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Cambodia 1991-94: Hierarchy, Neutrality  
and Etiquettes of Discourse

by

John Marston

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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1997

Approved by Charles H. Hays  
Chairperson of Supervisory Committee

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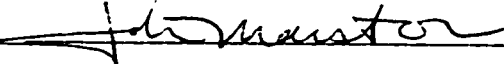
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Abstract

Cambodia 1991-94: Hierarchy, Neutrality  
and Etiquettes of Discourse

by John Marston

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee:  
Professor Charles F. Keyes  
Department of Anthropology

The dissertation is concerned with how the negotiation of conventions of public discourse correlates to changing political economy. It focuses on Cambodia during the period immediately before and after the 1993 U.N.-sponsored elections. The dissertation develops the idea of "discursive etiquette" as a working concept. From this perspective it examines Cambodian conventions of social hierarchy, Khmer linguistic etiquette, and the discourse of the Cambodian news media as they have changed in relation to social and political change in recent years. Specific chapters focus on hierarchically marked pronouns and terms of address, satirical cartoons, and styles of newspaper writing. The dissertation also includes a close description of the Information/Education Division of the United Nations Transitional Authority in

Cambodia (UNTAC) and its role in the negotiation of public discourse at the time of the elections. [Key words: Cambodia, hierarchy, neutrality, linguistic etiquette, United Nations, satire, cartoons, media]

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The community of English-speaking academics specializing in Cambodia (and other Cambodian specialists close to the academic community) is relatively small, and I am lucky to have known many of them and enjoyed the insights of their conversation and the comradeship of a group of people sharing a common obsession. I have a particularly great debt to May Ebihara, who has given me so much moral support over so many years. Others who stand out, as colleagues in the field or as interlocutors as I wrote this dissertation include David Chandler (the other senior scholar of Cambodia with whom I have had regular communication), John Brown, Sara Colm, Lindsay French, Wendy Freed, Elizabeth Guthrie, Anne Hansen, Siobhan Harper, Alex Hinton, Caroline Hughes, Bill Lobban, Carol Mortland, Jeanne Morel, Laura McGrew, Toni Shapiro, Ashley Thompson, John Weeks, and Teri Yamada.

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My deep thanks for the friendship of Manuel Moises.

**DEDICATION:**

**To my parents: Lucy and Amos Marston**

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

When I search for an image that would help to convey what this dissertation is about, what comes to mind is a meeting called by the Information/Education Division of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), in September, 1992, to present UNTAC plans about its relation to the media and get feedback on a draft media charter. This meeting brought together representatives of different UNTAC components and representatives of the different Cambodian political factions and media organizations. The meeting lay the groundwork for further activities by the Information/Education Division. I have to refer to a report to remember the specific arguments made. What I do remember clearly was the atmosphere, with the odd mixture of dignitaries gathered together in the upstairs room of the elegant art deco building which housed UNTAC headquarters, once the palace of the French résident, the building where Western journalists had met Pol Pot in late 1978, and a building which had played many different roles in successive Cambodian regimes. What I recall in particular was the strain of the formal mechanisms of the meeting, of the fact that everything was translated twice, so that in the end everyone's statement could be heard in Khmer, French, and English, thus making a show of the absence

of cultural bias to everyone concerned. Part of the effect, though, was to give the proceedings an exhaustive discursive complexity and make the flow of the discussion from speaker to speaker very hard to follow. I found myself thinking about the strange apparition being called up here, with its multiple heads and multiple tongues, and how its creation probably had more relevance than the content of the meeting itself. What I was focusing on was a kind of etiquette constructed to represent neutrality. And while it's possible that a less artificial format for the meeting could have been arranged, at least some of the elaborateness of the etiquette was probably necessary. Nevertheless, it inevitably took on a life of its own and (even though its whole purpose was to neutralize power) a power of its own. One could fruitfully speculate on the succession of multi-headed, multi-tongued apparitions which have figured in Cambodian history.

This dissertation, in the broadest terms, is about how power is related to the construction of neutrality. More narrowly, it is about how language systems relate to the interplay of neutrality and hierarchy in recent Cambodian history, particularly the UNTAC period, during which so much dramatic change in the nature of public life took place.

My interest in Cambodia dates back to 1982 when, as an English teacher, I worked in Khao I Dang, a refugee camp for Cambodians in Thailand. My fascination with Cambodia and my sense of personal connection to Cambodian people

continued and deepened as I later worked in the Philippine Refugee Processing Center. I received Social Science Research Council funding to do research with Cambodians in the U.S. on their memories of language policies under the Khmer Rouge. Eventually, I found ways of going to Cambodia itself, first, in 1989, as a visitor, and in 1990, teaching English in a summer program.

I went to Cambodia in early 1992 to do field research while working on a Cornell University microfilming project. That summer I was offered a job with the UNTAC Information/Education Division, and made the decision to postpone my formal research plans during the year that UNTAC would be in Cambodia. The year I spent working for UNTAC had a particularly powerful emotional impact, and my position as a U.N. representative gave me a different role in the country than I would have likely had as merely a scholar, in ways which I think are primarily good, but not totally. During the year I worked for UNTAC the Cambodian news media came to assume a much more prominent position in my research plans than I originally anticipated. In the year following my work for UNTAC, I continued to live in Phnom Penh and pursued my research interests with formal interviews, archival work, and the collection and analysis of newspaper articles. It will be apparent that this dissertation represents the peculiar combination of the different ways I have related to Cambodia, drawing not only on formal research but, very powerfully, my

experiences working for UNTAC, as well as the much longer process I have gone through of getting to know Cambodians and Cambodian society in various settings.

Chapter two will try to put the issues I am concerned with into a historical perspective, first by examining, in a broad historical fashion, the way language has related to social organization in Cambodia, and, secondly, by looking briefly at the context of the period in which UNTAC was in Cambodia.

In the third chapter, I will try to develop the theoretical perspective which informs the dissertation, the idea of discursive etiquette -- that is to say, the dynamic of the way social constructions of neutrality or euphemism relate to issues of power.

Chapters four through six will look at Cambodian hierarchy as a symbolic system -- as realized in gestures of greeting, ritual exchange, linguistic etiquette, and in the way it is represented in satirical cartoons. As a symbolic system, it inevitably relates to changing discursive etiquette, such that traditional symbolism of dyadic hierarchy, while never disappearing, comes to assume a role in relation to the etiquettes of mass mediated society, challenging and articulating with them in ways that are particular to Cambodia.

Having looked at the etiquettes lying behind configurations of hierarchy in personal relationships, I will go on to look at the discursive etiquette of mass media, particularly news media, representing an etiquette of

modernism, yet itself shaped in relation to traditional etiquettes and subject to continuing processes of social change. Chapter seven will look at the changes in the political economy of the news media at the time of the U.N. elections: the changing framework of public discourse. Chapters eight and nine look specifically at the role of the UNTAC Information and Education Division at the time of the election, as one producer and arbiter of public discourse, negotiating its role in Cambodia in competition with other producers and arbiters of public discourse. These two chapters, in particular, serving in part as a memoir of my UNTAC experience, are intended as an example of the concrete reality of practice as public discourse stands as a site of negotiation. Finally, chapter ten will examine four representative newspaper articles as examples of shifts of discursive etiquette which developed in relation to the political economic change away from socialism. Throughout the dissertation, I mean to document an evolving process of etiquette, constantly re-inventing itself in the face of social change.

## **Chapter Two: Language and Cambodian History**

One way to look at the broad sweep of Cambodian history is in terms of language systems as they play out a relation with social and political systems. While the remainder of the dissertation will look at very specific ways, at a specific time, social categories and individuals' relations to them are negotiated, I would like to look here in a very broad way at the ways categories of language have developed over time in Cambodia, how they have served to define difference, and how at different times different categories of discourse have been defined as outside normal discourse.

Khmer, the national language of Cambodia, is considered an Austroasiatic language and, as such, a member of the oldest known language family in mainland Southeast Asia. (Khmer, and the lion's share of extant Austroasiatic languages, are part of the Mon-Khmer language sub-family, one of three, along with Munda and Nicobarese). The twelve main branches of Mon-Khmer are believed to have separated from a common source 3,000 to 4,000 years ago, and the separation of the three major sub-families well before that (Diffloth, 1994). Cognates common to Austroasiatic languages include words for rice, millet, legumes, husking, pestle and mortar, and copper-bronze, suggesting that a culture based on agriculture and

bronze working dated to the time of linguistic separation (Higham, 1996:294). While Higham points out that other possible explanations are possible, he cites as plausible Blust's theory that

the present distribution of Vietnamese, Mon, Khmer and Munda languages [all Austroasiatic] resulted from the movement of agriculturalists down the Red, Chao Phraya, Mekong and Brahmaputra rivers, a process which saw neolithic communities established in our area during the third and second millennia BC. (Higham 1996: 4)

Austroasiatic peoples represented the demographically dominant population in the area before Tai and Tibeto-Burman began a process of in-migration -- the only other major early population being Austronesian groups, the precursors of the Cham, in the coastal area of what is now Vietnam. Different Austroasiatic languages, often with very small numbers of speakers, are now found scattered in remote parts of Southeast Asia and as far west as eastern India and the Nicobar Islands. Vietnamese is regarded by linguists as an Austroasiatic language, easily the largest one. However, due to its long contact with Sinitic languages it acquired a distinctive character of its own at an early period and is rarely thought of as related to Khmer by people in the region itself.

The Khmer civilization developed in the flood plain of the Sap and Mekong rivers. A process of centralization took place over the course of the first millennium, at about the same time that another major Austroasiatic group, the Mon, were going

through the same processes in what is now lower Burma and the Chao Phraya valley of Thailand. This related to the intensification of rice agriculture and the incorporation of Indian religious and socio-political systems. Writing, also adapted from Indian systems, began spreading in the region by the third century A.D. At this time a report of Chinese travelers to Funan (the Mekong Delta settlement believed by some to be inhabited by Khmer) describes the presence of books and depositories of archives, with the use of an Indian-type script (Shaffer, 1996: 23-4). The first dated Cambodian inscriptions, in Khmer and in Sanskrit, appear in the seventh century.

The fact that early inscriptions were in both Old Khmer and Sanskrit points to social and conceptual distinctions coming into play. Sanskrit inscriptions were in verse, and were typically encomiums to the gods or to the king, affirming a sphere of the timeless, outside of the mundane, in which the kings and the gods, by the performative act of the inscription, merged as part of one world. Mabbitt and Chandler (1995:20) cite an extended play on words from the stele inscription at Sdok Kak Thom. The following was in praise of the king:

Gladdening the sphere of his dominion with his talents, levying taxes that were imbued with lenience, causing hearts to expand, agreeable, he was appropriately lauded on account of his kingly virtue.

However, read another way, the inscription became a tribute to the sun god:

Gladdening his orbit by his beams, sending out rays imbued with softness, causing the lotus to expand, agreeable, he was appropriately lauded on account of his lunar<sup>1</sup> quality.

Khmer inscriptions were more transactional in character than the ones in Sanskrit, although, once again, the record of transactions between a more mundane sphere and the world of religious foundations set apart from it. Jacob records the following categories of information in pre-Angkorean inscriptions.

- (i) the date or name of the reigning king;
- (ii) the title and names of donors;
- (iii) the name of the god;
- (iv) names of the people from whom the donor obtained land to offer to the foundation;
- (v) details of the price paid to those who relinquished land for the foundation;
- (vi) the extent, location, and capacity of the donated ricefields;
- (vii) the names of the donated slaves with an indication of their duties;
- (viii) details of the subsistence to be given to the religious personnel;
- (ix) details of other land given to the foundation: orchards, market gardens, etc.;
- (x) list of precious objects given to the foundation;
- (xi) the statement that the revenues are to be combined with those of another foundation;
- (xii) warning of punishment for anyone using or abusing the belongings of the foundation.

(Jacob 1979:406-7)

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<sup>1</sup> Mabbitt and Chandler do not explain the seeming contradiction of the sun god having a "lunar quality."

Presumably there were those who could only read Khmer as well as those who could read Sanskrit, as well as the mass of the population who could read neither but for whom they represented arcane power. We do not know how widespread literacy was at the time of Angkor, but Anderson's description of the role of a literate elite in classical religious communities is probably apt:

[E]ven though the sacred languages made such communities as Christendom imaginable, the actual scope and plausibility of these communities can not be explained by sacred script alone: their readers were, after all, tiny literate reefs on top of vast illiterate oceans. A fuller explanation requires a glance at the relation between the literati and their societies . . . [T]he literati were adepts, strategic strata in a cosmological hierarchy of which the apex was divine. (1991:15)

"Libraries" at Angkor Wat and other Angkorean temple complexes were small buildings separate from the main buildings of the complex, their false windows perhaps indicating that they were associated with secrecy, if not merely the need to protect their contents from the sun. Here manuscripts and other ritual objects were kept, most likely a variety of the palm-leaf manuscripts which continued to be used in Cambodia until the mid-Twentieth Century, although there are no surviving Angkorean examples.

The Khmer empire expanded by conquest of neighboring peoples and, in some contexts, their incorporation as slaves. It is clear that at its height, when the Khmer empire extended

over large parts of what is now Thailand and southern Vietnam, the Khmer empire in part represented domination of non-Khmer people, such as Mon and Tai, whose relation consisted in paying tribute to the central power. Hall (1992: 232) writes that in early inscriptions "ethnic identity" (language affiliation?) was indicated of laborers working lands donated to temples. The precise relation between language groups is not clear, but it is reasonable to assume relations of domination encouraged the use of Khmer by conquered peoples.

Varieties of Khmer continue to be spoken in parts of what is now northeastern Thailand and southern Vietnam. There continues to be considerable contact between the Khmer-speaking population in southern Vietnam (Khmer Krom) and Cambodia proper, and their speech is mutually intelligible, although Cambodians regard Khmer Krom speech as heavily accented. Smalley (1994:137) concludes that Northern Khmer as spoken in Thailand is probably not mutually intelligible with Standard Khmer; however, at least a few ethnic Khmer from Thailand have been able to make the linguistic adjustments necessary to work in refugee camps and NGO's and Thai businesses based in Cambodia. Virtually all speakers of Khmer in Thailand and Vietnam are now biligual. A writing system for Northern Khmer based on the Thai script was developed in 1964. (Smalley 1994: 140) Scholars generally believe that, over time, large segments of the population who spoke Khmer

and other Mon-Khmer languages throughout the area have come to speak Lao, Thai, and perhaps Vietnamese, a process which continues today (see Keyes 1967:8; Wyatt 1984:1)<sup>2</sup>. (While generally accepting the overall historical trend, Smalley does point out that, in conjunction with general increases in population, speakers of Northern Khmer doubled between 1964 and 1989 [Smalley 1994: 151]).

After the 15th Century, Khmer power declined in relationship to its neighbors Siam and Vietnam, who would increasingly be in a position to dominate it politically. In 1431 A.D., following Thai sacking of Angkor, the capital was moved to near where the Sap and Mekong rivers meet, in the vicinity of what is now Phnom Penh. This represented a political economic shift toward greater emphasis on trade. The literary tradition linked to Angkor seems to have been in great part broken at this time, whether because of the move to a new capital, with the concomitant new configuration of economic relations; the destruction by invaders of the old capital; or the increasing importance of Theravada Buddhism, which was now spreading through Cambodia. Monumental architecture, and its concomitant inscriptions, had ended long prior to the time the capital moved south. There is no extant literature datable to the 15th and 16th century. While a courtly tradition of

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<sup>2</sup> Boisson (posting to sealang-l@nectec.or.th, May 30, 1996), writes: "Hematologists have shown that Khmers have specific blood traits, and that a map of the populations showing this trait at a certain minimum level coincides very well with a map of the maximal extension of the Khmer empire." While I do not feel qualified to fully evaluate or interpret this statement, it does seem to support the idea of a widely spread genetically related population throughout the area, and at least some likelihood that they once spoke Khmer or related Mon-Khmer languages.

literature and historical chronicles did survive, surviving manuscripts of classical literature, such as the Cambodian version of the Ramayana, date back only to the 17th century (Jacob, 1996). Huffman (1973) shows that Khmer syntax changed significantly during the interregnum between the early inscriptions and the first modern manuscripts, becoming much more like Thai, which suggests that some sort of process of creolization was taking place.

In conjunction with the rise of Theravada Buddhism, a more localized tradition of literacy developed in addition to the classical literacy associated with the court. This was based on the use of palm-leaf manuscripts by monks at village temples (wats). It is impossible to trace the social uses of literacy and how they may have changed over the period of 400 years between the rise of Theravada Buddhism and the reforms associated with the rise of print; however, we may assume that many of the traditions extant at the beginning of the 20th century dated back through much of this period. Nearly all young men became monks for a period of time, which meant that nearly all young men acquired a degree of literacy. (This practice also meant most women and girls were excluded from literacy; however, Reid [1988] suggests that in mainland Southeast Asia some women may have used literacy for commerce.) Whereas at Angkor inscriptions were in either Khmer and Sanskrit, the more elevated language in

manuscripts was now Pali, the language of the Theravada scriptures.

As Cambodian monks now describe the boran (“ancient”) traditions of the monkhood, still practiced in a few dissenting monasteries in Cambodia, palm-leaf manuscripts played a central role in religious practice. The monks in the more mainstream reformed tradition suggest that in the boran tradition, Pali texts were not expected to be understood; rather they were recited for the power the words were seen as having in and of themselves, sometimes in connection with healing and divination, as well as ritual. (The particular power associated with Pali script per se is demonstrated by its continuing use among Cambodians in amulets, tattoos, and talismanic handkerchiefs.) Khmer manuscripts, sometimes religious stories, such as the jataka tales, were read out loud, functioning as sermons. Indeed the manuscripts were probably thought of as something to be read out loud more than as something to be read silently.

In addition to the literacy acquired by the monks themselves, reading and writing was taught in wat schools to schoolchildren. Just as mainstream monks criticize the boran traditions of the monkhood, some writers have questioned the degree to which the skills acquired were true literacy. Clayton (1995) quotes Bilodeau as saying:

[Boys] learnt to read the [Buddhist] sacred texts . . . and copied out the written characters. In actual fact, the texts were learnt by heart, as a result of

endless repetition, and the pupils were quite incapable of reading the words separately. A Cambodian boy leaving the [wat] school had his memory stocked with edifying passages, but could neither read [nor] write.

Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that the literacy practices of the time served to inscribe world view and social relations.

The beginnings of Vietnamese territorial expansion to the south date to the 13th century. This soon brought them in direct conflict with the city states of Champa, populated by an Austronesian-speaking people who, much like the Khmer, had cultural and political traditions strongly influenced by India. Eventually Champa was conquered by Vietnam. Cham migration to Cambodia occurred in conjunction with the Vietnamese push into Cham territory. The first Cham came to Cambodia in the 15th century, and they were followed by several waves of migrants, continuing into the 19th century (Collins, 1996; Scupin, 1995). The Cham constitute one of the largest linguistic minorities in Cambodia. In Cambodia today they are largely a Moslem population, and often associated with fishing, small marketing, and the raising and butchering of cattle. Literacy, for the Cham, has traditionally meant a rudimentary knowledge of Arabic for religious purposes, studied in Koranic schools, and occasional use of Malay Arabic script for Cham language itself. This has some parallels to the ways Pali was studied by Khmer boys prior to the reforms instituted by Ven. Chuon Nath. One group of Cham migrants from Vietnam has maintained a distinctive identity. In 1693

A.D., at the time of the Vietnamese takeover of the city of Phan Rang, a large group of Cham refugees, including Cham royalty, settled in Cambodia in the river area near the capital; they are now called the Jahed. They practice a distinctive (some would say heterodox) form of Islam and read and write Cham in an ancient script derived (like Khmer) from Indian written traditions.

Historical records show a Chinese presence in Cambodia at least since the time the capital moved to the vicinity of Phnom Penh, and there was probably an on-going presence of Chinese even in Angkorean times. Wilmott (1967) cites linguistic evidence that suggests that Chinese played a significant role in Cambodian trade even prior to French colonialism -- such as the incorporation of Chinese words as Khmer numbers for multiples of ten. It is true that Chinese immigration intensified during French colonization, as it did in other Southeast Asian countries, and, more than other countries, extended to rural areas, where there was much intermarriage. All this meant that the literacy of commercial transaction often tended to be Chinese rather than Khmer, which in turn was more associated with religion and the court. Wilmott (1967:17-18) reports that prior to the 1930's the plurality of Chinese in Cambodia were Cantonese, but immigration of Teochiu Chinese from Kwantung Province was significant enough that by 1962-3 they constituted 77% of the Chinese population. Teochiu, more than any other Chinese

language group, settled in rural areas; they constituted 88% of the Chinese population in rural areas in 1962-3.

It was partly as a response to the threat of domination by Siam and Vietnam that in 1863 King Norodom signed the agreement making the country a protectorate of France. France quickly consolidated its control and made Cambodia a virtual colony, with the monarchy retained in what was increasingly only a ceremonial role. Cambodia, like Laos, was something of a backwater in French Indochina. The French imported Vietnamese as bureaucrats and plantation workers, yet another linguistic and cultural minority who, like the Chinese and the Cham, brought with them their own traditions of literacy.

With colonization, a French educational system developed parallel to the traditional system of temple (wat) schools. In these schools students were quickly immersed in French language, and all instruction was in French after three years. There was initially significant Khmer resistance to attendance at these schools (Clayton, 1995), perhaps because of loyalty to the philosophy of Buddhist education associated with wat schools, resistance to French language and culture per se, or discomfort with Khmer children being lumped with the children of Vietnamese bureaucrats, who for many years formed the majority of the school population. Thus, merely in terms of language education, colonialism brought complex social divisions which helped inscribe the discourse of power relations.

In the early 20th century, along the model of reforms which had already been instituted in the western provinces recently reclaimed from Thailand, the French began a program of systematizing and secularizing temple schools at the sub-district level. They were motivated in part by the fear of the continued cultural influence of Thailand. In these new schools, the three-year curriculum emphasized Khmer instruction. These new schools proved much more popular than the earlier French public schools, and at least a few students were able to progress from these locally-based schools to the higher levels of the French-system schools.

The first published works in Khmer were produced during the colonial period in Vietnam rather than Cambodia itself. There was initially great resistance by the monkhood to the introduction of printing. Khmer school texts printed in Vietnam, for instance, met opposition when they were first distributed in 1912.

After various technically unsuccessful attempts at underground printing, the problem of the "legality" of unrestricted publishing in Cambodia was openly discussed in 1918 . . . It was quite obvious that the traditional forces opposed to printing would lose the battle. Even if they wanted to, they could not interfere, since some printing presses were located outside Cambodian territory. (Nepote and Khing, 1981:63)

The decision in the 1920's to establish a Buddhist Institute was also related to the French sentiment that there was a need to create a Cambodian Buddhist tradition separate from that of

Thailand. Reformist monks, such as Ven. Chuon Nath, were active in the Buddhist Institute and supported the introduction of printing by the argument that it would enable the printing of the Buddhist scriptures in Pali and Khmer translation. The Buddhist Institute published palm-leaf manuscripts as books and systematized the study of Pali, significantly altering the meaning and practice of literacy in relation to Cambodian Buddhism.

While a bulletin in French and Khmer was published in Cambodia in 1925, and other journals, including the Buddhist Institute's prestigious *Kambuja Soriya*, appeared in the 1920's, the beginnings of the vernacular press in Cambodia are usually dated to the appearance of the newspaper *Nagara Vatta* in 1936. (Soth and Sin, 1982: 220; Chandler, 1992: 163-4) It was founded by three men associated with the Buddhist Institute, Pach Chhoeun, Sim Var, and Son Ngoc Thanh. Although short-lived, it represented one of the first true voices of a new Cambodian national consciousness. Son Ngoc Thanh, in particular, an ethnic Khmer from Vietnam, would become the most prominent leader of the nationalist movement (illustrating neatly Anderson's thesis (1991) of a link between print capitalism and the rise of nationalism.)

In 1944 the French introduced a Romanized system of writing Khmer. Despite a proviso that it was only to be used for secular texts, it was vigorously opposed by the Buddhist clergy, and when the French colonial government was temporarily

removed at the time of Japanese invasion in 1945, the Cambodian government quickly moved to discontinue the new system.

In the post-war period the new king, Norodom Sihanouk, would co-opt the nationalist movement and successfully negotiate for independence from France, which was granted in 1953. Soon after independence Sihanouk abdicated the throne to give himself freer reign to maneuver politically, and, as head of state, continued to dominate Cambodian politics until he was deposed in a coup in 1970.

The newly independent country began the task of making the country more fully Khmer by replacing the use of French with Khmer language. Committees of Khmer scholars were assembled to devise Khmer neologisms for French vocabulary, such as technical terms, which had entered the language. These began being introduced in elementary textbooks in 1960. This process generated debate about how new vocabulary should be chosen, whether from Pali and Sanskrit words, as monks such as Ven. Chuon Nath urged, or by returning to Mon-Khmer roots and theories of Mon-Khmer suffixation, as the intellectual Keng Vannsak urged. In effect this was a debate about the nature of national identity.

As king and as head of state, Sihanouk would play the media shrewdly, and cultivated a personalized, charismatic role in relation to the Cambodian public by means of mass meetings as well as print, radio, television and film. While some

opposition newspapers were allowed at different times, even these existed in relation to the forbearance and patronage of Sihanouk and other members of the royal family; all other media were firmly under the supervision of the state, often with Sihanouk's personal oversight.

Ebihara, describing radio news in the village in Kandal province where she conducted field-work in 1959 and 1960, wrote:

As a source of news the radio is of limited utility to villagers because the news broadcasts are either in French or in the formal Khmer speech used by educated people that is rarely intelligible to most peasants. Whenever Sihanouk is on the radio, he arouses great interest and attention (and it is a credit to Sihanouk's cleverness that, in such speeches to the populace, he always uses "colloquial" language in at least part of his talk so that ordinary people can understand him.) Otherwise, however, West Svay villagers are much more interested in listening to music and especially drama (which always drew a great crowd about the radio). (p. 546)

Osborne (1994) has ridiculed Sihanouk's filmmaking, which increasingly preoccupied him after the mid-1960's. It may be true that his obsession undermined some of his credibility with the Khmer elite and the foreign diplomatic corp. Nevertheless, the preoccupation was consistent with the broader pattern of Sihanouk's political style, which, often very shrewdly, cultivated a charismatic personality in relation to the new media.

Radio grew rapidly during the period Sihanouk was in power. In 1957, the number of radio receivers was estimated at only 20,000 (Lichty and Hoffer). At the time that Ebihara did her field work there were only two other radios besides her own in her village. By 1974 the number of radios in the country had increased five-fold, to about 100,000, and Lichty and Hoffer reported that even most tribal villages had at least one receiver. Television broadcasts began in 1966 and had a broadcast range of 60 kilometers from Phnom Penh. By 1971 there were 7,000 television sets and, by 1974, 25,000-30,000.

Sihanouk attempted to maintain a stance of neutrality in relation to the war in Vietnam, but Cambodia inevitably found itself sucked into the widening conflict. Sihanouk was deposed in a coup in 1970 and chose to ally himself with the small leftist insurgency already operating in the country. It would grow rapidly in the next five years. The new Lon Nol government sided with the U.S. in the war.

The Lon Nol period was a chaotic time for the press in Cambodia, full of corruption and periodic government crackdowns. Nevertheless, it enjoyed, overall, much greater freedom than it had under Sihanouk. Book publishing in Khmer flourished, particularly in the first years of the new regime.

The Lon Nol period was also a period of ethnic nationalism. In the early years of the Lon Nol period there was violence against Vietnamese, and Vietnamese continued to be

expelled from the country. Piat (1975) writes that prior to the late 1960's, it was mostly ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese who constituted the Cambodian reading public, and the lending book-stalls the frequented were a conspicuous feature of the Phnom Penh urban landscape. In the early 1970's, statutes prohibited displaying Chinese characters in public, and lending bookstores catering to Vietnamese moved to back alleys.

Whatever cataclysms Cambodia had undergone during the war were overshadowed by Democratic Kampuchea (DK) period (1975-79), during which the entire population of its cities was evacuated to the countryside to work in communes. (Standard works on the period include Chandler 1991, Chandler 1992, Kiernan 1985, Kiernan 1996, Etcheson 1984, Becker 1986.) This dissertation can only address very tangentially the brutality of the DK regime, in which close to two million people died, and its underlying cultural violence, which has been written about in great detail elsewhere. For the purposes of this historical survey it is enough to say that under the Khmer Rouge there was much anti-intellectualism, which related both to revolutionary theory and to the insecurity of young DK cadres of peasant background who suddenly found themselves in positions of power. In practice, literacy was restricted to a small revolutionary elite, with the larger population often afraid to demonstrate even the slightest sign of education. It was widely believed that to reveal knowledge of a Western language could lead to death. The Khmer Rouge were also

anti-Vietnamese, and for somewhat different reasons, any remaining ethnic Vietnamese in the country had to hide their status, including the use of Vietnamese language. Thousands of Cham were killed, in part because of their resistance to abandoning Moslem religious practices. Radio figured prominently in the country and often broadcast from loudspeakers at the village level. The general population recognized that certain styles of language were associated with the Khmer Rouge, and felt compelled to adopt these styles in everyday use.

Throughout Cambodian history, the relations between different spheres of discourse have always demarked social relations and provided frame across which these relations have been negotiated. This dissertation is about this, too; however, it looks at language use in a more specific sense and in a more specific period. I will look, first of all, at personal linguistic etiquette as it has traditionally inscribed and responded to hierarchy and how that has been affected by the general tendencies of modernism as well as the specific events of recent years: the reforms of Sihanouk, the socialist period, and the shift to a market economy since 1989. Then I will look at broader public discourse: the styles of language associated with the news media, and how these have shifted along with recent political changes.

## **The UNTAC period**

First, though, it will be helpful to summarize briefly the more recent historical framework this study draws on. The history of Cambodia since 1979, when the Democratic Kampuchea regime was overthrown, can be seen as a process of coming to terms with the effects of the Pol Pot period, just as, perhaps, speaking even more broadly, we can say that the history of Cambodia since independence represents the long process of coming to terms with the meaning of that independence.

When Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia in late 1978 and 1979, they installed a new socialist government which would be called the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) (and, after 1989, the State of Cambodia [SOC]). The new government established a degree of normalcy after the horrors of the DK period. Basic institutions of infrastructure were re-established; schools, state-owned book and newspaper publishing, cultural institutions, and television and radio broadcasting, all meant that culture was being revived and redefined. The new government received aid and operated in the cultural and diplomatic sphere of the Soviet-bloc countries, and in particular Vietnam. At the same time the Khmer Rouge, pushed to the Thai border, began a war of resistance. A number of small "free" guerrilla movements were also on the border, dating to the DK period and before. These movements

were strengthened by numbers of non-Khmer Rouge fleeing to the border at this time, and in 1979 several small "free" groups consolidated under the leadership of Son Sann to call themselves the Khmer People's National Liberation Front [KPNLF]. By 1981 a third movement, associated with Sihanouk, would organize, eventually calling itself the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia, or FUNCINPEC. The three movements in turn formed a coalition government in 1982, called the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. Part of the purpose of the coalition was to legitimate the three disparate movements in order to maintain the control of the Cambodian seat in the U.N. China supported all three groups of the coalition, and the U.S. and ASEAN countries supported the two non-Communist members of the resistance, publicly disassociating themselves from the Khmer Rouge. Tens of thousands of non-combatant Cambodians also came to the border at this time. Some would be resettled in Western countries; others would languish in border camps for years. (See Heder 1980, Chanda 1986, Shawcross 1984.)

Peace negotiations foundered for several years, but in 1989, as the Soviet Union collapsed and Vietnam faced the imminent loss of aid, it withdrew armed forces from Cambodia. The Phnom Penh government enacted a new constitution and instituted a number of reforms designed to hasten the peace process. These reforms also began the process of moving

Cambodia to a free-market economy. Over the course of the next two years, negotiations proceeded to the point where a peace agreement could signed in October, 1991 in Paris. This plan, drafted by Australian and American diplomats, was perhaps always unwieldy in terms of realities of the Cambodians who signed it, but they accepted it under pressure. In the terms of the Paris Agreements, a massive U.N. mission would be organized, with some 20,000 military and civilians, called United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). All four factions would demobilize, refugees would return to the country, and U.N.-supervised elections would be held. During this period the U.N. would be authorized to "control" certain key areas of government in the zones of all four factions: foreign affairs, public security, civil administration, and information, and economics, and would have a supervisory role in other areas of government. (For more detailed historical accounts of the UNTAC period, see Heder and Ledgerwood, 1996, Peou, 1996, Ledgerwood, 1995, and Shawcross, 1994.) As I will describe at some length in Chapter VI, I worked for the UNTAC Information/Education Division as part of effort to enact the mandated control of the field of information -- media -- in the country.

The most important goal of the mission, bringing peace, was never achieved, as the DK withdrew from the peace process. The UNTAC period did, however, result in thousands of refugees returning to Cambodia and effectively brought

about a Phnom Penh government which the major powers could recognize without losing face. Elections were held in which a large percentage of the eligible population participated, and despite intimidation in the campaign period, an impartial judgment would surely recognize that the elections were indeed in great part free and fair; this precedent is in itself a legacy to Cambodia.

FUNCINPEC won a plurality in the elections. One seat was won by a small party, Moulinaka, and a few seats by the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP, an outgrowth of the KPNLF), but the only other major winner in the election was the Cambodian People's Party (CPP, the party associated with the State of Cambodia). In the end, after the threat of secession by a number of eastern provinces, a compromise agreement was worked out whereby power would be shared by FUNCINPEC and CPP. Thus there were to be two prime ministers, Norodom Ranariddh, the first prime minister, representing FUNCINPEC, and Hun Sen, the second prime minister, representing CPP. Ministries would all have a first and second minister, from the different parties, and provinces would all have a deputy governor from the opposite party. Local political power, at the district level and below remained in the hands of CPP, awaiting the next scheduled elections in 1998.

This arrangement resulted in a superficial stability and, as the Khmer Rouge grew weaker and more and more

investment boosted the Cambodian economy, many outside observers declared Cambodia an UNTAC success story. Those of us who followed Cambodia closely, and knew of the political crises inevitably growing out of the awkward political arrangement, were more skeptical, although not without hope. As I write this, in the weeks after Hun Sen has overthrown Ranariddh in a vicious coup, any illusions of the success of the UNTAC mission are laid to rest. Ultimately, of course, those of us who worked for UNTAC always knew how marginal this success had been. The UNTAC mission was a complex political act with a complex political outcome, neither totally evil nor totally benign. At best it moved Cambodia forward to another stage of its history.

This dissertation attempts to look at the UNTAC period in the framework of what I will call “discursive etiquettes.” Ultimately it is about the process of searching for consensus, a process which sooner or later will fail but nevertheless has to be pursued. It will be apparent that, while I try to put this in a larger theoretical and historical perspective, I am at some level writing about the experience of UNTAC, and arguing that, despite everything, the search for an “etiquette” which will create consensus is worth pursuing.

### **Chapter Three: Toward a Theory of Discursive Etiquette**

To speak of political economy is to emphasize the interrelatedness of a society's differentiated groupings. That is, in classical Marxist terms, to emphasize the ultimate unity of systems of production and productive relations. By extension, political economy can also be seen to include technologies of communication and ideological systems as they articulate with economic and social life. If each political economy serves to sustain the continued existence of a society and helps to construct meaning for members of the society, it does so by a dynamic of differentiation which is inevitably related to domination and resistance. Almost by definition, a given political economy empowers and disempowers in its own particular way. Any given political economy will have its own particular costs, both in relation to the environment and in terms of the particular human suffering it generates. These costs may be widely unknown or widely recognized. They constantly change as environment and social institutions change, and the degree of recognition of the costs will itself change (and can itself impel change). Specific technologies, just as much as social and economic institutions, will also have their

costs. The same can be said, I believe, for the currency of specific concepts.

To distinguish between public and private life is to suggest that this distinction is salient to political economy. However, there is no simple relation between levels of economic status and access to public life, just as there is no simple relation between access to public life and political power or other kinds of socially defined prestige, except to say that such social institutions as state, religion, ethnicity, generation, or gender certainly do come into play in the particular way a society organizes relations of public and private and that social differentiation will tend to create corresponding publics.

As I will use the terms here, no given institution is defined categorically as public or private. Rather, the terms function indexically in relation to each other. A town meeting is public in comparison to the activities of a single family, but in a sense more private than network television news. A family dinner, seen in comparison to the life of work and school, can be called "private," but is also in some sense more of a public occasion than the conversation between two family members behind a deliberately closed door.

While the idea of public and private relates to the idea of accessibility, accessibility is never absolute. The accessibility to a park which makes it "public" is not quite the same as the

general population's access to a "public" corporate broadcast. The state defines the park as public and the corporation defines the broadcast as public in relation to other spheres of activity which are private. A society's conventions of accessibility will vary over time and from place to place. Its gatekeeping devices, those implicit and explicit conventions that constrain who can enter a given building or write a certain article, establish boundaries between different levels of public and private, thereby defining influence and control over different spheres of public.

However, I am for now less concerned by these gatekeeping devices than by the degree to which these levels of public and private demark contemporaneous access to common societally inscribed "texts" (in the broadest sense of the word -- see Ricoeur, 1971) or common reference to "prior text" (Becker, 1995:15). Thus the "public" of a family can be defined in terms of common reference to the memory of events, to texts (both of the family itself and of the wider society) that family members recognize themselves as sharing, and to the actual enactment of relations to one another. The "public" of a country or a nation exists in reference to language, myth, and institutions conceived of as in some sense shared. Every society will have its own economy of public discourses, with different levels of public articulated in terms of such

categories as locality, class, gender, ethnicity, generation, religion, political ideology, occupation, or consumer interest.

From this perspective of looking at "public," the bourgeois public sphere of Habermas, a historical phenomenon representing the ideal of the free exchange of ideas in a civil society, is only one category of the "public," that is to say, only one of a range of configurations of community, each of which is defined in terms of reference to commonly inscribed discourses. While it is often important symbolically for a public to be identified with the idea of free exchange by a mass of people representing the public, publics, as I am using the term, more typically carve out a complex set of relations of indexicality and exclusion to other publics and to what is construed as private. I by no means want to suggest that public life defines a sphere which is free from domination. It is enough to say that the term public suggests that at least some kind of free exchange takes among a group of people with common access to each other -- especially as this is indexed as relating to the idea of free exchange operating at a broader level. It is always implicitly contrasted with spheres of the private. This implicit indexical relation to, on the one hand, the private, and, on the other hand, the image of a public at large, is what distinguishes the concept of a public from the idea of a community or of a speech community.

It is my primary argument that specific publics will evolve discursive etiquettes corresponding to the particular tension implicit in their relation to a given political economy, configured with respect to technology, ideology, and social symbolism. An "etiquette," as I will use the term, is a socio-cognitive frame which indexes a discourse euphemizing or neutralizing social tension in contrast to a discourse which underlines it. There is no binding correlation between the actual practice of etiquette and distinctions of public and private. Some people will maintain rigid standards of etiquette in private just as some people will violate them in public; that is to say, there is individual agency in relation to etiquette. Even so, insofar as situations are indexed as public there is increasing pressure to conform to standards of discourse euphemizing or neutralizing the social tensions underlying the interactions of that public. When this social pressure is ignored, whether from ineptitude, ideological intent or the confusion resulting from fusion with new social systems, the discourse will be correspondingly marked. (It is precisely in such marked discourses that we may discern the limits of etiquette, and the outlines of emerging social change.)

This dissertation will attempt to explore this concept of etiquette with reference to contemporary Cambodian society, to the social tensions associated with the ways personal hierarchy operates in Cambodia, and to the contrasting political economic

configurations of socialism and personalized capitalism as they have worked themselves out in recent Cambodia history. As a starting point, however, to illustrate the practice of etiquette as I am using it, we can take as an example the social pressure on the discourse of American national media to euphemize reference to racial or ethnic tension. Strategies of euphemization have varied over time, from the convention of using whites to stand synecdochically for all Americans to the strategy of reference to a public image of whites and blacks in harmony together or the image of a somewhat larger group of people representing four or five ethnic categories -- rather more complicated kinds of synecdoche, which are nevertheless idealized simplifications in their own right. These euphemized discourses stand in contrast to another level of discourse where racial tension is recognized and even exaggerated -- a level of discourse which is indexed as more private than the euphemized one, but is always standing in the wings in relation to the discourse sanctioned by etiquette. It is as though one cannot really understand the euphemized (public) discourse unless one is in a position to view it with an understanding of the (ostensibly more private) social tensions underlying it. It is the discursive frame which includes the index both of euphemization and its non-euphemized contrast, as realized in social practice, which I am calling "etiquette."

As I am using "etiquette" it is meant to include both the traditional meaning of etiquette -- that of the way tacit or explicit codes work to promote harmony of interaction in conversation -- and the ways a society construes certain categories of discourse as somehow outside normal discourse and thus somehow neutral or ambiguous toward conflicting interests in such a way as to provide ground for common interaction. Thus, in personal interaction, to continue with the example of race and ethnicity, etiquette can mean the degree to which race and ethnicity will be avoided or explicitly referred to in actual conversation. But etiquette also has to do with ways whole categories of discourse function in relation to public life; thus the need to avoid reference to ethnicity (and a host of other social distinctions) may have something to do with the fact that children's cartoons tend to make use of animal figures as characters. In very different ways, the discourse of ritual, religion, art, mass media, science, and politics can serve the needs of etiquette and construct spheres of consensus which stand in conjunction to the consciousness of social tension in other social spheres.

Such etiquettes are used strategically as individuals negotiate their access to various levels of public and private, and etiquette choice is certainly one factor of identity. Etiquettes themselves are constantly in flux and constantly subject to societal negotiation -- complicated to no small degree

by the multitude of competing levels of public that exist in any society, and by the fact that what etiquette defines as public at one level (say, the sociability of the local tavern) may be regarded as private in relation to another (say, the world of church or school). To use the term etiquette is to emphasize the degree to which the resulting discourse reflects a principle of societal cooperation -- which to some extent it always does - - even though the negotiation of etiquette inevitably takes place among those who have the power to negotiate it, and will consequently be configured in relation to their relative positions.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) far-reaching study of the taxonomies of conversational politeness reflects a very different theoretical tradition than I am primarily drawing on here -- that of speech act theory and rational choice theory - - which may explain why their analysis does not explicitly extend to the etiquette of mass public discourse, such as that of meetings, written publication, and broadcasting. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that many strategies of politeness, which they categorize in terms of relations of speaker to hearer, are relevant to the question of the way an etiquette of discourse shapes the public record: claiming common ground among the members of the community, conveying the idea that the members of the community are cooperating, following conventions of indirectness, avoiding the appearance of

presumption or coercion, impersonalizing the discourse, being vague or ambiguous. My analysis of discursive etiquette in Cambodia is made primarily with reference to the relation of social inequality and competing social networks. We may identify a number of obvious social strategies: directly affirming the value of hierarchy (as universally acknowledged and advantageous) in relation to individuals or social networks; appealing to beliefs and principles which are construed as standing above and apart from the tensions of social inequality and competing social networks; or playing with ambiguity of discourse in such a way as the same message can be interpreted in conflicting ways to the advantage of disparate social groupings and social position. All these discursive strategies have a dialectical relation to the part of social consciousness which recognizes the tensions implicit in inequality.

Bourdieu writes:

Religion and politics achieve their most successful ideological effects by exploiting the possibilities contained in the polysemy inherent in the social ubiquity of the legitimate language . . . . The polysemy of religious language, and the ideological effect of the implication of opposites or denial of divisions which it produces, derive from the fact that, at the cost of re-interpretation implied in the production and reception of the common language by speakers occupying different positions in the social space, and therefore endowed with different

intentions and interests, it manages to speak to all groups and all groups speak it -- unlike, for example, mathematical language, which can secure the universal meaning of the word 'group' only by strictly controlling the homogeneity of the group of mathematicians. Religions which are called universal are not universal in the same sense and on the conditions as science.

Recourse to neutralized language is obligatory whenever it is a matter of establishing a practical consensus between agents or groups of agents having partially or totally different interests. This is the case, of course, first and foremost in the field of legitimate political struggle, but also in the transactions and interactions of everyday life. (1991: 39-40)

One must expand on Bourdieu's argument on a number of points. His emphasis in this passage on the role of polysemy should not blind us to the fact that other strategies of discursive etiquette can serve similar ends. Bourdieu's point, that the discourse of science is constrained by the relative homogeneity of the scientific community, is true only up to a point. If ambiguity and vagueness are not associated with the discourse of science in the same way that they are with the discourse of religion, the discourses of science are surely constrained by elaborate etiquettes aiming at finding ways to disregard individual bias while appealing to an ideal of neutral objectivity. (Conventions of choosing emotionally neutral vocabulary, of avoiding reference to the person of the author, of limiting the discussion to empirically determinable

information, all are in some sense work together as an etiquette.) One must question the idea, which I believe is implicit in Bourdieu's argument here, as in his other writings, that to strip away polysemy and reveal the underlying class tensions is necessarily constructive or good. Surely the etiquettes of science or religion or political rhetoric do sometimes serve to create a necessary and useful consensus; surely a socially constructed consensus has its own kind of truth along with the deconstructed world which acknowledges warring self-interests. But despite these objections, the passage represents great insight about the crucial role that postures of neutrality play in relation to practical consensus.

An etiquette may operate at the level of implicit social understanding, of habitus (in Bourdieu's term), or it may relate to explicit ideologies. Thus under the single rubric of etiquette we can include the processes described in detail by Bourdieu for an Algerian community, whereby domination is veiled in codes of habitual interaction and exchange.

Gentle, hidden exploitation is the form taken by man's exploitation of man whenever overt, brutal exploitation is impossible. It is as false to identify this essentially dual economy with its official reality (generosity, mutual aid, etc.), i.e., the form which exploitation has to adopt in order to take place, as it is to reduce it to its objective reality, seeing mutual aid as a corvée, the khammes as a sort of slave, and so on. (Bourdieu 1977, p. 192)

The negotiation of etiquette can also include such explicit strategies as control over public discourse in the form of censorship, as well as more complex ideological construal of discourse practice, such as when journalists in the BBC tradition are taught to attempt to get statements from both sides of a dispute, this standing synecdochically for the pursuit of fairness and truth.

In all these cases there is an effort to create an image of public consensus in relation to private realms of non-consensus. The point of censorship is not so much to deny opposition as to relegate it to the private. Even in the case of the BBC, where the broadcaster present opposing points of view, the idea is put forward that, whatever the dispute, there can in relation to the public at least be some non-partisan consensus as to what the dispute is. Strategies of etiquette can include agreeing to disagree, or agreeing that we, as a given public, are jointly in opposition to another given public. It is no doubt always possible to show that underlying the appearance of consensus there are forces of self-interest and domination coming into play (lurking in the shadows of the private with sometimes painful obviousness). Nevertheless, as Foucault would tell us, the very fact that the illusion is called for is an indication that the hegemony is not total.

Etiquette inevitably serves hegemony and, as such, is always the rightful target of those who would call hegemony

into question. It mystifies relations of power or makes a show of attempting to. But in its appeal to principles of cooperation, it provides a necessary commonality of discourse without which the workings of everyday social intercourse would be unthinkable. On the one hand, etiquette constructs a neutrality which is never as neutral as it pretends to be, and will always have a hegemonic bias. On the other hand, etiquette is by its nature a compromise by those negotiating for its control. Etiquette is not a naked display of power.

James Scott, in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, much like Bourdieu, is interested in exploring how a “public transcript” disguises hegemony. The book is a taxonomy of the different ways a discourse of resistance (“hidden transcripts”) stand in relation to the “public transcript,” where a discourse of resistance is only allowed to be made explicitly public at rare historical moments. That is to say, Scott is writing about the relation of public to private, in ways that parallel what I am describing as “etiquette.” Scott emphasizes the illusory quality of the public transcript: “The public transcript is, to put it crudely, the self-portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen.” (1990, p. 18) Those who have significant influence over public discourse will always represent a smaller group than those who are affected by it, and etiquettes do serve to bolster elites and marginalize those who do not easily fit into its categories. Nevertheless, such a

statement ignores the degree that, as the product of endless negotiations among shifting social forces, etiquettes also, if to a lesser degree, constrain elites. We can never underestimate the violence of domination and the relentless logic of the inevitable resistance to it, all of which imbues the etiquettes that articulate with it. Nevertheless, we can never quite dismiss an etiquette as serving the interests of the elite. When, as we shall see, the Khmer Rouge elite at certain periods were compelled to avoid reference to the word "I," it was a way of denying the truth of their own agency in relation to the revolutionary process; here an etiquette which on one level was self-serving was on another level its own kind of self-inflicted violence. To speak of etiquette is to concede the possibility of cooperation among human beings, even under the most strained conditions, and the idea that, even under the most strained conditions, humans will invent the conditions for cooperation.

It is not my intention to downplay either the potential for evil or the potential for good which etiquette entails. Rather, I would like to focus on a profound ambiguity implicit in discursive etiquette, that something which seems deeply necessary can come to be (and indeed almost inevitably does come to be) a strategy of dominance.

It would be an oversimplification to suggest that discourses of religion, art, mass media, science, and politics can

be reduced to a function of etiquette. It remains true, however, that each of these discursive spheres involves creating consensus, and etiquette is part of what does that. I would argue that there is a connection between what I am calling etiquette and what Rappaport calls logos (1994: 157-8), "a category of conceptions ordering many societies, perhaps most pre-modern societies" by which, in the practice of ritual, the idea of a unifying truth is constructed. This concept, as Rappaport describes it, stands as a counterbalance to the possibilities of distortion implicit in human language. In terms of what I am calling etiquette, we can say that logos is one particularly profound strategy for creating consensus where it is seemingly impossible -- that is to say, one particularly profound type of etiquette.

Another, more specific example, might be the role that Dumont argues that spiritual renunciation plays in relation to the caste system, by creating a realm of people who "become dead to the social world" and act with complete independence in a way which, Dumont argues, releases them from the inner logic of the caste system.

Now, if we bring together the society on the one hand and the renouncer on the other, we have a whole containing an equilibrium between quite different things: on the one hand a world of strict interdependence, in which the individual is ignored, and, on the other hand, an institution which puts an end to interdependence and inaugurates the

individual. . . It may be doubted whether the caste system could have existed and endured independently of its contradictory, renunciation. (Dumont, 1980: 185-6)

If there is a correlation between the tensions of a particular political economy and the discursive etiquettes associated with it, the question logically arises of whether there are broad patterns of correspondences, generalizable over time and location, between political economy and etiquette. One might ask, for instance, to take the broadest textbook categories, whether kin-based segmentary societies practicing swidden agriculture will tend to be associated with particular social tensions which will in turn entail a particular range of strategies of etiquette. If so, would this range of etiquettes contrast in any systematic way with that of hierarchically ordered agricultural polities ordered by personal relations to elites, or with mass mediated industrialized nation states? To fully explore this question is beyond the scope of this dissertation -- but one may rightly ask whether there is a larger pattern behind the fact that so many African societies have conventions, often defined in terms of kinship, about who can and cannot joke with whom, Cambodians manage not to think of gift-giving to superiors as bribes, and Americans are uncomfortable telling people their salaries.

It is possible to speak of a kind of evolution of communication technology as it relates to the size and

organization of publics and an underlying tension, found in every society, growing out of the difficulty of creating unity out of diversity. The word evolution, in this context, does not suggest progress or perhaps even overall complexity, but the fact an advanced stage incorporates the technologies of earlier stages, so that where once there was only the public sphere of the oral and written, it has been joined by the public spheres of print and broadcast technologies. From this perspective we can speak of a kind of evolution of etiquette.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, for example, one way to look at the historical distinction between, for example, "oral" societies, societies with widespread literacy, and societies with widespread use of print and broadcast media could be in terms of the different spheres of public which are created in association with different media. While a new medium of communication rarely replaces an old medium, it does create new economies of public and private and thereby new etiquettes, subject to the negotiation of the different forces in a position, to one degree or another, to control or influence it. Broadly based media, like print or television, widely consumed and widely subject to public opinion, are potentially subject to more broadly defined criteria

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<sup>1</sup> Clarke Speed, responding to an earlier draft of this section, suggested that rather than speak of an evolution of etiquette we might speak of a devolution of etiquette, as modernity further and further attenuates the natural conditions of etiquette, mystifying relations of production. While this idea appeals to me intuitively, and corresponds to my sense that there are greater pitfalls to the possibility of etiquette as societies increase in scale and diversity, I would prefer to forego any such evaluative position, acknowledging that etiquette serves to mystify, in exasperatingly complex ways, in any society.

of etiquette than, say, a church sermon or a tape-recorded message from a student to his parents. Moreover, the nature of the media -- the degree of personal authorship, the degree of collaboration, the duration and quality of its output, or the ways by which, economically, it is made available, as well as the degree to which it is identified with the idea of high technology, all play a role in defining a particular type of public and, hence, a particular type of etiquette.

Goody (1986:13), for example, suggests that the introduction of writing creates the possibility of more abstract, universalizing categories -- a much debated idea (See Street, 1984, 1993, Besnier, 1995). One way to formulate such an idea, which perhaps precludes at least some of the criticism which has been raised against Goody, would be to suggest, for instance, that where public is defined in terms of oral interaction, etiquette will tend to be defined in terms of personal relations and their iconic representation, whereas where public is defined in terms of written or print media, there is greater possibility of discursive etiquettes which represent authority as outside of personal relations.

Etiquette in practice entails reference to other media and other discursive etiquettes. Thus part of the etiquette of print will be the degree to which orality is or is not indexed, just as spoken discourse is transformed by the possibility of indexing a reference to the etiquette of print. Orality, or the indexical

reference to orality in print, may be defined as a departure from the etiquette of print; where this is the case, its use may signal defiance or a tactical appeal to solidarity. Conventions indexing literary etiquette in conversation may serve as a marker of class solidarity among educated people (or a humorous “putting on the dog”); more commonly, perhaps, they may be held up as a symbol of what stands in contrast to the solidarity of spoken discourse -- in either case the hegemony of educated discourse in relation to other kinds of oral discourse is underlined. (These tendencies become more dramatic where different media are associated with different languages -- see Rafael, 1995 for a discussion of the intertwining of Tagalog and English.) The degree of value a society gives to literate or oral discourse may vary; there is no reason why a society with a high degree of literacy should devalue orality, and the degree to which it does seems to relate merely to cultural convention (Tannen, 1982). This is surely what underlies the arguments of those, such as Street and Besnier, who see differences of the way literacy and orality are configured in a society as merely “ideological.” Nevertheless, I believe one can distinguish between different kinds of etiquettes and find correlations with the particular ways a society constructs public and private in relation to literacy and orality. That is to say, for example, that we cannot predict whether a society will value the fact that some people talk like books, but there are reasons why

certain styles are associated with books; and it's a pretty safe bet to say that people will not talk like books in societies where there is little literacy. One cannot say, of course, that a society with a particular combination of the use of books and broadcast media and film is any more complex than a purely oral society, but one can say that the very fact of the simultaneous existence of several different kinds of public discourse creates the possibility of simultaneous reference, and that this very intertextuality, as it figures in the negotiation of discursive etiquette, is a characteristic of the society with multiple forms of communication media.

Political economy is, of course, not static; wherever there is domination and resistance there will be a never-ending process of searching for new means of consolidating power and a countervailing search for ways to overcome or deflect it. Given the nature of human agency no direction is inevitable; nevertheless, humans will tend to work out the logical implications of ideas and institutions in relation to the constraints of environment and human biology. Habitus, the temporary state where human practice becomes unthinking reflexive convention (what Bourdieu calls "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations" [1977:78]) is a natural stage in life of ideas and institutions, framed periods of innovation, and periods where a society is acutely aware of the system's human costs, both times where

human agency is much deeper a part of things. The sequence of innovation, habitus, and awareness of costs represents a kind of directionality -- far from inevitable, but always an underlying possibility. To put this in a slightly different way, the social and environmental costs of a system (say, universal suffrage, or television, or the idea of the press as a fourth estate in relation to government) will be perceived differently by different segments of a society as they enact it or experience the effects of other people enacting it. Its very arrival on the scene, planned or accepted as though it were planned, suggests that at least a segment of the population was conscious of the innovation and regarded it as inevitable or good. Those actively using a system will work out its logic as far as they can; it may come to have currency among more and more members of a society. For some of the people some of the time it may come to be taken for granted, part of the habitus of everyday life which one would not think to question. I would suggest that it is the nature of any such system to be impermanent; the changing relations of different segments of the population, the fact that as systems develop their relations to other systems change, and the very fact that the inner logic of a system will grow increasingly apparent, all will tend to lead to a new awareness of the costs of the system -- and these will always be there -- which in turn will propel the society toward finding new systems.

An etiquette, as a category of a conceptual system, is vulnerable to changes in the political economy to which it is linked. It is also vulnerable to the contradiction at the heart of every etiquette: that neutrality serves dominance and becomes a form of dominance; when this is fully realized there will be a need to invent new strategies of etiquette. From this I do not argue that etiquette ever can or should be eliminated, merely that it must constantly be re-invented. One must acknowledge that the one who is able to deconstruct etiquettes and reveal the underlying dominance is a servant of history with a noble calling. The imaginative re-invention of etiquette is an equally noble calling.

This dissertation, then, will examine changing discursive etiquettes with reference to a period of time when Cambodia turned away from socialism, held a U.N.-supervised elections, and established a post-socialist state of mixed character. This will serve as a point of departure for looking at discursive etiquette in relation to larger processes of modernization in Cambodia. Put succinctly, the dissertation is meant to be the recent history of failed euphemism in Cambodia.

## **Chapter Four: Hierarchy in Cambodia**

To speak of hierarchy, as opposed to such terms as stratification, inequality, or domination, is to suggest that social inequality has been codified in relation to a symbolic system. This in turn, I would argue, suggests valorization as etiquette. That is to say, hierarchy is one strategy of euphemizing or neutralizing the tensions of inequality -- perhaps the most obvious one. In the following three chapters I will look at the issue of hierarchy in Cambodia; the rest of this chapter will try to establish an analytical framework for looking at hierarchy and use it to examine the ways hierarchy is inscribed in gestures of greeting and symbolic displays of generosity in Cambodia. Chapter three will look at the particular way Cambodian discursive etiquette works itself out with reference to hierarchically marked pronouns and terms of address. Then, in chapter four, I will look at how Cambodian newspapers have depicted and critiqued traditional practices of hierarchy in satirical cartoons.

Whatever descriptive models we may attempt to construct of Cambodian hierarchy as a system, the starting point is perhaps inevitably our own experience of difference. I

write about Cambodian hierarchy in part because it has figured in my own relations with Cambodians in ways that have been unsettling or puzzling. However much a chapter like this is an attempt to go beyond my intuitive understanding of Cambodian hierarchy, I must acknowledge that this intuitive understanding informs it, and is based on what sometimes seems like a fairly narrow range of images or experiences that have stayed in my memory. I recall, for instance, the image of evident pleasure that an old woman took in the act of prostrating herself before a distinguished monk as she offered him food. The cultural awkwardness in my relationship to a Cambodian family in the U.S. over the father's desire for the children to prostrate themselves in greeting before adult guests, including, sometimes, myself. My discussion about this with a more Americanized Cambodian guest, who praises the gesture by the children, saying it is very Khmer and very good, but, on further questioning, acknowledges that this is not always done in Cambodia and that he would not have his own children do it. My discomfort in Phnom Penh on several occasions when my landlord, a government employee, would come in a state of drunkenness and prostrate himself before me while declaring his devotion, a discomfort that derived in part from the moral violence of the idea of anyone prostrating themselves before me, but also from the suspicion that my

landlord's drunken gesture included an element of sarcasm. Another image which relates to drinking: eating out in Phnom Penh with friends, one of them the secretary of a high-ranking official. He is approached by his friend, a man who had also been secretary to a high-ranking official, but was recently appointed to an administrative position within the ministry. This man was drunk; he joked with my friend, acting out a hilarious parody of the use of deferential language, but punctuating it periodically with him cuffing my friend on the head. I think of gifts of fruit by Cambodians in Phnom Penh trying to ingratiate themselves with me, the implicit understanding being that this signals the beginning of a relationship; I knew that sometimes it preceded a request for a favor. Incidents like one, where I was walking down the street during a short visit to Battambang, and a young man appears out of nowhere, tells me he's worked with Westerners on the border, and implores me to help him, basing his appeal not on his qualifications, but on presenting himself, someone I'd never seen before, as an object of pity. In 1985, in the Philippine Refugee Processing Center, coming across a Cambodian refugee I knew working in the garden of a Cambodian-American couple who worked as staff. How even though I understood that in Cambodian terms it could represent something else, I knew that from an American perspective, they were violating an

unstated code which prohibited camp staff from using for their personal benefit the people they were in the camp to help. A wedding in rural Kampong Cham, where I am seated at the table with village notables, including the sub-district chief; I am struck not just by how much better dressed he is, but by the fact that he is noticeably better fed than any other Cambodian I have seen in the village. The image of two Cambodians working to repair a motorbike in Phnom Penh, where in the U.S. probably only one would be working. One man is obviously in charge; the other one squats attentively nearby, alert to provide whatever help is needed. You could not exactly say there is a division of labor, except insofar as the one in charge probably knows more or is more adept. The assistant senses what is needed and provides it. They are in a sense both doing the same job, the assistant acting as the extension of the man in charge or, sometimes, doing exactly what the man in charge is doing, as a way of spelling him. The action of one seems to flow into the action of the other. There is no sense in which the presence of a second person interferes or challenges the work of the main repairman. Three Cambodian-American girls, sisters, in Seattle, playing a board game I have just given them. I find myself puzzled by the pleasure they take in rolling the dice for each other and moving each other's pieces, quite unmindful of the implicit

competitiveness of the assignment of one piece to one person, as though their identities were interchangeable in this task, to me in ways that seemed to almost defeat the purpose of the game. Finally, there is the memory of a Cambodian friend in the U.S., a man in his early 60's of peasant/laborer background, telling me that he likes me because I don't hold by class distinctions (brâka<sup>v</sup>n vanna'); that I treat him as an equal.

Many of these instances, of course, stick in my mind because they involve specific tensions which arose where social practices are changing and/or coming into contact with cultural difference. Indeed, the fact that I was there in and of itself assures that each of these cases involved, at least minimally, a contact point in cultural difference. In my contact I mark these instances as "different" and in one way or another "construct" this difference; and the above listing obviously tells something about me and my cultural biases as much as it does about Cambodians. It is good to be wary of the degree to which Westerners' perception of Asian hierarchies or patron-clientism may relate primarily to the limited circumstances under which the Westerner relates to the Asian, or the particular limited situations where the Westerner is in a position to observe the Asian; even so, the notion that there are cultural boundaries

where differences in social organization are in some way demarked seems to me inescapable.

