ment interest shifted away from public health and toward public education, for which yearly budget allocations were increasing rapidly (see ch. 9, Education).

**Medical Personnel**

When the country attained independence the government immediately had to face a serious problem presented by the departure of nearly all of the medical personnel brought in by the French. At that time there had been very few Cambodians who had been schooled as doctors, pharmacists, nurses or paramedical personnel. To correct this critical situation the government established schools for training personnel in these fields.

The training program started slowly because of the lack of educational prerequisites on the part of students and the initial disinclination of women to select careers in nursing. In the early 1960's a few European and Cambodian physicians who were trained abroad and a few support personnel were doing the best they could to meet the country's medical needs. By 1967 it appeared that the goal of attracting a sufficient number of qualified personnel for medical training of all kinds might have been reached, since press releases furnishing lists of successful applicants for enrollment in the enlarged training facilities—including the school of nursing—also furnished extensive lists of presumably qualified alternates.

The Faculty of Medicine and Paramedical Sciences was created in 1957; the following year it enrolled its first class of graduates of the full 13 years of preparatory education in a 7-year course leading to the doctor of medicine degree (see ch. 9, Education). In 1967 the Faculty had become part of the Royal University of Phnom Penh and had expanded its teaching program to include training for dentists and hospital specialists. Nearly 500 medical students were enrolled, and it was announced that many of the graduates of the Faculty of Medicine would become teachers. In that manner the country's own specialists would gradually replace foreigners.

The Royal School of Nurses and Midwives—the training center for nurses, auxiliary nurses and midwives—also furnished the schooling of health officers (agents sanitaire). The health officer, who received 4 years of medical training with particular emphasis on sanitation and preventive medicine, provided much of the limited medical assistance available in the countryside.

An official source indicates that there were 337 physicians at the beginning of 1967 (see table 4). A report presented at the second 1966 meeting of the National Congress, however, gave the number as 123, which is more consistent with the 21 reported by the Ministry of Public Health at the end of 1960.
Table 4. Health Facilities and Personnel in Cambodia, 1955, 1963 and 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>1963</th>
<th>1967</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals and health centers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infirmaries and dispensaries</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital beds</td>
<td>2,446</td>
<td>3,869</td>
<td>6,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural midwife posts</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacies and pharmaceutical depositories</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>1,966</td>
<td>2,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwives</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health officers</td>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
<td>877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Includes public and private facilities and personnel.
2 Includes 85 hospitals and 8 health centers.

Source: Adapted from Sangkum Reastr Niyum, Kingdom of Cambodia, Basic Statistics as of 1st January 1967, January 1967, p. 5.

A French-trained gynecologist was serving also as chief of the only hospital in populous Battambang Province. The staff of the one psychiatric hospital, which had nearly 1,000 patients, included 9 psychiatrists. Some general practitioners could furnish prescriptions for glasses, and lenses could be ground in Phnom Penh. The dental corps, which had grown from 3 in 1955 to 28 in 1967, was headed by several French-trained dentists in Phnom Penh.

Doctors in the public health service receive low salaries. During 1966 a doctor in his first hospital post might receive 4,800 riels a month, plus a family allowance of 1,500 riels for those with a wife and two children. In private practice, at 150 riels a visit, he might earn a month's allowance in a single day, since some of the wealthier people preferred to pay for private care despite the low cost of government medical service. Some doctors, particularly those in the large government hospitals in Phnom Penh, supplemented their earnings with small private practices, but only about 10 percent of all doctors were in full-time private practice.

In a country where an entire province may have only one or two physicians, the service of health officers is considered essential. In 1967 there were nearly 400, all trained since 1955. They worked in provincial capitals, in the larger villages and with mobile medical teams, which provided medical treatment, studied the incidence of disease, gave inoculations and presented lectures and demonstrations in health and sanitation practices to rural people.

The number of nurses almost quadrupled between 1955 and 1967, reaching a total of more than 2,200 in 1967. The number of women nurses had increased substantially, but nursing re-
mained primarily a man's profession, particularly for those staffing the rural dispensaries and infirmaries. They treated small wounds and minor illnesses and worked with the mobile medical teams. For more serious cases, they arranged appointments with the provincial public health doctor on his regular rounds. There was still a nursing shortage in 1967, but in part it was countered by the fact that a person entering a rural hospital or health center was normally accompanied by one or more members of his family who would care for him and often would provide his food.

In 1966 midwives delivered almost half of the country's babies, saw most of their mothers on at least one prenatal visit and carried on a rudimentary child clinic program. There is a distinction between the regular midwife (sage-femme) and the rural midwife (accoucheuse rurale), who outnumbers the regular midwives by more than two to one. The rural midwife, usually operating out of her own village home, travels widely throughout the countryside, providing varied services both to mother and to children. A sharp drop in infant mortality between 1955 and 1967 has accompanied the more than tenfold increase in the number of rural midwife posts during that period.

Pharmaceuticals

The country in 1967 had 53 pharmacists. Most had been trained in the Faculty of Pharmacy, which had been established at the Royal University of Phnom Penh in 1961; only four had been registered in 1955. In 1967 there were about 800 pharmacies and pharmaceutical depositories scattered throughout the country; most were staffed by salespeople or by paramedical personnel. Because of the limited number of pharmacists qualified to prepare prescriptions, most of those filled were for imported patent medicines.

Drugs usually are dispensed at cost by rural health officers, but emergency medicines are free. In Phnom Penh the fairly numerous commercial pharmacies are required to remain open all night on a rotating basis in order to fill emergency requests for drugs.

In 1965 a state-owned company, the National Pharmaceutical Enterprise (Enterprise Nationale Pharmaceutique—ENAPHAR), was placed in control of the manufacture and distribution of pharmaceutical products, and in 1967 the Directorate of Pharmaceutical and Chemical Services of the Ministry of Public Health was reported to be considering the commercial production of pharmacopoeia products.

Hospital Facilities

When the country achieved independence, its hospital facilities
were few, and most of the buildings were 35 or more years old and badly in need of repair. Since that time there has been a great deal of improvement. Old buildings have been replaced, and new ones have been added. Much new equipment has been installed. In general, however, the shortage of hospital facilities has run parallel to that of medical personnel.

At the beginning of 1967 the country had 86 hospitals, 8 health centers and over 400 dispensaries and infirmaries. Most were public establishments, but there were four private hospitals and four rubber plantation hospitals. There were also a few private clinics in Phnom Penh and various military, police, school and company medical facilities.

Hospital facilities in Phnom Penh, much more nearly adequate than those elsewhere in the country, served half a million persons in surrounding portions of Kandal Province as well as the residents of the capital city. There were 7 hospitals (5 of which were also teaching institutions), several private clinics, 22 public dispensaries and infirmaries and 6 military infirmaries.

The largest of the general hospitals, the Preah Ket Mealea Hospital, with 1,000 beds, accounted for about one-sixth of the hospital bed space in the country.

The other principal hospitals in the city were the 500-bed Soviet-Khmer Friendship, which had been built with extensive Soviet assistance, the Preah Monivong military installation and the French-operated Calmette Hospital. All of these had operating theaters. Four other metropolitan theaters, located in private clinics in the city, gave the capital almost half of the total of 18 operating theaters available in the country during 1967. In 1955 there had been only one, in the big Preah Ket Mealea Hospital.

Two major establishments devoted to medical care were located outside of Phnom Penh. The one serving the largest number of patients was the Troeung Leprosarium in Kompong Cham Province; it had nearly 2,000 residents and received some private support from the popularly supported Committee for the Battle Against Leprosy. There was also a center for psychiatric care at Takhmau, a few miles south of Phnom Penh, which provided care for about 1,000 mental patients.

Hospitals in the countryside, seldom more than one to a province, are supplemented by rural health centers that give a skeletal kind of hospital care and have a few beds. The pilot center; also at Takhmau, was opened in 1960 with financial assistance from United Nations agencies and the United States, staff provided by personnel trained in the United States and advisers provided by the World Health Organization (WHO). The objective of the health center system was to provide prenatal and postnatal care for mothers and infants, vaccination and inoculation
against contagious diseases, theoretical and practical instruction for student doctors, nurses and midwives, and environmental and health improvement programs consisting of consultations and demonstrations. It was, accordingly, to be the focal point of the rural medical system.

As originally envisaged, the health center system called for the establishment of a center in each of the country's districts (srok), which numbered more than 100 in 1967. One health officer, three male or female nurses, three midwives and at least one health officer would be assigned to each center. The center would include a clinic of 22 beds for regular pediatric and maternity cases. Early in 1967 the health center system expansion program was continuing with government support. Only eight of these units had been placed in operation, however, and some were smaller than envisaged in the pilot operation.

The large number of hospitals and other medical facilities constructed during the 1960's has been made possible partly by extensive foreign assistance, and much of the more sophisticated hospital equipment has come in the form of donations from abroad. In addition, many of the new medical facilities are reported to have been built largely by popular subscription and with labor furnished by the people of the village or district. Reports of civic participation come from official sources, and there is corroborative evidence that people in urban areas have contributed substantial sums toward the building of hospitals and that farm villagers furnish volunteer labor in building their local infirmaries.

Despite the increase in the number of facilities, in 1967 they were still so few and the population of the country was so scattered that many people had nowhere nearby to go for medical attention. To counter this deficiency a mobile medical team system had been initiated. Under this program, a health officer would arrive in a village in advance of the team itself to consult with elders and obtain a general idea of the health needs of the village. A few days later the team would arrive. It would consist ideally of a provincial doctor and one or more nurses, midwives and health officers. During its visit it would provide quickly the closest possible approximation to the services available at rural health posts.

A measure of the problem involved in providing adequate hospital facilities in the countryside can be seen in Battambang Province. In 1967, for a population of 550,000, its hospital facilities were limited to a single 120-bed hospital and one small rural health center. The country's 408 dispensaries and infirmaries available in 1967 provided limited medical facilities but no regular hospital bed care.
The provision of additional physical facilities continued, but buildings were not enough. In addition to the staffing problem, there remained in 1967 an unsatisfied need for medicines and medical equipment, running water and lighting facilities and telephones to advise the rural posts when care might be urgently required.

Antimalarial Campaign

Malaria is most frequently encountered in sparsely populated portions of the country. Malarial regions cover an area representing about three-fourths of the territory, but their combined population totals only a little more than 1 million persons. Most of the malarial regions are in the provinces of Kratie, Kompong Cham, Kompong Thom, Kampot and Battambang. The disease is not present in Phnom Penh. Malaria is the country's most serious public health problem and is important also for the loss of working hours attributable to it. In addition, its presence hinders the development of many fertile parts of the country and thus has an adverse effect on the national economy.

To combat the disease, an agreement for technical assistance was signed with the WHO in 1951. The campaign against malaria which followed has consisted of eradicating the mosquito which transmits it and educating the population of malarial areas in preventive practices.

After the advent of the Sangkum in 1955 the campaign was accelerated, and by 1959 the number of protected persons reached 959,000, almost the entire population of the affected zones. It was necessary, however, to maintain the advantage gained and to prevent further outbreaks of the disease. To this end an administration for the eradication of malaria was written into the Five-Year Plan of 1960-64.

In 1967 the campaign was still being pursued energetically. Deaths caused by malaria, totaling more than 180 in 1962, had dropped to about 75 in 1965 and were occurring at the same rate late in the following year. About 30,000 new infections however, were reported during 1965. In spite of the number of villages treated with DDT and the large number of people classified as protected as a consequence, the more remote areas present unusual control problems. In a country where much of the territory is swamp during half of the year, mosquito control is an extremely expensive as well as a difficult undertaking, and in the mid-1960's the *anopheles balabencensils* mosquito—the main carrier—had yet to be eradicated.
Sanitation

Sanitary conditions in Phnom Penh and a few of the other principal urban centers are superior to those prevailing in the countryside, and both are improving rapidly. In the capital city three water purification plants, the last completed in 1966, provide adequate treatment facilities, but the water is often contaminated during distribution. Many houses do not have running water, but most have some kind of toilet facility.

