

**Interview with Rochoem Tun, alias Phi Phuon and Chiem
Male, age 63**

**Position during Democratic Kampuchea
Former messenger of Ieng Sary, Nuon Chea, and Pol Pot**

**Interview at Daung village, Malai commune, Malai district,
Banteay Meanchey province
December 19, 2010**

**Interviewed by: Long Dany
Translated into English by: Ten Sok-Sreinith**

Dany: What is your name, uncle?
Chiem: My name is Phi Phuon.
Dany: Why do most of the villagers call you Chiem?
Chiem: Because Angkar called me Chiem.
Dany: Is Phi Phuon your real name?
Chiem: No. My real name is Rochoem Tun.
Dany: What is your ethnicity?
Chiem: I'm from the Charay people.
Dany: How old are you now?
Chiem: I'm 63 year old.
Dany: Where do you live?
Chiem: I live in Daung village, Malai commune, Malai district, in Banteay Meanchey province.
Dany: What is your wife's name?
Chiem: Her name is Sreng Bunly.
Dany: How old is she?
Chiem: She is 56 years old.
Dany: Is she also Charay?
Chiem: No, she is not. She lived in Kampong Cham.
Dany: Which district did she live?
Chiem: She lived in Choeung Prey district.
Dany: How many children do you have?
Chiem: I have four children.
Dany: How many daughters and sons do you have?
Chiem: I have two daughters and two sons.
Dany: Are they adults?
Chiem: They are all married. I now have eight grandchildren.
Dany: What is your job?
Chiem: I am a farmer.
Dany: Did you used to work for the provincial government?
Chiem: Yes, I used to be deputy provincial governor.
Dany: When did you become deputy provincial governor?
Chiem: I was the deputy provincial governor from 1997 until 2005. I held this position for two mandate periods.

Dany: Are you still working for the party?

Chiem: Yes, I am.

Dany: Are you working for the Cambodian People's Party?

Chiem: Yes! I am a permanent member of the party.

Dany: What are your parents' names?

Chiem: My father's name is Patout Avik.

Dany: How old is he?

Chiem: He is 92 years old.

Dany: Where was he born?

Chiem: He was born in Che village, Nhanh commune, Andung Meas district.

Dany: Was that also your birth place?

Chiem: No. I was born in the same place as my mother: Keb village, Nhanh commune, Andung Meas district.

Dany: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Chiem: There are five of us, two sisters and three brothers. But one of my younger sisters is dead. So there are only four of us remaining.

Dany: Are they in Ratanakiri or here?

Chiem: They are all in Ratanakiri. One of my sisters used to come and visit me. However, upon her return, she fell seriously ill and passed away.

Dany: Did you attend school?

Chiem: I never attended school.

Dany: When did you leave your family?

Chiem: I left my family in 1966.

Dany: Where did you go?

Chiem: I went into the forest.

Dany: Was Department 100 already established at that time?

Chiem: Yes, it was.

Dany: What happened then?

Chiem: It's a long story. In 1966, I left the forest, and met H.E Ieng Sary in 1967. At that time, he was working for Department 102 and Pol Pot was working for Department 100.

Dany: Where were those departments?

Chiem: As far as I know, they were in Ba Keo district.

Dany: Who else did you meet?

Chiem: I first met Ieng Sary, and then Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, and Kuy Thuon.

Dany: How did you meet them?

Chiem: My brother-in-law was one of the resistants. His name is Lao, but he is already dead. He asked me to join the revolutionary movement.

Dany: How many people were there when you joined the revolution?

Chiem: There were only two people from my village, my sister and me. But my sister could no longer serve the revolution. Within two years, she quit because she was weak and ill. So she returned home eventually.

Dany: Is she your elder sister?

Chiem: No, she is my cousin.

Dany: What is her name?

Chiem: She is dead. Her name was Cham Biel. There were many people from different villages who joined the revolution. But there were only two from my province. After living in the forest for a period of time, we met Ieng Sary and Pol Pot. We implemented the growing rice movement in between 1968 and 1969.

Dany: Did you also work in the rice fields near Departments 102 and 100?

Chiem: No. We worked in Poun Le, Ba Kham commune, Ba Keo district.

Dany: Were there many people working in the rice fields?

Chiem: There were nineteen of us, but during harvest season, mobile work brigades and the villagers living nearby also worked in the rice fields with us.

Dany: How was the supply used? Was it for the staff in the Department?

Chiem: Yes! The supply was stored to feed people in the department and the army.

Dany: Did the army take form at that time?

Chiem: Yes! We were having mobile work brigades and the army.

Dany: Were there many people serving in the army?

Chiem: There were approximately three hundred men who came from the northeast zone.

Dany: Did Nai Saran aka Ya also serve in the army?

Chiem: Yes! At first he worked in Mudulkiri. Later on, whenever I met him, he was always with Pol Pot and Ieng Sary.

Dany: When did Ieng Sary and Pol Pot move there? Was it in 1966?

Chiem: I met them in 1967, but I don't know where they were before that.

Dany: Did they also work in the rice fields?

Chiem: Yes. When the coup d'état took place in 1970, Pol Pot returned from Peking by taking the road across Vietnam.

Dany: How about the King?

Chiem: He was still in Peking. In fact, Pol Pot went to Hanoi in order to go to Peking. He was still abroad when the coup d'état took place. In May 1970, while Pol Pot returned to the country by the Dragon Tail route to Kampong Cham, Ieng Sary went to Hanoi to accompany King Sihanouk and establish the National United Front of Kampuchea. I joined the trip from Dragon Tail to Kampong Cham with Pol Pot. We traveled on foot for seven months to reach Kampong Cham, starting from May until December.

Dany: How many people were there?

Chiem: There were about eighty people.

Dany: Was Pol Pot also there with you?

Chiem: Yes, Pol Pot and his family.

Dany: You meant his wife, Khueiv Bunnary?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: Were there many people from your ethnics?

Chiem: Yes! The large majority of us were from my ethnic group. There were only two Cambodians, Teav and Aul. They were intellectual cadres.

Dany: What was your position?

Chiem: I had no position. I just served in the defense unit.

Dany: Was it Pol Pot's defense unit?

Chiem: Yes! The unit was in charge of opening the way, and I was responsible for parades. I solved problems when they occurred. However, nothing happened along the way.

Dany: Did Pol Pot have other messengers?

Chiem: Yes, he had many messengers.

Dany: Did they also come from minority groups?

Chiem: Yes! Some died and some left him. In 1972, some of the messengers were assigned to fight in the battlefield, and died in Prey Kry, San Dek, and Tonle Sap (at the border line between Kampong Chhnang and Chhoeung Prey, Batheay and Kampong Cham). We traveled by boat from Prey Kry to Ta Ches during the deadly five-year fighting.

Dany: It took you five months [to reach Kampong Cham]?

Chiem: Actually, it took us seven months, from May to December.

Dany: It took you seven months to reach Prey Kry?

Chiem: No! We traveled this long way to reach our major base in Stueng Trang district, Kampong Cham province during the five-year fighting.

Dany: Oh! I also was born in Stueng Trang district, in Dei Dus, Prek Sangke!

Chiem: Really? I also traveled with Nuon Chea through Prey Sangke, Dei Dus to the east zone of region 203, Krauch Chhamar district during the five-year fighting.

Dany: Did he?

Chiem: Yes! We went to the east zone of region 203 to work with Soa Phoem.

Dany: Where was the department in Stueng Trang located?

Chiem: It was dispersed in several places the west and the east, along Chinith river, nearby the waterfall, and so on.

Dany: Was it also once located in Bit Chhnout?

Chiem: Region 30, 17, 19, 24, 30, and 31 were in Bit Chhnou, but they were relocated to many other different places.

Dany: Why were the departments in the Ratanakiri region given the numbers 100 and 102?

Chiem: It was very common to use numbers for the names of the departments. The numbers were the secret codes of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary. Simply put, if you hear Department 100, it is Pol Pot. If you hear Department 102, it is Ieng Sary.

Dany: It means you recognized them by their secret codes!

Chiem: Yes! For instance, if the letter was written "To Department 100 or 102," we would know that it was sent to Pol Pot or Ieng Sary.

Dany: Did you used to be a messenger?

Chiem: Yes, I did.

Dany: Who did you work for?

Chiem: In 1970, I worked as a messenger for Pol Pot, leading him back and forth to battlefields and different regions.

Dany: Did you work as his messenger since then?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: Your job was to send letters?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: How did you send the letters?

Chiem: If the letter was directed to Sun Sen in the battle field, Kuy Thuon in region 304, Soa Phoem in region 203, Ta Mok in southwest zone, and Ta Nhoem in northwest zone, for instance, we just took the letter to the place it was addressed.

Dany: For example, it was very far to get to Stueng Trang in 1970. So how did you manage to send the letter?

Chiem: Between 1971 and 1972, I frequently got lost, particularly in Kampong Thmar, Y1, and the rubber plantations. The department of the army was yet established then. We followed Pol Pot to various districts, regions and zones when he provided military trainings and things like that.

Dany: As his personal messenger, were you supposed to personally hand the letters to the secretary officers of each zone?

Chiem: Yes! But there were also other messengers in each zone. So we simply dropped the letter at their offices. But if the letter said "Submit in Person," we had to hand over the letter personally.

Dany: How did you deliver the letters?

Chiem: We walked to the place where the letter was sent. Because it took a great deal of time, until 1973 we traveled by motor.

Dany: Did you deliver the letter all alone or accompanied by other messengers?

Chiem: I usually walked alone to deliver the letter.

Dany: You came from Ratanakiri. I wonder how you learned the geography of Kampong Cham province.

