

**An Interview with Tum Soeun, Male, 72 Years Old**  
**Position during Democratic Kampuchea: Chief of Phnom Troyong Prison**  
**Birthplace: Trapeang Chrey Village, Trapeang Thom Commune, Tram Kak District,**  
**Takeo Province**  
**Current Address: Kilo 13 Village, Santepheap Commune,**  
**Sampov Loun District, Battambang**  
**October 11, 2011**  
**Interviewed by Dara P. Vanthan and Dany Long**  
**Translated by Phalla Chea**  
**01:35:43**

Dany: Please kindly speak louder because I am concerned that I will not be able to hear you well when I listen to what you say in the tape later. My name is Dany and his name is Dara. We both are from the Documentation Center of Cambodia, which documents the crimes committed during the Democratic Kampuchea regime (1975-1979). We are collecting and compiling information from the period of 1975 and 1979 for children of the next generation and for other researchers who want to know about that period. Those researchers may visit the Documentation Center and accessed these documents. We are talking to you here now because we want to ask something about your experiences from 1975 to 1979. Will you allow me to talk and ask you about that period?

Soeun: Yes, sure.

Dany: Do you have any questions in mind that you would like to ask me?

Soeun: No.

Dany: You don't have?

Soeun: No.

Dany: First, I want to know your name.

Soeun: My full name is Tum Soeun.

Dany: Tum?

Soeun: Tum.

Dany: Tum Soeun?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: How old are you now?

Soeun: Seventy-two years old.

Dany: Seventy-two?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Where were you born?

Soeun: Trapeang Chrey Village.

Dany: What commune?

Soeun: South Trapeang Thom Commune.

Dany: South Trapeang Thom?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: What district?

Soeun: Tram Kak.

Dany: Tram Kak?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Takeo Province?

Soeun: Takeo Province.

Dany: Where are you living now?

Soeun: In Kilo 13 Village.

Dany: Kilo 13 Village?

Soeun: Yes, Santepheap Commune.

Dany: District?

Soeun: Sampov Loun District.

Dany: Sampov Loun, Battambang?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: What is your wife's name?

Soeun: Her name is Chou Nin.

Dany: Chou?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Chou Nin. How old is she now?

Soeun: Sixty-five.

Dany: Sixty-five. Where was she born?

Soeun: In the same village as mine.

Dany: Your birth place?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: How many children do you have?

Soeun: Nine.

Dany: Nine children?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: How many sons and daughters?

Soeun: Five daughters and four sons.

Dany: Five daughters and four sons. What do you do for a living?

Soeun: Farming.

Dany: Do you have something else that you also do do for a living?

Soeun: I grow beans, potatoes and corn.

Dany: Beans, potatoes and corn?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: What is your father's name?

Soeun: My father's name is Saoth Tum.

Dany: What?

Soeun: Soath Tum.

Dany: Is he alive or dead?

Soeun: He passed away.

Dany: When did he pass away?

Soeun: In 1971.

Dany: What is your mother's name?

Soeun: My mother's name is Khieu Muth.

Dany: Khieu Muth. She?

Soeun: She died.

Dany: When did she die?

Soeun: She died in 1968.

Dany: 1968.

Dara: Your mother died before you father did?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: What did she die from?

Soeun: She died naturally.

Dara: He died of old age?

Soeun: Yes, from old age.

Dany: How about your father? How did he die?

Soeun: The same as my mother.

Dany: How many siblings do you have?

Soeun: Five siblings.

Dany: You have five siblings. How many brothers and sisters?

Soeun: All brothers.

Dany: Who is the oldest?

Soeun: The oldest is Tum Chhon.

Dany: Tum Chhon. He is alive or dead?

Soeun: Alive.

Dany: Where is he living?

Soeun: At our homeland.

Dany: At your homeland?

Soeun: Yes, in the village.

Dany: How about the second one?

Soeun: Tum Som.

Dany: Tum Som. Where is he now?

Soeun: At Chakrei Village.

Dany: Chakrei in Sampov Loun District?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: How about the third?

Soeun: Tum Seng.

Dany: The third is Tum Seng?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Where is he now?

Soeun: He is dead.

Dany: When did he die?

Soeun: He died when he was at homeland.

Dany: He died in 1985?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: How about the fourth?

Soeun: The fourth is me.

Dany: The fourth is you. How about the fifth?

Soeun: The fifth Tum Sao.

Dany: Where is he now?

Soeun: He died.

Dany: He died. So, two of your siblings died. How about the other three?

Soeun: Yes, three are still alive.

Dany: For now, I would like you to tell me about your life since you were a kid until now. Which school did you go to when you were young? Then, what you did next. Could you tell me?

Soeun: Since I was a child, I lived at Trapeang Thom Pagoda. I studied at the pagoda. When I reached seventh grade, I quit.

Dara: What pagoda?

Soeun: Trapeang Thom.

Dara: Trapeang Thom in Tram Kak?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: Who was the chief of the pagoda at the time?

Soeun: His name was Nov.

Dara: Oh, his name was Nov?

Soeun: Yes, he died.

Dara: I have been to that pagoda, too. You reached seventh grade when you stopped?

Soeun: Yes, in the old system.

Dara: At that grade, could you read and write?

Soeun: Yes, I could read and write clearly.

Dara: If in the current school system, what grade it is equivalent to?

Soeun: Now?

Dara: It was counted down from twelve.

Soeun: Yes, grade twelve was the first grade.

Dara: From 12, 11, 10...right?

Soeun: Yes, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7...

Dara: Did you finish your junior high school exam before you quit?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: Junior high school?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: Did you pass your exam?

Soeun: I took the exam, but did not pass.

Dara: You did not pass?

Soeun: No. I studied seventh grade, then took the exam, but did not pass. Then, I quit to help my parents farm.

Dara: Who was your teacher? Do you remember his name?

Soeun: I studied with Teacher Buon and Teacher Pon. But they all died. Teacher Tann.

Dara: Teacher Tann?

Soeun: Teacher Sroun taught me when I was in seventh grade.

Dara: What did you do after quitting school?



Soeun: I farmed.

Dara: Farmed. You just reached grade seven?

Soeun: Yes, just seven.

Dara: What year?

Soeun: 1960.

Dara: 1960? A long time ago.

Soeun: Yes, in 1961, I farmed. In 1962, I got married.

Dara: You got married in 1962?

Soeun: Yes. 1962.

Dara: To your current wife?

Soeun: Yes, my current wife.

Dara: You have lived with each other since then?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: When you got married, what did you do for a living?

Soeun: I did not have any job. I just farmed. During the free time from farming, I went out of the village to do some physical work.

Dara: How big were your paddy fields at the time? How many hectares of land?

Soeun: More than two hectares of land—big enough.

Dara: Two hectares, that is big.

Soeun: Yes, big enough to feed my family.

Dara: How many times a year did you farm?

Soeun: Just once.

Dara: Once?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: Was the yield you got high enough you feed your family?

Soeun: Yes, enough.

Dara: You said during free time, you went out to do some physical work for a living, what kind of work did you do?

Soeun: I dug the earth.

Dara: In your village?

Soeun: No, at other places.

Dara: Where? In other districts?

Soeun: At Kampong Som, Koh Kong. I went there to break the rock in order to take the rocks to build the airport.

Dara: To build the airport?

Soeun: Yes, to build the airport in Koh Kong.

Dara: In Koh Kong or Kampong Som?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: What months were you free from farming work?

Soeun: Around October and November.

Dara: When free from farming work, you went out?

Soeun: Yes, during the harvesting season in December, I returned home.

Dara: How was your living standard at the time?

Soeun: We earned just enough to eat.

Dara: When you went out to work there, did other villagers go with you?

Soeun: They left the village. Some went to this province, some went to that province. I went there alone. Some went to Battambang; some to Pursat.

Dara: You went to the place where you knew before?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: When did you have your first child?

Soeun: Two years after I got married. It was in 1962.

Dara: Was your first child a son or daughter?

Soeun: Daughter.