There is a regular garbage collection service, but scavenging dogs frequently overturn garbage cans, and scatter contents over sidewalks and streets. Septic tanks are used largely to dispose of sewage, but in 1966 a sewer system was being extended, about 6 miles of pipe having been laid during the second half of the year. The population cooperates well with public authorities in keeping streets and properties tidy, and in 1966 an East German magazine article described Phnom Penh as the cleanest city in Southeast Asia.

Refrigeration facilities are limited. Meat, unless well cooked, is likely to cause dysentery. Raw fruits and vegetables are often contaminated on the outer surface, but those which can be peeled may be eaten raw.

In rural areas sanitary practices are often primitive, and rivers and streams are common sources of water for cooking and drinking. It is common practice, however, to draw water for these purposes from the same watercourse that is used for bathing, washing clothes and disposing of garbage and other waste material. Villages are customarily without any systematic waste disposal facilities. The custom of keeping cattle, pigs and poultry under the houses has been a hazard to health, but during the mid-1960's stables, pigsties and henhouses were being built. Individual or collective granaries were being built in order to keep rats and other pests in check. Since independence a community development program conducted by the Ministry of Finance and Planning, assisted by United Nations agencies, included the provision of hygienic latrines for villages.

The purification of drinking water has been an important part of the health program, and under the French protectorate most provincial cities learned to purify their water supply by using alum, sand filtering and chlorination. Some small towns have pumping stations, purification plants and, sometimes, distribution systems. Other villages have purification plants and reservoirs of treated water but no distribution systems. In 1964 only 18 towns had public water systems, and many rural families continued to drink from rivers, irrigation canals and surface water which may have been polluted.

The government has recognized the necessity for supplying
clean water to its citizens as an important health improvement factor, but no more than 5 percent of the rural population has access to safe drinking water. An organization was started in 1960 to train people to operate and maintain well-drilling equipment in an efficient manner; by the end of that year 346 wells had been drilled in various parts of the country; and the program has been continued. By 1966 several water tanks had been installed, and more than 350 water reservoirs had been excavated.

The most significant gains in rural sanitation are expected to result from educating people to be more aware of proper practices. This is being accomplished by lectures and demonstrations in the villages by public health personnel and in the schools under the supervision of the Directorate of School Hygiene of the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts.

**Foreign Aid**

The public health and sanitation program has been strongly supported by foreign aid from several sources. Major assistance has come from the United Nations through the WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); from the United States through the Agency for International Development (AID) and such nongovernment organizations as the Asia Foundation and the Medical International Cooperation Organization (MEDICO) and from France through the French Economic Mission. Assistance has also been given under the Colombo Plan (see Glossary). In addition, Communist-bloc countries, including the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Communist China, have made significant contributions.

This varied assistance from many sources has included the construction of hospitals, infirmaries and at least one rural health training center; malaria eradication; education in medicine, nursing and maternal and child health; public health administration; training fellowships; medical equipment; BCG tests; treponematosus control and the provision of personnel for training Cambodians in the modern practices of surgery, medicine and public health.

**CONSUMPTION PATTERNS**

The average villager does not have a life of extreme hardship. His money income is low but rising. It increased from the equivalent of as low as US$50 per year in the mid-1950's to the equivalent of between US$115 and US$130 in the mid-1960's. This gain was partially offset by a moderate inflationary trend. Cost of living for all items in Phnom Penh rose fairly moderately, from a base of 100 in 1958 to 137 late in 1966; food items alone dropped
from an index peak of 122 in 1963 to 119 late in 1966. Figures for the country as a whole were not available.

The rural dweller's diet of rice and fish was abundant and easy to obtain. It was supplemented by vegetables from a kitchen garden and from gathering roots, wild fruits and berries, and the occasional capture of edible wild game. His housing was simple and inexpensive to build, and his meager supply of clothing was adequate for his needs in a tropical climate.

The rural dweller, growing his own food and often looming his own cloth, was largely self-sustaining. For the urban resident the largest item of expense was food, which accounted for well over half of his essential expenditures. Rice was the most important food cost item, followed by fresh and dried fish. Cabbages and bananas were the most important fruit and vegetable items.

Government statisticians calculated the cost of living of the urban working class on the basis of 60 percent of income for food, 20 percent for housing, 8 percent for clothing and 12 percent for miscellaneous expenses. Urban middle class costs were based on 53 percent for food, 15 percent for housing, 9 percent for clothing, 8 percent for amusements and 15 percent for miscellaneous items. Costs of the upper class included 45 percent for food, 11 percent for housing, 11 percent for clothing, 14 percent for amusements and 19 percent for miscellaneous.

The villager finds entertainment through his local temple; if he wishes to travel some distance for festivals, the local moneylender can make it possible, but moneylenders are the country's principal source of social tension. Most are Chinese rice millers and brokers, and the charging of exorbitant interest rates has been attributed to them. During the mid-1960's the government was attempting to counter usurious practices by establishing credit cooperatives (see ch. 4, Population and Labor Force; ch. 24, Financial and Monetary System).

The rural dweller traditionally has been deeply religious, and Buddhist principles have pervaded his system of values. His religion has taught him to disparage mundane wants, including the accumulation of wealth; therefore, his propensity to save has been minimal. After satisfying his immediate needs for food and clothing, he may spend any remaining funds on gifts to monks or to the temple or on a trip to another part of the country. Each year, thousands of people from all areas of the country attend the annual Water Festival in Phnom Penh.

In the mid-1960's these traditional consumption patterns were changing. The increase in literacy, in schooling and in the availability of consumer goods was creating new designs. The change was much more readily perceptible in urban areas than in the countryside, but people in general were taking an increasingly
mundane attitude toward the importance of money and the degree of satisfaction to be derived in spending it.

**FOOD, CLOTHING AND HOUSING**

Dietary habits appear to be basically the same throughout the country, whether among Khmer, Chinese or Vietnamese, in villages or in provincial capitals. Rice, fish and water are basic needs. Rice is not as thoroughly milled as in many other rice countries and is processed less in the rural areas than in the cities, so as a result it retains many vitamins. The average per person consumption of rice is almost 1 pound a day. *Tuk-trey*, a sauce made of fermented, highly spiced fish oil, is a dietary staple for people at all social levels. *Prahoc*, a spicy paste of Cambodian origin, made of salted, dried fish and allowed to ferment in jars, is also an important part of the diet. At its best, food is characterized by its mixture of delicate flavors and spices, combining the sweet and sour and the bland and bitter in distinctive national recipes.

Tea is drunk generally between meals. It is the first offering to a visitor, and refusal would be considered a rude and unfriendly act. Since tea is boiled it is safe for drinking and can be accepted without hesitation. Water is drunk after meals, generally from a large water jug and a common bowl. Supplements to the basic diet, depending on season, status and wealth, are vegetables, meat (beef and pork), poultry, eggs and fruits, particularly bananas.

The typical meal of a farmer consists of a ball of rice (which the Khmer eat with their fingers; the Chinese and Vietnamese, with chopsticks), three dried fish and a bit of *prahoc*. The diet in the cities, particularly in Phnom Penh, has recently been affected by such Western items as soft drinks and ice cream; the upper class favors French cooking, and there are French, Chinese, Vietnamese and Indian restaurants. Rice, dried fish and *nuoc-man* (a pungent sauce), however, are still staples.

For most of the people the diet is simple, both in variety and in quantity. Rice and fish, supplemented by a vegetable and by fruits that grow wild and are abundant, are the mainstays of the usual meal. Beef, pork and poultry are relished but are served only when the family can afford them. One 1967 estimate indicated that the average daily caloric intake was about 2,000 calories.

Dietary staples are plentiful, but malnutrition is manifested in the caloric underfeeding of children and in vitamin B complex deficiencies, such as beriberi. Such dietary deficiencies result from faulty food customs and a lack of public information about the proper composition of a balanced diet.

Meals are rituals which must not be interrupted, even by talk-
Serving dishes, with straw or cloth covers, are placed on matting on the floor. The members of the family sit around the dishes and serve themselves, the fathers and sons and the mothers and daughters taking their servings in that order of sequence.

Use of the national dress, the sampot, is customary in the countryside, but the wearing of Western clothes is usual in the cities. The sampot, worn by both men and women, is a length of cotton or silk up to 10 feet long and 1 yard in width worn wrapped around the waist, fastened in front and falling to mid-calf. The top of the remaining material is then passed between the legs and tucked into the waistband in back. The effect is to give the appearance, from the front, of loose trousers and, from the back, of a skirt. With the sampot women wear a blouse and shawl, whereas for formal occasions men wear a shirt, a high-necked tunic and long socks.

Women sometimes wear a sarong-type skirt which is suspended from above the breasts; an alternate costume for men includes a tailored vest, short trousers and a long-sleeved tunic. Loosely draped turban-like headgear is used by both sexes for protection against the sun. In the countryside men usually wear the sampot without a top and go barefoot. In remote rural areas women may also work in the fields naked above the waist.

In most of the rural areas children wear a more Western form of dress. Boys dress in shirts and shorts, and girls usually wear blouses and skirts or simple dresses. Increasingly, however, the garments of both boys and girls are in the process of regimentation by the establishment of prescribed designs and colors of dress as the uniforms of the Royal Khmer Socialist Youth (Jeunesse Socialiste Royale Khmère—JSRK), a paramilitary youth organization.

Other ethnic groups have their own traditional customs in dress. The Vietnamese of both sexes wear wide trousers and long robes, whereas the tribal Khmer Loeu often display nude torsos above breechcloths for men and short homespun skirts for women (see ch. 5, Ethnic Groups and Languages).

Although most people in the country have a few garments that are worn only on ceremonial or other special occasions—a sash-like dress scarf worn draped from one shoulder to the waist by Khmer women is an example—most clothing is simple and often made from cloth produced on the household loom. Consumer goods however, have become increasingly necessary, and their possession is a prestige symbol.

The traditional village home is inexpensively built with the help of relatives and neighbors. The typical house is rectangular in shape and 12 by 20 to 20 by 30 feet in size. Its wooden floor perches on wood or concrete piles as much as 10 feet high, the
height sometimes depending on the likelihood of flooding during the rainy season but more frequently reflecting the degree of prosperity of the owner. There is a sharply gabled thatch roof with overhanging eaves to protect the interior from monsoon rains. The matted thatch material may be of palm fronds or savanna grass, which is used widely in rural housing throughout Southeast Asia. Walls are constructed of overlapping thatch panels strung horizontally between posts supporting the roof.

Customarily, the house is without windows, but a space is left between the wall panels and the overhanging eaves to permit ventilation. Sometimes, however, there are apertures in the walls over which bamboo mats are lowered during heavy winds or rains. There may be several rooms, separated by partitions of dried palm fronds or other material, but the houses of the poor often have only a single room. The kitchen is usually a separate room or an adjacent shed, sometimes joined to the house by a ramp, but in some instances cooking is done beneath the house. Crowding is general, and privacy is minimal.

Most houses are constructed entirely of thatch except for the wooden floors, but some of the better dwellings are of masonry or wood with tile roofs. In recent years considerable housing construction has been accomplished by the government or with its assistance. It was estimated that a housing development planned by the government in 1967 for Khmer Krom refugees from South Vietnam would cost about 8,000 riels for each unit.

Furnishings may consist of several mats, cushions and chests containing one or two garments for each member of the family. Each family has its own statue of Buddha (see ch. 11, Religion). Festive platters and fruit dishes, which may be either of wood encrusted with mother-of-pearl or of copper and silver, are standard equipment for entertaining. Bowls of copper and silver are used to serve betel nuts, which figure prominently in most ceremonies.

