

Documentation Center of Cambodia

Interview with IM ChaemChaem (អ៊ឹម ថៃម), female, 70 years old

Position in Khmer Rouge Regime: Preah Nejr Preah (ព្រះនេត្រព្រះ) district committee

Currently lives in Ou Angrae (អូរអង្រែ) village, Trapeang Tav (ឃុំត្រពាំងតាវ) commune,

Anlong Veang (អន្លង់វែង) district, Oddar Meanchey (ឧត្តរមានជ័យ) province.

Date of interview: 6 April 2012

Interviewer: LONG Dany (ឡុង ដានី)

02:41:10

69 pages (in Khmer)

Dany: My name is Dany and these two interviewers named Vannak (វណ្ណៈ) and Sovann

(សុវណ្ណ). Three of us are from the Documentation Center of Cambodia which is permitted by the ministry to compile and develop a tourist guide book about Anlong Veang. In order to write this book, we have to communicate and interview the villagers who used to be resistance fighters and after the Integration Period they built their homes in this area. Therefore, I would like to ask you about your resistance history, building new village and present-time life. Would you allow us to ask those questions?

Chaem: Yes, please.

Dany: So, first of all, could you please tell us about your name?

Chaem: I have had the same name, IM ChaemChaem.

Dany: IM ChaemChaem?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How old are you now?

Chaem: Entering this year, I am 70 year old.

Dany: 70 years old in this year?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Where was your birthplace?

Chaem: In Kbal Ou (ក្បាលអូរ) village, Cheang Torng (ជាងទង) commune, Tram Kak (ត្រាំកក) district, Takeo (តាកែវ).

Dany: In Kbal Ou village, Cheang Torng commune, Tram Kak district, Takeo. What is your husband's name?

Chaem: NOB Nhēn (ណុប ញ៉េន).

Dany: NOB Nhēn?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How old is he?

Chaem: He is 70 years old.

Dany: 70 years old like you?

Chaem: He is 4 years older than me; so, he is 74 years old now.

Dany: 74 years old?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How many children do you have?

Chaem: I have 8 children in total; but 4 are dead, only 4 are living.

Dany: 8 in total, 4 are dead, right?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How many boys and girls among the 8?

Chaem: 6 boys, 2 girls.

Dany: 6 boys, 2 girls?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: So, what did your 4 children die of?

Chaem: They died of sickness when I was on mountain.

Dany: Were they sick while on mountain?

Chaem: Yes, malaria.

Dany: Malaria?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Were not there enough medicines or medics at that time?

Chaem: No.

Dany: So, 4 of them died on the mountain, didn't they?

Chaem: One died at my district where I travelled to work in various villages.

Dany: Oh, you did not have time to take care of your children, did you?

Chaem: No, I did not have time to take care of them until they died.

Dany: One died there and other tree died on the mountain also, right?

Chaem: To sum up, as a mother I did not have enough time to take care of them because I struggled for my nation and race.

Dany: Which village, commune and district do you live in?

Chaem: I live and I also raise an orphan up.

Dany: You raise one orphan up, don't you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Which village do you live in, currently?

Chaem: Ou Angrae village, Trapeang Tav commune, Anlong Veang district.

Dany: Trapeang Tav commune, Anlong Veang district in Oddar Meanchey province?

Chaem: Yes, Oddar Meanchey province.

Dany: What is your current occupation?

Chaem: I do farming, currently.

Dany: Do farming?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Do you have any other function?

Chaem: I used to work but now I retire already.

Dany: You used to be commune first deputy chief but now you retire, right?

Chaem: Yes, now I retire.

Dany: From when?

Chaem: When the term of office is ending in June or July, after the new election.

Dany: Then, your term will end, won't it?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Your term as Trapeang Tav commune first deputy chief will end in coming June, won't it?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: The election will take place in June; then, you will no longer work for the commune, will you?

Chaem: That's right.

Dany: What is your father's name?

Chaem: Iv (ឥវីវ).

Dany: What is his surname?

Chaem: EACH Iv (អ៊ាច ឥវីវ).

Dany: Did he pass away a long time ago?

Chaem: He just passed away 2 years ago at the age of 92.

Dany: Oh, he had a very long life, didn't he?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Where did he pass away? In Anlong Veang or elsewhere?

Chaem: He passed away in Malai (ម៉ាលៃ). He lived with his other children in Malai.

Dany: With your younger siblings in Malai?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about your mother?

Chaem: My biological mother passed away since I was 10 years old.

Dany: She passed away since you were 10 years old, didn't she?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What was her name?

Chaem: She took her father's name Chum (ជុំ) to be her surname.

Dany: Chum?

Chaem: Yes, CHUM Chim (ជុំ ជីម).

Dany: CHUM Chim. Did your father marry another wife?

Chaem: He remarried when I reached maturity.

Dany: What is her name?

Chaem: My step-mother's name was PECH Koeun (ពេជ កៀន). She was very kind. I took care of her until she passed away. Today is her 100th day funeral ceremony.

Dany: Oh, she also passed away, didn't she?

Chaem: Yes, she passed away last year.

Dany: Passed away?

Chaem: I am preparing her 100th day ceremony.

Dany: After this *Pachai Buon* (ប្រថុយបួន) ceremony, will you also prepare a 100th day ceremony for her in Malait?

Chaem: Yes, in Malai with my younger siblings.

Dany: How many siblings do you have?

Chaem: There are 8 siblings (including me); but one just passed away this year at this house.

Dany: 8 siblings, how many females/males?

Chaem: 5 females (including me).

Dany: 5 females including you and how many males?

Chaem: Only 3 males.

Dany: Are all of your siblings dead?

Chaem: Only my younger ones.

Dany: There are 8 siblings. Are all of the 8 alive?

Chaem: 8 of us are alive. But two died during the war. In total, there were 10.

Dany: 10 in total, but two died during the war. Were they male or female?

Chaem: They were male.

Dany: You said one just passed away. Was she/he younger or older than you?

Chaem: Younger, the one after me.

Dany: How many are alive nowadays?

Chaem: Only 7.

Dany: ??

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about the one whose house is opposite yours? Is she/he your younger?

Chaem: Yes. But she/he just passed away.

Dany: So, there are only 7, right?

Chaem: Yes, 7. But 6 live in Malai, only one here.

Dany: Only you here?

Chaem: Yes. Before that, there were 2. But now, one passed away and only one is alive.

Dany: So, there are 6 in Malai, aren't there?

Chaem: Yes, 6.

Dany: Where are you in your family?

Chaem: I'm the first child.

Dany: The eldest?

Chaem: Yes, I'm the eldest.

Dany: Did you attend any school, where you were young?

Chaem: Yes, when I was 7 years old, I attended a school in pagoda.

Dany: At the age of 7, you attended a pagoda school, right?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What grade did you study up to?

Chaem: I studied up to Grade 10 in the old education system.

Dany: Grade 10 in the old education system. When you were young, did you ever wish to study up to a certain level?

Chaem: I wished to study as much as I could. But when my mother passed away, I quitted school. I could read and write from the time when our government created literacy program. At that time, I started from Grade 12 up to Grade 10 (of the old society education system) and so until I could read and write.

Dany: Which year?

Chaem: I started the school since [19]63.

Dany: At that time, were you already good at reading and writing?

Chaem: Yes, I could read and write.

Dany: When you studied at the pagoda school, could you read and write yet?

Chaem: Not yet. I could only finish the basic alphabets; and after I finished basic vowels, I started to spell some words.

Dany: So, you could only read and write when you attended the literacy program, right?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: At that time, did you ever think that education was important, especially when you were young and until you attended school later on?

Chaem: I thought it must be important for myself: only we could read and write that we could understand many things.

Dany: Only when you read and write, right?

Chaem: Yes, if we can read and write, we can read books such as novels, poems and so on. At that time I read *Grandfather* Ngoy's (ឡើយ) books.

Dany: *Grandfather* KRAM Ngoy (ក្រម ឡើយ)?

Chaem: Yes. He composed and shared his poems in various villages. I read and memorised them all. I also read Chinese and Vietnamese stories, about the resistances in previous regimes and what to do when the war occurred. When I could read, the elderly people were also happy and supported me because they knew that I had broad knowledge. They liked me so much.

Dany: When you had children, did you encourage them to study or show them how important the education was?

Chaem: Yes, I did.

Dany: Did you?

Chaem: Yes. Since [19]82, [19]83, I made my children study in the jungle even if we stayed there for one or two months, I still tried to find a teacher for them. And I received people from 2-3 villages as well as soldiers' wives. I built up a school wherever I went so that my and their children could study.

Dany: How? Did you build schools?

Chaem: We called people in a meeting and asked them to build a school.

Dany: When you called people to build a school, was there any teacher?

Chaem: Yes, there was.

Dany: Where was the teacher from?

Chaem: The teacher was also my relative who had studied up to Grade 7 in the previous regime and became a teacher since then. He just passed away and we

prepared 100th funeral ceremony for him on the 5th day of the waning moon in Preah Vihear (ព្រះវិហារ). I also attended it.

Dany: What was his name?

Chaem: Nhoeun (ញ៉ែន).

Dany: Nhoeun?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did he also teach during the war and when you were on Puok (ពួក) Mountain?

Chaem: Yes, he always taught students, even his children. After the collapse, he went to take his father in Preah Vihear to teach as well.

Dany: Was his father also teacher?

Chaem: Yes, he taught adults.

Dany: Did he teach them only to read and write?

Chaem: Yes, only read and write until we had a stable place organized by Ta Mok (តាម៉ុក). When he saw that we built school and arranged teachers and students, he liked it and supported some clothes and so on.

Dany: When you were young and studied up to Grade 10, what did you do after quitting school?

Chaem: When my mother died, I quitted school and to run business to support my younger siblings until my father remarried; and then I married. Even though I quitted school, I could read and write.

Dany: When you quitted school, did you run business and support your younger siblings until you married?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: When did you marry?

Chaem: I married in [19]65.

Dany: To your husband?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How did both of you marry? Could you please explain more about how he proposed to you?

Chaem: He was also my relative. My father was my father-in-law's younger cousin. When he saw me, he got pitiful of me. When he came to discuss with my father, father agreed and suggested to build a house because at that time we had to have a house.

Dany: So, it meant that your husband had to own a house before coming to propose to you, didn't he?

Chaem: Yes, we only married with that condition. My mother-in-law proposed to me since I was 12 years, but I married at the age of 19.

Dany: Did you marry at the age of 19?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did he afford to build a house?

Chaem: Yes, he did.

Dany: Did he?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: After having a house, both of them married, didn't you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: You married in [19]65, didn't you?

Chaem: Yes, in [19]65.

Dany: What did you do for a living after the wedding?

Chaem: We did farming.

Dany: In that Kbal Ou village or did you move to other villages?

Chaem: One year after the wedding, my father-in-law passed away and we left my mother-in-law to earn a living at the mountain in Kampong Speu (កំពង់ស្ពឺ).

Dany: What was that mountain called?

Chaem: Dăch (ដាច់) Mountain, it had been formerly called Ta Oam (តាអំរី).

Dany: Ta Oam Mountain?

Chaem: Yes, but at that time, it was called Dăch Mountain.

Dany: Dăch Mountain?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What did you do there?

Chaem: To clear the forest for farming.

Dany: To clear the forest?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: During the 1960s, weren't there many people at the mountain in Kampong Speu doing farming and were there many free lands for farming?

Chaem: Yes, Ta Oam village was very large and I lived near it on a large field. There were 10 families going there. But now all of them died, except me.

Dany: Were all of the 10 families from Kbal Ou village?

Chaem: Yes, all of us were from Kbal Ou village.

Dany: Did all of the 10 families do farming?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: In which year?

Chaem: From [19]65, [19]66, [19]67 and in [19]68, the clashes took place for the first time.

Dany: So, in [19]66, when you were at Ta Oam/Däch Mountain, did you still do farming as usual?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Didn't you join the revolution yet?

