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The Early Phases of Liberation in Northwestern Cambodia: Conversations with Peang Sophi

by

David P. Chandler
with Ben Kiernan and Muy Hong Lim

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PREFACE

This working paper is drawn from nine hours of recorded conversation between Muy Hong Lim, a graduate student at Monash, and Peang Sophi, a 32 year old Cambodian who arrived in Australia from Thailand in April 1976.* Hong and Ben Kiernan, who attended two of the sessions, have checked the draft and translations, but I am responsible for the inferences drawn and the language used. When Sophi was told about the use to which the conversations would be put, he urged us to use his name, rather than a pseudonym, so as to give what he said "more force" (tvoeu oy klang cheang).

His account of life under the revolutionary regime differs in two important ways from others readily available in the West. Firstly, he spent over six months working actively - and rather happily - under revolutionary guidance; unlike many refugees, he was not punished by the regime for having roots in the "old society". Secondly, from about September onwards, he enjoyed considerable responsibility, as the "economic" foreman of an 800-man rural work team. For these reasons, his account is useful in gaining insights into the style and ideology of the revolution.

To a purist, of course, his eventual escape may show that he was still part of the "old society" after all. He fled because conditions were hard and because he thought - mistakenly as things turned out - that his best friend had done so.

His narrative, moreover, is not definitive. The pace and style of liberation in other parts of the country, both before and after Sophi's departure, obviously differed in many ways from

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* The interviews took place on 29 April, 5 July, 10 July, and 24 July. Several details were verified in more informal sessions in August and September.

what occurred to him in one corner of Battambang. This province, as Ben Kiernan has shown,* had a unique (but recent) revolutionary tradition, and enjoyed unusual prosperity throughout the French and Sihanouk years. Revolutionary cadre in this area may have been especially vengeful and undisciplined, too; certainly most tales of atrocities told by refugees refer to events in Battambang. Information on this point, however, is ambiguous: it may be that conditions elsewhere in Cambodia are better than in Battambang, but it is also possible that these areas are merely too far from the Thai border for refugees to be able to escape.

In the paper I have used the awkward phrase "Khmer Rouge" to translate Sophi's term Khmaer krohom. I have done so on the grounds that neither Sophi nor the new regime used the word "Communist", and some widely used term like "Khmer Rouge" is helpful for the time being to describe the liberating, as contrasted to the liberated segment of Cambodia's population.

I am grateful to Peang Sophi for his patience and goodwill; to Ben and Hong for their enthusiasm and their help with the draft and the translations; and finally, to Hugh Kiernan and Bopha Lim.

David P. Chandler

November, 1976

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* See Ben Kiernan, Working Papers Nos. 4 and 5.

THE EARLY PHASES OF LIBERATION

Peang Sophi was born in Phnom Penh in 1944, the third of six children. His father was a clerk - in 1953, at least - at a French-sponsored high school. In the mid 1950s the family moved to Stung Treng in northern Cambodia where Sophi completed his education, failing the examinations that would have admitted him to a lycée. Ironically, he took these examinations hoping to attend the Teachers' Training College at Kampong Kantuot, near Phnom Penh, a spawning ground in the Sihanouk era for Khmer Rouge cadre. To compound the irony, it was financed until 1964 by the United States.

After a stretch of casual employment around Phnom Penh, Sophi moved to Battambang, where his "adopted older brother" owned a bar. In 1966 he took a job at the textile factory then being built with Chinese economic aid. He started as a construction worker, and was later taught by Chinese technicians how to operate machines.[1] Over the next nine years (Chinese technicians left in 1967) he became familiar with most of the equipment in the plant. Because of this, he asserts, and because he was "poor", he was kept at the plant for three months by the Khmer Rouge - i.e. until July 1975.

Aside from his affection for Prince Sihanouk Sophi was apathetic politically, at least until liberation. He didn't vote in the National Assembly elections of 1966, and in 1972, unimpressed by Lon Nol (whom he refers to as a khmau, or "blackie") Sophi voted for a rightist anti-government candidate,

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1. Sophi remembers that in setting up the plant, the Chinese planted vegetables and fruit-trees around the factory, to provide food for the workers. The Cambodians neglected these plants, and they died off, only to be reintroduced by the Khmer Rouge after liberation.