The kitchen customarily is equipped with a portable oven made of baked clay, pots, a water pitcher, a jug, bowls and a rice ladle. Under the house, between the pilings, the family loom, cart, dug-out canoes and livestock are kept. The ladder or wooden staircase leading to the raised entrance, usually facing the east, must be protected ritually because it is believed to provide a route by which evil spirits may enter a house.

This form of building is in marked contrast to the well-constructed new public buildings of frame or masonry which are being built in the countryside. These are the new administrative buildings, schools, hospitals and health centers. The thatch homes contrast also with residences in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville and
a few of the main provincial towns, which are often solidly built structures of wood or masonry.

**PATTERNS OF LIVING AND LEISURE**

The society has two divergent patterns of living. The traditional one, evolved from an agricultural life, is followed in the rural areas. The new one, a part of the process of modernization, has become accepted in urban society even where the old pattern has not been completely discarded.

The country is predominantly agricultural, and sowing time and harvesting time are highly important. The proper moment for sowing rice, transplanting the tender shoots or bringing in the harvest is dictated by nature.

**Use of Calendars**

The Western calendar is used by the more sophisticated, by the government in its official transactions and by the educational and business institutions. Only rarely is the Buddhist day, month or year indicated beside the Western identification in an official government communication.

The formal calendar is a combination of both the lunar and the solar. The months are based on the movement of the moon, but the yearly cycle of months is corrected by the addition of intercalary days to bring them into accord with the movement of the sun.

The lunar months are also the basic units for the religious calendar, which has 12 months of 29 and 30 days, alternately; the first is known as female and the second as male. Marriages may conventionally be celebrated only during the female months.

The months of the religious calendar are divided into halves of 15 days each in the male months and 15 or 14 days in the female months. The days in each are numbered from 1 to 15 in the male months and from 1 to 15 or 1 to 14 in the female months. During the first half, in which the moon is waxing, the word "kot" (one who grows) is added to the number; during the second half, the word "noo" (one who destroys himself) indicates that the day is in the time of the waning moon.

Use is also made of a 12-year-cycle calendar of Chinese origin, which is used in neighboring South Vietnam. It carries the names of animals, followed by a numeral from 0 to 9. Each year is designated by a combination of the name of the proper animal of the year and of the proper numeral. It takes 60 years to complete the cycle of all possible number and animal combinations.

Certain days of the week are considered to have special significance. For example, some villagers refuse to lend money on Monday but gladly make purchases on that day. Saturday is considered a bad day throughout most of the country because it is liked by
demons and spirits; it is, however, a good day to appeal to in- 
habitants of the spirit world.

Holidays

The rhythm of life is strongly influenced by the alternation 
of wet and dry seasons which determine the times of sowing, 
transplanting and harvesting the rice crop. Certain days during 
these periods are the occasions for festivals and holidays, many 
of which are associated with the Buddhist religion. Among the 
most important are the Plowing of the Holy Furrow, which oc- 
curs in May at the beginning of the rainy season, and the Water 
Festival, which celebrates the reversal of the current in the 
Tonle Sap River (see ch. 2, Physical Environment). The Water 
Festival usually occurs in late October or early November and is 
specifically fixed by the full moon of the month of Kattik, within 
a few days of the actual reversal of the waters.

Both of these festivals are of the greatest traditional impor- 
tance, but neither is an official holiday. Official holidays are nu- 
merous, however; they vary somewhat from year to year, and 
different days apply to different sectors of the population. The 
Ministry of Public Health and Labor publishes lists applicable 
to workers in commerce, industry and agriculture; the Council 
of Ministers publishes lists of days applicable to personnel in 
national service. In 1967 the lists for both categories totaled 14 
holidays; the traditional days in the lunar calendar and those 
in the Western Gregorian calendar were included. These official 
holidays were granted with full pay to civil servants and em- 
ployees of state and mixed industries; in practice, they also were 
granted to most employees of private companies.

The most widely observed of the official holidays is New Year's, 
which occurs on April 13 and continues through April 15. It is a 
time of cleansing. On the last day of the old year houses are 
cleaned. On New Year's day itself, Chaul Chhnam, the people 
go to the temple to spray the images with water and to pray 
for good fortune during the coming year. On the last day of the 
period, they make sand hills in and around the temples and 
insert in them colored paper flags as pleas for prosperity. Sporting 
events and all-night dances are regularly featured.

Two of the three official Buddhist holidays are not recognized 
as official holidays for foreigners in business enterprises. Both 
are of 2 days' duration but involve only a half day's release from 
work each day. The first of this series of two, occurring in Jan- 
uary or February, is Meakha Bauja, which mourns Buddha's 
death. The second is Visa Bauja, which is in April or May; it is a 
triple anniversary of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.

The remaining official Buddhist ceremony, in September or
October, is Prachum, which lasts for 3 days during which offerings are made to the monks for the benefit of the dead. In addition to these formally designated national religious holidays, there is the October and November season of the Kathen. During this time, each monastery enjoys its own Kathen day on which villagers join in a procession bearing gifts to the monks (see ch. 11, Religion). Finally, Vietnamese are permitted two half days away from work to observe their own lunar New Year, Tet, which occurs in February.

Secular holidays are determined by the Gregorian calendar and are full holidays for both nationals and foreigners. These holidays include Labor Day on May 1, Constitution Day on May 6, United Nations Day on October 24, Independence Day on November 9 and Western New Year’s Day on January 1.

Christmas, formerly an official holiday, was not so designated for 1967, but employers were instructed to adopt a liberal policy in releasing Catholics to attend mass that day and on other holy days. That year government employees were dismissed during the afternoon hours of November 17 to enjoy the Water Festival.

Days of special occasion, such as the departure or return from the country of the Chief of State or the arrival of a foreign delegation of particular importance, are frequently designated official holidays. Altogether, it has been estimated that 50 or 60 days a year are ordinarily taken as official or unofficial holidays.

**Diversions**

Holidays of all sorts are treasured. People have an acute sense of the dramatic, and their celebrations abound with costumes, lights, floats and parades. Shadow plays are popular; music and dancing are enjoyed; and fireworks are a feature of every festival. Festive occasions are closely related to the Buddhist religion, since most are, in fact, Buddhist days of observance and since the temple itself is often the scene of feasts and theatrical performances.

The pleasures of the people are simple ones. Motion pictures are well attended in urban areas but are not available to villagers. There are a few “bar dancings” in Phnom Penh—night clubs featuring taxi dancers—and people everywhere are devoted to spectator sports. Fishing is popular, but big-game hunting is prohibited by law. In general, enjoyment of leisure time is associated with festivals, but there are enough of these to provide plentiful diversion for all.

There are no important distinctively national games, but kite-flying contests, featuring elaborately painted kites shaped like dragons or birds, are enjoyed by adults and children, and races in huge pirogues propelled by 40 rowers are featured during the Water Festival. Both the government and the population at large,
however, are keenly interested in such international sports as soccer, bicycling, track and field events, swimming, basketball, volleyball and table tennis. This increasing interest in sports is strongest in, but not confined to, Phnom Penh. In the capital an extensive system of sports facilities, the National Sports Complex, was constructed during the early 1960’s at a cost of over 420 million riels. Competition throughout the country is intense among groups representing schools, youth organizations and military units, and between provinces and districts.

Before 1955 sports competition at the international level was limited, but that year the country competed in the Southeast Asian Games, finishing next to last. In 1966 the new sports arena had been completed, and Cambodia was host to 16 other Middle and Far Eastern nations in the first meeting of members of Games of the New Emerging Forces and finished third. The country has received an invitation to participate in the Olympic Games to be held in Mexico City in 1968.

Cambodians are extremely fond of gambling. They find their only legal outlet for this taste in the state-operated national lottery. A clandestine lottery is said to exist also, however, and raids on illegal gambling houses are frequently reported in the press. Any public employee arrested for gambling is subject to dismissal, and the practice is forbidden to all Cambodians except on rare occasions when blanket exemptions are granted. For example, on New Year’s Day in 1967 participation in games of chance was authorized during the 3-day holiday. That same year a gambling casino was opened at the mountain resort of Bokor, but it was built for the use of foreigners only.

Social Problems

Social problems are few (see ch. 25, Public Order and Safety). Murder and sex crimes are at a minimum, but petty theft is common. Habitual drunkenness and alcoholism are almost unknown, although various kinds of alcoholic beverages are produced, and a large amount of wine is consumed, usually during festivals and on social occasions.

Drug addiction is rare in rural areas but is widespread among the Chinese and Vietnamese in the cities. Opium has long been a government monopoly and the source of considerable revenue. In the mid-1960’s, however, control of opium had become stringent. Importing, selling, stocking, buying or any other transaction involving the drug or poppies and poppyseed were all punishable, even as first offenses. Search without warrant on suspicion regarding drug violations was permitted any time of day or night. These measures suggested a fear of the spread of drug addiction and a determination on the part of the government to abolish it.
In 1967 the welfare program applied different rules to civil servants, military forces and police; to workers in state-owned industrial and commercial establishments and mixed-ownership establishments in which the state was the majority stockholder; and to workers in private enterprises.

A retirement and disability pension system was provided only for the civil servants, military forces and police. It provided coverage to widows and minor orphans; widows received half of the pension. The system was funded by a 6-percent deduction from each employee's salary plus an annual government contribution equal to 14 percent of the total amount of government salaries in the national budget; this sum was to be paid into the Civil Pension Fund.

Pensions were paid from the Fund on retirement for age or disability. Since 1962 special survivor benefits had been paid to families of civil or military personnel killed by hostile action. Two months' salary was paid if death occurred while on leave and 1 year's if it occurred while on an official mission.

Some of the larger private companies had their own retirement plans, however, and in 1967 a government publication reported that pension plans were in effect for most of the state and mixed enterprises, although they were not required under the government's instructions.

Other social legislation concerned working hours, wages, family allowances and workmen's compensation. Here, too, there was considerable diversity. A schedule of paid sick leave applied only to civil servants, but temporary disability allowances resulting from on-the-job accidents and service-related illnesses applied to all workers.

Compensations in this area varied according to category of employment. Medical expenses usually were reimbursed directly to the head of the family at the rate of 100 percent for workers, 50 percent for their wives and children and 40 percent for their parents. All employers were required to grant pay advances under specified conditions.

For the working force, accident compensation was generally granted irrespective of fault. This payment took various forms, including medical care and compensation at government expense for civil servants and lesser benefits for other workers. Items covered under various circumstances included return to the place of employment and funeral expenses.

Benefits usually commenced after 4 days of absence from work for on-the-job injuries or professionally related ailments. One-half of daily wages were payable from the fifth day, the indemnity to include regular and supplementary payments, including
family benefits. These benefits were payable to the worker until the healing of the wound or recovery from the work-incurred ailment but were to depend on the percentage of disability and were not to exceed 1 year's salary.

The Inspectorate of Social Affairs, an entity of the Ministry of Public Health and Labor, had general responsibility for giving financial and material assistance to homeless victims of calamities, such as fires and floods. It also supervised the Preah Sihanouk Children's Protection Center—a boarding school for needy children—and the Chamcar Mon Lodging Center for aged and injured people and needy children. The Inspectorate of Farms and Manual Education Centers, another entity of the Ministry of Public Health and Labor, included among its responsibilities the resettlement of Khmer Krom refugees from South Vietnam.

A more generally directed public welfare service, the National Mutual Aid Association (Oeuvre Nationale d'Entr'aide—ONE), was created in 1949 to provide those in need with funds, food and clothing. Under the direction of Prince Sihanouk during 1967, its contributions in money and commodities to the victims of border hostilities or to the impoverished in villages were occasions for presentation ceremonies presided over by officials of the government and were accorded extensive press coverage.

