

CHAPTER 3

The Modern Development during 1960s

While the previous chapter highlights the historical timeline of Phnom Penh, and particularly the development of Boeung Keng Kang as a model of urban changes, this chapter aims to provide an in-depth look at social modernization during the 1960s. The information in this chapter can be used as a background to understand the modern houses in this area. This chapter will highlight the connection between the policy of the post-independent government, and social development.

3.1 Sihanouk's Policy

In 1941, Prince Norodom Sihanouk was enthroned as the king of Cambodia under the selection of the French Protectorate.⁴⁴ However, the first constitution which was promulgated in 1949 stated the role of the king as only a “spiritual head of the state” and had no political status. This meant that King Norodom Sihanouk was merely a constitutional monarch.⁴⁵

After World War II, the colonizers weakened considerably, thus prompting countries under colonial rule to demand independence. King Norodom Sihanouk also embarked on an anti-French campaign. He appealed to the international community to support his effort in demanding independence for Cambodia.⁴⁶ He was also involved in gathering a national army, which received enthusiastic participation from the people in order to fight against the French. France finally granted total independence to Cambodia on 9 November 1953.⁴⁷ However, it was not until 1954 that the United Nations officially declared a total independence for Cambodia in the Geneva Accords. Ever since, King Norodom Sihanouk was recognized as the hero of national independence.

⁴⁴ Vandy Kaonn, p. 145.

⁴⁵ The French Fourth Republic (1946-1958) was a republican based government that was put into place after World War II. The Fourth Republic was well-known for its social reforms including instituting a social security system, a pension for those with disabilities and medical care.

⁴⁶ Vandy Kaonn, p. 145.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 174-179.



Figure 3.1 Photograph of Prince Norodom Sihanouk

While recognizing the independence of Cambodia, the Geneva Accords acknowledged the political neutrality of Cambodia with the condition that Cambodia must conduct a national election. This condition jeopardized the expectation of King Norodom Sihanouk to be a monarch ruler of the country through his success in demanding independence, because the constitution stated that the king was not allowed to participate in political competition. Therefore, in order to participate in the new political system without restrictions, King Norodom Sihanouk abdicated his throne and ran a political party to join national election in 1955.⁴⁸

Prince Sihanouk⁴⁹ announced the formation of the Sangkum Reastr Niyum, meaning People's Socialist Community, which was a political campaign embracing for the first national election. With his achievement in demanding independence that won the national people satisfaction⁵⁰ and policy of the Sangkum⁵¹, Prince Sihanouk won the national election in 1955. This offered him an opportunity to implement his ideology of the Sangkum.

It was during the following years, under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk, that Cambodia had developed significantly. With the achievement of peace and development, Cambodia was regarded as an “oasis of peace” or a Southeast Asian

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 174-179.

⁴⁹ For this reason, the *King* Norodom Sihanouk was later entitled as only *Prince*. I would modestly address the majesty as only Prince Sihanouk for short.

⁵⁰ A national referendum was implemented in 1955 by King Norodom Sihanouk to see how much his people agree his demand for independence from French. The 99.80 % of the Khmer people showed their satisfaction. Ibid, pp. 174-179.

⁵¹ Short name of Sangkum Reastr Niyum.

“Camelot”.⁵² Examining Prince Sihanouk’s declaration of his decision to abandon the throne, and his determination to develop the country, David M. Ayre argued that Prince Sihanouk not only intended to modernize Cambodia, but also attempted to make Cambodia a reputable country recognized by the international community.⁵³

The Sangkum Reastr Niyum political campaign of the Prince Sihanouk adopted a customized socialist ideology, called “Khmer Buddhist Socialism” which was formalized around Buddhist customs, traditions, and morals.⁵⁴ Claire Ashbrook claimed that it was reasonable for the nature of the Cambodian nation, since most Cambodian people followed Buddhism and Buddhist philosophies which had evolved since the ancient Khmer kings of Angkor. In addition, Khmer royal law before the French Protectorate was formulated through Buddhist philosophies which denoted that the king did not own his property and land, yet the people who lived on the property were only the temporal owners. Thus, the Sangkum Reastr Niyum considered the practice of land being communally shared amongst Cambodian people as a political philosophy for the new nation.⁵⁵

Given the nature of precolonial society in Cambodia in which Buddhism played an important role in legitimating the king and the hierarchy of rulers, the connection between Buddhism and the monarchy was an interdependent relationship, in that political power supported the ideology of Buddhism, while it also took advantage of this “legitimizing theology”.⁵⁶ This Buddhist doctrine was based on two kinds of beliefs, that is to say, first, that human beings have never been perfect and need guidance and protection; second, that individuals alone were essentially helpless. Thus, Ayre argued that the Buddhist philosophy of political authority of Prince Sihanouk played a vital role in maintaining the role of the king (the ruler) in maintaining the balance between the two beliefs and social order.⁵⁷

⁵² David P. Chandler, p. 200.

⁵³ David M. Ayre, *Autonomy of crisis: education, development and the state in Cambodia* (United States of America: Hawai’i University Press, 2000), pp. 33-34.

⁵⁴ “Pour Mieux Comprendre le Cambodge Actuel,” pp. 18-19.

⁵⁵ Claire Ashbrook, “‘Angkored’ in the Past Vann Molyvann’s modern Khmer architecture”, Master Thesis, University of Virginia, 2012, p. 29.

⁵⁶ Seanglim Bit, *The Warrior Heritage: A Psychological Perspective on the Cambodian Trauma* (California: Hayward, 1991), p. 20.

⁵⁷ David M. Ayre, p. 32.

The relation between the policy of the Sangkum Reastr Niyum and the philosophy of Buddhism could also be interpreted differently. Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua argued that the Sangkum Reastr Niyum clearly asserted its ideology as a conservative one, notably referring to the practice of power by Prince Sihanouk. Sourcing from the newspapers of the Sangkum, as the two editors pointed out, articles introduced the authoritarian philosophy which was drawn from a common belief in Buddhism. The belief asserted that those who were born within the class of leaders were considered to possess good fortune from their previous life, while those who were born into lower classes were considered as receiving less fortune from their previous life. And to justify that, the editors argued, the most fortunate should rule the less fortunate. “The poor and unfortunate should accept their lot and try for an improved situation in the next life through virtuous conduct in the present.”⁵⁸

It is also important to mention that the ideology of Buddhist Socialism was different from much of the basic ideology of Marxism. “The newly formed Cambodian government noted that the Sangkum form of Marxist socialism did not follow the political and economic doctrine contrived by the Western thinker of the 19th century.”⁵⁹ As Ayre argued, “The basic idea of this ideology was not a Western political ideology, but the religious traditions of Cambodian life.”⁶⁰ The Buddhist Socialism of Prince Sihanouk stressed the role of the ruler in maintaining equality among people, and treating people with empathy and goodness. It also renounced the Marxist view that the lower class should “overthrow” and abolish the ruling class. Furthermore, while Marxist socialism denied the private ownership of property, yet encouraged state or collective ownership of all capital, Buddhist Socialism reinforced the achievement and “fruits of labor of individuals.” As Prince Sihanouk claimed, according to Buddhist philosophy, the rich should make offers to the poor in order to gain merit.⁶¹

Not only did the Prince not favor the total implementation of the Marxist philosophy of Western countries, but he also claimed that adopting it could make their

⁵⁸ Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, ed., *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea 1942-1981* (Routledge: 1982). p. 98.

⁵⁹ “Pour Mieux Comprendre le Cambodge Actuel”, p17. As cited in Claire Ashbrook, p. 31.

⁶⁰ David M. Ayre claimed that he based on Prince Sihanouk’s claim.

⁶¹ Ministère de l’Information, *Considerations, sur le socialisme Khmer* (Phnom Penh, 1960), pp. 2, 5. Norodom Sihanouk, “Our Buddhist Socialism,” *Kambuja* (December 1965), p. 18. See also Sihanouk’s inaugural address to the 6th Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held in Phnom Penh, November 14 –22, 1961, in *FA* 18 (1962), p. 28. On the economic rationale of the ideology, see P. Preschez, *Essai sur la démocratie au Cambodge*, pp. 117–122. As cited in David M. Ayre, p. 35.

application undesirable, and cause disorder and imbalance in the future.⁶² Thus, the Cambodian government adopted only applicable features. The key features that the Cambodian government adopted from Western socialism encompassed “a nation’s faith, its economics, and the methods of implementation.” Cambodia saw these as the distinguished features of each nation.⁶³

Given the recent emergence of Cambodia as an independent state, the Buddhist Socialism of the Sangkum Reastr Niyum was regarded as playing a fundamental role in developing the country.⁶⁴ Within the international community, the basic ideology of the Buddhist Socialism of the Sangkum was appreciated as an intense and constant crusade for national development.⁶⁵

Although the Buddhist Socialism of the Sangkum was considered significant in spearheading the modernization in Cambodia, Ayre argued that it was the development of education that was the core of social modernization during the early years of the government’s implementation.