Chaem: No, not yet. There was little land and we had to do farming.

Dany: Did you do farming after clearing the forest in Ta Oam?

Chaem: Yes, we had surplus of cassava and maize. We sold them with other villages for a year. 2 years later, the clashes occurred and the Khmer Rouge was born.

Dany: Where did the clashes occur?

Chaem: First, I was told it occurred in Battambang (បាត់ដំបង).

Dany: In Samlout (សំឡូត)?

Chaem: Yes. Then, since I lived near other villagers, I saw soldiers, not yet everywhere, recruiting the Khmer Rouge resistance fighters.

Dany: Did the soldiers arrest them?

Chaem: Yes, one of my younger brothers was also arrested?

Dany: In which did the clashes start and did they start to...?

Chaem: In [19]68.

Dany: In [19]68?

Chaem: Yes, the end of [19]68 entering [19]69.

Dany: When the arrest occurred, where was your younger sibling arrested and taken to?

Chaem: In a place called Veal Lumhach (វាលលំបាច) at the mountain.

Dany: At Däch Mountain?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: In the village where you cleared the land to do farming?

Chaem: No. He delivered documents from Takeo to Kampong Speu and then he returned to a place where our comrades used to live in a house. When they ran away, the soldiers went up to that house hiding and waiting there.

Dany: At the house where you stayed?

Chaem: Yes, and they arrested him as soon as he arrived there. I saw that but also wondered about that. I saw when they walked him away along the field. At around 8

p.m., those two who walked behind them ran back. Then, my younger brother, who was bigger than others, was arrested.

Dany: How many people were arrested?

Chaem: Only one, only my younger brother. When he was arrested, they found a letter at the edge of his shirt. Then, he was detained at Trapeang Kraloeng (ត្រពាំងក្រឡឹង) Prison for a week. Later, a detainee was released and told me that my younger had been killed by tying him against a tree and cutting open his belly.

Dany: Were they the soldiers on Samdech's (សម្តេច) side?

Chaem: No, Lon Nol's.

Dany: What was your younger brother's name?

Chaem: His name was IM Y (អ៊ឹម អ៊ី).

Dany: Was IM Y after you?

Chaem: He was the third child.

Dany: So, you had a first younger sibling and he was the second one, wasn't he?

Chaem: Yes, he was the third child.

Dany: How did he deliver letters and was he arrested?

Chaem: He delivered the communication from one commune to another.

Dany: Who did he stay with and made him deliver the letters from one commune to another?

Chaem: He was with Ta Mok (តាម៉ុក).

Dany: Was he with Ta Mok?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Was he close to Ta Mok?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How could the soldiers know that he ran away?

Chaem: There was a village spy.

Dany: Did the spy tell them?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did it happen in [19]68 or which year?

Chaem: In [19]68.

Dany: Did you work with Ta Mok yet, at that time?

Chaem: No, I only knew him.

Dany: Did you only know him?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: You did not work with him yet, did you?

Chaem: No, but when he saw my younger brother a good boy, he made him his messenger.

Dany: Where did Ta Mok live at that time?

Chaem: He also lived in the village, but he travelled a lot from one place to another.

Dany: Did he live in the same village with you?

Chaem: Yes, he lived there too, but he was not well-known yet.

Dany: At that time, you did not work with him yet, did you?

Chaem: No.

Dany: After your younger brother was arrested, detained at Trapeang Kraloeng (ត្រពាំងក្រឡឹង) and killed by cutting open his belly, they found a letter. What was that letter about?

Chaem: It was about the leaders' meeting.

Dany: Oh about their meeting. What happened after your younger brother was killed?

Chaem: That was when coup d'état erupted. But entering [19]69, I returned to my birthplace and was arrested.

Dany: Who was arrested?

Chaem: I was arrested and detained at *Angkar* (អង្គការ) Station.

Dany: Did *Angkar* Station belong to Lon Nol's soldiers?

Chaem: Yes, it belonged to Lon Nol's. They said only me who was detained there, but my husband and our children separated from me.

Dany: What were you accused of?

Chaem: I was accused of being a member of Khmer rebel or bandit.

Dany: Bandit?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Was it because at that time you were with Ta Mok, weren't you?

Chaem: Yes, but they labelled this name such as bandit or Khmer rebel. Later on, it was renamed Khmer Rouge.

Dany: Were you arrested by *Angkar*?

Chaem: They arrested and detained me there so that my husband might contact me.

Dany: When you were detained, did your husband contact you?

Chaem: No.

Dany: How long were you detained?

Chaem: Until [19]70, when the coup d'état erupted, I was moved away.

Dany: From that place?

Chaem: Yes, from that place to another.

Dany: For how long?

Chaem: More than a year.

Dany: One year?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: During your one-year detention, did they do anything to you, for instance, torture or interrogate you?

Chaem: They interrogated me asking if my husband contact me, but I said no. Later on, he went there once, but they kept asking me. However, I still said that we never contacted.

Dany: Was your husband detained there too?

Chaem: He went to live in the jungle.

Dany: Did he go to live in the jungle?

Chaem: Yes, he was already in the jungle.

Dany: So, during your detention, were you ever persecuted or maltreated?

Chaem: They just threatened me.

Dany: How did they threaten?

Chaem: They asked about my husband but I said I did not know his whereabouts. They said I did not need to lie. Then, they asked if I dare to swear.

Dany: Did you dare to swear?

Chaem: It was when people from Ang Ta Saom district went there.

Dany: The soldiers from Ang Ta Saom district?

Chaem: Yes. They browbeat me. Later on, they persuaded me by asking what I did for a living and supporting my two children. I said how I could support my children while I was detained there. If they let me go, I could continue supporting my children. I am also good at verbally arguing.

Dany: What did they do when you said like that?

Chaem: Then, they said that they had a theatre and asked me to sell flowers or dance there to earn money for my children. I said I could not dance; only if I was allowed to doing farming that I could support my children. They said if I did not want to dance, I just stood and sold flowers there and they would suggest more soldiers to buy them from me. When I still refused, they took me to the commune chief's house. But I still refused, they also went back. Then, the commune chief said that next time, I would not follow them and if they still threatened me I could always go to him because all of them were under his authority. And if I saw someone carrying coconuts or vegetable to give those soldiers, I should not give anything to them and let them die.

Dany: What was the name of that commune chief?

Chaem: Chim (ជីម).

Dany: Chim?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Was he the commune chief under Lon Nol?

Chaem: At that time, he was under Samdech [Prince Sihanouk].

Dany: Did he help you for he was commune chief under Samdech?

Chaem: He helped me a lot because we were neighbours. But he also helped everyone in the district.

Dany: Which commune was he the chief of?

Chaem: He was the chief of Chean Torng (ជ្រាំងទ្រង់) commune.

Dany: Cheang Torng commune chief?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did he also help you?

Chaem: Yes, he did.

Dany: At that time, how many children did you have?

Chaem: 2.

Dany: Were they boys or girls?

Chaem: This one is the eldest and another one is dead now.

Dany: At that time, when you were detained and your husband fled into the jungle, where did you leave your children?

Chaem: I left them with my aunt in my birthplace. Then after a few days, I asked for their permission to go back and get one child to live with me. When I ran out of food, I asked them to go back and get some and meet my children there. My life was so miserable.

Dany: Were you detained there until the coup d'état in [19]70?

Chaem: Yes, in [19]70, after the coup d'état, I joined the resistance with them and I was called a market spy. First, I went to ask for his permission to come back but he refused. I said my children did not have anything to eat and even though he did not allow me to go, I still had to do it. He said I should not get angry with him. I said I was not angry but I had to go back home because my children did not have anything to eat. Then, he agreed to release me. Soon after that, the coup d'état erupted.

Dany: So it meant that you were detained before the coup d'état, weren't you?

Chaem: About half of a month before that.

Dany: What happened when you arrived home?

Chaem: When I arrived there I did farming like other people in order to support my two children until [19]71. Then, those who fled into the jungle in [19]70 secretly

returned back into the village. Those people who knew me came to ask me to join in their resistance, but I did not go back to my birthplace; instead, I went to Kampong Speu. In [19]72, Ta Mok asked to meet me in Takeo.

Dany: Did he ask to meet you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What happened in [19]71?

Chaem: In [19]71, I was suggested to run a labour-exchange collective in my village because they knew that I could resist and claim this or that. They thought I was mature. So, I set up groups in the collective to exchange labour in farming one day for each person. Then, I could call for a meeting.

Dany: Could you call for a meeting?

Chaem: (laughing) Yes, I could and the adult people liked it; and when there was a festival or ceremony, I was responsible for collecting their contributions such as rice, vegetables, salt, *Prahok* (*preserved fish*), and so on. They were good at solidarity.

Dany: Did you start the labour-exchange collective right in Kbal Ou village, Cheang Torng commune?

Chaem: First, I started only one in Kbal Ou village.

Dany: First in Kbal Ou village?

Chaem: Yes. In [19]71, I created it in all villages of Cheang Torng commune. Then, *Angkar* was established and I was in charge of the female unit.

Dany: Which year of the [19]70s were you in charge of female unit?

Chaem: [19]72.

Dany: A while ago you have said that in [19]72 Ta Mok asked to meet you. Was it so?

Chaem: He asked to meet my husband, Nhēn, not me. My husband fled into the jungle in [19]70. When everyone went to look for their family in the district, he escaped to Kampong Speu while I was in Takeo. I met him again in [19]72.

Dany: Did he go to the district?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did he ask for Ta Mok's permission to go?

Chaem: Ta Mok went there to get him back.

Dany: Did Ta Mok go there to get him back?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did Ta Mok go there to get him back to meet you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Why did not he agree to come back to his birthplace?

Chaem: He followed the organization of *Angkar* over there. Ta Mok said he asked them to let my husband to meet me. When he came back, he was no loner allowed to go back.

Dany: Did he live with you since then?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: So, in [19]72, when you joined with *Angkar* and were in charge of female unit, did your husband live with you yet?

Chaem: Not yet. He was in the male unit, which was the force used for leading young men to resist against Lon Nol's soldiers at their barracks. So, at that time, he was in charge of the male unit and educated them at the rear line. And I went from one village to another.

Dany: While you were in charge of female unit, did you still live in the same village or not?

Chaem: No, I left for the female unit already.

Dany: Where was that female unit?

Chaem: First, in sewing unit. Later on, I went to the female unit, when women were evacuated and left there. I was in charge of educating them. I was not good at public speaking. So, I just talked about our solidarity, they should not split or conflict would occur, like the way the parents educate their children.

Dany: Not now?

Chaem: No.

Dany: Now, you are good at public speaking; but back then, you were not, were you?

Chaem: Not yet, but they listened to me because I was older than them.

Dany: Where was that unit located?

Chaem: Damrei Romeal (ដំរីរមាស) Mountain.

Dany: Right on that mountain?

Chaem: No, at its foot.

Dany: But it was not in the village, wasn't it?

Chaem: No.

Dany: Were there many people, at that time?

Chaem: There were 400 women. I was educated them not to run away. The male unit was in charge of educating men while female unit was women. And yes, no tricky or lazy people were involved.

Dany: Were those 300-400 women gathered from villages or districts?

Chaem: When the army attacked into their villages, the parents gave their children to our army because they loved the soldiers like their own children. So, they gave their children, boy or girl to the rear line.

Dany: Then, you were in charge of educating them, weren't you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Women were under you, while men under...?

Chaem: Men were under male unit?

Dany: Was your husband in charge of male unit?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did he also educate them?

Chaem: Yes, he did until...

Dany: In order to educate them, did you prepare by writing what you intended to say to them or just say whatever came up to your mind?

Chaem: We noted some points to say, for instance, point 1, point 2 and so on. But after we read them, we had to do the best in our speaking style. By the way, at that time, during the festivity, we listened to the monks' preaching which also talked about solidarity.

Dany: Did you also listen to monks' preaching, at that time?

