

KHMER ROUGE 'TRAPEANG THMA' DAM CONSTRUCTION

Interview series: Interview No. 3

INTERVIEW WITH LAT SUOY, MALE, 55,
OCUPATION DURING THE KHMER ROUGE: SOLDIER
CURRENT ADDRESS: PRASAT TBAENG VILLAGE, BANTEAY CHMA COMMUNE, THMA
PUOK DISTRICT, BANTEAY MEANCHEY PROVINCE
BIRTH PLACE: CHEUNG WAT VILLAGE, PREAH NETH PREAH COMMUNE,
PREAH NETH PREAH DISTRICT, BATTAMBANG PROVINCE
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Dany: First, what is your full name?
Suoy: My name?
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Lat Suoy
Dany: How old are you?
Suoy: 55.
Dany: Where were you born?
Suoy: Choeung Wat village.
Dany: Which commune?
Suoy: Preah Neth Preah commune, Preah Neth Preah district, Banteay
Meanchey province.
Dany: Where do you live today?
Suoy: Prasat Tbaeng village.
Dany: Prasat Tbaeng village?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: Which commune?
Suoy: Banteay Chma commune, Thma Puok district.
Dany: Banteay Meanchey province?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: What is your wife's name?
Suoy: Daim Reth.
Dany: How old is she?
Suoy: 50 something, perhaps 56.
Dany: 51?

Suoy: Yeah, 51.
Dany: Where was she born?
Suoy: Po Bon village, Punley commune, Phnom Srok district.
Dany: Po.... commune?
Suoy: Po Rombon commune.
Dany: Po Rombon?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: How many children do you have?
Suoy: I have six children.
Dany: Six children?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: How many boys and girls?
Suoy: Three girls and three boys.
Dany: What is your current occupation?
Suoy: I do farming and am also a traditional healer.
Dany: What type of traditional healer?
Suoy: [I] break spells and use spells to help heal people.
Dany: Oh, a Khmer traditional healer?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: What is your father's name?
Suoy: Lat Nuk.
Dany: Is he still alive?
Suoy: Alive.
Dany: Where?
Suoy: Choeung Wat village.
Dany: Choeung Wat village?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: How about your mother?
Suoy: Nabb Khuon.
Dany: Where is she these days?
Suoy: She is also still alive.
Dany: Her name is Nabb Khuon?
Suoy: Nabb Khuon.
Dany: How many siblings do you have?
Suoy: Four [including me].
Dany: How many boys and girls?
Suoy: Two girls and two boys.
Dany: Where are you amongst your siblings?
Suoy: I am the third.
Dany: You are the third. How about your education?
Suoy: Grade 6.
Dany: Grade 6 in the old [school system] days?
Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Where did you study?
Suoy: A month after I took an exam in order to get to study at Svay [Sisophon], the Pol Potists came in.
Dany: Oh!
Suoy: [I] discontinued my study.
Dany: So you discontinued your study in 1975?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: How about going to study at Svay [Sisophon]?
Suoy: Yes. The Khmer Rouge came in. They took power, closed schools and I discontinued my studies at that time.
Dany: When you studied here, you went to Preah Neth Preah School?
Suoy: Yes, Grade 7 [old school system] at this Preah Neth Preah School.
Dany: Grade 7 at Preah Neth Preah. That means you finished Grade 6. Which school did you go to at Svay [Sisophon]?
Suoy: A school on top of a mountain. I forgot the name of this school... Today, it is Samdech Eou School at Phnom Svay [Svay mountain].
Dany: On Phnom Svay?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: So, you were there studying for one month, after which the Khmer Rouge came in, right?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: So, when the Pol Potists came in, what did you do?
Suoy: I was told to build a dam at Prey Moan [area]. They were looking for the 'absolutes'; I did not understand what it was. [Translator's Note: 'Absolute' was used to describe those who were especially daring and dedicated.] When they looked for 'absolutes,' I raised my hand and I was picked. I was made a soldier. I was to be an 'absolute' soldier... I cried missing my mother. I was 15 years old. I was placed in O-Smach forest, Smach Ta Khaek, Romduol, after which I was transported to Phnom Leab, where I was armed. I was at Phnom Leab for one month before I was transported to Romchek, Phnom Srok.
Dany: So, in 1975, you were assigned to build a dam at Prey Moan?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: What was the selection process?
Suoy: In the village, we were mobilized to build a dam at Prey Moan all together, construct dykes for the rice field. Every village.
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: There, in the meeting, they looked for those 'absolutes'. I didn't understand what the 'absolutes' were. I raised my hand because I saw others do so.
Dany: Who was in charge at Prey Moan?
Suoy: My leader was Ta Khim from a district east [of this place].
Dany: Which district east of this place?

Suoy: This Siem Reap province.
Dany: Siem Reap?
Suoy: Yes. Those from the liberated zone came to control us here.
Dany: When you built Prey Moan dam, you built it from where to where?
Suoy: Areas along the paved road. From Rohal, you actually can see this dam along the road.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The dam along the road, the tall one, I was building that one.
Dany: How long you were building the dam before you were selected to be one of the 'absolutes'?
Suoy: One month. I was selected to be an 'absolute' after one month.
Dany: Who conducted the selection?
Suoy: The leader of the military, the unit of Bang Saroeun.
Dany: Whose unit?
Suoy: Military of Bang Saroeun.
Dany: Who was Saroeun? What was his role?
Suoy: Military company.
Dany: [Military] company of Preah Neth Preah district or the region?
Suoy: At first, the region.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They were regional military.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Battalion 513.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Both single women and single men were selected. They selected male and female youth.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: All of the 'absolutes' were selected.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: I raised my hand and I was selected. I did not know what it was. I did not ask. I heard they were looking for 'absolutes,' I raised my hand.
Dany: When they were looking for 'absolutes,' how many went with you?
Suoy: There were five of us, me, Khmao at Pailin, Vong already deceased, Vy and Lat Vy who is a policeman at Banteay Meanchey [today].
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Ah, So Ty also.
Dany: So Ty?
Suoy: Yes, we were amongst the 'absolutes' together.
Dany: They selected only five 'absolute' persons at Prey Moan?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: So after the five were selected, you all were to be in Battalion 513?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: Was it a battalion or a regiment?

Suoy: 513 was a battalion.
Dany: Battalion.
Suoy: There were two battalions.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: There were two battalions in the region.
Dara: Another battalion was?
Suoy: Battalion 18.
Dany: Who was in charge of the battalion?
Suoy: For Battalion 18, I did not know. They were guarding the Thai border and stationed at Boeng.
Dany: So, after you became a soldier, where were you stationed and did you undergo any military training?
Suoy: [We] were stationed at Phnom Leab, where I was taught the letters. I lied that I could not read letters.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They taught vowels such as "A," "E," "Ei."
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They wrote "K" and I told them I did not know it. They showed me "E;" I said I did not know it because I was asked to teach.
Dany: Why did you lie?
Suoy: I lied because I was afraid they would kill us if they knew [we were educated]. So Ty also lied; we all lied. They told to learn to write such as "A." We were to get the earth at the bottom of a pond to use as chalk.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Get the mud and have it dried, and use it as chalk. Use it to write "A," "E," "Ei" at nights.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: I learned to write on a wooden writing board.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: When asked the next day, I said I did not remember.
Dany: How long did you learn at Phnom Leab?
Suoy: About 10 days.
Dany: What happened after 10 days?
Suoy: After 10 days, I was sent to Svay [Sisophon], guarding. After another three days, I was transported to a place where we were selected to become part of military units.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: I was sent to Phnom Srok district.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: I was stationed at Phnom Srok, after which I was sent on to Phnom Khlaeng, Phnom Kaun Khlaeng.
Dany: When you were guarding at Svay [Sisophon], how were troops selected? What was the selection process for Battalion 513?

Suoy: Battalion 513 was divided and handed over to the district.
Dany: To the district?
Suoy: Yes, one part was handed over to Preah Neth Preah district and the other was handed over to Phnom Srok district.
Dany: So, your Battalion 513 was divided into two parts?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: One was handed over to Preah Neth Preah district and the other to Phnom Srok?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: And you belonged to Phnom Srok?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: How many were handed over to Phnom Srok?
Suoy: A company was handed over to Phnom Srok.
Dany: A company?
Suoy: Yes, but not a full company because the number was 90 people.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The remaining part belonged to the region's old Battalion 513.
Dany: Ok. Understood.
Suoy: [The old Battalion 513] was retained.
Dany: So, a large unit was handed over to Phnom Srok district and another large unit to Preah Neth Preah.
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: And the remainder belonged to the region's Battalion?
Suoy: They were retained in their region's Battalion.
Dany: Who was in charge of your company?
Suoy: Ta Nakk; the deputy was Ta Chorn.
Dany: What was your position?
Suoy: I was a youth.
Dany: A youth?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: At Preah Neth Preah district, who was in charge?
Suoy: At Preah Neth Preah, I did not know.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: After the selection, we were transported out on that night.
Dany: You were handed over to Phnom Srok?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: What did your company do in Phnom Srok district?
Suoy: After the transfer, we were deployed at Kaun Khlaeng.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: We were guarding Kaun Khlaeng Mountain. We were in the third combat line.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: At Kaun Khlaeng, at Thmenh Trey, at Chhouk Ang.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: At Pleung Tun Trean.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Troops were deployed to guard against people's escape to Thailand.
Dany: So, the combat line at such places as Phnom Khlaeng and Chhouk Ang was to guard against...?
Suoy: Escape to Thailand.
Dany: Escape to Thailand?
Suoy: Yes, in case of escape.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: I was stationed at that place, after which I was transferred to a mobile unit.
Dany: How long were you there?
Suoy: About one year; no, less than one year. It was about three months later that I was transferred back to the unit.
Dany: Yes, when you were guarding at Phnom Khlaeng...?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: When was that three month period?
Suoy: I began the guarding perhaps after the [Khmer] New Year, after which I was sent to Kaun Klaeng. It was the beginning of 1976.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Early 1976.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: After three months at Kaun Khlaeng, I was transferred to a platoon stationed at Trapeang Thma.
Dany: I want to know about your guarding place at Phnom Kaun Khlaeng.
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: At the time, were there many people from the mobile unit fleeing and running into your combat line? Did you make many arrests?
Suoy: No, no escapes.
Dany: No escapes?
Suoy: No, members of the mobile unit never fled. Most of the time, those fleeing were those who made their way from distant places.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Never found fleeing people because they knew the road in the forest. The guarding was only to guard and shoot wild pigs and musk deers.
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: Some [fleeing people] may have been trapped at the border, where some bamboo traps were planted. My group guarded in huts like this.
Dany: So, Kaun Khlaeng is far from the border?
Suoy: Very far.
Dany: Far?
Suoy: Kaun Khlaeng Mountain was in the vicinity of Trapeang Thma.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: When you saw the Trapeang Thma dam, you could also see the Mountain, where there were many musk deers, stag deers, and wild pigs

