

# Cambodia-North Korea Relations Since 1964:

## A Historical Review\*

Kin Phea\*\*

### Abstract

---

Cambodia has established diplomatic relations with North Korea since mid-1960s. These relations were fostered by Prince Norodom Sihanouk and the late Great Leader Generalissimo Kim Il Sung. These relations were strengthened over the years through high-level visits by the leaders of the two countries.

For past decades, the relations between the two countries had been categorized as the unique ones based on strong personal tie of the two leaders rather than the national interests, and they were not based on geopolitical location and cultural connection. However, death of Kim Il Sung, then Kim Jung Il, and finally King Norodom Sihanouk, marked the end of the special relationship between Cambodia and North Korea - and with no Princes or Great Leaders linking arms, the two nations' destinies hardly seem linked either. Eventually, the relations between the two countries have become nominal ones.

This paper seeks to examine the historical review of the bilateral

---

\* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2nd World Conference on North Korean Studies (WCNKS), held on 14th October 2015, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this manuscript for their sincere comments.

\*\* Deputy Director General, International Relations Institute of Cambodia, Royal Academy of Cambodia, kinpheha@gmail.com.

relations, present landscape of relations with focusing on the past legacy, and the roles played by Cambodia between the North and the South Korea.

**Keywords:** Cambodia, North Korea, South Korea, diplomatic relations, Norodom Sihanouk, Kim Il Sung

---

## I . Introduction

Nations have been always interdependent and these are bound to remain so even after attaining high levels of development. Interdependence has been an incontrovertible fact of international relations. It compels every nation to get involved in the process of establishing and conducting relations with other nations. Each nation establishes diplomatic, economic, trade, educational, cultural and political relations with other nations.

For giving meanings and directions to diplomatic relations with other nations, each nation formulates and adopts a foreign policy. Through its foreign policy, it tries to secure the goals of national interest in international relations. The behavior of each nation in international environment is always conditioned by its foreign policy. Cambodia is not an exception.

The strategic foreign policy of Cambodia aims at enhancing the reputation and prestige of the nation on international arena, promoting Cambodian participation in regional and global affairs as well as expanding international supports in order to promote

social and economic developments and the decent and civilized livelihood of the citizens, and to strengthen national defense through widening international bilateral and multilateral co-operations.

Cambodia upholds a foreign policy which is independent, neutral, nonpartisan and makes its best to strengthen friendship and close cooperation with other countries in the region and around the globe without discrimination in terms of political and social settings. This is based on the principle of equality without interference in each other's internal affairs and with respect for each other's own independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity for mutual benefit in developing the economies, technology and science of each country.

Cambodia has established diplomatic relations with most countries in the world and is a member of most major international organizations. North Korea (officially Democratic People's Republic of Korea-DPRK) has been one of the Cambodia's friendly countries. Diplomatic relations between Cambodia and North Korea date back to mid-1960s. These relations were fostered by King Norodom Sihanouk and the late Great Leader Generalissimo Kim Il Sung. The bilateral relations were strengthened over the years through high-level visits between leaders of the two countries.

For past decades, the relations between the two countries had been categorized as unique ones based on a strong personal tie between two leaders rather than for the national interests, and it was not based on geopolitical location and cultural connection.

However, after Kim Il Sung passed away, then Kim Jung Il, and finally King Norodom Sihanouk, marked the end of the special relationship between Cambodia and North Korea – and with no Princes or Great Leaders linking arms, the two nations’ destinies hardly seem linked either. Moreover, in 1996, aspect of Cambodia’s relationship with North Korea was changed as Co-Prime Minister Hun Sen initiated diplomatic tie restoration with South Korea even though King Norodom Sihanouk strongly opposed that. Eventually, the relations between Cambodia and North Korea have become nominal.

This paper seeks to examine the historical review of the bilateral relations, present landscape of relations with focusing on the past legacy, and the roles played by Cambodia between the North and the South Korea. Finally the paper provides a conclusion on general aspects of Cambodia-North Korea relations.

