



**ក្រុមប្រឹក្សាសុខុមាលភាពខ្មែរ-អូស្ត្រាលី នៃរដ្ឋញូវសៅវែល សានីធកម្ម**  
**CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL OF NSW INC**

***Seizing Our Future***

**AUSTRALIAN KHMER:**

**reflecting on our cycle of life and  
 creating a positive destiny**



*CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE  
 COUNCIL OF NSW INC*

*STATE CONFERENCE*

*2003*

*An examination of the cycles of development.*



**held on Friday 23 May 2003  
 at 9.15 am**

Thomas and Rachel Moore Education Centre  
 Liverpool Hospital

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc wishes to acknowledge the hard work of the committee, presenters and all those involved in organising the conference and who gave their time and energies on the day, thus enabling this conference to take place. We also wish to thank the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs for providing the funding, through the Community Settlement Services Scheme and Ms Phanna Pao who is the conference organiser and our CSSS funded worker.**

### ***Board of Directors***

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Outworker Liaison Worker	Ms Sokhem Benson
Khmer Drug Education Worker	Mr Pich Oum
Volunteer – with women’s network	Ms Sarim Chey

### ***Conference Sub-Committee***

Mr Chong-Hean Ang  
Ms Ravy Heng  
Ms Marlene Henry  
Ms Phanna Pao  
Ms Nola Randall-Mohk  
Ms Diana Giese

This document has been collated and edited by Nola Randall-Mohk and Phanna Pao.

## **PROGRAMME**

- 9.15 am Registration
- 9.45 am **Ms Diana Giese – MC**  
**Welcome** – *Mr Chong-Hean Ang*,  
Chairperson
- 9.55 am **Aboriginal Welcome** - *Mr Merv Donovan*,  
Gumbaingerr Aboriginal Nation
- 10.00 am **Keynote Address**  
**“Putting the Heart Back into the Cambodian People”**  
*Professor Maurice Eisenbruch*  
Director, Centre for Multicultural Health,  
University of New South Wales
- 10.20 am **“Khmer kids: Youth of today, leaders of tomorrow”**  
*Ms Elisabeth Pickering*  
School Counsellor / Psychologist,  
Department of Education
- 10.40 am **“Can We Make a Change?”**  
*Ms Muntha Crowe*  
Khmer Service, Radio Australia, ABC.
- 11.00 am **Question time**
- 11.20 am **Morning Tea**
- 11.30 am **Performance**  
*Mr Soth Tek*  
Cambodian Traditional Musician
- 11.50 am **“Would you believe... facing reality”**  
*Mr Kerry Murphy*  
Associate Solicitor  
Craddock Murray Neumann
- 12.10 pm **“Developing Communities, Developing Needs”**  
*Mr Paul VanRyke*  
Researcher

- 12.30 pm **Questions**
- 12.45 pm **Lunch - Cambodian**  
*Newam Trosok (Cucumber Salad)*  
*Mee soouh sut mwun (bean thread salad with chicken)*  
*Mee Bompornng (Vegetarian noodles with torfu, tomato, mixed sauce)*  
*Sweet biscuits and fruit*  
*Tea and coffee*
- 1.30 pm **“Bringing Back the Angkor Spirit”**  
*Mr Chong-Hean Ang*  
 Senior Manager of South Western Sydney Region  
 UnitingCare Burnside
- 1.50 pm **”Spot the Leader”**  
 What does the Khmer community recognise as leadership?”  
*Ms Marlene Henry*  
 Multicultural Access Project Worker  
 Fairfield City Council  
 and  
*Ms Nola Randall-Mohk*  
 Outreach & International Student Co-ordinator  
 Granville College of TAFE
- 2.10 pm **Questions**
- 2.30 pm **Afternoon Tea**
- 2.50 pm **Panel Discussion – Chaired by Di Murray**  
**Acting Institute Director, SWS Institute of TAFE**  
*Dept of Industrial Relations – The NSW Government*  
 Behind the Label Strategy: Helping Cambodian  
 clothing sweatshop & home based workers find a  
 more balanced life and positive future”  
  
*Dr Eileen Pittaway*  
 Research on Khmer Elderly  
  
*Dr Thel Thong*  
 (Creating a positive future by ways of understanding  
 life and the process of Karma)
- 3.30 pm **Collect Issue Cards**  
*(Participants to note three main issues arising from today)*
- 3.40 pm **Vote of Thanks**
- 3.50 pm **Close**

# CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL OF NSW INC

## STATE CONFERENCE 2003

### BIO DATA

**Chong-Hean Ang**, his wife and two children came to Sydney in mid-1983. In Australia, he has obtained a Master in Social Administration from UWS and a post-graduate qualification from the Australian Graduate School of Management – the Consortium of Sydney and NSW Universities. Currently, Chong-Hean is the Senior Manager of South West Sydney Region for UnitingCare Burnside, a large and leading agency in child protection, residential care and family support in NSW. He is also presently leading the Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc as its President. In a capacity as a board member, Chong-Hean advises a number of government and community based organisations on management and cross-cultural issues. He has been recently engaged by Sydney University to be an adviser on a United Nations project in Cambodia on a development of a legal system dealing with juvenile delinquency. He is passionate about change management, teamwork and he is an active advocate for diversity in workplace and society.

**Ms Muntha Crowe** arrived in Australia on a scholarship in December 1970. I became a secondary teacher. Later, I taught Khmer in the first language maintenance program in a primary school in Melbourne for nearly eight years.

I have been involved in Khmer community work in Melbourne in different capacities at different times since 1976.

From 1992 I have worked as a broadcaster at Khmer Service, Radio Australia, ABC.

**Mr Merv Donovan** is from the North Coast of NSW and is a member of the Gumbaingerr Aboriginal Nation. He has a long experience in dealing with Aboriginal communities on a professional working level and at a social level of "growing up" and living in an Aboriginal community.

Since 1993 Merv has worked in Aboriginal Programs in TAFE NSW and currently holds the position of Aboriginal Development Manager in South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE.

**Professor Maurice Eisenbruch** is Professor of Multicultural Health at the University of New South Wales and Director of the Centre for Multicultural Health.

During the early 1980s, he worked at the University of Cambridge and then at Harvard Medical School, where he carried out research with the Cambodian community, especially with unaccompanied minors. During the 1990s, he moved to teach at the University of Paris. He led a research operation at CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) in Paris. He was also Director of Studies (Associé) at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences in Paris.

Fourteen years ago, he started working in the then Peoples Republic of Kampuchea on cultural issues in mental health, women's and children's health, and HIV/AIDS and malaria. He and his assistants have worked with more than 1,200 traditional healers in hundreds of villages around the countryside. He was Honorary Professor of Clinical Psychology and Anthropology at the Royal Phnom Penh University, and Counsellor, Institut Bouddhique. He has held consultancies in Cambodia with WHO, European Union, UNESCO and UNFPA. Eisenbruch returned to Australia 1999.

**Ms Diana Giese** organises programs across communities for libraries and museums, at federal, state and local level. Since 1992, she has co-ordinated oral history projects for the National Library of Australia, including *The Khmer Community in Australia* (see [www.nla.gov.au](http://www.nla.gov.au)). Products of her work include the books *Astronauts, Lost Souls and Dragons* (University of Queensland Press, 1997) and *Beyond Chinatown* (National Library, 1995), ABC radio programs, videos, CDs, archives and exhibitions.

**Ms Ravy Heng** had commenced studies in medicine prior to 1975 but had to abandon this when the Khmer Rouge took power. She arrived in Australia in 1980, and studied first Accountancy at TAFE, then transferred to and completed the Welfare Certificate in 1985. She worked as an Ethnic Teachers' Aid to support herself while studying part-time. Upon the completion of the Welfare course, she obtained work in the Department of Health as an Ethnic Health Worker. This required her to do further study and she completed the Certificate of Counselling in 1986. She continues to work at the South Western Sydney Area Health Service located at Fairfield Community Health Service. She is currently undertaking a qualification in Adult Education at UTS.

**Marlene Henry** is the Community-Project Officer - Multicultural and Indigenous at Fairfield City Council. She holds a Bachelor of Social Science degree from the University of New South Wales, majoring in Sociology, and has completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Social Change and Development at the University of Newcastle. Marlene has worked in research for 2 years, and policy and community development for 6 years.

**Ms Carol Hines** - is a Project Officer with the NSW Government's Behind the Label Strategy, which aims to address the issue of exploitation of factory and home based clothing workers in NSW. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Professional Writing (Journalism), Graduate Certificate in Public Relations, Graduate Diploma in Communication Management (majoring in Cross-Cultural and Organisational Communication) and Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. Carol has more than 18 years' experience in communication-based positions at work including journalism,

public relations, teaching and research. In the early 90's she spent three years in rural Japan, teaching English in government high schools and presenting interactive English teaching workshops and cross cultural communication seminars for the Akita Prefectural Board of Education. Upon her return to Australia, Carol taught ESL short courses at Monash University in Victoria to students from Indonesia, Thailand, China, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Hungary and Korea. She relocated to Sydney in 1996 and joined the public sector, working as a trainer and project officer for WorkCover NSW for six years before joining the Office of Industrial Relations' Behind the Label Strategy Team. Carol's post-graduate work at UTS included research assignments into communication issues for Vietnamese refugees. She is passionate about addressing the needs of people from other cultures who settle in Australia and has a special interest in the communication, access and equity issues of people from non-native English speaking backgrounds.

**Mr Kerry Murphy** is an Associate solicitor with the Sydney Law firm of Craddock Murray Neumann.

For a short time he worked for the Department of Immigration and then co-ordinated the Australian Office of the Jesuit Refugee Service. He has completed a Master of Arts in Medieval Studies and a Master of International Social Development.

He maintains an immigration and refugee practice, at all stages of the process. This includes cases at primary stage, merits review, Ministerial applications, Federal Court and High Court. Most other areas of his practice are migration related including character appeals in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

He lectures in immigration and refugee law at UNSW, UTS and for the Immigration Advice and Rights Centre training courses. He writes on immigration, refugee and human rights issues for various publications.

He is also a qualified cricket umpire.

**Ms Phanna Pao** is the DIMIA funded CSSS worker with CAWC who is responsible for organising the Conference.

From 1994 to July 1995, she worked as a welfare worker with Burnside Khmer family program. From July 1995 to November 1997, she worked with the Khmer Community of NSW Inc. as a Grant In Aid worker. Following this, she worked with ANGLICARE as the JPET co-ordinator.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in Social Administration from the University of Western Sydney Macarthur.

She has previously been involved with major projects including the Cambodian Women's Support Committee, Khmer Health Project, Beyond Survival Reclaiming Culture, Living in Harmony Project, and Khmer Child Protection Interest Group.

**Ms Elisabeth Pickering** is a School Counsellor/ Psychologist. She has been working with migrant and refugee students and their families for over 30 years. She is currently a School Counsellor at Cabramatta High School Intensive English Centre and Cabramatta Primary School, and working on a refugee project for the Fairfield District of the Department of Education and Training.

She has been involved in the development of a number of initiatives with the Department and community service providers to assist refugee and migrant students, including a Settling In program to support newly arrived young people. She has been involved in helping establish parent groups as part of a Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) program, which is designed to foster the successful settlement of students and their families.

She has a special interest in dealing with grief and trauma, the process of resettlement, cross-cultural counselling and assessment, and issues of access and equity for refugee and migrant youth.

**Dr Eileen Pittaway** is the Director of the Centre of Refugee Research University of New South Wales, Sydney Australia, and a member of the Asian Women's Human Rights Council. She has been working in the field of refugee policy for twenty-five years, focusing mainly on the needs of refugee women and their children. She represented one of the international non government organisations who successfully lobbied at the United Nations for recognition of rape in conflict situations as a war crime. In 2001 she was received an award from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for her work with refugee women and children. Her research interests include the relationship between civil society and the United Nations. She is currently working on a major international research project examining the response of the International community to the sexual and gender based violence experienced by the majority of refugee women and many children, with a particular focus on the "Women at Risk" Program in Kenya and on the Thai Burma border. She is also conducting research into effective models of intervention with refugee families who are experiencing high levels of domestic and family violence.

**Ms Nola Randall-Mohk** is an Outreach Co-ordinator at Granville College of TAFE and co-ordinates educational programmes in the local community and is responsible for International Students who study at Granville. She is an experienced ESOL teacher.

She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Education at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois, U.S.A. And then worked briefly in Bangladesh. Upon her return to Australia, she completed a Post Graduate Diploma in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

Through her involvement in teaching at TAFE in 1982 on vocationally oriented programmes for ethnic specific groups, she became involved in the Khmer community. Since then, she has been extensively involved with many Khmer organisations in Sydney. Nola first travelled to Cambodia in 1987. Subsequently, twice a year, she acted as escort for groups of Khmer

returning to visit their families until 1992 when the United Nations began setting up elections in Cambodia. In 1993, Nola took leave without pay from TAFE, and moved to Phnom Penh for three years where she taught English at the Australian Centre for Education.

In 1996, Nola returned to work at Granville TAFE, and in 1997 undertook a further qualification, Master of Arts in Language and Literacy. Today she is going to make observations about her experiences regarding leadership within the community.

**Mr Soth Tek** is a Cambodian Traditional Musician. He plays the Cambodian Tror Sauw. He was born in Takeo Province. He began playing the traditional instruments in 1979 in the Thai Camp. He arrived in Australia in 1988 and he has performed at various functions with other traditional musicians here.

**Dr Thong Thel** came to Australia as a Columbo plan student. He is now a retired high school teacher of languages (ESL/French). Before his retirement, he worked as a LOTE Multicultural Consultant at the South Eastern Metropolitan Regional Office of the Victorian ministry of Education.

He earned his BA from the University of Phnom Penh, and he was a high school teacher in Cambodia. He has the following degrees from Monash; Dip. Ed. in Education, MA in Linguistics, and PhD in Education. He obtained his Graduate Teacher-Librarianship from Melbourne College of Advanced Education.

He is an advisor to the National Language Institute of Cambodia, and a member of the Royal Academy of Cambodia where has taught and supervised Master Programmes in Linguistics and Education since 2001.

**Mr Paul Van Ryke** – is currently working on a report to update the client profile and needs analysis of Khmer and other Cambodian born ethnic groups (Khmer, Rural Khmer, Khmer Krom, Khmer Chinese, Khmer Korla, Khmer Leur, Khmer Cham, Thai Dam, Kuy, Pnong and other such groups as are shown to be living in NSW). He has a consultancy service which offers a range of workshops that can be adapted to suit the needs of business, government and non-government organisations. These include Strategic Planning, organisational and service evaluation, policy development, understanding and conducting services related research, getting the most out of media and effective writing and oral presentation. Paul also evaluates services and advises on changes for better service delivery.

# *CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL OF NSW INC*

## *STATE CONFERENCE 2003*

### **ABSTRACTS**

#### **Mr Chong-Hean Ang      “Bringing Back the Angkor Spirit”**

This presentation aims to overview how Cambodia’s war-torn situation and leadership style affect the Khmer people’s mentality.

Unfolding his own personal experience through Sihanouk, Lon Nol, Pol Pot, Heng Samrin and Hun Sen regimes, as well as his leading of and dealing with the Khmer community in NSW, the presenter will reveal some characteristics of the Khmer traditions and culture that have become major barriers preventing these people, the community and the country from moving forwards to be part of the mainstream system. How may the Khmer people and their community move forward from their current situation? Some recommendations and strategies will be suggested from a contemporary management and leadership perspective.

