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KHMER ROUGE ARTS

**KR PHOTO:** KR Cadres .....Back Cover



Loung Ung

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Prakas No.0291 P.M99  
2 August 1999.

Photographs by the Documentation Center of  
Cambodia and Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

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Letter :

# Justice Brings about Food

It was recently asserted in the international media that: “At present, if we ask Cambodian people what is the major problem Cambodia is facing, the people will answer the flood (not the prosecution of senior Khmer Rouge leaders).” This answer is simply not true. During the Khmer Rouge regime when hundreds of thousands of people were starving to death and killed, no one said justice was essential. In a society without justice, people will suffer from hunger and violations of their rights, and such a society will not progress. For this reason, the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed completely.

In order to begin reforming Cambodia’s economic and financial systems and to prevent hunger and the disrespect for human life, political reform is indispensable. Political reform is possible only if the Khmer Rouge tribunal is established. However, we are now in a situation where both sides (the Cambodian government and the United Nations) are blaming each other for the failure of the negotiations over the tribunal, and this will not help Cambodia.

Both sides should vow to resolve their disagreements within the next three months. In fact, if the government and the UN really want to solve their problems, three months is too long for completing an acceptable draft of the amended Khmer Rouge law. Without giving a clear deadline, the problems will not be solved until the day when all of the Khmer Rouge leaders are dead.

Nearly two million Cambodians died during the Khmer Rouge regime due to starvation, disease, overwork and execution. The regime was one of the worst violators of human rights in the twentieth century. The Cambodian government and the United Nations must show their willingness to bring justice to Cambodia, and indeed all humanity, by redoubling their efforts toward constructive negotiations. If there is an indication that the two parties truly intend to find new ideas and are determined to arrive at a solution that ensures international standards, it will be a welcome boost for the future of Cambodia. Although our waterways keep flooding, people will not lack food if Cambodian society has genuine justice.

**Youk Chhang**  
**Editor-in-chief and Publisher**



# The Confession of Tep Sam An

*Kalyan Sann*



Tep Sam an

Soon after they took over Cambodia on April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge leaders launched a sweeping campaign against the police and soldiers of the Khmer Republic government. Their next targets were civil servants, merchants, students and scholars. The last group of people targeted for execution was the Khmer Rouge themselves, some of whom were working overseas. These latter individuals included Sao Phim, Hou Nim, Hou Yun, Phok Chhay, Meak Touch, Sean An, Van Piny, Isoup Ganthay, Youk Chantha, Huot Sambat and Sarin Chhak. All these activists were called to return to Cambodia for the alleged sake of constructing socialism. Upon their return, they were sent to Tuol Sleng prison and then executed.

Tep Sam An was one of the many activists who had struggled overseas for the cause of the Khmer Rouge revolution. He joined the government of the National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK) in 1970 as third secretary to the Cambodian Embassy in Algeria. In response to the invitation of Democratic Kampuchea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tep Sam An returned to Cambodia on October 18, 1976. He was arrested by Angkar and sent to S-21 on October 23. At the prison, he confessed to being an agent of the CIA and KGB. A brief summary of his confession follows.

Tep Sam An was born in 1936 in Phnom Penh, and went to work in 1959 when he finished his baccalaureate. He was first employed by the U.S. Embassy in Cambodia. He claimed he joined the CIA in 1949 through an American, Mer, who was an employee of the embassy. His responsibilities were to keep track of Khmer Rouge in Phnom Penh and encourage the involvement of the public against the government policy in favor of North

Vietnam. In 1960 Tep Sam An was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he knew quite important people who were part of a CIA network, including Ke Chheang (the son of Ke Meas, the chief of protocol for the head of state), Ky Soth (the son-in-law of Sirik Matak, who was director of political affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), major Tim Naing, who was stationed in Stung Treng, and Nut Chhoeum, director of Meatophum (the Motherland newspaper).

Despite his absence from the embassy, Tep Sam An still had access to Mer, who often told him about the coup plot in Cambodia and American plans to convert the whole of Indochina into its satellite as well as a military base for the war against the "communist world," specifically China.

In August 1966, Tep Sam An became a chancellor of the Cambodian Embassy in Egypt. This embassy was staffed by Sarin Chhak (ambassador), Ky Soth and Chem Snguon (advisors), Nguon Pitoravuth (first secretary), Ky Peng Horn (second secretary), Tep Sam An and Samsophon Buntha (chancellors), and Van Loeung and Meas Sareth (vice-chancellors). Following the coup of March 18, 1970, the staff were separated into two groups, one of which consisted of Sarin Chhak, Chem Snguon, Tep Sam An and Meas Sareth, who joined the NUFK. The other group, consisting of Ky Soth, Nguon Pitoravuth, Ky Peng Horn, Samphon Buntha and Van Loeung, joined the Lon Nol government. In addition, Tep Sam An contacted certain people including some Lebanese nationals (Adran, Tiober and Cenpiyer), a Frenchman, an Egyptian named Salah, a Khmer-Muslim studying in Egypt named Han Matt, and an American chargé d' affaires named Christopher. Tep Sam An claimed that these men were CIA agents who contributed to the destruction of the NUFK government.

### The Mission in North Korea

In September 1970, Tep Sam An completed his mission in Egypt and was designated as chancellor of the NUFK's embassy in Pyong Yang, North Korea, where he managed to contact representatives from 16 countries, including India, Egypt, Iraq, Cuba, Romania, Czechoslovakia, East German, Indonesia, the Soviet Union, and France. Tep Sam An took every opportunity to inform those representatives about Cambodia, saying that "the war the Khmer Rouge are staging is being led by no heroes or cadres like the abbreviation 'NUFK' suggests." He requested that the representatives consider the war in Cambodia to be a war between the U.S. and the Khmer Rouge. If the U.S. failed, the Khmer Rouge would come to power and Cambodia would absolutely become a communist regime. Thus Tep Sam An believed that the representatives of all countries would lose their sympathy for the Khmer Rouge and would report to their respective governments, which would then change their positions and oppose the Khmer Rouge.

In the meantime, Tep Sam An also had close connections with two other people—Michel and Igor. Michel was a CIA agent spying in North Korea, while Igor was a first lieutenant in the Soviet Navy, who enticed Tep Sam An to join the KGB and told him to persuade NUFK fighters abroad to stop their struggle because they could not beat the U.S.

In April 1972, Tep Sam An asked to be transferred to Beijing. He claimed that besides the tasks of the front, he was required to work for the CIA and KGB. For the CIA, he was supposed to carry out general activities against the Khmer Rouge, while for the KGB, he had to cause a breakup among members of the front and persuade Cambodians abroad to stop fighting.

### The Mission in Beijing, China

Soon after arriving in Beijing, Tep Sam An managed to meet with Ke Chheang, Tim Naing, Nut Chhoeum and Koam Leang Hak. Ke Chheang was serving as chief of protocol and Tim Naing as a bodyguard of the head of state. The two burrowed within the house of

the head of state to eavesdrop on any political plans he might have, report on them to the French embassy in Beijing, and to commit sabotage. Nut Chhoeum and Tep Sam An mingled with the public. Koam Leang Hak served as a KGB agent.

In June 1973, the NUFK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs designated Tep Sam An as third secretary of the Cambodian embassy in Algeria, where Chem Snguon served as the Cambodian ambassador.

When the Khmer Rouge gained victory, Tep Sam An used several strategies to provoke the diplomatic corps and Cambodians to hate Democratic Kampuchea, by suggesting that Cambodia was a satellite of China, had no independence, and adhered to absolutism. Its people had no freedom and were facing famine, lacked clothes, medicine, and shelter, and were separated from their families. Angkar followed party-ism and family-ism. Tep Sam An hoped that by so doing, he would isolate the Khmer Rouge from the world.

### The Fate of Tep Sam An and his Friends

Early in 1973 the NUFK government identified Ke Chheang as a CIA agent. He was detained for a period of time, but eventually released. In February 1973 Ke Chheang fled to Thailand. In 1974, knowing that Lon Nol could not succeed, Tim Naing decided to resettle his family in France. Nut Chhoeum, sensing no way to return, fled to Hong Kong in September 1975. As for Koam Leang Hak, he was arrested by Angkar and forced to confess in January 1973. However, he was released in July of the same year. He then brought his family to resettle in Moscow. Among his friends, Tep Sam An was the only one who was arrested and sent to S-21 for interrogation.

In February 1976, Tep Sam An received a telegram from the DK Ministry of Foreign Affairs asking Cambodian embassy staff and their families abroad to come back for "education." The telegram specified that foreign spouses were not allowed to come along. Therefore, Tep Sam An came alone, leaving his Egyptian wife and three children in Egypt.

Tep Sam An arrived in Cambodia on October 18,

1976 at 11 a.m. He stayed at Office K-15 until the 23rd when Angkar arrested him.

At the detention center, a Khmer Rouge cadre named Thong of Group 8 interrogated him. The Documentation Center of Cambodia holds three confessions of Tep Sam An with different dates of interrogation. The first dossier is 16 pages long and dated February 4-14, 1977. It is entitled “International Situation Concerning Cambodia.” The second dossier of 74 pages is dated February 15-16, 1977, and concerns “The Plots of the U.S. and Soviets against Cambodia.”

The third dossier, dated February 23-25, 1977, focuses on the “History of Work and Traitorous Activities of Tep Sam An.”

Tep Sam An’s father’s name was Tep Choeun. His mother’s name was Saom Sam. His wife Hodahasan, was Egyptian. Tep Sam An was smashed after being accused of committing treason against the revolution, and being an agent of the CIA and KGB.

*Kalyan Sann is a staff-writer of the Searching for the Truth magazine.*

## Crossing the Khmer Rouge-Controlled Area: It Sarin’s Memoirs

April 17-18, 1972

We slept under a small abandoned farm cottage. A chief of the “front” militiamen, who was responsible for our security and journey, took a plastic sheet and spread it on the ground. It is a quiet night. Numerous lightning bugs are flying here and there. The chief asks to see if we have any hidden weapons or radio. He told us not to smoke to avoid being a target of the “enemy.” We are surrounded by six to seven militiamen who are working in shifts.

When the morning comes, April 18 at 5 a.m., the militiamen escort us to another village, approximately seven or eight kilometers from the market of Kantuot, in the province of Kandal. Early rains soak the earth. There we meet another group of twenty militiamen preparing food. We rush in and shake hands with all of the militiamen to show our “revolutionary fraternity.” “Militia comrades” invite us to join them in their meal. They pay much attention to us. Some express unsatisfactory feelings toward us, seeming displeased, perhaps by the way we dress or behave. They never became friendly. We also keep “the secret,” never asking because a “political commissioner,” who is burrowing in Phnom Penh and escorts us, has reminded us to avoid telling anyone our real positions. We meet



Khieu Samphan in the Liberated Zone, 1972

with the political commissar on the night of April 17, 1972, but we do not know his name or his role. Keeping things secret in all places and under all circumstances is a discipline we have received from the Khmer Rouge's Angkar along the way.

At 5 p.m., we are ready to move on. Another group of militiamen is supposed to escort us along with the chief of the village. An eavesdropper riding a bicycle comes and tells the commissioner that the way ahead has already been paved for us. We then depart with the commissar. Along the way there is no sign of danger. At 7 p.m., we cross National Road 2, in the vicinity of an area east of Kantuot Market. But we have no idea where it is located, since we have never known the geographic features of the region. Six to seven militiamen escort us across the road and said goodbye to us. They

turn back.

At 8 p.m., we enter another village, walking across high dikes full of palm trees and Sangke plants. A villager shows us the way. We have no idea of where we are being escorted to. Our new adventure is taking shape, like the old saying, "Walking into a cave of tigers." However, we are confident in our ability to slip through and of our personal, deep sympathy for the nation.

In addition to suffering invasions by the Viet-Cong and North Vietnam, we are even more enraged by the way the Khmer Rouge conspired with both of them.

In the middle of the night we reach Phsa Skun, Tonle Bati area. We are exhausted since it is our first time to walk such a long way—six to seven hours. The chief makes a room for us under a tiny abandoned Chinese-style cottage. We enjoy a long sleep there that night.

**April 19-20, 1972**

Our first impression in the morning is the tranquility of the scene. Several large Chinese-style houses are abandoned. There are only seven to eight families who have decided to remain. The front chief is rather tall and handsome. He is smoking a handmade cigarette in a relaxed manner. We are skeptical about his involvement with the Khmer Rouge, Viet-Cong and North Vietnam, and his ignorance of trading at the markets in Kantuot and Phnom Penh. Is he waiting for a chance to become a middleman of the lucrative business with Angkar?

At 6 a.m. we are asked to have breakfast at a large deserted house where we meet and exchange courtesies with the regimental commanders of a hundred-member unit, the commander of a battalion, and two political commissioners. All the comrades are very happy with our presence. One of the political commissioners is a former schoolteacher. He passes me a pack of cigarettes with the "Gold Leaf" trademark. He keeps talking with us along the way. I also express my thanks to him and wait for more questions. Then he turns to his autobiography. He says he is a former schoolteacher who has been "with the revolutionary movement" for quite a



long time. The events of March 18, 1970 forced him to flee into the jungle. The comrade goes on to say that his younger brother was also a secondary schoolteacher and joined the revolutionary forces just four months ago.

Another man, probably the political commissioner of a “hundred-member unit,” talks with us about Prince Sihanouk. Perhaps it is because he thinks that I have really been a core member of the Khmer Rouge working in Phnom Penh and have been “with the struggle movement” with him since the reign of Sihanouk that he hints, “Angkar will not allow Sihanouk to return to Cambodia now because when he comes, there is no doubt that people would be fond of him, while we will experience emptiness.”

I was surprised and wondered why the Khmer Rouge, who were communists, and Prince Sihanouk, who was a feudal prince, were able to join forces in the first place. We dared not ask him about anything relating to the front, the government of NUFK, the Viet-Cong or North Vietnam.

It was because we wanted to know about the Khmer issue and because we used to suffer under the Khmer Rouge alliance with the Viet-Cong and North Vietnam to kill Cambodians that we were taking a risk and acting like an insect flying into the burning fire with no weapon. We had a willingness to bend to the real situation and to love what belongs to the Khmer, in the way that Chhouk Meng Mao, a clean hero of “middle Khmer” drops his tears at the thought of the “Khmer Soul.”

When seeing the comrade presenting the “issue of Sihanouk” to me, comrade commissioner comes and asks the comrade to talk secretly, and probably not to go on with his story. It might or might not be true when he whispers, “I am not a ‘core’ member of the Khmer Rouge.”

At 4 p.m., two people come with two bicycles to give us a lift to Khna Tbeng village, about one and one half kilometers from the market of Skun. Along the way, two fighter planes—T-28s—are returning from their bombing runs.

Tranquility also prevails in Khna Tbeng village.

Villagers are rarely seen walking. A number of roof tiles are split and scattered by the bombings. Walls are riddled with bullets. Under two tile-roofed houses, we see a group of about fifty Khmer Rouge soldiers preparing a meal along with four female combatants, whom we presume to be medics. They are soldiers of Region 15.

We are warmly welcomed by the comrade commanders with cakes and watermelons. After eating, we are asked about the situation in Phnom Penh, about the soldiers of the Khmer Republic as well as the U.S. Our answer is that there are no American troops in Phnom Penh. This answer fails to convince them. Taking the opportunity, they express their grudge—their revolutionary grudge—toward the Khmer Republic. They say, “American running dogs are imperialists, capitalists, military junta and oppressors.” Seeing that we do not change our expressions, those comrades stop preaching.

#### April 20, 1972

When the morning comes, another “messenger” is slated to escort us. We forgot to mention that comrade political commissioners of Phnom Penh have escorted us up to Skun, Bati, where they turned back to Phnom Penh City. It is our good fortune to take a motorcycle—a Honda. We pass a number of tiny villages and ride along the Phnom Penh-Kampot railroad. Comrade messenger tells us that we have already entered Takeo territories. Life in the villages is active again. Along the way we see the existing military trenches. Peasants are farming as usual, while vendors are selling cakes along the way. At 11 a.m., we cross National Road 3 next to a road leading to Boset district.

(Continued in the October 2003 issue)

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*It Sarin was the commander of a Khmer Rouge military mobile unit of the special zone. Earlier, he had been a military officer of the Khmer Republic. He spent nine months with the Khmer Rouge only to be accused by Angkar of spying. He wrote this memoir in Phnom Penh on 28 July 1973 before he was captured and executed.*

# Excerpts from the Confession of Tuon Sokh Phala

*Sophearith Chuong*

**Continued from the September 2002 issue  
Preparation of the Base against the Revolution at  
Office S-8 and Other Networks**



Tuon Sokh Phala before 1975

Beginning in July 1975, Tuon Sokh Phala worked in the Ministry of Public Affairs headed by Phin. First, Phin designated him as supervisor of the Tonle Bassac Opera, where he monitored about 20 carpenters and masons. Tuon's job was to renovate the state's houses and buildings under the direction of Angkar. By the end of November 1975, Phin called Tuon to come back to Office S-8 to discuss the reconstruction of Chroy Changva bridge. A month later Phin asked Phuk Ky to work with Tuon.

On January 1, 1976 Phin assigned Tuon to fulfill a task at the Kirirom hydropower facility. Tuon worked there until May 1976, when he returned to S-8. At Office S-8 there were only Mai Sakhan, Men Nitho and Phuk Ky.