Dara: You got married in 1962, so you had your first child in 1964?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: So your daughter is old enough now?

Soeun: Yes, she is getting old.

Dany: She is living here?

Soeun: No, at Beung Beng.

Dany: Beung Beng in Samlaut?

Soeun: No, at Malay.

Dany: What is her name?

Soeun: Sum Samen.

Dany: Tum Samen.

Soeun: Female.

Dara: In 1964, you had a daughter?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: Had you moved you somewhere? Or did you still stay in the same village?

Soeun: In the village.

Dara: You continue to stay there?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: When you were living in that village did some turmoil occurred at that time?

Soeun: Nothing. It was peaceful in the Sangkum Reastr Niyum Period.

Dany: What did you do in the village?

Soeun: I just farmed.

Dara: Do you still farm?

Soeun: Yes, farming.

Dara: When did you quit farming?

Soeun: I farmed until an event occurred.

Dara: What event do you refer to?

Soeun: I mean the coup to depose the Prince Sihanouk.

Dara: The Prince?

Soeun: Yes, Prince Sihanouk in 1968.

Dara: In 1968?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: In 1968 or 1970?

Soeun: 1968-69. Before that I was in another province. During the coup, I returned home.

Dany: You mean that you left home in 1968?

Soeun: I was away for one or two months, then I returned.

Dara: You went during your free time?

Soeun: Yes, my free time.

Dara: When you were free from farm work?

Soeun: Yes. I stayed in another province for two months, three months at the longest.

Dara: You were living in the same homeland with Ta Mok?

Soeun: He was living in another village, not the same.

Dara: In a different village, but the same commune?

Soeun: Yes, the same commune.

Dara: When did you get to know Ta Mok?

Soeun: When I was at school because his daughter was in the same class as me.

Dara: Oh, Ta Mok's daughter?

Dany: Which one?

Soeun: Khom, she died a long time ago.

Dara: The one who was the wife of Ta Muth?

Soeun: Yes, the wife of Ta Muth.

Dara: Are you the same age as Ta Mok?

Soeun: No.

Dara: Not the same age as Ta Mok?

Soeun: No.

Dara: When you were at school, why was Ta Mok there? Was he a teacher or what?

Soeun: When I was at school, I saw him doing business such as cutting and selling wood, such as buying from this area to sell in other areas.

Dara: Did he buy wood after some houses were dismantled?

Soeun: Yes, he sold whole trees, and he bought and sold wood. Some people who were poor sold their houses. So Ta Mok got wood.

Dara: You said in 1968-69, there was a coup?

Soeun: At the end of 1968, there was a coup at Ang Tasom market.

Dara: Oh, there was a coup?

Soeun: Yes, a coup. Government soldiers opened fire on villagers, but I did not witness it. When I arrived home I saw the event. After I got out of the car, I saw people who had died on the street.

Dara: On the street?

Soeun: Yes, on National Road 12 from Ang Tasom to Takeo Town.

Dara: Oh, from Ang Tasom to Takeo?

Soeun: Yes, when I returned, my train stopped at Takeo. Then, I took a truck (Lambreuta) to Ang Tasom. I saw people who had died on the street, and then I rushed home. As I was walking home, soldiers looked at me suspiciously, but I did not care about them. I was just heading home.

Dara: They were Lon Nol soldiers?

Soeun: No, Sihanouk soldiers.

Dara: Sihanouk soldiers?

Soeun: Right.

Dara: At the time, did you have any controversy with Lon Nol soldiers?

Soeun: I don't know. When I arrived, I just saw corpses. When I arrived home, villagers said there was a coup. People staged a demonstration at Ang Tasom and soldiers opened fire on the villagers. I asked villagers when I arrived home.

Dara: So villagers talked to each other about the coup and fighting?

Soeun: Yes, we talked to each other normally.

Dara: What was it that the people demanded that made those soldiers come?

Soeun: I don't know much about it. I don't know why the villagers staged a demonstration. When I arrived, I saw corpses on the streets. When I arrived home, I asked my fellow villagers. The military based near my house was still there, but the soldiers left a few days later.

Dara: So you did not know clearly the motive of the demonstration?

Soeun: I don't know clearly. When the soldiers left, they left guns in the base. They gave those guns to me because we knew each other.

Dara: What was the situation in the village like? What happened next?

Soeun: After the coup, some villagers fled to the West of the village. Some villagers still stayed in the village. The situation was not bad. The soldiers left the village.

Dara: The soldiers left your village?

Soeun: They left their base near my village. When they left, they did not take their guns with them.

Dara: They wanted you to keep guns?

Soeun: Yes, two guns. I kept them at home.

Dara: Two guns?

Soeun: Yes, when I returned home.

Dara: What kind of gun?

Soeun: Two 8-bullet pistols. They were made in France.

Dara: Do you know who led the demonstration?

Soeun: I don't know. When I arrived, the demonstration was over.

Dara: How about Ta Mok?

Soeun: At the time, I did not see him.

Dara: You did not see him?

Soeun: No, I did not see him.

Dany: After the demonstration, you said soldiers left some guns for you to keep?

Soeun: Yes, two guns.

Dara: Then, they left?

Soeun: Yes, they left. They went to their station at Bati District.

Dara: What happened next?

Soeun: After that event, some group of people came to my village. They came to propagandize about their work. They said that Lon Nol soldiers staged the coup to depose Sihanouk.

Dara: Who were those people? Where did they come from?



Soeun: They were Khmer Rouge.

Dara: Khmer Rouge?

Soeun: Yes, then I gave the two guns to them.

Dara: So, you just heard about the Khmer Rouge at that time?

Soeun: Yes, it was at that time when I met with the Khmer Rouge.

Dara: Had you heard about the Khmer Rouge before that time?

Soeun: No, I never heard about them.

Dara: Never?

Soeun: Never.

Dara: After the coup, you heard about the Khmer Rouge?

Soeun: I heard about the Khmer Rouge; I heard about the event.

Dara: The Khmer Rouge arrived in the village?

Soeun: Yes, they arrived in the village. All the villagers still lived there after the Khmer Rouge arrived. Nobody went out. Then, in 1970, the Vietnamese came.

Dara: The Vietnamese came?

Soeun: Yes, they came. They came to operate from Ang Tasom to the west to this area. They had tanks and they arrested villagers. Some of the villagers fled to the forest. They shelled rockets into the villages as well.

Dara: Did it cause some deaths?

Soeun: Some villages died. They also undressed young girls in Southern villages such as in Pen Meas Village. The soldiers stayed the night in that village with their tanks as well. They operated from this area to the South.

Dara: To South which villages in the South?

Soeun: To Tram Kak.

Dara: To Tram Kak?

Soeun: Yes, then, they went further South, to Angkor Chey, then to Southern Vietnam.

Dara: When the Khmer Rouge arrived here for the first time, who led that group? Do you know?

Soeun: I don't remember their names. I forgot.

Dara: Then, you gave your guns to the Khmer Rouge?

Soeun: Yes, I gave them. I had two guns, I did not keep them.

Dara: Did they accuse you of something?

Soeun: No, they did not accuse me. After I gave them those guns, the soldiers who gave me those guns returned to the village.

Dara: Did they ask you about the guns?

Soeun: They did not ask about the guns. They brought another gun to keep in the village. The soldiers stayed in the village, but I forgot the name of the village. It was Thiet something. Those soldiers were to collect other soldiers.

Dara: Thiet what?

Soeun: Thiet Phum Kthom.

Dara: Thiet Phum Kthom?

Soeun: Yes, some soldiers stationed there. Two days later in the evening, I heard the gun shots. The Khmer Rouge and Lon Nol soldiers fought with each other. Some died, some were wounded. I went to look at them after the fighting ended. Some soldiers were my villagers. When I saw him wounded in his thigh, I brought him

home to cure. But his wound did not get healed because we did not have medicine. We could not go to the market because all the roads were blocked. Then, that soldier died.

Dara: Did you remember the name of this soldier?

Soeun: His name was Um.

Dara: Um?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: Who did he fight with?

Soeun: With the Khmer Rouge.

