

# FIELDWORK NOTES – Angkuoch Project – SG02

This project presents the combined fieldwork notes of Catherine GRANT (project leader) and SAY Tola (research assistant). We drafted these notes individually at the end of each day of fieldwork between 1 and 12 January. In the week of 13 January, we compiled them into this document, and checked over each other's notes, discussing discrepancies and reconciling and/or noting any differences in this document. We have deliberately retained any duplication of information, and any remaining discrepancies, in our notes.

Note: In these fieldnotes, the surnames of Khmer people are written first, following convention. "Ta" is a generic form of respectful address to an elderly man in Khmer; "Yeuy" is its equivalent for women. "Bong" is the respectful address to a man or woman around the same age as the interlocutor.

## 1 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Project planning with Song Seng and Say Tola at Heritage Hub, CLA.

## 2 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Project planning at Heritage Hub in the morning.
- ii. In the afternoon, met BIN Song, Angkuoch daek maker, at his home in the village of Preah Kor Thmey to greet and talk through ethics consent process. GPS co-ordinates: 13° 30' 3" N, 103° 49' 34" E.
- iii. Travel time by tuk-tuk from Cambodian Living Arts (CLA) Heritage Hub in Siem Riep town to Preah Kor Thmey = approx. 45 minutes; and to Srah Srong = approx. 20 minutes. Between the two villages = approx. 20 minutes.
- iv. In attendance: Collaborator SONG Seng, Research Assistant Say Tola, Cambodian Living Arts Heritage Hub Project Co-Ordinator KHOEUT Sochea, Project Investigator Catherine Grant.
- v. Around 3pm, BIN Song had read to him the participant information / verbal consent script, confirmed he understood the nature of the research and his participation, and verbally agreed to proceed with his participation. Audio/visual record of consent is also provided in separate files.
- vi. BIN Song lives with wife and grandson. Daughter lives and works in Thailand with other grandchildren.

- vii. His grandchild does not play Angkuoch daek. BIN Song only knows of one other person, a man around his age, who knows how to play Angkuoch daek. This man lives around 7 kilometers from his village. He sees him sometimes at the pagoda. (We later learnt that this was Son Soeun, who we subsequently met.)
- viii. BIN Song is a part of an organizing committee for the local pagoda. He sources the raw materials for making Angkuoch daek from the pagoda – they are leftover building materials. Then, sometimes he works with a blacksmith, who lives around 7 kilometers away from his home, to shape the frame for the Angkuoch daek.
- ix. He is keeping one Angkuoch daek in the hope that his son will learn how to play, but this depends on how much time the son has available to learn.
- x. BIN Song was involved with a Buddhist event at the pagoda in the coming days. We agreed to meet Wednesday 8 to Friday 10 January, full days, for filming of an interview and instrument-making.

## 2. SAY TOLA

- i. Bin SONG told us that he has lived in this village / house since 1989. He was born in another village in Siem Reap Province but was evacuated in 1989. When I asked the reason for his evacuation, he told us he was unsure. (On a later day, he told me that it was because the Khmer Rouge soldiers were still in that village.) His former land was bigger than his current land.
- ii. He told us he is hard of hearing, so we should speak up during our interview. During our visits, he also referred several times to his lack of teeth, and how this prevented him from playing the Angkuoch Daek any more.
- iii. Ta Song received a medal from Prime Minister Hun Sen some years ago because he was the most active member of the organising committee in building a temple for the local pagoda. He raised a substantial amount of money for the construction of the temple. He asked us to help him frame the certificate he received with his medal, and also a large photograph of him receiving the medal. (We did both in the following days, and returned them to him.)
- iv. He told us that he had been very hesitant to participate in this project because he thought he is too old and his physical strength wouldn't be up to it. In fact, he had declined the persistent invitations of a Japanese researcher the year before to show him how to make the Angkuoch daek. However, with the encouragement of Seng Song (project collaborator), he decided to participate in this project as he understood that he was getting old and that he held important knowledge that could otherwise soon disappear, if he didn't share it with us.
- v. Ta Song started to make the Angkuoch when he was young. At that time, the instrument was quite popular and people sometimes used to play the Angkuoch Daek to accompany two folk songs in particular: "Santouch" ("Hook") and "Prern" (the latter always with improvised lyrics). (I know both

of these folk tunes.) Someone would sing a verse, and then for the next verse someone would play Angkuoch Daek and everyone would dance.

## 3 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Project planning and data management at Heritage Hub in the morning.
- ii. In the afternoon, met KRAK Chi and his son CHI Monivong, both Angkuoch russey makers, at the home of KRAK Chi in Srah Srong Village, to greet and talk through ethics consent process. GPS co-ordinates: 13° 22' 7" N, 103° 51' 11" E.
- iii. In attendance: Collaborator SONG Seng, Research Assistant SAY Tola, Cambodian Living Arts Heritage Hub Project Co-Ordinator KHOEUT Sochea, Project Investigator Catherine Grant.
- iv. Around 2:30pm, KRAK Chi had read to him the participant information / verbal consent script, confirmed he understood the nature of the research and his participation, and verbally agreed to proceed with his participation. Audio/visual record of consent is also provided in separate files.
- v. Around 3:30pm, CHI Monivong had read to him the participant information / verbal consent script, confirmed he understood the nature of the research and his participation, and verbally agreed to proceed with his participation. Audio/visual record of consent is also provided in separate files.
- vi. Wedding ceremony nearby playing amplified music impeded sound recording ability; only ethics consent processes and informal discussion today. Wedding continues for one further day, so filming tomorrow will take place at the home of CHI Monivong, who leaves a few minutes' tuk-tuk / moto ride away, in a house that his mother provided for him.
- vii. 15 years ago, KRAK Chi was a farmer and a maker of palm sugar. The season for making palm sugar is November to April; for the rest of the year (May to October), he would make Angkuoch. He also used to make handles for cleaving knives. Now, he owns a restaurant opposite his house for tourists, and is the village chief.
- viii. Because KRAK Chi is also the village chief, he is unable to commit in advance to specific times for filming in the coming days, as he can be needed for duties at short notice. 7<sup>th</sup> January is Victory Day and neither he nor his son are available.

### 2. SAY TOLA

- i. Krak Chi used to be a farmer and palm sugar maker (in the 1990s and early 2000s). He also used to make carving on buffalo horn, for covers of long

- knives. (There were three particular styles of carving that customers liked: Hanuman, Apsara and the head of Naga.) He now does a few jobs including being a cook for tourists, an Angkuoch maker, and village head.
- ii. He was selected to work as a village head in 1988. (He mentioned that around this time, there was a call for people to become soldiers.) Because he is a village head, this means that KRAK Chi now works actively for the CPP in this capacity.
  - iii. We showed him the Angkuoch daek made by Bin Song and given to project collaborator Song Seng in advance of the start of fieldwork. Krak Chi thought that it was not a good one: that a good Angkuoch daek should be bigger and must be waxed on its lamella so then it can make a good and louder sound. The wax helps the Angkuoch to have more echo.
  - iv. Krak Chi has 6 sons. One of them can make and play the Angkuoch russey. His name is CHI Monivong. He works in the Department of Environment in Siem Reap province, and lives in a nearby house in Srah Srong village. Monivong has two children, one son and one daughter. He was at Krak Chi's home when we visited. We invited him to join us, so we could tell him more about the project. He told us more about himself too.
  - v. Chi Monivong learned to make the Angkuoch Russey when he was a high school student. Angkuoch could help him to generate some money and so reduce the financial burden on his parents. He earned money in this way, but he was not a good child or student. He always spent that money for wrongdoing (like going out with his friends instead of giving it to his parents).
  - vi. He said Angkuoch Russey was very popular before. Sellers could be found easily at Angkor, Banteay Kdei and Ta Prohm temples.
  - vii. Monivong's brother Chen (who we spoke with later in the fieldwork) is an Angkuoch seller and player. Because Chen could play the Angkuoch so well, it inspired a lot of tourists to buy the instruments, even for a \$USD20 price. One year, there was an order from a foreigner that required the making of 500 Angkuoch; Chen passed on this order to his father Krak Chi, who made the instruments.
  - viii. Monivong is very passionate about playing football. His Department at work won 2nd place in a competition among government departments in Siem Reap province in 2018. Besides from his full-time job, nowadays, he really likes to play volleyball.
  - ix. Monivong stopped making the Angkuoch russey five years ago, because he got full-time work in the Department of Environment. But because he is concerned that the knowledge and skills for making Angkuoch russey will be lost someday soon, he is willing to take part in this project.

# 4 JANUARY 2020

## 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Project planning and data management at Heritage Hub in the morning.
- ii. Interview with KRAK Chi around 2-4pm in a rice field at the house of his son, Chi Monivong. Location chosen because amplified music from a wedding at KRAK Chi's house was very loud; still audible at times during the video. GPS co-ordinates: 13° 22' 7" N, 103° 51' 11" E.
- iii. In attendance (for this and all remaining fieldwork, unless otherwise stated): Videographer THON Dika, Research Assistant SAY Tola, Project Investigator Catherine GRANT.
- iv. Completed "Part 1" of the interview.

