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## ***Kampot* of the Belle Époque: From the Outlet of Cambodia to a Colonial Resort**

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### **Abstract**

Historical studies about Cambodia have paid little attention to regional factors, and historians have been hardly able to give much perspective about the history of particular regions within the country. Therefore, this paper looks at *Kampot* as it was during the French colonial period in order to understand the foundations of present-day *Kampot*. Presently, *Kampot* is the name of a province and its capital city, which face the Gulf of Thailand. During the colonial period, it was an administrative center for the *circonscription résidentielle* that extended over the coastal region. The principal sources for this paper are the “*Rapports périodiques, économiques et politiques de la résidence de Kampot*,” from 1885 to 1929, collected in the *Centre des Archives d’Outre-Mer* in Aix-en-Provence, France.

Drawing from the results of our examination, we can recognize two stages in the history of *Kampot*. These are (1) the *Kampot* of King *Ang-Duong*, and (2) modern *Kampot*, which was constructed by French colonialism. King *Ang-Duong’s Kampot* was the primary sea outlet for his landlocked kingdom. After colonization by the French, King *Ang-Duong’s Kampot* became extinct, and the coastal region became isolated from other parts of Cambodia. The principal reason for this was the opening of Saigon Port and the exploitation of the Mekong River route. French *Kampot* became a regional administrative center and a colonial resort, which continues to the present. The appearance of the colonial city was succeeded to the provincial capital city after independence. *Kampot’s* status as a resort, which had been interrupted during the civil war period, began to be revived in the middle 1990s.

Throughout the periods of its history, the coastal region had been located on the border between inland Cambodia and the international maritime world. The delimitation of the Kingdom of Cambodia under French colonialism made *Kampot* into a state border district. The international openness of *Kampot* sometimes disturbed regional security. From the French point of view, the Chinese element had the potential to cause insecurity and, therefore, was strictly watched. The border served as a zone of refuge for thieves and pirates, and menaced the stability of the French administration. This situation continued until quite recently. Until the mid-1990s, the Khmer Rouge dominated the zone where thieves had once raged during the colonial period.

**Keywords:** Cambodia, *Kampot*, Gulf of Thailand, colonial period

Historical studies about Cambodia have dealt with “Cambodia” as a whole and have paid little attention to regional factors within it. Historians have been unable to give much in depth information or perspectives about any particular region. Thus, historical studies could not contribute to other Cambodian studies, including those that have tried to understand the civil

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war in recent history, or tried to research current economic and social situations in order to contribute to the development of Cambodia.

Certainly, compared to other areas, the regional histories of Cambodia cannot be said to have plenty of materials. Regarding ancient history (from the seventh to thirteenth centuries), Cambodia has hundreds of Khmer inscriptions, which comprise “the hard data about Cambodian society, economy, and politics” [30: 3]. However, from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries, we have less historical materials, except for the Royal Chronicles, which were compiled in the late eighteenth century at the earliest. As for the colonial period (from 1863 to 1953), French scholars and functionaries left descriptions about geography, natural history or regional administration, so we can hope to extract some information from them. With regard to the period of independence, we should try to conduct research into oral histories. So far, we can say that it is possible to study the history of some regions with regard to the ancient age and after the colonization.

In this paper, we deal with *Kampot* and the coastal region of Cambodia during the French colonial period. Today, *Kampot* is the name of a province and its capital city, which face the Gulf of Thailand. The purpose here is to describe its paysage and its relation with the central authority, in order to explain the foundations of present-day *Kampot* and surrounding region.

The principal sources of this paper are “*Rapports périodiques, économiques et politiques de la résidence de Kampot*” from 1885 to 1929 [20; 21; 22; 23]. They are collected in *Centre des Archives d’Outre-Mer* in Aix-en-Provence, France, and contain information about the political situation, spirit of the population, ways of communication, attitudes of the Cambodian functionaries, public works, agriculture, commerce, industry, the militia, justice, education, medical assistance, and other topics.

## I The Coastal Region of Cambodia

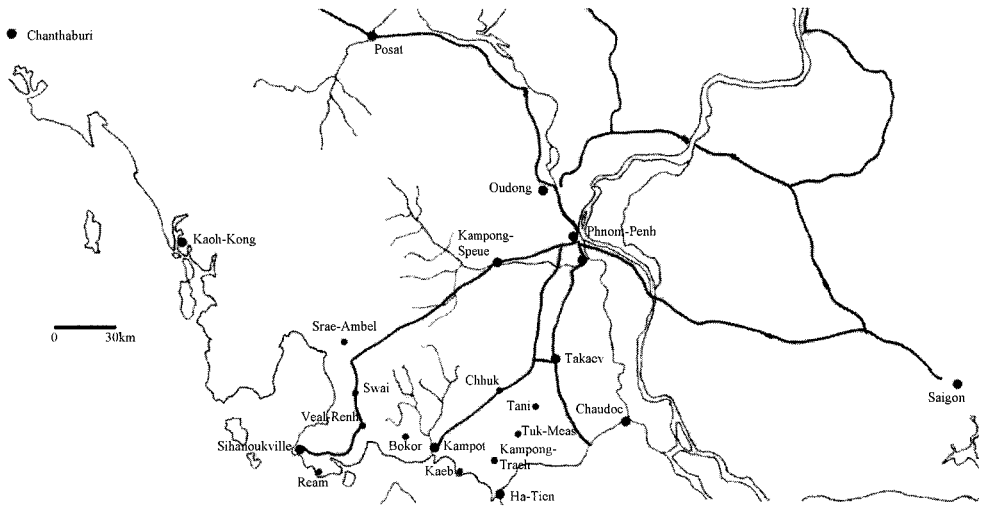
The Kingdom of Cambodia has a short coastline (about 400 km) on the Gulf of Thailand. The Cardamom Mountains (*Phnom-Kravanh*)<sup>1)</sup> and the Elephant Mountains (*Phnom-Damrei*) geographically separate the coastal region from the heart of the country. Two National Routes, No. 3 to *Kampot* and No. 4 to *Sihanoukville*, and a railway connect this region to *Phnom-Penh*. On National Route No. 3, a mountain called *Phnom-Tvea* (Mount Gate) marks the entrance to *Kampot*. *Phnom-Tvea* is literally the gate between inland Cambodia and the maritime province, which is guarded by a *Neak-Ta* (guardian spirit) named *Chomteav-Mau* (Madame *Mau*).<sup>2)</sup>

A narrow plain lies between these mountains and the shallow sea. Provincial capitals and

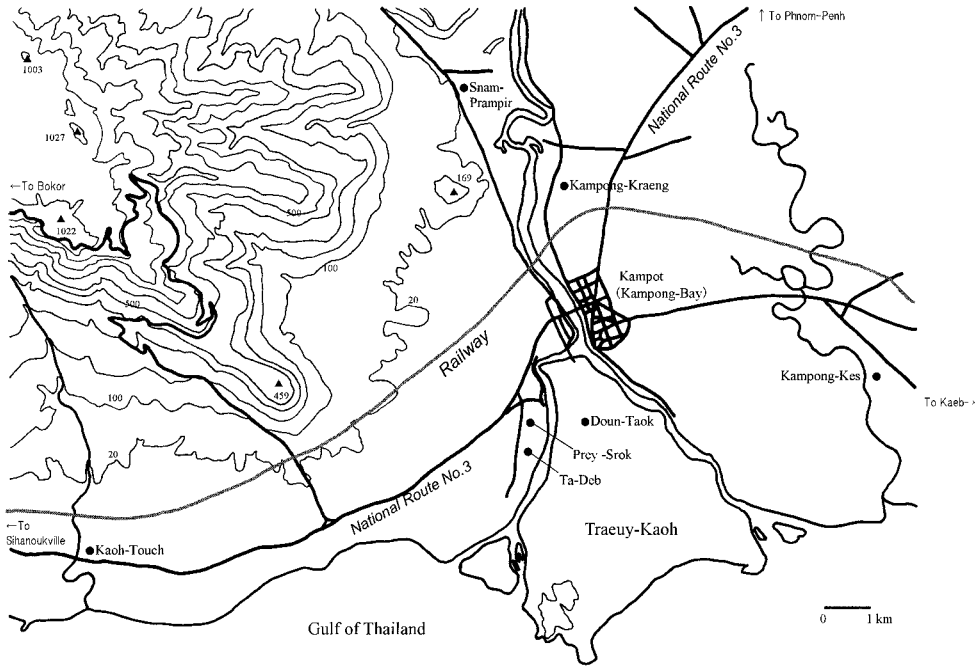
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1) The highest mountain is Mt. *Aoral* (1,813 m).

2) This *Neak-Ta* was born after the construction of the road and grew stronger as traffic on the road increased. It was believed that all travelers had to pray to this *Neak-Ta*, or they would die under a curse. Nowadays, there is another *Neak-Ta* named *Yeay-Mau* (grandmother *Mau*) at a pass on National Route No.4 and every driver offers fruit.



Map 1 Coastal Region



Map 2 Kampot

municipalities lie on this plain and are connected to each other by land and sea. Presently, the two municipalities of *Krong-Preah-Sihanouk* (*Sihanoukville*) and *Krong-Kaeb*, and the two provinces of *Kampot* and *Kaoh-Kong*, form the Cambodian coastal region.

During the French colonial period, the coastal region was administratively organized into a

*circonscription résidentielle* with *Kampot* as its capital. First, *circonscription résidentielle de Kampot* contained the *arrondissements*<sup>3)</sup> of *Kampot*, *Kompong-Som*, *Trang* (*Bunteay-Méas*,<sup>4)</sup> *Trang* and *Péam*), and *Kong-Pisey*<sup>5)</sup> (*Kong-Pisey* and *Pnôm-Sruoch*)<sup>6)</sup> [17: 211].

