Research into Gender-Based Violence During the Democratic Kampuchea

SVRI FORUM 2011
11 October 2011
Nakagawa Kasumi
Pannasastra University of Cambodia
Khmer Rouge Regime
1975-1979
(Democratic Kampuchea)

Pol Pot (dead in 1998)
Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)

- Extreme Communism
- 1.7 million people were dead
  (total population was 7 million)
People’s Revolutionary Tribunal (First Khmer Rouge Tribunal)

- In 1979, Tribunal was held in Phnom Penh

- Pol Pot and Ieng Saly were convicted (in absentia) – King granted a pardon to Ieng Saly in 1996 as a part of national reconciliation
Background

Research into sexual violence

April 2005- January 2006
Common understanding about sexual violence during KR regime

All the victims of sexual violence were all killed and no victims alive
Cambodian culture and sexual violence

- Violence against women is not regarded as human rights violation - often victims are blamed for provoking crimes
- Victims can not speak out their suffering: fear of damaging family reputation and social sanction imposed afterwards
Ideas for research

- Isn’t it important to document sexual violence that happened during KR regime? - as of “Comfort women”?
Objectives of research

- What kind of sexual violence occurred during KR regime?
- Is it true that “all victims were already killed”? 
Result of research
Sexual violence was strictly prohibited as “moral offence” by the central government.

What were moral offences?

- Relationship outside marriage
- Pregnancy without marriage
Types of sexual violence

- Rape
- Forced marriage
- Rape within forced marriage
- Prostitution for survival
- Others
Rape

- Rape before murder
- Gang-rape
- Rape: abuse of power
Forced marriage

- All marriages were arranged by the government
- Marriage was a ceremony to make an oath to the government
- More than 200,000 couples got married
- No relatives allowed to join the marriage ceremony
- After a marriage, newly weds were separated for labor
Rape within forced marriage

- After a marriage ceremony, newlywed had to have sex
- If they were found not to have sex, they were sent to re-education camp, or forced labor or tortured
- Both men and women are victims
Prostitution for survival

- Men in power had sex with women in exchange of foods and medicines; women reportedly offered sex for survival
- Young girls who did not want to be sent to remote areas offered sex to people in power
Other crimes

- Force to strip off clothes
- Mutilation
- Insert objects into sexual organ
Outcome of Research

- Could document the fact of comprehensive situation of sexual violence for the first time in the history
Extraordinary Chamber in the Courts of Cambodia

- Justice for victim? -
Punishment for the perpetrators?

ECCC: July 2007-

- Individual sexual crimes: most probably can not be prosecuted
- Criminal charges against individuals impossible
- Civil compensation impossible
Thanks for your attention

Nakagawa Kasumi
中川香須美
kasumi611@online.com.kh