Cultural boundaries are, of course, not only marked by the perceptions of Westerners -- and some anecdotal evidence of how Chinese or Vietnamese in Cambodia characterize difference is relevant as well. For example, a young man of mixed ethnicity in Phnom Penh told me about his new job working aboard a Thai floating hotel in 1992. The young man was born in Cambodia and possibly part Khmer, which was the only language he was fluent in, but was of Vietnamese, Chinese, and French descent, and did not identify himself as Khmer. He told me that in the hotel he preferred to work with Thais than Khmers. He said that the Khmers had no sense of equality: they never wanted to have anything to do with anyone they thought of as low status, just were always trying to attach themselves to the big people in the hotel. He said that his generalization about Khmers did not extend to my landlady of the time and her family; this, he said, was because they were Sino-Khmer and thus had a greater sense of equality. A petty story, but one which carries weight to the degree that it resonates with other stories and experiences. I told it to a Western woman married to a Sino-Khmer in the U.S. and she said that, yes, the Sino-Khmer would also attach themselves to

persons of power, but in a relationship of this kind they would work very hard to increase their status in the situation, whereas the Khmer would expect to be pulled up by the relation without any effort. These two anecdotes represent over-simplified, essentializing stereotypes, which should be seen as stemming in part from the personal animosities of the people telling the story; but they do serve to illustrate that the perception of "difference" in relation to social organization is not simply about the Western perception of Cambodian society. However arbitrary, however confused by the issue of mixed ethnicity, there are perceived lines of differences between the social organization of Chinese or Vietnamese and Khmer, and there is some consistency in the way these stereotypes are formulated. It would not be too difficult to turn the stereotype around, as Khmers sometimes do, and characterize the Sino-Khmer's hard work, for instance, as demonstrating an overly instrumental motivation, or to portray more positively the idea that Khmer feel motivated to appeal to affection.

West (1992: 37), in a review of the Thai novel, *Letters from Thailand*, by Botan, recounts how in the novel a Thai schoolteacher attempts to explain to his Chinese father-in-law the differences in Chinese and Thai family relations.

The young man seeks to explain that Thais love and respect their parents just as the

Chinese do, but show their feelings in different ways. 'You see, Thai parents let their sons depend on them. The Chinese and farang [Westerners] don't understand why Thai parents encourage that, but they do it because they see dependence as a kind of love.

Without underestimating the complex differences which distinguish Thai and Khmer social life, I think the quotation serves as an eloquent formulation of the idea the Vietnamese and Sino-Khmer were trying to convey in the anecdotes above, that (presumably like Thais at the time, but unlike their eastern neighbors) Cambodians value dependency.

The sometimes appallingly condescending statements of Thompson (1937), whose book was based in part on interviews with French colonial officials, should probably be regarded in the same category as the statements above. Despite their condescension, they do tell us something about the way the French constructed difference, and although they cannot be taken at face value, they do provide clues to cultural systems. She writes:

The unlimited devotion which the Khmer is capable of giving to those who know how to handle him is partially offset by the cloying docility of this perennially enslaved people. Despite their intelligence and obstinacy the Khmers are discouraging material with which

to work, from the viewpoint of future development. (357)

It is a point of view which obviously judges the Khmer only in terms of the ease by which they lend themselves to the colonial project -- to which they are "material with which to work" -- and one is tempted to suggest that the fact that the Khmer did not lend themselves to the colonial project is a point in their favor. Nevertheless, the notion of Khmer making a show of a kind of docility in the face of authority does resonate with ways other people have tried to characterize how Khmer culture was different from theirs. In a similar vein, Thompson writes:

Khmer feudalism differs profoundly from Annamite society. The Cambodians have a sincere attachment to their hereditary lords, and they are knit together by the powerful ties of clan. . . The people's natural timidity and formalism have become crystallized by and into a hierarchized society, carefully policed. There is a great fear and respect for authority and an inevitable traffic in influence . . . In its total lack of public opinion Cambodia is essentially a feudal country. The family group, or the hamlet, mark the limits of the average Khmer's spiritual and physical horizon. His inertia is complete, his lack of disinterested abstract curiosity total. Itinerant Chinese merchants form his sole link with the outside world. (327)

However oversimplified this is, and tinged with condescension, she was certainly grappling in 1937 with issues that still figure in relationships today.

A good starting place is to define terms. While my use of the word hierarchy in the chapter heading is intended to be broad, and to include such concepts as dependency, dominance, and patron clientism, it will be helpful to think through the distinctions these terms can take. Throughout the chapter I rely on the notion of inscription -- the notion that an idea or image or action can come to endure in public memory as a sort of "text", as such existing to a degree outside of time and outside of the motives of the specific persons who may have generated it or repeated it (see Ricoeur, 1979 [1971]). The word hierarchy implies that a schema of relations marking differences of status has in some way come to be inscribed as a common reference point for the relevant public. I do not go so far as Dumont as to say that hierarchy represents ranking in relation to common values (1980: 20), but we can assume that the inscribed codes are valued by at least some members of the society. The term hierarchy, as opposed to the actual practice of inequality and dominance, suggests a public code which is configured in relation to public etiquette.

While the word hierarchy is sometimes used to describe the way a chain of command is defined with respect to a specific situation, it is not the right to command that constitutes hierarchy, as I am using the term, but the fact that there is social inscription of an unequal relation, which may in some cases include the inscription of a chain of command. While in some situations hierarchy may refer to institutionally fixed roles which a person or a class of persons is recognized as playing in relation to given institutions (such as, for instance, the relation between a captain and a colonel), the inscription of hierarchy can just as easily be indexical, such that a given person may assume different roles with different persons, with hierarchy as a mechanism for pointing to a range of possibility with reference to relative positions (such as, for instance, the way that relative age markers point to relative roles, as in the Cambodian terms bâng and p'oun). Hierarchy as a concept can include differences in status inscribed in terms of class, ethnicity, or gender, as well as in terms of the dyadic personal relations I am primarily concerned with here. The idea of caste suggests ascribed hierarchy in relation to groups (Dumont, 1980); the ideas of class, or of stratification may just as easily refer to the dynamics of group relations indexed as relative positions. The way in which hierarchy is inscribed in relation to a given public is itself a process involving negotiation and

change, and there will always be competing inscriptions of hierarchy operative at a given time.

Terms like dependency or dominance refer to actual relations, not socially inscribed conventions. That is to say, we can talk about Joe being dependent on Al or Joe dominating Al regardless of whether this dependency or dominance occurs within a socially inscribed hierarchy. Nevertheless, relations of dominance and dependency will occur within and with reference to the way a society inscribes hierarchy, and will often be shaped by that hierarchy. It may be true that, to the extent that patterns of dependency or dominance are publicly acknowledged, they may themselves take on a kind of legitimacy and serve to define hierarchies. But the terms, in and of themselves, refer not to publicly inscribed statuses, but to specific relations as they are negotiated with respect to a specific time and place. While it is certainly true that groups or classes of society may be dependent on or dominate other groups or classes of society, within the context of this chapter I will often be referring to personal dependence and dominance.

By pairing the terms dependency and dominance, I do not mean to suggest that they are opposites. When I speak of personal dependency I am referring to a relationship which fulfills need or supplies refuge -- by no means a negative thing in a Cambodian context (and my use of the term is

implicitly a translation of the Cambodian word pe<sup>v</sup>ung). By personal dominance I am referring to any sort of power which a person may have over another person, whether by the capacity to inspire fear, or by personal magnetism or the ability to inspire love. Dependency as a concept is driven by need, as opposed to self-reliance or detachment. Dominance as a concept is driven by power, as opposed by resistance. These are intertwined but not complementary concepts. To say that one person dominates another perhaps suggests that both persons are in one way or another dependent on each other. To say that two persons depend on each other does not necessarily imply that there is dominance by one over the other, although in practice dependence is often related to dominance to some degree.

Patron-clientism is an analytical term. To speak of patron-clientism is to speak of a kind of dyadic relationship perceived as a characteristic pattern of social organization. The term patron clientism suggests that at some level these patterns are socially inscribed, if not in the minds of the actors at least in the mind of the observer. (Indeed, as we have pointed out above, observers may sometimes use the term as a way of inscribing difference, and the breadth of the phenomena that is sometimes lumped together in discussion of patron-clientism may have something to do with the fact that it

tends to stand as a general category of difference.) For the purpose of this dissertation I will take James Scott's 1976 article "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia" as representing the classic model of patron clientism. I will argue -- in ways that I believe are consistent with the later development of Scott's own thought -- both that there are specific limitations to such a model as we attempt to apply it to Cambodia and that there are underlying difficulties in applying it as a general theory. But first, with reference to basic definitions, we should state the obvious: that hierarchy does not in and of itself constitute patron-clientism, even though patron-clientism always exists in relation to the public inscription of hierarchy. Moreover, whereas personal dependency and personal dominance are deeply a part of patron-clientism, they only directly imply patron-clientism to the extent that personal dependence or personal dominance occur in a population at what at some level can be constructed as representing a systematic pattern. The etiquette of patron-clientism will consist in the ways a society devises to neutralize the tension implicit in relations of dominance or dependence, whether by validating it as hierarchy or by stressing an underlying equality.

Scott defines patron clientism as follows:

The patron-client relationship—an exchange relationship between roles—may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron. (1976:124-5)

Eisenstadt and Roniger's book *Patrons, Clients, and Friends* (1984), longer and more exploratory than Scott's article, provides less of a neat model, and it is harder to characterize their work as representing the classic view of patron-clientism, although it is a rich source of illustrations of the concept. Where Scott emphasizes social organization, Eisenstadt and Roniger give greater emphasis to patron-clientism as it relates to patterns of generalized exchange. Their definitions do not depart substantially from the above. However, they do include some discussion of the personal meaning of the patron-client relationship which is interesting for our discussion:

- (d) Ideally, a strong element of unconditionality and of long-range credit is built into these relations.
- (e) Closely related to the preceding is the strong element of interpersonal obligation that is prevalent in these relations -- an element often

couched in terms of personal loyalty or reciprocity and attachment between patrons and clients -- even if these relations are often very ambivalent . . . It is often very strongly related to conceptions of personal identity, (above all of personal honour, personal value or face-saving) and of obligations, and it is also evident in the presumed existence in such relations of some, even if very ambivalent, personal 'spiritual attachment between patron and clients.' (1984: 48)

I see such notions as inextricably tied to a society's strategies of etiquette.

While the models of Scott and Eisenstadt and Roniger are indeed extraordinarily rich in detail and resonant to anyone trying to analyze certain kinds of society, they do have limitations, primarily with respect to the degree to which they lack ways of accounting for the systematicity of symbolic systems in relation to social organization and generalized exchange. Scott, and Eisenstadt and Roniger, would probably not consider these works as functionalist, but in emphasizing exchange they implicitly suggest relationships which, however "whole person," are parallel to contractual exchange. They certainly recognize the inequality of the exchange involved, but when Scott, for instance, emphasizes reciprocity to the extent of making patron-clientism categorically different from the relation of a boss to those under him, he implicitly suggests that at some level a balance is in operation. When he speaks of

degree of coerciveness as though it were a different axis, which could in some way function as an overlay to considerations of exchange, he implicitly suggests that patron-clientism can take place without the negotiation of dependence or dominance. Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984), citing Pitt-Rivers, point out that despite the hierarchical differences between the patron and the client, the notion of patron-clientism implies a "moral equality". Such statements grow logically out of a view of patron-clientism which is based on the idea that the exchange involved is at some level balanced, such that when it isn't it is seen as an exception. I prefer to see such "moral equality" as one strategy of etiquette in relation to patron-clientism -- one which participants will conform to in varying degrees as it strategically suits them.

It is best to define patron-clientism in such a way that we can conceive it as existing even when there is not a convention of moral equality between the actors, such that the lack of moral equality is not an exception, merely one possibility. The emphasis on reciprocity in patron-client theory sometimes leads its proponents (as has sometimes been the case in discussion about Cambodia) to conclude that some romanticized world of balanced relationships and social stability has been lost. The notion of such balanced relationships have perhaps always had less to do with reality

than with strategies of discursive etiquette as they relate to specific situations. Those who bemoan a loss of balance in patron-clientism are perhaps in part bemoaning the loss of the iconic quality of the model. Moving, to use Bourdieu's terms, "from the mechanics of the model to the dialectic of strategies." (1977: 3) means recognizing the flux of domination, dependency, and resistance in relation to the specific etiquettes of patron-clientism. It also means being careful not to confuse the conventions of etiquette with underlying reality.

Given the above, I would like to attempt a new definition: *Patron clientism refers to social formations characterized by the fact that individuals' economic and moral welfare is shaped to a marked degree by the negotiation of dyadic whole person relationships, where the configuration of the personal dependency thereby created is widely recognized as conforming to the prototypical notions of hierarchy, as culturally inscribed.*

The key elements of the definition are, first of all, as in Scott's definition, that the relations involved are whole person relations, thus contrasting with situations where status is more likely to be negotiated with reference to institutional mechanisms. Secondly, they are seen as enacting iconic conventions of hierarchy. The degree to which a social system may be characterized by patron-clientism is a factor not only of

the frequency of whole-person negotiation between people of unequal status, but also by the degree to which it is culturally defined in such a way as to recognize it and not, for instance, relegate it to the realm of the "private," and thus invisible.

My definition differs from that of Scott in the degree to which it emphasizes negotiation instead of exchange. This means that however much the starting assumptions about hierarchy are inscribed, the particular nature of dominance and dependence of the two parties are in flux (particularly when the inscription of hierarchy is not institutionally fixed but indexical). This means that when we are looking for the implications of a particular instance of patron clientism, we may want to look at how specific negotiation draws on specific inscribed hierarchies, or at how specific inscriptions of hierarchy also inscribe a process of negotiation. The key to understanding patron-clientism becomes the analysis of the inscription of hierarchy in relation to the negotiation of status, rather than the analysis of exchange. We must also look at how the consequences of negotiation succeeding is mirrored by the consequences of negotiation failing.

A degree of reciprocity is implicit in the term negotiation, as well as shifting degrees of dependence and dominance. A society's particular strategies of etiquette in relation to hierarchy may include conventions which mystify relations of

dominance or which recognize a degree of "moral equality" among the people involved, but this is not a necessary part of our definition. Exchange will take place but there should not be an assumption that such exchange is in any way parallel to contractual exchange. While recognizing the element of "long-range credit" in patron-clientism which Eisenstadt and Roniger mention in the quotation above, we must keep in mind, following Bourdieu (1977:5-7) that this pattern of exchange, in leading to long-term indebtedness of one kind or another will, rather than create a stable relationship, just as much foster the strategic tension of two parties in a fluctuating imbalance.

Scott's model lends itself most readily to situations where hierarchical relations tend to be "fixed" or relatively stable over a period of time, such an institutionalized landlord/tenant relationship -- which Scott refers to as "a relationship that serves, in a sense, as the prototype of patron-client ties." (1977:125) I am here more concerned with patron-clientism as it exists in relation to people whose position in society is not fixed. Scott's patron-clientism contrasted with kin-based systems, while it focused on relations which were acknowledged as analogous to kin relationships or extensions of them. I would prefer to think of our model of patron-clientism as one which extends logically into relationships of kinship and gender, insofar as hierarchies associated with kinship and

gender are culturally inscribed in similar ways. That is to say, where relations between genders or relations among kin are negotiated in ways that are similar to those of other kinds of patron-client relations, I see no reason to exclude them from that term.

Bonds of patron-clientism serve to exclude as well as to include, which means they form networks which compete with other networks. While Scott and Eisenstadt and Roniger, in these works, as well as Wolf (1966) do all give some attention to the idea that patron-client systems may exist alongside and other social formations, including institutions such as those of the state, this idea is not fully developed. Specifically, no attention is paid to the degree to which these different social institutions themselves may be dependent on each other or dominate each other, and the processes of negotiation whereby these relationships are worked out.

It proves limiting to fit post-colonial Cambodia into the classical framework of patron-clientism, a country in which, compared to other countries in the area, there traditionally was relatively little landlordism. It is, moreover, a country in which there has in recent years been little stability of relations. Ebihara's often cited observation, that, other than the monkhood, "the family and household are the only enduring

and clearly defined units" at the village level (1968:186) would seem to preclude a system of patron-clientism seen primarily as fixed non-kin relations at the village level -- except insofar as villagers have patron-client links to people within the state apparatus. It is indeed in relationship to government and the court that classical definitions of patron-clientism are most applicable in Cambodian terms -- but we can only truly understand them insofar as we see them interfacing with less institutionally fixed forms of hierarchy.

I will argue that the etiquettes surrounding Cambodian patron-clientism has often traditionally not encoded itself in terms of the idea of a "moral equality" between the patron and client. Rather the tension of the exchange has tended to be neutralized by emphasizing, to an exaggerated degree, the symbolic valorization of the person of higher status, and, in the case of monks and royalty, their other-worldly status. Somewhat contradictorily, the tension of the relation is also countered by an exaggerated sense of the connectedness (and even, oddly, interchangeability) of the two parties.

Chandler (1996: 99-113), writing about pre-colonial Cambodia, distinguished three kinds of villages, (1) the kâmpu<sup>v</sup>ng, large towns on navigable bodies of water, which was often where the district chief (chavvay srok) was based,

- (2) rice growing villages, populated by ethnic Khmer, and (3) forest villages, often populated by non-Khmer.

Little information has survived about the way Cambodian villages were governed in the early nineteenth century. Some French writers have asserted that Cambodian villages had no government at all, and in most of them, indeed, relations with outsiders and with the state were sporadic and unfriendly . . . Villages were usually 'ruled,' for ceremonial purposes and for the purposes of relations with higher authorities, by elderly men chosen for their agricultural skill, literacy, and fair-mindedness. Taxes in rice and labor seem to have been paid, irregularly, on demand. Village government was perhaps more noticeable in the kampong [kâ<sup>V</sup>mpu<sup>V</sup>ng], where there were more officials and hangers-on, but there is no evidence that any villages in Cambodia were governed by formally constituted councils of elders, as was the case in nineteenth century Vietnam. (1996:104)

As Chandler describes it, there was a difference between patron-clientage as it existed at the level of the kâ<sup>V</sup>mpu<sup>V</sup>ng and above, and as it existed in rice-growing villages and in the forest. In these smaller villages, he writes,

If a person's place was relatively secure, people in weaker positions sought him out and offered homage in exchange for protection. The society, in a sense, was fueled by the exchange of protection and service implied in these "lopsided friendships," as they have been called. In a village context, these

links might be with older or more fortunate members of one's family, monks in the local wat, bandit leaders, government officials, or holy men (nak sel) who appeared from time to time, promising their followers invulnerability and riches. (1996:104)

(While the term "lopsided friendships" has often been used specifically to refer to patron-client relationships, the very fact that the categories Chandler mentions are so different from each other points to the difficulty of talking in classical terms about patron-clientism at this level.) It was at the level of the kâ<sup>V</sup>mpu<sup>V</sup>ng, according to Chandler, where patron-clientism became more important, and where "people with access to power accepted as many followers or slaves as they could." (1996:105)

This related, in part, to a more clearly defined system of titled officials, or okya, some of whom surrounded the king and some of whom served as chavvay srok. Their hierarchical role in relation to the king and the population was publicly marked in a clear way. Chandler says there were roughly around 200 okya in the capital and the countryside in the 19th Century. The chavvay srok were not really administrators over the areas for which they were responsible; rather, it is fair to say they were patrons, eating off the land and the people, who, for their part, used them to negotiate a relation to the realms of otherworldly royalty.

French colonial extraction of resources tended to be in limited areas, such as in rubber plantations, manned largely by non-Khmer, and in large rice farms in Battambang -- probably the one area in the country where significant landlordism developed. Certainly the French colonial period would have had a profound effect on the more general peasant population - - by the rapidly increasing density of population, by the fact that the French bequeathed land ownership to the peasantry, and, indirectly, by the development of Phnom Penh and all that meant in terms of symbolic value. In terms of generalized systems of exchange, however, as Chandler points out, there is little evidence that French colonialism necessarily altered significantly the basic economic patterns of the average subsistence rice farmer, which is to say that patterns of hierarchy and patron-clientism as they existed at the village level probably largely stayed the same. Government officials still tended to be extractive patrons rather than administrators. While the French officially abolished slavery, anecdotal evidence points to the fact that some debt slavery was still practiced up until the early 1970's.

Thion (1983) has suggested that the upheavals of recent Cambodian history may relate to the fact that there were few significant lines of patron client links connecting the country's

elite to people at the village level. Thion even theorizes that a more complete pyramidal system of patron-clientism had once existed but was undermined by French colonialism. Whether or not this theory is plausible, post-independence Cambodia had well-defined state hierarchical mechanisms which extended down to the district level, but few institutionally defined hierarchical mechanisms below the level of the district, either in terms of the state or in terms of economic institutions, such as plantations. (Petty government workers at the sub-district and village level, as Ebihara describes them, were selected informally by their peers and did not necessarily have any more power or influence than other charismatic people.)<sup>1</sup>

While landlordism increased during the 1954-75 period (Kiernan: 1982) this never took on the enduring institutional quality of classical patron clientism. What did exist at the grass-roots level was a great deal of personal dependency, in large part at the level of family relations, but also at the level of ad hoc relations which assumed some of the character of family relations. We can assume that some individuals at some times were able to negotiate a great deal of power and

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<sup>1</sup> A district, the next largest administrative unit after a province, would probably at the present time represent about 20-50,000 people -- and is further subdivided into subdistricts or communes (khum), which, in turn are divided into villages. The district is the level at which there would likely be a high school, whereas elementary schools would be present at the sub-district (khum) level. That is to say, a district leader would certainly be known to the general population under him, but would only directly touch the lives of a few people on a regular basis.

influence at a local level by their ability to manipulate this personal dependency -- such as the bandits and the holy men Chandler talks about existing in pre-colonial times at the village level.

Thus we can distinguish between the patron-clientism of state institutions (or that of large landholders and other kinds of major power brokers to the extent that they existed) and the more informal patron-clientism of personal dependency and dominance which existed in conjunction with this. On the one hand there was the ascribed hierarchy of positions in state institutions. These positions also implied a patron-clientism with the general population who sought access to them. On the other hand there were hierarchical conventions which could be used to index the negotiation of personal relations at all levels of society. It is not precisely true to say that at the grass roots level there was an ideology of egalitarianism. Relative hierarchy was recognized and inscribed in iconic images and conventional language. But there was little institutionally inscribed hierarchy other than that of the monkhood, and there may have been an ideology of egalitarianism to the extent that such institutionalized hierarchy was not desired. Informal networks have probably always competed with institutionalized hierarchies. However, it is also probably true that the informal hierarchical conventions which existed at the

village level may have made it easier for individuals and institutions to articulate with the more clearly ascribed hierarchical roles at higher levels.

The fact that it was only in certain spheres, in connection with the state and the clergy, that there were functioning institutions of hierarchy, may have even served to exaggerate the importance of those hierarchies for those negotiating a rise in status. Nevertheless, if we look at the population as a whole, I think that it is fair to say that prior to 1975, compared to other societies, there was relatively little institutionally inscribed hierarchy in Cambodia, but, on the other hand, a great deal of importance on personal dependency, inscribed in language and imagery indexing patterns of relative position. As Keyes wrote in 1977, referring to rural life in Theravada Buddhist Societies more generally,

. . . it can be seen that nonascriptive criteria are of equal if not greater importance than ascriptive criteria in the distribution of social roles and in the determination of the hierarchical positioning of these roles. (1995 [1977]: 163)

This seems to have been especially true in Cambodia, and it meant, in effect that hierarchy had very little stable institutional grounding there; and that the symbolism of personal dependency became relatively important. It is

possible to argue that where hierarchy is inscribed in terms of the iconic language of personal dependencies, it is more likely to be realized in terms of an etiquette that valorizes hierarchy, rather than one that argues for an underlying moral equality. The relative scarcity of links between the rural population of subsistence rice farmers and the urban world of government bureaucracy and merchants meant that the division between the two could more easily come to have the dynamics of a division of class than of patron-clientage, which would explain some of the anti-urban sentiment of the 1975 revolution.

Symbolic links between the center and periphery in different ways underlined and contradicted the lack of more tangible links of organization and exchange. If there were relatively few pyramidal links by which the grass roots population linked to the upper echelons of power, Sihanouk's use of television and his practice of giving speeches for mass audiences throughout the country, meant that the general population may have felt a greater symbolic link to the top of the pyramid than it ever had before.

The issue of how the 1975-78 Democratic Kampuchea period and its aftermath have effected hierarchy in Cambodia is very much at the heart of this dissertation, but also very difficult to address. It is fair to say that events during and after the Pol Pot period have if anything increased the

likelihood that an individual will be personally dependent on someone else, despite or because of the fact that there has often been a lack of stability of institutional hierarchies. It is also true that the Democratic Kampuchea period and the People's Republic of Kampuchea period each in its own way represented an attempt by the state to extend its reach. It seems clear that both regimes have been characterized by something resembling patron-clientism between state/party officials and the general population, but this in a context where there was nevertheless a public show of equality, and, in the case of Democratic Kampuchea, a radical attempt to uproot the most basic personal dependencies already in existence. The very instability of life in Cambodia has tended to exaggerate personal dependency in ways which sometimes underline the authority of the state but often compete with it. Indeed, the intransigence of networks of personal dependency in Cambodia give this kind of inscription of hierarchy an almost primordial quality, and it is significant that political unrest in Cambodia generally has to do with competition along lines of personal loyalty more often than along lines of ethnicity or ideology. Political economic change has typically involved processes where conventions of hierarchy shift among various personal and political networks and the mechanisms of the state<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> I will not try to address the very interesting issue of Khmer hierarchy as it has been

At the heart of my analysis is the question of the terms by which hierarchies are inscribed for Cambodians themselves. In the rest of the chapter, and the two chapters which follow it, I will focus on a few ways that hierarchy can be said to be inscribed or commented on. This in no way pretends to be an exhaustive compilation of the mechanisms of symbolizing hierarchy, but I hope that it can serve as a mechanism of exploration<sup>3</sup>.

First I will look at the symbolism of hierarchy in gestures of greeting and displays of generosity, cases where symbolic behavior in relation to the monkhood and (for gestures of greeting) royalty can be juxtaposed with more everyday interactions where there is more clearly a negotiation of power and status. This can be regarded as demarking traditional Cambodian discursive etiquette. The interactions with the monkhood is constructed as neutral to power, thus serving as symbolic common ground for the society as large, and perhaps

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realized among refugee communities and countries of resettlement, except to say there has been some obvious symbolic continuity, even as the negotiation of hierarchy has been transformed. These issues have been addressed in Mortland and Ledgerwood (1988), Ledgerwood (1988b), Smith-Hefner (1993), and French (1994). Indeed, it was discussion about the Cambodian refugee community, in connection with works like these, that was the impetus for my interest in the issue.

<sup>3</sup> One significant area in which hierarchy is encoded is in schools, as Keyes (1991) has explored for Thailand. See Hinton (1997) for work on public schools in Cambodia. Another area which is particularly significant, but difficult to understand in any society, is the particular role of military hierarchy in relation to the hierarchy of everyday life. Although I have not had time to absorb Hinton's recently completed dissertation, his discussion of the chain of command under the Khmer Rouge clearly raises interesting questions on this topic as well.

as a basis for the critique of other kinds of social interaction. Even so, players do negotiate strategically their positions in relation to these neutral symbols. Moreover, the gesture of lowering oneself before an otherworldly force, in order to thereby be raised up, resonates iconically with the ways other kinds of hierarchical relations are inscribed.

### **Gestures of greeting**

One obvious way that hierarchy is symbolized is the gesture of bowing down or prostrating oneself before another person (thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m). While there are some variations in specific postures, the thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m invariably means kneeling down with the palms of the two hands together in a praying gesture, the praying hands and sometimes the upper arms touching the floor, with the head then lowered on top of the hands.

A Cambodian man in the United States (the same man who, in the story I recounted above, had his children thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m him when they left or entered the home) told me that children thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m their parents, but parents only thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m God (pre<sup>V</sup>ah). When I asked him whether people don't thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m the king, he said that this was because the king was a sort of pre<sup>V</sup>ah. In this way thvay

bângku<sup>V</sup>m is categorically distinct from the less abject gesture of raising the hands, palms together in a praying gesture, in greeting (sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah), simultaneously bowing the head forward slightly. But the sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah is likewise used in greeting and, if less than thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m, it also suggests deference, and the two gestures, one could argue, are variations on each other.

I will not try to explore the thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m as it is used with the king and other royalty, except to say that the gesture involved is somewhat more elaborate, and that the fact that one must thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m the king and other royalty is widely recognized by the general public and considered important. It is fair to say that other uses of thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m implicitly parallel it.

The most common Cambodian usage of thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m is in the practice of Buddhism. A lay person is expected to thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m three times upon entering the presence of a monk or before leaving his presence. The same gesture is made before the statue of the Buddha upon entering or leaving one of the buildings in the temple complex where there is a Buddha image.

The complexity of the symbolic relation between the monk and the lay person was underlined for me when an American student, preparing to write a paper in which she would look at the role of patron-clientism in relation to

Cambodian Buddhism, said she found it difficult to say, between the monks and the lay community, which was the patron and which was the client. The monk, as mendicant, receives the necessities of life from the community. Nevertheless, the monkhood and individual monks are held up as objects of veneration, as is indeed illustrated by the gesture of thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m. The fact that lay persons will thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m before a monk three times in exactly the same way that they will thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m before an image of the Buddha, of course, establishes a parallelism, and the lay persons implicitly make the statement that they give the monkhood a respect that is in some way like the respect that they give the Buddha. Certain monks may have followers (both monks and lay people) who are in one way or another attached to them, and as individual religious leaders can be said to be patrons to the people to attach themselves to them. Similarly, certain lay people, by the significance of their contributions may have a special relation to a temple which could be called one of patronage. But these relations are not specifically expressed by the thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m, which marks the relation between all monks and all lay people. The most general things we can say about the thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m are that, first, it is an explicit (and in that sense public) declaration of hierarchy, and, next, that it serves to mark categories of people. Thus, certainly in its

usage with monks, it defines a hierarchy which is not so much intended to represent dominance as the notion that categories of people can exist outside of such considerations as domination and resistance. A monk is explicitly dependent on other people, but dependent in ways that are constructed as outside of considerations of power.

Thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m is also sometimes used by children showing deference to their parents. I only recall having seen this in Cambodia once, when an adult son, about to return to the U.S. after visiting his parents, knelt to thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m his parents and his mother-in-law in the airport before boarding. In the case in Seattle mentioned above, the father decided, after several years in the US., to institute the practice of having his children thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m him whenever they left the house or returned from somewhere. The children would also be expected to thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m guests. The thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m was a single, continuous gesture, not the three bows as practiced with monks. The family's practice should not be regarded as typical, although it does give an indication of ideal norms. It goes beyond the guidelines of a 1970 Cambodian etiquette book (Bhi Dian Lay, 1970), which said that children should sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah their parents in this situation. The family's practice comes closer to the codes referred to in a book of religious instruction for children, probably dating to the Sihanouk era,

which includes a picture of a child kneeling in thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m before his parents, his mother's hand on his head. This book advises children to regularly go to their parents, thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m, and ask them if they have done anything wrong that day. (Brah Balat Sambattichantasovnnno, 1993) In the case in Seattle, the father specifically instituted the practice at a time when he was conscious of growing old and worried about losing authority in the family. Extreme or not, the practice was praised by other Cambodians, who saw it as a way of inculcating Khmer values in the children, and felt that it would serve as a preventive measure against, for instance, the children joining gangs. Even though, in effect, this father was using the gesture to inscribe his personal domination, the thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m represents an ideology of the relation of people of different categories, rather than the actual power of the father to enforce his will in and of itself. The hierarchies to which one must thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m are all ascribed hierarchies, but ascribed hierarchies with some spiritual justification, in contrast to bureaucratic hierarchies.

Thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m and sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah serve as markers of cultural difference. While observers tells me that in Vietnam at the present time you might occasionally see someone sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah a Vietnamese Mahayana monk, there is no active tradition of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m. I was first taught to thvay

bângku<sup>v</sup>m by an ethnic Khmer man from Vietnam at the Theravada Buddhist wat in the Philippine Refugee Processing Center. Sensing my discomfort at the idea of the gesture, he told me that I was not bowing down to the person, but to the robes. In effect he was telling me, in Eisenstadt and Roniger's terms, that despite the gesture, there was a "moral equality" between me and the person I was prostrating myself before. However, as I have gotten to know Cambodian Buddhism better, I have never since then heard anyone say that the thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m is a gesture to the robes and not to the person, and when I have asked monks about this idea, they have only seemed puzzled. My interpretation of the event is that my friend, someone educated in Vietnam who had chosen to identify with Khmer culture, had felt a need, much as I did, to find a way of asserting for himself the underlying moral equality between the person who bows and the person who receives the bow. I would argue that for many Cambodians, there is not this need to reconcile the gesture of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m with any notions of moral equality.

While practices such as that of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m and sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah are generally held to be the same in Thailand and Cambodia, some differences are acknowledged as part of asserting national difference, as when a Cambodian television official, implicitly suggesting that the gestures made by

announcers on a Thai-owned television station undermined Khmer customs, told me that, unlike the Thais, the Khmers do not bow deeply when making a sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah.

As traditionally practiced, a sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah marks deference in ways that, for example, shaking hands does not. The height of the lifted hands corresponds to the degree of deference showed. According to the 1970 etiquette book (Bhi,156), children with parents or grandparents and students with teachers should raise their hands to the level of the eyebrows. Civil servants greeting managers should raise their hands to the level of the mouth. Ordinary people greeting someone of great importance, like a government minister, should raise their hands to the level of the nose. Among equals, the hands are raised to the level of the chest.

An etiquette book like this quite consciously points to ideological change in regards to idea of hierarchy, and points out, for instance, that students sometimes support themselves as waiters and cyclo drivers, as a way of arguing for the underlying equality of people in inferior positions, an idea that the author says is basic to Sihanouk's philosophy of Buddhist Socialism (sângku<sup>V</sup>m reah niyum).

Nowadays there are still some families who force servants to bow and prostrate themselves, to speak to them with hands raised in sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah, regarding them like royalty. Since we are now in the era of

the sângku<sup>v</sup>m, led by our Papa Prince [samtech ew -- Sihanouk], in which His Highness regards all seven million Khmer as his fellow-members, we must guide ourselves to abolish bad customs such as those of looking down on and violating the people who earn their living serving us. (Bhi, 1970:87-8)

Traditionally, an inferior is to sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah first upon meeting a superior. Whether or not her statement reflects the same egalitarian impulse as expressed above, the author is quite aware of the potential awkwardness if someone should unintentionally convey an expectation of relative status.

Equals who are of the same age, when they meet each other, should simply raise their hands and sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah at the same time, not allowing one person to be first and the other later, and each person should strive to watch the other's hands, lest they raise their hands first and we later, which is something impolite. Someone with good upbringing should not give the appearance of waiting for someone to sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah them first, but should always lift their hands to sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah first, unless the person is younger than them. (162)

Practices such as thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m and sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah are, like any other social practice, constantly changing, and were changing at the time the 1970 etiquette books was written. One of the needs the book seemed to be designed to fill was to

help its readers negotiate the meeting of French and Khmer styles of etiquette. Readers are told, for instance, that the French custom would be for the child to kiss the parents upon arriving or leaving, the parents then kissing the child in return, as opposed to the Khmer custom of having the child sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah the parents (which the parents do not return). The book points out that some Khmer families are adopting the French customs on this.

Much attention is paid to the option of using a handshake instead of a sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah. "One must shake hands modestly, using all the fingers, displaying honesty and solidarity (samaki)."  
(157) Although the book makes a point to emphasize that the superior is the one to initiate the handshake, it here acknowledges the implicit ideology of solidarity in the handshake. According to the book, which probably represented urban standards rather than those of the whole country, older people and women tended to sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah whereas men shook hands. Thus, much as in dress, men were more likely to assume an international style, women expected to conform to Khmer standards. While the handshake arguably represents an ideology of egalitarianism, or is at least in some ways neutral to some of the hierarchical distinctions in the sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah, it, in its neutrality, also constructs a community of users which serves to exclude categories of people. Perhaps, by

constructing contrastive categories, it could even be said to end up giving greater emphasis to the hierarchical role of women and older people in relation to them.

In certain contexts, the book points out, the individual must be ready to shift between the two options.

Generally, the person who commands respect should extend their hand first. Therefore, if someone older than us or of higher status doesn't extend their hand, the person of lesser status must show politeness in raising their hands in sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah, and say, "Chum reap sua, preah techakun or chumreap sua lok proh or loksrey" [a polite greeting, followed by a choice of honorific forms of addresses].(154)

During the Democratic Kampuchea period, in keeping with an ideology of radical egalitarianism, the use of thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m and sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah were prohibited. Since there was no monkhood or royalty, of course, the context for thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m was also largely absent. (Some people, a Cambodian in the U.S. told me, continued to maintain spirit shrines which they would surreptitiously thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m.) For the majority of the population there was no equivalent gesture which came to take the place of sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah, although at higher levels of the party organization there was some use of hand-shaking. Under the People's Republic of Kampuchea, these prohibitions were

lifted, and, indeed, morality textbooks used with elementary school children emphasized the need for children to show respect to elders and teachers, with pictures showing children raising their hands in a high sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah. A 1981 first-level morality book contained the following lesson:

All you young students! Whether you are at home, or going out and about, or at school, you must show respect and give greetings to the people whom you know or whom you come in contact with. You should raise your hands and sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah the person, at the same time saying, "Greetings bâng! Greetings pu, ming..." These words and the your gesture of lifting the hands is not lowly. As the words of old say, "Whatever is lowly with the hands is valued by the mouth." (thaok avey ni<sup>v</sup>ng day thlay avey ning mo<sup>v</sup>et.) People will certainly praise you and say, "You are the child of someone with breeding (mien puch). When you grow up, you will become someone with sufficient character. On the other hand, whoever does not know how to respect and give greetings, they will regard as a "child with no breeding." (et puch ambou), and it will be very difficult to live in society. (Krasuan qapram, 1981, p. 33-4)

While the above passage is not overtly political, many lessons in these morality texts were, and it is not too hard to see the lesson as relating to an ideology of reconstructing the hierarchy of the family and basic authority, which the regime felt had been undermined by the Khmer Rouge.

It is difficult to say how the practice of sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah or thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m might be different now than before 1975. While Cambodians affirm that all the forms that were practice before the Pol Pot period have returned, there continue to be complaints that general standards of etiquette were lost and have never completely returned. The fact that a passage like the above appeared in a 1981 school book meant that the writers of the school book felt it had to be taught, and there are still people who are concerned that these shows of etiquette are not being sufficiently taught. Probably the balance of options available in interaction is slightly different than it was before 1975. I recall, in 1994, visiting a Cambodian acquaintance who had returned from the border in 1992, worked for the U.N., and was now working for a U.S. agency. While I was in his office, a young man came bringing some documents from a political office. After he left, my friend pointed out that he had sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah'd the younger man first, which, he said, the young man recognized with embarrassment as a reprimand, since the young man should have been the one to sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah him first. He went on to bemoan the fact that codes of etiquette were being lost. The conversation led to a discussion of how he was raising his own children. He said that he wanted his children to learn and use the tradition forms of etiquette. He also said, however, that he nevertheless didn't

want his children to be slavishly accepting of authority. The Western tradition, by which younger people learned to question authority, he felt, was good.

The gestures of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m and sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah very much serve to inscribe social categories -- indeed to inscribe them in the habits of the body. First of all, the use of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m with monks and symbols of the Buddha serves, as one marker of a discursive etiquette, to define categories of behavior which are outside of normal intercourse, and outside the normal negotiation of power. The gesture is, in this context, again, clearly not a display of dependency, but a gesture of deference to the very possibility of a realm of social neutrality. The use of the gesture with other people becomes its extension to those realms which are depicted as being like what is outside of relations of power -- the moral dilemma, implicit in all etiquette, being that in the process of defining something as outside of power you are ultimately giving it power as well. Although it is not impossible to conceive of an underlying moral equality between the persons who offer and receive thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m, the two notions do not lend themselves to each other easily. The difference and the hierarchy which separates the two individuals is indeed publicly inscribed and the inscription enacts a public celebration of inequality which, nevertheless, by establishing a link between the two persons,

may in a sense uplift the inferior person by the connection to the superior. In the case of a monk or a Buddha image this is, again, a deference to power defined as neutral to mundane power. As used with a father or mother, the gesture of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m also suggests that their will is unquestionable and timeless. In either case the gesture suggests a more general social principle that makes the claim that a gesture of deference to social hierarchy can serve to uplift someone. As an etiquette, it neutralizes the tensions of inequality by suggesting that there is an appropriate hierarchical order and that the inferior person will acquire some of the status of the superior person by the very show of deference to them.

There is more room for negotiation about relative status in the enactment of sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah. Indeed, the 1969 etiquette book makes it clear that even in 1969 there was a great deal of subtle give and take. The injunction against waiting for someone else to sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah serves to remind us that there were occasions when people asserted their authority by waiting for someone else to sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah first, and that it must have required constant attention and delicacy to coordinate the gesture of simultaneous sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah when there was a need to establish equality. Even in 1969 there were people choosing to shake hands instead of sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah -- which is to say that Western influence opened up new strategies of etiquette. It is as though

the new gesture, as outside of the system, could be seen as neutral to it, even though in practice this inevitably defined new relations of power.

The gestures of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m and sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah are not gendered per se; neither men nor women are categorically excluded from either offering and receiving the gestures. Nevertheless, since only men become monks, women are excluded from receiving the most common form of the gesture, and a field is created which implicitly tends to give honor to men. The fact that urban men of a certain generation tended to shake hands rather than sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah engendered the symbolism in different ways, such that women were as it were categorized as needing to be associated with the inscription of hierarchy, whereas men could, in some situations, maintain a stance of being free from it. The new gestures as it were constructed a new etiquette in which the previous system of etiquette (and its strategies for emphasizing or de-emphasizing the tensions of social relation) was collapsed and placed as a whole inside the framework of a new strategy for emphasizing or de-emphasizing the tensions of social relation<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> While gender figures in each of the symbolic markers of hierarchy I discuss here, I do not attempt to systematically address the broad issue of gender and hierarchy in Cambodian terms. This has been explored, from a somewhat different theoretical perspective, in Ledgerwood (1990a) and Ledgerwood (1994a).

These processes of negotiation are on-going. A Cambodian father in the U.S. chooses to institute the practice of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m as a way of asserting Khmer identity and his vision of appropriate parental authority. A Cambodian bureaucrat working for an American agency chooses to embarrass a messenger as a way of establishing what he feels is the proper show of etiquette toward himself. This same messenger, arriving at an American office, facing variable codes, had chosen to push the limits of etiquette, either because the proper gesture was no longer apparent to him or because he wished to assert his agency in relation to an older man.

Insofar as these gestures inscribe hierarchy, where does resistance to hierarchy exist? One thinks of the proverb that Scott uses as an epigraph for his book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990): "When the great man walks by, the wise peasant bows deeply and quietly farts." One senses that there are occasions when there is genuinely a pleasure in a gesture of deference in Cambodian society; there are certainly occasions when the gesture is resented, as well. Resistance can mean private complaints; it can mean drunken exaggeration; it can take the form of avoiding contact with the person one is expected to show deference to. Occasionally, it can take the form of refusing to bow to the extent or with the frequency that is called for. Where more than one code exists, such as

sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah as well as handshake, then one can use the options to resist, to create new possibilities for oneself. The handshake can be a form of resistance to someone trying to escape Khmer authority, or the sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah can be a form of resistance for someone resisting European authority. Surely the Cambodian-American father who insisted that his children thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m was in a sense enacting a form of resistance to American culture.

Insofar as sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah involves the negotiation of socially inscribed hierarchies it is very much connected with patron-clientism as we have defined it -- the idea being that a symbolic show of deference can attach you to a higher world rather than merely demean you. Nevertheless, there are obvious limits to which this simple show of relative position could actually serve to advance one's position in relation to another person, and although it can serve to inscribe hierarchy, the sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah does not, in and of itself, serve as a very clear indicator of who was or was not a "patron" or "client."

Sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah and thvay bângku<sup>V</sup>m as we have focused on them inscribe dyadic relations, and it is in reference to dyadic relations that its quality of negotiation most comes into play. Perhaps when a performer greets a live audience with sâmpe<sup>V</sup>ah it can have some of the same quality of the spontaneous negotiation of relationship, the audience treated as

though it were a single person. Insofar as the sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah serves to frame the beginning and end of an interaction, it is natural that its use should extend to television announcers, who as it were greet the television audience with the gesture at the beginning and end of broadcasts. Nevertheless, the sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah in this situation is essentially different, in that it must be invariable, without a quality of negotiation, and that the members of the television audience become equal in relation to the gesture. One may very well ask how the social meaning of the gesture is changed in other contexts by its representation on television.

### **Symbolic Display of Generosity**

Another place to look for the representation of hierarchy is in terms of symbolic displays of generosity as practiced in common celebrations and ceremonies as well as everyday interaction, in rural and urban Cambodia. Again, one is struck by the degree to which such interactions do not clearly inscribe roles, but they do represent a matrix of action in which relative position is publicly negotiated in relation to commonly acknowledged conventions of relative hierarchy.

Thus, for instance, at a wedding party, each guest will be expected to make a gift of money, or châng day (literally “tie

the hands," the implication being that the gift creates a bond with the new couple). The sense of obligation surrounding such gifts is strong, and the amounts of the expected gifts of money are surprisingly high -- to the extent that they surely represent a level of sacrifice, both for the majority of Cambodians with modest incomes in the country and for Cambodians living on government assistance or minimum wage jobs in the U.S. (When I was in Phnom Penh it would not have been unusual for a government employee whose monthly salary was \$30 to châng day \$5, and it is not unusual for Cambodians living on welfare in the United States to châng day close to \$50 per person attending the wedding.) Such gifts are recorded and lists of contributions will be referred to when the recipient family finds itself in a position to reciprocate. A châng day gift is put in an envelope and not publicly announced at the wedding party, but guests are uninhibited about asking each other how much they châng day, and I remember one reception in Seattle where a Cambodian man, at a table with a younger man sitting with his fiancée, joked with him with some braggadocio about how much he was going to châng day when they got married. Naturally enough, those closest to the couple and their families will be expected to give more. Also, it is a point of public dignity that those capable of contributing more will give a generous amount.

At at least some weddings (this was especially evident at rural weddings I attended), guests of status will be seated at their own table, where there may be more expensive liquor, or where simply, in contrast to other tables, there will be liquor. In the rural weddings I attended, these guests of status included government officials, who no doubt fill the role of patron on occasion. The fact that they were seated in a place of honor was probably part of a strategy for maintaining good relations with someone the host family might need to rely on for favors. It was also doubtless a move calculated to generate a more generous châng day contribution. (A Cambodian arts organization in Seattle, in meetings to make plans for a concert, decided to designate an area of honored seating for leaders of the community, not because of contributions they had already made, but, again, with a quite conscious calculation that the gesture would create in these professional people a greater sense of obligation to contribute to the organization.) But these calculations aside, there is also a sense in which, as part of the etiquette of a wedding, châng day is supposed to be a motiveless gesture of fellow-feeling. Even though in reality there is a clear display of relative wealth, folk wisdom emphasizes that in the long run what people châng day to each other evens itself out. The ideal is that the community rises to help defray the costs that each member of the community sometimes must

defray. In practice the obligation often places considerable financial strain on people involved.

Much more difficult to measure, but very relevant to the issue of displays of generosity, are the more informal kinds of reciprocation involved in everyday situations where people are entertained at the homes of friends and neighbors or invite guests to eat at a restaurant. A humor column in a Phnom Penh newspaper in 1993 addresses this issue.

### **That's the Way Khmers Are**

**That's the way Khmers are:** If someone becomes rich he doesn't grumble about picking up the check when an impoverished friend drinks a case of XO. But he forgets that this friend sitting there drinking with him would be in seventh heaven if someone gave him the money in the amount of even a single bottle of XO.

**That's the way Khmers are:** If you are poor and your friend invites you to drink a case of XO, you wouldn't forget to thank your friend. But if your friend gave you money in the amount of one bottle of XO, you would rush to the hasty conclusion that your friend looks down on you.

That being the case, neither the rich Khmer nor the poor Khmer is of much help to each other; instead, they like to sponsor celebrations (tvaœe bon) or go out eating and drinking. For example, if a rich gentleman is giving a party for the poor people who are his friends and family, and you told him that it wasn't necessary to have the party -- to just divide the money among them, that

to take the \$1000 planned for the party and divide it among the friends and family would be better -- he certainly wouldn't agree. And even if he would agree, his wife wouldn't. Because the gentleman and his wife understand the significance of the party as being greater than the significance of making a gift. So it is that Khmers are seen as people who like to have parties and make celebrations.

There's more. **That's the way Khmers are:** When you go drinking at your friend's house and have XO, you want to later invite the friend in return, because Khmer don't like to feel indebted. Even though you are too poor to get XO, you make an effort to have some sort of beer or liquor on hand. And if your friend doesn't drink the regular liquor or beer, you'll whisper to your wife that somehow or other there has to be XO to drink -- we can wait to think about the consequences later. **That's the way Khmers are:** Even if it means borrowing at 100% interest, you're going to have parties and make celebrations like the best of them. If you don't believe me, look into it: Khmer families make celebrations more than anyone. The country that has the greatest number of celebrations is Cambodia.

When I speak this way, please don't accuse me of being some kind of cultural infidel (tomil). All I'm trying to do is observe and inform.

-- A-Srongoem (translation mine)  
(*Reaksmei Kampuchea*, 1993)

Those of us who have lived in Cambodia have often experienced the lavish attention paid to food and drink on social occasions. We have also experienced occasions when we are embarrassed because someone has chosen to reciprocate a gift or a gesture of ours in a way which seemed in excess of what they could afford. Conversely, we have sometimes experienced situations when we ourselves have made a gesture of reciprocation, and have been led to know that this gesture was inadequate.

Much could be said about the column quoted above: about how it relates to a particular time and place in Cambodia, as well as about what it idealizes and what exceptions it chooses to overlook. For our purposes, a number of points can be emphasized. It is important to note the degree to which such reciprocity is seen as a mark of Khmerness. The column recalls Eisenstadt and Roniger's statement that patron-clientism tends to involve "a strong element of personal obligation;" here this sense of obligation is specifically identified with ethnicity. Somewhat obliquely, the column also indicates that codes of reciprocity relate to gender. It is the man who stereotypically will be extravagantly generous to the point of self-ruin; it is the wife who stereotypically will put constraints on his generosity. Note that in the column insofar as a moral equality is maintained, the poorer man will be impoverished by his

attempts to serve XO. This moral equality is indeed the ideal. But probably just as often, the poorer man actually does not serve XO, but is made to feel the weight of his obligation in relation to it -- made to feel that because he cannot serve XO he cannot experience moral equality. The gift giving thus becomes a process of inscribing this inequality. The power of etiquette is such that, at least in the mythic case, people will conform to it, even to their ruin. In this scenario, the impulse to moral equality becomes a mechanism of enslavement, or at least a kind patron-clientism where the lack of moral equality is underlined.

All this, of course, relates to the rich body of anthropological literature stemming from Mauss' *The Gift* (1990). While Mauss emphasized the solidarities created by exchange, which are certainly relevant to Cambodian society, these exchanges in practice also underline inequality. It would be difficult to measure how much these patterns of reciprocity, existing as they do in Cambodia in complementarity to and in relation to contractual exchange, effect the overall patterns of generalized exchange, but they surely do in some way. Nevertheless, as relating to etiquette, the exchange is at some level driven by the fact that it is conceived as outside of these considerations.

Part of the significance of the column, of course, is that it demonstrates that there is an element of the Cambodian population which feels detached enough from these practices to critique them, whether because of the introduction of socialist or capitalist ideologies, or simply because, at a particular point in time, the practices had developed to the point of absurdity. The newspaper, and the humor column with an anonymous author, constructed as somehow detached from this realm of interaction, becomes a convenient vehicle for a new point of view -- print representing a new kind of public which, constructing new etiquettes, can critique old ones.

As the column points out, extravagance takes the form, not just of eating or drinking, but of sponsoring celebrations, often of a religious nature (tvaœ bon). Indeed, the words tvaœ bon can in other contexts be translated as "make merit," and an extravagance in such a situation represents a general ideology in which one must strive to make merit, such that sponsoring celebrations means a particularly appropriate form of symbolic capital.

There are of course many different kinds of bon, each of which in different ways reflects social relations and transforms them. For the purpose of this dissertation, it will be sufficient to point to a few practices which are characteristic of many different kinds of bon. A large percentage of bons focus

around the act of feeding monks, either through the ritualized giving of rice to monks or through ritual surrounding the act of the monks eating. In the latter case, after chanting of dharmic prayers, food will be formally presented to monks, and more chanting will be conducted by the congregation as they eat. It is only after the monks eat that the remaining blessed food will be eaten by the assembled congregation in a community feast. In certain kinds of bon, robes or packages containing items of daily use will also be presented to monks.

The act of giving to monks is a complex symbol. The gesture of feeding monks resonates with the act of feeding dependent family members, particularly since, in Cambodia, many of the people doing the feeding are older women and many of the monks are young enough to be their sons. But, of course, the symbolism of feeding monks goes beyond that of relations of family, with the gesture of feeding the monks in one sense becoming a gesture of feeding the community at large, who after all receive the food after the monks have eaten, but in another sense representing obeisance to something that is constructed as being outside or beyond the sets of relations which constitute the community.

A bon will be organized by an actual sponsor (mchah bon) who will provide the initial outlay of money required to hold the bon and take responsibility for informing the relevant

public of the bon. For a large bon flyers will be printed and distributed which provide the details of the planned bon and the names of the principal sponsors. Those participating in the bon will choul bon (literally "enter" the bon) by their contributions of food or money. The implication is that the sponsors of the bon are generating the greater measure of merit, but that other participants will also receive a measure of bon according to the mount they were able to contribute. Cambodians will often feel some reluctance to participate in a bon if they are not in a position to choul bon in some way.

Gifts of money are often collected in a decorative silver bowl designated for that purpose. As individuals choul bon the amount they have given will be recorded on a written list and then announced publicly, typically with over a loudspeaker system. The lists of contributors become the property of the mchah bon and, it is said, are sometimes later referred to when the mchah bon is deliberating on how much of a contribution to make to a bon sponsored by one of these people, although Cambodians acknowledge that the lists are sometimes discarded, the important thing apparently being the notion that the gift was in some way publicly inscribed at the time it was given. When Cambodians in the U.S. make contributions to ceremonies and building projects in Cambodia proper, the list of contributors and the amount of their donations may be read

out loud and videotaped at the site in Cambodia, with the videotape then distributed to all the contributors in the U.S.

In a bon where food is contributed, much like in a church potluck in the U.S., the public display of food becomes in part a display of the relative culinary skills of the women preparing the food. Likewise, the relative amounts of money contributed are also open to public speculation, revealing, not only the relative generosity of different members of the community, but a great deal about relative economic status.

In this context certain figures, in particular the mchah bon of large bons, are in a position to emerge as "patrons," in the simplest sense of the word as meaning "large contributor". It is taken for granted that such a major contributor has indeed made merit which will redound to his or her benefit, and this role indeed carries a great deal of symbolic capital. In practice, these patrons will often also be persons who are in a position to assume the "patron" role in a patron-client relationship, although the ways the symbolic capital of a major patron of a bon transforms into economic advantage is not immediately apparent. The important thing for our discussion is the degree to which these relations are publicly inscribed and celebrated and the fact that, however much in actual fact they may contribute to the advantage of the contributor in the community, they are thought of as merit in a more abstract,

religious sense. There is certainly no obligation to hide the amount of one's contribution from public view, as there might be, for example, in the U.S.

Like almost every aspect of Cambodian symbolic life, symbolic exchange also changed during the Democratic Kampuchea period and its aftermath. Under Pol Pot there was simply no practice of religion and so, likewise, no bon. There was also no use of currency, which in its own way limited symbolic exchange. It was not until March 17, 1980, that currency was re-instituted, which, as Sam (1987:82) has pointed out, facilitated the process of fundraising for temples, such as through "flower ceremonies," bon phka. Under the People's Republic of Kampuchea, bons could be organized, once again, but social controls were instituted such that much of the money raised would go for public works.

In each monastery, there is a committee consisting of lay members whose majority is representative of the local authority. The committee has a special task to decide how the money raised by the monastery should be used according to State requirements. many people I met during my fieldwork reported that only a small part of the charitable moneys was used in upgrading the monasteries. The committee usually assigned the rest of the funds to the building of schools, hospitals, government offices, roads, bridges and reservoirs. Such a policy was deemed proper in order to avoid the misuse of funds in unproductive

projects. This tight control had made people unhappy since they thought that charity should be used according to the wishes of the donor. (Sam, 1987: 86-7)

That is to say, during the People's Republic of Kampuchea period, symbolic exchange in the context of temple celebrations was constructed in such a way that was consistent with state goals. This practice was apparently abandoned in 1989, at the time that other reforms took place in connection with the relation of religion to the state.

In the early 90's one of the major focuses of television news has been to show public figures making generous contributions to bons or, in a parallel secular gesture, distributing food and gifts to the needy in different locations around the country. Needless to say, this public acknowledgment of generosity is in keeping with the public nature of ritual contributions, yet, as nationally broadcast event, totally different and representing a totally different category of symbolic capital.

While it is difficult to assess what was going on during the socialist period, it seems likely that even then funding for public works was often linked to specific political figures building up bases of support. Certainly by the UNTAC period and the period following it, the most adept political figures

were using their patronage of schools and temples around the country to adroitly build up bases of support, and by this time the contributions were openly presented as gifts to the community. From a Western perspective, the wealth that political figures are able to acquire from gifts and the advantages of office functions as a sort of tax and as the funds are channeled back to the grass roots, it is in effect a funding of public funds based on this tax, the difference being that the public is beholden to the person of an individual political figure and must cultivate its relation to him. However suspect this process must seem in Western terms, it at least does mean that funds are generated for public projects and that the legitimacy of central authority is in some way strengthened.

Hun Sen, in the post-UNTAC period, after visiting the different villages around the country where he has personally sponsored public works, has taken to writing songs about these localities, which are then broadcast on the radio, in so doing assuming a complex symbolic role, recalling that of Sihanouk in the 50's and 60's, which departs dramatically from his socialist past. In October, 1995, when a Phnom Penh newspaper *Serei Pheap Thmei* ("New Liberty News") made a disparaging remark about one of the villages where Hun Sen had sponsored public works, villagers came to Phnom Penh and trashed the newspaper office. (Roth, 1995) Hun Sen then

made public remarks approving of the actions (Fitzgerald, 1995; Human Rights Task Force, 1995). Obviously, even though it was the village that was criticized and the villagers who did the trashing, neither the criticism nor the trashing would have occurred if Hun Sen had not been a patron of the village. Such an event dramatizes a situation where the patron, the client, and the figure challenging the bond of the patron and client, each in their own way are negotiating their position in relation to the others. We do not know whether Hun Sen, who was out of the country at the time, ordered the trashing or whether someone below him ordered it knowing implicitly that Hun Sen would approve. But it is interesting to speculate whether, even if Hun Sen had not approved of the trashing, he might have felt obligated, in the role of patron, to support the action of the people who trashed the newspaper office in his name.

Before leaving the issue of symbolic exchange, I'd like to address the issue of corruption, which is often mentioned in the same breath as patron-clientism, even though it does not always fall easily into definitions of patron-clientism, except by nature of the fact that, like patron-clientism, it falls outside of formal channels. When a public official helps his friends or when someone cultivates a relationship with a public figure because he knows he can turn it to economic advantage, that is indeed a form of corruption which is patron-clientism. When I

think of corruption, though, I am just as likely to think of someone slipping money to a clerk in order to expedite the processing of documents, or a case, such as that of an acquaintance of mine in Phnom Penh in the early 1990's, where someone, needing permission in high places, will approach a broker who, for a fee, will approach the official involved and negotiate the terms for getting the necessary permission. Such a situation, among strangers or relative strangers, is essentially contractual, however sub rosa the contract may be, and has little to do with the negotiation of whole person relations. The reason this seems related to patron-clientism, I believe, has less to do with the processes of exchange than the symbolism involved. It had to do with the fact that it is inherently an unequal playing ground, that the exchange actually underlines the fact that the person in control of the situation can actively use this power to the detriment of the person with less power. A bribe, quite apart from the economics of the exchange, gives face to the recipient and acknowledges his power, and this symbolic gesture comes to represent the inscription, however grudgingly accepted, of hierarchy. The inferior person is once again supposedly uplifted by a show of deference to a superior person.

Both gestures of greeting and symbolic display of generosity very much exist on the level of the negotiation of

personal relations -- if sometimes personal relations in relation to Buddhist temple or the community associated with it. In the most iconic case, hierarchy is inscribed in relation to monks or the realm of the spiritual, in such a way that a detached, neutral realm is defined by the very actions themselves. These in turn serve to justify and illuminate other more mundane uses of the gesture or the display of generosity. With both gestures of greeting and symbolic display of generosity we see at least the beginning of a critique which calls into question the practices, partly in conjunction with changes in communication technology and the creation of new kinds of publics in which the meaning of the gestures changes.

There is clearly a traditional valorization of ascribed hierarchies associated with religion insofar as they are defined as outside of everyday relations of power. This stands juxtaposed to more free-wheeling negotiation of personal dominance and dependency, itself traditionally a powerful mechanism of social connectedness. These systems in no way preclude the expansion of less clearly valorized bureaucratic hierarchies, but their specific symbolic role of bureaucratic hierarchies in relation to the more traditional inscriptions of hierarchy is not clear cut.

## Chapter Five: Pronouns and Terms of Address

A Cambodian man in his mid-30's, one of the organizers of a Cambodian organization in Seattle I was involved in, told me once that he always insisted that the other board members call him bâng ("older sibling"), even though he was considerably younger than most of the other men. He said that this was because if he was p'oun ("younger sibling") to them, there would always come a point in an argument where he would be told to comply because, after all, "Bâng ('I') am older than p'oun ('you')." Whatever this illustrates about the specifics of Cambodians negotiating relations in an American setting, it points to some general principles which have bearing on my discussion. First of all, it illustrates that grammaticalized categories not only reflect but shape social relations. Everyone involved acknowledged that the use of the words bâng and p'oun involved constraints. Moreover, the categories implied in the words could become conscious ideology when it was advantageous for a speaker to do so. But this did not leave my friend without recourse. He was in a position to sidestep the constraints of the word by insisting on non-traditional usage.

Hill and Mannheim (1992), characterizing the "linguistic relativity" of Boas, Sapir, and Whorf, write:

. . . a set of claims is being advanced: that grammatical categories, to the extent that they are obligatory or habitual, and relatively inaccessible to the average speaker's consciousness, will form a privileged location for transmitting and reproducing cultural and social categories. (387)

In contemporary parlance, we can say that there is a correlation between language and habitus. (And as Hill and Mannheim demonstrate, Whorf and Sapir were much more concerned with correlations between language and behavior than in showing that language determines behavior.) Like Hill and Mannheim, I will not try to prove this. I take this to be axiomatic, an assumption which provides a basis for further investigation. I assume that distinctions like that between bâng and p'oun are often acted on reflexively; that is to say, that they are grammaticalized. As the illustration shows, they can also be used as a conscious index of normative relations. These norms, in turn, are subject to negotiation. Even so, such norms are sufficiently inscribed socially that a departure from them is, to expand on linguistic terminology, marked as such. Given the above, this chapter is written with the assumption that a close study of the way Cambodians address and refer to persons -- of "pronominals" -- will give us some clues to the way hierarchy works in Cambodian society and a device for looking at changing discursive etiquette.

One place to start is the classic article by Brown and Gilman, "The Pronouns of Solidarity and Power," (1960) which

despite its age and certain flaws, remains remarkably resonant. Brown and Gilman wrote about the social categories which distinguish the use of what are sometimes called “formal” and “informal” second person pronouns in most European languages, such as the distinction between tu and vous in French or the distinction between du and Sie in German. Brown and Gilman distinguished between what they called a semantic of power, characterized by non-reciprocal usage -- where, say, one person would use tu and the other person would respond with vous -- and a semantic of solidarity, characterized by reciprocal usage -- where both interlocutors would use tu or both interlocutors would use vous. They go on to argue that there has been a historical shift from usage in which the semantic of power was operative to usage in which the semantic of solidarity is operative. The article also talked about situational shifts, where various kinds of departures from norms of use mark a special situation or a change of status.

