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## Cambodian New Year Celebration Collection

1986

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Organized by UMass anthropology professor Joel Halpern, the images in this collection were put on display during the Cambodian New Year celebration in 1986. As part of the celebration, members of the large community of Cambodian refugees who have resettled in Amherst were recognized.

The collection consists of photographs as well as programs, correspondence, and financial records pertaining to the Cambodian-Americans in Amherst New Year's Day Celebration and Exhibit of 1986.

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## Background on the Cambodian exhibition

Organized by UMass anthropology professor Joel Halpern, the images in this collection were put on display during the Cambodian New Year celebration in 1986. As part of the celebration, members of the large community of Cambodian refugees who have resettled in Amherst were recognized.

A Five College event, the festivities took place over the course of several days and across three campuses. The film *Cambodia, The Peaceful Paradox* was played on Tuesday, April 1st at UMass. On Friday, April 4th, the art and photography exhibit opened at the Frost Library at Amherst College at 3 PM, followed by lecture by journalist T.D. Allman at 4 PM. There was a reception of Cambodian food and music. The following day, Saturday the 5th, there was a taste of Cambodian dishes and the art exhibit continued in the afternoon at UMass along with a slide presentation. At 7 PM that evening, a religious ceremony was held at the UMass campus pond. It was done by boat, in which the boat represented Dharma, which moves one from suffering and bondage to happiness and freedom. The water represented loving kindness, which assimilates through the virtue of its omnipresence; in the sky, on the land, and in all people. After this ceremony, talks were given at Bowker Auditorium, concluding with Cambodian music and dancing. This day was closed by a dance party in the campus center at 10 PM. On Friday, April 11th, festivities resumed at Mount Holyoke College. The films: *Refugee Women*, and *Bamboo City* played at Hooker Auditorium at 7:30 PM. A panel discussion on Refugees in New England was held at the Eliot House at Mount Holyoke Saturday Afternoon from 1-4 PM.

The Cambodian New Year is a three day celebration. Traditionally, families spend the month before thoroughly cleaning their homes. Early in the morning each of the three days, women prepare a meal to bring to monks at the temple by 7 AM. From then until noon the family attends a religious service, after which the children play and adults return home. No work is done for these three days.

The Khmer Rouge ruled in Cambodia from 1975-1979. Trying to create a purely agrarian communist society, they evacuated cities and forced the population to work long days in the field without food or rest. This led to famine, starvation, and exhaustion. Paired with severe brutality from the soldiers, more than a million Cambodians died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge. During the chaos of the Vietnamese invasion in 1979, many Cambodians fled to Thailand, and from there some families sought refuge in a third country, such as the United States.

## Scope of collection

The collection consists of photographs as well as programs, correspondence, and financial records pertaining to the Cambodian-Americans in Amherst New Year's Day Celebration and Exhibit of 1986.

Includes information on journalist T.D. Allman who gave a lecture at the event, and photographer John Spragens Jr., whose photographs were on display at the exhibit.

## Series descriptions

Series 1. Photographs  
1957-1986

Photographs of the Cambodian New Year's Day Celebration of 1986. Includes photographs taken in Cambodia by Joel M.



At home, photo by Cham Nan Koy, 1986

Halpern which were on display at the exhibit.

## Series 2. Documents

1984-1986

Documents relating to the Cambodian New Year's Day Celebration, such as correspondence of Joel M. Halpern, financial records, programs, and posters for the exhibit.

## Inventory

### Series 1. Photographs

1957-1986

Photographic Slides in *Cambodge*

1986

2 boxes of slides

Folder 1

Two boxes of slides of photographs from the book *Cambodge* by J.-P. Danaud.

Cambodian New Year's Celebration

1986

43 photographs

Folder 2

43 photographs of displays at the exhibit, as well as speakers and performances at the Cambodian New Year's Day Celebration.

Includes photographic negatives.

Cambodian Map: Map of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand

1986

Photograph of Map

1: Display with map as well as the photograph of a young boy with his hands in the Cambodian Sign of Welcome.

Cambodian Photographs: Sign of Welcome: Close-up

1986

photograph

Cambodian Map: Close-up

1986

photograph

Cambodian Photographs: Temple Angkor Wat

1986

photograph

2: The Principal Temple Complex at Angkor Wat, painting by Yon Seang, a senior at Amherst Regional High School. He was born in Kompong Cham, and arrived in the United States with his mother and sister in 1985.

