



## Cambodia News

### The New King

Following the expected abdication of King Norodom Sihanouk the little known Norodom Sihamoni was crowned King on October 30th. Amid an impressive array of festivities, Cambodian flags and portraits he was carried to the palace on an ornate golden litter by eight bearers accompanied by royal guards and musicians.



Sihamoni waves to the crowd

Sihamoni proclaimed "I swear to abide by the constitution and laws of the kingdom and am committed to serve the interests of the state and the people,". In a ritual bathing ceremony, monks, together with Sihanouk and former Queen Monineath, poured water on the new king to wash away impurities, and increase his prestige and power. The position has huge cultural significance and, though non-political, is a powerful position, particularly with the older generation, because of the reverence granted.

King Sihamoni was born in 1953. He studied in Czechoslovakia at Prague High School and then specialised in music and dance at the National Conservatory in Paris. Later he studied cinematography in North Korea and in 1992 was appointed Cambodia's ambassador to UNESCO, a post he held whilst residing in France until early 2004, when he moved to Beijing to look after his father.

Sihanouk, 81, had repeatedly threatened to abdicate because of

ailing health. It is the second time he had done so, the first being in 1955 when he became head of Government and central to political power. Cambodia has given him the title of "The Great Heroic King Sihanouk".

### Khmer Rouge Trials Saga

After a six-year process Cambodia has ratified an agreement with the UN to set up a tribunal, including foreign judges and prosecutors, for the trial of surviving members of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime, which caused the deaths of a quarter of the population between 1975 and 1979.

### International Aid

International donors have warned Cambodia that it must accelerate reforms and clean up corruption if it wants the aid on which it heavily depends. The World Bank said, "The nature and volume of assistance must be clearly linked to progress on reforms." Despite recent growth fuelled by garment exports and tourism, the gap between rich and poor is widening.

### Terrorism

An Interior Ministry spokesman has said they are seeking help to draft an anti-terrorism law to meet international standards and denies being negligent in defending against terrorism, despite concerns that they could become a breeding ground for terrorist groups.

### Tourism

Tourism has developed rapidly and according to the Tourism Ministry, total arrivals in 2004 are expected to reach 900,000 compared to 700,000 in 2003. A

new international airport is being considered for Siem Reap the gateway to the Angkor Wat temples. Tourism is one of Cambodia's main hopes for economic growth and poverty reduction.

However BBC Radio 4's "Crossing Continents" reported recently that tourism is aggravating the sexual exploitation of children to "epidemic" level. According to some surveys, up to 20% are sex tourists including those seeking children.

### Birth Rate decline

Although Cambodia's population has increased from 11.4 million to 13.6 million over the last six years, the rate of increase has fallen from 2.5% to 1.8%. There is still 38% of the population under the age of 15.

