

# The Cham Muslims of Cambodia: From Forgotten Minority to Focal Point of Islamic Internationalism

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## **Abstract**

The Cham Muslims of Cambodia are descendents of Champa, a once-powerful Hindu-Buddhist kingdom located in modern-day central and southern Vietnam. Champa existed from the second century CE until its complete annexation by its long-time rival, the Dai Viet, in 1832.<sup>1</sup> Its gradual loss of territory caused several waves of immigration to Cambodia between the crucial dates of 1471 and 1835 (the start of violent repression against the Cham in their last, and finally also annexed, principality: Panduranga).<sup>2</sup> It seems that the first wave allied itself with Cambodia's Malay community, with whom the Cham share ethno-linguistic (as both groups are speakers of Austronesian languages) and cultural (e.g., matrilinear customs) heritage, as well as their status as foreign immigrants. Through this contact, they were Islamized.

This article presents an overview of the religious and political development of Cambodia's Cham Muslims, most of whom are Sunnis, from the days of French colonialism up to the present, and shows how this formerly neglected minority became a showcase of Islamic internationalism. Contact persons or interviewees were recommended to me by Dr. Sos Mousine (CMDP, CAMSA, and the Ministry of Agriculture), Set Muhammadsis (CAMSA, CMDP) or Dato Hajji Alwi Muhammad (MAI Terengganu), or were sought out by myself. As I was mainly interested in religious change and the rebuilding of religious infrastructure, I visited many mosques and schools for interviews, which were conducted in English, Arabic, or with a Khmer or Cham translator.

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## Islam in Cambodia

### *Before Democratic Kampuchea*

There is hardly any information concerning Islamic practices in Cambodia before the French protectorate. European visitors and the *Royal Chronicles* note only the existence of mosques or the political and economic role of the Cham and Malays. While the Cham Bani in Vietnam remained attached to their distinctive religion, coupling rudimentary Islamic beliefs with traces of Brahmanism, the Cham in Cambodia supposedly became orthodox Shafi`i due to Malay influence. Indeed, in eighteenth-century Cham manuscripts, we learn of Malay efforts to lead the Cham of Panduranga (now in Vietnam) to orthodox Islam.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, we know of the *katip* (*khatib* [preacher]) Sumat, who returned to Cambodia in 1833 after studying in Makkah and subsequently conducted a preaching mission in Panduranga, where he led an anti-Vietnamese revolt.<sup>4</sup> It is reasonable to assume that it was mainly his Muslim followers who fled to Cambodia after its suppression.

As the existence of thirty-five Cham Jahed villages proves, not all Cham in Cambodia experienced the same degree of Malay influence. The Jahed, who are not Sunnis, pray only on Friday and are considered the preservers of Cham culture, as only they can still read and write in the classical Sanskrit-derived Cham script.<sup>5</sup> The other Cambodian Cham use an adapted form of the Arabic-derived Jawi script used by the Malays before British colonialism.

The *Royal Chronicles*' reports of King Ramadhipati/Ibrahim's conversion in the 1640s provide a small piece of data: One described ritual closely resembles the practices of a Malay traditional healer (*bomoh*).<sup>6</sup> Although it is doubtful that the king actually participated, the description might have been inspired by actual rituals. Furthermore, it states that the king's officials who converted were actually circumcised,<sup>7</sup> as are the Sunni Cham. Thus, we can infer that although they were already Islamized to a certain degree, traditional folk beliefs were still prevalent in the Cham-Malay community.

For higher-level Islamic education, the community looked toward Patani (now in southern Thailand) and Kota Bharu (in Kelantan, Malaysia). The latter was already a center of religious education for students from all over Southeast Asia in the second half of the eighteenth century. It must have had an intellectual impact on Islamic education in Cambodia, as it is still the most important destination of Cham students seeking advanced religious education. In fact, they call it "little Makkah."<sup>8</sup>

During the first half of the twentieth century, by which time the majority of Cham had become Shafi`i and followers of the Malay understanding of Islam, they naturally were affected by the fierce conflicts raging between

the *kaum muda* (young group) reformists and the *kaum tua* (old group) traditionalists in the Malay-Indonesian world. Indeed, the Malay brand of Islam, which eventually prevailed over the distinctive, somewhat superficial, Cham brand (as preserved by the Jahed), was perceived as modern in the Cambodian context, despite its stagnation for almost 150 years. For example, since the first half of the seventeenth century, local Qur'anic commentary was based almost exclusively on Abd al-Rauf Singkeli's (d. ca. 1700) *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, which draws on the *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* of al-Suyuti (d. 1505) and his teacher al-Mahalli. Until recently, this was the only tafsir of the entire Qur'an in the Malay language.<sup>9</sup>

Islamic modernism, as preached by Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and Rashid Rida (1865-1935), took hold in Southeast Asia through the *kaum muda*, who attacked the religious establishment for its backwardness and called for fresh *ijtihad* (independent judgment in juridical matters) and the purification of doctrine and practices (e.g., making pilgrimages to the graves of Islamic holy men; belief in magic; and, of great importance in Cambodia, specific burial, marriage, and birth rituals lacking Islamic justification). Another significant dispute centered on the *usalli* (*niyah*, stating one's intention as start of the prayer). The stagnation in the field of literature and the inability to adapt to the modern world's challenges were blamed on strict *taqlid* (imitation) and the traditional form of teaching in study groups (*halaqah*), where students of different ages sat around the teacher and learned by rote. The modernists introduced a classroom system far less based on plain memorization, encouraged education for boys and girls, and often included secular subjects in the curriculum.<sup>10</sup>

The *kaum muda* rose to prominence at an early date in the Dutch East Indies (the founding of the now multi-million strong modernist mass organization Muhammadiyah in 1912 can be seen as a hallmark in this context) and in the Malaysian Straits Settlements. However, it had a lesser impact on the rest of British Malaya, including Kota Bahru/Kelantan. Yet in the latter area, Islamic education was pushed forward by compiling dictionaries and tables of Arabic verb forms for Malay students by Muhammad Yusuf To' Kenali (d. 1933) after his return from twenty years of study in the Middle East.<sup>11</sup>

Although the *kaum muda* must have made its first inroads into Cambodia at least two decades earlier (in the 1930s Phum Trea had two famous schools, one with a modern mixed curriculum<sup>12</sup>), serious conflict broke out only in the 1950s via Imam Ali Musa's zealous propagation of its ideas upon his return to Kampong Cham province after long years of study in Kelantan. Bitter disputes mostly revolved around the correct burial ritual. The more modern educated *kaum muda* also claimed superiority because of their

expertise in Arabic, whereas the *kaum tua*, graduates of the old *halaqah* system, still relied almost exclusively on old Malay literature.