Dara: With the Khmer Rouge?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: So you helped Lon Nol soldiers? Were you accused by the Khmer Rouge later?

Soeun: All the villagers went to see and bring wounded soldiers to the village. Because we were villagers, so we needed to help each other.

Dara: What happened next in the village?

Soeun: Nothing happened. The village turned quiet. But later, the Khmer Rouge came in to propagandize.

Dara: The Khmer Rouge movement came to propagandize?

Soeun: Yes, because at the time, not a single Lon Nol soldier could come.

Dara: Was your village an autonomous or liberated village?

Soeun: A liberated village.

Dara: So, the Lon Nol soldiers could not come in?

Soeun: No.

Dara: Your home village?

Soeun: Yes, my home village. It is at the west of Ang Tasom. Lon Nol soldiers were at Ang Tasom base.

Dara: At Ang Tasom, the junction to Takeo and Kampot?

Soeun: Yes. The Lon Nol military base was there.

Dara: Lon Nol soldiers?

Soeun: Yes. They shelled the Trapeang Thom Commune.

Dara: They rocket-shelled Trapeang Thom?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: Trapeang Thom Commune is at the WWes of Ang Tasom?

Soeun: Yes. There were three roads; one to go to Takeo, one to Kampot and another one to Trapeang Thom.

Dara: So at the West of Ang Tasom, it was controlled by the Khmer Rouge.

Soeun: Yes, starting from Ang Tasom to the West was controlled by the Khmer Rouge.

Dara: The Lon Nol soldiers could not go in there?

Soeun: No.

Dara: Was that in 1970?

Soeun: Yes, 1971.

Dara: 1970-71?

Soeun: Yes, 1971. In 1970, people were still able to travel within this village.

Dara: So starting in 1971, the Khmer Rouge controlled the whole Trapeang Thom and some areas at the West of Ang Tasom?

Soeun: At the West of Ang Tasom.

Dara: Did the Khmer Rouge create a leadership structure in the village?

Soeun: Yes, they had their own structure.

Dara: The Khmer Rouge structure of leadership?

Soeun: Yes, the Khmer Rouge structure. They had village chiefs or commune chiefs.

Dara: Were you assigned to do something or to hold any position?

Soeun: No, I was an ordinary person.

Dara: You were an ordinary person?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: What happened next?

Soeun: I was assigned to guard the road.

Dara: You participated in a guard shift?

Soeun: Yes, I did.

Dara: Were you armed?

Soeun: No, I was barehanded.

Dara: Barehanded?

Soeun: I guarded the roads and if Khmer Rouge soldiers got wounded, I helped carry them to the village. I carried injured soldiers from one village to another. Other people carried from one specific village to another.

Dara: You did not know where the injured soldiers were sent to finally?

Soeun: No, I just carried them to a specific village, and those injured soldiers were sent to another village by other villagers.

Dara: What happened next?

Soeun: 1970, 1972, 1973, 1975. In 1975, the country was liberated. No more Lon Nol soldiers. The Khmer Rouge occupied the country. At the time, I farmed the dry season rice.

Dara: Dry season rice?

Soeun: Yes, in 1976, I went out to do farming during the dry season at Takeo Town—at the East of Takeo Town.

Dara: Which district? Which commune?

Soeun: At Phnom Da Commune, at the West of Phnom Da.

Dara: At the West of Phnom Da?

Soeun: Yes, the open field at the West of Phnom Da.

Dara: What district?

Soeun: Maybe....

Dara: Prey Kabas?

Soeun: No.

Dany: Angkor Borei?

Soeun: It is close to Angkor Borei. It is near...

Dara: Prey Kabas?

Soeun: It is near Prey Kabas. It is bordered with Prey Kabas. Three districts shared borders together.

Dara: During that time, were you an ordinary person or...?

Soeun: I was a group chief.

Dara: A group chief?

Soeun: Yes, I led the people in the paddy field.

Dara: You were a group chief?

Soeun: Yes, a group chief.

Dara: What were the names of the village chiefs, commune chiefs? Where did they come from?

Soeun: The village chiefs were from other districts. People from various places went to work there.

Dara: Several people from several places went there?

Soeun: Yes, from several villages. People from my village went there. They went to farm during the dry season.

Dara: So you no longer lived in this village?

Soeun: No, all the villagers left this village. All the villages were vacant.

Dara: Was your whole family with you?

Soeun: No, only I went there.

Dara: You were the only one in your family who went there?

Soeun: Yes, I was the only one to go.

Dara: How about your family? What did they do in the village?

Soeun: All the men went there. The women did not go. Oh, forgot to tell you, unmarried youth went there, too.

Dara: At that time, you were married, so why were you assigned to go there?

Soeun: No, only men were assigned to there—only men. Women stayed in the village.

Dara: In 1975, how many children did you have?

Soeun: Four children.

Dara: Four children?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: What happened after 1975?

Soeun: Oh, I had four children in 1975.

Dara: All the four children lived with you?

Soeun: They lived with my wife.

Dara: At Trapeang Thom?

Soeun: Yes, at Trapeang Thom Commune, Chrey Bakk Village.

Dara: But you were at Phnom Da?

Soeun: Yes, I went there to do farming. But I was there for a dry season only. Then, I returned.

Dara: You stayed there for a season only?

Soeun: Yes, for a season, then I returned home. I was just waiting for the assignment. If they wanted me to go, I would go; if not, I would stay home. At home, I worked in the cooperative.

Dara: What month in 1975?



Dany: It was the time when Phnom Penh was liberated—on April 17, 1975?

Soeun: Yes, 17 April 1975.

Dany: When did you go to Phnom Da to farm in the dry season?

Soeun: In November. The water began to subside in November and December, so I worked there until January or February or March. It was ready to harvest in March, and then I returned to my home village in March or April.

Dara: So, you farmed in November for the whole dry season?

Soeun: Yes, the whole dry season.

Dara: Then, you returned. Where did you go?

Soeun: I returned to my home village.

Dara: You returned to your home village?

Soeun: Yes, to my home village. In 1976, I was sent to Preah Neth Preah.

Dara: You were sent to Preah Neth Preah in 1976?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: You were sent there before somebody else?

Soeun: Lots of people went there—about 2,000 people.

Dara: You were one of two thousand people?

Soeun: Yes, we went to Preah Neth Preah.

Dara: You went to Preah Neth Preah District?

Soeun: Yes, I went to Preah Neth Preah District.

Dara: Why did you go there?

Soeun: We went there to work, to farm. We were led by someone.

Dara: Who was the leader?

Soeun: Srey Chaem.

Dara: Srey Chaem or Yeay Chaem?

Soeun: Yeay Chaem. Her husband was Ta Nhen.

Dara: Her husband was Ta Nhen?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: So, since 1976, she led the group to Preah Neth Preah.

Soeun: Yes. We were assigned to go to Preah Neth Preah.

Dara: To Preah Neth Preah?

Soeun: Yes, to Preah Neth Preah.

Dara: What did you do the first time you arrived there?

Soeun: The first time when we arrived there, we were given plows and other agricultural tools. Then, we farmed.

Dara: Where in Preah Neth Preah?

Soeun: We farmed at Krapao Mountain.

Dara: What mountain?

Soeun: Krapao Mountain. It was in the lowland.

Dara: What village? What commune?

Soeun: I think it was Krapao Village. At that time, it was not really a village. It was just Krapao Mountain. Some people were living there, at Krapao Village.

Dara: What did Yeay Chaem do at the time?

Soeun: She was a chief of district.

Dara: Chief of Preah Neth Preah District?

Soeun: Yes, Preah Neth Preah.

Dara: Since 1976?

Soeun: At the end of 1976.

Dara: At the end of 1976?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: What month?

Soeun: I don't remember.

Dany: Was it in rainy or dry season?

Soeun: It was probably in April. When I arrived there, villagers began to sow rice seeds.

Dara: Villages began to sow rice seeds?

Soeun: Yes, plow and sow rice seeds.

Dara: How could they do that? It was Khmer New Year and it was very dry. There isn't any rain in April.

