

30 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Buddhist Achievements in Kg Cham's Batheay District



30 April 08—Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and Madame Mao with people in Kompong Cham's district of Batheay.

... My wife and I are so glad to come back again to the district of Batheay to put in official use the Buddhist temple of Tumnub in the district of Batheay of Kompong Cham province. I would like to thank everyone, the Buddhist parishioners and specially to HE Hor Nam Hong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in pooling together efforts and resources to build this temple.

I seem to believe in the destiny. Take for instance I should not have been alive at all. I was separated from my parents when I was thirteen. I then took part in 105 battles in between 1970 and 1975, and that does not include the times when I had to escape from bombardments and shelling. Like all of our people, I also had to survive the Pol Pot regime. The assassination attempt by B-40 propelled grenades slightly missed my car. I was the target of assassination attempt by Samdech

Norodom Sereivudh.

A few days ago there was this reaction to what I said, "only Hun Sen will make Hun Sen fall" that I violated the people's rights. They do not understand what it means. If Hun Sen is to perform bad things for the people and country, Hun Sen will not enjoy the people's support anymore. Take for instance people said to me "Samdech will win the next elections" and my response was "yes if you vote for me and for CPP."

Some people said that I have launched the campaign but we have taped those people who warn people not to vote for CPP, and what does that mean? I told people if they like me those people have to vote for CPP but they in turn warn the people not to vote for CPP and Hun Sen. Is not this a warning or a violation of human rights?

I would like to give my greet-
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29 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Inaugurating Sino-Cambodian Friendship Bridge Se Kong

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen on April 29, 2008 went to Stoeung Treng province to preside over the historic achievement of the bridge over the Se Kong section of the Mekong River in and the NR 7 segment from Kratie to the northern part of Cambodia which was built with the Chinese assistance.

The Marvelous Bridge and Road

I am so pleased today to have

come to put into official use the Se Kong Bridge built with the Chinese financial assistance and its Ambassador to Cambodia is also present here with us.

I am so proud to be able to witness such an event. It has indeed been since 2004 that together with the Chinese Ambassadors, I have come to many places to launch the infrastructural construction and development projects,

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22 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Opening the Queen Preah Kosomak's Library in Kratie

After the Khmer New Year Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen went to Kratie province to put into official use the library in the College of Queen Preah Kosomak in the town of Kratie.

Starting New Year with Education

It is indeed a great pleasure to have come see you all after about a week of the Khmer New Year holidays which really made me so uneasy of being long absent from social and economic activities.

I ended the old year with my visit and proposition for a solution for the betterment of the living condition of the handicapped soldiers, and for ushering in the new year, I started by focusing on education and putting this library into official use.

The construction of the library enjoyed the financial support from Senior Minister Im Chhun Lim who was one of the first generation students graduating from this college.

HE Kham Phoeun already mentioned that the college was built in 1956 and it was called the Junior College of the Queen Preah Kosomak. In 1963 became the Senior College of the same name whereas the students who first graduated from here have finished their studies in the province of Kompong Cham and returned here as teachers. A number of them have now
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Kratie was one of them. With HE Chang Jin Feng, on July 26, 2006, I came here to observe the progress of the bridge construction and today, also with her, I am so proud to be here once again to put it into official use.

Being a poor country, which recently ended the war, the bridge is indeed an enormous achievement. For representatives of our friendly countries who are present here, take for instance France, China, etc. achievement of this type is so minor.

I agreed with HE Sun Chanthol, Minister for Transports and Public Works that the finishing of the NR 7 segment of 196.8 kilometers and the Se Kong Bridge brought us to name this bridge the Se Kong Sino-Cambodian Friendship Bridge. We also have the Pre Tamak and Prek Kadam Sino-Cambodian Bridges, and if more bridges would be built with the Chinese help, we would go on naming them that way too.

I would like to take this opportunity moment to express my sincere thanks to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China as a whole, the Shanghai Construction company in particular, their workers and technicians included for finishing the construction of the bridge and road for the people of Cambodia in this part of the country.

Where and How Do They Start?

The NR 7, which is under construction, captures many memories of my life as well as the People's Republic of China. In the first quarter of 1991, I visited the PRC at which time I had a chance to

meet with HE Ju Rongji, then Chinese Premier. I proposed to him for a consideration of providing financial help for the renovation of the NR 7 from Kratie to the provincial town of Stoeung Treng, whereas at that time Cambodia had an acknowledged funding for the construction of the NR 7 from Skun through to Kratie, which was financially supported by the Japanese Government, Asian Development Bank and the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries - OPEC. After HE Ju Rongji, I am now working with Premier HE Wen Jiabao.

