



Krousar Thmey
គ្រួសារថ្មី

KROUSAR THMEY - NEW FAMILY
first Cambodian foundation
assisting deprived children

SCHOOL FOR KHMER CULTURE AND ARTS IN SISOPHON

Semestral report : July 2003 / December 2003



Report written by Yann ROGER.

January 2004

visit our website : www.krousar-thmey.org

Cambodia : 4 Street 257 - Kampuchea Krom - Phnom Penh
Tel. : (855-23) 366-184 - Fax : (855-23) 882-113 - e-mail : krousar-thmey@bigfoot.com
Krousar Thmey is recognised as a charity in France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
1. KROUSARTHMEY PRESENTATION	5
1.1. THE STORY AND THE ACTIONS OF THE FOUNDATION	5
1.2. TODAY'S PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS TO COME	6
PARTNERSHIPS	6
SPEECH LANGUAGE THERAPY PROJECT	7
FAMILY PARTY	7
2. CULTURE AND ARTS IN CAMBODIA	8
2.1. CAMBODIA TODAY	8
2.2. THE ROYAL BALLET OF CAMBODIA ^[6]	8
2.3. SHADOW THEATRE	9
THE HISTORY OF SHADOW THEATRE AROUND THE WORLD ⁽⁸⁾	9
FROM THE SLAUGHTER HOUSE TO THE SHOP : THE LIFE OF A COW SKIN	10
3. ACTIVITIES OF THE SCHOOL FOR KHMER CULTURE AND ARTS	12
3.1. THE SCHOOL	12
CURRICULUM	12
DURING HOLIDAYS	12
STAFF	13
SEMINARS	13
3.2. THE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN	13
IN VILLAGES	14
SPECIAL EVENTS	15
CHILDREN TRAFFICKING WORKSHOPS	15
NEWS AND PROJECTS	15
PRESS REVIEW	17
2003 HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE	18
ROYAL BALLET OF CAMBODIA	19
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	20

GLOSSARY

Acronym	Definition
ABC	Association for the Blind Cambodians
CAO	Cambodian Optometry Association
CWCC	Cambodian Women Crisis Center
DAC	Disability Action Council
DDP	Deaf Development Program
ESC	Enfants Sourds du Cambodge
HKI	Helen Keller International
HDI	Human Index Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRIS	International Resources for the Improvement of Sight
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
TDH	Terre Des Hommes

INTRODUCTION

Geographical and human crossroads the Kingdom of Cambodia just comes out of very dark years during which its amazing heritage was badly hurt and on the verge of disappearing for ever. Rescued at the very last minute by a couple of old masters who managed to survive the Khmer Rouge regime, it is now coming back with great style inspired by the new youngster generation.

In order to better protect the Khmer culture and to bring it forward on the international limelight the UNESCO proclaimed in November 2003^[1] the Royal Ballet of Cambodia “ Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity ” .

Indeed Khmer art has its cultural roots deep into the Indian continent: its traditions regarding traditions, social hierarchy and writing all come from India and slowly merged as its own in between Ist and IVth century. Cambodia along the time developed its own characteristics and the refinement of its art expresses today through dances, sculpture, music and shadow theatre.

On the other hand Krousar Thmey opened in 1995 a “School for Khmer Culture and Arts” based in Sisophon, Banteay Meanchey province. Since 9 years the school has taught to more than 1000 students per year one of the five following traditional artistic subjects: drawing, sculpture, shadow theatre, dance and music. The school also shelters a prevention campaign against human trafficking and prostitution. The campaign aims at raising awareness to remote villagers about stratagems used by traffickers. It is especially on shadow theatre that this report is orientated but above all on the activities of the school during the semester July - December 2003.

For any other information, please feel free to contact us

Σ krousar-thmey@bigfoot.com

[1] : See article of the daily newspaper *Cambodge Soir* at the end of the report.

1. Krousar Thmey presentation

1.1. The story and the actions of the Foundation

Krousar Thmey is the first Cambodian Foundation assisting deprived children. It is non political and non religious structure.

