His Majesty
NORODOM SIHANOUK'S
84th Birthday

A special supplement to The CAMBODIA DAILY
Our Best Birthday Wishes for Good Health and Happiness to
Samdach Ta  Norodom Sihanouk

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Our Sincerest Congratulation
To His Majesty King
Norodom Sihamoni,
On His Royal Coronation

Our Warmest Congratulations
To Samdech Ta Norodom Sihanouk,
Father of Independence,
On the Occasion of His 84th Birthday

From The Management & Staff of:

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Managed by Orchid Hotels & Resorts
THE MEDIA-CONSCIOUS MONARCH
A Master at Crafting His—and His Nation’s—Public Image

By Michelle Vachon

Long before today’s media blitz election campaigns and photogenic presidents, the leader of a small Southeast Asian nation was capturing far more than his fair share of international media attention.

Retired King Norodom Sihanouk, who is celebrating his 84th birthday today, embarked on his first press campaign more than half a century ago. In the decades since, the retired King has grown adept at using the media to reach the public and influence politics in Cambodia and abroad.

Well-informed on what the media is saying on any and all Cambodian issues, Norodom Sihanouk swiftly responds, these days mostly in writing.

Recieving faxes of newspaper pages with handwritten comments in the margins from Norodom Sihanouk are a regular occurrence today at newspaper offices.

As journalists who have had their word choice or phrasing in a story scrutinized can attest, the retired King’s open comments, which can be harshly critical or sometimes playfully congratulatory, create between him and the press a very direct relationship.

Unlike modern-day political leaders whose media relations consist of official spokespersons issuing press releases and official communiqués, Norodom Sihanouk’s dealings with the press have been and still are very involved.

“His Majesty had a lot of time for the press: He built strong, long-lasting relationships with journalists like Bernie Krisher, Nayan Chanda, William Shawcross, Jean Lacouture, and others,” said Julio Jeldres, the retired King’s official biographer.

“In his 5-hour long press conferences in Peking, Pyongyang or in Phnom Penh before the 18 March [coup ousting him in 1970] were legendary,” Jeldres said.

In this regard, Norodom Sihanouk was ahead of his time, said Alain Daniel, who served as the retired King’s private secretary in the late 1960s as part of an agreement with the French government.

“At the time, it was not customary for political leaders to pay so much attention to the press and to the international press,” he said.

“(Norodom Sihanouk) recognized before many others the fundamental importance of what today we call ‘image’. Now there are media consultants with the technical expertise to create an image for a certain kind of product—there are techniques used to launch products. He had realized before anyone else that a country was also in a way a product, and that the image Cambodia projected abroad was something vital,” Daniel said.


Recalling his first meeting with Norodom Sihanouk at a press luncheon in 1964, Kamm wrote: “I asked one or two [questions], not because of a deep interest in Cambodia, terra incognita to me, but because I had found its chief of state a national leader unlike any I had ever met.”

“His Majesty had a lot of time for the press,” Kamm recalls, “He blurted out with disregard for conventional hypocrisy that statesmen are supposed to keep for themselves... Moreover, he dwelt on his country’s weakness rather than praising pretended strength.”

Eleven years earlier, Norodom Sihanouk had turned to the media in his quest for Cambodia’s independence from France.

After a visit to Paris in 1953 where his request had not been taken seriously, he later pleaded his cause in a Radio-Canada interview in Montreal, and in a New York Times interview in Washington, DC.


Recall the 30-year-old King was “already aware of the power of the Western press to affect governmental opinion,” Osborne writes. And shortly after those interviews, France invited Norodom Sihanouk’s representatives in Paris to discuss independence.

Over the years, media coverage would not always be so favorable, and Norodom Sihanouk would never take criticism lightly.

In April, he threatened to sue Phnom Penh’s French-language monthly magazine L’Echo du Cambodge for reprinting excerpts from a negative review of one of his feature films that was first published in 1971 in the French daily Le Monde.

The 1969 film “Ombres sur Angkor” had been about an alleged plot by the US Central Intelligence Agency to topple Norodom Sihanouk.

L’Echo du Cambodge immediately apologized, and the retired King did not pursue legal action.

“His Majesty’s relations with the press were sometimes tense because he used to reply to every article that was presented to him and that he felt did not convey an accurate picture of Cambodia or of his own actions and policies,” Jeldres said.