Soeun: Villagers sowed during the dry season.

Dara: They sowed during the dry season?

Soeun: Yes, they sowed during the dry season and waited for the rain fall to come.

Dara: What year in March or April? You said it was in late 1976.

Soeun: 1976.

Dara: What month?

Soeun: Villagers began to plow in April 1977. It was in April or May.

Dara: You mean that you left Takeo in March or April 1977 or you arrived in Preah Neth Preah in late 1976?

Soeun: Late 1976.

Dara: Late 1976?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: When you came to Preah Neth Preah, did you know Yeay Chaem well?

Soeun: Yes, I knew her well. Before I came to Preah Neth Preah, I did not know her. I just got to know her on the way to Preah Neth Preah. She was my leader of the group; I needed to know my leader. I asked her for food to eat on the way. I went to ask food from villagers to eat.

Dara: Did Yeay Chaem bring her family with her or did she go alone?

Soeun: Yes, she went there with her family.

Dara: She was a woman. She could manage to control 2,000 people? She led the group of 2,000 people?

Soeun: Yes. She led the group.

Dara: What did she do before she came to Preah Neth Preah?

Soeun: She was elected to the parliament.

Dara: She was a member of parliament?

Soeun: Right, a member of parliament in Takeo Province.

Dara: For Takeo Province?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: She was the Khmer Rouge parliament member?

Soeun: Yes, the Khmer Rouge parliament.

Dara: What was she a representative for—farmers, or what?

Soeun: Farmers.

Dara: She was a representative of farmers for the whole Takeo Province?

Soeun: Yes, Takeo Province.

Dara: A parliament member?

Soeun: Yes, a parliament member.

Dara: If she was a representative of farmers for Takeo Province, how come her position was equivalent to chief of district? Her position would be higher than that.

Soeun: When she arrived there, she worked in the district. I don't know more about her internal affairs. I just saw her working in the district committee.

Dara: Preah Neth Preah District?

Soeun: Yes, Preah Neth Preah. She communicated with Region and Zone.

Dara: Who was the chief of Region 5?

Soeun: His name was Cheal.

Dara: Cheal?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: There was no chief of district?

Soeun: No.

Dara: Yeay Chaem took position as chief of district after she arrived?

Soeun: Yes, she was a chief of district.

Dara: When you worked in the farm, were you assigned to lead the group?

Soeun: Yes, I was assigned to lead the group. Then I stopped working in the farm when I was assigned to work on the canal.

Dara: Where?

Soeun: Before I worked on the canal, I worked on the farm. I dug a canal from Phnom Srok to Trapeang Thmar.

Dara: Which canal? What was the name of the canal?

Soeun: A canal which started from Trapeang Thmar; it connected to Phnom Leap. It is the one to the East of Phnom Leap.

Dara: What was its name?

Soeun: At the time, the canal had not yet been given a name.

Dara: You just know that it was the canal from Trapeang Thmar to Phnom Leap?

Soeun: Yes, to Phnom Leap. It was connected to Tonle Sap Tributary. It went to the lowland fields near the Tonle Sap Lake.

Dany: What year?

Soeun: Late 1978. Oh, early 1978, we started digging the canal.

Dara: Did many people participate in the canal work?

Soeun: Yes, a lot. All forces of mobile units came to dig. They came from three or four districts to dig the canal—Trapeang Tharm. We dug the canal towards the lowlands to Preah Neth Preah. All forces of the whole Region 5 in Banteay Meanchey. All forces came to work together. Then, some forces were divided.

Dara: Did you bring your family to Preah Neth Preah with you?

Soeun: By that time, my family had already arrived.

Dara: When did your family arrive in Preah Neth Preah?

Soeun: In early 1978.

Dara: Your family arrived in early 1978?

Soeun: Yes, they came from my home village.

Dara: To meet you?

Soeun: Yes, to meet me here.

Dara: Where?

Soeun: At Preah Neth Preah.

Dara: Which commune?

Soeun: Rumduol Commune, Rumduol Village.

Dara: Rumduol Commune?

Soeun: Yes, in Preah Neth Preah District.

Dara: Where did Yeay Chaem live at that time?

Soeun: At Preah Neth Preah.

Dara: Mostly where did she live?

Soeun: In Preah Neth Preah Village.

Dara: Preah Neth Preah Village?

Soeun: Yes, in Preah Neth Preah Commune. Her house was the place where she worked.

Dara: On the National Road from Banteay Meanchey? Was it on the main road?

Soeun: Yes, her house was along the national road.

Dara: Along the national road?

Soeun: Yes, along the national road, at the East of national road.

Dara: In Preah Neth Preah Village?

Soeun: Preah Neth Preah. Oh, no, Chop Village.

Dara: Chop Village?

Soeun: She was living at Phnom Leap.

Dara: Which place?

Soeun: At Phnom Leap.

Dara: Her office was at Phnom Leap?

Soeun: Yes, at Phnom Leap.

Dara: In a villager's house? What did the house look like?

Soeun: Yes, it was a villager's house. When I arrived, the houses were vacant. All the villagers were assigned to work in other areas.

Dara: She was a district chief and her office was at Phnom Leap?

Soeun: Yes, at Phnom Leap.

Dara: What were you assigned to do at the time?

Soeun: I was a group chief. I led a mobile unit—farming and building the dams.

Dara: You were a chief of a mobile unit team?

Soeun: Yes, when my team was about to harvest, the war erupted. At the end of 1978, the fighting occurred.



Dara: You fled from Phnom Leap?

Soeun: Yes, I fled from Phnom Leap.

Dara: How did you know that Yeay Chaem worked and lived at Phnom Leap?

Soeun: I was living at the East of Phnom Leap—digging canals there. I was a group chief. Then, I was called to the meeting at the district office. Yeay Chaem came to the meeting too. We met there. Then, when I was digging the canal, Yeay Chaem came to visit weekly.

Dara: She visited the canal construction site?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: She visited?

Soeun: Yes, she visited.

Dara: Is it far from Phnom Leap to the site?

Soeun: It was an open field and you could see Phnom Leap with your eyes. But I can't figure out how far it was. It was about five kilometers from Phnom Leap. It was an open field.

Dara: Besides Phnom Leap, where there any more mountains there?

Soeun: At the lowland, there were about three or four more small mountains.

Dara: Which mountains?

Soeun: Sreh Mountain at the East of Phnom Leap was close to the main road. Phnom Leap is not close to the main road. Chonh Cheang Mountain is close to the road. It is where people carved statues made of stone.

Dany: What you are talking about was Preah Neth Preah?

Soeun: Yes, Preah Neth Preah. It was at the West of Preah Neth Preah.

Dany: How about Phnom Leap?

Soeun: Phnom Leap was at the East of Preah Neth Preah. Phnom Leap stands there alone. Next to Phnom Leap was Sreh Mountain.

Dara: There should be three mountains there? What are they?

Soeun: Sreh Mountain.

Dara: What is the name of another mountain?

Soeun: I forgot its name.

Dara: There is another mountain—Troyong Mountain.

Soeun: Oh, yes, it was next to Sreh Mountain.

Dara: Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: Yes, next to Sreh Mountain.

Dara: Troyong is between Leap and Sreh Mountain?

Soeun: Yes, right.

Dara: How far is it from Yeay Chaem's house?

Soeun: Yeay Chaem's house is at the foot of Phnom Leap. It is about one kilometer from Phnom Leap. From Phnom Leap to Sreh is about two to three kilometers.

Dara: At the Troyong Mountain, did people farm over there?

Soeun: Yes, people who were living there did farm. Some grew vegetables such as cucumbers. In the rainy season, they grew water melons or cucumbers. There are some rocks under the ground, but it does not matter.

Dara: What did people grow at Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: They grew cucumbers.

Dara: They grew cucumbers on the mountain?

Soeun: Yes, they grew cucumbers.

Dara: They grew cucumbers?

Soeun: Yes, people grew cucumbers to support their cooperatives. At the foot of the mountain, they grew potatoes and cucumbers.