#### **Ms Muntha Crowe                      “Can We Make a Change?”**

After a long period of observation, I have seen that the quality of leadership of the older generation within the Khmer community in Melbourne (or perhaps in Australia) has been affected by the lack of communication skills, attitudes of the community members and the traditions of Khmer social skills.

As well, the seemingly “inferiority complex” of individuals greatly hinders certain developments within the community.

In my paper I will try to examine how these factors are woven together to set back some progress within the community.

#### **Department of Industrial Relations “The NSW Government Behind the Label Strategy: Helping Cambodian Clothing sweatshop & home based workers find a more balanced life and positive future”**

This paper outlines how, with the help of the community workers at the Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW, outworkers can learn more about the Strategy including recent changes to the clothing industry that affect them and, in particular, find out how to claim unpaid wages and entitlements and how to access the Vocational Education and Training opportunities that are offered. Behind the Label offers education and retraining programs such as English language classes, clothing production certificate programs and courses in other areas of work such as Child Care

and Welfare Studies that are designed and supported especially for outworkers to access. This innovative strategy sees the NSW Government at the forefront of national debate and action concerning the protection of outworkers in the clothing industry. Behind the Label offers the possibility of a bright and balanced future for those in the NSW Cambodian community who are willing to reach out and participate.

**Mr Kerry Murphy      “Would you believe...Facing Reality”**

Working with a number of Cambodian clients who are attempting to sponsor relatives from Cambodia or with those who have been rejected and need to go to the MRT or AAT. There are some common features why cases are refused. I would like to reflect on these features why cases fail and make some positive suggestions how workers and community leaders can advise people in order to break this cycle and change these habits to obtain better migration outcomes.

**Ms Elisabeth Pickering      “Khmer Kids: Youth Of Today, Leaders Of Tomorrow”**

This paper draws on many years of experience working with Khmer students and their families in the Cabramatta and Fairfield areas.

The paper will consider some current issues facing Khmer young people, and will offer some ideas and strategies to assist young people in moving towards a positive future.

Video material and other examples from Cabramatta High School will be presented to illustrate ways in which schools can play an important part in strengthening community, promoting healing and cultivating leadership.

**Dr. Eileen Pittaway      “Report on the experiences of older Khmer settlers”**

There is some research evidence about the experiences of older refugees and migrants in relation to a range of countries either of origin or of settlement. However, almost all the relatively small body of work on older refugees and migrants focuses on the experiences of central Europeans in the middle to late twentieth century. Little is known about older refugees from other backgrounds despite the global numbers of displaced people continuing grown in recent decades. Little research has been undertaken in Australia on older refugees, despite there having been successive groups of refugees accepted in recent decades. This project is an exploratory qualitative study of older refugees settled in metropolitan New South Wales, using a focus group method. Community workers were also interviewed about the needs of older refugees. This paper presents findings from the project, looking particularly at the experience of **older Khmer refugees and migrants** settling in Australia, formal assistance provided and the response of the wider Australian society. Within this experience some consideration is given

to the impact of trauma on refugees' perceptions of later life. Preliminary conclusions examine potential implications for practice and policy in responding to older refugees.

**Ms Marlene Henry and Ms Nola Randall-Mohk**  
**“Spot the Leader - What does the Khmer community recognise as leadership?”**

People working in the welfare sector providing services to groups within their sphere of influence need to have an understanding of the paradigms of leadership held by those receiving the service. This may be organisations in their development, or individuals who contribute to the organisations. If there needs to be a paradigm shift in order to operate successfully within the wider Australian community, what needs to happen?

This paper will look at the history of leadership, expectations of what leadership means to various organisations and authorities, and how this impacts on the wider Khmer community in Australia today.

**Dr Thong Thel “Creating a positive future by ways of understanding life and the process of Karma”**

This paper is focused on three main themes of understanding life in Buddhism, the working process of Karma, and how to shape one's own future. Different culture and belief provide different definitions and meaning to life although they have a common ground, happiness in this life and the life after. As a first step, it is better to limit the scope and meaning given to life by providing two aspects of life according to western concepts and Buddhism. It involves the definition of life by Bertrand Russell and life according to Buddhism. The second step is to present roots of problems of life based on George Carlin's wisdom and the teaching of the Buddha about the three main causes of problems of human existence. Buddhist principles of good livelihood and Gandhian decent ways of life form the third step. The last step is suggestions of remedies to the problems or ways of creating a positive future for human beings based on Buddhism and Gandhian philosophy of life.

**Mr Paul VanRyke “Developing Communities, Developing Needs”**

Paul will present the findings of the 2003 Khmer communities' needs assessment to date. A profile drawn from the 2001 census will explore the particular demographic nature of the communities as compared with the general Australian population and has a few surprises in store. He will also present the findings from his extensive consultation with members of the community through a series of focus groups which reveal more similarities than perhaps is expected in the concerns of various parts of the community. Parenting and family relationships are central to the concerns emerging, and the findings explore the factors that impact on these. Finally he will suggest some areas that the community may want to pursue to address the concerns raised.

# *CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL OF NSW INC*

## *STATE CONFERENCE 2003*

### **PROCEEDINGS**

#### **Ms Diana Giese – MC**

**Welcome** – *Mr Chong-Hean Ang*,  
Chairperson

**Aboriginal Welcome** - *Mr Merv Donovan*,  
Gumbaingerr Aboriginal Nation

#### **Keynote Address**

##### **“Putting the Heart Back into the Cambodian People”**

*Professor Maurice Eisenbruch*

Director, Centre for Multicultural Health, University of New South  
Wales

##### **“Khmer kids: Youth of today, leaders of tomorrow”**

*Ms Elisabeth Pickering*

School Counsellor / Psychologist,  
Department of Education

#### **Introduction**

This paper

- (i) considers some current issues facing Khmer young people;
- (ii) offers ideas and strategies to assist young people in moving towards a positive future; and
- (iii) suggests ways in which schools can play an important part in strengthening community, promoting healing and cultivating leadership.

The paper draws on my experience in working with Khmer students and their families in the Cabramatta and Fairfield areas over a period of many years.

#### **Khmer youth**

The Khmer youth I have worked with are of diverse backgrounds, including recent arrivals from Cambodia; those born in refugee camps who came to

Australia at an early age; children of mixed marriages; and those born in Australia. Currently the combined number of Khmer students at Cabramatta Primary School and Cabramatta High School is over 300.

## **Issues**

The issues are as many and diverse as the individuals. While generalisation has its risks, it is clear that some issues occur frequently.

## **Personal**

Forming an identity is a major task for all adolescents. When young people are born of one culture and live in another, the task has extra challenges. Some young people maintain a strong Khmer identity but have poor connection to mainstream Australian culture. For some it is the opposite. Others have poor attachments to both mainstream Khmer and Australian cultures. These young people are often marginalised and end up with less socially accepted and less productive life styles.

When parents lack connection with the wider Australian community, families can be isolated and have little access to resources and support. Parents who have fears about children becoming too Australian will often be resistant to their socialisation, and the children become resentful.

Khmer parents often come from backgrounds where there was little or no education. This makes it harder for them to learn English, interact with the community and gain employment, and reduces their ability to encourage the education of their children.

Khmer kids often have few successful role models to show the value of education and how to achieve academically. Limited access to the mainstream Australian community means a lack of awareness of successful role models in the wider community.

Life experiences may also be constricted by socio-economic disadvantage, which is common in the Cabramatta area.

## **Family**

Many young people have parents who are still dealing with losses and traumatic experiences of their past. Parents frequently struggle with unresolved grief, relentless nightmares, somatic complaints, anxiety, depression, problems with anger control, and substance abuse. During the years of Pol Pot, many parents were not parented properly, and consequently they have difficulty in parenting their children.

The fragmentation and blending of families creates a range of complexities which add to family stress and pressures. Significant family members are often separated across countries.

The normal clashes between generations are frequently exacerbated by cultural issues. Conflicts often arise when parents hold fast to cultural beliefs and attitudes (perhaps of a generation or two ago) while their children have developed different perspectives. Parents separated from contemporary Khmer culture may have static views about their culture, and a lack of awareness of the dynamics of people and culture moving on. The cultural dissonance can make parents more narrow in interpreting how young people

should behave.

Communication problems are frequent, for example where young people cannot speak Khmer well and parents cannot speak English. The absence of a common language is one of the greatest family tragedies. Many young people who have lived most of their lives in Australia have a functional knowledge of Khmer but not the depth and subtlety of language to express themselves adequately. When a young person acquires English and education beyond the skills of the parents, this often disrupts the power base in the family with the result that parents lack the authority and credibility to guide their children. Young people often become interpreters and negotiators for their parents.

## **Education**

The disconnection of parents from schools causes problems for them and their children. Parents with limited English, and limited understanding of education and the educational system, often feel reluctant to make contact with the school until problems are in an advanced stage, and are often fearful of asking basic questions and getting basic information that would be of help to their children at school.

The poor socio-economic circumstances of many families often place pressure on young people to work and study at the same time. Parents may not understand pressures to succeed educationally, and may have little understanding of the amount of time a student has to devote to assessments and study to gain good HSC marks.

A lack of resources and crowded living conditions are obstacles to educational success. Books, a computer, Internet access and a quiet place to study at home are often not available.

Goals and strategies

To move forward, Khmer young people need a strong sense of who they are. Strengthening Khmer cultural identity is vital, along with fostering connectedness to the wider Australian community. To achieve this, it is important to consult Khmer young people, to set up mentoring programs involving a variety of Khmer and other role models, and to teach Khmer language and culture. Recently Cabramatta High School has begun teaching Khmer language for the HSC. This step has helped to provide validation for the importance of Khmer language and culture.

Much of my work over the years has been with communities that have experienced extreme suffering. Promoting healing among individuals and the community is a key goal. Last year a Peace Garden was developed at Cabramatta High School to assist this process. The Garden was designed as a special place for reflection and remembrance. At the opening ceremony religious leaders from the various communities represented in the school, including three Khmer monks, blessed the Garden. This added a special spiritual dimension to the Garden.

To connect parents with the school, so that young people are better supported with their education, Cabramatta High has implemented a number of initiatives, including Families in Cultural Transition programs, a Khmer Community Liaison Officer, the use of interpreters at all school meetings, translations of parent newsletters into Khmer, TAFE Outreach English classes for parents, and special information nights.

To support students with their education, Cabramatta High School has a homework program twice a week, conducted at the school by teachers, and students can access computers and the Internet.

Cabramatta Primary School also has excellent support for students and parents, including a very effective early intervention program, a play-group for pre-schoolers, and a Khmer bilingual program for Kindergarten to Year 12.

Schools are doing some good things to encourage young people to stand up and speak out. In recent years at Cabramatta High School a number of Khmer students have had leadership roles as Captains or Vice-Captains. This year both School Captains and one of the Vice-Captains are from Khmer backgrounds. Our current School Captain, Dalin Vann, recently gave an excellent speech at a forum at Sydney University. When Huy Meng Chhay was School Captain in 2000, he welcomed a number of distinguished guests to special occasions at the school (Gough Whitlam, Marie Bashir, John Aquilina), and communicated to them the needs of students. Leadership by example is crucial. Khmer young people need encouragement from their families and the community. The older generation of Khmers needs to model good leadership and work in a spirit of co-operation to nurture and guide the new generation. Young people also need a spiritual and ethical foundation.

There will always be vulnerable members in the community. Young people of today need to develop community responsibility and compassion.

The following is a poem by Phuong Au, written as a Year 11 student for the occasion of the opening of the Peace Garden. The poem is a reminder that young people are sensitive to the issues of today and the challenges that face us all as we seek to help Khmer young people to move into the future with hope and optimism.

### ***IT IS UP TO US***

The world is around us,  
But it is also in our hands.

We have seen the colours of many nations,  
Smelt the scent of exotic spices,  
Heard the drums, guitars, the music.  
We have felt the one water through our fingers,  
But our mouths were fouled with the words of the past.

Hatred. Racism. WAR.

Hatred that separated fellow men,  
Racism that promoted ignorance,  
And WAR – The beginning of famine,  
Disease and death.

We, who hold the world in our hands –  
Youth of today,  
Leaders of tomorrow –  
Have seen man's judgement,

The Battle of Armageddon on Earth,  
And have realised that we are  
The chosen ones.  
And that we must strive,  
Hand in hand,  
To deliver the Promised Land.

We can see many nations living as one,  
Smell the exotic spices,  
Hear the drums, guitars, the music.  
We can feel the one water through our fingers  
And together we can sing the songs of peace.

### **“Can We Make a Change?”**

*Ms Muntha Crowe*

Khmer Service, Radio Australia, ABC.

***Please note: This paper is based on personal observations during time of work and play in family life, with colleagues and friends and with community members, mostly in Melbourne, Victoria.***

***The purpose of this paper is to try to highlight the issues observed in the hope to improve the community effort and social values for positive results, and that these issues can be studied or researched further to legitimise these observations.***

***I apologise to anybody who would be offended by what I raise in this paper.***

We, the Khmer community, started to settle gradually in Australia since the 1970's, after the political upheaval and instability in Cambodia. We brought with us set values on family life, social norms, traditions on morality, sex roles and our beliefs.

Some of us received education here and some brought theirs from overseas.

We organised ourselves into community groups serving different or similar purposes. The community work has been so enormous. We built temples and community places, with huge donations mostly from the Khmer people living in Australia. We obtained assets to the value of over millions of dollars. And we are only a very small community.

In Sydney we see the Bonnyrigg Temple as a special Cambodian identity in Australia. Nevertheless, we hear of more temples set up in other locations. In Melbourne, we have three temples within one kilometre or less of each other.

People privately try to answer too many questions about such development. And the later generation of Khmer is asking a big question: WHY?

I will try to examine the answer to this question by looking at the tradition of Khmer leadership, social skills and attitudes.

## **1. The tradition of Khmer leadership**

We have seen that political arrangements in Cambodia seem to have been very fragile. Over and over in our long history, usurpers seized power, or failed to do so, after ruinous civil wars.

Such happenings can take place because of some major disorganised factors in the political and social situations.

If we look into the Cambodian history in recent time as well as in the distant past, we can make note of some patterns of leadership.

### **a. Legitimacy to kingship**

There has been no set rules for legitimacy to kingship or the throne. In Cambodian history, there has never been constitutional rule or a set regulation to lay out exactly who is to succeed a king. Therefore, in difficult circumstances a successor can claim kingship by force. Without such organised structure for kingship, royal politics has often led into turmoil because of the polygamy nature of the king. Each wife wants to claim power for her children. On the other hand other prominent personalities can also gain control of the throne.

### **b. Loyalty**

The provincial chieftains in the past appointed by the king would only be accountable to the particular king. When the king died he owed no loyalty to the king's successor. This can result in possible outbreak of power plays and power struggles.

### **c. Social Classes**

The social classes existed in the far past still remains today. The royalties and the high ranking official families are regarded very highly. The leadership group including the king is regarded highly through religious belief that the king has the heavenly power to organise the prosperity and wellbeing for his people. And the ordinary people remain as devoted as ever to these top levels of the society, giving way to sufferings from exploitation and unlawful deeds. The people often follow them blindly and regard their own destiny as karma.

### **d. Role Model**

On the other hand, looking back into our long history we see only a few heroes, and in modern time we have seen nobody of such role models in good leadership. King Sihanouk has been the on-and-off leader representing the royalty from the tradition of Khmer society. The ordinary Khmer place their devotion unconditionally in him. However, this may have changed by now.

