

"A society cannot know itself if it does not have an accurate memory of its own history."

Looking back

&

moving forward

Considering the legacy of the Khmer Rouge

ការពិចារណាអំពីកេរដំណែលរបបខ្មែរក្រហម

គ្រី ស៊ុយហៀង គឺជាក្មេងជំនាន់ក្រោយដែលកើតក្រោយរបបកម្ពុជាប្រជាធិបតេយ្យរយៈពេល៨ឆ្នាំ។ ខ្ញុំបានចូលប្រឡូកនៅក្នុងសង្គម ដែលនៅក្នុងនោះទាំងអ្នកប្រកួតសាររបស់ខ្ញុំ ក៏ដូចជាគ្រូនៅសាលាមិនបានបង្ហាត់ខ្ញុំអំពីចំណេះដឹងស្តីពីអំពើប្រល័យពូជសាសន៍ទេ។ នៅពេលដែលរបបនេះត្រូវបានបញ្ចប់នៅឆ្នាំ១៩៧៩ ប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រជាតិដែលមានលក្ខណៈនយោបាយត្រូវបានបង្កើតឡើងដោយមិនបានរួមបញ្ចូលរបបខ្មែរក្រហម។ ដូច្នេះ ខ្ញុំធំធាត់ឡើងដោយបានដឹងតិចតួចបំផុតអំពីរបបដ៏កំណាចនេះ។

នាក់។ ដូច្នេះ តើយើងគួរតែបំភ្លេចអតីតកាលដែលទ្រោះនាពេលបច្ចុប្បន្ននេះយើងមានសន្តិភាពហើយនោះ? ចុះអ្វីទៅជាការពិតនិងយុត្តិធម៌? តើមានការពិត និងយុត្តិធម៌អាចធ្វើឲ្យមានភាពខុសគ្នាដែរឬទេ ចំពោះអ្នកដែលបានស្លាប់បាត់បង់ជីវិតទៅ ឬក៏អ្នកដែលតែរស់រានមានជីវិតពីរបបនោះ? ចម្លើយរបស់ខ្ញុំពិតជាអាច។ ទោះបីជាការពិតនិងយុត្តិធម៌នឹងមិនអាចនាំជីវិតអ្នកដែលបានស្លាប់បាត់បង់ជីវិតឲ្យរស់ឡើងវិញដដែល ប៉ុន្តែវានឹងគ្មានសន្តិភាពពិតប្រាកដទេដល់បណ្តាគ្មានការបង្ហាញពីការពិតនិងយុត្តិធម៌នោះ។ ជាងនេះទៅទៀត ភាពរីករាលដាលនូវអំពើដ៏កំណាចដែលកើតមានដល់ប្រទេសកម្ពុជាមិនបានរលូនបាត់ទៅតាមពេលវេលានោះទេ។ ដូច្នេះ ការពិតនិងយុត្តិធម៌មានសារៈសំខាន់សម្រាប់អនាគតកម្ពុជា ព្រោះយុត្តិធម៌និងការពិតទាំងនេះមិនត្រឹមតែផ្តល់នូវមធ្យោបាយដើម្បីលើក និងទទួលស្គាល់ភាពឈឺចាប់របស់ជនរងគ្រោះទេ ប៉ុន្តែវាថែមទាំងជាធាតុដើមនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវស្រាវជ្រាវមិនឲ្យអំពើឃោរឃៅបែបនេះកើតឡើងម្តងទៀត។ ជាងនេះទៅទៀត ការពិតមិនត្រឹមតែផ្តល់តែចំពោះជនរងគ្រោះប៉ុណ្ណោះទេ វាក៏ផ្តល់ដល់ក្មេងជំនាន់ក្រោយផងដែរ។ ដូច្នេះ វាក៏ជាមូលដ្ឋានដ៏សំខាន់ដែលយុវជនត្រូវសិក្សា និងយល់ដឹងការពិតអំពីប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខ្មែរក្រហម។ នេះគឺជាការពិតដែលវានឹងធ្វើឲ្យបុគ្គលម្នាក់ៗ និងសង្គមទាំងមូលកាន់តែឆ្លាតវៃ និងរឹងមាំថែមទៀត។ PV/Lift