Dany: So, there were two combat lines deployed, one at your place and another at the border?

Suoy: Yes, three lines.

Dany: Three?

Suoy: Yes, one at Kaun Khlaeng, one at the border and another somewhere in between.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: And holes were dug.

Dany: So, when you were guarding, you did not arrest anyone?

Suoy: No, I did not encounter any fleeing people and made no arrests.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: I never saw anybody fleeing and never knew how they were fleeing. There were members of the mobile unit coming to ask for *Kha-cheay* (a kind of ginger) and I took them to dig and get some of it. Then I sent them back and that's it.

Dany: So, your company was guarding there?

Suoy: Yes, we were guarding there. But we were scattered.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: We were divided and scattered in huts and shelters like this.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: The troops assisted the mobile unites with communication, mushroom picking and fetching vegetables.

Dany: And you were transferred out after three months?

Suoy: Yes, transferred to Trapeang Thma dam.

Dany: When were you transferred to Trapeang Thma dam?

Suoy: It was late 1976.

Dany: Late 1976?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Which month, if you could remember?

Suoy: The month after the rains began, and there was flooding. It was the month when the water rose.

Dany: *Kadek*? [Translator's Note: From the Khmer lunar calendar - generally in December.]

Suoy: No. The month when we began to plough. (His wife said) *Asath*.

Dany: *Asath* could be in July-August?

Suoy: [No], *Ches*. [Translator's Note: generally in June.]

Dany: So, at the moment, it is *Ches*, right?

Suoy: Yes, it is *Ches*.

Dany: When did you go?

Suoy: I did not remember which month. I remembered, nonetheless, that when we were walking back, it was raining, water.

Dany: Water?

Suoy: Yes, we were ordered to camp at a corner of the Trapeang Thma dam.

Dany: Yes, why were you transferred from Kaun Khlaeng to Trapeang Thma?

Suoy: I was assigned to guard. The order was to guard the dam. In case of poor construction, the troops who were guarding would take over.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Or in case of a collapse or cracks.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: For example, you finished constructing a part and, after you moved on, the constructed part cracked.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: [In such case,] I would send a messenger, who at the time, carried letters.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Messenger meant letter. When the letter was sent, mobile unit would be sent to take up and clean the works.

Dany: So, who transferred you from Kaun Khlaeng to this dam?

Suoy: The commander of the company.

Dany: The commander of the company?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Ta Nak?

Suoy: Ta Nak, who was the commander of the company, took orders from Ta Vall's group.

Dany: Ta Vall?

Suoy: Yes. Ta Vall gave orders to you and you conveyed the order to me as to how many forces were to be transferred. This was the communication line.

Dany: Did you know Ta Vall when you were at Kaun Khlaeng?

Suoy: I was living with him for a while.

Dany: When did you live with him?

Suoy: Since 1975 when he married his wife at Svay [Sisophon] at Romduol.

Dany: He married in 1975?

Suoy: Yes, he married in late 1975.

Dany: Where?

Suoy: At Svay [Sisophon] where they made the pledge.

Dany: What was his wife's name?

Suoy: I forgot her name.

Dany: Yeay Kim, Yeay Kin?

Suoy: I forgot his wife's name. They got married at the same time as Ta Maong.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Both of them got married.
Dany: Where did his wife come from?
Suoy: I really cannot remember his wife. She was not from Siem Reap. His wife spoke like [us] too.
Dany: Where was she from?
Suoy: I think it is likely that she was from Battambang.
Dany: Okay. You knew him since 1975. You said just now that in '75, you were with a mobile unit at Prey Moan.
Suoy: It was late 1975. I was with a mobile unit in early 1975.
Dany: Okay.
Suoy: Late 1975, I was a soldier.
Dany: Okay.
Suoy: In short, that year.
Dany: Okay.
Suoy: After being selected as a soldier, I wasn't with the mobile unit anymore. Ta Vall was in charge of the military.
Dany: In charge of the military?
Suoy: Yes, he was. The deputy was Ta Phy.
Dany: Ta Phy?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: At the time of the troop selection, you met him at Svay [Sisophon] or at another place?
Suoy: We met at Romduol. He was not at Svay; he was at Romduol.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Ta Maong was at Preah Neth Preah district.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Ta Vall was at Romduol when he married his wife, at the same time that Ta Maong married his wife, whose house is at a corner of a road to Chub.
Dany: To Chup Vary [commune]?
Suoy: Yes. That is Ta Maong's house.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Ta Vall was at Romduol.
Dany: Where was Romduol?
Suoy: Romduol at Prey Moan.
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: His messenger was Vong, already deceased. Vong was my friend and Ta Vall's messenger.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: [Vong] together with Chhleum were serving him.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Serving Ta Vall until 1976 when Ta Vall was promoted to be in charge of the Region's mobile units.

Dany: 1976?

Suoy: Yes. In charge of all mobile units within Region 5.

Dany: So, he was removed from the rank of military?

Suoy: Yes. He was removed from the military and was no longer strengthening the troops.

Dany: Yes, at the beginning, Ta Phy was in charge of the military in Region 5?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: And Ta Vall was the deputy commander in charge of the military in Region 5?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: In 1976, he was removed from the military and put to be in charge of the mobile unit?

Suoy: He took charge of all mobile units.

Dany: All mobile units?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: So, you were transferred from Kaun Khlaeng to guard the dam. You said that was in the rainy season of 1976?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: During the rainy season, what was it like when you first arrived at the Trapeang Thma?

Suoy: I saw... When it comes to the construction, it was not yet completed. There were many mobile unit members, many of whom ran back home. They were arrested by security police. The village security police formed combat lines waiting only to arrest those fleeing and to return them to work. The troops did not touch members of the mobile units.

Dany: No, I wanted to know when you first left Kaun Khlaeng and arrived at Trapeang Thma.

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Was the dam already constructed or not yet, when you first arrived?

Suoy: They had begun to construct it and some parts were finished. They built one part at a time.

Dany: What did you see? Was it already forming a dam or not yet?

Suoy: No, not yet. They were still digging earth. Digging, carrying, and organizing. They were using string, poles to straighten the line.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: The bottom [of the dam] was 15 meters [in width] and the height was 5 meters.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: The width was 5 meters.

Dany: When you first arrived, you saw poles, bamboo, and did you see earth?

Suoy: Earth too. Parts of the dam were already finished. Other parts not yet. There were special mobile units.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: There were special units and on-foot units.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Members of the special units were given two cans of rice each per day.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Members of on-foot units were given one can of rice [each] per day.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Special units would carry one cubic meter of earth in eight carrying t
rips.
Dany: One cubic meter?
Suoy: One cubic meter with eight carryings. Each basket was this big.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Women were even running while carrying the baskets, back and forth.
These were their special units.
Dany: So, by the end of 1976, people were already carrying earth?
Suoy: Yes, they already carried earth.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Carried earth until mid-1977 or the beginning of 1978, when the
construction of the dam was finished.
Dany: When you first arrived, you saw mobile units constructing the dam. You
said Ta Vall was in charge of all mobile units of the Region. Were there
any other mobile units working on the site?
Suoy: There were no other mobile units. They all were mobile units of the
Region. In other words, these were government workers, who are
different from members of the village's mobile unit.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The latter was called the cooperative's mobile unit.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The cooperative's mobile unit was not within the formal structure.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The Region's mobile units were within the formal structure. There were
Region's medics to treat them.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They had their own leader to be in charge and were to abide by rules
like the military.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They were members of the mobile units, but, as troops, were given nice
clothes.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They had plenty to eat.
Dany: Yes, there is one more thing. When you arrived at Trapeang Thma dam,
did you know who initiated the construction of this dam?
Suoy: The person who initiated the plan for this dam?
Dany: Yes.