## II. Historical Review: Strong Personal Tie Relations

The diplomatic relations between Cambodia and North Korea were officially established on December 28, 1964 while there were two major factors affecting North Korea’s approach to foreign policy in the decades after the Korean War: the split between the Soviet Union and China and the emergence of post-colonial states and the Non-Aligned Movement. In the 1960s, as many newly independent nations joined the UN, North Korea expanded its

diplomatic relations, particularly in Africa. By the late 1960s, South Korea ended its policy of maintaining diplomatic ties only with countries that did not recognize North Korea, allowing the scope of diplomatic outreach for both Koreas to expand (Daniel & Kim 2015, 3).

The unique relationship between Cambodia and North Korea dates back to 1965, when Indonesian President Sukarno introduced North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung to Cambodia's mercurial King Norodom Sihanouk at a non-aligned summit in Jakarta (Sebastian 2011). The rest of the world figures from that landmark gathering and movement - Indonesia's President Sukarno, Yugoslavia's Tito, Egypt's Nasser, India's Nehru, Kim Il Sung, and China's Zhou En Lai - were dead. But for King Sihanouk, the event launched a long and valued friendship between North Korea and Cambodia, a relationship that had affected the foreign policy of both countries at key moments in their tumultuous histories (Cat 2007). At first glance, the Mao-suited 'Great Leader' and the urbane Cambodian monarch seemed cut from different cloth, but the pair quickly established an amity that bounded their two nations into a close partnership (Sebastian 2011). The bilateral relations were strengthened over the years through high-level visits between leaders of the two countries (Sebastian 2011).

After the 1965 meeting, Cambodia almost immediately decided to give diplomatic recognition to North Korea and withdrew it from South Korea<sup>1</sup>), a political debt that was never forgotten by

---

1) Cambodia and South Korea first established consular relations in 1962 and closed in

Kim Il Sung whose country was then ignored by the majority of non-aligned countries, and was often repaid over the years to Prince Sihanouk - both personally and politically (Cat 2007). Julio A. Jeldres, Sihanouk's official biographer, argued that the amity between Sihanouk and Kim was unique that it wasn't predicated on 'ideology, strategic or trade interests.' The relationship was purely based on the friendship between the two leaders and the support they gave to each other during difficult times (Sebastian 2011). In his 2005 memoir, Sihanouk wrote that Kim was "my surest and most sincere friend and the most steadfast in my support. Even more than a friend: a true brother and my only 'true relative' after the death of my mother (Geoffrey 2013, 154)."

Milton Osborne, an Australian diplomat turned writer, describes the relationship between Cambodia and North Korea as "puzzling, even bizarre." He said: "A more unlikely association it is difficult to imagine. For reasons that have never been very clear, Sihanouk found comfort in an extraordinary exchange of mutual admiration (Berger 2005)." The relationship between Sihanouk and Kim Il Sung solidified in March 1970 when Sihanouk was toppled through the military coup led by General Lon Nol and supported by the United States.

In mid-1960s, King Sihanouk's power was shaky. His balancing act between the left and the right became harder to maintain.

---

1966. Formal diplomatic relations were initially established in 1970. The relations, like the regime itself, were short-lived and were terminated in 1975 when Khmer Rouge come to power.

Cross-border smuggling of rice also began to have a serious effect on the Cambodian economy. In the Cambodian elections of 1966, the usual Sangkum policy of having one candidate in each electoral district was abandoned; there was a huge swing to the right, especially as left-wing deputies had to compete directly with members of the traditional elite, who were able to use their local influence. Lon Nol, a rightist who had been a longstanding associate of King Sihanouk, became the Prime Minister.

By 1969, Lon Nol and the rightists were increasingly frustrated with Sihanouk. Although the basis for this was partly economic, political considerations were also involved. In particular, the nationalist and anti-communist sensibilities of Lon Nol and his associates meant that King Sihanouk's policy of semi-toleration of Viet Cong and Vietnam People's Army activity within Cambodian borders was unacceptable; King Sihanouk, during his swing to the left in 1963–66, had negotiated a secret arrangement with Hanoi whereby in return for the guaranteed purchase of rice at inflated prices, the port of Sihanoukville was opened for weapons shipments to the Viet Cong. As well as the rightist nationalists, the liberal modernizing elements within the Sangkum, headed by In Tam, had also become increasingly alienated by King Sihanouk's autocratic style.