It first started in the refugee camp of Site II at the Khmer Thai border. In 1991 Site II was a real fortified city made of bamboo where more than 200 000 refugees were living crammed up. Many orphans wandered there and this is how the idea came up to build them a place to live and eat. Two orphanages opened inside the camp named "Orphelinats de Dangrek et Obok".

In 1993 and following the 23/10/1991 Paris agreements unifying the 4 political parties in dispute the Thai government organises the closing of the refugee camps and the return of its inhabitants to their country. The UNHCR asked to the "Orphelinats de Dangrek et Obok" to repatriate the last children from site II into their native country that some of those had never seen. Those campaigns gradually took place between 28th March 1992 and 30th April 1993 when the camp eventually closed.

Krousar Thmey settles then in Cambodia. To accommodate and cater those children the first protection centre was built in Siem Reap in November 1992 and later the ones in Takmau near Phnom Penh and under the request and financial support from UNICEF a third protection centre opened in Sisophon.

Over the last 10 years Krousar Thmey never stopped working in favour of Cambodian deprived children and this through 3 main topics:

- Childhood protection.
- Support towards education and schooling.
- Cultural and artistic development.

Other centers were built:

- 4 centers for street children : 2 in Phnom Penh, 1 in Poipet and 1 in Siem Reap,
- 4 schools for deaf or blind in Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Battambang and Siem Reap,
- 1 school for Khmer Culture and Arts in Sisophon,
- 7 family houses,

- 2 braille bookmaking workshops,
- 1 village for single women and their children in Poipet,
- 1 vocational training centre on fishing techniques in Sihanoukville.

Krousar Thmey also developed programmes to raise awareness among the population :

- 2 free exhibitions in Battambang and Siem Reap give the opportunity, not only to tourists but also to children from public schools, to learn about their own culture and natural environment.
- A prevention campaign against trafficking and prostitution (posters + drama) played twice a month in remote villages of the Banteay Meanchey district,
- A cultural game called « Neak Doeung » on the same principle of *Trivial Pursuit*.

The Foundation really aims at raising awareness among Cambodian people towards those issues. Krousar Thmey therefore employs more than 220 Cambodians and only 4 French volunteers who temporarily come to work in communications and finance control. Because those actions are on the long term basis we always work in close link with the government and national representatives. We hope that in the future a deeper involvement from the government could happen for example in sponsoring financially one of our programme.

1.2. Today's partnerships and projects to come

Partnerships

Cambodia is a country where more than 450 NGO established each one having its own scale and action plan. To better progress we work together on a regular basis or during more specific events.

We continue our cooperation with HKI and IRIS who auscultate our children and carry out operation if required. Since May 2003, 3 children from Siem Reap school were operated in the IRIS centre of Kampong Cham.

In the school of Kampong Cham that we opened in 2002 there is one classroom dedicated to low vision children. Those 12 children were auscultated by the NGO CAO and 7 of them received glasses. They all learn braille and use enlarged printed letters to read and write.

The NGO ESC came back from 24th December to 03rd January 2004. They continued their biannual checking of every hearing aid equipped deaf children. They also brought new devices to fit on new comers.

We keep on working with DDP on the construction of the Khmer Sign Language. 2 deaf children from our school in Chba Ampeou go regularly to attend meeting scheduled by the DDP.

Monthly meetings with ABC - and other NGO as IRIS, HKI, CARITAS, Medicam, DAC, ... - should enable the introduction of English lessons in our schools of Kampong Cham and Chba Ampeou.

The question about of vocational trainings for our young deaf and blind is still on the agenda. This will become a really issue as our children are getting closer to their adult life. This is the reason why NGO must meet together and think about it.

Krousar Thmey started to work on it by offering massages training, weaving, computing, music and dances courses. Some of our previous students have been employed in our braille workshops.

Speech language therapy project

A French volunteering speech language therapist started her one year mission in August 2003. Her goal is to train teachers for deaf children to new techniques by giving them new tools to improve communication within the deaf community: new exercises, optimisation of their hearing aid device and finally training on talking for the less handicapped. She first took the opportunity during the annual training of all the staff to give general knowledge on the subject. She is now spending some time in each of our 4 schools to assist the teachers in their daily work. One of the result of her mission is the building of a Kindergarten for deaf children aged below 6 year old.

