

A Buddhist Temple in Kompong Cham's Jiro

(01 April 2013 — Unofficial Translation, Selected Impromptu Comments)



01 April 2013 — Samdech Techo Hun Sen and Madame with people in the commune of Jiro, Tbong Khmum district, Kompong Cham province (Kampuchea Thmey)

Three Memories in Jiro

Today my wife and I are so happy to be able to participate with our Buddhist monks and people to celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony to build the Buddhist temple for the pagoda of Kompong Russei in the commune of Jiro, Tbong Khmom district. We are indeed happy to return to this area once again. The place is full of memories of suffering and separation, and relating to the historical development of our country. Since my father is in critical health condition, he is unable to come celebrate the ceremony for the pagoda that he initiated, while HE Pen Ien and Okhna Tri Pheap aided in the construction. I have not told him that we are here today.

However, today his children are here to join with all of our Buddhist monks and people here to celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony in just fifteen days from the Khmer

New Year, the Year of Snake or the year 2557 on Buddhist calendar. Also in just three days from today, according to my official birthday, I will be one year older. In fifteen days from today, it is when I lost one of my eyes in the battle.

Memories Beyond Description, Even in 50 Hours

We have today the presence of former commanders, officers and non-commissioned officers from the former generation in this ceremony. We also have the presence of nieces and nephews who are youth-student volunteers in the land measuring mission. According to request from HE Chea Sophara (Minister of Rural Development), we also have here the presence of 6,760 youths who are new members of the Cambodian People's Party. There was a heavy rain though last night throughout the country.

(Continued on page 4)

Agricultural Land Tax, Pig Import & Forest

(26 April 2013 — Unofficial Translation, Selected Extempore Comments)

In addition to the prepared text, at the closing of the annual review meeting of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Samdech Techo Prime Minister made the following selected extempore comments:

No Tax on Household Agricultural Land – CPP Policy

I think we need to make this point clear. Charging tax on household agricultural land is not and will not be the policy pursued by the Cambodian People's Party, even though there are increasing number of farmers. I would reassure that whether there will or will not

be my presence, I am urging the leaders of the Cambodian People's Party, whoever will continue the Party's policy, not to impose tax on household agricultural land. We need to do everything we can so that our people will benefit. With their benefits, people will spend and we will charge them the value added tax for whatever they will buy.

To impose no land tax is like helping them right in the field. For example, they need to spend one or two hundred thousand Riel per hectare as tax. When we do not charge

(Continued on page 8)

A Buddhist Temple in Prey Veng's Svay Antor

(22 April 2013 — Unofficial Translation, Selected Impromptu Comments)

CPP Political Platform Covers All, Religion Included

I would like to take this opportunity to talk a bit about Buddhism. I should recall that it has been the Cambodian People's Party vision since 1980s as there was a discussion in those days about its policy towards religion, and that included the state religion – Buddhism. The CPP political platform has covered every stakeholders, farmers, workers, intellectuals, religions, etc. I wish to clarify that what we thought about and believed so in 1980s has now become a connector to the present day's policy development for religion. It serves as measuring tool for religious progress in Cambodia too.

Together with Samdech Chea Sim, Samdech Heng Samrin, and other CPP leaders, we have set out a correct policy in all fields in the Kingdom of Cambodia. We have noticed the development of religious affairs where there are Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. For this religion of Christianity, we then noticed early involvements of World Vision and numerous other organizations. I remember saying that religion is the drug for believers. Pol Pot dismantled pagodas, killed the monks, but people still place their trust in reli-

(Continued on page 2)

In This Issue

- Buddhist Temple in Jiro, P-1
- Buddhist Temple in Prey Veng, P-1
- Agricultural Land Tax, P-1

(Continued from page 1)
gious faith ...

Buddhist Pagodas Shelter People

As of this point, we are looking to the Buddhist pagodas as major part of our policy toward elderly people, youth and children of our country. People of all circles could have asked why the CPP people not only allows people to practice religions in general and Buddhism in particular, but also share their resources to initiate the ritual of all sorts and to build and/or rebuild more pagodas. This has become our attention not only because the Buddhist religion provides education to the people, urging them to perform good action, but more importantly, because it plays a critical part in our policy for care of the aged, children and youth as well.

Let us all see. When people grow into their old ages, where do they go? They go to the Buddhist pagodas. That is important. That is why CPP not only opens for religious faiths but also has its members involved in all sorts of Buddhist ritual and in all of the more than 4000 pagodas throughout the country. Some of the aged people are in good care of their children but they also visit the pagodas every Buddhist precept day. Where would they go if we do not have pagoda? This is one dimension of the problem. We also have one other issue where a good number of people throughout the country are also taking shelters in pagoda.

Since 1979, the Cambodian People's Party been doing this job. So far, it has helped millions of people, especially the aged ones who take shelters in the pagodas. If the pagodas did not have the ability to rebuild or build in the past 34 years, after the liberation on 7 January 1979, where old aged people, especially in poor families, would go. It is indeed a great

part for the policy to take care of the aged. Take for example, in the pagoda of Preah Pothivang Am Lim Heng, hundreds of grand old dads and moms are staying to learn and practice precepts. Our people at an average of 60 years old would want to go to pagoda.

