

Searching for

THE TRUTH



- ◆ Always remember January 7
- ◆ Cambodia's failing medical system

"our recognition for victims does not begin and end with one day; rather, we should mark this day as a symbolic gesture that our responsibility is not forgotten and we will do more.."

--Youk Chhang

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The Khmer Rouge Revolutionary soldiers guard along the beach



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Contributors: Kok-Thay Eng, Pechet Men, Samphors Huy, Laura Fearn, Demosthenes C Reyes, Lim Cheytoath, Chenda Seang, Chivorn Sok. **Staff Writers:** Sarakmonin Teav and Chheng Veng. **Editor in Chief:** Bunthorn Som. **English Editor in Chief:** Cindy Coleman. **Publisher:** Youk Chhang. **Translators:** Ammaroith Chhim, Seyla Em and Sopheak Pheana. **Graphic Designer:** Sovandany Kim **Distributor:** Sorn Leak

Email: dccam@online.com.kh, Homepage: www.dccam.org

ALWAYS REMEMBER JANUARY 7

Kok-Thay Eng

Today, January 7, marks the day in 1979 when Cambodians were liberated from genocide. As the years passed, however, some people began to see January 7 as the start of an invasion of the Kingdom by Vietnam, and thus there is little to commemorate. But I personally believe that liberating a population from genocide is more important than the temporary loss of sovereignty of the Cambodian state.

However, I recognize that there has been an international debate about the appropriateness of bringing down a genocidal regime by use of a foreign occupation. Liberating a people from a brutal government by military means has taken place a few times since the Genocide Convention in 1948.

It is a major responsibility of the global community to free victims from the jaws of death by mass killing. The “responsibility to protect” theory raises the importance of liberation from genocide above nation-state principles.

Therefore, January 7, 1979 should be a day when ASEAN nations, at the very least, contribute to the raising of awareness about genocide in Cambodia within their states, with a goal of adopting a regionally integrated genocide education system.

ASEAN integration would not be possible without collective social and historical consciousness. Genocide in Cambodia must be learned across ASEAN because it was a crime against humanity committed against the Cambodian people in a

The Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation soldiers entered Phnom Penh to defeat the Democratic Kampuchea regime in January, 1975.



manner that affects all of mankind.

In my opinion, beyond prosperity and security, ASEAN has an obligation to promote human rights and moral education, raise awareness of the mass atrocities that have happened in the region, educate younger generations across ASEAN on the genocide that befell Cambodia, and create a model for protection of people in the member states in the future.

This program should be included in a new ASEAN work plan on education as an additional objective that recognizes the plight that Cambodian

people faced from 1975 to 1979 and the suffering brought to the people in East Timor between 1975 and 1999.

Since ASEAN was created in 1967, the region experienced civil wars and genocide resulting in millions of deaths. The most notable war was in Indochina. The genocide that resulted was the work of the Khmer Rouge, an extreme Maoist entity that committed atrocities against its own people.

This case of genocide is completely different from the Holocaust, whose victims and perpetrators were clearly defined and took place within a global

conflict. In Cambodia the genocide happened within a regional conflict in an atmosphere of noninterference, meaning that ASEAN member states had full knowledge of what was occurring in Cambodia but chose a misguided path of nonintervention.

Of course, at that time, Cambodia was not a member of the association, but this is an interesting lesson that ASEAN should learn by educating younger generations and posing questions about the moral responsibility of stopping a genocide happening in the region.

Security and economic cooperation in ASEAN will become meaningless if atrocities happen in a member state while other members act as unconcerned bystanders.

Kok-Thay Eng



People return back to their houses and hometown after the Democratic Kampuchea regime collapsed in January, 1979.

THE SUBSTANCE OF ACTIONS

Youk Chhang

On Nov. 1, 2005, the United Nations General Assembly designated Jan. 27 as international Holocaust Remembrance Day. The day is significant because it not only honors the victims of the Holocaust but it also calls attention to the world community's resolve to not let such horrific events be forgotten. However, we would be mindful to note that one day of acknowledgment does not necessarily equate to a lifetime of respect, and the sincerity of gestures can never replace the substance of actions. We must ensure that our passion for humanitarian principles translates into a sincere compassion for the individual human being, and our commitment to remembering the past is

measured not by our knowledge of the trite, but our appreciation for the individual human story.

It is in this spirit that I relate to you a story that is deeply personal but nevertheless representative of the struggle that many Cambodians still face today.

Just recently my sister Keo Kolthida Ekkasakh, or Kol, passed away, after a long struggle with cancer. She was born in 1959 in Phnom Penh to my mother, Keo Nann. Kol was deaf, and as the youngest of five sisters, she was two years apart from me, so we were like best friends. Lacking the ability to communicate with all but those trained in sign language, she learned to depend on herself



Keo Kolthida Ekkasakh during the 1980s

and the few people who had the patience and love to know her. Yet, despite her circumstances, she had an incredible spirit and a personality that could light up a room.

When the Khmer Rouge took control of Cambodia in 1975, I lost contact with her, and while we re-connected after the fall of the regime, both of us had already forgotten much of our sign language. Over the years our ability to communicate decreased, and it was not until last year that I began spending a great deal of time with her. We discussed the death and disappearance of loved ones and her experiences during the Khmer Rouge regime. Like many Cambodians during this time, she worked in the fields, planting vegetables and clearing forest. Like all victims, she learned to survive by sheer instinct: eating roots, leaves and insects to forestall starvation. I was amazed by the description of her experiences, and I was awed by the indescribable spirit and resourcefulness she must have had to survive as a deaf person during this atrocious period.

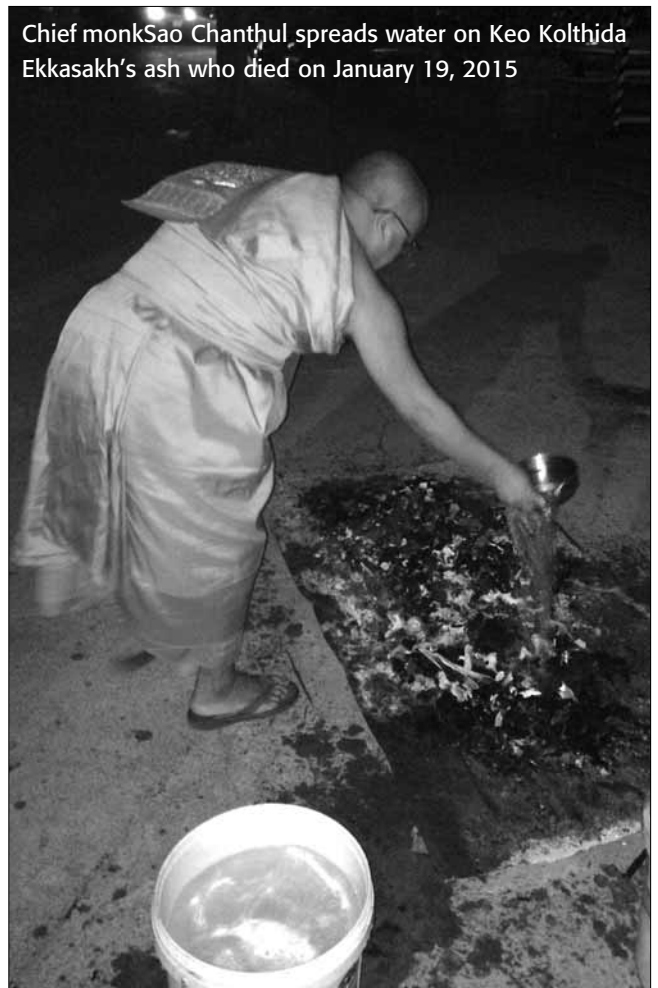
The time I spent with her in the last year meant so much to me, and it was why in her final days, I prayed for a miracle in her health.

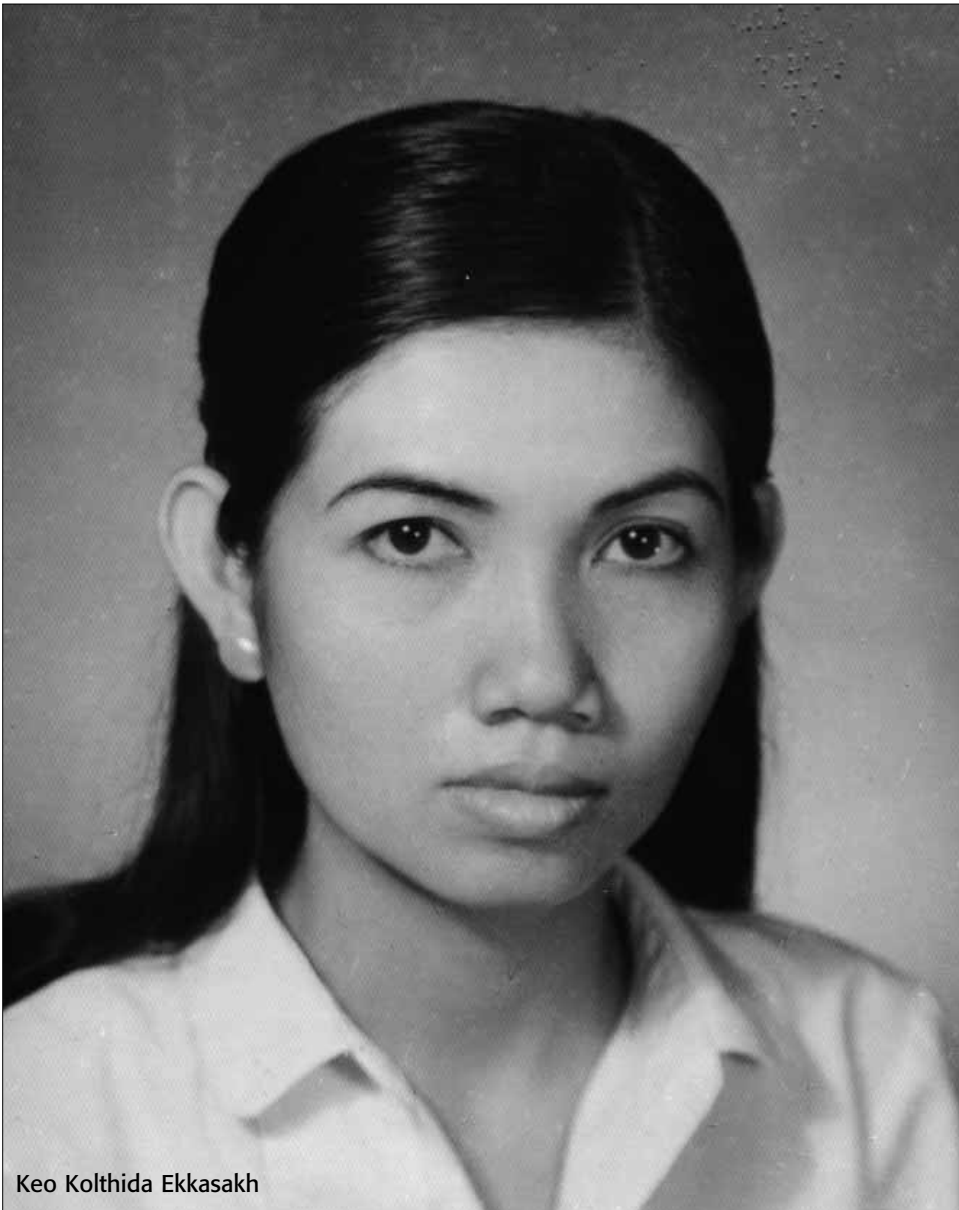
But, like many Cambodians who suffer dire medical circumstances, she was at the mercy of an under-developed medical system, in which inefficient and unethical practices persist, as much as technological shortcomings. I spent many days and nights and weeks without sleep, supervising her medical care and waking medical staff during the night to ensure her proper treatment. Lacking immediate incentive or a more professional responsibility to a patient's care, medical staff are often lax in their duties, particularly when the patient is poor. While in most modern medical systems, the patient's wellbeing is of paramount concern, in Cambodia it is the certainty of payment and thereafter the prospect for additional gratuities that guarantee quality of care. Such a system fails

the impoverished, and it does a disservice to the generation that suffered so greatly to preserve a country in the wake of the Khmer Rouge.

My sister died on Jan. 19, 2015, but she did not die without a fight. On January 13, nearly a week prior, she was pronounced dead by her doctors. Her vital signs appeared to have stopped, and she seemed to have no life. The doctors pronounced her dead and had we not thought different, she would have been cremated alive. Upon the doctor's advice we sadly took her to the Wat Langka pagoda, but rather than cremating her, we prayed. We prayed and the monks chanted and burned incense. We prayed over her body for hours and at one point a monk, Venerable Sao Chanthol, noticed tears on the side of her right cheek. She began to move her arms and open her eyes. I immediately showed her drawings of her memory

Chief monk Sao Chanthol spreads water on Keo Kolthida Ekkasakh's ash who died on January 19, 2015





Keo Kolthida Ekkasakh

for the American deaf researcher Erin Moriarty Harrelson. If miracles happen, then one occurred that evening.

My sister lived for another week. She told us how she saw everyone who she knew in life and who died during the Khmer Rouge regime. She met my father, sister and neighbor—all who died during this time period.

My sister survived (and thrived) for another week but then abruptly passed on the evening of January 19.

I wish there was more that I could have done to comfort her, just like I wish there is more that I

could do for victims of the Khmer Rouge. Cambodia continues to struggle to this day with the history of this period. While we often look to politics, education and religion as the prominent fields that harbor the residual effects of this horrific period, the medical system as well bears this period's scars.

While all societies struggle with improving their respective medical systems, I don't believe my sister's circumstances were isolated or unique. Had we not been at her side imploring the consistent attention to her care or inquiring into, with secondary medical opinion, her actual condition, I question how long she may have truly lived. The cool indifference to the poor or the casual triaging of medical care based on economic circumstance disguise a

deeper sentiment than mere distraction, incompetence or laziness. The vestiges of horrific regimes can often reside in our own understanding, empathy and concern for our fellow human beings, in casual interactions as much as in professional services, and it is in this light that Cambodia still has much more to do.

Indeed, our recognition for victims does not begin and end with one day; rather, we should mark this day as a symbolic gesture that our responsibility is not forgotten and we will do more.

Youk Chhang

FIGHT FORWARD WITH BRAVENESS AND THE GREAT AND WONDERFUL SPEED AS ALWAYS

EXTRACTED FROM REVOLUTIONARY FLAG MAGAZINE VOLUME 2, ISSUED IN FEBRUARY 1976

Veng Chheng

April 17, 1975 was the date when Cambodian revolutionary soldiers and people under the accurate and bright way of leading of the prosperous Communist Party totally won over the invasion of American Imperialism and its servant, the betraying gang of Lon Nol. Since April 17, 1975, the party decided that we have completely ended our united democratic revolutionary movement by fully winning. Starting from April 17, 1975, the Cambodian citizens and male and female youths must continue our revolutionary socialism and build socialism in Cambodia in order to sustainably protect our nation as well as our revolutionary benefit, rebuild our economy, and make our country become strong, developed and greatly and wonderfully prosperous.

According to the party's plan, we must build our country by changing our weak agriculture into strong agriculture within the next 10 to 15 years. This is the most precious task for male and female youths of this generation. It is also a most crucial task which our revolutionary male and female youths have to pay close attention to and must struggle to make this task be accomplished.

Continuing the revolution and building socialism in Cambodia is to defend our nation and move our country into an agricultural era; we have a lot of start-up capital, indeed. We have the revolutionary authority in hand which enables us to assign tasks according to the plan of our revolution. We have control over the entire state. We have the enormous strength of our people. Our citizens have practiced the brave act, i.e. won over the American

Imperialism and its companions. Our people are hardworking, skillful, able to bear hardship, and struggle against all obstacles. We have strong, skillful and brave soldiers who dare to fight against every obstacle to get rid of the enemies. We have means of production, such as all kinds of fertile land and farmland. We have resources of water, including rivers, lakes, ponds, and waterways, nationwide. Besides, we have many big and small factories, handicraft booths, and artisan stalls in every district, commune, village, and cooperative; all are under the control of our revolutionary authority. All of these capitals are huge and are the foundation for our national rebuilding process and to defending our territory to let it become strong, prosperous and developed rapidly. However, the capital which is even more valuable than these and would be the factor which determines the present and the future of our socialistic Cambodia is the revolutionary capital. In other words, it is our citizens, workers, peasants, Cambodian revolutionary soldiers and our male and female revolutionary youths who obey our strong revolutionary principle. They are led by the most accurate and bright leading way of our Communist Party. This revolutionary capital is the strongest foundation for us to move forward with our revolutionary socialism and reconstructing socialism in our Cambodia both in the present time and the future.

In addition to this fundamental element mentioned above, comparing to the scale and scope of the task in transforming the country from

poor agricultural practices into the agricultural era within 10 to 15 years, we still lack material. We have insufficient technology. This makes it difficult for us.

Additionally, hardship in making decisions would lead to the complication in practice. In the trend of the current world, people's revolutionary movements to free themselves from the oppression are happening everywhere. On the other hand, the powerful nations are fighting for power and putting their control over parts of the world. Among all the places, there is also Cambodia. If we look at the current situation of our Cambodia, we could see that, nowadays, the American Imperialist is publicly and secretly taking action in several fields, including politics, foreign affairs, spying, and internally invading Cambodia and viewing our citizens as their slaves. American Imperialist and its companions will continue their actions for now and the future. However, with highly attentive and highly responsible policy for our own territory, our

citizens, our revolution; the long-lasting struggle, fighting forward spirit and fighting forward spirit of our workers, peasants, Cambodian male and female youths; and, under the smart leading way of the Communist Party, the actions and lies of American Imperialism and its companions will be removed.