Family party

The family party will be held in Kampong Cham on 5th, 6th and 7th April 2004. Krousar Thmey will celebrate its 13th anniversary. !

This event is the opportunity for most of our children to meet together and create close links by playing, dancing, etc... It is also a good time for the staff who join the party, from the cooks to the drivers and of course all the directors and teachers! The directors already started raising funds to cover the cost of this event.

Unfortunately the children being more and more each year, some of them will have to wait for their turn...

2. Culture and Arts in Cambodia

2.1. Cambodia Today

With a population of 13.4 millions people, it is a young population which represents Cambodia. A demographic survey^[2] shows that 52% of the youth are aged below 18 whereas 78% might not be officially registered. An assessment^[3] from the NGO Population Reference Bureau predicts that Cambodian population should reach 18.5 millions people in 2025 and should double and reach 24.4 millions by 2050. While walking along the roads or in the city streets an appealing seeing is that those places are full of life and children shouting.

According to a report from the World Bank^[4], reduction of poverty is progressing but too slowly. Between 2000 and 2003 the number of people living with less than 2 dollars per day only drooped by 1.25% from 80% of the population to 79%. Cambodia ranks 130th out of 175 countries rated by the UNDP^[5] according to their HDI. It the poorest country in South East Asia influenced by both neighbouring Vietnamese and Thai cultures but also the big Chinese community which settled down here since many decades. Today and 6 months after the national elections of July 2003 its rebirth is still a long-term job organised by a tumultuous political life which is still trying to place its marker.

It is therefore in favour of this Cambodian youth that Krousar Thmey developed it various programs while always making sure that the cultural identity of the child is respected.

[2] : Survey on the demographic and health situation in Cambodia, 2000.

[3] : Newspaper *The Cambodia Daily*, 25/07/2003.

[4] : Newspaper *Cambodge Soir* du 1/07/2003.

[5] : Newspaper *Cambodge Soir* du 19/10/2003.

2.2. The Royal Ballet of Cambodia^[6]

According to legend, the dance is as ancient as the Khmer people themselves. Carved representations of dancers, as those adorning the monuments at Angkor, first appeared on the region's temples in the ninth century. Infused with a sacred and symbolic role over the centuries, the dance represents the values of refinement, respect and spirituality. Today Cambodians esteem this tradition because it embodies the soul and culture of the Khmer people. Its repertory perpetuates the legends related to the origins of Cambodia, and its dancers were considered messengers of the gods and ancestors.

Four distinct character types exist in the classical repertory *Neang* the woman, *Neayrong* the man, *Yeak* the giant, and *Sva* the monkey each possessing distinctive colours, costumes, makeup, masks and gestures.

The codified gestures and poses that dancers must learn during years of intensive training evoke emotions such as fear, love, joy or rage. An orchestra

performing sacred music accompanies the dance, and a female chorus provides running commentary on the plot and the emotions mimed by the dancers.

The Royal Ballet practically ceased to exist under by the Khmer Rouge, who eliminated almost all master dancers and musicians. Immediately after Pol Pot's defeat in 1979, dance troupes re-emerged and performances of the ancient repertory resumed. Classical dance, once again officially linked with Cambodia's king and religion, played a central role in rebuilding the country as well as a new national identity.

In recent years, the ballet has regained much of its former splendour, yet it faces numerous difficulties, such as the lack of funding and suitable performances spaces, competition from modern media, and the risk being transformed into a mere tourist attraction. Only a few surviving masters possess intimate knowledge of all aspects of this rich tradition.

Of course dances are at the centre of the school activities. Lessons are given everyday and students often perform during week end with the campaign against trafficking and prostitution or specific events.

[6] : www.portal.unesco.org/culture

[7] : See article on daily newspaper *Cambodge Soir* at the end of the report.

2.3. Shadow theatre

The history of shadow theatre around the world⁽⁸⁾

The geographical origin of shadow puppetry is as dark as the colour of the projected shadows ! The research job carried out is hindered by the lack of written proof and the difficulty to grasp the meaning of the words used - especially Sanskrit in India and old Chinese - .