The clearest weakness of the Brown and Gilman article is the oversimplification implicit in the broad categories of “solidarity” and “power,” a criticism implicit in Friedrich (1966, 1972) and Silverstein (1984), which becomes quite explicit in Muehlhäusler and Harré (1990).

As we shall see, neither can survive as ubiquitous categories when actual cases of pronoun choice are closely examined. Even in those languages and

cultures from which the authors originally derived them, something more complex is needed. We shall find that at least the following are required: rank, status, office, generation, formality, informality, public discourse, private discourse, high degree of emotional excitement, and there may be others that will be needed from case to case. (Muehlhäusler and Harré, 1990, p. 132)

It is indeed true that Brown and Gilman lump into one category types of "solidarity" which may be quite different from each other in different languages and that, for instance, what might be called the solidarity of intimacy does not meet their own definitions. Similarly, it is fair to say that pronouns do not so much index "power" as inscribe indices of relative status according to culturally determined criteria. Moreover, by contrasting solidarity with power they are creating an artificial dichotomy which indeed implies a culturally biased notion of what solidarity and power mean. In fact, of course, solidarity can exist among people of different status, and the relations between as well as within solidarity groups are never devoid of issues of power, in such a way that it is fair to say that the inscription of a "semantic of solidarity" will inscribe fields of power, just as the inscription of a "semantic of power" can never be divorced from the particular ways human connectedness -- or solidarity -- is worked out. Despite all this, Brown and Gilman were certainly correct in saying that pronouns can provide an index to the play of categories

whereby relations of solidarity (as broadly defined) and power (as mediated by status) are negotiated.

Perhaps the chief insight provided by the Brown and Gilman article is in showing that signs can have different meaning as used non-reciprocally and reciprocally. Whether or not non-reciprocal usage can precisely be said to encode power, they do encode dyadic relations by indexing contrasting (and presumably unequal) positions with respect to the interlocutors. One can conceive of non-reciprocal relations extending in chains or working as pyramids, but the net of relations does not form a block; it will consist at best of interlinked strands. Reciprocal usage, on the other hand, can be conceived of as extending in blocks of commonality, suggesting, in Brown and Gilman's parlance, solidarity.

Brown and Gilman argued that there was a historical shift from a semantic of power to a semantic of solidarity. There is no explicit reference to Marx either in the Brown and Gilman article or any commentary on it I have found. However, the interest of the article has surely always partly been the degree to which it resonates with Marxist ideas about the historical emergence of class consciousness.

Brown and Gilman's analysis leaves some basic questions. They write that the power semantic was once dominant in a relatively static society in which power is distributed by birthright and is not subject to much

redistribution. The power semantic was closely tied with the feudal and manoral system. (p. 264)

This skirts the question of the degree to which there was reciprocal usage at the time, and what it meant in relation to the "power semantic." How rare, precisely, was reciprocal usage at that time? Is it fair to say that at this time reciprocal usage was more marked than non-reciprocal? This has yet to be shown, or its implications fully explored. Brown and Gilman, though, are convincing in their argument that some sort of shift has taken place. They make no claim that this shift has meant greater equality in actual practice, although they do associate it with "social mobility and equalitarian ideology." (p. 264) Another way of putting it would be to say that at a certain point there was felt a need to euphemize the expression of dyadic differentials of status.

Surely the shift Brown and Gilman describe relates the European shift in the nature of public that Habermas describes in *Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere*. It is a shift away from defining the public in terms of an aristocracy which dominates private persons to a public which includes the mass of the population but stands in opposition to their private lives.

Khmer use of pronouns and terms of address is more complex than the European distinction between "formal" and "informal" pronouns, and the way it provides a reference point by which questions of connectedness and status are negotiated is in no way clear cut. But it would be unthinkable to try to

discuss Cambodian hierarchy without reference to Khmer use of pronouns and terms of address.

I would like to ask non-speakers of Khmer reading this chapter to bear with me as I develop a close linguistic argument with what I believe are rather subtle distinctions of Khmer language. The ultimate goal is to understand how a Khmer sense of public and private is inscribed and how this relates to a more general sense of how, in a Khmer context, human connectedness is enacted.

Grammatically, what I will call person-referring expressions (alternatively "pronominals") fall into at least four categories: kinship terms, pronouns, titles, and names. By person-referring expressions I mean, in simplest terms, the kinds of things that would substitute for an English personal pronoun if you were doing a translation exercise. That is to say, I focus on the range of conventional choices open to speakers for making repeated reference to persons. Specific non--pronouns I focus on here (and some of the pronouns) have a range of usage which extends beyond that of the English pronoun, and in the long run these broader categories have to concern us as well. The fact that, for instance, we can use a kinship term as a substitute for "you" or "I" in no way implies that, in Cambodian terms, this particular usage is in any way categorically different from its use in the third person as a "noun;" it does point to a system in which the distinction between a person-referring "noun" and a "third-person

personal pronoun" may sometimes be less useful than in English.

The four grammatical categories of pronominals (kinship terms, pronouns, titles, and names) sometimes occur in conjunction with each other. That is to say, for instance, that the pronoun aeng can occur immediately after names, kin terms, or titles; a title can be used with a kinship term or a name, and a kinship term can be used with a name.

In order to give a rough sense of what the different pronominals I will refer to mean, it may be helpful to begin by charting the different ways traditional categories of singular and plural person might be translated from English into Khmer, although one must keep in mind that, as the rest of this chapter will show, the interesting thing about Khmer pronominals is precisely the fact that their meaning doesn't translate very well into categories such as these. The items in parenthesis indicate less frequent usages.

1st person singular: añ, kñom, kin terms, knea, (kñombat), (yoeng), (ké), (aeng)

1st person plural: yoeng, kneayoeng, (yoengkñom)

2nd person singular: kin terms, aeng, titles, (ko<sup>v</sup>at)

2nd person plural: kin terms, titles, (ko<sup>v</sup>at)

3rd person singular or plural: vea, ko<sup>v</sup>at, ké, knea, kin terms, titles

Ehrman (1972) distinguishes three types of usage with respect to pronouns and terms of address: ordinary, vulgar, and formal (which includes clerical and royal usage as well as more general formality.) I would like to emphasize the degree to which each of these categories is self-integrated and related to other categories in a particular Khmer way. Therefore, I will refer to these distinctions in terms of three registers of speech, which I will call 1) Relationship/Reciprocity (RR) (what Ehrman calls ordinary usage); 2) Objectifying Self-orientation (OS) (what Ehrman calls vulgar usage); and 3) Other-worldly Respect (OR) (including what Ehrman calls formal, clerical, and royal registers). These three registers tend to have some correspondence to the grammatical distinctions between kinship terms, pronouns, and titles; however, this correspondence is not precise. And just as grammatical categories can occur together, registers can sometimes overlap, creating as it were further overlap registers.

By using the term register, I do not necessarily mean to suggest that all words in a given register will co-occur in a given situation, or even that expressions in different registers cannot co-occur. Instead, in distinguishing the three registers, I mean to look for broad patterns of contrast. These registers could be sub-divided to chart more precise patterns of co-occurrence.

My central premise will be that the register I call "Relationship/reciprocity" (RR) is less marked than the other

two registers. That is to say, that it constitutes socially less of a special case, in ways that I will discuss further below. In effect, I am making more explicit the implications of what Ehrman means when she calls it "ordinary" usage. OS is a register defined specifically as private, uneuphemized self-interest. OR defines usage when interacting with specific public realms defined as above and neutral to normal relations of power.

In the register of "Objectifying self-orientation" (OS) I include the pronouns añ, aeng, vea, and ké. As a register, it is also associated with the usage of the prefixes a- and mi-, and with "low register" verbs which are often regarded as impolite as used with adult humans: si ("eat") and dek ("sleep").

In the category of "Otherworldly Respect" (OR) I put all titles except the word neang, that is: lok, ne<sup>V</sup>ak, loksrey, ne<sup>V</sup>aksrey, kañña, techkun, preahtechpreahkun, thaukae, aekodom, lokchumteav, lokkru, ne<sup>V</sup>akkru. (Lokkru, ne<sup>V</sup>akkru are words that translate as "teacher", for a man or a woman. Thaukae refers to someone who is the proprietor of a firm. Kañña refers to an unmarried woman. The rest of the terms are more general honorifics, with masculine or feminine endings, which express different levels of deference.) As a register it is also associated with terms like kñombat ("I" with a polite particle) or the polite word añchoeñ before verbs of motion. In this category I also put the different sets of vocabulary prescribed for usage with monks and royalty --

nouns, verbs, and pronouns, in addition to titles -- while recognizing that these two sets of vocabulary in some sense constitute separate registers in and of themselves.

What I am calling the register of Relationship/Reciprocity (RR) is as it were the default case, thereby including everything that doesn't fall into the other categories. Thus it includes: 1) kinship terms (Chinese as well as Khmer); 2) the pronouns kñom, knea, yoeng, and ko<sup>V</sup>at; 3) the title neang; 4) personal names; 5) Ø as used pronominally.

There are relatively few Khmer words which can unquestionably be called pronouns. Pou (1979) maintains that, if we exclude terms which have historically served as other parts of speech, the only two pronouns are añ and yoeng. Indeed, as this chapter will make clear, the question of what is a Khmer pronoun is complicated by the fact that non-pronouns take on pronominal functions. I have chosen to categorize as titles all categories of words which can occur before personal names, even if they also occur independently and are sometimes categorized as pronouns. Some Khmer pronouns historically served as nouns. While the word kñom continues to have a second meaning, "servant," no one could claim that the pronominal usage is in anyway tinged with the earlier meaning. Likewise, the historical meaning of the word ko<sup>V</sup>at, "the world," seems to have been completely forgotten, except perhaps in the fact that, like titles, it is used both in the second and third person. The fact that the word vea once meant "male

slave" is perhaps reflected in the fact that it marks OS register, but the original meaning of the word seems to be completely lost. Four other words that I will call pronouns, ké, knea, aeng, and khluon, however, continue to have ranges of usage which extend beyond what is normally associated with pronouns, making them difficult to categorize.

Disregarding pronouns associated with monkly or royal vocabulary (as well as titles, kin terms, and other pronominals which are not pronouns per se), the system of pronouns can be charted as follows:

|                                   | OS          | RR                      |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1st person                        |             | <u>yoeng</u>            |
| 1st person (sing.)                | <u>añ</u>   |                         |
| 1st person (non-inclusive)        |             | <u>kñom</u>             |
| Non-2nd person                    | <u>ké</u>   | <u>knea</u>             |
| Non-3rd person (sing.?)           | <u>aeng</u> |                         |
| Non-1st person                    |             | <u>ko<sup>v</sup>at</u> |
| 3rd person                        | <u>vea</u>  |                         |
| Personal placemaker (all persons) |             | <u>khluon</u>           |

I have categorized as "non-2nd person," "non-3rd person," and "non-1st person" pronouns that can be used in the other two persons but not in this person.

Khmer pronouns do not make distinctions on the basis of gender and, as seen above, most extend in usage beyond a

single grammatical category of person. Strictly speaking, añ is the only pronoun which is exclusively singular, although a chart like the one above is misleading in that it doesn't reveal the tendency for the words kñom or ko<sup>v</sup>at to be singular or the tendency of the word yoeng to be first person plural inclusive. Similarly, the use of ko<sup>v</sup>at in the third person is much more common than its use in the second person.

My primary purpose here is to understand what OS and RR signify in relation to each other by examining points of register contrast. In these terms, we might well focus on the following contrasts, which point to typical choices in register.

|                   | OS         | RR                      |
|-------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1st person        | <u>añ</u>  | <u>kñom</u>             |
| Non-second person | <u>ké</u>  | <u>knea</u>             |
| 3rd person        | <u>vea</u> | <u>ko<sup>v</sup>at</u> |

Añ has four primary categories of usage. It is the "I" of monologue and self-reflection. It marks societally defined norms of superiority toward the person addressed. It marks situationally defined condescension or anger. And, used reciprocally, it marks a certain kind of familiar intimacy.

While I will argue that OS is more marked than RR, there is also a sense in which it is seen as more basic. It marks at least one kind of private. Añ is the self of thought; it is the self when no one else is around. Añ is used to index selfishness; kñom never is. (The grotesque character extorting money from

the multi-headed peasant in the cartoon in the following chapter, uses the word añ when he says, "Me! Me!" A colloquial expression for selfishness is "añniyum," which translates literally as "me-ism") Añ is exclusively singular; kñom is sometimes used to express "we-exclusive," as when a speaker is referring to him- or herself together with a spouse. Used when addressing children or inferiors, it suggests that the speaker is in a position to act as an independent agent, quite apart from the demands of the person addressed; their relevance as a separate agent in relation to the speaker is denied. Hence, when añ is used with people who have some expectation that the speaker would use kñom or a kinship term, it is seen as marking anger or a deliberate intent to insult.

Like second-person pronouns in European languages, as explicated by Brown and Gilman, reciprocal usage changes the meaning of añ (in contrast to kñom, which has the same meaning whether it is used reciprocally or not.) Mutual usage of añ suggests an uninhibited familiarity, such as that between people who were classmates in school.

Vea, as a third-person pronoun, is used to refer to inanimate objects and animals as well as to children and other inferiors, the same categories of people with whom one would refer to oneself as añ. Pou writes that the word historically referred to a type of male slave, which helps explain some of the derogatory connotations of the word. Usage also roughly

correlates with that of verbs like dek ("sleep") and si ("eat"), words that are "supposed" to be used only with animals and inferiors, but in actual fact have wider usage. In this category also falls the prefixes a- and mi-, occurring before nouns and names (mi- specifically with females). Usage is standard with inanimate objects and acceptable with children, but can be highly insulting as used to refer to adults who have reason to expect a level of respect. Usage with children is conventional to the point that other options seem artificial; in these contexts it comes to have the effect of a diminutive, and in no means precludes real affection. (Some informants say that a- with adult women, as opposed to mi-, is also acceptable.) But as a register these usages (in particular añ and a-/mi-, are typically characterized as "bad" and impolite or unpleasant to the ear. One Cambodian man, pressed for distinctions about who you could use vea with, said you would absolutely never use it with people older than you. You could use it with younger siblings or teen-age children, he said, but not in a public meeting. When asked if it was acceptable to use vea to refer to small children in a public meeting, he first said, yes, but then offered two alternatives: khmeng\_nuh ("that child") or neang (see below). Children, if asked, will say that they do not want to be called a- or mi-. These words can definitely signal anger or condescension. Nevertheless, as used reciprocally among social equals, the register does imply special bonds. Ko<sup>v</sup>at, in contrast to vea, while not honorific in the same way that OR words are,

suggests that the person referred to is someone who demands a degree of respect.

Aeng, used as a second person pronoun, has no corresponding RR pronoun; the corresponding RR terms would be kinship terms. In choosing aeng over a kinship term one is specifically drawing on the generalities of prototypical roles implicit in kinship categories. Aeng is less clearly a pronoun than añ or vea. In its broader usage it is used to underlie the specificity of a person or an object, as when it is part of phrases which mean “oneself” (khluon aeng) or “that very” (nuh aeng, as in “that very car” -- lan nuh aeng). It is commonly used with kinship terms (bâng aeng, mae vea aeng) -- overlapping the RR register -- to emphasize the specificity of the person addressed, as such serving as a marker of familiarity. As used alone, for second person address, it likewise emphasizes the specificity of the person addressed, and, used alone, gives particular emphasis to the fact that the speaker and address are distinct, self-interested parties, much like the word añ does. The second-person usage of the word aeng alone is typically mentioned as parallel to the usage of añ and a-/mi- and there is a clear pattern of co-occurrence.

Aeng is less common in first person usage than second person usage, but it is sometimes used between close friends when they do not want to use the word añ. Thus, while the full OS force is felt in second person usage, it represents a euphemism in first, although it is nevertheless less polite than

kñom. A common usage of aeng in the first person, is with reference to oneself as a player in a story one is telling.

Reciprocal usage of a-/mi-, añ, and second-person aeng is not restricted by gender. When I asked about who someone would have reciprocal usage with, I was often told that you would have reciprocal usage with the same kind of person you could jokingly hit on the head -- an answer which, even though it still left me with my basic question, at least provided another example of behavioral co-occurrence, as a sign of bantering equality, breaking the often-repeated taboo against touching the head. (In the story I referred to at the beginning of the last chapter, a drunk official teasingly used deferential language at the same time he keeps swatting my friend on the head -- thus humorously playing on the incongruity of the two codes.) One woman interviewed said that reciprocal usage occurred between people who sralañ knea co<sup>v</sup>et muoy thlaoem muoy ("love each other with one heart and one liver.") Most people usually say that the reciprocal usage of añ/aeng/a-/mi- occurs among people who have been in a structurally similar role together, such as in classes in school, and achieved a relationship of easy familiarity. The process of assuming this kind of relationship with one another is a gradual one, with interlocutors testing the waters by using it on occasion and seeing how the other person reacts. One male interviewee said that you would use it when you reached the point in a relationship when you would go on a trip together and

everyone's money was used in common, with no attention to the question of who was paying for what. There was an awkward point in the same interview when I showed a little too obviously my surprise when he went on to say that men start using añ/ aeng/ a-/ mi- together after they'd slept with the same prostitute. He was probably merely repeating what he thought was conventional wisdom.

Some of the limits of the usage of añ/ aeng/ a-/ mi- are illustrated by a conversation with a Cambodian man in Tacoma who was making the point that people in Cambodia age sooner than people in the United States. He said that when he returned to Cambodia, people he had once used a- with now seemed so much older than him that he no longer felt comfortable using it with them.

A- and aeng are sometimes used together in what is regarded as a particularly insulting mode of address -- a-aeng, typically pronounced starting with a guttural "r" sound. A young woman once told me that this was the kind of expression which, if a husband used it with his wife, she would be justified in leaving him. However, usage does vary from family to family, and is sometimes a very common usage by husbands to their wives.

Añ/ aeng/ a-/ mi- are clearly conceived as part of a single register by Cambodians, and many would no doubt dispute my inclusion of ké in the same category. I have chosen to do so because, like the other pronouns, it signals a lack of

relationship, and in some contexts can be mildly derogatory -- a slight euphemism of vea --even though in many contexts it functions very differently than the other words I have listed as OS. Pou writes that ké historically meant "the people." In current usage, it is most commonly used as an indefinite pronoun, as could be translated as "one," "you," or "they," as in na<sup>v</sup> srok thai ké baoek khang chveng ("In Thailand they drive on the left.") It has as well the meaning of "someone" or "people in general," or "other people." Ko<sup>v</sup>at ta<sup>v</sup> chuop ké ceh tae sliak pe<sup>v</sup>ak s'at bat. ("When he goes to meet people, he always dresses well.") Ké typically contrasts with the inclusive "we" of yoeng, as when I commented on the number of cars on the road, and my Cambodian friends said, te<sup>v</sup>ang ké te<sup>v</sup>ang yoeng ("Yes, both theirs and ours.")

Ké can also, however, be used to refer to specific people, in ways that parallel the usage of ko<sup>v</sup>at and vea. In such usage, ké is used in situations where the person referred to neither deserved the respect of ko<sup>v</sup>at or the obvious condescension of vea. Sometimes it implies the anonymity of the person or persons referred to. Sometimes it implies a somewhat softer condescension than vea. Thus a woman writing a letter to an advice column in a Phnom Penh newspaper uses ké at the beginning of the letter to refer to a man she was just getting to know, but switches to ko<sup>v</sup>at when, in the course of the story, he comes to figure prominently in her life. A graphic novel produced by a Cambodian man in France in the mid-1980's

(Sotha, 1985), narrating a story from the Pol Pot period, refers to a villainous Khmer Rouge character throughout the novel as ké, thus avoiding the direct hostility of vea while also avoiding the respect of ko<sup>v</sup>at. In a popular novel written in the 90's, a character, speaking in reference to his wife with his mistress, uses the word ké. When I question a Cambodian friend about why he is using the word ké to refer to his teenage nephews, he tells me that if he were speaking at a meeting, he would refer to them as ko<sup>v</sup>at.

The usage of ké in first person, cited by Pou, is in my experience infrequent. There are obvious parallels with the French usage of the word on in the first person, in which the usage of on/ké becomes a way of detaching the speaker from some of the responsibility implicit in the self-reference (See Mühlhäusler and Harré, 1990). (French on, as used in 3rd person, translates as "one" in English.) Ké, however, seems to be an indigenous usage with no particular connection to French. Usage is restricted to within the family and among close friends, and is associated with displeasure or unhappiness. Parents would rarely use it with children; it would be more to the point to use añ; but husband and wife might use it with each other or a child with parent. Thus, in the Khmer graphic novel produced in France, a husband, after intimidation by the Khmer Rouge, uses ké to tell his wife he has decided to stay in that location: "ké ut mean kol bâmnâng châng ta<sup>v</sup> ru<sup>v</sup>ah na<sup>v</sup> Phnom Penh té, pruh ké ban samréch co<sup>v</sup>et na<sup>v</sup> ti nih bândoh

ason se<sup>V</sup>n;” (“I [ké] don’t have the intention of going to live in Phnom Penh, since I [ké] have decided to stay here temporarily.”) One Cambodian friend I asked about first person usage of ké gave as an example a child denying that he had taken something: “ké ut yok a-ning phâng;” (I [ké] didn’t take that!”)

We can contrast ké with knea. I have categorized knea as RR. It occurs, like ké, in the first and third persons, and, like ké, derives historically from a word meaning “the people.” But in contrast with ké, which emphasizes an idea of “the people” as separate from “us,” knea emphasizes “the people” as a solidary group. Thus yoeng ta<sup>V</sup>v chea muoy ké (“We’ll go with them”) contrasts with yoeng ta<sup>V</sup>v chea muoy knea (“We’ll go with each other”). In many contexts knea is best translated as “each other.” Ko<sup>V</sup>at pi ne<sup>V</sup>ak nuh srâlañ knea nah. (“They love each other very much.”)

Perhaps the most typical usage of knea as a pronoun is as a first person plural inclusive pronoun, often with the word yoeng (the speaker and the addressee), emphasizing the connection of the interlocutors. [example?] As used as a first person singular pronoun, it emphasizes the degree to which the speaker appeals to the hearer’s sense that they are part of a single group. aoy knea ñam bay phâng. (“Please let me [knea] have some rice to eat.”) As a third person pronoun it may, on the one hand, serve to remind the hearer that the person or persons being referred to are the knea of the person speaking -

- that is, part of a single group. On the other hand, it may be used to emphasize the degree to which a person or persons is regarded as an object of sympathy, regardless of the actual connection. puok pnâng knea craoen ru<sup>v</sup>ah na<sup>v</sup>v loe phnu<sup>v</sup>m. (“The minority people usually live in the hills.”)

My main goal here is to establish a sense of the borders between OR and RR, which I see as representing a grammaticalized distinction between those to whom one is in a relation of normal reciprocity and those to whom one isn't. In what sense does OR represent a marked usage? One kind of markedness occurs when añ/vea/aeng/a-/mi- are used counter to normal expectations, thereby marking the situation as one of anger or insult. As used reciprocally, the expressions are not in the same way situationally marked, but do seem to define a special relation, one that is the exception rather than the rule. As these words are used with children and status inferiors, and as ké is used in the third person with inferiors or people of relative anonymity, it is perhaps more debatable whether these words represent a marked category at all. But I will contend that the register consists of establishing a category of relationships which is defined primarily by what it is not, by its lack of connection to ordinary relations of reciprocity.

It is in this way that OS is related to the register I call “Otherworldly Respect” (OR), which I maintain is not so much defined as representing a particular relation as much as by the fact that it does not constitute normal intercourse.

At the heart of OR, as we are concerned with it here, is the use of titles. By title I mean expressions which can occur before personal names as well as independently. Khmer titles can be used in the second or third person. The two most basic in Khmer are lok and ne<sup>V</sup>ak, which occur before kinship terms as well as names and are the core elements in the titles used for teachers, lokkru and ne<sup>V</sup>akkru. As used with kinship terms or as the root of titles for teachers, lok signifies male and ne<sup>V</sup>ak signifies female, although lok can be used in expressions like loksrey and lokchumteav to refer to women and ne<sup>V</sup>ak, as used alone, is not specifically male or female.

Ne<sup>V</sup>ak is less clearly honorific than lok. Some informants say that it was once used as a term of address for parents-in-law. It is sometimes used as a general case second person, when speakers don't know the exact status of the persons they are addressing, or when one constructs dialogue which is intended to abstractly depict how people addressing other people in a given situation, regardless of how someone of a given status might speak to another person in actual practice.

In conjunction with titles are other honorific expressions. The word añcoeñ occurs as an honorific before verbs of motion or, used, alone, can be translated roughly as, "Be my guest." It is quite common. And there are polite expressions for "eat" and "sleep" that are associated with this register -- indeed different expressions for clerical, royal, and run-of-the-mill OS usage. The expression kñombat ("I" as used with someone to

whom one shows deference) is no longer common. However, deferential expressions for “T” are obligatory when talking to monks (kñomka<sup>V</sup>na or simply ka<sup>V</sup>na) and royalty. (tulbângku<sup>V</sup>mkñommcah and shorter variations of this for other royalty). More generally speaking, honorific vocabulary associated with monks and royalty is more elaborate and rigidly required. Thus, in addition to separate words for “eat” and “sleep,” monks have separate words for “money” and “clothing,” and when referring to royalty, there are separate words for body parts.

There are levels of honorific, such that, for example, lok is less honorific than aekodom, as the cartoon in Chapter Six illustrates well. Such patterns of co-occurrence are an interesting topic in and of itself. However, I am not so much interested in this as with the fact that, as categories of OR, they can be contrasted with the less marked relations of everyday reciprocity. I would argue that honorific terms of address, like lok and ne<sup>V</sup>ak, tend to establish categories which, much like those for monks or royalty, define the person as in a detached or other-worldly relation to the everyday populace. These people’s power is defined as being outside the normal range of power.

Lok and ne<sup>V</sup>ak, and titles more generally, are stereotypically associated with government employees, including teachers. In traditional thinking and language, Cambodians distinguish four different ways of making a living:

farming rice (thvoe srae), garden-farming (thvoe châmka), engaging in small or large-scale personal enterprises (rok si), or working for the government (thvoe kar). The word that is usually translated as “work” (thvoe kar), usually refers specifically to government work or work for an NGO or business where there are regular hours and set wages. Although in some contexts the word thvoe kar refers to all kinds of labor, it is nevertheless true that, for example, if you ask someone who sells fruit in the market what kind of work they do (thvoe kar thvoe ey?), they might answer that they don’t work (thvoe kar); they are just “people” (prâcheachon). (In this context one should not forget the significance, from a Marxist perspective, when different categories of labor are seen as qualitatively incommensurable. See, for instance Wolf, 1994: 2. This has some bearing on the attitude toward the use of titles in the socialist period.)

When I asked an informant whether people wouldn’t use lok with a rich businessman, one interviewee said no, because you never really knew how wealthy a businessperson was, whereas a government official’s title was clear. When I visited a village in Kampong Cham in 1993 for the wedding of a friend’s brother, I asked how many people in the village would be called lok. I was told that no-one would be called lok. Ebihara, describing the relation of villages to authority, said that it was only with government officials at the district level that there were obvious shows of deference. [find exact quote]

Clearly, these are the same persons who would be addressed as lok. Teachers are also addressed as lokkru and ne<sup>v</sup>akkru.

Obviously, the use of lok and ne<sup>v</sup>ak is much more common in provincial towns or Phnom Penh, the centers of bureaucracy, and its usage extended to non-governmental figures who had certain kinds of institutional authority. Certainly lok and ne<sup>v</sup>ak tended to be used with foreigners from Western countries.

In third person, lok is used to refer to monks, and monks are often addressed with lok together with a kinship term. This term of address is sometimes continued even after a man has left the monkhood. Parents are sometimes addressed with lok or ne<sup>v</sup>ak in front of the word for “father” or “mother” (lok upuk, ne<sup>v</sup>akmday), but this is quite formal, and seems to be associated with urban middle class usage.

Since the use of lok and ne<sup>v</sup>ak, and other more elaborate titles, is associated with position, it is typically used with someone in connection with their fulfilling the roles associated with that position. If someone is accustomed to using kinship terms or añ/ aeng/ a-/ mi- with someone, and they rise in rank, the person might continue to address their friend as they previously did in some social situations; but at a meeting, or in the presence of other people to whom that person is lok or ne<sup>v</sup>ak, they would give them the respect of that title. In this sense, the use of titles can be situationally marked. A cartoon in the following chapter shows a politician ignoring a journalist

when he addressed him as lok, but becoming more responsive when the journalist shifts to aekodom, illustrates the degree of negotiation involved in the use of titles. In my own experience, I initially hesitated to use titles, assuming, from a Western perspective, that people might sometimes feel uncomfortable with the implied formality. And it is true that someone with an obvious class status as a farmer or a laborer might interpret a title as sarcasm. But among professional people, I soon learned that people genuinely liked being addressed by titles and that it was better to err on the side of formality than informality. Only once, in a gesture of openness for which I continue to be grateful, did someone ask me to call him bâng instead of lok -- a government official and friend, in the course of a conversation on this very topic.

Unlike añ/ aeng/ a-/ mi-, titles are in no way an expression of situational emotion. One would not, in a sudden burst of admiration, suddenly break into the use of lok. It suggests an ascribed status. Titles can be used reciprocally or non-reciprocally, but the meaning is essentially the same in either case.

In many ways the register which is most difficult to characterize is the "normal" register, RR, not the least because it contains several different kinds of elements.

At the heart of RR is a system of Khmer kinship terms which functions pronominally to represent the 1st person and

the 2nd person, as well having third person usage like kinship terms in any language.

A somewhat simplified chart of kinship terms is as follows (see Ehrman 90-1, for a chart which includes relationships by marriage):

|                                  |                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| grandfather                      | <u>ta</u> [more formal term, <u>chitaa</u> , rarely used as terms of address.]                                                            |
| grandmother                      | <u>yeay</u> [more formal term, <u>chidoun</u> , rarely used as a term of address.]                                                        |
| uncle or aunt older than parents | <u>om</u> [more formal terms, <u>upuk</u> <u>thu<sup>v</sup>m</u> (m.) and <u>mdaythu<sup>v</sup>m</u> (f.) are rarely used as kin terms. |
| father                           | <u>upuk</u> ( <u>lokupuk</u> , <u>u</u> , <u>puk</u> , <u>pa</u> )                                                                        |
| mother                           | <u>mday</u> ( <u>ne<sup>v</sup>akmday</u> , <u>mae</u> , <u>ma'</u> )                                                                     |
| uncle younger than parents       | <u>pou</u> , <u>mea</u>                                                                                                                   |
| aunt younger than parents        | <u>ming</u>                                                                                                                               |
| older sibling                    | <u>bang</u>                                                                                                                               |
| younger sibling                  | <u>p'oun</u> , ( <u>oun</u> )                                                                                                             |
| child                            | <u>koun</u>                                                                                                                               |
| niece or nephew                  | <u>khmuoy</u>                                                                                                                             |
| grandchild                       | <u>cau</u>                                                                                                                                |

As a system, several points stand out. The first is that relative age is more salient than gender. Indeed, relative age figures explicitly in any kind of dyadic exchange involving kin terms. It's also notable that there are no terminological distinctions between relatives on the father's side and relatives

on the mother's side, doubtless relating to the fact that Khmer descent is reckoned bilaterally. Finally, it's worth noting that there are more distinctions in relative age and gender for the ascending generation than the descending generation. While there are a number of possible explanations for this, it may suggest a cultural tendency to expect a child to define his or her relation to a person in terms of that person's categorical relation to his or her parents. One would not in any corresponding way define one's relations to someone in terms of their relation to one's children -- meaning there is less need for close distinctions in the descending generation. The exception would be a husband and wife who, particularly in rural areas, might address each other using teknonymy. Thus, if a child's name was Mao, the father might address his wife as mae Mao or mae a-Mao or mae vea. While teknonymy seems to be primarily used between husband and wife, I was once addressed as mea vea ("the child's uncle").

The words upuk and mday have traditionally only been used with reference to birth parents and children or people who have taken on the traditional role in a significant way. All the other kin terms are categorical; that is to say, they are used to address people of a certain age or relational category, regardless of blood relationship.

On the one hand, the usage of categorical kin terms makes reference to an underlying logic of relative age. Thus the person you call bâng is older than you and logically should

call you p'oun, just as the person you call ming should be someone a bit younger than your parents (that is, p'oun in relation to your parents) and should logically call you khmuoy. Logically speaking, there should be no reciprocal usage to kinship terms, since all Khmer kin terms refer to relative age.

At the same time, kin terms do not merely make objective reference to a person's relative age, but have meaning in relation to prototypes of how different categories act in relation to each other. This constitutes an underlying tension in the system, since sometimes prototypes do not correspond to actual age types, leaving room for inconsistencies and negotiation.

The words ta and yeay, for instance, refer not merely to a person's relative age but to a certain image of age, so that someone the speaker might call bâng in actual interaction can be referred to in the third person as ta, recognizing that he has the general characteristics of old age. (See Ledgerwood, 1985) (Ta and yeay can be used not only with people who look old, but with people who are seen affectionately as having a kind of colorful authority. Thus a character in a film might be referred to as ta regardless of age -- I remember in particular a friend using ta to refer to Sean Connery in a James Bond film.)

Since Cambodian kin terms are categorical, they refer, again, not just to those in one's immediate family, but to relational categories more generally, so that, for instance, it would be common for someone in Phnom Penh to call a waiter

or cyclo driver bâng, p'oun or pou. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which one's family and other people with which one is intimate are more prototypical than these strangers; they would be considered better examples of bâng, ming, om, p'oun, etc., in part merely because they are more likely to fulfill the prototypical implications of the words.

Where genetic relations are known (or where a significant relation with one's parents is acknowledged, whether or not it is actually genetic) it seems to take priority over age categories. Thus for instance, in a family where the father had children late in life, and his own children were about the age of his nephew's, he nevertheless directed his children to call his nephew bâng, even though the man was old enough to be their father. This is another way of saying that, where the relative relation to self and the relative relation to parents are in conflict, one will defer to the relative relation to one's parents. This, however, is also recognized as in some ways being peculiar. The most prototypical case for the use of a kin term would be with someone who had the proper genetic or pseudo-genetic relation to one's parents, fulfilled the stereotypical roles for the term, and fell in the proper age category in relation to oneself.

As prototypical categories, bâng and p'oun are especially sensitive words, suggesting mutual support and an obligation for the bâng, in particular, to take responsibility for the well-being of the p'oun, and for the p'oun to defer to the direction

given by the bâng. Cross-gender usage of the terms bâng and p'oun (typically shortened to oun) is especially explosive, and suggestive of courtship and romance. The stereotype of lovers calling each other oun and bâng is very deeply engraved, and when in a film a character with a stereotypically feminine voice says, "oun srâlañ bâng" (oun loves bâng), there is likely to be laughter in the audience which recognizes the relation as familiar to the point of corny; but the laughter doesn't mean that the stereotype has lost its power.

Given this situation, there is a strong tendency for men and women to avoid addressing each other using the most logical age categories, and a woman will call a man pou even though he is logically more in the age category of a bâng. Perhaps one reason why the title neang has lost its honorific edge and is used as a general term of address for younger women is the fact that it is a convenient substitute for p'oun when one doesn't know the name of the woman or girl being addressed.

The full force of categorical kinship terms is most felt when they are used in first person as well as second person, as is common among family members and other intimates. To use kñom instead of a kin term in the first person softens or euphemizes some of the prototypical weight of the term.

Given names are sometimes used pronominally in the second person as a substitute for kin terms that are p'oun or younger. I initially assumed that this was a way of avoiding

explicitly marking the fact that the person was younger and thus in an inferior status, but I invariably found, when asked whether they would prefer to be called by their name or by p'oun, that Cambodians claimed they preferred p'oun, apparently because it held a greater sense of interdependency. The use of personal names becomes a way of expressing relationship without the full force of obligation implied in a kin term. (We may generalize to say that categorical terms are seen as more empowering than the specificity of a name.) Non-reciprocal usage usually means that the person addressing another person by their name is older. Reciprocal usage of names is sometimes used between people who are friendly but do not have sufficient intimacy to warrant reciprocal usage of añ. This includes cross-gender usage where there is a need or a desire to avoid kin terms.

Perhaps the most difficult pronominal usage to characterize is  $\emptyset$  -- the use of no explicit marker at all. Sometimes this seems to merely indicate a desire for speed and efficiency, but it is clearly more acceptable among people who are younger or with whom one is on familiar terms than with people who require respect. I remember hearing a mother correct a child for deleting any pronominal reference when he was talking to his father; but it was not a harsh reprimand, and the fact that the child would thoughtlessly delete pronouns is an indication of how common it is in familiar speech.

Reciprocal usage of bâng is common among people who are of roughly the same age group -- a usage which some Cambodians say has increased as a result of socialism. (This is the kind of relation that my friend was insisting on in the anecdote at the beginning of the chapter.) It is common even though it is recognized that it is logically impossible. One can be called to task if it is too obvious that age differences are unequal, and some Cambodians will argue that any reciprocal usage of bâng is incorrect. Reciprocal usage of bâng is perhaps the least complicated egalitarian mode of address in Khmer usage.

If it is possible to soften or avoid the prototypical force of kin terms, it is also possible to underline it, such as by tacking on a kin term at the end of a sentence. (Soum toh, bâng. "I'm sorry, bâng.") It has something of the effect of calling someone by their first name in American English; it serves to underline a sense of connectedness and interdependence, often in the nature of an appeal to that sense of connectedness. To reach out and touch someone's arm at the same time would have the force of further underlining the effect of the usage.

Similarly the use of the word knea as a pronoun emphasizes people as in sympathetic relation to each other.

Certain Chinese kin terms have entered Khmer and are common alternatives to Khmer kin terms. One informant rather schematically divided pronominal usage by mode of work. Those who work for the government (who thvoe kar)

are addressed using OR titles. The Chinese engaged in small and large-scale business enterprises (who rok si) would be addressed using Chinese kin terms. And Khmers engaged in farming (who thvoe srae) would be addressed using Khmer kin terms. This is obviously an oversimplification, both in terms of the economic division of labor between Chinese and Khmer and in terms of the use of kin terms, although it has some historical accuracy and continues to have force as a stereotype. Chinese kin terms in common use in Khmer, as listed by Ehrman, are kong (grandfather), ma (grandmother), che<sup>v</sup>k (older or younger uncle), i (older or younger aunt), hea (older sibling), and chae (older sister)<sup>1</sup>. The most common explanations for who is addressed using Chinese kin terms are that they do not relate specifically to ethnicity, but tend to be used either with people engaged in business or with people who have light complexions. In my experience, there are some people who are addressed by Chinese kin terms -- particularly chae -- who do not clearly fit either category; it is in part merely an alternative form. In urban usage, chae may be coming to be used as a female form in contrast to bâng as an exclusively male form, as one informant suggested when pressed for an explanation about why he used chae instead of bâng with a woman. It is interesting that all the Chinese kin terms listed by Ehrman are for people older than the speaker. One Sino-

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Harrell (personal communication, 1997) points out that these are simplifications of the actual Chinese forms.

Cambodian friend explains this by the fact that Chinese generally do not address people younger than them by kin terms.

I will not try to address in detail the question of which alternatives in RR are more marked than others. The word knea seems quite obviously marked in some way, putting it in a borderline category with OS, just as ké seems marginally OS. On the other hand, it is not clear whether first-person usage of kin terms is more or less marked than the use of kñom. The use of Chinese kin terms is clearly “marked” by the very fact that they are identified as “Chinese;” but some of this markedness seems to be being lost. In general, my analysis tends to see kin terms as the most basic pronominal usage of RR, which is to say, the most basic pronominal usage overall.

As an overall system, Cambodian pronominals represent a system of cognitive models which are integrated in a cognitively coherent system; while no cognitive system can claim to be totally “logical,” they are shaped by the tendency for a given speaker or a community of speakers, at a given time, to find a basic internal consistency, which speakers will return to as evidence of its naturalness and correctness. On the other hand, Cambodian pronominals display, as language does more generally, evidence that they represent the public inscription of negotiated attitudes toward personal relations; as such they are constantly being re-tested and re-defined.

The three broad registers represent three modes of relationship: that of frank (but generally private) self-interest; that of interactional interdependence; and that of deference to public institutions and the people who symbolize them. If there is any correlation between pronoun usage and ways of viewing the self, we find here three different varieties: the self that serves itself, the self that interacts with others, and the self that serves others. With reference to the overall framework of pronominal usage, the mode of interactional usage is most basic, with modes of self-interest and deference defined in contrast to it.

In a sense, each of the three modes defines solidarity and hierarchy in a different way. The RR modes defines hierarchy in terms of relative age and correspondingly defined roles. This defines a kind of solidarity as well, since roles are defined as serving each other, of working toward common ends which will be beneficial to all parties. OS, as used non-reciprocally, defines a hierarchy of indifferent superiority. As used reciprocally, it defines an interchangeable identity, the commonality of self-interest which is tinged with the disrespectable. OR represents hierarchy as defined by publicly inscribed position. Such position represents solidarity only insofar as it is acknowledged that one another's positions are necessary to the overall functioning of the society or elite institutions. Used reciprocally, OR titles represent mutual acknowledgment of position.

If the three modes are in contrast to each other, they are also in some sense a single system, and a single range of alternatives. One must stress the degree to which, in a complex system of this kind, an individual's relative position is explicitly marked. One must also stress, given layers of alternatives which often do not constitute well-defined categories, the degree to which the complexity of the system implies a constant process of negotiation.

From the perspective of how Cambodians view basic socio-economic divisions, the significant categories are perhaps not those between OR, RR, and OS, but between OR and the use of Chinese and Khmer kin terms, as corresponding to the distinction between thvoe kar, rok si, and thvoe srae, with thvoe srae being the category of the mass of the population. Perhaps it is the fact that government employees have not historically been beholden to the population which meant that their position would be marked by the use of OR. The usage related as well to a long tradition of classes of people, whether religious specialists or royalty or colonial powers, whose power consisted in holding themselves separate from the rest of the world. This was not without social usefulness, in that it created categories of people who, as set outside of normal social intercourse, could play a neutral role in relation to different personal networks. If the use of Chinese kin terms, as opposed to Khmer kin terms, does not at the present time seem comparably defined as a separate register, it is no doubt

because there has been more room for give and take in dealing with Chinese businesspersons.

The marked quality of OS is not so much a reflection of a separate economic mode as a way of marking certain kinds of relations which are indifferent to economic considerations. It is a mode for use with people who, on the one hand, are so inferior the speaker does not recognize any interdependence, and, on the other hand, those who are so close and equal in status that we can display common self-interest and common pleasure. This is explicitly a realm of the private.

RR is in a sense more egalitarian than OS or OR, in that it recognized mutual interdependence, but insofar as it relies ultimately on an age-ranked kinship system, it is not truly egalitarian. There is surely a sense in which, from a traditional Khmer perspective, equality for all is not an ideal; the ideal is more of an interdependent respect which recognizes the perquisites of age. Equality is more marked than (a certain kind of) inequality. When a young Khmer man told me how a neighbor had, in anger, addressed an older Vietnamese man in the neighborhood as a-aeng, my friend described his lack of respect for age as a "violation of human rights." One way of interpreting his statement would be that hierarchically marked aged categories are so intrinsic to Khmer society as to have a "primordial" quality whose violation is indeed cultural violence.

There are only a limited number of contexts in which there is reciprocal usage of terms of address. All of them are

less common than hierarchically-marked kin terms. Mutual usage of añ/aeng/a-/mi- is truly egalitarian, but has a sub-rosa quality, suggesting self-interest in relation to more cooperative forms of hierarchy. It is as if it were an equality you don't acknowledge in public, like the mutual use of profanity in English. Mutual usage of aeng or knea in the first person are in some ways like a euphemized añ; more respectable forms which are nevertheless somehow defined less in terms of themselves than in terms of what they are avoiding. They convey noticeably less solidarity than añ. The same can be said for mutual usage of given names or mutual usage of bâng. These usages seem to be defined in reference to the system of kinship terms. They are convenient, but they lack the real indication of a kind of non-reciprocal interactive solidarity which we find in the kinship terms themselves. Mutual usage of titles is less the sign of personal solidarity than of mutual deference to an institutional framework. The various ways of euphemizing the force of añ/aeng/a-/mi- or kinship terms in order to create respectable egalitarian categories points to a basic need for these categories, perhaps driven by modernism; the language nevertheless still proves itself to be somewhat awkward in accommodating them.

As I have said, there is an essential tension in the system having to do with the fact that age categories and prototypical kin roles do not always coincide. Similarly, there is a tension

underlying the fact that it is not always clear whether to use a kin term or other words that show greater condescension or respect.

Perhaps any symbolic system encoding hierarchies will have corresponding symbolic systems resisting those hierarchies. If you look hard enough you even find, I believe, resistance to the hierarchy implicit in kin terms (the anecdote at the beginning of the chapter is one example), although this kind of resistance is not too conspicuous in Khmer society. On the other hand, it is quite common to find sarcasm and resentment toward the use of OR as it is used with reference to non-royalty/non-clergy -- further evidence of its marked quality.

I recall a Cambodian friend telling me about his experiences working for three different kinds of wealthy men in the late 1950's -- once, again, the three occupational categories of farmer, businessman, and government worker (ne<sup>v</sup>ak reachkar -- in this case a parliamentarian). Farm labor, he said, out in the field, was the hardest of all. Working for a businessman was also hard work, but at least you were in the shade. Work for ne<sup>v</sup>ak reachkar was the most comfortable: it was light work, just washing clothes and serving food, and you got to eat the good food the family ate themselves. But he went on to say that it was the most demeaning job. You had to use deferential gestures, he said, and use expressions like kñom bat, lok mcah, techkun, and lok srey. It was almost he

said, like dealing with a monk. This kind of language, he said, would never have been expected by a wealthy farmer or businessman. It is interesting that my friend would have been comfortable using the terms with monks or royalty (who, he pointed out, are also pre<sup>v</sup>ah -- that is, religiously sanctioned), but not with government employees per se; some of the inner logic is missing. This, in effect, is another tension implicit in the system of pronominals, and it is a tension which increases with the expansion of the role of government bureaucracy and the growth of egalitarian ideologies.

As a couple of anecdotes recounted by Jacob illustrate, egalitarian philosophies were already affecting pronoun usage in the pre-WWII period.

Quite apart from the abstract nouns which French could usefully supply, young intellectuals familiar with French also appreciated the democratic simplicity of French pronouns in contrast with the status-indicating Khmer system. In the 1950's I remember hearing a group of educated Phnom Penh Cambodians of various ages and social levels using *vous* to each other in a political discussion, apparently because they appreciated the equality which *vous* suggested. How conscious Khmer were of their language's explicit exposition of differences of social status is illustrated in a novel set in the pre-war era where an officious local governor cannot bring himself to speak politely to his subordinates by using /*khnom*/ [Jacob has a j-like dip on the n in *khnom*][kñom] for "I" or "me"! The result is that his underlings all become used to

understanding what he says even when the pronouns "I" and "me" are omitted. (1993: 156)

While these anecdotes are about egalitarianism, they are about an egalitarianism which, by its association with European influences, also helped define an elite. In the 1950's and 1960's, at the time that Sihanouk instituted a mass political movement under the name of "Buddhist Socialism" (sângku<sup>v</sup>m reah niyum), members of the movement often addressed each other by a word, sahachivin, which roughly meant "comrade." Compared to the radical reforms that would appear in years to come, this usage was superficial. Historian David Chandler, then a U.S. foreign service officer, recalls, "I don't think the custom ever got below or outside the government and was certainly very seldom used by people without socks" (personal communication, 1997). Nevertheless, this, and the usage reported by Jacobs, points to an elite construction of egalitarianism which surely lies at the root of later DK language practices.

DK language usage itself entailed many implicit contradictions, and, as with so many aspects of their ideology, it was typically taken to such an extreme that it represented a violation of its own supposed underlying principles. Khmer Rouge use of person-referring expressions can be seen at once as a radical reversal of traditional usage and an attempt to distill the essence of traditional usage, just as the revolution

represented both modernism and a reaction against modernism.

It is not always clear to what extent DK usage reflected explicit policy as promoted among the general population, to what extent it represented the practice of an elite which, whether by ambition or fear, was imitated by rank and file cadres throughout the country, and to what extent it merely grew logically out of the radical social experiments being implemented more generally.

Once the monarchy ended in 1970 there was, of course, little occasion for the use of royal vocabulary. Similarly, the fact that under DK the monkhood was eliminated is sufficient explanation for the fact that monkly vocabulary was not used. But, going much beyond this, all OR vocabulary was eliminated, as stories from the very first days of the DK period attest. Ponchaud (1978), for example tells the story of how, as Phnom Penh was evacuated, a woman raised her hands in supplication to a Khmer Rouge cadre, calling him techkun, only to be told that there were no more techkuns. For the cadre who said this, it was obviously very explicit policy.

In part, what was so devastating about the DK period was the degree to which realms of relative privacy were made open to public scrutiny, and public expectations extended to what would have usually been considered private behavior. Many Cambodians, when pressed, can recall times and places when they surreptitiously spoke as they wished, but these times and

places were relatively scarce; the eyes of the state claimed to be everywhere, and in the recollection of many Cambodians, you had to use DK standards of language at all times.

OS words, añ/aeng/a-/mi-, had never been considered totally appropriate in public. The fact that they could not be used in the DK period had to do in part with the fact that the realm of the public, and public standards, now extended much further than it once did, and anything that ran counter to those standards was suspect. It is not too difficult to see why the use of OS to express condescension or anger would have been repressed in the interest of socialist cooperation. OS vocabulary was also not considered appropriate for use with children, a more profound ideological reversal. DK cadres told people they must now respect children.

La langue révolutionnaire a aboli aussi le vear, pronom personnel de mépris à la troisième personne du singulier et du pluriel, utilisé pour les enfants, les subalternes et les femmes, et son remplacement par koat, employé jusqu'alors dans les autres contextes. En fait, il ne pouvait y avoir de révolution digne de ce nom sans cette mise au point! (Picq, 1984)

[The revolutionary language also abolished vea, a third person personal derogatory pronoun, singular and plural, used with children, subordinates, and women, and replaced it with ko»at. In fact, one could not have a revolution worthy of its name without addressing this issue!]

While reciprocal usage of OS, it could be argued, was egalitarian, and even proletarian in tone, it was likewise suspect, perhaps because it suggested the possibility of alliances which could potentially represent a challenge to power.

DK standards of discourse, then, first of all called for the elimination of more marked registers of speech. Foreign vocabulary was also generally prohibited, whether because it was foreign or simply because it was associated with urban educated populations. The use of pa and ma' for "mother" and "father" (deriving, some say, from French, others from Chinese) was also taboo, as the stories of many Cambodians attest. Chinese kin terms as terms of address seem to have been unacceptable in most locations, although one Chinese-Vietnamese man, concerned in the DK period with not being identified as Vietnamese, told about being addressed as kong (Chinese for "grandfather") by the children he taught during the period.

The following passages are taken from an unpublished colloquium paper (Marston and Duong 1988) based on research which Sotheary Duong and I conducted with Cambodians in the U.S. about their recollection of DK language usage:

Changes also took place in the domain where kin terms were once used, although there was again considerable variation. The most extreme description of the usage promoted by the Khmer Rouge -- probably never more than a simplified

generalization intended to explain what happened to non-Khmer -- was that people of older generations were all called puk ("father") and mae ("mother"), whereas everyone else was called mi<sup>v</sup>t. Although what actually occurred was more varied and complicated than this, it may be true that the most striking innovations in terms of address were the widespread use of mi<sup>v</sup>t and more extended use of puk and mae.

Mi<sup>v</sup>t is literally translated as "friend," although the revolutionary implications the word took on are perhaps better translated as "comrade." A word that some Cambodians believe is a more literal translation of the word "comrade," sa'ma'mi<sup>v</sup>t, was generally only used on formal occasions, and despite its literal meaning, "most equal friend," it was probably in effect reserved as a term of address for cadres of high rank. [Sa'ma'neari was the term when addressed at women.]

Mi<sup>v</sup>t, as used during the DK period, functioned grammatically somewhat like a title. It could be used alone or preceding a name or a kin term. Unlike a title, it could be followed by the suffix - aeng, indicating familiarity or the lower status of the person addressed. It could be used in the second or third person or, in the words mi<sup>v</sup>t yoeng ("we friends") in the first person [inclusive] plural.

As described by the persons we have interviewed, mi<sup>v</sup>t was more consistently used with people younger than the speaker than with people older than the speaker, perhaps as a way of indicating that, despite the difference of age, they were in no way considered inferior. For example, an old man who taught school said that he addressed the children as mi<sup>v</sup>t; they addressed him as ta ("grandfather") or, since he was Chinese, as kong (a Chinese word for grandfather). (Another DK teacher, however, said he called his students koun ("child"), and they called him puk ("father").

People older than the speaker, but of the same generation might be addressed, again, as mi<sup>v</sup>t, or as mi<sup>v</sup>t bâng. There are also reports of the use of mi<sup>v</sup>t with Khmer words for "aunt" and "uncle": mi<sup>v</sup>t pou, mi<sup>v</sup>t ming, mi<sup>v</sup>t 'om, or with words for grandfather or grandmother: mi<sup>v</sup>t ta, mi<sup>v</sup>t yeay, but with people of the generation of someone's parents or older, according to the greatest number of Cambodians we interviewed for this project, it was more typical to use puk and mae.

When we talk about the use of the words "mother" and "father" as terms of address during the DK period we are really talking about two different things: usage promoted within the family and usage promoted outside of the family.

Inside the family the terms of address pa ("p<sup>a</sup>") and ma' ("ma") were prohibited, either because they were believed to be of foreign origin - although according to Proschan (1988) they are actually not of foreign origin -- or because they were associated with the city and with upper classes. Instead, people were told to use the more rural terms puk and mae ("mother"). One boy from Phnom Penh told how during the DK period his mother hit him when he unthinkingly called her ma'. There are also stories of families being told that children should call their parents mi<sup>v</sup>t puk and mi<sup>v</sup>t mae. Beyond whatever ideological implication the new words may have had, the changes were perceived as a symbol of a change of relationship between parent and child, as well as an indication that the state had some right to say what the relationship between parent and child should be. These changes within the family sometimes provoked fear and resentment; however, the habit of calling parents puk and mae was also one change that sometimes endured after the DK period had ended.

Laurence Picq, a Frenchwoman who was married to a high-ranking DK cadre and lived in Phnom Penh with the DK central organization, reports that her daughters were compelled to call her "aunt" instead of "mother." She reports that they did not call anyone "mother," and implies that among the DK elite children generally did not address their parents as "father" or "mother." Although this was not the case in the experiences of the refugees we interviewed, there is a similar kind of reversal in the story of one of my own informants, who said that she felt compelled to call her adoptive (thor) father pou ("uncle"), instead of puk as she would have previously.

The usage of the words puk and mae ("father" and "mother") as more general terms of address is perhaps the most suggestive of the language changes associated with the DK period. Ponchaud (1978: 141) also reports this usage. Cambodian refugees interviewed report that many times puk and mae came to replace the words ming, pou, and 'om as conventional terms of address for people of a generation older than the speaker, and sometimes they also replaced ta and yeay as terms of address for the grandparents' generation. This was not perceived as something negative. Cambodians will usually cite this as an example of how the Khmer Rouge spoke "sweetly." . . .

Sometimes the people who used puk and mae as terms of address were called koun ("child") in return. The Cambodian man I have worked most closely with in the preparation of this paper, who was in eastern Cambodia during the period, argues that this usage was very widespread, but many people interviewed do not report this.

An unusual alternative for puk and mae, only occasionally reported, is the use of a word, ñom, which was previously a clerical word used by monks to address their parents.

The word ta ("grandfather") may have acquired special usage in some places, although it is impossible to make generalizations. [. . .] Some revolutionary leaders and village leaders were called ta. One highly educated informant claimed intriguingly that the first "generation" of Khmer Rouge leaders were addressed as ta, and that the DK leaders who joined them later were called puk. I have no evidence to support this theory. It is clear that some Khmer with no revolutionary status were called ta, too. One man said that in the DK period people jokingly called each other ta because hardship had aged them. Another explanation is simply that, given the uncertainty about norms of usage at the time, ta became an alternative where the proper usage was ambiguous.

There were also clearly circumstances when words like pou and bâng, kin terms for people older than you, continued to be used without the word mi»t. A revolutionary song, "The Children's Team Raises Dikes," includes the lines: "We all stand firm.' In the morning we study; in the day we work,/ increasing the outcome with aunt (ming) and uncle (pou)." (Camrian Pativatt, 197?: 13)/. Situations described by Szymusiak and Cambodians interviewed give the impression that in general usage words for "uncle" and "aunt" became words reserved for someone with special intimacy.

Laurence Picq reports usage that is sometimes distinctively different than that reported by the refugees we have interviewed. She write that people a generation older than the speaker were called "aunt" and "uncle" and has even written to me:

Quant á la tenance que vous rapportez, d'utiliser "père et mère" je suis certaine que si elle avait été connue en haut lieu et si les Khmers rouge avaint eu le temps, elle aurait été vivement dénoncéé et condamnée car politiquement et idéologiquement, les

Khmers rouge tenaient à ce que le parti communiste incarne le rôle de père et de mère, seuls, uniques et véritables de toute la nation. (Picq, 1988)

[As regards the tendency you report to use "father and mother," I am certain that if this had been known in high places, and if the Khmer Rouge had had the time, it would have been actively denounced and condemned, since politically and ideologically, the Khmer Rouge held that the communist part incarnated the role of the sole true father and mother of the entire nation.] (Translation mine.)

It is hard to explain the discrepancy between her report and the fact that most of the refugees we have interviewed have told us that puk and mae were used with people a generation older than the speaker. (This kind of usage of puk and mae was also reported in casual conversation by a woman who claimed to have worked in a textile factory in Phnom Penh during the DK period.) It is possible that the use of puk and mae was a folk usage not associated with the DK elite.

As we have mentioned, Picq reports that her own children never called anyone "mother." During the last year of the DK period, the students she taught called her "mother," a fact that she attributes to "une fibre sentimentale très particulière qui vibre pour une femme particulière quand toutes les femmes jouant le rôle de la mère de même que les autres femmes sont appelées tantes" (1988) [a quite individual sentimental fibre which extends toward a particular woman when all women play the role of mother, just as the other women are designated as 'aunt'].

We may never know the exact boundaries of the usage of puk and mae as general terms of address, but the reports of it among the refugee

community are frequent enough that it seems to have represented a dramatic pattern of usage among at least a segment of the population.

Picq also, quite intriguingly, reports that among the DK elite the word "I" (kñom) was discouraged in order to stress the idea that personal identity should be subordinate to collective identity. She writes (1988) that originally "I" was replaced by substitutions yoeng kñom (a formal expression for "we") or mi<sup>v</sup>t yoeng ("we friends/comrades").<sup>2</sup> Since it became apparent that in this kind of substitution people were still in effect referring to "I," yoeng kñom was also prohibited, and "I" (kñom) was reserved solely for sessions of self-criticism.

Dans la vie courante, il fallait donc construire des phrases impersonnelles, ou avec des verbes á la 3e personne du singulier, ou, au pis aller, s'abstenir de parler.

Quand le mouvement de lutte contre "la propriété de sa personnalité" s'accroissait, personne ne s'exprimait plus á la première personne du singulier et le comportement de la personne changeait également. (Picq, 1988)

[In everyday life it was necessary to construct impersonal phrases or make use of third person singular verbs or, failing any other alternative, to refrain from speaking.

When the movement of struggle against the "ownership of the personality" was being emphasized, people did not express themselves in the first person singular, and their personal behavior changed accordingly.] (Translation mine.)

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<sup>2</sup> This was not totally an innovation. There were pre-1975 contexts when yoeng or yoeng kñom was used to indicate first-person singular.

However, as Picq points out, this aspect of the language reform was limited to certain circles. None of Cambodian refugees we have interviewed indicated any knowledge of this kind of change in usage.

A few sources, including Picq (1988), indicated that in the DK period *bâng* ("older sibling") and *mi»t bâng* came to be used as terms of address for people of rank, even when they were younger than the speaker. Pol Pot himself was referred to during the revolution as *bâng ti muoy* ("older brother number one" [hence the title of Chandler's biography *Brother Number One*]. (Years before he became a leader of the revolution, Khieu Samphan, running for election to parliament, asked people to call him *bâng* instead of *lok*.) (At the Democratic Kampuchea mission to the United Nations, Pol Pot is reportedly now called "om ['uncle'] Sar" -- with reference to his original name, Saloth Sar.)

*Mi<sup>v</sup>t*, in terms of semantic weight, was much like using *aeng* or *knea* in the second person, but it functioned grammatically as a title and in a sense was intended to have the dignity of a title (while in practice it had some of the intrusiveness of a title).

Distinctions of age were never totally lost in actual practice, although they were challenged in a number of ways, especially in dignifying the role of children and youth, who were seen as more capable of leading forth the revolution than their elders. In many ways, the operative metaphor was that the party (or "Angkar," the organization, whose meaning

sometimes extended to include the population as a whole) was like a family. Familial love, however, was in its own way extreme and threatening, particularly as it challenged the legitimacy of any other claims of family.

It is absurd, of course, to think that the DK regime was truly egalitarian or that it was familial, but discursively, these myths were quite intrinsic to the society. There was, as it were, a necessary etiquette of denying the incredible violence of the revolution, an etiquette which was construed as an affirmation of ideology.

The degree to which there is variation in reported DK usage suggests a local negotiation and interpretation of ideological principles promoted by the central organization. It is notable that while there was a general move to eliminate categories of language that marked status or emotion, variations did emerge -- sometimes merely the choice of an alternative form for the sake of it being an alternative form -- which served to mark certain relations as distinct.

I believe we cannot fully understand the social and economic reality of the DK period without understanding the particular etiquette which evolved in relationship to it -- an etiquette which relates to but goes beyond the explicit ideologies the regime invoked: an extreme euphemism in

relation to an extreme violence; a submersion of individual agency which allowed individual agents to act with great ruthlessness. Can we say that such an etiquette grew in part out of desperation? It was not without beauty, not without a kind of "sweetness." It revealed the revolution, providing a discursive framework which enabled a segment of its leadership to act, even as it disguised the underlying costs of the revolution -- but with a disguise which became increasingly transparent, to DK cadres as well as the people who suffered under them.

Dans les relations entre individus, "merci," "pardon," "s'il vous plaît" furent supprimés, ce qui n'impliquait pas un manque de respect, bien au contraire! On ressentait ces changements de langage comme une promotion de l'individu. Celui-ci n'était plus redevable de quoi que ce soit à personne, on ne culpabilisait plus, on ne se culpabilisait plus, on ne subordonnait plus et on ne se subordonnait plus.

Si la notion de respect tel qu'on le concevait traditionnellement était fortement ébranlée par les Khmers Rouges, la politesse n'en était pas pour autant exclue des moeurs. En réunion, chaque intervenant commençait par présenter "ses respects" et quand on craignait de s'être trompé ou d'avoir offensé quelqu'un, on invoquait sa tolérance: saum atyirsray. Cette expression, utilisée avec mesure, faisait appel à la conscience la plus noble de l'autre et impliquait une attitude pacifique. (Picq, 1984: 352)

[In relations between individuals, "thank you," "I'm sorry," and "please" were suppressed, which did not imply a lack of respect -- on the contrary! These

changes of language were experienced as a promotion of the individual. Since there was no indebtedness to anyone for anything, one no longer blamed, one was no longer blamed, one no longer subordinated other people and no longer subordinated oneself to other people.

