The True History of Khmer Krom

[10] Why do Khmers like to call “Yuon” instead of Vietnamese?

SLK
10/01/2009

Like his comrades in China and Vietnam, he (Pol Pot) knew how to manipulate the “modern, scientific” theories of Marxist Leninism to give legitimate expression to ancient racist attitude and cultural animosities. “National liberation” wars began against European colonial powers and continued against neighbors who were historic enemies. Vietnamese communists called the Chinese communists, “Han chauvinists,” when began their feud. The Cambodian communists would call the Vietnamese communists “Youn,” which they used to mean savage, when they would both go to war in 1978.
[10] Why do Khmers like to call “Yuon” instead of Vietnamese?

I very often heard the word “Yuon” since I was in my Vietnamese mother’s womb when they whispered to each other in bed about “Yuon”. When I was born in a Yuon village in the outskirt of Phnom Penh. I heard the word “Yuon” so often since then. Why? Because my father was a sailor/captain on the large barge bringing goods from Phnom Penh to Srok Yuon, and from Srok Yuon to Phnom Penh. My Vietnamese mother and my Chinese father always like to call “Yuon” instead of Vietnamese. For example, they like to call “Yuon” who live in the city of Prey Nokor/ or “Yuon Prey Nokor. I hardly heard they called “Vietnamese” instead of “Yuon”. All Cambodian people always like to use “Yuon” instead of Vietnamese. Why? Because it’s their habit in speaking with their tongue.

But the word “Yuon” has appeared in the History of Kampuchea since 1618-1628 during the reign of King Chey Chetha II, when Prey Nokor, Baria and Bien Hoa were illegally seized by Yuon landplunderers.

Khmer Rouge literature in the 1970s frequently referred to the Vietnamese as Yuon (barbarian), a term dating from the Angkorian period.¹

In the dictionary of Kampuchea of Chuon Nath on Page 985, it clearly describes the word “Yuon”: Noun. The race of Tonkin, Annam, Cochin Chine: Yuon Tonkin, Yuon Annam, Yuon Cochin Chine; common words are used very often to call Yuon Tonkin as Yuon Hanoi, Yuon Annam as Yuon Hue, Yuon Cochin Chines as Yuon Prey Nokor.²

**Cochin China related: Vietnam geography**

(kō´chĬn, kŏ´-), Fr. Cochinchine, historic region (c.26, 500 sq mi/68,600 sq km) of Vietnam, SE Asia. The capital and chief city was Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). Cochin China was bounded by Cambodia on the northwest and north, by the historic region of Annam on the northeast, by the South China Sea on the east and south, and by the Gulf of Thailand on the west. It included the rich Mekong delta, one of the world's great rice-growing regions, and, in the northeast, the southern spurs of the Annamese Cordillera, where rubber, coffee, tea, oil palm, and sugarcane plantations were established. Only the Plaine des Joncs [reed plain] and the mangrove-covered Ca Mau peninsula were not cultivated. Cochin China was originally part of the Khmer Empire (Former City of Prei Nokor). In the 17th cent. the Annamese (later called Vietnamese) gradually infiltrated through the mouths of the Mekong, increasing their commercial influence.

² Dictionaire Cambodgien, (1967)
until they became masters of the region in the middle of the 18th cent. After the French occupied Saigon (1859), Annam ceded to France both E Cochin China (1862) and W Cochin China (1867). Unlike the other sections of Indochina, which were French protectorates under native rulers, Cochin China was administered by the French as a colony; thus, French influence was strongest there. After World War II the status of Cochin China became a major issue in the relations between France and Vietnam. Constituted (1946) as an independent republic within the Federation of Indochina, Cochin China was later (1949) permitted by the French to join with Annam and Tonkin in Vietnam. After 1954, when Vietnam was partitioned, Cochin China became the heartland of South Vietnam; it was later divided into several provinces. See more in “They’ve unfairly been forced to give up their Kampuchean citizenship...”

