

Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
Transcription of interview

Interviewed by: CHAY Chan Daravan and Thomas KUEHNEL

Interview granted by: Ms SÂ Siek

24 March 2009

(Partial transcription of the audio file D200/6R)



[00:18:53] - [00:20:40]

KUEHNEL: Aunt, did you hear of that evacuation from your chairman, or did your chairman issue the order to evacuate the people?

SÂ Siek: No. This might have been from others making the communication—from the side of those Grandfathers, and then the instruction was given to our chairman, saying that their entry was not yet possible, like that, because the people were evacuated in the wrong direction.

KUEHNEL: Who were the Grandfathers you have spoken about?

SÂ Siek: Those three uncles.

KUEHNEL: KHIEU Samphan, SON Sēn and HU Nim, those three persons?

SÂ Siek: Yes.

KUEHNEL: What did the Grandfathers mean? Did we call or address them using those terms?

SÂ Siek: Now they are called “Grandfathers.” Previously, they were called “Um-អ៊ី”/“Uncles.” On the one hand, how they were referred to was based on age and I was young at the time. They were called Uncles, so I just followed suit. They are now called Grandfathers. They were called Uncles based on their ages at that time.

[00:20:40]

KUEHNEL: But at that time did you hear your chairman say who had ordered the evacuation of the people?

SÂ Siek: No. I did not know.

 [01:28:51] - [01:30:22]

Daravan: Aunt, this morning, you told me about Yat (យ៉ាត). Who was Yat? What did Yat do?

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SÂ Siek: This Yat was at the Ministry, at the Printing House. Ms YUN Yat (យុន យ៉ាត) no ... was the wife of SON Sên.

Daravan: The wife of SON Sên? Where did she live?

SÂ Siek: She lived opposite, in the vicinity of, Wat Preah Puth (វត្តព្រះពុទ្ធ) Pagoda. Her house was at that location.

Daravan: Wat Preah Puth Pagoda, doing what? ...What did she do then?

SÂ Siek: She was at the Printing House.

Darvan: The Printing House?

SÂ Siek: Yes.

Daravan: The Ministry of Propaganda...

SÂ Siek: Then after HU Nim's arrest, Aunt At (អាត) came to take over those two ministries merged as one: the Ministry of Propaganda and Education.

Daravan: Did that mean that she was Minister of the Ministry of Propaganda and Education, the Printing House? She then came to take over the two ministries?

SÂ Siek: Yes, she then came to take over the two ministries merged to form the Ministry of Propaganda and Education. The Ministry of Propaganda was dissolved.

Daravan: Is that right?

SÂ Siek: Yes. Those two ministries were merged together.

Daravan: When they arrested HU Nim ?

SÂ Siek: Yes, after HU Nim's arrest.

Daravan: After HU Nim's arrest, YUN Yat (យុន យ៉ាត) came to take over the two ministries.

SÂ Siek: Yes. It was then the Ministry of Propaganda and Education.

Daravan: Designated the Ministry of Propaganda and Education.

SÂ Siek: Yes.

KUEHNEL: He wanted to ask which ministries were merged together.

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SÂ Siek: The Ministry of Printing House, those at the Printing House. At the Printing House - I want to refer to the Printing House.

Interpreter: Was the Ministry of Printing House merged with the Ministry of Propaganda?

SÂ Siek: The Ministry of Propaganda was replaced by the Ministry of Propaganda and Education. Yes, the Ministry of Propaganda was dissolved.

[01:30:22]

[01:58:16]- [02:00:38]

Daravan: Did they ever tell you to go to study anywhere?

SÂ Siek: They told us to go to study at ... the place of Uncle Kèn (កែន)! It was at the riverbank.

Daravan: Uncle Kèn—the riverbank.

[01:58:30]

SÂ Siek: Yes.

Daravan: What did Uncle Kèn do at that riverbank site? Which K (ក) was it?

SÂ Siek: Uncle Kèn was in charge of ... Kèn was called Lin (លីន).

