

*KHMER
(CAMBODIAN)
CULTURE
& CUSTOMS
SEMINAR*

NOTES AND OUTLINES

prepared by Khmer Interagency

Published by

Khmer Interagency
19 Sullivan Street
Fairfield Heights, NSW 2165

Author: Contributors to Khmer Interagency Seminar

Typsetting: Nola Randall

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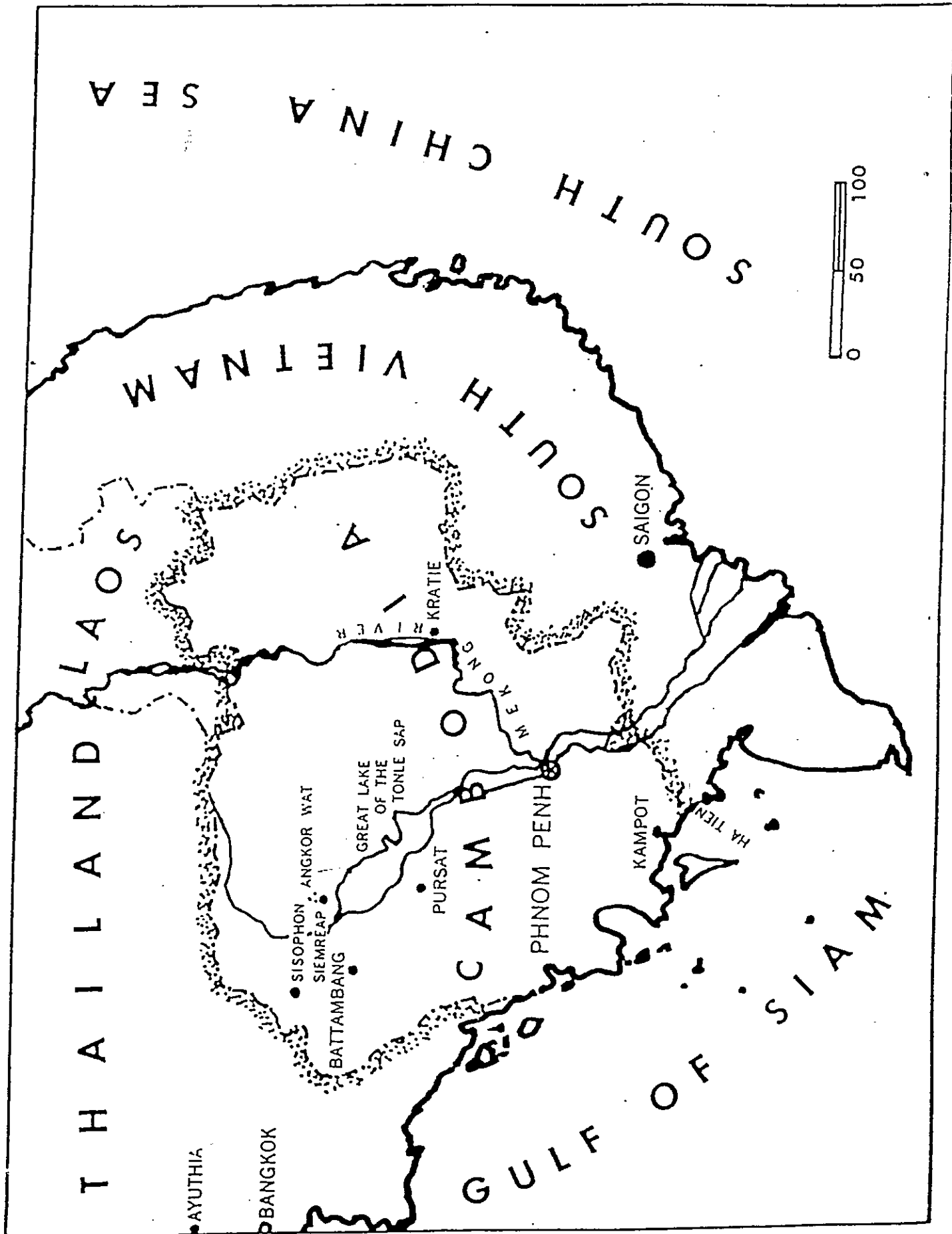
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Khmer Interagency
Resources - Khmer Cultural Seminar

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INTRODUCTION

In 1992, Khmer Interagency agreed to conduct a seminar on Khmer Culture for the benefit of Non-Khmer workers. Workers from fields in education, police, health, youth, aged were invited to participate. Through discussion and planning, the programme was agreed to as being the basic information needed to work with Khmer people here in Australian society. There were 175 people attended on the day.

This book was then compiled by Khmer Interagency as a result of the seminar conducted through the Interagency.

All of the contributors prepared their outlines and notes and have submitted them for the benefit of other workers in the community who may find this information a benefit in their work.

KHMER អង្គការអន្តរភាព
សង្គ្រោះ រស់រាន Interagency



Dear Colleagues

Khmer Interagency is currently planning a Seminar about Khmer Culture and Society. The Seminar will be presented on 26 June, which is during Refugee Week.

The programme, designed to inform people with Khmer clients about Khmer life, is enclosed for your information. It is a one day seminar which includes information about education, religion, health, customs and there will be workshops in the afternoon when questions can be answered. You will learn the distinction from other countries in South East Asia who each have individual customs.

The cost of this seminar is \$25, which includes a Khmer lunch and a tour of the Khmer temple. We hope that people will pay in advance by enclosing a cheque with the registration slip below, since places are limited.

The Seminar is being held in the Bonnyrigg Youth Centre Hall, (next to Khmer Community Centre) at 28 Bonnyrigg Avenue, BONNYRIGG, at 9.00 am.

If you have a worker or a friend whom you believe would benefit from this seminar, please pass on this information to them so that they can attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink.

CHONG HEAN ANG (Mr)
Seminar Convenor
16 May 1992

cut here

I wish to attend the Seminar, Khmer Culture and Customs on 26 June 1992 at Bonnyrigg Youth Centre, Tarlington Parade, BONNYRIGG.

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....
.....

Code:.....Phone: (.....):.....

My cheque for \$25 (payable to Khmer Interagency) is enclosed.
(Return to P.O. Box 33, Canley Heights. 2166)

I wish to attend the workshop ticked below: (tick one)

1. Child Rearing Practices
2. Education System in Cambodia
3. Religion
4. Womens Issues
5. Adolescent Issues
6. The Change of Roles of Khmer Elderly People
7. Social Classes in Khmer Society
8. Can a Western & Khmer Partnership Help Khmer

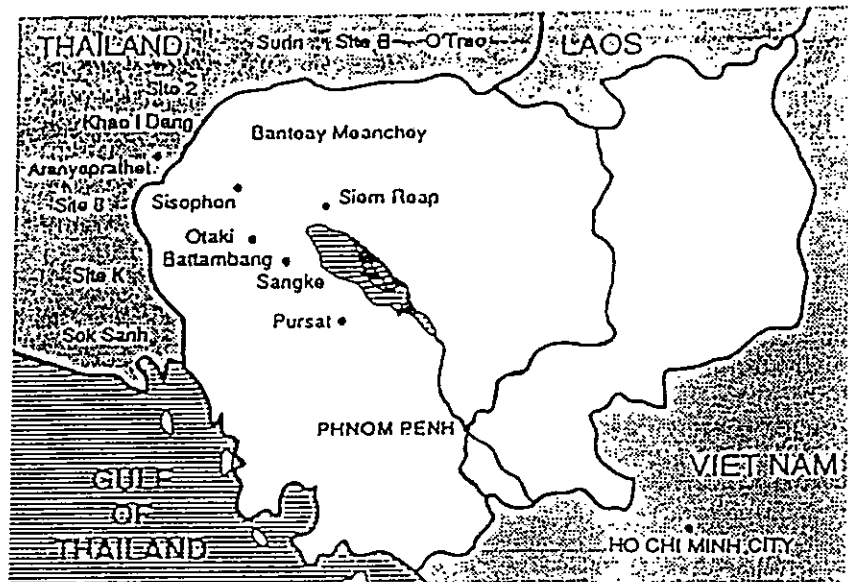
PROGRAMME

9.00 - 9.15 am	Registration
9.15 am	Opening Speech: Mr Dennis Donovan, Mayor of Fairfield
9.30 am	Introduction to "Khmer Interagency"
9.40 am	Purpose of the seminar - Mr Por Heang Ya Cambodian Geography - Ramy Var Cambodian History in brief - Chong Hean Ang Khmer Festivals and Recreation - Youvath Sik & Meng Eang Thai
10.30 am	Morning Tea
10.45 am	Brief History of the Khmer Community & Services in Sydney
11.00 am	Saing Heang Seng Child Rearing Practices a. In traditional Khmer customs - Por Heang Ya b. In Khmer-Chinese sub-culture: the integration of ethnic Chinese into Khmer society - Chong Hean Ang
11.40 am	- Cultural Exhibition - Traditional costumes - Greetings - Body Language - Ways of addressing people
12.00 pm	Mental Health Issues in Khmer Community - Dr Chris Sohan
12.30 pm	Lunch
1.30 pm	Demonstration of Khmer classical dancing and traditional music Role of Buddhism in Khmer society and in terminal illness Youvath Sik and a Buddhist monk
2.00 pm	Slides of Kampuchea/Cambodia - Nola Randall
2.30 pm	Temple tour
3.00 pm	Afternoon Tea
3.15 pm	Play - "New Life, New Rice" - Burnside Khmer Programme
3.45 pm	Workshops - Question & Answer session - topics below: 1. Child Rearing Practices - Por Heang Ya & Chong Hean Ang 2. Education system in Cambodia - Tek Heang Ya & Theau Yorth 3. Religion - Youvath Sik & a Khmer monk. 4. Womens Issues - Ravy Heng & Vannak Ing 5. Adolescent Issues - Ramy Var & Chantha Sok 6. The change of roles of Khmer elderly people - Chum Pha Prak & Min Hauv Yorth 7. Social Classes in Khmer society - Souvannarand Kay & Phiny Ung 8. Can a Western & Khmer partnership help Khmer suffering - Dr Chris Sohan & Meng Eang Thai
4.30 pm	Vote of thanks to organiser and to participants - Jan Collie, Co-ordinator Cabramatta Civic Centre. .

CONTRIBUTORS

Mr Por Heang Ya - District Officer (Multicultural), Department of Community Services.
 Mr Chong Hean Ang (Convenor) - District Officer (Multicultural), Department of Community Services.
 Ms Ramy Var (Facilitator) - Coordinator of Bilingual Community Educators for New Arrivals, Department of Health, Fairfield.
 Ms Ravy Heng - Khmer Ethnic Health Worker, Fairfield Community Health Centre.
 Mr Youvath Sik - District Officer (Multicultural), Department of Community Services.
 Mr Saing Heang Seng - President of Khmer Community of NSW Inc.
 Mr Theau Yorth - Khmer Youth Health Education Officer, Fairfield/Liverpool Youth Centre.
 Mr Min Hauv Yorth - Khmer Welfare Worker, Burnside Khmer Programme.
 Ms Vannak Ing - Khmer Obstetric Liaison Officer, Fairfield Hospital.
 Mr Meng Eang Thai - Khmer Counsellor, Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture & Trauma Survivors (in NSW)
 Ms Nola Randall, BA (Ed), Dip CE, Grad Dip TEASOL - Outreach Co-ordinator, Granville TAFE
 Ms Phiny Ung - HIV/AIDS Khmer Research, University of Western Sydney, Hawksbury Campus.
 Ms Souvannarand Kay - Khmer Interagency/Interpreter
 Mr Chum Pha Prak - Khmer Ethnic School Teacher and Khmer Arts Teacher

*KHMER
(CAMBODIAN)
CULTURE
& CUSTOMS*



FOR ENQUIRIES ABOUT KHMER CULTURE, PLEASE CONTACT THE SEMINAR COMMITTEE:

	Phone	Fax
Mr Chong Hean Ang (Convenor)	(02) 643 2377	(02) 643 1966
Mr Por Heang Ya	(02) 728 1911	(02) 726 0412
Ms Ramy Var	(02) 727 4244	(02) 726 2512
Ms Ravy Heng	(02) 727 4244	(02) 726 2512
Mr Min Hauv Yorth	(02) 728 4411	(02) 724 6762
Mr Meng Eang Thai	(02) 726 1033	(02) 726 5717
Mr Theau Yorth	(02) 823 7658	(02) 823 5916
Mrs Vannak Ing		

R.S.V.P. to P.O. Box 33, CANLEY HEIGHTS. 2166

KHMER ស្ថាប័នអន្តរភ្នាក់ងារ
ស្ថាប័នអន្តរភ្នាក់ងារ Interagency



SEMINAR

DATE: 26 JUNE 1992

RSVP: 12 JUNE 1992

*KHMER
(CAMBODIAN)
CULTURE
& CUSTOMS
SEMINAR*

held on 26 June 1992 in the Bonnyrigg Youth Hall, Bonnyrigg NSW.
organised by Khmer Interagency of NSW, a group of Welfare Workers who meet on the
second Friday of each month in Fairfield.