Ali Musa was subsequently joined by Imam Ahmad, who had returned after studying in India (presumably influenced by an Indian reformist movement, most likely the Deobandis or the Nadwat al-Ulama<sup>13</sup>). As in other parts of Southeast Asia and even in India, the resulting conflicts divided families and villages and even caused violent clashes. In 1960, the Cambodian government temporarily exiled the two imams to Thailand. Over the following years, the situation calmed down and a coexistence between the two parties ensued.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1970s, the Cham were caught in a downward spiral through civil war and the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) regime led by the Khmer Rouge. Whereas the Lon Nol regime used the Cham to pursue its own goals, the DK sought to destroy them as a distinct group.

### *Under the Khmer Rouge (1975-79)*

Discussions about the fate of the Cham under the Khmer Rouge revolve around certain important questions. First, did they suffer disproportionately or not vis-à-vis the majority of Cambodians? While Michael Vickery denies that they suffered more than the average Khmer, Ben Kiernan and Cham researcher Ysa Osman see them as victims of specific genocidal policies.<sup>15</sup> Kiernan bases his suggestion on a presumed proportionally higher death toll among the Cham and estimates that approximately one-third of the estimated more than 250,000 Cham living in 1975 died under the DK regime.<sup>16</sup> According to Vickery, the 1975 Cham population was less than Kiernan's 250,000 and, therefore, suggests a much lower death toll.<sup>17</sup> However, Osman and Cham officials like current Grand Mufti Sos Kamry (Kamaruddin Yusuf) claim that there were approximately 700,000 Cham, thus implying the horrible death toll of 400,000-500,000.<sup>18</sup> Both Kiernan and Osman regard the 1979 Cham population to have numbered around 200,000.

All of these 1975 figures are largely guesses, since the last census including the Cham before this date took place in 1936 and gave a Cham population of 73,000. Even if we assume this figure as being much too low, due to the limited possibilities of conducting a thorough census in rural Cambodia at that time, an increase of up to 700,000 in four decades would imply an incredible growth rate. Yet evidence suggests that Kiernan's estimate was actually too low. A Khmer Rouge telegram from 1975 implies that more than 150,000 Cham were living in the Eastern Zone (consisting of the eastern part of Kampong Cham province and parts of three other provinces)

alone before the deportations began.<sup>19</sup> Kampong Cham province was – and still is – where the majority of Cham lived, and its largest community was in DK Region 21, which formed part of the Eastern Zone. Still, the high number of 150,000 Cham in this zone alone might hint at a higher number of Cham than Kiernan had expected. Although still far below the 700,000 figure, it is another argument in Kiernan’s and Osman’s claim to a disproportionately high death rate among the Cham.

Second, were they targeted because of their race, ethnicity, or religion, or simply because they were considered enemies of the regime? The idea of persecution because of their race *per se* has to be dismissed, for the Chinese minority suffered (according to Kiernan) an even higher death rate (about 50 percent). In fact, the DK regime had friendly relations with Beijing, which had sent a huge contingent of advisors to Cambodia. The persecution of the Chinese minority merely occurred because the Chinese were mostly city dwellers and thus labeled as class enemies for their social origin.<sup>20</sup> It seems that the Cham were not the victims of racism, but rather became collectively labeled as regime enemies because some of them refused to comply with certain policies, such as the attempted eradication of religion through the destruction of the religious elite, places of worship, and religious literature, all of which affected all religions in the same way. Furthermore, certain discriminatory measures were applied to the Cham and other minorities (e.g., banning the Cham language and breaking up most of their villages).

Many Cham initially supported the revolution because they were mostly part of the rural population, of which a high proportion joined the revolution (here, the heavy bombing and shelling of the countryside by the American airforce and the Lon Nol troops played an important part.<sup>21</sup>). Second, the Eastern Zone’s revolutionary organization had its own Islamic movement led by Sos Man (see below, p. 6), and the majority of this zone’s revolutionaries were communist but still pro-Sihanouk and pro-Vietnamese (Khmer Rumdos [Khmer Liberation], as opposed to Khmer Krahom [Red Khmer]). During the war against Lon Nol, intra-revolutionary fighting occurred between these two groups and another dissident communist faction, the Khmer Saor (White Khmer), whose leaders were mostly Cham.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, some of them rebelled when the bans on religion and the Cham language were introduced. Cham Khmer Rouge cadres led a rebellion in Krauchhmar district (Kampong Cham province) in late 1975.<sup>23</sup> A *toun* (religious teacher) in Sihanoukville province incited dissatisfied people to run off into the forest in early 1976.<sup>24</sup> Such counterrevolutionary behavior stigmatized the Cham. In both instances deportations ensued, apart from violent repression (the village of Koh Phal was razed after a rebellion) and execu-

tions. Village and religious leaders, as well as religious teachers, were targeted for execution, as were those associated with the Lon Nol regime, the Cham battalion, or FULRO.<sup>25</sup> Still, some Cham occupied various positions under the DK: Mat Ly was a member of the party's Thbaung Khmum district committee and the People's Assembly,<sup>26</sup> Tumad Afan served in the Ministry of Education, and one Cham even worked as an interrogator at the interrogation (and torture and execution) center Tuol Sleng (S-21).<sup>27</sup>

The treatment of the Cham varied from zone to zone and even from district to district. Without going into detail, I provide some general observations on variations in their status and treatment. The Khmer Rouge divided people into base people (revolutionary supporters in rural areas) and new people (generally deportees, city dwellers). Only the former were granted a full-rights status. Throughout Cambodia, the Cham were labeled *a priori* as new people, except in the Eastern Zone,<sup>28</sup> where the revolutionary Cham Sos Man (Mat Ly's father) was initially allowed to form a Islamic Cham Movement (disbanded in 1974). Although at first enjoying a superior status compared to the Cham of other zones, in 1978 the Eastern Zone Cham were severely persecuted due to rebellions and the CPK center's special treatment of the zone. Moreover, there is no evidence that Cham suffered more than Khmers in various districts in the North, Northwestern, and Western zones, while, at the same time, forty entire families were killed in Kampong Tralach district (Kampong Chhnang province, also in the Western Zone).<sup>29</sup>

At least by 1977, the Khmer Rouge's policy to break up the Cham, as they were collectively suspected of being traitors, was clear. Through deportations, Cham villages were divided into small groups and forced to live among Khmers and killings became more widespread. But the collective persecution of whole groups of alleged regime enemies was not confined to the Cham. In fact, the CPK center eventually considered the whole Eastern Zone, including most of its revolutionary leadership, untrustworthy. In May 1978, it began a large-scale program to disperse and eliminate Eastern Zone cadres and populations, collectively labeled as "Khmer bodies with Vietnamese minds." This constituted the worst atrocity of the DK period: Over 100,000 people died during the next six months.<sup>30</sup> One-third or even more of the zone's population was subsequently evacuated to other zones, where their numbers rapidly decreased due to selective killing and starvation.<sup>31</sup> These measures affected Khmers and Cham just the same. People from the Eastern Zone expelled to the Northwestern Zone had to wear blue and white checkered scarves so that they could be readily identified as deportees.<sup>32</sup>

Surprisingly, the number of Cham imprisoned at S-21 (Tuol Sleng) was rather small. Out of 14,000 people held there, only forty-two were Cham,

alongside forty foreign Muslims.<sup>33</sup> The Cham detainees were not only questioned about alleged rebel contacts, but also about the political stances of Islamic leaders.<sup>34</sup> This is another testimony of the regime's fear of religious leaders as anti-regime mobilizers.

