

Section 4. Cambodia's History and Culture

–The quest for the Profound Spirituality of the Khmer Culture–

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1. An understanding of the contemporary history of Cambodia, disrupted by international politics

1-1 The significance of the 'liberation' of 1975

–The 'special relationship' with Vietnam–

When Cambodian people are asked to enumerate their most outstanding characteristics, they may cite the following: i) They are people who speak the Khmer language, ii) They have had a king since the very beginning, and iii) They are pious believers in Buddhism. This is the *raison d'être* of the Cambodian people. In 1970, Cambodia joined an anti-American struggle for liberation in connection with the civil wars in Vietnam and Laos, and in 1975 it achieved the unification of the nation, in the name of 'liberation.' The year 1975 was a starting point for Cambodia to shift from its traditional framework based on the royal regime, to a new framework based on socialism. In this sense, the year 1975 can be regarded as a turning point in its contemporary history.

In 1985, Foreign Minister Hun Sen was elected the Prime Minister of the Heng Samrin regime. For a period of ten years or more after the 'liberation' of Cambodia, the civil war still smoldered, and the Heng Samrin troops along with Vietnamese troops stationed in Cambodia captured a base of the Pol Pot troops on Mt. Malai. Under these circumstances the Cambodian people had to endure constant hardships. Moreover, horrendous massacres were carried out under the Pol Pot regime. The Third Indochina War around the Thai border continued into the Heng Samrin regime. Cambodia concluded a Friendship Treaty with Vietnam in 1979, and allowed Vietnamese troops to be stationed in Cambodia. Vietnam thus provided support for Cambodia in various fields. This political and military 'special relationship' between Vietnam and Cambodia drew severe criticism from around the world, since it gave rise to the opposite of what people's liberation ought to bring, that is, freedom and independence.

This 'special relationship' with Vietnam affected the

economic aspects as well. The new economic policy adopted in Vietnam was reflected in Cambodia's economic policy, as for example in Cambodia's joint group system, which is strongly security-tinted.

The national news agency releases of official announcements comprised the only source of current information on Cambodia. Activities meant to collect information on the actual situation in the country, such as news coverage and research, were not allowed. Reports, evidence, and articles published under such circumstances had to be treated with a considerable amount of circumspection, as the information could be manipulated politically.

Both the Pol Pot regime (1970), which was derived from the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), and the Heng Samrin regime (1978), which was derived from the People's National Liberation Front, came into power with the noble political ideal of liberating the people. However, in the actual political process, both regimes faced various difficulties, including a substantial gap between their ideals and the reality. Their noble ideals and political principles manifested both at home and abroad could not be accomplished so easily. Rather, the reality was quite the opposite of their ideals. Consequently, the Cambodian people were forced into a terrible plight, suffering from a series of misfortunes. The Cambodian people, despite their strong latent antagonism toward Vietnam, were liberated from the abominable Pol Pot regime with the support of Vietnam, resulting in the establishment of the Heng Samrin regime. Such an outcome was incomprehensible for the Cambodian people. What made it even more so was the hostility between Vietnam and China. Although both nations were involved in Cambodia's civil war, carrying together the banner of anti-Americanism to save the nation, their relationship turned hostile from 1975 onwards, and finally, in 1977, a military clash occurred. This was therefore a war between family members that had once fought together on the basis of solidarity.

1-2 The Pol Pot faction

–The reality of an ideal society that should be without exploitation–

The National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK) was launched in Beijing in 1970, under the banner of anti-Americanism in order to save the nation. Various factions joined the front, including the Khmer Rouge (the Pol Pot faction), the anti-Khmer faction derived from Khmer Viet Minh, the former People's Party, and the pro-Sihanouk faction. The FUNK, in opposition to the United States and the US-backed Lon Nol regime, spread war throughout Cambodia, in parallel with the progress of the Vietnam War. Meanwhile, the Khmer Rouge was engaged in military action on a small scale in rural areas. Leftist group members who once studied in Paris, such as the Chairman of the Cambodia Communist Party Pol Pot (Saloth Sar), Khieu Samphan, Hu Nim, and Hou Yuon, led such small-scale military forces individually, and commanded a resistance movement in the rural areas.

With the participation of Prince Sihanouk, the FUNK gained power with the strong support of China, and this later became one of the causes of the Third Indochina War. On April 17, 1975, the Pol Pot faction occupied Phnom Penh, to establish the new Democratic Khmer Government.

It was clearly stated in the constitution that the nation should aim to establish a happy and equal society, with no gap between the rich and the poor. For this purpose, the government destroyed the conventional rural system, and created a new form of cooperative association (*Sahako*), based on collective labor. These cooperative associations were somewhat similar to the people's communes in China, serving as an organizational unit. Thus, people were controlled in their daily life and forced to carry out production activities, without any private freedom. Everything (food, clothing, and shelter) was placed under collective control. Each member of a cooperative association had to do his or her share of the work, under the supervision of government officials (*Onkar*). In order to sever any psychological attachment to their traditional lifestyle in their previous village, farmers were forced to change their domicile. It is estimated that about two million residents of urban areas, including Phnom Penh, were forcibly assigned to become members of cooperative associations throughout the country. These members were then mobilized to

construct irrigation channels, and increase the production of farm crops. They had to engage in hard labor under the burning sun for more than ten hours a day. As a result, many people ruined their health and died of illnesses. Government officials were relentless in executing defiant members or those who showed any sign of slackness. People were prohibited from moving around within the country, and all schools were closed.

In those days, education was focused on political labor. The Pol Pot regime destroyed social facilities and factories that manufactured luxuries, and excluded any imported products. People speaking foreign languages and intellectuals with specialities were treated with hostility, and many of them ended their life unnaturally. Moreover, the Pol Pot regime banned Buddhism, claiming that it was an evil religion, and blew up temples, pagodas, Catholic churches, and Muslim mosques. Buddhist priests were forced to return to the state of being laymen.

In promoting the system of increasing production, various problems came to the surface. For example, as new irrigation channels were constructed without the involvement of any professional surveyors, the water did not flow properly. The Pol Pot regime rejected the market economy, and abolished the currency. In a word, the ideal society without exploitation stated in the constitution was nothing more than an illusion, under the Pol Pot regime.

1-3 International relations between Cambodia, China, and Vietnam

–Groping for release from the repressive control of Vietnam–

When viewing the political system in Cambodia, it is obvious that there have always been splits in the factions fighting over power, which then tie themselves to foreign powers targeting Cambodia. This invites further confusion in most cases. The Khmer Rouge was divided into the following three factions: i) A group led by Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, and others, whose base was in the northeastern mountainous area at the initial stage of the struggle. They were under the influence of Maoism. After they obtained control of the government in 1975, they were relentless in arresting and purging high officials and their sympathizers, who objected to the policies of these factions; ii) A group led by Hu Nim, Hou Yuon, and others, whose base was in the southern part

of Cambodia. These glorified the Cultural Revolution, but were politically purged immediately after the liberation; iii) A group led by Heng Samrin and others, who were derived from the Khmer Viet Minh that had occupied the eastern part of Cambodia on the border between Vietnam. These were pro-Vietnamese. Feuding among these three factions exacerbated the purges. The Pol Pot government bragged of its success in achieving for the first time real ethnic independence from foreign control and subordination. Throughout the nation, however, unprecedented experiments in socialism were widely practiced, resulting in a large number of victims at many cooperative associations. In order to divert public attention from domestic confusion and discontent over working conditions, the government stirred national resentment against Vietnam, which was a favorite tactic conventionally used by governments. Thus, the government intentionally provoked a border dispute with Vietnam, though the truth of the circumstances is not certain.

China provided powerful support for Cambodia after the establishment of the FUNK in 1970. The Pol Pot regime, with a stronger inclination towards China based on close solidarity, aimed at adopting a policy of self-reliance. In other words, the government intended to release itself from the fetters of Vietnam. China sent a mission to Cambodia immediately after the establishment of the Pol Pot regime, with a large quantity of aid materials. After Pol Pot's visit to China in September 1977, China intensified its military aid to Cambodia. Three months after the visit, on December 31, 1977, the government declared that diplomatic relations with Vietnam would be severed. In those days, the military forces of both nations were still fighting fiercely around the Mekong Delta. This border incident took place against a background of the following three factors. The first one was the Cambodian people's psychological fear of Vietnam, which had arisen through a long history of complicated ethnic friction between the two nations. In particular, the Cambodian people felt an underlying sense of crisis in relation to the possible annexation of their nation by Vietnam. China, being adroit in assessing such public sentiment, successfully convinced the Cambodian people that China's support could be helpful in getting rid of Vietnam's influence.

