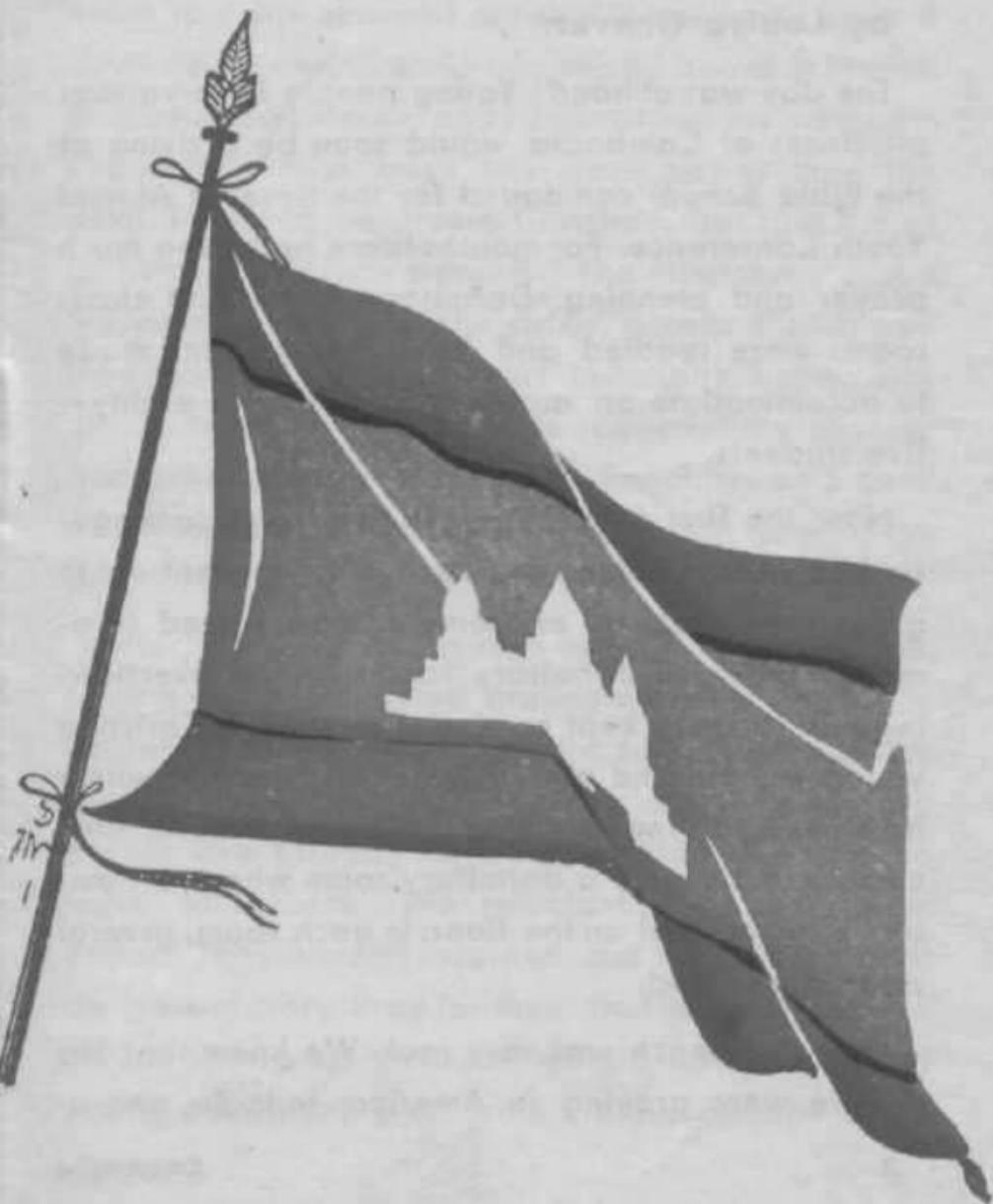


# Cambodia

Volume 7

Number 3



## Cambodian Youth Conference

by Louisa Graven

The day was at hand! Young people from various provinces of Cambodia would soon be arriving at the Bible School compound for the Seventh Annual Youth Conference. For months there had been much prayer and planning. Dormitory rooms and classrooms were readied and final preparations made to accommodate an anticipated eighty or eighty-five students.

Now, the first day of August, they were coming—by bus, train, boat, or car. Excitedly, we went out to greet them. But our excitement soon turned to amazement when dormitory rooms began overflowing and still they kept coming. There were Christian young people and also unbelievers, some of whom had never attended a church service before. One classroom became a dormitory room where a number of boys slept on the floor. In each room, several slept in one bed.

God's presence was very real. We knew that His people were praying in America, in India, and a-

round the world. On the first Sunday, the day following registration, four prayed for salvation.

