

Cambodia independence day

Long road to peace, stability leads to brighter future

Hor Monirath
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF
CAMBODIA

This year, the Kingdom of Cambodia celebrates the 58th anniversary of its independence from French colonial rule on Nov. 9, 1953.

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

May I take this opportunity, on behalf of the royal government and people of Cambodia, to convey again our heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences to the government and people of Japan, particularly to the victims and members of the bereaved families on the tragic losses and great suffering brought about by the catastrophic earthquake and horrific tsunami that hit northeastern Japan on March 11, followed by the crisis at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

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

Growth, prosperity

Under the wise leadership of His Majesty King-Father Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia regained independence in 1953 from nearly a century of rule by the French colonial empire. Cambodia has been internationally recognized

as an independent and sovereign state. Nevertheless, nearly 60 years since its independence, the kingdom has not been seen attaining full peace and stability. The country went through a very turbulent period caused by its internal rift throughout the Cold War period, pushing the nation into a human tragedy and destruction in the 20th century of modern history.

This year, the entire nation commemorated the 20th anniversary of the retired monarch's return to the kingdom from exile in November 1991. The auspicious event was held in conjunction with the celebration of the birthday of His Majesty King-Father Norodom Sihanouk, who entered his 90th year on Oct. 31. It is worthwhile to recall that His Majesty's return was a historic milestone that brought about the birth of the so-called second kingdom, constitutional monarchy, to the country. His Majesty has been regarded as the symbol of the nation and profoundly respected by all Cambodian people from all walks of the society and unanimously titled the "Father of Independence, Unity and National Reconciliation."

In fact, 20 years have passed since the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, known as the Paris Peace Accords, were signed by Cambodia and 18 other nations, including Japan, on Oct. 23, 1991, in Paris. It marked the first time that Japan's Self-Defense Forces were dispatched outside the country, within the framework of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation, since the end of World War II. The conclusion of the agreements brought hope for the Cambodian people to enjoy the rights to live in peace for a prosperous future after enduring more than 20 years of war. Unfortunately, the agreements did not bring immediate full peace for the Cambodian people. The country's peace and stability remained fragile due to the Khmer



National leaders: His Majesty King of Cambodia Norodom Sihamoni (left) and Prime Minister of Cambodia Hun Sen; Right: The 20th anniversary of His Majesty King-Father Norodom Sihanouk's return to Cambodia is celebrated in October. ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA



Rouge faction's refusal to join the election process organized by the U.N. in 1993 and their resumption of guerilla warfare against the newly elected coalition government, creating instability and prolonging civil war in the country for another five years.

Real peace and stability had been observed just more than 10 years ago when the kingdom was able to put an end of the war in 1998 by eliminating the entire political and military organizations of the Khmer Rouge thanks to the royal government's pursuance of the "Win-Win" policy of national reconciliation initiated by current Prime Minister Hun Sen. It was the first time in Cambodian contemporary history that the government has exercised control over the totality of its territory. This achievement of peace and stability was purely built by the Khmer people themselves who supported mutual compromise and national reconciliation at the highest stake.

For the historical memory and justice of innocent victims who died during the Khmer Rouge regime, the Extraordinary Cham-

bers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), sponsored by the international community, were established in 2006. Currently, the most responsible top leaders for the crimes that were committed during the period from April 17, 1975, to Jan. 6, 1979, are being tried in this special international tribunal. The event has come to stir the memories of the nation and marks an invaluable feeling for the survivors. However, taking into account that "finding justice is truly a very difficult mission while preserving peace is even harder," any measures undertaken for the purpose of finding justice must not jeopardize the prevailing peace, stability and national reconciliation, which our nation has hardly achieved by ourselves.

With peace and stability in place, the nation has a great opportunity to concentrate on its socioeconomic development and move the nation forward. Cambodia is considered as the most successful post-conflict nation in term of development. The World Bank placed Cambodia among the top 10 developing countries with the highest

economic growth, around 10 percent annually from 1998 to 2007. Again, after experiencing the negative impact of the global financial crisis and economic downturn in 2008-2009, the Cambodian economy achieved 5.9 percent growth in gross domestic product in 2010 and is expected to reach 7 percent GDP growth for 2011, if there were no unfavorable domestic or global conditions, such as the impact from severe flooding in the country and uncertainty in the global economy. Nevertheless, the royal government remains optimistic that this year's economic growth will be around 6 percent. The prospect of economic recovery has underlined the country's stronger engines of economic growth for the sake of its future economic expansion. The remarkable achievement of the country's economic development reflected in an impressive record in poverty reduction more than 1 percent annually, from 45 percent in 1994 to approximately 25.8 percent in 2010, and expected to achieve the country's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of reducing poverty to

19.5 percent by 2015. Last year, the MDG Award Committee in New York presented the MDG Award 2010 to Cambodia, recognizing the outstanding achievements of the royal government's endeavors in making the most absolute progress on the MDG. Furthermore, a recent study, "Youth civic participation in Cambodia," conducted by the U.N. Development Program also found that 95 percent of youths ages 15 to 24 said the kingdom has been moving in the right direction with respect to their valuation of history, cultural heritage, democracy and political leadership.

