Interview of Yong Kae

A: Name of interviewer: [Aeng Dalin]

B: Name of interviewee: [Yong Kae]

A: To begin, I want to formally greet you ma'am.

Do you give us permission to record this interview

that is about your personal khmer history?

In order for this history to be recorded for your posterity to listen

and be familiar with your history.

Hello, my name is [Aeng Dalin] and I will be your interviewer

and I came to me, I represented a university in America called "BYU"

And the day I interviewed my brother was on the 26th of August, 2018.

A. Yes, excuse me... do you agree to allow me to interview you?

B: Go ahead, you can interview me.

A: Yes! Thank you! Do you ... live in this village or another one?

B: [Thnal] village, [Sra Nge] commune.

A: District?

B: [Siem Reap] district, [Siem Reap] province.

A: Yes! You have a full name, what is your name?

B: My name is [Yong Keo].

A: [Yong Keo]?

B: Yes!

A: Full name, oh! Less wind! And not to worry.

A.Do you have a nickname?

B: No I don't have one, just the one name.

A: You just have that name, right?

B: Yes!

A: Yes! And how old are you now?  
B: 38!

A: 38?

B: Yes!

A: And what about you, lunar year, dry year, Karl Thaor street, what year are you?

A: The year of the dog?

A: The year of the Dog, yes!

B: Year of the Dog, born in '82 (1982).

A: Born in 1982?

B: Yes!

A: Where were you born?

B: I was born in [Battambang] province.

A: [Battambang]?

B: In [Borvil] district.

A: [Borvil] district?

B: Yes!

A: [Battambang] province! Oh! You are from [Battambang], right?

B: Yes!

A: Yes!

B: But we are orphans.

A: Really, an orphan?

B: Orphans come to help her.

A: Yes! How many siblings do you have?

B: I have 4 siblings. All are girls, my 4 siblings are all sisters.

A: And which child?

B: The second child.

A: The second?

B: Yes!

A: Can you list off your sibling's names please?

B: Their names... [Yong Cheat] is one, and [Yong Sokut] is another

oh, and then one more, my younger sibling, but we give it to them while they were a baby.

They died when they were still young, eight years old, we were kids when it occurred.

A: How old are you?

B: When that happened, probably 8 or 9 years old.

If my third sister was about nine years old at that time, maybe that many years?

During this time, I may have been about 3-4 years old.

A: Oh! Your parents died as well isn't that right?

B: Yes!

A: And can you list off your sibling's names please?

B: Another name, [Kim Yoeun], but not in this province so we don't meet.

Come here, but three of them come, that person became a husband over there, we gave them already.

Parents raised them until they could get a husbands and then they would leave and go do Thai business.

A: Starting from when you were young, do you remember times when you were on good terms with them?

And when was it difficult?

Can you remember it and recount it please?

B: Yes I can recount it...

A: When you were a young child, what would you always do?

B: As a child I was over here a bit, over there a bit, i never really had a true destination.

If me and my youngest sister they were in this place here with [Chin Haos] and another aunt.

This aunt raised that aunt, [Pav] is the youngest of all.

They raised them without knowing where to get money for food, she raised them, they also used up the money washing plates of [Kuy Teav] for them.

Until the money she had earned washing plates of [Kuy Teav] for them, for 2 people!

An older sibling and one more, one is [Cheat] and the other [Yong Sokun] they would be together all the time.

only part in return is a little over there a little over here, they didn't have a future like us.

if we lived as orphans we would wander, very shrewd.

Until the time of our grandparents confiscation from the camp, that dreaded camp during the regime

Until the time of our confiscation when we went away with grandma

until the time we can leave from grandma and go to meet our aunt that [Pav] was with [Chen]

washing dishes for [Kuy Teav].

until they stopped with the dishwasher for plates of [Kuy Teav]

They married and took my older sibling with them when they took my sibling to do with them he was older, 13 years old.

until the time he reached the age of 13 years old.

to the time he reached the age of 13 years and suddenly he knew how to harvest, he know how to do it and

he knew how to work for a little money and to the time...to the time we went to count rice

Aunt used to obtain rice, we went to the [Neam Field] (the name of the field) which was very far

and my older sibling walked alone and during that regime there weren't any of those terrible drugs at all.

and we were young, precisely 13 years olds , we could walk as well.

