

President Kaysone: A revolutionary life



A museum on the life of Laos' iconic leader is housed in a two storey building of contemporary Lao design, on Kaysone Phomvihane avenue.

Ekaphone Phouthonesy

Located 6km from the city centre on the avenue that bears his name, Kaysone Phomvihane Museum attracts both Lao and foreign visitors to learn about the life of Laos' iconic leader and the revolutionary movement he led for decades to free the nation from foreign domination.

President Kaysone devoted his life to leading the Lao people to independence, culminating in the establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on December 2, 1975.

Mr Kaysone was born on December 13, 1920, in the central province of Savannakhet. He attended primary school from the age of five, and quickly showed great aptitude in both Lao and French languages.

Even as a child, he had a strong vision for the future, and made a personal commitment to excel in his studies for the betterment of his own life and those of his parents.

After graduating from primary school, Mr Kaysone decided to continue his secondary education in Hanoi, Vietnam. Far from home, he often remembered his father's wise words and advice, which taught him to remain diligent in his studies for the sake of his future, and that of his family, friends and people. He is quoted as saying a person must always have the drive to do something positive - to benefit his or her own nation. He believed that if a person gave up such efforts, they would never achieve their goals.

In 1939, President Kaysone entered a Vietnamese law university, and became an active member of the University Youth Association, energetically striving in its work for national liberation.

In 1945, he decided to return to his birthplace in Savannakhet province, to

join others in the campaign to take back power and declare Lao independence from the Japanese after their armies were defeated by the allied forces.

In 1946, he met with Vietnamese leader 'Uncle' Ho Chi Minh for the first time.

In the historic meeting, President Kaysone shared his private thoughts with Uncle Ho, revealing his belief that the Lao and Vietnamese people must join hands in fighting the French colonialists, who had returned to occupy Laos after Japan's departure.

He spoke of his idea that Laos would establish its own organisation to fight the French and construct a revolutionary stronghold to house an armed resistance force. In 1948, he was assigned to command a Lao army regiment stationed in Huaphan province, and during this time learned the intricacies of military tactics and how to be a strong leader. He also studied in detail the theories of Marx and Lenin. In 1955, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party was established, with

Mr Kaysone elected as the first General Secretary. With his wise counsel and strong leadership, the Party led the Lao people through the destruction of the Indochina war to liberate the nation from imperialist yoke in 1975, and open a new chapter in Lao history.

That year he became the first Prime Minister of the Lao PDR, and in 1986 he introduced the Party's renovation policies, reopening Laos' doors to the world, which resulted in the birth of the current market-oriented economy, welcoming foreign investment and helping the Lao people towards more prosperous times than ever before.

Mr Kaysone Phomvihane remained Prime Minister until 1991, when he assumed the post of President of the republic until he passed away in 1992 at the age of 72, leaving a legacy of countless lessons still followed by Party members, government officials and all Lao people.

Kaysone Phomvihane Museum is open daily from 8am to 4pm.

Basic Lao phrases

- A table for two people, please
- Can I look at the menu, please?
- Can I look in the kitchen?
- Is there a house specialty?
- Is there a local specialty?
- I'm a vegetarian
- I don't eat pork
- I don't eat beef
- Can you make it "light", please?
- A set meal
- A la carte
- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Tea
- Supper
- I want chicken soup
- ⇒ Khor to sam lab song khon dae
- ⇒ Khoi khor beung lai kam a-ham dai bor?
- ⇒ Khoi khor beung heuan khoa dai bor?
- ⇒ Chao mi lai kam a-ham phiset bor?
- ⇒ Chao mi laikam a-ham pheun bam bor?
- ⇒ Khoi pen khon kin che
- ⇒ Khoi bor kin xeen moo
- ⇒ Khoi bor kin xeen ngoa
- ⇒ Chao xai nam man noi noi dai bor?
- ⇒ A-ham la kha karm nod
- ⇒ A-ham tarm sang
- ⇒ A-ham xao
- ⇒ A-ham thieng
- ⇒ Nam xaa
- ⇒ A-ham kharm
- ⇒ Khoi yark kin kaeng kai