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Sport and Community – Soccer Tournament in Palmerston North

I went to the Cambodian soccer tournament in Palmerston North recently to support our Kamarak team. About 20 of us went all together, in a van and two cars.

For the first time ever Cambodian soccer teams from 4 cities in New Zealand came together to compete for the Cambodian cup - an event organised by Khmer Star Manawatu.

On Friday, just before our journey, the team was blessed by the monks at Wat Khemarapiraktaram at Takanini. We hired a 12 seater van to help us with the transportation. It was such great fun to have almost everyone in the van telling jokes and talking about soccer...etc. On the way, we stopped to have dinner at a Cambodian restaurant in Hamilton. We arrived at Palmerston North at around 3:30am. We were to sleep at a hall with players from other teams, but the heating system was not working so we ended up sleeping in one big room at a motel. With so many of us in one room, we only managed to sleep for less than 2 hours. But everyone's sense of humour kept us going. The team members who had travelled by car slept at other motels.

the ball around right in front of the Rebel Sport shop eager to enter.

At about 9:30am we arrived at the Skoglund park. The official opening was conducted by the leaders of the Cambodian community there, the city mayor and other officials and was well attended by fans and supporters. In addition three girls entertained us with an umbrella dance. The games kicked off at 10am. Our first game was against the Palmerston North team - Khmer Star Manawatu. Kamarak put on a great performance, in spite of a long journey against a big home team, achieving a nil – nil draw. The second game was against the Wellington team – Khmer Wellington Soccer United which



we won 2 – 1. The third game we played against our neighbouring team from Hamilton - Waikato Cambodia Phoenix which we also drew nil –nil. In the round robin, we were second due to having fewer goals than the Palmerston North team.

All the teams were in the semi-final in which we met the Hamilton team again. At full time, we were still scoreless. In extra time, our player Bunheng Lim scored the golden goal and our players



and supporters exploded in loud cheers, jumping with excitement, which gave a huge boost to the team's morale. Robert Lay punched the air with a big shout of satisfaction. We got through to the final against the Palmerston North team who had beaten the Wellington team 4-3.

By now our players were all so tired with sore and cramped legs and were in almost unbearable pain. Despite this, they massaged each other's aching limbs. One of the boys even suggested we should get a physio. Things were not in our favour as we were short of subs but the team's fighting spirit was

at full force. In the final , they were really visibly exhausted and not able to move as fast as they wanted too. Many were escorted off the field with injuries. The home team seemed to be tired too but they had more substitutes to withstand the Kamarak team. At full time it was nil all. With the first half of extra time gone, no one had scored, but with 2 minutes to go before the end of the second half of extra time, when we were just expecting the penalty shoot out, the Palmerston North team scored the golden goal to claim the glory.

It was a hard fought game. Though we did not win the cup, the team's fighting spirit had won the



people's hearts. They had pushed themselves to the limit, playing with pride and strength. Their determination and their sense of brotherhood and solidarity had moved me to tears. They embraced each other in a circle - a scene rarely seen in our team. The guys were so awesome and cool. We will all remember that weekend for a long time to come.

By one of Kamarak's staunchest supporters.

P.S It was a long drive back home. Everyone was less talkative until someone came up with jokes and humour... Also, big thanks to the Palmerston North Cambodian community for organising this memorable tournament.



Milestones – 10 Year Anniversary Party

The Auckland Cambodian Youth and Recreation Trust is now 10 years old. It was formed in 1998 after starting with a small group of Cambodian young people who were keen to establish a Cambodian soccer team. A year earlier in 1997, a Cambodian radio show has already been created. As a result of these two exciting initiatives and an active group of volunteers, the trust was formally registered in 1999 as a charitable trust to provide support services and a social, cultural network - especially for young people. In 2008, it was registered as a charitable entity by the charities commission.

