

បន្ទីរឯកសារកម្ពុជា

**Interviewed with Mean Sambath aka Lim Hong known as Aun  
Male, 55 years old**

**Position during the Democratic Kampuchea:  
Deputy Chief of Prisoner Guard Unit in region 5, Thmar Puork district**

**Interviewed at Kampong Svay commune, Serey Sophorn district,  
Banteay Meanchey province  
October 12, 2010**

**Interviewed by: Long Dany  
Translated into English by: Sok-Sreinith TEN  
Translation edited by: Marquita Smith**

Dany: First I would like to know your name.  
Sambath: My name is Mean Sambath.  
Dany: What is your present name?  
Sambath: Another name of mine is Lim Hong. This is an alias, which I used in order to register as a soldier.  
Dany: Why do people call you Aun?  
Sambath: It is my nickname known to most people in my village. But my official name in the National Registries is Sambath.  
Dany: How old are you?  
Sambath: I'm 55 years old.  
Dany: Where were you born?  
Sambath: I was born in Roluos village, Svay Chek commune, Thmar Puork district, Battambang province.  
Dany: Has the name of your village been changed?  
Sambath: No.  
Dany: I see. How about the name of the commune?  
Sambath: The whole place is now known as Roluos village, Roluos commune, Svay Chek district, Banteay Meanchey province.  
Dany: What is your wife's name?  
Sambath: Her name is Bou Pheat.  
Dany: How old is she?  
Sambath: She is 55 years old.  
Dany: Where does she live?  
Sambath: She lives in Pi village, Kampong Svay commune, Serey Sophorn district.  
Dany: What is your job?  
Sambath: I am a soldier.  
Dany: What is your position?  
Sambath: I am a deputy chief of DB, Secret Agent, of Office II.  
Dany: For Royal War Operation Sub-district of Banteay Meanchey.  
Sambath: Yes.  
Dany: What is your military rank?  
Sambath: I am a First Lieutenant (Second rank).  
Dany: What is your wife's job?  
Sambath: She is a housekeeper.  
Dany: How many children do you have?  
Sambath: I have three children.

Dany: How many sons and daughters do you have?  
Sambath: I have three daughters.  
Dany: What is your father's name?  
Sambath: His name is Tuy Vuth.  
Dany: Today he....  
Sambath: He has already passed away. He was a soldier and killed in Svay Daun Keo.  
Dany: When did he die?  
Sambath: Before the 1970s, but I'm not sure.  
Dany: Before the 1970s?  
Sambath: Yes, he was former soldier officer to the king [Sihanouk].  
Dany: How about your mother?  
Sambath: My mother is Cheam Nil.  
Dany: Is she still alive?  
Sambath: Yes, she is.  
Dany: Where does she live?  
Sambath: Today she lives in Sophy village.  
Dany: Roluos village?  
Sambath: It is called Kampong Svay commune.  
Dany: Oh, I see.  
Dany: Yes, she lives there.  
Dany: You mean in Kampong Svay commune, Serey Sophorn district?  
Sambath: Yes.  
Dany: How many brother and sister do you have?  
Sambath: I have six siblings, all of whom are male.  
Dany: Six brothers!  
Sambath: No, actually I have five brothers and one sister.  
Dany: Are you the oldest or the youngest?  
Sambath: I am the second oldest brother.  
Dany: How long had you attended school?  
Sambath: I attended school until I was in grade 9, then I entered the monkhood.  
Dany: Where did you study?  
Sambath: I studied at Svay Chek School.  
Dany: In which monastery did you become a monk?  
Sambath: I became a monk in Svay Chek monastery.  
Dany: How long did you spend as a monk in Svay Chek monastery?  
Sambath: I was a monk for three years.  
Dany: When did you enter the monkhood?  
Sambath: I was ordained in 1970, but I was disrobed in 1973.  
Dany: What did you do after that?  
Sambath: I became a farmer.  
Dany: How long did you work in the rice field?  
Sambath: I worked as a farmer until 1975 when I decided to become a soldier.  
Dany: Why did you decide to become a soldier in 1975?  
Sambath: There was a recruitment held in my village. I was the one selected.  
Dany: Did you remember how the recruitment worked and why you were the only one to be selected?  
Sambath: Many men were needed, but no one volunteered.  
Dany: So you volunteered!  
Sambath: No, my name was randomly selected.  
Dany: Who recruited you?

Sambath: Oh, I didn't know, and hardly remembered anyone. I think it must have been the village chief who was assigned to mobilize the soldiers. However, the villager chief had no idea who used to be soldier. Phorn along with others recruited [men from my village].

Dany: Who was your village chief?

Sambath: It was Ta [grandfather] Penh.

Dany: Does he also live in this village?

Sambath: Yes, he lives in Roluos village, but he came from Chas [old] village. The soldier informed the village chief, and then the village chief recruited men to serve in the military army.

Dany: What happened after the recruitment?

Sambath: I was transferred to Thmar Puork. All selected men were assembled and stayed in the same unit. In fact, there were two units, unit 513 and unit 425. The latter was my unit.

