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Full Translation

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Tram Kak District Hall (ត្រាំកក់)  
Culture and Fine Arts Office

Brief History of  
Kraing Ta Chan (ក្រាំងតាចាន់) Genocided  
Pol Pot – Ieng Sary Clique

In Kus sub-district (គុស), Tram Kak district, Takeo province

Kraing Ta Chan used to be a completely quiet forest and a stupa to preserve the remains of the ancestor of the people in that base.

This forest is located in north western Kus sub-district bordering with Samraong sub-district (សំរោង). Each of the four dimensions of this forest measured over 100 meters. It is rich of various types of trees such as *Dipterocarpus alatus* (ដើមឈើទាល), strychnine (ដើមស្លែង), *trang* (ដើមត្រាង), tamarind (ដើមអំពិល), *chhnuol* (ដើមឈូល), etc. People called that place 'Theat Kraing Ta Chan' (ជាតុក្រាំងតាចាន់).

In 1973, this forest became a communal plantation and where solidarity group members ate communally. However, now it has become a genocide center of the genocidal Pol Pot clique.

This prison was built between 1973 and 1974. Between 1970 and 17 April there was only one prison in the district. That prison was located in Pèn Meas village (ប៉ែនមាស), Samraong sub-district, Tram Kak district, Takeo province. This prison received all kinds of people, including those who were from the areas liberated by the Khmer Rouge and others who had been evacuated from all places such as Âng Ta Saom Market (អង្គតាសោម), Tram Kak, those who travelled for their business, and some cadres who returned from North Vietnam. People in this prison were not severely tortured for a long time: they were merely interrogated and taken away to be killed at Thnàl Me Prey (ថ្នល់មេព្រៃ), at some places around the foot of Dâmrei Romiel mountain (ដំរីរមៀល) such as Sdok Sap (ស្ដុកសាប), Trapeang Chhouk (ត្រពាំងឈូក), Trapeang Chreou (ត្រពាំងជ្រៅ), Trapeang Chèng (ត្រពាំងចែង), Prey Andaung (ព្រៃអណ្តូង) and so on. Some other people

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were transferred to upper echelon. In particular, they searched-out and killed the entire family of PRUM Săn (ព្រំ សាន់), a former Khmer Rouge.

Between 1972 and early 1973, because the Khmer Rouge regime had killed people, the consciousness was split within military. As a result, one hundred-member unit started an uprising led by comrade Sien (សៀន), alias Sien Lock Toek (សៀន ឡឹក តឹក). However, this plot was unsuccessful; it was compromised and Sien was arrested. This area was then controlled by a commander from Pèn Meas while all forces were disarmed. Sien managed to escape in late 1973. At that time, District Committee Soeun (សៀន) asked to meet with the prison head named Phi (ភី), 40 years old, whose right leg was amputated and a man named Khorn (ឃ័ន), 53 years old, the attacker to set a plot. Then, they were transferred to other places. In late 1973, the prison in Pèn Meas was moved to Kraing Ta Chan and was under the control of a group people who used to be monks such as Achar Chhên (អាចារ្យឆេន) (Achar Preah Tripitaka) (អាចារ្យព្រះត្រៃបិដក), the head; Achar An (អាចារ្យអាន) (Preah Tripitaka) (ព្រះត្រៃបិដក); Achar Dăm (អាចារ្យដាំ) (Preah Tripitaka) (ព្រះត្រៃបិដក); and Achar Penh (អាចារ្យពិញ) (Preah Tripitaka) (ព្រះត្រៃបិដក).

Meanwhile, they prepared another network to receive, interrogate and torture prisoners: first, Srè Chumreou village (ស្រែជំរៅ) was controlled by Ta Kel (តា កិល), whose right fingers were amputated, with his henchmen, who were in charge of sending people to the main prison. They did not reveal all information to people related to the agreement among these traitorous lines from provincial to district levels. They called it the Southwest Zone Prison. In that year, they secretly killed people in mass near the foothills after sunset. They even killed the base people who had served in in Samdech Sihanouk's regime, middle businesspeople, teachers, veterans, etc. by hitting with buttons, axes, hoes, and so on. Between late 1973 and 1974, a man named IM Soeun (អ៊ឹម សៀន) became the District 105 Committee. He replaced the responsible people for that prison, while the former ones were transferred to work outside. The new nominees were Ăn (អាន់), the Chairman (a Party Member); Penh (ពិញ), (a Party Member), becoming the Deputy Chairman; and Duch (ឌុច) (a Party Member) becoming Member. For daily executions, they also assigned two executioners: Chēng (ចេង) and CHUON Moeun (ជួន ម៉ឺន), with the support of another 10 members from the guard unit. In case they could not kill as many people as planned, they would need killers from Angkar's office to come help them kill.

