THE CROCODILE STAR

Forcibly transferred from Phnom Penh, we settled in our mother’s home village in Takeo. It was 1975, and rumors circulated that we would be able to return to our home. One day, the Khmer Rouge came and told us to pack up and move. We were hopeful that our journey home had now begun.

We were put on a train. There were so many people on the train that we could not even sit. One of my sisters had a daughter (Tan Keoketana) who was only a few months old. We were all worried about what would happen next. One night, my uncle (Keo Chhoeun) looked up at the stars and he reminded us of the Crocodile Star.

The Crocodile Star is a story that we learned as kids. It is an old story about a crocodile that did good deeds and as a result was made a star in the sky. The Crocodile Star was always seen as a beacon of hope, direction, and good things. People could look to the ‘Big Dipper’ and find the Crocodile Star who would show them the way.

Riding in the train, in the darkness of night, my uncle looked for the Crocodile Star and pointed it out to us. He told us we were heading in the direction of Phnom Penh. We became so excited and happy because we believed we were truly heading home. Day and night we continued onward, always stopping in different places, but none of this mattered if we were going in the right direction. Suddenly, though, reality sunk in. Upon reaching Pursat, many people were removed from the train. The rest of the passengers continued onward until reaching Battambang province near the Thai border. Our journey had not ended, it had only just begun.

I often thought about the Crocodile Star. I still think about it today. For a brief period of time, the Crocodile Star gave us hope and happiness, even though, ultimately, it was all just a dream. My family became separated, and we entered a new life of starvation, hard labor, and genocide. I feel fortunate to have survived this horrific period. Many family members, including my sister’s baby daughter and my uncle, did not survive. I can never look upon the Crocodile Star in the same way again.

JUSTICE, MEMORY, RECONCILIATION
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) will design, install and manage permanent
exhibitions on the history of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) and develop 24 provincial museums throughout Cambodia. As part of the first step
of this museum exhibitions project, DC-Cam will work with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to create and manage five museum exhibitions
in five provincial museums, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Thom, Takeo and Svay Rieng. Together with the Ministry of Culture and
Fine Arts, DC-Cam will document the stories of survivors and the histories of villages, burial sites, and prison centers across the country where
mass atrocities took place. These exhibitions are an important development not only for Cambodia’s struggle for reconciliation and justice
today, but the education of its youth for generations to come. Ultimately this project will educate the public on Democratic Kampuchea history
as well as serve as an instrument for ensuring this history is never forgotten.

This project would not be possible without the generous support of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the German government.
DC-Cam’s funding for this project comes by way of the Victims Support Section/ ECCC, which receives its support from Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. This project would also not be possible without the United States Agency for International
Development, which offers core support to DC-Cam.

“Although millions were killed, millions more survived to tell their story.
The perpetrators of these crimes also survived as well.”

Leng Ratanak, Producer of A River Changes Course

Little things matter in life. This is a photo of Phka Thnak-Tik: A flower that means little water pot. It grows out of hay that has been left on the field after the harvest season. During
the KR regime, the people who worked in the fields would see these flowers and, for a time, realize that beauty can still exist in hell. One victim recalled seeing field upon field
covered in these flowers when he lived in region 5. Every harvest season, the whole field would be covered with these flowers and they would bring back memories of family and
home. In the depths of sadness and despair, it is the little things that can save one’s soul.

Photo by Phat Piseth
THE FORCED TRANSFER:
The Second Evacuation of People During the Khmer Rouge Regime

BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND FINE ARTS AND THE DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Design
Youv Chihuang
Yvonne Wong Design

PARTNERS
Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
National Museum of Cambodia
Departments of Culture and Fine Arts in Battambang, Baray/Neak Chey
Kampot/Phnom, Takeo and Siem Reap
ECCC/Lead Co-Lawyers for Civil Parties/Civil Party Lawyers/Victims

ADVISORS
Christopher Dearing, Esq.
Elisabeth Simonnewart Foyt, Esq.
Pich Ang, Esq.
Mahaveer Mohan, Esq.

FUNDING
German International Cooperation (GIZ) through the Victims Support Section at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) provides financial support for this exhibition.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provides core support

Front cover: Ieng Sary with a Chinese delegation inspecting the railway during the forced transfer of people in late 1975. Source: DC-Cam Archives

Copyright ©2014 by the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Printed in Cambodia. ISBN: 9-789995-062075.
During the Democratic Kampuchea regime, our country suffered enormous cultural losses. Music, art, religion, and custom were sacrificed on the altar of a warped regime that had no regard for humanity, let alone the individual human being.

Children were taken from their parents; husbands were separated from their wives, and families were broken apart. Cities and towns were emptied, and throughout the country, people were forced to travel, often times on foot, with nothing but the possessions they could carry. Ultimately millions of Cambodian people died during this regime.

It is in this sense, the Khmer Rouge committed both human and cultural genocide. This exhibition on forced transfer gives us an opportunity to reflect on certain aspects of this human and cultural genocide. Reflection on the past is a crucial task for all post-conflict countries because a country that cannot face its history for the education of our society and the next generation. But history has many lessons that can help humanity in the future.

Many of the problems that we see today are the consequences of our Nation’s problems of the present and future. Crucial task for all post-conflict countries because a country that cannot face the past is opaque to the present unknown or new. This exhibition gives us the opportunity to reflect on the past and the present.

We mustn’t shrink from our responsibility to investigate and preserve this history for the education of our society and the next generation. But history has many lessons that can help humanity in the future. This exhibition gives us an opportunity to reflect on the past and the present. We mustn’t shrink from our responsibility to investigate and preserve this history for the education of our society and the next generation. But history has many lessons that can help humanity in the future.

...
A fundamental characteristic of the DK regime was the constant relocation of its population. People were repeatedly and forcibly moved from one place to another—from their place of birth to a different zone and from one cooperative to another. Relocations were ordered from the provinces of Kampong Cham, Takeo, Kandal, and Prey Veng to Pursat, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, and so on. In general, the movement was from the southeast to the northwest part of the country. People were transported on foot as well as by boat, truck, train, and oxcart. The evacuees were terrified, confused, and traumatized as they were stared at, separated from their family members, and forced to journey into the unknown. The train journeys in particular were very traumatic. Evacuees were provided with almost nothing to eat and were separated from their family members at each train stop. The painful losses and trauma of the Cambodian citizens speak directly to the violence committed by the Khmer Rouge.

The permanent exhibitions in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts on Forced Transfers includes survivors’ stories of the forced relocations and the traumatic experiences of the Cambodian society. These exhibitions will provide a tranquil space for remembering, acknowledging, and honoring the suffering endured by victims and survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime. The educational programs incorporated within the exhibitions will take place in public and private spaces, including provincial museums, schools, homes, and specific sites where the Khmer Rouge committed violent acts against their own people. We hope that these exhibitions will provide visitors with a glimpse of the trauma and fear that was omnipresent in the practices of the DK regime behind a shadow of darkness.

As a member of the younger generation who was born after those traumatic years, I sincerely hope the photographs and narratives contained in the exhibitions will inspire people to share memories and learn more about the history of the Khmer Rouge regime. One person’s story represents only a piece of the larger puzzle, the totality of which will ultimately provide an historical record of Cambodia’s past. Piecing that puzzle together is the process through which we can better understand the violence inflicted upon my family and other Cambodian families as a whole. The impact of that violence is felt by all of us on a daily basis and fuels a desire to restore humanity, dignity and honor to all survivors of the genocide perpetrated by the Democratic Kampuchea regime. People who were targeted for discrimination because of their association with an urban, Western, or loyal to the regime were identified as “Base People.” New People were often divided into two groups: those who had a background in commerce, education, or wealthy upbringing, regardless of whether this characteristic was actually true. Armed Khmer Rouge soldiers dressed in black or green khaki uniforms, with motorcycles and rifles on their shoulders, patrolled the country’s roads. They did not know where to go and most people were told to simply go back to their birthplace. People from Phnom Penh were identified as “New People” or “17 April People,” while people who were deemed to be trustworthy and loyal to the regime were identified as “Base People.”