Cambodian Photographs: Temple Angkor Wat

1986

2 photographs

4: Central Tower of the Main Sanctuary. 3: Subsidiary Temple at Angkor Wat

Cambodian Photographs: Temple Angkor Wat

1986

2 photographs

6: View through entryway to Central Tower. 5: Frieze of Khmer King and Warriors.

Cambodian Photographs: Harihara, Avalokitesvara, and Apsara

1986

3 photographs

7: Harihara, and amalgamation of Shiva and Vishnu. 8: Avalokitesvara, a popular Bodhisattva of the 7th century. 9: Apsara, a divine dancer in Hindu mythology.

Cambodian Photographs: Mahabarta, Buddha Seated on a Serpent, and a Kneeling Woman

1986

3 photographs

10: Mahabarta, a heroic Hindu epic. 11: A symbolic syncretism of Hinduism and Buddhism. 12: Buddhist representation of wisdom, or possibly Queen Jayarajadevi.

Cambodian Photographs

1986

3 photographs

13: Line of Dancing Apsaras. 14: Single Apsara. 15: Dancer from Orphanage Arts Group  
Cambodian Photographs: Apsaras of Classical Royal Ballet  
1986  
photograph

16: Cambodian tourist poster produced by the Royal government.  
Saing, Sotha: Cambodian Photographs: Painting: Rural Life  
1986

17: Farmers store hay in preparation for the Monsoon season.  
Saing, Sotha: Cambodian Photographs: Painting: Rural Life  
1986

18: A farmer returns home in his oxcart, having stocked up on fish from Lake Tonle Sap for the monsoon season.  
Huot, E. Seng: Cambodian Photographs: Drawings  
1983  
3 drawings

25: Men waiting in line for food after working for 12-16 hours. 26: Family escaping to Thailand. 27: Being punished by a Khmer Rouge soldier.  
Huot, E. Seng: Cambodian Photographs: Drawings  
1983  
3 drawings

28: A line of people being taken to the forest to be killed. 29: Decapitation. 30: Killing by a grave.  
Huot, E Seng: Cambodian Photographs: Drawings  
1983  
3 drawings

31: Pulling fingernails. 32: The cadre killing in prison. 33: Cutting out a woman's liver.  
Spragens, John: Photographs of Cambodia: Choeng Ek  
1983  
2 photographs

34: Kandal Province, December 1983, some bones found in the mass grave at Choeng Ek. 35: Skulls found in the mass grave at Choeng Ek.  
Spragens, John: Cambodian Photographs  
1986  
3 photographs

36: Sunday Strollers at the Independence Monument in Phnom Penh. 37: Third year students at Chhaktmonk School copy lessons into their notebooks. 38: Members of an orphanage art group play music for traditional dancers.  
Spragens, John: Cambodian Photographs  
1986  
3 photographs

39: Cambodian children at school. 40: Woman carrying sugar cane. 41: Fishing on a small tributary of the Tonle Sap, Kandal Province.  
Spragens, John: Cambodian Photographs  
1986  
4 photographs

42: Fishing on the Tonle Sap River. 43: Ox carts harvesting rice. 44: Setting fish out to dry at the riverside market. 45: A "production solidarity group" threshes rice.  
Spragens, John: Cambodian Photographs  
1986  
5 photographs

46: About 100 chickens bought from farmers on the way to market in Phnom Penh. 47: Gathering seedlings for transplanting. 48: Residents of the city's Orphanage No. 2 shovel freshly cooked rice out of huge pots. 49: Children eating rice with a thin soup at Orphanage No. 2. 50: Fruit stall with bananas.  
Kenseth-Abel, Elaine: Cambodian Photographs  
1983  
5 photographs

51: The marketplace at the Khao I Dang refugee camp. 52: "Children just hung around; there was nothing for them to do."  
53: "Many people got sick from the polluted water." 54: "There is no guarantee that the food will come every week, sugarcane is grown around the house but it is not very good." 55: Studying English while awaiting permission to settle in the United States.  
Kenseth-Abel, Elaine: Cambodian Photographs  
1983  
2 photographs

56:"Most of the monks were killed by the Khmer Rouge but many became monks in the camp." 58:"Wood is used for cooking. We had to be very careful with fires because the roof and sides of these houses are very dry and they could burn up very fast."