In March 1970, while Sihanouk was touring Europe, the Soviet Union and China, large-scale anti-Vietnamese demonstrations erupted in Phnom Penh. Crowds attacked the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong (Provisional Revolutionary Government of the

Republic of South Vietnam) embassies. Sihanouk initially gave a certain degree of support to the demonstrators; he hoped Moscow and Beijing would pressure North Vietnam to reduce its presence in Cambodia. Indeed, it has even been suggested (by William Shawcross and others) that King Sihanouk and Lon Nol might have planned the first demonstrations to gain political leverage against Hanoi.

The riots, however, escalated beyond the government's control – although this was likely done with a degree of encouragement from Lon Nol and Sirik Matak – and the embassy was sacked. Inside, a “contingency plan” was allegedly found for the communists to occupy Cambodia. On March 12, Sirik Matak cancelled King Sihanouk’s trade agreement with North Vietnam; Lon Nol closed the port of Sihanoukville to the North Vietnamese and issued an impossible ultimatum to them: all People's Army of Vietnam aka. North Vietnamese Army (PAVN) and National Liberation Front aka. Viet Cong forces (NLF) were to withdraw from Cambodian soil within 72 hours (on March 15) or face military action. When, by the morning of 16 March, it was clear that this demand had not been met, some 30,000 youths gathered outside the National Assembly in Phnom Penh to protest against the Vietnamese presence.

On March 18 1970, the army took up positions around the capital, and a debate was held within the National Assembly under In Tam’s direction. The rest of the assembly unanimously voted to withdraw confidence in Sihanouk. Lon Nol took over the powers



of the Head of State on an emergency basis, while the position itself was taken by the President of the General Assembly, Cheng Heng. In Tam was confirmed as President of the Sangkum. The coup had, therefore, followed essentially constitutional forms rather than being a blatant military takeover. These events marked the foundation of the Khmer Republic. Five days later, King Sihanouk appealed from Beijing urging his followers to join the resistance army in the marquis. Many Cambodian farmers did. Prince Sihanouk formed an exile government based in Beijing, backed by China, North Vietnam and some other communist countries.

North Korea transferred its recognition to the resistance front headed by King Sihanouk from his exile in Beijing after his overthrow (Sebastian 2011). In 1979 when the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia to oust the Khmer Rouge, North Korea risked the ire of the rest of the Eastern block to give its support to the new Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) - the Cambodian struggle against the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. North Korea risked its long-lasting relationship with Vietnam, a socialist comrade, to extend support to Sihanouk and the coalition government over which he presided (Cat 2007).

During his visit to Pyongyang in June 1970, Sihanouk was treated as a visiting head of state, being entertained in state banquets and welcomed in special mass rallies. In addition, Kim Il Sung gave him the assurance of North Korean support, as described in his memoirs:

President Kim Il Sung gave me, in conclusion, the assurance that whatever might happen to me in the future, he, his party, his people, his state would never abandon me, would always support me in whatever I might undertake for my country especially for its national independence and its territorial integrity, and would always offer me the most generous and caring hospitality (Sihanouk 2005, 154).

During King Sihanouk's first period of exile (1970-1975), Kim Il Sung ordered the North Korean military put the finishing touches on a 60-room Korean-style palace for King Sihanouk at Changsuwon, a picturesque lake about 45-minute drive from Pyongyang. In his book *Three Days in the Hermit Kingdom*, American Eddie Burdick wrote that from the sky the palace was "oddly reminiscent of the main complex at Angkor Wat," set among hills "peppered with military installations of various types – including numerous surface-to-air missile batteries (Sebastian 2011)." Reciprocally, Sihanouk spent these years composing political or revolutionary-style songs praising Kim Il Sung and the people of North Korea. Throughout the 1970s, Sihanouk languished for a few months every year in his North Korean home, making a series of films starring North Korean actors (Geoffrey 2013). His family took boat trips there, played badminton and swam in the pool (McPherson 2014).