Next, Tuon joined Mai Sakhan to prepare for the expansion of their anti-revolution forces. A consensus was reached that efforts had to be made to persuade and provide education to workers who had not yet been strongly opposed to the revolution and who had not understood the essence of the revolution. Doing so would give them an opportunity to take a close look at the workers and technicians to identify who could be enticed in order to expand their forces as much as possible. Phin went to Office S-8, contacting Mai Sakhan directly, who once claimed, "Legally, brother Phin was a chief

of the ministry, so the masses paid attention to his speech and activities."

Phin was not able to be closely involved with the daily activities of building forces, but he could provide possibilities for anti-revolutionary elements to act. Thus Phin deployed core members in different places to grasp hold of the masses. Phin appointed Tuon Phalla as supervisor of Technical Office S-8, placed Phuk Ky on the Blacksmith Committee, Men Nitho on the committee of the Electricity Technical School of Toek Thla, and Mai Sakhan as a human resource officer of S-8. While Tuon was working to recruit more forces, in October 1977 Mai Sakhan disappeared without explanation. This made Tuon very worried about himself. He stopped his activities. As for Phin, he spent two or three months thinking alone in a room and going nowhere.

A few days later, Phin asked Tuon to meet him and said, "The situation at the office is evolving negatively. On the face of it, Mai Sakhan was taken away by Angkar. Therefore, it will require more vigilance and flexibility to go on with our work; otherwise, we will achieve nothing in the end and we will die together."

Phin made direct contacts outside the ministry. Since the country was liberated in 1975, Phin had been in close contact with Koy Thuon, aka Khuon (Democratic Kampuchea's minister of commerce). Khuon made great efforts to resolve several problems for Phin's ministry, provided all kinds of equipment, and promoted the improved livelihood of S-8, as well as his own family. By the end of 1975, Phin assigned Men Nitho to work on a committee that collected loot in the name of a representative of the Ministry of Public Affairs. The committee was under the management of the Ministry of Commerce, which in turn was under the chairmanship



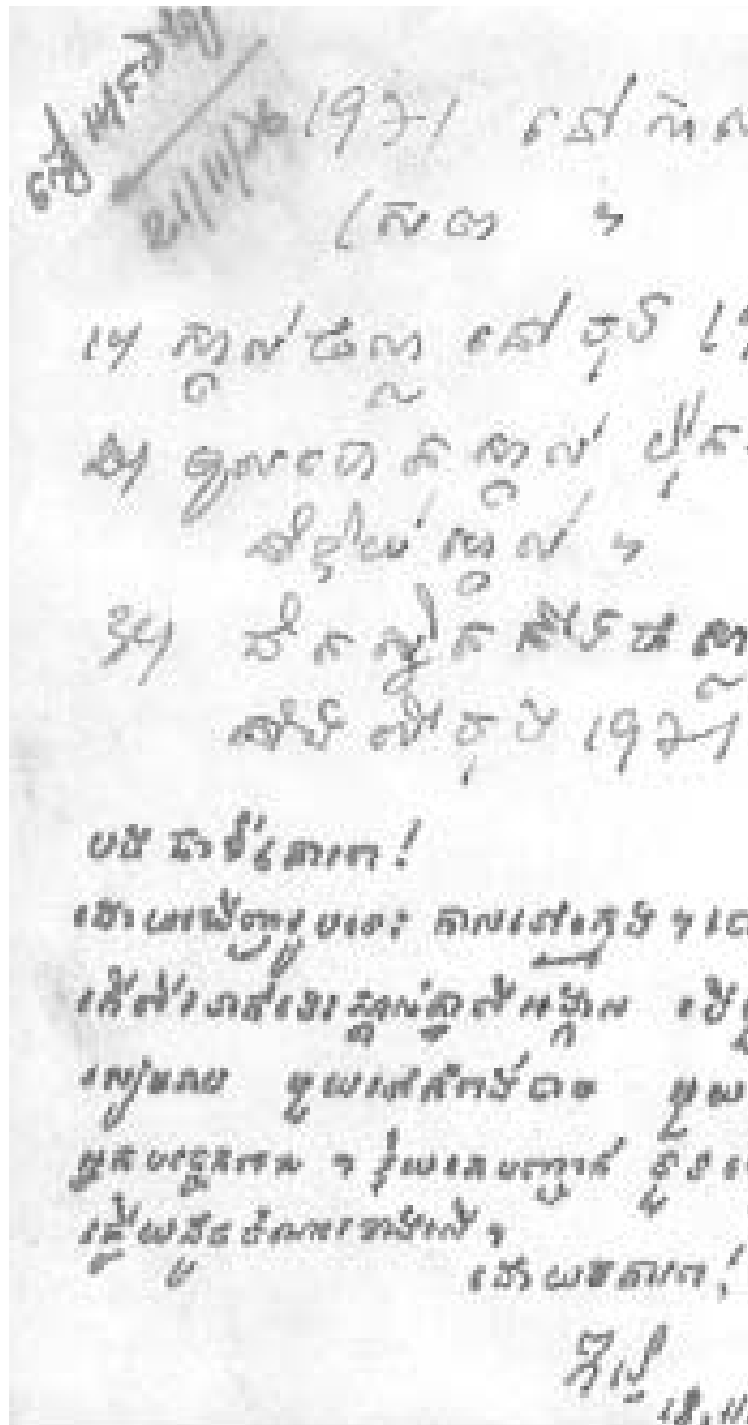
of Khuon. Men Nitho, a member of the committee, was able to check every single house to see if he could make broader connections. Phin made Men Nitho a messenger and had him make contact with Khuon. For other tasks that were secret in nature, Phin asked Touk, his own wife, to serve a messenger.

Khuon used Tin Kim Hong as a messenger to contact Phin. Tin Kim Hong was one of Khuon's students at Sihanouk High School in Kampong Cham. After the liberation, Khuon asked Tin to come and assist him in the Ministry of Commerce. The two tried not to meet each other directly to avoid suspicion. However, they met during official ceremonies.

In 1975 Phin asked Tuon to meet with Chakrei (alias Mean, secretary of Division 170). He did so twice. In September 1975, Tuon met with Chakrei to discuss common tasks. Nothing secret was discussed. Another meeting took place in November 1975, when Tuon brought a letter from Khieu (Son Sen) asking Chakrei to provide forces to clean the Tonle Bassac Opera in anticipation of Prince Sihanouk's return. During the second (and last) meeting, Tuon brought two letters. One requested materials for construction, and the other one was marked "secret." Phin told Tuon that this letter had to be handed over to Chakrei, and in the event his absence, was to be returned to Phin. Phin and Chakrei were conspiring to overthrow the revolution. Chakrei's division was in charge of planning the coup, which was scheduled to take place on the CPK's Anniversary (September 30, 1976).

The plot was supposed to be carried out during the ceremony, when Chakrei's soldiers were to throw grenades to cause chaos at the scene (close to the stadium). Then his forces at Chba Ampeou were supposed to rush into Phnom Penh on the pretext that they were coming to protect Angkar. In reality, they were about to rush into the stadium in an attempt to smash the party's leadership and announce a new Cambodian government. However, this plot was aborted.

The purported traitorous activities of Phin were revealed. Angkar now knew and Chakrei was arrested. In October 1976 Mai Sakhan was also arrested. Phin then changed his plot, assigning Peou Va and his comrades to be ready to hijack a plane to Thailand on December 24, 1976. But they failed and Peou Va and



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Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

his connections were arrested.

**Arrest and Smashing of Network Elements in Connection with Anti-revolutionary Activities**

Tuon Phalla’s confession documents discuss his “traitorous” activities, letters to Angkar, work for the CIA, conspiracy against the revolution at S-8, his wife’s joining the CIA, the traitorous activities of Phin, the relationship between Tuon Sokh Phalla and Khuon, the connections between Khuon and Phok Chhay, and the communications between Phin and Sot and among Phin, Set, and Muon in the plot to hijack an airplane.

It appears that Tuon was interrogated six times based on the six documents found that were entitled “Confession of Tuon Sokh Phalla aka Koeun.” Certain individuals implicated by his answers were arrested and smashed, including his wife. Tuon was arrested on January 1, 1977 and smashed on March 8, 1977. His wife, Tuon Chandara, was arrested on April 25, 1977 and smashed on November 23, 1977. Men Nitho was arrested on January 1, 1977 and smashed on May 12, 1977. Chhim Sophon aka Touch, the wife of Touch Phoeun, was arrested on March 2, 1977 and smashed on May 14, 1977. Phok Chhay was caught on March 14, 1977 and smashed on July 6, 1977.

The following individuals are those whose dates of smashing were not noted: Khuon (Koy Thuon), arrested on January 25, 1977; Phin (Tauch Phoeun), arrested on February 17, 1977; Mai Sakhon aka Sam, arrested on October 19, 1977; and Chan Chakrei aka Mean, arrested on May 19, 1976. Which of those whose names appear on these confessions were killed, and what happened to the rest of Tuon’s family remain to be researched.

When he was detained at S-21, Tuon was not in doubt about his future. He believed that Angkar had enough reason for arresting him and bringing him to Santebal. During the interrogation sessions, he was showered with a great number of questions, making him nervous. Tuon’s first confession seems to be rather tumultuous. He didn’t understand several points until the day he was smashed. He faithfully informed Angkar, “What I regret is the fact that I will never have the chance to join the socialist revolution. Yes, before I did so.”

There is a note on the back of a photograph of Tuon Sokh Phalla and Nuon Khoeun, reading:

“Propose Angkar’s examination, November 21, 1976. The photo was taken at the Art Performance Hall 1971. 1) [Khoeun] got to know Phalla at the end of 1970. 2) Because he knew Pok Than, who then introduced him to [Phalla]. 3) [He] became close with Phalla from the end of 1971.” Respected Brother! How could they get to know each other as one was a teacher in Kampong Cham Province, while the other was a technician. Someone has been ordered to confirm Nuon Khoeun, but his response was the same as mentioned above. Regards, Duch. November 18, 1976.” On the confession of Tuon Sokh Phalla, there is a note reading “1) Propose a copy. 2) Please ask him according to what I have already noted inside, February 26, 1977.” The inside note reads, “Ask contemptible Khoeun more about Phok Chhay’s information. Ask contemptible Phalla why he knew that Phak Chhay joined the CIA? Evidence?”

In addition to the above notes, there are also short messages on the relations between Toun Sokh Phalla and Khuon.

Toun Sokh Phalla was interrogated by Group I in which Oeun Laot was the interrogator and Tha was the stenographer. The confessions bear the victim’s thumb-print.

*Sophearith Chuong is a staff-writer of the Searching for the Truth magazine.*



## List of Foreigners Smashed at S-21

*Prepared by Nean Yin*

(Continued from the August 2003 issue)

No.	Name	Nationality	Occupation	Place of Arrest	Date of Entry	Date of Execution
127	Nguyen Thu Thieng	Vietnamese	Binh Nhi bandit	Kampongsom	April 18, 1978	April 28, 1978
128	Nguyen Thi Bap (F)	Vietnamese	People	Ba Cuk	April 19, 1978	April 28, 1978
129	Pham Van Vo	Vietnamese	People	Ba Cuk	April 22, 1978	April 28, 1978
130	Do Van Phu	Vietnamese	People	Ba Cuk	April 22, 1978	April 28, 1978
131	Nguyen Van Va	Vietnamese	People	Ba Cuk	April 22, 1978	April 28, 1978
132	Do Van Tong	Vietnamese	People	Ba Cuk	April 22, 1976	April 28, 1978
133	Phu Vuc Tim	Vietnamese	People	Kampongsom	April 18, 1978	April 28, 1978
134	Nguyen Van Nhuc	Vietnamese	Ex-Thieuky	Duk Ve	April 26, 1978	April 28, 1978
135	Tran Van Xuan	Vietnamese	First lieutenant	Mokva	March 4, 1978	April 28, 1978
136	Nguyen Thi Thoi (F)	Vietnamese	People	?	? January-1978	April 28, 1978
137	Nguyen Thi Sang	?	?	?	?	April 28, 1978
138	Nguyen Thi Bach Heu (F)	Vietnamese	Singer	KampongSom	April 1, 1978	April 30, 1978
139	Nguyen Thi Lan	Vietnamese	Wife of Nguyen Van Dak		Svay Rieng	April 27, 1978 April 30, 1978
140	Nguyen Thi Nhien	Vietnamese	Student	Svay Rieng	April 28, 1978	April 30, 1978
141	Nguyen Thi Mom	Vietnamese	Viet-Cong soldier	Southwest	?	April 30, 1978
142	Nguyen Thi Vang (F)	Vietnamese	Spy	Svay Rieng	?	April 21, 1978
143	Phan Thi Ny	Vietnamese	Spy	Svay Rieng	?	April 21, 1978
144	Vo THi Thuy (F)	Vietnamese	Spy	Kampot	?	April 21, 1978
145	Tran Thi Le Xuan (F)	Vietnamese	Spy	Kampot	?	April 21, 1978
146	Nam Sien Meng (F)	Vietnamese	Spy	Kampot	?	April 21, 1978
147	Pham Thi Lang(F)	Vietnamese	Spy	Kampot	?	April 21, 1978
148	Danh Heng	Vietnamese	Monk	?	Nov 11, 1976	May 12, 1977
149	Dach So Re	Vietnamese	People	?	Dec 10, 1976	May 12, 1977
150	Chao Vie	Vietnamese	?	?	May 6, 1977	May 7, 1977
151	Nguyen Chan Binh	Vietnamese	Spy	Vietnam	May 31, 1977	Oct 20, 1977
152	Chan Ly	Vietnamese	Spy	Vietnam	May 31, 1977	Oct 20, 1977

(Continued in the October 2002 issue)

*Nean Yin is the team leader of the Microfilm Project of the Documentation Center of Cambodia.*





S-21 prisoner



# Khmer Rouge Guerilla Training

(Document D21931)

(Continued from the August issue)

## 54) Departing for an Attack

Before departing for an attack, the squad chief has to obey the group chief or group deputy chief in relation to how he orders the attack to begin. The squad chief looks after six men, while his deputy controls six men and listens to the chief regarding the following: how many weapons do we have? What are they? How much ammunition do we have? How many grenades? What kind?

## 55) Moving to the Target in Search of Enemies

The group looks at the left and right corners. When encountering the enemy, the guide must signal and then we follow. The group and squad have to catch up to the guide before opening fire. Two squads move forward and exchange fire.

## 56) Changing Places

In war, it is common to change places because sometimes we withdraw, and sometimes we chase the enemy or fire at the enemy at a short distance. Before changing places, one has to consider one's position in advance.

There are four ways to think about it:

- 1) Where?
- 2) Through where?
- 3) When?
- 4) How?

### Explanation:

1) "Where" means to find a big mound that can protect our bodies.

2) "Through where" means when we find a big tree or big mound, we have to find a way out. Move in or out of the field or forest in a way that the enemy cannot see us.

3) "When" means that when we see the way out at a time when the enemy is showering fire at us, wait until the fire is minimized before leaving.

4) "How" means that when we have a way out, we can either creep or crawl. In case our target is far away, we must take four or five steps before lying down.

Before moving from one place to another, the four points mentioned above should be considered.

## 57) Hiding Ourselves

Hiding ourselves is the main warring method to avoid being seen by enemies and their pilots, while we can see them easily.

### There are five ways to hide:

- 1) Knowing our chief/commander's place
- 2) Knowing the target of the enemy who is firing
- 3) Escaping from the enemy's bullets
- 4) Hiding from pilots
- 5) Knowing the way back and the way in. Do not

turn back right away without looking at the left and right corners. One squad moves back and the other two fire.

## 58) Time In and Out

Deploy soldiers before coming in or going out. Two men must be deployed to stand facing the left, the right, and the back. There must be a space of either 50 m or 100 m between the two.

## 59) Withdrawing from an Attack

After withdrawing from the an attack, the chief has to whistle, signaling his men to regroup to review equipment—lost or gained—and then report to the group chief. The meeting must be held 100 m from each squad. Before getting involved in a struggle, the chief is required to tell his men where to withdraw and rejoin in any place that is quiet and far from the enemy.

## 60) Reporting our Withdrawal

- 1) When?
- 2) Why?
- 3) How many of us died?
- 4) How many of us are wounded?
- 5) How many weapons destroyed? What are they?
- 6) How much ammunition have we used?

- 7) How many hand grenades have we used?
- 8) What is the balance?
- 9) Other equipment?

The group chief is required to report to the zone military chief.

**61) Reporting on the Enemy’s Withdrawal**

- 1) Where did the struggle against the enemy take place?
- 2) Which day?
- 3) What time?
- 4) When did they withdraw?
- 5) Why?
- 6) How many of them were killed?
- 7) How many weapons have we captured from them? What kinds?
- 8) How many hand grenades? What are they?
- 9) How much ammunition have we seized ? What are they?
- 10) Other equipment?

**62) Moving**

When moving, you must follow orders. Moving here and there, forward and backward is not allowed. The men are supposed to obey their chiefs, who is to tell their men the following:

- 1) When moving, troops must look to the right and left corners and other directions. No speaking. No smoking or burning at night.
- 2) When traveling a long distance, there must be a stop for each four kilometers walked. Pause for fifteen minutes and then continue. If smoking cannot be avoided, [we] must ask soldiers to guard one or two kilometers from where the smoking occurred.

