

Preah Sihamoni Raja Buddhist University

(14 February 2013 — Unofficial Translation, Selected Impromptu Comments)



14 February 2013 — Samdech Techo Hun Sen is warmly welcomed by senior Buddhist followers at the inauguration of the Preah Sihamoni Raja Buddhist University (Kampuchea Thmey)

CPP Gets Their 2013 Elections Candidates List Ready

Revered Samdech Preah Moha Rajadhibadei Tep Vong and Samdech Preah Abhiserei Sokuntheadhibadei Bour Kry, and all Buddhist monks, I am so pleased to come today to put into official use the buildings of the Preah Sihamoni Raja Buddhist University (PSR-BU) with all of you. I had a high fever last night and could not sleep well because of the coughing. As I am speaking now, I sense that my body temperature is around 39 degrees celsius. I would seek your understanding if my talk today could not go smoothly. Anyway, I have made it a try. As my wife is also in similar health state, she cannot make it today as planned.

I may cancel some of tomorrow's program as I have already made an appointment with doctor. As for this afternoon, I may have to keep the program on since it is also very important matter. I will keep

my speech short anyway. Just now Samdech (Budshist Patriarchs) wished me to gain success on the July 8, 2013. They did not say directly what it would be but I understand what they mean. This afternoon I will lead the meeting on the compilation of the list of the CPP's members of the National Assembly-to-be as Samdech Chea Sim could not be present. Maybe other political parties are doing the same. The CPP will draw a list of candidates for the coming general elections.

Buddhist and Secular Harmony – Key for Virtue, Moral and Morale

As far as the construction is concerned, I have a great pleasure to have learnt the detail from the report of Samdech Preah Abhiserei Sokuntheadhibadei in relations to the effort. I agree in full to the construction of those necessary buildings here in the PSR-BU. I may recall that when I was here to

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Recommendations at Interior's Review Meeting

(22 February 2013 — Unofficial Translation, Selected Extempore Comments)

... On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would suggest following policy recommendations in relation to the competency of the Ministry of Interior:

End of Local Use and Export of Rosewood

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior HE Sar Kheng drafted a circular for my signature in relation to the issue of illegal logging. Our country has to stop using lo-

cally as well as exporting rosewood. We need to contact countries that are export destinations of rosewood to stop buying it. Rosewood processing also has to cease or logging of rosewood would rampage to other countries as well.

Yesterday I already signed the circular. It has gone into press already. Everyone has to abide by the instructions. As long as there are people who use the wood, there will be people who

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Kirirom-III Hydropower Inauguration

(23 February 2013 — Unofficial Translation, Selected Impromptu Comments)

The 18-MW Hydropower Kirirom-III

I am so happy to be here to witness the official operation of the Kirirom-III Hydropower Station of 18 MW in the district of Sre Ambel, Koh Kong province. This is the achievement, as was reminded by HE Suy Sem, Minister of Industry, Enregy and Mines, that is responding to the inauguration of the Kirirom-I Hydropower Station since May 1, 2002. At the time, seeing he fact that we have water potential here – which only runs off to sea and limited use for rice cultivation, I proposed to the CEITEC compnay to extend their feasinbility study in order to see if we could put into place the Kirirom-III hydropower station.

In fact the Kirirom-III hydropower was put into trial operation since April 2012,

which is ten months as of today. We also have to reschedule the inaugural day twice, once from the company's request and another from February 21 to 23 as I had to accompany the Queen Mother and HM the King to have medical checkup in the People's Republic of China. We then rescheduled it to today which is falling on a weekend day. I also have a family duty as well today as there is a wedding party of a nephew. However, this event cannot be rescheduled any more and there are more relatives who can be present at the wedding on my behalf too.

I am asking our participants here for their understanding

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that we have to organize the inaugural ceremony today that is your weekend break. However I am sure some of you might have planned it that after the ceremony will head to Preah Sihanoukville for the beach or Kompong Speu or Phnom Penh golf courses.

Electricity Price Varies with Oil Prices

Today we have one more achievement to celebrate as far as hydropower is concerned. We have electric power connected and transferred from the Kirirom-III to Kirirom-I and on to Phnom Penh. As is presented in the report by Minister of Industry, Energy and Mines, HE Suy Sem, our need for electricity is even bigger but starting from 2013 through to 2015, we will put more electric and hydropower stations into operation. While waiting for them, we are still facing shortage of power supply.

Taking this into consideration, certain areas in the country are facing with high prices for the electricity supplied by private companies who produce diesel-run electric power generation. This is the case for mostly areas that the state electric transmission lines have not come to them yet. As the electric production by private companies depend solely on diesel for their generation of electricity and the price of fuel fluctuates in the international markets. It is noted that the price of electricity goes up when the price of fuel has gone up, but it does not go back down when the price of fuel comes down. I urge the Electricite du Cambodge (Electricity of Cambodia) to review this situation.