In addition to the above mentioned action of American Imperialism, our male and female revolutionary youths must pay the highest attention to our revolution to get rid of the internal invasion which harms us as well as the action and lies employed to fight us, our military and our politics of all neighboring countries which are the companions of the American Imperialism and our enemies since early times. All kinds of enemies are continuously planning their plan, action and strategy to fight us, invade us internally, and prevent us from rebuilding the socialistic society as well as converting from a weak agriculture to a prosperous agricultural era within the next 10 to 15 years. We

Revolutionary workers produced bricks at Ta Khmao (Photo: March 1978)



must find our strength to be the foundation of our decision and practice, and to avoid the selfish decision making. If we follow our selfish decisions, we would somehow become pessimistic, fall into darkness, lose concentration, and dare not fight against all kinds of our enemies and struggle with every obstacle and hardship which prevents us from success. Sometimes, being too optimistic could lead us to fall into the thought of extreme peace, constructive, over excited of the triumph, careless about our revolution, unfamiliar to the struggle against social status in which there is a tense issue and frequently causes problems to our strategy. Selfish decisions could bring us into danger, and we could not succeed in rebuilding the country or reconstructing our socialism in Cambodia.

Consequently, our male and female revolutionary youths have to realize our current and future difficulties, resulting from both decisions and practices, to estimate and give accurate advice on the scale and scope of our task in the current time and in the future. We must run at our fastest speed to win over the victory. If we walk or run in a normal speed, we would not be able to fulfill our tasks in defending and rebuilding our country during this tense and complicated situation of the current world and the matter of the selfish decisions as mentioned previously.

The slogan which encourages us to continue our quest in creating a socialistic Cambodia and to defend and build our nation in the present and in the future is:

"Fight Forward with the Braveness and the Great and Wonderful Speed as Always."

What does this slogan mean?

Fight forward with braveness as always means that at every ministry, offices, worksites, farms, cooperatives, workers at all factories, and peasants at all worksites and cooperatives must fight forward with the greatest strength and

braveness to win over all big and small tasks assigned to each individual every day with quality, speed and economical spending. Fighting forward on all kinds of our everyday small and big tasks must be performed frequently regardless of day or night, cold or hot. Fight forward in our task, we must never think of the time, exhaustion, or break. Indeed, we must always fight forward every day and every hour to boost our productivity. This is the meaning of fight forward as always.



Revolutionary combatant youth and female combatants of a mob
(Photo: March 1978)

Fight forward with braveness as always also means to keep fighting to work on every kind of task independently, responsibly, and self-helping at the highest level with the principle of creativity, i.e. do not perform tasks following the traditional way which was out of date, slow and unproductive. Based on the most economical principle, one

should not work just for the sake of working, wasting, or destroying the mutual benefit. Economical principle is in accordance to the slogan "Work more, get more, and spend less." With the responsible principle for the revolutionary party, nation and people would not work just for the sake of working, i.e. following slavery way of work as in the previous society. This is the entire meaning of the slogan: "Fight forward with braveness as always."



ile unit at Oh Jrov district were striving to harvest rice

With the great speed on every task and work over the assigned plan; for example, if the plan in 1976 is to produce three tons of rice per hectare, generally, according to the slogan "with the great and wonderful speed", we must alter the planting technique in every field, including canal, dike, dam, irrigation system, fertilizer, seed, transplanting

technique and grass removing technique. We must do whatever to increase our rice production not to three tons per hectare but 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 tons per hectare. By doing so, we call this work with the great speed.

The most wonderful means to perform correctly and according to the party's instructions. Put another way, the most wonderful refers to working in a better, speedy, productive and accurate way. Accuracy refers to both party's instruction and working technique. For instance, if one builds the dike or digs the canal, one must be able to do it at every rice field, store water, fill the water into the rice field in whichever season, speedily complete, use less force, and do not gather in just one location. If we fight forward to build a dike, dig a canal both day and night, yet we could finish in just one or two places, or more places but there was no water filled in or there is flood and damage to the seeds, it is not called "the most wonderful."

In addition, the most wonderful, though we have little capital, we could fight for our nation and build our country to be better, stronger and faster. Indeed, the above definitions are the genuine and complete meaning of the slogan "fight forward with braveness and the great and wonderful speed as always." Male and female youths must always keep this in mind and make use of the time to transform oneself into the bravest fighting force in all kinds of small or big and heavy or mild revolutionary tasks which we perform every day and everywhere.

We have to fight forward as always to defend and build our country in a great, wonderful, and equal speed in all ministries, offices, worksites and cooperatives in order to prevent enemies from committing all kind of crimes in our territory or in other countries nearby and far away, which does not allow them to have the ability or chance to invade or destroy our revolution from the inside. We must not allow them to destroy our country and

people. We must build our society on our own.

Hence, the matter is that male and female youths, revolutionary cadre, people, workers, peasants and Cambodian youths must reconsider their thought, see the actual weight of their task, stop thinking about the individual benefits and other tiny things, and focus just only on our important tasks. If they do not, then as a result, they perform the tasks slowly and cause trouble to the national reconstructing responsibility they have. If one could reeducate their minds and concentrate on defending the building of the country as stated above, the slogan "Fight forward with braveness and the great and wonderful speed as always" will come into reality. We will, for sure, accomplish the national defense tasks and lead our country to be

the greatest and the most wonderful one which would be looked up to by the universe and show us as a role model. Consequently, both enemies inside and outside the country, both near and far, would not dare do anything to us. Currently, they could do nothing to us, so in the future we will be prosperous and strong in every field. It would even become harder for the enemies to invade our territory.

Thus, all male and female revolutionary youths must fight forward to defend and build the country by working according to each individual task with braveness and the great and wonderful speed as always.

Veng Chheng



CONFESSION OF NEN TUY AKA PHY, SECRETARY OF BATTALION 513 IN NORTHWEST ZONE

Pechet Men

Nen Tuy was born in Khtom Chrum Village, Rohat Tik Commune, Mongkul Borey District, Battambang Province (now, it is in Banteay Meanchey). Tuy was arrested by Angkar on June 28, 1977 and was forced to write down the confession, which is 25 pages long, from August 2 to August 20, 1977. In the confession, Tuy pointed to 77 other people.

The following is the summary of Tuy's confession, describing his actions until the date when he was arrested by Angkar.

At the age of 12, Tuy attended school in the village for three years. In 1962, Tuy and his mother moved to live with his elder sister, Lan, at Chheu Teal Village, Wat Tamim Commune, Sangke District, region number 1, in the Northwest Zone. After living with his elder sister for 5 years, in 1967 Tuy was hired to fill in the water into the field of Yun at Kanghat Village, Kanteu Commune, Banan District, region number 1, in the Northwest Zone.

In 1968, Tuy was recruited to serve as a soldier to prevent the Khmer Rouge from coming to contact the villagers for food by Tep, the village chief, and Poch, the first secretary, of Kanghat Village. Seven days later, Tuy and Sanh returned to work at the orange farm of Yun. After returning to the orange farm for a while, Tuy and Sanh were contacted to join as spies to search for information about the Khmer Rouge by Poch, the first secretary, and Sep Sok, a militaryman at Banan district hall. Tuy and Sanh had to work with two other spies, i.e. Mao and Yun, the orange farm owner, to search for the Khmer Rouge network at the grassroots level in the jungle and expand their spy network.

In 1968, Tuy and Sanh recruited 4 new

members, including Dung, Hok, Kampaong, and Sok, as their spy network. Four of them were formerly peasants at Kanghat Village, Kanteu Commune, Banon District, region number 1. Then, Tuy got information about the Khmer Rouge network in the village. It was Thuch. So, he reported to his senior level. Three days later, Thuch was taken away by Poch.

In the beginning of 1969, Banon District chief, Sy Sienghor, called Tuy, Poch, Mao, Yun, Sanh, and Sep Sok for a meeting and instructed them to work hard in searching for Khmer Rouge networks that were betraying the nation. District chief Sy Sienghor introduced Tuy to four others, including Tan, Khaui, Yat and Den. Tuy postponed his task on March 18, 1970, the date when there was a coup d'état to overthrow Prince Sihanouk.

In April, 1970, Tuy joined with the Khmer Rouge regime through Loek Soeun aka Toat. In October, 1970 Tuy was assigned to be the deputy chief of a group of soldiers in region number 1 of the Northwest zone by Thorn. Working for Thorn for one month, Thorn advised him to join the C.I.A. He told Tuy that the communist regime had no religion, goodness or sin, and status. If Tuy would like to live in a resourceful society with respect for religion, he had to join with the C.I.A. In November, 1970, Thorn introduced Tuy to be a member of the C.I.A. with the recommendation of Hoeng Sak. After being a member of the C.I.A., Tuy was introduced to Kien and Nay, and he was assigned to create a new force and take action against the revolutionary movement in order not to let it succeed.

In the beginning of 1971, Tuy urged Khmer Rouge soldiers who were preparing to flee to do so.

He claimed that the government had lots of soldiers, and they were headed to Treng Camp and Koas Krala Camp. After the soldiers fled away, the government forces entered Boeng Srange Village and gathered around 50 villagers. In the midst of 1971, Tuy recruited two new members, consisting of Phet, a driver of region number 3 (Northwest zone) and Sy Iv, a worker at the sugar factory in Kampong Kol Village. At the end of 1971, Angkar took 30 soldiers away in every zone in order to build a new force at region 5 (north of Battambang Province). This made Tuy lose his connection with Nay, Khoeun, Phet and Sy Iv. In 1972, Tuy met with Thorn and was assigned to be the group chief of the village company. Thorn introduced Tuy to Than Kheun, deputy chief of Thorn, and Prom, who came from Vietnam and was the mechanic of region number 3 (Northwest zone). Tuy was assigned to destroy bombs, weapons and food of the revolution. In the middle of 1972, Tuy recruited 3 new members such as, Heun (peasant), Chhoeun (chief of platoon) and Chhorn, deputy chief of battalion 513 in region number 5 (Northwest zone). In the end of 1972, Tuy and Heun, together, burned around 400 bushels of a rice pile in Sre Korng Village.

In the beginning of 1973, Thorn introduced Tuy to other C.I.A. networks, including Sa-em, Chin, Lauy, Yong and Thang Khoun. Tuy and Heun contacted Thang Khoun to trade with Svy Oeung, a colonel of Chorp Camp in Preah Neth Preah District, region number 5, in the Northwest zone. When Angkar removed its force and sent them to Siem Reap Province, Tuy, Heun and Thang Khoun reported to Svy Oeun to gather the villagers in Chambak Pha-em Village and Kork Ksach Village, about 100 families. As soon as the U.S. started to bombard Cambodia, Tuy, Heun, Chhorn and Chhoeun urged 60 soldiers to flee. They also gathered villagers from three villages to join with the government. Until the end of 1973, Tuy

recruited 6 new members more, including Pep (chief of platoon), Nhanh (chief of platoon), Ran (chief of platoon), Phon (chief of platoon), Tam (chief of platoon), and Ruom (battalion 513 member in the Northwest zone).

In 1974, Thorn moved Tuy from a regional soldier to become a chief of regiment in the newly liberated zone in Preah Neth Preah District. Thorn told Tuy about the condition of Lon Nol soldiers who submitted to the revolutionary force everywhere. He asked Tuy to continue to expand the C.I.A. force and not to tell any other C.I.A. members about the Lon Nol soldiers' condition. In Preah Neth Preah District, Tuy instructed his C.I.A. members to lessen the defense when fighting Lon Nol soldiers, in order to give Lon Nol soldiers a chance to win. As a result, the Khmer Rouge could not win over Lon Nol soldiers at Thmar Puok Camp as Lon Nol soldiers got help from Svy Oeun's soldiers in Chorp. Furthermore, Lon Nol soldiers liberated 200 families and seized 15 trucks of rice.

In 1974, Tuy included 5 new C.I.A. members into his network. Those were Sanh, chief of company (of battalion 513); Pek, chief of platoon (Cannon Platoon); Thon, chief of platoon (of battalion 513); and, Vet, chief of battalion 513, region 5, in the Northwest zone).

In the beginning of 1975, Thorn assigned Tuy aka Phy as the secretary of the battalion, Chay as the deputy secretary, and Tuy as a member of battalion 315 in region 5. In February, 1975, Thorn and Hoeng Sak called Tuy aka Phy, Chay and Tuy to tell about the Khmer Rouge's plan to control the entire country in May, 1975. They got such information after they went to train with Angkar for some time. Hoeng Sak added that the only way to achieve the victory over the Khmer Rouge revolution was to fight against the revolution when K.R. soldiers were excited about their victory and lost their attention. Therefore, the most important task was to strengthen the C.I.A. forces by adding

more and more members. However, this plan was not successful as the Khmer Rouge arrived at Chorp Market earlier than the plan. Additionally, they also arrested the colonels and evacuated the ordinary soldiers away. Only the weapons which Tuy transported to be used for daily use remained.

In early 1975, Angkar controlled most of each zone, and they ordered to have weapons and bombs collected from every region. Only 7 trucks of bombs were kept to be used for defending the border region. Then, Thorn linked Tuy to Vann, a member of Serey Sophorn District; Chat, deputy



Victims at S-21 Security Center or Tuol Sleng prison

secretary of Thmar Puok District; and Yuy, member of Phnom Srok District to search for Svy Oeun's network that the Khmer Rouge had sent away after the liberation. At that time, Tuy found Eng, lieutenant major of the Free Khmer force and Sam At, a teacher at Serey Sophorn District, region 5.

Then, Tuy assigned Sa-em, Eng and Sam At to secretly attack the guarding Khmer Rouge. Under Tuy's instruction, the above members secretly fired a gun at two tank storage places in a Kapok farm twice and the bullet storage warehouse at Svay Chek once and at Phnom Bak once. Later, Hoeng



Victims at S-21 Security Center or Tuol Sleng prison

Sak moved Tuy, Sanh and his younger brother, Sary, to take control over the economic sector. This was because Hoeng Sak got the news that Angkar planned to use the currency notes which they had published.

In August, 1975, Angkar called Tuy to study in Phnom Penh for a month and at a region for a month. Before Tuy went to study, he assigned Sa-em, Sam-at and Eng to look for the Free Khmer forces. Three of them found 20 members of Free Khmer forces. So, Sa-em, Sam-at and Eng as well as 12 members of the Free Khmer force fled to Thailand. The other 8 remaining members were shot to death by the Khmer Rouge.

After knowing that the Khmer Rouge did not use the currency note, at the end of 1975, Hoeng Sak moved Tuy from economics and finance unit to be the secretary of battalion 513. At that place, there were Kun as deputy chief, and Saroeun as a member. Hoeng Sak instructed Tuy to prepare the battalion 513 by inserting the C.I.A. members to be in charge of a platoon and company as well as expand their networks.

In the early 1976, Hoeng Sak called Tuy; Chay, chief of machine repairing unit (region 5); Sruoch, assistant of region 5 and chief of agricultural sector; Horn, assistant of region 5 and raising dam female comrade; Vann, a member of Serey Sophorn District; Chat, undersecretary of Thmar Puok District; and, Yuy, member of Phnom Srok District for a meeting to arrange the plan to destroy the revolution in 1976. Thus, all C.I.A. members must expand the forces, cause conflict along the border, and contact other networks outside the country. Plus, Hoeng Sak introduced the members to Hong, former under-command of Prince Sihanouk and was, at that time, the regional assistant and chief of arts unit; Loap, chief of regional agricultural sector; Kong, Secretary at Sangkat Prasat and in charge of the region; and, Savat, chief of commerce in region 5, Northwest

zone. Later, Hoeng Sak ordered Tuy, Chay, Sokun, Heun and Ruom to contact Lak 43 at the Thai border to search for the Free Khmer forces that fled away. There, Tuy met with Dam, and he took Tuy to meet with Domnal, captain of the Free Khmer forces; Eng, a lieutenant major; and Sam-at who fled from Cambodia at the end of 1975. Half a month later, Tuy met with Eng, a soldier of General In Tam. He, then, introduced Tuy to Dorn, In Tam's lieutenant major; and, Dy who was formerly a customs officer and brother of Dan. Tuy reported to Eng, who was at Lak 42 at the Thai border, about 40 members who Dan and Dy had trained to serve as the Free Khmer force.

In June, 1976, Tuy, Heun, Ruom, Sokun and Chay went to meet with Eng, the lieutenant major; Domnal, the captain; and, Dam, at Lak 74 near the Thai border to discuss about revolutionary forces along the border and inside. Also, they planned to fight against the party during the harvest season in 1976. After the meeting, Domnal and Eng instructed Tuy and other members to bombard the landmines and burn out the fences, planted by the party along the border, to make the soldiers become at ease to enter and fight against the party. At that time, Tuy transported 70 people who were linked by political tendency and were the relatives of C.I.A. members. Later, Tuy brought 30 of them to Hoeng Sak, and were sent to Nguy and Chat. Those 30 people were people who the Khmer Rouge evicted from Phnom Penh. Most of them were linked to the politics which the Khmer Rouge wanted to demolish. At the end of 1976, Tuy included four more C.I.A. forces, consisted of Khann, chief of battalion 513; Kann, chief of economics group of battalion 513; Seu, chief of company 2 in battalion 513; and, Tey, chief of a group in battalion 513 in region 5 of the northeast zone. Tuy instructed those 4 members that communism was very tense, male and female youth could not love each other. If they did and

Angkar knew that, they would be taken to be killed regardless of how hard they had worked for Angkar. They would not be forgiven. Moreover, the current living circumstances were as if living in prison. Indeed, the plan to fight against the revolution at the end of 1976 was not successful because the external forces were restrained by Ronakse Thai. And, they could not control fully over the internal zone.