In June 2003, the United Nations (UN) and the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) signed an Agreement to try the senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea and those most responsible for the national and international crimes committed between 17 April 1975 and 6 January 1979. Pursuant to this Agreement, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) was established within the Cambodian judicial system and officially inaugurated on 3 July 2006. The tribunal’s mandate was to establish the truth, to punish those responsible for the crimes, and to bring about justice and reconciliation.

With the desire to give testimony and seek justice at the court, over 4,000 civil parties and over 5,000 complainants have stood ready to participate in the ECCC. And yet, while the ECCC has given a voice to numerous victims, survivors and their families, there is still much to be done in terms of making the testimonies tangible for future generations.

As a member of the younger generation who was born after those traumatic years, I sincerely hope the photographs and narratives contained in the exhibitions will inspire people to share memories and learn more about the history of the Khmer Rouge regime. My father was silent, and this is why I have never known the truth about my family. I have no idea how many people were killed and why. They are never revealed in the testimonies. My father’s silence explains everything and nothing at all. His reticence forces me to realize how traumatic life was during the DK regime. At the same time, it contains details of life under the regime behind a shadow of darkness.

As a member of the younger generation who was born after those traumatic years, I sincerely hope the photographs and narratives contained in the exhibitions will inspire people to share memories and learn more about the history of the Khmer Rouge regime. My father was silent, and this is why I have never known the truth about my family. I have no idea how many people were killed and why. They are never revealed in the testimonies. My father’s silence explains everything and nothing at all. His reticence forces me to realize how traumatic life was during the DK regime. At the same time, it contains details of life under the regime behind a shadow of darkness.

As a member of the younger generation who was born after those traumatic years, I sincerely hope the photographs and narratives contained in the exhibitions will inspire people to share memories and learn more about the history of the Khmer Rouge regime. My father was silent, and this is why I have never known the truth about my family. I have no idea how many people were killed and why. They are never revealed in the testimonies. My father’s silence explains everything and nothing at all. His reticence forces me to realize how traumatic life was during the DK regime. At the same time, it contains details of life under the regime behind a shadow of darkness.
such as Kandal, Kampong Thom, Takeo, Kampong Chhnang and Kampot (Cham) to Siem Reap and Preah Vihear. In addition: people from the central and southwest parts of the country were also relocated to the Northwest Zone (Battambang, Pursat and Baray Meanchey provinces).

Documents from the DK regime show that from 400,000 to 500,000 people were to be added to the Northwest Zone and 50,000 people were to be moved out of the East Zone (Pey Veng and Stung Raveng provinces).

Train operators saw thousands of people being sent by train through Phnom Penh. Phnom Penh was initially in Phnom Penh and Pursat and Battambang provinces in the Northwest Zone. People were transported using all means possible, such as train, civilian and military trucks, boat, oxcart, tractor and by foot. People were packed into crowded train carriages and were given little or nothing to drink or eat on these long train journeys to the northwest of the country. Troops and civilians of the Khmer Rouge supervised these movements. They stood guard over people on trains, boats and oxcarts, and they oversaw the reception of people at train stops.

The exhibitions will also feature the testimonies of former Khmer Rouge soldiers who worked as train operators. As participants and witnesses to this massive relocation of people, former Khmer Rouge soldiers will provide insights into the arrival of people at train stops and their follow-on journey by exact, foot, or truck to cooperatives. The exhibitions will feature photograph, videos and audio interviews, as well as revolutionary songs of the period from DC-Cam’s archives, as well as information about burial sites, memorials and former prisons near train stops along the railway network.

The forced evacuation of Phnom Penh and the subsequent forced transfer of people, former Khmer Rouge soldiers will provide insights into the Khmer Rouge supervised these movements. They stood guard over people on trains, boats and oxcarts, and they oversaw the reception of people at train stops.

The exhibitions will first be installed and inaugurated at Battambang and Baray Meanchey museums. Both provinces were situated in what is today designated as the Northwest Zone. Battambang was the seat of the Khmer Rouge capital at this point. The ultimate goal in this approach is to pay respect to the memory of people who died during these forced relocations as well as educate the visitor on the broader history of the forced relocations as well as educate the visitor on the broader history of the Democratic Kampuchea period.

The train operators saw thousands of people being sent by train through Phnom Penh. Phnom Penh was initially in Phnom Penh and Pursat and Battambang provinces in the Northwest Zone. People were transported using all means possible, such as train, civilian and military trucks, boat, oxcart, tractor and by foot. People were packed into crowded train carriages and were given little or nothing to drink or eat on these long train journeys to the northwest of the country. Troops and civilians of the Khmer Rouge supervised these movements. They stood guard over people on trains, boats and oxcarts, and they oversaw the reception of people at train stops.

For the exhibitions to have real social value in Cambodian society, they must be accessible to visitors of all kinds from across the various provinces. To this end, a school program will be established by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and DC-Cam to bring students from local high schools and universities to the exhibitions. Exhibition brochures and interactive educational activities will also be designed to ensure that visitors are not merely passive recipients of ‘information’, rather, they will be actively engaged in the study, reflection and memory of victims and survivors. They will have the opportunity to reflect on the stories of those who experienced this history as well as learn the wider historical context of the Democratic Kampuchea period.

Train operators saw thousands of people being sent by train through Phnom Penh. Phnom Penh was initially in Phnom Penh and Pursat and Battambang provinces in the Northwest Zone. People were transported using all means possible, such as train, civilian and military trucks, boat, oxcart, tractor and by foot. People were packed into crowded train carriages and were given little or nothing to drink or eat on these long train journeys to the northwest of the country. Troops and civilians of the Khmer Rouge supervised these movements. They stood guard over people on trains, boats and oxcarts, and they oversaw the reception of people at train stops.

The exhibitions will also feature the testimonies of former Khmer Rouge soldiers who worked as train operators. As participants and witnesses to this massive relocation of people, former Khmer Rouge soldiers will provide insights into the arrival of people at train stops and their follow-on journey by exact, foot, or truck to cooperatives. The exhibitions will feature photograph, videos and audio interviews, as well as revolutionary songs of the period from DC-Cam’s archives, as well as information about burial sites, memorials and former prisons near train stops along the railway network. Federations will also be featured, showing how culture and storytelling endured even where forces attempted to eliminate it.

Each train stop represents a reference point in time and space for the history of these forced relocations. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and DC-Cam will provide the public with an opportunity to explore the history of specific sites and neighbouring communities as they relate to the forced transfer of people and the history of Democratic Kampuchea at large. The ultimate goal in this approach is to pay respect to the memory of people who died during these forced relocations as well as educate the visitor on the broader history of the community that surrounds the train stop.

The exhibitions will feature a school program that is being established by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and DC-Cam to bring students from local high schools and universities to the exhibitions. Exhibition brochures and interactive educational activities will also be designed to ensure that visitors are not merely passive recipients of ‘information’, rather, they will be actively engaged in the study, reflection and memory of victims and survivors. They will have the opportunity to reflect on the stories of those who experienced this history as well as learn the wider historical context of the Democratic Kampuchea period.

Train operators saw thousands of people being sent by train through Phnom Penh. Phnom Penh was initially in Phnom Penh and Pursat and Battambang provinces in the Northwest Zone. People were transported using all means possible, such as train, civilian and military trucks, boat, oxcart, tractor and by foot. People were packed into crowded train carriages and were given little or nothing to drink or eat on these long train journeys to the northwest of the country. Troops and civilians of the Khmer Rouge supervised these movements. They stood guard over people on trains, boats and oxcarts, and they oversaw the reception of people at train stops.