In conclusion, the Cham were not marked for extermination from the beginning, but came to be regarded collectively as enemies, as were the Eastern Zoners. Nevertheless, the rural Khmer population was not dispersed to the same extent as were the Cham and, of course, did not have its language banned. Furthermore, numerous reports have surfaced of Cham being forced to eat pork by DK cadres. However, it should be kept in mind that this kind of humiliation could not have been used systematically, as DK refugees generally complain that there was too little meat of any kind. I also doubt Osman's allegation that the Cham of Kampot and Sihanoukville provinces and Kampong Luong (Kendal province) today do not speak their native language because of the DK ban.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Ner has written that the Cham of Kampong Luong mostly spoke Khmer and that half of the Cham of Kampot province (then including the Sihanoukville province of today) had already given up their native language (referring to his visits of the areas in 1937).<sup>36</sup>

When the DK regime was finally deposed in January 1979 by a Vietnamese military intervention and the efforts of the Front for National Salvation of Kampuchea, founded by DK Eastern Zone defectors (including Mat Ly), the long process of rebuilding the Cham community had to begin.

### **Picking Up the Pieces**

The new People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) immediately allowed the reestablishment of Buddhism and Islam. The Cham became strong supporters of the new regime and, with several Cham members in the National Assembly, were more represented in the government and its institutions than ever before.<sup>37</sup> Some Cham refugees returned from Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia.<sup>38</sup> The highest-ranking Cham in the country was again Mat Ly, now a member of the ruling party's (the precursor of the CPP<sup>39</sup>) Political Bureau. Furthermore, he was the prosecutor in a tribunal that tried Pol Pot and Ieng Sary *in absentia* in 1979 and served as deputy minister of agriculture in the early 1980s.<sup>40</sup> He also turned out to be the instrumental figure in the Cham's quest to get desperately needed help from the international Islamic community, as almost all mosques and religious books had been destroyed.

Yet neither the West nor the Islamic world seemed to be concerned about the Cambodian tragedy. In 1979, 1980, and 1981, the United Nations (UN)

decided that the ousted DK regime was still Cambodia's legitimate representative. No western nation opposed the DK's claim; in fact, most voted for it (the PRK was seen as a tainted, Vietnamese-backed regime). Among the Muslim-majority countries, only Afghanistan, Algeria, South Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Chad opposed this. More strikingly, Kuwait, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, all of which would later become the Cham's largest benefactors, voted in favor of the DK.<sup>41</sup> The DK regime occupied Cambodia's UN seat until 1990.<sup>42</sup>

Already in 1979, Mat Ly established an organization to help the Cham attract foreign donors. In April 1980, a Cambodian delegation visited the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Jeddah to request moral and material support. Perhaps because of their distrust of the PRK regime, the first efforts of these organizations were undertaken to help Cham refugees in Thailand and Malaysia. The IDB finally provided a subsidy of \$500,000 for the Malaysian government to facilitate the entry of Cham refugees.<sup>43</sup> Needless to say, this aid could have been used to rebuild Cham communities inside Cambodia. This incident sheds light on the doubtful conditions under which international aid was used not to assist the slowly recovering Cambodian state and its population, but rather the refugees, most of whom had fled after January 1979 and thus were not fleeing political oppression (in the Thai refugee camps near the Cambodian border, the population had increased from 35,000 in January 1979 to over 200,000 in mid-1980).<sup>44</sup>

Seddik Taouti, who visited Cambodia as the IDB's representative in 1981 and 1982, testified to the Khmer Rouge's full-scale destruction of the Qur'an and other religious books. For example, the Nur al-Ihsan mosque of Chrang Chamres, one of the few remaining mosques (according to conflicting reports either five or twenty out of 113<sup>45</sup>), had only one copy of the Qur'an. The situation in various localities in Kampong Cham province was similar. Eventually, the IDB became the first large donor: \$1 million was given to reconstruct mosques with annexed classrooms and to acquire school materials, including scientific and religious books in Arabic and Malay.<sup>46</sup>

Apart from rebuilding their mosques, the Cham first had to construct a new religious leadership by selecting a grand mufti, *hakims*, imams, and other officials. As the vast majority of them, as well as the religious teachers, had been wiped out – only 20 of the 113 *hakims*, 25 of the 226 deputy *hakims*, and 38 of the approximately 300 *toun* survived<sup>47</sup> – it was inevitable that a whole new generation would take over these functions. Grand Mufti Res Lah, the two deputy muftis, and most other officials appointed by the Lon Nol regime were either executed or died during the DK regime.

The beginning of the PRK era marked the end of Cham persecution, for the new government was rather sympathetic toward them, facilitated cooperation with the IDB, and in a few cases even made donations for mosque repairs and construction.<sup>48</sup> However, rebuilding the Cham community and Cambodia in general was hampered by international opposition to the Vietnamese-backed regime and the ongoing military struggle against the remnants of the Khmer Rouge and the Khmer Serei, both of which were operating in the border regions close to Thailand. International Muslim interest in the Cham was also very limited until the end of the 1980s.

In 1988, Mat Ly and his Cambodian Islamic Association won the support of two businessmen from Dubai, Hisham ibn Nasir and Mahmud Abdallah Qasim, who not only financed a yearly Cambodian hajj contingent, but, more importantly, in the 1990s contributed financially to the construction of 20 mosques throughout Cambodia. These are easily identifiable because they bear the name Dubai (e.g., the International Dubai Mosque of Phnom Penh at Boeung Kak lake).<sup>49</sup> This mosque, built in 1994 mainly for the foreign Muslims residing in the capital, is only frequented for the Friday prayer (the *khutbah* is held in Arabic and Khmer), which is attended, apart from a limited number of Cham, by Muslims from Arab countries, South Asia (mainly Pakistan and Bangladesh), Thailand, Malaysia, and even Burundi. The imam spent a few years at al-Azhar, and his salary is paid by the financiers from Dubai. Even though this mosque is located far from traditional Cham enclaves, an unidentified number of rural Cham families now live adjacent to it in an illegal settlement, where they have established a few *halal* food stands and hope to be allowed to stay permanently.<sup>50</sup>

Malaysian interest in the Cham first became evident in 1988, with a museum exhibition in Kuala Lumpur entitled “Malay-Champa Civilisation.” This rediscovered feeling of kinship with the Cham (Malaysian officials even called Champa “the first Malay kingdom in Indochina”) and the Cham’s traditional turn toward Malaysia for higher Islamic education facilitated Malaysia’s rise to prominence in providing development aid.<sup>51</sup> In addition, such aid is rather safe in the ASEAN context, for aiding the Muslim minorities in southern Thailand and the southern Philippines could easily provoke Bangkok and Manila, both of which are confronting long-term local Muslim irredentist movements.<sup>52</sup>

Still, it was not until after the UN-brokered elections in 1993 that Islamic internationalism, as well as the increased efforts of exiled Cham in the West and of Cambodia’s political sphere, began to play a major role in the Cham’s understanding of Islam.

