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by *Pr. David Chandler*, CKS Senior Advisor

Dear readers,

I am grateful to my colleague Michel Antelme for inviting me to write a brief note for the CKS Newsletter and I am delighted to be associated with the CKS as senior advisor.

As many of you know, I have been associated with Cambodia since 1959 when I began to study the language as a US Foreign Service Officer. When I resigned from the Foreign Service in 1966, I decided to pursue an academic career.

My dissertation dealt with Cambodian political history in the early nineteenth Century, before the arrival of the French. For twenty five years, I taught Southeast Asian history at Monash University in Australia.

My wife and I returned to the United States to live in early 1998. Since 1990 I have visited Cambodia fourteen times for consultations and to conduct my own research.

In 1999 I followed the early history of CKS with great interest, and became formally involved in its programs when I was teaching at Cornell University earlier this year. I plan to work as a senior advisor with the Center, specializing on its academic programs, until 2003.

I will certainly retain a pro-active interest in the CKS after that.

Working with Philippe Peycam and his colleagues at the Center, with the CKS advisory board, made up of scholars from several countries, including Cambodia, and with the board of the Center, I hope to assist the Center in its efforts to sharpen the focus and reinforce the synergy of scholars throughout the world in the field of Khmer studies. Through sponsoring seminars, conferences, academic programs, fellowships, newsletters and so on, the CKS hopes to play a helpful and lively role by acting as a clearing house and sounding board for scholarly initiatives and especially by encouraging young Khmer scholars to pursue post graduate work in

the field of Khmer studies both in Cambodia and overseas.

Although the CKS welcomes the support and participation of foreign scholars and foreign institutions, it plans to sponsor fellowships for foreigners only insofar as the fellowships benefit from extensive and systematic co operation and partnership with Cambodian scholars and institutions. The Khmer scholars and institutions, in turn, will benefit from these partnerships.

The CKS will also seek to sponsor fellowships for young Cambodian scholars, preparing them for post-graduate study abroad in some cases and sponsoring post-graduate work inside Cambodia in others.

The precise priorities of the CKS over the next few years will, I hope, be set at the conference-workshop sponsored by the Center in January 2001 in Siem Reap. At that time a research agenda and a general strategy for the next few years will be discussed. My colleagues and I welcome your ideas in the meantime, by letter and email. Those of you who will attend the conference workshop will have an opportunity to express their views and share with others who are interested in enhancing and deepening the study of Cambodian history, society and culture. The workshop is discussed in detail further in this newsletter, and I look forward to seeing you there.

To close on a more personal note, the prospect of working with the CKS as a senior advisor is an exciting one for me. I am delighted to be at a point in my career when I can devote a good deal of time in trying to bring some of the ideals that I have mentioned to fruition, and to working alongside Khmer and foreign scholars affiliated with the Center. In 2001-2002, I hope to spend several months per year in residence at the Center. After forty years of studying Cambodia mostly from afar, I look forward enormously to these longer visits and to working with all of you.