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In 1975, more people were killed in this prison than in previous years; it was also the year that the whole country was liberated by the revolutionary army. In order to meet requirements, the leadership prepared three different places to receive people who were considered to be prisoners of war. Those places were: Bakhong pagoda (បាខុង) and Châmpa pagoda (ចំប៉ា) in Ta Phem sub-district (តាផែម) and in Âng Roka (អង្គរកា). On 17 April 1975, all strata of people, both military and civilian, were evacuated from Phnom Penh and other provinces and put in their offices in these three places. Through our research from the survivors of torture, we have learned some of the tricks played by the genocidal clique as follow:

First type:

All people considered to be prisoners of war were imprisoned in those three places. Then a man named Khèm, the District 105 Committee, and Ân, chairman of Kraing Ta Chan Prison set up a plot with the approval of *Achar Chhên*, chairman of the police in that area between 1973 and 1974, who was in charge of those three places. The plot aimed to divide people to be killed by trickery, asking about their previous occupations and making them believe that as for those who used to work in any position in the previous regime, *Angkar* would transfer them to work in the same position accordingly based on their specialties:

- those who used to serve as military high ranking officers, including the high-ranking military commanders
- those who used to serve as military officers and soldiers
- those who used to serve as doctors
- those who used to serve as cadres, technicians
- those who used to serve as provincial or district governors
- those who used to serve as policemen
- those who used to be as professors, students, intellectuals and highly educated people.

They also assigned other fields for professions of people and then they divided those people into groups and sent them away. In sending these people away, they used gentle official words by saying that *Angkar* would take them to a suitable place to rest. *Angkar* also suggested them working in their individual specialisation and position; then they allowed those people to follow their lead without being tied. They put them into Kraing Ta Chan prison, but not all together and at the same time: when they detained and smashed them all, they brought in more. During this period, they did not yet keep them alive for torture because so many people had to be killed. In general the killings were not immediate: they kept the beautiful women, like NOP Nèm's (ណុប ណែម) wife KIM Nauva (គីម ណូវ៉ា) and others. They kept them alive to be raped and tortured before they killed them. They mistreated them as they pleased: they had their people beat them to death, and when they were dead, they penetrated their genitals with a stick for fun. They

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also took absolute measures, killing anyone who revealed their heinous and filthy acts. Killing tools were clubs, hatchets, hoes, bamboo stumps, long knives for cutting banana trees, mallets, and other objects. There was another part: they wanted to experiment; they kept a doctor whose name has been forgotten to conduct experiments on, among others, a prisoner who was giving birth. They had the doctor conduct surgery on a woman who could not deliver her baby on her own. After the successful operation which both mother and child survived, the doctor was killed.

By May 1975, they had to take measures to torture the serious types and keep some forces for reeducation to serve them. In early 1976, there was a plan to search-out people from all cooperatives at every location and in the ranks of the military. They sent in people from every location: 17 April people, base people, their own cadres, teachers, medics, soldiers, and others arrested for various offenses by unit chairmen, squad leaders, and village chairmen for stealing yams, breaking a ploughshare, mental illness, etc. They sent those people to the prison and tortured them harshly. Various sites used to bring people in, such as the common reception office, checking office, prison 1, 2, 3, 4. Inside the prison, they weaved barbed wire like a rat cage; then they put up wood boards and nailed the boards outside. They placed wooden boards for prisoners to sleep on in two rows while shackled by the leg, leaving a space in the middle to walk. When they came to kick the shackles, they shouted that if anyone did not remain quiet or place the pin of the shackle in the right position, they would beat them to death. They would do the same to those who failed to follow their warnings.

From late 1975 until 1977, they developed new methods of torturing: There was a square underground dungeon 2 meters on each side and 5 metres deep. Additionally, they weaved barbed wires inside and roofed it with wooden boards. They dug the earth to the depth of a man's height, then put white lime in that hole and covered with a wood board. Next they used a vice to squeeze the temples of the prisoners and hit their chest etc.

