



MINISTRY OF CULTS AND RELIGION

Novice Sokha



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Ministry of Cults and Religion

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Phnom Penh, January 2016

Novice Sokha





ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា
ជាតិ សាសនា ព្រះមហាក្សត្រ

ក្រសួងវប្បករ និង សាសនា

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FOREWORD

The 2013 government-led Cambodia Violence Against Children Survey provided, for the first time, national estimates that describe the magnitude and nature of violence against children in Cambodia. The findings highlight that violence is a significant problem for many Cambodian children. Children are often abused by the very people they know and trust, including their parents and teachers, and in places they should feel safe, including their homes and schools. Many children never talk to anyone about their experiences, let alone seek help. Violence can harm a child’s mental and physical development and stops them from reaching their full potential. Violence teaches violence – to break the cycle we need to prevent it.

Buddhism plays an important role in promoting morality and non-violent values, as well as upholding the Cambodian civilization and culture. Cambodian culture and tradition values Buddhism and places great respect in Buddhist leaders. People listen to monks in a way they do not listen to others – monks are therefore in a unique position to talk to people about sensitive issues and to address harmful social norms and practices. Buddhist leaders connect to the daily lives of Cambodians through their Dharma prayers, sermons, advice and processions to collect donations. They are in contact with the people and aware of the issues and problems that prevail in their monastic communities. When effectively and accurately applied, Buddhist theory and the actions of Buddhist leaders can help prevent violence against children.

The Ministry of Cults and Religion is mandated to oversee all religions in Cambodia, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN**. The Ministry has promoted morality in Cambodian society, aimed at teaching people how to become generous, compassionate and responsible, and how to live together peacefully and without violence.

The Ministry developed this book, “Novice Sokha”, in cooperation with the Buddhist Cabinet of Cambodia. The book aims to enhance the capacities of Cambodian monks to contribute to the prevention of violence against children.

The Ministry would like to thank UNICEF Cambodia for its technical and financial support in developing Novice Sokha.

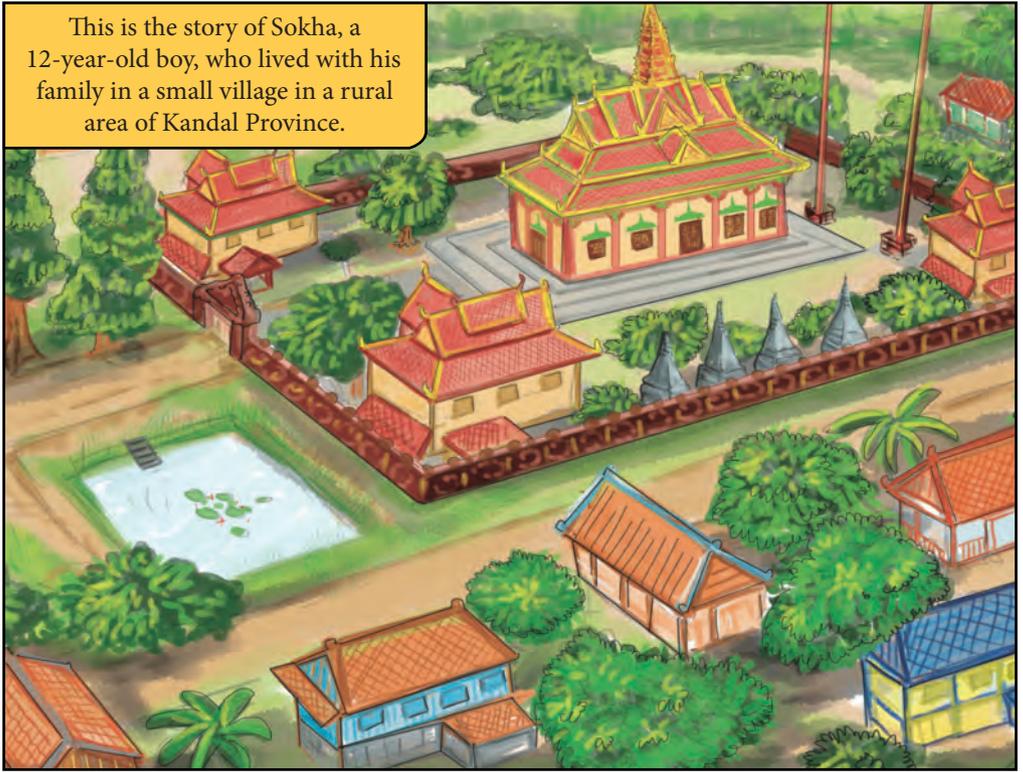


Phnom Penh, 14th January 2016

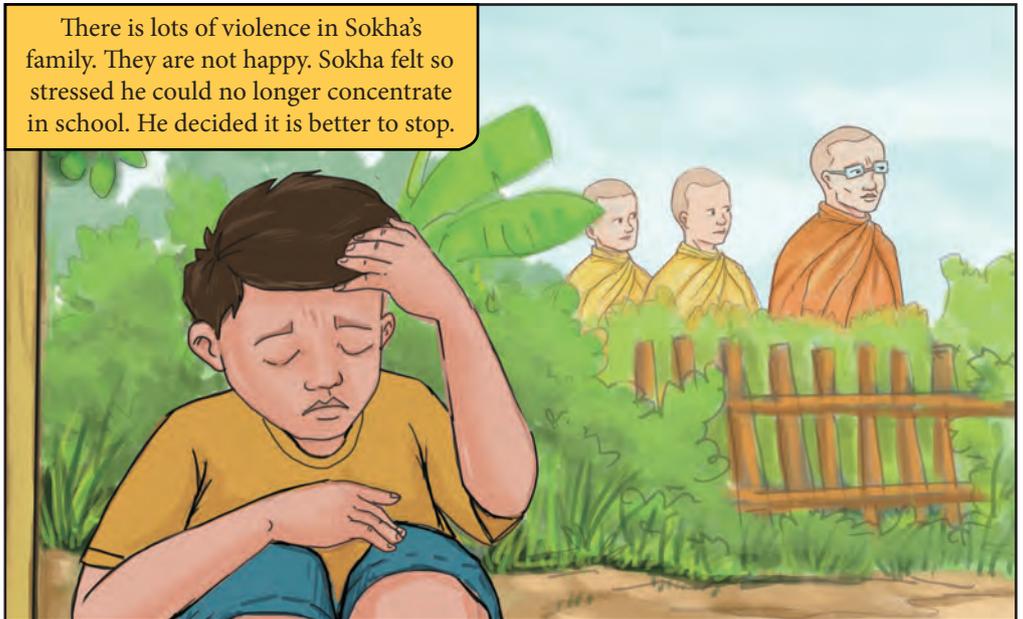
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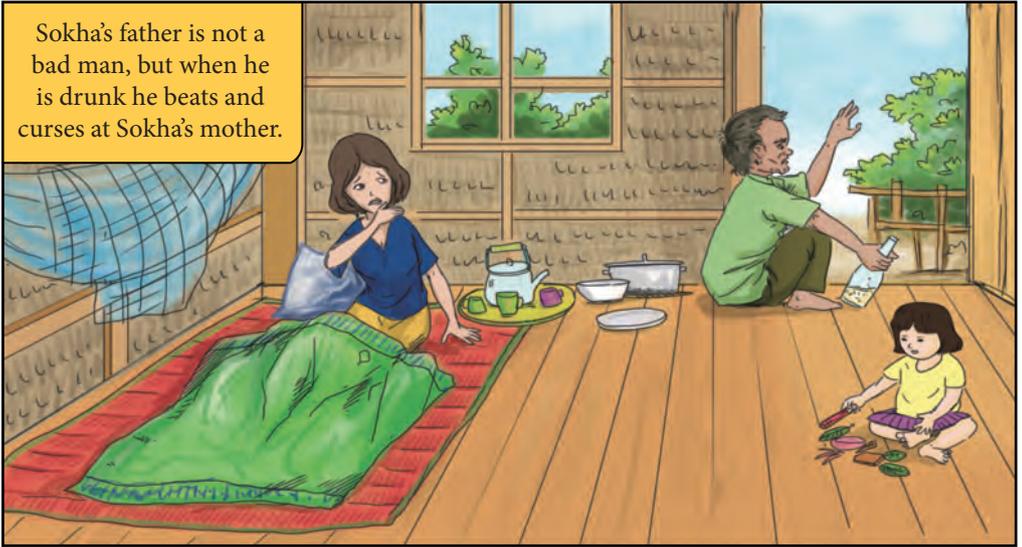
This is the story of Sokha, a 12-year-old boy, who lived with his family in a small village in a rural area of Kandal Province.