Chiem: I did not know the geography of Kampong Cham province well. The fact was that after leaving Ratanakiri, I walked with Pol Pot across the forest. We walked for seven months and finally reached Stueng Trang, where we established our base. Then, we traveled to different departments and communities with Pol Pot. So I knew only the places where Pol Pot paid visits to. Until 1973, we traveled by motor. We sometimes depended on the map for directions, and there were assigned routes for us to take. After the liberation in 1973, we traveled from Skun and Prek Kdam to Odung by motor. At that time, as we camped in Kampong Chhang, near Am Leang, we traveled on the national road. Soon after 1974 liberation, we used that road to cross the river.

Dany: You previously stated that there were Departments B20 and B19 and so on in 1970, 1971, and 1972. How were these departments named?

Chiem: They were simply called by the numbers. As seen, B17 was one department, and so were B19, B20, and so on and so forth. But those departments were relocated several times across the forest.

Dany: Were there many people serving in each B?

Chiem: Not many.

Dany: Does "B" mean "Department"?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: Did Pol Pot work in the department?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: How about Ieng Sary?

Chiem: Ieng Sary was on board from 1969 until Phnom Penh was liberated.

Dany: So there was only Pol Pot who was in charge of the department operation?

Chiem: It was Pol Pot, Nuon Chea, and Kheiu Samphan.

Dany: How about Sun Sen?

Chiem: Sun Sen was fighting in the battlefield. So he had rarely been to the department. He moved from place to place to command in the battlefields. For example, if there was fighting in Kampong Thom, Sun Sen would be there, just as in any other battles such as Kampong Cham and Phnom Penh.

Dany: What about Von Vet?

Chiem: Von Vet was on duty in special zone, while elder Mut, Se, Chung, and Sy were respectively in the southwest zone, Kampot, Koh Kong, Kampong Spue and Kampong Chhnang. They were revolutionaries.

Dany: Did Pol Pot move his department from Stueng Trang, Kampong Cham to Am Leang, Kampong Chhnang, and then to Kampong Spue in 1973?

Chiem: No! In 1973, Pol Pot commanded the fighting to capture Phnom Penh.

Dany: Where did he stay at that time?

Chiem: He stayed near Am Leang.

Dany: Did Kuy Thuon also stay in the same department as Pol Pot?

Chiem: No! Kuy Thuon worked in the department of military region.

Dany: Where was the department of military region located?

Chiem: It was located between thirteen and twenty-five kilometers [from Malai].

Dany: Was it in the rubber plantation compound?

Chiem: Yes! Everyone worked in their respective departments, except when they were called for an assembly.

Dany: Does it mean that when Pol Pot commanded the battlefield in Am Leang, all the departments in Stueng Trang had to move to Am Leang?

Chiem: No! There were those who were on duty in each department, so there was no need to move the department. I was brought to Samlot in 1972 by Nuon Chea. I usually travelled with him at that time.

Dany: Did you usually travel on foot?

Chiem: Yes! We walked.

Dany: How long did it take you to reach Samlot?

Chiem: It took us four months.

Dany: Did you carry out the activities of the regime movement while travelling?

Chiem: Yes! We did some activities when we visited each base. At that time, we traveled from Kampong Thmar to Kampong Leng district, and then to Kampong Chhnang, Am Leang, and Pis Mountain. In 1973, Pol Pot commanded the army in the battlefields.

Dany: Did Pol Pot and Nuon Chea usually travel together? Did they travel to different places?

Chiem: They did not travel at the same time. When Pol Pot first set out on a trip, Nuon Chea would stay and oversee the department in Am Leang. He would call for discussion if there was an urgent and important issue.

Dany: Did you come to Samlot with Nuon Chea, only the two of you?

Chiem: Yes! I traveled with Nuon Chea alone in 1973.

Dany: So it means Pol Pot was in Stueng Trang in 1972, but he moved to Am Leang in 1973.

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: How long did Nuon Chea stay in Samlot?

Chiem: He was in Samlot for just one week.

Dany: Did he return to Am Leang after that?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: Why did he go to Samlot?

Dany: He went to meet the three elders, Ruos Nhoem, Keu, and Tul, in northwest zone.

Dany: So you worked as messengers for several senior leaders, including Pol Pot!

Chiem: Yes! I accompanied both Nuon Chea and Pol Pot.

Dany: Did they know you well?

Chiem: Very well! They were the ones who took me from Ratanakiri.

Dany: Did they allow you to study?

Chiem: Yes, I learned to read during my spare time.

Dany: Did they teach you, or you learn by yourself?

Chiem: No, they didn't teach me. There were teachers to teach us. There were books and pens, for instance. I can read and write through documents. As far as I remembered, I read a document talking about civilian and militiaman fighting tactics.

Dany: As his personal assistant, did he give you any advice?

Chiem: He taught me how to do my work and build myself up. We learned to get rid of what was useless, and to improve ourselves in terms of the way we thought, and to live with good moral conduct. We would build up our ability and knowledge, and most importantly learn to get along well with our colleagues and leaders.

Dany: Did Ieng Sary bring you to work for Pol Pot and Nuon Chea?

Chiem: I first met only Ieng Sary. After working for Ieng Sary for a period of time, I met Pol Pot after his return from Peking. In May 1970, Pol Pot asked me to work for him, and Ieng Sary agreed. I had known Ieng Sary since he brought me with him in 1967.

Dany: How many people did Pol Pot ask to work for him? Were there any other people from ethnic groups?

Chiem: There were a few people who were Pol Pot's personal guards. But they are all dead.

Dany: Who were they?

Chiem: They were Ken and Huon. They are dead.

Dany: Did they belong to ethnic groups?

Chiem: Er.. Phat, Pheat, Soem, Ky are also dead.

Dany: Were all of them Charay ethnics or other ethnic group?

Chiem: They were from different ethnic groups. Some were Charay, while some were Tomphuon, Kroeng, Kavet, Praov, and Kachak.

Dany: How many people did Pol Pot bring along with him?

Chiem: There were around eighty people from different ethnic groups.

Dany: Any Cambodians?

Chiem: Yes! His wife, Teav Aul, Yon, So Hong were all Cambodians, approximately ten people.

Dany: Was So Hong his newphew?

Chiem: Yes! I am not sure if he was Pol Pot's nephew in blood. At that time, I did not know that. Only later did I learn about it.

Dany: Did you meet Nuon Chea when you arrived in Stueng Trang?

Chiem: Yes! We met not only Nuon Chea, but also Khieu Samphan, Ho Noem, and Ho Yun. It was a big gathering that all the representatives of each zone across the country, the northeast, southwest, northwest, west, and special zone, to name a few, attended.

Dany: They assembled in Stueng Trang?

Chiem: Yes! But they returned to their zones after the meeting was put into an end.

Dany: How did they travel the meeting, by foot, motor, or car?

Chiem: I had no idea because we arrived in and left the department at night.

Dany: You meant they arrived and left the department only at night?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: Was there anyone to guard the way for them?

Chiem: There were those who guarded and sent messenges.

Dany: So everyone worked during the day?

Chiem: Yes! We worked in the daytime.

Dany: Did you become a messenger both for Pol Pot and Nuon Chea in Stueng Trang?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: Did you find it okay?

Chiem: Of course! I usually traveled with both of them, particulary Pol Pot.

Dany: Did you return to Am Leang after going to Samlot with Nuon Chea to meet elder Nhoem, Kue, Tul?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: Where was the department based in Am Leam located?

Chiem: It was located in the foothills of Pis Mountain, in the west of Am Leang.

Dany: Was the central hospital where Doctor Chuon Choeun worked also located there?

Chiem: Yes, Dr. Chuon Choeun worked in Ra Smatch, next to Sduk Troal or Sduk Toal, Tuol Krasaong. At that time, it was commonly known as Kdak Ta Ngor.

Dany: Was it near your department?

Chiem: Yes, I think it may be located nearby my department.

Dany: Did all of senior leaders come to Am Leang?

Chiem: No! On one instance, upon the return of Nuon Chea, Pol Pot traveled to Am Leang.

Dany: Did you move from Stueng Trang to Am Leang?

Chiem: Yes, I travelled back and forth.

Dany: Did you always accompany those elders when they set out on a trip?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: Had you been to any military bases?

Chiem: No! We traveled to attend the closing session of the military training. After the training, we returned to Stueng Trang. We also provided military training at the base and regional levels.

Dany: Uncle! I have seen a photo of the king and the queen on a trip across Vietnam to Cambodia...

Chiem: It was in 1973 when I traveled to welcome the king and the queen in Siem Pang. We went through Stueng Treng to Stueng Sen, and continued to visit Kulen Mountain, Banteay Srei and Angkor Wat temple. I accompanied the king and the queen.

Dany: Was it in 1973?

Chiem: Yes, it was in 1973. Ieng Sary also accompanied the king...and in 1974 he escorted the Chinese journalists to Cambodia.

Dany: How did he get to meet the King?

Chiem: He traveled from Stueng Treng.

Dany: Do you mean he traveled from Vietnam and continued to Stueng Treng?

Chiem: Yes!

Dany: How far did the Chinese journalists get into the country?

Chiem: They had been to Kep in 1974.

Dany: Oh, really?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Did they meet with Lon Nol soldiers during their journey?

Chiem: No. We traveled across only the liberated regions, so we faced no problem. The liberated region was large enough for us to set out our journey.

Dany: How long did the king and the queen visit the country?

Chiem: Their trip did not last long. They spent three nights in Siem Pang and another three nights in Anlong Kramuon.

Dany: Where is Anlong Kramuon?

Chiem: It's near La Bavut. They also spent three nights in Stueng Sen and one night in O Kbal Chhlus, where they continued their trip to visit Kulen Mountain. They stayed at Kulen Mountain for three nights.

Dany: Where is O Kbal Chhlus?

Chiem: To get there, we took two different main roads to the north part of Kulen Mountain across the forest. During their trip, Kuy Thuon traveled by a car 404 because it could go through the forest, while the king traveled by the Chinese Jeep and a four-wheel-car. The Jeep could run only at night because the Americans bombed during the day time. It was really difficult!