In January, 1977, Tuy, Sokun, Saroeun, Hoeng Sak, Damnol and Eng had a meeting again at Lak 47 to organize a plan to fight against the party in 1977 again. Hoeng Sak asked Tuy to hide himself in the revolutionary force and work hard to gather more forces to rebuild the new forces in order to fully control the situation as well as persuade the evicted people from Phnom Penh to join with them in September, 1977. In Tam was the leader of this plan. Moreover, Hoeng Sak told Tuy to report all of his actions to other C.I.A members when Hoeng Sak was absent. Those members were San, army at northeast military region; Sou, committee member in charge of Khmer-Thai affairs; May, worked with Sou; Nov, chief of brigade in northeast region; Chhin, reservoir constructor in region 5; Sovann, reservoir constructor in region 5; Phoeun, chief of statistic unit in region 5; Kheam, deputy chief of commerce in region 5; Chhuy, chief of company 2 in battalion 513; Thornn, female assistant to the doctor in region 5; and, Prak, female chief of commerce in region 5 at the northeast zone. Then, Tuy, May and Sou expanded their networks along national road number 6, from Serey Sophorn to Poipet. They also contacted Chhoeun, state commercial officer who stood by at Aur Chrov to let In Tam lead his soldiers along national road number 6 to fight against the revolution in September, 1977. Additionally, Tuy and Kong continued to strengthen their forces among Communist Kampuchea Youth and moved their force backward to be in charge of cooperative at

Sangkat Prasat where most people were evacuated from Phnom Penh. Here, Tuy introduced Chhoeun, chief of a platoon in battalion 513; Pep, chief of a platoon in battalion 513; and, Chhorn, platoon chief in battalion 513 in region 5 at the northeast zone to Hoeng Sak. Later, Hoeng Sak instructed Tuy to recruit three other C.I.A. members to destroy Trapeang Thmar reservoir at Phnom Srok District, in region 5. The reservoir was 15- kilometers long. To accomplish the plan, they contacted Chhin and Sovann who were the reservoir constructors. Furthermore, Hoeng Sak ordered Tuy aka Phy to contact with Tuy, secretary of battalion 425, who was in charge of Thmar Puok District along the Thai border. This was to arrange the networks along the border at Lak 42 and Lak 30 with the aim of keeping the path open for In Tam's forces to enter. Later, Hoeng Sak called Tuy aka Phy, Sokun, Saroeun, Tuy, secretary of battalion 425, Sou, May, San and Nov to meet at Nimet Village, Aur Chrov District, in region 3 at the northeast zone to discuss the development of revolution destroying plan which would be started in September, 1977. Hoeng Sak assigned Tuy aka Phy to wait for the forces from Lak 47 to Lak 42, and Tuy, secretary of battalion 425, to wait for the forces from Lak 30 to Lak 20. Hoeng Sak, San and Nov were waiting for the forces to enter along national road number 6.

Then, Tuy started his plan along the border by chasing cattle into Thai territory, causing Thais to be confused, thinking that the Khmer invaded their territory and firing back. Next, Hoeng Sak appointed Tuy and Sanh to transport the weapons from the warehouse by hiding almost 1,000 rifles in his location. He called for all the recruited members to a meeting by lying, saying that they were called to join the convention. While Tuy was transporting the weapons, in May 1977, he was arrested by Angkar.

Pechet Men

DOCUMENTS STILL MAKE MY MOTHER REMEMBER

Bunthorn Som

Every year, the Royal Government of Cambodia celebrates the victory over the Khmer Rouge regime on January 7. Many newspapers, radios and television channels have written, reported and broadcasted films and old documentaries related to this regime to raise the public awareness about the killing of millions of people during this regime. However, there are some residents and politicians who criticize such actions as political propaganda and the arrangement with the Vietnamese as they intend to invade Cambodia.

Despite these different views, my mother,



Som Bunthorn's mother who currently lives at Svay Reing province

currently 62 years old, living in the countryside of Svay Rieng Province, does not involve herself with politics, but still remembers the experiences of terror she encountered during the Khmer Rouge regime. Every day, my mother usually spends time watching the black-and-white television after her farm work and housework are finished. My mother has watched a ten-minute long documentary about the Khmer Rouge regime which has been broadcast on a local television channel. After the broadcasting ended, she shared her experiences with my nephew who is studying in grade 11. She asked, "Why does the television channel broadcast the Khmer Rouge documentary?" and "Why were people dead?" She also told some of the stories which I never heard before. My mother's homeland is at Baty Commune, Chantrea District, one among the seven districts in Svay Rieng Province which had been severely affected by the bombarding during the Lon Nol regime. My mother is the youngest child among her 10 siblings, while my father was a soldier in the Lon Nol regime.

My family had to hide their identity when the Khmer Rouge first came to power. Later, the Khmer Rouge spies searched for the biography of those who had served in the previous regime, and my father was called to be interrogated. However, my father kept lying that he was a pig trader in the village. Those whose biographies were clearly known by the Khmer Rouge were taken away without any interrogation. At the same time, the Khmer Rouge ordered one of my mother's elder brothers, Sat, who was a carpenter, to demolish a temple of Prasap Leak Pagoda, located in Mes Tha-Ngak Commune. But, as he was a Buddhist, he told the Khmer Rouge that he could not demolish it as

he only knew how to build. The Khmer Rouge bound him and took him to be killed as soon as they heard his claim. Then, the Khmer Rouge evicted his wife and children away from the village. They disappeared since then. Being terrified by this event, at the beginning of 1976, my parents decided to flee from the village and headed to Vietnam. Both of them had requested the Vietnamese soldiers who guard along the border that they would like to look for their relatives who had fled to Vietnam. There were many Khmer citizens who were sent back by the Vietnamese soldiers as there had been a request from the Khmer Rouge, and this was done in exchange for cattle. The refugees who were sent back were killed immediately in front of the Vietnamese soldiers.

My parents lived in a village of Long An Province, Vietnam, located next to Chantrea District, Svay Rieng Province. Both of them carried earth and performed farm work for Vietnamese. One night during 1978, Khmer Rouge military invaded and entered Boeng Kanh Chaut, the place where my

mother lived, and killed a family consisting of 5 members and burned the house and some materials. My mother fled away in fear. At that time, she asked her neighbor to cradle my twin elder sisters who were just one years old. She took my oldest sister with her along with some clothes and food.

My parents returned to Cambodia with their relatives at the end of 1978. On the way back, one of my aunts died by stepping on the landmine when she entered an old village to cut some banana leaves to pack the rice cake. At that time, my mother could only stay at a distance. She could only see my aunt's scarf floating in the air.

To date, my mother keeps telling about her experience to her next generation. I believe that her story plays a crucial role for our family as well as the nation, in particular, without serving a political interest, to let the young know about the Khmer Rouge regime.

Bunthorn Som

www.cambodiatribunal.org

The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor (www.cambodiatribunal.org) provides extensive coverage throughout the trial of two former senior Khmer Rouge officials accused of atrocity crimes. The Monitor provides daily in-depth analysis from correspondents in Phnom Penh, as well as complete English-translated video of the proceedings, with Khmer-language video to follow. Additional commentary is provided by a range of Monitor-affiliated experts in human rights and international law. The Monitor has been the leading source of news and information on the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC) since its inception in 2007. The website hosts an archive of footage from the tribunal and a regularly updated blog containing analysis from expert commentators and coverage by Phnom Penh-based correspondents.

An estimated 1.7 million Cambodian citizens died under the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979. The former Khmer Rouge officials to be tried in the ECCC's "Case 002" are Nuon Chea, former Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea's Central Committee and a member of its Standing Committee and Khieu Samphan, former Chairman of Democratic Kampuchea State Presidium.

The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor was developed by a consortium of academic, philanthropic and non-profit organizations committed to providing public access to the tribunal and ensuring open discussions throughout the judicial process. The site sponsors include Northwestern University School of Law's Center for International Human Rights, the Documentation Center of Cambodia, the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation and the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. The concept for the website was conceived by Illinois State Senator Jeff Schoenberg, a Chicago-area legislator who also advises the Pritzker family on its philanthropy.

A WOMAN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE BUILDING AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

Samphors Huy

Mrs. Prak Chansokha is the deputy provincial governor of Preah Sihanouk Province. She is in charge of the Cultural Center and many other tasks. She has presided over the inauguration ceremony of an exhibition of forced transferred at the Cultural center of Preah Sihanouk Province. This exhibition was the collaborative work between the Documentation Center of Cambodia and Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. On this occasion, she shared her painful experience of separation with all participants, including students and residents. Her story made some participants as well as the Islamic-Khmer remember how the Khmer Rouge regime linked to their personal experience and caused them to burst into tears. After the ceremony ended, Mrs. Chansokha provided an interview on her own experience and her participation in peace building and national reconciliation after the

collapse of the Khmer Rouge.

According to research, done in the post conflict societies and the countries that suffered from genocidal regimes, women not only were actively involved in earning their own family living, raising children and providing education, but also helped to strengthen their own community. Actually, in South Africa, there were 55 percent of women, while in Libya there were 51 percent of women who have shared their pain and their actual life experience with the Truth Commission in their own country. Women, children and the entire community were severely affected by the war. However, such impacts have provided chances for women to show their ability and search for equality between males and females in their own country.

Even though those women have endured hardship, separation and grief of losing their



Mrs. Prak Chansokha during the inauguration of the forced transfer exhibition at the Cultural Center of Preah Sihanouk province

beloved parents, siblings, and children, they have never given up. Women have converted their sorrow into their struggle and won over obstacles to provide happiness for their family and are rewarded with success. Generally, some people have considered women as weak and could not fulfill any important task. Nevertheless, if we have a close look, we can see that women are dependable for their family. During hardship, war and starvation, most of the women gave up some of their food and saved their entire family, as in the case of Mrs. Chansokha.

Mrs. Chansokha has 9 siblings. Her father was a police officer, while her mother was a housewife. Her family was evicted by the Khmer Rouge to Thmar Sar Village and Krabey Prey Village for a while. Later, the Khmer Rouge evacuated them to Thmar Bang Village. She was separated from her husband, who was a policeman, when she had just given birth to her child a month before. Later, her oldest son, who was 5 years-old, died of malnutrition and there was no medicine to cure him.

The Khmer Rouge categorized her family as well as other evicted families as having political tendencies due to having the background of a former official. The Khmer Rouge did not allow her family to live with the old people. They were assigned to log new land to do farming. Though she had just given birth a month before, the Khmer Rouge assigned her to work as others. She had to do transplanting in waist-deep water from dawn until the evening.

Regarding the food ration, the Khmer Rouge gave a can of rice to each individual to have for days. Because of starvation, people would cook the given rice to eat in just one day. In the next day, because of having no food, those people went to pick up wild fruit to eat, which caused them to be poisoned and suffer from diarrhea. Though knowing about this issue, Mrs. Chansokha looked for extra food, including every kind of wild fruit and banana trunk to stop her starvation.

She witnessed an event. Because of starvation, a villager cut the potato leaves which he planted on his own. He was, then, caught by a



Workers harvest corns at a cooperative in Koh Thom district

Khmer Rouge spy, accusing that he stole the collective property. She was bound. That villager complained to the spy: why he couldn't cut it to eat as it was planted on his own. The Khmer Rouge spy did not care about his complaint and bound him to a tree, without letting his legs reach the ground. The Khmer Rouge sharpened coconuts and threw them at him every day. The Khmer Rouge spy gave him neither food nor water. Seven days later, he passed away. The spy unbound him and took his corpse to throw into the water. She remembered that that villager was bleeding and produced a pitiful shouting. These brutal tortures in front of the villagers made people live with terror and Bak Sbat (mental illness coined by Dr. Chhim Sotheara).

She regrets and misses her younger brother. Being starved, her younger brother had asked others for food. Seeing that, the spy beat him. She had to just stand and watch her younger brother being beaten. Her younger brother got ill. Later, her mother decided to carry him off Tuol Por Mountain to the hospital. She pitied her mother so much as she had to walk kilometers. Her mother expected that by taking her younger brother off the mountain to the hospital she could make him feel better than leaving him on the mountain. Unfortunately, without getting better, three days later, her younger brother passed away. She still looked for the wild fruit for her small child and reserved this food.

Later, her daughter got sick. She carried her to see the doctor and got some sort of black pill, mixed with rice bran. At that time, her daughter was just four-months old. Her daughter passed away that night, yet she dared not cry out loud as there were spies following her. She cried and held her daughter's dead body until dawn. In the morning, not allowing her to do anything, the Khmer Rouge took her daughter's corpse to bury. At that time, she touched the dead body and felt that there was still body temperature. She thought that her daughter had not yet died. However, the Khmer

Rouge did not allow her to keep her. Nowadays, she keeps thinking that if she had obstructed the Khmer Rouge at that time, her daughter might have survived. Regarding her husband, one night, he complained about the hardship of assigned work and the oppression of workload set by Angkar in the meeting. All participants totally agreed with what he had raised, yet they remained silent. The next morning, her husband's mobile unit was moved to Aur Chamnar as planned, but her husband was kept. Angkar moved her to carry earth at the dam and dig out huge stones. Some people's legs were injured due to the stones falling off. During the work, comrade Bieng, zone chief, came to ask her in a joking way, "What belongings does comrade have?" She responded: "I have got nothing. My daughter died. Only my husband remained." Comrade Bieng continued: "Do not appreciate what you have now! You may be separated. Be careful!" She responded in the joking way that everything depended on Angkar. Her husband was terrified and, confusingly, put the torch on the bed. She blamed him for this action as the torch could burn down the house. She did not realize that her husband was frightened of being taken away by spies during that night.

Later, without seeing her husband, she went to ask for him at the worksite. People who worked at the worksite told her to stop looking for him as they saw the Khmer Rouge had come to take him away. At that moment, she dared not cry though she almost could not breathe. She was speechless. The next morning, she asked the spy about her husband, yet the spy did not talk to her. Then, a female comrade called her to an isolated temple and told her, "Comrade should no longer ask for comrade Kdey as we also have no idea. Comrade should try to work hard, instead!"

One day, when she carried the seedlings on her head to the field, there was a base person from Takeo Province who told her, "You are fortunate.

On that night, not only your husband was taken, but also another three families' members. Even the family with small children were all taken to be killed by the spy." Later, she was told that the rice carrying unit (her husband's unit) were all killed, resulting from complaining about the hardship and insufficient food; they were not even allowed to pick up the dropped jackfruit on the ground. Before killing them, the Khmer Rouge cut off their limbs to let the blood out. Knowing such news, she felt so sorry for her husband.

When she got sick, there was comrade Dorn, cooperative chief, who secretly took some medicine and rice to her. She was so frightened, for at Veal Puoch, her living location, there were many tigers. One night, when she left the hospital, she spotted the tigers' footprints. Suddenly she saw a tiger just in front of her. She prayed, "May my goodness save me from this danger!" Suddenly, the tiger walked away.

In 1978, Vietnamese soldiers entered, and the Khmer Rouge evacuated people to live at Thmar Bang. At that time, her parents were taken to be killed. On the way back to meet with her parents, one of her younger sisters died from the cold weather, which caused her stomach to stop working. Mrs. Chansokha had to raise her remaining little brothers and sisters. At first, she was a secretary at Bit Trang Commune. She guarded the village with males. To attend the meeting, she had to walk and, sometimes, hitchhike on the villager's truck. She contacted all she knew and worked with at Kampong Som city to ask for rice and clothes to distribute to the poor people.

She was in charge of all commune works. Some people were injured because of the Khmer Rouge's bombarding. She, then, went to look after the injured villagers with the doctors. Most of the citizens loved and voted her to be their commune chief. Yet, she refused.

From 1980 to 1981, she came to work at the

city and was in charge of productivity. Later, the state appointed her to work on education and broadcasting about national policy. She went to Cheung Kor Village to work on harvesting with her villagers; performing the role of midwife; and, encouraging villagers to earn a living. The Khmer Rouge knew about her works, so she often changed her living location. She got the news regarding the Khmer Rouge's plan of action in advance and vanquished them. She took many weapons and sent them to the government. In addition, she was also involved in educating and encouraging women. She saved the prostitutes at Kampong Som city and provided them with an education. Ultimately, they could have proper jobs. She has done such work as she has lost her siblings, parents, daughter and husband during the Khmer Rouge regime. She, now, follows the Buddha's word by keeping in mind, "Rancor ends when you forgive." She got some relief when the senior Khmer Rouge leaders were brought to trial.

She still wonders why the knowledgeable people led their country into mass executions. At her living place during the Khmer Rouge regime, she saw many human bones. This revealed that a lot of people were killed. Nevertheless, during the hearing, former Khmer Rouge leaders said, "There was not any execution and people were not starved."

