

Cambodian Language Guide Script

For those of you keen to have a written version on the podcast, here is the script below:

Scott: Ah.... Soo ee nih?

Mot Suan: Do you mean s'uh-ee nih? Are you asking 'what is this?'

Scott: (smiling) Well, yeah, I'm trying to!

Mot Suan: You were very close – to say What is this? You say tae saaey nih

Scott: tae saaey nih – right – thanks for that! So, what IS it?

Mot Suan: (laughing) I'm not sure if you will like it... fried spiders!

Scott: (laughing) I'm game for anything!

Mot Suan: (asks fried spiders in Khmer)

Scott: Hey, thanks for that – would you like to share them with me?

Mot Suan: Sure, come and sit over here, it's the place I have arranged to meet my group for dinner. I am a tour guide and I am meeting a group here in awhile. Are you Australian? There are a few Australians in this group you might like to meet.

Scott: That sounds great. I'll grab us a drink along the way.... Fried spiders... what do you drink with them? Oh and I'm going to have to try that – is that a pineapple on a stick?!?!?

Mot Suan: That's right – it's very sweet. This stall has beer or soft drink if you would like one.

Scott: Right, how do I say two please?

Mot Suan: This is som pii

Scott: som pii I don't suppose you could teach me a bit of Cambodian while we wait for your group?

Mot Suan: Sure, I like to try and practise my English as much as I can. Also, locals will like that you are trying to speak with them in Cambodian, not many foreigners speak the language.

Scott: Great so a language lesson over a feast of fried spiders, pineapple on a stick and beer – life doesn't get much better than this!

Mot Suan: You say khnhom chmoh scott Lok Scott

Scott: khnhom chmoh scott Lok Scott – and how do I ask a persons name – how do I say What is your name?

Mot Suan: This is tae neak chhmoh aavey? – so I would say tae neak chhmoh aavey?
Lok Suan

Scott: tae neak chhmoh aavey?. What about I'm from Australia

Mot Suan: This is khnhom mok pi pro tes ou sra lii. I should help you with some Khmer greetings, the most traditional which I'm sure you have seen is the Som Pas – this is where someone holds their hands together and bows their head. This is a sign of respect and you say chhom reap suor which is Hello when you do it.

Scott: Som Pas, chhom reap suor – are there rules for this?

Mot Suan: If you hold your hands high and bow low this shows great respect and you should always return a som pas, it is considered very rude not to. Some Cambodian men might shake your hand instead, but a Cambodian woman will never do this.

Scott: Ok – so don't offer to shake a womans hand?

Mot Suan: No you should not do this. Also Cambodians are very polite – so when you are addressing a man you should say Lok – which is Mr so I would be Lok Suan

Scott: Lok Suan

Mot Suan: You say Lok Srey for a woman followed by her name –

Scott: Lok Srey

Mot Suan: Also, you might refer to an older man as Ta which is grandfather or Po which is Uncle

Scott: Ta, Po – what about grandmother or aunt?

Mot Suan: Grandmother is Yeay and aunt is Ming

Scott: Yeay, Ming

Mot Suan: Family is very important in Cambodia and we are all taught to respect our elders or important people like the Monks – that is why we say Ta or Po as a sign of respect. You might also use brother and sister – bang and bang srey

Scott: Bang and bang srey – how would I refer to a Monk?

Mot Suan: This is a good question – Monks are very important in Cambodia, the Wat or temple is usually the centre of village life and we refer to the monks as Venerable – in Cambodian this is preah dech preah kun

Scott: preah dech preah kun

Mot Suan: You should show great respect to monks and be very mindful when you enter a temple – remove your shoes and hat, don't touch the statues and if a monk is seated when he is talking to you don't stand above him – sit down also. Also you must ask permission if you want to photograph a buddha.

Scott: Right – got it. How do I say goodbye

Mot Suan: This is lea sen hauy

Scott: lea sen hauy. Ok – what about yes and no – as in yes please or no thank you?

Mot Suan: this is good, locals will appreciate this – yes is bat yes please is bat trov kar

Scott: bat trov kar

Mot Suan: No is te and no thank you is ot te or kun hauy

Scott: ot te or kun hauy – so please is soum

Mot Suan: That's right – you might say soum for excuse me

Scott: soum tos. What about I don't understand

Mot Suan: this is khnhom min yol te

Scott: khnhom min yol te. Ok... what about Please Say that Slowly

Mot Suan: this is soum ni yeay yiit yiit

Scott: soum ni yeay yiit yiit – this is tricky! How about Where Is and Which Way to?