Suoy: The plan was arranged at the top. From Ta Vall.
Dany: From Ta Vall?
Suoy: Yes, Ta Vall had a plan to construct a reservoir.
Dany: A reservoir?
Suoy: Yes. The unfinished bridge was called Cheang Moung.
Dany: Cheang Moung?
Suoy: Cheang Moung built it. He already died.
Dany: What did he do?
Suoy: He was a lead engineer for that bridge.
Dany: Lead engineer for the bridge?
Suoy: The big bridge was not yet finished as you could see there were many poles there.
Dany: Where was this big bridge?
Suoy: The big bridge was at Trapeang Thma. It was called the first bridge.
Dany: So, the first bridge was built by Cheang Moung?
Suoy: Yes, Cheang Moung did it.
Dany: Cheang Moung's team composed of many members?
Suoy: He had a group of workers, whose names I did not know. I only knew Cheang Moung.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: We selected members of the mobile units, who he could get to help him.
Dany: Yes. So, this dam, Ta Vall had a plan to construct a reservoir?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: What was it for?
Suoy: The reservoir was built for people to be able to cultivate rice during the dry season.
Dany: Cultivation of rice during the dry season?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: This cultivation of rice during the dry season, people from which place could cultivate it?
Suoy: People from all over Phnom Srok district.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The water could flow as far as Preah Neth Preah district.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The canal reached as far as Rohal commune.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: It flowed that way towards the river.
Dany: Yes. Why did you know that Ta Vall initiated this construction plan of the dam?
Suoy: Because he was giving orders. He was in charge. He was taking measurements.
Dany: Yes.

Suoy: He was taking measurements and he was transporting the food supply. Everybody took his orders.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Must do whatever - planting or transplanting rice - ...

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: ...was ordered from Ta Vall.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Ordered by Ta Vall.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: To finish transplanting rice here and there; he ordered the repairing of damages of the dam.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: He ordered to do it.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: He was the top man of all Region 5. Ta Vall was the most senior, most senior for the region's mobile units.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: He was in charge of all of Region 5.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: He was the only man.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: His name was so well known that the dam was named Ta Vall dam.

Dany: Ta Vall dam, which one?

Suoy: Ta Vall dam was this one.

Dany: A dam from Kambaor to Sreh [mountain]?

Suoy: Yes. That was Ta Vall dam. Trapeang Thma reservoir was also part of Ta Vall dam. Spean Sraeng's reservoir was also part of Ta Vall dam.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Ta Vall was the one constructing it.

Dany: So who was the chief of Region 5?

Suoy: Ta Hoeng.

Dany: Ta Hoeng?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Who was his deputy?

Suoy: I did not know [that person]. I knew a number of people such as Ta Hoeng, Ta Phy, Ta Vall, Ta Maong.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Earlier, Ta Maong was also working for the region.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Afterward, he was in charge of Preah Neth Preah.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: When troops were divided, he was chief of the district.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Earlier, he was also a military commander.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: We were not following closely.
Dany: When the dam was being constructed, did Ta Hoeng visit?
Suoy: Yes. He visited. A visit to inspect the completed parts. Chinese guests also came. It was said that Angkar was Chinese.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: It was this country, I forgot. They were from three countries.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: When they came, they wore white shirts with the sleeves of this length. When the cars arrived, we were to turn our faces away. [We] were told to turn our backs to them, meaning we were not allowed to see their faces. They were in the cars behind our backs.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: It was said that they were Chinese and a ... country; there were two countries.
Dany: You said the Chinese. When did they come?
Suoy: It was '77 and they also came in '76. They came twice a year.
Dany: But when you arrived there, it was in late '76?
Suoy: Yes. Hearing they were visiting. We were there, ready [to receive them].
Dany: Did you see them?
Suoy: I only saw them in '77.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: I was transferred there in '77 and saw them in that year.
Dany: Which month in '77?
Suoy: They visited in a month when the rice was not yet bearing fruits; the height of the rice was up to our knees only.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They inspected the rice fields at various ceremony halls.
Dany: How did the Chinese come?
Suoy: Cars.
Dany: Which brand?
Suoy: It was like a military car, similar to a jeep.
Dany: How many people?
Suoy: Two persons in a car. It was almost like a van, today's tourist vans.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: It was almost like a tourist van, but smaller.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: There were many people in that van.
Dany: Yes. Who accompanied those Chinese visitors?
Suoy: The group of Ta Hoeng, that of Ta Phy. Zone military escorted them.
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: There were two pools of military.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: When visitors of high positions came, the Zone's military was escorting them instead of the region's military.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The Zone's military, generally speaking, were special forces of the nation.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They were the loyalists.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They wore green shirts.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They were called the Zone military.

Dany: Zone military?
Suoy: Yes. Zone [military] was at today's kapok plantation. This kapok plantation was the base of the Zone [military].

Dany: Kapok plantation?
Suoy: Kapok and mango plantation.

Dany: Kapok and mango plantation?
Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Was that the base of Zone?
Suoy: Yes, a military division was based there.

Dany: Whose division?
Suoy: I did not know. I only knew that District 7's military battalion was there, in Ta Daun village, Daun Cheal.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They were District 7's battalion.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: I knew it was a battalion and not a division. I did not know their names either.

Dany: Do you know Zone leaders?
Suoy: I knew only one, Ta Nhim.

Dany: Knew only Nhim?
Suoy: Yes. He was secretary of Zone.

Dany: You did not know other leaders of the Zone?
Suoy: No. I did not know them, I only knew Ta Nhim. He used to come for a meeting.

Dany: When was that?
Suoy: It was in 1976, a meeting at Phnom Srok.

Dany: Meeting at Phnom Srok?
Suoy: Yes, at today's district hall of Phnom Srok.

Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The Khmer Rouge troops, including my group, stationed there.

Dany: At Trapeang Thma, did he come to visit?

Suoy: No. Trapeang Thma was where we were working. Leaders stationed at Phnom Srok, the district hall. When my group was called, [we] stopped there at the district hall.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: A rice warehouse was opened. During the New Year, we were given a three-day leave like today.

Dany: How about leaders from Phnom Penh, from the Party Center, top leaders, did you ever see them visiting Trapeang Thma?

Suoy: I saw and I heard people talk about it. But I did not know their names. We were soldiers and we were not allowed near them.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: It was much like you visiting this pagoda and we are the locals here.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Guarding, without knowing who visited. The Zone secretary came and I knew Ta Nhim came. Other leaders, Chinese visitors came. We knew the Chinese came.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: We were informed via radio communication, using Radio 125 of this big event. We were told to be ready to receive the Chinese guests. We made preparations but did not know who else came. They visited for a moment and would return in their cars.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: They went to eat at Svay [Sisophon].

Dany: Have you ever heard of Pol Pot or others coming?

Suoy: Never. Pol Pot was never seen arriving here. Never, never. He might have come to Svay [Sisophon], I did not know.

Dany: How about others?

Suoy: Others were said to have come here; those underneath him, but he never came here.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: They would have come and done the inspection at Svay [Sisophon].

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: At Svay, it was like this. When Pol Pot came, troops along the road were to be ready blocking traffic, not to let people come out.

Dany: When did he come to Svay?

Suoy: No. I meant that I do not know.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: If he came, he came to Svay. Because I was at Trapeang Thma.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: We were only concerned about our targeted objectives. Any mistakes, we would be killed. For example, if we were guarding the dam and the dam was damaged, and we did not report the dam damaged, terrible.

Dany: Let's go back to Trapeang Thma. According to your knowledge, how many companies and battalions were required to build Trapeang Thma?

Suoy: The number of people?

Dany: Yes. The number of people in battalions and companies?

Suoy: Tens of thousands of people.

Dany: Tens of thousands of people?

Suoy: Yes, tens of thousands of people.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Because in Region 5 everyone was mobilized.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Male and female youths.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: They called youths from villages in Thma Puok, Preah Neth Preah, Phnom Srok, from the entire Region 5, plus the new people from Phnom Penh also.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Many people.

Dany: How many regiments and battalions?

Suoy: Talking about regiments, I do not remember because there were too many people and I did not know all of them.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: What I knew was that there were many people at the place, from Trapeang Thma to Toal Punlea.

Dany: Up to Punlea?

Suoy: Yes, the people who built [the dam] lined up to Punlea.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: There were tens of thousands of people.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: And you would walk to work and wouldn't return until almost sunrise.

Dany: How wide was the bottom of the dam?

Suoy: 10, 15 [meters].

Dany: How about height?

Suoy: 5 meters.

Dany: How about the top width of the dam?

Suoy: 5 meters.

Dany: How about its length?

Suoy: I don't know the length.

Dany: From Trapeang Thma to Pulea as you said just now?

Suoy: Yes, very far.

Dany: Far?

Suoy: I assumed it to be close to 10 kilometers.

Dany: Close to 10 kilometers?

Suoy: Yes, because it was blocking the water system flowing from the upper forest in order to make a reservoir.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: When fishes were freed, they were brought at night.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: They released fishes as big as catfishes, from more than ten trucks, into the water.

Dany: Yes. For members of the mobile units who had problems such as suspicion, how would you treat them according to orders from Ta Vall?

Suoy: When there's a problem, their unit, group and regiment took care of it. The troops had nothing to do with it.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: For example, when one was having night blindness, the person was accused of having consciousness blindness. The big or small unit, of which that person was a member, transported the person to the pits. If [the person] avoided the pits, they would say that the person did not have night blindness. Those pits - it would result in death if you fell into them. Avoid them.

