

Aged Monk Wonders: Will Peace Ever Come?

PHNOM PENH — (AP) — A 74 year old Buddhist monk sat cross-legged in a temple here wondering whether peace will come before he dies so he can once again see his beloved birthplace, now in enemy hands.

The venerable Mom Sock's native village and temple are only a sampan

ride across the Mekong River from Phnom Penh's presidential palace. But he said the three miles seemed very long Thursday when he fled the invading Khmer Liberation Front forces and American bombs.

In the last three days, Mom Sock and several thousand other villagers have

left their homes on the eastern shore of the Mekong and ferried across to Phnom Penh, becoming the newest refugees in a city already overcrowded with the displaced and homeless.

The baldish monk said he left his temple at Prek Luong village "because my temple was very close to the

enemy, about one kilometer away.

"The day before I moved to Phnom Penh, four Khmer Liberation Front men came to my temple and went inside for a moment. I didn't want to talk to them but I made sure who they were. They left without any trouble," he said.