“Sometimes the newspapers to which His Majesty wrote did not publish his responses, and this created some tension in the relationship, which was otherwise very healthy,” he added.

In the mid-1960s, Norodom Sihanouk’s relations with the foreign and national media deteriorated.

“On 11 September 1967, [then] Prince Sihanouk decreed the suppression of all newspapers appearing in Cambodia and their replacement with four daily newspapers in Khmer, French, Chinese and Vietnamese languages put under the control of the Ministry of Information,” wrote the late Charles Meyer in his 1971 book “Derriere le sourire khmer,” or “Behind the Khmer Smile.”

Moreover, with the exception of a few journalists known to print official statements without comment, Norodom Sihanouk closed Cambodia’s doors to the foreign press,
The Management and Staff of SGS extend best wishes to
His Majesty Norodom Sihanouk
on the occasion of His 84th Birthday.

Happy Birthday to His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah
Norodom Sihanouk
on the auspicious occasion of his birthday
from the Management & Staff of Himawari Hotel Apartments

The management and staff of Nagacorp & Ariston Sdn Bhd extend their best wishes for long life, good health and happiness to His Majesty Norodom Sihanouk on the occasion of His 84th Birthday.

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WATCHING BETWEEN THE FRAMES

The Retired King’s Films May Be More Message Than Medium

By Erika Kinetz
And Kay Kimsong

A long, dreamy epoch of Technicolor peasants, Mercedes sedans, pastoral North Korean lakes, and a beautiful queen came to an end in late September: “My cinema, it is dead,” retired King Norodom Sihanouk wrote in a letter from Beijing that was posted on his Web site.

Norodom Sihanouk has, of course, said this before and he may well say it again. While the retired King’s filmmaking career, which spans four decades, may or may not be dead, for the moment, the distribution of his films is. In that same missive from Beijing, he asked state-run TVK to stop broadcasting his films, a request the station has said it would honor.

And so begins the afterlife of the retired King’s films. He has written and directed dozens of films, many of which he also scored. He often cast himself, family members and public dignitaries in starring roles. Norodom Sihanouk has written that he made the films with fervor and love for his homeland and his people, but these days, it’s quite difficult to find them in Cambodia. After he retired in 2004, Norodom Sihanouk moved his personal film archive to the Ecole Francaise d’Extreme-Orient in Paris and to Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

The films were never meant to be for sale, yet like many things in Cambodia, they are anyway. The few copies that do circulate in markets around Phnom Penh have been pirated from foreign diplomats who received them as gifts, or from members of the Royal Family, according to You Sokunthy, whose DVD stall at Phsar Tuol Tumpoung is one of the few places that you can find them. Today, the films, most of which were created for Khmer audiences, are perhaps most ardently pursued by curious-seeking tourists.

The tourist market, some say, is where culture goes to die. This shift has ripped the Royal films. This shift has ripped the Royal films.

“People laugh,” said Ly Daravuth, the director and regular broadcasts on state TV. Even today, Norodom Sihanouk’s films, then, belong to an older order. He first began experimenting with filmmaking in the 1940s, and in 1966 made his first feature film, “Apsara.”

[Norodom] Sihanouk was having a discourse of building an independent, proud nation,” said Ly Daravuth. Part of that proud nation turned out to be a cadre of filmmakers—Rueum Sophon and leu Pannakar among them—who grew up around Norodom Sihanouk, according to “Cultures of Independence,” a book on Cambodian arts and culture published by Reyum.

“The culture was a tool for him,” said Ly Daravuth. “There is always a link between art and state ideology.”

According to the Reyum book, the other major school of Cambodian filmmakers at the time was USIS trained Cambodians to make Khmer-language films for these village screenings. Sun Bun Ly, a policeman who went on to form Cambodia’s first independent, commercial film production company, Neak Poan Productions, was among them. So was Nhek Dim, who USIS sent in the early 1990s to the Walt Disney studios to learn cartooning.

Norodom Sihanouk founded Cambodia’s first international film festival in 1968; that year and the next, his films won the grand prize—a pure gold statue of an Apsara dancer. In 1997, the International Film Festival of Moscow honored him with a special jury prize.

In general, however, his filmmaking efforts have been met with limited international critical acclaim. And aesthetics alone may not offer the right lens for judgement.