Her story shows that women have taken part in the peace building and reconciliation process. They also help to strengthen their community. In post conflict and war torn societies like Cambodia, people suffer from Bak Sbat and lose confidence. As a result, attention and warmth provided by the state authority, in particular including the participation of women, have played a crucial role in reconstructing the nation.

Samphors Huy

AN UNDENIABLE, AND UNFORGETTABLE HISTORY

Sarakmonin Teav

Before 1970, under the rule of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia as well as Cambodians were awarded peace, and almost every field was developed. After the coup d'état to overthrow Prince Norodom Sihanouk on March 18, 1970, led by Marshall Lon Nol, the entire nation encountered war.

The most affected ones were the residents in the isolated areas. Around half a million ton of bombs were dropped by the U.S. on this small country, which caused thousands of people to die, become disabled and lose their housing. Because of the anger at these actions, and the King Father asking his people to enter Maki jungle to join the Khmer Rouge movement to fight against the

republic regime of Lon Nol, the angry people and those who lost their beloved family members joined with the Khmer Rouge revolutionary movement. Consequently, the number of Khmer Rouge soldiers increased dramatically.

On April 17, 1975, Khmer Rouge soldiers succeeded in overthrowing the Lon Nol regime. Each Cambodian was excited with this victory and expected that his/her own country would become peaceful. Everyone was happy and ran out to proudly welcome the arrival of the Khmer Rouge liberating soldiers. However, this excitement and expectation faded quickly and was replaced by confusion and terror as soon as people were asked to leave their houses for three days in order to clear



The Khmer Rouge soldiers entered Phnom Penh to defeat the Lon Nol regime in April, 1975.

the enemies and to avoid the U.S. bombardment. At that time, many people died and were separated from their family. Those who refused to leave were immediately shot to death. The Khmer Rouge started killing their own people from the first day of their victory. Democratic Kampuchea, also known as the Khmer Rouge regime, seized freedom and humanity from the people. Actually, as in one part of "Pumpkin Prisoner", an actual story of a survivor of the Khmer Rouge regime, published in Searching for the Truth Magazine, the Khmer Rouge cadres bet on a rubber twister game. A guard shot a prisoner in his/her head; the prisoner then fell down to the ground. The guard stated, "Their head's value is not equal to one of my shirt buttons."

Cambodians became slaves of the prison without walls of Pol Pot's Angkar. The Khmer Rouge converted a beautiful country with prosperous civilization into killing fields, blood rivers, and bones mountains. Millions of people endured the suffering. Invaluable culture, religion, custom, and tradition were demolished by the Khmer Rouge. In just about three years, two million people died of starvation, diseases, exhaustion and execution. Between 1977 and 1978, there was a mass purge among Khmer Rouge cadres, specifically the cadres and residents of the eastern zone. Angkar accused them of being involved with Vietnamese to destroy the Democratic Kampuchea. Later, there was a mass movement against Angkar of Khmer Rouge in this eastern zone. Thousands of residents and Khmer Rouge cadres fled to Vietnam and Laos to form the revolutionary forces. They also mutually agreed to create the United Front for the National Salvation of Kampuchea (UFNSK) on December 2, 1978. The UFNSK got support from residents in every location; in addition, they got support from Vietnamese volunteer soldiers. With the help from the Vietnamese volunteer soldiers, UFNSK fought against and won over Democratic Kampuchea

soldiers. On January 7, 1979, Cambodia was completely liberated.

January 7 Victory ended the dark era and moved on to a new page of its history. Though the nation and all citizens had to start to reconstruct the country and their living from zero point, Cambodians demanded to have their own freedom and be the owner of their own destiny. Starting from the victory day, Cambodia, as well as Cambodians, has struggled to change the nation from ash, scars from the war and tears of suffering into a country with significant development, which has peace, sovereignty and rule of law.

However, nowadays, there are still some citizens and politicians who deny recognizing this victory day. They claim that January 7, 1979 was invented for political interests, as it was the date that the Vietnamese invaded Cambodian territory. These claims are just based on what they think. The important point is that those people could never prove that genocide never took place in Cambodia. Thousands of victims of the Khmer Rouge regime and the trial to prosecute the former Khmer Rouge leaders are the evidence to prove that a genocidal regime had, for sure, taken over in Cambodia. In particular, the former Khmer Rouge leaders are currently being prosecuted at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. The claim that there was no Khmer Rouge regime and no genocide in Cambodia shows a severe contempt for the two million lives lost as well as all of the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Consequently, as part of a next generation as well as prospective leaders, we have to learn and understand the Khmer Rouge history clearly. We must never forget this brutal regime. Every single one of us must learn about such a regime in order to prevent the genocide from taking place again in our motherland.

Sarakmonin Teav

KHIEU SAMPHAN'S HEALTH CAUSES NEW DELAY AS ECCC EVIDENTIARY HEARINGS RESUME

TAKEN FROM WWW.CAMBODIATRIBUNAL.ORG, HEARING ON JANUARY 8, 2015

Laura Fearn

The first day of ECCC evidentiary hearings for 2015 completed a half-day of business before the court was again forced to adjourn, this time due to defendant Khieu Samphan's health.

The court appeared eager to get back to business after the previous attempt to begin evidentiary hearings in phase 02 of Case 002 was

abandoned in November of last year due to a boycott by the Khieu Samphan defence. Nil Nonn, President of the Trial Chamber, called the court to order and Case 002/02 was finally underway. The first testimony of the day was slated to address the atrocities that occurred at the Tram Kok Cooperative (including the treatment of Buddhists) and those relating to the Kraing Ta Chan Security Center.

A varied crowd filled the public gallery. Cambodians from throughout the country were in attendance, including 608 visitors from Battambang, 350 from Pursat, and 250 from Prey Veng province. A contingent of 26 students from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, U.S.A. joined to observe justice in action as part of a two-week field trip to Cambodia integral to their four-year Global Citizenship degree. By morning break, they professed to being overwhelmed by the proceedings. Apparently, as it transpired, so was Khieu Samphan.

The work of the court began modestly with Mr. Nil Nonn stating that Justice Karopkin would not be in attendance and the greffier reporting that all other parties were present. The President went on to briefly review the prior difficulties that the Trial Chamber has experienced in trying to find "a workable compromise" that would have enabled the commencement of substantive testimony last fall, and how, failing in such endeavour, the court had "had no choice but to adjourn to



Khmer Islamic citizen was interviewed by National TV at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

today.” He reiterated that defence counsel had pledged they would be ready for the second phase of the trial once they had filed their appeal on the first phase, a task that was completed last week. But, Nil Nonn emphasized, the delay of 25 lost trial days and the attendant costs of same were unacceptable. Therefore, the President announced that “to protect the proceedings moving forward fairly and expeditiously,” Touch Vorleak and Calvin Saunders were sworn in January 5, 2015, as respective national and international standby counsel. He outlined that they will take over the Khieu Samphan defence if the court determines such is necessary.

The Trial Chamber also noted that it had issued a misconduct order against Khieu Samphan’s defence team, that the court scheduling order provided for only three days of testimony per week until an assessment of the fitness of the accused to stand trial is completed, and that the assessment of such fitness was to begin on January 19, 2015. With that, Nil Nonn declared the evidentiary hearing to be open.

Quickly, Anta Guissé, Khieu Samphan’s Intern-ational Co-Defence counsel claimed the floor, opining that Khieu Samphan’s rights were being infringed by the “importing of lawyers...(who) have no procedural role...as counsel Khieu Samphan has chosen are present.” She argued that there is no precedent for having “replacement players on the field... awaiting a necessity to arise.” She claimed “their mere presence is not necessary, is not compulsory...” but “is putting pressure on Mr. Khieu Samphan and is somewhat of a threat to us.” She was most emphatic that she felt the Chamber was “sending a message that they were being far from impartial.” As a solution, she raised the issue of having an “impartial outside body clarify the issue” of whether there has been any malfeasance respecting professional ethics. She noted that as of January 5,

the Paris bar “is still not seized” of the issue.

Eventually, the court cut her off, stating that she didn’t “want the public to understand you delayed the proceedings,” and instructing Ms. Guissé to be brief. The Defence Counsel then asked the Chamber to reconsider its decision to impose standby counsel “who have no procedural role in the proceedings.”

Kong Sam Onn, Khieu Samphan National Defence Co-Counsel, also pled that the appointment of the standby counsel was contrary to the interests of Khieu Samphan as these counsel would follow the advice of the Chamber and not the accused. He pointed out that the court had referred the question of the defence team’s conduct to their professional bodies, that there had been no ruling yet stating there had been any misconduct, and that the court could not anticipate what the bar decisions would be. Kong Sam Onn asked that the Chamber reconsider its decision to appoint the counsel affirming that he also felt that the presence of the new counsel may “infringe or affect the right of defence counsel to protect our client.” Khieu Samphan’s defence closed on trying to further justify the court’s reconsideration on the basis that having standby lawyers “may confuse the public.”

Victor Koppe, International Co-Lawyer for Nuon Chea, rose to voice his opinion that the new sitting arrangements whereby the standby counsel have taken the seats that had been allocated to the Khieu Samphan defence is “insulting” in a “brutal manner.” He, too, asked the Chamber to reconsider the decision, arguing that “there is not a place for them on this side of the court room.”

Khieu Samphan reiterated for the record that he had counsel he knew and trusted, and who were independent of the court and “did not submit to the Trial Chamber.” He added that he felt that the appointment of standby counsel was “one of the tricks to prevent (his) counsel from performing

their jobs” and that it “infring(ed) the law.”

International Co-Prosecutor Koumjian jumped to defend the court’s actions pointing out that Khieu Samphan defence counsel had defied the court, walked out of the proceedings, caused financial losses, and “more importantly...” caused justice to be delayed for two months. Arguing that the court could not be held hostage by defence counsel defying the orders of the court, he said “the only threat and pressure (that Khieu Samphan defence counsel face) is that they must obey the orders of the court.”

Civil Party Co-Lead Lawyer PichAng claimed that the accused had the right to professional counsel but not to a right to “jeopardize proceedings or rights of civil parties.” But, he felt there must be a “balance” and asked the Chamber to provide time for the standby counsel to study the file in case Khieu Samphan’s current lawyers are not present. He also noted his displeasure that the seating arrangements made it appear that there were now three defence teams.

Marie Guiraud, Civil Party Co-Lead Lawyer objected to the Khieu Samphan defence team’s “insinuation that (because of the appointment of standby lawyers), there would be an objective alliance acting together in a community of interests,” emphasizing that the civil parties maintain their independence.

All parties having had their say, the President of the Chamber moved to start hearing testimony. Firstly, he reminded the accused that according to Rule 21 (1)(d), an accused has the right to remain silent but that under Rule 90, there is a right to examine the accused. He announced that NuonChea had informed the court that he intended to exercise his right to remain silent. As Khieu Samphan had not been clear on this issue, the President then asked for his present stance.

Khieu Samphan stated that “because there is pressure on (his) defence team”, he also would

exercise his right to remain silent whilst reserving the right to make a statement at any time.

Nil Nonn said he would honor any change in either accused’s position at any time. The next item of business was the Lead Co-Lawyers request to have a map of 17 communes’ locations to be admitted into the record. A discussion ensued between Judge Fenz and the Civil Party team in which it devolved that the map does not contain new evidence. It was prepared by the Civil Parties lawyers from evidence already in the case file. Locations of the communes are clear but not so locations of the villages which are “impossible” to determine. The witness who would testify about it had not seen the map as it was prepared only a day before the hearing. The President invited submissions to be made before the end of the day on whether the map should be accepted, and stated that he would then make a ruling before the witness took the stand.

Mr. Nil Nonn moved the hearing right along dealing with such housekeeping matters as stating that questions not relevant to the scope of Case 002/01 would not be allowed, giving the order of precedence of questioners, and warning that lawyers must adhere to acceptable professional standards of conduct, that the court would tolerate no rudeness.

Witness 2TCW 936 was then called. The President asked preliminary questions outlining the witness’s background, that he had lived in a commune, his current address and his occupation as a small businessman and rice farmer, his parents’ names and that he had three children. Most specifically, the court had the witness confirm that he had no relatives who had been admitted as civil parties and that he had been sworn in under oath.

The court then reviewed the obligations of witnesses, in particular, that a witness may refuse to answer a question if it is self-incriminatory but

that a witness had an obligation to give testimony unless it was self-incriminatory. Further, that the witness had an obligation “to tell the truth based on (his) knowledge, experience and observations.” The witness answered positively the court’s enquiry as to whether he had re-read prior evidence given to the OICJ investigator.”

Anta Guissé vehemently objected to this process whereby witnesses read over their prior statements, but Nil Nonn ruled that the court would “stick to the decided strategy in the previous proceedings” and allow it.

After the morning break, the court addressed Mr. Koppe’s objection to civil party lawyers leading witnesses. The President invited Mr. Koppe to put his objection in writing by referring to the section of his appeal brief that dealt with this issue, and then for him to await a ruling in due course.

Seng Leang, Assistant Co-Prosecutor picked up the questioning, establishing more of the witness’s background that would enable him to be cognizant of the events material to the hearing. These elicited information such as: the witness was able to live with his parents during the Khmer Rouge time as he was a small boy; that there were six children in his unit which was assigned to tend to cattle but they were close to where the canals were being dug; that all the other boys in his unit were the same age as he but they died; and that the only teaching available at the time was “under a tree,” that there was “no proper stationary schooling,” (the school having been converted to ammunition storage among other uses). At age 15, he was sent to a temporary unit where the children would do harder labour before aging into the adult labour force although, because of his age, he still tended the cattle from early morning to dusk. (Only adults worked at night). His freedom of movement was prohibited. Not legally being able to visit his parents, he would sneak out to see them but “was tortured and brought back to the unit” if he was

caught.

Mr. Koppe objected on the basis of it being leading for Seng Leang to ask if there was another form of punishment besides beating as beating had not been mentioned. Nil Nonn overruled him, finding that in principle, leading questions would be allowed.

Seng Leang went on to draw the witness out on the issue of communal eating. This was given as starting in 1974 for a month and then cancelled until 1975 when communal eating was again imposed. The witness said he ate communally in the village, that there were six in his group who ate together, with many members in other groups.

The witness testified that the quantity of food (a spoon of steamed rice and morning glory soup with chicken or duck) was inadequate, but that he did not report it to the cooperative for fear of being killed by the chief of the cooperative.



The surviving victims of the Khmer Rouge regime wait to hear the verdict announcement of Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

On the basis that it was a personal experience of his mother's of which the witness had no personal knowledge, KONG Sam Onn objected on behalf of Khieu Samphan's defence, to the witness testifying that his mother reported she was so hungry that she did not have the strength to work.

Anta Guissé asked for more information concerning the source of this information, and Mr. Koppe said that it would be "helpful to lay a foundation of the issue here as it is important to events in June, 1976." Mr. Koppe emphasized that it is "not helpful the way the examination is going." In his own defence to the latter comment, Mr. Seng stated he had given notice to everyone that he would be proceeding with an examination on the working conditions in the cooperatives.

The President then interjected to question the documentary source of the information, and to

ask for responses from the co-prosecutors to the objection so that he could then fully consider what his ruling on the objection should be.

Mr. Leang explained that the source was an interview by the witness's mother with the OCJ investigator. Mr. Lysak, Assistant International Co-Prosecutor contributed to the discussing saying that the procedure in the prior trial was to pose a question "to witnesses of information from other witnesses of which they have knowledge." Madam Guissé felt that the foundation of testimony, the origin of the document and under which conditions the document could be used, should be established first.

The President ruled that the objection was not sustained and that "the witness would answer in relation to his or her personal knowledge or experience," and that the assistance co-prosecutor could not directly hand the document to the



witness.

When Seng Leang continued his line of questioning regarding the witness's mother, the witness declared he did not know of her statement concerning reporting not having enough to eat but that he did know that she had talked to people in the cooperative. The witness then went on to ask that he be examined instead on the cooperative, earning a rebuke from the President that he had no right to order which questions he wanted to answer. The witness then further answered that after his mother had delivered a baby, she had so little to eat that she became ill.

The Co-Prosecutor changed the subject, now inquiring into whether the witness knew people were transferred out of Phnom Penh after April 17, 1975. He said he knew that they "were evacuated...in cooperatives."

Mr. Koppe objected on the basis of the witnesses tender age of 15 meaning it "was beyond the capacity of the witness" to answer on how the new people were "characterized" by the regime.

The witness did testify that he knew they were named "17 April people, civil service people or soldiers" and that his family, being local people, were not so named. He also knew that the old residents were called "base people" and the imports were "new people." He had no idea how many families of new people were sent to Tram Kok.

Switching to the treatment of Buddhists, the Mr. Co-Prosecutor elicited the information from the witness that, whereas from 1973 to 1974, the monks had raised chickens and ducks to support soldiers in Phnom Penh, from April, 1975, to January, 1979, there was no Buddhism practised. He said all the monks were disrobed in 1975 and the temples turned into clinics, pig stys and storage facilities.

Mr. Koppe objected that the witness could not possibly know that all of the monks had been

disrobed and asked that the trial chamber make a direction on such wide questioning. Mr. Koppe said he could "stand up every time but what is the point?" The court ruled the questioning could proceed and the witness said he knew of one monk who refused to be defrocked.