Dany: So the king only traveled at the night time?

Chiem: Yes. We traveled only at night. One night, the car crashed into the trunk of a tree, causing the king and the queen to break their teeth and bleed from their tongues.

Dany: The car crashed into the trunk of the tree!

Chiem: Yes. That was because it was at night and the road was full of sand, and so on.

Dany: What did he say then?

Chiem: He said at least he could shed his blood in the battlefield.

Dany: Did they go to Siem Reap town after visiting Kulen Mountain?

Chiem: We could only enter the Angkor Thom temple because it was our liberated area. At that time, Lon Nol soldiers occupied Siem Reap town. Fortunately, there was no bombing on the day we went to visit Angkor Thom.

Dany: Which road was taken for their return?

Chiem: We took the same road.
Dany: In the same car?
Chiem: Yes.
Dany: Were there any Vietnamese or other nationals who accompanied the King during his trip back to the country?
Chiem: Yes, there were some Chinese and Vietnamese who accompanied the King. They were journalists.
Dany: Did the leaders of the two countries also accompany the King?
Chiem: No, I don't think so because none of them was introduced, except the King. Ieng Sary accompanied the king and special activists in the movement.
Dany: Did Pol Pot also join the trip?
Chiem: Yes! All the [Khmer Rouge] leaders including Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ho Noem, Ho Yun travelled with the King.
Dany: What about Sun Sen?
Chiem: Yes, he accompanied the King, and so did elder Ya from the northeast zone.
Dany: Did they [all the KR leaders] stay in Am Leang until 1975?
Chiem: Yes.
Dany: They stayed in Am Leang until Phnom Penh was liberated in 1975?
Chiem: Yes! From 1972, we camped in southwest zone located in the west of Am Leang and worked in Department B5 near Taing Poun, Ta Khmaov.
Dany: Where was Taing Poun?
Chiem: Taing Poun, Ta Khmaov was located in Kampong Tralach, Kampong Chhnang.
Dany: Was there a Department B5 [in Am Leang]?
Chiem: Yes, there was only one department.
Dany: Why was it named B5?
Chiem: I don't know. I just called the way he did.
Dany: Who is "he"?
Chiem: Pol Pot!
Dany: What happened after the liberation in 1975?
Chiem: We entered Phnom Penh in 1975.
Dany: Did you go to Phnom Penh with Pol Pot?
Chiem: I stayed with Pol Pot in Phnom Penh for a period of time. However, when Ieng Sary left the city in order to build up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I went with him.
Dany: Did Ieng Sary ask you to go with him or did you make a request yourself?
Chiem: No. We had no authority to make any requests. I was simply assigned by Pol Pot to go with Ieng Sary. My work was to provide hospitality to the guests and to look after the house [building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs]. Somehow, it was a hard work.
Dany: Where were most of the guests from?
Chiem: The first group were from China and other different countries. Within three years, there were a number of embassies that came into existence.
Dany: How many embassies were there?
Chiem: There were ten embassies from different countries permanently based in Cambodia. They were Vietnam, Lao, Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania, Cuba, and the North Korea.
Dany: How about Timor?
Chiem: Yes, we also had Timorese embassy.
Dany: How about Thailand?
Chiem: We did not have a Thai embassy in the country yet.

Dany: Does that mean that after the liberation, you stayed with Pol Pot for a period of time?

Chiem: Yes, I stayed with him when I first came to Phnom Penh.

Dany: Where did you stay in Phnom Penh?

Chiem: We first stayed at the train station and then moved to the Finance and Economic Ministry. After that, we stayed in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which today is the Council of Ministers. During the first three years, the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was an old house that was later destroyed. After that, it was rebuilt with the support of the Chinese government and the King, and eventually was inaugurated.

Dany: So you simply worked as a receptionist?

Chiem: No, I was just part of the staff who looked after the building, served the guests, and cleaned the kitchen and bathroom.

Dany: Where was Department 870? I used to hear this name, but I have no idea where it is.

Chiem: Department 870, also known as K3, was located in Tonle Basak near one of the embassies. I forget the name of this embassy! The collective cooperative of the central committee was also there. However, K3 or Department 870 was displaced from time to time; for instance, it used to be near the Royal Palace, and Preah Kor and Preah Keo pagoda.

Dany: Is it now near Kuntha Bopha Hospital?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: So Department 870 was simply a mobile department.

Chiem: Yes, it was relocated over time. It used to be located near the hospital, Tonle Basak, Ta khmao, and Chram Cham Res.

Dany: Did the senior leaders work for this Department?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Besides Department 870 or K3, where else did Pol Pot work?

Chiem: In fact, Pol Pot worked in different places. Sometimes he worked in K3, sometimes in an office near the Royal Palace, sometimes near Tonle Basak, and sometimes he traveled to different zones.

Dany: How about Nuon Chea?

Chiem: Yes, he also worked in different places.

Dany: Khieu Samphan?

Chiem: Yes, him too.

Dany: So it means you worked for the hospitality section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (today's Council of Ministers)?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Did you stay in the Ministry permanently?

Chiem: Yes, I stayed in the Ministry, but the house was in the same block as the Ministry of Finance, near the Cambodian Development Company (CDC) near Wat Phnom. The house hosted for guests was located in Chamkarmon district.

Dany: What did you do everyday? Did you clean the house or cook for the guests?

Chiem: Yes, I prepared the rooms for the guests, making sure everything was ready.

Dany: Do you know where most of the Cambodian students from abroad stayed at that time?

Chiem: Most of them stayed in the house near Boeng Trabek. They had to travel to work for the ministry. Brothers Seng Hong and Hoa Nam Hong were also among those students. I have known him since then.

Dany: What was his job?

Chiem: At that time, he had just started working for the ministry, so he helped [brother] Keat Chhun with some works dealing with policy issues.

Dany: Did he also work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Chiem: Yes. Oak Sokun, who came from France, also worked for the ministry. However, he is already dead. There is only Chuob Brasith, who is now living in France.

Dany: Were they just students [who were chosen to work for the party] or the revolutionary resistance group?

Chiem: I noticed some of them worked with Ieng Sary since 1970, under the King's rule. Of course, there were more of them volunteering [for the party].

Dany: Was Ieng Sary in charge of the whole operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Who was his subordinate?

Chiem: It was Brother So Hong.

Dany: How about Brother Vann Piny?

Chiem: I have no idea who Vann Piny was. What was his revolutionary name?

Dany: As far as I know, he was one of the subordinates. He was arrested later.

Chiem: Vann Piny? In the ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uncle Ieng Sary was the one who oversaw the ministry. Brother So Hong was responsible for policy issues. Brother Toeb, Keat Chhun, Sokun, Chann Yorann, In Sopheap, Long Norin, Bun Heng, and Brother Tith Samnang also worked for the ministry.

Dany: What about Porn, the one who came along way from [Ratanakiri] with you? Where did he work?

Chiem: He worked as the president of Department 870.

Dany: How about Doeun?

Chiem: Touch Kham Doeun also worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Dany: I learned from the document that Touch Kham Doeun worked with Porn.

Chiem: In truth, Touch Kham Doeun was the younger brother of Touch Phoeun, the Minister of Transportation.

Dany: Were you the only member of an ethnic group who worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Chiem: Camrade Tuon was also from an ethnic group. He now lives in Kanh Chabb.

Dany: Where is Kanh Chabb?

Chiem: It is in Pailin province.

Dany: Do you know the name of the district?

Chiem: No, I don't.

Dany: What is Camrade Tuon's name nowadays?

Chiem: His name is still Tou.

Dany: Did he also work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Chiem: At that time, he worked as a technician for the North Korean and the Chinese embassies.

Dany: What is his wife's name?

Chiem: Her name is Choeun.

Dany: Were you two the only members of ethnic groups who worked for the ministry?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: As a resistance member, did you find your job hard or challenging because you never used to experience this?

Chiem: I was taught and advised by the elders and some of the intellectuals, including Brother Long Norin. I learned a lot from him, and it took me a short while to be capable of doing those works.

Dany: You learned from the intellectuals!

Chiem: Yes. I was taught how to prepare the bedrooms, bathroom, and the office.

Dany: Did Long Norin also do the same work as you?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Besides Long Norin, who else did you work with?

Chiem: There were several other people, including Brother Suong Sy Koeun. I think you may know him. He is ill and now in Phnom Penh.

Dany: I used to visit his hometown in Prek Prasab. I met his newphrew two or three years ago. I asked him about Suong Sy Koeun, and he told me his uncle is also living in Malai, and teaching English to young children.

Chiem: Yes, that's true. But his health is deteriorated.

Dany: Is he now in Phnom Penh?

Chiem: Yes, he has a newphew in Phnom Penh to look after him. Moving to Phnom Penh makes it easy for him to visit a doctor. No one stays in his house in Malai.

Dany: When did you get married?

Chiem: I got married in 1972.

Dany: Did you get married in Stueng Trang?

Chiem: Yes, I got married when I worked in Stueng Trang.

Dany: How old were you when you got married?

Chiem: I was 27 years old.

Dany: What did your wife do at that time?

Chiem: She was a female cadre, and worked for the department 304.

Dany: Did she work with Kuy Thuon?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: After your marriage, did she move to work with you?

Chiem: Before the marriage, she worked for Department 304, however, she moved to work for Department 870 after our marriage.

Dany: What was her job at Department 870?

Chiem: Her job was to cook for the senior leaders.

Dany: So that means she cooked for Pol Pot and Nuon Chea?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: How long did she work as a cook?

Chiem: She worked until 1978.

Dany: Did she also cook for them when they were in Phnom Penh?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: So it meant that they had meals together?

Chiem: Yes, they joined the same table for meals.

Dany: Did they also stay in the same house?