Recent studies tend to admit that the first forms of shadow puppetry appeared in South India in II BC. The sanskrit word *saubikha* « shadow player » identified in the old treaty of 160-140BC is often used as evidence. Later the shadow theatre would have travelled to Java and China. With more certainty a written Indian evidence recalls that the Sanskrit drama *Dutangada* was played on 7th March 1243 during a spring festival in the area of Gujarat, North India. On the Chinese side there are two theories: one saying that the first comment about shadow puppetry was made in XIth century during the *Sung* dynasty, the other in XIIth century. Many Chinese legends for instance tell that in 121 BC, a servant of the the Emperor *Wu* from the *Han* dynasty had the idea to bring back the shape of the late concubine *Ly* with her shadow on a stretched white gazed screen ; this legend aims at bringing back the origin of shadow puppetry in China.

Opaque or translucent puppets and whether fitted with horizontally or vertically-held control rods are very important sources of information in this research ; it is interesting to note that only India shows the whole variety of features whereas all the other countries only use one single technique : horizontal-held control rod and translucent in China, Turkey, Greece and Arab countries, and opaque and vertically-held control rod in South East Asia.

It is even more interesting to note that in India shadow theatre using translucent puppets originates from Deccan area, north part of a southern region closest to China while opaque shadows come from far south India. All of this tend to say that propagation of the art went north through China and south to Indonesia. From China the phenomenon would have carried on its route towards Middle-East by following Mongols invasions.

Its establishment was made possible in South East Asia (after XIth century and more probably in XIIIth century) with the help of Muslims emigrated from India (Cham people in Vietnam, Lao, Cambodia and Thailand, Islamic Malaysia and Indonesia).

On the occident side Egypt possesses 3 texts related to shadow theatre dated 1260-1277 and written by a local physician. During XIVth century Mongols and more precisely hero Jenghiz Khan successors would have introduced shadow theatre in Persia while Turkey may have borrowed the art from Egypt during XVIth century. In Europe the first allusion was made in Spain in 1619 in the terms of « Chinese shadows » used later in France too. The coming of shadow puppetry in the western countries is a poser since a Portuguese text from 1515 explains the similarities of the puppets seen by its author and the Portuguese ones called "bénéditos". Portugal had indeed colonies in South East Asia during XVIth century.

Today traditional shadow theatre is played especially in India, in South East Asia, in China but also in Greece and Turkey where the episode of the popular character Karagos carries on entertaining children and adults. Indonesia has managed to take the most out of them in attracting tourists around the various puppets also called *wayang*. China has gained an international gratitude for the extreme elegance and neatness of its shadows.

[8] : *Observation on the historical development of puppetry*, Keith Rawlings, 1999 et 2003. Available on www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/definitions/historical/

From the slaughter house to the shop : the life of a cow skin

Last year the school was renamed "School for Khmer Culture and Arts" and lost its previous title of "Shadow Theatre Workshop". This is to remember how deeply rooted is the art of shadow puppetry in that place !

This one of the 5 subjects that the children can learn and from the buying of the leather skin to the selling of the puppet each step is being carefully taught.

Here are the main steps in the making of a puppet :

1. Buying of the skin at the slaughter house.
2. Stretching on a wooden frame and scrapping off the grease and flesh stuck on the inside of the skin.
3. 24h soaking in a mixture of lime juice and lime.
4. Stretching on a wooden frame to scrap off hairs.
5. Painting with a natural colorant made of boiled bark.
6. Drying under the sun.
7. Storage of the skin ready to be carved.

Depending on the size of the skin and the size of the puppet a cow skin can usually produce 10 puppets.



Step N° 3 : hairs are scrapped off with a knife.

3. Activities of the School for Khmer Culture and Arts

3.1. The school

Curriculum

The school welcome children from two secondary public schools from Monday to Saturday. Sometimes other children from primary schools or those showing willingness to learn about Khmer arts receive special courses. The two schools we work with include our subjects in the curriculum from the National Education. Each child from grade 7 or 8 come therefore to our school and receive 1 hour per week all the school year round. An assessment of each one is made and communicated to the public school.