It should also be noted that as a country with agricultural potential, the royal government of Cambodia has put strong emphasis on a policy of attracting foreign investment in the agricultural sector, aiming to intensify agricultural products and becoming a major exporter to the global market in the future. Considering rice as the white gold of Cambodia, and with the strong potential of rice production, the royal government announced last year a policy to increase rice

export to 1 million tons by 2015.

The aforementioned achievements, without doubt, cannot exclude Japan's extensive involvement in the peace-building process in Cambodia and its consistent support, along with all development partners, in efforts for the country's rehabilitation and development. Especially, Japan remains the largest official development assistance (ODA) donor for Cambodia despite facing critical challenges at home. Japan's ODA came in various forms, supporting the areas of development of social and economic infrastructure, improvement of basic social services, including health and education, promotion of agriculture and rural development, and human resource development.

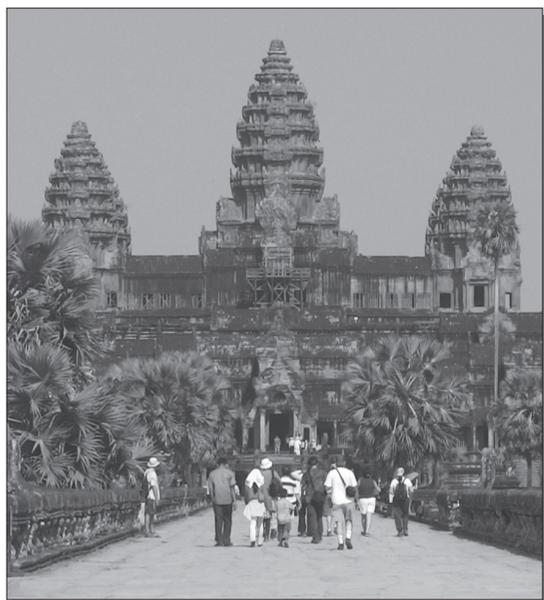
Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the royal government and people of Cambodia, I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation and heartfelt thanks to the government and people of Japan for their continuing support of Cambodia's reconstruction and development that have significantly contributed to the government's endeavors in the

poverty alleviation of the Cambodian people.

From year to year, a long tradition of friendship between the people of Cambodia and Japan has been strengthening and flourishing. Historical facts tell us that people-to-people contact between our two countries may go as far back as about 400 years ago when a venturing group of Sakai natives arrived at the Khmer empire, as Cambodia was then called, and visited Angkor Wat Temple, where an inscription of their city name "Sakai" was found on the stone pillars of the temple and remains today. In view of applauding our enduring relationship, it was a great pleasure to welcome the Japanese government's recent decision to assign Osamu Mukai, a well-known Japanese actor, as goodwill ambassador to Cambodia for the first time in the last 58 years of our bilateral diplomatic history. We are optimistic that his noble mission will certainly create stimulus to promote not only the exchange of culture, people-to-people contact, mutual investment and tourism, but also further deepen the long, traditional friendship between the two nations.

Today's economic relations between Cambodia and Japan have been seen growing as Japanese investment in Cambodia has risen in recent years. According to data of the Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC), registered capital investment from Japan was \$24.65 million for 2009 and \$35 million for 2010. The Japan International Cooperation Agency's investment statistics also showed that, by end of May 2011, Japanese investment with Cambodian approval jumped to \$142 million, and by the end of 2011, Japanese companies were expected to invest \$211 million and would employ as many as 36,000 Cambodian workers. Japanese investment has mostly emphasized manufacturing, such

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Congratulations

to

His Majesty King-Father NORODOM SIHANOUK
on his 89th Birthday,
His Majesty King NORODOM SIHAMONI
and to the People of
the Kingdom of Cambodia
in Commemoration of
Their 58th 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,
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with the rank of Minister



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Cambodia independence day



National pride: The Temple of Preah Vihear has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2008. ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA

Investment opportunities abound in growing nation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

as electronics, home appliances, garments, sports equipment, medical goods and automotive parts that have reflected the royal government's efforts in diversifying the country's export-oriented products beyond the garment industry and agricultural commodities.

