

1997 Southeast Asian
Water Festival
Program Guide

ពិធីបុណ្យអុំទូក
បុរាណវិទ្យា



Saturday
August 23, 1997
11 AM - 6 PM

Major Funding Provided by the Theodore Edson Parker Foundation

ສູນກາງ ການເພດ ແຊນຕ໌ ເມໂມຣີໂອ
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ຢາກເວົ້າ ກັບ ນາຍພາສາ

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In Memory of
Noreth Tim Som
(1961 to 1997)



The 1997 Southeast Asian Water Festival is dedicated to the memory of our late colleague Noreth Tim Som.

Noreth's loss was felt deeply through the planning of this event, to which he gave so much of his heart. He made invaluable contributions to the Festival through his knowledge of the Lowell community and Cambodian culture.

Noreth was an employee of the City of Lowell Health Department through a National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences grant. Our thoughts are with his wife and two daughters.

The Southeast Asian Water Festival Committee would like to thank Andy Chung, owner of the Lin Garden restaurant in Dracut, who hosted a memorial dinner attended by 100 persons that raised funds for Noreth's family.

About the Southeast Asian Water Festival

A Cambodian proverb tells, "Where there is water, there is a fish."

For centuries in Southeast Asia, the Water Festival has celebrated the importance of water in all aspects of life. Water has always represented prosperity, life and goodness to the Southeast Asian people. Buddhist scripture explains that the Water Festival is held to thank the spirit of the water; to pray for evil spirits to go away; and to honor the Dragon King who dwells in the water. The Festival also asks the water spirit for forgiveness for "dirtying" the water - for example, by using it to irrigate soil.

Fishermen and farmers rely on their rivers, lakes and ponds for their livelihood. Villages sprout next to riverbanks. In recent years, water has also come to symbolize economic development. Khy Taing Lim, director of the National Mekong River Commission, said, "Water is our soil, our mines of gold, our main natural resource... we must use our water to export, and get foreign currency to develop the country."

During the races, known as Bon Om Tuk in Khmer or Boun Song Hae in Laotian, people of all ages gather at the riverbanks to sing, dance, and watch the rowing races for three days in November.

In Lowell, the Southeast Asian Water Festival began as a project funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association; the City of Lowell Health Department; the Laotian American Organization; and the UMass Lowell Center for Family, Work and Community formed the original working group. The intent was to recreate a time-honored tradition for the first time ever outside of Asia, to encourage the community to work toward many common goals; and to learn from the Southeast Asian community about important environmental and health issues.

Planning began late in 1996. We welcome your comments and look forward to working with you for future Festivals. We would also like to thank Mr. Edward Shih-Chung Wang, coordinator of the Festival. What you see today represents the work of hundreds of people from throughout our community. We hope you and your family enjoy the day, and we hope to meet you at the Merrimack River for many years to come.

Ms. Jane Benfey, City of Lowell Health Department

Mr. Samkhann Khoeun, Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association

Mr. Richard Scott, Lowell Heritage State Park

Dr. Linda Silka, UMass Lowell Center for Family, Work & Community

Mr. Chareon Vannabouathong, Laotian American Organization

Thanks to Our Private and Business Sponsors

We would like to thank the individuals, businesses and corporations that helped make the Festival possible through their generous contributions. We also thank the individuals and business who "adopted an umbrella" in support of the beautiful umbrellas you see today.

Our Business Sponsors

Franklin Companies
Joseph A. Godfroy, CLU
Home Depot
Lakeview Lounge
Lowell Sun Charities
Key West Corp.
Marcotte Law Firm
Navy Yard Liquors
Reebok
Spot Clean, Inc.
Vaillancourt & Co.
Vic's Pastry Shop

Our "Adopt An Umbrella" Sponsors

Down Town Auto Repair
Fineberg & Gray Associates
Grey Fox Electric, Inc.
Lowell Real Estate
McPhee, Ltd.
Pavex Inc.
Ben P. Phanmalai Insurance & Income Tax Services
Phnom Penh Supermarket
Ms. Chris Peik
Roy Fence Co.
UMass Lowell Center for Family, Work & Community
UMass Lowell Nursing Department
Xamsenethai Restaurant
Xiong Enterprises



Our Friends of the Festival

All of us at the Water Festival wish to thank the individuals, businesses and organizations that have supported our efforts with generous gifts of time and resources.

Our Friends of the Festival

American Textile History Museum
Barnes & Noble - Downtown Lowell
Mr. Ed Trudel, City of Lowell Special Events Office
Blaine Beauty School
Cambodian Cable News
Espresso Pizza
Glory Buddhist Temple
Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce
Khmer Television Program
Lowell Festival Foundation
Lowell National Historical Park
Lowell Parks & Recreation Department
Lowell Police Department
Lowell Telecommunications Corporation
New England Folklife Center
Pawtucketville Neighborhood Council
St. Julie Asian Center
UMass Lowell Office of Community Service
UMass Lowell Crew Racing Team
The Voice of Cambodia - WLLH 1400 AM
YouthBuild



Volunteers

We want to thank our dozens of volunteers and River Ambassadors who are giving freely of their time today. They include teens representing Big Brother / Big Sister of Greater Lowell; the Coalition for a Better Acre; The Eliot Church; Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical School; Lowell Catholic High School; Lowell High School; and the Teen Coalition. Our volunteers also include students and faculty from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and people from Lowell's many communities.

We also wish to thank Pany Khakeo for making sure our volunteers are well-fed.