Drawing from “modernization theory” and “human capital theory” which was developed from the “structural-functionalism” of western countries, Ayre pointed out why Prince Sihanouk’s policy focused heavily on expansion of the education system. In modernization theory, Ayre argued, the achievements of western countries were seen as a roadmap for developing countries to follow. However, because of the broad aspects of modernization which included globalization, mechanization, industrial development, and enlightenment, “it was modern, secular education that was at its core.” This theory meant the modernization of education system, to obtain modern behavior, modern values, and to become a modern society.⁶⁶

While modernization theory focused on quality of education, “human capital theory” emphasized the quantity of human labor. It suggested that to provide more opportunity for people to be educated would also mean increasing the quantity of human labor and technicians needed to fulfill the development of industries, and thus encourage economic growth. Thus, in the policy of Sangkum, education was one of the

⁶² “Pour Mieux Comprendre le Cambodge Actuel,” p. 17. As cited in Claire Ashbrook, p. 31.

⁶³ Claire Ashbrook, p. 31.

⁶⁴ Ankie Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 48– 49.

⁶⁵ Norodom Sihanouk, *Souvenirs*, p. 262.

⁶⁶ David M. Ayre, p. 36.

priority sectors. A significant number of educational institutions, such as schools and universities, were constructed to realize the prospected vision.⁶⁷

While recognizing the significance of the national policy of Sangkum on the development and modernization of Cambodia, international policy adopted by the Sangkum also contributed significantly to the development of Cambodia during that time. The politically neutral stance of Prince Sihanouk, which was recognized by the Geneva Accords, was a strategic decision which could help Cambodia avoid external threats and guarantee external assistance from a multiplicity of sources. Through the policy of neutrality, while modernization was prioritized, the prince wished to avoid his country from being involved in an increasingly complex political and military conflict which was escalating across the border in South Vietnam.⁶⁸

Margaret Slocomb argued that the international relations policy of Prince Sihanouk was not only designed to keep Cambodia as a safe place for investment, but also wished to make rapid development in the country through accepting financial assistance from both communist and anti-communist countries.⁶⁹ Given its socialist orientation, the Sangkum was able to bring support from the international socialist bloc. In 1956, through an industrial economic assistance program, the Chinese offered equipment worth US\$22.4 million to Cambodia. They also assisted in constructing a textile factory and a glass factory in later years. Other countries provided financial assistance through various aid programs. For example, the construction of three factories – tractor assembly plants, tire production facilities, and a sugar refinery – was made possible through loans offered by Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union provided assistance in the healthcare sector and education, financing the construction of a large hospital and a technical school in Phnom Penh.⁷⁰

Anti-communist countries could not ignore the presence of communist aid to Cambodia. Leaders of the anti-communist bloc such as the United States and France offered substantial financial and technical assistance for the development of Cambodia as well. Most of this assistance mainly targeted financing the development of infrastructure. The proposed plan to construct a new road and new deep-seaport in

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 36.

⁶⁸ Margaret Slocomb, pp. 77-78.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.78.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.78.

Kampong Som, later named Sihanoukville, was daringly supported by the United States and France. As said earlier, their assistance with these projects could be considered as more than a good wish for development of Cambodia, but also as a challenge to the dominance of communist countries. This intention was revealed through the commitment to finish these projects even though the real cost of the projects overwhelmingly exceeded the expected budget. French and West German assistance built a railway from Sihanoukville to Phnom Penh. In the education sector, the United States also financed the construction of a technical school in the Russey Keo district of Phnom Penh. There were also investments such as a French-sponsored oil refinery and truck assembly plant in Sihanoukville.⁷¹

In 1963, the political stability and peace of Cambodia were disturbed as Prince Sihanouk got involved with the Vietnam War. Then, Prince Sihanouk declared the rejection of further assistance from the United States, because Washington supported the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), as well as denied aid from Thailand, with which Cambodia had relentless border disputes. This involvement in the Vietnam War and renunciation of United States assistance were seen as violations of Cambodia's policy of neutralism. The decision gravely impacted on economic development and political instability, and thus resulted in political unrest and eventually civil war.

To sum up, national and international policy adopted by the Sangkum were very crucial for the development of Cambodia. The Buddhist Socialism possess significant implication for the process of social modernization. Firstly, Buddhist Socialism underscores the important of social order which was a core traditional Khmer society. Secondly, it promotes good governance of the ruler. The government has the obligation to look after the citizens offering good public service such health care. Thirdly, it offers freedom for people to enjoy arts and culture, technology, and economic. And similarly, by rejecting the economic doctrine of Western socialism that aimed for equality sharing benefit and wealth in the society, Buddhist Socialism encourages individual's success. This include the success in wealth and businesses, and in earning higher position in the society. Lastly, the ideology regards the development of education as a core in social development which resulted in the construction of education institutions, and the increase educated people and labor resources for driving economic and industrial

⁷¹ Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Collins, p. 86.

sectors. At the same time, international policy of Sangkum also potentially contribute to the development of the nation. The neutralist policy attracted foreign investments for the growth of the economic, and financial assistance to support the construction of educational institutions, important infrastructures.

3.2 Architecture of the post-independence period

The political strategy of the Sangkum focused on educational development as the core of development and modernization. The most physical representation of the success of the policy could be seen through the expansion of the city, filled with public and private architecture and infrastructural development. This part examines how education and economic growth inspired the development of architecture in Cambodia.

Architecture always has a role in politics, since architecture is used to symbolize and manifest power. Chang Jiat Hwee argued that:

“If state-sponsored architecture is a reflection of the political conditions, one could say that the modern Khmer architecture was mainly shaped by Sihanouk's political agendas since the post-independence period of 1950s and 1960s in Cambodia was characterized by Sihanouk’s monopoly of political and symbolic powers, to the extent that a contemporary journalist remarked that ‘Cambodia is Sihanouk’.”⁷²

Though Chang Jiat Hwee’s argument placed most weight on the monopoly that Prince Sihanouk held over shaping architecture to represent his power, his argument did also imply that Prince Sihanouk’s policy had an integral role in encouraging the development and modernization of architecture.

3.2.1 Architects

It was during the early 1950s that the education sector began to receive attention from the newly established government, after years of being ignored by the French Protectorate. In this effort, a number of Cambodian students were sent to study abroad through either scholarship from the government, private sponsorship, or development assistance. As there was growing demand for constructing public infrastructure, public institutions, and private projects, architects played an important

⁷² J.H. Chang, “Another modern architecture postcolonial spectacles, Cambodian nationalism and Khmer tradition”, *Journal of the Singapore Institute of Architects, Urban Heritage*, 2009, p.151.

role in designing, planning and building. There were a number of architects and builders during the 1960s who significantly contributed to the construction and urban planning sector.

Vann Molyvann was considered the first Cambodian student who received an education in modern architecture. After finishing high school education, he was sponsored to continue study abroad, where he was accepted to study architecture in École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. During his stay in France, Vann Molyvann worked as an architect for the Atelier Arretche and traveled throughout Europe.⁷³ He returned to Cambodia in 1956 and was later selected by Prince Sihanouk to be Chief of the Department of Civil Buildings. Between 1956-1962, Vann Molyvann worked in many roles: as head of Urbanism and Habitation, Counseling Architect for the city of Phnom Penh, and Secretary of State for Public Works and Telecommunications.⁷⁴ During his work, Vann Molyvann contributed significantly to realizing the modernization goals of Prince Sihanouk's policy. He was involved in designing many public institutions and city planning. In his designs, he introduced modern architecture which incorporated traditional features and national identity, which people recognized as the legacy of Prince Sihanouk.

Lu Ban Hap was another well-known Cambodian architect. Similar to Vann Molyvann, Lu Ban Hap also received a sponsorship to study in France. Following motivation from Vann Molyvann, Lu Ban Hap changed his mind from studying engineering to study architecture instead. Lu Ban Hap said that “at that time there were no qualified architects in Cambodia; Molyvann told me that this could be our chance and won me over.”⁷⁵ Lu Ban Hap returned to Phnom Penh in 1960, following a request by Prince Sihanouk. Immediately upon returning, he was commissioned to found the Phnom Penh municipality's department of housing and town planning.