Chiem: They stayed in a flat, consisting of several rooms, so they each could have their own room.

Dany: Does that mean that they had meals together but stayed in individual rooms in the Department 870?

Chiem: Yes, there was a large cooperative, where all the leaders gathered for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Sometimes Ieng Sary, who worked in Department B1, also joined the table with all of us at the communal eating hall in the ministry.

Dany: Did you mean Department 870?

Chiem: No, I meant at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Dany: Did he also have meals with you?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: So you had meals in Department B1?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Did Ieng Sary eat with you everyday or just occasionally?

Chiem: Actually, he was the cooperative supervisor, but he also worked for the ministry, so he sometimes ate at the ministry.

Dany: How were the meals served? Three times a day?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: How was the food?

Chiem: They had some sorts of sour soup, fried vegetables, or fried fish, and so on.

Dany: How many recipes were served per day?

Chiem: There were no more than three recipes, including a soup with vegetables or meat.

Dany: Did they usually have porridge as their breakfast?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: What was served with porridge?

Chiem: They ate dry fish or salty egg or fish. We often cooked sugar fish or meats as breakfast.

Dany: Did they also have sweets or fruit sometimes?

Chiem: Yes, they did. There was a restaurant in Central Market where the ministries got food and fruit.

Dany: At the Central Market?

Chiem: It was called the Administrative Market, under the supervision of Ministry of Commence. During the first year, each of the ministries went there for food. However, during the second and third year, some of the ministries managed to find food on their own. Some went to search for fish in Chhnuk or Roang Pruol to make dry fish or fish paste, and some grew vegetables.

Dany: Was some of the food production for the ministries assigned to specific regions or zones?

Chiem: Of course, there was at least one region or zone assigned to produce food for each of the ministries. Each ministry also assigned some people to grow vegetables in Chram Chamres, for instance, in Prek Pnaov.

Dany: Did Pol Pot or Nuon Chea frequently travel to visit each base in the each region?

Chiem: Yes, they did.

Dany: How often?

Chiem: Quite often.

Dany: How about Ieng Sary?

Chiem: Uncle Ieng Sary rarely traveled in the country, but he often went abroad. Sometimes, if free, he would accompany the foreign delegates to visit the base in the region.

Dany: Did you always accompany him?

Chiem: Yes, sometimes.

Dany: Did you travel with him whenever he led the delegates?

Chiem: Yes. When I worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I always accompanied him.

Dany: Wherever he went, you were always with him?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Every zone he visited?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: When there was a trip, did he inform you beforehand?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Did he ever conduct a trip to meet the students who came from abroad?

Chiem: Yes. He went to meet students in Boeng Trabek.

Dany: What did he talk to the students?

Chiem: First, he gave the students a summary of current situation, both inside and outside the country. Second, he explained the goals of the revolution, that everyone had to build up themselves in accordance with the regime movement.

Dany: Were there many students?

Chiem: Yes, there were many students.

Dany: Where were they come from?

Chiem: They came from different countries, for instance, France.

Dany: Both male and female students?

Chiem: Yes, some were male and female, but the majority were from France.

Dany: Do you think he often went to see the students at Boeng Trabek?

Chiem: No, I don't think so. The office [in Boeng Trabek] was only put under supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late 1978.

Dany: Who was the supervisor of that office?

Chiem: It was under supervision of Department 870, and after that Ministry of Foreign Affairs took over it.

Dany: Have you known Hoa Nam Hong since the resistant period?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Was he one of the students staying at Boeng Trabek?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: What did he do?>>>

Chiem: He was the monitor of the intellectual groups. He was also one of the intellectual members, but he led other students. Brother Heng Aun was his assistant, while others, including Brother Chuob Prasith, Keat Chhun, Chann Yorann, and Brother Eth Sokun, were assigned to work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dany: Did you know that some of the cadres were arrested, including Pornng?

Chiem: Yes, we learned about it only after they disappeared.

Dany: Do you know the reason why those people were arrested?

Chiem: No, I don't know.

Dany: As one of the members of the resistant group, you may be aware that some of your members were disappeared and arrested, including Von Vet, Touch Kham Doeun, Touch Phoeun, Ya, and so on. Do you know why they were arrested?

Chiem: Speaking of the arrests, they were surprising to everyone. We noticed that many of the members had disappeared.

Dany: Did the senior leaders say anything about these matters, particularly regarding the reason for those arrests?

Chiem: I don't know. They didn't say anything about those arrests, but in the case of Kuy Thuon, I knew why he was arrested. News of his arrest was published in Revolutionary Flag magazine, explaining that he had confessed to committing a moral offense. I had no idea why others were arrested, except that they disappeared.

Dany: Were there many members who disappeared?

Chiem: There were many cadres who disappeared, at both the regional and zone levels, as well as the district level. They suddenly disappeared.

Dany: As I have learned from my interviews with most of the former cadres, chiefs of regions were swapped. For instance, Ta Mut, chief of the southwest region, was assigned to oversee the northwest region and Ta Nhoem, chief of the east region, was transferred to the north region, and so on. Do you know the reasons for these reassignments?

Chiem: Yes, I do. The assignment of new cadres to oversee the southwest region caused mass killings. Many of them were proud and rigid. Ta Mok is a bad person, I hate

him. In 1979, there seemed to be a heated argument over the management in southwest region, where Ta Mok built up cruel cadres to commit execution.

Dany: Did Pol Pot and Nuon Chea talk anything about this problem?

Chiem: I didn't notice that. I don't think they said anything. Also, nothing was written in any documents. Simply, there was no mentioning of any killings. Our movement was called the National Democratic Revolution during the resistance period. However, after the liberation day on the 17th of April, 1975, it was called the Socialist Revolutionary Party, with the purpose of creating a communist state. It was the goal of the regime. It was true that during the national resistance, we fought against the American imperialists and their servants, while under the democratic resistance, we fought the feudalists, capitalists, and reactionists. The resistance was against the former regime, not any particular groups of people. However, it was implemented in an extreme manner that took many innocent lives. Everyone was petrified, including me! I might not be alive today if the Vietnamese troops had not overthrown the regime. Perhaps I might have been arrested.

Dany: Why did you feel that way?

Chiem: I have no reason in particular, but I certainly know that this would have happened to me.

Dany: You worked closely with Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, and Nuon Chea, so what were you afraid of?

Chiem: After they were appointed as leaders, I was not afraid of anything. Their movement was as strong as a broken dam! However, after the liberation, they fought each other for powers.

Dany: Which ones were hungry for power?

Chiem: All of them aggressively fought for power, especially Ta Mok. I learnt this personally! Why did I say Ta Mok was aggressive? It's because he argued with others while they were having meals. He claimed that comrades Soa Phoem, Kuy Thuon and Khieu (Sun Sen) didn't arrive in Phnom Penh before him. However, Pol Pot was the one who reached a compromised and suggested that everyone work together. He said that the success of Phnom Penh liberation was not achieved by any particular individual, but by the unity and solidarity of everyone. Yet Ta Mok was demanding for his own reputation!

Dany: You mean Ta Mok.

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Did they argue over this matter during their meeting?

Chiem: Yes, they did. He acted strangely compared to others. I am glad that he died. I hate him!

Dany: Do you really hate him?

Chiem: He is a pigheaded person!

Dany: Does it mean that whenever they held a meeting in Department 870, you saw and heard their discussion?

Chiem: Yes, because I also was there in the meeting. During the three year resistance I didn't learn this, because I was not assigned to work for a military unit until 1979. Ta Mok attempted to beat me. I was not afraid of him. He cursed me and intended to shoot me. Because I controlled military forces both in the east zone and An Long Veng region, he dared not do so. He was a selfish person. He liked to look down on everyone, particularly those like us, members of ethnic groups. I hate him, and I am happy to see him dead. I am furious because Ta Mok was a tricky man. The situation might not have gotten as bad as it did. That was because of Ta Mok! As the proverb goes, "If one fish spoils, the other fish in the basket also spoil!" Ta Mok

committed most of the dirty acts. For example, in 1978, there was a mass killing of 79 people in the region where he was in charge.

Dany: What was the real situation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when the Vietnamese troops captured Phnom Penh in 1979? Did everyone decide to escape or retreat?

Dany: In December 1978, the first phase of invasion took place. The second phase occurred in the north of the country. Our forces could not stand against the attack, so we decided to retreat from Phnom Penh. On the 7th of January, I was on duty to fight. Around 7 or 8 o'clock at night we retreated.

Dany: Did you serve as soldier on the 7th of January?

Chiem: Yes. At night on the 6th of January, I dropped the king at the airport to Peking. That night, we prepared to fight. My forces were trained in military tactics.

Dany: I would like to know another important story about the king. In his book, Nayann Chenda wrote that the King escaped to the northwest region. Is that true?

Chiem: Yes, it is. I was the one who helped him escape.

Dany: Could you please briefly tell me about his escape?

Chiem: At that time, Angkar said, the Vietnamese forces are now inside the country and the king shall be evacuated to Poi Pet.

Dany: When did that happen?

Chiem: It was before his return to Phnom Penh. It might have been on the 29th or 30th, between those dates.

Dany: In December 1978?

Chiem: Yes. We left Phnom Penh at 9 pm and arrived in Svay at 5:30am. Our forces gathered in Battambang province. The fact was that we usually stopped for a rest at our resting spot, for instance, in Kampong Chhnag, Pursat, Bantambang, and Sisophon.

Dany: How many people were there in the car?

Chiem: There was the King [Shihanouk] and the queen, King Pen Nut and his queen along with two or three servants.

Dany: The king and the queen, along with King Pen Nut and... were in the car.

Chiem: The King and the queen traveled in black Mercedes, and King Pen Nut and his queen were in another black car. There were another two cars, one in the front and one behind. In total, there were four cars running to Poi Pet. The King said if the Vietnamese forces captured this region, just wait for orders from the Angkar. Wherever Angkar told us to go, we must follow the orders.

