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Time to Fatten Up?

A few months ago a good Kampot friend had a heart attack and checked out of this mortal life. He was the type of guy who never had a bad word for anyone and was nearly impossible to dislike, and really, in his early sixties, was too young to go. Didn't even get to draw on his Canadian pension. As friends were carting him between hospitals and finally to Phnom Penh, since Kampot doesn't have a cardiac unit, he said, I'm not ready to go. Too bad, fat man, you should've given that desire a bit more consideration before it was too late.

I was a bit peeved: I still miss him some. He didn't have to go so soon, at least in my totally non-professional, non-scientific opinion. He'd had an attack 15 years previously, but couldn't bring himself to adapt his eating habits and lifestyle to that very serious risk. Actually, he had lost a lot of weight from his maximum and only ate one meal a day, so he was starting to get a handle on that front, but then he'd often overeat on that one meal and took no note of what he was eating. Bacon came up in conversation at one point, with me frowning upon it. He countered by taking out his stash and said, look at this very lean bacon. True enough, it was very lean for bacon, but still 50% fat instead of the typical 80% fat.

As I noted in an article titled, *Eat Your Damn Veggies*, that I published a couple months before he died, heart attacks generally result from an unstable build up in the arteries of fat, cholesterol and white blood cells. (BTW, researchers just recently discovered the connection between stress and heart attacks: stress stimulates the production of white blood cells. Also while I'm at it, let me clarify the role of cholesterol. It was first identified back in the nineteenth century. Saturated fat – mostly animal fat – contains a lot of cholesterol. The body also produces it and requires it and problems result when we don't have enough; but too much, combined with excess fat and white blood cells is what kills us.)

The only way to mitigate the risk somewhat is to exercise, you know, get the blood moving and loosen up those sticky fats, etc. To that end I practically begged him to get on his bicycle, come out to my house, only 7 or 8 minutes away, and work some fat out. He never made it.



When he wasn't out drinking and having fun, he was at home receiving guests. His house was centrally located and he was almost always available if anyone wanted to stop by and chat; he found nearly everybody interesting. He would sit in his easy chair for hours, smoking one unfiltered cigarette after another ... it might've been quality tobacco... but still. And anytime after 4 pm, and sometimes earlier, he'd be enjoying his drink.

When he wasn't chatting with friends he was hunched over his



little computer, also smoking one cig after another. Drinking and smoking tobacco are also big risk factors. Tobacco makes the inside of the arteries fuzzy thus helping to clog them. It also increases blood pressure, the likelihood of clotting and reduces oxygen to the heart.

Alcohol? Every time you feel washed out, slow and edgy after a good bout of drinking, you've damaged your system. The direct effects of excessive drinking is that it increases blood pressure and weakens the heart muscles. Smoking, as far as I'm concerned is a nasty habit with no redeeming values, it's only there to teach us how weak we are and how little control we have over ourselves and our desires.

But personally, on the other hand, a few beers every night, hanging out at the pubs and having a good time with friends makes all the difference in my life, which would, at least at my present juncture, be excessively boring otherwise. So we all have choices to make. Not many of us just naturally do all the right things for longevity. If we are enjoying our lives and we do want to hang around as long as possible, then there are things we have to learn to like, such as exercise. It's not something we naturally enjoy, we do it because it brings corollary benefits. We have to make adjustments in our attitudes and in the way we do things. Is a slab of bacon worth a few days (weeks, months) of a good life enjoyed? That's basically the choice we fogeys have to make. Doesn't matter all that much when you're young, but the dangers inexorably accumulate. And let me assure you, even at 70, as long as you're reasonably fit, you'll certainly want to hang around as long as you can.

One thing can be said is that he was under no stress whatever and went out doing exactly what he wanted to do. If there is a paradise express, he's got a reserved first class seat.

Another Cambo friend, in his late sixties, died a couple months later. He, in fact, did things right, he ate healthy and rode his bicycle all around Phnom Penh. So, you never know, though it stands to reason that his lifestyle helped keep him alive longer than otherwise. He too was enjoying life and would've been happy to hang around for a lot longer. He'd invented an industrial process and ran a company that made him a millionaire and though he never wanted for anything he desired, he lived a simple life. He had a lot of friends and never refused if someone he half trusted needed a loan. He too should have no problem at the pearly gates.

Both guys had been fat most of their lives. Being obese is a risk factor for a lot of chronic problems. Your heart and lungs have to work a lot harder moving all that extra weight around. It'd be akin to always going uphill. All the internal organs have to work that much harder to process all that extra food and it's especially difficult on the joints and muscles, the knees probably the worst affected. There aren't that many fat people in geezer homes, they don't live that long.

A big part of the problem is that society teaches us to eat crap from an early age. As far as I'm concerned it's not money that's the root of all evil, it's marketing: trying to convince people to consume products without

any relationship to any intrinsic benefit they might receive for doing so. Vast sums of money are spent selling processed food or fast food (an incredible 25% of all meals in America are fast food crap) because there's lots of money to be made on those, but little on eating healthy fresh food... ever seen an ad for lettuce, green beans or broccoli? Some people, devotees of fast food burgers will take offence at me calling their fav food crap, but MacD's burgers are only 15% meat, the rest is sorta-meat, pseudo-meat byproducts; the lettuce is kept looking fresh by soaking it in a chemical bath, etc. And as mentioned in the previous article on eating when 3- to 5-year-old kids were fed a MacD's burger in a plain wrapper and a company logo wrapper, three fourths said it tasted better in the corporate wrapper. And while you may think it's arrogant for me to say so, you might like that fast food burger because you've been brainwashed from an early age, not because it actually tastes good.