Not in itself a welfare institution, the cooperative system performs important welfare functions. The Royal Office of Cooperation (Office Royale de Coopération—OROC) is described in the legislation which created it as an organization formed in the public interest. In 1967 the members of the cooperatives and their families included as much as one-fourth of the population, and the purchasing, vending and credit facilities had a substantial effect upon the welfare of the people. The most important services rendered were in connection with credit extended for the costs of planting and services in connection with marketing of the rice crop (see ch. 19, Agriculture; ch. 21, Labor Relations and Organization; ch. 24, Financial and Monetary System). In addition, legislation in force permits and prescribes rules for the establishment in business enterprises of mutual assistance funds.

Most of the private welfare organizations are of recent origin. The Women's Mutual Health Association was established in 1953 as a result of the efforts of a group of women, most of them American, to demonstrate the use of powdered milk. Encouraged by the Queen, it developed into an influential organization associated with the Preah Ket Mealea Hospital in Phnom Penh where it has concerned itself with prenatal and postnatal care and general child care. In 1962 the organization made a financial donation to the hospital's pediatric center. Also of importance is the Cambodian Red Cross Society, which was organized in 1951;
it was presided over in 1967 by a princess of the royal family and depended for its operation on contributions and an annual fund raising drive.

Other private welfare associations included the Society for the Assistance of Children, the Association of Cambodian Women, the Association of the Friends of Secondary and Technical National Education and the Medical Assistance Society for the Religious. There are also various welfare organizations sponsored by certain ethnic groups: the Association of Vietnamese in Cambodia operated a dispensary in Phnom Penh that was open to all, and the Chinese cared for the physical and monetary needs of their compatriots. The extent of welfare work of the Chinese community was presumably disturbed in mid-1967 by the government's action in dissolving the Khmer-Chinese Friendship Association, which had engaged in some welfare activities.
CHAPTER 9
EDUCATION

The growth of education during the 1960's made the country a leader among the developing nations which were establishing new educational programs. Education allocations in its austerity budgets have been enormous in comparison with those in other such essential fields as health and welfare. Statistics bear out the glowing accounts of educational progress which appear in government journals.

At independence the country inherited the educational system which had originated in France and had been transplanted intact to its colonies. Emphasis was on classical studies. French was taught as a second language and was often used as the principal language of instruction. Since that time the Cambodian Government has tried to bring about a reduction of outside influences on the country's institutions and values. Much more than a generalized idea, this has been a continuing program identified in official reports as "Khmerization." The educational system, however, was not appreciably affected by this program until the early 1960's, and in 1967 French influence was still strong.

Nevertheless, some steps had been taken, and more were planned, to reduce the French emphasis on classical studies in the public school curriculum and to reduce the use of the French language in the classroom. It was generally recognized that the classical curriculum was ill adapted to the needs of a developing country and that excessive emphasis on the use of French in education placed a heavy burden on students. The high rate of failures in the examinations given at the end of secondary school was largely attributed to the difficulties students had in mastering a foreign language.

In 1965 Prince Norodom Sihanouk had suggested the essentials of a basic change which he felt should be made in the Cambodian version of the French classical educational system. In 1967 the Higher Council of Royal Universities refined his suggestions into a concrete proposal under which both the cyclical system and the basic thrust of secondary education would be altered to meet the country's need for practical education. French was to be de-emphasized still further, and vocational education was to be stressed.
The revision of the school curriculum was to be accompanied by a deliberate avoidance of studies in scientific, technical and vocational fields of specialization that were too sophisticated to be of immediate practical value to the developing economy. The government planners were determined to develop an educational system which would produce a quantity of trained workers in balance with the number of trained supervisors and would produce both only in fields in which they were in short supply.

The changes desired by the government were not being accomplished easily. The fast growth of the school population has outpaced the great efforts to overcome a shortage of teachers. Because of this shortage, instruction methods suffer, and the teaching process continues to consist largely of much dictation, rote memorization and verbatim recitation of textbooks. There is often little comprehension on the student’s part and little opportunity for him to ask questions or to participate in discussions.

The disadvantages deriving from the teacher shortage are compounded by a shortage of textbooks, both in titles and in numbers of copies. In many instances the only book available in a class is the one used by the teacher. The shortage of textbooks, particularly acute in the primary classes because of the overwhelming number of new students entering the first level, is aggravated by a shortage in the variety of titles available in Khmer on technical subjects. A 1967 resolution by the National Congress called for simple and understandable transliterations of technical terminology into Khmer until committees could designate and approve specific terminology to be used in translation (see ch. 13, The Governmental System).

The new focus on the Khmer language and on practical courses of study had not found popular acceptance. Most parents and students continued to be interested in classical rather than vocational or professional studies, and most students with sufficient academic ability and good fortune to gain entrance to schools above the secondary level were studying to become teachers, physicians and lawyers. Few were interested in even the highest levels of technical education. Nevertheless, since the facilities for higher level classical instruction were still insufficient to absorb all of the candidates who applied, many were reluctantly accepting what they regarded as trade schools.

The government is determined that most young people will be trained as farmers or as skilled industrial technicians, but in the face of widespread opposition to these objectives, educational authorities sometimes seem uncertain as to how fast they should proceed. Announcements of progress in the transformation of the school system were often filled with assurances that there was no
intention of surrendering the benefits inherent in the French educational and cultural heritage.

In the mid-1960's young people were anxious to obtain an education, and parents were willing to make sacrifices so that they could obtain it. In this predominantly agricultural society there was little evidence of the reluctance, characteristic in much of Southeast Asia, of farming people to forgo their children's help so that they may obtain an education.

Popular support of the government's efforts is evidenced in many other ways. Parent-teacher associations are numerous and active, and civic groups and private individuals at all levels of society are reported to make substantial contributions of money and services in building schools. In rural areas schools are sometimes built by the contribution of labor furnished and funds subscribed by villages; the overall private contributions reportedly reach as much as 80 percent of the total costs. In urban areas large sums for school construction are sometimes subscribed by the more prosperous citizens. At the new Kompong Cham Technical University, two buildings have been gifts of wealthy individuals, and one building each has been donated by Chinese and Vietnamese communities.

In the past foreign aid to education was substantial. In 1967 the French Government was continuing to operate several schools and to furnish teachers at higher levels. West Germany, the Soviet Union and Communist China have furnished school buildings and equipment. Before the termination of its assistance program in 1963, the United States had made contributions to education in excess of $4 million. In general, however, during the mid-1960's the rapid growth of the school system was essentially financed by the country itself.

The teaching profession holds a respected place in society, and teachers are among the best paid civil servants. The esteem in which careers in education is held is underlined by the fact that in 1965 more than a third of the enrollment in institutions of higher education consisted of persons studying to be teachers.

HISTORY

As early as the thirteenth century, there was an educational system under which young boys were sent to temple schools, where monks taught them to read and write Khmer and instructed them in the sacred writings of Buddhism (sutras) and in simple manual arts. The aim of the student was to learn Buddhist doctrine and to practice it in order to acquire merit. By the time the French protectorate was established in 1864, temple schools existed in most villages and provided virtually the only type of available education.
Modern education was introduced gradually. Three years after the establishment of the protectorate, King Norodom set up a school in which French was taught to children of the royal family. In 1878 the first French school was opened in Phnom Penh, within 20 years primary schools had been established in some provincial capitals.

Public education had its start in 1911 when King Sisowath issued the first decree on compulsory education and required parents to send their sons at the age of 8 to the temple schools to learn to read, write and count. This edict, however, was largely ignored. Shortly thereafter state schools—designated as Franco-Cambodian schools—began to be established. In theory, girls as well as boys could attend these schools, but in practice few girls did so.

In 1916 another royal edict, supplementing the first, was issued. It directed the parents living within 1½ miles of a Franco-Cambodian school—of which there were 29 in 9 provinces—to send their sons to school as soon as they reached 10 years of age. This edict also went largely unnoticed.

In 1918 the governor general of French Indochina approved a new plan aimed at establishing a permanent educational system in Cambodia as a part of the French educational system for all of Indochina. All previous regulations were abolished, and the director general of education in Hanoi was given responsibility for education in Indochina and was to administer it with the assistance of the heads of education of the member countries.

According to the 1918 plan, children were to have an education similar to that available in France. The system was to consist of 6 years of primary school, followed by 4 years of advanced primary school and then by 3 years of secondary school. At the end of the 18 years, students were to be given an examination. Upon their successful completion of the examination, the students would be permitted to enter universities in Indochina and France.

The new educational system was foreign to the Cambodian tradition, and many factors impeded its spread. Most people preferred to send their sons to the traditional temple schools rather than to the unfamiliar state schools. As a result, few attended the state schools, and, of those who did attend, few attended for more than 3 years.

In 1924 an experimental school was opened in Kampot Province with a view to reforming the temple schools by instructing monks in modern European teaching methods. By 1930 a few monk-teachers had been trained and sent to teach at certain local temples, which became known as modernized temple schools. The curriculum offered in such schools was basically the same as that of the state primary schools except that no French was
taught. The standard of teaching was satisfactory but not as high as that of the government schools.

The experiment was an immediate success. As an extension of the traditional system, the modernized temple school won the approval of many parents and students who had been reluctant to accept the state schools. The French authorities were also pleased to have modern education gaining a foothold in the country. Modernization of the temple schools spread rapidly; about 100 new ones opened every year.

Despite the success of the modernized temple schools, the French educators did not consider them to be the ultimate solution to the educational problem. One drawback was that girls were excluded from the schools. Another difficulty was that many monks left the monastic system after having received training to teach. Although the modernization process was continued the French authorities planned eventually to transform all modernized temple schools into state schools.

The nationalist movement, which developed during World War II and led to independence in 1958, was accompanied by an ever-increasing enthusiasm for education. It became evident that trained personnel would be needed to carry on the functions formerly performed by the French and Vietnamese brought in by the French to fill many civil service positions. Throngs of children flooded the schools, but the government remained financially unable to satisfy its people's demand for learning. In general, it attempted to continue and expand the French school system, and between 1947 and 1951 about 100 modernized temple schools were converted to state schools.

The growth in education in the 1950's and 1960's was phenomenal, and it reflected the amount of public money spent in this field. The 12.2 percent of the national budget allocated to schools in 1954 rose steadily to 19.2 percent in 1966. Only the national defense received consistently higher allocations. The 1967 draft budget reserved 1,445,953,000 riels (see Glossary) for national education. In contrast, public health and public works were to receive 389,872,000 and 234,828,000 riels, respectively.

The growth in educational opportunities at progressively higher levels has been accompanied by a shift in emphasis. During the first years after independence, emphasis was placed on the expansion of primary education. It was later shifted to general secondary schooling and, during the 1960's, toward higher education and technical studies at both secondary and higher levels. These shifts have been expensive. A comparative study by a United Nations agency concerning educational costs in various countries found that in 1962 the average cost per student in primary school for a year's study was 837 riels. For a student
in a general secondary school the cost was 3,158 riels; for a student in a technical school at the secondary level it was 5,852 riels.

Both in the past and in the present the educational system has been used as an instrument of social control. Traditionally, the Buddhist monks regarded their temple schools primarily as places for teaching the importance of gaining merit and of following Buddhist precepts and only secondarily as educational institutions. In the mid-1960's the government saw the schools as an appropriate place for the indoctrination of young people in the precepts of Khmer socialism. This was accomplished often by lectures to students, distribution of literature and an intensive school sports program which identified with national pride. More often, it was accomplished by the establishment in schools of units of the Royal Khmer Socialist Youth (Jeunesse Socialiste Royale Khmère—JSRK), a paramilitary uniformed organization for boys and girls which is devoted to furthering Khmer socialist goals and the nation's sense of identity.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

In the public school system, education is free at all levels. To proceed from one level of education to another, it is necessary only to pass the required examination and to find a place in an institution. Neither of these requirements is easy, however, since only a minority pass the difficult examinations, and qualified applicants for entrance in institutions greatly exceed vacancies.