### **Islam in Cambodia after 1993**

After the 1993 elections, things changed quickly. Several international Islamic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Arab countries and Malaysia appeared; cooperation with Malaysia at the state and national levels grew; numerous Cambodian Islamic NGOs sprang up and became more involved in party politics in order to channel foreign aid and coordinate community upliftment efforts; and the emergence of new religious ideas and movements from the Gulf, India, and Malaysia led to the emergence of diverse new currents of Islam in Cambodia.

At the beginning of all this was the (until then) largest peace-keeping mission in UN history: the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which consisted of stationing 15,900 soldiers from several countries in Cambodia to uphold order for eighteen months until August 1993.<sup>53</sup> Their presence had a profound impact upon the Cham. Cambodia was basically divided into ten sectors, five of which were monitored by Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Tunisian troops. Some cooperation was inevitable. For example, each of the 600 Bangladeshi soldiers at Siam Reap donated \$1 every month to maintain and expand the mosque in Stung Thmey village (Siam Reap), and Indonesian troops stationed near Prek Ta Peou (Ta Khmou district, Kendal province), a village renowned for its fishing nets, raised \$7,000 to build a mosque.<sup>54</sup>

The peace process and the elections also caused many Cambodian refugees to return. The Cham remained active in politics, some of them even serving as secretaries and deputy secretaries of state in various ministries. In addition, they could be found in the National Assembly, especially in Parliament, as members of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and of the royalist FUNCINPEC. It was mainly the politically active Cham who formed Islamic associations to benefit the community.

#### *Cambodian and International NGOs*

Shortly after the elections, Ahmad Yahya, a returned refugee (he had spent several years in the United States) serving at that time as a FUNCINPEC member of the National Assembly and presently as a member of Parliament representing Kampong Cham province for the Sam Rainsy Party, founded the Cambodian Islamic Development Association. This NGO takes a special interest in elevating the Cham's level of education, and thus, apart from supporting religious endeavors, sponsors students at the private Norton University of Phnom Penh or to study abroad (mostly in Malaysia, where they study general, as opposed to religious, subjects).<sup>55</sup>

In 1997, Cambodian Grand Mufti Kamaruddin Yusof (Sos Kamry), acting as patron and advisor; Othsmān Hassan (secretary of state, ministry of labor and vocational training); and Zakariya Adam (secretary of state, ministry of cults and religion), acting as president and vice-president, respectively, established the Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation (CMDF) to provide *dakwah* (*da`wah*), education, knowledge, and welfare for the community.<sup>56</sup> It consists of three committees: one each for *dakwah*, welfare, and education, each of which has its own subunits. One subunit bears the name of “international aid.” Of course, the CMDF relies largely on cooperation with the Islamic world and foreign aid. Interestingly, although the CMDF denies involvement in any political party as part of its mission, in fact its founders, as well as committee heads and at least certain subunit heads, are all members of Prime Minister Hun Sen’s CPP.<sup>57</sup>

The education unit, which has a language (Arabic, Malay, and English) and computer training institute, has established a network of over fifteen secondary Islamic schools for girls and boys in eight provinces. Known as *Madrasah an-Nikmah*, they essentially use the same (mixed) syllabus as similar schools in Malaysia. Generally, Malaysia’s efforts in education are viewed as an example to follow. Contrary to other Islamic village schools, Malaysian universities accept these schools’ graduation certificates, as does al-Azhar.

The *dakwah* unit mainly searches for and manages donations. The closest cooperation seems to exist with Malaysia, as the organization coordinates activities with and gets support from various Malaysian NGOs, state institutions (e.g., Terengganu state’s Council of Islamic Affairs),<sup>58</sup> and universities (e.g., Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia-KUIM in Negeri Sembilan state). Donations also come from Australia, Indonesia, Brunei, the United States, Singapore, and various Arab states. When a new mosque is formally opened, CMDF President Othsmān Hassan usually cuts the ribbon. However, sometimes this honor is reserved for Prime Minister Hun Sen or the former party secretary Heng Samrin,<sup>59</sup> thus testifying to the intertwining of the CMDF and the CPP. These acts should be seen not only as strategies to advertise the CPP as the Cham’s party, but also as efforts to strengthen the Cham’s attachment to Cambodia. Therefore, the Cambodian national anthem is always part of the ceremony.

The efforts of the welfare unit include a *korban* (*qurban*) and *`aqiqah* program (donations of sheep or cows for sacrifice on the seventh day after a child’s birth); aid for flood victims; sending books, prayer mats, and mopeds; and Saudi eye doctors to perform eye surgery – all for free. Through Sos Mousine (deputy secretary of state, Ministry of Rural Development), who

heads the health unit, the CMDF is connected with two other associations: the Cambodian Muslim Students Association (CAMSA, founded in 1994 with the help of Mon Kriya) and the Islamic Medical Association (IMAC, founded in 2001). The IMAC provides free mobile clinic services in rural areas and started to build a polyclinic in March 2005. Sos Mousine presides over both organizations and is cooperating with the IDB.

Several Arab NGOs operate directly in Cambodia.<sup>60</sup> Shortly after the 1993 elections, donators from Kuwait arrived, and in 1996 the Revival of the Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS) officially began working in Cambodia. This organization is prominent for its orphanages (including schools and mosques), of which the whole country, not just the Cham, has a great need. The largest of its eight orphanages is located a few kilometers outside Phnom Penh and is home to approximately 300 boys. The organization also supplies the teachers' salaries and students' grants for the school annexed to the Nur al-Ihsan mosque of Chrang Chamres, which serves as a boarding school to prepare future Islamic teachers.<sup>61</sup>

Since the end of the 1990s, at least four Saudi organizations have been active in Cambodia. The first to arrive was the Umm al-Qura International Organization, which, together with the al-Basar International Foundation, sent eye doctors to Cambodia.<sup>62</sup> Umm al-Qura also established a large school complex at Chroy Metrei village (Kendal province), which became rather controversial in 2003 (see below, pp. 17-18). The other Saudi organizations are the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), and the al-Haramayn Foundation.

Contacts between the Cham and Malaysia have been renewed and steadily expanded. The CMDF regards Malaysia as a model, and its numerous language training efforts in Malay show the Cham's and Malaysia's desire to strengthen these cordial relations. Of course, this has both inherent religious and economic implications. The modern-oriented Cham leaders recognize the importance of education, which most rural Cham lack. In addition, they view Malaysia as a symbol of rapid economic growth and successful educational reform policies. Furthermore, Malaysia has been involved in the international promotion and institutionalization of Islam since the early 1970s,<sup>63</sup> and thus has gained recognition throughout the Muslim world. This is exactly what the long forgotten Muslims of Cambodia are after.

