

GENOCIDE EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

**The Teaching of *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*
Democratic Kampuchea Textbook Distribution**

A Public Education Forum between Teachers, Students and Parents

REPORT FROM SVAY RIENG PROVINCE

October 6, 2011 -- By SER Sayana



Students and villagers participate the Public Education Forum in the dining hall of Po-Serey Pagoda.

Introduction

The public education forum is conducted in the most remote areas in Cambodia. The forum brings together teachers, students and villagers to learn and discuss Khmer Rouge history and link it to their communal histories which have been taken for granted and almost entirely ignored. This is a chapter in the history textbook selected for use in a group exercise.

On October 6, 2011, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)'s Genocide Education Project conducted a public education forum in Chrak Skor village, Svay

Chek Commune, Rumduol District, Svay Rieng province. The forum was conducted at a compound of Po-serei pagoda. This was the 23rd forum held in a remote area where access to current information and development is limited.

There were approximately ninety five participants in the forum. Among these participants, there were about fifty villagers, laymen and women, and forty-five students, teachers, and commune and village chiefs. The DC-Cam team distributed five types of documents including the history textbook "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979), anti-genocide slogan poster, Case 002 booklet, ECCC Trial Observation booklet, and an edition of the Searching for The Truth magazine.

Geographical and Historical Background Description

SVAY RIENG is a province in the southeast of Cambodia, bordered by Vietnam to the east and the south, and Prey Veng province to the west and the north. During Khmer Rouge times, Svay Rieng was in region 23 of the Eastern Zone and So Phim was its secretary of the Zone. In 1978, most people in Svay Rieng were killed or evacuated to other places like Kampong Chhnang, Pursat and Battambang province after So Phim was called a traitor of the regime. Cadres from the Southwest Zone, led by Ta Mok, took control. According to Renakse documents stored in the DC-Cam archives, 96,760 people in Svay Rieng province died under the Khmer Rouge regime. The DC-Cam mapping report shows forty-three killing sites and thirteen memorial sites.



Rumduol district was called Samraong district under the Khmer Rouge. It was changed to Rumduol again after the fall of the regime. Interview testimonies from Svay Chek commune chief and villager Mrs. Noem Hun given that during 1978, all people in Svay Rieng province especially Rumduol district were evacuated to Pursat and Battambang provinces and many were killed there. The Khmer Rouge cadres from Southwest zone were sent to control the area. The cadres told people that the Vietnamese were coming to kill villagers by cutting open the belly and stuffing grass inside, or informed the people that they would be moved to Kanleng Khlanh (Khmer expression mean oily place, easy living with plenty of food...etc.). Meanwhile the KR also gave the villagers each a blue

Krama (Khmer checked scarf, typically made with only combination of two colors, white with red or white and blue), some also got short-sleeved shirts, and sardine steam fish. People were drafted and walked in flocks by foot from Svay Rieng to Koh Chey of Preah Sdach district and Mesang district of Prey Veng province and continued to Neak Loeung (border of Prey Veng and Phnom Penh). In Neak Loeung, people were asked again if they had received the blue scarf, the cadres started to distribute again to those who had not yet got one. From Neak Loeung, people were put in two story wooden boats or ships to Chbar Ampeou quarter in Phnom Penh. After Disembarking in Phnom Penh, transferred from the boats and walked to Central Market. At night, people were given again the blue scarf, shirt and skirt and sardine and walked to railway station, where they boarded a train at midnight that would take them to Pursat Province.

Mrs. Noem recalled that after arriving in Pursat early in the morning, people heard young children shouting for each other that "Hey, a lot more fertilizers arrived..." New comers were called fertilizers, this is because the previous new comers were killed and it was expected that this group would receive the same fate as previous ones. Mrs. Noem stated that there were also Vietnamese people in the company with her on the way to the provinces and they were also killed there.

No one knew where they were sent to but just to follow the cadres. Later, there had a few people knew that there would be something with the blue scarf and they destroyed or hid it. Some people think and understand that the blue scarf is a sign to mark on those from the east zone and to be executed.