## 2. SAY TOLA

- i. Krak Chi knows of only two types of Angkuoch: Angkuoch Russey (bamboo) and Angkuoch Daek (metal)
- ii. Krak Chi's father was an Angkuoch Daek player, but Krak Chi didn't learn either to make or play Angkuoch Daek, because he wasn't really interested. He later learnt to make Angkuoch Russey, when his son Chen went to buy those instruments from Ta Koeuy.
- i. In the past, people liked to play Angkuoch Russey to release stress. They normally played when they were alone. They also played Angkuoch to flirt with girls, and girls quickly understood through the sound of music. Even just five year ago, Angkuoch Russey players would bring Angkuoch to play for themselves for pleasure around Srah Srang area (not for tourists).
- ii. Based on what Krak Chi observed, there is no woman who can play the Angkuoch. He assumes that this musical instrument is not created for women to play.
- iii. Krak Chi was fascinated to learn about Angkuoch Russey because he had witnessed how his son Chen could generate some money from selling this instrument to tourists. As Chen needed to go to Preah Dak village for buying those instruments from MONG Koeuy ("Ta Koeuy" who died in 2012), Krak Chi decided to learn from Ta Koeuy. He told us that this would have been in 1993, but Chen was born in 1988; we think that this might have happened instead in around the early 2000s, because Chen told us he was about 11 when he first visited Ta Koeuy. It took Krak Chi two weeks to understand and to be able to make Angkuoch Russey with a nice sound.

- iv. These days, Krak Chi always makes the Angkuoch Russey with the assistance of his grandson, who is under 10 years old. (Krak Chi's son Chen later told me that his nephew – the son of another brother of Chen and Monivong - was taught by Krak Chi to make the instrument, and now he can do all the steps, but he mostly gets Krak Chi to saw the bamboo. He does not make Angkuoch unless there is an order from customers).

## 5 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Video-shooting of instrument-making, plus interview on Angkuoch-making process and tools, with KRAK Chi from around 7am to 11:30am at his home in Srah Srong village.
- ii. Short video of him playing Angkuoch toward the back of the neighbouring house, where his current restaurant for tourists is.
- iii. Project planning and data management at Heritage Hub in the afternoon.

### 2. SAY TOLA

- i. Krak Chi told us the names of the tools he uses to make an Angkuoch Russey: រោង (metal hacksaw), កាំបិតក្រព្រា (common knife), កាវ (glue – brand name “502”), ពន្លាកតូចមួយ (small chisel), ទងធំមួយ (big chisel), កាំបិតសម្រាប់ចំក្តុយស្បៀ (three bamboo cutting knives). He purchases his tools from a blacksmith who lives near him in the same village, and goes to get them himself, so he can make sure the blacksmith gives him the right tools.
- ii. Krak Chi can make 15 Angkuoch Russey per day. Sometimes he sustains little injuries when he carves the head of the instrument. The bamboo for Angkuoch Russey must be five to six years old. Krak Chi used to plant his own bamboo near his home, but sometimes he goes to buy bamboo stems from others, instead of cutting his own plants.
- iii. It takes two weeks to dry the bamboo in the sun. Drying in this way helps the Angkuoch to last long and make a beautiful sound. However, if a client's order is urgent, Krak Chi roasts (smokes) the bamboo, because it is quicker.
- iv. The thinner the Angkuoch, the nicer the sound.
- v. Krak Chi carves the Angkor Wat motifs on the instruments only when the clients want. (We took a photograph of such an instrument.) The original idea of carving the Angkor Wat motif came to him because he wanted people to know that he lives close to Angkor Wat area of Siem Reap province.

- vi. Krak Chi told me that the main reason he learnt to make, made, and taught other people (like his sons and grandson) the Angkuoch Russey was to generate income.

## 6 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Video-shooting of instrument-making, playing, and interview on Angkuoch-making process and tools, with CHI Monivong from around 7am to 2:30pm at his home in Srah Srong village.
- ii. Met CHI Monivong's brother CHI Chen (KRAK Chi's son) toward 2pm, who played Angkuoch for us, and invited us to return tomorrow for further talking about Angkuoch.
- iii. Around 2pm, CHI Chen had read to him the participant information / verbal consent script, confirmed he understood the nature of the research and his participation, and verbally agreed to proceed with his participation. Audio/visual record of consent is also provided in separate files.
- iv. The project team showed the brothers a photograph of the 1966 Angkuoch acquisition of British Museum (from its catalogue). Monivong told us that the technique and material (bamboo) appeared the same as the one he and his father used. The darker colour of the Collection instrument might be due to the treatment of the bamboo for preservation, he told us.
- v. The project team asked whether Monivong would like the British Museum to add one of his Angkuoch to its collection. He said yes, and selected an instrument from a small bundle of those that he had recently made, testing the sound of several of them and seeking opinion of his brother Chen. The instrument they eventually chose Monivong had made using the 'smoking' technique to dry the bamboo, a technique that he had showed us earlier that morning (see associated video asset for 2020-06-01). Singe marks from the fire are visible on the flat broader end of the instrument. Three sets of three small lines on the rounded side of the instrument are characteristic markings. I offered to buy the instrument off him; he said they'd sell for maybe \$1 (USD) or \$2 at the markets. I gave him \$5, with added thanks for his time today, and confirmation that project collaborator Seng Song would return with a further honorarium for his participation.
- vi. Project planning and data management at Heritage Hub till early evening.

### 1. SAY TOLA

- i. The project team arrived at Chi Monivong's house at around 7am. Because the 7 January ("Victory Day" in Cambodia, recognising the fall of the Khmer Rouge

in 1979) was the following day, Monivong had had to maintain guard of the village from the previous nighttime till that morning (as is common for government officials in the lead-up to important public holidays). Monivong told us that he had only slept for only two hours that night, yet he was still willing to come and offer his time for the interview.

- ii. Monivong told us that he almost forget about the meeting for the interview (despite a confirmation call the day before). He came to his house to meet us only after getting a call from his wife, after we arrived today.
- iii. Since he had stopped making the Angkuoch Russey for five years already, he had no tools at his house, yet he was eager to borrow them from his father in order to show the project team. He took his motorbike to his father's house to collect the tools, while we set up for the recording.
- iv. Once Monivong got all the tools, he went to search for bamboo to cut, in an area at the back of his house. He cut the bamboo stem, sawing two parts of it. While he was sawing, he measured the length with the span of his fingers – stretching between thumb and third fingers, and using one-and-a-half of this distance. He told us that the maker should not cut at the 'node' of the bamboo. Monivong then chopped that bamboo into smaller pieces and then started to carve it into the shape of Angkuoch Russey. This process is documented on our video.
- v. While he was carving, he told us that his style is different from his father's. He told us that his father would prefer to dry the bamboo in the sun for two to three days, before finishing the final steps of carving. (Separately, Krak Chi had told us that he dries the bamboo for up to two weeks.) Monivong said that if he followed his father's process, it would take a lot of time. Yet, his father's style is the traditional way and he believed the Angkuoch are good if makers follow that style. But that way, Monivong said, is more difficult for him (as well as taking longer), because in the process of drying, the bamboo becomes hard and he cannot sharpen it with ease.
- vi. Monivong's way is to smoke the bamboo after he carved the head of the instrument (see video and photo documentation). While he was not being recorded, Monivong told me that his father would get mad if he were aware that Monivong was telling us about the smoking technique.
- vii. While Monivong was on the record, I asked about his father's perspective on the smoking. He replied that his father asked him why he prefers to smoke the instruments, and Monivong said it was because he could make them faster. Monivong told that after that, his father also started to smoke the bamboo, yet he also then dried the stems under the sun as well. The smoking helps the bamboo to become softer and smooth. But Monivong said that this technique means that the instruments can break more easily, and are more vulnerable to insect damage. He said that of ten instruments that he made using the smoking technique, two might break; but all of the instruments his father makes using the drying technique alone would survive. But he also said that in the time it takes his father to make ten instruments, he could make 20.
- viii. Monivong also shared with laughter that his father Krak Chi maybe does not want to show us (the project team) every single thing about making



Angkuoch Russey, because he might be worried about his future business in making Angkuoch. But as for Monivong, he told that he feels everything should be shared, that people should not hide their skill.