This year marked this significant milestone. We started to celebrate with a huge function at the Coral Reef restaurant that was attended by over 400 people. It was such a great honour to have representatives from other Cambodian community groups attending the function. Mr. Chhour Try, the president of Cambodian Association Auckland Inc. attended, along with many of the committee members. Also in attendance were Mr. Sarath Lim, the president of the Cambodian Community of New Zealand, Mr. Kone Thach, the President of Auckland Khmer Krom

Association, Mr. Sou Hoeung Ly, Chairman of the Cambodian Chinese Kung Luck



Association, along with Deputy-Chairman Mr. Meng Ly; Dr. Man Hau Liev from Auckland Khmer Buddhist Association and Mr. Rasy Sao, the president of the Christchurch Cambodian Association. Also notable was the attendance of many leading Khmer business people such Mr. Yan Lim from Lim Brothers and Mr. Keth Hann from Hann Automotive Servies.



The evening was notable for having two singers from Cambodia brought in for this special occasion: Mr. Youk Dourng Dara, and Miss. Chea Channy. This pair really boosted the evening with great energy and voices along with Auckland's Ponleu Thmey band. Apsara dance was performed by Miss Rady and the wishing dance by Miss. Sopharoth. The girls danced beautifully wearing elaborate costumes in front the big crowd, with a backdrop of Preah Vihear and Angkor Wat temples behind them. The event was highlighted with the trophy and medals presentation to the Kamarak team. Two young players were trained by our coach and became Small White reps - Felixsun and Billgate. The young player of the year award went to Kimseng Chea, who shyly came on stage last. The top scorer award went to Tarachhay Lai, while the award for best player went to Vannak Ung. Also, to mark the 10 year anniversary, trophies of appreciation were presented to those who have made special contributions to the trust: Mr. Kol Noun for his contribution to the Auckland



Cambodian soccer team, Mrs. Chansary Nuon for her services to Cambodian cultural dance and to Rotha Touch for his services to the Khmer Voice radio in Auckland.

The evening went smoothly and was enjoyed by all. The dance floor was full of people dancing to the rhythms of Ramvong, Saravan and Kontrim. The sound of laughter echoed here and there from across all different tables. People conversed both in English and in Cambodian and often there was toasting of glasses to health and happiness. It was a truly a fantastic night with food and great entertainment, and a time for socialising and catching up with friends and family members, some of whom hadn't seen each other for some time.



As the event approached midnight, the dance floor became less crowded and allowed for more challenging dance moves and for the music to get louder and faster. But alas, all good things must come to an end and this first part of our anniversary celebrations had to be wrapped up. There will be more to come though - on the 21st of November the second installment of our 10 year anniversary celebrations will take place at Panmure Community Centre. Be there!

A big thank you to all those who attended the evening, with special thanks to all the volunteers.



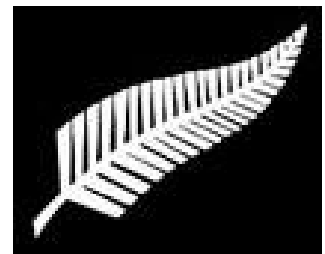
Opinion – Culture and Identity



There's no doubt that culture plays a hugely important role in nearly all aspects of human life as it helps individuals and communities to define and understand who they are and what they value. In these times of increased migration and exposure to other cultures, many people are finding it more important than ever to identify with a particular culture they see as 'theirs'. At the same time though, it is becoming less straight-forward to define exactly what makes up any one culture, as factors like age,

language, education, race and nationality all conspire to give people different definitions of what culture means to them. For example, I've always struggled to answer when asked what New Zealand culture is: I know the elderly are not the same as the young, Maori and Pacific Islanders are not the same as Pakeha, immigrant New Zealanders are not the same as those born here, Auckland is not the same as rural areas, and so on and so on.

And just as there are a wide range of perspectives of what it is to be a Kiwi, so are there a great variety of stories of what it means to be a Cambodian living in New Zealand. Some people have only recently arrived while others were born here. Some have difficulty with English while for others it is their first language. Some see great opportunity here while others yearn for what they left behind. But every one of these perspectives is valid and valuable.



We want to give the opportunity to those in the Auckland Cambodian community to share their ideas about their culture and their lives here in New Zealand, and in this issue we've included two such viewpoints. Your own experience may differ, or you may not agree with all that is written, but we are happy for these two young writers to share what culture and growing up in New Zealand mean to them.