Therefore, looking into the old-aged people policy, one should not overlook the role of Buddhist pagoda. It is equally important that one must identify the role of the Cambodian People's Party in its involvement together with the people to build up Buddhism, and other religious faiths. Some people have come and talked about their so and so visions and made empty promises. In the past 34 years, let us ponder, if there were no Buddhist temple and pagodas, where would they go and what would they do? Take for instance parishioners of Serei Udom pagoda, where would they go to practice their precepts. In this meaning that Buddhist pagoda is a part of the country's policy for old aged people, the Cambodian People's Party has done and continues to do in its support for the Buddhism.

As for policy towards youth and children, we need to look to the facts that there is school next to it. In our country, in the time when Cambodia was under France, there were so few schools. Many who had learned a lot were the ones who stayed and learned in pagoda. Later, we had more and more schools build outside but still adjacent to pagoda. As of now, we have so many schools. According to the report of HE Hah Saret, there is a university, three institutes, a school of pedagogy, etc. There are up to 256 school buildings – 1,297 classrooms in all - that I have sponsored the construction. I am sure today we will have some more.

Some of the youth may want

to go into monkhood and we must consider this in the policy for youth and their development too. Some people may stay in monkhood for just a few years before they leave it. There is one other point that we all know about. Some poor parents bring their children to the pagoda and place them under monks' upbringing and education. I used to be one of them. I like being one, this life or next. My dad brought me to the monk for education and care. He told the monk all he wanted back from the monk was for me to have two eyes still. That is an expression to mean the monk can do whatever he deems necessary to get the kid educated, but do not to the extent of blinding him.

The Buddhist monks provide people with advice to perform merit action, which in turn facilitate social and state management since the people are respecting the law. To abide by the Buddhist dhamma to perform merit action in the society is tantamount to respecting the state law and order already. It is in this understanding that the Cambodian People's Party has been ready to provide its assistance in all Buddhist pagodas throughout the country. Responding to the question why the CPP organizes so many Buddhist rituals for Samdech Techo Hun Sen, HE Sar Kheng, HE Bin Chhin, and other leaders to preside over, I would say that not only are we open for religions and their rituals but also for support and involvement.

Solar Energized Lighting for Pagodas and Schools; Fed- eration of Youth

I have a discussion with Dr. Sath Sami and figure out the need for electricity for lighting in pagodas as well as in schools. I have seen the proposal from the pagoda for a generator but on top of providing the generator, I will see about giving a set of solar ener-

gized lighting as well. The solar lighting would serve better for the need of light at night. This should help our elderly people who have to come to the temple at night for Buddhist rituals. It is almost the time to provide "candle for rainy season" and I urge that the act of providing should be done before the election campaign period as it falls on the day set for this Buddhist ritual – providing candle for the monks in Buddhist pagodas.

As for lighting the candle, I would suggest that the Buddhist monks would do so on our behalf in all over 4,000 pagodas because if the CPP officials come down to the pagodas to light the candle with our monks, during the electoral campaign period, they would be accused of buying people's heart and mind.

Here in Prey Veng, there is a strong youth movement led by Sar Sokha. It is the Union of Federation of Cambodian Youth of Prey Veng. I would ask for your understanding and help as I wish to leave him at your service. I learnt that they have engaged in various works. For instance, lately they helped people catching snails that attack rice fields. Those snails have been resistant to pesticide. That left us no choice but to catch and kill them manually. As Sar Sokha is now one of the CPP candidates for the fifth legislative term of the National Assembly of the Prey Veng constituency in the forthcoming election on 28 July 2013, which is over three months from now, I am calling for your support and look after him.

Sar Sokha is the son of HE Sar Kheng. We fathers are getting older now. We need to involve our children in politics and public functions. We have appointed recently Tri Narin, a young member as governor of a province. He is a university

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

graduate. We need to involve youths in various public functions. There has to be connectivity. Sar Sokha is not here today but he has always been active with my sons. It is like what I was talking about in Kompong Speu that HE Sar Kheng's father and my father joined together their Buddhist activity in the pagoda of Ampil Voan. HE Sar Kheng and I are working together in the Royal Government. Now our sons are working together too. I thank the working team of the CPP who provide assistance for Prey Veng province and appreciate efforts made by every level of provincial authorities and the armed forces.

The Korean Peninsula and Preah Vihear Temple Issues

Please allow me to remind you of what I said on April 11 in the district of Pearaing, Prey Veng province, on two issues – the threat of war in the Korean peninsula and the court case of Preah Vihear temple. As far as the threat of war in the Korean peninsula is concerned, it has proven that the Royal Government has taken correct position while various circles have opened attacks on the Royal Government in social media for neglecting the concern for safety for its people and diplomats in South Korea. So far, as we know now, has the Royal Government been doing right or not? Should we have evacuated our workers from South Korea, we may have difficulty in regaining their trust and work access.