The second background factor in the border conflict was the issue of Cochin China. In the New Independence Agreements between France and Vietnam signed

in March 1949, both nations agreed that Cochin China should be relegated to becoming part of South Vietnam. At the Geneva Meeting in 1954, Cambodia insisted on its right of sovereignty over Cochin China. Cambodia has been and is consistently demonstrating, that the issue of Cochin China has not been settled yet.

The third factor was the Cambodian people's anxiety over the Vietnamese quartermaster corps stationed along the Ho Chi Minh route, running through the eastern part of Cambodia. The Cambodian people were concerned about whether the presence of the corps would continue as a *fait accompli* even after the war. With the intensification of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, the volume of transported munitions increased. Vietnamese soldiers in charge of transport were trying to overpower their opponents by sheer force of numbers, along the transport route. Within Cambodian territory, there were shelters, recreation bases, and field hospitals for the officers and soldiers of both the North and South Vietnamese Liberation Fronts. The Cambodian people were therefore concerned that these corps would remain even after the war, and that the illegal occupation of Cambodian territory by Vietnamese forces along the route where the population is sparse, might be allowed as a *fait accompli*.

1-4 Cambodia's peace process spurred by the collapse of the Soviet Union and East Bloc grouping

–The three-party coalition government with different objectives, although allied with each other–

After severing diplomatic relations with Vietnam, China delivered a large amount of munitions to the Kampong Saom Port, and dispatched military advisors as well. In May 1978, Cambodia made peace proposals to Vietnam consisting of four items, including the cessation of invasion, and the abolition of an Indochina proposal for establishing a federation between Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The Pol Pot regime arrested and executed pro-Vietnamese government officials one after another. Thus, pro-Vietnamese people fled to Vietnam. On December 3, 1978, pro-Vietnamese soldiers formed the Khmer People's National Liberation Army, with Heng Samrin as leader. The Pol Pot regime and other countries in the world labeled this organization a puppet regime of Vietnam.

On 25 December 1978, the Khmer People's National Liberation Army, in which Cambodian people living in Vietnam were included, started large-scale offensive operations in the eastern and southeastern parts of Cambodia together with elite Vietnamese troops. This was the beginning of the Third Indochina War. The capital city of Cambodia, Phnom-Penh, was occupied on January 7, 1979, and the People's Republic of Kampuchea was established on January 10 of the same year. Prince Sihanouk returned to Beijing after escaping from Phnom-Penh just before the fall of the city. The Pol Pot regime that had to retreat to the Thai border, declared their unrelenting resistance, and denounced Vietnam as an invader.

The Heng Samrin regime concluded a Peace and Friendship Treaty with Vietnam. This Treaty legitimized the stationing of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia and the supportive military action by the Khmer People's National Liberation Army, thus confirming a special relationship with Vietnam. With a view to punishing Vietnam for these deeds, China invaded Vietnam on 17 February 1979, an action that involved fierce fighting around Lang Son.

An estimated 650,000 Cambodian people fled the country during this period to become refugees.

The Heng Samrin regime, with powerful support from Vietnam, expanded its effective governing region, while the Pol Pot faction continued its anti-Vietnamese guerrilla warfare around the Thai border. In the Heng Samrin regime, the Cabinet Council corresponded to the Cabinet, and the Chairman corresponded to the Prime Minister. The only legitimate party was the People's Revolutionary Party, which was closely related to the Vietnamese Communist Party and the Laos People's Revolutionary Party. Vietnamese troops (estimated to be about 140,000 soldiers in 1986) stationed in Cambodia, supported the People's Revolutionary Army in order to fight against the three-faction guerrilla troops around the Thai border. These three anti-Vietnamese and anti-communist factions were the Pol Pot faction, the Son San faction led by the former governor of the national bank (the Khmer Serai Troops) which aimed at a republican regime, and the Sihanouk faction (the Sihanouk Troops) who were yearning for the past royal regime. These three factions, with different objectives and yet allied, launched the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (hereafter referred to as the Coalition Government), in July 1982. The Coalition

Government was given a seat at the United Nations as the legitimate government approved by about 75 nations. In fact, the Cambodian issue was no longer merely domestic. It had become excessively complicated due to the influence of international political confrontations between the East and the West, as well as between China and the Soviet Union, and China and Vietnam. Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and the East European countries supported the Heng Samrin regime, whereas China and ASEAN member countries supported the Coalition Government. With the establishment of détente between East and West, both leaders held peace talks in Paris in December 1987. In the early 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the East Bloc, the Cold War structure, which involved confrontation between East and West, came to an end. Accordingly, Cambodia's peace process made rapid progress, followed by the Paris International Conference on Cambodia in 1991, the establishment of the Supreme National Council (SNC), the Peace Keeping Operation (PKO) launched by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992, the general elections, the promulgation of the new Constitution, and the appointment of Prince Sihanouk as King of Cambodia in 1993.

1-5 Political disorder in Cambodia after the achievement of peace

—How would a rabbit in the role of a judge mediate a dispute in a folktale?—

A new government was launched in September 1993 with two Prime Ministers. As a result of the general elections, the Funcinpec Party won 58 seats, followed by the Cambodian People's Party with 51 seats. Thus, Norodom Ranariddh of the Funcinpec Party was appointed as the First Prime Minister, and Hun Sen of the Cambodian People's Party as the Second Prime Minister. The coalition government contributed to political stability, though not fully. At that time, Cambodia was faced with the following five problems: i) Reconstruction after the war; ii) Retreat from socialism and the introduction of a market economy, iii) Poverty reduction; iv) Return to the international community; and v) Establishment of a cultural identity toward racial reconciliation.

In preparation for the general elections to be held in May 1998, each Prime Minister's faction was actively

involved in political campaigning. Meanwhile, the Pol Pot faction, which was continuously engaged in guerilla warfare in the northwestern part of Cambodia, tried to form a coalition with the Funcinpec Party. With the intention of rallying itself from an inferior position, the Funcinpec Party wanted to exploit the forces of the Pol Pot faction. This provoked great antipathy on the part of the Cambodian People's Party, resulting in a military clash. On June 17, 1997, there was an armed confrontation between the guards of each Party. On July 5 and July 6, Second Prime Minister Hun Sen and his troops launched a harsh offensive against First Prime Minister Ranariddh's troops. As a result, Ranariddh's troops were crushed, and Ranariddh was ousted.

This military clash was triggered by the following two actions of the First Prime Minister's troops: i) they illegally brought in weapons, such as heavy firearms; ii) they invited the support of personnel from the illegitimate Pol Pot faction. This was regarded as a power struggle to expand the sphere of influence of each, and was targeted at the forthcoming general elections in May 1998. Thus it could not be considered as a *coup d'état*. Both factions became agitated and engaged in fighting for no political reason. In other words, this military clash was the result of the immaturity of the new democracy. Prince Sihanouk and Second Minister Hun Sen trusted each other, as they were both involved in establishing the basic framework for peace in 1987. Moreover, both agreed that the Pol Pot issue should be settled at all costs.

The international community regarded this military clash on July 5, as an infringement of the Peace Agreements, as both factions had ignored the basic principle of the Peace Agreements, which was not to resort to force. The Funcinpec Party and the Cambodian People's Party simply did not get along together. They were just like oil and water, as the former consisted of the Royalist Party members who had returned from overseas, whereas the latter consisted of rural people who had remained in the nation to exert their influence. Friction between the two parties was tremendous, though both were jointly in charge of administration under the guidance of the king for three and a half years. Behind the scenes during this military clash, the anti-Vietnam Pol Pot faction tried to grasp the chance to recover, by taking advantage of this confrontation between the two Prime Ministers.

The Cambodian people were worn-out both physi-

cally and mentally due to the political disorder caused by the civil war. However, by taking the medicine of Western democracy and Western elections, they were making a gradual recovery. This military clash was a form of allergic reaction for them. In rural areas, unlike urban areas, there were many illiterate people, and they were uncertain as to how far they could appreciate the significance of the general elections. Traditionally, rural people had lived in peace and were self-sufficient. If only they could have continued earning their living by agriculture in an atmosphere of peace, they would have been satisfied. In a Cambodian folktale, a rabbit in the role of a judge would mediate in a dispute amicably, by listening to the complaints of both sides. This indicates the wisdom of the Cambodian people, with regard to living with each other.

Peace in Cambodia should be established based on the following three criteria: i) to maintain the coalition government and the National Assembly; ii) to support the constitution; and iii) to comply with the Peace Agreements. It was necessary for the international community to watch carefully whether the Cambodian people, keeping the above three criteria in mind, could implement free and fair general elections on their own in July 1998.

