History and Political Government of Cambodia

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Khmer Kingdom (Funan)

- The date that Cambodia was established is unknown
- Cambodia's modern-day culture has its roots in the 1st to 6th centuries in a state referred to as Funan
- Modern-day archaeological findings provide evidence of a commercial society centered on the Mekong Delta that flourished from the 1st century to the 6th century.
- Served by a network of canals, the city was an important trade link between India and China.

(Cambodia, 2018)
Angkor Era

- In the early 9th century a Khmer (ethnic Cambodian) prince returned to Cambodia from abroad. He probably arrived from nearby Java or Sumatra.
- Jayavarman II declared himself prince through many ceremonies.
- His kingdom eventually came to be centered near present-day Siem Reap in northwestern Cambodia.
- Between the early 9th century and the early 15th century, 26 monarchs ruled successively over the Khmer kingdom and built many temples.
- At its greatest extent, in the 12th century, the Khmer kingdom encompassed (in addition to present-day Cambodia) parts of present-day Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar (formerly Burma), and the Malay Peninsula.
- Historians have not been able to fully explain the decline of the Khmer kingdom in the 13th and 14th centuries.

(Cambodia, 2018)
Temple of Angkor Wat
Bayon Temple at Angkor Thum
Cambodia Dark Age

- History of this Era is Poorly Recorded
- Cambodia was a relatively prosperous trading kingdom with its capital at Lovek, near present-day Phnom Penh
- In 18th century a Civil War came close to destroying Cambodia.
- In the early 19th century, newly established dynasties in Vietnam and Thailand competed for control over the Cambodian court.
French Rule

- By the second half of the 19th century, France had begun to expand its colonial penetration of Indochina.
- In 1863, France accepted the Cambodian king's invitation to impose a protectorate over his severely weakened kingdom, halting the country's dismemberment by Thailand and Vietnam. For the next 90 years, France ruled Cambodia.
- France did little to nothing for the Cambodian economy.
- During World War II (1939-1945), Japanese forces entered French Indochina but left the compliant French administration in place.
- In 1945, Cambodians were allowed to draft a constitution and form political parties. On the verge of defeat in 1945.
- First Indochina War (1946-1954)
- King Sihanouk managed to gain Cambodia's independence peacefully in 1953.
- The Geneva Accords of 1954, which marked the end of the First Indochina War, acknowledged Sihanouk's government as the sole legitimate authority in Cambodia.
Modern State Cambodia

- In 1955 Sihanouk abdicated the throne in favor of his father to pursue a full-time political career, free of the constitutional constraints of the monarchy.
- Sangkum Reastr Niyum (People's Socialist Community) was initiated.
- Sihanouk served as prime minister of Cambodia until 1960, when his father died and he was named head of state.
- In the late 1950s the Cold War intensified in Asia.
- Sihanouk pursued a policy of neutrality that drew substantial economic aid from the competing countries.
- In 1965 Sihanouk broke off diplomatic relations with the United States and allowed North Vietnamese Communists, then fighting the Vietnam War against the United States and the South Vietnamese in southern Vietnam, to set up bases on Cambodian soil.
- In 1969, U.S. president Richard Nixon authorized a bombing campaign against Cambodia in an effort to destroy Vietnamese Communist sanctuaries.

(Cambodia, 2018)
Khmer Republic

- March of 1970 Sihanouk was removed and General Lon Nol took over.
- In April U.S. and South Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia, searching for North Vietnamese, who moved deeper into Cambodia.
- In October 1970 Lon Nol inaugurated the Khmer Republic
- In 1975 the Khmer Republic collapsed and Khmer Rouge forces occupied Phnom Penh
- The United States continued bombing Cambodia until the Congress of the United States halted the campaign in 1973.

(Cambodia, 2018)
Democratic Kampuchea

- Pol Pot, also known as Saloth Sar, organized the Communist guerrilla force known as the Khmer Rouge.
- The Khmer Rouge ousted General Lon Nol in 1975, establishing a brutal Communist regime that ruled until 1979.
- The people given the most power in the new government were the largely illiterate rural Cambodians who had fought alongside the Khmer Rouge in the civil war.
- The Khmer Rouge killed intellectuals, merchants, bureaucrats, members of religious groups, and any people suspected of disagreeing with the party.
- From 1965 to 1973, the United States launched a massive bombing campaign in Cambodia.