When Cambodia hosted the ASEAN Summit, the Summits of ASEAN + 3, ASEAN + China, HE Ju Rongji came for a visit to Cambodia, by which a singing ceremony was organized to provide Cambodia with loans and add-ups every year. My visit in 2004 to China was conducted when Cambodia had the post-election political stalemate.

China took a clear political stance at that time by saying that it knows who to work with. This is a strong message to both those providing support to the CPP and also to me as the candidate of the Prime Minister to lead the coalition Government. It was then that financial loan for the construction of the NR 7 was signed.

Further financial assistance was made to Cambodia when I took part in the Sino-ASEAN exhibition in 2004 for de-mining work along the projected NR 7. This is the area where heavy bombardments took place in between 1970 and 1973 because it is the vicinity of the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Samdech Preah Norodom

Sihanouk at that time returned to the country's liberated zones. Though the amount was just 600,000 US dollars, it has however kept everyone's life safe while working here.

Cambodia's Internal and External Integrations

Having achieved these achievements, the NR 7 from Skun at Kompong Cham province to the border with Laos has finally achieved the country's integration in the northern part of Cambodia, but also to link Cambodia up with neighboring countries as well.

The road between Phnom Penh and Stoeung Treng province is 480 kilometers long and another 56 kilometers to the border point with Laos. Together from Phnom penh to the border crossing with Laos is 536 kilometers. Today is a historic day in my political career as the Cambodian Prime Minister that I have the honor to inaugurate the longest road and bridge.

The road and bridge provide opportunity and benefit not only to the people of Kratie and Stoeung Treng but so to speak for the whole people of Cambodia.

This area could develop to be the 4th economic pole after 2015. The provinces of Stoeung Treng, Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri, but also some parts of Kratie and Preah Vihear could become the 4th economic zone after Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville and Siemreap.

The potential we have here in the northeast is tangibly great. We could pick one to mention here - the hydropower station, which could provide electricity not only for local and inter-

nal markets but also to neighboring countries as well.

In this area, we have rich underground mineral resources and as of the moment we speak we have a large steel mining in Thalaborivat and bauxite under an area of ten thousand hectares in Mondulakiri. They are also potentials for tourism. That is why we have to link these areas up together so that we could realize our dream of turning them into the fourth economic zone in the country.

Having achieved the road and bridge this area will be accessible and primarily linked up to the areas with its potential neighbors - Vietnam and Laos. This road is going to be named the ASEAN and Asia Highway 11.

This road has indeed been a shortcut between ASEAN and Yunnan's Kunming because we do not have to travel first to southern part of Vietnam by Cambodia's NR 1 but to Laos by the NR 7, and from there turning up to the north into Vietnam before getting to Yunnan's Kunming of the PRC.

It is indeed the triangular development for Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam in the Great Mekong Sub-Region. The NR 62 which we have started construction in Preah Vihear will also be a plus in this matter.

New Projects & the Coalition Positive Results

In a recent working visit to the PRC, the Minister for Transports has signed an agreement on the loan package for the construction of the NR 57 and 62, but also the NR 78, which I am sure, is an upbeat. The Shanghai standard for roads

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05 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Getting the NR 62 Constructed in Preah Vihear Province

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen despite his busy schedule presided over the construction of the NR 62 which would provide connection to Kompong Thom province on one side and to Siem Reap on the other. Comments are selected and provided herein.

Road is Hope and Wealth

It is indeed good to hear the Chinese saying that goes "to be rich first you have to build the road" and in Khmer we say "where there is a road there is a hope." We have been opening many construction sites with the financial assistance from China and please allow me to share with you what happened in just one year. On February 11, 2007 we opened the construction of the NR 76 which has the total length of 127 kilometers from Snuol to the city of Sen Monorom of Monduliri province. On March 15, 2007 we opened the construction of the NR 8 which has the total length of 109 kilometers from the Bridge at Prek Tmak of Khsach Kandal district to the Vietnamese border at Prey Veng's Anlong Chrey.