Whereas modern Arabic-Islamic thought reached the Cham through the Malays, now Middle Eastern Islamic thought and practice (including Salafi and Wahhabi teachings) have found direct inroads through the Islamic charities operating in the country. It goes without saying that these developments

have prompted important changes among the Cham. But before discussing this, I turn to another recent and important outside influence: the emergence and rapid rise to prominence of the Tablighi Jama'at.

### *The Way of Dakwah*

The Tablighi Jama'at (TJ) began to spread across Cambodia in the early 1990s because of Sulaiman Ibrahim, the former imam of Phum Tria who had lived in Vietnam, Thailand, the United States, Egypt, and Malaysia from 1970-89. He came into contact with the TJ<sup>64</sup> in Malaysia, where it had been active since the 1970s. I was told that Pakistani and Indian TJ members first visited the mosque of Prek Prah (Phnom Penh) in 1987-88.<sup>65</sup> But it was only after Sulaiman Ibrahim's return to Cambodia in 1989 and his subsequent *dakwah* efforts that the TJ took hold among the Cham. Malays from southern Thailand also played an important part: Yusuf Khan, the organization's leader in Southeast Asia, lived there and had numerous followers. Yusuf Khan also came to Prek Pra, and Malays from southern Thailand and Malaysia now come to Cambodia regularly on their *khuruj* (obligatory preaching mission).<sup>66</sup> Sulaiman Ibrahim first preached in Chumnik (Kampong Cham province) and then moved to Phum Tria, where he built a madrasa in 1992 with the help of Malaysian TJ sympathizers and Cham living in the West.<sup>67</sup>

The movement quickly attracted vast numbers of followers and has become a major force. Its main centers are Phum Tria, Prek Pra, and Daun Loy/Au Chreou (Sihanoukville province), and it now has twenty provincial units (the Cham live in twenty-two provinces).<sup>68</sup> The movement's canon, Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhlawi's *Fada'il-e 'Amal* can be found in many mosques in Malay, English, and even the Urdu original. Furthermore, parts have been translated into Khmer by Abdul Coyoume, an old companion of Mat Ly.<sup>69</sup> Every Thursday evening, a large gathering consisting of locals, as well as people from distant villages in the area, is held at the movement's centers. After the sunset prayer, visiting preachers from other parts of Cambodia, Southeast Asia, or even South Asia address the audience, which spends the night at the mosque and eats together.

Due to its location in Cambodia's capital, Prek Pra is basically referred to as the movement's central node. However, the obvious spiritual center is the comparably difficult-to-reach Phum Tria. This is not surprising, as the TJ's strongholds are in rural Cambodia; however, its influence in Phnom Penh's Chrang Chamres and Chroy Changvar is steadily increasing. Sulaiman Ibrahim not only lives at Phum Tria, but his boarding school and Cam-

bodia's largest mosque, the construction of which was started in 2000 (still uncompleted in August 2005, as I saw piles of tiles lying inside during my visit) are located there as well. The school's *ustad* (professor) was educated in Thailand at Yala city's Madrasa Markaz Tabligh, and several other teachers studied in Thailand.<sup>70</sup>

One reason for Thailand's importance among JT supporters are the difficulties the movement has encountered in Malaysia. For instance, Sabah state banned the movement (1985) and Malacca state followed suit (1992).<sup>71</sup> The Malaysian *dakwah* movement Darul Arqam, said to be active in Cambodia, was banned in 1994 for being a deviant sect. The Dakwah Tabligh is under constant surveillance in Malaysia, whereas both groups were treated with relative indifference by the Thai authorities in the past.<sup>72</sup>

On the other side of Cambodia, close to the Gulf of Thailand, one also finds a recently (2000) constructed *tablighi* boarding school and mosque, the Dar al-Muhajirun in Au Chreou (Sihanoukville province), which attracts students from all over the country. Just a few kilometers away is the austere al-Azhar mosque (built in 1964 and damaged – but not destroyed – in DK times) in Daun Loy, the *markaz* of the area.<sup>73</sup>

In Phum Tria and other zones of JT influence, its members' ostentatious manner of imitating the Prophet's example is demonstrated in their clothing. For example, the traditional sarong and *kopiah* (skull cap) have been traded for the traditional Arab robe and turban. In Phum Trea, I witnessed numerous students brushing their teeth with a *miswak* (a tree twig) instead of a toothbrush.

## New Challenges

Since the early 1990s, the appearance of Islam in Cambodia has once more been altered. The Cham's desire to strengthen their bond with the international Islamic community has brought about a new level in their constant quest for identity reinvention. During their long sojourn in Cambodia, their traditional pagoda-style of mosques almost died out. Now, even those that survived are being razed and replaced with those that look more "Islamic." Cham women are wearing the Islamic headscarf (*jilbab*, *tudung*), which is encouraged by the *tablighis*, Arab charities, and Malays, instead of the *krama* (the checkered "national" scarf widely used by all Khmer) or a distinctive woolen hat still found in Kampong Cham province. In the mid-1990s, the body-enclosing (except the eyes) black *purdah* appeared and can now be found in certain regions.<sup>74</sup> This is causing unease among the Cham and the Khmer majority. More problems occur because rural Cham girls, of whom

very few even complete primary school as they are needed at home or in the field, are forced to drop out of school because most secondary schools ban the wearing of headscarves.<sup>75</sup>

The different currents of external Islamic influence also lead to conflict within the community. In this context, we might recall the quarrels between traditionalists and modernists in the first half of the twentieth century and later between the *kaum muda* and the *kaum tua*. Now the new ideas arriving in Cambodia are causing similar dissensions.<sup>76</sup> Islamic charities (notably Umm al-Qura) have pressured the Jahed community to give up its distinctive religious practices in favor of standard Sunni ones. Their refusal to do so has cut them off from international Islamic aid.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the state regards them as a distinct and respected religious community. Its leader Kai Tam, who lives in O Russei (Kampong Chhnang), is recognized as equivalent to the grand mufti of the orthodox Cham and was bestowed with the title *ouknha* (excellency) just like the latter.