Im Tam.[2] "Only high officials", he asserts, voted for the Marshal, even though "We knew, without him, the political situation would become impossible".

Before liberation Sophi supplemented his wages (which rose slowly to the equivalent, in 1975, of A$35 a month) by working in his adopted brother's bar. At one point, also, he spent two weeks digging for sapphires in Pailin, west of Battambang. Finding nothing, he returned to his factory job.

On 18 April, 1975, a day after Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, Battambang was liberated without a shot. High government officials had fled in helicopters the day before, and the city was in a holiday mood. "We thought the war was over", Sophi remarks, "And that we could work normally again and go about our business with a less corrupt regime". With hundreds of others Sophi went to the outskirts of town to greet "our friends" the Khmer Rouge, about whom - in spite or perhaps because of five years' hostile propaganda - he knew very little. Like most of his friends, Sophi welcomed liberation without realizing what it meant: "The Khmer Rouge had won; fair enough; the war was over".

In this context, the solemnity of the Khmer Rouge themselves probably came as a surprise. The first ones Sophi saw were heavily armed, "very young" and dressed in black like peasants, although their trousers, Sino-Vietnamese style, were held up by elastic bands. They were "unmistakably" Cambodian, and Sophi noticed that they were "thin and pale; none of them was fat". They were also contemptuous, and aloof, "looking us over, distrustfully, from head to toe". Khmer Rouge cadre later admitted to Sophi that in the early days of liberation they were subject to "uncontrollable hatred". It was in this mood that executions

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2. In 1966, Sophi remembers that the candidate in his district of Phnom Penh, Cheng Heng (later Chief of State in the Khmer Republic) spent huge sums of money purchasing support.

of Lon Nol officials took place, and that Khmer Rouge dismantled two T-28 aircraft they found at Battambang airport - with their bare hands. "They would have eaten them if they could", Sophi remarks.

Battambang was not evacuated at once. After about a week, the Khmer Rouge told its people - but not the workers at the textile factory - to disperse to the countryside, because "American B-52s" were soon to bomb the city. Although Sophi knew nothing of this exodus at first-hand, it seems likely that local Khmer Rouge spent the first few days after liberation organizing themselves for the move and preparing work-sites near the city to receive evacuees.[3]

During this week, the Khmer Rouge forced the rapid deflation of prices in the city, confiscated radios, and gradually phased out the use of money.

At first, Sophi was not impressed by the newcomers. "We didn't take them seriously", he says. "We sat and listened to them, but paid no attention to what they said". Snobbery, perhaps, played a part in his indifference. According to Sophi, most of the Khmer Rouge were "real country people, from <u>far</u> away" - illiterate, out of touch, and ill at ease. For example,

> They were scared of anything in a bottle or a tin. Something in a tin [perhaps insecticide] had made one of them sick, so they mistook a can of sardines, with a picture of a fish on it, for fish poison, and one of them asked a friend of mine to throw it out. I saw them eating toothpaste once, and as for reading, I remember them looking at documents upside down.

After the evacuation, "about eighty" Khmer Rouge, including twenty women, arrived at the textile plant to study work techniques. Most of them came from Samlaut, 50 km. to the southwest. At this stage, also, the three ranking executives of the plant (in charge of personnel, administration, and technology)

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3. These tactics also applied in the Pailin region. See Kunara Sam, "Quand les armes se sont tues", <u>Sereika</u> 1 (August, 1976), 8-10.

were taken off to "study". Khmer Rouge cadre later told Sophi, whom they befriended, that the men had been shot because they were "corrupt" - a charge which Sophi believes was true in two cases, but false in the third.[4]