When the French installed the *Résidence*, its capital *Kampot* in administrative designation was an aggregation of 8 villages that contained 2,500 inhabitants [13: 1–2]. These villages are now included in the District of *Kampong-Bay*, the urban area of *Kampot* Province.

(1) “Cambodian *Kampot*” was on the *Prek-Kampot* River, behind “Chinese *Kampot*” and near a Cambodian pagoda. In 1889, there were only 30 inhabitants and most of them were peasants [14: 85].

(2) “Chinese *Kampot*”, which local people called *Prey-Srok* and Europeans called *Kampot*, was on the right riverbank of the west branch of the *Prek-Thom* River. Its inhabitants were exclusively Chinese. The village consisted of two ranges of houses running parallel with the river and two roads. In January 1888, there were two pagodas of brick, a market, 75 houses, and a Chinese school. The number of inhabitants was 267 (65 men, 65 women and 137 children). Most of them were merchants and some had sea junks [14: 86–87].

(3) A Vietnamese village, *Tien-Thanh*, was in front of “Chinese *Kampot*” and another Vietnamese village was on *Trey-Ka* (*Traeuy Kaoh*)<sup>7)</sup> Island. In 1888, there was a school, a market and two ranges of houses running parallel with the river. The village population was 428, including 228 Chinese, 189 Vietnamese and 11 Cambodians. There were 88 houses and 17 large sea junks. Inhabitants kept 123 pigs and yielded 450 kg of rice in 1886 and 900 kg in 1887 [14: 110].

(4) A Malay village, *Trapeang-Svay*, was below the Vietnamese village on *Trey-Ka* Island. The inhabitants were peasants and fishers. In January 1888, there was a thatch-roofed mosque, a school teaching Arabic, 33 houses and 15 large sea junks. The population was 199, including 172 Malays. Inhabitants kept 41 buffalos and 19 cattle, and yielded 9,000 kg of rice in 1886 and 16,200 kg in 1887 [14: 110].

(5) The Malay-Cambodian villages of *Khlong-Neas* and *Bang-Supream* were on *Trey-Ka* Island. *Khlong-Neas* was on the left riverbank of the *Prek-Thom* and *Bang-Supream* was inland. In January 1888, there were 358 inhabitants, including 142 Malays and 97 Cambodians. There were 53 houses and 27 large sea junks. Inhabitants kept 98 buffalos, 48 cattle and 3 horses, and yielded 12,000 kg of rice in 1886 and 22,500 kg in 1887 [14: 110–111].

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3) Before the installation of *Résidence*, the Cambodian royal authority controlled these *arrondissements* separately. *Kampot* belonged to the *Dey* (Land) of *Baphnom*, which was under *Kralahom*, the King’s Minister of Marine and Water Transportation. *Kompong-Som* belonged to the *Dey* of *Pursat* under *Chakrei*, the King’s Minister of the Army and Land Transportation. *Péam* and *Banteay-Meas* belonged to the *Dey* of *Treang* under *Yomaréach*, the King’s Minister of Justice. *Kong-Pisey* was under *Okña Norintréathipadei*, *Oparach* (the Second King’s) Minister of Land Transportation [9: 211–216].

4) *Banteay-Meas*.

5) *Kong-Pisey* is now in *Kampong-Spueu* Province.

6) *Phnum-Sruoch* is now in *Kampong-Spueu* Province.

7) *Traeuy-Kaoh* is now a commune belonging to *Kampong-Bay* District, *Kampot* Province.

(6) There was a Malay-Cambodian village, *Daun-Tek (Doun-Taok)*,<sup>8)</sup> which consisted of groups from *Trapeang-Romeas*, *Daun-Tek* and *Sala-Kev*. *Trapeang-Romeas* was on the *Prek-Kandal-Romeas* River, a branch of the *Prek-Thom*. *Daun-Tek* and *Sala-Kev* were inland, but some Malays of *Daun-Tek* had boats on *Prek-Kandal-Romeas*. In January 1888, it contained 213 habitants including 140 Malays, 50 Cambodians and 23 Chinese. There were 55 houses and 7 large sea junks. Inhabitants kept 58 buffalos, 55 cattle, 9 horses and 5 pigs, and yielded 15,000 kg of rice in 1886 and 30,000 kg in 1887 [14: 111].

(7) The Malay village of *Kandal-Romeas* was on the left riverbank of the *Prek-Kandal-Romeas* at the face of *Trapeang-Romeas*.

(8) The Chinese village of *Kompong-Bay (Kampong-Bay)*<sup>9)</sup> was on the left riverbank of the *Prek-Thom*. On January 1, 1888, there were 30 houses and a Chinese school. The population was 171 (80 men, 30 women and 61 children) and increased to more than 250 in the same year. Most of the inhabitants were merchants. Some had sea junks and traded with villages on the coast [14: 87].

Other principal centers located on the east of *Kampot* were *Kompong-Trach (Kampong-Trach)*,<sup>10)</sup> *Tonhon*, *Tani*,<sup>11)</sup> *Tuk-Meas*<sup>12)</sup> and *Kep (Kaeb)*.

(1) *Kompong-Trach*, the center of *Péam* Province, was on a small river, which only small junks could ascend. The builders of this village were Chinese who arrived before the period of French colonization. They cultivated pepper and *Kompong-Trach* became a trading center for pepper. As transactions of pepper increased, the village of *Kompong-Trach* expanded. In 1907, the French built a market and after that, shops, restaurants and tailors were installed around the market [24: 11–12].

(2) *Tonhon* was a trading center for pepper, too. From March to May, oxcarts loading pepper went to *Tonhon* everyday. This village was located a few kilometers east of *Kompong-Trach*, at the confluence of the *Potassy* River and the *Giang-Thanh* River. The *Giang-Thanh* River continues to *Vinh-Te* Canal, which connects *Ha-Tien* and *Chaudoc*. The inhabitants of this village were Vietnamese fishers and Chinese merchants [24: 12–13].

(3) *Tuk-Meas* was the administrative center of *Banteay-Meas* Province. It was a Chinese village on the *Tuk-Meas* River, which large junks could ascend [24: 13–14].

(4) *Tani* was another Chinese village on the way from *Kompong-Trach* to *Treang*.<sup>13)</sup> Pepper was cultivated in its surroundings [24: 13–14].

(5) *Kep* was a small port where coolies disembarked from Chinese junks heading for pepper plantations [24: 14].

8) Now *Doun-Taok* is a village of *Traeuy-Kaoh* Commune, belonging to *Kampong-Bay* District, *Kampot* Province.

9) *Kampong-Bay* is now a district of *Kampot* Province.

10) *Kampong-Trach* is now the central town of *Kampong-Trach* District, *Kampot* Province.

11) *Tani* is now a commune belonging to *Angkor-Chey* District, *Kampot* Province.

12) *Tuk-Meas* is now divided into two communes (*Tuk-Meas-Khang-Kaeut* and *Tuk-Meas-Khang-Lech*) belonging to *Banteay-Meas* District, *Kampot* Province.

13) *Treang* is now in *Takaev* Province.

The principal centers on the west of *Kampot* were *Kaoh-Touch*,<sup>14)</sup> *Preaek-Tnaot*,<sup>15)</sup> *Tuek-L'ak*,<sup>16)</sup> *Sré-Thom*, *Veal-Renh*,<sup>17)</sup> *Swai*, *Champa*, *Véal*, *Kampong-Seila*<sup>18)</sup> and *Srae-Ambel*.<sup>19)</sup> When Pavie traveled from *Kampot* to *Kompong-Som* in 1881, the itinerary from *Kampot* to *Kompong-Srela* (*Kampong-Seila*) needed four days under the best conditions [18: 99–101].

(1) *Câh-Tauch* (*Kaoh-Touch*) village was 11 km from *Kampot* on the *Prec-Câh-Tauch* River. Pavie saw some boats on the river that were loading wood.<sup>20)</sup> *Câh-Tauch* village contained 15 to 20 houses and its environs had paddy fields on which many buffalos grazed. Before, this village had been called *Ramset* and was located 15 minutes west, but because the land became poorer, the inhabitants moved to new places [14: 82; 18: 102].

(2) *Prec-Thnot* (*Preaek-Tnaot*) village was on the left bank of the *Prec-Thnot* River, 12 km from *Câh-Tauch* village,<sup>21)</sup> and about 20 Cambodian families lived there. Some Vietnamese began to settle in this village in the middle of the 1860s, and after that their numbers increased. They made planks and boats ordered by the Chinese of *Ha-Tien* or *Kampot*. The houses of the Vietnamese merchants and fishers were aggregated, and those of the Cambodians peasants were scattered in the plain. Only the land around *Prec-Thnot* was cultivated, but other parts remained absolutely uncultivated [14: 82; 18: 103–104].

(3) *Teuc-Laak* (*Tuek-L'ak*) village was on the right bank of the *Prec-Teuc-Laak* River, about 12 km from *Prec-Thnot* and 5 km from sea. The land was fertile and covered with paddy fields. There were 12 or 15 houses of métis-Chinese and many Cambodian peasants inhabited, too. The houses of the Chinese were aggregated and those of the Cambodians were scattered in the plain and the bush. The *Prec-Teuc-Laak* was navigable to a point an hour above the village. At the beginning of the northwestern monsoon, many ships from *Kampot* ascended the river to buy paddies. The crews were Chinese and Malays and they went into the country and offered cottonades, tobacco and other goods in exchange for paddies and forest products, like gamboges, resin, oil and gum [14: 79–80; 18: 104–105].