**63) Crossing Creeks and Streams**

Each group has to have three or four long-handled knives to cut trees or other things along with a hoe or spade to place machine guns.

- 1) When encountering a creek, stream or river, which is deep and without a bridge, while we are carrying heavy things and cannot swim, we must find bamboo or wood to make a raft. Without these, it’s possible to get wild vines and weave them into a one-Hat width rope

in combination with four wooden bars of the same size as the rope. Then assign a soldier to swim to the other side of the river. He takes one side of the rope and secures it to a big tree.

- 2) When we are fighting and want to capture a location from the enemy, leave two squads and let one squad move on the water, bringing along an end of the rope to secure at the other side of the creek as said earlier. After that we have to swim one after another. The first squad, after crossing the river, has to start a fire, making time for the other squads to swim across. When all men manage to reach the other side, we must deploy accordingly.

**64) Settlement (Making Camp)**

The chief has to determine whether to camp where there is a jungle, whether to rest for a day or night, and whether the place has just been captured from the enemy. Before settling in, make sure that the entry and exit are accessible and patrolled all around. The shelter should be a distance of four to five kilometers from the battlefield. Not many villagers should be informed about this; otherwise, when captured, they would be interrogated about our position. Entering villages and eating there are permitted. Before settling in, we are required to ask the villagers for details about the location.

- 1) How far is it from the enemy?
- 2) Is there water?
- 3) Which shortcut to take—through the railway or a simple path?

It is suggested that we stop at any place with jungle and water. And we must remind ourselves that where we have captured a place from the enemy, we are required to look around to make sure that buried weapons do not exist and that no enemy is waiting to catch our chief. Assign soldiers to guard facing all directions. When the settlement is finished, please let the general chief be informed so that he knows our struggle.

**65) Reporting on the Struggle**

- 1) Weapons taken from the enemy
- 2) Direct the machine guns at the enemy’s exit
- 3) The number of enemies killed



- 4) The number of enemies arrested
- 5) The number of weapons seized from the enemy
- 6) Ammunition taken from the enemy
- 7) Equipment taken from the enemy
- 8) The number of our men killed
- 9) Request for more ammunition
- 10) Request for reinforcements
- 11) Request for more grenades
- 12) Request for supporting weapons.

**66) Climbing Mountains**

When we are fighting with enemies in the moun-tains, we must separate while we are at the foot of the mountains. One squad is to keep fighting, while the other two move up at the left and right corners. Search for vines to weave into a big rope. One man is supposed to take the rope up. If the mountain is full of rocks, the men have to climb them. When the first man has reached the peak, he is required to secure the rope to a big tree. And the rest below start moving up, using the rope. When all men manage to get to the top, others must be deployed to re-inforce the first group.

**67) Escaping from the Enemy**

If the enemy surrounds us while we are eating or sleeping, the chief has to be spiritually strong, shouting for our forces to separate into three sub-groups to counterattack the enemy. If we cannot curb the enemy, a whistle must be blown to signal our men to break through, meaning that the group in the north rushes to the north, the south rushes to the south, the left rushes to the left and the right rushes to the right simultaneously.

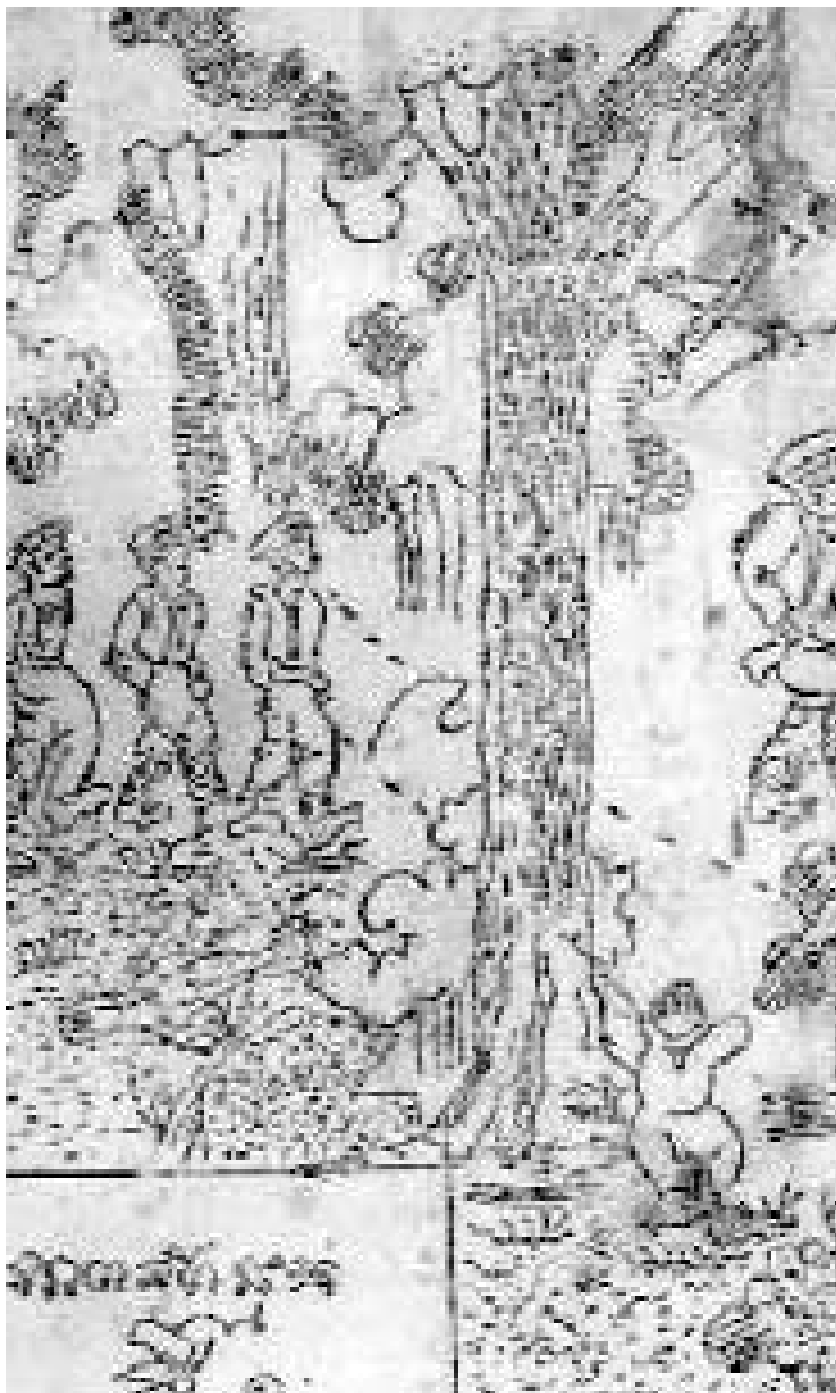
Weapons are to be ready and the grenade throwers have to take out the pins and throw the grenades at the enemy. Then shout, “Thrust! Thrust!” to scarce the enemy and rush in to break through.

If we have six men, we must separate into two groups. When we have two, we have to

rush together to make a break. Do not panic.

**Ambush Unit**

Ambush units must have at least thirteen members, one of whom is a chief, responsible for all aspects. Ensure the availability of good weapons, daggers, grenades, sacks of rice and pots for cooking in a quiet forest. Entering villages and making our presence known to



villagers is not allowed.

1) Learn how to ambush; know how to creep or crawl, aim the gun for an effective shot, know how to estimate the speed of a bullet in reaching its target, and adhere to the customary rules of integrity and justice.

2) When we more or less know which way the



enemies are exiting, it is suggested that we find a thick forest to hide ourselves and be ready for an attack. When we find we are in a good position to fight the enemies, we must storm attack to make them panic-stricken. When they realize this, we have to escape and run to fight them from the front to make sure that they are separated. But even if a group of them are turning back, we are required to chase them. Do not let them escape.

3) When seeing enemies resting or having a meal, we must secretly crawl in closer and closer so that we can easily shoot or throw grenades without them knowing. We have to rush in and seize equipment. Don't be scared of death. Do whatever needs to be done to destroy them.

4) When seeing enemies in a state of vigilance, it is not advisable to do anything to them. Wait until they move further and become tired. When they think that they are away from danger, we have to open fire. Another point, when we find enemies carrying their wounded members or corpses, we must keep track and shoot them until the end.

5) Try to dig holes in the road, cut off bridges, wiretap, and ambush trucks or horses ridden by enemies. Whether we succeed or fail, we have to do this to devastate them.

6) Try to find a straight path, dig trenches, and install machineguns to fire at enemies in queues. In front of the machineguns, there must be punji pits covered with grasses along both sides of the road. When we fire at the enemies, they will escape by crawling or creeping. So, of course, they have to be killed this way. The same applies to trucks or ox-carts. When we open fire, they will try to escape by jumping down and then hit the standing stakes.

7) Every ambush has to be conducted this way to make the enemies very scared of us. They don't know where we are and why they always meet us like this. **End**



## Reclaiming the National Soul of Cambodia Through the Great Victory of April 17, 1975

(A summary of D21711)

*On April 15, 1976 Democratic Kampuchea celebrated the first anniversary of its great victory. Seizing an opportunity, the leadership of Democratic Kampuchea published a message to honor the occasion. The message talked about the victory as both a military triumph and the reclaiming of Cambodia's national soul, which had been lost to the feudal-capitalists, imperialists and colonialists.*

Through such a great victory of April 17, 1975, we managed to reclaim our national soul, which was lost and deviated from a thousand years ago. "Our nation" refers to the Cambodian nation and the people of Cambodia, including the Khmer and other ethnic minorities living on our country's soil, specifically in the northeast. The "Cambodian nation" is a combination of such elements, including their territories, economy, traditions, culture, literature, [and] arts.

Most aspects of the genuine nature of Cambodia were destroyed. Its whole essence vanished, leaving only an empty shell. Each of us still says Cambodia, ethnic Khmer, Tumpoun, Charay, Kachak, Laotian, Thai, Kuoy, and so on in rural areas. We say we are Khmer. It is just an empty shell. However, its real essence, referred to as our national soul, vanished. The feudal class had no national soul, no love of the country, no protection of the territory, no satisfaction in their land. They instead thought of what belonged to foreigners or imperialists. This is what we call losing national soul. Soul of other sorts came in with a label of Cambodia. However, the essence in terms of standpoint was an imperialist and reactionary nature.

Petty bourgeoisie said they also had the spirit of patriotism. However, living as lackeys in colonialism and semi-colonialism, like it or not, the soul vanished into thin air. Only the worker-farmer class could remain the most national in nature because they had not been

influenced by imperialism. They were so far away that the impact could not reach them. However, their national soul was lost to some extent since imperialists, through their networks, exploited the blood of our farmers in remote areas, where they lived from hand to mouth, relying on cans of rice. They were so poor that it was easy for them to be affected—that is, there was no consideration of their territory anymore. They did whatever needed to be done for survival and to pay

Khmer Rouge soldiers taking over the General Staff Department of Khmer Republic.



taxes. Under such repression, farmers could not think of their territory.

Therefore, all of the country's classes, both in circumstances of lackeydom and semi-lackeydom, were subject to a loss of national soul to a greater or lesser degree. Much of our national soul was destroyed. If this situation had remained, Cambodia would have been empty in the ten or twenty years to come. First we would have lost our territory. Another loss would have been the soul and real nature of ourselves. Over time, we would have become Americanized and our national soul would have disappeared. So, classes of all types would no longer see the beautiful soil of their country. Why? Because the national soul became weaker and weaker. For this

reason, anything from abroad was beautiful, such as cultures, arts, customs, literature, books, and mountains.

Such fake identities were not coming from our people. It was the situation—oppression by imperialists of all generations—that turned the national soul this way. It was the main issue, which was the issue of soul. Losing the national soul and the nature of the nation is always very dangerous.

Fortunately, the revolutionary movement of our democratic nation on April 17 brought about a great victory. Through this success, the national soul of Cambodia has been completely regained. It is a national soul of the people and progress, not a national soul of Stone Age oppression and reactionary classes. Therefore, we now see our territory resuming its charm. Now even in the dry season, it remains beautiful. It is because of the stand, and the national soul has infiltrated into our consciousness, standpoint, flesh and blood and all veins. A combination of all these things has made us feel fresh about our water, land, forests, lakes, and something else, even though it is the dry season. We are satisfied. We are proud of our people, our nation and our territory. Everything becomes different in terms of view, stand, and sentiment. So we managed to reclaim our national soul and we are extending this force extremely hard. The national organ, which once appeared to be in tumult, has now become a unified organ of our national nature. So it means that we don't just conquer our land, but the view, stand, and soul, which are the breath of our nation. This is the true victory.

Although we don't have anything like airplanes or ships, we still believe in our soil, our nation and our people. Even in the month of Phal Kun, or the month of Chet, we still see our newly turned farmland in a fresh way since we believe that it has upgraded the living conditions of our people. This land would make our country prosperous. This land would protect our country aggressively. The freshness was not the result of decoration with a red bow, but rather, because of our stand, view, and belief in the fruit buried inside the land.



This is what we call the soul, which has already been born. It stems from our revolutionary struggle. This soul and standpoint come into existence within the party, the army, the people, and all of us. This belief becomes a force. And this force is strong. The people's strength can do anything, transforming Cambodian territory into something desirable.

If we examine the whole history of Cambodia, there are wonderful events, glorified in the world.

◆ Before they admired the masterpieces of the Angkorian period. However, we are not so proud of this since the people at that time worked under slavery conditions.

◆ One more wonderful thing is the great victory of April 17, 1975. This is the tremendous event making the world appreciate and want to model itself upon us. It is not some sort of mockery. Rather, it is an admiration with politeness and respect, and shows their motivation to model themselves on the heroism of our people and our army. They learn from our revolutionary movement and our great victory of April 17.

◆ Another story we are doing and hopefully will produce greater achievements than the ones of Angkor and the great victory of April 17 is the great revolutionary movement to transform Cambodian rural areas into gardens, according to strategic plans. The transformation is being made with the speed of a great leap forwards.

There are two aspects here. The first one is the public forces, which have been burrowing in for a hundred years. They must be dug out to stimulate our activities. The other aspect is the soul of believing in our nation, soil and our people. These elements are coming, being strengthened, and extending among all of us, among the people, our party and our army. So therefore, the two elements, people and the national soul, are strong, enabling us to achieve anything we wish.

Korea, our friend, experienced a great movement known as "Chi Li Ma," which means a flying horse. Comparatively, there is great speed in building a country this way. However, they told us that comrade Kampuchea has no Chi Li Ma, no flying horse, which

is why Kampuchea is moving faster.

This is what we call belief, that is, belief in the regime. No matter how hard our enemies are propagandizing, people still believe in the regime, which is correct. It is this regime that helps to construct the country with the most effective and best quality. I would like to indicate that the national soul exists. The national soul lies in believing in its nation, people, practical movements, and the real situation. This is a great victory for our nation. We are obliged to extend it in order to transform our nation, our soil, and to become prosperous, fresh, and practical. Fresh in terms of view and stance.

For this reason, we are required to copy the model of victory of the "national soul." This is a learning process and a new experiment in the world. Comrades in the world would come and learn from Kampuchea, but not learn about the production of airships or something prosperous. They would come and learn the stance of independence and self-reliance, and mastery of our own destiny carried out by our revolution. This is one essence of our national soul. There is no need to rely either on imperialists or anyone but ourselves.

*Based on the philosophy of the lecture above, the Khmer Rouge held their regime higher than any other regime through the policy of the "great leap forwards" that was supposed to transform Cambodia into a garden. Even the Angkor era, when agriculture reached its peak, was thought not to compare with the great development that would take place under Democratic Kampuchea. Moreover, the policy of a "great leap forwards," in combination with independence, self-reliance and self-mastery, made the Khmer Rouge believe that Democratic Kampuchea would be able to build the country more rapidly than certain other countries and become a model to be appreciated and copied.*

*In fact, the soul of Cambodia, which the Khmer Rouge claimed was lost a long time ago, actually vanished during Democratic Kampuchea itself, which not only took the soul, but also the lives of more than two million people in Cambodia.*

# List of Prisoners Smashed at S-21 (Tuol Sleng)

*Compiled by Nean Yin*

(Continued from the August 2002 issue)

No.	Name	Role	Place of Arrest	Date of Entry	Date of Execution	Others
500	Det Den	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
501	Sam Khit	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
502	Tham Mak Lak	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1975	May 24, 1976	
503	Chhut Ta	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
504	Vy Chhai	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
505	Sa Hatt	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
506	Chan Som	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
507	Lek	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	died of disease
508	Sreut Kav	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
509	Khoem	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
510	Pheng	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
511	Yuth Phong	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
512	Chheut	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
513	Lak	??	Kampong Som	May 7, 1976	May 24, 1976	
514	Tea aka Toek	Public affairs	Region 25	Feb 22, 1976	May 25, 1976	
515	Sam Sin Thai	Agricultural engineer	Region 32	Feb 22, 1976	May 25, 1976	
516	Peou Khun	Teacher	Pursat	April 5, 1976	May 25, 1976	
517	Chea Vanny	Student	Preah Net Preah	April 9, 1976	May 25, 1976	
518	Chin Hoeun	??	Battambang	April 9, 1976	May 25, 1976	
519	Hieng Kim Sreng	Worker	Milk factory	May 11, 1976	May 26, 1976	
520	Koy Saroeun aka Mong Nero	Medical worker	Rokar Kaong	May 21, 1976	May 26, 1976	
521	Chik Brahim	Soldier	Koh Thom	January 24, 1976	May 26, 1976	
522	Samrith Lam Nhieng	Soldier	Kandal Stung	Jan 24, 1976	May 26, 1976	
523	Chan Suon	Farmer	Kampong Som	??	May 26, 1976	died of disease

(Continued in the October 2002 issue)

*Nean Yin is the team leader of the Microfilm Project of the Documentation Center of Cambodia.*





## First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers

*Loung Ung*

### Phnom Penh, April 1975

Phnom Penh city wakes early to take advantage of the cool morning breeze before the sun breaks through the haze and invades the country with sweltering heat. Already at 6 a.m. people in Phnom Penh are rushing and bumping into each other on dusty, narrow side streets. Waiters and waitress in black-and-white uniforms swing open shop doors as the aroma of noodle soup greets waiting customers. Street vendors push food carts piled with steamed dumplings, smoked beef teriyaki sticks, and roasted peanuts along the sidewalks and begin to set up for another day of business.

