

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA

Interview with Chum Mei survivor of Tuol Sleng prison

Interviewed by Sim Sorya on March 23, 2006

Translated by Terith CHY

- Sorya : My name is Sim Sorya. I am a researcher of the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Today, I want to briefly ask you about what you had gone through Tuol Sleng. This documentary is to be shown to local and international students in order that they learn about your experience as a prisoner of Tuol Sleng. Do you allow us to do this documentary and let it be shown? Do you want those students to see this documentary?
- Chum Mei : This is exactly what I want. I have been waiting for this opportunity for years to have young generation learn the truth of the Khmer Rouge regime.
- Sorya : This documentary is to be shown in meetings participated by academics, and the public. I will probably carry this documentary to show them by myself.
- Chum Mei : Yes. Yes.
- Sorya : Firstly, could you please describe us your background, about your childhood, hometown, living, education...?
- Chum Mei : I was purely a son of farmers living in the country, having no education except being able to read and write my own name, **but not the calculation of number**. I was also an orphan as my parents had died since when I was very young, and therefore I lived with my elder in Phnom Chheukach. Staying with my elder until I turned 19, I returned to my home-village and became a monk for a year.
- Sorya : Yes.
- Chum Mei : After one year as a monk, I decided to leave monkhood and, with only 60 riels in my pocket.
- Sorya : Yes
- Chum Mei : With this 60 riels, I tried to seek job in Phnom Penh. Knowing no ones in the capitol, I spent my nights beneath the protruding roof edge of warehouses by the river. I could not find any job until I had only 5 riel left in my pocket. I did not know what to do. I decided to ask... I saw somebody with a rope on his shoulder.
- Sorya : A rope?
- Chum Mei : It was an ordinary rope for tying the boat [to a post, so that it would not move].
- Sorya : Yes.
- Chum Mei : I asked him. He said, at his place people were needed to carry woods at Prek Ta Et located far beyond Kampong Cham province.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I decided to go because three meals were provided a day with the salary of 300 riels. 300 riels during that time was a huge deal.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I then decided to go.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : After I worked there for a while, I started to feel so homesick that I asked to quit and returned home.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : At my home village, my elders asked me to stay together and not to go anywhere.

Sorya : Oh.

Chum Mei : Yes. Because our parents have passed away, I should not go away.

Sorya : ...stay united with siblings.

Chum Mei : Yes, staying united with siblings. But, because I could not live in the country, I left for Phnom Penh again without leaving a notice to my elders.

Sorya : Go to Phnom Penh one more time.

Chum Mei : Yes. Went to Phnom Penh one more time.

Sorya : When was that?

Chum Mei : Probably in ...

Sorya : How old were you at that time?

Chum Mei : I was more than 20.

Sorya : At the time of your second journey?

Chum Mei : Yes. I was more than 20 years old at the time of my second journey. I was about 21 or 22. When I arrived [in the capitol], I asked to be apprenticed to fixing vehicle machines at a place called **Ploet Ty** in front of the central hospital.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : During that time, it was called in French as **Ploet Ty**.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : After a few years of apprenticeship, I could fix machines.

Sorya : Oh.

Chum Mei : I could fix machines of truck and tractor. Then, I was transferred to work in Prey Veng province and this time I served the state.

Sorya : This machine-fixing group sent you there?
Chum Mei : Yes.
Sorya : Was it state-run?
Chum Mei : Yes, it is state-run.
Sorya : State-run?
Chum Mei : Yes, it was state-run. It is called the Public Transportation.
Sorya : Yes.
Chum Mei : I had been transferred to work as a mechanic in Prey Veng.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I had worked as a mechanic in Prey Veng for 3, 4, or 5 years. At that time, Ratanakiri province, which was in need of mechanic, requested a mechanic from Prey Veng. Because I knew a person in that province whose governor at that time was Ung Nhorch, I proposed to go.

Sorya : When was that?
Chum Mei : It was in 1960.
Sorya : To Ratanakiri?
Chum Mei : Yes. In 1960.
Sorya : 1960?
Chum Mei : Yes, it was in 1960.
Sorya : Yes.
Chum Mei : I moved to fix vehicles in Ratanakiri. I was assigned to the job of controlling all kinds of machineries including generator, water-pumping machine, trucks and tractor.

Sorya : Yes.
Chum Mei : I was called a head of mechanical workshop.
Sorya : Head of mechanical workshop in Ratanakiri?
Chum Mei : Yes, in Ratanakiri. At the public transportation, there were many trucks and tractors.

Sorya : Was it a part of the Public Transportation?
Chum Mei : Yes, at the Public Transportation. Staying there longer, roads were started to be built and after a period of time Prince Sihanouk went to Ratanakiri for a high school inauguration ceremony. In short white pants and short-sleeve shirt, he presided over the inauguration of a high school.

Sorya : The high school was in Ratanakiri?
Chum Mei : The high school was in Lumpatt of Ratanakiri province. During that time, the provincial town was in Lumpatt.

Sorya : Yes.
Chum Mei : ... not in Banlung as now. At that time, [provincial town] was in Lumpatt.

Sorya : When you were assigned to be a workshop head in Ratanakiri, were you only the driver of road-fixing truck? Or were you a mechanic for earth-carrying truck?

Chum Mei : No, I was controlling of all truck drivers. I was like a supervisor of the job.

Sorya : You monitored them?

Chum Mei : Yes, I monitored all of the roads...

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : ... monitored all tractors, trucks and so on...

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : ... including the number of tractors, steamrollers, generators and so on.

Sorya : Oh...

Chum Mei : I was there until like in 1968-69.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : By 1968-69, the Khmer Rouge started to fight. First of all, they [the Khmer Rouge] fought to gain control over Mondulkiri province and, after seizing Mondulkiri, they tried to take Kratie province. After taking Kratie, they fought for Stung Treng province.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : The Khmer Rouge was like that.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I was there fixing bridges and so on, and they tried to burn down those bridges.

Sorya : Oh...

Chum Mei : As soon as the bridge was fixed, the Khmer Rouge burnt it down, and The Khmer Rouge was like that. Overall, the base of Pol Pot was originally there.

Sorya : After he came from France? [Sorya's voice is very low at this point.]

Chum Mei : Upon his return from France, he went to Ratanakiri.