Dany: Were you his driver...?

Chiem: Yes, because I had traveled forth and back with the King since 1973 and safeguarded his journey from Kantuy Neak (Dragon's Tail) to Siem Pang district. I had known him well ever since the three-year-resistance.

Dany: Did the King know you?

Chiem: Yes. During the three year resistance, whenever the King traveled to the province, I was usually assigned to drive for him. One time when I drove him to Svay, he said to me that if something went wrong, just keep on heading to Thailand.

Dany: Did Ieng Sary assign you to take the King into exile?

Chiem: Yes! I waited for the order. On the fourth of December, I was called back to Phnom Penh.

Dany: Did Ieng Sary require you to return to Phnom Penh or you...?

Chiem: Yes, he did, but Angkar assigned him to ask me to return. We held a meeting in House Number 1, today's Cambodian Development Committee near Wat Phnom, and held a party for the fact that the King went to Peking and the United Nations in order to attract attention to the Vietnamese invasion. The King was on board the

plane on the sixth of January at around 8pm. After he had gone, I made a request for more weapons even though it was at night.

Dany: Does that mean that on the fourth of January you brought the King back to Phnom Penh?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Did you arrive in Phnom Penh on that day?

Chiem: No, on the fourth, we started our journey, and on the fifth we decided to slow down our journey. We finally arrived in Phnom Penh at around five o'clock. I dropped the King at his palace near the Independence Monument. It was a new palace.

Dany: Didn't he stay in his previous palace?

Chiem: Yes. At that time, he decided to move to a new and small palace, which I was assigned to build.

Dany: Is it near the Prime Minister Hun Sen's house today?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Is it the embassy of North Korea?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: When did the King move out from his palace?

Chiem: The new palace was halfway under construction, and was only completed in 1978. He said his palace would be for entertaining guests, and that he would prefer to stay in the house behind the palace.

Dany: Was there a meeting on the fifth?

Chiem: Yes, and after the meeting, we held a party.

Dany: Did the King also attend the party?

Chiem: Yes, Nuon Chea, Pol Pot, Sun Sen, and Ieng Sary also joined the meeting and party.

Dany: Was the party held nearby today's Cambodian Development Committee?

Chiem: Yes, but it was called House Number 1.

Dany: Did you also join the party?

Chiem: No. I didn't attend the party, but I guarded the building outside.

Dany: What happened on the sixth of January, after the party?

Chiem: On the fifth, we worked and enjoyed the party, but on the sixth we simply carried out our usual tasks. At night, we sent the King to the airport to travel to Peking.

Dany: When did the flight to Peking take off?

Chiem: It was around 8 o'clock.

Dany: Do you mean 8pm?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Who took the flight with the King?

Chiem: Only the King Pen Nut and a few servants accompanied the King.

Dany: Did Ieng Sary go with the King?

Chiem: No.

Dany: Did you know where the King was heading to?

Chiem: He said first he would head first to Peking, and then to the United Nations. However, he was furious and blamed us for the fact that the Vietnamese forces had invaded Cambodia's territory.

Dany: Do you mean he blamed everyone after he had settled into Peiking?

Chiem: Yes, upon his arrival, he put blame on us. He was extremely furious at us. He would not go discuss the issue with the United Nations.

Dany: At that time, do you mean that everyone was equipped with weapons and tools to fight against the Vietnamese?

Chiem: Yes! That night, I was on alert from 11am until 12pm. There were ongoing explosions across Phnom Penh. We believed that the Vietnamese forces were traveling down Road Number 1. We frequently heard explosions. When the morning came, I was preparing the ammunition. I met Ta Mok at around 8am. He asked me to place our military forces in Nak Loeng, and said he would send 20 tanks afterwards. We were waiting for the order to attack. At that time, Brother Met was the Chief of General Staff in Nak Loeng, but he disappeared.

Dany: Who?

Chiem: Brother Met.

Dany: Oh, do you mean Sou Met?

Chiem: Yes. He was the chief general. He disappeared. When Phnom Penh was chaotic and full of gun shots, my forces and I left for the train station and we passed Cheng Heng's house in The Kosamak Hospital and Stung Meanchey. At around twelve, the Vietnamese forces entered Phnom Penh and occupied the Central Market. I sent some of the forces to spy for more information, and found out that there were many Vietnamese soldiers.

Dany: Were the staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked to serve as soldiers?

Chiem: Yes, They became soldiers, and most of them were male.

Dany: Did they mobilize as one unit?

Chiem: Yes, they became a force of a regiment.

Dany: What happened when the Vietnamese troops captured the capital? Did the KR forces decide to retreat?

Chiem: As we no longer could win the battle, we decided to retreat to Thmat Pong Mountain. We spent two and a half months assembling the forces, and finally in mid-March we moved to the northwest zone. We ceaselessly fought against the Vietnamese forces and as a result, many were killed, including Vietnamese soldiers, and many of weapons were also destroyed.

Dany: Were [the KR] forces equipped with adequate weapons?

Dany: We didn't have adequate weapons, and worst of all the front-line forces were not placed along the border. Thus, when the Vietnamese forces attacked, the rear forces were not able to control the situation and eventually retreated.

Dany: Did the soldiers usually retreat during the attack?

Chiem: We retreated to Pailin, and it took us four months.

Dany: Did the senior leaders come with you?

Chiem: No. When the Vietnamese forces captured Phnom Penh, I didn't stay with them. By that time, Ieng Sary had already moved out of Phnom Penh with his family. He stopped at the Chinese embassy, and left the embassy afterwards.

Dany: So the Chinese embassy hadn't withdrawn from the country yet. Is that true?

Chiem: Actually, the Chinese embassy was near the place where the senior leaders stayed. In April, I eventually arrived in Pailin, and I met Ieng Sary. I also met Pol Pot in Samlot.

Dany: While in the battle, did you maintain the contact with the senior leaders?

Chiem: Yes, I did. We did have a radio transceiver to communicate. We reported everything to them, and followed their orders.

Dany: In April when you arrived Pailin, how was the forces mobilized?

Chiem: Some of the forces were from Trat and were evacuated by the Thai authorities to Lem. Some forces were escaping from the north part of Siem Reap province. Of course, there were hundreds of thousands of people. It was a terrible situation.

Dany: Who were they? Were they the Khmer Rouge cadres, soldiers, or villagers?

Chiem: Everyone moved to Pailin. A large majority were the soldiers themselves, and their families, from every ministry. Also, the staff from each ministry were unified

into the military forces, both male and female. Male soldiers were in front line, while women served in transportation units and the young and the old were assigned to fight behind the front line.

Dany: Was it your own initiative or orders from the leaders to reform the forces?

Chiem: The reformation of the forces was suggested by the senior leaders. We were allowed to take actions to solve our political, military, economics, and technical problems after the plan was set up by the leaders.

Dany: During the three year resistance, the senior leaders took vigorous actions to strengthen the forces. You stated that when you moved to Pailin, the transportation unit and the front line soldiers had already been established, so could you tell me how this new policy differed from the previous policy?

Dany: It differed slightly from the previous policy. As you noticed, the secret resistance was distinctive from year to year. For instance, the secret resistance during the five year war differed from the three year resistance and the 1979 period.

Dany: I see. What was the secret resistance, really?

Chiem: It means we secretly resisted the government. However, during the coup d'état on the 18th of March, 1970, we didn't have many members. Only during the five year war did we gather adequate forces and creat a transportation unit, known as "Sneng" unit, based in the battlefield. During the revolution that led up to the founding of National Democratic Kampuchea, hundreds of villagers volunteered, and they all were committed to liberate the country. On one hand, this revolution was known as the revolution of National Democratic Kampuchea, which won a complete victory on the 17th of April, 1975. It was noticeable that there was no resistant movement to overthrow the KR regime, except in 1977.

Dany: Does that mean that there had always been a traitorous group aiming to overthrow the revolution?

Dany: Yes, of course. They wanted to overthrow the revolution, and thus they were seeking ways to cause trouble, particularly by throwing accusations against the southwest and east zones. In fact, it was overcrowded in the southwest zone, and everyone was dying for power. Another problem was that Ta Mok had been continually promoted in the central zone. Worst of all, the cadres overseeing the east zone were accused of being the enemy, thus provoking chaos, and as a result, the Vietnamese forces were able to encroach on Cambodia's territory. If the Vietnamese troops had not captured some areas, our government would not have been overthrown. . Noticeably, the policy of dealing with political and governmental management had been reformed. The forces in southwest zone were scattered across every region, causing internal turmoil. For instance, stealing a potato, breaking a spoon was considered as a crime. It seemed that everyone viewed everyone else as an enemy, unlike the five year resistance when the people were unified. At this time, everyone criticized everyone else and dared to kill for power.

Dany: Did you become aware of all these minor accusations of stealing a potato, breaking a spoon or ploughing before or after the three-year-resistance?

Chiem: I became aware of this issue before the three-year-resistance because I had been travelling to various regions.

Dany: Did the senior leaders also learn about this?

Chiem: They definitely knew this. They knew that the cooperatives were not as developed as they claimed, because most people had only gruel with some vegetables. I also witnessed the poor living condition of people in the northwest zone, in Pursat province.

Dany: Do you mean you saw that the cooperatives that were supposed to be well developed could barely offer gruel to the people?

Cheim: Yes.

Dany: How was the living condition of people at that time?

Cheim: I have the memory of seeing people building dams, canals, and so on. At that time, I teased the elderly Nhoem, saying that the fact that villagers had only gruel showed that the cadre overseeing those people was incapable.

Dany: Oh, did you talk to elderly Nhoem in person?

Cheim: Yes, I did. I was just teasing him, but he took it seriously. Based on the party policy, those cadres who could only provide gruel to their people were incapable and useless.