Under Dale Lysak, International Co-Prosecutor, questioning, the witness stated that 12 of his family members, including himself, his parents and all of his siblings, had been arrested in June, 1976; that his parents had been arrested for complaining about the food ration and betrayal of the cooperative; and that other villagers (non-relatives) including Sut Sok, the village chief, were arrested at the same time. They were taken to Ang Roka office for one night where, although they were the only prisoners, they saw shackles, handcuffs and blood stains. The next day, they were moved to Kraing Ta Chan Security Center. The witness never saw his father again after he was arrested but his father had left his lighter at the prison. The witness was told that his father "had been taken away after he was severely tortured." He described the prison as having two levels of barbed wire fence, with "three buildings for keeping the prisoners, one building for workers, a cooking building, two small halls, and a place for questioning prisoners."

The court adjourned for lunch after which the President announced that the Trial Chamber was unable to continue with the witness's testimony as Khieu Samphan had been taken to hospital after complaining of dizziness and the effects of high blood pressure. Declaring that the hearing could not proceed without Khieu Samphan's presence, the President was, therefore, on the basis of a letter attesting to Khieu Samphan's medical condition, adjourning the hearing until tomorrow, January 9, 2015, at 9 AM.

Laura Fearn

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:

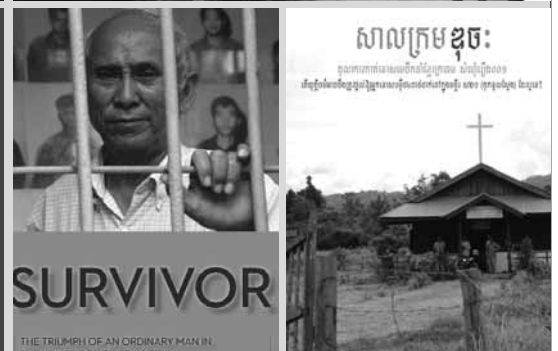
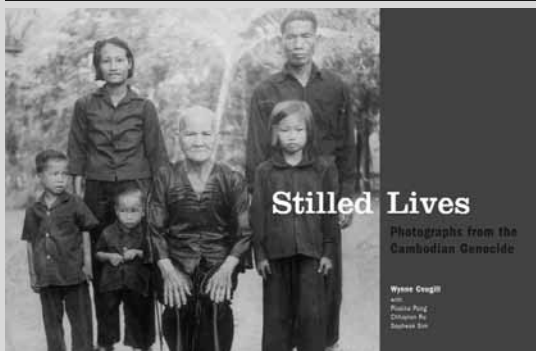
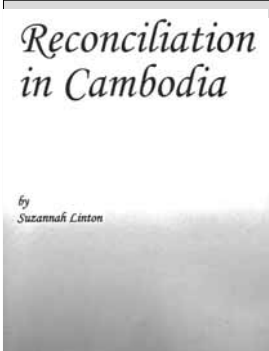
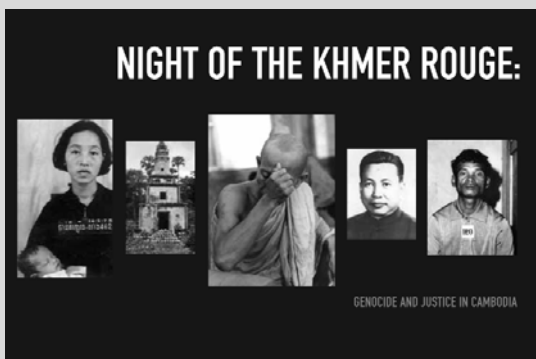
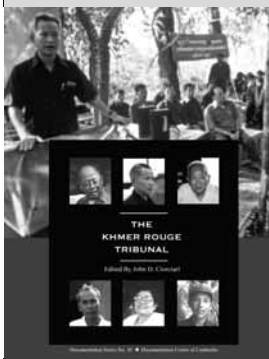
1. Library: Through our library, the public can read documents, books and magazines, listen to tapes, watch documentary films and view photographs held at DC-Cam, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, National Archives and other locations.

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.



PROSECUTION WITNESS GIVES TESTIMONY OF VALUE TO THE DEFENCE

TAKEN FROM WWW.CAMBODIATRIBUNAL.ORG, HEARING ON FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Laura Fearn

A morning of seemingly-pedestrian testimony as Phneou Yav bore witness about his life from 1975-1979 under the Khmer Rouge. But what Mr. Phneou attested to arguably made him a more valuable witness for the defence than for the prosecution.

Co-Prosecutor de Wilde got into his questions by asking Mr. Phneou about his education. The witness had left school in “year nine of the old education system” and then ordained as a monk at age 18. Further background enquiries elicited that Phneou Yav did not know why Ta Seth, a village chief had been executed. He could only think that the man had “had an issue with the commandoes that stayed at his house.” And on miscellaneous

items, the witness said that cooperatives began in 1975; there was communal dining starting from after the fall of Phnom Penh in 1975 to 1978; and there was no disagreement voiced against collective meals as “no one dared to protest.” In 1975, he could still exercise his right to live in his own house but he could not pick the fruit near his home because the fruit, coconut trees and cattle “were considered for communal use.” In 1975, private ownership had been abolished and all possessions collected for communal use. Once more, the witness testified that no one would protest out of fear of disappearance. Neither were they allowed to do anything on their own. For example, if they went fishing or catching frogs, their



People queue to enter courtroom at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

bounty would go for communal consumption if they were caught. They lived in fear of making a mistake, the punishment for which was to be taken away and killed. Mr. Phneou admitted that he did not actually see people being taken away because he was out ploughing the field, carrying earth or planting vegetables when these things happened.

Mr. Phneou reported that there were evacuees from both Phnon Penh and Takeo in his commune Angk Ponnereay. When they arrived, there were in good physical condition and were instructed to build a dam. These people were “considered to be ‘new people’ and, also, ‘depositees’.” Surprisingly, the witness said he did not think their personal belongings went to the commune.

“It seems to me that even jewelry was not taken from them.” When prodded by Mr. de Wilde about the discrepancy between how the new people were treated compared to the existing residents, Mr. Phneou could only add that he did not know why because he was busy working in the rice fields. No new houses were built for the newcomers. They were put in Unit 3. They did not have to write their biographies “at the beginning.” He confirmed that later the cadres went looking for the Lon Nol officials and “military service” people.

In 1976, Mr. Phneou was given the task of teaching the children of the “base people”, and only of the “base people.” The curriculum he was assigned included the alphabet and spelling for which he was given a guidebook to assist him. He also taught the children such practical knowledge as how to tend cows and collect cow dung.

The members of the unit had no work quota but toiled from 6:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. when they went to the communal kitchen for a meal. Then they worked from 2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. Contrasting with the Reverence Em, Phneou Yav did not work often at night although some others were assigned to evening labor. He repeated that

“nobody dared to complain” about the work.

People were divided into three categories in early 1976 but Mr. Phneou did not know who made the decision to do so. Unit One was for “base people;” Unit Two was for “candidate people” who were base people whose relatives “had connections with the enemy;” and Unit Three was for “17th April people.” The witness was in Unit One and in a children’s sub-unit.

Regardless of his prior testimony, when Phneou Yav was asked to explain who was meant by “the enemy” in the Unit Two classification criterion, he said that the units were based on strength and speed of doing work, “not based on affiliation to an enemy.” The Co-Prosecutor did not pursue it. The witness then defined Unit One as being for strong people who finished their work faster while Units Two and Three were for the “not so strong.” There was no difference in discipline between the units. The witness did not know if other communes had been divided into the three-category system.

Mr. Phneou had heard the terms “pure people” and “sullied people” but he could not explain what the distinction between these people and “base people” was other than Unit One was the “purest” and Unit Three: “the lowest category of people.” Further, when asked to distinguish between “full rights old people” and “candidate people,” he simply replied that “candidate people” were allowed to become “full rights people.” He knew of no cases of someone being promoted from Unit Three into either Unit One or Unit Two. And, there was no movement from Unit One to Unit Two. “Base people” were “selected from the beginning” and stayed in that category. The terms used in Khmer were K1, K2 and K3 were, respectively, “full rights people,” “candidate people” and depositee unit people.” Further, the units were subdivided into many other specialized units: the canal-building unit, the canal-digging unit; the

seedling unit, the cart unit, the kitchen unit, the fishing unit, and the boy's and girl's units, for example.

Food was the next topic explored. Mr. Phneou recalled that surplus rice was sent to the "upper echelon." The workers received a plateful of rice and a large bowl of fish and morning glory soup to be shared among eight people. Mr. de Wilde read in from Phneou Yav's statement made to the court investigators that he did not get enough to eat. The Co-Prosecutor wanted to know why a "base person" would be left hungry. The witness said that the meals were similar for all units but Unit One would get more food because they worked faster than the other units. After being cautioned by Mr. de Wilde to only attest to things within his personal knowledge, Mr. Phneou admitted that, because freedom of movement was prohibited during the regime, he had not actually gone to the communal kitchens of the other units to observe their meals. In a slight variance to his hereinbefore testimony, the witness said the punishment meted out by the unit chief for complaining about meals was "re-education" but not to be killed.

Mr. Phneou did not know if Ta Vin was taken to Kraing Ta Chan for complaining about not enough to eat. He said they were not allowed to know what happened at Kraing Ta Chan, only that it was a detention center. Although he had heard of the threats, he personally was not aware of the killings. He was told that Ta Vin, a member of a cart unit, was sent there in late 1976. He remembered because it was after he started to teach the children. The witness only knew Ta Vin under that name and did not know if he was also known as But Vin.

Mr. de Wilde ended with some questions about meetings but Mr. Phneou had seldom attended them as he was occupied with looking after the children. He did add, though, that

meetings were held frequently and were presided over by Ta Khen. Meetings held in Unit One were exclusively for Unit One. He did not recall any discussion of the enemies on the border or Yuon enemies, but he said "some of us had heard about these matters." In his meetings, they had focused on work and how to work faster. All that the witness had heard about Nhor, the head of the cooperative, was that he was "strict." He said that there were no cooperative leaders from the "17th April people" because these positions were only for "base people."

Mr. Phneou said that when the children were caught stealing food, they were reprimanded and threatened with being taken away for their mistake. He had witnessed a unit chief threaten a young thief with execution.

Phneou Yav knew Ta Khen, who was the commune chief until the Vietnamese came and the man "ran away to the mountain." When Ta Khen returned, he was killed by villagers in revenge. Ta Khen had sent reports to the district office in the form of a letter and via messenger. He also knew Ta Chunn, the district chief of Tram Kok. Accompanied by messengers, Ta Chunn would come to supervise work sites and meet with the commune chief. Ta Mok did not visit. Mr. Phneou did not know him but had heard his name.

Mr. de Wilde read in from the witness's prior statement to the investigating officers that he had seen 20 couples get married; that some of the participants did not know each other; that militiamen eavesdropped to know "if the couples got on well;" that if they did not, they would be reported and "advised" to do so on threat of being sent to Kraing Ta Chan; that the ceremony was not a marriage but a "resolution" ceremony in which they committed to loving their spouse for the rest of their lives; and, if people liked each other, they could propose making a resolution themselves by applying to the "upper echelon" through the

chairman of the cooperative and the unit chiefs.

Mr. Phneou confirmed these facts to the Co-Prosecutor and added that he had attended only two commitment ceremonies (for 20 couples and another for 10 couples). He played no role in either of them. He also contributed that Unit One people could marry Unit Two people but not Unit Three people. Ta Khen always presided with the assistance of the village chiefs. Ta Khen would make brief remarks emphasizing that once a resolution was made, the couple could not be later separated. Other than “to live and love together,”

15 to 20 years old; some married, some single. If reported for non-consummation, the newlyweds would be summoned for a reprimand and re-education.

Mr. de Wilde tried hard to get to the bottom of the apparent contradiction that couples were in fear of death if they refused to marry but, indeed, were able to express such dissent and nothing happened. Kong Sam Onn, Khieu Samphan Defence Counsel, objected to his continued questions on the basis that the inquiry had been answered although it might not be the answer the



People queue to enter courtroom at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

he gave no other instructions. The witness said that a bride would be appointed for a groom. If one of them did not like each other but liked someone else, then they did not have to get married to the appointed spouse. Mr. Phneou explained that the person voicing the protest could wait and marry their preferred partner at the next ceremony. Afterwards, the unit chief sent two militia to eavesdrop on the newlyweds to see if they “were getting along” (that is, if they consummated the marriage). He described the militia as “peasants,”

co-prosecutor wanted. The President directed the counsel to rephrase his question “rather than making a conclusion from the response.” Counsel did so but he still did not get clarity on why people were scared of being killed if they refused to consummate a marriage.

The Co-Prosecutor moved on to the issue of treatment of Buddhists during 1975-1979. Mr. Phneou said that before this period, there were only two pagodas in his district. The Khmer Rouge made the monks disrobe and turned the pagodas

into storage space for fertilizer and into meeting places. The Buddha statues at one pagoda were thrown into a pond. Mr. Koppe objected to the next question about how “the base people” felt about the eradication of all Buddhist practices as the witness could only testify as to his personal experience and the inquiry was rephrased and personalized. Phneou Yav “felt sorry for Buddhism and the Buddha statutes but what could I do? We all kept silent and just did according to the instructions of the unit chief.”

Mr. Phneou did not see any Khampuchea Krom. There “was no mixture of people in the commune.” He was certain that Unit Three only held people from Phnom Penh and Takeo.

Civil Party Legal Aid Lawyer Lor Chunthy picked up the story by having Mr. Phneou confirm that he knew from a unit chief that Ta Non and Ta Chea had returned from Hanoi. Counsel then posed questions about supplies. The witness explained that supplies were distributed to the villages from local sources. They were not supplemented by goods from elsewhere. In referring to the common

property, he said the unit chief “guarded belongings and cooking utilities.”

Mr. Phneou was designated to teach the children by the unit chief. He did not instruct the children to call Angkar their parent as they already had mothers and fathers. He taught the alphabet based on the textbooks he was given.

The categorization of people was decided at the commune level. Mr. Phneou “only knew” that he was told to be in Unit One and that there were some exchanges between Unit One and Unit Two.

He described a “main force” or “special unit” as one that finished more work faster than the other units.

Food distribution varied slightly. When he was at Tuk Chun (spelling?), ten people received three cans of rice gruel to share. At Angk Ponnareay, each person was given one-half a can of cooked rice.

Mr. Phneou had been informed that there was a “chain of command from district to commune” by his unit chief with whom he had a close relationship.



Students receive some documents before attending courtroom of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

Angk Ponnareay pagoda had 30 monks before 1975 while Tuk Chun pagoda had more than 100.

If someone died in hospital, they were buried at the hospital without benefit of Buddhist funeral rites.

Post-lunch, Mr. Koppe, Nuon Chea Defence Counsel, returned to the issue raised yesterday of the failure to produce documents prior to witnesses' testimony due to problems inherent in the process of clearing them for release. Mr. Koppe had just received "a large binder" with two statements from Case 004 witnesses. One of the papers was 120 pages long. At a glance, the counsel had determined that it was "a very important statement" for the defence in regards to the next witness. Mr. Koppe submitted that "the only proper way to proceed is to postpone" until the parties can all look at all of the material. Mr. Koppe felt he could not continue with the witness and "officially" asked for a postponement.

Mr. de Wilde responded that the two statements were part of the 89 he had mentioned yesterday and are concerned with this segment of the trial on Kraing Ta Chan and Tram Kok. The papers made ten disclosures since yesterday, only some of which "describe one witness to come. There is no other mention of a witness to come soon." The Co-Prosecutor maintained that the documents would not "impede the examination of Mr. Phneou today or the witness tomorrow."

Further, he said that his colleagues would provide more details on the records in the next few minutes.

Anta Guissé, Khieu Samphan Defence Counsel, started with a conciliatory declaration that the defence "was not saying that the OCP was laying traps" but that there were problems of disclosure. She disagreed with the Prosecutor's claim that the documents would have not impact the next witnesses' testimony but that "the bias" was

against her as she had not read the statements. She pointed out that "the elements and facts described are not useless without the names of the witnesses." She concluded by asking the Chamber "for a chance to stand on an equal footing."

Civil Party Lead Co-Lawyer Marie Guiraud called the disclosure "problematic and unusual." She admitted it was a problem for them and reiterated her comment of yesterday that they were "in exactly the same situation as the defence."

Mr. de Wilde disagreed with the implication that they were not all "on equal footing." As long as he does not have clearance from the OCJ to release the documents, he cannot use them in the courtroom either.

Ms. Guissé destroyed that argument saying that, as counsel has read the documents, he does not have to refer to them in order to use them in the public courtroom

Judge Fenz addressed the matter on behalf of the court. She reaffirmed that this was not about assigning blame but rather "about managing a difficult situation," something to which, she said, the judges had given a great deal of thought. She announced that the court would be sending out an email today to all parties on how the bench "envisages the near future." They "will give the parties time to familiarize themselves with the documents but feel that it is in order to go ahead today and tomorrow. If witnesses later need to be recalled, then a request can be made and the Chamber will decide on it then."

The examination proceeded with Nuon Chea Defence Counsel, Suon Visal, fleshing out miscellaneous details with Mr. Phneou beginning with the work done by the various units. The witness elaborated that the work load differed between the units because Unit Three was not as "progressive" as, particularly, Unit One. "That is why the units were divided." When sick, workers were allowed to be hospitalized but relatives were not

able to take care of them there “because they were not medics.”