Train operators saw thousands of people being sent by train through Phnom Penh. Phnom Penh was initially in Phnom Penh and Pursat and Battambang provinces in the Northwest Zone. People were transported using all means possible, such as train, civilian and military trucks, boat, oxcart, tractor and by foot. People were packed into crowded train carriages and were given little or nothing to drink or eat on these long train journeys to the northwest of the country. Troops and civilians of the Khmer Rouge supervised these movements. They stood guard over people on trains, boats and oxcarts, and they oversaw the reception of people at train stops.

Train operators saw thousands of people being sent by train through Phnom Penh. Phnom Penh was initially in Phnom Penh and Pursat and Battambang provinces in the Northwest Zone. People were transported using all means possible, such as train, civilian and military trucks, boat, oxcart, tractor and by foot. People were packed into crowded train carriages and were given little or nothing to drink or eat on these long train journeys to the northwest of the country. Troops and civilians of the Khmer Rouge supervised these movements. They stood guard over people on trains, boats and oxcarts, and they oversaw the reception of people at train stops.
Kumar Reachea Train Station, Takeo Province, where people were evacuated from South to North during the Khmer Rouge regime.

Photo by Seng Kunthy
About a month later, Angkar ordered everyone to eat communally. During this time, we did not offer us enough rice, beans or corn. Living conditions were extremely difficult. We were transferred to Banaok cooperative, in a nearby forest. Angkar was in power.

This took place immediately after my arrival in Phnom Penh. We reached Mong village, Thma Kor commune, Lvea Em district, Kandal province. To this day, only my mother remembers their names. The arrest took place in the evening at Phlouv Tei village, Thma Kor commune, Lvea Em district, Kandal province. To this day, only Chen, the security chief, has survived the regime. My father was taken to Tonle Khiomong security office. They arrested my father because he was a district chief during the Lon Nol regime. He was not able to escape while the Khmer Rouge was in power.

In 1973, I was evacuated, along with the other villagers. It was Chen, the security chief, who called out our names. At that time, we departed by ship from Phlouv village of Thma Kor commune. Then we boarded a train at night. This was in power. I lost my house, cattle, and farmland when the Khmer Rouge took over. I lost my brothers there. I went to see a fortune-teller who informed me that they had all died. I want the court to prosecute the Khmer Rouge as soon as possible in order to render justice for the victims. I want to have a statue erected to honor the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime and provide a sense of relief to the survivors. I want the court to prosecute the Khmer Rouge as soon as possible in order to render justice for the victims. I want to have a statue erected to honor the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime and provide a sense of relief to the survivors. I want the court to prosecute the Khmer Rouge as soon as possible in order to render justice for the victims. I want to have a statue erected to honor the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime and provide a sense of relief to the survivors. I want the court to prosecute the Khmer Rouge as soon as possible in order to render justice for the victims. I want to have a statue erected to honor the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime and provide a sense of relief to the survivors. I want the court to prosecute the Khmer Rouge as soon as possible in order to render justice for the victims. I want to have a statue erected to honor the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime and provide a sense of relief to the survivors.
In 1976, unknown Khmer Rouge soldiers evacuated me and fourteen of my relatives from Kien Svay district, Kandal province, to the central part of Svay Sisophon district in Banteay Meanchey province. My parents and seven of our relatives were sent to Phum Srok district, Banteay Meanchey province. There my husband and I, along with a hundred other evacuees, received three days of political reeducation because the Khmer Rouge categorized us as a group of intellectuals. Comrade Mong, the chief of Preah Net Preah district, and another former Lon Nol government officials and intellectuals. They were assembled into groups and taken away.

Later, we were separated. My husband and I were sent to Po Enh Preah district, Banteay Meanchey province. My parents and seven of our relatives were tied up. The other people on that truck were also tied up like me. They were loaded me onto a truck with about ten other people and sent us to a prison in the central part of Svay Sisophon. On the way, I was shackled and my hands were subjected to constant hard labor, and I had to work tirelessly to please the Khmer Rouge cadres in charge.

At the reeducation camp, a former student of my father’s who was a Khmer Rouge cadre there recognized me and helped prevent other cadres’ mistreatment of me. Two months later, I was released and sent back to reunite with my husband in Kok To You village, Preah Net Preah district, Banteay Meanchey province. I was told by another Khmer Rouge cadre that if I wanted to survive, I had to work hard. And we worked very hard to please the cooperative chief there. I saw the Khmer Rouge cadres take away a lot of people from my cooperative who never came back.

Atircuit. A survivor’s story from Kampong Thom province: Leng Yun

My group, the deposited ones, were taken to another reeducation camp in Svay Sisophon, Serei Sophon district, Battambang province. Along with over two hundred detainees, I was assigned to grow crops, such as cabbage, Chinese broccoli and cassavas along the Sangke Lake. There I was subjected to constant hard labor, and I had to work tirelessly to please the Khmer Rouge cadres in charge.

In 1975, my family and I were forcibly evacuated to Sa-than Lork by A Khun, male and Leap if we had not followed the evacuation orders. I would have starved or killed us. I do not know why they forced us to go there, but I think that they regarded me as the enemy. I was part of the first group of New People. Those evacuated from Phnom Penh comprised the second group of New People. The Khmer Rouge named those people the first new group and the second new group. They stated that my group was a deposited group, about to be executed. However, the second group was executed first because they were high-ranking officers, rich people, capitalists, and people who used to eat delicious food. My group was accused of being capitalists. My family, in particular, whose living conditions were better than those of others in the villages, was all taken away to be executed. In Sa-than Lork, my group cleaned the forest for a month. Then, Vong, Khun, and Laiun me to Po Ploekh Village, Sam Preah Commune, Sotong District.

In 1975, my husband, Yip Hiep, 30, was taken away to be executed. I also witnessed my elder brothers, Yip Lep, Yip Len, and Yip Pheng being taken away to be executed. They were strangled by Soeun, whose wife was Kha-them. Three people (unknown to me) tied up my brothers with rope and executed them away. They accused my husband and brothers of being enemies, ‘the rich.’ My parents and parents-in-law died from exhaustion and starvation. Aside from them, an elderly woman named Dek, 60, also died from starvation. In addition, my mother’s elder sister named Yin died from starvation.

During a half-hour break, each person received a food ration of one ladle of gruel, containing only one grain of rice mixed with morning glory. At that time, I dared not challenge the Khmer Rouge, because I was fearful of being killed. In the evening, they gave us (col) not more than a spoonful of rice. They gave us (col) not more than a spoonful of rice. Sometimes, gruel was served to (us), but it was not enough to fill our empty stomachs. We had to mix it with water, morning glory, papaya root, banana stem, and chili to eat a kind of edible herb called duck lettuce that grows in the water. Sometimes, I stole rice bran and rice husk and pounded them for a meal. At the time, it was very delicious, but now I cannot eat it. Sometimes, small children stole rice but were caught and the rice was taken from them. The children then starved until the evening when they were released. Sometimes, they were beaten by Voing and Kao, who were in their twenties. Cheok, a female, was in charge of assigning food rations, and an elderly woman named Yan cooked the rice. Yan was cruel, however, if she was fond of someone, she allowed them to take the solid (griel) from the bottom of the pot. My group, the deposited ones, was served only watery (griel) to eat. During the regime, rice production was high, but they never gave us enough rice to eat. They regarded us as the enemy (because they felt we had been rich). My parents and parents-in-law died from exhaustion and starvation. From then on, I have never seen my husband. They took my husband to Po Ploekh Village, where they killed him. I did not go to that village, because I was afraid I would also be executed.