After the coalition between King Sihanouk and Khmer Rouge,

supported by China, had gained victory over the Lon Nol regime in 1975, Sihanouk returned to Phnom Penh to become the titular head of state before being deposed by Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot in the following year and put under house arrest. His son, the Cambodia's current King Norodom Sihamoni, continued to study filmmaking in North Korea until he was called to join the family in Phnom Penh in 1977.

King Sihanouk's second exile period began in December 1978 when Vietnam invaded Cambodia, expelled the pro-Chinese Khmer Rouge, and established the pro-Vietnamese Heng Samrin regime. King Sihanouk flew to Beijing and soon afterwards, according to his memoirs, found that although China opposed Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, it preferred the Khmer Rouge to Sihanouk to become a leading faction in the anti-Vietnamese coalition. Therefore, he decided to go to Pyongyang for consolation (Sihanouk 2005, 218-221).

During his second exile period (1979-1991), Sihanouk spent at least two months a year at Changsuwon, maintaining a tight schedule of "drafting statements, correspondence, book writing, audiences to foreign diplomats and visiting journalists" (Sebastian 2011). He claimed that the environment there was quieter and more conducive to writing his memoirs than in Beijing (Burns 1985). However, the real reason might be his frustration with China and his admiration of Kim Il Sung's support for him as a leading figure in the anti-Vietnamese coalition, as revealed in his interview in North Korea to Western journalists in 1979:

Since my arrival, President Kim Il Sung has never asked me to cooperate with the Khmer Rouge. President Kim Il Sung told me: “I support only you... Prince Sihanouk...only you, not the Khmer Rouge... only you”. The embassy of the Khmer Rouge is still here, but its name is never mentioned. President Kim Il Sung said only one sentence: “I support only Prince Sihanouk!”. In contrast, China never supports Prince Sihanouk. Never. China said: “Prince Sihanouk must support Pol Pot (Schier & Schier-Oum 1981, 135-136).

As though sensing his visitor’s thoughts, King Sihanouk said: “To understand Sihanouk, you have to know that I am an Asian man - I am a yellow man, not a white man. So I am guided by sentimental feelings, by feelings of gratitude, and it is those that are most important to me. I will always be grateful to my hosts here, and in China, for giving me everything when everything was lost (Burns 1985).”

In 1980, the Soviet Union officially asked North Korea to shut the door on Sihanouk. Although North Korea was receiving extensive assistance from the Soviet Union as well as other Communist and Socialist countries at the time, Kim Il Sung refused, telling his powerful benefactors that “our Communism is not honorable unless it supports the patriots like Sihanouk who struggle for the independence of their country and the freedom of his people,” according to Sihanouk’s official biographer, Julio A. Jeldres (Cat 2007).

After the peace settlement of Cambodia was endorsed by the International Conference on Cambodia in Paris in October 1991, Prince Sihanouk returned to Cambodia in the following month with the North Korean bodyguards, commanded by a general from Kim Il Sung’s presidential bodyguards (Lintner). Sihanouk was quoted by Reuters in 1994 that “I was overthrown by my own royal guards, I am better protected by 25 North Koreans from the Democratic Republic of Korea [sic] (Sebastian 2011).” In September 1993, 38 years after leaving the throne, Prince Sihanouk was crowned King yet again. The new post-UNTAC Constitution assigned him ceremonial powers, specifying that he was to reign, but not rule.

### III. Present Nominal Relations: The Past Legacy

The year of 1996 marked a new aspect of Cambodia’s relationship with North Korea as Co-Prime Minister Hun Sen initiated diplomatic tie restoration with South Korea. But Prince Sihanouk declared that he would not accept the credentials of any South Korean Ambassador sent to Cambodia, and urged “pro-Seoul forces” to wait until his death before establishing full diplomatic ties (*The Phnom Penh Post*, 21 February 1997).