Sorya : Oh!

Chum Mei : And to my precision Khieu Samphan went to Phnom Penh, while Pol Pot to Ratanakiri.

Sorya : What happened after there was the burning down the bridge?

Chum Mei : The Khmer Rouge surrounded the region. We could not travel to Phnom Penh, even if we wanted to because they seized control of the whole Kratie.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Also, the whole Stung Treng was seized and we could not go anywhere, except to go through Vietnam.

Sorya : Only to go through Vietnam?

Chum Mei : Yes, only if we decided to go through Vietnam. There was one day when the Khmer Rouge fought for Ratanakiri; they fought in the night, setting fire on houses and the barrack.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Telephone line was disconnected.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Communication was lost. Airplane from Phnom Penh could not land on because the communication was lost. So, the airplane kept hanging

around the airport surrounded overwhelmingly by soldiers of the Khmer Rouge.

Sorya : Oh.

Chum Mei : The Khmer Rouge surrounded the airport.

Sorya : Did this take place in Lumpatt?

Chum Mei : Yes, in Lumpatt. District governor was trying to get someone to drive a truck and leave it in the middle of the airport in order to prevent airplanes from landing. The district governor ordered me, "Mei, please do whatever you can to drive that truck – the logging truck – and leave it in the middle of the airport to prevent them from landing." Because we had lost the communication.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : The Khmer Rouge had surrounded the province. I drove the truck and left it in the airport. All of the sudden, they fired at me. I tried to run and escaped to Lumpatt, to Sre Pork river.

Sorya : Oh.

Chum Mei : then I entered back to the provincial town.

Sorya : So, you stay there quite a long time?

Chum Mei : Yes, quite long.

Sorya : from 60 to 70.

Chum Mei : I had stayed there for 10 years.

Sorya : 10 years.

Chum Mei : Yes, 10 years.

Sorya : The Khmer Rouge took place from 1968. How do you think about the relation between the minority groups and the Khmer Rouge?

Chum Mei : It shot me just off my outside ear, burning my hair.

Sorya : Oh

Chum Mei : It shot me from there, very close to me.

Sorya : Did the minority groups in the region support the Khmer Rouge or Lon Nol? How was their relation?

Chum Mei : They all supported the Khmer Rouge.

Sorya : The minority groups [support the Khmer Rouge]?

Chum Mei : Yes, all minority groups supported the Khmer Rouge. When they saw [government] army entered their area, [minority groups] they tried to block their way by employing sharpened bamboo, and using bow and poisonous arrows and so on.

Sorya : Why?

Chum Mei : I did not know the reason either. Then... after the firing at the airport, it was announced that we now moved to Banlung where there were governmental army. We packed our stuff and left for Banlung with about 20 trucks.

Sorya : Moving to the Lon Nol side?

Chum Mei : Yes, Lon Nol side.

Sorya : Did you go along with them?

Chum Mei : Yes, I went with them.

Sorya : Back to Banlung?

Chum Mei : Yes, back to Banlung.

Sorya : So, you moved to Banlung after an incident preventing the airplane from landing on. After you moved to Banlung, how long had you stayed there before you moved to Phnom Penh?

Chum Mei : I had stayed there for only a week.

Sorya : Oh.

Chum Mei : The story was like this. When we left [for Banlung], it was during the shooting at the airport. We started to pack stuff in the morning. At around this time of the day we departed. Head of warehouse was shot dead.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They were shooting us from behind. I was at the front of the line. Children were crying noisily. Fortunately, two [governmental] helicopters were helping us, attacking them from the air. One of them was shot in the wing.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : The shot helicopter returned to Banlung. They targeted me, and I was hiding behind my car. At that time I held two guns, a Sainito and an Herstal.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Working with the public transportation, we all were allowed to hold guns.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : with soldiers.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : After this battle, we continued to go to Banlung.

Sorya : What happened after you had arrived Phnom Penh?

Chum Mei : Hold on. I wanted to talk a little bit about Banlung.

Sorya : Yes! Banlung.

Chum Mei : When we arrived at Banlung, we were no longer limited to two cartridges of Sainito's bullets; we could able to get as many cases as we wanted, but before then we were given only two cartridges.

Sorya : After you arrived at Banlung?

Chum Mei : Yes, we were provided with only two cartridges before. Later we could get as many as we wanted. The public transportation group was in a frontline, army another frontline, and police another frontline.

Sorya : In Banlung?

Chum Mei : Yes, in Banlung. I was in a frontline protecting Banlung. Knowing that the public transportation frontline was weak, the Khmer Rouge attacked us during the night. My friends and I, all about 30 people, fought all night long.

Sorya : was it also in 1970?

Chum Mei : Yes, in 1970. We fought fiercely. The next morning, there found about 30 Khmer Rouge dead because they entered while I threw grenades. We had many grenades, and we could have them as many as I wanted. They could not move in. That morning, a military major

came to oversee the situation and found those dead. We did not know which side those dead belong to. They painted black all over their bodies with charcoal, except the part covered by the short pants. Their cartridges were found beside their bodies with no shoes. I did not know which side they belonged.

Sorya : How can people and you manage to go to Phnom Penh?

Chum Mei : I alone had strong connection with the province governor, and he loved me.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I asked him to go to Phnom Penh, and he allowed me to go.

Sorya : Did you fly?

Chum Mei : Yes, I flied. I flied alone to Phnom Penh. Other people had to go to Vietnam.

Sorya : What happened after you left Ratanakiri?

Chum Mei : After I had arrived in Phnom Penh for about two months, those to go through Vietnam also arrived in the capitol. Places around Chaktomuk Theatre [Sorya cut]

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Those places were prepared for those from provinces seized by the Khmer Rouge. Governmental officials from those provinces

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : [government official] were arranged to stay at casino compound.

Sorya : Casino.

Chum Mei : Yes. All of them were arranged to stay there.

Sorya : Was it the casino that is now Cambodiana hotel?

Chum Mei : Yes, at Cambodiana. At that time, the construction was not yet completed.

Sorya : Yes. Yes.

Chum Mei : [Chum Mei repeats] [construction was] not yet completed.

Sorya : Where did you stay at that time?

Chum Mei : I also stayed there.

Sorya : At the casino?

