

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Documentation Center of Cambodia
PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT (PA)

KHMER ROUGE 'TRAPEANG THMA' DAM CONSTRUCTION
Interview series: Interview No. 5

Interview with Chhit Yoeuk, male, age 64
Position during the Khmer Rouge: Chief of economics/logistics section
Place of birth: Char Leu Village, Toek Cho Commune,
Preah Netr Preah District, Banteay Meanchy
Current Address: Sorya Village, Kob Commune,
O-Chrov District, Banteay Meanchy
Date of interview: June 19, 2011
Interviewed by Long Dany, Transcribed by Chhunly Chhay
Translated by Farina So
Number of pages: 68 (Khmer), 46 (English)
Duration of interview: 2h:41:50

Dany: Uncle! We come from the Documentation Center of Cambodia. The Center works to record and compile a history of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979). We publish the collected materials into a magazine for the younger generation and researchers. We have come to Preah Netr Preah to record accounts related to Ang Trapeang Thma and over the past week I met about 70 people. I met with Uncle La-Mut, Uncle Seng, and Uncle Chhuong.

Yoek: Was it *Ta* Chhuong in Daun Chreng?

Dany: Exactly! And Uncle Suoy...

Yoek: I see.

Dany: We met lots of people and Uncle Suoy wanted me to meet you because you know a lot and remember more than him. Did you work in the logistics section? In the economic section?

Yoek: Yes, I worked in that section. But I was also removed to carry Natural Fertilizer (number 1). I did not know what kind of mistake I had made. So when people from the Southwest zone came, I was assigned to collect empty containers for the economic section because the people within the section were illiterate. So with my moderate knowledge, I helped them out.

Dany: Okay, so I'd like to begin the interview now.

Yoek: No problem!

Dany: Uncle, first I'd like to know your name.

Yoek: My name is Chhit Yoeuk.

Dany: Chhit Yoeuk?

Yoek: Chhit Yoeuk.

Dany: How old are you now?
Yoeuk:I am sixty-four.
Dany: Sixty-four. Where were you born?
Yoeuk:I was born in Char Leu Village, Cho Leu Commune.
Dany: Toek Cho? In which district is this located?
Yoeuk:In Preah Netr Preah District.
Dany: Preah Netr Preah District.
Yoeuk:But it was in Stung Kralanh during that time.
Dany: I see. In which province is this located?
Yoeuk:In Battambang.
Dany: Battambang. What is your current address?
Yoeuk:I live in Sorya Village now.
Dany: In what commune?
Yoeuk:Kob Commune.
Dany: Kob?
Yoeuk:Kob.
Dany: Korb?
Yoeuk:Kob. K.O.B.
Dany: In which district?
Yoeuk:O-Chrov District.
Dany: And which province?
Yoeuk:Banteay Meanchey Province.
Dany: Banteay Meanchey Province. What is your wife's name?
Yoeuk:Vong Vy.
Dany: Vong Vy. How old is she now?
Yoeuk:Forty-eight.
Dany: Where did she come from?
Yoeuk:Okay, let me tell you. She was born in Takeo, but in Sangkum Reastr Niyum. Her father was a teacher. She moved to Bavil when she was little and has lived there since then.
Dany: How many children do you have?
Yoeuk:I have three children.
Dany: Three children? How many sons? How many daughters?
Yoeuk:Two daughters and one son.
Dany: Two daughters and one son. Are they all adults?
Yoeuk:One of them is pursuing his bachelor degree in Svay [Sisophon].
Dany: Two daughters and one son? What is your occupation now?
Yoeuk:I grow rice.
Dany: Besides growing rice, what else do you do?
Yoeuk:Besides that, I look after someone's house.
Dany: Whose house is it?
Yoeuk:It belongs to an organization. The PFD Organization.

Dany: What is it?
Yoeuk:PFD.
Dany: PFD?
Yoeuk:PFD.
Dany: What does the organization do?
Yoeuk:The organization helps alleviate poverty.
Dany: Uncle, what is your father's name?
Yoeuk:His name is Cheam.
Dany: Keam?
Yoeuk:Cheam. Ch.ea.m.
Chhunly: What is his last name?
Yoeuk:I do not remember his last name. But I still remember my grandfather's name, *Ta Chhit*. However, I do not remember my great grandfather.
Dany: Okay. Is your father still alive or did he pass away?
Yoeuk:He died.
Dany: I see. What about your mother?
Yoeuk:My mother is Veun.
Dany: Her name is Veun?
Yoeuk:She died.
Dany: She died. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
Yoeuk:Two.
Dany: Two?
Yoeuk:I am the youngest.
Dany: So you have another sister?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: What is her name?
Yoeuk:Her name is Chhit Yoeun.
Dany: Where does she live now?
Yoeuk:In [her] native village, Char Leu.
Dany: In Char Leu. What is your educational background?
Yoeuk:Well, I finished my primary school and then stopped because I did not have money to continue. So I became a monk. After I returned, I studied at a teacher training school and taught students. I tried very hard to learn. I even learned in the refugee camp.
Dany: Where did you study your primary school?
Yoeuk:At Toek Cho School.
Dany: Toek Cho School? What grade were you in?
Yoeuk:Seventh.
Dany: So did you finish your 7th grade?
Yoeuk:After I passed the exam, I did not have any money to continue. I lived far from the secondary school and there was only one school in Battambang, another one in

Provincial Town, and the other one in Kralanh District. We could choose one among these, but my parents did not want me to study.

Dany: When did you pass your exam?

Yoeuk:1958.

Dany: 1958?

Yoeuk:That is right! After I passed, my family did not have money to support my further studies, so I stopped.

Dany: I see. So you became a monk after you stopped in 1958?

Yoeuk:I became a monk later.

Dany: In what year?

Yoeuk: In 1962.

Dany: 1962?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: What pagoda did you stay in?

Yoeuk:In Char Leu Pagoda.

Dany: In Char Leu Pagoda?

Yoeuk:Yes that is right.

Dany: How long did you stay there?

Yoeuk:For three years.

Dany: Did you become a monk or novice?

Yoeuk:I became a monk.

Dany: Did you become a chief monk?

Yoeuk:No. I left the pagoda. I could have stayed there longer if I had wanted.

Dany: When did you leave?

Yoeuk:In 1965.

Dany: Okay. What did you do after you left the pagoda?

Yoeuk:After I left, a school principal in that area asked me to teach children.

Dany: When did you start teaching?

Yoeuk:Well, from 1965.

Dany: In 1965. And then you left?

Yoeuk:Well, I taught for one year and then I left the pagoda. But since they could not find a new teacher, I was asked to help for one more year.

Dany: So you taught since you became a monk?

Yoeuk:That is correct.

Dany: And after you left the pagoda, you still taught for one more year?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: Where did you teach?

Yoeuk:Char Leu School.

Dany: Char Leu School. How many students did you have?

Yoeuk:I taught the 10th and 11th grades.

Dany: 10th and 11th at Char Leu Primary School?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: I just want to clarify. You taught while you were a monk for one year and after you left monkhood, for how long did you teach there?

Yoeuk: One more year.

Dany: One more year? So after you taught, what did you do?

Yoeuk: After I left in 1970 some of the surrounding countryside became part of the liberated zone of the Khmer Rouge.

Dany: After the 1970 coup, did you serve the Khmer Rouge [revolution]?

Yoeuk: Well, when we went into the jungle, they said we had to liberate us from capitalism and feudalism. But some people could enter the Khmer Rouge quickly, while others – such as the village chief – could not.”?

Dany: Were you motivated by those who came to do a propaganda campaign?

Yoeuk: Yes, the Khmer Rouge came and went back and forth every day. This meant that in every 10 days, the Khmer Rouge came daily, while the Lon Nol soldiers came only once.

Dany: Do you remember any of the Khmer Rouge’s names?

Yoeuk: Yes, I do. But they died.

Dany: What are their names?

Yoeuk: Tang Kheun.

Dany: Tang Kheun. Who else?

Yoeuk: Leav Ho.

Dany: What were their positions?

Yoeuk: Chief of Army.

Dany: Where?

Yoeuk: In Siem Reap because in the past, they were all stationed in Siem Reap. This meant Siem Reap was their hideout base to fight the battle.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: But [we] came here because [we] did know what to do.

Dany: Do you remember in which month you joined the Khmer rouge?

Yoeuk: Approximately at the end of 1970.

Dany: Was it end of 1970?

Yoeuk: But it was since it was 1970 when they came to mount the propaganda campaign.

Dany: Since 1970? It was the end of 1970 when you joined them?

Yoeuk: That is correct.

Dany: Could you describe the place where you worked with the Khmer Rouge? Where was that? And what did you do?

Yoeuk: No, because I did not go to many places. Let me tell you. I hid in *Prey Kong Put* Jungle, which is in Kralanh district, but it did not yet reach Srey Snam District.

Dany: What did you do when you stayed in the jungle? And how many people were there?

Yoeuk: Well, a lot of people. But for us as youth, we worked as militia men.

Dany: In what capacity did you serve?

Yoeuk:I worked as both a militia man and a soldier.
Dany: What were your roles and responsibilities?
Yoeuk:My role was to transport materials [food] for soldiers at the front line. The second thing was to join the soldiers and fight.
Dany: So how many militia men were there at the time?
Yoeuk: Well, a lot of them. I think nearly 200 people.
Dany: Nearly 200 for one commune?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: What commune is it?
Yoeuk:During that time, there was no village. They put the militia men in Sangkat 12, Sangkat 13 accordingly.
Dany: Which sangkat did you belong to?
Yoeuk:In Sangkat 12.
Dany: In Sangkat 12, in which district?
Yoeuk:It is in Kralanh District, but I did not know what district the Khmer Rouge called.
Dany: Okay. Who was the chief of the militia?
Yoeuk:His name was Peng.
Dany: Peng! What about you, what was your role?
Yoeuk:I was elected chief of special militia later.
Dany: As a chief of special militia, did you lead the 200 men?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: When did the election take place?
Yoeuk:About 1973.
Dany: In 1973? So what did you do as a chief of the special militia?
Yoeuk:For example, when there was a plan to fight in Samroang and the order said 30 or 20 soldiers were needed, I sent the forces respectively. But the others took turn.
Dany: I see. So when there was a battle, you selected 30 people to go to the battle?
Yoeuk:Yes. They went with other soldiers.
Dany: They went with soldiers?
Yoeuk:That is right.
Dany: And when there was another battle, another 10 or 20 took turn?
Yoeuk:Correct.
Dany: So what did they do besides going to the battle?
Yoeuk:They also built roads and dams.
Dany: Did building the roads and dam happen since 1973?
Yoeuk:Yes, we never stopped.
Dany: Where was the dam?
Yoeuk:The dam was in Kong Put Village. For example, when there was a need to block the water from flowing, we built the dam.
Dany: But you said earlier that the militia men hid in the jungle.
Yoeuk:Yes, in the jungle.

Dany: So you also built a dam in the jungle?

Yoek: We built it to grow potatoes. Although we lived in the forest, we built a house under the trees because we were afraid of jet planes.

Dany: You were afraid of jet planes? So did you have any plan for the people who fled to the jungle? Whether or not they lived in a cooperative?

Yoek: No, no communal eating among people, except some brigades. For example, when a group of soldiers came, those who had houses hosted them.