The 1997 Southeast Asian Water Festival Committee Offers Thanks to Our Many Volunteers

Sha-King Alston	John Mitchell
Jane Benfey	Rebecca Markey
Tom Benfey	William McGowan
Wendy Blom	Kim Monh
Khan Chao	Ken Northrop
Arn Chorn-Pond	Chath pierSath
Andy Chung	Richard Racicot
Marcia Dolce	Sak Seang
Lee Hershfield	Dr. Linda Silka
Paul Hudon	Chhavy Sinuon
Beverly Johnson	Allison Trela
Judith Kelley	Patty Trela
Rassany Khakeo	Edward Wang
Samkhann Khoeun	Cheryl West
The Venerable Sao Khon	Blong Xiong
Saravon Khun	The Spar and Spindle
Angleine Lee	Girl Scout Council

Please Note: We have attempted to make sure everyone's hard work and enthusiasm has been properly acknowledged. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions. All information in this Program Guide is current as of our publishing date.

The Rowing Races

Boat racing is an integral part of the Water Festival in Laos and Cambodia. Racing teams from throughout the different countries compete for the right to represent their temples in national championships held every November on the Mekong River in Phnom Penh and Vientiane, the capitals of Cambodia and Laos respectively.

In Lowell, we have adapted this time-honored tradition to the Merrimack River. Our boats, which were built in Cambodia, are about 30 feet long and hold 16 team members. The racing boats are sponsored in part by Saints Memorial Medical Center.

Teams representing local businesses and community organizations will race against each other and the clock. The two teams with the best times will be invited to compete in the final race at 3:50 p.m.

We would like to thank Boat Committee members Tom Benfey, Bill McGowan of the UMass Lowell crew team, Ken Northrop of the Lowell Parks & Recreation Department, and Richard Racicot of the Lowell Festival Foundation for ensuring a safe and enjoyable day of racing for all participants.

Today's Teams Include:

(Please note these are teams registered as of our publication date.)

Team #1	The Royals	<i>Eng Pol, Captain</i>
Team #2	F.O.B.	<i>Kipo Saysongkham, Captain</i>
Team #3	Sea Dragons	<i>Roath Ven, Captain</i>
Team #4	Laos Community Soccer	<i>Bounhiang Chanthavanheung, Captain</i>
Team #5	Wat Lao Mixayaram	<i>Kham Lattanasack, Captain</i>
Team #6	That Luang Market	<i>D.K., Captain</i>
Team #7	Pepsee	<i>Ting Vannabouathong, Captain</i>

Race Schedule:

(Teams to be announced at Race Time.)

Rowing races are scheduled every 30 minutes. Races begin 500 meters upstream from the Sampas Pavilion and end near the stage. Race results will be announced soon after the completion of each race and will be posted at the Race Station.

12:20 p.m.	_____	vs.	_____
12:50 p.m.	_____	vs.	_____
1:20 p.m.	_____	vs.	_____
1:50 p.m.	_____	vs.	_____
2:20 p.m.	_____	vs.	_____
2:50 p.m.	_____	vs.	_____
3:20 p.m.	_____	vs.	_____
FINALS: 3:50 p.m.	_____	vs.	_____

Celebrating the Environment

The Southeast Asian Water Festival celebrates Southeast Asian culture and the importance of water. The Mekong and the Merrimack Rivers share a history of providing nourishment and recreation for the people living nearby. We want to learn from these histories. Many of the groups listed below have spent time exploring the importance of rivers to our culture. Please come join us as we celebrate the Merrimack River as our common resource. We wish to remember the late Noreth Tim Som, an original co-chair of our Environmental Committee. We also thank Paul Hudon and Chath pierSath for chairing our Environmental Committee.

Our Health and Environmental Participants

Charles Consulting
Clean Water Action
The Eliot Church
Lowell Community Health Center Tobacco Program
Lowell Lead Project
Lowell Heritage State Park
Lowell National Historical Park
Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility
Lowell Regional Water Utility
Merrimack River Watershed Education
Merrimack River Watershed Council
New England Aquarium
Northeast Environmental Justice Network
Rape Crisis Services of Greater Lowell
The Relevance Company
Tsongas Industrial History Center
Saints Memorial Medical Center
Southeast Asian Environmental Partnership
UMass Lowell Nursing Program
UMass Lowell Toxics Use Reduction Institute
UMass Lowell Department of Work Environment
U.S. Dept of Food & Agriculture
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Waste Watch Center
Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

(Funding for the community water quality testing was provided by the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission.)



Sharing Our Cultures

We welcome cultural and artistic expressions from many communities. We hope you will sample what our artists and crafters have on display, and we invite you to learn more about Southeast Asian culture through demonstrations of traditional activities. We wish to thank Samkhann Khoeun, Chath pierSath, Rassany Khakeo and Cheryl West for leading our outreach to area artists, performers and crafters.

Our Cultural and Community Participants

Angkor Dance Troupe
Buddhachak, Inc.
Dragonfly Studio
Glory Buddhist Temple
Khmer Cultural Institute
Laotian Temple of Massachusetts
O'Bonn Studio
Pepperell Spinning Group
Thong Phamduy
St. Julie Asian Center
Trairatanaram Buddhist Temple
Blia Vang
Wat Lao Mixayaram of New England
Weaver's Guild of Boston

Sampas Pavilion Activities

(Performance times are subject to change.)

10:00 a.m. **Sava Band**– A Cambodian rock band starts the day with fun and excitement.

11:00 a.m. **Chhay Yam Parade** – The Angkor Dance Troupe opens the Festival with a march featuring brilliant costumes and the lively rhythms of wooden drums.