In May and June 1975 conditions at the plant began to harden. For one thing, workers were made to wear black peasant costumes, with cuffless trousers reaching half-way down the calf. Sophi, who dyed a pair of "old society" trousers black, was once humiliated at the gate by Khmer Rouge soldiers who cut off the bottoms to the requisite height and ordered him to sew up the pockets. On a more serious level, pay was halted altogether and the Khmer Rouge took political control of the factory, working through two former employees who had been jailed by the Lon Nol regime and who now "talked politics all the time, and were pure red". In this period unco-operative workers would disappear to "study". Sophi attended several meetings which denounced the "old society", and others which discussed methods of increasing productivity at the plant. Partly because shortages of fuel meant that the factory could only run two shifts a day, rather than three, and partly because of the arrival of the new politicized workers, the Khmer Rouge seem to have intended all along to phase out the thousand-odd workers who had been at the plant before liberation. Sophi himself was dismissed in July 1975, charged with eating an extra bowl of rice. From then on, whether tactically, from conviction, or both - Sophi's narrative is not clear on this point - he co-operated with the Khmer Rouge and was rewarded with increased responsibility and power.[5]

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4. Sophi admits that the top two executives at the factory were corrupt, but adds that the technical director, a young man, was not.

5. His enthusiasm for the Khmer Rouge - whether genuine or feigned - made his friends suspicious, and he had to go out of his way, sub rosa, to show that he was loyal to his adopted brother.

From July 1975 until January 1976, he worked on a co-operative farm (sahakar) at Wat Rokar some five kilometres south of Battambang.[6] In September and October he was detailed along with "seven thousand" people from different work-sites, to work on a canal at Snoeung, 20 km. southwest of Battambang. He came back to Wat Rokar for the harvest at the end of 1975, and escaped to Thailand in January 1976.

Several aspects of his narrative are worth discussing in detail. These include what he saw of the reorganization of Khmer society; working conditions; the style and content of political meetings; and changes in vocabulary, life-style, and culture sponsored by the regime. Although he remained unconvinced by the totality of Khmer Rouge teaching, Sophi was impressed by the integrity and morale of many cadre, and by the ideology embodied in official directives and revolutionary songs. At several points in the interviews, he said, "The [Khmer Rouge] theory is good".

In the summer of 1975 Cambodian rural society, in Battambang at least, was reorganized, first on the basis of ten-family units, and later into work-teams. These numbered from 30 to over 1,000 persons, organized on a task basis, with a module of three ten-man groups. Each of these was encadred at the work-sites by three men, in charge respectively of "action" (sakam), "politics", (niyobay) and "economy" (setekec). The "action" leader was in charge of organizing the work force and arranging its day-to-day programme; the "politics" leader dealt with

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6. Although the word translates as "co-operative", the sahakar clearly have more in common with Chinese communes or Russian collective farms than with Vietnamese co-operative ones. It is uncertain if parts of Cambodia liberated before 1975, however, have undergone as much dislocation as Battambang.

"keeping everyone happy" - i.e. with morale and cultural affairs; and the leader connected with "economics" obtained supplies for the work team, including tools, food, and medicine. He also arranged, at harvest time, for the day's harvest to be brought to a central granary controlled by the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge chose these leaders, Sophi said, on the basis of skill, class background, and effectiveness within a given group. They enjoyed no special privileges, aside from some freedom of movement from site to site, if they were in charge of a large group. In the words of a revolutionary slogan, they were expected to "join enthusiastically" (sosrak sosram) in work which their groups performed. The 33-man groups (kong), in turn, were organized in three groups (i.e. to a total of 99 people) with an additional three-man cadre. The 102-man groups could then be organized if necessary, into larger bodies; Sophi cited examples of groups numbering three-, eight-, and twelve-hundred-odd workers. The mechanics of reorganization, which Sophi first noted at the canal site, went fairly smoothly, indicating considerable skill on the part of the Khmer Rouge in recruiting supervisory personnel. According to Sophi, the goal of the regime is to set up self-reliant thousand-worker groups throughout Cambodia, "within the next five years". These would produce clothing and tools, while bartering surpluses with other groups producing different commodities or crops. Groups of this kind were to be formed in Battambang in early 1976. Another aspect of reorganization was that at harvest time a special 800-worker harvesting team, composed of young people selected for the purpose, moved from work-site to work-site aiding local workers in bringing in the rice. The group was known as a "shock troop" (top sruoch), and its members were supposed to set an example to others by "enthusiastically joining the momentum" of everyone's work, (choh cho'p chol'na), sleeping in the open if there were no accommodation for them.