If the notion of respect as it was traditionally conceived was strongly shaken up by the Khmer Rouge, politeness was never in such a way excluded from customs. When people met, they each began by presenting their "respects," and when one felt that one had offended someone, one invoked their tolerance: som atyiasrey. This expression, used with restraint, appealed to the most noble part of the other person's conscience and implied a peaceful attitude. (Translation mine)]

The Khmer equivalents of "thank you," "please," and "I'm sorry" probably always had more of an OR tinge to them than the English expressions. Avoiding them was not just a practice of the revolutionary elite; it extended to the general population. A phenomena which has particularly common currency on Cambodian accounts of the DK years, which Picq cites in the same context as the above, is the fact that the Khmer Rouge, when giving orders or asking for something would word it as a "suggestion" (soum snaoe) rather than a direct request or a demand -- again a euphemism which disguised or complemented the unyielding coercion characteristic of the regime.

Usage under PRK was much less rigid and extreme than in the DK period, although it was still far from merely a return to pre-1975 usage. Monkly vocabulary came back into use

with the return of the monkhood, although some royal titles (notably samdech) previously given to the highest ranking monks were not yet in use. In general secular OR titles (lok, ne<sup>V</sup>ak srey, thaukae) were avoided, and the all-purpose “comrade” (sa'ma'mi<sup>V</sup>t) was used to dignify public occasions or, as in the cartoon about corruption in the following chapter, as a way of emphasizing the idea of socialist solidarity. Less formal than sa'ma'mi<sup>V</sup>t, the DK usage of mi<sup>V</sup>t also continued to be used by some Cambodians for a time after 1979.

In a usage which seems to have also derived from DK usage, bâng was sometimes used with officials even when they were younger than the speaker, as a sort of substitute for the word lok. One textbook from the early 1980's, startlingly, shows a child addressing an adult teacher as bângkru (siladharm, thnak di 2, 198?), although the Cambodians I have asked about this uniformly say that children addressed teachers as lokkru, ne<sup>V</sup>akkru, as they had prior to 1975. There was some use of sa'ma'mi<sup>V</sup>t within the social service at this time, but probably most people in government offices used kinship terms with one another. Even in the military, where rank would certainly have been a salient issue, the etiquette of the time was to ignore it in the use of terms of address and simply use kin terms.

The most intrusive aspects of DK usage never came into play. OS was probably used much as before 1975, and their

was no attempt to regulate the discursive etiquette of private conversation.

Inevitably, we couch the observations of the 1980's with reference to the changes which came after them. Thus, during the UNTAC period, Cambodians, in conversation, often contrasted the new ostentation with the socialist tendency to hide evidence of wealth and power. There were rich people in the PRK, they said, but the rich felt the obligation to hide the fact and not go to night clubs and restaurants, and not dress conspicuously well. This had some correspondence to the tendency to avoid terms of address that marked status. Sa'ma'mi<sup>V</sup>t, it could be said, in effect marked status, because it tended to be used with reference to the elite, but the word nevertheless suggested a rejection of the valorization of rank.

The dominant shift from DK to PRK was toward a public which was less intrusive in relation to the private. There were still local level meetings, still radio broadcast over loudspeakers in public places, still nosy cadres; but there was more room for individuals to decide for themselves their relation to public life, as individuals relating to a bureaucracy rather than an all-embracing communal organization. Whereas public life still assumed the posture of revolutionary solidarity there was more room for a realm of the private which complemented and resisted it.

The time of the U.N. sponsored elections, starting really with the signing of the Paris Agreements, was also a time of

discursive shift, generally perceived as representing a return to the usage of pre-1970 or pre-1975 society. (What in the long run it actually represents it is perhaps too soon to say.) For those who had been adults prior to 1975, it was a return to what they remembered, or thought they remembers, of usage at that time. For younger people, it was inevitably more of an artificial construction, worked out according to a logic which at least they thought they understood.

As a consequence of peace negotiations in the late 1980's, well-known Cambodian figures, such as pre-1975 military and political leader In Tam, began visiting the country. When they were mentioned in Cambodian newspapers, their names were preceded by the title lok rather than s.m. (the abbreviation for sa'ma'mi<sup>v</sup>t), in effect recognition of the term in a non-revolutionary context, for a type of leader who was outside of the revolution. When I spoke Khmer to a dignitary at a government-sponsored conference in Phnom Penh in 1989, I was corrected for calling him lok and told to call him sa'ma'mi<sup>v</sup>t. Even so, at the same time bicycle rickshaw drivers knew instinctively that I was someone to be called lok. By the time I arrived to work in Cambodia in early 1992 (following the October, 1991 Paris Agreements), I never heard sa'ma'mi<sup>v</sup>t. I recall, probably sometime in 1993, filling out a form in the post office to receive a package, and noticing that one part of the form had been corrected, so that lok appeared before the space in front of the name, while another part of the form still

had the abbreviation s.m. It was in the aftermath of the Paris Agreements that the Cambodian media began to stop using sa'ma'mi<sup>v</sup>t and sa'ma'neari and used lok and ne<sup>v</sup>ak srey instead; for the public at large, this was the sign of a new discursive era.

Upon Sihanouk's return to Phnom Penh, at the same time that he re-instituted the Thommayut Order of Theravada Buddhism, he granted the royal titles samdech to four key monks, in effect re-establishing a tradition of monarchical hierarchy within the monkhood. The title samdech, already held by Son Sann, the leader of one of the major parties, was eventually, following the election, bestowed on key leaders of the CPP as well as FUNCINPEC. People joked that the Khmer Rouge would be next, with samdech Khieu Samphan or samdech Pol Pot. There was certainly no one in CPP who, out of love for the socialist ideals of egalitarianism, expressed any desire to cling to the title sa'ma'mi<sup>v</sup>t.

During this time the words lok and ne<sup>v</sup>ak srey began coming back to use in government offices, albeit with some awkwardness. In the Ministry of Culture office I worked in during the first half of 1992, my American predecessor told me to call the woman in charge of the office ne<sup>v</sup>ak srey, but the Cambodians working together all called themselves by kin terms. In 1993, when a Cambodian friend of mine graduated from the university and started working in a government office, he said that even though the standard of using lok and

ne<sup>v</sup>ak srey were acknowledged, people were not entirely comfortable using the words; he himself, just out of the university found it odd to be addressed as lok. He said that when outsiders came to the office, they would use lok, but office members would revert to kin terms for everyday usage.

Part of what was happening, of course, was not just the expectation that people would suddenly change their usage, but the fact that a mass of people were returning from the border, where in non-Communist zones revolutionary terms of address were not at all in use.

Perhaps the most dramatic meeting of usage styles was that of the armed forces, where ANKI (i.e. FUNCINPEC) and KPNLAF (i.e. KPNLF) troops now joined CPAF (i.e. CPP) troops in a single army, thus the hierarchical forms of military address used by the border armies coming in contact with an armed forces where it was common to use kin terms. How this worked itself out in actual practice would be a fascinating study. Despite the larger numbers of CPAF forces and, ultimately, the greater power of their leadership, it became policy to re-introduce hierarchically-marked address among newly trained troops. Quite apart from the question of how "real" power relations were working themselves out between FUNCINPEC and CPP and specific leaders associated with these parties in the aftermath of the elections, it was the discursive etiquette of pre-1970 royalism which in some sense had "won."

Of course, usage was not precisely what had existed prior to 1975 or 1970, although this is hard to measure. Before 1975 the term lok srey was used with a woman's husband's name, following the French use of Madame, and ne<sup>v</sup>ak srey was primarily used with a woman who was never married, widowed, or divorced. Now ne<sup>v</sup>ak srey was used, with the woman's own name, with both married and unmarried women, perhaps following the etiquette of use with sa'ma'neari. I believe I never heard lok srey in Cambodia during this period. This is one case in which developments genuinely moved in the direction of egalitarianism.

More typically, the period immediately following the elections, as titles came back into use, there was a striking inflation in their usage, which was often commented on. The words aekodom ("Your Excellency") and lok chumteav (female "Your Excellency") came back into use with a vengeance, and some commented on the fact that, whereas prior to 1975, these titles were only used with ambassadors and statesmen of the highest rank, they were now in use down to the vice-ministerial level. There was in general in this period an amazing jockeying for the signs and symbols of rank, and much satire was generated, for example, by the numbers of people who suddenly acquired high military rank, usually as the result of generous bribes. Such usage had its own logic and its own momentum, which in part reflected the desire to return to pre-socialist usage, but was in part something else entirely. It was

a discursive etiquette corresponding to the demands of a new political economic order, which had to do, not with age-old hierarchies, but with how much political and social hay you could make with newly revived symbols of power<sup>3</sup>.

Person-referring expressions do not tell the whole story of Cambodian hierarchy, any more than do gestures of greeting, symbolic exchange, or satirical cartoons, but they do represent a significant part of how, as individuals negotiate dyadic relations, these relations have been inscribed. Traditionally, as we have seen, categorically marked hierarchical interdependence stands in contrast to, on the one hand, personalized modes which deny or transcend the obligation of interdependence and, on the other hand, modes of institutionally sanctioned hierarchies.

An ideology of egalitarianism -- which never fit very well with traditional Cambodian usage -- resulted in experiments alterations of pronominal use and then the radical linguistic contortions of the Khmer Rouge. Since then there has been a backing off, and the attempt to return to pre-1970 usage,

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<sup>3</sup>A Cambodian man in Seattle reports that among the younger generation of urban Khmer, there is a tendency to avoid reciprocal usage of añ/aeng/a-/mi. This, he said, had nothing to do with the fact that OS words were suppressed during the DK period, but merely by the fact that the younger generation could not divorce reciprocal usage from the derogatory implications of non-reciprocal usage. He said that reciprocal usage continued among the younger generation of more rural Khmer, and that, for instance, young Khmer in Seattle housing projects continued to use it while young Khmer in the suburbs wouldn't. Since this tendency never came up in my own interviews with younger Cambodians in Phnom Penh, I surmise that this is primarily a phenomena among Cambodian-Americans whose families were of urban background in the old country; even so, it is a very interesting development, showing how a particular dialect can construct pronominal usage in a particular way.

leading at time to a new exaggerated marking of status, which in its own way may also lead to the loss of meaning in actual practice. As with other forms of hierarchical symbolism, we see the evolution of self-consciousness about use, which in and of itself represents a profound change.

Thompson's statement about Cambodian, cited in the previous chapter, that "[i]n its total lack of public opinion Cambodia is essentially a feudal country. The family group, or the hamlet, mark the limits of the average Khmer's spiritual and physical horizon (1937: 327)," is, of course, totally outrageous. How can any society, feudal or not, lack a sense of "the public," or of various levels of "public," but the quote raises interesting questions about how "public" is construed in societies where the inscription of dyadic relations is inscribed as primary. One possible way of looking at the way a concept of the public was constructed in traditional Cambodian society is to point out how certain realms were marked as separate and representative: the OR realms of royalty, clergy, and government service. There was a sense that it was in relation to these three institutions that people had a relation to the "public." Another way to address the issue is to point out that the negotiation of dyadic relations was not in and of itself "private," at least in the sense that there was a conspicuous need for it to be hidden or euphemized. It was a generally recognized process. Reciprocal OS usage was in a sense private; it was the expression of a certain kind of egalitarian but self-

interested solidarity which people felt the need to hide or euphemize in more "public" settings.

Sihanouk was certainly a public figure in every sense of the word, and it was only with his reign that a public associated with the mass media arose -- but the idea of public was still very much associated with the notion of a relation to him as a person. While in practice very different, it is not too much of a conceptual leap to go from this to the way that the Khmer Rouge constructed their relation to the population as familial; a blurring between the public and the private is taken to its extreme -- to the extent that the quintessential pronominal forms of public and private were eliminated. The regimes that have followed have stepped back from this extreme usage -- and perhaps a "public sphere" in Habermas' sense is genuinely evolving, but as Cambodia, for example, has reverted to pre-1970 honorific vocabulary, it is also struggling to find precise ways of inscribing the reality of negotiated personal relations in relation to public discourse.

## **Chapter Six: Satirical Cartoons**

This chapter is about hierarchy as it is represented in satirical cartoons published in Cambodia from the late 1980's to the present. These cartoons, of course, represent a very different kind of inscription of hierarchy than the things we have been looking at so far, both by nature of the fact that, appearing in newspapers, they represent mass culture (and with that modernity), and by the fact that they primarily represent an observation and critique of traditional hierarchy by claiming to inscribe it from a position outside and above it, rather inscribe it in the point of enacting it. That is to say, the etiquette of print discourse comes to index and frame the traditional etiquette of personal interaction. As such this chapter anticipates the discussion of the etiquette of mass media which underlies the later chapters of this dissertation. The satirical cartoons I will look at now have a logical relation to the material of the previous chapters, since they in part incorporate and comment on the etiquette of gestures of greeting, gift exchange, and linguistic markers we have been describing.

I have argued that etiquette means the tendency for a given public to define discursive strategies which neutralize or euphemize the tension of the forces negotiating for its control

(typically associated with more public discourse), in contrast to another level of discourse which is neither detached nor impartial (typically thought of as a more private discourse). While this second level can and does also appear in public, when it does it will have a marked quality. Satire, we could say, is such a form of marked discourse, one that flouts the tendency of public discourse to neutralize or euphemize. Satire is very much public discourse, but it is public discourse that calls attention to the failure of public life to live up to public etiquette -- that is to say, to transcend the private.

Classic speech act theory holds that there are principles of cooperation which underlie the way we experience conversation. (Grice's theory of implicature is summarized in Levinson, 1983: 100-118). The point of these principles is not that they are adhered to as rule, but that when they are not (when they are "flouted") the interlocutor will refer to the underlying principle to find what seems to be a lack of meaning. Thus, for example, if a complement doesn't make sense in the given context, it may be interpreted as sarcasm. Logically extended, we could say that when satire flouts public etiquette, it implicitly acknowledges and calls for it, appealing to underlying principles which are basic to cooperation in society. This is certainly what happens at times. Satire can also use the excuse of this logic to be a force of social change, challenging an re-defining public etiquette.

Like other art, satire will often also deliberately flout the truth, calling attention to its own distortion. (Grice's "Maxim of Quality," in speech act theory, suggests that it is an underlying principle of conversation that the interlocutor must "try to make your contribution one that is true.") Again, the fact that distortion not only occurs but occurs with obvious deliberateness, forces the audience to look for underlying meaning. Anderson, contrasting the styles of two different Indonesian cartoonists, writes:

The contrast is between the violently emblematic and "artificial" style of Sibarani and the naturalism of Hidaja. Where Hidajat says, "Look, my pictures are like life," Sibarani says, "Only my cartoons will show you what everyday appearances conceal." (1990: 165-6)

Distortion forces a new relation to reality.

Satire (or more broadly speaking, social critique) doesn't begin with the development of print media; Cambodian folk stories, for example, often represent a satirical commentary on moral behavior. In an anecdote recounted in the previous chapter, a Cambodian man flouted conventions of greeting by making the sâmpe<sup>v</sup>ah gesture first to a younger man, thereby calling attention to his lack of etiquette. This kind of critique has always been practiced. Much of what we regard as satire in a modern sense, however, does tend specifically to flout the style and etiquette of print and other mass media, to as it were accentuate personal eccentricity and deformity, the very things which mass media seems to preclude. It is as though

newspaper cartoons say, "I will show you what the etiquette of print conceals." The satire moreover defines etiquette by pointing out what ought to be concealed, even as at another level it celebrates the revelation of private worlds. The sentiment of the cartoons I look at here is surely not a total departure from sentiments which Cambodians must have felt long before the introduction of print, or the introduction of socialism, and there are certainly other ways than cartoons of making a critique of abuses of personal power, but these sentiments come to have a certain logic and nuance which is best understood in the terms of new etiquettes.

Political cartoons first assumed a prominent role in newspapers and magazines dominated by Sihanouk in the post-independence period. Sihanouk was himself an avid reader of the French satirical newspaper *Canard Enchaîné* (See Marston 1997), and in addition to the use of Cambodian cartoons in Cambodian periodicals in the primary state newspaper, *Neak Cheatniyum*, they appeared in the popular bilingual satirical magazine *Pseing Pseing* and in the French-language magazines *Le Sangkum* and *Kampuchea* in which Sihanouk also printed political cartoons from foreign countries which supported his policies. The humor can probably be seen as a logical extension of Sihanouk's sense of his personal style: sophisticated, witty, irreverent.

The satire of the early cartoons was never directed against Sihanouk himself, but against foreign countries like the

United States whose policies Sihanouk opposed and, occasionally, domestic opposition. Satire was as it were Sihanouk's private viewpoint claimed as public. The fact that its use was often associated with French-language publications probably also tended to define its use as associated with a narrow Franco-Khmer public sphere -- a discourse apart. During the Khmer Republic (1970-75), after the coup which deposed Sihanouk, newspapers enjoyed greater freedom, and satire, more than under Sihanouk, attempted to speak for the viewpoint of the general public. Political cartoons continued to grow in sophistication and full-page satirical cartoons were featured weekly on the front page of the newspaper *Nokor Thom*, usually about the war, in which Cambodian soldiers were now fighting on the side of the Americans. Not surprisingly, there were no cartoons in the severely curtailed journalism of the Pol Pot period. In the 1980's, under the People Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) regime, reproductions of cartoons from socialist bloc countries began appearing in Cambodian newspapers, eventually followed by cartoons by Cambodian artists themselves.

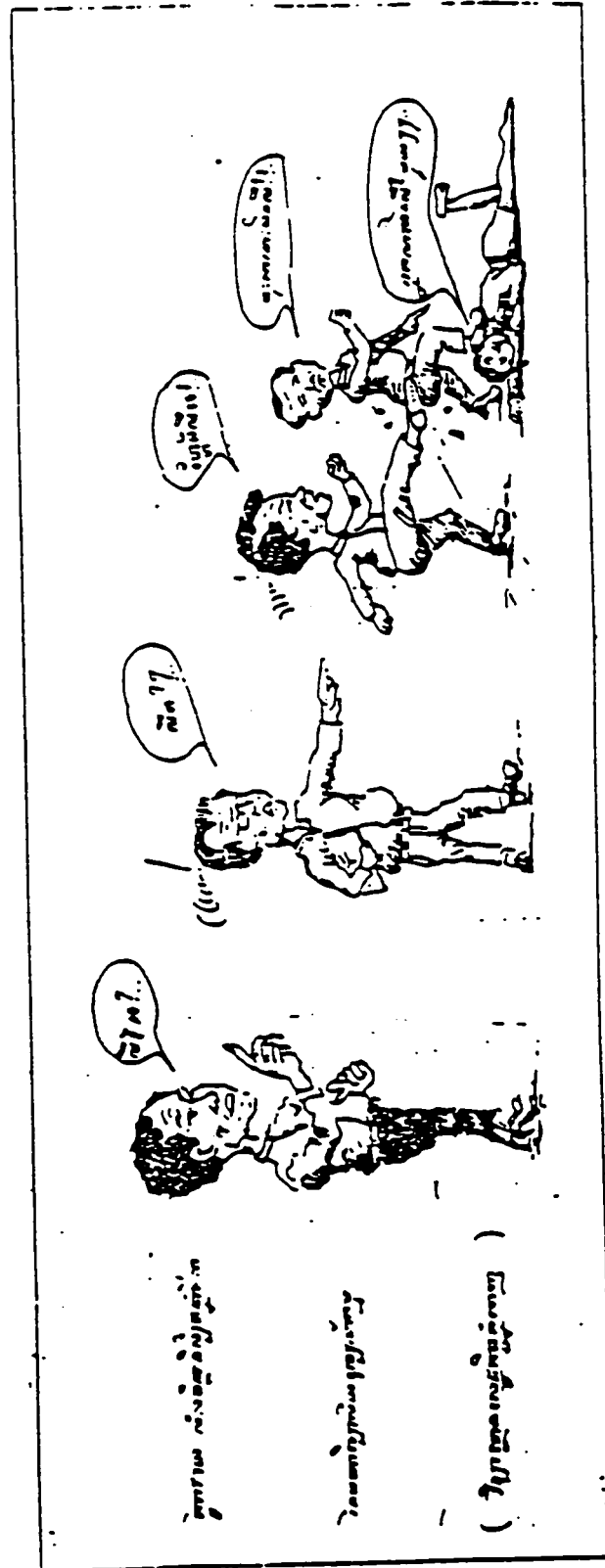
The majority of the cartoons I'm going to look at here were printed in the newspaper *Kampuchea* in the late 1980's, prior to the 1989 constitutional reforms which resulted in the country's name being changed from People's Republic of Kampuchea to State of Cambodia (SOC) in connection with peace negotiations which would eventually lead to U.N.-sponsored

elections. The cartoons appeared during a period of opening up in which the Party had a policy of encouraging self-criticism. These cartoons were either pictures drawn by and submitted by readers themselves or were ideas submitted by readers which were drafted by the *Kampuchea* staff cartoonist Em Sokha, contributing to the notion that the public voice of the paper included the private voices of members of the general population. This period of openness was short-lived, and by late 1989, cartoons of this kind, and other politically daring articles and letters to the editor, had ceased to appear. At this time, the cartoons Em Sokha drew for *Kampuchea* came to follow quite strictly the government line, but nevertheless showed increasing artistic sophistication.

When independent newspapers began to flourish, following the UN presence in Cambodia in 1992-3, Em Sokha became increasingly visible in the many papers where he freelanced -- papers which were much more explicitly political than *Kampuchea* could be in the late 1980's. I will also look at a few cartoons by Em Sokha and other artists from this later period. During the period cartoons were more likely to focus on political factionalism, the salient tension of the time. Here though, for comparison, I will largely focus on cartoons which, much like those earlier ones from *Kampuchea* in the 1980's, do not so much take a stance in relation to specific political factions as venture satirical comment on social relations. Cambodians in the United States to whom I have shown these

pictures will sometimes try to find an overtly political meaning in them, either finding references to contemporary political figures in them -- having to be reminded when the pictures actually appeared -- or using examples of political figures to illustrate the relations in question. I am, however, more interested in them as a depiction of how more general relations of hierarchy are conceived and critiqued.

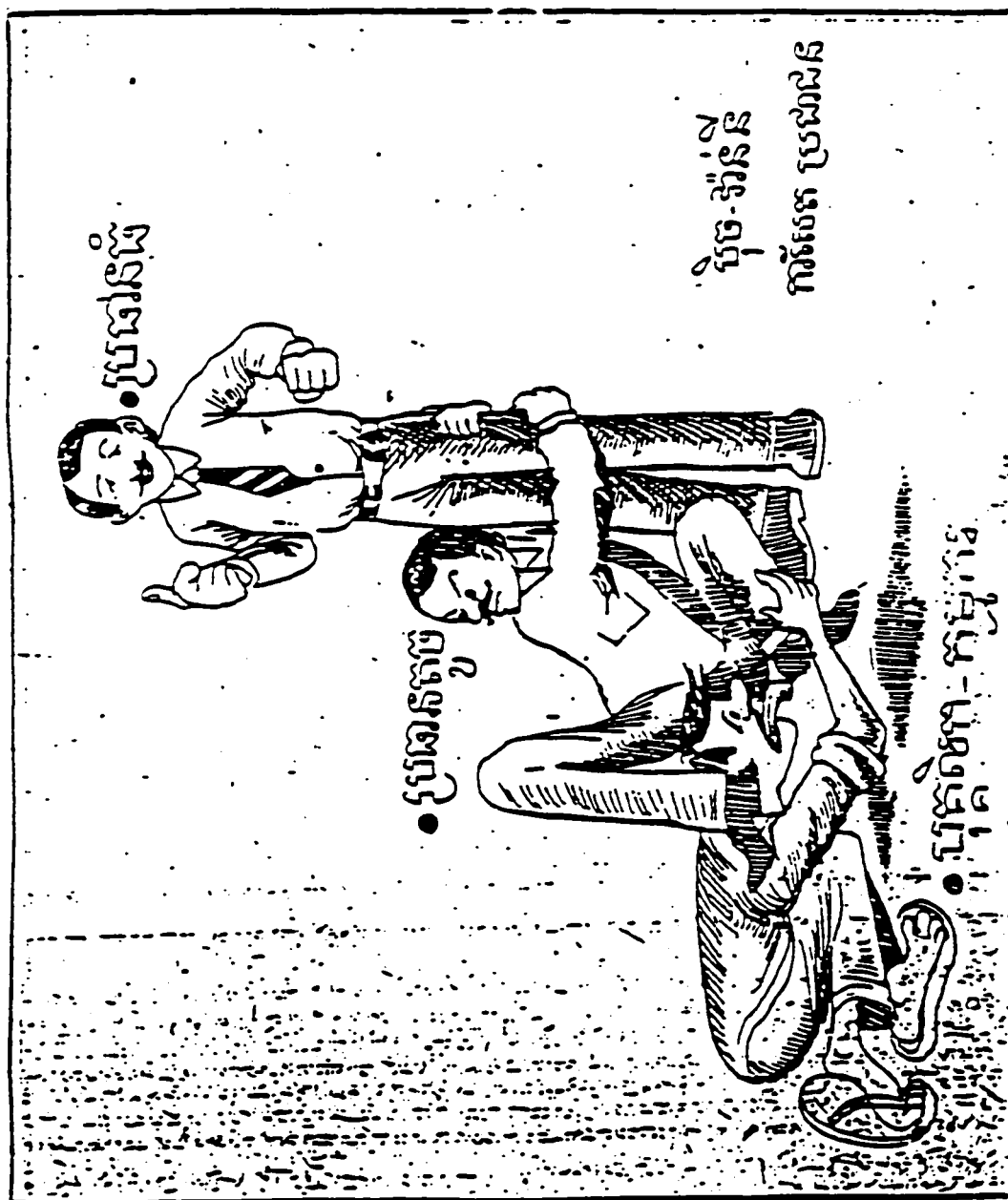
Picture A, submitted to *Kampuchea* in the late 1980's by a university student, depicts satirically the broad scheme of descending hierarchy. The figure at the top of the hierarchy asks the simple question, "Do you hear, or not?" As the question descends to the bottom of the hierarchical chain, the question becomes increasingly contemptuous in tone and is accompanied by increasing amounts of physical violence. Note that the cartoon doesn't just depict a chain of hierarchical relations, but one in which domination is increasingly violent as participants descend the chain, suggesting perhaps that the person at the top is responsible for the violence at the bottom of the chain as well as that the system works to oppress those on the bottom. It is hard to say whether or not we could call this picture a depiction of "patron-clientism," since the men depicted have no power of negotiation with the people above them. But one can see how a cartoon like this would appeal to people who are themselves, with great difficulty, negotiating a position at the bottom of the hierarchy.



PICTURE A. From Kampuchea, March 3, 1988.

When I showed this cartoon to a well-educated Cambodian couple in the United States, the man said that the relation depicted might be from Phnom Penh to the region to the province to the district to the village. Their comments focused on the increasing number of words and violence from figure to another. The woman cited a proverb: "One crow is ten crows" (k'aek muay chea k'aek dâ<sup>v</sup>p), meaning that when you have trouble it increases exponentially, what the man called, in English, "the ripple effect." He went on to say, "That's why we got killed in the Pol Pot period. Because of that effect."

While Picture B picture also appeared in *Kampuchea*, it was submitted by someone who identifies himself as staff at the more conservative *Prâcheachon* newspaper. It is quite similar to the one above, in that the persons at the bottom of the hierarchy are in increasingly humiliating positions, to the point that the lowermost person licks the soles of the feet of the person above him. The person at the top of the hierarchy is identified as "Boss." According to a Cambodian who viewed the picture with me, his pointing finger, the same gesture made by the person at the top of the hierarchy in the previous cartoon, represents giving orders. The left hand, in a clenched fist, represents power. A middle figure, embracing the legs of the boss, is identified as a "Little Boss." The man at the bottom of the chain, wearing sandals instead of shoes, is identified as "Staffworker or Laborer." Where the other cartoon depicted a



PICTURE B. From Kampuchea, Aug. 31, 1989.

hierarchy of command, this one depicts a hierarchy of symbolic expression of subservience. It seems to be saying, this is what negotiating hierarchy entails. Whereas the gesture of thvay bângku<sup>v</sup>m is inscribed as representing deference to spheres which are outside and above us, this is clearly representing something else, something which in no way could be called pure<sup>1</sup>.

The Cambodians I showed this picture to saw it as a criticism specifically of the middle figure. The young man recently arrived in the United States said that it showed that people embrace the big shots and forget they know the little guys. The couple commented on the fact that the big boss didn't even see the little boss. The one in the middle, the man said, gets the power from the big boss to oppress the lower one. His wife pointed out that the three cannot disengage from each other. "This one depends on (pe<sup>v</sup>ung) this one; that one depends on (pe<sup>v</sup>ung) that one."

These two violent cartoons, depicting a more general view of hierarchy than most of the other cartoons I'm going to look at are not easy to interpret. To a non-Cambodian observer like myself, the violence depicted is unsettling, and it is striking that the cartoons would appear matter-of-factly in a government publication during a political period not noted freedom of expression -- whether because the depiction of power relations is less taboo for a newspaper in Cambodia than,

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<sup>1</sup> Laura Summers, commenting on a version of this material presented at a conference, pointed out that the authority figures in both of these cartoons have ties, and suggested that the relation referred to is implicitly one that parallels colonial domination.

say, for a newspaper in a small city in the U.S., or because *Kampuchea* newspaper in the late 1980's was more daring than its position might lead us to believe. The relations depicted here are certainly ones that would have been criticized even before the introduction of print. Nevertheless, there is a certain inevitability about the tendency of a new etiquette to explore what must have seemed like the shadow world of the old etiquette.

Picture C is another cartoon which depicts the nature of relations as experienced within hierarchically defined relations. This picture, also from the late 80's, was drawn by Em Sokha from an idea submitted by a government office worker -- and shows the exaggerations of his later style beginning to emerge. The cartoon depicts an enormous "Boss" and four underlings who each performs a task designated by words which in Khmer start with the same letter of the alphabet: bowing, staying close, supporting and presenting. A short poem, provides the commentary:

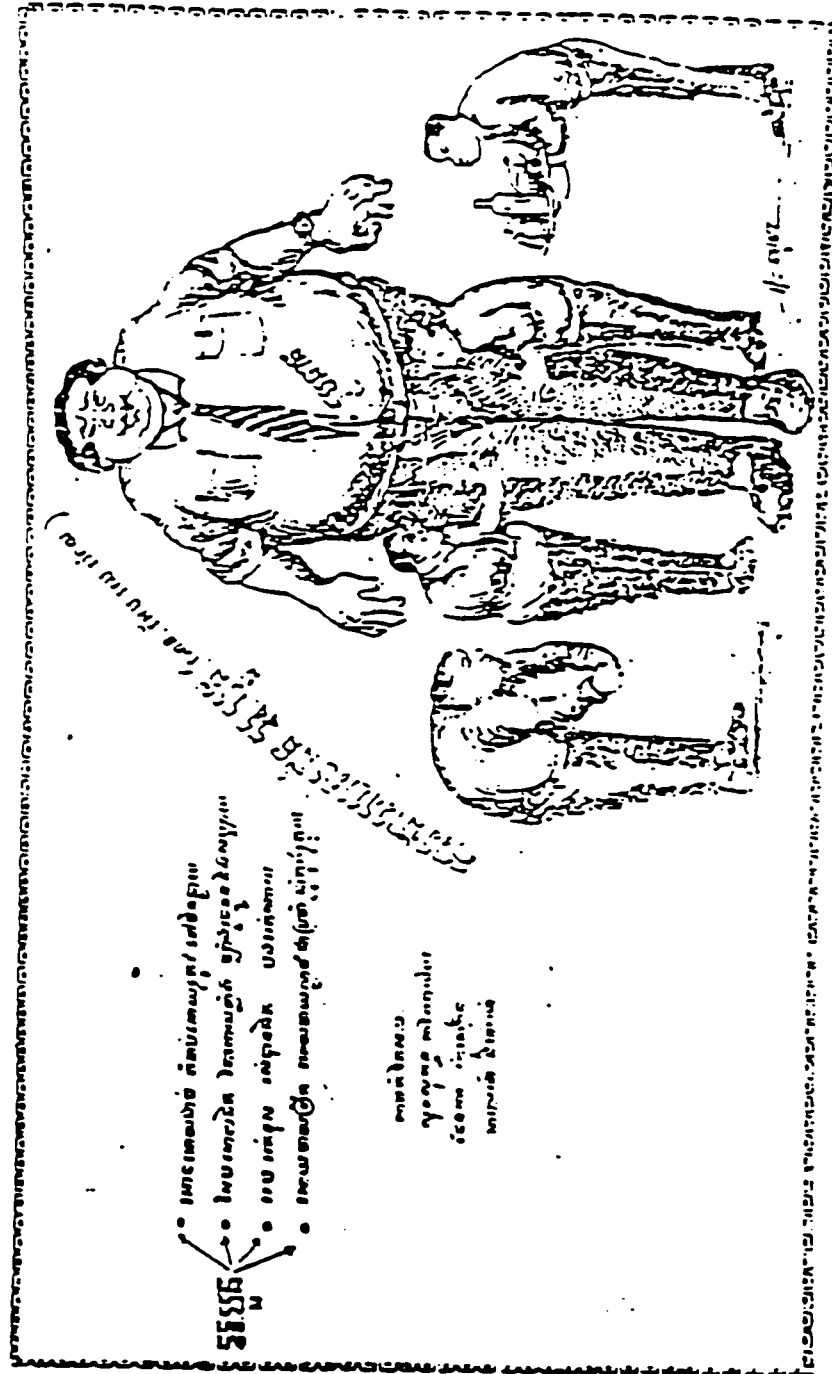
Bow continuously; make the proper salutation; don't  
go far away.

Stick close; embrace with strength; when war comes  
you'll escape the draft and be  
comfortable.

It's not a mistake to give support; keep yourself  
close; your big brother won't tire of you.

Give gifts to the chief in the morning; something to  
spend in the evening; that's how to keep  
your lucrative position at the  
checkpoint.

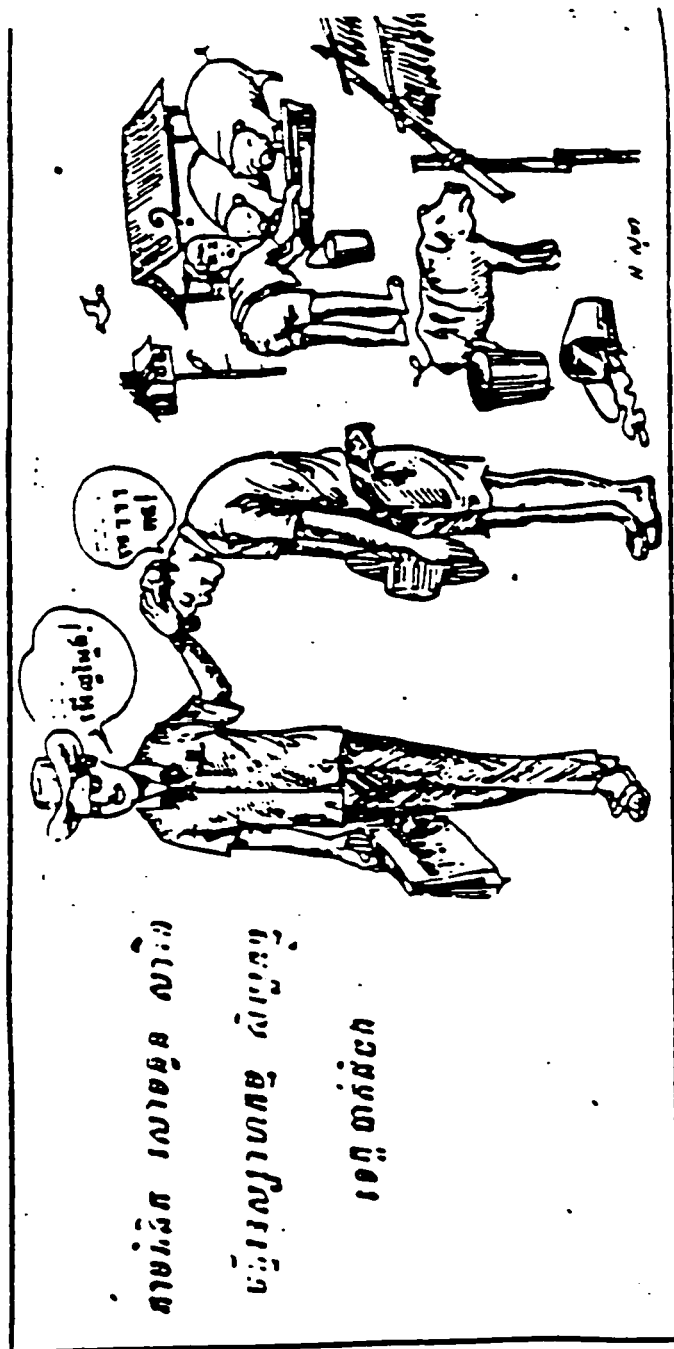
[translation mine]



PICTURE C. From Kampuchea, Nov. 1, 1990.

More than the first two cartoons, it evokes a specifically Khmer iconography, with the enormous figure of the boss pictured in a role much like a king or a god, even though from the poem we know the person is more likely to be a bureaucrat. The poem gives a very specific idea of what patron-clientism meant in the late 1980's, a time of war, when one was likely to be preoccupied with negotiating a means of escaping military service or access to lucrative checkpoints, both issues which government officials were in a position to help.

Picture D, one of the earliest pictures I have found by Em Sokha, was based on an idea submitted by a reader to *Kampuchea* newspaper in 1987. Although it is much less stylistically sophisticated than later Em Sokha cartoons, it is interesting for the details it provides of how status is marked. Here we are not looking at bureaucrats in relation to each other, but a peasant in relation to a state official. A peasant, straw hat in hand, smiles and bends his head as the man of importance touches it, a gesture considered as an insult when performed by an adult to an adult. The man of importance, using language with marks of condescension, says, "Yes, very good," while not even bothering to look at the man he is addressing. The peasant replies, "Yes," using a deferential particle. The peasant seems to have let a bucket of pig slop fall over in his haste to greet the man of importance, to the amazement of the figure in the background. The man of importance has what were clearly markings of power in 1987:



PICTURE D. From Kampuchea, Aug. 13, 1990.

a briefcase, a western-style hat, sun glasses, pens in his pocket, and a watch. Like the first two cartoons, it provides few clues as to what either figure could hope to gain from the symbolic show of hierarchy, but underlines, ironically, the fact that a humiliating type of hierarchy is still very much present.

*Kampuchea* newspaper had a wide circulation, but was distributed primarily through the workplace and party networks, and probably mostly read by government employees, party members, and students, who are, indeed, the people who submitted these cartoons, and cartoons like these are probably most accurately seen as representing the frustrations of people experiencing hierarchy specifically within socialist government bureaucracy. But although existing within bureaucratic hierarchy, the relations depicted are felt at a personal level. If they are not always "whole person" relations in quite the way Scott intended, they are relations deeply inscribed in the body. The cartoons depict a criticism and a warning; like any work of art it is at some level also a celebration. It is not enough to say that the cartoons depict hierarchy as it has existed in Cambodia from time immemorial (or the traditional etiquette of personal relations discussed in the previous chapter) although there is a level at which that is part of what they are doing. As satire, they also represent, as I have said, a perspective of criticism. I think there are at least three ways of interpreting the satire here.

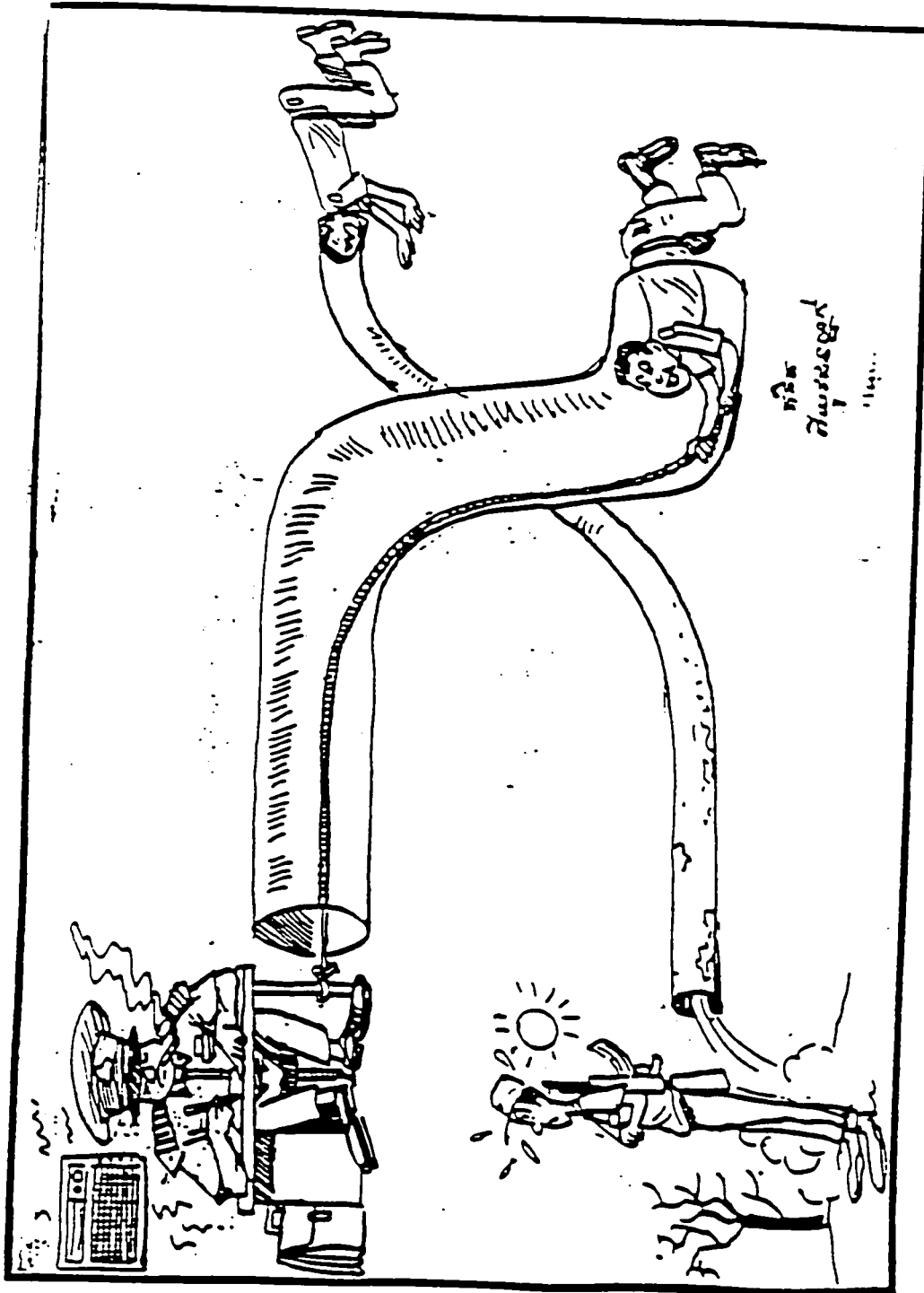
First of all, the cartoons may be said to represent the application of a socialist ideology of egalitarianism to the critique of traditional Khmer practices of hierarchy. (It is, in fact, unlikely that cartoons of this kind could have appeared when they did unless they in some way represented the ideological line of the Party and state.) That is to say, a new etiquette critiques an old etiquette -- and socialism did represent an etiquette of modernism in relation to tradition. (The degree to which the etiquette of socialism at this time was, moreover, associated with Vietnam and the influence of Vietnamese advisors is a complex and touchy issue.)

A second interpretation seems, at least superficially, to contradict the first. This is the idea that the PRK period represented a time of the expansion of socialist bureaucracy into grassroots levels which in pre-1975 Cambodia had been relatively free of government bureaucratic presence. Not only did the state descend into the village but the Phnom Penh bureaucracy was made up of people who had only recently arrived from the country. Seen in these terms, the cartoons can be taken as representing resistance to kinds of fixed state bureaucracy which they in fact hadn't known before. They resisted the fact that now people found themselves being servile to bureaucrats in ways that they would previously have been reserved for the king and the monkhood and which, for the average person, would only have taken place in specially marked circumstances. While the idea that the cartoons stem

from the expansion of state hierarchical bureaucracy may seem to contradict the idea that the cartoons were informed by a socialist ideology of equality, it may in fact be more accurate to say that bureaucratic hierarchy, and the etiquettes which correspond to it, somehow entail notions of equality that they nevertheless in other ways undermine. Indeed, *Kampuchea* newspaper itself may have represented some of this contradiction, since as ideology it promoted a socialist ideal of equality and yet, as authorities pushed for it to be distributed and read at the grass roots level it also in some ways represented the intrusion of the center onto the periphery.

A third possibility could be that even though bureaucratic hierarchies were expanding, and even though a rise in the bureaucracy could make an incredible difference in a few people's lives, it was a time when individual Cambodians often found that negotiating bureaucratic hierarchy to meet their own needs and goals particularly difficult and arbitrary. Perhaps it was a time when people also bridled against the ways patron-client networks were functioning because relatively few people were in a position to use them well. The upheavals that Cambodia has undergone since 1975 left many people bereft of the very kinds of personal connections that were the only way to succeed, underlining the bitterness of the situation. In this context, a critique of patron-clientism is both a moral judgment and an expression of envy.

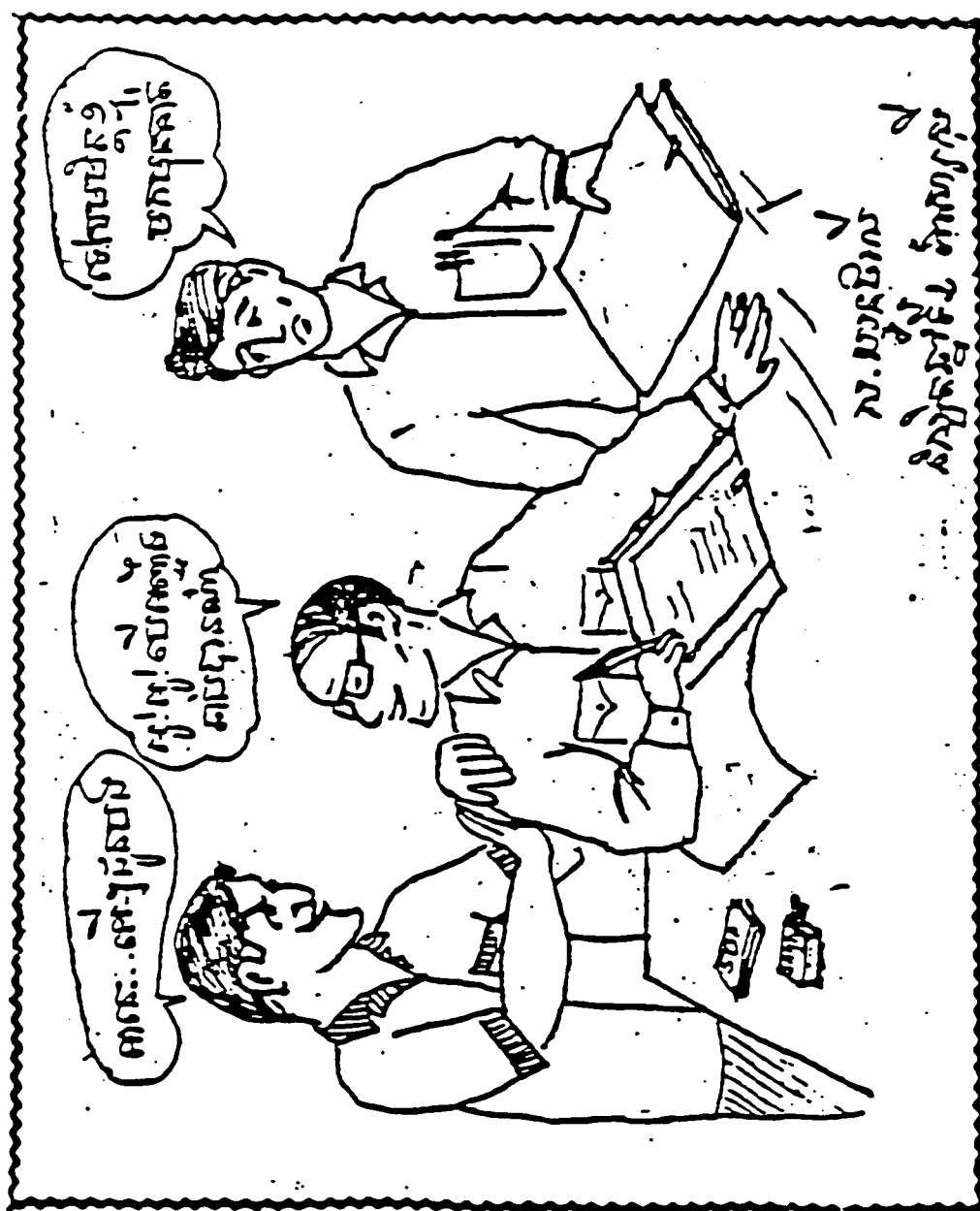
The four cartoons we have looked at so far all deal with the anguish of operating within hierarchical systems. They critique traditional displays of power within bureaucratic hierarchies (often new bureaucratic hierarchies). Most of the rest of the cartoons we will look at have to do with the anguish of being excluded by patron-clientism and other hierarchically marked systems. Picture E is another very general depiction of hierarchy as negotiated in actual practice. This cartoon was published in 1993, and appeared in a commercial, corporate-funded newspaper. The cartoon includes the notation that it is based on an idea submitted by a “young man.” The cartoon depicts two pipelines. One leads to success and security depicted by a military officer in an air-conditioned room. (The young man recently arrived from Cambodia described the situation of the military officer using the slang term kânlaeng kla<sup>V</sup>ñ, literally a “fat place,” i.e., a place that is comfy and lucrative.) The smiling young man at the other end of the pipeline has a rope tied to the leg of the military officer’s table, which he will obviously use to pull himself up. Another, frowning young man has his head in a second, thinner pipeline, this one descending and emptying something resembling gutter water onto a scene where a common soldier stands sweating in the sun. A Cambodian looking at this cartoon would know that it refers to the slang word to<sup>V</sup>yô, or “sewer pipe,” used to refer to a line up by means of a friend in high places. Somewhat more clearly a picture of patron-clientism than the other



PICTURE E. From Reaksmey Kampuchea, Aug. 24, 1993.

cartoons, it conveys a popular conception of how one succeeds or fails in the negotiation of status: the implication always, not so much that there will be an exchange to the mutual benefit of both parties, so much as the idea that if only one could find a to<sup>v</sup>yô, everything would be taken care of, because a system of personal relations exists alongside, and can determine, the ascribed relations of bureaucracy.

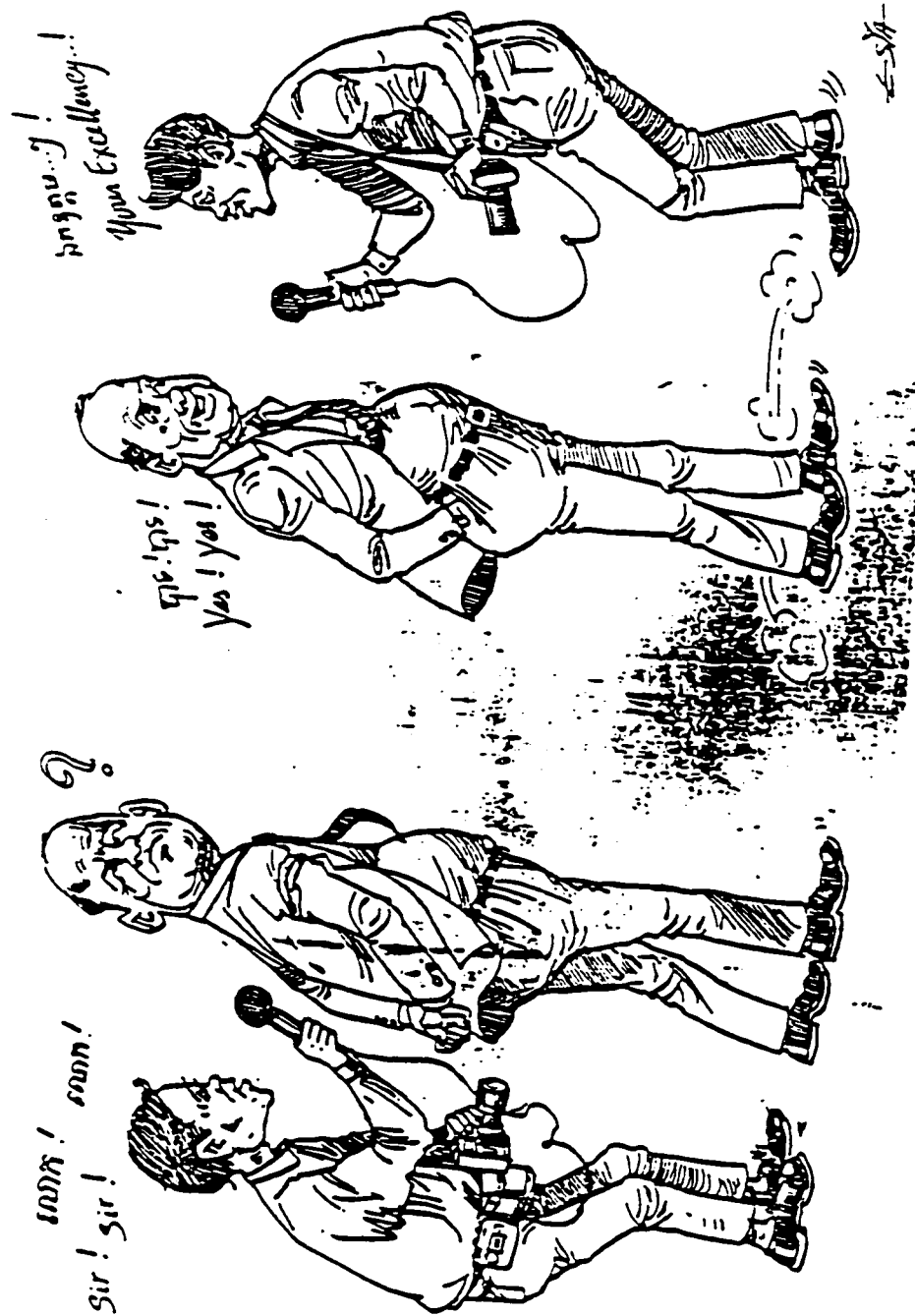
Some of the late 1980's cartoons do make reference to petty corruption, which, as Scott points out, can grow logically out of institutions of patron-client exchange. Picture F was a cartoon submitted to *Kampuchea* by a second-year university student majoring in Russian, which shows a bureaucrat taking care of paperwork for someone who gives him cigarettes and money before another person who hasn't. There isn't a clear distinction of status among the players, but there is the tit for tat exchange that we associate with the classical model of patron-clientism. It is also, of course, a statement about the negotiation of the system. The moral perspective of the cartoon is clearly marked as socialist by the use of terms of address. The man offering cigarettes and money also appeals to the bureaucrat by calling him bâng, or "older brother;" The other man protests, saying, "Comrade, I came before him." The cartoon, of course, on one level, represents the outrage of the man who addresses the bureaucrat as "comrade." At another level, it's a word to the wise about how things work. It shows both how people succeed in negotiating the system and how



PICTURE F. From Kampuchea, June 2, 1988.

other people fail by their inability to negotiate the system. In a way the cartoon is about the competition between a world in which people address each other as bâng and other kinship terms and a world in which people address each other as "comrade." When I showed this picture to the young man recently arrived from Cambodia, he laughed and said, "Si monok!" a nonsense play on the sound of the words "si sâmnauk," or "corruption."

Picture G, again, is a more recent cartoon, from a time when standards of public diction no longer dictated the use of the word "comrade." This newspaper cartoon was reproduced on a poster advertising the 1995 regional conference of the International Federation of Journalists, held in Phnom Penh, which is why the dialogue appears in English along with the Khmer. It is in part a satirical reference to the fashionableness of the word aekutdâ<sup>V</sup>m, or "Your Excellency," a phrase which disappeared under socialism but came back with a vengeance in the post-election period. The joke was that it was demanded by officials whose rank would never have justified the word prior to 1975. The cartoon shows a journalist who fails to get a politician's attention when he simply uses the deferential word lok, but succeeds with a more extravagant title. The younger Cambodian man, to whom I showed the picture, imagined the politician telling the figure on the right, "A-aeng kua sâmkro<sup>V</sup>anbar," a statement colored by a condescending pronoun, which translates as, "You do know how to be polite." The



**PICTURE G.** From UNESCO/Khmer Journalists' Association conference poster, 1995.

cartoon, again, touching on an aspect of patron-clientism, depicts nicely the negotiation of hierarchy by a willingness to give symbolic face. In effect, the reporter has sacrificed a degree of symbolic moral equality in order to get the interview. The cartoon is a critique of this lack of moral equality at the same time that it comments wryly that this is how the world works. All these cartoons are about people successfully and unsuccessfully using unofficial means to gain access to official channels.

Once we accept the idea that the negotiation of dyadic whole person relations is a significant process in Cambodian society, we must also recognize that different kinds of dyadic whole person relations can have different moral constructions. To depend on someone (pe<sup>v</sup>ung), when dependence means fulfilling need, is almost invariably represented as something good. But the converse of this, to depend on someone (ang), in the sense of providing protection which allows the person to act with impunity, is a frequent subject of satire, and a frequently called on explanation for evil, regardless of the facts involved.

The next three cartoons, by Em Sokha at different points in his career, all represent the idea of a khnâng. The word khnâng literally translates as “back,” as in the back of a chair, and could be translated as “backer,” except that it has a more negative connotation than the word “backer,” implying that the person involved could not act in the way they are doing if it

weren't for their khnâng. The word khnâng often implies support by someone who is not immediately visible. Thus the idea is often called on to suggest that there are issues of power lying behind the surface reality. Note how the negotiated personal connection with someone of higher status, again, excludes or stands in opposition to those outside the personal network. This personal network, however, is one that stands in contrast to legitimate bureaucratic hierarchy.

The first cartoon, Picture H, one of the cartoons from *Kampuchea* in the 1980's, was drawn by Em Sokha from an idea submitted by someone working in the state oil and gas corporation. It shows two workers, one with a khnâng and one without, the one without slacking off while the other one works. But when the supervisor comes by, it's the worker with a khnâng who feels that he can express his opinions, and when it comes time for evaluations, it's the worker with a khnâng who gets good evaluations. Like the other 1980's cartoons we have seen, it's a work related complaint which depicts the difficulty of negotiating hierarchy, this time for the person without links to those in positions of status.

Picture I is the only cartoon I'm going to show which is really a political cartoon rather than social satire. It's an Em Sokha cartoon from *Kampuchea* in 1990, in the period after there had been a clamp down on the paper's social criticism, a political cartoon very much depicting the line of the Phnom Penh government, who saw the non-communist resistance



PICTURE H. From *Kampuchea*, Dec. 15, 1988.



PICTURE I. From Kampuchea, Nov. 22, 1990.

movements operating on the Thai-Cambodian border as nothing more than a front for the power of the Khmer Rouge. Here an oversized Pol Pot stands behind Sihanouk, who is addressing a miniature version of his son Ranariddh. Sihanouk tells his son, "Don't fear. No matter what, there is still a khnâng behind us with strong legs, who has killed millions of people, and who is waiting to help us. Our group will win without fail." Similar cartoons, either depicting Pol Pot as the khnâng of other political parties or the Vietnamese as the khnâng of the Cambodian People's Party, often appeared around the time of the 1993 elections. (Or occasionally another rather more bizarre representation of illegitimate dependency, where political leaders Son San and Ranariddh were depicted suckling the breasts of Pol Pot, or a variety of pro-CPP newspapers suckled the multiple breasts of a figure representing Vietnam.) The underlying assumption is that politics is about choosing patrons, with the ultimate criticism of a player being the idea that he is nothing more than a client to a sinister force.

This third cartoon, Picture J, is one I commissioned from Em Sokha in 1994. I asked him to draw a cartoon for me which would represent the way of life of a journalist working in Cambodia at that time. The three panels show the different ways of life of Cambodian journalists which he felt like were the most significant categories, those struggling to survive, those writing with covert political backing, or those thriving from corruption. What I'm most interested in is the visual



PICTURE J. Commissioned from Em Sokha, 1994.

representation of a khnâng -- dark, shadowy, standing like the back of a chair, but more intimidating than supportive. Here, as almost invariably, the person with a khnâng is contrasted with the person without one, who is left destitute.

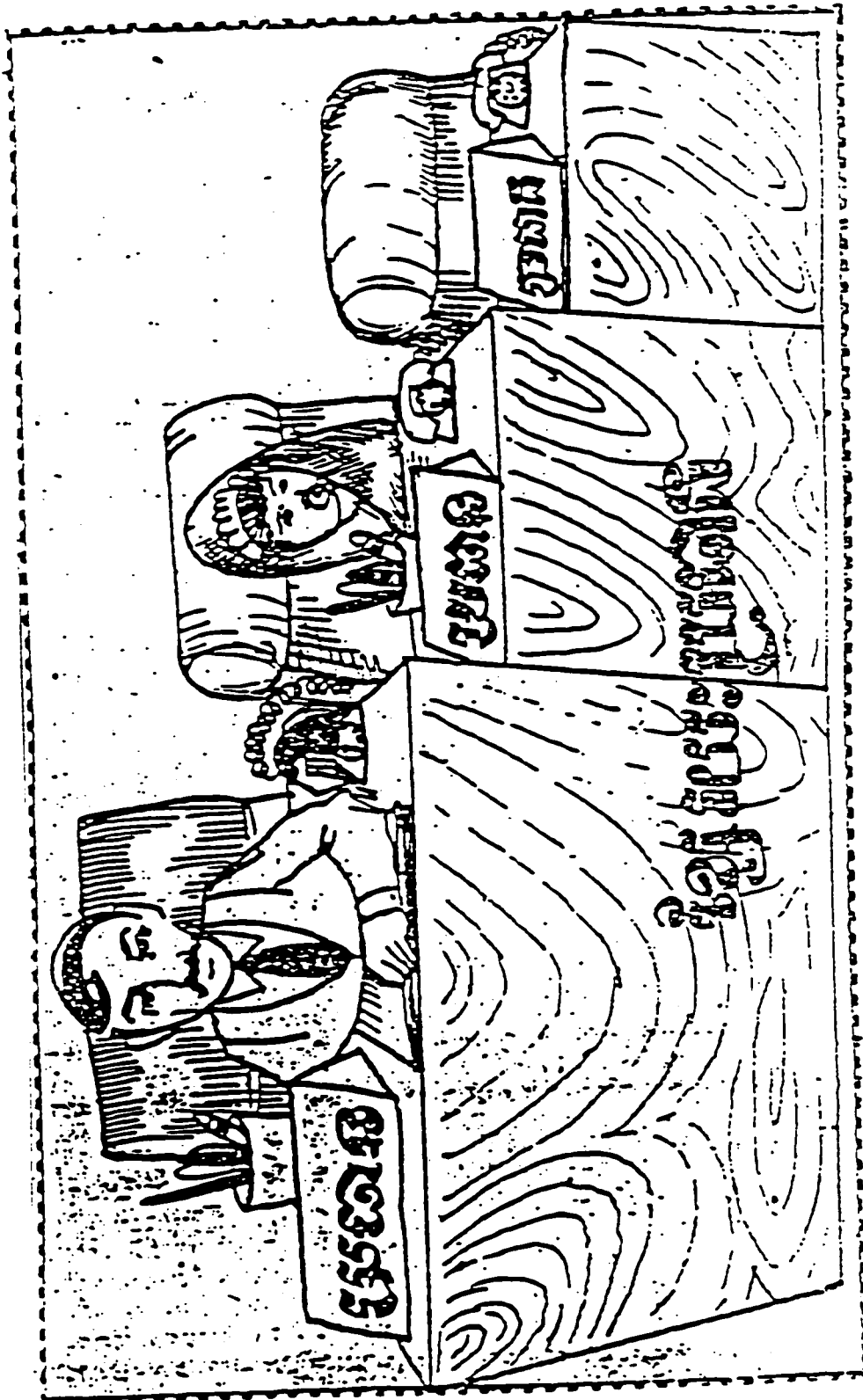
As we saw in the last chapter, there traditionally were legitimate ways to encode personal dependency and dominance, especially in relation to family and religion, and these were publicly inscribed. It is in relation to the development of a modern bureaucracy that both that these relationships needed to become more covert, and that a particular critique would evolve in relation to them. While this critique related to the critique of a simple abuse of power which always existed, it went beyond it, expanding the sense of what must be private in relation to public life. To speak of a khnâng is to recognize a certain bitterness in relation to a code of hierarchy.