Children are nominally required by law to attend school through the sixth grade, but in 1966 more than one-fourth of all children appeared to drop out at the end of the first grade, and there were five times as many first graders as sixth graders. These apparent dropout figures are misleading, however, since the extraordinary growth of the primary school system during recent years accounts in considerable part for the higher registrations in lower grades (see table 5). About half of the students completing the primary cycles in the mid-1960's were going on to some form of secondary education, a good record for a developing country.

Education for girls continues to lag, largely because girls were not permitted in the temple classes where most boys formerly received their education. A high school for girls was established in 1945, but girls' education did not receive legislative support until the enactment of a woman's rights law in 1955. Since that time, the schooling of girls has progressively closed the gap, and for every 100 boys who entered the first grade in 1966 there were 80 girls. The female proportions in more advanced classes were lower but were growing. Between 1950 and 1964 the per-
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*The source material does not define "vocational education." Essentially, it is secondary education in technical specialties. It may include some education at the lower university level.*

Source: Adapted from Sangkum Reasr Niyum, Kingdom of Cambodia, Basic Statistics as of 1st January 1967, January 1967, p. 4.

The percentage of girls in all primary and secondary schools rose from 9 to 34 percent, and in 1965 about 800 of the 6,000 students enrolled in schools at higher educational levels were female.

**Administration**

At the national level the operations of the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts are conducted by its Dependent Services, which consist of the National Office of Educational Planning and the directorates of Secondary Education, Primary Education, Physical Education, School Sanitation, Arts and Cultural Relations. In provinces and autonomous municipalities local educational directorates are responsible to the national directorates of secondary and primary education and exercise authority over the administration and inspection of public and private primary and secondary schools and other educational institutions not connected with the royal university system. The royal universities are autonomous, but the Higher Council of Royal Universities furnishes advice and guidance on policy for higher education and coordination of subjects taught at higher levels. In addition, the Cabinet-level Higher Council of National Education serves in an advisory capacity for the educational system as a whole.

**Primary Schools**

Primary education is divided into two cycles of 3 years each.
At the end of the first cycle—the elementary primary school—students may take the state examination for the certificat d'études primaires élémentaires. Those who successfully complete the second cycle—the complementary primary school—receive the certificat d'études primaires complémentaires.

Training is offered to boys in the modernized temple schools as well as in the state institutions, but it is limited to the first cycle, and the curriculum does not include French. In general, the quality of instruction is lower than that available in the state schools.

In state schools—which both boys and girls attend after they are 6 years old—the curriculum in the mid-1960's was composed of ethics, civics, history, arithmetic, geography, science and hygiene, Khmer and French languages, manual training, draftsmanship and physical training. Khmer is the language of instruction, and French is begun in the third year. An endeavor is made to impart practical and useful knowledge and to instill a liking for manual work. Educational authorities plan to simplify the course of study somewhat and to bring about a greater standardization of teaching methods.

Between 1955 and 1967 the number of students in state primary schools rose sharply from fewer than 280,000 to over 900,000 (see table 5). Some of these students were in the temple schools, which are considered part of the state primary system. During the 1955–67 period, however, the percentage enrolled in the temple establishments dropped from 30 percent to 10 percent of the total state primary enrollment.

The growth of primary schooling has been so great that in 1966 public or private primary education was available to almost all of the population of primary school age. In a few of the frontier areas, however, the population was so sparse and scattered that the government found it necessary to provide boarding facilities for some of the students.

Primary school facilities have not grown with sufficient rapidity to make possible a sufficient improvement in the quality of education. Unresolved problems include the insufficiency in number of schools, particularly at the primary level; shortage of books; and difficulty that children, especially those from the temple schools, have in passing the state examination at the end of the third year. The largest impediment is the acute teacher shortage. In some schools the teachers in 1966 were required to hold two sessions daily and, in some of these, to teach 60 or more students in a single class. The overall student-teacher ratio was 46 to 1 in 1955. The ratio remained the same during 1963, but in 1967 it had risen to 67 to 1.
General Secondary Schools

General secondary education is offered as a 7-year course divided into two main cycles of 4 and 3 years, respectively. A few schools offer both cycles, but the first (4 year) cycle is normally offered in institutions known as collèges, and the second (3 year) cycle is given in secondary schools called lycées.

At the end of the collège cycle, students are required to take a state examination. Successful candidates are awarded the diplôme d'études secondaires du premier cycle.

The lycée is also divided into two parts, the first of 2 years' duration and the second of 1 year. At the end of each part the students are again required to take state examinations. Those who pass the examination given upon completion of the first part are awarded the first baccalauréat; those who pass the second part are awarded the second baccalauréat. The first baccalauréat is generally regarded as being the approximate equivalent of a high school diploma in the United States, and the second baccalauréat is regarded by some authorities as being the equivalent of 1 year of United States college education and by others as the equivalent of 2 years of college.

State examinations for the first and second baccalauréat are given twice annually; students may make application to take them whenever they feel prepared. The examinations are regarded as extremely difficult, however, and many students who apply to take them fail to do so because when the moment comes they feel they need more time to prepare. In addition, some are unable to take the examination because they are not held in all schools. In 1966 they took place only in Phnom Penh and in a few provincial centers. During that year 7,467 attempted the first baccalauréat, and only 2,028 passed, whereas 561 of 1,366 candidates for the second baccalauréat were successful.

In 1967 there were 21 state lycées and 87 state collèges, which accommodated 88,000 students. This represents great achievement, for in 1955 there were only 4,200 students in the public secondary schools. The number of schools is still inadequate, however. Even though a substantial portion of those unable to gain admission to the state schools can be accommodated in the private schools—provided they can meet the expenses—others who desire further education are unable to obtain it because of the lack of facilities.

In 1967 the Higher Council of Royal Universities, acting on suggestions made earlier by Prince Sihanouk, made a proposal for revising the system of secondary education. Under the terms of this proposal, the first and second years of secondary school would observe a series of academic cycles new in content as well as in duration.

The first and second years of the reconstituted secondary in-
stitutions would become an observation period during which a council of teachers would determine the principal aptitudes of each student on the basis of a common course of studies pursued by all members of the class. The third and fourth years of secondary schools would then become an orientation period in which the student would be tentatively assigned to one of sections “A,” “B” or “C.” These sections would emphasize study in a particular field which would presumably be followed during the remainder of his academic life and direct him toward the line of work which he would pursue after his education. The three sections of specialization would be classical, technical and agricultural. Parents would be advised to enroll their children in the sections recommended by the teacher councils, but they would be permitted to select other sections that the students could enter only after passing an aptitude test provided for this purpose.

Students in the “A,” or classical, section would ideally be destined for university level training following successful achievement of the second baccalauréat. Students in the technical and agricultural sections would continue their studies in lycées or vocational schools until completion of the first baccalauréat, at which time they would be prepared to enter the labor market, go on to higher studies in technical fields or continue secondary training for a second baccalauréat which would qualify them for university entrance.

These proposals represent a means of expanding secondary vocational education and of integrating it into the general school education pattern. Late in 1967 the proposals were under study by the Higher Council of Royal Universities with the objective of finding means of implementing them on a selective basis as early as the beginning of the 1968–69 school year.

**Vocational Schools**

The vocational training system is in the process of such rapid development that the manner in which it is administered, the courses of study emphasized and the number of schools and students involved have recently undergone radical change from year to year. In 1955 vocational training was offered by 5 specialized schools to a student body of less than 400. In 1967 some 7,000 students were enrolled in 47 schools. This rapid increase has occurred because the government has been determined to train more young people in practical skills.

The increase does not appear to have been a response to popular demand on the part of the students who, after completing primary school or even the first cycle of secondary school, would usually prefer to obtain further classical education and enjoy the prestige accompanying it. They have proved willing, however, to at-
tend a vocational school rather than accept premature termina-
tion of their school careers.

The regular state secondary school is being revised to place
much greater weight on vocational studies, and vocational educa-
tion at higher levels is being emphasized. Whereas the few stu-
dents formerly in vocational institutions usually entered after
completing both levels of primary school, in 1967 the completion
of the first cycle of secondary school (10 years of schooling) was
becoming the new standard for entry in specialized technical
schools. At the higher education level, the availability of techni-
cal education in the royal university system was increasing rapid-
ly.

In 1967 training in agronomy and related subjects at the sec-
ondary level was being offered by the National School of Agri-
culture, Animal Husbandry and Forestry in Phnom Penh, the
Prèk Leap lycée in Kandal Province and the Chamcar Krauch
collège in Kompong Cham. The Phnom Penh school recruited stu-
dents from the tenth grade only; the lycée recruited from the
tenth and the sixth grades; and the collège recruited from the
sixth grade.

In addition, collèges in the frontier provinces were reported to
be increasing their courses in agricultural and related subjects
to meet the practical needs of these regions and retain on the
farms young people who might otherwise migrate to towns to
seek industrial or administrative positions for which they had no
training.

The National School of Arts and Crafts was established in
1957 to meet the growing industries' need for trained workers.
By 1962 it had over 700 students, and its ultimate planned en-
rollment was approximately 1,600. It recruits students over 18
years of age who have completed the 6 years of primary educa-
tion. It is designed primarily to produce skilled workers in such
fields as general mechanics, carpentry, electricity, radio and metal-
working. In addition, a more advanced type of study at this
school emphasizes science and mathematics in order to furnish
preparation for university engineering studies.

The People's University is a vocational school which offers a
more informal practical curriculum to young people and adults
of both sexes. Training is furnished in radio, electricity, dress-
making, embroidery and other useful subjects. Evening courses
are available for adults, and the school participates actively in
the country's campaign to eradicate illiteracy. About 250 regular
students were enrolled in 1967.

At the upper secondary level a series of small technical train-
ing centers is being established to give 3 years of specialized
study in skilled trades to students who have completed the first
cycle of secondary training. The best example of this group of schools is a new center at Battambang. Built with West German assistance and with German instructors on its staff, it opened in 1966 with 60 students, which ultimately is to be increased to 100.

The same general kind of upper secondary level technical training is furnished in the royal university system. Some students enroll in technical universities for 3 years after completing the first cycle of secondary school. Thus, while actually completing secondary vocational study, they study within the university faculties under the same administrative and teaching system as the regular university student body.

**Higher Education**

Facilities for higher education are not extensive, and there has been keen competition for the few available openings in the state operated institutions. As at other levels of education, however, growth during recent years has been impressive. Enrollment at the university level increased from a reported 116 in 1955 to 2,571 in 1963 and to 7,400 at the beginning of 1967. The increase in enrollment presumably has reduced considerably the backlog of qualified students unable to find places in institutions of higher learning. By October 1965 it had been reported that since 1960 only 7,292 students had been accepted at universities and advanced technical training schools out of 15,840 candidates who had satisfactorily completed their baccalauréat examinations.

The licence ès lettres or the licence ès science, awarded after 4 years of university level study following the attainment of the second baccalauréat from secondary school, is the equivalent of the bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree. Students with less secondary preparation, accepted by technical universities for shorter courses, are awarded the brevet supérieure de technicien, which usually represents 13 years of schooling and is roughly equivalent to a junior college diploma.

In 1967 the royal university system included the Royal University of Phnom Penh, the Royal University of Fine Arts and the Royal Technical University, all located in Phnom Penh. The Royal Technical University had several provincial branches. The buildings for a fourth element in the system, the Royal University of Agricultural Sciences, were under construction at Chamcar Daung, near Phnom Penh.