(4) *Sré-Thom* village was three hours from *Teuc-Laak* and was its dependence. After passing 2 km of cultivated land, the village appeared. This village contained about 40 houses of Cambodian or métis-Chinese at the edge of forest along the *Prec-Sré-Thom* River. Products of this village were exported by using the river. In former days, the village was located near the road, but because the land became poorer, the inhabitants cleared the forest and built a new village<sup>22)</sup> [14: 81; 18: 106].

(5) Then the road passed *Véal-Reen* (*Veal-Renh*).<sup>23)</sup> Twenty to 30 houses were at the foot of

14) *Kaoh-Touch* is now a commune belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

15) *Preaek-Tnaot* is now a commune belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

16) *Tuek-L'ak* is now a commune belonging to *Prey-Nob* District, *Krong-Preah-Sihanouk*.

17) *Veal-Renh* is now a commune belonging to *Prey-Nob* District, *Krong-Preah-Sihanouk*.

18) *Kampong-Seila* is now a district belonging to *Kaoh-Kong* Province.

19) *Srae-Ambel* is now a district in *Kaoh-Kong* Province.

20) According to Leclère, *Ca-Toch* (*Kaoh-Touch*) was 20 minutes from sea.

21) According to Leclère, *Prec-Thnot* was 30 minutes from sea.

22) After that, a plague killed people on two occasions.

23) *Veal-Renh* is now a commune belonging to *Prey-Nob* District, *Krong-Preah-Sihanouk*.

*Phnom-Véal-Reen* hill. The inhabitants were Cambodian or métis-Chinese and most paddy fields belonged to the Chinese or Malays of *Kampot* [18: 110]. According to Leclère, *Véal-Rine* (*Veal-Renh*) had the best paddy fields in the province [14: 75]. Pavié visited a village of an ethnic group called *Tchiong*, between *Véal-Reen* and *Somrong*.<sup>24)</sup> The population was about 40 and they lived in 7 houses amid paddy fields at the edge of the forest [18: 111–116].

(6) After *Swai* village, the road went into a thick forest and there were no villages until *Champa* and *Véal*. According to Leclère, *Poum-Soye* (*Swai*) was six hours from sea, on the left riverbank of *Prec-Thom-Véal-Rinh* (or *Prec-Soye*). This village was a dependence of *Poum-Teuck-Loak* and the last village of *Kampot* province. There lived Chinese and Cambodians who were merchants and peasants. The 12 or 15 houses of *Champa* were at the foot of *Kidauk* hill, and the country was half-cultivated and covered with fruit trees. *Véal* was 3 km from *Champa* and inhabitants cultivated paddy fields [14: 81; 18: 111, 120].

(7) *Kompong-Srela* (*Kompong-Seila*) was a half hour's walk from *Véal* and 20 km from *Swai* village. There was a fort built by the Vietnamese before the reign of King *Ang-Duong* [18: 121].

(8) The capital of *Kompong-Som* Province was *Sré-Umbell* (*Srae-Ambel*) village. The habitants of *Sré-Umbell* were Chinese, métis-Chinese or Siamese. There were about 50 houses in the village including 2 houses of Vietnamese. On houses along the water, a half dozen small sea junks were moored and traded with the ports of *Kampot*, *Chantaboun* and *Bangkok* [18: 124–125].

The west end of the Kingdom of Cambodia, on the Gulf of Thailand, consists of *Kaoh-Kong* Province. *Kaoh-Kong* was ceded from Siam to Cambodia by a treaty on February 13, 1904.

In 1910s, *Kas-Kong* (*Kaoh-Kong*) Island was deserted, covered with forest and separated from the main land by a channel of hundreds of meters. At the northern point where there was the small island called *Cône*, a roadstead of a steamer and customhouse were installed. The country behind *Kas-Kong* had mountains of 300 to 1,000 m high and was thinly populated. A few Chinese and Vietnamese settled only on the coast and fished. The port of *Kas-Kong* was not opened for commerce, but steamship postal service between *Saigon* and *Bangkok* touched usually. Siamese commercial ships also visited *Kas-Kong* to buy dried fish and *Kapik*.<sup>25)</sup> [24: 20–23].

We can see that these centers were (1) inhabited by Chinese merchants and Cambodian (Khmer) peasants, and (2) all located on small rivers flowing into the sea. Products were gathered at these centers and carried through these rivers. Eastern centers were mainly collecting centers for pepper, and most of their products were exported to Saigon through the *Vinh-Te* Canal. The western centers exported paddies and forest products to *Kampot* by using Chinese or Malay sea junks.

24) *Samrong* is now a commune belonging to *Prey-Nob* District, *Krong-Preah-Sihanouk*.

25) It is a paste made from shrimps.



## II *Kampot* before the French

### 1. *Emergence of Kampot*

According to a French geographer Jean Delvert, the author of “*Le Paysan Cambodgien*” (1958) and “*Le Cambodge*” (1983), Cambodia is a continental country and the role of the coastal region was very limited in Cambodia’s history and economy before 1955 [6: 13]. However, this idea was not entirely true. In history, Cambodian kings sought an outlet located on the Gulf of Thailand. The oldest cases involved the Pre-Angkor Kings, *Isanavarman*, *Bhavavarman*, and *Jayavarman I*, who tried to control the *Chanthaburi* region [30: 131–132, 338, 342, 350]. There remain many monuments around *Chanthaburi* and the *Banteay-Meas* District.

In post-Angkor sources, such as the Cambodian Chronicles, the coastal region appears in records starting from the seventeenth century. Vickery, who analyzed Portuguese sources of the sixteenth century, concluded that the Portuguese had knowledge about bays and inlets along the coast, but had no knowledge of a canal linking them to the *Bassac* River, so the Mekong River was the main route for Cambodia in those times [29: 401–403]. According to the Jesuit Guy Tachard who visited Siam in 1687, the mountain behind *Chanthaburi* was the border between Siam and Cambodia, and Governor of *Chanthaburi* was a Malay Muslim who was subject to the Siamese Court [27: 469–472]. Alexander Hamilton who traveled on the Gulf of Thailand in 1720 wrote that two ports, *Cupangsoap* (*Kompong-Som*) and *Ponteamass* (*Banteay-Meas*, later *Ha-Tien*) belonged to Cambodia, and Cochin-China was divided from Cambodia by a river of three leagues broad [10: 193–208]. Accordingly, we can see that the Cardamom Mountains separated Cambodia and Siam, and the mouth of the Mekong River separated Cambodia and Cochin-China in those days.

From the end of the seventeenth century, Cambodia lost control of the Mekong River route as Vietnamese power expanded into the lower Mekong. A Cambodian king in the late eighteenth century, *Outey-Reachea* III (who reigned from 1758 to 1775) allied with a Chinese, *Mac-Thien-Tu*, who had established an autonomous polity based in *Ha-Tien* and controlled the maritime network on the eastern part of the Gulf of Thailand. *Ha-Tien* was located at a point where a river linking to the *Bassac* River flows into the Gulf of Thailand. Landlocked Cambodia tried to keep its access to maritime trade through *Ha-Tien* [26].

The first description of *Kampot* in the Cambodian Chronicles refers to an event that took place from 1771 to 1775. In 1771, King *Tak-Sin* of Siam attacked *Ha-Tien* and destroyed it completely. Then, *Tak-Sin* marched to the Cambodian capital *Oudong*. Cambodian king *Outey-Reachea* III, who was allied with *Mac-Thien-Tu*, escaped from his capital and asked the Vietnamese king for reinforcements. When Vietnamese troops came closer to *Oudong*, *Tak-Sin* withdrew to his capital *Thonburi*, and left a Cambodian prince, *Ang-Non*, with Siamese soldiers at *Kampot* as a counterforce to *Outey-Reachea* III. *Ang-Non* expanded his influence over *Treang* and *Banteay-Meas*, and resisted *Outey-Reachea* III. At last, *Outey-Reachea* III grew tired of the hostilities with *Ang-Non* and ceded throne to him in 1775 [1: 614–641; 25: 107–110; 9: 22].

After *Ang-Non* left *Kampot* for *Oudong*, the Cambodian Chronicles describe no stories

relating to *Kampot* until *Ang-Duong's* entrance onto the historical stage in the 1840s. The coastal region was under the control of Siam and Vietnam. According to a description by John Crawford in the 1820s, the island of *Ko-Kong* (*Kaoh-Kong*) was the point that divided both territories. *Kampot* town was chiefly inhabited by Cambodians, but also contained a few Vietnamese and about a thousand Malays [5: 456–458].

A French *Résident* of *Kampot*, Adhemard Leclère, could get some historical information from an old Malay man in late 1880s [13: 6–8]. Until 1840s, the Vietnamese governed *Kampot* and *Péam*, but *Kompong-Som* belonged to Cambodia. The Vietnamese constructed a road from *Ha-Tien* to *Svai* village (on the border with *Kompong-Som*) via *Kampot*. There was a Vietnamese customhouse at the mouth of the western branch of the *Kampot* River and a Vietnamese fort surrounded by a huge mound with a ditch of 20 m wide at *Kompong-Bay* (*Kampong-Bay*) village. A Chinese village called *Phum-Bay* was situated along the river, 150 m from the Vietnamese fort, and contained some 50 inhabitants. Scarcely 50 people lived in the “Cambodian *Kampot*” in those times and the “Chinese *Kampot*” had not appeared yet. On *Trey-Ka* (*Traeuy-Kaoh*) Island, there were about 40 houses. The house of the Vietnamese governor was on the island, too. A Vietnamese mandarin called *Ong-De-Cai* lived in *Tien-Thang* village. He was charged to supervise the river and to administer the province. Vietnamese soldiers stationed at *Kampot* were so few that they had to organize a Cambodian militia.

