

[自由論題: 研究論文]

Urban Functions of Temples and Their Relationship with Local Markets in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

プノンペンにおける都市機能としての寺院の役割
マーケットとの関連性を求めて

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Abstract: Urban development in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, has been poorly planned, causing the demolition of historical buildings as well as the loss of tourism resources and urban character. In Phnom Penh, where urban expansion and modernization progress along with high economic growth, temples are considered to be an important element in terms of urban conservation. Based on interviews and mapping work, this study aims to reveal the urban functions of temples and their relationship with local markets that have been serving as part of the day-to-day life of urban residents in Phnom Penh. Our findings indicate that the preservation and succession of temples in Phnom Penh are essential to maintaining the important urban functions that they perform. In turn, this will lead to the preservation of Phnom Penh's urban character.

カンボジアの首都プノンペンの都市開発は計画性に乏しく、歴史的建造物の取り壊し、観光資源や都市の風土性の喪失という問題が生じている。高い経済成長とともに都市の近代化、拡大化が進むプノンペンにおいて、フランス統治時代以前からの都市の変遷の中で、寺院は都市の機能と景観という点で重要な要素であると言える。本研究において、寺院の都市機能と人々の生活の場であるマーケットとの関係性を調査・研究し、プノンペンにおける伝統的な都市要素として寺院を保全し継承することが、プノンペンの風土性の保全につながると考えるに至った。

Keywords: urban planning, temple, market
都市計画、寺院、マーケット

1. Introduction

1.1 Study Background

After a prolonged civil war that began in 1970, Cambodia made its way back to the international community following the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement, and subsequently became a member of

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1994 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004. However, due to continued political conflict between the ruling and opposition parties in the country, true stability was not achieved until the 2000s. Since 2000, except during the 2008-2009 global

financial crisis and after 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic started, Cambodia has maintained a high gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of over 6.5%, making Cambodia one of the most remarkable growing economies in Asia (Fig. 1). This development was made possible largely by the Cambodian government's proactive efforts to attract foreign investments, such as preferential treatment for foreign investors, which led to the acquisition of foreign currencies. Along with the economic development, there has been a rush to build high-rise office buildings, shopping malls, and condominiums in Phnom Penh and other urban areas, disregarding the need to preserve French colonial architecture and buildings of historical value.

Amid such rapid economic growth and urban development, the key issue is how Phnom Penh can maintain its unique characteristics, and there is an urgent need to identify and protect urban elements, such as historically and culturally valuable buildings, and their functions.

1.2 Study Objective

In the previous study, Fujisawa and Kuzuhara (2023) revealed the following: the current status of markets and shophouses—the urban elements that characterize Phnom Penh's landscape; the involvement of these urban elements in the development and growth of the city since the French colonial period; and importance of these urban elements in the lives of people in Phnom Penh. The present study focuses on temples, which symbolize Buddhism, the state religion of Cambodia. Temples are considered an important urban element for the preservation

of Phnom Penh's urban character and also support the daily lives of people in Phnom Penh. The purpose of the study is to reveal the urban functions that temples perform in the rapidly changing city of Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, as well as their relationship with the local markets. In addition, academic information on Phnom Penh is extremely scarce, and we, therefore, believe that it is significant to keep the contents of this paper as a data resource for future research.

1.3 Study Methodology

In October 2022, an interview survey to find out about the role of temples was conducted in seven temples located in Phnom Penh for preparatory research. Of the 14 administrative districts (Khans) in Phnom Penh, seven major temples located in the five districts that can be identified as the central city area were selected for the target temples (Table 1). Under the direction of Professor Loch Leaksmy, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, two students from the said university visited each temple and conducted interviews with randomly selected temple priests, residents, and visitors.

In June 2023, based on the preparatory survey, multiple choice questions were developed, and a telephone survey was conducted with the head priests of seven temples, followed by a questionnaire-based interview survey with 103 temple visitors to these seven temples.

Furthermore, in April 2023, an interview survey was conducted with 10 visitors to each of the seven temples who



Fig. 1 Change in Cambodia's GDP growth rate
Source: IMF, 2022, World Economic Outlook

were nominated by the head priests (70 visitors in total) to identify their behavior patterns from their residences to the temples, and mapping work was carried out based on the result.