In passing I might note that of the pictures I have found that deal with dyadic hierarchy, this is the only one that depicts women, the wife and daughter here represented as dependent on the male journalist, and as such pressuring him to work harder and harder. I can only interpret this as part of a general tendency to let men stand as public representatives for women, and perhaps a tendency to further euphemize power relations as they occur across gender lines.

The last two pictures I'd like to show illustrate the Khmer term khsay roye<sup>v</sup>ak. Khsay roye<sup>v</sup>ak has sometimes been

translated as “personal network,” but also has some of the implications of the English word “retinue.” It denotes a particular string of personal relations, much like those in a pyramidal patron-client network. Steven Heder (personal communication, 1996), has pointed out that the expression is relatively new in use, and was an innovation, a translation from Vietnamese, which came into use in connection with the guerrilla movements of the Indochinese war. The two cartoons below in part illustrate the fact that there are two levels of usage for the expression. On the one hand, it acquired legitimate usage by the socialist government which grew out of the guerrilla movement, to mean simply an institutional hierarchy. On the other hand, it is still associated with underground networks. The expression is in some contexts interchangeable with older terms like bândañ (“network”) or pa<sup>v</sup>kpuak (a circle of friends or associates, sometimes with a negative association as in the word “crony.”) The fact that the term is new, or that it has acquired currency only recently, may represent a growing need for the critique it represents.

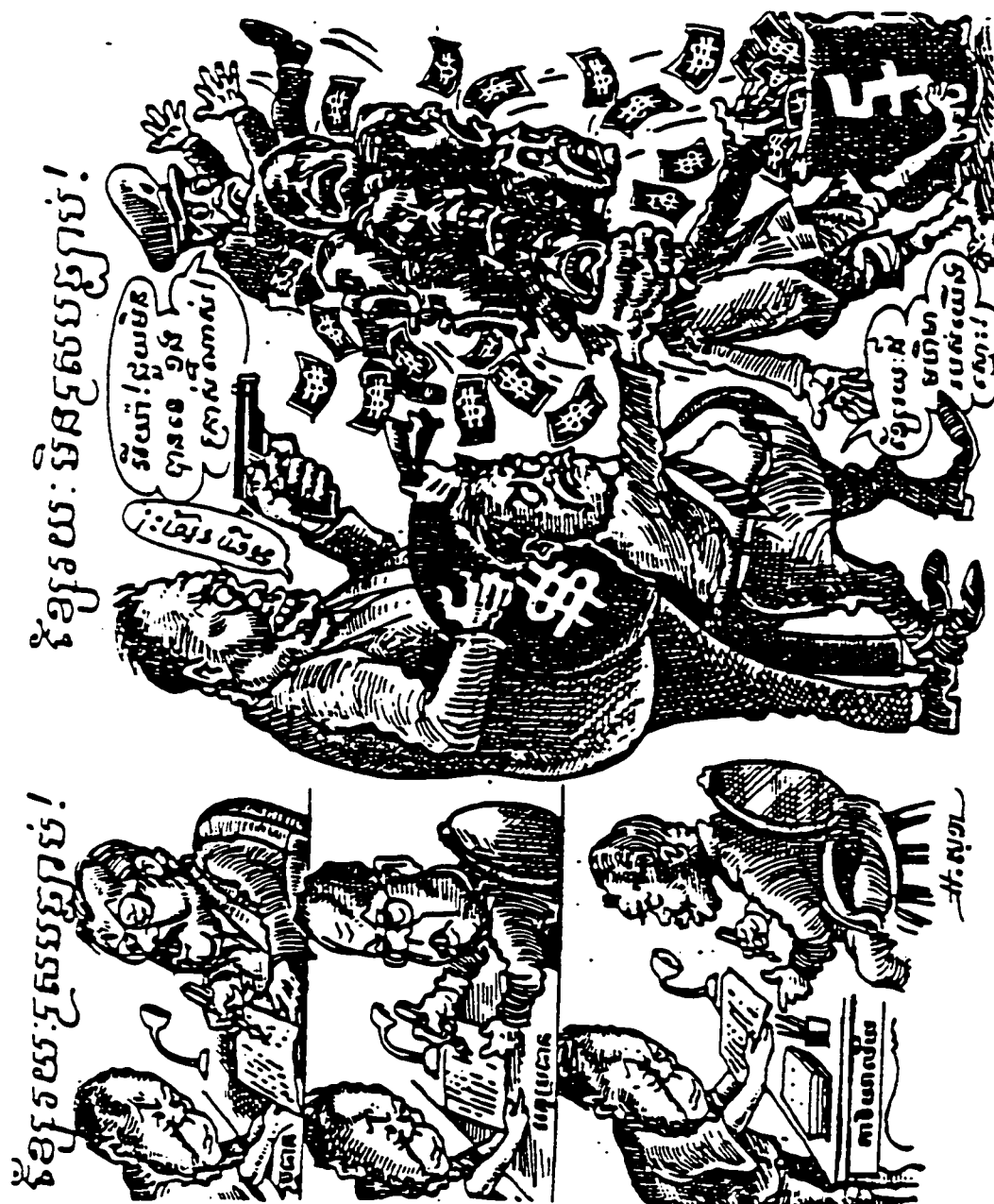
The first cartoon, picture K, is a rather innocuous one which appeared in Kampuchea in the late 1980's. It's entitled, “The Boss's Khsay Roye<sup>v</sup>ak.” An adult man sits at a desk with the name plate “Boss.” Next to him is an infant who also has a name plate with the word “Boss,” and an empty desk, also with the nameplate “Boss,” indicates a third generation. Clearly the concept khsay roye<sup>v</sup>ak can include bureaucratic hierarchy,



PICTURE K. From Kampuchea, March 23, 1989.

whether or not it also includes personal connections. I include this cartoon primarily to provide a conceptual frame for the next cartoon.

The last cartoon, Picture L, is, again, one that I commissioned from Em Sokha, this time in September, 1995. I asked him if he would draw me a cartoon which illustrated the concept khsay roye<sup>V</sup>ak. I was expecting something resembling the first two cartoons I showed above, and admit I was somewhat surprised by this picture as an illustration of the word khsay roye<sup>V</sup>ak. Before he drew the picture, as we discussed what I wanted, we agreed that it would be appropriate to depict both a legal khsay roye<sup>V</sup>ak and an illegal one. Intentionally or not, the finished cartoon seems to suggest that the illegal khsay roye<sup>V</sup>ak is competing with the legal one. On the left, we see the legal khsay roye<sup>V</sup>ak, where a man deferentially submits a document, first to an office worker, then to the deputy boss, and finally to the boss. The illegal khsay roye<sup>V</sup>ak, on the right, violently extorts money from the poor. A policeman is shown, totally helpless, exclaiming that he can't help because the khnâng is too powerful. In fact, as Em Sokha depicts it, the khsay roye<sup>V</sup>ak is nothing more than a well-dressed thug with a khnâng. The man throttling the common people brags about his powerful khsay roye<sup>V</sup>ak and passes the money back to the khnâng, who impudently brags, "Me! Me!" What's interesting here is the idea that the bond of patron clientism is not a self-contained unit so much as a



PICTURE L. Commissioned from Em Sokha, 1995.

corporate entity which, acting as an entity, can be involved in the processes not only of excluding, but of dominating and exploiting. Is this a criticism of khsay roye<sup>v</sup>ak per se? Maybe not, given the left hand of the picture, although the rather bleak picture of the left doesn't leave us feeling totally cheery about that side of khsay roye<sup>v</sup>ak either. (The young man recently arrived from Cambodia who was shown the picture certainly recognized the violence of the situation on the right. But he also said that the picture on the left was an illustration of how long it took to get something done through legal channels; you had to have things signed and re-signed. In contrast, he said, the figure on the right gets what he wants immediately.) Oddly, the two figures on the right depict patron clientism almost in its classical form, with one man providing cash and the other protection, but the effect is not to create a balanced, functioning society so much as to disrupt order. Overall, what we are shown is a picture of the power of personal networks of non-ascribed hierarchical relations, a power which is shown to be quite frightening.

The focus of this chapter has been on the nature of a satirical critique as a flouting of public etiquette and how, coming from the perspective of print media and modern ideologies, it sheds a particular light on private worlds to reveal some of the ways hierarchy is enacted in Cambodia. I have mostly contrasted the ways traditional Cambodian society has had of encoding and justifying hierarchy in personal

etiquettes with the new dimension to hierarchy opened up by new kinds of publics -- with their concomitant new stance of overview in relation to the world, claiming in their own way to be outside issues of power and thus to provide the basis of a kind of etiquette. In Cambodia, certainly, the new etiquette doesn't replace the old etiquette but increases options and makes the relation to these options more complex.

A more specific focus of this dissertation is the question of whether there are shifts in discursive etiquette from the socialist period to the post-socialist period, relating to the way the particular tensions of political economy have shifted.

The first pictures we saw were quite violent, but we can contrast their violence with the last picture. On the one hand is the violence experienced within institutional hierarchy, which at some level has a pretense of control and order. This is at least one characterization of late 1980's socialism in Cambodia. On the other hand, as depicted in this last cartoon, are personal networks existing outside of bureaucratic hierarchy, and competing with them, perhaps representing something about post-socialist Cambodia. This last cartoon taps the idea that these connections can be even more violent and exploitative.

I have argued that in traditional Cambodian society, patron-clientism was less concerned with formal relations, relating to ascribed hierarchies, than with more shifting relations, as defined in terms of dominance and dependence as they relate to more indexical hierarchies. The cartoons

illustrate these two kinds of patron-clientism as they come into play with each other. At some level both are valued and socially inscribed. Socialism tended to increase bureaucratic hierarchy and give it more public prominence, shifting indexical patron-clientism more to the level of the private -- even though it was still an intrinsic part of the way things worked. Even the cartoons from the late 1980's document powerful personal relations as they exist outside of ascribed hierarchies. As the country shifted to a market economy, however, the role of personal relations seemed to become even more salient and more a true threat to even the possibility of the ascribed hierarchical relations, at least in the vision depicted in the last cartoon.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the cartoons is the fact that the earlier cartoons, as well the more recent cartoon showing the pipelines to military success and failure, were based on ideas submitted by readers. This suggests the negotiation of public discourse on a number of levels. Presumably, there was some status to having your idea accepted by a national newspaper, so the very fact of working to have a cartoon or an idea for a cartoon published was a kind of negotiation of symbolic capital. But the ideas also represented a public discussion about what was and was not appropriate hierarchy -- that is to say, what kinds of symbolic representation of hierarchy, in terms of gesture or symbolic exchange or the use of pronouns, was appropriate. At yet

another level, the appearance of the cartoons was part of the broad negotiation of the idea of what was or was not appropriate to appear in print media. The fact that these cartoons appeared in the late 1980's meant that, for a period of time, forces negotiating for the control of public discourse were willing for the totalizing impartial voice of the newspaper to include certain kinds of satirical cartoons, and the very totality of that voice became defined in terms of the fact that it included these cartoons. After a relatively short period of time, these cartoons stopped appearing, because the balance of the forces negotiating for its control changed, such that there was a new construction of what could constitute the totalizing impartial voice of public discourse. These same processes, of course, have continued to be negotiated in the UNTAC and post-UNTAC periods.

## **Chapter Seven: Cambodian News Media in the UNTAC Period and After<sup>1</sup>**

With this chapter I move away from the issue of personal negotiation of hierarchy, as it relates to discursive etiquettes, to the question of the negotiation of the role of the Cambodian news media, as it sets the parameters of another kind of discursive etiquette. In this chapter I will look at institutional changes in the nature of the media which took place over the course of the UNTAC period and its immediate aftermath, when we saw the rise of small newspapers deeply embedded in traditional systems of personal networks as well as the appearance of a new kind of transnational corporate media. Chapters eight and nine will be a close examination of the role of the UNTAC Information/Education Division, which I take to be a case study of the concrete negotiation of the terms of discursive neutrality. Finally, in chapter ten, I will look at specific newspaper articles from the socialist and post-socialist period, in order to explore the nature of the changes of discursive etiquette which took place in relation to the events described in the previous two chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is adapted from my article in Heder and Ledgerwood (1996).

Whatever other transformations may or may not have taken place in Cambodian Society during the UNTAC period, the media was unquestionably a very different kind of body when UNTAC left than it was when UNTAC arrived. It changed rapidly and dramatically, and this change was itself an influence on the political climate of the time: it gave the public a sense that a more general change was taking place. While the institutions of media that emerged were often still far from perfectly free, balanced, or effective, the new media nevertheless represented shifts in the ways Cambodians could observe the events unfolding in their country and see themselves as in relationship to it. Fundamental changes were occurring in the economy of what could be said, by whom, and under what circumstances.

During the 19 months that UNTAC was present in Cambodia, the media developed in several specific directions. Political factions and parties which had never before been permitted to function in Phnom Penh established a media presence there along with the media of State of Cambodia (SOC). Soon after that a non-state/non-party media arose which attempted to function within the framework of a free-market economy. Although there were some significant developments during 1992, such as the emergence of a range of political party bulletins, it is in particular the five months between the beginning of 1993 and the May elections which stand as a watershed period during which, in a great rush of activity, many new, independent organs of media appeared. At the

same time, the political changes taking place during the UNTAC period accelerated a shift away from the influence on the media of Soviet block countries (and Vietnam) and toward, on the one hand, nationalism, and on the other hand, the influence of ASEAN countries and the West.

The new independent organs of media fell into two very different categories: small Khmer media enterprises and independent institutions of media funded by foreign corporations based in ASEAN countries. Together with the state media and the media of political parties, this meant that now at least four different kinds of institutions were operating simultaneously. The convoluted developments in the media in the post-election period are perhaps best seen as a process of working out the new social reality of the media as these institutions interacted with each other, with the state bureaucracy, and with political power brokers. A new political reality meant a need for media institutions to try find new ways of defining a public stance of neutrality; but the changing society also meant coming to terms with a changing social framework of personal networks and patronage -- which in Cambodian terms often meant covert political patronage.

### **Cambodian Media Before UNTAC**

Toward the end of 1992, at the time that the UNTAC Information Division initially attempted to create a media association, the most conspicuous obstacle to its formation was

the fact that there was little that could be called "independent" media. The existing institutions of media were situated firmly within the administrative framework of one or another political party or faction. Despite the Paris Agreements, the factions remained hostile to each other, and there was not even sufficient neutral ground for an association to elect officers. Individual journalists, however much on one level they might want to, could not sufficiently forget the political networks to which they were bound to work together for common goals as journalists. While there were certainly publics, in the sense I am using the term operative at different levels of society -- communities of common reference and a common sense of a relation to the private -- there was no public sphere in the sense used by Habermas, that is to say, no realm where there could be exchange of ideas free of political domination.

The media in Phnom Penh at this time still primarily consisted of the State of Cambodia organs of press, radio, and television. Political divisions still to some extent followed geographical lines. The Khmer People's Liberation Front (KPNLF), National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) and the *partie* of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK) had radio facilities broadcasting from Thailand or near the Thai border, and FUNCINPEC was still publishing a bulletin from the border.

This represented a continuation of the situation of Cambodian media from 1979 until the 1991 Paris Agreements, which pitted the Socialist media based in Phnom Penh against

the media of the tripartite resistance based on the Thai border.<sup>2</sup> The media of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK, which after 1989 would be called State of Cambodia(SOC)) was socialist in that all media was controlled by the state. It was also socialist by nature of the degree to which its existence was dependent on political and economic links to a group of countries which identified themselves as socialist: to the Soviet block countries, and, in particular, to Vietnam -- through the membership of its journalists in a Soviet-dominated journalists' association, through the fact that Vietnam and other countries sent experts to provide training and technical expertise, through the fact that Cambodian journalists were sent to socialist countries for political or journalistic training. The state news agency, SPK, was originally designed to be part of an interlocking system of socialist-block news agencies, but this plan fell by the wayside as Soviet influence disintegrated. By the time UNTAC arrived the Soviet Union no longer existed and Vietnamese troops and advisors had left, but the media was still one shaped by these systems and identified with them in the public mind.

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<sup>2</sup> In describing the PRK/SOC media as based in Phnom Penh, I don't meant to imply that it was only in Phnom Penh. A more detailed description of the media would take into account regional radio and television stations set up in several provinces in the late 1980's as well as a long-time program of loudspeaker programming functioning in many provinces. A fuller description of the media on the border would also include mention of a United Nations Border Relief Operation-funded newspaper printed there which came to have a circulation as great as any of the newspapers published inside the country -- in itself a comment on the strange economics of the border camps.

The Cambodian media was also socialist in that, following a Leninist model, it had since 1979 fallen under the direction and review of the Commission for Education and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary People's Party of Kampuchea and its successor, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Party members sometimes referred to the Commission as functioning as the "brain" of the party. It was the branch responsible for generating and promoting the party's political philosophy. The Commission had a regular weekly meeting in Phnom Penh with representatives of the media to discuss goals. Editors who worked with the Commission now say it did not engage in a priori censorship. The heads of the various branches of media were responsible in the eyes of the party for guiding their institutions along the lines that the party directed. However, because of the weight of this responsibility, politically sensitive materials were at least sometimes sent to the Commission for approval prior to publication or broadcast, and major programming decisions were only made with the approval of the Commission. (In 1990, for example, the radio arts division consulted the Commission about whether it could begin broadcasting recordings of the wildly popular pre-1975 balladeer Sin Sisamut, long avoided because of his association with previous regimes.)

Most media cadres now recall that disagreements rarely arose at the meetings between the Commission and media representatives. If true, this is one indication of how seldom the consensus of what could be said was ever questioned. At

its worst, the Phnom Penh media in the 1979-91 period fell back on slogans, perpetually repeated political formulas, and a dry litany of the who, what, when and where of official meetings. This is the image that most Cambodians call up when asked to recall the media from the socialist period. It is hard to get a sense of the times when the media from this period might have been effective or interesting. At least two contexts reported by the journalists who participated stand up under further investigation. In the early 80's surprisingly moving anti-Pol Pot songs were recorded and broadcast by radio arts teams, at a time when the population's memories of the DK regime was still fresh and when there was still energy and excitement about reviving radio in the country. The quality of radio arts declined as the surviving pre-75 equipment deteriorated and as artists left for greener pastures -- some of them to the camps on the border. There was also an exciting period for Cambodian newspapers in the late 80's, when for a time the party espoused a policy of self-criticism, and daring articles and political cartoons began to appear, particularly in *Kampuchea* newspaper, such as the earlier cartoons discussed in the previous chapter. However, this led to repression when the party decided that criticism was going too far.

During the period between the signing of the Paris Agreements and the official arrival of UNTAC, there was significant reshuffling of staff between the Commission for Education and Propaganda and the ministries it regularly dealt with. This aimed at streamlining the Commission and assuring

that the party would still be in a position to wield influence once UNTAC assumed authority. The Paris Agreements mandated that UNTAC should have direct control over the field of information in order to ensure "a neutral political environment for free and fair elections". However, the Commission was never dissolved during the UNTAC period, and it continued to exert its authority over the SOC media even though the state and the party were, by the Agreements, to be separate. The SOC media would maintain a clear editorial slant in favor of the CPP and its leaders throughout the period leading up to the elections.

In April, 1992, shortly after UNTAC was established, most of the national media institutions which had fallen under the jurisdiction of the Commission were joined into a newly formed Ministry of Information. Dith Munty, the head of the CPP Commission, while continuing to serve in that role (and in his role as a representative to the Supreme National Council), also assumed the newly created position of Minister of Information, a move that would assure him of having a continuing influence over the Ministry even if it were forced to separate from the Commission.

Later that April, the SOC parliament passed a media law. Accounts vary as to who wrote the law, but it seems to have been drafted by the SOC Journalists Association in conjunction with the Commission for Education and Propaganda and then channeled through the Ministry of Justice. The law immediately drew fire from the other factions in the Supreme

National Council, who perceived that it attempted to preempt UNTAC's position in relationship to the media and leave SOC in a position to exert its control. It is not true, as has sometimes been claimed, that the law was "communist;" the media as defined by the law is a free-market one, and the law made no provision for the role of the party, an essential aspect of a Leninist system; but the law would have given existing SOC administration considerable restrictive power over the media, and in effect the power to block the creation of opposition media. (In general we can say that it was not SOC policy to adhere to institutions which functioned along classic Marxist/Leninist lines so much as to ensure a system where order would be maintained and its own figures would maintain their positions of power.)

### **The Media of the Armed Opposition**

Arising alongside and in opposition to the socialist media was the media of resistance groups. In 1982, after the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, FUNCINPEC and KPNLF radio and print facilities had been established in Thailand and along the Thai border. According to a KPNLF official who is now in the Ministry of Information, the facilities and training of staff was funded by what was called the "ASEAN Working Group," with money from Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and the United States. The two

factions set up separate AM stations on the Thai border which could broadcast into the adjoining provinces; eventually, a joint FUNCINPEC-KPNLF FM station, Voice of the Khmer, began broadcasting into Cambodia from Chiang Mai, Thailand. Some staff were sent to Bangkok or Singapore for technical training. Broadcasts were very political in nature and aimed as much at the population within the country as at the Cambodians in their own zones. It was by no means any more "free" than the media being produced inside the country. (A FUNCINPEC information official, recalling the broadcasts, said that all programming had a political agenda. The radio station might play sentimental songs from the Sihanouk era, but this was done with the political goal of reminding people of their life in that time.) Bulletins published by the two factions, and, for a short period, a slick jointly produced magazine, were sent to Cambodian supporters overseas as a way of raising funds. According to a FUNCINPEC official, Khmer-language bulletins were also brought into the country to be distributed by guerrillas. The information teams operating on the border also made videos of military activities to be sent overseas to generate contributions.

FUNCINPEC and KPNLF AM radio broadcasts continued up until the time of the elections, but in December, 1992 the FM broadcasts from Chiang Mai were discontinued because the countries who had been supporting the station were under pressure to maintain a stance of neutrality with respect to the elections. The KPNLF had by this time organized itself into two

separate political parties, the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and since LDP was in a position to take over the AM station on the border, BLDP effectively lost its broadcasting capacity in the country. While a single small station of this kind would perhaps have had only a negligible effect on their standing in the election, BLDP leaders sometimes hold this up as an example of the party's lack of access to the media, which they blame for its relatively poor showing.

### **The Arrival of UNTAC and the Cambodian Media**

In response to the SOC Press Law, the UNTAC Information/Education Division began preparations for what was to be a "Media Charter" which would provide a legal framework for a free press which would be operative in the administrative zones of all four factions during the UNTAC period. As such it would take precedence over the SOC law. In the process of meetings with journalists, political representatives, and UNTAC legal staff, the Media Charter ended up becoming a watered-down set of "Media Guidelines," which did not claim to have the force of law, but did serve as a basis for Information/Education Division discussion with the media about what was and was not appropriate. Legal issues were further complicated when an UNTAC Penal Code and an UNTAC Electoral Code were passed (with little or no consultation with the people who had been working on the

Media Guidelines), both with measures pertaining to the media. On a given issue, it might have been difficult to say precisely what the law actually was. It is fair to say that in practice the SOC media law was ignored, and, during the UNTAC period itself, the more restrictive measures of the UNTAC Penal Code were never acted on. This meant that there began to be room, in ways that there hadn't before, for an independent media to exist.

The BLDP had been the first of the factions from the border to set up a bulletin in Phnom Penh. The *KPNLF Weekly Bulletin* was founded in January, 1992 after meetings in the Supreme National Council in which the four factions had agreed in principle that a free press should be allowed to exist in the country. The *Bulletin* was about 20 pages in length per issue, photocopied on regular-sized typing paper, stapled in the corner. It was printed and sold at BLDP headquarters in Phnom Penh. Editorials took a strong anti-SOC stand, and it included reports of human rights abuses sent to the party by its members in the provinces. These reports, while not a paradigm of careful reporting, represented a breakthrough in the possibility of Phnom Penh press speaking openly about the darker sides of the SOC. In March 1992 the bulletin's editor was shot and wounded while riding a motorcycle in what many believed was an attempt to intimidate the paper and the activities of the party. Throughout 1992 the bulletin continued to be subject to pressures by local authorities and had difficulty bringing issues to party offices in the provinces. On

occasions when its copy machine broke down, it was unable to find any shops willing to do printing for it; and Cambodians expressed fear of being identified by agents if they went to BLDP offices to buy the paper. (It was only in early 1993, accompanied by UNTAC information officer Susan Manuel, that BLDP staff were able to bring a small printing press from the Thai border by truck. This enabled the BLDP to print the bulletin and party campaign materials more cheaply than they had previously.)

By late 1992 other larger political parties had also begun distributing political party bulletins in Phnom Penh: FUNCINPEC, the LDP, and the Democratic Party. Perhaps because of the SOC reactions to the strident *KPNLF Weekly Bulletin*, the other party bulletins were less confrontational in tone and tended to focus on providing basic information about the parties and their leaders. They had limited circulation. Sometimes, even in the case of the *FUNCINPEC* bulletin, there were not enough copies issued to distribute to all the party offices in the provinces. In practice, these bulletins tended not to be something that people sat and read in their homes but something to be posted on notice boards outside of the party offices which were opening up throughout the country. The contents sometimes seemed less important than the mere fact that the existence of a journal legitimized a party. Even so, they had impact on the more traditional field of the media by demonstrating that a multiplicity of political voices was now possible.

By the end of 1992 the few publications that could be called independent still occupied a peripheral position for the average Cambodian. *Sânthepheap*, ("Peace") a weekly journal started in March by a long-time writer and deputy editor at the SOC newspaper *Kampuchea*, is significant in that it did not have any overt ties to a state or political organization. However, its independence did not mean it was neutral. It maintained a militantly pro-SOC/CPP position, and sometimes took extreme stands which prominent SOC/CPP figures supported but did not want to be linked to officially. (It tells something about its relationship to the party that in January, 1993 it was seen posted in a more conspicuous position on bulletin boards outside the CPP office in Siem Reap province than were the official SOC and CPP newspapers.) *Sânthepheap* was similar in format to the *KPNLF Weekly Bulletin* and may have been conceived of as a response to it. The summer after it began publication it began featuring political cartoons drawn by Em Sokha, who come along with the editor from *Kampuchea* newspaper. While similarly scathing cartoons had sometimes appeared in *Kampuchea* before the Paris Agreements, they were now given a large format and placed on the front or the back cover to dramatic effect, becoming the bulletin's trademark. The editor of *Sânthepheap*, who after the May elections became CPP's officially designated Deputy Secretary of State for Information, continues to insist that the paper was genuinely independent and funded by income he was receiving from rental property. (A rumor often repeated among

Cambodian journalists holds that a high-ranking CPP figure had given him the villa with the understanding that he would put out the paper in return.)

Perhaps more truly economically independent were the two English-language newspapers, the *Phnom Penh Post* and *Cambodia Times*, both for-profit institutions which started publication in July 1992. The *Post* was the personal investment of its American editor, a former Asia Foundation official. The *Times* was a Malaysian corporate venture by a firm dominated by the Malaysian-Chinese businessman Dato Dr. Chen Lip Keong, although it had at least some Cambodian shareholders. Both newspapers ended up being printed overseas and shipped by air to Phnom Penh (the *Post* from Thailand, the *Times* from Malaysia), a move that protected them from censorship and dramatically increased the quality and range of print-styles available to them. The status of the *Post*, and perhaps the *Times*, would have been questionable under the April, 1992 SOC press law, which prohibited foreign ownership. (The *Post*, which was already in the process of negotiating to set up the newspaper when the law was passed, regarded this provision as a slap in its face -- although officials denied that the measures were drafted with the paper in mind.)

The *Cambodia Times* began publishing a Khmer-language edition in November, 1992. (The Khmer edition had the same English name, transliterated into Khmer.) This Khmer-language edition, more slickly edited than the other Cambodian

newspapers, and using color photographs, attracted a lot of attention when it first started (although this waned in the months before the election as other newspapers appeared on the horizon and the paper's willingness to tote a pro-SOC line became increasingly obvious). When the Khmer edition first started, the paper was in a position to offer salaries which attracted journalists and computer staff away from other papers. This was a cause of distress among the editors thus abandoned. The pattern that *Cambodia Times* set -- of an internationally financed newspaper which was able to attract staff, readership, and advertisers -- and which turned out to be less neutral with regards to the election than it initially seemed -- would be repeated when *Reasmey Kampuchea* ("Light of Cambodian") came on the scene.

Meanwhile, UNTAC was also beginning to generate its own broadcast programming, as I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter. In the second half of 1992 the UNTAC Information/Education Division began producing video news clips and dialogues to be broadcast on SOC television, and it also set up its own radio studios to produce materials for broadcast over SOC facilities. Eventually it would also set up its own radio station, thereby assuming a role that the U.N. had never taken on previous missions (a decision which does indeed have far-reaching implications). UNTAC radio would increasingly have an impact on the political mood.

Despite UNTAC's mandated control of the field of information, it in practice often found that access to antennas

and to television air times involved a process of negotiation with SOC. Some of the more controversial television programming, dealing with human rights abuses, was never broadcast on SOC TV.

The "Control Unit" of the Information/Education Division, as part of UNTAC's mandated "direct control" over the field of information, was also in dialogue with the media as it wrote and tried to implement the Media Guidelines -- which aimed to promote principles of a free press and set up the conditions for a "neutral political atmosphere" in preparation for the elections. Information staff monitored the media and started regular visits to the offices of newspapers, radio, and television.

UNTAC formally requested access to Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK, that is to say, the Khmer Rouge) radio facilities but was never allowed to visit them. The PDK station, the Voice of the Great National Union Front of Cambodia, continued to broadcast inflammatory programming which attacked SOC, made allegations of the presence of Vietnamese forces in the country and accused UNTAC and its leaders of sabotaging the Paris Agreements. The PDK ignored all communications from UNTAC asking it to stop making racist and inflammatory remarks about the presence of Vietnamese civilians in the country and about westerners and others in UNTAC.

### **Early 1993: The Period of Media Transformation**

The media began to change rapidly in early 1993: there was a consolidation of the FUNCINPEC media; a new television station and a newspaper, both Thai-financed, were set up; and small independent newspapers began to proliferate. These trends were perhaps the natural outgrowth of the economic and political developments taking place, especially the conversion to market economy and the establishment of a multi-party political system, which were at least the stated goals of all the political parties. Although the emerging media outlets were indeed independent in ways that the institutions that preceded it hadn't been, they were nevertheless haunted by political interest and the influence of power brokers. Many of the independent media (both small-scale Cambodian ventures and internationally financed institutions) often had political agendas or were allowed to exist because of agreements to tote a political line.

All of the twenty registered political parties had some access to the media during the period leading up to the election. This was because UNTAC systematically provided air time on both television and radio for each of the parties during the official campaign period, as was mandated by the Paris Agreements. But it is only FUNCINPEC which can be said, by the time of the elections, to have created a media network in any way comparable to that enjoyed by SOC. In addition to its more cut and dry bulletin, FUNCINPEC started a newspaper and two youth bulletins in the weeks preceding the elections. More importantly, it began broadcasting an FM radio station in

February, and, after the start of the official campaign period, in late April, launched its own TV station. Both the radio and television stations operated out of the complex of buildings where Prince Ranariddh was living on Street 214 in Phnom Penh. Not too surprisingly, SOC officials claimed that the stations were unauthorized, and they held up FUNCINPEC television equipment at the airport for a period of time against the protests of UNTAC. Although these stations did not have the broadcast range of SOC stations, and the television station, in particular, could not be picked up outside of Phnom Penh, their existence (quite apart from the content of the broadcasts) made a powerful statement about FUNCINPEC's importance and potential for influence.

For many months, the *KPNLF Weekly Bulletin* was the only media outlet produced in Phnom Penh which dared to take a stance directly in opposition to SOC/CPP. It would be naive to say that FUNCINPEC did not attack SOC/CPP; but it did so with a certain strategic finesse. For a period of time FUNCINPEC's attacks on SOC were in large part limited to its press releases (a branch of journalism in its own right). The actual media organs of the party maintained a stance of detachment. As SOC attacks on FUNCINPEC became increasingly acrimonious, however -- in particularly focusing on the allegation that FUNCINPEC was linked to the Khmer Rouge or to criminal activity -- the FUNCINPEC media began responding in kind. It sometimes made its attacks more indirect by the technique of broadcasting letters which had been written to

FUNCINPEC FM. Its attacks often focused on allegations, similar to the ubiquitous attacks in PDK radio broadcasts, that the Phnom Penh government was the puppet of the Vietnamese.

Many of the opposition political parties had strong anti-Vietnamese tendencies and to one extent or another espoused positions similar to the anti-Vietnamese stance of the PDK as manifest in its regular broadcasts from the border. This evidenced itself early on in inflammatory articles in the *KPNLF Weekly Bulletin*, although the *Bulletin's* contents were toned down after UNTAC objected to them. (They surfaced again in *Utdomkate Khmaer* ["Khmer Conscience"], a small newspaper which was published by a high-ranking BLDP figure, but which had no official connection to the party.) As the campaign progressed, some material of this kind also appeared in the FUNCINPEC youth bulletin *Sâmleng Yuvachon Khmaer* ("Voice of Khmer Youth").

The independent media which arose after the beginning of 1993, both internationally financed enterprises and small-scale Cambodian ones, were very much subject to political pressure. In conversation, at the time, Cambodians often complained that new newspapers would start up which seemed politically neutral, and then, after a few issues, would begin assuming inflexibly the SOC political line. In the period of time leading up to the election there seems to be some validity to this charge, at least in the case of the largest of the new newspapers, *Kâh Sântepheap* ("Island of Peace") *Reasmey Kampuchea*, and the Khmer edition of the *Cambodia Times*.

Other papers no doubt also modified their editorial positions to some extent in response to pressure or bribes, although it is hard to distinguish between a genuine political position and one produced by bribes; there was certainly variation from paper to paper, as well as from issue to issue.

The Thai-financed IBC TV, which began broadcasting in early May, during the official campaign period, had a clear pro-SOC position from the very beginning, leading some to conclude that this stance was part of the agreement by which the station was allowed to open. There was some speculation that the television firm specifically had links to CPP figure Prince Norodom Chakrapong, who was often featured in its programming.

### **The New Print Media**

Small-scale independent Khmer newspapers began appearing in Cambodia with the publication of *Kâh Sântepheap* and *Toek Dey neung Manuh* ("Territory and Man") in late January, 1993. *Kâh Sântepheap*, the more significant of the two newspapers, was edited by Thong Uypang, a journalist who before 1975 had worked for a popular paper of the same name. Its style and subject matter were to set a model for many of the small newspapers that would follow it. Its front page layout was a crazy-quilt of pictures and headlines in a variety of sizes and print-styles which, though hardly reader-friendly, somehow, much like Phnom Penh traffic, evoked the anarchic

mood of the time. It was splashed with lurid pictures of dead bodies and recently captured thieves, perhaps following the example of the popular SOC police newspaper *Nokorbal Prâcheachon* ("The People's Police"). And it had a nitty-gritty knowing attitude toward the topics it wrote about, displaying this, for example, in tersely worded poems about the rich and the poor and the abuse of power. A Cambodian who visited the newspaper office regularly reported that most of the editorial staff carried guns, suggesting an atmosphere at the newspaper of paranoia or hard-nosed realism. It was one of the papers about which people complained that it started out neutral and then began assuming the SOC line.

In the months that followed -- before and after the elections -- many similar small newspapers would be formed, some with experienced journalists working for them, some without. Some folded after only a few issues, and it was often hard for Cambodians, as well as foreign observers, to keep track of the papers and their different political lines. Journalists might end up working for a whole series of different newspapers, or for more than one newspaper simultaneously. The best of the newspapers had a vivid colloquial style which was different from anything that appeared in the traditional SOC media. They tended to be a venue for opinion rather than news, although it was perhaps those papers who were most often able to provide real news which tended to survive. Because the small independent newspapers operated on a shoestring, they were particularly

susceptible to bribes and intimidation -- as evidenced by their sometimes rapid fluctuations of editorial opinion. Unable to survive by advertising or the sale of the paper alone, these papers in effect relied on either overt or covert patronage. They very much existed within a traditional Cambodian world of personal networks.

The emergence of an independent print media represented a real change in the way the media worked. Although SOC newspapers were available for sale in Phnom Penh in a couple of government stores, they had over the years primarily been distributed through government offices to state employees. The growth of an independent print media in Phnom Penh corresponded to an amazing proliferation of newsstands throughout the city. This was said to be reminiscent of the large numbers of newsstands which had existed in the Lon Nol period of the Khmer Republic. The actual sale of the independent papers was often essential for their continued existence in a way that it had not been for the state organs of media for many years. Reports on crime (which had made the SOC police newspaper *Nokorbal Prâcheachon* so popular) and sensationalistic love stories (sometimes pornographic) were standard fare in the new newspapers. This may have had more to do in determining which newspapers sold well than their political positions. Some of the new smaller newspapers assumed the names of newspapers which had existed prior to 1975, thus underlining the notion that the new era represented a return to the past.

Although some Cambodians complained that the political bias of the new newspapers was no better than the bias that had come before, there was in fact a significant difference simply in the fact that, because they were nominally independent, the new newspapers could cover events involving a number of parties. This contrasted with the situation as late as the end of 1992, when journalists associated with SOC, on the one hand, and the opposition parties, on the other, were saying that they did not feel they could even enter the state or party offices of the opposing faction to conduct interviews in the course of their journalistic work. They feared this would be interpreted as political betrayal. Whatever the degree of bias of the new independent newspapers in the period leading up to the election, or the degree to which they were persuaded to have a certain bias, they had a certain freedom which allowed some kinds of news to be covered which had not been covered before. And, in fact, there was increasingly a range of opinion in these newspapers.

### **The Foreign-Owned Corporate Media**

These small Khmer enterprises contrasted with the corporate media institutions represented by *Cambodia Times*, IBC TV, and the daily newspaper *Reasmey Kampuchea*. The latter two came on the scene at about the same time that many small newspapers were appearing, in the weeks before the election. They and *Cambodia Times* were all owned by foreign

based firms who hoped that the venture would pave the way for other corporate media investment in the country, or other investment more generally. An indication of the complexity of the corporate relations involved is seen in the situation of *Reasmey Kampuchea*, which was a joint venture between the Thai-based media firm Wattachak and a Sino-Khmer businessman, Theng Bun Ma, born in Cambodia, who had citizenship in both Thailand and Cambodia and is recognized as one of the largest landholders in Cambodia and a figure deeply involved in corporate investment in the country. *Cambodian Times* was also run by a foreign media firm linked to interests involved in a variety of kinds of investment in the country.

The three foreign-financed institutions were the only media outlets in Cambodia which could be said to have had a corporate structure by the time of the elections. Together with the *Phnom Penh Post*, they were also the only media outlets deriving a significant portion of their income from advertising. (After the elections, when FUNCINPEC leadership decided to declare their radio and television stations independent of the party, they were also able to generate significant amounts of advertising. A year after the elections, they were probably the only other media institutions which could be said to have a corporate structure.) It is not clear to what extent, or for what period of time, the institutions may have operated at a loss in order to establish a niche in Cambodia. The three firms have all at one time or another been subject to rumors of having shady dealings with government officials. This is part of the

reality of what it means for corporate institutions to operate in Cambodia. When they are written about in the pages of the small independent newspapers these corporations are personalized, depicted as run by bloatedly rich, self-centered individual men, a far cry from the (perhaps ultimately more sinister) dry, business-as-usual atmosphere of corporate power that greets the visitors to these institutions. This personalized image perhaps illustrates how Cambodians are likely to perceive corporate institutions more generally.

When the Thai-financed newspaper *Reasmey Kampuchea* began being published in April, 1993, it had a strong impact on the rest of the print media. It was published six times a week, used color, had a more sophisticated layout than other papers, had more pages, and yet, as Cambodians often pointed out, was being sold for the same price as other newspapers. The editor, Pen Samitthy, one of the more talented Cambodian editors, came from the CPP municipality newspaper *Phnom Penh*. *Reasmey Kampuchea* was able to pay much higher salaries than a government newspaper, and some of his staff at *Phnom Penh*, as well as experienced journalists from a number of other newspapers, left their jobs to join the paper. *Phnom Penh* was already in difficult financial straits (and, like most state offices, unable to pay its employees a living wage). Pen Samitthy's departure was in effect the death knoll of the paper, a point which is still sensitive for him. Its first and second deputy editors would go on to edit their own small newspapers.

Other newspapers also complained that it was difficult to compete with the new newspaper. The impact was particularly dramatic in the case of the SOC bi-weekly police newspaper *Nokorbal Prâcheachon*, which for many months had grown in popularity because it was the most politically daring of the SOC newspapers and because as a police newspaper it was in a position to cover salacious crime stories which attracted wide readership. Circulation fell drastically when the new *Reasmey Kampuchea*, less closely identified with the state, began covering the same themes on a daily basis.

Although, like *Kâh Sântepheap* and the Khmer edition of *Cambodia Times*, *Reasmey Kampuchea* was initially perceived as neutral, it took a pro-CPP stand during the election campaign and after the elections supported CPP allegations that the elections were not fair. Although some Cambodians complained in conversation about the bias of the paper, it continued to be widely read. Its editor has objected strongly to the paper being called "pro-SOC" -- to the point of breaking off business relations with Agence-France Press when they refused to issue a retraction on this point. It is indeed true that the newspaper's links to SOC at the time of the election were never as straightforward as the links between SOC and, say, Pen Samitthy's previous newspaper *Phnom Penh*. *Reasmey Kampuchea* is not a socialist paper in the old mold, but a corporate newspaper. However, it is one which was linked through corporate interests as well as personal connections to SOC and its leadership. Time has shown that the three

corporate media institutions tend, not so much to favor one party over another as to take what appears at the time to be non-controversial stance. This often means supporting what they perceive to be the position of the powers that be.

The arrival on the scene of *Reaksmey Kampuchea* was similar to the arrival on the scene of the Khmer edition of *Cambodia Times*. It was in a position to dominate the scene because of the investment funds backing it from overseas and technological advantages it had in being printed overseas. For whatever reason, perhaps because its editor was talented and its editor was Khmer, or because it came out more frequently, *Reaksmey Kampuchea* appeared to be more widely read and talked about than *Cambodia Times* during the year after the election when I was in Cambodia. On the other hand *Cambodian Times* (perhaps because of its link to an English-language edition of the paper) continued to have more pages of advertising.

IBC-TV, also Thai-financed became popular very quickly, although it never acquired the clear dominance over the field that *Reasmey Kampuchea* did over the print media. IBC-TV primarily drew its staff from Thai-speaking Cambodians who had returned from refugee camps on the border -- which meant it wasn't competing with TV Kampuchea for staff. (There was no evidence that the predominance of staff from the border affected the political stance of the station.) TVK officials, however, were sensitive to the fact that the new television station was able to attract advertisers that they were not. IBC

TV programming did not break drastically from the patterns set by TV Kampuchea. (In 1995 IBC-TV would leave Cambodia because of reorganization within its home corporation; it sold its interests to another Thai company, in a joint venture with the Ministry of National Defense.)

Although no corporate financed radio station opened up during the period prior to the election, the argument could be made that Radio UNTAC took on a role that was in some ways parallel to that of a foreign media corporation like IBC-TV and *Reasmey Kampuchea*. -- it represented a sudden infusion of foreign capital and technical expertise. During the weeks preceding the election, when Radio UNTAC began broadcasting live, it became extremely popular. At great expense, UNTAC set up relay stations so that its broadcasts would reach throughout the country. The international technical expertise of the broadcasts was no doubt an element of what generated a mood of excitement about the radio and made it more attractive than its competitors (along with, of course, the content of its programming and what that represented as a departure from the past and an opening up of new kinds of discourse).

### **The Cambodian Media During and After the May 1993 Elections**

During the actual elections all broadcast media, in accordance with electoral regulations, refrained from political

broadcasting, and in the wake of the elections the stations allied to SOC or FUNCINPEC never returned to the pitch of acrimony which had been reached during the campaign period. For various reasons, many smaller periodicals stopped publishing at the time of the elections, and some of them never reopened, although other similar papers would open in their place. All the political party bulletins which started in the period before the election stopped publication, but eventually a few small newspapers would open up which were loosely affiliated with some small parties which had stood in the election.

As time passed, FUNCINPEC FM and FUNCINPEC TV would officially become private stations, although this was primarily a cosmetic difference, and the general public would still identify the stations as "FUNCINPEC." (One radio official said the decision was made so that FUNCINPEC wouldn't seem like the opposition party in the government; FUNCINPEC was the government.) With the closing of Radio UNTAC, FUNCINPEC Radio emerged as the most popular radio station. This was less because of its editorial standpoint than because the quality of the music it played and the effectiveness of its live format. (It was an example of a media success achieved on a modest budget, without an inpouring of international corporate funds.) The old SOC radio, the state news agency, and the police newspaper, all changed their names to ones that were regarded as more politically neutral. Eventually, a television station would be

opened which, like FUNCINPEC TV, was officially private, but understood to be the television of the CPP.

Since the elections the media has been in great flux. I visit to Cambodia in 1995 and have had occasional access to Khmer newspapers. More dramatic events concerning the media have been well covered by wire service reports and English-language journalism in Cambodia. Nevertheless, it is difficult for me to assess the nature of the changes taking place in journalism as it operates on a day to day basis. Certain dynamics have seemed to be emerging. At least initially, for the media of the state, and perhaps for broadcast media more generally, one the most significant dynamics was the attempt to define a new stance of neutrality. Although in the period of the Provisional Government of Cambodia, while the constitution was being written, the print media enjoyed a great deal of freedom, the broadcast media exercised caution -- perhaps unsure where its bread would be buttered in months to come. When the constitution was passed and Sihanouk re-crowned king, BLDP figure Ieng Mouly replaced Khieu Kanharidth as the Minister of Information, a move that was announced as one that would give the ministry a neutral position with regards to FUNCINPEC and CPP -- and broadcast media did seem become more neutral, although it was neutrality defined in a particular way in relationship to the situation. Radio and television policy was that, in reporting news, political affiliation of politicians would not be announced -- meaning that the stance of neutrality was not (as it might be, say, with BBC) one of a

detached, God-like observation of political parties which it could assume would be in conflict, but one of ignoring political differences and presenting opposing camps as though they, and the stations themselves, were part of a single party with common loyalty to the king.

Gradually, language with a socialist ring to it was decreased on state television and radio. There was some innovative programming, such as broadcast forums in which government officials answered questions put to them by citizens. (A similar program initiated by IBC, which used figures from NGOs instead of merely government officials, proved more controversial, and was eventually shut down.) In general, however, broadcast media was much less likely than print media to push the limits of public etiquette. The downside of the efforts to make a broadcast media that would be inoffensive to all parties was that it was very cautious, bland programming which avoided or ignored the most far-reaching political tensions in the country. State media, during the time I was in the country, chose to downplay reports of demonstrations. Perhaps simply because of technical considerations, there was surprisingly little broadcast coverage at the time Khmer Rouge and government forces were struggling for Pailin. At the time of the June 1994 coup attempt it would be government policy to remain silent .

When Ieng Mouly was made Minister of Information, Khieu Kanharidh was given the secondary position of Secretary of State of Information. It was a compromise

situation similar to what was being put into effect in other ministries. While this did in some ways help effect neutrality, it sometimes in effect served to paralyze the everyday operations of the ministry (as similar compromises were doing in other ministries). There were few actual staffing changes in the state media, despite FUNCINPEC calls for giving its people more jobs. Several months after ministry staff said that the decision had been made to make a FUNCINPEC figure the head of radio, the decision was still bogged down in political bureaucracy. It is difficult to gauge the degree of political infighting over control of broadcast media, but it was obviously taking place.

By 1995 a split would occur between a faction of BLDP led Ieng Mouly and another led by Son Sann. Hun Sen would come to the aid of Ieng Mouly and Ieng Mouly would come to be seen as in the pocket of CPP. Clearly, there began to be a process of repoliticization of the broadcast media, as CPP opened its own television in December, 1995, and other new radio and television stations took a position of siding with either CPP or FUNCINPEC -- generally CPP (Chheang, 1995). During a 1995 visit to Cambodia, I heard a radio call-in show on a new radio station where listeners could criticize social problems; what seemed to me a daring and refreshing radio format. When I met the director of the radio station, he made it clear that he considered himself allied with Hun Sen. A show of this kind was possible, perhaps, because the new station made clear its loyalty to Hun Sen. What was striking, perhaps,

was that once a media institution's primary loyalties were clear, there could be latitude for social criticism at a local level.

Since the elections, the print media which had once been associated with the SOC government became increasingly peripheral to the media scene. *Phnom Penh* closed down. The police newspaper *Nokorbal Prâcheachon* (now called *Nokorbal Cheat* ("The Nation's Police")) became increasingly lackluster. A year after the elections its editor said that the pressure from the two different parties controlling the Ministry of Interior made it increasingly impossible to write anything but the blandest articles. Soon afterwards it closed down. *Kampuchea* newspaper survived the changes somewhat better, but still had a much more modest role than in its hey day. Under the editorship of Tat Li Hok, who returned to the paper after several years in radio, it acquired some momentum. It continued to be published and distributed to state employees, but was not sold at newsstands. Thus it came to have something of the character of an in-house bulletin. Staff at the state news agency, now called AKP, said a year after the elections that one of their previous functions, to write official state-sanctioned editorials, was now impossible. They complained that they lacked direction from the ministry, and that their division was increasingly being ignored. The CPP party newspaper *Prâcheachon* ("The People") (which for some time had primarily supported itself from the income from its printing press and its computer school) now declared itself an independent newspaper and revised its format so that it was

more like that of the newer small newspapers. It came out less often and no longer carried the status it once did as the newspaper of record of the Party in a socialist state. However, it continued to be distributed for free among state employees (as were some other small independent newspapers which had the funds to do so).

Nationalism, or, put differently, the need to redefine the terms of national identity in regard to changing political contexts, has been a major dynamic in the country since the Paris Agreements. It has had an affect on all sorts of organs of media. It almost goes without saying that lying behind the attempt to make the state media more neutral is the attempt to define a unified national identity. While they have rarely attempted to be neutral, nationalism has certainly been a rallying cry of the small independent newspapers. And nationalism has shaped the way the role of foreign-owned corporate media has been defined.

A sort of nationalism, of course, lay behind the anti-Vietnamese stance of anti-SOC journalism that was problematic during the UNTAC period. Many Cambodians conceptualized the direction of change taking place in the country as a liberation from Vietnamese influences. Anti-Vietnamese rhetoric continued during the period following the elections, and some newspapers previously associated with SOC/CPP, such as *Kâh Sântepheap*, *Sântepheap*, and *Nokorbal Prâcheachon /Nokorbal Cheat* began taking a similar stance.

At the same time, there were increasing attacks in the small newspapers on Thai influence in the country. When I commented to the editor of *Nokorbal Cheat* on the fact that his newspaper now had anti-Vietnamese rhetoric which he had never seen there before, the editor pointed out that there were also anti-Thai articles; together it constituted a new sort of "neutrality." Sometimes less sophisticated Cambodians would speak about Thai influence in terms of the negative impact of foreign "ideologies" (monokumwicchia), unconsciously drawing on phraseology which the socialist regime had used to attack Thai and Western influences.

Anti-Thai sentiments came to a head when there were demonstrations over the issue of the fees being charged to stall owners at the newly remodeled Olympic Market. Since the same investor, Theng Bun Ma, was involved in the Olympic Market venture and in the financing of *Reasmey Kampuchea*, this, in particular, made the newspaper subject to attacks. (Many Cambodians were also under the mistaken impression that IBC TV was owned by Theng Bun Ma, too.) In early 1994 a particularly vicious media war started between *Reasmey Kampuchea* and *Kâh Sântepheap*, with *Reasmey Kampuchea* accusing *Kâh Sântepheap* of corruption and *Kâh Sântepheap* accusing *Reasmey Kampuchea* of covering up Theng Bun Ma's "Mafia" links and, in general, being the lackey of Thai interests.<sup>3</sup> *Reasmey Kampuchea* remained the most widely

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<sup>3</sup> The tone of these attacks was harsh by the standards of any country. A Jan. 23, 1994 Reasmey Kampuchea article entitled "If You're Not Shit, Don't Shit,"

read newspaper, but at least some Cambodians began saying in conversation that they no longer trusted the news coverage of the paper. Eventually the two newspapers "made up" over beers in meeting of Phnom Penh journalists arranged by Secretary of State of Information Khieu Kanharidh which was reported in the press. It is worth pointing out that *Reasmey Kampuchea's* vitriolic response to attacks by *Kâh Sântepheap* were a departure from the newspaper's usual style -- a sort of slipping away of the corporate mask -- whereas *Kâh Sântepheap's* attacks were very much in keeping with the style associated with the paper.

There was also at this time a great deal of generalized talk about the effect of decadent foreign influences on Khmer morality. For example, in Fall, 1993, during the Miss Cambodia pageant broadcast on television, finalists were even asked what should be done about the negative influence of foreign film, video and television on Khmer morality. This kind of criticism perhaps referred more to pornographic videos and other materials increasingly present in the country than to the programming and articles of the three large foreign media corporations, but it resonated with the growing sentiment

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said, "The thing I want to say is that shit has soiled Koh Sântepheap from its head to its foot. Who doesn't know that this is the foundation on which Koh Sântepheap began publication? Ho, ho! The car that they drive everyday doubtless comes from "ritual offerings" made to it; and the building they use as an office every day no doubt comes from another kind of offering to the spirits. And that's not all -- the printing press, the computers are gifts to the church as well." Koh Sântepheap published a cartoon in its Jan. 25-27 edition which showed Theng Bun Ma in increasing ecstasy as two dogs licked, first his feet, then his legs, and then his genital area.

against these institutions. (Soon after the Miss Cambodia pageant, Minister of Information Ieng Mouly declared a ban on any materials which besmirched the dignity of Khmer women. One effect of this seemed to be that pornography increasingly focused on *Vietnamese* women.)

IBC was increasingly subject to criticism that it was promoting Thai cultural imperialism. In response to such criticism, government review of the station's programming intensified. It now ensures that all programming is dubbed in Khmer (the station could no longer fall back on Thai music programming as it initially did) and there was review of such matters as whether women announcers are dressed in an appropriately Khmer fashion. All indications were that IBC did everything it could to cooperate. It tried to increase the percentage of Khmer staff, and made a point to include more Khmer films and other cultural programming. It aired statements which emphasize its commitment to Cambodian traditions. After newspaper articles appeared which commented on the fact that television advertising made parents subject to unreasonable demands from their children to purchase the products, IBC even broadcast a short which showed a child asking his mother for a toy, and his older brother castigating him for making unreasonable demands which didn't take into consideration the family's finances. IBC Thai staff I talked to pointed out that its Khmer staff was given full control over news programming.

In Fall, 1993, sensitive to criticisms of encroaching foreign influence, the Ministry of Information declared a temporary moratorium on new foreign-owned media in the country. Some new media ventures, since 1994, have been joint ventures with foreign corporations, as were, in fact *Reaksmey Kampuchea* and *The Cambodia Times*. The partial ownership by Cambodians probably precludes any immediate danger of anti-foreign feelings connected with the corporate media institutions getting out of control. The presence of foreign-owned media interests in the country will, however, probably continue to be a sore point in some situations.

The emergence of an independent Cambodian media has meant a need to redefine the relationship between the media and the state in several ways. It has meant the emergence of bureaucratic institutions within the Ministry of Information which had never existed before. It has meant a process of re-negotiation of the way the role of the media is defined in law. It has resulted in the formation of new journalist associations, which have had to work out their actual role in the country.

Starting in the period of the Provisional Government, the Ministry of Information created a press department which would have responsibility for supervising the independent media. (There had been no need for such a department in SOC because there hadn't been an independent media.) This office was to be responsible for monitoring the media and informing relevant officials about what the media was saying; it also

played a role in mediating disputes between the media and individuals who had grievances with it.

Since the April, 1992 SOC media law was never really put into practice, the question of what law was in effect over the press was not clear when UNTAC left the country. There was considerable uproar in the press when, in late 1993, the Ministry of Information announced that the April, 1992 SOC press law was operative. The consensus of the press at that time was that the law was a repressive, "communist" law. In response to the uproar, the Ministry of Information attempted to draft a new law in conjunction with the Council of Ministers. In May, when a draft law which was to be brought before Parliament was circulated to the press, journalists again objected strongly to several measures, including one that would allow the government to close down newspapers, and one that would require newsstands and printing presses to have government authorization. The newly formed journalists' association was able to lobby to have the law rewritten. (In the meantime, it was the 1992 media law which was invoked as the legal basis for the shutting down of the newspaper *Prum Bayon* on June 7, 1994.) Drafts of the press law continued to be shuttled back and forth between the Ministry of Information and the Council of Ministers, and pressure was mobilized by international journalists' associations and human rights organizations restrictive measures. The press law passed by parliament in July, 1995, with provisions calling for fines and imprisonment for journalism affecting national security, was

far from pleasing to the journalists affected, but at least did represent a process of active negotiation.

The issue of the creation of a journalists' association has always been linked to the discussions about media law. The underlying conception of UNTAC's unsuccessful attempts to form a politically neutral journalists' association was that such an association would help provide a tradition in which journalists could regulate themselves without state interference. The idea of a journalists' association continued to be discussed and meetings among journalists began taking place in September, 1993. Debate about the association focused on the issue of the degree to which it would be linked to the government. Finally, at the end of 1993 the Khmer Association of Free Journalists was formed, later to be called simply the Khmer Journalists Association (KJA). The issue of the press law was one catalyst to the association finally being formed. Journalists hoped that by forming their own Code of Ethics they could preclude government intervention and preserve greater freedom than they would have otherwise. Pin Samkhon, the editor of *Khmaer Ekreach* ("Independent Khmer"), a small newspaper with ties to the small Democratic Party, was elected president. There was general consensus among the journalists forming the association that they didn't want the president to come from either the state media or from *Reasmey Kampuchea*. Pin Samkhon, a recent returnee from France, was new to journalism, but obviously intelligent and politically astute. Soon after the association was formed it created an ethics

committee which wrote a Code of Ethics. The association became officially affiliated with the International Federation of Journalists in April, 1994.

The KJA always had some basic weaknesses, and some papers notably refused to join it from the beginning. But it had notable success in its ability to mobilize opposition to the early drafts of the new media law. It always faced the risk of being coopted by the government. Pin Samkhon was out of the country in March, 1994, at the time that the editor of *Dâmnoeung Pel Preuk* was arrested. He would later say in conversation that he had expressed in meetings with the Ministry of Information his disapproval of *Dâmnoeung Pel Preuk's* violations of journalistic ethics, and speculate that this had been interpreted as a green light for the arrest to be made. Both a May, 1994 draft media law and a more recent Ministry of Information statement show that there is a tendency for government officials to conceive of the association's Code of Ethics, not as a voluntary act of consensus, but as something which needs to be enforced. The May draft of the press law would have made the association the sole agent for providing credentials to the press -- in effect turning it into a government agency. This measure was eliminated in a later draft of the bill, but it is characteristic of the precariousness of the situation the association found itself in. It was trying to protect the rights of the press, but was also being manipulated into being an agent for controlling the press.

In July, 1995 a new association was formed, the League of Cambodian Journalists. The breakaway reflected genuinely dissatisfaction within KJA, but also reflected a pattern whereby Hun Sen has successfully exploited political divisions within parties and organizations in order to create new organizations which clearly support him. The new association, headed by *Kâh Sântepheap* writer Chum Kanal was openly supported by Hun Sen and the newspapers which joined it were newspapers which tended to support CPP. One officer of the KJA told me about specific pressures he had experienced to join the KJA. In September, 1995, when I visited Cambodia, I was told that the handful of newspapers identified as "opposition" -- they would become more and more explicitly identified with opposition leader Sam Rainsy and his new Khmer Nation Party -- had been denied permission to form their own association. Soon afterwards, they would were allowed to form the Association of Independent Journalists. All this meant that journalists were once more allied along political lines which tended to preclude them having a unified voice.

Controversy with regards to the media has tended to be mostly in connection with the small independent newspapers. These small independent newspapers continued to be a strange mixture of voices. A year after the elections, the number of newspapers had increased to about 30, and at the time of the July 1997 coup their numbers were reported as 40, although not all of the were actively printing at any given time. Until

the arrival on the scene of *Dâmnoeung Pel Preuk*, the two most popular newspapers, other than *Reasmey Kampuchea*, were *Kâh Sântepheap* and *Chakraval* ("The Universe") both edited by pre-1975 journalists, and both having a certain stylistic consistency and flare. While these papers were widely reported to be in the black financially, most were not. Advertising was negligible in all the small newspapers. The editor of one small newspaper said that a newspaper in Cambodia could only get advertising if it had a personal connection to advertisers. Most newspapers were funded by a patron or by money its editor had saved up.

*Prâlung Cheat* ("Soul of the Nation") was one example. It was edited by a pre-1975 editor, who funded the paper by income he received from a bakery he has run for many years. He reported that the paper costs him about \$100 an issue. He and other pre-75 journalists on his paper expressed nostalgia for the days when someone from the royal family would give newspapers the cost of their rent every month, and they expressed shock at a visitor asking if this didn't constitute a sort of bribe. (Other pre-1975 journalists were more ready to acknowledge that gifts had strings attached. They said that in the Lon Nol period newspapers would print veiled criticism, hinting at what they could say, in the hopes that it would generate contributions. There is some indication that practices of this sort are arising again today.) In the post-election period, the editorial stance of small newspapers was rarely a

clear-cut identification with one of the three major political parties or another.

Em Sokha, the talented artists who had drawn political cartoons for *Sântepheap* now freelanced for a number of the small newspapers. His cartoons were made to order, and based on ideas provided by the editorial staffs of the different newspapers, and they in no way reflected a consistent political position. But ubiquitous as they were, they helped stamp the newspapers with a common look. While this style was not linked in a simple sense to any specific group or stance, it did seem to reflect an unsettling dark, menacingly hierarchical world view.

In the months following the election small newspapers made a number of very direct attacks on corrupt politicians and customs officials. Most Cambodian readers welcomed such reportage, although some officials complained that the attacks were too haphazard and sometimes motivated by the desire to receive hush money. Print journalists typically complained that the freedom that they enjoyed under UNTAC was gradually being taken away. Perhaps statements of this kind represented a romanticization of their position during UNTAC but it is true that formal and informal regulatory mechanism were being put in place which had an affect on the press's freedom. By Summer and Fall, 1994, there would increasingly be reports of incidents of violence against newspapers and arrests of journalists.