There is lots of violence in Sokha's family. They are not happy. Sokha felt so stressed he could no longer concentrate in school. He decided it is better to stop.



Sokha's father is not a bad man, but when he is drunk he beats and curses at Sokha's mother.



Lately Sokha's father started drinking more and more. Being increasingly violent.



When Sokha's parents are stressed or angry with each other, they tend to turn their anger to their children.



How can I ever sleep? I feel so sad. There is no peace in my family.

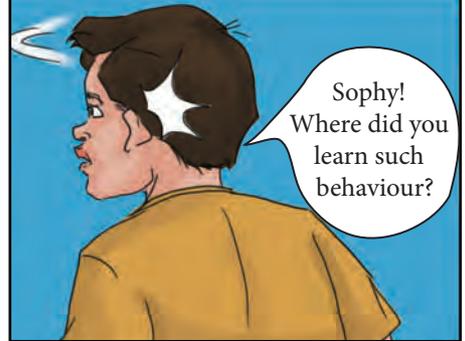


One day...

Go away you stupid dog!



Sophy! Where did you learn such behaviour?



My mother and father hit and yell at me and Sophy. It makes us feel hurt and afraid of them. Like nobody loves us.

When I am angry with Sophy I hit and yell at her. I feel so guilty after. I don't know why I do this. I am sick of this life. Something needs to happen!

Each time his parents fight Sokha asks his neighbours to help. But they do not care - it is normal to them.



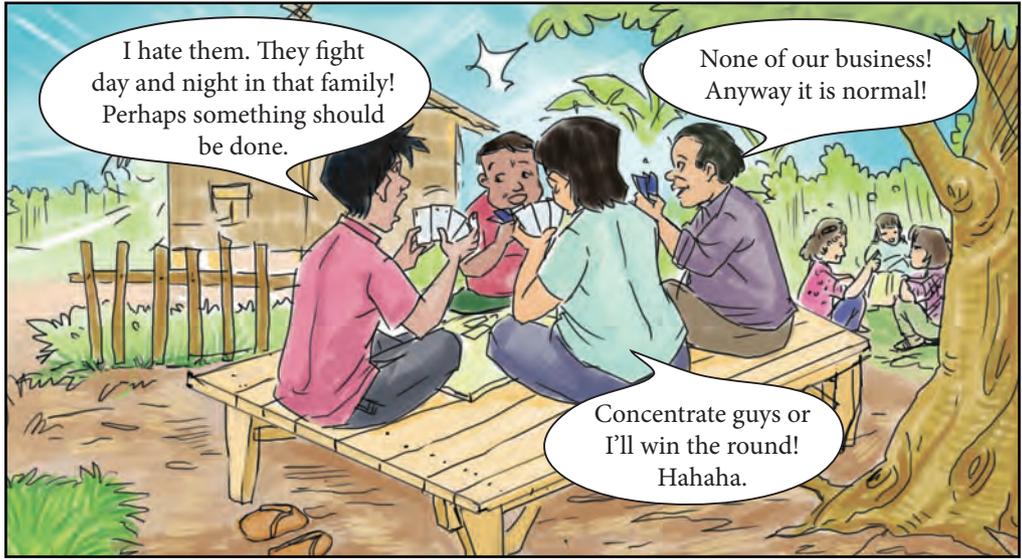
Tell me! Where did you hide the money? I need to drink!

There is no money! You spend it all on your drinking! You are a loser, you are good for nothing!

I hate them. They fight day and night in that family! Perhaps something should be done.

None of our business! Anyway it is normal!

Concentrate guys or I'll win the round! Hahaha.



I think it's the wife's fault. She doesn't take care of the house and the family. She is always sick.

Yeah... Anyway I don't care.



Aunts, uncles, please help!



Reflection Box 1

1. What types of violence does Sokha experience? Are there the other types of violence?
2. How does this violence affect Sokha's feelings?
3. What should Sokha experience at home instead?
4. Is it acceptable for husband to hit wife?