Chum Mei : Yes, at the Casino area. But I had my wife staying at Tuol Kork.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : My wife stayed at Tuol Kork. When I reunited with my wife, I was to work only in the morning and off in the afternoon. I started works in the morning and left work at 1pm. However, I had a night duty at Chaktomuk Theatre, and around this time of the day I could see the bombing.

Sorya : The bombing in 1970?

Chum Mei : No, that was...

Sorya : Which year of 1970s when you stayed at the casino?

Chum Mei : Probably happening in 1971.

Sorya : 1971?

Chum Mei : Yes, probably 1971-72.

Sorya : Didn't you stay at the house of your wife?

Chum Mei : Yes, I did. I stayed in Tuol Kork. I only came to sign my attendance at work and left.

Sorya : You said you saw bombing in 1971?

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : How was people's situation in the market?

Chum Mei : The Khmer Rouge kept shelling.

Sorya : Shelling?

Chum Mei : They shelled the city from Phnom Prasith, Prek Tameak and so on.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They shelled 10 to 20 shells each day both in the morning and evening. They kept approaching the city closer and closer.

Sorya : When did the Khmer Rouge reach the city?

Chum Mei : Reached Phnom Penh?

Sorya : Yes, when Pol Pot soldiers entered the city, where were you?

Chum Mei : I cut the story of Chan Raingsy.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : When they entered Phnom Penh, I moved out of Tuol Kork because of the shelling.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I moved to stay at Phsar Depo with an old doctor named Lok Lien.

Sorya : He has a child living in France up to these days. There was one day when the Khmer Rouge attacked the city harshly; I did not remember if it was on 7th or 8th.

Sorya : Was it in April 1975?

Chum Mei : Yes, you are right. They kept attacking the city harshly; their female soldiers with their pants rolled up.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They carried rockets.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : B-40 rockets.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : At Phsar Depo, Lon Nol soldiers was driving a CMC truck.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They[female soldiers] pointed [B-40] at the truck. The truck was forced to stop. The ladies did not shoot the truck.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : 4 or 5 of them took the truck and drove away. Those Lon Nol soldiers escaped and hid in people's houses in Phsar Depo. The truck was loaded with weapons and ammunitions. At that time, the Khmer Rouge entered the city. My younger sibling and I, each of us had a scooter.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : [We] went to see another younger brother at Santhormuk.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : He recently arrived from Chhouk. At that time, the situation was terrible including the shelling was going on, hue and cry of separation

of family members, burned cars and trucks and so on. All happened near DN.

Sorya : How did you manage the situation?

Chum Mei : It was at about 6 or 7 pm, the Khmer Rouge forced us to leave.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They announced, "Fathers and Mothers! We have to urgently leave the city, 10 kilometers off the city, because the US was going to drop bombs." They walked around telling, while pointing their rifles at the people. If we did not leave, they would start pulling their triggers, killing and injuring people.

Sorya : You were allowed to hold guns in Ratanakiri. Were you still allowed to hold guns in Phnom Penh?

Chum Mei : No, I no longer held the guns.

Sorya : Oh.

Chum Mei : I no longer dared to hold the gun. I returned the guns at the time I fled back to Phnom Penh.

Sorya : Would you please describe what happened to you before you were imprisoned in Tuol Sleng?

Chum Mei : When the Khmer Rouge told people to leave the city, I also left the city and arrived at Kabb Srove.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I spent the night there. I continued the walk the next morning.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I reached Prek Pnœou

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : at night. We needed to cook, and I had to get water for the cooking. It was dark at night.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I stepped on dead bodies.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I saw dead bodies lying all the way I went to get the water.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : A lot of dead bodies were beside where I slept. I smelled the stench everywhere. I had four children, and we had to eat and sleep without light. Also we ate in the dark. In the morning, I saw people lying just like we did.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I had seen a lot of corpses all the way from Kilometer 6 to Prek Kdam.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : The Khmer Rouge kept chasing us to walk. I saw the Khmer Rouge's trucks ran over corpses lying on the road, flattening the bone, flesh, hair, jaws and ears. Corpses were all over the road. The road, National Road 5, was of many cut-offs, a cut every 2 or 5 kilometers in order to prevent vehicles from moving over. When I arrived at Kruos pagoda,

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I threw my photos and military stuff into the pond. It was a risk of life to carry those stuffs, even a watch.

Sorya : When did you return to Phnom Penh?

Chum Mei : I returned to the city the same year. During that time, I reached Cheung Chhnok.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : At Cheung Chhnok, the Khmer Rouge forbade people from going forward.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : People were told to stay there at one place.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : When I was looking for field crabs after rain as food;

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : When I was looking for the crabs, I saw a bus coming.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They called for mechanics who could fix tractor, truck and machines to return to work with Angkar. Angkar needed them.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I registered my name, and decided to return [to Phnom Penh] with my family. When we arrived at Thnal Keng, other people also registered and came along. It was at night.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : The Khmer Rouge said that they would depart at night. At that time, I gave them two suits of Khmer Rouge pajamas and a flash light. I showed them the registry letter, and they said, "comrade should depart at night, tonight."

Sorya : Departed from Thnal Keng to Prek Kdam

Chum Mei : Yes. Yes.

Sorya : and to Phnom Penh?

Chum Mei : Right, to Phnom Penh. As soon as I departed, the pilots

Sorya : Yes.

Chum mei : [the pilots] also asked to come along.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I thought I could not sleep there and I had to go to Taing Kauk. Because pilots were most wanted, I decided not to come along with them.

Sorya : I told the Khmer Rouge that I would wait and come the next morning. They allowed me to come the later. Then I and my children came to Prek Kdam. There, I showed the local Angkar my registry letter.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I was told to remain in Prek Kdam and to look for more colleagues, and that Angkar would award the former jobs. I was able to find 7 people.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : We all were told to work at machined boat workshop at Russey Keo in Phnom Penh. 7 of us left for work in Phnom Penh, while the rest of our families were remained in Prek Kdam.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : None of machined boats and ship worked. 7 of us managed to fix about 10 boats. Then we taught them to learn to run the boat. Some of them were already able to run the boats.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : After they learnt to run the boat, soldiers of the Khmer Rouge were called to board the 10 machined boats and left for Kratie province.

Sorya : How long did you stay at the machined boat workshop?