Chaem: Yes, I liked to listen to it since I was very young when my grandmother took me to pagoda.

Dany: So, during the war in [19]68, [19]69, [19]70], [19]71, [19]72, did you still listen to the monks' preaching, go to pagoda like you used to do it before?

Chaem: Yes, I used to meet *Grangfather* Noeu (នោយ), the monk head of Trapeang Thum (ត្រែងពាំងធំ) Pagoda, who was in charge of the whole Tram Kak district.

Dany: Our present-time *Grangfather* Noeu?

Chaem: Yes, our present-time elderly *Grangfather* Noeu.

Dany: Does he currently live in Srah Chhouk (ស្រះឈូក)?

Chaem: Right at this Phsar Chas (ផ្សារចាស់) Market.

Dany: Where is Phsar Chas Market? Is it at Ou Chik (អូរជីក) Canal?

Chaem: North of the Ou Chik Canal.

Dany: I also used to go to that pagoda.

Chaem: Trapeang Thum Pagoda?

Dany: Yes, to Trapeang Thum Pagoda.

Chaem: He was the monk head because he had high education.

Dany: Was he in charge of the committee of Tram Kak district, at that time?

Chaem: Yes, from monks' side.

Dany: Monks' side?

Chaem: Yes, and mine.

Dany: Did you ever go to his pagoda?

Chaem: Yes, when I attended and gathered people to a meeting there. I sat with the elderly and he liked me very much. He asked and contacted me ever since.

Dany: How long were you at the female unit?

Chaem: For 2 years long. Then, from [19]72, [19]73, [19]74, I went to Angkor Chey (អង្គរជ័យ). After staying in Angkor Chey for 2 more years, I moved to Kaoh Andaet (កោះអណ្តែត).

Dany: At that time, it was in [19]74, the country did not collapse yet, did it?

Chaem: Not yet, the fighting was continuing.

Dany: Was the fighting intensified in Phnom Penh and did they almost enter the city?

Chaem: Yes, it was near the city.

Dany: Did the Khmer Rouge liberate Angkor Chey already?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Completely liberated?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Then, you were transferred from women's unit back to Angkor Chey, weren't you?

Chaem: Yes, all women were recruited to be soldiers.

Dany: Were they recruited to be soldiers?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did your husband go to Angkor Chey with you?

Chaem: Yes, he did.

Dany: Did you go together, not separated?

Chaem: Yes, we were together.

Dany: Did you have to face any obstacle or difficulty, when you were in Angkor Chey?

Chaem: There were some difficulties; but we felt better because we had our forces and supports from the people. But, it was difficult when people did not have enough food and we had to solve their problem by providing land for them to grow rice and other crops and to make fertilizer. We did not use chemical fertilizer like we are doing now. Instead, we made 1st and 2nd composts. And yes, we surely could produce 3 tonnes of rice per hectare.

Dany: 3 tonnes per hectares?

Chaem: Yes, from 3 to 4 tonnes with 1st and 2nd composts.

Dany: What was 1st fertilizer?

Chaem: It was made from our excrement.

Dany: How about 2nd fertilizer?

Chaem: It was made from *Tuntrean Khètr* (ទ្រព្យខ្មែរ) plant, termite nest mixed into each other.

Dany: Was it called 2nd fertilizer?

Chaem: Yes, 1st fertilizer was purely from our excrement. We took it from toilet of every house. It was our plan to do so for growing crops.

Dany: For your case, did you go to Angkor Chey by yourself or did Ta Mok arrange for you to go?

Chaem: He assigned me to supervise the people in that district.

Dany: How many people were assigned to supervise those reserved people?

Chaem: I was in charge of organizing the people right there.

Dany: Only you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about your husband?

Chaem: Yes, he also went there with me; but he did not travel as much as I did.

Dany: Were there any people to assist you?

Chaem: Yes, people from communes.

Dany: People from communes went to assist you, didn't they?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Regarding the method of rice cultivating such as how to fertilize and so, did you develop it by yourself or were there any trainings on, for instance, how to make 1st and 2nd fertilizers/composts so that you could increase your rice production?

Chaem: First, we asked those who knew about the rice cultivating technics from river bank.

Dany: Which river?

Chaem: From lower parts such as the farmers from Kaoh Andaet and Chamkar Leu (ចំការលើ). Then, we assigned one of them to be a chief.

Dany: A chief?

Chaem: Yes, he took his squad to cut *Tuntrean Khètr* plant. We divided into squads.

Dany: (*raining cats and dogs*) When you were in Kaoh Andaet, you started to farm rice and you said that you could produce 3 tonnes of rice per hectare, was that true?

Chaem: Yes, we could successfully improve the soil condition in Angkor Chey by fertilizing it a lot.

Dany: Did you fertilize it a lot?

Chaem: Yes, we did. There were at least 3-4 stock piles of 1st and 2nd fertilizers in every village. Other crops were also produced a lot more. When they saw such an achievement of mine, they transferred me to Kaoh Andaet.

Dany: So, the plan to produce 3 tonnes of rice per hectare was introduced since [19]75, wasn't it?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Was it?

Chaem: Yes, since [19]74, 75.

Dany: Where else was that 3-tonne-per-hectare plan from?

Chaem: From *Grandfather* POL Pot.

Dany: *Grandfather* POL Pot? But the method of rice cultivating and how to increase rice production were dependent upon each individual technique, or were there any trainings or instructions from upper echelon?

Chaem: The upper echelon only imposed the plan of how to make fertilizer, for instance, how much fertilizer could be made from one district per year. For rice cultivating, they observed the paddy fields to check how much 1st or 2nd fertilizer should be used per hectare. For my case, I could do that successfully.

Dany: Could you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Which units did the rice products supply to?

Chaem: We transported it to supply the army in Kampong Som (កំពង់សោម) and the evacuees, whom we liberated in [19]75. Then, I was transferred away.

Dany: The rice product was supplied to the army. Did you still supply the army, when the people were evacuated in [19]75?

Chaem: Yes, we supplied the army until the war was over. They produced rice by themselves; they also protected the people and could still supply their units.

Dany: So, where else did you supply the rice product to, since the army could afford themselves?

Chaem: We supplied only the evacuees from cities and provinces nationwide.

Dany: Didn't you supply to the sector or the centre?

Chaem: We supplied in case they requested, for instance, 100 tonnes of rice from each district.

Dany: Did you supply them?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: So, at that time, how much rice did they request per year?

Chaem: In my district, I had to supply 100 tonnes to the army. Then, we transported it to them.

Dany: Didn't you transport the rice by yourself?

Chaem: No, the requesting unit came to transport it.

Dany: For the remaining rice, did you distribute to the villagers? How much did each of them get?

Chaem: We distributed each person 10 *thaings* out of 15 *thaings* [*translator's explanation: 1 thaing is probably 30 kilogrammes*]. We distributed according to the number of people in one household. But, later on, all remaining rice was stored in the barn.

Dany: In the only one barn?

Chaem: Yes, they made this size of barn.

Dany: At that time, how many meals did you plan to provide the people per day?

Chaem: Like in the present time, they had 3 meals depending upon themselves. And we worked. Like my case, I did not discriminate any work and I also produced rice. I had my own rice barn.

Dany: While you were in Angkor Chey, weren't you?

Chaem: Yes, in Angkor Chey.

Dany: In Angkor Chey, did you set up the schedule for them to work, for instance, starting time, break time? Besides working in the rice paddy fields, did you assign them to work in the plantation or other work?

Chaem: Yes, I did. It was fixed that the starting time was 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Plus, I assigned them to work at their house from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 or 2:00 p.m.

Dany: What did they have to do at home?

Chaem: They grew other crops at home for them and their children to eat. I only tempered myself to work non-stop. I planted at least 5 clumps of cassava for two hours per day for my 5 children, because each of them would eat one clump. So, the place where I lived, no one was starved to death.

Dany: So, after fulfilling the work at home, what time did the rice cultivating start?

Chaem: From 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Dany: From 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What would they do when they finished the work?

Chaem: Then, they went back home and cooked for their children and themselves. One year after the cooperative in Preah Netr Preah (ព្រះនេត្រព្រះ) was organized, they also introduced that practice. No one had ever done that before.

Dany: While you were in Angkor Chey, did the people eat at their houses or at the cooperative?

Chaem: They ate at their houses.

Dany: Did they still eat at their houses in Angkor Chey?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did they only cultivate rice and not do other work?

Chaem: They only cultivated rice; but some also worked in the plantation. The elderly were in charge of light works such as growing crops or making rope.

Dany: I had no idea about the administration in each district at that time. But at the present time, in each district administration there are agriculture, health, security and other sections. Was there such a structure when you controlled the district?

Chaem: Yes, there was.

Dany: How many sections were there in each district?

Chaem: All sections, but I was only with people, in charge of economy ever since.

Dany: Only at the economic section?

Chaem: I was [in charge of] growing crops and experienced the way to deal with people. I searched for the seeds from Kien Svay (កៀនស្វាយ) and when I moved to Preah Netr Preah I went all the way to Takeo (តាកែវ) to search for the seeds and distributed to the people to grow. I do not just boast around but I tell you the truth that people even said that "Oh, now our revolution sheds light to us." My predecessors did not do well; but when I was there, I did successfully.

Dany: A while ago, you said that, after Angkor Chey, you were transferred to Kaoh Andaet. In which year, did you go there?

Chaem: I went there in [19]76.

Dany: [19]76?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Why were you transferred from Angkor Chey to Kaoh Andaet?

Chaem: Because I could fulfil the plan.

Dany: Could you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: At that time, who assigned you to Angkor Chey?

Chaem: Ta Mok and *Grandfather* POL Pot.

Dany: Ta Mok and *Grandfather* POL Pot?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Why were you transferred to Kaoh Andaet? Why was the committee in Kaoh Andaet removed?

Chaem: There were frequent conflicts among the committee. When I arrived there, the chairman was transferred to Kirivong (គិរីវង់).

Dany: So, who was in charge of Kaoh Andaet at that time?

Chaem: *Grandmother* Sieng (សៀង).

Dany: Sieng?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Was Sieng transferred to Kirivong?

Chaem: Yes. Then, there were three people: a male member, my deputy was Ta Mok's younger brother-in-law and me.

Dany: Who?

Chaem: *Grandfather* San (សាន), Ta Mok's younger brother-in-law.

Dany: So, while you were in Kaoh Andaet, there were you, *Grandfather* San and ...?

Chaem: Also *Grandfather* Chăn (ចាន់), but he was very old.

Dany: Is he still alive?

Chaem: No, he passed away a long time ago.

Dany: How about *Grandfather* San, Ta Mok's younger brother-in-law?

Chaem: I am not sure if he is dead or still alive, but heard that he is in Samlout (សំឡូត).

Dany: Oh, is he in Samlout?

Chaem: Yes, he used to come to visit me once.

Dany: *Grandfather* San?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What is his wife's name?

Chaem: Peun (ព្រីន).

Dany: Is Peun Ta Mok's biological younger sister?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: When you went to Kaoh Andaet, did your husband go there with you?

Chaem: No, he was still in Angkor Chey. After he allowed go to Kaoh Andaet for one year, he assigned to organize Takeo city.

Dany: Your husband?

Chaem: Together. My husband was still at home in Angkor Chey.

Dany: Did he supervise Angkor Chey on your behalf?

Chaem: Yes, he did little work.

Dany: Did he?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: So, the former Kaoh Andaet supervisor was transferred to Kirivong, right?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Were all people in the committee transferred to Kirivong?

Chaem: No, only one. But I stayed there for one year.

Dany: Was his name *Grandfather* Sieng?

Chaem: Yes, but I heard that *Grandfather* Sieng had passed away a long time ago.

Dany: Whom did *Grandfather* Sieng go to Kirivong with?

Chaem: I cannot recall whom he went there with at that time.

Dany: Was he the chairman?

Chaem: Yes, he was the chairman but he was removed. When I arrived in Kaoh Andaet district, they already organized to eat communally.

