Cambodia Essay, Research Paper

I am among those people who suffered from the torture during the years of 1975-79. The Khmer Rouge took over the Khmer Empire in 1975 as Democratic Kampichea, ending a 600-year monarchy. The leader Pol Pot swiftly placed the entire population into rural communes, where death was the penalty for disobeying orders. I used to live in constant fear and pain because of the Khmer Rouge.

When the Khmer Rouge gorilla took over they did not start to do any killing yet. However, they didn?t hesitate in making my whole family work for them 24 hours a day without giving us a chance to rest. Each day, I slept about one to two hours at most. When I was a little boy at the age of eight, I use to get up at one o’clock in the morning to go to the barn and herd the cows. I also had to go to the rice field and pick up loose crop after harvest, to the barns and to take out the cow manure. My father was very surprised and happy with my ability to handle the workload so he gave me a Garuda patch. Garuda was a mythical bird that was a sign of courage.

At that time, I worked and work, and I never received ample sleep. Their reason for our constant work was we needed to produce more food or our country might fall into a state of famine. I remember those times as being a young boy with the health of an old man. I suffered from mosquito and other insect bites every day because I was forced to work without any break. My health was so bad that I always suffered from all kinds of malaria, diarrhea, malnutrition, and more. Since the Khmer Rouge came to power, we never got to eat rice; we only got to eat liquid rice, which hardly contained any rice in it, for it was mostly water. I remember at times, due to overwhelming hunger, I used to sneak out and venture into the forest to hunt for lizards, birds and animals to kill for food. Once, my mother went out to the rice field to work, and she caught one big fish. My mother took the fish back home to cook for the family and one of the Khmer Rouge leaders who lived in the same Poumm or town as us almost took my parents away to execute them. As a result, other families within the Poumm found out from that my mother had caught a fish and used it as a personal property and did not share with everyone else in the group. They threatened that the next time they caught my family cheating on them, they will execute us.

That?s after the Khmer Rouge?s killing started. The Khmer Rouge didn?t kill just scholars, farmers, teachers, monks, men, elders, and women, but they also killed babies and animals. These ruthless men never chose their victims, but just like the wild animals, they killed anyone, anything that they could get their hands on. I remember that one time an old man at the age of 70 in my Poumm of town was executed because he didn?t want to get up one night.

Cambodia as a whole, was so technologically lacking, they couldn?t even begin to imagine how much easier their work could have been with the proper tools. Pol Pot adopted a policy of isolationism because of his unwillingness to modernize. He encouraged great agricultural revolution without even thinking about its consequences.

There was never a point in our long workdays that I could relax and unwind. I always had to sleep with a certain unattainable feeling of horror. When I awoke in the morning the usual irrational workload and threats of torture greeted me by whipping or beating. I worked like an animal during blisteringly hot days, during which the temperatures peaked at around 120 degrees.

There was never one day during that year that I had the chance to celebrate any ceremony. My family, strong in culture, sometimes performed the popular Cambodian dance of mimes. I always prayed to Lord Buddha that my nightmare would end soon, but my call to him was never been answered.

At that time, we really wanted to get away from that area, but we couldn?t escape because if we tried to do so, they would try to kill us on the account of being traitors, and that we didn?t care about our country.

Then, at the end of 1975, after we worked so hard for them and they decided that they had had enough of my family and the other nine family in the area, they decided to force us out of the area, which according to them was execution. They gathered about ten families together and forced us out and told us that we will go to another area, which was called Thaa-genh, in the Battambong Province. And when we arrived there, they planned to execute us all.

When we traveled in Thailand we had to move by feet across many land mines and pits, and other dangerous explosive mechanisms that the Khmer Rouge hid underground. When we traveled, we traveled with about twelve other families, four families died from starvation, disease, and execution at the same time.

Luckily, upon arriving, we noticed that the non-communist allies arrived and the two forces fought each other there. From there, my parents decided to take us back to Kondall Province.

Then in Kondall Province, we decide to settle in Chbaa Ompov near Phnom Penh. We lived there for a while and again still lived in constant fear. Between 1976-79 we traveled across many Provinces. At the same time, we encountered many other problems because when we arrived at a place called Srok Baa-runk Tlaegg, we ran into more Khmer Rouge allies.

Soon, after a while, my parents figured that out that it is not going to be safe to live there because soon, the large groups of Khmer Rouge going to march into Phnom Penh and take over the capital. So, we decided to travel across from Phnom Penh back to Battambong so that we can stay in Thailand for a while until this raged war over.

I am currently stationed in Thailand with my family waiting for this war to end. Luckily all members of my family are still alive.