Furthermore, Arab charities and the Tablighi Jama'at/Dakwah Tabligh movement view each other with suspicion. Muslim opponents of the TJ have always argued that the *Fada'il-e`Amal* draws mostly on weak hadith and that its adherents value it as much as they do the Qur'an. Other doctrinal criticisms are that the *tablighis* are not thorough enough in their efforts to root out local un-Islamic practices and that their *khuruj* (obligatory preaching mission) is *bid'ah* (an innovation). Apart from the religious implications, the practice of frequently leaving one's family to engage in *dakwah* is considered unacceptable. While the *tablighis* accuse Arab charities of proselytizing via financial aid, they are themselves criticized for only preparing the Cham for the afterlife instead of helping them raise their standard of living. In fact, the *tablighis* have a bad reputation among modern-oriented Muslims because they are said to advocate only primary education for Cham children and then purely religious studies. In contrast, schools established by Arab charities and the CMDF teach secular subjects as well. The more extreme partisans of the Dakwah Tabligh even insult western-style dressed Cham for wearing *kafir* (unbeliever) clothes.<sup>78</sup>

Also, differences between rural and urban Cambodia seem to play a role in this dispute. Especially in rural Daun Loy, I heard that this area's Cham are barred from the large influx of Islamic aid pouring into Phnom Penh. Although the *tablighi* madrasa of Au Chreou was built with Malaysian support (which continues with a modest monthly subsidy of \$100), just like the mosque of nearby Boeng Ta Prom village, where the donor organization's check is presented inside the mosque, it is clear that Arab charities often neglect such remote areas.<sup>79</sup> But other Cham are generally skeptical of such aid,

for they have heard of or might have experienced cases in which donations were coupled with an attempt to popularize alien religious doctrines (e.g., Wahhabism).<sup>80</sup>

These conflicts have once again resulted in divided communities. For example, in Chumnik (Kampong Cham province) one finds a *markaz* of the *dakwah tabligh* as well as a mosque of the Kuwaiti RIHS, each of which is frequented by segregated groups of residents.<sup>81</sup> In Phum Tria, Sulaiman Ibrahim's plan to consolidate the area's worship in the new huge mosque was opposed by the neighboring villages, whose people (allegedly against the *dakwah* leader's will) searched for aid to build their own small mosques because they disliked his claim to leadership and *tablighi* dominance.<sup>82</sup> Near Phum Tria, I saw one small mosque (built with Malaysian support) and two more under construction (one of them with RIHS support).

Another fault line is the attitudes toward the community's official leadership. Grand Mufti Sos Kamry, like most of the imams and village *hakems*, belongs to the CPP (this also goes for the Jahed), which often makes any distinction between the local CPP and the religious hierarchy difficult.<sup>83</sup> Naturally this is problematic, as certain currents in the Cham community hold that politics and religion generally do not mix; others, affiliated with other parties, view these circumstances as just another proof of democracy's limited scope under long-time Prime Minister Hun Sen. Still, the new puritan factions on the fringes of Cambodian Islam criticize the grand mufti and the Ministry of Cults and Religion, along with its secretaries Zakarya Adam (CPP) and Sith Ibrahim (FUNCINPEC), as being religiously lax.

However, it is important to note that most Cham generally agree that Sos Kamry (appointed to his position for life) is the best man for the job and that it is merely the CPP domination down to the village level that causes concern.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, I want to point out that the Cham supported this CPP domination in the 2003 election. Although intimidation and even killings (according to Amnesty International, seventeen candidates of FUNCINPEC and Sam Rainsy Party were killed in the run-up for the elections<sup>85</sup>) still play a part in elections, the CPP's consolidation of power on the local level cannot be attributed to such practices alone. As for FUNCINPEC, it should be remembered that with the death of Tol Lah (2003), former secretary of state in the Ministry of Education and afterwards deputy prime minister and party secretary-general, the party lost its most eminent Cham politician.

In general the Cham have lost influence in Parliament, compared to the elections in 1998 (which were controlled by the CPP<sup>86</sup>), with the number of Cham members decreasing from ten (five CPP, four FUNCINPEC, one SRP)

to three (two CPP, one SRP), while the number of senators has remained stable: one from FUNCINPEC and one from the CPP.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, three Cham are now serving as secretaries of state and four are serving as under-secretaries of state (all CPP, apart from Sith Ibrahim). In addition, Ismail Osman (FUNCINPEC, and allegedly a supporter of the Dakwah Tabligh<sup>88</sup>) is president of the National Assembly. With Sem Soprey and Saleh Sen (both CPP), Kampong Cham (where 40 percent of the Cham live) and Kampong Chhnang both have Cham vice governors.

Finally, the Cham community has been affected by militant Islam and the war on terror. Several Arab NGOs operating in the country figure prominently on the Bush administration's list of organizations that allegedly support international terrorism: IIRO and WAMY, which for years were led by bin Laden's son-in-law Muhammad Khalifa, and the al-Haramayn Islamic Foundation. But it was Umm al-Qura's school at Chroy Metrei village (Kendal province) that the Cambodian authorities closed down, due to American intelligence reports. In May 2003, its Egyptian director and two Thai teachers were arrested for suspected links to the terror organization Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). All twenty-eight foreign teachers (from Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Thailand, and Yemen) and their families were deported. In June, Sman Ismael, a Cham from Kampot and a former student of an Islamic school in Patani (southern Thailand), was arrested for alleged complicity with the former.

The absolute majority of Cham viewed this incident as politically motivated (e.g., to serve American interests) and the charges as unsubstantiated. The school, now known as the "Cambodia Islamic Center," was reopened in September 2004 under the auspices of Grand Mufti Sos Kamry and the Ministry of Cults and Religion. Such well-known Cham CPP members Sos Kamry, Othman Hassan, Zakaryya Adam, and Sos Mousine were appointed to its leading positions, and current staff-members are all Cambodian Cham.<sup>89</sup>

Whereas those Cham more sympathetic to the prime minister argued that the suspects were innocent, others, like the opposition politician Ahmad Yahya (SRP), were furious and claimed that they were only guilty of arousing the CPP's envy for running an influential organization.<sup>90</sup> The whole case became even more doubtful, as it took the authorities until 29 December 2004 to convict the suspects, who had already spent one year longer than allowed by the law in preventive detention.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, a connection between Cambodia and the JI was eventually proven: Hambali, the alleged JI head, had lived from September 2002 to March 2003 in a Phnom Penh

guesthouse in the backpacker area of Boeung Kak, located near the International Dubai Mosque.

One of my informants in Kampong Cham province further argued that other foreign-run institutions were in danger of being shut down or taken over by the authorities not because of links to international terror, but for a lack of diplomacy in dealing with the government. The informant's brother was a former teacher at the RIHS-run orphanage in Phnom Penh and allegedly quit his position after disputes, the source of which was the teacher's attendance at a government seminar about AIDS prevention – his superiors had not approved of his attendance.<sup>92</sup> Another interesting story, related by the same informant and other people I talked to in Kampong Cham province, concerns the financing of Phum Tria's huge mosque. According to rumors, the mosque was at least partly built with aid from Pakistan, and in the months after 9/11 a short financial crisis occurred. When asked about this, the *ustad* declared that the mosque was financed solely by Cham living in Cambodia and abroad. However, he also claimed not to be well-informed on the subject, as he had come only to teach in Phum Tria two years ago.<sup>93</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the pace at which the Cham community has developed over the last two decades, especially after 1993, is astonishing. I regard the introduced changes as by no means extraordinary, given the development of the rest of Muslim Southeast Asia. All of these countries (just like the whole Islamic world) were subject to an Islamic resurgence during this time. Part of Southeast Asia's Islamic resurgence consisted of movements that, at the same time, were not anti-modern in a general sense, but still strongly emphasized purifying religion and applying it to daily life. Another important part in this resurgence, especially in Malaysia, was played by the Dakwah Tabligh and other *dakwah* groups, which gained enough importance to be labeled a threat to Muslim unity and thus, in the case of Malaysia, even to national unity.

