

ṬOK DĀK' SRŪV: A TYPE OF RICE GRANARY¹

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There are different ways of storing rice used for daily consumption. Any Cambodian is familiar with the *janruk*, the commonplace rice granary – a small edifice for storing rice. If a home does not have a *janruk*, rice is stored in various types of sacks in the house. Sometimes people arrange a specific place, called *tik*, in the main house or in the kitchen to store rice. The *tik* is a square made of planks of wood suspended between two columns in the house, about waist high. The floor and walls of the plank box are covered with mats. In the following, I will describe a less known method of storing rice, in a different type of granary known as a *tok*. A *tok* is made of bamboo and takes the form of big basket (Figures 1-2). Although it can be found in other places including Mongkol Borei, it is most often made, and seen for sale and in use in the Tonle Toch region (Figures 3-4).

To make a long lasting *tok*, mature bamboo is selected. First the bamboo is spliced into the “thickness of two figures” with a length of 5 to 8 meters. Then the pieces are soaked in water to prevent decay. After soaking, they are partially dried and then woven by starting from the bottom (Figure 5). At this stage it is full of holes, and so not useable (Figure 6). To be able to use the *tok*, a mixture of cow-dung and termite hill soil or



Figure 1

¹ “Ṭok dāk’ srūv,” *Khmerenaissance* 4, 2008-9: 10-12.

² Translated by Siyonn Sophearith and Ashley Thompson

mud needs to be packed over the basket in a number of layers, and totally dried (Figure 9). Figure 7 shows a complete *tok* for sale without such coating for ease of transport. In the Tonle Toch region, a hole is left in the *tok*, to enable a person to actually enter its body to collect the rice (Figure 8). This hole is closed by a board, when the *tok* is full.

With good maintenance, a *tok* can last for 10 years. It can vary in size, according to preference. We have observed two sizes: a smaller one with a capacity of 60 *thāmñ* of rice (about 1440 kilograms); and a bigger one with a capacity of 100 *thāmñ* (about 2400 kilograms).



Figure 2



Figure 3

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Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9