**Ho Chi Minh City**

Related: Vietnam Geography

Formerly Saigon, city (1997 pop. 5,250,000), on the right bank of the Saigon River, a tributary of the Dong Nai, Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city, the greatest port, and the commercial and industrial center of Vietnam. It has an airport and is the focus of the country's highways, railroads, and Mekong delta waterways. An ancient Khmer settlement, Saigon passed (17th cent.) to the Annamese. It was captured by the French in 1859 and ceded to France in 1862. A small village at the time of the French conquest, Saigon became a modern city under French rule. It was laid out in rectilinear fashion with wide, tree-lined avenues and parks, and soon developed a reputation for its beauty and cosmopolitan atmosphere. It was capital of Cochin China and from 1887 to 1902 was capital of the Union of Indochina. For administrative purposes Saigon and Cholon, on opposite banks of the Saigon River, were merged in 1932; in 1956 the two cities were included in the new prefecture of Saigon. Saigon became the capital of the newly created state of South Vietnam in 1954. In the Vietnam War it served as military headquarters for U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. It suffered considerable damage during the 1968 Tet offensive. Throughout the 1960s and early 70s at least a million refugees from the rural areas poured into the city, creating serious housing problems and overcrowding. In 1975 after Saigon surrendered and Vietnam was reunited under the prevailing Communist government, the city lost its status as capital and was renamed after the late North Vietnamese president. The local economy of Ho Chi Minh City was disrupted during the early years of the new regime, which curtailed foreign investment and promoted collectivization. In the 1980s and 90s, conditions improved as the city gradually adapted to the new system and the government relaxed its economic policy. There is a growing industrial base, which includes the manufacture of home appliances, clothing, and shoes as well as automobile assembly. The city is the seat of Ho Chi Minh Univ. and a national theatre.
Annam

Related: Vietnam Geography

Related: Vietnam Geography SE Asia. The capital was Hue. The region extended nearly 800 mi (1,290 km) along the South China Sea between Tonkin on the north and Cochin China on the south. In addition to Hue, the principal cities in the region are Da Nang (the chief seaport), An Nhon, Quang Tri, and Vinh. In 1954, when Vietnam was divided on a line approximating the 17th parallel, Annam went largely to South Vietnam. The ridge of the Annamese Cordillera separated N and central Annam from Laos on the west; the ridge then swung south-eastward and ran along the coast of S Annam, which included the plateaus that stretched to the borders of Cambodia and Cochin China. The narrow coastal plains of N and central Annam were interrupted by spurs of mountains that almost reached the sea, as at Porte d'Annam, a pass important in Annamese history.

The origins of the Annamese state may be traced to the peoples of the Red River valley in N Vietnam. After more than 2,000 years of contact with the Chinese, they fell under Chinese rule as the result of a Han invasion in 111 BC. The region, to which the Chinese gave the name Annam (“Pacified South” ; a name resented by the people), comprised all of what later became N Annam and Tonkin. Southern Annam was occupied by the kingdom of the Chams, or Champa, from the late 2d cent. AD. In 939 the Annamese drove out the Chinese and established their independence, which they maintained, except for one brief period of Chinese reoccupation (1407-28), until their conquest by the French in the 19th cent.

By 1558 the kingdom was in effect divided between two great families: the Trinh line, which ruled from Hanoi (then called Tonkin) as far south as Porte d'Annam (this area was called Tonkin by the Europeans who arrived in the 16th cent.), and the Nguyens, who ruled from Hue over the territory extending from Porte d'Annam south to the vicinity of Quy Nhon. The ruling dynasties of Hue and Tonkin were overthrown in 1778 and 1786 respectively, and the two domains were reunited (1802) as the empire of Vietnam by Nguyen-Anh, a Hue general, who had procured French military aid by ceding (1787) to the French the port of Da Nang and the Con Son islands. Nguyen-Anh established himself as emperor; his authority was formally recognized by the Chinese in 1803. In 1807 the Vietnamese extended a protectorate over Cambodia, which led in succeeding years to frequent wars against Siam.

After the death of Nguyen-Anh his successor, attempting to withdraw into isolation, mistreated French nationals and Vietnamese Christian converts. This provided an excuse for French military operations, which began in 1858 and resulted in the seizure of S Vietnam (Cochin China) and the establishment of protectorates (by 1884) over N Vietnam (Tonkin) and central Vietnam (Annam). The French, who abolished the name Vietnam, received recognition for their protectorates from the Chinese emperor. In 1887 Annam became part of the Union of Indochina. In World War II Indochina was occupied by the Japanese, who set up the autonomous state of
Vietnam, comprising Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China; Bao Dai, the last emperor of Vietnam, was established as ruler. After the war Annamese and Tonkinese nationalists demanded independence for the new state of Vietnam, and the region was plunged into a long and bloody conflict (see Vietnam).

