

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

DC-CAM'S MOBILE EDUCATION UNIT TRAVELS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS



Students Attending Book Distribution and Presentation

Introduction

On March 5, 2014, the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor and the Witnessing Justice Projects of the Documentation Center of Cambodia conducted a workshop and textbook distribution at the University of Management and Economics, Kratie province. The event began with *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* textbook distribution to 18,000 high school and university students and was followed by presentations focusing on the history of Democratic Kampuchea and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia.

DC-Cam hopes to use this outreach as a platform for disseminating information about the history of the Khmer Rouge and the trials of Khmer Rouge leaders. It is through this awareness and greater access to resources that the CTM Project hopes to preserve the memory of events and perpetrators during this period. The aim is to increase the understanding of justice and enhance individual and collective access to justice.

Book Distribution

In a large, covered gallery on the university campus, *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* was distributed to 1,800 university and high school students. The high school students were from Kratie Krong and Preah Moha Ksachtrei Yany Kosomak high schools. All had assembled to attend the textbook distribution ceremony and presentation about the history of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) and development of the trials of Khmer Rouge

leaders responsible for crimes committed during the DK period currently being conducted at the Extraordinary Chambers in Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). The event was presided over by H.E. Ms. Tun Sa-Im, Under-secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.



A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979) Textbooks

Writer Dy Khamboly was the first Cambodian author to compose a history of the DK, a 90-page textbook with historical photos. “This book is a powerful educational tool especially for members of the younger generation, people who were born after the Khmer Rouge regime,” said Theam Heng, Deputy Director of the Kratie Provincial Education Office. He further added that studying our history can bring better understanding of current times and governance of Cambodia; thus these students will be well-aware of this topic and better prepared to participate constructively in Cambodia’s future. Adding to that, H.E. Ms. Tun Sa-Im emphasized that education in the last three decades had been abolished. Children were forced to transport cattle wastes for fertilizer, while adults were required to do farming. In contrast, Cambodian students nowadays have full freedom to study, to live, and to pursue their goals. She encouraged participants to study hard for their future and to give back to their communities in the future. To engage the crowd, she asked the audience to identify the advantages of learning the history of Democratic Kampuchea. A female student emerged from the group and responded “it informs us about the miserable living conditions and struggling of the victims of the regime.” At the end of her speech, H.E. Ms. Sa-Im reminded the students of the two powerful slogans used by the Ministry of Education and the Documentation Center of Cambodia saying, “Learning about the history of Democratic Kampuchea is to prevent genocide” and “Talking about experiences during the Khmer Rouge regime is to promote reconciliation and to educate children about forgiveness and tolerance.”

Afterward, Mr. Dy Khamboly, himself a former student at these schools, took the floor and gave a brief introduction of DC-Cam’s genocide education program for development, peace and reconciliation in Cambodia. *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)* was

approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport to be integrated into the high school curriculum. To date, DC-Cam has distributed 500,000 copies of the textbook to virtually all high schools across the country and trained 3,000 high school teachers in teaching methodologies. He concluded that Cambodia is a post-conflict country and similar to a glass that dropped onto the floor and broke into small pieces. Nowadays, we are picking up those pieces, trying to put them back together. All Cambodian people including teachers and students have an obligation to help restore the broken glass. One of the mechanisms to reconstruct the country is to learn about the past atrocities.

Presentation

After the book distribution, the team provided presentations and discussions about Khmer Rouge history and the developments at the ECCC.

Dy Khamboly discussed Khmer Rouge history focusing on the events from 1975 to 1979. Starting on April 17, the hottest season in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge evacuated city dwellers to countryside to do the farming. The evacuations and Khmer Rouge's five-year plan dragged countless people to family separation, starvation, forced labor, and death. He encouraged students to become familiar with the bad examples set by the regime and avoid those mistakes in the future.

Lim Cheytoath then explained the ECCC. Because most students were not familiar with the accused, he included among his presentation slides photos of the senior Khmer Rouge leaders, Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary, and Ieng Thirith. Unfortunately, because of the brightness of the sun light, students could not see the photos in the presentation clearly. He then discussed the charges at the ECCC, the time frame of the trials, and jurisdiction. He concluded his presentation by discussing challenges facing the ECCC including financial issues and declining health of the accused.

Questions from Students

1. How was the ECCC established?
2. How can the ECCC provide justice for the victims?
3. Why does it take so long to sentence the Khmer Rouge leaders?
4. What was the Duch's confession before the Chambers? And what were the sentences?
5. Why did the United Nations not take actions against the Khmer Rouge?

6. What are the reasons for the DK purges in 1977-1978?
7. What will happen if the accused die before the ECCC delivers its judgment?
8. How did the Khmer Rouge come to power?
9. Why did the Khmer Rouge leaders kill their own people?

Reflections

Sovanarith, a first-year student majoring in Economics, said that he was happy to attend the event, not only because he received a copy of the book but also because he learned about the heinous history of Cambodia in the presentation made by Dy Khamboly.

Sothea, a grade 12th student said she knew very little about the Khmer Rouge tribunal. But she learned a lot from the event. She will share the knowledge with her friends and community. Her grandfather was killed during the Khmer Rouge because he was an educated man. In the future, she wants to study law and help to find justice for the people.

Rapporteur: Phalla Chea

Venue: University of Management and Economics

Attendee: University and high school students from Kratie Krong and Preah Moha Ksachtrei Yany Kosomak high schools

Speakers: H.E. Ms. Tun Sa-Im, Mr. Kim Thun, Mr. Dy Khamboly, Mr. Lim Cheytoath, and Mr. Theam Heng.

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