After killing my husband, they returned his krama (scarf) and sarong (long skirt) to me. Sometimes, I stole rice bran and rice husk and pounded them for a meal. At the time, it was very delicious, but now I cannot eat it. Sometimes, small children stole rice but were caught and the rice was taken from them. The children then starved until the evening when they were released. Sometimes, they were beaten by Voing and Kao, who were in their twenties. Cheok, a female, was in charge of assigning food rations, and an elderly woman named Yan cooked the rice. Yan was cruel, however, if she was fond of someone, she allowed them to take the solid (griel) from the bottom of the pot. My group, the deposited ones, was served only watery (griel) to eat. During the regime, rice production was high, but they never gave us enough rice to eat. They regarded us as the enemy (because they felt we had been rich). My parents and parents-in-law died from exhaustion and starvation. From then on, I have never seen my husband. They took my husband to Po Ploekh Village, where they killed him. I did not go to that village, because I was afraid I would also be executed.

After killing my husband, they returned his krama (scarf) and sarong (long skirt) to me. Sometimes, I stole rice bran and rice husk and pounded them for a meal. At the time, it was very delicious, but now I cannot eat it. Sometimes, small children stole rice but were caught and the rice was taken from them. The children then starved until the evening when they were released. Sometimes, they were beaten by Voing and Kao, who were in their twenties. Cheok, a female, was in charge of assigning food rations, and an elderly woman named Yan cooked the rice. Yan was cruel, however, if she was fond of someone, she allowed them to take the solid (griel) from the bottom of the pot. My group, the deposited ones, was served only watery (griel) to eat. During the regime, rice production was high, but they never gave us enough rice to eat. They regarded us as the enemy (because they felt we had been rich). My parents and parents-in-law died from exhaustion and starvation. From then on, I have never seen my husband. They took my husband to Po Ploekh Village, where they killed him. I did not go to that village, because I was afraid I would also be executed.

After killing my husband, they returned his krama (scarf) and sarong (long skirt) to me. Sometimes, I stole rice bran and rice husk and pounded them for a meal. At the time, it was very delicious, but now I cannot eat it. Sometimes, small children stole rice but were caught and the rice was taken from them. The children then starved until the evening when they were released. Sometimes, they were beaten by Voing and Kao, who were in their twenties. Cheok, a female, was in charge of assigning food rations, and an elderly woman named Yan cooked the rice. Yan was cruel, however, if she was fond of someone, she allowed them to take the solid (griel) from the bottom of the pot. My group, the deposited ones, was served only watery (griel) to eat. During the regime, rice production was high, but they never gave us enough rice to eat. They regarded us as the enemy (because they felt we had been rich). My parents and parents-in-law died from exhaustion and starvation. From then on, I have never seen my husband. They took my husband to Po Ploekh Village, where they killed him. I did not go to that village, because I was afraid I would also be executed.
...to me. At first, I didn’t ask (them) about anything. Fay made, probably in his thirties, informed (me) that my husband had been executed at To Pech.

KILLING
In 1975, I witnessed people, whose hands had been tied behind their backs, being escorted away to be executed. I witnessed the incident, but I didn’t report any inquiries. In fact, I had myself because I was afraid I would also be executed. Those arrested were accused of being enemies – stealing rice and fish. Among the arrested, I knew one elderly man named Chhoun, who was 50 years old and lived in Ta Chhum. He was accused of being an enemy. A Hay escorted people to be killed at To Pech. My husband was one of those arrested. In addition, I also witnessed coworkers being taken away to be executed. They had committed wrongdoing by breaking a plate, plow, or plowshare. One of those arrested was Xun, for example, who had broken a plate. He was accused of being an enemy. The bodies were found when the well was dug up again for use.

In 1978, Chan, male, was a “low ranking” security policeman. When they called to me to work there, I whispered to him that a high ranking [security officer], whose name I did not know, had raped and killed a woman in Daun Sok. Chan did not inform me of the name of the person who committed rape and murder. He was accused of being a captain (in the Lon Nol army).

A RAPE OF A 17TH APRIL WOMAN
In 1978, Chan, male, was a “low ranking” security policeman. When they called to me to work there, I whispered to him that a high ranking [security officer], whose name I did not know, had raped and killed a woman in Daun Sok. Chan did not inform me of the name of the person who committed rape and murder. He was accused of being a captain (in the Lon Nol army).

During Democratic Kampuchea, everyone had a job to do, no matter what his or her physical conditions were. No one was left with nothing to do. If someone was found to be lazy, Angkar considered him or her to have a deviant consciousness and had a saying: “If you’re kept, it’s no gain; if you’re pulled out, it’s no loss!”
shelters along the fields. Adult females harvested, worked the fields, or worked on the farms. Apart from working the fields, the males had to gather wood or transport materials. In the youth unit, female youths and male youths lived separately in a village that was under the control of Ta Sun, Ta Vion and his wife, Ly. After the village chief died, Mith Neary Yan, Mith Neary Seoun and Mith Neary Roath controlled the females to build dams, dig dikes and work the fields. In addition, they also worked on the farms. Older children worked to pull grass from the fields and transport vegetation to make fertilizer. In the compost site, there were Old People who made fertilizer for use in the fields.

Under the Khmer Rouge, men and women were paired up and forced to stand in front of each other. The cooperative or the village in which the (marriage) ceremony would take place would organize the ceremony. The cooperative or the village chief would then announce the event. After the announcement, the mean and the woman would approach each other and take each other's hands. Those who found their respective partners were married to each other. As for consummation, each couple had to pledge their allegiance to Angkar. As for consummation, the mean and the woman would approach each other and take each other's hands. Those who found their respective partners were married to each other.

The dark times, trauma, separations, torture, starvation, and overwork caused many people to die. Many died of illness. Most important of all, the country's economy failed completely. In the end, I endured life under the regime and learned to survive until the country was liberated from the dark ages and executions motivated by revenge and discrimination.

Living conditions under the Democratic Kampuchea, or the three years, eight months and twenty days,” era was the most difficult. People worked without rest and without enough to eat. People were living in low-standard conditions that lacked sanitation. There was a lack of basic materials to use. People only had a small bag. There was no market for trading. People did not go to school (none existed) and only worked in the fields. Also, any products that were made had a small bag. There was no market for trading. People did not go to school (none existed) and only worked in the fields. Also, any products that were made

Kampong Ro District, Svay Rieng Province, guarding Trapeang Trach Prison. The guards worked without rest and without enough to eat. People were living in low-standard conditions that lacked sanitation. There was a lack of basic materials to use. People only had a small bag. There was no market for trading. People did not go to school (none existed) and only worked in the fields. Also, any products that were made

The chief walked prisoners out to work and the interrogator asked the prisoners questions at the worksite. The Khmer Rouge grouped high-ranking [soldiers] together in order to relocate them to Russei Kranh Prison, the big prison in Phnom Penh. Po Thmei Pagoda was located in Svay Rieng Province, located in Phnom Penh. Po Thmei Pagoda was located in Svay Rieng Province.

Half a month later, the Khmer Rouge sent me to Poek Ponleaa Security Center, located in Preah Ponlea Commune, Kampong Ro District, Svay Rieng Province. The chief walked prisoners out to work and the interrogator asked the prisoners questions at the worksite. The Khmer Rouge grouped high-ranking [soldiers] together in order to relocate them to Russei Kranh Prison, the big prison in Phnom Penh. Po Thmei Pagoda was located in Svay Rieng Province.

Three or four months later, I and other prisoners were evacuated to Wat Po Thmei. When we arrived at Po Thmei Pagoda, the Khmer Rouge selected those who were physically weak and kept them there and placed people who had strength to work in other places. Po Thmei Pagoda was located in Svay Ta Yan Commune, Kampong Ro District, Svay Rieng Province. There were approximately four or five guards working at this security center. There were about a hundred prisoners in my group and another five hundred from another group.

Three or four months later, I and other prisoners were evacuated to Wat Po Thmei. When we arrived at Po Thmei Pagoda, the Khmer Rouge selected those who were physically weak and kept them there and placed people who had strength to work in other places. Po Thmei Pagoda was located in Svay Ta Yan Commune, Kampong Ro District, Svay Rieng Province. There were approximately four or five guards working at this security center. There were about a hundred prisoners in my group and another five hundred from another group.