11:30 a.m. **Blessing Ceremony** – Buddhist monks from area temples and spiritual leaders from throughout the community welcome our racing boats to the City of Lowell. Featured guests include the Venerable S Khon, the Venerable Chek Chuon, Mr. Samkhann Khoeun, Mr. Chanrithy Oung, Mr. Seang Sak, Mr. K Silavong, and Mr. Chareon Vannabouathong.

Noon **Angkor Dance Troupe** – A leading Cambodian dance company directed by Phousita S. Huy and Tim Chan Thou presents: the classical Blessing Dance; the Butterfly Dance, symbolizing the curiosity and compassion of the Cambodian people; and the Pestle Dance, honoring the harvest and the rhythm of the tools traditionally used to mill rice.

12:30 p.m. **Cultural Fashion Show** – Young people from Greater Lowell present traditional and modern styles from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and the United States. We are pleased to present a special line of clothes created by fashion designer Souchitta Chanthompalit of Lowell. The fashion show is presented with assistance from the Asian Pride Club of Lowell Catholic High School.

1:10 p.m. **Lao Traditional Dance** – A group of Lowell performers directed by Katie Un present dances blessing the Festival and symbolizing Water Festival traditions.

2:00 p.m. **Classical Cambodian Music** – Arn Chorn-Pond and Bin Phan perform traditional works on distinctive Cambodian musical instruments.

2:30 p.m. **Wat Lao Buddhavat of Rhode Island** – A performance of the Lao Surng Water Festival dances, cheering on the boat racers and the Can Lao dance, famed for showing the distinct natures of the people of Laos. The music is played on the Can, an instrument unique to Laos.

3:00 p.m. **The ADAM Project** – Breakdancing and hip-hop “movements for peace” by Southeast Asia youth from Big Brother / Big Sister of Greater Lowell.

4:00 p.m. **Awards and Closing Ceremony** – Winners of today’s rowing races will be recognized by the community, and spiritual leaders will bring the day to a close.

Festival Stage

(Performance times are subject to change.)

1 p.m. **Traditional Cambodian Music** – CMAA Youth Traditional Music Project, under the instruction of Arn Chorn-Pond and Bin Phan, presents folk music. Sponsored by Reebok.

1:30 p.m. **Laotian Mo Lam Poetry** – Spontaneous poetry about Southeast Asian culture.

2:10 p.m. **Cambodian Friendship Dance** – The CMAA Youth Dance Project, directed by Rany Him, perform Khmer folk dances. Sponsored by Reebok. Performers include: Roath Ven, Peter Ven, Ya Uy, Ribin D., Samoeun Sok, Ryna Him, Danny Sok, Leakhena Levin, Olivia Ly, Peann Chhuon, Rachanna Song, Saneth Sim, Christy Kang, Anita Roum, Lina Mann, Roeun Soun, Sophanna Sam, Bopha Sem, Rosin So, Phann Try.

2:40 p.m. **Bob Martin** – A Lowell native offers folksongs about the Merrimack River.

3:00 p.m. **“The Ghetto”** – The CMAA Youth Theatre Project, written and directed by Arn Chorn-Pond, Barry Marshall and Chath pierSath, confronts drugs, gangs, and teen pregnancy. Sponsored by Reebok.

Storytelling Stage

*Share stories, poems and tales of many lands and the rivers
that water them with area writers and storytellers.*

Performance times will be announced.

Featuring:

Li Min Mo,

telling stories of Burma, Cambodia,
Laos and Thailand. Sponsored by
Lowell Sun Charities.

Amy Kopaczewski

Kowith Kreth

Cindy Murphy

Bunrith Sath

Chath pierSath

Richard Scott

The Mekong River flows down from Tibet to China and through Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

In the languages of these countries, the mighty Mekong River is known as: the Water of Stone, the Turbulent River, the Mother of Waters, the Great Water, and the River of Nine Dragons.



Water, like the god Siva, is both the source of creation and a great destroyer of life. It feeds the land from which the rice springs forth; it sustains the fish in lakes and rivers. It can also be an implacable force, sweeping away all before it. From time immemorial, the lives of the people of Southeast Asia have been dictated by the alternating southwest and northeast monsoons, steady winds each prevailing for half a year. So come the rains followed by months of parched earth, extremes of flood and of drought. The cycle of the seasons, both a blight and a blessing, could never be broken, but it was the genius of Angkor to master it. Inheriting the hydraulic engineering brilliance of Funan, the ancient Khmer constructed canals and reservoirs, moats and pools in a huge system that tamed water, accommodated its excess, provided for its lack. In essence,

Angkor was created from complete mastery over water and it was a water-borne empire. Not one of sailing ships and merchant princes, but one of irrigation assuring abundant harvests, of canals affording ease of access, even of water balancing the massive stone temples. As a symbol, too, water in the moats surrounding the great temple mountains represented the cosmic ocean. Water was also leisure and Angkor's aristocracy would have cheered at boat races, laughed on amorous outings to pleasure pools. With decline, Angkor lost its ascendancy over water. Canals and reservoirs fell into disrepair as the empire weakened and crumbled. Water, once again unbridled, took control. More than plants, more than man, water has undermined Angkor's monumental glory. Yet, although no longer in exquisite balance, water continues to sustain – as well as to amuse – life at Angkor.