On June 6, 2007, we opened the construction of the Bridge of Prek Tamak which is 1,060 meters with a width of 13 meters in the commune of Prek Anh Chanh in Muk Kampul district. We opened the 975 meters Bridge of Prek Kadam construction on June 11, 2007 and the construction of the NR 56 on March 26 this year from Battambang to Pailin with the total length of 103 kilometers.

Today we opened the construction of the NR 62 which is 150 kilometers with 45 bridges and 308 waterways.

We will have the 24 kilometer NR 210 from NR 62 to Srayng Koh Ke that will connect to Preah Vihear on one side and to Siemreap province on the other. We also need financial commitment to build the road from Tbeng Mean Chey back to Kompong Thom (129 kilometers). From Preah Vihear one can go either to Kompong Thom or to Siemreap via Srayng Koh Ke or to say that the people in Preah Vihear have got two connections.

All-out Integration

My position has been clear from the beginning that what I want is not to achieve only administrative and political integration but all-out integration which will make this integration work - mainly the road connection. Integration into ASEAN and into the Greater Mekong Sub-region requires that Cambodia has to first integrate internally otherwise we could not benefit from outside integration.

We have now built the NR 7 that brings us to the border with Laos, two other roads - the NR 8 and and 76 - connect Cambodia to Vietnam, whereas with the NR 57 we have Battambang connected with Pailin and on to Thailand. We have mainly now connected among many different parts of the country and hope that we will be able to do more in a speedy manner.

Sino-Cambodian Diplomatic Relations

This year we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Sino-Cambodian diplomatic relations and all activities that are under way are meant to be parts of this commemoration.

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ings and welcome to the people who have taken side to CPP and more are going to come. Yesterday the CPP registered before any other party for the elections. Some other parties still have bargained their positions. As far as I know some in Funcinpec are bargaining their ranks in the list whereas the CPP has its candidate lists since late 2007 and early 2008. In Kompong Cham province for instance Samdech Heng Samrin is the candidate number 1, HE Hor Nam Hong is the candidate number 2, HE Khieu Kannharith, candidate number 3, HE Chea Sophara, candidate number 4, etc. CPP does not have the history of candidates wrangling for their ranks in the list, especially bargaining the prices for the position.

I am so happy today to see that we have made great progress here take for instance in the communes of Jialia, Jba Ampeo and Taingkraing because we have the 7-March reservoir from which people

could produce rice from two to three times per year with the yield of 3.7 to 4 tons per hectare. I have also instructed the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to study the possibility of building flood catchment system so that when seasonal flood recedes, water would be kept and reserved for our people to grow rice or other crops.

Rain starts early this year and our people are busy harvesting their produces. Food crisis in the world opens an opportunity for the Cambodian farmers and producers though some people in the city claimed they had hard times with rising food prices, but between 70% and 80% of the Cambodian farmers will reap from the situation. There have been many culprits to the cause of soaring food prices, from the shrinking land for producing food, the demand for growing biofuel crops, drought, oil prices, etc. I have ordered to bring rice to Senegal and to other countries if our stock can afford...■

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and bridges in Cambodia is the first especially in the province of Kratie and Stoeung Treng. This standard, which we all appreciate, should be replicated to other parts of Cambodia and we already have the NR 7, the Se Kong Bridge, the NR 8, NR 10, 62, etc.

I could compare this to my political strategy as I never set my political objective on the road of uncertainty and without strategy. But as we have to integrate Cambodia by means of internal and external links, one should think that they have to do the same in politics.

This is a proud political lead-

ership of the Royal Government of Cambodia. It also reflects the political correctness of the parties taking parts in the Government...

From the province of Stoeung Treng I would like to express and deliver this splendid news to HM the King of Cambodia during HM's birthday anniversary which is approaching on May 13, 14 and 15, for which there will be a three days holiday.

I also wish to inform the Heroic King Father and Heroic Queen Mother the joy that we have succeeded in linking the current Cambodia back with the Sangkum Reastr Niyum time, which are the wishes of their Majesties...■

03 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Stocktaking and Directives Setting for Agriculture, Forestry...

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen gave his comments and raised some of the issues relating to the country's agriculture, forestry and fishery, while focusing on rice production, statistics and rubber.

Export Quality Rice

We have proposed to the Prime Minister of Qatar to bring back some package of rice for trial and we have prepared for him seven different kinds of rice species. We served him during the banquet with our rice and he noted that this long grain tastes good and he requested some for trial.

