

## Breaking Down Barriers

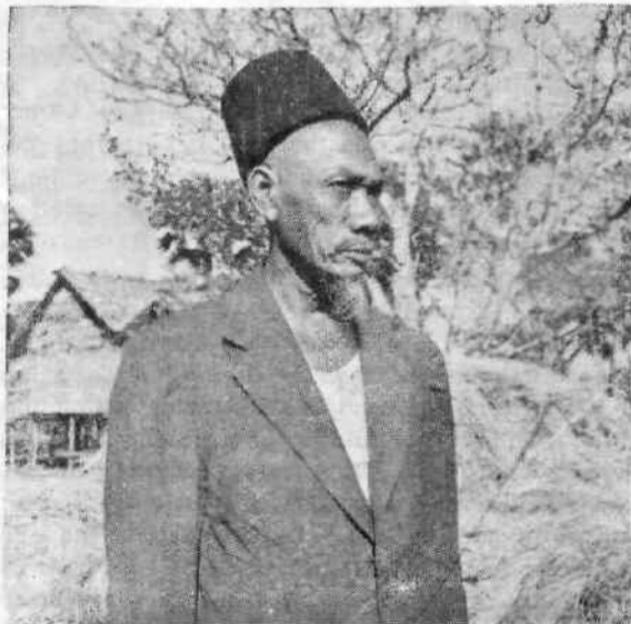
About three years ago, when we visited the first Kouy Antra tribe's village, we felt a strangeness of attitude toward us. The children would run away from us and the women would stay their distance. We prayed that the Lord would help us to be able to reach the hearts of these people. The Lord directing us, we found the first barrier breaking down by handing out a few simple medicines. We were able to learn a few phrases in their dialect, and by this means the walls were beginning to crumble. We decided that going to their village for a short while *during the day was not enough, but that we must go and stay all night.* An elderly Cambodian Christian lady and I decided to do just that, and at their request, drove right into their village, had an evening service, and then slept in the car. We were now their friends and just two months ago the first two Kouy Antra tribesmen prayed for salvation. Hallelujah! Last Friday, as we walked through the village, one of the people there remarked, "When you first came here the children were afraid of you, but now they follow you all over." The father-in-law of the first Kouy who prayed was a former chief and seemingly opposed to the Gospel, but when I offered to leave a phonograph and Gospel records in their home while we were on furlough, he received us with joy. The last barrier is their religion, but God is able even for this, if you pray.

Paula Doty

# Cambodia

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A Cham for Portrait Study

## Cambodia in the "Valley of Decision"

Buddhism has controlled the destiny of millions of souls down through the centuries. Tradition and custom perpetuated generation after generation have established a life pattern that has not altered appreciably for centuries. Buddhism is intrinsically an ethical system rather than a religion, and basically does not claim allegiance to any god. This system of belief regulates the lives of the vast majority of Cambodians. It has created a barrier, permitting very little of the light of the Gospel to penetrate the souls of men bound by superstition and ignorance.

To the casual observer, there seems little likelihood of deviation from established ancestral customs. However, there are those who are aware that underneath this superficial structure rumblings can be heard that could indicate a religious and social upheaval. I do not believe that this is mere wishful thinking. Cambodia recently won her independence. Western materialism is a tremendous force that cannot be lightly dismissed. The people are already feeling the current of competition and are making efforts to meet the challenge in every field. The need for education has fired the ambition of youth, and the clamor for higher education can be heard from every corner of the land. National pride inspires them to compete with their neighbors in the fields of government, science, and religion. Woman suffrage is an issue that has already been surmounted. What effect will all of these changes have on the national life of the people? Is Buddhism, as practised in Cambodia today, compatible with the trends of world progress? For the answer, one must turn to the Cambodian student. His speech will not necessarily betray his inner conflict. He insists that he is loyal to his fathers' religion, and enters into the religious ceremonies wholeheartedly. To many, to deny Buddhism is to deny one's citizenship. Outwardly, Buddhism seems stronger than ever, but the strength of Buddhism lies in its ability to attract young men to the priesthood. It is here that the structure seems to be weakening for among students and intellectuals few show any interest in entering the priesthood.

The developments of the next few years will create a vacuum in many lives. This vacuum must be filled. Already the forces of Communism are preparing to meet this challenge. Its voice is being heard making enticing offers. Thousands of Cambodia are standing in the "Valley of Decision". Can the Church make its voice heard above these other tempting offers? Two diametrically opposed forces are bidding for the youth of Cambodia; Communism on the one hand; the voice of Christ on the other. Can we as Christians amplify His voice above the din of false Communist propaganda? Harold Sechrist

## ADDING TO THE CHURCH

Two years ago six young people met with Ruth and me in a little country chapel in Kratie Province to formally organize their Young People's Society. Four of the six could hardly read or write and all were very weak Christians. Today there are sixteen born-again, live-wire young people in this society which regularly has twenty to twenty-five in attendance, even at Wednesday night prayer meeting. We do praise the Lord for the six young people who have just recently been converted and we solicit your prayers for them as well as for the many others who have stated that they, too, wish to "enter Jesus". May God grant that all shall know the true meaning of being "in" Jesus Christ.