Daravan: What did he do then?

SÂ Siek: He replaced the late Pàng (ប៉ាង) and...!

Daravan: Replaced Pàng?

SÂ Siek: Yes.

Daravan: So, did you study at the place of the late Pàng?

SÂ Siek: That is correct.

Daravan: And when you went to study, did they have you go there, or what?

SÂ Siek: They had me go to the location of Wat Botum Pagoda.

Daravan: After you went, were you placed at Wat Botum instead?

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[01:58:56]

SÂ Siek: That's correct, and there was no study whatsoever.**Daravan:** You were put at Wat Botum Pagoda. What was Wat Botum Pagoda called then—what unit was it? What number was it?**SÂ Siek:** I did not know. I did not learn of that.**Daravan:** And who was chairman at Wat Botum?**SÂ Siek:** I saw that it was the location of their security.**Daravan:** Did you see security personnel?**SÂ Siek:** I saw the security unit of KHAM Mi (ខាំមី)

[01:59:10]

Daravan: Saw the security unit of KHÂM Mi?**SÂ Siek:** Yes.**Daravan:** And what was this place, to your knowledge, upon your arrival there?**SÂ Siek:** That place was a security site to provide protection; for example, they invited us there since we had made mistakes, unknown mistakes. Say we were prisoners, like that.**Daravan:** It was like that. Upon your arrival at Wat Botum Pagoda, was it a place for study or a prison?**SÂ Siek:** No. That place, it could be compared to, when we ... Like I said, they took us there to stay to wait for them to provide information from the ministry or any particular section: Where was this person to be taken? Where must this removed person be taken? That is according to my observation, because I arrived and spent the night there. The following morning, they told KHÂM Mi's messenger named Phâl (ផាស់) - Phâl knew me - they said, "Sister, do you know the place of Ta Lei Chey Dob (តាឡើយដប់)?" I said that I did not know it. They then said, "Oh, Sister, you will be alright. You won't die. Sister, try to refashion yourself well. Then you will be able to return to Phnom Penh." They said that. I was stunned, not knowing what was happening.**Daravan:** So, you slept there for one night?**SÂ Siek:** Yes, I slept there for one night, and then they had me go to a different place.**Daravan:** The following morning, where did you go?

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SÂ Siek: The following morning, I boarded a motorboat.

Daravan: Where did the motorboat go?

SÂ Siek: Somewhere in the vicinity of Boeng Kēt (បឹងកេត).

Daravan: You boarded the motorboat and went to Boeng Kēt?

SÂ Siek: Yes, to Boeng Kēt.

Daravan: You went to stay in Boeng Kēt instead?

SÂ Siek: I went to B-20 (ប៊ី-២០).

Daravan: You went to Boeng Kēt, to B-20, instead?

SÂ Siek: Yes. I was tempered at B-20.

[02:00:28]

Daravan: You were tempered at B-20 instead.

SÂ Siek: Yes.

Daravan: How many months were you tempered?

SÂ Siek: Quite long—from April 1978 to 1979 when the Yuon arrived.

KUEHNEL: Was the information about people being instructed to strive to grow rice three times per year or three tonnes per hectare information to agitate people to do it seriously, or just the propaganda of the leaders?

SÂ Siek: It was not propaganda. This was pushing. Pushing for that to avoid the people going hungry, like that.

Daravan: I want to ask you more. During your time working at Propaganda and also during your life during that era, did you ever hear the principle of the Democratic Kampuchea regime about “One Khmer Rouge soldier against 30 Yuon soldiers” broadcast in the news?

SÂ Siek: At the time of the fighting?

Daravan: That’s right, during the war era. And while working at the Ministry of Propaganda, did you hear this principle being broadcast?

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SÂ Siek: I do not remember.

Daravan: Did you ever hear this, or hear broadcasts of this principle?

SÂ Siek: I do not remember. I have completely forgotten.

Daravan: But did you ever hear of that? Try to recall it, Aunt!

SÂ Siek: I do not remember anything like that. If I did hear of that, I have forgotten.