When this militia and local people rose in revolt, the Vietnamese ran to *Ha-Tien*. Vietnamese troops were reinforced at *Ha-Tien* and counterattacked. The Cambodians and Malays were defeated, and the Vietnamese who could recover *Kampot* appointed *Ong-The-Su* as a new administrator. The Chinese kept neutral during this uprising.

In 1841, Cambodian governor *Oknha-Mau*, who hated the Vietnamese yoke and was supported by Siam, gathered about 3,000 Cambodians. The Vietnamese ran away to *Ha-Tien* again. The entire province rose up against Vietnam. Malays in *Kampot* also organized a troop of 100 men led by *Chu-Tia*. Then, only 200 Vietnamese soldiers were in *Ha-Tien* and they had to fight against an enemy six times more in number than themselves. The Vietnamese army resisted for one month and a half, but when the new enemy appeared from inland, they evacuated to *Chaudoc* because they could not get reinforcements. The Malay informant of Leclère said that 600 Vietnamese died near *Ha-Tien*, the Siamese lost 140, and the Cambodians lost 60. Later, the Vietnamese could recover *Ha-Tien*, but *Kampot* remained in the hands of the Cambodians and *Oknha-Kan* was appointed as its governor.

## 2. *Kampot* under King *Ang-Duong*

King *Ang-Duong* constructed a road from his capital of *Oudong*, to *Kampot*, and opened *Kampot* as the only international seaport of Cambodia. The traveling time between *Oudong* and *Kampot* was eight days by oxcart and four days by elephants [16: 121–122].

In those days, there were about 500 houses and 3,000 inhabitants in *Prey-Srok* and *Kompong-Bay*. King *Ang-Duong* welcomed European merchants, and built a house of stone and

wood<sup>26)</sup> at *Trapeang-Svai* village in *Trei-Ka* Island for them. The French Father Estrées had a church<sup>27)</sup> at *Ta-Dép (Ta-Deb)*<sup>28)</sup> village on the river's right bank. About 30 families of Christian Vietnamese lived below this church and most of them were fishers.<sup>29)</sup> There was a Royal Garden in *Kompong-Kreing* village on the left riverbank, and it sent pineapples, durians, mangos and mandarin oranges to *Oudong* every year<sup>30)</sup> [13: 9–11].

The imports to *Kampot* were “grey and white shirtings, long cloths, white brocades, turkey and other red cloths, coloured shirtings, sarongs, gambier, iron and steel, agricultural implements, and Banares opium.” The exports were “rice, sugar, peas, pepper, hides, horns, fish, tobacco, silk, dried meat, salt, gutta percha, gamboges, ivory, cardamoms, beeswax, tilseed, sapanwood, aquila wood, lard, rosin, and live stock, such as pigs and fowl.” The rice, peas, pepper, sugar, and tobacco were produced around *Kampot*. The hides, horns, gums, cardamoms, beeswax, and salt-fish were the products of inner Cambodia. A large portion of the interior products was carried to *Kampot* through the *Ha-Tien (Vinh-Te)* Canal. However, Vietnam could close this canal at will, so the Cambodian King and nobles preferred to use the land route. The trade at *Kampot* was entirely in the hands of the Anglo-Chinese merchants of Singapore and small British ships from 200 to 250 tons were employed [2: 177–179]. British merchants who visited *Kampot* in 1854 met (1) the Governor,<sup>31)</sup> (2) the Lieutenant-Governor *Sinky*,<sup>32)</sup> (3) the Chinese merchant *Chinchoo-Choow*,<sup>33)</sup> and (4) the Malay merchant *Tuanku-Tay*<sup>34)</sup> [15: 289–295]. These Chinese and Malay were the notables of *Kampot* in those days.

### 3. *Insurrection of Kampot*

Cambodia became a protectorate of France in 1863. According to the Malay informant of Leclère, “Chinese *Kampot*,” “Cambodian *Kampot*,” *Phum-Bay*, *Trapeang-Svai* and *Tien-Thanh* had about 700 houses and 5,000 inhabitants, including 900 Chinese, 300 Malays, 40 Vietnamese, 30 Siamese and hundreds of Cambodians at that time. Most parts of *Trey-Ka* Island were covered by bush. *Tien-Thanh* was a Vietnamese village on *Trey-Ka* Island and founded about 1865. King *Norodom* appointed a Vietnamese as chief of the canton and let him control the

26) This house disappeared after *Ang-Duong's* reign, but its beton foundation remained until the 1880s.

27) Mouhot described that it was a house covered with creep and surmounted by a cross [16: 113].

28) *Ta-Deb* is now a village of *Andoung-Khmaer* Commune, belonging to *Kampong-Bay* District, *Kampot* Province.

29) This church and Christian village disappeared about 1859.

30) This Royal Garden existed in the years of Leclère as well.

31) The Governor of *Kampot* during *Ang-Duong's* reign was *Oknha-Thong*. He was Sino-Cambodian and lived at the foot of Mt. *Phnom-Sa*. There he had a plantation of sugarcane about 55 ha 600 and a sugar mill. He made white sugar and sent 100 piculs of this white sugar to King *Ang-Duong* every year. *Oknha-Thong* died about 1860, but his sugar mill was still working in 1880s [13: 11].

32) *Sinky* was a Chinese wearing his hair in a tail wound around his head, and he was styled *Bandar-Thoam*.

33) *Chinchoo-Choow* was one of the principal Chinese merchants of *Kampot* and was son-in-law to the Governor.

34) *Tuanku-Tay* traded largely in raw silk, ivory, gamboges and sticklac. The king always employed him as his super cargo, when the king's junks were sent down to Singapore.

village and all Vietnamese in this province. The villages of *Klong-Neas* and *Bang-Supream* did not exist yet, and *Daun-Tek* (*Doun-Taok*) village was just founded by a queen who had been in *Kampot* for eight years. There were only two Chinese houses in *Trapeang-Romeas* village [13: 12].

After this period, *Kampot* began to decline. In 1870, *Kampot* had no more than 1,500 inhabitants. The main reason for this decline was because Saigon Port was opened and navigation along the Mekong River began to be exploited in the interests of French colonialism. Cambodian inland products took the Mekong Route to Saigon and stopped taking the long land route to *Kampot* [13: 13]. Finally, the insurrection from 1885 to 1887 gave quietus to ancient *Kampot*.

On the eve of the insurrection, there were a telegraph office and an *entrepôt* of opium in *Kampot*. The telegraphist was a French man named Garcerie. Another French man named Pestel and an Irishman named Resenthal were stationed at the *entrepôt* of opium. The entire island of *Trey-Ka* was French property since 1882, but had not been exploited yet [13: 14].

At the end of February 1885, a secret meeting of mandarins was held at *Treang*.<sup>35)</sup> At this meeting, *Oknha-Pusnoulouk-Chhouk*, *Sdach-Tranh* (master) of the *Dey* (land) of *Treang*, ordered *Oknha-Chhim*, the Governor of *Kampot*, to attack the three French men in *Kampot* [13: 15–16].

On the 17th of March, at noon, a band of 50 men sacked the *entrepôt* while Resenthal was having lunch at the telegraph office and while Pestel was in *Ha-Tien*. Another band of 50 men attacked the telegraph office. The telegraphist and Resenthal did not resist and fled to *Ha-Tien* by boat. The band threw the telegraphic instruments and electric piles into the river and cut the telegraph line. Then, a Vietnamese courier from *Ha-Tien* appeared at the house of *Oknha-Chhim* to ask for a boat to pass the river as usual. *Balat*<sup>36)</sup>-*Phok* of *Kompong-Trach* caught him and had him beheaded. The Chinese gathered as many of their belongings as possible and escaped to *Ha-Tien*, *Rach-Gia*, *Véal-Rinh* and *Kompong-Som*. Some fled to Bangkok, Saigon, Singapore and also to China from those places. The customhouse at the entrance of the river became a fort of insurgents. Fifty men who were armed with guns defended it. A wooden barrier was constructed on the way from the customhouse to *Kampot* town and a junk loaded with stones was sunk in the pass [13: 17].

At the beginning of April, an *avisó à vapeur* “Sagittaire” and two junks appeared at the anchorage of *Kampot*. Then, the chiefs of the insurgents brought 500 partisans to the customhouse: *Mékang-Préap* led 200, *Balat-Mey* led 100, *Balat-Suon* led 100 and *Népol-Ouk* led 100. At six o'clock the next morning, two armed junks passed the barrier and reached a point 500 m from the customhouse. The insurgents had gathered on the right riverbank. Firing continued for an hour. When *Balat-Mey* and *Népol-Ouk* were shot in their arms, the insurgents

35) From *Kampot*, (1) *Balat-Soun*, a Sino-Cambodian of *Kompong-Bay*, (2) *Prom*, a Cambodian *sophéa* (judge) of *Kabal-Meas*, (3) *Ouk*, a Cambodian of *Kompong-Bay*, and (4) *Préap*, a mandarin of *Kampot* went to *Treang*. Returning to *Kampot*, *Préap* and *Ouk* called other mandarins to a meeting held at *Oknha-Chhim*'s house, and *Balat-Khuon*, *Mey*, *Um*, *Tép* and *Méas* attended.