Children in colorful T-shirts and shorts kick soccer balls on sidewalks with their bare feet, ignoring the grunts and screams of the food cart owners. The wide boulevards sing with the buzz of motorcycle engines, squeaky bicycles, and, for those wealthy enough to afford them, small cars. By midday, as temperatures climb to over a hundred degrees, the streets grow quiet again. People rush home to seek relief from the heat, have lunch, take cold showers, and nap before returning to work at 2 p.m.

My family lives on a third-floor apartment in the middle of Phnom Penh, so I am used to the traffic and the noise. We don't have traffic lights on our streets; instead, policemen stand on raised metal boxes, in the middle of the intersections directing traffic. Yet the city always seems to be one big traffic jam. My favorite way to get around with Ma is the cyclo because the driver can maneuver it in the heaviest traffic. A cyclo resembles a big wheelchair attached to the front of a bicycle. You just take a seat and pay the driver to wheel you around wherever you want to go. Even though we own two cars and a truck, when Ma takes me to the market we often go in a cyclo because we get to our destination

faster. Sitting on her lap I bounce and laugh as the driver pedals through the congested city streets.

This morning, I am stuck at a noodle shop a block from our apartment in this big chair. I'd much rather be playing hopscotch with my friends. Big chairs always make me want to jump on them. I hate the way my feet just hang in the air and dangle. Today, Ma has already warned me twice not to climb and stand on the chair. I settle for simply swinging my legs back and forth beneath the table.

Ma and Pa enjoy taking us to a noodle shop in the

morning before Pa goes off to work. As usual, the place is filled with people having breakfast. The clang and clatter of spoons against the bottom of bowls, the slurping of hot tea and soup, the smell of garlic, cilantro, ginger, and beef broth in the air make my stomach rumble with hunger. Across from us, a man uses chopsticks to shovel noodles into his mouth. Next to him, a girl dips a piece of chicken into a small saucer of hoisin sauce while her mother cleans her teeth with a toothpick. Noodle soup is a traditional breakfast for Cambodians and Chinese. We usually have this, or for a special treat, French bread with iced coffee.

“Sit still,” Ma says as she reaches down to stop my leg mid-swing, but I end up kicking her hand. Ma gives me a stern look and a swift slap on my leg.

“Don’t you ever sit still? You are five years old. You are most troublesome child. Why can’t you be like your sisters? How will you ever grow up to be a proper young lady?” Ma sighs. Of course, I have heard all this before.

It must be hard for her to have a daughter who does not act like a girl, to be so beautiful and have a daughter like me. Among her women friends, Ma is admired for her height, slender build, and porcelain white skin. I often overhear them talking about her beautiful face when they think she cannot hear. Because I’m a child, they feel free to say whatever they want in front of me, believing I cannot understand. So while they’re ignoring me, they comment on her perfectly arched eyebrows; almond-shaped eyes; tall, straight Western nose; and oval face. At 5’6,” Ma is an Amazon among Cambodian women. Ma says she’s so tall because she’s all Chinese. She says that some day my Chinese side will also make me tall. I hope so, because now when I stand I’m only as tall as Ma’s hips.

“Princess Monineath of Cambodia, now she is famous for being proper,” Ma continues. “It is said that she walks so quietly that no one ever hears her approaching. She smiles without ever showing her teeth. She talk to men without looking directly in their

eyes. What a gracious lady she is.” Ma looks at me and shakes her head.

“Hmm...” is my reply, taking a loud swig of Coca-Cola from the small bottle.

Ma says I stomp around like a cow dying of thirst. She’s tried many times to teach me the proper way for a young lady to walk. First, you connect your heel to the ground, then roll the ball of your feet on the earth while your toes curl up painfully. Finally you end up with your toes gently pushing you off the ground. All this is supposed to be done gracefully, naturally, and quietly. It all sounds too complicated and painful to me. Besides, I am happy stomping around.

“The kind of trouble she gets into, while just the other day she—” Ma continues to Pa but is interrupted when our waitress arrives with our soup.

“Phnom Penh special noodles with chicken for you and a glass of hot water,” says the waitress as she puts the steaming bowl of translucent potato noodles swimming in clear broth before Ma. “Two spicy Shanghai noodles with beef tripe and tendons.” Before she leaves, the waitress also puts down a plate filled with fresh bean spouts, lime slices, chopped scallions, whole red chili peppers, and mint leaves.

As I add scallions, bean sprouts, and mint leaves to my soup, Ma dips my spoon and chopsticks into the hot water, wiping them dry with her napkin before handing them back to me. “These restaurants are not too clean, but the hot water kills the germs.” She does the same to her and Pa’s tableware. While Ma tastes her clear broth chicken noodle soup, I drop two whole red chili peppers in my bowl as Pa looks on approvingly. I crush the peppers against the side of the bowl with my spoon and finally my soup is ready to taste the way I like it. Slowly, I slurp the broth and instantaneously my tongue burns and my nose drips.

A long time ago, Pa told me that people living in hot countries should eat spicy foods because it makes them drink more water. The more water we drink, the

more we sweat, and sweating cleanses our bodies of impurities. I don't understand this, but I like the smile he gives me; so I again reach my chopsticks toward the pepper dish, knocking over the salt shaker, which rolls like a fallen log onto the floor.

"Stop what you're doing," Ma hisses.

"It was an accident," Pa tells her and smiles at me.

Ma frowns at Pa and says, "Don't you encourage her. Have you forgotten the chicken fight episode? She said that was an accident also and now look at her face."

I can't believe Ma is still angry about that. It was such a long time ago, when we visited my uncle's and aunt's farm in the countryside and I played with their neighbor's daughter. She and I had a chicken we would carry around to have fights with the other kids' chickens. Ma wouldn't have found out about it if it weren't for the big scratch that still scars my face.

"The fact that she gets herself in and out of these situations gives me hope. I see them as clear signs of her cleverness." Pa always defends me—to everybody. He often says that people just don't understand how cleverness works in a child and that all these troublesome things I do are actually signs of strength and intelligence. Whether or not Pa is right, I believe him. I believe everything Pa tells me.

If Ma is known for her beauty, Pa is loved for his generous heart. At 5'5," he weighs about 150 pounds and has a large, stocky shape that contrasts with Ma's long, slender frame. Pa reminds me of a teddy bear, soft and big and easy to hug. Pa is part Cambodian and part Chinese and has black curly hair, a wide nose, full lips, and a round face. His eyes are warm and brown like the earth, shaped like a full moon. What I love most about Pa is the way he smiles not only with his mouth but also with his eyes.

I love the stories about how my parents met and married. While Pa was a monk, he happened to walk across a stream where Ma was gathering water with her jug. Pa took one look at Ma and was immediately

smitten. Ma saw that he was kind, strong, and handsome, and she eventually fell in love with him. Pa quit the monastery so her could ask her to marry him, and she said yes. However, because Pa is dark-skinned and was very poor, Ma's parents refused to let them marry. But they were in love and determined, so they ran away and eloped.

They were financially stable until Pa turned to gambling. At first, he was good at it and won many times. Then one day he went too far and bet everything on a game—his house and all his money. He lost that game and almost lost his family when Ma threatened to walk out on him if he did not stop gambling. After that, Pa never played card games again. Now we are all forbidden to play cards or even to bring a deck of cards home. If caught, even I will receive grave punishment from him. Other than his gambling, Pa is everything a father could be: kind, gentle, and loving. He works hard, as a military police captain, so I don't get to see him as much as I want. Ma tells me that his success never came from stepping on everyone along the way. Pa never forgot what it was like to be poor, and as a result, he takes time to help many others in need. People truly respect and like him.

"Luong is too smart and clever for people to understand," Pa says and winks at me. I beam at him. While I don't know about the cleverness part, I do know that I am curious about the world—from worms and bugs to chicken fights and the bras Ma hangs in her room.

"There you go again, encouraging her to behave this way." Ma looks at me, but I ignore her and continue to slurp my soup. "The other day she walked up to a street vendor selling grilled frog legs and proceeded to ask him all these questions. 'Mister, did you catch the frogs from the ponds in the country or do you raise them? What do you feed frogs? How do you skin a frog? Do you find worms in its stomach? What do you do with the bodies when you sell only the legs?' Luong asked so many questions that the

vendor had to move his cart away from her. It is just not proper for a girl to talk so much.”

Squirring around in a big chair, Ma tells me, is also not proper behavior.

“I’m full, can I go?” I ask, swinging my legs even harder.

“All right, you can go play,” Ma says with a sigh. I jump out of the chair and head off to my friend’s house down the street.

Though my stomach is full, I still crave salty snack food. With the money Pa gave me in my pocket, I approach a food cart selling roasted crickets. There are food carts on every corner, selling everything from ripe mangoes to sugarcane, from Western cakes to French crêpes. The street foods are readily available and always cheap. These stands are very popular in Cambodia. It is a common sight in Phnom Penh to see people on side streets sitting in rows on squat stools eating their food. Cambodians eat constantly and everything is there to be savored if you have money in your pocket, as I do this morning.

Wrapped in green lotus leaf, the brown, glazed crickets smell of smoked wood and honey. They taste like salty burnt nuts. Strolling slowly along the sidewalk, I watch men crowd around the stands with the pretty young girls at them. I realize that a woman’s physical beauty is important, that it never hurts business to have attractive girls selling your products. A beautiful young woman turns otherwise smart men into gawking boys. I’ve seen my own brothers buy snacks they’d never usually eat from a pretty girl while avoiding delicious food sold by homely girls.

At five I also know I am a pretty child, for I have heard adults say to Ma many times how ugly I am. “Isn’t she ugly?” her friends would say to her. “What black, shiny hair, look at her brown, smooth skin! That heart-shaped face makes one want to reach out and pinch those dimpled apple cheeks. Look at those full lips and her smile! Ugly!”

“Don’t tell me I am ugly!” I would scream at

them, and they would laugh.

That was before Ma explained to me that in Cambodia people don’t outright compliment a child. They don’t want to call attention to the child. It is believed that evil spirits easily get jealous when they hear a child being complimented, and they may come and take away the child to the other world.

### **The Ung Family, April 1975**

We have a big family, nine in all: Pa, Ma, three boys, and four girls. Fortunately, we have a big apartment that houses everyone comfortably. Our apartment is built like a train, narrow in the front with rooms extending out to the back. We have many more rooms than the other houses I’ve visited. The most important room in our house is the living room, where we often watch television together. It is very spacious and has an unusually high ceiling to leave room for the loft that my three brothers share as their bedroom. A small hallway leading to the kitchen splits Ma and Pa’s bedroom from the room my three sisters and I share. The smell of fried garlic and cooked rice fills our kitchen when the family takes their usual places around a mahogany table where we each have our own high-backed teak chair. From the kitchen ceiling the electric fan spins continuously, carrying these familiar aromas all around our house—even into our bathroom. We are very modern—our bathroom is equipped with amenities such as a flushing toilet, an iron bathtub, and running water.

I know we are middle-class because of our apartment and the possessions we have. Many of my friends live in crowded homes with only two or three rooms for a family of ten. Most well-to-do families live in apartments or houses above the ground floor. In Phnom Penh, it seems that the more money you have, the more stairs you have to climb to your home. Ma says the ground level is undesirable because dirt gets into the house and nosy people are always peeking in, so of course only poor people live on the ground level. The truly impoverished live in makeshift tents



in areas where I have never been allowed to wander.

Sometimes on the way to the market with Ma, I catch brief glimpses of these poor areas. I watch with fascination as children with oily black hair, wearing old, dirty clothes run up to our cyclo in their bare feet. Many look about the same size me as they rush over with naked younger siblings bouncing on their backs. Even from afar, I see red dirt covers their faces, nestling in the crease of their necks and under their fingernails. Holding up small wooden carvings of the Buddha, oxen, wagons, and miniature bamboo flutes with one hand, they balance oversized woven straw baskets on their heads or straddled on their hips and plead with us to buy their wares. Some have nothing to sell and approach us murmuring with extended hands. Every time, before I can make out what they say, the cyclo's rusty bell clangs noisily, forcing the children to scurry out of our way.

There are many markets in Phnom Penh, some big and others small, but their products are always similar. There is the Central Market, the Russian Market, the Olympic Market, and many others. Where people go to shop depends on which market is the closest to their house. Pa told me the Olympic Market was once a beautiful building. Now its lackluster façade is gray from mold and pollution, and its walls cracked from neglect. The ground that was once lush and green, filled with bushes and flowers, is now dead and buried under outdoor tents and food carts, where thousands of shoppers traverse everyday.

Under the bright green and blue plastic tents vendors sell everything from fabrics with stripes, paisley, and flowers to books in Chinese, Khmer, English and French. Cracked green coconuts, tiny bananas, orange mangoes, and pink dragon fruit are on sale as are delicacies such as silver squid—their beady eyes watching their neighbors—and of brown tiger shrimp crawling in white plastic buckets. Indoors, where the temperature is usually ten degrees cooler, well-groomed girls in starched shirts and

pleated skirts perch on tall stools behind glass stalls displaying gold and silver jewelry. Their ears, necks, fingers, and hands are heavy with yellow twenty-four-carat gold jewels as they beckon you over to their counters. A couple of feet across from the women, behind yellow, featherless chickens hanging from hooks, men in bloody aprons raise their cleavers and cut into slabs of beef with the precision of many years' practice. Farther away from the meat vendors, fashionable youths with thin Elvis Presley sideburns in bell-bottom pants and corduroy jacks play loud Cambodian pop music from their eight-track tape players. The songs and the shouting vendors bounce off of each other, all vying for your attention.

Lately, Ma has stopped taking me to the market with her. But I still wake up early to watch as she sets her hair in hot rollers and applies her makeup. I plead with her to take me, as she slips into her blue silk shirt and maroon sarong. I beg her to buy me cookies while she puts on her gold necklace, ruby earrings, and bracelets. After dabbing perfume around her neck, Ma yells to our maid to look after me and leaves for the market.

Because we do not have a refrigerator, Ma shops every morning. Ma likes it this way because everything we eat each day is at its freshest. The pork, beef, and chicken she brings back is put in a trunk-sized cooler filled with blocks of ice bought from the ice shop down the street. When she returns hot and fatigued from a day of shopping, the first thing she does, following Chinese culture, is to take off her sandals and leave them at the door. She then stands in her bare feet on the ceramic tile floor and breathes a sigh of relief as the coolness of the tile flows through the soles of her feet.

At night, I like to sit out on our balcony with Pa and watch the world below us pass by. From our balcony, most of Phnom Penh looms only two or three stories high, with few buildings standing as tall as eight. The buildings are narrow, closely built, as the city's perimeter is longer than it is wide, stretching two

miles along the Tonle Sap River. The city owes its ultramodern look to the French colonial buildings that are juxtaposed with the dingy, soot-covered ground-level houses.

In the dark, the world is quiet and unhurried as streetlights flicker on and off. Restaurants close their doors and food carts disappear into side streets. Some cyclo drivers climb into their cyclos to sleep while others continue to peddle around, looking for fares. Sometimes when I feel brave, I walk over to the edge of the railing and look down at the lights below. When I'm very brave, I climb onto the railing, holding on to the banister very tightly. With my whole body supported by the railing I dare myself to look at my toes as they hang at the edge of the world. As I look down at the

cars and bicycles below, a tingling sensation rushes to my toes, making them feel as if a thousand little pins are gently pricking them. Sometimes, I just hang there against the railing, letting go of the banister altogether, stretching my arms up high above my head. My arms loose and flapping in the wind, I pretend that I am a dragon flying high above the city. The balcony is a special place because it's where Pa and I often have important conversations.

(Continued in the October 2002 issue)

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## Female Patients

*Sokhym Em*

The Democratic Kampuchea regime left most of Cambodia's women weak or dead. Insufficient food and forced labor made them vulnerable to contagious diseases. After 1979, almost all of the regime's female survivors had chronic diseases. Some women were left handicapped for life. Many failed to menstruate and suffered from such chronic diseases as rheumatism as a result of hard labor and malnutrition during pregnancy. Still others suffered mentally as a consequence of being separated from their families.

