

Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
Interview transcript

Interviewer: Herbert Karugaba

Interviewee: Mr. KIM Vun (គីម វ៉ុន)

Interview date: 25 July 2009



(Transcription of part of the tape recording D201/10R)

Question (Q)-Answer (A)

[01:05:09]-[01:05:32]

Q: In that regime, did your family have any contacts with Pàng (ប៉ង), the chairman? Did you have any other contacts (inaudible)?

A: Actually, Pàng assembled many people and sent them to work in the Center. He had a plan. My family members who were sent to work in Kampong Thom province went there through him.

Q: Did you experience the same situation?

A: No. I was in the group from Kampong Speu.

[02:25:19]-[02:38:13]

[02:25:19]

Q: You just stated that insects such as ants would be killed when there was a fight between the elephants. So, he wants to ask a question referring to that: So then, KHIEU Samphan was probably an elephant, since he had a very senior position. Can you recall if Mr. KHIEU Samphan made official speeches in any functions he attended? Did he attend meetings with Pol Pot? Similarly, did NUON Chea ever deliver speeches? Did he attend meetings with Pol Pot? Or did you know the activities of both these people who were the elephants?

A: It seemed to me that KHIEU Samphan was an elephant. Handicapped, you might say, with no limbs, no strength, no forces.

Q: Why? He was the Head of State. How could he be a handicapped elephant while he was in such a capacity?

A: As I was always with him during National United Front. I never saw any power originate from KHIEU Samphan. Yes, I am speaking the truth.

[02:26:42]

Q: (Interpreter) you were with him?

A: Power ... I was with him during the National United Front era.

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Q: (Interpreter) From which year to which year?

A: In 1971.

Q: (Interpreter) from ... after 1979?

A: No. It was in 1971.

Q: (Interpreter) In 1971?

A: While I was with him during the National United Front era, I never saw him have any power. That was why I said although he was a big elephant, he was like an elephant with a broken leg: an elephant that had no power. In this regard, I knew the background of KHIEU Samphan, had studied and had heard brother(s) tell stories since 1967-68, because my siblings were also government workers in Phnom Penh. They often talked about KHIEU Samphan. In those days, speaking about the Sihanouk authorities, KHIEU Samphan was seen as a victim.

Q: (Interpreter) Yes. Let us talk about that era ...

A: But in Pol Pot era, he was also seen as a victim.

Q: (Interpreter) Why do you say he was a victim?

A: And in the era of fighting the Yuon, he seemed to be a victim, since he had no power.

Q: (Interpreter) Why did he have no power?

A: From what I knew since the war time, I saw that even during in the 3-year regime, that KHIEU Samphan, for example, was an organizer for transporting supplies to the bases.

Q: (Interpreter) Oh! During the three-year regime?

A: Yes. For example, a visit was made by the President of Laos or someone at the presidential level, he went to welcome them, for instance the President of Laos or whoever. Furthermore, when Samdech Sihanouk was in the Royal Palace or PÈN Nuth was in the Royal Palace and wished to make a trip somewhere, I used to see KHIEU Samphan accompanying them. However, I did not know if he attended any meetings. But that was his work in the regime of 3 years and 8 months.

Q: (Interpreter) How did you know KHIEU Samphan was tasked to transport supplies to Zones and Sectors, and to meet the presidents?

A: I knew some people in charge of transportation, the convoys to the bases.

Q: (Interpreter) So you knew the transporters? How did you learn about welcoming the President of Laos? How did you learn that? Did you hear it from someone, or did you witness it?

A: No. [I] went to welcome the president too at the airport at ...

Q: (Interpreter) Did you go and welcome them too?

A: I did.

Q: (Interpreter) Did you go with KHIEU Samphan?