What is more important here is to change from growing long-term (six-month) rice to medium (more than four months) and short-term rice (three-month). We have discovered that the land area for growing long-term rice has gone down whereas the land area for medium and short-term rice has increased. It is indeed not easy to induce changes in the people's habit of rice production.

Statistical Improvement - a Must

I would state in this moment that it is important to get our data/statistic right or we will have a lot of problems. Take for instance there has been some reports that provide us figures that are unbelievable. Did they go and measure it themselves? Now that we have better instrument for measuring like GPS and this could be of tremendous help to us.

When we noted the increase of dry-season rice yield, from a statistical point of view we have to find out the cause for the increase. It is already discovered that the main factor

for the increase has been the building of water canals all over the country or we could suppose that we have improved our capability in irrigation. It is good indeed to keep our statistics in tact so that it will keep us informed of where we are and what else could be done.

Mechanized Agriculture

I remember that when I stand here 23 years ago in 1985, I proposed that the state sell tractors to farmers. At that time the state provided service of tilting land and it was difficult to get the money from the farmers. Therefore I instructed that the state sell the tractors to farmers. Now we have noticed that more farmers opted for mechanical tools instead of work animals in their agro—activities.

We should orientate them to continue using mechanical tools but not to leave animals all out for we still need them when it is necessary. We use tractors and other mechanized tools when we have fuels but we would not have to pay for their meals when we use animals. They give us pulling power, fertilizers and meat.

Rubber Plantations

It is indeed a matter of concern because we are in the phase of privatizing our rubber plantations, which means the Government or state no longer manages them. It is also noted the increase of household rubber plantations because more people want to grow rubber since its price has gone high from 600 US dollars to 2600 US dollars per ton in the international market. It is important to raise our people's awareness of the need of the best rubber species. Because of the increase

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This year we also will inaugurate the new building of the Council of Ministers and I will have a better place to work like others. China this year is to host the Olympics Games and HM the King of Cambodia will attend the opening ceremony.

Aside from that I will have two trips to China - in October for Asia-Europe meeting and again to Nanning's as special guests of the ASEAN-China Expo. Taking this opportunity I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, former King of Cambodia for establishing diplomatic relations with China 50 years ago. The relationship has brought good things to the children of Cambodia. Cambodia will continue without alteration its One-China policy. Some people said Hun Sen is kowtowing China but for me Taiwan and PRC is one China.

Cambodia would be unhappy if Preah Vihear seceded from the country to declare independence with some foreign support. I think this example could put you in the shoe of China. We do not agree with the measures to prevent the Olympic Games or to get the Olympics as a hostage to the Tibet's issue, Sudan, etc. Cambodia disagrees with that. There has been an attempt to launch a demonstration to put pressure on the Government of the PRC and Sudan through putting a hindrance to the Olympic Games. I told the Minister of Interior that Cambodia allows no fighting in our country. They may do whatever they want to elsewhere but not in Cambodia. Cambodia does not allow its territory to be a place where one country fights against the other. China also is not allowed to use their territory to fight against other countries as well. Cambodia is a small country but we have equal footing in all matters...■

09 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Education Achievements in the Commune of Kompong Popil

Visiting the communal town of Kompong Popil in the district of Pearaing, Kompong Thom province, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen gave his vision on how the local development would be.

Pearaing Will Be a City

It is my pleasure indeed to return to the district of Pearaing of the province of Prey Veng and I am so glad that today we inaugurate the Hun Sen College of Kompong Popil but what is more important is that our people have more needs to fulfill. I am sure that before long the people of Pearaing have to prepare themselves to become city dwellers. The NR 8 is running through here and

Pearaing would become a city that is no longer secondary to the district of Pea Raing at all but directly to Prey Veng province itself.

HE Chea Soth who is getting old is no longer able to lead the CPP working team here, though he has provided the district with numerous achievements. HE Nhem Vanda (of the disaster preparedness and response center) also has built a number of schools. HE Bin Chin, Deputy Prime Minister, will take HE Chea Soth's place in Prey Veng since he has been moved to Phnom Penh. The General Staff Chief Ke Kim Yan also sent here his soldiers to help with the drought in

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1994-95. That is why it is noticeable that there are many soldiers in the district of Pea Raing.

College Level Education

I have declared in Santuk of Kompong Thom that we have to increase education facilities to local areas and more teaching staff will also be provided. We have to raise or initiate educational level of college to all districts and this is the goal we attempt to reach...