Chum Mei : About 6 months.

Sorya : What did you do after that?

Chum Mei : Hmmm...

Sorya : What else did they ask you to do?

Chum Mei : Because we were able to fix tractor machine,

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Angkar asked us to collect spare parts.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Spare parts of tractors to be kept at O-Russey.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Collect from Russey Keo to be kept at O-Russey.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Chief of my work unit was Kun.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : My unit chief was Kun. My work place was called K-9, today located south of O-Russey.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Kun's birth place was at Kanhchreach of Kamchaiy Mea.

Sorya : When you were working as machined boat mechanic, which department or unit, to be precise, you were working for?

Chum Mei : I did not know which ministry or department. I only knew that it was called [Office] M-5 at Russey Keo.

Sorya : M-5?

Chum Mei : Yes, M-5. Chief of M-5 was a man named Man.

Sorya : What about at O-Russey?

Chum Mei : At O-Russey, Kun was our chief.

Sorya : Kun?

Chum Mei : Kun was chief.

Sorya : How your working place was called?

Chum Mei : K...

Sorya : Was it K-9?

Chum Mei : K-9. Yes, it was K-9.

Sorya : How was your uniform at work? Casual dress or what?

Chum Mei : Black pajamas.

Sorya : Black pajamas?

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : Could you please describe about your works at O-Russey? How long did you work there? and what did you do?

Chum Mei : I stayed at O-Russey quite along time. First, I was assigned to collect spare parts. After this job was done, they told me that Angkar now assigned me to fix sewing machines. With a pass, I was entitled to collect sewing machines. Sewing machines throughout Phnom Penh were ordered to be collected.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Then unit chiefs were ordered to take those sewing machines to me at O-Russey.

Sorya : You worked at O-Russey until which year?

Chum Mei : I worked there until I was arrested and brought to Tuol Sleng.

Sorya : When did they arrest you?

Chum Mei : Almost the end of 1977.

Sorya : Late 1977?

Chum Mei : Yes, in late 1977.

Sorya : Was it in December of 1977?

Chum Mei : Correct.

Sorya : Could you please describe the situation of your arrest?

Chum Mei : Before my arrest, there was a series of disappearances of the unit chiefs.

Sorya : Was it before your arrest?

Chum Mei : Yes. When I worked there.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : After I had worked at O-Russey,

Sorya : There was a series of disappearances?

Chum Mei : After I had worked for several months, Kun disappeared.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Then Yong turned up to take his place.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : After a few months, Yong also disappeared, and again Comrade Vann from south-western zone took over Yong's place.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : The disappearances kept going on.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Until almost the end of 1977, I was called for a meeting. They told me, "Now, Angkar needs you to fix trucks in Vietnam because we at the moment engage in war with Vietnam."

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I dared not refuse to Angkar.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I was told that I would depart the next morning at Office K-9. I at that time asked them to withdraw hammock and scarf for my use. In the morning I arrived with a box of truck-fixing tools. They told me that there was no need to bring the tool box, and that it would be sent later. They called me to get on the three-wheel car. There were three of us on the truck.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : One was Rin, and another one was Doar.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : When I arrived at Tuol Sleng, I had no idea that it was Tuol Sleng prison.

Sorya : How did they get you there?

Chum Mei : A three-wheel truck.

Sorya : How many people on the truck? Only you and the driver or anybody else?

Chum Mei : Only with the driver, and he was the chief.

Sorya : Chief of which place?

Chum Mei : Yes, he was the chief of that place?

Sorya : Chief of K-9?

Chum Mei : He was the chief of Office K-9.

Sorya : The latest chief [after a series of disappearances]?

Chum Mei : Yes, the latest one.

Sorya : Was he the one transferred from south-western zone?

Chum Mei : Yes, he was. I was taken to a wooden house in front of the gate of Tuol Sleng, which now becomes a store selling stuff and food.

Sorya : Yes. Yes.

Chum Mei : It was a wooden house.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Now it is still a wooden house.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : As soon as the truck had stopped, I was handcuffed and blindfolded with a scarf I put around my neck; all three of us [were handcuffed and blindfolded].

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : All three of us were blindfolded. Under blindfolding and blindfolding, I thought to myself my life would not be spared.

Sorya : You were taken there alone, or with other two persons?

Chum Mei : With other two persons.

Sorya : With other two persons?

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : Do you remember their names?

Chum Mei : Comrade Rin,

Sorya : Rin and...?

Chum Mei : Rin and Doar

Sorya : the other was Doar.

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : All of you were mechanics?

Chum Mei : Yes, we were all mechanics.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Unlike the two who had long been with the Khmer Rouge, I was a 17-April mechanic [the city people].

Sorya : What happened next?

Chum Mei : They then walked me into the prison's fence. I shouted loudly, "Brother, please help take care of my family." As soon as I finished,

they kicked me from behind, and I fell flat to the ground. They made me stand by grabbing my hair.

Sorya : Any guards coming out to take you? Or you were taken in by the driver?

Chum Mei : They were in the wooden house. They appeared out of nowhere.

Sorya : Inside the fence of Tuol Sleng?

Chum Mei : No, at the outside.

Sorya : Was it happened in front of Tuol Sleng?

Chum Mei : It was in front of Tuol Sleng.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They suddenly appeared to handcuff me.

Sorya : Then they took you into Tuol Sleng compound?

Chum Mei : Yes, then they took me into Tuol Sleng compound.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : In Tuol Sleng, they asked me about where I lived, which district, which sub-district, which province.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I provided them with the answers.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : The, they took photograph of me and measured my height.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They undressed my clothes leaving only short pants.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They blindfolded and handcuffed me, and put me into a cell. Have you ever seen the cell I was confined? [Chum Mei asks Sorya] The cell was about this big [Translator Note: Chum Mei uses his hands to show the space of the cell].

Sorya : Yes. I saw those cells.

Chum Mei : Yes, it was about this big. I was put into the cell and shackled before they took off the handcuff. Then they took away the blindfold. There was a piece of garment covering up the open door.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : To cover up so that we could not see one another.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They put me there in the cell. The guard went back and forth, back and forth. The guard is still alive.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : He is living in Kampong Chhnang today. I met him once when Rithy Pann brought him [to be filmed].