Working conditions at Wat Rokar, for one with Sophi's strength (he was known as "friend stocky" [mit map] to the Khmer Rouge), were not especially severe. People rose at five. Work began in the fields about an hour later, and lasted until noon. After an hour for lunch, work resumed from 1.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. The hours were flexible, however, for one Khmer Rouge innovation - linked, perhaps, to the movement's preoccupations with indigenous culture, asceticism and self-reliance - was to work "according to the sun", following a shared rhythm of work rather than the mechanical rhythm of a clock. At first, the ten-family units, although removed in most cases from their original homes, retained identity by cooking and eating together at the work sites. This practice changed in August 1975, when food was cooked in common for work teams, whose members contributed their personal rations (given them by their "economic" leaders) to a communal kitchen. In another connection, Sophi quotes a Cambodian proverb ("Food from a large pot is never tasty") to criticize the regimentation of the new regime. However, rations were usually sufficient, varying from one Nestle's condensed milk can of uncooked rice a day, at the beginning of liberation, to three cans per person ("too much", according to Sophi) during the time spent digging the canal. Sophi stressed that workers on the job were fed more rations than their "unproductive" dependants, probably as part of angkar's programme of stressing the moral value of collective labour,[7] and of punishing those who "exploited others' work" (chih ch'oan polikam).

In Sophi's opinion, Khmer Rouge control over rations was a way of controlling the people: "With enough to eat, we might get lazy; by economizing with us, they kept their strength."

On the whole, then, Sophi found conditions fairly hard, but

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7. The virtues of collective behavior vis a vis individualism are stressed repeatedly by the Khmer Rouge, in radio broadcasts and in the Constitution of 1976.

the administration reasonably just. He brushes aside other refugees' assertions of brutality by saying that many of these people, who lived only two or three months under the Khmer Rouge, had no understanding of the directives that governed working conditions.[8] These came into effect towards the end of 1975. According to Sophi, the seven which he remembered were:

(1) Respect the discipline imposed by the organization (angkar)

(2) Respect the directives of the organization

(3) Pursue solidarity and unity of action

(4) Don't squander common property

(5) Struggle to work hard; struggle to be humble; struggle to be clean and honest

(6) Report daily on work accomplished

(7) Plan the work to be done on the following day.

In speaking of organization and control Sophi stressed that Khmer Rouge cadre, as such, were not involved at the work sites themselves. At Wat Rokar in fact there were only three cadre in residence. Each sahakar had a "president", or protean, who was a local man, chosen by the Khmer Rouge, and then "elected" by the sahakar. The first of these at Wat Rokar was executed by the Khmer Rouge for listening to "Voice of America" radio broadcasts and, more generally, for losing enthusiasm for the revolution. He was replaced by a more dedicated figure. The Khmer Rouge cadre themselves, in these early stages, were not identified by personal names, and kept to themselves (at Wat Rokar, the Khmer Rouge soldiers had their own separate field of padi) although they had no special privileges or badges of rank, and were friendly enough in their relations with villagers and

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8. It is possible that in the early stages of liberation, these directives were not widely circulated, but were memorized only by work-team leaders.

workers.[9]

In Sophi's opinion, the Khmer Rouge were able to retain control over large groups of people in four ways: by the threat and collective memory of force; by controlling movement in and out of the work-sites; by monopolizing the distribution of food; and by locating the sites at considerable distances from roads and other population centres. From time to time, unco-operative villagers disappeared, allegedly to "study"; a macabre jingle: "the Khmer Rouge kill, but never explain" (Khmaer krohom somlap, min del prap) circulated at the factory.