Since at least Fall, 1993, the Ministry of Information had begun trying to exert its influence over the media in a number of ways, such as by holding informal meetings with journalists when it felt they were engaged in objectionable practices. It, for example, asked newspapers to stop printing pictures of dead bodies on their front pages. It also had meetings with newspapers asking them to be less harsh about the issue of the discrepancy between government employees salaries and the amounts parliament had voted to give its members, which had proved to be an explosive issue. Sometimes government officials would make the point that the press should not depict the country too negatively, because it would scare away foreign investment. Although these ministry suggestions did not have the force of law, and different newspapers chose to follow them or ignore them in varying degrees, they did have a noticeable effect.

Incidents of political pressure on the press and incidents of violence and intimidation clearly escalated over the time period between the 1993 elections and the July, 1997 coup. Specific incidents often do not seem to fit into a clear pattern, but it was clear that such incidents increased in frequency. I will argue in Chapter eleven that such intimidation is part of a process whereby the terms of a new discursive etiquette are being negotiated. The small newspapers, it should be kept in mind, are very much linked to personal networks, and at least some violence (as indeed much journalism) had to do with personal vendettas or the power struggle between rival

personal networks. Even in these cases, however, the fact that some acts of violence could be perpetrated with impunity had political implications. And, as we have seen, there was a clear process whereby small newspapers became divided into political camps, evidenced by the divisions of the journalists' associations. In particular, those newspapers associated with Sam Rainsy and his Khmer Nation Party came to be subject to explicit government repression, which sometimes also extended to violence. The tensions between the media associated with Ranariddh the leadership of FUNCINPEC and that associated with Hun Sen and the CPP was clearly present as well, although for me less easy to sort out. The playing field was perhaps less vitriolic attacks in small newspapers than subtle shows of loyalty on broadcast media. It is clear that violence against journalists can be attributed to both sides. The firebombing of a government television station in Sihanoukville not long before the July, 1997 coup, motivated apparently by FUNCINPEC's desire to block the CPP orientation of the station, seemed in particular to reflect long-standing resentment.

For the record, I think it is helpful merely to list some of the incidents of repression and violence against the press (which I draw from wire service reports and reports in the *Phnom Penh Press*.)

-- March, 1994. Imprisonment of Ngoun Noun, editor of *Dâmnoeung Pel Preuk* for two days.

-- March, 1994. Bombing of the office of *Antarakum* ("Intervention") newspaper.

-- May 17, 1994. Confiscation by police of print run of *Sakâl* ("Universe") newspaper.

-- June 7, 1994. Banning of the newspaper *Prum Bayon*.

-- June 11, 1994. Unexplained death of the editor of *Antarakum*.

-- July 8, 1994. Rearrest of Ngoun Noun in connection with articles about the attempted coup. (This time he was imprisoned for a month.)

-- July 11, 1994. Letter from the Minister of Information to the Phnom Penh Municipal Court asking them to investigate the issue of whether the newspapers *Sakâl* and *Kolbot Angkor* were "badly affecting Social order and national security."

-- September 7, 1994. Assassination in broad daylight of the editor of *Sâmleng Yuvachon Khmaer*.

-- December 8, 1994. Drive-by shooting of *Kâh Sântepheap* editor Chan Dara. (His alleged murderer would later be acquitted.)

-- December, 1994. *Monaksika Khmaer* ("Khmer Conscience") ordered to suspend publication for two weeks.

-- January 14, 1995. *Sâmleng Yuvachon Khmaer* and *Sereypheap Thmey* ("New Liberty News") suspended.

-- Feb. 26, 1995. Chan Rotana, editor of *Sâmleng Yuvachon Khmaer* imprisoned briefly.

-- May 19, 1995. *Utdom Kati Khmaer* ("Khmer Ideals") ordered closed.

-- May 20, 1995. Editors of *Sereypheap Thmey* and *Utdom Kati Khmaer* found guilty in court.

-- September 7, 1995. Grenade attack on *Dâmoeung Pel Preuk*.

-- October 23, 1995. Villagers from site of Hun-Sen sponsored public works ransack offices of *Sereypheap Thmey* after the newspaper makes disparaging remarks about the village.

-- November, 1995. Unregistered and highly critical newspaper, *Plech Dâmnoeung*, ordered closed after three issues.

-- February 8, 1996. FUNCINPEC radio announcer Ek Monkgul shot and seriously wounded.

-- May 18, 1996. Thun Bun Ly, editor of *Utdom Kate Khmaer* gunned down in Phnom Penh. (Editors of two other opposition papers threatened at the same time.)

-- June 4, 1996. Khmer Nation Party barred from owning a radio station.

-- June 28, 1996. Chan Rotana's prison sentence upheld, and he is imprisoned. (Released after one week with the intervention of the king.)

-- August 23, 1996. Hen Vipheak, of *Sâmleng Yuvachon Khmaer*, imprisoned (also released after a week).

-- January 3, 1997. Leng Samnang, editor of *Komnith Kaun Khmaer*, gunned down and seriously wounded.

-- March 26, 1997. Kry Sothy, reporter for "Public Opinion," stabbed in front of newspaper office, seriously wounded.

-- April 1, 1997. At least one journalist killed, 14 wounded, when grenades were thrown into a Sam Rainsy rally.

-- May 5, 1997. One killed, two wounded, in firebombing attack on television station in Sihanoukville.

While it is still difficult to understand clearly how the media has been affected by the July, 1997 coup, it is clear that many journalists have fled the country, including Pin Samkhon, the head of the KJA, and only a fraction of the newspapers which were publishing prior to the coup are still open. FUNCINPEC radio and television are no longer broadcasting.

In the aftermath of the July, 1997 coup, the notion is often tossed around of how the country has now merely reverted to the situation prior to UNTAC. At certain levels of government, where changes instituted were never more than superficial, this may be true. However, without painting the picture of the post-coup media scene as rosy, I think it is a good example of how the country has not reverted to the situation prior to 1991. However much the media may now tend to give slavish support to Hun Sen and CPP, it is not a socialist media in quite the way it was before and never will be. Newspapers like *Kâh Sântepheap* and *Reaksmey Kampuchea*, however firmly in the camp of Hun Sen, are not at all like the socialist newspapers which preceded them. Discursive etiquettes will change with the coup, but they will not be the discursive etiquettes of a socialist country at war in

the 1980's. I suspect there will be less freedom of the media, but public voices will probably not avoid the display of wealth, the show of the accouterments of power, and links to global capital. For better or worse, the nature of public in Cambodia has irrevocably changed.

During the UNTAC period there was a period of time when, with the creation of a multi-party state, the media seemed to be operating along party lines, although it was, finally, only two parties, CPP and FUNCINPEC, which in any significant way had significant systems of media. After the elections, there was for a time what now seems only a cosmetic tendency to discourage media outlets associated with political parties, especially when it comes to broadcast media. FUNCINPEC kept the political ties of its media outlets under low profile and the state media seemed to be moving away from its obvious ties to CPP. But over time there was a re-politicization of the broadcast media, especially as CPP worked actively to create or gain control of broadcast media outlets that would counterbalance those of FUNCINPEC.

Small newspapers were always highly editorial and political, although this, in practice, often seemed related to personal patronage as much as political philosophy, and they had a degree of autonomy as they negotiated their position. The small Cambodian newspapers got by in part by the sale of the newspaper, in part by the funds their owners were willing to contribute for the newspapers to continue to exist, and in part (so it was rumored) because figures of prominence would

give them money to influence the content of the newspaper. This was in itself a sort of patronage, but one that involves an ongoing process of negotiation. Such patronage often had political coloring, but its covert nature gives the political games a particular complexity. None of the small Cambodian newspapers appeared to derive a significant part of their income from advertising. It was a media which existed very much within the system of personal networks that traditional Cambodian Society is associated with. With time, though, small newspapers became increasingly associated with one political camp or another, as exemplified by the ways the journalists' association split into three parts. The most clearly oppositional papers, generally allied with opposition political figure Sam Rainsy, were in particular subject to repression.

Three internationally-financed corporate media institutions were set up during the UNTAC period: *Cambodia Times*, *Reasmey Kampuchea*, and IBC-TV. All three derived significant income from advertising. There is, understandably, fear of foreign influence over the Cambodian media, and in the cases of each of the corporate media institutions, the fact that it was foreign financed has been controversial.

The introduction of corporate media culture into Cambodia is a significant development. In many contexts corporate culture in Cambodia means transnational culture, with media institutions owned by foreign interests or joint ventures with foreign interests. This continues to redefine Cambodia's relation to a global economy. The foreign media

corporations first operating in Cambodia were able to exist because of bribes and personal connections with government officials, and because they were willing to take certain stands at the time of the elections. There is clearly a complex relationship to traditional personal networks, which is nevertheless a very new kind of economic relation which creates very new kinds of publics.

Up until the time of the coup, most Cambodians would probably still tell you that the media was much freer than it was before the UNTAC period -- by which they mean that the print media is in a much better position to take a critical stance toward government authorities. However, the critical stance of the print media was sometimes been superficial or motivated by the desire to generate hush-money, and even at its best it was hard to know how meaningful this freedom was. Since the elections new institutional mechanisms have been put in place to coordinate the relationship between the independent media and the government, which ultimately, even before the coup, meant growing societal regulation. It was never necessarily helpful to think of the media as evolving toward an ideal of "democratization," although it is true that Western models of a "democratic" media influenced some journalists and government officials. It was probably more accurate more accurate to say that the developments in the media have to do with the larger process whereby the country is moving to find ways to function in relationship with ASEAN and Western countries. The coup will not meant that this process is

reversed, although it is likely to mean that different strategies will be pursued toward that end. I suspect that regulation of the media is likely to increase. In any case, strategies of discursive etiquette will continue to develop in relation to particular social definitions of authority and the new modes of resistance that develop along with it.

## **Chapter Eight: UNTAC Information/Education Division, Part 1**

The next two chapters look at the Information/Education Division of UNTAC and the processes of negotiating a particular discourse of neutrality the work of the division entailed. This is obviously a special case and in many ways a peculiar case, but it is one that has some bearing on the question of how the discourse of more local publics come to articulate with the discourse of more global publics. It is also a case where I can bring to bear a much more immediate observation of the processes whereby negotiation takes place.

Once we begin looking at the U.N. in Cambodia, we are of course in some sense no longer just talking about Cambodia, and the complexity of the cultural dynamics of what is taking place makes a quantum leap, simply by nature of the fact that non-Cambodians are involved. However, if we want to talk about the discourse of neutrality in Cambodia in this period, we must talk about the role of the U.N. in producing and promoting a discourse of neutrality, and it is ultimately no less a Cambodian discourse because non-Cambodians had a role in the negotiation of it as a social reality.

From the end of June 1992 to the end of July 1993 I worked in the UNTAC Information/Education Division as part of what was called the Control Unit. The Information/Education Division was divided into three units, the Production Unit, the Control Unit, and the Analysis/Assessment Unit. It is in particular the work Production Unit and the Control Unit which is most connected to the broader concerns of the dissertation, in that it was involved with the negotiation of the cultural construction of discourse. But I will also discuss the role of the Analysis/Assessment unit, since it was very much a part of the life of the division, since it reveals something about the role of UNTAC more generally, and since it was a unit I was in a position to observe closely. It also raises interesting questions about how a political and social critique evolves and is given voice in relation to the construction of new, more global discursive etiquettes.

When I refer to the process of cultural construction I am referring to processes whereby human action is shaped or harnessed, whether by texts, rituals, laws, folk ideologies, institutions, or the dynamics of a given technology. To talk about the U.N. as being involved in cultural construction in Cambodia is to acknowledge that this cultural construction does not necessarily involve the dynamics of a single "culture," but can be a process involving peoples coming from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds.

Cultural construction associated with the UNTAC period serves well as an illustration of how quickly cultural construction can progress from the exhilaration of innovation to general awareness of the construction's human costs. One way of looking at phases of a process of cultural construction would be to stress the degree to which the phase of innovation and the phase in which the cultural construction becomes problematic represents a process of dialogue.

The cultural construction of the U.N. in Cambodia was not only temporary, it was mandated to be temporary. It had the nature of innovation, and for at least some people had the liberating force of innovation. At the same time, the degree to which it was problematic became apparent very quickly. Nevertheless, for at least some people, for a limited period of time, it created institutions which functioned by unquestioned habit.

There is no doubt a sense in which no cultural construction can ever be truly neutral. All cultural construction will have moral and social costs, and to those who most directly experience these costs, it is not neutral. Nevertheless, cultural institutions can be defined by a society as being "neutral" in relation to other institutions which the society defines as in conflict or in opposition. The interest of the particular cultural construction of UNTAC lies in the fact that it was consciously intended to be neutral and consciously strove to promote an atmosphere of neutrality in Cambodia.

## **Organization**

Roughly, the division of labor of the three units of the Information/ Education Division was as follows:

The Production Unit was to Produce UNTAC materials for dissemination to the Cambodian public: radio and television materials, pamphlets and posters, and all kinds of graphic arts needed by the mission. It also had a sub-unit devoted to the dissemination of these materials.

The Control Unit was to monitor and control the field of information in Cambodia more generally. Information was one of five areas over which the Paris Agreements mandated that UNTAC have direct control (the others being foreign affairs, defense, national security, and finance), and UNTAC Civil Administration, which was in charge of the control function more generally, delegated responsibility for the direct control of the field of information to the UNTAC Information/ Education Division.

Narrowly defined, the role of the Analysis/Assessment Unit was to evaluate the impact of the materials produced by the Production Unit on the general Cambodian population. In actual fact, the Analysis/Assessment Unit always attempted to play a broader role in providing political analysis of the situation and the role of UNTAC with regards to it, and in

serving as a pool of international staff with expertise in Cambodian language and society.

Tim Carney, the chief of the Information/Education Division, had requested a leave from the U.S. Foreign Service in order to be part of UNTAC. He was fluent in Khmer and had a long-term interests in the politics of Cambodia. A book of documents he translated and edited while he was a student at Cornell is one of the basic source books about the Khmer Rouge. He also once published a book of photographs he took in the border camps and in Phnom Penh during the course of his work for the U.S. Department of State. Over the years he had written a series of articles analyzing the political situation in Cambodia. As senior staff for UNTAC, he was directly responsible to Yasushi Akashi, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, who headed the mission. The Analysis/Assessment Unit was headed by Steve Heder, another long-time scholar of Cambodia, who had been working for Amnesty International prior to joining UNTAC. Heder had originally expected to work for UNTAC Human Rights, but was reassigned when the director of Human Rights wanted to choose his own Deputy Director. Production was headed by Zhou Mei, a former journalist from Singapore, and Control was headed by Valentin Sviridov, a one-time chargé d'affairs of the Soviet Embassy in the PRK. Unlike the Production Unit and the Analysis/Assessment Unit, which were responsible only to

Carney, the Control Unit was also responsible to UNTAC Civil Administration.

Although previous missions had had divisions devoted to information, there was little precedent for the scale and the particular focus of the division in UNTAC. No mission had emphasized broadcast media to the extent that UNTAC did. (Certainly no previous mission had had its own radio station.) Although all missions had had political officers, the analysis division evolved in unique directions. No U.N. mission had ever previously had the mandate to control the field of information in the way that UNTAC did.

The Information/Education Division was based in Phnom Penh. A decision was made early on that, because it was going to give emphasis to broadcast media, staff would be concentrated in Phnom Penh rather than there being an Information Officer assigned to each province. This meant that Civil Administration staff on the provincial level had to assume some of the responsibilities of the dissemination of materials produced by the Division. The decision freed up posts so that UNTAC could instead place human rights investigators in the provinces. Analysis and Control officers made regular trips to areas throughout the country, but no one was assigned to a particular area.

When I first went to talk to Carney and Heder about the possibility of working in the division, they were working out of a single office in the UNTAC headquarters building near Wat

Phnom. I started work at the time the move was being made to the buildings on street 29 near the Independence Monument which was to be the Information/Education headquarters, or UNTAC 12. UNTAC 12 was a pair of newly-remodeled villas linked on the second floor by a walkway. By this time production already had a skeletal staff and had begun working with Cambodian artists and technicians to create materials. There was still not a clear definition of what, in day-to-day terms, the work of Analysis and Control would actually constitute, and for a period of time my work tended to overlap in the two units as we figured out, in practical terms, what we were doing. Steve Heder was still very much involved in Production issues. He even narrated some of the initial Khmer-language videos. Others of us who were speakers of Khmer also sometimes helped out with production in the early days, before our own work began to pile up and Production acquired their own Khmer-speaking international staff as the roles of the different divisions became more clearly defined.

Throughout the course of UNTAC, but particularly in the early days, as writers and artists were still figuring out what their job was, all output was extensively vetted for any sign of political bias in the use of language or the situation described or for any thing which was not in accord with the wording of the Paris Agreements. Initially, this vetting was undertaken by Tim Carney and Steve Heder, and the basic diction of UNTAC was marked by decisions they made at this time. Many words

had taken on political overtones in the language, and a conscious attempt was made to avoid these words or somehow neutralize their effect. The most often cited example is the fact that the different words for "people" were all politically marked. The word prâcheachon was associated with the socialist period and the word prâcheapolrot was associated with the Lon Nol period. In order to avoid using one or the other, the decision was made to combine them into a single compound word prâcheachonprâcheapolrot. (A third term, prâcheareas, which was associated with the period of monarchy, and literally means "subjects" of the king, was not included in the compound. As it so happens, this is the term which eventually came into use following the elections.) The text of the Paris Agreements, as translated into Khmer, French, and English became a standard for the wording of UNTAC translations, even where the text's translation was uncolloquial or less than perfect as a translation. Eventually, all the international staff literate in Khmer would be expected to share the duties of vetting scripts.

The division expanded as new international staff arrived from overseas -- sometimes after long waits -- and as local staff were hired. The Cambodian staff included technicians, writers, and artists who worked with Production, a large team of translators, who again primarily worked with Production, and a team of media monitors, who worked with Analysis and Control. Media monitors were responsible for reading Khmer-

language newspapers and viewing television and writing summary reports in Khmer of the content, which was then used by Khmer-literate Analysis and Control international staff. In addition to the translators hired locally, UNTAC 12 also housed a team of overseas Cambodians (from the U.S., France, Australia, and Japan), hired as International Staff (and thus on a different pay scale from local staff), who were administratively under UNTAC central administration, not under the Information/Education Division, although they sometimes did translation for the Division as well. Their work tended to focus on UNTAC documents which required a great deal of precision, such as drafts of laws.

My memory of the early days of the Information/Education Division is associated with a series of trips to different parts of the country which attempted to coordinate the efforts of Analysis and Control with the dissemination of Production materials in public meetings. These trips were organized by Steve Heder, and the Analysis functions of the trips tended to dominate -- so I will discuss them in more detail as part of my description of Analysis below, but these trips deserve passing mention here as an example of how, in the early days, the different units worked together.

## **Production Unit**

Of the three units in the Information/Education Division, Production is the one with which I had the least direct contact. Thus, while the following description is certainly framed by what I was in a position to observe or hear about by being a part of the division, I have also relied on Zhou Mei's book *Radio UNTAC of Cambodia* and on interviews I conducted with three radio staff in the two years after UNTAC .

The Production unit was divided into subunits focusing on radio, television, and graphics. Administratively, it was also responsible for an Information Center which opened in late 1993 as a sort of library in Phnom Penh where the public could go to read UNTAC materials and the materials of the different political staff. Production also had staff devoted exclusively to the process of dissemination of UNTAC materials throughout the country.

Posters and booklets in Khmer were sent through the different UNTAC administrative divisions to each of the districts in the country and each of the cantonment sites. (Other materials would be commissioned by the Electoral Division and sent directly to them.) The broadcast materials produced by UNTAC were made to be broadcast on the television of the existing administrative structures (before UNTAC had its own radio station, it likewise relied on the radio of the existing administrative structures). In the case of

television, this meant TVK, the SOC station, and, in the last weeks before the election, FUNCINPEC television. Radio materials were also broadcast on Voice of America, under a special agreement. Video and audio tapes of UNTAC materials were also sent throughout the country, where they could be used by UNTAC staff in public meetings or information campaigns.

### Graphics

The graphics sub-unit produced posters, banners, booklets, and leaflets. Booklets included comic book editions of the radio dialogues being broadcast on television, and copies, in Khmer, French, and English, of the text of the Paris Agreements. Graphics designed circular stickers with UNTAC slogans for posting on cars and motorbikes. Later it would design similar stickers out of materials that would reflect light and serve as a safety device for bicycle rickshaws. The graphics sub-unit would later design the T-shirts that would be worn by electoral staff during the elections. Early materials tended to focus on informing the general public about the general purposes of UNTAC being in Cambodia. Later materials focused more specifically on the mechanics of the election and on making the point that the ballot was genuinely secret.

Many of the materials reflected the personal style of Jan Arneson, the graphics artist from U.N. headquarters in New

York who headed the sub-unit. She used jarring juxtapositions of bright colors, and her designs broke up space in a way I had never seen before in anything produced in Cambodia -- to the point where I worried at first about whether the designs were "un-Cambodian." But as time went on, they became part of the cultural fabric that I associated with UNTAC. And by the time of the elections, I found that this particular visual style, as I saw it in the banners and the T-shirts, had become suffused with emotion, a feeling which I believe was shared by many Cambodians.

One of the first posters generated by the unit was distributed about the time I arrived in the Division. It had been designed before Jan Arneson arrived and was very straightforward in style and message, and primarily intended to be informative. It was in black and white and U.N. blue. It was intended to depict the process of cantonment and demobilization as outlined in the Paris Agreements. On one side of the poster were four small pictures of the faces of soldiers, each in the uniform of one of the four factions who were signatories to the Paris Agreements. The main body of the poster consisted of four panels which depicted the process of cantonment and demobilization. They showed soldiers entering a cantonment site, turning over weapons, playing volleyball on a cantonment site, and returning home after demobilization.

Early on in my tenure with the U.N., on a trip to Battambang province, another information officer and I talked to UNTAC Civil Police (CivPol) about the posters and the distribution of them that CivPol was involved with. The CivPol officer we met advised us that we should avoid posters which were controversial and sites this poster as an example. He said that they sometimes found this poster torn down where they had posted it in remoter areas of the province, although he was unwilling to speculate about who was tearing down the posters or what specifically it was they objected to.

In fact, it was the cantonment process depicted in the poster which was precisely the part of the Paris Agreements which did not take place. Heder (1996) argues convincingly that NADK had begun a process of demobilizing troops and curtailing the distribution of weapons and ammunition after the Paris Agreements; however, they never followed through with the process of cantoning and turning over weapons under UNTAC supervision. Because of this, the other factions never demobilized as completely as was outlined in the Agreements, and to the extent that they cantoned troops and disarmed, they complained that they were vulnerable to the factions that had not disarmed. The provisions of the Agreements were that each of the factions would support its own troops in cantonment sites, but in fact there was little capacity to do this. Most cantoned SOC troops were quickly given "agricultural leave" and returned to their families. In January, 1993, I

talked to a motorcycle taxi driver in northern Siem Reap province who had been an ANKI soldier. He spoke with resentment about how he and other ANKI soldiers had stayed in a cantonment site for a few weeks without sufficient food or supplies until they had each decided to go his own way.

These posters were soon overshadowed by the many other posters generated by the division, and I never again had occasion to talk to provincial staff about whether the newer posters were considered controversial or were torn down. But as I traveled around the country, over the months, I would occasionally see this old poster still in place on public buildings. I was struck as much by how quickly the posters had taken on a faded and forgotten quality as much as by the irony that what it had depicted had not taken place.

It was not until after the UNTAC mission was over that I saw the stamps made from the four panels of the poster, which, printed overseas, had probably only just arrived in the country. Doubtless very few people using the stamps saw the irony of what the panels depicted. But the stamps served to represent UNTAC after UNTAC was gone.

### Television

Of the different Production sub-units, it was television that I had the most contact with. This may have been because Isabelle Abric, the head of the sub-unit, was one of the first

people I met when I joined the Division, and I continued to be friendly with her. It was also because I acted in a video dialogue in the early days. And eventually I was assigned the job of vetting the scripts for the video dialogues created by Production.

My first week on the job I rode along to watch the filming of a video dialogue in a village on a dirt road in the vicinity of Phnom Penh. The dialogue was filmed at a straw stall along the road of the sort that are used to sell cigarettes, vegetables and fruits, and sundries in Cambodia. Like all of these dialogues, the actors depicted Khmer peasants (conceived of as being the "average" Cambodians) in conversation about the U.N. or issues related to the situation of the U.N. in Cambodia -- in this case the peasants were talking about the right to form associations, with one of the characters at the end of the dialogue, humorously announcing that he was going to form an association of cow tenders. These dialogues were consciously written in simple language and intended to be accessible to Cambodians with little education, a public voice which nevertheless made a show of relating to the private lives of Cambodians. A small crowd of villagers gathered to watch the filming, which had to be interrupted frequently whenever a motorbike or truck went by on the road.

These early dialogues focused on the theme of the reasons for UNTAC being in the country and the specific goals of the various UNTAC components. As the elections approached

the dialogues would provide more and more specific information about the election process. Different components of UNTAC would each, for their scheduled weeks, provide a dialogue or the germ of an idea for a dialogue, and this would be extensively re-worked until it was a usable script by the production staff. Part of my job as the person vetting the scripts was to check the accuracy of the translation from English to Khmer, but I found that as the weeks went by the Khmer staff were more and more likely to write the script in Khmer around the given topic and then cobble together an English "original" for the benefit of the international staff -- a much more reasonable way of proceeding.

I myself acted in one of the early dialogues. The dialogue was intended to illustrate the work of the U.N. in reconstructing the country, and I played a U.N. construction engineer who was leading the work of building a bridge. The wife and daughter of the peasant family that the dialogues focus on go to visit the construction site, where an uncle is working, and he introduces them to the UN engineer and tells them about the role that the U.N. is playing. The Cambodian director who shot the piece emphasized to the actors the idea that they have an attitude of interacting with me as an accessible equal and not someone who was due special deference. The most frequently used non-Cambodian in the video dialogues was a Khmer-speaking expatriate man named Ali Kistauov, who worked for the UNTAC Electoral Division and acted in dialogues concerned with

explaining the electoral process. (Ali was from the former Soviet Union and possibly still had Russian citizenship. Everyone I have asked recalls that Ali was not ethnically Russian, and his name suggests that he was Muslim, but I have been unable to determine his exact ethnicity.) (He would join the staff of Radio UNTAC in the post-election period.) Ali became a well-known figure to Cambodians throughout the country, and people would often ask me what his nationality actually was. (This was, of course, no secret; but it is interesting that the ideological logic of a U.N. mission of this sort would mean that the nationality of someone symbolizing the U.N. as he did would, as a matter of course, not be part of his identity in the dialogues.) Ali's role in the dialogues was as a source of information about UNTAC. He was always presented as interacting genially with Cambodians, visiting them in their homes, eating with them, and taking part in New Years celebrations.

At a public showing of UNTAC dialogues in northwestern Cambodia, an Analysis officer heard viewers making jokes about the peasant woman on the screen having such beautifully polished nails -- unlikely for anyone who did manual labor. A report was written and the nail polish disappeared, but never her earrings, which perhaps is conceivable for a well-to-do peasant woman. The point to be made is that in Cambodia, as anywhere, a universal type is not a perfect representation of reality.

Like everyone in the Division, Abrie was consciously preoccupied with maintaining a stance of neutrality in the video materials. A willingness to maintain a stance of neutrality was, indeed, written into the job description of people working for Information/Education; in actual practice neutrality was not always easy to define, or could be defined in different ways, and the question remained for someone supervising actors and other artists, of how to choose people who were "neutral" and how to define their role in such a way that they would truly be "neutral". In the early days, Abrie worried about the degree to which she could give autonomy to the Cambodian filmmaker who was directing the dialogues, since she knew he had made films heavily tinged with propaganda in the PRK/SOC period. As time went by, however, she became increasingly convinced of his skill as a director, and convinced that no bias was entering the direction. He could assume the role of a "neutral" artist in producing the dialogues, and she could focus more attention on other activities. There was also some initial worry about the neutral image of the actors selected, since any skilled older actors would necessarily have acted in propaganda films as a perquisite of being an actor in that period. Indeed, we did get a letter early on complaining about the use of one of the actresses, and, much later, after UNTAC had left Cambodia, a Cambodian journalist told me stories about the political activities that another actor prominent in the dialogues had been involved in. I don't

believe these compromised the effectiveness of the dialogues, but they at least tinged them with a level of irony for a segment of the population. One of the UNTAC actors (the irony here is that it is one who was eventually fired) would in the post-UNTAC period be hired by an NGO to narrate a series of video clips on water sanitation. Certainly, the benign, public-interest-oriented focus of the UNTAC dialogues was consciously drawn on in the choice of this actor.

In addition to the video dialogues, the video sub-unit produced "news magazine" videos with short documentary items about UNTAC and developments relating to UNTAC and the elections. These were filmed in the style of Western news broadcasts and geared at an audience with a higher level of sophistication than the dialogues were. In the style of Western news broadcasts, they maintained a stance of presenting objective fact. One early news magazine was an extended interview with UNTAC chief Yasushi Akashi, who addressed basic issues. Abrie took charge of the filming of the news magazines herself, and the reporting often took her to different locations around the country.

From the beginning, SOC/PPP monitored the contents of UNTAC materials very closely for anything which they felt might be prejudicial against them. As early as August, 1992, they objected to some video and radio materials which dealt with the issue of human rights, saying they showed SOC/PPP in a negative light. At least one news magazine story, addressing

human rights abuses, was refused broadcast by SOC television. From the perspective of the U.N., promoting human rights was a neutral agenda, and, more than that, it was part of their mandate to create a neutral political atmosphere in the country. Nevertheless, reports about human rights abuses inevitably did tend to show SOC in a negative light. Materials of this sort, that SOC would not broadcast, did nevertheless get some circulation by nature of the fact that they were sent around the country and used by UNTAC military and civilian staff in local screenings, and because parallel programming was given on Radio UNTAC.

Even though the Paris Agreements mandated that UNTAC had direct control over the field of information, it in fact had few mechanisms with which to compel any particular course of action if the "administrative structures" of any of the factions opposed it. While the mandated direct control over the media should logically have meant that UNTAC could show whatever it wanted, it did not in fact really have the power. I remember Tim Carney once commenting that a basic limit on the power of UNTAC over the SOC media was the fact that Dith Munty, the Minister of Information, was also on the Supreme National Council, the one body which stood over UNTAC.

In early 1993 Info/Ed began a program of round-table discussions where representatives of different parties (four at a time), would sit on a panel and answer questions about basic political issues which had been given to them in advance. It

was a stiff format, falling far short of debate, but one which at least started the process of familiarizing the general public with the names of political parties and their basic stands. SOC television refused to air these roundtables, maintaining that parties could not make statements on television until the beginning of the official campaign period.

UNTAC did distribute videos of the roundtables to UNTAC offices around the country, as it did with other UNTAC production materials, where they were shown in public meetings by UNTAC staff, and a small French television broadcasting station, which had a broadcasting range that did not extend beyond the boundaries of Phnom Penh, also played the programming. UNTAC did not have the power to force SOC to play it.

The Paris Agreements mandated that all political parties should have access to the media during the campaign period, and so, during the six-week period which constituted the official campaign period, UNTAC allotted time for the different political parties during the segments of UNTAC programming which were to be aired nightly. The parties were each given the option of submitting a five-minute (later expanded to ten-minute) campaign piece which they had filmed themselves, or to come to the studios at UNTAC 12 to film a short talk by a representative of the party. Most did the latter.

SOC objected to having to broadcast this programming and the issue was debated in the Supreme National Council.

Eventually, a compromise was reached where there would be 30 minutes (as opposed to an hour) of UNTAC programming per night. (As it turned out, constraints on production capacity made even this 30-minute segment hard to fill.) Unfortunately, a directive issued by Akashi to the effect that television had to supply 30 minutes to UNTAC did not state when this time should be supplied, and SOC refused to let UNTAC be programming be broadcast at the prime 7 p.m. slot which the shorter UNTAC pieces had previously occupied. They offered the time slot at the end of the day. When UNTAC asked for the time slot before the regular TVK programming, at 5:30 p.m., SOC readily agreed. We would later come to regret having chosen this time slot, since it was a time when most Cambodians had not yet returned from work and a time slot at which, in many parts of the country, there was no public electricity with which to watch TV.

All UNTAC campaign talks of this kind were carefully vetted to avoid content that was defamatory or racially inflammatory. There was at least one case where a political party was asked to re-tape their segment because of the use of the word yuan for Vietnamese in ways that were clearly derogatory. SOC refused to show one or two segments, and on one occasion UNTAC agreed that their complaints were justified. (The head of another small party objected to a broadcast which made reference to his conviction for rape in a border camp. Since the conviction had been made by a court

under the supervision of the U.N., and all indication was that the man was indeed guilty of rape, UNTAC did not yield to the man's demand for a retraction.)

Once UNTAC tapes arrived at TVK, they were sent to SOC/CPP officials for previewing, a process which took time and meant that they were not broadcast according to the schedules that UNTAC had planned. I once wrote a formal complaint when a TVK official made a reference to the tapes having to be sent to the Party (CPP). Technically, the Party and the state were supposed to be separate, and TVK was under the administration of the state. He was probably justified in being irritated, since we both knew that the Minister of Information was also chief of the Party's Information and Education Commission, and so, one was essentially the other.

During the campaign period, SOC/CPP produced campaign dialogues which were similar in style to the UNTAC video dialogues, in what was perhaps an attempt to confuse the viewer into believing that their materials had the U.N. imprimatur. On the other hand, SOC very much wanted UNTAC material to be clearly identified as such, so that it did not seem to take on the imprimatur of SOC.

FUNCINPEC TV came into being only at the time of the official campaign period, and it took time for UNTAC and FUNCINPEC to work out the logistics of getting video tapes to FUNCINPEC to broadcast as it was on SOC TV. I, and perhaps others at Info/Ed, tended to be somewhat less likely to

condemn FUNCINPEC, because they were new and struggling to exist and had a much smaller broadcasting range. Nevertheless, it is true that FUNCINPEC did not comply quickly with UNTAC's requirements that it show the UNTAC tapes of political candidates, and this may have been at least partially politically motivated.

### Radio UNTAC

From the beginning, it was the assessment of Tim Carney that radio was the key medium in Cambodia and that UNTAC's attempts to convey its message to the Cambodian people should rely most heavily on radio. This commitment to radio is very much reflected in the amount of energy and resources that UNTAC put into radio. Radio UNTAC represented the first time that a U.N. mission had its own radio station, and the implications of a U.N. mission having its own radio station are far-reaching and complex. The questions it raises about the relation of the U.N. to the population in the country where it serves and the political roles that radio can legitimately serve by no means have clear-cut answers. Nevertheless, we can say that in Cambodia by the time of the elections UNTAC's use of radio came together in a way that captured the imagination of the public, and it became astoundingly popular. It is frequently cited as one of the success stories of UNTAC, and accounts of the period often describe Radio UNTAC as playing a

key role in convincing the Cambodian population of the secrecy of the ballot.

The rather minimal contact I had with the radio sub-unit was mostly confined to the first month that I worked in Information/Education. During that time, the young British man who for the time being was the acting head of radio asked me to help arrange interviews with Cambodian musicians while he was struggling to formulate a plan for choosing appropriate music. Once again, it was a question of neutrality - - how to choose music which was not associated with one political period or another. He wanted to explore the idea of whether there was a folk tradition of music which was politically neutral and could be used for programming. Later he told me that he had decided to avoid Cambodian music and instead focus on the music of the different countries represented by UNTAC in Cambodia. (This was probably the basis of the situation that Zhou Mei describes when she writes:

A pot-pourri of music would link the bits and pieces together to form a programme. In the pioneering days of Radio UNTAC, selection of music was very much left to the individual radio producer who very often would have to resort to whatever music tapes he/she had brought with him/her to Cambodia. The bias was obvious; one could always guess the nationality of the producer by the choice of music. (1994:29))

Later Radio UNTAC would rely heavily on dedicated songs requested in letters, which became astoundingly popular, with occasional international music interspersed. It is worth noting that each of these strategies in its own way represented a strategy of neutrality, but neutrality could signify something very different in each case. I remember an early session in which the young British man asked me to help translate. He was trying to get announcers to speak in a more colloquial style -- a departure from the normal Cambodian role. I was taken aback when he said that he wanted to show them the movie *Good Morning Vietnam* and try to get them to imitate the Robin Williams character.

Radio UNTAC had a team of (at the most) eight international radio producers and (at the most) 10 Cambodian producers. Of the Cambodian producers, about half were formerly associated with the SOC government and about half came from the border. Of the producers from the border, most were from KPNLF camps; only one was from a FUNCINPEC camp. In February, 1993, a Cambodian-American with journalistic experience, Sophat Pak, arrived to supervise the team of Cambodian radio producers.

Just as Ali Kistauov, the Khmer-speaking Russian who acted in UNTAC dialogues, became a celebrity in the country, so did Anne Guillou, a French Khmer-speaking graduate student in sociology, who became widely talked about in her role of radio producer/reporter for Radio UNTAC.

Radio UNTAC developed as an entity only very slowly, and, looking back, it is surprising for how short a period before the election it was actually going full-swing. The first half-hour program was recorded in May 1992. By July 1992 radio was producing two half-hour programs a week. By October, it was up to four half-hour programs per week. Up until this time, radio programming had to be sent to SOC radio and other places to be broadcast. In an October resolution the U.N. Security Council authorized UNTAC to proceed with the radio station, stating that it

Emphasizes, in accordance with article 12 of the Paris Agreements, the importance of the elections being held in a neutral political environment, encourages the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to continue their efforts to create such an environment, and in that context request, in particular, that the UNTAC radio broadcast facility be established without delay and with access to the whole territory of Cambodia.

(United Nations, 1992)

It began broadcasting from an old Philips transmitter supplied by SOC on November 9, with three 30-minute broadcasts per day. It wasn't until Feb. 12 that the time was increased to three 1.5 hour broadcasts per day. On April 19, six weeks before the election, the station went live, at the same time increasing broadcast time to nine hours a day. Finally on May 12, less than two weeks before the elections, it increased its broadcast time to 15 hours a day, a schedule it was able to

maintain in the post-election period up until the time that the station went off the air in September, 1993.

This gradual process represented the technical difficulty of setting up facilities and training people to use them properly. It represented a process of reporters learning how to report and translators learning how to translate quickly and efficiently. It also represented the never-ending difficulty of working a way through the U.N. bureaucracy and the bureaucracy of the SOC administration which was supplying the transmitters. While the Paris Agreements mandated that UNTAC "controlled" the field of information, there nevertheless had to be a very real process of negotiation in order to work out exact terms of that "control" with respect to radio transmitters as with everything else -- such that agreement could not be reached unless they would result in advantage to the SOC ministry of information by supplying fuel and making contributions to the infrastructure of the facilities.

Zhou Mei writes that the total cost of the radio equipment at UNTAC 16, its installation and maintenance, was US \$3,101,647. UNTAC also set up, at great expense, three relay stations, in Siem Reap, Stung Treng, and Sihanoukville, so that Radio UNTAC could be heard in every possible corner of the country. Because of delays in the contracting process, the technicians hired to install the relay stations did not arrive until February and the relay stations were not operative until April, meaning that they served the mission a matter of weeks

prior to the election, and there were times during the campaign period when one or more of the relay stations were not functioning because of technical problems. (After UNTAC left Cambodia, two of these relay stations would be looted, resulting in a loss which one former U.N. radio staff person estimated as three quarters of a million of dollars U.S. Observers speculated that the looters were probably only interested in reselling the copper wiring for a few thousand dollars.)

Part of the strategy of using radio to get the message of UNTAC out was to distribute free used radios throughout the country<sup>1</sup>. If there were times when Radio UNTAC seemed to represent everything that was good about the mission, the problems associated with the distribution of radios sometimes seemed to represent all the strange complexities of idealism gone amok which was also very much a part of the mission. The used radios all came from Japan, donations generated in mass campaigns organized by the Soka Gakkai, the Social Democratic Party, and the Japanese government. In all they sent 347,804 radios, 849,400 batteries and 1,000 radio cassette recorders. While the staff involved in distributing the radios deserve great praise, it is undeniable that it turned out to be a very messy and complicated process which resonated with the inequities and popular resentments associated with the UNTAC period. The essential irony was the fact that something that a

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, Lichty and Hoffer (1978:119) report that the CIA had also had a program for the mass distribution of transistor radios in the Cambodian countryside in 1970.

highly developed country would have in surplus to the extent that they could give them away was equivalent to a month's earnings for most Cambodians. When UNTAC came to rural sites to distribute radios there would be fights for them, sometimes near riots. One report told of a confrontation at an UNTAC warehouse in Kampong Speu where armed soldiers came to demand radios when the rumor circulated that some radios had been withheld. (The rumor was generated by the fact that some non-functioning radios were still in a warehouse.) Incidents like these reminded us that at some level most Cambodians hoped that the UNTAC mission would bestow concrete, material benefit to them as individuals or their families, and there was ultimately resentment when the effects of the UNTAC presence proved to be rather intangible, when relatively few pieces of the UNTAC pie proved to be within reach. An incident which stands in my memory like a slap in the face took place when I was on a rural road with a Cambodian UNTAC co-worker, and, after asking him if he thought it was appropriate, getting out of the car to ask a woman if we could take her picture performing irrigation with a manual device. She asked us sarcastically if we had any radios. A statement once appeared in a Cambodian newspaper to the effect that Bulgarian UNTAC soldiers were giving donated radios in exchange for sex. Although I never heard any internal UNTAC confirmation to it, it was too close to something that could be true to be shrugged off and stung

because, whether or not it was true, it was certainly consistent with one side of the popular conception of UNTAC.

Measured by the comments of Cambodians in Phnom Penh, the enormous output of letters to the station requesting songs, and the comments that would eventually appear in the Khmer language press, Radio UNTAC became extraordinarily popular in the weeks before the election. Its announcers were widely known and talked about. It is not easy to say what it was that "clicked" with the Cambodian public. Radio UNTAC generated excitement in part because its staff felt and conveyed the excitement of the historical processing they were writing about and announcing, historical processes which the general public genuinely recognized as important and exciting.

In Zhou Mei's book she describes a slow process of encouraging Cambodian radio producers to act independently and confidently.

... the nurturing process had been painfully slow. Much depended on their receptivity and absorption capacity which seemed warped by fear and diffidence. We wanted them to understand why they should not allow others -- politicians in particular-- to intimidate them. If they could learn by example, working alongside the international radio team-- at end-1992, six; at the time of the election, eight -- we hoped that over time, they would accept our reassurances why they should not be afraid. . . . If we made any headway in the months before the election, the greater their paranoia and fear. (1994: 72-3)

While Zhou Mei's point in telling us this is that before the election the Cambodian radio producers did not gain confidence (and go on to tell how in the post-election period one Cambodian radio producer became recklessly over confident) I think her comments illustrate that a process of empowerment was taking place for the Cambodian radio producers, and that it was precisely this sense of empowerment that was conveyed in the radio broadcasts and resulted in their popularity. Certainly the one Cambodian radio producer whom I interviewed after the elections, a young returnee from the border camps, expressed a feeling of excitement over the responsibility that he was given, and excitement that for him was coupled with the excitement of the fact that, while he worked, he was for the first time getting to know the city of Phnom Penh.

No doubt part of the excitement that Radio UNTAC generated came out of its technical sophistication, the fact that it had the equipment to do things with radio that other stations didn't have, and the ability of the international staff to use this technical sophistication to push for a fast modern pace.

Selections from the hundreds of letters to Radio UNTAC were read on the air and the radio encouraged listeners to request songs and dedicate them to people. Whether because it was something novel, or because, in a tiny way, it represented empowerment, this programming became enormously popular.

Many international staff have their own Radio UNTAC stories. One Analysis/Assessment officer likes to tell how she

was driving down the road with the car windows up listening to Radio UNTAC and saw a young man who was obviously moving his body to the same music she was listening to. Another one likes to tell how delighted she was when visiting a remote village in Kampong Cham to enter a Buddhist temple and find the monks listening to Dave Brubeck. While I had received some comments from Cambodians I knew when I acted in an UNTAC video dialogue, I found that, much later, when I was one of a group of UNTAC officers interviewed on Radio UNTAC about the customs of their home countries, it seemed like every Cambodian I knew had listened to the broadcast. Certainly, we observed Cambodians listening to Radio UNTAC and talking about it every day, and trips to other parts of the country helped to confirm that its popularity was not limited to the people in Phnom Penh.

We should not underestimate the degree to which Radio UNTAC was popular because people came to believe they could trust its reporting. While its reporting was basic, it covered news frankly and tried to avoid assuming a political line. This meant that a field was opened up to say things that had not been possible to say on the radio of either SOC or the armed resistance. Radio UNTAC's programming included radio versions of the same dialogues prepared by the TV sub-unit. It also featured news reports and interviews with key people involved in the peace process, both UNTAC personnel and Cambodian officials. Like TV, during the official campaign

period, Radio UNTAC allotted large blocks of time to give representatives of the 20 political parties equal time to put forward their political platforms. In the post-election period, the radio began reporting on larger social and cultural issues.

It is hard to pinpoint when exactly SOC criticism of Radio UNTAC began. Certainly SOC was sensitive to UNTAC's implicit criticism of it in its reporting of human rights abuses, on radio as on TV. But it was in the period immediately prior to the elections that tension flared up. Two cases, in particular, relate to the three days prior to the election which were designated as a "cooling off" period when there was to be no campaigning and no political reporting in the media.

At this time, the Information/Education Division, as part of its Control function, responded quickly to a clearly defamatory edition of *Kâh Sântepheap* newspaper, which in addition to defying UNTAC's regulations against political writing in this period, made broad suggestions that the FUNCINPEC party, and Sihanouk himself, continued to be linked to the Khmer Rouge. Carney sent a letter to the newspaper which, following the precise wording of a SOC press law, denounced the defamation and prohibited the newspaper from publishing until it had published this letter on the front page of its next edition. Carney's letter to the newspaper was read over Radio UNTAC. From that time on *Kâh Sântepheap* was unfailingly critical of Radio UNTAC, at one time complaining that it "controlled" Cambodia.

Also during the cooling off period, UNTAC imposed fines on two prominent SOC political figures, Prince Norodom Chakrapong and the mayor of Sihanoukville, Khim Bo, for violations of UNTAC electoral law during the campaign period. A news report about the fines was broadcast on Radio UNTAC, and SOC would declare that this itself constituted a violation of the cooling off period, since the report, they said, involved covering political news .

In the period leading up to the election, UNTAC personnel, throughout the country, were very aware of our vulnerability on a number of grounds and we knew that the election period and its aftermath could very easily become a period in which political uncertainties could erupt into social unrest or lead to the mobilization of armed forces. Ever since Radio UNTAC moved into its own building in April in had made a conscious effort to build up security in anticipation that the radio might be subject to attacks by the Khmer Rouge or attempts to muzzle it by disgruntled political factions. These security measures were very much initiated by the radio staff themselves and not ordered by the UNTAC senior staff above them. At the request of Radio UNTAC, Ghana Battalion soldiers armed with machine guns were assigned to guard the building at all times. Sandbags were piled in front of the doors so that the building had the look of a fortress preparing for siege. A stockpile of food and water and medical supplies were kept on hand. They made certain they had spare generators.

Contingency plans were worked out so that UNTAC's access to radio transmitters was blocked, the radio programming could be microwaved to Voice of America in Bangkok and broadcast from there.

In the days after the election, UNTAC reports partial returns of the election as they came in, much as would happen at the time of an election in a Western country. FUNCINPEC radio and television based their reports on UNTAC press releases also. SOC media, however, reported figures based on reports of its own poll observers, and these reports showed CPP at an advantage compared to UNTAC reports. As UNTAC reports came in which showed FUNCINPEC ahead of CPP, moreover, CPP objected, saying that the partial results distorted the outcome of the election in the minds of the population listening to the radio. It was on this basis that on May 3, three days after the election, the CPP broadcast over SOC radio its demand that UNTAC stop broadcasting the results of ballot counts. UNTAC did not comply.

It was in this context that the following day UNTAC received a phone call and, a little later, a handwritten letter, from a woman who claimed to have knowledge that SOC troops were making preparations to attack the radio complex, and radio staff, checking on the report, found that there was indeed a tank fueling up at the place that the caller had indicated. Some 50 UNTAC troops, with their trucks and anti-tank weapons, were called quickly to the scene, and the

international press arrived in full force -- and there was no attack. There is perhaps no way of knowing for sure whether an attack was averted by the show of UNTAC force, as many radio staff believe, or whether the woman's phone call was an elaborate hoax or paranoid fantasy. The incident does point to the way Radio UNTAC became the locus of very real political tensions at a moment when, in realpolitic terms, the consequences of the election were being determined.

Because of the popularity Radio UNTAC had achieved, the decision was made not to stop broadcasting immediately after the elections, but to continue through the period in which the new constitution was being written. Thus, when Radio UNTAC stopped broadcasting in September, 1993, it was one of the last UNTAC institutions to cease its operations in the country. Zhou Mei reports that in this period politicians who had once regarded the radio as anathema now clamored to be interviewed by its reporters. When it stopped broadcasting, it was the subject of nostalgic articles in some of the local newspapers.

### **Analysis/Assessment Unit**

The Analysis/Assessment Unit was very much stamped by the personality and style of its director, Steve Heder, who recruited a team of young scholars to work under him who

were literate in Khmer and had devoted time to understanding the country and its politics.

Narrowly defined, the mission of Analysis/Assessment was to analyze the effectiveness of the material produced by Production, but Heder clearly saw the unit's work as going beyond that. He envisioned it as a corps of people with expertise in Cambodia who could analyze the larger political picture and serve the larger goals of the mission. As a corps of international speakers of Khmer, the unit also ended up being called on a translators/consultants in sensitive situations where the neutrality of the translator might be an issue. There is no question but that Heder and the Analysis/Assessment Unit were an extremely effective unit.

Heder was himself a complex, intriguing figure. During the UNTAC period stories floated in the Cambodian expatriate community that there was an American plan to dominate the mission; stories of this kind focused on Tim Carney and Steve Heder as the masterminds of American domination. Such stories ignored the fact that, compared to most U.N. missions, the role of Americans was very small in UNTAC; and in the large scheme of things, the role played by the Information/Education Division and the Analysis/Assessment Unit in relation to the mission as a whole was also quite small (compared to, say, the military divisions, the civil police, civil administration, or the electoral division, all of which had more direct impact on the direction of the mission, even if they were

less visible to the international community.) They also forget the fact that Steve Heder was a very different person with a very different background and personality than Tim Carney.

Heder had been a journalist in Cambodia in the late 60's and early 70's, becoming fluent in Khmer. In the late 70's he entered graduate school in political science at Cornell. (Stories of his phenomenal skills in Khmer language were legendary among the students of the language who followed him at Cornell and elsewhere.)

At the time that the flood of refugees began arriving on the Thai-Cambodian border in 1979, Heder went there to do research among the arriving refugees. He received a grant from the U.S. State Department. As stated in the introduction to his 1980 monograph, "Funding was provided by the External Research Section of the U.S. State Department, with the clear understanding that the author would be completely free to draw and express his own conclusions, whether or not these were in agreement with the government." (1980: 4) While attacks on Heder and the Division sometimes referred to Heder as a former State Department employee, it is important to keep in mind that his connection was much more tenuous than that of Tim Carney, who was a career foreign service officer.

On the basis of his research on the border he wrote the monograph *Kampuchean Occupation and Resistance*, which, published in Bangkok in 1980, was relatively inaccessible to academic circles in the West. In the early 1980's he wrote

many short articles on Cambodian politics, a number of which were published in *Indochina Issues*. His career at that time seemed to many observers to be running parallel to that of Ben Kiernan, who was finishing a Ph.D. in history in Australia under David Chandler, and who was interested in the same issues. Their articles appeared in similar types of journals, and they sometimes debated each other in them. For someone like myself in the early 80's, passionate to learn anything I could about Cambodian politics after working several months in a refugee camp, these were the kinds of articles I sought out and devoured. Whereas Kiernan followed the traditional academic route, finishing a Ph.D., publishing *How Pol Pot Came to Power* and eventually accepting a position at Yale, Heder began working for Amnesty International, and it is only since UNTAC that he has finished his doctorate at University of London and joined the faculty of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. It fair to point out that Heder's willingness to depart from the traditional academic routes for many years in some ways added to the aura of intrigue surrounding him in Cambodian studies circles.

Heder and Carney consciously set out to assemble a team of specialists literate in Khmer to work in the division and in Analysis/Assessment in particular. In effect this meant that they were drawing on the latest crop of scholars specializing in Cambodia. The same search for Khmer-literate international staff resulted in other people with academic backgrounds being

hired for other units (as well as some people literate in Khmer who did not have academic backgrounds.) I was myself already working in Cambodia, and was approached by Heder and Carney at the time they were searching for people literate in Khmer, and, although officially assigned to the Control Unit, did work under Heder in the Analysis Unit before the boundaries of the two units became rigidly defined. I continued to share an office with Analysis staff and felt strong links to the Unit. All of us with academic backgrounds felt certain connections through common acquaintances and backgrounds.

If the Analysis/Assessment Unit had its negative sides, these were things that grew naturally out of the very things that made the unit so effective. The fact that it was a highly cohesive group also meant that it did not represent a great range of ethnic or ideological background. Many of the people had known each other prior to UNTAC; even if they hadn't, they were likely to have been linked by common friends or common teachers. Once a talented U.N. staff person who had been instrumental in getting the division started left the unit, there was no longer the presence of regular U.N. staff as there was in Production or Control. Although Heder and Carney unquestionably made a conscious effort to hire an international team, that would not be dominated by a single nationality, it is perhaps not too surprising, given the nature of Cambodian studies and the personal connections they were drawing on to

find these people, that all the members of the unit but one came from English-speaking countries, and that all the members came from highly developed countries. These were highly individual people who were in no way rubber stamps of each other. Nevertheless, if you compared this group of people to the odd conglomeration of international staff working in either Production or Control, it was clear that they tended to share basic assumptions about the nature of democracy and the goals of the mission.

Heder was an effective catalyst to the productivity of the group. He himself worked incredibly long hours and was amazingly efficient and productive, inspiring the unit by his example. He also created an atmosphere where the members of the team felt they had the latitude to pursue the directions that their interests naturally led them. The structure of the unit was loose and its parameters were discussed and re-discussed in unit meetings -- which were, nevertheless, shaped by Heder's seeming encyclopedic knowledge about Cambodia, his expertise on human rights laws and conventions, his thorough understanding of the Paris Agreements which had established the mission, and the savvy sense of politics he had which was only partly explained by the fact that he had studied political science.

An attempt to examine the dynamic of the unit more closely inevitably leads us into subjective areas. Heder certainly collected a team of people who were highly motivated

to know about and understand the situation in Cambodia and created a situation where they were free to pursue that motivation. The atmosphere that was created was, moreover, one of adventurism in the pursuit of understanding, of challenging oneself to go far and to take risks in the pursuit of understanding. An atmosphere was created where knowledge which was difficult and dangerous to acquire was valorized. Heder prided himself on being the kind of person who could untangle the strange web of Cambodian politics, of being the oracle with the ability to see behind all the endless layers of intrigue -- and he did have enormous resources of knowledge about Cambodia. In certain ways he was extremely generous about what he knew. He received and quickly digested mountains of memos from other branches of UNTAC and quickly channeled them to the people under him. Certainly part of what most animated Heder and the members of the Analysis team was the sense that the true, heretofore hidden, workings of power in Cambodia were within reach of being seen and understood in ways they hadn't before -- and this included the power of UNTAC, the Khmer Rouge and the other factions as well as State of Cambodia. There was an intoxication in the idea that by knowing these things one might have a degree of influence oneself in shaping the direction of the future.

I think everyone in the unit was motivated by this drive to understand, and caught up in the adventure of the pursuit of

this understanding, as well as the idealistic goals of the mission. But, while one must always stress the remarkable degree of cohesiveness the unit did maintain, and the friendship and admiration which the members of the unit continue to have for each other, an accurate description of the dynamic of the unit has to acknowledge also that the dynamic produced its own kinds of exhaustion, affecting different people in different ways at different times. There were certainly times when members of the unit (certainly myself, insofar as I was part of the unit) seemed to reach the limit of their competence and motivation, in ways that now seem embarrassing. At its worst, the dynamic of the unit also led to a kind war-hero arrogance and bravado which in turn led to other members of the unit withdrawing in exasperation. There were sometimes some bruised egos.

The drudge work for the Analysis/Assessment unit was the desk work they had to do -- in particularly reading and writing reports which digested stacks of Foreign Broadcast Information Service translations of the radio programming of the different Cambodian radio stations and the reports of a group of Cambodian media monitors assigned to our own unit. This odious desk-work was alternated with periods of time when Analysis officers would travel around the country to get a feel of what was going on and what people were really thinking in the country.

Over the course of the mission, the unit's field work was organized in a number of different ways, and team members also ended up getting involved in a number of different projects which, if sometimes rather tangential to the stated goals of the Information/Education Division, represented the unit's flexibility in pursuing the broader goals of the mission. Analysis/Assessment came to often take on the role of a critic of UNTAC. This was because, as fluent speakers of Khmer, Analysis officers were able to observe and report on what Cambodians were saying about the activities of the mission. It was also because our travels around the country put us in a position to see what was going on from a broad perspective, because the spirit of the unit was one which encouraged thinking broadly about the meaning of the mission and the degree to which it was fulfilling its stated goals, and because Analysis officers were willing and able to write reports about what they saw and thought.

One of the first plans of attack, started in late summer, 1992, was a schedule of visits to different parts of the country with the press office of the military division, called "Military Public Information". The country was divided into military sectors, and a schedule was worked out to go to each of the military sectors. This was technically not just an Analysis trip, but was intended as a trip that would serve the needs of dissemination and control, as well as to provide an occasion for the military press office and the military intelligence unit - -

"Military Information" -- to have a better sense of what was going on in the different areas. The team of people involved would go together to the sectors in question, usually by helicopter. (The fact that military sectors were involved greatly facilitated the logistics of getting around the country.) The control officer would stay in the provincial capital and meet with provincial ministry officials dealing with information. Analysis officers, together with Military Public Information and Military Information officers, would go to the cantonment sites in the sector, with a dissemination officer accompanying them to handle the video showings. The Analysis officers were not so much interested in studying the cantonments sites in and of themselves as they were interested in getting into the rural areas surrounding the cantonment sites, which tended to be areas where allegiance to one particular faction or another was not clearly defined. At the cantonment sites, and in villages surrounding the cantonment sites, there would be showings of UNTAC video materials. As Info/Ed conceived the video showings, they were not so much considered as representing a major drive of dissemination of UNTAC materials as they were an opportunity to observe how people in these areas were reacting to them and an occasion to talk to the people who assembled.

Individual Info/Ed staff from Analysis, Control, and Dissemination went on these trips on a rotating basis. I ended up going on five of the trips. One of the earliest trips, for

example, was to Battambang province. While most of the group went on to cantonment sites, another Control officer and I stayed in the provincial capital. There we did a combination of Control and Analysis activities. We visited the radio and television station and had dinner with a television reporter who showed some openness about talking about the political controls on the station. We discussed the distribution of UNTAC posters with UNTAC Civil Police. We interviewed representatives of the different military factions in residence in Battambang to participate in Mixed Military Working Group meetings. (Other than the SOC representative, they were largely restricted to their hotel at this time.) I interviewed the head of the CPP Commission for Education and Propaganda. I, more generally, with limited success, tried to strike up conversations with strangers and thereby get a sense of what the general population was thinking about. I looked up relatives of Cambodian friends I had known in the U.S., and my conversation with them, along with a conversation with the proprietors of a Malaysian restaurant and an interview with an Islamic television official, served as the basis for a short report on the Islamic community in Battambang.

Much as our colleagues were doing at the cantonment sites, we drove out into the country and selected villages, more or less at random, where with a VCR and a generator we showed UNTAC video materials. At the same time I tried to

talk to the people in the crowds which gathered and get an idea of what they were thinking about.

While on two or three trips the logistics of travel meant that I ended up going along to some of the cantonment site visits, it was only on the trip to Kampong Thom where I ended up taking on fully the Analysis role, where my primary focus was on the cantonment sites and the areas surrounding them. Kampong Thom was notorious as an area of intense military activity with the Khmer Rouge, and I asked to go along on the cantonment site visits specifically because I knew that the military activity in the area would mean it would be a particularly interesting visit. Because another Analysis officer was unable to go at the last minute, I became the official leader of the group -- a sensitive position, since our military partners on the trips, the Military Public Information group had been complaining that our teams lacked discipline and leadership. (They were obviously not used to the personal style of academics.)

We had been told once already in Phnom Penh that the cantonment sites we had chosen to visit were too dangerous for us, but we raised the issue with the commander of UNTAC forces, and he gave us authorization to go to these sites. Nevertheless, when we arrived in Kampong Thom, we were led to an extended session with representatives of various UNTAC components in Kampong Thom, who advised us to revise our itinerary. They had proceeded to make a new schedule which

consisted of what seemed to us largely ceremonial visits to uninteresting places. As official leader of the group, I was faced with the choice of whether to lead my team into the jaws of death or not. While preparing to back down when their arguments became overwhelming, I nevertheless felt it was necessary to make a show of pushing for our original plan. After spending well over an hour talking back and forth, we found that no one was willing to stick his neck out far enough to actually prohibit us from going. I was therefore somewhat taken aback to find that the assembled panel did accede to us going into the jaws of death, if we agreed to some basic modifications of our plans.

During what remained of the morning we went to a non-controversial SOC cantonment site, where we met with the commander -- the cantoned soldiers had virtually all gone on agricultural leave -- and gave a video showing in a nearby village. In the afternoon we were told by the helicopter pilots that it would be impossible to go to the Khmer Rouge cantonment site we had requested and come back in time for them to make their required return to Phnom Penh, which meant that one of the more dangerous stops on our itinerary was impossible -- somewhat to our relief. Instead we went to a district seat about an hour's drive from Kampong Thom provincial town, one of the locations that had been set on the new schedule we had been offered. There we found a large assembly of people from the community already in place.

Many had been waiting since morning, when they had been told the meeting would take place. They had obviously been called together by the same SOC/CPD organization mechanisms that in the past would have assembled the community to hear political speeches. They obviously expected a speech -- which none of us was prepared to give, and the video showing was not designed for a group this size. Only a small percentage of the people gathered could get close enough to the monitor to actually see the video program. We as well as the villagers left extremely frustrated.

The following morning we flew by helicopter to an ANKI cantonment site at Popok and by there traveled overland to ANKI and KPNLAF cantonment sites at Krayea and Boh Thom. These two cantonment sites were in areas surrounded by DK troops and thus were among the sites considered dangerous to visit. While it would have been much faster and efficient to go directly by helicopter, there had been cases of DK firing at helicopters in those areas, it was deemed safer for us to go by 4-wheel drive vehicles. A truckload of Indonesian Battalion troops accompanied us. The trip was clearly through territory that was not in the control of SOC, although relations between the DK and ANKI and KPNLAF was complex and problematic. At Krayea we met with UNTAC military personnel and with the nervous ANKI corporal in charge. We showed our videos, although, being the middle of the day, there was really no one to watch them. On the way back we stopped at the KPNLAF

camp briefly and met with the camp commander. Back at the Popok cantonment site, we met with camp leaders and organized a video showing for the evening.