36) *Balats* are deputies of provincial governors.

began to run. At this time, *Balat-Khuon*, leading his men and two small canons, reached *Ta-Dep* village on the right riverbank. When the fugitives appeared, *Balat-Khuon* and his men also ran away with them. The two small canons were left behind. After this battle, the French ascended to *Prey-Srok* village. The village was empty so they returned to the customhouse with two small canons of *Balat-Khuon*. About three o'clock in the afternoon, two junks ascended to *Kompong-Bay* village. Nearly 400 insurgents gathered at a pagoda near *Kompong-Bay* and 100 were stationed at the old fort on the left riverbank. After half an hour of firing, the insurgents ran away. *Oknha-Chhim* who received this news, ran to *Prey-Thnang* at the foot of *Phnom-Thvea*. Then, two French junks descended to the customhouse again. The next morning, when the French ascended the river again, a notable of the Malays named *Néak-Ving* came to propose that he and his villagers would take the French side. When his proposition was accepted, Malays of *Trapeang-Svay* returned to their village. *Néak-Ving* guided French troops to "Cambodian *Kampot*" where *Balat-Khuon* and his 200 men were stationed. With only two or three gunshots, the insurgents ran away to *Ta-Dep* village. *Balat-Khuon* fled to *Chan-Bak* village, about two hours from *Phum-Bay* [13: 17–19].

The French navy established a post in an abandoned pagoda on *Trey-Ka* Island, and later, the infantry of the marines came to replace the navy. The French *Résidence* was created, and the telegraph office and the *entrepôt* were reestablished on the island. Then inhabitants came back to the island. Many Chinese also came back to the Vietnamese village of *Prey-Srok* [13: 19–20].

The chiefs of the insurgents held a meeting at *Phnom-Tuk-Kraham*,<sup>37)</sup> and *Balat-Khuon* was appointed as *Mékang-Thom* (commander). He reorganized the insurgents into centuries and kept two centuries for his own protection [13: 20].

At the beginning of July, a Chinese pirate named *Quan-Khiem* joined the insurgents,<sup>38)</sup> accompanied by 20 Chinese and 30 Cambodians. *Balat-Khuon* accepted him and let him build a fort at *Phnom-Sa*. *Mékang-Préap* was stationed at a fort of *Phnom-Krakos* with 100 men. *Oknha-Chhim* was in *Trapeang-Rang*, two days from *Kampot* and came to *Phnom-Sa* with 30 men. The governor of *Kompong-Trach*, *Chén*, arrived with 100 men, and so the number of insurgents became 1,500. *Balat-Khuon* proposed to appoint *Quan-Khiem* as *Mékang-Thom* and all chiefs accepted his proposition [13: 21–22].

French *Commandant* Klippfel's column began to march on *Phnom-Sa* on the 12th of July 1885. At *Phnom-Sa*, insurgents were encouraged because *Machas-Sâ-Ouk* (King *Norodom's* sister) and her husband *Séna-Kham* arrived. *Quan-Khiem's* Chinese were arranged in

37) There is a village named *Tuek Kraham* in *Kandal* Commune, belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

38) At this time, a man named *Séna-Tép* who claimed to be invulnerable joined the insurgents. *Balat-Khuon* let him lead six centuries to *Kompong-Bay* and promised to follow him with 300 men. But when *Séna-Tép* reached *Trapeang-Chanbak* village, *Balat-Khuon* and his men did not appear. So *Séna-Tép* was angered and went back to his village, *Veal-Prasat*. False prince *Angk-Phim* also tried to join the insurgents. He had lived in *Phnom-Smeu-Khchey* (*Phnom-Srouch* Province) for many years and also claimed to be invulnerable. King *Norodom's* sister, *Machas-Sâ-Ouk*, and her husband *Séna-Kham*, and 1,000 men accompanied him. But when *Balat-Um* told Governor *Chén* that the man was only mad and the real *Angk-Phim* died 40 years before, the false prince left the insurgents [13: 23–25].

front. After half an hour's firing, attacked by a French detached force from the right side, the insurgents began to run away. *Machas-Sâ-Ouk* escaped to *Phnom-Penh* on a horse. *Quan-Khiem* hid himself in *Phnom-Sa*, and later, ran to *Srok-Pouch* village. The insurgents lost three Chinese and two Cambodians. Klippfel's column lost a French soldier and a Vietnamese *tirailleur*. Another column attacked *Phnom-Krakos* on the 14th of July and broke the fort of *Mékang-Préap* [13: 25–26].

The chiefs of the insurgents gathered their partisans and met at *Phum-Chra-Pouch*. *Quan-Khiem* accused one of the chiefs, *Balat-Um* of being a traitor. However, *Oknha-Chhim* appointed *Balat-Um* as Governor of *Kampot* to oppose *Balat-Khuon*. *Quan-Khiem* and *Balat-Khuon* refused this appointment, and so the party of *Oknha-Chhim–Balat-Um* and the party of *Quan-Khiem–Balat-Khuon* were definitively dissociated [13: 27–28].

In *Phnom-Penh*, *Obbaréach* (*Oparach*, the Second King, future King *Sisowath*) recommended *Oknha-Nukol-Mey* to be Governor of *Kampot*. *Oknha-Nukol-Mey* arrived at *Kampot* on the 3rd of August, 1885 by sea. He stayed on an island about 500 m from the *Résidence* with 12 militiamen. At the same time, *Obbaréach* decided to visit *Phnon-Srouch*, *Banteay-Meas*, *Treang* and *Kampot* by himself. This news disturbed the insurgents. The party of *Oknha-Chhim–Balat-Um* decided to surrender. On the 19th and 28th of August, *Nop-Ross* and *Savat-Mah* of *Phum-Prey-Nop* (*Prey-Nob*),<sup>39)</sup> and Malay *Balat-Néak* and *Long-Chu-Y* surrendered to the *Résidence*. On the 11th of September, *Balat-Khuon*, *Kés*, *Mey*, *Kralapéas-Méas* and *Mâha-Sombol-Kin* surrendered to the *Résidence* with their 30 men. On the 13th of September, *Balat-Um* and *Séna-In* surrendered. *Oknha-Chhim* surrendered to *Obbaréach* at *Kus*.

But *Quan-Khiem* and *Oknha-Pusnoulouk-Chhouk* wanted to continue their war. *Quan-Khiem* gathered 250 Chinese in *Kompong-Som* and *Véal-Rinh*, and came to *Phum-Trapeang-Prang*, 15 hours from the *Résidence*. *Oknha-Pusnoulouk-Chhouk* came to *Phum-Chhouk* (*Chhuk*)<sup>40)</sup> with 200 men, including 100 Chinese. On the 18th of September, a Chinese of *Banteay-Meas* informed the *Résidence* that there was a powder magazine of *Quan-Khiem* at *Phum-Trapeang-Plang*, and 45 small barrels of powder were confiscated. After that, *Quan-Khiem* watched *Kampot* from *Kompong-Som* and *Véal-Rinh*, and *Oknha-Pusnoulouk-Chhouk* corresponded with him from the border of *Treang*. These two chiefs met at *Phnom-Sot-Chat-Chroun* on the 30th of October to arrange a counterattack [13: 28–31].

From the end of November to the beginning of December, many small bands were reorganized. On the 2nd of December, a band appeared at *Kompong-Nong* (*Kampong-Nong*).<sup>41)</sup> On the 11th of December, another band sacked *Trapeang-Kok* (*Trapeang-Kak*),<sup>42)</sup> and a small band of 50 men commanded by *Balat-Khuon* sacked *Domnak-Touk* district. On the 23rd, 30 men commanded by *Séna-Tép* attacked *Tani* village and killed a Malay man sent from the

39) Now *Prey-Nob* is a district belonging to *Krong-Preah-Sihanouk*.

40) Now *Chhuk* is a district belonging to *Kampot* Province.

41) Now *Kampong-Nong* is a village in *Koun-Satv* Commune, belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

42) Now *Trapeang-Kak* is a village in *Stueng-Kaev* Commune, belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

*Résident*. The next day, this band grew to 200 men and dug a trench at *Chaulong-Kangkok*.

A column of 100 soldiers under *Sous-Lieutenant* Monot departed from *Kampot* on the 30th of December and swept *Kabal-Romeas*, *Anrong-Kaki* (*Anlong-Kokir*),<sup>43)</sup> *Tani* and *Au-Kassa*. This column came back to *Kampot* on the 3rd of January 1886, but Monot was killed in *Kompong-Trach* during this mission. Another column under *Capitaine* Larry departed *Kampot* on the 4th of January to sweep *Domnak-Touk*, *Truong*, *Chhouk*, *Kus* and *Kompong-Trach*, and came back to *Kampot* on the 23rd.

During the time *Capitaine* Larry was absent, insurgents tried to menace *Kampot* from behind. In this case, 150 insurgents sacked *Kompong-Kès* (*Kampong-Kes*)<sup>44)</sup> on the 6th and *Kompong-Nong* on the 12th. On the 14th, *Mékang-Préap* arrived at *Srok-Sla* with 30 men and advanced to *Tuk-Loak* (*Tuek-L'ak*). On the 15th, *Quan-Khiem*, *Balat-Khuon* and *Nghet* appeared at *Trapeang-Plang* with 300 men.

A new column commanded by *Sous-Lieutenant* Véhel departed *Kampot* on the 15th of February. On the 4th of March, this column fought with the insurgents at *Thlok-Pring* on the right riverbank of *Prek-Thnos*, and on the 25th they fought with another band at *Phum-Da-Ko*.

On the 13th of February, *Quan-Khiem*, *Balat-Mey* and *Balat-Chan* constructed a fort at *Domnak-Trey-Ung* (*Damnak-Trayueng*).<sup>45)</sup> On the 14th, *Quan-Khiem* constructed another fort in *Bang-Po* village near *Phnom-Sa*. On the 8th of March, a band of 350 men led by *Phu-Chuoy-Buoy* appeared in *Véal-Rinh* and constructed barrages in every river of the district. On the 10th, 150 men left *Véal-Rinh* and arrived at *Tuk-Loak* on the 11th and at *Prek-Thnot* on the 12th. *Quan-Khiem*'s junk arrived at the mouth of the *Prek-Thnot* River as well. On the 30th of March, *Balat-Khuon* and *Séna-Tong* was at *Bo-Eng-Po* with 400 men and *Quan-Khiem* was at *Phnom-Pting-Ke*, an hour from *Bo-Eng-Po*, with 250 men. *Phu-Chuoy-Buoy* arrived at *Kam-Chay* with 300 men on the 1st of April.