Dany: So how did you manage all the militia men?

Yoek: No, we did not control people. To put it right, we were like security police in the local village because we needed to secure the areas from Lon Nol soldiers. If the Lon Nol came, we would confront them.

Dany: I see. So in the name of security police, you patrolled the village to see whether there were enemies or bad elements?

Yoek: Correct.

Dany: So beginning in 1973 when you found bad elements among people, what did you do to them?

Yoek: If bad elements were found, we did not do anything. It depended on the army. We did not know what happened because we did not know who they were, so the soldiers would take action.

Dany: So you sent them to the army. You reported to them?

Yoek: Yes. We reported to soldiers what happened in our village.

Dany: Did you ever arrest them and sent to the soldiers?

Yoek: No. I never arrested anyone because the decision was made by the chief. Sometimes they were strict, but I was not strict.

Dany: I see, so it depended on the chief. You were also a chief but you were not strict, were you?

Yoek: No, not strict.

Dany: For special militia, did you control the whole district?

Yoek: Only the whole commune.

Dany: The whole commune. Like you said - Sangkat 12, right?

Yoek: Yes.

Dany: Or what else?

Yoek: There were 12 communes and 13 sangkat. But we were not interested in other sangkat. Especially, we rarely lived in the village.

Dany: What was the name of district chief, for example, the one who managed sangkat?

Yoek: Well, the chief of district at that time...because this was region 5 which meant this region was not in Battambang, so we lived under region 45 in Siem Reap.

Dany: In Siem Reap.

Yoek: 35, 45...

Dany: Yes, it was in region 35.

Yoek: For region 35, they had their own chief of district.

Dany: Yeah, did you know him?

Yoeuk:I know the names of *Ta Sam* and *Ta Doh*. Sam and Doh were not last name or first name.

Dany: Okay. So there were two people: *Ta Sam* and *Ta Doh*?

Yoeuk:Two people.

Dany: Were they chief of district?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: In which district?

Yoeuk:Srey Snam District.

Dany: Srey Snam District?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: So you worked in the territory of Srey Snam District?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: It was not in Kralanh District?

Yoeuk:No. The area was included in Srey Snam District. It was like Kralanh District because, as I observed, bullets and bombs also reached Srey Snam.

Dany: So what about the chief of region? Who was he?

Yoeuk;Well, *Ta Hoeng* was the chief.

Dany: Was it region 35?

Yoeuk:That was another thing, but for region 5, it was *Ta Hoeng*.

Dany: Did *Ta Hoeng* become a chief since 1973?

Yoeuk:Yes, he was in that region. But he worked there for a while and I did not know what went wrong with him, but he was sent to grind rice for a long time until 1975.

Dany: They took him to grind rice?

Yoeuk: Yeah, he grinded and carried rice. This was for those who made mistakes.

Dany: So what did *Ta Hoeng* work in 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, and 1975?

Yoeuk:He worked in Siem Reap.

Dany: In Siem Reap?

Yoeuk:Yes. But his front line was in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey, Thmar Puok. He fought in the battle field often

Dany: Okay. What did he do then?

Yoeuk:He was chief of the region and the army commander, which was like the provincial chief.

Dany: How many people who worked with *Ta Hoeng*?

Yoeuk:I just know *Ta Hoeng* only.

Dany: You know only *Ta Hoeng*! Did you work with him?

Yoeuk:No, not at all. I rarely saw him.

Dany: So you did not meet him in 1973?

Yoeuk:It was hard to meet him because he rarely came. Sometimes when he came, I was not there. I meant if they did not allow us to meet, we could not. If they allowed us to meet, then we could.

Dany: When there was a meeting, did *Ta Hoeng* come?

Yoeuk: I usually joined commune meetings because, as militia men, we were under commune control.

Dany: I see. What was his name?

Yoeuk: It was *Ta Pheng*, but later he became a chief of Phnom Srok.

Dany: Was *Ta Pheng* a chief of Phnom Srok?

Yoeuk: No, that was later.

Dany: But did *Ta Hoeng* come to work in your area?

Yoeuk: Yes, he came. He came with a Jeep car from Siem Reap. He came to check directly. For instance, if there was a plan to fight in Thmar Puok, they would come right away.

Dany: Did he come?

Yoeuk: Yes. Some medics also came.

Dany: When did you leave the jungle?

Yoeuk: In 1975.

Dany: Until 1975?

Yoeuk: We left after the war ended in 1975.

Dany: So you left in 1975?

Yoeuk: Correct.

Dany: So what happened after 1975, what did you do?

Yoeuk: Well, after 1975 militia men were assigned to live in former Lon Nol areas, so

That is why the people were evacuated.

Dany: I see.

Yoeuk: My parents were also evacuated from my village. Everybody had to leave. They did not let us stay in our native village. Or at least they were transferred from village A to village B.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: I was a militia man in charge of economics. I was concerned only for my area, for example, from here to Svay [Sisophon], I just looked after that area.

Dany: After 1975, the Khmer Rouge evacuated people, didn't they?

Yoeuk: Yes, they did.

Dany: Did you decide to evacuate people by yourself or were you ordered to evacuate people?

Yoeuk: The decision was from the top, from other districts. And we, as militia men, had no role in it. We looked after the people because sometimes soldiers wanted to harm people, such as by kicking.

Dany: So you just evacuated people. Where did you go?

Yoeuk: I came to live in Preah Netr Preah District.

Dany: Okay. So you looked after all the militia men in the district?

Yoeuk: No, I came to live in Toek Cho Commune. Later I was selected because we were separated to work in different sections. Some became soldiers. As an older youth, over thirty, I was assigned to work in Preah Netr Preah District Office.

Dany: Okay. When were you selected?
Yoeuk:It was in 1975.
Dany: What month was it?
Yoeuk:During the rainy season, in August or September.
Dany: August or September of 1975?
Yoeuk:That is right.
Dany: Who recruited you to work in the District Office?
Yoeuk:The district officer who came to document my biography. His name was Loeum.
Dany: Loeum?
Yoeuk:*Brother* Loeum.
Dany: Did Loeum document your biography?
Yoeuk:Yes, he did.
Dany: What did they do next?
Yoeuk:They selected the staff among the militia men depending, for example, on how many staff were needed to safeguard the district office.
Dany: What did you do when you moved to the district office?
Yoeuk:I was in charge of the office right away.
Dany: So you were in charge of the district?
Yoeuk:Yes, I took charge of Preah Netr Preah.
Dany: Were you a chief of the district?
Yoeuk:No, in another district.
Dany: Who were the committee of the district?
Yoeuk:They were Loeum, *Ta* Sam Ath, Kho. When brother Loeum was transferred to the regional office, *Ta* Moang came to replace him. *Ta* Moang was on the district committee.
Dany: So was *Ta* Loeum on the district committee?
Yoeuk:Yes, he was.
Dany: And his deputy was *Ta* Sam Ath?
Yoeuk:*Ta* Sam Ath.
Dany: How about Tho?
Yoeuk:No, Kho was in charge of security.
Dany: Was Kho in charge of security?
Yoeuk:Yes! He was in Aviation Military.
Dany: Was Kho alive?
Yoeuk:Where does he live?
Dany: In Beanteay Chhmar. In what village and commune?
Yoeuk:In Thlauk village.
Dany: Thlauk village?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: In Banteay Chhmar Commune. Did he change his name?
Yoeuk:No. Still the same.

Dany: What about his wife?
Yoeuk:She passed away. Her name was Say.
Dany: So she died.
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: So he was in charge of district security?
Yoeuk:His second wife is *Che* [sister] Reth.
Dany: You worked as a chief of the district?
Yoeuk:Yes, I did.
Dany: What did you do as a chief?
Yoeuk:We managed all the materials from the zone or region. We had the statistics and census and people should equal amount of the stuff.
Dany: Where did you distribute?
Yoeuk:We distributed to the communes! For example, one commune could have 3,000 people and another commune 6,000 people, so I needed to distribute to them accordingly and properly.
Dany: How many communes were there in Preah Netr Preah?
Yoeuk:Let me see...Preah Netr Preah Commune, Toek Cho Commune, Prasat Commune, Rohal Commune, Teankam Commune.
Dany: What commune is it [the last one]?
Yoeuk:Teankam.
Dany: Teankam Commune, so five communes in all?
Yoeuk:Toek Cho, Prasat, Oh! Phnom Leap.
Dany: So there is one more, Phnom Leap?
Yoeuk:Yes, Phnom Leap.
Dany: So there are six in total?
Yoeuk:Six communes. Later, they were rearranged.
Dany: Okay. But in the Pol Pot regime, there were only 6. Uncle, when was *Ta Loeum* transferred to the region?
Yoeuk:In 1976.
Dany: 1976?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: Do you remember the month when he moved there? For example, was it during the rainy or dry season?
Yoeuk:Probably during the rainy season. He was accused of a moral offence.
Dany: He committed a moral offence? In what sense?
Yoeuk:Because of love. But he did not have any wife and the woman did not have any husband as well. But he was about 40 years old.
Dany: How old was he?
Yoeuk:Nearly 50 and he did not have a wife. But the top forgave him because he did not have any wife; he was single. They sent him to the region. He had a high position in the party. He used to stay with Khieu Samphan and he was appointed from the

top. Lets say, when you become a district chief and want to appoint someone as a police man, the person will not be easily removed.

Dany: You said he committed a moral offence, do you know with whom? Was she from this area or from Phnom Penh?

Yoeuk:She worked in the same unit, which meant she also worked for the state.

Dany: In which district?

Yoeuk:In Preah Netr Preah District.

Dany: What was her name?

Yoeuk:Well, I cannot recall, I forget completely.

Dany: What did she do?

Yoeuk:She helped with cooking rice and water. They were in love with each other.

Dany: When *Ta* Loeum moved to the region, what did he do?

Yoeuk:After moving there for two months, he drove a car with a regional stamp. We thought that he lost everything, but he became commander of the regional force.

Dany: So he drove a car back...

Yoeuk:He came to work in the region.

Dany: Did he drive a military car?

Yoeuk:Yes!

Dany: What was his role?

Yoeuk:It was hard to ask for someone's position at that time. At the very least he was a chief of regiment.

Dany: In that region?

Yoeuk:Correct.

Dany: So you did not know what month was it in 1976?

Yoeuk:Probably in July or August.

Dany: So who replaced him?

Yoeuk:*Ta* Moang.

Dany: *Ta* Maong?

Yoeuk:Yes, he was on the district committee.

Dany: What did *Ta* Moang do before he came to replace *Ta* Hoeng?

Yoeuk:He worked as a soldier.

Dany: Chief of soldiers.

Yoeuk:The chief of soldiers patrolled in Preah Netr Preah before. He was not the chief. There were many kinds of soldiers such as regional soldiers, zone soldiers. Later he was appointed chief of district.

Dany: So regional soldiers patrolled in Preah Netr Preah?

Yoeuk:No, it was Zone's military.

Dany: Zone's military? In Region 5?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: But he was stationed in Preah Netr Preah.

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: So when *Ta* Loeum moved out, *Ta* Moang became a chief?

Yoeuk:Correct.

Dany: What about you?

Yoeuk:For me, I was in charge of the economic section and the district office. But later they created a commerce office, so that all materials and agricultural products were transported to the office. I was sent to the mobile brigade.