- ix. Monivong said that he was introduced to making the Angkuoch Russey by his father Krak Chi, and he was interested to learn because it helped him to generate some income. He was still a school student at this time.
- x. When he was still a school student, Monivong said, he also sometimes helped his mother cook for guests at the little restaurant they own opposite their house. When the guests came to eat at there, he always played for them, so then some of them were interested to buy.
- xi. When talking about the technique of playing, Monivong kept complimenting his older brother Chen, saying that his brother was very talented and well known to tourists who came to visit Ta Prohm. Some of the tourists even came to his home searching for his brother.
- xii. When we asked him whether he should have a break for lunch or we should come to meet him another time for the interview section, he said he wanted to keep going and finish everything today because he could not predict whether he has time to continue later or not.
- xiii. When the interview finished, we gave him our appreciation for his time and sharing his knowledge. Then he smiled and said he was excited about the project and hopes that this project can spread the information about Angkuoch widely.
- xiv. Then Monivong's elder brother CHI Chen arrived at the place where we were sitting. Chi and Monivong discussed the picture of the British Museum instrument that we had printed out, and they said that assumed that the Angkuoch was likely made by the family of Ta Koeuy. When I told them that the Angkuoch in the picture was brought to the British Museum in 1966, they told me that they thought that the colour of that Angkuoch may be red because it had been varnished or otherwise treated by the British Museum in order to protect it from insects. *(Later note from Catherine Grant: I guess there is also the possibility that the instrument was treated prior to it coming into the possession of the British Museum.)*
- xv. When CHI Monivong left to go to work, CHI Chen started to share a lot of stories that he had learned about Angkuoch, such as those that he was told when he was selling Angkuoch; he said met people from many places and those people showed him many different music instruments. He told me that one Australian man once showed him an Angkuoch Daek, and he said it was not small. It was big. He said that that Australian man could not buy his Angkuoch Russey to take home, because Australia has very strict rules on importing wood products.
- xvi. We asked Chen on video about his consent to participate in the project and whether he would be willing to give a short interview and play for us on video. He accepted, but asked the project team to shoot at his house the next morning instead of now, because he was not wearing nice clothes. We thanked him, and made arrangements for tomorrow morning.

# 7 JANUARY 2020

## 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Met CHI Chen at the small restaurant-house opposite his father's house in Srah Srong village, from around 7:30am to 11am. He played a larger and smaller Angkuoch russey for us, and spoke in interview.
- ii. Chen told the project team about a family in a nearby village who makes Angkuoch. Chen believes that the British Museum instrument may have been made by a person in that village, because of the thick shape of the top knotch of the instrument. That person, "Ta [grandpa] Koeuy", taught his father KRAK Chi how to make Angkuoch russey. His grandsons may still be in that village and making Angkuoch, and he suggested we could visit the village to try to find them. He did not have a contact number.
- iii. Project planning and data management at Heritage Hub till early evening.

## 1. SAY TOLA

- i. CHI Chen told us that Angkuoch is a Khmer music instrument that has existed for a long time in Cambodia. Men used this instrument to woo/ call the ladies secretly so that their relationship is not shown to their parents.
- ii. There are four types of Jew's harp that Chen knows of and has played: Angkuoch Ksae, Angkuoch Daek Trong ('straight' Angkuoch made of iron), Angkuoch Daek Moul ('round', which is the style that Bin Song makes) and Angkuoch Russey). Chen said that he had seen and played the Angkuoch Daek Trong belonging to Ta Koeuy, when he went to buy instruments from him. (Ta Koeuy's daughter Leakhena had told us that Ta Koeuy had been given the iron instrument as a gift, and that perhaps it was from Laos.)
- iii. Chen told us that only men play the instrument, but that women sometimes used to put the Angkuoch Russey into their hair as a hairpin (as in a photo we took), and some women buy the Angkuoch to keep at their homes (as a souvenir).
- iv. There are two sizes of Angkuoch Russey (bamboo Jew's harp): small and big. The small one is for women, and big one is for men to play because it needs a stronger breath. The small Angkuoch produces a resonant sound and does not need a long or strong breath. At one time, Chen could play the small Angkuoch for 30 minutes and he did not get tired when playing it. At one time, he could play the bigger one from 5 to 7 minutes.
- v. Since he was about nine, Chen went to sell Angkuoch at Ta Prohm temple. He decided to sell this instrument because that is an instrument that not many people sell.

- vi. Sometimes he went to meet the Angkuoch Russey maker named Ta Koeuy, to buy instruments from him to sell. He started to go there when he was very young. Ta Koeuy also showed him the Angkuoch Daek (Moul and Trong).
- vii. Whenever he played the Angkuoch at Ta Prohm temple with the purpose of attracting customers, young and old people were fascinated to come to listen and question him about the instrument. There, he always chose the smaller Angkuoch to play. Most of the time, the customers always want to buy the one that he played. And he would charge a higher price because that Angkuoch became smooth and shiny from playing.
- viii. At one time, there were two young ladies who sold the Angkuoch Russey at the temples too. They also played when they were selling the Angkuoch. Their sister also knew how to play. She lives at the north Srah Srang village.
- ix. When we showed Chen the picture of the Angkuoch Russey in the British Museum on our interview question sheet, he told us that he believes that it was made by Ta Koeuy or Ta Koeuy's grandfather, because he said Ta Koeuy always made Angkuoch with a thick head and body. Also, Ta Koeuy always put four lines of marking on the body of his Angkuoch instruments. (It was difficult to see these in the photograph.)
- x. When Chen was selling Angkuoch, he also got to know and play the Angkuoch Ksae (String Angkuoch). Chen told that the playing technique is different from other type of Angkuoch. Chen said that people need to wind the string around the index finger and put the frame into mouth when they play Angkuoch Ksae. The level of sound relies on the movement of finger.
- xi. Chen said he could recognise whether an Angkuoch Russey is good or bad in few seconds, from looking at it. He does not need to put it in his mouth.
- xii. Chen said that when he was selling the instruments, a lot of old people knew about the Angkuoch but only young ones were interested to try to play it, or to buy it.
- xiii. When Chen was an Angkuoch player, he had to pay the Apsara Authorities (who are responsible for the Angkor Wat temple area) once every ten days for permission to sell his instruments in the Angkor temple complex. He also had to bribe the traffic police, and had to buy lunch for a certain policeman every day. Even then, he could be asked for further money by the authorities. At the same time, he was fed up with Cambodian people for saying that he sold the instruments at a very expensive price. Then Chen's mother told him to stop selling the instruments altogether, and he got a job at Viroth Hotel in Siem Reap town as a bartender instead. Chen is now an expert in wine and cocktails.
- xiv. During these last three years, Chen has missed his life as an Angkuoch seller. At one stage, he was trying to go back and sell instruments in the morning shift, before his bartending work, but the authorities always asked for a lot of money (more than \$USD), even when he wanted to sell the instruments only for one hour.

- xv. Chen taught a lot of young people to play Angkuoch Russey, like people to whom he sold instruments, and also children in his village including his nephew. He did this because he believes that they can preserve the instrument and how to play it for the next generation.

## 8 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Met BIN Song, maker of Angkuoch daek, at his home in Preah Kor Thmey, from around 8am to around 1pm. His wife was there too. At one point, around 8 people arrived and looked on as we filmed. BIN Song told us that one of the women there was his daughter from his first wife, who he met through Angkuoch: he played Angkuoch daek to her, and she played back to him.
- ii. BIN Song had collected a piece of scrap metal (from building materials) to make the Angkuoch daek from the pagoda the day or two before, and told us that he had no need to go to the blacksmith.
- iii. We asked about going to visit the Angkuoch daek player who BIN Song knows, who lives outside a village that's around 30 minutes by tuk-tuk from his place. BIN Song was concerned that the road is too difficult. He had also informed us a few days ago that the player was not so well. We held off making plans until we discussed with project collaborator SONG Seng.
- iv. Project planning and data management at Heritage Hub in the afternoon.

### 1. SAY TOLA

- i. When the project team arrived BIN Song's house, Ta Song kept telling us how regretful he is, because he can no longer play and show how people communicate through Angkuoch. Playing the Angkuoch needs teeth to gently hold the instrument.
- ii. He told us that in the past, people - women and men - liked to play Angkuoch whenever they met each other. No matter whether they went to the pagoda or Angkor Wat temple (where he used to go every Khmer New Year), they used this instrument to play along with songs and the rest of people who were there could dance and enjoy the sound of it. Sometimes, Ta Song took a small Angkuoch Daek that he could play with only one hand, and he used the other hand to make a dance move with. The people normally danced in circle for this type of dance.
- iii. Ta Song said, he used to play Angkuoch with the purpose of flirting with girls. Girls also used this Angkuoch to woo the men back. In fact, he met and married his first wife through playing Angkuoch: when he played Angkuoch

to her, she played back. He also said that when he was younger, his communication with young women through the Angkuoch was useful because the old people could not understand their language.