tŏnˈkĭnˌ, tŏng´-), historic region (c.40,000 sq mi/103,600 sq km), SE Asia, now forming the heartland of N Vietnam. The capital was Hanoi. Tonkin was bordered on the north by China, on the east by the Gulf of Tonkin, on the south by the historic region of Annam, and on the S and W by Laos. The region of Tonkin was conquered in 111 BC by the Chinese, who ruled until they were ousted in AD 939, at which time the area became independent. The inhabitants began a southward expansion, and by 1471 they had acquired the kingdom of Champa. After the division of the Vietnamese lands between two dynasties in 1558, the northern half was ruled from the city of Tonkin (modern Hanoi); thus the name of Tonkin came to be applied by Europeans to the whole area. The two regions were reunited in 1802 under the rule of the restored line of Hue as part of the empire of Vietnam. To open the Red River to French trade, French expeditions were sent into Tonkin in 1873 and 1882; that of 1882 resulted in a full-scale colonial war, complicated by Chinese intervention (China also claimed the region) against the French. In 1884, Annam accepted a French protectorate, conceding France a separate protectorate over Tonkin with control more direct than over Annam. In 1887, Tonkin became part of the Union of Indochina. In World War II, the region was occupied (1940-45) by the Japanese. After the war Tonkinese and Annamese nationalist leaders joined in demanding independence for the state of Vietnam, and Tonkin was torn by guerrilla warfare between the French and the Viet Minh nationalists led by Ho Chih Minh. The name also appears as Tongking and Tonking.

(hănˈoi, heńoiˈ), city (1997 est. pop. 3,500,800), capital of Vietnam, on the right bank of the Red River. It is the transportation hub of the country, with two airports and rail connections to Kunming, China, as well as to the main Chinese system centering on Beijing; it is also linked by rail with Haiphong and Ho Chi Minh City. Manufactures include machine tools, plywood, textiles, chemicals, matches, automobiles, tires, building materials, and handicrafts. The city is known for its European-style public squares and tree-lined boulevards. It is also a cultural center; in the city are the National Univ. (formerly Hanoi Univ.), the National History Museum, the Revolution Museum, and several historic monuments, including the Temple of Literature, the Mot Cot Pagoda, and the Temple of the Trung Sisters. Hanoi became (7th cent.) the seat of the Chinese rulers of Vietnam. Its Chinese name, Dong Kinh or Tong King, became Tonkin and was applied by Europeans to the entire region. Hanoi was occupied briefly by the French in 1873 and passed to them 10 years later. It became the capital of French Indochina after 1887. The French developed Hanoi industrially, centering railway repair shops and small processing industries there.
Occupied by the Japanese in 1940, Hanoi was liberated in 1945, when it became the seat of Vietnam's government. From 1946 to 1954, it was the scene of heavy fighting between the French and Viet Minh forces. After the French evacuated Hanoi in accordance with the Geneva Conference (July, 1954), the city became the capital of North Vietnam. Under the North Vietnamese it was greatly expanded industrially.

During the Vietnam War its transportation facilities were continually disrupted by the bombing of bridges and railways, which were, however, immediately repaired. The city remained remarkably intact despite heavy U.S. bombings, although widespread destruction occurred after the massive attacks of Dec. 18-30, 1972, when many non-military targets, including the French embassy and large residential areas, were hit. Much of the civilian population had been evacuated and factories had been dismantled and reassembled in forested and rural areas. After the cease-fire, much of the machinery was returned and functioned again in ruined structures. Hanoi was established as the capital of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on July 2, 1976.3

Like his comrades in China and Vietnam, he (Pol Pot) knew how to manipulate the “modern, scientific” theories of Marxist Leninism to give legitimate expression to ancient racist attitude and cultural animosities. “National liberation” wars began against European colonial powers and continued against neighbors who were historic enemies. Vietnamese communists called the Chinese communists, “Han chauvinists,” when began their feud. The Cambodian communists would call the Vietnamese communists “Youn,” which they used to mean savage, when they would both go to war in 1978.4