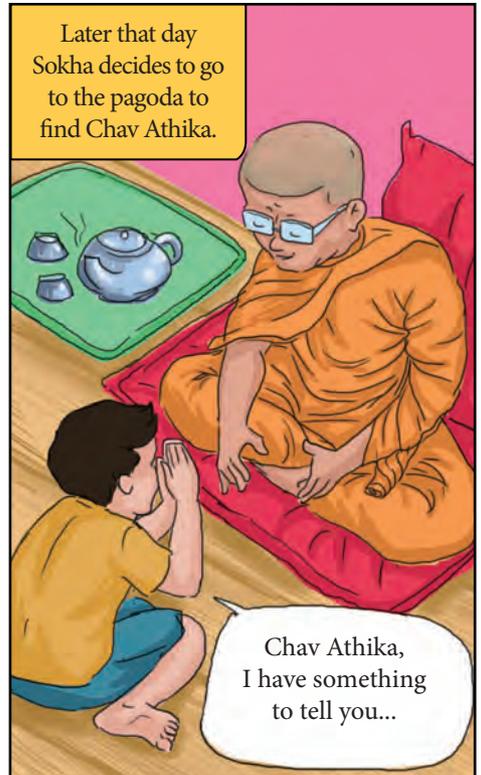
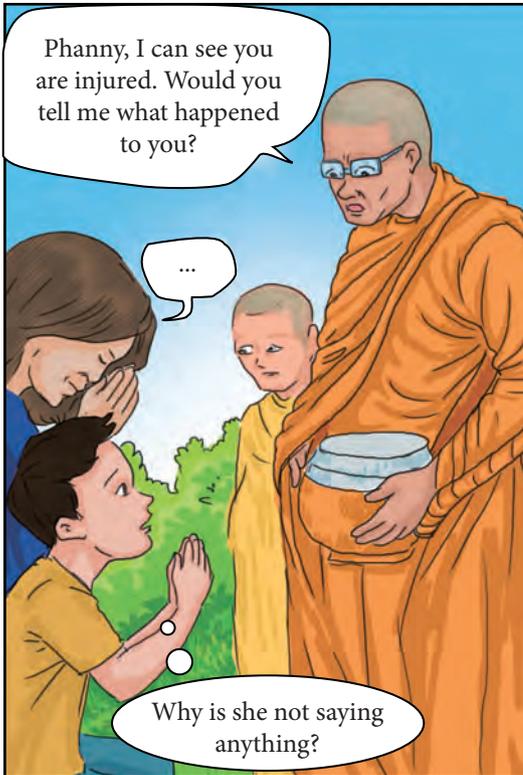
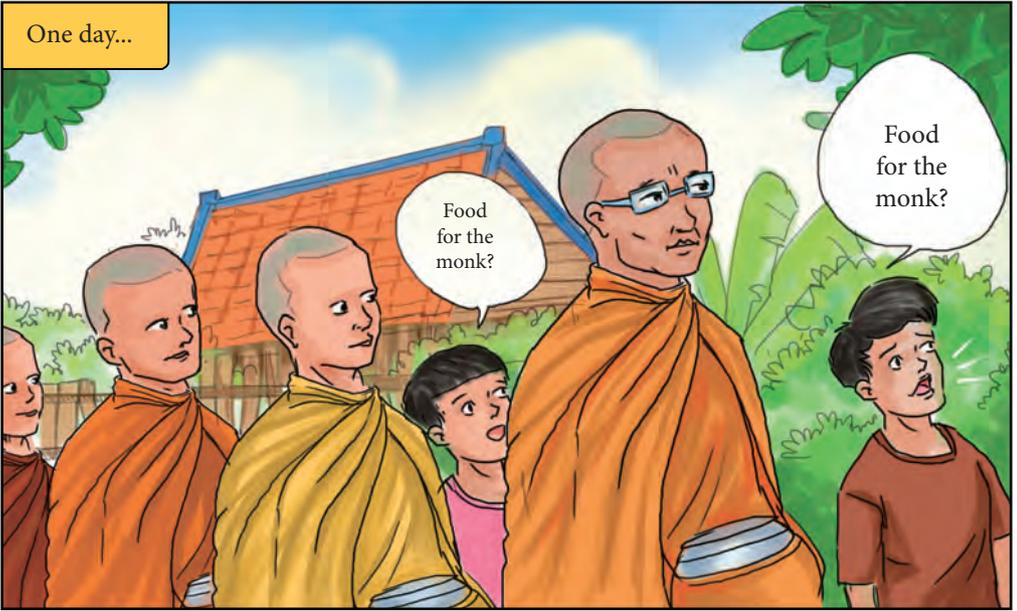
1- Experience physical violence – hitting, smacking, or beating with an object – by his parents. They often hit him as a way to discipline him. We call this corporal punishment. Sokha also experience emotional violence – blaming, cursing – as well as neglect. Beyond experiencing violence himself, he is exposed to violence in his home, also called domestic violence. Other types of violence include economic violence, sexual violence and sexual and labour exploitation.

2- He feels sad, hopeless, guilty and embarrassed – he feels frustrated and angry. He cannot sleep at night and has nightmares. He cannot concentrate in school and eventually decides to stop altogether.

3- That violence is never the answer, that he is loved, supported and protected by his family at all times.

4- It is not acceptable, law prohibited to commit any domestic violence. Sokha's father must stop hitting his wife.

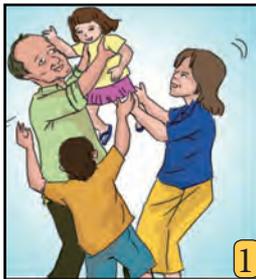
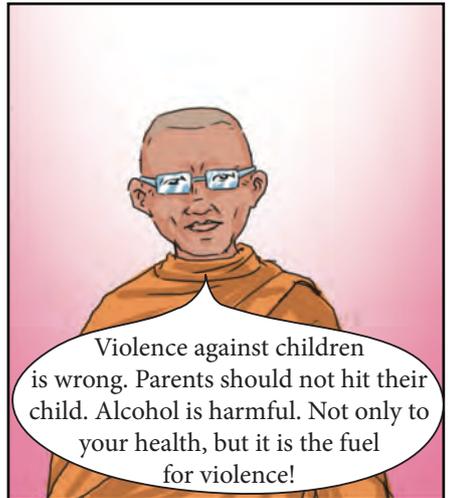
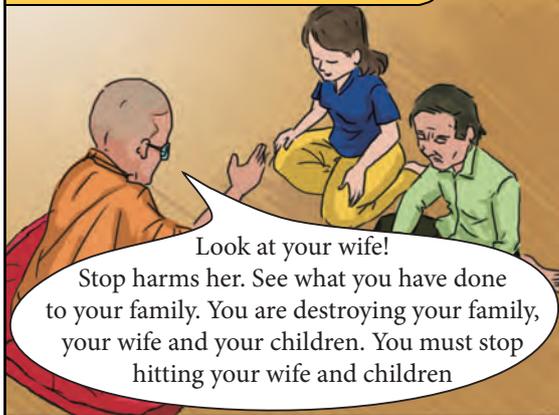
One day...



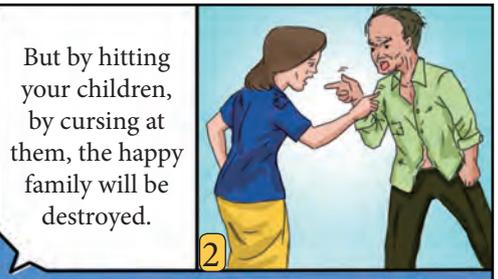
Sokha in the pagoda discusses with Chav Athika about the situation in his family.



Chav Athika visits his house the next day and talks with Sokha's parents.