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, who holds power in the country while the monarchy has largely taken a ceremonial role, has added pragmatism to King Sihanouk’s approach. The

strongman caters to companies from South Korea, which is the second largest investor in the country after China, while taking in the occasional North Korean delegation. On May 15, 1996, the relations between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Korea were re-established by two leaders: Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and H.E. Mr. Kim Dae-jung, President of the Republic of Korea. The two countries officially reopened their embassies on October 30, 1997. Since 1996, the top leaders of the two countries have exchanged state visits many times.

Starting from the second establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations between the two countries, Cambodia and South Korea have become two countries whose diplomatic relations developed dramatically in a very short time span. South Korea has become one of the top three development partners of Cambodia which also includes Japan and China. From time to time, South Korean tourists become number one in Cambodia, while thousands of Cambodian people go to South Korea every year in different purposes including tourism, business, education, labor work, marriage, etc.

However, at the same time Cambodia still has continued the peculiar and close friendship with North Korea. Cambodia has fallen mainly under Chinese influence over the past decade, receiving more than \$8.2 billion from 2006 to 2012. But North Korea has kept whatever footprint it can. The North Korean artist group, the Mansudae Art Studio, helped to build a \$10 million

national museum near Angkor Wat, the 900-year-old temple ruins near Siem Riep that hold enormous national symbolism for Cambodians, even appearing on the Cambodian flag (Geoffrey 2013). The operation was scheduled to begin in April 2013 (Talia 2013). However, the project was delayed for several years and completed on December 4, 2015. According to Long Kosal, spokesman for the Apsara Authority of Cambodia, the North Korean company which built the museum would run it, together with the government, for 10 years, during that time they would get back their investment plus profit. Management would then transfer to Apsara Authority (Jamie 2015).

The North Korean mission to Cambodia sits on a major thoroughfare in the capital Phnom Penh, in the shadow of a lavish mansion belonging to the country's Prime Minister Hun Sen. There are usually few signs of life behind the tinted windows of the pale pink embassy building, which only rarely admits visitors (Sebastian 2011).

A gift from King Sihanouk, the embassy – his birthplace – was leased at no cost to North Korea in 1991 for a fixed period of 20 years, after which it was to become a museum. That agreement, which was reiterated in Sihanouk's 2005 will, technically expired in 2011. Savvy tenants, the North Koreans haven't moved out. It is argued that King Sihanouk gave the house for 20 years rent-free to North Korea to express his gratitude for the assistance the founder of the DPRK, president Kim Il Sung, gave to King Sihanouk, particularly during his years in exile between 1970-1975

and again between 1979-1991 (McPherson 2014).

In July 2000, at the invitation of Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Korea led a delegation to pay an official visit to Cambodia. In the following year, Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation met with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Korea, who was accompanying Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea, on an official good-will visit in Cambodia.

Such visits provided more opportunities on exchanging views on ways of strengthening and maintaining the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. In this spirit, both sides exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, especially on the further expansion of the traditional bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues, in which both sides reached full agreement.

The two sides agreed to further expand and strengthen their bilateral cooperation in the economic, cultural, educational, scientific, sport and other fields of mutual interest. They also agreed to strengthen their mutual cooperation in regional and international organizations such as the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, etc. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other and to the principles of peaceful coexistence



as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Non-Aligned Movement and in other relevant international law.

The two countries had signed seven cooperation agreements beginning in 1993, but they were never implemented. The bilateral agreements range from cultural cooperation to trade promotion to establishing a joint IT committee. There isn't any investment from North Korean at the moment beyond its restaurants (Cambodia Organic 2011).

Since the early 1990s, the North Korean government has also run a chain of restaurants in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, a venture that brings the regime much-needed foreign currency. The eateries are rare spots where South Koreans get direct contact with North Koreans who are not defectors because they're served by pretty North Korean waitresses (Geoffrey 2013). It's estimated that the restaurants are contributing about \$100,000 to \$300,000 a year to North Korea's national coffers (Palatino 2011).

Cambodian officials pointed out that “there are zero economic and trade exchanges between Cambodia and North Korea at the moment”. However, the two nations have a long history of friendship and cooperation, so that the former Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk - a beloved and controversial figure who dominated the second half of the 1900 - maintained close personal relationships with the “Eternal President Kim Il Sung (*Asia News.it* 2011).”