Other features of this resurgence were direct Arab influence (e.g., visible in Indonesia if one looks at the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, which is closely associated with the Muslim World League) and also the emergence of militant Islamic movements at the fringes of Muslim society. But compared with its Southeast Asian Muslim neighbors, whose resurgence took time to grow, things were accelerated considerably after Cambodia's sorely tried Muslims were discovered by Islamic internationalism. The very intensity of this international Islamic effort is another peculiarity of the Cham's case. Clearly, the Arab oil-backed organizations have the largest scope and

are able to penetrate into Islamic communities in all corners of the world. The Tablighi Jama'at and the various Malaysian *dakwah* groups also spread throughout the world rather quickly.<sup>94</sup> But the historical and ethnic ties between the Malays and the Cham made the latter a preferred recipient of federal (UMNO approved) as well as regional (from the PAS-controlled states of Kelantan and Terengganu) and private Islamic aid.

Of course, what is striking about the Cambodian Cham is their status as a minority of immigrant descent and their opting to reinvent their identity on the basis of Islam and relegating ethnic identity to a secondary position. But this process is nothing new, for their ancestors did it immediately after their arrival in Cambodia. This was a gradual, though at times somehow slow, process for hundreds of years. But in the era of globalization and fueled by international efforts, it was transformed into a very fast one. A majority of Cambodia's Cham population has, even though living in a Buddhist country, felt the urge to belong to the wider Islamic world ever since. Finally, the wider Islamic world has come to them.

## Endnotes

1. Po Dharma, "Etat des dernieres recherches sur la date de l'absorption du Campa par le Vietnam," in *Actes du Séminaire sur le Campa organisé à l'Université de Copenhague, le 23 mai 1987* (Paris: Centre d'histoire et civilisations de la péninsule indochinoise 1988), 62.
2. Agnès De Féo, *Les Chams, l'islam et la revendication identitaire* (Mémoire de DEA, 2004), 17.
3. Ibid., 50-51.
4. William Collins, *The Chams of Cambodia* (Center for Advanced Studies, 1996. Online at [www.cascambodia.org/chams.htm](http://www.cascambodia.org/chams.htm)), 23. (The page numbers of the printed version do not correspond to those given in the table of contents therein. To simplify things, I cite the printed version's actual page numbers.)
5. De Feo, *Les Chams*, 61-74; or, by the same author, "Les Chams sot, dissidence de l'islam cambodgien," *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, no. 78 (2005): 115-24.
6. Carool Kersten, "Cambodia's Muslim King: Khmer and Dutch Sources on the Conversion of Reameathipadai I, 1642-1658," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (JSEAS) 37, no. 1 (February 2006): 12.
7. Mak Phoeun, *Chroniques Royales du Cambodge (de 1594 à 1677)* (Paris: PEFEO, 1981), 190.
8. De Feo, *Les Chams*, 37.
9. R. Michael Feener, "Notes towards the History of Qur'anic Exegesis in South East Asia," *Studia Islamika* 5, no. 3 (1998): 54-55.
10. Eliraz Giora, *Islam in Indonesia: Modernism, Radicalism, and the Middle East Dimension* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004), 1-8.

11. Feener, "Notes," 57.
12. Marcel Ner, "Les musulmans de l'Indochine Française," *BEFEO* 41 (1941): 177-78.
13. See Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982).
14. Collins, *The Chams of Cambodia*, 63-64.
15. Michael Vickery, *Cambodia 1975-1982* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 1999), 194-95. (This is a republication of the original [Boston: South End Press, 1984]) and *Kampuchea: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Francis Pinter, 1986), 2; Ben Kiernan, "Orphans of Genocide: The Cham Muslims of Kampuchea under Pol Pot," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (BCAS) 20, no. 4 (October-December 1988), 11-33, and *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 1999), 461-63. (Again, a republication of the original [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996]); Ysa Osman, *Oukoubah: Justice for the Cham Muslims under the Democratic Kampuchea Regime* (Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2002), 1-9.
16. Kiernan, "Orphans of Genocide," 30.
17. Michael Vickery, "Comments on Cham Population Figures," *BCAS* 22, no. 1 (January-March 1989): 31-33. Also see Kiernan's defense of his figures in "The Genocide in Cambodia, 1975-79," *BCAS* 22, no. 1 (April-June 1990): 35-40.
18. Osman, *Oukoubah*, 2.
19. *Ibid.*, 3.
20. Kiernan, "Genocide in Cambodia," 39.
21. Ror a personal account, see Osman, *Okubah*, 57.
22. See Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime*, 64-68.
23. Osman, *Oukoubah*, 4.
24. *Ibid.*, 69-75.
25. The Cham battalion (the Fifth Brigade) gained notoriety for its systematic destruction and extermination of Khmer Rouge villages. Les Kosem, a Cambodian Cham and military officer, played a major part in establishing links between nationalist Cham and highland groups in Cambodia and Vietnam. Eventually in August 1964, his Front for the Liberation of the Champa and the Bajaraka movement, a group representing various (Cham-related) Austronesian-speaking hill tribes and also Austroasiatic (Mon-Khmer)-speaking tribes, merged to form FULRO (Front Unifié de Lutte de la Races Opprimés). Subsequently, FULRO was patronized by the up-coming general Lon Nol. Collins, *The Chams of Cambodia*, 31.
26. Kiernan, "Orphans of Genocide," 10.
27. Osman, *Oukoubah*, 30, 58-59.
28. Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime*, 275.
29. Vickery, "Cambodia 1975-1982," 138, 194; Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime*, 286-88; Kiernan, "Orphans of Genocide," 27-30.

