

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) MAPPING THE KILLING FIELDS OF CAMBODIA, 1997: khet PREY VENG [N-14-prey veng/a-cb-pv]

Location	Site Name/ Date	# of graves	Est. of Victim	Witness	File # / ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
srok Kanh Chreach	Sala Svay Romeat/ 25 march 1997	93 pits	1716	On Chheang អ៊ុន ឈាង	R 032501 A/ 140401	N 11°41'5313"	E 105°26'7582 "
srok Kanh Chreach	Prey Tuol Chakchrah/ 25 march 1997			Hem Soy ហែម សែយ	R 032506 A/ 140402	N 11°37' 5068"	E 105°35'6094 "
srok Kanh Chreach	Prey Toul Chakchrah/ 25 march 1997	30 pits	500	Sat Seng សាត់ សឹង	R 032507 A/ 140403	N 11°37'2801"	E 105°35'4775 "
srok Kompong Trabek	Trapeang Tnaot/ 26 March 1997	73 pits		Yem Kat យ៉ឹម ខាត់	R 032603 A/ 140301	N 11°10'2841"	E 105°30'7500 "
srok Kompong Trabek	Tuol Mreugn/ 26 March 1997			Mom Sey ម៉ុំ សី	R 032603 B/ 140302	N 11°10'0581"	E 105°30'8533 "

On March 24, 1997, the Documentation Center assigned a group of researchers-Sin Kin, Pho Tip and Hak Sopha-to search for documents related to Cambodian Genocide during Pol Pot's regime in khet Prey Veng.

Khet Prey Veng

We went to khet Prey Veng by National Road # 1, via Nacleung ferry. We reached the capital of khet Prey Veng at 9:00 a.m. When we arrived, we arranged to meet the following officials:

- First deputy chief of cabinet.
- Mr. Yut To, first deputy governor of khet Prey Veng.

Documentation Center of Cambodia

Searching for the Truth

ស្វែងរកការពិត ដើម្បីការបង្ហាញនិងយុត្តិធម៌

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After getting permission from the governor, we contacted the cultural department officer and met the following people:

- Mr. Kim Savat, chief of department.
- Mr. Put Savat, deputy chief of munti.

During the meeting, we asked for the participation of 7 officers in our expedition. Then we met the following religious officers:

1. Mr. Chen Tak, chief of department.
2. Mr. Pol Son, deputy chief of department.
3. Top Heun, administrative chief.
4. Chan Porn, religious chief.

In the meeting, we asked for information of documents related to Cambodian Genocide. At 2:00 p.m., we met munti khet superintendent, and asked for 2 bodyguards.

Geographical Features of khet Prey Veng

Prey Veng is located 91 kilometers from Phnom Penh. It consists of 12 districts, 116 sub-districts and 1,135 villages. Khet Prey Veng shares its border with:

- Khet Svay Rieng and Vietnam (in srok Kamchay Mear) in the east;
- Khet Kandal in the west;
- Khet Kompong Cham in the north; and
- Vietnam in the south.

In Pol Pot's regime, it was in eastern zone, Region 20. It covers 488,300 hectares. It consists of 129,270 hectares of rainy season paddy-field, 36,480 hectares of dry-season paddy-field, 15,240 hectares of plantation field, 37,105 hectares of forest, and 39,419 hectares of dwelling area, administration building and water ways.

The population of Prey Veng is 984,020, of which 515,132 are female. It consists of 187,458 families; 73 are ethnic Chinese families, 3,059 are ethnic Vietnamese families and 332 are Muslim and other ethnic groups. Out of the total population, 10,053 are civil servants and 2,595 are police.

Statistics of the Genocide Victims during Pol Pot's regime:

These statistics were compiled just after the liberation in 1979. The death toll was 485,261. It includes:

- 444,645 farmers;
- 12,420 civil servants;
- 2,572 monks;
- 1,539 ethnic minorities; and
- 1,076 disabled people.

At 7:30 a.m. on 25 March 1977, we headed to srok Kanh Chreach, which is located 42 kilometers from the capital of Prey Veng, by National Road 15. In Pol Pot's time, it was in the eastern zone, Region 20. We arrived at 11:30 a.m. and met with Duch Kamdom, the chief of the district.