Cambodia–North Korea relations were so dependent on the friendship of the two leaders that it naturally began to wane after

Kim Il-Sung died in 1994 and King Sihanouk abdicated the Cambodian throne in 2004 (Sebastian 2011). Kim Jong-il died of a suspected heart attack on 17 December 2011 while traveling by train to an area outside Pyongyang (Wikipedia 2015a). A year later, Prince Norodom Sihanouk passed away on 15 October 2012, at the age of 89, in Beijing, People's Republic of China, after suffering health issues (Wikipedia 2015b). When Kim Jong Il, North Korea's second generation leader, died in December 2011, Sihanouk issued a private message of condolence. Shortly before his death in October 2012, North Korea awarded him the International Kim Il Sung Prize.

According to a leaked US diplomat cable from 2006, one Cambodian diplomat suggested Cambodia's 'special relationship' with North Korea was 'no longer as unique as it once was (Sebastian 2011).' Prince Sihanouk's passing away marked the end of the special relationship between Phnom Penh and Pyongyang – and with no Princes or Great Leaders linking arms, the two nations' destinies hardly seem linked either (Farrell 2012). Of course, the new aspect of relations has started since Cambodia's diplomatic tie restoration with South Korea in mid-1996.

#### IV. Between North and South Korea

While Cambodia's relationship with North Korea is a nominal one, Cambodia's relationship with South Korea is a healthy one. It

goes beyond the official agreements and arrangements, beyond the inter-governmental meetings and interactions. The relationship has been always based on principle of equal footing and equal rights with no interference into each other's internal affairs and sovereignty. These healthy relations are on the right track and fitting perfectly with the process of regional integration in the advent of globalization. This growing relationship contributes to the development of bilateral cooperation of South Korea with Cambodia. It also bring about peace and prosperity in the region.

Cambodia has diplomatic relations with both South Korea and North Korea. Due to the existing conflict between the two Koreas, there is just like one limit line which set boundary for the development of relations between these two countries-Cambodia and South Korea. Especially, until now, Cambodia has no sign to give up its diplomatic tie with North Korea because it is a diplomatic legacy of the former King Norodom Sihanouk as he has long-standing personal ties with North Korea: the bilateral relations strengthened over the years through high-level visits between leaders of the two countries.

During his visit to Cambodia from 19 to 22 November 2006, South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun asked Cambodia to act as a mediator relieving tension between the two Koreas. He said that South Korea appreciated Cambodia's good relations with North Korea and he hoped they could be used to smooth diplomatic relations on the Korean peninsula. Mr. Roh also asked Prime Minister Hun Sen to bring his words to the North Korean leader

and tell him that South Korea has no intention of menacing the survival of North Korea.

Cambodia has good relations with both communist and democratic worlds as it used to be a communist country and changed to be a democratic one. Cambodia and Cambodian people and government always welcome any positive steps or initiatives in Korean peninsula, such as Sunshine policy and six party talks<sup>2)</sup>, etc. Cambodia respects the decision made by Koreans themselves. During the meeting with Jan Yun Gon, the newly appointed North Korean ambassador on August 15 2016, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen called on North Korea to comply with all relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and urged the resumption of the six-party talks in order to maintain peace on the Korean peninsula. He stressed that what Cambodia wanted to see is peace and stability in the Korean peninsula. In June 2016, Prime Minister Hun Sen met with a South Korean delegation and assured South Korea that Cambodia condemned North Korea's nuclear testing (Sokheng 2016).

Cambodia-South Korea relations at both governmental and grassroots levels, have exponentially increased. As for diplomatic relations between Cambodia and South Korea in relations to the sphere of international politics, the two countries' leaders have engaged in dialogues on bilateral cooperation in regional and

---

2) The six-party talks between South Korea, North Korea, China, Russia, Japan and the US began in 2003 to deal with the DPRK's nuclear program but were halted in 2009 when North Korea announced it would no longer take part, due to international criticisms.

international arena to help resolving global issues of mutual interest, particularly to seek the blueprint for a peaceful resolution to the Korean peninsula conflict.

