National Library of Cambodia (Adapted from Report to VALEASE by Pascal Bourdeaux)

Historical marks on Libraries in Cambodia:

National Library of Cambodia:
The forerunner of the NLC, the “bibliothèque centrale du Cambodge” (Central Library of Cambodia) was created in December 1924 under the initiative of the Résidence Supérieure and in accordance with the decrees French colonial Regime. When Cambodia begins to regain independence in 1951, this Library officially becomes the National Library of Cambodia. It then reports having 20,000 books. According to negotiations between the former Colonial power and the different Associated States of Indochina, a part of the common archives from the Central Library of Indochina in Hanoi should have came back to Lao and Cambodia libraries, but this agreement was not enacted. The first collections in Khmer were dated from the Sangkum period. In 1975, the library was transformed in a pigsty and had a kitchen that used books, chairs and bookcases as combustibles. In 1980, only the reading room reopened, with few activities during the Vietnamese occupation. In 1988, a first international aid program begun to microfilm some material (Cornell University). In 1995, the manuscripts and the ancient collections of the Bibliothèque Centrale du Cambodge have been restored by a French team. The Cambodiana Section keeps 20,000 books, some of which came from the library of the Résidence Supérieure du Cambodge. In 2004, the Valéase project began a regional project on digitalization of French materials in the former Indochinese colonies. In August 2006, the CKS-NLC joint-venture project launch the first stage of the digitalization of the “Cambodian” collection.

Library of the Buddhist Institute:
The Buddhist Institute was created in 1930 from the collection of the Royal Library which was formerly founded in 1921 from 2 different collections; Oudong Pagoda’s Collection and a private collection of the head officer of the Mahanikay order who died in 1913. The collections were completed regularly. In 1975, there were around 40,000 books and manuscripts, but most of them have been lost. The Library just reopened in 1996.

Library of the National Museum:
Collection of several thousand books (essentially Archeology and Buddhism).

Hun Sen Library:
University Library opened in 1997; reserved collection on Cambodia (1700 books) in French, English, Khmer; some official documents from the Sangkum period.

Provincial Libraries:
No information (Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampot?)

Main foreign resources centers in Khmer language:
- British Library (London)
- Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (London)
- National Library of Australia
- Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris), in particular : Inventaire des livres imprimés Khmer et Thai du fonds Georges Coedès, catalogue du fonds khmer
- Ancient library of the Cedoreck (Paris) - Library of INALCO (Paris)
- Old National Library of Democratic Republic of Germany (Berlin)
- Library of Cornell University (Unites States)
- Khmer Studies Institute (Connecticut)
- Cambodian Foundation (Texas)