1-6 Traumatic experiences affecting the general elections

–Restoration of confidence is the key to reconstruction–

In April 1998, Pol Pot, the most influential figure within the Khmer Rouge, died. Thus, the guerrilla group Khmer Rouge, which had been a destabilizing factor in Cambodian politics, ceased to exist.

Hun Sen allowed his political opponent, Ranariddh, to join the general elections in July 1998, campaigning for free and fair elections. About forty parties announced their participation. During election campaigns, the most conspicuous party was the Cambodian People's Party, whose posters were found everywhere and large signboards caught people's attention in rural districts covering most areas of the country. The power struggles of the central government were thus brought into rural areas. Politics distressed rural people, who were coerced into providing support in exchange for various promises and goods. Such political maneuvers were repeatedly carried out in rural areas, where people

should have been enjoying a peaceful rural landscape of palm trees scattered here and there with their fan-shaped leaves. Even though free and fair elections were implemented, the question was what would happen after that, namely whether peace could be firmly established, and whether people's peace of mind could be restored.

Most Cambodian people are very pious Buddhists, with a peace-loving national character. They devote themselves to agriculture, and worship local gods. They appreciate spiritual moderation, regardless of their poverty. This is the quintessence of the Khmer spirit. As mentioned previously, in Cambodian folktales handed down from generation to generation, a rabbit in the role of a judge would settle a dispute amicably by listening to the complaints of both sides. However, the civil war, continuing from the 1970s, and the terrible massacres by the Pol Pot regime, caused violence to permeate the peace-loving national character of the Cambodian people. They now tend to disguise their violence with gentle smiles, and settle conflicts of interest by force. Violence has now become ubiquitous in their daily life. The Cambodian people are still obsessed with such traumatic experiences, and as long as they suffer from this trauma, peace will not be firmly established in the country.

A proverb in Cambodia declares: a villager who swam across the ocean dies in a puddle where water buffalos are resting. It means that even if a person has accomplished a splendid job through great hardships, all these efforts will come to nothing if that person loses his life due to a minor mistake. This proverb describes the peace-loving Cambodian character well. In order to get rid of violence, there is no way but to endeavor to steadily restore the Khmer spirit, while keeping this proverb in mind.

The following three factors are indispensable for political stability in Cambodia.

- (i) The presence of King Sihanouk: He is 78 years old (as of 2001). Though rumor has it that he is ill, he enjoys overwhelming popularity among rural people. Thus, his presence is as essential as ever for political stability.
- (ii) Buddhism: Along with the king, Buddhism provides spiritual support for the Cambodian people. The restoration of Buddhism must provide the foundation for peace. Priests have held peace marches with the participation of many villagers.
- (iii) Restoration of confidence through school educa-

tion: Under the lingering civil war, it was actually impossible to provide education. Education must be revitalized expeditiously at the national level.

Cambodia has a glorious history of civilization. In the 12th century, the large temple of Angkor Wat was constructed. Since 1980, the author has been involved in technical surveys as well as the preservation and restoration work of the Angkor Monuments. Cambodian people can restore their confidence by establishing a system of preservation and restoration work by themselves, which would include the training of stonemasons and the development of links with the local people. While providing economic aid, Japan should seriously consider how it can cooperate in the resuscitation of the Khmer spirit. This will certainly encourage the Cambodian people.

On July 26, 1998, a general election was held throughout Cambodia. The Cambodian People's Party won 64 seats (41%), followed by the Funcinpec Party with 43 seats (31%), and the Sam Rainsy Party with 15 seats (15%). King Sihanouk summoned the Funcinpec Party and the Sam Rainsy Party, which did not recognize the election results, and acted as an intermediary between them and the Cambodian People's Party. As a result, Hun Sen was elected the sole Prime Minister.

1-7 Relations between Cambodia and its neighboring countries, Vietnam and Thailand

—The nightmarish memories of Vietnam's control over Cambodia—

Exchanges between Cambodia and Vietnam started in the late 15th century. Until then, there had been the Kingdom of Champa in the southern part of Vietnam. After the Kingdom of Champa was defeated and broken up by an attack of the Le Dynasty in 1471, the Vietnamese advanced into the southern part. In 1623, the King of Cambodia authorized a certain person named Nguyen who lived in Hue, to carry out business activities in Pray Nokor (around Ho Chi Minh), in the Mekong Delta. With overseas Chinese merchants, Nguyen developed the Mekong Delta, and in 1731, he demanded that Cambodia cede two southern provinces. In 1758, Cambodia admitted Vietnam's suzerainty. As the King's power was weakened, an Imperial command by the King required the countersignature of a Vietnamese advisor. In 1806 when Ang Chan II returning from Siam (Thailand)

acceded to the throne, he immediately admitted Vietnam's suzerainty again.

As Cambodia admitted Siam's suzerainty as well, both nations, that is, Vietnam and Siam, started a struggle with regard to their influence over Cambodia. In 1834, when Queen Ang Mey acceded to the throne, she entrusted state affairs to Vietnamese high officials, who were also in charge of local administration. Thus, everything was changed into a Vietnamese style. In 1841, when Cambodia was annexed by the Nguyen Dynasty of Vietnam, Queen Ang Mey and high officials were taken to Saigon. The Khmer people were coerced into following Vietnamese manners and customs, but anti-Vietnam uprisings occurred here and there. In 1845, when Ang Duong returned from Siam, he acceded to the throne under an agreement between Siam and Vietnam, thus restoring the independence of Cambodia.

As a result of the French bombardment of Danang in 1847, five Vietnamese warships were sunk. From the late 19th century, Vietnam was totally preoccupied over negotiations with France, and thus became indifferent to Cambodia. According to the Protection Treaty in 1863, Cambodia, including the former territory of Cochin China (Mekong Delta area), came under the rule of France.

In 1887, Cambodia, along with Vietnam and Laos, formed French Indochina. In Cambodia, French administrators gave important posts to lower-level Vietnamese officials. Consequently, the Cambodian people's daily life was under the direct control of such Vietnamese officials. This aggravated the simmering friction between the two peoples. Moreover, under the administration of French Indochina, an influx of Vietnamese workers, merchants, carpenters, and drivers into Cambodia, resulted in depriving Cambodian people of their jobs. In particular, Vietnamese people monopolized the navigation business and fishery along the river delta, forming their own villages throughout the area.

Since the old days, Vietnam has advanced into the southern part of Cambodia with the backing of its forces, and occupied agricultural land as a *fait accompli*, thus intensifying the friction between the Vietnamese and Cambodian people in the south. Due to differences in their historical and cultural backgrounds, both groups have found many incompatibilities in their daily lives. Vietnamese people under the influence of Chinese culture have accepted Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, while Cambodian people under

the influence of Indian culture have accepted Theravada Buddhism. In a word, behind the conflict between the two groups, there exists a heterogeneous cultural antagonism.

1-8 Cambodian people released from Pol Pot's reign of terror

–Complicated ethnic sentiments–

After World War II, Vietnam gained independence, but was divided into North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Under the structure of the Cold War between the East and the West, relations with Cambodia became complicated, and were dependent on international politics on every occasion. In April 1954, some Viet Minh battalions (namely the Vietnam Independence Union) invaded the northeastern part of Cambodia, but they retreated after a short while. At the Geneva Meeting in 1954, Cambodia insisted on its right of possession of Cochin China, and refrained from signing. This issue was one that derived from the old days, as the Khmer people (Khmer Kampuchekrom) had continuously lived in Cochin China. From the late 1950s to the 1960s, North Vietnam, the South Vietnam People's Liberation Front, and South Vietnam were engaged in diplomatic negotiations over a policy of neutrality for Cambodia. Moreover, with their involvement in the Vietnam War, the relations between Cambodia and Vietnam varied unpredictably.

In March 1970, an anti-Vietnam demonstration was held in the southern part of Cambodia, and Vietnamese houses were attacked. In those days, the US-backed Lon Nol regime had joined forces with South Vietnam. However, due to the historical background of Cambodia's occupation by Vietnam, Cambodian people had a strong resentment against Vietnam. Under the extreme racist regime of Pol Pot, a large number of Cambodian people of Vietnamese ancestry were persecuted and executed. This led to the border dispute with Vietnam. In 1977, the Pol Pot regime started to attack Vietnamese territory around the border. In December 1977, it declared that diplomatic relations with Vietnam would be severed, denouncing Vietnam's intentions to incorporate Cambodia into a Vietnam-led Indochina. At the end of 1978, the Khmer People's National Liberation Army, protected by Vietnamese troops, invaded Cambodia, and in 1979, the Heng Samrin regime was established with 200,000 Vietnamese troops stationed in

Cambodia.