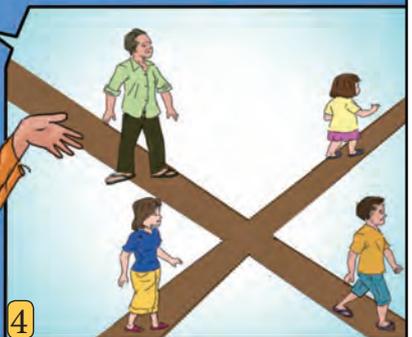
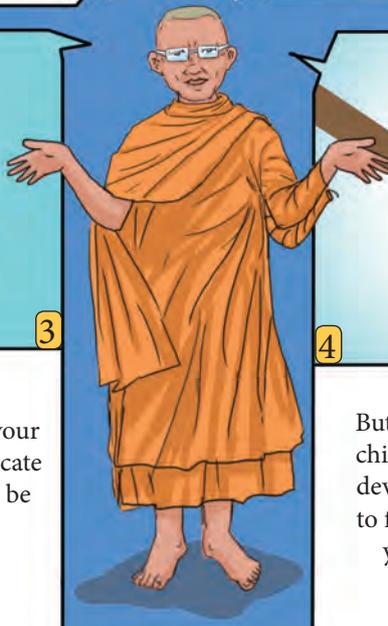
This is what a happy family looks like.



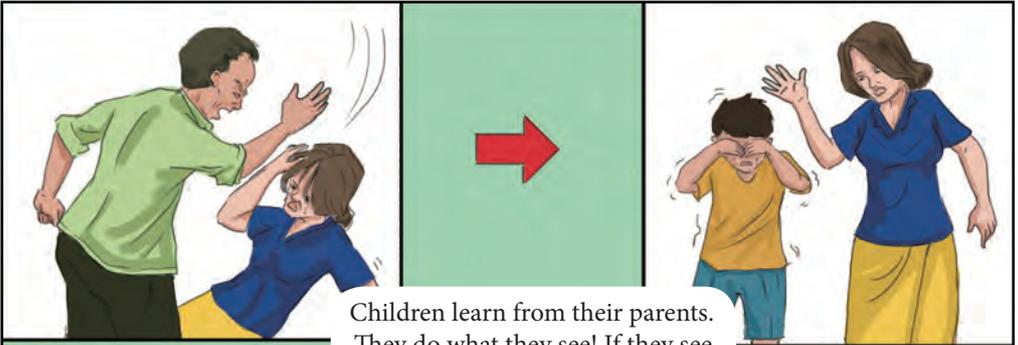
But by hitting your children, by cursing at them, the happy family will be destroyed.



You may believe hitting your children is needed to educate them. To avoid they will be spoiled.



But this is not true! Hitting your children, even mild, harms their development. They will grow up to fear you and will not to trust you. The relation with your child will be destroyed.



Children learn from their parents. They do what they see! If they see their parents using violence to their children and to each other...



...they learn that violence is normal. They will use violence towards others. As Sokha told me he used to hit his sister.



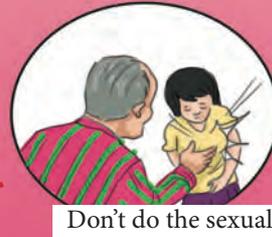
And as Sophy already learnt to kick the dog when she is angry. If you want your children to grown up to be peaceful people, you need to behave in a peaceful way yourself.



Chav Athika continues to visit Sokha's family and advise the parents how to improve their family situation



Think about the 5 Buddhist precepts!



Chav Athika reminded Sokha's parents again and again about the following five wise messages.

Be aware of your role as parents. Your children will follow by your example. Be a good person, if you want your children to be good persons.

Beating does not help children, it just makes them afraid and emotionally hurt. They will learn to fear their parents.

Beating doesn't teach children the difference between right and wrong.

Beating and blaming damages your relationship with your child. They will learn not to trust you.

Beating may teach children to obey you, but not to respect you. They will not understand why what they did was wrong.

Reflection Box 2

1. Is it ok to use forms of violence to discipline children? Why could it be wrong?

2. What does violence teach children?

3. What does the term “alcohol is the fuel of violence” mean?

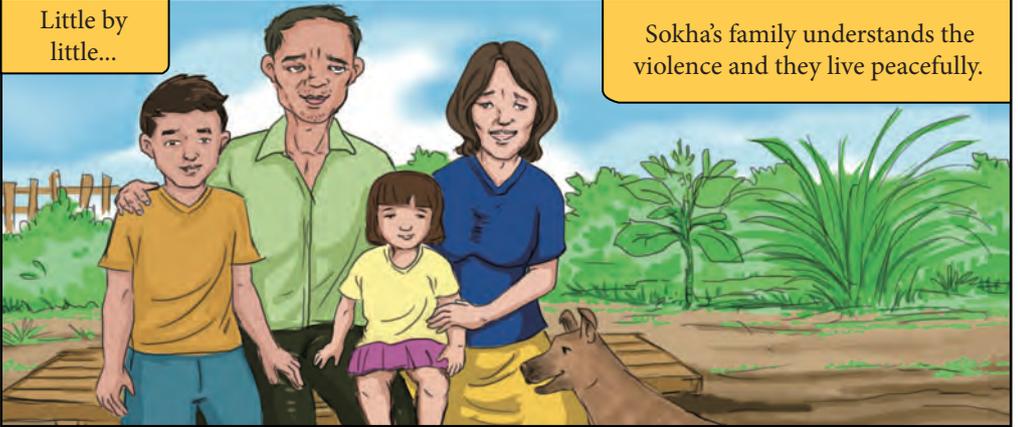
1 - Corporal punishment is wrong because: • It makes children feel lonely, sad and abandoned. It teaches them to fear. It stops them from learning. • Corporal punishment is harmful to the development of children and can slow down their brain development. • Hitting children harms the relationship between parents and their children • It easily escalates into ever more harmful and hurtful punishment.

2 - Children copy the behaviour of their parents - they do as they see! Children who see their parents use violence, learn that using violence is normal and acceptable. They learn that it is the correct way to express their emotions. When they grow up they are more likely to use violence or accept violence committed against them. It also teaches children that the people they depend on most to protect them—their parents—will hurt them. That they should fear their parents and that their homes are not safe. It teaches children that love and violence are linked.

3 - Alcohol reduces your ability and can make you act in ways you would never normally act. It can increase your physical aggression towards others. Small arguments can suddenly result in serious fights. If someone is drunk they lose their ability to think clearly and simply stop to see the consequences of their actions. Alcohol tears families apart.

Little by little...

Sokha's family understands the violence and they live peacefully.