Moreover, to confirm various aspects and obtain background information related to this study, interviews were held with Professor Loch Leaksmy, Mr. Ek Buntha, Deputy Director-General, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts; and Professor So Sokuntheary, Department of Architecture, Norton University, Cambodia.

Table 1 Number of temples and administrative districts

	Name of Temple	District (Khan)
A	Wat Ounalom	Doun Penh district
B	Wat Botum	Doun Penh district
C	Wat Langka	Boeng Keng Kang district
D	Wat Tan	Chamkar Mon district
E	Neakvoan Pagoda	Tuol Kouk district
F	Tuol Tompoung Pagoda	Chamkar Mon district
G	Sampov Meas Pagoda	Prampir Meakkakra district

1.4 Literature review

Regarding previous studies on the urban formation of Phnom Penh, Shiraishi and Wakita (2007) analyzed the urban formation process from the initial founding to the urban infrastructure formation under French rule, focusing on the city block formation and distribution of facilities. On the other hand, regarding previous studies on Cambodia and temples, Hayashi et al. (2014) collected data on the facility configuration and location of 771 temples in Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, as well as data on the movement of 5,500 monks, and integrated all this data. They then conducted a spatiotemporal analysis of the movement data over time in Thailand and tried to apply their findings to other regions. However, there have been no studies that have examined the urban functions of temples in Phnom Penh.

2. Number of temples and monks in Phnom Penh after 2016

Buddhism has been the state religion of Cambodia since Cambodia's first constitution was enacted in 1947, with the exception being during the period of Democratic Kampuchea and the subsequent constitution of the People's Republic of Cambodia, and there is a central government ministry named the Ministry of Cults and Religion. According to a census conducted in 2019, Buddhists accounted for 97.1% of the approximately 15.5 million people in Cambodia, indicating that the majority of

the population believes in Buddhism (Shiraishi and Wakita, 2007).

There are two Cambodian Buddhist sects: the Mohanikay, a conventional sect, and the Dhammayut, which derived from the Thammayut sect formed by King Rama IV of Thailand. As of 2022, there were 5,104 temples and 70,905 monks throughout Cambodia. Of these, 151 temples and 6,219 monks existed in Phnom Penh, with 142 temples of the Mohanikay sect and 9 temples of the Dhammayut sect (Table 2). Table 2 shows that one extra Dhammayut sect temple was added between 2016 and 2022 but the number of monks has decreased. In the Mohanikay sect, the number has decreased from 7,094 in 2016 to 6,076 in 2022, and in the Dhammayut sect, from 471 in 2016 to 143 in 2022.

From an overall perspective, it is clear that the number of monks tends to decrease. Nevertheless, since only monks who were officially recognized as monks were counted, young people who have been studying in temples since childhood and students who have moved to temples from the countryside for academic purposes were not included in those numbers. In addition, many temples have a committee consisting of members who live in a temple and play an essential role in managing the temple, collecting donations, cleaning, and so on. Furthermore, temples also have elderly women (don chi or yeay chi) and men (tachi) who live on temple property engaging in training, caring for the monks, cleaning, cooking, and other duties, thus many people besides the monks share their lives there (Hayashi et al., 2014).

Table 2 Comparison of the number of temples and monks in Phnom Penh between 2016 and 2022 (National Institute of Statistics, 2020; Ueda and Okada, 2012)

Sect	Number of Temples		Number of Monks	
	2016	2022	2016	2022
Mohanikay	142	142	7,094	6,076
Dhammayut	8	9	471	143
Total	150	151	7,565	6,219

(Book to be Distributed on the Occasion of Nirvana, 2006 / Number of Monks and Temples in Cambodia 2021-2022, 2022)

3. Role of temples in Phnom Penh

3.1 A survey targeting temple priests

In June 2023, a telephone survey on the role of the temples was conducted with the head priests of the seven temples listed in Table 1. Table 3 shows the results of the survey. The priests of all the temples selected the following roles of temples: Buddhist teachings; festivals and other Buddhist events; academic and moral education; dwellings for monks/elderly people without

Table 3 Role of temples

Temples	Buddhist teachings	Buddhist events (festivals)	Education (academic and moral)	Dwellings (self, elderly, student)	Relief for the poor / Charities	Spiritual support	A place to accumulate virtues	Vaccination sites	Culture preservation	Employment creation (temple help)	Tourist attraction	Library
A	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
B	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○				
C	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			
D	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			○
E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			
F	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
G	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	3	2	2

families/students coming from rural areas; relief for the poor; spiritual support; a place to accumulate virtues; and a vaccination site. Some priests selected the following answers: culture preservation; employment creation; tourist attraction; and library.

