

PRESS RELEASE

Embassy of Japan to Cambodia

Second "*Bon-Odori*" Festival

8 October (Sunday) 2006, 17h00 p.m.,
at Crystal Doom (next to the Chenla Theater)

The Embassy of Japan announces that the second "*Bon-Odori*" Festival will be held on this coming Sunday, 8 October at the Crystal Doom located next to the Chenla Theater. This annual festival is organized by the Japanese Association of Cambodia, in cooperation with the Embassy of Japan and the Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Center (CJCC). The purpose of the event is to promote friendship and mutual understanding between Cambodian people and Japanese residents through traditional folk dances of both countries ("*Bon-Odori*" and "*Roam Vong*" dance).

Opening addresses will be made by H.E.TAKAHASHI Fumiaki, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Cambodia and a Representative of Phnom Penh Municipality. The Festival will be inaugurated with WA-DAIKO (Japanese Drum) performance. A detailed program of the event is attached herewith.

"*Bon-Odori*" is a traditional style of folk dance ("*Odori*" means "dance" in Japanese) with a long history more than 1000 years in Japan. In general, "*Bon-Odori*" is performed by residents of a community typically during the "*Urabon*" periode. *Urabon* (or *Bon*), traditionally in Japan from 13 to 15 August, is a buddist observance honoring the spirits of ancestors. This is equivalent to "*Phchun Bann*" in Cambodia. Originally "*Bon-Odori*" dances welcome and give send-offs to ancestors' souls, but nowadays, "*Bon-Odori*" is an occasion to enjoy dancing with neighbors in the community.

There are common characteristics between "*Bon-Odori*" and "*Roam Vong*" dance. The both of them are performed in the form of a circle without any difficult technique. Therefore, both Japanese and Cambodian people can easily enjoy "*Bon-Odori*" and "*Roam Vong*" dance. The Festival will surely bring about an opportunity to promote better understanding between Cambodian and Japanese through common everyday culture.