At the beginning of the school year 2003/2004 1075 students were enrolled in the school and the repartition was as follows :

Drawing	Sculpture	Dance	Music	Shadow Theatre	Permanents	Total
304	316	237	129	44	45	1075

Because some students are sometimes absent teachers give from time to time morale lessons to remind them the good manners expected inside the school.

The number of pupils varied along each month and the situation in December was as follows :

Drawing	Sculpture	Dance	Music	Shadow Theatre	Permanents	Total
505	474	313	114	68	45	1519

During holidays

During the holidays of July and August 2003, the school opened its classrooms to any child one willing to learn. Thus in July 2003, numbers were as follows :

Drawing	Sculpture	Dance	Music	Shadow Theatre	Permanents	Total
223	61	62	9	35	45	435

They all benefit from 1 daily hour. The sculpture class always offers to interested children to learn how to carve on wood (sculpture on leather during the year) : children must then bring their own piece of wood that they bring back home when finished.

On 14th August 2003, students from the school and Japanese students organised a day to collect garbage in public places. The same type of event occurred in November 2003.

Staff

The staff number is stable and 11 people are employed : one director, one assistant director, one sculpture teacher, a shadow theatre one, a drawing one, a music one, two dance teachers, a driver and 2 watchmen.

Two English teachers come to give few hours of lessons each week.

Seminars

The director or her assistant attend seminars or meeting. Here is the list of those they took part during this semester :

- 3rd - 5th and 24th - 26th July 2003 : The director attended a seminar on Children Trafficking organised by TDH.
- 24th October 2003 : The assistant director went on training in Phnom Penh at CWCC office.
- 10th - 13th November 2003 : The director went to Kratié for a meeting held by TDH on Children Trafficking and the action plan for year 2004.

3.2. The prevention campaign

The school always count on its 45 students - also called "permanent students" - to lead the prevention campaign against children trafficking and prostitution. Recruited from grade 7 to 12 they are the most skilled and motivated students from the school. In January 2004, 15 new comers have started to train to substitute in the future those who will leave the permanent troupe. The permanent have some advantages such as free English lessons and school materials.

The troupe usually perform 2 times a month in a remote village of the Banteay Meanchey province. They play a drama followed by dances and music and also sometimes a shadow theatre play if the show is played in the evening. The drama tells the story of a traffickant lady coming to recruit new children.

The troupe gives to local authorities posters edited especially by Krousar Thmey. Those posters also aims at raising awareness among villagers of the

stratagems used by traffickants to seduce parents and influenced them to confide their children. Anne Horsley of IOM reminds in an article released in December 2003 (see article in the press review) : « Efforts to curb the illegal migration need to include educating parents and children ». This poster distribution completely fits to this remark inasmuch as even illiterate people can still understand the message conveyed by looking at the simple images.

In villages

The troupe sets up in the morning and starts to make some advertisement. Soon the news spread that a show is on its way and many children and adults come to watch the show in the afternoon. This sort of show being scarce in the countryside it becomes easily a big event and often the troupe is asked by the chief of the village to come and perform one more time. 9 shows of that type were given during this semester.



T-Shirt of the prevention campaign.

Special events

Dances are sometimes performed on special religious or official ceremonies. This request from the public provincial authorities is a real proof the genuineness and the good reputation that our school acquired around Sisophon. The following picture was taken in a pagoda during the Buddhist ceremony of *Kathen*.

Students performed 7 times on special occasions.



Kathen ceremony.

Children trafficking workshops

From Mai 2003 to January 2004, 90 workshops lasting 2 hours each were organised together with TDH and CWCC on the theme Children Trafficking. 30 to 60 people attended each workshop (villagers and children from schools). The seminars where the staff went this semester were part of that project.

News and projects

The truck carrying the troupe in the countryside was converted to be able to perform in places where no stage is available. The troupe can now settle anywhere... except during rainy season!

The new logo is being updated in each of our centers ; the logo on the walls of the school was painted in December 2003.

The future projects is to go and play the show further than the Banteay Meanchey province. Playing in areas where there is no electricity make the school thinking of buying a small generator. Going on tour in places such as Pursat or Kampong Thom is also another project.