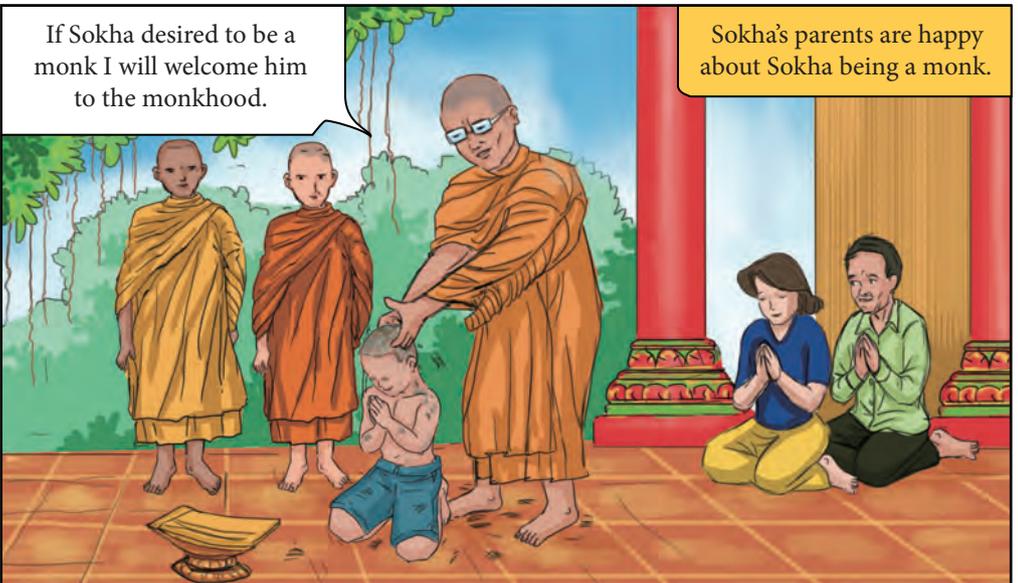
Father, I have been thinking, I decided I want to become a monk!

My son! I respect your decision. I am proud of you. I will talk to Chav Athika.



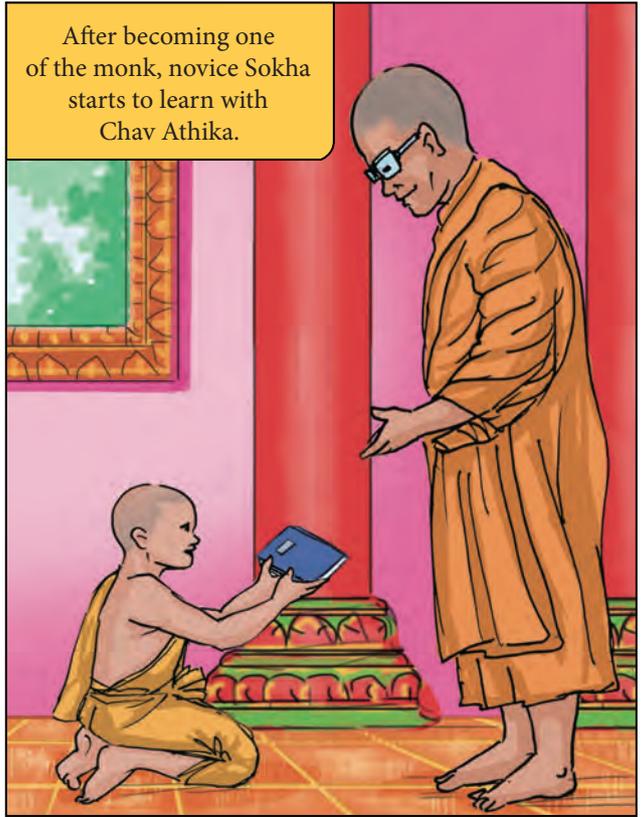
If Sokha desired to be a monk I will welcome him to the monkhood.

Sokha's parents are happy about Sokha being a monk.





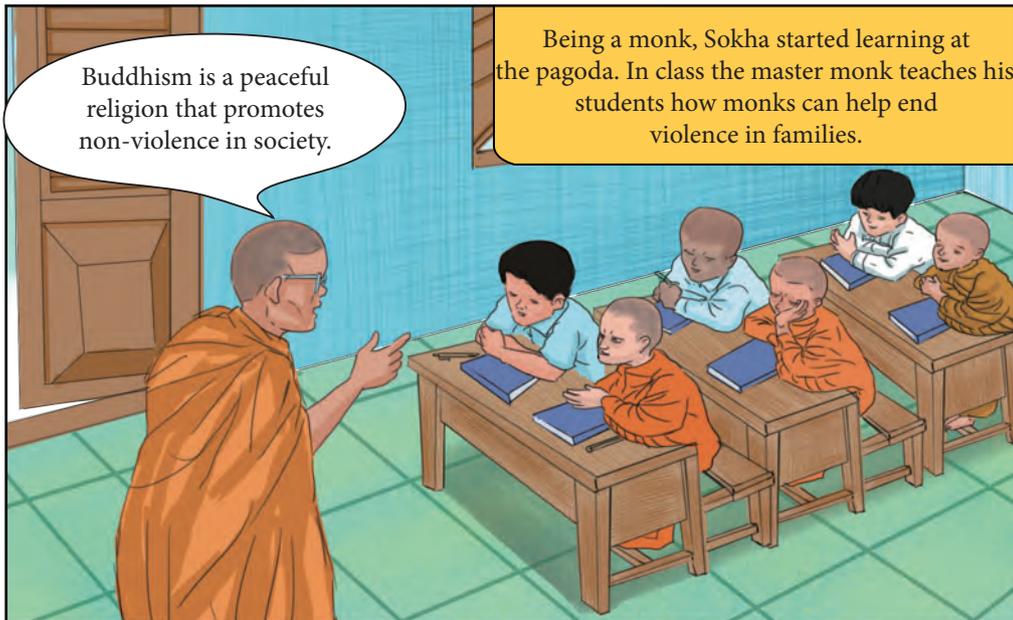
After becoming one of the monk, novice Sokha starts to learn with Chav Athika.



Novice Sokha is working hard alone in pagoda.

Buddhism is a peaceful religion that promotes non-violence in society.