*An excerpt from **Passage through Angkor**, by Mark Standen Publishing Company, Ltd.*

ក្នុងនាម ប្រយោជន៍រាជរដ្ឋាភិបាល ក្រសួងសេដ្ឋកិច្ច និងហិរញ្ញវត្ថុ

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រៀបចំកិច្ចសន្យាសហប្រតិបត្តិការ រវាងរដ្ឋាភិបាលកម្ពុជា និងសហគ្រាស

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លទ្ធផលនៃការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវ និងការវាយតម្លៃ ធនធានធម្មជាតិ

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ថាមានធនធានធម្មជាតិ ដែលមានតម្លៃខ្ពស់ ត្រូវការការស្រាវជ្រាវ

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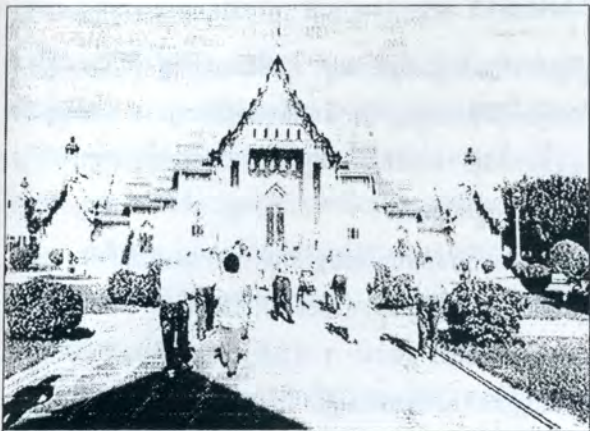
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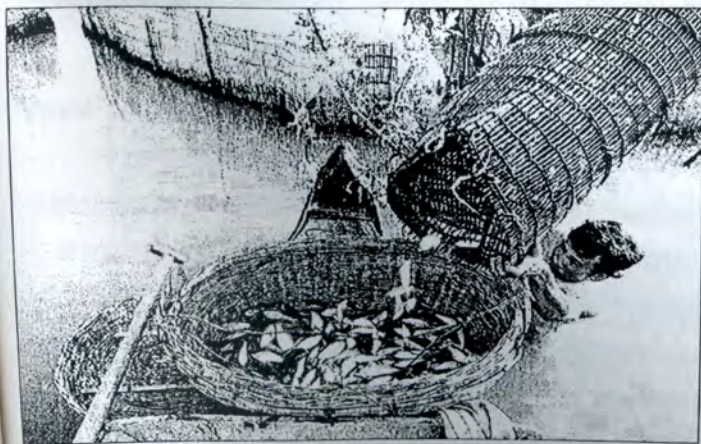
កិច្ចសន្យាសហប្រតិបត្តិការ



The Marble Temple is one of the most important spiritual landmarks in Laos.



Floating markets, such as the one in Bangkok, are also found on waterways in Laos and Cambodia.



Right: Southeast Asian fishermen use bamboo fish traps and baskets in shallow waters.

ប្រវត្តិបុណ្យអុំទូកខ្មែរ

ពិធីបុណ្យអុំទូក គឺជាបុណ្យប្រពៃណីដ៏ធំមួយដែលប្រជាពលរដ្ឋខ្មែរតែងរៀបចំធ្វើជារៀងរាល់ឆ្នាំ ក្នុងថិរវេលាពេលថ្ងៃ គឺពីថ្ងៃ១៤កើត ដល់ថ្ងៃ១រោច នៃខែកត្តិក។ ក្នុងពិធីបុណ្យអុំទូកនេះផងដែរ គេតែងមានប្រារព្ធពិធីបណ្តែតប្រទេស និងពិធីបុណ្យសំពះព្រះខែ-អកអំបុក ទៀត។ ប្រវត្តិនៃពិធីបុណ្យអុំទូក មានតាំងពីបុរាណកាលដ៏យូរលង់កន្លងមកហើយ។ មានឯកសារជាច្រើនបានបកស្រាយប្លែកៗគ្នា ហើយក៏មានរូបភាពជាក់ស្តែងភ្ញាក់នៅលើសិលាចារឹកនៃប្រាសាទបាយ័ន និង បន្ទាយឆ្មារដែរ។

តាមសៀវភៅដ៏យូរឆ្នាំ មាននៅក្នុងវិទ្យាស្ថានពុទ្ធសាសនបណ្ឌិតមានចែងថា នៅសម័យអង្គរនាគ្រឹះសករាជសតវត្សទី១២ ក្នុង កម្ពុជាមានសេចក្តីសុខក្សេមក្សានុក្សរៀងរាល់ ដោយព្រះបាទជ័យវរ្ម័នទី៧ ស្តេចចេញធ្វើសង្គ្រាមជើងទឹកបង្ក្រាបពួកចាយ ដោយកងទ័ព ទូក ជាចំបាំងរំដោះក្រុងកម្ពុជាអោយរួចផុតស្រឡះចេញពីខ្មាំងសត្រូវ (គ.ស. ១១៧៧-១១៨១) ។ ចំបាំងគ្រានោះ មានភ្នាក់នៅលើ ជញ្ជាំងប្រាសាទបាយ័ននិងប្រាសាទបន្ទាយឆ្មារ។ នៅក្នុងចម្លាក់នោះ ឃើញមានកងទ័ពទូកយ៉ាងច្រើនមហិមាដែលមានព្រះនាយា ល័ក្ខណ៍នៃព្រះបាទជ័យវរ្ម័នទី៧ ប្រថាប់ឈរលើទីតាំងនាវាចំបាំងដោយទ្រង់ និងដំបងយ៉ាងស្វាហាប់ក្នុងចំណោមកងទ័ពទាំងឡាយ។