For Vietnam, soon after the unification of the North and South, China's support for the Pol Pot regime from 1975 was a serious threat to its security. In the fall of 1978, when confrontation with China became manifest, Vietnam decided to overthrow the Pol Pot regime mainly using its own forces, while supporting the Khmer People's National Liberation Army, an anti-Pol Pot Cambodian organization, thereby avoiding a pincer movement by China from the north and Cambodia from the southwest.

The Vietnamese and Cambodian people held such deeply rooted mutual distrust, partly due to their historical confrontations. It was therefore difficult to purge the anti-Pol Pot factions from the Thai border. In those days, many people fled from the country as refugees, and in the meantime the Vietnamese troops rescued many Cambodian people from the threat of death under the Pol Pot regime. The Vietnam-backed Heng Samrin regime established a relatively strong national foundation in a short while.

As mentioned previously, with the retreat of Vietnamese troops in 1989, the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, that is the Paris Agreements, were signed in 1991. Finally, in 1993, Cambodia was reborn as a new kingdom released from the influence of Vietnam. The following two factors ensured Vietnam's retreat from Cambodia: (i) Vietnam appealed for a cessation of its isolation from the international community; and (ii) Vietnam lost its supporters due to the collapse of socialism, such as those in the Soviet Union and the East Bloc countries. However, the fact that Pol Pot guerrillas remained under the anti-Vietnam banner, represented a long history of confrontations, struggles, and conflicts between the two peoples.

1-9 The profound spirituality of Khmer culture

—Release from the fetters of Thailand and Vietnam in the French colonial areas—

Here, relations with Thailand will be discussed from the historical viewpoint. The Cambodian people (Khmer) and Thai people (Siam) had a long history of cultural exchanges, as shown in the carved reliefs of Angkor Wat in the 12th century. These two peoples lived together in the northeastern part (Isaan) of Thailand.

Until the 14th century, Cambodia took the lead in developing relations between the two countries, whereas from then on, Thailand took the lead. After the establishment of the Ayutthaya Dynasty in Thailand in 1351, both countries engaged in a territorial dispute. Even after Cambodia was forced to renounce the Imperial capital of Angkor in 1431 as a result of an attack by Ayuttaya troops, Thailand persistently attacked Cambodia. When King Thoam Reachea acceded to the throne in 1474, he was forced to cede the country to the suzerainty of the Ayutthaya Dynasty. Thus, until 1863, Cambodia was subject to Thailand, except for some periods. For example, in 1555, Cambodia recovered its former territories temporarily, because the Ayutthaya national capital region fell under the power of Burma in 1569 as a result of an attack by King Bayinnaung, and thus belonged to Burma for 18 years. Meanwhile, Cambodia carried out additional construction to complete Angkor Wat, where the royal palace was temporarily moved. When the Imperial capital Lovek fell in 1594, Cambodia ceded its territory again to the suzerainty of Thailand.

The Cambodian royal family members, after spending their infancy at the Court in Thailand, were brought back to Cambodia as youngsters. In the late 18th century, Cambodia had to approve the suzerainty of Vietnam and Thailand, and 10,000 Cambodian people were taken to Bangkok for the excavation of canals. The northwestern part including the Angkor district of Cambodia belonged to Thailand. When the King of Cambodia died in 1796, a new king was not appointed. Instead, the high official Pok reigned over Cambodia.

In 1806, Ang Chan II, returning from Bangkok, acceded to the throne. However, in 1814, he approved the transfer of three provinces in the northern part of Cambodia to Thailand. Cambodian people have a distrust of Thai people due to this long history of hardship caused by Thai rule. This resentment still remains, regardless of the shared cultural ties between the two peoples in Theravada Buddhism.

In 1863, Cambodia came under the protection of France. In 1893, according to the France-Siam Agreement, France recovered the three northwestern provinces from Thailand. Under the same Agreement, France also recovered former Cambodian territories in 1904 and in 1907. In this way, the current northwestern border was formed. In 1941, Thailand occupied the northwestern part with a view to recovering the former territories lost during the French occupation. Thailand's

occupation was approved as a *fait accompli*, through Japan's arbitration. However, as Japan was defeated in 1945, Thailand was compelled to renounce these territories.

After World War II, Thailand often made political demands in relation to the opening and closing of the border between the two countries, and created difficulties for Cambodia. Thailand adopted pro-American policies in the 1960s, thereby obstructing the policy of neutrality proposed by King Sihanouk.

From 1978, Thailand indirectly interfered in the Cambodian issue, through support for the Pol Pot troops stationed along the Thai border. Thailand provided them with munitions obtained from China. It was Thailand that maneuvered behind the scenes to establish the coalition government, consisting of the Pol Pot faction, the Son San faction, and the Sihanouk faction. However, public opinion pressured Thailand to stop providing support for the Pol Pot faction, and in 1991, the Paris Agreements were concluded.

Since the 15th century, Cambodia has suffered attacks from both sides, Thailand in the west and Vietnam in the east, and its territories were annexed by both countries in the late 18th century. Its Imperial capital was moved from Phnom Penh to Lovek and then to Udong. Around 1860, the reign of the King of Cambodia was limited to the area surrounding the Imperial capital Udong, as the northwestern part was occupied by Thailand, and the southern part was occupied by Vietnam. A large number of Cambodian people were conscripted as soldiers, whenever both countries dispatched their forces. This resulted in the decline in the population, with a reduction in the vitality of the country. Disorder and devastation in Cambodia starting with a power struggle in the royal family was aggravated, as both neighboring countries were at war with Cambodia, by the desire to expand their territories.

1-10 Rural areas now being tainted by the monetary economy **–Searching for a new image of rural areas–**

Due to the disorder caused by the war, the fertile plains of paddy fields became deserted. Farmers formed small villages in the jungle, leading to a self-sufficient life in a closed society. The majority of Cambodian people were farmers, living in villages located

on embankments or hills to avoid submergence. One village consisted of 50 to 80 households on average. There were reservoirs and small rivers in the villages, with cultivated paddy fields and crop fields. In each village, the chief of the village (*Me Pum*) and his assistant formed a mutual aid group, in order to carry out the farming. Religious events served as the unifying norms for the villagers' lifestyle and culture, and thus, Buddhist priests seeking salvation performed their ascetic practices in front of the villagers. There were small shrines sacred to ancestral gods and native gods, to whom villagers would pray for mercy and blessings. People made their living from agriculture, raising a single annual crop of rice.

Villagers started rice planting in submerged paddy fields. They led their life according to the farming schedule, though it was changeable as their extensive agriculture depended on the weather. Villagers would cultivate their own farmland (about 3 hectares on average) using human power (family members) and animal power (two cows), to harvest crops to be consumed by their family and to be paid as tax. As the traditional ethnic costume for work, women would wear a waistcloth called a *sarong*, with a cloth called a *krama* on their head. On the occasion of religious events or visits to the temple, they would wear a traditional costume called a *sampot*. Meals were quite simple, consisting of rice as the staple food, together with noodles and *prahok* (a kind of fish gut pickled in salt).

In rural areas of Cambodia, the economic system is still self-sufficient. People go to the nearby market with their pig on a bicycle, in order to exchange it for daily necessities, school supplies, and wall panels made of palm leaves. They have continued such economic activities, even without their ever appearing in the economic statistics. The basic principle in rural areas is to treasure the harvest. Judging from the traditional rural structure, one can see that the monetary economy is not everything for the rural people.

What if rural areas were to be affected by a consumer-oriented society, similar to an urban-oriented economy? In rural areas where more than 80% of the total population of Cambodia lives, it is vital to place a special emphasis on agriculture. Moreover, it is necessary to reduce poverty, improve the living standards, and achieve equal distribution of wealth.

1-11 Spiritual values for the Cambodian people **–‘Paradise’ and ‘Pielg’ in Theravada Buddhism–**

I have often wondered why the Cambodian people are filled with the joy of life, despite their poverty. They must be spiritually contented people. In other words, they live amidst the magnificence of nature with sound hearts and minds, relishing the contentment of life. Theravada Buddhism has provided the greatest support for their peace of mind. I am curious to know what it is that has served as the mental sustenance for the Cambodian people.