Reflections on Working to Uncover Genocide

Suyheang Kry Born eight years after Democratic Kampuchea, I was brought up in a society in which neither my family nor my school taught me about the genocidal regime. When the regime ended in 1979, a politicized national history was created that did not include the Khmer Rouge. Thus, I grew up knowing little to nothing about this tragic period. As I got older, I became more and more interested in my family's history during the Khmer Rouge era. Armed with passionate curiosity, I decided to work for the Documentation Center of Cambodia in order to investigate the truth about the regime. Having interviewed hundreds of victims of the regime, I have seen firsthand their remarkable resilience and dignity, despite the barbarous crimes committed upon them. However, ironically, this resilience and dignity were borne partially from a

purposeful silence on the past. My father's words "let bygones be bygones" reflect the sentiments of many victims. However, should we forget the past now that we have peace? Do truth and justice make a difference to those who survived the regime? My answer is a resolute yes. Truth and justice will not bring back to life those who died, but there is no true peace without them. The brutal violence that devastated Cambodia does not diminish with time; it requires purposeful action and education to overcome the horrors that took place, and commemorating and acknowledging the suffering of victims is the first step towards preventing such atrocities from reoccurring. This is true for both survivors and the next generation, which is why it is imperative that youth learn and understand the truth about Khmer Rouge history to ensure a stronger citizenry as we move forward. LIFT



Suyheang Kry talks to students at Hun Sen Ang Snuol High School.



Keo Chanchesda writes from: Vancouver, Canada

I had been on adventures before—into green forests and into the deep blue of the ocean—but this one was different. I was stepping on a plane for the first time and flying overseas to get a better education. Five months earlier, I received a two-year scholarship from the Lester B Pearson College of the Pacific, or LBPC-UWC, one of 13 of their international colleges around the world. The 18-hour flight was a long one for me, but the reality was more than that, as I had to stop in Hong Kong for a couple hours before I could transfer to my plane to Vancouver, Canada. The first couple weeks of school felt so strange. Everything was in English: food, clothes, chairs and tables ... everywhere I touched, saw, smelled and heard had English names to it. But since my English was not so good, I had a hard time living in my college. But I said never mind and I just followed my instincts until my English improved. So I studied so hard for my economics class, English B class, maths class, philosophy class, physics class, theory of knowledge class, self-taught class (literature), wilderness activity, big brothers and big sisters activity. No only that, everywhere I went I always carried something to read. I tried to finish my homework on time. I also talked to people a lot. After a couple of months of hard work, my English improved. Well, it was not just because of me alone, I also had help from my 200 fellow students from 100 countries and the other staff and faculty members. Then the exams popped up one after another, and I did quite well. Project week was about a month and a half before the winter break. The idea of project week was that every student go out and do whatever activity they want for a whole week, so they can improve their leadership skills and also connect with the real world. I did some work an organization called VIDEA, which deals with fair trade issues. On the first day, we were doing a survey on every coffee shop in Victoria to ask if they had any concerns on fair trade issues. The second day was spent making a presentation to show the students at the University of Victoria. The winter break in my first year was really amazing because we had a big snowstorm just before Christmas. It was at least 10 years since Victoria had snow like that. I spent time outside playing and making snowball fights, I built a snowman, slid around and enjoyed the view of the snow, even if it was pretty cold for me. During the winter break the snow closes things down, so the students who could not

afford to go home stayed around, which meant I had to apply for a host family, which turned out fine since my host family was generous and friendly, and made the winter quite enjoyable. School started again after three weeks after the break. I felt so refreshed and ready to start school. The process was the same—classes and activities—but it was just a bit easier for me. It went on for a couple for months until we had another project week and the One-World show. The One-World show was not much different from regional day shows, but it was aimed at the public. So we prepared hard for it and I joined a dance group from Africa called "Che-Che". It was fun being on a stage with more than 2,000 people watching you. After One-World was another project week, and then school, preparing for the final exam, and done. That was it. Time to go home, on May 25, 2009. A year passed by really fast and before I realised, I was home again. My friends had a wedding, so I became an MC again. All the good memories before going to Canada came back. Unfortunately, school time arrived again in August. Time to go back to school. In February of my second year I was accepted at the Colleges of Idaho and Westminster College in the United States. I was so excited to move on and ready to take my International Baccalaureate, but later I discover that I had a medical injury which I had to stay in Canada for another year to cure. Summer came and everyone left home except me, a couple friends and some teachers who had business left over at the campus. It was not quite what I expected from Canada because summer was as hot as Cambodia. Not only that, the creatures that I had never seen before in Canada, flies and mosquitoes, was all there too. Most of the time I spent alone sleeping, checking out the news online, reading and so on. But most of all, I joined the Dragon Boat team from Victoria and I won a bronze medal during summer. Life as a third year student was really fun and easy. I did not have much to do like I used to, even if I still had load of work to do. I had been a lot better after a long vacation during the summer and my health improved. I did not have to worry about anything at all. All I have to do now is to study hard and pass the International Baccalaureate. Six months had passed since the summer ended, and there is only a couple months left before summer comes back again, but for now, I have to let time pass again and enjoy my moment. LIFT