A few of the young people, we were to learn later, had devil strings tied around their waists. One of these boys became sick the first Sunday. Two days later, not having recovered, he came and said, "I know that the reason I am sick is because I have a devil string tied around my waist. I heard that man (a missionary) speak, and I understood his message. I know now that Jesus has more power than the devil. I want to become a Christian, but first I must go home and tell my parents." The missionary urged the young man to cut the string, accept Christ, and then go home and give his testimony, but he was not quite ready to do so. He replied, "My parents and grandparents have been Buddhists and devil worshippers all these years. I must tell them of my decision, and then I will return."

Later, a second young man came and said, "I, too, have a devil string tied around my waist and I am beginning to feel dizzy." A third said, "I am not sick yet, but I also have a devil string and since my two friends are already ill, I am frightened. I want to leave with them." We reluctantly watched them depart. They haven't returned, but they have heard the gospel story. Pray for them that they might soon accept the Lord. However, we did have the joy of seeing a devil string cut from the body of one of the

young women. One hundred and nine young people, thirty-two of whom were girls, remained to study the Word of God, the largest Christian Youth Conference ever held in Cambodia.

Across the front of the chapel was the conference theme in large Cambodian letters—JESUS IS EVERYTHING TO ME. The Rev. Samuel Mok, Chinese pastor from Battambang, came to minister during four chapel periods, giving very challenging messages along the line of complete consecration. Then Rev. Ben Wati, from India, arrived to preach and counsel the young people during the last ten days of the conference. Many victories were won.

One young man from the Bureau of Agriculture decided to spend his vacation at Youth Conference to find out what Christianity was like. He accepted Christ and, since returning home, has written that he is reading his Bible and desires to witness for the Lord. A number of the young people, after confessing their own sins, became greatly burdened for their parents and returned to the altar to intercede for them. Altogether, twenty young men and women accepted the Lord Jesus for the first time, and many others came forward to repent of various sins in their lives.

At the close of the conference, the National Youth President stated that several young men had made the decision to give their lives to Christ for full-time

Christian service. Most of them are still studying in government schools, but, upon completion of their studies, desire to enter the ministry.

After three weeks of study, they returned home, many of them to face real trials and testings of their faith. But the future for Cambodia looks brighter because of the moving of the Spirit of God among the Youth. Pray that these lives will blossom forth to spread the fragrance of Christ to every corner of this land.

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### **by Bernard Dunning**

From six o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock at night, the young people were kept busy. During the day, they studied Bible, music, the preparation of messages and programs, English, handicrafts, followed by a time of sports. The evening programs varied; there were worship services, world travel and health films loaned by the U. S. Government and fun nights when they played games and put on skits.

This year due to the large number enrolled, it was impossible to take them for a trip every Saturday. However, one Saturday, we did go for a hike, swim, and picnic.

On Sunday afternoons, the young men went out witnessing for Christ in the surrounding villages. This year those who had just prayed at Conference also stated their desire to go out and witness.

Of special importance during the middle of Conference was the election of the National Youth Committee for the coming year. As in past years, three fellows and one girl were elected.

Everyday began with prayer meeting at 6:30 A. M. with the whole student body present. Later each morning, during chapel period, an outside speaker ministered to the young people. Many times the chapel period continued into the next study hour as the students gathered around the altar seeking God's will for their lives. The evening "Quiet Period" was from 9 to 9:30 P. M. with counsellors and missionaries meeting in the various rooms for devotional reading and prayer with the young people. There were some evenings when the young people, returning to their rooms after the church service, heard the Voice of God still speaking to their hearts, and there surrendered to His will.

The last Saturday of conference was very busy as the young people prepared for the banquet and the teachers prepared for the program to follow. The auditorium was decorated with palm branches and streamers. The tables were arranged in long rows

with name cards, made for the occasion, placed at each plate. The young men who waited tables were very efficient in serving such a large group. Following the banquet the "clean up crew" transformed the banquet hall into an auditorium for the evening program. Nearly every class had some share in the program, displaying the knowledge that they had acquired in the past three weeks of study. This was followed by the distribution of awards. There were two group awards for the highest attendance at conference according to provinces. Two personal awards were given for the memorization of Bible verses. Also, in each class an award was given to the student who produced the best work. Everyone was sitting on the edge of their seat as the names were read off, waiting to hear the news. Yes, some were disappointed, but many were heard to say, "Next year I will receive a prize."

Sunday they began to say farewell to their friends. Many were counting the months until they would meet again at the next Youth Conference. The exodus began after the evening service. Early Monday, at three o'clock A.M., another group left and throughout the morning the "goodbyes" were heard over and over again. There was another phrase, a request made to the missionaries, the fellow students, and teachers, "Please pray for me." Will You accept this challenge of prayer with us?

