

## กรุงเทพมหานคร - Bangkok – The City of Angels

We spent just three days in the Bangkok area, but we did several different things, most of which my wife and I had done before, but since it was the first trip to Thailand for my brother-in-law and his wife, it was all new to them.

## อยุธยา - Ayuthaya – The Ancient Capitol



Photo 1 - Reed with the Ayuthaya Elders

not changed at all, but Ayuthaya was much different. In 2002 we spent a full day seeing many of the ruins. On this excursion we had time for just Wat<sup>1</sup> Yai Chaimongkol and Wat Sri San Phet.

We had arranged to spend 30 minutes with the two Elders in Ayuthaya, Elder Cooper and his companion. We had a care package for Elder Cooper from his mother to deliver. We met them at a restaurant near



Photo 2 - This Open Air Wat partially built inside the walls of the ancient Wat.

2002. There was a big sign to greet people, and lots of local shops. There is an open air Wat here that is in daily use. There is also a huge pagoda (เจดีย์) set on top of a large base. At this site you can climb numerous steps up and into the pagoda.

The first day was dedicated to Ayuthaya and Bang-Pa-In. I served in Ayuthaya from August 1974 through early January 1975. Mani Seangsuwan was my companion for most of that time. In those days we only saw tourists in the city once. They were a group from Germany filming a documentary among the ruins. Today people come by the bus loads from Bangkok to see the ancient ruins in and around the city. In the 1990s Ayuthaya was named a World Heritage Cultural

Site. We had last visited here in 2002. Pang-Pa-In had

Wat Yai Chaimongkol. They informed us that the local branch (part of the Pakkret district) averages 46 members in attendance each week. That was well beyond my expectation.

Wat Yai Chaimongkol is located southeast of town. The town has grown over the past 20 years out to the location of the Wat. Formerly there was little outside the city once you crossed over the bridge over the east fork of the Chao Phraya river. I cannot remember ever visiting there as a missionary, but we did visit this site in 2002. The site had been improved markedly since

<sup>1</sup> Wat is the Thai word for a Buddhist Temple or place of worship.



Photo 3 - The sleeping Buddha at Wat Yai Chaimongkol

Unlike other Wats in Ayuthaya the Burmese did not cut the heads off all the Buddha's at this site. Built by King Uthong (first King of the Ayuthaya period) in 1592.

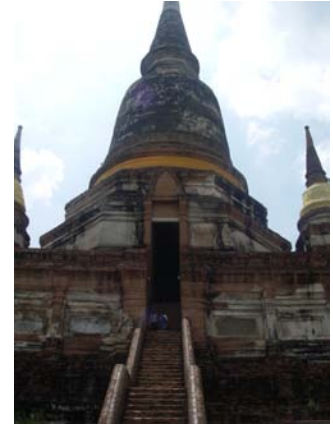


Photo 4 - The large Pagoda at Wat Yai Chaimongkol



Photo 5 - The grounds of Wat Yai Chaimongkol from the Pagoda



Photo 6 - The row of Buddha's around the perimeter at Wat Yai Chaimongkol



Photo 7 - The Three Pagodas at Wat Sri San Phet



Photo 8 - The wall of Wat Sri San Phet and the new Wat

Wat Sri San Phet had not changed since 2002. This Wat is located on the island that is the old part of the city. It is the home of the famous 3 pagodas. In the early part of the 1970 a new Wat named Wat



Chaimongkol Bophit was build adjacent to the grounds of Wat Sri San Phet. Photo 8 shows the wall of the temple in ruins in the foreground and the new Wat in the background.

## บางปะอิน – Bang-Pa-In Palace – King’s Summer Palace

The King’s summer palace at Pang-Pa-In is about 15 kilometers south of Ayuthaya. It had not changed since 2002. The grounds were as beautiful as ever. The bushes which are shaped into various animals are always interesting. Today in Bangkok the medians some streets are being filled with these bushes (smaller size) also shaped into various animals. This time we spent a few minutes to look into the Chinese palace. There were some interesting things in there, like a carving from bones.



Photo 9 - The signature item at Pang-Pa-In - The building that protects the Statue of Rama 5 – King Chulalongkorn the Great - son of King Mongkut. He was the special child that Ana Leon Owens was hired to teach. He built this palace and many other buildings in Thailand.



Photo 10 – New additions to the animals shaped from bushes at Pang-Pa-In



Photo 11 - The Chinese Palace. A gift to the King of Thailand from China



Photo 12 - The bone carving inside the Chinese palace at Bang-Pa-In

## ดำเนินสะดวก - Dumnern Saduak – The Floating Market

Dumnern Saduak is a city in Ratchaburi province. It is located mostly west and a bit south of Bangkok. It is not too far from the gulf of Thailand. Sherry and I visited here for the first time in 2002. The draw to



**Photo 13 - Main Street in Dumnern Saduak**

When we visited in 2002 I had no concept of just how far to the west Dumnern Saduak is from Bangkok. For some reason I had thought it was just out west of Thonburi. That thought is incorrect. Dumnern Saduak is well past Nakorn Pathom out in Ratchaburi province. Should I choose to visit this area again we will also plan to continue a bit further west and visit the bridge over the River Kwai as well. In 2002 you got in a long tail boat to get to the marketplace and then transferred to a smaller boat

to this town is the floating market (for tourists) that has developed here. Decades ago it was common for Thais to come to the canals of Thonburi (the other side of the river from Bangkok) to purchase goods (mostly food) from vendors in their boats. The floating Market at Dumnern Saduak is similar to what used to occur near Bangkok, but here it is all directed toward tourists. Tourists come here by the hundreds daily.