Therefore, it is important that formulating a policy must be objective and farsighted. What would happen when both North and South Korea are in normal state of affairs while we move Cambodian workers out? We have delegated the task to the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training to send our inspectors to the country to follow up with the

situation and work together with the Cambodian Ambassador over there. The Korean peninsula is still in tense situation but fighting does not break out. As of this morning, there has been news that North Korea has moved a missile carriage. Our point is that a fight is still a possibility next to none. I would therefore appeal to our people to keep calm and not to be concerned on this issue. The Royal Government has already planned certain measures should the war happen.

Secondly, I would like to appeal our people to trust the Royal Government's competence in relation to the verbal interpretation on the Preah Vihear issue at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. I would assure our people and the press to rest assured in the Royal Government's efforts in dealing with this issue. We have entrusted the task with HE Hor Namhing, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, who works closely with the Cambodian delegation, which includes also three foreign lawyers – a US, a British and a French national. I would advise all concerned to make no comments on the issue.

As for Thailand, we have noticed that there are at least four different groups who have involved in this issue. As the verbal interpretation is now over, it seems the opposition and the ruling parties in Thailand are throwing fire on each other.

One of the groups leads a movement with an aim to raise flag on the Preah Vihear temple and to appeal the Thai delegation to walk out of court, to recognize no jurisdiction, etc. Well, that is what is happening on the Thai side and we leave it up to the Thais to deal with it. As for Cambodia, we are

united on this matter.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the Cambodian delegation led by HE Hor Namhong as well as our lawyers for defending our arguments in a competent manner. As I said already in Kompot the other day, the session was to give verbal testimony to the court and the court will have its decision in between October and November. We will leave it up to the court and need to make no statement that would infringe upon the court's competency.

Our people and perhaps some of the politicians may ask why Hun Sen keeps silent on this issue. We already send the matter to court and a delegation to see matter through, why should we make further comments. However, I have information updates though we have five-hour time differences between Cambodia and Holland. I always had to stay until after 12 midnight to receive the updates on our interpretation and Thai interpretation. In all there are only two main points here – Cambodia is demanding the court to reinterpret its decision in 1962 and the Thais insist no need for interpretation.

The Cambodian delegation uses every cause-in-fact and proximate cause arguments based on the map in Annex 1 to demand the court to interpret its decision in 1962. We have only one map while the Thais bring in so many different maps. This or that line that the Thais presented does not exist in the cause-in-fact and proximate cause of the International Court of Justice decision in 1962. Whether to give its interpretation or not is up to the court, but we need to inform our people about what is going on in this regard.

However, what would the court do to its decision in July 2011 on establishing the de-

militarized zone in Preah Vihear? Should they leave it like that for years to come? Should it go back to the former status quo, which both sides of conflict send in their armies to the area where the court entrusts then chair of ASEAN – Indonesia, the task to look after its development? Doing so would end the Indonesian role as well. I would suggest that our people hold on to this argument. Normally it would not be an easy thing to reverse.

Secondly, a judge of Somalian nationality proposed to the two sides – Cambodia and Thailand to provide maps and coordinates to the court by April 26 and no later than May 30. We would leave this to the lawyers to work on it. What I wanted to share with you here is that we have made correct prediction. While people enjoyed the New Year, the delegation led by HE Hor Namhong in Holland as well as me in Phnom Penh, continued working. We need to ask one question, why does the other side in this case not want the court to interpret? If they are not the culprit, why should they be concerned?

However, though we fight in the court, Cambodia and Thailand should not be considering each other as enemy. I have worked with Prime Minister Yingluck Sihanawatra. The two countries should go on working with each other no matter what decision the court will make. The two Ministers of Foreign Affairs are also in good terms with each other in the court. We should not consider each other enemy and should have good cooperation. I would like to send my appreciation to the armed forces, local authorities and people along the Cambodian-Thai border and encourage them to visit or do business with each other. Cambodia cannot move Thailand to another place or Thailand would do it otherwise...■

(Continued from page 1)

I flew a bit early this morning so that I could have a bird's eye view of Kompong Treas, where I saw the already-built bridge at Prek Bat Dei and a bridge at Prek Peam Jilang. I have observed the people's livelihood in the area. The helicopter went over Tuol Dambang and then Tuol Keo. We also got the view of Boeng Tunsong and the Samraong isle in the Mekong River. I also viewed numerous places where I used to travel across.

In fact, I also do not know where to begin because there are so many memories that even fifty hours would not be sufficient for me to bring it out. I would like to express my deep thanks for the people in this area, Cambodian and Muslim alike, for saving my life and for taking care of me in time of great difficulties during wartime. Later there was a number of families – Cambodian and Muslim – who had also saved my wife's and my son's lives. The Polpotists then evacuated people, my wife and son included, to Kompong Treas and then to Boeng Pruol, Prek Ta Et, and then to Thmar Pij. They had to walk across the rubber plantation at night and stayed at Boeng Thom for duty to make fermented fish.

My wife was then a widow because they believed that her husband was dead already. It was true that she had been a widow for over two years. It was quite fortunate that they believed I was dead so that they did not monitor her movement and life. That could have saved her life. In the song "Misery of a Bereaved Wife," a part of the lyrics goes "*picking rice panicle during the day in Tbong Khmum, weeping and embracing son at night thinking of husband, living in disguise and fear, waiting for the new day, the day sufferings no more.*" The song describes indeed lives of my wife, my son and mine ...