Dany: Was it known as a battalion or regiment?

Sambath: It was a battalion.

Dany: Battalion 425?

Sambath: Yes, Battalion 425.

Layum: Which Division?

Sambath: Oh, division was used only for the regional military army. As I said, there were two units.

Layum: Was unit 425 a district military army?

Sambath: No, it was a regional military army. If it was a district military army, it must be based in district, and it had its own name, not Division. But I was in the regional military unit.

Dany: You became a soldier of regional military armed forces.

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Was it based in Thmar Puork?

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Please describe your working condition as a soldier in Thmar Puork district.

Sambath: We worked and stayed in the unit, and later we were assigned to fight against the enemy along the border. I was assigned to look after the warehouse in Thmar Puork.

Dany: Really?

Sambath: Yes! The warehouse located in the west of this road was full of artillery and all kinds of rifles.

Dany: What was your occupation then?

Sambath: I was a deputy chief, and Suot was the chief of the guard unit.

Dany: How did you find your work?

Sambath: At the time, a security office and a prison were also located in [Thmar Puork], and we were also required to guard those places.

Dany: Was it a prison of the whole region?

Sambath: Yes, because they ordered...

Layum: Where was the warehouse located?

Sambath: Now it is a school, but I don't remember the name. The area is full of Trach trees [a kind of large tree]. But each building was formerly used as a guesthouse. I lived west of this guesthouse. So it is in the north of the market, about 150 meters away from the bridge.

Layum: Is it near the satellite?

Sambath: Along the road to Banteay Chmar, it is in the north of a local market, near Bralay Thnal.

Dany: Were the prison and security office based in Thmar Puork or Region 5?

Sambath: The prison and the security office belonged to the Region.

Dany: How many people worked as security guards?

Sambath: There were seven people.

Dany: And Mr. Suot was the unit chief?

Sambath: Yes, he was.

Dany: And you were the deputy chief?

Sambath: Yes.

Vannak: When was the security office established?

Sambath: I don't remember, but I think it was between 1975 and 1977.

Vannak: Was it in 1977?

Sambath: Yes.

Vannak: Who were the prisoners? Were they involved in political activities against [the Khmer Rouge]?

Sambath: No, simply they were arrested and transferred to be detained here. I had no idea where they were from.

Layum: Were the prisoners arrested because of political issues?

Sambath: No!

Layum: How about those who committed sexual offenses?

Sambath: Oh, no! The security office did not detain those involved in such offenses. I received prisoners who were outside the combat line and those evacuated from place to place.

Dany: Could you please describe how the security office operated?

Sambath: Very few of soldiers were arrested, but mostly the spies hidden in the villages or the forest. They all were sent to the security office. Some were transferred to this security office, while some were executed in Svay. There were some female cadres working in the security office, and they, for instance, Ang and Khorn, also took part in executing the prisoners. At that time, the female militiamen were not withdrawn from the militiamen team yet.

Vannak: Does it mean that women were also able to become militiamen and spies?

Sambath: Of course, they could.

Layum: They worked for the provincial military army?

Sambath: No, they worked for the regional military army.

Layum: There are many prisoners detained in today's prisons unlike those under the regime.

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Did you receive some prisoners who were involved in political activities?

Sambath: We detained those who were arrested from the village and those who tried to cross the border.

Dany: Where did those people try to escape to?

Sambath: Those evacuated from Svay and Preah Net Preah tried to escape to Thailand, and they were arrested and sent to be detained in the prison.

Dany: When did the mass migration to Thailand take place?

Sambath: Noticeably, it was between 1976 and 1977.

Dany: As a security guard since 1975, were you aware that many arrested from the village were sent to be detained in the prison?

Sambath: Yes, but I was a security guard at the warehouse. Only later on I was sent to guard the prison.

Dany: So it means you guarded both the warehouse and the prison?

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: How did you do your job at two different places at the same time?

Sambath: Simple as it was, I guarded both the warehouse and the prison. At the warehouse, there was a large house storing all kinds of rifles and artillery.

Vannak: How many buildings were there at the prison?

Sambath: There was only one building with four or five separate rooms.

Vannak: How many prisoners were detained in each room?

Sambath: Between seven to eight people.

Dany: As far as I know, some prisoners were executed, while others were sent to Svay. Please elaborate this point.

Sambath: The decision was made based on the confession they had made.

Layum: Who was the interrogator?

Sambath: I don't remember their name.

Vannak: So your job was to simply guard the outside of the facility?

Sambath: Yes, my job was to make sure the prisoners did not escape and that the weapons were in place. After being interrogated, the prisoners were transferred. I did not know much about this process, except that each day there might be two prisoners who either were sent to Svay or executed along the way. Upon the interrogation, execution might be employed on some prisoners, and this job was the responsibility of female soldiers.

Layum: Did the execution also take place in the cell?

Sambath: No, the prisoners were executed behind the facility.

Vannak: You means in the bush behind the prison?

Sambath: Yes.

Vannak: Could you please describe the regional structure? Do you know the chief of the region 5 or any others?