KHMER CULTURAL SEMINAR

AIMS:

1. To exhibit the Khmer Culture and its distinctions from other South East Asian cultures.
2. To sensitize government departments and non-government agencies about the needs of Khmer people as well as the Khmer culture.
3. To improve Khmer workers' skills in organising medium size seminars, in public speaking and in presentation skills.

OBJECTIVES:

1. At the end of the day, participants will be able to distinguish the difference between Khmer and other IndoChinese peoples.
2. Participants will know the location of Cambodia on the map.
3. Participants will have a general overview of Cambodian history.
4. Participants will become aware of particular aspects of Khmer society and culture such as child rearing, the role of elderly, the role of women.

PROGRAMME

9.00 - 9.15 am	Registration
9.15 am Fairfield	Opening Speech: Alderman Dennis Donovan, Mayor of Fairfield
9.30 am	Introduction to "Khmer Interagency" Purpose of the seminar - Mr Por Heang Ya
9.40 am	Cambodian Geography - Ms Ramy Var Cambodian History in brief - Mr Chong Hean Ang Khmer Festivals and Recreation - Mr Youvath Sik & Mr Meng Eang Thai
10.30 am	Morning Tea
10.45 am	Brief History of the Khmer Community & Services in Sydney Mr Saing Heang Seng
11.00 am	Child Rearing Practices a. In traditional Khmer customs - Mr Por Heang Ya b. In Khmer-Chinese sub-culture: the integration of ethnic Chinese into Khmer society - Mr Chong Hean Ang
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4.30 pm	Vote of thanks to organiser and to participants - Ms Jan Collie, Executive Officer, Cabramatta Community Centre.

CONTRIBUTORS

- Mr Por Heang Ya - District Officer (Multicultural),
Department of Community Services.
- Mr Chong Hean Ang (Seminar Convenor)
- District Officer (Multicultural),
Department of Community Services.
- Ms Ramy Var (Facilitator)
- Coordinator of Bilingual Community
Educators for New Arrivals,
Department of Health, Fairfield.
- Ms Ravy Heng - Khmer Ethnic Health Worker,
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Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of
Torture & Trauma Survivors (in NSW)
- Ms Nola Randall, - Outreach Co-ordinator,
Granville TAFE
- Ms Phiny Ung - HIV/AIDS Khmer Research,
University of Western Sydney,
Hawksbury Campus.
- Ms Sovannarand Kay - Khmer Interagency/Interpreter
- Mr Chhuong Phar Prak - Khmer Ethnic School Teacher and
Khmer Arts Teacher



INTRODUCING KHMER INTERAGENCY

Khmer Interagency was set up in 1983 as a means of support for workers who work with Khmer clients. The group meets each month to liaise, share information, discuss problems and lobby for better services for Khmer settlers. Minutes of meetings are kept and correspondence is referred to all members who regularly attend.

A wide cross-section of types of services are represented at Interagency and advice on Khmer issues or referral to appropriate contacts can be made through Khmer Interagency.

The services include:

- Welfare and Settlement
- Information
- Health
- Education
- Cultural/Customs
- Translation/Interpreter
- Information

Workers involved in Khmer Interagency come from various agencies such as:

- Department of Community Services
- Health Department
- Burnside Welfare Programme
- T.A.F.E.
- S.T.A.R.T.T.S.
- Department of Social Security
- Indochina Refugee Association
- Khmer Associations

Members of Interagency would be pleased to assist any enquiries regarding Khmer which you may have. You can contact any of the following people for information or referral...

Mr Por Heang Ya (Convenor)	Ph: (02) 728 1911	Fax: (02) 726 0412
Mr Youvath Sik	(02) 728 1911	(02) 726 0412
Ms Ramy Var	(02) 727 4244	(02) 726 2512
Ms Ravy Heng	(02) 727 4244	(02) 726 2512
Mr Chong Hean Ang	(02) 643 2377	(02) 643 1966
Mr Lychantha Sok	(02) 728 4411	(02) 724 6762
Mr Meng Eang Thai	(02) 726 1033	(02) 726 5717

GEOGRAPHY OF CAMBODIA

prepared by Ramy Var

OUTLINE

- 1.0 Location
- 2.0 Climate
- 3.0 Population
 - 3.1 Ethnic Groups
 - 3.2 Languages
 - 3.3 Religions
- 4.0 Economy
- 5.0 Government

Now it's my turn to give you some information about geography.

Well, I think I only need to speak very briefly about the geography of Cambodia as I can see that people who attend our seminar are school counsellors, social workers, lawyers, MP?, police officers, university lecturers, health educators and many other professions so most of you may have done some research or study about Cambodia already. But for those of you who didn't have an opportunity to study about Cambodia, here is some brief information which will help you to understand more about where Cambodia is, so that you don't get Cambodia mixed up with our neighbouring countries.

This is because I personally came across a lot of questions both at work, or meetings and other occasions asking where is Cambodia, Is it part of Vietnam, Do Cambodians speak the same language as Laotian. And the answer of course is NO.

Cambodia is in fact a unique country which has its own language, alphabet, culture, tradition and custom (Refer to the map). As you can see in the map, Cambodia is situated on the North Eastern shore of the Gulf of Siam and bounded by Thailand on the North & West, Laos on the North-East, and Vietnam on the East and South-East.

Cambodia is a very small country - approximately 181,000 sq km (69,800 sq miles) and now you may like to know how small it is compared to Australia. It is 32 times smaller than Australia and more or less the same size as Tasmania. Cambodia is divided into 19 provinces and the capital city is Phnom Penh. (Can you say it?). Cambodia is a warm country. The temperature ranges from 17 degrees to 38 degrees. The warmest month is April. That's when we celebrate Cambodian New Year. The coldest month is in December and January. There are two seasons in Cambodia: the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy or the monsoon season starts from May to October and the dry season starts from November to April.

The population of Cambodia was estimated before 1975 at 7.8 million people. 80 - 90 % the population were Cambodian and 10 - 20 % were Chinese, Vietnamese and Chham. Between 1975 - 1979, the era of the Khmer holocaust, almost half of the population were killed during Pol Pot's regime. Cambodia became well known to the world as the country of the "killing fields".

From 1979, which we call year zero, the population of Cambodia has grown rapidly according to the findings in the World Book. It is estimated for 1992 at 7.2 million living in Cambodia and according to Austcare figures, 8.2 million.

Language

In Cambodia, Khmer is the official language of administration which has its own alphabet consisting of 24 vowels and 33 consonants and subscripts.. (refer to the language chart). From province to province, there is slightly different accent or pronunciation or even the usage of some words, particularly the northern part of Cambodia. (prarm)

French was widely used as a language of government and higher education. Chinese and Vietnamese were also used in the market place as a language of bargaining. English was introduced in early 1970's but at that time, it was not yet popular.

Therefore, most of the Cambodian people who settled in Australia have to transfer from their learned language skills in Khmer or French, to English which a lot of us find difficult to pronounce. For example, s as plural, ed in past tense. Learning another language is a very difficult task, don't you think? Because we have to learn to understand the meaning of each word, it's important to understand the meaning in different contexts. A Khmer person that I know, who experienced difficulty learning and understanding English. This man went to buy a train ticket at Cabramatta station to Leightonfield. When he arrived there, he said to the Station Master that he wanted to buy a ticket to Leightonfield. The Station Master asked "Single?" And quickly he said, "No, I'm married."

Religion

Theravada Buddhism is the main religion which is followed by 90% of the population. Hinduism and Animism were a strong influence in early history. Christianity and the Muslim faith are practiced by some.

Economy

Cambodia's economy is based greatly on agriculture. It produces rice, maize, rubber, pepper, palm sugar, soya bean, tobacco, cotton and silk. Until the 70's, the country's farm production was usually high enough for the Cambodian people and exported to other countries. Rice and corn were the main food crops. In addition, Cambodia produced large quantities of rubber for exportation. Many farm and rubber plantations were destroyed during the Vietnam war and the civil war in Cambodia. The Cambodian economy also provided fuel as well as providing building materials for houses and boats. About half of the timber is hard wood.

The Ton Le Sap, the great fresh water lake in Cambodia, also dominates Cambodian life and economy. It provides 130,000 tonnes of fresh water fish each year. The fish are either dried, salted, smoked or fermented for the production of prahok, a staple of the Cambodian diet.

Government

Prior to the arrival of the French, the country was governed as a monarchy. When the French colonised, they imposed their administration and legal systems on the country. After World War II, the French withdrew from IndoChina and Kampuchea became independent. Kampuchea maintained the monarchy as well as a cabinet (or council of ministers) led by a Prime Minister who was responsible to the National Assembly.

In 1953, Prince Sihanouk abdicated so that he could lead the popular socialist party and contest elections. His party was successful in 1955 and he became Chief of State in 1960. However, the Vietnam War destabilised the country so much that by 1970, Prince Sihanouk was ousted by Marshall Lon Nol. He declared the country a republic in October 1970, gave it a new constitution and new system of government. Sihanouk was in exile in Peking.

Marshall Lon Nol himself was overthrown by the Khmer Rouge in April 1975 who remained in power until 1979, when the Vietnamese invaded. They installed the Hun Sen government who have ruled the country since the invasion of the Vietnamese. Current United Nations Peace negotiations have to plan to conduct elections and leave power in the hands of the SNC - Supreme National Council with Prince Sihanouk as President of the SNC.

I'll leave it to Chong Hean to give you more information about the history of each era and how it has influenced Cambodian life.

Now I would like to call on Chong Hean to talk about the history of Cambodia.

CAMBODIAN HISTORY IN BRIEF

Prepared for Khmer Cultural Seminar by Chong-Hean Ang

OUTLINE

- 1.0 The Fu-nan Period (1st - 5th Century A.D.)
 - 1.1 The tale of Cambodia (Kaundinya or Hun Tien conquered Queen Willowe Leave or Lieu Yi)
 - 1.2 Hinduization of the Funanese, the Chams and the Khmer.
- 2.0 The Chen-La Period (535 - 802 A.D.)
 - 2.1 The Chen-La extended its empire to the boundaries of present-day China.
 - 2.2 The founder of the Khmer dynasty: "Kambuja" - hence the French "Cambodge" and the English "Cambodia"
- 3.0 The rise and fall of The Angkor Empire (802 - 1432 A.D.)
 - 3.1 King Jayavarman II and King Jayavarman VII and their achievements.
 - 3.2 The decline.
- 4.0 The French Protectorate (1884 - 1949)
- 5.0 The Independence
- 6.0 The Modern History of Cambodia
 - 6.1 The "Royume du Cambodge"
 - 6.2 The Khmer Republic
 - 6.3 The Democratic of Kampuchea
 - 6.4 The People Republic of Kampuchea
 - 6.5 The Supreme National Council

To have the task of presenting Cambodian history within 15 minutes is a mission impossible. Because even to run down very briefly, some major historical events of this country which has two thousand years of history and which was known as one of the greatest early powers of South-East Asia is still difficult.

So what I have decided to do is to divide the entire Cambodian history into 6 parts.

- 1.0 The Fu-Nan Period (1st - 5th Century A.D.)
 - 1.1 The Story of Cambodia

History for most Cambodians is legend symbolizing the subjective experiences of their ancestors rather than the more or less factual record of events usual in the west.