In addition to temples’ direct involvement in Buddhism, the survey result revealed the role of temples in education. Thus, to further investigate the role of temples in education, separate interviews were conducted with Professor Loch Leaksmy and others. According to the interviews, after Buddhism was introduced to Cambodia in the 12th century, temples served as educational institutions until the French colonial period, but in recent years as urbanization has progressed, some elementary schools have been established separately from temples; nevertheless, there are still many cases where schools are located next to temples or on their premises (Sasagawa, 2006; Ministry of Cults and Religion in Cambodia, 2022; Hirayama, 2011). In addition, interviews with head priests revealed that temples serve as a place for children who live there for financial reasons to learn rules, manners, and morals through group living.

The survey results also revealed the function of the temples as dwellings. In addition to 385 monks, 217 students live in the Wat Ounalom (A), most of whom migrated to Phnom Penh from the countryside. Many of these students come from financially challenged families. Young people living in temples are provided with daily meals and a place to sleep, and they live in a communal environment there while engaging in academic learning. It is difficult for young people from rural areas who have no relatives in Phnom Penh and who have financial difficulty, to rent a place to live in Phnom Penh. Temples are the only places that provide financial support in the form of food, clothing, and shelter, and they are considered to be excellent places where young people can devote themselves to academic

learning, including the fact that they are located in the city center. Moreover, temples accommodate not only young people but also elderly people who have no families, serving as a kind of nursing home. Elderly people living in temples are provided with food and a place to live.

The role of temples as tourist attractions was also revealed. The visitors to Wat Ounalom (A) included many tourists, and Wat Langka (C) located in central Phnom Penh offers a meditation experience named “peaceful free group meditation” for foreign tourists.

From the survey results, it is apparent that temples play a wide range of roles that support the daily lives of people in Phnom Penh. Their support is not only for religious belief, but also for education; material assistance to the poor in the form of food, clothing, shelter, vaccinations; funerals and gatherings; election polling; disaster evacuation; libraries; and even for tourism.



Fig. 2 Pchum Ben Day (Cambodian religious festival)
Note. Photo by the author in September 2022

3.2 Survey targeting temple visitors (1)

In June 2023, a face-to-face interview survey on the presence and role of the temples was conducted with visitors to the seven temples listed in Table 1. Table 4 shows the survey results. 70% of the respondents answered ‘Buddhist teachings’, and more than half of the respondents answered ‘a place for education’ and ‘a place to accumulate virtues’. In Cambodia, where Theravada

Table 4 Awareness survey result on the role of temples

Buddhist teachings	Buddhist events (festivals)	Education (academic and moral)	Dwellings (self, elderly, student)	Relief for the poor / Charities	Spiritual support	A place to accumulate virtues	Vaccination sites	Culture preservation	Employment creation (temple help)
70	0	53	18	36	25	53	0	6	0

Note. Multiple answers were allowed. The number of valid responses was 100.

Buddhism is the predominant religion, people believe that by visiting temples and donating food and money to monks, they can not only accumulate virtues for their benefit in their present lives, but also send virtues to their parents who gave birth to and raised them. According to the interviews with Professor Loch Leaksmy and others, many people believe that they would have a better life in the next life by doing good deeds and accumulating virtues, such as donating goods or money to help people in need. With this background, temples have also become places for people to do good deeds, for example, participating in cleanups and environmental conservation events through temples.

In addition, many respondents chose ‘spiritual support’ as well as ‘dwellings’ and ‘helping the poor’, indicating that many of them consider temples to be a place for peace and tranquility and a place that provides spiritual stability.

Tables 3 and 4 show the roles of temples from the viewpoints of head priests and temple visitors, respectively, and both groups’ perceptions were found to be mostly consistent.