តាមឯកសារល្បែងប្រណាំងទូករបស់ក្រុមជំនុំទំនៀមទំលាប់ (លេខ ១៩.០០៤) និពន្ធឡើងដោយលោក **ង៉ាង ម៉ែន** ហៅ **អាចារ្យ-ង៉ាង** នៅពុទ្ធសាសនបណ្ឌិតរង ខេត្តឃ្នាំងកម្ពុជាក្រោម មានចែងថាបុណ្យអុំទូកកើតឡើងនៅសម័យលង្វែក (គ.ស. ២០៧១ គ.ស. ១៥២៨) ក្នុងរជ្ជកាលព្រះបាទអង្គចន្ទទី១ ទ្រង់តាំងពន្លាតាត ងារជាសិទ្ធិពូជជាស្តេចក្រាញ់នៅកម្ពុជាក្រោម ស្រុកបាសាក់។ ស្តេចក្រាញ់នេះក៏បានចាត់ទាហានជើងទឹកការពារស្រុកចែកជាបីក្រុម គឺ៖

ក្រុមទី១ ហៅទ័ពស្រួច ហាត់ច្បាំងនឹងទូកដែលមានទ្រង់ទ្រាយដូចការប្រណាំងទូកយើងសព្វថ្ងៃ។

ក្រុមទី២ ហៅទ័ពជំនួយ ហាត់ច្បាំងនឹងទូកថែវជាពីរជួរដែលមានទ្រង់ទ្រាយដូចទូកប្រណាំងយើងសព្វថ្ងៃ។

ក្រុមទី៣ ហៅទ័ពបាសាក់ គឺទូកធំមានដំបូល មានថែវមានក្តោង មានទ្រង់ទ្រាយដូចជាទូកបាសាក់ ហៅទូកប៉ុកចាយ តែរាង ស្លូតវែងមានដំបូលតែមួយកាត់ខាងមុខឥតជញ្ជាំងជាទូកសំរាប់ដាក់ស្បៀងអាហារសំរាប់កងទ័ព។

ស្តេចក្រាញ់កម្ពុជាក្រោមនេះ កំណត់យកថ្ងៃពេញបូណ៌មីខែកត្តិកជារដូវអកអំបុកនោះ កែតទាហានជើងទឹកជើងគោក "សមយុទ្ធ" មួយយប់ មួយថ្ងៃរៀងរាល់ឆ្នាំនៅទន្លេកន្ទេរ ក្នុងខេត្តឃ្នាំង។

តាមសៀវភៅនិងឯកសារជាប្រភពទាំងពីរខាងលើនេះអាចសន្និដ្ឋានបានថាប្រទេសកម្ពុជាសម័យបុរាណ ជាប្រទេសមានកងទ័ព ជើងទឹកយ៉ាងខ្លាំងពូកែ និងមានវិធីហ្វឹកហ្វឺងពិធីសមយុទ្ធកងទ័ពនេះជាប្រពៃណីជារៀងរាល់ឆ្នាំ ហើយអាចសន្និដ្ឋានទៀតថាប្រទេស កម្ពុជាធ្វើពិធីនេះរៀងរាល់ឆ្នាំ គឺជាប់តំណមកពីសមយុទ្ធក្នុងសម័យបុរាណនេះឯង។

ឯកសារខ្លះទៀតនិយាយថា ពិធីបុណ្យអុំទូកនេះ ជាបុណ្យប្រពៃណីជាតិដ៏ធំមួយនៅប្រទេសកម្ពុជា គឺមានសភាពប្រហែលនឹង បុណ្យប្រចាំរដូវរបស់ជនជាតិអឺរ៉ុបដែលមានឈ្មោះថា សាំងហ្សង់ ដែលបច្ចុប្បន្នប្រារព្ធធ្វើនៅអឺរ៉ុបខាងជើង។

ប៉ុន្តែការបកស្រាយខ្លះទៀតបានបញ្ជាក់អោយឃើញថា ប្រជាពលរដ្ឋខ្មែរជាអ្នកកាន់ព្រះពុទ្ធសាសនា តែក្នុងប្រលឹងខ្មែរតែងមាន បង្កប់នូវឥទ្ធិពលព្រហ្មញ្ញសាសនានិងជំនឿជីវចលនិយមដែរ។ ដូច្នេះប្រពៃណីនេះមានប្រវត្តិទាក់ទងទៅនឹងព្រះពុទ្ធជាព្រះបរមគ្រូ ហើយក៏ទាក់ទងជំនឿសាសនាពីរទៀតដែរ។ ក្នុងពិធីបុណ្យអុំទូកនេះ គេមានរៀបពិធីលយប្រទេសដែរនោះ គឺសំរាប់បូជាព្រះពុទ្ធបាទ