The story of Cambodia began some time in the first century A.D. An Indian youth named Kaundinya (in Khmer - Hun Tien) was visited by a spirit in his dream. The spirit advised him to fetch a bow, board a ship and sail eastwards. Next morning, Hun Tien found a bow and a quiver of arrows lying in the courtyard. Encouraged by the dream, he took the weapon, embarked on a merchant boat and sailed Eastwards. After many days of journey, Hun Tien finally arrived in a country ruled by a Queen named Lieu Yi (in English books: Willow Leaf). Hun Tien conquered Lieu Yi and subsequently got married with the Queen. that was the beginning of Fu-Nan.

1.2 According to documents written by Chinese travellers, there were three groups of people living in the lower Mekong region. They were the Chams, the Funanese and the Khmer. After the intermarriage of Hun Tien and Queen Lieu Yi, it was observed that many Indian scholars came to Fu-Nan and at the same time, many artists from Fu-Nan were sent

to India to further their training and education. It was said that people were gradually Hinduized. By the fourth Century, according to the Chinese documents, "people were completely Indianised".

2.0 The Chen-La Period (535 - 802 A.D.)

To the north of the Mekong, there was a region called Chen-La. Chen-La was the chief vassal state of Fu-Nan. In the middle of the sixth century, Chen-La broke away from the Fu-Nan, then fought with Fu-Nan and subsequently gained control over Fu-Nan.

During the 250 years in which Chen-La was dominant over Fu-Nan, it extended its empire to boundaries of present day China.

The name "Cambodia" derives from this time. Chen-La was inhabited by Khmer and it was said the founder of the Khmer dynasty was "Kambuja" hence the French "Le Cambodge" and the English "Cambodia".

3.0 The Rise and Fall of the Angkor Empire (802 - 1432 A.D.)

This was the time of greatness, the period that modern Khmer leaders refer to when rallying their people. The buildings at Angkor Wat erected at this time, have become a national symbol.

There were two very great leaders during this period: King Jayavarman II and Jayavarman VII.

Jayavarman II who was set upon the Khmer throne as vassal to the Malays, turned away from them and asserted Khmer independence. It was said that he built so many temples but little actually remained of what he constructed.

Social welfare was also a concern of the kings of this period. Jayavarman VII constructed hundreds of hospitals and built rest houses for travellers and distributed tons of rice to the needy. He also established schools and libraries. the arts flourished. Angkor was built in 12th and 13th Centuries. Many of the kings themselves excelled as scholars.

The Decline

Unfortunately, after Jayavarman's death the empire began to fall apart. The people were exhausted by huge construction projects and by wars of conquest.

The Mongol pressured the Thai and the Thai invaded Cambodia. In 1353, the Thai army captured Angkor. thousands of artists and scholars were carried away to slavery in Thailand.

In 1430-31, the Thai again captured Angkor. This conquest marks the end of the magnificent Khmer era. The Khmer abandoned Angkor and moved to the central part of the country.

From 1432-1864, Thailand and Annam struggled for control of Cambodia. Thailand won the lands in the north and Annam in the south.

4.0 The French Protectorate (1864 - 1949)

King Ang Duong died in 1859 during the course of a war. His eldest son, Norodom, who had become a Thai protege, was a point of conflict with the French. He gave two western provinces to Thailand so that he could accept French "protection".

The French protectorate was proclaimed in April 1864. Two months later, Norodom was crowned by representatives of both France and Thailand. This gave France exclusive

control of Cambodian foreign affairs and the right to defend Cambodia against external and internal enemies.

The French resident-general was the actual ruler, and the king merely the symbol of country and religion. (After 1887, Cambodia became part of Indo-Chinese Union).

Norodom died in 1904 after a 40 year reign. His brother Sisowath was king until 1927. Sisowath's son, Monivong reigned from 1927 to 1941. Then Sisowath Monivong's sons were passed over in the royal succession and the son of his oldest daughter, Norodom Sihanouk, became the king.

5.0 The Independence

On 25th April 1941, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, aged 18 was crowned King of Cambodia. On 12 March 1945, under Japanese occupation, Sihanouk proclaimed independence from France. But on 5th October, of the same year, French parachutists reoccupied Phnom Penh upon Japanese capitulation.

The significant events during 1945 was the formation of Khmer Issarak (Anti-French Free Khmer Groups). In March 1951, Khmer Issarak joined with Lao Itsala and Viet Minh in an alliance against French colonialism.

On 9 November 1953, Cambodia attained independence under King Sihanouk.

6.0 The Modern History of Cambodia

6.1 The "Royaume du Cambodge"

In March 1955, Sihanouk abdicated as king so that he might lead the "popular socialists' party" and contest elections to govern the country through the National Assembly. His party was successful in 1955 and became Chief of State in 1960. The same year, the Kampuchea Communist Party was formed.

The Vietnam war brought an end to Cambodia's hopes for development. Sihanouk sought desperately to maintain the country's neutrality and territorial integrity but South Vietnamese and American forces launched bombing raids on suspected communist bases within Cambodia.

6.2 The Khmer Republic

In March 1970, while Sihanouk was abroad, the coup d'Etat led by marshall Lon Nol, took place. This is the government backed by the U.S.A. Living in exile, Sihanouk joined with former enemies, the Khmer Rouge and co-ordinated the struggle against the Lon Nol government. And that was the beginning of the turmoil. The civil war started. The Vietnam War also reached Cambodia with great ferocity. During the next 5 years, more bombs were dropped on Cambodia than were dropped during the whole of World War II. Once a land of food surpluses, Cambodia became dependent on American aid to survive. Poverty, famine, corruption had driven the Khmer to believe that perhaps a new regime would rescue the country.

6.3 The Democratic Party of Kampuchea

On 17 April 1975, the Khmer Rouge defeated the Republican Regime. From that day, the masive genocide in Cambodia began. On that particular day, Australian Government accords recognition to the Pol Pot Regime. The new constitution was adopted, Cambodia became officially known as Democratic Kampuchea. During the three and a half years of brutally repressive regime of the Khmer Rouge, approximately more than two million Khmer either died from hunger or were executed.

6.4 The People's Republic of Kampuchea

In January 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and established a government with Heng Samrin and Hun Sen. As a result of this, the other three factions led by Sihanouk, Son Sann and Pol pot started the war of liberation against the Vietnamese.

6.5 The Supreme National Council

The Supreme National Council is the body proposed to embody Cambodian sovereignty until the election. This is part of the United Nations peace proposal which was signed in Paris on 23 October 1991. It will work with UNTAC inside the country. It was finally agreed that there would be 12 members and that Samdech Sihanouk would be the President. Until the election which is proposed for next year, the country is being run by the S.O.C. (State of Cambodia) administration of which Ayodom Hun Sen is the Prime Minister. If a consensus is not reached and Prince Sihanouk cannot make a decision on its behalf, the UN Secretary General can make final decisions.

KHMER FESTIVALS by Mr Youvath Sik and Mr Meng Eang Thai

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Major Festivals and Celebrations
 - Bon Chol Chhnam Khmer (Khmer New Year)
13 - 15 April
National Holiday
 - Bon Visakha Puja
Full-moon day, May
National Holiday
 - Bon Pchum Ben
September
National Holiday
 - Bon Kathin
Around October
This is not a national holiday
 - Water Festival
Early November
National Holiday.
 - Bon Pkar (Monastery's Fund Raising)
It can happen any time throughout the year.

**SPEECH BY MR SAING HEANG SENG,
PRESIDENT OF KHMER COMMUNITY OF NSW INC.**

I have a great privilege of being invited for today's seminar. On behalf of the Khmer community, I'd like to thank you all for your interest and enthusiasm in finding out more information about Cambodian culture and lifestyle etc. I would like to give you a brief outline about the situation in the Khmer Community of NSW Inc.

The Establishment of the Khmer Community of NSW

Khmer Community was established in 1976 and was incorporated in 1986. It started off as a very small community. It is still small now compared to other well established communities such as Italian and Chinese, but it is becoming more and more recognized by other communities in Australia.

Before 1990 we only had one worker, and the amount of work was getting out of hand over the years due to the welfare needs in our community and more Cambodian immigrants settling in Australia. So we received extra grants to hire another worker.

The objectives.

The objectives of the Khmer Community are:

- * to strengthen and improve the relationship among all Khmer people in New South Wales
- * to foster matters of interest and help overcome obstacles confronting the Khmer Community in New South Wales
- * To preserve and promulgate Khmer culture
- * to be the sole representative of Khmer people in NSW
- * to remain politically unaffiliated
- * to promote goodwill and friendship between members of the Association, the Australian community and all other organisations.

We serve 125 to 135 clients a month on average. Our offices are situated in Bonnyrigg, Fairfield and Campbelltown.

H.E.L.P. Project

We also received grants to work on a project called Helping Early Leavers Programme to assist Cambodian High School students with their learning difficulties in catching up with their school work. To date we have about 150 students participated in the project and are very happy with the services provided.

Khmer Ethnic Schools

To preserve the language and culture of our parents and grandparents and promote multiculturalism in Australia we have also conducted two Khmer classes on Sundays in Bonnyrigg and Campbelltown areas with 182 students at Bonnyrigg and 108 students at Campbelltown.

Khmer Youth Association of NSW

We also have a sub-committee for youth called Khmer Youth Association of NSW having around 200 members to date.

Land Grant

Land was granted to us by the New South Wales Land and Housing Corporation in May 1987 with a 60 year term from 1987 to 2047. a monk's residency area, a multi-purpose hall and an office were built on the land. We have six monks residing in the residence and the

cultural centre is used as a temple for the usual purposes and amenities connected with it. A heavy duty kitchen is needed and it is to be built next to the office. The kitchen project is underway and is expected to be completed in the near future. We received some grant for the project, however we still need more financial support for this project.

Boat People

Since the arrival of the first boat people two years ago, we have been really concerned and have participated with the Action Committee for Refugees in Australia to organise a number of rallies to lobby the government for their refugee status, although we have not had any success in this matter. We have organised food to be prepared and brought to them almost every week. We have also raised some funds to support the boat people as well.

KLISS

A lot of effort has been made to enable us to have Khmer language in secondary Schools recognised. This is called Khmer Language In Secondary School. We have already started our first step by having a Cambodian teacher teaching Cambodian students in Cabramatta East Primary School and there are 120 students participating in the programme. We are still trying to have more teachers with overseas qualifications recognised so that more classes can be opened in other areas.

Finally, I would like to inform you that this is my second last week as the President of the Khmer Community. During my two year term, I've enjoyed working tremendously and would like to thank the Khmer Interagency for their continuous support. However, I would like to make a request that the Management of the Khmer Community still have their support and I am seeking their help to support the next President as they have supported me to work in harmony and keep the community going. As a small community, it is very important to work as closely together as we possibly can.

CHILD REARING PRACTICE IN TRADITIONAL KHMER CUSTOMS

Prepared by Por Heang Ya for the Khmer Cultural Awareness Seminar on 26 June 1992.

CHILD BIRTH

Traditionally, having a baby is considered one of the most difficult tasks for women. Only those living in the city can get access to hospitals or to private maternity centres. People in the rural areas used to use the old ladies who had experience in delivering babies or at later period in the mid 1960's there was access to rural midwives, who had completed a six month voluntary health worker training for each district.

The Cambodian words for having a baby "Chlong Tonle" are translated literally as "crossing the river" because they believe it is the fate of the mother during childbirth to have good child birth, to suffer or even die.

It is still a common practice, particularly in rural areas, for a midwife to deliver the child at home. After the birth many people still maintain that a smouldering wood or charcoal fire must be placed beneath the bed of the new mother in order to warm her up for the next three to seven days after delivery. Cambodians also believe that the mother's body becomes vulnerable after childbirth, the longer she can afford to stay on the heat the better it is for her health. and she must also take care of her diet, some types of meat, fish, fruit and vegetables are avoided.

People believe that the mother is vulnerable to three main ailments. The first is overworking, the second is food poisoning and the third is by witchcraft (Thong Thel). Most women avoid heavy work for the first three to six months after labour. The witches can make mother and baby sick at any time if they succeed in violating the security zone. For this reason the husband must put a thorny bush underneath the house to frighten away the wandering witches (Thong Thel).