The Outlook on the Economy of Democratic Kampuchea noted that authority was an absolute mechanism of the revolution and the party. Due to revolutionary absolutism, the DK regime managed to establish a policy that divided people into three categories. The April 17 People were classified as the third category, or parasites. The Khmer Rouge discriminated against April 17 People, repressed them, and tracked their every move in an attempt to sweep the country clean of feudal characteristics, as stipulated in Article

3 of the constitution of Democratic Kampuchea: "The culture of Democratic Kampuchea has a national, popular, forward-looking, and healthful character such as will serve the tasks of defending and building Kampuchea into an ever more prosperous country. This new culture is absolutely opposed to the corrupt, reactionary culture of the various oppressive classes and that of colonialism and imperialism in Kampuchea." In his interview with a Belgian delegation on August 5, 1978, Pol Pot asserted, "The culture of Democratic Kampuchea is a new culture in character, eliminating reactionary aspects."

Nget Lon of Pornng Tik Khang Cheung village, Khus subdistrict, Takeo province said that in 1975, Angkar created a cooperative in Tram Kak district where people were to eat communally. Working conditions in the cooperative were very poor. The bodies of workers in the cooperatives, especially those of the April 17 women, became swollen due to the lack of food and overwork. Those with serious diseases were

taken to the local Khmer Rouge hospital. The few medicines this hospital possessed were produced by the medical staff themselves because Khmer Rouge leaders rejected western medical science.

Based on an interview with Matt Ly, who now lives in Kampong Cham, Angkar formulated “eight provisions” for transforming Cambodia into a utopia. One such provision states, “Angkar is obliged to abolish all hospitals and their staff left by previous regimes with a view to establishing hospitals of a new style with a socialist character—revolutionary pureness and cleanliness.” Revolutionary medical staff provided services to patients at home and at their respective work sites. As stated in a notebook kept by a Khmer Rouge cadre: “Angkar’s medical staff do their best to serve patients. They are not taking bribes like the medical staff of previous regimes.”

An interview with Thaong Sin, currently a medical doctor in charge of provincial health in Takeo province who has documented Pol Pot’s crimes against Phnom Penh dwellers, confirmed that Angkar’s medical staff did try to help the people, but had almost no technical proficiency. The fact was that no matter what the disease was, the same medicines would be delivered. In addition, most of Angkar’s medical staff were very young— from 14 to 15 years of age—with at most three months of technical training.

Young women who were full of class vengeance and absolute will for the revolution were recruited into health institutions in accordance with the party’s policy. In the Statement of the Communist Party of Kampuchea to the Communist Workers’ Party of Denmark in July 1978, Nuon Chea stated, “Revolutionary medics have to be from the worker-farmer class because it the biggest and most progressive class... The party needs stance more than ability in building the country.” The young, often illiterate female medics recruited by Angkar received rudimentary practical training. The sort-term training course taught them only how to give injections and deliver medicines

to patients. Improper medicines caused many patients to either suffer adverse reactions or die.

In 1975 Kim An, a resident of Tuol Tbeng village, Cheang Torng subdistrict, almost died because of an injection. Immediately after the medic removed the syringe, she experienced a seizure and became unconsciousness. He had apparently injected Kim An with chicken soup, which had been placed close to the medicine. It Sdaeng, a former Khmer Rouge medic, recounted that in 1975 a woman named Um died shortly after being given an injection by a medical chief named Bo. Similarly, an April 17 woman in Tram Kak district died of a heart attack after a syringe was pulled out.

Hem Oeun said that in 1976 she suffered from a fever and womb illness. She was then sent to a hospital in Prey Lvea subdistrict. The female medics there were young, around 14 years old. When taking the tablets, she said she felt dizzy and could not see anything. Despite spending the next five months at the hospital, she did not recover. Thinking that it was a waste of time, she decided to go home. Thaong Sin noted that the Khmer Rouge medics diagnosed diseases themselves, but could effectively treat only obvious illnesses, including abscesses, wounds, diarrhea, cholera and less serious fevers. But they could not diagnose diseases relating to the womb, bowel, or stomach. As a consequence, patients with these illnesses would be accused of pretending to be sick and then would be killed. For this reason, several women did not mention that they were ill.

Ngin Hean, a resident of Toek Thla village, Kus subdistrict, Tram Kak district, Takeo province, said that some patients died on the work site due to the long distance between the site and the hospital. She added that when women became sick, they were not said to have insufficient food. Instead, they were accused of suffering from “consciousness illness.” Thus, many some women continued working rather than go to the hospital

Yin Samuth, a former schoolteacher in Svay Rieng,

recounted that at the hospital, many women became patients because of malnutrition, womb diseases, tuberculosis, overwork and malaria.

The confession of Chhun Hiek was taken at Tuol Sleng prison. It noted that in 1976 she examined a female patient who was the wife of Nhim, a secretary of the Northwest Zone. The test showed that the patient suffered from a cyst in her womb. However, when she was brought to April 17 Hospital, she was said to suffer from tuberculosis.

Uk Lay Im, a resident of Ang Ta Saom village and subdistrict in Takeo province, said that in 1976, she took care of many women with chronic diseases; these women were forced to build dams across the lake, where they were soaked from dawn to dusk. Having only one set of clothing, they slept in their wet clothes.

Women with less serious medical problems were not allowed to go to a hospital unless they became unconscious. Some of them were accused of having a “consciousness illness” and of being “enemies burrowing inside,” and were subjected to beatings or reduced food rations. Lay Im commented, “Such an accusation was not true, because when women were suffering from diseases inside them, such as womb diseases and allergies, they could not be diagnosed since there were no technical instruments. The medical staff used their hands to diagnose the diseases. When they found that the temperature of the patients was okay, they accused the patients of having consciousness diseases and then sent them to be tortured until death.”

Ay Na Soeun complained that at her work site, the working hours were from morning till 10 p.m. and that during her menstruation period, she asked her unit chief for a leave. The chief then accused her of being lazy and conspiring against the plans set by Angkar.

Pen Chandara, currently a schoolteacher in Phnom Penh, claimed that she was sent by her unit chief to a hospital after she passed out at her work site in O Neang

subdistrict. She collapsed due to a vaginal discharge. Medical cadres were not able to help her. So, she tried to find tree roots to boil as a medicine to cure her illness. However, a combination of hand-made medicines could not help her a hundred percent. Today she still suffers from an inflammation of the uterus. Pen Chandara claimed that the vaginal discharge was the consequence of long periods spent in the water, allowing a variety of germs to infiltrate. Many of her co-workers suffered from the same problem. Pen Chandara noted that she was pregnant in 1977, but continued to work until the day she gave birth to her baby. A few days after the baby’s delivery, Angkar assigned her to serve as a wet-nurse at a child care center, where she was required to suckle many children, while receiving small rations of food—one ladle of porridge per meal. Consequently, she became weaker and weaker.

Vanna, a member of Leay Bo subdistrict, Tram Kak district, Takeo province, cried, saying, “In 1977 I became emaciated and was sent to a hospital. However, Angkar’s medical staff were heinous. They accused me of having a consciousness illness. In fact I was sick. I was starved. I became smaller and smaller to the point that my knees appeared to be bigger than my head. Even with such conditions, they still could not see what was really wrong with me. They hated April 17 People so much. My parents and children died miserably. Now I’m alone. No relatives. Although I’m happy now, I still cannot forget that heinous regime.”

Democratic Kampuchea forced people to work at least 16 hours a day. Workers were divided according to age and sex. Both single and married women were considered as “front forces” and had equal work with men. Article 14 of the Democratic Kampuchea constitution stated, “It is the duty of all to defend and build the country together in accordance with individual ability and potential.” Therefore, women and men were required to have equal work. Too much work with

no time for rest and the lack of food made women exhausted and suffer from chronic diseases.

Khieu Samphan, president of the State Presidium of Democratic Kampuchea, informed prince Norodom Sihanouk in 1976 that “[our] relocated compatriots are well. They are working hard, but they volunteer and are so very happy to do so.”

Democratic Kampuchea did not allow pregnant women to take leave before or after their babies were born; instead, they were forced to work until the day they went into labor. The women were supposed to return to their work sites immediately after delivery. While they were hospitalized, their food rations were cut. Still worse, any patient who would eat all of the rice in her bowl would be dismissed from the hospital immediately because the medical staff thought that she had already recovered. Many women who had just given birth became skinny and lacked breast milk.

Two weeks after she gave birth, Yung was made to collect cow dung, do sweeping and carry soil. Later she suffered from allergies, producing no breast milk for her child due to overwork and insufficient food rations.

Aok Sim gave birth to her baby in 1977. Shortly after she delivered her baby, Angkar assigned her to take care of a group of forty children whose ages ranged from two months to two years. Aok Sim complained that she almost collapsed from the work. She had to suckle other children while the food rations remained the same. She was fed only sour soup made from water-grass and water lily, which made her become weaker and weaker.

Real San, former medical chief of staff of Tram Kak district, said she always reported to the higher level when she discovered women with a womb disease. However, Angkar did not believe her but accused her of attacking Angkar.

A Khmer Rouge medic named Thuon who worked at P-1 Hospital (now known as Calmet Hospital) claimed that from 1977 to 1979 the hospital’s patients included a large number of children whose parents

were leading Khmer Rouge cadres at the district, provincial and zone levels. These children were treated well. In contrast, the April 17 children were never treated well. Many of them were suffering from tetanus, polio, measles, small pox, tuberculosis, jaundice, fever, and diarrhea. Many children died every day. Most of their diseases were brought on by the lack of hygiene and neglect on the part of the nurses. For example, the Khmer Rouge nurses used rusty, unsterilized scissors and other medical instruments. And after their babies were delivered, women were given some so-called “rabbit-dropping”



Khmer Rouge medical women producing local tablets.

50  
50  
50  
50  
100  
100  
100  
100  
100  
100  
Black  
Magenta  
Cyan

medicine produced by the Khmer Rouge themselves.

In 1977 Sikoeun's eight-year-old child died of tetanus. Aok's one-year-old child suffered from tetanus and malnutrition in the same year. He is still alive because of a combination of tree roots used as traditional medicine.

Some women suffered from miscarriages when they worked. Even so, Angkar never let people talk about such things. Kry Peng Hong said in 1978 his wife, who was two months pregnant and his second cousin who was six months pregnant, both miscarried in a field.

In addition to poor treatment and the risk of being



accused falsely, poor sanitation increased the transmission of diseases and discomforting ailments. These included head lice, bedbugs, flies, and mosquitoes. Sometimes patients chose to stay at home waiting for tree-root medicines, rather than to be hospitalized by the Khmer Rouge.

Beside these physical impacts, several women suffered from mental diseases. Because of family separation, they became frustrated, lost their memories, and often could not control what they were saying. When what they said ran counter to Angkar's policy, they were taken to be killed. Many of these women continue to suffer today. Although the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed twenty years ago, they are still traumatized by bereavement, separation, and the hardships they experienced.

Hem Oeun once became crazy because Angkar took her husband and children to be killed. She shouted, describing her pain at being separated from her beloved husband and children. She has now recovered from her mental illness, but her emotional wounds remain. She admitted, "I became a fool because of the death of my children and husband."

Ren, a resident of Siem Reap subdistrict, Kandal Stung district, Kandal province, went crazy when her children and husband were killed. After 1979, she appeared to be half-witted, unable to distinguish right from wrong. In 1990 she recovered and decided to marry another man. Unfortunately, her second husband and children died of diseases. She again lost her mental balance and may never recover.

In summary, as a consequence of the principles of "independence, self-reliance, and creation of a new culture of cleanliness, Democratic Kampuchea left behind countless widowers, women with mental disorders, and orphans, as well as many other social issues for survivors to cope with.

*Sokhym Em is a staff-member of the Project to Promote Accountability.*



# The Duty to Prosecute

*Elizabeth Van Schaack*

Nations in transition from repressive regimes are frequently faced with the dilemma of whether or not they should prosecute the human rights violations of predecessor regimes. A variety of theoretical arguments have been espoused to support each position. Some have argued that a social consciousness against human rights abuses will only develop if perpetrators are brought to trial for their offenses. Others counter that the unequivocal and formal condemnation of the atrocities is critical, but the number of people ultimately brought to trial does not matter. Those advocating the former position maintain that blanket pardons confirm that the powerful and influential are exempt from the rule of law. Jose Zalaquett alternatively argues that nations should concern themselves most immediately with preventing the recurrence of human rights abuses and repairing the damage caused by past abuses. Nonetheless, there exists among theorists a consensus that on balance, the cause of human rights, the promotion of democracy and the rule of law necessitate some investigation and prosecution of human rights violations of previous regimes.

Notwithstanding these theoretical considerations, some jurists have argued that international law imposes an affirmative duty on states to prosecute grave violations of human rights—acts that violate individuals' right to life and physical and/or mental integrity—that occur within their territorial jurisdictions. Such remedies may be civil or criminal. These two classes of remedies serve different functions. Under criminal law a perpetrator is punished for his or her offenses against society, whereas civil re-remedies are designed to compensate victims. Both remedies aim to deter future infractions, although in markedly different fashions.

Commentators have found this duty to prosecute violations of prior regimes under international law in several places: criminal law treaties, “ensure and respect” treaty provisions, and “right to a remedy provisions.”

Customary international law may also impose a duty on states to prosecute such violations.

## A. Criminal Law Treaties

A criminal law treaty is any treaty that imposes actions that states must take against those persons or agents who have committed crimes contrary to international law. In this respect, several international human rights instruments include the principle of *aut dedere aut judicare*—extradite or prosecute. For example, Article 4 of the Genocide Convention specifically requires the punishment of Convention offenders. In addition, the Torture Convention requires that states make acts of torture criminally punishable (Article 4), exercise jurisdiction over offenses that occur in their territories (Article 5), and extradite offenders or try them domestically (Article 7). One impetus behind the Torture Convention was the desire to implement more effectively the prohibitions against torture articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Torture Convention also embodies an optional procedure that empowers the Committee Against Torture to consider complaints of torture lodged against states that have promulgated optional declarations under Article 22. In addition, the Committee may initiate its own investigations if it learns that torture is being systematically practiced in a state that is a party to the Convention. Finally, the United Nations Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity also commits state parties to prosecute violators of, *inter alia*, war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

The Nuremberg and Tokyo prosecutions confirmed that crimes against humanity are offenses punishable under international law and may support a state duty to prosecute perpetrators of such violations. According to Article 6 (c) of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal, crimes against humanity include “murder, ex-

termination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war, or persecution on political, racial, or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated.” The applicability of the Nuremberg Charter of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg to the situation in Cambodia is limited, because it prohibits only those acts committed against any civilian population, before or during a war. However, the Control Council Law No. 10, which gave jurisdiction to war trials within occupied Germany after the Nuremberg trials, omitted this nexus to war language and designates crimes against humanity as “[a]trocities and offenses, or other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population.” On December 11, 1946, the U.N. General Assembly unanimously approved the Charter and Judgments of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, commonly called the Nuremberg Code or Nuremberg Principles, as binding international law. States cannot derogate from their obligations to protect individuals from crimes against humanity or from their obligations to hold the guilty responsible.

In February 1993, the Security Council of the United Nations established an international war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia using Chapter VII authority and characterizing the genocidal practices of Bosnia’s “jus in bello” as a threat to the peace. Significantly, Article 2 of the tribunal’s statute also grants the international tribunal the power to prosecute persons committing or ordering to be committed grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. As an instrument, the tribunal possesses Security Council authority to prosecute individuals for grave breaches of international humanitarian law, regardless of whether the violations occurred during an armed conflict or in a campaign against civilians.

#### **B. “Ensure and Respect” Provisions**

Many human rights instruments compel states not only to refrain from interfering with individual liberties, but also to respect certain civil and political rights and ensure that they are enjoyed by individuals within their jurisdiction. Several commentators assert that these

provisions oblige states to prevent affirmatively or to remedy violations of these rights. In *Velasquez Rodriguez v. Honduras* the Inter-American Court took a similar position. In that case, the Honduran military was accused of the arrest, torture and execution of a student activist in violation of the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights concluded, “The state has a legal duty to take responsible steps to prevent human rights violations and to use the means at its disposal to carry out a serious investigation of violations committed within its jurisdiction to identify those responsible, impose appropriate punishment and ensure the victim adequate compensation.” The Court ultimately ordered the Honduran government to compensate Velasquez’s family in the amount of \$150,000.

#### **C. “Right to a Remedy” Provisions**

Certain multilateral instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, recognize the right of individuals to be free from enumerated human rights violations. The prohibitions of the Universal Declaration are reinforced in the U.N. Charter, which compels members to obey and respect the human rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration. While human rights treaties are limited in their ability to prescribe affirmative state action, some do convey a “right to remedy” to victims of human rights abuses. For example, Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that, “Everyone has a right to an effective remedy by competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.” Article 2(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also recognizes this right to a remedy.