The workers had little free time when they were not on duty or sleeping. Their shifts ended at 5:00 P.M. They ate, took a bath and went to bed. They had no weekends but every ten days they could visit family. That was when the children saw their parents.

Mr. Phneou taught numeracy as well as the alphabet. The children received the same food rations as the adults of cooked rice and fish. When they tended the cows, there was an opportunity for the children to catch fish for their meals. If the children made trouble, his unit chief would blame Phneou Yav.

The witness repeated there were only Khmer in his community, not Cham and not Chinese.

Mr. Koppe asked about the circumstances of Mr. Phneou’s wife being in hospital. Five days after she had given birth, she was ordered back to her work of carrying earth. She did as required but developed post-natal depression. The authorities would not allow her to take traditional medicine in wine.

Mr. Phneou did not remember anytime from 1975-1979, when there were no more distinctions between the three groups of people. He does remember that a “candidate person” was about to be upgraded to a “full rights person” when the Vietnamese arrived. He confirmed that such upgrading was not applicable to Unit Three.

Counsel wanted to know if Mr. Phneou knew, of his own personal knowledge, of anyone who had been sent to Kraing Ta Chan because they had complained about inadequate food. The witness did. Phneou Yav had shared a cart job with Ta Vin. Someone had overheard Ta Vin make the remark and reported him. The witness was present when Ta Vin was arrested and told he was being “taken for re-education.” After the fact, Mr. Phneou had heard people whispering about the reasons for the arrest. Mr. Koppe followed up with asking if he

could give one example of someone being killed for making a mistake. Mr. Phneou could not do so but maintained that, although it did not happen to “base people,” it had happened to people in the other groups. He had heard this from others when, during meals, they had discussed disappearances. The witness refuted that this was “speculation” on his part as he knew it at the time. Counsel raised that the fact that he knew one man in a cart unit had been taken away was quite different from knowing the reasons for somebody’s arrest, but Mr. Phneou said he had asked contemporaneously and learned that Ta Vin had been disappeared.

No children were arrested for stealing. They were young, age 12, so were not punished. They were threatened but “it was just a threat to get the children to stop stealing.”

Neither did the witness have any “concrete examples” of any couples sent to Kraing Ta Chan for failure to consummate. But he was steadfast that, if a couple’s lack of marital congress was found out through eavesdropping, they were strongly “advised to consummate the marriage.”

Mr. Koppe summed up his enquires as “there had been a general fear of possible measures but no one actually sent to Kraing Ta Chan.” Mr. Phneou confirmed that that was “correct.” It was most valuable evidence for the defence.

The Buddhist statues were thrown into a pond in front of a pagoda by villagers. Mr. Phneou said they were incited to do so by the village chief. They were not punished for their actions as it was done on instructions from the “upper echelon,” probably the commune chief. He knew this “for a certainty” having learned it from his cousin who had attended the incident but “had not dared break the statues.” It happened at the time of the monks being defrocked and the cooperatives established. He knew nothing more about the destruction of the statues.

Ms. Guissé had a need to know more about

how the units were divided. Mr. Phneou delineated that membership in the large units was on the basis of strength and age with Unit One being the top grade. The large units were broken into subgroups, for example, a women's rice growing unit, a ploughing unit, a men moving earth unit, a children's unit, a men's growing vegetables unit, a fishing unit. Each of these smaller units existed to supply their own larger unit with its needs but not other large units.

Khieu Samphan Defence Counsel Kong Sam Onn was next up with a shotgun range of questions.

First, he had Mr. Phneou detail his jobs from 1975-1976. Mr. Phneou had started as a member of Unit Two working in the rice fields. In 1976, he was promoted to Unit One and put into the cart unit transporting rocks. After eight months, because he was literate, he was assigned to look after the male children. In 1978, a young teacher came to assist him. He held the title of "teacher" during this period. The children's units were divided on the basis of age and sex. His children's unit was known as "the concentration unit" which referred to the

younger children. The older students were at the pagoda and part of a mobile unit. Mr. Phneou had no formal training in teaching but did his best for 2 1/2 to 3 hours a day in the school room and then around 1:30 P.M., the children went off to tend the cows, one cow per child. He rarely gave examinations. His students learned the alphabet but were not good in numeracy. They knew the numbers but not how to add or multiply well. His unit chief came around to observe the class every day or so but he had no other inspectors. Neither did any parents come as they, too, were working. The children could visit their parents in the evening or on the 10th day visiting days.

Teachers and students slept together in a large building. There was no indoor bathroom and they relieved themselves in the fields or forest. If the children got sick, he would keep them in from tending cows, and notify the parents to fetch them and take them to the hospital. "Sometimes the mothers only did candling and the children got better and didn't go to hospital." Once more he answered that the children received the same food rations as adults. They could get their food at the



General overview of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal's courtroom (Photo: ECCC)

communal kitchen and bring it back to the school to eat. The children got cooked rice, fish almost daily, and a piece of pork or beef every ten days while Unit Two only got gruel. He felt there was “no lack of food for the children.” Again, Mr. Pheou related that the unit chief would only reprimand the children when they stole. Sometimes they still stole. The Women’s Unit would inform the unit chief if a child stole. He had also scolded miscreants when they fought or argued with one another.

Mr. Kong then embarked on a tortuous and mainly nonsensical (on the part of both examiner and examinee) sequence of questions and answers perhaps designed to determine the distinction between a cooperative and a unit but which failed in its entirety. Other than Mr. Phneou defining that the terms “dining hall and cooperative are exchangeable,” this dialogue led nowhere. Even Mr. Kong gave up exclaiming: “I am lost.” And so was the audience. Counsel was more effective in eliciting the information that there was a chief for the sub-units which also had a deputy chief and a member who were all engaged in the same work. For the main unit, the chief only monitored and ensured that the work quota was fulfilled.

This marathon brought the testimony of Phneou Yav to an end. Judge Nil Nonn thanked him for his participation in the pursuit of justice and excused him from the stand.

The President then called the reserve witness, Sao Hean. Sao Hean is a rice farmer from Tram Kok. He is married with 8 children. He was efficiently identified and qualified by Judge Nil Nonn who then turned the proceedings over to Co-Prosecutor Travis Farr who began with the narrative that in 1970, “the Khmer Rouge came of the forest to organize the village and sub-districts under militias.” He wanted to know how they did it.

Sao Hean spelled out that they first created the villages and then the communes. By “created” he meant that the Khmer Rouge selected the chiefs,

the deputy chiefs and members of the committees. Then the village chairmen organized the solidarity groups following plans that originated with Angkar. Nobody ever explained to Mr. Sao what Angkar was.

Simplistically, Mr. Sao’s answer to how the schools and hospitals disappeared was to state that they disappeared when “the teachers and doctors were all gone.” Similarly, the wealthy, those who owned lots of paddy land and those who owned large houses also disappeared, “sent away to study.” In this way, he said, ownership was eliminated.

After the fall of Phnom Penh, Mr. Sao could not remember how many evacuees he personally saw arrive from Takeo province. When they divided the population, his unit chief explained to him about the categories and he was put in with “the candidate people” as he had relatives who had worked for Lon Nol. The “full rights people” were treated better than the other groups. Although they all received the same food rations, the “full rights people” were the chiefs of the units and supervised the other people.

When the new people had come, the group chiefs researched to discover who were the soldiers and teachers “who were taken away and never reappeared.” Sao Hean knew this from his personal experience of having the group chiefs, Ta Ech and Cha Neal (spelling?) come and search his house to find out who his elder brother was. Then militia men came and took his brother away. The militias involved were the group chiefs Pang, Ech and Ta Lon.

At this juncture, it was 4:00 P.M., a convenient time the President said to stop for the day, and he adjourned court until 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, February 18, 2015.

Laura Fearn

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? u How did the Khmer Rouge gain power? u The Khmer Rouge Hierarchy u Khmer Rouge Domestic Policies u The Khmer Rouge Security System u Office S-21 (Tuol Sleng Prison) u Khmer Rouge Foreign Policies u The Fall of the Khmer Rouge u The Verdicts of the ECCC.
- ♦ **SCHEDULE:** Monday 2pm-3pm u Wednesday 9am-10am u Friday 2pm-3pm.
- ♦ **VENUE:** Building A, top floor, 3rd room.

Public Forum on the Genocide Education Chher Teal village, Sambo commune, Province on M



of the Khmer Rouge regime at Kampong Prasat Sambo district, Kampong Thom March 3rd, 2015



CAMBODIA'S FAILING MEDICAL SYSTEM

Demosthenes C Reyes

Dear Editor,

It has been less than a year that I have been practising as a surgical oncologist in Central Hospital, but I have been living in Phnom Penh for the past four years as a Christian missionary. Before moving here, I had been practising oncology for the past 30 years in the Philippines. I had my surgical training in a government hospital in Manila and a short surgical fellowship at the Pacific Presbyterian Hospital in San Francisco, California. During the course of my practice here in Phnom Penh, the following are my sad observations regarding the medical system:

- ◆ There is no obvious quality medical standard for all practising medical personnel (doctor and nurses).
- ◆ The medical and nursing curriculums are inadequate to meet international standards.
- ◆ There is no internship program to transition medical students to private medical practice.
- ◆ Domineering, materialistic attitude and lack of compassion of most medical personnel.
- ◆ Religious beliefs and superstition without scientific or medical basis form the foundation of most medical and surgical decisions.
- ◆ Lack of ongoing research on some medical problems and issues affecting the community.
- ◆ Lack of training institutions or training programs on some essential specialties (there is only one cardiac interventionist and one nephrologist in the whole Phnom Penh area).
- ◆ Lack of a governing body that determines the competency and regulates the behaviour of

most medical personnel.

- ◆ The government hospital that should be giving the best medical and surgical treatment is in a deplorable condition in terms of staff competency.
- ◆ Lack of competence in handling medical and surgical emergencies in different hospitals.
- ◆ Lack of governing bodies that classify clinics and hospitals in terms of their facilities and competencies in handling medical and surgical cases.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Develop medical and nursing curriculums that will meet the international standards.
- ◆ Create a governing body that will determine the competence and skill of medical students who just graduated from medical schools and regulate the behaviour and competencies of most medical and nursing personnel.
- ◆ Establish a governing body that will classify health care facilities into a primary, secondary and tertiary, depending on their competencies and facilities in handling patients, and would limit hospitals from admitting patients according to their classification.
- ◆ Give qualified students, medical and nursing personnel an opportunity to be trained abroad in different medical and surgical specialties with the agreement that after the training they would come back to Cambodia to train other students and medical and nursing personnel.
- ◆ Develop a residencies program for tertiary hospitals in different medical and surgical

specialties and subspecialties.

- ♦ Create a network of medical emergencies services among hospitals.
- ♦ Create medical facilities and hospitals that specialise in certain medical and surgical conditions, eg, an orthopedic hospital, a heart centre, a cancer centre, a hospital that handles traumas etc.

I hope and pray that changes in the medical system will come soon. But on the other hand, I am fully aware that it will take a lot of political will to change this system, because the problems are deeply rooted.

Demosthenes C Reyes



The Khmer Rouge medics operated on a patient. Some of young Khmer Rouge medics did not attend any course at health school.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE PROSECUTING PROCESS OF THE SUSPECTS IN CASE 003 AND 004

Lim Cheytoath

After an official investigation conducted by co-investigating judges for several years, ultimately, the identities of two among the five suspects who have been accused in Case 003 and Case 004 have been publicly revealed by the international co-investigating judge, Mark Harmon, and put under secret investigation though both of them have not been arrested. Both accused are Meas Mut, accused in Case 003, and In Chem, accused in Case 004. The other suspects were not yet identified by the international co-investigating judge.

Meas Mut is put under secret investigation regarding the crimes stated in Cambodian Legal Code in 1956, crime against humanity, and extreme invasion on the Geneva Convention in 1949. In Chem is put under secret investigation regarding the crimes stated in Cambodian Legal Code in 1956 and the crime against humanity.

Putting both accused under secret investigation is to give a way to the lawyers of the accused to have the right to check documents in the case and participate in the interrogating procedure. This is because there are lawyers appointed by the defense unit for the accused in Case 003 and Case 004. Lawyers who represent those accused are not allowed to check documents in the case or participate in the investigating process. Given the right, the defense lawyer could check the documents at that time. This is to ensure the accused or defendants have the right to get a fair prosecution and to promote the effectiveness of this investigation.

According to the plan of Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), declared on September 30, 2014, it expects that

the investigation of Case 003 and Case 004 could be closed in the first or second quarter of 2015, while the closing order will be announced by the third or fourth quarter of 2015. After announcing the closing order, co-investigating judges will decide whether or not to send the case for prosecution; this depends on the evidence collected in the investigation.

Even though other suspects' identities were not yet revealed, the decision of the international co-investigating judges to reveal the identities of both accused in Case 003 and Case 004 and the admission given to the defense lawyers of both accused to check the documents in the case and participate in the investigation process appears to be a positive forwarding process to bring the responsible persons of the crimes which led to the death of tens of thousands of Cambodians to trial and justice and to provide justice to the victims who have waited for almost 40 years.

Lim Cheytoath

*Please send letters or articles to
Documentation Center of Cambodia
P.O. Box 1110, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Tel: (855) 23-211-875,
(855) 12-996-750
Fax: (855) 23-210-358
Email: truthbunthorn.s@dccam.org
Homepage: www.d.dccam.org*

INTENTIONALLY DESTROY THE EVIDENCE

Samphors Huy

Chronic civil war and the Khmer Rouge regime took away millions of Cambodians' lives. After the war was over, Cambodia has built the memorials and gathered the bones from varied places to put into the memorials or Stupa in the pagodas in the community. The Documentation Center of Cambodia found out that there were 81 memorials dedicated to the victims, 19,733 mass graves, and 196 prisons in all of Cambodia.

Though receiving attention from the Cambodia government and some relevant non-profit organizations in gathering and keeping the memory of the Khmer Rouge regime, the attention to documenting written evidence about the killing in provinces is still limited. As this evidence is still new in age, it is not protected. In addition, due to the economic and social tension, some evidence has become worn or lost.

The question of why we must keep and preserve evidence of the Khmer Rouge regime is a valid one.

These evidences play an important role in memorializing and educating the next generation about the Khmer Rouge regime, as well as aiding scholars around the world who do research about the brutality of this regime. It is hard to believe that such atrocity has happened in Cambodia and other countries. In addition, evidences, including original documents, bones, chains and handcuffs, knots which used to bind the victims, victims' clothes and belongings, and the killing fields are crucial in searching for the truth and for the justice process. If the evidence and witnesses disappear, the next generation will lose the documents and evidence for their research and, in the future, people would hardly believe in this history. Moreover, people

experiencing this regime who are the living witnesses and are able to tell their life story to the next generation are aging. Victims who passed away have lost the opportunity of getting the respect and justice they deserve.

Youk Chhang, executive director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, during his testimony in front of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, strongly encouraged the international communities to return documents taken away from Cambodia back to Cambodia. Youk also spoke on the matter of preserving and valuing those documents by raising the point that every single piece of document is equal to a piece of Angkor Wat Temple's stone. Documents and evidence do not only have an historical value but also is the evidence for the legal process in the court, which is currently debating. Everything depends upon the reasonable and legitimate collection of evidence.

Since ancient times, Cambodians pay respect by not being allowed to touch the corpse or bones of their dead relatives as they believe that those things have spirits and could bring them luck or protect them and their family members. Later, because of poverty, people started to pay less attention to the religion and pay less respect to the spirit of dead people. There are many other factors which make the ethic of the religion practitioners decline. According to studies and research, the evidence which has worn away has been caused by nature and mankind. People at the grassroots level knew that some people pay the respect to their dead relatives by taking the urn to keep and look up to, for example the case of Thmey Pagoda in Siem Reap Province. Some others would dig up the buried corpses to look for items of value, resulting

in the degradation of the bones; some bones were even eaten by cows. In some other cases, they dug up the buried body to build houses or to farm.

DC-Cam's team has been to provinces to collect evidence to organize an exhibition on the Khmer Rouge regime. We found a lot of things considered as evidence. Those consisted of, but not limited to, blindfolding clothes, rope used to bind the prisoners and clothes which were believed to have been kept by the villagers, and some of them have disappeared. At that time, the team questioned why such things have disappeared. The preserver, who was formerly imprisoned before building the memorial to store the bones, said there were clothes, Krama, and other belongings which remained. Then, villagers burned them all

due to the bad smell, and they had no idea why such things should be kept if the owners were no longer alive. A person who stays in the pagoda told us that he did not know that there will be someone to come and look for such things. If known in advance, he would not have burned all of them. Evidences were collected and stored in the memorial or the stupa. They were piled together without being carefully preserved. As a result, clothes and those things got easily broken and damaged. In addition, the piled bones were kept together with clothes, without attention to preservation and appropriate temperature. Eventually, the bones got broken and were fragile. We acknowledge that Cambodia should have an expert to work and research this issue to preserve



Remaining bones and skulls of victims after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed in 1979.

the evidence. Preserving the evidence will facilitate the management and examining the killing location as well as other prisons, located near the urban centers and in provinces which are close to the city.

