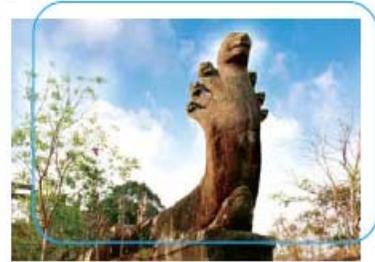
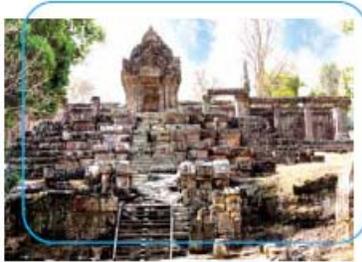


# PREAH VIHEAR THE WORLD HERITAGE SACRED SITE

Inscribed on the list of Patrimony of Humanity  
on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2008 at Quebec, Canada.



March 2009 by Someth Uk

Honorable guests,  
Distinguished scholars,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
And Japanese Friends,

Today, I have a privilege to be among all of you. I am happy and honored to present to you in a very a summary manner Preah Vihear the Khmer cultural heritage which has been declared World Heritage on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2008 in Quebec city in Canada.

The main purpose of my presentation today is to show to you the “*Exceptional Universal Value*” proclaimed by UNESCO and may I quoted what has said the Director-General of UNESCO, MR Koichiro Matsuura “That the inscription *engages the collective responsibility of the international community to ensure its protection.*”

In the kaleidoscope of these humble panoramic and imaginative pictures, I am trying to spread in front of your eyes sample of the beauty of the Temple and its site not to forget the natural surrounding landscape. Along the visual presentation I also should apologize that I describe in words might not have the level of apprehension and therefore less persuasive effects than the images of this magic Temple. Only some of you who have visited the Preah Vihear can witness what I am now telling you in a very modest way and can testify at my place that the reality is far beyond my presentation. In one word, the Temple is mystic in its spirit blended with the architecture and landscape so that together is a master piece of composition integrating all in one religion, nature and the creation of mankind.

The second message that I wish to convey to you is our vision of how the protection of Preah Vihear can be ensured in a sustainability manner. No doubt that restoration work, preserving natural environment, improving living conditions of the population surrounding the Temple will need strong conviction and continuous commitment in mobilizing effort and funding. To respond to these requirements we have to invest the total wealth of Preah Vihear by optimizing the potentials of natural resources in the region. But along the process, we wish to share with our Japanese and worldwide friends our responsibility and our duty in preserving the World Heritage.

Intervention program and a strategic planning will be part of the Sustainable Protection and Social Improvement Plan that we will study and design in the near future. We sincerely hope your participation in the process and in the implementation phase so the dream of protection of Preah Vhear will come true in the days to come.

May I now proceed to the presentation.

## 1- Geographical location:

- In South East Asia
- In the Kingdom of Cambodia,
- In the Northern part of the province of Preah Vihear, on the border of Thailand,
- Along the Dangrek mountain,
- 550 km from Phnom Penh the Capital of Cambodia, (road distance)
- 240 km from Angkor Wat World Heritage (road distance)



Cambodia

## 2- The History:

- An open garden dedicated for spiritual worshipping and, holistic hermitage and pilgrimage during 7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> century, longtime before construction of temple,
- Site with the 3 surrounding mountains representing Hinduism gods: Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma,
- The temple, symbol of “ *The Light looking to the Empire* ” was constructed by:
  - king Yaçovaraman the 1<sup>st</sup> started in IX to X century
  - king Suryavarman the 1<sup>st</sup> in XI century,
  - king Suryavarman the 2<sup>nd</sup> completed in 12 century,A lingua, symbol of god of life reproduction was brought to Preah Vihear from the Khmer temple Wat Phu located in Southern part of Laos also a World Heritage,
- The evolution of religion from Hinduism to Buddhism without conflict has taken place since the pilgrimage period prior adoption of Buddhism by Cambodia,