Remarkably, Minebea Co., a major global Japanese manufacturer, built a factory assembling micro-motors in Phnom Penh this year with a capital investment of \$59 million. AEON Co., a leading retailer in Japan, planned to launch a \$150 million investment in Cambodia and will start to build the first-ever large department store in Phnom Penh in 2012. Japanese manufacturers already in Cambodia include Yamaha Motor Co., Suzuki Motor Corp., Ajinomoto Co., and Sumitomo Wiring Systems Co. Other well-known Japanese assemblers have

shown their interests in investing in Cambodia. The growing trend of Japanese investment reflects that more and more Japanese investors have acknowledged the great advantages of investing in Cambodia thanks to the kingdom's political stability, potential of natural resources, low labor costs and geographical location in the center of the Southeast Asian region. The government's pro-business policies, which include, among others, labor-intensive export processing, domestic market import substitution and greater market openness to free trade are not strangers to the current trend. The business-oriented policies of the royal government have put the country at more advantages for foreign investment attraction as proved in a recent research conducted by the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) that placed Cambodia as an emerging and

promising investment location in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and become increasingly attractive for foreign investors. However, to maintain the country's investment attractiveness, according to a joint survey by JICA, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, Cambodia needs over \$1 billion annually for infrastructure spending by 2020, with about half going to new projects and the other half to maintenance. This exorbitant amount represents a tremendous challenge, but to some investors, it can be a great investment opportunity.

Cambodia's vision

On the diplomatic front, Cambodia is the only former recipient country of U.N. Peacekeeping Operation forces that has started to dispatch its military personnel to support U.N. PKO activities in other countries. Since 2006, Cam-

bodia has dispatched more than 800 military personnel involved in mine-clearance and construction to different U.N. Peacekeeping Missions to countries such as Sudan, the Central African Republic, Chad and Lebanon.

With experiences in cooperation with the U.N. and in view of sharing its own experiences in national reconciliation, building and maintaining peace while committing to promote international peace within the U.N. frameworks, Cambodia now stands ready to become a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. It is for the first time that Cambodia presents its candidature to the U.N.'s main body for the 2013-2014 term since gaining independence in 1953 and becoming a member of the U.N. in 1955. The approach to put an end to the civil war and the hard-earned peace by Cambodian people themselves can serve as a role

Working together for prosperity

Takeo Hiranuma
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-CAMBODIA
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP
ASSOCIATION IN THE DIET

I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to the Kingdom of Cambodia and its people on the occasion of Cambodian Independence Day.

Around 30 years ago, when I was a young deputy, four members of the Diet including me made a visit to civil war-plagued Cambodia. As Cambodian airports were not available at that time, we entered the country from the border with Thailand.

We went to a village led by Gen. Dien Del and were allowed to inspect the camp in the jungle.

There was an army, schools and people lived in an orderly

manner with devotion to their country. It was a danger zone, where incoming, life-threatening projectiles flew at a short distance.

We Japanese linked arms with people of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), who value freedom.

Later on, we kept in touch with the KPNLF and conducted financial and food assistance via former Prime Minister of Cambodia Son Sann.

We the young members of the Diet crisscrossed Japan for fundraising and got many donations. We made efforts in negotiating

with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan so that more food assistance could be distributed to the Cambodian people.

After many twists and turns, through much pain and many efforts on the part of the Cambodian people, the country was reunified and a newborn Cambodia began, which I sincerely admire and congratulate.

At present, Cambodia is working toward prosperous nation-building under the leadership of His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni.

It is wonderful to celebrate the independence anniversary

together and I believe that Japan should continue maximum cooperation.

In Buddhist Cambodia, Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom, are expected to further contribute as tourist attractions in the future.

I think Japan should further help the kingdom consolidate infrastructure and further expand economic exchanges.

On this auspicious occasion of the Cambodian independence celebration, I would like to pray for the further development and prosperity of the Kingdom of Cambodia and its people.



Global contribution: Cambodia's military personnel is dispatched to support United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA

in 2002. Cambodia, as chair of ASEAN, in close cooperation and with the support of all member countries, will continue to work on ASEAN's current priorities to push forward a dynamic integration toward realizing the ASEAN Community by 2015.

It should be recalled that Cambodia in ASEAN reflects that

the region has turned its diversities — politically, economically and culturally — to the peoples' advantage and advanced their common interest in strengthening peace, stability, development and shared prosperity in the region. Obviously, Cambodia has made utmost efforts in close cooperation with old and new member countries to contribute to the process of the building and realization of the ASEAN Community in accordance with the aspiration and vision of all ASEAN peoples, as well as its commitment and contribution toward establishing an East Asian community for the sake of future generations.