Dany: When did you witness the poor living condition of people?

Cheim: In 1978.

Dany: Was Nhoem still alive in 1978?

Cheim: Yes, he was still alive in early 1978.

Dany: Who did you go with when you happened to witness this incident?

Cheim: I went to [the northwest zone] with Pol Pot. Road Number 5 linking Siem Reap to Kampong Cham was inaccessible, so we travelled by boat back to Phnom Penh.

Dany: Did Nuon Chea also join this trip?

Cheim: No, only Pol Pot.

Dany: How about Ieng Sary?

Cheim: No, Ieng Sary worked at his office in the Ministry.

Dany: Did you always travel with the senior leaders, although you worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Cheim: Yes, I travelled with them whenever I was called, and Ieng Sary usually assigned me to go with them.

Dany: By the way, back to what you said earlier, you mean that senior leaders as such Pol Pot and Nuon Chea were aware of poor living condition of people.

Cheim: Of course, they were aware of this, that's why in early 1978 they sent a message calling upon the cadres to tolerate each other and avoid accusing each other of being the enemy.

Dany: Yes, I also learned about that letter from 1978, which requested that the cadres tolerate and forgive each other.

Cheim: Yes, we had to tolerate and learn to forgive others.

Dany: Did the upper cadres also know about this?

Cheim: Yes, they knew it. Now that the potential cadres became cadres of the central committee, everyone in each zone and district knew everyone else. Because we were in the central zone, we knew everything. As members of the central committee, we were respected by the other cadres. We firmly trusted one another.

Dany: Did you know Nhoem and dare to talk to him?

Cheim: Yes, I had small talks with other cadres in every region, including those in the central zone.

Dany: I read a telegram discussing the Cham people in the north and northwest zones. Were you aware of the fact that the Chams in Koh Phal, Kampong Cham rebelled against the cadres, and killed some of them? Also that there was an evacuation of the Cham people out of the region?

Cheim: I didn't know about such incidents. However, I heard Pol Pot mention some rebellious movements against the revolution. All the cadres were called to show their stances in their regions. Therefore, we had to be cautious. During the first three years, the first accusations that people were C.I.A or K.G.B agents took place. Also, the Kok Minh Taing group secretly established its three traitorous lines in

Cambodia, aiming to take control over Cambodia. These three traitorous lines were tightly unified. Thus, we had to be on an alert for the revolutionary enemy.

Dany: Really?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: How about the Vietnamese enemy?

Chiem: There was no mention of the Vietnamese enemy, but the Vietnamese were known for their desire to establish an Indochinese federation. After our victory on the 17th of April, the Vietnamese were dismayed. The Vietnamese government directly asked our government to discuss its Indochinese plan in 1973. But we denied their call.

Dany: What would the discussion have been about?

Chiem: The Vietnamese troops attacked in the south part of the country and denied the negotiations proposed by the Americans. Finally, the Vietnamese government convinced the Cambodian government to negotiate with the Americans in June and July of 1973. Because of the poor cooperation, we refused to be involved in the negotiation. Although we lacked of ammunition, we stood firm and attacked back. As one of our slogans said, "Take the artillery from the enemy to fight the enemy," "Where there are people, there are troops," "Where there are people, there is economic growth" and "Where there are people, and there is a request."

Dany: What happened in 1979?

Chiem: In 1979, we needed to dissolve the Communist Party of Kampuchea and mobilize forces.

Dany: How the situation in 1979 differed from the three-year-resistance?

Chiem: During the five-year-fighting, we were independent, but it was difficult to win the war. Nonetheless, we had adequate supplies, including weapons, gunpowder, healthy food-beef, sugar, rice, monosodium glutamate, fish paste, bread, canned fish, oil, and so on. Moreover, the implementation of the militia war tactics was running smoothly. At that time, we were able to defend ourselves and struggle to maintain our power, but during the last few years, the situation was uncontrollable, for example, we did not participate in the Borey Agreement, and thus were unable to participate in election movement. What is more was that Ta Mok set first and second conditions that required us not to join the election campaign and to continue to attack the enemy. At that time, we held a meeting organized by Ta Mok nearby Chhatt [Umbrella] Mountain.

Dany: What did he suggest during the meeting in Chhatt Mountain?

Chiem: Ta Mok told Pol Pot that if Pol Pot decided to carry on the fighting, he would follow the decision. It seemed that Ta Mok was no longer independent. The situation during the national resistance differed from the three-year-resistance. When the Vietnamese forces attacked us, we were weak both spiritually and intellectually. Everything was under Ta Mok authority, and consequently caused internal instability. He attempted to arrest Ieng Sary. However, because Ieng Sary oversaw the armed forces in Pailin and Malai, he ordered his forces to be on alert. Worst, Pol Pot was not able to resolve the dispute, allowing Ta Mok to try to seek a solution to the row, which simply made the situation worse, like trying to extinguish a fire with gasoline. Also, my forces did not want to be under the control of Son Sen. Son Sen planned to arrest many leaders, namely Sok Pheap and E Chhean. This caused controversy among the leaders. One day, it was broadcast on air that Ieng Sary, Sok Pheap, and E Chhean were traitors. After learning this, we, soldiers from the two units, rose up against the accusation. Now that we were accused of being enemies, we decided to defect to the Hun Sen government. We thought it was useless to struggle anymore! Our group was not big, but still we

broke apart. So Unit 320, the Ta Bet unit, and Unit 705 defected to the government, while the central unit remained under Son Sen's authority. Ta Mok ordered the central unit to attack my forces in Malai and Pailin. However, because we used to struggle together, we decided to negotiate. They asked why we defected to the government. We simply replied "despite the internal disagreement, there shall not be an accusation broadcasted on air. Now that we were considered as traitors, we had better defect to the government."

Dany: Do you mean the [KR] cadres based in Pailin and Malai defected to the government?

Chiem: Yes. Without the forces in Pailin and Malai, we would not have been here today. It was not that easy to overthrow the regime if the internal unity did not break apart.

Dany: Why was Son Sen killed?

Chiem: It was the internal dispute among the senior leaders. Because Son Sen was not able to oversee the Malai and Pailin zone, he was accused of being incapable. Eventually, he was killed by Ta Mok. In fact, there was a row among the leaders, and as a result, Pol Pot was kept in one place and prohibited from being involved in any problems. Ta Mok agitated cadres from the upper and the lower ranks, and was able to arrest Pol Pot as hostage. The internal affair was really complicated. Finally, Ta Mok planned to kill Pol Pot, hoping that he would be promoted as a leader when Pol Pot was killed. Actually, Ta Mok was a pigheaded and useless person.

Dany: What happened to Ny Korn or Neay Korn?

Chiem: Ny Korn?

Dany: I referred to Ny Korn, who was under supervision of Son Sen.

Chiem: Ny Korn was an older brother of Son Sen.

Dany: Really?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Did he also work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Chiem: He worked as an organizer for the Ministry. In 1979, he camped in Mak Heurn, and oversaw both political and military forces. Brother Hong was in charge of opening the way from Koh Kong to the areas near Lao border. Therefore, Ieng Sary contacted him and mobilized his forces to resist the government along the border.

Dany: I would like to know how Malai was developed?

Chiem: Yes, go ahead!

Dany: Before the armed forces settled in Malai, what was it called?

Chiem: Malai was a settlement of Division 450. It was Division 450 which stood firm against the enemy, and indeed Malai was frequently attacked. However, we were strong enough to keep the clash under control. After that, UNTAC was able to internally work with us, and as consequence the situation was calmed.

Dany: I would like to know what the original name of Malai? Was it originally called Malai?

Chiem: During the three-year-resistance, I heard it was called Malai Mountain. It was a settlement of free Khmers. In 1975, they were those who surrendered, namely, Dieng, Diel, and In Taom, and they were also known as White Khmer. It was said so, as far as I have heard. These groups ran a tremendous movement against the Khmer Rouge. In 1979, when I moved here, it was a densely forested area, full of wild animals such as tigers, elephants, and so on. It was completely different from today.

Dany: Who took control the Malai region or Malai Mountain during the three-year-resistance?

Chiem: It was under supervision of the northwest region.

Dany: Name of the region?
 Chiem: Malai was in Region 5.
 Dany: What was its district?
 Chiem: It was in fact called Serey Sophorn district.
 Dany: Wasn't it Ou Chruv district?
 Chiem: No, Ou Chruv district was named after the regime collapsed. Under the regime, it was Serey Sophorn district.
 Dany: Wasn't it Region 3?
 Chiem: No, it was Region 5.
 Dany: Who controlled Region 5?
 Dany: It was Chiel, a son of Nhoem. I knew most of them, including elderly Vanh, who was in charge of military units in the northeast zone, Samai, Sou, Kue, Tul, and many more.
 Dany: Does it mean that Malai was in Serey Sophorn district during the three-year-resistance?
 Chiem: Yes!
 Dany: Who was the chief of Serey Sophorn district?
 Chiem: I don't know, but Hing and Chiel controlled Region 5.
 Dany: Was Malai the settlement of free Khmer forces and bandits?
 Chiem: Yes.
 Dany: Did the bandits attack the Khmer Rouge?
 Chiem: Yes.
 Dany: Did they still remain in this area when you moved here?
 Chiem: No, I didn't see any of them here, and had no idea where they had gone. Perhaps they emigrated to Thailand. But we found a place called Sras of Free Khmer [Pond of Free Khmer], where those free Khmer were stationed. It was belonged to an unknown minister. This area was a market for selling wood to Thailand, and the minister earned pretty good money. That's all I saw at that time.
 Dany: Was Sras of Free Khmer or Sras of immigrants named by your forces after you moved here?
 Chiem: It was named by the Khmer people. The area was called that Sra of Free Khmer because the emigrated Khmer dug the pond to extract water for daily use.
 Dany: When did these people emigrate?
 Chiem: Those who lost in the war in 1975 escaped into the forest. Later on, they emigrated to Thailand. Elderly In and Taom created a movement called Molynaka.
 Dany: After 1979, your team set up a transportation unit and combat forces. I would like to know how the management policy for the military and the civilians were set up.
 Chiem: As army soldiers, we created a structure with a team chief, platoon, company, battalion, regiment, and squad. The living conditions in the battlefield were like a military camp, in a collective way. Everyone was on alert, maintaining internal orders, known as the second regime. Political and military commanders were in charge of different duties. For instance, the military commander commanded the military forces in the battle, while the political chief was in charge of mobilizing and managing the political forces both in the front and rear lines. Soldiers were in the front line, while the villagers were in the rear lines.
 Dany: Did Ieng Sary take control of Pailin and Malai regions?
 Chiem: Yes.
 Dany: Did Son Seng oversee Sampov Loun region?
 Chiem: Yes, that's true.
 Dany: How about Ny Korn?