“If you ask me to look at the films from a purely art-critic perspective, it would be a difficult reading,” Ly Daravuth said. “But I’ve only looked at them as historical films.”

The retired King has said that he never intended his films to be commercial undertakings. In 1957, he told the International Film Festival of Moscow that the budgets for his films ranged from $20,000 to $70,000 and were financed by the Cambodian government. They were to be of the people and for the people, with free screenings and regular broadcasts on state TV. Even today, Prince Sisowath Kola, who said copies of the films would be provided free of charge to anyone who needs them.

Continued on page 14

OCTOBER 31, 2006
He looked familiar. I was eating pork and ginger with white rice at Phnom Penh's Lucky Bright Restaurant and realized that I had seen the violin player before. Then it hit me: Huot Thea is in King Father Norodom Sihanouk's band.

"It has been good for my career," the 41-year-old violinist said after one of his regular performances at Lucky Bright.

People, he says, often recognize him from his performances with the King Father.

Cambodia's multi-talented retired King is known not only as a prolific filmmaker but also as an energetic singer and talented songwriter.

Norodom Sihanouk's legendary palace soirees have always included him singing live before diplomats and dignitaries, featuring such Western classics as "Feelings" and "Lambada," as well as much-loved songs by Cambodia's late Sin Sisamuth.

Sin Sisamuth's "Sekong," "Why Do You Cry When I Sing?" and "Last Year," are still wildly popular among young and old Cambodians and are included in the retired King's repertoire.

Norodom Sihanouk's band often includes his half-brother Prince Norodom Sirivuddh on guitar and Minister of Culture Prince Sisowath Panara Sirivuddh on saxophone.

When a violin is required, as it often is, Huot Thea is called for.

"My father played for the King and I have known him since I was a boy. I work at the Ministry of Culture also so when they need me, they contact me there," Huot Thea says, adding that he is also a dab hand at the maracas.

"We played together for a meeting of provincial governors in September, before the King Father left for Beijing," Huot Thea says.

Norodom Sihanouk has been singing publicly at the palace in Phnom Penh on occasion since the early 1990s following the country's turn to democracy and his return from exile in China. Huot Thea says he has performed with the retired king countless times since then.

"With the King Father I learned a lot of new songs especially in French and Spanish that I never would have had a chance to learn," he says.

Sometimes the band's practice sessions can go on for a very long time, Huot Thea says, because Norodom Sihanouk is a perfectionist and has the energy of a much younger man.

"I have never seen a person that age that can sing that much and remember that much," he said. "When we played for diplomats, it went on until four in the morning. I went to the toilet two or three times, but the King Father never stopped to take a break."

US Ambassador Joseph Mussomeli, who has attended some of the retired King's performances, said of the singing: "I wish I had had as much stamina at 24 as the King Father still has at 84."

Huot Thea said of all the songs the retired King sings, his personal favorite is "Monique," which is about the King Father's love for the Queen.

Most nights, however, Huot Thea can be found leading his Lucky Bright Band at Lucky Bright restaurant on Norodom Boulevard, where he plays for a clientele of largely well-to-do Cambodians and government officials.

But Huot Thea has also entertained some very different customers.

A master of the traditional Khmer two-stringed instrument called the tro, Huot Thea as a teenager was conscripted to play for Khmer Rouge soldiers during the 1975-1979 Democratic Kampuchea regime.

"During the Khmer Rouge regime, I also played... I was still young so I never thought about politics. I would play when they camped at the pagoda," he said. "That is life—you have to adjust to the new regime."

But those days are long gone, Huot Thea said. Life is better playing with the retired King.

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**BACKING THE ROYAL BALLADEER**

His Majesty Norodom Sihanouk's Violinist Is a King Among Fiddlers

By Erik Wasson
And Prak Chan Thul

The retired King sings backed by Huot Thea in this image taken from a video of the performance.

The retired King sings backed by Huot Thea in this image taken from a video of the performance.

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**The Cambodia Daily**

The Cambodia Daily is a daily English language newspaper in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It covers national and international news, as well as local events and lifestyle topics.
Tachibana, publishers of the best selling inspirational books by Toshu Fukami, wish Your Majesty Norodom Sihanouk a joyous 84th birthday and many, many more
By Douglas Gillison

Five hundred and ninety-seven days into his retirement, former King Norodom Sihanouk landed at Phnom Penh International Airport in the afternoon of May 26. After a six-month absence, the retired King was greeted by more than 100 government officials, foreign diplomats, and Prime Minister Hun Sen.