Dany: To the mobile brigade?

Yoeuk:Yes, I worked in the district mobile brigade.

Dany: What year was it?

Yoeuk:Probably early 1976.

Dany: Early 1976?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: Who moved you to the brigade in 1976?

Yoeuk:They came from the region.

Dany: From the region?

Yoeuk:From region 5. It was *Ta Hoeng*.

Dany: *Ta Hoeng*?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: Was he a chief of region 5?

Yoeuk:Yes, he was.

Dany: Who else?

Yoeuk:There were others, but I did not know them. I just knew those who often came because chief of region had no time to go back home, so he also stayed with us in the area in such a bad condition.

Dany: So you only knew *Ta Hoeng*, the chief?

Yoeuk:Yes, I did.

Dany: Did he have any subordinates?

Yoeuk:No.

Dany: Such as *Ta Moang* or *Ta Sam Ath* in the district?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: Who else?

Yoeuk:No I did not know because I went to work in the rice field.

Dany: Did you control Preah Netr Preah District's mobile brigade?

Yoeuk:Yes, I was in charge of the town district, like a provincial town. We had the authority to look after our area.

Dany: So you were a chief of Preah Netr Preah's mobile brigade?

Yoeuk:Yes. I was in charge of the youth mobile brigade in the district.

Dany: How many of them and how old were they?

Yoeuk:Well, about 500-600 people.

Dany: Approximately 500-600 people? What about their ages?

Yoeuk:Most of them were 18 to 25.

Dany: From 18 to 25? Were they male and female?

Yoeuk:No. There were only men.

Dany: Were all men?

Yoeuk:Correct.

Dany: Were they all April 17, base people? Did they live altogether?

Yoeuk:They lived altogether. Some young men who had been evacuated from Phnom Penh were in my group.

Dany: In your group? How did you select them?

Yoeuk:We did not select them. This is like their duty, they have to go as a son. Because middle-aged men live in cooperatives, but young men in their youth had to go to work in mobile brigades.

Dany: What did you do as a chief in early 1976?

Yoeuk:I built a dam and dug a canal.

Dany: So you built a dam and dug a canal?

Yoeuk:Yes. I built the dam to prevent the dikes from falling apart. There was a path near the road we saw.

Dany: So where was your first workplace?

Yoeuk:From Chub to Prey Moan Rohall.

Dany: What did you do there?

Yoeuk:We transplanted during the rainy season and harvested during its season. And then we extracted the rice from its stalk and transported the rice to the warehouse.

Dany: So did your mobile brigade transplant and harvest from Chub Vary to Preay Moan Rohall?

Yoeuk:Yes, we did. Because sometimes the district asked us to work in Rohall and we had to go.

Dany: I see. Did the people help you transplant or did you have a separate rice paddy?

Yoeuk:No. For the district unit, we needed to make sure that we had food to support our own unit and to keep the remaining food for the people.

Dany: How much rice did you get in Prey Moan?

Yoeuk:I was transferred to the state region (region belonged to the state) later. They created this section separately from the district.

Dany: I see.

Yoeuk:This state region received orders from all regions. For district, they could only join the discussion. So we worked and harvested from Rohall to Prey Moan.

Dany: What did state region mean?

Yoeuk:It meant state farm, farm in the region.

Dany: Did it belong to the region?

Yoeuk:Yes, because the region came to check on their own, not the district.

Dany: When did you move from district mobile to state region?

Yoeuk:It was in 1976.

Dany: What month was it?

Yoeuk:Approximately in October.

Dany: So it was in October, 1976?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: What did state region mean exactly?

Yoeuk: I was the deputy of state region.

Dany: So you were the deputy of Region 5's state farm. Who was the chief then?

Yoeuk: It was *Ta Chhang*.

Dany: *Ta Chhang*?

Yoeuk: Yes. But he was executed.

Dany: So *Ta Chhang* was the chief and you were his deputy?

Yoeuk: Yes, that is right.

Dany: Were there many people in your group?

Yoeuk: There were a lot. In total there were three cooperatives.

Dany: Three cooperatives in it?

Yoeuk: There were between 5,000 to 6,000 people.

Dany: Were there between 5,000 to 6,000?

Yoeuk: Yes, that is correct.

Dany: Were all of them youth?

Yoeuk: No. There were some middle-aged people. But we had a youth section. We were also in charge of middle-aged people.

Dany: There were about 5,000 to 6,000 people. What did they do?

Yoeuk: Well, they worked in cooperatives because there were three cooperatives within the state region.

Dany: I see.

Yoeuk: Female youth were in the transplanting unit and the dam project. When the women harvested, we came to collect the rice.

Dany: From where to where was your regional farm covered? Was it from Rohall to Prey Moan?

Yoeuk: Let me see... The area surrounding Chub belonged to the regional state farm but the district office donated land to us from Rohall to Prey Moan.

Dany: How big was the area? How many hectares?

Yoeuk: From four to seven kilometers from Rohall to Prey Moan. It was from Rohall Pagoda to a turning point to Phnom Srok.

Dany: So, *Ta Chhang* was the chief and you were his deputy. Who else was in charge of the state farm?

Yoeuk: There were only two.

Dany: Only two?

Yoeuk: Because I was in charge of the youth section and did not stay there often.

Dany: But there were three cooperatives?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: Who were the chiefs of Cooperative 1, Cooperative 2, and Cooperative 3?

Yoeuk: Nam was the chief of the cooperative.

Dany: Nam, what about the chief of Cooperative 2?

Yoeuk: It was comrade Meth in charge of Cooperative 2.

Dany: Comrade Meth?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: What about Cooperative 3?

Yoeuk:Father Seth. His name was Seth, but we usually called him "father" Because we were still young, in our 30s.

Dany: Were they all alive?

Yoeuk:They may have died because I have never met them.

Dany: You have never met them?

Yoeuk:I travelled across Banteay Meanchey, but I have never met them.

Dany: For the regional state farm, were middle men assigned to work in the rice paddy?

Yoeuk:Yes. This meant it was for agriculture.

Dany: So who was in charge of the state farm?

Yoeuk:[Someone] from the region.

Dany: From the region.

Dany: Was it *Ta* Hoeng from Region 5?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: Was it under the district office?

Yoeuk:No. But we could discuss the plan [with them] because the district had even greater authority than our own.

Dany: Did *Ta* Chhang become the chief later?

Yoeuk:He was removed in 1975.

Dany: End of 1976?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: Which month was it?

Yoeuk:They dissolved it in early 1977. How was it dissolved? The village was integrated into the cooperative, the commune! I was transferred to a regional mobile brigade because I was not yet married. Those who were married stayed and worked in the village. Those who did not have ay wife were sent to the regional mobile brigade and then to Trapeang Thmar.

Dany: So it was at the end of 1976 or early 1977 when they dissolved regional mobile brigade.

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: Why was *Ta* Chhang removed?

Yoeuk:*Ta* Chhang worked for the district office branch. The branch meant that he was the assistant to the district. But he worked in Prasat, Toek Cho, and several communes.

Dany Why did they dissolve the state farm?

Yoeuk:There were some conflicts between the state farm and the cooperative. For the state farm we had enough rice to eat, but the cooperative did not have enough. And they wanted us to live equally. So the cooperative caused trouble. I know because I worked in the state farm. People from the commune said that we ate

porridge with cooked rice. I also raised this issue in the meeting, "We can eat from what we produce." I made thousands of bags of rice, so I needed to support my brigade and make sure that they were full. I also distributed some to the district and to the region.

Dany: Who did you raise this issue with?

Yoeuk: During the meeting at the commune and district levels because the commune accused us of being unequal in eating. In the cooperative, people ate watery rice soup, and we ate condensed porridge. So the conflict was related to the ration of rice.

Dany: When you had a meeting with *Ta Hoeng* and the district committee, did they raise this issue?

Yoeuk: Well, they asked us to address the issue, but it never ended. Later, they dissolved the state region.

Dany: It was dissolved. So *Ta Chhang* was moved to the district office branch in *Prasat* commune?

Yoeuk: Right!

Dany: Middle-aged people who were married worked in the cooperative, but what about young men and women?

Yoeuk: They followed me.

Dany: So they did. How many of them?

Yoeuk: About 300 of the men and women.

Dany: Both men and women?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: You said that the regional state farm had accommodated 5,000 to 6,000 people?

Yoeuk: That is right! This was because when you were married, you had to live in a cooperative.

Dany: I see.

Yoeuk: So some children went to work in the cooperative.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: So we could not be too strict. For example, those who asked us to go to see their mother, we did not know how to do so.

Dany: So there were about 300 people who followed you?

Yoeuk: Yes over 300.

Dany: About 300. And you worked in a regional mobile brigade?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: So you were chief of this regional mobile brigade?

Yoeuk: No. The chief was *Ta Vall*.

Dany: Was *Ta Vall* the chief?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: Were you the deputy then?

Yoeuk:No. There was no deputy. He was the chief and there were seven mobile brigade committee members.

Dany: Seven mobile committee members?

Yoeuk:Yes, both men and women.

Dany: Who were they?

Yoeuk:I do not remember all of them.

Dany: Do you remember some?

Yoeuk:Yes, I do.

Dany: So can you tell me?

Yoeuk:There was another person named San. But he was removed from the deputy. *Ta Khauv*, Chan, and ...me. There were three other women.

Dany: Okay. Do you remember the three women?

Yoeuk:One of them named Mith.

Dany: Mith.

Yoeuk:Another named Ruom.

Dany: Ruom? And what about the third one?

Yoeuk:Her name was Ran.

Dany: Ran?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: Where does Mith live?

Yoeuk:She has lived in Siem Reap, but I have never met her. But some people said she has gone to the U.S.

Dany: What about Ran?

Yoeuk:I have never met Ran. I do not know where she is now.

Dany: So how many of the seven members are still alive?

Yoeuk:Well, I think most of them died. I just heard that *Ta Khauv* and *Ta Vorn* are still alive and live in Kamboar, but I do not know their well-being now as we have been separated from each other for a long time.

Dany: *Ta Khauv* and *Ta Vorn*?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dara: So *Ta Vorn* was also one of the seven members?

Yoeuk:Yes, he was. But he was in charge of a different project. For example, in regard to construction, there was a person who was in charge like us. We worked and stayed with the young men and women. We shared food and shelter.

Dara: What kinds of work were the seven members responsible for?

Yoeuk:They worked in different tasks.

Dara: As for you, what kind of work did you take charge of?

Yoeuk:I sometimes worked on water control. Whenever there was a problem with the dam, I assigned my people to fix it. Some worked on building canal and some on sewage system. We had different jobs but we shared with each when we met. We talked about our challenge i.e., why we could not finish setting up the sewage

system. The reason was because of the disease (diarrhea), so that is why the project was halted.

Dany: Was it end of the year when there was a regional committee? Or did they have it before?

Yoeuk:No. It just existed.

Dany: So it was created when you moved there at the end of 1976?

Yoeuk:Yes. It did not exist before because *Ta Vall* was the military commander.

Dany: Was he the commander?

Yoeuk:Yes. He was removed.

Dany: So where were his headquarters?

Yoeuk:In Region 5.

Dany: Region 5?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: So he was the commander of soldiers in Region 5?

Yoeuk:He was not. He was like chief of regiment.

Dany: So who was the commander in Region 5 then?