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- A: Yes, I did. When there was a visit of a leader from other countries, we, the ministries/offices people, normally went to welcome them.
- Q: (Interpreter) Yes. And you stated that when Samdech Sihanouk and Mr. PEN Nuth went somewhere, they were accompanied by KHIEU Samphan. How did you learn this?
- A: Oh! I saw him going to the bases. Whenever I went to get information, I always met him.
- Q: (Interpreter) You met and saw ... ?
- A: The people I met included KHIEU Samphan and his wife, and Samdech Ta [Sihanouk] and Samdech Yeay [Sihanouk's wife].
- Q: (Interpreter) Did he go to the bases? Did you meet him at that time?
- A: He went. He, for example, he went to the cooperatives Samdech wished to visit. They were around Phnom Penh. I always met ... that's why I said ...
- Q: (Interpreter) But did you go there with KHIEU Samphan and his wife?
- A: That's right.
- Q: (Interpreter) But can you recall which year you him in your capacity as a journalist?
- A: Often went there.
- Q: (Interpreter) You saw him frequently?
- A: That's right.
- Q: (Interpreter) Let me interpret this first.
- A: Yes. It was very frequent that KHIEU Samphan accompanied Samdech on trips to the bases.

[02:31:00]

(The interpreter interpreted the questions for the international investigator)

[02:33:56]

- Q: You said that you went to visit the cooperatives together with KHIEU Samphan and his wife, Samdech Sihanouk, and PEN Nuth. Did you go there because you were assigned to collect information and write articles for the newspapers?
- A: I collected information, but I did not know the plans...
- Q: (Interpreter) But, you collected information to be published in newspapers, magazines, correct?
- A: Yes. But I did not collect information from the trips. I did not collect information from the trips made by Samdech or KHIEU Samphan. However, I went get information from the bases and sometimes accidentally met them.
- Q: (Interpreter) You did not go with them?

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A: No, I met them accidentally. I did not go to collect information from their activities. It was a kind of visit. I visited! As part of the newspapers, I collected information, took photographs.

[02:35:17]

Q: You said you saw KHIEU Samphan and his wife accompanying Samdech Sihanouk and PÈN Nuth to the cooperatives. Did you often see them, based on your recollection? How many times did you see them?

A: I cannot remember how often I met them, but I met them many times.

Q: Approximately how many times?

A: Many times, but I do not remember. I often met them by chance.

Q: Where did you meet them? How often? Which provinces? When did you meet them?

A: I often met them around Phnom Penh. They made trips to the nearby areas. Samdech went there to relax. The trips were not official ones. [He] often accompanied Samdech when Samdech was on trips to relax.

Q: (Interpreter) In nearby areas?

A: Areas around Phnom Penh

[02:36:15]

Q: Now, you saw them many times: Where did you see them? Can you recall? Which areas?

A: [I] saw them around Phnom Penh...

Q: In Kandal?

A: provinces near Phnom Penh such as Takeo, Kandal. Most of the time, [Samdech] relaxed in the Royal palace. He took trips away to relax. They were not official trips.

Q: At that time in such regime it was known that life was not easy in the cooperatives. Life was probably horrible. KHIEU Samphan probably saw such activities, correct? What do you think now?

A: I do not know. I do not know ...

Q: (Interpreter) But, do you think so? Do you think the same as what was said by the investigator? That at that time it was ...

A: I do not know what to think.

Q: ... Went to see, the difficult life in that regime ...

A: Mr. KHIEU Samphan, if he went along ...

Q: (Interpreter) KHIEU Samphan also went to see. Do you know if he saw such pitiful things?

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[02:37:43]

A: I do not know. I never went along with him to look. But I used to welcome guests with him. If speaking about when he accompanied Samdech, I do not know. Because in fact, in the initial plans of Democratic Kampuchea, Samdech was to be Chairman, Head of State, the State Presidium. But you know that Samdech transferred the post to KHIEU Samphan. Samdech gave his signature allowing KHIEU Samphan to be the State Presidium instead. But that was supposed to be held by Samdech Sihanouk! The person who did ...

[02:38:13]