### On the Menu?

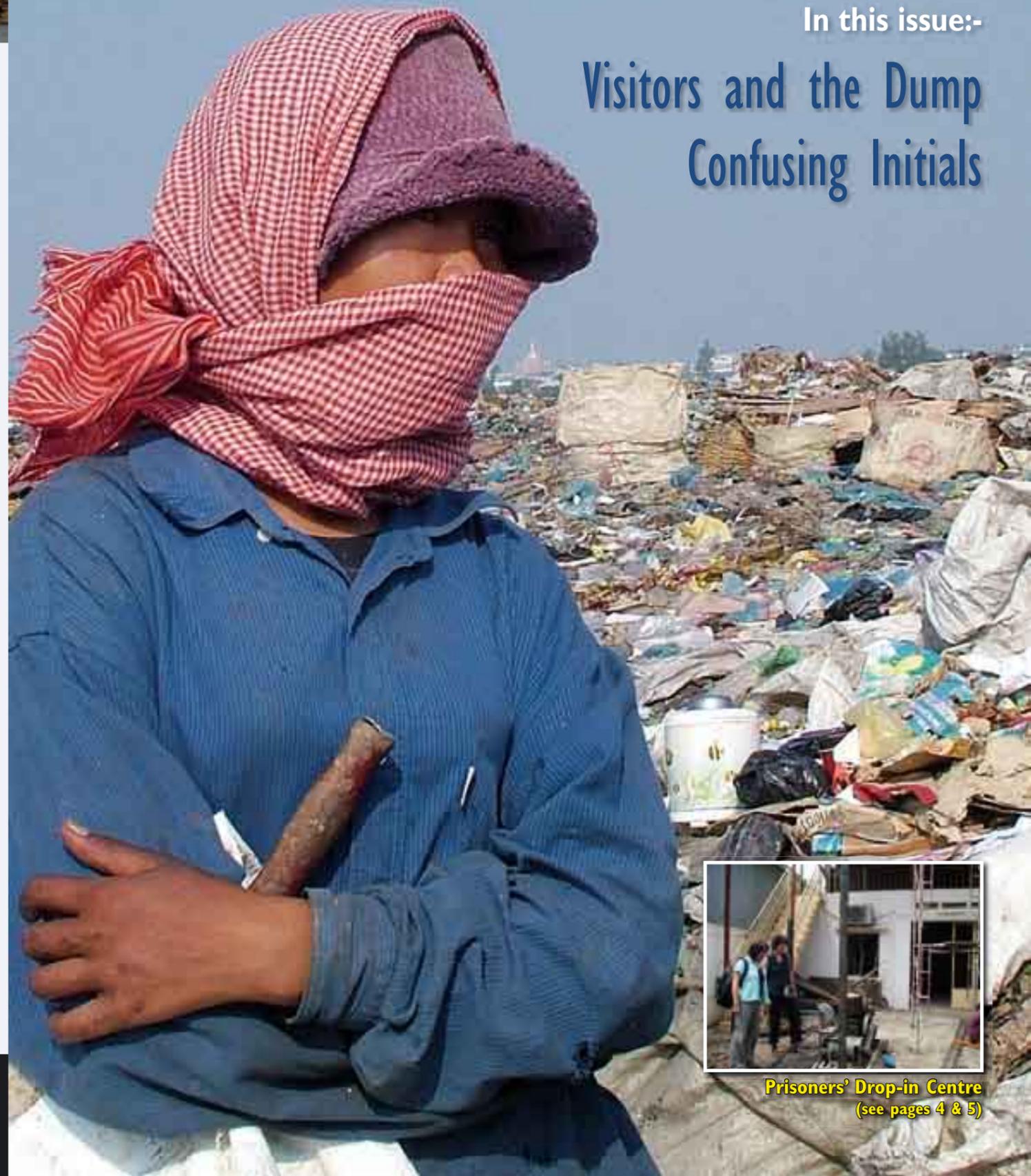


Spiders or crickets for lunch?

It is paddy rat season again with a choice of stir-fried, boiled or barbecued rat. Rat is lean, low-fat meat tasting like pork or tangy partridge. Many Cambodians were forced to eat rats for the first time during the starvation of the Khmer Rouge years. They have long been a rural norm but have recently become popular in cities.

In this issue:-

## Visitors and the Dump Confusing Initials



Prisoners' Drop-in Centre  
(see pages 4 & 5)





# The Drop-in Centre for released Prisoners

From a legacy SAO Cambodia has been able to part fund the establishment of a prisoner drop-in centre project being run by **Prison Fellowship Cambodia**.

Prisoners in Cambodia often get long sentences for trivial offences, particularly if they don't have money to pay the court or the police. Often they will contract life-threatening diseases in the arduous conditions of the prison. At the end of this they are turned out of the prison door without means of support. They may well not be received back into their home communities and often have no other choice but a life of crime. During the recent Council visit Geoff was able to 'Drop-in' at the drop-in centre on two occasions.

The first visit was before renovations of their premises were to be completed by a team from a UK church. The drop-in centre was due to open at the beginning of November and will slowly increase the number of released prisoners it caters for, developing skills training activities, a feeding programme, and health and counselling activities. The Centre was also visited after the team had renovated the rooms and it looked as if the deadline date would be met.

**Catherine Elam** of St Mary's Church, London's West End, was part of the team helping renovate the premises, she writes about her whole experience:

Some months ago I felt God stirring me to do something bigger with my life. I felt challenged to get a first hand view of the life of a missionary and experience a completely different culture. Cambodia seemed to come up at the right moment. I was captivated and fascinated by the stark contrast of poverty and beauty of a place so disabled by the horrors of recent events and by its history of enormous suffering.