Yoeuk:*Ta Choy*.

Dany: *Choy*? What about *Phy*? What did he do?

Yoeuk:*Phy* worked in district office branch.

Dany: So *Choy* was the chief?

Yoeuk:Well, I do not know who was the boss.

Dany: Okay. But you do know that *Ta Vall* was the chief of soldiers in Region 5 before he became chief of the mobile brigade.

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dara: Was he chief of regiment or battalion?

Yoeuk:Well, maybe he was chief of regiment. Because we just heard his title, but not a full title and we did not know clearly whether it was regiment or battalion.

Dara: So, how many soldiers were under his command?

Yoeuk:About 400.

Dara: Then he was chief of regiment!

Yoeuk:Yes probably. That is why he was appointed chief of regional mobile brigade which was not low. Everybody knew *Ta Vall*. When you asked people in villages, they will tell you that *Ta Vall* was mean.

Dany: Was he mean?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: Could you describe him?

Yoeuk:He was thin. He came from Kampong Cham.

Dany: He came from Kampong Cham? He was thin? What about his complexion?

Yoeuk:He had a brown complexion. But it was hard to tell because those with a fair complexion had also turned brown because we did not have any lotion or cosmetics to protect our skin.

Dany: What about his hair?

Yoeuk:He had straight hair.

Dany: Straight hair. Was it long or short?

Yoeuk:Well, his hair was not too short because at that time they said...they told the barber that "you cannot cut my hair as you want. For example, if a person's head was bald, how could you cut it? They said that. Give me some rights.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk:If the head has some bald spots, the barber should be creative in cutting the hair. The barber could not just cut it.

Dany: How about the way he spoke?

Yoeuk:Well, he was absolute.

Dany: Absolute?

Yoeuk:According to his behavior and speech, he might be a teacher.

Dany: A Teacher?

Yoeuk:Yes. Because he spoke French with *Ta Hoeng*. *Ta Hoeng* was a professor from Phnom Penh.

Dany: Did he speak French when he met *Ta Hoeng*?

Yoeuk:Yes, he spoke French when he walked.

Dany: Did you ever hear him speak French with *Ta Hoeng*?

Yoeuk:They spoke. I sometimes walked behind them to monitor people building the dam, and what they did not want us to hear about, they spoke in French.

Dany: How old was he when you met him?

Yoeuk:About 38 or 39 as I know.

Dany: What about *Ta Hoeng*?

Yoeuk:He was about 40.

Dany: About 40?

Yoeuk:Yes, because he was small.

Dany: Small?

Yoeuk:He had dark skin.

Dany: Where did he come from?

Yoeuk:Well, I did not know. Because he was a professor from Phnom Penh.

Dany: From Phnom Penh? What about *Ta Vall*? His behavior?

Yoeuk:He liked those who spoke the truth.

Dany: The truth?

Yoeuk:Yes. He did not like people to flip-flop in their opinions. He did not like anyone who tried to please their leader; otherwise, he would ask us critically.

Dany: How?

Yoeuk:He asked me what I did in Sangkum Reastr Niyum. Whether or not I was a soldier. He said I acted as a soldier with two or three ranks. They said they got rid of this tradition.

Dany: So for those who tried to please him, what did they do?

Yoeuk:There were some who used to be asedang [sergeant]. They told him.

Dany: So what did he do to them?

Yoeuk:No, he did not say anything because everything depended on local leaders. In some regions no matter whether they were soldiers or policemen, if they respected their leaders and worked hard, there would be no problem.

Dany: So the seven committee members were set up at the end of 1976?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: So what else did you do?

Yoeuk:They were collected to the rice fields to build the dam or dig the canal. But we did not work on the Trapeang Thma irrigation system yet.

Dany: Okay. Could you describe the system and structure and the workforce of the mobile brigade?

Yoeuk:As I know Preah Netr Preah has a vast of plain area and many mobile brigades gathered in the district.

Dany: May I interrupt you. How many people were in the regional mobile brigade?

Yoeuk:As I know there were 7,000 people at the beginning.

Dany: Seven thousand?

Yoeuk:Yes, that refers to the regional mobile brigade only.

Dany: What about the range of their ages?

Yoeuk:Well actually since I was not married, I was sent to the mobile brigade.

Dany: So the regional mobile brigade was for those who were unmarried?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: Did you know how many men and women?

Yoeuk:I think there were more women than men.

Dany: So women were more than men?

Yoeuk:Of the 7,000 there were about 4,000 women.

Dany: So you said Preah Netr Preah is covered by plains. So what did you do first?

Yoeuk:We built the dam and dug canals across the streams in the communes and districts. The regional mobile brigade was sent everywhere up until Sala Kraham (Red school). *Ta* Sruoch worked there. But later he was moved out. *Ta* Kong was in charge throughout the region.

Dany: Throughout the region?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: What dam did they start with in Preah Netr Preah District?

Yoeuk:From Sreh to Kamboar.

Dany: From Sreh to Kamboar?

Yoeuk:Have you ever visited the dam?

Dany: I went to Sreh.

Yoeuk:From Sreh in front of the pagoda and then go east at Prin to the mountain. Then you will reach Kamboar. That is called the Kamboar Sreh Irrigation Dam.

Dany: Okay. So you built the dam.

Yoeuk:Kamboar Sreh.

Dany: Did you work to build it?

Yoeuk:I did not attend the work. I still worked in the state region with *Ta* Vall and other leaders.

Dany: So the dam was built even when you were still at the farm?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: So was it before that?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: So I want to know about your experience when you moved to the regional mobile brigade of the seven committee members. What did you start to do?

Yoeuk:Before we planned to build any dam, we needed to know the dimension and the workforce needed. We, as committee members, needed to listen to them clearly before organizing any meeting in our own respective unit. For example, we planned to build a 3,000 meter-long dam and we needed to assign the work to each person. If you had 100 persons and each needed to take care of half a meter, so how many meters should the workforce achieve a day?

Dany: When we talked about Trapeang Thma, when did you start?

Yoeuk:When we talked about Trapeang Thma, we needed to mobilize people from all the districts to work in the regional mobile brigade.

Dany: From which districts?

Yoeuk:All the districts including Thma Puok, Phnom Srok. The Trapeang Thma Irrigation Project needed people from Thma Puok, Phnom Srok, Serey Sophorn, and Preah Netr Preah and other districts.

Dany: What about Mongkul Borei?

Yoeuk:No!

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk:Phnom Srok, Thma Puok, Serey Sophorn, Preah Netr Preah, only four districts.

Dany: So there were four districts in Region 5?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: Okay, then the four districts and the regional mobile brigade?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: First of all I wanted to know about the start of the project. Did they have any meeting?

Yoeuk:First, they convened a meeting to select an engineering committee to work on road adjustment.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk:And they worked from Daun Noy to Angkor Wat.

Dany: From Daun Noy to Angkor Wat? But Daun Noy is near the Thai-Cambodia border.

Yoeuk:Yes it is near the Thai border. It is referred to as the Old Road from Thailand to Angkor What.

Dany: Could you tell us more clearly about those who attended the meeting and what they planned to do first?

Yoeuk:*Ta* Vall came to meet region and zone leaders.

Dany: Where did they meet?

Yoeuk: In Svay [Sisophon].

Dany: The meeting was held in Svay, Region 5. What month did you meet with them?

Yoeuk: I do not remember.

Dany: It can be in...?

Yoeuk: Because Trapeang Thma was started in February. It was probably in 1977.

Dany: In February, 1977?

Yoeuk: But they met 1 or 2 months earlier. They conducted the study on the site before they made the decision and forming a committee.

Dany: Who were present in the meeting?

Yoeuk: *Ta* Nhim.

Dany: *Ta* Nhim. Were there any people from the Central Party?

Yoeuk: They came, but I did not know them.

Dany: They also came?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: So did the irrigation project come from the Central Party from Phnom Penh?

Yoeuk: Yes. But they asked the local authority to conduct a study on the site. They should choose an ancient road to build the dam, so that [we] could use the road to Angkor. So those in Region 5 at Sala Kraham (Red Hall) would start to work on it and get everything started.

Dany: Uncle, I'd like you to tell me more about the meeting place. You said you did not know anybody from the Central Party in Phnom Penh.

Yoeuk: No I did not.

Dany: But did they come?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: And *Ta* Nhim also came?

Yoeuk: He came to the meeting.

Dany: What did *Ta* Nhim do?

Yoeuk: He was the zone secretary.

Dany: Which zone?

Yoeuk: Northwestern zone.

Dany: Okay. And who else?

Yoeuk: Well, I just knew *Ta* Nhim.

Dany: Who else besides those from the Central Party?

Yoeuk: From the region.

Dany: Which region?

Yoeuk: *Ta* Hoeng's region.

Dany: *Ta* Hoeng.

Yoeuk: All the members of the district committee.

Dany: All of them?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: And the mobile brigade also came?
Yoeuk:Yes. The chief of the mobile brigade.
Dany: Who was he?
Yoeuk:*Ta Vall*.
Dany: *Ta Vall*. Where did they meet?
Yoeuk:First they met in Svay and then in Trapeang Thma.
Dany: Did you come to the meeting?
Yoeuk:No.
Dany: But why did you know who came to the meeting [as described above]?
Yoeuk:Well, they told us that tomorrow there will be a meeting with Central Party members, district committee, chief of zone and region.
Dany: Okay.
Yoeuk:They talked about the workforce and dimension of the irrigation system.
Dany: Okay.
Yoeuk:Its base is sixty meters, its surface is twenty meters, and its height is twelve meters.
Dany: Is it twelve meters in height?
Yoeuk:That was their plan, but they did not finish it.
Dany: So did they have a clear goal and plan?
Yoeuk:Yes, they did. The construction plan was from the stream flowing to Stung Kralanh. Do you know the water pump station? It is in Char Leu. There is a path to Rumchek District and then there is a road facing east. They built the dam across a small river called Stung Smach. They planned to use the water to supply the dam as it is huge.
Dany: Did you see the construction plan?
Yoeuk:In fact, I did not see it.
Dany: You did not see it?
Yoeuk:No I did not. I just assigned people to work because only the district committee or chief of the region had it.
Dany: But why did you know the dimension (60 x 20)?
Yoeuk:Because they came to meet with us. *Ta Vall* told us about the dimension.
Dany: What about the length?
Yoeuk:If we count from the first bridge to the west, it is about nine kilometers. But it is longer than that.
Dany: So you did not see the construction plan as a hard copy yourself?
Yoeuk:No. Not at all.
Dany: But you heard it from *Ta Vall* who came to conduct a meeting?
Yoeuk:That is right. They told us in the meeting.
Dany: Do you know what they wanted when they launched this project?
Yoeuk:I think they wanted to make use of the water in the dam to transplant rice during the dry season up to thousands of hectares.
Dany: Thousands of hectares? In which district?

Yoeuk: In two districts: Phnom Srok and Preah Netr Preah. Because the canal to Phnom Srok flows to Stung Kamboar, we could have absorbed and preserved lots of water from canals nearby during the rainy season.

Dany: So the first goal was to preserve water to transplant rice during the dry season? What about the second?

Yoeuk: The second was to get fish and other living beings from the irrigation. Wild animals or birds usually came to shelter nearby. This was home to all the living beings. There were plenty of fish, up to twenty-one kilograms.