We could understand that those companies still use the fuel they bought and stored from the time when the price was high. However, their stocks from then should not go

on and on. All these are somewhat provisional as our objective efforts are to increase further production and install more transmission lines – both main stations and substations – to the most parts of the country so as to reach out to the people's demand in every family.

BOT Form of Investment in Electricity Generation

Later from Tatai hydropower station, we will be able to get electric supply of another 120 MW and in 2014, 338 MW from the hydropower station of Russei Jrum Kraom and 246 MW from Atai hydropower station. Also in 2013, we also are hoping to generate electricity of 100 MW from coal and more in later stage. We are also planning to generate more hydroelectric power from Jiey Areng and also electricity from coal as well. Along with this we also need to invest in putting up transmission line to channel the power to where it needs to supply.

Invested in transmission lines are private companies and those credited from partners, People's Republic of China also included. For what is done to get the electric generation here, we are applying BOT module of investment where after thirty years of operation, the facility will be owned and operated by the state. We apply similar model in other hydroelectric investment projects with the difference noted on the length of operation periods – some 35 or 40 years. When that time comes, we on this podium would not be around or I may take another birth for two years already. The ones that operation period last thirty years, I might be around.

First Come First Served Investment Policy

We still need to continue to attract more investments in

generation of electricity. Based on investment potential – capital wise and technologywise, most of them are from the People's Republic of China. In some countries, they built the hydropower station themselves but they purchased equipments from the PRC, which produces the most materials and equipments used in hydropower stations. Some people could have said why do we only have investment from China. I would take this opportune moment to declare that the Cambodian policy vis a vis investment is "first come first serve." That is our first criteria defined in our investment policy. It would not be a matter at all whether one is investor coming from Japan, US or any country at all.

Another element in our policy is that we do not differentiate so from so or give so and so more priority. Everyone is to have equal chance. As I said, we are exercising "the first come, first serve" policy. Some people may argue that they would wait till after the general elections. Cambodia has no choice but to give the chance to those who would not have to wait. Those who neglect investment opportunity for the general election should not blame Chinese investors who did it on the contrary. They may raise an issue that so and so company now is small. Why don't you wait for a much bigger companies that will come after the elections.

As we are hungry now, we would not wait for the big fish. We would eat any fish that comes by. I must put it in simple term. Not only companies coming from different countries, those coming from the same country also compete that the one that come before them are smaller and they are bigger companies. What can we do when that company came see us once and never shows up in three

years. Let me affirm that our investment policy is those who come in first are to be served first. In fact the Chinese companies have been quite resolute in taking and implementing their investment projects.

Three Favorable Factors in China's Investments

Take for instance this area has been mined. According to the report of HE Keat Chhon, we have spent a sum of 1,366,475 USD to liberate a size of 6,885,300 square meters. The Chinese company has taken up the challenge to conduct their studies for the hydropower stations of Kirirom-I and Kirirom-III while other companies had abandoned them. So **one of the three critical points** of the Chinese investment in Cambodia is to take up the country's challenges and resolute in adjusting their investment projects in accordance with their Government's directions and in line with the recipient country's demand and objective.

The second point is that China has both technology and various equipments/materials made in the country. In so far as we know, in the world, there has not yet any country that builds and operates any hydropower dam bigger than the PRC. According to some of the studies, the PRC stands number one followed by Brazilia and Paraguay, Venezuela, Canada and the US. It is not Cambodia that invest in many hydropower stations. It is those countries that do but they do not seem to have problem with the environment. While in the case of Cambodia, there has always been complaint on possible environmental impacts.

As for the **third factor** that allows the PRC to make better investment decision is while other countries hesitated in

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putting money elsewhere for the financial crisis and economic downturn, those companies from the PRC did not lose their momentum at all. They either use their own capital in funding their investment projects or those from the China's state banks. Within the framework of ASEAN-China relations where there has always been the participations of Chinese Premier HE Wen Jiabao, I noted that he always declares that the PRC reserves ten billion USD per annum for investments, a part of which to be used by private sectors, in ASEAN countries.

We have done the best we can to attract the investments both state and private from the declared ten billion USD. I just do not want to reveal it here but some companies, not from China, who have chose to come invest in Cambodia have sought capital loans from the World Bank, IFC, ADB, etc. Some have even asked for the Royal Government's assurance latter to back up their loan requests. If that is what that needs to be done, we told them, why don't we ask for loan and do it ourselves. That is easier.

Well to stress again for those who came around saying why there are only investment from (the People's Republic of) China. While other do not come and the ones from China do, that is what happens. Many showed up and disappeared. When they showed up they always told us of their huge capital – billion USD. However, they never were serious. Real investors in Cambodia are talking of tens or hundreds of million. It has been our experience to have heard those non-serious investors come talking to us in billions. It was hard to believe as some after telling us of their billions capital, they borrow us money for their travel.