During his career in the 1960s, Lu Ban Hap designed many buildings and city planning works. His designs included hotels, theatres, schools, and social housing. Similar to Vann Molyvann, Lu Ban Hap could also be regarded as a modernist architect. However, his modern architectures seemed to favor a sense of traditional features. For

⁷³ Andre Lortie, *Paris s'exporte: modèle d'architecture ou architectures modèles : ouvrage réalisé à l'occasion de l'exposition Paris s'exporte ... juin septembre 1995* (Paris: Editions du Pavillon de l'Arsenal, 1995), 130. As cited in Claire Ashbrook, p. 5.

⁷⁴ Ibid, Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Collins, p. 230.

⁷⁵ <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/post-weekend/building-legacy>, retrieved 05 April 2017.

instance, two of his major architectural works, the Cambodiana Hotel and the University of Kampong Cham, strongly echoed traditional architecture. He employed traditional monumental roof styles in his design. Besides working for the government, Lu Ban Hap also ran his own construction company. His private company was commissioned to design various types of works: both public and private buildings like universities, factories and houses.

Lu Ban Hap was also known for his skill in construction techniques which could save construction time and cost. His prefabrication principles in the construction of a school building in Phnom Penh reduced nearly half of the usual cost. The method was also planned to apply in house construction. A house was built in Kep city, a colonial coastal city south of Cambodia, as an experiment.

Martin Aerne, an architecture professor at the Royal University of Fine Arts, argued that Vann Molyvann gained more reputation because he followed Le Corbusier, and other international modernist architects, and then he creatively used this knowledge in combination with local tradition to produce new architectural features, whereas Lu Ban Hap was considered “too formal”, for his design was “less integrated, less deeply interwoven.” In addition, as Martin suggested, one could observe the difference between the White Building designed by Lu Ban Hap and the Grey Building designed by Vann Molyvann. “The structure doesn’t have the same impact on the space, the lighting and the shading as Vann Molyvann’s building, which was a much more of a spacious experience,” said Martin, “Trying to be as objective as possible, I’d say the architectural value of his work was not the same.”⁷⁶

An “Architect needed to think about air, light, water, and try to design buildings which make life comfortable and healthy,” said Mam Sophana. Mam Sophana was awarded a scholarship from the American Institute of International Education in 1958 to study architecture at Miami University in Ohio for five years where he then worked as an assistant at Fish Rinehart Firm in Cincinnati. After returning home in 1965, Mam Sophana worked as a lecturer at the Royal University of Fine Arts. He also opened his own private firm in Phnom Penh. In 1967, he was awarded a Gold Medal for

⁷⁶ <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/post-weekend/echoes-le-corbusier-phnom-penh-and-beyond>, retrieved on 05 April 2017.

the design and the construction of the National School of Electricity, today known as the National Technical Training Center (NTTI) in Phnom Penh, by Prince Sihanouk.

Other well-known architects included Chhim Sun Fong, Seng Suntheng, and many others. Most of them received an education abroad, especially in France or the United States. Other non-Cambodian engineers and architects also played an important role in realizing and motivating the expression of modern architectural design. These people included Vladimir Bodiansky and Gérald Hanning, who was formerly an expert engineer for the United Nations, as well as Pierre Lavigne, Henri Chatel and Leroy & Mondet.



Figure 3.2 Architects and Engineers of the 1960s in Cambodia

3.2.2 Modern Khmer Architecture

Although Cambodian students received architectural education abroad and were inspired by western modern architectural philosophies, the architectures that they designed for Cambodia strongly maintained connection with locality. Architectures of post-independence period featured with climate adaptation, tradition style, and manifesting connection to historical past. Such architectural approaches in connecting new and traditional architecture were similar to Kenneth Frampton's term: critical regionalism, a movement that defied the banality of modern architecture which aimed to

reject historical connection.⁷⁷ Rose and Collins called the architecture of 1960s “Modern Khmer Architectures”, for new architectures were designed in modernist style yet followed the wisdoms of traditional architecture.⁷⁸ J.H. Change also agree that architectural modernism in Cambodia assimilated traditional wisdom.⁷⁹ The characteristics of modern Khmer architecture include the following.

Firstly, because the technology in control the climate was still expensive, Cambodian architects employed techniques learnt vernacular architecture to achieve climatic comfort in the building naturally. Vernacular architectures had been perfecting its design to the need of occupants for hundreds of years by having adaptation to geography, social conditions, climate and so on. Climate adaptation techniques include the raising up of building off the ground, having a lot of openings for cross ventilation, having large roof overhang for sun protection, using lightweight materials for quite release of heat as the sun goes down and orientation, so on.

Secondly, although new architectures employed modern techniques and materials, some of them still adopted traditional aesthetic such as the use of traditional roof style or traditional ornaments. For example, the Chaktomuk Conference Hall, which was design by Vann Molyvann in 1963, and Cambodiana Hotel, which was designed by Lu Ban Hap in 1969, were features with traditional roof style.



Figure 3.3 (a) Chaktomuk Conference Hall, (b) Cambodiana Hotel

Thirdly, new modern Khmer architecture employed new aesthetic that was inspired by the creative process of design. Such distinct aesthetics could be derived from simplifying of traditional style and having less use of traditional ornament or

⁷⁷ Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A critical history* (London: Thames and Husdon Ltd: 1992), p. 314.

⁷⁸ Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins.

⁷⁹ J.H. Chang, p151

features. Importantly, new modernist aesthetics were the exercises of well-known international architectural philosophies that was mainly inspired by well-known modernist architects. Thus, the style includes new form, the showing off structure, and material, the use concrete, the play on the face. However, the design concepts were inspired by the knowledge learnt from the past in which the design intention was to develop new architecture that linked with the past in an abstract way.

Claire Ashbrook a master student of Virginir Univeristy who interested in modern architecture of Cambodia, particularly the work of Vann Molyvann, who was the focal person of modern Khmer architecture, found that the way of interpretation adopted by Vann Molyvann in designing architecture that integrate international and local features could be influenced by the Atelier Arreche of Ecole de Beaux Arts where Vann Molyvann used to worked for during his stay in France. Examining the work of Louis Arreche, the head of the Atelier Arretche, Ashbrook pointed out that Arretche was a modernist architect who interested reflecting the historical context in his design. For instance, when redesign of church of Saint Joan of Arc, which was almost destroyed during World War II, and the adjacent market in Rouen, France, Louis Arretche incorporated memory of the location into the architecture. In designing the church, Thus Luis Arreche featured the church with curve roof constructed from wooden beams to mimic of the form of the boat because boat construction was a traditional practice in this area.⁸⁰



Figure 3.4 Eglise Sainte Jeanne d'Arc à Rouen designed by Louis Arreche; exterior (left), interior (right)

In addition, new discovery on the connection between the collaboration in the architectural design and construction by Masaaki Iwamoto showed that the

⁸⁰ Claire Ashbrook, p. 5.

exercised of creative process in designing modern Khmer architecture was supported by the collaboration from foreign engineering experts who stayed in Cambodia from 1959 to 1965.⁸¹

To get a clear understanding about modern Khmer architecture, we need to look at the design of National Sports Stadium and Techer Training College.