Dany: Did you ever attend the meeting with *Ta Vall* and the chief of the region? Did you hear them talk about the purposes of building Trapeang Thma Irrigation Project?

Yoeuk: They also told us that this plan would be used to irrigate rice fields in the two districts. They focused on the agricultural plan in order to get the rice to exchange for machinery. They wanted to get the yield three times a year.

Dara: Uncle, I have a question regarding the plan. Did they tell you that the back of the dam would be twenty meters?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dara: The base would be sixty meters and the height would be twelve meters?

Yoeuk: Twelve meters.

Dara: Do you know how many workers were needed to complete the project and how long it took?

Yoeuk: In the first phase about 4,000 people were mobilized from the districts and 7,000 people from the regional mobile brigade.

Dany: Okay. They needed 4,000 people from the districts and 7,000 from the region in order to reach their goal?

Yoeuk: They planned to finish it in three months. But it was not finished due to the rain. The other reason was that *Ta Vall* and *Ta Hoeng* who were active in this project were arrested. And then people from the Southwestern zone continued.

Dany: I wanted to ask you about the plan more clearly.

Yoeuk: Alright.

Dany: So you knew that the plan came out of a meeting between the chief of the region and those from the Central Party?

Yoeuk: Well, the top planned everything and then they came to announce it. They met with leaders and chiefs and then those people told us later.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: Because they had to commit to finishing it in several months.

Dany: So who came to organize a meeting with your unit?

Yoeuk: Well, *Ta Vall* came to meet with us and we spread the message to our members.

Dany: Do you remember what he talked about?

Yoeuk: When *Ta Vall* came to meet us, he talked about how to do it, not about the construction project. He said how to assign people to work on their assigned tasks. For example, there were 7,000 in the mobile brigade, they assigned the force to carry

soil (half a meter plus 30 people). They gave each person an equal share of work. If they could not finish, they had to sit down and discuss, “why didn’t you finish your work?” This is similar to the development project.

Dany: You said at first they started to measure the land. From where to where did they work on that?

Yoeuk:They had their committee. But I just knew *Ta Khauv*. It took us three months to complete chopping trees and clear the forest. We could not see any trees anymore.

Dany: From where to where?

Yoeuk:They worked from the ancient roads in Daun Noy to Angkor Wat.

Dany: Wait a minute. You built Trapeang Thma in this area, why did you pave the way from Daun Noy? It is near Thai-Cambodian border. Isn’t it?

Yoeuk:Trapeang Thma needed to be built across the Ancient Road, and the road started from the border to Angkor.

Dany: Was it across the Ancient Road?

Yoeuk:That is right. But we needed to clear the forest and everything along the Ancient Road in order to build the dam.

Dany: So they cleared it from Daun Noy across Trapeang Thma and then to Angkor?

Yoeuk:That is right. To Sreng Dach bridge and to Angkor.

Dany: Why did the Trapeang Thma Irrigation Project have anything to do with Daun Noy and Angkor Wat?

Yoeuk:As I know they wanted to follow the Old Road but they could not do it. It was big. If you see the road to Chong Kal and Kamboar, you will see a huge dam gate.

Dany: Oh I see. So they wanted to build a road from Daun Noy across the dam surface as a side road and then construct another road to Angkor?

Yoeuk:That is correct! And the road across the back of the dam was an old road. It had a bridge but it was demolished.

Dany: Alright! So they measured it for three months before it was constructed?

Yoeuk:Yes.

Dany: For three months?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: They had a committee in measuring this, including *Ta Khauv*. What about Uncle Chhuong? Did he take part?

Yoeuk:Yeah *Ta Chhuong* also participated.

Dany: What did he do?

Yoeuk:*Ta Chhuong* did the measurement.

Dany: So he was not one of the committee members?

Yoeuk:No. *Ta Chhuong* probably was in charge of the measurement. I almost forgot because I did not see him. We worked far from each other. Some were sent to Kaun Kleng, so they did not know what happened at Trapeang Thma.

Dany: So it took the people three months just to finish measurement?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: You said you started the construction in 1977?

Yoeuk: In February because that was after the harvest season. They collected people there. It was probably in February.

Dany: So in February you started to build Trapeang Thma?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: So who was in charge of the project?

Yoeuk: *Ta Vall* was the one who was in charge of everything in general. But there were many other leaders who were in charge of the district mobile brigade, for example, Serey Sophorn district mobile brigade. Everybody was given their assigned task clearly.

Dany: So *Ta Vall* was in charge of everything?

Yoeuk: Yes, he took care of the whole region, but he had his assistants. All the district committees assisted him in building the dam.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: It was not *Ta Vall* alone who made the decisions; he had to discuss the plans with others.

Dany: All the district committees were his assistants. So he was in charge of overall management.

Yoeuk: Yes, he was in charge of the regional mobile brigade.

Dany: What about others?

Yoeuk: No more. He was the only one and the seven committee members as I mentioned.

Dany: What about you? What was your position?

Yoeuk: I was also in the committee. I led 300 men and another woman led another 300 women and we worked altogether.

Dara: Where did you start working on the project at the beginning?

Yoeuk: First, our workforce worked in Smach (Poar Char). It is on the way to Phnom Srok and to Rumchek. We built the dam across the lake.

Dara: Was it also a part of the Trapeang Thma project?

Yoeuk: Yes. We built it in order to build a dam gate. The dam gate is huge and the second to this is Trapeang Thma reservoir. Let me tell you, during rainy season our workforce were assigned to work in different places. I worked in Smach, another unit weaved baskets in order to carry soil. Lots and lots of baskets were trucked from one place to another.

Dany: Well, I want to know about Trapeang Thma in more detail. As you were in the committee, where were you assigned to work?

Yoeuk: I did not have any position because I was removed. Before they formed mobile brigade to work on the Trapeang Thma project, they had to form a regional mobile brigade. But I did not have a chance to work much, then I was removed.

Dany: Where did you go?

Yoeuk: I worked to collect Fertilizer Number One (natural fertilizer which is made of feces).

Dany: So you were not in charge of the economic section?

Yoeuk: Well, only after they fired me. I did not belong to any unit or brigade. But I knew someone who worked in the economic section and he gave me rice to eat. He did not know how to read but he had struggled for the revolution since 1970s with *Ta Nhim*, that is why nobody dared to say anything to him. So I tried to please him in order to get rice to eat. Later *Ta Vall* asked me to fix the neck of hoes. He told me how to do it. It was not difficult.

Dany: So you said you did not get involved in building the dam?

Yoeuk: I did not belong to any unit because I was removed.

Dany: So when was that?

Yoeuk: Before that. It was at the end of 1976.

Dany: End of 1976?

Yoeuk: Yes, there were many others who were removed, not only me.

Dany: Who were they?

Yoeuk: Several people.

Dany: Could you tell us their names?

Yoeuk: There was one person named Chan, but he was also removed. He was asked to chop firewood at the hospital.

Dany: Which hospital?

Yoeuk: In Anlung Sar, Phnom Leap Commune.

Dany: Was it a regional hospital? Or did it belong to the regional mobile brigade?

Yoeuk: Yes, it belonged to the regional mobile brigade.

Dany: Was it in Anlung Sar?

Yoeuk: Yes. Comrade Ruom and I worked on blending Fertilizer Number One.

Dany: You both worked in...

Yoeuk: Fertilizer Number One (feces).

Dany: Where?

Yoeuk: We collected it from the mobile brigade. When someone defecated, we collected the recent feces and place it in a pit.

Dany: Do you know why were you removed?

Yoeuk: It was hard because we were not aware of our mistake. Sometimes, our colleagues did not want us to stay longer as they did not want to see us grow fast, so they may report to the top. So they just assigned us the work in other places. For example, one person had to find firewood, another worked in a hospital, and another in a fishing unit.

Dany: Who was sent to Tonle Sap?

Yoeuk: His name was Thav.

Dany: So who announced your new job?

Yoeuk: *Ta Vall*.

Dany: *Ta Vall*?

Yoeuk: We all were separated.

Dany: But why did you work to fix the neck of the hoes while others built the dam?

Yoeuk: Well, I was still within the mobile brigade, but they changed my position. They could ask us to fish or do whatever they wanted. Due to the lack of hoes, I was in charge of tightening the neck of the hoes.

Dany: Did you know about the ration of food for each person at the beginning?

Yoeuk: Each had to finish two cubic meters.

Dany: Each for two cubic meters?

Yoeuk: Yes. Each received three cans of rice.

Dany: Per day?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: How did you know this?

Yoeuk: I experienced it myself. Later when I was asked to work in the economic section, I got three cans of rice. We had six to seven bags of rice left. We could not finish it because each had three cans of rice a day, a lot.

Dany: You did not finish it? So you still had some rice left?

Yoeuk: No, we did not finish it.

Dany: You still had some rice left?

Yoeuk: Some brigades had some rice left, but this was applied only to mobile brigades and for Workforce Number One. However, they could receive this amount of rice only when they worked hard. After that, they got only one can of rice or half a can.

Dany: A day?

Yoeuk: That is right. I transported and distributed rice to them.

Dany: Alright! Could you describe when you worked on the fertilizer and making the neck of the hoes and then in the economic section?

Yoeuk: Well, I would start from the time when *Ta Vall*, *Ta Hoeng* were arrested and they replaced them with KR officials from the Southwestern zone. When they arrived, we did not dare to oppose. Everybody kept quiet. I went to collect empty containers for the economic section. I knew this because I helped my superior in recording the number of people. For example, 100 or 200 people and I just added the number. *Ta Rin* became chief of Region 5. When he came, everything changed because *Ta Vall* was arrested.

Dany: So they started to build the dam in February 1977?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: And the one who was in charge of economic section was not you?

Yoeuk: No. It was not me.

Dany: So who was in charge of it?

Yoeuk: *Ta Peung*.

Dany: Was he in charge?

Yoeuk: Yes. He came from the regional army.

Dany: Did he come from the regional army?

Yoeuk: That is right. I was not in charge of that.

Dany: What about *Ta Vall*? Was he in charge of all mobile brigades in Region 5? And what about the seven committee members? Did they work on the dam?

Yoeuk: Those who were not removed did work on the dam.

Dany: So those who were not removed were those you mentioned above...

Yoeuk: Those who were removed were asked to collect fertilizer. But sometimes we did not do it because there was no fertilizer for us to collect.

Dany: Okay. But you said those who were removed still worked in the mobile brigade?

Yoeuk: Yes, but they no longer held their positions.

Dany: Although you no longer held the position, you still worked in Trapeang Thma.

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: But you collected Fertilizer Number One. For example when anyone defecated, you collected it.

Yoeuk: I shoveled it and place it in a pit.

Dany: You placed it in a pit? How many of you who worked on that?

Yoeuk: Only two.

Dany: Only two. How many people who collected it?

Yoeuk: Those who collected it stayed in their brigade. For example, I came to ask you, "How much fertilizer did you collect?" I just came to check, but was not working on it myself.

Dany: Okay, I got it. What did *Ta Vall* plan to do at the start in February? Did the chiefs of battalion or brigade come to receive the order from him?

Yoeuk: Yes, they came.

Dany: So during the meeting, what did he plan to do? For instance, how much should each person do in order to finish the dam?

Yoeuk: Well, they had a clear plan, but sometimes, we could not achieve it.