Véhel's column met *Mékang-Préap* and his 200 men at the foot of *Phnom-Krakes*, a few minutes from *Snam-Ampil* (*Snam-Prampir*),<sup>46)</sup> and broke them on the 5th of April. *Quan-Khiem* went back to the fort of *Bo-Eng-Po* on the 7th and stayed there with 600 men [13: 31–33].

On the 8th of May, a column of 100 soldiers under *Lieutenant* de Vaubert departed *Kampot*. *Résident* Santenoy also marched to *Bo-Eng-Po* with 30 militiamen. After an hour's battle, a Cambodian militiaman of the *Résident* succeeded in penetrating into the fort of the insurgents, and French troops broke the fort in five minutes. The insurrection of *Kampot* ended [13: 33].

At the end of 1886, an interview between the King and the insurgents was held at *Kus*, and accomplished pacification. The military post of *Snam-Ampil* was abandoned in January 1887 and

43) Now *Anlong-Kokir* is a village in *Kandal* Commune belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

44) Now *Kampong-Kes* is a village in *Trapeang-Sangkae* Commune belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

45) Now *Damnak-Trayueng* is a village in *Samrong-Leu* Commune belonging to *Banteay-Meas* District, *Kampot* Province.

46) Now *Snam-Prampir* is a village in *Meakprang* Commune, belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

that of *Kampot* was abandoned in May 1888 [13: 34].

After the insurrection, *Quan-Khiem* kept the authority of an “absolute master” in the northern part of *Kompong-Som* Province. The authority of the King did not reach his domain [20: Mars 1888]. *Quan-Khiem* himself stayed in *Prec-Yung* village and tried to reform his band [20: Octobre 1889]. In March 1890, when a band of pirates from Milieu Island menaced the region, *Quan-Khiem* assured the inhabitants of protection from the pirates. The inhabitants confided in him rather than the Governor of *Kampot* [20: Mars 1890]. The following month, *Quan-Khiem* succeeded to expel the pirates to the frontier of Siam [20: Avril 1890]. At last, the Governor of *Kompong-Som* arrested *Quan-Khiem* in May 1896. By then, he was too old and was caught without resistance [20: Mai 1896].

*Kampot* emerged after the fall of *Ha-Tien* in 1771. In the 1840s, just before King *Ang-Duong* ascended the throne of *Oudong*, territories of Siam, Cambodia and Vietnam were defined on the Gulf of Thailand, and *Kampot* came into the hands of *Ang-Duong*. He developed *Kampot* Port and tried to attract traders from Singapore. The status of *Kampot* as the only outlet of Cambodia continued until the 1860s, then the French colonized Cochinchina and Cambodia, and the Mekong Route returned to be the access route into the heart of Cambodia. In the 1880s, when the French colonial authority began to step into *Kampot* from the sea, it had to confront with the local powers that waged guerrilla warfare from surrounding mountains.

### III Scenery of the Coastal Region in the Colonial Period

#### 1. Rhythm of Activities in *Kampot*

*Kampot* was deprived of its status as Cambodia’s main seaport in the late nineteenth century. After that, the hinterland of *Kampot* Port was restricted to its surroundings. The main exports of *Kampot* during the colonial period were paddy and pepper.<sup>47)</sup> In 1878, *Kampot* exported more than 15,000 piculs of rice (*riz*), 3,000 piculs of pepper, 150 piculs of tobacco, 80 piculs of gamboges, 1,000 piculs of palm sugar, 100 piculs of hide, 100 piculs of wood oil, 50 piculs of resin, and 6,000 packets of torches, etc. [18: 18–20].

With the end of the southwest monsoon, harvest season<sup>48)</sup> began and navigation was activated. Junks of *Hainam* arrived at *Kampot* to disembark coolies, fertilizer and tobacco for

47) The dimension of pepper cultivation changed according to its price. When the pepper price declined, the yield decreased because planters, especially of small property, abandoned their plantations or changed to other plants such as tobacco, potatoes, hot peppers and hevea. Sometimes, as in 1906, an exodus of Chinese coolies would occur. In 1914, because of the drought of 1911 and 1912, considerable numbers of small pepper planters in *Banteay-Meas* Province abandoned their plantations [18: 22–23; 21: Rapport économique Janvier-Février, Juillet-Août. 1907; 22: Juillet 1913– Juillet 1914, 1er Trimestre 1920, 1er, 2ème, 3ème Trimestre 1921, 1er, 3ème Trimestre 1922].

48) The harvest season for paddy began in November and ended in February. That for pepper began in March and finished in May.



pepper plantations and considerable numbers of young pigs.<sup>49)</sup> When the harvest was finished, many junks of *Ha-Tien*, *Hong-Chong* and *Phuquoc* came to *Kampot* to load paddies from *Veal-Renh* or around *Kampot*. The traffic of paddy and pepper was at its peak from May to June. The traffic of *mam*<sup>50)</sup> made from shrimps was also considerable in January and February. Large junks from Bangkok came to buy *mam* in the *Kompong-Som* region [20: Décembre 1896, Janvier, Février, Mai, Novembre 1898, 21: Rapport économique Janvier-Février, Mars-Avril, Mai-Juin 1907].

In May, as rain began to fall, land routes became troublesome. Sea routes also became difficult when the southwest monsoon began. From July to September, navigation was almost zero because the sea was dangerously rough and ships did not dare depart.<sup>51)</sup> During July, land routes by oxcarts or elephants could be substituted for the sea, but from August, most parts of the land routes were inundated and the commercial activities stagnated. People of *Péam* and *Banteay-Méas* began to prepare their paddy fields to transplant in June, and in *Kampot*, transplantation began in July. From October, land routes became usable and navigation also began to be reactivated [20: Août. 1883, Mai, Juin, Août, Septembre, Octobre 1898; 21: Rapport économique Mars-Avril, Juillet-Août, Octobre 1907].

## 2. Population

The *Résidents* almost always reported that the Cambodian population had *bon esprit*. Most of them were farmers and were said to be docile and obeyed easily to the orders and suggestions of the administration [22: 2ème Trimestre 1923].

From the reign of King *Ang-Duong*, the commercial activity of *Kampot* was in the hands of the Chinese population, and Mouhot wrote that one saw 10 times more Chinese than *indigènes* in *Kampot* town. Pavie also described that *Kampot* was exclusively populated by Chinese who married Cambodian women and Sino-Vietnamese [18: 117]. Besides merchants, large numbers of *Hainam* Chinese flowed into the southern part of *Kampot*, *Péam* and *Banteay-Méas* Provinces as coolies of pepper plantations and became the dominant element.

The French authority regarded the Chinese population as an element that could possibly threaten security. In 1894, the *Résident* reported that the Chinese had been hostile to the French because they were afraid that French authority would restrain their agricultural and commercial activities, however, the establishment of order and communications by the French began to improve their attitude [20: Décembre 1894].

Coolies from *Hainam* were treated as potential vagabonds. The *Résident* reported that they constituted the floating population who did not submit, and they were living by theft and gambling because the salary from pepper plantations was low. Sometimes they left their

49) These pigs were sold at *Péam* or *Kampot* and fattened for re-export to Singapore. In 1880, 2,600 heads of swine were exported to Singapore [18: 20].

50) This is a type of paste.

51) The junks of the *Résidence* had to rest at *Ha-Tien* seven or eight days and transportations of *dépêche* was effected by land routes.

patrons after a few months of employment and patrons also never reported such quitting to the chiefs of congregations. Most *Hainam* Chinese did not have a fixed domicile and way of subsistence, did not carry any identity with them and escaped paying tax [21: Janvier 1908, Octobre 1910, Juillet 1911, Juillet 1912–Juillet 1913]. The *Résident* gave instructions to Cambodian functionaries to arrest these *Hainam* Chinese and sometimes they attacked functionaries to regain their friends [21: Octobre 1907, Août, Novembre 1908, Février, Mars, Septembre, Octobre 1909, Mars 1910].

Quarrels between Chinese groups were reported too. For example, *Hainam* Chinese and *Trieu-Châu* Chinese quarreled in October 1908, and *Inspecteur* Durand, two chiefs of congregations and six guards were sent in. By the intermediation of the *Résident*, both congregations signed a type of conciliation agreement in December. The *Résident* ordered both congregations to pay a penalty of 500 piastres per month in case of troubling the public order [21: Octobre, Décembre 1908].

The French authority in *Kampot* tried to keep a strict watch over the presence of secret societies and Chinese communications with China. In contrast to most of the Cambodian population, and even to Chinese in other parts of Cambodia, the Chinese elements in *Kampot* seemed to have been sensitive to the international situation, especially to events in East Asia. The Russo-Japanese War,<sup>52)</sup> the 1911 Revolution in China,<sup>53)</sup> World War I,<sup>54)</sup> and movement of the Kuomintang from 1925 were reported to have some impact in *Kampot*.