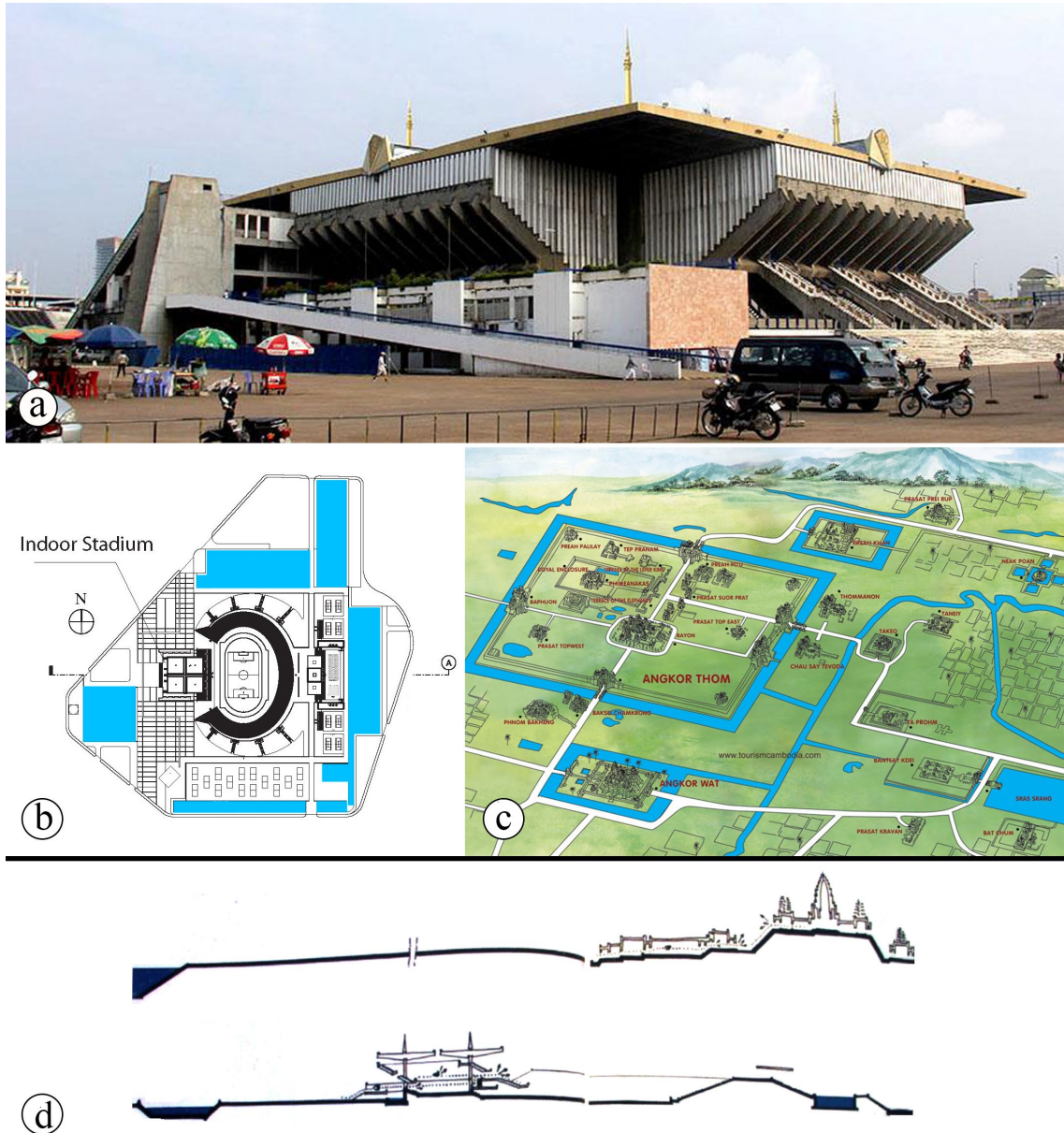
- **National Sport Stadium**

National Sports Stadium was the celebration of modern architecture that enthused by both traditional Khmer wisdoms and modern technology. The architecture was employed a number of features such as climatic adaptation design, the reflection of Angkor temple architecture, and the modern structural system. Similar to Angkor Wat temple, the stadium was surrounded by ponds. While these ponds served as temporally water storing basins to help avoiding flash flood in the area, they also increased moisture containing in the air through natural evaporation. Architecture of the stadium followed the orientation of Angkor Wat temple which faced to the west. The concrete bridges, which spanned over water ponds on the side of the stadium inferred to the naga bridge of Angkor that led the visitor through the pond to the main temple.

Inspiration from vernacular architecture was conferred through the raising up of building from the ground which was a method that imitated traditional stilt house. Pond that stored rain water which ran down from the magnificent umbrella-like roof through the pipe hidden inside the pillar offered cooling effect when the evaporation of water rose up in the upper room. The upside-down pyramid shape design of the building further helped reducing direct contact with sunlight. The holes or openings under the stepped sittings were designed for maximizing ventilation. These opening allowed the evaporation of the water from the pond below to cool the air in the building. This in fact could be referred to the way tradition house was ventilated through its bamboo floor which gape. The ventilation effect was further maximized through the vertical aluminum louvers acting as breathing walls of the stadium.

⁸¹ Masaaki Iwamoto, "Vann Molyvann and His Collaborator" (paper presented at mASEANa Project 2016: Pioneers of Modern Architecture, Kyushu University, 2017), pp. 26-29.

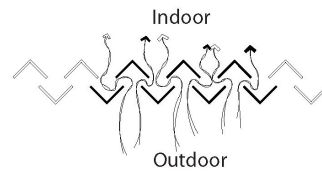
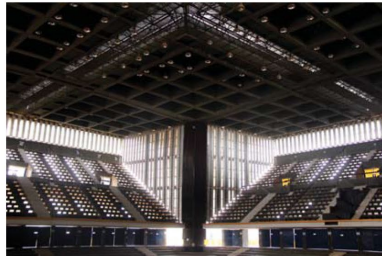
Speaking in a presentation about his impression with Modern Architecture in Phnom Penh, Professor Yoshiyuki Yamana, a Japanese Professor specializing in Modern Architectural History, said that the National Sport Stadium was the most exquisite architecture that showed how international and Cambodia design elements were combined.⁸²



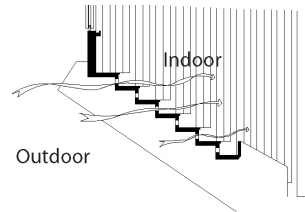
(a) Photograph of National Sports Stadium, (b) Master Plan of National Sports Stadium, (c) irrigation system of Angkor (d) Sketch of Angkor and National Sports Stadium by Vann Molyvann

Figure 3.5 Design concept of National Sports Stadium

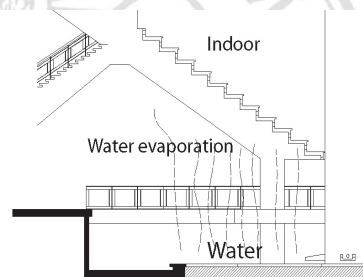
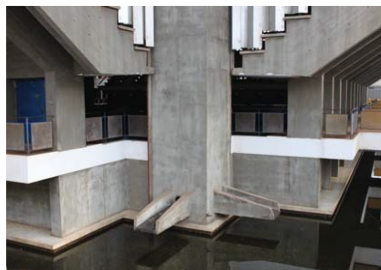
⁸² <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/post-weekend/echoes-le-corbusier-phnom-penh-and-beyond>, retrieved on 15 January 2017.



This is horizontal section of aluminum louver wall. The design is best for allowing air to come in, but not water.



The hole under the sitting step was designed for ventilation



Water help provide cooling agent to building

Figure 3.6 Climatic adaptation features of National Sport Stadium

- **Teacher Training College**

Teacher Training College was a cluster of three main buildings designed differently: an office building, a class room building, and a library. Leading from the entrance gate, the bridge which represented the naga bridge of Angkor Wat temple connected the three buildings. The office building featured concrete hexagonal ducts-like-roof which offered best protection from sun heat and its radiation into building. Facing to the east, its horizontal windows with swing leaves were designed for maximum opening and were shaded by the cantilevered upper floor. Exterior walls were double wall to minimize heat penetration. Similar to stilt house, the building was raised up to reserve ground floor for parking space. There was an outdoor auditorium that located on the east of this building. This auditorium harnessed the evening shade from the building. Classroom building was a good example of effective naturally lit interior. Concrete roof designed with louver glasses allowed wind and light to effectively

penetrate into the rooms and corridor. Large windows, sunscreen wall, and louver panels also helped maximized lighting and ventilation. Finally, the library was the architecture of arts which mimicked a type of traditional Khmer hat made from palm leaf.



