

Cambodia independence day

Celebrating growth, relations with Japan

Hor Monirath
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF
CAMBODIA

On Nov. 9, the Kingdom of Cambodia celebrates the 57th anniversary of its independence while Cambodia and Japan are celebrating the 55th Anniversary of the Treaty of Amity, which was signed on Dec. 9, 1955.



On this auspicious occasion, I have the great honor to convey the warmest greetings of His Majesty Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, king of Cambodia; Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, prime minister of Cambodia; and the people of Cambodia, to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, to H.E. Prime Minister Naoto Kan and to the great people of Japan.

Taking this opportunity, I am also very pleased to extend my warm congratulations to the readers of The Japan Times and top management of the renowned newspaper for publishing a special supplement for Cambodia Independence Day.

Cambodia, under the wise leadership of His Majesty King-Father Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk gained independence in 1953 from nearly a century of French rule. Cambodia

had enjoyed peace and stability and built up the country on the basis of internationally recognized independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and adherence to the principle of neutrality.

Unfortunately, the Cold War did not exclude Southeast Asia but spread throughout the entire region. The 1970 coup d'etat of a pro-American regime of Gen. Lon Nol pushed Cambodia into a deep hole of internal conflict that lasted nearly three decades. The atrocities of civil war damaged almost the entire economic and social infrastructures, including human resources of the country as millions of Cambodians died, particularly during the genocidal regime of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979.

Since the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, Cambodia was isolated from international community and prevented from receiving the funding of international financial institutions. At least until the conclusion of the Paris Peace Accord in 1991, the Western bloc continued their silence on the Khmer Rouge genocide and recognized them as the sole legitimate government of the country at the United Nations.

Looking to prosperity

The first-ever general election monitored by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1993 did

not achieve real peace in Cambodia due to the resistance of the Khmer Rouge faction, which boycotted the election process and resumed guerrilla warfare in the northern and western parts of the country. Thanks to the "win-win" policy of national reconciliation of the Royal Government of Cambodia initiated by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, the long civil war was completely ended in 1998 by the Khmer themselves with the elimination of all political and military organizations of the Khmer Rouge.

With the return of full peace and stability under the right leadership of Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Cambodia can be considered a successful post-conflict country. The Royal Government has embarked on wide-ranging reforms focusing on macroeconomic and public financial management, financial sector reforms, and rehabilitation and reconstruction of physical infrastructures. Other structural reforms are being undertaken, including administrative, military, judicial and fiscal reforms that would allow Cambodian people to live in modern, civilized society. These reforms are necessary, a life-or-death matter, so that Cambodian society can face the future confidently and achieve prosperity.

Since then, the Cambodian economy has undergone a rap-

id transformation. With the support of development partners, donor countries and the private sector, Cambodia has made giant strides in development, resulting in the country's gross domestic product (GDP) increasing fourfold from \$2.4 billion in 1993 to \$10.3 billion in 2008 while GDP per capita income has more than tripled from \$229 in 1993 to \$778 in 2009 and is projected as \$842 this year. It has been noted that during the same period, the poverty rate was reduced from around 50 percent in 1993 to approximately 27.3 percent in 2010 and expected to reach the country's Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty to 19.5 percent by 2015.

Like other Asian economies, the government has successfully guided the economy through the most difficult period of the global crisis. The government has acted swiftly to counter the social impact of falling incomes and employment from declining garment exports, tourism and construction pursuant to the crisis. Cambodia has managed to maintain the stability of the financial sector as well as macroeconomic and social stability, especially the normalcy of people's livelihoods. GDP experienced a positive growth in 2009, though small, as the agriculture and services sectors maintained robust growth.

While the global recovery remains fragile, the Cambodian economy is estimated to reach around 5 percent in 2010 and 6.8 percent in 2011. The prediction for the kingdom's GDP growth would mainly result from a rebound in garment exports, an increase in tourism and the service sector, and an expansion in the agricultural field. It is also highlighted that the recent adoption of anticorruption laws has contributed to improving international competitiveness and reducing business costs. Better gains in tax collection offered the best hope to meet the dual objectives of securing fis-

cal sustainability and mobilizing resources for development and public investment.

It has been encouraging to note that according to a recent study made by the Overseas Development Institute and the U.N. millennium campaigns, Cambodia has been placed among 20 countries making the most absolute progress on MDGs. Cambodia was found to be on track to achieve targets related to poverty reduction, education, gender equity, nutrition and water access. It was also expected to reach 50 percent of targets related to maternal health and child mortality. In recognizing the outstanding achievements in these efforts, the MDG Award Committee in New York presented the "MDG Award 2010" to Cambodia in September this year. These achievements reflected the Royal Government's strong endeavor and commitment to narrow the country's economic disparity and bring about people's well-being and prosperity for future generations.

