

## **Japan Relief for Cambodia**

JAPAN RELIEF FOR CAMBODIA ARE NON-PROFIT, VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS COOPERATING WITH KING NORODOM SIHANOUK TO BRING HOPE TO THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE THROUGH PRIVATE AND CORPORATE DONATIONS, DISTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE NEEDY. JRIC PROJECTS INCLUDE (1) A JAPANESE VOLUNTEER MEDICAL TEAM PROVIDING CARE TO THE NEEDIEST CITIZENS OF PHNOM PENH (2) MANAGEMENT OF A SHOP EMPLOYING 10 AMPUTEES SELLING GOODS DONATED BY MAJOR FIRMS (3) COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF 3,000 BICYCLES TO THE RURAL POPULATION AND (4) PUBLICATION OF THE CAMBODIA DAILY, THE FIRST AND ONLY INDEPENDENT DAILY PRINTED IN CAMBODIA, DEDICATED TO ESTABLISHING A FOUNDATION FOR A FREE PRESS, CREATING A MODEL FOR A PROFESSIONAL INTERNATIONALLY-ORIENTED NEWSPAPER AND TO TRAIN JOURNALISTS. OUR ADMINISTRATIVE, PACKING AND TRANSPORT COSTS ARE CONTRIBUTED BY DONORS IN THE SHIPPING AND TRADING INDUSTRIES. REGISTERED AS A TAX EXEMPT FOUNDATION AND NGO IN CAMBODIA. JAPANESE FIRMS CONTRIBUTING CASH OR IN KIND TO JRIC THROUGH THE KEIDANREN'S COUNCIL FOR BETTER CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP (CBCC) ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A TAX EXEMPTION FROM THE FINANCE MINISTRY.

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BERNARD KRISHER  
Chairman

FOR RELEASE AFTER MAY 3, 1994

### **KING SIHANOUK WILL HOST PALACE CEREMONY ON MAY 9th TO LAUNCH DISTRIBUTION OF 3,000 BICYCLES FROM JAPAN**

King Norodom Sihanouk will host a ceremony at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh on the morning of Monday, May 9th to launch the distribution of 3,000 bicycles donated by the people of Japan to community workers in Cambodia's poorest and most remote villages. (Press and TV coverage is welcome).

More than 20 Japanese cities are participating in the program and more than 1,500 used bicycles, many originally abandoned, or donated by the public, have reached Cambodia. Three hundred are enroute on the high seas bound for the port of Sihanoukville and another 300 will be loaded onto containers on May 11th by student volunteers from Helpline in Tokyo.

The campaign is aimed at improving Cambodian village life, where a bicycle is as precious as a luxury car in Tokyo. Applications for bicycle requests are being distributed throughout Cambodia and publicized in the press, radio, and over TV. Anyone--including the applicant himself, a relative, government agency or non-governmental organization (NGO)--may recommend a candidate, but one application must be submitted for each applicant. The priority will be given to health workers (particularly village midwives), agricultural extension workers, teachers and students who must travel far to get to school. The focus is on those who contribute to the village community. An impartial committee will make the selections.

The project was begun last August and so far bicycles have been received from 22 cities, including Ashiya, Ikaruga, Itami, Okayama, Sayama, Shijonawate, Sendai, Takamatsu, Chofu, Tokushima, Nishinomiya, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Fuchu, Misato, Yamato, Yamato Koriyama, Yamato Takada, Warabi, and in Tokyo: Shinagawa-ku, Shibuya-ku, Shinjuku-ku and Minato-ku.

Four Japanese firms have made a substantial contribution of their funds and services to make this project possible. Nippon Express is transporting 3,000 bicycles from all over Japan into Tokyo to a warehouse in Aoyama provided rent-free by Nippon Telephone & Telegraph (NTT). Nippon Express then re-transportes the containers of bicycles which have been loaded by student volunteers from Helpline to Oi Pier in Shinagawa, Tokyo, where Nihon Yusen (NYK) ships them without cost to Sihanoukville port in Cambodia. Kinsho Mataichi Co., Ltd, a trading firm, is providing customs clearance services, pays for the loading of the containers onto the vessels and has also covered the cost of overland transportation in Cambodia.

In Cambodia, the bicycles are being stored at the Cambodian Red Cross Warehouse where a team of seven bicycle repairmen, including two amputees, hired by Japan Relief for Cambodia (JRfC), are readying the units with necessary repairs for distribution to the villages. The full-scale distribution, following the Royal Palace ceremony, is expected to begin in June and continue through the fall.