Dany: Did they already eat communally?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: After they organized to eat communally, did they set up any policies on working?

Chaem: We set up policies as follows: first, they built a big kitchen and rice barn. But it was not difficult for me because we had separate work to do. I was at the rear line focusing on rice cultivating while *Uncle* San, my deputy, was in charge of Boeng (បឹង) district near the Vietnamese territory.

Dany: What did he do?

Chaem: He focused on cultivating dry-season rice.

Dany: Only dry-season rice?

Chaem: Yes, since our work was separated, there was no any conflict. And we only met once a week.

Dany: Did you receive any instruction for Ta [Mok] regarding the organization of your work?

Chaem: Yes, sometimes he asked us to meet him.

Dany: When you produced more rice than needed, where did you supply the surplus to?

Chaem: To the army.

Dany: To the army?

Chaem: Yes, because when the war was just over, they did not produce any food yet, especially, the evacuees from Phnom Penh were allocated into districts. That was difficult. But, it was also easy for us; because of our proper forces deployment we could afford conflict.

Dany: Was not there any conflict?

Chaem: No.

Dany: Because you organized it properly?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: If you could not organize it properly, the conflict would occur, right?

Chaem: Conflict occurred and they would say we were opposing or betraying. But, for my case, people liked me because I did what I said. I always set the time for them to do their private work everywhere I went to.

Dany: What was it called the time beside the main work?

Chaem: In part-time, we did our private work.

Dany: Private work?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did you design it by yourself or the upper echelon told you to do so?

Chaem: I did it myself so that the people would have sufficient food.

Dany: Was it kind of additional food?

Chaem: Yes, in case they did not have enough communal food, they still had some additional food at home.

Dany: When they took the break time to grow crops at home for them to eat in their household or would such an additional food be placed communally so that everyone could share?

Chaem: No, anyone could enjoy whatever they grew back home. We did not need to supply them more from what we got outside. Their eldest children could cook for the family. I said we did not need to solve their problem. Sweet potatoes and cassava were available every month.

Dany: How long did you live in Kaoh Andaet?

Chaem: I lived there for a year. Then, after the harvest season, Ta [Mok] transferred me to Takeo.

Dany: Back to Takeo?

Chaem: After staying in Takeo for less than half of a year, he transferred me to Preah Netr Preah.

Dany: In Takeo, which part were you in?

Chaem: I stayed at the south of the weaving hall.

Dany: Because Ta Mok's house was in the lake (*it is raining strongly and very windy*)?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: And?

Chaem: I lived in the house of an ethnic Chinese man along the way from Ang Ta Saom to Dangkoal (ដង្កោល).

Dany: In Takeo, were you in the sector or where else?

Chaem: I was also in the district and I was communicated and invited to meeting until I was transferred.

Dany: Which district were you in when you were transferred to Takeo?

Chaem: In Kaoh Andaet district.

Dany: So, in Takeo, you were in Kaoh Andaet district, but not in the district hall, right?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: So even you went to Takeo, but you still worked for Kaoh Andaet district, didn't you?

Chaem: Yes, I still worked for that district.

Dany: But you did not work for the sector, did you?

Chaem: No.

Dany: Which sector was it, at that time, Sector 13?

Chaem: Sector 13.

Dany: But you did not work for Sector 13, did you?

Chaem: No, I succeeded my chairman and was just a member.

Dany: Sector member?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: ... (*inaudible*)?

Chaem: He is dead. His name is *Uncle Saom* (ស៊ាម).

Dany: *Uncle Saom*?

Chaem: Yes. He was in Prey Veng (ប្រៃវែង). He went to work there as if he was well-educated.

Dany: (*It is raining cats and dogs*) ...?

Chaem: *Grandfather Mut* (មុត) was his deputy.

Dany: (*It is raining cats and dogs*) *Grandfather MEAS Mut* (មាស មុត)?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: So *Grandfather MEAS Mut* was ... (*inaudible*)?

Chaem: Takeo. He was separated from his work and stayed in Takeo. When my chairman *Uncle Saom* became sick, I was promoted to ... (*inaudible*). But I did that for a short time, around one year; then, I was transferred to Battambang (បាត់ដំបង).

Dany: Then, you went to Preah Netr Preah, didn't you?

Chaem: Yes, in Preah Netr Preah.

Dany: ... (*inaudible*)?

Chaem: There were 5 districts: Kaoh Andaet, Tram Kak, Treang (ត្រាំង), Kirivong and Angkor Chey.

Dany: ... (*inaudible*)?

Chaem: Treang was under other people.

Dany: ... *(inaudible)*?

Chaem: Before I went to Preah Netr Preah, he committed suicide by hanging himself.

Dany: What was his name?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Kiet (គឿត).

Dany: *Grandfather* Kiet?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: ... *(inaudible)*?

Chaem: I did not know anything about that. He might have committed any offence by involving with any woman which led to suicide. He was dead when I arrived there.

Dany: Kiet?

Chaem: Oh *Grandfather* Kiet and *Grandfather* Vèn (វ៉ែន) also hanged himself.

Dany: ... *(inaudible)*?

Chaem: Treang district at Prey Sandèk (ព្រៃសង្កែក).

Dany: Who was in Tram Kak?

Chaem: In Tram Kak, *Grandfather* Kiev (គឿវ) also died.

Dany: What was his name?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Kiev.

Dany: *Grandfather* Kiev?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: ... *(inaudible)*?

Chaem: In Kirivong before being transferred to Kaoh Andaet, there were: *Grandfather* Sieng and *Grandmother* PÈN Pon (ប៉ែន ប៉ុន). But she is dead now.

Dany: How about *Grandfather* Tit (ទិត) *(inaudible)*?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Tit also spent a short time there. Then, he was transferred to Samlout.

Dany: ... *(inaudible)*?

Chaem: A short time. But, in Kirivong, he was not the chairman, just deputy. But, I did not know why he was transferred to Samlout, later on.

Dany: Kaoh Andaet, Kirivong and Angkor Chey and who else?

Chaem: Ta Mok's younger brother-in-law named Net (ណឹត) was in Angkor Chey; but he is also dead.

Dany: Net?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about another younger brother-in-law of his named *Grandfather* San?

Chaem: He ... (*inaudible*) also in Samlout.

Dany: Did he also go to Samlout?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Whom did he go with?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Tit.

Dany: So, you stayed in Takeo only for a short time, didn't you?

Chaem: Yes, for only some months ... (*inaudible*).

Dany: When were you transferred to Preah Netr Preah?

Chaem: In late [19]78, maybe in December entering [19]79. When the rainy-season rice started to be ripe, we ran up to the mountain. So, it was extremely difficult for me to be in charge of that district.

Dany: ... (*inaudible*)?

Chaem: Oh, you might think I am lying but I'm not. When I arrived there, people were living in a very terrible situation. In every house, there were sick people. As I used to mention when I was talking with Mr. Khèmbra (ខែម្រា) that in their former list there were one hundred thousand; but when I got there, ten thousand had already disappeared, only ninety thousand existed.

Dany: List of the people?

Chaem: Yes, because people from every part of the country were evacuated to that district.

Dany: Really?

Chaem: Yes, because there was huge space with few 'old people' there. There were only ten thousand 'old people'. There were only ... houses. Phnum Lieb (ភ្នំលៀប), Preah Netr Preah, Tean Kam (ទានកាំ), Rohal (រហាល), Teuk Chor (ទឹកជ្រាវ), only 5 communes.

Dany: Only 5 communes ...?

Chaem: But there were few residents.

Dany: Preah Netr Preah, Kambaor (កំបោរ), Tean Kam?

Chaem: No, Preah Netr Preah, Rohal, Tean Kam, Phnum Lieb and Tuek Chour.

Dany: Only 5 communes?

Chaem: 5 communes. Oh, another one, Prasat (ប្រាសាទ) commune.

Dany: Prasat commune?

Chaem: Yes, Prasat commune.

Dany: So, there were 6 communes, weren't there?

Chaem: Yes, 6 communes.

Dany: How about when you were in ... *(inaudible)*?

Chaem: Ta [Mok] gave two trains.

Dany: Did he give you two trains of people to control?

Chaem: Yes, they lived with me because at that time he asked all the leaders in Takeo province; but none of them accepted because it was very difficult and the local people ill-treated them and it was very complicated. In the past, Battambang was rich of rice and even exported to Mongkul Borei (មង្គលបូរី). But, at the time of our control, the war was just over in [19]75 or [19]76 and the mass was very starving because people were evacuated there and in one house there were 5-6 families.

Dany: At that time, when Ta Mok instructed you to go there, who was ... *(inaudible)*?

Chaem: When I arrived in that district, there were two local people.

Dany: Who were they?

Chaem: One was named At (អាត); but he is already dead.

Dany: At?

Chaem: Yes, and another one named Phô (ផ្លូ), who currently lives at the Thai border.

Dany: Where is Phou now?

Chaem: I do not know his whereabouts; but he used to phone me once.

Dany: Which village does he live in?

Chaem: Near the Thai border, the one beyond Malai (ម៉ាឡៃ).

Dany: Sastra (សាស្ត្រា)?

Chaem: No, beyond that.

Dany: Sampov Lun (សំពៅលួន).

Chaem: Yes, there. I saw him coming from there.

Dany: What is his wife's name?

Chaem: His first wife is dead. Now, he lives with his second wife.

Dany: What is his second wife's name?

Chaem: I have no idea. I used to live Kralanh (ក្រឡាញ់) with his first wife and we used to flee away together.

Dany: Does Khou (ខ្យ) live in Sastra?

Chaem: No, not in Sastra.

Dany: Does he live in Samlov Lun?

Chaem: Hard to tell.

Dany: I also know that part.

Chaem: Oh, *Grandfather* Khou is very old and people in Phnum Lieb, Preah Netr Preah know him very well.

Dany: Along Sampov Lun?

Chaem: I do not go there much so I do not know that part.

Dany: So, when you arrived there, the local people helped ... (*inaudible*)?

Chaem: They helped me for a few months. I built a good relation with the chairman. So, he gave me the list and other materials during our first meeting. Then, he disappeared.

Dany: Who disappeared?

Chaem: The district chairman named Moung (ម៉ែង) disappeared.

Dany: Did Moung disappear?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about At?

Chaem: At was still there and worked with me for a year. Then, At also disappeared and people from the East Zone replaced him.

Dany: Who?

Chaem: A man named Khon (ខុន); but he is also dead.

Dany: How about Khou? Was he the chairman, deputy or member?

Chaem: Before and until I arrived there, he was still the member.

Dany: So, was he just the member?

Chaem: Yes, just the member and he was in charge of youth for dry-season rice.

Dany: Was Khou friendly with you?

Chaem: Yes. Oh, and he was a very honest person. But there were a few letters authorizing his arrest; but, I hid him.

Dany: Did they want to arrest *Uncle* Khou?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Oh, did you help him?

Chaem: Yes, I helped him so that he can survive until now.

Dany: So, if I ask him anything, he will talk about you, won't he?

Chaem: Yes, because I helped him a lot.

Dany: Do you have his phone number?

Chaem: A commune council member at my office in Phnum Lieb has his phone number.

Dany: Commune council in Phnum Lieb?

Chaem: Yes, he has his phone number. I used to call and talk with him a lot. But he is very old now. He is a good and honest person, but afraid of death.

Dany: When seeing he was an honest person, you helped him, didn't you?

Chaem: I helped him, for instance, when he was accused of not being an honest person and making demonstration, I hid the accusation letter from him and educated him. Then, I dismissed all the youth that was under his control and instructed them to live along the river bank by fishing or rice cultivating.

Dany: I also wonder who wanted to arrest him?

Chaem: Arrest whom?

Dany: *Uncle Khou*?

Chaem: Oh, *Grandfather* Nhim (ញឹម) from the zone.

Dany: When you arrived there, were *Grandfather* Nhim still there?

Chaem: Yes, he was. His son's name is Chiel (ជឿល).