(a) The entrance bridge Angkor Wat, (b) the entrance bridge of Teacher Training College

Figure 3.7 Design Concept of Teacher Training College

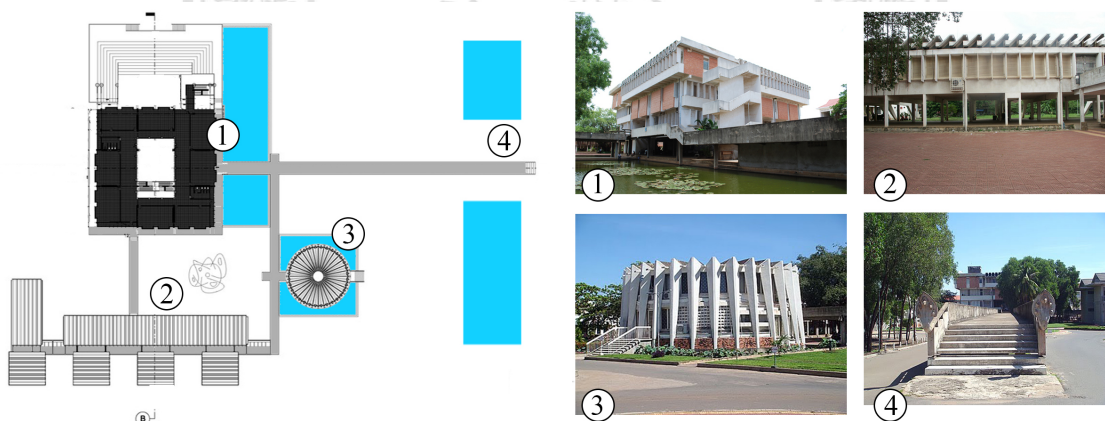
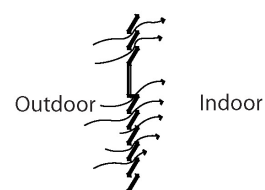
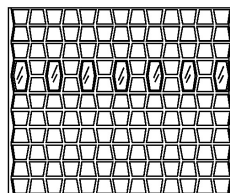
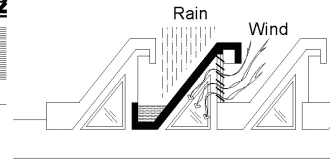
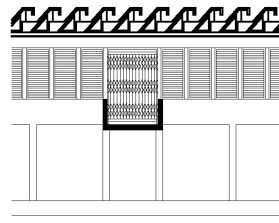


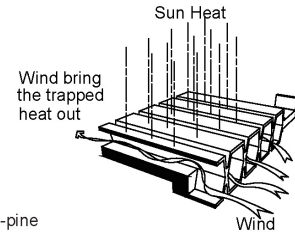
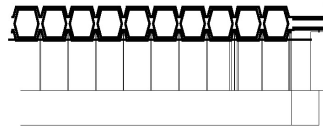
Figure 3.8 Master Plan of Teacher Training College



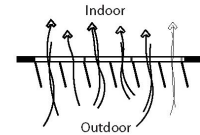
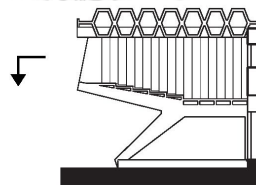
- Sunscreen wall is designed for air breathing and lighting
- It helps enhance aesthetic as well.



- Trough-like roof or gutter-like roof provide heat protection and skylight effect.
- The same time, aesthetic enhancing



- Double roof layer, in the form of hexagone-pine. It helps efficiently stop heat from heating up the interior.
- The same time, aesthetic enhancing



- Louver helps attract wind to come into indoor
- The supporting posture expresses structural strength

Figure 3.9 Climatic adaptation features of Teacher Training College

3.2.3 Architectural Style

- Public Buildings

Modern architecture of 1960s could be considered as the way architects tried to combine modern architectural style with traditional symbols. Such modern architectural styles included was very diverse but simply categorized such as a simplicity of geometrical forms and proportion with linear repetitive expression based on the balance of structure, detail design, material elements balance and proportion, structure, detail, material and repetitiveness of elements.

Usually, modern building design was a combination of difference geometries through the process of subtract and addition. Different elements were put together to create a coherence façade. Rather than hidden column and beam, these structural elements were exposed. Buildings designed by Vann Molyvann, tended to integrate rain water pipe into structural design in order to hide them from sight.

Proportion was always vital consideration when designing the building. New architectures tended to employ this technique, but rather than using symmetrical balance as had been used in traditional architecture, they combined difference forms and material textures. Architectural detail was one of the most vital design consideration in modern style building. Such elements were carefully crafted. Usually such element included rain water pipes, gutters, sunscreen walls, ventilation bricks, doors, windows and roof.

One of the architectural elements that seemed to be popularly adopted was the expression of architecture form or elements in V-shape. Examining a number of architectures designed by Vann Molyvann, most works contained V-shape feature. Grand Ross and Collin noted that the zigzag-shape roof featured on the former staff apartment of National Bank of Cambodia which was designed by Henri Chatel and Jamshid Petigura in 1963, one of housing projects constructed within Front de Bassac Project, had influenced later building design such as State Palace in Chamkarmon and private houses.⁸³ Vann Molyvann extensively used such design for numerous buildings such as Chaktomuk conference hall, Pochentong international airport (today Phnom Penh International Airport), State Palace, SKD factory office, etc. People suspected that the V-shape could be represent letter V of Vann Molyvann's name. Uncle Nam Heak, whose career was an engineer during the 1970s said that "National Olympic Stadium shaped up in letter V which meant Vann Molyvann."⁸⁴



Figure 3.10 Staff apartment of National Bank of Cambodia

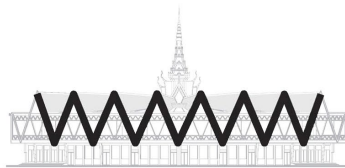
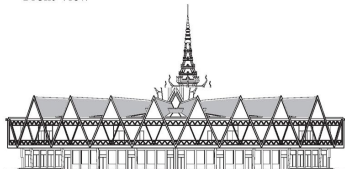
⁸³ Helen Grand Ross, p. 38.

⁸⁴ Interview on 18 January 2016.

Chaktomuk Conference Hall
Architect: Vann Molyvann
Year: 1961



Front View



Elevation

Camkamon Compound
Architect: Vann Molyvann
Year: 1966



Elevation



Elevation



Roof Shape

SKD Brewery Factory
Architect: Vann Molyvann
Year: 1968



Sketched Elevation

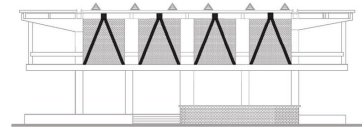
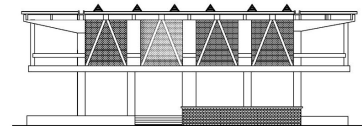


Figure 3.11 Illustration graphic of modern architectural style

- Modern Houses

Besides public buildings, private architectures designed by well-known architects, particularly Vann Molyvann, also possessed similar architectural languages. Though private projects, Vann Molyvann maintained his design characteristic such as having, sunscreen for sunlight protection, large window opening for ventilation, stylistic design, showing materials and concrete structure. Examples can be seen in many design work as following:

- Norodom Sirivuth's mother

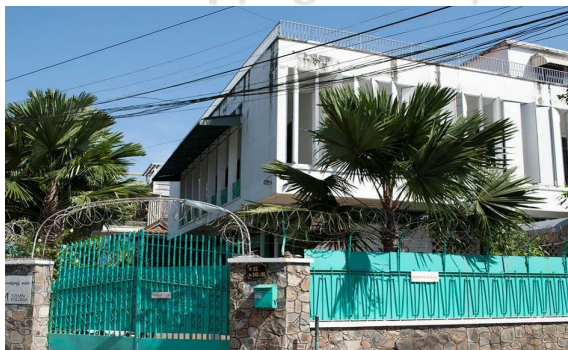


Figure 3.12 Norodom Sirivuth's Mother designed by Vann Molyvann

Located along Preah Sihanouk Boulevard, the house was constructed in 1950s⁸⁵ and was designed by Vann Molyvann. The concrete structured house was designed in a simple box-form decorated with vertical rotatable panels which were intended for protection from light and introducing wind into the house.

- Vann Molyvann's house

Vann Molyvann built his own house on Moa Tsetung Boulevard of Phnom Penh in 1970s. The design of his own house was very distinguishing to other private houses in the city. The roof is a shell structure shaped in hyperbolic parabolic curves. The house consisted of three storeys. Ground floor was for an architectural office. The first floor was for bedrooms. Living room and kitchen were on the top floor where occupants could enjoy the open view and space under the concrete parabolic roof. The exterior was decorated with red brick facing and large windows were protected by steel grilles. The interior is a large open space from columns.



Figure 3.13 Vann Molyvann's house

3.3 Infrastructure

After we discussed about government ideology and modern architecture as the aesthetic of the built form, we will look at the development of infrastructure to see how they contribute to social development, particularly construction sector. Having said that, we will look at the development of Sihanoukville city which was founded during the 1960s.