Dara: So, at Trapeang Thma dam, were there a lot of people having night blindness?

Suoy: Yes. They had night blindness.

Dara: And when wanted to know if one really had night blindness...

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: They got the person to walk?

Suoy: Yes, the person was led to a pit. If the person was truly night blind, and fell into the pit, the person would be helped to get out because the person was truly blind [at night].

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: The person would be allowed to rest.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: If the person was led to a pit and avoided the pit, the accompanying person would push that person [into the pit].

Dany: Yeah?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Did you witness the event?

Suoy: I saw it. Because it had nothing to with the troops, they did the work amongst themselves. The killings of people were not done by troops, but by the chief of battalion, regiment, and company.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: I was stationed there and I knew Chhuoy was executed. I was told, "Comrade, Comrade Chhuoy was arrested last night." [Then] I asked, "Who arrested him?" They responded, "I did not lie to you." I then realized, 'Oh, the company arrested him.'

Dany: Oh.
Suoy: As I observed, the killings at Trapeang Thma dam were not done by troops, but by chiefs of the battalion, regiment and company.
Dara: You mean the mobile unit?
Suoy: The mobile unit that reported to its superiors.
Dany: To whom?
Suoy: To its superiors. For instance, the company did the killings and it reported to the regiment and the battalion. And if the battalion [did the killings], [it reported to the] regiment. And if the platoon did the killings, it reported to the company. And the company closed the case.
Dara: And it wasn't reported to anybody else?
Suoy: No.
Dara: There was another occurrence. Seng said that Ta Vall made a fire and later put the fire out, leaving the embers still burning.
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: They got those having night blindness to walk across these burning embers. If the persons were truly night blind, they would step on the embers.
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: There were more than ten people and one of them stepped on the burning embers. This one person was kept alive, while those that avoided the burning embers were all killed. Did you witness this event?
Suoy: This event was not done by Ta Vall. It was by their regiment. They did all kinds of things.
Dara: Did you witness these burning embers?
Suoy: I did not witness it. I witnessed the pits, though.
Dara: What about the pits?
Suoy: I knew the key [person] was from the regiment. Ta Vall could not have done it as he was at Svay [Sisophon].
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: It was true he was in charge of all mobile units in Region 5. But he was based at Svay. He trusted his chief of regiment.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: [He] trusted the regiment.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Prosecutions or executions were up to the regiment, which did all kinds of things. I was stationed at Trapeang Thma dam, but never contacted.
Dany: Really?
Suoy: Yeah. I told you just now about the execution of Chhuoy from Choeung Wat village. I gave him clothes and, the next morning, he was executed. I did the research and found out that the regiment did it.
Dany: Yeah?

Suoy: Sometimes, I and two others sat on the dam like this and saw that they took the night blind people to the pits.

Dany: Yeah?

Suoy: But this had nothing to do with the troops. They did it amongst themselves.

Dara: So, could the troops comment, contact, order or stop them?

Suoy: No. They could not stop them. If we stopped them, it would be interference in their work. If they contacted us, we did. If they did not contact us, it was up to them to decide. Any mistakes, their leaders dealt with it.

Dara: When you were at Trapeang Thma, you did not carry earth or construct dam?

Suoy: No. I was guarding.

Dara: So, you were a troop there?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: [You were there] guarding the dam?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: At Trapeang Thma dam?

Suoy: Yes. I was guarding. When the mobile units were withdrawn, my team was still there, inspecting in case of damage. If, when the water rose to the highest level, there were any damages, [I would] inform messengers to report and request the assistance of the mobile units.

Dara: So, you were not repairing the damages on the dam?

Suoy: No. Once reported, the mobile units were called to repair the damages and cracks. A platoon would be sent to take care of it.

Dany: So, as you were in the troops, your role was to guard and inspect the dam, checking if there were damages. Did you also guard against something else?

Suoy: Guard against everything. If they contacted us and we found people escaping, we would arrest them.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Even after the arrest, we could not kill them.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: We arrested them and sent them over to superiors to deal with them.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: They did whatever [to the escapees, up to them]. My team would return.

Dany: So, if there were escapees and if they were arrested, you sent them over to the upper level, which level?

Suoy: To superiors at Phnom Srok, to Phnom Srok.

Dany: Who was at Phnom Srok?

Suoy: We sent [them] to the company, such as Ta Nakk.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: After transferring them, my team would return.
Dany: Were there many escapees when you were there?
Suoy: When I was guarding, I did not find any escapees. In conclusion, I did not know about escapees because, for instance, the dam was here and people would go to defecate at the other side of the dam.
Dany: Yeah.
Suoy: We went to do our works and did not know if they had come and had gone. If they were arrested, they were caught further down.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The place where I was stationed was too crowded.
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: It was difficult to identify good people or enemies. For example, I was sitting here and you defecated at that pagoda.
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: I was sitting, not moving around.
Dany: Did your team, regiment, ever have meetings with Ta Vall? Did Ta Vall give any orders?
Suoy: Never. Meetings were only with the company, with Ta Nakk. After meeting with Ta Nakk, a meeting with the platoon was called.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: After meeting with the platoon, group leaders were called for meetings, through which targets were set. This was how we got orders.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: For example, I was transferred from here and placed at the old post.
Dany: Yes. So, the role of a troop like you was only to guard the dam, inspect damages or any problems such as cracks and then report them?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: To whom was the report sent?
Suoy: To superiors.
Dany: Who?
Suoy: Ta Nakk.
Dany: Ta Nakk?
Suoy: Yes. Ta Nakk wrote the letters to Ta Vall.
Dany: Yes. Aside from these [works], you were guarding. How many hours were you guarding? From what time to what time?
Suoy: Each was to guard two hours. A squad, composed of three persons, was to guard two hours. Three people for two hours.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Two hours of work. [I] walked to Chup [commune] and returned.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: When the others' turns came, I would waken them to take up their jobs.
Dany: So, in threes?
Suoy: Yes, a squad.

Dara: So, the guarding was done 24 hours a day?
Suoy: Yes. We guarded until morning, and all day. Guarded night and day.
Dara: Two hours each turn?
Suoy: Yes. Two hour shifts, taking care of the dam. If it was damaged, we would be responsible.
Dara: So, when you first arrived there, the dam was being constructed. You were there too, right?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: Guarding too?
Suoy: Guarding.
Dara: So, for the entire dam at Trapeang Thma, how many military regiments were there guarding?
Suoy: At Trapeang Thma there weren't too many troops. There was only a military platoon. There were many troops at Kaun Khlaeng.
Dara: Therefore, there was only a military platoon at Trapeang Thma Dam?
Suoy: Yes, a platoon of Ta At.
Dany: Ta At?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: Ta At was chief of the platoon?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: The troops were deployed along the entire dam?
Suoy: No. Troops were deployed in one place. The dam was here and the Thunder Struck Bridge was there.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: At Sreh [village].
Dany: When you inspected the dam, you inspected every place, right?
Suoy: Yes. When my turn came, I would talk until Kambor [mountain].
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: [Troops] were not placed some here and some there. They were placed in one place only.
Dara: Where were you stationed?
Suoy: I was stationed at the corner of Trapeang Thma dam.
Dara: Corner of Trapeang Thma?
Suoy: Yes. Near the first bridge.
Dara: Near the first bridge?
Suoy: Yes. You know after the corner, there was a bridge. At the corner leading to Pongro district. Now, there is a ceremony hall built over there.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Earlier, that was called the four-faceted hall.
Dany: So, during Pol Pot time, the four-faceted hall was already there?
Suoy: There was a four-faceted hall over there.
Dany: Who was at this four-faceted hall?

Suoy: This four-faceted hall was for guests.
Dany: Oh.
Suoy: One was a four-faceted hall and another was a guest receiving hall, which was for receiving visiting Chinese guests. The guests visited the guest receiving hall, inspecting the geography of the area and of the reservoir, for an hour before returning.
Dara: So, there were no guests walking on the dam for you to guard?
Suoy: No. They were not careless. They came in white shirts with sleeves of this length.
Dany: White shirts?
Suoy: Yes, white shirts. They were not supposed to be seen because they were worried.
Dany: How about the eating at that time? What was eating like for troops and for mobile units?
Suoy: Troops were given two cans of rice [each] per day.
Dany: Two cans of rice per day?
Suoy: Yes, two cans of rice per day.
Dara: Was it enough?
Suoy: It was enough for everybody. Ten persons meant ten cans of rice [each time]. More than enough. But there was no MSG.
Dany: Yeah?
Suoy: No MSG.
Dany: No MSG?
Suoy: Yes. There was no MSG; only salt was available for sour soup.
Dara: That's good for health - without MSG.
Suoy: [chuckling....]
Dany: So, each of you was given two cans of rice per day?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: What about food? Did you have enough fish and meat?
Suoy: Each person had to sort out their own food. Sometimes, when we had no food, [we ate] salt.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: There was no MSG. We ate with salt [chuckling...].
Dany: How about the mobile units?
Suoy: They had their own economy. They had no rice soup to eat. The ration was, for example, one kilogram of beef, pork or fish, with many vegetables for 100 people.
Dany: How about the rice ration?
Suoy: For special units, they could have two cans of rice each.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The special units received the same amount of rations as troops. For normal units, which referred to on-foot units, one can of rice per day each.

Dany: One can of rice per day?
Suoy: Yes. One can of rice per day each. Half of the can for lunch and the other half for dinner.