We discovered that the number of tourists who come to visit genocide sites has been increasing everywhere around the world. For instance, the U.S. Holocaust Museum, displaying the crimes committed by Nazis on the Jews, welcomed 2 million visitors in 2014. Moreover, at the Jewish detention camp in Auschwitz, Poland, there were 1.5 million visitors in 2014. At the same time, most of the visitors who come to Phnom Penh visit Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Cheung Ek Killing Field. According to the director of Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, in the high season,

there are around 1000 visitors. And during the vacation, on a daily basis, the number would be higher than the visitors who visit the National Museum. Based on this number of visitors and researchers, besides Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Cheung Ek Killing Field, we should pay attention to other locations which are close to Phnom Penh. It could include Kraing Ta Chan at Takeo Province.

Indeed, evidential documents, bones, clothes, chains, and handcuffs play a vital role in proving the killing and torturing of our Cambodians. Cambodians must continue their culture in paying respect to their dead ones. One should never dig up the buried corpses or ancient graves or the graves of the Khmer Rouge victims. The residents must

think that those dead bodies were our ancestors or victims of the Khmer Rouge regime who were innocently killed. And, they should be respected and protected. The spirit of the dead could not rest in peace if they were invaded for the second time when we touch their dead bodies. Therefore, the relevant ministries, non-government organizations, donors and Cambodians at the grassroots level must help to preserve such evidence and be trained by experts.

The Documentation Center of Cambodia has collected documents related to the Khmer Rouge regime for the purpose of building the memory and justice as well as to do in-depth research on this regime. This is to benefit Cambodian society and the world as it could help to prevent the crime against humanity and genocide from taking place again.

Samphors Huy



Remaining bones and skulls of victims after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed in 1979.

BECOMING AN ORPHAN BECAUSE OF THE KHMER ROUGE REGIME

Chenda Seang

3 years, 8 months and 20 days was an unforgettable moment in time for Cambodians as the entire population suffered from detention, torture, starvation, forced labor and other inhumane actions, conducted by the Khmer Rouge. Even though Democratic Kampuchea or “Khmer Rouge regime” ended about 30 years ago, these events seem new to my mother who lived her life in terror during this regime.

My mother is Ty Sokhay, who was born in Memot District, Kampong Cham Province. Due to the poor living conditions, her parents sent her to live with another family which had a better standard of living. My mother almost forgets her biological parents’ faces as she left them to live with her new family when she was 8 years old. In her new family, there were three adoptive children, and my mother was the second one. Though the three children came from different families, they loved each other as if they were biological siblings. My mother’s living was better as her adoptive parents’ living condition were quite a bit better.

Everything faded when the Khmer Rouge came to power on April 17, 1975. Like other families in Cambodia, my mother’s family was evacuated from her home village to Loa Krapoan Village, one among other villages in Memot District. At that time, people were not allowed to take any valuable possessions, except their daily

belongings, including clothes and some food.

Along the way, my mother saw some people crying when they were looking for their lost family members. Upon her arrival at Loa Krapoan Village, Angkar assigned my mother to work in a female unit, while her elder sister was assigned to work in another female unit, which was the special unit. Her adoptive parents were assigned by Angkar to look after children as they were aging. Angkar could



(From left to right): My mother and her younger brother

not assign them any other tasks. Her younger brother was sent to a child unit to pick up animal dung and perform other tasks. My mother could not meet her parents and siblings though they were living in the same village. At that time, she missed them and would love to meet with her parents and siblings, yet it was impossible for her as she had to stay at the mobile unit. Later, Angkar sent my mother to farm. After living and working in this village for two to three months, my mother heard that Angkar moved her parents and siblings to another village.

It was this time when my mother felt so lonely. It was a feeling of a female child who had never received love from her biological parents; in addition, her new parents had to leave without knowing when they could meet again. My mother's living turned out to be very hard. She had to live alone, and Angkar assigned her so much work that she did not have time to rest. Moreover, there was not sufficient food to eat. Angkar gave just a bowl of watery gruel. Though being forced to perform harsh labor and provided insufficient food, no one dared complain or murmur as they were afraid of death. One day, when my mother was transplanting in the field, she saw a spy lead away a man who stole tamarind to eat. Then, my mother knew that Angkar killed that man by accusing him of being disloyal to Angkar. Since knowing and hearing of this event, my mother felt even more frightened; she then remained silent. She could only follow what Angkar assigned her to do. At night, no one dared discuss any bad things about Angkar as they were afraid their discussion would be heard, and they would be reported to Angkar. If Angkar realized that one spoke ill about Angkar, one would be taken away by Angkar and later be killed. One night, while all the mobile unit members were asleep, my mother witnessed the spy led 7 to 8 people by blindfolding them to the jungle at the back of the village. The next morning, my mother

acted as if she knew nothing and worked as usual though she was so frightened. Since then, my mother became even more worried about her safety.

In the beginning of 1976, the Khmer Rouge started to kill people in the village; a majority of the villagers were sent by Angkar to the battlefield to fight against Vietnamese soldiers. People who were killed were accused by Angkar of being disloyal or betraying Angkar. In addition, my mother was one among the group that Angkar targeted to smash (kill). Every day, my mother and other villagers were ordered to sit in line in the village. At first, my mother had no clue why they were ordered to do so. Later, she realized that Angkar intended to kill her and others. But because of the tension at the Cambodia-Vietnam border between the Khmer Rouge soldiers and the Vietnamese soldiers, Angkar delayed its killing plan. As a result, my mother's life was saved.

Later, Khmer Rouge evicted my mother from Loa Krapoan Village to Sre Kak Village. During her journey, she tried her best to search for her parents and siblings. However, she got no information about them. Being frightened of being killed by Angkar, my mother had to move forward. Her face was pale, and she was speechless. After arriving at a village which was unknown to her, she and other villagers stayed in an empty house. While she was sleeping, everyone was packing their belongings and running out of the house. Seeing this, my mother did the same and followed the crowd. Later, she realized that newly dead corpses were buried at the back of the house.

Upon her arrival at the new village, Angkar appointed my mother to join a mobile unit. Day by day, my mother lived her life with terror, loneliness and despair. She had no idea when the prison without walls era would end; so that she could reunite with her family members. One day, Angkar called females in the mobile unit for a meeting.

Angkar stated, “Comrades! Please stop worrying about the clothes matter as Angkar would provide all comrades new clothes. Comrades need not waste time to have the clothes cut.” Hearing so, everyone applauded, for they were excited about getting new clothes. Because my mother was not close to the unit chief, she was not given new clothes. Only the one who was close to him/her would be given the clothes. Still, my mother did not feel jealous of them. She kept working as usual. Later, she realized that those clothes had belonged to people that Angkar had taken to be killed last night. Knowing this fact, she doubled her worry. She thought that Angkar would take her to kill one day.

In the beginning of 1977, Angkar continued evacuating my mother from one village to another. At the end of the day, she reached Suong Village. At that time, it was a journey with no direction for her. During the journey, she saw corpses along the way. Though seeing such scenes, she still kept moving on as she had to follow Angkar’s instruction. Upon her arrival at Suong Village, Angkar made her stay near Vihear Kpuos Pagoda, and she kept searching for her family. Villagers told her that if she would love to find her parents and siblings, she may need to go to Prey Veng Province because people from a variety of places were all sent to Prey Veng. Hearing this, she desperately wanted to go to Prey Veng Province to look for her parents and siblings, yet it was impossible for her as Angkar tasked her to plant potatoes near the rubber farm. She dared not run away or complain about what Angkar had assigned her to do because she was afraid of being killed by Angkar. Hence, my mother worked on the potato planting every day. One day, after returning from work, she and others went to rest under a tree near the rubber farm. They saw a mass grave filled with corpses. My mother, having seen such things several times, lost her hope to be reunited with her family members. From time to time, more and

more were killed by the Khmer Rouge.

In 1978, due to the tension between liberated soldiers and Khmer Rouge soldiers, my mother decided to flee from Suong village and head to Prey Veng Province, aiming to look for her parents and siblings. After days of journey, she eventually arrived at a village in Prey Veng Province whose name she does not remember. An aunty allowed my mother to temporarily stay with her. She advised my mother not to go out because the Khmer Rouge often came to this village to gather the young and send them to the battlefield. Hearing this, my mother dared not go anywhere, but stayed in the house. However, a few days later, as the house owner had told her, the Khmer Rouge came to the village to gather the young and send them to the battlefield.

Before the arrival of the Khmer Rouge, the house owner told my mother to hide herself in a dark place at the back of the house in order not to be seen by the Khmer Rouge. Then, she opened the door and window because if she kept them closed, Angkar would suspect and come into the house to check. Arriving at the village, Angkar called all villagers to come out of their houses in order to enable them to check whether there were any young remaining in the village. Angkar shouted: “Angkar needs male and female youths to serve as spies.” Then, a villager stood out and exclaimed: “We do not have more young, for Angkar has sent all of them to the battlefield; none of them have returned to the village.” Next, Angkar went back without saying a word. My mother felt relieved; what was unexpected for her was that she got the information that her parents were evacuated to this village. She did not know whether this was true or not. Then, she went to search for her parents. As she had dreamed of, she met her parents, who were living in a cottage at the end of this village. Yet, her siblings did not stay with them. However, my mother kept searching for her siblings’

information. She got no information about them. Staying with her parents for quite a while, my mother decided to continue living in this village as she was afraid of being caught by Angkar. A few days later, there were Khmer Rouge soldiers headed to the village where my mother lived. Seeing that, a villager shouted out: “Khmer Rouge headed to our villager to arrest and kill our villagers! Hurry and run away!” Next, all villagers, in panic, fled. Because of the chaotic situation, my mother was separated from her parents again. She kept running with the crowd and ran into the jungle. They, then, freed themselves from the Khmer Rouge. My mother, once again, lived separately from her parents. In the jungle, she stayed with a couple who had a small baby. They asked my mother to look after the baby. They loved my mother. At night, no one dared talk or build a fire; they were afraid that the Khmer Rouge would know. If the Khmer Rouge knew that they were in the jungle, they would be in big trouble.

Later, my mother knew that her parents were taken away by Angkar. She desperately wanted to return back to the village, yet the villagers in the jungle forbid her from returning as it was so dangerous. A few days later, Angkar sent her parents and other villagers to a location which they had set for killing them. Before the killing, the Khmer Rouge played the loudspeaker in order not to let the victims’ voices be heard when they were killed. Fortunately, her parents could survive as the Vietnamese soldiers entered Cambodia at the end of 1978. After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, my mother could be reunited with her parents and siblings. There were none who had disappeared. All of them returned to their home village. Though my mother could survive the Khmer Rouge regime, she still felt terrified as she witnessed Angkar kill so many people. Those events still remain in her memory. My mother hopes that Cambodia will achieve justice and reconciliation

through bringing the Khmer Rouge leaders to trial. Moreover, my mother really appreciated that Duch, the chief of Tuol Sleng Prison was sentenced to life imprisonment, and the case 002 is currently proceeding. This is not only a scar in my mother’s life, but it is also the painful experience that she would love the young generation to learn and not to forget, in order not to let this atrocity reoccur again in Cambodia.

Chenda Seang

SIGNIFICANCE OF GENOCIDE EDUCATION

- ◆ *Your questions empower and give meaning to those who have suffered. Asking your parents and grand-parents about the Khmer Rouge will further the conciliation of the Cambodian nation.*
- ◆ *Teaching children about the Khmer Rouge regime means teaching students the difference between good and evil and how to forgive. Broken societies must know their past in order to rebuild for their future.*
- ◆ *Teaching children about the history of the Khmer Rouge regime, as well as stimulating discussion between children and their parents and grand-parents about what happened, are important to preventing genocide both in Cambodia and the world at-large.*

MY GRANDMOTHER'S DESTINY DURING THE POL POT REGIME

Chivorn Sok

My grandmother is Chem Yai, currently 69 years old, who was born in Kampong Svay Village, Kampong Svay Commune, Serei Sophorn District, Battambang Province (nowadays, Banteay Meanchey Province). Her father's name is Chem Yon (passed away), and her mother's name is Laok Yuk (deceased). My grandmother has four siblings (2 brother and 2 sisters). She is the second child of the family. In 1970, my great-grandfather was a farmer, while my great-grandmother was a seller in the market to raise 4 children. One year later, my grandmother got married with my grandfather, Chey Samoeun (deceased) who was born in 1945 in Kampong Speu Province and later moved to Serey Sophorn District, Battambang Province in 1960. After being married for two months, my grandfather passed the administrative official position and served at the military camp in Aur Bek Ka-am in Phnom Penh.

This made my grandmother leave her home village and live with her husband. In June, 1972, my grandmother gave birth to her daughter, my mother. My grandfather loved his wife and daughter very much. He never let my grandmother face any difficulties after they got married. On April 17, 1979, after the Khmer Rouge won over the Lon Nol soldiers, the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom

Penh and ordered people to leave Phnom Penh for three days by claiming that the U.S. would drop bombs in the city. The Khmer Rouge added that people need not take many belongings as they would not leave for long. They should not lock their houses, too. Knowing that the situation was not good, my grandfather hurried to meet with his wife and daughter. He saw many Lon Nol soldiers. Upon his arrival at his house, with no hesitation, my



My grandfather, Chey Samoeun

grandfather took all of his military clothes to burn and changed into civilian clothes. This was not to let the Khmer Rouge know about his background. My grandfather advised my grandmother to pack some dried food and money to take with her. Then, they hurried to leave. At that moment, my grandmother cradled my mother, while my grandfather carried the belongings, following the evacuation orders of the Khmer Rouge. He saw soldiers and other peoples' dead bodies along the way.

Kids were crying as they got lost from their parents. Carts, motorbike carts and tricycles filled the road. Everyone was frightened and worried.

My grandparents were evacuated to Kampong Thom Province in June, 1975. They lived in a commune called Krayea Dang Kdar Commune. Later, the Khmer Rouge started to build cottages from small trees for the villagers. Thatch was put

together to form the roof. Both of my grandparents had to work differently. Their daughter was taken to be looked after by the elderly women. Angkar sent my grandfather to work at an other location outside the cooperative. He could return home once every ten days. My grandmother was not sent to work at the location outside of the cooperative. She worked near her cottage and other nearby areas. Every day, my grandmother got up at dawn, at around 4 am, and she had to perform tasks from 10 to 12 hours. She could get only two meals per day. Approximately four months later, my grandfather got malaria because he worked at the hill site.

Then, Angkar sent him to be cured at Taing Krasang Hospital. On the same night, Comrade Sary, who lived in the same cooperative as my grandfather, told him that my grandmother was giving birth at the cottage. Being worried, though being sick, he left the hospital and went to see his wife that night. The next day, they did not see him at the hospital, Angkar came to look for him at his

cottage, and they did find him at that cottage. My grandfather was sent to work at an other place as Angkar assumed that he had recovered, for he could return to his cottage. Just two days later, my grandfather's sickness became serious, which caused him to faint when he was working.

Angkar assigned Sary, who worked with my grandfather, to drive the ox-cart to take him to the hospital. Unfortunately, my grandfather passed away mid-way to the hospital. Receiving this news, my grandmother felt so painful. She had to bear not to cry as Angkar forbid everyone from expressing their sorrow or happiness. Not obeying the rule, one would be taken to be re-educated. After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge on January 7, 1979, my uncle, who was born during the Khmer Rouge regime, died of disease. This pain still remains with my grandmother who currently is a widow.

Chivorn Sok



The wedding of my grandfather, Chey Samoeun, and my grandmother, Chem Yai

WHY WAS I FOUND GUILTY?

Sopheha Chou

My experience during the Pol Pot Regime

Many writers always wrote: "There is a fine line after the rain." Yet, to my poor motherland, Cambodia, after the war ended in 1975, there were only the houses, schools, and public buildings, which were almost entirely destroyed. There was the grief of separating from beloved siblings. Children were separated from mothers; wife was separated from her husband. This image always remained in Cambodians' minds. Mass graves and bone piles, resulting from war, filled the nation.

Such pain did not only happen to the elderly, youths or children, but also the new born infant who just opened his eyes to see the world for just one minute. Everyone endured the suffering.

On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge completely captured Phnom Penh. City people expressed excitement and hoped that this reign would bring no oppression or corruption. People would be able to live in peace. In particular, they would escape from war, causing the Khmer militias blood to fill this motherland. This war was the result of two political ideologies. The war erupted between the Khmer people. Each side was greedy for power and position.

The hope and pure smile of those innocent city people faded as soon as Pol Pot commanded them to leave the city to live in the countryside. The order replaced people's hope and smile with grief and tears.

I was a youth, studying at Chbar Ampeou High School. I was living with my uncle and aunt near the Russian Hospital. I left home and joined with the crowd, consisting of a hundred thousand people. This heart breaking scene happened in front of me: patients in the hospital were forced to

leave though they could not walk properly; they had no relative to help them. Some patients died along the way. Painful exclamations were everywhere, resulting from the separation from the beloved mother, husband and children. I was also separated from my beloved flower garden as well as my beloved high school, where I was supplied with knowledge. It helped me to become a resourceful human in the future.

I kept asking myself if my bright future which I always expected would end? In the afternoon, my family members reached a glass factory. Here, I saw Khmer Rouge soldiers lead republic regime soldiers in lines. I had no idea where they would be led to. Among those war defeated soldiers, I knew one of them ; it was Nop Nem, wearing sky blue pants and a light pink checked t-shirt and carrying a small bag on his back. He was walking quietly, following the other soldiers. His eyes kept staring at the crowd to find his siblings, wife and children.