In 1555, Gaspar Da Cruz, a Catholic priest of the Dominican order in Malacca, visited Cambodia to preach the Gospel for the first time. This missionary work ended in complete failure. Da Cruz heard the following story from a Cambodian Buddhist priest: there are 27 Paradises in Cambodia, where every living creature including fleas and lice can transmigrate to each soul in the wheel of life (samsara). Human beings can go to the first Paradise located nearest to the earth. It is filled with food and drink, with magnificently attractive celestial maidens in attendance. Above the first Paradise extends the second Paradise, to which Buddhist priests can go. There are many steps corresponding to a person's accomplishments. For example, a priest who has lived in the intense heat will be rewarded with the supreme bliss of being able to take a rest in a cool breeze.

Only someone who has completely rejected greed can go to the third Paradise on the top. The person will become like a round ball, just like a living creature in the body of Brahma. Cambodian people still believe in the existence of these three Paradises.

In parallel with the Paradises, there are 13 Hells, and the Hell into which a person falls is decided according to the severity of his sins.

Then why do people struggle despite their knowledge of these Paradises and Hells? It is because of greed. People lose their moral principles as a result of greed. Therefore, people should follow the teachings of Dharma, and put them into practice. At the final stage of practice, people will be spiritually awakened, and attain Nirvana.

Villagers come in contact with Buddhist priests with the expectation of being relieved from the various hard-

ships of the everyday world. They expect that this encounter with priests will lead to the salvation of their souls. How do the villagers put these teachings into practice when judging good and evil? In Cambodian traditional folktales, there appears a rabbit acting as a judge, a crocodile full of cunning, and a tiger as a villain, making a great fuss in the world. Only a pond snail watches these developments in silence, judging good and evil. A pond snail is the wisest of all, knowing the truth. It walks in the paddy fields slowly, step by step. It is the pond snail that embodies the truth of Dharma in the world. Indeed, such is the far-sightedness of the rice-cultivating Cambodians.

Theravada Buddhism accepts and maintains the Tripitaka Scripture originally written in the Pali language. The Scripture is written in the respective languages used in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, and the content is the same. Villagers attach greater importance to the priests than to the Scripture itself, as they regard priests as the embodiment of the Scripture. Therefore, priests are referred to as 'living religious precepts,' and are worshipped by the people. Each temple has an organization administered by the neighboring villagers, who are in charge of religious events and ceremonies held at the temple. People perform acts of charity through such ceremonies, not because they want to live peacefully in the next world, but because they want to be connected to both the living and the dead beyond time and space. Therefore, such ceremonies are performed not only for themselves but also for other living people, and also for those in the future, in the next world, and the dead. In order to hand down these ceremonies from generation to generation, it is important to establish an organization administered by the villagers who are in charge of performing these ceremonies. On the other hand, Thai Buddhism places excessive emphasis on acts of charity and focuses only on supreme bliss in the next world, and not on the connection beyond time and space. This has caused a misunderstanding among the people. At the temples in Cambodia, however, the content of the Scriptures have been conveyed to villagers orally through recitation. Only priests who have studied the Scriptures in the Pali language for a long time, can understand and interpret them.

It is traditionally said that the values and virtues of the Scriptures will be lost if they were written down, and this is another reason why the Scriptures have been orally conveyed.

Cambodian people believe in Theravada Buddhism, and want to perform acts of charity. Villagers sincerely welcome a priest asking for alms at the door. This is a pious act in expectation of the deliverance of their souls. Paradise is the thing that attracts the people's attention the most. It is quite understandable that everyone wants to go to the first Paradise, as it contains attractive celestial maidens. People in those days seemed to have had a sense of humor. They must have known both the bitter and the sweet sides of life. Theravada Buddhism is a religion of priests who have abandoned the secular world, and it focuses on self-salvation. Cambodian priests do not get married, and their final goal is to attain the state of Nirvana through practices. It is the ardent wish of Cambodians to become the fellow travelers of a priest.

2. International cooperation in the preservation and restoration of the world cultural heritage

–Investigation and study of the Khmer spirituality hidden in Angkor Wat–

2-1 Human resources development as a support for the independence of the local people

The significance and urgency of the preservation and restoration of cultural properties has long been discussed. In the 21st century, with the rapid progress in scientific technology and computerization, global standardization and mechanization will be further promoted. In contrast to this phenomenon of global standardization, the preservation and restoration projects of cultural assets reveal an individual ethnic tradition, and cultural and historical achievements in each country or region, with important keys to the solution of historical, cultural, and social problems. Preservation and restoration projects should be promoted from the viewpoint of each country or each race where the cultural properties exist, and from the universal viewpoint of mankind. It is necessary for us to consider the following two issues from the former viewpoint: i) what help we can offer in the investigation, study, preservation, and restoration, and ii) how will such help be related to the future preservation and restoration projects for the cultural properties of each country.

In the search for the identity of ethnic culture, com-

parative studies on four monuments (Borobudur, Pagan, Sukhothai, and Angkor) in Southeast Asia, started in 1984. Through the study of these monuments, local residents who are now living or once lived in the monument districts will be given some clues as to their own roots. In other words, based on such data, people can find their identity. Through this scientific evidence, local residents will develop ethnic pride and confidence. In its cultural policy, each country places importance on the study of history, the preservation of monuments, and the exhibition of these monuments, including sightseeing tours. Thus, the study of monuments is important in contemporary history as well.

In 1984, a project for comparative studies on the preservation and restoration of the cultural heritage of Southeast Asia was launched, based on the principle that the preservation of the monuments should start from international cooperation between people. This project consisted of 32 experts from four countries (Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, and Myanmar), including Ms. Hariyati Subadeo (the former Chairperson of the Borobudur Public Corporation) from Indonesia, the Prof. M.C. Subhadradis Diskul (the former President of Silpakorn University) and Doctor Nikom Musigakama (the former Director of the Department of Fine Arts in the Ministry of Education) from Thailand, Professor Tantun (the former President of Mandalay University) from Myanmar, who was awarded the Fukuoka-Asian Cultural Prize, the late Mr. Tatsuro Yamamoto (a member of the Japan Academy), Mr. Yoneo Ishii (the President of Kanda Gaigo University), the late Mr. Daigoro Chihara (in charge of the restoration of Borobudur), Mr. Nobuo Ito (the former Head of the Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties), and Mr. Yasushi Kono (the former Asian Section Chief of UNESCO) from Japan. The project dealt with the four monuments, Borobudur, Pagan, Sukhothai, and Angkor.

UNESCO highly evaluated this project as a regional cultural cooperation program in Southeast Asia. During the implementation of the project, international symposia were held seven times at the sites, to conduct on-site investigations of the monuments. Experts engaged in the restoration work at the site were asked to participate in the discussions and to make presentations of case studies. 'To study and learn at the Asian site' was our basic perspective. The results of these symposia on international cooperation in the preservation of these four monuments were compiled in a report of 1,400 pages

(*Cultural Heritage in Asia, vols. 1-7, Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University, 1985-1992*).

In short, cultural heritage symbolizes the pride and tradition of each ethnic group. The restoration work, in principle, must be carried out through the efforts of local residents. None but these local residents can explain their indigenous culture to the world. Therefore, international cooperation on the preservation and restoration of the monuments should start from human resources development, in order to help ensure the independent activities of the local residents.

2-2 Support for the preservation and restoration of Angkor Wat and the human resources development project as the repose of souls of colleagues

In the suburbs of Siam Reap (the northwestern part of Cambodia), covering an area equivalent to the 23 Wards of the Tokyo Metropolis, there are 62 monuments, including the world-famous Angkor Wat. During the Angkor Dynasty lasting for some 550 years, the kings of each period constructed many temples, monasteries, small shrines, reservoirs, and bridges in the Imperial capital, located around Siam Reap. Most existing monuments were made of stone.

In order to rescue the Angkor Monuments from collapse, our team visited Siam Reap in 1980 to start the emergency restoration work. Despite the absence of diplomatic relations, the Sophia University Angkor International Mission started a restoration project for the first time as Japanese aid. In 1994, the International Conference on Safeguarding Angkor was held in Tokyo to switch from the conventional framework consisting of Sophia University, UNESCO, the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient (EFEO), the World Monuments Fund, and the Archeological Department of India, to a new framework of international cooperation. Since then, in Phnom Penh or in Siam Reap, the International Coordinating Committee on the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC) has been meeting regularly under the co-chairmanship of the Japanese and French Ambassadors, with the assistance of UNESCO.