A STORY FROM SVAY RIENG PROVINCE: VANN SORN
MEMORIALS, BURIALS & PRISONS IN BATI DISTRICT, TAKEO PROVINCE

Wuat Sophy (Wat Ka Koh)

The Buddhist Temple (Wat) Sophy, also known as Ka Koh, is located in Kandoeng Thom Village, Kandoeng Commune, Bati District, Ta Kep province. The Khmer Rouge converted this Buddhist temple into a security center and an execution site from 1973. The first prisoners who were arrested in this security center were base people. So Nhôr, 69 years old and currently living at Kandoeng Thom Village, Kandoeng Commune, Bati District, was a former prisoner who was imprisoned in Wat Ka Koh security center in late 1973. Nhôr said that the security guard accused him of insulting the Khmer Rouge and arrested him. When he was imprisoned, he witnessed prisoners chained in two rows, with each row composed of 20 to 30 prisoners.

The Khmer Rouge also evacuated all the base people who lived in the area to remote sites and forced people from crossing the area freely. So Nhôr saw prisoners die of starvation and also saw prisoners being tortured and executed. Puth was the first head of Koh Ka security center. He ordered his staff to tell prisoners that they would be relocated to a new area. This area meant that the prisoners who had been identified for relocation were executed. Nhôr recalled that prisoners were very frightened when they heard from the prison staff about “relocations” to a new area because they knew that this meant they were destined for execution. In early 1974, So Nhôr was released and allowed to return home. However, he was forced to promise comrade Puth that he would never tell anyone about the executions and torture at the security center.

PRISON IN BATI DISTRICT

Wuat Sophy (Wat Ka Koh)

The Buddhist Temple (Wat) Sophy, also known as Ka Koh, is located in Kandoeng Thom Village, Kandoeng Commune, Bati District, Ta Kep province. The Khmer Rouge converted this Buddhist temple into a security center and an execution site from 1973. The first prisoners who were arrested in this security center were base people. So Nhôr, 69 years old and currently living at Kandoeng Thom Village, Kandoeng Commune, Bati District, was a former prisoner who was imprisoned in Wat Ka Koh security center in late 1973. Nhôr said that the security guard accused him of insulting the Khmer Rouge and arrested him. When he was imprisoned, he witnessed prisoners chained in two rows, with each row composed of 20 to 30 prisoners.

The Khmer Rouge also evacuated all the base people who lived in the area to remote sites and forced people from crossing the area freely. So Nhôr saw prisoners die of starvation and also saw prisoners being tortured and executed. Puth was the first head of Koh Ka security center. He ordered his staff to tell prisoners that they would be relocated to a new area. This area meant that the prisoners who had been identified for relocation were executed. Nhôr recalled that prisoners were very frightened when they heard from the prison staff about “relocations” to a new area because they knew that this meant they were destined for execution. In early 1974, So Nhôr was released and allowed to return home. However, he was forced to promise comrade Puth that he would never tell anyone about the executions and torture at the security center.

After liberation day on 17 April 1975, security guards arrested people and brought them to Koh Ka security office frequently. Bun Him who was born in Cham Bah commune, Bati District and currently living in the United States stated that, “In 1975, there were several thousands of base people whom Angkar evacuated from Phnom Penh, travelled along National Road 3 and 3 were imprisoned in Ka Koh security center and at Wat Triod Ka. These evacuees were thrown into a pond measuring 50 meters wide, at a depth of about 4 meters and died in the pond. The pond was near the main building of Wat Ka Koh security center, located an area of the north, east and south of the Buddhist temple. The people they killed included children, elderly people, men and women. Their corpses were then piled up. The pile was about two meters high. This started from between 18-25 April 1975.”

Bun Him reported that Uy, deputy commander of the Southwest Zone, killed the majority of these people. Between 1976 and late 1978, arrests and executions continued. Prisoners included base people and evictees. Tim Kun and Muy Chok were base people who committed a crime and were imprisoned in the security center. They described that prisoners were killed in every direction and area surrounding the main building. Executions also took place by a pond in the northern area of Sophy Primary School. The tools used for the executions included sticks, a hoe and metal bats. Loud music was played to drown out the screams of the people. The executions took place at times in the middle of the afternoon, around 3pm.

In 1978, comrade Puth was replaced by comrade Kun, a brother of comrade Chom who worked as a District Chief. Comrade Puth was replaced because he had committed a moral offense. During Kom’s administration, all the prisoners at Ka Koh security center were taken away to be killed by security guards. Tim Kun said that when Puth was still in charge of the security center and the killing site, District Chief Chom had planned to kill all the prisoners.

Muy Chok reported that whenever District Chief Chom drove his motorbike to Koh Ka prison, people knew that both torture and executions were about to take place. A table that was used during interrogations was placed only 15 meters from the grave. When he conducted his interrogations, Muy Chok looked at his list of prisoners and looked at the names of those slated for execution based on a strikethrough, a red underline or the “x” marked next to the name.

Muy Chok clarified that the village or commune chief provided the names of the prisoners contained in comrade Puth’s list. It was only after this that the prisoners in this list were transferred to Ka Koh security center or Office 08. Then the list was sent to the district office for review. District Chief Chom would then review the list and decide which prisoners would be killed by striking through the name in red. After this, District Chief Chom sent the list back to Office 08. Comrade Sruo, vice-head of the security center, looked after the list and was in charge of the executions. He executed people identified on the list. Before the prisoners were executed, their hands were tied behind their backs and they were blindfolded. They were then told to kneel down by the grave. This took place almost every day. On an average day, 50 to 100 prisoners were executed. Muy Chok concluded that between 1976 and late 1978, security guards killed an estimated 50 to 100 prisoners daily. Interrogations, executions, and the security guards escaped to Vietnam. The remaining prisoners returned to their families or escaped when the regime collapsed in 1979.

Venerable Kao Kosal heard from his master, the late So Satt that after 1979, there was blood on the floor in front of a broken Buddha statue inside the main building of Wat Ka Koh, on the wall, there were many holes with metal chains connecting these holes. The holes have been repaired but the marks remain.
On journeys from Takeo or Svay Rieng in the southeast, or from the capital Phnom Penh, thousands were taken to the provinces of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey in the newly designated Northwest Zone, ostensibly to “increase rice production.”

It is hard to imagine what it must have been like for mothers, fathers, uncles and aunts, grandparents and children to board trains, not knowing which direction the trains were traveling on. Here, we share two such stories, which some survivors told on train journeys. How did they pass the time while traveling? What stories did they tell on these long train journeys? How did they pass the time and entertain their fears and apprehensions? How did they ensure their children felt safe? Khmer folktales, created and shared by communities orally, were a way to read the stars and know their landscape and their place in the world. These tales traveled with aunts, grandparents and children to board trains, not knowing which direction the train was going in, or what their fates would be. These people travelled with scant possessions and had little food on long journeys.

A Pang Neang Tey

During a rice rice season, A Pang temporarily stayed days and nights at the rice field to look after the rice. He also brought a long-neck Chapei along—a 3-stringed wooden instrument. During the day, he looked after his rice field and in the night he sang songs and played the Chapei. When he sang every night, there was a female ghost who would come and listen to his beautiful voice. To warm herself, she would go and sit near a fire that was lit near A Pang’s hut. One night, not too long after the ghost sat by the fire, A Pang saw the female ghost. He asked, “Who are you sitting by the fire?” The female ghost replied, “It’s me.” A Pang responded, “Could this be a ghost?” The ghost responded, “Why not a ghost?” A Pang asked, “Tell me your name! What are you looking for?” The female ghost replied, “I am Tai. I came here to listen to your Chapei.” A Pang said, “Come up closer if you want to listen to deeper into the forest. They were close to A Pang. Later on, they fell in love and stayed together as husband and wife. After harvesting season, the female ghost asked A Pang, “Now that the harvest has already passed, do you accept me as your wife? If you do not accept me, I will kill you.” A Pang answered, “Okay, but we must wait until I finish bringing the rice to my home.” A Pang returned to the female ghost, Tai. After he brought the rice to his home. Thereafter she introduced him to her ghost relatives and they lived together ever since.