- iv. When I asked why they had to hide their communication, Ta Song responded with a laugh that teenagers' communication should not be heard by their parents since it is not their business to know. Ta Song also mentioned that some women lost their virginity before marriage, which was a strong taboo at that time.
- v. Ta Song changed his plan of bringing the research team to the pagoda to choose the piece of scrap metal from which to shape the Angkuoch Daek; instead he had picked it up while he was at the pagoda for a religious event in the previous days.
- vi. Ta Song told us that he first learned to make Angkuoch Daek when he was 11 years old. He was fascinated to make this instrument because he had heard from old people that Angkuoch Daek was a Khmer instrument. When he was about 15, he happened to meet a man from the Kuy ethnic group who showed him the shape and appearance of an Angkuoch Daek that belonged to that man. Soon after that, Ta Song tried to make an instrument like that, recalling the details of it from memory, and he made those instruments available for sale.
- vii. He could sell an Angkuoch Daek for 25 Riel in about 1951-1952 (when he was around 11 years old).
- viii. When he became a monk when he was 21 years old, he saw a picture of Angkuoch Daek in the Pali Canon (គម្ពីរព្រះអូតិកក), which gave him further ideas about its form. He left the monkhood when he was 23 years old.
- ix. Ta Song said when he wanted to measure the length of Angkuoch Daek, he always cut a palm leaf to the length of 1.5 decimetres (=15 centimetres) and then used that leaf to measure the Angkuoch length.
- x. During the 1960s, he said Angkuoch Daek was very popular, and even women were keen to learn to play this instrument. That's how he came to teach many women in the village.
- xi. During Khmer Rouge, BIN Song said he had not undergone harsh hardship because he was appointed as the leader of a team. He said his role was to order people and tell them to work. I asked whether he was cruel to people, and he responded that people who were under him were living in the same village with him, so he was not nasty to them.
- xii. After the Khmer Rouge, Ta Song had a few methods of earning money including making knives, *snaeng* (musical instruments made of buffalo horn) and *khloy* (flute). Ta Song told me that people bought the *snaeng* to trap elephants. He could also play this instrument.
- xiii. Ta Song told me that there was a man named Ta Korng who came to meet him in 1999 and asked him to make lamellas for his two Angkuoch Daek. Ta

Song did, and this was a reason that his name and his skill in making Angkuoch Daek spread. Ta Song told us that Ta Korng is still alive and lives in Tnoat Chrum village in Angkor Thom District, Siem Reap Province. When I asked, he didn't know whether Ta Korng played Angkuoch Daek, and he didn't know why Ta Korng had two Angkuoch Daek frames that he needed lamellas for.

- xiv. Ta Song's wife told me that her husband has had seven wives, and she is the second one. She told me that Ta Song had moved to live with the seventh wife, around a kilometer away, a long time ago, but when her daughter went to work in Thailand about five months ago, Ta Song came back to live with her. With the seventh wife, Ta Song has had another son.
- xv. When we went to the house of the seventh wife (who is much younger than Ta Song, perhaps around 40) to pick up a tool to make Angkuoch Daek, that seventh wife told me that Ta Song really liked to play the Angkuoch, no matter where he went. She said she heard her husband played it almost every night when he had teeth, and that he had played it in the rice fields too. She told me that she really likes to listen him playing. She also told me that Ta Song has been teaching their son to make and play Angkuoch Daek. But because of the son's busy schedule at school, their son now can't spend much time on these activities.
- xvi. Before the project team left the house, Ta Song told me that he had recently rejected the invitation of a Japanese researcher to talk about Angkuoch Daek many times, as he did not have teeth and did not want to share. But he said that he agreed with SONG Seng to participate this project because he understood that it was important and felt sorry that not many people know this Khmer instrument.

## 9 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Around 7:30am, we visited Preak Dak village which CHI Chen had told us about two days ago, to try to find relatives of the Angkuoch-russey-maker MONG Koeuy. Ta Koeuy had taught Chen's father KRAK Chi how to make Angkuoch russey, and Chen had told us he may have made the British Museum instrument. Along the way, we stopped twice to ask street-side store-owners for directions before finding the house. GPS co-ordinates of house 13° 26' 39" N, 103° 56' 2" E.
- ii. At the home, we found 31-year-old KOEUY Leakhena. We explained to her about the project, and Chen's information, and showed her the photo of the British Museum asset. She told us that she is excited to see this photo because she is sure that the instrument was made by her father. She became

a little emotional when she told us that she was sorry that her father was no longer alive to see this photo.

- iii. Leakhena then called her mother, 75-year-old LAV Mech, who came to join us at the front of the house. We introduced ourselves and showed her the photo. She too was sure that the instrument was made by Ta Koeuy, her (second) husband. The first thing she told us after that was that he could say “I love you” through the instrument. She chuckled when she told us this.
- iv. We chatted further to Leakhena and Mech, for around 15-20 minutes. Early on in this conversation, we asked them whether we may turn on the video, and they agreed. We did not want to interrupt the flow of conversation, so remained in location and only placed the microphone between them; video and audio quality is not strong, with ambient sounds drowning out the conversation at times.
- v. Toward the end of this conversation (while still on video), I explained further about the video documentation and documentary we hoped to create for this project, and asked the two women whether they would be willing to speak on camera a little bit about what they’d just told us. They agreed, and we went to set up the camera in the garden at the back of their house.
- vi. Leakhena soon joined us with some photos of her father, including a large framed one that had been used at his funeral in 2012 (age 75). He died of a lung condition.
- vii. Leakhena and Mech spoke on video for around 10 minutes, including about the British Museum asset (a photo of which is shown in the video and photographs of this interview).
- viii. Leakhena told us that her half-brother (Mech’s son from her first husband) makes Angkuoch russey, but is very busy, and she wasn’t sure whether he’d be able to talk with us. She said that she would mention our project to another brother, who also makes Angkuoch russey, in case he wanted to talk with us. I said we’d be very happy to meet him, and alerted her to the short remaining fieldwork period. We exchanged phone numbers.
- ix. We left a copy of the Khmer consent form, and told Leakhena and Mech that SONG Seng (project collaborator) at CLA Heritage Hub would be in touch with them about the preliminary project outcomes, and that they could contact him at any time.
- x. We left the house, and returned around 15 minutes later with a gift of a basket of fruit.

## 1. SAY TOLA

- i. The project team went to find out more about Ta Koeuy’s relatives after hearing from CHI Chen’s family that the picture of the Angkuoch in the British Museum is most likely made by Ta Koeuy.
- ii. When I asked people along the way to Preah Dak village, people seemed to know the exact house of Ta Koeuy’s son. Even though I didn’t refer to Angkuoch, the people asked me in return whether Ta Koeuy was the one

who made and sold Angkuoch; one person also told me that he had passed away. Because Ta Koeuy's name seemed to be known to the people in the village, this helped the research team to find out his house with ease.

- iii. When the research team arrived the house, the lady who we learnt later to be Leakhena came to greet us. When we explained about the project and showed her the photo of the Angkuoch in the British Museum on the sheet where we had compiled the research questions, she became emotional and cried. She said it reminded her of her father (Ta Koeuy). She did not say clearly what made her confident that this was an instrument made by her father; she said that her father was the only person she knew of who could make Angkuoch Russey, and that he had taught other people. She said she felt sad that he was not here to see this photograph and hear the story of this instrument. She told the team that her father spent his entire life making Angkuoch Russey and also taught all her brothers to make and play. Leakhena told us that she has a half-brother, Pov, the son of Ta Koeuy's first wife, and he makes Angkuoch Russey too. She has three brothers who make Angkuoch Russey (who we met later).
- iv. After Leakhena shared this information, she went to call her mother and showed her the picture. Leakhena told me that her Mother (LAV Mech) is just recovering from symptoms caused by diabetes. Yeay LAV Mech told me that she was not able to walk for five months.
- v. Both LAV Mech and Leakhena said that Ta Koeuy died in 2012 at the age of 75. (Later, on 11 January, Leakhena's older brothers told me that he died in 2012 at the age of 78.) LAV Mech said that her husband Ta Koeuy died from lung disease. Leakhena said that her father also drank wine a lot.
- vi. When LAV Mech saw the photo of Angkuoch, she said quietly that she missed her husband. She told us that her husband had been a good husband, and that because of his making Angkuoch, her family got enough money to buy a motorbike. (Later, Reatha told me that they had been able to purchase three motorbikes with the income generated from their combined Angkuoch-making)
- vii. LAV Mech told us that she got married with Ta Koeuy during the Khmer Rouge period. It was a forced marriage by the Khmer Rouge. She had known Ta Koeuy since she was very young, as they had grown up in the same village.
- viii. LAV Mech said, during the 1960s, Ta Koeuy always put a sugar palm juice pot on his back and put the Angkuoch in it, and whenever he went to sell at Neak Poan, Krol Ko and Ta Som temples. She mentioned that Ta Koeuy always brought a knife along because he could use it to improve an instrument when the sound of an Angkuoch Russey did not sound right/ good. In addition to the Angkuoch, Yeay Mech also said that Ta Koeuy brought coconuts to sell to the tourists.
- ix. LAV Mech did not know from whom her husband learned to make Angkuoch.