Soldiers under Command Laid to Rest in Jiro

We must put every piece of the puzzle altogether. We cannot leave any piece ignored. All did start from 17 April 1975. I was wounded on 16 April 1975, one day before the liberation of Phnom Penh. Thousands of Cambodian youth participated in the national liberation. We did not know then about Pol Pot. All we knew was to respond to the call of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk. Everyone I met did the same thing. Today we have here two former nurses – Bren and Phal, who then were so busy taking care of the wound in the battles. Phal was always in good military uniform and Bren was then the head of the hospital. I will get back on this later.

I am so grateful to the monks and people for allowing me to have a place to stay. Please allow me also to pay my respect to the souls of former soldiers under my command who were laid to rest in this pagoda. Many soldiers died and some were lucky as either they had proper burials here in this pagoda or were taken away by their families. In those days, we buried our dead soldiers with a closed-up bottle in which we placed a piece of paper with his/her name written on it so that it would be easier for us to identify them later. We have a stupa here marking our national liberation from the US supported Lon Nol regime.

Along the river, those who had been living in less fear were perhaps people who settled far from the wooden bridge up to the lake of Boeng Kambao and Boeng Pruol. However, the relatively calm situation for them happened because the Lon Nol army withdrew from the islets of Koh Jruk and Koh Samraong. Still, their artillery could reach Boeng Kambao causing some casualties to

some of my friends. People settling from Boeng Pruol and Prek Batdei to the upstream could be safe from the Lon Nol artillery.

1973 Paris Agreement – A Huge Psychological Gain

I came to settle in this area since when I reported to the marquis in Snuol of Kratie province. I then came down to Memot district to fight against the (former President of South Vietnam) Nguyen Van Thieu's forces along the national road 7 with brother Sok Saroen. In those days, there was only one B40 for a platoon. I had my first three shots because I was in the frontline at the village of Sa Am. I arrived somewhere in this region in late 1972. I first stayed in Kompong Treas and then to Peam Jilang. Later, we moved the army down here and most of the time I lived in Kompong Russei. We launched the fight along the national road 7, where the Lon Nol forces came as far as Moat Khmumng bridge. We also met with the Lon Nol forces in the barracks of Svay, Toek Kruoch, Tonle Bet from one side, and from the downstream, we met at Prek Jik Don Tei, Banteay Korng and to Tonle Bet. As for this area, we had engagements from Jiro and Roka Thom through to Tonle Bet.

Later, from Jiro through to Tonle Bet there were only two barracks – one in Jiro and another in Roka. When the Paris Agreement was reached in 1973 requiring for the US withdrawal, and there was no more air strikes from August 1973, the Lon Nol soldiers fled from the barrack of Jiro. It was a huge psychological gain. I was relieved. There was only one barrack at Roka and there had not one at Prek Touj. They withdrew and the flood was high so we moved our troops to stay at Boeng Pruol, Kompong Janloh, Prek Ta It. We always rowed the boats to ob-

serve the situation in the battle. As the flood was in its full swing, my colleagues and I tied our boat and stayed here overnight. We had in those day boats for four rowers and two rowers since we were soldiers stationing along the river. We stayed in an old temple. I think they pulled it down and build a new one in place already.

Until February 1974, the Lon Nol forces opened attack aimed at regaining the Jiro barrack. Brother Sok Saroen may remember that they pushed their cannons of 12.7 mm into the the water and we took them all. To be frank, we retook the Jiro barrack later as the first capture because the Lon Nol soldiers fled. We did not take them militarily. There was then a soldier left in the barrack. He was high on marijuana. He did not flee. He did not swim. We asked him to come join us for meal. Nobody did any harm on him. There was a good morale in those days.

As the dry season started, the Lon Nol forces opened attack on D 15 barrack, which was just established. D 15 was my phone number. After we took Jiro, along with D 15, we also set up a new barrack called A 80. We called it A 80 because we positioned A 80 millimeters artillery there. We also had another barrack named after Svay (mango) because there were so many mango trees. It was close to Roka Thom and positioned in a small mosque by the forest. Another barrack established then was the one at the tower opposite the city of Kompong Cham on another side of the Mekong River. I had my eye wounded there.

I was wounded three times. In 1973 I was wounded at Vanna's home. They shelled 105 mm from Jroy Thmar and it fell on the house. Two were wounded. I had a wound in my thigh. I did not go to the hospital.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

tal then or I could have met my wife there. What was more shocking was that one of the two medical assistants who just arrived from regional military hospital in the evening was wounded in the morning and had to be transferred to hospital. He was hit in his abdomen. We had nothing to help him with but to prevent his intestine from coming out with a bowl wrapped by a scarf around his waist and transferred him by an engine boat under the command of Math Ly, who was in charge of logistics, to a hospital in Kroj Chmar. He died when he arrived at the hospital.