I think the turning point came about when Yon, the son of our houseboy, went to Youth Conference at Ta Khmau for three weeks. There he was solidly converted and, upon his return home to Kratie he began to witness to his teen-age companions. At first, meeting only ridicule, he found it hard going, but gradually, after almost a year of fruitlessness, some of these young people began to come along with Yon to young people's meetings. Last year several of these unsaved boys accompanied Yon to Youth Conference and, although they did not become Christians then, they certainly learned the way of salvation. Praise God, this has borne fruit, for not only have they become Christians but they have interested a host of others, both girls and boys, who regularly attend all of the church services, including prayer meetings. (Con't. next page under cut)

## NEW RESPONSIBILITY

To understand a great new burden and challenge that has fallen on us for the evangelization of the Phnong tribes of East Cambodia, we shall have to begin by explaining some recent events that have made a radical change in this part of S. E. Asia. The change is such that we have to extend the borders, areas and peoples of our mission responsibility. Previously all the tribes work of Vietnam and Cambodia was under the Tribes of Vietnam Mission. With the establishing of Cambodia as an independent country and the resultant strict border control, the vast tribal areas of Cambodia were made inaccessible to the inhabitants of Vietnam, and now at least thirty-eight thousand Phnong tribesmen, without one Christian among them, have become our responsibility. A month ago I went on an observation trip with Rev. & Mrs. Thompson to get an idea of our responsibility to these people. The eight day trip took us through mountains, jungle and plateau, into places where few white men had been and where the inhabitants had never seen a



Many other people have been reached through these young people. Their friends and neighbors, seeing them ride our pickup truck, often twenty strong, to meeting, have begun to wonder what this is all about. Some families are in violent opposition, others are friendly and have invited us to come to their communities to preach, explaining the Gospel through film strips and sermons. We most certainly

want to do just that.

We have been training these young people in evangelism and witnessing. They accompany the national worker and myself to other villages Sunday afternoons, distributing literature and helping with the services. Pray for these young people as they seek to serve their Master here in Cambodia in this way.

Ed Thompson

## IN CAMBODIA

white woman. The Phnong peoples are a nomadic tribe, cutting clearings in the jungle to plant their rice and corn. After several plantings, the ground loses its strength and they pass on to another area. We found a new village where they were in the process of clearing a new jungle garden. They were cutting down tremendous hardwood trees of the virgin forest. As the great trees fell you could hear the boom and the crash echo far and wide through the forest. The brush and fallen trees, of great value in far away markets, would be burned and the ceaseless struggle for food and existence would continue.

In the light of evening campfire and a carbide lamp, the Phnong, with their shining copper skin, would listen to the story so new and strange to them. They never had heard of One True God who created the world and who had a Son who came to love and save the Phnong people. They listened to the messages with rapt attention, rarely taking their eyes off of the charts that we used. After having

heard the explanations, they said, "We are a very ignorant people. We have never heard about the God of the Cambodians or the God of your people. All we know is what our ancestors have taught us about fearing the evil forces in the jungle. We like what you have to tell us. But we can't believe unless you give us a teacher. You must send someone to tell us how to believe and how to live." What a challenge at our very door!! Whom are we going to send to these people? Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest that He will send forth laborers. The harvest is ready. Who will go? Pray! Phnong country is rugged and it will take an experienced, able person to endure its rigors. The government has given us a temporary land grant to build a grass shack in a main center among the tribes called O'Raang. It is at this point that we must begin the evangelization of the Phnong peoples who have become our responsibility. There are many adversaries. Pray! May we soon see the church of Jesus Christ planted in the jungles of Cambodia.

Harry Taylor

## DISTRICT CONFERENCES

Though the Battambang Conference this year was less well attended than last year it was characterized by a greater feeling of responsibility, determination, and joy in the Lord's work.

About forty delegates came in from country churches. The Christians rejoiced as they gave half as much again as was necessary to meet expenses. For the first time in years there is money in the district treasury. Rev. Harry Taylor was the special speaker, and he and Mrs. Taylor rendered many musical numbers, both vocal and instrumental. There was a seriousness of purpose in the business sessions as the Christians established a firmer order of discipline. No one is to take communion, vote, hold office, or speak in church unless his life measures up to the standards of consecrated Christian living.

The new district committee was made responsible to see that the church is pure and working for the Lord. These men are applying conference decisions in their communities with a wholesome effect.

The baptismal service was the conference highlight. As the Christians sang "O Happy Day" six were baptized, including a promising young man whom the Lord has called to go to Bible School.

The Moung Church withdrew from the district circuit and called a pastor of its own. Pray for this group and its pastor, Rev. Chau Voch, as they take this step of faith. The Choenda Sva Church, also in the district circuit, is larger, and should have its own pastor. Pray that they, too, might step out in faith and see the Lord's blessing.

