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【 Title of Research 】

Cultural Resource Management:

A Case of KOH KER Historical Heritage Site, Cambodia.

【 Purpose of Research 】

The Khmer cultural heritages remaining from ancient time have still existed and scattered over Cambodia as well as the neighboring countries. These inheritances reflect its civilization and its national history for the Khmer national identity. These remaining include both physical and non-physical cultural heritage. The physical cultural heritage is comprised of a number of sites, monuments, group of buildings, caves, historical cities, irrigation systems, royal roads, and ceramics industrial and so on. The non-physical cultural heritage incorporates such as the life-style, traditional custom, song, folklore, literature, handicraft, and oral tradition, etc. Among these physical and non-physical cultural heritages, there are many elements that could help for the sites surviving.

These properties characterize a great significance for Cambodian culture and society, and they also provide the most value heritage for mankind. However, many of these properties are in the danger by rapid growing of the economic boom and social security, and the exposure to the elements of nature. Thus, one mission of Cambodian people is to preserve such cultural properties for bequeathal to the future generation, to ensure that these important cultural resources will serve as the foundation for creation of better society at large.

The revival of tourism is a new phenomenon in Cambodia. This phenomenon could be effected on cultural heritage site and social environment, if one has no pay the attention on the matter. In other word, the preservation of cultural heritage and social environment has newly been applied in Cambodia. At the present day, Cambodia is experiencing a historic turn, notably in the terms of economy. It offers great potential for tourism-related investments. At the same time, it faces the challenge of protecting and preserving national heritage and the environment as whole.

For example, to being conscious of the protection and preserve importance of the national cultural heritage, the Cambodian government has approved several plans of protections historical site of Angkor region, and presented the protection policies for the Zoning and Environmental Management Plan for the Angkor World Heritage Area. Even though, the Cambodian government has approved those plans for Angkor historical site protection, there are many historical sites remaining unprotected in the jungle. For example, there are such as the site of Koh Ker, Sambo Preikuk, Prash Khan Kompong Svay, Banteay Chhmar, etc. This is because of the social insecurity, the lack of national experts, and the lack of financial support for the project. In addition to

above problems, until now the human resource on the field of cultural heritage management and relevant skills are still lacking and requiring.

Therefore, we must admit that many historical sites in Cambodia have been remained unprotected. While the Angkor Archaeological Park is going smoothly with such works, because Angkor was inscribed in the World Heritage List. Thus, my chief purpose is to choose this historical site of Koh Ker, among other unprotected sites, as a topic for study. Because this site have still remained many antiquities and the images of the traditional life style. On the other hand, this site has not been attempted yet, though a few studies have been done.

More specially, this study aims to seek a proper way to make master plan in order to preserve the sustainable between the tourist growing, people and the site itself.

The Studied Area :

My focal site, Koh Ker, is situated approximately at 15° < 28347 N and 04° < 50706 E, in Koh Ker village, Srayang commune, Kulen district, Preah Vihear province (Northern part of Cambodia). The site itself is located between the Dangrek Mountain and the plain of Angkor area. It is approximately 120 kilometres north of Angkor area and approximately 61 kilometres from the north of Beng Mealea temple. Koh Ker site was once a heart of the Khmer ancient city for twenty-three years in the tenth century, which was associated with the great civilization of Angkor.

The original name of Koh Ker, which written in the inscription, was "Chok Gargyar", the pond of Koki (in botany, Koki is a kind of tree *Hopea Odorata*). The modern name of Koh Ker means the Island of Glory. Koh Ker site was a city of Khmer empire, dated in the second quarter of the tenth century, when the king Jayavarman IV moved the capital from Yasodharapura (Angkor area) to the area. Two decades later, his successor, the king Rejendravarman II returned to Yasodharapura and abandoned Koh Ker capital. Throughout present day Koh Ker area are remaining many ruins of ancient religious monuments, irrigation systems, roads and other public works.

【Content/Methodology of Research】

2.1. Content

The objective of study is divided into four parts:

Part I: The aim of this planning process is to build up the comprehensive information as a resource for future monitoring. This part aims to study on this period in historical perspective. Historically, there had a few problems fundamentally raised in that period. First, it was because of the brief transfer of capital in the second quarter of the tenth century from capital of Angkor to Koh Ker. And this has been marked as an unexpected event of historical turning point, though the same organizational elements directed construction of an agrarian city. Another notably, some scholars believed that that period had a political conflict rather than the infrastructural failure. The same elements geographical aspect of the Yasodharapura (Angkor)

had been implemented in Koh Ker, as infrastructural basis of new relocated capital.