There were a couple of studies on longevity done about twenty years ago. In the first, birds, insects and small mammals were purposely underfed. They were given half what they wanted to eat, but lived twice, in some cases three times as long. Animals



in the wild eat as much as they can when food is available, not knowing when the chance might come again, but evidently they're much healthier when they stay lean and a little hungry. Once again it just stands to reason that bodies have a lot less work to do when they consume less and are less burdened by excess weight to carry around when they stay slim.

As I understand it the researcher who did the study limits himself to 1500 calories a day. He's tall and skinny as a rail. Now I do know skinny guys who are very strong but mostly, very thin people seem frail and feathery. I'm sure he doesn't expect to live twice as long, but does he really gain much by starving himself as opposed eating properly and keeping meat on his bones; that is, being slim but not skinny? While being 50 kilos overweight is an obvious health risk, could being 5 kilos over actually be worse than perfect weight? Could that small extra amount really reduce your lifespan? In fact, later studies on monkeys have shown no longevity benefit to reduced calorie diets, much to the dismay of researchers who expected to see a difference. The ones fed a full diet lived just as long and performed equally to those who were kept a little hungry.



In the second study which ties in with the first, flies were placed in containers which were too small to allow them to fly, and thus exercise, with the result that they lived much longer than their kind who led normal fly lives. Does our researcher also follow the prescriptions of the second study and vegetate as a means of living longer? You certainly wouldn't have the energy to exercise much on a starvation diet. And could work and exercise be bad for you? In fact, excess effort is definitely a killer. One big right wing crusade in the US has to do with trying to weaken Social Security benefits, if not to destroy the program completely. One of their main points is that people are living longer so they want to raise the age of eligibility. However, if you break down the numbers, people who work manual jobs are not living longer, it's those who spend their lives at desk jobs who are. Presumably, those paper pushers who live longer keep a reasonable weight. Effort is important for a healthy body when young, but when you age, hard work will send you to an early grave. You still need to exercise and stay fit, and test your endurance on occasion, but hard work will



In fact the marketers might doing Americans a favor in the long run since fat people will last longer in the coming lean times of droughts and catastrophic weather that so many of us are predicting. Our wafer thin researcher in a famine?, dead meat in short order. So go ahead and fatten up for the end times and hope you don't die of obesity before you get to use up that fat for the lean years. For sure, don't worry about your figure, keep that pot belly; it'll keep you going for at least a month or two.

kill you.

As human beings we still have that primal need to fatten up for lean times, though few developed country people have ever experienced times of want. We've also learned through marketing that we can add Life and Happiness and the Beautiful Woman of Our Choice if we just consume as much as possible of their processed food products or restaurant meals. As a result, one-third of Americans are overweight and one-third are obese, maybe partly because they can't seem to find a path to those goals in real life. The one thing they can enjoy is fattening food.



Why Some People Like to Travel in the Dark

Dark tourism is not a rebranded form of spelunking. It entails no bat watching, no guided tours of the Parisian catacombs, no visits to Fairbanks in sunless winter.

It explores the conceptual dark — “death, disaster and the seemingly macabre,” according to the British Institute for Dark Tourism Research (yes, it exists), travel to sites of historically documented tragedy, carnage, malice or any combination thereof. Destinations include Poenari Castle in Romania, the haunt of Vlad the Impaler, inspiration for Count Dracula; Salem, Mass.; and the Tower of London.

But what happens when sites of more recent bloodshed or tragedy are refurbished into attractions for globe-trotters? What does a gift shop at Fukushima, Japan, mean? Does South Africa’s Robben Island really need a restaurant?

“It’s the commercialization of death,” Philip Stone, the executive director of the Institute for Dark Tourism Research, tells *The Guardian*. “Take the Flight 93 crash site. Soon after it happened farmers were selling tours of the field. But now there’s an established memorial. There’s been a process of commercialization from that initial demand to becoming a formal destination.”

It’s a process many find objectionable, igniting heated debates about selfie protocol at Auschwitz and Treblinka; or whether it’s appropriate (and safe) to visit Chernobyl. “I wonder how visitors will react to an attraction that walks a fine line between Disneyfication of a tragedy and dark tourism,” writes Sharon Heal (at the *Museums Journal*) of the Titanic Museum in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Belfast is also home to a booming “conflict tourism” industry, focusing mainly on the “Troubles,” a period of sectarian unrest between Catholic republicans and Protestants loyal to the British Crown. It’s a development *The Guardian*’s Chris Jenkins calls “simply exploitation.”

“Come to Belfast and see our magnificent city,” he writes, “Rejuvenated, regenerated and re-energized. Take a walk through the streets and in the shadows of the division walls. Why not stop to get your photo taken beside a mural of men in

balacavas? If you really want, why not write a message of hope and peace on one of our walls, a truly symbolic sign of human solidarity?” The idea is

“deeply disturbing,” he says. Places of violence and profound loss, from which many Belfasters are still recovering, have “become a spectacle, an attraction.”

And yet, for others, dark tourism constitutes a kind of indirect reparation. “Hundreds of Cambodians” now make a living by guiding tourists through the country’s infamous Killing Fields — where more than a million people were executed and buried in mass graves by the Khmer Rouge between 1976 and 1979. “Tourist dollars and capitalism are helping me come to terms with my country’s history — and my own,” one such guide told *National Geographic*’s



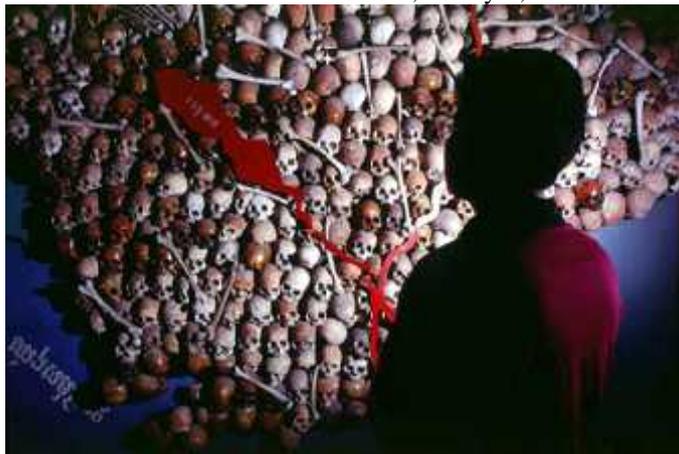
Zoltan Istvan when he visited the fields in 2003.