These beliefs have diminished gradually since the introduction of Western medicines, access to hospitals and well trained midwives, especially for the people in the city. Thus the death rate has gradually improved.

Birth registration was made at the major's office in the district or at the mayor's office at every suburb in the city. The Khmer give little importance to their birthdate and people sometimes forget when their birthday is. Traditionally the date of birth was recorded on the lunar calendar and is counted as one year old at the time the baby is born.

The child's surname can be taken from the father's first name or from the grandfather's first name. Very often children from the same family can have different surnames. Unlike the Chinese or the Vietnamese, the Khmer do not adopt common patronymic names e.g. Ung, Nguyen or Smith in English.

CHILDHOOD

In the early days, most Khmer parents would prefer their first born to be a girl. The Khmer believe the first girl would bring luck to the family. This may be true because it would be a relief to the family to have a girl as the first born so that parents could delegate the parents responsibility of looking after her younger siblings when her parents go to work.

Child care services do not exist, children were either minded by their mothers or by relatives. Most family relied on relatives or their eldest child to stay away from school to mind their youngsters if their parents were busy. The affluent families would have a nanny to mind the child in their own home.

Breast feeding can go on till the children reach the age of two years.

During the early age the children were exposed to various traditional and some improper western treatments. For instance coin rubbing or tiger balm ointment rubbing are commonly used to cure mild fever, diarrhoea, stomach ache, etc. Antibiotics like Penicillin, Chloramphenicol, Streptomycin or even the corticosteroid were available in the markets or from the chemist without a prescription, and the proper course of treatment was never followed.

Children are taught to be obedient, polite, sober and quiet at a very early age, usually as early as their infancy period. Direct child parent confrontation are more often forbidden. In turn parents must hold to behavioural norms as a good model for their children. Cambodians have a saying "Fruit never falls far away from its tree".

Physical punishments are widely used as the way to modify the children's behaviour. Child abuse was never reported as child welfare agencies did not exist. Most Cambodian parents believe they have absolute authority over their children therefore it is up to them to chose the proper ways to discipline their children.

However, some parents prefer to instill proper behaviour into their children by encouraging them to follow the good example of the adults, older children, and teachers. Boys are subjected to less discipline than girls but they are subjected to harder physical punishment than girls for misbehaving.

ADOLESCENCE

Traditionally during adolescence, there are pre-puberty rites which apply to boys and girls. The central features of these rites consist of cutting the top tuft of hair at age of 11 or 12 to symbolise passage from childhood to adolescence. The true puberty ritual, literally translated as "entering the shade" is only for girls. This practice has, however, declined at later periods because more girls stayed at school.

For the male, adulthood comes when he has taken religious vows. Traditionally, a boy enters the buddhist temple at the age of 11 or 12 to serve a period as a novice monk. It is considered very important and necessary for the child's learning and development, and also helps the child to discipline and control his mind.

These traditional practices have also declined at later periods but pagodas were still the most preferred free boarding places for boys who go to state schools in the cities before 1975. A lot of elite Cambodian males in the 1950's spent their early childhood with the monks or even in the pagoda school.

For studying reasons the majority of adolescents live away from home after entering secondary school. They can either live with relatives in the cities or share a house or board with a family. It is unacceptable for a girl to share a room with a boy as room mate. Most runaway male adolescents seek refuge with buddhist monks in the temple. It is not acceptable and uncommon for children especially girls to leave home before they get married.

EDUCATION

The education system in Cambodia was rapidly modernised and extended in the 1950s and 1960s. Many primary and secondary schools were opened in rural areas and universities and other tertiary institutions were established. The education system, based on French education structure became oriented to increase Khmer Nationalism and Khmer language gradually replaced French as the major language of instruction at all levels of schooling. The structure of education was based on a six year primary school model and seven years secondary model. Secondary schooling was divided into 2 parts; college and lycee.

The first 4 years is called college. Subjected to their success in the state examination, the student will be entitled to a Diploma (Diplome D'Etude Secondaire Du Premier Cycle) equivalent to School Certificate in Australia. However, they are not entitled to it if they fail the examination.

The second part called the lycee, is divided into 2 further sections. The first part of 2 years and the second part, the terminal section of 1 year. Both parts were followed by a state examination, also modelled on the French system and called the Baccalaureate first level and second level.

The standard of the examinations were very high, only about a quarter of the candidates expect to pass the exam each year. Up to 1969 the examination included very hard written and oral tests. The success in the Baccalaureate qualifies the students to go to universities. There were nine universities in 1970.

It also noted that students can only progress to the next class if they pass the yearly examination. Students are enrolled in class according to their abilities rather than to their ages. Students are only allowed to repeat each class for up to three years in any school.

Students rarely ask questions. Learning by rote was comon. Schools were co-educational but boys and girls sat on different sides of the room and were not asked to participate in joint activities. Punishment by caning was heavily used in the primary schools in the 1950's and in early 1960's.

Most parents heavily relied on the teachers to provide a good education for their children. School activities such as parent-teacher meetings rarely occurred. Little contact was maintained between the teacher and parents while the child is enrolled in school.

Private secondary schools were very popular in the 1960's for students who could not get places in state secondary schools. Some other private schools were operated by ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese, and French communities (Ecole Miche for Catholics, Lycee Descarte for French) until the early 1970's.

Traditionally, Buddhist monks had been in charge of all education in Cambodia. Had there not been Buddhist monasteries the Khmer language and literature might possibly have disappeared long ago like our Vietnamese neighbours.

After 1975, virtually no schools remained open at any levels.

In 1979, schools began re-opening as the education system was re-established but the educational standard was low as many qualified teachers were executed.

THE FAMILY

Traditionally the family has been regarded as the basic unit in the Cambodian society.

The family is usually very extended, composing old grand parents, parents and unmarried children. In most cases grand parents live in the same home with the last child of the family.

A family of five to seven children, with more boys than girls, is considered ideal.

The husband is the head of the family, but in practice the wife has substantial authority especially in matters relating to the home and the children's upbringing. The husband is responsible for the housing and food provision for the entire family.

The wife is primarily responsible for the maintenance of social and moral values within the family. In most cases, the wife is also responsible for all the financial matters. She is usually more approachable to the children than the father.

Traditionally there are separated morale rules for husband and for wife to follow (e.g. Rules for Men, Rules for Women, written by King Ang Doung in 1837, and by Bandith Moeun Mayat a later period).

From an early age, children are expected to assume responsibilities around the home to help out the family. These may include domestic chores such as preparing meals, washing and cleaning to helping with the farming and harvesting of rice.

The authority of parents over their children is absolute and this normally continues until the children are married. However, parents usually exercise their authority sparingly, preferring to teach approved behaviours by means of example set by adults and older children.

This traditional family norm was completely reversed during the Pol Pot period between 1975 and 1979. The Khmer Rouge destroyed the traditional family values by transferring parental authority to the state and breaking down the extended family into nuclear units. Husbands and wives were seldom allowed to live together. The word "family" referred to "the husband" or "the wife" individually and also to the nuclear family as such. Children became impolite and no longer observed the proper deference patterns because they were taught to respect and be faithful to the State - "Angka" rather than to his/her family. The Khmer Rouge said we must respect the children because they are the future of "Angka".

However the traditional education and social values that children must take care of their prents when they grew old, has been reinforced after the Pol Pot era was over.

CAMBODIAN FAMILIES IN AUSTRALIA

Cambodians in Australia are the survivors of the Pol Pot Regime. The majority of people arriving in Australia over the period 1975 to 1983, with the bulk arriving since 1980.

The community are characterised by incomplete families, many children with little previous formal education, and all people suffering the traumas associated with the civil war since 1970.

The Khmer settlers in Australia are in Many ways conductng the most important task of re-establishing their families, their communities and their lives.

The pride and integrity of glorious history, is re-emerging as a strong characteristic of the Khmer (Bennoun et al, 1984). Traditional conceptions of gratitude and respect to the three most important people in everyone's life (Mother, Father and Teacher) are always reinforced within the family.

Some Khmer parents note with concern that the traditional feelings of respect and gratitude by children are becoming much weaker. Reliance on children, who generally have a better command in English language, to act as interpreters and for information about Australia has put stress on the traditional parent-child relationship by reversing roles.

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CHILD REARING PRACTICE IN KHMER-CHINESE SUB-CULTURE (OR SINO-CAMBODIAN CULTURE) prepared by Chong Hean Ang

1.0 THE INSPIRATION OF THIS PRESENTATION

Enquiries received from School Counsellors, Teachers and District Officers concerning the pressure that children from this sub-culture are under and their outstanding achievements.

2.0 BACKGROUND

What are Sino-Cambodians? Products of Chinese fathers and Khmer mothers - according to David Steinberg in his book titled "Cambodia, Its People, Its Society, Its Culture", the Sino-Cambodians rank above the Eurasians (French Cambodians). A widely held belief among the Khmer is that the offspring of a Khmer-Chinese union combine the most vigorous qualities of both groups. The general attitude is that Non-Chinese genetic strains upset the purity of original Khmer attributes. Many Cambodians boast of being "pure" Sino-Cambodians.

3.0 THE SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION OF ETHNIC CHINESE INTO THE KHMER SOCIETY.

- 3.1 There was evidence of Chinese traders in Cambodia as early as when the country was called "Funan".
- 3.2 "The only known historical account of the early eras of Cambodia was written by Chinese travellers". ("Angkor and the Khmers" by Malcolm MacDonald, Oxford University press 1987).
- 3.3 In 1296, a Chinese official named Chou Ta Kwuan was sent to work in Cambodia. Chou wrote notes and kept a diary in which the Khmer culture was thoroughly described. Many French historians and western researchers agreed that Chou's papers are the most reliable and valuable historical documents for historians who study the late 13th century and the early 14th century Cambodia. ("Cambodia, Its People, Its Society, Its Culture" by David Steinberg, Thomas Fitzsimmons 1959).
- 3.4 There are three major ethnic Chinese groups in Cambodia: The Tehchieu, the Cantonese and the Hokkienese. Each group establishes their own association - private schools and temples. The census in 1970 indicated that there were 650,000 Chinese in Cambodia. 30% of the capital city's population were Chinese.
- 3.5 Intermarriage of Khmer and Chinese is a frequent occurrence in Cambodia and has done much to strengthen relations between the two groups.
- 3.6 The Chinese are admired and envied for economic talents and personal wealth. Yet, because of their reputation for industrial and financial success, Chinese are eagerly sought as marriage partners. "In Khmer eyes, the Chinese male is a super breadwinner and many Cambodian fathers dream of a Chinese son-in-law" (David Steinberg).
- 3.7 Like anywhere else, the Chinese in Cambodia are usually not interested in politics. However, they obey the local law and have adapted imperceptibly and inoffensively to local conditions and customs, always respectful of the religion, and superstitions of the Khmer among whom they live.

4.0 CHILD REARING PRACTICES

- 4.1 Clan name: Common surnames are: ANG, CHAU, UNG, SOR, TAN, TANG, HONG, LY, KY, EAP, NGO, LIM etc.
- 4.2 Because of the importance of clan names, most Chinese fathers would prefer to have more sons than daughters.
- 4.3 The role of caring for a baby is initially taken by the mother and several months later this role would be given to the house maid or grandparents as the mother is busy with business/career. As a result of this, many children have behavioural problems e.g. attention seeking, feeling inadequate and lonely, emotional problems which lead to further conflicts within the family.