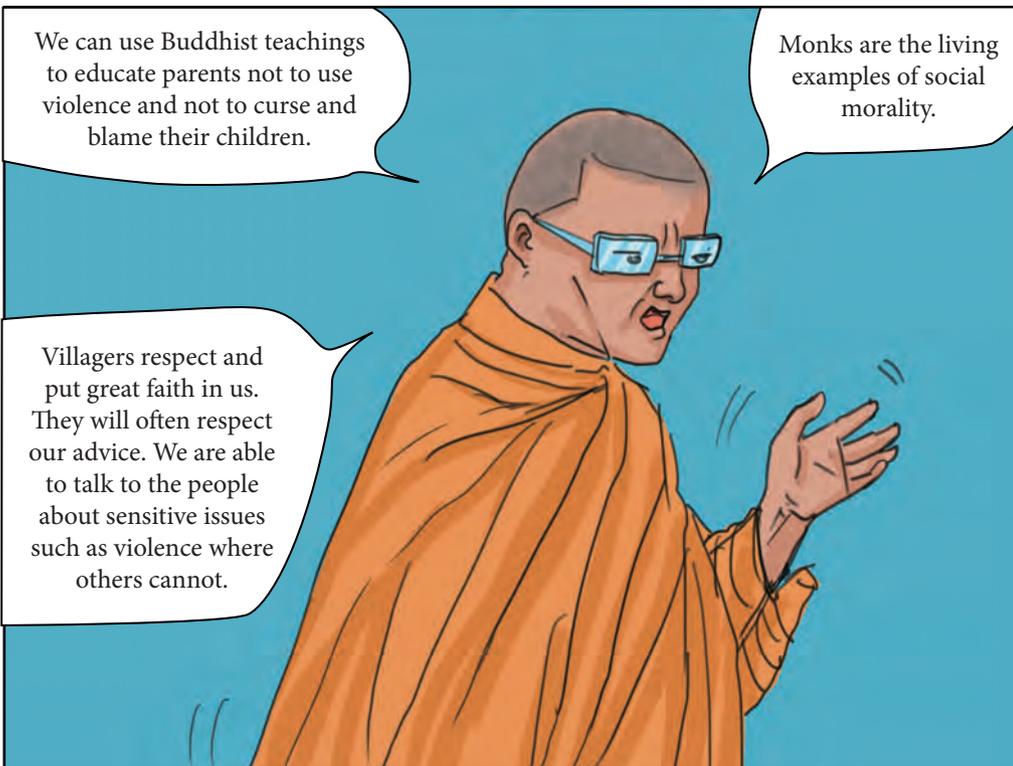
Being a monk, Sokha started learning at the pagoda. In class the master monk teaches his students how monks can help end violence in families.



We can use Buddhist teachings to educate parents not to use violence and not to curse and blame their children.

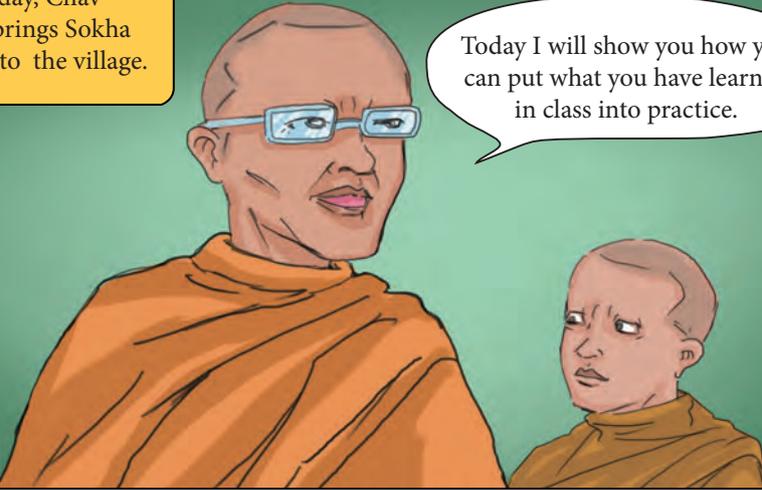
Monks are the living examples of social morality.

Villagers respect and put great faith in us. They will often respect our advice. We are able to talk to the people about sensitive issues such as violence where others cannot.



One day, Chav Athika brings Sokha with him to the village.

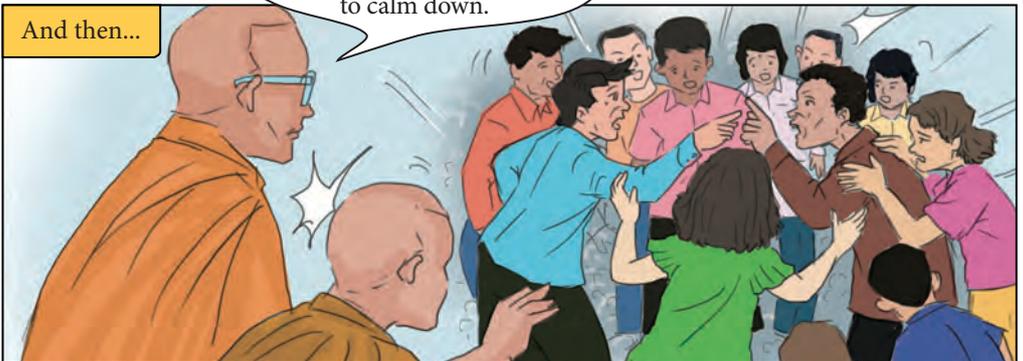
Today I will show you how you can put what you have learned in class into practice.



Sokha! As monks it is our role to advocate for the rights of children. We inform families about the negative consequences of violence. We teach the five Buddhist precepts. We advice parents to practice good virtue to their children. Just as I did with your family. This is how we create a peaceful society.

Look at them!
Unable to control their anger.
We must talk to them
to calm down.

And then...



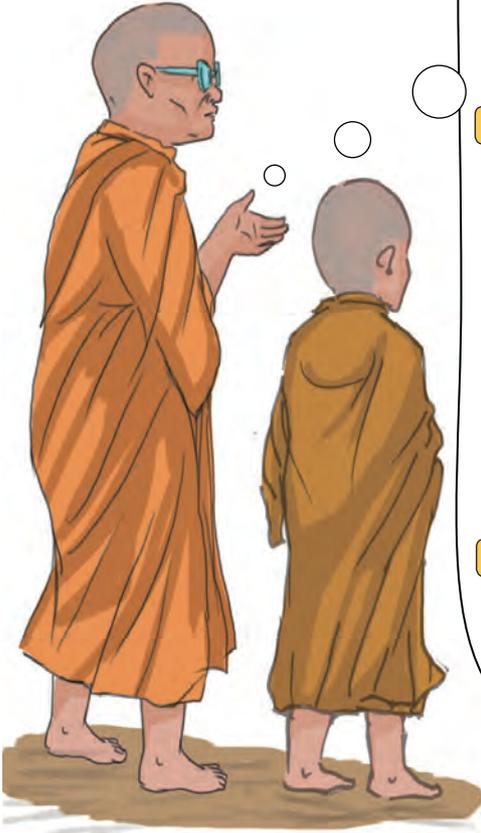
Chav Athika goes in and talk to them. They respect the monk and stop fithing.



Sokha, when we are angry it is important to think carefully. Or our anger will result in violence.

But what can we do to control our anger?

Let me give you some examples.

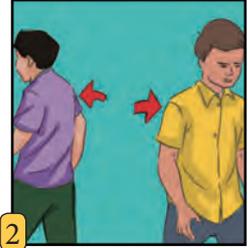


1



You can take a deep breath and count to ten...

2



You can simply walk away from the situation and wait until you feel calm again...

3



Exercising or playing sports helps because we release stress...