Ties with Japan

The Cambodia-Japan diplomatic relation was officially established on Jan. 9, 1953, ahead of Cambodia's formal declaration of independence from French.

Given historical fact, contact between the people of Cambodia and Japan did not merely begin 57 years ago but may go as far back as the 17th century, when a venturing group of Sakai natives arrived at the Khmer Empire, as Cambodia was then called, and visited the magnificent monument of Angkor Wat. To mark their impressive and memorable journey to the Khmer Kingdom, these people inscribed the name of Sakai City, where they came from, on the stone pillars of Angkor Wat. It is also believed that the Japanese for the pumpkin, "kabocha," referred to its origin, as it was brought from Cambodia into Japan.



Royals: His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni is welcomed by Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko on May 17 during his state visit to Japan. ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA

Cambodia announced in 1954 that it renounced the right of the state to ask for compensation for damages caused by the presence of the Imperial Japanese Army in Cambodia during World War II. During the visit to Japan of the then Prince Norodom Sihanouk in December 1955, the House of Representatives of Japan passed a resolution of thankfulness for Cambodia's renouncement of compensation. In the spirit of this event, the Japan-Cambodia Treaty of Amity was signed on Dec. 9 that year by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the then prime minister of Cambodia, and Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu of the government of the then Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama. Our relationship has developed and strengthened steadily on the basis of mutual respect, understanding, conviction and cooperation.

As we are commemorating the 55th Anniversary of the Treaty of Amity this year, I am very pleased to note that following the invitation of the government of Japan, Sam-

dech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, the king of Cambodia, successfully paid a State Visit to Japan from May 16 to 20, aiming to further strengthen the friendly relations between Japan and Cambodia. The occasion of the State Visit of His Majesty the king reflected the highest esteem accorded to the diplomatic relations between both countries.

It is imperative to note that Japan has played an essential role in contributing to bring peace, reconstruction and socioeconomic progress to Cambodia. Japan joined the U.N.-led mission in supervising the first-ever general election in Cambodia in 1993, which led to the restoration of the constitutional monarchy and multiparty democratic regime. More significantly, Japan registered top among the biggest foreign aid donors to Cambodia over the last 15 years. Japan's assistance, which Cambodia badly needs, came in various forms, including financial assistance, technical support and capacity-

building that aims to help rehabilitate and rebuild the country's physical infrastructure and human resource development.

In June this year, the government of Japan announced grant aid worth \$131 million for the construction of Neak Loeung Bridge across the Mekong River, which the Royal Government and people of Cambodia are very much grateful to the people and the government of Japan. The construction of the Neak Loeung Bridge will not only benefit Cambodia but also the Mekong region countries as it links the highway from Vietnam to Thailand that will help boost regional trade and tourism as well as generate more economic activities in the Southern Economic Corridor.

Given the country's considerable achievements over the past 15 years, the Royal Government has often cited in public that Japan's assistance and active involvement in the construction and development



World wonder: The Angkor Wat temple complex, built in the 12th century, has been the national pride of Cambodia and is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.



Congratulations

to

His Majesty King-Father NORODOM SIHANOUK

on his 88th Birthday,

His Majesty King NORODOM SIHAMONI

and to the People of

the Kingdom of Cambodia

in Commemoration of

their 57th Independence Day on November 9

The Honorary Consulate of the Kingdom of Cambodia in Fukuoka is honored to have developed the following activities:

- ❖ Visa issuance
- ❖ Promotion of Japanese tourism according to the Agreement between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Honorary Consulate of Cambodia in Fukuoka
- ❖ Organizing cultural events in Fukuoka to showcase Cambodian arts and culture
- ❖ Introduction of Cambodia to the young people in the Kyushu and Okinawa regions to promote their interest in building bridges between Japan and Cambodia



Haruhisa Handa
Honorary Consul of
the Kingdom of Cambodia in Fukuoka,
Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia
with the rank of Minister



Honorary Consulate of the Kingdom of Cambodia in Fukuoka

Nishinippon Shimibun Building 15th Floor
1-4-1 Tenjin, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka-shi, Fukuoka 810-0001

Tel: 092-717-1255 Fax: 092-717-1021
HP: <http://www.fukuoka-cambodia.jp/>



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Key meeting: Then Prince Norodom Sihanouk meets then Emperor Hirohito (posthumously known as Emperor Showa), then Empress Nagako and then Crown Prince Akihito during his visit to Japan in December 1955. ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA

Cambodia proud of friendly relations with Japan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

of Cambodia have significantly contributed to the Kingdom's progress and remarkable economic growth as we witness today.

Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the Royal Government and people of Cambodia, I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation and deep gratitude to the government and great people of Japan for the continued large assistance extended to Cambodia since 1993 through its grant aids and Official Development Assistance programs as well as active engagement from Japanese non-government organizations.

In terms of the economic and trade relations, the governments of the two countries signed the Agreement for the Liberalization, Promotion and Protection of Investment in June 2007. The agreement aims to promote investment and strengthen economic relation between our two countries.

Cambodia has huge potential for foreign direct investment (FDI) in areas of agriculture, agro-industry, infrastructure, export-oriented industries, oil and gas, mineral resources, and tourism. Over the last 15 years, the Royal Government of Cambodia has put a strong emphasis on a policy of attracting FDI aiming to support the reconstruction and boost the development of the country.

In an attempt to attract potential investment from Japan, the Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC), which is an investment promotion agency to promote economic potentials and investment opportunities of the country, set up a Japanese desk within the agency with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Early this year, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) also launched its representative office in Phnom Penh, aiming to ensure dissemination of comprehensive information for interested Japanese investors.

It has been noted that Cambodia's total FDI was \$515 million in 2009 and on current trends would increase by 20 percent for this year. Japa-

nese investment in Cambodia began to increase, despite ranking relatively low at 12th among the largest international investors in Cambodia. According to data of the CDC for 2009, registered capital investment from Japan was \$24.65 million, representing 0.47 percent of Cambodia's total registered capital. Currently, a number of leading companies from Japan have positioned themselves in Cambodia and more business delegations have extended their visits to the country. I, therefore, strongly recommend and welcome more potential Japanese investors to the Kingdom and urge them to look to this country as a major platform for export to other countries since Cambodia is a party to a number of regional free trade agreements, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) FTA, ASEAN-China FTA, ASEAN-Korea FTA, ASEAN-Japan FTA, etc.

In terms of foreign tourist arrivals, despite the global financial and economic crisis, Cambodia attracted about 2.18 million visitors in 2009, of which more than 146,000 came from Japan, ranking fourth among foreign tourists to Cambodia. According to the Ministry of Tourism, the number of tourists increased 13 percent during the first seven months of 2010 thanks to the global economic recovery and in addition to the country's great potential of cultural assets including, among others, the famous Angkor and Preah Vihear temples as UNESCO World Heritage sites. In this respect, I would like to welcome Japanese people to visit Cambodia, the Kingdom of Wonder, in the spirit of friendship as this year our two countries are commemorating the 55th Anniversary of the Treaty of Amity.

Cambodia, which joined ASEAN in 1999 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004, has benefited remarkably from Japan's active engagement in various regional and subregional cooperation frameworks, such as the ASEAN-Japan Dialogue Partnership, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia

Summit (EAS), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), the Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation (GMS), the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle, and the newly established Japan-Mekong Cooperation.

It has often been pointed out that the ASEAN Community may not be realized by 2015 if economic disparity remains wider among the old and new member countries. In this respect, the Japanese government initiated the Japan-Mekong Region Partnership Program, announced in 2007, aiming to boost development in the Mekong region and help accelerate ASEAN's integration by the set date. Last year, the First Japan-Mekong Summit was convened in November in Tokyo, where the leaders demonstrated their strong conviction and political commitment to further develop, expand and strengthen partnership and cooperation between Mekong countries and Japan for the sake of peace,

Treaty of Amity between Japan and Cambodia

Signed in Tokyo, Dec. 9, 1955; entered into force, Aug. 21, 1956

Japan and the Kingdom of Cambodia, desirous of strengthening their amicable relations on an advantageous basis, have decided to conclude a Treaty of Amity and for that purpose have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries,

The Government of Japan:
His Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mamoru Shigemitsu

The Royal Government of Cambodia:
His Royal Highness Minister of Foreign Affairs
Samdech Preah Upayuvareach Norodom Sihanouk
Who, having communicated to each other their full powers found to be in due form, have agreed upon the following provisions:

Article I

Japan and the Kingdom of Cambodia shall maintain themselves a constant peace and perpetual amity.