Chiem: Yes, Ny Korn was in the same region as Son Sen. At first, Son Sen controlled Regions 1001 and 1002.

Dany: Where were Regions 1001 and 1002?

Chiem: They were close to Preah Vihear province, along the Lao border with Cambodia. Son Sen moved from Regions 1001 and 1002 to Pailin province. However, he did not manage to take control of Pailin, so he decided to move to Sampov Loun region with his brother, Ny Korn. Once he managed to control military forces, he was assigned to the west zone. The west zone was along Road Number five, and was known as a battlefield base. Nuon Chea and Son Sen were in the west zone, while Ta Mok and Ke Pauk were in the north zone.

Dany: Where was the north zone located?

Chiem: It ran from Poi Pet to the northeast and bordered Preah Vihear, Rattanakiri, and Mondulakiri provinces. The south and the west zones were divided into two huge battlefields, one of which was in Anlong Veng.

Dany: Who took control of Anlong Veng region?

Chiem: Pol Pot and Khieu Samphan.

Dany: How about in this region?

Chiem: Ieng Sary took control of this region.

Dany: Which part of this region?

Chiem: He supervised Regiment 450 and another regiment in Pailin.

Dany: What was the name of the regiment in Pailin?

Chiem: It was Regiment 415, and it was overseen by E Chhean.

Dany: Did you earlier say that Son Sen moved from Regions 1001 and 1002 to stay with his brother, Ny Korn?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: In which particular areas did Ny Korn take control?

Chiem: His targets were Battambang and Tonle Sap.

Dany: Which areas were under your control?

Chiem: The area from Road Number 5 to the Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces was under our control.

Dany: Which part of Road Number 5?

Chiem: From Poi Pet to Svay Sisophon.

Dany: Where was Ieng Sary's house located?

Chiem: His house was nearby here, in Malai, but he also had another house in Pailin.

Dany: Does it mean that he stayed temporarily in Malai?

Chiem: Yes. He was responsible for transporting weapons, and some food and financial supplies to regions throughout the country.

Dany: Who else were in the leadership positions in Malai?

Chiem: Brother Sok Pheap was in charge of the military section and Brother So Hong was in charge of policy issues.

Dany: How about you?

Chiem: I worked in a regiment, in charge of transportation and weapons management.

Dany: Really?

Chiem: Yes, I also fought in the battlefield.

Dany: Really?

Chiem: Yes, we were unable to wage on war if we did not transport the weapons.

Dany: Were there many female cadres working in this unit?

Chiem: No. In this regiment, there was another team that maintained military forces both in the front and rear lines, while we were to be in charge of transportation. We were assigned to do certain activities such as hiding food and gunpowder supplies

for soldiers in the forest. Without all these supplies, the soldiers were not able to fight.

Dany: As you was in charge of transporting the supplies, do you remember where these supplies were imported from?

Chiem: They were donated from China. These supplies included rice, salt, gunpowder, money, and food.

Dany: Were there any contributions from Angkar?

Chiem: No. But we also received some donations from some donors who provided some supplies to several camps, including a camp of elderly Nguk, E Dao camp, Sras Keo, and Kham camp.

Dany: Does that mean that China provided supplies to the soldiers in the battlefield?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: What tactics did the soldiers use to wage the war?

Chiem: First, we spied to keep track of the situation. With clear information on the situation, we would attack. Soldiers in the battlefields were quick to attack and then withdraw. Second, we used a tactic called militiaman attack, in which we first sent a few soldiers, followed by five more soldiers, and then ten soldiers. These soldiers were supposed to mine, explode bombs, and so on. Furthermore, these tactics were also being taught to the villagers. Setting nails along the roads was another militiaman tactic.

Dany: Did it also include making sticky spikes?

Chiem: Yes, we used all these strategies.

Dany: How were the sticky spikes made?

Chiem: They was made from bamboo stick with sticky gum. The sticky gum was mixed with snake venom or other kinds of venom, and boiled with plant roots. The sticky spikes looked similar to arrows. There were many kinds of spikes. We called this tactic, "people attack", which meant that men, women, and the young and the old knew how to make it.

Dany: Do you mean that the villagers were taught to fight in this way?

Chiem: Yes. It was called "actual movement". We implemented this type of training only when our ideology had been absorbed by most of the people in our controlled regions. It was absolutely effective when people were quick to learn and believe in our movement. However, speaking of espionage, it was a difficult task to plant mines, although it was deemed as the most effective defense measure.

Dany: As a group of soldiers living in such a densely forested area, how did you all manage to build houses?

Chiem: You know, we were not able to afford these kinds of houses! The houses were simply made of bamboo sticks with thatched-roofs made out of plants. We also used tents for shelters. For the villagers, they simply built a hut small enough for one bed as their shelters.

Dany: Where were their huts?

Chiem: They were scattered around the river and throughout the forest.

Dany: I see. How many soldiers were gathered in this area?

Chiem: There were around two to three hundred thousand soldiers.

Dany: That many!

Chiem: Yes, and if we also counted in the villagers, there were millions of people. The militiaman resistance was impossible to dissolve with this great number of forces.

Dany: Million of people?

Chiem: Yes. Mobilizing forces was possible everywhere.

Dany: As I was told by some villagers here, the Vietnamese and the government forces made an attack on this area.

Chiem: Yes, the attack forced our forces to retreat to Thai territory.

Dany: Why?

Chiem: Because the front forces were not able to control the situation, we had to retreat. It was our tactic to retreat, or else our forces would be completely destroyed. However, we used another tactic, known as team attack. In 1989, we liberated Malai Mountain by attacking twenty to thirty times a day along the main road, and each attack-starting with bombs-was implemented by only a few militiamen. Regarding the bombs, we set a procedure for the militiamen to follow. They were not allowed to fire their guns, but only explode the bombs as that caused more death and injuries, and most importantly produced less noise. Once the Vietnamese and the government forces ran out of supplies and lost contact, they escaped for their survival.

Dany: How did your forces manage to escape into Thai territory when the Vietnamese troops attacked?

Chiem: The senior leaders asked permission from Thai authorities.

Dany: Where were your forces allowed to settle down?

Chiem: Of course, the Thai authorities granted the permission. We needed to rent a plot of land if we chose to settle in their territory.

Dany: What was the areas called?

Chiem: They were Areas 85 and 86.

Dany: How many people settled there?

Chiem: Hundreds of thousands of people.

Dany: Did you continue to make ongoing attacks?

Chiem: Yes, we finally liberated Malai in 1990.

Dany: Did people return to Malai after the liberation in 1990?

Chiem: Yes, in 1990 women and children were asked to resettle in Malai. However, the soldiers kept on attacking the Vietnamese and the government forces along the border, Angkor Borey, and Svay. Eventually, we made their forces retreat, and we were able to enlarge our occupied areas. We set up forces to line up in those areas and continued attacking, and successfully occupied Sisophon and Angkor Borey.

Dany: After enlarging the occupied areas, did the forces return to Malai in 1990?

Chiem: On November 15, 1989, we were able to liberate the above mentioned areas, except the area along Road Number 5 from Poi Pet to Sisophon. Finally, we took control of the whole area in the forest.

Dany: That means on November 15, 1989 your forces finally occupied those areas.

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: What were the challenges the group faced after all the Vietnamese and the government forces retreated?

Chiem: The area, known as the K5 mobilization, located along the border was filled with mines and spikes.

Dany: How did you deal with this?

Chiem: We cleared all the mines and dug up the spikes. We sold those spikes to Thai authorities, and earned some profit.

Dany: It was risky, wasn't it?

Chiem: Yes, it was very risky.

Dany: How many were killed because of the mines?

Chiem: Hundreds.

Dany: I see.

Chiem: Some died, some wounded and crippled.

Dany: So, since your forces took control of Malia, did the Vietnamese forces attack on the area again?

Chiem: Yes, they hadn't. At the beginning of 1990 and on October 23, 1991, there was an agreement. We sent our armed forces into Phnom Penh, enough to attack Khieu Samphan's forces.

Dany: Did your group have hidden forces in Phnom Penh?

Chiem: Yes

Dany: When was the organizational structure of villages, communes, and districts created, Uncle?

Chiem: In Malai, we broke away to form the National Union of Democratic Kampuchea movement on August 15, 1996. In late 1998 we moved to Anlong Veng. In 1997, the government sent me to Stueng Treng, Zone 1, Ratanakkiri, Mondul Kiri, and Kratie to convince the authorities there to form a break-away movement. I moved to Malai after I had finished my mission.

Dany: Who was in charge of the supervision?

Chiem: It was under the supervision of Yor, the most senior Khmer Rouge commander of the northern Nama Region.

Dany: His name is Yorn?

Chiem: Yor! Now he is a deputy commander of Ratanakkiri Military Sub-cooperation Zone. He holds the post of Colonel. He is my relative. He and I were lobbied to break away by the movement.