The largest and oldest of these establishments, the Royal University of Phnom Penh, was founded in 1956 as the National Institute of Legal and Economic Studies. In 1967 it consisted of faculties of law and economics, letters and humanities, sciences, medicine (including dentistry), pharmacy, commercial science and
pedagogy. Its 4,800 students, nearly half of whom were studying to be teachers, included some candidates for doctoral degrees.

The Royal University of Fine Arts had faculties of art and archaeology, architecture and urban studies, plastic arts, drama and choreography, and music. It also operated a preparatory institute of music and dancing, two conservatories and two technical training centers. Graduates were to follow careers in the performing arts or become skilled craftsmen. Its 500 students included both degree candidates and candidates for the brevet diploma.

The Royal Technical University in Phnom Penh offered training in civil and agricultural engineering, applied chemistry, electricity, mining, mechanics and textiles. About half of its students were licence ès science candidates, and the remainder were working for brevet diplomas. Branch technical universities were located in Kompong Cham, Battambang and the Takeo-Kampot area. The Kompong Cham school, inaugurated in 1964, offered training in mechanics, physical and mathematical science and tropical farming. The branches at Battambang and Takeo-Kampot were still under construction. As these new institutions open, they are expected to offer a limited variety of courses leading to brevet diplomas; later, they are to furnish full 4-year programs.

The Buddhist University in Phnom Penh, not a part of the royal university system, is devoted to the higher education of monks. It offers courses in Khmer civilization, religion, science and literature, Sanskrit, Pali, English and French. The Higher School of Pali gives instruction in history, geography, mathematics, sciences, and classical and modern languages. It is closely associated with the Buddhist Institute. The Royal School of Administration was founded in 1956 to prepare young people for civil service careers. The growth of the royal university system made it superfluous, however, and it was abolished early in 1967.

In the past the Cambodian Government has cooperated with the governments of other countries to provide extensive opportunities for qualified students to obtain higher education abroad. During the mid-1960’s, however, the government had restricted this flow of students. Those graduating abroad had proved reluctant to return home after completing their foreign education, and those who did return often found it difficult to readjust to the way of life and standard of living in their homeland. Sometimes their acquired skills were too sophisticated to be readily adaptable to Cambodian needs.

Returning students believed that their education was superior to that of young people who had studied at home, and the ready availability of scholarships for study abroad militated against the growth of the country’s university system. As a consequence,
an "educate at home" policy has been adopted by the government.

In 1962 about 549 Cambodian students were studying abroad. There were 242 in France, 141 in the United States and smaller numbers in other countries. In 1966 the overall number had dropped to 87. The students in the United States were gone. There were 31 in France, 15 each in East Germany and Communist China and 18 in the Soviet Union; the remainder were scattered in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, North Korea, Australia and Canada.

PRIVATE EDUCATION

Some private schools are operated by minority ethnic groups in order to make it possible for the children to study their own language and culture. Others provide an education to Cambodian children who are not able to gain admission to a public school. All private institutions must be licensed by the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts and formerly were supervised by the Directorate of Private Education. This entity has been abolished, however, and since 1966 private schools have been under the supervision of the Directorates of Public Primary and Public Secondary Education, which treat them in the same manner as state schools. The change was made to bring about tighter control over the quality and substance of private education.

The private school curriculum is generally similar to that offered in state schools and emphasizes classical education. The Khmer language must be taught at least 3 hours a week. As a whole, the private school system suffers a teacher shortage so acute that effective learning seems almost impossible. In 1965 the primary student-teacher ratio was over 100 to 1; at the secondary level it was nearly 80 to 1.

The components of the private educational system are the Chinese schools, belonging to the Chinese community; the denominational schools, most of them operated by French and Vietnamese Catholic priests; French schools; and Cambodian schools. Between 1963 and 1967 the private primary school enrollment increased from about 32,000 to 39,000, whereas that of private secondary schools dropped from about 19,000 to 10,000.

Until recent years, most of the private school population was Chinese. The Chinese schools, however, have been discouraged by a series of restrictions applied on the theory that they tend to segregate their ethnic minority enrollment from the Khmer majority and that they have been used by Communists for teaching subversive doctrine. Chinese schools above the primary level have been prohibited, but the Chinese are deeply attached to their language and culture and have attempted to evade this restriction by organizing extension programs. In addition, a Chinese lycée, operated by the Communist-oriented Ch’ao-Chou dialect group,
was reported functioning in Phnom Penh in the early 1960's.

For higher education, Chinese students formerly went abroad to South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Communist China, Nationalist China, France or Hong Kong. This activity has been curtailed, however, by a government ordinance which forbids the return of any Chinese or Vietnamese who has remained out of the country for more than 3 months.

In 1967 the press carried a series of complaints that Chinese schools were teaching Communist doctrine from imported textbooks instead of the Chinese classical subjects which had formerly been taught from textbooks printed in Cambodia. Since the students were permanent residents of the country and had no intention of returning to Communist China, the purpose of this change was described as clearly subversive. As a consequence, special regulations were issued concerning the opening, closing and operation of ethnic minority schools to ensure their political neutrality. Students were required to register the nationality of both parents, and textbooks used and records of work covered were made subject to government inspection and approval.

Vietnamese children make up a substantial part of the enrollment of the private schools. Some, operated by Vietnamese Catholic priests, are in effect Vietnamese schools to which the special regulations apply. Most Vietnamese children, however, attend state schools.

French schools, open to Cambodian children, are well run and well attended by children of the wealthier class. Cambodian schools, during recent years the largest element in the private system, play an increasingly important role in absorbing students who cannot be accommodated in the state schools. They rank far below the public schools in prestige, however, and their educational standards are considered to be lower.

**TEACHING STAFF**

In the late 1950's only about 5 percent of the teachers were "diploma" personnel with 13 years of primary and secondary schooling plus 1 year of teacher training. Most of the others had earned only the *certificat d'études primaires complémentaires*, awarded on the successful completion of both cycles of primary education. Elementary teaching was entrusted largely to Khmer assistant teachers (*moniteurs*) who were recruited from holders of the *certificat d'études primaires complémentaires*, monks with practical experience as teachers or as inspectors in a modernized temple school or holders of a diploma of higher Pali studies. Secondary school instruction was usually offered by teachers (*instituteurs*) who had at least 1 year's experience in primary school teaching, had a satisfactory rating on this experience and had successfully passed a qualifying examination.
In 1967 intensive efforts were being made to increase the size of the teaching corps and improve the quality of instruction. The size of the student body, however, was increasing so quickly that crash programs producing imperfectly trained teachers were still necessary, and classes were so large that even the best instructors were badly handicapped in their classroom efforts.

That the educational system had not collapsed altogether under the weight of new students was largely a consequence of the growing number of persons attracted to a career in education by the good salaries. Teachers were paid as much as or more than persons holding positions in other departments of the government. Skilled employees in other government agencies were supplementing their incomes with part-time teaching assignments.

In a country where teachers had formerly received only minimal training, an increasing number was being educated at the university level. It was the government's view that encouraging well-educated young people to become teachers would channel them into useful careers when, otherwise, they might swell the ranks of an intellectual elite with liberal educations too sophisticated to be of use in the country's developing economy.

In 1965 over 300 secondary school teachers, recruited by competitive examination among baccalaureat holders and former primary school teachers, completed a 1-year training course. Almost 1,000 teachers trained for primary and secondary school completed a 1-year course of study at the teacher training center at Phnom Penh or a 2-year course at the center in Kompong Kantuot. They had been recruited from holders of lower secondary diplomas. In addition, so-called “contractual” teachers holding lower secondary diplomas had been placed directly on the staffs of primary schools, where they received some on-the-job training. In 1965 about 500 teachers were given a 2-month training course at Kompong Kantuot during the school holidays.

The need to provide teachers in practical subjects for vocational schools and for the vocational tracks of study to be established in the general secondary system required the establishment of another emergency plan. The program, which was placed under a director of Practical Activities Studies in the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts, began in 1964 with the assignment of a few student teachers to the agricultural school at Prék Leap for a short course in agriculture and livestock breeding.

By 1967 the program had been expanded to include training, for periods of 4 months to 1 year, to persons of both sexes who had at least lower secondary diplomas. The courses have been in agriculture and livestock breeding—emphasized as the most important to the country's economic life—domestic arts, woodwork-
ing, general mechanics and sheet-metal work. Many of the instructors for this program were recruited on a part-time basis from government specialists. It was hoped that by 1970 teachers for the practical activities program could be replenished on a continuing basis from graduates of the country’s technical training schools and universities.

In 1967 foreign teachers, most of them French, continued to play an important part in education at higher levels. There were about 300 in the country, the majority engaged in teaching at the secondary level. They staffed the Lycée Descartes in Phnom Penh, were represented in the Royal University of Phnom Penh and taught in Khmer schools in Phnom Penh and in the provinces. Under a cultural agreement with France, these teachers were to serve for 1-year periods. The Cambodian Government was to provide accommodations, contribute to their salaries and pay the costs of their transportation between France and Cambodia. The cost of these teachers caused some resentment, and there was some disagreement between French and Cambodian authorities over the control of this teaching group. It was hoped gradually to improve the situation by training more Cambodian teachers for higher education.

Teaching remained primarily a man’s profession, but the role of woman was increasingly becoming important. Between 1960 and 1964 the percentage of female teachers in primary schools rose from 9 to 34, and the percentage in secondary schools was raised from 14 to 16. In 1964 the number of female teachers in vocational schools and at the university level was negligible.

Participation of women in the teaching profession is continuing to increase. About half of the 540 students completing their courses in 1965 at the Kompong Kantuot teacher training center were women, as were one-fourth of all higher education students specializing in teaching. In addition, during the mid-1960’s it was evident that the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts was making a conscious effort to encourage women to enter the field of education.

**LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION**

A remarkable reduction in illiteracy has been accomplished since the country became independent in 1953. An extensive 1958 sample survey indicated that 31.2 percent of the population over 15 years of age was literate. Among males the rate was 67.6 percent; among females it was 5.3 percent. There was no significant variation among age groupings for men, but illiteracy among women became more pronounced in direct proportion to age. In the 15- to 19-year age bracket, 14.7 percent were literate, but in the brackets of 35 years and over literacy dropped to 2 percent.
or less. The disproportionately low rate of female literacy was a reflection of the fact that until recent years most primary education was furnished by the temple schools, which were open only to boys.

The explosive growth of education since 1958 has eroded illiteracy. In 1967 no current survey material was available, but widely varying statistical estimates indicated that illiteracy had dropped to 20 percent or lower and was continuing to decline rapidly. Nearly as many girls as boys were in the lower grades of public school, and it seemed that the school system eventually would virtually eliminate illiteracy.

The government, however, had determined that learning through primary education was too slow a means of achieving literacy for all the people. Prince Sihanouk announced the institution of the National Literacy Campaign in late 1964, and early the following year a law prescribing the rules of this campaign was enacted. Under it, citizens not able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of reading and writing by the end of 1965 would be subject to an annual fine of 50 riel. Resident aliens not meeting this requirement by the end of 1966 would be subject to the same fine.

Effective dates of the penalty elements in this legislation have since been postponed. In addition, it has been recognized that some people may prove incapable of learning to read and write. Accordingly, in 1967 it was suggested that those failing tests to demonstrate literacy be given certificates showing that an attempt had been made.

The minister of national education and fine arts is chairman of the Permanent Literacy Committee, which is composed of representatives of several entities of the central government. Under it, the Technical Literacy Committee directs, at the national and local levels, survey committees which supervise 6-month literacy courses leading to issuance of certificates of literacy. To receive these documents an applicant must be able to read, without too much hesitation and with reasonable comprehension, a 6- or 7-line paragraph concerning everyday life and be able to write 6 or 7 lines under dictation without making too many errors. In addition, he must be able to write correctly numbers expressing sums of money, weights and measures.