These factors may have affected our way of thought and shaped up our attitudes to leadership, in the present situations in Cambodia and anywhere we go.

During the strong period, Cambodia could afford to live with these not-so-desirable political and cultural factors. But in the long term, periods of turmoil and unorganised structure of the society may have caused the downturn of politics in the Cambodian history. And we may have lived the consequences now.

The Khmer people of present time claim their ancestral connection with the Angkorean Khmer. Even if it is legitimate to do so, that period is so remote to our existence now. And the modern Khmer is of a very different power base.

We have become weak and fearful of the neighbouring countries. We have gone along the line of dependency, politically, economically and may be culturally too at present. But we observe a competitive attitude among ourselves. It seems that we possess an attitude of “inferiority complex”.

## **2. The apparent “inferiority complex” attitude**

This is the unwillingness to take criticism. It is the feeling of a threat when challenged.

The motive to raise oneself and push the others down, using negative statements criticising others, and not being able to acknowledge positive input.

The unwillingness to negotiate and approach each other in a positive manner.

Note: A lot of Khmer people appreciate the input of the outsiders rather than their own people. (This may have derived from the colonial concept, acknowledging the more superior culture of the colonial boss.)

### **How this attitude may have developed**

I am inclined to think that an attitude of a group of people can be shaped up by a long period of certain happenings within the group. And the negative impacts of wars in the far past can take its toll on the people’s mind. And the effects take roots and developed into a way of thinking in later generations. It is the process of evolution along the same line as the Darwinian theory of evolution.

Angkor was abandoned and forgotten. The destruction of Longvek, with Khmer cultural properties heavily looted, added more to the damaged psychology of the people.

(Until recently, there is still a story that the Khmer people in remote areas in the vicinity of an ancient temple ruin would tell their children to stay away from the temple as it is a cursed site.)

The loss of lives and the loss of livelihood during the wars in those periods must have been so enormous for ordinary people to endure. Although

physically, they have recovered, psychologically they might have been so damaging that could have changed their way of thought and attitudes.

On the other hand, the Khmer people now hold on so strongly to the concept of Angkor grandeur, attaching themselves to the so-called “glorious past”, boasting the greatness, with all the great temple buildings that are famous worldwide, as if we, the current Khmer people, had built them. As well, some of us think that anything similar to the Angkor art would have been copied from us.

Undoubtedly, the Khmer people have become so weak politically, economically and culturally, that we almost lost our identity. And these are more the reason that we need some kind of psychological support to survive emotionally. And Angkor is obviously the saviour for young and old in all regimes of the Khmer people.

Eventually the concept of “Angkor our glory” becomes innate and make us think we are so great, without even thinking about what that means. At the same time the fear we have about our neighbouring countries created the hatred we have for them. This kind of hatred results from subconsciously knowing that we are weak.

The falsified hatred and the fear of the neighbouring countries have taken form, as the Cambodian leaders have never had abilities to correct the situation of the Khmer weakness and rule as an independent nation for centuries now.

I would conclude that the general downturn of Cambodia has instilled the attitude of inferiority complex in many generations of Khmers.

And we have brought with us a sample of Khmer in Cambodia and laid it out here in Australia.

How does this attitude affect the leadership presented in the Khmer community in Australia? I have observed the attitude of thinking, “I am the best”.

### **3. “I am the best” Attitudes**

From the family unit, husband and wife argue; and grown-up children argue. Arguments can explode out of proportion, and it may result in divorce and break up between family members. It stems from “My idea alone is right. I must win.”

This kind of problem is not really uncommon.

But when this attitude is brought into the bigger picture of the society, clashes occur between individuals. Strong personalities objecting to each other and cannot give allowances. They are unhappy with each other and stop working together. Then all parties go their own way doing what they

think is legitimate even setting up similar projects within each other's reach. And competitiveness may result from such development.

With this attitude, prominent personalities can gather force to satisfy their own ego without thinking much of the consequences. The resources of the community can become more divided and the community may miss out on the more significant benefits.

#### **How does such an uncompromising situation take place?**

The culture of negotiation and giving allowances in order to reach common objectives does not seem to exist.

People of similar background would come together to form their own group or network, disregarding the others. The sense of cooperation is not a familiar concept.

The community members appear to aim at making peace by pleasing all parties, dividing their resources accordingly, participating in all places. The impassivity within the community makes it possible for the leaders to do what they wish.

The two parties that break away from each other would possess similar characteristics- either "you are too simple-minded" or "you are too arrogant" attitudes.

The lack of appreciation of one another turns people against each other.

There is a saying in Khmer "cheh aeng aoy kraeng cheh ke" meaning, "If you know a lot, you still have to appreciate other people's knowledge too". Yet, this saying is not practiced enough to create a more harmonious environment among the so-called leaders of the community.

Having left their status behind in Cambodia, people try to grasp for something to hold on to, and psychologically feeling so inferior when challenged.

#### **4. The lack of communication skills adds to the list of disadvantages.**

We have noticed that at meetings we drag on for so long. A matter that can be decided in five minutes, we make it go on for half an hour. Why?

- a. We may want to impress with our supposedly good ideas.
- b. We may like to raise matters relating but not relevant, just to show that we have something to say.
- c. If the matter is raised by someone we do not like or trust, we may want to argue to object or to prove its unworthiness in a lengthy manner.
- d. We may just suddenly think of something else entirely irrelevant and bring it into discussion.
- e. We may just talk to someone while something is discussed and then ask afterwards to have something repeated.

- f. We may raise something relating but not relevant just to satisfy our curiosity.
- g. We possess a lot of casual attitudes to things.
- h. The chairperson cannot or is too lenient to conduct a meeting.
- i. We are not punctual, we may not adhere to time limit set or we do not set duration for meetings. This causes restlessness among people who want to leave.

Etc.

To face each other in order to solve certain misunderstanding or to clarify some personal matter is a difficult task.

Another more distressing problem is being impatient and responding harshly to someone we think dull-witted or unworthy of nice speeches. This situation can cause loss of control of a meeting and results in prolonged hatred towards the person. Subsequently, the person becomes so unpopular with a group of people. Then the break-up of the leader group results. The hurt in such a manner is so deep, especially if the offence is from the part of a younger person.

**This brings in the relationships between the old and the young Khmers in the Australian situation.**

**5. The young people complain that their ideas and opinions are not taken seriously.**

“The children are seen but not heard” is also applicable in the current Khmer culture. “The older you are the wiser you become” is another saying applied to our way of thought. The latter is not true in all cases. However, our elders have the tendency to think so and will not like to change the concept.

Here we come across confrontations between the father and the son at the traditional frontier where generation gap occurs within the Khmer and the more forward Australian culture, which the son, or for that matter the daughter too, have obtained from school.

On the other hand, the younger generations in Australia would like to contribute to the community and inherit the roles to maintain the Khmer cultural heritage and other matters concerning the Khmer people in Australia. They have gone through the education system here and have been trained to use a more systematic channel for communication. They are often challenged by indifference from the elders, which is discouraging for the continuity of fruitful contribution to the community by the younger generation.

In the context of dealing with the older people, in the Khmer way, being polite but firm about what they wish to get may be an approach to achieve results. Namely, it is to use the respectful attitude but stress on gaining the result, but it needs to be a very skilful style of communication and more time involved.

The positive dealing with traditional values can be a way to some reform. So what are these values that we brought with us?

## **6. Traditional Values**

- a. In the family units Khmer values often contradict or contrast with the Australian ones, especially from the eyes of the children and particularly girls. The wife as well may suffer a great deal of inequality in terms of workload and family life.

These contrastive values lead to a lot of sadness within the family. And often the father or the husband is to blame, as he usually holds the authority controlling the life of the family. Men can do anything while girls and women are restricted in their needs.

- a. Looking at the picture of the community as a whole, we see a lot of men in the leadership group and not many women, because women generally are not encouraged to participate or are told or brainwashed to think that they are not worthy of becoming a leader.
- b. Generally, Khmer traditional view is so strong that reforms would be so difficult and complex. A very good example is found in our belief in Buddhism. People, in particular the elderly, donate so generously as they believe in gaining merits for the next life. The temple can provide very good facilities for community welfare based activities, but people believe that the facilities built by donations aimed at specific goals and cannot be redirected for use in other purposes. So welfare based organisations would have to find other revenue to meet their needs.

Such conditional concept of usage of the temple facilities represents a restrictive vision and can limit the liberate development of the community.

This apparent unwillingness to volunteer the place for community use in welfare need may not be intentional. But the belief in the allocation of the donations for specific purpose is much stronger. The belief in giving in terms of Buddhism to gain the merits for next life is so strong that any other fund raising for secular purposes for current life situations cannot be as successful as for Buddhist purpose.

- c. The lack of will to change the tradition is found in other activities within the community. A wedding reception is a large gathering that the host may see it as a fund-raising for themselves. Nowadays, birthday parties are as big as the wedding party and conducted in similar manners. The disadvantage of such gatherings is the fact that people are obliged to give money as a gift, at least enough to cover the expenses for each person invited.

Large gatherings are favourable as it signifies the popularity of the host. In contributing into parties in this manner, the community will divide

their resources. If a person is well-known, he would receive more invitations to such functions and more he would spend in that manner, making his financial situation a bit tough, because it is more recognised to give money as a gift. The guests would not want to change the way of giving. So the tradition continues.

- d. To apologise for one's own mistake is not a common practice. If we perceive something is not going right with someone we just avoid the person and talk bad about him, possibly causing more trouble. We would ponder about the situation but we are too proud to face it, and so decide to become unfriendly towards the person instead.

In fact if we can talk to each other face to face in a positive way trying to clarify the problem, usually we can clear away misunderstandings.

- e. Finally, the concept of solidarity means that the other group has to join us not the other way around.

### **7. But, are we all bad? No.**

I have sounded very negative so far. Nevertheless we have built beautiful temples with mostly the community funds. We have raised money for flood victims in Cambodia. We have contributed to build or rebuild temples in Cambodia.

The business community is thriving. They have contributed immensely to the community in general and to specific projects. And we have also produced a lot of young professionals.

And we have seen that the Khmer people stay together as a community in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane, and so on. Namely wherever we go we try to find each other, console each other of good and bad things that happen to us. Of course we can make things better for ourselves and for Australia.

At this stage of development the first generation of Khmer have been working together, or not together, to make things better. And we have developed as a community, although the negative perception within the leadership group is a mutual feeling. Each group thinks that the other may be at fault.

### **8. What can be done to improve and develop the community further with more harmony?**

Of course the later generations of Khmer community are taking over gradually in Sydney as well as Melbourne and may be in other places as well. Young people as young as in their early twenties are coming into committees showing their initiatives in different matters. And naturally older generation will subside gradually.

During this transitional stage, and after nearly thirty years, the older generation has to learn to reflect on all the happenings of the past.

- a. It is time that people have to look inward and assess their past. Metaphorically, they can try looking at themselves in the mirror and ask questions, “Are the things I have done always right for the community? Or are they done because of my own ego-centric nature?” “Have I considered every possibility for the right approaches to things?” “Have I offended people by doing what I was doing?” “Have I hurt anybody during the course of my doing?” etc.

We must accept the fact that we are not always the best. At whatever educational level we have obtained, there is always someone out there who is better. Education may have given us the method of thinking and given more information about certain matter. But education does not always make a person into a Buddha.

We can always go back to the people we know we have offended and make up in an appropriate manner. Try to change the tradition and improve. Of course it takes a very “big” person to do this and it can be done.

- b. We must embrace the younger generation, with the idea of grooming them to be our successor working for the community. So we must recognise their inputs, encourage them and allow them time to apply themselves, allow them time to go over their mistakes and change themselves for the better. We must give all the support we can. And most importantly accept any changes they want to make to better the situation in the community.
- c. We must learn to let go of some beliefs that hinder progress.
- d. For the younger generation, respect for the elders is a must. Respect does not mean that they have to be listened to all the time. Respect is to explain something in a polite manner so that results can be obtained. More importantly a well-balanced understanding of the mind of the older people (and for that matter the mind of any person) must be valued and used to the effect appropriately.
- e. We can claim and appreciate the concrete evidence of our past glory of Angkor period with dignity. But we must accept that the past is not ours to boast about. There are other nations that were or are as glorious around us. We must accept the fact that we are now a much weaker race and aim at making things better together.
- f. As a nation Cambodia has a long history that needs to be studied in depth by the Khmer people in order to understand our past and learn from our mistakes.

Of course we are much more fortunate than some nations that we have records of our past. We have our language and literature. We also have chbap, which are the laws of society that although conservative in many parts, they are prudent and also prove relevant for modern living. These chbap can be chosen for studies and considered by every Khmer.

## **Can we produce the will to make things different?**

We need to find a good leader, then the tactful processes towards very thorough self- development programs for all.

The art of communication is the key to many solutions. Ideas alone cannot work without communication skills.

It has been proved that there is the willingness to work together to a certain degree, especially among the younger Khmer in the community. We also need some kind of coordination between states for ideas and community spirit.

I hope I have not offended many people and I hope this paper contributes positively to the Cambodian community in Australia. Thank you.

### **References:**

1. David P. Chandler, *"The Land and People of Cambodia"*, HarperCollins, 1991
2. Chbap Pseng Pseng (*Khmer social laws*) in Khmer

## **Morning Tea**

### **Performance**

*Mr Soth Tek*

Cambodian Traditional Musician

Playing three songs

### **"Would you believe... facing reality"**

*Mr Kerry Murphy*

Associate Solicitor

Craddock Murray Neumann

- **Common visa problems**

1. Spouse visas
2. Family reunion

- **Character cases s501**

1. Fake documents and ID
2. Incorrect information
3. Correct family relationships

- **Documents**

1. Fraudulent documents
2. School documents to show dependency

- **Use of ‘Agents’ and ‘advisors’**

1. Non registered Migration agents
2. Rely on people who are experienced and no dodgy brothers
3. Paying money without a receipt
4. Costs agreements are compulsory
5. Copies of documents can be supplied on request

- **Dealing with corruption**

1. Report incidents to Australian authorities
2. Do not pay money without a receipt

## **“Developing Communities, Developing Needs”**

*Mr Paul VanRyke*

Researcher

### **NEEDS ASSESSMENT.**

Preliminary Report      March 2003

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This is the first of three reports on the 2003 Needs Assessment of Khmer people in New South Wales conducted under the auspice of the Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council (CAWC) and funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA).

The three reports are:

- Preliminary Report (March 2003)
- Interim Report (May 2003) to be presented as a paper at the CAWC Annual Conference.
- Final Report (June 2003).

#### **2. PROGRESS ON PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION**

This Preliminary Report is written at the halfway point in the primary data collection phase of the needs assessment. Data is being gathered in four ways:

- Statistical data collection.
- Key in formant interviews.
- Focus groups.

- Literature review.

## 2.1 Statistical data collection

- (a) Review of relevant data from the Australian Census of 2000. Data has been collected using language spoken by the respondent as the defining term. There are slight variations to the figures if either acknowledged ancestry or country of origin is used. Data as been collected using gender and age breakdown where appropriate (income, employment, marital status, participation in education). Information has also been collected on household tenure types and citizenship. This information will be compared with available data on these measures for the general population.
- (b) Supplementary information on Khmer migration post 2000 provided by DIMA. This figures here indicate that there have been a small number of migrants since the 2000 census, and again this may well mean that these later arrivals will not significantly alter the broad findings of the 2000 census.
- (c) Relevant data on a range of social and health indicators provided by Government Departments and Federal and State levels. This data is reported on at different levels corresponding to the most accessible level at which the data is initially collected. Data has thus far been collected on those receiving aged care services, those in supported accommodation, those receiving disability services and public housing. More data has been requested and is expected on child protection referrals, domestic violence, drug and alcohol treatment services, and participation rates in K-12 schooling. The data being sought is being supplemented as the consultations indicate areas of concern to the community or those providing services to the community. This is in order to validate these perceptions and to ask questions of why there may be a difference between perception and the recorded data.

