

**Khmer Cultural-artistic antiques impress Japanese people**

On 28 December 2009, **H.E. Dr. Sok An**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers, accompanied by **Lok Chumteav** and delegation members, including **H.E. Mr. Thong Khon**, Minister of Tourism, and **H.E. Mr. Chuch Phoeun**, Secretary of State of Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts returned from a visit to Japan.

During their 4 days visit to Japan, **H.E. Dr. Sok An**, **Lok Chumteav** and delegates had participated in the New Angkor Culture Heritage Exhibition which was held on December 27, 2009 at Mitsukoshi Exhibition Center, Tokyo. This event was also attended by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Japan; Mr. OKADA, Chief Executive Officer of OKADA Cultural Foundation; Professor ISHI ZAWA, Rector of Sophia University, and many other Japanese officials. Speaking on that occasion, **H.E. Dr. Sok An** thanked OKADA Cultural Foundation which helps the Japanese people to understand Khmer culture and civilization and also makes Cambodia more attractive to the Japanese tourists through this exhibition. In addition to the opening ceremony of the exhibition, **H.E. Dr. Sok An** also had conducted two successive meetings with H.E. Mr. KATSUYA OKADA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and Mrs. SADAOKO OGATA, President of JICA. In the two separate meetings, the discussion focused on the promotion of cultural and tourism development in Cambodia in accordance with the spirit of the statement of Mekong- Japan leaders' summit on November 6-7, 2009. **H.E. Dr. Sok An** requested the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan to encourage more Japanese investors in tourism sectors to Cambodia. His Excellency also expressed the need of having direct flights from Japan to Cambodia.

Now, the Japanese tourists to Cambodia ranked number 3 as compared to other foreign tourists. A total of 163,806 Japanese tourists had visited Cambodia in 2008. For the 11 months of 2009, there were 129,283 Japanese tourists.

During the visit **H.E. Dr. Sok An** also met with Japanese investors from 16 companies dealing with financial, Transport and Information sectors. Some of these companies had also expressed their willingness to send representatives for the opening of their offices in Cambodia in early 2010.