(Cambodia, 2018)
Recent Development

- In October 1991 Cambodia's warring factions, the UN, and a number of interested foreign nations signed an agreement in Paris intended to end the conflict in Cambodia.
- The Paris accords and the UN protectorate pushed Cambodia out of its isolation and introduced competitive politics.
- The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia sponsored elections in May of 1993.
- Hun Sen was in charge and refused to give up his power so he threatened to upset the election results.
- A three-party coalition formed a government headed by two prime ministers: Prince Norodom Ranariddh, one of Sihanouk's sons, became first prime minister, while Hun Sen became second prime minister.
- In July 1997 Hun Sen planned a coup to Oust Ranariddh while he was overseas.
- In November 1997 an agreement was reached - Hun Sen became sole prime minister and Ranariddh became president of the National Assembly.
- In early 1999 the constitution was amended to create a Senate.

(Cambodia, 2018)
(Caswell, 2014, p.7)
Political timelines

1995  The Future Light Orphanage in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, was founded to teach children skills to avoid poverty.

1995  The Khmer Rouge was ousted in Cambodia after a 3 year reign of terror in which hundreds of thousands died.

1996  Mar 26, In Cambodia the Khmer Rouge kidnapped Christopher Howes (37), a mine-clearing expert from Bristol, England, and Huon Huot, his interpreter. In November Howes’ employer paid $120,000 for his release. The two men were killed shortly after their abduction. Their remains were found in 1998. In 2008 a Cambodian court sentenced four former Khmer Rouge rebels each to up to 20 years in prison for their involvement in the murders.

1996  Apr 16, Khmer Rouge guerillas attacked a group of tourists near Kompot, 85 miles southwest of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Reports have it that they killed and wounded a number of people and kidnapped about 20. 1996 Jun 7, In Cambodia it was reported that Pol Pot was gravely ill or possibly dead. Pol Pot died 1998.

1996  Jun 21, In Cambodia Khmer Rouge guerrillas held dozens of sawmill workers for ransom and killed 14 of them with axes. 1996 Aug 8, In Cambodia the government announced an internal power struggle and split in the Khmer Rouge. Leng Sary, a Pol Pot chum and the Khmer Rouge foreign minister, opposed Son Sen, the minister of defense and led defections that grew to 10,000. 1996 Sep 5, Cambodia rushed troops to aid the 1,000 or so Khmer Rouge dissidents near the village of Chup Koki. About 5,500 Khmer Rouge rebels remain loyal to Pol Pot.
Political timeline

1996  Sep 14, In Cambodia King Norodom Sihanouk granted amnesty to Leng Sary, the Khmer Rouge rebel leader. 1996  Oct 18, Cambodia's king granted amnesty to all prison inmates except those convicted of serious crimes and judged to be too dangerous. He also proposed tearing down the country's dilapidated prisons which house about 2,000 people, many held without trial. Leng Sary was granted amnesty and formed a political party. His followers maintained rule over Pailin under nominal government control. 1996  In Cambodia Ta Mok ousted Pol Pot from power and kept him under house arrest until his death in 1998.

1997  Feb 14, Khmer Rouge guerrillas killed all but three Cambodian government officials sent to make peace 1997Mar 30, In Cambodia a grenade attack at a political rally killed at least 16 and wounded over 100 as opposition leader Sam Rainsy led some 200 members of his Khmer Nation Party in front of the National Assembly. 1997 Jun 11, In Cambodia Pol Pot ordered the killing of the former Khmer Rouge defense minister Son Sen (67) and his powerful wife, Yun Yat (63), and 9 relatives. 1997  Jun 17, Fighting broke out in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, between the 2 competing prime ministers. Security troops of Prince Ranariddh faced troops of the national police under Hok Lundy, a supporter of Hun Sen.

1997  Jun 18, In Cambodia it was reported that Pol Pot had surrendered with 15 followers.

History, Cambodia, 2018
Political Timeline

1997  
Jun 21, Cambodia government sources announced that former Khmer Rouge troops had captured Pol Pot

1997  
Jun, Cambodia’s Hun Sen wrote to the UN and asked for help in bringing remaining Khmer Rouge to trial. 1997
Aug 19, In Cambodia 35,000 people fled across the border to Thailand to escape fighting between forces loyal to Prince
Ranariddh and troops of coup leader Hun Sen.