Daravan: So you do not remember? Do you not remember if it was broadcast or not?

SÂ Siek: That's right.

Daravan: And what did this principle, to your understanding, mean—the principle of “One Khmer Rouge soldier against 30 Yuon soldiers”?

SÂ Siek: To my understanding?

Daravan: Yes.

SÂ Siek: It was intended to say that they were weaker than us, like that. We were skilled at fighting, probably that.

Daravan: And what did the phrase “one person against 30 persons” mean?

SÂ Siek: That meant that we fought hard, and they did not fight very hard.

Daravan: Our soldiers fought harder?

SÂ Siek: Yes, because we were then in a people's war, like that.

Daravan: Yes.

SÂ Siek: It was not a fully-equipped war. When marching somewhere at night, the people could be used—they could be used anytime, as it was said that the people knew ...

Daravan: I turn a bit to the previous question on the matter relating to speeches by Khmer Rouge leaders. Aunt, you said that they also broadcast speeches by Khmer Rouge leaders. Did you ever see any Khmer Rouge leaders come give an interview on the radio? The era when they, including KHIEU Samphan...?

SÂ Siek: No.

Daravan: Or NUON Chea or POL Pot or IENG Sary— did they ever come to the Ministry of Propaganda to make any statements live on the radio or speak about their instructions or principles?

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SÂ Siek: No. If they wanted to deliver a speech or communicate some information, they recorded it on a small cassette player.

Daravan: Like that?

SÂ Siek: Yes.

Daravan: So, a small cassette player would be brought in?

SÂ Siek: Yes. Tape recording.

Daravan: Tape recording?

SÂ Siek: Yes. The recording tape would be brought in, copied and echoed.

Daravan: Like that?

SÂ Siek: Yes.

[03:32:32]

Daravan: So, their recording tapes were replayed for broadcast?

SÂ Siek: They were broadcast like the current practice. For example, during the New Year, they delivered a speech or two to raise morale. That was their original voices.

Daravan: Yes.

SÂ Siek: So, they never came to any live broadcast for us to see them directly. They worked at their places.

Daravan: So, their statements were broadcast. For example, when attending a particular ceremony, they said something and it was taken to be broadcast. Did they ever visit the Ministry of Propaganda—the leaders? Did you ever see them come to check work at the Ministry of Propaganda?

SÂ Siek: They rarely came.

Daravan: Did they ever come? Or did they never come at all? Or rarely, meaning that they did come?

SÂ Siek: It seems that I do not remember.

Daravan: Do you not remember?

SÂ Siek: It was like that only when there were guests coming: they said that they would accompany the guests. They wanted to see something or they wanted something...

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- Daravan:** Did they ever accompany guests there?
- SÂ Siek:** Yes.
- Daravan:** Where did the guests come from?
- SÂ Siek:** There were Chinese visitors and Yuon visitors at that time. We still had contacts with them.
- Daravan:** That's right! And who came?
- SÂ Siek:** That depended on their professions. For example, when a Chinese delegation from their Ministry of Foreign Affairs came, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would accompany them.
- Daravan:** Like that?
- SÂ Siek:** Yes. If a delegation from a particular ministry came, then those from our ministerial counterpart would accompany them. It was just like our current practice.
- Daravan:** Like now? But which ministries did you see accompanying guests? As for IENG Sary, did you ever...?
- SÂ Siek:** Mostly at the Ministry...; IENG Sary never participated. The Grandfathers, in the past, did not often stay inside the country.
- Daravan:** IENG Sary never came?
- SÂ Siek:** That's right.
- Daravan:** How about NUON Chea?
- SÂ Siek:** Yes. He might have come.
- Daravan:** NUON Chea might have come?
- SÂ Siek:** Yes as he was in charge of the people's work.
- Daravan:** How about KHIEU Samphan?
- SÂ Siek:** KHIEU Samphan, him mostly ... at that time, he was often busy with *Samdech* [Sihanouk].

[03:34:15]