The 83-year-old ex-monarch, a semiretired figure in the history of Cambodia, waved to reporters but said nothing before stepping into a car with the Queen Mother, Norodom Monineath, and driving off.

“He would like to have come back a long time ago but he did not feel OK to return because some people criticized him,” Prince Norodom Yotvathoe, one of the retired King’s sons, told reporters at the airport.

In statements made during the months prior to his return, Norodom Sihanouk said alternately that fear of political upheaval and also his failing health had prevented him from returning home.

In January, however, he said his elongated absence was in fact due to the painful memory of anti-Sihanoukist propaganda, broadcast the previous October on Cambodian television stations at the request of Hun Sen.

Frustrated that King Norodom Shihanouk was unavailable to sign off on a controversial new border treaty with Vietnam, Hun Sen ordered TV and radio stations to play Loun Nol-era songs that accused Shihanouk of ceding land to Cambodia’s larger neighbor.

“The fact that the new generation publicized the song made me...remember the abuse against me,” Norodom Shihanouk wrote in a message posted to his Web site at the time.

However, seven days after his return in May, Norodom Shihanouk, during a banquet at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh, described the prime minister as his own son and a “new hero of Cambodia.”

“King Norodom Shihanouk and I both support Samdech Hun Sen to lead the country for the whole of his life,” the retired monarch said at the gathering, during which he sang 21 songs, plus one requested by Hun Sen.

It appears to be the closest Norodom Shihanouk has been to Hun Sen and the ruling CPP in the past 13 years since UNTAC, said Keo Puth Rasmey, executive director of the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia.

He knows that the CPP is the major party with a critical role in stabilizing the country and guaranteeing the existence of the monarchy,” he said.

National stability and the survival of the Cambodian monarchy are the two overriding preoccupations of Norodom Shihanouk, though his lifelong interest in national politics is also evident.

Khek Galuchet, president of local rights group Licalu, said the former King remains very much interested, if not directly implicated in politics.

“I think he’s still involved in politics in the larger sense of the term,” she said.

“He is aware of the situation in Cambodia, he follows the situation, he is informed. But I don’t think he wants to come back to politics.”

And for those who think the retired King may still somehow be engaged in politics, Norodom Shihanouk has continued the steady drumbeat of disclaimers.

“His Majesty King-Father Norodom Sihanouk has repeatedly stated that he only wishes to live in peace and stay out of politics,” the former King’s cabinet net released in April.

In the year since his last birthday, Norodom Shihanouk has witnessed both the decline and the emergence of parties that trade in the symbols of his long political career.

Among the casualties were dozens of Funcinpec members who were fired by Hun Sen, and Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who was removed as co-interior minister. Under fierce verbal attack from the CPP, Prince Norodom Ranariddh quit as National Assembly president and was then forced out as president of Funcinpec.

At the week of Ranariddh’s ouster ended, the former King had not yet responded to a letter informing him of Keo Puth Rasmey’s installation as Funcinpec president, said Nouv Sotathna, the party’s newly appointed spokesman.

Nouv Sotathna therefore decided to speculate on what Norodom Shihanouk’s relations would be with a post-Ranariddh Funcinpec. In an Oct 20 letter to Prince Ranariddh, the former King described the changes to Funcinpec as “an unforeseen tragedy.”

“Prince Ranariddh’s unique gestures towards the different political parties in Cambodia are an attempt to diffuse the many competing tensions, he said.

The former King has saved his strongest criticism for his nephew Prince Sisowath Thomico, who, to oppose Hun Sen and the CPP, has formed the recently launched Sangkhum Jatiniyum Front Party.

Prince Sisowath Thomico’s marital status.

[Image 27x26 to 291x617]

In an interview, Prince Thomico said he would like to join all the people of Cambodia and of the world to wish your Majesty a very happy 84th birthday.

You are the glue and unifying force which holds your nation together. May you continue to enjoy a long and healthy life to assure Cambodia’s good fortune and prosperity.