So we can see clearly the word “Youn”, in which doesn’t mean as too far many foreigners who can’t read both Yuon and Khmer languages by accusing Cambodians who are racists/xenophobias against Yuon as “contemptible and derogatory words” or and as having a “savage connotation”. “Youn” don’t like Cambodians to call them “Youn”, because they might think they feel too shameful that their ancestors who used to be slaves of Chinese for nearly a thousand years in Yunan. Or the word “Yunan” has to be taken away “An”, leaving only “Yun” instead of “Youn”. It sounds more likely, eh! If all Cambodians who are so racial prejudice against Yuonese and Siamese imperialists. Cambodian lands would not be too easy to be eaten up by Yuonese and Siamese imperialists in such barbaric manners. “Youn” might not like Cambodians to call them “Youn” because on the other hand, their ancestors had wickedly and brutally committed crimes against Cambodians since 18th Century.

Cambodians don’t like to call “Youn” as “Vietnamese”. Why?! Because “Viet” being pronounced in Khmer is to sound like “Yiek”, but Cambodians pronounced “Yiek” in other ways is “Yak” is a sarcastic word to mean “Giant/Cannibalism”. Because “Yak”, who always is in Legendary Story of Ramayana of India, known in Khmer as “Ream Ker”, used to eat human

---

3 Columbia Encyclopaedia, Sixth Edition, Copyright (c) 2004
4 Elizabeth Becker: When the War Was over: Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution (1986) P.137
fleshes and animals for their daily likelihood. Therefore, “Yak/Vietnamese” always eat Khmer lands so far so worse. That is why Cambodians always like to call “Yuon” instead of Yak-Nam/Vietnamese. So in every book, newsletter, magazine, pamphlet and newspaper...etc. in which nearly all Cambodians authors/writers like to use “Yuon” instead of Yak-Nam. “Viet” in Khmer language, means differently of “Expand/conquer/conquest”. For example: Whenever “Yuon” Viet/conquest Khmer land. Yuon destroyed too far many Khmer documents under its brutal domination/absolute power. The word “Vietnam”, which wasn’t written in Dictionaire Cambodgien, 1967 at all, is very strange. I try to look up for the word “Vietnam” under “V” in Khmer that I still can’t find. Why...?! We can see clearly in a Pre-Angkor Map in 3rd Century A.D about the “Dai Viet”; what does “Dai Viet” mean in Khmer? “Dai” in Khmer is to mean “arms”, and “Viet” is already mentioned. So we make up a phrase about Yuon who have “Dai/arms to conquer/Viet all Champa, Khmer Krom and Laotian lands so far so worse. This Yuon nation, once upon the time, according to the history, was named “Giao Chi”, who lived in the Red River in Tonkin, the utmost north of present North Vietnam.

According to Cambodian-English on page 787 of Part 2: “Yuon” means in Sanskrit “Yavana” is ‘Foreigner, barbarian’. That's why all Yuon landplunderers/eartheaters didn't like Khmer people to call them "Yuon". Because Yuon behave themselves like worms/eartheaters so extremely badly.

**War with the Annamites 1123-1136**

Although it is know that Suryavarman was a warlike king, the inscriptions of Kambuja do not give any definition information about any wars wagged by him except those which preceded his accession. But Cham inscriptions and Annamite documents give some information on the subject. From 1113 to 1139, Champa was governed by a weak king, Harivarman, who, during the later years of his reign was under the influence of his Yuvaraja, and adopted son named Jaya Indravarman, whose growing power excited the jealousy of the legitimate heirs. The Annamites, who had won their independence from China 939 and were now organised as the Empire of Dai Viet, were undergoing a succession of weak minorities. Suryavarman II seems to have been bent on attacking Dai-Viet through Laos and started to bring pressure to bear on Champa to render him assistance.

Suryavarman II seems to have begun his activities as early as 1123-1124; for Annamites documents quoted by Maspero say that during those years Cambodians and Chams began to take refuge from their enemies at the court of Dai-Viet. In 1128 Suryavarman II is said to led 20,000 soldiers against Dai Viet, doubtless following the old route taken by the embassies of Upper Chenla from Savannakhet to Nghean; but he was defeated and driven out. The next autumn he sent a fleet of more than 700 vessels to ravage the coast of Dai-Viet; and thereafter constantly harried that Kingdom, by land and sea, sometimes dragging Champa along with him. In 1132 the combined forces of Cambodia and Champa gain in Nghean, but were driven out. In 1136 Jaya
Indravarman III, now ruling as Yuvaraja, having made peace with Dai-Viet, refused to join Suryavarman II in a new campaign, which ended disastrously for him.5