## 2.2 Key Informant Interviews

- (a) Interviews with key informants from within CAWC. This was undertaken early in the assessment to identify key areas for investigation. It also serves as a measure of the degree to which CAWC is in touch with community issues and concerns. The consultant can report that the issues raised in these interviews have proved to be the consistent themes raised in other consultations.
- (b) Interviews with key informants from existing community and Government services to the communities. These have been difficult to organise as workers in relevant positions are usually time poor and on occasion workers have needed to get clearance for these discussions from senior management. However, interviews have been conducted with workers from the Department of Community Services, the Department of Education (at policy and school level) and Police Ethnic Liaison Officers, Khmer Community School, Mimoso women's' refuge and free-lance Khmer interpreters. Interviews will continue with Settlement Workers, Centrelink, Links to Learning, Health (including women's health, HIV/AIDS), UnitingCare Burnside, Community Housing, Anglicare, employee support services (such as the sweatshop worker project) gambling intervention services, Departments with

responsibility for policies and practices affecting small farm holdings (a particular area emerging from discussions with Khmer farmers).

### 2.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups with different population groups within the communities. At the time of writing this report, these have been:

- A group of the elderly centred on the Canley Vale temple (20 women, 8 men).
- A group of students from all years at Cabramatta High School (6 boys, 13 girls).
- A group of newly arrived Khmer adults attending English classes with ACL (19 women, 6 men).
- The Khmer Community Interagency (12 agencies represented, both Government and NGO).
- Khmer Women attending a group auspiced by CAWC and conducted at Uniting Care Burnside (8 women).
- A group of men from the Khmer Farmers Association (13 men).

Groups are also planned with

- Khmer Krom.
- Two further groups of Khmer youth.
- A group of Khmer residing in the Campbelltown area.

If possible, it would be good to conduct a group or some selected interviews with men working in other than farming as it is this group of men for whom there is considerable community concern in relation to gambling, domestic violence and abuse and adolescent/parent relationships.

### 2.4 Literature Review

#### (a) Profiling and needs assessment of Khmer communities

This has thus far been the least fruitful area of data collection. As here had been an extensive use of literature in the 1998 report, this search concentrated on trying to locate studies that have been conducted into Khmer emigrant communities since 1998. An extensive search was done on two fronts:

- A broad Internet search which identified a range of potential sites. These included research bodies with an interest in Asian and multicultural studies, and Khmer associations and organizations. This search was unsuccessful. The literature identified here was of little use in taking the discussion of the issues for Khmer communities much beyond that canvassed in the 1998 report, still largely focussed on refugee re-settlement and torture and trauma issues.
- A targeted search in health and welfare indices. This has identified some lines of investigation and the material is now being collected.

The consultant is also collecting pertinent material referred to by interviewees, including potentially useful bibliographies.

#### (b) Contextualising the findings

The literature being collected here is of two forms:

- That which presents theoretical frameworks and models within which to analyse the findings in a way that can suggest effective future interventions.
- That which can offer insights from other emigrant communities that again can suggest effective future interventions.

### **3. WHAT KHMER VALUE ABOUT LIFE IN AUSTRALIA**

The consultant believed that it was of use to ask what it was that Khmer community members consulted valued and/or enjoyed about their life in Australia – both what attracted them here and what they have come to value subsequently. The answers here speak to the expectations Khmer migrants have – whether they came as refugees or under spousal and family reunion programs. Understanding this provides a context in part for the needs as expressed. It's also important to recognise that what is valued sometimes has its downside from the view of the community members. Where this is so, both what is valued and what is of concern are identified. This means that sometimes the issue of need is 'a question of balance' as a key informant put it.

#### **(a) Education**

In this context, education means primary and secondary schooling and tertiary education through TAFE and university. It is valued because it is free (at least until Year 12); because of the comprehensiveness of the subjects covered; because of the quality of the teaching staff; because of the willingness of school to bring matters of concern to the notice of parents before the school takes disciplinary action. Success in education is highly valued.

The downside is that the education system is seen to give children and young people too much information about their rights and to fail in adequately disciplining those who ought to be disciplined. These themes will be explored later in this report.

#### **(b) Health care**

Again, health care is valued because it is free (most of those consulted use general practitioners who bulk bill and the public hospital system) and comprehensive. The safety net on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is valued as it offsets the impact of high costs in other areas such as rent. Community members also value the hygiene and environmental standards of Australian society; Australia, or at least their experience of Sydney, to which much of their experience is confined, is 'clean'.

The downside here is the lack of Khmer-speaking health professionals and access to on-call interpreter services. The issue of interpreter services is discussed later in a more general discussion on the on-going issues of lack of English language proficiency as a significant barrier to accessing Australian society.

(c) Income

Generally, those who work are able to earn more than they could in Cambodia. The downside to this is the kind of work they engage in and the costs that eat into the mostly single family income, particularly housing and food. Farmers have concern for the capital costs of their farms and for the uncertainty of financial return. There is more investigation to be done here with men who are the family income earner.

(d) Income Support

The presence of a range of income support is valued – sickness allowance, pensions, unemployment benefits, AusStudy, Family Allowance.

However, income support for young people who leave home and that available to women who are separated are both areas that come in for criticism as encouraging the break-up of families.

(e) Housing

Most adults attending focus groups to date have been in rental accommodation. They are overwhelmingly positive about the standard of the accommodation – it is cleaner, sounder, roomier than that in Cambodia, in their experience.

The downside here is that rents are reportedly high relative to household income, and tenants lack the knowledge and the language to enforce their rights. Again, this general area of Khmer as consumers will be taken up later in this report.

(f) Law and order

Adults almost universally say they value this aspect of Australian society. This is both support for policing and also more generally for the presence of laws that give community members a sense of safety and security. They also frequently say that they value the absence of ‘corruption’.

At the same time, some service providers are concerned that community members do not always appreciate the force of penalties when they are applied, for example, failing to meet undertakings made in court.

The corollary to this support for law and order is a male perception that women have too many ‘rights’ and parental perceptions that children similarly have too many ‘rights’. The perceived impact here is the loss of respect for husbands on the one hand and parents on the other and the breakdown of the family unit as a result.

#### **4. KEY INFORMANT AND FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS**

What is reported on here are only the main themes in an abbreviated form. They are for information only at this stage and should not be taken as conclusive of being the primary findings to be reported on in the final assessment. However, they are also themes that have a strong consistency across all consultations so far.

(a) Diversity within the communities

It is essential to understand that the Khmer communities in NSW are as diverse as the general communities of NSW. That is, the communities are not homogeneous when it comes to their background nor their experience of living in NSW. This is not only a matter of sub-ethnicities within the Khmer, but also matters of class, gender, age, and circumstances of entry into Australia.

It is also essential to understand that the individual experience of Khmer and their families is also as varied as the experience of individuals and their families within the wider society. That is, while the needs assessment will identify some broad issues of concern it cannot be assumed that any individual Khmer person or their family will necessarily be affected by the issue identified. For example, it would be wrong to characterise all relationships between parents and children as ones of cultural conflict and so marked by tension. The capacity of a family of migrants to adapt to their new society will depend on their prior experience of adapting to change of this magnitude and on the fit of their values and aspirations with that new society.

The final report will consider different approaches to considering issues of individual, family and societal resilience for what they can suggest as ways forward in addressing needs.

Finally, much of what is identified is not particular to the Khmer communities, but is common to other culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and indeed to mainstream Australian society as a whole. What is described before is descriptive of the evolution of communities in general.

It could almost be said that what emerges is a picture of a mature community with all its strengths and weaknesses, its risks and its challenges. In the final report, the findings here will be considered within the new frameworks of risk and protective factors as a means of identifying how to mediate the risk by working from the strengths, the protective behaviours.

(b) Community processes and structures

There are three emerging issues here.

- The politics of communities. The Khmer community, like any other community in Australia is a political one. This is not limited to different allegiances to the formal Parties in Australian society, but is meant in the wider sense of the politics of a community expressed through its leaders and through the forming of sub-groups within the community based around values and expectations, and in the Khmer communities, around sub-ethnic identification. These allegiances can be deployed in support of one set of values and expectations or another. They may align around some and be in conflict around others. They are also aligned with different visions of what the nature of the community and its institutions ought to be. They are fluid, as are the politics of the wider community. There are questions within the community of whether there is the will to move beyond these allegiances in assuring the needs of the community are met.

- Leadership and succession. From its first days in the period of refugee settlement, the Khmer communities have produced leaders. Leaders have varying degrees of skill and experience and authority. Leaders also understand and carry out leadership differently. There is a questioning within the communities now of what kind of leadership is appropriate for the next years of the development of the communities. There is also concern that there are few opportunities for leadership training and that the young are uninterested in leadership.
- Organisational territoriality. As with any other community with a growing set of organizations and institutions there is a times a sense that particular institutions may be owned by and/or own particular groups within the communities. For example, some identify this as the way the existing community temples operate and others see this as true of some of the present NGOs. There is concern that this situation leads to a waste of effort and resources, and that it can also leave some groups entirely isolated.

#### (c) Community identity

There is a strong sense that the community needs to shake off the remnants of a 'victim mentality' that understandably developed through the refugee years. This concern extends to discussion of the nature of the appropriate community institution, organizations and processes for the community in the future. There is a perception among some that the future of the community may be held back if the health and welfare contexts that were appropriate in the early years of settlement continue to prevail.

Again, this will be considered in the final report within the context of risk/protective approaches to communities, families and individuals.

#### (d) Language

The final report will discuss the place of language in individual, family and community development, resilience and maintenance. Language not only gives access to services, but more importantly to understanding the values and mores of a society within which one finds oneself. For now, access to opportunities for learning both English and Khmer figure high in virtually every group's assessment of their needs.

In the absence of language skills, the weight of facilitating access to society falls on the functions of interpretation and translation. There are inadequacies in both of these continually identified in the consultations to date.

#### (e) Parenting/family support

Relationships within the family unit and the consequent impact on its integrity are concerns that most immediately are voiced by key informants and focus groups.

Specific concerns that will be explored in the final report include the following:

- Gender role expectations.
- The distribution of power over family affairs, particularly financial.

- Support for the rights of women and children.
- The disruption of the childhood of the present generation of parents and consequences for their parenting capabilities.
- Children inappropriately taking on parenting roles.
- Parent/adolescent conflict, usually couched in terms of respect and discipline.
- Domestic violence and abuse of women and children.
- Access to child development education, particularly pre-schooling.
- Access to on-going early childhood services.
- Nutrition within the family.

(f) Gambling

There is concern for the growth of gambling over the past 4-5 years and its impact on families. Gambling is perceived as linked to domestic violence and abuse, increased pressure on family income and disruption of family relationships.

(g) Isolation of women and the aged

There is a strong concern that women in families and the aged are socially isolated as a result of a number of factors:

- A lack of proficiency in English.
- Strained family finances.
- An emphasis on the domestic roles of women and the aged.

(h) Alcohol and other drugs

While there is a concern for the abuse of alcohol and other drugs, it is within the context of concern for the primary causes seen to lead to this abuse, and these are most often placed in the relationships within families and the impact of gambling. A lack of appropriate options for detoxification has also been identified.

(i) Service deficits

There are specific service deficits being identified:

- Aged services.
- Better transport systems.
- Advocacy services.
- Mental health

These areas will all be expanded on in the final report

(j) Specific issues for small holding farmers

Discussions with the Khmer Farmers Association has identified a number of concerns particular to them which centre around policies and practices at Federal and State level and in financial institutions to support small holding farmers. Specifically, the issues identified thus far are:

- Start up capital costs.
- Securing start up loans.
- On-going costs of equipment and fertilisers.
- Drought relief and water costs.
- Urban expansion pressures on holdings.

These will be investigated in the final report.

## Questions

### **Lunch - Cambodian**

*Newam Trosok (Cucumber Salad)*

*Mee soouh sut mwun (bean thread salad with chicken)*

*Mee Bompornng (Vegetarian noodles with torfu, tomato, mixed sauce)*

*Sweet biscuits and fruit*

*Tea and coffee*

### **“Bringing Back the Angkor Spirit”**

*Mr Chong-Hean Ang*

Senior Manager of South Western Sydney Region

UnitingCare Burnside

## ***Angkor Wat – the National symbol of Cambodia***

### *Outline*

- Some identified Cambodians’ mentality that might be the barriers preventing them from moving forward.
- Some characteristics of the leaderships in the contemporary history of Cambodia (1953 - present).
- “Khmer mentality” by Prof Sar Sarun.
- Cambodians’ strengths.
- Some successful strategies to shift Cambodians’ mindset.
- Some successful examples from CAWC.
- How to bring back the Angkor spirit?

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*Some identified Cambodians’ mentality that might be the barriers*

*preventing them from moving forward*

- “Khmer genes are warriors genes”.
- Distrust of people from different cultures.
- Fear of differences.
- “I take my recipe/formula with me when I die”.
- “accept whatever happens to you, that must be our destiny”
- Khmer conspiracy theory: based on one’s own feelings and interpretation of events rather than facts or evidence.
- Resistance to change.
- Support of own people’s violence towards others.
- Feel superior - with no basis.
- Feel inferior - with no basis.
- Double standards.
- “They do not get the point”.
- Extremism.
- Blame others for own problems.

*Leadership styles  
Kingdom of Cambodia  
(King Norodom Sihanouk)  
1953 - 1970*

- Constantly denigrating neighbouring countries and fabricating Cambodia’s international status
- Managing by fear
- Fear of differences
- gain popularity by providing extravaganza entertainment
- Victim of political circumstances - political promiscuity leading to loss of support from

*Leadership styles  
during Khmer Republic (Lon Nol)  
1970 - 1975*

- American backed government.
- Westernisation of the Khmer culture.
- guns are the law.
- Leaders were out of touch with reality.
- This government was riven from within by factional disputes and lurched from crisis to political crisis.
- Fear of differences.

*Leadership styles during  
Democratic of Kampuchea (Pol Pot)  
1975 - 1979*

- The genocidal regime where more than 2 million people were killed.
- Arbitrary violence is a trademark of the Khmer Rouge, with disobedience being judged as treason punishable by death.
- No trust amongst leaders, eventually the Khmer Rouge turned on itself killing their own party members.
- Fear of differences.

*Leadership styles during  
The Kingdom of Cambodia (Hun Sen)  
1979 - present*

- Vietnamese backed government
- Intimidation to opposition parties
- Opposition leaders use the government's connection with the Vietnamese as a reason to denigrate its leadership.
- Leaders show no role model of co-existing with differences.
- Power is concentrated in the hands of an individual leader.
- The process of democracy is superficial.

*Proloeng Khmer = Khmer soul  
The 10 basic roots of Khmer mentality  
Prof. Sar Sarun - Faculty of Arts & Human Sciences, Phnom Penh  
University, 1973*

- Hidden strength - persisting behaviours that keep the country from perishing despite repetitive invasions.
- Self-praise attitude - having great pride and boasting about oneself, a behaviour that has been evidenced throughout Khmer history. Often, it could work against Khmer people.
- Being insensitive to rules - due to geographical location of the country. As Cambodia is rarely threatened by natural disasters, its people have little need to adjust themselves to natural constraints, thus Cambodians have been shaped to be insensitive to social and legal rules.
- Being inactive - due to tropical climate, Cambodians have few activities. "This is unfair for the society in tropical countries".
- Fuzziness on commitment - confused at all important aspects of commitment due to various seasons that are not clear cut. (sic)
- Extremism - the more you love, the more you hate.