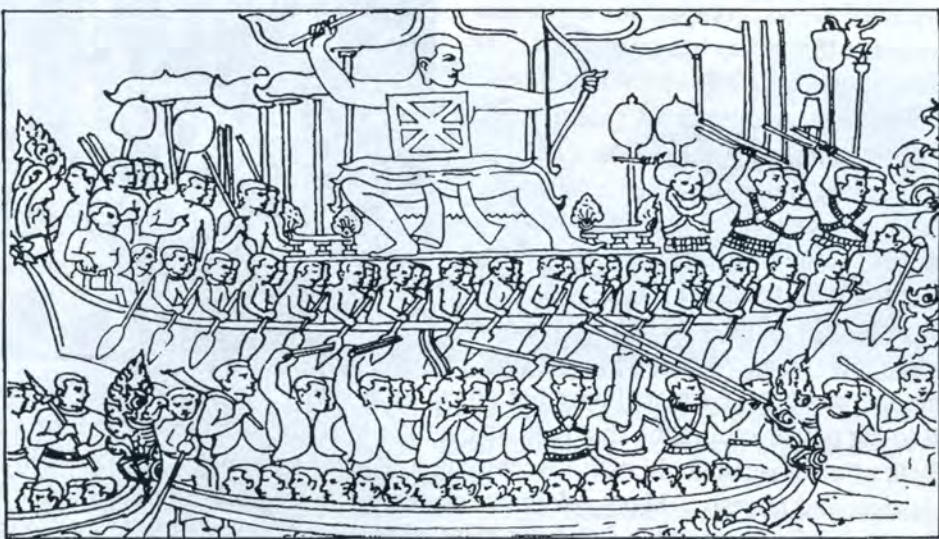
ដែលប្រតិដ្ឋាននៅឆ្នេរស្ទឹងនម្ពុទ្ធានិងព្រះចង្កូមកែវជាដើមនៅពិភពនាគ។ ក្នុងគម្ពីរទាថាវង្សបានចែងថាព្រះចង្កូមកែវទាំងបួនរបស់ព្រះ
 ពុទ្ធបានប្រតិដ្ឋាននៅបួនកន្លែងដែរ គឺនៅដ្ឋានត្រពាំង ពិភពនាគ ស្រុកគន្ធារៈ និង ទន្លេបុរៈកលិដ្ឋរដ្ឋ។ ឯភាណវារៈចាលី ត្រង់ពុទ្ធ
 នមស្ការគាថាបានចែងថា ស្នាមព្រះពន្លឺព្រះពុទ្ធមានប្រតិដ្ឋាននៅចំពោះកន្លែង គឺនៅភ្នំសុវណ្ណមាលិក ភ្នំសុវណ្ណ ភ្នំសុមុត្តវយោនកប្បី
 និងស្ទឹងនម្ពុទ្ធា។ ហេតុដូច្នេះហើយ បានជាបុព្វបុរសយើងធ្វើបុណ្យលយប្រទីបឧទ្ទិសដ្ឋានតាមព្រះគង្គាទៅកាន់ទីកន្លែងទាំងពីរនេះ។
 ម្យ៉ាងទៀតបុណ្យអ្នកទូកនិងលយប្រទីបនេះក៏អាចចាត់ចូលក្នុងជំនឿនិងទំនៀមទំលាប់នៃព្រហ្មញ្ញសាសនា គឺដើម្បីជាការដឹងគុណដល់ព្រះ
 គង្គានិងព្រះធរណីដែលជាអ្នកផ្តល់អោយជីវភាពរស់នៅនិងសេចក្តីសុខក្រុមក្រុមផងដែរ។

ជាក់ស្តែង ស្ថានភាពភូមិសាស្ត្រនៃប្រទេសកម្ពុជាមានបឹងទន្លេសាបដែលជាប្រភពទឹកដ៏ធំមួយនៅអាស៊ីអាគ្នេយ៍ បានទទួលទឹកពី
 ទីបេប្រទេសចិនជាទីដ៏សែនឆ្ងាយតាមរយៈទន្លេរមេគង្គ។ ម្យ៉ាងទៀតបឹងទន្លេសាបនេះ ក៏បានទទួលទឹកពីប្រភពភ្នំតូលែនដែលជាទីដ៏
 ពិសិដ្ឋតាមរយៈស្ទឹងសៀមរាបដែរ។

ទឹកជំនន់នៃទន្លេរមេគង្គបានធ្វើឱ្យបឹងប្តូរទាំងឡាយលិចក្លាយទៅជាសមុទ្រដ៏ធំល្វឹងល្វើយ ដោយនាំយកដីល្បប់មកជាមួយបានធ្វើ
 ឱ្យដីមានជីវជាតិបង្កលក្ខណៈឱ្យដំណាំដុះលូតលាស់គួរជាទីពេញចិត្ត។ ដល់រដូវវស្សាក៏ក្នុងបឹងទាំងឡាយនោះហូរត្រឡប់តាមទន្លេសាប
 ពីជើងទៅត្បូងវិញ ដែលចាប់ផ្តើមនៅខែវិច្ឆិកា គឺជាពេលដែលស្រូវក្នុងស្រែកំពុងតែទុំដែរ។ ប្រជាសាស្ត្រខ្មែរជាកសិករបានដាំដំណាំ និង
 ធ្វើស្រែតាមដំណើរនៃទឹកសំរកនោះតែងទទួលផលយ៉ាងច្រើនដែលជាកត្តាផ្តល់ឱ្យគេមានធនធាន។

ហេតុនេះដែរ បានជាបុព្វបុរសខ្មែរកំណត់យកខែកត្តិកនេះរៀបចំជាពិធីបុណ្យអ្នកទូក-លយប្រទីប និង សំពះព្រះខែ-អកអំបុក
 ដើម្បីសម្តែងនូវរោសព្រេងនាដឹងគុណចំពោះអ្នកមានគុណ និងដើម្បីសុំទោសនូវអំពើមិនតប្បីដែលកើតមានជាយថាហេតុក្នុងការ
 ផ្តល់គ្រឿងស្នោតគ្រោកដល់លោកទាំងពីរ។

Below: A drawing based on Bas-Relief depicting Naval Battle commending by Jayavarman VII, Banteay Chmar, late 12th century.