A month passed and the ghost relatives asked A Pang if he would like to hunt elephants? A Pang took the frog out of his bag and showed it to them. Suddenly, the ghosts ran away screaming. “We cannot keep Tey with us! He is too strong, for he dares to hunt elephants and keep them in his bag! We must not let him stay with us! We must let him go!” A Pang was released and he returned to his home. In this story, the ghosts see the frog as an elephant, which illustrates the ghostly world’s opposite view of reality. The story is a common tale told by elders to their children. The adults loved to tell this story to make kids laugh and get scared at the same time, but as one child survivor recalled, “When we were told this story on the train, no one laughed because we were afraid of the Khmer Rouge soldiers.” They looked scared than ghosts.

The Star of Crocodile

A long time ago there was a wealthy man who buried all his wealth near the mouth of a stream in front of his house. He didn’t tell anyone about it, not even his wife. When he passed away, he came in his wife’s dream and told her where he had buried the treasure. She asked the people to help her dig up the treasure. The man was reborn as a crocodile that lived by a religious dwelling. News of the crocodile spread quickly to all the villagers. The presence of the crocodile manifested as the Big Dipper in the Northern Hemisphere, which the people call the “Crocodile Star.”

At a festival, the wife took a part of the wealth and spent it on the Kathen ritual, as her husband had requested. On the day of Kathen procession, as the ceremony started, it was the crocodile that led the boat in the water. But the crocodile became exhausted with the effort. When the procession finally reached the temple, the crocodile died. To honor the crocodile, the wife and villagers designed a banner in the shape of a crocodile to be used in the ceremony.

When the crocodile passed away the godness that he had done for the people manifested as the Big Dipper in the Northern Hemisphere, which the people call the “Crocodile Star.”

In this story, a wealthy man, who wanted to help his wife, died and became reincarnated as a crocodile. As a crocodile, he helped the village, but, amidst his efforts in helping the village, he grew tired and died. Ultimately, his good deeds become memorialized in the stars. Elders would tell this story to children under the night sky to entertain them, but it is more then just a children’s story. The Crocodile Star always symbolized hope and direction, guiding as much as encouraging people. As one survivor recalled, while the story consolled children (and even adults) on the train, it was not long before nobody had consumed our thoughts of imagination.”
We know their faces: the grainy black-and-white images of prisoners detained, interrogated, and tortured at S-21; their images haunt us as reminders that we walk the grounds of the former prison—now known as the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. We think of their lives—and their deaths—as we walk through the photographic albums of the genocide, which are on permanent display throughout the museum. We think of their lives—even their names—because they were transformed into anonymous, nameless persons who toiled under the blistering heat or torrential rain were under constant surveillance; their activities were monitored. Khmer Rouge soldiers were ever-present and ever-vigilant; they stood guard over the co-operatives; they stood guard over the work-camps. Any movement, any wrong attitude, any thought that was "out of order" or "out of place" was subject to immediate and brutal punishment and immobility: detainment in one of the approximately 200 security-centers established throughout the country.

Movement was necessary, but movement was circumscribed. Workers were needed in the rice-fields; enslaved labor needed to grow the rice that was subsequently transferred, beyond the borders of Democratic Kampuchea, to China, Yugoslavia, Madagascar, and Hong Kong, leaving thousands of Cambodians malnourished and famished. Workers were needed to dig canals and clear forests for rice-fields for planting; to clear the forests for clearing; to the reservoirs and canals for digging. In the process, the sinews of family life were sundered; husband forcibly separated from wife; daughter forcibly separated from mother. As recalled by one survivor, the Khmer Rouge "kept moving us, from the rice-fields into the woods. They purposely did this to discase us so they could have complete control." Always moving, always trying to stay in front of the wheel of history, to not be crushed. Democratic Kampuchea was genocide in motion.

Within the cooperatives and work-brigades, the men, women, and children who toiled under the blistering heat or torrential rain were under constant surveillance; their activities were monitored. Khmer Rouge soldiers were ever-present and ever-vigilant; they stood guard over the co-operatives; they stood guard over the work-camps. Any movement, any wrong attitude, any thought that was "out of order" or "out of place" was subject to immediate and brutal punishment and immobility: detainment in one of the approximately 200 security-centers established throughout the country.

Movement was necessary, but movement was circumscribed. Workers were needed in the rice-fields; enslaved labor needed to grow the rice that was subsequently transferred, beyond the borders of Democratic Kampuchea, to China, Yugoslavia, Madagascar, and Hong Kong, leaving thousands of Cambodians malnourished and famished. Workers were needed to dig canals and clear forests for rice-fields for planting; to clear the forests for clearing; to the reservoirs and canals for digging. In the process, the sinews of family life were sundered; husband forcibly separated from wife; daughter forcibly separated from mother. As recalled by one survivor, the Khmer Rouge "kept moving us, from the rice-fields into the woods. They purposely did this to discase us so they could have complete control." Always moving, always trying to stay in front of the wheel of history, to not be crushed. Democratic Kampuchea was genocide in motion.
T he Cambodian people waited for many years to see the senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime held accountable for their crimes. Nearly thirty years passed between the fall of the Khmer Rouge on January 7, 1979, and the establishment of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). Aiming to provide justice to the Cambodian people, this commission was set up by a group of Cambodians – seventy percent of whom were born after the Khmer Rouge lost power – and their elders must now decide how to best balance understanding of their tragic history with efforts to heal and move forward.

The creation of the ECCC was an important step in bringing the history of the Khmer Rouge era to light. Case 002/01 uncovered the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge regime and the forced transfer of Cambodians to different parts of the country. Public outreach around these exhibits is a way for those who did not live through the Khmer Rouge era to begin the healing process. Survivors of the Khmer Rouge era will be able to release some of the heaviest memories from their hearts, and may be able to reach out to each other, opening the fabric of society that was so badly torn during that time.

Apart from being here today, there are many more ways that you can contribute to efforts to heal Cambodian society and move towards a brighter future.

**KEEP INFORMED**

This permanent exhibition focuses on just one aspect of the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime. For those who want to learn more about the suffering of those who lived under the regime, it is also important to understand why and how the Khmer Rouge came to power, so that Cambodians can work together to prevent another dangerous group from taking over the country. There are several websites you can visit to find more information: the Sleuk Rith Institute (www.sleukrith.org), the Documentation Center of Cambodia (www.ddcam.org), and the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor (www.cambodiabureau.org).

**REACH OUT TO OTHERS**

Past victims of the Khmer Rouge era are many ways that you can do this. You can help them to find the strength to get the support that they need to become part of an effort to prevent these terrible crimes from being repeated in the future. You can also help with the healing process. Survivors of the Khmer Rouge era will be able to release some of the heaviest memories from their hearts, and may be able to reach out to each other, opening the fabric of society that was so badly torn during that time.

**GET INVOLVED**

After seeing this exhibition, you may want to help to teach others about the history of the Khmer Rouge era. You can release some of the heaviest memories from your heart and history, and using the information you find in the websites listed above. You can use the textbook, “A History of Democratic Kampuchea,” written by Khamboly Dy, to teach others about the Khmer Rouge era, especially if you are a school teacher. You can contact the Sleuk Rith Institute (www.sleukrith.org) to find out how to visit and learn more about the era and volunteer to help to teach others.

**REMEMBER ALL OF CAMBODIA’S HISTORICAL LEGACIES**

Cambodia has a long and rich heritage that weaves a common thread through Cambodian society. From the architectural beauty of Angkor Wat to classical dance and energetic folk music, there are many legacies that should be celebrated. The Khmer Rouge tried to destroy these traditions and cultural riches, and their efforts to do so continue to deprive Cambodian society of its greatest treasures. You can play a role in healing the country by learning about and continuing these traditions.