Cambodian Chinese in New Zealand

I've always regarded myself as a New Zealand born Cambodian Chinese, not a Kiwi-Asian, Banana or the like. I guess that's what sets us apart, a sense of belonging, even though I myself have never travelled to Cambodia nor speak the language.



My siblings and I were all raised in New Zealand and as such our heritage I believe has been lost. We do our best to understand our culture and still maintain our family values, but it's like some essential part is missing. Growing up in New Zealand I have always been intrigued by what life would have been like if my parents never came here. I recall asking a lot of questions, how they lived, the scenery, the food, the lifestyle but could never gain a clear picture myself. In the end though I believe that the opportunities here in New Zealand that have been presented to me and my family outweigh what would have been if we

were in Cambodia. This again could be seen as a false pretense since I have not experienced life in Cambodia.

With the majority of my relatives residing in Auckland, it has enabled me to grow strong bonds with them throughout my life. Even now that I have started working I still get to see them on a regular basis and it's great, with the exception of my siblings who are still working / studying in various parts of New Zealand.

I am currently a registered pharmacist working in South Auckland and have been so for the last 2 and half years. I enjoy the nature of the job and the experienced I have gained working in the primary health sector is invaluable. However, I guess with most things that you do on a day to day basis things become monotonous no matter how challenging and fun it is. To break the monotony I am currently enrolled in an introductory business course as an attempt at continuing education, and to further my knowledge on a scope outside my practice. I believe in life you must always set goals or have a vision, something that keeps you striving for success or else you just stop or hit a wall.



The Cambodian Chinese community we have here in New Zealand is a good mix. Whenever there is a function or a gathering of some sort you tend to see a good bunch of people, familiar faces and most of all smiling faces. I hear a lot about what's going on in the Cambodian community through my parents. I used to attend most gatherings while I was growing up but as I mentioned earlier I cannot converse in Khmer and so feel uncomfortable by the thought of participating in any of the events nowadays.

Jeffrey Ly

Bananas: \$2.95 a Kilo - Are We That Cheap?

Asian. Asian. Asian. It's like counting sheep! We are undoubtedly taking over. All that sci-fi alien invasion rubbish is merely a clever decoy hatched by Buddha to mask our true intention: 'World Domination.' With well over four billion inhabitants in Asia alone, in about one hundred years (give or take 10 or so years), we should see Asian hybrids ruling the world! Asians are everywhere and anywhere, from the person whom you frequently pass along the street to the drivers sporting the big yellow L-plates on their front and back car windows. Even the owner of your local dairy gets an honourable mention.

The term Asian has, in recent times become such a degrading phrase that for many it is a word too shameful to even utter. The once majestic and morally praiseworthy race, "Asian" is now 'suffocating' due to the assimilation of our youth into 'white' culture, under sheer pressure from the media and their peers. An excerpt taken from the Washington Times headlined, "Making Hay with Shifty Labels" started the article off with the truly debasing statement, claiming that 'Asians are now white.' Outrageous, yet true! Are we really that ashamed of who we are? It is absurd and frankly sad to witness the gradual but increasing loss of the Asian identity in this generation, as these premature dweebs throw away years of perfected art, music and culinary culture to chase the American dream, key word being, American.

There is no excusing the fact that the majority of Asian teens in modern society are simply just too ignorant and self-centered to respect their own family history and carry on those traditions, for fear



of losing face amongst their so-called cliques- once again Americanised. The clique that an Asian would choose to belong to drastically depends on the dynamics of their individual school and institution, since the prestigious act of entering under a social umbrella must first be considered 'cool' or, with slightly better wording, 'socially acceptable' by their benighted group of friends. Shout outs goes out to all the wanksters, teeny boppers, skateboarders, and Asian emos running amuck globally- to name a few.

Hello?! Identity crisis? The eyebrow-raising trend witnessed in spite of all of this, are those seemingly populous congregations of Asians, who, despite solely intermingling with people from roughly the same parts of Asia as themselves, all group together to commend a culture which is not their own. They would rather adopt the white

(or in certain cases, black) culture than be seen displaying patriotic gestures towards their own ethnic background. Why is that? Whatever the case... these people are very, very, culturally confused.