Nicky Day and Lisa Cescon are St Mary's members who felt called from their jobs in London four years ago. **They arrived in Phnom Penh on an SAO Cambodia Mission Awareness visit and stayed to work** with sick and dying prisoners in the



The Team take a break.

do something bigger

prison hospital. No easy task as Cambodia is a country deeply affected by its past; corruption and fear. There are no social services so prisoners who do leave prison have nowhere to turn for help. They are mostly illiterate, have no skills or money and have often been disowned by their families.

Michelle Lahey-James, led the St Mary's team of eleven. Our mission was to paint and decorate a new Drop-In Centre for released prisoners and provide computer training and bible study for the Cambodian staff of PFC (Prison Fellowship

Cambodia). Not an easy task, but team motivator, James McKetchnie, kept our spirits up as we sanded, painted and polyfilled for a few very hot, exhausting days. I know how much Nicky and Lisa appreciated our effort, which they desperately needed to finish the centre in time for the opening.

hot, exhausting days

Often we hear about the people 'out there' but it doesn't have any real bearing on our lives. I am glad we got the opportunity to be involved and to come back and tell other people about the work in Cambodia. We also know more specifically about the prayer that

is needed. I am also aware how touched the staff were that we had come all the way out from England to invest our time in them. It was wonderful to be able to bring our skills to help with various training needs, bible study and to have amazing times of fellowship and prayer.

Of course no article on Phnom Penh would be complete if I didn't mention the crazy traffic system and the hilarity of seeing whole families balanced on a single moped! On a more sombre note were the visits to S21 Pol Pot prison and the killing fields – experiences that left me with a feeling of deep sadness and disgust at the torture human beings are capable of inflicting on each other.

One humbling experience was our visit to Kainos Prison where we spent a morning evangelising with drama, drumming and singing to 200 prisoners- some of whom were barely teenagers. It was definitely

experiences that sow seeds

one of those surreal experiences in which you wonder if you are having any impact. Perhaps they were simply amused by a bunch of funny looking westerners leaping about doing strange actions. We often don't know until later how someone has been affected or touched by the Holy Spirit.

It is hard adjusting back to London life. I don't have stories of great miracles. But praise God He did bring back my luggage, which went missing in Kuala Lumpur, my mini miracle! The whole trip was a fantastic experience; I will always treasure the privilege of being on such a fantastic team and the honour of being able to serve Nicky and Lisa; their beautiful spirits and positive radiance a testimony in itself.

I strongly believe that God uses these experiences to sow seeds on a much deeper level and I believe this may be true for others too. It has given me a deeper appreciation for the country and its culture, a greater humility and compassion for God's people, a wider trust in the power of what we can do when we surrender our will and our lives and let Jesus lead and guide us.



Visiting after the work is done



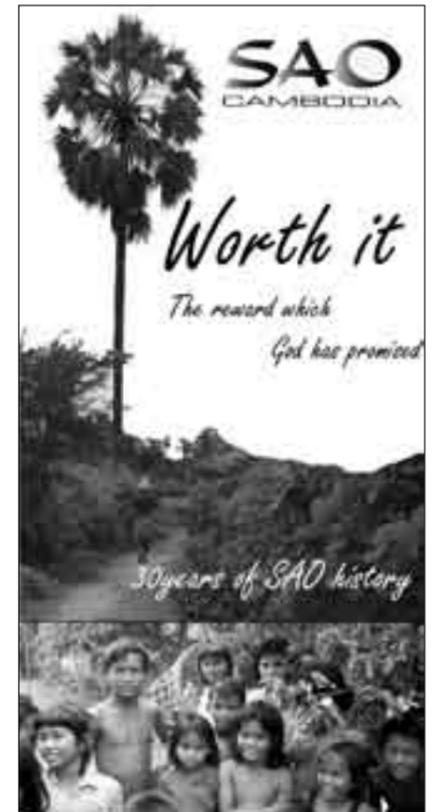
## Worth it - the reward which God has promised

### 30 years of SAO Cambodia's history.

One man's call for prayer for Cambodia - SAO Cambodia's founder Major Taing Chirrc - at the Keswick Convention in 1973 - and Paul and Helen Penfold's response to circulate news to those willing to pray - gave birth to the mission which sent people around the world to serve the Cambodian people. Wherever they happened to be, from resettlement centres in Gravesend and Paris to refugee camps in the border regions of Thailand and Cambodia, and eventually to Cambodia itself, the mission brought good news and practical help. SAO members and associates reflect on their time with the mission and tell you their stories for themselves!