1998  
Mar 31, In Cambodia government soldiers made a major offensive to destroy the remnants of the Khmer
Rouge guerrillas, whose numbers were disintegrating due to defections and internal fighting 1998  
Apr 15, Pol Pot (73) died of a heart attack in Anlong Veng, northern Cambodia. His body was cremated. It was later reported that he killed
himself with malaria pills and tranquilizers after learning that an aide planned to hand him over to the US. In 1999 it was
reported that Ta Mok had Pol Pot executed. In 2001 the place of his death was designated as a historic site and plans were
made to make it a tourist attraction. In 2004 Philip Short and John Murray authored “Pol Pot: The History of a Nightmare.”

1998  
May 2, Cambodian refugees entered Thailand as government troops declared that they had all but destroyed
the Khmer Rouge.1998  
Nov 25, Cambodia’s new National Assembly began office with Prince Ranariddh as speaker of the 120-seat group.

History, Cambodia, 2018
Political Timeline

1998 Dec 7, The UN agreed to give Cambodia’s UN seat to the new government.

1999 Apr 30, Cambodia was admitted as the 10th member of the Association of Asian Nations (ASEAN).

2001 Aug 7, Cambodia’s Constitutional Council approved legislation to establish a special court to try former Khmer Rouge leaders for crimes against humanity. 2001 Aug 10, Cambodia’s King Sihanouk signed war-crimes legislation to try senior Khmer Rouge leaders.

2003 Apr 11, Cambodia and Thailand agreed to resume full diplomatic relations, which were suspended after anti-Thai riots shook Cambodia’s capital in January. 2003 Jul 27, Cambodia held elections for seats in the 123-member national Assembly in the third democratic election in a decade.

2004 Jul 6, Actress Angelina Jolie (29) arrived in Cambodia. PM Hun Sen had offered her citizenship in recognition of her nature conservation work in the country’s northwest. 2004 Jul 14, King Sihanouk reappointed Hun Sen as Cambodia’s premier.
Political Timeline

2004  Jul 8, In Cambodia Hun Sen and Prince Ranariddh signed an agreement to share power with Hun Sen as PM and Ranariddh as speaker of the National Assembly.

2000  Oct 14, In Cambodia Prince Norodom Sihamoni, retiring King Norodom Sihanouk's son, a former ballet dancer and U.N. cultural ambassador, was officially confirmed to succeed his father on the throne.

2006  Jan 22, Cambodia held its first Senate election. PM Hun Sen's ruling party secured a landslide victory. Only 123 parliamentarians and 11,261 members of commune councilors, local administrative bodies, were able to vote.

2008  Oct 7, The UN food agency (WFP) said it is resuming free breakfasts for hundreds of thousands of poor Cambodian schoolchildren after securing new funds for a program suspended due to high food prices.

2008  Dec 10, The government of Cambodia and the UN agreed in principle to strengthen measures to prevent corruption among staff at the country's genocide tribunal.

2010  Mar 19, Cambodia's foreign ministry said Cambodia has temporarily suspended marriages between South Koreans and its citizens to curb human trafficking. The latest ban came after the March 3 conviction of a Cambodian matchmaker who arranged marriages between Korean men and 25 Cambodian brides.
Political Timeline

2011   Nov 28, Burundi told delegates at a global anti-landmine summit in Phnom Penh that it had cleared its territory of landmines, becoming the 18th state party to do so. Myanmar was the only country recorded as laying new landmines last year, but the Intl. Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) said it has since been joined by Israel, Syria and Libya, bringing the current global use of landmines to its highest level since 2004

2012   Sep, Cambodia’s government ordered employers to pay out an extra $10 a month in allowances to every worker. 2012 Nov 19, President Barack Obama made a 6-hour stop in Myanmar. In a notable detour from US policy, the president referred to Burma as Myanmar in his talks with President Thein Sein. Obama then became the first US president to set foot in Cambodia, a country once known for its Khmer Rouge "killing fields."

2013   Jul 28, Cambodia held general elections. The opposition appeared to make significant gains in parliament. The ruling party of PM Hun Sen claimed a victory with 68 of the national Assembly’s 123 seats. 2013 Sep 24, Cambodia’s parliament reappointed premier Hun Sen for another five-year term, extending his nearly three-decade rule as the opposition threatened to mount fresh protests over the disputed elections.

History, Cambodia, 2018
2018 two journalists have been in pre-trial detention since their arrest in November. They were charged with “providing information that is destructive to national defense to a foreign state” after they were caught filing stories to Radio Free Asia (RFA). Both men deny the charge against them which carries a prison term of up to 15 years.

This has gotten worse since Trump has been elected and started “fake news”.

World News, 2018
References