Sihanoukville was formalized through the construction of a port and transportation system with Phnom Penh city. The city became popular for spreading out

⁸⁵ <http://archive.lumhor.org/portfolio/villa-for-norodom-sirivuths-mother/>, retrieved 29 March 2017.

new form of architecture and tourist destination, and infrastructure, economic zone. The history of Sihanoukville began with an ambitious plan to construct a new transport system that would allow import and export process possible without depending on neighboring countries. These was the most important works that significantly contributed to economic development of this newly independence nation. This infrastructure system involved the construction of a deep seaport on Cambodia costal line, a new road and a railway system that connected the port to Phnom Penh. The idea of the constructing a seaport and its transportation system also led to the construction of a new city which was seen as an expansion of urban and architectural modernization during that period.⁸⁶

3.3.1 Sihanoukville port

There was a certain reason why the post-independence government urgently proposed to construct a new port shortly after regaining independence from French. According to Robert Philpotts who made an in-depth research on the history of the new port, the ambitious plan involved economic and political implication during the post-independence, namely complication of the political neutrality of Prince Sihanouk.⁸⁷ Philpotts suggested that in order to understand the significant of the projects, the problems of the existing international trade routes, namely the Mekong River route and the railway between Phnom Penh and Cambodia-Thai border which was constructed by French Protectorate in 1930s, should be examined.

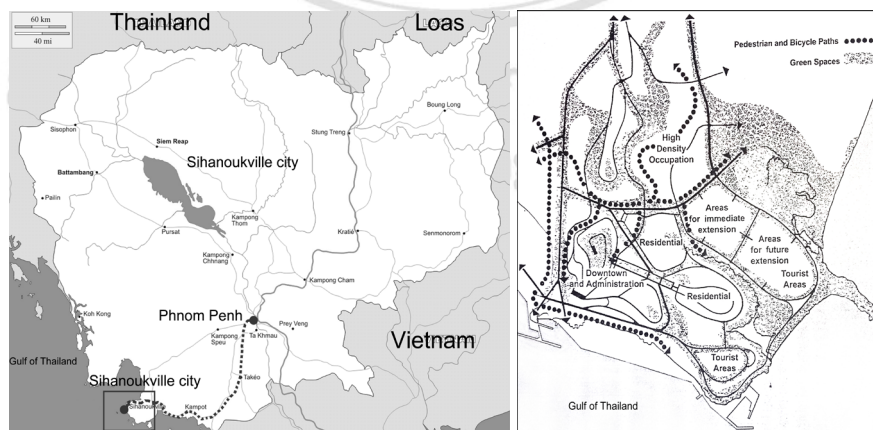


Figure 3.14 Sihanoukville master plan zoning

⁸⁶ Sant Suwathcharapinun and Sakona Loeung, *The Rise and Fall of Sihanoukville Modern Architecture: Sihanoukville railway station*, (proceeding of *The 7th Built Environment Research Associates Conference (BERAC7)*, 2016, p. 553.

⁸⁷ Robert Philpotts, *A port of Independence: The Origins of Sihanoukville* (Blackwater Books, 2006), p. 3.

The section of Mekong River from the confluence to the mouth of Mekong River in South China Sea was import route that enabled Cambodia to connect with outside world since Angkor era. The role of the river continued to serve the development of Phnom Penh city during the French Protectorate. However, the ceding of Cochinchina, the territory that hold region of Mekong delta and the river which was colonize by French nearly a century, to Vietnam control in 1949 gravely disrupted the connection of relation and economic of Cambodia with the outside world. Even though shipping and traveling through river were still possible during the early of 1950s, the escalating insecurity in South Vietnam due to their struggle to combat with French, caused concern and disturbing import and export process of Cambodia.

Railway system connecting Phnom Penh and Cambodia-Thai border which was constructed by French Protectorate in 1930s also gradually became unreliable trade route. There were many problems including technical problems, security concern and mainly political confrontation. Firstly, it was the technical caused by the inconsistency between the two railway systems. Thailand railway followed British railway standard, while Cambodian railway followed French standard. Secondly, trains and railway sometimes were attacked by Vietminh rebels who were fighting against French in Vietnam. They were hiding in Cambodia territory, as what was attacked in 1950. Thirdly, the most important problem was the political dispute between Cambodia and Thailand. The effort of *King* Norodom Sihanouk to seek independence from French was never welcomed by Thailand.⁸⁸ Thailand even provided support to a Cambodian rebel group. On top of that, in 1954 there was Cambodian-Thai border dispute over ownership of Preah Vihear temple, in which Thailand rejected the French-Siam Treaty in 1907 which acknowledged the demarcation and the surveyed map between Cambodian and Thailand, and Thailand occupied the temple to enforce their claim.⁸⁹ As a consequent, in 1958 Prince Sihanouk cut diplomatic tie with Thailand.⁹⁰

Therefore, constructing a new port on Cambodian coastal line came to be a better choice. To locate a suitable location for a port construction required more than just a consideration of the depth of the sea due to the sour relations between Vietnam and Cambodia. Two exiting seaports were rejected: a colonial port in Kampot and a

⁸⁸ Vanndy Kaonn, p. 178.

⁸⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preah_Vihear_Temple#cite_note_International_Court_of_Justice-7, retrieved on 23 October 2016, retrieved on 24 November 2016.

⁹⁰ Vanndy Kaon, p. 218.

coastal guard port in Ream. Kampot had been an ancient and colonial ocean port from which Cambodia products were exported, but the ancient port was not qualified to the modern cargo vessels because of its shallow water. Whereas Ream port was a small naval base dating from 1925 that was used by coastal patrol vessels. The port had deeper water and was accessible by large ships. However, the location was critical to proximity to Vietnam territory.

Given there were existing results of coastal survey conducted during the French protectorate in between 1908 and 1948, located further west of Ream port was selected. It was a rocky promontory close to Coudee Island (now Koh Pos) in the bay of Kampong Som.

The location of the new port located only thirty kilometers from Kampot. The plan had been proposed to connect the new seaport to Phnom Penh via continuous link between an existing Phnom Penh-Kampot road, a road between Kampot-Ream and a new section of road from the new seaport to mid of Kampot-Ream road which was called Tuk Sap. The section of road between Kampot and Tuk Sap faced serious difficulty in repairing and timing because of too many old bridges. Thus, prompting revise on planning of the road. The engineer had proposed the construction of a new road that run from the new port to Phnom Penh which cutting through forest and remote villages. It was believed that the new road would not only provide access to rural villages but also access to forest logging, as well as a new land for agro-industry plantation.

According to the plan, the construction of modern port and the new road required large amount of budget which Cambodia could not afford. But because of political neutrality stance of Cambodia which allowed Cambodia to accept development assistance from any donor countries because of the tension between communist and anti-communist world. Communist Chinese and Soviet Union were trying to influence Cambodia through donating finance and investment. This made French and American to generously finance and support the proposed projects. French would be responsible for constructing a new port while the United States would construct a new highway linking the new port to Phnom Penh.

3.3.2 Sihanoukville Urbanization

While the highway and seaport were being constructed, plains and hills situated on east of port construction site were being prepared. The city was planned to accommodate a population of 55,000 residents. The planning included zones for port and reserved area for port expansion and industrial park, the railway network, tourist zone and the town center that comprised of municipal offices, business buildings and houses. The provincial government offices and business zone were located in the middle of the city, where as residential zone was located on the hills and high plains. To the south of the city, the low plains and adjoining beaches were reserved for tourist development. The city was named Sihanoukville as an honor to the leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk.⁹¹

Apart from being known as the international seaport, Sihanoukville was also regarded as tourist destination, since there were many beautiful white sand beaches. Hotels and villas were constructed to accommodate services for to tourists. One of the first hotel to be constructed was Independent Hotel design by French architects, Leroy and Mondet.⁹² Situated on a hill land in the middle of preserved forest land, the white exterior of the hotel appeared clearly contrasted to the green forest.

Philpotts noted that the development of city coincided with the advancement in aviation technology especially the commercial jet airplane which encouraged people to travel to many countries in a shorten travel time. The repair of Pochintong Airport in Phnom Penh facilitated air travel to bring more tourists into Cambodia. At the same time, the construction of a new airport in Sihanoukville further facilitated air travel from Phnom Penh to the new city.

In addition to attraction to tourists, the city also attracted the investment in industrial factories. Given the existence of the international seaport, it was easy for the factories to facilitate any materials they needed. At the same time, it was easy for them to export their products to oversee market. There were a number of factories constructed in Sihanoukville at that time, such as Khmer Brewery factory, tractor installation factory, and the oil refinery factory.

⁹¹ Vann Molyvann, p. 196.

⁹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Hotel, retrieved on 6 April 2017.

By late of 1960s, construction of a railway line which linked Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville, crossing Kampot province where there was cement factory, was completed. The railway construction was financed by French and Germany. The railway then significantly contributed to the way in which the traveling cost was reduced and transported those heavy materials and products to the capital.