Dany: What did Chiel do?

Chaem: He was in charge of the province in Svay Sisophon (ស្វាយស៊ីសុផុន).

Dany: The sector?

Chaem: Yes, the sector.

Dany: So, when you were there, was Chiel at the sector committee?

Chaem: Yes, he was at the sector committee, while his predecessors had disappeared.

Dany: Didn't you arrive when Hoeng (ហឿង) was still there?

Chaem: I used to hear this name and when I arrived there, he had been already removed to Trapeang Thma (ត្រពាំងធ្ម) under *Grandfather* Văl (វ៉ាល់).

Dany: Did you arrive when *Grandfather* Văl was still there?

Chaem: Yes, I didn't see him. I just heard that *Grandfather* Văl supervising the dam construction.

Dany: Did *Grandfather* Vāl complete the work at the Trapeang Thma Dam?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: When you went there, did they still build the dam?

Chaem: I didn't do that work because I was in Preah Netr Preah. I only took my force to cultivate rice.

Dany: Did you cultivate rice there?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: But, didn't they still build the dam?

Chaem: No, but he had done it.

Dany: Completed?

Chaem: Yes. I was in charge of another dam below it. From Spean Sraeng (ស្ពានស្រែង) Tributary, they built the Trapeang Thmar Dam linking to another dam called Trapeang Teab (ត្រពាំងទាប). Away from that dam, I was in charge of building a dam from their water-gate to the east of Phnum Lieb. The large mouth of that dam was about 30. He took a car along that road to check it every day.

Dany: What was that dam called?

Chaem: They used my name.

Dany: To call that dam?

Chaem: Yes, it was called *Grandmother* Chaem.

Dany: So, in that district, if I ask for *Grandmother* Chaem Dam, everyone knows, right?

Chaem: Yes, except the new settlers. Everyone from young to old in that district call that dam like that because I led the way to build it and people get benefit from it. All the way from Speang Srèng to the Tonle Sap (ទន្លេសាប) River, to Bāk Prea (បាក់ព្រា), to Mongkul Borei Tributary, to the west of Prasat commune, to Preah Netr Preah commune, until Moam Veal (ម៉ាវាល) were rich of water.

Dany: For the people in all communes that you mentioned, Prasat commune, Phnum Lieb commune, Tean Kam, were you in charge of organizing them or ... (*inaudible*)?

Chaem: I was in charge of organizing and selecting them.

Dany: Were you in charge of selecting and organizing them?

Chaem: Yes, I was.

Dany: How about the person in charge of Phnum Lieb?

Chaem: The person from Phnum Lieb in Trapeang Thom (ត្រពាំងធំ) went away.

Dany: Where did he go?

Chaem: Back to his home village.

Dany: Where?

Chaem: He went back to Tram Kak district.

Dany: Back to Trapeang Thom?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What was his name?

Chaem: Kăt (កាត់).

Dany: Where does Kăt currently live?

Chaem: He lives in Trapeang Thom; but I do not know his specific place.

Dany: What is his wife's name?

Chaem: I cannot recall his first wife; but, he is living with the second one.

Dany: What is his second wife's name?

Chaem: I have no idea.

Dany: I just want to know, in case, for instance, he knew about your good deeds, and when I have free time in the future I will take some time meeting with him.

Chaem: His son-in-law's name is *Grandfather* Song (សុំផា) living along the road up to the market.

Dany: Does his son-in-law live in the market?

Chaem: Yes, Song and Mi (មី).

Dany: Is the husband named Song?

Chaem: Yes, the husband Song is a medic.

Dany: What is his wife's name?

Chaem: Mi.

Dany: Is Mi *Grandfather* Kăt's daughter?

Chaem: Yes, she is his daughter with his first wife. He might think I'm reporting to you about him; but I'm not.

Dany: No, not like that. But, does *Grandfather* Kăt go back to live in Trapeang Thom?

Chaem: Yes, he lives in Trapeang Thom.

Dany: But, you do not know about his wife, do you?

Chaem: I do not know about his second wife because I did not ask him.

Dany: How about the person in Phnum Lieb?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about the person in Prasat?

Chaem: He also went back to Trapeang Thom.

Dany: What is his name?

Chaem: Houy (ហ្វឹយ).

Dany: Houy?

Chaem: But, he is dead.

Dany: Is he?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about Tean Kam?

Chaem: He went from here. Tean Kam was under *Grandfather* Ruos (រ៉ូស). But he gets paralysis and can no longer do anything.

Dany: Where?

Chaem: In Thlat (ថ្លាត) commune.

Dany: *Grandfather* Ruos in Thlat commune?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What is his wife's name?

Chaem: His wife's name is *Grandmother* Kuch (គុច).

Dany: *Grandmother* Kuch?

Chaem: He used to be *Achar* (អាចារ្យ) at Thlat Pagoda. Now, I do not know much about it. She is running a small business in Tean Kam.

Dany: Tean Kam commune?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about Rohal commune?

Chaem: Rohal commune was under a woman. But, I do not know about her whereabouts since the separation.

Dany: What is her name?

Chaem: At that time, Rohal was under some local people and Kha (ខា).

Dany: What was the name?

Chaem: Kha, a woman.

Dany: Was Kha a woman?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Do you know where she is now?

Chaem: She disappeared a long time ago.

Dany: How about Preah Netr Preah commune?

Chaem: Preah Netr Preah was under a local person named *Grandfather* Krâk (ក្រក់) who is *Grandfather* Nhim's relative.

Dany: But, was *Grandfather* Krâk replaced by a new person?

Chaem: By a newly arriving woman

Dany: What was her name?

Chaem: Khal (ខាល) at the north end of the village; but, she might be scared.

Dany: At the end of this Ou Angraë (អូរអង្រែង) village?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: No, I will not go to meet her or she might be scared. I just want to know.

Chaem: Yes, that is what I know.

Dany: Did you also organize her, at that time?

Chaem: Yes, I went to organize her because she an 'old people'. I was instructed to do it from Phnom Penh. It was difficult and inside ... (*inaudible*). At night time, they assigned people to survey the 'new people' who were chatting noisily. But, when the local people saw that we were good people, they tried to guard us. I also told her to sleep while I guarded for her.

Dany: What is Khal's husband's name?

Chaem: Phâl (ផល).

Dany: What did her father do?

Chaem: Nothing.

Dany: While she was in Preah Netr Preah, was she married yet?

Chaem: Already. But they did not live together. They were separated when she went there.

Dany: Anyway, I have often heard of Phnom Trayông (ភ្នំត្រយ៉ាង) Prison. Did you know anything about it?

Chaem: No.

Dany: You did not know it, did you?

Chaem: No. Let me say something. I never know the people who filed the complaint against me and neither have they known me. You should follow it too because I never went to organize it at all.

Dany: You did not know it at all, did you?

Chaem: Not at all. I am an honest person. I do not refuse of what I have done. But, I absolutely deny it for I never committed it.

Dany: But, did Phnom Trayông Prison really exist?

Chaem: I used to hear about it but I did not know about its organization because I just lived there for a short time. I just focused on dealing with the people's problem and educating them. For one year, I did not even know all offices or ministries. Phnom Trayông Prison was probably directly organized by the province.

Dany: But, do you know the location of Phnom Trayông Prison?

Chaem: No.

Dany: Did not you ever communicate with them?

Chaem: No. It was organized by its own unit and I did not organize it. I just focused on my people. It was likely separate from each other like the office in each district or commune.

Dany: Separate?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Was it far away from your place?

Chaem: About 200 metres. But it was hidden by a mountain, 2-3 bridges over there, while I was at the east.

Dany: About 200-300 metres?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: So, you could see each other, couldn't you?

Chaem: No, we could not. Oh, let say it was about one kilometre.

Dany: One kilometre?

Chaem: From the road leading to the village and there was a mountain at the end of Phnum Lieb. That mountain was called Phnom Trayông.

Dany: Phnom Trayông?

Chaem: And I was at the other end of Phnum Lieb on the higher mountain at the east.

Dany: At that time, how did you go to work?

Chaem: At the beginning, I walked; but later on, I was provided two bicycles.

Dany: Bicycles?

Chaem: Yes. After I was provided two bicycles I still travelled around until the upper echelon in Phnom Penh brought and distributed fabrics and dresses to the people. Then, I was provided a motorcycle.

Dany: Could you ride motorcycle, at that time?

Chaem: No, I had it ride me.

Dany: Someone rode you motorcycle?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: You could not ride it, could you?

Chaem: No.

Dany: What was that motorcycle made?

Chaem: It was a beautiful motorcycle.

Dany: There was Honda, CL...

Chaem: It was Honda.

Dany: What was its colour?

Chaem: It was a little bit pale.

Dany: Green?

Chaem: It was beautiful.

Dany: Green?

Chaem: Yes. Later on, I left it in the jungle.

Dany: At that time, you did not ride it, did you?

Chaem: No.

Dany: Who has ridden you until now?

Chaem: My first cousin once removed who lives with me.

Dany: Your niece/nephew?

Chaem: No, my first cousin once removed.

Dany: Did he/she ride you the motorcycle?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did your husband ride it too?

Chaem: No, he cannot ride until now.

Dany: Did not he ride you the motorcycle to work?

Chaem: No.

Dany: So, your first cousin once removed rode you to work, right?

Chaem: Yes. When the burglary occurred in my house, it was those boys and neighbours who helped us.

Dany: When did it happen?

Chaem: When I was at Phnum Lieb.

Dany: Was there such a burglary at that time?

Chaem: Yes, the burglars broke and entered my house through the kitchen.

Dany: Did those burglars dare to break into your house while you were the district committee?

Chaem: Yes, they broke into my house at 1:00 a.m. I did not know what they were looking for.

Dany: How?

Chaem: There was confusion at that time. We did not dare to assume that they were really burglars.

Dany: How did such burglars dare to break into your house?

Chaem: I was accused of being against the Zone Committee *Grandfather* Nhim.

Dany: *Grandfather* Nhim?

Chaem: He treated me very badly. Only before digging the canal, I had to ask the people if we could dig 10 kilometres for only 3 months. People agreed to do that in order to reduce the flood in rainy season for 2-3 communes. There was so much fish at that time.

Dany: When *Grandfather* Nhim disappeared, who went to succeed him?

Chaem: Then, it was Ta Mok from the Southwest Zone.

Dany: Did Ta Mok go there?

Chaem: Yes, he went to control the Northwest Zone.

Dany: When he went to control the Northwest Zone, who succeeded him?

Chaem: I did not know about that. But in [19]79, we ran away separately.

Dany: I would like you to describe a little bit more detail about the situation after the Vietnamese entered the country in [19]79. How did you run away ...?

Chaem: It was very difficult for me because I was delivering my baby on the departure day.

Dany: Could you please describe a little bit about the place?

Chaem: I had to go around telling the people to run away, while I was in the contraction myself. I heard the gunshots in Kralanh (ក្រឡាញ់). I delivered my baby at 12:00 a.m. and I had to stay on fire until I left at 5:00 a.m.

Dany: So it meant that you had to deliver your baby at 12:00 a.m. and stay on fire until you left at 5 a.m., right?

Chaem: Yes, and I left.

Dany: What happened when you were so weak like that?

Chaem: Hearing a lot of gunshots like that the villagers, including the midwife, had already left; only a few people remained. At 5:00 a.m. when I heard more and more gunshots, I asked one of my assistants named *Comrade* Roan (រ៉ាន់) to check what happened and why so many gunshots were heard from Kralanh. Then, I got off the bed, where I stayed on fire, to check my baby. And I stood at the door to check if anything wrong with my arms and legs, my blood was still red and everything seemed normal. A while later, that man returned with the motorcycle and said the fights were going on and the Vietnamese were matching in with a lot of flags when they got off their cars. Hearing so, I grabbed my baby and was ridden the motorcycle away. At Trapeang Thma Dam, I walked along the road nearby called Kôk Siem (គោកស៊ីម) Road. Then, I stopped there and my health seemed to be fine.