Part II: The fundamental objective for this part is to document the socio cultural communities of the site. Make sure that the study is not only focused on the monument complex, but also to explore more about the daily activities of people. To understand the existing of cultural society can be a strategy for making the master plan of the site and can utilize as the basis for the sustainable economic development of the local communities in the future. This part is also intended to describe the daily activities and practices of the people. This is including, traditional way of their living, faming, foraging forest products, fishing, making tools and their skills, existing folklores and oral history, ceremonies and other ritual performances. Besides, the importance is to think the interaction between state and society relation. This is also related directly to building and developing communities.

Part III: The objective of this part is to consider and to arrange the framework for zoning and the administration of Koh Ker site. Make sure that the protected zone should not be made to large area, since the management control over large area and strict regulation will affect more on the human living system, and large area requires more resources of finance and manpower.

The aim of this framework of zoning is to preserve all the important archaeological features and cultural landscapes; to control of the different land uses by regulation; and to improve the economic and social conditions of the area.

Part IV: The main objective of this part is related to the policies of cultural-tourism management. Recently, there have the large number of tourists in different background on a historical heritage sites and other locations of tourist facilities throughout Cambodia. These amounts have often resulted in alteration of the original feature in all kind of the archaeological sites, and the traditional life style of the local people.

The purpose of this study is also to make the new plan for protecting from the future impact of the growing tourists in the area. At the same time as the impacts are inseparable from other factors of economic change relating to the expansion of tourism industry.

2.2. Methodology of Research

2.2.1. Research Libraries :

My fieldwork is to conduct libraries research in order to collect the available documents, which are related to the subject.

The main sources, which would be served for the management and administration of Koh Ker heritage site, have been deserted. These sources are namely such as international convention, charter, the experiences paper of the management of cultural property in the world, and Cambodia legal administrative frameworks for the protection of the historical site (such as protection legislation, and synthesis report on the zoning and environmental management of Angkor within the Siem Reap region, etc). These information sources are kept as the data in the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Ministry of Tourism, APSARA Authority, and UNESCO.

2.2.2. Field Research:

The main objective of this phase will obtain all required data and information from the field research on the site. The collection process started from the summer vacation of this year. In order to conduct the field study of management and administration of Koh Ker historical site, I am approaching the field of archaeology and anthropology.

+ Archaeological approach: I do my survey all archaeological features at the site and make the inventory of the locations. This would be a basis for future monitoring in appropriate legal framework of zoning system. Thus, it would also divide the boundaries for the buffer zones of archaeological site and cultural landscape, and control the new development works.

+ Anthropological approach: This approach is to research of the cultural society of the local people. It could be applied for the methodology of area study. I have to spend my times with local people in order to observe their life activities. And it would make me to understand more deeply and is easy to communicate with them. To pursue this plan, I have to work out with the local authorities and other related communities. Within these, my criteria to select the information are such as gender consideration, age, local authority, villagers, skilled people, and other stakeholders. On the other hand, the study is focusing on the overall adaptive strategy surviving of their daily activities. There are such as traditional way of making living, farming, foraging forest products, fishing, skills and tool making, documenting the existing folklores, traditional practices for example oral history, ceremonies and other ritual performances.

【 Conclusion/Observation 】

After conducting preliminary research on the site, I have found some new idea on and understand more the existing cultural society in the area.

The study of cultural society of Koh Ker site can be leaded us to understand the traditional life style and beliefs. It also provides us to make a plan for development strategy in the area. The development planning strategy has to incorporate at its core the value system of village, including the traditional way of living, traditional ritual, traditional reciprocal labor systems, etc. In order to preserve the site in sustainable development, one must not be abandoned any of these elements. Each element has its important role to make the site beware from the destruction.

Moreover, the growing of the tourist potential in the area should be made in balance with the local cultural society and their employment needs. This study provides us to understand more the methodology of preservation the value of cultural heritages. It will permit these rich cultural resources to contribute to the present and future socio-cultural development of the country. This master plan is not only served for the future research policy of Koh Ker site, but it can be also applied for the other historical sites in Cambodia.