*Identified Cambodians' mentality that might that might be barriers preventing them from moving forward*

- “Khmer genes are warriors genes”.**
- Distrust of people from different cultures.**
- Fear of differences.**

**.Khmer conspiracy theory: based on one's own feelings and interpretation of events rather than facts or evidence.**

**.Resistance to change.**

**.Support of own people's violence towards others.**

**.Feel superior - with no basis**

**.Feel inferior - save face**

**.Double standards.**

**."They do not get the point".**

**.Extremism.**

**.Blame others for own problems.**

*Cambodians' strengths*

- Enormous resilience
- high level of adaptability
- fun loving people
- have a strong sense of community spirit

*Some successful strategies to shift Cambodians' mindset*

- Influence their value systems.
- Challenge inappropriate mannerism, behaviours and points of view. Do not ignore them due to political correctness.
- Provide relevant training, coaching and mentoring.
- Facilitate dialogue with many sub groups and points of view in Australian society.
- Assist and engage Cambodians to analyse deeply and intellectualise issues for meaningful discussion and debate.

*Some successful examples from CAWC*

- "Living In Harmony" traditional costumes and dance party to address issues of racial discrimination within Cambodian community.
- CAWC's new Board of Directors community management model - a model of empowerment and partnership.
- CAWC's partnership with TAFE: Community Management and Leadership Training for Cambodians - strengthening & building community capacity.
- Cambodian Women's Support Group - shifting mindset, women's rights and confidence building.

*Celebrating Diversity*

*Living in harmony*

*How to bring back the Angkor spirit?*

What is that spirit?

- Artistic spirit

- Team work, solidarity
- Strategic planning
- Refinement and high standards
- How to make use of and retain ethnic groups' (in Cambodian society) wealth, skills and knowledge?

One of the major challenges for Khmer leaders:

Identity issue.

What constitute “Khmerness”?

*Final note...*

- Reflect on the past
- engage with the present
- follow current trends
- have a dream, a vision about the future, and...
- create that future!

### **”Spot the Leader”**

What does the Khmer community recognise as leadership?”

*Ms Marlene Henry*

Multicultural Access Project Worker

Fairfield City Council

and

*Ms Nola Randall-Mohk*

Outreach & International Student Co-ordinator

Granville College of TAFE

<b><i>What is leadership?</i></b>	<b><i>Marlene</i></b>
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After an exhaustive review of available literature, it is evident that the concept of 'leadership' has not been able to be defined by a single all-encompassing statement. Indeed, leadership is very hard to define as one key concept or process. Leadership, and models of leadership, are constantly influenced by behaviour, by the environment they are practiced in, and by other circumstances.

I am prepared to propose an interpretation of leadership that draws from a number of sources; that is, that leadership is a often a continuing journey of learning that allow you to experience constructive and effective relationships with others who are working together with you, to achieve the same vision or goal.

This may include understanding people and embracing them, listening to people, making a real connection to others, and taking them with you on your journeys [Yates 2001/2002]. Leadership can also be evident as a personal quality, rather than a learned quality or skill, which originates from qualities and behaviours [Doyle & Smith 2001].

Studying theories of leadership will not necessarily make you a leader. Researching and writing this paper on leadership does not make me an instant leader! Further, a good manager does not equate to a good leader, or vice versa. It is no use relying on theory alone – "you must have the maturity to be able to use it and energise others" [Yates 2001/2002: 15].

What leadership is about is how you put those theories and models into practice - how you find a balance in education and intellect, and capture the strengths of those you are working with. It is a culmination of skills, your respect for your peers and others around you that will demonstrate your leadership abilities and aspirations.

"A leader has a significant impact on the thinking, behaviour, and the performance of the people around him or her. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, or directly or indirectly, leaders motivate or drive people to behave in certain ways" (Human Synergistics/Centre for Applied Research Inc, 1997).

What kinds of practical qualities come to your mind when you think of a leader? How do we define our own leaders? Leaders come in all shapes and sizes, and can range from people we refer to as community leaders, religious leaders, people in government ([politicians]), workers in the field, our peers, or committed individuals to a cause. Who are they? Who would you call a leader? Do any of these qualities come to mind?

- A Visionary?
- Being able to see the big picture?
- Strategic?
- Motivational?
- Charismatic or inspirational?
- Adaptability?
- Someone who sees positive outcomes in change and risk taking?
- Being open to new ideas?
- Supportive?

These are all relevant qualities we seek in a leader, and qualities of leadership we strive to demonstrate, but remember this list is not definitive. These qualities can be harnessed to help people come together, to achieve and be as effective as they can be. However leadership is not only about strengths in personal attributes. Good leaders are often ordinary people, like you and I who are able to reflect on who they are, and use this reflective process to energise others.

## ***Paradigms of Leadership***

So what does history tell us about leadership, and leaders who have risen to the many challenges of the past? Internationally, many models have been researched. For example, the American model of leadership is often synonymous with charisma, where leaders are seen out in front, charging to battle [Dunn 1998]. Leaders, however, are not always charismatic. Leaders

will know how to deal with change and use this as part of their growth and development.

Historically, the Australian model of leadership has often been portrayed as an amalgamation of many styles and models based on the British model of hierarchy, aristocracy, and the right to rule. Today, the styles of leadership demonstrated by Australians are much harder to define, with recent research indicating an emphasis on management over meeting goals and visions of organisations and staff [Farrelly 2003]. Often people skills are pushed aside, with career aspirations and saving face as the primary goal for many managers and so-called leaders.

Over time, there have been many examples of leadership. Doyle & Smith (2001) refer to several types of leaders and leadership portrayed, including:

- those who lead by their traits or personal qualities
- those who lead by behaviour.
- different styles are relied on under different situations or circumstances – having a contingency approach allows effectiveness based on the "leadership style and the degree to which the situation gives the leader control and influence [Doyle & Smith 2001: 6].
- transformational, where the leader is a change agent, and
- charismatic leadership, or people are "born" leaders, having special talents and are gifted.

Some of the research I uncovered referred to common qualities of leaders, which including the ability to:

1. identify, cultivate and inspire enthusiastic followers
  2. focus their efforts
  3. face and overcome great difficulties
  4. expect more from themselves than they do from others
  5. are not afraid to make tough decisions
  6. have a vision and utmost faith in themselves to fulfil that vision
  7. are ambitious for themselves, their companies, and their people
- [Shelton 1999: 14].

It is often quite easy to envision what you want from a leader, and just as easily identify what you don't want! It is often hard to find leadership in those who have never taken on a challenge to look at themselves critically and in detail.

#### Personal leadership styles

There is never only one style of leadership to prescribe yourself to. Many leaders rely on different styles in order to be effective. The impact of leadership can either be positive or negative. Having the qualities of a leader does not mean that can influence others in the most effective way. An awareness is needed of how your style influences others.

Daniel Goleman recently conducted research into solving the mystery of what is effective leadership. His research identified six key styles, which are quite common across the board in leadership studies. These styles appear

to have "a direct and unique impact on the working atmosphere of a company, division, or a team" [Goleman 2000: 78]. More importantly, his research indicated that leaders who achieve the best results, or who are most effective in what they do, rely on several leadership styles, depending on the situation.

The styles identified by Goleman were:

- Coercive – demands immediate compliance
- Authoritative – mobilises people towards a vision
- Affiliative – creates harmony and builds emotional bonds
- Democratic – forges consensus through participation
- Pacesetter – sets high standards for performance, and
- Coaching – develops people for the future [2000: 82-83].

Four of these six styles have a positive effect on the workplace, situation and outcomes. The *Coercive* and *Pacesetter* styles are regarded as the least effective, especially when used on their own. Yet, in some circumstances, quick top-down decision making skills are necessary, and implementing standards for a highly skilled, competent and motivated team can ensure outcomes are achieved on time.

All the styles mentioned in the research have a short term use, that is you cannot rely on one style for more than too long. The ability to use and move between styles in order to respond to people and other influences demonstrates a well-honed understanding of leadership, and the role it can play in achievement and effective outcomes. Most leaders are not aware of the impact they have on others, so by initiating different styles, they are able to also gauge reactions and responses to how well they are able to work through problems, issues and relationships.

## ***The Paradigm shift***

### **Do we need one? How do we tell? Why do we need one?**

Leadership can sometimes be about challenging the norm, and taking risks that will make a positive difference for a situation or a relationship. But how are we to be sure of what's working and what isn't in leadership? How do we tell if we're 'stuck in a rut' or are progressing forward?

You may find that you and your organisation, or your team is working well together in order to achieve your intended outcomes, but the "leader" of your team may not allow those challenges to impact as wholly as you would like. Is this issue of leadership not about the process but about the leaders themselves?

So what needs to happen to change leadership as we know it? It takes a brave person to challenge the status quo, and it is taking that step that often makes a difference in leading people or yourself to achievement. Development of effective leadership takes time, and as the commercial says, it "won't happen overnight". Commitment is essential to ensure it works for the best for everyone.

It's more than 20 years now since I returned to Australia from 4 years in Chicago followed by 6 months of teaching in Bangladesh. I've had plenty of time to experience a range of leaders and leadership styles in the Khmer community. Plenty of time to become aware of the dirty linen in the community, the expectations, the prejudices, likes and dislikes, hierarchies, power struggles, family and political factions and the immediate history which catapulted Cambodians into the Australian society.

I should say at the outset that my involvement with refugees from Indo-China stemmed mostly from my belief in and commitment to a multicultural Australia. I believed that if I couldn't live in harmony with my neighbours, and make multiculturalism work on an individual level, then Australia as a whole was doomed in doing so. From one group of Australians to another, there are significant differences anyway, without the added burden of crossing cultural and language barriers. I set out on a most interesting journey which continues today in much more complexity now that I have married a Cambodian and parent step-children and grandchildren in a very blended, extended family.

As an outsider looking on at first, much of what happened went right over my head. I went to every function or activity that I was invited to and sat and listened, and watched and learned, much like a child learns its first language.

Through my time and involvement, I have watched the wider Khmer community go around in a number of circles, to the point now that I wonder how we can move it on, so that there is something for my children and grandchildren to be committed to. We can't all be leaders, but we must have them if we are to have any direction.

### ***The Glaring Issues***

**Why we think these are problems? Are they different from other cultures or are they the same? If they are different, how or why?**

I would like to identify some of the glaring issues which I have seen set this community in a cyclic pattern rather like the seasons.

#### Status and education

In the early 80's, the issue of maintaining former status (or class) was important, and it was even possible, being in a new place with no history, to make up a better bio-data than the real one! A few people have been caught out on that since Cambodia opened up again in the 90's. Linked to that was the issue of a high level of education gained in Cambodia being able to command for you, a great deal of respect.

The problem with these two issues is that if you have no innate intelligence to manage the skills required in a new country and new way of life, all the status or education in the world will be of no use. In Australia you will be assessed on what you can do or achieve. Once the next generation can think and act independently, then they will treat the previous generation with respect but not be willing to place the future of the community into their hands – unless they can also demonstrate those transferable skills.

### Unexpected survival instincts

The desperate situation often breeds a leader. Just when in-fighting looks like it is about to destroy the entire hard work of ten years, behind the scenes manoeuvring will produce an outcome that was unforeseen by the outsiders, or uninitiated to the culture. And the community holds its own, or lurches on for another round!

Power and obligation – "The need to have power, or be associated with someone who has power"

This could be in a family unit or in some other group. It is not just about helping your relatives but there is a belief that you don't mind being a server as long as you are serving on the winning team. The need to have power or be associated with power tends to get people to work within their clans and while it is a strength base for the family, it doesn't improve the wider society much. Australians see this as nepotism, but it is in fact more than that. It also has to do with obligation. The favours never end. If someone helps you, then you are mentally keeping score, so that you can repay the favour when the time arrives.

No one wants to get the hard work but everyone wants to get the glory. This often leads to wrong assumptions about motives for people doing things. Why would you want to put in a lot of time doing something if you aren't going to make money out of it or get glory for doing it: misunderstanding motives. Character assassinations are common. So a person is persuaded to take a leading role, then gossiped about so much that they lose heart and leave, or after then have completed their term and done a reasonably good job, the person following boosts their own position by denigrating the leader prior to them. This is very common. It means that no knowledge is stored and passed on – community records are destroyed to maintain the fiction. There is not a pattern of co-operation but rather of competition. Setting out to make a mark by being better than the person before you! (This sounds awfully like Canberra to me but at least with our government, the departments maintain that continuity which is missing in Khmer organisations!! Each new group, with a few exceptions must start from scratch)

### Being on the winning team

Fence sitting is common. If you can't figure out who will win, or who will be the strongest, then don't take sides until it becomes very clear and then you

jump to the right side of the fence. You always want to be on the winning team.

"Divide and Conquer" by spreading gossip and persuading everyone not to believe in someone else, and then the community will be so fragmented that no one will be unable to achieve anything. This is a simple technique from the Pol Pot time where this kind of gossip removed the person permanently

If you disagree with someone, then you never talk to that person again. This isolates them effectively and may limit their power base. In Western societies, we are taught to accept defeat graciously particularly through sport. We mightn't like the other person, but we learn to behave normally to other fellow travellers – from about grade 2 in fact.

If you can't run it, leave and make another organization that you can be in control of, no matter how few people you represent. This helps you get back your "face". This has happened so many times here in Sydney that it is hard to know how people expect to raise all the funds that are necessary to support community ventures.

Find someone you can put in, encourage him a lot and then once he accepts to stand as leader, get him elected, and then disappear to leave him to run the show with no support. Work him till his fingers fall off.

As soon as you've persuaded someone to stand for election and gotten them in, begin to criticise so that whatever belief they had in their ability to do the job disappears completely and they will never want to be bothered to take any public office again, even if it is community service. This will mean that instead of doing the job, they have to work out how to get out of it graciously so that they "save face" on all fronts – with those supporting them and with those criticizing them. This is a very tricky business.

### Identity

Acknowledging or recognizing or creating identity is a major issue faced by all arrivals at some time early on. This is one of the emerging issues for the community as it seeks its direction. When the early arrivals came to Australia, it was much easier to define what a Khmer person should do, how they should behave and what they should think. Time is slowly changing that.

The ideas brought by the parents are passed on to the children, who are also taking in knowledge in school and in the other social associations that their parents aren't privy to. This sets the agenda for a cultural or generation clash. This is not peculiar to Khmer, but will affect future community leaders remaining connected to the community or leaving it as irrelevant.

The parents are holding on fast to the identity they know, which includes the social forms and formulas that they are familiar with, while the younger people are taking on other ways of doing things. The Khmer organizations tend to stick to the way things were structured in Cambodia, even if the

constitution and paperwork looks like it all fits the Australian scene. But more and more now, the younger generation with their local knowledge and education don't fit, and so eventually leave for associations where they **will** fit and be listened to. Very often they don't want to associate with the old system. So possible leaders are lost which is a great loss to the community.