Types of torture:

- When their network brought prisoners in, they would send them to common office. Then, they rang a bell as a signal and took the prisoners inside to be shackled. Next, they ordered the prisoners to sit in rows on wood boards; barbed wire was placed below, and all prisoners were guarded all the time. When new guards arrived as replacements, they would use a wrist-sized club to knock hard on the prisoners' heads to count the number of prisoners. If someone did not remain still or tried to avoid the blow, they would strike that person dead; however, they would keep the dead with the living all night long until next day. Then, they would order other prisoners to tie the leg of the dead prisoner and pull the body away. They forbid complaining about the mosquitoes and lice. There were many mosquitoes and lice under the wooden boards.

Full TranslationTricks and torture in interrogation:

In order to confuse the people about their dirty and infamous plots, when they brought in prisoners for killing, they normally used gentle words by calling them 'brother' or 'sister' and adding that now *Angkar* had decided to return them home, but at the same time they would like to apologise for bringing them here, and when the prisoner returned back home, the prisoner should not say anything because this place was only used for tempering. They also requested that six of the brothers and sisters leave the place at a time in order to meet with *Angkar*, who would issue a release letter for them. All of the prisoners were happy to hear that. They used the sound of the loudspeaker to cover the sounds of those who were hit and fell into the pits.

Tools used for torturing and killing:

When they walked the prisoners out from Prison 1 or 2, they brought them for interrogation. If they were not satisfied with the answers, they would return those to Prison 3. For minor crimes, prisoners were accused of stealing yams, stealing rice for their children, letting cattle eat rice in a field while guarding, or breaking a ploughshare while ploughing, etc. Serious crimes could be the accusations of being a soldier, a teacher, someone who had lived in the liberated zone who had then escaped to join the Lon Nol clique, medics, or committing moral offences. The prisoners with one of these serious crimes would be brought into Prison 4, where severe torture would be conducted; and prisoners who were taken out of this prison would be killed right away.

Tortures used during interrogation:

First, they pushed prisoners into a pit: this pit was dug the depth of a man's height and was a square 2 square metres on each side, with white lime and was covered by a wooden board. The prisoner was ordered to sit on that board and was hit while answering the questions. Then, they took out the pin used to support the board, and the prisoner would fall into the pile of white lime; then the cover was closed for five minutes and they would interrogate the prisoner again before beating him dead and throwing him into a pit.

Second, they made prisoner stand on a chair leaning against the strychnine tree and tied him crucifixion-style and embedded a pillar in front. Then they used a drill-bit shaped piece of wood to twist violently into the chest of the prisoner to pin him to the tree, and they took the chair away. They kept torturing and interrogating the prisoner until he died and they threw the corpse into a pit.

Third, they made a semi-circular vice attached to a drill-bit shaped handle and put it on the prisoner's head. Then they started to tighten it and squeeze the temples of the prisoner; they dripped water from above until he died.

Fourth, they blindfolded and tied the prisoner by the arms with three ties. They slit the throat; then they cut them open to bleed them out so that the bodies would not swell.

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Fifth, they placed the prisoner in a dungeon which was 5 metres deep with woven barbed wire inside. The prisoner was restrained with three ties; then, they used rope to tie around the prisoner's armpit and threw him down inside; the other end of the rope was tied to the top of a pole overhead. Then they closed the cover of the pit for seven days before they re-interrogated him; then they threw the prisoner in the pit. As for the small children, they would grab them and smash them against a tree trunk. Bigger children were treated similar to the adults.

Another method of torture was to starve the prisoners. In a big cooking pan, they put from one and a half to three cans of unpolished rice; then mixed it with unclean water lily/morning glory; it looked a lot like food for pigs. They used coconut shells to distribute it to the prisoners, first-come first-served; those who did not get food today had to wait until tomorrow. They cooked soup from the stalks of banana trees, which would be sliced in pieces (like the food for pigs), then put in some salt and distributed it to the prisoners regardless of whether it was well-cooked or not. They said the soup with young banana tree was not for prisoners, so all that the prisoners deserved was old banana- tree soup. Some prisoners who were held there previously had their sentences reduced, and they had them work in the fields, transplanting rice, climbing palm trees to collect the juice, planting crops, digging pits, dragging corpses to be buried, and covering the grave pits. But they had a way of dealing with these people: if anyone learned of it and told anyone about it, the entire group would be smashed.

In 1976, they started to research and find faults and arrest many people from each sub-district and cooperative. The faults were stealing yams, breaking ploughshares, picking fruit to eat, being ill but still having an appetite, chatting in a group of a few people, making stoves in their own houses, etc. They distorted the words of some others, whether they were 17 April people or base people.

