

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

REPORT OF CGP MAPPING TEAM VISIT TO PREY VENG PROVINCE

24 - 27 October 1995

13 - 15 February 1996

Survey Team : Charles Bowers and Hak Sophal

Tuesday 24 October

On arrival in Prey Veng Town we met the Second Governor, Mr. Chhay Sayeun, who arranged for us to meet with him and his officer at 2:30 pm. The Second Deputy Governor chaired the meeting, and present were Mr. Khim Sava, Chief of the Department of Culture and the Arts, Mr. Chen Tak, Chief of the Department of Cult and Religion, Mr. Leng Cheth, Deputy Chief of the Department of Information, Colonel Yet Yuon, Deputy Commissioner of Police, and the Deputy of the Cabinet Office.

After discussion of the Genocide Sites in Prey Veng, it was decided that, because of the flooding, the only sites possible to visit at that time were in four Districts, Kamchay Mea, Prey Veng District, Peam Ro and Ba Phnom Districts. The district with by far the most important sites in the province, namely Peareang District (KR Region 22), was accessible only by boat, three hours each way from Prey Veng Town, so it was decided to return there at another time. There was some discussion of the sites in Peareang District, as Mr. Ieng Cheth had visited the sites there in 1979, and was present during the excavation in 1982. Here he described a " hill " of clothing at the Tuol Slang killing site in Krang Village, Prey Sralet Sub-district, and hundreds of mass graves, and also a similarly important killing site at Kanchom pagoda, in Kanchom Sub-district. Ieng Cheth claimed that the two Santesok chiefs of Region 22 were named Men and Mao.

Wednesday 25 October

The survey team set off from Prey Veng Town at 7:30 am, accompanied by Mr. Chen Tak, Chief of the Department of Cult and Religion, who had been a prisoner of the KR in Kamchay Mea District from 1975-77, and two armed policemen.

Kamchay Mea District Sites :

Ta Som

Kranhung Sub-district

140201/2

After a fifty kilometers drive over very rocky roads, we arrived at the District HQ of Kamchay Mea District, and were taken by District officials to the Ta Som prison site where Mr. Chen had been held prisoner. According to this witness this was a small prison holding only 150 prisoners while he was there. They were all men, mostly from Phnom Penh. He knew two others in the prison who died there, one a former Representative, Yi Yamret, and another, also a clerk, who died by torture for stealing some green corn to eat. Others were Lon Nol soldiers.

The prison was made of bamboo with palm leaf roof, and the prisoners were kept in separate small cells. Prisoners slept on the ground, and were tortured by being tied to a tree and hit with palm branches. Most of the tortured victims died 4-5 hours later

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with blood coming out of the mouth. Other died from overwork (digging irrigation canals) and not having enough to eat. The two prison chiefs were Yem and Samay. There were two mass graves (not excavated) under water in the rice fields nearby.

Prey Boeng Pruos

Kranhung Sub-district

140203/4

We were next taken to the mass graves near Samaki Village (previously Prey Bang Prou) in Kra New Sub-district. We were shown many mass graves in the forest that had been partly opened by grave robbers, with bones and teeth scattered around, and district officials told us that they had counted 62 mass graves at that site, with estimated more than 5,000 victims. About two kilometers away we were shown the site of the prison, and spoke to a witness who saw the prison after liberation and before it was destroyed. He drew on the ground a long narrow building of bamboo and palm thatch, with small individual cells " Tuol Sleng " style.

The Chief of Kra New Commune, Vong Chun, said that one of the killers escaped, and hid in his house for one night. He said that Nuon Chea had planned to kill the killers after they had killed three times, together with the driver of the truck. He said that they used three killers, and that they took turns to kill as their arm tired from their labor. They used a metal pipe, and it became bent with the blows.

Ta Keng pagoda

Smang Kang Cheung Sub-distinct 140205

Ta Keng pagoda is the site of one mass grave, with more than 15 graves nearby under water in the rice fields. Prisoners who were held in the pagoda, and executed here, were staff from the local hospital, and people who tried to escape from the hospital.

Thursday 26 October

On Thursday morning we visited the Department of Cult and Religion office to search through their records in the early 1980's, and managed to located a copy of the 1982 Report on the Genocide in Prey Veng Province, and were given a certified copy of this report. We also began a search in the Provincial Archives to attempt to locate other relevant documents, but had to leave this task in the hands of the Chief of the Department of Information, who will send copies of any documents found to our office in Phnom Penh.

Peam Ro District Sites :

Peam pagoda

Peam Ro Sub-district

140701

The first site visited in Peam Ro District was the memorial at Peam pagoda, close to the ferry where highway 1 crosses the Mekong at Neak Leoung. This memorial contains the bones excavated from the pits at nearby Chroey pagoda. The Stupa containing the bones is in quite good condition, and the bones are well protected from animals.

Chroey pagoda

Peam Ro Sub-district

140702

This pagoda was destroyed in the fighting between the Lon Nol forces and the DK pre- 1975, and was used as an execution and mass burial site 1975-78. We could not

Ba Phnom District Sites :

140101

This witness gave the name of the KR Chief of Santesok for that Region was Korn, and the most vicious killer was called Rinn. No local people were allowed into that area.