New posters will be printed since around 500 were given this semester.

Eventually a new sound mixer is on the shopping list.

PRESS REVIEW

2003 Human Rights Prize

Year 2003 finished with a great piece of news as Krousar Thmey was awarded the 2003 Human Rights Prize by the French Republic. Together with 4 other international NGO Miss Cheam Kosal, director of Krousar Thmey in Cambodia, received the prize from the hands of the French Prime Minister M. Jean-Pierre Raffarin in Paris on 11th December 2003. We received a donation of 15000EUR.

This decision was made to recognise the work that we have been carrying out since 1996 in the town of Poipet at the Khmer-Thai border. Krousar Thmey opened a village made of 20 small wooden houses which welcomes single mothers with very low income and each house is surrounded by a small garden where they can grow fruits and vegetables. They don't need to pay any rent and Krousar Thmey even helps some of the poorest families : the only condition for them being to send their children to school.

Today 20 mothers and 81 children benefit from this program.



Article paru dans un quotidien Khmer « Kampuchea Thmey Daily » le 8/01/04.

Royal Ballet of Cambodia

Danse

**Les autorités épinglent les troupes
qui “dénaturent” le répertoire classique**



Le ministère de la Culture a exprimé hier ses craintes d'assister à une "dénaturation" du répertoire classique qui serait mis à mal par un nombre croissant de troupes de danse. Alors que le Ballet royal

a été inscrit en fin d'année dernière sur la liste du patrimoine immatériel de l'humanité, les autorités sont décidées à protéger ses chorégraphies. Quitte à interdire certaines troupes.

Page 8

Article released in « Cambodge Soir » on 11/02/04.

Human trafficking

The CAMBODIA DAILY 17

NATIONAL

Children Beggars Deported From Vietnam

BY SAING SOENTHRITH
AND SOLANA PYNE
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

HO CHI MINH CITY - Vietnamese police bused 65 Cambodians from Ho Chi Minh City back to Cambodia on Friday, after arresting them for being in the country illegally, border officials said.

The group, mostly children from Svay Rieng province, is part of a growing population of Cambodians traveling to Vietnam to beg for money.

"We have been sending Cambodian beggars back to Cambodia sometimes as often as once or twice a month," said Luon Kimkhun, consul general at the Cambodian consulate in Ho Chi Minh City.

He said that many of the children are trafficked by ring leaders who keep a percentage of money earned from begging. He added that many of the returnees head back to Vietnam after they are released.

Hundreds of Cambodian children are begging in Vietnamese cities, according to Anne Horsley, a project coordinator with the International Organization for Migration.

But she added that a small IOM study of two groups recently repatriated suggested that more children are taken to Vietnam by one



district and had been begging on the city's streets for three weeks.

A definitive picture of the problem is hard to come by, as are statistics about how many of the children are victims of trafficking and how many return to Vietnam after being repatriated, Horsley said. Very little research has focused on the problem, and so most evidence is anecdotal.

Poverty is the main reason children beg, Horsley said. But Hun Neng, the provincial governor in Svay Rieng and the brother of the prime minister, disagreed.

"I went down myself to their houses in Chantrea and Kompong Ro districts," he said. "They are begging to buy a motorbike or a TV, even though they have plenty of rice to feed them."

Regardless of motivations, those traveling to Vietnam to beg represent a problem that is only just emerging, especially when compared to those crossing the border into Thailand, where as many as half of the children are trafficked by ringleaders, Horsley said. "The challenge now is to stop it from spreading," she said.

Efforts to curb the illegal migration need to include educating parents and children, she said. But, she said, they also have to make it easier to prosecute the traffickers.

Saing Soenthrith/The Cambodia Daily
Srey Mach, 7, and her brother, Mouk, 8, beg on Chau Van Liem Street in Ho Chi Minh City's Cholon District 5.

Article released in « Cambodia Daily » on 29/12/03.

Thanks to your generous support youngsters in Sisophon can enjoy themselves while learning the great traditions of their country.



M. Sao Vann, teacher of shadow theatre, his pupils and their work.

On behalf of them,
THANK YOU!!!