We will increase equal chance for both male and female students to get access to college level education, an important criteria to go on to the tertiary education. We now have more

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to prevent the conflict we must continue to prevent the conflict from happening in the country. According to real experience, most of the time, some silly things happened because of rhetoric of some political leaders in the world or authors like for instance the experience brought in here by the Indonesian participants that issue flared up because of a joker.

I am so shocked to see that one word could turn a billion people as enemy. Take for instance, something happens here and there, and they said it is a terrorist act caused by the Muslims. Why is it so? Terrorists never have a religion. I seem to agree with the idea that the one that make the most mistakes is CNN and/or BBC which create a lot of problems. The French TV5 is also not less provocative than the above two.

We all know what happened in the Southern part of Thailand. Then Government installed by the military said that hundreds of Muslims from Cambodia crossed the border

universities in rural provinces too.

Peace for Khmer New Year and for the Elections

Because we are approaching the Khmer New Year I would seek everyone's attention that we should safeguard peace in the country so that our people could enjoy the ceremony and I would see also that it is important for our country and people to be in peace and reconciliation so we all go to the polling stations in an environment of safety and security, free from violence, threat and pressure. I am sure that our people will have the best conscience to judge what is best for them and for the country...■

to work as militants in the Southern part of Thailand. I took the matter in my hand. Is it not enough that they had to fight the Muslims in the South? Do they want to fight also with Muslims in Cambodia? Why should they try to make more enemies? After corrections made by HE Premier Surayudh Chulanant, the matter had calmed down.

I think that the Government in countries where there are more than one religion have to be careful with their comments because whatever they say about this affair will determine the consequential situation - for better or for worse.

To master religion one has to be literate and therefore religion also produces human resources who could be helpful in administration as well. We have to see the benefit from having secular knowledge and Buddhism or other religions combined. The state should in fact take benefit from religions especially in terms of human resources development, virtue and morale for social management...■

13 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

Social and Economic Responses for Handicapped Soldiers

Before the celebration of the Khmer New Year, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and Madame visited the Rehabilitation Center for Handicapped Soldiers in the District of Kien Svay and brought them some social and economic responses before moving to resettle in the state providing land and housing. Selected comments are provided here as follows:

My wife and I are so happy to come see you all at the 317 center of Kiensvay for the handicapped soldiers. In September last year my wife and I came here and listened to your suggestions. We have retained this center while others have been transferred to the Ministry of Social and Veteran Affairs.

We have now prepared for their residence where each family will get a plot of 1.5 hectare land and we have reserved a size of 171 hectares land as public property in which 12 hectares for schools, six hectares for pagoda and 6 hectares for health centre, four hectares for market construction and 6 hectares for administrative use, four hectares for electric station and 12 hectares for plants growing to produce biofuel.

Our soldiers and their families will be provided with the land and housing according to the lots they picked. Many generous people have indeed contributed in the building and handling of this charity project for our handicapped soldiers.

I would suggest that our soldiers after moving in should reside there at least five or ten years before selling land to others. I have here some financial help and utensils for

starting with your livelihoods. I understand how you feel being a handicap because I am also a handicap. In the name of the people and nation, I would like to express my sincere and deep thanks for them who sacrificed their flesh and blood for the sake of our people. Because of the win-win policy we no longer have people maimed because of war and therefore no one should go on making this silly mistake to cause bloodshed again at all.

As long as I am alive I will not let anyone to make wrong political decision that would bring war to Cambodian again at all.

Those coup makers under Gen. Lon Nol thought about launching it months or weeks or days before the incident took place but its consequences had taken us 38 years to live with in pain, destruction and isolation. A short-sighted and negligent decision in just a split of a second had made us the younger generation spend decades to solve the consequences.

My decision to crack down on the coup on July 2, 1994 and to launch offensive in 1997 were in fact a must that I have to see to them otherwise our country would be in jeopardy of being victimized of war again. The win-win policy has indeed been a good thing for us to put an end to the protracted war.

I would from hereon allow no one make wrong decision at all. Some said that only people power will be an effective tool to deal with the CPP. I warn them that it is effective in Ukraine, in Georgia and/or other places but that will be

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become senior officials of the Royal Government of Cambodia and members the Senate and the National Assembly.