Two other reasons for Khmer Rouge success - aside from the attractiveness of their programme - seem to have been their special appeal to youth, especially those between thirteen and sixteen (a neglected group in pre-revolutionary Cambodia), - who were organized into their own work-teams - and their giving power and responsibility to people with what they called "poor peasant" backgrounds.

In the early stages of liberation, Khmer Rouge speakers publicly admitted, they had been fired by "uncontrollable hatred" for members of the "old society". "We were so angry when we came out of the forest", one speaker allegedly said, "that we didn't want to spare even a baby in its cradle". At political meetings at Wat Rokar and Snoeung, Khmer Rouge admitted executions of "old society" people, but added that angkar had ordered these executions stopped. One reason for this, according to a speaker at Wat Rokar, was that angkar wanted Cambodia's population, depleted by at least a million people during the five-

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9. Sophi noticed, however, that a few symbols of status persist. The highest-ranking cadre he saw, for example, carried pistols, and travelled with two "runners" (niresaa) - teenaged messengers with high status in the revolution. Cadre with lower status carried rifles.

year war, to reach 20 million by 1990.[10] Sophi says the figure was "made up" and adds that everyone was "much too tired to reproduce" (he uses polite language here) at the end of the day.

Sophi's comments about political meetings at Wat Rokar and at the canal-digging site are interesting. Ironically, for a regime that has ruthlessly pruned foreign words from its vocabulary, the assemblies themselves are known as miting.[11] There were miting of one sort or another every night. Those at Wat Rokar opened with singing "The Red Flag" (see Appendix, p. 14), a song written in 1970 and more popular, it seems, than the national anthem ['The Victory of 17 March (1975)'] promulgated in 1976. Sophi reports, incidentally, that the only flags he saw were merely red, without markings of any kind. As in China, these were flown at work-sites, to raise morale. He never saw the national flag, adopted officially in early 1976, which bears a stylized image of a three-towered Cambodian temple, in yellow, on a red field.

While smaller meetings, limited to work-team leaders, were held two or three nights a week, larger ones, involving entire work-site populations, occurred about once a week. At these, men and women were separated from each other, and grouped according to marital status. In the speeches and discussion that ensued, everyone enjoyed equal status as "friends". Subjects for discussion did not include "individualistic" complaints, however, but were geared to improving work and morale in the collectivity as a whole.

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10. See also Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Report, Asia and the Pacific, 26 April 1976, which reports a Cambodian official's statement, at an international conference: "Cambodia has more than 7.7 million people at present. We want more people; we do not want to kill them."

11. The word in Vietnamese is mit-tinh; see Alexander Woodside, Community and Revolution in Modern Vietnam, Boston 1976, p.267.

Indoctrination at miting included explanations of the ten directives, already mentioned, and the memorization of revolutionary songs. "Cultural groups", usually formed locally, also performed at miting in song and mime, dramatizing the revolution with prepared, rather than improvised texts; at Snoeung, there were cultural performances every night. Khmer Rouge speakers urged people to be self-reliant, to work harder, to be humble, and belaboured the Americans, as well as "everyone with a white skin and a sharp nose", according to Sophi. Two sentences he remembers are: "We have only ourselves; we must offer our work to Angkar;" and "Robbery only satisfies one person". His favourite speaker, Ta Mih (a revolutionary pseudonym), spoke in such a way "that nobody ever got tired". Mih was the leader of Khmer Rouge militia attached to Wat Rokar and the canal-building site. One of his most effective speeches, as recalled by Sophi, ran something like this:

> In the old days, the big people (nak thom) told us we had independence. What kind of independence was that? What had we built? Well, they built an Independence Monument. Where did they build it? They built it in the capital. Who saw the thing? The nak thom's children. Did country people see it? No, they didn't; they saw only photos. The nak thom's children went in and out [of Cambodia], going to this country, that country, and then they came back, to control our kind of people [literally "our group"]. And now what do we do, in contrast? We don't build Independence Monuments like that. Instead, by lifting up embankments, digging irrigation canals, and so on, the children of Cambodians can see what they have done, and country people will see that in the time of their grandfather, the time of their father, and their uncles, they built their own independence....