3.3.3 Modern Architecture in Sihanoukville

As soon as plan for Sihanoukville was finished, city was populated with buildings and public spaces. Modern architecture style had been introduced to the city through the construction of public and private buildings. Buildings such as Catholic Church, hotel, national bank, railway station and residential villas which designed in modern style became the architectural landmarks of the city.

Besides involving in planning the city, Vann Molyvann also involved architectural design of some buildings. One of these buildings was National Bank. Similar to most buildings he designed, the National Bank buildings exhibited modern style, materialistic, structure expression, and climatic protection. The buildings featured with red brick facing, large concrete cantilevered roof and a large sunscreen wall on the west façade of the building to shield evening sunlight.

Another example of modern architecture which was always overlooked due to its severe deterioration and its unused function was the Sihanoukville railway station. It was designed and built by Georges Kondracki, a French architect, in 1962 under the joint grant of French and Germany. Sihanoukville railway station architecture was one of buildings constructed during the development of Sihanoukville city. The station was the last among the 13 stations to be constructed along the railway line that run from Phnom Penh through Takeo, Kampot and Sihanoukville.

Sihanoukville railway station, similar to the building design by Vann Molyvann, employed tropical design principle such as heat reduction, cross ventilation, natural lighting and local materials. Its indoor environment was well naturally ventilated and lit through the use of louver glass on the whole wall that enclosed the building. Glass louvers was one of the great tool allowing wind to cross the building fabric while restricting rain water. Insect screen was also used to prevent disruption from insect. Stretching along the sun axis, sunlight penetration was minimized. Connected arched

roof form an outer roof shell that providing protection to lower roof. With very cautions to costal location, building materials were carefully selected. Wall structure was made from aluminum which was the best material in resisting to costal area climate. The structure was brute reinforced concrete in style with architectural brutalism. The floor was laid out with natural aggregate which can be found from the nearby river.



Figure 3.15 Modern architectures of Sihanoukville

3.4 Social Development

3.4.1 Art and culture

Prince Sihanouk was an important figure in promoting modern art and culture. His interested in art and music led to an initiative in construction of a number of national theaters. The growing popularity of film and movies also led to the growing number of cinemas in the city. In order to promote filming sector, there was celebration of national and international film festivals such as the first International Film Festival of Phnom Penh in 1968 and the first National Film Festival in 1969 which were held at this

national theater.⁹³ Important theaters that were constructed during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum included:



(a) Preah Suramarit Theater, (b) Chenla Theater, (c), Capital Cinema

Figure 3.16 Cultural centers constructed during 1960s

- a. Preah Suramarit National Theatre: designed by Vann Molyvann constructed between 1962 and 1968. Located in the Front de Bassac development area. The theater could accommodate 1,200 seats. The theatre not only used for performing arts but also served as working space for the National Conservatory of the Performing Arts. The building was destroyed in 2008.
- b. Chenla Cinema Theater: designed by Lu Ban Hap, the theater consisted of a small stage which was designed for film projection only. Lu Ban Hap said he was asked by Prince Sihanouk to design a small cinema on land. Prince Sihanouk also made a conceptual sketch of cinema that could seat about 20 people. But because the sketch was not to scale, the actual drawing that was made to scale could accommodate as much as fifty people. After making revise, the theater became even larger which had the capacity to accommodate up to 800 people.⁹⁴
- c. Capital Cinema: A private cinema was built in 1964 and was designed by Vann Molyvann.

3.4.2 Education

In order to make robust development, the country vitally needed a lot of educated human resource. The Sangkum Reastr Niyum significantly promoted education through construction of a number of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions included as following:

⁹³ Ingrid Muan and Ly Daravuth, 154.

⁹⁴ Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins, p. 37.



(a) Royal University of Phnom Penh (b) Teacher Training College (c) Institute of Technology (d) Training center for Electric du Cambodge (e) & (f) School of Applied Arts and Engineering

Figure 3.17 Education institution constructed during 1960s

- Royal University of Phnom Penh: There were three separate educational institutes located on this campus which were constructed stage by stage. The first building was the institute of Technology which was a donation from Soviet Union in 1961. The second was Khmer University which late named Phnom Penh University which inaugurated in 1968. The last was the Teacher Training College which was completed in 1972.⁹⁵
- Preah Kossomak Centre: Training Center for Electricité du Cambodge (EDC): it was inaugurated in 1969 and was designed by Mam Sophana. This institution was aimed to provide specialized skill in electric engineering.⁹⁶
- School of Applied Arts and Engineering: constructed in 1965 and was designed by Dr. Lynn Emerson. The school was a collaboration between Cambodia and United States in which the United States agreed to build, equip and train the staff of a technological institute destined for engineers and high-level technicians.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid, pp. 187-189.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 179.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 86.

3.4.3 Social Housing

In an effort to provide proper house to people, particularly public servants, the government initiated a number of public housing projects. These projects included Front de Bassac development project which located at the along the Bassac River, and the 100 houses project located on the West of Phnom Penh a located planned for city expansion. In Front de Bassac project, there were three main housing projects: Olympic Village, National Bank's staff apartments, and apartment for private lease. The Olympic village was designed by Vann Molyvann and was aimed to provide short term accommodation to athletes who came to join Southeast Asian Game hosted in Phnom Penh in 1963. The building would then be used for social housing. The National Bank's staff apartments were designed by Hanri Chatel and apartment for private lease named as municipal apartment.⁹⁸ There was also other project for providing housing for public servants such as the 100 houses project sponsored by National Bank. This project was designed by Vann Molyvann and completed in 1965.