Coal-Run Electricity Generation Compensates Hydropower Loss in Dry Season

According to this report provided by HE Keo Ratanak, head of Electricity of Cambodia, looking at some of the figures about who produces hydropower the most, Cambodia is not high on the list. The People's Republic of China's hydropower production has accounted for 171,000 MW looking at the figure disposed in 2009. For the same period, Brazil and Paraguay produced 14,000 MW. Venezuela – a country bestowed with oil treasure, built a hydropower station that generates 10,200 MW or 64% of the energy produced from all sources. Canada produces 75,000 MW for own consumption and sale to the US. The US used hydropower dams for both energy and irrigation. Among them, in 2010, some 2,540 dams are made for generating and supplying 10,000 MW electricity to 8,000,000 households, replacing fuel burning of up to 5,000,000 barrels.

If the US also has hydropower stations, where do they use the water for? Some people like to use the US as their reference or support argument, while the US do not even know about it. They beg to be the US passive supporters while the US do not even know it. As I said in the general elections in 2008, it was lucky that the US passive supporters did not win the elections – as many of them backed up their promises with the US assistance – or the US would have to spend a lot of money so that those parties could keep their promises with the voters.

As of now we have put into operation the hydropower stations that generate over 200 MW – 193 MW from Komjai hydropower station, 18 MW

from Kiririom-III and 12 MW from Kiririom-I. The hydropower is the most resilient source of electricity that are not subjected to fluctuation of oil prices. This amount has not been adequate to current demand. In the rainy season, the Kiririom-III operated in full of 18 MW but in dry season it has reduced to 9 MW only and for only six hours. The power from Komjai station has also lowered from 193 MW to only 60 MW. This has called on production of electricity from other sources, mainly coal.

In the dry season we hope to produce more power from coal-run station to compensate for the loss of power generated by hydropower stations until we will have fuller capacity operation of the hydropower in rainy season. Take for instance this 18-MW hydropower station, if we were to use it fully, because of limited size of water sources, full capacity could run for about one month before the water depletes. So we have no other choice but to generate extra power supply from coal-run technology. That is why I make it clear in the beginning that production of electricity is still a main concern.

Peace Makes Electricity a Great Demand

Some may say it is so because Hun Sen has ended the war that many areas where before 1996 were in no demand of electricity have now sprawled up in development at the implementation of the win-win policy that pacifies all conflicted zones. Peace has brought about unexpected development and now we are in a state that everywhere demands electricity. In the older days, 1960s, 1970s and even 1980s, most of the houses used kerosene, tree saps, torch, fish oil to light up. As of now, if the transmission line is not there, the smaller generator

will take its place, and further away car battery, from which people depend for their TVs and lighting up. Not many houses use kerosene lamp and/or candle anymore.

As our country is in peace, we now have to light up the cities, rural towns, etc. Elder people might remember that we used torch and tree sap in the old day to give light. In 1960s, anyone with a kerosene lamp would be like the one with generator now. In a village of 200 houses, there might be ten houses or so with such lamps. With light they are the place where people gathered together. As you can see that the win-win policy has culminated in various important stages of development. For instance, aside from higher demand for electricity, the numbers of vehicles and motorbikes have also made a high jump.

Maybe this is again because of the leadership. That is why we asked in the past if we are making efforts or not? We said yes we were. And why did we not have this situation? It was because of wrong policy that the country was always at war and people had to live and eat collectively, hard-labored day and night, and nothing more than rice porridge to consume. That was because of wrong policy. As now we can see because of correct policy, starting from 1979 everyone were in their black suits, and most with bare feet.

Incorrect policies brought about war, killing, destruction, lack of demand for electricity and electricity itself. Now we do not have enough. It is because of peace that we need more electricity. Without peace no one would build home and need electricity. The Cambodian People's Party and I would take up the responsibility if those of you who possess the motorcycles and/or motorcars would argue

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that they are now worse off because they have cars and motorcycles.

No Heavy Industries along the Coast

Let us figure out how many cars travel from Phnom Penh to Preah Sihanoukville now. At this time, tourists already are enjoying the sea. There was a question to me and I directed it to HE Mok Mareth, Minister for Environment. It was the request of the Council for the Development of Cambodia. I instructed we would not allow heavy industries – such as oil refinery, steel industry, etc. to stand at the Preah Sihanoukville, Kep and Kompot provinces, as these industries would cause pollution to the whole beach. That is why I deny a request to set up an oil refinery at Prek Toal.

In one of my visits to China, then Premier Zhu Rongji was seeking my advice on a steel mill in Stoeng Hao. I then advised him to let interested company to go to Koh Kong to work with HE Lyon Phat as we have decided to keep the southeastern beach of Cambodia as our rising star for the country as far as tourism is concerned. This year we have 2,580,000 tourists with roughly 2,200 million USD incomes. We cannot afford to lose this income from tourism. Please think about it. It is in this environmental concern that we do not wish to have more fuel-run factories anymore. However, we cannot avoid coal but it has to be a clean one for environment too.