Mrs. Ok Kauy in Chen village, Lvea commune, Preah Sdach district of Prey Veng province told that she also received a blue scarf and was told to move too but she stamped the scarf to bury in mud.

Highlight of the Forum Activities



Students of Svay Chek commune heading home after class.

The team members and the purposes of the forum were introduced to participants. An explanation of each of the publications and program schedule of the forum session followed.

1. Opening Remarks – by Svay Chek commune chief Mr. So Khay

Before starting the forum, I invited Mr. So Khay to give remarks to open the morning forum. Mr. So stated: *“First, I would like thank all of you here especially the Documentation Center of Cambodia team. This forum today is very important that DC-Cam put in the necessary effort to organize and bring all these documents to give. The purpose of this forum is the create platform for our villagers and their children, students and teachers to discuss the history of the Khmer Rouge. Especially, we can ask share and talk about our experiences of the past we suffered during the Khmer Rouge so that the next generation can learn from it and can ask questions about overall issues relating to the tribunal, the history and the forum itself. You all should pay attention, because this forum will give you more knowledge about the Khmer Rouge regime.”* At the end of his speech, he officially opened the forum and told the participants them to try hard to listen.



I thanked to Mr. So and took time to again explain the purpose of the forum. I asked the student participants to raise their hands if they knew of or had heard about the KR from their parents or relatives. Some students said they heard from their parents they were not enough food to hear, forced labor, and some heard from Radio, and some others heard

that the regime killed many people. I explained that the public education forum was in place to encourage students to ask questions about the KR to their parents or elders in order to gain extra knowledge about the regime in from what they had learned from school. Moreover, the forum will lead to building peace and reconciliation, locally and nationally, in Cambodia.

After the opening remarks from the commune chief, I opened the forum by outlining details of the program and the objective.



A villager Mrs. Noem Hun shares a view on Khmer Rouge.

2. Distributing DK history book and Pre-forum survey

Before distributing the book to the participants, I explained that the book consisted of 11 chapters covering the following topics: how the Khmer Rouge gained power, the reign of the Khmer Rouge, and its fall.

After the remarks the team distributed the book "*A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*" to the participants. At the same time, pre-forum surveys were distributed to the participants to fill in order to gauge their knowledge of the Khmer Rouge before they received a chapter lesson from the team members. Team members helped the group of villagers who were unable to read or write complete their surveys. I led the groups of students and villagers by guiding them through each question. All pre-forum surveys were collected and the program continued. The team members then allowed participants to take rest for 10 minutes and then observed the model teaching.

3. The Presentation of Chapter two "Who were the Khmer Rouge? How did they gain power?" – by Sayana Ser

After browsing through the 11 chapters of the textbook, I asked the group which chapter they wanted to study discuss. The majority of students and some villagers said they were interested most in Chapter two about "Who were the Khmer Rouge? How did they gain power? Then I asked a few villagers who they thought the Khmer

Rouge were. Some said they were Communists, others thought they were from King Sihanouk.



Participants are working in group discussion.

I began presenting chapter 2 by asking for a volunteer from the group to read the first paragraph of the chapter "The early communist movement". A student raised his hand and volunteered came to stand in front of the crowd to read. Then I asked the group to answer and define the communist movement and the Khmer Rouge. After a few minutes of discussion with the group, I divided the participants into groups of four with each group taking different reading responsibilities.

- Group 1 focused on "The Early Communist Movement" and brief biography of Pol Pot
- Group 2 focused on "The Creation of the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party" and biography of Nuon Chea
- Group 3 "The Workers' Party of Kampuchea (WPK)
- Group 4 "The Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK)"

I gave the groups 15 minutes to read and summarize the assigned sections.

After reading, I asked a representative from each group to summarize what the group had read. Before allowing participants to read the chapter, I explained how to take notes and grasp the important events. First, group 1 spoke very briefly about the early communist movement and seemed very shy. Group 2 also offered a brief summary of their section. However, the representatives of groups 3 and 4 seemed to know how to summarize their sections well. Additionally, I explained to students again how to take notes and summarize the lesson.