Dany: Let me ask you something. Could you tell me how people were treated at Phnom Leap?

Soeun: People were living around Phnom Leap—lots of people.

Dany: People lived around that place?

Soeun: Yes, lots of people. There is a road around the mountain.

Dany: How about Yeay Chaem? Where did she live?

Soeun: She lived there, too.

Dany: At Phnom Leap?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Where was her office where she worked?

Soeun: At her house.

Dany: She worked at her house?

Soeun: Yes, her house. She had an ordinary house.

Dany: She did not work at Chop. Did she? Chop at Preah Neth Preah.

Soeun: No.

Dany: How about Sreh Mountain?

Soeun: There were many people at Sreh Mountain. Only ordinary people lived there.

Dany: Only ordinary people?

Soeun: Yes, only ordinary people. And some mobile units worked there too.

Dany: Ordinary people and mobile unit teams?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Did some cadres live there?

Soeun: Yes, some group chiefs and unit chiefs lived there.

Dany: Group chiefs and unit chiefs?

Soeun: Yes. Some chiefs lived there. They lived in groups and teams. Some people were in the cooperatives in the village.

Dany: How about Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: At Troyong, some people lived there, too.

Dany: There were some people at Troyong Mountain, too?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Was there something else there?

Soeun: There were some mobile unit teams.

Dany: Was there an education center there?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: An education center?

Soeun: Yes, it was close to Troyong Mountain.

Dany: The education center was close to Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: Yes, it was close to Troyong Mountain. The education center just came into existence when I went there. A month after it was created, I went there.

Dany: Could you give me some description about that place? I want to know about that education center. How big was it?

Soeun: As far as I know, it was the district's education center. Some people who made mistakes were sent there. Later, they were sent to their villages. People in Preah Neth Preah were not sent somewhere else, only to Phnom Troyong.

Dany: As far as you know, how big was it? Starting from where to where?

Soeun: It was not small, not big. There were lots of villagers living there at the time. Where the villagers lived covered one hectare of land. The education center covered two hectares of land.

Dany: It was about one or two hectares?

Soeun: Yes, about two hectares. At that time, some villagers were sent to mobile unit teams.

Dany: Where was it from the mountain? In which direction?

Soeun: It was close to the mountain. It was at the North of the mountain, on the main road from Phnom Leap.

Dany: The education center was closer to Phnom Leap or Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: Troyong Mountain. But it was not far from Phnom Leap. The villages were connected to each other. There were lots of villages at Phnom Leap.

Dany: When was the education center created before you arrived?

Soeun: It was created two months before I arrived there.

Dany: About two months?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Who created that center?

Soeun: Yeay Chaem. She brought some mobile unit teams to work there. If someone committed mistakes, Yeay Chaem brought them there to be educated. It was created by the district committee.

Dara: How long had the education center operated before the Vietnamese soldiers arrived?

Soeun: About two months.

Dara: Only two months?

Soeun: Yes, it was over two months. The Vietnamese began to come in November or December 1978. At that time, rice began to ripen. People were about to harvest. It was created in around August.

Dara: August?

Soeun: Yes, August.

Dara: You remember clearly—it was August?

Soeun: Yes, around August.

Dara: Who supervised that place?

Soeun: Someone supervised that place.

Dara: Who?

Soeun: The chief's name was Pet.

Dara: What?

Soeun: Pet.

Dara: What is his name again?

Soeun: Pet.

Dara: Pet?

Soeun: And Yeay Chaem also supervised that place.

Dara: Yeay Chaem took over the reeducation center?

Soeun: Yes, she called people to go there. The cooperative chief could send people there. Yes, right. The cooperative chiefs sent them there. I never saw the cooperative chiefs there. They were working at their places. Some mobile unit teams just worked at their places.

Dara: Was the reeducation center a security center?

Soeun: Yes, a security center.

Dara: It was a security center?

Soeun: Yes, that place.

Dara: At Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: Yes, Troyong Mountain. That's a security prison. The militia team organized that place.

Dara: So there should be a leader there—at that security prison.

Soeun: Yes, the real leader was Chaem.

Dara: Oh, really?

Soeun: Yes, right. For others, they were just stationed at the place and waiting for people who were sent there. They just reported to the leader. If no one was sent there, they just kept quiet—without having work to do.

Dara: Did you know the mistakes people made who were sent to Troyong Mountain?  
How many cooperatives sent people to that place?

Soeun: Hey, I don't remember.

Dany: How many communes were there in Preah Neth Preah district? Such as Phnom Leap Commune and..?

Soeun: Phnom Leap, Preah Neth Preah, Tean Kamm.

Dany: Tean Kamm?

Soeun: Yes, Teuk Cho, Prasat.

Dany: How about Rohal?

Soeun: No.

Dany: Rohal Commune did not exist? Phnom Leap, Preah Neth Preah, Tean Kamm, Teuk Cho and Prasat.

Soeun: Prasat. I think Rohal too. Preah Neth Preah. Yes, about five to six communes.

Dany: Can you guess how many cooperatives sent people to Troyong?

Soeun: I don't know. I don't remember.

Dany: You don't remember?

Soeun: No, I don't remember. I just saw people going there.

Dany: Did Yeay Chaem visit that place often?

Soeun: She visited. She visited all the cooperatives.

Dany: She visited all the cooperatives?

Soeun: Yes, all the cooperatives. She went there to see people working, farming, digging canals, building dams. I saw her.



Dany: She built dams?

Soeun: Yes, she led a mobile unit team.

Dany: Did she ever visit Troyong to see people who were sent there? Prisoners.

Soeun: I don't remember. I just saw her visiting there.

Dany: She visited that place, too?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: What did the prison look like? What did the hall to keep prisoners look like?

Soeun: I saw a long hall and there was a kitchen.

Dany: Long hall or what?

Soeun: Yes, a long hall. It was like a hall about ten meters long. And there were around five halls. Some halls were three meter wide, some four meters wide. Some were small and some were big. And there was a hall for a mobile team.

Dany: A hall for a mobile unit team? Was it separated from the other halls?

Soeun: It was connected to the other halls. They lived with each other.

Dany: In total, how many were there?

Soeun: You mean halls?

Dany: I mean how many people lived there?

Soeun: I don't remember.

Dany: As far as you remember, what kinds of people were sent there? What kind of mistakes had they made?

Soeun: The mistakes they made were very common. They were hungry and they stole something to eat. The cooperative chiefs accused them of being the enemy. Some committed serious mistakes.

Dany: Some committed serious mistakes?

Soeun: Yes, serious mistakes. At that time, people did not have food to eat. During free time for work, those people just looked for food to eat. They looked for potatoes or sugar cane. When they were spotted, they would be arrested.

Dany: Were there any more mistakes they made besides stealing food?

Soeun: No. If they made more serious mistakes, people were never sent to that place. When I arrived there, I saw people were starving. There were no political prisoners.

Dany: Did you supervise Troyong Mountain, too?

Soeun: Yes, I supervised a mobile unit team.

Dany: Supervised at?

Soeun: I supervised a mobile unit only.

Dany: Only a mobile unit?

Soeun: Yes, I led them to dig canals, farm in the dry season rice and something else. I did not farm the whole year when something occurred.

Dany: Who supervised there?

Soeun: Yeay Chaem.

Dany: Yeay Chaem supervised that place?

Soeun: Yes, another supervisor was Pet. They were there.

Dany: Yeay Chaem and Pet supervised there?

Soeun: Yes. Yeay Chaem visited there often. I saw her occasionally. The security guards were there.

Dany: Security guards were there?

Soeun: Yes, they were there.

Dany: Security guards?

Soeun: Yes. Security guards of the district. Yeay Chaem's security guards.

Dany: How many?

Soeun: I don't know.

Dany: Did you recruit those security guards or did Yeay Chaem recruit them?

Soeun: Yeay Chaem recruited them.

Dany: Yeay Chaem recruited them?

Soeun: Yes, mobile unit team was responsible for working in their unit. I did not have the right to recruit security guards. The district committee members were to decide which group would go where, and who to withdraw.