A: Yes!

and we were work with unhusked rice in the province of [Battambang] not going any lower

and when the sun set we lost it already and quiet dismissal

And we have an easy way to walk and the water up to this length

And backpack and 50 cans of rice

It is only heavy when the rainy season is over and the harvest month is over.

From the month of harvest to the time it hadn't ended yet

It was also at war, the Khmer Rouge, we were soldiers.

I harvested about this time, I saw our soldiers and the Khmer Rouge shooting each other, heard the sound of bullets being shot.

And we're going to harvest this thing, look at the Khmer Rouge scorch this! This gas

burned the rice crop, burn whatever, all the people went to burn with fire individually.

Until this time came where I couldn't come here.

The aunt here, she got married here and took me here

Until the time to bring that aunt

that went personally with them, first to the province [Sruol Buol] I waited till she came back here.

A: And what's the name of your parents?

B: My parents, their names...

A: Oh my!

their name, their name is [Yong].

A: Your mother's name is [Yong]?

B: The father is [Yong], but her mother's name is [Chaen].

A: Her name is [Chaen]?

B: Her name is [Chaen].

A: For both of them, if they are still alive, about what age are they?

B: If they're still alive, they're probably around their fifties.

A: I see, they're in their fifties! When you were younger, they were still around, right?

B: They were.

A: In that time, what kind of work did they do to take care of the kids?

B: In that time, we had the fields, as well as other things. We were in the country.

B: We worked the fields, my mom worked in the fields too during the farming months.

B: In the periods where there was free time in the past, they did clerk work and other kinds of work.

B: And he knew how to carve idols, we carved idols

B: We carved idols when they needed us to

B: He also carved for them, he carved leopards and other things.

B: He also made bullets for them, he never used them himself, he just made them.

A: He's really skilled, huh?

B: He was also a painter/drawer, he would do different works of art.

B: Like, he'd do art with Khmer calligraphy and put it on fabrics.

B: He'd write letters for them.

A: Was his writing visually beautiful?

B: It was, yes. But it was also like the work of someone learning, not mature in their skill yet.

B: Like they coudn't wait for him...

A: They didn't wait for him?

B: Until ...

A: So...what was the reason he died?

B: In that time, for most people, they said that it was mostly due to one reason or another

B: But for him, he wasn't sick, no...

A: What about him? Can you describe it?

B: Recount I can, and from that aunt that was a young maiden old enough to marry

B: He said that the story was this, that aunt said that he went to tend the fields

B: He went to go harvest thatch so we could cover the roof.

A: Right, I understand.

B: He went to ask for help from someone else because they had a cart, we didn't have a cart.

B: He went to ask because he was going to harvest and he wanted to know when they were going. In that time...

In that time, as long as you dare to hold hands, hold a shirt, you only know how to hold on already.

Because we were young maidens, but the ghosts are begging for food

To those awful people who captured them and already had a wife, I still can still remember

They had a wife and during the evening came up to the house, and there was a complaint among them.

Arguing with each other, they didn't accept responsibility those awful people anyone who already had wives

Until the complaint was made, he knew completely why it was happening and became someone in the know

even fight each other enough until...

A: During that time your father [...]?

B: My father didn't have much to say.

A: Oh! Really!

B: Yes, indeed! He didn't have much to say.

A: Right! So did you care for him till he died?

B: He...

A: He doesn't have any sickness?

B: No he's sick! He sick, I watch, watch over him talk

Sick; how we are hot in the center of our chests it's hot, if mother in return

He sleeps clutching a water bottle; far too hot

And when he is relieved when he is relieved again of sickness, it's burdensome on mother to see him like that over and over again.

A: Well? Sick forever huh?

B: Only sick for one week, when they're sick they rival each other for just a week.

A: Then they both died?

B: Both died! Remember...

A: You had time to join together, right?

B: No! Wait and see, wait and see to talk

till the time to see him overburdened, the house was far from Grandma's house as well

Until now, mom is so strong and she is far away in a hammock at grandmother's house

Healed grandmother's house until he searched for a doctor to look for something wrong; he still isn't well

The day mother died, father sat down in front of the stairs

he hasn't done anything to react. People like us normally we sit like we don't have any pain inside that:

"If the mother and child dies, the father also goes with."