(Continued in the October 2002 issue)

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## Interview with the Venerable Yos Hut Khemacaroo

*Kalyan Sann and Kannitha Kim Keo*

**The Venerable Yos:** We have been talking about the Khmer Rouge tribunal for many years now, yet we have not come to a satisfying, unambiguous conclusion that would end the anxiety and this seemingly endless negotiation on the topic, and allow us to focus on rebuilding our nation and lives. In my opinion, this issue is closely linked to the wishes of human beings. Khmers [Cambodians] are no different from the rest of the world; they have a desire to learn the truth underlying an event that has been witnessed by many people. Victims who lived through the Khmer Rouge regime experienced the sufferings and saw with their own eyes the danger of death and the damage to property and the whole nation. Now we want to find out through the law of “cause and effect” and the [Buddhist] law of “action and result” why things were as they were and to learn who we should blame. In addition, we want acceptance [understanding] and accountability for the acts and their subsequent results [what the Khmer Rouge did and its consequences]. There is a need to know the truth in order to set an example for the victims, people of this generation, as well as the next. Also, [we] want to end the argument over this issue, which has been consuming a lot of our valuable time and led to endless accusations against each other. These accusations are a large impediment standing in the way of a genuine reconciliation. In short, it is about the truth: once the truth is known, people will settle down.

**Question:** From whom do you want to know the truth?

**Answer:** From those who are accused of being responsible for the crimes, and who participated in decision making: the members of the leadership of the Democratic Kampuchea government, the Khmer Rouge senior leaders. I want them to be present and defend themselves in court. In either national or international law, without a trial, the accused is regarded as innocent. Just suspecting

and accusing someone, but without judgment from the courts, does not allow us to say legally whether a person is guilty or innocent. This is law, a respect for human rights. Therefore, it is necessary for the top Khmer Rouge leaders to appear in court and argue against the accusations. Even if there are only suspicions against them, they must clarify their acts. If they have any alibis, let them present them. The judges will make their decision through evidence and the eyewitnesses, accordingly. If senior Khmer Rouge leaders are found guilty, they must confess, take responsibility for what they did, apologize to Cambodians and the families of the victims, and swear they will not repeat their crimes. Then, the tribunal will decide whether they should be pardoned.

**Question:** At present, some top Khmer Rouge leaders have defected and have not confessed, but they have asked for amnesty [from the government]. What is your opinion about this?

**Answer:** Before being granted amnesty, the Khmer Rouge leaders must first admit they committed the crimes concerned, the atrocities. Only after they confess could amnesty be given to them. We cannot talk about amnesty without confession; it does not make any sense.

**Question:** To what standard of justice do you want the tribunal to hold?

**Answer:** To provide justice, the tribunal has to be a court that has legal expertise, is independent, does not seek benefits for a particular person or group, does not involve politics, and sticks to the law. [There are two kinds of tribunals]. One complies with human morality, is uncorrupted and is impartial, and the other sticks to the law and the accepted standard of justice. Atrocities did not occur only in Cambodia, but in other countries as well. The tribunal must adopt proper and formal procedures if everyone is to be satisfied with the outcome.

Cambodians—both victims and future generations—would accept this kind of tribunal because they want to end the debate and accusations. They also want to take the lessons of Khmer Rouge atrocities and use them in rebuilding and leading our country to prosperity, and for making people more careful in not following what is bad.

**Question:** Please give us your opinion concerning what the Cambodian government and United Nations should do at the moment to establish the Khmer Rouge tribunal.

**Answer:** It takes one's willingness to achieve one thing. In this case, it is the willingness to seek justice, and nothing else, in order to end the Khmer Rouge issue. Ways will always be found, once willingness is in people's minds, and they do not think about personal affairs, nepotism and other aspects. If people's minds are occupied with these factors, the tribunal will not be realized. Do not think about ones self. Think about collective benefits and national interests, since prosecuting the Khmer Rouge leaders is not a political issue. If it is a political tribunal, it will have another character. The tribunal must be independent of political parties and individuals. Unless this kind of devotion exists, justice will not be brought to society.

**Question:** From your point of view, if the Khmer Rouge leaders confess their crimes and ask for pardon, would you pardon them?

**Answer:** I am a religious man, a Buddhist monk; I'll do it without hesitation. In the dharma, people act wrongly because they have wrong ideas. Because they have wrong ideas, wrong consideration and wrong perception, they do wrong things. Sometimes, their minds are engrossed in greed, anger and insanity, which cause them to confound things or become insane. For this reason, we should rightly have pity on those who do wrong and help them to find ways to think right and to relinquish bad deeds. In short, in Buddhism, there is no grudge, anger, or vindictiveness. We do not even want to become an enemy of those who are angry at us and wish to become our enemies. Buddhism teaches

us to win over bad deeds by doing good deeds, to win over a grudge by not bearing a grudge and by embracing love, forgiveness and pity, to win greed by being kind, and to win falsehood by always speaking the truth. All of these are wins and are free of vindictiveness, and we cannot lose this way. Revenge will never end if people solve conflicts through passion, greed, anger and insanity.

We imprison a convict because we want to change him. Therefore, a lawful prison with morality is not a facility to inflict physical pain on inmates. Rather, it is a place where people are rehabilitated so that they will not commit more crimes when they are released. It is not locking them up and throwing away the key. For if we do not educate and change them carefully in order to make them become conscious of their crimes and regain normal thinking, when they are free they will continue to do bad deeds, holding grudges and acting out of revenge.

Another method people use to punish a convicted leader is by forcing him to live in exile. Take the story of Prince Vesandar [a Buddhist tale depicting the previous life of Buddha] as an example. The prince was banished from the city to live in the jungle because he had given a sacred white elephant to another kingdom. This was against the will of the people, but as time passed, he was invited to return. Therefore, revenge is not a gain. The most important things are truth and accountability in order to set an example for other people not to do the same things.

**Question:** If the Khmer Rouge tribunal is established, what benefits do you think Cambodian society will receive?

**Answer:** The benefit of truth. For truth is very important, and can be found through reason. The truth is the benefit itself. It makes us feel relief, enforces accountability and prevents people in this and the next generations from doing the same things. Wrongly done, [the tribunal] will not provide a satisfying result, in spite of good intentions. Likewise, using wrong, violent strategies will lead to catastrophe.

The Khmer Rouge also mentioned that they acted



as they did because they loved the country and its people, but they used wrong methods. If they loved the people, why did they hurt them, kill them? If they loved the country, why did they kill it, disrespect human life, destroy the nation's culture, morals and traditions? Similarly, if we use wrong or bad methods, the tribunal won't produce any results; this is the essence of the law of "action and result." I can say that the Khmer Rouge leaders who committed all the crimes were extremely obstinate people preoccupied with greed, anger and insanity who considered themselves above the rest. This was wrong. They regarded others as valueless and thought they could do anything they wanted. This was misperceiving, illiterate behavior, an act resulting from mental problems.

Another benefit is national reconciliation. When the accused are charged with their crimes, people will be happy and stop worrying and accusing each other. Only then will Cambodians begin to think about long-lasting peace and national reconciliation, befriend one another, have pity on each other, and rebuild the country toward prosperity.

Moreover, the tribunal will help eliminate the rampant culture of impunity—not punishing those who committed crimes and the irresponsibility of the criminals.

**Question:** According to the Buddhist law of "action and result," those who do good receive good and those who do bad receive bad. If the tribunal justly prosecutes the former Khmer Rouge leaders, who apparently committed evil acts, will these leaders suffer misery after they die? And if there is no tribunal, will they suffer the same misery after death?

**Answer:** Please be aware that "action and result" is a natural law. This law does not exist only in Cambodia or for Buddhists. It is in every country. Only life in Nirvana is free of action and result, cause and effect, birth and death, and happiness and suffering. Buddha did not create this law himself; he discovered it. What acts did the Khmer Rouge leaders commit? What results have they received for themselves and Cambodia?

The Khmer Rouge leaders will never receive happiness, for furious and vicious persons live in constant sorrow and anger. Not only in the present: at the very time they committed their crimes, they were full of anger, hatred and grudges.

The magazine Searching for the Truth also publishes Khmer Rouge leaders' slogans; these show that the Khmer Rouge indoctrinated Cambodian children to bear grudges. Therefore, evil intentions and attempts to cause harm to others are causes of suffering for the Khmer Rouge leaders themselves. They have no happiness. They can't sleep. They live in apprehension about being assassinated by their foes. Wherever they go, they are escorted by tens of bodyguards. They change places and use many tricks to ensure their safety. They are hated, cursed, and criticized, etc. These are consequences of their acts.

Some journalists told me the Khmer Rouge leaders are living prosperous lives. I don't think they are happy. They are always worried; they regret what they did and are criticized and despised. This is the greatest psychological punishment; it is what we call hell. Heaven and hell are in our minds, in the present, not in our next lives. When we are at peace, happy and satisfied, we are in heaven. In contrast, sadness, anger, regret and dissatisfaction are hell. We should not think about heaven and hell in the following life; we should devote our attention to what we do in the present. There is hell for those who do bad, even though they live in luxury now.

Was the tragedy the Khmer Rouge inflicted on the Cambodian people the result of peoples' acts? This will take a very long time to explain. Life is uncertain. Everyone has to go through birth, sickness, death, happiness, sorrow, despondency, unity and separation, and wishes and failure. None of us will escape death, death because of sickness, death by accident, death from war, death for other reasons, for everything is uncertain. I say this because I want Cambodians to feel relief that not only Cambodia was plagued with wars. The catastrophic results of war were already

witnessed during World Wars I and II in Europe. Wars in other countries killed hundreds of thousands of people both in the past as well as in the present. If you do not want to face tragedy and total destruction, you must follow Buddhism’s Middle Way and the Noble Eight-fold Path. People are born because they have sin.

Everyone is born as a citizen who has a role in social and national affairs. Thus, each person makes a contribution to the success or failure of a nation, whether what they do is intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, or whether the decisions they make are right or wrong. A citizen is a factor leading to the happiness or suffering of the nation. If the country is developed or devastated, we are part of it. Thus, we all have to share responsibility. One is personal responsibility; the other is one’s responsibility as a citizen. Using this reasoning, do not blame others, saying that they are wrong and we are right. This is difficult to say, since in some ways we joined a political party, a liberal or communist one. A lot of people supported the Khmer Rouge. This was because we misinterpreted or were overly careless and let a group of cruel people take control of the country and then destroy it to such an unimaginable extent. The Khmer Rouge regime is a lesson for us to be more careful and prevent an individual or a group of people from doing what they want. It also teaches us not to support [a political party] blindly, not to be easily convinced and not to be deceived. This may lead to tragedy for ourselves individually and the whole nation.

We don’t understand completely about “action and result.” Our private acts, in addition to our acts as citizens of a nation, produce added results. Therefore, each of us must consider thoroughly: don’t just blame each other and avoid taking responsibility, and never to be cheated again.

**Question:** If it is as you described—that the sufferings people had during the Khmer Rouge regime were unpredictable—then why should we do good deeds if we do not know whether good or bad things will happen to us?

**Answer:** It is not like that. Good deeds lead to some happiness, happiness on the way, but not a long-lasting one. Happiness without suffering, unchanged happiness is Nirvana. There, people are free of greed, anger and insanity, and stop dreaming about rebirth. If they think about the next life, then they’re thinking about death and rebirth. Old age, sickness and death are results of birth. Rebirth and life without uncertainty and sufferings do not exist. In the universe, all beings and nonbeings are uncertain. This is a law of nature, which scientists support, even though they don’t understand it fully. Nothing in this world is permanent. Things change all the time. If you want to avoid the uncertainty of life, the only way is to gain merits to be freed from the law of “action and result.” Then you will attain Nirvana, a state of greatest and permanent happiness. The effort to do good deeds with all our hearts and souls by giving things to people and helping them will provide our lives with a fairly high level of happiness, but not a permanent one. Permanent happiness does not exist in this world of greed, anger and insanity. Each country is the same. Each has the worldly phenomena of happiness, suffering, peace, war, development and tragedy, etc. No one country has continual prosperity. Everything is ruled by a natural law—that is, birth is followed by death.

**Question:** At the moment, we are trying to bring about national reconciliation. Because the majority of Cambodians are Buddhists, what contributions can Buddhism make to national reconciliation?

**Answer:** Preach sermons to the people in order to help them accept the truth, stop blaming each other and take responsibility for the future of the country. Teach people to learn to forgive. A lot of people still think they are completely right and that others are totally wrong, but don’t forget that people make big mistakes, because there are those who support them. Buddhism teaches people to see the truth through the truth. The past can never be changed; it’s over. It can only serve as a lesson, an experience for our work at present. The present is most important. We cannot go



back even for a second to change what has happened, except trying to accomplish new tasks and learning from failure. Thus, Buddhism states: do not feel sorry for what has happened, but one must be determined that from now on he or she stops committing wrong acts, because that will cause pain and suffering to him or her, as well as other people. On the other hand, good deeds must be carried on and encouraged.

**Question:** After the Khmer Rouge tribunal, what should we do with the Khmer Rouge history?

**Answer:** After the truth is found, people should write Khmer Rouge history for educational purposes, for humanity. This history will also teach the world not to underestimate [the situation at hand] or be careless; otherwise, tragedy will happen.

**Question:** According to Buddhism, what does “action and result” mean?

**Answer:** “Action and result” means what we do and its consequence. An “action” is something we do intentionally. It provides results immediately or in the next life. Everything we do intentionally and consciously, including good and bad, is recorded in our soul. It is an inheritance, a true belonging of us, since it stays with us and will give results, good or bad accordingly. If it is a good act, the result will be happiness. We can control our acts while we are doing them, but once they are done, it is over. We have no control over when the results will come; it is autonomous. We do not know how to find the time and place to receive the results. It is beyond our understanding.

We cannot decide what the results should be; they are automatically created by action. Sometimes, a good act we have just done does not provide immediate good results. The results of a bad act we committed some time in the past could occur instead. Similarly, bad results do not occur right after a bad act, the good result of a good act we did in the past may happen first. Therefore, we do not know. But, most of the time, those who do good deeds receive good results. Most people misunderstand the concept of “action and result.” They always say fate determines what they are. In reality,

“action and result” is “do good receive good, do bad receive bad,” or “mastering a skill from learning, becoming rich from hard work” [a Khmer slogan explaining that one’s effort will be paid off]. Hard work is the act, while mastering a skill is the result. Working on a farm is the act and the harvested rice is the result. Drinking is the act and not being thirsty is the result. If we love, we will be loved. If we curse, we will be cursed. If we hit, we will be hit. We cannot control what kind of result we will receive or when it will come.

**Question:** You mentioned that an “act” is done intentionally only, do unintentional acts produce results?

**Answer:** No, they do not. Unintentional acts are done without one’s consciousness. For example, we are not allowed to kill animals or people, but what if we step on an insect unknowingly and kill it? This will not be included in “action and result.”

**Question:** Please explain the word “truth”; what does it mean?

**Answer:** Truth is fact. For example, the realization that everything in this world is uncertain is the truth. It is not a theory or a belief. It is true that everything is uncertain. Buddha taught us about pain and suffering, the cause of suffering, and how to suppress suffering. This is the truth that Buddha discovered when he reached enlightenment. He found that greed, anger and insanity are the roots of all kinds of suffering. War, sadness and crisis—from the family level to the national level, to the world—have common causes: greed, anger and insanity. Buddhism teaches people to decrease and eliminate these negative aspects. If the level of these negative feelings decreases, happiness will rise. If they die out completely, Nirvana will be attained.

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# Agents of Death: Explaining the Cambodian Genocide in Terms of Psychological Dissonance

*Alex Hinton*

(Continued from the August 2002 issue)

Moral Justification: Both dehumanization and the use of euphemism make it easier for killers to morally justify their actions. In the Stanford mock prison experiment, for example, “prisoners” constituted a category that it was legitimate to treat in a harsh manner. Similarly, since Jews were likened to a “disease” that threatened the larger German community, Nazis could regard their eradication as a necessary public health decision. In each case, the group of persecuted individuals was marked in such a way that normal moral standards no longer applied to them.

In DK, this type of moral restructuring was facilitated by the local-level legitimization of the violent ethic and the ideological glorification of violence in general. As noted earlier, individuals suspected of being “enemies” of Angkar were strongly dehumanized and subjected to execution. Khmer Rouge cadre had been taught not only to hate such people but to destroy them without hesitation or pity. For a person like Comrade Chev, killing “enemies” was both a “political necessity” and a moral imperative: “If he purged enough enemies, he satisfied his conscience. He had done his duty to Angkar” (Ngor 1987:229). As “traitors,” those who criticized Angkar’s policies, stole food, attempted to escape, conspired against the state, or did not display the “proper” revolutionary spirit could be legitimately punished and/or executed. Such violence against enemies was glorified by the Khmer Rouge ideology, as illustrated by the frequent references to blood in the national anthem, political speeches, and revolutionary songs.

This blood imagery also invoked another theme in Cambodian culture—*kum*, or a grudge that often leads to disproportionate revenge. *Kum* is “a long-standing

grudge leading to revenge much more damaging than the original injury. If I hit you with my fist and you wait five years and then shoot me in the back one dark night, that is *kum*. Cambodians know all about *kum*. “It is the infection that grows on our national soul.” Because one of the most common situations in which Cambodians developed this type of grudge was when another person made them lose face or suffer, many peasants harbored resentment toward the rich and powerful who looked down upon them and enjoyed a much easier lifestyle. Khmer Rouge ideology played upon this resentment by explaining to its supporters that the rich had traditionally oppressed the poor and that the situations could only be changed through class struggle (another concept that invoked the warrior tradition). When they took power, many Khmer Rouge thus had a class grudge against “capitalists” who had often treated them with a lack of respect, were responsible for their impoverishment and suffering, and who had supported the Lon Nol forces that had killed many of their compatriots.