Sorya : Khieu Ches?

Chum Mei : Yes?

Sorya : Was him Khei Ches, also known as Peou? How many guards were there?

Chum Mei : I did not know the number.

Sorya : What did you do everyday in the prison?

Chum Mei : After my arrest, I did not do anything yet.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I was arrested at about this time of the day and I was put in a cell until 1 pm when I was taken out, blindfolded, handcuffed and walked to a southern premise?

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I was walked up to the second floor. The premise was written 04 in red.

Sorya : How was the premise?

Chum Mei : It was an interrogation place.

Sorya : Interrogated at every noon?

Chum Mei : Yes, I was taken to be interrogated. There was a man sitting in a chair like I am sitting now [Chum Mei explain to Sorya how the man sat].I was shackled to the floor.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : There was a type-writer on the table. Beside him were sticks and electric-shocking tools and so on.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They asked, "How many of you entered CIA?" "How many people in your group?"

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : "When did you enter CIA?" "Who took you into CIA?" I then told them, "Brother, I don't know what a CIA or a KGB is." As soon as I finished, he suddenly made his move to beat me brutally until he felt tired. Then, he insulted me, "You motherfucker! Still you not admit?" He added, "Angkar is not stupid. You mean that Angkar arrested you innocent people?" I begged for mercy, "I don't know anything."

Sorya : Who mostly interrogated you?

Chum Mei : Seng.

Sorya : Seng?

Chum Mei : Seng. Seng has already died.

Sorya : After interrogating you and type-writing your answer, what else did they do to you?

Chum Mei : I was beaten twelve days and nights consecutively. I thought to myself, "I would ultimately die, although I do not admit." Then I decided to admit of being a CIA, naming a lot of persons [in the confession]. They insulted again, "You Motherfucker! If you had long admitted, you would have not been this beaten or electrically shocked."

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : They stopped interrogating me since. During the interrogation, I was electrically shocked and beaten. See? This finger was broken as a result of being beaten, and they also pulled off my toe nails. Because I was too painful,

Sorya : Oh

Chum Mei : I protected myself with my hand, and my little finger was broken. I was too painful.

Sorya : What happened to other prisoners? Did you hear anything?

Chum Mei : They did not let us know or see anything. Prisoners were blindfolded every time they were taken in and out.

Sorya : Did you know any inmates?

Chum Mei : They all died.

Sorya : Friends you know since 1960s?

Chum Mei : Only Mr. Pich who I have known since 1960s. Ung Pich was also a mechanic.

Sorya : I mean the inmates that you know him up to these days?

Chum Mei : No.

Sorya : No?

Chum Mei : No. Also, I did not know Nat, and I did not know Bou Meng.

Sorya : What else did you see?

Chum Mei : At that time, we were not allowed to see anything.

Sorya : How did you hear?

Chum Mei : I heard the sound of crying people. "Oh, Mother please helps me. I am dying. Oh, Father please helps me." They also insulted the interrogator, "You Motherfucker! You can kill me right away. Don't Torture me!" "I am willing to die."

Sorya : Did you hear the voice of women and children?

Chum Mei : Yes, I heard the voice of children and women crying.

Sorya : Did voice which did not sound like Khmer, but rather to Chinese or Cham-Muslims?

Chum Mei : Yes, I did.

Sorya : Did you hear any voice of the minority?

Chum Mei : Yes, I heard the voice of Vietnamese who spoke with accent. Therefore, I recognized it.

Sorya : When was that happened?

Chum Mei : When I was still imprisoned.

Sorya : In late 1977?

Chum Mei : I was taken to confinement in late 1977 until almost the end of 1978.

Sorya : Quite long?

Chum Mei : Yes, quite long.

Sorya : ... [Translator Note: it is unclear. The voice was too soft.]

Chum Mei : Right.

Sorya : Did you hear any radio or Khmer Rouge music or any policy on radio?

Chum Mei : I did not hear any such things.

Sorya : You did not hear it?

Chum Mei : Yes, I did not hear it. But before my arrest I used to hear, such as during the New Year.

Sorya : You did not hear anything in the prison?

Chum Mei : No. I did not hear anything. As you know, places from Pethchin traffic light to Mohamuntrei pagoda was firmly rounded up by tinned fence.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : and from Pethchin to Boko were firmly rounded up by tinned fence.

Sorya : I wondered if they set up a radio to educate the prisoners?

Chum Mei : No. Not at all.

Sorya : What were the restrictions for inmates? What were you allowed to do and what were not? How often did they inform you of the restriction?

Chum Mei : No restrictions. But we knew ourselves that we should not look at things.

Sorya : Who else you know other than Seng?

Chum Mei : There were three of them, two of whom beat me only a few times.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Duch's deputy also beat me.

Sorya : Hor?

Chum Mei : [Yes] Hor also beat me. He had a stain on his face.

Sorya : Oh! Hor had a stain on his face?

Chum Mei : Yes. He had a stain on the face.

Sorya : Hor. Was Hor tall?

Chum Mei : Hor was tall.

Sorya : Did he have a bright skin?

Chum Mei : Bright skin and a stain on the face. I was told that he has died. I don't know for sure.

Sorya : What about the other one?

Chum Mei : The other one was Tit. He had curly hair.

Sorya : You have known Duch since that time or just know him recently?

Chum Mei : I have never known Duch.

Sorya : You only heard his name, right?

Chum Mei : I only hear his name.

Sorya : So, you also heard his name. Right?

Chum Mei : Right.

Sorya : But for Hor, you know him?

Chum Mei : Yes, I remember him. He had a stain on his face. I remember Hor said while beating me that you will probably kill me when you see me later.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : He said like that.

Sorya : When you were detained at Tuol Sleng and when you were beaten, did you think to yourself about your mistakes? Did you dare asking why you were taken there?

Chum Mei : No, I did not dare asking them.

Sorya : Did you think to yourself?

Chum Mei : Yes, I thought about it too much to sleep. I thought if jumped down the building, I would probably break my legs and ultimately not be able to escape. I did not even know how I could jump when hands were handcuffed and legs were shackled. I thought nights and days about who would come to help me and about the possibility of my survival. I prayed nights and days. I could not sleep before 12 o'clock.

Sorya : Why?

Chum Mei : By 8 or 9 o'clock, I could not sleep.