In 1977, they researched into the ranks of the military, and during that year they and arrested the military unit of Ta Keav (តាកែវ), a former Khmer Rouge struggler, and killed them in that prison. This was Unit 190. The reason was because Ta Keav had ordered a reform of the Marxist-Leninist regime. They arrested Ta Keav and put him in Phnum Sânlung prison (ភ្នំសន្លុង). He died soon after that. Then they took his daughter who had one child and was a medic at Daem Bēng sub-district (ដើមបេង), Kiri Vong district (គីរីវង់), and who was married to a military commander, and killed them too. Not only that, they took the former teacher named Hīn (ហ៊ិន) whom they had assigned to be in charge of the Au Tav rice mill (អូតាវ), and killed him too, accusing him of being connected to Ta Keav.

Between 1976 and 1977, when many corpses filled the prison compound, spreading a bad smell many kilometres away and causing the people to learn of it, they went around making propaganda that it was a site where many chickens were killed.

Full Translation

When they could not find a place to put the corpses because the surrounding area was all people's houses, at night time they took the prisoners to be killed in the rice fields to the south of their location, land that they had already ploughed. When people walking around came upon the pits, they shouted and made a fuss, and everyone learned about it. They had a plan to drive away all the people living nearby, and they expanded their site west of the old site where the people lived. At the site which they later expanded, through questioning a surviving prisoner they sent out to work the palm trees named SÂY Sèn (សយ សែន), son of the former sub-district chief Sây (សយ), he clearly saw his father being killed with many other people while he was climbing a palm tree to collect palm juice. First, they took those prisoners to the mouth of the pit, then made them kneel down while blindfolded with an old *krama* (Khmer scarf) and their arms tied three times, stripped them naked, struck them with one club, threw them into the pit, and covered them with dirt, dead or alive. There was a case related to the killing at noon of one mother with two children: the older child was about 5 years old and the younger about 8 months old. First, they took the mother and the younger child to kill by hitting it and throwing it into the pit. When the older child saw this, it tried to run away. However, they finally caught the child and buried it with them. When more people became aware of this killing field, the Pol Pot clique started to build two layers of fences and forbid people from going around that area or else they would be killed. Their duty was to take away all belongings from the victim, except the clothes they were wearing. All the collected items would be sent to upper echelon every Sunday. An old man who had lived near that area was instructed by the man named Ăn to help them to pack all of those things on carts in order to deliver them to upper echelon. Within one week, two baskets of gold, one basket of watches, and seven carts of clothes were sent. Only the clothing was returned for distribution to the people.

During 1978 and 1979, Kraing Ta Chan prison was renamed from the Southwest Zone Detention Office to the District Detention Office for the province; The sign board was only hung when the senior leaders came to work or for meetings. Only Party Members and above could attend the meetings to report on the searching for enemies in the base areas. Ăn mostly reported on the torturing and the number of people killed, how many males, females, elders, youngsters, etc.

After liberation on 7 January 1979, when the Front liberated that area, the Kraing Ta Chan village chairman and people dug up and found as many as two sacks of documents, victims' biographies. The decisions to kill sent to Khèm, the District Com, came from each spearhead chairman, both male and female, from the unit chairmen called cooperative chairmen, youth chairmen, boy's chairmen, girl's chairman female mobile unit chairmen, the sub-district hospitals, the children's hospitals, and children's teachers, etc.

As for reports from the district and above were given to Ăn, the prison chairman. Khèm the District Com. wrote: '*From Comrade Khèm, To Respected Brother Ăn*'. Five or six lines of people were sent in at a time, each consisting of 15 to 18 person with strikeouts in red ink. The total number in the temporary statistics list was more than

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10,045 people. This list was sent to district, but has disappeared; its location is unknown because the province collected everything.

In order to show the truth, we have preserved this genocide center as evidence for the next generations to be aware of the cruel acts of the Pol Pot clique. We have also protected and exhumed the bones of a small fraction of the victims, more than 3,000 persons, and have preserved those bones in a shrine for worshipping and showing the public.

Seen and agreed  
6 March 1996  
Governor of Tram Kak District  
Signature & Seal

5 March 1996  
Head of the Culture and Fine Arts Office  
Signature

NEANG Vorn (នាង វ៉ន)

KHIM Khun (ក៏ម ឃុន)