When taken to the next extremity, shock-horror becomes apparent when these morons wholeheartedly embrace labels such as 'banana' and 'white-washed', terms which they use to describe themselves. 'Banana' is a metaphor created to class Asians who although yellow-skinned on the outside, are 'white' on the 'inside', with views which embellish and adopt the ethics and conducts of the Caucasian culture. Contradictory to the proposed definition of what an Asian should be, which part of 'characteristic of Asia' and 'Asian culture' does this ludicrous new metaphor come under? Similarly, 'white-washed' is another term used to class those who have turned their backs on their own culture, assimilating once again to the standards of the white society. How ironic it is that instead of the intended sting of an insult, these words are taken alternatively as a compliment by Asia's white-washed bananas.

Our morals as a result, have been uprooted as our youth so readily abandon their ancestral values. They instead seek to retain a fast paced lifestyle full of alcohol, drug abuse, minimal respect for elders and premarital sexual practices- all of which are not taught or encouraged by our prudish elderly. The ongoing trend of Asian Diaspora showcases the dire consequences of limited understanding or, in most cases, just plain ignorance about the true



merits of tradition and its importance to our diverse society as a whole. These juveniles grow up forgetting about the struggles and sacrifices that their parents underwent, gratitude is shown through acts of demolishing the identity their ancestors had worked so hard to establish. Talk about a slap in the face!

Just last year, I was hopping off the plane and doing a semi-salute as my foot touched down on Cambodian soil. A well deserved reunion after 7 years of the sheep-hugging New Zealand culture, don't cha think? Despite the humid 37 degree heat from the sun (damn the equator), I was bustling through customs too excited to care and ready to exit and reabsorb my 7 years of



missed culture! Imagine my surprise, when I saw 'our' teenage boys and 'our' teenage girls positively glued to each other on the back of their motorbikes. Oh- my Gosh! Cambodian youth are now white too?!

Another mind boggling incident that struck me was whilst at this club, where I went to catch up with my newly-married cousin. I was dumb-founded at the sight of this midget wankster swaggering to the middle of centre stage. What on earth was he doing there? More importantly, what was he wearing?! His pants sagged down to his knees, giving him a ridiculous shrunken appearance. On top of that, his far too baggy T-shirt did nothing for his overall appeal than work to

emphasize his Pygmy build. This 'midget', my friend, was our 'Cambodian' DJ. I know right... what has the world come too?

Damn it all. Grow up! Our multi-cultural Asian society is not 'cheap'! The effort to bridge the gap between Asians and other races by taking part in their culture may be heartwarming, but it is also very shameful. This is seen in the assimilation of so many of our youth already into the White (and in certain cases, Black) culture in the process of trying to fit in. Tell me this... how many white (or black) people would ever consider assimilating into the Asian culture? As diverse and unique as each of one of our culture is, the number could probably be counted with one hand. Of course there are bound to be occasional anomalies (ones which I've yet to meet), but let's just face it, they are obviously happy with who they are as a collective race. So why can't we be happy with our 'own' culture of origins?



I propose a challenge to all my Asian brothers and sisters out there, to learn to grow up and take a stand for who we are as individuals. We should no longer be influenced by our 'friends' or the media. Perhaps with time we can mature and realise that abandoning our own identity is not 'cool'. If all the cultures in the world were to mix in a gigantic bowl then all the different types of fruit, each one symbolic of a culture, would show us the multitude of different yet unique variations which together makes our

society the wonderful interracial compilation that it is today. Let's work together to encourage our differences and heck, who eats banana anyway?

Moritta Sokha Sath

What do you think? If you have a thought or opinion you'd like to share then we'd love to hear from you. Write to us at nzkhmertrust@hotmail.com



Celebrating Success - Phalla Sam: On Her Way Up!