Currently, the Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA) and Sophia University Angkor International Mission (Sophia Mission), are implementing the preservation and restoration project, as well as

the investigations on the Angkor Monuments. Since 1970, when a civil war broke out, Cambodia had suffered from social disorder for 24 years, until the UN started the Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) in 1993. During these years, preservation and restoration activities had to be suspended. Moreover, these activities could not be resumed immediately just because the Cambodian side had become peaceful. However, as both the three-party Coalition Government at the Thai border and the Heng Samrin Government actually administering in Phnom Penh agreed on the preservation and restoration of the Angkor Monuments from 1980 to 1989, even though the civil war still continued, we were busy with restoration work for several monuments. This restoration of the cultural heritage was carried out along with Cambodian workers, despite the fact that they were suffering from food shortages.

The Angkor Monuments, including Angkor Wat, symbolize the ethnic pride and traditions of the Cambodian people. During the Pol Pot regime (1975 – 1979), 36 cultural heritage preservation experts were forced to die, due to the policy of eliminating intellectuals who were considered to be poisoned by Western philosophy and language. As a result, there remained no experts who could be in charge of the investigation, preservation, and restoration of the cultural heritage.

Personally, I feel disconsolate over the death of those Cambodian colleagues who had worked together with me for the preservation and restoration of the Angkor Monuments since 1961. As an act of remembrance for those colleagues, I am now devoting all my energies to the restoration work of the Angkor Monuments. This is the reason why I (or Japan) must provide support for human resources development, aimed at developing the capacity of Cambodian experts in cultural heritage preservation.

It has been expected that the preservation and restoration projects of the Angkor Monuments would help Cambodian people to reconstruct themselves spiritually, and regain their pride and confidence in a true sense. Profits gained through tourism must be returned to the country or region, so that the country or region can take the lead in the research and in the preservation and restoration work. Moreover, these profits should contribute to economic independence and regional development.

Experts have been absent for the past twenty-five years. For the first time in eleven years since the hu-

man resources development project started, the number of promising experts in cultural heritage preservation is on the rise.

As mentioned previously, the Sophia University Angkor International Mission (hereafter referred to as the Sophia Mission) has been involved in emergency restoration work since 1980. In this emergency restoration work, villagers were in charge of the following cleaning activities: to construct supports to prevent the falling of stone materials; to drain water from the monuments; and to remove the undergrowth of tropical vegetation.

The human resources development project started in March 1990, when signs of peace emerged in Cambodia. This project has been and is continuously being implemented, aimed at the raising of the skills of the following three groups of experts: i) officials who are able to supervise the investigation, preservation, and restoration of the cultural heritage, ii) technical officials with medium-level skills, and iii) stonemasons.

On-site training for students of the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh is implemented at the Monuments in Banteay Kdei, for which the Sophia Mission has been in charge. These students belong to either the Department of Archaeology or the Department of Architecture. Since 1995, five students selected from each Department have jointly carried out investigation and research with the Sophia Mission, in the months of March, August, and December of every year, with practical on-site training provided by Japanese instructors. These students entered the Royal University of Fine Arts in 1991, when the University was reopened. Sophia University constructed the Angkor Training Center (two stories with an area of 290m²) in August 1997, so that these students could lodge together, have lectures, treat artifacts obtained from excavations, and make drawings.

After graduation, these students were employed as trainees. They went to the Training Center every day to deal with assignments in archaeology and architecture, and have continuously received training from Japanese instructors. Four students were selected from those who participated in the training. They won scholarships from private foundations to study at the Graduate School of Sophia University. In their Master's theses, they presented their studies on the Angkor Monuments from a unique viewpoint as Cambodian people. Currently, they are in the doctoral level course, preparing

their dissertations.

2-3 Project for the coexistence of human beings (village), nature (environment), and culture (monuments) –Japanese technologies and methodologies are not always applicable–

In my opinion, the implementation of preservation and restoration projects alone is not enough. Therefore, since August 1991, we have also been implementing a project aimed at the development of rural communities around the monument area, and the restoration of traditional culture. This is a project for the coexistence of human beings, nature, and culture. In this project, we have been investigating the natural environment such as plants and ecosystem in the adjacent forest areas, as well as the economic conditions, irrigation, topography, geology, and water quality, in the villages around the monument area in Banteay Kdei. In addition, research on the intangible cultural assets in the Siam Reap Province is under way to prepare an inventory of a miniature shadow play (*Sbek Tuoch*) and a deer head parade (*trot*). The project is also designed to collect folktales. Currently, we are obtaining results of the research on socio-economic conditions and traditional culture, in Sra Srang Village in the north. Thus, we have taken the first step in the project toward the coexistence of villages, forests, and monuments.

Nine universities and five organizations in Japan have joined our team, implementing the project based on the following three philosophical principles:

- (i) Cambodian people must be responsible for the protection of their own cultural heritages. Based on the principle that Cambodian experts should be in charge of the preservation and restoration of the cultural heritage in Cambodia in order to pass them down to future generations, a human resources (researchers and technicians) development project was started ten years ago. This project aims at the development of personnel to contribute to the academic independence of Cambodia, and to make observations on cultural sovereignty.
- (ii) Research on the cultural heritage must be closely related to the preservation and restoration project. It is not sufficient to restore only the damaged parts of the cultural heritage and pass them down

to the future generations. Restoration without scientific identification may destroy the original monuments. In other words, we must identify when, how (using what materials), and why the monuments were constructed, as well as their outlook on the universe and style. The preservation and restoration work must be based on careful academic investigation and research.

- (iii) A medium- to long-range perspective is required for research on the preservation and restoration of monuments. Along with the careful investigation of the monuments, it is necessary to develop a medium- to long-range master plan for the preservation and restoration work. In the long-range plan, the preservation and restoration work should be implemented continuously for 30 to 50 years, in order to rediscover the traditional construction methods and techniques, and to evaluate them. It is desirable to use these traditional methods and techniques with some improvements, in combination with high technology. Similarly, research on the natural environment around the monuments, such as irrigation, plants, and ecosystems, should be based on a long-range perspective. In a word, cultural cooperation is a persistent and long-range task.

Only a limited number of experts have learned South-east Asian languages in Japan, and have undertaken a profound study of archaeology and architecture. It is true that Japan has superb technology, sufficient support funds, and competent researchers and technicians. Japanese people, therefore, tend to have a latent sense of superiority towards the Cambodian people. Such Japanese feelings of superiority toward other Asian countries hinder them from creating mutual trust. I have learned from my 40 years of experience that Japanese technologies and methodologies are not always applicable to Cambodia and other tropical countries in Asia, due to unforeseen obstacles caused by climatic differences.

Some Japanese experts and researchers, although they are the exception, tend to think that technology is everything and that Japan is superior to other Asian countries. Therefore, they think that all they have to do is to restore the damaged parts of the monuments, separating the cultural heritage from local communities. In other words, they do not try to grasp the meaning of the cultural heritage in the context of Cambodian culture. Such people have to change their views. Cooperation

for the restoration of monuments, is not a question of just digging using an excavator, and laying stone materials using a crane. What is more important is the basic research on the monuments, as well as the study of the masonry methods and actual experience in masonry. Starting from the introduction of technology suited to the technical level at the site, new machines and high technology should be introduced step by step.

Without this basic principle that cultural cooperation should be provided while respecting local culture and communities, cooperation for the restoration of monuments will never be rewarded. Rather, such cooperation may be criticized as cultural destruction. We have come to the following conclusion from our 20 years of experience in Cambodia: what is necessary in Cambodia is the restoration and preservation of monuments 'of the people,' 'by the people', and 'for the people.' The research on the cultural heritage and cooperation for the restoration work should start from human resources development, such as archaeologists proficient in excavation methods, architects experienced in restoration work, and stonemasons competent in handling stone materials. We are implementing the human resources development project, as well as the excavation and restoration projects, jointly with professors of the Royal University of Fine Arts. Moreover, a joint project with Autorite pour la Protection du Sites et l'Amenagement de la Region d'Angkor (APSARA) has been launched.

In actual fact, experts and researchers in our team have caused various cultural frictions, because in many cases normal methods in Japan are not always applicable to other Asian countries. At the same time, there are many things that Japanese people can learn from the local villagers and residents, as for example through shadow plays and folktales. Local people teach us when we should plant rice, how we should drain the rainwater, and which nut is efficacious as a medicine. In some cases, local people misconstrue our good intentions as interference. We must keep in mind the fact that Japanese methods are not everything. Hopefully, such cultural frictions will lead to mutual understanding.

Angkor Wat is a symbol of the Cambodian people. Therefore, the preservation and restoration work should be carried out by them. As mentioned previously, I am devoting all my energies to the restoration work of the Angkor Monuments as an act of remembrance for my 30 Cambodian colleagues, who were forced to lose their lives.