Deceitful Neo-Polpotists and Sovereign Debt Issue

I have noticed that now some people have spread their leaflets (with regard to the price of electricity). They said in their leaflets that the electricity has to be at 500 Riel per KWH. I asked from where they will get the electricity. In every invest-

ment, we have conducted negotiations and secured approval from the National Assembly. Do they want to declare themselves as neo-Pol Pot or what? To bring the price of electricity to 500 Riel per KWH is like to violate the standing agreement. Aside from this, no country in the world could secure the price of electricity at 500 Riel per KWH. Is this not deceiving? They claim that they would bring the price of gasoline down to 1,000 Riel per liter. How could they while countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Venezuela, etc. – oil richest countries in the world - could not bring their prices of oil this low. These politicians have made themselves cheaters.

Talking about the sovereign debt, as of today, we are still in burden of paying back the debt incurred from the past, those hundred millions that the Lon Nol regime owes to the US also included. There was to development from that money at all. How could they help boost agriculture or anything else since Lon Nol controlled only the cities? We do not know in what they owe but perhaps in purchasing bombs that they dropped over Cambodian people's heads. When the President of the United States was here I propose to him that he abolish certain amount of the debt whereas we will try to either pay back the rest at concessional interest rate or transfer the it to development aid. They have not yet agreed to our proposal as of this time.

This is the sovereign state. Even though (it was a debt incurred) by an illegal government that overthrew Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk and brought Cambodia into the flame of war, where numerous people died of US bombardments, we still accept our responsibility to pay it back. How could these people promise to bring the price of elec-

tricity to lower than that approved by the National Assembly? Do they wish to ignore the state responsibility from now? They apparently apply a policy to rip from the rich to give to the poor and that is why I say the neo-Pol Pot has come to haunt us in the 21 century. I do not make it a political preach, but only to remind you. They say our people are getting poorer but why our people's electricity demand jumps up and we need to make more investments.

A Visit to China in April

I thank the CEITEC International for implementing this challenging project successfully and placing the station into official operation today. I also thank for the assistance provided by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to Cambodia. I also depend on the Embassy to channel our thanks to the government of the People's Republic of China that is always providing support in urging private investments to Cambodia. I make it grateful to the Ambassador HE Pan Guangxie for his effort on all this. We have more construction sites to preside together in this year and coming years.

As of present, the People's Republic of China offers Cambodia its tax favor where the point is we need to invest in any goods that are deemed demanded by China, while our Chinese friends also have the chance to send in their investors to produce goods and export them to China. You may need to be reminded that the Chinese market is huge – 1,300 million people. Take for instance the province of Guangxi of about 47 million people has a much bigger production than Cambodia. We have also secured three favorable conditions for their investors - the loan, grant and concessional loan from China. Lately, the State of the Peo-

ple's Republic of China has urged the Chinese companies and investors to direct their investments to Cambodia. That has responded entirely to our wish. We do not want more loans but investments.

We could not afford to avoid borrowing money from China as many countries, including those in Europe, also are begging for loans for paying their staffs. Cambodia is in need for loan for speeding up its economic growth. Does not it sound different? While urging their investors to come invest in Cambodia, we know that the Chinese state is securing capital for them. On this note, for all projects in Cambodia, not even a single project that fails to meet its deadline. They are even finishing them before deadlines too. They can achieve this because they have sufficient capital. Moreover, the Bank of China is backing them up. All of this has promoted the Chinese-Cambodian relations to a new stage.

In my visit to the People's Republic of China in 2010 and the returning visit of President Hu Jintao in 2012 and then Premier Wen Jiabao again also in 2012, the two sides agree to raise their bilateral relations to the state of comprehensive strategic partnership. If all goes according to plan, I will conduct a visit in April 2013 to the People's Republic of China to meet with the new Chinese leaders, who are taking over leaderships from HE Hu Jintao and HE Wen Jiabao in March. We will then bring new inputs to the comprehensive strategic partnership with our Chinese friends. We will speed up cooperation in economics, trade, investment and other areas, especially tourism as the number of tourists coming from China has now stood at number three on top of the list.

Last Year of Rectangular Strategy Phase-II

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celebrate the birthday anniversary for Samdech Preah Abhiserei Sokuntheadhibadei, there was a request made to me as far as this construction project was concerned. The construction was at the time 15% done, and I was of the opinion that since this Buddhist University bears the King's name, I could not ignore the pace of construction at all. I was so happy to accept the request and was of great pleasure to help finish the construction as a token of gratitude and respect to HM the King as well as to Samdech Preah Sangharaja.

According to the report by Samdech Preah Abhiserei, it is clearly visible that there is inseparable human resource development relation between the Buddhist and secular worlds. As long as the secular world is making progress, the Buddhist world is too. In reciprocity, the Buddhist world also helps in people's education to perform good deed and when people are holding on to good deed, it will make the state management easier too. If people perform sinful actions, the state would have tremendous difficulties in its management in society. I see the complementarily indispensable role of the Buddhist and secular worlds.