- 4.4 Education and Discipline Practices
 *Usually children are sent to kindergarten when they are 4-5 years. Most of the children receive a bi-lingual education in Chinese private schools. when they finish Chinese high school, they would start Khmer high school where they are taught in Khmer, French and English. As a result of this, most children are multilingual e.g. being fluent in 4 - 5 languages and several Chinese dialects.
 *Sending children to private boarding schools is a common practice. Schools are expected to produce outstanding well disciplined children. It should be noticed that corporal punishment is widely accepted in Cambodia.
 *In Chinese education, children are strictly supervised. Home visits on week-ends are conducted by school staff. A strong emphasis is placed on maths and languages. Children are also required to attend private music, dancing, calligraphy and painting classes.
- 4.5 Sino-Cambodian place high value on education of their children. Children are taught from a very young age to respect both Chinese and Khmer cultures.
 *Being brought up between two influential cultures is uneasy for children. however, they have learnt to adjust themselves to suit situations e.g. being with paternal family they can make a noise when drinking tea or eating and coming back to maternal family they can sit down calmly when carving fruits and vegetables; Sino-Cambodian child would react angrily when being touched on the head by a Khmer but would accept it as a friendly gesture if that person was from Chinese background.
- 4.6 Relationships between parents and children
 *Although children are taught to respect their elders, they are allowed to express views and make decisions.
 *The tradition of parents being too modest about their children's great achievements could hurt the children's feelings. While parents think that this may encourage greater achievements, children often feel that this is denigration.
 *Family conflicts are usually resolved within extended families to protect their reputation.
 *Tremendous pressure from parents sometimes leads to boys running away from home. (There have been cases of some boys have a fantasy of marrying with poor but caring countr girls (i.e. they believe they would receive some attention and affection).
 *Belief: took good care of aged parents and children and the children will in turn provide the same quality care for you. "Do good receive good, do evil receive evil".
- 4.7 Marriage
 *Marriages between members from the same social class are a common occurrence because of fears of sharing their welath with other groups.
 *Arranged marriages still exist. In some cases, the girl's parents may discreetly approach the boy's family (reverse proposal role). If both parties are agreeable, an engagement would take place.
 *Bi-cultural marriage ceremony (observation: Khmer influence in marriage ceremony tends to be stronger/more pronounced than Chinese).
- 4.8 Career/Employment Social Practices/Religion
 *Occupationally, Sino-Cambodians excel as bankers, moneylenders, entrepreneurs, doctors, teachers, lawyers, high ranking government officials and even some politicians.
 *Children are encouraged by their Chinese fathers to socially mix with the Khmer as well as with other ethnic groups. (Chinese philosophy: peaceful co-existence leads to gains in business).
 *Religion: belief in both Buddhism and worship of ancestors.
 *In social services, Sino-Cambodians have outstanding achievements compared to other groups. This is evidenced by schools, bridges, temples, hospital wards being built/donated by wealthy members of this group.

5.0 SINO-CAMBODIANS IN AUSTRALIA

- 5.1 Initially, socially isolated because most of them have resettled in France, USA and Canada, therefore do not have their own particular social group.
- 5.2 The elderly group has difficulty in adjusting their social status/changing of role.
- 5.3 Most aspects of child rearing practices remain unchanged.
- 5.4 Despite a disrupted education, the numbers of Sino-Cambodian youth who attend universities are very high compared with other groups from Cambodia.
- 5.5 In Australia, their contribution to the Khmer community is still outstanding.

CULTURAL EXHIBITION prepared by Chong Hean Ang and Ramy Var

Introduction

To learn about a particular culture, one has to begin observing how people from that culture do things in their daily life.

What we are going to show you may seem quite elementary, but in fact, it is practical skill which will assist you when dealing with Cambodian clients or perhaps, friends.

1. Greetings

- Younger person initiates the greeting (Chum Reap Suor, puts both hands together to salute elders).
- Persons from lower social class/ have lower professional status usually initiate the greeting.
- Westernised Cambodians may shake hands. Unlike in Australia, Cambodian men usually put out their hand first.
- Informal greeting; Meet - calling each other then asking each other; where are you going?

This may sound rather personal, but the intention is to say "good day" to start a conversation. One can simply give any destination, and should not be offended by such a question.

2. Ways of addressing people

Although people are not related to each other, the following words are used to address people according to their age:

Grandfather/Grandmother
Uncle/Aunt
Brother/Sister
Nephew/Niece

Calling an older person by their first name is considered very rude.

Westernised Cambodians would address people with Madame/Monsieur. However it should be noticed that unlike French/English, the word Madame/Monsieur will be followed by first names. e.g. Mr Ching Hean (not Mr Ang).

Due to the division of social classes, there are specific ways to address those who belong to religious groups and the royalty.

3. Body Language

a. Eye Contact:

When listening to their elders, one usually lowers their head to show respect/ paying attention e.g. receiving advice etc. This does not mean one feels guilty or is trying to hide something.

b. Showing Affection:

Kissing - intimate body contacts are not usually shown in front of children or in public unless one is quite Westernised. It is not uncommon in family assessment situation that Western workers become confused because of such behaviour. Do not hesitate to consult your Cambodian colleagues.

c. Gestures - Stooping:

When one walks with a stoop in front of people this means respect.

Passing - Handling things:

With both hands means respect. Walking over a person's body or legs is considered rude.

d. Norm-Taboo-Superstition:

- Touching one's head
- Walking under the clothes line/owl brings bad luck
- Taking shoes/hat off when entering Temple/House
- Meaning of colours

e. Traditional costumes

Explanation given by Ramy Var

ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN KHMER SOCIETY AND IN TERMINAL ILLNESS

prepared and presented by Youvath Sik

OUTLINE

1. Brief History of Buddhism in Cambodia
2. Buddha's teaching and the Cambodians' Way of Living:
 - The Five Precepts
 - The Eight Precepts
 - The Samsara (cycle of rebirth)
3. The life of a monk in Cambodia
4. The role of Buddhism in helping terminal illness

CONTENT

1. Brief History of Buddhism in Cambodia

The cradle of Buddhism is in north-east India, in the basin of the River Ganges. Its origin dates back several centuries before the Christian era. Gautama was the founder of Buddhism, but as he belonged to the Shakya clan, he was also later called Shakyamuni.

There is no clear account stating when Buddhism came to Cambodia. Some scholars claimed that Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism transmitted to Cambodia from India around the 5th Century. Although religion in Cambodia was heavily influenced by earlier

contact with India, Theravada Buddhism is the major religion and is practiced by more or less 90% of the population. As with the other countries of Indo-China practice often included elements of astrology and belief in spirits.

It is customary for Khmer males to spend at least a few weeks as a novice, observing the same ritual and devotion practised by monks who have devoted their life to serving Buddha.

You may wonder what Theravada Buddhism is. Well, briefly, history tells us that some time after the Buddha's death, the Sangha (the Buddhism clergy and community) split into two. One group held the spoken words of the Buddha to be the absolute authority, while the other took a more open-minded attitude and contended that what he means was more important than what he said. Schism followed schism until there were 18 schools of thought. Of these 18 schools, the Theravada which is based on the verbal teaching of the Buddha, has become the prevailing form of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. Theravada uses scriptures in Pali, the sacred language which it claims was used by the Buddha.

The other branch of Buddhism, Mahayana (Great Vehicle) is currently being practiced in China, Tibet and the other areas of the Far East. In South East Asia, the only country where Mahayana still prevails, is Vietnam.

2. Buddha's Teaching and the Cambodian way of living

The three major tenets of Theravada Buddhism (often referred to as the Buddhist trilogy) are :

the practice of regular devotion according to buddhist doctrine: Dharma.
the belief that one's present conduct will determine a future incarnation: Karma.
the Buddhist clergy and community within which individuals may improve their Karma: Sangha.

Buddhism has planted the belief in Karma. Belief in Karma promises a better, happier future by the performance of good, meritorious acts in this life, where evil acts will bring about miserable retribution in the next life. For laymen (and I shall say laywomen as well) the cardinal virtue is to observe the five precepts (panca-sila), that is to say:
I undertake the rule of training to refrain from:

- Killing living beings
- Taking what is not given (stealing)
- Wrong conduct in sexual relations (adultery)
- False speech (lying)
- All intoxicants confusing the mind (drinking alcohol)

In addition to the five precepts of not killing, not stealing, not committing adultery, not lying and not drinking alcohol, there are three more, to make the eight precepts.

- I undertake the rule of training, to refrain from food at the wrong time.
- I undertake the rule of training to refrain from dancing, singing, music and seeing entertainment, from wearing jewellery, smartening with perfume and beautifying with cosmetics.
- I undertake the rule of training to refrain from a luxurious or large bed.

The Sansara (The cycle of rebirth)

In Buddhism, six states of transmigratory existence are distinguished. From the lowest level to the highest, they are hell, hungry ghosts, animals, fighting spirits, men and heavenly beings. Most people engaged in merit winning acts, seek to secure happiness and pleasure in the next life, whether to be born again into the human world or into the

heavenly world. Some of them may wish to become rich and live in luxury rather than attain happiness in spiritual terms. These six states of existence lie, after all, in the shadow of suffering caused by spiritual darkness and egoistic desire. Buddhism theory, states that we are all caught up in the cycle of rebirth which is: born - age - ill and death. Furthermore, whoever we are as long as we have body, we have suffering. So how can we liberate ourselves from the suffering. The primary aim of Buddhism is literally extinction, a state which transcends the other six states and so liberates the individual from the cycle of rebirth. Nirvana is the state of the total extinction of passions and is the highest spiritual bliss.

This philosophy and belief closely stay with Cambodians life evidence in which in the way we make a last farewell at the funeral service we would wish the deceased to reach the spiritual bliss. In conversation or in correspondence, we would wish the others with the 5 Buddhist wishes. They are:

- Long life
- Beauty
- Happiness
- Strength/Good Health
- Wisdom

3. The life of a monk in Cambodia.

The role or job description of a Buddhist monk is defined by the 227 rules of discipline (called the patimokkha), which order his behaviour in all its aspects from rules of sexual conduct to table manners. One of the most significant differences between a smonk and a layman is that sexual activity of any kind is forbidden. This does not mean that married men or widowers can not be ordained, but it does mean that they must remain celibate while in the order. There is no prohibition for the monk to leave the order. It is better to become a good layman than to remain a bad monk, and a man is honoured for staying in the order for a long time rather than being stigmatized for leaving it.

A second major austerity relates to dietary practice, the rule being that monks should take no nourishment after midday. The first meal is taken around seven am and the second meal is timed to finish just before noon. After this time, he is allowed only to smoke or chew beetle or to drink which is unsweetened or which does not contain milk.

A third criterion separating the way of the monks from the way of the world is pivotal. The monk does not earn his living but subsists on presentations of food made by householders who live along the route he takes on his daily alms-round.

The monk's special station in society is most visibly marked by his saffron robe, and by his shaving off his hair and eyebrows at his ordination and once each month thereafter.

The superior status of the monk over the layman is acknowledged in many ways. One is by linguistic usage. There are terms of address and reference used only for and by monks. Another important area that women have to avoid phusical contact even of an indirect nature e.g. passing a book or glass of water, these must be placed on a cloth or table, but not given directly to the monk. That is why when women offering food to the monks have to avoid touching their spoon and the monk's rice pot.

4. The role of Buddhism in helping terminal illness

Consistent with the beliefs of the Buddhist faith, Khmer people expect to be reborn in another life following death. The use of Buddhism in the last stage of life is to strengthen the psychological and emotional well being of the dying one. Buddhists believe that no one can escape the cycle of rebirth or Pamjara which is born - aged - ill - and death.

In the Buddhist verse, the "Jarra Vagga" the decay it says:

"See this body beautiful,
a mass of sores, a congeries,
much considered, but miserable
where nothing's stable, nothing persists."

The Buddha's teaching is telling us that nothing remains infinite and that we have no control over it.

These flowers, Bright and beautiful, Fragrant and good smelling, handsome and well-formed, soon indeed, discoloured, ill-smelling and ugly they become.

This very body, beautiful, fragrant and well formed, soon indeed, discoloured, ill-smelling and ugly it becomes.

The decay verse went on:

All decrepit is this body,
Disease most and frail,
This foul mass is broken up
For life does end in death.

I think I will stop here, but I would like to conclude that the Buddha does not command us to believe his teaching (Dhamma) He asks us to investigate it in ourselves. He said: "A good goldsmith does not assume the purity of a sample of gold. He or she tests it first. In the same way, the Buddha's words are not to be accepted by blind belief (literally, out of respect for the Guru) but must be investigated with wisdom."

SLIDES OF KAMPUCHEA FOR KHMER INTERAGENCY

prepared and presented by Nola Randall

Thanks Ramy.

The slide presentation which I will show you today is firstly a commercial presentation which summarizes much of the information presented here today. Following that recorded presentation, I will show you just a few slides of my own. Slides are not my forte, but there are some photo albums of two of my visits which you can look at during the break.