3.3 Survey targeting temple visitors (2)

In the survey targeting temple visitors to the seven temples listed in Table 1, the respondents were asked about their history of visiting the temple they are currently going to. Table 5 shows that 58% of the respondents answered ‘since childhood’ indicating that more than half of them have continued visiting the same temple since their childhood. The average age of those who answered ‘since childhood’ was 49.31 years, meaning that they have been visiting the same temple for more than 40 years. When combined with the 20% of the respondents who answered ‘more than 10 years’, nearly 80% of them have been visiting the same temple for more than 10 years.

The respondents were also asked how often they visit temples. Table 6 shows that 40% of them responded ‘Daily’, and the most common response was ‘Often’ (once a week or more), indicating that more than 80% of the respondents visit the same temple once a week or more.

In addition, they were asked about the temple and their

residence. Table 7 shows that 70% of them live in close proximity to the temple, within a five-minute walking distance, and more than 80% of them, excluding those who live in the temple, visit the temple on foot.

Moreover, they were asked about the temple committee which consists of members who support the activities of the priests and monks and perform various tasks related to the temple’s operation (collection of money, cleaning, etc.). As shown in Table 8, more than half of the respondents answered that they were members of a temple committee.

The frequency of visits and the proximity of residence to the temple, as well as the status of committee membership, suggest that the relationship between the urban residents in Phnom Penh and temples is quite close, and temples are deeply rooted in their lives.

Table 5 History of visits to temples currently going to

	Number of response	Percentage
Since childhood	59	58 %
More than 10 years	20	20 %
5 to 10 years	6	6 %
Less than 5 years	16	16 %

Note. The number of valid responses was 101.

Table 6 Frequency of temple visits

	Number of response	Percentage
Daily	41	40 %
Often	45	44 %
Other	17	17 %

Note. ‘Often’ means at least once a week, and ‘Other’ means at least once a month. The number of valid responses was 103.

Table 7 Temples and residences

	Number of response	Percentage
Nearby	71	70 %
Living in a temple	19	19 %
Other	12	12 %

Note. ‘Nearby’ means within a five-minute walk from the temple. The number of valid responses was 102.

Table 8 Membership in temple committees

	Number of response	Percentage
Member	56	54 %
Non-member	47	46 %

Note. The number of valid responses was 103.

3.4 Survey targeting temple visitors (3)

In the survey targeting visitors to the seven temples listed in Table 1, the respondents were asked whether or not they stopped at a market when visiting the temple. Table 9 shows that 84% of the respondents stop at a market on their way to the temple and on their way back home every time they visit the temple, and when combined with those who stop at a market only on their way to the temple, the percentage is as high as 84%. Regarding the reason for stopping at a market, 93% of the respondents answered that the reason is to ‘buy offerings’ (Table 10). In addition to the answer of ‘buying offerings’, 98% of the respondents answered that the reason for stopping at a market is to ‘make small talk’, suggesting that markets are not only a place to buy offerings, but also a place for communication.

Table 9 Whether or not to stop at a market when visiting a temple

	Number of response	Percentage
Every time on the way there and back	27	34 %
Every time on the way	40	50 %
Every time on the way back	0	0 %
Sometimes on the way there and back	0	0 %
Sometimes on the way	13	16 %
Sometimes on the way back	0	0 %

Note. The number of valid responses was 80.

Table 10 Reasons for stopping at a market

	Number of response	Percentage
Buying offerings	74	93 %
Meeting friend(s)	41	51 %
Making small talk	78	98 %

Note. Multiple answers were allowed. The number of valid responses was 80.

Furthermore, to identify the behavior patterns of temple visitors, a separate interview survey was conducted with 10 visitors to each of the seven temples listed in Table 1 (70 temple visitors in total) who were nominated by the head priests, and mapping work was carried out based on the results. The temple visitors’ travel routes from their residences to the temples were drawn with lines on a map to see their behavior patterns. The original map was created by Fujisawa and Kuzuhara (2023), on which clusters of shophouses with the markets in the center are shown (the dotted circles), and the survey result of the present study was added to the map. The numbers circled in black in Fig. 3 show the residences of the respondents who stopped at a market before reaching a temple, and their routes to the temple are shown with black lines. On the other hand, the residences of the respondents who did not stop at a market on their way to a temple are marked with gray, uncircled numbers, and their routes to the temple are shown with gray lines.