Eastern Provinces after the Coup in 1970

About 38 years ago, after the coup against the Head of State - Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk on March 18, 1970, a part of the Cambodian territory, especially the eastern provinces of Kratie, Stoeung Treng, Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri had completely been liberated. The fall of Kratie province was bloodless because all of the Lon Nol soldiers had surrendered and became the human resources that were first liberated at that time.

The district town of Snuol was indeed the first to be liberated and as far as I could recall not less than 80% of the former students of the Queen Preah Kosomak College had taken part in the national liberation movement.

They have become the best human resources the liberation movement had at the time. Some of my friends who had studied here died in the war between 1970 and 1975 and some had survived the genocide regime.

In the liberation zone at that time most of the colleges - both junior and senior had been closed since 1970 and a severe and tight control had been imposed in this area. It was later called special region or 505 Special Zone.

The Beginning of Land Reform Policy

Officially I became the Prime Minister on January 14, 1985 and I took several trips around the country in which Kratie was one of them. I also went

to the district of Sambo where I happened to listen to the district head who told me the three different solidarity groups (like collective farming groups). He said "I would like to inform Comrade President of the Council of Ministers that the district would make every effort to scale up the solidarity group class 3 to class 2, and class 2 to class 1. I joked with him that "we would starve to death together."

In between 1979 and 1980, we have to form solidarity group which combined farmers altogether and we had no other options.

Take for instance we then had only a pair of oxen for twenty households. We then started to assign land to the people but then provincial leaders - on the party as well as Government lines - did not understand the policy steered by the Prime Minister.

They all wanted to scale up the solidarity group whereas I instructed that we should dissolve the second and first class of solidarity groups (of farmers) back to the third class of solidarity group which is to share labors and tools in farming.

Another memory I could recall from Kratie was when I spent time here leading a demonstration against Samdech Nhek Tjulong's sister - Madame Tob, who encroached upon land of other people and developed into what they called "new farm." It is worth noting that land encroachment took shape at all forms from old times. We should not let history repeat itself.

A Modern Library and a Tour Site

I have a great pleasure to see

that we have made great efforts in building this library which is going online as well.

The situation in the world has now been immediately brought to sight by modern media - TVs or internet access. Students can access information provided in various sites from distance and going live for own use and studies. This will indeed speed up human resources development...

It is indeed splendid to have heard that during the Khmer New Year there have been numerous visitors to the town... Phnom Penh has been deserted during the Khmer New Year for three reasons.

Firstly, the country has enjoyed full peace, stability and public order that our people feel free and secure to go wherever they wish to. In fact we had been deprived our freedom of celebration of holiday like this since 1970 when the coup took place on March 18, 1970.

Secondly, the country's infrastructure has been improved to a great extent after we have been pooling efforts in the last 29 years for reconstruction. Especially in the last two terms of the Royal Government of Cambodia, infrastructure has been improved in terms of roads, bridges as well as transport means.

Thirdly, though there is this situation of inflations, hiking rice and oil prices, our people, because of their increasing resources could still make it to their villages and places they wish to see. This clearly shows that the living conditions of our people could cope with hiking rice, oil and consumer goods prices and enjoy still the Khmer New Year.

Kratie's Infrastructural Development

From the point of Preah Theat, we have a road that will lead us to Chhlong and from there one direction will take us to Kratie town and another back to Kompong Cham province. Parts of them have been asphalted and I would include into my loan project for next year the bridge at Kompong Raing, which will be concrete instead of Bailey as it is now and so are the Bridges of Peam Te and Prek Chhlong...

Political Issues

This is right to say that the country stands ready for change only that it is not changing by means of orange revolution (as in Ukraine) and people power in the street. People power must be expressed through ballots and the destiny of the people will depend upon their own decision and determination.

Indeed former members of parliament and the Senate of the SRP have changed side to CPP and they have sacrificed their interests of being members of the Senate and the National Assembly of the said Party to join the Royal Government.

As for the new term, if Funcinpec could not make it CPP will have all to itself. As for some political agitations made that I have yet responded I would warn not to attempt to let go the stone on Hun Sen's feet as it would hit yours instead.

There has been this proposition of three conditions, etc. I would seek HM the King and the Heroic King-Father and Heroic Queen-Mother, if ever they have contact with the person, to warn of what he intends to do...■

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tens or junior or senior colleges, and in some places we have built University as well. Days ago I went to Pailin and a University has been there as well.

In Banteay Mean Chey, we have a college for every commune. It is indeed a magnificent achievement. As I used to say if we know how to do it, we can make use of the opportunity to multiple results.