Look, under Pol Pot's time, the regime was fierce as there was then only secular and no Buddhist or religious world. There was no morale education but killing. For us now we have Buddhist teachings, which are serving as law to measure human actions as far as merit or sinful actions are concerned. Combining the twos – Buddhist and secular worlds, there is a great contribution to the management of the society and in the building up of virtue, moral and morale, which are important parts of people's development and progress.

Twenty-Five Students from

PSR-BU Helped in Land Measuring and Titling

In other word, human resource development could be achieved not only from secular university but also from Buddhist universities as well. While learning the Buddhist teachings in the Buddhist University, students also learning other subjects that are inclusive in the curriculum of the university in the secular world as well. We would say that those who go through the Buddhist University have one extra subject to acquire in addition to other subject and that is the Buddhist teaching. As for this University, even the computers that Samdech Preah Abhiserei has requested, I also have them brought here today.

By the way, this is the first donation and if there is more in demand, please let me know because I am no stranger to this. I used to live the pagoda boy life too. I know the people's need very well. In the pagoda, though not all comes to spend time in the pagoda are poor as some of the rich people come to pagoda for their merits, the majority of them living there – only men - are from poorer families. I am so grateful that Samdech Preah Abhiserei allows 25 students from the PSR-BU to participate in the land measuring and titling mission in accordance with existing policy. I would take this opportune moment to express my sincere appreciation to their heroic efforts in the missions. Some of them have already returned and some are continuing their good works.

I would like to take this opportune moment to seek understanding from the University that some of those youth-student volunteers who have returned from the mission and have to have extra study on some subjects. I am grateful that the teachers involved have been so kind to help them. I am sure because they have

spend time in the field helping our people with their land measuring and titling, I am sure they could have failed to fulfill some of the tasks obliged by the University. I am sure they would find your assistance helpful.

More Assurances Offered

Samdech Preah Abhiserei already mentioned that the costs of construction is 488,417 USD, and 15% of which, or 72,000 USD, Samdech has shared. I covered the rest. As I clarified earlier, I must find the way to help finish the construction as it is attaching to the name of HM the King as well as to the on-going efforts of Samdech Preah Abhiserei. Leaving the project to depend solely on money raised from religious activities would take the construction a long time to be ready. It was on that note that I am willing to cover the rest 85% or 416,917 USD for the project.

There was also a request letter from Samdech Preah Abhiserei for 50 computers, 5 printers, 5 photocopiers and 20 LCD projectors, which has total costs of 48,800 USD. I already approved the request. There is no use of having a building without the teaching and studying tools. However, I have noted one thing that we should not repeat it next time. Look you have younger people sitting on this side, which is in shady condition, while elder people have to sit in the sun. People whose task is to arrange the seats should be more considerate in their work.

Also today, Samdech requested for a hall of 24 meters by 24 meters with the total costs of 150,000 USD. I approve the request. I have brought the money here for you and you may work it out to keep it safe for the construction. Thieves would not distinguish monks from parishioners. The reason I am bringing the money for you right away

is because we will have the next elections soon and there will be this busy time for the formation of the Royal Government. If I were to give you a chunk of money at a time, it could be a daunting task if you need money and I would have no money then.

I would take this opportune moment to devote the achievements made possible by our collaboration, this hall and the PSR-BU altogether, for the soul of of Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod, whom we said final goodbye about two weeks ago, for HM the King and the Queen Mother and the two Buddhist Patriarchs. I have a strong hope that if there will be truly the next world I would want to be the pagoda boy again.

Thanks for Institutions Involved in the Cremation

Now I would address a few issues in relation to the royal funeral (of Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod). On behalf of the Royal Government and my own, my wife and I would express our sincere thanks to HM the King as well as the Queen Mother for their heartfelt letters, which you already have heard, to me thanking the organization of the whole event. Their Majesties also expressed in those letters their thanks to all institutions involved.

I am so proud of the work that we have done altogether – the National Assembly, the Senate, the Royal Government, other legislative and executive institutions, the judicial institutions, the armed forces and the Buddhist monks in the whole Kingdom of Cambodia also included. What we have done is indeed giving an honorable rank to the King Father in his final departure. The works that we have done to pay respect as his grateful children have gone through smoothly and in discipline.

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We could as well consider it as Cambodia's luck. It is a miracle that from the day he passed away to the final cremation, nothing of misfortunate nature happened. It was truly the miraculous power of Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod for Cambodia. I really believe in this miracle. I would like to take this moment to express my deep thanks on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia to the Buddhist monks in the whole Kingdom, the armed forces as well as the sub-national level authority and the people inside and outside the country for their participations in saying the final goodbye to Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod.

I would also thank the different commissions involved, the deployment of the over ten thousands armed forces and the live broadcast by all TV stations and radios. I am so proud of our nation. In the whole mourning periods, they put on only two songs – (1) Goodbye Cambodia, composed and sung by the former King Father and (2) Blood of Gratitude, written by me. They put off all commercial advertisements, music, concerts, etc.