Sinsuke Yamada, President
Otsuka Shoe Co., Ltd.
23-4, Shimbashi i-Chome
Minato-ku, Tokyo
(105-0004) Japan

THE CAMBODIA DAILY
OCTOBER 31, 2006

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THE CAMBODIA DAILY
OCTOBER 31, 2006
His Majesty’s Birthday

Long Live Samdach Ta Norodom Sihanouk
Good Health and Happiness always on the Occasion of His Majesty’s 84th Birthday

From the Management & Staff
Sunway Hotel Phnom Penh

Long Live Samdach Ta Norodom Sihanouk
Good Health and Happiness always on the Occasion of His Majesty's 84th Birthday

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THE FUTURE OF THE MONARCHY

By James Welsh

The last 12 months have been a turbulent time for Cambodia’s royal family. In October 2005, Prime Minister Hun Sen threatened to abolish the monarchy if King Norodom Sihamoni failed to sign off on a controversial supplemental border agreement with Vietnam. And earlier this month, retired King Norodom Sihanouk warned that a request by Prince Sisowath Thomico that he return and run the country could also spell disaster. In a message posted on his Web site, Norodom Sihanouk said an unidentified “CPP personality” had told him that such calls could bring the monarchy to a close.

It is perhaps little wonder then that Julio Jeldres, official biographer of retired King Norodom Sihanouk, wrote in a recent email that he felt pessimistic about the institution’s future.

“The monarchy, I fear, has been treated with contempt, threatened, used and abused by the political elite for their own political ends, causing an irreparable disunity among the Royal Family,” Jeldres wrote.

One of the defining details of King Norodom Sihamoni’s reign to date has been his decision to avoid Cambodia’s rough-and-tumult political scene.

For Kek Galabru, founder of local rights group Licadho, this has been a wise move.

“Now [the people] start to respect and love the new King because the new King Sihamoni has no problems with politics—he’s not involved with politics at all,” Kek Galabru said. But while the monarchy appears stable under King Sihamoni, she added: “After King Sihanoni—I don’t know.”

Part of the monarchy’s appeal for the general public, Kek Galabru said, is that the public associates it with peace.

“When King Sihanouk was deposed, the war arrived. This is in the mind of Cambodian people,” she said.

Cambodia’s love for the monarchy—and more specifically Norodom Sihanouk—continued through the Khmer Rouge period and was rewarded when he was once again appointed to the throne in 1993 as Cambodia began its transition from a communist state to a fledgling democracy, Kek Galabru said.

This love, she added, continues on today and into the future through King Sihamoni.

“If one day the monarchy was to disappear, I believe that Cambodians would lose a great deal,” said Alain Daniel, who served as Norodom Sihanouk’s private secretary in the late 1960s as part of an agreement with the French government.

Daniel said the idea of a monarchy can contribute permanence and security in a country, as was recently seen after the bloodyless military coup in Thailand.

“We now have the good fortune of having a King who is a young man, cultivated, competent, an artist, very well-informed about Cambodian culture, and a man who has lived abroad long enough to know what a modern country is,” he said.

But Daniel also noted that the monarchy is in a period of transition.

Describing Norodom Sihanouk, he said: “We have at the head of Cambodia a truly exceptional man who is a major public figure in world history and who—whether or not he was King at different stages of his life—has always been considered the sovereign by the majority of the population.”

But the world has changed since Norodom Sihanouk first reigned in the 1950s and 1960s, he said. “Cambodians must redefine monarchy adapted to the world today—and this is perfectly doable.”

For some observers, the key to the monarchy’s survival will depend upon steering away from politics and focusing on the role of national figurehead and a symbol of stability.

Despite anti-royal rumbles from the CPP, political analyst Lao Mong Hay said the monarchy is secure, and that the current government will keep it in order to legitimize the CPP’s rule.

Even though the monarchy has been marginalized for the moment, the government still needs it, he said.

“The Japanese shoguns needed the emperors to legitimize their power; so does the Cambodian shogun [need] the King to legitimize and consolidate his power,” Lao Mong Hay said.

Government spokesman and CPP Information Minister Khieu Kanharith said that Hun Sen respects the King and the government has protected the achievements of the Sangkum Reastr Niyum.

For some, King Sihamoni’s relatively low-profile reign is part of an ongoing redefinition of what the Cambodian monarchy is all about.