The result was the same in both cases: The more experienced regulars destroyed the raw Vietnamese levies. The two queens, rather than surrender to the enemy, chose suicide by drowning in the nearby river. “Sinization” now began in earnest, with Chinese administration taking the place of traditional leaders. Two more rebellions took place. One in 248 A.D., also led by woman, Trieu Au, collapsed almost immediately, and like the Trung sisters, Trieu Au committed suicide. The second led by Ly Bon lasted from 544 to 547 and was also crushed. With the rise of the strong Tang dynasty in China after 618, resistance became hopeless: Viet-Nam became the Chinese Protectorate General of the “Pacified South” (“An-Nam” in Chinese). It was under the name “Annam,” a symbol of humiliation and defeat that the region was to become best known to the outside world. (Vietnam Imperial March and Nationalism. From “The Two Viet-Nams: A Political and Military Analysis”, Chapter 2: A Glimpse of the Past. By Bernard B. Fall.6

I’m always warned by Cambodians not to call Vietnamese “Yuon” in Australia. They might think Yuon will hit me if I still keep calling them “Yuon”. I asked Cambodians why I can’t call Vietnamese “Yuon”. They often give me no answer about “Yuon”. I always tell Cambodians I’m half Yuon and half Chinese, but I was born in Cambodia. I’m not afraid of “Yuon”. Even if I can’t speak both Yuon and Chinese, but my blood is real Sino-Yuon.

And today, Samdech Hun Sen who is so afraid to call Vietnamese instead of “Yuon” whenever he addresses to the public. We really don’t know how many times he’s been called by his master-Hanoi Leaders to be reprimanded in calling Vietnamese “Yuon”. If he makes a mistake by calling Vietnamese “Yuon”. We also rarely hear Samdech Hun Sen calling Vietnamese “Yuon” on Kampuchean TV or in public. He, perhaps, doesn’t clearly understand much about the word “Yuon”. So he goes rowdy by bitterly attacking on his Khmer compatriots who used to call “Yuon” instead of Vietnamese as I’ve already mentioned this chapter. And there are many evil foreigners, who always say to themselves, are to be “experts” on Cambodia, unfairly and wrongly accuse Cambodian of being racists against Yuon to read like this:

By Bora Touch, Australia

Because of general ignorance and political manipulation, especially by foreigners with the foreign “experts” on Cambodia being the worst offenders, the term “Yuon” has become so controversial that the Khmers and the Khmer language have become the victims.

---

5 Lawrence Palmer Briggs: The Ancient Khmer Empire (1999) P.190
6 Praeger Publishers, New York, 1971
The term has been criticized by foreign experts as “contemptible” “derogatory” and as having a “savage connotation”. The word has been used by certain political factions as a tool to discredit or demonize their political rivals for their own political gain.

In his letter to editor of Washington Times, 13/9/02, Dr. David Roberts defamatorily called the opposition leader, Mr. Sam Rainsy, a racist for using the term “Yuon” when referred to Vietnamese. Roberts was harshly critical of Mr Rainsy and wrote: “Mr. Rainsy is not a democrat. He is a disappointed authoritarian in the Cambodian tradition. He refers to his Vietnamese neighbors as ‘Yuon,’ meaning savage.”

Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Head of UNTAC, was hypnotized by the foreign “experts” on Cambodia to the degree of, reportedly, speechlessness, when a Khmer journalist used “Yuon” to refer to Vietnamese when asking him questions. Akashi’s foreign advisors even discussed criminalizing the use of term. Although the use of the term was not criminalized, “insults” and “racial incitement” (which are undefined which led to broad discretion or political abuses) were made criminal offences in the UNTAC criminal Code 1992. The drafters of the Code had a misplaced focus. They apparently were so obsessed with ensuring use of the word “Yuon” could be actionable that they failed to criminalize the offence of assault. As a result, assault is not punishable under the Code unless it results in permanent injury lasting six months. This has provided the police with an implicit license for torturing accused people - unless an accused person suffers permanent injury it is difficult to complain about police treatment during questioning. The Code further fails to include basic criminal defences such as insanity and self defence. But, congratulations, if someone utters the word “Youn” they can be charged with “insult” under Code.