At Zero Hour January 1, 1975 – Nationwide Battle

The second battle was when we assaulted the D 15 barrack at zero hour on January 1, 1975. It was a nationwide battle. I had a wound in my shoulder. For the third time, on 16 April 1975, we also had a battle here one day before the liberation of Phnom Penh. It was unbelievable that the whole war led to nationwide destruction and the Khmer Rouge came to power. Whom should we blame? I bring this matter up to you because we have many young people present, among them 6,000 Cambodian People's Party youth from fourteen communes in the district of Tbong Khmom. They are new members of the Cambodian People's Party.

It is important that we have brought this up so that our youth could differentiate their times and situations between our two different generations – one with chance and one without. Youth who have involved voluntarily in measuring land for people, the scout and the Red Cross youth could draw conclusion and analysis on this matter. As I said elsewhere, we, youth in the former generation, had no other chance than taking up arms not pen or

pencils in either urban or rural area. I had an uncle who was then governor of Kompong Cham province – Mr Nou Tho. He was the one who met with then my superior brother Sok Saroeun on April 17 at the tower area opposite Kompong Cham city. It was after I was wounded.

It was since 1974 that I could say that I lost my belief in the national liberation movement. It was well known to everyone that Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk was the top leader and Samdech Pen Nuth was the Prime Minister. We all were of that belief. However, we found that certain instructions came from the man with 87 as his pseudonym. For some circulars, we even saw the name in short 'Pol' but we could not account for the fact. It was till after the liberation that the complete pseudonym appeared 'Pol Pot' and the former number 87 has taken one more zero after it to become 870. In later circumstances, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk was placed under house arrest in the Royal Palace and many of his children and relatives were killed.

Between region 203 and 304 then, the separated line was at Koh Samraong (isle in the Mekong opposite Kompong Cham city). Koh Jrouk was in the responsibility of region 304 under the control of Koy Thuon and Ke Pork. In defense of Koh Samraong from possible military assault from Lon Nol to regain it, they sent in our forces. It was to my shock that every time the Lon Nol soldiers aimed their canons at us soldiers of region 203, people's homes in the centre of Koh Samraong village went ablaze. It was not one or twice but every time the Lon Nol soldiers fired upon us. This frequency had made us to collect information and figured out that someone put people's homes on fire. We could do nothing. It was not in our mili-

tary region. I brought my notice to my superior and what I got back was "that is good, after the liberation, there will be no rich and poor, big or small house."

I was shocked. My instinct brought me to a suspicion whether that was a mistake committed at operational or leadership level. Such acts of no virtue happened in region 304 but not yet in region 203. I once asked brother Ek at Boeng Pruol "I do not understand, the Lon Nol soldier fired upon my troops at Koh Samraong, but why they put people's homes on fire?" He gave me the answer I told you earlier. It has brought me more questions than answers. I was a low-rank soldier. It was hard to understand what was going on. I could have betrayed the movement since then and it was not difficult for me to swim across the river to join the uncle who was then governor of Kompong Cham. I did not do that because I loved my country and I had no idea what Pol Pot had planned and done. Again, no matter on what side I was at the time, I had nothing to choose from but being soldier. There was a difference though. You had to decide between being a soldier for Lon Nol or for Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk.

In Pol Pot's time, there was completely no choice at all. The whole country had turned into torturing camps. The Buddhist pagodas became fertilizer warehouses. People in the whole country had no choices at all. They could not even choose who they want to get married with. At present, our youth have every right, including the right for political inclination and political party. In February 2013, the Ministry of Interior reported that there are over 50 political parties, down from 58, and over 3,000 non-governmental organizations. This has also shown people of my generation have no choice

at all. We were hostages to the war and soon later to the regime of Pol Pot.

Land of My Love

I am so glad to have participated in liberating our country from the regime of Pol Pot's genocide. Furthermore, I had served the cause against the coup makers and foreign aggression and bombardments too. I should say that this area also brought me to know my wife as well. Things happened unexpectedly. Brother Sok Saroeun may have remembered. We went together for a meeting between Tuol Kandal and Kompong Russei along the Mekong river. You, me, Huot (already deceased) and Kompha, all four stood there and Jen in logistics came from Kroj Chmar. It must be in 1973 since it was after we attacked the barrack at Tonle Bet on March 23, 1973 to commemorate the third anniversary of the establishment of the National United Front. We came here after joining the military exercise at Tuol Sophi, where I recently presided over the inauguration ceremony of the Buddhist pagoda.

Parking his bike, Jen asked me: 'Bunnal, have you asked the hand of Rany, a nurse in Kroj Chmar?' I was so surprised and responded I did not know her or hear about her how could I do that? From then on rumors were going on. When Sar Hao took over Kompong Cham, he did his best with the marine forces in between June and July, before the seasonal flooding. Some of my comrades in arms who did the matchmaking died. Rumors went on for almost a year. They spread the news that my wife and I were in love while I did not even know if she existed. I then asked brother Sok Saroen to lead me to see her. On her side, I remember were Chhunleng, Bren, Chan, Khemara and

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Rany, my wife. On my side, there were only brother Sok Saroeun and me.