We should make use of peace and national reconciliation for the sake of our country's development and because of knowledge, experience and high technology we can take a shortcut toward development. What is important here is that the University has now got close to our people and they should hold on to this opportunity. I would urge our female students not to drop

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ineffective in Cambodia.

People power in Cambodia should be expressed through the ballots they cast into the ballot boxes and not in the streets.

That kind of people power will in case of necessity be responded with people power of same sort in order to avert the worst outcome. What will happen if we leave the situation evolve like when Lon Nol launched the coup? We had Pol Pot genocide, handicapped people and national disasters.

Toppling the Polpotists and preventing them from returning to power, dismantling them politically and militarily and integrating the country from separations to one united country have all been the handicapped meant for...■

school but to stay all the way to get high education as male ones.

Thank for Birthday's Messages

I am so grateful that because today is my birthday I have been offered a bunch of flowers from the committee and also I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratefulness to the message of HM the King of Cambodia, and of Samdech Ov, the Heroic King-Father and Samdech Me, the Heroic Queen-Mother that highly appreciate my activities in the country's liberation movement as well as the search for peace and re-establishment of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and my support to HM the King Sihamony.

I also thank Samdech Chea Sim and Samdech Heng Samrin, as well as the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces for their best wishes for my birthday. Today, thirty eight years ago I went to the jungle. My birthday is indeed a different one but this is my day when I joined the army and the struggle to liberate the country from foreign aggression in response to the appeal by Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk. My history is indeed not different from that of HE Ke Kin Yan because I started as a soldier whose age was not even 18 years old.

Best Wish for the Opposition

Having achieved such a wonderful birthday wishes I would like to share that with our people - both supporters and those in opposition that they be blessed with happiness and long life. It is so simple that I wish the opposition because as long as they stay as opposition leaders, I will keep staying as head of the ruling party. I also want to have a strong competitor and

08 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

A Visit to the Construction Site of the Bridge of Prek Tamak

The bridge over the Mekong at Prek Tamak that is under construction with the financial loan from the PRC will be the second bridge of its kind in Cambodia after the Japanese Kizuna bridge over the Mekong at Tonle Bet of Kompong Cham province. Samdech Hun Sen was invited to lay the cement in the first pillar. The following is the selected comments and statement of appreciation of the Sino-Cambodian friendship.

... I am so glad to come to the Prek Tamak bridge construction site today to witness the progress made so far and to symbolically pour concrete for the first pillar of the bridge.

What is more important is that the bridge has indeed had to build in extension of another 6 meters for free. What I get impressed the most is that the progress has been made fast beyond my expectation.

On my flight to and fro Kompong Thom I noticed speedy progress of the bridge construction down here. It is indeed marvelous that the most up-to-date vessel used in this kind of construction in China has indeed been moved to work here.

The Chinese do not retain the best and modern technology for themselves but to share them with us and other countries as well. I would have to thank China through Her Excellency the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China for this generous offer and sharing.

This indeed creates confidence and the company will in the future be known for their commitment and sharing, for which more projects

would be given to them.

I have no doubt with the Shanghai construction company because as we all can see that the major expertise of the company is to build high buildings but that does not mean that the company does not possess the skills of building good bridges.

The company is building the NR 7 and the bridge over the Mekong at Se Kong, the bridge of Prek Tamak, the bridge of Prek Kadam and the NR 62 from Tbeng Mean Chey of Preah Vihear to the Koh Ke temple and back to Siemreap. The bridge here has to be raised high 15 meters above the water level at flood time so that vessel traffic would not be obstructed.

To be fifteen meters above the highest level of water during the biggest flood would allow us to continue traffic for ships, etc. especially we have to tug through here loads of rubber as well as other important crops. I am so glad to hear that the construction period has been rescheduled to less than 50 months. In the future more people from Prey Veng province, Svay Rieng and Kompong Cham will travel this way in great number before the construction of the bridge at Neak Loeng.

We will have to reconsider the improvement on the NR 6A because of this achievement. Before the Khmer New Year I am so glad to be able to come to this symbolic event. I am also taking this moment to note that the NR 8 after its construction finishes will become one of the most busy roads that extends its connection to the greater Mekong Sub-region, via Vietnam...■

04 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Inaugurating the Country's First Northwest University

General Ke Kim Yan, Chief of Staff of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) headed the construction of the University of Mean Chey in the province of Banteay Mean Chey. Samdech Techo Hun Sen presided over the inauguration ceremony in which he made the following comments.