Samdech Hun Sen's letter to US Senators John McCain and John Kerry of 3/10/1998, capitalized on the senators' ignorance of the term “Youn” in Hun Sen’s campaign against Mr. Rainsy. Hun Sen stated, "Mr. Sam Rainsy referred me as a “Yuon” puppet. In case Your Excellencies are not familiar with the term “Youn”, “Youn” is highly derogative and racist term used to denigrate those of Vietnamese ancestry”. Hun Sen is known for his ties to the Vietnamese. What Sam Rainsy said was nothing new. Hun Sen chose to attack his use of the term “Youn” rather than answer the charge that he was too close to the Vietnamese.

The term began to be politicized in late 1970s, especially during the Khmer Rouge-Vietnam war. In an attempt to demonize KR, the Vietnamese propagandists propagated that “Yun is the pejorative term for the Vietnamese”: see Hanoi’s propaganda against KR: Kampuchea Dossier (KD), April 1978, Pt I, p 35. On the following page, they added “Annamites” in French, or Annam in Khmer, “is another pejorative term meaning Vietnamese” p36. The term “Annam”, or “Annamese” in English being pejorative is more than ridiculous considering the fact that Annam was the name of a country. While a few Khmers know this Vietnamese self-adopted definition, anything is possible in propaganda war.
Dr. Robert's definition of “Youn” as “savages” appears to have been drawn from the KR’s definition of the term found in the KR Black Papers (1978) p.9. The definition is, incorrect and baseless and was included by the KR and the Vietnamese for the purpose of their respective propaganda. The adoption of this definition by Dr Roberts and others flies in the face of more than a thousand of years of evidence to the contrary.

Let me set the record straight. The term is neither new nor contemptible or derogatory. In fact, the Khmers have been using the term for more than a thousand years and it has become a piece of Khmer tradition and language. As far as the surviving recorded evidence shows, the word “Yuon” appears in Khmer inscriptions dating back to the reign of King Suryavarman I (1002-1050), a immediate predecessor to the Angkor Wat temple builder Suryavarman II: see Inscription K105 or Coedes, Inscriptions du Cambodge, K. Hall, Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia (1985) etc. “Yuon” was used in the context of trade and commence to refer to the Vietnamese people and in no way was a term of contempt.

As a matter of fact, “Yuon” was well known and used by early European travellers and officials; for instance by the British linguist Lieut-Col James Low in his “On the Ancient Connection Between Kenah and Siam”, Journal Indian Arch. Vol v. (1851) p513, by a famous French naturalist Henri Mouhot in his “Notes on Cambodia, Lao Country,” Journal Royal Geog. Soc. London, Vol. 32 (1862),p.157; by a Thai King Mongkut (1851-68) in his official correspondence, Phratchaihatthalekha prahatsomdet phrachomklaochauyuhau (114-116), etc. “Yuon” was still in use by some French writers after the independence of Indochina states, for instance, by a French Sgt. Resen Riesen, Jungle Mission (1957). In Khmer writings, the term “Youn” was not used as a racist slur nor to indicate contempt, but to refer to what since WWII have been known as Vietnamese people. None of Khmer language dictionaries define "Youn" as “savage” or indicate that it is a pejorative term. “Youn” has been used in old and new Khmer poetry and songs for hundreds of years compared to the term “Vietnamese” which has been used about 50 years ago.

Additionally, the Khmer dish named “samlor mchu Yuon” means Vietnamese sour soup. In fact, it would be odd to call that particular dish “samlor mchu Vietnam” because it is not the traditional name, even the Vietnamese-Cambodians refer to it using the word “Youn”.