4

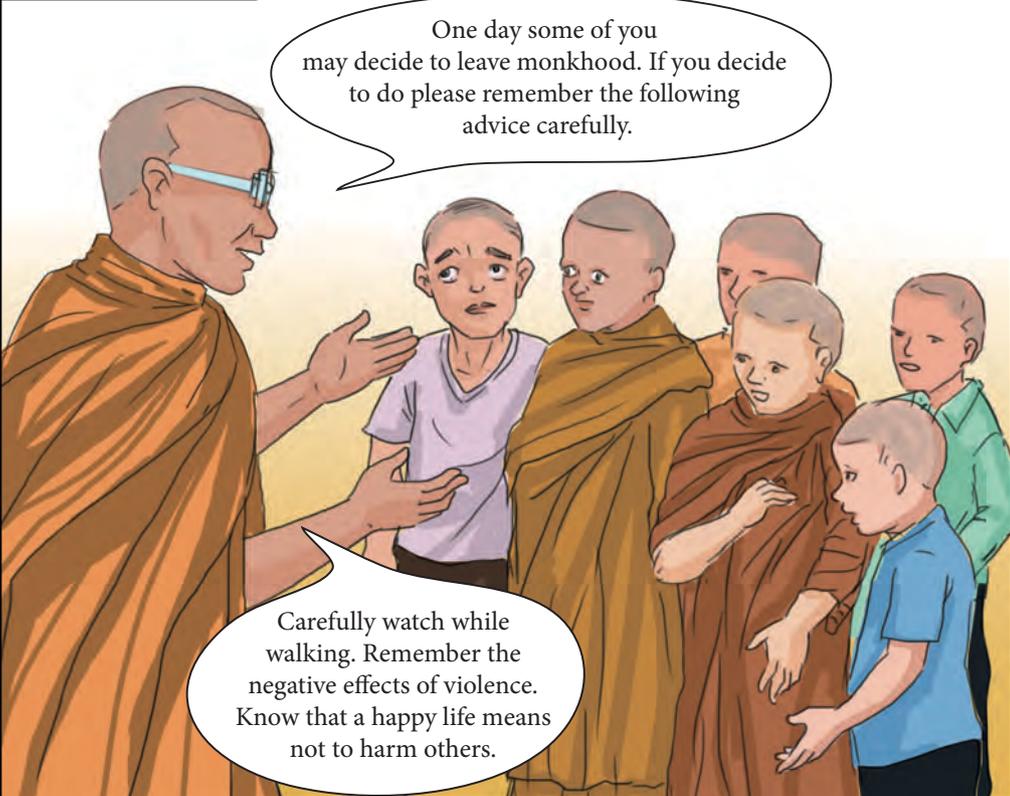


... Or we can teach people how to meditate. It will help them feel peaceful.

You know Sokha, with some support, most cases end well. Like your family. But some families will not change. In serious cases of violence, such as rape, or when the family does not change, it is important to report the situation to the police or the local authorities.



Back in the class...



One day some of you may decide to leave monkhood. If you decide to do please remember the following advice carefully.

Carefully watch while walking. Remember the negative effects of violence. Know that a happy life means not to harm others.

After monkhood, don't drink! After monkhood, don't use violence! It destroys the humanity and Buddhism.

Be a role model to others. Advice other to have good morality. Being a role model means showing respect to others. It means maintaining violence-free relations.

Reflection Box 3

1. How Buddhism can help prevent and end violence?

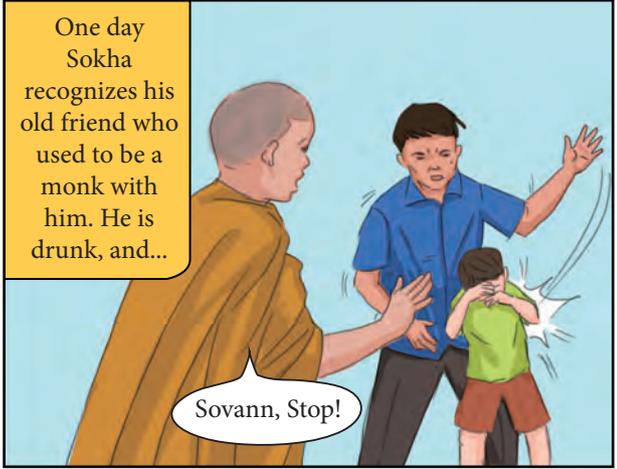
2. Why are Buddhist monks unique when it comes to ending violence against children?

1. Buddhism is a peaceful religion that promotes nonviolence in society and is concerned with the welfare of all beings.
 - The Dharma teaches people how to become generous, compassionate and responsible and how to live together peacefully.
2. Monks are Cambodia's spiritual leaders and symbolize social morality.
 - Monks are Cambodia's spiritual leaders and symbolize social morality.
 - Communities and families seek advice and guidance from Monks.
 - Monks are respected and regarded wise – people will listen to Monks in a way that they will not listen to anyone else – this allows Monks to talk to people about sensitive issues.

Ten years later Sokha still lives at the pagoda. He teaches families and spread the Dharma in the surrounding villages nearly every day.



One day Sokha recognizes his old friend who used to be a monk with him. He is drunk, and...



Look at you! What are you doing? Don't you remember the words of Chav Athika?