Cambodia is the latest member to join this regional grouping, in April 1999. Cambodia's admission was a truly historic moment, fulfilling the vision of ASEAN's founding fathers to unite all nations in Southeast Asia under the ASEAN roof. The realization of "ASEAN-10" has not only a symbolic significance, but also immense implications for the cause of the regional unity and solidarity in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, equality and noninterference in its member countries' internal affairs. Since becoming a member of ASEAN, Cambodia is believed to have benefited considerably in the spheres of economics, politics and security. Particularly, the return of full peace and domestic tranquility, considerable improvement of the respect of human rights principles stipulated in the ASEAN Charter and the development of a matured

democratic process in Cambodia have contributed significantly to the stability and security in the region, and enhanced the kingdom's prestige both regionally and internationally.

It should be further pointed out that the success of realizing the ASEAN Community by 2015 will mainly lie in the improvement of quality of life and bridging of the economic development gaps among the old and new member countries. In line with this vision, the Japanese government initiated the Japan-Mekong Region Partnership Program in 2007, aiming to boost development in the Mekong region and help accelerate ASEAN's integration as well as enhance the existing healthy relationship between Japan and the Mekong region countries. Since the inaugural Mekong-Japan Summit in November 2009 in Tokyo, the high-level summit has been convened annually where the leaders have underlined and expressed satisfaction at the progress of the implementation of the 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. Cambodia will be honored to host the Fifth Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Cambodia in 2012.

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.

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Cambodia independence day

A new decade of mutual friendship begins

Tsuyoshi Saito
DEPUTY CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY
AND CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-CAMBODIA
PARLIAMENTARIANS' FRIENDSHIP
LEAGUE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
OF JAPAN

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 58th anniversary of the Independence Day of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

First of all, I wish to express my deep sorrow and condolences to the royal government of Cambodia and its people for



the great loss of lives and damages caused by the recent flooding. I hope that the assistance from Japan, including the emergency relief assistance, will contribute to Cambodia's early recovery from this disaster. Cambodia is a country that has recovered from the tragic history of civil war and achieved the current stability and development. We

are strongly encouraged by the progress made by Cambodia all the more because of the difficulties it has overcome. We pay tribute to the strenuous efforts made by His Majesty King of Cambodia Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, the leaders and each and every Cambodian who is striving for peace. On the occasion of the anniversary of its independence, I pray for the further prosperity of Cambodia toward the future.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude

for the cordial assistance we received from Cambodia in the wake of the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake, in the form of donations and letters of encouragement. We, Japanese, strongly felt wholehearted friendship and solidarity with Cambodia. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the 1991 Paris Peace Accords, and the fact that our two nations have developed and enjoyed such a long-standing, cooperative relationship in a wide range of areas in the last two decades is particularly noteworthy.

A new page in the history of our two nations has now been opened toward the further deepening of the relationship. I am pleased to note that the amount of Japanese investment to Cambodia has substantially increased this year compared with previous years, at an unprecedented pace. I sincerely hope that Japanese assistance for strengthening the connectivity of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and eradicating the economic disparity in the region as well as promoting public-private cooperation through assisting the development of both hardware and software infrastructures, will contribute to attracting further investment to Cambodia.

With Cambodia chairing ASEAN next year, much more active exchanges between government officials in Japan and Cambodia are expected. In addition to such exchanges, I wish to continue to encourage exchanges of parliamentarians. Last December, I had the privilege of visiting Cambodia with other members of the Japan-Cambodia Parliamentarian's Friendship League of the Democratic Party of Japan, and paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and interacted with many people. I was deeply moved by the rich history and culture of Cambodia when I visited Angkor Wat on that occasion. In October 2011, the Japanese government appointed Osamu Mukai, a Japanese actor, as a goodwill ambassador between Japan and Cambodia. I hope that he, as a bridge of friendship, will actively contribute to deepening the mutual understanding of our two nations.

I sincerely hope that Japan and Cambodia, as members of the Asian community, will further strengthen the mutual trust and friendship, and work together to achieve peace and prosperity in Asia as a whole.



Capital landmarks: The Royal Palace is the residence of His Majesty the King of Cambodia, and Wat Phnom (below) is a Buddhist temple that is a symbol of Phnom Penh. ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA



Friendship: Actor Osamu Mukai (center) has been designated by Japan as goodwill ambassador to Cambodia. ROYAL EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA

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