Dany: What was a special unit?
Suoy: The special unit, in short, was an 'absolute' unit - dead or alive. As I said before, carrying one cubic meter of earth with every eight carrying trips.

Dany: Yeah.
Suoy: Running, carrying baskets this big up the dam. They had good food and nice clothes.

Dany: How many special units were there amongst these mobile units?
Suoy: There was one special company.
Dany: One company?
Suoy: Yes. Only one company.
Dany: How many persons were there in a company?
Suoy: One company had 100 people.
Dany: Only one hundred people?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: You were talking about tens of thousands of people just now. Who were members of the special unit?
Suoy: Yes, the special unit was composed of only 100 members. The rest were normal mobile units, which were estimated in the tens of thousands. Four to five persons of the normal [mobile unit] carried one cubic meter of earth and they had small rations.

Dany: The ration was one can per day?
Suoy: Yes. One can per day. Those willing to join special unit could have more rice soup.

Dany: Yeah.
Suoy: And they had more clothes than others.
Pronh: Who was in charge of the special unit? Who was in charge of the company?
Suoy: I did not know the chief of the special unit. I knew the deputy. He was Comrade Reap.
Pronh: Reap?
Suoy: Yes, I did not know the chief. Comrade Reap from *Srok Treas* [village].
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Treas at Pha-koam [commune].
Dany: Is he alive today?
Suoy: I don't know where he is today.
Dany: Yes. So, the remaining tens of thousands of other people were given only one can of rice per day?
Suoy: Yes. One can per day.

Dany: What was the situation like? How were people's sizes and bodies, their activities?

Suoy: People were emaciated, without enough food to eat. Lack of nutrition led to exhaustion. For some, their knees were bigger than their heads. For some, they did not have sugar to use as medicine.

Dany: What?

Suoy: They used sugar to cure exhaustion. Some were asleep, as they were too exhausted. Some people were used to carry human waste to be used as fertilizer. I did it myself, carrying human waste. I was ordered to carry human waste for one month and, if I did not do it, they would kill me. Carrying human waste until it was no longer stinky, but smelled good because the burnt ash smell was stronger.

Dany: Yeah.

Suoy: Mixed with ashes, the smell was not stinky. I used to carry it.

Dara: Which troops were used to carry [it]?

Suoy: They trained us. The troops had to be a model.

Dany: Ah.

Suoy: A leading model for people. Not only other people did it, we had to do it too.

Dara: The troops really led [people] even though they did not even dare to give comments?

Suoy: That was their business. If our task was done right, it was good. But if done wrong, we would be killed.

Dany: Oh.

Suoy: Because I was the type of person who spoke up, I was once taken to be killed and I ran. It took place at Preah Neth Preah commune.

Dany: Oh.

Suoy: I helped people. Then I was too scared and I no longer helped them.

Dara: How did you help?

Suoy: My elder brother, Phan's brother, was boiling herbs.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: Ta Phan, you know.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: He was boiling tobacco and as he was slicing [the leaves]. Security police from Southwest arrested [him]. I intervened, "Why did Comrade arrest him? During the break, he should be allowed to boil [tobacco] to smoke."

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: "He boiled [it] and you threw it away, arrested him. It is not right to do so." Also my aunt's case, she could not eat cooked rice.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: She was given a ladleful of rice. She ate a little bit and dried the rest. When she was sick, she would make rice soup from the dried rice.

Dara: Yes.
Suoy: They confiscated this and accused us from the Northwest of being enemies. At night, they arrested me and took me to be killed.

Dara: Did they manage to arrest you?
Suoy: Yes, they did.
Dara: Where did they take you?
Suoy: To Ta Krork place. The place was called Ta Krok. I was taken to that commune.

Dara: To the pagoda?
Suoy: No. At the corner, where there was a pagoda gate, the gate of this Wat Phnom.

Dara: Oh. How did you escape?
Suoy: I resisted.
Dara: How?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: How?
Suoy: There were 15 of them. They arrested me. They asked my mother for me. I answered, "Yes." [I was told] "The village chief wants to see you."

Dara: Yes.
Suoy: I said, "You go first." I told my mother that I knew I would be arrested.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: I knew they would arrest me. I tightened my car tire-made sandals and thought, "Got to beat this lady."

Dara: Ladies?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: Female cadres from the Southwest. I thought, "I've got to beat this lady." When I got to the house of the village chief, he came down. He had rice to eat and was fat.

Dara: Oh.
Suoy: [I] saw a bunch of strings that were going to be used to tie me. I did not say anything, but my eyes were [on the strings]. I said, "Sister told me to come to the house of the village chief. And now where are we going? It [the house] should be at this pagoda."

Dara: Oh.
Suoy: When I arrived at the front of the pagoda - at the market - I was not taken into the pagoda. Instead, I saw five other people coming out of the pagoda.

Dara: Oh.
Suoy: Now there were ten of them. They said, "Let's go to the commune." The commune chief was Phal, a lady from the Southwest. When I arrived at the house of this commune chief, [they] came towards me. I thought, "That's terrible." I thought of what to do. I turned to them and said,

"Sister, I would like to have a pee." I told them I would like to have a pee. The Southwest people replied, "You can do it in the toilet." I responded, "I am not used to peeing in the toilet. I prefer open spaces."

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: My apologies. I held my penis. They held my hands and as they held my hands, I beat them. They returned the blows. I turned to a small female cadre from the Southwest named Choeun. "I got to beat this woman." I hit her, and she grabbed my waist. I thought, 'This woman is serious.' I held her head and kneed her. I kneed her by the breast and she fell down to the ground. I was hit from behind by a machete and it scratched my shirt. Angels were helping me so that I escaped the machete blow. A few blows from the machete, but I was not hurt. Ta Krork was trying to beat me on my temples with a brace used to keep the cart standing. I escaped and kicked him. He fell to the ground. I could not fight any longer and thus ran towards the mountain. As I arrived at the front gate, I ran up the mountain.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: I returned to my village [Chheoung Wat] and went to look for my wife, who was chief of the district's medics.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: My wife, chief of Phnom Srok district's medics, treated me for a month. I had with me a stamped letter from the company. At that time, the Southwesterners were already arrested. Ah, sorry, the Northwesterners were all arrested, with the exception of 100-person team.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: In the forest, I was transferred to Kaun Khlaeng forest from Trapeang Thma dam after the arrests of Northwesterners, including Ta Nhim, Ta Phy, Ta Hoeng.

Dara: When were these arrests?

Suoy: At the end of '78.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Then I fled to the forest. And in '79, I returned to my wife's place.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Then I defected to the Khmers on this side and became a soldier with the Vietnamese troops.

Dara: So, you were a soldier of the [PRK] State of Cambodia?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: Then you fought the Khmer Rouge?

Suoy: I fought the Khmer Rouge, around this area.

Dara: At the beginning, you were a Khmer Rouge troop guarding the dam?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: Trapeang Thma dam?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: And when the Vietnamese troops came, you joined the Vietnamese troops fighting the Khmer Rouge?

Suoy: Yes. I fought. I saw [Im] Chaem fleeing. I fought ... [Translator's Note: cannot understand].

Dara: Let's continue. Until when were you a guard at Trapeang Thma dam?

Suoy: I guarded Trapeang Thma until '88.

Dara: Until '78 or '88?

Suoy: '78.

Dara: '78.

Suoy: In '78, [people from Kampong Cham] the Kampong Cham-ers had already arrived.

Dany: Until which month were you guarding Trapeang Thma?

Suoy: I used to remember. I forgot. I remember the people from Kampong Cham and the people from Takeo, and the cadres from Southwest.

Dany: [people from] the Southwest?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: When did the people from Southwest arrive?

Suoy: I already forgot. My wife knows. They asked my wife for medicines. They carried a long-handled machetes and sought [medicine] from the people of Kampong Chhnang.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: There were two groups. One was from Southwest, [or] people from Southwest Zone.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Another group was from Kampong Chhnang and Pursat.

Dara: They were the people from the West, weren't they?

Suoy: Yes. Those people from the West and Ka-Koh Battambang people were also called Southwesterners.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: There were two groups, one was smoking *Sangkae* leaves and another was smoking *Ka-Koh* leaves. The latter was from Southwest, Takeo.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Those from Southwest were very mean. Those from *Ka-Koh* Kampong Chhnang were nice. They were all women, but those from Takeo were very mean. And those from *Ka-Koh* Kampong Chhnang were nice.

Dany: Yes. When you were transferred out of Trapeang Thma, were you transferred after the Southwesterners arrived or what?

Suoy: When the Northwesterners were arrested.

Dany: Northwesterners were arrested?

Suoy: Yes. They arrested the Northwesterners. The secretary of the Zone was arrested.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: They were arrested after being called for a meeting.

Dara: Yes.
Suoy: It was about the East Zone and the Northwest Zone. It was said that the East Zone shot a dead Chinese diplomat. But Ta Mok claimed that the Northwesterners did the shooting.

Dara: Oh.
Suoy: Then Region 5's troops were all transported en masse to Kaun Khlaeng forest.

Dara: Ah.
Suoy: Transported to the forest.
Dany: At that time, were Ta Maong, Ta Vall already arrested?
Suoy: Not yet.
Dany: Not arrested yet?
Suoy: Yes. He joined with the troops and abandoned his mobile units.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: He abandoned his mobile units, which were to do their works. All the troops fled to Kaun Khlaeng where cannons were deployed.