- x. She said Ta Koeuy used to say 'I love you' through the Angkuoch to her. She could understand that secret language, but she did not know how to reply as she did not play this instrument.
- xi. LAV Mech is the second wife of Ta Koeuy, and Lav Mech herself had also been previously married. Lav Mech and Ta Koeuy were arranged to be married, and got married, during the Khmer Rouge era (1975-1979). At that time, Mech told us that she had assumed that her first husband died during that period. However, her first husband in fact survived the Khmer Rouge period, and he turned up to visit her and her children during the 1990s. Lav Mech told us that her first husband had settled in a European country and had taken another wife there.
- xii. Leakhena said that before there were many bamboo plants at the back of her house. Those plants had been cut down since the family members had stopped making the Angkuoch in the last few years and because her brother needed that land to build a house there after he got married.
- xiii. Leakhena said that when she got married, her husband was also interested to learn to make Angkuoch Russey. Then he came to learn from her father. He made and sold this instrument for a few years and stopped after the Angkuoch market became very narrow.
- xiv. During the interview, LAV Mech kept saying that Khmer people do not really help to promote Angkuoch and that's why it is becoming endangered. Leakhena proposed that all Cambodian should help to promote this instrument. One benefit is that, she said, it helps men to do their job at their houses so then they can stay close to their wives and children. Since the market of Angkuoch is very narrow now, Leakhena and LAV Mech urged Cambodian people to promote and help to keep the tradition of making Angkuoch alive.

## 10 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Returned to the home of BIN Song around 7:30am till around 10am to complete the filming of Angkuoch daek-making. Interview conducted at the same time as the making.
- ii. BIN Song said that all three of the instruments that he showed us he'd made following project collaborator SONG Seng's visit to him late last year, when Seng met him to inform him about the project and request his participation. Before that, the most recent Angkuoch daek he made were pre-Khmer-Rouge era; he hadn't made Angkuoch daek for 50 years.

- iii. I explained to BIN Song the purpose of the British Museum, and showed him the photo of the Angkuoch Russey in the collection. I asked him whether he would like also one of his Angkuoch daek to be in the collection, and he gave an emphatic 'yes' (three times). I told him I would buy the instrument from him, but neither he nor Research Assistant Tola was sure about a price: in the 1950s, he used to sell Angkuoch Daek for 25 Riel (under 1 cent USD by current conversion), and he hasn't sold an Angkuoch Daek since about 1970. Tola thought maybe \$15USD was reasonable; I gave him \$20, with additional thanks for his generosity for his time and skills (and confirmation that project collaborator SONG Seng would soon return with his honorarium for the project). Seng later told me he thought that around \$10USD might be a reasonable current price for an Angkuoch Daek in general.

## 1. SAY TOLA

- i. Today the project team went to meet Ta Song again. While we were just reaching his house, we saw him leaving his house by bicycle to take some energy drinks to his second wife, who lives about a kilometer away. After seeing the team arrive, he turned his bike back to the house to meet us. He said he would go to his second wife later.
- ii. The team asked him to show us the process of filing down the lamella of the Angkuoch Daek. Because this takes a long time, he had already begun this process in the previous days, but he showed us how to do it. He explained that it takes him around 30 minutes to saw a lamella, and that he had been concerned about the amount of time the project team would have to spend waiting for him to finish the lamella, so he started it in advance.
- iii. While filing the lamella, Ta Song told us that soon after he first started to make this Angkuoch Daek, a man from the Kuy ethnic minority people showed him an Angkuoch Daek from that ethnic group. He was unsure about its appearance until the Kuy man came to show him.
- iv. However, Ta Song said he had been intrigued to make Angkuoch, and had made it, since he was 11 years old. At that time, he said, he had heard from old people that people in the past liked to use the Angkuoch.
- v. I asked how Angkuoch created a secret language. Ta Song said that there are three parts of the body that a player has to use to 'talk' using the Angkuoch: their uvula, tongue and mouth.
- vi. Ta Song told us that he feels very special and honored when our project team came to document him and the instrument that he makes. He told us that he would encourage all researchers to keep doing their work on Cambodian instruments, because researchers can promote and share knowledge to people around the world. He additionally encouraged Cambodian youth to pay attention to the endangered culture of Cambodia, as well as to find out about other instruments that are endangered.

- vii. In the evening, I saw I had three missed calls from KOEUY Reatha, one of the sons of Ta Koeuy. When I called him back, he asked me to explain more about the purpose of meeting his mother and sister the day before. He additionally asked me to explain more about the project. After I explained, he said he was very interested in the project; that for a long time he had been thinking about and discussing with his brothers that somebody should feature the life and work of their father, to recognise it. In this conversation, he also said that other researchers and journalists had come to talk to their father and them in the past about Angkuoch, but that he wasn't informed about what happened to that information.
- viii. Ta Koeuy's son Reatha explained to me that at one time, his father was the only person who made the Angkuoch Russey. His father learned it from his (Reatha's) grandpa who used to live on the north side of Angkor Wat. Reatha said that his grandpa used to be the leader of a "clan" and that he used the Angkuoch Russey in his role as leader. When the clan came together for a ritual ceremony, his grandpa played the Angkuoch Russey at that ceremony.

## 11 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Returned to the home of BIN Song around 7:30am with full project team (SONG Seng, Patrick KERSALE, THON Dika, SAY Tola, and me). Seng and Patrick asked some further brief questions of interest, including on the provenance of the Angkuoch daek (on video).
- ii. BIN Song told Seng that when he was around 15 years old, he saw a member of the Kuy ethnic group with an iron Angkuoch; although he did not source an instrument from them, he remembered its form, and so was then able to teach himself to make an Angkuoch Daek. He already knew how to make Angkuoch Russey, but when he began to make Angkuoch Daek, he received many orders for it.
- iii. BIN Song showed Seng how to cover the line of sight to his mouth with three fingers when playing.
- iv. BIN Song told Seng and Patrick that there are no specific measurements for the Angkuoch Daek – the instrument may be made in different sizes. He thought that when the tail and the head are of the same length, the sound is best. When asked how many instruments he may have made in his life, he replied: too many to remember.
- v. BIN Song told us that after he made Angkuoch Daek when he was young, there was a lot of interest, and he had many orders from villagers. Since 1970, with the onset of civil war, there were no more players (or orders for instruments). In 2019, a Japanese researcher (who Seng assumes is Leo

Tadagawa) invited BIN Song to participate in a project about Angkuoch Daek and to make him some instruments, but Ta Song declined because he felt he was too old and couldn't make the instruments well any more. When Seng came to him later to explain about this British Museum project, however, he said that he then recognised that he was getting old and that his knowledge would die with him unless he shared it with others, and he could see the value and importance of the project, so agreed to participate.

- vi. Around 8:15am, the four sons of Ta Koeuy arrived at BIN Song's house in a car. Introductions and informal knowledge-sharing about Angkuoch Daek and Angkuoch Russey among all present (some captured on video).
- vii. Around 9am, went with BIN Song in two tuk-tuks, and the four sons of Ta Koeuy in their car, to the house of Angkuoch Daek player SON Soeun, who is BIN Song's friend since childhood. The trip took under half an hour with reasonably good dirt road quality the whole way. GPS Co-ordinates: 13° 31' 30" N, 103° 47' 13" E.
- viii. SON Soeun was at his house when we arrived, with other family members around. We introduced ourselves. Around 9:30am, we undertook the ethics informed consent process with him (recorded on video/audio), and he provided his consent to participate in the project.
- ix. We invited SON Soeun to play for us, which he did, and we interviewed him. He told us he had not played the Angkuoch Daek for a long time, and so was out of practice. This may have been the first time in many years (even over 50 years) that he had played the instrument.
- x. At one point, Ta BIN Song came over to join us (he had been sitting separately until then, chatting with someone from the household). We relocated to a shadier spot and recommenced the interview exchange with both BIN Song and SON Soeun. At one point, they began to play at the same time, but BIN Song soon stopped, referring to his lack of teeth.
- xi. By way of a gift exchange (in addition to the token gifts provided to participants in this project, including shoes, picture frames, clothes, and baskets of fruit), videographer THON Dika joined me in a performance of the Cambodian song "Oan Sronos Kai K'dek": he singing, me playing the instrument *Chapei dong weng*. I then attempted a rendition of "Roamvung", accompanying myself on chapei. We provide this video along with the other assets as a way to document our own presence in the field.
- xii. The four sons of Ta Koeuy had participated in the informal conversations with BIN Song and SON Soeun and/or witnessed (at least some of) the interview being conducted. Toward 12:30pm, I got out my laptop and showed them the photo we had taken a couple of days earlier, of their mother and sister with the photograph of the 1966-donated Angkuoch russey. One of the brothers, KOEUY Reatha, was "100%" sure that this was an instrument made by his father.
- xiii. Reatha gave me an Angkuoch russey. I asked whether he wished for me to keep it, or to donate it to the British Museum; he said he preferred for me to have it, because any donated to the Museum should be of excellent quality.