Speeches like this convinced Sophi that "no one can beat the Khmer Rouge at talking", but he adds that "When you asked them, 'Why do you say one thing and do another?' the answer was that 'the organization moves by leaps and bounds'" - that is, it followed tactics and strategy known in detail only to itself. In this context, also, it is interesting that the Khmer Rouge, in the

early stages of liberation, made almost no specific pledges about popular welfare in the future - e.g. when and if schools would be reopened, or currency reintroduced - preferring to stress the dynamic interplay of agricultural prosperity and self-reliance.

These aims and achievements were also treated by a semi-monthly newspaper, Revolution, which circulated at Wat Rokar. According to Sophi, the editors of the paper - which emanated from Phnom Penh - were not named, nor did it single out government leaders for special attention, reflecting the anonymity of collective leaders. "I didn't believe what it said", Sophi asserts, without mentioning any reasons for his distrust.

The changes in rural life-style that were introduced into Battambang in 1975 had been in effect in liberated areas for several years. Uniformity of costume and hair style, enforced in these areas since 1973, are perhaps the most obvious: women's hair was bobbed rather severely, in recognizably Chinese style; and Maoist peaked caps - unknown in pre-revolutionary Cambodia - were widely worn. Similarly, the formal structure of Buddhism was dismantled, and although some monks appear to have been allowed to stay in their monasteries, most were ordered out of the sangha to assist the revolution. Broadcasts from Phnom Penh never mention Buddhism, incidentally, even as a shortcoming of the "old society". A puritanical strain in Khmer Rouge behaviour can be seen in such regulations, cited by Sophi, as one that forbids women from unbuttoning the top button of their tunics, and others enforcing the separation of workers by sex when work was done; personal ornaments, including jewellery, are discouraged.

The keynote of linguistic reforms is being "humble inside the revolution" (reaka knung pattavot). Differences in status no longer exist; begging and arrogance, respectively, are not allowed. The Khmer Rouge emphasize that relations between husband and wife and between parents and children should be marked by cordiality, and the use of crude expressions is discouraged.

Foreign words, especially French ones, are no longer permitted; what were "commands" are now "suggestions" and what is emphasized over and over is the self-reliance of Cambodians, and by implication of the Cambodian language, vis à vis the developing national revolution.[12]

The details of Sophi's escape in January 1976 are of interest. A band of seven men from Thailand arrived at Wat Rokar and offered to guide Sophi's adopted brother, among others, to the frontier. Sophi's brother refused, unwilling to escape without Sophi, absent that day at a work-site. The band then contacted Sophi, who arranged a rendez-vous with them, on the understanding that his brother would join him in the escape. His brother, however, at the last moment changed his mind, convinced that Sophi, by now "heart and soul" with the Khmer Rouge, would prefer to stay in Cambodia.

In a twist of plot worthy of the Ramayana, Sophi, unknown to his brother, had actually planned to escape for some time, and had squirrelled away some extra clothes and rice for the journey. He fully expected to encounter his brother on his escape, but he didn't, and his brother - much more a part of the "old society" than Sophi, in the eyes of the Khmer Rouge - remains behind as a participant in one sort of new society - the one envisaged by the new régime - just as Sophi, by escaping to Australia, has chosen to participate in another.

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12. For more information about linguistic changes, see David P. Chandler, "The Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea (Cambodia): The Semantics of Revolutionary Change", Pacific Affairs, Fall 1976, (in press).

APPENDIX

SIX REVOLUTIONARY SONGS

These songs were memorized by Sophi during his time at Wat Rokar and Snoeung. The first of them, "The Red Flag", is sung at the beginning of every miting. Some of the others use existing folk-tunes and traditional rhythms, but the main difference between them and pre-revolutionary songs, aside from such obvious ones as the choice of subject matter, is that the songs are sung in unison rather than by individuals - a trend reflected in the words as well, which praise collective efforts at the expense of individual ones.