In the hospital, we had food. Brother Sok Saroeun knew many people working in the hospital and I knew a few because most of the time I was in the battle. I ran my eyes for anyone who could be Rany. She did not come out. After lunch, I took my ride on a motorbike to see my cousin in Prek Jam. My cousin made fried banana and I took some for brother Sok Saroeun. It was already late evening. Standing the motorbike, I pulled the pistol from my waist to hang down my shoulder. I noticed a woman writing a prescription by a kerosene lamp. I approached and asked where could Rany be at this time. She said Rany had gone to fetch the water.

Placing my backpack and pistol in the room, I came back down and walked to meet nurse Mom. Nurse Mom was older than I was and I addressed her 'Elder sister Mom, where could Rany be at this hour?' Nurse Mom responded to me 'Rany was the woman you just asked.' I felt very sorry that I did not look fully at her when asking the question. The discussion came at night. Looking at her I was talking to myself, if I were to know that she was this beautiful, why having to spend time discussing the problem, it is better asking her hand since yesterday. That was how things happened. Finally, we could marry. I spent my time in hospital P 2 with brother Bren. This was a place where I was carried on April 16 from the tower by the current Kizuna bridge to Boeng Ansaong, Boeng Kambaor and on to Prey Ta Ith. My wounded eye was removed in Orain Ov district.

Development and Religious Harmonization

Those are a few things about this area. I thank everyone, my relatives included, for coming today. I cannot see you all today. I was just a ten-year old kid when I lived here. Now I have some bad teeth already because I am in my late 50 already. Just now I have the chance to see the school at Boeng Kombaor, Boeng Pruol, which were built higher above flood level. I thank Oknha Tri Pheap for paying 248,000 USD for the construction of this Buddhist temple.

As far as development is concerned, we have more to do. We will continue to build more roads from the Tonle Bet river at Kizuna to the bridge of Peam Jilang, according to plan. We will have asphalted roads to Kroj Chmar, and downstream to Boeng Kombao, Baat Dei, Boeng Pruol, Kompong Janloh, Prey Pdao and Peam Jilang. I am also sending a message today to the people in Peam Jilang about the fact that I have not been here more frequent, especially after I have become a leader of the country now. I am present everywhere and I need to do everything for everyone. In Peam Jilang, the Buddhist pagoda of Kompong Janloh is so beautiful and so is the mosque. I noted that instead of one mosque, now there are more in Boeng Pruol. It is good for our country that Buddhism and Islam coexist harmoniously.

Take for instance we are organizing the ceremony to welcome the Buddhist achievements but we also have here the presence of our Muslim community and other religious groups as well. Religious harmony is one fact but love, pity and hardship that we shared altogether from after the time when we liberated our country from the US aggression that supported the Lon Nol regime and from the genocidal regime, and the restoration of the country from scratch. These are facts that help improve our

people's livelihood from day to day and that provide more chances for our people as well as younger generation to be able to do whatever they should and could.

New Members of Cambodian People's Party

It seems that we have here the presence of the youth student volunteers too. Reasmey, who formerly worked in Kep and could not spend a night without missing his father, is now working as deputy head of the team that works in Stoeng Trang. We have here those in Stoeng Trang, Tbong Khmum and Dambe districts Khim Srey Peo, Jea Van Than, Duj Sothea. You know that in Trapeang Pring, where Duj Sothea is now measuring land for the people, I had my training as special commando there. Jia Sophat is now deputy team leader in Kompuan of Mehmot district. This place used to have many snakes. I am sending to everyone in your team my best wishes and through you to people for whom you are measuring land for. The work you do for the people has been so great and will be bringing about achievements for the country too.

Today we also have some 6,760 new members of the Cambodian People's Party from 14 communes. We also have one more project to connect Sre Siem through Tbong Khmum to Kroj Chmar and to Prek Aki of Stoeng Trang. We need to build a bridge across the Mekong River there too. Since there are many members of the Cambodian People's Party, I wish to speak a few things for them and hope things are not hard for them to fulfill. What are they? You need to make effort to study in order to make yourselves competent. You need to reap the chance you have. We have even more schools and schools are moving accessibly close to students. Make effort to study,

continue to study and urge other people to go to school too. I am sure this is what you can do.

Secondly, you need to do good things for people. People would not respond with love to bad action. Members of the Cambodian People's Party should know how to serve the people. You definitely can do that. It is not so hard. Your good action will be well responded with love from the people. By the way you need to stay away from drug while make yourselves good example for others. Those with motorcycles need to wear helmets while driving. Observing the traffic law could also help save our lives as well.

Last, but not least, when you go to vote, you should vote for the Party. Each member of the Party has his vote it will count for. This is not hard too. You see the Party's deity sign, which is on your t-shirt and cap, so you really know where to tick on the ballot. I am reminding you again that this is the national election. It is way different from the communal election. The national election will decide the destiny of the Prime Minister. It is true this is the legislative election but the elected members of the National Assembly will vote to choose the Prime Minister or to form the Royal Government. Please do not venge your anger on wrong person. Please do not vote off Hun Sen for your anger on village heads or police. This election is about whether you want Hun Sen to go on or someone else from another party to take over. If you want Hun Sen to go on, you need to vote for the Cambodian People's Party ... I have four words – love, pity, satisfaction and trust of Hun Sen, please vote for the Cambodian People's Party. I already mentioned about destruction in the past ... let's see what people decide on the forthcoming 28 July 2013 ...