The Royal Palace Minister Plays Key Role

I would like to take this moment to express my deep thanks to Samdech Kong Sam Ol, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Royal Palace, for his indispensable organizational skills to help me with in putting the events in order. Take for instance we were quite concerned about the funeral procession where the coffin would be moved on and off the carriage. We were worried that while doing so, the coffin might not be in stabilized position.

With the skill of Samdech Kong Sam Ol and direct leadership from me, the whole

thing went on smoothly. I would say that if we did not have Samdech Kong Sam Ol, we would face an impossible task to handle. I have brought that to the attention of HM the King and the Queen Mother, while Samdech Krom Preah (Norodom Ranaridh) also made this remark.

Water and Soil from Kulen Mountain, Cambodia's Honor and Gratefulness

I wish to clarify on something. I would like to inform you again that the water used to extinguish the pyre fire and to wash the remains brought in from Kulen Mountain, an affluent tradition that we must hold on tightly to. We had to organize water-asking ceremony at the Mountain of Kulen and bring the water to Phnom Penh. We also brought soil from Kulen Mountain too for placing underneath the coffin for cremation. That is the story. In addition to that, we also have a meaningful procession. As Deputy Head in stand-by of the funeral organization commission and Samdech Kong Sam Ol as permanent Deputy Head, we have statues of many kinds of animal, selected for their meanings. In the older day, human labor pulled those animal statues but we used vehicle to carry them along with the procession.

Everything has happened and worked in tandem. Despite the exaggeration run in the press, Deputy Prime Minister HE Keat Chhon has set aside the required amount for the need of the preparation of the event. I told Samdech Krom Preah that even if the cost would be ten times more (the Royal Government) would still have to make it happen in gratitude and respect to the great works for the nation by Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod and for the country's honor too. We could not afford to be too common.

There has been some opinion brought forward that Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod's will was to keep his body lie in state for just a short time. As far as this matter is concerned, I would remind that Deputy Prime Minister HE Tia Banh was with me in Beijing and he could be a reference. Tracing back a bit, on the day that the King Father passed away, 15 October 2012, we issued no circulation. The King Father's will was not to keep his body for too long since that would cost more for the state budget. I then proposed that we could not afford to be too common on this because the event would involve the country's honor and reflect gratefulness to the great favor HM did for the country.

I suggested that the body of the King Father should lie in state at least three months. You may notice that in our first circular, it states the body of the King Father will lie in state not less than three months. After making necessary calculations involved, the construction of the crematorium had only over two months – starting from November 7 to do the job. The construction was underway days and nights until we had the crematorium in place. We now leave the crematorium as it is so that our people can come to visit but we also will have to discuss when to remove it before the Khmer New Year comes.

Pyre Lighted Five Times

Everything went perfectly well. However, there has been rumor on the cremation day with regard to some scene people saw on TV screen. The rumor goes from street to street, one coffee table to another, etc. The press has also written about it. It is in this development that I have the need to clarify what happened or the story will go without end. I am begging their pardons – HM the King and the

Queen Mother, for the necessity to clarify and reveal in the presences of the two Buddhist patriarchs about the miracles during the pyre lighting at the cremation time.

How does the story go? First, people are pondering why it took too much time for the cremation to happen, why did the artillery salute and the fireworks were not on as the clergymen already gave a signal. What took it so long? I am sure some of the people present on this forum also did not know what happened. According to plan, everything happened at once altogether – lighting the pyre, the Buddhist monks give their sermons, the clergymen give their sound signals, the fireworks around the crematorium light up and the artillery salutes start. However, as was witnessed by the two Buddhist patriarchs, it took us about fifteen minutes later to be able to fire the artillery salutes. What was the story?

As I am talking about this again I have a pilomotor reflex as it is indeed a great miracle that I am sure was born out of the great power of the former King Father. It was our plan to finish up before 6 pm. At ten minutes to six, after the flower laying period was over, HM the King, the Queen Mother and those involved had to go up to the pyre deck of the crematorium. The technicians then moved the coffin at which time the head-side lied to the west to lie to the east so that the lighting would start at six o'clock sharp. As we had to remove the cloth that covered the face, we had to cover up one of the camera. The issue here is why it took longer than expected for the artillery salutes to start. I should now reveal to you that it took us five times to light up the pyre before it finally got on. It was truly a miracle.

However, according to my

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observation, from the start, Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod would not “move” if it was not the time. While we move the coffin out of the palace, there was a time that I noticed and said to Samdech Kong Sam Ol why the soul banner holder were marching on while the funeral procession did not move yet. The fact I noticed this is because I had come across this once with HE Chea Sophara when it was my later mother’s case. As the coffin arrived before the time set by the funeral Feng Shui man, the electricity was off and came back only at the time set. I do not compare my late mother’s case to that of the King Father. I just want you to see the miracle.