At the last step of presentation, I opened a question and answer session. Few questions that related to the chapter were asked by the participants.

4. Questions from participants

Next, I opened the question and answer session and led discussion about the DK history and Khmer Rouge Tribunal with DC-Cam staff member Ms. Dy Socheata. We answered questions posed by students and tried to engage villagers by asking them to help answer the questions. The questions were as follow:

1. Why did the KR evacuate people from the cities to countryside?
2. Why did the KR kill their own people? What was the use in doing that?
3. Why was King Sihanouk in China under the KR, not in Cambodia?
4. What was the KR's policy?
5. Lon Nol was the military marshal (chancellor) of Sihanouk but why did Lon Nol launch a coup to overthrow his master?
6. Why is the KRT named the case as 001 and 002, what do these designations mean?

5. Distributing the ECCC-related materials, Post-Forum Survey and Evaluation Form

After the question and answer period, the team distributed the booklet titled "Genocide: The important of Case 002", ECCC Trial Observation booklet, Anti-genocide slogan poster, Searching for the Truth magazine and post-forum surveys in order to assess how the knowledge and attitude of the participants towards studying the history of the KR had been changed, if at all. After about 15 minutes, the surveys were collected and I thanked all participants for their attendance and engagement in the discussion.

Observations, Team's Interviews, and Impacts

Students' and Villagers' Participation

The engagement between students and the material was strong. The students asked a number of important questions. Some answers were solicited from the villagers.

The Forum and Teaching History

Regarding the forum, the commune chief Mr. So Khay suggested that he believed that the forum had brought information about the ECCC and knowledge about the Khmer Rouge regime and its history to the participants, especially the students who are from the younger generation. He thought that the forum was good and his favorite part was the Q&A session. He stated that he could not directly ask and answer in the manner of the Q&A session when reading the newspaper or listening to radio. He said that the forum generated thought among the participants to learn what the KR were like and to distinguish between bad and good.

Villager Mr. Mom Saphal thought that the forum was good because it could provide knowledge about the history of the Khmer Rouge. He **requested to be given several** sets of the documents so he could distribute them in his village called Popoul because he wants people and his relatives **to gain more knowledge about the KR**. He added that the evacuation and daily life under the KR should be taught in public schools so students could understand the crimes committed by the KR and would then be able to separate good from bad.

Challenges

Survivors of the commune have doubts on whether the tribunal can work fairly to deliver justice to Cambodian people. The commune chief Mr. So Khay stated that he was not sure and could not say if the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT) can bring justice to people "It is like a song with the singing line as: ...buffalo that is eating (rice), I really dare not chase it; if it is walking away, I will show you how to chase it.... Similarly, this motto can be applied to the UN tribunal. The UN did not take any action during the dark period under the KR and moreover, the UN had recognized the KR as the representative of Cambodian Government, allowing it to hold Cambodia's UN seat. I have heard that their allegations of corruption are being investigated, and that there is internal conflict within the office of co-investigating judges. I cannot tell until the trial is completed."



The program had to be delayed for an hour because the villagers and students did not arrive until 9:00 a.m. because of rain, flood and household work. The majority of young women in the commune work in garment factories and even though the forum was centrally located there is still the lack of transportation and poor road conditions.

Since the forum started one hour later than expected the program (8:00 a.m.), it also concluded later than expected. There were a few parents of the student participants who called to ask the commune chief about their children. The team had tried to finish the forum at 11:30; however, we learnt that we needed to end the forum by 11 o'clock regardless of the delay because the students and some villagers such as monks had their regular meal time at 11 o'clock.

The forum is being held in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and funded by The Asia Foundation (TAF), Phnom Penh, Cambodia with the core supports from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

TEAM MEMBERS AT THE FIELD:

SER Sayana

PHAT Piseth

TEAV Sarakmonin

DY Socheata

APPENDIX 1

Interview Summaries

Ret Ratha, born in 1993, Rorng Damrey village, Svay Chek commune.