**Photo 14 – Reed & Sherry at the front of our long tail boat**

to visit the market. Today you can just stay in the long tail boat. The name for these boats comes from the fact that the propeller is at the end of a long pole (about 10 feet long) that the driver maneuvers behind the boat.



**Photo 15 - The traffic jam in the market place.**

Our boat captain was quite capable of maneuvering the boat through the crowded canals. The markets are a combination of stores along the canals (where you can easily shop from your boat) and food vendors themselves in boats on the canals. As we'd stop at several shops along the canals, I'd ask the shop keeper the following question, "What do you have that the

other stores do not have". Generally this would be followed by moment's contemplation and then the answer "nothing".



Photo 16 - One of many stores at the edge of the canal where you can sample to goods for sale.

In 2010 the rainy season had been pretty wet, thus there was lots of plant matter floating in the canals. Before we returned to our van, the boat driver fed some brightly colored fish that came up to the surface near the boat when he dropped on fish food in the water.

## พระปฐมเจดีย์ -Thailand's Largest Pagoda



Photo 17 - The large Pagoda at Nakorn Pathom

Once I realized we had traveled well beyond Nakorn Pathom, I decided that on the way back to Bangkok we should stop and see the largest Pagoda in all of Thailand (in Thai JayDee; sometimes referred to in English as a stupa). As you can see in the photo at the left, this pagoda is very large. There was scaffolding all around the base as the exterior was being repaired and decorated with a simple design. Also on the ground of this pagoda are multiple Buddhist temples (Wats). The last time I visited this site was on Buddha's birthday in 1975. All pagodas are said to contain some relics of the Buddha inside them, but I've never been able to find anyone who knows what specific relics of the Buddha are in a given pagoda. This is a popular site for the Thais to visit and worship at.



## พระบรมมหาราชวัง - The Grand Palace – Bangkok



Photo 18 – Dusit Maha Prasart - The building was used most recently for the viewing of the King's sister prior to her cremation.

In 1782 King Rama the first moved the capitol of Thailand from Thonburi (across the river from Bangkok) to Bangkok. As the first King of the current Chakri dynasty he established the Grand Palace as his home. This Grand Palace also included the King's personal temple; know as Wat Phra Kaew, which is home to the Emerald Buddha (made of Jade).

The kings lived here until King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) built several other palaces and decided that he enjoyed living elsewhere (like Dusit Palace) more than here at the grand palace. The Grand palace has been used

mostly for ceremonial purposes since that time.

Once of the newer residences on the property has been used from time to time as a guest house for visiting dignitaries from other countries.



Photo 20 - The Emerald Buddha in "Rainy Season" attire

The Grand Palace is the most visited place in all of Thailand. The current admission fee is 350 Baht (about \$10 USD) per person. The admission price includes the royal museum, the temple of the Emerald Buddha, and the palace of the king. Clearly they have used the money to maintain the property. During our visit I

noticed restoration work taking place on the upper terrace of the temple grounds, as well as an artist touching up the paintings that line the inner side of the wall around the temple area. Today proper dress is required to visit the temple grounds this means that those in shorts must wear a sarong or a pair of

pants. Inside the Emerald Buddha temple no photography is allowed (though during a special tour during my missionary

years our guide said, "Go ahead and take pictures now). Never the less, if you have a good camera, with the right lens, you can take a photo of the Emerald Buddha from outside the temple through the open doorway. Les was able to do just that. The photo above is as good as any I've found on the internet. A member of the royal family changes the attire of the Emerald Buddha three times per year, once for



Photo 19- Haslams and Westbergs just outside Wat Phra Kaew



Photo 21 - A Giant guards the royal temple grounds

each season (hot, rainy and cool). The cool season (November – mid-February) is not really cool, but is cooler, than the hot season.

Just to the south of the Grand Palace is Wat Po. This is the home of the famous reclining Buddha. The soles of the feet of the reclining Buddha are made of “mother of pearl”



Photo 22 - Reclining Buddha at Wat Po

## จตุจักร- Chatuchak -Weekend Market

There are many markets in Bangkok, but probably nothing like the weekend market at Chatuchak. Located near both a subway station and a sky train station north of Bangkok, this market attracts large crowds on Saturdays and Sundays. You can find most anything you might want to purchase at the market. Food, clothing, and souvenirs are found in abundance.



Photo 23 - The Weekend Market Chatuchak (2006)