(Continued from page 8)

income trap and our goal has been set so by 2030. Looking onward, when we complete our plan for irrigation system, we will be able to increase our production from the current state that we could export up to three million tons of rice while only a certain area of our rice field cultivates twice a year. With irrigation system in place, we will be able to strengthen intensive farming system.

As far as rubber is concerned, its competitive state and demand for rubber is not waning down. Rubber and rice bear the same state of competition and demand. Rubber, once bigger, is considered as forest coverage too. Promoting rubber plantation on economic land concession and/or land that have been measured and issued title for the people in the framework of existing policy on land issue, would increase land under rubber. We will then have more land under forest coverage and people will generate economic benefit from their rubber too. According to Mak Kimhong, the price for rubber today has stayed at 2450 USD per ton.

In Malaysia, their forest coverage is palm oil tree and rubber too. They make their country green by replacing them to former natural forest. They cleared them and grew in their places trees with more economic values. I think we will need to encourage more cultivation of rubber.

There are more and more people like to grow rubber between one to five and ten hectares on their land. Some of you who have studied and wished to establish Institute of Agriculture could do a great deal to help them. They definitely need your expertise. Also a possibility, they'd send family members to learn the skills and techniques in growing, managing and taking care of rubber because they have to

look after their rubber.

Rosewood To Be Listed as Endangered Plants

As for the rosewood issue, I have brought it up in the meetings of CLV, CLMV and ACMECS as well. In last March, HE Cham Prasidh also suggested further measure that the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries would write a letter to seek inclusion of rosewood into the list of endangered plants. I already approved the suggestion. Cambodia may not be the place where there are many rosewood but where rosewood transits. They chop them down elsewhere and bring them into Cambodia. With it listed as endangered plant, no one would dare buy it.

Fresh Water Supply Shortage in Preah Sihanoukville

Please allow me to speak a little about the fact that we encountered lack of fresh water supply in the city of Preah Sihanoukville. I have not had a clear indication as to why the problem happened yet. However, I instructed HE Sbaong Sarat, governor of the province, to make effort in channeling fresh water down from the river of Kbal Chhay. I have seen they did it but I still do not have the thorough account why there was this incident that there was shortage of fresh water supply to the city. I do not know whether the Preah Sihanouk Water Headquarters does not want to purchase water from Kbal Chhay or what. I think the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy who is responsible in this issue should conduct a study. However, I would have your attention on the source of fresh and clean water.

It is not only the case of the city of Preah Sihanouk. Wood is a major problem. In fact, there would not be shortage of water. But it happened. What remains to resolve is that those

who have land in the area must make further efforts, if they do not use their land for industrial purpose, to grow long-term crops to increase more green coverage, which we hope will attract more rain, prevent land erosion and wash-off, while protecting the sea from encroaching upon mainland. This should be an issue of attention and consideration for all not just Preah Sihanouk city. I instructed the ANCO Company to extend its pipe to the city. It took a week. Why so long and who was responsible? Is it not because they did not want to buy water from the Company and continue to resolve the problem with limited resources?

Re-grow Forest in Kbal Chhay Area

I would urge our people to make further effort to grow long-term crop and trees like rubber or others that will be there for a long time and attract rain as well. The Forest Administration must cooperate with concerned sectors and development partners, the private sector included, especially the ANCO Company, to restore the depleted forestland in Kbal Chhay and re-grow long-term trees in the natural forest in place of short-term trees. We have to take serious measures to take care of the Kbal Chhay water reservoir to keep water for the city. We cannot afford to allow that happen since the Preah Sihanouk province is the second economic pole of the country. We have here industry, service, seaport, etc.

The provincial authority of Preah Sihanouk province must take every measure to prevent land claiming and to reinforce natural resource management in accordance with the order already issued. We should not resort to water from underground. I also instructed the project manager of Koh Puos development to run a water

pipe from the city and not to take water from underground. From where do we take the water to Koh Puos? It will be from Kbal Chhay ...

CPP Lacks Human Resource?

There have been some comments that the Cambodian People's Party is lacking human resource to be a candidate for the post of Prime Minister. I wish to elaborate a bit in response to that. I think they have gone a bit to the extreme.

The other day they said I could only be a primary school teacher. I accept that. Right before the Khmer New Year, they said the Cambodian People's Party is short of candidate for the post of Prime Minister because there has been only one man for it. I would call the person my junior brother, though he may be about my age, a bit older or younger. What is the most important thing is that the person used to come asking me for advices in 2006-2007 on whether he should create a Party or go on to be NGO.

As far as this matter is concerned, the 'younger brother' should not be too obtuse. In politics, if the Cambodian People's Party is proposing incapable man to the post, it is rewarding you because you will be able to bewilder him. He used to come for advice from this Primary School teacher. I now continue to advise him that if the Cambodian People's Party proposes incapable candidate for the elections, you should be happy because he may not get elected.