King Sihanouk, despite his ailing health and busy schedule during his two months' stay in Cambodia before returning to Beijing for further treatment of his bone marrow cancer, has conveyed his appreciation to the people of Japan for this grassroots' project and has scheduled a rare ceremony at the Palace, to be held May 9th, where some 30 guests flying in from Japan will witness the presentation of the first 20 bicycles to village midwives by the King.

Takehito Nakata, his wife and daughter, the family of the late Atsuhito Nakata, who was killed as a Japanese UNTAC election volunteer worker in Cambodia, will also attend the ceremony. The Nakata family will be received in a private audience by the King on the same day.

In deciding to host the ceremony, King Sihanouk wrote to JRfC:

"I am very happy to host a ceremony at the Royal Palace on May 9th to distribute donations from the people of Japan which you have kindly collected for the poor and handicapped among our citizens, and to join you in launching the distribution of 3,000 bicycles to our neediest villages.

"In this respect I would like to thank, from the bottom of my heart, the 22 cities in Japan which have donated these bicycles to our people. A bicycle in a village provided to a midwife, an agricultural extension worker, a teacher or a student, who must travel far to get to his class, is akin to giving an automobile to a city dweller."

The King also expressed his gratitude to the major Japanese firms which contributed to the success of this project--NYK, Nippon Express, NTT, and Kinsho Mataichi, stressing that "our people will never forget their generosity."

JRfC will use the occasion to present other donations to a group of amputees who will be invited to attend the ceremony; medical equipment to the Municipal Hospital of Phnom Penh (where JRfC's Atsuhito Nakata Memorial Japan Volunteer Medical Team is based), and computer equipment donated by Apple-Japan to the University of Phnom Penh where JRfC is establishing a Cambodia Journalism Workshop Through Computer Training.

**As a second stage of the bicycle project, JRfC will support a program, with the cooperation of other Japanese organizations, to train bicycle assembly and repair skills at the Preah Kossamak Technical & Vocational Training Center (Tuk Thla) in order to re-establish a bicycle industry in Cambodia as it existed in the 1960s. Such an industry would serve to provide jobs, raise skills and conserve foreign exchange by reducing imports and potentially create an export market. Most important, it will offer the possibility of making bicycles accessible to many Cambodians.**

**A letter from King Sihanouk related to the bicycle donations and his desire to establish a bicycle training program with Japanese assistance is attached in the original English version.**

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RESIDENCE PEKIN

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NORODOM SIHANOUK  
KING OF CAMBODIA

Mr. Bernard Krisher  
Chairman  
Japan Relief for Cambodia  
4-1-7-605 Hiroo  
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo  
Japan

Dear Mr. Krisher,

I am very happy to host a ceremony at the Royal Palace on May 9 to distribute donations from the people of Japan which you have kindly collected for the poor and handicapped among our citizens, and to join you in launching the distribution of 3,000 bicycles to our neediest villages. In this respect I would like to thank, from the bottom of my heart, the 28 cities in Japan which have donated these bicycles to our people. A bicycle in a village provided to a midwife, an agricultural extension worker, a teacher or a student, who must travel far to get to his class, is akin to giving an automobile to a city dweller.

I would be delighted if representatives from these cities and others, who so generously participated in this program, will accept my invitation to attend this ceremony as guests of honour.

I am also most appreciative the Japanese firms which contributed their services and funds to make this project a reality --NYK Shipping Line, Nippon Express, Kinsho Mataichi, NTT, Shinano Jitsugyo and Mitsubishi Corp. Our people will never forget their generosity.

I would also like to thank Japan Relief for Cambodia for its efforts to enlarge this project by gaining support in Japan to establish a bicycle production training program. Such a program will create a cadre of trained mechanics capable of bicycle assembly and eventually total manufacturing so the poorest Cambodians in the most remote areas can obtain affordable bicycles.

At the same time, if Cambodia can produce its own high standard bicycles, based on Japanese technology, we can reduce import, increase exports and offer great employment opportunities. The creation of a light industry, such as bicycle manufacturing, is an essential priority for Cambodia to help us in our "take off".

In the years 1950-1960, under the SANGKUM REASTR NIYOM, we had many such light industries which made Cambodia self-sufficient in essentials, including bicycles. Your plan to begin training the mechanics, including some amputees, who are repairing the bicycles donated from Japan, to learn bicycle assembly, is the best way to re-establish such an industry in Cambodia.

I would be very grateful if Japanese bicycle technicians, machinery and parts could be brought to Cambodia to establish a training program at the Preah Kossomak Technical & Vocational Training Centre (Tuk Thla) where Japanese technicians are already doing an outstanding job in training our students in auto repair.

Such training will enable us to re-establish a light industry which will have a rippling effect in speeding our economic development, economic prosperity and creating a skilled labour force.

Warmest regards,

  
NORODOM SIHANOUK

Beijing (Hospital), March 7, 1994