...National Geographic

Som Chumreap Soo-uh. A Khmer greeting.

All of us probably identify Khmer with local images that are more familiar to us than the pictures which we have just seen. *We may have a friend, a client or a student who we meet in daily life here in Sydney, who has told us about themselves and their history.

*Here are scenes which we experience often in the life of the Khmer Community here in Western Sydney. Offering rice to the monk. (2)

*Offering food to the monks at a special ceremony.

*Burning incense and praying.

*Waiting for the ceremonial washing of the buddha at the new year festivities.

*The sand mountain.

*The sand mountain ceremony at new year. (2)

*Entertainment following the ceremonies.

As a result of co-ordinating and teaching groups of young unemployed Khmer, I soon found myself participating fully in the life of the Khmer community in Australia. This brought about my initial visit to Kampuchea, as the request of many of my friends here in Australia who wanted me to "test the waters" to see if Khmer here could safely return to visit. I therefore found myself inspecting locations, counting monks, and trying all kinds of food.

*A standard tour 5 years ago began with a visit to Tuol Sleng. These brief slides hardly capture it at all. Small cells, walls and walls full of pictures of people who were tortured and murdered...for what? *The records of two Australians were found here with their signed confessions to crimes of working for the CIA. They had merely been on a fishing boat passing down the coast with no intention of landing in Kampuchea, when the Khmer Rouge soldiers had captured them and executed them.

*This is the grave site of the last 14 people who were killed by the Khmer Rouge just before the Vietnamese pushed them back.

*It was also possible to visit the Ex-Royal palace, which has now been reoccupied by Samdech Sihanouk.

*This has since been refurbished completely. You can see in the background a house which was a gift from France.

*This building holds many valuable statues and has a completely silver floor.

*This was part of a historical painting on the wall of the temple area inside the palace.

*Independent Monument. This was built in 1954. The Australia Mission is just around the corner from this monument.

*The medical university, where there were a number of demonstrations held in December last year.

*The railway station.

*The samaki hotel, now called the Royal. This hotel previously housed all the Westerners prior to the reforms introduced by Hun Sen in 1988/89. *Now this hotel houses a bar in what could be called the Kings Cross of Phnom Penh.

*A home prepared to conduct a religious ceremony. You can see, as well as the buddhist flags flying, there are also State flags. Almost every home had one.

*A house in the countryside.

*A rice paddy.

*A bullock cart on the way to Svay Rieng near the Vietnam border.

*A picnic trip to Ton Le Bati in Takeo province.

*The temple at Ton Le Bati.

*Traditional musicians play each Sunday, hoping to earn a little extra.

*The water front.

*A sala - or school house.

*Because of the heavy fighting in the area, it wasn't until my second visit that I finally was able to visit Siem Riep and Angkor Wat.

*You have a brief stop over at Angkor Thom, which was built from 7 - 9 th Century.

*Here you can see the Four faces of the Prum.

*As you drive from the airport to Angkor Wat.

*Angkor Wat is all that I had been told and more. We spent four hours walking through the temple and hearing the history explained.

*We were able to walk to the top, which is no problem at all - until you turn around to come down.

*I'm sure that we all wish all Khmer the very best for the future in terms of the peace process and what it may bring their their country.

If anyone wants to look at some of the souvenirs or look through the book on Ankor Wat, please feel free to do so. Thanks very much.

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE KHMER COMMUNITY

By Dr Chris Sochan, Psychiatrist
Prepared for Khmer Seminar on Culture and Customs

Mr Chairman

Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to thank the seminar convener Mr Chong-Hean Ang and the members of the Khmer Interagency for honouring me with this invitation to address this audience on Mental Health Issues in the Khmer Community.

The organising committee had initially called this Khmer Cultural Awareness Seminar before settling on "Khmer Culture and Customs".

I fit in better with the earlier title as I am not competent to tell you about Khmer culture and its influence on mental health but I can inform you on how I become and became aware.

Awareness is the making conscious, the becoming informed of the unknown. We can become aware i.e. conscious of our cultural influences only when we come in contact with another culture.

If we lived in a monocultural world we would not be aware of cultural influences on our daily lives. We become informed when we want to or are open to learning. Awareness therefore applies to both the Khmer and the non-Khmer when coming to this seminar.

Culture identifies a human being as belonging to a specific group because of shared beliefs, customs, ways of living life, solving problems and identifying what is valued. Culture provides identity and continuity.

This issue must be of particular importance to the Khmer people whose cultural identity is not only assailed by the needs of assimilation into a new country, but also by the deliberate destruction by the Khmer Rouge of the culture bearers (monks, artists, intellectuals) the cultural symbols and cultural rituals.

This subject, Mental Health Issues in the Khmer Community can overwhelm anyone. How to tackle it and yet make it meaningful? How to not be my normal overinclusive self? To reduce excessively will only make it trite, and yet to make it inclusive enough so it is not boring. When talking it over with Chong Hean and the Committee it was clear that they wanted me to tell you of my experiences and yet somehow fold it into Sydney.

As a migrant son of Eastern European parents who had experienced a war, concentration camp, forced labour, migration and the building of a new life in Australia, I found myself attracted to and wanting to work with other migrants. As a young doctor, I experienced the frustration of communicating with and understanding people with whom I did not share the same language and culture. As a trainee psychiatrist I was forced by circumstance to learn about what I came to love.

The public health system then, as now, is the major provider of mental health care to our non-English speaking population. To provide access they have wisely formed the Health Care Interpreter Service. This service calls into question any situation where health care is provided without the service of a professional interpreter or a competent bilingual therapist. As good as it is, it has also shown up its limitations. The most serious of which is that there are few practitioners who can competently use it.

In the long run I believe that as much as interpreters require training to work in a therapeutic partnership, therapists also need training to work with interpreters.

It is also my experience that not all interpreters should be working in mental health. This "natural selection" can be seen in the medical profession where most doctors do not practise psychiatry but interpreters have no such luxury.

Something new is needed to broaden our horizons of therapy. This has come about through our increasing knowledge about refugees and their plight. Refugees have problems related to their traumatic experiences. The public health system has become increasingly narrow in its perspective (its agenda). It has identified the major psychoses as its primary goal. This has its merits in that a major community health cost deserves effort and funding. In doing so the public system has narrowed itself to an organic approach where mental illness is defined in terms of genetics, inheritance, neurotransmitters and appropriate medications. This narrowing has been at the cost of an interpersonal, social and cultural approach.

Refugees with their trauma deserve better. They deserve more than band-aid assistance. Refugees on the whole are normal people who have been through abnormal experiences. These experiences, have left many with ongoing distress (nightmares, vivid recall of trauma, startle reactions, anxiety, depression and physical symptoms) that cripple their ability to concentrate, perform, tolerate stress and so they do not achieve their potential. The incidence of marital conflict, disharmony, child abuse and substance abuse increases.

Last year I visited both the U.S.A. and Canada and I was very pleased to see their system and make my own evaluation. In Boston, Massachusetts and Portland, Oregon, they run services for Indo-Chinese patients. These two services are different and are run by intelligent, charismatic and productive leaders.

The Indochinese Psychiatry Clinic in Boston works on an evolving system of the bicultural cotherapist. Here the "therapist" lends their cultural expertise whilst the Westerner provides medication and therapy skills. The aim is to give ongoing support, training and supervision of indigenous people to treat their own. The emphasis is cotherapy.

At the Indochinese Psychiatric Clinic in Portland the bilingual staff are trained in counselling but have mainly an interpreting role. They are supportive therapists.

I think that both centres are converging to the same point. The point being the working/therapeutic partnership between the westerner and Khmer-American. In both cases this required years of working together and getting to know and understand how the other works.

It was clear that what made it work was trust and mutual respect and not slogans of what it should be.

It was obvious to me that when and where such a partnership existed, the results were self evident.

Cohesion was provided by a common purpose of the patient-client's welfare/wellbeing and the obvious dedication of the staff. Both centres were based in hospitals. The atmosphere was relaxed and inviting. It was clear that the place was organised and that the setting evidenced quality reflecting a belief in quality of service. Both centres used the medical model of symptoms, signs and diagnosis and both had active debate, discussions, teaching programmes and research.

Toronto, Canada well known for its multicultural leadership has no equivalent of either of the American systems or the New South Wales system in producing mental health services

for the refugees and migrants. Their system is centred around individuals and self help agencies.

Both the American and Canadian systems rely on a variety of funding sources in order to be viable.

I am not advocating the American Health system for Australia. That system is a failure in providing health care. I do advocate that we learn from their centres of excellence which the Americans are good at.

In February this year I was involved with the Americans in a Khmer mental health training programme in Site 2, the largest Cambodian border camp in Thailand. **** (Description)**
Here I started my learning.

War is ongoing
Camp life is ongoing
Lack of safety is ongoing
Lack of employment is ongoing
Malnutrition is ongoing
Separation is ongoing
Nothing normal is ongoing

The situation for the Khmer is not like some car accident, a bereavement, a break-in, a Granville train disaster, or a Darwin cyclone. All of which have been recognized in our community as legitimate causes of ill health and distress.

This situation is ongoing.
It is abnormal.
It affects normal people.

What stands out is TIME and that the abnormal becomes the accepted norm. It doesn't let up. There is no respite. When can they get on with their lives??

The World Federation for Mental Health (W.F.M.H.) completed a document in 1989 called "Community of Confinement: The Mental Health Crisis in Site Two." co-authored by Richard Mollica and Russell Jalbert. This led to a study called "Repatriation and Disability: A Community study of Health, Mental Health and Social Functioning of the Khmer Residents of Site Two." by Dr Mollica et al. A thousand randomly selected households were surveyed in Site Two and some of its findings were:

1. They are young (53% below age 20 and 13% above age 40) living on average 5 to a household and one in six women are widowed. Eight out of ten respondents have lived in Site Two more than five years.
2. The majority came from Battambang province and 46% of surveyed adults are employed, 22% as vendors, 10% in the military or police work. Literacy, education, being a male and married all improved your chance of working.
3. One in four Khmer adults attended school or a training scheme.
4. 87% of adult respondents rated their own health status as fair to poor. This was almost exactly equivalent to the proportion that claimed to have "bebotchet" (83%) which approximately translates as "a deep sadness inside oneself" (that can be hidden from others).
5. Poor health status was also highly correlated with physical pain, disability, depression and anxiety.

6. Western criteria for major depression was elicited in 55% of adults. This was ascertained using a symptom checklist translated to Khmer and corrected for idioms (expressions) called the Hopkins Symptom Checklist - 25. 11% of the respondents also indicated that they had frequently felt "samlap kloun" (suicidal) during the previous week.
7. A list of 28 major trauma events were drawn up from 10 years of documenting the traumatic experiences of the Khmer. The respondents were asked about 3 time periods:
 - * Pol Pot (1975-1979)
 - * 1980 till the present
 - * Past 12 months.

They were asked if they witnessed or experienced the traumatic event.

8. During Pol Pot period nearly all were exposed to traumatic events.
9. Since 1980, human rights violations such as brainwashing (24%), murder of a family member (8%) and torture (8%) were alleged to have occurred.

As well as

- lack of food (56%)
- forced evacuation (51%)
- combat situations (44%)
- lack of medical care (28%)
- lack of shelter (24%)

10. Overwhelmingly respondents indicate that their worst traumatic experiences occurred under Pol Pot less than 10% indicated that the worst event occurred in a refugee camp.

11. A western category, called Post Traumatic Stress disorder was evaluated by constructing a checklist of symptoms.

15% were checklist positive.

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Most of these (95%) also met Western criteria for depression.

The greater the number of trauma events the more likely one will be checklist positive. Similarly if the traumatic events have occurred in the last year. Widows and the highly educated were the most likely to have post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The report also suggests that there is a difference between responses of Khmer in Site 2 and those resettled in Western countries that suggests that they feel less isolated in their suffering.

Also it is believed that Khmer culture may protect against the development of alienation, emotional "numbness" and survivor guilt.

The training programme in Site Two was aimed at providing our Khmer trainees with mental health knowledge that was to be grafted onto their indigenous system. We called our programme:

- K Krou Khmer
- C Counselling

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- K Krou Khmer
- C Counselling

B Buddhism

M Medication

The Krou refers to their indigenous doctors who use a variety of treatment techniques such as herbal medicines, steaming, cupping and an understanding of the underlying and unifying belief system.