Dany: What was his plan?

Yoeuk: The plan was divided by workforce. What should we do if we had 130 or 100. The regional mobile brigade did not start the work at Trapeang Thma right away. We cleared the cotton plantation in Kang Va. Before that the plantation was surrounded by a thick thorny growth that was one meter by 100 meters and we were asked to clear this in one day. No matter how dense, we had to clear it in one day.

Dany: To clear the forest?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: I want to know whether he set the task for everybody who came to work at Trapeang Thma? How many meters should each person achieve; or how much food should they get; and for how long. Like you said earlier, the base of Trapeang Thma is sixty meters long; its height is twelve meters; and the dam surface is twenty meters. So did he

Yoeuk: I did not know much because I did not join the meeting. But I knew some. They measured and planned the soil and the manpower so that they would be able

to assign everyone to work on it effectively. For example, each had to complete half a meter or two cubic meters a day for the project.

Dany: For how long did the project go when *Ta Vall* was arrested?

Yoeuk: As I know the project was thirty percent complete.

Dany: Thirty percent?

Yoeuk: That is right. They completed the dam from Bridge Three to Bridge One, plus another portion at the corner. That was until the rainy season.

Dany: Until rainy season?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: What month was that when *Ta Vall* was arrested?

Yoeuk: Well, I did not know what month exactly. After his arrest, they mobilized soldiers from the Southwestern Zone. He might have been arrested in June which was the rainy season.

Dany: In June?

Yoeuk: That is right. That was probably in June.

Dany: In June, 1977?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: Did Southwestern people come when *Ta Vall* was arrested?

Yoeuk: They came one by one.

Dany: One by one?

Yoeuk: They did not come altogether until *Ta Vall* was arrested.

Dany: Okay, so did only people from Southwestern Zone come to this area?

Yoeuk: Well, first people from Eastern Zone came but they were later arrested. There were many steps and many groups of people. I forgot the name of someone from the Eastern Zone. He was in charge of the regional mobile brigade. His assistants were educated; they held the Bac II certificate. He looked young, but then he disappeared. Oh I remember him. His name was Tuy. He took overall charge of this work. I did not know whether or not he was arrested. But he disappeared. After this moment, Southwestern Zone people came to control the area.

Dany: So which zone arrested *Ta Vall*?

Yoeuk: I think he might have been arrested by this zone leader. After his arrest, the zone leader (*Ta Nhim*) was also arrested.

Dany: So *Ta Vall* was arrested by the Northwestern Zone leader?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: Who came to arrest him?

Yoeuk: Well, the security police from Northwestern Zone came to arrest him. I saw a white jeep come.

Dany: White jeep?

Yoeuk: Yes. I trembled every time I saw the white jeep.

Dany: Could you describe the car?

Yoeuk: Well, it was white which is similar to yours.

Dany: Was it similar to this jeep?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: Did *Ta Chiel* come yet when *Ta Vall* was arrested?

Yoeuk:*Ta Chiel*?

Dany: Yes.

Yoeuk:*Ta Chiel* also came to the region.

Dany: Which region?

Yoeuk:Mostly in Region 5.

Dany: In Region 5 most often?

Yoeuk:That is correct.

Dany: What did he do?

Yoeuk:*Ta Chiel*, well he worked for the region, but I do not know what was his real position.

Dany: Was he *Ta Nhim*'s son?

Yoeuk:Yes, he was.

Dany: Did he live in Region 5?

Yoeuk:He came here once in a while.

Dany: Once in a while?

Yoeuk:But also frequently.

Dany: Did *Ta Chiel* come to arrest *Ta Vall*?

Yoeuk:No, the security guards came. As I know it was *Ta Nhim* who ordered the security guards to ask *Ta Vall* to go to the re-education center.

Dany: Did *Ta Nhim* ask *Ta Chiel* to go to the re-education center?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: What about *Hoeng*?

Yoeuk:*Ta Hoeng* was arrested before *Ta Vall*.

Dany: Which month was that?

Yoeuk:Well, in 1977 but I did not know...

Dany: But you said *Ta Vall* was arrested in June 1977.

Yoeuk:Yes probably. But I think *Ta Hoeng* was arrested earlier.

Dany: Okay, but it happened in the same month?

Yoeuk:That is right.

Dany: What did they say when they arrested them?

Yoeuk:They did not say anything. They just said it was their plan to re-examine (purge) these people.

Dany: Re-examination?

Yoeuk:Yes, because if they remained, they would be a threat to the communist Party. I am not quite sure.

Dany: Did they arrest only two people—*Ta Hoeng* and *Ta Vall*?

Yoeuk:Both of them were arrested as well as other people in other district offices.

Dany: Did they also arrest people from other districts?

Yoeuk:Yes, they arrested step by step. And some district committees were also arrested.

Yoeuk: Let me see, the Thma Puok District Committee was also arrested.
Dany: What was his name?
Yoeuk: I did not know was that before or after.
Dany: Pardon?
Yoeuk: In addition to Thma Puok, the Phnom Srok District Committee was also arrested.
Dany: What was his name?
Yoeuk: *Ta* Hatt.
Dany: Was *Ta* Hatt arrested?
Yoeuk: Yes. *Ta* Pheng whom I mentioned earlier was also arrested.
Dany: Was *Ta* Pheng a district committee?
Yoeuk: Deputy committee.
Dany: Deputy committee of Phnom Srok?
Yoeuk: Yes, of Phnom Srok.
Dany: Okay.
Yoeuk: And *Ta* Sam Ath who was the committee in Preah Netr Preah.
Dany: *Ta* Moang?
Yoeuk: *Ta* Moang died and they also arrested people at the commune levels. To conclude, they referred to the link.
Dany: Okay.
Yoeuk: If they arrested you, you had to answer their questions.
Dany: Didn't you know the Thma Puok committee member?
Yoeuk: No. I did not know.
Dany: What about the Serey Sophorn committee member?
Yoeuk: His name was *Ta* Suth.
Dany: Was he arrested too?
Yoeuk: Yes.
Dany: So they arrested *Ta* Hoeng in the region, what about soldiers? Were they also arrested?
Yoeuk: I did not know whether they were arrested. I was transferred to work in the mobile brigade. But *Ta* Choy in the army was arrested. After the arrest, brother Ram came. The purge happened after people from the Southwestern Zone came to replace former leaders in the region.
Dany: So as for regional mobile brigade, only *Ta* Vall was arrested?
Yoeuk: Yes. Only *Ta* Vall was arrested.
Dany: What about others?
Yoeuk: Well, I did not remember. They also arrested people from the mobile brigade.
Dany: Okay.
Yoeuk: Some cruel mobile brigade chiefs were also arrested by people from the Southwestern Zone.
Dany: When they arrested *Ta* Vall in June, who came to replace him?
Yoeuk: Later the regional mobile brigade was led by brother Yoeun.

Dany: Yoeun or Yann?
Yoeuk:Yes, Yann and *Ta* Poal.
Dany: Yann and *Ta* Poal?
Yoeuk:Yes. Everybody knew *Ta* Poal.
Dany: Where did he live?
Yoeuk:He came from the Southwestern Zone.
Dany: Did he come from the zone?
Yoeuk:Yes. But brother Rin was the chief of the region.
Dany: So they replaced *Ta* Hoeng with Rin?
Yoeuk:Brother Rin came.
Dany: Was *Ta* Rin from the southwest?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: What about the army?
Yoeuk:*Ta* Chhoeung was in charge of the army in Phnom Srok, Region 5.
Dany: What about the Headquarters?
Yoeuk:His name was...
Dany: Ram?
Yoeuk:*Ta* Ram.
Dany: *Ta* Ram was stationed in the division, but he came to Region 5?
Yoeuk:To be honest, I do not know much about this because it is about the army.
Dany: What about at the district levels, were there any people to replace the old leadership?
Yoeuk:I just knew about Preah Netr Preah.
Dany: Who came to work in Preah Netr Preah then?
Yoeuk:Yeay Chaem was in charge of Preah Netr Preah district.
Dany: Yeay Chaem?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: Alright.
Yoeuk:Later she was promoted to zone leader.
Dany: Did she become zone leader?
Yoeuk:Yes, and then the Vietnamese came.
Dany: Where did Rin go so that Yeay Chaem became the zone leader?
Yoeuk:I did not know where he went. But I saw him later. He was still alive. He fought against the Vietnamese. He died later.
Dany: Really?
Yoeuk:*Ta* Ram was his brother. He is still alive. He worked in the division.
Dany: Was he *Ta* Rin's brother?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: Was he *Ta* Ram?
Yoeuk:*Ta* Ram.
Dany: Where is he living?
Yoeuk:He lives in Sampov Loun, Phnom Prik.

Dany: In Phnom Prik. What is his wife's name?
Yoeuk: Well, I did not know. I do not know how it changes now.
Dany: But did he live in Phnom Proek?
Yoeuk: Yes. He has lived in Phnom Proek.
Dany: What is his position?
Yoeuk: He was a commander in chief.
Dany: Now?
Yoeuk: No, it was before.
Dany: Okay. But what does he do now?
Yoeuk: I do not know what he does now.
Dany: Let me see. When they arrested *Ta Hoeng* and *Ta Vall*, *Ta Rin* became a zone committee and *Ta Poal* and *Ta Yann* became chief of regional mobile brigade, did they still work on Trapeang Thma?
Yoeuk: Yes, the purges occurred later.
Dany: Okay.
Yoeuk: When they reformed the brigade, I distributed the rice to the workers.
Dany: Okay then you became chief of the economic section.
Yoeuk: Well, I became the chief because I transported empty buckets to *Ta Rin* and he asked me about my background. I told him, "I do not hold any position; they removed me." I then attended a meeting at the district and they appointed me to take care of logistics in the mobile brigade. That is why I knew the number of the workers which were about 32,000.
Dany: So there were about 32,000 in the mobile brigade?
Yoeuk: Okay. For 32,000, each had three cans of rice. *Ta Rin* gave us the ration, but he asked me to plan the logistics carefully.
Dany: Okay.
Yoeuk: He asked me to reserve 1,000 bags of rice in the warehouse. I was also in charge of the rice for other districts. They needed to contact me and they could get the rice as they wanted.
Dany: Okay, then you were appointed chief of the economic section in Region 5?
Yoeuk: That is right.
Dany: Where was your main office?
Yoeuk: It was located in Trapeang Thma.
Dany: In Trapeang Thma?
Yoeuk: Yes, there were mobile brigades everywhere from Srey Snam and Phnom Leap.
Dany: When were you appointed?
Yoeuk: Well, probably in December.
Dany: In December?
Yoeuk: End of 1977.
Dany: Yes. What about *Ta Rin*? Where was he?
Yoeuk: *Ta Rin* lived in Svay [Sisophon].
Dany: In Svay! Did he ever go to Trapeang Thma?