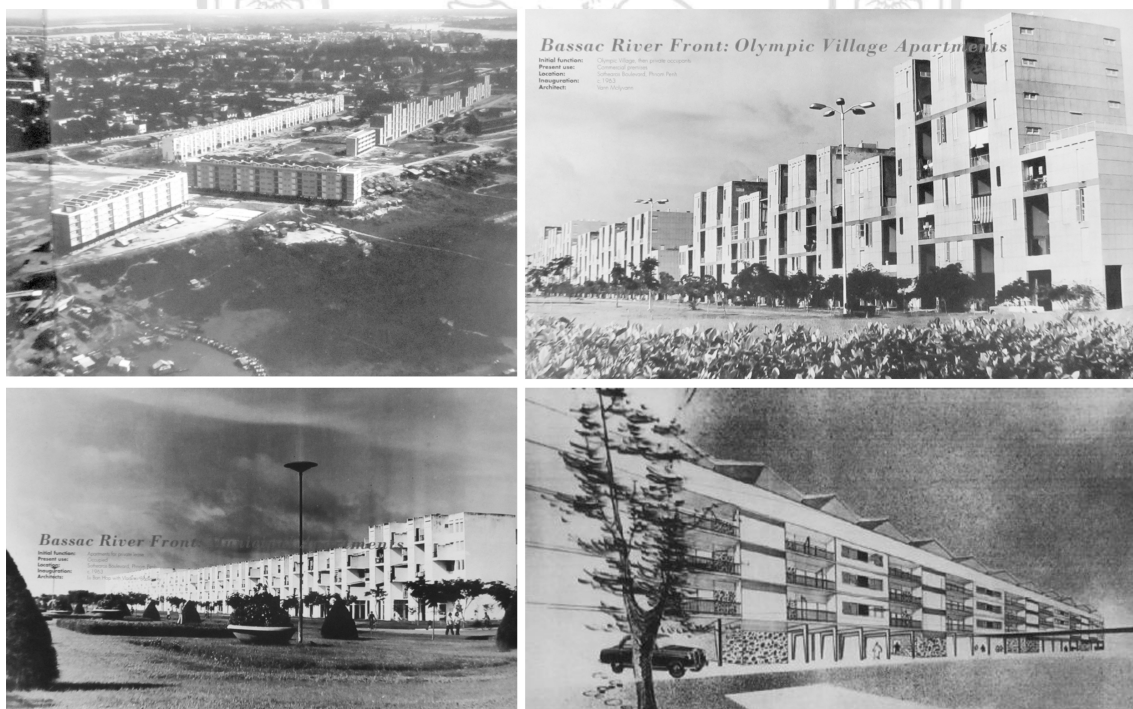


Figure 3.18 Apartments in Bassac River Front Project

⁹⁸ Ibid, p23

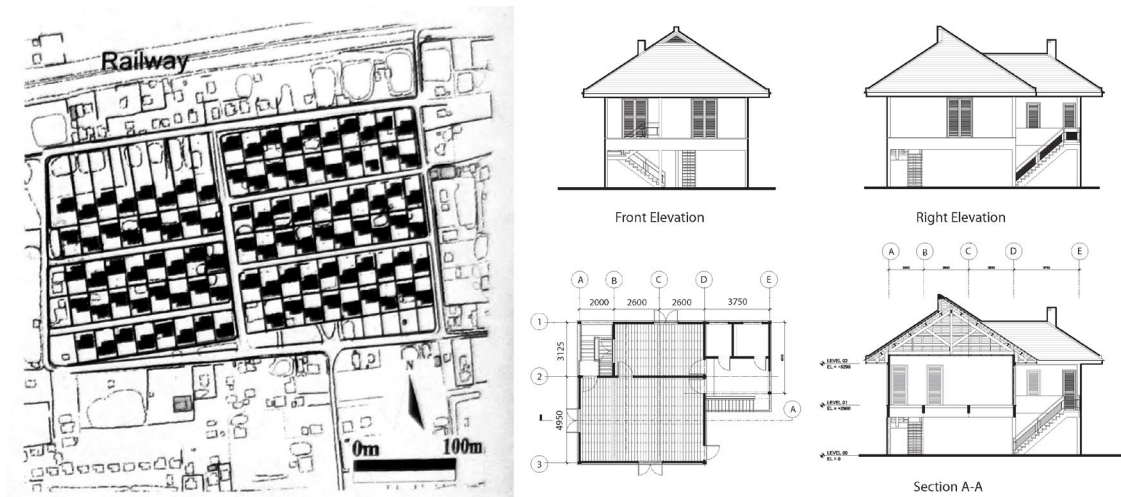


Figure 3.19 The 100 houses project

3.4.4 Public service



Figure 3.20 Soviet-Khmer Friendship Hospital

The post-independence government also paid attention to other sector on public health service in maintaining social welfare. They established a number of hospitals and medical training schools to provide health care service to local people. In 1960s, there were seven major public hospitals and several private clinics operated as well in the city. Most of them was financed by foreign countries, such as the Soviet-Khmer Friendship Hospital which was built in 1960, the French-operated Calmette Hospital and a Chinese hospital. This indicated the how government benefited from its international policy.

3.5 Modern Life

French had colonized Cambodia nearly a century. Their culture and modernization had always been a model of social modernization in Cambodia. So, French culture had influenced on this traditional country particularly, royalty and elites. Such influences included language, dress and materials, attitude, and protocol. People had been dressing in an elegant of the western dressing code when attending formal meetings. Women dressed up in modern clothes in modern style that expressed elegance and tidiness. As Penny Edwards suggested, even though Cambodia gained full independence from French which marked by the closure of colonial department and functions operation in Cambodia and withdrawal of colonial military troops, cultural influence still inherited. As he maintained, “The symbiotic, indigenous–European cultural legacy of the French Protectorate was already indelibly marked in the sculpting of a Khmer national style and character in religious, museological, artistic area.”⁹⁹

One of research works that provided a general understanding on the social arrangement during the post-independence was “Area Handbook for Cambodia” written by Frederick P. Munson and a number of sociologists. According to the Munson et al, social status division within Cambodian society could be put into three classes. These were and still are upper class, middle class and lower class. The upper class and the middle class constituted the majority of urban population during the post-independence period.¹⁰⁰ The upper class included those work within the government offices. The middle class included the white-collar workers, professionals, businessmen and teachers and the lower class included workers and peasants. Even though traditional way of becoming an upper social class was through traditional political family and religious power, reforms in political system of the post-independence government made it possible for ordinary people to become higher class through their success in business, advanced education, occupational status and political, military and religious link.¹⁰¹

Michael Vikery pointed out that the upper class was so wealthy that they could afford foreign made products. Some people even traveled abroad for sightseeing and business purposes. It was this group of people who pursued social modernization that was inspired by westerners. Western modernization was widely followed by local

⁹⁹ Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation* (Univeristy of Hawai’I press, 2007), p. 251.

¹⁰⁰ Frederick P. Munson, et al, *Area Handbook for Cambodia* (Library of Congress, 1968), p. 65-68.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p. 68.

people. Thus, attitude may include daily dressing, working style and daily living and how people enjoy social life. Vikery claimed that these people followed way of living of Parisian and New Yorkers. As he put it:

“On the one hand, this made Phnom Penh one of the most attractive cities in the world, and on the other led to such absurdities as the “councils d’élégance automobile” sponsored by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The beautiful city, though, had to be filled private villas which few could legitimately afford and all the luxuries to go with them. From the highest level the demonstration effect spread downward until everyone aspired to luxuries which neither the individual, nor the society as a whole could afford. The result was a generalized corruption and a draining of wealth into unproductive investments.”¹⁰²

Learning from the novel could also clarify the claim on social modernization. One of novel that aimed to highlight the life during the French Protectorate and after the country received independence offered a reflection upon the way of living of a moderate family who lived in Phnom Penh. Working as a lecture at a university, the family could afford to own a private house located within the center of the city. The author pictured a living room that was filled with modern household appliance such as refrigerator, canapé sofa, and car.¹⁰³

Upon the development of economic, leisure and entertainment would never have been far from social life. Bars, pubs and movie theaters had flourished throughout the city. Milton Osborne highlighted one aspect of those who had a good connection with the government. Foreign embassies and firms would persuade them to allow their product to be imported into Cambodia market. These people tended to spend time for partying and dancing and consuming foreign expensive drink. With this, Milton also pointed out that Takmau town which located several kilometers from Phnom Penh was a place for their night indulgent for drinking, dancing and having sex which were treated as a secret thing from their families.¹⁰⁴ With the development of city and town of provinces, and infrastructure, tourist destination and travelling had become more popular for people living in the city. City such as Sihanoukville and Siem Reap had

¹⁰² Michael Vickery, *Cambodia 1975-1982* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999), p. 24.

¹⁰³ គឹម សែត (Kim Seth), *ឯណាគួនប្រើខ្ញុំ* (where is my daughter), Cambodian novel.

¹⁰⁴ Milton Osborne, *Phnom Penh: A cultural and literary history*. Oxford: Signal Books Limited, 2008), p.130.

been a popular tourist destination for people. In the book titled “Before Cambodia”, Milton also disclosed the wide spread of gambling. Besides having casinos in Phnom Penh, Kep, a colonial coastal resort located nearly two hundred kilometers from Phnom Penh, attracted gamblers from the city to make frequent visits.¹⁰⁵ Education system had been part of people’s daily life. New higher educational institutions had been built in the city and learning was free of charge. In each city block, schools were included so as to provide education door to door for people living in the city, especially in Boeung Keng Kang.

Conclusion

The discussion on the political ideology, the development of city, architecture and infrastructure, and cultural development, significantly illuminated the process of social modernization of Cambodia during the post-independence. Theoretically, social transformation after independence could be described through the concept of Post-colonial theories, which aim to examine the intricate connections and influences between the colonized countries and their imperials. In particular, such theories can enlarge an understanding of the authentic cultural development as well as the need for asserting a new identity. As Bill Ashcroft pointed out that the capacity to change and adaptation as a mean of social modernization was the one of the most important characters of the post-colonialism societies.¹⁰⁶ It is important to mention that this research have come across the concept of post-colonial theories at the end. It would be rather distorted if this research takes the concept and re-described every finding towards the theories, but rather use such theories to support the findings of how Cambodia's social modernization has been constituted historically.

To summary, Cambodia had extensively invested both effort and resources to transform the former colonial nation to be recognized by the internal such as having a national policy that fostered social modernization through human resource building, constructing infrastructures and public institutions, and economic growth. In materializing the aspiration of modernization, modern architectures were employed by leader of the nation through assigning modernist architects, both local and international, to design a series of important state projects that significantly contributed to change of

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, Milton Osborne, p. 20.

¹⁰⁶ Bill Ashcroft, *Post-colonial transformation* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 2.

urban landscape of the cities. Social modernization was also embraced by people, mostly in upper and middle class. Although influenced by French Protectorate culture, cultural development of the post-independence society was inspired by the opening of the nation to the world through modern education, technological advancement, economic increase and imported products further enhanced the process of social modernization.

Therefore, information about social policy, social modernization, modern public architecture and modern living of people, could be used as a framework to explore houses in Boeung Keng Kang in term of social production. It was always interesting to examine these built form environments to understand the relationship of modernization between public and private realm, basically in the architectural field. Next chapter will explore the architectures of modern private houses in details.