Dany: Where was your husband when you were ridden the motorcycle away?

Chaem: He was in charge of militia and stuck on National Road 6.

Dany: Was he in charge of the militia?

Chaem: Yes, and he was stuck along the road.

Dany: How about other children of yours?

Chaem: They were following me. But I had one truck loaded with a lot of belongings and my children. Other people went on different roads but we all promised to meet at Phnom Koun Khlèng (ភ្នំក្នុងខ្ពស់) Mountain.

Dany: Were there many people going with you, at that time?

Chaem: Nearly 4,000 people.

Dany: Nearly 4,000 people?

Chaem: Yes, almost half of the Preah Netr Preah district population.

Dany: Did all of people who worked with you at communes and villages go with you?

Chaem: Yes, all and also included Kralanh district.

Dany: Also Kralanh district?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: At that time, did *Grandfather* Khau (ខ្មៅ) also go with you?

Chaem: Only his wife went with me because he was a militiaman.

Dany: Was *Grandfather* Khau a militiaman?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did he stay with your husband?

Chaem: Yes, while I was on the motorcycle, I had to go across harrowed soil and forest. That was why I believe in good deeds and thought of my parents' blessings that saved my life since then.

Dany: While you were in Preah Netr Preah, did your parents live with you?

Chaem: Yes, they went with me too but they lived on a different house in Svay Sisophon. But, then they went to meet with me right at that place.

Dany: So it meant that when you were in Preah Netr Preah, they were in Svay, right?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How about your siblings?

Chaem: They kept going together until the top of that mountain.

Dany: While you were in Preah Netr Preah, where were they?

Chaem: They were in Svay Sisophon.

Dany: Why did you take your parents to Svay Sisophon?

Chaem: Er, at that time, Ta [Mok] assigned *Grandfather* Nhēn to go there. Then, *Grandfather* Nhim was assigned to stay at the market. Later on, I took my siblings with me since then.

Dany: So it meant that, later on, Ta Mok assigned your husband to be in charge there, right?

Chaem: Svay Sisophon.

Dany: What was Svay Sisophon, district or sector?

Chaem: Province or sector.

Dany: Was he the committee in Svay Sisophon?

Chaem: No, he was not the sector committee because there was one already.

Dany: Who was the sector committee, at that time?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Nhim's son named *Grandfather* Chriel.

Dany: But?

Chaem: He was instructed to educate people in Tuek Thla (ទឹកថ្លា), Samrông (សំរោង).

Dany: But still in the sector committee line?

Chaem: Yes, but it was very difficult. He had to run away even in the day time.

Dany: At that time, did your husband hold higher position than you?

Chaem: No, not that high. He was just in a leading role to some extent.

Dany: When *Grandfather* Chiel and *Grandfather* Nhim disappeared, who went to succeed them?

Chaem: It was in [19]79 and we were separated.

Dany: So, no one went to succeed them, right?

Chaem: I had no idea, only people from this generation.

Dany: When you arrived at Kaun Khlèng, did you meet your parents and all of your siblings?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What did you do next? Did you still keep running?

Chaem: Then, we still kept going to the Dangrek (ដង្កែក) Mountains.

Dany: Together?

Chaem: Yes, together.

Dany: But, you were still weak, weren't you?

Chaem: Yes, after leaving motorcycle and truck, we took carts.

Dany: Did you take carts?

Chaem: Yes, one family looked for a cart and a pairs of oxen. When we arrived in Kaun Khlèng, our husbands went back to look for carts and oxen. We took the carts until Banteay Chhmar (បន្ទាយឆ្មារ). We left everything there and took only children with us.

Dany: What did you have for food, along the way?

Chaem: We did not have anything and got lost for one night and day. Everyone had nothing to drink. Parents had their urine for their children to drink. But, at 3:00 p.m., it started to rain as strongly as it did a while ago.

Dany: ...?

Chaem: Yes, it was raining cats and dogs. Can you imagine that in February-March, it was raining a lot like that? Some people used their fabric to collect the water into their kettles and pots. It was raining so much that it seemed like something came to rescue us. Each of us had a handful of rice to eat along the way. We kept going and met the army on the Dangrek Mountains at 10:00 p.m.

Dany: At 10:00 p.m.?

Chaem: Yes, when we arrived, the army took us to meet with the Thai who gave rice to us to cook overnight. We did not sleep that night. The Vietnamese below were attacking in Ampil (អំពិល) district, where the villagers even fled away before us leaving their land in Duol (ដួល) village. After that, the people went down there and some got water containers, oxen, kitchen tools and other utensils because the owners had fled away; some even fled into Thailand. We lived and cultivated rice in Ampil for about a year. Then, one or two years later, the fighting occurred again, and we had to run up to the mountain again. On the Dangrek Mountains, we moved up and down for three times.

Dany: At that time, did you live together with your husband, children, parents and siblings?

Chaem: Yes, all of us together.

Dany: Which part of Dangrek Mountains did you arrive at? Was it in Thai territory?

Chaem: From far end of the Dangrek Mountains until a place called Thlork (ធ្លក់) village.

Dany: Which district?

Chaem: Ampil district.

Dany: Banteay Ampil (បន្ទាយអំពិល) district?

Chaem: Yes, Banteay Ampil district. I lived there for one year.

Dany: What was it called, 1003 or 1001?

Chaem: No longer about that, only civilians and military units.

Dany: Were you a civilian, at that time?

Chaem: Yes, but I controlled the people from Preah Netr Preah district. Those who went without their wives would be asked to go back. During the meeting, we asked if they went there alone and they said yes. And then, we asked if they knew the way and they responded yes. They called me 'aunt'. I asked if they could find the way and they said yes and just walked along the cart tracks. And the people there used to go to and come from Thailand. We asked to go back until none of them was there, except married couples. I had to carry my baby and walked in the middle until night time. It was festivity parading up to the pagoda. One commune organized a unit and there were 6 communes. So, 3 communes were before me and other 3 were behind. It was a long story!

Dany: Which year did you arrive in Thlork village, Banteay Ampil district?

Chaem: Yes, I lived there for one year by cultivating rice in a place called Tuek Chenh (ទឹកចេញ) near Ampil village.

Dany: Was there only a group of your people live there, or were there any other people living there too?

Chaem: Until I went up to live in Chräch (ត្រាច់).

Dany: In Chräch?

Chaem: Then, Ta [Mok] instructed us to transport people from Baräng Thlëak (បារាំងផ្អាក) and Samlout.

Dany: Were there many people going to Chräch, at that time?

Chaem: There were so many people. At that time, I met some units from Phnom Penh because there were conflicts among the leaders. Ta [Mok] called me to go from there.

Dany: Could you tell more, how the conflicts were, at that time?

Chaem: The conflicts occurred between chairmen and their deputies.

Dany: Who told you about them?

Chaem: Now, they are longer in positions.

Dany: Who were they?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Chiem (ជ័រ) and *Grandfather* Chim (ជឹម).

Dany: *Grandfather* Chiem?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Chiem in Malai.

Dany: Oh, *Grandfather* Chiem in Malai. I also know him.

Chaem: Do you know him?

Dany: Yes, I know *Grandfather* Chiem who lives there.

Chaem: And *Grandfather* Chim went there before I did. *Grandfather* Chim was ethnic minority living in Trapeang Prasat (ត្រពាំងប្រាសាទ), whose wife is named *Grandmother* Nēng (នេង).

Dany: *Grandfather* Chim, *Grandmother* Nēng's husband. What did they do that caused the conflicts?

Chaem: They controlled workers' unit 1003 ... 808.

Dany: 808?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Where was *Grandfather* Chim from?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Chim was also from Takeo.

Dany: But, were had he been before the Vietnamese entered and you ran away?

Chaem: I did not know he had been from. I arrived in Chräch before I did.

Dany: How about *Grandfather* Chiem?

Chaem: *Grandfather* Chiem went there with *Grandfather* POL Pot.

Dany: Did he go there with *Grandfather* POL Pot?

Chaem: Yes, and when the conflicts occurred, the army split.

Dany: During those conflicts, among *Grandfather* Chim and *Grandfather* Chiem, who was right and wrong?

Chaem: Normally, when they did not tolerate even small things, they would try to catch each other's mistake. Then, Ta [Mok] instructed me to go from Ampil district up to the mountain.

Dany: Among *Grandfather* Chim and *Grandfather* Chiem, who was the chairman?

Chaem: It seemed *Grandfather* Chim was the chairman before I arrived there. When I was there, I was promoted the chairwoman; *Grandfather* Chiem became deputy and *Grandfather* Chim the member (laughing).

Dany: Did you become the chairwoman, when you went there from Ampil?

Chaem: Yes, I became the chairwoman.

Dany: How did *Grandfather* Chiem feel when you became the chairwoman?

Chaem: He seemed alright.

Dany: Was he really alright?

Chaem: Yes, no matter how angry he felt against me, but I said to him, he would listen. And he never came to my house with bare hands; he often brought sugar and so.

Dany: Was *Grandfather* Chiem that so?

Chaem: Yes, *Grandfather* Chiem was a good-hearted person. He and I still keep our contact until nowadays, even between our children.

Dany: Can you recognise him, nowadays?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Do you contact him nowadays?

Chaem: Yes, we keep our contacts. Whenever, I go to Malai, we often have a very long chat.

Dany: I still have his phone number because we used to invite him to Phnom Penh and he accepted.

Chaem: Yes, that is alright. Now, he is retired.

Dany: Where does *Grandfather* Chim live now? In Trapeang Prasat?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What is his wife's name? I cannot recall it.

Chaem: Nēng.

Dany: When I have time, I would go to ask him something in Trapeang Prasat.

Chaem: (laughing) You should not ask him.

Dany: How was he while he was living with you and *Grandfather* Chiem?

Chaem: He did not say anything if he did not feel like it.

Dany: When Ta Mok transferred you from Ampil district, where did you go?

Chaem: I was in charge of receiving civilians and militants' wives in Chräch.

Dany: In Chräch?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did it take a long time?

Chaem: Yes, the wives of militants from Division 500.

Dany: From which year to which year?

Chaem: Since [19]80, 80, 82.

Dany: From [19]80, 80, 82 until when?

Chaem: I received civilians until [19]98, 99 in Anlong Veang (អង្គរវែង), also, during UNTAC period in [19]93.

Dany: Did you also receive civilians at that time?

Chaem: Yes, I received only civilians for a long time.

Dany: Did you receive all civilians in the whole Anlong Veang district?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did you hold a high position, at that time?

Chaem: (laughing) Ta [Mok] just assigned me to do it.

Dany: When you received civilians and militants' wives, how did you organize them to live such as food and so?

Chaem: It was alright. Every month, Ta [Mok] provided one canteen of rice to each person. So for 5 people, we provided 5 canteens of rice per month.

Dany: 5 canteens per month?

Chaem: Yes, and if we did not finish them all, we exchanged it with the Thai. At that time, we had enough food because Ta [Mok] received aid from China.

Dany: Did China help you at that time?

Chaem: Yes, and it was transported through Thailand. People from most parts of the country went there.

Dany: Since the people were from many parts, were there any conflicts between them?

Chaem: No.

Dany: No?

Chaem: That's right. I just tried to fulfil the duties laid down by *Angkar* without discriminating towards different people. People from inside tried to solve the problems raised without reporting to Ta. Then, Ta assigned others to lead. At that time, France supported through world origination. He knew me because I had one younger sibling working as a French-Khmer interpreter. No matter how tight the security was, we could still get through because he helped us.

Dany: When you were in Chräch during the resistance and when you distributed rice to the civilians, there were any festivities or ceremonies with the Buddhist monks?

Chaem: There were no any monks; there were only the elderly who used to be monks preaching for us. But in Khmer New Year or Phchum Ben (Ancestors' Day), we did not have monks to preach.

Dany: I wonder why, during the 3 years period, there were no monks or pagodas?