Yoeuk:He went there quite often.
Dany: Quite often?
Yoeuk:Yes. Everybody knew this. He was active. He worked as everybody else, lifting the soil into the basket.
Dany: Digging soil?
Yoeuk:If you want to search for him, you might not be able to do so because he looked like other workers. He worked like other workers.
Dany: Did he carry the soil?
Yoeuk:Yes, he did.
Dany: He still carried the soil despite his position?
Yoeuk:Yes.
Dany: How old was he?
Yoeuk:He was at least 40.
Dany: At least 40?
Yoeuk:He told me he was 31 when he got married. So he was probably 40 at least.
Dany: What was his wife's name?
Yoeuk:Hmmm...His was a Sino Khmer.
Dany: What about his complexion?
Yoeuk:He was well-built and had curly hair. He had a fair complexion.
Dany: Fair complexion?
Yoeuk:Yes. He was polite.
Dany: How was his speech?
Yoeuk:Polite.
Dany: Did he stay at Trapeang Thma overnight or come back in the evening?
Yoeuk:Sometimes he stayed there overnight. Among the region committee, I think he was different from others. He was thorough and just.
Dany: Just?
Yoeuk:For example, when we butchered a cow, we had to make sure that everyone got the meat. He even checked every bag of fish in the warehouse. He was afraid that we kept some for our own. I was impressed by him.
Dany: Like *Ta Rin*?
Yoeuk:Yes, everybody admired him. But what was it for? I did not know what mistake he made. But in reality, he would blame anybody who brought more rice.
Dany: So *Ta Rin* was the one who took charge of Trapeang Thma himself?
Yoeuk:Yes. In addition, *Ta Yann* and *Ta Poal* were also stationed there. But he came back and forth because Mongkul Borei and Bavil were also included in Region 5. And I worked in the economic office there.
Dany: Uncle, did *Ta Rin* tell you about his plan related to Trapeang Thma?
Yoeuk:I sometimes received his order, but not often. He came once a month to check the rice himself i.e., how much rice came in and how much left.
Dany: Did he come to check himself?
Yoeuk:Yes, he did. That is why I said I never saw...

Dany: But did he say anything related to Trapeang Thma? What were the plans from the top?

Yoeuk: Well, he used to talk about that. He said we had to finish it by the year he came into his office. If we could not finish it, we had to delay. But he was then arrested before the Vietnamese came.

Dany: You said there were about 32,000 people in the mobile brigades?

Yoeuk: Yes, before there were only 7,000 but later there were up to 32,000. But there were 4,000 in each brigade. We had sixteen brigades, so we had over 20,000. Later, it rose to 32,000. I knew this because I took care of the figure.

Dany: For the 32,000 people, was it referred to the regional mobile brigade only or the district mobile brigades were also included?

Yoeuk: Altogether. They came to get their rice in one place.

Dany: In one place?

Yoeuk: Yes, Serey Sophorn district assigned the economic staff to meet with me to get the rice. But I could not go and check on them myself because there were so many people. I did not know whether or not they lied to me but they were also district staff.

Dany: That is right. And each of the 32,000 received 3 cans of rice a day?

Yoeuk: Yes!

Dany: So you did the calculation as such?

Yoeuk: Yes. But I rarely counted per can. I just weighed it. For example, 100 kilograms were equal to 400 cans of rice.

Dany: Were 400 cans of rice equal to 100 kilograms?

Yoeuk: That is correct.

Dara: Among the 32,000, were there any people from the mobile cooperative?

Yoeuk: Well, there were. We referred to all of the mobile brigades. They were considered a regional force. They were demobilized and returned to their districts during the rainy season, except the regional mobile brigade.

Dara: So this meant the 32,000 included...

Yoeuk: Included the district mobile brigades.

Dara: Were all in cooperative mobile units?

Yoeuk: Yes. All were in cooperatives and all villages. After the plan finished, we went to a regional mobile unit. There were only 4,000 left, during Ta Rin's control.

Dany: During Ta Rin's control, you said only 4,000 were not demobilized at Trapeang Thma by the rainy season?

Yoeuk: Yes. They were there to secure and repair the dam, and to work on the rice field.

Dany: You said Ta Rin was transferred to where?

Yoeuk: Ta Rin was purged in 1977 when Southwest cadres arrived in late 1977.

Dany: You said Ta Vall was arrested in June 1977 and Ta Hing in 1977?

Yoeuk: Yes. Maybe *Brother* Rin. We could not recall our memory but Brother Rin was arrested in 1978 because his arrest took place. Then, the Vietnamese came.

Dany: How many months after his arrest?
Yoeuk: Probably five months.
Dany: But Ta Rin was also arrested?
Yoeuk: No. Could not remember, but after he was arrested, Yeay Chaem was replaced as region.
Dany: Chief of Region?
Yoeuk: Yes.
Dany: Chief of Region 5?
Yoeuk: Chief of Region 5.
Dany: So, at that time, Yeay Chaem was the chief of Region 5?
Yoeuk: Yes. Her husband was the chief of Preah Netr Preah District.
Dany: Who was the district chief? Her husband? What was his name?
Yoeuk: Ta Nhen.
Dany: Ta Nhen?
Yoeuk: Yes.
Dany: So, when Yeay Chaem was promoted to be the chief of Region 5, he was the chief of Preah Netr Preah district chief? So, when Yeay Chaem was region chief of Trapeang Thma, he continued to be in that position?
Yoeuk: There was a plan to continue.
Dany: Planned to continue?
Yoeuk: Because when she was promoted, he came and met with me.
Dany: Yes.
Yoeuk: Having met me, he wanted to ask how many places for economic sections, how many people, how many rice mills, where was the rice taken? It was not so long before the Vietnamese came. It means that Yeay Chaem did not take over the work at Trapeang Thma. After taking the work, the Vietnamese came.
Dany: She did not examine or do anything?
Yoeuk: Not yet.
Dany: When she was the chief of district, did she come to visit Trapeang Thma?
Yoeuk: Yes, she came to visit there. She continued to dig a canal from the east of Phnom Leap. It was because the district chief was at Phnom Leap. She was stationed at Phnom Leap, but also at Preah Netr Preah. They used it to be reservoir.
Dany: Yes. You said when Yeay Chaem moved from Phnom Leap to...
Yoeuk: She was with mobile unit. In fact, she went to sleep with her husband. But she could go to the mobile unit in this or that district, as she was the region chief.
Dany: Yes. She did not go to Serey Sophorn?
Yoeuk: I did not see her there or did not know anything because I stayed away. Sometimes, she came.
Dany: When you worked with Yeay Chaem in 1978, what was she like? For example, color, height, and speech?
Yoeuk: Yeay Chaem is short and has dark skin.
Dany: Similar to you?

Yoeuk: Yes. She looks like this. And through her speech, she could be the person who was extensively trained because her word seemed strong and firm, as I heard from others. We could listen to her as she spoke slowly.

Dany: One more thing, I met Chhuong yesterday. He said at one point you went with Chhuong and Man, who was Hatt's brother. Could you describe this?

Yoeuk: It was like this. When I did trade in fish, I was involved. I needed to take rice. But I did not know that his younger brother was captured. The older brother would not be kept any longer. I left Ta Chhuong's place. I took him to help work here as the southwest was there. And I went there. He and I got along and then he asked me "Let me ask you, as you are like my child, would they bring me to be killed? Uncle!" I did not know. "It is difficult, Uncle!" We both were at an open field. If he wished to escape, I did not know how to deal with him. And, I did not make any conclusion but I walked him with a bicycle. He said I would not be spared as his brother was captured. I said, "I did not know, uncle. Uncle! Now [I] did not know. I was assigned to take you there. They said it was for a meeting, but I did not know. They did not send others, but me. It was because I knew you". We used to eat and drink altogether, so if I told him to escape, it was hard. But if he could escape himself, I could not do anything as I had a bare hand. At that time, it was late afternoon. When we arrived at Phnom Srok, he said, "Let it be like this. [It was because of] late afternoon, let's go to my house and have food there. Don't worry. I will not escape. I know you. I pity you." After we had a meal, for which I was grateful, he asked me "Brother! My father!" I said I did not know. "Comrade" In fact, I was a subordinate as I did not know what to say. I was assigned to take him. I was sent because during the season when the eels were trapped, he always told me that "Please tell others that I know how to trap eels". At that time, if we went to work for economic section, we had food to eat. So, he wanted me to help him. I conveyed his words to the chief of the regional mobile unit, who said to let him do it. That is why I was assigned to take him. On our arrival, we ate food. And we met female militiamen, who were soldiers. They were female militiamen. I did not know anything. In the afternoon, I walked him with the bicycle. They asked if you was Man? I said Yes. Then, it seemed that they whispered in a strange way. After leaving, he was hopeless. He said "I know that I will be arrested." I said I did not know. He said, "let me go to that place". Upon arrival at my place, we had a meal. We had plenty of food at the economic section. We ate porridge and he stayed with me for about four days. He kept talking with me that, "I am hopeless but do not know where to escape". He said if he were to die, to let him die. Later, he was taken away. He was captured and sent to a district security office, as I learned afterward. It was because I met the person who took him, and I asked, "That day that Man was taken, where was he sent to?" The person said, "No, [he] was sent to the security office." The reason I knew that he was sent to Phnom Srok security office was that there were many people, including soldiers, at Phnom Srok security office.

Dany: At that time, who ordered you to take Ta Man?

Yoeuk: Brother Yann, chief of regional mobile unit.
Dany: The chief of regional mobile unit ordered you to take him?
Yoeuk: Yes. The chief said, "Comrade! Bring him to work here."
Dany: [Did he] Say it like that?
Yoeuk: Yes.
Dany: Why did you take Ta Man back at that time? And why did Chhuong come along?
Yoeuk: At that time, Ta Chhuong took charge of the fishing unit, so he might need to come to tell something I did not stay at my workplace, I just left a message for the people there to cook food for him. And I went to each place to make sure that there was enough rice.
Dany: In which month and year you called Ta Man?
Yoeuk: Could not remember but it might be the rainy season. Ta Chhuong may remember?
Dany: Yes. In which year during the rainy season?
Yoeuk: It could be, possibly....
Dany: At that time, you said Ta Vall was arrested in 1977 or before that?
Yoeuk: After.
Dany: How long?
Yoeuk: It was long. After his arrest, our country was liberated. It might be in 1978. It might be two or three months in late 1978.
Dany: Uncle! After that, *Ta Rin* and *Yeay Chaem*, how long did you work with *Yeay Chaem*?
Yoeuk: Long enough. After that, *Ta Yann* and *Ta Poal*. Now, *Ta Yann* was also arrested.
Dany: Yes.
Yoeuk: Only *Ta Poal* was left. I worked for him until the Vietnamese came.
Dany: After the arrest of *Ta Vall*, how long did *Ta Yun* become chief of the regional mobile brigade?
Yoeuk: No, it was less than a year. Since then, after *Ta Yun* was gone, only *Ta Poal* was left. *Ta Poal* along with others from the district level had the responsibility over there. Then, *Yeay Chaem* came. It was not so long after when the Vietnamese arrived.
Dany: Yes! Not so long when she served as a region chief?
Yoeuk: Not long.
Dany: How many months if you guessed, did *Yeay Chaem* serve as region chief?
Yoeuk: She took over during the rainy season and then during the summer season, there was a liberation.
Dany: At that time, did *Yeay Chaem* plan to build Trapeang Thma dam?
Yoeuk: Not yet.
Dany: Not yet?

Yoeuk: Yes, as I knew, there was no plan yet because she just took over from others. She tried to resolve the living conditions in the villages and communes. Over a certain period, we began to eat rice.

Dany: Yes. When the Vietnamese came, was there any meeting before an escape from the village, was there any digging of holes?