Phalla Sam's life is a success story, but it hasn't been at all easy. At the age of 30 she is now living in Auckland, happily married, studying English part time and working in a factory from 2.00pm to 10.30pm. So life is still hard work, but as she says, "when I was in my country it was harder than here."

Phalla was born in Char Am Pov, a suburb of Phnom Penh on 2nd March 1979, less than two months after the fall of the Khmer Rouge. She has one sister and one brother. In her early years life must have seemed reasonably secure. Her father was working for the government as a truck driver. Then at the age of six tragedy struck. His truck was ambushed by bandits and he was shot dead along with twenty other people. Phalla's mother, who was illiterate, had no source of income. It looked like there was no future for the little family.

Yet, something in Phalla's young spirit kept her going. Along with her brother and sister, both younger than her, she sold biscuits and slices of water melon and pineapple from a tray she carried on her head. At other times they scavenged on a rubbish dump or cleaned pieces of wood for a furniture maker – one bundle of 30 pieces earned them 100riels per hour (about 4 US cents).



Somehow they scraped together enough money for her and her siblings to go to school in the afternoons, while still working in the mornings. Sometimes the family went hungry and the struggle to survive meant that she didn't achieve her potential at school. At the age of 15 she left and began work as a



waitress at the Cambodiana, a five star hotel in Phnom Penh, where the manager helped her with her English. It was there that she learnt to do "cross stitch" work from a Malaysian friend.

It was in May 2001 that she met her future husband. They were engaged in June 2003, and soon, after her fiancé moved to New Zealand where they got married in 2005. Her sister is also now married and her brother works in a photocopying shop, designing



printing work on the computer. He hopes to complete his computer engineering and I.T. degree at University.

Phalla says she doesn't want to be famous, but would like to get a job as a bank teller. But there is something about her life which deserves fame. With her brother and sister she has climbed out of destitution and is building a new life for herself and her future family. She has a message for people who are poor and disappointed with life. "If you try hard and use your skills and knowledge, your life will improve. Don't surrender your life and one day you'll be happy like me."



Future Leaders – Taekwondo Role Models

Who would have thought that joining Taekwondo in 1996 would lead these two exceptional women to gain their Black Belts, represent their country overseas and become role models as well as leaders in the local community both inside and outside the sport they enjoy?

Having travelled all over New Zealand to complete her medical degree Ms Thu Nguyen (nee Thach) obtained her 4th Degree Black Belt at only 24 years of age. Through the years she has been successful in all aspects of the Martial Arts which have seen her travel to Poland, Australia and Canada, successful in numerous events.



Her younger sister Ms Chanthie Thach, no stranger to success either, recently obtained her 3rd Dan at the age of 20. She has represented New Zealand in both the Junior and Senior teams overseas in Italy, Canada and trialled for the team to Honduras however had to pull out due to injuries.

In 2006 Thu and Chanthie decided to give back to the community and they opened a club in the Mt Wellington area (Auckland) – both passionate about building the community through developing students to become leaders. Their dedication and hard work has seen this new club grow and become an influential member within the Taekwondo family – something they continue to grow and improve.

Many hours are spent organising and travelling around the country to numerous events. Making sure the club has the support needed and also putting in a lot of personal time and energy trying to gain sponsorship so no member has to miss out. Often they are there helping out in the early hours of the morning working behind the scenes or helping out in the weekend giving their all and not thinking about themselves.

They are truly inspirational to others; they are selfless and very humble.

They do all this without hesitation, for Thu it's sometimes after a very long shift in the hospital or before she is due in for night duty. For Chanthie it's after long hours studying for Bachelor of Health Science (Public Health) and Nursing degrees or alongside her involvement within the Cambodian Community through her work as an after school tutor for the youth. Their work is ongoing and their goal is something we should all work towards – help build the next generations and our future so they can do the same.



What is Taekwondo?