Sambath: I think it was Ta Thun, the chief of region 5. I don't remember who the district chief was, and I am also not sure if it was Chhat.

Dany: How about Hing?

Sambath: Ta Hing was the chief of the zone. I know the current regional structure better than the one under the regime.

Dany: Who was the head of the security office?

Sambath: The head of the security office rarely visited the facility. I looked after the office.

Dany: Really?

Sambath: Yes, I was in charge of taking care of prisoners, making sure they didn't escape and deciding who to be released.

Dany: You?

Sambath: Yes. I was assigned to bring the prisoners to be interrogated in the house in the south part and two of my subordinates were sent to guard the house for interrogation. After the interrogation, the prisoners were shackled and sent into the cell.

Layum: Were they shackled?

Sambath: Yes. The shackle was made of metal with a removable lock.

Vannak: Are you talking about the cuff or shackle?

Sambath: The shackle because we didn't use the cuff at that time. Because it was removable, we needed to lock the shackle every time.

Layum: Lock the shackle!

Sambath: Yes.

Neighbor: During the Kampuchea Republic, such prisons already existed.

Dany: Your group was not responsible for interrogating prisoners?

Sambath: Yes. It was the team working at the regional level who interrogated the prisoners. My group had nothing to do with that job. What was most important

for us was to strictly guard the prisoners making sure none were able to escape. If this happened, we would face big problems.

Dany: You brought the prisoner to be interrogated?

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Was there a room for interrogation?

Sambath: Yes, it was actually a large house. In fact, hundreds of prisoners were killed.

Dany: Did the interrogation team also stay with your team?

Sambath: No, they stayed with the regional officer. His name was Thea. My wife knew him.

Layum: Who was the executer?

Sambath: No one. Everyone carried out the execution. If needed, anyone-female or male soldiers would bring a prisoner to be killed.

Layum: Was everyone assigned to kill the prisoner?

Sambath: Yes, there were those responsible for digging up the pit and killing the prisoners.

Dany: After the interrogation, was your team informed of which prisoner was to be killed or released?

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Did the interrogator tell you exactly who was to be killed?

Sambath: Yes, we were told which one to be killed or transferred to Svay.

Dany: Your team would do what you were told.

Sambath: Yes, we sent the prisoners to be killed or transferred according to their names assigned by the interrogator.

Layum: Did the prisoners beg for their lives?

Sambath: Definitely yes! They ceaselessly begged for survival. Though pitied, there was nothing the [middle or lower] Khmer Rouge cadres could do due to the rigid order.

Dany: Every cadre had to act according to order?

Sambath: Yes. As a result, hundreds of prisoners were killed, particularly at the compound in the south of a Secondary High School.

Dany: Where was the school?

Sambath: In the south of Thmar Puork Secondary High School.

Layum: Did you refer to Thmar Puork High School?

Sambath: Yes.

Vannak: Does it mean that there were two different places for execution?

Sambath: Yes.

Vannak: How many kinds of prisoners? Were they the April 17 people or those involved in political activity?

Sambath: Mostly those from Phnom Penh, who were trying to escape to Thailand. But they didn't make it, and finally were arrested by militiamen and then transferred here.

Dany: How was the execution conducted? Did they use a gun?

Sambath: No, they simply killed the prisoner with a hoe.

Dany: How did they kill the prisoners?

Sambath: We dug the pit, had the prisoner sit down next to it and smashed them in the head from behind into the pit.

Dany: Were the prisoners tied up?

Sambath: Of course, they were. If not, they would have run away [laugh].

Dany: How were they tied?

Sambath: We used the hammock string to tie the next prisoner.

Dany: Their hands were tied up to the front?

Sambath: No, we tied their hands behind their backs.  
Dany: Were they blindfolded?  
Sambath: No.  
Dany: Then they were smashed behind their heads with a hoe?  
Sambath: Yes.  
Dany: Did the prisoners dig the pit themselves?  
Sambath: No. Some soldiers and my subordinates dug the pit for the prisoners.  
Vannak: After being killed, were the ties released?  
Sambath: Of course, we released the tie and kept the hammock string (used to tie the prisoners) for further use.  
Layum: If we didn't release the tie, we would not have enough string to use.  
Sambath: [laugh]  
Dany: Were the prisoner's clothes also stripped off?  
Sambath: No, they were full of blood.  
Layum: Did the executioner search for valuable materials?  
Sambath: No. That was because the militiamen who arrested the prisoners had already taken those things.  
Layum: How about beautiful women?  
Sambath: Oh, none dared to do anything to beautiful women. Such a case never happened!  
Dany: Was it because it was strictly prohibited or people dared not do that themselves?  
Sambath: Oh! You were subject to be killed if you dared commit a sexual offense no matter how beautiful they were, especially those from Phnom Penh.  
Dany: When did the execution normally take place?  
Sambath: It was around seven o'clock.  
Dany: Seven at night?  
Sambath: Yes, it was between seven and eight at night.  
Dany: Was there any music broadcast during the execution in order to avoid attention from the villagers nearby?  
Sambath: Oh, we never did that. None of the villagers dared to mention the executions though they might know. Everyone kept quiet.  
Dany: Was the pit covered by the ground after the prisoners were executed?  
Sambath: Of course, we covered the pit properly.  
Dany: How many prisoners were killed in each pit?  
Sambath: I think from three to five prisoners.  
Dany: Both male and female prisoners in the same pit?  
Sambath: Yes, in the same pit!  
Dany: Did many prisoners try to beg for their survival?  
Sambath: Absolutely yes! They talked too much, stating they were honest, and begged for release.  
Dany: When did you start executing prisoners?  
Sambath: Between 1976 and 1977, I was assigned to work for the security office. But then in 1977, I was transferred to Kbal Romeas, Chhlok, near the border.  
Dany: How many prisoners did you kill each day or month between 1976 and 1977?  
Sambath: I didn't kill prisoners everyday. However, I may have killed three or five people within a week. There were always prisoners to be killed.  
Dany: Really?  
Sambath: Yes, there were many prisoners arrested from many different places.  
Dany: Were they city people or base people?