Srok Kanh Chreach is located in the northwest of khet Prey Veng. It shares the border with:

- Srok Pognea Krek and Vietnam in the east;
- Srok Oreang Ov in the west;
- Srok Tbaung Khmom in the north; and
- Srok Kamchay Mear in the south.

General Statistics of srok Kanh Chreach

It has the population of 60,007, of which 31,757 are female. The population is divided into 12,016 families. It has 8 khum, and 99 phum.

It occupied the land of 30152 hectares, 20500 hectares is plantation area.

We arranged to meet the government officers of the village, who have the experience of searching for documents related to the genocide in Pol Pot regime. The cultural officer and chief of srok Kanh Chreach informed us that there are two main former execution centers in srok Kanh Chreach. They are:

1. Svaymead model school in phum Lngeun, khum Kabeungreay, srok Kanh Chreach, khet Prey Veng. During Pol Pot's regime, the school campus was turned into the prison and security department. After 1979, the bones of the victim were excavated from the campus and buried elsewhere.
2. The security department, prison and execution center were in phum Svay, khum Preal, srok Kanh Chreach, khet Prey Veng.

After hearing of the two execution centers, the cultural officers led us to the places, which are located in phum Svay, khum Preal, 9 kilometers to the southeast of munti khet.

Location

Important points of the execution center:

1. Security department
2. Prison (for light crimes)
3. Prison (for serious crimes)
4. Execution center

The security department, prison and execution center are located 600-700 meters from phum Svay. The execution center is 700 meters from the prison.

There, we found a witness named Sak Seng, 49, male, 1.66 meters tall, gray hair and golden artificial teeth. In Pol Pot's regime, he taught children, phum Svay, khum Preal. Besides teaching, he was also the chief of a unit in charge of tending cattle. He still lives in phum Svay, khum Preal.

The witness' proximity to the security center and execution center during Pol Pot's regime, as well as the fact that he worked for Pol Pot's men, makes him an important witness. We accompanied the witness to the execution place, 4 kilometers from phum Svay, 700 meters from the prison. We observed an execution place called Chak Chos high land. A lake, canal and jungle are nearby. Four trees mark the place. We personally saw the mass grave.

There are 20-30 pits 4m x 4m, 5m x 5m, 3m x 3m square and 1.30m-1.70m deep. After observing the pits and questioning the witness, we concluded that 100 to 200 victims were buried in these pits.

Other information

The witness claimed that Khmer Rouge security cadres started building the prison in 1974. The prison was finished in 1978-79. He told that in 1974, many Lon Nol soldiers were killed. During 1975-77, from March to April, the security cadres killed urban citizens, base people who committed mistakes, suspected CIA members and infiltrators.

The prisoners were mostly male; there were no children. Two or three people were brought to the prison each day and there was no chance for them to survive. The prisoners who were alleged to have committed light mistakes were ordered to dig the pits. The witness added that the victims had been told that they were being taken to be educated. The witness claimed that the severe genocide took place in 1977, and 1978. By early 1979, no prisoners were left alive. The perpetrators were Kim, San, Bo, Im and some other unknowns. Each of these people have disappeared.

The detailed information is available in the tapes and photo documents. We took photographs of the documents and genocidal sites.

The second witness is Hem Soy, 46, 1.60meter tall, black complexion, long sleeve white shirt, a watch and black hair. In Pol Pot regime, he was a bodyguard of Song, the chief of srok Kanh Chreach. In 1977-78, when southwestern people arrived, he became an ordinary citizen. Since 1979, he has worked in the justice office of srok Kanh Chreach. We interviewed and photographed him. He used to visit the security center of phum Svay, khum Preal. One of his sisters was killed there.

He said that the prison was built during 1973-74 and was finished in 1978. The kinds of victims killed here varied from year to year. Before 1975, the victims were mostly Lon Nol soldiers and prisoners of war, although base people accused of being infiltrators, and Khmer Rouge cadres who indulged in sex, or who were suspected to be infiltrators or of having contact with Lon Nol soldiers were also killed. After 1975, victims were mostly urban people, inhabitants who had committed mistakes or those who used to be military policemen, spies, custom officers, teachers, or students. The prisoners were placed separately, based on the mistakes they had made. Regardless, all of them had no chance to survive and were killed in 1978 and early 1979.