... My wife and I returned once again to the province of Banteay Mean Chey to put into use the Mean Chey University after we came on February 18, 2008 to preside over the groundbreaking of the reconstruction of the railroads between Sisophon and Poi Pet and to the Kingdom of Thailand. And last year we also came here to witness the construction of the University.

University Relates to Chief of Staff

My wife and I are so pleased and appreciate highly, in my name as well as on behalf of the Royal Government at HE General Ke Kim Yan's initiative in getting this University built for the sake of developing human resources in the region and as a token of memory that relates this place to his background.

HE General Ke Kim Yan first joined the army stood guarding the bridge here in 1979. He has transformed himself from a soldier to the Chief General Staff of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces. This has proved that CPP never depends on kinship or political relation, or generations to get their man appointed. We appreciate a man and give the job according to his capability.

It is indeed a good idea and in the preface of the special issue of the 2008 Review of the

General Staff, HE General Ke Kim Yan did mention a lot his vision in relation to human resources development in the north-western part of the country. The University has been built at the cost of more than six million US dollars with many contributions made by various donors through various occasions.

What we have achieved beside the cost of building this University is the fact that our students who have finished their study in colleges no longer have to go to Phnom Penh or other provinces but they could stay here to further education. The University would accommodate some students from Banteay Mean Chey, from Battambang, Uddor Mean Chey, Pailin and also from a part of Siemreap.

To the east of country's Svay Rieng province we have a University built by General Police Chief Hok Lundy. In Siemreap HE Sieng Nam, a member of parliament built a University as well. We have more Universities now built not only in Phnom Penh but also in the province as well.

From Battlefield to Development Zone

HE General Ke Kim Yan said in his address that he would like to turn this battlefield into development zone and it has now been realized in the last recent years because in all parts of the country, where there used to be battlefields have now become zones of development.

As we have now achieved peace and the war is gone what should we do? Now fighting places have become primary schools or kindergar-

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of about 10,000 hectares per year of household rubber, we would have in the future bigger household rubber than that of the state. After its latex period is over rubber also gives us timber.

Fishing

I may not understand all about fishing but when I flew over the Great Lake of Tonnele Sap I have noticed extensive fishing traps that seemed to have left no room for fish to recuperate. We have to work out a norm that will be respected by all fishing community and whoever is to violate the set norm will have to be reprimanded or stripped off their fishing rights. With regard to building water reservoirs around the Great Lake of

Tonle Sap, especially in the province of Kompong Thom, action to conserve water for irrigation for the dry season rice is welcome but we find it unacceptable that this action has led to anarchic deforestation of bushes and inundated forest.

According to the report from Kompong Thom we have a total area of 12,000 hectares from 113 water reservoirs built altogether. We should conduct a monitoring process to see if anyone of them would be detrimental to the ecosystem so as we could legalize those places productive ecosystem. I would say the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology will be the one to conduct this monitoring study...■

03 April 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Comments at the Inter-religion Symposium in Cambodia

... As I said in my prepared text that religions in Cambodia had died in the genocide regime between 1975 and 1979. Though the root of religion has been a long one in history but in Cambodia they all just revived the same time. If Polpotists were just narrow minded nationalists they would have abolished other religions but not Buddhism. But they abolished all and that is their crime against humanity that they have to be accountable for while undergoing trial in the court.

Their Majesties of Cambodia, prior to the regime of Pol Pot's genocide, always harmonize between races and religions, which we all have to admit that was a brilliant leadership in the past. According to my experience as a leader of this country in the past nearly thirty years, I see that it is very important to have first of all harmony among races.

Race is the point of beginning

and religions and cultures follow on as some Cambodians are not Buddhists and some Cambodians even get married with the Muslims. They have to be first Muslims to get married with the latter. What is the main concern here would be the neutrality of the public administration. Whoever is holding a state position - whether it is the village head or Prime Minister, has to be neutral and his/her judgment should not be biased in favor of any culture or religion s/he belongs to, while neglecting other religions or culture.

In Cambodia, from HM the King to other junior leaders, we all are Buddhists but we have been very careful of having biased. Buddhism in Cambodia has two sects - Mahanikaya and Dhammaryuth. Therefore, all religions have to live together and would not be obstacles to the country's development. Since we do not have religious con-

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