30. Ben Kiernan, "Wild Chickens, Farm Chickens, and Cormorants: The Eastern Zone under Pol Pot," *Revolution and its Aftermath in Kampuchea*, eds. David P. Chandler and Ben Kiernan (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Council, 1983), 138.
31. *Ibid.*, 197.
32. Ben Kiernan, "Kampuchean Muslims: An Uncertain Future," *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs (JIMMA)* 10, no. 1 (January 1989): 30.
33. Osman, *Oukoubah*, 7, 9, 126.
34. *Ibid.*, 27.
35. *Ibid.*, 5.
36. Ner, "Les musulmans," 169, 175.
37. Kiernan, "Kampuchean Muslims," 34.
38. Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 176. Here Nair gives the untenable number of 100,000 Cham Muslim refugees resettling in Malaysia in 1978; this at a time when it was obviously hard enough for Cham living in the border regions to escape to Vietnam, let alone Malaysia. A refugee camp in Tay Ninh province (Vietnam) held 600 Cham refugees in 1978 (Kiernan, "Orphans of Genocide," 15.).
39. On the CPP, see Michael Vickery, "The Cambodian People's Party: Where Has It Come From, Where Is It Going?" *Southeast Asian Affairs* (1994): 102-17.
40. Collins, *The Chams of Cambodia*, 39, 42.
41. Kiernan, "Orphans of Genocide," 32-33. Interestingly, I came across a reference to a 1975 article in the Saudi *Akhbar al-`Ālam al-Islami*, hijacking the struggle of the Cambodian Muslims for blatant propaganda; Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 414.
42. Evan Gottesmann, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge: Inside the Politics of Nation Building* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 342-43.
43. Seddik Taouti, "The Forgotten Muslims of Kampuchea and Viet Nam," in *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, Ahmad Ibrahim et al., (Singapore: ISEAS, 1986), 199.
44. Michael Vickery, "Refugee Politics: The Khmer Camp System in Thailand," in *The Cambodian Agony*, eds. David A. Ablin and Marlowe Hood (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1988), 293-326. (Figures obtained from pp. 295, 298.)
45. The higher figure is obtained from Taouti, "The Forgotten Muslims," 194; the lower one from Osman, *Oukoubah*, 119.
46. Taouti, "The Forgotten Muslims," 196.
47. Osman, *Oukoubah*, 119.
48. For example, I have been told of government aid for the old mosque of Phum Roka (Kompong Cham province), which had survived the DK era roofless, in 1985. Interview with Imam Yunus (Phum Roka) 19 July 2005.
49. De Feo, *Les Chams*, 90.
50. Interviews conducted with various persons (including the imam) at the Dubai mosque on 29 July 2005, 1 August 2005, and 2 August 2005.

51. Collins, *The Chams of Cambodia*, 63.
52. Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, 171-93.
53. Trevor Findlay, *Cambodia: The Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Gottesmann, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 342-52. For a contemporary journalistic approach, see Michael Schaper, "Die Friedensstifter: UN-Blauhelme in Kambodscha" *Geo*, no. 2 (Februar 1993): 36-56.
54. Interviews with the province imam of Siam Reap, Musa Soleh, in Stung Thmey (15-16 July 2005), and *toun* Muhammad bin Abdulwani in Prek Ta Peou (2 August 2005).
55. Collins, *The Chams of Cambodia*, 61; De Feo, *Les Chams*, 90.
56. Information on the CMDF, unless otherwise indicated, was obtained from the document *CMDF Serves the Muslim's [sic] Community* (Phnom Penh: CMDF, 2004); and interviews with Sos Mousine and CAMSA under secretary general Set Muhammadsis in Phnom Penh (13-14 July 2005).
57. *CMDF Serves*, 3; Farina So, "The Study of the Qur-An vs. Modern Education for Islamic Women in Cambodia," [www.dccam.org](http://www.dccam.org), 8-10.
58. Personal conversation with Dato' Haji Alwi Muhammad, CEO of the Majlis Agama Islam of Terengganu, in Istanbul, Turkey (7 June 2005).
59. Heng Samrin was party secretary of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party (PKR) from 1981 until it became the Cambodian People's Party in 1991. Therefore, western observers came to refer to the PRK regime as the "Heng Samrin regime."
60. De Feo, *Les Chams*, 91-92.
61. Interview with Imam Ali ibn Musa at the Nur al-Ihsan mosque, Chrang Chamres, Phnom Penh (14 July 2005).
62. CMDF, 44.
63. Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, 60.
64. On the Tablighi Jama'at, see Muhammad Khalid Masud, ed., *Travellers in Faith: Studies on the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); and Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000): A Cross-country Comparative Study* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2002).
65. Interview with senior *tablighi* Haji Faisal at the mosque of Prek Pra (21 July 2005).
66. The movement's members are obliged to engage in *da'wah* three days every month and forty days every year; senior members have to conduct three months of *khuruj*.
67. Collins, *The Chams of Cambodia*, 65.
68. Interview with Haji Faisal. (See endnote 65.)
69. De Feo, *Les Chams*, 95. Mat Ly, during his last years still a member of the National Assembly and also supreme personal advisor to the king, died in 2004. His modest grave is located on the premises of the Prek Pra mosque.

70. Interview with an unnamed *ustad* at Phum Tria (31 July 2005).
71. Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, 185; and De Feo, *Les Chams*, 94.
72. On the Darul Arqam movement, see Johan Hendrik Meuleman, "Reactions and Attitudes towards the Darul Arqam Movement in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika* 3, no. 1 (1996): 50-78.
73. Interviews with Zayn al-'Abidin, director of Dar al-Muhajirin in Au Chreou (27 July 2005) and Ga'far bin Abdallah, the province imam of Sihanoukville province, in Daun Loy (28 July 2005).
74. I only witnessed this kind of dress worn by a small group of women in Phum Tria. Another example given by Farina So, "The Study of the Qur-An," 7, is the conservative village of O-Kcheay, Battambang province.
75. *Ibid.*, 6.
76. De Feo, *Les Chams*, 101-04.
77. *Ibid.*, 62.
78. Interviews with Sli Man in Kampong Cham city (19-31 July 2005).
79. Interviews with Zayn al-'Abidin and Ga'far bin Abdallah and interview with Imam Ahmad Ali b. Ansri at Boeng Ta Prom, Sihanoukville province, 27 July 2005.
80. Interviews with Ismir Ramli and an elderly villager in Koh Sautin, Kampong Cham province (18 July 2005).
81. De Feo, *Les Chams*, 101.
82. Interview with Sli Man.
83. Bjorn Blengsli, "Trends in the Islamic Community," *Phnom Penh Post*, Issue 12/12 (6-9 June 2003).
84. Interview with Cham historian Ysa Osman at the Documentation Center of Cambodia in Phnom Penh (2 August 2005).
85. <http://web.amnesty.org/report2003/khm-summary-eng>.
86. Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 354-55.
87. The 1998 figures are obtained from Omar Farouk Bajunid, "Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia: A Review," in *Islam in Civil Society in Southeast Asia*, Mitsuo Nakamura et al. eds. (Singapore: ISEAS, 2001). The 2003 figures from Farina So, "The Study of the Qur-An," 8-10.
88. De Feo, *Les Chams*, 94.
89. Interviews with Sos Mousine and Musa Soleh. The latter's father is now teaching at the facility.
90. Noy Thrupkaew, "Follow the (Saudi) Money," *American Prospect Online*, 8 January 2004.
91. Information obtained from the U.S. State Department, online at: [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51507.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51507.htm).
92. Interviews with Sli Man.
93. Interview with an unnamed *ustad*.
94. Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, 200.