Tympan du Gopura IV : barattage de la mer de lait



Lintheau du Gopura IV : Krishna tue Kayla

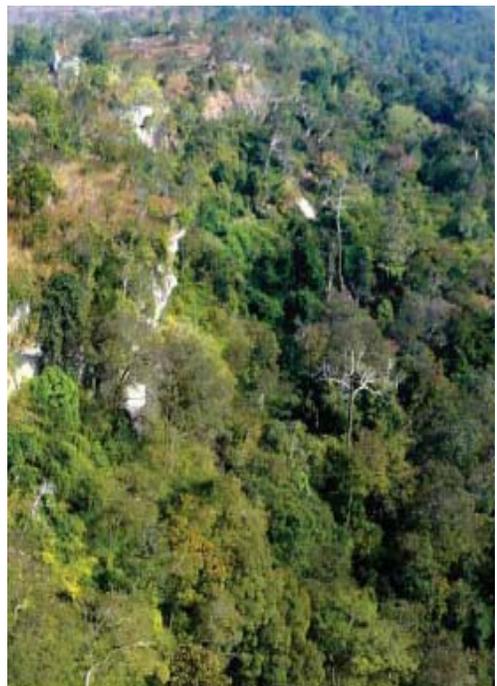
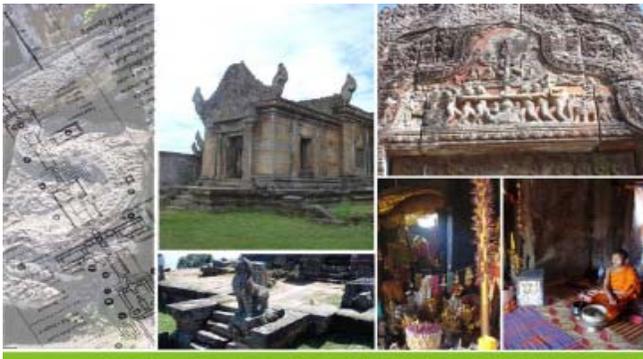
### 3- The Site:

- Top of the mountain at 620 m altitude above sea level, temple is misted between blue sky and white cloud, with temperature range between 24 degrees Celsius to below 12 degrees Celsius at night,
- On the rock promontory with steep slope toward Cambodian side and gentle descent in the direction to Thailand,
- Temple is laid out along its North-South axis, with perspective looking South on vast plain at the Cambodian territory,
- Surrounding: forest and natural environment,
- Average rainfall is 1400 mm/year,



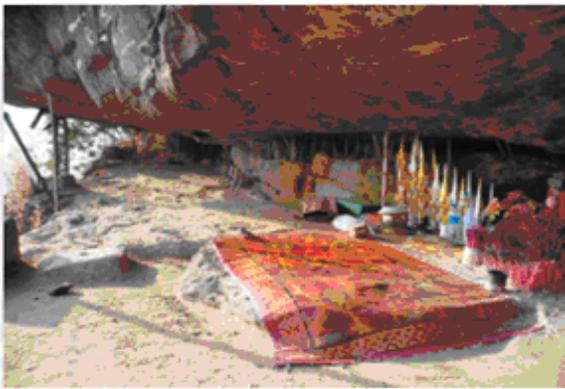
## 4- Wealth of Preah Vihear :

- Universal values declared by World Heritage Committee for the following reasons:
  - historical,
  - cultural and spiritual ( architecture, religion )
  - site and surrounding landscape, with rock garden,
- Potential Resources:
  - cultural heritage ( temple and hermitage caves ),
  - natural forest,
  - arable land,
  - possible untapped resources,
  - labor force,



## 5- Possible produced wealth from:

- Cultural tourism (historical temple, archeological site),
- Agricultural, and rents from land,
- Forestry potentials,
- Eco-tourism (natural environment, forest and landscape),
- Handicraft, artistic and social values (dances, traditional festivities),



## 6- Sustainable Protection and Social Improvement Plan

One concept and two objectives whose targets should be:

- Preserve and protect the World Heritage, a patrimony of humanity, as cultural wealth of mankind,
- Transform it into assets to generate resources through appropriate projects leading to social progress, and economic improvement,
- Protection the temple by creating buffer zones that could be a living environmental park, with fauna, flora and traditional villages,
- Make the buffer zones and the temple site an area of free pollution, by optimizing the potentials of available resources in the region,
- Involving the population to participate fully in the process of implementation of the plan, so they can share equitably the benefit generated from enhancement actions, while having a sustainable balance between livelihood and nature protection.

Finally give the possibility to the poor population to improve their living conditions, at least a minimum food safety net, health care, hope for a better future for themselves and for their children.

*This is the road map to narrow the poverty gap.*



## 7- A Worldwide participation project

A worldwide participation project came from the fundamental idea that the World Heritage site of Preah Vihear belongs to Humanity. In this context the Universal values of the Temple and its Cultural Heritage **should be shared by people of the world and particularly be the pride of the Asian nations.**

People loving cultural heritage and human values are invited to participate in the Project whose aim is to preserve the temple and to improve the natural environment, social and economic of the living being in the region.

Upon this philosophy, I wish to propose to friends from all parts of the world and personally to invite my Japanese friends to participate in this project a noble task to preserve and safeguard a patrimony of mankind. I sincerely hope that my voice expressing feelings from my heart will be perceived in this memorable occasion and that response from *Friends of Preah Vihear will be spontaneous.*

Coming to the end of my presentation, I would like to express to you my Japanese and world wide friends my gratitude in giving me this opportunity to address to you wholeheartedly my invitation to your participation for the preservation of Preah Vihear and the enlightenment of our civilization, a testament to many generations of mankind to come.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION**

sUmGKuN

(Som Aor Kun)

**Statement from the DPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
Of the Royal Government of CAMBODIA**