Sambath: They were mostly Phnom Penh people. But for base people who may have committed sexual offenses, the cooperative chief ordered them to be killed. I don't know much about this case.

Dany: Who decided which prisoners were to be killed or transferred to Svay?

Sambath: It was the regional officer. As far as my wife knew, it was Phea. But it was more likely to be Thun.

Dany: What was his name?

Samath: Thun.

Dany: So Thun identified those to be killed for your team.

Sambath: Actually, he was in the frontline zone based in Thmar Puork. He is a member of parliament.

Layum: Is he?

Sambath: I think so.

Layum: Do you mean he was head of a district committee?

Sambath: Yes, I think so.

Layum: There were both soldiers and civilians working for the regime at that time.

Vannak: Did you receive written order or oral order from your superior?

Sambath: There was a written assignment, identifying the names of prisoners.

Vannak: Were there any name to be released?

Sambath: No, none were released, except those names to be executed or transferred.

Vannak: Really?

Sambath: Yes, we never released any prisoner.

Dany: So you never release any prisoner although you tolerated them.

Sambath: But three prisoners escaped.

Dany: How did they escape?

Sambath: I just simply know that there were three people who escaped. I was blamed and got in big trouble when the upper cadres found out about this.

Dany: Did you intentionally release those three prisoners or did they manage to escape themselves?

Sambath: They managed to escape by unlocking the shackle and tearing the metal bar.

Dany: Three prisoners?

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Did you face any problems because of their escape?

Sambath: Of course, I did. I was subject to an attempt to be detained and killed. But with the help from Na, I was able to be absolved from this matter.

Dany: What did you do for the district and sub-district officers, or security officers and soldiers?

Sambath: My team was never called for a meeting with those officers. We simply guarded the warehouse. At that time, we lacked food supply, and consequently some parts of my body were swollen.

Dany: Did you happen to know any of the prisoners you killed?

Sambath: Oh, I knew none of them.

Dany: How many prisoners do you think had been killed at that time?

Sambath: Within two years time, there were about 100 prisoners killed, and another 50 killed in the south of a high school. However, under Ream supervision, there were a large number of prisoners killed.

Dany: Who was Ream?

Sambath: He was the district chief from Preah Net Preah.

Dany: District chief?

Sambath: Yes, he was transferred from Preah Net Preah.

Dany: But Chhat was the first district chief in Thmar Puork, right?



Sambath: Yes, it was Chhat.  
Dany: Who was appointed after Chhat retired?  
Sambath: It was Ream.  
Dany: How about Rith and others?  
Sambath: Oh, I didn't know any of them. I knew only Chhat when I was a soldier in Trapoang Thmar. I supervised the military forces in Trapoang Thmar and faced no risk. Only when I worked for the security office was I involved in killing people.  
Dany: How was the food condition for prisoners?  
Sambath: They were provided rice along with sour-soup with fish. We didn't spend money on fish because we could search for it.  
Layum: It seems that their food ration was much better than the villagers.  
Sambath: Yes. They had rice to eat, not gruel.  
Layum: On the contrary, the villagers had only gruel.  
Sambath: At that time, we didn't provide gruel to prisoners.  
Dany: Does it mean the prisoners were provided with rice?  
Sambath: Yes, they ate rice. What mattered was the execution. The prisoners ate what we ate. Food was cooked in a large cooking pot, and divided among six or eight people in each cell. At that time, we also domesticated about 100 ducks so that we could have the eggs. But we didn't have beers to drink.  
Dany: Did you torture the prisoners before executing them?  
Sambath: After the arrest, they were not tortured, but transferred or executed. But they were brought by my team to be interrogated.  
Dany: Did the interrogator come to interrogate the prisoners personally in the cell?  
Sambath: No, the name of the prisoner to be interrogated was already identified when the interrogator arrived and asked for certain prisoners. When we were told the name, I asked my subordinate to release that prisoner for the interrogator. Pens and notebooks were waiting for the prisoner. We were not aware of interrogation policy, but what we took seriously was to make sure the prisoner would not escape.  
Layum: Did the questions draw out information related to the political activity?  
Sambath: I have no idea because I was not the interrogator.  
Dany: You never interrogated the prisoners?  
Sambath: Yes, I only guarded the prisoners.  
Layum: Do you think the prisoners actually did what they were accused of?  
Sambath: I have no idea too. But I think they tried to escape because they wanted to survive.  
Dany: Did you eat rice or gruel?  
Sambath: We ate rice, not gruel.  
Dany: Three times per day?  
Sambath: Yes.  
Layum: Except that we didn't have beers!  
Sambath: Yes, no beers to drink. We never ran out of meat because we domesticated around 100 ducks.  
Dany: What else did your team do besides guard the prisoners and warehouse?  
Sambath: We took care of everything including cleaning up urine or excrement and recording the information of every activity that happened.  
Dany: Were you the one who gave orders?  
Sambath: Yes, I ordered my subordinates to guard the prisoners when they asked for bathroom.  
Layum: Was the prison surrounded by wire?