Ratha is 19 years old, in grade 12 at Hun Sen Kampong Chork. Ratha used to hear about KR from his parents who told him that under the KR, they had worked very hard and there was no enough food and medicine. The older and younger people had been forced to work very hard and had been killed if they didn't complete their work on time.

Ratha said he had learned a lot from the forum and in his opinion the most interesting portions of the forum were working on the group exercise and the Q&A session as this allowed him to gain more information about the history of DK. He hopes that such a dark period in history will not happen again in Cambodia. Ratha aims to educate the Khmer people to love each other because they live in the same world and share one nation. Ratha aims to share will have share what he knows about the KR with everyone, especially the hardship and suffering that occurred under the KR. Ratha believes that there are ways to prevent the KR happening again. Ratha wants the Khmer people to live peacefully. He think 'Peace' is mean that there is no war and internal conflict in a nation. But before peace can happen, people must first reconcile.

Ean Rina, born in 1996,

Rina is in ninth grade. He heard about the KR from his parents before the forum but he didn't believe them at all. Rina thought it was just a tale to scare young people. Recently, after learning about the history of the KR at school and from the forum, he believes the stories and wishes to learn more about DK. During the forum, he was really interested in the Q&A session about the history of the KR because it could help him learn a lot about the KR and what happened at under their rule because in his opinion, he doesn't want the KR to reoccur. The best way to prevent this is by learning about the history of DK. Another way is to teach people who are about to walk on the wrong path, and correct him/her. Rina wants to have people, especially those who live in the same nation, who share the same nationality, to have peace and live without oppression from other people or nations. Rina never discriminates against the children of former KR cadres or perpetrators because they are of a new generation and cannot be held responsible. Rina thinks that not discriminating is a form of reconciliation because if we don't discriminate, people can live with each other peacefully.

APPENDIX 2

Local newspapers Rasmei Kampuchea covered the forum events in Svay Rieng and Prey Veng.

Prey Veng

និយាយពីការរស់នៅក្នុងសង្គមយុវក្រលមជ្ឈតិយាយពីការផ្សព្វផ្សាយប្រកួតប្រជែងកីឡាស្តីពីកីឡាស្រីក្នុងតំបន់ភ្នំពេញស្រីយ

● ក្រសួងមេរៀន យុវជន និងកីឡា និងមជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

USAID/USA Sida/SWEDEN

វេទិកាស្តីពីការអប់រំសាធារណៈ ប្រែប្រួលវប្បធម៌

ស្រុកកែវ និងសិស្សានុសិស្ស សរុបជាង ៣០០ នាក់ ។ ផ្ទៃក្នុងឱកាសនោះ សេង ធី បានរៀបរាប់ពីភាពឈឺចាប់របស់ខ្លួននៅក្នុងរបបខ្មែរក្រហម ដើម្បីជាការរំលឹកនូវបទពិសោធន៍របស់ខ្លួនទៅកាន់សិស្សានុសិស្សដែលជាក្មេងជំនាន់ក្រោយឱ្យបានដឹង និងជាការចូលរួមចំណែកក្នុងការទប់ស្កាត់កុំឱ្យកើតមានម្តងទៀត។ សេង ធី រំលឹកថា កម្មវិធីបង្រៀនខ្មែរក្រហមពីទំនាក់ទំនងជាមួយគ្រួសារនោះ គឺ ឈ្មោះ គោម និងគោម បានហៅឱ្យកុមាររបស់ខ្លួនទៅប្រជុំតែឯកទេសដែលស្ថិតនៅជុំវិញភ្នំពេញ របស់ខ្លួន អ្នកទាំងពីររូបជាមួយគ្នាមិនដឹងទៅវិញ។

