

Part 2. Research of the Longvek Site

Chapter 1. Background and Overview of the Research

Section 1. Background of the Study

Longvek was the royal capital of post-Angkor Cambodia. The existence of the 16th-century royal capital that lay surrounded by earthen walls and moats has been acknowledged since earlier times, but no full-scale archaeological surveys have ever been conducted. The period from the end of the Angkor period to the post-Angkor period was marked by invasions from neighboring countries and domestic instability, and was an especially complicated period within the history of Cambodia. After Angkor, the royal capital was moved to different locations a number of times, including Srei Santhor, Phnom Penh, Longvek and Oudong, and the internal situation is thought to have been unstable. The actual state of affairs remains unknown so much that the period from the end of the Angkor period to the post-Angkor period is sometimes called the “dark ages” This dark ages, from the 15th to 16th centuries, is precisely the focus of this project, and this paper is a report of an archaeological survey carried out for the first time at the royal capital of Longvek. It also provides a collection of basic materials for future surveys.

Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties conducted an archaeological survey of the post-Angkor capital of Longvek and Krang Kor from fiscal 2010 to 2012 as the “Exchange Project for Conservation of the Oudong and Longvek Archaeological Sites in Cambodia,” under the scope of Networking Core Centers for International Cooperation on Conservation of Cultural Heritage funded by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan. Implemented with cooperation from the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the Department of Archaeology at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, the survey focused on the exploration and survey of monuments and human resource development. At Longvek, the survey was carried out in three separate missions.

Section 2. Overview of the Survey

First survey

From July 29 to August 1, 2011, a survey was carried out at Longvek. As the Longvek site spreads across a large area, aerial photos (Fig. 46, 47) were taken by Mr. Kensuke Nishida from Nihon Chisui Fukuoka Corporation using a multi-rotor helicopter prior to implementing a full-scale exploration of the monument. Photo shoots were taken at the northwest corner of Longvek, the center of the mound on the west side, the southwest corner, the northeast corner and at Tuol Bayok.

Second survey

The south side of Longvek was explored from January 9 to 12, 2012. The exploration revealed numerous mounds near the south side mound, and remains and artifacts were confirmed at a number of the mounds. Thus, after



Fig. 46 Earthen walls and moats on the western side of Longvek



Fig. 47 Earthen walls in the southwest corner of Longvek

numbering the mounds for convenience and creating an inventory, a small-scale trench survey was carried out at mound No. 2 (Fig. 48) and brick remains No. 1 (Fig. 49). As a result, no remains were found from the trench at mound No. 2, so it is assumed that some form of activity took place using the natural mound. At brick remains No. 1, a brick structure had stood on the mound. It was already severely collapsed (Fig. 50), and a shaft made by rooters was also found (Fig. 51), so the trench was dug in front of the brick structure. No conspicuous artifacts were found from the trench, and findings were limited to several pottery fragments, but a Ming blue and white porcelain was found from around the mound.

Third survey

An exploration was launched at the Longvek site from August 13 to 16, 2012, to create a basic inventory for assessing the distribution of remains and artifacts in Longvek. This was decided to be done by creating an inventory sheet for recording basic information. The GPS of spots where remains and artifacts were confirmed, the types of artifacts and other such information were recorded on the inventory sheet to accumulate information. As a result of the exploration, data was collected from a total of 53 spots.

Fourth survey

An exploration was conducted in the Longvek site from November 30 to December 3, 2012, to create an inventory of Longvek. Through the exploration, data was successfully collected from 41 more spots, such that the distribution of remains and artifacts was ultimately confirmed in 94 spots in all. However, exploration surveys still need to be continued hereafter, as the previous surveys could not fully cover the entire grounds of the Longvek site.



Fig.48 Survey of mound No. 2



Fig.49 Survey of brick remains No. 1



Fig.50 Brick remains No. 1



Fig.51 Shaft made by rooters at brick remains No.1