***Experiences with various committees and the strategies they use***

Within the last twenty years, I have worked on the Central Management of the Khmer Community of NSW for 11 years in some capacity. My first experience, was being co-opted to the education sub-committee of the Khmer Community. I was invited by the then general secretary. She was working with me as a bilingual assistant on a course for Khmer young people at TAFE. This was an interesting experience, since the meetings were held in Khmer of which I didn't speak one word at the time, and I fulfilled my duties by doing what was passed on without really knowing what was going on. My main function was to write any necessary letters in English that needed to be done, and keep people informed about the correct procedures for Community organizations.

I could honestly say that I didn't know too much about how the relationships in the Khmer community worked then at all. I was a mere TAFE teacher trying to find ways to assist a group of people – young people mostly to settle into a new land and find employment. Having lived in the United States from 1975 to 1980, I was uninformed about what all average Australians had learned via the newspapers about Indo-China during that time – I can promise you news in the U.SA was like a continuous war movie on Vietnam, but with little fact and not much substance. I was on a steep learning curve. My main focus was to implement courses which tried innovative ways of educating people to include literacy, (in two languages in many cases), social and living skills, work specific skills, work place information and very often fill in the gaps of a missed primary education (including maths, history, geography etc). I knew nothing of the community politics and was learning about Cambodia's history and culture.

Another experience I recall, was at an election that followed. I don't remember the individuals, but I remember the situation and I only came to understand the implications much later. In order to keep one of the particular political factions in control of the community at the time, a person was nominated for leadership. I don't know how much interest there was to undertake such an office. The real power brokers were in employment which would not permit them to hold office at that time, so a relative was persuaded to stand. He stayed only two months, and then left not completing the work connected to the office. He was replaced without going to an election, since the constitution allowed for this. ...And business rolled on as usual – mostly the business of teaching Khmer language, maintaining traditional and cultural dancing groups and ensuring that the traditional festivals happened which were the initial concerns.

The following election (I always attended these but as a non-Khmer didn't vote for many years at the beginning despite being on the committee), I was passed on like a comfortable shoe to the next committee. I say this, because upon reflection, I see I was able to maintain some sort of consistency by being there. This third committee worked very hard and during their term, we finally obtained the land for the complex at Bonnyrigg and fundraised madly to begin the first building project. During this phase, we moved on to a different vision of what the Khmer community in Australia would be with a strong desire for tangible assets. It was not without its problems. It's not every day that the local member hauls you in to lambast you because someone on the committee, at a function the night before, has bailed up the Premier at the urinal to ask for funds!! Or issues of the staff being looked down on by some management members for merely being staff. But many things were achieved during this term. The money that was requested at the urinal was given to the community after we put it through the appropriate channels!!

What made it so successful? We were like a gang of Gung Ho illiterates who pulled off the job – by fighting and surmounting all obstacles! I think now it was the fact that we had something to work for, we worked together on that committee as equals, we discussed things, we carefully followed up whatever rules in the new society which gave us any advantage and we had a goal to work for which was the Bonnyrigg Khmer Community Centre then just empty land but is now a multimillion dollar complex.

What saddens me most about this particular committee is that I rarely hear anyone praise the efforts or achievements of that committee, but rather, I still hear detrimental gossip about the negatives things that occurred.

There have been two other types of committees that I want to mention. The educated missionary type comes to mind – someone who has zeal and a belief in themselves because they believe they were born to rule. The community can go forward, but only some people are attracted to this and the rest are disaffected. The belief that people have to be educated – to be able to manage the problems – it takes on a negative connotation for some. I know a number of less educated people who manage others well and make more money than I do and have very good ideas. Many people stopped being involved during this time. Other people were attracted. Further building additions happened at the Bonnyrigg complex. It was steady as she goes. I rarely hear any comments about this time.

The final organisational experience that I want to mention, that also has positive lessons for us, was when I returned from living in Cambodia during the two terms of Mr Por Heang Ya who I will mention by name. During this term of office, the management had a very important goal of completing the complex at Bonnyrigg by building the temple, which it proceeded to do in co-operation with the Cambodian Buddhist Society. The hallmark of this committee was also one of having something to work for, working as equals, being committed, following up whatever regulations were imposed by government, making links to government, involving women and young people, operating inclusively by conferring with all other Khmer

organizations so that everyone felt as if they were a part of the process. There was a good relationship with Khmer Interagency and CAWC and a clear defining of the different spheres of work that the Khmer Community would undertake in individual service delivery, the Buddhist Society in concerning themselves with religious activities and Khmer Interagency (KI) in Community Development and enhancing networking and professional development for workers. This did away with competition and removed the threat of people crossing into each other's patches.

On an individual level, the patron system is one that Australia does not really use. We get work by going for interviews based on our resume and our own skills and experience. While we may like to be part of a gang or group, we can operate outside of this as we move into adulthood.

The patron system is alive and well in Cambodia and people arriving here want to have a patron to feel secure, protected, make links to work, have someone to go to, to borrow money or socialise with – rather than operating as an individual. The patron system can operate in the family, or in groups with a natural leader who attracts followers. It may be a positive for the person. It can lead to corruption as well as it means obligations involve dependence, returning favours and paybacks are part of this obligation.

I believe that disunity among monks has compounded leadership problems.

<p><b><i>My experience of Social / Community leadership – NSW Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council Inc. Marlene</i></b></p>
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The Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council (CAWC) of NSW was established in 1983 by workers working with Khmer clients. In 1996, the Khmer Interagency as it was originally called, developed its management structures, and in the following year was successfully funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs under its Community Services Settlement Scheme for a Level 3 Community Development Worker.

In 1999, CAWC received continued funding for that position, renamed Community Settlement Scheme Worker. This community development position currently funded under the CSS Scheme has been essential in driving community projects and activities that have increased the capacity and input of local residents and members of the wider Khmer community, including the minority groups represented such as the Khmer Kampuchea Krom.

In September, the name of the organisation was changed to Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc. Early in 2002, additional funding was received from various sources, including Federal and State Government. There are currently four funded positions with CAWC. The organisation has continued to strengthen and develop alliances and partnerships with both State and Federal Government, and has shown their skill and ingenuity in bridging gaps in service provision, and putting Khmer issues into the mainstream welfare service agenda. They have shown leadership as an organisation by taking risks and challenging their traditional community

welfare practices in order to continue to serve the community to the best of their ability.

Over the past five years, I have seen CAWC as an organisation quickly demonstrating their eagerness to embrace change and new visions for the local Khmer community. They have accepted planning and participation as key drivers for their work, and continually challenge the issues raised within the community to focus on producing the best outcomes for the community.

CAWC – Current management structure

Their current management structure gives a very business-oriented perspective to the work of CAWC, but it encapsulates the drive and commitment of those who volunteer to steer the organisation towards many continued successes.

Harnessing funding from other sources apart from their original grant via DIMIA demonstrates their determination to grow as an organisation, and embrace the challenges of the community sector, and show others that small organisations such as CAWC can grow, prosper and continue to make a difference.

Developing and organising this conference is a credit to CAWC, and the many players who continue to support the work of the organisation, the Khmer community and the workers who aim to increase capacity and opportunities for partnership.

<b><i>Solutions? Ways to work around these issues ... Nola</i></b>
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Khmer like most groups of people, have a complex range of opinions and views about most issues, with multi-layers in each view. There is not one single view about anything. My comments are not intended to be definitive. For every idea or concept that I discover, it is possible to find another to contradict or complement it. But I believe if we are to work together, we need to understand each other. We have to start somewhere.

As we have heard, it depends on what style of leadership we are considering or even for that matter, what style attracts us to follow as well. We can look at the qualities of leadership that Marlene has already talked about and of course these can transcend culture, but may not necessarily.

We need to recognise differences in using Linear Thinking towards solutions versus Circular Thinking towards solutions.

One of the things that is changing is the move away from circular thinking which is the custom in many countries in Asia, not only Cambodia. As the young people are educated in the system here, they are taught a system of logic that moves through problem solving in a linear fashion and in talking to younger people, they are adopting this. This saves time, but older people will find this abrupt and possibly offensive. I particularly remember a meeting called to discuss the option of the Khmer Community of NSW becoming incorporated. The meeting went on from about 10 am until 5 or 6 pm at night, and everyone keep repeating the same things, so that their voice would be identified with an idea, instead of just adding ideas in the way we would do, if an idea was missing from the discussion.

Education is always a key to changing. Through my experiences in CAWC, I have joined in the professional developments and have grown right alongside the other members, as we have organised for ourselves training on public speaking, management, first aid, had internal discussions about issues of contention within the group and the wider community. We have looked at the various fields that the different workers are in and networked and shared the training specific to those areas, so that we all benefited.

So what are the negative strategies that they use? As with us, they also use control, fear, blame, avoidance, not acknowledging an issue. High on this list is never being able to tell someone what you think of them because you are afraid of offending them. But it doesn't stop the talk. It means you talk behind them. This is a most destructive strategy. To shift the paradigm, we must tackle this issue and teach people to be able to debate issues without taking it personally, or thinking they are losing face.

And what can we observe in the way that Khmer in Australia particularly are organising themselves, that we may find instructive in working together? Teamwork and co-operation have worked very well. Participative Democracy has worked very well in CAWC over a long period of time.

In Cambodia, they do need a paradigm shift away from the patron system. But where to start and how to do it, is beyond my control or even imagination. However, in Australia, through participating in the wider community, we should be able to implement strategies that will shift the paradigm for the greater benefit of the entire community.

If you ask Khmer why they are glad to be in Australia, freedom and democracy are usually mentioned. I believe in CAWC, we have refined participative democracy to an art. Issues are put on the table, and more than one person is always involved in making a decision. This has been

done through the monthly meetings and the posting of minutes to keep everyone abreast of the information. Everyone can have a say about all issues – you only have to attend. Now thanks to email, we can be in contact and participate even more efficiently.

What is important for the future is encouraging the younger people to work alongside us. At this point in time, to encompass the whole community, we need to encourage leaders who understand how to operate comfortably in both cultures so that they can tell either side why things are being done the way they are, and they can maintain their respect and appropriateness in both cultures. I'm so glad to tell you that Huy Meng Chhay, mentioned by Elizabeth Pickering, is on our management – and I'll also vote for him as Prime Minister.

### **Further Questions ...**

A very good question I have asked myself many times since I returned from living in Cambodia is, why does building temples get commitment, and why isn't temple building equated with community building or capacity building since this is investing in the next generation – similar to the next life.

Why does building temples get commitment? Of course it's related to religious beliefs and reincarnation. But how can we transfer this energy to building community or building capacity so that it will have significant outcomes not only on Khmer but also the wider community?

Have non-Khmer, working alongside the community, done damage to the direction of the community by helping the wrong people – the ones who sound good to us, but aren't being listened to by them.

It's so important to listen to as many people as you can to make sure you are not making damaging assumptions. Don't just get with one person and listen to them, and throw all your weight in behind them. They may have a following, but is it just family, or is it the patron system meaning they have something to offer which you don't know about that is creating their following. Is it legitimate? At the beginning of my involvement, I remember spending lots of time with people who we assumed would go on to become leaders and transfer information and participate in community development. Some are no longer involved, and not even respected by many in the community. Can you spot the leader? No not always!

As a non-Khmer myself, I often ask myself if I am doing something that impedes progress – am I accepting the right things and holding out for the right things – or am I not listening enough. Is it their vision, is it my vision, or it is ours? I have never tried to be a leader in the community myself, but to serve those who were. Only Khmer themselves can comment on whether this strategy has been useful in the development of this community within our multicultural Australia.

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## **Afternoon Tea**

### **Panel Discussion – Chaired by Di Murray**

#### **Acting Institute Director, SWS Institute of TAFE**

*Dept of Industrial Relations – The NSW Government Behind the Label Strategy: Helping Cambodian clothing sweatshop & home based workers find a more balanced life and positive future”*

#### ***Behind the Label: The NSW Government’s Clothing Outwork Strategy***

#### **In 2001, Premier Bob Carr announced**

##### ***Behind the Label***

- a \$4 million, three-year NSW Clothing Outwork Strategy
- to address the ongoing problem of unfair treatment of factory and home-based clothing workers in NSW.

*Behind the Label* aims to:

- help to create an Australian clothing industry that competes successfully on the basis of design, technological innovation and productivity, while providing healthy, safe and fairly paid employment to all its workers

- eliminate the exploitation of vulnerable groups of workers in the home-based clothing sector and in sweatshops

### ***Behind the Label: The NSW Clothing Outwork Strategy***

There are five key elements to the Strategy:

1. Amendments to the *Industrial Relations Act 1996*
2. Establishment of the Ethical Clothing Trades Council
3. Bilingual inspector/advisers to work within outworker communities
4. Industry adjustment - a supply chain management project
5. Labour adjustment - education and retraining programs for outworkers

### ***Behind the Label: 5 Key Strategy Elements***

#### 1. Legislative Amendments

- Industrial Relations (Ethical Clothing Trades) Act 2001
- commenced on 1 February 2002
- inserts amendments into the *Industrial Relations Act 1996*
- enables outworkers to recover unpaid remuneration from principal contractors and other suppliers in the clothing production chain
- clarifies the provisions of the Act that deem clothing outworkers to be employees
- establishes the Ethical Clothing Trades Council

### ***Behind the Label: 5 Key Strategy Elements***

#### 2. Ethical Clothing Trades Council

- Advisory Council of clothing industry representatives (retailers, manufacturers, TCFUA and FairWear)
- provides advice to the Government on the levels of compliance with obligations (legal and voluntary) to outworkers
- promotes compliance with existing self-regulatory mechanisms such as the Homeworkers Code of Practice and the Retailers Ethical Clothing Code of Practice
- will advise in its 12 monthly report (due now) on whether there is a need for the Government to introduce a mandatory code for the



clothing industry and the content of such a code (if the Government is satisfied that current self regulatory mechanisms are inadequate in overcoming the exploitation of clothing outworkers)

### ***Behind the Label: 5 Key Strategy Elements***

#### 3. Four Bilingual inspector/advisers

- working within the Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Khmer and other communities
- providing practical assistance and information to employers and employees in the clothing industry to help them comply with their obligations under Industrial Relations law and the Clothing Trades Award and enforce their rights.
- Some of the ways in which *Behind the Label* inspectors help outworkers are:
  - by visiting clothing factories and home-based workplaces to inspect employers records and make sure they are doing the right thing and paying correct wages
  - holding information seminars in community languages
  - assisting outworkers to recover unpaid wages and
  - participating in community events and working with community based organisations.

### ***Behind the Label: 5 Key Strategy Elements***

#### 4. Industry adjustment

- DIR and WorkCover sponsored University of Western Sydney to undertake a clothing supply chain management project
- to identify savings and efficiency improvements in the flow and management of work in the production process
- to demonstrate the benefits that can be achieved to the broader industry

### ***Behind the Label: 5 Key Strategy Elements***

#### 5. Labour adjustment

- established education and retraining programs for outworkers
- to recognise prior skills, upskill and reskill outworkers, to provide a skilled workforce for the clothing industry and alternatives for outworkers who wish to leave the industry
- DIR working in partnership with the Department of Education and Training and TAFE NSW to ensure that training programs are appropriately targeted to outworkers
- funding community development programs to support and assist outworkers to access and participate in training (bilingual support, childcare, transport, community venues).

Programs include:

RPL in Clothing Production, English language and literacy through WELL and TAFE Outreach, Childcare - Ethnic Co-op and Liverpool TAFE, Traineeships, Hospitality, Beauty Therapy, Welfare.