Being so shocked with this view, I was grabbed by someone and ordered:

Stop! Comrade, stop!

I turned to see the voice's owner. I was stunned as I saw two black clothed soldiers. Both of them were wearing black clothes, with the black pants rolled up to their knees, and car tire shoes and armed with AK guns.

What's up, Bang?

Are you, comrade, a soldier?

I... I am just a student, Bang!

If a student, why does the comrade have the soldier's bag?

I started to realize that I had a soldier's bag, which I used to store my books, with me on my back.

Bang! This is just my school bag.

Both of them checked my back by dropping all the things inside on the pavement. They then picked up my school identification card to see it and said:

Here, there is no high school, but the field and farmland. Now there are no diplomas, but diplomas gained by practical experience! It will be earned at the worksite. Comrade should no longer carry this bag as it is useless.

After saying so, both of them kicked my books into the field and took away that bag. At the evening, my aunt, uncle, their three small children and I arrived at Kou Creek. We stayed there for one night.

That night, the pain filled voices were everywhere. The ill elders and children died one after another as they had been walking under the unbearable April sun for the entire day. Some victims' family members used a knife, while some others used a stick to dig out the earth near the pond to bury the dead bodies. Some dead bodies were left under a Sangke tree.

The next morning, the evicted city people and my family were continuously forced to move forward. Along the way, from Kou Creek, I saw lots of soldiers corpse's. It was so grieving. All the dead people were Khmer. I really pitied those dead people as they had never asked for anything for themselves, their wives, siblings and relatives. They could do nothing besides peacefully laying under the sun's heat. Their blood filled the earth, telling other Cambodians not to fight against their own citizens again. This could only be disastrous to them. People died because of the war. Both you and I did not like war.

My aunt led me and my three small cousins to walk under the dryweather for two days and three nights. We, then, arrived at Chambak Community. Even as we reached here, we were still faced with grief. My cousins were thirsty, but I could

not find clean water for them as the dead bodies floated along the water sources. Some source had less dead bodies, while others had more. The wells in the community were all broken. I went to get water to cook from a small puddle where there was no corpse. Even though the water taken from that source was not pure, we had to drink it to stop the thirst. I stayed at Chambak for a night. People celebrated a ceremony, which was unknown to me, here. I saw the red banners were installed everywhere. There was also the sound from the loudspeakers, yelling: "Bravo the revolution and the defeat of the imperialists!" I thought to myself: what was the revolution? Who was the imperialist? Both sides were all innocent Cambodians who lived under war.

The next day in the afternoon, I arrived at Tnaot Village where my aunt's home village was. Here, I felt a bit more relieved as my aunt met with her cousins, and we had proper shelter and food, which was better than during our journey. In the next day, I said goodbye to my aunt to leave for my home village, located in Suong Commune, Tbaung Khmum District, Kampong Cham Province.

I travelled on a bicycle along with the crowd who were heading to their home villages. Along the way, there were not so many people. On the back seat of my bicycle, I loaded a package of clothes, consisting of two pairs of clothes, a Krama given by my aunt, rice, saucepan, and dried fish which my aunt had prepared for me before I left. I rode the bicycle until noon, and I stopped to cook and have lunch under the shade of a palm tree. As soon as the rice was ready, I started eating, yet I saw a youth, of my age, was laying his head on a small package under the Sangke tree. A moment later, he got up and sat there with a grieved and exhausted facial expression. I called and waved him to come near me.

Would you like to join me? (He seemed happy with my question.)

Thank you! But, you seem to have very little food.

Though it is little, we could share. In the evening, I will cook more as I have quite a lot more rice.

After finishing the meal, we started to ask each other. I started first:

Where are you travelling to? Where are your parents? Do you have any siblings?

I have no idea as I have been staying in Phnom Penh since I was very young. My father passed away in the battlefield at Taing Kork a long time ago. My mother served at a house near Tuol Tompong Market, while I stayed at the pagoda.

I continued:

What is your name? What are your parents' names?

I am Ven Makara. Staying at the pagoda, I was called Ah Krui.

He asked me back:

How about you? What is your name? Where is your home village?

I told him about myself. But, I did not tell him my original name; I told him just my name at school.

So, where do you decide to go?

I have no idea. I do not know where my relatives are.

Why don't you go with me?

I would join you; at least, we have company. Yet, I have no rice to cook.

Along the way, we kept talking. We took turns sitting on the front seat of the bicycle. I did not usually sit at the front as he was bigger than me, and he guaranteed to be the rider. Since then, we started understanding each other, and, at last, we became good friends. Both of us had no knowledge about the direction. We kept asking others until we crossed a small river. We then rode until Dey Ith. We continued to Neak Loeung, crossed the river to Prey Veng, and continued our journey to Kampong

Cham Province. Both of us rode on a boat rowed by a small child. Arriving at the other side, I gave money to the boat owner. That child opened his eyes widely and said:

Here, we do not use money. We exchange commodity instead of money.

I had no valuable thing to exchange.

Would you take the shirt?

Yes, I would.

I untied the package to take a shirt to give to the boat owner. After taking the bicycle from the boat, we continued our journey.

Ah Kara, let me sit at the front!

No need! I am not yet tired.

Both of us rode the bike through villages, fields, forests, and, at night, we arrived at a damaged pagoda whose entrance it was written "Dey Doh Pagoda". Here, there a number of people rested. Both of us also rested here with others. Because we had no container to take water to drink as others did, we took our bike to the river front to have a bath and take some water for cooking.

After we finished our dinner, we, together, went to Dey Doh Pagoda to look for a place to rest as it was dark. I saw a tree with numbers of branches. I, then, asked Makara to sleep under it because there was no one resting under that tree.

Ah Kara! Let's sleep under that tree!

Yes! Good idea! It has branches which could protect us from dew, and there is no one at rest there.

So, you should clean the place, and I am going to look for some branches and leaves to lie on.

I was looking for some leaves and branches, when all of a sudden, Ah Kara ran to me with fear.

Ah... Ah Phea! Do not sleep there! There are so many dead bodies behind the tree. I just stepped on them this moment.

Are you sure? Maybe someone else also sleeps there!

Of course! When I unintentionally stepped on them, I apologized. Later, I used my hand to clean the place. I touched their bodies. Their bodies had no heat; they were freezing.

What on earth do you have to be frightened of dead bodies?

I was speechless as I never thought that he was scared of ghosts that much. I lighted up the lighter and saw a dead body of a 16 to 17 year-old female. She was skinny, and, perhaps, she was ill for several days. She maybe just passed away this morning as her body was not swollen and smelly, yet. Her family could have had no ability to bury her

Korki Dey It. Here, the Khmer Rouge categorized people in groups in order to send them to another province or district. They did it by writing on big pieces of banners to let people know where they should go.

At Korki Community, there were a hundred thousand people. Cars and motorbikes were left out everywhere, even at the riverfront. Sitting down to take a rest at the stump of a Korki tree with Ah Kara, I suddenly heard the sound of the loudspeaker producing: "People who go to Kampong Cham Province, please board the ship immediately as it is leaving soon!"



People in a mobile unit were planting rice during Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)

as she was just covered with the curtain clothes and left here. I decided to move the sleeping place as Ah Kara requested. At this Dey Doh Pagoda, there was no monk. The Vihear (temple) was destroyed by the bombs and bullets during the fight. Both of us went to sleep on the concrete stairs that remained. That night, we could not sleep well as we had no mosquito net, and many mosquitoes bit us. The next morning, we started the journey. We rode our bike until the afternoon and arrived at

I speedily carried my package, while Ah Kara hurriedly took the bike to the riverfront and lifted it up to load on the ship. Cars and motorbikes were not allowed to be loaded. The ship started leaving the port, but I had no idea where it would lead us to. Lots of dead bodies were floating along the river. We were on the ship until 10 pm. We then arrived at Svay Sach Mountain. The ship entered the port. At Svay Sach Mountain, Angkar appointed one to cook for the evacuees. I had no plate to put the rice

on. I had only a saucepan. Ah Kara went to take soup, while I went to the kitchen. I found a few palm leave containers. I asked for one to pack the rice. After eating, we went to have a bath in the river and found a place to sleep. Ah Kara was waiting for our bike which was unloaded from the ship. That night, both of us slept in the field and were soaked with the dew. Being exhausted and starved as we could not sleep at Dey Doh Pagoda the previous night, I slept tight without knowing that the mosquitos bit me.

In the morning, I headed to Phsar Suong Community. At noon, I rested and cooked. Suddenly, the elders in that district came to asked both of us. We told them about what had happened. They advised us that if anyone asked us, we had to tell him/her that we could learn very little and were formerly workers, and we should never mention the word police or soldier if you want to survive. They left us. I continued the journey. I arrived at Tnal Torting. We rode the bike headed toward Tonle Bet but we got lost. Out of nowhere, there was a motorbike following us. The driver shouted:

Stop! Comrades, stop!

I turned back and saw that there were two black clothed Angkar members. I asked Ah Kara to stop as ordered.

Where are both comrades going to?

We go to Suong!

What? Going to Suong, why you go this way?

My apolgy, Bang! I do not know the road.

They stared at both of us.

Are both of you soldiers?

No. We are students.

They remained silent. They, then, checked my package and told me:

Going to Suong, comrade may go along this way for approximately 7 kilometers.

I was so delighted as they did not put any punishment on us. At night, I arrived at Phsar Suong

Community. Here, the Khmer Rouge did not allow us to enter the house. We were ordered to stay with many other evacuees outside. Ah Kara asked me:

Ah Phea! Is here your home village?

Sure! Riding along this way for just 500 meters more, we would reach my house.

Hearing that, Ah Kara could not stay still. He sat and stood interchangeably.

Just that distance, why don't they let us go?

So what? They do not allow us to go.

A moment later, there was a person delivering food to the evacuees, one each. At around 8 pm, my mother came to look for me. Seeing each other, my mother and I burst into tears. It represented our missing as we were separated for years.

When did you arrive?

I arrived since the evening. How do you know that I came here?

I knew it from the food deliverer. You looked familiar to him, but he dared not ask. He, then, went to tell me.

Mom! Tomorrow, I will be sent to Dambe District.

My mother cried again. It represented her deepest love to me.

It has been five years that you were away from me. During these five years, I was always waiting for you to come to stay near me. Unfortunately, my hope faded. We are separated as Angkar ordered. We could never complain.

I am always hoping that coming from a distance, I could reunite with my parents and siblings. In contrast, I had to live separately from them.

A group of spies asked my mother to return home. The next day, many ox carts were used to transport all the evacuees to the forest and isolated areas. Ox walked forward to move the cart, causing a cloud of dust. People were almost breathless. Along the field, there were only the dead tree

stumps and dried land. This view was so grieving. I pitied my motherland very much. The ox carts arrived at Pneu Village. The Khmer Rouge stopped to wash the ox. Ah Kara and I rested under a tamarind tree. Suddenly, I saw my elder sister was riding the bike to take me a basket of some rice and dried dishes. She was sweaty. She cried, tapped my head, and said:

Have a safe journey. If Angkar ordered you to do anything, just follow. You must remember that and do not complain.

Yes, I will remember forever.

And, you and your friend must look after and remind each other not to commit any wrongdoing to the Angkar's regulations. You must remember.

Yes, Bang.

Now, the ox carts continued the journey. My elder sister kept following the cart which Ah Kara and I boarded on. She told us not to forget her words. The ox cart moved us away from my elder sister. It was further and further until we did not see each other. The cart went through the rubber farm. Then, we stopped to have lunch here. I unpacked the food my elder sister gave to me to eat with Ah Kara. There was fried chicken. I ate and cried at the same time as I missed my mother and elder sister. Tears filled my eyes. I was confused as I had been away from my mother and sister for years, but we could meet for just a very short time. We did not even talk to each other properly. Who can stand such a situation? Ah Kara tried to reassure me.

Ah Phea! We are men, so we must not cry over the pain. You must be strong and struggle forward.

All the evacuees, including both of us, continued the journey. I was so sad as I was still thinking of that separation. War has ended, why the suffering still happened on all Cambodians? When will my mother's tears stop? From today onward, these tears may be converted into blood. Who knows? One had to be separated from his/her

beloved one. The suffering was even bigger than the pain of losing a dead child.

The ox carts paused at Tep Nimet Village as it was night. At this village, Angkar also prepared food for us as in Phsar Suong. Both of us slept on a bamboo bed in front of a villager's house. I slept so tight as I was exhausted. This was because I ran out of my tears when I met with my mother and elder sister. I could release some of the pain as such a situation did not only happen to my family, and it did not only happen to the city people but every Cambodian in this entire country.

The next day in the afternoon, the ox carts arrived at Chey Sambath Village, Dambe Commune. It is the new place for city people. Here, Angkar assigned Ah Kara and me to live in a house with 12 other people. However, Angkar did not assign us into groups or units. They were waiting for other evacuees from other locations. They just assigned people to clear the grass and clean the living places.

5 days later, all evacuees from every location arrived. Angkar categorized people into groups and units. Those who came with their family members and relatives were put to live together. Those who came alone were put together. Both of us were put to live with two other people who had no relatives. Four of us kept one another as our own biological siblings. Four of us decided to change our original names and backgrounds in order not to let others know us. Among all of us, there was a senior who formerly was a sophomore. He was voted by us to be our eldest brother as he would be able to give three of us advice.

Peng Mengsie changed to Peng

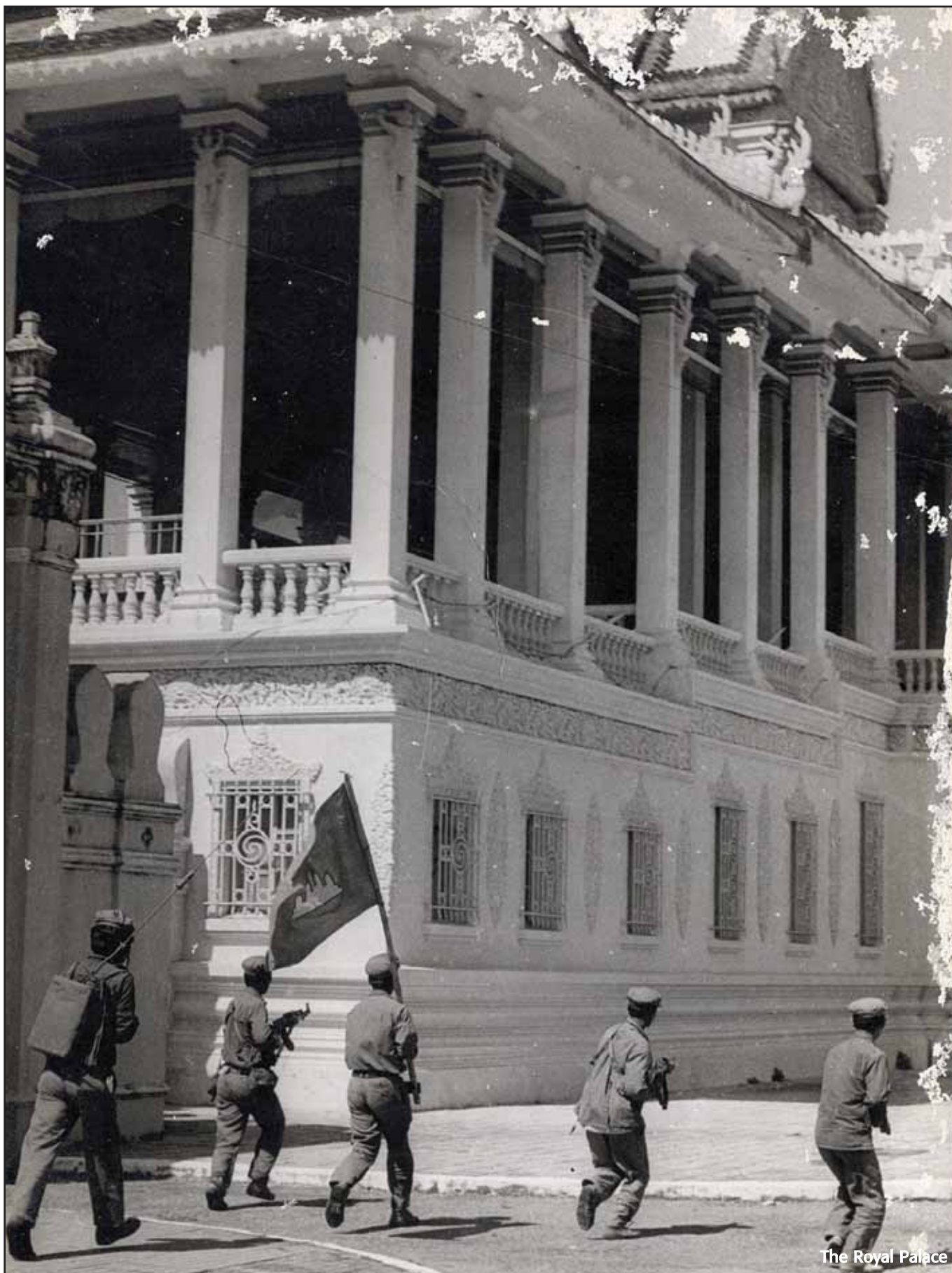
Ven Makara changed to Pak

I, Chou Sophea, changed to Ping

Tiv Songpor changed to Pen

(To be continuos)

Sophea Chou



The Royal Palace

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.dccam.org.

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