Taekwondo is a Korean martial art and the national sport of South Korea. In Korean, tae means "to strike or break with foot"; kwon means "to strike or break with fist"; and do means "way," "method," or "art." Thus, "taekwondo" may be loosely translated as "the way of the foot and fist" or "the way of kicking and punching." *Wikipedia*

Update – **Brother** **Number One** Documentary – *from* *Annie Goldson, the Director*

Back from Cambodia nearly a week now. I think it was difficult for all of us to process what we saw and experienced. Working something like 11 x 12/13 hour days, we had to focus on what was in front of us, ensuring we stayed sensitive to our subjects, adhered to the schedule but remained open to unexpected storylines when they revealed themselves.

And then there are always the practical demands: changing and numbering tapes, charging batteries, making sure there was enough light, finding power sources and so on. The usual demands but in place that had felt like no other. Now the intense focus of



production has elapsed I find Cambodia returns in my dreams, my psyche's attempt to cope, after the fact, with the surreal horrors of Tuol Sleng and the Killing Fields.

Something most Cambodians have to deal with on a daily basis. That was what struck me – how many stories, untold stories, are out there waiting to be told and how many people we came across that told us of the nightmare that that had been their past. Memories made harder too, because of the lack of accountability for and acknowledgement of these crimes. The past hurts can only ever be very partially salved by the Court process, whatever its outcome.

Rob was amazing to work with, showing courage and dignity at every step. He has always had an ability to express strength of will, along with an extraordinary openness of emotion (often seen as contradictory). The Cambodians we spoke with were immensely grateful for his stand in Court: he was able to express things that perhaps they felt less able to.

There were optimistic moments while filming too, especially working with DC Cam and seeing the multi-dimensional work that they

undertaking to try to address the past, from writing the first real history books, through conducting outreach programmes, to attempting to institute reconciliation between perpetrators and victims, plus much more.

There were fun times too: hanging out with Kulikar, our “translator/character” and Vohtar, our great “slow and steady” driver who managed to negotiate us through extreme traffic with grace and care. And watching the spectacular display at the stadium in the early evening as forty competing aerobics teams, dancing to separate rhythms, strive for fitness. A soccer game goes on beneath them largely unnoticed while kites and balloons whirl overhead.



To love is human, it is also human to forgive.

Source: Mercator

Vox Pops – Have Your Say

Questions

1. What things make you most proud about Cambodian culture and being Cambodian?
2. Are there some things you don't like so much?
3. What things do you like most about life and the culture in New Zealand?
4. Are there some things you don't like so much?

Name: Dyna

Time in NZ: 4 years



1. Culture, religion, tradition, education system and the way of life. Cambodian people treat each other very well.
2. The politicians and the rich and powerful people who can do everything they want and don't respect the law.
3. The social life, nobody being above the law, and lifestyle of Kiwis including sports, music etc. New Zealand's culture is bi-cultural between Pakeha and Maori and I enjoy meeting different groups of people from various backgrounds.
4. I don't like gangs, because the young generation don't understand, joining a gang can cause trouble in society and involves crimes violence or murder.

Name: Phalika and Rothmany

Time in NZ: 2 years



1. People are polite and friendly and look after each when things are difficult or someone is sick. Also Cambodia has many ancient temples and natural resources.
2. Lack of road rules, untidiness and lack of hygiene that can be bad for health.
3. Fairness, respect for the law and human rights, the government helps look after vulnerable people.
4. Too many rights given to children so sometimes they don't respect or appreciate what their parents say. *(Summarised from Khmer)*

Name: Mrs Maran

Time in NZ: 21 years



1. Traditional dancing and weddings, the fact that children listen to their parents, and a sense of community. And temples like Angkor of course.
2. Problems with AIDS and crime these days.
3. NZ is a safe and peaceful country with real democracy. People are friendly and there is good education.
4. Problems with young people drinking too much. Also a minority of people are still racist.

Name: Boya

Time in NZ: 5 years



1. Cambodian food, festivals, and being able to speak and understand my own language.
2. I don't hate anything about Cambodian culture.
3. Sports (rugby and cricket). I like the casual way people dress. And kiwifruit!
4. I don't like New Zealand TV. Especially things like Shortland Street!

Would you like to interview your family, friends, or people in your community? What questions would you ask? Send us your questions, responses and / or photos and it could be you or someone you know appearing in the next issue! Write to nzkhmertrust@hotmail.com

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