Dark tourism boasts an educational component as well. According to *The Atlantic*’s Debra Kamin, a burgeoning market of dark-tourism travel agencies will book travelers on excursions to war-torn Afghanistan, “the most restive regions of the Caucasus,” Muammar el-Qaddafi’s old compound in Tripoli, Kiev’s Independence Square and even North Korea (with permission from Dear Leader). “Yes, there are human-rights violations in North Korea, and yes, travel there does raise ethical questions,” she

writes, but it may be that allowing the world a peek at North Korea and places like it will draw inquisitive eyes to those same issues, which are in dire need of international attention.

“If I hadn’t gone as a tourist to North Korea, I never would have set up my news website,” Chad O’Carroll, founder of *NK News*, tells her. “So you have to think about not just the effect that travel has on North Koreans, but also on the tourists.”

Perhaps therein is the root of concerns with dark tourism. What do we find more worrisome about the commercialization of tragic places: that they might lose a bit of their dignity in the process, or that we might lose a bit of ours? And maybe conflating dark tourism with pure pursuit of profit neglects the fact that humans are curious — and our curiosity isn’t limited to the cheery and life affirming. “There’s no such thing as a dark tourist,” Mr. Stone tells Ms. Kamin. “Only people interested in the world around them.”





Lost for words

After a traffic accident which wasn't his fault and the other driver did a runner a barang was invited to the local cop shop to file a report for his insurance purposes.

A little intimidated by the surroundings he was asked what the other driver was doing at the time of the incident. After a minutes thought he replied.

"He was driving in a Khmer fashion."

The cops didn't understand what he meant and pressed him for a further explanation. Not wanting to upset the cops he nervously used words such as "erratic," and "unpredictable." The cops still didn't get it and pressed him further.

Finally he just let it all out.

"He was driving like a bloody loony. You know. A mad monkey in a Lexus just like all the other monkeys driving them in Phnom Penh."

The cops just giggled as the local police chief pulled up outside just behind him in his Lexus.

Thailand mulls ID wristbands

Tourism Minister Kobkarn said she had approached hotels over the idea of handing out wristbands to help identify tourists that get lost or into trouble.

"When tourists check-in to a hotel they will be given a wristband with a serial number that matches their I.D. and shows the contact details of the resort they are staying in so that if they're out partying late and, for example, get drunk or lost, they can be easily assisted," Kobkarn said.

"The next step would be some sort of electronic tracking device but this has not yet been discussed in detail."

She added that a "buddy system", pairing tourists with a local minder at tourist destinations, was also being discussed.

What idiot thinks up these ideas?

It will just make them stand out even more as a target as well as letting assailants know where they



are staying and their passport details. And what a paradise for tourists, treated as criminals with electronic devices.

But it will help to identify you if you are killed or mugged!!

Near impossible

With Thailand clamping down on visas the Khmer authorities seem to have reacted by making "business visas" virtually impossible to get at land crossings.

On the Labour card/visa fracas here latest word is they are trying to sort out a new visa class for

retirees/dependents etc.

And probably sorting out who gets what between the two ministries.

Watch out

By the time you read this you may be aware that thefts and robberies have been on the rise recently.

As is the custom here the two weeks before any major holiday is affectionately known as the "Robbery season." With the Water Festival however it is also the pick-pocket season in the crowds in town so hang onto your belongings closely.

Phnom Penh Pub Page

It seems that every time I try to head out to do some hard work and research, it has rained this month – ok that is not quite fair – I have taken my usual attitude of doing solely amateur bar hopping for the first few weeks and try to fit in my professional drinking right before publication date.

Yes I admit it, I am the pub page procrastinator. This month, the weather kept me from enjoying my rounds but after some encouragement from the Publisher and threats to have the Hunchback follow behind me with a cricket bat, I managed to make my way to a few establishments.

Still no Templar bar – I hope this is not another Waiting for Gadot-esque satire like we had waiting for Larry's to open. I was assured that things are moving forward and Templar will be opening one of these days and I keep walking by its location a few doors down from the FCC to see how things are going. Robbie has said he wants to make sure things are done right before opening. In Cambodia, I am not sure that means the bar will be arriving on a timely basis.

Speaking of opening, just in time for publication Hedonism Bar has opened on 104 St. in the old Vixen space beside Cavern. It was fairly quiet when I dropped by and I was told that the bar would be fully staffed up in a couple of weeks.

The place had a 70's disco vibe when I was there between the music choices and the décor (the wall paper would a quite the trip with the right blood chemistry). It is a fairly small space but they have made the best of it and it seemed quite comfortable- although as it was not too busy when I showed up, I may have another perspective on a crowded night.

Actually given the size of the place,

I questioned the choice of having a dart board (I suspect there will be some drunken adventures with flying metal objects in the near future) but I guess they were trying to decide what to let drunken customers play with in a bar with no room for a pool table.

A lovely segue as we move next door to Cavern – much to my shock my favourite kitchen on 104 St. has closed. It is a tragic story of the care and respect that one tavern owner can have for his staff.