A prescient awareness that the Khmer Rouge might attempt to take revenge upon the urbanites after obtaining power is evident in comments made by several survivors. One person reported how “Khmer Rouge speakers publicly admitted they had been fired by ‘uncontrollable hatred’ for members of the ‘old society.’ We were so angry when we came out of forest,” one speaker allegedly said, “that we didn’t want to spare even a baby in its cradle.” Ngor also relates an anecdote about how, during a propaganda dance, costumed cadre would pound their chests with clenched fists and shout over and over again at the top of their lungs: “BLOOD AVENGES BLOOD!... Blood avenges Blood. You kill us, we kill you. We

‘new’ people had been on the other side of the Khmer Rouge in the civil war... Symbolically, the Khmer Rouge had just announced that they were going to take revenge” (Ngor 1987: 140-1). Khmer Rouge could morally justify their killing as an act of revenge against people who had been responsible for traditional class inequalities and the wartime deaths of numerous comrades.

Two other forms of moral justification for killing were also operative during DK: the use of palliative comparisons and of torture to extract confessions. First, the suffering and death of the people was sometimes legitimized by negatively comparing such privations to those the Khmer Rouge endured during the war. A common Khmer Rouge response to questions about overwork, disease, starvation, living conditions, and/or random execution was that “the revolutionaries suffered ten times worse than you during the war.” Through the use of such comparisons, Khmer Rouge cadre were able to minimize the harmful effects of the death and privations that the populace was enduring. Second, the Khmer Rouge often sent suspected “enemies” to prison centers where they were tortured until they confessed to their “crimes.” The conditions in these “reeducation” centers were appalling: prisoners were often chained together in extremely hot and cramped quarters, severely beaten or disfigured, left lying in their excrement and urine, tortured in horrific ways, and/or randomly executed. Such dehumanization made it easier to torture victims. Torture produced their confessions. Confession morally justified the entire process.

**Desensitization:** Upon completing a post-war study, the U.S. armed forces were stunned to discover that only fifteen percent of trained combat riflemen reported having fired their weapons in World War II. On the basis of this information, basic training was revamped so that recruits would be desensitized to killing. Indoctrination techniques were geared to getting soldiers used to the idea of “wasting” an enemy. As one marine reported: “Kill, kill, kill, kill, It was drilled into your mind so much that it seemed like when it actually came

down to it, it didn’t bother you.”

Khmer Rouge cadre seem to have undergone an analogous desensitization process. Recruits were put through an intensive indoctrination program that “filled their hearts and minds with a seething, unquenchable hatred [for the enemy].” Propaganda meetings, ideological training, self-criticism, and membership in various associations were all geared toward producing this proper “revolutionary spirit.” Extremely young people from the poorest segments of society were favored for the army, since they were, in Maoist terms, like “a blank page on which we can write anything.”

The Khmer Rouge had also become acclimated to violence during years of guerilla warfare, U.S. bombing, and civil war. Many survivors have commented on how tough and battle-seasoned Khmer Rouge soldiers appeared when they victoriously entered Phnom Penh. Their attitude toward violence was often similar to that of Comrade Chev, for whom “the act of killing other human beings was routine. Just part of the job. Not even worth a second thought.” One informant explained to me that at first Khmer Rouge like Chev “wouldn’t have the heart to kill people and might have even pitied their victims. After executing a few people, however, killing became normal to them, a way of proving their bravery.” The banality of death was reinforced by DK ideology, particularly the local-level implementation of the violent ethic and general glorification of blood sacrifice. Like the Nazi doctors, some of the initiates to this world of violence reportedly had to get drunk before they could execute their victims. Eventually, however, many of these “soldiers were able to kill without being intoxicated. Some even learned to relish it and bragged about it afterward.” For such “agents of death,” repeated exposure to violence gradually blunted their sensitivity to killing.

**Obedience to Authority:** If many people were skeptical about Arendt’s description of Eichmann as a normal bureaucrat who was epitomized the “banality of evil,” these doubts were largely erased by Stanley

Milgram's research on "obedience to authority." Milgram found that a large majority of his subjects would obey the experimenter's commands to continue shocking a "learner," even when they could clearly see that the voltage designation read: "Danger—Severe Shock." Afterwards, many subjects explained that they were only "doing as I was told." Such research illustrates that people will more readily commit acts of violence in situations in which they are given orders that "must be obeyed" and can displace blame onto authority figures.

Strong social precursors for this type of obedience existed in Cambodian culture. Like other Southeast Asian countries, Cambodian political interactions often took place on the basis of patron-client relationships (*bâks puok, khsae royeah*). In return for protection and assistance in matters in which only someone with more power could be effective, a client incurred a moral debt that had to be repaid through loyalty, gifts, and obedience to her or his patron, whose own influence would thus increase incrementally. During DK, Angkar became the new political authority to whom such loyalty and absolute obedience were due. People were told not to think—"Angkar thinks for you." Obedience was enforced by intimidation, spying, criticism sessions, indoctrination, and terror.

In addition to the expectation that the populace would serve Angkar, soldiers were trained to unquestioningly obey Angkar's orders. Recruits returning from indoctrination training were reported to have been converted into well-disciplined "fanatics who would not deviate from [a] prescribed course of action." Given that the violent ethic had been legitimated on the local level, this military ethos of strict discipline and obedience remained in force throughout DK. "In the civil war [such soldiers] had been trained to kill Lon Nol forces. When they were ordered to kill 'new' people on the front lines they obeyed automatically." One Khmer Rouge executioner told me that he killed because "I had to obey the orders of my superior. If they ordered me to do something, I would do it. If we

didn't obey, we would have been killed."

Such obedience was reinforced by group norms. Cambodians place great importance upon maintaining face because honor is gained through the respect and obedience of others. In social interactions, Cambodians remain extremely concerned about how others evaluate the way they perform the duties expected of someone of their status. This desire to gain honor through the positive evaluations of others contributed to group conformity. In DK, Khmer Rouge soldiers belonged both to Angkar and to smaller units whose survival often depended on one another. In addition to following military discipline and being loyal to their leaders, individuals would also have felt pressured to obey orders for fear of losing face in front of their comrades. One person explained that if a soldier didn't obey an order to kill, "it meant that she or he was a coward, the most inferior person in the group, the one who had lost to the others." Moreover, those who distinguished themselves in the performance of their duty gained honor and might be promoted. The result was that "when the order came from Angkar to kill, they obeyed."

The lack of contrition evinced by some of these Khmer Rouge was in part due to their ability to deflect responsibility for the acts they were perpetrating. Orders came from Angkar and thus were not the responsibility of the individuals actually committing acts of violence. Relocation orders could be explained by saying: "This is Angkar's rule, not my rule." Torturers would tell their victims to "please tell Angkar the truth." Since Angkar represented "everyone," accountability for such actions could be successfully diffused.

The Conversion Process: How are people like Comrade Chev converted into genocidal killers? As noted previously, the specific inputs required to turn someone into an "agent of death" will vary depending on that individual's life history. One, several, or all of the PSD reduction strategies discussed above may be pivotal in creating people who can commit acts of evil.

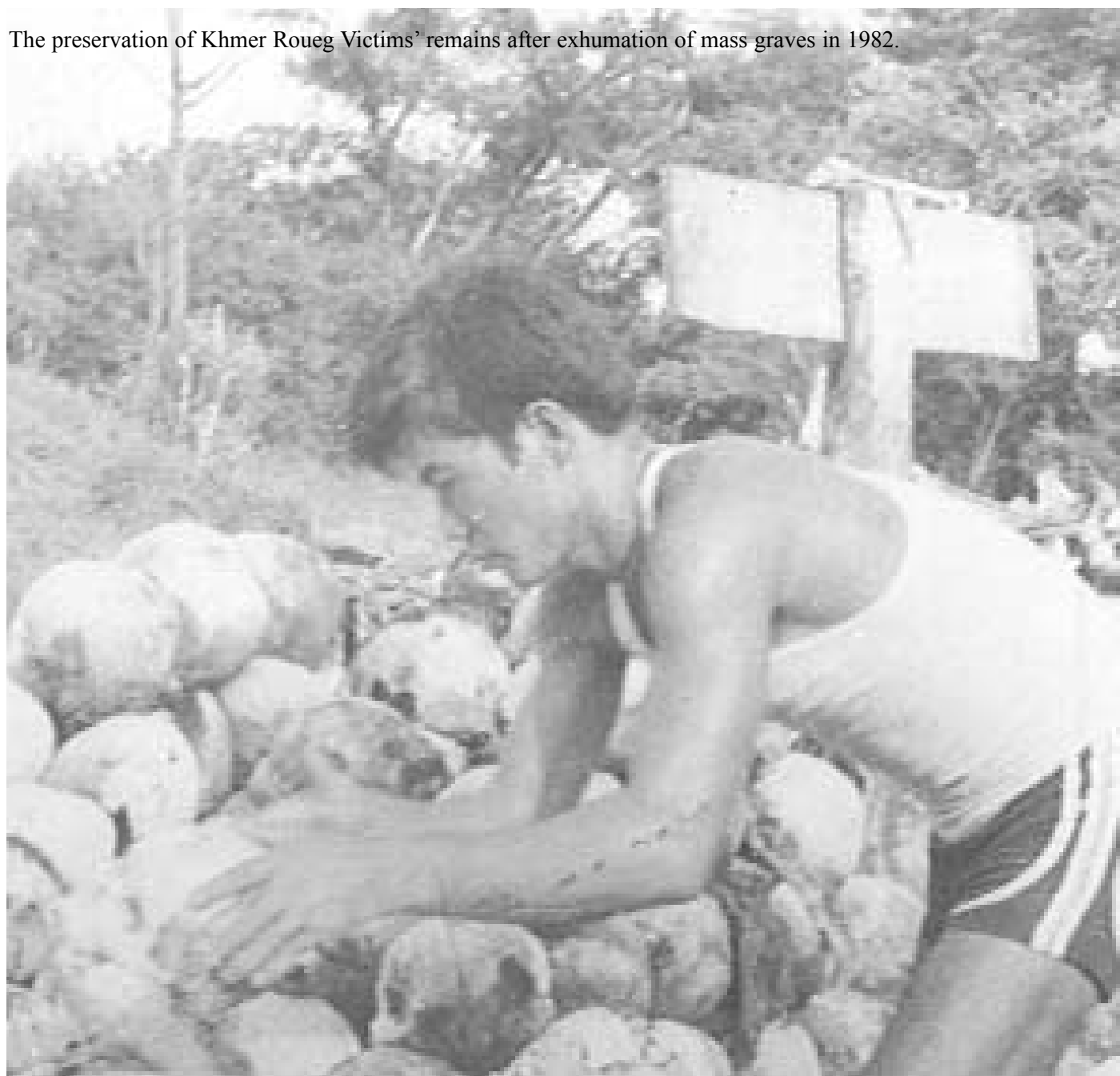


These people will draw upon the “state-level response” as they make their own “individual-level response” to the PSD that arises when they kill. Such cognitive restructuring involves a dialectic in which complex processes interact to push the individual along the “continuum of destructiveness.” The exclusion and devaluation of a group of individuals set them outside of a given community. Dehumanization morally justifies

the harm of these people. By using euphemism and deflecting responsibility onto authority figures, any remaining culpability can be diffused. As people are harmed, the perpetrators become acclimated to violence. Desensitization makes the dehumanization of victims seem more normal.

Many Khmer Rouge would have experienced PSD when they were asked to kill people who had

The preservation of Khmer Rouge Victims’ remains after exhumation of mass graves in 1982.



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previously been members of their community (i.e., when the violent and gentle ethics came into conflict). These “agents of death” reduced their PSD in a number of ways. First, they changed these cultural models (i.e., they were able to do this because the DK regime effectively glorified violence and undermined the gentle ethic in the creation of the “killing fields”). Second, these actors changed their behavior (i.e., once they had killed, such

violence became more routine). Third, Khmer Rouge cadre acted in an environment that had been dramatically altered (i.e., DK ideology not only legitimated but actually glorified the violent ethic in local-level interactions). Finally, these individuals were able to add new, lower level-schemas that made the larger cultural models more consonant (i.e., through dehumanization, the use of euphemism, moral justification, the deflection of responsibility). The result of this process of cognitive restructuring was the creation of “agents of deaths” like Comrade Chev who could commit genocidal atrocities.

**Conclusion: Anthropological Thoughts on Genocide**

There are blows in Life so violent—I can’t answer!

Blows as if from the hatred of God; as if before them, the deep waters of everything lived through were backed up in the soul...I can’t answer!

Not many; but they exist... They open dark ravines in the most ferocious face and in the most bull-like back.

Perhaps they are the horses of that heathen Atilla, or the black riders sent to us by Death.

—Cesar Vallejo, “The Black Riders”

While I agree with Cesar Vallejo that it is difficult to comprehend how people can come to kill each other so easily, I do think we can understand events like large-scale genocide. When confronted with the horror of genocide, scholars have all too often turned away from exploring the origins of such violence. Anthropologists have been particularly negligent in this respect. Perhaps the relativistic ethos that guards “our” cultures of study has prevented us from making stronger statements about the morality of genocidal events. As is evident from this essay, I do not think that this is a responsible stance. It is precisely because anthropologists can make insightful analyses of the conditions that facilitate large-scale genocide that we must begin to examine this topic.

This essay has been an attempt to initiate such a dialogue by drawing on both psychology and anthropology. I would argue that, before discarding western



psychological concepts, we must first determine if they can be productively applied cross-culturally—albeit in a form modified in terms of anthropological understanding. By doing so, we can enter into an interdisciplinary debate about genocide. Psychosocial dissonance represents one concept that can be fruitfully forged from a synthesis of psychological and anthropological insights and can help us understand the genocidal events that took place in Cambodia and, potentially, elsewhere.

This essay has not only shown the ways in which perpetrators of violence attempt to deal with PSD, but also how a genocidal regime deliberately manipulates cultural models to transform the consciousness of these “agents of death.” Because it can account for both micro-level and macro-level factors, the model of PSD I propose is able to provide a more complete explanation than can either a “top-down” or “bottom-up” perspective alone. For example, a macro-level approach which assumes that genocidal killers are homogeneous automatons who blindly follow state ideology cannot explain variations in the “individual-level response” of disparate actors. Likewise, a micro-level framework that focuses primarily on psychodynamic processes has difficulty accounting for how the “state-level response” shapes the contexts in which genocidal violence takes place. Because a model of PSD is able to draw insights from both the micro and macro levels of analysis in a culturally sensitive manner, it represents a distinct anthropological contribution to our understanding of the origins of large-scale genocide. Given their work on violence and other complex topics, anthropologists can develop many more insightful analyses that increase our understanding of large-scale genocide even further. I urge them to begin doing so.

One of the most disturbing conclusions that has emerged from this analysis is that genocide does not seem to be something only “sadistic killers” are capable of performing. Long ago, Arendt correctly pointed out that such killing can become banal, something almost anyone can come to do with appropriate training and/or

cognitive restructuring. If this is true, how can we prevent genocide? First, as indicated above, we can develop analytical constructs that provide insight into how genocide arises and, once it is occurring, how it can be stopped. For example, the notion of PSD helps us understand how people can be converted into “agents of death” through a combination of ideological, socio-cultural, and cognitive changes. To recognize genocide in the making, we can therefore monitor a given society’s “state-level response” to see if it is setting up the preconditions for genocidal PSD reduction (e.g., by undermining cultural models that foster nonviolence, promoting violence against devalued groups through ideology, producing a euphemistic discourse of destruction). Similarly, once genocidal violence is taking place, we can attempt to interfere with, or counteract, the “individual-level response” that converts a person into an “agent of death.” Since dehumanization is so crucial to the conversion process, we can take steps to “rehumanize” victims. Obviously, each case must be examined separately to determine exactly how to prevent/stop genocidal killers. While remaining sympathetic to the spirit of Vallejo’s words, we must try to produce such sensitive analyses of genocide. We can answer.

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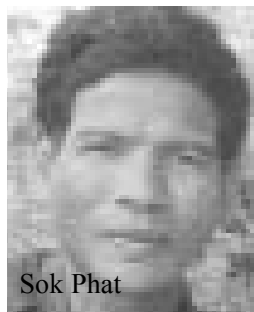
# Why Aren't Senior Khmer Rouge Leaders Prosecuted?

*Dara Peou Vanthan*

Many of my friends have asked me whether the Khmer Rouge (KR) leaders can be prosecuted. I was not prepared for this question. However, I do believe all Cambodians, including former KR cadres, are increasingly interested in the negotiations on the establishment of the KR tribunal.

It has been over five years since the Government of Cambodia wrote to the UN, requesting international assistance for a tribunal. The negotiations between Cambodia and the UN, which seemed to be leading toward the creation of a mixed tribunal for prosecuting top KR leaders for the deaths of millions of Cambodians from 1975 to 1979, have yet to bear fruit. From the first letter of the Royal Government of Cambodia dated June 21, 1997 to February 8, 2002, the negotiation process ceased functioning when the UN decided to withdraw from the negotiations.

Cambodian people whose children served as cadres during Democratic Kampuchea and later died or disappeared, as well as many surviving KR cadres, are demanding the prosecution of the KR leaders. Moreover, some of them have stated that they will not be reluctant to appear in court if requested to do so.