2-4 Efforts to interpret messages hidden in Angkor Wat

In 1980, our team started the investigation, preservation, and restoration of the Angkor Monuments, based on the above-mentioned principle: “the restoration and preservation of monuments ‘of the people,’ ‘by the people,’ and ‘for the people’ in Cambodia.” When providing assistance to the Cambodian people, it is necessary to establish a system to encourage them with elaborate and painstaking attention.

In the Pol Pot period, many monuments were left neglected. During the Heng Samrin period, no country dared to enter Cambodia, regardless of the SOS call from the Angkor Monuments. However, our team started to provide assistance in 1980 as a university NGO, and later in 1993 after the Peace Agreements were concluded, UNESCO and France joined us. Why did we go to Cambodia in the middle of a civil war when no other country dared go there? Why were we obliged to help the Cambodian people in restoring the Angkor Monuments? As mentioned earlier, we provided assistance in memory of the spirits of the dead, as a form of remembrance to the 30 or more Cambodian colleagues who were forced to lose their lives. Thus, we have been implementing the human resources development project aimed at nurturing Cambodian officials, and have been dispatching survey missions for on-site training.

So far, 32 Sophia missions have been dispatched. These missions consist of groups engaged in the following nine fields: architecture, archaeology, remains of kilns, geology, irrigation/environment, communes, tradition/culture/folktales, investigation into long-distance aspects of cultural heritage, and the distribution of rucksacks. These nine groups have provided assistance in response to the needs of the Cambodian people, to encourage and motivate them to participate in the reconstruction of their nation. This is the objective of human resources development as well. Our team constructed the Sophia University Angkor Training Center (two stories with an area of 290m²), where Cambodian graduates from the Department of Archaeology and the Department of Architecture are employed as trainees in order to receive a thorough training in Cambodian culture, its background, history, indigenous methods, and unique systems or traditions. In other words, in order to preserve and restore the cultural heritage properly, it is

necessary to start from a clear understanding of traditional systems in rural life. This is not just because the Angkor Monuments are located near villages. It is always necessary to consider where to place Cambodian history, culture, and society, including Angkor Wat, in the context of world history.

After the three or five year training course at the Sophia University Angkor Training Center, these trainees are sent to Japan to study at a university, and return home with a university degree. This is a stupendous and overwhelming project of human resources development, and such medium- and long-range cultural cooperation will need to be continued for twenty or thirty years.

Another reason why survey missions continuously carry out activities, such as investigation, study, preservation, and restoration, is that there are many things we can learn from the Cambodian people. Through the restoration work, we can learn about the culture and tradition, as well as the desires, faith, and outlook on the universe of people in the past, by deciphering their messages and spiritual values hidden in Angkor Wat or Bayon.

Cambodia is a poverty-stricken country, with painful experience of the lingering civil war. However, cultural cooperation motivated by pity does not last long. Japanese people must realize again with humility, that there are still many things to learn from Cambodia. Cambodia has its own traditions and customs in daily life, and it is necessary to consider the future preservation and restoration work of the Angkor Monuments within this traditional framework of Cambodia. Needless to say, it is essential also to provide technical training. I sometimes wonder whether Japanese society has fully discussed these basic principles of international cultural cooperation. Rather, it appears to me that Japanese people tend to be arrogant and overconfident, and to take the attitude that we can do anything in Cambodia, since we have the money, the technology, and the human resources.

2-5 Who should be responsible for the cultural heritage of Cambodia? —Cambodia's cultural sovereignty—

Who should protect Cambodia's cultural sovereignty and cultural heritage? This should be done by the Cambodian people themselves, and not through international assistance. Also, who should be responsible for

Cambodia's cultural sovereignty? Again it is the Cambodian people who should be responsible. Therefore, it is necessary to develop Cambodian human resources expeditiously, so that they can take the initiative in policy-making, regarding the preservation and restoration of their cultural heritage.

The preservation and restoration work of the Angkor Monuments is just like a 'show window' displaying international cooperation. Each country should try to make its presence felt in the preservation and restoration work, while respecting Cambodia's cultural sovereignty. In other words, the Cambodian people themselves should take ultimate responsibility for their own culture.

The scenes of village life carved in relief on the Angkor Monuments are still seen in the surrounding villages. From early childhood, Cambodian people have experienced such lifestyles, scenes and customs, and have acquired faith in them through their five senses. Therefore, once Cambodian people acquire their own direction, know-how, and skills for the preservation and restoration work, it is possible to apply Cambodian traditional methods to the detailed preservation and restoration work of their traditional cultural heritage, namely the Angkor Monuments, to be nurtured by successive generations.

In 1997, when the military clash occurred between the Hun Sen faction and the Ranariddh faction, many foreign aid missions left Cambodia for Bangkok, and only the Cambodian people remained at the monument site.

I went over to Cambodia in 1980, although no one else did. At present, the international community and experts in monuments emphasize the importance of the Angkor Monuments, insisting that we should devote all our efforts to the preservation and restoration work. Why then did no one help us during those difficult times from 1980? The reason given was a political one, namely that the Heng Samrin regime was a puppet government. I appealed to various related organizations, including the UNESCO, the Japanese Government, and the United Nations to help the Angkor Monuments, describing the deterioration of Angkor Wat. In 1993, after the normalization of diplomatic relations, various countries, organizations, and experts entered Cambodia. What is regrettable is that no one bothered to enter Cambodia in response to an SOS call from the Angkor Monuments in 1980, although I had hoped that at least one or two conscientious individuals might come to

save the Angkor Monuments, regardless of the absence of diplomatic relations.

The fact that many countries are now providing assistance for the preservation and restoration of the Angkor Monuments, is to be highly appreciated. What is important here is each country's consideration regarding the future of the Cambodian people. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider from each standpoint, as to who it is that should play the key role with reference to the preservation and restoration of the monuments 'of the people.' Japan provides funds and know-how, and in return, many things are being learnt from the preservation and restoration work on the Angkor Monuments. In Cambodia, methods based on Japanese archaeology and architecture are not always applicable. When providing cultural cooperation, a humble attitude needs to be taken of learning from the Cambodian people, while respecting their cultural sovereignty.

2-6 Searching for the original scenery of Angkor Wat

-What is an ethnic aesthetic sense?-

When viewing the scene presented from the first tower gate of Angkor Wat, it is possible to see five steeples towering against the sky beyond a group of palm trees. This scenery fills us with profound and mystical feelings. However, the original scenery of Angkor Wat can never be known. Imagine that there were several towns surrounding Angkor Wat, and wooden houses with elevated floors were closely packed. At the marketplace filled with the cries of vendors, many goods must have been sold. These wooden houses vanished as time passed, and the sites were covered with undergrowth, huge trees, and other vegetation. Some places may have been covered with banyan trees, as is now seen in the Ta Prom Temple. At present, Angkor Wat and other monuments are neatly arranged with the trees trimmed. However, in the past, these monuments must have looked very different.

In 1908, Mr. J. Commaille of the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient was appointed as the official in charge of the preservation of Angkor Wat. He lived in a house with an elevated floor placed on a cross-shaped terrace, just over the Western approach to the first tower gate. He used that house as a residence and office. According to reports, his first task was the removal of the undergrowth and trees. He employed Cambodian

workers to level the ground of the precincts by removing the sedimentation of earth and sand. Then, dense palm trees were thinned to get a wide view. The leveled ground was laid with turf, and the workers mowed the lawn several times after the rainy season. Therefore, it can be said that the current scenery of Angkor Wat has been created artificially. Since Angkor Wat was constructed, it has never been deserted to become a ruin, though the precincts were densely covered with trees. After the fall of the kingdom in 1431, people were not allowed to get close to Angkor Wat for some time. Later however, it was changed into a temple of Theravada Buddhism, and has been a sacred place for Buddhism ever since.

The grandeur of Angkor Wat captivates us whenever we stand in front of it, and so little attention has been paid to the surrounding scenery. For 63 years (including the colonial period) from 1908 to 1971 until the retreat of French experts, French people took the lead in the project for the preservation and restoration of Angkor Wat, displaying the contribution of French culture. However, these preservation and restoration activities, setting aside the technical aspects, were devoted to producing a clean and tidy Angkor Wat that would be well received by tourists, and based on the French aesthetic sense.