At 2:30 p.m., we departed for the following places:

- The security department, Svay Romeak school.
- The prison, Svay Romeak school.
- The execution site, in the campus of Svay Romeak school.

The above places are in phum Langeun, khum Kabeung Reay, srok Kancheach, khet Prey Veng. Svay Romeak school was a model school and was built by Americans during the Sangkum Reashniyum regime.

We found 2 witnesses:

The first witness was Un Chheang, 56, fair complexion, 1.65 (1.67) meters tall and gray hair. The second witness was Chhurn Chhun, 58, fair complexion, 1.62 meters tall. During Pol Pot's regime, both worked in the cooperative of phum Salong, khum Kabeung Reay, srok Kanh Chreach, khet Prey Veng. Nowadays, Un Chheang is the first commune chief of khum Kabeung Reay, srok Kanh Chreach, khet Prey Veng, where Chhurn Chhun also lives.

Our researcher group and the witnesses went to the genocidal site, which is located on the right hand side of National Road # 15, 12 kilometers west of munti khet.

At first, we examined the location of the prison, security center and execution center. Svay Romeat school was turned into prison by the Khmer Rouge. The security center is located 100 meters from the prison. We took photographs to document the location.

We saw many empty pits scattered around the campus of the school. The corpses had not been removed from the large pit, which is marked by palm trees and located near the big pond which the prisoners dug. The pond is 10 meters wide, 30 meters long, and 2 meters deep.

In 1979, the witness excavated the pits. He said that the corpses he exhumed looked as if they had just been killed. Previously, the site consisted of banana trees and approximately 93 small pits which each contained a few corpses. A big pit, 10m long, 5m wide and 2 meters deep, contained 276 or 279 victims. It is believed that 1440 to 1500 victims were buried in that place. The total number was 1,716 victims.

Types of Prisoners

First Category: Before 1975, the prisoners were mostly base people and Pol Pot cadre who had committed mistakes. After 1975, the prisoners were mostly evacuees from khet Prey Veng, Phnom Penh etc. The two witnesses claimed that Lon Nol soldiers, policemen, spies, and custom officers were killed before civil servants, professors, capitalists and Cambodian-Vietnamese.

Second category: These victims were cadre members, soldiers, srok chiefs and all of the collective deputy chiefs in srok Kanh Chreach. The executions started in 1977 and lasted until 1978. The people from the southwest came to replace the easterners who were killed by the remaining easterner cadre.

The two witness claimed that the prisoners there had no chance to survive. The local executioners were Chhon, Seng, Chhorn and Ut. The top executioner was San, from the southwest. Tes So, who worked with the zone chief Soa Pim, is known to live in khet Prey Veng.

Detailed information is available on our tape recordings of the two witness. We photographed the prison, the witnesses and the pits as documents.

On 26 March 1997, we went to Kompong Trabek, khet Prey Veng, accompanied by 2 policemen and cultural staff members. We reached the destination at 9:00 a.m. The place we went to is located 58 kilometers from srok Kanh Chreach, along National Road # 1 which continued from national road no. 15.

At first, we met:

- Chea Sroy, governor of district;
- Va Sophat, the third deputy governor of district; and
- Sok Bunthorn, chief of district cultural office.

Geographical Features of srok Kompong Trabek, khet Prey Veng

This srok is located in Region 20, in the map of Pol Pot's regime. It shares its border with:

- Srok Svay Rieng district, khet Svay Rieng in the east;
- Srok Preah Sdech in the west;
- Srok Ba Phnom and Mesang in the north; and
- Vietnam in the south.

Some information from district official

On our research in the district cultural office, we copied some useful information. We were told that in 1983, French researchers, Han Ry Loca, got a mission order from his excellency Khiev Kagnarith, secretary of state, and came to collect all Pol Pot genocidal documents. Those documents were the originals. The remaining documents were copies. We collected the information about the execution centers in srok Kompong Trabek, especially that related to the security centers and the killing sites. Cultural officer informed us that there are two sites. They are:

- Tul Mareign execution center, located in phum Kansom Ork, khum Kanso Ork, srok Kompong Trabek, khet Prey Veng; and
- Cheang Dek execution center, located in khum Cham, srok Kompong Trabek, khet Prey Veng.