Sorya : Why?

Chum Mei : I was to wait and see if my name was called.

Sorya : What happened to those who were called?

Chum Mei : Names were called to be executed at Cheung Ek.

Sorya : How did you know?

Chum Mei : I was told by other inmates. They alerted one another, "The truck is coming."

Sorya : Did you sleep together with other inmates?

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : Weren't you alone in the cell?

Chum Mei : Yes. But I was later shackled to a long bar together with other inmates.

Sorya : So, later you were shackled to a long bar, right?

Chum Mei : Yes. During 12-day interrogation, I was confined in the ground floor. After then, I was put in the upper floor.

Sorya : Upper floor?

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : In the western building?

Chum Mei : No, I was put in an upper floor of the same building.

Sorya : So, in the middle building?

Chum Mei : Yes, [I was put] in the upper floor of the middle building. I was told that inmates were taken [to be executed] at 12 midnight everyday. As I was told, I really heard the sound of trucks coming in at 12 midnight. Later, when Rithy Pann asked Prak Khan, he replied that he was the one sending prisoners out.

Sorya : Who?

Chum Mei : I am not sure it could be Prak Khan or Huy.

Sorya : You said just now that your finger was broken because Seng beat you. And you later gave the answers they wanted. Right?

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : You invented the story, right?

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : I want you to see your own confession to know that which parts were tortured to get answers and which parts were true.

Chum Mei : Hmm!

Sorya : This is on page 3, and I will read for you.

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : I will read for you and after that I will let you see it yourself.

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : It reads, "In around 1964, after a riot attacking US embassy Tit asked me to go to Merchant Toek. At that time, Brother Tit told his boss that he got me who was willing to serve the Free World [the West]. Then Merchant Toek put a vase on the table, in which there was a flag of many stars. He announced that I then on became CIA. Toek told me that it was a US flag representing the free world." This statement was type-written.

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : Was this truly your answer? or Seng had invented it?

Chum Mei : Yes, I did give this answer.

Sorya : You really gave this answer, right?

Chum Mei : Yes, I really gave this answer.

Sorya : Did it really happen?

Chum Mei : No, it did not happen in real life.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : It was because they wanted the answers, so I gave them the answers. I invented it.

Sorya : yes.

Chum Mei : Had I not invented it, I would have been killed.

Sorya : Yes

Chum Mei : I invented it in order to get away.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : To get away from being beaten. The statement was not true.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : It was not true.

Sorya : The event was not true. How about the names like Toek and Tit? You invented the names as well? Or those were the real persons that you know and that were not CIA?

Chum Mei : I invented them.

Sorya : In the cases of Toek and Tit, did they really exist?

Chum Mei : I really know some of them in 1960s.

Sorya : But they were not involved in this story, right?

Chum Mei : No, not at all. I did not know what a CIA was.

Sorya : Yes, I understand.

Chum Mei : Why did I give such answers without fearing the death of other persons?

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Because I thought that it might be because someone pointed to me, that's why I was arrested.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I was innocent.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Why should I be arrested?

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Therefore, I assumed that there might be somebody pointing to me [in their confession].

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I so assumed.
 Sorya : So, the event was not true, but the persons could be true?
 Chum Mei : You are right.
 Sorya : There was another statement on page 12. It reads, "In early 1976, I did not remember the exact month. I went to take my family from Office M-11, and I met Brother Sreu. Brother Sreu asked me, 'How was your work with Brother Kun?' I answered that it was fine and that he got me to fix trucks of the ministry of sewing. He added, 'Good! Try to work harder. If you need anything, you can contact Brother Kun. Brother Kun told me that he already knows your previous activities with me. It is alright because Brother Kun is also our man. You should try to perform your jobs harder. I am also trying to perform my jobs on the water.'" I want know whether Sreu and Kun really said so.
 Chum Mei : No, it was not true at all. All was invented.
 Sorya : All was invented, right?
 Chum Mei : I invented all in order to protect my life;
 Sorya : Yes.
 Chum Mei : Otherwise I would have been killed.
 Sorya : Yes
 Chum Mei : Yes.
 Sorya : Why did the name Sreu and Kun come into your mind? Why not other names?
 Chum Mei : Because I knew that Kun was already arrested.
 Sorya : Yes.
 Chum Mei : The one interrogating me also knew that that Kun had been arrested.
 Sorya : Do you refer to Seng?
 Chum Mei : Seng also learnt the arrest of Kun.
 Sorya : So, it means that...
 Chum Mei : Yes.
 Sorya : So, you were making yourself Kun's man, right?
 Chum Mei : Right.
 Sorya : in order to fit into a traitorous story.
 Chum Mei : Yes, you are right.
 Sorya : A traitorous story of Kun and you. So you invented it, right?
 Chum Mei : Yes.
 Sorya : So, Kun did exist, right?
 Chum Mei : Yes, Kun was chief of Office K-9.
 Sorya : Yes.
 Chum Mei : The one I mentioned earlier...[Sorya cuts]
 Sorya : The one who was arrested?
 Chum Mei : Yes. ...about the arrest of Kun and Yong and so on.
 Sorya : Did Sreu also exist?
 Chum Mei : Yes, Sreu also existed.
 Sorya : Had Sreu been arrested by then?
 Chum Mei : Yes, by then all of them were arrested.
 Sorya : Was Sreu with the sewing unit?
 Chum Mei : No, Sreu was with Office M-5.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : the on-water transporting unit.

Sorya : So, in short names and position truly existed?

Chum Mei : Yes,

Sorya : much of them truly existed, right?

Chum Mei : Yes, true.

Sorya : However, that you betrayed them or they betrayed you could be untrue?

Chum Mei : No, it was not true. That I answered this and that was because I was too painful. Such story as spilling the acid was totally invented.

Sorya : How was the spilling of acid happened?

Chum Mei : ... [Chum Mei speaks but was cut by Sorya]

Sorya : How was the spilling of acid happened?

Chum Mei : [I] spilled acid on garments and so on.

Sorya : Oh, spilled acid in order to destroy things, right?

Chum Mei : Yes, to destroy things. I invented it in order to convince Seng to believe me.

Sorya : in order to convince [Seng] to believe that you really betrayed, right?

Chum Mei : to believe that I really betrayed.