That he knows how to speak until the day of Mother's death is finished

for three days, father died again, one more.

A: Life is very difficult, not having a mother or a father, huh?

B: Difficult! So difficult because when we are orphans we don't know who to rely on

We don't know what to do.

A: Right! Of course.

B: I tell my life story truthfully.

A: Yes! Until the time....oh! I simply want to listen to your history

it's bitter and for you

do you know which province your parents were residents of?

B: My parents were residents of this province!

[Battambang] in the [Bavel] District.

A: In [Bavel] District?

B: In the village of [Sranal].

A: Yes! And you been married since what year?

B: I'm not married, but I have this child-in-law normally

since the age of uh, until currently, he is 21 already.

A: What year was that?

B: The year 2001.

A: Oh! Really?

B: Yes!

A: So you must love each other, like with all your heart, huh?

B: We love each other heart and heart.

A: And have you told the parents?

B: His parents he also loves, and I think that he saw!

his brother from childhood, he met his aunt, if it's hard from that

and until arriving to meet his aunt is another difficulty of his.

He carries desserts to sell, he carries one plate, a hundred with one hundred per plate, not a problem.

A: Oh, that's different!

B: Yes, indeed! He goes to sell in the morning, when he gets up he makes them, and when he finishes making them, he leaves the house to go sell.

At that time, his house was to the east. In [Thnal] Village like me.

But on this opposite sides of each other, he would sell until it was time to sit and rest at his mother's house here.

To his father-in-law who always calls for his son-in-law until he comes to help him

eat rice, eat whatever until we're finished, and then he knows to go home and sell more desserts until their gone, and then come back.

They exchanged 8 bowls of rice for a kilo of rice at that time.

Because at that time, a kilo of rice was only 800

And we only sell six thousand desserts a day.

And we raised her aunt, her five children, and her husband helped her find fish until ...

A: What about your aunt, does she help sell sweets?

B: When her relative didn't come, she did it by herself.

When her relative did come, they helped.

A: And what about them?

B: In the beginning, when we didn't know the people of this countryside...

When we arrived in this new place, they escorted us, and we carried away.

He also followed behind. I was only 13 years old or so at that time

I came from that time, but I was only 17 years old and I worked in construction.

A: Where are they working?

B: At that point... they worked...they started to work in... [...]!

Our Cultural Village did not exist at that time

The Cultural Village wasn't built

But close to where the Cultural Village would be, we built a new hotel

At that time, it was used as the 4th village's hospital.

The 4th Village was made by the hospital for the soldiers

Medic soldiers... I've worked there ever since then

Did it for three or four years, as much as I could...

A: Did you find it difficult when doing construction?

B: It was very difficult and burdensome, we did hard work.

And they insulted, they insulted even our mothers, but I endured it, why? They said I was stupid

Didn't know the alphabet because I never learned it...

A: You didn't learn anything at all?

B: I never learned, never learned... and so, because we didn't know the alphabet

They keep insulting us, saying things that we had to endure...

A: At that time, did you marry?

B: During that time I didn't have a husband, I was still single.

A: At that time, you did construction and did you do anything else?

B: I only did construction. At that time we

Back then, I worked construction and, for hire, I would work transplanting rice seeds, in one day I would earn 2,500 riel.

A: Transplanting seeds...

B: In exchange for rice!

A: Are you all finished working?

B: Well... I still work in hotels, arranging rooms, that's what I'm up to

Washing the dishes for them

But when I married my husband, he told me finish quickly

That's when I was married, but before then it was hard living with my aunt and I was having a difficult time.

A: And so when you were with your aunt

Did she love you or what?

B: She loved us, but she followed her husband until ...

A: Her husband didn't love you, is that right?

B: Her husband spoke in a condescending manner about us

In a way that when we came back from work

When we got home, he'd look down on us, always saying that we only worked with guys

[...] so I never saw the money

At that time, the monthly wage was only 12 thousand riel.

A: And would you keep the money or give it to your aunt?