Table 10 shows that many of the temple visitors who stop at a market intend to purchase worship items, such as food for donating to the temple, Buddhist altar utensils, and incense sticks, revealing that the habit of shopping at a market when visiting a temple has taken root in the community, and their residences are also geographically close to the market and the temple. In addition, with the exception of some visitors to temples B, C, and D, which are located in close proximity to each other, no one traveled to temples further away from their residence, suggesting that the temples, markets, and shophouses are the spheres of day-to-day life for the urban residents in Phnom Penh.

According to Fujisawa and Kuzuhara (2023), markets and shophouses perform important urban functions for the people in Phnom Penh, supporting their livelihoods and being part of the local community. Temples are geographically located close to the markets and shophouses, but these three urban elements are also customarily and culturally relevant to the people in Phnom Penh, suggesting that these places are closely connected to their daily lives.

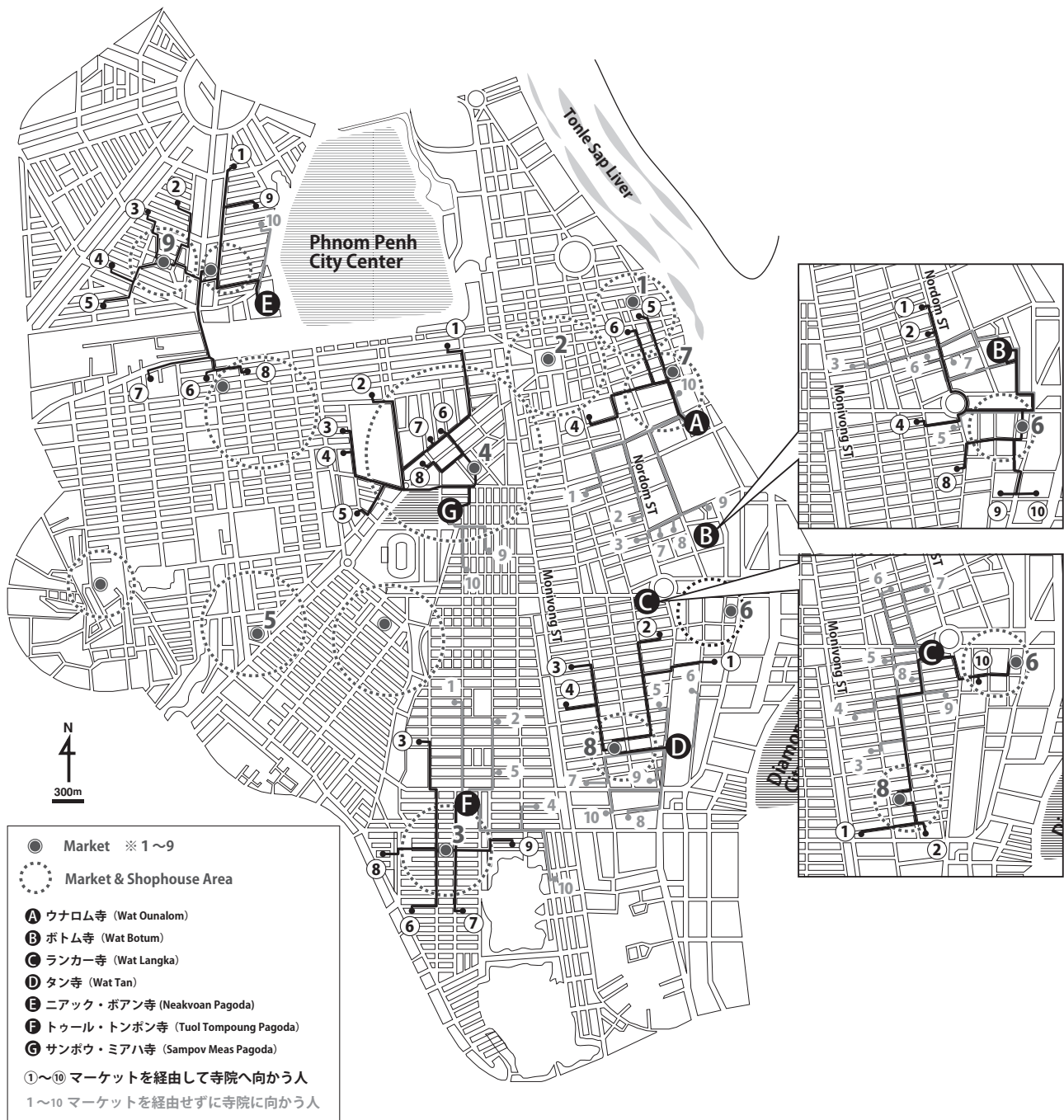


Fig. 3 Travel routes of temple visitors (7 temples) (Fujisawa and Kuzuhara, 2023)

4. Temples in the urban transformation

This section describes how the temples, an urban element, have been related to the urban transformation of Phnom Penh. In the previous study, Fujisawa and Kuzuhara (2023) presented a series of maps showing how Phnom Penh's city center has developed and expanded with the construction of the markets since 1890. Fig. 4 shows the locations of the temples plotted on the aforementioned series of maps following the construction year of each temple.

After 1890, Phnom Penh's city center began to be formed with Wat Ounalom (A) and Wat Botum (B) at its center. From

1910 to 1937, it is evident that the city center expanded to the south centering on Wat Langka (C) and Wat Tan (D) constructed in 1904. After 1943, Neakvoan Pagoda (E), Sampov Meas Pagoda (G), and Tuol Tompoung Pagoda (F) were constructed, and the city center largely expanded to the west. Moreover, with the exception of the Tuol Tompoung Pagoda (F), markets were constructed later in the vicinity where six other temples were located as shown in Fig 4. Two other markets except Tuolkock Market near Neakvoan Pagoda (E) are quite small, and the year of their construction is unknown, according to the local management office. In addition, Table 11 lists the construction