He told SONG Seng that he could make three or four instruments of different sizes for the Museum, provided that due attribution was given. SONG Seng agreed to discuss further with him (and with the Museum) in due course.

- xiv. We left the house of SON Soeun around 1pm, took BIN Song home, and farewelled him and his wife for the day.
- xv. Project data management and planning at Heritage Hub in the afternoon.

## 1. SAY TOLA

- i. All the project team went to BIN Song's house. The team gave him some gifts.
- ii. There, team member Patrick Kersale did a further short interview with Ta Song, with the help of translation from SONG Seng. In this interview, Ta Song shared some of the same information as he had already shared with me the day before. During the interview, Ta Song also told Patrick that he had met a Kuoy minority man when he was around 14 to 15 years old, who showed him an Angkuoch Daek. (He mentioned that Angkuoch players stopped playing in 1970; he told me that this was because of the Khmer Rouge. Note that 1970 was the start of the civil war in Cambodia.)
- iii. When Patrick asked Ta Song about the look of the Angkuoch Daek, suggesting it looked like Garuda, a mythological bird or peacock), Ta Song replied that he thinks the instrument could be similar to a peacock because when a peacock crows, its sound is long and resonant like the sound of Angkuoch. Ta Song also told us that when the tail of the Angkuoch is as long as the head, the sound of Angkuoch will be good.
- iv. Ta Song also told us more about the context of playing this instrument. He said Angkuoch was commonly played to accompany the folk song 'Prern'. I asked him about the origin of that folk song, and he said it was Khmer.
- v. Ta Song told us that in the 1960s, the Angkuoch Daek was more popular than Angkuoch Russey.
- vi. He said that some players (men) liked to put 'charming wax' that attracts love on their Angkuoch. By doing this, men can attract girls to fall in love with them. (This charming wax is commonly known in Cambodia and can be used for a range of purposes; it is typically prescribed by a 'healer' or 'Kru' for some malaise.)
- vii. After the interview, Seng mentioned to Ta Song the possibility of making the Angkuoch Daek available on the international market. They agreed to discuss further later, because we wanted to go to Ta Soeun's house. *(Later note from Cathy: this comment relates to an email exchange I [Cathy] had in early January with Mr Philippe Dallais, Executive Board Member of the International Jew's Harp Society [IJHS], of which I had recently become a member because of the Society's relevance to this project. Mr Dallais had mentioned in an email to me the possibility of making some Cambodian Angkuoch available through a small 'museum shop' in Switzerland. I informed*

*Seng Song, who said he would talk further about this possibility with Mr Dallais and the maker-participants in this project, in due course.)*

- viii. Then the three sons of Ta Koeuy and Lav Mech arrived Ta Song's house, along with the brother of the wife of one of them. We had informed them the day before that we would be there, and had invited them to join us. They met and talked with Ta Song, saying that their father Ta Koeuy also knew how to make Angkuoch Daek. They told us that names and ages are:
- a. KOEUY Polo around 45 years old
  - b. CHHUT Tok (the brother of Polo's wife) around 40 years old
  - c. KOEUY Reatha (our main contact) born 28 June 1983
  - d. KOEUY Sovanrith born in 1990
- ix. One son, the middle brother Reatha, who works in role assisting a commune chief, said that his father knew a lot of styles of Angkuoch Russey (round, square, thin and thick), and that he knew how to make all of them. This son had also brought a few Angkuoch Russey with him, which he showed us. He said that most of the Angkuoch makers who had learned from his father liked to make Angkuoch similar to those that he had brought with him, because they take a short time and they look nice. But he also added that when people make that type of Angkuoch, they do not need to pay serious attention to making it, since it is easy and quick.
- x. KOEUY Reatha told us that because of his family's making Angkuoch, all his siblings could graduate from high school. He said he remembered that his family could afford to buy three motorbikes because of the family's selling Angkuoch. He said that there was a German man who ordered 10,000 Angkuoch at a time, and more than once, which helped his family to generate a lot of money. The German man's wife was Thai, and since 2003, when there were anti-Thai protests and riots in Cambodia, the German man has not returned.
- xi. After the chat at Ta Song's house, all the project team, Ta Song and Ta Koeuy's four sons went to an Angkuoch Daek's player house. His name is SON Soeun.
- xii. Ta Soeun told us that he was born in the year of horse. (Using a calendar of Chinese years, Cathy and I later calculated that this probably means he was born in 1942.) He said he has already turned 78 years old now. *(Note later added by Cathy: Seng later reminded me that when a person is first born, Cambodian people say that he or she is already one year old; this may explain the slight discrepancies between stated birth years and ages among some project participants.)*
- xiii. Ta Soeun told me that he could not hear well any more, and that he is just recovering from knee pain. He said if there is no medicine for him to take every week, he finds it very difficult to move due to the pain.
- xiv. While setting up the camera, I asked him to sit on a mat and show us how to play, but then he said the team should give him two or three days so then he

could practice. He told me that he feels very shy to play with so many people around, because he only played when he was young and he had not played Angkuoch Daek for a very long time. He said he cannot remember how to play it well. But then he tested his playing, and played for us.

- xv. When I asked the meaning of his playing – what he had communicated to me when he played – he said: “Oun euy (my dear), why do you look so good? What’s your name?” Another time, Ta Soeun played for me: “You’re beautiful, Oun. Where do you come from? What’s your name?” He played for us again, and this time he played and introduced his name through the Angkuoch.
- xvi. When Ta Song was there, and Ta Soeun played again, I asked Ta Soeun whether he could understand the meaning of the Angkuoch Daek message that Ta Soeun played for him. Ta Song said he could not hear well any more, but he could recognise that it was ‘*ᄃᆞᆫ*’ (‘paul’, the word used for the recitative speech-style of playing Angkuoch.)
- xvii. Ta Soeun told us that he started to play the Angkuoch Daek because he saw some older boys in his village use Angkuoch. He was intrigued to learn from them. Then he asked them to give him one but none of them did, because they needed the instruments for themselves. After that, he learned to make Angkuoch Daek so then he could use it wherever he went. He made five instruments and kept one for himself and gave the others to other boys.
- xviii. Ta Soeun said he was not a good boy when he was young. He said his mother always told him not to go out, but he did. He said that Ta Song wasn’t good either. Ta Soeun said that he (Ta Soeun) always went out secretly with Ta Song to different villages flirt with girls at night and he’d come back home in the early morning. He laughed when he told me this. At night, when he went to play Angkuoch to wake up his lover, sometimes she would come out to meet him, but sometimes he had to play for a very long time before the girl would hear and come to meet him.
- xix. Ta Soeun explained that the girls immediately knew the secret language that he used through Angkuoch. They’d respond with words. And if they already had a boyfriend or husband, they would still respond but tell him that they were already taken. Ta Soeun told us that when he played Angkuoch when he was young, he also put love attractive charming wax on his Angkuoch, so that the girls would fall in love with him.
- xx. Ta Soeun said when he was growing up, he went to flirt girls in many villages whenever there was a Bon (festival). Everytime he saw beautiful girls, he flirted using the Angkuoch Daek. Ta Souen said that Angkuoch Daek is used as a secret language that Angkuoch players used when they want to ask girl for a kiss or more.
- xxi. When Ta Soeun recalled all these memories, Ta Song scolded him that he should not say these things because it does not bring any benefit or knowledge. Ta Soeun listened and nodded. On the way back to his home, Ta

Song said in the tuk-tuk that the research team should remove these bad sayings of Ta Soeun, since it brings nothing to the young generation.

- xxii. A couple of days earlier, Ta Song had told me that he became a monk when he was 21 years old, and left the monkhood when he was 23. Today, Ta Soeun told me that he had entered and left the monkhood at the same age and at the same time as Ta Song; they joined the monkhood to show gratitude to their parents.
- xxiii. Ta Soeun told us that he stopped playing Angkuoch Daek when he got a wife. He got her because she fell in love with his Angkuoch playing.
- xxiv. He commented on the Angkuoch Daek that Ta Song had made, and said that it was not good yet. He said that Ta Song should have held the instrument over a candle flame so that it glowed, and then poured water onto it, so then the Angkuoch would become firm and could make a good sound. I asked Ta Song about this, and he said he used to have fire bellows so that he could do this process, but he sold the bellow as scrap a long time ago.
- xxv. As Ta Soeun was playing for us, Ta Song often gave him advice about how to improve his playing techniques (for example, breathe in or out / make a louder sound). (One photo we took shows Ta Song talking to Ta Soeun and giving him advice as he is playing.)