During World War I, the French authority prohibited the entrance of Chinese journals and gave an instruction to all authorities of the *indigènes* to arrest the propagators. But they could not prevent junks coming from China, Siam or Singapore from bringing news into *Kampot*. The Report of the 4th quarter of 1914 indicated that there was “false news” about the war in Europe among the *indigènes* from China or Siam [22]. In the 3rd quarter of 1915, Chinese from Siam or China spread rumours of a Japanese project to establish a protectorate over the Kingdom of Siam<sup>55)</sup> [22: 3ème Trimestre 1915]. Besides, some Chinese obtained information from French journals. A chief of the *Hainam* Chinese congregation at *Kompong-Trach*, *Ly-Heng* subscribed to

52) It was reported that the Chinese of *Kampot*, especially *Trieu-Châu* and *Canton* were satisfied with the success of Japanese, and expected a modification and complete reorganization of China. Some showed hope for an overturn of the dynasty [19: Avril, Juin 1905].

53) The *Résidence* of *Kampot* designated a possibility that emissaries made propaganda for the “Renovation of China” and the authority tightened its observation over the Chinese [21: Juillet 1912–Juillet 1913].

54) From the beginning, Chinese were well informed about the roles of each European country and showed confidence of the victory of the Allies. They assumed that the arms of each country had the same quality and that 180 million were opposed to 90 million so the force of numbers would decide the result of the war. They showed the idea that the war was only a temporary disturbance for their commerce [22: 3ème, 4ème Trimestre 1914]. In the 2nd quarter of 1915, tensions between China and Japan created an anxiety for conflict in East Asia between Chinese elements [22: 2ème Trimestre 1915].

55) The rumour was that Japan would declare war, Japanese ships would appear in the Gulf of Thailand and Japanese troops would land, and Siam would gather its fleet at *Pak-Nam* to reply. The Governor of *Kas-Kong* believed in this rumor and sent two reports to the *Résident*.

“l’Illustration” and “Excelsior” regularly [22: 3ème Trimestre 1915].

The events of China from 1925 were well known to Chinese in *Kampot* because many of them subscribed to Chinese journals. Applications for passports to China doubled in 1926, but most Chinese were absorbed in the cultivation of pepper or commerce, and looked with indifference to the agitations of the exterior. The *Résident* supposed that the reason was because most of them were born in Cambodia so they had never seen China, and they benefited well from pepper cultivation and commerce. However, the *Résident* recognized that Chinese societies were absolutely closed to the French, so the French could not know what their reunions decided, and the agents of *Sûreté* were negligent with political matters [23: 2ème, 4ème Trimestre 1926, 1er, 2ème, 3ème, 4ème Trimestre 1927]. On the other hand, it is reported that every order from the *Kuoming-Tang* (Kuomintang) was obeyed strictly and direction from China gave particular impulsion to education. Two adult schools of *Kompong-Trach* and *Kampot* functioned under the direction of teachers who “recently” came from China, and they propagandized in favor of the *Kuoming-Tang*. On June 11, 1928, the French authority searched these two schools and seized numerous pamphlets of propaganda. Teachers and Chinese who were interested in the propaganda were expelled [23: 1er, 2ème, 3ème Trimestre 1928]. But in 1929, because of the difficulty of the economic situation,<sup>56)</sup> the Chinese population looked as if it lost interest in events in China [23: 1er Trimestre 1929].

Fishers of the *Kampot* and *Ha-Tien* region were mostly Vietnamese. There, a chain of small islands bordered the sea, and the fishers did not leave far from their operation centers. Their activity area was limited to the line of *Phuquoc* Island — the *Ba-Lua* Archipelago. Their ships lacked the means to preserve fish, so they had to hurry to *Ha-Tien* or *Kampot* to sell their fish, and the strength of their ships did not allow them to operate in the open sea [24: 8]. According to Pavie, the Vietnamese village on *Trei-Cach* (*Traemy-Kaoh*) in front of *Kampot* contained 40 to 50 families and they lived on fishing sea cucumbers.<sup>57)</sup> During the rainy season, inhabitants prepared fishnets and their ships<sup>58)</sup> departed when the Northeast monsoon stabilized. They returned home for the festival of *Têt*, and after that, they continued fishing until June [18: 20–21].

*Rapports périodiques* give us less information about the Malay population. In 1916, it was reported that *Y-Man-Suon*, a Malay man of *Kompong-Kes*, collected silver for the “Sultan of Turkey.” The *Résident* was informed of this from *Ali-Anahari*, a subject of Turkey and a refugee from Yemen. According to the research by the Governor of *Kampot*, *Y-Man-Suon* collected 50\$00 from certain habitants of *Kompong-Kes*, *Khbal-Roméas* and *Kompong-Krang* (*Kompong-*

56) Many merchants of pepper, including *Lim-Yieu-Lin*, the manager of the *Société Nhy-Hoa* at *Kampot*, disappeared from the region.

57) Chinese bought sea cucumbers for 8 to 12 piastres par picul and sent them to Cholon. At the market of *Phnom-Penh*, sea cucumbers from *Kampot* were priced 15 to 20 piastres. Those from China were more than 50 piastre.

58) There were four or five ships in the village and five or six men went aboard each ship. The owner of the ship and nets took three parts of the catch when they took part in the fishing trip, and took two parts when they did not. Other fishers took a part.

*Kraeng*)<sup>59)</sup> and gave it to *Y-Man-Lep*. *Y-Man-Lep* used that silver to make a trip for *Phnom-Penh* to meet a bonze who was famous for the knowledge of Pali and Arabic and some Malays hoped to consult him about certain religious differences [22: 3ème Trimestre 1916].

European colons settled around *Kampot* rather early compared to other parts of Cambodia. After the insurrection, a colon from Luxembourg settled around *Kampot* about 1892, and created a plantation of tobacco and coffee at *Phnom-Thmey* in *Snam-Ampil* village. In 1895, he obtained an onerous concession at *Kep* to enlarge his coffee plantation. Another colon, Canavy, created a plantation of areca at *Kep* in 1897 [24: 26–27].<sup>60)</sup> Limestone from *Phnom-Coulang* on the *Tuk-Meas* River was exploited by Perruchot since 1891 and ceded to Henry of *Saigon* in 1916. He constructed new limekilns and supplied lime to western Indo-China and Cambodia [24: 13–14].

### 3. Security

The monograph of 1918 indicated that the Gulf of Siam was a refuge of pirates until “a few years ago.” Because of the steam ships of the administration and the service of customhouses, the region became calm, but the sporadic activities of pirates were reported annually [24: 4–5]. Mouhot, who visited Cambodia under King *Ang-Duong*,<sup>61)</sup> passed coasts infested with the pirates of *Kampot*. That was the area between *Kompong-Som* and *Kampot*. He wrote that pirates watched the sea from the heights and prepared for an attack upon seeing a sail [16: 110]. In November 1889, *Résident* Leclère alarmed that from December to March the activities of pirates would occur. Since he became the *Résident* four years before, pirates’ junks attacked ships on the Gulf of Thailand and villages at the mouth of rivers in this period. Steam ships of the marine were sent for patrol along the coast, but they could never reach the scene of piracy in

59) *Kampong-Kraeng* is now a commune belonging to *Kampot* District, *Kampot* Province.

60) According to the Annual Report from 1913 to 1914, French colons in *Kampot* “decreased” to two people, Canavy and Bouillod. Dupuy sold his concession, Apavou had died, Balliste, Morel and Perruchot had departed, and concessions of Bouilloche et Cie. and Heiduska were expired. Meyer, Berthet, Ogliaastro and O’Cobhia had bought many pepper plantations but they rented most of them as *métayage* to Chinese. Canavy planted 15,000 arecas but did not get income as he expected yet, because his plantation was under development. Bouillod’s concession was 150 ha of which he opened 80 ha. He planted 4,000 hevea and prepared another 12,000. Other than hevea, he planted durian and mango, and had 200 ha of paddy fields and four pepper plantations.

61) In the *Ang-Duong* reign, a Chinese named *Mun-Sui* (*Mun-Suy*) lived in *Kampot* and the King treated him as a friend. He was a former pirate and claimed to be descended from an ancient imperial family. He ran from Amoy with a hundred men and ravaged the coastal region. The owners of junks feared him and people began to adopt measures of self-defense against him. Later, he ingratiated himself with the Governor and King (Leclère’s Malay told that when *A-Chhép*, another chief of pirates attacked, he was shipwrecked and decided to retire). Fearing complaints from nearby countries, the King appointed him as coast guard and sheltered him. Later, he was loved by the Chinese, and was asked to interfere when differences happened. Pavie wrote in 1884 that he was old and poor, but respected in *Kampot*. He had the skill to treat wounds and treated people for nothing [13: 11; 16: 116–117; 18: 29]. One of the chiefs of the insurrection of late 1880s, *Quan-Khiem* was also a former Chinese pirate and the author of “the massacre of *Rach-Gia*.” He ravaged the coast from the Point of *Samit* to *Koh-Toch*, and attacked commercial junks using his two junks armed with old canons [13: 21].

time [20: Novembre 1889].

The mountains, which separated the coastal region from the interior, served as the hiding place for bands of thieves. Like other regions of Cambodia, the activity of thieves increased as the dry season began and the land route became useable. Then, bands of thieves were formed and attacked isolated villages or pepper plantations to rob their products. Their activities decreased during the season of agriculture [21: Novembre–Décembre 1906; 22: 2ème Trimestre 1920; 23: 3ème Trimestre 1927]. Unseasonable weather and bad crops also stimulated the activities of thieves [21: 4ème Trimestre 1912, 2ème Trimestre 1913; 22: 1er, 2ème, 3ème Trimestre 1922].