In retrospect, it is difficult to assess how much the trip accomplished. Certainly it helped us get a better understanding of what was going on in the field, and much of what we observed we wrote up in reports. We certainly hoped the trip would facilitate dissemination, but we knew the video materials were already being disseminated by UNTAC military and civilian personnel, often more efficiently than we could do it ourselves. Beyond this, though, it is important to say that the trip served to symbolize, to ourselves and to others, our resolve in going as far as we could to make contact with areas close to the Khmer Rouge, both to disseminate information about UNTAC and to learn what was actually happening there.

There were always tensions between the personal styles of the Military Public Information group and the more free-wheeling Analysis officers, and this led to disagreements about the ways the trips should be conducted. As there were more and more discussions about the trips it became clear that the military group had a very different vision of the purpose of the trips, and saw the primary justification as one of dissemination. Analysis agreed to start giving greater attention to dissemination in the remaining trips, by, for instance, preparing a speech in Khmer which could be given by one of the Analysis team members at the stops. They also agreed that

when the first cycle of trips was completed, the joint trips of this kind would be discontinued.

The etiquette of dealing with UNTAC officials in the provinces was itself delicate, especially as Analysis officers saw their role as including the uncovering and reporting of problems of all sorts. This would continue to be sensitive ground throughout the mission.

I'll include one more story relating to these trips, which has little to do with activities specific to the Analysis unit but I think tells us something about the atmosphere of the mission as a whole and the dynamic of these trips in relation to them. The last of the trips was to the northeast of Cambodia, the provinces which are most mountainous and heavily forested, where the population is a mixture of ethnic groups and only marginally Khmer. As a control officer, my work was primarily in the provincial town of Stung Treng, along the Mekong River. My analysis colleagues were flying to cantonment sites in Preah Vihear, Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri provinces. Rather envious of their chance to see more of the country, I at least arranged, on the last day, to ride with some Military Observers to a cantonment site two hours east of Stung Treng provincial town, where I would link up with the rest of the team, scheduled to arrive there by helicopter. UNTAC military observers worked together in teams of mixed nationality and always unarmed. They were chosen from ranking officers of the military of their home countries. Within the UNTAC

military structure they were quite distinct from the regular soldiers who served on the mission, who in a given sector were a battalion from a single country -- in the northeast, Uruguay. Since the team helicopter arrived several hours later than anticipated, I ended up spending most of one day with two UNMO's, one French and the other Norwegian.

The original purpose for the UNMO's to be there, to oversee the activities at the cantonment site, was made superfluous by the fact that no cantonment had actually taken place at the site. Instead, they ended up spending most of their time trying to understand the situation, primarily by cultivating relations with the SOC military personnel stationed there. They also made a studied effort to make contact with Khmer Rouge in the area, sending out word however they could that they were open to meetings, and spending hours scanning back roads hoping for an encounter.

I don't know whether the fact that I, someone from Phnom Penh, was present, could have had anything to do with what happened. While we were sitting around talking to SOC military personnel a message was given to them that a group of Khmer Rouge had sent word that they wanted to meet them at a certain location. We drove down the national road and on to a primitive logging road where, eventually, we came to a clearing and met the group of four Khmer Rouge fighters, all very young. They told us a story of how some civilian villagers in their zone had been abducted and killed by SOC soldiers and

asked for the matter to be investigated. They described living conditions in their zones as harsh and asked for help with food. The UNMO's talked about the need for peace and encouraged the DK to lay down their arms. They also set up a time for another meeting. I had some Info/Ed flyers and pamphlets and gave them to them. They seemed to be taking them more to be polite than for any other reason; no doubt the gesture had its element of absurdity. What to me seemed like a false note came from one of the UNMO's. I report it despite the great admiration I have for the two men, who were clearly willing to risk their lives to make contact with the Khmer Rouge and push for the peace process to take place. The French officer asked the young man speaking to us if he could have his krâma scarf as a keepsake. He quietly said no.

While this incident is in no way "typical" of an Analysis mission it was typical of the style of the Analysis unit to push into places and situations where the underlying tensions of the political picture would be revealed. Much like the motivations of the French military observer, the analysis team was interested in going to the utmost to achieve the goals of the mission. But we were also looking for events that would memorialize our own adventures.

Because of his expertise in Khmer and his deep knowledge of the Khmer Rouge, Heder was often called upon to interview DK defectors. In the early days of the mission, at a time when we were still working out our conception of what

the role of Analysis was, several of us were involved with the issue of Khmer Rouge defectors. My own involvement stemmed from the fact that, by chance, I had seen a group of Khmer Rouge defectors in Kampong Speu province being brought out for a visiting Hungarian television crew to interview, and I wrote a report which was critical of the fact that the defectors were being turned over to SOC authorities for re-education rather than put into cantonment sites. It turned out that UNTAC had no clear policy or administrative mechanisms for dealing with defectors, and was in the process of hashing this out. Heder, I learned, had already begun interviewing the defectors in UNTAC custody, and other Analysis officers also became involved in the process. (Heder's interviews with defectors provide the basis for his article, "The Resumption of Armed Struggle by the Party of Democratic Kampuchea: Evidence from National Army of Democratic Kampuchea 'Self-Demobilizers.'" [Heder, 1996].)

While the question of what to do with the defectors was still being debated, Heder, another Analysis officer, and I, and an American Military Information officer, drove one Sunday to the area at the foot of Srang mountain in Kampong Speu to talk to villagers and try to determine if it was really safe for the defectors to return. Since Srang mountain was in the control of DK guerrillas, we were approaching areas of DK control. Besides simply finding out whether the villages were safe for the defectors to return, we were, of course, trying to get an

understanding of the overall situation in these villages and an understanding of what the people there knew and didn't know about UNTAC and its mission. Trips of this kind were arduous, simply by nature of the fact that the roads were monumentally bad. For us, certainly at this early point in the mission, there was a thrill just in getting away from the cities and towns and beginning to come to understand what life was in remoter areas, which happened to be areas where the border of SOC and DK zones of influence met and overlapped.

I ended up going to these villages two more times. I and the Military Information officer who accompanied us on the original trip went along when the group of defectors were returned to their villages -- this after they had been held much longer than they had expected, when they were already threatening to escape from the UNTAC holding center and return on their own. It was another day-long, arduous trip, this time without trying to talk to villagers -- dramatic in part simply because of it became an occasion to think about the mystery of the meaning of the political exchange that the return of the men represented.

There ended up being one more trip to the villages, which was not really an UNTAC trip but an International Committee of the Red Cross trip, which stemmed from the fact that on our first visit villagers had told us about medical problems they had had. We had reported the situation to the American Red Cross, who was working in the province, and they in turn had

referred the matter to ICRC. The trip had initially seemed uneventful. We went to the same villages on the north and south sides of the mountain. It was after our meeting in the second group of villages, while we were walking back to our vehicles, that we were approached by a group of heavily armed Khmer Rouge who said that they wanted to talk. The manner of the men was relaxed and the event, startlingly, did not seem particularly threatening, but a natural outgrowth of the complex negotiations taking place as part of the peace process.

The Military Information officer insisted that the exchange take place, not in a house, but at our car. He may have assumed, as he told me at the time, that they might want to defect. No doubt he was also more sensitive to the security situation than I was. I noticed only the small group of soldiers accompanying us. The Military Information officer later reported that he had also observed, at some distance, a second circle of soldiers. The young DK soldier who joined us in the car talked about land seizures by State of Cambodia troops and said that DK troops were being held unfairly in SOC prisons in connection with these land seizures.

What did encounters like this mean? In the long run, they seem to have had few consequences. It's hard to conceive of what the DK who chose to meet us thought our coming to the village meant and what their gesture of communicating with us meant. There would, finally, be no cooperation between UNTAC and the DK on the crucial issue of the elections, and the DK

would increasingly be hostile to UNTAC trespassing on their zones or even zones which were arguably theirs. Nevertheless, it seems significant that there was fleeting communication -- that at some level at some time both sides were open to it.

A final activity associated with the Analysis Unit which I'd like to focus on is their participation in what was called "Control Team" missions headed by UNTAC Civil Administration, which took place in the two or three months before the election. While the Analysis Unit was by no means the only part of UNTAC represented, and there may have been some participants on the Control Team missions who thought of Information/Education's participation primarily in terms of the availability of high-powered translator/interpreters, I think it is fair to say that the Analysis Unit very much stamped its signature on the missions and that they were very much in keeping with the style of the Unit as it had developed during the UNTAC period.

The Control Teams missions were a series of visits to the provinces to examine and analyze provincial government documents pertaining to the administrative fields for which the Paris Agreements mandated that UNTAC should "control." This had little or nothing to do with the most clear-cut statement of the Analysis Unit's mandate -- that of examining the effectiveness of the UNTAC media and the role of UNTAC more generally -- and a lot to do with the role the unit had defined for itself of investigating and analyzing changing political

developments. The Control Team missions were a response to widespread political violence and an attempt to use UNTAC's mandated control over government bodies to deter it. Since the purported goal of the missions was to make UNTAC's mandated "control" more effective, the missions were perhaps more logically linked to the Control Unit of Information/Education; however, I was the only Control Unit officer to go on a control team mission.

The Control teams, headed by UNTAC Civil Administration, included representatives of the different UNTAC divisions, notably civil police and finance, as well as Information/Education. The idea was to descend as a team unexpectedly on government offices at the provincial and district level and exam the documents found there. While UNTAC was not authorized to actually take documents, it was authorized to examine them and to photocopy them -- either by bringing them temporarily to the local UNTAC offices or by using a photocopy machine which was brought, along with a generator.

Much later, when journalist Sue Downey would allow me to check the transcript of parts of an interview she had done with me, to be part of an oral history of the UNTAC period, I quibbled about the fact that she referred to the missions in her prefatory remarks as "raids." Downey claimed that everyone she had talked to had called them raids, from Steve Heder to Norodom Ranariddh. It was true that the team's activities were

nothing more than what UNTAC was mandated to do routinely, namely checking administrative files for the time period for which UNTAC had direct control. However, given the logistics of the operation and the paucity of UNTAC officers who could actually read Khmer, UNTAC had very limited capacity to check records in this way at any level, and particularly not at the provincial level. Thus to suddenly exert that authority constituted a "raid."

And UNTAC personnel involved were very much looking for evidence of inappropriate behavior. Officers coming back from missions would talk about how "lucrative" the mission had been, by which they meant how much incriminating evidence they had uncovered. Officers were consciously aware that they were exercising a power authorized by the wording of the Peace Agreements that in the normal workings of a government could not be exercised. Ultimately, the missions proved justifiable by how easily they did uncover evidence of inappropriate activities within provincial administrative bodies.

There were six missions, to Prey Veng, Takeo, Kampong Cham, Kandal, Sihanoukville, and to the FUNCINPEC-controlled zone. I participated in the missions to Takeo and Sihanoukville. Ledgerwood (1996: 128) describes a letter from Hun Sen to Yasushi Akashi about the control team activities.

The letter, which was given intensive publicity in the CPP/SOC media, characterized Control Team

missions as paramilitary "encirclement and search operations" during which SOC officials were "detained." Their activities, Hun Sen proclaimed, "reminded [him] of the despicable acts committed by the Pol Pot regime." he alleged that they constituted "an attempt by UNTAC to destroy the peace plan."

In fact, in my experience, which I think is typical, the tone of the missions was always calm, and interactions, both on the side of the UNTAC officers and the people whom we met, who, despite some awkwardness and nervousness, made every show of agreeing to cooperate with us in any way possible. A mission would typically end with a formal meeting in which the mission team would meet with the governor and ranking administration officials of the province, (including, in the case of Takeo, the entire battery of district chiefs) and speeches would be made in which everyone pledged their support to the ideals of the Paris Agreements.

In the Takeo mission, I was part of a team of four or five people who focused on the Tram Kok district police station, while a larger team went to the provincial capital. (In general, when part of the team focused on a given district, it was liable to be a district where claims of human rights abuses or other irregularities had come to our attention. Tram Kok is the one district of Takeo province which extends into the mountainous areas where there was Khmer Rouge activities.) We calmly asked to see documents and for locked cabinets to be unlocked. We photocopied anything that seemed to be promising, through

most of the day. Later one of the complaints lodged against us -- a very Khmer one! -- was that we worked through the lunch hour and did not let the SOC policeman in charge go home for lunch. In fact, we did offer to share our food with the man, who was, in any case free to leave at any time, as long as we could continue working ourselves.

Part of what SOC objected to in the missions was the fact that the operating assumption was that SOC was in an adversarial position with UNTAC. Despite the display of cooperation on both sides, we all knew that we were out for dirt -- and this, and the fact that there was an element of surprise was what ultimately made it a "raid." Our assumption was that if we broke for an hour or two the very documents we were looking for would be gone. In Tram Kok we went back a second day, partly because we realized that a notebook we had not photocopied may have been significant; we were not at all surprised that this notebook was now gone.

What we were looking for more than anything else was documentary evidence that linked officials to human rights abuses and suppression of opposition parties. In Tram Kok, the documents we photocopied included both official government documents and notebooks with the minutes of police meetings. Both provided direct evidence that SOC police continued to keep records on members of opposition parties well into the UNTAC period, when police were supposed to have become

politically neutral. More importantly, we found evidence in the police notebooks of police ties to undercover groups which we had reason to believe were involved in harassing minority parties.

The most general finding that came out of the missions was the degree to which the state and the party continued to be intertwined -- not really so surprising, given the fact that the very definition of the state, prior to UNTAC, had been to serve the goals of the (Leninist) party. This failure to separate the state and the party can be interpreted in a number of ways. It no doubt in some ways represented the deliberate attempt to defy the UNTAC mandate that the state and the party were to be separate. It certainly represented an unwillingness to just "roll over" in the face of the organization of other parties. It also, I think, illustrated the fact that the task of conceiving and enforcing a new system at the grass roots level was not easy, and that UNTAC had only begun to scratch the surface in understanding what political systems were actually operative and what means would actually be required to put a new system in place.

In subsequent missions there was less element of surprise, and no doubt some documents were hidden away at the advice of Phnom Penh; but there continued to be abundant evidence that the state and the party continued to be deeply intertwined, no doubt because the system was so firmly rooted

in the two bodies that it was not easily eradicated, and at the grass-roots level it probably would have been difficult to even conceive of what it meant in practical terms. The missions also continued to find significant evidence of human rights and financial abuses, although it never came across the "smoking gun" it was looking for that would have provided the real key to individual responsibility for specific abuses. In general, records were kept so unsystematically, particularly at the district level, that the provincial level government workers assigned to take care of them would themselves have found it a gargantuan task to locate and remove incriminating evidence -- and may often not have felt they could evaluate what was important. The simplest solution for them was to burn everything. Once, in Kampong Cham, the UNTAC team came across the ashes of newly burnt records; on another occasion, in one of the districts in Sihanoukville, they arrived just as SOC administrators had begun burning documents.

There was one mission to areas controlled by FUNCINPEC, and the Analysis unit certainly was just as eager to uncover dirt there, and certainly was under no illusion that there was less dirt to find there than there was in SOC zones. However, the general consensus of the Analysis officers who participated in the mission to the FUNCINPEC zones was that it was poorly executed, with little element of surprise, and relatively little of interest was uncovered.

On the one hand, it is important to emphasize that the Control missions clearly fell under the mandate of the Paris Agreements and that the UNTAC staff involved made every show of politeness and respect to the SOC and FUNCINPEC officials they dealt with on these missions. Moreover, the missions resulted in important findings which UNTAC was able to use, in some measure, as it continued to push to create a politically neutral atmosphere in the country. But, however much the results of the mission showed that the missions were needed, it is true that the missions were not without an invasive quality, and there was a disturbing quality to the missions that had to do with the fact that we were non-Cambodians demanding cooperation from Cambodians. It was missions such as these which pushed to the limit the differences in style in the different members of the unit.

As I have said, my account of the Analysis/Assessment Unit has less to do with the issues this dissertation is primarily concerned with -- the negotiation of public discourse -- than a description of the Production and Control units of Info/Ed. Nevertheless, much like the satirical cartoons I focused on in Chapter Six, the work of the unit does raise interesting questions of the role of critique in relation to public discourse, and the circumstances under which critique can take place. Analysis served as a critique of Info/Ed production materials; beyond that, it served as a critique of UNTAC itself within UNTAC; finally, it served as a critique of the ways different

political bodies lived up to the terms of the Paris Agreements. This critique was technically in-house, although widely read outside of UNTAC and sometimes re-printed in the press. There were doubtless those who would have like to euphemize the voice of the Analysis/Assessment Unit, but the need for an oppositional voice of this kind grew logically out of the philosophy of the mission itself and the massiveness of the organization. Ultimately, it was a voice calling for the mission to live up to its stated game rules, that is to say, to the most explicit statement of what had been worked out, like etiquette, as principles of cooperation, the Paris Agreements.

## **Chapter Nine: UNTAC Information/Education Division, Part 2**

### **Control Unit**

Since most of my own work was done in the Control Unit, it is both the unit I know the best and the one which it is hardest to view objectively. A basic failure of the U.N. attempt to put into practice the Paris Agreements was its failure to fully exercise its mandated control over the fields of defense, public security, foreign affairs, and, the task of the Control Unit, information. This represented, in part, the fact that the notion of such a control was ill-conceived or, at the very least, incompletely thought out as a plan. No doubt it is fair to admit that the U.N. attempts to exercise control were often weakened by disorganization and inefficiency, as well as the fact that the U.N., and many of the people the U.N. tended to hire, were more traditionally in the role of avoiding control or the appearance of control. But even if these issues had not been a factor, it is valid to say that control was not something easy to do. It took time to understand what "control" meant or could mean in actual practice and to figure out what means were available and practical for putting it into effect. Given the actual nature of control, the U.N. provided very few staff to exercise it, and

there were very few institutional mechanisms to back up those staff.

Control initially fell under Heder's jurisdiction as acting deputy director of Info/Ed, and it was he, along with Carney, who initially set the agenda for the unit. Susan Manuel, an American mission appointee journalist, was the ranking officer in the unit at this time. The fact that Heder was working in both units had something to do with the fact that I initially worked more closely with Analysis than Control. I had also initially gravitated away from control, because I found it difficult to define for myself what the unit was really attempting to do or what skills I could bring to it. We were all, I think, initially somewhat uncomfortable with the idea of "controlling." The watchword, originating with Heder, was that "control" was to mean effecting "de-control" -- that our goal was not to censor the press but to effect a transformation toward greater freedom of the press. This notion appealed intuitively, but the concrete steps to be taken toward this end were far from apparent. One basic step toward this end would be the creation of a Media Charter, which would declare basic principles of the freedom of the press as well as its basic ethical obligations. We would also work toward the creation of a journalists' association which, free from the state and drawing on the media of all factions, would put the task of regulating the media on journalists themselves. Control was also, from the beginning, concerned with the task of gathering

information about the media -- perhaps the role I felt most comfortable with myself. We tried to figure out the bureaucratic structures of the various media bodies and to establish a "control" presence there by regular visits and attending board meetings. This meant not only establishing a presence in relation to television, radio and print media in Phnom Penh, but some kind of presence in relation to provincial radio and television, to the national Ministry of Information, and the provincial offices of Information and Culture. For those control officers, like myself, who read Khmer, part of our job was to read and assimilate media monitor reports.

Fairly early on, Analysis and Control jointly set up a team of Cambodian media monitors who would read newspapers and watch television and write summary reports (in Khmer). For Analysis, these served as a basis for analytical reports on the politics of the country. For Control, they served as a way of checking on the media as media.

Control was always less cohesive as a unit than Analysis, and there were significant comings and goings of staff. Some of the people on the roster of control officers seemed to have little if any effective role or were there for relatively short periods of time, and I will not try to talk about these people. For me the core staff of the unit were Manuel, her Cambodian translator/assistant (who became head of the media monitors), myself and two other Khmer-speaking information officers, and

Valentin Sviridov, who was appointed as director three months after I'd joined the unit.

Sviridov was a long-term Russian foreign service officer working on the Southeast Asia desk, who came directly from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with no previous U.N. experience. He spoke French (better than English) and Vietnamese. His appointment made him deputy director of the Information/Education Division as a whole, in addition to director of the Control Unit. It was understood that his appointment, in typical U.N. fashion, was a political move intended to balance out the position of Tim Carney, a long-term U.S. foreign service officer. Sviridov's appointment ended up serving to diffuse some tensions within the Control Unit, and helped make it possible for me, after having started out with one foot in Analysis, to more gracefully integrate myself into Control. I remain grateful to him as a genial administrator accustomed to bending to bureaucratic reality who gave the people under him enough space to do their work. The main criticism I have of him is that he had so little sense of mission.

Sviridov continued to live in the compound of the Russian embassy and told me once, in a tone of voice that implied that it would be silly to try to pretend otherwise, that he was still in effect an employee of the Russian government -- a statement that Carney, whatever formal or informal links he maintained to the U.S. state department, would never have made. Two or three times Sviridov made statements which implied that he

thought I was myself working for the U.S. embassy or at least had regular contacts with people there, which as it so happened was not the case. I enjoyed his nicknames for me: first "Cop Marston" and, later, "Brother John", which he soon explained was a reference to the name of one of the U.S. bombs regularly dropped on Laos during the war. Heder's style in Analysis, which had been my experience of how things were supposed to work in UNTAC, was to circulate any and all memos that came his way to the people under him, after reading them himself with great speed and efficiency. Sviridov exasperated those under him by not circulating types of reports we had been accustomed to reading. His style was to come to your office and personally hand you a report he had received, with a few words about how interesting it was, as though he was doing you a favor in letting you read it (never mind that I had already read it and six other more relevant reports from the stacks on my Analysis office-mates' desk). No doubt this style had something to do with his experiences in the Russian foreign service. After giving voice to our complaints, we got a few more reports or memos but never as much as we were accustomed to under Heder. The appointment of Sviridov meant that Heder was no longer in the chain of command between Carney and Control, and he began devoting himself exclusively to the Analysis Unit, whose work load, indeed, was increasing exponentially. Carney was probably always less interested in Control than the other two units, and Sviridov's

presence as director probably made it all the more expedient for him to keep it at arms' length.

If anyone can be said to have defined the sense of mission of the Unit, it was perhaps Susan Manuel. As a longtime journalist herself, she brought to her work a basic understanding and moral commitment to issues of journalistic ethics and the freedom of the press. In particular, it was Manuel, more than anyone else, who assumed the responsibility for creating the Media Charter -- later called the Media Guidelines -- which over time came to define the goals of the unit more than anything else. Manuel was assigned by Carney to put together the Media Charter. She based it in part on similar laws and manifestos that she was able to assemble from different countries. The draft document was discussed in sessions of a Media Working Group which called together representatives of the various factions and media bodies. These sessions themselves (I describe one in Chapter One) became drawn-out pieces of political theater, conducted in English, French, and Khmer, so that every statement was dignified/bureaucratized by being translated into the other two languages.

It is not totally clear to me what role Carney had originally intended for the Charter to play. Certainly, many of us in the unit assumed that the Media Charter would have the force of law or official policy, and might even be enacted by the Supreme National Council, so it was a disappointment when,

after discussion with U.N. lawyers, the charter was reduced to the level of "guidelines," with no mechanisms for enforcement. Nevertheless, the Media Guidelines were widely distributed and served in the eyes of many journalists as representing what the U.N. saw the role of the media as being; as such they had considerable effect. Certainly they were what we as a unit continued to work for. The Media Guidelines were remembered and cited by journalists and Ministry of Information officials well into the year following the elections and stood as at least one reference point in ongoing debates.

Other U.N. laws and rules concerning the media were put into effect when a U.N. penal code and electoral laws were drafted and enacted -- to the distress of the Control Unit, which typically would only learn of the codes after it was too late to lobby for our own perspective. The articles concerning the media in the penal code, in particular, were harsh and very different in spirit from the Media Guidelines, and would be used as a basis for imprisoning journalists in the post-UNTAC period.

The idea of forming a journalists' association was a recommendation in a report that had been given to Info/Ed by UNESCO at the time that UNTAC entered the country. The Control Unit's subsequent attempts to form a journalists' association were maladroit and totally unrealistic. However, the basic operating assumption, that the formation of a journalists' association was the next logical step in the creation

of a free-market journalism, does seem to have been valid, and the gestures made by UNTAC in this direction may have laid some groundwork toward the formation of associations and the negotiation of their role that has taken place since UNTAC.

The formation of a journalists' association became a major priority of Sviridov when he first entered the unit. Basically, the strategy for the formation of a journalists' association meant little other than the U.N. declaring that it was formed and calling a mass meeting of journalists to try to get them to discuss its structure and content. The meeting inaugurated the opening of a new Information Center, where the public could go to read UNTAC materials and the campaign materials of the various parties. It was also timed to coincide with the printing of the Media Guidelines, which were distributed. The meeting was well-attended by Cambodian journalists, who very quickly devoured the over-priced hors d'oeuvres we served. Various speeches were given on the role of the press. I remember in particular an eloquent speech by a deputy director of the electoral division, in which he talked about the importance of an independent press at the time of elections. What he was oblivious of, and what, more embarrassingly, various speakers from our own division were also oblivious of, was the fact that at that time there was virtually no media body which could be said to be independent, that media still only existed within the context of political faction. So it was not surprising that, when it came time to discuss possible officers for the association,

there was no one who was regarded as sufficiently neutral to even stand as an officer, and there was no agenda for the association which could be mutually agreed on. This was so obvious to the journalists in attendance that there was not even room for debate. The conclusion of the journalists attending the meeting was that the "association" should continue to hold meetings and present speakers, but that it should be the U.N. that should be responsible for the content, and no officers should be elected. In effect, they told us that they were not ready for an association but were willing to come to U.N. seminars. We did hold a couple more seminars, and on department reports we claimed to have formed a journalists' association, but this had little real meaning. Journalists I talked to privately said that the idea of an association was good, but it wasn't the right time.

For me, particularly in the early days, Control meant learning about newspapers and provincial ministries of information and culture and writing reports about them. Different Control officers were assigned radio, television, and one of two groups of newspapers. I worked with the newspapers *Kampuchea*, *Prâcheachon*, and *Nokorbal Prâcheachon*. Periodically, I would also go to provincial capitals and write up reports on the information activities there, both the activities of the Provincial Ministry of Information and Culture (the two ministries had not yet been divided as they had at the national level) and whatever information activities

the smaller parties were engaged in. I tried to understand the flow of information in the country as it related to UNTAC and the promotion of a neutral political atmosphere.

For a time, at the three newspapers, I primarily devoted myself to interviewing staff and trying to understand what was going on there. This, we hoped, also constituted something of a dialogue about the nature of media. As part of our mandated control, we asked to be able to sit in on regular editorial meetings. *Kampuchea* and *Nokorbal Prâcheachon* simply claimed that there were no such meetings. (Months later there was an awkward moment when I stumbled in on one such meeting at *Kampuchea*. By that point my presence or non-presence seemed academic. I sat in long enough to maintain face, then left.) *Prâcheachon*, the CPP party newspaper, more forthrightly simply refused the request. Later I had occasion to see a leftist British magazine which reported in outrage that UNTAC had even "demanded" the right to attend the staff meetings of the official party newspaper -- never noting that our "demand" had never been granted, and that UNTAC had little recourse in the situation, never mind that the Paris Agreements had mandated control over the field of information.

Basic policy questions about what should be controlled, and in what way, were never answered for the unit as a whole. Journalist Sue Downey, in a conversation during the months following UNTAC's departure from Cambodia, told me that she

had asked Tim Carney early in the UNTAC period how he was going to distinguish between state media and party media. She said that he never really answered her question and that subsequent events showed that he never really had. My own question, posed in a memo during the mission and also unanswered, was slightly different, but related to the same underlying issues. At what point do we, as "controllers" of the media, allow a clear political stance, recognizing that the political stands of each party must be freely heard in an election, and at what point do we push for a stance of neutrality, for fear that the media unfairly has a capacity to bias public opinion.

State of Cambodia itself made decisions about which of its former bodies should be considered state and which should be considered party, but these distinctions always seemed somewhat arbitrary. There is some indication that CPP had anticipated that UNTAC might take much more control over state mechanisms than it did (and perhaps hoped that state employees would receive UNTAC salaries or that state bodies would be eligible for aid). As it so happened, UNTAC never had the power or resources to effectively "take over" state mechanisms. We felt, in Control, however, that the mandate of the Peace Agreements should give us authority in relation to media bodies. We never made any explicit distinction between "state" and "party" media in relation to this authority, maybe because in most cases this distinction would have seemed

arbitrary. Perhaps another U.N. administration might have chosen to distinguish between *Kampuchea* newspaper and *Prâcheachon* or the opposition *BLDP Weekly Bulletin*, simply because *Kampuchea* had, shortly before UNTAC entered the country, been declared "state," but the problems we faced with both kinds of paper were essentially the same. UNTAC Civil Administration argued that *Nokorbal Prâcheachon*, published by the Ministry of Public Security, should, like the police in general, be totally neutral politically. To me, in late 1992, the paper seemed like one of the few with any editorial vitality, and I wouldn't have wanted to totally squash that -- even though we pushed the paper when its news stories extended to the point of slanderous attacks on other parties. The situation called for decisions to be made about when we would encourage neutrality (itself almost impossible to enforce) and when we were merely trying to discourage violations of journalistic ethics (also nearly impossible to enforce). These decisions were never made at a higher level, and those of us on the ground level essentially floundered to arrive at an intuitive sense of what was appropriate.

Intuitively we felt that broadcast media needed to be more neutral politically than print media, although since smaller parties had small broadcast facilities on the border, and eventually in Phnom Penh, one wondered to what extent it was equitable to insist that the State of Cambodia broadcast media was "state" and therefore neutral. In any case, we in practical

terms did not have the force to totally divorce SOC media from an editorial stance.

Thus, for instance, Civil Administration in Battambang province could tell local television that they should cover the opening of the party officers for parties other than CPP, but there was little to make them do it. On an early visit to Battambang, radio and television officials invited us to have regular staff in Battambang and essentially take over the broadcasting operations. From the point of view of these intermediate-level radio and television officials, they weren't so concerned one way or the other with what was broadcast -- but they didn't want to be responsible for what was broadcast in the eyes of the party; they wanted to be able to claim that someone else made the decision and not them. From our point of view, we wondered what difference it would make if we had regular staff based in Battambang or not. Why should we assume they would be more likely to follow our directions if we were based there than if we only visited there regularly? What reason would we have to assume that we would have anymore power there than we did in Phnom Penh? Ultimately, SOC/ CPP was in a position to only do what it was forced to, and UNTAC, for whatever reason, was not willing to commit the resources to force the issue.

We met regularly with *Nokorbal Prâcheachon* in connection with politically slanted articles which implicated opposition party members in crimes or implied that opposition

party members were linked to the Khmer Rouge. The editor sometimes took the tack that what he was printing was accurate, but also gave us to understand that he was at least sometimes under pressure himself -- sometimes in relation to articles about crime or corruption that stepped on powerful people's toes. So we saw our role as defending him as well as negotiating with him to encourage more politically objective reporting.

My own work was primarily with SOC media, and, indeed, since SOC had the largest media, the work of control inevitably fell most heavily on SOC; however, we saw it as our goal to work with the media of all the parties. Manuel, in particular, worked with BLDP and FUNCINPEC. BLDP had been the first party to form a bulletin which was openly in opposition to SOC/CPP. As such, it was both courageous and journalistically amateurish. Manuel was both its defender and worked closely with them when she felt the journal had been guilty of journalistic irresponsibility. We were especially concerned, with all the opposition parties, with articles which were expressly anti-Vietnamese and which called for the expulsion of the Vietnamese population from Cambodia. BLDP had no objection to Manuel attending board meetings, and was probably the most genuinely cooperative of the major parties with our efforts, no doubt because they had the most to gain. For logistical reasons, our unit was able to conduct relatively little monitoring of radio broadcasting from the Thai-

Cambodian border, which, unlike SOC radio, was not translated or summarized by Foreign Broadcast Information Service. It is a legitimate criticism to say that this was another way in which we were more lax in subjecting the parties from the border to "control" than we were SOC/CPP. However, the broadcast range of these stations was quite small, and we knew that they were in some ways operating from a position of weakness in the country. We did, at least, pay token visits to the stations, one Khmer-speaking Control officer to the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) station and I to the FUNCINPEC station, which was better equipped than I would have expected. It was one of the FUNCINPEC transmitters from the border which was brought to Phnom Penh for the new FUNCINPEC station which would broadcast from Ranariddh's home.

It was the philosophy of the control units of UNTAC Civil Administration, as well as Info/Ed, that UNTAC had a priori control -- that is to say, that we had the right to see what was going to be printed or broadcast before it came out and had the right to demand that something be changed at that time. In actual practice, it was close to impossible to exercise control before the fact, and we had to be satisfied with lodging complaints about things that had already come out. As the election approached we became increasingly concerned over blatantly partisan television news reports, particularly those which reported on arrests for theft and other crimes and showed ID cards indicating that the arrestee was a member of

an opposition political party. Most of these reports also made an assumption of guilt even though the persons in question had not yet been tried.

At one point the control officer covering television asked me to come along to broach this issue with television authorities. We decided to tell them in the most straightforward terms that they were prohibited from making broadcasts which were defamatory of other parties in this way. We specifically attempted to conduct a priori control, waiting until the control officer covering TV, who made regular visits to the station, had seen a tape of this kind prior to broadcast, in order to very clearly and specifically order that this could not be broadcast. I recall that we very consciously did not check for approval with Sviridov or Carney on this, because we suspected that they would not approve of such an overt confrontation. Indeed, this may have been the first time we were explicitly claiming the right to exercise control rather than merely open up matters for discussion. We talked to the production manager who referred us to the station manager, who in turn insisted that the only person who could make the decision was the ministry official in charge of radio and television programming. By the time we were allowed to see him the program had already been broadcast, but we continued to push our statement in no uncertain terms. This was the start of a period when it became our specific strategy to aggressively protest programming which defamed other

parties. We had little real control over this, but it meant that television staff had to confront us and openly defy our position. Our initial efforts were well received in Info/Ed, and we felt that we had clear support to continue doing this. The officer assigned to television ended up leaving UNTAC for a period of time, and in the period leading up to the election, I ended up taking over his liaison work at the station. It was something of a cat and mouse game: my coming to the studio, trying to see as much of what was planned for the evening as possible, to do so trying to wander through as many rooms as possible, in case something was being prepared in a room I wasn't monitoring, the assumption always being that if anything controversial was about to be aired, television staff would try to keep me from seeing it. Periodically, something would come up which we couldn't approve of, and I would go through the process of confrontation -- to the point that the confrontation itself came to have something of the predictable quality of routine -- a sort of agreeing to disagree. I can only remember once where something was changed prior to broadcast. In effect the change in wording we agreed on was nothing more than taking away a reference to a specific party and substituting conventional indirect language that in the socialist period had been used to refer to the party anyway. However, it seemed to us that the kinds of news broadcasts we were protesting were beginning to occur with less frequency, if never totally disappearing. We liked to believe that our tactics were having

some effect; this is, of course, difficult to judge. As the confrontations became more routinized, our strategies became more refined. The next step was to begin putting our orders into writing; the step after that was to run back to the office, make a statement for Carney to sign, and bring the signed statement to the television station. These were obvious procedures, but it took time for the obvious to occur to us. Again, this never resulted in the station yielding on a given broadcast, but one could feel the effect of the signed, written document on the nervousness of the lower-level staff. Still, a signed, written document meant nothing unless UNTAC was willing to back it up with force, which it wasn't -- so it was an elaborate game of bluff.

We came to realize that many of the more objectionable materials were not originally coming from Ministry of Information television and radio departments, but from the information division of the Ministry of National Security, which produced "Security Minutes" to be broadcast twice a week, mostly consisting of crime reports. It was the information division of the Ministry of Public Security which was also responsible for the newspaper *Nokorbal Prâcheachon*. The Ministry of Information people told us that they had no jurisdiction over the programming that came from Public Security; they had to broadcast it. Ministry of Public Security, of course, was telling us just the opposite, that they just came up with what they could, and it was the responsibility of the

national television people to decide whether it was appropriate for broadcasting or not.

All this was taking place at the same time that, along with Analysis officers and UNTAC staff from Civil Administration, I was participating in the "control missions" which I wrote about above. I was more and more convinced that the examination of documents was central to what control should be about. I was motivated in part by my awareness that the discussions we had with ministry officials were not in and of themselves leading anywhere and were sometimes obscured by our lack of reference to the nature of chain of command. It was in this context, that I decided to go to the information office of the Ministry of Public Security and ask to see transcripts and other materials pertaining to the security minutes broadcasts. I went by myself; it seemed to me that this could be a starting point for making the viewing a documents a routine part of my job. Once I had looked at the transcripts I was originally given, I began looking at other documents on the shelf that might be relevant. At this point, the woman in charge of the office came in, told me I wasn't supposed to be looking at those documents, and grabbed them away. I followed her, saw where she'd stashed them behind a desk, and grabbed them back, making it clear that it was my position that the U.N. was entitled to see such documents, as was mandated by the Paris Agreements. By now the young man who was the woman's immediate supervisor, had come up;

he was more savvy than she was about the role of the U.N. and the implications of my request to see the documents, but just as wary of the personal consequences to him of allowing me to read them. I proceeded to read through the stack of documents and identified three that I wanted to take and photocopy, which led to the next confrontation with the young man. He argued that my taking the documents could put him at risk, even physical risk, and that he gave me his word that I would have access to the three documents the next day, once he had checked with the head of the information section. I was not surprised when the next day the head of the information section was not there and the office where I had been looking at documents was locked. I proceeded to another unlocked room and sat down at the desk to look at whatever documents I found there, coming across, among other things, a police report which, at a time when police were supposed to be politically neutral, reported on political activities by opposition parties at Phnom Penh Buddhist temples. One was always amazed at how close to the surface incriminating documents were, if we were only in a position to look at them, which theoretically we were supposed to be.

The head of the Ministry of Public Security information office, who happened to be a new appointee, continued to never be available when I came to visit, and when I heard that he was conducting a meeting at the office of *Nokorbal Prâcheachon*, I went over to that office and sat down in the

room with the meeting. He proceeded with the meeting for a while and then, becoming increasingly agitated, asked to see me in the office, and told me that I could not be present at the meeting. I told him that I was still waiting to see the documents and that as an UNTAC information officer I had every right to attend the meeting, a point that had been clearly established since my first contact with the newspaper. He canceled the meeting and left, and I never saw him again. In retrospect, it is easy to ask what the point of all this exchange was, and to wonder if administrative mechanisms could have been put in place that would have made it possible to avoid confrontations of this sort. My responses were certainly ad hoc in nature; however, it was the nature of the situation to do what in a given situation seemed logical and appropriate; it is hard to imagine any sort of effective role which would not have in some sense been confrontative. No doubt it would be difficult to say that I or UNTAC "won" in this situation, and there was a sense in which it came down to us making a nuisance of ourselves to make our point -- but we did at least force the issue of control, force SOC officials to demonstrate palpably that they were not cooperating in the way they claimed they were.

Just as the Ministry of Public Security had an information service which produced security minutes for radio and television, so did the Ministry of National Defense -- the difference being that we'd relatively little to complain about

from them. They were partisan to the extent of depicting the Khmer Rouge in a negative light, but since the Party of Democratic Kampuchea was not participating in the elections, we were willing to let this programming appear, and inclined to accept its overall veracity. When, in the weeks before the elections, the defense minutes suddenly began broadcasting reports claiming links between FUNCINPEC and the Khmer Rouge, we were taken aback, because we'd never taken the time to figure out how the Ministry of Defense information service worked, or how to lodge a complaint in a way that would be effective. The attacks on FUNCINPEC included interviews with Khmer Rouge defectors in which the defectors talked about having conducted joint operations with FUNCINPEC. The control officer in charge of radio went directly to the defense information production office and complained vocally (resulting in an internal defense ministry memo, somehow supplied to our office, which talked about the "immoral" behavior she exhibited in lodging the complaint). I took a more formal approach, going through UNTAC Civil Administration officers who were responsible for Ministry of Defense, being told at Ministry of Defense that we would have to make a formal request for a meeting, waiting well over a week for a reply (near the elections, at a time when a difference of days made a difference), finally talking to a high-ranking officer in a supervisory position over the production teams, knowing that this person was probably not going to

change anything and possibly not even in a position to change anything, but going through the motions knowing that it was important that at least at some level our position had been voiced.

As the elections approached, control activities were often dictated by the electoral schedule itself. Once the official campaign period started, we were preoccupied with simply making sure that UNTAC production materials were played on television, including the televised statements of the different political parties and roundtable discussions with representatives of different parties, which SOC was not motivated for the general public to have contact with. As the officer in liaison with SOC television, it meant I had to be there at the hour UNTAC materials were scheduled to be broadcast, to be sure it was actually broadcast, and to keep track of which UNTAC tape was actually broadcast on which day. SOC didn't hesitate to broadcast extended speeches by Hun Sen; there was little we could do except send a letter of protest. FUNCINPEC by now had its own small television station which could at least broadcast to the city of Phnom Penh, which meant, on short notice, we were trying to figure out who was in control of programming, what kind of programming they were doing, and what they might be doing that would be questionable. FUNCINPEC television itself managed to avoid playing the UNTAC tapes until the last minute, giving as an excuse that they didn't understand the requirements, or that the tapes had

been sent to the main FUNCINPEC office instead of to the television station. FUNCINPEC broadcasts passed the line of political acceptability more than once, reading letters to the FUNCINPEC radio which made libelous accusations against CPP figures, interviewing university students on FUNCINPEC television saying that they knew that CPP was controlled by the Vietnamese. When we protested they asked us why we weren't controlling SOC media. SOC television officials and FUNCINPEC television officials took the similar line of asking me why I was only controlling them when the other side was getting away with murder. Our moral outrage over FUNCINPEC was not too extreme, given that SOC had control over so much more media and had been using it unconscionably against FUNCINPEC and other parties for so long.

UNTAC put up bulletin boards around the country where the different political parties could display their material. In Phnom Penh it was Control who checked the posters -- mostly looking for racist, anti-Vietnamese statements and cartoons.

After the official campaign period there was a four-day "cooling off" period, in which there was to be no more campaigning and no political reporting in the broadcast media or, as we interpreted the rules, in newspapers. The large new newspaper *Reaksmey Kampuchea* complied under protest and printed blank spaces where the articles had been, with bold headlines announcing that this had been censored by UNTAC. The most blatant violation was *Kâh Sântepheap* newspaper,

which not only violated the order, but printed a sensationalized front page which made broad, libelous claims against the FUNCINPEC and included early 1970's photographs of Sihanouk in the jungle with the Khmer Rouge. FUNCINPEC staff came to see Carney immediately to protest. After deliberating on what to do, he wrote a letter of complaint to the newspaper telling they were prohibited from putting out the newspaper until they had printed his letter on the front page. This letter was broadcast on Radio UNTAC. It was shrewdly worded in such a way that it conformed to a media law passed by SOC parliament as well as to UNTAC regulations. To those of us in Control, Carney had always seemed extremely cautious about exercising authority in responses to abuses by the media (too cautious, we felt), so it was cathartic when in this case he acted boldly. Like any such action, it had its costs, and, not too surprisingly, *Kâh Sântepheap* wrote harshly about UNTAC and Info/Ed from that point on.

"Control" meant that UNTAC, as an outside body, designated as neutral and working to fulfill that role, entered into processes of negotiation with Cambodian media institutions with the aim of making them conform to a vision of proper discursive behavior, both in general terms and in terms of the particular situation of the election. Control claimed to be the ultimate arbiter of discursive etiquette; in effect it was one authority negotiating with others a practical discursive etiquette of the media during the UNTAC period.

## **Hierarchies**

A basic theme of this dissertation is that the public construction of hierarchy will be complemented and complicated by the construction of neutrality and that the construction of a public stance of neutrality, while it throws into relief the hierarchies it articulates with, also inevitably tends to define a kind of hierarchy. Here, for reasons of organization, I will discuss hierarchy and neutrality as they relate to UNTAC Information/Education Division separately. However, the question which ultimately concerns me is how the two issues feed each other.

The most fundamental hierarchy we are concerned with here is the relationship between UNTAC and the general population, which, of course, in many ways was not defined as a hierarchical relationship so much as the presence of a neutral force, descending from above, which would help Cambodia through a transition period. The notion that UNTAC was above and apart from everyday Cambodian life was, of course, complicated by the fact that there were Cambodians working for UNTAC. There were of course job hierarchies among the expatriates working for UNTAC as well as among the Cambodians working for UNTAC, which helps to complicate matters.

One very straightforward way of looking at relations within UNTAC is simply to look at how the division functioned in terms of categories of pay, certainly a major indicator of the social dynamics of UNTAC. This was not always an indication of inscribed hierarchies per se, but it was a good indication of broad social divisions. To simplify things a bit, it is fair to say that UNTAC's presence in the country meant that there was a category of expatriates working for UNTAC who often made incredibly extravagant incomes in relation to the Cambodian economy; there was also the category of locally hired Cambodians, who made much, much less, and yet an enviable wage in terms of the Cambodian population as a whole; and there was the category of the general population of Cambodians not employed by UNTAC, who, of course, ranged from rich to poor, but who on the whole had a per capita annual income of what a locally hired Cambodian working for UNTAC made in only one month.

As the U.N. perceived these categories, of course, they were divide into a complex variety of sub-categories. There were several categories of U.N. expatriate employee, from U.N. volunteer, to military personnel, to locally hired civilian personnel, to internationally hired civilian personnel, as well as the different levels within job categories of administrator, professional, or clerical by which the U.N. categorized personnel. Give the ad hoc nature of a mission, these categories sometimes seemed rather arbitrary, and there were certainly

situations where, simply because of job category, staff who were doing the same job or even working much harder could end up making less than other staff, in rather bizarre ways that went far beyond the inequities of any work place. The most significant division of this kind among expatriate personnel in Information/Education was between those who were locally hired and those who were hired internationally, the latter getting a daily subsistence allowance which almost doubled their income. Over time, within a given division, there were some mechanism for negotiating pay level, but this never extended to the point of enabling locally hired Cambodians to rise to the level of international staff.

The most profound categorical distinction in jobs, again, was the distinction between expatriates and Cambodians, with expatriates getting as much as twenty times as much as locally hired Cambodians. This kind of double standard is not unusual in situations of Westerners working in Third World countries, and my purpose in focusing on it is not so much to cry injustice as it is as to point out what a profound categorical difference this was. The ironies become especially acute if we look at the expatriate Cambodians who worked for UNTAC, who either returned to the country and were hired in Phnom Penh or were hired before they left their homes in Western countries; they constituted an unusual category. While the U.N. stipulated that Cambodians themselves should not take positions in which they would be making political decisions, Cambodians from overseas

were hired for their technical skills or as translators. This meant, for instance, that in UNTAC 12, where the Information/Education Division was housed, there were two groups of translators. Staff in both groups were "Cambodian," but translators from one group were hired locally and from the other group were hired overseas. Their work was not the same. Overseas Cambodians worked directly for the central U.N. administration and tended to translate official documents, whereas the locally hired Cambodians worked for Information/Education and did the translation required by the division. The overseas Cambodians tended to have a higher level of education than the locally hired Cambodians. Even so, they were doing very similar sorts of work, and the incredible difference in their salaries pointed to the underlying arbitrariness of the system. Certain Cambodians, not just by their language skills but by their familiarity with the Western or Japanese ways of life, were in an advantageous position. They were rewarded by the degree to which to which they could be seen as apart from, and thus neutral to, everyday Cambodian relations. (There was, of course, some range of pay among locally hired Cambodians, so that a messenger was paid differently from a media monitor or a radio producer, but these distinctions seemed trivial in comparison with the differences between the pay of locally hired Cambodians and international staff.)

Besides those who were actually on U.N. payrolls, the presence of the U.N. created groups of Cambodians who were affected economically them, from businesses contracting with UNTAC to landlords to restaurateurs to shopkeepers to prostitutes, and it goes without saying that the advantages that accrued to them related to the overall political economy of the country. This was not hierarchy per se, but a pattern of strategic negotiation in relation to hierarchies, which could potentially lead to a kind of hierarchy in itself.

True hierarchy in the U.N. system did not correspond directly to job category or income. There were many different kinds of power and privilege within the U.N. system, and there were variable means of access to it, depending on personal connections, language skills, and cultural affiliation. It is certainly a mistake to suggest that a body like UNTAC could have been dominated by a single country, but it is fair to recognize, as Ghosh does (1994), that despite its stance of representing impartially the world, a core of dominant industrial countries did in some sense continue to enjoy that dominance within the U.N. system. This had little to do with actual numbers of employees from a given country on a mission. But there was a hierarchy to the extent that certain functions, in particular the more intellectually defined functions of the U.N., tended to be dominated by staff from Western industrialized nations and Japan. Language was certainly an issue in all this. It was an advantage to know

English or French well; indeed, to not know one of these languages well would have marginalized anyone of any authority. In Information/Education English was more important than French. It is true that in U.N. terms, someone who came from a smaller country was in some ways valorized; this is part of the discursive etiquette of the U.N. Thus there is a sense in which the ideal would be to come from a non-G-7 country and yet have the language and cultural skills of someone who had. There were a few bright and shining stars who fell in that category, but, in my experience, only a few.

Ghosh writes:

Within UNTAC, it was no secret that certain key administrative positions were reserved for the representatives of a small group of wealthy or powerful countries. if this is worth remarking on, it is surely not because the UN happens to reflect the realities of the world that sustains it. Rather it is because the UN itself, as an organization, has no language to deal with those realities. Born in the period of postwar decolonization, the vocabulary of the UN has always been centered on international egalitarianism. Thus the circumstances of a localized peacekeeping operation today, when a variety of powerful global interests come directly into play, represent a problem for the UN's own organizational culture, since that culture possesses no vocabulary to deal with international hierarchy except for the anodyne terms perm five and donor country (1994: 413).

I would not say that the U.N. lacked such vocabulary but that there was an inevitable and necessary etiquette which euphemized it.

For Cambodians within the system, language skills were essential and often much more relevant to advancement than other qualities or experience. The discourse of neutrality was a discourse in English or French. This was widely recognized by the population at large. It is true that to some extent the U.N. tried to help its employees with their English or French, and thus equalized the playing field a bit. It's also true that in a division such as Information/Education, where a significant number of expatriate staff spoke Khmer, this tendency could be a little bit less conspicuous. But only up to a point.

The U.N., of course, made a point to hire returnees from the refugee camps, as was indeed in keeping with the attempt to establish its political impartiality. I don't think it's really fair to say these people were advantaged in hiring or advancement, although it may have seemed so at times to people from within the country. In Info/Ed the numbers of Cambodian staff from the border and from SOC-controlled areas of the country were about the same. It is true that Cambodian staff from the border sometimes had better English skills or were more adept at dealing with foreigners, because they had been doing that in the camps, which was an advantage in the U.N.; however, in the long run it was probably more than overbalanced by their lack of connections in the country.

The question of the degree to which Cambodians who worked with or in other ways dealt with U.N. personnel tended to fall into traditional patterns of patron-clientism is an

interesting and complicated question. Certainly patterns of showing courtesy in the cultivation of relations with superiors continued from before, as well as quid pro quo expectations, some of which led to disappointment. To the extent that traditional patterns existed, they only sometimes worked, either in terms of the superior or inferior roles being played. If someone came to me asking me to help them to get a job, I was relatively helpless unless there were concrete skills which could be put down on an application form -- although if they did have skills which filled a job category, I might be able to push for them to be hired, as in almost any country. Ultimately, the Cambodians who thrived in the U.N. system did so because they were savvy in adapting themselves to the new system, found expatriates who were willing to adapt to them, or were lucky enough to find expatriates whose own cultural expectations were complimentary to theirs. It was a situation where expatriates genuinely did need Cambodians, and a Cambodian who could establish a personal relationship with a U.N. expatriate staff member could indeed find it beneficial, always bearing in mind that these benefits were limited by the temporary nature of the U.N. presence in the country. The U.N., at least in the television materials that were being produced by Info/Ed, consciously tried to construct an image of U.N. personnel as not being aloof and patron-like, and certainly many U.N. staff believed in an etiquette of egalitarianism with Cambodian staff, despite the often crushingly obvious

differences in wealth and power. Those of us who spoke Khmer interacted with them in ways that de-emphasized the hierarchies of language and behavior. It could be argued, though, that the U.N. presence, like that of a colonial power, by creating a dual economy and a situation where a few people could profit enormously by contact with an outside elite, encouraged at least one type of patron-clientism. This was no doubt underlined by the cultural backgrounds of some U.N. staff.

To what extent did the field of power created by the U.N. presence invoke a corresponding field of resistance? I think it is true that on many levels the Cambodian population genuinely welcomed the U.N., for both idealistic and instrumental reasons. They welcomed the prospect of peace and they welcomed the wealth they hoped would come into the country and touch them personally. Correspondingly, they resented the fact that peace and wealth didn't materialize, or didn't materialize as fully as they'd hoped. There was a lot of resentment of the personal behavior of U.N. personnel, who indeed often failed to live up to the ideal of nobility and neutrality, and the folklore which emerged that tended to elaborate on and exaggerate these stories was itself a form of resistance. The Cambodians who worked for Info/Ed were certainly in touch with and participating in the same positive expectations and resentments that the general population did. I'd like to believe that, by and large, they were happy to have

the jobs they had. They knew that, in Cambodian terms, it was a well-paying job and many Cambodian staff clearly felt some excitement about being where the action was. They didn't neglect the practical realities of life, which is to say they may have maintained links to political figures or political factions who had previously supported them; resistance can consist of being less neutral than you pretend to be. When I think of resistance I think of how it bothered me when I noticed that one of the media monitors had enlarged the detail of a political cartoon and placed it under the glass cover of his desk. It showed a Cambodian woman with her arms around an overweight, grossly ugly foreigner whose pockets were stuffed and overflowing with money, telling him, "Oh, you're so handsome." Eventually, shortly before the radio station closed up shop, after my own work for Info/Ed had ended and I was in the U.S., there would be a short strike against Zhou Mei, the head of production, who was resented for what they perceived as her condescending manner. (Unfortunately, this is all too much supported by the tone of her book.) No doubt there were more resentments with more expatriate staff than we acknowledged. Perhaps the most tangible resistance exercised against UNTAC was theft, that became endemic as UNTAC prepared to leave the country, in Info/Ed and elsewhere -- thefts of cars, computers, and other equipment -- theft which we knew could not have occurred without the cooperation of at least some Cambodian staff, the fact that we did not know who

or how many of them in itself contributing to an overall feeling of betrayal. The theft seemed to remind us that self-interest would ultimately prevail over loyalty; it could also have served to remind us how little we had actually given to the Cambodians who were working with us.

UNTAC was publicly defined as having a position of authority in the country; that is to say, a kind of hierarchy was inscribed. It was empowered by the fact that this hierarchy was recognized, at least in certain contexts. The force of UNTAC money, the fact UNTAC brought troops with it, the fact that journalists were covering its activities, and the fact that the signatories of the Paris Agreements, SOC, FUNCINPEC, and KPNLF, found it in their interest to maintain the appearance of cooperating with it, all contributed to its authority, and thus to give officials who worked for UNTAC a hierarchically marked position of authority in the country. UNTAC was in a position to distribute pamphlets as well as radio and television programming which helped give it credibility and inform the public of its goals, which, indeed, were, for the most part, recognized by the general population as being appropriate goals. UNTAC had "control" over key fields of government, including the field of information; in practice this control was limited. A control officer like myself could lay claim to some authority over media officials; that is to say we could claim that at some level our hierarchical position in relation to them was "inscribed." Ultimately, though, what power I enjoyed was only

that which media people were willing to provide or that I was able to negotiate for myself.

## **Neutrality**

Neutrality in the terms of this dissertation ultimately means discursive neutrality -- that is to say, a strategy of etiquette which constructs certain spheres as neutral in order to deflect the tensions the tensions of a political economy. The ultimate question with regards UNTAC is the degree to which it could sufficiently find common ground -- neutral ground -- among the warring factions to hold an election and bring about peace. But to talk about neutrality with regards to the U.N. means ultimately looking at the question of the question of how the U.N. constructed its own neutrality.

The words "a neutral political atmosphere" was a catch phrase which defined what we, in Info/Ed and in other divisions, were working for in preparation for the elections. The U.N. was invited to assume a temporary authority in the country, of course, because its authority, more than that of any Cambodian faction or leader, could be seen as neutral in relation to the conflict in the country -- neutral, it was presumed, because the U.N. was far enough removed from Cambodian society and politics that it had little vested interest in any faction (although even that statement was suspect).

Neutrality, of course, is never clear cut, and the most absolute neutrality would be an absolute indifference, which wasn't desirable either. The most straightforward meaning of the phrase "neutral political atmosphere," as I came to realize it was being used by senior staff, was simply that the election should take place in an atmosphere where political intimidation was not a consideration -- this in itself representing a major challenge, which was never fully achieved. The phrase wasn't necessarily meant to refer to the neutrality of UNTAC itself, which within UNTAC was more or less taken for granted, or to control of the media to the degree that it was "balanced" in relation to the parties standing in the election, but these were also areas in which neutrality was an issue.

The job descriptions for UNTAC staff, both expatriate and Cambodian, called for them to be neutral. Heder (personal communication, 1996) has argued with me that the precise nature of this neutrality could be contractually defined. I prefer to think that, however carefully neutrality is defined, it will inevitably be subject to negotiation in relation to the particular situation in which it is constructed. It is always in some sense an artifice, even if a necessary one.

Ghosh (1994:417) compares UNTAC with the U.N. mission in Somalia, which he sees as less successful, in part because a large U.N. contingent from Italy, the former colonizing country, drew on its extensive connections to the country.

Quite possibly, the Italian contingent in Somalia was attempting to emulate a different organizational style: that of the independent humanitarian relief mission or "Non-Governmental Organization" (NGO), whose success lies precisely in creating credible links with the local population. By contrast, the success or failure of a UN operation appears to depend largely on the efficacy of the barriers between itself and the people of the region where it is located.

While I cannot take this deliberately provocative statement totally seriously, it does raise very interesting questions about the nature of neutrality, which were especially significant in Info/Ed.

I have waited until the end of the chapter to talk about the role of Tim Carney, the direction of Info/Ed, because it is in connection to the idea of neutrality that his role is most interesting. A career U.S. foreign service officer, fluent in Khmer, Carney had worked for the U.S. embassy in Cambodia prior to 1975. Pursing his interest in Southeast Asian studies, he got a masters' degree from Cornell and, in connection with that, put together a monograph which translated and analyzed documents related to the Khmer Rouge, one of the first important books about the Khmer Rouge. Throughout his State Department career, he continued to give conference papers and write articles about Cambodian affairs for academic journals. His work with the U.S. department of state brought him to the various camps on the Thai-Cambodian border where the resistance was based.

Because of his long-standing interest in Cambodia, Carney requested to be part of the UNTAC mission. He and Dennis McNamara, the head of Human Rights, were the only UNTAC officers at the level of division director who actually had expertise on Cambodia, and he was the only one who spoke Khmer. This was both his strength and his weakness as an UNTAC official, because the background which gave him his expertise could inevitably be used to question his neutrality.

I always found it difficult to take seriously the rumors in circulation among expatriates in Cambodia at the time, culminating in an RFI broadcast, which maintained that Carney had been a U.S. intelligence officer. Carney would eventually win a lawsuit against RFI over this broadcast.

Nevertheless, the fact that Carney had been a high-ranking U.S. foreign service officer continues to raise questions. I think of the comments of a non-Cambodian friend who, while not part of UNTAC, had been in a position to observe it closely. Carney's career was not that of an intelligence agent, my friend surmised, it was the career of someone who, as a foreign service officer, worked above intelligence agents, and whose work put him in a position to read and analyze intelligence reports in the process of determining policy. It is a valid question to ask whether, as part of the position Carney was quite open about holding in the U.S. state department, he would have as a matter of course been involved in activities that would cast doubt on his neutrality as an UNTAC department

head. In my own musings on this issue what bothers me most is that I don't know, and suspect I am not in a position to know, what Carney actually did in his role as a foreign service officer. In terms merely of his symbolic role, I think there is reason to question whether it was appropriate for the U.N. to have chosen a high-ranking U.S. foreign service officer for a position such as Carney had -- but they would have been hard-pressed to find someone of similar stature with country expertise.

Was the neutrality of Carney's position ever compromised in actual practice because of his connection to the U.S. State Department? I believe that it was not. Carney certainly used his connections with the U.S. State Department to, for instance, arrange for us to receive Foreign Broadcast Information Service translations of radio broadcasts free of charge, and to arrange for radio UNTAC to be broadcast over Voice of America (just as UNTAC television programming was broadcast on French TV); these things did not seem to seriously compromise our position. From his work on the border, Carney knew some of the leadership of FUNCINPEC and the KPNLF, and they may have felt they had more access to him than SOC figures did, but he was certainly in significant communication with SOC as well. Overall, insofar as I was in a position to observe his decision-making, he seemed genuinely to be trying to be impartial. If anything, he exercised more constraint in his dealing with SOC/PPP than those of us under him would have liked. I believe that he chose to take a stance of neutrality that he felt

was in keeping with his role in the U.N. It was inevitable that he would think like an American and think like someone who had been in the U.S. foreign service for many years. No doubt the way he interpreted the Paris Agreements reflected his cultural biases and his diplomatic training; but everyone in the U.N. inevitably brought baggage of this sort with them.

Heder, responding to an earlier draft of this chapter, wrote about himself and Carney:

Both Heder and Carney were professionally "civil servants," not politicians, Heder in Amnesty, Carney in the U.S. Government, and understood the neutrality of their roles in forms of loyalty and impartially implementing the Paris Agreements and following the political lead of the U.N. The goal is also to inform policy-makers, rather than make policy. Carney and Heder, in particular, came with institutional norms of acting and functioning in a "neutral" way to implement policies laid down by their "democratic" political superiors.

(Personal communication, 1996)

To me it is precisely this general capacity to claim that a civil servant can and should be neutral which is interesting. If Carney and Heder were truly only serving a contractual relation to the U.N. could they have been effective? Probably not. Is it not possible that attitudes that are reflexive to a "neutral" civil servant working for Amnesty or the U.S. Government might prove less than neutral in another context? I think so. Is it possible that, merely as a public symbol, Carney's presence was a threat to the fragile etiquette of

UNTAC? Perhaps. Nevertheless, I believe Carney served UNTAC well.

Sviridov and two Khmer-speaking information officers in Production had worked for the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Heder had once had a grant from the U.S. State Department to do research on the border. But really all of us who spoke Khmer, even if we hadn't worked for a government, had had a history of working with Cambodians which generally could have been construed as giving us bias toward one side or the other. In our work we sometimes drew on contacts in one faction or the other which we'd had prior to our work with UNTAC. Conceivably, this could have biased us in one direction or the other. But in the long run, we seemed to be shaped more by the work we were doing than by any pre-conceptions we brought with us. If the job often seemed to put us in an adversarial relation with SOC, it followed from the fact that SOC was so ubiquitous and its sins were unavoidable. If we wanted to do our job fairly and work for a neutral political atmosphere, we had to be in an adversarial relation with SOC, and there was no noticeable difference between those who came from backgrounds working in the country and those who came from backgrounds of working with refugee communities. In our minds we consciously aimed at serving the Paris Agreements impartially, and were in that sense neutral. Non-Khmer-speaking staff may have sometimes come with a conscious agenda of serving their own country's interests. But more

often than not they saw themselves as simply doing their job; if anything, they represented the neutrality of relative ignorance and indifference.

