

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Genocide site in Kampong Cham and Kampong Thom

BURIAL SITE:

1. Trea II (Trea Sub-district Krauchmar District Kampong Cham province)

Tria II Village is one of a series of five Cham Villages in Krauchmar District, which were emptied and devastated during the Pol Pot time, with all of the Cham inhabitants being removed or killed. At Tria II we were shown the bones from two of five mass graves sticking out from the river bank. The other three mass graves which are located under a grove of lemon trees nearby have not been excavated. We were shown the houses in the village which were used as prisons, and as offices for the Khmer Rouge. One witness told us that the KR brought people by boat from up the river to kill there.

Tow Cham witnesses told us that all the bridges leading to this village were cut except one in order to isolate the area, and that none of the local people were allowed into the area. The KR played loud music from 6.00pm until 9.00pm to attempt to cover the cries of their victims. They were told that the victims were killed by hitting them on the back of the head with a hoe. The children were held by the leg and had their heads bashed against a tree to kill them. The two Cham witnesses, who worked as carpenters for the KR, were the only Cham left in the area during the Pol Pot time. The husbands were taken away from their wives and children, on the pretext of being given work, and they were then sent to live in other Cham communities.

The local Mosque and Muslim School in Tria Commune have now been re-established with assistance from the Malaysian Government.

2. Koh Phal (Peus 1 sub-district Krauchmar District Kampong Cham province)

Koh Phal village can only be described as a killing factory for the Region during the Pol Pot time. We were shown 49 large mass grave (2m x 4m) near the village, only two of which have been excavated. Witnesses informed us that short term prisons were established in one of three large purpose built buildings, one of which remains, and that the others were used as KR barracks and storehouses. The prisoners were brought by boat from across the Mekong (Kratie?) and from "up the river", held overnight, and taken to the pits to be killed the next day. A fisherman from the area said he could hear the screams of the prisoners in the night as he was fishing, and that he saw the boats full of victims arriving every day. This witness worked as a fisherman there for only three months during the Dry Season of 1977. The number of killing at Koh Phal is estimated to be 5-10,000 victims, many of whom were Cham people.

3. Prey Dang Veng and Prey Tbeng

Wat Sra Nge Prison is located in phum Sra Nge, khum Tbeng, srok Kampong Svay, khet Kampong Thom. The religious Buddhist building in Wat Sra Nge was converted into the prison and the place for torturing. The prison was built in 1975. In the front of the prison are two big trees under which victims were tied and interrogated and then taken to be killed at 2 sites:

1. Killing site Prey Tbeng in srok Kampong Svay, khet Kampong Thom. This killing site is around 150 to 170 m east of Wat Sra Nge. It was a dense forest in the Pol Pot's time. There are 50 pits, each of which is 3 to 4 cubic meters. Small pits can hold 3 to 7 bodies. The total death toll of victims killed here was 1,500.

2. Killing site Prey Dang Veng in Phnom Sra Nge, khum Tbeng, srok Kampong Svay, khet Kampong Thom. This killing site is about 1.50 km northeast of Wat Sra Nge prison. It was a dense and long forest which was far from the people's houses. Now, people have cleared some parts of the forest to grow plants. We reached this location at 11:00 a.m. We saw many pits big and small

in the middle of the forest. Some were 4x4 meter squares, or 2x2 meter squares, about 1.50 m deep. According to witnesses after 1979, there were approximately 400 to 500 pits with 3,500 victims. We got this information from a witness named Noch Un, age 46. In the Pol Pot's time, Noch Un lived in phum Sra Nge, khum Tbeng, srok Kampong Svay and worked in a mobile work brigade. Since 1979, Noch Un has lived in khum Tbeng, srok Kampong Svay, khet Kampong Thom. Noch Un told us that two kinds of victims brought to be killed here: base people who were politically involved in any party, committed crimes of immorality, were unable to work, were always ill, spoke too much without thinking, and had freedom of movement; and civil servants, policemen, soldiers, and students taken from Phnom Penh city and khet Kampong Thom. Victims were transported by trucks, ox-carts and by foot. Lines of victims were tied and marched to be imprisoned here. The victims were all taken to be killed at the 2 mentioned killing sites. The killing peaked in 1978 (pictures and more detailed information recorded on cassette).

MEMORIAL SITE:

4. Wat Skun (So Tep Sub-district Cheung Prey district K. Cham province)

An elaborate new stupa has been built at this Wat as a memorial to those killed at the nearby killing fields, paid for by the relatives. The bones, only femurs, are stacked in a neat block approx. 2m x 2m x 2m, representing many thousands of victims.

About 500 meters West of the Wat is a large killing site with many mass graves which has now been turned into an orchard for growing cashew nut trees. The pits are 2 meter square, and we counted more than 400 pits. Many pits have been excavated, and they contained 15-20 bodies in each pit, giving a total of more than 5,000 victims killed at this site. Bones and pieces of clothing are still visible in the ground around the pits.

