

Kairi Komatsu, JICA expert

How do you spend your days while the influence of coronavirus has brought us significant lifestyle changes? I temporarily returned from Cambodia in April and have been working remotely.

As I mentioned in my previous newsletter, the JICA project I'm working for is "The Project for Capacity Development for Sewerage Management of Phnom Penh Capital Administration and Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)." It aims to support the development of laws/regulations and technical guidelines.

The project team outsourced the legal comparison/classification of other countries as a legitimate development operation. As a result of a tender, we have just contracted with a Cambodian office of a Japanese design consultant.

In the future, I will report to you our technical guidelines operation that we are working on together with the ADB, Asian Development Bank, project.

This time, I will tell you about wastewater treatment plants in Cambodia.

Currently, three WWTPs are running in this country, and they are in the capital cities of Siem reap province, Sihanoukville province, and Battambang province, respectively. Adopted treatment processes are all waste stabilization ponds.

Siem Reap WWTP with a capacity of 8,000m³ per day

This facility is in the city of Angkor Wat of the world heritage. The ADB and Korea EDCF Economic Development Cooperation Fund plan to expand the WWTP.

Some international donors like the World Bank and French organizations provide support, including sewer improvement, system development, etc., for this leading tourist attraction.

Sihanoukville WWTP with a capacity of 6,900m³ per day



Sihanoukville is a harbor city by the Gulf of Thailand and a resort with a beautiful beach. Because of rapid tourism promotion since 2016, water pollution is getting a problem caused by wastewater from hotels. The Cambodian government has input its budget to retrofit Sihanoukville WWTP. The ongoing retrofitting project aims to remove nitrogen and phosphorus by combining the A2O process and coagulant addition. The photo is the present primary anaerobic pond of Sihanoukville WWTP.

Battambang WWTP with a capacity of 1,080m³ per day

People say Battambang is the second city behind Phnom Penh. Currently, this WWTP accepts less than half of the wastewater because of the damaged sewer pipe. ADB plans to construct two new WWTPs, pipelines, and pump stations.

The photo below is the existing secondary facultative pond. This beautiful oval-shaped lagoon fits well in the surrounding nature.



In March 2020, the Cambodian government and MLIT, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Tourism of Japan, were planning to meet for urban development.

The sewerage department of MLIT and JS would join the meeting in Siem Reap.

I was also going to join them, but coronavirus forced the postponement of the meeting.

Though participants from Japan canceled their visits, I had arranged for local guides to tour WWTPs and other facilities. So, at least I should try to make my first visit to Siem Reap and Angkor Wat in this opportunity. However, on the departure day, the Cambodian office of JICA announced a prohibition on even domestic moves.

That's why I have neither visited Siem Reap nor Angkor Wat yet. I also have no photo for this newsletter. I wished it could have featured Angkor Wat this time, but I had no choice. (First, is there a foreigner who has not visited Angkor Wat yet for his ten months of stay?)

So, I will tell you about another place where I visited.

In February, three JICA experts, including me, went to the Temple Zone of Sambor Prei Kuk, the third registered UNESCO World Heritage Site in Cambodia. You will get to this Archaeological Site of Ancient Ishanapura by driving the No.6 national highway north for 3-4 hours from Phnom Penh. Sambor Prei Kuk is the site of the Chenla Kingdom of about the 7th century. While the Khmer Empire that constructed Angkor Wat existed from the 9th to 15th century, Chenla Kingdom was in the late 6th to 9th century.

I've heard that Sambor, Prei, and Kuk mean many, forest and temple. As the name describes, many brick temples sleep in the woods.



Left: Two lion statues guarding the entrance of a temple. Since some figures have Western features, the connection to Western regions is pointed out.

Right: A temple enshrines murti (Hinduism god, replica) inside.





Left: Octagon-shaped temple.

Its wall surface has precious carved relief called "flying palace." Speaking of the octagon architectural structure, I remember Yumedono Hall, Hall of Dreams, of Horyuji temple of Japan. They might be similar-timed structures.



Right: A quiet temple covered by trees

Since Sambor Prei Kuk has few visitors, I recommend it to people who want to feel an exploration.