Dany: At the time, the mobile unit was under your supervision?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: You supervised them?

Soeun: Yes, I took over the district mobile unit. I had 200 members.

Dany: You had 200 members?

Soeun: Yes, 200 members.

Dany: Under your supervision. How about security guards?

Soeun: Security guards were under Yeay Chaem's supervision.

Dany: Yeay Chaem took over them?

Soeun: Yes, I didn't have security guards.

Dany: You didn't have security guards?

Soeun: I had the mobile team.

Dany: Did you know some security guards?

Soeun: They were young; I forgot their names.

Dany: You forgot?

Soeun: Yes, I forgot their names. If I met them now, I would not be able to remember them.

Dany: But at that time, you remembered their names?

Soeun: My former classmates, I forgot them too. When I visited my homeland, I met some former classmates, but I forgot them. After they told me, I could refresh my memory. At the time, we studied at the pagoda and slept there together.

Dara: Have you ever been to that place again?

Soeun: Yes, I visited my homeland. I went there to make a stupa for my father's soul.

Dara: Did you remember some people who were from your homeland and then were sent to Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: No, I went to my homeland in Takeo.

Dara: At your homeland?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: What was the leadership of Troyong Mountain? How did it operate? Could you tell me?

Soeun: Some people there just looked after people who were sent from cooperatives. If people were sent to break the rocks, the mobile unit team needed to take them to break the rocks. Some were sent to do farming.

Dara: Who assigned those jobs to people who were sent there?

Soeun: Yeay Chaem, a district chief. Assignment was from district committee.

Dara: From Yeay Chaem?

Soeun: Yes. She was a district chief.

Dany: You said earlier that you supervised the mobile unit team?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: The mobile unit team at Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: Yes, the mobile unit team was based at Troyong Mountain, too.

Dany: What kind of mobile unit was it?

Soeun: It was an unmarried youth group—boys and girls. It was a district mobile team. If the district needed some forces, I sent those forces to work there. If some places needed forces urgently, I sent them there. For instance, if some places were facing floods, I sent them there. Some rice fields needed about two or three days, it was completed.

Dany: District mobile unit team?

Soeun: Yes. Mobile unit team.

Dany: District mobile unit. How about youth under your control? I would like to know what their statuses were. Were they with you in order to reeducate?

Soeun: No, they had not made mistakes. They did what I assigned them to do. I never sent them to any other places.

Dany: You said earlier that some prisoners committed slight mistakes, and some committed serious mistakes at Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: I heard that some people resisted after they were arrested after they were caught stealing some fruit.

Dany: How were people with serious mistakes were treated? How about people with slight mistakes?

Soeun: I don't know. They were kept in the halls close to the halls of the mobile unit teams. I did not go there often.

Dany: What do you mean?

Soeun: It was not a market where I had to go every day.

Dany: People with serious and minor mistakes were kept separately?

Soeun: Yes, they were kept separately.

Dany: How about..?

Soeun: There were some halls. Halls were built separately. Some halls were three or four meters wide. Some were squares. Some halls were the longest—they were seven to eight meters long with three rooms.

Dany: People with serious mistakes, were they shackled?

Soeun: No, the security guards just guarded them. The guards took those people to work and to go back to the halls.

Dany: The security guards took them to work?

Soeun: Yes. I saw the guards escort them to work—to break the rocks. Some groups consisted of about ten. Three or four guards supervised those groups. Some guards escorted those people to farm.

Dany: How about those who committed minor mistakes?

Soeun: People who committed minor mistakes were not escorted to work.

Dany: They were not escorted to work?

Soeun: No.

Dany: What kinds of jobs did they do?

Soeun: Like other people.

Dany: They worked like other people?

Soeun: Yes, if they were assigned to break the rocks, they broke the rocks; if they were assigned to farm, they farmed; if they were assigned to build the dams, they built dams.

Dany: They worked with your mobile unit team?

Soeun: Yes, they worked together.

Dany: So you supervised the mobile unit team and Troyong Security Prison, too?

Soeun: Yes, it was a different unit.

Dany: Were you a deputy?

Soeun: No. It was a different unit.

Dany: Completely different unit?

Soeun: Yes, different unit.

Dany: You were the chief of the district mobile unit team?

Soeun: Yes, I led the district mobile unit team.

Dany: You supervised the district's mobile unit team?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Who was your deputy?

Soeun: There was no deputy.

Dany: You did not have a deputy?

Soeun: There were chief of groups and teams.

Dany: Chiefs of groups and teams?

Soeun: Yes, each group had around ten people. Some groups had fifty people. Some groups had three smaller teams.

Dany: Who supervised Troyong Security Prison?

Soeun: Pet.

Dany: Pet?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: His name was Pet. Where did he come from?

Soeun: He came from Kampot.

Dany: Where is he living now?

Soeun: He passed away.

Dany: What was his wife's name?

Soeun: I don't know how she is now.

Dany: You know her as well?



Soeun: I don't know. We were separated since we fled from that prison. I was there for two months only. When the Vietnamese advanced, we fled. I went to Dangrek Mountain.

Dany: After Pet, who else was in charge of that place?

Soeun: No one else. There was a chief of military unit, group chief and team chief.

Dany: Do you remember the names of the people in each group?

Soeun: I forgot their names.

Dany: How about people who were chiefs of big groups?

Soeun: I forgot their names. I did not pay attention. It has been a long time since we were separated. I don't remember their names.

Dara: Did you know Mr. Phatt?

Dany: Mr. Phatt at Preah Neth Preah Commune, Kandal Village.

Soeun: I don't remember. If I saw his face, I would remember.

Dara: When I met him, he told me that he wanted to meet you, too. He said that you saved his life.

Soeun: I forgot.

Dara: He said you saved him to stay alive. Could you try to remember? Do you remember Mr. Phatt? You may know him.

Soeun: I can't recall. If I could see his face, I might know him. There is one who is selling pork now. I forgot his name. When I saw him, he did not remember me. But I remembered him.

Dany: What did he do—the one who is selling pork?

Soeun: He is selling pork.

Dany: But what did he do during the Khmer Rouge?

Soeun: He was in the mobile unit team with me.

Dany: Mobile unit team?

Soeun: Now, he sells pork with his motorbike.

Dany: Earlier, you said that Yeay Chaem supervised the militia unit and the security prison?

Soeun: Yes, it was under district supervision.

Dany: Under district supervision?

Soeun: Mobile unit and militia were under district supervision. Commune work was under district supervision, too. I know what I was assigned only. I did not know about the work of others. I did what I was assigned to do.

Dany: The security prison was created by Yeay Chaem? When was it?

Soeun: She created it, and it operated for a period of two months.

Dany: For two months?

Soeun: Yes, just two months. Then the Vietnamese arrived and we fled.

Dany: You were very close to her?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: You were very close to her? Was she friendly to you?

Soeun: As a mobile unit member, I did not communicate with her often. I communicated with her only when I my unit needed food.

Dany: You communicated with her about those issues?

Soeun: Yes, I communicated with her messenger.

Dany: What was his name?

Soeun: Hey, I forgot his name. He was in charge of the list.

Dany: Yes?

Soeun: He lives in...I forgot. His name was Sok. When my unit was short of food, I contacted him. If I needed rice, I went to his office. If they had any problems, we contacted their office. That office was responsible for sending forces to any place, or withdrawing forces from other places or to farm in that commune.

Dany: What was eating like? Did your mobile unit team have enough food to eat?

Soeun: All mobile unit teams ate porridge. I couldn't eat rice. If the mobile unit team ate porridge, I ate porridge, too.

Dany: At the time, you ate porridge, too?

Soeun: Yes, porridge.

Dany: Can you describe your eating situation?

Soeun: White porridge. Each person got two bowls of porridge.

Dany: How much rice did they receive per day?

Soeun: Hey, for 100 people, there were thirty to forty cans of rice. They had rice for lunch and dinner only.

Dany: Was that enough?

Soeun: Some days it was not enough; sometimes, it was enough when they were not very hungry.