Why should you cry fool about that? It is so obtuse that you let it out. How can you win the elections? If Hun Sen is not a capable candidate and the CPP runs his candidacy for the elections, you should let the CPP do that because it will be at your advantage ... ■

(Continued from page 1)

tax from them, they could use the money for something else, like purchasing a bicycle for their kids or other agricultural utensils. This is my will and I make it clear now that *we will never impose tax on household agricultural land*. However, this is the policy set out and supported by the Cambodian People's Party only. I do not know what other Parties would do on this matter. They are talking about increasing salary, I doubt if they could do it without increasing taxation.

Well, that is their problem. As for the time that the Cambodian People's Party rules, whether there will be or will not be me, I wish to make this will clear to all that no such tax will be imposed.

On Issue of Pig Imported from Abroad

While talking about this issue, I have seen on TV about the proposal made by HE Mong Rithy, Head of the Private Sector's Agricultural Working Group in relation to import of pig from abroad. I would suggest two ideas for him so that he could think about it and bring it out for more discussion with our people and for taking further measures. I would urge on this matter that we have to look at the whole forest and not at just a single tree. Take for example if there is increasingly high demand, no matter how many you have in your stock – in pork or beef, you may have problem ensuring the supply. If in that case we prohibit import of meat, we would firstly be against the rules set out by the World Trade Organization, but secondly, would also cause reciprocal inflation that is going to be destructive to the economy.

We should be careful with this view. As we all can see now, we have a balance between demand and supply for the fact that there is contribution from local animal husbandry and

from import from abroad. We had better think harder about what would be the consequences if we were to prohibit import from foreign countries. A fundamental reform in fisheries did bring the price of fish down, but we should bear in mind that fish is not the only source of protein that our people need. We should therefore think harder about its repercussion. I am therefore urging you to figure out the growing demand and ability to respond from local husbandry.

Secondly, in 2015, if I should remind you, only two years more, we will have this ASEAN Community thing. We should try to find a better way to produce low-cost animal feeding, as I recommended just now, or we will not be able to give answer to the question. I think this is the answer and I would urge no administrative measures. We should figure out economic measures in place of administrative ones. When the ASEAN Community is here for real, there will be no barriers as all doors will be open. We will have certain goods that we can push in to regional markets but we also have to allow goods from other countries to compete in our market.

It is a reciprocal approach. We will engage in the game and compete. If we were to place trade barrier from now, it will be destructive when the time comes because a sudden shutting down of pig/pork import would indeed create demand for beef, chicken and/or fish. On that instant, they would ask for a higher price.

The question here is why our neighboring countries are raising animal at a cheaper cost than we would, and they can sell them to us. I am sure animal feeding cost should be one of them. How to produce low-cost animal feeding would be a question. I wish to add further that administrative measure is

not going to bring about real economic growth. One would apply it only when it is necessary.

As we are also a member of the World Trade Organization, we should try to familiarize ourselves with the trend, as there are two more years only to get to ASEAN Economic Community. Closing our country would also lead to others to do in reciprocation.

When all will do that, it is a disaster. Recently, Minister of Trade, HE Cham Prasidh and his Thai counterpart have worked out to resolve the problem concerning agricultural products in the western part of our country. Prime Minister Yingluck (of Thailand) also talked to me lately that the trade issue between the two countries has made improvement.

Thais will buy our agricultural products in Banteay Meanjei, Uddar Meanjei, Battambang, Pailin, etc. What will happen if we stop their pig from coming in? Based on that report I noted on TV, I suggest that the Head of the Agricultural Working Group reconsiders this matter. We cannot afford to think only about pork without considering its repercussion on beef, chicken and fish. I would seek our people's understanding on this matter because we cannot afford to neglect the need of our people in the whole country for local families who raise pig. I respect the right for private sector to share their opinion with the Royal Government but there has to be point that the Royal Government could and could not accept.

We should think about diversifying animal husbandry to make it cheaper in Cambodia. We may allow certain protection so that our people can produce animal feeding at a lower cost. In fact, the cost of producing animal feeding in Thailand and Vietnam should be higher than in Cambodia.

Why could they do it cheaper than us? They sell it to us. In trade, there is a reciprocal relation. If we refuse their product, they would do the same to ours.

As for restriction on pig with disease, yes it is important for us to observe strictly. I would ask for joint efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health. As far as restriction concerning disease, we have been careful on their goods and they are to our goods too. There are two different issues here (1) the restriction of movement of animal for diseases and (2) import pig jeopardizes local animal husbandry industry. I would urge a thorough clarification and explanation on this issue to our people.

Preventing Import of Disqualified Food Products

We have taken measures already and the implementation has commenced. We still have some loopholes. More efforts need to address this shortcoming. Flow of imported animal without management and inspection has reduced but more also need to be carried out. As we have all learned that we use to have cases concerning disqualified chicken legs imported from other country. However, we seem to have seen less of those chicken legs these days. Still we are seeing chicken legs on sale. We need to strengthen prevention of importation of disqualified food products.

Rubber – Land Coverage and Profit Making

On this point, we need to look ahead to the future like 2030 when Cambodia, according to its goal, would be going from lower-middle income country, after passing the state of low-income country this year, to higher-middle income country. We would try the best to push Cambodia out of lower-middle

(Continued on page 7)