Just visualize the scenery of the Grand Trianon and Petit Trianon located at the back of the Chateau de Versailles. There are large and small ponds, with trimmed trees here and there, and we can have a broad open view. In the preservation and restoration work of Angkor Wat, M. Commaille must have subconsciously visualized the Chateau de Versailles. No one has referred to this point, but in my opinion, his work must have been based on a stereotypical French aesthetic sense. The preservation and restoration work of monuments is sensitive enough to reflect such a subtle aesthetic sense. It must be highly appreciated that the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient has contributed to the preservation and restoration of Angkor Wat for 63 years. However, what is required for the preservation and restoration of the cultural heritage in Cambodia, is the sense of the Cambodian people themselves. We must have respect for their five senses cultivated in the climate of Cambodia, as well as for their aesthetic outlook.

Box 4-1 Cooperation in the Preservation of the Angkor Monuments through the UNESCO Japanese Trust Fund

From 1908 to 1971, the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient (EFEO) was in charge of the preservation and restoration of the Angkor Monuments. However, due to the civil war and disputes in recent years, the Monuments have increasingly deteriorated.

Soon after the establishment of the UNESCO Japanese Trust Fund for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage, as the first project, the Japanese Government provided assistance to hold the First Technical Round Table of Experts on the Preservation of the Angkor Monuments in Bangkok in 1990. UNESCO proposed this conference, the first technical meeting on the Angkor Monuments, as part of the Action Plan for the Preservation of the Angkor Monuments. About 30 participants, including international experts, Cambodian experts, and representatives of international organizations, government organizations, and non-governmental organizations, adopted a series of recommendations for future activities.

In 1991 during the Cambodian peace process, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Federico Mayor, requested the assistance of the international community in safeguarding the Angkor Monuments. His request attracted international concern. The Angkor Monuments, where numerous structures exist over an extensive region of 4 million square kilometers, have incomparable beauty and universal value. In December 1992, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee registered the Angkor Monuments on the World Heritage List. At the same time, in order to intensify activities to aid in their safeguarding, the Angkor Monuments were declared as monuments on the verge of crisis.

In 1993, the Japanese Government hosted an Inter-governmental Conference on the Safeguarding and De-

velopment of the Historic Site of Angkor. Participants, including the King of Cambodia, and representatives of governments, international organizations, financial institutions, and NGOs from more than 30 countries, adopted the 'Tokyo Declaration.' As a result of this conference, the International Coordinating Committee on the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC) was established in Phnom Penh, to support the activities of APSARA (the Cambodian government agency established in February 1995 by Royal Order). The ICC has met regularly since December 1993, under the co-chairmanship of Japan and France, with the assistance of UNESCO. Through the Japanese Trust Fund, the Japanese Government provides support for the ICC meetings.

Four projects on the Angkor Monuments are summarized below. Some projects have recently been completed, while the others are now being implemented.

(1) Project for the preservation and restoration of the Angkor Monuments

In response to a request from the Cambodian Government, the Japanese Government sent four preliminary survey missions. In 1994, Japan organized the Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA) to implement a specific preservation and restoration project under the UNESCO Japanese Trust Fund for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage. With support from the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE), this long-term project is now being implemented, such as investigations and restoration work, focused on the Bayon Temple and the Royal Plaza (*Prasat Suor Prat* and its terrace).

Major Angkor projects under the UNESCO Japanese Trust Fund

Name of project	Total expenditure (US\$)	Period	Organization for accepting projects in Cambodia
Preservation and restoration of the Angkor Monuments	9,600,000	1994 - 1999	APSARA
Technical assistance to the Angkor Conservation Office	669,500	1992 - 1998	APSARA
Human resources development at the Royal University of Fine Arts	1,288,900	1997 - 1998	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
Inscriptions at Angkor	79,100	1997 - 1998	UNESCO

Box 4-1 (Continued)**a) Bayon Temple**

The Bayon Temple which is situated in the center of Angkor Thom, is the last castle town built from around the late 12th century to the early 13th century. This is one of the most important structures in the Historic Site of Angkor, from both the historical and architectural viewpoints. Regrettably, the degree of deterioration is severe. This project aims at the preservation and restoration of the Bayon Temple's Northern Small Library, which is on the verge of collapse, and the formulation of a master plan for the preservation and restoration of the whole Bayon Complex.

The restoration work was completed in September 1999. In order to find out the cause of the deformation of the platform resulting in the collapse of walls and roofs, the platform was dismantled in 1996. As a result, it was proved that the deformation was caused by uneven subsidence due to the soil content, which had been washed away over a long period of time. JSA carried out the compaction of the sandy layer using a traditional prodding tool called an 'Elephant's Foot,' and then applied a small amount of slaked lime to improve the density of the sandy layer.

All data collected during the demolition and restoration work and the results of scientific analysis on the causes of deterioration, have been made available to the public. These data will be used for the formulation of a future master plan. Based on the principle that the original shape of the structure should be respected as much as possible, JSA has been organizing an annual symposium on the restoration of the Bayon Temple since 1996.

b) Royal Plaza

Prior to the implementation of specific restoration work on the *Prasat Suor Prat* (12 towers) and its Terrace, various investigations have been carried out. At present, a detailed architectural investigation into each tower is being made. At the Northern *Prasat Suor Prat*, excavations were carried out with a view to identifying the original monuments, the process of reconstruction or extension of the Terrace, and the process of changes in other structures. It has been proved that the inclination of some towers on the verge of collapse has been caused by the repeated contraction and expansion of the ground, along with fluctuations in the

underground water level.

(2) Technical assistance to the Angkor Conservation Office

This project aims to contribute to strengthening the Angkor Conservation Office (ACO), in charge of the conservation of the Angkor Monuments. As a first step, Building No. 27 called 'Groslier's House' and Building No. 25 which is used for the administrative services of the Office were renovated through the Japanese Trust Fund. The implementation of the project was initially hampered by a serious deterioration in the security situation in Siem Reap city in 1993. However, at present, the renovated buildings are fully utilized as the offices of the ACO and the APSARA authority. In Building No. 27, through UNESCO's fund aid, the International Scientific and Technical Documentation Center on Angkor has been set up.

Moreover, three artifact storage buildings (No. 3, No. 4, and No. 5) were renovated, and a stone engineering workshop was constructed. Security measures were significantly strengthened through the construction of iron fences and iron grids.

In Building No. 3, as a German project, a laboratory was installed for the research and conservation of the stone materials.

The renovation work was carried out in coordination with the inventory work of artifacts, through the UNESCO French Trust Fund. Building No. 12 was also rehabilitated as the stone engineering workshop, with a stone cutting machine provided by JSA for training purposes.

(3) Human resources development at the Royal University of Fine Arts

Capacity building for national experts is extremely important, for sustained cultural heritage preservation activities.

When this project started in 1993, Japan contributed only by inviting foreign lecturers to the Department of Archaeology of the Royal University of Fine Arts. However, since the academic year 1996, Japan has extended assistance to the Department of Architecture and Urbanism.

Also, since 1996, with the cooperation of the Toyota Foundation and the Japan Foundation Asia Center, Ja-

Box 4-1 (Continued)

pan has provided assistance in activities such as the recruitment of professors, monitoring, and evaluation. Moreover, personnel training for Cambodian teaching assistants and administrative staff has started.

Through this project, not only the quality of the University but also the teaching skills of the Cambodian lecturers and the capacity of the administrative staff has been significantly enhanced. Moreover, two Departments have substantially reformed their curricula. Through the renovation of the library of the South Campus with joint funding from the British Embassy, university facilities have been improved, thus significantly improving the academic environment.

(4) Inscriptions at Angkor

There is no compiled document of Cambodian epigraphy. However, such a document is essential not only for students majoring in epigraphy, but also for researchers of related fields or other fields to enable them to correctly interpret the inscriptions. Therefore, this project aims to compile a manual of inscriptions at Angkor.

Currently, Professor Long Seam of Phnom Penh University, Professor Yoshiaki Ishizawa of the Faculty of Foreign Studies of Sophia University, and Professor Claude Jacques, Director of Studies of *the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* in Paris, are jointly in charge of compiling a manual of inscriptions. In an introduction, Khmer paleography and Sanskrit metric will be outlined, followed by the text focused on the following three topics: (i) Khmer history, (ii) religion, and (iii) society, with the whole or part of the actual inscriptions related to each topic. More than twenty texts in the Sanskrit or Khmer languages will be translated with notes. At the back of the manual, images of the engravings of all inscriptions quoted in the text will be appended. Moreover, samples of inscriptions in Thai, Burmese, Japanese, and Arabic discovered in Angkor and its vicinity will be presented in an appendix.

A study by Professor Ishizawa on the traces of writings in Chinese ink by Japanese people in 1632 will be introduced as well. In order to understand the first centuries of Khmer history, literature written in the Chinese language is extremely important.

Source: *Activities under the UNESCO Japanese Trust Fund for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage* (published by UNESCO, November 1998)

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