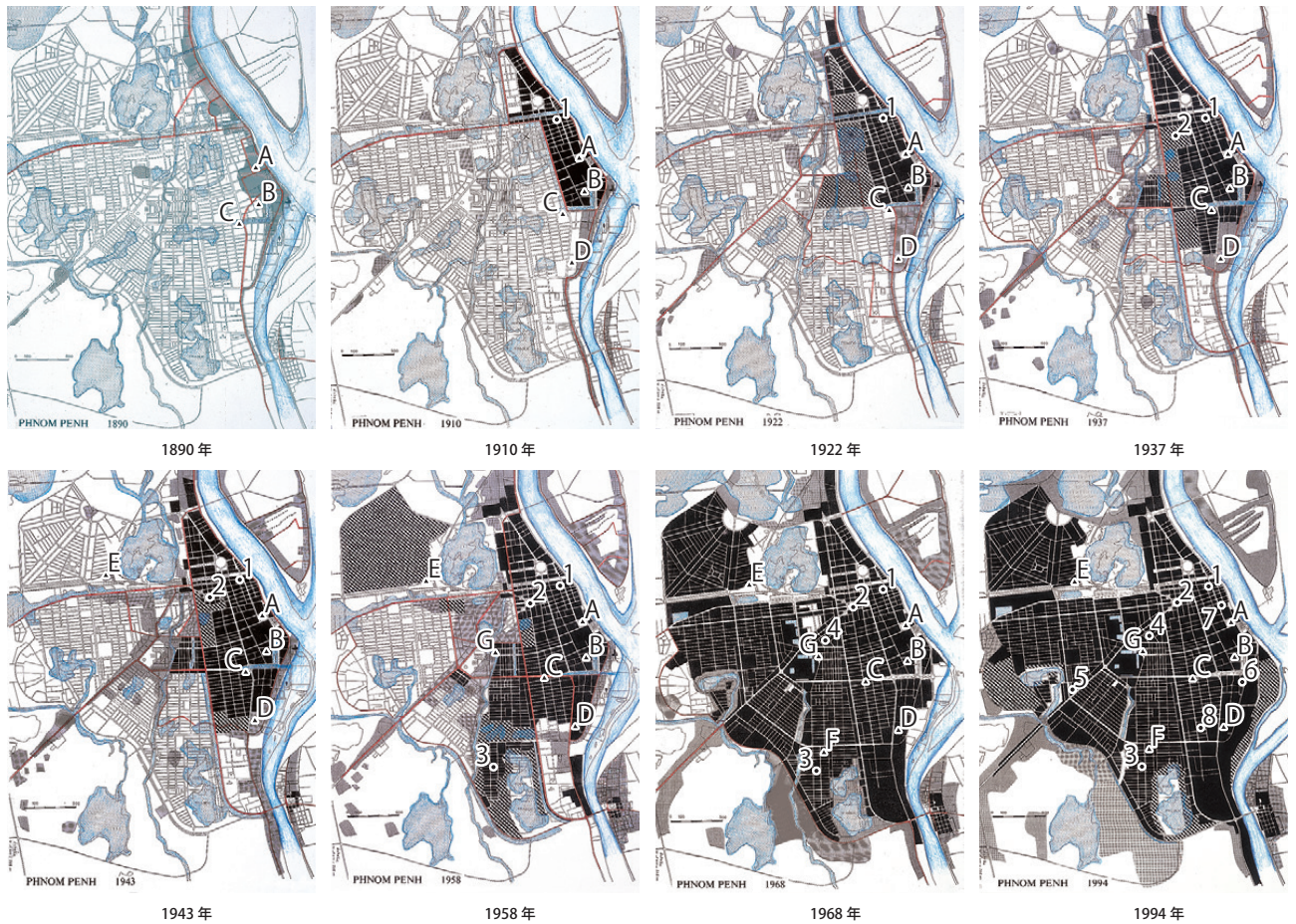


Fig. 4 Temples and the emergence of local markets in Phnom Penh's urban transformation (reproduced from Fujisawa and Kuzuhara, 2023)

year of the temples and the neighborhood markets.

In the previous study, Fujisawa and Kuzuhara (2023) concluded that since 1890, Phnom Penh has developed and expanded in line with the construction of major markets. However, Fig. 4 and Table 11 show that temples existed in the vicinity of the markets and shophouses before they were constructed, revealing that, there were temples first, and then markets were constructed near those temples in the process of urban expansion. Thus, it can be inferred that people began to gather in places where temples were located, and markets were

constructed in the vicinity, leading to urban expansion. However, there are large time gaps between the construction years of temples A to C and the construction years of the markets, and thus the correlation among temples, markets, and urban expansion has not been fully verified. Nevertheless, the interviews with Professor Loch Leaksmy and others indicated that the correlation among temples, markets, and urban expansion has become a common perception in the region.

Table 11 Construction years of temples and markets (reproduced from Fujisawa and Kuzuhara, 2023)

Name of Temple		Construction Year of Temple	Name of market		Construction Year of Market
A	Wat Ounalom	1434	1	Old Market	1892
			2	Central Market	1937
			7	Kandal Market	1989
B	Wat Botum	1442	6	Kabko Market	1987
C	Wat Langka	1422			