“[King Sihamoni] is in the process of redefining what Cambodian monarchy should be,” Daniel said. “He is doing this with finesse, progressively—Cambodian style—quietly and without upheaval.”

(Additional reporting by Michelle Vachon and Yen Samana)

THE CAMBODIA DAILY

October 31, 2006
I Extend My Heartiest Wishes to
Your Majesty
Norodom Sihanouk
on Your 84th Birthday

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Depictions of an idealized Cambodian homeland are a recurring theme. “Shadow Over Angkor,” from the late 1960s, tells the story of a foiled plot to topple the government. It opens with Norodom Sihanouk, dressed in a white officer’s uniform, white shoes, and white gloves, on the deck of a battle ship.

Then it quickly moves to a series of loving long shots, which show Cambodia to be a nation of smooth roads, bustling ports, swimming pools, world-class monuments, fresh-cut roses and a happy diplomatic corps.

It is a splendid, air-tight vision, crafted even as his country teetered on the brink of chaos.

The film premiered in Moscow in 1969, the same year that the US began its secret bombings in Cambodia. Norodom Sihanouk’s scripts call Cambodia to be a nation of smooth roads, bustling ports, swimming pools, world-class monuments, fresh-cut roses and a happy diplomatic corps.

Filmmaking is a habit the retired King seems hard-pressed to drop. In early October, he posted on his Web site a newspaper article which told of a strange and murderous love triangle. The victim’s wife and daughter, who shared a boyfriend, poisoned him with battery acid and the wife then cut his penis off.

“I had stopped making films,” wrote the retired King. “But if I were still ‘active’ as a filmmaker, I could never allow myself to show in a film of N Sihanouk details that abase my honor and dignity.”

Filmmaking is a habit the retired King seems hard-pressed to drop. In early October, he posted on his Web site a newspaper article which told of a strange and murderous love triangle. The victim’s wife and daughter, who shared a boyfriend, poisoned him with battery acid and the wife then cut his penis off.

The retired King, however, kept all these documents on file—the news stories, good and bad, and the messages he sent after their publication. He regularly posts some of them on his Web site or reprints them in his monthly bulletin.

And, it would appear, he never forgets any of them.

Among the messages he has recently issued in response to Prince Sisowath Thronicco’s giving his newly-formed political party a royalist agenda, Norodom Sihanouk resurrected this month a letter he had sent to the publication Indochina Report in Singapore in April 1987.

The lengthy letter—posted in installments on his Web site—was in reply to a 1986 story written by Prince Thronicco criticizing Norodom Sihanouk and his regime of the 1950s and 1960s.

As the publications he created, the retired King has not viewed the media solely as a political tool.

“Kamboja,” which he launched in 1965, was a magazine-style, color publication with full-page photos and a mix of indepth stories and light features to inform and entertain the Cambodian public.

It appeared in English and in French, which many Cambodians spoke at the time. Its May 15, 1966 issue, for instance, included: an account of an armed confrontation between Thai and Cambodian military at Fresh Vihab temple; an interview with Chinese President Mao Zedong by Norodom Sihanouk with a photo of the two heads of state; a feature on Prey Veng province; a business story on the pepper crop in Kampot province, with costs and expected yield over 5 years; a poem by H H Doeng, a Cambodian returning to the country after a 10-year absence; words and music of a Norodom Sihanouk song; a story on basketball; and political cartoons.

Among his other publications were “Le Sangkum,” an indepth monthly on politics and history, and the humorous publication “Phseng Phseng,” Daniel said.

Today the retired King’s messages continue to draw public attention to an array of issues.

In July 2005, in the margin of a story on Montagnard asylum seekers deported to Vietnam after being refused refugee status by the UN, he wrote: “Our Buddhism and our Democracy should bring us to grant asylum to these unfortunate Montagnards.”

Earlier this month, he referred to the French documentary “Indigenes,” which aired on the French television station TV5 in Phnom Penh, saying that the program on “natives” in the French army failed to mention Cambodians who fought for France in the two world wars and received virtually nothing in return.

Most of these messages the retired King writes by hand himself in French—the language he learned as a boy in then Indochina and in which he wrote his books in the 1970s.

“[Norodom Sihanouk] belonged to that generation of heads of state for whom style was important,” and who chiseled every sentence of their messages or speeches, Daniel said.

“I believe that he has always been interested in journalism and journalists, not only because he considered [the press] an important lever in politics...but also because this is a man who likes to write” Daniel said.