As the story was told to me by a kindly passing troubadour, as pchum benh was approaching, three of the kitchen staff faced an Odyssean choice – how to move forward between the Scylla of abandoning their familial responsibilities and the Charybdis of

leaving me without a place to get a good burger and amazing fries on 104 St. over the holidays. Fortunately this Gordian knot was dealt with masterfully by our humble publican who closed his kitchen forever rather than force his staff to make this difficult choice (there is another version being whispered among those who should know better that it was closed to prevent an ebola epidemic from spreading through the hostess bars but I don't put any faith in such tales).

Of course this has left our noble hero sitting in front of his establishment drinking himself silly and moaning about the lack of any other place in Phnom Penh to grab a meal worthy of his deeds. I was told that the Pub attempted to step up and provide an alternative Sunday roast suitable for this champion of worker's rights, but forgot to let our hero know about it.

I found Chez Rina on another rainy night when I was out for a stroll. It is on 98 St. – a quiet street near the post office and just north of the KFC.

You will probably never find yourself there unless you are looking for it; however despite having only a quick stop over there, I would recommend you go looking as it is worth a visit or three. It an elegant and intimate bar in a colonial building that opens at 5 and closes around 12:30 (or later if people are hanging out).

It is a cocktail bar with some interesting selections and a few assorted choices to fill out the menu – I was a bit disappointed to find only three beers but happy to see that Leffe was only of the limited options. Wednesday is ladies night – 1st drink for the fairer gender is free - an important starter given that it does not appear to have a happy hour and cocktails were USD5.

Finally, I dropped by a few places that I have not circulated through in quite a while.

First up was Barbados on 130 St. I still can never remember what nights

they have live music – I wish I could because I really enjoy the other nights. For those who enjoy a fun night out with a staff that seems intent on making the customers enjoy their time and leave far more inebriated than they had planned – this is a good place to include on your itinerary.

For a later night haunt, I found myself at White Cobra on 51st for the first time in ages. It is great to see that some things never change.

This is still a great spot to see the world go by without being mired in the middle of the GSM late night festival of the heteromorphic and eccentric. Inexpensive drinks in a place where long time locals still dwell.



A Phnom Penh Prison Diary 7

September 12th

I have now spent nine months detained "pre-trial", with very little news or information on the process - a situation which I now realise is kidnapping or even human trafficking.

We are not allowed access to information on the criminal justice system (such as law books) but one of the terrorists has managed to smuggle in a copy of "The Criminal Code of the Kingdom of Cambodia". The book is well written, therefore definitely copied from a real country and is in constant demand.

The Criminal Code also demonstrates what I have been told by numerous detainees, both foreign and Khmer - the system is bullshit! The Criminal Code bears absolutely no resemblance to the conduct of authorities or the process in the real world, it is a front and a tool used for extortion; releasing those who pay and imprisoning those who do not.

Today I have been given advance notice of my court hearing - which is tomorrow.

September 13th

By prison van, the First Court is around an hour from Prey Sar. A group of guards start collecting detainees from the 100 plus cells at around 06:30.

Around 40 prisoners are due at the First Court for this morning's session - despite the fact that the court does not have the capacity to hear more than 10 cases.

We are cuffed together in twos and lead towards two mini-vans, the type that seat eight in the back on soft, comfortable foam filled seats. However, the seats have been ripped out by a guerilla, leaving a bare metal floor with jagged, rusty holes from the seat mountings, allowing a close view of the blacktop (or dusty red-top) as it rushes past.

The modernised mini-van has a much larger capacity, guards force 20 prisoners and six guards into the back of each van. Six more guards and the driver, sit in the front, with a small armoury of rusty AK47's, an assortment of wooden sticks and electronic cattle prods.

The hour long journey to the First Court is hot and extremely uncomfortable. As we reach Norodom Boulevard, the engine starts to smell like a burning labrador, so the driver pulls over and the prisoners have a whip round to buy five bottles of engine water from a Caltex station.

Pouring cold water over the hot engine creates a refreshing sauna effect inside the van with unmistakable notes of hydrocarbons. After a 20 minutes steam, we resume our journey, leaving on the road a collection of cracked engine parts in a pool of oil and water.

We arrive to the expected chaos, the court building is surrounded by photographers and crowded with family members as vans arrive from a number of Phnom Penh prisons.

I meet my girlfriend and her family in the waiting area, which is the normal small, filthy room, packed with far too many people. It appears that the whole court experience is designed to de-humanise and cause maximum stress.

An embassy official in forms me that I will appear in court room one and that he is present to observe the process.

Shortly after, I am lead into a large courtroom which, front and centre, has a long raised wood panel bench for three judges, on the left is benches for the prosecutor and the prosecution lawyer. To the right is are identical benches for the Clerk and the defence lawyer - which is empty.

I am directed to the dock, which is a semi-circular wooden bar, located in front of, and below the judges - in between the two lawyer benches.

In the dock already are five young Khmer men, who I have never met and are nothing to do with my case. The six of us stand shoulder to shoulder in front of the judge.

Working from one Khmer to the next, the judge asks each in turn a few questions, then makes what seems to be an instant judgement before sending them back to the waiting room one at a time. This appears to be a mass hearing.

After ten minutes (two minutes per case), I am left alone in the dock. My lawyer hasn't arrived, nor has the lawyer for the corrupt, fruity NGO, which is attempting to profit from my kidnapping. After a few words, my case is postponed.

I return to the waiting room where I see the five Khmers from the court room, grinning and queuing to thumb

print the court documents. An English speaking prisoner tells me that they have each paid upto \$2,000 for a reduced sentence.

I have already realised that nobody is judged "not-guilty" as everyone is already a pre-trial prisoner - somebody would lose face.

