



DUCH PORTRAYED AS SELFLESS STUDENT AND DEDICATED TEACHER

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The tribunal heard the testimony of four witnesses who knew the Accused Person, Kaing Guek Eav (alias Duch) when he was a student and a teacher. However, before these character witnesses testified, the defense finished its questioning of the expert witnesses Francoise Sironi-Guildbaud and Ka Sunbaunat. Through his questioning, international defense counsel Francois Roux attempted to demonstrate the sincerity of Duch's remorse which has been a hotly contested issue throughout the proceedings. He recounted to the experts Duch's acts and statements, such as Duch's emotional apology and voluntary participation in the re-enactment at Tuol Sleng prison (S-21) and Choeung Ek.

Roux also revisited the issue of Duch's ability to be rehabilitated which was contested by the prosecution yesterday. He recalled the experts' statements that a person is not born an executioner, but that one becomes an executioner. Using this same logic, the experts agreed that a person such as Duch could be made "human" again. In other words, he could be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society.

Witnesses describe Duch's personality as a student and a teacher

Duch's former high school classmate, Sou Sat, described him as a kind and generous student. While many students were reluctant to help others, Duch was always willing to help his classmates and share his knowledge. Furthermore, she never witnessed any verbal, physical, or intellectual conflicts between Duch and any other student or teacher. (The trial chamber permitted Sou Sat to visit Duch after her testimony, as is common practice in international criminal proceedings.)

Regarding his more recent years as a teacher, Duch's former high school students, Tep Sem and Tep Sok, described him as a dedicated teacher. Tep Sem described Duch as a humble and attentive teacher who did not care about the social class of his students. Duch, he explained, offered free private tutoring to students who needed additional help. Tep Sok described Duch as a kind and gentle teacher. He explained that Duch would donate books to his students and was always available to students who needed extra help. Chou Vin, who taught alongside Duch at a school in the Phkoam village from 1995 until 1997, also explained that Duch was well-liked and well-respected by his students, who would sometimes refer to him as "grandpa teacher."

These witnesses all expressed shock upon learning of Duch's role as chairman of S-21. Tep Sok described a feeling of regret when he heard the news because he viewed Duch as a virtuous man who turned into a criminal. Sou Sat was "stunned and terrorized" when she found out that one of Duch's former professors was detained and executed at S-21.

Civil Party lawyers attempt to express clients' discontent with trial chamber

Today, the civil party lawyers continued to voice their clients' discontent with the court's decision that barred civil party questioning of character witnesses. At the start of the session, civil party lawyer Alain Werner asked the trial chamber for permission to read into the record the open letter from the civil parties. The trial chamber denied Werner's request and suggested that he resubmit the letter to the court.

Later in the day, and on several different occasions, lawyers for the civil parties asked the chamber to explain to the witnesses why the civil parties were not present in the courtroom. The civil party lawyers argued that it was important for the witnesses to know the reason for which they would not be asked questions from civil party lawyers. However, the requests seemed to be motivated primarily by a desire to force the court to acknowledge the discontent of the civil parties. The tribunal therefore predictably denied their first request. After the second, the tribunal expressed its frustration by the repetitiveness of these requests. Finally, after the third request, the tribunal disconnected the civil party microphones and informed them that they would be prohibited for intervening during the remainder of character witness testimonies. Today's events further strained the relationship between the court and the civil parties. The civil parties felt that their rights had been unduly restricted, and now feel that the court is unwilling to hear what they perceive to be their legitimate complaints.

The lawyers for civil party groups two and four were absent for the second consecutive day. No indication has been given to explain their absence and it is unclear if it is related to the boycott. Given today's developments, the remaining civil party lawyers may elect not to attend the proceedings until the conclusion of character witness testimony.