It is true that most Vietnamese do not know the term “Yuon” and only the Khmer colloquially use it to refer to them, but this surprises no Khmer because equally most of the Vietnamese do not know that almost the whole of south Vietnam (from Don Nai to Hatien provinces) rightly belong(ed) to Cambodia and the Vietnamese ancestors (and themselves) have colonized that part of Khmer lands for the last 3 centuries. “Yuon” had been used long before the beginning of this brutal Vietnamese colonization process starting in late 15th century. Knowledge by the Vietnamese, therefore, is not a test of the meaning or offensiveness of the term.
Some “experts” have argued that if the Vietnamese are offended with the use of term, the Khmer should follow their wish. Well, a lot of Khmer traditions and words may offend the Vietnamese but this should not force the Khmer to give up their traditional and cultural habits, and there are many Khmer terms which Vietnamese had adopted in their language. Political “correctness”, or forced accommodation rather, is not new to the Khmer. Back in the 19th century, the Khmer were forced to learn and speak Vietnamese rather than the Khmer language and to behave and to dress the way the Vietnamese under the policy of Vietnamization by Emperor Minh Mang or his dynasty. Phnom Penh was changed to Tran Tay; a Phnom Penh fort was changed to “Annam”; and all Khmer districts were changed to Vietnamese names; Khmer traditional royal coronation, in case Queen Ang Mei; and titles were changed to adopt the Vietnamese way. When the Khmer resisted, they were punished and, in some cases, executed. The resistance has continued.

The question is should the Khmer give up this piece of their traditional language or culture, thus stop resisting? Why should we? It is time for dispassionate discussion of the term rather than inflammatory comments by foreigners and by Mr Hun Sen. Perhaps the foreign “experts” should see that in a sense they have been manipulated by Mr Hun Sen, and the Vietnamese rather than lecturing the Cambodians about hate language. The tone of foreigners, particularly in their criticism of Sam Rainsy, smacks of paternalism. As if we do not know what words in our own language mean. Believe me, Khmers know which words in their own language are “bad” or pejorative and we do not need foreigners to teach us or show us the way.

For Vietnamese to accept another term, “Yuon”, and learn that the term is not pejorative and not contemptible is perhaps easier and cheaper than forcing the Khmer to give it up, a task which could include destroying the 1000 year-old inscription (or at least obscuring the “offensive” word in that inscription) as well as destroying all Khmer dictionaries.

---

Re: Opinion: The Term ‘Yuon’ and Its Political Manipulation (Score: 0)
By Guest on Monday, May 19 2003 @ 17:32:53 PDT

I think the foreigners cannot understand and feel the pain and suffering that we, the Khmers, went through. They do not know how is like as one's country is being invaded by the enemy who ruthlessly killed and tortured just as the Nazi in Hitler's regime. The pain and suffering that still lasts to our generation. How they feel their home and their freedom had been taken away by the invaders. If you the readers have any comments or want to me, you welcome to do so at my email: huablessed@msn.com thank you

Re: Opinion: The Term ‘Yuon’ and Its Political Manipulation (Score: 0)
By Guest on Wednesday, July 30 2003 @ 22:35:40 PDT
All Khmer should continue on calling the Yuon intruder, Yuon, Yuon. I will continue telling the next Khmer American generation using the term Yuon. Yuon is Khmer term for Yuon. Don't care what outsider think of our word. Yuon intruder is always Yuon intruder.
Hi, Mr. writer! It’s really greatest discussion of the word “YUON”. Yes, the term of that word has been used hundreds of years, and I think all Khmers, especially Khmer Krom will not give up of that word, period. Hun Sen is a puppet of Yuon; he cannot use that word to exchange his power and life, period. I am so proud of Mr. Samrainsy used the term "Yuon" in front of VN and the world.

Some foreigners and political factors care too much just that word that being opposing to the term democracy. Do Khmer and Khmer Krom have democracy today? Not at all. Who destroys democracy in South VN known as Kampuchea Krom and thousands of Khmer Krom lives had been killed and tortured and forced Khmer Krom to live as slave of Yuon? A-YUON IS THE TERM OF THE CAUSE.

So, in my own Khmer dictionary define the word “Yuon” means many things such as outlaw, robber, killer, invader of neighbour, relationship destroyer /neighbors...You'll all see if looking real close and good to the Yuon history. KK, KhmerUnited.

Dear: Compatriot,

We all ready knew that Mr. Hun Sen works under the controller of ah! Yuon. Hun Sen has no idea at all; he only does follow whatever ah! Yuon decided. So, I judge that Mr. Hun Sen is going to die better still alive... Because, he can't support or protect anything for lives of population who living under his regime. It's so worse if the Prime Minister of country doesn't know what your own function is! And let enemy to control to execute its own population without reason.

I'm always concerned about Mr. Hun Sen. If in this circumstance that we all knew him working under the controller of ah! Yuon. How come we can't find the way to eliminate Hun Sen's dominion out from then and now!!!!