Paul Ellison

## OUT OF THE PIT

Here is the testimony of God's saving power as told me by the father of Hun, a nine year old with an open smiling face.

Hun attends Sunday School and children's meetings with his brothers and sisters. On his father's property is a well about twenty feet deep, with water about seven feet deep during the dry season. All around its mouth is slippery clay soil, for neighbors use the well, too, and the ground is always wet.

Hun was drawing water for his mother's garden and unseen, he slipped and fell in. Down, down he went to the bottom. Swim? No, he can't. But fortunately he wasn't hurt and he quickly rose to the surface. Unafraid, he was calm as, with his feet on one side of the well, and his hands on the other and facing downward he walked himself up to the top. Reaching the top, he called, "Mother! O, Mother! Mother! O, Mother!" Realizing that his voice came from the well she got a bamboo pole and held it out to him and he grabbed it and was pulled out. His face was a joy to behold as he stood again on solid ground, soaking wet, but so thankful in his little heart that God had saved him from drowning, while his sweet smiling mother praised the Lord.

He not only saved Hun from sin, but from drowning also. Do you know the joy of salvation from sin through the Lord Jesus Christ? He is all in all. He has said we must become as little children in order to be saved, having the same child-like faith in Him. Children are so easy to lead to the Lord.

Esther Hammond

Upon our return from furlough we were privileged to attend the Siem Reap District Conference. Mr. Bun and Mr. Ut, two Bible School students, who have been taking turns pastoring the flock, accompanied us to the conference, and Rev. Joe Doty, who has been overseeing the District, joined us. One of the highlights of the trip was visiting with Christians in their homes, enroute to Kontraeng, where the meetings were held. A memorable visit was to a new village called "Elephant Crossing", in Kompong Thom Province. Our former servant moved to this locality a year ago. He and his wife have faithfully witnessed from house to house, and the result of their faithful lives and testimonies is that five persons have acknowledged their sin and turned from heathenism to Christ.

Services were held in Kontaeng Friday through Sunday, and we all had very blessed fellowship together as we witnessed to many curious neighbors who came to the chapel. Long into the night the Christians sat around little kerosene lamps telling each other what God had done for them. The spirit of the conference was one of joy, peace, and a bond of kinship with the Lord and one another in Christ.

In direct contrast was a party going on in a neighboring house with gambling, hilarity, and drunkenness throughout the night — DARKNESS BECAUSE OF SIN.

As we returned home Sunday, weary but happy, our hearts turned from inexpressible joy to sadness realizing the need of darkened hearts all around us. This darkness was vividly manifest through a scene we witnessed by the roadside. We saw an elderly woman invoking evil spirits to control her life and body to appease these spirits, because someone in her family was ill. It was eerie! Such darkness! Such false hopes! Such ignorance! all because "the god of this world has blinded their understanding."

Will you not pray for the Christians without a shepherd? They are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, and have suffered much persecution gladly for the sake of the Gospel, and have the joy of the Lord abounding in their lives. Pray that they may be kept by the power of God and continue to be shining witnesses to those around them who know not Christ as their Saviour.

Edythe Dunning

## A MISSIONARY MEDITATION

David said, "The kings of earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed." Under the guise of patriotism, Cambodia's National Anthem is an open dethroning of the Lord. It is a mandate of trust in human monarchy, fate and Buddhism. The three stanzas read:

Heaven protects our king  
And gives him happiness and glory;  
To reign over our souls and our destinies.  
The one being, heir of the Sovereign Constructor,  
Guiding the proud old kingdom.

Temples are asleep in the forest  
Remembering the splendor of the great kingdom.  
Like a rock the Khmer race is eternal.  
Let us trust in the fate of Cambodia,  
The empire which challenges the ages.

Songs rise up from the pagodas,  
To the glory of holy Buddhistic faith;  
Let us be faithful to our ancestors' belief.  
Thus heaven will lavish its bounty  
Towards the ancient Khmer country, the great  
kingdom.

And this is only a reflection of the gross rejection of the Son of God everywhere in Cambodia. But

over against man's plottings is heard the triumphant heavenly chorus saying, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

Cliff Westergren

Cliff adds this comment: "When I first found that Cambodia had a national anthem I made a special effort to get the words and their English equivalent. The resultant information left me heart broken as it reflects how deeply pagan philosophy has gripped every phase of Cambodian life. At that hour of reflection the Lord gave the verse which follows the anthem. Hallelujah."

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## COMING AND GOING

Rev. and Mrs. D. W. Ellison are enroute to Cambodia after furlough, and should arrive early in May. We welcome them back to the field. Four couples, Rev. & Mrs. A. L. Hammond, Rev. & Mrs. H. K. Sechrist, Rev. & Mrs. J. E. Doty, and Rev. & Mrs. M. B. Steiner, are booked to leave for furlough before the end of July. May God hasten them back to the field.

Mrs. George Sprunger, Mrs. Steiner's mother, is accompanying the Ellisons to the field, and will return to the States with the Steiners. We welcome her to our midst.