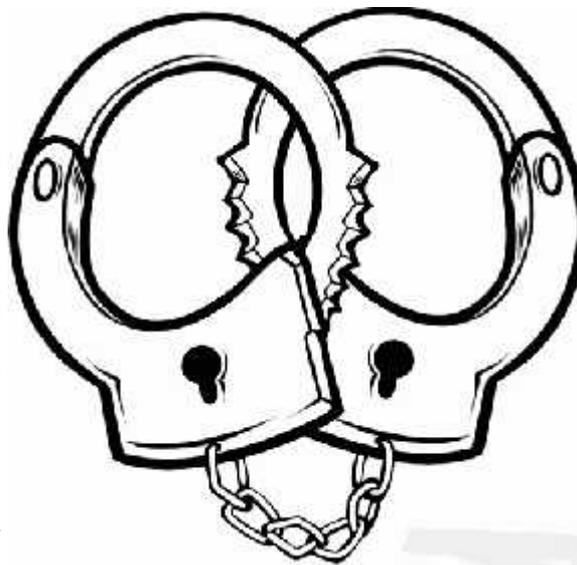
It strikes me as odd that these documents are completed outside of the courtroom, but then I realise that we are away from the view of the public gallery, and the press.

This is the first time I have witnessed mass corruption by the court machine but it won't be the last. Later I calculate that, if this was

typical of the process, the First Court of Phnom Penh alone would earn more than \$20m a year.

All forty prisoners are processed through (probably) the worlds fastest court system - in less than two hours. As we are cuffed and packed into the mini-vans, my girlfriend says goodbye and slips me a water bottle of vodka for later.

During the long journey back, the Khmer prisoners seem to cheerfully accept their lot as they ask about each others ver-



dicts.

We arrive back at CC2 after the lunchtime lock down. Rather than return each prisoner to their own cell, the authorities lock all forty of us in my hospital cell, increasing our cell count from 28 to 68 for the next three hours - thus ensuring that TB and the associated NGOs continue to proliferate at Prey Sar.

I am six months into my pre-trial detention at Prey Sar prison, an experience not unlike being taken hostage. I have even been asked to pay a \$15k ransom, not only on my freedom, but on my life as an innocent man.

Each day I wonder, would it have been better to pay, rather than take the moral high ground? Even four years later, it is impossible to know if this was the right decision.

What I do know now is that the laws, policies, procedures and people who are put in place to act in the interests of justice - just don't give a shit.

Especially those from your own country.

4th October

It is a well known fact that the Khmer language is inefficient. Anyone who has heard a public speech by, for example, Hun Sen will know that what can normally be said in a few English words, often takes hours in Khmer.

It is a little known fact that there is one, single Khmer word that is more efficient than the English equivalent. This word is "huugh-haa"

The English translation is "an especially annoying person, who acts as if they are wealthy by strutting around like a clucking cock, while flaunting expensive, but often fake or stolen items of Asian bling".

Outside of prison, a typical example of huugh-haa, is that annoying guy in the re-sprayed Lexus, who, while speaking on his fake iPhone 8, gives you the "yes, this is mine" look as he drives up the wrong side of the road.

The truth though is that this man has eight kids and no job. To fund his ringer Lexus, he has sold 11 of his children's kidneys to a Triad gang, leaving them with only 5 to share between them.

Inside prison, it is a little more difficult to flaunt your wealth, be it imaginary wealth, or real. Here are the top 10 huugh-haa items in Prey Sar;

10 - Lexus brand boxer shorts

Bling on a budget, genuine Lexus boxers are the only briefs worth anything in Prey Sar - "brief" of course, includes lawyers.

9 - Member augmentation

For reasons unknown, a high percentage of young prisoners, consider it a good idea to enhance themselves with glass beads, inserted using a sharpened toothbrush handle. Not the kind of bling you can flaunt - until you are in hospital.

8 - Tailor made prison uniform

This option screams "I've got connections", or maybe a kid sister working in the Khmer Bling Garment Factory International Ltd.

7 - A selection of colour biros

Together with the tailored uniform and displayed in the breast pocket, this subtle extra, upgrades your ranking and your perceived IQ.

6 - Prison ink



...."He's getting ink done, getting a tattoo...", all that is required is a small electric motor, a car battery, a fine guitar string and the colour biros. But remember, Prey Sar rules state, "no homosexual tattoos" - still, the male tramp stamp is popular among the mid-level huugh-haa.

5 - Flintstone gym

For those who like to buff themselves, a gym made from lumps of concrete and wooden sticks.

4 - A bicycle

Previously the exclusive domain of prison guards, a pushbike is a powerful upgrade. The only problem is that it must be kept inside the overcrowded cells - due to theft.

3 - A fish tank

Nothing says "this is my space" better than an aquarium filled with tomorrow's lunch.

2 - Cable TV

The latest craze amongst the super-lazy bling elite, non-stop reruns of Jeremy Clarkson - talking about Lexus SUV's.

1 - A designer cup

Cheap, effective, portable bling. The ultimate Lexus branded version being in brushed stainless, with a plastic cap and spout similar to a toddlers beaker.

Bits from the Beach

The roads of Sihanoukille are very topical this month for a couple of reasons firstly a couple of bad accidents that have caused multiple fatalities.

A middle aged Russian lost control of his high powered automobile slamming into a student riding his moto. The student who was due re retake his exam the next day died instantly. His moto was in several bits proving the Russian was going at some speed. It was rumoured the driver of the speeding car had had a few vodkas.

More recently an 80 year old Khmer lost control of his Lexus at the junction of Ekereach Street & CT Street outside Charlie Harpers. Two were killed instantly and many injured some seriously the old man was confused with his pedals and slammed on the accelerator instead of the break why am I not stopping more accelerator bang slam what a mess. The police took him away for questioning.

The local authorities are always looking to widen Ekereach Street, dig it up to lay pipes cables etc, but now they are starting to widen some of the side streets. The latest is Makara Street



which is where Snookys is located.