Cheth Cheun, base person from that village, witnessed the killing at this site on several occasions in 1977 when he came to cut bamboo to use for climbing sugar palm trees. He said that the victims, who were New People, men, women, and children, were brought by truck to a Santesok house next to the house of the chief of the District, where they were made to undress except for their underpants. There was a "hill" of clothing near this house. They were killed by hitting on the back of the neck with a metal axle until the bar bent. Children were swung around by the feet and their heads bashed against a tree. The victims were then stabbed in the abdomen with a bayonet before being pushed into the pit, according to the witness, in order to stop the body swelling up with gas, and thus to allow more bodies to be buried in each grave.

5. Wat No Kor (Ampil sub-district Kampong Siem district Kampong Cham province)

This Wat is situated on High way 7 from Kampong Cham to Phnom Penh near Kampong Cham, and is built within the grounds of an ancient Angkor temple. At this Wat are two memorials used to store some of the bones that have been brought from the massive killing fields at Wat Phnom Proh, a few more kilometers out along the same highway. One of the memorials is used simply as a storage for bones, and the other is a stupa used for ceremonial purposes. Both Memorials together contain the bones of more than 1,000 victims.

6. Wat Baray Chan Dek (Baray sub-district Baray District Kampong Thom Province)

Wat Baray Chan Dek criminal center is composed of prisons, a killing site and a memorial. It is located in phum Troh, khum Baray, srok Baray, khet Kampong Thom. Traveling along National Road # 6, the criminal center is 15 km from munti srok of srok Baray.

Prison

The Bali house and the religious Buddhist building inside Wat Baray Chan Dek were used as prisons. The Bali house was the prison in which victims were handcuffed and shackled. The Buddhist building was the prison in which victims were detained—but not handcuffed or shackled. The prisoners here were not required to do manual labor. They were to be detained here just for a short period prior to being killed.

Killing Site

Killing site was in front of the religious Buddhist building. The site is about 70 m wide, 100 to 150 m long. Around 150 to 200 pits are scattered about the site, each of which is 4 m wide and 4 to 6 m long. The victims killed here included young and old people, Chinese, Islamic, Vietnamese, civil servants, 17th -April people evacuated from the city as well as base people. The killing peaked in 1978.

Memorial

The remains of the victims under Pol Pot's regime were placed in a big 2-story stupa which is 4 m wide, 4 m long and 7 to 8 m high. These remains outnumber those in other places. Every year, on the 20th of May, Hatred Day is always held to recall the people's sufferings caused by the Pol Pot's men.

According to the witness, an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 victims were killed here. The witness was Kin Sang, age 51, male 1.60 m tall, robust, sparse gray hair, fingerless left-hand. He has lived in phum Troh, khum Baling, srok Baray, khet Kampong Thom since before Pol Pot's time. The chief of khum Baling also provided information as mentioned above. We photographed them and recorded our interviews on cassette.

7. Tuol Ta Plorng (Trach village, Kampong Chen sub-district Stung district K. Thom province)

At 11.30 a.m., we inspected Tuol Ta Phlorng execution site with, Mr. Luon Khom. We inspected pits and took photographs of the stupa (memorial) in which victims' bones were stored. The execution sites are on 3 high hills with a lot of palm trees, Bayan trees and tamarind trees. Ta Hul Leang takes care of victims' bones. We did not meet him. After we took photographs of bones, pits and the execution site, we did not yet estimate the number of victims, but we seek for witness who lived near the site and who used to be in the prison in Reaksmei Saophoan High School. We saw a great many bones were stored in the memorial. At 12 noon, we found Mr. Chum Vin, 62, used to be in Reaksmei Sophorn High School prison. He lives in Trach village, Kampong Chen Cheung (north) sub-district. He was in the prison in 1977 and was released in 3 months and 10 days later. He was in prison because of stealing and picking rice. Mr. Vin saw a lot of people in the prison with him. The interrogation place was north of the school building. He was tortured until one of his legs crippled. The Khmer Rouge took the prisoners to kill every night at Tuol Ta Phlorng 500 meters away from the school. He added that after 1979 in 1980 or 1981, villagers dug up graves to explore gold and they found uncountable corpses. They did find gold. All people who were killed in 1976 (new people) from various cities. The victims were mixed: Khmer, Chinese, and officials. Mr. Moeng Huot Hoeun gave the same information as Mr. Chum Vin. He also went to dig for gold. So, the information from the witnesses, Huot Hoeun, Luon Khom and Deputy Chief of the district seems important and similar.

The estimation of pits and victims at the execution site of Tuol Ta Phlorng

According to informants and witness who witnessed the events, and made the following estimations:

- There are two 5 meter x 20 meter pits. The pits were 2 meters deep. There are 200 or 500 small pits.
- There are 100 or 200 corps per main pit and 1 or 3 or 4 corpses per small pit according to big or small families. So there are 50,000 or 100,000 or 150,000 corpses. Bones were not all stored in the memorial, because there were too many. Cows ate a lot of bones because villagers dug the graves up to explore gold and the bones were in mess all over the killing hill.

List of surviving prisoners

Mr. Chum Vin, Mr. Moeng Huot Hoeun and Mr. Luon Khom told us that: There are 3 surviving prisoners:

1. Koan Prik lives in Trel Village, Kampong Chen Cheung (north) sub-district.
2. Koan Sieng, died after 1979.

3. Prin Meas lives in Chy Meas village, Msa Krang sub-district.
These people can be found, if needed because they are all still alive.