Some might wonder if building a partnership with the Cambodian church is worth it. Read our 30th Anniversary booklet (A5 format) with anecdotes from past members and associates and see how worthwhile the whole adventure is.

To buy your copy send a cheque made out to SAO Cambodia for £2.00 to SAO Cambodia, Bawtry Hall, Bawtry, Doncaster DN10 6JH



Nicola and Lisa inspect the site before the team get to work.



## CONFUSED by NGOs, READ, ICC, SPPA? WHAT is a WAT? WHO IS Rannaridh?

Hopefully the following glossary of acronyms, people and organisations will answer your questions. If not then send a text to 07730589605 and ask Geoff.

### Projects

**READ** – Research, Education and Development works with the Bunong tribal group in remote Monduliri, seeking to bring them a written language and develop a bi-lingual (Khmer/Bunong) education programme with health, development and animal husbandry components.

**RIDE** – Ratanakiri Integrated Development and Education programme works with a number of minority hill tribes in north-eastern Cambodia carrying out bi-lingual education, food security and health activities. The project was founded in 1994 and seeks to empower the hill tribes through literacy, education and life skills training.

**HOSEA** – Helping Orphanages by Support, Education and Advice. Works with a whole range of child care workers, to improve their skills and standards of care for children at risk. The project seeks to influence national policy on childcare issues and to broaden opportunities available to children who are growing up within institutions.

**SPPA** – Skills Promotion for Poverty Alleviation. SPPA works with Partner organisations facilitating their work with a key group in their target community in elements of income generation. Eventually this group will be able to share their knowledge and skills with the whole community. SPPA promotes micro-enterprise models that operate with transparency, integrity, and Christian values.

**Dental Programme** – Provides English language training for dental students to access technical literature and an Orthodontic post graduate diploma course, both at the Dental faculty of Phnom Penh, and a dental nurse training component in Kampong Cham.

**FAITH** – Food & Income generation, Training and Health. FAITH, working in partnership with EFC, facilitates initiatives where local Christians and non-Christians work together to address the needs and problems of the people in their communities.

### People

**Prince Rannaridh** – Sihanouk's senior son, leader of the Royalist Party (FUNCINPEC) former Prime Minister and currently leader of the Senate.

**The Great Heroic King Sihanouk** – King and Head of State over a number of years, now abdicated in favour of King Sihamoni. You could write a very long book about Sihanouk's ability to survive the turmoil his country has been through.

**His Royal Highness King Sihamoni** – Ascended to the throne on 30th November 2004, son of Sihanouk and his current wife Queen Monineath, hence the name. Sihamoni has lived most of his life in France where he was a professor of classical dance and ambassador to the United Nations cultural organisation, UNESCO.

**Hun Sen** - Cambodian political leader, premier of Cambodia (1985-93, 1998-; second premier, 1993-98). A member of the Khmer Rouge from 1970, he fled to Vietnam in 1977. When the Vietnamese army invaded Cambodia, Hun Sen returned, becoming foreign minister (1979-85) in Heng Samrin's Vietnamese-backed, anti-Khmer Rouge, Communist government. In 1985, Hun Sen became premier and soon was the most powerful member of the Cambodian government. After the signing (1991) of a peace agreement with both the Khmer Rouge and Norodom Sihanouk's forces and then national elections in 1993, Hun Sen became copremier with royalist Prince Norodom Ranariddh. In 1997, after a period of tension in the coalition, Hun Sen's forces moved against Ranariddh and his allies, and Ranariddh fled the country. In disputed elections in 1998, Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) won, and he became the sole premier and remains as the most powerful figure in Cambodia.

**Pol Pot** – The shadowy leader of the Khmer Rouge, Brother Number 1. Described as a quiet and gentle man by most who met him, his

regime was responsible for the death of up to 1.7 million Cambodians. After their defeat by the Vietnamese in 1979, he continued the fight from the Thai border where he and his forces were supported by the USA and Asian countries concerned about the Vietnamese expansion. The Khmer Rouge signed the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 by which time Pol Pot had officially retired as leader. The Khmer Rouge refused to participate in the ensuing elections. They continued the civil war until 1997 when mass defections diminished their numbers to a few guerrillas hiding in the jungle. Pol Pot was tried by his colleagues for 'treason' and mysteriously died in early 1998, depriving his country of an opportunity to try him for genocide.