Dany: Uncle, I have another question. Malai district is divided into Dong Village, Kandal Village and so on. How was it divided then?

Chiem: At the time, those areas were grouped or systematized as a battalion or a regiment. I mean the battalion or regiment was like a village. In my division, there were 100 body guards, and then I organized it into a village.

Dany: What was its name?

Chiem: Presently, we had such villages as Reaksmei Meanchey, Santepheap, Banteay 1, Toul Prong Ror, Kla Gnorb, Koh Snuol, O Sampor 1, O Sampor 2, and Banteay 2. These villages were then grouped into a commune.

Dany: How many villages were there in a commune?

Chiem: Sometimes a commune consisted of four villages, eight villages or five villages. In Malai, there were 6 communes: Boeng Beng, Malai, So Srohaov, O Sampor, Tuol Pong Ror and Ta Kong.

Dany: But first of all, were villages created where soldiers were based?

Chiem: Yes! When we defected to the government, we ceded our forces into the framework of military armed forces and military police. Some were district governors, deputy district governors, and we had different offices. The administrative structure was organized in compliance with the structure from the top.

Dany: Did your former Khmer Rouge group have to do this job on our own or we had anyone to help?

Chiem: No, not at all! They just informed us they would come and discuss how many villages there were and how many villages or communes we wanted to create. Obviously, we were better aware of the region than they were. If our request to create a district was agreed by the ministry, then we just waited for a royal decree to be issued, as we had already have governors.

Dany: Did your group appoint people or develop the organizational structures on our own?

Chiem: Yes. We developed the organizational structure and sent it to the ministry for approval. If it was approved, we would carry out our jobs according to the hierarchy.

Dany: What would you compare a village to?

Chiem: A village was comparable to a battalion or a regiment.

Dany: Does a battalion mean a village?

Chiem: Yes. Also, a regiment can become a commune. In each regiment, we have a chief.

Dany: Before the integration with the government, were there any villages or commune names as such Malai commune, Daung or Kanal or Thmei villages?

Chiem: No, after defecting to the government, the former KR named these villages and communes according to their geographical areas. For instance, Porng Ro village was named because this village was full of Porng Ro [a kind of sour fruit], Koh Snuol village, full of Snuol [force-ripened] trees, Banteay I and Banteay II, Boeng Beng commune, Sangke village, Chambak and Lavea village.

Dany: Oh, I see.

Chiem: It was how they were named.

Dany: How were people recruited to serve in military offices, administrative offices, and provincial government and as police officials?

Chiem: If I was a chief of a regiment, I would be recruited as provincial governor or deputy governor.

Dany: A chief of regiment?

Chiem: Yes. For instance, the chief of a regiment in the battlefield will reorganize and rename its regiment. For example, Regiment 450 was renamed Regiment 21 or 51.

Dany: Who served in the civil sectors?

Chiem: The civilians.

Dany: You mean the governor and deputy governor?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Who was the provincial governor at that time?

Chiem: In 1997, it was Chhoem Mony. Now he is working for the office of provincial hall.

Dany: What did he do before that?

Chiem: He worked as politician.

Dany: How many deputy governors were there?

Chiem: There were three deputy governors, including Mun, Morn and me. The provincial governor was Chhoem Mony.

Dany: What was the structure of police officials?

Chiem: The chief of provincial police is known as the inspector, while the chief of commune police is known as the police official. In each commune, there are nine police officials.

Dany: Yes, I know that. But during the integration with the government, were there any police officials?

Chiem: No.

Dany: Who were qualified to be police officials?

Chiem: Most of people served in the battalion were qualified.

Dany: They were recruited to be inspectors!

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: How about the security officials?

Chiem: The security officials hold the same ranking to the provincial military commander. It is the policy of the government.

Dany: After the election, were there any changes in the structure of provincial governors?

Chiem: No. There was no election. They were just simply appointed, and after their retirement, a new recruitment would take place.

Dany: Does age matter?

Chiem: No. As seen there are four governors, namely, Yi, Sokha, Keo and Ra, who are the former members [of the KR], while other deputy governors are newly recruited.

Dany: Senior members?

Chiem: Yes, among all deputy governors, there are three former deputy governors, three general provincial governors, and two other deputy governors, one of who is female. Also, we just established councils of provincial committees.

Dany: How many members are there in a council of provincial committee?

Chiem: There are thirteen members, twelve of whom are from the Cambodian People's Party and one from Sam Rainsy.

Dany: Were you one of the members?

Chiem: No, I was appointed, but I declined to because it is an tiring job.

Dany: Do you now just simply work in the office of Cambodia People's Party?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: After the integration with the government, what have you noticed about the changes in Malai between 1979 and the integration period?

Chiem: It was good for us to defect to the government. Our ranking framework remains the same, thus, we are able to be independent. The Win Win policy of the prime minister is very effective, and the government is implementing its promise. We are able to be the owners of the land, houses, and our personal property after we integrated with the government. Most noticeably, each village and commune implements decentralized management, which makes it possible for each village to play an independent role. The structure is divided into independent villages-consisted of village chief, deputy chief with an assistant, The structure is the sameboth commune level and provincial level.

Dany: What did today's provincial governor do when you were the deputy governor?

Chiem: Today's provincial governor is Tep Khun Nal.

Dany: Yes.

Chiem: Tep Khun Nal was a personal secretary to Pol Pot.

Dany: Does he also live in Malai?

Chiem: No, he first settled in Anlong Veng. Only in 1999 did he move to Malai.

Dany: Did he?

Chiem: The senior officers asked him to defect to the government, but he refused.

Dany: Please clarify!

Chiem: He was asked to work for the new government as a member of the council of ministers.

Dany: Did he really refuse this request?

Chiem: He wrote a letter to the King, requesting to be on duty in the province. Finally, he was granted permission. He is a capable member.

Dany: Is he an educated person?

Chiem: Yes, he is.

Dany: I don't know him. Do you know how old he is now?

Chiem: I think he is a few years younger than me.

Dany: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the integration with the government?

Chiem: Before the integration, we were fearful of war. However, we are now able to live with our families, farm, and strive to earn a better living. We feel safe when travelling. So long as we have enough money, we can go wherever we want.

Dany: Have you noticed any weaknesses so far?

Chiem: In Malai, we have poor infrastructure. Recently, the government set up a development plan to build a new road in this area, except the road to the ricefield. . Also, if the water system can be improved, then Malai will become a developed area because all the important reconstruction, such as school buildings and ministries, has already been established. Moreover, people widely understand the rule of law and human rights practices.

Dany: Did you make a visit to your home village during the three-year-resistance or after the government liberation?

Chiem: I didn't visit my home village during the three-year-resistance.

Dany: When did you visit your home village?

Chiem: I flew from Phnom Penh to visit Ratanakiri in 1997.

Dany: Oh, did you fly there because you had an important task to do?

Chiem: Yes, and that made it possible for me to visit my home village.

Dany: How did you feel after having been away for many years?

Chiem: I saw there were almost two hundred thousand people living there. Before that, there were just thirty thousand people.

Dany: In Ratanakiri?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: Do you mean in your village?

Chiem: There were not as many people as that in my village. I could see everyone that owned a motorbike, unlike under the regime, when no one could afford a bicycle.

Dany: Did your brothers or sisters and your father still recognize you when they first saw you?

Chiem: Yes, they did. There was a news report, and they learned about me. So they traveled with the Red Cross team and visited me. I met my parents and everyone. After I completed my task, I returned back.

Dany: How did you feel when you first met them?

Chiem: I was completely thrilled and happy.

Dany: During the three-year-resistance, you held a considerably good position. Why didn't you make a visit to your home village?

Chiem: I thought I would visit my family in 1979 after all I had been tied up with my daily work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the three-year-resistance, I traveled to China.

Dany: Really?

Chiem: Yes.

Dany: When did you go to China?

Chiem: It was in 1976.

Dany: Did you travel to China to visit or to study?

Chiem: I went to China along with Pol Pot, Von Vet, elder Doeun, five people in total.

Dany: How long did you stay in China?

Chiem: It was around one month.

Dany: Where did you visit?

Chiem: We visited several provinces including

Dany: Did you visit Peking?

Chiem: Yes, we visited Peking and also the Great Wall of China.

Dany: Did you take any photos?

Chiem: Yes. But I have none with me because such photos shall be stored with Angkar. We had no rights to personally keep them.

Dany: Did your relatives live and work in Phnom Penh or at a base?

Chiem: No. My younger brother was a doctor since the three-year-resistance, and he still holds this profession, while my eldest sister was a housewife.

Dany: Did she work at all during the three-year-resistance?

Chiem: No.

Dany: Did you bring your brothers or sisters to Phnom Penh?

Chiem: No.

Dany: Have your relatives visited you in Malai?

Chiem: None, except my younger sister who has died. However, my father has been here for four months, and returned back in 2006.

Dany: Did he spend four months here?

Chiem: Yes. This is a picture of my mother and father.

Dany: When did your mother pass away?

Chiem: In 1978.

Dany: Your father is now 92 years old! He is very old! When visiting your home village, how do your relatives, friends, or villagers react?

Chiem: We are happy to see each other, but many of them are dead.

Dany: Have you ever thought of returning to your home village?

Chiem: I think we cannot afford that. We have already settled down here. But if we have enough money, we will see if we can return to our home village.

Dany: Why do you wish to live in your home village?

Chiem: Because I am here alone, while many of my relatives, and especially my three siblings are living there.

Dany: You have been living quite a long period of time. So do you think you will find it difficult to speak your native language if you return to live there?

Chiem: It's difficult at first; however, after one week, I manage to adapt well.

Dany: Do people in your family speak Khmer or your native language?

Chiem: We speak Khmer.

Dany: I see. I would like to thank you so much for your time.

Chiem: Yes.