The King-Father’s Miraculous Power

I may as well go into detail so that you could easily understand. As the covering cloth removed, I was standing right at the foot side alone. The Queen Mother, HM the King stood on the southern side of the coffin facing north while the Buddhist patriarchs stood on the northern side of the coffin facing south. Samdech Krom Preah then joined me later at the foot side. Samdech Kong Sam Ol handed me the candle with long handle that I had to present it to HM the King.

I knell down presenting him with the candle. Both HM the King and the Queen Mother lighted the candle from the “sun ray lighter.” The Buddhist patriarchs then gave their sermon while the royal clergymen gave their sound signals and the candle lighted for about two centimeters. For some reason nobody knew, the candle was off.

For the second time, the candle burned about three centimeters, but it was off again. It was a miracle. It was clearer as the third time had come. We

poured alcohol from top to bottom of the pyre lighter. Their Buddhist patriarchs were there at the time. The light went up but fell off soon after to extinguishing. HM the King and the Queen Mother then moved to the southern side of the coffin standing facing north and invited the two Buddhist patriarchs to light up the pyre with my help. It was even before we torch the pyre, the light again went off. One may interpret this according to one’s belief and judgment but to me it is a miracle.

For the fifth time, I begged forgiveness from Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod and said that I have no other choice. HM the King and the Queen Mother were also this time at the foot side to the north and the two Buddhist patriarchs were at the foot side to the left, where I was also standing. I then lighted the pyre from Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod left foot side or the southern side of the pyre. The lighting went into flame. Anyone may interpret what you see and hear. Finally, I was the one to get the pyre on to the end. I bring this up to end the rumor and interpretation that went along accusing those in charge of technological set up, lack of coordination between artillery salutes and the religious rituals, etc.

HM the King and the Queen Mother said to Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod that Their Majesties only followed his will. The two did not seem be able to light the pyre. In response to their gestures, to my analogy, the soul of Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod prevented the lighting up. As for the parts that involved the two Buddhist patriarchs and me, and then I finally did it alone, it is open for anyone’s interpretation. If I have missed any points, the two Buddhist patriarchs may want to give more in detail. There were many people present at the time that I think this incident would not be a secret.

In short, there was great miracle from the merit of HM the King Father at that night.

It was beyond anyone’s interpretation. Though I was in tear and Samdech Krom Preah too, I heard it loud and clear. I said to the Queen Mother that the King Father did not want to leave his children and the Queen Mother responded: “HM waited for Samdech Prime Minister (to light up the pyre).” It was true and the Buddhist patriarchs here could have heard it too that evening. The Queen Mother then said there does not seem to hear the artillery salutes. I then gave a sign for the salutes. Again, this is the truth. I wish that there would be no more baseless interpretation. No matter whom you would ask you would get the same story. I do not know why I became the one in the end to be able to get the pyre on fire.

I was not to be the one, and the first to do so. I did not know what I did in the past life that in this life I have always been at the side of HM the King Father to then end. On 14 November 1991, I accompanied the King Father from Beijing to the Royal Palace and finally I was the one that organized the funeral and lighted up the pyre. It was also my first time to pick the remains from cremated body – whether it is from the Royal families or simple citizen. When my grandmother died, I was a monk. So I did not have chance to pick her remains. As for the grandparents on my mother’s side, I was busy visiting India. They died one after the other in just one week. I am now inherited continued defense of the throne and HM the King.

Begging Pardons for Shortcomings

I am begging for forgiveness for all of my actions from HM the King and the Queen Mother. Their Majesties said to

me “Samdech do not make any mistakes.” I would have to beg for forgiveness in one other incident about artillery salutes. There was a protocol that first we had to wait until the Queen Mother and HM the King leave the place and second they had to wait for my carriage to leave the place to. However, as the funeral procession had gone on and the coffin carriage went farer, though my carriage was right there near the artillery team, I ordered the salutes while the Queen Mother and HM the King were close by. I have the necessity to get that done and cannot follow the plan.

In another instance, we could not hold the funeral procession to start only after the preaching completed for we had more preaching along the procession or we would not get to the crematorium in time. That was why after the monks finished their sermon, the clergymen had to do their ritual all along the departed procession ... ■

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I also thank and appreciate the efforts made by the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mines, the Ministry of Economy and Finance as well as the Electricity of Cambodia, the local authority of the Koh Kong province’s Sre Ambel district and the armed forces, the demining team included. Those who demined this area are not from CMAC or Engineering teams of the Ministry of National Defense. They are trained deminers of the centre for demining in preparation for missions in foreign countries, like Sudan and Lebanon.

We have more works to do while we are achieving so much. This is also the last year for us to implement the Rectangular Strategy Phase-II where we have to make further efforts to promote 7% economic growth as we already did 7.3% for last year...■

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supply them. Rosewood suppliers would not only chop the ones inside Cambodia but also in other countries too. If we go on allowing export of rosewood, illegal logging will go on too.