D	Wat Tan	1904	8	Boeng Keng Kang Market	1991
E	Neakvoan Pagoda	1940s	9	Tuolkock Market	2002
F	Tuol Tompoung Pagoda	1962	3	Tuoltompoung Market	1953
G	Sampov Meas Pagoda	1948	4	Orussey Market	1960

5. Conclusion

This study revealed that temples in Phnom Penh play roles not only in supporting Buddhism, the state religion of Cambodia, but also in education, dwellings, relief for the poor, welfare services such as vaccination sites, and depending on the temple, cultural protection, employment creation, and tourism. Even during the rapid economic growth after 2000 and the COVID-19 pandemic, temples have remained deeply rooted in the lives of people in Phnom Penh.

This study also revealed that temples and markets are located in close proximity to each other, and markets have been constructed in the vicinity of temples throughout the urban transition process in Phnom Penh. Temple visitors often live in the vicinity of the temple they go to, and it is common for them to stop at a market before or after visiting the temple, suggesting that temples and markets are deeply rooted in the lives of people in Phnom Penh, both in terms of customs and culture, and they are important urban elements constituting the sphere of urban residents' day-to-day life.

Our findings indicate that the preservation and succession of temples in Phnom Penh are essential to maintaining the important urban functions that they perform. In turn, this will lead to the preservation of Phnom Penh's urban character.

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