It was U.N. policy, because of its stance of neutrality, that Cambodians should not be put in positions where they had to make decisions relating to politics. Inevitably, there was no way this line could be drawn in any clear cut fashion, particularly since non-speakers of Khmer ended up being so dependent on Cambodians. Even a translator was subtly shaping policy in the process of translating. In Information/Education the expatriate staff tended to be suspicious of the degree to which Cambodian staff had more links to the factions than they were letting on; there is little question but that the local staff at Info/Ed included Cambodians who were reporting back to different parties. We took this for granted and tried to keep more sensitive documents tucked away in locked drawers. But we had no desire to draw sharp barriers between us and Cambodian staff. We listened to what they had to say and were affected by it just as they listened to what we had to say and, presumably, were affected by it.

Scripts for radio and television were always vetted for political bias. Occasionally, expatriate staff noticed implications of bias, that Cambodian staff had overlooked, but, overall, it did not take long for Cambodian staff to understand the nature of

the "neutral" role they were expected to perform and perform it.

Among the media monitors, we included an item on the form on which they reported on the media where they could give their own interpretations of the significance of the events. At least one media monitor regularly wrote his own analyses of the political scene, because he knew that Heder and the rest of us would be interested in reading them. One of these analyzed the likely outcome of the elections, concluding that CPP would make a poor showing. Heder thought it interesting enough that he translated and, without identifying who the author was, circulated it like other reports from the division, as an example of one Cambodian intellectual's perspective. Certainly the report represented an interesting point of view and it was valid to let people know that some Cambodians interpreted the elections this way. However, the report could have had an effect on shaping opinion in UNTAC, and Heder was later criticized by those who felt that the report itself was obviously incredible and demonstrated Heder's own bias. The story points to some of the complexity of the relation of local staff to expatriate staff in terms of the question of neutrality.

More typical, perhaps, is the role of the Cambodian video director who was responsible for filming video dialogues. Initially, his work was closely supervised, and all the scripts and videotaped dialogues were certainly carefully vetted throughout the mission. The director's work was initially very

closely supervised; the fear was always that as a Cambodian he would have a political bias and that it would somehow demonstrate itself in his work. It became clear, though, that he was able to understand the "neutral" nature of his work, and direct it accordingly. Now, I have no idea how "neutral" the director ultimately was, but it was clear that he could assume that role in relation to Cambodian politics for the purposes of his work for UNTAC.

A similar situation was that of a Cambodian man, recently returned from the border, who worked initially as Susan Manuel's translator and assistant and became head of the media monitors. He in effect, by sheer force of hard work and ability, and by Manuel's devotion to his cause, was able to come to have a similar status in the division as expatriate Control officers, and considerable influence over what would have to be called political decisions, even though he had obviously had links to a specific faction on the border. This was all merely a function of the fact that we had come to trust him. It is reasonable to ask whether this man, whatever his intentions, may have unconsciously interjected the bias of someone from the border; certainly the degree of power he had overstepped the boundaries defined by UNTAC in an attempt to establish its neutrality. But I clearly believe that he attempted to act "neutrally" in the interest of the Paris Agreements, and as such clearly served the mission.

Production materials generated by Info/Ed had to be neutral. This meant different things in different contexts. It could mean searching for styles of language that did not seem biased in one direction or another, often a difficult task; it meant euphemizing certain tensions; it meant using "international" styles instead of Khmer styles (of music, of writing, of graphics, of editing) or trying to find Khmer styles that could be seen as politically neutral. Other times neutrality meant letting all the different parties have a voice. In Control we tried to push for objectivity. We would have liked the media to present both points of view on an issue (we never accomplished that); We would have liked them to be neutral to the point of not telling blatant lies about each other. We pushed for what we thought were international standards of the press, in the hopes that this would represent a kind of objectivity.

Ultimately, this neutrality was artificial. If you looked hard enough you could claim it was an illusion. It distorted the world. Like any public etiquette, it created artificial boundaries about what could and could not be said in a given context. But it did so in a particular context for a particular purpose, which I believe was a valid and decent purpose.

## **Chapter Ten: Discursive Etiquette in Socialist and Post-Socialist Newspaper Writing**

It is not difficult to understand and identify with the sensibility behind the famous short poem by W.H. Auden:

Private faces in public places  
Are wiser and nicer  
Than public faces in private places.  
(1966)

Framed more in the terms of this dissertation, the poem is talking about the ways that public discourse can index the etiquette of more private discourse and private discourses can index the etiquette of more public discourse. Auden's poem is in keeping with a major tradition of Western literature (and in particular poetry) since Wordsworth, which asserts the value of personally-informed etiquettes of discourse and questions the value of the more strained, depersonalized etiquettes of modern life, especially as they constrain human action at a more personal level -- although the poem's cold jab of moralistic wit hints that Auden does know something of what it means to be a public face in a private place. Auden's wariness toward the euphemized, impersonal, and totalizing tendencies of public discourse represents a sensibility similar to that

which has informed a tradition of thinking which declares its distrust of the "massness" of mass media. Certainly, we all feel the strain of public etiquette, which we recognize as being in some way less natural than the more ingrained and spontaneous etiquette we have known since childhood. Stretching the ideas a bit, we can see how this sensibility is connected in some way to that which informs a book like James Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, with its underlying hunger for a world where hidden -- private -- transcripts of resistance could be made public. There is a sense, as I pointed out in the first chapter, that public etiquette only makes sense in terms of what is implicitly known about the private; this in itself suggests a certain cultural logic whereby, sooner or later, for the etiquette to make sense, the private will have to come out.

Despite all this, ever since I have known the poem, a priggish part of me has always mused about whether public faces in private places might sometimes be just what is needed, or whether there are situations where private faces in public places might not be wiser or might not be nicer -- that is to say, might be more of a threat than a liberation.

Discursive etiquette, I have argued, does not mean that public discourse will be more impartial or neutral, but that it will increasingly be subject to pressure to become so. Oral discourse is not inherently more private than print discourse; however, it is often typical for markers of orality to index the

private, just as by printing something or making reference in oral communication to print discourse, it will tend to mark the exchange as in some way more public or dignified by its relation to public life. When Ong (1991: 110-111) writes that the roots of orality are agonistic, he is probably not so much referring to anything inherent in the nature of orality so much as the fact that when print discourse indexes orality, it is often a way of indexing the private in relation to the public; it is the private which is agonistic in relation to the public. And it is perhaps by looking for the private in relation to the public that we find clues to the particular etiquette associated with a public.

In this chapter I would like to examine four Cambodian newspaper pieces, the earliest in 1985, the other three from the months before and after the 1993 elections; each of these pieces in one way or another can be said to be public discourse which indexes the private. (Three of the pieces in one way or another specifically index orality in relation to the print discourse of newspapers.) My intention here is to contrast the discursive etiquette associated with socialism with contrasting discursive etiquettes which emerged in the period of the elections. Inevitably, any choice of four articles such as as these as typical raises questions about what has been excluded; and I must acknowledge that discursive change is much more complex than any analysis of four articles will allow. However, the four articles can at least provide a beginning for looking at

what is logically possible in terms of how the private is indexed in relation to public discourse, and enable us to examine how a limited selection of logical possibilities might relate to changing discursive etiquettes as Cambodian political economy shifted away from socialism. My choice of articles is in many ways intuitive, relating to my gut reactions of differences in style; this chapter is best thought of as an exploration of my gut reactions rather than any sort of final word. However, I believe most observers familiar with Cambodian journalism would agree that each of the four articles is typical of a category of newspaper at a specific time to the degree that it could not have appeared interchangeably with any of the other four pieces.

The first piece, “Good People; Good Work: Comrade Ms. Hâm Mali in the Provincial Education Bureau of Stung Treng Province,” (translated in Appendix A) was published in 1985 and very much evokes the style of writing of that period. It appeared in *Kampuchea*, the first and largest newspaper of the People’s Republic of Kampuchea. *Kampuchea* was the newspaper of the United Front, one of a handful of state-owned newspapers and journals published at this time, including the party newspaper, the newspaper of the armed forces, and the newspaper of the state labor union. The piece is a short description of the life of a provincial bureaucrat, emphasizing her suffering during the Democratic Kampuchea period and

how her conscientious work since 1980 led her to be assigned her current position. It praises her cooperative attitude and the household gardening she does after hours to support her family.

It would be easy to dismiss the formulaic quality of this writing. A Cambodian woman in her mid-30's, who had had a government job in the late 1980's, recently arrived in the U.S., told me, when I showed her the article, that it was "part true, part lies." Questioned further, she said she would have felt the same way if she had read the article in 1985. Her response, I believe, was less a comment on the actual truth content of the short biography, but a way of acknowledging that the piece had an overlay of political rhetoric. It's not my purpose to criticize this overlay of political rhetoric so much as to suggest how it may have related to a particular discursive etiquette.

The article is not a sophisticated piece of writing, but is fairly typical of the period of time it was published, and it is not enough to dismiss it as bad writing. Occasionally articles did appear at this time which displayed greater writing skill but were, I believe, informed by a similar discursive etiquette.

The article specifically aims to present the life of one of the little people and hold it up for public examination as a model. Implicitly, it raises the question, "What is the proper relation of the private to the public?" The short biography comes out of a tradition which explicitly valorizes the role of the "people" in relation to the party and the state but in no way

valorizes self-interest in relation to the party and the state (although it does valorize attention to the needs of one's family). Later in the 1980's it would be possible for newspaper articles to criticize those who put self-interest over public interest, but here the strategy is to hold up public models. There is no specific indexing of the "oral" here, as there will be in the other articles we look at, although it is noted that the piece comes from "the articles of the central women's organization," which may mean unpublished bureaucratic records; there is thus an indexicality to less public bureaucratic records and the implicit suggestion that the discourse of *Kampuchea* includes and puts into perspective the discourse of bureaucratic records.

At the time this article was published, *Kampuchea* was just beginning to publish fiction, and the article may have represented part of a movement to bring more color to the paper by writing about real people's lives. The paper did have a humor section which told jokes, sometimes in dialect, submitted by readers, but humor still seemed very peripheral to the overall tone of the newspaper. Another kind of orality was indexed in a very different way than it would be in the later articles I am looking at, by the fact that a prominent feature of the newspaper was always the printing of the texts of political speeches; the print style of the newspaper and the rhetoric of public speeches were by and large presented as interchangeable. *Kampuchea* was linked to orality in yet

another way: in 1985 work units would have regular political meetings, and a regular feature of the agenda would be to have the people present read out loud from *Kampuchea* and other publications. This was a time when there clearly was a public tradition of orality and it had some precedence over print *per se*.

At this time most of the articles in *Kampuchea* were reports on public meetings, reports on delegations to and from Cambodia, and reports from throughout the country on success in meeting production goals, or such state and party goals as literacy campaigns. Newspaper writing at this time seemed only concerned with news insofar as it related to the fulfillment of party goals. There was no coverage of, say, crime or natural disasters, or anything that was outside the control of the state and party.

The article is agonistic/partisan, very explicitly attacking the Khmer Rouge, but its agonistic stance is that of the party and the state as a whole; there is no indication that people could or should have personal perspectives which would differ from that of the state; if there is such a personal perspective, it does not have a place in public discourse.

The essence of the article is that Comrade Ms. Hâm Mali is a model because her will is consonant with that of the party and state. Like the party and state, she holds the ideal of revolution high. She suffered under the Democratic Kampuchea period and the bitterness of that experience motivates her to

work for the cause of revolution in the current regime. This work is realized, first of all, in terms of specific bureaucratic goals, but also in terms of her willingness to cooperate with non-Cambodian as well as Cambodian comrades. She is held up, not just as a model, but as a model for women; it asserts the comradeship of women. Her story also serves to illustrate the fact that the state now encourages small-scale family enterprises.

The article is full of catch-phrases, which certainly to a reader not caught up in the revolutionary logic of the time seem monotonous and predictable: references to “the genocidal regime,” “the genocidal group of Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, and Khieu Samphan,” “the service of the revolution,” “all the energy of her body and heart”, were very common in public discourse at this time; I suspect they were monotonous and predictable for the average Cambodian on the street even at the time the article was first published. They do, however, serve the function, of reasserting, almost algebraically, truths which were considered basic to the goals of the party and the state.

Perhaps the most artificial mechanism of the article is its insistence on framing the woman's biography in terms of the suffering of the Pol Pot period, in such a way that this becomes the motivation for everything else that it describes, much like the People's Republic of Kampuchea is presented in more general terms as motivated by the experience of the Pol Pot

period, emphasizing the suffering of women under the Khmer Rouge. Other possible driving forces are overlooked.

What does the article euphemize? Clearly it euphemizes the degree to which the woman it describes (like other Cambodians active in the state and party) may have had other motivations than love of the revolution and bitterness toward the Pol Pot period. It certainly does not choose to explore the question of what the exact status of this woman, who prior to 1975 was "active in the struggle to liberate the country from the American imperialists," might have been in relation to the Khmer Rouge or Sihanoukists, and how, even though she is once again in the "service of the revolution," her loyalties may have adjusted over time. When the article praises the fact that she "has strived to cultivate closely the ties to national and international comrades" it makes us wonder why this needs to be a conscious goal and reminds us that not everyone was comfortable with the presence of international advisors. Who was not cooperating and why were they not cooperating? In asserting the comradeship of women, the article was simplifying the complex and contradictory role of women at this time. Surely the people who wrote and read this article were well aware of the tensions that are euphemized here. We see a discursive etiquette at play here both in the fact that these issues are not discussed and by the fact that a model of cooperation is held up.

Even though the article in some ways depicts itself as a story of a woman who stands for all Cambodian women, in actual fact the woman described is a bureaucrat, someone who worked for the state and was probably a party member. Although the article seems to be saying that anyone could follow her example, readers certainly knew at some level that the bureaucracy also excluded people, and that not everyone could rise in the bureaucracy in the same way that this woman did. Thus, even though at one level this is an article about “the people” (and specifically women) as revolutionary comrades working toward the goals of the revolution, it also implicitly acknowledges a hierarchy between those who are part of the state and party bureaucracy and those who aren’t. We could say that it is a strategy of discursive etiquette to neutralize the tension of hierarchy by seeing party and state bureaucrats as representing the population as a whole, and as working for the population as a whole.

In the late 1980’s there was a period of liberalization of the press, when the party was encouraging self-criticism, and newspapers (particularly *Kampuchea*) printed rather daring letters to the editor as well as the kinds of satirical cartoons I focused on in Chapter 3, suggesting the possibility of a new kind of discursive etiquette. There were also a few articles critical of state enterprises. This criticism, however, never extended to the point of criticism of the party itself or the basic principles of socialism. When it seemed to be heading in that

direction, as in the case of *Kampuchea*, there were clamp downs, and after 1989 this period of opening up of the press was over.

The second newspaper piece I would like to look at, “Chea and Chon,” from the party newspaper *Prâcheachon* in the period immediately before the 1993 elections, has a basic similarity to “Good People; Good Work,” even though it appears in a different newspaper at a different time. Like it, it is immediately recognizable as socialist discourse.

The name of the newspaper *Prâcheachon* means “the people” and this word has a socialist ring in contrast to alternative words like prâcheareah (“people/subjects of the king”) or prâcheapolrot (“people/citizens”). It is the word translated as “People’s” in the name of the party: “Cambodian People’s Party.” The name of the article is “Chea and Chon,” that is to say two fictional characters whose names are taken from the parts of the word for “the people,” which is also the name of the paper and the party. The title of the article is written in large script in a box with the faces of two male farmers, one holding the tail end of a hoe balanced on his shoulder, the other with a traditional Khmer scarf (krâma) wrapped around his head, in typical rural fashion. The two faces, young and handsome, are of course those of totally dignified model farmers, with no trace of humor or condescension.

The article is one of a series of pieces with the same heading which appeared in the newspaper two or three times a week during the two months prior to the 1993 elections. It is basically a campaign piece written in dialogue form. One speaker asks what the characteristics of the Cambodian People's Party are. The other speaker answers with a list of the major arguing points of the campaign: that the CPP fought and continues to fight the Khmer Rouge, that no property will be confiscated because it belonged to someone else prior to 1975, that CPP has worked faithfully for national reunification, and that CPP will fight corruption and crime. The first speaker then responds by calling for the people to vote for CPP, summarizing the reasons once again, and the second speaker echoes this.

What my translation may not adequately evoke is the degree to which the diction of this piece is much more sonorous and refined than that of the 1985 article. This is carefully worded writing, by people who at least at a certain level clearly know their craft. The irony here is that it's very difficult to imagine these words coming out of the mouths of two peasants, the fictional Chea and Chon, and it's very hard to imagine this style of writing and logical development appealing to any sort of mass public.

What I'm most intrigued about this piece is the fact that it is written in dialogue -- that is to say, that it indexes orality. The fact that it is in dialogue does attract the reader to it; it

attracted me to it. But when I actually read the piece, I find virtually nothing in the text itself which would call for it to be written as a dialogue.

*Prâcheachon* was founded in 1985 as the official party newspaper, distinguished from the older and more popular *Kampuchea*, the newspaper of the United Front. When I came to work in Cambodia in early 1992, *Kampuchea* had been in decline for some time. The most popular newspaper in Phnom Penh was probably the police newspaper, *Nokorbal Prâcheahon*, which covered crime stories (this in itself something novel in Cambodian journalism at the time) and sometimes ventured into satire; a municipal party newspaper, *Phnom Penh*, took editorial risks and was popular among students and intellectuals. *Prâcheahon* was always the staid official paper, which at this point came out most often and was most widely distributed throughout the country. During the UNTAC period, *Prâcheachon* was one of the newspapers I was assigned to visit regularly, to discuss with one of the editors the plans for the week and any materials from the previous week which we felt violated the principles of a “neutral political atmosphere.” *Prâcheachon* was nothing if not a respectable and circumspect newspaper, and there was rarely anything to complain about on this front. I came to admire the intelligence and integrity of the deputy editor, Khun Sodary, with whom I met regularly.

UNTAC claimed that we had the right to sit in on board meetings and to review articles before they were published. *Prâcheahon* made no bones about not allowing us to do this, and we were powerless to protest. However, Khun Sodary was willing, every week, to go over the master plan for the themes the paper would focus on during the week. In retrospect, the most notable thing about the paper was just the fact that such a master plan existed. The paper made a conscious effort to write editorials and find news that would illustrate the points decided on in advance as goals. That is to say, the paper was organized to be, in a carefully rationalized way, a mechanism of propaganda (khosanaka). (One must keep in mind that the word "propaganda," denoting the deliberately orchestrated promotion of revolutionary consciousness, did not have a negative connotation in a socialist context.) At one point such a master plan of themes for the week would have been generated in conjunction with the Commission for Propaganda and Education; although *Prâcheahon* may not have been working with the Commission at this time, the rational realization of propaganda goals is I believe characteristic of the way that the Commission would have set agendas for the media more generally.

A good example of the kind of propaganda points listed for a week might be the very list of campaign points given by Chon in the dialogue, and one can in fact easily imagine a

writer working from such a list in the process of writing the article.

The fact that it is written in dialogue form emphasizes the idea that these points are not merely the voice of a bureaucratic elite but the voice of the people in general. UNTAC (which also had its propaganda goals) was doing the same thing in television and radio dialogues which depicted rural Cambodians talking about the meaning of the election, although the UNTAC dialogues would at least try to embed the message in some kind of narrative which showed the speakers interacting with each other on a personal level. Here the two voices, Chea and Chon, are virtually identical. It is as though the message is that there is no possible disagreement among the people.

When I try to imagine in what kind of a context such a dialogue might actually be spoken, what comes to mind is two figures standing in front of a political rally rather than two people in conversation. The indexing of orality does serve to make a claim for authenticity, as though to say, these are private viewpoints as well as public ones; that is to say, even though the article must have been written by the people who wrote the other articles in the paper, the convention of indexing orality suggested multiple voices speaking on behalf of the ideas in the rest of the paper. It seems to be claiming that a farmer like Chea or Chon would say this. However, as in the previous article, there is in the last analysis no interest in

particularity of viewpoint. A particular viewpoint is only of interest insofar as it supports the public stand of the party.

What does the article euphemize? Like other socialist writing from the period, and perhaps like the public discourse of almost any country at war, little recognition is given to the possibility of the party not being in control. The kind of detail in the piece which those of us at UNTAC would have found most objectionable was the notion that CPP had seemingly unilaterally opened up the way for Sihanouk to return to the country, rather than this being the result of negotiations among all the factions. Whether it was explicit policy or simply engrained habit, CPP publications during the UNTAC period invariably presented CPP as the driving force in the country as change took place. More generally, the piece (like any campaign piece) simplifies the motivations of the party and the degree to which party members may have acted in their own interests. In taking a stand against corruption the piece overlooks the fact, well recognized by the general public of Phnom Penh in everyday conversation, that there were CPP figures involved in corruption as well.

As in the previous article, the strategy for euphemizing hierarchy is to claim that public rhetoric is ultimately by and for the people. In 1985 all mass media coming out of Phnom Penh was state controlled, and this claim could at least at some level be taken at face value. By 1993, when other parties and other non-state media were appearing on the scene, it was

much harder to claim that one party represented the mass of the population or the class of farmers. Only a relatively small portion of the population would have read this article (mostly a party elite), and even those people probably regarded it less as unquestionable truth than as a set of tactical arguments.

These two newspaper pieces are very much products of a certain time as well as a certain political perspective, and it is not too surprising that the Cambodians I have showed them to find them less interesting interesting than I do, or use the articles as an occasion to talk about politics which has no immediately connection to the content of the articles. I have always assumed that there must be Cambodians who identified with the logic of this kind of rhetoric and would still be sympathetic to the sentiments lying behind it but they are surprisingly difficult to find.

Examined in terms of discursive etiquette, the style of these two pieces does have its own logic. This is an etiquette which grows up around a country at war with a dominant bureaucratic elite but considerable day-to-day chaos. The etiquette does not euphemize the central tension of the time, the war itself, but it does euphemize any internal divisions among those whom it feels should be unified in the war effort; a show of unity becomes a major imperative of public discourse. Given this, the private can only be indexed in relation to the public insofar as it represents a show of solidarity with public goals. Such a discursive framework

inevitably tends to interpret resistance to authority as sympathy for the enemy. A critique exists, first of all, in the discourse of the other side, heard, for example, by radio broadcasts; it also exists as rumor and in apathy toward public media.

In any Leninist state, a basic social tension can be found in the hierarchical relation of the party to the population (no greater than the hierarchies of other societies, but no less). In this context a public stance of declaring the party as representing and working for the people becomes a way of coping with the actuality of this tension as well as avoiding acknowledging it. Where hierarchy is framed in such a way, the lifestyle of a cadre must be "simple and proper," as Hâm Mali was described. One could say that this lifestyle was a sham, as many Cambodians after 1993 did, but it was also an etiquette which grew logically out of a certain political economy.

The remaining two pieces I will look at come from independent newspapers that started around the time of the U.N.-sponsored elections. As I recounted in Chapter 5, it was not until the period of U.N. presence in the country, immediately before and after the 1993 elections, that there was a sudden flourishing of private newspapers. On the one hand there was the newspaper *Reasmey Kampuchea*, whose situation somewhat parallels that of some other media

institutions which appeared in Cambodia at the same time: a new Thai-owned television station and two English-language newspapers, one which would eventually come out in a Khmer-language edition. Like them it was funded, at least partially, by wealthy interests from outside the country, relied on foreign technical support, and was in some sense corporate in structure. On the other hand, there were some 30 small independent newspapers, operating on a shoestring, which started at different times and survived for different lengths of time, in the months before the elections and since then. What I'm concerned with here is the degree to which the contrast in style between *Reasmey Kampuchea* and the independent newspapers, growing out of different economic and political matrices, can be said to represent competing discursive etiquettes, each of which contrasted with the discursive etiquette of the socialist media.

*Reasmey Kampuchea* is a joint venture between Wattachak, a Thai media corporation, and Theng Bunma, a Cambodian-born Sino-Khmer businessman with dual citizenship in Thailand and Cambodia, one of the wealthiest and most powerful persons in Cambodia. Theng Bunma is known to have close links to key political figures; there have also been increasingly frequent allegations that he is involved in illicit activities, such as drug running (Thayer, 1995); he also quite openly declared the fact that he had helped to bankroll the 1997 coup. The precise connections between Theng Bunma,

Wattachak, and *Reasmey Kampuchea* are not clear, but he is identified with the paper in the popular mind. Such connections with specific power brokers remind us that *Reasmey Kampuchea* may not be a corporate newspaper in quite the way that, for example, we imagine an American newspaper to be. Nevertheless, it is not merely a mouthpiece, but has its own corporate identity. It was started with a significant outlay of capital. Compared with other Cambodian newspapers it has a large staff, who are paid a living wage, and the staff has a clear organization with significant division of labor. It has slowly developed a base of support in advertising, which it is ambitious to expand further. The paper was originally printed in Thailand, and still was at least through most of 1995, which is to say there has been a degree of complexity to the financial arrangements by which is produced and distributed. The arrangement has also meant that its front page could be printed in color, and that it simply looks technically superior to the smaller newspapers. In contrast to what the visitors to smaller newspapers see, and in contrast to almost anything you would have seen in Cambodia prior to 1992, someone going to the *Reasmey Kampuchea* offices is struck by the business-like, professional atmosphere there, deriving no doubt in part by the mere fact that there is no shortage of computers and other equipment. *Reasmey Kampuchea* is edited by Pen Samitthy, previously the editor of *Phnom Penh*, one of the most highly regarded papers from the

socialist period. When it formed, *Reasmey Kampuchea* was able to attract many of the best journalists trained during the socialist period, since it could pay salaries several times higher than what a government worker receives.

To make an initial contrast, we should recall that the smaller independent newspapers which started at this time tended to be economically insecure and struggling with basic resources like access to printing presses and paper, even more so than did papers in the socialist period. Their means of support was completely domestic. They might receive infusions of money from individual patrons, but not from large businesses or patrons acting in conjunction with large businesses. There was rarely more than two or three ads in a paper. The most prominent of the small newspapers had editors or key writers who worked on pre-1975 newspapers. A few had journalists from socialist era papers. But many of the journalists on these papers came to their jobs with little training. In some ways the small newspapers are very different from each other, and represent a range of political and philosophical tendencies rather than a single direction in journalism, all very well illustrated by the fractures which resulted different journalists' associations. The differences in political alliances are important, and certainly have a lot to do with questions of who can survive a coup and who can't. But there was also a certain sameness to these smaller newspapers; they all have similar formats and they seem to be following

similar strategies for surviving financially, albeit with variable success. The newspaper with the largest circulation, *Koh Santepheap*, has sold well enough and lasted long enough that it can claim to have some of the institutional success of *Reasmey Kampuchea*; however, stylistically, it is still unmistakably marked as one of the smaller newspapers.

*Reasmey Kampuchea* has its own distinctive look. Merely in terms of visual style, it is much neater and more orderly in appearance than the smaller newspapers. Usually 12 pages instead of four, it is much more dependent on features than the smaller newspapers, with horoscopes, television schedules, and articles focusing on popular artists and sports. There is at least some tendency for these features to stress consumerism, giving the paper a more bourgeois feel than the smaller newspapers.

Perhaps one way to look at the style of *Reasmey Kampuchea* as a whole is to look at the particular ways that a column, in contrast with the rest of the newspaper, indexes the oral. One of the most successful features of the paper is a column called "The Crazy Point of View" (Dassana Lâp-Lâp). "The Crazy Point of View" appears prominently on the front page of the paper, as do similar columns in many other Cambodian newspapers. The column is headed by the title in decorative scripted letters, and a cartoon picture of a pot-bellied Cambodian peasant leaning against a tree and smoking a pipe, his glasses pushed up onto his forehead and the idea that he is deep in thought indicated by one hand stroking his

chin. Since different columns are signed by different pseudonyms, we can assume that "The Crazy Point of View" is not written by a single journalist, but there is nevertheless a good deal of stylistic consistency from one column to the next. The columns are humorous and usually make a satirical point about aspects of contemporary life, social pretension, corruption, or the low status of journalists.

Appendix C is a translation of one of the columns (as is the humorous piece, "That's the Way Khmers Are" reprinted in Chapter 2). The column translated in Appendix C appeared in 1993 soon after the new constitution was enacted which re-established the monarchy, and makes the point that royalism, which was never given full recognition at the time of the elections, had now emerged victorious<sup>1</sup>. The narrator tells how he has been persecuted for his craziness all his life, and was ridiculed at the time of the elections for advocating royalism, but is now vindicated.

The columns are explicitly marked as more "oral" than the rest of the paper. Some of the columns consist simply of a dialogue between two characters. Other columns are narrative -- a humorous story. Other columns assume the role of someone musing philosophically about life. Columns often make reference to the idea that the narrative persona is "crazy" (lâp), and sometimes suggest, as in the translated column re-

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<sup>1</sup> Since FUNCINPEC is usually identified in the Western press as the "royalist" party, the point that royalism didn't stand in the election may be puzzling. However, there is nothing in the name FUNCINPEC which indicates that it is royalist, and even though it was identified with the return of the monarchy in the popular mind, this was not the major thrust of the party at the time of the elections.

printed as Appendix C, that the narrator has been subject to ridicule or outcast for his craziness. In the columns, the writer makes reference to himself by the pseudonymous name at the end of the article, preceded by the derogatory prefix a- (sometimes teasingly derogatory, or diminutive) so that for instance, if the pseudonym is lâp, the narrative persona might refer to himself throughout the article as khnhom a- lâp ("I" -- derogatory prefix -- "crazy"). This is something that would never occur in actual oral speech, where a- would only be used to refer to other people, animals, or objects. From the cartoon that always accompanies the column, we are given to think that the voice is that of a farmer, and in at least one column, bemoaning the passing of the U.N. radio station, the narrative persona complains that reading newspapers can't be considered as an alternative to the lost radio station, since after all he's illiterate. In the column translated in the appendix, the narrator refers to wearing a sarong, something which would only be worn in public in a rural setting. In other columns there are references to the column's persona being a journalist -- always an impoverished journalist humorously suffering from lack of respect.

The writing in the column is marked as oral in a number of ways: by the use of dialogue, by a narrative, anecdotal style, by the fact that words are sometimes spelled as they are pronounced in rapid speech rather than how they are typically spelled in print (nong for nuh, or achoeng for anchoeng, etc. --

much as in English, if we wanted to mark orality, we might write gonna for going to or -in' for -ing). It is also "oral" in its choice of diction, relying heavily on slang and other colloquial language. Most significantly, the column is marked as oral by the use of modality -- by exclamations (the explicit injection of affect into the discourse, in a medium which is presumed to be without affect), and by the use of markers such as the prefix a- which seem oral to the degree they typically indicate an individual's subjective relation to other people or things.

All this, of course, represents conventional markers of orality. The column is, ultimately, very much a print phenomenon, and exists as an explicit complement to the discourse of the rest of the paper. The column is "personal," but, signed by a variety of pseudonyms, it is ultimately anonymous. As mentioned above, the pseudonymous author refers to himself as a- in what is patently a convention, not truly oral. Similarly, columns will sometimes inject the interjection mae vea (literally, "Oh, child's mother!"), a folksy tektonomy expression which a husband might use with his wife, but we know full well that the column is in no way written by a man to his wife, and the subject matter is in no way typical of what a husband might say to his wife: the expression merely serves conventionally to mark the discourse as conversational and intimate, much like the discourse of a husband talking to his wife.

The column is satire, and, like the cartoons described in Chapter 4, flouts conventions of public etiquette. Indexing orality becomes a way of signaling that the article departs from the public mode. Although the column does indeed take risks, it displays a shrewd sense of how far exactly public propriety will let it go. As satire, the column can sometimes be surprisingly pointed and direct, as when it talks about corruption, but it can get away with it because it is patently identified as humor. The column also speaks in very general terms, so that if, for example, it writes about corruption, it does so with reference to a humorous fictional uncle who has just entered politics, etc., in such a way that the column never seems to be talking about specific politicians or specific situations, unless they are common knowledge. It presents, as it were, the humor of the timeless truth of corruption -- a devastating revelation in its own way, but not immediately threatening to any given figure.

What role does the column play in relation to the voice of the paper as a whole? Obviously, it personalizes the paper, providing a private face in a public place. It is an Andy Rooney to the Mike Wallace of the paper as a whole. It implicitly makes the claim that the familiar world which the reader knows has a place within the more impersonal, omniscient voice of the newspaper. It states, however equivocally, that print can include oral, that the public includes a place for the private, that the impartiality of the paper as a whole is all the

more perfect because it acknowledges the private, individually biased point of view. Even so, the column is in no way presented as the main reason someone would buy the paper. It has a subordinate role. We could even say that the relation of the voice of the column to the voice of the paper as a whole suggests a synecdoche of the hierarchical relations between private individuals and public authority, as well as between the discourse of the private and the etiquette of public discourse. It is a carefully measured, subordinate place. The idea that the voice of the column really is different -- more personal, less public -- is a device, a way of constructing the parameters of public discourse, but the column is extremely well done, and it "works." One way of looking at this is to say that the column is a means whereby hegemony is maintained, a sop to the private which maintains the hegemony of the public. This is at least partially true, but I think it is more complicated than that. In comparison with the socialist discourse that preceded it, the column comes as a relief, providing at least some way of indexing complex relations of otherness that are entailed in the relation of the public to the private. And the column, however shrewdly and warily, does at some level risk a kind of negotiation of public discourse, and has an effect in modulating the voice of the paper as a whole.

To this one can contrast the smaller newspapers. Most of these smaller newspapers also have columns in which a more

personalized voice contrasts with the overall voice of the newspaper, but I'm not so much interested in comparing the different columns as in arguing that the overall tone of these newspapers tended to be marked as "personal" and "oral," but with different implications than with the column in *Reasmey Kampuchea* .

A quotation from Adorno comes to mind.

If the invention of the printing press inaugurated the bourgeois era, the time is at hand for its repeal by the mimeograph, the only fitting, the unobtrusive means of dissemination. (Cited in Bennett, 1982:46)

The papers were not mimeographs. They required a certain outlay of capital. But it was relatively small. The papers were not "small media," the personally circulated media of photocopies, cassette tapes, and faxes which Srevernny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi (1994) show played such an important part of the Iranian revolution. But they had some of the characteristics of small media. One editor complained to me that putting out the paper resulted in him losing about \$100 per issue -- a great bargain by the standards of a paper in an industrial country. Newspapers were small and ad hoc, and many staff members worked for minimal wages. They were not very polished, but that was always part of their appeal.

In some ways the papers consciously represented a return to the past, to pre-1975 journalism. Many of the small

newspapers took the names of pre-1975 newspapers, some even claiming to be revivals of them. Nevertheless, in their ad hoc character, they represented a radical post-socialist re-formulation which represented very real innovation.

To say that these newspapers were privately owned rather than state or corporate ventures is only part of the issue. One must ask the question of what it means, in Cambodian terms, for something to be privately owned. These newspapers were very much linked to personal networks in ways that affected the content as well as the financial workings of the newspapers. One journalist, in a 1995 interview, told me it was wrong to identify some newspapers as "opposition" and the rest as supporting the government, as many people tended to do at that time. All of the newspapers criticized the government, he said (which I believe is true). But for each newspaper there would be some individual political figure or figures who would never be criticized, because the newspaper was indebted to them for personal patronage or protection. Most of these newspapers could not have survived without financial help from powerful figures. In any case, the newspapers were vulnerable to intimidation, and it was understood that they could not survive without some sort of backing in powerful places which could protect them. It is in these terms that the papers can be said to be playing a role in competing patron-client networks, and the theater of journalism was in part the theater of these competing patron-

client networks. As in so many aspects of Cambodian life, the drama of the end of socialism was the drama of the re-emergence of these patron-client relationships -- or at least the fact that they were now somewhat more visible. The fact that the details of these patronage connections were only dimly known by the readership and as such subject to speculation added to the drama. Newspapers were also known to accept gifts at a more petty level for printing articles and political commentary -- in effect covert advertising and paid political announcements. Stories circulated that at least some newspapers also engaged in petty blackmail, in such a way that a newspaper article would hint at defamation or an announcement would appear that an article about a specific person would appear, with the deliberate calculation that the person in question would come through with a bribe to prevent the article from appearing. (There is concrete evidence of this just in the fact that these announced articles really did not appear.) These practices had also been common in pre-1975 journalism. The point I want to emphasize here is not so much the lack of ethics as the fact that the content of the paper was constantly subject to personal negotiation, such that any given article was not merely written to the public at large, but might also involve the negotiation of relationship between specific persons.

The newspapers were also "personal" to the degree to which they emphasized editorial rather than straight news. In

general, especially in the earliest days of the newspapers, there was much blurring between editorial and news -- to the extent that a Westerner teaching journalism classes in Cambodia would complain that the students had little sense of the distinction between objective fact and subjective opinion. There was some variation between the smaller newspapers on the degree to which this was true, and the more successful newspapers did indeed have more news, in particular crime stories, but even in these newspapers there was little sense that "objectivity" was a conscious goal. The same Western journalism teacher commented that there was no tradition in Cambodia of keeping an accurate record even of, for example, shipping schedules. McLuhan wrote:

The classified ads (and stock-market quotations) are the bedrock of the press. Should an alternative forum of easy access to such diverse daily information be found, the press will fold.  
(1964:186)

But classified ads and stock-market quotations, of course, had no role at all in these smaller newspapers. These were not newspapers whose existence was in any way intertwined with contractual transactions of business. Rather, their primary focus was the theater of relationships as they are negotiated with reference to fields of power. These were not tabloid newspapers in quite the Western sense of the word.

With a few exceptions, the smaller newspapers had a jumbled, rather confusing visual style. Other than serialized

fiction and a few other features, headlines and leads for all the articles in the paper were on the front page, seemingly competing with each other, in a pell-mell, anarchic layout which, however, inefficient, did somehow convey a chaotic excitement which seemed much more typical of the life of Phnom Penh than the orderliness of *Reasmey Kampuchea* or the socialist-era newspapers. Most newspapers, including *Reasmey Kampuchea*, featured gory pictures of crime and accident victims and pictures of recently captured criminals, and in certain newspapers, like *Koh Santepheap*, the gore was particularly blaring. Picture quality was variable; sometimes papers would print blurred snapshots. It was not merely bad journalism; there was something exciting about the idea that the papers were uninhibited about using whatever they had to. Political cartoons were featured prominently on the front pages of newspapers. The best of these cartoons, usually by the artist Em Sokha, were brilliantly executed and served to give a political meaning to the tone of conflict and confusion which characterized the papers more generally; the worst cartoons were incredibly amateurish.

Appendix D is a translation of an article which appeared August 25, 1993 in *Chakraval*, one of the more successful and long-lasting of the newspapers. It's an essay on corruption. Although the newspapers sometimes have pieces which are labeled "opinion" or "editorial," this one was not, even though it is patently editorial in content. Like the column in *Reasmey*

*Kampuchea*, there are a number of things which seem to mark the piece as oral, although, unlike in *Reasmey Kampuchea*, the division in the paper between what is marked as oral and what isn't is quite blurred. The piece is rambling and rather structureless, probably in this regards more like the way someone really speaks than the *Reasmey Kampuchea* column. Like the *Reasmey Kampuchea* column, it uses colorful and humorous figures of speech, with earthy and very concrete references to the physical world, and this use of language is part of what sells the paper. Here, though, the voice is clearly that of the writer, not that of a fictional narrative persona. While this particular piece does not make reference to specific political figures, the piece is written in response to attacks on journalists and clearly makes reference to very real struggles that had direct bearing on the author as a journalist. It doesn't just joke about corruption, it jeers about it. Other newspapers would take these tendencies even further.

While this article does not make use of the technique of underlining orality by spelling words as they are pronounced rather than following traditional spelling, other articles in small newspapers do, sometimes in headlines as well as the article proper. I have been surprised at how often I found that intellectuals in Cambodia -- a Ministry of Culture official, a university student, the editor of a government newspaper -- used this fact as the focus of their criticisms of the small newspapers, describing the usage simply as "incorrect," as

though it was done out of ignorance rather than as a deliberate technique for the specific effect of underlining orality. What they were really complaining about was the use of indexes of orality to flout discursive etiquette.

The appeal of the smaller newspapers has always been connected to the idea that they were saying things that previously could not be said. There was a genuine excitement when the newspapers began to appear, which I think can be described in terms of what Scott called the "saturnalia of power" when hidden transcripts are first publicly declared (1990: 202).

The sense of personal release, satisfaction, pride, and elation -- despite the actual risks often run -- is an unmistakable part of how this first open declaration is experienced. Although we have expressly avoided using the term truth to characterize the hidden transcript, it is all too apparent that the open declaration of the hidden transcript in the teeth of power is typically experienced, both by the speaker and by those who share his or her condition, as a moment when truth is finally spoken in the place of equivocation and lies. If a postmodern sense of the tenuousness of any simple claim to truth keeps us from using the term, it must certainly not prevent us from recognizing, as Václav Havel does, that those who take this bold step experience it as a moment of truth and as a personal authentication. (Scott, 1990:208)

While the small newspapers became mired in compromise very quickly, and perhaps do not live up to the rather noble images of resistance evoked in Scott's book, their appearance certainly

contributed to the general excitement of the idea that things were changing in the country, and they were certainly shaped by the vague and contradictory images of the "hidden transcripts" of a more private oral tradition. I remember once, when I was doing U.N. work at the national television offices before the elections, how a TVK staffperson came into the room with a copy of a newspaper which had just begun printing, and announced to everyone with excitement that here was a newspaper that was really telling the truth. Cambodians in Phnom Penh at that time often said that the new newspapers would come out and seem to be telling the truth, but after a few issues always reverted to following the government line. This was always an oversimplification, but it is true that what people looked for in the new newspapers was a radical telling of the "hidden transcript," that many new newspapers, by the very fact that they were new and by the fact that they were more willing to take risks, seemed to promise this, and that this promise always eventually disappointed them. Papers were judged by whether they told the "truth," and "truth" tended to be judged in terms of how strongly the new discourse confronted the discourse of authority. New newspapers which were particularly daring, like *Damneng Pel Proek*, could generate incredibly large sales, at least temporarily, although in so doing they also made themselves vulnerable to public pressure and private intimidation. "Truth" in the small newspapers had less to do

with, say, what could be proven objectively in a court of law, than what embodied and made public the oral tradition, heavily steeped in rumor, which had provided a counter discourse during the years when small newspapers like these would have been unthinkable. The small newspapers were thus “oral” in another sense, in that they gave public voice to a discourse which had previously existed only at the oral level. The “oral” style of the newspapers, in their emphasis on the anecdotal and subjective and in the way they consciously emphasized orality by unconventional spelling and the use of slang, itself helped to mark the papers as representing the hidden transcript made public. In a sense the fact that the newspapers represented a hidden transcript made public was both what was good and what was bad about them. It was what made them exciting and what made them a symbol of social change. It also meant that the papers had little respect for or, sometimes even understanding of, the constraints of public etiquette.

The period since the inception of these newspapers has very much been a period in which the newspapers and the other forces shaping life in Cambodia have been in a process of negotiating the nature of public discourse. As the state has asserted control, one cannot escape the image of increasing repression. But what has been involved has also been a more general institution of “discipline” (in the Foucaultian sense), related to processes of “professionalization” as well as to

repression. I see this as a process of working out the dimensions of a new public etiquette; in the long run it will probably represent a process of moving away from orality and partiality or incorporating it in some safe, conventional way.

One should point out that a paper like *Reasmey Kampuchea* was not totally immune to the influence of the smaller newspapers. In an interview in early 1994, the editor, Pen Samitthy, discussed with me the newspaper's research into why its circulation was not growing. The most interesting of several reasons was his assertion that readers disliked the fact that the newspaper presented both sides of a dispute, and did not provide a clear point of view. He was as it were saying that Cambodian readers did not want a newspaper to be "objective." His comments were probably a reference to conversations he had had with my former colleague Susan Manuel, the UNTAC officer assigned to work with the newspaper he used to edit, *Phnom Penh*. Just as I had, working with other newspapers, she had tried to argue for the idea of the press playing a politically unbiased role, which seemed virtually impossible at the time. Samitthy's comments to me had far-reaching implications. Did Cambodians in 1994 really even want a press that would present both sides of the argument? Would doing so validate the voice of the newspaper as "true" in the way it purportedly does in the West? *Reasmey Kampuchea* did indeed, in its coverage of crime and war, come to imitate some of the sensationalist style of the smaller newspapers, and the

very fact that a column like "The Crazy Point of View" appeared illustrated the fact that it understood the importance on an editorial edge; but it would never be partisan in quite the way that the smaller newspapers were, because the overall voice of the paper remained an impersonal one.

Much more typical than *Reasmey Kampuchea* adapting itself to compete with smaller newspapers were the pressures put on the smaller newspapers. In its most extreme form this has meant violence against small newspapers, as I have recounted in Chapter 5. Since the 1993 elections, four [re-check] journalists have been killed. There have also been other forms of violence. A grenade was thrown at a newspaper office in late summer 1995 and a newspaper office was trashed with the tacit approval of a major political figure. It is typical of the situation that it was sometimes unclear whether violence has to do with "personal" disputes or "political" issues. It is difficult to distinguish between the two in a country where individual power brokers, because of links to political figures, are in a position to commit violence with impunity. Violence in any case has been a means by which public discourse is negotiated, and those in a position to commit in are in a position to shape public discourse. As I write this, it is still difficult to understand the effects of the 1997 coup on Cambodian journalism, but it is clear that many opposition journalists have fled the country and that many newspapers have closed down.

Since the 1993 elections the degree and nature of state control over the media has been a subject of on-going negotiation. In some ways this process of negotiation began before there ever was an independent media, with the passage of a SOC media law anticipating non-government media; the validity of this law was disputed by UNTAC, which was mandated to have control over the field of information at this time. At different times UNTAC, with its Penal Code and its Media Guidelines, made an attempt to shape the direction of the media, and UNTAC's declarations of the freedom of the press may have indeed had something to do with the flourishing of the small independent press. Subsequently, during the year following the ratification of a new constitution, drafts of a media law were hotly debated, and, although journalists were far from satisfied with the law finally adopted, they worked with Human Rights groups to actively lobby against the early drafts of the law and were able to remove some objectionable measures.

In the socialist period regulatory mechanisms had as it were been built into media institutions by the very fact that they were state-owned. When the small independent newspapers first began appearing, there was little if any systematic state regulation of them -- which had something to do with the way that they developed. Over time, mechanisms were put in place within the Ministry of Information whereby small newspapers were systematically read and kept track of

and whereby disputes regarding them could be regulated or mediated.

Ministry officials also held public and private meetings with newspapers to discuss what they found problematic. I recall, for instance, a public meeting in which the Minister of Information declared that newspapers should not print gory pictures on their front pages. While injunctions like this were easily ignored by papers with powerful backers, they at least created a field of discourse in which newspapers were forced to decide whether they were in a position to offend the ministry or not. All of this has not meant that journalists have conformed to public expectations, but it has meant that it is increasingly difficult for journalists to merely ignore public expectations.

Even before the coup, there were a series of arrests of Cambodian journalists, clearly politically motivated, or motivated by the desires of individual power brokers. The court procedures have been far from fair. At one trial a judge was openly in communication with someone about the trial by cellular phone. Even so, the arrests were complicated by the fact that the journalism in the papers of the men arrested really could be called slipshod and biased.

UNTAC had pushed for the creation of an independent journalists' association, a project which had little hope of realization when media institutions were primarily linked to the state and political parties. By the end of 1993, however,

the situation was ripe for the formation of an association. The argument for the association was always that it would allow journalists to regulate themselves without state interference. In practice, the question of the degree of connection between the organization and the state was very difficult to define and often became problematic; so did the question of the degree of control the association had over its members. Journalists recognized, just as the state did, that there were abuses of journalistic ethics, but attempts to control them led to further disputes and divisions. The journalists' association, and subsequent break-off associations, had ethics committees. It was not clear what power the committees had or who it was responsible to. Nevertheless, it represented one more "disciplinary" mechanism developing to shape the discourse of the media.

Throughout the period there was also attempts to professionalize the press by training. This was supported by the government because they felt it would be a way of encouraging constraint on the unruly small newspapers, even though this may not have been the goal of the teachers. Journalism classes were taught through UNESCO and, later, by teachers of journalism brought in by the Asia Foundation to work with the journalists in the different associations. A state-affiliated Communications Institute was set up in 1995, with funding from Australia, Denmark, and France, to train journalists. One cannot dispute the need for this training and

the desirability to bring more professionalism to Cambodian journalists, which they themselves desired. There is some inevitability about this. But one can say that it changed the discourse of the media in such a way that its links to oral communication -- part of what made it exciting -- were made more tenuous.

The training of journalists had the explicit goal of protecting journalists. If you are careful to distinguish editorials from news, the argument goes, then you can't be accused of showing editorial bias in your news coverage. But this kind of logic ignores the possibility that when you divide the world into discursive categories of "editorial" and "news," a realm of discursive possibility may have also been lost. As small newspapers learn to compartmentalize editorials from news -- a lesson *Reasmey Kampuchea* did not have to be taught -- they are undergoing a kind of disciplinary process.

An American journalist, funded through the Asian Foundation, whom I interviewed in Fall, 1995, said he tried to work with journalists of all political affiliation. He worked, he said, with a group of five newspapers which had come to be identified in general parlance as the "opposition" newspapers; they were the newspapers most vulnerable to government pressure. He said he could not protect them from government intimidation, but he could at least train them to write well-documented professional articles of a kind such that, if journalists were brought to court, would in no way leave them

vulnerable to legitimate criticism. One has to applaud the work of a teacher like this, and recognize the inevitability and value of the processes he is working through with journalists, which may indeed be what is needed for a press in opposition to the government to survive. One must at some level recognize, however, that as an outsider he is as it were preparing journalists to deal with a court system that as of yet does not exist in Cambodia, and as such is an advocate, not just for "professionalism", but for a whole political economy of discourse. However inevitable and good what he is doing is, one must recognize that it represents a movement toward the establishment of specific frames of public discourse which itself limit the way opposition can take place; in effect it is shaping specific strategies of discursive etiquette.

The ways that the small newspapers indexed discourse as personal, private, and oral is similar to the way the columns in *Reasmey Kampuchea* did, and both contrast in similar ways to the discourse of socialist papers; but the small newspapers' use of this kind of discourse extended much further. We could describe the difference in terms of a political economy of discourse, where particular discursive relations reflect and interact with particular relations of power. There is as it were different relations of power and economics in the ways different newspapers construct the difference between public and private, impartiality and partiality, and orality and print.

It is too simple to say that the disciplinary mechanisms that come to play in relation to the smaller newspapers represented an attempt to make them over into the image of *Reasmey Kampuchea* or the socialist media which preceded them. But it is true that the political economy of discourse that characterized *Reasmey Kampuchea* was not considered problematic, whereas that of the small newspapers often was. In the discourse of *Reamey Kampuchea*, the relation of the private to the public was acknowledged, but its place was subordinate. In the smaller newspapers, the private sometimes seemed to challenge or subvert the public. It was this that the disciplinary mechanisms, in different ways, with a sort of inevitability, came to address.

## **Chapter Eleven: Conclusion**

One way to look at the material in this dissertation in overview might be to consider the relation between the notion of discursive etiquette as I have used it and different ways of looking at ideology. I will not attempt any sort of exhaustive review of the complex and often contradictory ways the concept of ideology has been formulated. (Woolard, 1992, provides a neat summary.) However, I find it helpful to look at the material in this dissertation in the light of three different definitions of ideology.

Gouldner (1976), building on Habermas' concept of the public sphere, sees the emergence of an Age of Ideology at the time of the development of the printing press. Ideology, in this formulation, contrasts with belief systems, such as those associated with major religions, where belief is shaped by preponderant power and systems of personal affect, in such a way that individuals defer to belief systems as they defer to personal authority. Ideology only arrives with greater abundance of information and represents attempts to construct belief systems out of this abundance of information. To speak of ideology is to speak of competing belief systems as they are subject to debate in the public sphere. "In some part, ideologies are efforts to search out and construct new

groundings for the very 'news' to which they make tacit reference." (Gouldner, 1976: 111) Ideology has to do with the manufacture of consent rather than the imposition of authority.

Given this definition, from one perspective, the Phnom Penh government and the armed resistance based on the border were fighting a war of ideology in the 1980's along with the actual war. UNTAC attempted to eliminate the element of coercion and let ideology stand against ideology in a free election. From another perspective, however, there never was significant ideology of this kind coming into play in Cambodia. Belief systems throughout the eighties and up to the present time have been subsumed by the negotiation of competing networks of personal dependencies. At the time of the elections, Cambodia voted, from this perspective, not for an ideology, but for peace and the patronage of the king. How can we reconcile these two perspectives? The truth is perhaps somewhere in between, where ideologies of a certain kind are enacted in relation to systems of person as well as state-coercive domination, in ways which Gouldner's theory does not adequately give us a means of accounting for.

Gouldner's theory of ideology, like Habermas' notion of the public sphere, is useful in explaining what UNTAC was working for in Cambodia and what at least some journalists envisioned themselves as doing -- that is to say, attempting to create an atmosphere where ideologies could compete, free from the influence of personal domination. The formulation

proves less than effective when we try to apply it to describe belief systems which continue to be embedded in systems of personal domination and dependence, and personal affect, as they so often are in Cambodia.

I am in fundamental agreement with Gouldner that changes in communication technology help to create new kinds of ideology and that a new kind of critique emerges with the mass media. The various satirical pieces we have examined in the dissertation do, in different ways, represent stances of detachment with regard to institutions which it would be more difficult to critique without mass media which assumes a stance of impersonal omniscience. That is to say, print media does help construct a realm of the neutral with which to look at social life. Nevertheless, one must take into account the degree to which premodern social institutions also contained their own particular constructions of the neutral and detached, such as the way the Cambodian monkhood and the etiquettes surrounding it provided an alternative to the domination and dependence of everyday life; these constructions, rather than merely legitimating authority, could serve as the basis of a kind of critique as well.

Gouldner writes:

Ideology is born of a situation in which socially organized work and public projects will produce privately appropriated gratifications, gratifications that will in fact be allocated differentially. Ideology is that speech that seeks to reduce the dissonance between mutual dependence and differential

allocation; it seeks to reduce the dissonance between the fact that nothing can be accomplished without others, while at the same time allocating differential rewards despite this radical, mutual dependency. (1976: 277)

This comes very close to being a statement about discursive etiquette. And yet Gouldner is concerned with something rather different: conscious, competing belief systems as they are formulated in relation to modern systems of communication. And relatively little of the material covered in this dissertation falls in that category. What this dissertation is about is how, more generally, etiquettes do what Gouldner shows certain ideologies doing.

Althusser's famous formulation holds that "Ideology is a 'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." (1971: 162) It opens up quite different possibilities than Gouldner's formulation, suggesting less consciously elaborated belief systems which more specifically relate to an identity in relation to political economy. It is a general theory and, unlike Gouldner's, makes a deliberate point of claiming to be outside of history. Such a definition easily extends to pre-modern systems.

Much of what I have discussed in this dissertation could be analyzed in these terms. Etiquettes of gesture, linguistic usage, and ritual display serve to define and reinforce imagined hierarchy. The media, constituting in Althusser's terms one of the State Ideological Apparatuses, constructs itself and the ruling powers it associates with as reasonable and

impartial. The UN in Cambodia liked to imagine that it was impartially working toward peace. Certainly at some levels the impartiality of the media or the UN are merely imagined relations.

Where the definition is limiting is in the degree to which it can only conceive of these imagined relationships in terms of repressive class relations. It fails to sufficiently recognize the contradiction that these imagined relations, enacted as etiquette, can also fill fundamental needs in the creation of consensus. That is to say, to reformulate the quotation by Gouldner above, that there is a need to reduce the dissonance between the fact of mutual dependency and the fact of inequality.

Discursive etiquettes are certainly the products of Ideological State Mechanisms: of schools, religious ritual and teaching, traditional family practices, and the mass media. Hierarchically marked Cambodian pronouns and terms of address serve as a good example of Althusser's principle that "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects" (1971:173) -- that is to say, that ideational systems create role expectations that are often constricting. Social identity is indeed negotiated with reference to culturally inscribed conventions of identity. Even so, it seems too simple to define this identity only in terms of a relation to a preponderant power.

In fact, the State and its Apparatuses only have meaning from the point of view of the class

struggle, as an apparatus of class struggle ensuring class oppression and generating the conditions of exploitation and its reproduction. (1971:184)

To think in terms of discursive etiquette is to argue that the State and its Apparatuses do have meaning beyond that of class oppression and exploitation. A statement like the above is helpful if someone is working to bring about the reversal of state authority. It would not be particularly helpful to someone trying to bring peace to a warring country.

Perhaps the most useful framework for relating discursive etiquette to ideology is Volosinov's notion of behavioral ideology (Volosinov, 1985). Volosinov examines the notion of discourse as expression, rejecting it as illusion. Instead, he sees discourse as embedded deeply within the dynamics of social situations. More than this, consciousness is embedded in the particularities of social life. It is this socially shaped consciousness which he calls "behavioral ideology."

To distinguish it from the established systems of ideology -- the systems of art, ethics, law, etc. -- we shall use the term behavioral ideology for the whole aggregate of life experiences and the outward expressions directly connected with it. Behavioral ideology is that atmosphere of unsystematized and unfixed inner and outer speech which endows our every instance of behavior and action and our every "conscious" state with meaning. (1985: 57)

To be more fully conscious is to be more fully engaged with life as embedded in society. "Behavioral ideology" is ideological because of its sociological character -- that is to say, because it

ultimately relates to the dynamics of political economy. A behavioral situation, what I would call the particular nature of the public, will shape the nature of the discourse.

Only when social custom and circumstances have fixed and stabilized certain forms in behavioral interchange to some appreciable degree, can one speak of specific types of structure in genres of behavioral speech. So, for instance, an entirely special type of structure has been worked out for the genre of the light and casual causerie of the drawing room where everyone "feels at home" and where the basic differentiation within the gathering (the audience) is that between men and women. Here we find devised special forms of insinuation, half-sayings, allusions to little tales of an intentionally nonserious character, and so on. A different type of structure is worked out in the case of conversation between husband and wife, brother and sister, etc. In the case where a random assortment of people gathers -- while waiting in a line or conducting some business -- statements and exchanges of words will start and finish and be constructed in another, completely different way. . . The behavioral genre fits everywhere into the channel of social intercourse assigned to it and functions as an ideological reflection of its type, structure, goal, and social composition. The behavioral genre is a fact of the social milieu: of holiday, leisure time, and of social contact in the parlor, the workshop, etc. It meshes with that milieu and is delimited and defined by it in all its internal aspects.

The production processes of labor and the processes of commerce know different forms for constructing utterances. (1985:63-4)

This dissertation is about the discourse of behavioral situations as they relate to the tensions of particular political economies. The kinds of behavioral situations I have focused

on are sometimes more broadly public than what Volosinov lists above: the behavioral situation of the mass media and that of public ritual, in addition to more personal interactions as exemplified by linguistic and gestural etiquette. But like Volosinov I'm concerned with how social meaning relates to the form of the discourse.

The idea of discursive etiquette goes beyond what Volosinov is saying here, but etiquette is essentially behavioral. It may or may not be a conscious system; it is realized in practice. Linguistic etiquette, like gestures of greeting and formulas for the display of generosity, demark discursive categories. Such discursive categories will serve in part to justify existing power relations, but they also provide conventions for putting these power relations in perspective and conventions for avoiding them by defining a neutral space in relation to them when it is necessary.

The question which concerns us is how such discursive categories vary in relation to political economy, not only from situation to situation, contemporaneously, but over time. In all the situations we have looked at, etiquettes which legitimated hierarchy lost some legitimacy in relation to modernity. There has also been a self-conscious tendency to restore such usages, coinciding with the collapse of socialism and the resurgence or greater public visibility of informal personal networks.

The broader sense of public created by newspapers and other mass media at a local level and, increasingly, more global

networks of corporate media, do significantly alter the behavioral situation. Constructed as somehow outside social intercourse (just as the UNTAC was in different ways constructed as being outside normal Cambodian social intercourse) they can claim to occupy an impartial public space by which the rest of social interaction can be put into perspective -- but strategies for constructing the particular nature of this impartial public space will vary. The various strategies for doing this in recent Cambodian history have not been particularly successful -- the stylistic rigidity of socialist styles, the temporary option of an international body's discourse of neutrality, renewed valorization of the king as the hierarchical apex of the society, or media market free-for-all alternating with violent repression. These rapidly changing strategies represent the tension of traditional systems trying to adapt to Cambodia's changing place in the world. How the media, and discursive etiquettes more generally, will respond to Hun Sen's recent seizure of power remains to be seen.

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Zhou Mei. (1994) *Radio UNTAC of Cambodia: Winning Ears, Hearts and Minds*. Bangkok: White Lotus.

## CURRICULUM VITA

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### Education

Ph.D. University of Washington, 1997. Anthropology.  
M.A. University of Washington, 1991. Anthropology.  
M.A. University of Minnesota, 1985. English as a Second Language.  
B.A., w/ high distinction, University of Michigan, 1974. (Major: English; minor: Spanish)

### Research Grants

Doctoral Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies.  
"Cambodian Concepts of Hierarchy and Equality as Reflected in the Use of Language." September, 1993 to June, 1994.

Indochina Studies Program (joint committee of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies) grant. "Language Reform and Language Change in Democratic Kampuchea, 1975-78." October, 1986 to October, 1987.

### Professional Experience

Teaching (Anthropology and Southeast Asian Studies):

Colegio de Mexico. Visiting Professor of Southeast Asian Studies, Fall, 1997 to present.

University of Washington. Instructor, "Anthropological Aspects of Communication," Summer 1997; "World Civilizations: Cambodia," Winter 1996

University of Washington. Teaching Assistant, "Introduction to Cultural Anthropology," Spring 1995 and Spring 1996; "Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology," Fall 1995.

College of Archaeology, Fine Arts University, Phnom Penh. Mini-course on linguistic anthropology, Nov. 1993 to March, 1994.

Teaching (Language):

Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute, University of Wisconsin. Coordinator of Cambodian language instruction, June to August, 1995.

Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute, Cornell University. Coordinator of Cambodian language instruction, June to August, 1991.

Summer English language program, Phnom Penh, sponsored by the U.S.-Indochina Reconciliation Project and the State University of New York -Buffalo, June to Aug., 1990.

University of Minnesota. Teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at various levels for a total of 11 quarters between 1982 and 1989. Taught both for the English Program for International Students and for Univ. of Minnesota extension classes.

International Catholic Migration Commission at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center (Bataan, the Philippines). Teacher Supervisor providing training, evaluation, and basic administrative functions for a team of Filipino ESL teachers, Sept. 1985 to Sept., 1986.

Other:

United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia. Information officer, working in liaison with the Cambodian language media, June, 1992 to July, 1993.

Cornell University Libraries Documentation Project in Phnom Penh. Coordinator of museum microfilming project, Feb. to June, 1992.

International Catholic Migration Commission. Site editor, Passages: A Journal of Refugee Education, Nov., 1985 to Sept., 1986.

### Publications

"Em Sokha and Cambodian Satirical Cartoons." (forthcoming) Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science.

"Cambodian News Media in the UNTAC Period." In Propaganda, Politics and Violence in Cambodia: Democratic Transition under UN Peacekeeping (1996), Heder, S. and J. Ledgerwood, eds. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

"Metaphors of the Khmer Rouge." In Cambodian Culture Since 1975: Homeland and Exile (1994), M.M. Ebihara, C.A. Mortland, and J. Ledgerwood, eds. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Review of the book Pol Pot Plans the Future (D. Chandler, et al, eds.), Journal of Asian Studies, Feb., 1990.

Annotated Bibliography on Cambodia and Cambodian Refugees (1987). Southeast Asian Refugee Studies Project, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota.

"Homestay." Passage: A Journal of Refugee Education, Summer, 1986.

"Clinically Speaking: ESP for Refugee Nursing Students," MinneTESOL Journal, Fall, 1985 (with Adele G. Hansen).