**TAKE HOLD OF CAMBODIA’S FUTURE**

Knowledge of history helps to prevent us from repeating the mistakes of the past. This permanent exhibition focuses on just one aspect of the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge, and it is also important to understand why and how the Khmer Rouge came to power, so that Cambodians can work together to prevent another dangerous group from taking over the country. There are several websites you can visit to find more information: the Sleuk Rith Institute (www.sleukrith.org), the Documentation Center of Cambodia (www.ddcam.org), and the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor (www.cambodiabureau.org).

**KEEP INFORMED**

This permanent exhibition focuses on just one aspect of the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime. For those who want to learn more about the suffering of those who lived under the regime, it is also important to understand why and how the Khmer Rouge came to power, so that Cambodians can work together to prevent another dangerous group from taking over the country. There are several websites you can visit to find more information: the Sleuk Rith Institute (www.sleukrith.org), the Documentation Center of Cambodia (www.ddcam.org), and the Cambodia Tribunal Monitor (www.cambodiabureau.org).

**REACH OUT TO OTHERS**

Past victims of the Khmer Rouge era are many ways that you can do this. You can help them to find the strength to get the support that they need to become part of an effort to prevent these terrible crimes from being repeated in the future. You can also help with the healing process. Survivors of the Khmer Rouge era will be able to release some of the heaviest memories from their hearts, and may be able to reach out to each other, opening the fabric of society that was so badly torn during that time.

**GET INVOLVED**

After seeing this exhibition, you may want to help to teach others about the history of the Khmer Rouge era. You can release some of the heaviest memories from your heart and history, and using the information you find in the websites listed above. You can use the textbook, “A History of Democratic Kampuchea,” written by Khamboly Dy, to teach others about the Khmer Rouge era, especially if you are a school teacher. You can contact the Sleuk Rith Institute (www.sleukrith.org) to find out how to visit and learn more about the era and volunteer to help to teach others.

**REMEMBER ALL OF CAMBODIA’S HISTORICAL LEGACIES**

Cambodia has a long and rich heritage that weaves a common thread through
When Khmer Rouge revolutionaries seized Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975—claiming victory after five years of civil war with the US-backed Khmer Republic—they almost immediately began to forcibly transfer city dwellers and refugees to labor camps in the countryside. “Brothers and sisters,” they declared, “you are not forgotten their defeat. Leave to avoid the American B52 bombers.” The Khmer Rouge forces implementing forced transfers provided very little or no assistance to the displaced, who were subjected to extremely inhumane and sometimes lethal conditions. The fall of Phnom Penh to the Communist Party of Kampuchea directly participated in decisions to forcibly relocate people en masse, and the “evacuation” of Phnom Penh, as well as the succeeding phases of forced transfer to specific zones, has been the primary focus of ECCC Case 002:1.

Khmer Rouge forces implementing forced transfers provided very little or no assistance to the displaced, who were subjected to extremely inhumane conditions, including family separation, disappearances, illness, starvation, beatings, sexual violence and death. Targeting and persecution of specific groups was also common during the forced transfers. The Khmer Rouge divided the population into two classes: the New People and the Base People. The New People, or “April 17 People,” were former city dwellers and refugees, whereas the Base People were those who remained in the countryside during the civil war. Officials from the Khmer Republic government, indigenous highlanders, Cham Muslims, ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese, as well as Buddhist monks and nuns, were among those specifically singled out for separation and harsh treatment. Survivors of the regime have suffered long-term psychological and physical trauma that continues to this day.

Following ECCC Internal Rule 23, civil parties are entitled to claim only “collective and moral reparations.” In Case 002:01, civil parties have sought the recognition of thirty-eight reparations projects that acknowledge the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime, and comprise a significant part of the ECCC’s legacy. Survivor participation in processes of justice is important to not only honor victims, but to promote community restoration and dialogue. The five permanent exhibitions on forced transfer, featuring testimonies from victims and perpetrators, as well as histories of villages, burial sites and prison centers, will contribute to the memorialization of the genocide, as well as the education of current and future generations about what happened under the Khmer Rouge regime. In so doing, they will powerfully shine a light on Khmer Rouge atrocities through the kinds of memorial acts that, under the Khmer Rouge, were violently condemned as evidence of “sickness.”

Samphors Huy is a PhD student in Global Affairs at Rutgers University-Newark, as well as a member of DC-Cam’s Genocide Education Project. Hudson McFann is a PhD student in Geography at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. Kosal Path is an assistant professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College and was the deputy director of DC-Cam in 1997-2000. They are members of the Steering Committee of the Rutgers International Working Group on Cambodia and Southeast Asia (IC-SEA), which is part of an ongoing partnership between the Rutgers Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights (CGHR) and DC-Cam. 

---

1. See, for example, Alexander Laban Hinton, Purity and Contamination in the Cambodian Genocide, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1988), 183, 184.
2. See, for example, Alexander Laban Hinton, Purity and Contamination in the Cambodian Genocide, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1988), 183, 184.
3. See, for example, Alexander Laban Hinton, Purity and Contamination in the Cambodian Genocide, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1988), 183, 184.
4. See, for example, Alexander Laban Hinton, Purity and Contamination in the Cambodian Genocide, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1988), 183, 184.
5. See, for example, Alexander Laban Hinton, Purity and Contamination in the Cambodian Genocide, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1988), 183, 184.
6. See, for example, Alexander Laban Hinton, Purity and Contamination in the Cambodian Genocide, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1988), 183, 184.
Kumar Reachea Train Station, Takeo Province, where people were evacuated from South to North during the Khmer Rouge regime.

Photo by Seng Kunthy
BEFORE THE KHMER ROUGE REGIME

Mok Sin Hong’s mother, adult on the far right, and family

Mok Sin Hong (second person from right) during wedding
LEFT: Mok Sin Hong’s father, Mok Lean. RIGHT: Mok Sin Hong’s cousin, Mok Sin Hon, Mok Sin Ou, and another cousin on Taul Kauk flower farm.

LEFT: A young Bun Ean with her friends, 1938, Kampong Cham Province; RIGHT: Bun Ean and Buth Choun after their wedding, 1940, at their first home in Kampong Cham Province.
LEFT: Khiev Noeun, front row center, and Khiev Noeun, hand on hip; RIGHT: Kong Channsavorn with his aunts Nou Tha (seated left) and Nou Pat, and cousin (seated in front).

LEFT: Tep Kim Try and Tep Suy Eang a month after their marriage. RIGHT: Thach Koem and Nieou Phnum with their son, Battambang Province, 1973

LEFT: Tun Chhum and his family. RIGHT: Mr. San Sok a civil Party in case 002 before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal.
Wedding photograph of Youk Chhang’s late sister, Keo Tithsoye (mentioned in the Foreword) and her husband Ong Suchanak, 1969. Chhang is the boy in the far left corner. The girl to the far right is his cousin, Keo Savary who died of starvation during the Khmer Rouge period. The man in a white uniform is Chhang’s neighbor Chey En, a police commissioner in Kampong Cham province later executed by the Khmers Rouges. His wife, beside him, was also executed by DK cadres. The elderly woman behind the couple is Chhang’s great grandmother, who passed away of old age. The man behind Chey En dressed in a dark gray uniform and wearing glasses is Chhang’s uncle, Sakou Saphon, who was executed by the Khmer Rouge. Source: Youk Chhang’s Family Collection.
Women and men team carrying earth during the Khmer Rouge regime. This photo was taken during the visit of Khmer Rouge high-ranking cadres or what could have been a group of foreign dignitaries and their Khmer Rouge hosts. Each time visits were made, everyone was told to dress up the best way they could or sometimes they were provided clothes and Krama temporarily. When the cadres visited the site, everyone was usually told to smile for the camera and for the visiting cadres.