As far as I know, none of the songs has been printed in the west, even though they - and hundreds like them - are used intensively by the régime of Democratic Kampuchea, as part of its programme of "national culture" and as weapons in the revolution.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

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THE RED FLAG

Glittering red blood blankets the earth - blood given up to liberate the people: blood of workers, peasants, and intellectuals; blood of young men, Buddhist monks, and girls. The blood swirls away, and flows upward, gently, into the sky, turning into a red, revolutionary flag.

Red flag! red flag! flying now! flying now!
O beloved friends, pursue, strike and hit the enemy.
Red flag! red flag! flying now! flying now!
Don't leave a single reactionary imperialist (alive): drive them from Kampuchea. Strive and strike, strive and strike, and win the victory, win the victory!

SOLIDARITY GROUP

Dear brothers and sisters in the solidarity group, happy and self-assured: let us celebrate Kampuchea, recently set free, by striking out and leaping forward to construct new rural areas.

We raise embankments, and these form a network, like spider-webs, everywhere. We dig canals, small and large, long and short, bringing water and loam to pour onto our fields.

We use fertilizer now; and now we raise embankments, high and low. We choose the seed we want. We wipe out pests. We build fences to protect our plots from beasts.

And we are very happy because we are the masters to a great degree. Problems of water no longer worry us. Even with the floods and droughts, we can grow rice.

O solidarity group, working in unison, happy and self-assured! Dry-season rice, wet-season rice, light and heavy varieties of rice: our husbandry is successful everywhere.

O solidarity group, you are a new kind of family, special, beautiful, and unique. Our happiness is enormous, and we struggle to expand and solidify it, even more.

The new nation of Kampuchea is a glittering, glowing, sparkling kind of light. We strive to work harder and harder, to expand and complete the revolution.

THE BEAUTY OF KAMPUCHEA

O beautiful, beloved Kampuchea, our destiny has joined us together, uniting our forces so as not to disagree. Even young girls get up and join in the struggle.

Pity our friends who shoulder arms. Thorns pierce their feet; they do not complain; this is an accomplishment of Khmer children struggling until blood flows out to cover the ground.

They sacrifice themselves without regret, they chase the Lon Nol bandits, with swords and knives hacking at them, killing them, until the Lon Nol bandits are destroyed.

CULTURAL GROUP

We press our palms together, and bow our heads, respecting all of you, our friends, who have come together for this evening meeting.

We have come tonight to show our talents, and our popular, revolutionary culture - to entertain you, our young friends.

In the cause of cultural struggle, and in the name of the beautiful art of the ancient Khmer, please correct and improve our performance. Please help us to root out corrupt and rotten culture.

If what we do is right or wrong, please, friends, correct and refine the details, helping us, constructively, to fit in with old traditions, and to achieve a revolutionary culture.

THE SUMMER WIND

As the summer wind blows, the sun shines on the rice-fields, where workers and peasants move together. Some have sickles in their hands, and some carry pots of water on their heads.

Look at the ripe rice, as the wind moves over it in waves; the workers are happy in their hearts, working nights and mornings, with no fear of getting tired.

We are overjoyed to be increasing the output of village and district. Our economy has made great steps forward; now we have surplusses to put into granaries and to supply the revolution.

*

RAINFALL IN PISAKH (APRIL-MAY)

The rain falls in pisakh. There's a cool breeze. Dear friends, the rain falls now and then. We hear roosters crowing everywhere, and our brothers the peasants join together to increase production.

This is the sowing season: we toss corn and beans in front of us. We strive to work, so as to supply the army, holding on and struggling at the front.

The Khmer are happy now, no longer feeling tired, striving to clear the road to peace. All the Khmer children are happy, for the revolution guides Khmer and Khmer toward solidarity.

Intertwined, as one, our anger shoots out at the imperialists - the Americans, and their reactionary lackies, killing them until they disappear.

* * * * *

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