They have taken away about 5 meters on each side and made a right mess. Snookys have released a statement saying that they are still open for business. The local authorities want to widen the road to take some of the traffic away from Ekereach Street.

Climate change has affected the weather in Snooky. The last two months which are normally the wettest have been very dry. June & July were probably wetter than normal but the dry period in September & October is certainly unusual to say the least. Early next year we will probably not have enough water again so start planning for a drought.

The director of a French NGO and school in Sihanoukville was arrested recently for messing around with young boys. The French community was in shock and refused to believe the accusations.

Apparently the former French judge had been on the radar for some time but there was not enough evidence to arrest him. More recently 2 boys had the balls to come forward and press charges against the Frenchman. It is amazing how these people can immerse themselves in the community for years with out being discovered. His Khmer wife is probably an accomplice in so far as she knew what was going on.

The authorities seem to be taking an interest in sprucing up the beaches! Below are a couple of before and after pics of Ochheuteal beach showing how a complete lack of drains can impact a beach and the nice job they did of filling it in.

Photos: Steve Cline



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The Bayon Pearnik is an independent magazine dedicated to raising beer money as well as encouraging debate over standards of taste, humor and journalistic ethics. Published every month or so in Phnom Penh. Not to be taken seriously or while driving or operating heavy machinery. Always consult your doctor first because we're not responsible for what happens to you.

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"We accept anybody's ravings—we often print them!"

AROUND AND OUT

The Foodie

Heading out on the first foodie venture to Phnom Penh's tastiest eateries the difficult decision was obviously where to start. With the plan being to simply hunt down tasty dishes across the city from shacks, food stalls, bars restaurants, or anywhere else offering up flavor sensations, the options were of course endless. I was in the mood for something Asian, so why not start with something Cambodian. It had been a long time since I'd visited a Khmer beer garden, the ear splitting Karaoke, the obnoxiously drunk nouveau riche, menus with no prices, and the occasional gun shots from disgruntled generals, all being good reasons to avoid them, or anything looking like one.

Restaurant 54 on st.184 had that look from the outside, the food had been recommended, it was time to give the beer garden another go. Parking up was easy enough, pull up to the door and a scruffy young kid will exchange your bike for a key, which presuming you've given it to the correct young urchin, will open the lock placed around your bike once it has been valet parked. The beer garden itself is the courtyard surrounding a large villa in an 'L' shape with projector screens at both ends with the football on, and space for a band to the left of the entrance door. The tables are all shiny stainless steel, and mostly full. We are led down the back by a waitress in a shiny Guinness top who is connected to a walky talky via an earpiece.

Beers are cheap with regular sized bottles of Angkor and Kingdom at around \$1. Heineken and Tiger were there for a little more. The menu has a comprehensive selection of BBQ items, and a variety of ways to cook them which are mostly the same for each item. Trying to be adventurous we ordered the goat curry, and added some large black ants, a seafood fried rice, and beef in a beer can. This was radioed into the kitchen and started to arrive shortly after.

First up was the seafood fried rice which had a deep brown color, with rich earthy flavors to match, with a duck egg fried into it, and topped with large chunks of grilled shrimp and butterflied prawns. It wasn't a large plate, but at 11000r nor was it expensive. The goat curry, 16000r, arrived next. Made from a 'kroeng', Cambodian curry paste, in a rich gravy that complimented well the gamey flavor of the goat which was cut into chunks of skin, and the meat just below in an equal ratio. The ants we added were lost in the already bold flavors, and would be better tried as suggested on the menu. Finally the beef in a beer can, 11000r. A can of ABC had had its top roughly hacked off and the decapitated can was used as the vessel to serve a beef stew that featured small, reasonably tender chunks of beef in a gravy with similar seasoning to the better known dish, Luc Lac. Novelty value, of which there was little, aside completely pointless.



The food overall was well prepared, and quickly served, the service quick and efficient, and the key in my pocket did return my bike at the end of the meal. Restaurant 54 was nothing like those beer gardens of old, and gets the Foodie seal of approval.

On the Town

A monthly look into Phnom Penh's music scene, and potentially a bit of what's on info.

The Battle of the Bands night at Sharky Bar was a good way to get acquainted with a number of new bands on the live music circuit. Seven bands in total would battle it out to be Phnom Penh's finest. Sexploited got things under way in raucous punk fashion, pulling in the crowd with free t-shirts to the first moshers, and culminating in the anarchic repetition of sex and violence, the chorus and name of their final song.

Dirty Jacks took up the mic next and their lead singer politely informed the crowd that if they didn't like him they could F right off before launching into a writhing, screaming, new age punk metal set that saw him singing from his back on the floor numerous times, collapsing as the screams rang out.

Sangvar Day followed with a set of metal and hard rock, and then Mad-Fer-It took everyone to Manchester with a set of Oasis covers finishing off with a crowd pleasing version of the classic Cigarettes and Alcohol. Then following an intro of distortion and noise it was on to Splitter. Alternative metal they bill themselves

as, their sound is original and intense with thumping drums and dirty bass lines and intense vocals and head-banging. They got my vote.

Adobo Conspiracy rocked up next in school uniform the lead singer looking that part for a second before she exploded into a whirl of energy. Nightmare AD closed the night with more powerful death metal, but in the end it was Splitter who won the 4th Annual Battle of the Bands, congrats guys.



KAMPOT SUBTERFUGE 1

The small village of Aumuhle Schieswig-Holstein, Germany, May 1944: Admiral Karl Donitz rarely left the deep underground bunker complex, his operational headquarters just outside Kiel, except for the occasional summons to Berlin. The demands of being Commander of the Third Reich's U-Boat fleet and the remnants of its surface navy were as onerous as the terrible losses they had sustained; but Donitz was professional military. Old school maybe, but he considered his high ranking position as a duty and stayed, as far as he possibly could, above the sycophantic politics that were a hallmark of Hitler's crumbling lunacies. It was with no little pleasure, for the first time in over a year, he was able to visit his much cherished and peaceful home; however he was also there, for operational reasons, to set in motion one of the most extraordinary missions ever accomplished by the Germans in the Second World War.