ធី យាយម៉ាត់ ៗ ប្រកបដោយកំហឹង សេង ធី រៀបរាប់ថា ខ្មែរក្រហមពិតជាធ្វើបាបប្រល័យជនជាតិខ្មែរ កាយទាំងផ្លូវចិត្តបង្អត់អាហារ បង្ខំឱ្យធ្វើការងារទម្ងន់ កាត់ផ្តាច់មនោសញ្ចេតនាបងប្អូន ប្រពន្ធ និងកូន ។ សេង ធី បញ្ជាក់ថា រំលឹកនូវសូម្បីតែខ្ញុំ ឃើញកូនក៏មិនហ៊ានហៅកូនដែរ ព្រោះខ្លាចគេស្តាប់ ។ នៅក្នុងបញ្ចប់ សេង ធី បានចោទជាសំណួរទៅកាន់បងប្អូនដែលចូលរួមក្នុងវេទិកានេះថា តើមានអ្នកណាដឹងទេថា អ្នកណាជាអ្នកដែលឈរពីក្រោយនៃការធ្វើអំពើឃោរឃៅទាំងនេះ? នេះជាអ្វីដែលខ្ញុំចង់ដឹង។

នៅក្នុងវេទិកាសាធារណៈនេះមានមេតូដូសម្រាប់ទៅលើគុណភាព រក្សាទុកទោសមេដឹកនាំខ្មែរក្រហម និងសំណូមពរឱ្យគុណភាពមេតូដូដឹកនាំទាំងនោះឱ្យបានជាប់ គ

សិន ម៉េត មេតូដូពោធិ៍ បានផ្តល់ជាទស្សនៈមួយថា ពិតណាស់ការធ្វើវេទិកាអប់រំជាសាធារណៈ វាពិតជាសំខាន់ផងដែរតែមិនមែនជាការផ្សព្វផ្សាយដ៏ល្អចំពោះជនរងគ្រោះក្នុងរបបខ្មែរក្រហមនោះទេ ការធ្វើវេទិកានេះគ្រាន់តែជាការបង្រៀន ឬប្រាប់ក្មេងៗជំនាន់ក្រោយឱ្យបានដឹងនូវប្រវត្តិ

ប្រជាធិបតេយ្យរវាងគ្រួសារ និង ឪពុកម្តាយ របស់មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជាបានប្រកួតប្រជែងនៅក្នុងបទវិវាទវិវាទពោធិ៍សែនជ័យក្នុងភូមិចកស្ត ឃុំស្វាយចេក ស្រុកវៀល ខេត្តស្វាយរៀង ដោយមានការចូលរួមយ៉ាងច្រើនកុះករពីសំណាក់លោកមេឃុំ ប្រជាពលរដ្ឋសិស្សានុសិស្ស មិនខុសអ្វីនឹងវេទិកាដែលធ្វើនៅខេត្តព្រៃវែងនោះទេ ។ ជាងនេះទៅទៀត ចំណុចដែលបងប្អូនប្រជាពលរដ្ឋចាប់អារម្មណ៍ជាងគេនៅក្នុងការរៀនប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រកម្ពុជាជាប្រជាធិបតេយ្យនោះ គឺជំពូកទី២ ដែលនិយាយពី តើខ្មែរក្រហមជានរណា? និងតើខ្មែរក្រហមក្លាយជានរណា? ដោយរបៀបណា? សំណួរជាច្រើនបានចោទសួរមកកាន់ក្រុមការងារមជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា ពីសំណាក់សិស្សានុសិស្ស និងបងប្អូនប្រជាពលរដ្ឋ។ សំណួរទាំងអស់នោះមានដូចជា ៖ តើហេតុអ្វីបានជាខ្មែរក្រហមសម្លាប់ប្រជាជនរបស់ខ្លួន? តើការធ្វើនេះដើម្បីអ្វី? តើហេតុអ្វីបានជាខ្មែរក្រហមជម្រុះប្រជាជនពីទីក្រុងទៅជនបទហើយឱ្យពិជនបទកម្រិតខ្ពស់? តើហេតុអ្វីបានជាកុលាការ ហៅឈ្មោះសំណុំរឿងថា ជាសំណុំរឿង០០១ ២០០២? អ្នកមិនប្រើឈ្មោះជនជាប់ចោទ ?