Sok Phat

Sok Phat resides in Tik Phos district, Kampong Chhnang province, and wants the speedy creation of a tribunal. A former Khmer Rouge soldier, he was detained at S-21 (Tuol Sleng Prison) in 1978. He said, "When the KR leaders are prosecuted,

people's living conditions will improve; if not, it is because nepotism is continuing to occur... Not nepotism on our side only, but the KR's as well. The prosecution will stop this and relieve everyone..."

On, who lives in Tporng district, Kampong Speu province, recalled a Khmer Rouge slogan, "The cow can be lost, but not the rope." He explained, "We can think about ourselves; the rope is like a network, which is more important than a cow. If we have a rope, we can catch a cow anywhere."

Pil Phan, a resident of Rolea Phieat district, Kampong Chhnang province, said that he wanted the KR tribunal to be established quickly; otherwise, it is possible that none of the suspects will survive before being prosecuted. He also said, "I want the tribunal. But as I listen to the radio, nothing has changed. It just stays in the negotiation stage. Yet, one after another, the KR leaders continue to die. Soon there won't be any suspects alive."

Pol Pot, the infamous Maoist-inspired communist and secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), died on April 16, 1998. Ke Pauk, military commander of the Eastern Zone, died on February 17, 2002.

Recently, there have been new indications that negotiations will resume as a result of the exchange of letters between the Cambodian government and United Nations. H.E. Hor Namhong, minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation, stated that Kofi Anan wanted a mandate for the negotiation and the Cambodian government showed an apparent intention to have a tribunal.

Senior KR leaders like Nuon Chea, 74, Ieng Sary, 72, and Khieu Samphan, 73, are living freely in Cambodia. Only S-21 chief Duch and the infamous military commander Mok are being detained, awaiting the tribunal.

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*Dara Peou Vanthan is the supervisor of the Project to Promote Accountability.*

# She Can't Stop Remembering

*Dany Long*



Din Oeun

Din Oeun, 60, is a native of Pochendam village, Svay Antor subdistrict, Prey Veng district, Prey Veng province. Her father, named Daung Din, died of disease during the Pol Pot regime. Her mother, Nut Ao, 81, is still alive.

In 1970, Din Oeun married Tep Yun, called Chuy, who was born in Peam Ro district, Prey Veng province. Chuy's parents were Vietnamese who fled from Vietnam to establish new lives in Peam Ro district.

During the period of heavy American bombing on Peam Ro, Chuy fled to Pochendam village and stayed temporarily at the house of Leang, his former neighbor. During that time, he fell in love with Din Oeun and invited a few senior villagers and Leang to request permission from Din's family to marry her. Din Oeun's parents agreed and demanded an engagement present of 500 Riels and five tables of food.

The wedding ceremony was cheerful and attended by many relatives and neighbors. Before the Khmer Rouge regime, marrying someone of Vietnamese descent was common.

After the marriage, Chuy became a breadwinner. Unlike other villagers who farmed for a living, he traded chickens, ducks, fish and other goods. Sometimes, his trade led him as far as Vietnam. Din Oeun stayed at home, caring for the house and preparing meals for her husband.

In late 1972, Din Oeun gave birth to a daughter, which delighted Chuy. He had told his wife he wanted a daughter more than a son. Chuy was a caring husband and father. At home, he washed clothes for his wife and baby, prepared food, and rocked the baby to sleep. He called his daughter Kim Va and always brought her a present when he went on a business trip. He sometimes

brought his family to visit Prek Po and Vietnam. His parents had died since he went to live in Pochendam village; they were buried in Peam Ro district.

Around 1974, Chuy traded with Vietnamese businessmen by buying medicine from Vietnam and selling it in the Khmer Rouge territories in Prey Veng province. Sometimes, Vietnamese traders bought Chuy's goods at the border to sell in Vietnam. But the prosperous life his family enjoyed disappeared after April 17, 1975.

Chuy's Vietnamese relatives had been advising him for a few years to escape to Vietnam because of the unstable political atmosphere in Cambodia. In 1970, for example, the Republic of Kampuchea government had driven out and killed Vietnamese nationals living in Phnom Penh. Din Oeun had also tried to coax her husband into leaving Cambodia, but Chuy had disagreed, saying, "I'm happy to live and die here."

During the Pol Pot regime, the cooperative chief, Lik Chhem, assigned Chuy to work as a manure porter and other jobs at several work sites around Pochendam village. He was not ordered to work at sites far from his home, nor did he send his daughter to a children's unit, for he was afraid his daughter would not be fed well. Instead, he brought his daughter to work with him. While carrying earth, he held his daughter's hand. At mealtime, he fed her until she was full before he ate. He always begged a lump of rice from the cooks and wrapped in the edge of his scarf in case his daughter became hungry at night.

Despite the intensity of the work and the lack of food, he never complained about exhaustion or said he did not want to go to work. He always completed what he was ordered to do.

In about August 1977, the cooperative chief ordered soldiers from Svay Antor subdistrict to summon Chuy to the subdistrict office before setting off to cut ropeak

plants. Before he left he reminded his wife and mother-in-law to “take good care of Kim Va; I’ll return in several days.” Chuy then disappeared without a trace.

Thirty year-old Din Oeun was put in a women’s unit. The unit chief assigned her to transplant and harvest rice and transport earth. Sometimes, she was ordered to do her work as far as Ampil and Tnaot villages on the Vietnamese border. At other times, she was sent to work in the fields until midnight, and sometimes spent the entire night there.

Din Oeun saw her family only rarely. Even though she sometimes worked near her home, she had little time to feed, bathe, or sing to her daughter, as her husband had done. Din Oeun was always tired, and Angkar did not give her new clothes to replace the tattered ones she wore every day.

On the day the Khmer Rouge took Chuy away, Din Oeun was away from home harvesting rice north of Pochendam village. When she was working, one of her colleagues told her, “Your husband is being taken away!” Upon hearing this, she dropped her sickle and ran toward home. When she arrived, she saw soldiers ready to take Chuy away. But they told her that the cooperative chief had called Chuy and other people to get prepared for slashing ropeak plants. She packed a few belongings for her husband, saying, “Husband! If you are ordered to slash ropeak, please return home as soon as you complete your work.” She did not realize that the Khmer Rouge were going to execute her husband.

A week later, she began to think that her husband was not going to return, because the wife and children of her older brother, Lach Ni, had been taken away in a similar fashion and had not yet returned. As time passed, she started to accept that her husband would never return. Despite her grief, she dared not inquire or complain to the cooperative chief, because she was worried about the safety of herself and her daughter. When she needed to cry, she had to leave the presence of other people.

Din Oeun revealed, “I think that they killed my husband because they learned about him through the

statistics each village collected. I never told anyone my husband was a Yuon [Vietnamese]; they knew it themselves. In addition, my husband spoke Khmer with a Vietnamese accent.” The Khmer Rouge began to kill Vietnamese when it began fighting Vietnam in early 1977. Din Oeun said that the Khmer Rouge policy toward exterminating the Vietnamese minority in Cambodia was that “if the husband was a Vietnamese and the wife a Khmer, only the husband was executed. If the wife was a Vietnamese and the husband a Khmer, then the children and the wife were to be killed.”

The soldier who came to get Chuy acted under orders from the cooperative chief, Chhem, and a unit chief, called Huon. Both were later executed. After the Khmer Rouge took Chuy away, Din Oeun was not evacuated to Battambang or Pursat like Lach Ny’s family. She lived alone with her daughter. She changed her daughter’s name from Kim Va to Samean, since she was afraid the Khmer Rouge would take her away like her father.

When the Khmer Rouge soldiers took Chuy away, Kim Va had already learned to speak. She had been fondly cared for by her father and had spent most of her time with him. When she did not see him for a long time, she would ask her mother frequently, “Mom, where is dad?” Din Oeun cautiously answered, “They took him to slash ropeak.” Kim Va continued, “Will he come back soon, Mom?” Din Oeun replied, “I don’t even know myself.” A few days later, Kim Va asked the same questions and Din Oeun answered the same thing, “He is on a mission. I don’t know either why he doesn’t come back.” After the Khmer Rouge regime was brought down in 1979, Kim Va stopped asking her mother, for by then she understood that the Khmer Rouge had killed her father.

Din Oeun recalled that soon after the Khmer Rouge led Chuy away to slash ropeak, she frequently dreamt about him. One night she dreamt that Chuy’s soul visited her and told her: “they took me to be killed.” Although the tragedy happened long ago, it is still vivid in Din Din Oeun’s mind. Describing his story to

others gives her a sense of relief. She added, “If the Khmer Rouge had killed my daughter too, I’d go with her. I wouldn’t be afraid anymore.”

What that made Din Oeun unable to forget Chuy was Chuy’s thoughtfulness—he did everything for his family.

After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime on January 7, 1979, Din Oeun and her daughter had to rely on themselves. They could not farm like other villagers, since they had no cows with which to plow. At present, she earns her living by selling groceries and other household products, but her small income is not sufficient for her family’s needs. She earns only enough to feed herself each day. From dawn till dusk, both mother and daughter work without rest. Whenever she talks about Chuy, Din Oeun sheds tears. “If her father had survived, she would not have had to work so hard. Her father would have let her lead a leisurely life. He wanted his daughter to grow up quickly and to be clever, so that he could teach her to

work with him.” She continued, “When I see her, I think about her father. I can never forget him.”

The terror left behind by the Khmer Rouge regime still lingers in her mind. “I will not offer my daughter to a Vietnamese family; I’m afraid she’ll face the same fate as I did.”

On Ancestors’ Day and the Khmer and Vietnamese New Years’ Days, despite her poverty, Din Oeun struggles to prepare food to offer to the monks and prayers for the soul of Chuy. Since Chuy died, she cannot afford to hold a significant religious ceremony for him. She said whenever she has the money, she will do it for the soul of Chuy.

She disclosed, “If I have a chance and support, I want to sue the killers of my husband. Sadly, no one cares about this; I cannot do it alone.”

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*Dany Long is a staff-member of the Project to Promote Accountability.*

## A Daughter Lost During the Khmer Rouge Revolution

*Pivoine Pang*

Before 1975, girls and boys between the ages of 13 and 18 in Prek Sdei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, were selected by their village chiefs to serve the Khmer Rouge revolution. They did not understand why they should do so. They just obeyed their chiefs, who said: “join the revolution to liberate the country.” Some volunteered to join, believing the propaganda. Others were forced to.

Im Chan joined the revolution when she was 16. She was convinced to join by Sar Tang Yeng and Srei, chiefs of women’s units of her village. Chan said, “If I didn’t go, the subdistrict chief would mistreat me, force me to work day and night.” Nay It became a Khmer Rouge soldier when she was 16. In mid-1974, she was informed that her older brother had died of natural causes. She asked permission from her unit chief to go home to attend her brother’s funeral, but the chief refused.

Instead, she was sent to work as a stretcher bearer at the Tul Kraing battlefield.

Female soldiers were assigned to work on the front lines, transporting ammunition and food to the battlefield, moving the wounded, and guarding corpses. Nam Sokha said, “Women were required to have a gun like men.” Older girls were sent to the front lines, while younger girls were required to bring food from supply camps to the defensive lines.

In 1975, a subdistrict chief named Pich assigned Sar Tang Yeng to be the chief of her village’s women. Her father Sreng said, “If my daughter did not serve the revolution, she would be unable to escape death. All young women in the village were sent to the battlefield by the subdistrict chief.” When she arrived at the battlefield, Sar Tang Yeng was told to guard corpses. Too frightened, she ran back home. Two days later, the





village chief ordered her to return to the battlefield. Sar could do nothing, for if she stayed, she would be killed. Her father never saw or heard of his daughter again.

Lo Sim was forced by Srei, the chief of Bratheat village, to join the Khmer Rouge. Srei berated Lo Sim: “How could you stay, while the others have gone!” Sim was assigned to cook food and then transport it to the battlefield. Sometimes, when she reached her destination, the bombing began. Unable to bear such work any longer and hearing that her mother was seriously ill, she escaped and went home. A few hours after she arrived, the unit chief brought her back. Her mother cried herself to death over her daughter.

Srin was the father of Chea Im. They were separated in 1973, when Chea Im was just 13 years old. Chann Kien, the Chong Prek village chief, talked her into joining the Khmer Rouge. She was later told to bring food to the battlefield of Prek Tauch. Like other girls, she returned home only to be forced to return later. People told Srin that his daughter was assigned to disassemble ammunition behind Kampong Sambour pagoda. Srin has had no news of his daughter since then, and does not know whether she is dead or alive. After 1979, when meeting with other girls who had left home with his daughter, he questioned them about his daughter. He said, “I fell into the Khmer Rouge’s trick.”

Some girls, after disappearing into the Khmer Rouge revolution for many years, returned home only to find that their parents had already passed away. Tuy Son left home and joined the revolution when she was 18 years old because her parents forced her to marry a man she did not love. Tuy Son asserted that whether she did that or not, sooner or later the unit chief would have summoned everyone to go. She worked as a stretcher bearer. Many months later, because she missed home, she returned, but the unit chief brought her back. Only after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed was she able to return home. Sadly, her mother had already died due to lack of medical care. Later, the same man who had loved her during the revolution again proposed marriage. With compassion for her father, she agreed.

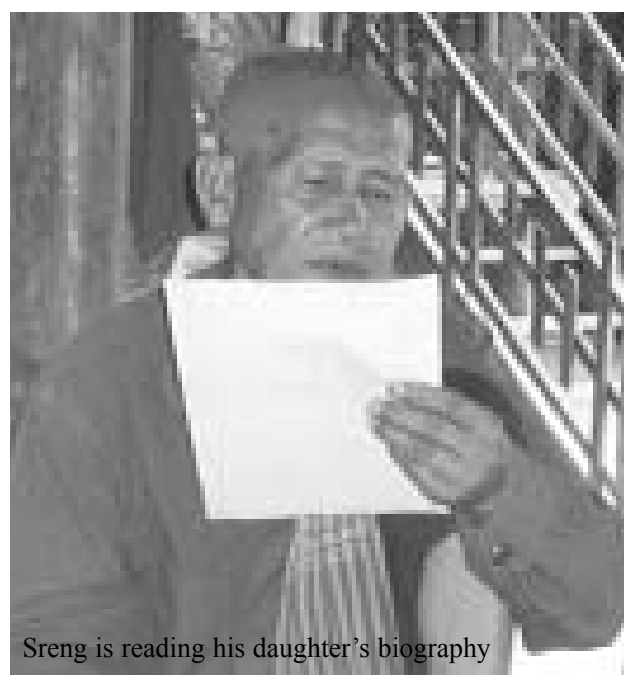
Two months after they took control of Phnom Penh, the Khmer Rouge screened and sent suspect women to the southwestern area of Phnom Penh. There, those who had disobeyed military regulations, such as escaping home or committing moral offenses, were sent to work at Stung Bakou. Veng Phal, who had run home, was sent to Stung Bakou to work at hard labor almost without rest.

In 1975, the unit chief sent Leng Nav to construct dams and irrigation channels, and work in the rice fields at Stung Bakou. During their retreat in 1979, the Khmer Rouge forced her into the mountains. She attempted to escape to Thailand, but was arrested by Vietnamese soldiers and sent back home. At home, she became an orphan because her parents had died due to overwork.

Even now, more than twenty years later, some parents and relatives await the return of their daughters. It is so long that some parents almost forget they lost daughters in the regime. The Khmer Rouge not only reduced the country to ashes, they also devastated the people by destroying their families.

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*Pivoine Pang is a researcher of the Documentation Center of Cambodia.*



Sreng is reading his daughter’s biography

*Letter from the Reader:*

## **The Vital Role of the Searching for the Truth Magazine**

I was a baby when the great-leap-forward regime began to engulf Cambodia on April 17, 1975. Ruthless execution, forced labor, starvation, forced evacuation, religious persecution, and other oppressive acts on Cambodians—young and old—happened from this day until the day of its collapse on January 7, 1979.

I am aware of all of these after reading the magazine Searching for the Truth of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam). Still, it is very important for me to continue to read this magazine about this barbarous regime. This magazine is truly vital for Searching for the Truth and plays a key role in the establishment of the Khmer Rouge tribunal.

I strongly believe that an independent tribunal will be created, in part, as an effort of the DC-Cam.

*C-Tate Chhun, Program Officer*

*Japanese Center for Conflict Prevention (JCCP)*

## **The Great Essence...**

Phnom Penh, July 17, 2002

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, who dispatches Searching for the Truth to my office every month. This magazine is expressive of what happened during the Pol Pot regime. I personally admire the Searching for the Truth team, who spend tremendous efforts on searching for important historical accounts, which we are all eager to know and understand, to publish.

Despite the fact that, most people went through this regime, we have yet to learn about it from every corner of the country thoroughly.

To avail myself of this opportunity, I am pleased to thank one of the magazine team members, who I met at my office (my apologies for not remembering his name). He brings the magazine to me every month.

Please accept the deepest friendliness from me.

*Sophona Kem*

*Head of Information Department of the National Assembly Secretariat*





The Documentation Center of Cambodia would like to appeal to governments, foundations and individuals for support for the publication, *Searching for the Truth*. To contribute, please phone (855) 23 21 18 75 or (855) 12 90 55 95 or Email: [dccam@online.com.kh](mailto:dccam@online.com.kh). Thank you.

**A magazine of the Documentation Center of Cambodia: *Searching for the Truth*. Number 33, September 2002.  
Funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)**