Chaem: I had no idea about that. Suddenly, they had to join the army with that short hair without waiting for it to grow a bit longer.

Dany: But when our country became independent and gained victory, people were organized to live in zones, cooperatives and so, why were not there any monks to conduct any festivities or ceremonies at pagodas or so? You had also been to pagoda as a Buddhist devotee before that, hadn't you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Did you know anything about that, at that time?

Chaem: As I already said, only the elderly who used to be Buddhist monks and could preach were available, while the pagodas were used as offices. It seemed that it had to be that way.

Dany: You did not know about the policies from upper echelon, did you?

Chaem: No, it just came out that way. However, we still kept practicing our beliefs because we knew what sin and good deed were. At that time, we practiced our religious ceremonies like the way the Cham that had their religious leaders, did theirs.

Dany: Anyway, in which year did you leave the mountains and go to live in Anlong Veang?
 Chaem: Since the UNTAC period in [19]93. When I went to Anlong Veang and built a beautiful house there. But it was burned down when I ran away.

Dany: How did you come down? Were there any roads to travel?
 Chaem: Yes, Ta [Mok] had a tractor and trucks. He paved roads which are still being used since then.

Dany: Did Ta Mok also pave roads?
 Chaem: Yes.

Dany: From where to where?
 Chaem: He paved roads everyday from the mountain foot in 2000.

Dany: Was that mountain foot called Choam (ជាំ).
 Chaem: Yes.

Dany: And until where?
 Chaem: Until Prey Sa'ak (ព្រៃស្នាក់), Srae Nouy (ស្រែណូយ), Bay Tăb (បាយតាប់) and so.

Dany: Did you start to pave roads before and after the people went down.
 Chaem: After he paved the roads, people started to go down.

Dany: Did you know why people went down?
 Chaem: We had one objective. When the war was over, the leaders started to contact the leaders inside, like *Grandfather* Nuon who was a relative to MEAS Sophea (មាស សុភា).

Dany: Is NUON Chea relative to MEAS Sophea?
 Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How relatives they are?
 Chaem: It seems they are cousins.

Dany: Cousins?
 Chaem: Yes. After they contacted each other, they went to meet HUN Sen (ហ៊ុន សែន) who decided on our departure. So, we went down. We were divided into two parts: one in Bay Tăb and another one in Srae Nouy (ស្រែណូយ).

Dany: When you went down for the first time, did you go straight to your former house?
 Chaem: My house and village were located on the way from the bridge at Ou Chik (អូជីក) Canal and there were mango trees.

Dany: Was it near a hospital?

Chaem: Yes, north of the hospital. There, it was my village.

Dany: What is that village called?

Chaem: Ou Chik village.

Dany: Was named Ou Chik villag or *Granfmother* Chaem village, after your name?

Chaem: They called after my name.

Dany: *Granfmother* Chaem village?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Was it the first place you went to live?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: How long did you live there until the conflicts occurred and you had to run away again?

Chaem: When I arrived here.

Dany: But, at that time, you were in Anlong Veang, weren't you?

Chaem: Yes, and when I went up the mountain, my house was burned down.

Dany: Why was your house burned down, at that time?

Chaem: The fightings between the inside army and ours on the mountain.

Dany: How were the fightings?

Chaem: When we went up and built our camps on the mountain until [19]99, they accepted each others' promises that those who used to own land and went up the mountain and when decided to go down, they promise to give back our land. But, when I arrived, many people had already lived in my village.

Dany: Where were they from?

Chaem: New comers and soldiers who said they had liberated it from Ta Mok. Then, I left that place.

Dany: Did you bring any complaint to claim your land back?

Chaem: I also brought my complaint to PRUM Samēt (ព្រំ សាម៉េត), but the district under *Grandfather* Yim (យីម) did not solve it.

Dany: YIM San (យីម សាន)?

Chaem: YIM San, *Grandfather* Ni (នី), *Grandfather* KOY Saroeun (កុយ សារឿន). They were in the same team.

Dany: They did not solve it, did they?

Chaem: No. At that time, PRUM Samēt told me to check my rice paddy field but houses had been already built on it. So, I decided not to dismantle the houses and let

them live there. Then, I did not wait for any solution and came here and clear the land from mines, instead. People there wondered where the former Khmer Rouge who left the mountain went to because no one was there.

Dany: When Ta Mok went down, he built various places. Did you see any place he built when you leave the mountain for the first time? Did Ta Mok build anything in the area near you house in Ou Chik?

Chaem: First of all, he bought a saw mill to solve the problem for militants' wives and civilians. Then, he bought walking tractors, tractors to help people with their rice cultivation. Secondly, he started to ...

Dany: Where did he build the saw mill?

Chaem: Srah Chhuk (ស្រះច្បក់) at the pagoda.

Dany: At the pagoda?

Chaem: But, when we ran up the mountain, they took them all.

Dany: Can your recall when his first achievement was built?

Chaem: From [19]99 to 2000.

Dany: The Integration Period in [19]99?

Chaem: The Integration was in 2000.

Dany: When did he start to build the saw mill?

Chaem: When I went down for the second time.

Dany: That saw mill?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What else did he achieve besides the saw mill?

Chaem: He started to build Ou Chik Dam. He used to build it before but he did not feel safe; then, he hired Thai technicians to rebuild it. Only two Mai Kho (ម៉ៃខូ) excavators and dumptrucks taking rocks while my villagers and I cut the trees to make prop for the bridge. Each village had to cut from 500 to 1000 or 2500 trees.

Dany: Did he build Ou Chik Dam?

Chaem: Yes, he built Ou Chik Dam. He also planned to get water from Mekong (មេគង្គ) River to Longveack (លង្វែក).

Dany: How to get the water from Mekong River?

Chaem: Like the way he did in Phnom Penh.

Dany: Oh, to build dam, right?

Chaem: Yes, he hired Thai technicians to build dam as well as schools and hospitals.

Dany: Besides schools and hospitals, what else did he build?

Chaem: A new dam.

Dany: A new dam in Tumnuop Thmei (ទំនប់ថ្មី) village?

Chaem: Yes, he built it too. There were two Mai Kho excavators and 4 dumptrucks. Some were digging in the canal while others were building the dam from around the mountain foot to Srah Chhuk and upto the main road.

Dany: Did he also plan to dig water canal?

Chaem: Yes, he dug the water canal for Thmei village. If you go there and ask the villagers where the canal and the dam dug and built by Ta Mok, they will tell you.

Dany: Did he finish his plan? Did he get water from that canal?

Chaem: Only half of the canal from the dam to Thmei village was done. The main canal was very deep. He planned to dig canal and take around the area, where the village was in the middle.

Dany: Did he plan to dig canal around the village?

Chaem: Yes, and hoped to supply the water to all communes in the whole Anlong Veang district.

Dany: Besides schools, hospitals, bridges, saw mill, what else did he build?

Chaem: Those were from his best. He built the current house, which cannot be dismantled because it was built from wood, which name I cannot recall, with tiled roof.

Dany: From Samraong (សំរោង) tree?

Chaem: Yes, and its size is like this.

Dany: Was his house lifted by human forces or Mai Kho excavator?

Chaem: By Mai Kho excavator.

Dany: Yes, the pillars were too big to be hugged around by a person without peeling the skin of the tree. Each part of the house leave huge pieces of wood connected to each other. So, no one wants to dismantle it because they want to see such a huge house.

Chaem: Those were his achievements. I cannot recall when I came down from the mountain for the first time. Whether it was during UNTAC period or later on?

Dany: After that?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Later on, when you can recall?

Chaem: He built that house in [19]99.

Dany: Also in [19]99?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Which did you move from Anlong Veang where your house was taken?

Chaem: I came to live here in 2000. I lived there in [19]98, 99.

Dany: Where were you in [19]98, 99?

Chaem: Overthere.

Dany: Overthere?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: And in 2000, you moved here, didn't you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: When you moved to live here, was it newly built by you or an old village?

Chaem: It was a new village and the barrack was located at that school.

Dany: That school?

Chaem: Yes, when the Vietnamese entered here, they built a huge barrack to protect Anlong Veang. Then, Ta [Mok] told me to live here and I came here.

Dany: Were there any people, when you first arrived here?

Chaem: Yes, it was a pure jungle rich of tigers and elephants.

Dany: Were there any people coming to live with you?

Chaem: Yes, 78 families.

Dany: 78 families with you?

Chaem: Yes, they came with me. When the Integration occurred in 2000, people from other provinces moved to live here.

Dany: When you first arrived here, what was this place called?

Chaem: The army in Ou Angrae from Ou Chrov Thum (អូរក្រវាត់). It was the place where the army rusked rice; then, it was called Ou Angrae. It was already called Ou Angrae when I arrived here.

Dany: So, you also called it Ou Angrae, right?

Chaem: Yes, we called it Ou Angrae.

Dany: When it became a village of 78 families, who was its first village chief?

Chaem: It was me. At the very beginning, when people started to come down from the mountain, they started to distribute rice. However, people in other villages got 4 kilogrammes of rice each while those in mine got only 1.5 kilos.

Dany: Why?

Chaem: They did not give all of the rice. Instead, they sold it away.

Dany: Who took the rice away to sell?

Chaem: The person from the district in charge of distributing the rice. It was divided into two sections. But *Comrade* Lai (លៃ), a district committee, was in charge instead. Then, we conducted a demonstration there but no one at the district hall talked to us because all staff had already gone away. So, we went to *Grandfather* Pim's (ប៊ឹម) house, who gave 400 [Thai] Bahts. Then, he told me to buy *Prahok* at the market for 500 and we shared it among each other and went back home. Then, we asked for more

rice because we got only 1.5 kilos. About months later, Mr. HUN Sen went there. After that, we got rice from a world organization. After Pailin (ប៉ៃលិន), it was in Anlong Veang. It was me who planned to pave that road.

Dany: Was it you who planned to pave it?

Chaem: Yes. All of us were female. I organized them into 5 squads. Then, I took the plan by myself.

Dany: To whom?

Chaem: To *Uncle Run* (រុន), the unit chairman. When, he saw he said why I wanted to meet him. I said I brought the plan to build that road to him because the district did not approve it. Then, he took it and said he would see into it and asked if I could measure the distance; I said yes. Then, I measure the road three times and planted the poles. The men looked down on us; so they unrooted the poles and we had to plant them again and again.

Dany: Where were those men from?

Chaem: They were in that village; but they were very bad.

Dany: Didn't they want you to do that work?

Chaem: No, they did not want women to do that work. We did it only in Ou Angrae village, not Tuol Prasat (ត្នូលប្រាសាទ).

Dany: Not Tuol Prasat, only Ou Angrae?

Chaem: Only Ou Angrae. I was the supervisor in charge of measuring from the school until over there. Then, *Grandfather* Thiep was in charge from there on. I measured from there until here and divided.

Dany: How about Slaeng Por (ស្លែងព័ណ៌) village? Was it called like that at that time?

Chaem: No, it was called like that later on.

Dany: What was it called, at that time?

Chaem: It was called *Grandmother Răn* (រ៉ាន់) village.

Dany: Oh, *Grandmother*?

Chaem: She was a short woman who used to be the village chief. *Grandfather Rēt* (រ៉េត) was her successor.

Dany: Where does *Grandmother Răn* live?

Chaem: She lives near the Red Cross office.

Dany: Is the Red Cross office also near *Grandfather Rēt*'s house?

Chaem: His house is alone, next to the office at the west.

Dany: Was it called *Grandmother Răn* village, at that time?

Chaem: Yes, *Grandmother* Răn village covered until my rice field around here. When I cultivated rice in that field, it was called Slaeng Por rice field. Then, the village also became Slaeng Por. Actually, Slaeng Por rice field belonged to the army.

Dany: When did you started to work in the commune?