### ***Behind the Label Goals for the Clothing Industry***

- Improved industry compliance with industrial and OHS obligations – (this may be through voluntary self regulation or a mandatory code)
- Outworkers aware of and receiving their lawful entitlements and working in a safe environment
- The creation of a skilled labour force for the industry through vocational training
- Providing the industry with some practical tools to implement cost savings and efficiency improvements in its production chains
- Persuading consumers to buy ethically made clothing
- A strong and viable NSW clothing industry that is competitive in a global market NOT an industry surviving through suppressed labour costs

*Dr Eileen Pittaway*

Research on Khmer Elderly

Discussion

*Dr Thel Thong*

### **Creating a positive future by ways of understanding life and the process of Karma**

This paper is focused on three main themes, understanding life in Buddhism, the working process of Karma, and how to shape one's own future. Different culture and belief provide different definitions and meaning to life although they have a common ground, happiness in this life and the life after. As a first step, it is better to limit the scope and meaning given to life by providing two aspects of life according to western concepts, and Buddhism. It involves the definition by Bertrand Russell and life according to Buddhism. The second step is to present roots of problems of life based on George Carlin's wisdom, Gandhi's social evil, and the teaching of the Buddha about the three main causes of problems of human existence. Buddhist principles of good livelihood and Gandhian decent ways of creating a positive future for human beings based on Buddhism and Gandhian philosophy of life.

#### **I. Definition of life**

According to Bertrand Russell, his definition of good life is stated in a single statement which is: "the good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge" (Jayasuriya, 1996, p17).

The notion of life in Buddhism can be explained through the operation of the six senses-organs. It is understood as the process of continual inputs and outputs through these six senses. Diagram showing the operation of these six senses based on the teaching of the Abhidharma by the Buddha.

Means which provide the senses of craving

Eye <i>cakhu</i>	Visual objects	Eye – perception <i>cakkhu tvear reavacana</i>	Eye – consciousness <i>cakkhuvinnana</i>
Ear <i>sota</i>	Sound	Ear – perception <i>sota tvear reavacana</i>	Ear – consciousness <i>sotavinnana</i>
Nose <i>ghana</i>	Smell	Nose – perception <i>ghana tvear reavacana</i>	Nose – consciousness <i>ghanavinnana</i>
Tongue <i>jivahara</i>	Taste	Tongue – perception <i>jivha tvear reavacana</i>	Tongue – consciousness <i>jivhavinnana</i>
Body <i>kaya</i>	Tangible	Body – perception <i>kaya tvear reavacana</i>	Body – consciousness <i>kayavinnana</i>
Mind/heart <i>manodhatu</i>	concept	Mind – perception <i>mano tvear reavacana</i>	Heart – consciousness <i>manovinnana</i>

These inputs and outputs are manifested through physical, verbal and mental activities.

Another definition of a meaningful life is based on a Buddhist saying which states that “a life of a person who uses his intelligence is defined as a meaningful life”. Pañña Jivin Jivita Bahusikham...(Buth, 2000, Abhidharma course, tape no. 12)

## II Roots of problems in life

Before embarking on solutions to modern problems facing our time, we have to acknowledge the roots of actual problems form different sources.

### II.1 Modern problems of life in developed countries

Let’s consider ideas containing in George Carlin’s wisdom<sup>1</sup>. I group them under different headings for the benefit of simplicity and illustration.

#### 1. Problems in relation to possession

We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers,  
wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints.

We spend more, but have less;

We buy more, enjoy less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families,  
more conveniences, but less time.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.

#### 2. Problems in relation to knowledge

We have more degrees, but less sense,  
more knowledge, but less judgement,

more experts, yet more problems,

more medicine, but less wellness.

3. Problems in relation to consumption

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little,  
drive too fast, get too angry,  
stay up late, get up too tired,

Read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

It is time where there is too much in the showroom window and nothing in  
the stockroom.

A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you  
can choose either to share this insight, or just hit delete.

4. Problems in relation to technology

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the  
street to meet a new neighbour.

We conquered outer space, but no inner space.

We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul.

We've conquered the Atom, but not our prejudice.

We write more, but learn less.

We plan more, but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait.

We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies  
than ever, but we communicate less and less.

5. Problems in relation to family life

These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but  
broken homes.

Remember, to spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not  
going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because  
that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the  
only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember, to say "I Love You" to your partner and your loved ones, but  
most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes  
from deep inside of you.

6. Problems in relation to the meaning of life

Tall men and short character, steep profits and shallow relationships.

These are the days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality,  
one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer,  
to quiet, to kill.

Remember, to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person  
will not be there again. Give time to love, give time to speak and give time to  
share the precious thoughts in your mind.

## II.2 Human problems according to Gandhi

I consider Gandhi's seven sins as the seven social evils which form parts of  
human problems. They cover the majority of activities around these seven

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Google Website

topics either in the form of physical, verbal and mental activities. They are:

1. wealth without work,
2. pleasure without conscience,
3. knowledge without character,
4. commerce without morality,
5. science without humanity,
6. worship without sacrifice, and
7. politics without principles (Interaction Council, September 1997, unpublished paper).

These seven principles are self-explanatory. The item no. 4 matches well with the Buddhist principles of five forbidden trades.

### **II.3 Human problems according to Buddhism**

Buddhism has provided three main basic causes of problems in life, greed, hatred and illusion. They form the roots of human problems which cause endless births and rebirths. Followings are excerpts from Kalama Sutta<sup>2</sup> in which the Buddha taught Kalama royal family members in his time by ways of direct questions and answers.

#### **Greed**

What do you think, Kalamas? Does greed appear in men, when it does, for their benefit or harm? For their harm, Venerable Sir. Kalamas, being given to greed and, being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by greed, human beings take life, steal, commit adultery and tell lies. They prompt others to do likewise. Will that be for their harm and ill? Yes, Venerable Sir.

#### **Hatred**

What do you think, Kalamas? Does hatred appear in men, when it does, for their benefit or harm? For their harm, Venerable Sir. Kalamas, being given hatred and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by hatred, human beings take life, steal, commit adultery and tell lies. They prompt others to do likewise. Will that be for their harm and ill? Yes, Venerable Sir.

#### **Delusion**

What do you think, Kalamas? Does delusion appear in men, when it does, for their benefit or harm? For their harm, Venerable Sir. Kalamas, being given to delusion and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by delusion, human beings take life, steal, commit adultery and tell lies. They prompt others to do likewise. Will that be for their harm and ill? Yes, Venerable Sir (Tripitaka, vol 41, pp. 219-220).

Problems raised by George Carlin are problems caused by actions motivated by these three unwholesome minds. These sorts of problems occur whenever there is life according to the Buddhist teaching.

#### **Escaping the past or creating a positive future**

Escaping the past or creating a positive future life can be translated into the

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<sup>2</sup>Suttantapitaka (text in Khmer)

following statements:

- Don't let the past Karma influence or programmed our future life
- How to escape the effect of Karma? And
- What are the appropriate ways to live with it or to improve it?

For a start, it is better to understand how Karma is formed and how it operates, and why people are born different.

### **III.1 Understanding the Buddhist philosophy of Cause and Effect – Karma-Phala**

The statement of the Buddha: “You harvest what you have sown”.

Karma of the past	Karma of the present	Karma of the future
Sowing the seed of greed	Harvest greed in the present life	Harvest greed in the future life
Sowing the seed of hatred	Harvest hatred in the present life	Harvest hatred in the future life
Sowing the seed of Illusion	Harvest illusion in the present life	Harvest illusion in the future life

### **III.2 How Karma is formed?**

The law of karma is based on cause and effect as highlighted by the Buddhist saying: “One reaps what he has sown”. There are at least three basic ingredients that assist the production of bad karma, greed, hatred, and ignorance. Wholesome and unwholesome Karmas are formed through the six organs of senses which are eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and heart. For this example of Karma formation, let consider the following two instances. At 10am a Buddhist monk stood at the gate of a house on his alms begging round. The first reaction of an old Cambodian woman was to offer him some food. This is considered as an act of generosity which will create a wholesome Karma. A few hours later, she came across a young boy who stole the bike of her grand child a few days ago,. She swore at him and tried to hit and catch him but he ran away. An unwholesome Karma has happened in her mind. It was caused by her anger and hatred. The same Buddhist monk and the same boy passed in front of another household but there was no reaction from the people of the household.

### **III.3 Karma formation process**

The first case of Karma formation processes are as followed ( a simplified version of the operation of the mind):

1. 1st instance: something is intervening the vision organ or the vision path.
2. 2nd instance: probing and tracking the eye-path (Avajjana Citta)
3. 3rd instance: eye consciousness is formed.

4. 4th instance: accept and transfer the eye-object image (Samppadicchana Citta)
5. 5th instance: evaluation and assessment of the eye-object image (Santirana Citta)
6. 6th instance: judgement and recognition of the eye-object image. It is a Buddhist monk (Votthvana Citta)
7. 7th instance: action taken, generosity in the form of food offering (Javana Citta, at this stage, the heart is involved)
8. 8<sup>th</sup> instance: the mind cling to the wholesome Karma resulted from the generosity or meritorious deed (Tadalambana Citta, at this stage, a feeling of happiness and satisfaction arises).

Wholesome and unwholesome Karma occurs at this stage and disappears from the scene to stay in the background, and a new mind (Citta) comes to the stage. These two Karmas will have their effect that will form part of the following minds, Javana Citta; Cuti Citta - the last mind; Patisandhi Citta – linkage chain or the fertilization stage; and Bhavanga Citta – identity keeping force. They will serve as stepping stones for the next life.

### **III.4 Why people are born different<sup>3</sup>**

This is another example to illustrate the working process of Karma which constitutes the mental aspects of human existence according to Buddhism. The main argument is based on the Buddhist concept of the inheritance of temperament formulated by one's own Karma or deeds of the previous lives. This temperament is not inherited from parents as physical body parts do because it is a mental element of the human existence. Human temperament can be altered through good education and with appropriate social environment. The author presented in brief some categories of temperaments which are manifested in human behaviour.

We notice that people everywhere in the world are different due to their temperament. Temperament is within one's mind and it is revealed through one's behaviour and actions. Buddhism divides people into six categories according to their Carita – nature, character. The first category has Raga Carita – the greedy-natured. It is someone who pretends to possess virtues and hides his vices or his real nature. He has Asmimānāh – full of greed and he is a miser. He likes benefit and advantages at the expense of others. The second category Dosa Carita – The hate-natured. Most of the times. He gets angry very easily and likes to revenge. He is jealous of others' happiness and progress. He has no sense of gratitude and always thinks of himself and his belongings. The third category Moha Carita – the stupid or dull-natured, is someone who is ignorant and stupid. He has confusing thoughts and not

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<sup>3</sup>Based on a Buddhist booklet in Khmer by Ven. Kong Kou (translation by Thel Thong)

serious in his work. He is lazy and likes sleeping at the times. He is fond of committing unwholesome deeds and frivolous activities. He has wrong views and finds it hard to get rid of them. The fourth category Sadha Carita – the faithful-natured, is a good-hearted one. He has a peaceful mind and genuinely generous. He is always willing to associate with pandits to improve his knowledge. He is keen in Buddhism and other useful subjects of learning. He is straightforward and does not hide his vices and mistakes. He is just and does not exhibit the virtues that he does not have them. The fifth category Budha Carita – the intelligent-natured, is someone who is intelligent, perseverant and mindful on Sangvek – having pity and concern for oneself and others. He is someone who sticks to good friends. He is receptive to good advices, sober in food and in using equipment and materials. The sixth category Vitakka Carita – the ruminating-natured, is someone who is fussy and having unstable mind. He is not interested in wholesome deeds and not serious in his work. He is mainly interested in large crowd or large gathering of people. He likes thinking and does all sorts of work-plans at night and is willing to achieve them during the day time.

These six kinds of people can be grouped into two main categories which are the bad and good categories. Good people have good temperament and are willing to perform only good actions. This group of persons, from the very young age, does not need much guidance and advice in life. They respect the life of animals and human beings and do not commit sexual misconduct. They think that parents love their daughters and husband loves his wife as much as they do therefore nobody should abuse their rights. They think that people have the right to possess what they own, and they suffer when their belonging has been stolen in the same way as if it happens to them. This group of people thinks that telling lies will cause suspicion and mistrust among friends and acquaintance. Consuming intoxicated drink will cause all sorts of diseases and make them lose control of their mind. This first group of people has compassion and loving-kindness towards animals and human beings. They are willing to help other people who are in need of assistance, and are happy to see other persons healthy and wealthy. They are the people who have good temperament and endowed with right views.

The bad people, from the very young age, like to do bad things and are willingly like to hurt animals and other human beings. They have no mercy in mind and are willing to create all sorts of problems to others. They are jealous and don't want to see other people to be as rich as they are. These people are interested in violent stories or undertaking criminal acts, and committing theft. These traits of behaviour are innate.

Other groups of people believe that there are neither good nor bad things, neither virtues nor vices, neither merit or sin. This group of people has bad temperament and wrong views.

### **III.5 How can we explain the root of these temperaments?**

Buddhism explains that these temperaments are not the product of the present life but they have been accumulated for many existences in the past. Good and bad temperaments were the product of bad or good physical

actions, bad or good verbal actions and bad or good mental actions in past lives. They were people having wrong views or they will become people having wrong views in the future. The past bad temperament produces people with bad temperament of the present time while the past good temperament produces people with good temperament of the present time. The explanation of one's own inheritance of temperament was based on the Buddhist proverb which states that: "people harvest what they sown. People who do good actions receive good results. People who do bad actions receive bad results." "*Yatisam vappate bijam tadisam labhate phalam kalyanakar I kalyanam papkari ca papakam*". It was Buddha who said that 2,600 years ago. Good and bad actions of the past produce bad and good temperament of the present life. Good experiences and knowledge earned in the past produce people with good experiences and knowledge of the present time. They create people with different capacity of ingenious skills and intelligence. Students of the same age from different background attending the same class have different capabilities in their class performance. They like some professions and reject others. Children are born from poor and illiterate family background but perform far better than children of wealthy and educated parents. There are blind musicians and singers.

People with these special abilities are those who were in these conditions for many existences in the past. These past abilities can turn them automatically into people of good behaviours and good temperament. This automatic behaviourist transformation is called *Kayappayoga or Vac payoga* – inherent temperament. One of the outstanding disciple of the Buddha by the name Sariputta<sup>4</sup> used to be born as monkey for many times in the past. In his life as a human being he still inadvertently jumped over small brooks as a monkey used to do, instead of crossing it as other Buddhist monks did. It was reported to the Buddha. In response to the query, the Buddha informed the audience of monks that Sarputta had been a monkey for many existences of his past lives.

#### **IV Creating a positive future through examining principles of life**

There are two objectives in escaping the past, escaping bad happenings and escaping forever. The former intention is to improve one's own life while the latter implies escaping the vicious cycle of life. It means being free from rebirth by achieving the state of full bliss or Nibbana. To achieve it, it is required a tremendous effort and perseverance in the practice of Dharma. This article deals with the former objective which is also the aims of this state conference.

Followings are the four groups of principles of life as raised by George Carlin, Gandhi and Buddhism. I group together as they are complementing and supplementing each others.

A. Problems of knowledge in George Carlin and that of Gandhi

a. We have more degrees, but less sense,

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<sup>4</sup>See Appendix A for characteristics of Karma according to Buddhism

- b. More knowledge, but less judgement,
- c. More experts, yet more problems,
- d. More medicines, but less wellness,
- e. Knowledge without character

A French proverb “science sans conscience n’est que ruine de l’âme” adds more support to this notion of knowledge without character.