Across the dining table sat Kommandant Kurt Muller; The Admiral and Kurt had a friendship that covered many years and nautical miles. First as raw cadets, then midshipmen and successively, in positions of greater responsibility, as they were promoted up the rungs of the tall, naval, ladder. Tonight though they were relaxed as the rough, red, village wine worked its magic and they reminisced about various ladies and the scrapes they had escaped. Given the fact that between them they had visited most ports in the world the list was endless as were the stories and the girls. Regretfully they would never get printed nor would they ever be able to tell their grandchildren! However, should they ever wish to recount, both men had been highly decorated U-Boat captains in the First World War and each had their boats sunk in action and been Prisoners of War. Here their paths, for a short time, diverged; The Admiral on release from internment returned to Germany but Kurt remained in England and married a local girl. Sadly she was to die in childbirth and it was only in the early 1930's that the Kapitän rejoined the German Navy with his original rank reinstated. By 1943 he was Kommandant of the U-Boat Training Academy reporting directly to Donitz and like his friend put duty above ideology. This, in a way, made tonight's task even more delicate, though the Admiral was certain in his own mind that Kurt Muller was the only individual he considered capable of achieving success.

Striding to the sideboard Donitz returned with a tray bearing a large crystal decanter of Apple Schnapps, two glasses and a parchment, wax-sealed, envelope. After the traditional submariners' toast "To Absent Friends" the Admiral handed Kurt the packet explaining that it contained his new assignment which not only was sea-going but totally top secret. Once the contents had been read and understood the document, of which there was only one copy, would be destroyed. Kurt said nothing but reached for his Meerschaum pipe and pouch of foul smelling shag whilst Donitz excused himself to check the latest radio traffic. Gently rolling the black tobacco and tamping the ceramic bowl Muller eyed, with suspicion, the document in his lap. Once convinced his pipe was drawing to his satisfaction he gently broke the wax seal, extracted the two, hand-written, sheets and through a blue fag scanned the contents. His first reaction was to reach for more Schnapps.

It was over two hours before Donitz returned to find a near empty decanter and his friend gazing to some uncharted point on

the horizon. Muller nodded at a small personal notebook on the table; that, he stated, were his requirements for equipment and the limited crew allowed which he considered necessary to undertake, what both men knew, was probably a suicidal mission. The Admiral pocketed the notebook and said he would do his utmost to ensure the vessel was victualled as requested. Nothing more was said, the pair merely hugged fiercely. Although both men were destined to live long, long lives they would never meet again.

May, 2014. Our ten days in Kampot had been a wonderful break. Wined, dined, relaxed and bronzed the thought of returning to business the following day was something that neither Tuk, nor



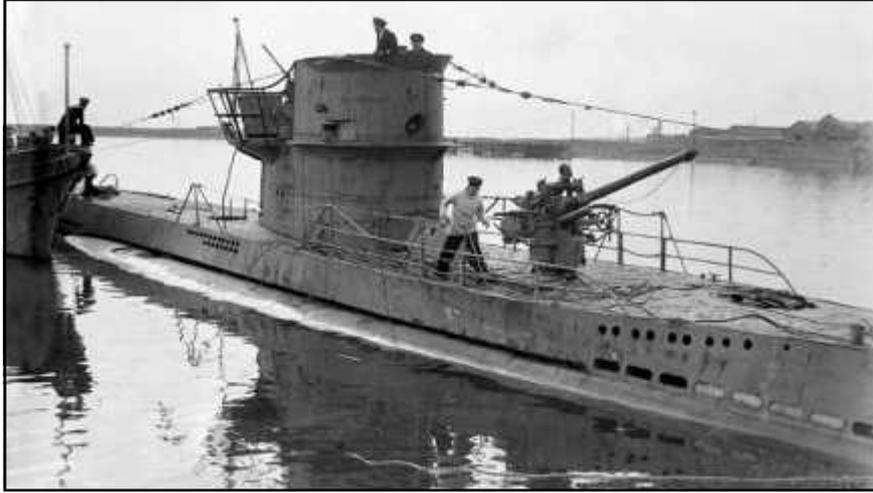
I, had dare mention. Dinner that final evening was a simple treat of rare, baby lamb chops, minted new potatoes and a dressed salad washed down with a very passable Red. Holding my glass to the light and giving it a slight swirl I admitted defeat as to its origin. Confucius smiled with triumph though graciously did not call Checkmate but merely said "German". Similar to waving a red cape to an enraged Spanish bull, my very manhood was being called into question; the reaction was a spluttered "imbloody possible". Twisting the knife even deeper Confucius's sang-froid response was he had said German not Germany! Goaded and loaded, my rudeness unleashed a comment about some female member of his far flung tribe running off with Marco Polo's caravan; eventually she fell in love with a cabbage-eating prince to live happily ever after, yodelling, as they created one of Europe's finest vineries on the slopes of his Bavarian castle!

My response delighted Confucius and I was congratulated on an over-vivid imagination but the simple truth was our liquid nectar came from South Australia; since we had ample supplies would I like to listen to an extraordinary story? A kick, followed by a jab in the ribs, from Tuk alerted me to shut up as she urged Confucius to continue; intrigued that the tale was obviously unusual she asked was it something recent? His ambiguous response was that for him it was only yesterday but for us it was history. Tuk looked quizzical and bluntly said to her Godfather it was getting late for puzzles. Confucius tugged his beard, grinned and quietly replied it was about the night Kampot captured a German U-Boat!