Chaem: Since the first mandate. When the people started to split, the district came to solve the problems. They organized my village and Trpeang Trav commune was split from Akphivoad (អភិវឌ្ឍន៍) commune. I also agreed when people raised their hands to accept the split because they were very angry for they did not receive enough rice. Then, there were Ta Dev (តាដេវ), Trapeang Chas (ត្រពាំងចាស់) and this village. There were only three villages. Later on, Ou Samrông village also joined in. Then, Ou Samar (អូសាម៉ា), the new people until Tuol Svay (ទួលស្វាយ) over there. It was me who led them to pave the road.

Dany: The road to Samrông?

Chaem: Yes, the road to Samrông.

Dany: You led it to be paved, didn't you?

Chaem: Yes, I was in charge of that. Then, the Engineering Unit came to measure the road and asked me to guide them until Ou Samar for all day long.

Dany: Since you lived the 3-year regime and you faced various difficulties, did that regime affect your daily life?

Chaem: At that time, it affected only on taking care of my children and solving people's problems. I went to solve the problems every day without having time for my children. Even 3-4 of my children died, I did not arrive at their last breaths.

Dany: What did they die?

Chaem: One died in [19]75 or 76. Two more died on the mountain when I was so busy working very night.

Dany: Did that 3-year regime affect your life?

Chaem: Yes, and I saw it brought complication to my own life because children are our top priority. But I could not raise them well because I was too busy with my work. I was extremely loyal to my work and tried all the best.

Dany: On the other hand, did the 3-year regime affect the lives of the people in your community, villages and district?

Chaem: Now?

Dany: Yes, did it affect any of them?

Chaem: No, because people in this generation are mixing while those who used live with me in that regime has split away.

Dany: How is your relation with your family? Do you still have good relations with your family, parents, relative and children?

Chaem: Yes, I do.

Dany: How about in the past?

Chaem: So was it.

Dany: Before the war?

Chaem: It was also alright because I kept thinking about my parents' sacrifice to me. And so were my relatives. We still kept sharing what we got to avoid some wordings that we turned to forget our parents' and relatives' deeds towards when we became better-off.

Dany: How was your relation within your family during the 3-year regime?

Chaem: It was alright.

Dany: Did you live close to your family, parents, relatives, at that time?

Chaem: For my case, I let them live in other groups. But since [19]79, I have lived close to them. On the other hand, like what you have observed my daily behaviours, I did not change anything.

Dany: Nowadays, do you still have close relationship with your husband?

Chaem: Like before.

Dany: Like before?

Chaem: Yes, he has his work to do, I have mine.

Dany: So, your relationship has not changed at all since before the war, during the 3-year regime and later one, has it?

Chaem: No at all because we have our commitment since our wedding day, which was arranged by our parents to live together for the rest of our life.

Dany: How about your children?

Chaem: Yes, so are our children.

Dany: Have you ever described your life, experience until you come to live in Anlong Veang to your family members or next generations or your family members from distant places?

Chaem: Yes, I have but not very often. I have only told my relatives who live far away but never told those who live with me.

Dany: Haven't you told those who live with you?

Chaem: No, never.

Dany: But, you have ever told those who were from distant places, haven't you?

Chaem: Yes, I have.

Dany: How often?

Chaem: No so often. But I just told them about my hardship and difficulties. But, since now I am retired, I have told next generations and those who used to receive from me. Yes, I straight forwards and often tell them.

Dany: What have you told them?

Chaem: I told them that they had to understand their work by following my example. I have worked since I had two children and now I am 70. I can achieve this because of my struggle of work, good relations and solidarity with my co-workers and people. One more word is 'responsibility' and we have to be responsible for what we have done whether it's right or wrong. Look at me, I have never been complained about.

Dany: Normally, since you have a big family, what have you talked with each other about, in your free time?

Chaem: We have talked about what happened in the past and at the present time. Mostly, we have talked about Buddhist property.

Dany: Buddhist property?

Chaem: Yes, by comparing between what we have seen and what we can recall from our work.

Dany: Whom have you talked to?

Chaem: My children, grandchildren, nephews/nieces.

Dany: What did they say when you told them about Buddhist property?

Chaem: Yes, they listened to it. But I also check if it is not safe, I would not talk about it.

Dany: Is there anything in my mind that you do not want to talk or hard to talk about and you cannot share it with your neighbours and relatives, or anything that you hide in your mind and you find it very difficult to say it out loud?

Chaem: Yes, there is.

Dany: Is there?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: What is your difficult thing that you find hard to say?

Chaem: The thing that I find hard to say is the current problem. I have lived through one generation to two and three, now I see the current conflict. It is about the land issue. I think and realize that the land issue becomes the main problem in this generation. If I raise this issue, it will affect. What kind of effect? For example, they force people to thumbprint on the documents for a company. I say the people should not be angry with villages or communes because we can't help following the order from the top. And what kind of development we can see now? Where is it from? It is the concern I have to think about. I am afraid that in this generation, we all will become their servants.

Dany: Do you think the students in Anlong Veang should be educated about the history from previous generations, like yourself?

Chaem: Relating to education, *Uncle* asked me to read for the children, but I said he should do it by himself. I did not dare to do so.

Dany: You did not dare, did you?

Chaem: Eh, because I was afraid that they might accuse me of instigating any opposition moment.

Dany: For your own idea, do you think the students in Anlong Veang should be educated about the history from previous generations?

Chaem: I have done it too. During the vacation or the beginning of the terms, I am often invited to talk about it.

Dany: Do you think we should tell such a story to any national or international tourists who come to visit Anlong Veang?

Chaem: I can tell the story in Anlong Veang from no people lived here to many people.

Dany: From no people lived here to many people?

Chaem: Yes, there were no any civilians in the past, only militants.

Dany: Are there civilians now?

Chaem: Yes, there are so many civilians now. There are also market and town to help people to improve their living standards and to make them less concerned about land issue.

Dany: To make them less concerned about land issue?

Chaem: They are worried that they will not have enough land to share their children.

Dany: To make them less worried?

Chaem: Yes, to make them less worried. So far, I have prevented such a problem, even though it is not a long term, it can help for some extent.

Dany: Do you keep good relations with your neighbours and villagers? Are there any conflicts occurring between you and them?

Chaem: Only when they asked me to solve their problem.

Dany: What were the conflicts occurring among the villagers?

Chaem: Now, such a conflict decreases.

Dany: What were the problems in the past?

Chaem: Conflicts within their family, domestic violence, drunkenness and so. But now, such a conflict decreases.

Dany: Such a conflict decreases?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Since, you have lived through many generations. How can you compare the regulations, rules and practices to Sangkum Reastr Niyum (សង្គមរាស្ត្រនិយម)?

Chaem: The regulations, rules and practices were not very often disseminated at that time. They announced them at pagoda and people just simply followed them. In this generation, people are educated very frequently and they listen and understand very well. That is a way to reduce the corruption.

Dany: How about the regulations, rules and practices during the 3-year regime?

Chaem: During the 3-year regimes, the regulations, rules and practices were very strict.

Dany: Strict?

Chaem: Yes, strict but good.

Dany: Strict but good?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: By the way, what were the effects of that 3-year regime on the current Anlong Veang?

Chaem: During that 3-year regime?

Dany: Yes.

Chaem: On effect is that people just focus on their living by doing the farming and we solved every kind of people's problems. On the other hand, when the government is joined by various fractions like this, people just focus on their business without worrying about war.

Dany: What were the events during the war in Anlong Veang that you can recall? What kind of situations did you see in Anlong Veang during the war?

Chaem: It was very difficult in Anlong Veang during the war. People had to move a lot and they had to learn anywhere they could: under the house, the trees and so on.

Dany: During the conflicts, who fought against whom?

Chaem: *Grandfather* POL Pot's forces fought against Ta Mok's from inside.

Dany: Did POL Pot's and Ta Mok's forces fight against each other?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: During the war, who fought against whom in Anlong Veang?

Chaem: Samdech HUN Sen's forces fought against POL Pot's.

Dany: POL Pot's Khmer Rouge forces?

Chaem: Yes, the Khmer Rouge was split into two fractions.

Dany: Two of them. Were there any Vietnamese forces, at that time?

Chaem: No. Oh, there were. Some of them joined with our internal forces.

Dany: Fought against the Khmer Rouge?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Since you were very close to Ta Mok and in case your children or grandchildren ask you about Ta Mok's personality, what will you tell them?

Chaem: I will tell them that Ta Mok made their parents live, built schools, hospitals, dams and many other things in Anlong Veang. This is his historical legacy during his power.

Dany: Do you *Grandfather* SON Sen (សុំផែន សែន)?

Chaem: Yes, I know him.

Dany: How was he?

Chaem: He was alright.

Dany: How about *Grandfather* POL Pot?

Chaem: He was also not cruel.

Dany: How about *Grandfather* KHIEU Samphan?

Chaem: Even though *Grandfather* KHIEU Samphan was a petit bourgeois, he always stood by people. In conclusion, those leaders were good at each other, except during that conflict.

Dany: How about *Grandfather* NUON Chea?

Chaem: So was *Grandfather* NUON Chea.

Dany: Since you are involved in politics, are there any complicated political issues within Anlong Veang?

Chaem: No, there are only the cases where some people protest when they are told to thumbprint to provide their land to private company. But, I have tried to prevent such a protest. I checked the documents sent to me and I saw something like 'Kingdom of Cambodia, Nation, Religion, King' and whole English language. I did not know what it was; I just knew that they requested for concessionary land and they made columns in that documents for people to thumbprint.

Dany: So, there are land issues in Anlong Veang, aren't there?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Land issues between people and private company?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Besides land issues, what else?

Chaem: There seems to be nothing else.

Dany: Which is the main party in Anlong Veang?

Chaem: Cambodian People's Party.

Dany: Only Cambodian People's Party?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Why is Cambodian People's Party the main party in Anlong Veang?

Chaem: Because I see that most of the former Khmer Rouge members join this party.

Dany: I still have two more questions for you. Supposed that you are writing about the history of Anlong Veang district, which points should you include in your book?

Chaem: (laughing) As I said before, since people from every where are living in Trapeang Trav commune, first issue is land, because they come here to look for land to settle and earn their living. Secondly, even though the government's organization is acceptable, they are still worried what will happen in the future.

Dany: If you write a book, you will think about land issue and new settlers, won't you?

Chaem: Yes.

Dany: Is it your main concern?

Chaem: Yes, because I have brought the complaint to Mr. SO Phana (សុំ ផានណា), the forestry officer, and a few times at the district hall.

Dany: If you write the history of Anlong Veang, which events will you include in your book for the knowledge of next generations?

Chaem: I cannot talk about it now, maybe next time.

Dany: You cannot find what to write, can you?

Chaem: If I talk about that, it will affect other people.

Dany: You do not dare to talk, do you?

Chaem: Yes. I am afraid that there will be only me against many people who do not like me.

Dany: It is alright if you do not want to talk about that. Since you moved to live here, have there been any improvements or developments?

Chaem: Yes, there have.

Dany: Such as ...?

Chaem: The good point is that, the CPP's government has provided a lot of benefit to people. Since the people are satisfied with all of the achievement, the lower authority is also easy to work.

Dany: I still have one last question for you. What kind of benefit do you hope to get from the book that we are writing about Anlong Veang both individually and collectively?

Chaem: If you write the history of Cambodia as a whole and about Anlong Veang in particular, I think it will be more beneficial if you write about land issue and safety and security because they are scared of war. They will be relieved if the stability can be maintained.

Dany: I have no more questions for you. Do you have anything more to add or any suggestion to make?

Chaem: Since you have asked me to describe about the history, I want to suggest you not to include any inappropriate parts. You also should check the situation and include only parts that are beneficial. My second suggestion is that all of what I have mentioned does not mean I blame any party or government because from the Integration Period until now, Cambodian People's Party have solved many problems and brought about a lot of benefits to the people. As a result, they usually vote for the Cambodian People's Party ever since.

Dany: Yes, thank you very much your interview with me for more than two hours spoiling your meal time.

Chaem: That's alright.

The End