B. Problems of commerce without morality in Gandhi and that of the Buddhist five forbidden trades

- 1. do not trade in butchery,
- 2. do not trade in human beings,
- 3. do not trade in alcohol and drug,
- 4. do not trade in armament, and
- 5. do not trade in poison

C. Principles of consumption: George Carlin and Buddhism versus capitalism

George Carlin and Buddhism see the same problems caused by over consumption, but capitalism preaches for maximum consumption. Well-being and comfort are attained by means of highest consumption.

- a. We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little,
- b. drive too fast, get too angry,
- c. stay up to late, get up too tired, read too little,
- d. watch TV too much, and pray too seldom

D. Problems in relation to technology Gandhi and George Carlin

- a. We conquered outer space, but no inner space.
- b. We’ve done larger things, but not better things.
- c. We’ve cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul.
- d. We’ve conquered the Atom, but not our prejudice.

Gandhi: I want the dumb millions of our land to be healthy and happy, and I want them to grow spiritually...If we feel the need of machines, we certainly will have them. Every machine that helps every individual has a place, but there should be no place for machines that concentrate power in a few hands and turn the masses into mere machines minders, if needed they do not make them unemployed (Gandhi cited in Schumacher, 1973, p.30).

#### **IV.1 Can we escape the past?**

Based on the law of Karma: “you harvest what you have sown” it is pretty sure that it will be hard for someone to escape from it. The analogy of somebody who has committed a criminal act within an Australian law, has been under the warrant arrest of a court case. What is his chance of running free?

A computer word-processing can do and undo a cut, copy and paste activity but one cannot undo a killing act and an unwholesome Karma resulted from bad deeds. By analogy, bad Karma and good Karma can be compared to a stable full of black bulls and white bulls. If there are more strong white bulls, the likely chance of a white bull to get out first from the stable is possible. In this circumstance, it is possible that someone can avoid the bad happening under the condition that he has earned more wholesome merits than the unwholesome ones. But what does happen to him if he is running short of wholesome merits? The black bulls still have a chance to come out at a later stage.

#### **IV.2 Can bad temperament be transformed?**

Yes it is according to the teaching of the Buddha. Bad temperament can be improved by eradicating bad habits. Good temperament can be also improved further. One can cultivate good temperament by generosity, practicing Sila or precepts and meditation practices. Those who practise generosity, precepts and meditation will gain good merit. This merit will become elements of good temperament and behaviour which stay in the sub-consciousness of the individual. (It will serve as ‘temperament credit’ for the next existence). Upanissaya Dharma – decisive support or inducement, is of three kinds:

1. Danupanissaya, they are inducements resulted from generosity.
2. Silupanissaya, they are inducements resulted from observing precepts, and
3. Bhavanupanissaya, they are inducements resulted from meditation.

These inducements are inherent in the mind of those individuals who have observed these three kinds of Dharma. Generosity helps individuals to rid of greed, attachment to one’s belongings and property. Observing the precepts helps individuals to rid oneself of hatred and revenge. Bhavana – meditation helps individuals to gain knowledge and insights. Those individuals who are persistent in performing these three Dharma will be endowed with the nine Paticvedadharma which are the four Magga – Stream or path and four main Phala – fruits or results, and Nibbana – the final state of bliss or the absolute deliverance from all future birth. In regards to this matter, a Buddhist proverb state that: “Na tam mala pita kayira aññe va pana ñataka sammapanihitam cittam seyyaso nam tato kare” only by ways of keeping one’s mind endowed with right views that any individual can have success in his life as well as earning progress and good health. One’s own parents and relatives cannot provide these things. It means that parents and relatives cannot provide success, wealth, and good health to their loved ones.

Bad temperament arises from holding wrong views and doing bad things by physical, verbal and mental actions. Wrong views, in brief, are of three kinds:

1. Akiriyadithi – holding the view that bad deeds, good deeds and other unwholesome actions by ways of physical, verbal and mental activities do not bear any results or consequences,

2. Ahetukadithi – holding the view that there are neither causes nor effects which make people noble or mean but human beings are either happy or unhappy by themselves, and
3. Nathidithi – holding the view that generosity and worship have no bearing at all. This last view can be also called Ucchedadithi which believes that after death there will be no rebirth.

People holding these views have no sense of generosity and sin, and no notion of abstaining from committing evil acts. Nourishing wrong views will deprive people of progress and keep them in the endless vicious cycle of death and rebirth. The misery resulted from the vicious cycle is far worst than any pain and suffering caused by (war or other natural calamities).

## **V. Creating a positive ways of life based on Buddhist principles**

They are ways taught by the Buddha. The most basic ones are practicing the five precepts and the ten codes of conducts called Kammabath Dap<sup>5</sup>, abstaining from the five forbidden trades, and conducting one's way of life according to the Noble Eight Fold Paths.

### **V.1 Part of Purity the principle of life**

In his first sermon at Sarnadha in India, the Buddha explained to his close five friends the Path of Purity of life which formed one part of the content of his first sermon. What is the Path of Purity in Buddhism? The Path of Purity, he told his friends, 'teaches that a person who wishes to be good must recognize some principles as principles of life'. According to my Path of Purity the principles of life recognized by it are:

1. not to injure or kill,
2. not to steal or appropriate to oneself anything which belongs to another,
3. not to indulge in lust,
4. not to speak untruth, and
5. not to indulge in intoxicated drinks

The recognition of these principles is most essential for every man because he must have a standard by which to judge whatever he does.

### **V.2 Conditions for a good livelihood: the Buddhist ways**

In general, Buddhism attempts to integrate a philosophy of life into economics. For economic stability and well-being, the Buddhist philosophy of life stresses three factors in the Vyagghapajja Sutta, 1) Utthana Sampada – production of wealth through skilled and earnest endeavour within the framework of Dharma, 2) Arakkha Sampada – its protection and savings, and 3) Samajivikata – living within one's means. The Buddhist principles

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<sup>5</sup>See Appendix B

selected as a basis for the remedy of the present problems include three common premises: the observance of the notion of Right Livelihood, consumption to live and no living to consume, and the observance of the Buddhist tradition of a happy life. According to Rigg, the ultimate aim of Buddhist economics attempts to do three things:

*First, to inject moral and ethical considerations into the study of economics; second, to accept that all actions have an outcome, and to strive to minimize the effect of such actions; and third, to bring a holistic vision to economics, reflecting the holistic nature of existence (Rigg, 1997, p.52).*

The Buddha stresses the importance of Right Livelihood, which is one of the characteristics of the Noble Eightfold Path to life. “Right Livelihood” means conducting one’s life according to the Dharma or the teaching prescribed by the Buddha. Laymen have to observe the five Buddhist precepts, the Kammabatdap<sup>6</sup>, and to avoid the five forbidden trades. The Buddhist recommended way of life is not to do harm to animals, people and the environment that one is living in. It reflects the common saying, that “live and let other beings live too”, and the principle governing the conduct of life is to consume less by maximising the enjoyment.

Right Livelihood can help to minimise the vacuity of the market-oriented economy. The mainstream economists argue that the key benefit of development and economic growth is that it increases human choice, but a Buddhist would further the query the meaning of choice. It if means *Tanha* (blind craving), then it is against the Buddhist ethics and it needs to be controlled. “Choice should not be endorsed at all times and may, indeed, be decried. Moderation – the Middle Way – is seen to be the key to Right Livelihood” (Rigg, 1997, p. 52). For Buddhists, the quality of life must be free from greed and envy. One of the principles of life is to conduct a livelihood which is economically healthy and responsible to other as well as to one’s environment. Rigg argues that the Buddhist economy should aim at

*Ethically sound policies, and to assure that the outcome of development does not harm the environment, society and individuals, and that all people should have a minimum quality of life Four Requisites in Buddhist teaching: food, clothing, shelter and medicine) (Rigg, 1997, p. 53).*

It is commonly believed that Buddhism is against the accumulation of wealth but indeed this is not the case. “*The Anguttara Nikaya Tripitaka*, Buddhist Canon, encourages the ability acquire wealth because happiness of a householder consists of the possession of wealth, its enjoyment, freedom from debts and freedom from blame” (Gunasinghe, 1972, p.41). The Buddha taught how wealth could be amassed when he advised Alavaka: “one should take the yoke upon him and exert himself to gain wealth” (Gunasinghe, <sup>6</sup>1972, p 46). Not only did he teach how one could gain wealth but he also advised on strategies in using it effectively: “the householder is instructed to divide his earnings into four parts, one to meet his daily needs, two parts to

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix B

invest in business and the fourth to set apart for a time of need” (Gunasinghe, 1972, p 46). In addition to happiness, the *Samyutta Nikaya Tripitaka*, Buddhist Canon, reminds the householder that he must be aware that the lack of stored wealth is one of the sources for the decline of a family, life, and the *Vinaya Pitika* says that laziness resulting from immoral practices leads to the diminution of wealth (Gunasinghe, 1972, p. 42).

In the *Pitaka-Vagga of Digha Nikaya*, the Buddha gave four conditions that would ensure happy life: “tireless efforts in whatever occupation one is engaged, the ability to guard one’s wealth acquired righteously, association with desirable people and an even life to suit one’s income” (Gunasinghe, 1972, p 42).

Family life and marriage life are also important ingredients in life. In relation to marriage life, Buddhism<sup>7</sup> provides the following rules, regulations, and mutual duties and obligations between husband and wife.

Singalaka, wife is in the West and it means that husband should provide care for her in five ways: 1) accept her as the only legitimate wife, 2) do not look down on her, 3) be faithful to her, 4) accept her as the head of the household, and 5) provide her all necessary make-up items. Singalaka, wife residing in the West who has received attention from her husband will in return, provide the following five favours: 1) provide good housework, 2) provide appropriate assistance to her own and in-law relatives, 3) be faithful to her husband, 4) look after the wealth brought in by her husband, and 5) be wise and industrious in every works. The West direction that husband has covered is a cardinal direction which has peace and devoid of all mishappenings.

### **V.3 Good livelihood and the human satisfaction**

Human satisfaction forms parts of a good livelihood. Material satisfaction gives importance to goods and their consumption more than to the workman who produces them. From a Buddhist point of view, this is against the truth since it considers:

Goods as more important than people and consumption as more important than creativity. It means shifting the emphasis from the worker to the product of work, that is, from the human to the sub-human, surrender to the force of evil (Schumacher, 1973, p. 51).

Buddhism is for man’s creativity and capitalism is for goods. Buddhism recommends the “Middle Way” and therefore it is not antagonistic to physical well-being. Buddhism has no objection for individuals to be rich. You are encouraged to work hard, to be rich and earn your living according to the Dharma, and to be millionaires but you should not become slave of your own fortune. “It is not wealth that stands in the way of liberation but the attachment to wealth; not the enjoyment of pleasurable things but the <sup>7</sup>craving for them” (Schumacher, 1973, p52). The Buddhist economic philosophy focuses on simplicity and non-violence.

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<sup>7</sup> Thong, 2003, p. 49

The value of consumption, goes against the notion of maximum consumption preached by economists. Buddhism encourages people to consume less while capitalism encourages consuming more. The difference lies at the level of application. “he, (the modern economist), is used to measuring the ‘standard of living’ by the amount of annual consumption, assuming all the time that a man who consumes more is ‘better off’ than a man who consumes less” (Schumacher, 1973, p.52).

This attitude goes against the Buddhist economist who considers this approach as excessively irrational and argues the reverse “since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption” (Schumacher, 1973, p.52). An example of the principle’s application is the cloth making and cloth consumption of the Buddhist monk community.

*Thus, if the purpose of clothing is a certain amount of temperature comfort and an attractive appearance, the task is to attain this purpose with the smallest annual destruction of cloth and with the help of designs that involved the smallest possible input of toil. The less toil there is, the more time and strength is left for artistic creativity (Schumacher, 1973, p.52).*

*Example of a modest way of life with minimum consumption*

Preah Ananda, the Buddha’s attendant, in one occasion, explained to King Pasenadikosol’s query about how he used his robe. Preah Ananda replied: “an old robe when discarded is used as a bed spread. The bed spread when discarded is used as a rug. The discarded rug is used to sweep the floor, and after that it is cut into small pieces and mixed with clay to repair the broken wall.

Buddhism preaches simplicity and non-violence which implies a relatively low rate of consumption that allows people to live without great pressure and strain and at the same to fulfil the primary injunction of Buddhist teaching: ‘cease to do evil; try to do good’.

As physical resources are everywhere limited, people satisfying their needs by means of a modest use of resources are obviously less likely to be at each other’s throat than people depending upon a high rate of use (Schumacher, 1973, p.53).

The life-style recommended by the Buddhist economist is based on non-violence and compassion and includes living and working for nature while the materialists live from nature. Bertrand de Jouvenel, an eminent French political philosopher, supports the Buddhist economic principle with its focus on the importance of all life.

*All human life is a dependent part of an ecosystem of many different forms of life. As the world is ruled from towns where men are cut off from any form of life other than human, the feeling of belonging to an ecosystem is not revived (Schumacher, 1973, p.54).*

In relation to the notion of 'economic' and 'uneconomic, the Buddhist economist distinguishes between living on income and living on capital, and argues that: "a population basing its economic life on non-renewable fuels is living parasitically, on capital instead of income. Such a way of life could have no permanence" (Schumacher, 1973, p. 55).

#### **V.4 Creating a positive ways of life based on Gandhian principles of life**

Avoid the seven sins in conjunction with the understanding of one's own greed will help people to overcome hardship in life. In this regard Gandhi reiterated the Buddhist teaching about greed. There can be growth, but it cannot be an unlimited one. "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not for every man's greed (Gandhi cited in Schumacher, 1973, p. 29). Gandhi's spinning wheel is the symbol of simple tool and simple machinery for the millions of poor Indians. He was against the notion of making human kind slaves of modern machinery.

#### **Conclusion**

Buddhist recommended way of life is not to do harm animals, people, and the environment that one is living in. It reflects the common saying, that 'live and let other beings live too', and the principle governing the conduct of life is to consume less by maximising the enjoyment. Buddhism sees the essence of civilization not in the multiplication of wants, but in the purification of human character.

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## **Appendix A**

There are five categories of Karma which are as follows:

1. Kammassakomhi = I have inherited Karma.
2. Kammadayado = I have Karma as my possession.
3. Kammayoni = I am born of Karma.
4. Kamma bandhu = I have karma as my relative.
5. Kammapatisarano = I have karma as my refuge.

Yam kammam karissami kalyanam va papakam va tassa dayado bhavissami.

Whatever I do either wholesome or unwholesome deeds, I shall reap them for sure in the future.

## **Appendix B**

### **Kamma Bat Dap, ten fundamental codes of ethics for lay Buddhists**

These fundamental codes are based on the five precepts, and they are grouped into three categories according to physical, verbal, and mental activities.

The physical activity category consists of three elements

- (i) to abstain from taking life,
- (ii) to abstain from stealing, and
- (iii) to abstain from committing adultery.

The second group is composed of four elements:

- (i) do not tell lie,
- (ii) do not use divisive, abusive, and insulting language,
- (iii) do not use rude and obscene language, and
- (iv) do not talk nonsense

The mental activity category consists for three elements:

- (i) to eliminate the greedy intention of stealing,
- (ii) to eliminate the intention of taking revenge, and
- (iii) to cultivate right understanding

The aim of observing these ten rules is to purify one's physical, verbal, and mental activities that are the source of social conflict and violence (Thong, 1999, p. 239).

### **Collect Issue Cards and Evaluations**

**(Participants to note three main issues arising from today)**

**Vote of Thanks**

**Close**