## 12 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. THON Dika and SAY Tola met CHI Chen at Ta Prohm, one of the temples of the Angkor Wat complex, to film him playing Angkuoch Russey. The temple is within the grounds of the Angkor District, demanding a significant entrance fee for non-Khmer people; I decided to devote time to project data management and planning instead (having been to the temples on previous visits to Cambodia).
- ii. Project data management and forward planning with videographer THON Dika in the afternoon.

### 1. SAY TOLA

- i. Dika and I went to shoot video of CHI Chen playing at the East Gate of Ta Prohm temple. Chen was already there when we arrived.
- ii. When the three of us walked in, an official (a lady) followed us and asked what the team intended to do. (She saw Dika carried the tripod.) I explained her that the team wants to take footage of Angkuoch player in the temple. She asked if the team has any paper to prove this. I showed her the ethics



information sheet about the project (in Khmer) and Cathy's letter. She could not decide if she should let the team in. She took photographs of information sheet and Cathy's letter, and sent these to her senior to check. Because of low phone coverage, she could not send them out, and she asked the team to wait again. *(Later note by Catherine Grant: "Cathy's letter" refers to a letter that project collaborator Seng Song had secured on my behalf from the Apsara National Authority, a body under the Ministry of Culture that is responsible for the management of the Angkor temple area, in advance of fieldwork commencement. The letter outlined the reason for my visit to the Angkor area, and stated the intended activities of the project team. In previous days, when we had visited Srah Srong village, showing the letter to officials at the entrance to the Angkor temple area had permitted me to enter the area without payment the fee that foreigners must usually pay to gain access it.)*

- iii. Then her senior arrived and I handed Cathy's letter to him for him to read. When he saw it was from the Apsara National Authority, he immediately told the team that it is okay to go in. He then asked the lady to take a few photos when the team was taking the video of Mr Chen playing.
- iv. While walking toward the temple, Chen told us that it has always been like that. Before he used to play for his customers inside the temple too and it was also very strict.
- v. While Dika was shooting CHI Chen playing the Angkuoch Russey, an official for the Apsara National Authority (another lady) came to take photo of us, and talked on her walkie talkie. Then she walked away. A few minutes later, she came back with two other officials and asked me to stand in front of her camera. She said that she needed to send photos for doing a report, but I said that she could take photos of the team but that I was not comfortable to follow her orders. She kept taking photos of us, and I heard her sending voice messages about us to her senior.
- vi. After that, Dika, Chen and I walked to the north gate as Chen suggested that it is quiet and used to be a place that his customers made appointments with him so that he could play for them and sell instruments. We took around 15 minutes to reach the north gate. Along the way, we also happened to meet the traffic policeman who Chen had told us about before. They chatted a little.
- vii. Then Chen showed us the place where he used to bring a hammock and sleep. He said that most of the time, he came to meet customers there at around 1pm. Most of the customers that met him there were good ones. They gave him a higher price, and most of the time, they asked Chen to play for them.
- viii. We headed back to the East Gate, and a man (an official) came and asked us about the project again. I gave him an information sheet (from the ethical consent process for the project). He said his first co-worker had not read it carefully. I told him that if there is anything wrong or if he has further questions, he could call project collaborator SONG Seng, and that his phone

contact is on the project information sheet. Once we arrived back to Siem Reap town, I got a call from Seng saying that the Apsara Authority had called him and requested that the project team delete all the videos they had taken that morning at the temple.

- ix. I called that Aspara Authority official to negotiate and asked him to come to the Heritage Hub office and check the video we had taken. He asked me to wait for five minutes because he had to call his senior. Then he return called, and said “Please kindly understand us! I know you have spent a whole morning to take videos. That is our mistake that my co-worker did not read carefully. Please delete those videos. You can keep photos to use, but not videos because it shows the details of the temple. If the videos are shown publicly, I am concerned that both sides will have problems.” I accepted his request, and I also told him about the informed consent process that the team has applied to make sure all parties are ok with the research, and he seemed happy to hear that.
- x. In the afternoon, Cathy, Dika and I met at the Heritage Hub to discuss the events of the morning. We thought that although we could not use the video taken that morning, we could extract the audio from the files. We also have one photograph from that morning. These assets are submitted along with these fieldnotes.

## 13 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Media-related work at the Heritage Hub: preparation of IJIH blog post, EMKP BM web blog post, project description translation into Khmer, compilation of photos, video and captions for press enquiries, drafting social media posts. SAY Tola completed draft fieldwork notes.

## 14 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Project work at Heritage Hub: translation of IJHS blog post into Khmer, translation into Khmer of press materials, reviewing and revising these fieldnotes, etc.
- ii. In the afternoon, we met Mr Kosal MEY, Liaison Officer in the Cultural Unit of the UNESCO Office in Siem Reap, at the Heritage Hub to discuss the project and intentions. Mr MEY is responsible for tangible heritage in Siem Reap

Province and works closely with the Apsara Authority regarding preservation and protection of the Angkor temple area. We exchanged information and Mr MEY said he would be pleased to be kept informed of outcomes of the project. Seng would invite him to the launch event for the video documentary later this year.

## 15 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Project work at Heritage Hub. Further collaboration with Tola regarding fieldnotes; social media posts; literature review on Angkuoch in Khmer and English.

### 2. SAY TOLA

- i. I called Ta Koeuy's son KOEUY Reatha to confirm his name and his brothers' names (provided in a previous entry of these fieldnotes), and confirmed them. Reatha also asked whether his father could be credited for being the maker of the instrument in the British Museum, and also said that his father was the first person to start a business of Angkuoch-making. I said that the project leader (Cathy) would relay his request to the British Museum.
- ii. He said, when he saw the photo of the instrument in the British Museum, that he knew that it was made by his father because of the 'breast' (ឃ្រា) of the instrument on its lamella. KOEUY Reatha said if it was made by his grandpa, there would be no 'breast' on the lamella because his father (Ta Koeuy) had told him that his grandpa used to put wax the lamella instead, rather than carving that shape into the instrument itself.
- iii. He added that his father was first person to draw motifs on the Angkuoch (for example, sets of lines or a motif of Angkor Wat).
- iv. Reatha commented on the Angkuoch Daek that was made by Ta Song, which he had seen on 12 January when we all went to Ta Song's house. He said that that Angkuoch might not have been put on the hot embers (like it should be) because it was not yet firm and smooth.
- v. He added that Ta Soeun's playing of the conversation through Angkuoch Daek on 11 January was not clear for him, unlike his father's which he could hear and understand. He said, players need to rehearse with each other for two or three days before they can understand each other. When Reatha used to play the Angkuoch Daek, saying (for example) "I am going to the market" through the instrument, the brother who was with him would be able to understand.

- vi. KOEUY Reatha told me that he learned to play and make Angkuoch Daek from his father, but due to the lack of orders from customers, he (Reatha) rarely makes Angkuoch Daek, and he never kept one for himself.
- vii. Reatha said all his brothers learned to make Angkuoch Russey when they were old enough to be able to hold the knives. He told me that when the neck of the Angkuoch is long (the width of three or four fingers), the sound of it will be very good.
- viii. He also told me that there was a shop named “Chhoukrath” in Phnom Penh that used to order a lot of Angkuoch Russey from his family. The people from this shop took photos of his family to put in front of the shop but he never got a chance to see that shop.
- ix. KOEUY Reatha told me that some years ago, there were Japanese and German researchers and Radio Free Asia (RFA) journalists who came to take footage of his family (including his father) making Angkuoch, but he did not know how those people used those materials. He told me that this is the reason he wanted the project team to make sure that his family is credited for their knowledge about Angkuoch and for the instrument in the British Museum.

## 16 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Project work at Heritage Hub with Tola. Meeting with Song Seng in the afternoon to discuss forward planning regarding interview transcription and translation, preparation of digital assets, interim project report, and budget.

## 17 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Project work at Heritage Hub with Tola in the morning. Project meeting with collaborator Patrick Kersale in the afternoon, during which we discussed project plans (including regarding translation of metadata), and exchanged information and footage from the project and from Patrick’s earlier fieldwork on Angkuoch in Siem Reap province (1998 ff.).
- ii. Around 4:15pm, Tola and I returned to the home of the family of MONG Koeuy in Preah Dak village, arriving around 4:45pm, where we had arranged to meet MONG Koeuy’s son KOEUY Reatha. We chatted with Leakhena and her mother while we waited for Reatha to arrive. He arrived around 5:15, as

did other family members. We invited Reatha to speak on video briefly about the reasons for his understanding that the British Museum instrument was made by his father, explaining that we had the intention to provide this information and the video-recording to the Museum so that it could better understand and assess this claim. Reatha agreed, and spoke on video for around 12 minutes. He also played briefly for us.