LEFT: Khmer Rouge leaders riding on a train. RIGHT: Young train drivers, most of whom were teenagers, took hundreds of thousands of Cambodian people from other parts of the country to the Northwest zone of Pursat and Battambang during the Khmer Rouge regime.
People working in a dam construction site in remote Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime. During the regime, people were forced to labor physically in order to build dams, canals, and farming.

Cambodian people digging the dam in the suburb of Phnom Penh during the Khmer Rouge regime. All people were obliged to work during the regime. The Khmer Rouge regime compelled large portions of the population to conduct manual labor on a daily basis in order to increase the country’s production of rice.
LEFT: Middle-aged men and women carrying earth during the construction of a dam during the Khmer Rouge regime. RIGHT: Men and women working at “1 January” dam near Chirn River, Kampong Thom province during the Khmer Rouge regime. This photo shows the busy labor camp under the hot sun surrounded by woods. It was taken during a high profile visit of Minister of Social Affairs Ieng Thirith.; RIGHT: Men and women working at “1 January” dam near Chirn River, Kampong Thom province during the Khmer Rouge regime. This photo shows the busy labor camp under the hot sun surrounded by woods. It was taken during the high profit visit of Minister of Social Affairs Ieng Thirith to the site.

LEFT: Children carrying farm tools in a labor camp. Children and teenagers were often assembled into units (in this case a ‘teenager unit’) for the purpose of labor and discipline. They were beaten and many died of starvation, illness and loneliness. Most youth who were members of these units were separated from their parents for years. Many children never saw their parents again. After 1979, there were over 200,000 orphans in Cambodia. Some of the children who survived this period, and who are now adults, have no idea what happened to their parents.; RIGHT: Communal eating at the cooperative.
Ieng Sary with a Chinese delegation inspecting the railway during the forced transfer of people in late 1975.

AFTER THE KHMER ROUGE REGIME

One of the first markets in Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed. This photo shows a market in 1980 at Koh Thom district, Kandal province, near the Vietnamese border. Money had not yet been officially issued. Therefore, people used a barter system in which they exchanged any possessions or goods they had for the food they wanted. The majority of the survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime were women. Since then they have been the driving force behind the rebuilding of Cambodia—economically, socially, and spiritually.

One of the first markets in Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed. This photo shows a market in 1980 at Koh Thom district, Kandal province, near the Vietnamese border. Money had not yet been officially issued. Therefore, people used a barter system in which they exchanged any possessions or goods they had for the food they wanted. The majority of the survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime were women. Since then they have been the driving force behind the rebuilding of Cambodia—economically, socially, and spiritually.
One of the first markets in Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed. This photo shows a market in 1980 at Koh Thom district, Kandal province, near the Vietnamese border. Money had not yet been officially issued. Therefore, people used a barter system in which they exchanged any possessions or goods they had for the food they wanted. The majority of the survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime were women. Since then they have been the driving force behind the rebuilding of Cambodia—economically, socially, and spiritually.

LEFT: Clergymen and monks conducting Buddhist religious ceremony in front of the skulls of those who died during the Khmer Rouge regime. In Buddhism, it is believed that those who died violent deaths face great difficulty in becoming reborn. RIGHT: Bones and skeletons of those who died during the Khmer Rouge regime can still be found throughout the country. Very often, local authorities collected these bones and skeletons and placed them in a central location such as an abandoned school, house, or cottage. In this picture, skulls and bones were placed in a small building with unprotected care. These places serve as sacred areas in which survivors can come and honor their relatives who died during the Khmer Rouge regime.
Memorials for those who died during the Khmer Rouge. The killing took place almost everywhere in the country during the Khmer Rouge regime. After the regime collapsed, skulls and skeletons of those who were killed could be found throughout the country. Some local people exhumed these graves in order to bring the bones to a central place in which relatives could pay their respects and conduct ceremonies annually.
Civil parties in case 002 before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal meet in Phnom Penh to select their legal representatives, 2010. RIGHT: The courtroom of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Designed and built out of the 'Theater Hall' of the Military Base of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, the building had never been used before it was lent to the Khmer Rouge tribunal in 2006. The facility can accommodate 500 people.

View inside the courtroom of the Khmer Rouge tribunal, staffed by the United Nations and Cambodia. Each office of the tribunal consists of the UN and Cambodian personnel with Cambodian majority.
CAN WE RECONCILE WITH THE KILLING FIELDS OF CAMBODIA?

This map provides details of known burial sites throughout Cambodia. Source: Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), which was a field office of Yale University's Cambodia Genocide Program (CGP). CGP was established by Prof. Ben Kiernan. Principal Investigator: Pheng Pong Rasy, DC-Cam; Cartographer: Tom Veldman of GIS Health and Hazards Lab, Department of Geography, Kent State University.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) will design, install and manage permanent exhibitions on the history of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) and develop 24 provincial museums throughout Cambodia. As part of the first step of this museum exhibitions project, DC-Cam will work with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to create and manage five museum exhibitions in five provincial museums, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Thom, Takeo and Svay Rieng. Together with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, DC-Cam will document the stories of survivors and the histories of villages, burial sites, and prison centers across the country where mass atrocities took place. These exhibitions are an important development not only for Cambodia’s struggle for reconciliation and justice today, but the education of its youth for generations to come. Ultimately this project will educate the public on Democratic Kampuchea history as well as serve as an instrument for ensuring this history is never forgotten.

This project would not be possible without the generous support of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the German government. DC-Cam’s funding for this project comes by way of the Victims Support Section/ ECCC, which receives its support from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. This project would also not be possible without the United States Agency for International Development, which offers core support to DC-Cam.

“Although millions were killed, millions more survived to tell their story. The perpetrators of these crimes also survived as well.”

Leng Ratanak, Producer of A River Changes Course

Little things matter in life. This is a photo of Phka Thnak-Tik: A flower that means little water pot. It grows out of hay that has been left on the field after the harvest season. During the KR regime, the people who worked in the fields would see these flowers and, for a time, realize that beauty can still exist in hell. One victim recalled seeing field upon field covered in these flowers when he lived in region 5. Every harvest season, the whole field would be covered with these flowers and they would bring back memories of family and home. In the depths of sadness and despair, it is the little things that can save one’s soul.

Photo by Phat Piseth
THE CROCODILE STAR

Forcibly transferred from Phnom Penh, we settled in our mother's home village in Takeo. It was 1975, and rumors circulated that we would be able to return to our home. One day, the Khmer Rouge came and told us to pack up and move. We were hopeful that our journey home had now begun.

We were put on a train. There were so many people on the train that we could not even sit. One of my sisters had a daughter (Tan Keoketana) who was only a few months old. We were all worried about what would happen next. One night, my uncle (Keo Chhoeun) looked up at the stars and he reminded us of the Crocodile Star.

The Crocodile Star is a story that we learned as kids. It is an old story about a crocodile that did good deeds and as a result was made a star in the sky. The Crocodile Star was always seen as a beacon of hope, direction, and good things. People could look to the ‘Big Dipper’ and find the Crocodile Star who would show them the way.

Riding in the train, in the darkness of night, my uncle looked for the Crocodile Star and pointed it out to us. He told us we were heading in the direction of Phnom Penh. We became so excited and happy because we believed we were truly heading home. Day and night we continued onward, always stopping in different places, but none of this mattered if we were going in the right direction. Suddenly, though, reality sunk in. Upon reaching Pursat, many people were removed from the train. The rest of the passengers continued onward until reaching Battambang province near the Thai border. Our journey had not ended, it had only just begun.

I often thought about the Crocodile Star. I still think about it today. For a brief period of time, the Crocodile Star gave us hope and happiness, even though, ultimately, it was all just a dream. My family became separated, and we entered a new life of starvation, hard labor, and genocide. I feel fortunate to have survived this horrific period. Many family members, including my sister’s baby daughter and my uncle, did not survive. I can never look upon the Crocodile Star in the same way again.

JUSTICE, MEMORY, RECONCILIATION