Dara: Oh.
Suoy: Then Ta Nhim was arrested. Ta Nhim was secretary of the Northwest Zone. Ta Nhim was arrested and reeducated. During the Pol Pot regime, reeducation meant death or imprisonment.

Dara: Yes.
Suoy: Then 15 people came to arrest those in Region 5. There were hundreds of troops, but only 15 people came [to make the arrests]. When they arrived, they called Ta Hoeng for a meeting.

Dara: Yes.
Suoy: When he went to the meeting, he was arrested and held in a concrete house. Then Phy and Voan were also called for meeting. Voan was head of the security center in Region 5.

Dany: What was his name?
Suoy: Voan.
Dara: Voeun?
Suoy: Yes, Voeun.
Dany: Voeun was head of the security center in Region 5?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: Where is Voeun?
Suoy: Today, I do not know where he is. I know his name. I know he was head of the security center in Region 5. He was responsible for the detention of people, those from mobile units and troops.

Dara: Where was the security center of Region 5?
Suoy: I never saw security center. I knew that they executed people at a jack fruit plantation, the execution site.

Dany: Where was this jack fruit plantation?
Suoy: The jack fruit plantation was at the foot of Svay Mountain.

Dara: Foot of Svay Mountain?
Suoy: Yes. Today, there are all houses on the site.
Dany: Do you happen to know the security center at Banteay Neang?
Suoy: That security center was for Region 3.
Dany: Yes?
Suoy: Yes, Region 3.
Dany: You know anything?
Suoy: After the arrest of Ta Hoeng, they also called Phy. After Phy, they began to arrest troops. For instance, you were informed to withdraw your troops from the military front near Thailand.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: They told [you] to hand in arms. I forget the type of arms at that time. Then they told you to study.
Dany: When was Ta Vall arrested?
Suoy: Ta Vall was arrested at the same time as Ta Nhim. Ah, sorry, Ta Phy.
Dany: [Arrested] at the same time as Ta Phy, Ta Hoeng?
Suoy: Yes. Ta Phy, Ta Hoeng, Ta Maong.
Dany: Do you remember the dates when the meetings were called?
Suoy: I cannot remember the year. I remember, however, that they [those from the Southwest] were there for less than one year when the Vietnamese arrived.
Dany: So, they lasted for one year?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: That means they [the meetings] were happening in '78?
Suoy: Yes. Then the Vietnamese came in.
Dany: After the arrest of Ta Hoeng, Ta Phy, Ta Vall, what was the replacement like in the Northwest Zone?
Suoy: In the Northwest Zone, they arrested those people and accused them of disloyalty.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: The Northwest Zone committed betrayal.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: Because, according to the report I saw myself, the Northwest Zone printed currency.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: The state printed currency and gave salaries. Privates got 25 Riel.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: If [you] had higher rank, you got 30. And, if even higher, it got up to 50 Riel of Pol Pot's currency.
Dany: I would like to know who replaced Ta Nhim after he was arrested.
Suoy: No one replaced him.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: I guess Ta Mok.

Dany: Ta Mok?

Suoy: Yes, Ta Mok took complete control.

Dany: How about Ta Hoeng?

Suoy: Ta Hoeng was imprisoned.

Dany: After Ta Hoeng was arrested, who was in charge of Region 5?

Suoy: I did not know who was taking over. It was chaotic at the time.

Dany: Oh.

Suoy: You could say Yeay [Im] Chaem took over and you could also say Ta Mok took over. Because those two controlled everything. Because everybody listened to Ta Mok.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Region 5 did not have any troops.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: Region 5 existed only in name. There was no secretary. The Southwesterners controlled and I never saw their faces.

Dany: You referred to Yeay [Im] Chaem just now. Do you know what she was doing at that time? And where she was?

Suoy: Yeay [Im] Chaem was stationed at Trayaung Mountain.

Dany: Yes.

Suoy: She was stationed at Trayaung and held positions like chief of cooperative. But she was actually very powerful.

Dany: How powerful?

Suoy: Her authority was all over the district, Preah Neth Preah district.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: Her authority was powerful.

Dany: According to your estimate, when did she arrive?

Suoy: She arrived at the same time as those Southwesterners. They arrived altogether. Yeay [Im] Chaem was stationed here and Phal was stationed at Preah Neth Preah commune.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: Phal was chief of commune, while her husband, also named Phal, was in the troops.

Dara: They were all Southwesterners?

Suoy: Yes, all of them.

Dara: When Yeay [Im] Chaem became chief of Preah Neth Preah district, was she involved in overseeing or supervising the dam workers at Trapeang Thma?

Suoy: No. She worked here, but she assigned her subordinates.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Her subordinates from Southwest were used. According to reports I heard from security police who used to work with [her], Yeay [Im] Chaem gave orders to *vai* [Translator's Note: *Vai* in Khmer here could mean two things. *Vai* could mean 'kill.' In the context of the rest of the

sentence, however, it more likely refers to 'breaking mountain rock.'] and to do other things such as breaking rock at Phnom Trayaung. These were the works of Yeay [Im] Chaem.

- Dara: Oh.
- Suoy: She fled. She fled via Phnom Srok's road.
- Dara: Oh.
- Suoy: She was in the troops and controlled troops.
- Dany: So who was in charge of Trapeang Thma after Ta Vall's arrest?
- Suoy: No one was in charge. Mobile units diverged and moved to Spean Sraeng [brigde], leaving only Mong and his team there constructing the bridge.
- Dany: Only his team was there?
- Suoy: Yes. The bridge was unfinished.
- Dany: Not finished?
- Suoy: While constructing, the Vietnamese arrived and [people] went their own ways.
- Dara: So, there were two bridges at Trapeang Thma?
- Suoy: Yes.
- Dara: And all three bridges were not completed?
- Suoy: Not finished.
- Dara: All three were not finished?
- Suoy: Yes. Because these bridges were constructed to hold trucks; [they were] big.
- Dara: Yes.
- Suoy: Ta Vall said that he made [the bridges] big enough that trucks could pass each other. He had not finished his work yet when the Southwesterners arrived. People were in chaos, with some fleeing.
- Dara: Yes.
- Suoy: [Translator's Note: Cannot be understood by the translator.]
- Dany: At that place, only Ta Mong's team was still there constructing the bridge?
- Suoy: Yes.
- Dany: There were no mobile units carrying earth there?
- Suoy: No. [They] already went to Sraeng Bridge.
- Dara: How about the cooperatives' mobile units?
- Suoy: All of the cooperatives' mobile units were withdrawn. There weren't any except for the mobile units consisting of the mothers, which were farming, cultivating rice, and transplanting rice at their cooperatives.
- Dara: Oh.
- Suoy: The state's mobile units became troops like today's military.
- Dara: Oh.
- Suoy: All were sent ahead, leaving behind at the cooperatives only those collecting the harvest and cultivating rice.

Dara: Just now, you said that when Ta Nhim was arrested you saw a document talking about currency?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: Troop at this and that rank got this much of Riels and stuff, can you elaborate?

Suoy: It was not a document. I saw the currency with my own eyes.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: We talked amongst the soldiers.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: A private would get 25 [Riels] and those in higher ranks got from 30 to 50.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: The currency disappeared sometimes. The currency was seen locally.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: Issued locally. One month after it was issued, the arrests of the Easterners were heard about.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: First there were arrests in the Eastern Zone.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: When the Eastern Zone arrests happened, Ta Nhim understood [the situation] and that's why, [he] told Ta Hoeng to mobilize troops and fled to the forest.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: The intention was to fight against the Southwesterners, against Takeo. But Ta Mok took action first.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Ta Mok was fast and got Nhim to a meeting.

Dara: That means the currency had arrived Phnom Srok?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: Did you see that currency?

Suoy: Yes. I saw the currency. It had the sign of a cow and a plough.

Dany: That must be Lon Nol's currency with the sign of a cow and a plough.

Suoy: No, not currency from the old regime. The currency had a bronze color and it was this big.

Dara: What did you see written on it?

Suoy: Cow.

Dara: No I am talking about the writing. Was Lon Nol or Democratic Kampuchea written, or what?

Suoy: I did not notice the writing. I noticed a picture of a person wearing a scarf on their head.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: A scarf on their head like this, holding a bar like this, and a pair of cows.

Dara: How much was this note worth?

Suoy: That was 10 Baht, ah sorry, 100, no sorry, it was 10 Riel.
Dara: 10 Riel?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: 10 Baht, 10 Baht all the times.
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: When you returned to Kaun Khlaeng, the Southwesterners had already arrived?
Suoy: Yes, they had arrived.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: When the Southwesterners arrived, they did not know that my team was in the forest.
Dara: They did not know?
Suoy: No, they did not know. They arrested the entire Region 5, except for my team's 100 members.
Dara: In the forest?
Suoy: In the forest.
Dany: In Kaun Khlaeng forest?
Suoy: In Kaun Khlaeng forest, at the military front.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: Each rifle had one or two bullets.
Dara: You ran out of bullets?
Suoy: Yes. About half a month later, they found out [we were there]. When they found out, they sent a messenger to my team, telling us to go and see them as soon as the messenger arrived. It did not matter day or night. Then my platoon leader...
Dara: What was his name?
Suoy: The leader of my platoon was Ta At.
Dara: Oh, Ta At.
Suoy: Ta At read the letter and said, "We are being called. Comrades, let's pack our stuff. We are to go to Phnom Srok at 12 midnight." At Trapeang Thma at that time, the water rose up.
Dara: Up to your neck?
Suoy: Yes, up to the neck level. We walked and as we reached Trapeang Thma reservoir and Wat Trapeang Thma, it was dawn.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: We walked from Trapeang Thma to Phnom Srok. As soon as we arrived, we saw the Southwesterners sitting, five of them. They were in blue shirts and blue pants. [They asked,] "How many bullets do you have?" I was leading the others. I said I had two bullets. "How about the grenades?" Three grenades [I said]. The type of rifle at that time.... [it was] AK[47].
Dara: Oh.