The Khmer Health System had been devastated under Pol Pot. Western trained physicians and nurses, Krou Khmer and Buddhist monks were murdered, traumatized and disabled. To my knowledge, there is only one Khmer psychiatrist in the world. Both Krou Khmer and Buddhist monks were involved in our planning, teaching and now writing of the Khmer Mental Health Manual.

Khmer Buddhism is the underlying religion of the Khmer people. The monks involvement in this programme is crucial not only because of the benefits of meditation and a form of time out (retreat) but because the monks educate the people, take in those who may have no other place and are crucial to the attitude of hope or hopelessness when it comes to mental illness and distress.

The counselling and medication refers to the Western Khmer partnership and knowledge base developed through work with Khmers in their countries of refuge.

In Site 2, I was involved in co-teaching with a Khmer American whom I had never met. I went to teach people of a culture that I knew little about. It was frightening, exciting and rewarding. I found that I did not have to be an expert on them. I had to recognize my limits, the limits of our knowledge and to encourage the Khmer students to recognize that as a group they were able to produce knowledge. As a teaching team and as a working group we developed a partnership. Having gone to teach I learnt a lot.

One of my assignments was to teach on psychosis. This was a real challenge - a westerner teaching Khmers what is abnormal and then prescribing treatment!! My Khmer American and I tackled this problem by setting homework assignments where the students listed Khmer criteria (elicited from their experience and or interviews with other Khmer) for psychosis; Khmer beliefs as to cause and Khmer solutions for psychoses.

Our students were then assigned to work groups which prepared and organised their work. The groups came together as a class and we put together the information as a whole. They were closely questioned in order to expand on issues thus enabling the class and us to understand. Our western ideas and knowledge was then inserted as a contrast to what they had produced. Clearly there was a lot of agreement, the differences were commented on but also left as a stimulus for future reflection and work.

In Sydney, we have the service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors better known as S.T.A.R.T.T.S. at Fairfield and the Institute of Psychiatry at Rozelle which runs a variety of courses on working with migrants. We need a centre specialising in cultural awareness.

In Melbourne, they have the TRANSCULTURAL PSYCHIATRY UNIT which is instrumental in disseminating information, doing research and emphasising a culturally relevant service by training both doctors and interpreters in how to work more productively together. Overseas research work, evaluating the training of clinicians and administrators in cultural sensitivity, has revealed a significant increase in service utilisation and a decrease in consumer dropout.

By cultural perspective, I don't mean that it views the individual only from a cultural standpoint. I mean that culture is emphasised as also important because it influences a person's view of the world, and the self in the world. It influences a society's sense of hope

and acceptance of troubled, traumatized or ill people. It influences the beliefs around illness or distress and who, in that social group one turns to for help, comfort, relief or treatment. It determines the structure of the system to which these individuals turn and in which others work. It determines how we organise into a reference system what we regard as abnormal and/or distressing.

A centre, which emphasizes culture, can become a knowledge base because of the bias of its reading, thinking and research. As part of a whole, it can disseminate information to the wider professional and non-professional community. It can be the place to go for supervised hands on experience. It can be the centre for the cross-cultural partnership.

Such a centre can be linked with S.T.A.R.T.T.S., the Institute of Psychiatry and other community (e.g. schools, the law) and hospital based services. I see no reason why it cannot be assisting migrant access to the private sector.

Such a centre may help the Khmer to document their belief system that impinges on their utilisation of the Western Health Care System, to outline Khmer attitudes to a variety of social issues, physical-mental-intellectual impairment and to the expression of distress. Will these vary with age, acculturation, assimilation, education and gender?

Who do the Khmer turn to?

What would they like to see happen?

So in conclusion I wish to say that not only are we in need of developing a culturally sensitive and appropriate healing system but we also have to give assistance in cultural repair as this is what was attacked.

We have no high ground of moral or intellectual imperialism as we are also part of a world wide epidemic of war, trauma, torture and violence.

...The Khmer distress is ...that it was their bothers and sisters who did this to them!

MENU FOR KHMER SEMINAR

ENTRE

Spring Roll
Deep Fried Bread

MAIN COURSE

"Sutch Ko Chongkah" - Cambodian Beef Skew
(marinated in lemon grass, galangal & other spices)
"Newam" - Cambodian Sweet and Sour Salad
"Amock" - Fish

"Bai" - White Steamed Rice

DESERT

"Crorb Knauw" - Mixture of sweetened Mung Bean, Egg, and Coconut.
"Onsom Chayk" - Steamed Cake made of banana in sticky rice.
"Plei Chher" - Fruit.

DRINKS

Juice
Tea
Coffee

WORKSHOP 1

Child Rearing Practices

See previous notes

WORKSHOP 2

Education System in Cambodia

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CAMBODIA

prepared by Mrs Tek Heang Ya and Mr Theau Yorth

A. PRIMARY EDUCATION

	Australia	Cambodia			
Age	NSW	Before 1959	1959-1975	1975-79	After 1979
3yr9mth 4yr9mth	Preschool (non compulsory)	None	Kindergarten (non compulsory)	No School	Kinder- garten
5yrs	Kindergarten	None	Kindergarten (non compulsory)		
6yrs	Year 1	Infant Class	12th Class		1st Class
7yrs	Year 2	Preparatory Class	11th Class		2nd Class
8yrs	Year 3	Elementary	10th Class		3rd Class
9yrs	Year 4	Medium I	9th Class		4th Class
10yrs	Year 5	Medium II	8th Class		5th Class
11yrs	Year 6	Superior Class	7th Class		Entrant Exam
		Entrant	Exam		

B. SECONDARY EDUCATION

Year 7	6th Class 12 years old	6th Class 12 years old	No School	6th Class
Year 8	6th Class 13 years old	5th Class 13 years old		7th Class
Year 9	4th Class 14 years old	4th Class 14 years old		8th Class
Year 10	3rd Class 15 years old	3rd Class 15 years old		
	EXAM	EXAM		EXAM
Year 11	Seconde 16 years old	Seconde 16 years old		9th Class
Year 12	Premiere 17 years old	Premiere 17 years old		10th Class
	EXAM FOR	BACC I		11th Class
	Terminale 18 years old	Terminale 18 years old		
EXAM FOR HSC	EXAM FOR BACC II	EXAM FOR BACC II		EXAM

C. TERTIARY EDUCATION

* Technical College/Technical Institutes:

- Institute of Technology
- Institute of Nursing and Midwifery
- Institute of Commerce etc...

* Universities

1. Phnom Penh University
Faculty of Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine,
Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Law and Economics,
Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Veterinary Surgery,
Faculty of Animal Husbandary.
2. Fine Arts University
Faculty of Music, Faculty of Ballet etc.
3. Battambang University
4. Kompong Chham University
5. Takeo-Kraties University

D. BUDDHIST SCHOOL: (for Monkhood)

They were taught English and Khmer in this school. After finishing lower levels, they could also continue their tertiary education.

E. PRIVATE SCHOOL:

Open to those who could not get a place in Public School through exams. They had to pay fees.

NOTE:

- * School leaving age was not set up.
- * Around about 1974, there were the first "BACC II" in Khmer language which was called "KHMERISATION".
- * There were two sessions per day:
Morning session from 7.30 am to 11.30 am
Afternoon session from 2.30 pm to 5.00 pm
- * During war time, students had their every day school hours shortened to give way to the other groups.
- * School Vacation -
Petit Vacance - 2 weeks in April (New Year Time)
Grand Vacance - 8 weeks in June-July (monsoon season).
- * Officially, we used to write the Surname first then the First Name.

WORKSHOP 3

Religion

Buddha's Teaching

The Three Major tenets of Theravada Buddhism (trilogy)

- the practice of regular devotion according to Buddhist doctrine: Dharma
- the belief in one's present conduct will determine a future incarnation: Karma
- the Buddhist clergy and community within which individuals may improve their Karma: Sangha.

The Precepts:

- No Killing living beings
- No taking what is not given (stealing)
- No wrong conduct in sexual relations (adultery)
- No false speech (lying)
- No intoxicating liquor confusing the mind (drinking alcohol)
- No food at the wrong time
- No dancing, singing, music and entertainment, wearing jewelry, smartening with perfume and cosmetics
- No luxurious or large bed

The Sansara - cycle of rebirth

Six states of transmigratory existence:
hell, hungry ghosts, animals, fighting spirits, men and heavenly beings.

We are all caught up in the cycle of rebirth:
born - age - ill - and death

WORKSHOP 4

Womens Issues

OUTLINE - prepared by Ravy Heng and Vannak Ing

- * General Role of Women
- * Education
- * Women's Health
 - Birth Control
 - Ante-natal Care
 - Child Birth
- * Divorce
- * Women in Cambodia Now
- * Women in Australia

NOTES ON WOMEN'S ISSUES - prepared by Ravy Heng

The legal head of a Cambodian family is the husband, but from my observations, the wife's authority is almost equal. She has a voice in all household affairs. It is generally the wife who controls the family budget as there was no banking system commonly used in Cambodia.

In most rural families, the husband undertakes most of the outside work while the wife looks after the house and the children. As the norm, the woman is expected to be a virgin until marriage and advice on sex education is given by a mother or a respected elderly person on their wedding night, with further education being given by the husband. Consequently, some Khmer women demonstrate little knowledge of many aspects of contraception, pregnancy and birth.

Education

There are two categories in education.

Women in the city:

- have a high education
- more independent
- obtain more professional status

Women in rural areas:

- have less education
- get married early (mostly arranged marriages)
- more dependent on the husband

Women's Health

Birth Control

In Cambodia, birth control is not generally used, though it has become available. To be single meant to be a virgin, and married women welcomed large families. In Australia, the women accept contraception, because of financial and accommodation problems. Withdrawal and condoms are not commonly used methods, because of the rejection from

the husband. Many women take the pill, but often without knowing how it works. Instructions need to be repeated a few times through an interpreter as women are likely to nod or say they understand to be polite. Abortion was unthinkable in our home country, but here some women learn that they can get it easily, so do not use contraception. (Explain religious reasons about abortion - reincarnation).

Ante-Natal Care

In Cambodia, some women in the city would probably not see a doctor until the fifth or sixth month, and women in rural areas not at all because the health care system was not introduced. Therefore when they present to the labour ward, there is no medical record on them. This complicates the cases during labour.

In Australia, women will come early for a check, partly to book the bed.

Child Birth

During the birth process, it is believed that due to the loss of blood women become weak and cold. Water use is reduced to a minimum. There should be no shower or bath when one is recovering from birth. Slowly burning charcoal is placed underneath her bed. The purpose of the fire is to warm her up, to stimulate the blood circulation in order to reduce blood clots. She is not allowed to go out of the house for at least one month. Sauna can be done by herb steam bath. 99% of women breast feed. During the time after a birth, women eat food with a lot of pepper and ginger, and drink a specially prepared wine containing ginger and herbs to keep the body warm. Women also cover their bodies completely with stockings, turbans and warm clothes, even in hot weather.

For those who had access to their local town, post-natal medical check up was usually conducted by private midwife or GP. Unfortunately for those who couldn't afford private services, post natal check ups are not done.

In Australia, women expect the support person to stay with them while they stay in the post natal ward.

Divorce

Divorce is rare, but uncomplicated. It is legalized by a letter endorsed by a magistrate and granted without difficulty. However, one party does get blamed and this blame is documented in the legal paper. The eldest child is given to the father and the other children go to the mother.

In Australia, the number of divorces is increasing because women who are suffering from chronic domestic violence are now seeking their rights and seeking advice from professionals on how to deal with their problem.

Back in Cambodia, the cause of the family breakdown is usually blamed on women. Gradually the attitude of Khmer in our community towards family break down or divorce is changing, and women can get their support from the new society.

Women in Cambodia Now

As a result of the war, 75% of the population in Cambodia are women. This means that household are often headed by women and women are sole supporters of families. This must have an effect on the society and culture.

Women in Australia

Here in Australia, Cambodian women have a lot of knowledge and understanding about their rights. This can sometimes actually cause a problem with their husbands and the knowledge can lead to a domestic problem because men feel they are being denigrated.