B: I'd give it all to them, I wanted to be on good terms with them

My aunt would give me 4000, 4000 Khmer riel, nothing more

She was fine with using all of my money, I was sick and tired of it.

A: Oh, really! So, you worked but never had your own money, you give it all to your aunt?

B: Never had my own!

A: Oh! Because you were living with them?

B: Because we were living with her and I was still young

I didn't know who else I could rely on because I wasn't familiar with anyone else

I didn't know anyone else, unlike the youth today

They can go

Rent a house or a room to stay in but, as for us ...

A: We didn't know.

B: We didn't know, we couldn't go because ...

A: It was hard to be with your aunt?

B: So difficult! I was so sad when I arrived

They insulted me, blamed me, but my aunt wouldn't insult me

But her husband drank, he cursed at and despised me

Looked down on me all the time until I couldn't bear it

He said I was saving money to run after some guy

That's why he never let me have any money, he said:

"Come fish with me, go to sleep, and come fish with me again."

So, when I heard that, I was young and scared so I ran away from home.

When I ran away from home, I ran for three days

My siblings weren't in this area so I ran

By the time I got to my hometown, I had Yong Sokun come visit with me

At that time, I told them ... ”Oh, I ran away from home today

If not, they would continue to abuse me. ”

I hugged my sibling and walked through the field right there

My house moved from there to here.

A: Yes!

B: As I was walking through there ... there was a light

The soldiers were guarding over there, the police began guarding at 12 o'clock that night, and wondered who I was.

I did not dare to answer, I wasn't brave enough

Then they walked over and asked again, then I replied "Me!" "Where are you going? Why didn't you answer the first time?"

At that time, I was very nervous, there was no way I could say I was running away

So I said I was going to my​ grandparent's house in the east, that's when they stopped asking me questions.

Then my younger sibling pointed out that I only had two pairs of pants, two pairs of shirts, and no money, not even a hundred riel.

A: And where did you go to live?

B: I went to my boss's house that night

At one o'clock, one o'clock at night, I arrived at their house

When I got to my boss's house, he sent me to Angkor Chum, leaving my younger sibling at their house

When I arrived at Angkor Chum, I worked there for two days

I worked for two days, then they found out I was at Angkor Chum

They went there after me, I met them at the market in Angkor Chum

But I didn't show my face. I escaped

and then I took a car to Svay Thom at 3 at night

Then I was found in Svay Thom by the younger brother of my boss

He found me and said, "Go back to our house."

My aunt wouldn't give up, at that time she wouldn't give up on me.

"Your siblings are here, they've come and are stay at our house. Come back."

The villagers said, "Oh, child, go home.

Do not come here, you're just a child...

A: Because you were alone!

B: I was alone and struggling

I told my aunt what was wrong and she counseled me.

A: Yes!

B: Then, a couple of my siblings weren't there

I said that I came to live on my own

My older sibling, the eldest, went to his hometown

When they went home, they brought back rice from there

An expensive field that, at the time, hadn't been sold yet

A two-hectare farm which was inherited from our father which he hadn't sold yet.

By the time he left for home, his uncle was dead.

A: His uncle?

B: Yeah, his uncle that would always speak down to him.

A: He died?

B: Oh! He didn't drink anything the day he died.

Because we didn't have anything to eat during that time, we only had our countryside

He would go out and catch snails to boil, to pickle, and served it up right where he would sleep.

His brother went to work and it was four in the morning when he passed.

A: He died from food poisoning from the snails?

B: No! We would all eat the snails.

A: Oh, okay!

B: That day, he didn't drink anything at all.

It was his time to die was what they said!

[Keo], I am free from fault

They say that the locals who know pity me

that I'm free from fault

when all of a sudden, I no longer felt free from fault, things became more difficult than before.

A: Why was that?

B: I had to work to feed my kid because their father wasn't around

to work in order to feed the kid.

A: At this time the kid was still young, yes?

B: The kid was eight or nine years old, more than ten years old.

The older sister was twelve years old, if she is after them; 5 children total

The last of them is [Bun], she is one who walked yesterday.

A: You work to support of all of them?

B: I work to support them all [...].

A pound of rice for only a week I work until I go home

from [Wat Bo Has], do you know [Wat Bo]?

A: Yes! I know it!