Where there are no buyers, there would not be suppliers. We have to seek cooperation from countries that are importing rosewood and cooperate with them so that they stop buying rosewood from Cambodia. That is one way of solving the problem. Certain elements in some countries already had rosewood logged but they could not get them out. In this case, Cambodia has become a transit place. Rosewood does come into Cambodia but the Cambodians were not the ones to log it. There are rosewood loggers who operate that in those countries. They logged it and got to their contacts in Cambodia so that they can channel their rosewood through. We will have to find way to curb that. However, let's first study the circular and implement it altogether.

Beware of Small Ember that Makes Big Fire

Please allow to stress on this point. I have told Lok Chumteav Yingluck Shinawatra while she was visiting Cambodia to attend the cremation of the late King Father that in Cambodia there are no extremists tendency. I told her, no matter how the International Court of Justice would interpret, even if the interpretation would give Cambodia the upper hand on the issue, Cambodia would not resort to force to move the Thai force out of the area. We would sit down and talk to prepare for a smooth process.

However, on the Thai side, there have many opinions, which also include the demand for implementation of the Tokyo Treaty in 1941, which compelled (the French) to con-

cede to Thailand the provinces of Battambang, Siemreap and Kompong Thom at the time of the WW II. There are also ideas that if the ICJ interpretation would be a disadvantage to Thailand, the country should deny it and use force.

Facing with this situation, between the Royal Governments of the two countries, there might not be a problem, but there have been flourishing public opinion on the Thai side on the issue that we may have to take high precaution. From our side we will have to exercise restraint on this issue, no matter how the interpretation would come out. We will exercise calmness while seeking way to evade conflict. We will take precautions. We would not allow those extremists to ignite fire into the relation between Cambodian and Thailand.

We will do our best to maintain the good relations no matter what the ICJ interpretation would come out. I told HE Yingluck Shinawatra that let's not allow this problem to expand into the whole border issue between our two countries, prevent it from impairing other fields of cooperation – like economics, trade, etc. In short, we should not allow a small ember make big fire. We cannot move Thailand to other place on this planet and Thailand could not do the same for Cambodia. We have to coexist peacefully.

It is indeed regretful that in Thailand there are many trends of opinions. Some even went this far to deny the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, while the other brings up the Tokyo Treaty of 1941, in the WW II, that forced the French to concede Battambang, Siemreap and Kompong Thom provinces to Thai side. Well, now we have already created new provinces in the area – Preah Vihear, Uddar Meanjei and

Banteay Meanjei. So, let me remind you once again that there has been provocation from their side to use force. For us, we would not do that. I am stressing it today because we have here the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense too. No matter how advantageous would the interpretation be to our side, we will exercise restraint and seek the way to implement the ICJ's decision.

Overloaded Lorry Measures and Fire Catastrophe

As far as traffic issue is concerned, this morning I talked about it in the Cabinet's meeting already. However, there is one point that I want it to get out for public knowledge. I also just learnt about it. Deputy Prime Minister HE Yim Chhay Ly who led the meeting between the Ministry of Public Works and Transports and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries brought to my knowledge that all overloaded lorries were fined and then allowed to drive on with excess weight. What do you call that? It is weighting lorry to charge for excessive weight. It is not measure to prevent overloaded lorry from driving in the roads.

This will bring about more malfeasances as transport companies would pay the two million Riel (or about 500 USD) fine and go on abusing the roads with excessive weight. Our streets/roads will keep on damaging because of this. I am giving serious instruction that extra weight will need to pay a fine, while the company has to remove excess goods and load it on to another vehicle. Otherwise, the lorry would not leave the weighting station. If you only fine them and let them go on, we cannot guarantee the state of our streets and roads. I order you to check on this again.

I also inform the transport company that all transporta-

tion means from today on will not just pay the fine and go on. I encourage those involved to fulfill this work together. If we overlook the situation, it does not how much money we would have, there would not be enough to repair or rebuild roads. It took me by surprise while doubting maybe I did not have sufficient information.

As for fire disaster, I already talked about on 25 December 2012 at the inauguration of the sugar factory in Kompong Speu, where I encouraged the private companies to take part in preventing fire disaster themselves. I am longing to see concrete outcome. I am so sorry that last night a market in the district of Koh Thom was on fire. The Koh Thom market of 200 stalls was on fire at around 3 am and we have yet to receive the assessment report. However, according to HE Sun Chanthol, the destruction costs about 300 to 400 thousands USD. It is on this note that maybe it is better to build a new one. I have assisted in rebuilding a number of markets so far in Kratie, Kompong Thom, Pursath and Preah Sihanoukville. In saying so, I hope our people do not put their market on fire for the Prime Minister to help build a new one. I raised money from colleagues and friends to build the market. It is not from the state budget ...

Checkpoints—The Same Old Issue

It is still the same old issue. It happens in repetition manner. I have begged it on behalf of the Buddhist monks and by various other means. You at the provincial level also have all the power you need. Why the issue is still hot here? I have the report about the fact that these anarchic checkpoints are mobile. In fact, I should not bring it up as it is your work already. I just advise you further. Let's do it altogether now...☐