- iii. By this time it was getting dark (and quality on associated video assets unfortunately deteriorates). I asked the family if we may take some further photos of them together, and they agreed. We left the family with a complete colour copy of the document about Cambodian musical instruments and Jew's harps in the British Museum catalogue (that had been compiled by EMKP intern Ethan Wong in advance of EMKP training in September 2019), which they seemed pleased to receive.
- iv. KOEUY Reatha and the other sons of MONG Koeuy had already been informed about the project by their mother and daughter, with whom we'd undertaken the informed consent process some days earlier; they had also accessed the Khmer-language project information sheet that we had left with the women. Around 6pm, we asked Reatha whether we may use the photographs and video files, and the information he had provided, for purposes of the project and project outcomes; he confirmed that he understood the nature of the research and his participation, and verbally agreed to his participation. These fieldnotes serve as record of his consent (no audio/visual record).
- v. I explained to KOEUY Reatha and his family that I would contact the British Museum to ask about the possibility to update their catalogue entry for the 1966-donated Angkuoch, to append the additional information he had provided about his father. I promised him that the project team would be in touch in due course to inform him of the outcome of that correspondence.
- vi. We left the home around 6:30pm for Siem Reap town.

## 18 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. Along with project collaborators Patrick Kersale and Seng Song, I had been invited by Cambodian Living Arts to participate in an excursion for the delegates of the "Arts for Transformation" program, which explores how the arts can bring social transformation and peace to post-conflict societies. Twelve international delegates, based at New York University (Abu Dhabi campus) participated in the program. We spent the morning at the Angkor temples, followed by lunch at the small house-restaurant in Srah Srong village owned by project participant and Angkuoch-maker KRAK Chi. His son (and project participant) CHI Chen served us food. I gave delegates a 10-

minute presentation on the project, followed by a question-and-answer session, and KRAK Chi played Angkuoch; Seng and Patrick contributed to the Q&A too. Seng invited KRAK Chi to offer the delegates the opportunity to purchase an Angkuoch Russey (for \$2); several delegates bought an instrument.

## 2. SAY TOLA

- i. On Saturday Jan 18, I went to Rohal village, Daun Kev commune, Puok district of Siem Reap province, with researcher Raksmei An, one filmmaker and a former journalist at Radio Free Asia. I went to this village with the purpose of witnessing an endangered tradition named 'Kor Chuk', which means 'cutting the wild hair'. The parents there told me that the children have kept this hair for 13 years for daughters and 15 years for sons. When their children turned to the mentioned age, they have to prepare for that hair cutting ceremony. This is a tradition that the parents inherited from their parents, that is, they had been through this ceremony when they were young. I arrived that village at around 9am. Then I witnessed the process of preparation. A lot of old women came to help preparing and making the materials for the ceremony.
- ii. At around 11am, Bong Raksmei asked me if I would be interested to meet Ta Korng, a player of Angkuoch Daek that he had first met and interviewed some years ago, when a Japanese researcher called Leo [Tadagawa] was interested to learn more about Angkuoch Daek. Raksmei and I went to visit his home. We arrived there at around 11:20 am. When we reached the house, he was sharpening bamboo. Ta Korng told me that he and his wife make woven baskets. I could see his wife smoking the woven baskets in the kitchen. Besides making woven baskets, Ta Korng told me that he is a Khmer healer.
- iii. Bong Raksmei had told me that Ta Korng is very famous and a lot of people from different provinces come to meet him every day. He told Ta Korng's house is never quiet because customers come every day for healing. When I next visited him, I saw two customers at his house. (I went back because I aimed to witness another ritual ceremony called 'reborn' and another ceremony called 'Chansok Kirisothe', and the host of the reborn ceremony is nearby Ta Korng's house.)
- iv. I told Ta Korng that I came to his house because I want to ask some information about Angkuoch Daek. He was welcoming. Around 11:30am, I explained to him the information on the participant information / verbal consent script, and Ta Korng confirmed he understood the nature of the research and his participation, and verbally agreed to proceed with his participation. These fieldnotes serve as record of his consent (no audio/visual record).
- v. Ta Korng asked me to wait because he needed time to collect his Angkuoch from another house. He went to get the instruments from a smaller house

that belongs to him. (He was at a bigger house; I am not clear whether it belongs to him or his son.)

- vi. While he was going to get the Angkuoch, an old man and old woman came to visit the house to see Ta Korng. They started to tell me a lot about the Angkuoch. The man told me that he also liked to use Angkuoch for fun when he was a teenager. He told me that playing Angkuoch was very popular but now it was already lost. Not many people had an instrument. He told me that if an Angkuoch couldn't produce a good sound, people in the past liked to apply honey wax to the instrument, to make it sound better. The old woman also started to share with me how the Angkuoch sounded.
- vii. Then Ta Korng came back with a *Snaeng* (wind instrument made of buffalo horn) and Angkuoch in his hand. Ta Korng played the *Snaeng* for me, and told me that people used the instrument for trapping elephants. Ta Korng told me that there are a lot of *Snaeng* sold in Thailand but he has no money to buy them. He told me that he would like to have some more of those instruments because he really loves them.
- viii. He then played the Angkuoch for me. He told me that he does not play it often. He likes to play only in the evening these days. He said he couldn't play well because he had lost his teeth. Ta Korng told me that he lost 9 teeth from playing Angkuoch. He told me that he really like this instrument and that he will tell people to put one in his coffin when he passes away.
- ix. Ta Korng he told me that he has only one Angkuoch, made by an old man in the village called Mr Hok, who made Angkuoch Daek, *khloy* (bamboo flute) and *Pei* (reed-wind instruments Pei Pork and Pei Or). I am not clear about the year but Ta Korng told me the instrument was made in 1980s. However, the tongue of the instrument needs fixing, he said. Once he asked ask Ta Song and a man named Ta Phan to make another tongue for it but neither of them could make it well for him. He said he wasted \$USD5 to Ta Song to make another tongue. Ta Korng said that Ta Song could make the body of the Angkuoch Daek, but there was only man he knew of, named, 'Mao', who could make the whole Angkuoch well, including the tongue, but he had passed away.
- x. When he mentioned the name Ta Phan, his wife told him that Ta Phan had passed away three months ago. I could see he was very shocked and sorry to hear that news. Even though Ta Phan had passed away, Ta Korng told me that he would go to meet Ta Phan's wife to ask whether she could find the instrument with no tongue for him.
- xi. Ta Korng is 82 years old. He told me that his children told him to stop climbing the sugar palm tree. He told me that he started to play Angkuoch Daek when he was 15 years old. He was a Buddhist monk for three years. While he was a monk, he told he left his Angkuoch with his grandpa. (He did not mention this, but in fact monks in Cambodia are not allowed to play or listen to music.)
- xii. I asked him why old people liked to play Angkuoch Daek, and he said they played the Angkuoch to call the women. But then, those women always

cursed the men back. When he was a teenager, he told me, he liked to play the Angkuoch Daek in the night time. At night time, he said the Angkuoch sounded so loud. He always said through the instrument, “Euy Euy, Oun Srey! [Hey, young lady!] Have you fallen asleep or not yet?”. And the next morning, the girls always came to him and asked him why he called last night. Sometimes he also used Angkuoch Daek to call the wind in the harvesting season.

- xiii. When Ta Korng played another Jew’s harp (from another country) given to him by the Japanese researcher Leo [Tadagawa], he said it could damage the teeth easily if one does not know the technique. He said it also can cut the tongue of the player as well so player must be very careful. He said that that instrument did not produce a clear sound: the sound is confusing and not easy to understand. So he said he prefers to use Khmer Angkuoch, although its shape does not look as nice and it has a lower sound.
- xiv. Ta Korng said he has been through three war times. He told me about his life in the Khmer Rouge time that people were not allowed to talk publicly. He ate only porridge. He saw starvation and different forms of abuse.
- xv. Last year, he told me, a French man came to meet him to shoot footage about his daily life, like climbing the palm tree and ploughing the rice field. He told me that he had started to make sugar palm because sugar cost 2000 Riel [around 0.5USD] per kilogram.
- xvi. He told me that now people have stopped practicing their traditions, like raising (silk) worms, weaving mats, silk, threads and making ploughs and many more. He told me that even monks also don’t chant dharma to the extent that they did in his generation. The way that monks bless people is also different and shorter than before.
- xvii. When I took Ta Korng’s photos this day, he told me to print them and keep them in my bedroom. By doing so, he told me, I’d have a good life.

## 19 JANUARY 2020

### 1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. I departed Cambodia for Australia today, transporting in my suitcase the two Angkuoch Russey (one purchased from CHI Monivong for the British Museum, and one given to me as a gift by KOEUY Reatha) wrapped in a kroma (Cambodian scarf), and the Angkuoch Daek (purchased from BIN Song for the British Museum) in a hard glasses case. The two Angkuoch Russey (made of bamboo) were inspected by customs on my arrival in Australia, unproblematically. (The customs official was curious about their function.)