“In my opinion, he had not been a head of state, he would have had the qualities to be a great journalist.”
The Embassy of the Czech Republic

in the year of the 50th anniversary of the Czech - Cambodia diplomatic relations

submits its most loyal greetings and best wishes to

His Majesty Norodom Sihanouk

The King Father

on the occasion of His Majesty’s Birthday
THE KING FATHER’S DIGITAL DISPATCHES

His 84th Was A Busy Year For The World’s Most Prolific Royal Blogger

ON NORTH KOREA:

“The work of extremely heroic struggles for total and irreversible National Liberation, for national Defense, National Education and Juche-Socialist Construction by His Excellency the President-Marshal and Great Leader KIM IL SUNG, and by his illustrious and beloved Son and most worthy Successor His Excellency the Marshal-Great Leader KIM JONG IL, is that of two true GIANTS of universal HISTORY.”

- PYONGYANG, MARCH 3, 2006

ON THE PRESS:

“HE [Information Minister] Mr. KHIEU KHARITH has just reminded me that I promised never to sue journalists. Consequently I will not sue the journalist or journalists who produce or who shall produce texts, articles slandering me, dragging me through the mud or insulting me or distorting History. I shall content myself with publishing ‘clarifications’ or other texts (Replies, Protests, Reestablishments of historical truths...)

- JANGSUWON STATE GUEST HOUSE, NORTH KOREA, APRIL 25, 2006

ON WORLD CUP FOOTBALL:

“Alas, instead of two victories in two matches, France has only gotten two draws. And this, one must underscore, was due to indubitably anti-French referees who, respectively, denied the French in official competition a penalty and a ‘well-cooked’ goal, that is, obvious, shown on television.”

- PHNOMPENH, JUNE20, 2006

ON THE KHMER ROUGE:

“Continuing to display, to exhibit without shame, for the pleasure of tourists and other ‘visitors,’ the skulls, bone fragments (skeletons, etc.) of the innocent victims of the Diabolical K.R. Polpotian Monsters, is to show extraordinary contempt and a total lack of pity for the victims of the diabolical K.R Polpotians.”

- PHNOMPENH, JULY 16 2006

ON FRANCE’S WORLD CUP DEFEAT:

“If [Italian footballer] Mr. Marco Materazzi hadn’t uttered words of very grave, extremely grave insult, to [French player] Mr. Zidane, it is certain that the latter would not have been crazy enough to deliver that ‘head butt’ to the Italian.”

- PHNOMPENH, JULY16, 2006

ON FORMER KR COMMANDER TA MOK:

“And now there are a considerable number of our compatriots who, as ‘worthy’ sons and daughters, are deciding to pay homage to the prothesis of a leg of TA MOK (a warrior who reportedly lost a leg by jumping on a landmine) as an equal to the relics of Buddha!!”

- PHNOMPENH, AUG 6, 2006

ON ADULTERY:

“It seems that only communist Countries consider adultery a ‘crime.’ According to ‘anti-Communist Liberals,’ one can love and practice adultery freely, as one loves and freely eats foie gras and ice-cream.”

- SEPT 6, 2006

EXCERPTED FROM THE ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY “SORRY, LADY, I’M GAY”:

“(Widowed) Lady: ‘Mr. Rene, as I have told you already, a year ago I lost my husband who was a Colonel in the Army of the USA. He died in Iraq. And you tell me that you live normally in France with your parents... Mr. Rene, I will come right to the point. By visiting the Fatherland of our origin, Kampuchea, Destiny has allowed me to make your acquaintance in Angkor, symbol of the greatest glory of Kampuchea. And I have fallen in love with you. Will you marry me in Angkor, my beloved Rene?’

‘Rene: Madam, I too will come right to the point. By visiting the coast of Koh Kong province, Published Jan 15, 1967, in Kambuja magazine

Top Left: After playing basketball in 1963, Norodom Sihanouk tells journalists in Phnom Penh that he does not want to be dependent on the US.

Photo: Audiovisual Resource Center/French National Audiovisual Institute

Right: Norodom Sihanouk boating off the coast of Koh Kong province.

Published Jan 15, 1967, in Kambuja magazine

Photo: Courtesy of the National Library of Cambodia

- OCT 2, 2006

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