Dany: Two bowls of porridge and they ate only during lunch and dinner?

Soeun: Yes, lunch and dinner.

Dany: How about breakfast?

Soeun: They did not have breakfast. They went to work in the morning.

Dany: How big was each bowl?

Soeun: The same as our current bowl.

Dany: Just small ones?

Soeun: Hey, not very small; it was big enough.

Dany: The same size as bowls for soup?

Soeun: Hey, bigger than that. I had never seen small bowls during that time. I saw bigger bowls.

Dara: Did the bowls belong to the mobile unit team or did they belong to people?

Soeun: All people had the same ration of porridge. At that time, rice was almost gone. When I arrived there, the rice fields were flooded. It was in 1978. When I arrived there, rice fields were flooded. Half of Preah Neth Preah was flooded. Some places near Phnom Leap, the water was as deep as my neck. On the way from Rumduol Village was covered with water. When the flood occurred, my mobile unit team went to block water from flowing in.

Dany: How about the prisoners at the reeducation center? Were they given the same ration as the members of your mobile unit team?

Soeun: The same.

Dany: How did you know it was the same?

Soeun: When I went there sometimes, I saw them eat porridge.

Dany: What did they eat porridge with?

Soeun: They ate porridge with vegetable soup. If they had morning glory, they ate morning glory. They ate what they could find. The cooperative chiefs could assign someone to look for vegetables. For the mobile unit team, we did not have food. So, we requested food from the cooperatives. Or we could request from the district office and they would give us food to eat.

Dany: Your team ate porridge with vegetables? How about fish and other meat?

Soeun: Yes, there was some meat: fish or meat.

Dany: Where did you get that meat?

Soeun: I assigned three for four people to look for fish or meat. Each cooperative also did the same. They assigned their people to catch fish and look for meat. If they found fish, they brought it to their cooperatives to support people in their cooperatives.

Dany: Who decide about what to eat?

Soeun: When rice was scarce, we had to manage to eat porridge. If we had rice, we would eat rice. We could cook rice to eat. If we did not have enough rice, we could eat porridge. If we ate rice, we would not have some to eat before harvest.

Dany: You had to decide based on the situation?

Soeun: Yes, the upper echelon also ordered us to do so.

Dany: Orders came from whom?

Soeun: Orders came from the district committee.

Dany: Yeay Chaem?

Soeun: Yes, she was part of the district committee.

Dany: Yeay Chaem ordered you to eat porridge?

Soeun: Yes, she ordered us to eat porridge because we had a rice shortage.

Dany: How often did you meet with Yeay Chaem? What did you talk to her about? Did you talk about any plans or about any events?

Soeun: I was at the mobile unit team. I met her two times when she ordered the mobile unit team to work at other places. When she wanted any forces, she asked her messenger to tell me. He told me to bring the mobile unit team to this place or that place.

Dany: To where?

Soeun: To work at any commune. For example, to help transplant rice in the commune, at the village. Or to build dams which were broken by water. My team consisted of lots of youths, so it did not take long to complete any work. Some were sent to grow vegetables such as cabbages and cucumbers; while some were sent to look for fish.

Dany: When you joined the meeting with her, what did you talk to her about?

Soeun: She talked about plans to do something.

Dany: What plans?

Soeun: Some plans to achieve some work. We had to complete work in order to improve the livelihood of villagers. We had to set up our forces to find fish to make sure that our team had enough to eat.

Dany: When the Vietnamese were about to arrive, did Yeay Chaem called for a meeting?

Soeun: No, she did not hold the meeting, the Vietnamese arrived so quickly. They arrived in Siem Reap and it was too late. When the Vietnamese arrived in Siem Reap, we packed our stuff and fled.

Dany: At the time, Yeay Chaem was a chief of district?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Who was her deputy?

Soeun: Her husband.

Dany: Her husband?

Soeun: Yes, Ta Nhen.

Dany: Ta Nhen was a district committee member, too?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Which district?

Soeun: The same district.

Dany: In the same district where Yeay Chaem's job was?

Soeun: Chief.

Dany: How about her husband?

Soeun: Her husband was her deputy.

Dany: Who was the chief of Phnom Leap Commune?

Soeun: It was led by a person who was brought to Preah Neth Preah by Yeay Chaem.

Dany: Do you remember his name?

Soeun: The chief of Prasat Commune was Houv.

Dany: Houv?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Where is he now?

Soeun: I don't know where he is. He is gone.

Dany: You do not know where he is now?

Soeun: I don't know.

Dany: How about Phnom Leap? How was the chief?

Soeun: Kann.

Dany: Kann?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Where is he now?

Soeun: He might be at his homeland. I don't know if he is still alive or dead. I have not seen him for a long time.

Dany: He was from the same homeland as yours?

Soeun: No, he was from a different village.

Dany: What village did he live in?

Soeun: Prey Kdei.

Dany: Prey Kdei. His name was Kann?

Soeun: Yes, from Prey Kdei Village. His name was Kann. But after the Vietnamese came, he returned to his homeland.

Dany: He returned to his homeland?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Is he called Kann or does he use another name?

Soeun: I don't know. We have not met for a long time.

Dany: What was his wife's name?

Soeun: His wife's name was Him.



Dany: Him. At Prey Kdei?

Soeun: Prey Kdei.

Dany: Prey Kdei, Trapeang Thom Commune?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: How about Rohal Commune? Who was the chief?

Soeun: Ta Nob was a chief. But I don't know where he is either.

Dany: You don't know. Do you?

Soeun: No, I don't know.

Dany: What was his wife's name?

Soeun: I don't know.

Dany: When Yeay Chaem was at Troyong Mountain, was she pregnant?

Soeun: I don't know. I did not care about it.

Dara: You said earlier that Troyong Mountain was a security prison. It was created in August 1978. Right?

Soeun: For two months.

Dara: It lasted two months, and then the Vietnamese arrived.

Soeun: Yes, the Vietnamese arrived.

Dara: Did you flee with Yeay Chaem too?

Soeun: Most people fled first. I followed them. Then, I met them at Dangrek Mountain. I did not see her baby. I saw one of her children who was pretty big.

Dara: I heard that when the Vietnamese arrived, that she delivered a baby on the street.

Soeun: I was separated from her. We were separated from each other. I went on my own.

Dara: When the Vietnamese arrived, did Yeay Chaem leave before somebody else?

Soeun: Yes, I left after others left.

Dara: In what month?

Soeun: I met her for about a month before we fled.

Dara: I mean at Troyong Mountain.

Soeun: When I left Troyong Mountain, I met Yeay Chaem about a month later. We stayed with each other for about ten days, and we were separated again. I went to the South. She went to Dangrek Mountain. I came to Prey Mann.

Dara: You came to Prey Mann?

Soeun: Yes, I came to Prey Mann.

Dara: I would like to know about Troyong Mountain and Phnom Leap. When the Vietnamese arrived, Yeay Chaem fled?

Soeun: Yes, she fled to the North.

Dara: To the North. Then, she fled?

Soeun: I left after she did.

Dara: How many days later after Yeay Chaem left?

Soeun: About the whole afternoon. I left in the afternoon. I left at around 1 pm. When I left, the Vietnamese arrived at Ta Pon Bridge. Everybody had left.

Dara: Did lots of people at Preah Neth Preah know you since you were a former leader of a mobile unit team?

Soeun: I don't know if they remembered me or not. Some might remember. Some people in the mobile unit remembered me. Some came to visit me. When I was at Prey Mann, some people came to visit me bringing food and other stuff. They were living in the government-controlled areas, but they came to the forest to cut wood for a living. Prey Mann was a place where people smuggled some stuff illegally. I brought my family to live in Prey Mann.

Dara: Did you witness any killings at Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: No. I just saw them going to work as usual. They returned to the halls as usual. I saw some of them working in the mobile unit team. Some broke the rocks. Some went to grow vegetables with my team. I did that with them, too. I did not witness any killings.

Dany: You said some people broke rocks. Where were the rocks used for?