B: [Wat Bo Has] I ride a bicycle there (my husband waits for the rice and no longer talks about our stories)

From here! From [Wat Bo] to my home, when I came home, I suddenly saw my brother had gone out to borrow rice, so they can cook rice, I was heartbroken, suddenly I arrived, there was nothing to eat:

"Aunt, can I have 500៛ aunt, I have bought food already."

A: That is difficult ...

B: That knows more ...

A: Yes! Okay, currently is your life with your family more relaxed than before or what?

B: Thinking about it before and now, it's a little more relaxed personally

that my husband is still alive, daily he is sick. His life is difficult.

Considered a little difficult, until the beginning of this year, he knows it's difficult.

While my husband had searched, she rode a [moto]

to go work or do something else and works while being 5 months pregnant

and stopped working on any construction site that has a husband already and [...] .

A: Yes! What about you, you haven't learned in school right?

B: I haven't studied! I did not hear that I studied literacy for three nights

they said that I had a boyfriend, that I had an affair.

A: That's right. Until the happy times ended, Pol Pot, were you born yet?

B: I was not born yet, but experienced the horrible war in the latter end a bit, until the time I...

A: How old were you then?

B: At that time, I do not remember the age.

When the war ran into the straight line, I do not remember.

I only remember that I came here when I was 13 years old

but the war with the Khmer Rouge, was not over yet.

A: Yes! You and what religion do you follow every day?

B: Our Buddhism.

A: Our Buddhism?

B: Yes!

A: How many children do you around every day?

B: 3 children.

B: 3 children!

B: Yes!

A: What is your husband's name?

B: His name is uh ... [Yan Yin].

A: [Yan Yin]?

B: Yes!

A: Your husband's name is Yan Yin?  
B: Yes!

A: How old is he?

B: My husband is 39 years old.

A: Yes!

B: He is one year older than you.

A: 39!

B: Yes!

A: And do you remember ... the name of your grandparents on your father's side?

B: My grandparents on my father's side?

A: Yes! Who are your grandparents on your father's and mother's sides?

B: Oh! That grandma's name is [Ouch], grandpa's name is [Chrouk], that's his name.

A: Yes!

B: And my grandparents on my... mother's side, grandpa's name is [Vaen] and Grandma's is [Kham] that's her name.

I remember everything, I remember that grandpa died just two years ago

If we include grandma, they've been died for a long time, I haven't seen their seen their face, I only know the name they were called by.

A: Your father's grandparents?

B: On the mother side. If it's my father's side, then I've met both.

A: Yes!

B: He died already.

A: And next do you have sibling living in another province?

Your siblings created you?

B: No I don't have any! Only in this province

I have four siblings, one of whom is in Thailand

that has been there since they were young.

A: Yes! And does he remember all of you?

B: He remembers us all! Because those siblings are not hidden from him.

They can tell you everything, they can tell you about their siblings when they come to visit.

From last year when they visited until the time to visit Thailand, they haven't contacted each other.

A: What about you, what do you do every day for work?

B: Last time, every time ... Ah! Every day?

A: Yes!

B: I sell dessert in front of that house, the rest of the time I sell it, I don't take a break.

Like buying fifty thousand, selling forty thousand

Also, day by day, I add more trees until one day, a little more until all the trees are done

I think that I'll stop selling.

A: Right!

B: Until ...

A: Your life is very difficult?

B: Yes, difficult! Until this younger sibling, this is him, he sells goods.

I have to take my daughter-in-law to see them and sorrow

they call to go scavenge for recyclables, they give them 25000៛ a day.

A: Oh!

B: It is close to home.

A: He bought recyclables?

B: He buys recyclables, he also sells goods.

A: Right! So, to close, do you have any final words to send to your posterity

so they avoid something?

B: Of course!

A: For them to try hard in life, right?

B: The children of the next generation, if possible, can avoid

participating in drug use, do not use them at all in order to be a good person

and don't be a child of [...].

A: Right!

B: I only ask that they study until ...

the child is very smart, they have learned sufficiently, his children set aside

money for the child to study in school.

A: Yes! Thank you!

B: Yes!

A: Finally, thank you for allowing me to interview you. Yeah!

And thank you again very much.

B: Yes!