ព្រះនាមរាជវង្សនៃព្រះបាទជ័យវរ្ម័នទី៧ នៅប្រាសាទបន្ទាយស្នា។

Rites & Rhythm

(Reprinted from *Cambodia: The Legend Comes to Life*)

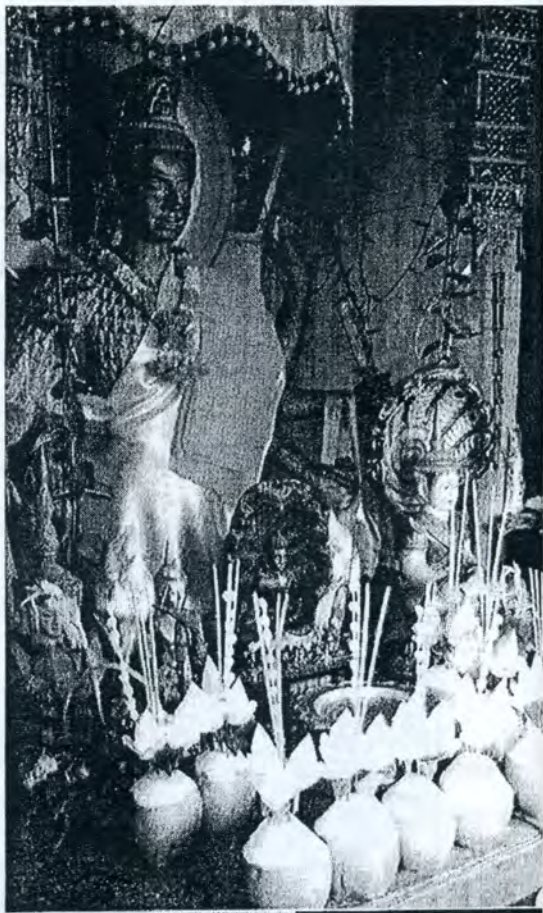
Long and sleek, brightly colored, with curving prows pointing high, the fleet of racing boats looks from the bottom of the sea to come and play in the water.

Light glints off paddles plunging in unison into the river. Drums beat time. The arms of dancers undulate gracefully in the bows. Along the shores of the Tonle Sap river, crowds cheer while ministers, ambassadors and other dignitaries surround the King in his pavilion. Villagers gather from far and wide—for many, their only occasion to visit their capital—to encourage their boat to victory. It is the Water Festival, Cambodia's biggest and most gala celebration: three days in November when the nation puts aside work and care, and honors the great naval warriors and accomplishments of the past. The celebration also marks a unique natural phenomenon: the changing of the flow of the Tonle Sap, the river and lake system which is the heart of Cambodia. From Phnom Penh to Siemreap, this land of water turns into one grand party—Cambodia's Mardi Gras.

Hundreds of longboats, propelled by precision-trained crews, compete for honor and glory in two- and three-boat heats along a 1,000-meter course to the King's Pavilion in Phnom Penh. In Siemreap, smaller boats race in the more confined waters of Angkor Wat's moat.

The Festival comprises three celebrations—a tribute to water, the ceremony of *Ok Ambok* (the pounding of the Rice), and *Sampeah Preah Khai* (the full moon Prayers).

The Pounding of the Rice stems from Buddhist mythology about a female giant who can predict the weather. Farmers honor her power each year. The Full Moon Prayers are dedicated to the power of a rabbit that took its own life in a fire to serve as food for a god who visited Earth as an emaciated old man. According to Khmer mythology, the rabbit symbolizes fidelity, justice, and honesty. Many celebrants say they can see its form traced in the full moon by the god. As night falls and the full moon rises, showers of fireworks light up the sky, exploding with booms and pops that mix with cheers of awe and joy. Enormous balloons are



“fed to the moon” and a flotilla of “fairy boats” outlined by lights slips gracefully through the dusk.

At midnight, flatted rice, called *ambok*, bananas and coconut juice are offered to the moon, which returns the thanks with a bright smile from heaven. In a Buddhist ceremony, a line of candles is gingerly rotated three times on a rod: their falling wax reveals the future.

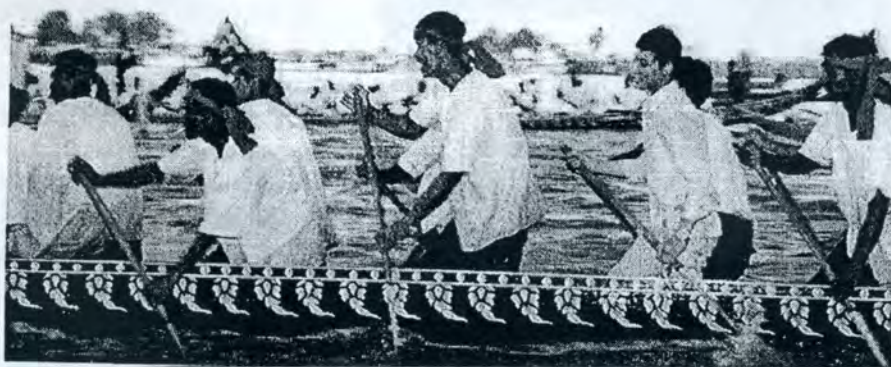
The Phnom Penh festival is the largest, with more than one million people crowding the banks of the capital’s riverfront, but the Siemreap celebration is growing in popularity. Celebrated in the early 1960s at Angkor Wat, presided over by King Norodom Sihanouk, the festival was revived at the temple in 1994, with fishing boats racing. Two years later the boats were replaced by special, smaller versions of classic longboats. The Siemreap festival offers spectators the splendid sight of racers competing as dusk falls while the setting sun transforms the towers of Angkor Wat to radiant spires—as cicadas and birds hum in the forests.

The Water Festival commemorates an era when naval forces fought for control of a land dominated by water, dating as far back as the Funan era (3rd to 6th century). King Jayavarman VII hailed his armada’s victory over a Cham fleet in 1181, a battle vividly depicted on wall carvings at the Banteay Chmar temple in Banteay Meanchey provinces and Bayon temple in Siemreap. During the 16th century, King Ang Chan I moved the capital to Lovek in southern Cambodia.

Today, these and other victories are reenacted in the races. The first round—with seated rowers—represents the elite forces who were sent into battle first, and are followed by the standing rowers, the second wave of any sea-born attack: all storming towards victory.