Sambath: Actually, we didn't have a proper bathroom. Prisoners simply used the rice field as a toilet.

Layum: I meant the prison!

Sambath: Oh, of course the prison was surrounded by wire.

Dany: Did any of the prisoners attempt to escape while they were out for toilet?

Sambath: No, but there was one incident where three prisoners successfully escaped.

Dany: When did they escape?

Sambath: It was in 1977.

Dany: Which kind of prisoners were they?

Sambath: As far as I remember, they were not Thmar Puork residents. I think they were from Preah Net Preah village.

Dany: What did they do wrong?

Sambath: I think they tried to cross the border.

Layum: Were there many people attempting to cross the border?

Sambath: There were many people, and they all ended up detained in prison, particularly those city people.

Layum: Was it because they didn't know the geographical area?

Sambath: Yes. They were new to the area and weak in health.

Dany: Were the three escaped male or female prisoners?

Sambath: They were all male, one of whom allegedly killed his own wife.

Dany: Were they found and arrested again?

Sambath: No.

Layum: Was this prison established by the northwest armed forces?

Sambath: Yes.

Layum: Then the southwest forces took over the prison?

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Were you transferred to somewhere else in 1977?

Sambath: Yes, I was transferred to Thlok.

Dany: Where was it?

Sambath: My name was sent to work for a regiment in Thlok.

Dany: Why was that?

Sambath: It was because the prison was dissolved and all the weapons were transferred to Svay, and then we were sent to Thlok.

Dany: At that time, the southwest forces were dispersed in Thlok, right?

Sambath: Yes, there were some of the southwest forces in this area. One year later, I was assigned to oversee the mobile unit in Mebun. I was a chief of region 6, but people under my control were simple villagers and farmers.

Dany: How many people served in your unit?

Sambath: There were a hundred people. They all worked in the field.

Dany: How long did you live in Thlok?

Sambath: I think until 1978.

Dany: What happened next?

Sambath: Then I was sent to Trapoang Thmar.

Dany: What did you do in Trapoang Thmar?

Sambath: I dug and carried the ground.

Dany: Did you work for a mobile unit in Trapoang Thmar?

Sambath: Yes, I was a deputy chief of the southwest region, while Ngann was the first deputy chief.

Layum: Which unit?

Sambath: Chief of the mobile unit in Thmar Puork district.

Dany: Really?

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: But you were the deputy chief?

Sambath: Yes, I was a deputy chief of the unit. Ngann was the chief, while Auong was my subordinate including Song Srey from the southwest region.

Layum: How many people were there in the unit?

Sambath: There were hundreds of people, between 200 to 300 people.

Layum: Perhaps they were all full of energy.

Sambath: Yes.

Layum: What did you eat when working in the field in Mebun and Trapoang Thmar?

Sambath: We ate rice.

Dany: Rice or gruel?

Sambath: We had rice; otherwise, we would not be able to carry the soil to build the dam.

Dany: Were the people working for mobile unit single?

Sambath: Yes, none were living as family. But we did have a widow named Teacher Soriya. She didn't do any work. If not for me, she would have been killed.

Layum: Where did she teach?

Sambath: She taught at the emergency school. She was married, but hardly did any work.

Layum: Does she work for CWCC?

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Her name is Soriya?

Sambath: Yes.

Layum: What did she do at that time?

Sambath: She was evacuated and settled nearby these rice fields. I think she would have been executed during the previous regime.

Dany: Which regime?

Sambath: I meant the time when I first arrived here. Being weak may cause you death.

Layum: She was weak!

Sambath: She frequently fell ill and was not able to carry the soil or anything.

Vannak: Did you notice that after the southwest forces settled down, there was an increase in the number of people killed?

Sambath: Yes.

Vannak: As far as I knew, those in high positions like you were likely to be arrested by the southwest forces. Were you one of them to be suspicious of?

Sambath: In truth, many people were killed, particularly those in high positions. At the time, there was a problem emerging. For the mobile unit, we received ten cans of rice to eat for ten days. However, I told my subordinates to cook it for five days in order to make sure that we had enough to eat. As a result, I was accused of giving away the rice to the enemy. Ream, the regional chief, attempted to kill me behind a house.