**Khieu Samphan** – The former spokesperson for the Khmer Rouge and 'Head of State' during their reign of terror, Khieu Samphan is now living in Pailin along with former Khmer Rouge foreign minister Ieng Sary and Noun Chea (Brother Number 2). Despite these three being key players in the genocide it is not clear if they will stand trial as they have been granted immunity by the Government in return for their surrender.

**Deuch** - head of the Tuol Sleng prison complex during the Khmer Rouge reign of terror, was a former schoolteacher named Kang Kech Eav. Deuch oversaw a precise department of death. His guards dutifully photographed the prisoners upon arrival and photographed them at or near death. The photographs were part of the files to prove the enemies of the state had been killed. In 1996, no longer affiliated with the Khmer Rouge, Deuch met some American evangelical missionaries in north-western Cambodia and converted to Christianity. He was working as a medical orderly in April 1999 when a journalist discovered his past identity. He turned himself in to the authorities and awaits trial in prison.

**Ta Mok** –The military chief of the Khmer Rouge lost the lower part of one leg in fighting around 1970. It is believed that he directed the massive purges, earning him the nickname 'Butcher'. After the regime was overthrown in 1979, Ta

### Organisations

**(I)NGO** – A (International) Non-Governmental Organisation is one that is not a part of a government. Although the definition can technically include for-profit corporations the term is generally restricted to social, cultural and development charitable groups, whose primary goal is not commercial. Hence Mission Agencies are NGOs. Local NGOs are registered in country, as opposed to INGOs registered overseas.

**EFC** – The Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia represents approximately 80% of the evangelical churches in Cambodia in a similar fashion to the Evangelical Alliance in the UK. ICC supports it with various secondments.

**FLD** – Farmer Livelihood Development a local NGO, which has emerged from the former SCALE fish project, started by SAO Cambodia in 1991. The project has a broader impact than the original aquaculture

programme, with arable and animal husbandry components.

**Rajana** – not initials this time but a Khmer word for "Crafts" and a local co-operative that grew out of an early SAO Cambodia initiative.

**Optometry Clinic** – The Optometry clinic was started by SAO in the mid 1990's and is now fully localised and prescribing and manufacturing spectacles.

**Cambodia for Christ** – The prayer group which became active in supporting Cambodian refugees and then became SAO.

**Southeast Asian Outreach** – The name by which we became known once we started relief and development work.

**ICC** – International Cooperation Cambodia is a Christian development organization comprised of five agencies, including SAO Cambodia.

Mok remained a powerful figure, controlling the northern area of the Khmer Rouge's remaining territory from his base at Anlong Veng. In 1997, following a split in the party, Ta Mok seized control of one faction, naming himself supreme commander. He held the ailing Pol Pot who died in his custody. In 1998, following several key defections, Ta Mok was forced to flee Anlong Veng. On March 6, 1999, the general was captured by the Cambodian army near the Thai border and brought to Phnom Penh, where he joined Deuch at the Military Prosecution Department Detention Facility. Ta Mok was the last leading member of the Khmer Rouge to remain at large in Cambodia; other senior figures had died or already made immunity deals with the government.

### Others

**NFE** – Nonformal Education is any organised educational activity outside the established formal education system. For our projects this means educating people in village meetings, workshops and training days.

**Expat** – An expatriate is someone living outside his or her country of origin. The expat members of ICC are all the non-Cambodian missionaries.

**Wat** – A Buddhist temple.



# Visiting Us in March

## Kunleakhena Prom (Leak to her friends)

*Leak is one of the SPPA project staff working with Herry. She is responsible for maintaining the relationship with some of the partner projects, regularly visiting them, encouraging them and running training sessions as they seek to implement their micro enterprise projects within some of Cambodia's disadvantaged communities. Leak will be in Denmark for two months with a colleague, Sombath from ICC, speaking to young people and others about their Christian experience and life in Cambodia. They will both be in the UK for two weeks arriving in time to join us at the conference and going on to speak at various meetings, schools and churches.*

I was born and grew up in Phnom Penh, with my family of eleven people. I have two sisters both of whom are married and have three children between them. My parents are government officers. I have lots of relatives but some died during the Khmer Rouge years.