## V. Conclusion

This paper examines the historical background of Cambodia–North Korea relations since 1960s to the present. North Korea has diplomatic relations with many countries, but it is still considered one of the world's most isolated nations, as most of its ties remain nominal and involve minimal trade and exchanges. North Korea's relations with Cambodia imply this.

Over the decades, Cambodia–North Korea relations were peculiar and unique because these relations totally depended on strong personal ties of former leaders of the two countries, Cambodia's Norodom Sihanouk and North Korea's Kim Il Sung and Kim Jung Il, rather than national interests of both countries nor for geographical, cultural or trade connection. The two leaders always expressed their gratitude to one another for the support and admiration they had given to each other.

In 1964, King Sihanouk claimed the DPRK or North Korea was the only legal state for the country and the entire nation of Korea, and decided to break off consular relations with the government in Seoul and established diplomatic relations with Pyongyang. King Sihanouk's decision greatly impressed Kim Il Sung whose country

was then ignored by the majority of non-aligned countries. Kim Il Sung gave King Sihanouk generous support during his first and second periods of exile because Kim Il Sung considered King Shihanouk as the head of the state.

Since mid-1990s, as the Cambodia's relations with North Korea were just the past legacy, Cambodia has still kept relations with this isolated country while diplomatic tie restoration with South Korea have been made, and developed dramatically in a very short time span. Without the two leaders' linking arms coupled with very low connection of investment and trade, the destinies of Cambodia and North Korea rarely linked to each other and their relations are nominal. In the contrary, South Korea has become one of the top three development partners of Cambodia, and also plays an important role in Cambodian economy.

Between the two Koreas, Cambodia respects the decision made by Koreans themselves and urges both sides to return to six-party talks. What Cambodia wants to see is peace and stability in Korean peninsula.

투 고 일: 2015년 12월 24일  
심 사 완 료 일: 2016년 08월 18일  
게 재 확 정 일: 2016년 08월 22일

## Reference

*Asia News.it.* 2011. "Phnom Penh and Pyongyang seek a solid trade

- relationship.” Asia News.it. July 28. <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Phnom-Penh-and-Pyongyang-seek-a-solid-trade-relationships-22217.html> (Accessed on 19 August 2015).
- Berger, Sebastien. 2005. “Unlikely alliance of king and Communist celebrated over mashed pig’s trotter.” *The Telegraph*. November 25. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/cambodia/1503939/Unlikely-alliance-of-king-and-Communist-celebrated-over-mashed-pigs-trotter.html> (Accessed on 11 August 2016).
- Burns, J. F. 1985. “Sihanouk finds Caviar and Kim Il Sung mix well.” *The New York Times*. June 22. <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/06/22/world/sihanouk-finds-caviar-and-kim-il-sung-mix-well.html> (Accessed on 21 August 2015).
- Cambodia Organic. 2011. “North Korea wants to buy Cambodian Rice.” Cambodia Organic. July 27. <http://www.cambodiaorganic.com/news-25-north-korea-wants-to-buy-cambodian-rice.html> (Accessed on September 2015).
- Cat, Barton. 2007. “Old friends, new beginnings.” *The Phnom Penh Post*. November 01. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/old-friends-new-beginnings> (Accessed on 15 August 2015).
- Daniel Wertz, JJ Oh, & Kim Insung. 2015. “Issue Brief: DPRK Diplomatic Relations.” The National Committee on North Korea.
- Farrell, Tom. 2012. “Remembering Sihanouk: Kim Il Sung’s Cambodian Cold War Collaborator.” *NK.NEWS.ORG*. October 22. <http://www.nknews.org/2012/10/remembering-sihanouk-kim-il-sung-cambodian-cold-war-collaborator/> (Accessed on 9 September 2015).
- Geoffrey, Cain. 2013. “Cambodia: Sihanouk’s love affair with North Korea.” *Global Post*. February 5. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/cambodia/130204/cambodia-sihanouks-love-affair-north-korea> (Accessed on 18 August 2015).
- Jamie, Elliott. 2015. “North Korea-funded museum set to open in Siem Reap.” *The Phnom Penh Post*. November 27. <http://www>.