Suoy: They said, "AK, leave it here." Then, they said, "Comrade, you need to seek authorization both when you go to take a bath and when you relieve yourself."

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: I thought that I was in trouble and would be dead. That I would be imprisoned and executed. I was with them for ten days and God helped me, *Para* troops arrived.

Dara: *Para*?

Suoy: The *Para* troops, led by Koy Chhea.

Dany: Sorry, I am lost.

Suoy: Koy Chhea, living in Thma Puok today.

Dara: His name was Koy Chhea?

Suoy: Yes. Earlier, he was commander of Division 7; these Koy Chhea and Lach Khaek.

Dany: Son San? Son San's *Para* troops, right?

Suoy: Yes, Son San's.

Dara: How is it related to Son San?

Suoy: He (Koy Chhea) visited his wife. It was like that. He ran away to Thailand and secretly returned to visit his wife.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: While he visited his wife, villagers reported that *Para* invaded the village. Then, the Southwesterners made me a group leader.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: I was given a rifle and I said to myself, "I survive." I told my team that if they messed with us, we would shoot and escape to the forest.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: The Northwesterners listened to me. I was like a unit chief.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: I took only two Southwesterners with us. Those two watched our every step. They were put in charge of us.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: They were made my deputies. I went to Ampil [village], Kang Namtav [village] along the road to Trapeang Thma Reservoir.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Koy Chhea had already left that place. We were stationed there. At that place, Sal, today living in Phnom Penh, had a fight.

Dara: Who?

Suoy: Sal.

Dara: His name was Sal?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Today he lives in Phnom Penh?

Suoy: He works in Phnom Penh. Sal had a fight. He said, "The disloyal Southwesterners gave us only gruel to eat." Hearing this, I told him,

"Don't be crazy. If you are reported, you are dead." The Southwesterners accused all the Northwesterners of being disloyal.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Ten days later, my group was told to retreat.

Dara: You retreated?

Suoy: Yes. Re-treated to carry human waste. It was terrible. I got my subordinates, two of them, to carry the waste. Excuse me for using these words. The waste of the mobile units was yellow and black because they ate anything edible due to the lack of food. I carried the fresh waste. Then mobile units with the new people told me, "Son, if you want to reduce the smell, mix it with ash." As I mixed it with ash, the smell went away. You did not smell even when you carried it on your shoulders. After I had carried it for a while, [I] almost, excuse me, ate this waste. After carrying waste for half a month, I was assigned to collect cow dung. I was to collect two sacks per day. How could I get two sacks as I was in the middle of nowhere?

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: People collected all of them ahead of me. There, I was given one can [of rice] per day.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: My team did not complain if we received one can [of rice] per day.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Then, the chief of my company was arrested.

Dara: What was his name?

Suoy: Ta Nak.

Dara: Ta Nak?

Suoy: Yes. Then, Ta Hatt was arrested. Ta Hatt was secretary of Phnom Srok district.

Dara: Yes. His brother was Ta Man?

Suoy: Yes, Ta Hatt, secretary of the district.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: Ta Hatt was arrested; he was called [to a meeting] the next day. I told him [Ta Nak], "Ta Hatt is about to be arrested. And, if you go there and find the situation is not good, return to us because we have rifles. In any event, we will flee to the forest together." He was called to a meeting. He was sitting in a chair like this. Speaking about this and that for a while, they arrested him.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Those Southwesterners did not even bother to point a gun at us. They would call us to have a chat. Then, they told us to go up to the concrete house and they arrested us. They put us in a truck and sent us to the secret place, the secret place at Svay [Sisophon].

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: The police station of Mr. Launh, Mr. Mea. The place where Mr. Launch was staying, where Mr. Launh used to stay.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: After that arrest and imprisonment, my group was disappointed and thought that our turn would come because after we were sent to Ka Koh, we had to work so hard. We were given half can of rice per day. My group discussed amongst ourselves. We thought that we should flee to the forest and then to Thailand. However, we stayed there until we were transferred to Region 3.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: In Region 3, Malai was already under attack. Because we could hear the sound of guns at Malai, I got a gun. I was trying to shoot myself in the lap in a way that would not hurt the bone. I checked myself over. The bullet could hit the flesh, but not the bone because it could cause amputation. I shot myself in the lap like this. The bullet did not get through my flesh. It did not hurt me. Therefore, I thought to myself that I had to find another way to hurt myself. I starved myself for three days. I was asked, "Why didn't you eat?" I told them I had a fever. Food was brought to me, but I decided not to eat. I was missing my wife. I ran home. Village militias were trying to shoot me. But [I] was not hurt and ran to see my wife. [Translator's Note: According to information from the interviewer Dany Long, there were a lot of cases like this during the Khmer Rouge regime. Those who did not want to go to the battle tried to look for excuses. One of those many excuses was to hurt themselves so that they would not be sent to the war zone.]

Dara: Which district?

Suoy: Pothivong district.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: My wife was removed from the clinic. Those who were married, despite their high positions, were all removed by the Southwesterners. I met up with my wife and the Vietnamese came. I volunteered to join the Vietnamese soldiers.

Dany: When did you get married?

Suoy: I got married in the '77.

Dany: How did you get married?

Suoy: Angkar allowed for marriages. I made a request. We did not see each other's faces. We only knew names.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Because we could not have a proper look, we could end up marrying the handicapped. Some ladies married handicapped husbands.

Dany: In '77, Angkar arranged your marriage or you saw her yourself?

Suoy: I saw her and made a request. They allowed me to make my request.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: I did not know who to request.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: My friend, Sal, said to me, "Request a wife." I said, "I don't know who to request." Sal told me, "Propose Reth, chief of the medics. Try it."
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: My friend Sal gave me the name of the medic.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: I requested a district medic. I did not know if I had succeeded. Then Angkar called for me and told me that I had to return at night. I thought to myself, 'That's it - dead.' I was told to hold hands and get married.
Dany: Your wife at that time was chief of the district's medics at Thma Puok?
Suoy: Phnom Srok district.
Dany: Phnom Srok district?
Suoy: Yes.
Dany: When did she become chief of the medics?
Suoy: Since '70 something. I did not know the whole of her background.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: She was from the liberated zone.
Dany: Were you together after the marriage?
Suoy: Two nights after the marriage, I was transferred to Kaun Khlaeng.
Dany: Kaun Khlaeng?
Suoy: Yes. Then from Kaun Khlaeng, they transferred me to Trapeang Thma. This was somewhat confusing.
Dara: So, you were not living together?
Suoy: No. Transferred here and there. My group was sometimes at Trapeang Thma and other times at Kaun Khlaeng.
Dany: You said that the Southwesterners wanted to kill you and you resisted. When did this happen?
Suoy: That happened after I got married. I cannot remember. At that time, my wife cared for me. My hands were swollen from the fight. I forget the year the Southwesterners fought me.
Dany: '78 yet?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: '78 or '77? End of '77 or early '78?
Suoy: Perhaps end [of '77]. If not end [of '77], it was '78.
Dany: Yes.
Suoy: Because there were many people from the Southwest, such as Phal and Nget.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: Nget was based at Ta Paen.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: Nget was mean.

Dara: How many Southwesterners did you know? Can you give their names?
 Suoy: I knew some. I was quite flirty.
 Dara: Oh.
 Suoy: I was flirty, and, at that time, it meant many wives.
 Dara: Yes.
 Suoy: During that time, I was single. And I was talkative.
 Dara: Yes.
 Suoy: I knew Nget at Ta Paen from the Southwest, Phorn, and Comrade Khan, whose parents were living here.
 Dara: Oh.
 Suoy: I was based at Phnom Srok. When I visited home, I got to know them.
 Dara: Yes.
 Suoy: At that time, I took leave to visit my mother. That's when I got to know them. As for Phal, the commune chief, her husband was a soldier in the Southwest.
 Dara: Yes.
 Suoy: His superior was Riem.
 Dany: Did you know Riem?
 Suoy: Yes.
 Dany: What did he do?
 Suoy: Riem was a chief of regiment.
 Dany: Chief of regiment?
 Suoy: Yes. The chief of Regiment 202.
 Dany: Chief of Regiment 202?
 Suoy: Yes. Zone.
 Dany: Of the Zone?
 Suoy: Yes, 202 of Southwest Zone.
 Dara: Army of the Zone?
 Suoy: Yes, army of the Zone.
 Dany: Where was the base of Ta Riem?
 Suoy: He was based at Chup [commune].
 Dany: He was based at Chup?
 Suoy: Yes, but our troops were deployed from here to Battambang.
 Dany: What was the name of Ta Riem's wife?
 Suoy: I did not know his wife. I knew him because he was here.
 Dara: What did he look like?
 Suoy: He was tall, but thin.
 Dany: Where was he later?
 Suoy: During the period when we returned from the forest, Ta Riem fled to the forest and his troops fled to Prey Moan [area].
 Dany: Did he become district chief of Thma Puok?
 Suoy: I was never there. I do not know.
 Dany: Yes.