Soeun: Rocks were used to build bridges and other sites. After they broke the rocks, trucks came to pick up the rocks. Rocks were used to build bridged or water gates. The trucks came to pick up. There was no place to buy rocks, so we needed to break the rocks from the mountain. If some places needed forces to break the rocks, they came to bring those forces.

Dany: Did you witness any torture?

Soeun: No.

Dara: Could you describe the condition of prisoners at Troyong Mountain?

Soeun: There were not many people.

Dara: Were they shackled or handcuffed?

Soeun: I don't know. It was led by somebody else. I did not go there often. I was living about 500 meters from that place. At night, I went to sleep. As morning came, I went to work. That's what I did.

Dara: Do you know where Yeay Chaem is living now?

Soeun: I heard that she is living in Preah Vihear.

Dara: Preah Vihear?

Soeun: Yes,

Dara: She is still alive?

Soeun: Yes, she is alive.

Dara: Alive! You have ever met her since separation?

Soeun: No, I had never met her.

Dany: Let me ask you more. You said that the chief of Rohal Commune was Nob?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Where did he come from?

Soeun: He came from Kampot, but I do not remember which district.

Dany: You did not know where he is living now?

Soeun: No, I don't know.

Dany: How about Houv?

Soeun: I don't know where he is.

Dany: How about Tean Kamm Commune? Who was the leader?

Soeun: I am recalling my memory (laugh).

Dany: How about Preah Neth Preah?

Soeun: Nonh.

Dany: Nonh?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Where is he now?

Soeun: I don't know if he is alive or dead.

Dany: Where did Nonh come from?

Soeun: Kampot.

Dany: Kampot?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: How about the chief of Teuk Cho Commune? Who was that?

Soeun: Hey, I forgot.

Dany: You forgot?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: How about Preah Neth Preah? Did you know Ta Phan?

Soeun: Yes, Phan was at mobile unit of district and commune too.

Dany: Phan was at a mobile unit team of commune?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Do you know him well?

Soeun: Not so well. He was at a mobile unit. We worked together, dug canals together.

Dany: Where did Ta Phan come from?

Soeun: He was from Preah Neth Preah.

Dany: His homeland was Preah Neth Preah?

Soeun: Yes, Preah Neth Preah.

Dany: Where is he now?

Soeun: I don't know. We were separated a long time ago. I did not search for him. It is not important.

Dara: Have you ever heard about Phan?

Soeun: No, I did not.

Dany: You did not hear about him?

Soeun: No, not at all.

Dany: You had never met?

Soeun: No. I had never met him (laugh). We were separated.

Dany: Who was the chief of the region? When you first arrived who was the chief of region? You know only Cheal? Who replaced him later?

Soeun: Cheal. Later, I heard that he was kicked out.

Dany: Who replaced him?

Soeun: I forgot his name.

Dany: Where did he come from?

Soeun: I don't know his homeland. I saw him working with Yeay Chaem in the construction site. He gave directions to others to dig canals or build dams.

Dany: His name was Rin?

Soeun: Yes, I think so. His name was Rin.

Dany: Rin?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: He was called Rin?

Soeun: Yes. He was a region chief.

Dany: Rin was a region chief until the Vietnamese arrived?

Soeun: When the Vietnamese arrived, he disappeared.

Dany: He disappeared?

Soeun: Yes.

Dany: Do you know where he had gone?

Soeun: I don't know. I did not see him.

Dany: You did not see him?

Soeun: No.

Dany: Who replaced him?

Soeun: No, the Vietnamese arrived. There weren't any more region chiefs.

Dany: You said that he disappeared before the Vietnamese arrived?

Soeun: He disappeared. When the Vietnamese arrived, I did not see him. I did not know where he went. When we fled, we did not see him either.

Dany: You did not know if a new region chief was appointed?

Soeun: No, I don't know. Rin was a region chief. Then, I saw Yeay Chaem; she was a chief of Preah Neth Preah District. The region chief disappeared when the Vietnamese arrived. When the Vietnamese advanced, I did not see him. I ran to the forest. When I reached Dangrek Mountain, I did not see him.

Dara: I asked you a lot. I don't have any more questions. Do you want to tell me anything because I really want to know more about you.

Soeun: I don't know much. I know only what I was told to do. I followed all orders. If I had asked about other's work, they would accuse me of violating their work. After I fled, I quit all work. I was told to do the pointed bamboos and brought weapons to the frontline to fight with the Vietnamese. I came to live in government-controlled areas in order to protect my children from danger. I don't want my children to be separated again.

Dany: How often do you visit your homeland?

Soeun: I have been there twice. At one time, I stayed there for a month.

Dany: You have been there twice?

Soeun: Yes, I went there to build the stupa and stayed there for a month.

Dany: Are you related to Ta Mok?

Soeun: No. We are long-distance relatives.

Dany: How about Ta Tith?

Soeun: Ta Tith was related to Ta Mok.

Dany: But you are not related to Ta Mok?

Soeun: No. Ta Mok's relatives mostly lived at the West of Trapeang Thom Pagoda. I lived in separated villages; my village and their villages were in different directions.

Dany: Your home village was at the South of the pagoda?

Soeun: Yes, at the far South next to Samrong Commune.

Dany: Had you visited Preah Neth Preah after 1979?

Soeun: I just travelled past that place recently.

Dany: Did you visit there?



Soeun: The car drove so fast and I couldn't tell them to stop on the way. At the time, I went to Siem Reap to buy a water tank.

Dany: You were a chief of a mobile unit team. Do you feel frightened of being a victim of revenge? Do you feel scared?

Soeun: I don't feel frightened. I walk everywhere without being scared.

Dany: You aren't afraid?

Soeun: No. When I am here now, I don't feel afraid. I am not afraid of revenge.

Dany: Why you don't feel frightened?

Soeun: Because I did not persecute them. I never harmed them. I did not send anyone to anywhere.

Dany: If one day you have to go to Troyong Mountain? How would you feel?

Soeun: Yes, I don't dare to go.

Dany: If someone invites you to join Kathin festival at Preah Neth Preah, will you join?

Soeun: I don't have money to go. If I had money, I would go.

Dany: If you are supported financially, would you go?

Soeun: I would go.

Dany: One more, if the court invited to you testify about your experience during the Khmer Rouge regime in Phnom Penh, are you going?

Dara: To attend the trial, attend the hearing.

Soeun: Yes, if I am invited just to watch the trial, I will go. I will also go to tell them about my experience during the Khmer Rouge regime about what I did during the Khmer Rouge.

Dara: Every day, do you listen to the radio or watch television about the tribunal?

Soeun: Yes, I do.

Dara: You do?

Soeun: Yes.

Dara: My office has invited lots of people to attend the trial, to listen to the hearing. If I invite you, will you go?

Soeun: I will go.

Dara: You will go? On October 19, there will be a trial hearing. On October 19 and 20, there is a hearing about the fitness of Ieng Thirith. Television will broadcast it live as well and you can watch it, too. If you want to go, I will invite you.

Soeun: I can't stand being in the taxi for too long.

Dara: Really?

Soeun: Yes, I would get sick if I am in a taxi for a long time. The last time I took a taxi to my homeland, I spent another two to three days sleeping on the bed.

Dara: If I invite you, I will invite the village chief to accompany you as well. Will you go?

Soeun: It depends on my health. If I take a taxi, I will feel dizzy and numb and very sick. I rarely travel to other places. The last time I went to Siem Reap to buy a water tank, I got sick. I got high blood pressure.

Dara: When you travel past Preah Neth Preah, you remember all those places?

Soeun: I remember some, not all.

Dara: Did it change a lot?

Soeun: Yes, it changed a lot. During the Khmer Rouge, there was nothing, only rice fields. Now, there are lots of houses. The road was paved and nice and comfortable. There are lots of bridges along the national road. The canal that I dug changed too. I could hardly remember it.

Dany: What is the name of that canal?

Soeun: No name. What is it called now?

Dara: I don't have any more questions. I would like to thank you very much for taking time to talk to us. Thank you.

Soeun: Yes, thank you for coming to report about me.

**END**