We went to the first execution center in order to ask permission to copy available documents. We went through National Road # 1, 7 kilometers from munti srok, then turned left and continued for 7 kilometers to reach our destination, 14 kilometers east of district office.

In phum Kansom Ork, we met the chief of the village and two **witnesses**:

- The first witness was named Mom Sey, 64, 1.65 meter tall, fair complexion and gray hair. In Pol Pot's regime, he lived in phum Kansom Ork, khum Kansom Ork, srok Kompong Trabek, khet Prey Veng. He was imprisoned for 8 months.
- The second witness was Yim Hak, 67, gray hair, fair complexion, 1.60 meters tall. During Pol Pot's regime, he lived in the same place as the first witness and was imprisoned for a period of 1 year in Tul Mareign prison.

At 11:00 a.m., our researchers and the witnesses walked 1.5 kilometers to the execution center to inspect the site. There are many pits scattered around the compound of Tul Mareign prison, most of which have not yet been covered with soil.

The reeducation center, prison, and security center in Tul Mareign were built between 1973 and 1975 and from 1978 to 1979. Before 1975, the prisoners were those who were accused of being secret spies, CIA agents, infiltrators, and Lon Nol defected soldiers. After the liberation in 1975, evacuees, Lon Nol soldiers, military policemen, civil policemen, spies, and customs officers were imprisoned and forced to work overtime. They were interrogated and killed one after another. During 1977-78, the southwesterners came and liquidated all the prisoners, even ordinary people and families of civil servants. The husbands were killed before their wives.

The witnesses added that all of the prisoners were killed. Bones and corpses were found in every paddy-field. After 1979, many pits had not been covered with soil yet. The witnesses said that there is a total of 72 pits. Each of the small pits is 2m wide, 3m long and 1.50m deep. Several medium sized pits are 4m by 4m and 2m deep. The biggest pits are 4m wide, 20m long, and 2meters deep. With the information from the witness, we estimate that approximately.....victims were buried here. In 1977 and early 1978, the prisoners and victims were Svay Rieng citizens.

With the information from the witnesses, we concluded that there was a prison on Tul Mareign high land. On a plot of land measuring one square kilometer is located each of the following killing sites:

1. Trapaeng Thnot
2. Trapaeng Chhouk
3. Tul Chhrash
4. Tul Ko
5. Trapaeng Los
6. Reusey Chur Reusey Chin

Those places are approximately 100 meters to 200 meters from execution center. The witness added that Soa Phim's men, from the eastern zone, took truckloads of prisoners to be killed there.

Note: We photographed the witnesses and recorded their testimony.

The cultural office of srok Kompong Trabek gave us some related documents. We went to only one execution center because the GPS was broken down. Therefore, we canceled the expedition to the other execution center in Cheang Dek, khum Cham, 10 kilometers west of National Road.

Conclusion

Our research about Cambodian genocide in each province, especially khet Prey Veng, has given us good working experience, such as:

1. The officials who participated in the mission are capable and understand the value of the work and the honor that they will receive from it. They are responsible and patient, because they are used to hard work.

2. We had a good driver. The expense was reasonable, which made the work proceed very smoothly. We had good relationship with the local authorities and the people in khum, srok, and khet. We also gave gratitude money to the witnesses.
3. The admission order from the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of the Interior, together with recommendation from the director of the Documentation Center and the good relations we had with the local people made our communication go smoothly.

Difficulties and obstacles

The reasons that we could not launch additional research in Prey Veng are quoted below:

1. Svay Rieng is a big province. We will need to work very hard there.
2. When we reached srok Kompong Trabek, the mapping machine stopped working.
3. Our research time was short. The execution center is far from the Prey Veng provincial town. Besides, the weather was very hot. Anyway, we did our best. We started working just after we had finished eating.
4. The car's air conditioner did not work. Sometimes, we walked 2 or 3 kilometers to the killing field under the hot sun.
5. We spent a long time arranging to meet the provincial governor. Sometimes, we failed to meet the district chief and officers. The communication took 2 hours or a half day. Therefore, we were always pressed for time. Our research depends on time, preparation and money. We would like to suggest to Mr. Director to reconsider our daily expense, our hotel fees and our salaries.