

PRACHEAPREI MAZAGINE

The Victims of the Khmer Rouge Genocide receive \$100 US Dollars; those who didn't receive were unhappy...

This is the first time that relatives of the deceased victims of the Khmer Rouge received donations from the Dr. Handa Japanese Fund after having pledged for many months. There were 200 victims' families, including the poor and elderly, received aids from Dr. Handa Compensation Fund.

On the 24th of April 2006, on the grounds of Amporvanda Monastery called Prey Svay Pagoda, located in the commune of Sopotep, Chbar Mon District, Kompong Speu Province, Khmer Rouge Genocide victimized families happily showed up to receive aid. Previously, no one received \$100 US dollars donation, they received only rice, sarongs, scarves and clothes. Conversely, there were also unhappy people around the pagoda. They were unhappy because they did not receive any aid, even though they had relatives victimized by the Khmer Rouge too. A woman, 50 years old or so, deeply drunk, came to the venue and said that she also had her husband and kinsmen killed by the Khmer Rouge, but why she did not receive any donation? In her drunken state, she was embarrassed to enter the premise.

During the ceremony, H.E. Mr. Say Chhum, MPs of Kompong Speu Constituency, H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, President of the University of Cambodia, along with Dr. Haruhisa Handa, head of Dr. Handa Compensation and Memorial Fund for the victims of the Khmer Rouge Genocide, appeared on the tribune.

Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, President of the University of Cambodia, said that he wished to apologize to all of the people who did not have received this fund. He really did not know any Cambodian people who had not suffered from the Khmer Rouge. However the first distribution of aid was organized only for widows who were the poorest of the poor families and whose kinsmen as well as children had been assassinated by the Khmer Rouge.

This was the first time that Dr. Handa Fund distributed aid to the victim families of the Khmer Rouge Genocide. Those who received the donation came from 19 villages among the three communes of Chbar Mon District, Kompong Speu Province. Two hundred victimized families had been selected among three hundred and fifty poorest families. As stipulated in the agreement, each family received a total of \$100 US dollars in aid, \$90 US dollars was in cash and the other was 50 kgs or \$10 worth of rice.

Dr. Haruhisa Handa, Chairman of the World Mate Organization, Chairman of the International Foundation for Arts and Culture in Tokyo, Japan, and Chancellor of the University of Cambodia, said during the ceremony he had been deeply touched and attached to the Cambodian people, who had been seriously victimized by wars, separation and sufferings. The donation that he gave to them can be partly spent to organize

religious ceremony to contribute to their deceased husbands and children who died during the Khmer Rouge so their spirits can rest in peace in the spiritual world; and the rest can be spent for alleviating poverty within their families. This fund was aimed at distributing aid to 10,000 victims' families of the Khmer Rouge Genocide throughout the country. The Fund targeted those who were widows, whose husbands were killed, and poorest of the poor.

Dr. Haruhisa Handa, a Japanese philanthropist, has already been given a "Cambodian Citizenship." His blessed work has also included supported to free medical treatment to Cambodian patients at the Preah Sihanouk Hospital of Hope. As a new Cambodia citizen, Dr. Haruhisa Handa pledged that he would try his best to distribute his personal fund to help Cambodian people who have difficulties in their lives. The amount of this fund totaled \$1,300,000 US dollars.

During the ceremony a representative of the victims, Mr. Suon Him, strongly rejoiced with Dr. Haruhisa Handa's donations. Mr. Him recalled the punishment and suffering he had witness and undergone, towards his family as well as other Cambodian families throughout the country, during the Khmer Rouge genocide. An old aunt named In Mao, living in Varsar Village, Varsar Commune, Samrong Tong District, described the suffering she had undergone. These sufferings couldn't be forgettable. No words could be compared with those sufferings. Her husband was killed simply because they accused him of being traitor of the nation; and her other four children were also put on trial to be definitely killed, but fortunately, two of them survived. For nearly 30 years, she has been struggling to feed her surviving children. The \$100 dollars was not much for the rich, but for a poor widow like her it was worth everything. She thought that with that sum of money she could offer religious ceremony to memorize her deceased husband and children's spirits.

Outside of the premises, there were crowds of unhappy peoples. They said they were also poor and victimized and asked why they were not given any aid. They realized, undoubtedly, that every Cambodian people's families had all been strongly affected by the Khmer Rouge Genocide.

Consequently, the 200 families qualified to receive Dr. Haruhisa Handa's generous donation. Dr. Handa distribution ceremonies were launched along with the Khmer Rouge Tribunal to put on trial surviving Khmer Rouge leaders in Cambodia.

So far, there is no exact number of the people who had been killed by the Khmer Rouge Regime. During 1979-80, there was information estimating that there had been more than three million Cambodian people killed during Khmer Rouge Genocide; but afterwards, there was information speculated that there were around two million people who had died, and finally, there was only more than one million....