Kenseth-Abel, Elaine: Cambodian Photographs

1983

2 photographs

57:"I used to make these cages for chickens. They are easy to do. Usually bigger ones are used." 59:"Many of these houses are open. If there is a strong wind, it will just blow them away."

Kenseth-Abel, Elaine: Photographs: Cambodians

1983

2 photographs

60: Social time on a Sunday morning to see the American visitor. 62: Bou Mes and her child, then had no hope of coming to the U.S., accepted by the Immigration Service in 1984.

Kenseth-Abel, Elaine: Photographs: Cambodians

1983

2 photographs

61: Choun Mao, oldest daughter of Prak Ky. 63: Prak Ky, her daughter Choun Mao and their family.

Cambodian Language Map of the U.S.

1970

64: Produced by the U.S. Information Service in the 1970's, courtesy of James Hafner, Geography Department, UMass.

Photographs: Cambodians

1984

2 photographs

65: The Hang Pich family arriving at Bradley Airport, July 1984. 66: Sokhen Mao at Amherst Regional High School.

Photographs: Cambodians

1984

5 photographs

67 and 68: Boay Bou was sponsored by the Wesley Methodist Church of Amherst and arrived in Amherst at the end of 1981. 69: Choun Mao in her American kitchen. 70: Sin Noy and his family at home in Amherst in July 1984. 71: Sin Noy and his family at their first apartment in Sunderland, July 1984.

Photographs: Cambodians

1984

4 photographs

72: Sokhen Mao in the ESL classroom at Amherst Regional High School. 73: Kreila Krouch in her first year at Crocker Farm Elementary School. 74: Seia Krouch also in his first year at Crocker Fram Elementary School. 75: Sokhen's older married brother, Sokha, employed at the Amherst Common School.

Koy, Cham Nan: Photographs: Cambodians, "Near Our House"

1983

photograph

76: Photograph entitled "Near our House" by Cham Nan Koy, grade 12, Amherst Regional High School.

Cambodian New Year's Celebration: Performance

1986

3 photographs

Classical Cambodian dance by the Royal Ballet Troupe of New York City.

Cambodian New Year's Day Celebration: Speaker

1986

photograph

Four photographs of a speaker at New Year's Day Celebration.

Cambodian New Year's Day Celebration: Speaker

1986

photograph

Photograph of a speaker at New Year's Day Celebration.

Cambodian New Year's Day Celebration: Speaker

1986

photograph

Photograph of a speaker at New Year's Day Celebration.

Cambodian New Year's Day Celebration: Speaker

1986

photograph

Photograph of a speaker at New Year's Day Celebration.

Photographs: Robert Frost Library

1986

photograph

Kavanaugh, Lorraine: Cambodian Photographs: Sign of Welcome and Temple

1986

photograph

Folder 3

Chhnang, Kompong: Cambodian Photographs: Dancer from Orphanage Arts Group

1983

photograph

Two children dressed in traditional clothing; in a traditional Cambodian dance.

Cambodian Photographs: Temple

1986

photograph

Cambodian Photographs: Cambodian Sign of Welcome

1986

photograph

A young boy holds his hands in front of him, with his palms together and fingers up, as if in prayer.

Ward, Frank: Photographs: Cambodians

1986

2 photographs

Folder 4

Cambodian-Americans employed at Amherst College.

Ward, Frank: Photographs: Cambodians: Sin Chham

1986

photograph

Ward, Frank: Photographs: Cambodians: Sin Chham and Friends

1986

photograph

Cambodian Photographs: Angkor Wat

1957

4 photographs

Folder 5

Photographs of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the largest religious monument in the world. The Angkor Wat temple complex is the preeminent symbol of Cambodian culture. The former capital of the Khmer Empire of the 9th to the 13th century, its extensive architecture represents the flourishing civilization, which was founded on abundant rice cultivation and a religious piety formed out of Hindu and Buddhist influences from India.

