

CAMBODIAN QUEEN IS DEAD IN PEKING

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**Sihanouk's Mother, 71, Had
Joined Her Son in Exile
After His Overthrow**

PEKING, April 27 (Reuters)—Queen Mother Kossamak of Cambodia, 71-year-old mother of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, died here today with her son at her bedside, an official announcement said.

The announcement did not give funeral details or mention the Prince's possible return to Cambodia.

Prince Sihanouk, last week named chief of state for life by the new government set up after the capture of Phnom Penh 10 days ago, had delayed his return to his homeland to share his mother's last days.

The Prince, who is 52 years old, said a few days ago that when his mother died he would carry her ashes back to Siem Reap in northern Cambodia.

Joined Son in 1973

The Queen was left behind in Phnom Penh following the coup that ousted Prince Sihanouk in 1970. Her health failing, she was allowed to join her son in exile here in 1973.

For some months she stayed in the gentler climate of southern China before moving up to Peking to live with her son in an elegant residence provided by the Chinese Government.

Queen Mother Kossamak, whose great passion was classical dance, looked cheerful when she celebrated her 71st birthday at a glittering party last October.

But her illness, apparently heart trouble, cast a shadow over Prince Sihanouk's celebration of the Communist victory in Phnom Penh.

In a recent communiqué he revealed that he had asked the authorities to prepare an air strip at Siem Reap so that he could fly there with his mother's ashes.

An Influential Queen

Queen Sisowath Kossamak, long a symbol of monarchy in Cambodia, was believed to have exerted considerable influence over her son, Prince Sihanouk, whose rights to the throne stemmed from her father.

Although Queen Kossamak's father, King Monivong, had had two direct male heirs, his 19-year-old grandson, Prince Sihanouk, was named his successor in an act designed to unite two branches of the royal family that had been divided. That was in 1941, and Queen Kossamak became the young king's leading adviser.

On March 3, 1955, after the small kingdom gained complete independence from France, Prince Sihanouk stepped down from the throne to enter politics and become Cambodia's spokesman in world affairs. He assumed the role of Premier and his parents, King Norodom Suramarit and Queen Kossamak, jointly succeeded him on the throne.

After King Suramarit's death in 1960, Queen Kossamak continued to perform the ceremonial functions of the monarchy, while Prince Sihanouk became Chief of State, without succeeding his father as king.

Queen Criticized

In 1965 indignation over a magazine article critical of the Queen Mother touched off an attack on the United States Embassy in Phnom Penh by 20,000 Cambodian students who hurled rocks at the building and tore down the American flag.

The article, published in Newsweek magazine, quoted sources in Phnom Penh as having said that the Queen was "money-mad and reportedly runs a number of concessions in town, plus a string of bordellos at the edge of the city."

In May, a month after the article appeared, Prince Sihanouk announced that his Government had severed diplomatic ties with the United States. In explaining his decision, the Prince cited an attack by the South Vietnamese air force on two Cambodian border villages and the comments in Newsweek about his mother. The article had already led the Phnom Penh Government to bar almost all journalists and photographers of the "so-called free world" from the country.

When Prince Sihanouk was overthrown in 1970 by Marshal Lon Nol, his Premier and Defense Minister, Queen Kossamak, then 67 years old, remained in Cambodia, unable to join her son in exile in Peking. She was removed from the royal palace to a suburban villa, where, in March, 1973, she was held under house arrest after an air attack on President Lon Nol's residence in Phnom Penh.

Eight months later, she was granted permission to join Prince Sihanouk in China.