**NEW**  
**God's Appointment**

**by Leanore Peterson**

Furlough! There seemed to be sort of magic in the word. The stress of the work had never seemed quite so great nor the weather quite so hot. How refreshing to get to a cooler climate and how wonderful to see our children and loved ones again! But that was six years ago, and we are still on furlough.

It has been hard to be reconciled to staying when our hearts long to be back in Cambodia. We miss the fellowship of our Cambodian friends, the precious times spent together as we talked of the things of God. Not that we lack fellowship here, but there is a difference. Even in Christian circles, conversation so many times centers on other things — baseball, television, new cars, present day tensions—with the Lord kind of left out. It would be so good to be able to explain some portion of the Word to our Cambodian brethren and see their eyes light up in appreciation! Here the people have so much of everything—more Gospel literature than one can read, plenty of churches, wonderful radio messages, special meetings — that they have become cold and apathetic.

*Sometimes we have wondered why we have been*

kept here at home when there is such a burden on our hearts for the many who have never heard of our wonderful Saviour, and where it seems we are needed so much more. Perhaps that is why the Lord opened the door for us to have a missionary challenge radio program on which nearly a thousand missionary messages from all corners of the earth have reached thousands of people, stirring their hearts to new missionary endeavor. We believe this missionary challenge on the air has helped several young people to decide to spend their lives in full time service for Christ. But even greater than this, as the missionaries have unburdened their hearts, the challenge to a greater prayer ministry has been accepted by many listeners, and we know that God is working in answer to the volume of prayer that ascends to the throne of grace.

The desire to return to Cambodia is still strong in our hearts, and should He open the door, we would be most happy to go back. But in the meantime, there's work to be done here, and for the present our mission field is Western Michigan. And if by staying here we can have a little share in arousing Christians to a realization of their responsibility in getting this Gospel out to the uttermost parts of the earth, we can rest content in the knowledge that God's way is best and trust the future completely in His hands.

## CAMBODIAN CULTURE IN REVIEW

The Kingdom of Cambodia is one centralized state which is divided into sixteen provinces and they in turn are divided into districts. These districts are again subdivided into village groups, similar to what we call townships. It is here we meet the Cambodian villager, backbone of Cambodian economy, center of Cambodian life and subject for this brief article.

The houses of his village (which usually has from twenty to a hundred) are probably one of two types; wood with tile roofs, or thatch throughout. Both are built high off the ground and are entered by a ladder with an uneven number of steps. This construction provides safety from flood waters, good circulation of air, protection against animals and a storage room for farming implements, most of which are locally made.

For transportation, his cart serves well in any kind of terrain, and is powered by two husky water buffalo or oxen. It is practical, simply made and scarcely overturns. Someone has called it the "Cambodian jeep," with four wheel drive. His tools are well adapted to his environment and are deeply attached to the traditions of his forefathers.

The majority of village folk are farmers, and a distinct difference is made between those who grow rice and those who grow other crops such as vegetables. The first type requires flooded land, the other, higher ground which does not flood. Among the variety of important crops other than rice are corn, beans, tobacco, soy-beans, peas, jute, cotton, palm sugar and kapok. The vegetable farmer is the more prosperous.

Rice is grown in several ways, depending on the area of the country. Rainy season rice is dependent on its water from rains, whereas deep-water rice is dependent on flood waters. Rainy season rice is planted by a system of transplanting seedlings to the fields. Deep-water rice is sown in the same manner as grass seed with no replanting.

Other major village occupations include weaving, basketry, pottery making, and the manufacture of palm sugar. It is interesting to note that the sugar palm is the Cambodian national tree, from which 30,000 tons of palm sugar are extracted yearly.

Economically, the rule of life for most villagers is adequacy. The desire to be "successful" in a material sense is rarely known. Religiously he is closely connected with the local Buddhist temple. Politically, he enjoys freedom and is proudly patriotic. A symbol of his allegiance is found in almost every home—his national flag.

## **SOMETHING NEW!**

We rejoice that in three provincial centers, secular bookstores have agreed to display and sell Bibles and Gospel literature. Praise God for this wonderful opportunity to further distribute His Word!

**PRAY** — that the recipients will understand and seek the Salvation of the Lord.

— that stores in other provincial centers may agree to do the same.

## **REJOICE!**

Several of the young men to whom God was speaking during Youth Conference, have answered the call of God and are studying in Long Term Bible School in spite of the extreme pressures from unsaved parents to discourage them.

## **DID YOU KNOW**

That during the past year the fruitfulness of the Gospel has been mostly manifest in the hearts and lives of young people?

**PRAY** — that the Lord may use their zeal and fervor to stir up the hearts of the older Christians, to repent of their sin and join with the youth in witnessing for Christ by life and word of testimony.