សំណួរទាំងអស់នេះ ត្រូវបានឆ្លើយយ៉ាងក្បោះក្បាយពីសំណាក់ កញ្ញាស៊ី សាឃ្យាណា និង កញ្ញា ធី ស៊ីជាភាគីបុគ្គលិកមជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា។ គួរបញ្ជាក់ផងដែរថា វេទិកាសាធារណៈស្តីពីការអប់រំប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រកម្ពុជាប្រជាធិបតេយ្យ ខេត្តព្រៃវែង និងស្វាយរៀង នេះជាខេត្តទី ២២ និង ២៣ សម្រាប់គម្រោងស្តីពីការសិក្សាប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រកម្ពុជាប្រជាធិបតេយ្យ (១៩៧៥-៧៩) ដែលគម្រោងនេះ មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា ត្រូវធ្វើទាំង២ខេត្ត/ក្រុង ទូទាំងប្រទេស ។ **ទាវ សារះមុតិ**

កញ្ញាស៊ី សាឃ្យាណា និយាយទៅកាន់អ្នកចូលរួមវេទិកាសាធារណៈ នៅខេត្តព្រៃវែង

កុំពេញ: ខ្ញុំសូមមកអរគុណផងដែរដល់ឪពុកខ្ញុំ ទៅធ្វើបាបនិយាយបណ្តើរហ្នឹង ទើបខ្ញុំបានឮថា ខ្ញុំដែលបង្អប់ទៅដោយភាពឈឺចាប់របស់អីស្រី សេង ធី ដែលបានខ្លាំងនៅក្នុងវេទិកាអប់រំសាធារណៈ ស្តីពីការអប់រំប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រកម្ពុជាប្រជាធិបតេយ្យរវាងគ្រួសារ និងឪពុក ម្តាយ របស់មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា ។

វេទិកានេះធ្វើឡើងកាលពីថ្ងៃទី ៤ ខែគុណា ឆ្នាំ២០១១ នៅក្នុងបទវិវាទវត្តស័រវិទ្ធិល្អិតល្អន់ ដែលស្ថិតនៅភូមិពោធិ៍ ឃុំក្រាំងស្វាយ ស្រុកព្រះស្តេច ខេត្តព្រៃវែង ដោយមានការចូលរួមពីក្រុមប្រឹក្សាឃុំក្រាំងស្វាយ និងមេតូដូពោធិ៍ ក្រុមជាមួយនឹងប្រជាពលរដ្ឋ ដែលមកពីភូមិពោធិ៍ និងភូមិសាស្ត្រកម្ពុជាប្រជាធិបតេយ្យ និងវិធីមួយនៃការចូលរួមចំណែកក្នុងការទប់ស្កាត់កុំឱ្យរបបនេះ កើតមានឡើងម្តងទៀតប៉ុណ្ណោះ តែមិនមែនជាការផ្សព្វផ្សាយពេញលេញនោះទេ ចំពោះរូប ម៉េតផ្ទាល់ការផ្សព្វផ្សាយ គឺជាការបាននូវយុត្តិធម៌ពិតមួយតាមរយៈគុណភាព ហើយសំណូមពរឱ្យគុណភាពមួយនេះធ្វើការកាត់ទោសឱ្យបានត្រឹមត្រូវ ដើម្បីជាកិច្ចការអប់រំជំនាន់ក្រោយកុំឱ្យយកកិច្ចការមេតូដូ ហើយសូមកុំឱ្យចំណាយពេលលើកាត់ទោសយូរ ព្រោះអីខ្មែរក្រហមពេលនោះកាប់សម្លាប់ប្រជាជនតែមួយប៉ប៉ែតភ្នែកទេ ។

ដោយឡែកមួយទៀតនៅ ថ្ងៃទី៦ ខែឆ្នាំដែល វេទិកាសាធារណៈ ស្តីពីការអប់រំប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រកម្ពុជា