- phnompenhpost.com/national/north-korea-funded-museum-set-open-siem-reap (Accessed on 23 December 2015).
- Lintner, B. 2007. "Odd couple: The Royal and the Red." *Asia Times*. October 31. [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/IJ31Ae02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/IJ31Ae02.html) (Accessed on 21 August 2015).
- McPherson, Poppy. 2014. "A gift that keeps on giving." *The Phnom Penh Post*. November 7. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/gift-keeps-giving> (Accessed on 09 September 2015).
- Palatino, Mong. 2011. "A Korean 'War' in Cambodia?" *The Diplomat*. January 21. <http://thediplomat.com/2011/01/a-korean-war-in-cambodia/> (Accessed on 18 August 2015).
- The Phnom Penh Post*. 21 February 1997. "...While contentious South Korea ties strengthened." <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/while-contentious-south-korea-ties-strengthened>. (Accessed 02 September 2015).
- Schier, P. & Schier-Oum, M. 1981. *Sihanu Perd Ok Tok Kamen* (in Thai, translated by Chantima Ongsuragz from *Prince Sihanouk on Cambodia*). Bangkok: Prakaipreuk.
- Sebastian, Strangio. 2011. "North Korea's New Friend?" *The Diplomat*. August 14. <http://thediplomat.com/2011/08/north-koreas-new-friend/> (Accessed on 15 August 2015).
- Sihanouk, Norodom. 2005. *Shadow Over Angkor, Volume One: Memoirs of His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: Monument Books.
- Sokheng, Vong. 2016. "PM Hun Sen 'urges' North Korea to resume talks." *The Phnom Penh Post*. August 15. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/pm-hun-sen-urges-north-korea-resume-talks> (Accessed on 18 August 2016).
- Talia, Ralph. 2013. "North Korea drops \$10m on museum near Cambodia's Angkor Wat." *Global Post*. 2013. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/130110/north-korea-builds-museum-near-cambodia-angkor-wat> (Accessed on 23 December



2015).

Wikipedia. 2015a. “Kim Jong-il.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim\\_Jong-il](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim_Jong-il) (Accessed on 18 August 2015).

Wikipedia. 2015b. “Death and state funeral of Norodom Sihanouk.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death\\_and\\_state\\_funeral\\_of\\_Norodom\\_Sihanouk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_and_state_funeral_of_Norodom_Sihanouk) (Accessed 18 August 2015).

요약

---

## 1964년 이래 캄보디아-북한 관계:

### 역사적 고찰

낀 페아(Kin Phea)

International Relations Institute of Cambodia, Royal Academy of Cambodia

캄보디아는 1960년대 중반 북한과 외교관계를 수립하였다. 이 관계는 노로돔 시하누크(Norodom Sihanouk) 왕자와 김일성 장군에 의해 조성되었다. 이 관계는 양국 고위 인사들의 방문을 통해 해를 거듭하며 강화되었다.

지난 수 십년 간, 이 양국 관계는 국가이익보다는 두 최고 지도자 간의 강한 개인적 유대에 기초한 관계로 독특한 것이었으며, 또한 이 관계는 지정학적 위치와 문화적 연계에 기초한 것도 아니었다. 그러나, 김일성, 김정일의 사망과 노로돔 시하누크 왕의 사망은 캄보디아와 북한 간 특별 관계에 종지부를 찍었고, 손을 맞잡은 왕자와 지도자들이 없어 두 나라의 운명은 거의 연결되지 않는 듯하다. 결국, 양국 관계는 일반 관계가 되었다.

이 논문은 캄보디아와 북한의 양국 관계를 역사적으로 검토하고 과거의 유산에 초점을 맞춰 현재 관계의 상황을 점검하며, 남북한 관계에서 캄보디아의 역할에 대해 고찰한다.

주제어: 캄보디아, 북한, 한국, 외교관계, 노로돔 시하누크(Norodom Sihanouk), 김일성