Although Cambodian Women often do understand their rights in this society, because of the reputation of the family, they usually feel reluctant to identify a marriage problem.

In this area, they still need a lot of help from social welfare workers.

WORKSHOP 5

Adolescent Issues

WORKSHOP 6

The change and roles of Khmer elderly people

ROLE OF THE ELDERLY IN CAMBODIA - prepared by Min Hauv Yorth

OUTLINE:

In Cambodia

- * Social Power/Influence
- * Economic Influence
- * Cultural Influence

In Australia

- * Social Role
- * Economic
- * Culture

How to Tackle the Problem.

NOTES:

- * Social Power/Influence
 - Status - position in the family
 - Power - influence over the family
influence over the community
e.g. in a village or rural community
 - Respect - decision maker (arrange of children and conflict resolution) elderly people have a role in sorting out or assisting with family problems.

- * Economic Influence

Higher class elderly people

- Give financial assistance to children and control over the money in the family.
- Some don't control the money in the family

Lower class elderly

They were entirely supported by children for all costs.
providing physical support, psychological support, and have activities to involve in -
making craft, and farming.

- * Cultural Influence

- They are the story tellers in community
- Respect is given to the elder generation, because they are old
- Expert in cultural ceremonies, functions in the family and community.
- Information giver about culture

In Australia

* Social

- Experience of torture and trauma and loss of close family and relatives and property may have a severe affect on elderly people.
- Breaking up of family due to migration leaves elderly feeling hopeless.
- Loss of status, power
- Opinions clash
- Advises and wishes challenged
- Role changed (Look after grandchildren)

* Economic

- No longer control over money in family (government assistance)

* Culture

- Loss of control over the second generation due to strong pressure by the new society to assimilate and to abandon their culture.
- Language problems
- Culture clashes

However, life in Australia brings much joy as well as stress, and the awareness of these issues can assist in planning for services provided to elderly, so that they can become more self sufficient and cope with their problems.

CONCLUSION

How to tackle the problem here

Community Welfare Support Mechanisms

- * Provide direct and indirect services to elderly people in coping with family problems.
- * Establish English classes for elderly people.
- * Provided days/weekend excursion
- * Plan to apply government fund to build elderly houses/village.
- * Cambodian Temple at Bonnyrigg.
- * Promote social interaction among elderly people.

WORKSHOP 7

Social Classes in Khmer Society

prepared by Sovannarand Kay and Phiny Ung

Between the 9th and 15th centuries, Cambodia was observed to have received a very strong influence from Indian culture, especially in the division of its social classes. In fact, Khmer society at that time, was divided into four classes and they were as follows:

1. THE ROYALTY/ARISTOCRACY

This refers to the Royal family who was considered as "GOD" and always considered as the leader of the country. People from other classes could never mix with members of this particular group. with the exception of the elite. Those who intended to break this restriction would face a death sentence. In some cases, the punishment would involve execution of members of their family.

2. THE ELITE

This refers to high ranking government officials, very rich business entrepreneurs and religious leaders. As stated above, the elite could in some cases, be mixed with the aristocracy.

3. THE MIDDLE CLASS

People from this class were observed to be rich and conservative. They were also known as the nobled. Wealthy farmers and land-lords weere also included in this group. It should be noted that the integration of this group into the elite was acceptable.

4. THE SLAVE

Generally, this refers to very poor people who sold their labour to survive. They were never allowed to integrate into other classes. They were put in the market for sale by their owners and they had to serve their masters (owners) from generation to generation. Regardless of how much they earned, their social class would remain unchanged.

However, the Khmer society was gradually developed and reformed because of other cultural influences. By the 18th century slavery was not officially accepted anymore. The boundaries between the other three classes did not seem to be obvious. The French colonisation which had begun in Vietnam extended into Cambodia and in 1861 a protectorate was established.

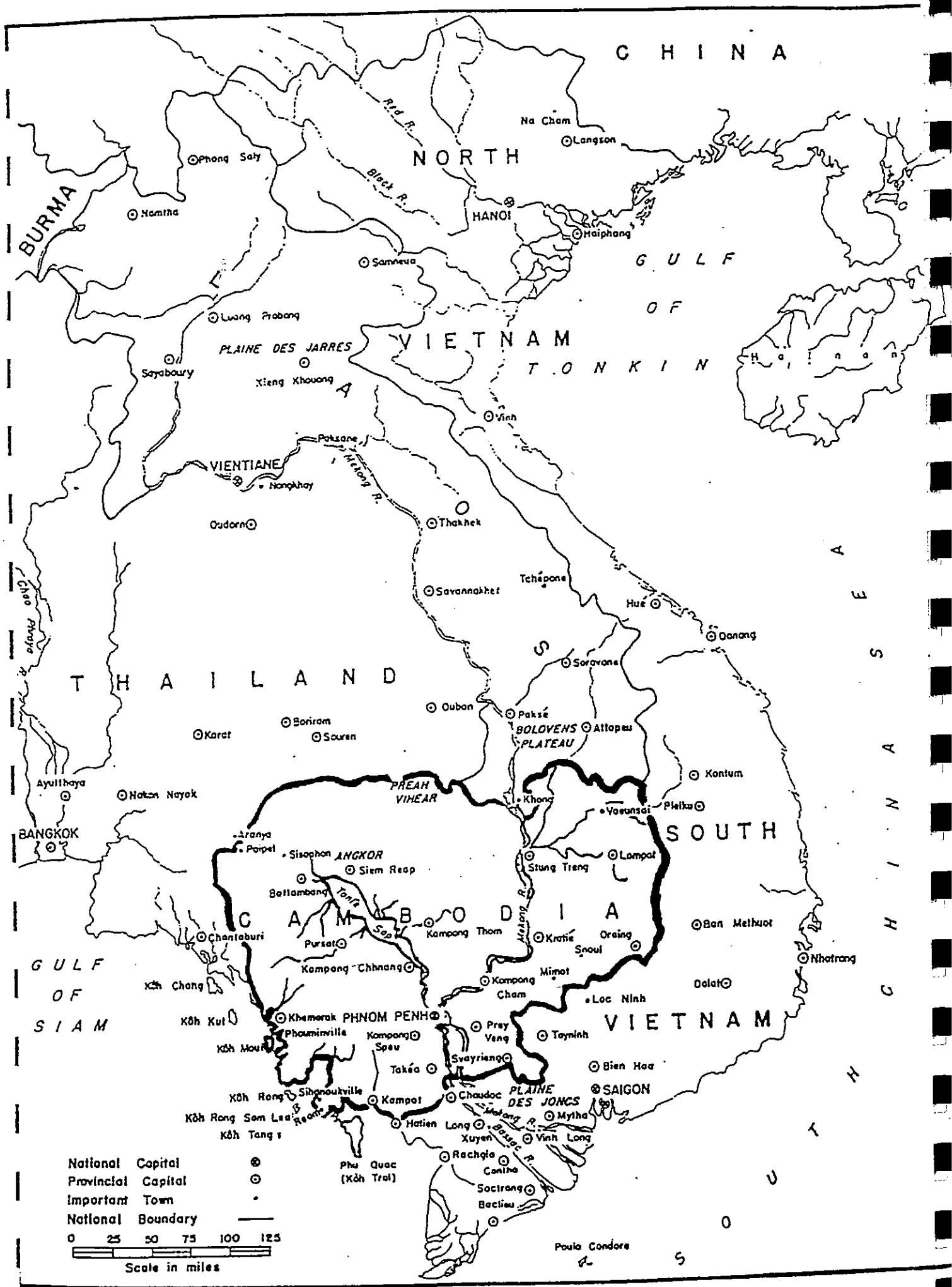
The position of the King became largely symbolic, with the French government ruling through a parallel administration. The French culture and way of life began to exert its influence and French became the official language. Since then, the interaction between classes has increased and now they are known as:

High Class
Middle Class
and Underprivileged Class

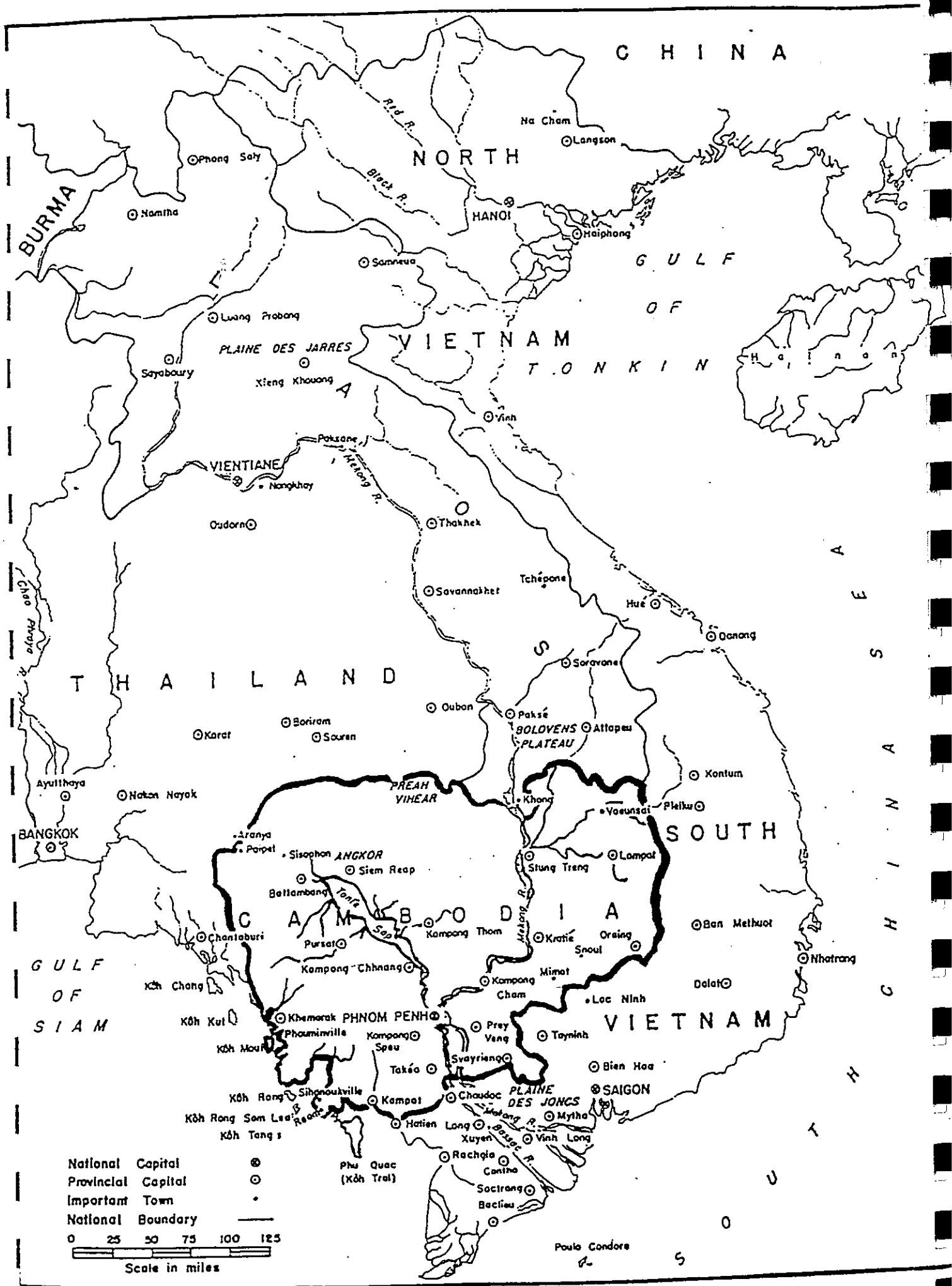
People from the underprivileged class can integrate into the other two classes by having high education (or graduate from a school overseas). This means that members of any social class can have access to employment, or can marry members of other groups without being restricted by social rules or conditions.

WORKSHOP 8

Can Western & Khmer Partnership Help Khmer Suffering



Cambodia in Indochina. (Adapted from "Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam," Service Géographique de l'Indochine, 1933)



Cambodia in Indochina. (Adapted from "Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam," Service Géographique de l'Indochine, 1933)