Courses leading to literacy certificates have been generally instituted, and the numerous volunteer teachers include civil servants, Buddhist monks and ordinary citizens who are literate. Persons between the ages of 10 and 50 are subject to the requirement of proving literacy, and all literate persons theoretically are required to volunteer their services to tutor the illiterate. At the end of 1966 well over 1 million persons were re-
ported to have attended literacy courses and about 270,000 to have been granted certificates. At that time, however, a considerable number presumably still were enrolled in courses and had not taken qualifying examinations.

Under the 1965 legislation the literacy requirements can be met only in the Khmer language. Initiation of the literacy campaign was attended by much publicity. Trial examinations and the first official examinations were recorded and broadcast by radio throughout the country, and the press was full of statements concerning its importance. It is not, however, an end within itself, and a literacy certificate confers no particular privilege other than freedom from the penalty imposed by the legislation. It has been proposed that, once universal literacy has been obtained, the mechanism established to achieve it be continued in furtherance of adult education in general. Plans are being made for the institution of courses throughout the country in general education, civics, information on farming, and hygiene in villages. In addition to regular adult education courses, radio talks, pamphlets and posters are to be used.

Although the overall adult education program has been substantially accelerated by the literacy campaign, its beginnings go back to the time of independence. In 1954 a basic training center for instructors of adults was established at Tonle Bati in Kandal Province. People trained there later settled in villages, where they combined teaching the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic to adults with instruction in such practical matters as farming and handicrafts. They have also been charged with generally broadening the horizons of villagers by circulating among them newspapers and other informational materials.
The artistic and intellectual life of the modern state is overshadowed by its past. In 1967 the spirit which built the great stone temples of the Angkor period (802-1432) no longer existed. Craftsmanship was limited largely to the creation of tourist items. The learning of the Brahmans—whose poetry and prose were inscribed on walls and steles in ancient Kambuja—was neglected. At the court, however, a few of the descendants of the Brahmans still used some practical applications of ancient astronomy and mathematics in the preparation of the annual calendar.

Recently, however, there has been evidence of a new intellectual stirring. In 1964, on instructions from Prince Norodom Sihanouk, an academy was to be established in Phnom Penh to coordinate research and studies concerned with the national culture. The many authorities in language, literature, customs and folklore were to be coordinated in a central national institution to be known as the Royal Academy. Its charter indicated that its board of directors would be presided over by the president of the Council of Ministers and that it would be concerned with scientific research as well as with arts and culture.

The Academy was divided into four institutes: letters, fine arts and archaeology; social and political sciences; biological sciences; and physical and mathematical sciences. The first institute was further subdivided into five sections, including lexicography and grammar; language and literature; engraving, coins and medals; archaeology; and fine arts.

The governmental agency responsible for encouraging progress in art and literature was the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts. Budgetary allocations to this ministry were assigned primarily to the field of education, but some financial assistance was also allocated to the Cambodian Writers' Association, the Buddhist Institute, the Buddhist University in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian National Theater, the National School of Music, the School of Art and the Faculty of Letters and Humanities.

BACKGROUND

The height of Cambodia's artistic achievement was attained
during the Angkor period, when the Khmer kings had funerary temples erected. The temples, of extraordinary size and magnificence, were built to immortalize the spirits of the kings. Of the many magnificent temples still standing in 1967, the temple of Angkor Wat is the largest and most lavishly decorated. All are majestic, however, and it is for these architectural masterpieces that Cambodia's creative genius was best known throughout Southeast Asia and the rest of the world.

Although the ruins of Angkor were first discovered by Portuguese missionaries in 1570, they were revealed to Europeans by Henri Mouhot, a French naturalist who was subsidized by the English. Mouhot left London in April 1858 for a voyage to Southeast Asia. He visited Siam (Thailand) and then worked his way around the south coast to Cambodia and arrived in Battambang late in 1859. He learned from a French missionary of the existence of some ancient ruins which could be reached in a few days' march. In January 1860 he left for the site and finally arrived in the vicinity of present-day Siem Reap, where he found the Angkor Wat temple complex—partially covered by jungle growth. Angkor Wat and the nearby Bayon of Angkor Thom, with their water reservoirs, irrigation canals, temples and a planned city, represent the most magnificent construction program ever conceived in ancient Southeast Asia.

Cambodians for centuries had been living in the vicinity of the temple complex, and its history formed an integral part of their intellectual background. King Ang Duong, who reigned from 1846 until 1859, decreed that a silhouette of Angkor Wat be engraved on the coins of the era. He also decreed that it should appear on the national flag.

The Angkor inscriptions on the monuments, as well as the architectural remains, show the country's cultural debt to India, but there are also many signs of other foreign influences and native inspiration. In neither art nor literature were the Indian patterns slavishly copied. There was nothing in India comparable to the classic simplicity and unity of Angkor Wat or the Bayon of Angkor Thom.

Most Indian temples were dominated by multitudes of sculptured forms of human and animal figures. Similar figures may be found in the Cambodian structures, but they are usually limited to a purely decorative role, subordinate to the overall structure. The Naga (a seven-headed snake), which was the mythical ancestress of the Khmer peoples and a constantly recurring theme, was frequently reduced to a functional position, such as a railing on a bridge or a banister on a staircase.

Similarly, the literature, especially the poetry, surviving from the period displays a distinctly Cambodian character. The domi-
nant literary themes were derived from the Hindu epics, but many others were adapted from Khmer history and mythology. Especially important was the cult of the god-kings (devorajas), who were worshiped as reincarnations of Vishnu, Siva, Buddha or other Indian deities.

When the Thai conquered a large part of the Cambodian empire and established themselves within their present national boundaries during the fifteenth century, they absorbed much of the culture of the conquered population. This Cambodian influence was further fortified when Thai raiders carried off many of the best scholars, artists and craftsmen as slaves during the recurrent Thai-Cambodian wars. The culture never quite recovered from this setback.

LEGENDS, DRAMA AND DANCE

Legends have reinforced the cohesiveness of the people and formed a bond of common heritage and significance. History, for most Cambodians, is legend symbolizing the subjective experiences of their ancestors rather than the more-or-less factual record of events that is usual in the West. The recounting of old stories and legends, usually in poetry form, is popular among most of the people. These are usually taken from ancient Hindu epics, from their Cambodian counterparts or from mythical and legendary Cambodian history.

The stories abound with princesses in distress, princes in disguise, miraculous creatures, giants, magic and good or evil omens. Buddhist religious beliefs are strongly evident. People live in a world they cannot control. Their present lives, whether good or bad, are the result of their conduct in past reincarnations; what they do in the present will determine their life in future reincarnations. This theme of cause and effect runs through all Cambodian literature, ancient and modern, and is also frequently alluded to in ordinary conversation. Life itself should be accepted with placidity and resignation.

Ancient legends and stories provide themes for nearly all dramatic presentations, of which there are four main forms. Ranked in order of cultural importance, these are the Royal Ballet, the National Theater, the shadow plays and the popular or folk dramas. Traditional drama combines pantomime with singing and dancing. Roles are danced in pantomime and include traditional steps, postures and hand movements, while a chorus sings the story, accompanied by an orchestra.

The Royal Ballet, maintained by the court, is not a truly popular form of entertainment. The dancers wearing masks or white makeup and dressed in elaborate costumes, execute difficult but stylized steps, which are repeated in varying sequences for the different dramas. The repertoire of the Royal Ballet is limited
to about 80 dramas in the royal library; no new ones have been written for many years.

The place of origin of the Royal Ballet is debatable. In the fifteenth century, when Thai raiders carried off tens of thousands of Cambodia’s best artists, scholars and craftsmen, the entire Royal Ballet was taken to Siam. This episode led to an intermingling of Cambodian and Thai features. Present-day Thai claim that the Royal Ballet is an adaptation of Thai ballet, and Cambodians claim that it was based on the ancient Angkor ballet as it was before the Thai captured the dancers.

The costumes and crowns used by the Cambodian palace dancers show an unmistakable Thai influence, but there is one notable exception. Every item of jewelry worn by the dancers is authentic. The bracelets and anklets are gold studded with precious stones, and the crowns for male roles are of beaten gold and weigh as much as 5 pounds. When not in use the costumes and jewelry are kept in a museum in the palace.

The Royal Ballet is an important tourist attraction, but it creates little local interest except in palace circles. From a historical point of view, however, it is of importance as it provides the only link between modern Cambodia and the magnificence of the ancient Khmer empire. Moreover, it still performs sacred dances for special occasions. In July 1967, in response to a request from farmers who were concerned about the persistent lack of rain in certain provinces, Prince Sihanouk and the Queen had two sacred dances performed in the palace throne room by members of the Royal Ballet. In a ceremony before the dance, Prince Sihanouk lighted the sacred candle and placed a crown of jasmine on the throne. At the foot of the throne was a table on which were placed offerings to the supernatural powers and the ghosts of departed sovereigns. These consisted of water, rice, areca nuts, betel nuts, fruits, meats and desserts. The dances were called *buong suong Tevoda* and were performed in an attempt to solicit assistance from supernatural powers in bringing the much-needed rain.

The National Theater was established after independence and—as illiteracy is rapidly disappearing—the Theater is appreciated by students, intellectuals and farmers, thereby playing a positive role in the cultural domain. The School of the National Theater was established in 1956. At the end of each year the students take an examination; and at the end of 4 years, a final examination. They receive a small monthly salary and are given instruction in the history of art and civilization, must study both Cambodian and French and are taught vocal and body expression, diction and elocution, miming, interpretation of plays, im-
provisation and the arrangement of dramatic works. Physical exercise and acrobatics are practiced every morning.

Popular plays performed by the National Theater are *Rithisen* and *Neang Kangrei* (adapted from the legend concerning the tragic death of Neang Kangrei); *Thmar Ram* (Dancing Stone), extolling the value of Khmer arts; and *Khleang Moeung* (War with Siam), which praises the resolute courage of the Khmer soldiers in fighting the Siamese.

The shadow play (*nang sbek*) is usually presented at temples during festivals and is a form of puppet show. Shadow pictures, made by holding a series of perforated panels between a light and a white screen, depict scenes of the drama while the story is recited from behind the screen. Some of these panels, traditionally made from leather, are complicated and often are jewel like; all designs are strictly traditional.

The popular or folk dramas are performed by wandering troupes and are greatly appreciated. These include farces and popularized versions of the classical ballet—making use of the national talent for improvising songs and for caricaturing persons in the contemporary scene, especially Chinese, Vietnamese, French and other foreigners.

Outside the theater, dancers are employed in certain ceremonies, such as weddings. One rustic ceremonial dance, the *leng trot*, performed occasionally by small troupes in the Siem Reap region, appears to be a survival of an ancient hunting rite. The two chief figures, the “hunters,” are armed with imitation rifles, and the “prey” is represented by a man riding a sort of hobbyhorse with a stag’s head on the front end and a tail with a bell on the other. While hunters and prey portray the hunt by various comic antics, a fourth figure executes dance steps resembling those of the Royal Ballet. A chorus accompanies the dance, keeping the beat with long poles at the top of which are crosspieces with bells. Whatever its original purpose, the *leng trot* is now danced as a magic rite to encourage the coming of the monsoon rains when they are late.

Popular dancing, which declined after the great days of Angkor, has been revived in the form of a dance imported from Thailand. This is the *lamthong*, and it is danced by both couples and groups. It combines the features of Western social dancing with the classical ballet. Couples dance together but do not touch each other. Footwork is less important than the graceful posturing of the hands in motions typical of the ballet or Indian dancing.