Bands of thieves raged relentlessly in the Provinces of *Banteay-Meas* and *Kas-Kong*, which are located at the eastern and western ends of the region. Communal authorities of these provinces were sometimes indifferent to public peace. In *Banteay-Meas* Province, the district near the border with *Treang* and Cochinchina served as a refuge for bands of thieves from both countries. The *Résidents* of adjoining *circonscriptions* organized a mission to exterminate these bands together [22: 1er Trimestre 1918, 3ème Trimestre 1920, 1er, 2ème, 3ème Trimestre 1924; 23: 1er, 2ème Trimestre 1929]. In *Kas-Kong* Province, inhabitants of the maritime region were Siamese, and French influence had not reached yet in the 1920s [22: 2ème Trimestre 1922, 3ème, 4ème Trimestre 1923; 23: 1er Trimestre 1927]. Similar situation has continued until quite recently. Until the mid 1990s, the Khmer Rouge dominated the zone where thieves once raged during the colonial period.

The distinctive character of *Kampot* since its appearance on the historical stage was first of all its openness. Although *Kampot* lost its status as the main port of the kingdom from the mid nineteenth century, it continued to take part in trade on the Gulf of Thailand independently. The Chinese population continued to handle the commercial activity and the main products of the *Kampot* region. Furthermore, *Kampot* was geographically located on the border of the inland world and maritime world, and politically located on the border of three states: the Kingdom of Siam, the French Protectorate of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the French Colony of Cochinchina. This location made it difficult for the French authority to maintain public peace because no one could control the flow of people, things and information.

#### IV Retouches by the French

##### 1. *Route Coloniale No. 17*

In 1872, when the telegraph line was installed between *Phnom-Penh* and *Kampot*, a new road was also created. The itinerary took three days and a half by elephants or oxcarts every season, and there were six stations: *Kompong-Toul*, *Kna*, *Sla-Kou*, *Kou*, *Mac-Prang* and *Domnac-Touc* [18: 4–5].

The *Phnom-Penh–Kampot* road later became *Route Coloniale No. 17* and was paved to introduce automobiles. According to the Annual Report from 1912 to 1913, there was a

subsidized automobile service connecting *Kampot* and *Phnom-Penh*. The cars of this service always departed loading a maximum number of passengers, although two other enterprises, Rafel and Dan-Suon, also offered automobile service between *Phnom-Penh* and *Keþ*, *Kompong-Trach* [21].

*Route Coloniale* No. 17 was renamed National Route No. 3 after the Kingdom of Cambodia attained independence.

## 2. *Kampot City*

In April 1885, in the middle of the insurrection, the first *Résident* Marquant arrived at *Kampot*. At first, the *Résidence* was installed on *Trey-Ka (Traeuy-Kaoh)* Island, and later, was moved to *Kompong-Bay* village, after the French burned the old village [13: 2, 20]. The construction of the definitive building of the *Résidence* began in 1889 [20: Juillet 1889].

Installation of the *Résidence* and the route to *Phnom-Penh* stimulated the development of *Kompong-Bay* village into an urban center. The *Résident* reported in October 1894 that the Chinese of *Prey-Srok* came to settle in *Kompong-Bay*, along the Route of *Phnom-Penh-Kampot*, and more than 30 houses were under construction [20]. In 1900, only 2 houses of local people were of tiling in *Kompong-Bay* village. But after that, a construction boom happened, and 27 two-storied shophouses of brick were constructed on the riverbank in 1901. There were many applications for construction of brick shophouses also [7]. In 1900, a market was constructed in *Kompong-Bay* [20: Janvier, Avril 1900]. In 1905, a new market was built [20: Avril 1905], and the old market was demolished. Wood and tiles were reused to construct a covered pier and a fish market in front of the new market [20: Juillet 1905]. The boulevard of the urban center was accomplished and connected to the Route of *Phnom Penh-Kampot* in February 1907 [21: Février 1907]. The present shape of *Kampot* city was completed in those days.

After that, waterworks and electricity were installed. A pipe for potable water was constructed in 1907<sup>62)</sup> [21: Février, Mars-Avril 1907]. In 1910, the pipe made of pottery was exchanged for a conduit made in a foundry, and the distribution of water to the city was installed [21: Juillet 1909-Juillet 1910]. From 1925, installation of electricity in the city center began [22: Rapport économique 2ème Trimestre 1925].

As in other *Résidentiel* centers, Bastille Day (14 July) was celebrated at *Kampot*. Periodical reports from the *Résidents* described the festival until 1919. Amusements were organized and the masses from surrounding provinces enjoyed it, and the principal functionaries among the Cambodians, Chinese and Vietnamese, and principal merchants were invited to the banquet [21: Août 1906, Juillet 1907; 22: 3ème Trimestre 1917, 3ème Trimestre 1919].

Present-day *Kampot City* continues on from its previous incarnation of the colonial age. When the Kingdom of Cambodia became independent, *Kampot City* had 5,000 inhabitants<sup>63)</sup>: *Kompong-Bay (Kampong-Bay)* was an administrative center of colonial style,

62) The source was a barrage of masonry constructed at the foot of the mountain.

63) The population of *Kampot City (Kampong-Bay District)* was 33,126 in 1998 [15: 114].

*Kampot-Toch* was the Khmer quarter, *Preisok (Prey-Srok)* was the Chinese quarter, and *Trapéang-Svai* was the Malay quarter. There was a wooden pier for small junks on the riverbank of *Kompong-Bay*. Many fishing boats of vivid colors animated the fishers' market installed on a terrace. Cars congested the area in front of the market and the horns of busses resounded, but upon leaving the market, the animation disappeared [4: 289–290].

### 3. *Modern Port*

The interests of French colonialism needed a deep seaport on the Cambodian coast. The reasons were to avoid the long trip around the *Camau* point at 300 km south and facilitate relations between French Indochina and Siam or Singapore, and to make a depot on the Gulf of Thailand in case of a critical situation [24: 15]. But *Ha-Tien*, *Kampot* and *Kompong-Trach* could not be chosen because bars at the entrance to their rivers prevented large ships from accessing these ports [24: 7]. The French judged that the only point suited for the construction of a deep seaport was *Ream* Bay, which is located at the middle of the Cambodian coast. They expected that the itinerary from Bangkok to Saigon, which needed four and half days, would be shortened to 40 hours<sup>64</sup> by the construction of *Ream* Port [24: 16–18].

After independence, *Ream* became the port of the *Marine Royal Khmère*. A commercial port was established in 1959 by France and was named *Sihanoukvill*. *Sihanoukvill* was connected to *Phnom-Penh* by National Route No. 4, which was constructed with American aid [4: 306–308].

### 4. *Resorts*

*Kep* as a resort began in 1910, when Dupuy, a merchant of *Phnom-Penh*, obtained an authorization from the Protectorate to construct a villa at *Kep* Beach. Some years later, he ceded the villa to King *Sisowath*, who bestowed it on the Protectorate in 1914 [24: 27]. In 1911, *Résident Supérieur* Outrey organized a commission at *Kep* to make a sanatorium and a watering place. The members were *Commandant* Tiffon of *Phnom-Penh*, Crossnard, Dr. Pannetier, Canavy (*colon*) and Fabre (*conducteur*), and they met under the presidency of the *Résident* Rousseau. In 1915, *Gouverneur Général* Sarraut permitted this project. The works began in 1916 and finished in 1917. The bungalow of *Kep* was opened to the public on March 1, 1917 [24: 27–28].

From the 3rd quarter of 1920, construction of the *Station d'altitude de Bokor* began. The road to *Bokor* was completed in 1921, and the *Bokor* Palace Hotel, which had 38 rooms, was officially opened in 1925 [19: 93–94; 22: 2ème, 3ème Trimestre 1923, 1er, 2ème Trimestre 1924, 1er Trimestre 1925; 28: 265].

During the First Indo-China War (from 1946 to 1954), *Bokor* was used as a hospital. But after that, because of the activity of a band called "*Dragon Noir*," insecurity dominated this region. *Station d'altitude Bokor* was abandoned and burned by bands [2: 295]. In contrast to

64) The itinerary between *Saigon* and *Ream* was estimated at 12 hours by automobile. A commercial ship running 10 knots per hour took 26 or 27 hours from *Bangkok* to *Ream*.

*Station d'altitude Bokor, Station balnéaire Kep* of the years of *Sihanouk* was on its way to extension. White cabins, hotels and restaurants were situated along the beach, and many villas were under construction [2: 298–299].

Of all the constructions by French colonialism, we can see *Kampot* city and its infrastructures nowadays too. But the resort facilities were totally destroyed in times of insecurity. *Kampot*, as a resort, began to be revived quite recently. After UNTAC (from 1992 to 1993), some new hotels and guest houses were opened in *Sihanoukville* and *Kampot*. Many people of *Phnom-Penh* visit the coastal region during the Khmer New Year vacation (April). *Kampot* is animated at that time, but in other seasons of the year, it returns to the quietness of daily life.

### Conclusion

Cambodian central authority intervened in *Kampot* twice: (1) King *Ang-Duong* who made *Kampot* his kingdom's main seaport, and (2) the French colonialism who built urban center of *Kampot* as a *Résidentiel* capital and a foothold of a resort district. These interventions produced temporal flourish of *Kampot*. After colonization by the French, King *Ang-Duong's* *Kampot* became extinct forever. The principal reasons were that Saigon became the outlet of Cambodia and the age of the steam ship required deep ports. Modern *Kampot* that began in the 1880s continued to *Sihanouk* age until it was interrupted by the civil war from 1970s.

Independent of demands from the central authorities, the basic nature of *Kampot* has never changed. *Kampot* always took part in the trade activities on the Gulf of Thailand with its own resource, such as paddy, pepper, *mam* and forest products, and the Chinese population kept being the most active element in *Kampot*. This nature of *Kampot* would sometimes cause a disturbance for the French authority. The French assumed that the Chinese element had the potential to cause insecurity and strictly watched them. Additionally, mountains that separated *Kampot* from the inland, sea and the state border delimited by the French always gave asylum to insurgents, thieves and pirates who menaced the security of the region.

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