Mot Suan: As a tour guide I specialise in this – I can tell you where everything is!

Where is

é na

Scott: é na

Mot Suan: Which way to taé phlov muoy na tiw kan

Scott: taé phlov muoy na tiw kan. Ok – I think it’s time for another round of spiders – which were crunchy and strangely satisfying – how do I say How Much is it? I’ll go and get us some...

Mot Suan: This is taé vea thlay pon maan

Scott: taé vea thlay pon maan. And Too Expensive?

Mot Suan: Don’t worry – they won’t be! But for other things you can say thlay nas

Scott: (laughing) I know... thlay nas. How would I ask for the bill at a restaurant?

Mot Suan: You would say kith luy

Scott: kith luy

Mot Suan: That’s right. Also, a small tip is always appreciated as local salaries are very low.

Scott: That’s good to know – and I’ve been told I should tip tour guides also....

Mot Suan: (smiling / laughing) Yes, we also appreciate this!

Scott: Ok – to help me count out my tip – how do I count to ten?

Mot Suan: this is muoy pii bey

Scott: Whoa – show down – or should I say... soum ni yeay yiit yiit – one at a time!

Mot Suan: one muoy

Scott: muoy

Mot Suan: Two pii

Scott: pii

Mot Suan: Three bey

Scott: bey

Mot Suan: Four buon

Scott: buon

Mot Suan: Five pram

Scott: pram

Mot Suan: Six pram muoy

Scott: pram muoy

Mot Suan: Seven pram pii

Scott: pram pii

Mot Suan: Eight pram bey

Scott: pram bey

Mot Suan: Nine pram buon

Scott: pram buon

Mot Suan: Ten dob

Scott: dob. About the number of fried spiders I've eaten! How do I say I like this?

Mot Suan: You say khnhom choul chet vea

Scott: khnhom choul chet vea What about I don't like this....

Mot Suan: this is khnhom min choul chet vea te

Scott: khnhom min choul chet vea teThe pineapple wasn't for me...

Mot Suan: (laughing) yes, they are very sweet.

Scott: Just a bit! Now, I know to not drink the water and to be very careful of what I eat...

but I also know how easy it is to get sick while here, so how do I say hospital and doctor.

Mot Suan: Well, I hope you won't need them but hospital is mon tii pet

Scott: mon tii pet

Mot Suan: Doctor is kru pet

Scott: kru pet. What about police?

Mot Suan: I'm SURE you won't need that one, Cambodia is very safe – but if you do – polis

Scott: polis. Now I know your group will be here soon, I've just got a few more words if that is ok?

Mot Suan: Sure – go ahead, I'm enjoying this!

Scott: Ok – how do I say Have you a room?

Mot Suan: This is taé nak mean bontob te.

Scott: taé nak mean bontob te.. What about May I see it?

Mot Suan: It is a good idea to see the room before you book it – some of the smaller hotels and hostels are not great... you say taé khnhom som meul vea ban te. Also, you should try to bargain on the room price.

Scott: taé khnhom som meul vea ban te. What about bus, train, taxi and boat

Mot Suan: Bus is baas

Scott: baas

Mot Suan: train is ror tes phleung

Scott: ror tes phleung

Mot Suan: For taxi's you must negotiate a price before the trip – there are no meters in taxis. taxi is taksi But there are also tuktuks – which are bikes or motorcycles – again you should bargain with the driver before you get in, but they are cheaper than the cars.

Scott: Right –bit like Thailand. Boat and ticket?

Mot Suan: Boat is touk

Scott: touk What about ticket?

Mot Suan: This is som bot

Scott: som bot. Ok my friend before I buy us another round of beer my final words are today, tomorrow, yesterday and now – I find these useful for booking things!

Mot Suan: (laughing) Yes, I can see how these would be useful! Today is thnhay nih

Scott: thnhay nih

Mot Suan: Tomorrow is thnhay saaék

Scott: thnhay saaék

Mot Suan: Yesterday is msel menh

Scott: msel menh

Mot Suan: Now is ey louv

Scott: ey louv

Mot Suan: Very good! Just in time, here come a few of my group, that man is the Australian I think you will like.

Scott: Great, I'll get us some more beer – thank you very much for my lesson!

Mot Suan: My pleasure!