Dany: When did you start doing your work? Did you have any additional work to do at night?

Sambath: We didn't work at night. If you were assigned to carry the soil within four cubic meters, you can finish it early or later. You could allow yourself to go free from work as much as possible so long as you completed your task. It was the unit chief who assigned the task.

Layum: And made records!

Sambath: Yes. The chief took note of those people who completed their work and those who proposed to work at night. Usually those who asked to put off their work during the daytime did so because they wanted to search for fish in the river.

Dany: This meant each person was required to carry the soil in four cubic meters.

Sambath: Yes, they had to finish it!

Dany: Did they manage to complete it successfully each day?

Sambath: If it was not completed, they would have to have it completed at night time.

Dany: Do you think four cubic meters for soil carrying was a reasonable workload for a person to do in a day?

Sambath: For those strong people, they would finish it quickly. But for those weak people, they found the work hard.

Layum: Are you able to do such work today?

Sambath: Oh no! I cannot!

Dany: Four cubic meters each both men and women?

Sambath: Yes, it was equally assigned.

Dany: It meant men and women had to carry the soil within four cubic meters.

Sambath: Yes, it must be equal.

Dany: Were men considered stronger than women?

Sambath: Of course, some women were not able to finish their work. But they were advised.

Dany: Did the unit or team chief report on who didn't do the work, who was lazy, and those who were involved in political activity to you?

Sambath: No, they reported only the number of completed work tasks while I just guarded the workers. Punn was the one responsible for inputting the data of completed work.

Dany: Who?

Sambath: Punn. Nowadays he is a teacher.

Layum: What was Peng Pun's responsibility?

Sambath: He was in charge of inputting the data and analyzing the result of the work.

Dany: Who arranged the plan? You?

Sambath: No, we received the work plan from the meeting in the region.

Dany: Meeting?

Sambath: There was a meeting hall near bridge number one.

Dany: Who was the chairman of the meeting?

Sambath: I didn't know.

Layum: Did the meeting usually take place for long?

Sambath: Yes, it focused on arranging and implementing the work plan.

Layum: The agenda of the meeting must be repetitive.

Sambath: Yes, it was, indeed.

Layum: But none dared to complain!

Sambath: That's true. We simply received the work plan, and implemented it.

Dany: You did mention Ream. Did he also join the meeting?

Sambath: Yes, he did, including Phal.

Dany: Did you know Yeay [grandmother] Chem?

Sambath: Yes, I knew her. She was from Preah Net Phreah.

Dany: What did she do?

Sambath: She worked for the district office.

Dany: Did she also attend the meeting?

Sambath: Yes, but her position was not announced, especially during the meeting.

Dany: Did you remember who the chairman of the meeting was?

Sambath: I think he was from Svay.

Dany: Who was he?

Sambath: I don't know. I forgot.

Layum: How did the high ranking cadres travel? On foot or by horse?

Sambath: Oh, they traveled by car!

Layum: Of course, the high rankings must travel by car!

Sambath: Yes, that's true.  
Dany: How about you?  
Sambath: I walked. I didn't even have a motor, let alone a car.  
Dany: Really!  
Sambath: Yes.  
Layum: How did you feel being a high ranking cadre? Proud?  
Sambath: No, nothing to feel proud about.  
Layum: But your life was better off than that of villagers, wasn't it?  
Sambath: I felt scared of problems. Unlike others, I took no notice if a few people ran away.  
Dany: When you were in Trapoang Thmar, was anyone arrested and sent to prison or killed?  
Sambath: No, there was no such case. But there was one who died of drowning.  
Dany: Die of drowning?  
Sambath: Yes, she was from Ta Siev.  
Dany: Why no one was arrested or killed?  
Sambath: It was the second phase when everyone was required to build dam.  
Dany: How was the first phase?  
Sambath: It was under Rong's supervision, where a large number of people were killed. At the time, I was a soldier, and I was less aware of the internal policy. Everyone in the cooperative knew that many people were killed at the time.  
Dany: When did phase one end and two start?  
Sambath: Phase one and two were from 1975 till 1977.  
Dany: When did phase two start?  
Sambath: It was from 1976 to 1977.  
Dany: How long did you work in Trapoang Thmar?  
Sambath: When I moved to Trapoang Thmar, the plan was fulfilled. When I was in Treng Bridge, the unit was dissolved. I then worked for the district mobile unit as a deputy unit chief, under Suot's supervision. At the time, I was accused of giving away rice to the enemy and threatened to be killed. Worse, I had only gruel, so my body got swollen. I was always starving, hoping that I could even eat frog.  
Dany: When was the mobile unit in Trapoang Thmar dissolved?  
Sambath: It was in 1978.  
Dany: Did you move to Thmar Puork then?  
Sambath: Yes.  
Dany: Did you still work as a deputy chief of the mobile unit when you returned to Thmar Puork.  
Sambath: Yes, I was a deputy chief of the mobile unit for the district office.  
Dany: And Suot was the chief?  
Sambath: Yes.  
Dany: Was he from the southwest zone?  
Sambath: No, he was from Svay. Today he lives in York village, Ampil district. He was the one who assigned Ream to kill me. He was jealous of me and claimed that I attempted to be the chief. I never attempted to cause him any troubles. To me, we were friends and soldiers in the same unit.  
Sambath: What was his full name?  
Sambath: Sao Suot.  
Dany: Where does he live?  
Sambath: He lives in York village, Ampil district.  
Dany: Which commune?