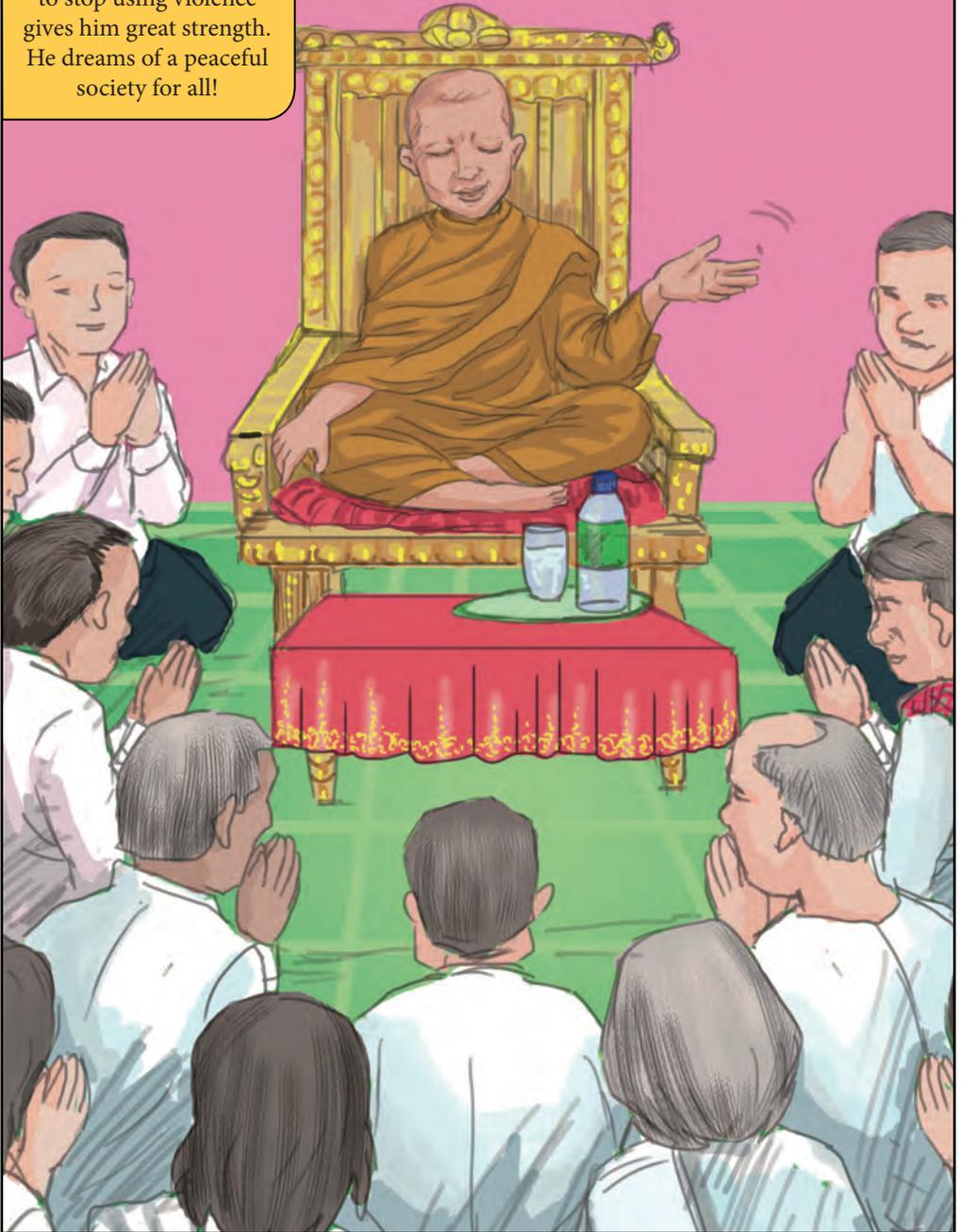


My dear son, my dear wife... I was out of control. I deeply apologize. It will never happen again.



Sovann's family lives happily again.

Sokha is grateful to be a monk. Teaching families to stop using violence gives him great strength. He dreams of a peaceful society for all!



REVIEWING COMMITTEE

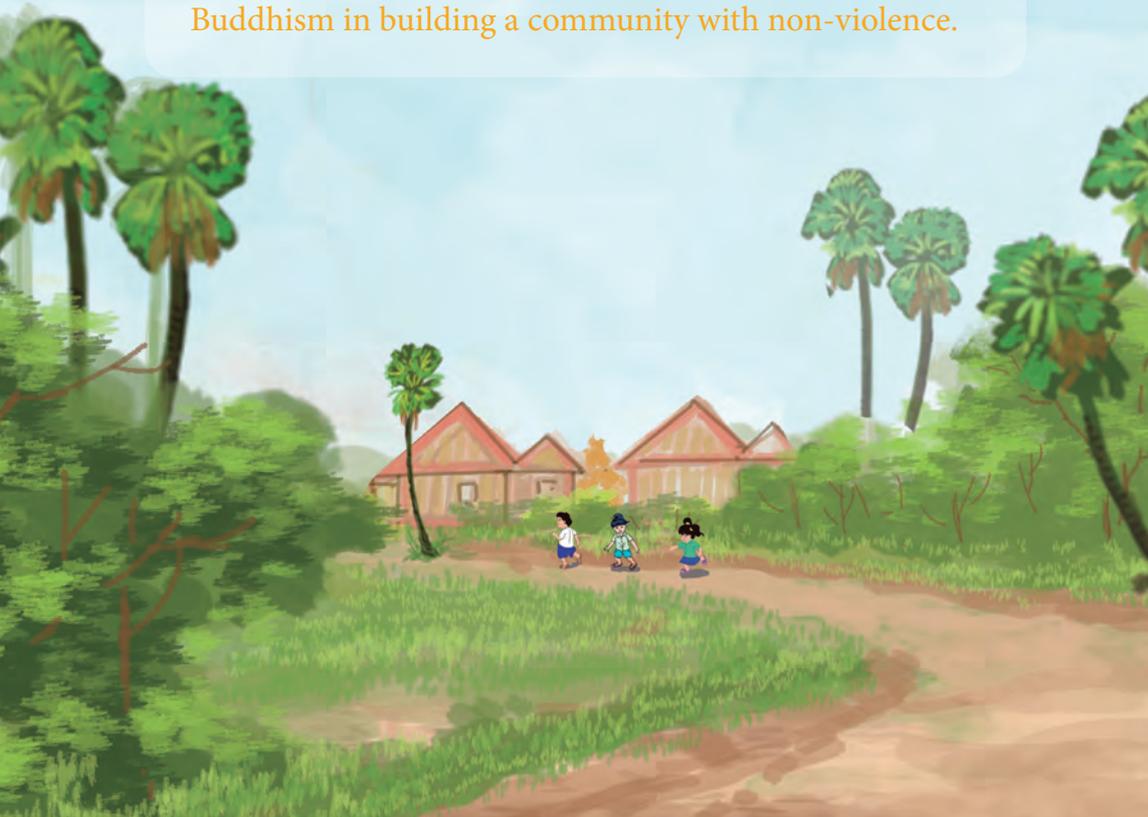
1. H.E Dr. **Min Khin**, Minister of Cults and Religion
2. H.E Dr. **Seng Somony**
3. Ven. **Chuon Savoeun**
4. Ven. **Vong Aneta**
5. Ven. **Sok Bunthoeun**
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9. Ms. **Hor Phallin**
10. Mr. **Srey Sovanmony**
11. Ms. **Chan Kanha**

Instruction: “Novice Sokha” is for monks to carry with them when they are in the community. It has been printed in small size to carry in bag. It is also for use in National Buddhist Education Program:

1. Monks keep copies of Novice Sokha in bag.
2. Monks read Novice Sokha to understand about violence and child protection.
3. Monks teach families about violence prevention using Novice Sokha.
4. This book also can be used to teach students of the Buddhist Education Program.

Sokha lives with his parents and he suffers from domestic violence every day. As he cannot longer endure with the situation, he asks Chav Athika for help. Later on, his family returns to live in happiness and Sokha decides to become a monk. Working by hard, Novice Sokha taught a lot of families to avoid the violence in society.

This story shows the duty of pagoda and the monks who change the children's lives and make their families to live in happiness. It also shows about the contribution of Buddhism in building a community with non-violence.



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