

Cambodia Journal vol.8

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This is the last "Cambodia Journal" because I returned to Japan.

I left Japan for Cambodia on July 1st, 2019, and returned on April 1st, 2023. I'm pleased to report that the JICA Project I joined, "Capacity Development for Sewerage Management of Phnom Penh Capital Administration and Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)," has been completed successfully. My contract as a JICA expert was initially for two years but was unexpectedly extended twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I'm sorry, I intended to write "Cambodian Journal" at least every other month, but it became about twice a year. (Putting work aside for a moment), I strongly regret that I did not convey the whole appeal of Cambodia.

Living in Cambodia, a country that has consistently experienced economic growth of over 5% per year, I felt the atmosphere of a country and economy constantly on the rise. I also had the outstanding experience of seeing the state of the water environment in Japan, which I had only known about from textbooks and stories from my parents' generation: black waterways, anaerobic bubbles, and lakes full of surfactants.

I fulfilled my role successfully thanks to the warm welcome from the Cambodian people and the support and cooperation of the people involved in Japan. I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude.

In May, Phnom Penh hosted the 32nd Southeast Asian Games (commonly known as the SEA Games), often referred to as the Southeast Asian equivalent of the Olympics, for the first time. The success of the SEAs was an outstanding achievement, and I received many messages from friends and acquaintances in Cambodia, full of joy and pride (on social



Workplace, Ministry of Public Works and Transportation symbol: Vishnu statue and me (installed when the office moved, but quickly removed. I wondered why, and it turned out that the statue had six arms instead of eight, so an eight-armed statue was reinstalled. A very Cambodian episode.)

networking sites, I also saw comments from Japanese people saying that the opening ceremony was better than the 2020 Tokyo Olympics...). I look forward to Cambodia's increasing role in the international community.

From April, I have returned to the JS East Japan Design Center's Civil Engineering Design Department, so if you are in the area, please feel free to say hello (as for work, I am in a complete state of Urashima Taro and things are terrible). I hope to continue building bridges between the two countries, not only in terms of work but also in tourism and other areas. Thank you for your continued support.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. The following pages include some of the photos I had planned to include.



Product image for illustration purposes only

These are the first manhole cards to be issued overseas (Khmer and Japanese versions). The photo shows the manhole cover indicated by the coordinates on the card in Siem Reap, where Angkor Wat is located. JICA volunteers working at the WWTP in Siem Reap utilize these manhole cards as promotional tools. The cards are available from a travel agency where Japanese managers and Cambodian guides fluent in Japanese work. Please feel free to visit and obtain one. As of May 23rd, 75 copies have been distributed in the area (21 Cambodians, 53 Japanese, and one 1 French). They are also distributed in

Shiga Prefecture, with over 1,000 copies having been handed out.

Surprisingly, there are some beach resorts in southwestern Cambodia. As development and Chinese influence progress, please do so as soon as possible to enjoy a relaxing time.

The ferry is comfortable, but please be careful. Even if you have a reservation, it may not operate as scheduled, and you





may not be able to board if you don't reconfirm on time.

You can collect gems in Cambodia. Digging by hand in the red soil, similar to the one on the left, and processing the reddish-brown stones that emerge will produce the gemstone known as Ratanakiri Blue (pictured on the right). This is

zircon, but you can collect corundum (sapphires and rubies). It seems that you can sometimes get them at reasonable prices at local markets.



View of the Mekong River with the city of Phnom Penh in the background: top, July 2019; bottom, March 2023.

In less than four years, the number of high-rise buildings has increased considerably.



This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Japan-Cambodia friendship.

I went to Angkor Wat just before returning to Japan. From there, I saw a view that combines the symbols of both countries.

I hope you will all visit Cambodia!