Sambath: Ampil commune and Ampil district.  
Dany: Do you mean Banteay Ampil district?  
Sambath: Yes.  
Layum: Ampil commune, Banteay Ampil district.  
Sambath: At the time, there were many killings committed upon innocent people in the cooperative. I could do nothing in this particular matter. Yun advised me not to commit the killing. But my life was threatened by Ream.  
Dany: What did Yun do?  
Sambath: Yun was in the east zone, but he previously worked in the southwest zone. He worked for the district office in Trapoang Thmar before Ream moved here. Yun noticed that I worked hard and supervised the mobile unit well, so he liked me.  
Dany: Did Ream become the chief after Yun left?  
Sambath: Yes. Yun was in charge of organizing a meeting in Kork Romiet. At that time, my life was jeopardized.  
Dany: But Yun protected you because you worked hard.  
Sambath: Yes, he reassured that I bore a good personality.  
Dany: What happened next?  
Sambath: Then I was assigned to work in the field and also supervise my mobile unit.  
Dany: Still you were a deputy chief?  
Sambath: Yes. But Suot was jealous of me. He overstated that I greedily wanted to be chief of the mobile unit. That was not true.  
Dany: Is his name Sun or Suot?  
Sambath: His name is Suot. His hair has already turned gray.  
Dany: Is Yun still alive today?  
Sambath: I am not sure whether he was killed.  
Dany: Nonetheless, was Ream in charge of the district until the liberation?  
Sambath: Yes, he worked as district governor until the Vietnamese troops entered the country.  
Dany: How about you?  
Sambath: Yes, I worked in Thmar Puork district until the Vietnamese forces captured the capital. Then I returned to my home district Svay Chek with a cart.  
Dany: As a former Khmer Rouge, did the villagers discriminate against you?  
Sambath: No. It's because I never committed any killings upon any villagers. I never killed, threatened, or shot anyone.  
Dany: You mean people in Svay Chek?  
Sambath: Both people in Svay Chek and other districts. As seen, the district governor knows me well. I was invited for lunch several times by Yann and others. I never killed or threatened any villagers. I just simply guarded the warehouse and the prison. The interrogation and execution were to be ordered by the upper cadres. The mobilization of men and women to be executioners was beyond my acknowledgement. Surprisingly, female cadres were also favored in killing.  
Dany: Really?  
Sambath: Yes. Those female cadres including Ang and Leav were assigned to kill prisoners.  
Dany: Where is Ang now?  
Sambath: She is in Romdeng village, Thlok commune, Siem Reap province.  
Dany: Is she still alive?  
Sambath: Yes, she is. She was the female deputy chief of female militiamen.  
Dany: Was she?  
Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Female deputy chief of district female militiamen?  
Sambath: She was female deputy chief of militiamen in the region.  
Dany: Which region?  
Sambath: Region 5.  
Dany: Her name is Ang.  
Sambath: Yes.  
Vannak: What does she do nowadays?  
Sambath: I think she is a farmer.  
Dany: Where does she live?  
Sambath: She lives in Romdeng village. She is Kuoy ethnic.  
Dany: Is she?  
Sambath: Yes, she is. She has very bright hair.  
Dany: Which commune does she live in?  
Sambath: I am not sure if it is Tram Sasar or Leng Smach commune.  
Dany: Which district?  
Sambath: Srey Snom district.  
Dany: Siem Reap province.  
Sambath: She can live at any place.  
Dany: Was she married during the regime?  
Sambath: No, she was not.  
Vannak: Do you know her husband?  
Sambath: No, I don't.  
Dany: How do you know that she lives in Romdeng village?  
Sambath: I know her biography.  
Dany: So do you know her parents?  
Sambath: No, I don't. If asked about, she is the only Ang known in Romdeng village.  
Dany: Really?  
Sambath: Yes.  
Dany: Who else worked as female cadres?  
Sambath: I don't know any others who were from Battambang or Pursat, except Ang.  
Dany: Do you know any other people who worked for the security office?  
Sambath: No.  
Dany: I'm referring to the one who oversaw the prison after you left your position.  
Sambath: It was Ta [grandmother] Met. Under Ream's supervision, there were many people killed. For instance, the chief of cooperative was killed for mistakenly writing an incorrect biography or being involved in argument.  
Dany: What did you do after you returned to Svay Chek?  
Sambath: I became a simple farmer.  
Dany: You worked in the rice field.  
Sambath: At that time, I moved to live in Tram Sasar village, Srey Snam district, Siem Reap province. I was selected to serve as a police officer by the Vietnamese officers, but my wife complained that I would end up being hated.  
Dany: You mean after the Vietnamese troops came into Cambodia in 1979, you were selected to serve as a police officer.  
Sambath: Yes, I was selected to be a chief of police.  
Dany: In Tram Sasar village?  
Sambath: Yes, it was in Pong Ra village, Tram Sasar commune.  
Dany: Why did you move there?  
Layum: You decided to become soldier instead of being a police officer.  
Sambath: The Vietnamese officers recruited men to serve as police officers. I wanted to become police officer, but my wife and my parents did not agree.