Article II

Each High Contracting Party shall respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the other.

They shall regulate every difference that may arise between both Parties through peaceful means.

Article III

Diplomatic and consular representatives of each High Contracting Party shall enjoy, within the territories of one another, on the basis of reciprocity, every privileges and immunities that are accorded to diplomatic and consular representatives of the most favored nation.

Article IV

Both High Contracting Parties shall undertake negotiations in order to conclude agreements aimed at enhancing economic, financial, technical and cultural cooperation.

They shall endeavor to facilitate exchanges of knowledge and technical experiences in the fields of science and industry.

Article V

Each High Contracting Party shall endeavor to accord every possible facilitation to nationals of the other who desire to immigrate to its territories in cases where it deems that this immigration conforms with common interests.

Article VI

The present Treaty shall be ratified in conformity with constitutional procedures of each High Contracting Party. It shall enter into force one month after the date of exchange of the instruments of ratification, which shall take place in Phnom Penh. The Treaty shall remain in force until it is terminated by either High Contracting Party by giving one year's notice.

In Witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty and have affixed thereunto their seals.

Done in duplicate at Tokyo this ninth day of December 1955 in Japanese, Cambodian and French. In case of any divergence of interpretation, the French text shall prevail.

For Japan, Mamoru Shigemitsu
For Cambodia, N. Sihanouk

This is an unofficial translation by the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Japan.

development and prosperity in the Mekong region, underlying Tokyo Declaration and Plan of Action 63 as guidelines for a successful establishment of the New Partnership for Common Flourishing Future between Japan and the Mekong region countries. At the Second Japan-Mekong Summit Meeting in Vietnam in October this year, the leaders reaffirmed their determination to strengthen the Mekong-Japan cooperation and welcomed A Decade toward the Green Mekong initiative and adopted its Action Plan.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to The Japan Times for giving me this excellent opportunity to address its many readers.



Infrastructure: The longest bridge across the Mekong River will be completed in 2015 with Japan's grant aid.

Development helps both nations, all Asia

Tsuyoshi Saito
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-CAMBODIA
PARLIAMENTARIANS' FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE
OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF JAPAN

On behalf of the Japan-Cambodia Parliamentarians' Friendship League of the DPJ, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on this Nov. 9, on the occasion of the 57th independence anniversary of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

We greatly respect that Cambodia has overcome the tragedy of the civil war that lasted for years, and achieved stability and development as we see today. This is the result of the strenuous efforts by His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk, other national leaders, and each and every person in Cambodia who are striving for peace. On the occasion of the anniversary of its independence, I pray for the future prosperity of the nation.

A month from now, Dec. 9, is the 55th anniversary of the signing of the Japan-Cambodia Treaty of Amity. Following the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991, Japan participated in the peacekeeping operation under the lead of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), dispatching Self-Defense Force personnel as well as civilian policemen and election observers to Cambodia. The friendship between Japan and Cambodia deepened through such events, and the strength of the bond developed through Official Development Assistance and non-governmental organization activities is particularly noteworthy, when compared to that of other ASEAN coun-

tries.

Earlier this year, Japan signed an agreement with Cambodia to provide grant aid for the Neak Loeng Bridge project, which will be completed in a few years. The bridge will connect the regions separated by the Mekong River and I firmly believe it will become essential infrastructure that contributes not only to Cambodia's economy but also to development of the entire Mekong region.

This parliamentarians' league was established this spring for the purpose of consolidating the relations between Japan and Cambodia. It was our great honor that our executive members were received in audience by His Majesty King Sihanouk when he visited Japan in May. We were deeply impressed by his discernment and compassion.

There are active exchanges between parliamentarians of both countries. In August, we welcomed a nonpartisan Cambodian parliamentary delegation to the Democratic Party of Japan headquarters in Tokyo and held fruitful discussions on agricultural development with DPJ Diet members. In December, two DPJ parliamentarians, including Naoto Sakaguchi, who serves as the secretary general of the league, will be visiting Phnom Penh to attend the International Conference of Asian Political Parties co-hosted by the Cambodian People's Party and the FUNCINPEC Party.

I sincerely hope that Japan and Cambodia, as members of the Asian community, will continue to further strengthen the friendship and trust between each other, and walk together to achieve peace and prosperity in all of Asia as well as in the two nations.

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to His Majesty King-Father
NORODOM SIHANOUK
on His 88th Birthday
and to the People of the
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on the 57th Anniversary of
Their Independence Day

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