Sorya : so that you would not be beaten, right?

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : In total, your confession contains more than 30 pages.

Chum Mei : Right.

Sorya : 37 pages to be precise. Only the traitorous network,

Chum Mei : Yes. It was up to 6 pages detailing traitorous network [names]. Did these names really exist? Did these really hold these positions? Or that these names really existed, but they did not betray. Which one is true?

Chum Mei : The issues that I clearly remember were the issues of Kun, Yong and Sreu at Office M-5.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : These issue were true.

Sorya : ...[Sorya speaks but was cut by Chum Mei]

Chum Mei : However, these people did not enter CIA or KGB like I said in my answer.

Sorya : How could you manage to think of these many names? I am wondering. Did Seng himself put these names in [the confession] or you give these names?

Chum Mei : I gave the names and he type-wrote it.

Sorya : How did these names come into your thought?

Chum Mei : I gave the names as they came across my mind.

Sorya : You just said what you had invented, right?

Chum Mei : I just said what I had invented and he noted them down.

Sorya : Did most of these names really hold the positions given in the confession?

Chum Mei : No, they did not exist. Some of them did exist such as Kun, whose position was really a chief of Office K-9, and Sreu, who really worked with on-water transporting unit.

Sorya : Yes. Such names as Toek, a former car-selling businessman.

Chum Mei : This one was invented.

Sorya : Tit also a former car-selling businessman;

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : Heng a corporal and car inspector for Merchant Toek, now lost information. Did you invent these names?

Chum Mei : I invented these names.

Sorya : Such workers in Phnom Penh as Phy, Hoeun, Vin, Hoeung and Chan were all lost information. Forest ranger in Kratie, workers in Phnom Penh. These were the names you pointed to.

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : Car-selling businessman, chief of sewing ministry, Man, Kun, Khan were all invented? Did they ever suspect you when names were overlapped or when they were not likely?

Chum Mei : I did not know either.

Sorya : Did Seng ever suspect that this one name was unlikely?

Chum Mei : No, that never happened.

Sorya : They noted down everything?

Chum Mei : I think Seng was there to write down.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : If he missed the information I gave, he might have also been executed.

Sorya : Oh!

Chum Mei : Should there be any missing of prisoner statements given, he would be taken to be killed.

Sorya : Do you think that Seng sometimes knew the fact that you invented the story, but he anyway wrote it down because he might have been killed if he did not get the confession?

Chum Mei : Yes, a number of people in his position were taken to be executed. When sometimes lost half of the story, they were taken to be killed. It was 'a new wave takes over its preceding' which means after a series of them were killed, a new series coming to take over.

Sorya : How about your current living, your business and your job, and your family?

Chum Mei : My living is in bad situation. Today, I have nothing to depend on but Chhang Youk who continuously sends journalists to interview me. Each of them gives me 20 USD or 30 USD.

Sorya : Most journalists give you [money], right?

Chum Mei : Yes. I did not demand it from them; most of them voluntarily give it to me. They pity me.

Sorya : What are you doing everyday?

Chum Mei : I am working with [governmental] engineering team.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I was there instructing young mechanics fixing machines. When they don't understand, I explain to them and get them fix the machines. I don't do it myself because I am old now. My salary is 100 USD. This is only enough for my expense on electricity and water.

Sorya : Do you have nightmare or anything that make you feel uneasy or unable to sleep?

Chum Mei : It is called mental...

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : I want to the see the mental organization to see what has happened.

Sorya : Do you sleep well?

Chum Mei : It takes me long time before I can sleep because I think too much about my children who are unemployed, about not-enough living, and about the fact that we don't know how long we will live.

Sorya : Why?

Chum Mei : I am sad everyday because if I get shot, that would be the end.

Sorya : Who would shoot you?

Chum Mei : We cannot foresee it.

Sorya : Why do they want to shoot you?

Chum Mei : I do not know if they want to shoot me. It is my feeling.

Sorya : Why?

Chum Mei : I feel afraid because I am a witness of Tuol Sleng and give interviews to journalists everyday.

Sorya : Oh.

Chum Mei : Everyday *they* speak on the outside, and *they* must have something in their mind.

Sorya : You refer "*they*" as the former Khmer Rouge, right?

Chum Mei : Exactly.

Sorya : They want to kill you?

Chum Mei : You are right. That is what I mean. If I get shot, my wife and children would be miserable in their whole lives. See?

Sorya : If you suspect anybody, you can call police; or now that we have the United Nations which establishes Extraordinary Chambers located a bit beyond Pochentong;

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : You can report or call, they would come to protect you. If you are victim and you are suspicious of danger, they would come to protect you.

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : I will give you the phone number to contact.

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : It is good that you concerns about your security, but you should not be concerned too much. Please take the phone number from me, and report when you suspect...

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : When you suspect, you can call. Do you have headache?

Chum Mei : No.

Sorya : Do you have any dreams?

Chum Mei : Yes, I do.

Sorya : I mean the dream of that regime.

Chum Mei : of Tuol Sleng...

Sorya : What do you dream of?

