

I Like Reading Books

Next to our house, in the west, lived one of our cousins. He had two children younger than me. He had just built a new house and changed his job. For many years, he had been a technician, assembling or repairing bicycles and selling their spare parts. As bicycle businesses declined because many people now used more and more motorbikes, he decided to close his bike shop and open a bookstore, which was the second in the village. In the bookstore, he sold stationery, school textbooks, Buddhist textbooks, and some novels. From time to time, we could find some magazines, but no updated newspapers. More and more books were accumulating week after week. Since the bookstore opened, I had spent most of my spare time helping my cousin and his wife, putting books in order by title, subject, or author, and eventually selling them to customers. I also took advantage of the chance to read almost every Khmer book available in the store. I read not only educational or informative books but also novels written by well-known authors and young writers. I read all kinds

of books, from sex education and cartoons and comics to the most reliable ones. I was so absorbed in reading that I spent more and more time in the bookstore than at home. Most of the time, my mother had to shout from the veranda to call me for lunch or dinner, so I was always late for the family gathering. But this reading behavior would help me significantly in my further studies.