My suggestion that Hun Sen still have power the Cambodia land will belong to ah! Yuon and Khmer Krom land is very hard to take back. But, if we and Khmers can eliminate ah! Yuon from Cambodia as soon as we can, then Khmer Krom land will be come freedom possible...That’s why they call "POLITIC". We all Khmers have to stand up forward, never back off!!!

Respectfully yours,

Samakijeatboy
Names of countries change depending on what countries calling:

US= Cambodia
French= Cambodge
Chinese= Jienpuchai
Japanese= Kambodja
Laos= Kmen or vice versa
Cambodia= Ahkieng (US)
Cambodia= Barang (French)
Cambodia = Yuon (Viet)
Cambodia= Chen (Chinese)
Cambodia = Yipun (Japanese)
Cambodia = Lao (Laos)

Foreigners must not criticize Khmer for calling other countries different names. We have our own language. Such accusation on Sam Rainsy or Cambodia is rather a political tactic than a definition of the word Yuon. Scholars and educators, especially the foreigners should analyse before taking Cambodian as a scapegoat. This is nothing but a nonsense issue to put on Cambodia. Obviously, Hanoi-Hun Sen try to come up with anything to put down the nationalist or other running party.

Re: Opinion: The Term ‘Yuon’ and Its Political Manipulation (Score: 0)
By Guest on Sunday, February 23 2003 @ 21:58:44 PST

Dear Bora Touch,

Who are you supporting, Mr Sam Rainsy or Ah Hun Sen? Above article you posted in it seem like you are supporting Hun Sen. I’m very proud to hear that Mr Sam Rainsy call the savage Viet -Yuon. You got to think about it... Yuon is savage. They won't leave Khmers to live in peace. And who is behind the killing field, Yuon of course. So it’s true Yuon are savage and ALL Khmer should call them Yuon. So people will understand why Yuon are called Yuon.

Re: Opinion: The Term ‘Yuon’ and Its Political Manipulation (Score: 0)
By Guest on Tuesday, May 13 2003 @ 18:52:45 PDT

It may be worth reminding the writer that the word 'nigger' simply means 'black' in Latin. There is still a country in Africa (Niger) proudly using this word as the name of its nation. However, a cultural setting and attitude among white people in using the term, at least in the West, has led to recognition that the actual meaning of the word is irrelevant -- when people feel insulted, you've insulted them, regardless of innocent intent.
Great explanation; In fact the term “Yuon” has been around even before the existing of the South Vietnam (which was later stolen from Cambodia). By changing the piece of land from Khmer Krom to Vietnam does not necessarily erase or replace the use of the word Yuon by the original Khmer people who still live there. Don't try to invent new name for the crocodile. A crocodile is always a crocodile, and all Khmers know that. So let continue to use the word Yuon as usual and just ignore what the ignorance out there thinking.

These are the twelfth roots of the reasons that the Khmer people who really considered Yuon as their 3-Century-Old-Leech-Hereditary Foes who are the worst murderous violators of human rights on earth. And this is the clearest revelation unfolds their Past and Present Endless Unforgettable Painful Suffering Tragedies, Hatred and animosity against Yuon, and many Secret Killing Fields that Yuon committed against Cambodians in the bitterest past to the UNPO and UNO. Yuon colonialists and imperialists are still trying to cover up their One Million Super-Dirty-Demonic Genocide Plans against Khmer Krom before eyes of people in the outside world. Who created Killing Fields in 1975 to 1979 to brutally massacre more than 3 million innocent Cambodians, and more 460,000 lives again from 1979 to 1991 in Cambodia like that? And the killing fields still exist in both Khmer Krom and Central Highlands of Degar. Can the world and UN still ignore these barbaric acts and violation of human rights that being committed by Yuon evil-murderous-communist leaders? Tragic irony of history; their victims, the peasants of Indochina, will be unforgotten. They will join the countless millions of earlier victims of Yuon tyrants, intimidators, murderers and oppressors. Why were about three million Cambodian lives spent from 1975 to 1979 like that? Without about 3 million Khmer Kandal lives were spent; can all Khmer Krom people, who are still living in Khmer Krom/South Vietnam, be allowed to reveal their Endless Past and Present Unforgettable Painful Suffering Tragedies to the UN and world like that? No, they can’t. Why can’t they? Because all their mouths are completely automatically shut up, and all Khmer Krom educated men are also hunted down to be eliminated brutally.