By the end of 1977 both groups were all taken to the Kriang Svay and Kriang Kor killing fields and executed. In 1978 the prisons were used for Sou Phim army soldiers, who were also killed at Kriang Kor. As Ouk Ea says, " the New Soldiers killed the Old Solders, and then they began to research the Vietnamese families in the District to be killed. " In 1977-78 most Vietnamese in the District were killed at Kriang Kor, including the wives and children of many Khmer who were married to Vietnamese women.

141001/2

After driving about 15 kilometers South from the District HQ we met the Chief of Domrey Poun Commune, Yem Chhean, who then accompanied us to the sites. Yem

Tuol Kriang Kor **Domrey Poun Sub-district** **141003**

Thmey pagoda (former site)	Domrey Poun Sub-district	141004
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Wednesday 14 February 1996

Peareang District Sites :

One witness, Chun Set, aged 53, was born in Krang Village, and described how he had been asked by Santesok to go to Tuol Slang in 1977. He had been tied when he arrived at the Tuol and placed in a house with other victims. There were 30-40 men, women and children, and they were all tied. After several hours he was released

because they had confused him with someone else. He was told that all the others would be killed, and that he was not allowed to tell anyone about this killing.

He said that he saw a lot of book at the pits, but that the pits had been covered already. When he stepped on the pits he saw that the ground was soft, so he thought that what the KR had told him was true, and he was sick. He said that when Santesok first asked people to go to the Tuol, they were not tied, and were told that it was for work, but when they arrived at the Tuol they were tied and put in the house.

Sla pagoda	Kampong Russei Sub-district	140802/3
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After lunch at the District town, we drove 10 kilometers South to Sla pagoda. This pagoda had been destroyed by the KR in 1976, and the kot used to house Santesok. Victims were brought on foot or by ox cart from surrounding communes, and were killed at this site. There are 86 mass graves, partly excavated, and 5,250 victims. The chief monk told us that he had seen this number killed inscribed on the wall of the kot after liberation. The memorial at the pagoda contains approx. five hundred skulls.

Kanchom pagoda	Kanchom Sub-district	140804
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After a long and dusty drive back through the district HQ, we turned and drove 15 kilometers East to Kanchom pagoda. New people from Phnom Penh had been brought by truck in 1977 to be killed there. They were killed by being hit on the back of the head with a metal bar, and thrown into large ponds. There are eight such burial ponds, and 26 mass graves at the site. A small memorial did contain some bones that had been scattered near the ponds by grave robbers, but now they have been eaten by animals. The Commune Chief, Mr. Nam Thorn, estimated the more than 5000 victims had been killed at this site.

Thursday 15 February

We headed 50 kilometers South East from Prey Veng town next morning to Preah Sdach District HQ, 15 kilometers South form Hwy. 1, where we were met by Mr. Bun Thuon, District Chief of Information, and his assistant Suon Sok Kham, who accompanied us to the sites.

Srok Preah Sdach Sites :

Neaq Ta Snay **Reathor Sub-district** **140901/02**

This site is approx. 20 kilometers North West of the District HQ, and was a prison and killing site operating from 1977-78. The victims were initially new people from Svay Rieng, and then mostly Sou Phem army soldiers. They were brought on foot or by ox cart, and were killed by hitting with a hoe, and were buried in 5 large and more than 100 smaller mass graves. Witnesses informed us that the Santesok chiefs were Lon and Hon, and another called Youn, who was killed by the Chief of Police of the District at the liberation. It was estimated in 1982 that more than 8,000 victims were killed at this site.

Witness Sat Pheng, aged 32, was born in Tamau Village near the site. When he was 13 years old he was minding cows near the killing site when he saw 200-300 victims brought to the site and killed by being hit in the back of the neck with a hoe. He witnessed these killings over several days, and said that most of the victims were Sou Phem army soldiers, and women with them.

Prey Andong

Ankor Reach Sub-district

140903

Prey Andong site was quite close to the District HQ, and is located in the rice fields 500 meters behind a row of houses close to the main access road in the District from Hwy 1. The main burial site here was a small rice field about 15 meters by 30 meters. The owner of the rice field said that when they first came back there after liberation there were human bones scattered around the edge of the rice field, and that even now oil comes to the surface of the field when it is flooded. The mud is discolored reddish-brown in the dry season, and was quite different to the surrounding fields. Rags from clothing are still plowed up on the site. Nearby on a raised area there is approx. 100 mass graves which have never been excavated except by grave robbers. Mr. Bun Thuon told us that he had heard that the victims at this killing site were New People from Svay Rieng and Phnom Penh, and that they were brought on foot to be killed at the site in 1977.

Documents:

After searching through old files from the 1980's in the Office of Cult and Religion, we managed to located copies the Provincial Report on the Prey Veng Genocide sites prepared in 1982 to be sent to Phnom Penh. There were two identical copies in the file, and the Chief of Cult and Religion presented us with one certified copy for our records.

Conclusion :

We were not able to contact the Governor in Prey Veng on our first visit due to lack of prior notice of our visit, but we were very well received by his Second Deputy and his Departmental Officers. Our first visit was badly timed, being at the height of the flood season, but we were able to make up for this on our second visit when we saw some of the most important genocide sites in Prey Veng Province, namely in Peareang District, Prey Veng District, and Preah Sdach District.

The team was able to map eight major sites and three smaller sites in five districts in Prey Veng Province, with the major sites visited having a total of more than 1,000 mass graves where approx. 65,000 people were killed.

Charles Bowers

31.10.95

updated with additional sites

19.02.96