Suoy: [I] knew when he was in the vicinity. But [I] do not know about after he left.

Dany: Yes.

Pronh: Sorry, I would like to go back a little bit. You said that Ta Mok accused the Northwest of killing the Chinese?

Suoy: Pardon me?

Dara: You said the arrest of Ta Nhim was due to Ta Mok accusing Ta Nhim's Northwest Zone of murdering the Chinese diplomat?

Suoy: Yes.

Pronh: Was it true that the Chinese was murdered?

Suoy: No. Ta Nhim did not know about it. He planned to reform society.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: [He planned] to get people to do business, and that's why the currency was printed.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: [He was] printing the money so that people could buy products from the cooperatives.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: When the Eastern Zone...

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: During the Eastern Zone arrests, Ta Nhim was implicated.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: That was not the Northwest Zone.

Dara: So, was the arrest related to the printing of the currency?

Suoy: No.

Dara: The reason was the shooting of the Chinese diplomat?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: According to you, did the shooting of Chinese diplomat really happen?

Suoy: The shooting of the Chinese diplomat did happen, but it was the Eastern Zone who did the shooting.

Dara: They did the shooting?

Suoy: Yes. The Eastern Zone did the shooting. The Eastern Zone and Northwest Zone had a very close friendship.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: They were so close. But Ta Mok did not get along well with the Northwest Zone or the Eastern Zone. He was challenging both for a high position.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: That's why Ta Mok's group crushed the Northwest Zone and the Eastern Zone.

Dara: Where did this currency come from?

Suoy: I do not know. My superior showed us the currency and said that the currency would be issued and used. I saw the scarf on the head, a plough and the money was red.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: It was bronze. The color was similar to this wood.

Dara: How many notes did you see?

Suoy: I was shown three notes.

Dara: All of them were 10 Riel notes?

Suoy: One 10 Riel note, one 20 Riel note. Ah sorry, two 20 Riel notes. They told us that a private would get 20 [Riel].

Dara: How much would you get?

Suoy: I was supposed to get 20 Baht.

Dara: 20 Riel?

Suoy: Yes.

Pronh: Was the shooting of the Chinese diplomat reported to the [Party] Center?

Suoy: The information about shooting the Chinese diplomat was discussed amongst peers.

Dara: So, it was a rumour?

Suoy: Yes. Rumour. It was said that the Northwest Zone shot the Chinese diplomat. After the investigation, it was found that the Southwest Zone [did it]. Ah sorry, the Eastern Zone shot the Chinese diplomat dead.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: The issue was connected to the Eastern Zone and the Chinese diplomat. It was related to the activities of Ta Mok.

Dara: Yeah?

Suoy: Yes. The shooting of the Chinese diplomat was so that Ta Mok would not be on good terms with the Chinese embassy.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Related to the Chinese embassy - Ta Mok planned to kill all the men, leaving the women to breed with the Chinese.

Dara: Was this true?

Suoy: It was the intention. The Southwesterners intended to kill all the men, according to Ta Mok's plans.

Dany: You said just now that Ta Mok intended to kill all the men and get all the women to breed with the Chinese. How did you get this information?

Suoy: I heard it from my superiors.

Dany: Your superiors?

Suoy: Yes.

Dany: Which superior told you?

Suoy: Ta Nakk held a military meeting with chiefs of district and commanders.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: He told the troops and informed the Northwest Zone to get ready.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: In order to defeat the Southwest, [we] got ready by transporting the weapons to the forest. And after being called to return, [we] were arrested easily at home. That was done by Ta Mok.
Dara: Does that mean the Eastern Zone took action first?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: And the shooting of the Chinese diplomat was intended to prevent them from getting along well with Ta Mok?
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: Was this what you intended to say?
Suoy: Yes, because the Eastern Zone was about to flee to the forest in order to join forces with the Northwest.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: The friendship between these two Zones was meant to crush the Southwest to extinction in order to reestablish the revolution. That included conducting business amongst cooperatives.
Dara: Oh.
Suoy: So that people would not have to journey to buy things.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: Ta Nhim intended to make this happen so that money could be made. Then a border checkpoint would be opened and Thai products could be imported.
Dara: Then, there would be some business activities?
Suoy: Doing such business. And Ta Mok learned of this plan we had.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: Then they sent their troops of less than 100 members here.
Dara: Which troops of 100 members?
Suoy: Southwestern troops sent here numbered less than 100.
Dara: Why could you not handle this 100-member troop?
Suoy: [We] were politically outmaneuvered.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: Politically outmaneuvered. If we were to fight, they could not beat us. Only five of them came to Phnom Srok.
Dara: Yes.
Suoy: They arrested my group of 100 people, and ten or so chiefs of district.
Dara: When they learned about the arrest of the superiors, why couldn't the subordinates...?
Suoy: It was like the saying, "Catch fish without muddying the water." They did not let anyone know. The husbands were arrested quietly. Then, they began to take away the wives of Ta Vall, Ta Maong. I saw it with my own eyes.
Dara: Oh.

Suoy: I forgot their names. They kept them in a secret place and they were sent to transplant rice during the day. At that time, it was raining. In the morning, [they] sent them to transplant rice and I met them. I said surprisingly, "You are here." They said, "Yes. We are here." I knew them; they were wives of Ta Maong and Ta Vall. Sometime later, I lost their information. I did not know if they were killed or went somewhere else. No more information.

Dara: So, at that time, you should have learned that when one was taken to study it meant arrest. Why didn't the resist immediately or fight the Southwesterners?

Suoy: It was political trickery. For instance, the Zone was visiting and we were called to a meeting.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: They sent out information and a report. At that time, messengers were used.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: They sent a messenger to us and told us to come to a meeting.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: When we arrived, their people were everywhere.

Dara: It should have been known that when one was called for a meeting, they should know of the arrest. After the superiors were called to a meeting and arrested, the subordinates dared not resist?

Suoy: Knew but weren't able to resist. It was too overwhelming.

Dara: You mean that after the disappearance of the leaders, there was no one to lead?

Suoy: Yes. There wasn't any ammunition.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: We each had three bullets. We did not have ammunition, although we knew that the superiors had been arrested.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: We knew that our superior was arrested because he had disappeared for three days.

Dara: We have asked you a lot of questions already and collected a lot of information.

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: Do you have anything else to add? Do you have anything else that we have not asked you to tell us?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: No?

Suoy: No.

Dara: From the time that you served the Khmer Rouge, is there any moment that you had a particular connection with, that you remember most?

Suoy: I remembered the time when I was guarding Trapeang Thma reservoir. I remembered walking and the water splashing and soaking the bottom edges of my pants.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: The water at this time of the year rose up to the top of the dam and waves came and went.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: The water was...

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Even during the winter season, they didn't have us withdraw from the area.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: There weren't any blankets. Only scarves were available.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Walked back and forth. I was worried that the dam would collapse.

Dara: Have you ever visited the Trapang Thma dam?

Suoy: Never.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: It has been about 20 years.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: I visited once and was so sad.

Dara: You happened to pass that place?

Suoy: I happened to pass that place when coming from Thma Puok to the second bridge.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: No. The third bridge leading to Ta Sokh and to the river.

Dara: Uncle, in short, you happened to pass Trapeang Thma dam?

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: How wide was the width of the dam?

Suoy: 5 meters.

Dara: Only 5 meters?

Suoy: Yes. Only five meters. It has recently been repaired.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: Today, the width might have been expanded. I don't know.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: But when it was constructed, it was 5 meters.

Dara: Because when I talked to Seng...

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: Seng said that the original plan was to have a 25-meter width, the bottom of it 40 meters and the height dependant on the surface of the land.

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: If the surface was elevated, the height could be as tall as 3 meters. And if the surface was a pond, the height could be as tall as 4, 5 or 6 meters.

Suoy: Yes.

Dara: But that the width was as wide as 25 meters, do you believe that this figure could be true?

Suoy: When I saw it being constructed, it could never have been 25 meters. It was only two car lanes.

Dara: Only two car [lanes].

Suoy: Yes. Wide enough for two cars.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: They used strings and tied it up like this. They tied string like this and filled the dam up.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: I asked the late Chhoy. I asked him, "How wide is this string?" He said, "5 meters."

Dara: Yeah?

Suoy: Yes, that's why I told you that it's 5 meters. He also said that at the low elevation surface near the first bridge, where there was a small stream, the height was as tall as 7 or 8 meters.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: It elevated up like this.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: That one was built by the special unit.

Dara: Special unit?

Suoy: Yes. The special unit carried one cubic meter in eight carryings.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Their baskets were as big as this.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: These baskets were only carried by women; there were no men, all were women.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Their bodies were as big as this lady.

Dara: Oh.

Suoy: Because they had enough food to eat, they were big and could carry [earth] very swiftly.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: Aside from this [special] unit, the speed of other on-foot units - which received one can of rice [per day] - was normal.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: The baskets were this big.

Dara: Yes.

Suoy: Carried them as if they were light.

Dara: We do not have any more questions to ask you.

Suoy: Yes.
Dara: We would like to express our thanks to you for talking to us and telling us about your experiences at Trapeang Thma.
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: Thank you.
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: I wish to end my interview now.
Suoy: Yes.
Dara: Thank you.
Suoy: Yes.

END.