Yoeuk: No, I did not know as I walked home. I took charge of the economic section. There were thousands of sacks of rice. The people encircled my place called Smach Por-Char because rice was placed inside the pagoda. I spontaneously spoke to the crowd, some of whom I knew. I invited them for discussion and said, "Now, brothers! There is no need to encircle it. I cannot take all the rice, but only about ten cans of rice. You could take it but avoid any violence." I wanted to say that it would not be good if you had a conflict after I left. I also studied religion. I declared this to those who encircled the place.

Dany Yes.

Yoeuk I prepared to leave too because I was told not to stay any longer.

Dany Yes.

Yoeuk Heard that let go, but not to stay any longer. We would meet and discuss later.

Dany Yes, when the Vietnamese came, did you go along with Yeay Chaem?

Yoeuk Yes.

Dany You escaped as a group?

Yoeuk Yes, all were from Phnom Srok and Preah Netr Preah Districts.

Dany Yes.

Yoeuk We all went together.

Dany Where did they go?

Yoeuk We went as far as Dangrek Mountain. I served as a soldier over there. Numerous people died of malaria.

Dany Did you get married?

Yoeuk Not yet.

Dany Not yet?

Yoeuk I just got married. You can see my children here. They are studying.

Dany Yes. Did you serve as a soldier with Yeay Chaem?

Yoeuk Yes, of course.

Dany: How long did you spend with Yeay Chaem?

Yoeuk: Until the liberation in late 1980. Oh! No, in late 1979. In late 1980, it could be December or January.

Dany: Yes.

Yoeuk: Because I left here, soldiers under my control did not like to be there. They had no freedom. It was different from Prey Moan and Phnom Chatt, where people enjoyed a better freedom. They could bring gold to exchange for food.

Dany: Yes.

Yoeuk: Over there, there were no Thais. It was surrounded by forest. If people wanted to eat coconut, they could go and pick it. We defended and crushed spikes.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: That is why I fled Dangrek with many soldiers. I was followed. I told her that sister! As I got here, I was tired of returning home.

Dany: Really? Yeay Chaem followed you and talked to you?

Yoeuk: Yes, because there were no soldiers. I brought them all.

Dany: How was she? Where did she go?

Yoeuk: No. In the meantime, she is alive and works as a commune council member.

Dany: A commune council member?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: But, she did not stay with you in early 1980, as you said. But you came to Chhat Mountain where soldiers could enjoy freedoms such as exchanging rice and gold?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: Where did Yeay Chaem go?

Yoeuk: Yeay Chaem went to work at Northern Zone with Ta Soeun.

Dany: Yes?

Yoeuk: Stayed with Ta Soeun in the Northern Zone.

Dany: In which part of the Northern Zone?

Yoeuk: Northern Zone! In Oddar Meanchey [province]. It was beyond Kok Morn, Ampil, where the fighting took place at Preah Vihear [province].

Dany: Where were they fighting these days?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: Kok Morn was at Ta Krabei and Ta Moan temples?

Yoeuk: Yes. Around that place.

Dany: Around that place. When you were at Chhatt Mountain under the Khmer Rouge?

Yoeuk: The same. It was Khmer Rouge.

Dany: Yes. How was it, Uncle?

Yoeuk: Well, when I arrived there I did not go...because they wanted Yeay Chaem to go to Chhatt Mountain, but she did not want to go. So the plan was cancelled. And I did not want to go back, that is why I stayed here.

Dany: For how long did you stay at Chhatt Mountain?

Yoeuk: Well, I stayed there until 1984 when there was fighting with Vietnam. When the Vietnamese took over that area, I fled to Malai. It was called Ka-ngak.

Dany: Yes, Kangak refugee camp.

Yoeuk: Yes. That is right.

Dany: How long did you stay in Ka-ngak.

Yoeuk: Until the repatriation!

Dany: The repatriation in 1992?

Yoeuk: Well it was in 1993. I was asked to join the army.

Dany: Where?

Yoeuk: Along Dangrek Mountain.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: In Thnor Duon and Ang Kbal Leav, but later when my wife delivered a child, I had to come back to take care of her. So we returned home.

Dany: You said you became a soldier in Ang Kbal Leav, did it belong to the Khmer Rouge or Para military?

Yoeuk: It belonged to the Khmer Rouge.

Dany: What was your position?

Yoeuk: Well, I was just a member of the division. I just followed their orders.

Dany: Did you hold a position within the division?

Yoeuk: No. Not at all.

Dany: No?

Yoeuk: They needed sincere persons to work in the division. They carefully selected people to work with them.

Dany: Were you an advisor or...?

Yoeuk: No. I was not. I was asked to go with the chief of regiment and when they had any problem, they discussed.

Dany: Alright.

Yoeuk: I mostly worked with *Ta Sou*.

Dany: *Ta Sou!* Prum Sou?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Dany: So when did you get married?

Yoeuk: I am not sure, probably in 1982.

Dany: So after you were married, your wife lived in the refugee camp, and you became a soldier at Ang Kbla Leav?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: Okay and until 1993 you returned to your village?

Yoeuk: They did not have rice for men at the camp, they gave it to women only. So I took an exam and became a teacher. I taught there.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: When I became a teacher, my division chief asked me to come back. But I told them that my wife was not well, so I needed to take care of her. I continued teaching in order to get rice.

Prunh: Excuse me, Uncle. I have a question for you.

Yoeuk: Okay.

Prunh: When you were a chief of the economic section, you gave the rice to the 32,000?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Prunh: Did the 32,000 work at Trapeang Thma?

Yoeuk: Yes. They worked to Trapeang Thma because it was huge and needed a lot of people to build it.

Prunh: So to conclude, did Trapeang Thma need 32,000 people to complete?

Yoeuk: Well, they did not stay in one place. Some worked on the dam and canals which flow into the lake. Some blocked Spean Sreng Lake. Have you ever been to Spean Sreng Lake yet?

Dany: Yes, we have heard about it. And we will go soon.

Yoeuk: When you reach the district, you should go and see why we needed to block it.

Dany: Okay.

Yoeuk: In the past they called it Ancient Bridge, which was big. But they filled it in with soil.

Prunh: Based on your estimation, how many people worked at Ang Trapeang Thma?

Yoeuk: I think not many people worked there because the workforce needed to take care of other places i.e., the canal. So they reserved some people at Trapeang Thma per se.

Prunh: What was the maximum number of workers at Trapeang Thma?

Yoeuk: Well over 1,000. They were asked to look after it and check whether it leaked. If they could not do it, they had to tell their leaders.

Prunh: So among the thousands and thousands of people, how many workers were still working?

Yoeuk: Lots of them were here before demobilization.

Prunh: About 20,000?

Yoeuk: Yes. But they could not do anything freely.

Prunh: Okay.

Yoeuk: There were some people who got ill. Some women who ran back to their cooperative were taken back. It was not free.

Bunthorn: Uncle, you said each of them got three cans of rice a day?

Yoeuk: That is right.

Bunthorn: 3,000...

Yoeuk: 32,000!

Bunthorn: Okay. And there were 400 cans of rice per bag?

Yoeuk: Yes. That is right.

Bunthorn: So there would be over 30,000 bags of rice?

Yoeuk: I did not remember. But they told us to reserve 1,000 bags of rice in the warehouse. And there were 7 trucks were needed to transport the rice.

Dany: Where did they collect the rice?

Yoeuk: From cooperatives and districts.

Bunthorn: I did the calculation. They needed 240 bags of rice.

Yoeuk: Okay.

Bunthorn: 240 bags of rice are a lot.

Yoeuk: A lot of them. Seven trucks transported the rice during the day and night.

Dany: Did you have enough rice from cooperative support?

Yoeuk: No not enough. Sometimes, we could not get rice from them.

Dany: What happened when you did not have the rice?

Yoeuk: The regional leader endorsed a letter to get the rice from Mongkul Borei warehouse. They got 5,000 bags of rice to support the workforce. But we got three cans of rice for only three months. After that we were demobilized and the ration of food was also decreased. Sometimes, our ration was almost equal to that of the cooperative.

Dany: Half a can of rice?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: A day?

Yoeuk: Yes, when we did not need to work hard.

Dany: Okay, so that was when you did not work hard?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Prunh: Excuse me, Uncle, you talked about Loeum?

Yoeuk: Loeum!

Prunh: You said he knew high ranking officials. Who were they?

Yoeuk: No, I did not know who. Because we know that there would be few out of 100 who could survive with respect to moral misconduct. But those who ranked below me would not survive. At least, they could be imprisoned at a security office.

Prunh: Did you ever meet Khieu Samphan?

Yoeuk: But this is what I heard from others that Loeum used to work with Khieu Samphan. Probably, he served food and water. Afterward, he was assigned to take charge here. It was not true as we did not witness that. But if we talked about history, we needed to believe in others. If not, would we be killed or what? In the case of stones at Angkor Wat, stones bore holes.

Danty: Is there anyone wishing to ask him more?

Yoeuk: Yes, let ask.

Dara: Do you know Chum Seng and Lat Suoy?

Yoeuk: I know Suoy but almost forgot.

Dara: What Suoy do?

Yoeuk: Small unit.

Dara: At Trapeang Thma Dam?

Yoeuk: Yes, now Seng lives in Punley. We have been separated for so long. [I] did not know how is it.

Dara: What did Seng do?

Yoeuk: He worked as a chief of unit.

Dara: At Trapeang Thma Dam?

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dara: I met Seng yesterday at Ta Vorng.

Yoeuk: Seng lives in Ta Vorng and Suoy in Punley.

Dara: Suoy lives in Tbeng, Banteay Chhmar Temple.

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dara: I met him yesterday.

Yoeuk: If I meet them, I would recognize them. Because at that time, I worked in economic section, I knew them.

Dara: That is why I came to meet with you.

Yoeuk: I knew all the women there. Sometimes, when they asked for leave of absence for three days, what could be the rice ration of the three days in regard to the three days of absence? For example, how many cans? But they never felt afraid of me. I allowed them to meet their parents. I said it was not my rice but for all. If we were to starve, we would starve altogether.

Dany: It seemed to me that we did not have any more questions for you.

Yoeuk: Okay.

Dany: Do you have anything to add?

Yoeuk: Well! In all, I would like to know about the purpose of this interview. I just want to say that. Other people are afraid of their history background. For me, I am NOT. I just talk about the truth, no matter what happens.

Dany: Yes. Uncle! As I told you earlier, we work at the Documentation Center of Cambodia. The center works toward compiling and collecting documentation of the DK regime (1975-1979). You are the person who has lots of experience in Region 5, especially the mobile work unit and Ang Trapeang Thma. We want to write about Trapeang Thma stories. And, this interview will contribute to the research and it will get published in the *Searching for Truth* magazine. This is intended to allow researchers and the younger generation to learn about it. Perhaps, they could make contact with you based on our interview.

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: They may ask you more.

Yoeuk: Yes, alright. Because I used to read some books and magazines that were compiled. But they have many arguments in those magazines, but what they said about little things, we did not know much.

Dany: So, I would like to thank you so much for your time. It is nearly three hours, now. It is about over two hours.

Yoeuk: Yes.

Dany: Yes. Thank you so much.

Theany: Uncle! May I take your picture and record this interview?

Yoeuk: No problem.

End.