My father worships spirits and is known as a healer. I remember people bringing the demon-possessed to him to be exorcised. I believed in Buddha at that time and was afraid that it would happen to me. Before I was a Christian I believed that my life was horrible and without meaning, I always argued with my parents and was never patient with them. It was hard to be a good child and I so much wanted my parents to love me.

My parents would not allow me to go anywhere that they believed was not safe. I always had to ask them for permission to go places with my friends. It was hard for me to

face when they could go but I could not.

When I finished High School I heard that Jesus came to die for my sins and that He loves me. I entered University and started to learn English at the Fellowship of Cambodia University students FOCUS programme. I really enjoyed making friends with Christians at the FOCUS centre and saw that their lives were so different from mine, full of joy and with a strong relationship with each other, almost like brothers and sisters. How could I become like them? I decided to give my life to Jesus on 16th June, 2000. I have received

God's love, better than any earthly parent's love.

There were many struggles when I became a Christian. I pray that God would continue to work in my life and make me new and help me to follow Him. He is building patience, love and joy in me, using His word and friends to encourage me. I, in turn, have been able to help other friends to understand the gospel and grow in faith.

### God has a purpose

When I was young I did not understand my parents' love. But now I begin to understand how much they love me and care for my future. Their protective ways were how they expressed their love.

I believe God has a purpose for my life. I begin to understand how God plans for people in different ways. I enjoy my opportunities to disciple young girl friends and see their lives change as they turn to the Lord. ☘



Leak demonstrating palm sugar manufacture.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR PAM LUCAS**, a previous SAO Cambodia Mission Awareness visitor, due to fly out in the New Year to work with some friends of ours at AOC (Asian Outreach Cambodia). Pam will be serving them in administration and medical work for two to three months based in Phnom Penh.

# What Can I do

One of the great things about the SAO family is that it is easy to get involved and be part of the work. I was amazed at the last Conference we held how many had been to Cambodia, one way or another. Everyone can contribute and their views and thoughts count. So if you are looking for ways to get involved, what about these three ideas.

## The Conference March 11-15th at High Leigh, Hertfordshire.

Come and meet in fellowship with other members of the SAO family, including team member **Sarah and Pola** in the UK on home leave/maternity leave. Also **Leak and Sombath**, visiting from Phnom Penh, will join us. Sombath works in the ICC office doing administrative work and Leak works for the SPPA project. Some excerpts from Leak's life story can be found on Page 10. The **Rev Wati Longkumer**, the Indian Dean of Academics at the Phnom Penh Bible School, who is currently studying in the UK, will also join us (for more on Wati see last summer's issue of Vision. This Vision also reported on the 2004 Conference).



Ministry from **Rev Geoff Larcombe** (Pastor of Godmanchester Baptist Church) who is a former missionary in India and current trustee of LatinLink.

Conference Details/Costs from £110 with early booking discounts (complete the booking form on the address sheet).

## Youth Team Trips

We are still looking for some young people to join the team trip in July/August 2005. These trips are great fun, a big adventure and very hands on. We meet and work with a variety of expat and Cambodian Christians as well as doing outreach to those not yet saved. Orphanages, schools, street kids, elephants, Angkor Wat, the jungle and churches are all exposed to the young people's enthusiasm. We expect our team members to experience what God is doing in Cambodia as well as in them. **DO YOU KNOW A YOUNG PERSON WHO NEEDS TO SPEAK TO GEOFF?** (Tel:01480 395726)

**Then of course there are opportunities to join the team and serve longer term (see the posts advertised on Page 3).**



## Mission Awareness trip two weeks in Mid February 2005

We still have a couple of places available – contact John Heard on 01474 363788.

What better way to get a first hand experience of what God is doing in Cambodia? Led by John Heard you will see the projects and mission workers in action. Go and meet the team on their own ground, visit Cambodian churches, see Phnom Penh and the surrounding countryside, make friends with some of our Cambodian staff, learn about their lives and then run a children's fun day.



Mission Awareness visitors have used the opportunity to explore how they can get involved both in prayer and practically. **Be warned some have stayed on and not come back!** (see page 4) Others have returned later for longer periods of work.

If a group of you want to go on an awareness visit then we can consider tailor made trips.