Cambodian Photographs: Angkor Wat, Subsidiary Temple

1957

photograph

Cambodian Photographs: Angkor Wat, Central Tower of the Main Sanctuary

1957

photograph

Cambodian Photographs: Angkor Wat, Frieze of Khmer King and Warriors

1957

photograph

Cambodian Photographs: Angkor Wat, View through Entryway to Central Tower

1957

photograph

Cambodian Photographs: Angkor Wat, Statues and Carvings

1957

photograph

Folder 6

Eight photographs of sculptures, statues and engravings at Angkor Wat.

Cambodian Photographs: Harihara

1957

photograph

A well-known god of Khmer iconography, combining characteristics of the Hindu deities Shiva and Vishnu.

Cambodian Photographs: Avalokitesvara

1957

photograph

A popular Bodhisattva of the 7th century, representing an iconographic innovation connected with the diffusion of Buddhism into the Khmer Kingdom.

Cambodian Photographs: Apsara

1957

photograph

A divine dancer in Hindu mythology.

Cambodian Photographs: Scene from Mahabarta

1957

photograph

A scene from Mahabarta, the heroic Hindu epic.

Cambodian Photographs: The Buddha Seated on a Mythical Hindu Serpent

1957

photograph

Represents the symbolic syncretism of the two faiths.

Cambodian Photographs: Kneeling Woman

1957

photograph

This kneeling woman may represent the Buddhist personification of wisdom, but it may also be Queen Jayarajadevi, wife of King Jayavarman VII, developer of Angkor. A cult of god kings began in the early 9th century.

Cambodian Photographs: Line of Dancing Apsaras

1957

photograph

Cambodian Photographs: Single Apsara

1957

photograph

Musee Guimet (Paris, France): L'Art Khmer

1986

photographs

Folder 7

Book of photographs by the Musee Guimet (Paris, France). Photographs by Leonard Von Matt of Cambodian statues and carvings; text with information on titles, provenance, and styles by Jeannine Auboyer.

Student Photographs

1986

Folder 8

Mao, Sokhen: Photographs: Cambodians: Older Cambodian Woman

1986

photograph

Black and white photograph, taken by Sokhen Mao, grade 12.

Booke, Charles: Photographs: Cambodians: Sokhen Mao at Amherst Regional High School

1986

Black and white photograph taken by Charles Booke, grade 11, Photography II class.

Koy, Cham Nan: Photographs: Cambodians: Cambodian Children in Amherst

1986

photograph

Photograph taken by Cham Nan Koy, grade 12, Photography II class.

Koy, Cham Nan: Photographs: Cambodians: Cambodian Children in Amherst, "At Home"

1986

photograph

Photograph by Cham Nan Koy, Grade 12, Photography II class.

Koy, Cham Nan: Self Portrait: Cham Nan Koy

1986

photograph

Photographs in Cambodia

1986

Folder 9

Additional photos by Joel M. Halpern; not used in the exhibit.

Halpern, Joel M.: Cambodian Photographs: Statues

1986  
photograph  
Halpern, Joel M.: Cambodian Photographs: Stone Carvings  
1986  
photograph  
Halpern, Joel M.: Cambodian Photographs: Statue  
1986  
photograph  
Halpern, Joel M.: Cambodian Photographs: Temple  
1986  
photograph  
Halpern, Joel M.: Cambodian Photographs  
1986  
photograph  
Series 2. Documents  
1986  
Exhibit materials  
1986  
Folder 1

Programs, schedule of events, an overview of the culture and history of the Cambodian people, fliers, and posters for the Cambodian New Year's Day Celebration. Includes a plea to petition President Reagan to help Cambodian refugees living on the Thai border.

Correspondence and financial records  
1984-1986

Folder 2  
Includes a copy of a brief article about Dith Pran, a *New York Times* photographer who escaped the Khmer Rouge, correspondence of Joel M. Halpern about the exhibit, some information on T.D. Allman and his book *Unmanifest Destiny*, information on John Spragens Jr., guidelines on the Five College Lecture Fund, notes of Joel M. Halpern, memorandums of the weekly coordinating meeting for the event, and invoices for expenses for the event.

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired from Joel M. Halpern, 1986.

### Processing Information

Processed by Libby Wassmann, 2015.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use (More information )

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## Search terms

### Subjects

Amherst (Mass.)--Social life and customs  
Cambodian Americans  
Political refugees--United States  
Refugees--Cambodia

### Genres and formats

Photographs

### Link to similar SCUA collections

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Southeast Asians



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