Dany: Was Tram Sasar far from you home village?

Sambath: You could go there from Kamping Puoy to Romdeng, and finally you reached Tram Sasar.

Dany: So did you manage to become a police officer eventually?

Sambath: No, my wife and my mother-in-law asked me to stay home. Until in 1980, I decided to become a soldier in a Regiment along the border.

Layum: What do you do nowadays?

Sambath: Today I am a deputy DB, for provincial armed forces.

Layum: Are you the commander in chief in Preah Net Preah?

Sambath: Oh, Tauch Rith is the chief of the district council committee. He receives double salary from the two sources.

Layum: You are not working for headquarter in O Ambil, right?

Sambath: I was in charge of DB infantry.

Layum: Now you are...

Sambath: I am deputy secretary in Office II.

Layum: You work for the provincial armed forces.

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: You said you became a soldier in a Regiment along the border in 1980.

Sambath: Yes.

Dany: Which Unit?

Sambath: It was a so-called Independent Regiment, which directly received support from the Ministry of Defense.

Dany: Who was the commander in chief?

Sambath: It was In leuy. But he is now a police officer.

Layum: Oh, he was in such high position.

Sambath: Later on, he bribed to become Para Military armed forces.

Sambath: When did you return to the province after serving as a soldier along the border?

Sambath: Two years later, I returned to the province. It was Pchum Ben day at that time. I then worked for DB infantry with Dorn.

Layum: Did you infer that Dorn used to be an agent?

Sambath: No, he is Kampuchea Kroam. He worked for Battalion 51. His house is just there.

Dany: When did you get married?

Sambath: It was in 1989.

Dany: I see.

Sambath: Yes.

Sambath: Did you say 1979 or 1989.

Sambath: It was in 1979.

Vannak: You got married during the Khmer Rouge regime.

Dany: And at that time, the Vietnamese troops didn't enter the country yet.

Sambath: Yes. After months later, they captured the capital.

Dany: What did you wife do under the regime?

Sambath: She was a textile worker.

Dany: Where did she work?

Sambath: She worked for a textile factory in a secondary high school [the school was used as textile factory] in Thmar Puork.

Dany: Did she work in a textile factory for Thmar Puork district?

Sambath: Yes.

Layum: Is she beautiful?

Sambath: You can see her in the photo [laugh].



Layum: I think most of female textile workers usually stayed indoors.  
Sambath: No, she also worked in the field like others because there was not much work to do.  
Layum: Who made request to Angkar for your marriage?  
Sambath: It was me because my brother-in-law, Phoeun, was my unit chief.  
Layum: He suggested you to...  
Sambath: No. I was fond of her, and I requested [my brother-in-law] to have her marry me. Funny enough, they brought me the wrong woman. She has the same name as my wife.  
Layum: The same name?  
Sambath: Yes. With such a mistake, I was punished to sign a promise note saying I would not be able to request anyone to be my wife. It was Ream's idea to give me such punishment. I was not afraid of that. Later on, Bang [brother] Loung asked me [if I wanted a wife], and finally I made another request for marrying her. My wife was furious at me before I even could hold her hands.  
Dany: Were you allowed to select anyone to be your wife?  
Sambath: Of course, yes.  
Dany: But some were not allowed to.  
Sambath: Yes. Some were disappeared because of making such requests. But I was never scared.  
Dany: You both remained as married couple ever since then.  
Sambath: Yes.  
Dany: The final question is to ask you if you have heard about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal.  
Sambath: Yes, I have.  
Dany: Recently, the court sentenced Duch, the head of Tuol Sleng. Were you aware of this matter?  
Sambath: Yes, I watched it on television.  
Dany: What do you think of the KRT?  
Sambath: What do I think?  
Dany: In your opinion, do you think the KRT reasonably sentenced Duch? If so, why?  
Sambath: Yes, it is true that killing is wrong. So, he must be sentenced for his criminal acts.  
Dany: Actually he was sentenced to 39 years, but then it was reduced to 19 years imprisonment. So do you think it is appropriate?  
Sambath: I have no idea. I am not sure if he was actually ordered by senior leaders or he implemented the plan by himself.  
Dany: I see. I think I have no more questions to ask you. If you have any questions, you can ask me.  
Sambath: I don't have any questions.  
Dany: So, I would like to thank you so much.  
Sambath: Yes.  
Layum: Are you a colonel?  
Sambath: No, I am a lieutenant.  
Layum: You are a former official, yet to be promoted.  
Sambath: Oh, that's because I never bribed for promotion, unlike Lim Hong.  
Layum: You didn't change your name.