Chum Mei : Sometimes I dream of being beaten and so on.
 Sorya : Oh.
 Chum Mei : Sometimes I scream until my current wife wake me up.
 Sorya : You feel like you were being beaten, right?
 Chum Mei : as if I was being beaten.
 Sorya : Was it happened long ago or recently?
 Chum Mei : Recently... [Note of Translator: Chum Mei is sobbing.]
 Sorya : Do you often go to Tuol Sleng?
 Chum Mei : Yes...[Note of Translator: sobbing]
 Sorya : Bou Meng, Vann Nath also go to Tuol Sleng?
 Chum Mei : Nat never goes [to Tuol Sleng]. I just met [Bou] Meng yesterday.
 Sorya : Have you ever asked him if he also feels threatened like you do?
 Chum Mei : The same.
 Sorya : It seems that he [Bou Meng] has never said of that concern?
 Chum Mei : Yes. My wife and children were all executed. Met each other only for a while. Met at 8 am, wife and children all were taken to be executed at 12 midnight.
 Sorya : How did you meet each other?
 Chum Mei : We met each other on the road.
 Sorya : You met each other on your way escaping the prison in 1979?
 Chum Mei : After escaping the prison, at Ang Snuol we met Vietnamese force who launched shooting at us. Half of the group, Pich, Kong fled to this side, while Eng living in Kampong Cham and I fled with my family. When we arrived at Srah Pol, while I went out to beg for food, my family and Eng were taken out to be killed in the night.
 Sorya : Do you feel happy seeing the court being established? Are you happy?
 Chum Mei : I feel relieved hearing Radio Free Asia broadcasting that the United Nations is preparing the prosecution. Somehow, I have a feeling fearing that I would be killed. However, I have another feeling that I should not fear death any more as I am now quite old, 75 years old.
 Sorya : As you used to be detained there, who do you think should be prosecuted?
 Chum Mei : The issue is a long story. As I told you, it is difficult to speak. It is really difficult.
 Sorya : You said that you feel relieved hearing Radio Free Asia broadcasting about the establishment of the courts. What will be the benefit of this court? What do they mean to you?
 Chum Mei : I am happy because the United Nations and the world, countries upholding rule of law,
 Sorya : Yes
 Chum Mei : [Note of translator: continued] are helping to make justice available for Cambodia. We lost three million people because we did not have the rule of law. I want the United Nations to seek justice for us and for our next generation so that they know how to select leaders, not of that kind – the kind that led to the loss of 3 million people.

Sorya : Given other people and people associated with the Khmer Rouge, do you think that there will be any hostility or conflict caused by the prosecution by sending their leaders to trials? Given the situation of Cambodia and of former members of the Khmer Rouge, do you have any concerns of fragile within the society in the future?

Chum Mei : To my assumption, there will be no such fragile because the dead has already died. Right?

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : There is no point for bearing angers.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Those losing siblings and/or parents to the regime want only justice, want rule of law to be prevailing in Cambodia for the next generation.

Sorya : When taking leaders of the Khmer Rouge to be prosecuted, [I am] afraid that former members of the regime might be angry at their neighbors or at other people who sent their relatives to trials. Do you think that such fragile amongst villagers would be available when one support the Khmer Rouge and the other support the trials? Do you think such conflict can exist?

Chum Mei : Such issue could exist. However, we have to explain to families of the living Khmer Rouge

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Explain to them that "this is not to take them to be executed, right?

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : and that during that time all were Khmer Rouge, except that one held senior positions and the other held low position."

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : But, I find it difficult to listen to Khieu Samphan, and I find it difficult to listen to Nuon Chea. Why was it difficult to listen to? I watched TV,

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : Khieu Samphan said that he did not know [what happened].

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : How could he not know? He was the state presidium and he said that he did not know. Is this reasonable? Please help me think about it. We are all the same human being; how come the state presidium did not know about the fact that more than 3 million people had died, and how come Nuon Chea president of the national assembly did not know. I totally don't believe them.

Sorya : When there are courts established to seek justice, do you think people like you whose wife was taken to be executed would feel relieved for the future?

Chum Mei : Yes, I believe we would feel relieved for the future. Because all others and I would not know what to demand but to rebuild the country, to strengthen our children in order to prevent them from falling into the same old path, the so-called path of prison without wall. So far we have not talked about law and, if we do not achieve this prosecution, it would be worse in the future – ones could kill another and one could create army.

Sorya : Of all the experiences you went through, which one would first come into your mind when you think about those past like when you eat or when you sleep?

Chum Mei : What I remember most is the watery gruel,

Sorya : Eating watery gruel.

Chum Mei : The watery gruel, the two ladles of gruel; the fact that I was being beating and that I begged for mercy and that they grabbed my hair; and the fact that I only met my wife a short while and that we separated forever.

Sorya : If you have a chance to meet Seng who beat you.

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : What would you say to him? Supposed that Seng is still alive and that now there exists the prosecution,

Chum Mei : Yes.

Sorya : What would you say to Seng?

Chum Mei : I want to ask Seng.

Sorya : Yes.

Chum Mei : "Why was I arrested? Why did you beat me? Who was behind you? Did you personally beat me when I did not give answers?" I want to ask these questions. I could not lift my hands to kill him because there was somebody behind him. It was not Seng alone doing that.

Sorya : Do you want to demand reparation from Seng or not?

Chum Mei : I don't want to demand any reparation.

Sorya : You do not demand reparation.

Chum Mei : Let this life go. I demand only the rule of law for my children.

Sorya : Supposed that Seng has just come back from distant place and that he has not known about the courts and about the process of the courts, what would you like to tell him?

Chum Mei : I want to tell him about the establishment of the courts to try the Khmer Rouge and explain that to him.

Sorya : What would you tell him? Will that scare him?

Chum Mei : I would tell him that, "Seng, you don't have to worry. It was not only you; there were a lot more people doing such job. The government pardons [to all people like you], except the important persons." That would be what I would tell him. There is also the second group who knows Seng. The second group clearly knew Seng, Tit, and Hor. There is another person.

Sorya : Is he called the second group?

Chum Mei : The person I mentioned was in the second group, and Seng who beat me was in the first group. His name was ... Laim or what I am not sure.

Sorya : You know that only the senior leaders would be prosecuted and that people like Seng would be alright. How do you know this? Through radio, newspaper, magazine or did somebody tell you?

Chum Mei : I don't know this issue. I heard radio announced that only the high-ranking persons [would be prosecuted].

Sorya : on Radio Free Asia?

Chum Mei : Yes, Radio Free Asia said like that.
Sorya : On behalf of the researchers, I want to ask if you have anything to give as a piece of history for the next generation. What would be your first word to tell?
Chum Mei : Like I said, the most important thing I want to have is the prosecution and the rule of law for the next generation. Right?
Sorya : Yes.
Chum Mei : What I tell you is the same like I tell the newspapers; that is what I want. One can do anything they want even to kill people, when there is no law. Law is very important. Another important aspect of law, supposed that you come to kill me,
Sorya : Yes.
Chum Mei : How can I kill you back? What do I have to kill you back? I want to ask you.
Sorya : Because you were already killed?
Chum Mei : If I had already been killed, who would take the vengeance to kill you back? How could my family kill you? Right?
Sorya : So, you mean that you want to have the law existed in order to prevent it [from happening again] in the future?
Chum Mei : Exactly. That is what I meant.
Sorya : Thank you so much.
Chum Mei : Thank you.