The sight of 300 boats gathering at the golden pavilion on the Tonle Sap is the festival’s climax. You will feel the glory of the festival in your heart—still beating quickly to the pace of the drummers.

An armada of boats gathers in front of the king’s pavilion for the race. The first *baku*, a Brahman priest, starts with a trumpet in the first round and cuts an



imaginary line unleashing the waters of the Tonle Sap to flow freely towards the sea. Oars raised, rowers from throughout the country cheer jubilantly: “*Chey-yo Samdech Euv!*” – Long live the King! Another *baku* heralds the moment with a trumpet from a conch shell. It is a moment unlike any other in the world: Cambodia’s moment.

Left: Statues like this are commonly seen throughout Cambodia. People often make offerings of food, incense, and money in hopes of prosperity and long life. Above: Hundreds of boats compete for a moment of glory.

The Tradition of Water Festival Boat Building

(Reprinted from Cambodia: The Legend Comes to Life)

When *Chang'hann Hoy* broke into two pieces, people thought it was because the rowers were too strong. They said the rowers paddled the long, sleek racing boat so fast it just split apart—the bow end sped away from the stern, leaving one half in Siemreap and the other half far down river in Kompong Chhnang.

Fast it was. *Chang'hann Hoy* was so named after it brought food from Kompong Chhnang to monks at Angkor Wat 150 kilometers up the Tonle Sap river. And the food—*chang'hann*—was still *hoy*—hot! And the boat was fast because the rowers were strong and rowed with great speed, so the story goes.

But Monh Sok knows that the rowers weren't the reason why the legendary long boat split in half. Sok, a 51 year-old boat builder from SiemReap, knows Hot Food broke apart because it was built so

well—built according to the ancient formula developed centuries ago to make the war boats of the ancient Angkor empire.

Built for speed, and Hot Food was built so well, so sleek, so fast, it just raced away from itself.

Surely, the ancient formula makes fast boats—ones so sleek, graceful and brightly colored. It is this ancient formula that produces the boats that every November fill the Tonle Sap at Phnom Penh and moat at Angkor Wat in Seimreap for the Water Festival races, Cambodia's grandest celebration.

Monh Sok says the key to the formula is an ancient rule: "*Kor romaing, bath kantaing, kantuy puos kray*"—"the neck of a fallow deer, the bottom of a basket, the tail of snake named kray." The formula works like this: The deer's neck is handsomely round. The bottom of a basket is roughly flat. The Kray snake's tail is smaller, "like chicken's chest," Sok says.

The chief workman recites this formula and tells his workers to carve their boat accordingly—neck of fallow deer curving gracefully up at the bow, basket flatness shaping the hull's bottom, thin snake tail sweeping back from the stern. "If the tail is too big, the boat will leap," Sok says. The boat builders rush

from stem to stern, and then pull themselves away to see the sides of the long craft to make sure that the rule has been complied with properly.

The boat is made. You have to entirely answer the requirements of the ancient formula. But what happens if you use *koki thmar* wood to make this boat? It will sink, of course. According to the veteran



boat maker, it is not enough just to follow the rule—the workmen must also select the best quality wood.

They should use the normal *koki* tree, not *koki teuk*, *pchek neung dei*—“*koki* and water; *Pchek* and earth.” But *koki* is expensive, because it can last hundreds of years—and sometimes hard to find. If the boat makers cannot afford the best, they should choose another high quality wood, maintaining the strictest traditions, and thus, produce the best boats. These provinces have also produced many victorious crews.

Building, painting, naming, racing, and funding the boats—which can cost over \$2,000—all of these things involve a great commitment by communities. The boat usually represents a Wat where it is stored in a place of honor during the year—revered with incense, flowers and offerings—under an open-air rooftop which respects the spirit guardian of the vessel. Whole villages typically accompany the boat to the Water Festival to cheer it on with great pride and honor.

The full-sized racing boat is 20 to 25 meters long and 1.5 meters wide. It carries 40 rowers or more, plus a helmsman and perhaps a dancer or musician who keeps the rhythm at the bow. Because the moat around Angkor Wat is much smaller than the Tonle Sap or Mekong river, the boats that race at Siemreap are smaller, only 13 to 18 meters long.

Normally, five to ten people build a boat. Producing a finished vessel caulked with a special mixture of resins and chopped hemp sack, can take five months or more. Strict rules and spirits influence the naming process which is done under consultation with elders and monks; and it is not uncommon for a name to be born of a dream. “Olden Garuda”, “Tiger Descending the Mountain”, “Powerful White Woman”, “Powerful Black Woman”, and “Magic-eyed Woman”: many of the names resonate the female spirit of the vessel.

The building of a boat is accompanied by ceremonies at each stage—entering the forest, cutting down the tree, and starting the carving. The biggest ceremony is reserved for when the boat is launched for the first time.

The ceremony commemorates the spirits of the *Naga king* and *Neang Hing*, who preserves the water land. Bananas and decorated coconuts are placed before the boat, five candles are lit, along with incense sticks, and traditional music is played. And the monks bestow their blessings.

It is at this time that the final and most significant feature is put in place: the eyes. For it is the eyes, which awake the boat’s spirit and give life to the racers.



Making a racing boat, says Sok, who has been a boat builder since the age of 18, takes a lot of thought, patience and work. But look at the sleek boats as they race past you on the river or the moat—look at the high deer neck at the bow and the snake’s tail at the stern, see the eyes that embody the spirit, and the light flashing off 40 paddles, listen to the beat of the rhythm, you will know the work was well done.

Far Left: The hull’s bottom is carefully shaped like the bottom of a basket. Left: The boat is painted with colors carefully chosen by village elders and monks.

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