From the number and excellence of the items of Cambodian art and culture on display in the Musée Guimet in Paris, it is evident that the French were more concerned with the culture of that small country than that of any of their other possessions.
French scholars and archaeologists revealed to the modern world the wonders of the ancient Khmer civilization. During the days of the French protectorate a cultural adviser (conseiller artistique) was assigned to the Cambodian throne, and he did much to revive the ancient dances and instill renewed interest in the drama.

MUSIC

The most common form of artistic expression is the singing to traditional music of improvised lyrics about the familiar, traditional music of improvised lyrics about the familiar, traditional scene. The little boy tending the water buffalo, children playing together, young men and women courting and members of the wealthy and educated classes at social functions all find pleasure and relaxation in this pastime. Although the words may be improvised, the number of tunes is surprisingly limited. Some of these songs are undoubtedly very old and were handed down orally from one generation to another, as formerly there was no musical notation system.

An allied and perhaps equally common form of popular amusement is the playing of musical instruments. Both the making and the playing of musical instruments may be considered traditional arts. Western visitors are surprised at the rapidity with which Cambodians learn to play unfamiliar instruments without formal instruction. Most can play some instrument, and many make their own and ornament them with elaborate inlay work. There is likely to be music at almost every social and festive gathering, and one person may spontaneously improvise songs about other persons present. If instruments are available others will accompany him, or there will be rhythmic handclapping and group singing of traditional refrains.

Although Western instruments have been introduced (Prince Sihanouk plays the saxophone), native instruments are more popular. Among these are four types of violin, three types of plucked instrument, flutes, oboes and various types of drums, cymbals and gongs. Another typical Cambodian instrument is the kong thom. This is a wooden-framed horseshoe containing 16 suspended gongs. The player sits in the middle of the horseshoe and beats out the melody with two wooden mallets.

Music accompanies all festivals and celebrations. Almost all processions will be preceded by musicians playing drums and violins. Amateur orchestras are common in the villages, and families may perform impromptu private concerts after dinner.

CRAFTS

In the nineteenth century and earlier many artisans were employed to provide artistic luxuries for the numerous members
of the royalty and others who had achieved wealth. At that time silverwork and goldwork were of high quality, especially in making jewelry and the little boxes which hold the ingredients for betel nut chewing, at that time an important social ritual among all classes. In the twentieth century, however, the making of both jewelry and the little boxes had decreased, for the wealthy had abandoned the chewing of betel nut and turned to luxury manufactures of European origin. Early in the twentieth century craftsmanship was dying rapidly, and some special crafts, such as the making of niello ware, were already forgotten. Many craftsmen had turned to farming to make a livelihood. A survey at that time showed only 132 artisans left, and most of them were no longer practicing their crafts.

Albert Surraut, the French governor general, attempted a revival of crafts with the approval of King Sisowath. Craftsmen were assembled in Phnom Penh in a school of fine arts operated in conjunction with a museum. They were employed as masters to train young craftsmen under the traditional apprenticeship system. The French did not interfere, hoping to exclude European influence and to prevent the frustration of native initiative.

A new generation of craftsmen was trained, but the results were generally uninspiring. Ancient themes were meticulously repeated for appeal to the tourist trade. Cambodians who could afford the products showed only polite interest and provided little patronage. Although some of the craftsmen put small individual touches to their designs, more often standardized designs originated by others were used. The craftsmen enjoyed little prestige. It was considered degrading for a member of an educated or a prosperous family to engage in such work.

The principal crafts now practiced are the working of silver and gold, the making of jewelry and the sculpture of ebony, colored hardwood and stone. Leather punching or carving is a specialty of artisans in Siem Reap Province. The silverwork and goldwork consist largely of cigarette boxes, sugar and cream sets and similar tourist-trade items; designs are based on the figures and floral patterns seen on the stone carvings of Angkor. The wood sculpture, similarly based on ancient models, consists of heads and buddhas. The best jewelry is probably made by Chinese craftsmen, but a few Cambodians are also skilled in this craft.

Stone sculpture and ivory carving are local household industries in some parts of the country, catering to local demands for buddhas. There is also some tortoise-shell work, but it is done chiefly by Vietnamese. In 1967 the Ministry of Tourism established a "crafts shop" in the waiting room of the Phnom Penh airport; it displays various items of local manufacture that are
for sale. These include silks; shawls; silver boxes; items carved from ivory, hardwood and stone; and gold and silver jewelry.

Household implements are practical but unadorned and are usually either of Chinese manufacture or copied from Chinese objects. Pottery making, a local industry in several areas, shows little artistic ability, even though the bowls and pots are attractive in shape. When a nicer dish is desired for use at the table, a decorated Chinese bowl is usually purchased. If wall decorations are desired in the more prosperous homes, Vietnamese lacquered pictures or European prints are used.

Some common objects, however, are often decorated—among them the oxcart, the pirogue (dugout canoe) and the rice-harvesting knife. These objects reflect pride in workmanship, but the amount of actual carving and decoration is usually scanty. Here, too, as in nearly all forms of Cambodian art, designs are traditional. Heads of dragons and Nagas are the most common themes, and some floral patterns probably are used.

One of the few folk arts in which all Cambodians take special pride is the making of the sarong-like national costume (sampot). Sampot weaving is a widely scattered local industry. At court, different colors are worn for different days of the week. The rectangular pieces of material that are used for the sampot can be given any one of an infinite number of designs. For the most common workaday use the weavers utilize inexpensive materials, usually imported from Japan, but for special occasions they prefer native handwoven materials.

Each sampot is woven separately by hand. Frequently, native vegetable dyes, available only in certain months, are specially mixed for each sampot, so that no two garments are the same. The simplest are made in linear or plaid patterns. One popular variety uses heavy silk threads of one color for the woof and another color for the warp to produce a shimmering effect in solid colors. The most complicated and original is the holl, in which the design is produced by predyeing the threads with different colors along their length, a process requiring 3 months. More lavish is the sampot woven with gold or silver threads. The royal sampots and those of the ballet dancers have silver throughout the woof.

The new Royal Academy in Phnom Penh is intended to stimulate a revival of handicrafts. There is also in that city a museum which displays outstanding examples of native handicraft in the hope of instilling a spirit of competition among the provinces.

The articles made by the present-day craftsmen must conform to established patterns, and the artisan or sculptor must adhere to the conditions under which his predecessors worked. The artist or artisan, therefore, must observe and apply the established con-
cepts which tend to point to the Angkor period of the Khmer empire. There is little or no room for individual artistic expression on the part of the artisan himself.

**VISUAL ARTS**

Visual arts reveal the conservatism of the people. Little that is spontaneous or extemporaneous is seen. Ancient themes are preferred, and there is rarely any effort to improve them. Probably the nearest approach to an emotionally charged art is found in the temples. In the last half of the nineteenth century, a time of peace and relative prosperity, the people replaced their decaying stone temples with new wooden structures patterned after the old style. The pediments were lavishly painted or carved with traditional motifs drawn from legends and epic poems, and the points of the eaves curved upward in the shape of graceful Naga tails. The results were works of art which have been greatly admired by Western observers.

In recent decades, as these structures succumbed to humidity and insects, they frequently were replaced with concrete structures, which were more lasting and were also easier to build. Instead of individual carving, concrete molds were used repeatedly, creating a uniform temple decoration. Designs, which in wood could be deeply and intricately carved, had to be smooth, shallow and round to conform to the shape of the concrete molds. Formerly, villagers would donate labor and the use of free materials from the forest, saving money to pay for decoration; today, most of the money may go for construction, leaving little for decoration.

During the 1960's the government encouraged a revival of interest in painting. Until diplomatic relations with the United States were discontinued in 1965, the United States Information Service and the Asia Foundation provided financial support for the annual exhibitions in Phnom Penh at which paintings by contemporary artists were judged for the award of prizes.

**LITERATURE**

Most of the literature of the Angkor period was written on materials easily destroyed by conquering enemies or by the tropical climate and insects. From the inscriptions carved on the stone monuments, however, their high quality may be judged. They include the royal edicts, laws, records of victorious battles, hymns to the gods and records of donations to monasteries and hospitals.

In 1967 the literature was only beginning to reflect new currents of foreign influence. A new sense of dedication noted in the works of some authors could be seen in a few novels. Some
writers utilized legendary plots and ancient historical settings while introducing new social messages. One author used ancient Angkor for his setting and attempted to show that wealth and prestige could be gained by one's own conduct in this life and need not depend upon one's efforts in a former life. Merit should be achieved not only for a reward in a future life but in the present life as well.

Other novelists with a social message used the contemporary scene to attack present-day problems. The tendency of too many young people to seek employment in the government was dealt with in two novels: the hero of one went into the army as the best way to serve his country; the heroine of the other urged her fiance to go into business to help save the country from the economic clutches of the Chinese and Vietnamese.

Such novels were the outpouring of a force which might become stronger in the future, but they have not received wide attention throughout the country. Not many books are published, and the periodicals which were published were government controlled. The periodicals that received the greatest distribution were two monthlies, *Le Sangkum* and *Kambuja*; a weekly, *Réalités Cambodgiennes*; and two dailies, *Contre-Gouvernement* and *Agence Khmère de Presse*.

**INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT**

Although France maintained a protectorate over the country for some 90 years, French culture had a remarkably small impact on the intellectual life of the people. Sheltered by the deep convictions of their religion and by their conservatism, the people remained essentially Cambodian, and there was no great intellectual life at the time the French arrived. The leaders received a French education, but it was tempered by their training in the temple.

Intellectual life was impeded by the lack of schools of higher learning. Under the French rule there was no university or school beyond the lycée level, and the schools in existence were too few and too small. It was, in addition, extremely difficult to obtain permission to go to France to study.

Resistance to Western culture was often a matter of national pride, but after the country achieved complete independence resistance was no longer considered essential. The people felt free to accept Western ideas and techniques, and it is possible that French culture will permeate the country more successfully than it did under the protectorate.

Modern intellectual life—a mixture of the old and the new—is in a transitional period, and new currents are unquestionably stirring. The country has formally adopted a modern democratic
government and has developed a modern educational system. These innovations, together with increased contacts with a great number of foreign nations, have lessened the dominance of old ideas. New influences have been at work, and the pace of cultural change will necessarily be much more rapid.
CHAPTER 11
RELIGION

Theravada or Hinayana Buddhism, one of the two forms of Buddhism, is practiced by at least 85 percent of the population. Theravada Buddhism is also the religion of Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Laos and North and South Vietnam, but Cambodia has no official religious ties with any of those countries, other than being a member of the World Fellowship of Buddhists.

The Constitution declares that Buddhism is the state religion, but it guarantees absolute freedom of religion. The king or Chief of State is the head of the Buddhist hierarchy and includes in his advisory council representatives of the two Buddhist monastic orders. A secretary of religious affairs directs religious activities and institutions, including the Buddhist Institute and the Higher School of Pali.

The great majority of the Khmer identify themselves as Theravada Buddhists, but Mahayana Buddhism, Hinduism and belief in spirits or supernatural beings have played a prominent role in the country's history, and they exert a strong influence on present-day religious practices. Many devout Buddhists perform rituals in connection with spirits, often with the cooperation and participation of the Buddhist monks. Hinduism no longer survives as an organized religious body within the country, but traces of it remain in court rituals, art, drama and various ceremonies.

Religious minorities total between 10 and 15 percent of the population. Most of those who choose to follow other religions are of foreign origin. Roman Catholics, many of them Vietnamese, number about 57,000. Most of the small Cham-Malay population is Moslem. Members of the Chinese and Vietnamese minorities often practice ancestor worship or Mahayana Buddhism. The Khmer Loeu, who inhabit the forested highland plateaus and intermountain valleys, have a wide variety of animistic beliefs and practices.

Almost every village supports at least one Buddhist temple, and yellow-robed monks are ever-present figures in scenes of daily life. Buddhism has a pervasive influence on all aspects of society. It is the dominant force which gives the people a positive set of