

# **Khmer Ceramics Excavated from the Prasat Suor Prat, Angkor Thom**

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It is a report of the Khmer ceramics excavated from Prasat Sour Prat (PSP) during 1995 to 2005. PSP locates in the heart of Angkor Thom consists of a typical terrace among the other temples of Khmer architectures. The complex consists of twelve laterite towers and their terraces, located on a north-south axis in the eastern portion of the Royal Palace complex. They are aligned in two groups on either side of the royal avenue, which runs from the front of the Royal Palace to the Victory Gate. The six towers to the north of the avenue are designated as the Northern Group (N1-N6) and the six to the south as the Southern Group (S1-S6).

Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA) had been planning and conducting archaeological excavations and investigations for providing basic data to establish a practical restoration plan, with the more specific aim of confirming the original morphology of the terraces and circular moat, unraveling their construction techniques and the successive modifications made to them, and determining chronological relationship between features with dating. The total excavated area measured more than 4200 m<sup>2</sup>, and the main area of excavations and investigations was carried out on the periphery terraces N1, N2, N3, and S1; surrounding moat and northern pond.

Regarding the major parts of the terraces, part investigations had generally clarified their structures and construction methods. The detected constructions of each features and soil stratigraphy or rammed earth demonstrates that the terraces were not completed in one single phase, but were rather rebuilt and extended in several times from the construction, until the newest terrace which remains on the ground surface today. On the process of each successive modification, the previous features were dismantled, the ground surface of former terrace was covered with thick soil strata by ramming earth, and several parts of the terraces were extended broadly to outside as a plan, and then other new features were built on these later terraces. The terraces re-building activities and vestiges thereof can be divided into four more or less times.

The stratigraphy in the excavated areas basically corresponds with the four stages of the terraces construction which was Layer I is the present ground surface. Layer II, Layer III, Layer IV, Layer V and so on are artificially-laid soil layers for the construction of the fourth, third, second and first stages. Many excavated artifacts were gathered from these layers.

The representative Khmer ceramics are jars, pots, tiles, bowls, lidded boxes, and vessels. Both glazed and un-glazed ceramics were uncovered. Among un-glazed ceramics, tiles, jars, and pots were numerous. These ceramics were mixed with other ceramics such as Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese ceramics in the same layers.

The above ceramics are now put into studying by archaeological experts of the JASA project.