"Infurkinpossible" was my ill-chosen contribution, adding that as far as I knew, Uncle Fritz, never had the technology to get this far. Definitely a wrong move; a not so gentle squeeze on my crutch was accompanied by a nod in the direction of the carving knife; my beloved growled, quietly, in my ear that she could still find room for something smaller than another cutlet, from an animal that had an IQ less than a rutting Sloth! Point taken I shut up. Meanwhile Confucius, delighting in the battle of the sexes, niftily recharged our glasses and then began an astonishing narrative.

He recounted that he couldn't remember the exact date because he was only a small boy but certainly it was early 1945. His father, Socrates, had woken him in the dark hours and together they had boarded the launch and headed, at full speed, up the northern estuary. There they encountered the whole Kampot fishing fleet surrounding an enormous, curious-looking ship, grounded on a mud bar. Even by the light of a half moon it was easy to see that it had

to be 60 Metres long but curiously very narrow with a single deck-house in front of which was mounted a large cannon. My father, apparently, knew exactly what it was and hailed the vessel first in Japanese, then French and finally English. To his astonishment he received a response in the final language and was invited to board this menacing monster. He was gone a scant 30 minutes; on his return he issued orders for Kampot's two regatta racing canoes to be launched and crewed by as many people as could be mustered. With sixty persons to each boat pulling and our launch, with its mighty, marine, Lister motor at full power pushing, we negotiated the brute into Dupon's, old, spate-water canal. Even as dawn broke the boat, under instruction from father, was being camouflaged with bamboo, chopped trees and bushes. Including the grizzled, pipe-chewing, captain there was only nine crew. To a man, they were filthy, unshaven, clad simply in shorts, stank and were



visibly terrified and unarmed. Unknown to me they were to become my playmates and houseguests for the next nine months! Satisfied he had achieved, for the moment, all that could be done he had the vessel secured, guarded with strict instructions that he, alone, had access to board. For the safety, he emphasised strongly, including the wellbeing of the whole community, not a single word, should be spoken of this gift from the Gods. In the meantime the crew would be accommodated, as guests, at his home reminding everyone that Cambodia had non-aligned status; although the vessel was impounded the men were to be treated as asylum seekers especially as the Japanese had vanished from Kampot a month earlier.

The following day, my father, with the gracious, English-speaking German Kapitan, whose name was Kurt Muller, undertook a stern to bow inspection of the submarine. What he saw not only amazed but raised more questions than answers; being of a fastidious nature he said little but made copious notes. The only cargo she carried was 500 Kilos of industrial grade machine diamonds! It was, by all accounts, a quiet ride home; my father deep in thought whilst Kurt retired to the stern, smiling contentedly, sucking on his pipe like a man who had exorcised more than one ghost. A shrewd judger of others he was certain with Socrates he and his men would be safe; although none would ever return to Germany. Thank God, in the list he had given Donitz, had stipulated no crew member should have dependents or family.

To my father's joy he discovered that Kurt Muller was a masterful chess player (pride would not allow further comment!); a thoughtful, educated man, the Kapitan was totally open about his mission as my father, on his word of honour, had assured no harm would come to anyone. Quietly, as they battled with the black and white jade warriors, the whole extraordinary saga was revealed; at this crucial point in the story Confucius declared it was a suitable moment to take a pee break as his little story was far, far from

finished! As if adding emphasis, we returned to a table laden with cheeses, grapes, celery, and crackers, all accompanied by a couple of rare Upper Ebro fortified vintage wines; add to that a dateless wax-sealed Remy my judgement was valid in that the Miller's Tale had barely begun.

For once, seated, Confucius began with a reminder these events had taken place when he was a small boy. Much of what we were about to hear was a compilation his father's reminiscences and his own maturity enhanced by many decades of academic study. The Germans, he declared, were light years ahead throughout the war in submarine technology and tactical underwater marine warfare. The mainstay of their fleet was the Mark VI U-Boat; used in collective groups better known as "Wolfpacks" they wreaked havoc. Their major failings were limited operational distance and torpedo capacity. These shortcomings were

recognised and out of this the Mark IX was developed; indisputably the Orca of the saline jungle these killers had four forward tubes and two aft. Inboard she carried 22 torpedoes with a further six strapped externally and the capacity to carry 40 mines. Her huge diesels gave a surface speed of 20 knots whilst her electric motors would allow her to stay submerged for up to half a day. Given that this technology is only 70 year's old I would still challenge anyone to find me, today, a modern airliner operating under optimal conditions, having the capacity to make a 20,000 kilometre voyage on a single top-up! Well this is exactly the type of craft that was surrendered to my father other than his vessel hadn't been designed as a warship. Technically known as a model IXD she had no torpedo or mine-laying compartments, no engagement Control Room and its associated, automated, range-finding attack optics and radar. The normal model IX U-Boats required an operational complement of 60 men but Muller achieved his extraordinary journey with just thirty sailors. The submarine had been built with the single purpose of transporting those passengers essential, in Hitler's mind, who would ensure the continued existence of his thousand year plan in an operation codenamed Odessa.

If we are to believe Kurt Muller's observations, which my father had no reason to doubt, then his ship delivered, across many parts of the globe the crème of the Nazi elite. This is far beyond the realms of fantasy, as history has revealed, those of importance were undoubtedly paranoid and all had doubles!

At this point Confucius stopped his saga complaining, bitterly, that he had only received a half-full flask; replenishment was essential as only half the story had been told especially as to the sad and epic journey, its impact on Kampot and other countries; anyway he was in desperate need of a smoke. His exact words were, actually, that well lubricated tonsils and a good "Hookah" were essential in recounting old memories! To be continued.

Lee Charles