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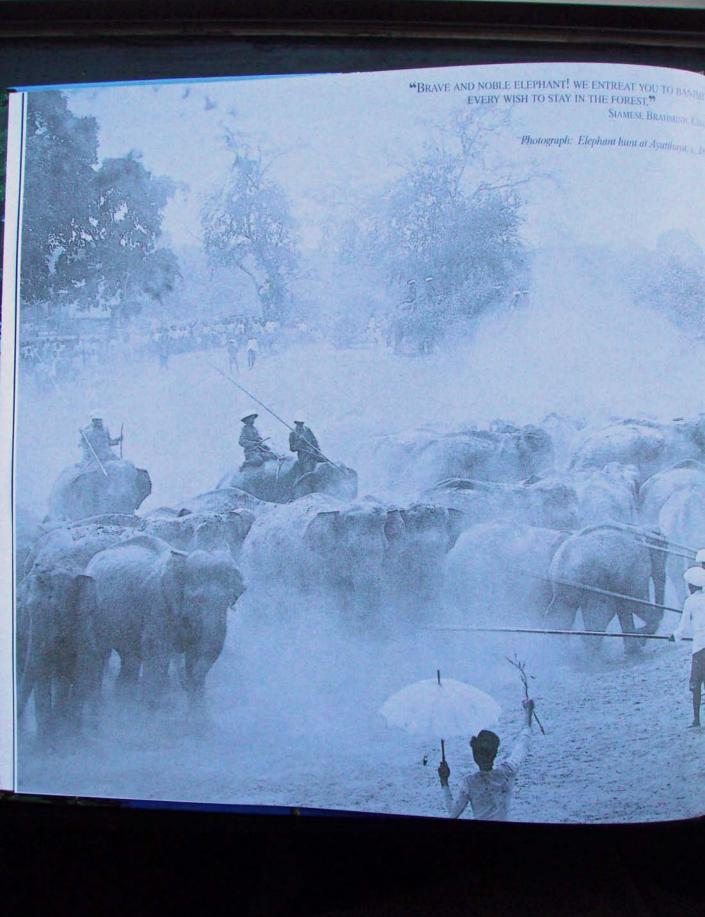
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"BANGKOK! I THRILLED, I HAD BEEN SIX YEARS AT SEA, BUT HAD ONLY SEEN MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY, VERY GOOD PLACES, CHARMING PLACES IN THEIR WAY – BUT BANGKOK!"

JOSEPH CONRAD

Photographs: Chao Phraya River, c. 1890. Wat Arun gate, c. 1890.







THAILAND



ARCHIPELAGO GUIDES

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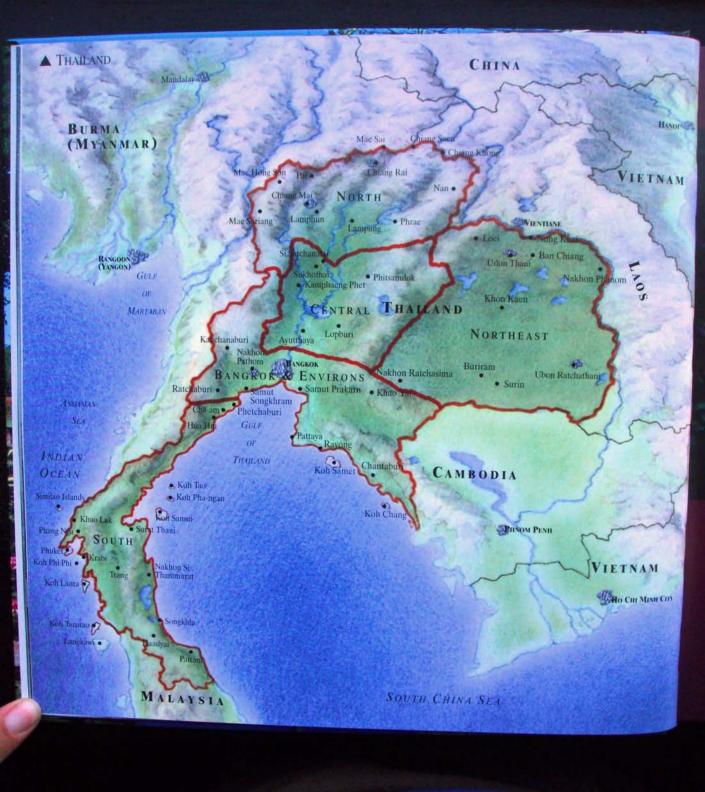
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How to Use this Guide

The symbols at the top of each page refer to the different parts of the guide.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

UNDERSTANDING VENICE

▲ ITINERARIES

♠ PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The itinerary map shows the main points of interest along the way and is intended to help you find your bearings. The mini-map locates the particular itinerary within the wider area covered by the guide.

....

The symbols alongside a title or within the text itself provide crossreferences to a theme or place dealt with elsewhere in the guide. ★ The star symbol signifies that a particular site has been singled out by the publishers for its special beauty, atmosphere or cultural interest.

At the beginning of each itinerary, the suggested means of transport to be used and the time it will take to cover the area are indicated:

- By boat
- ★ On foot ★ By bicycle
- By bicycle
 Duration

THE GATEWAY TO VENICE *

PONTE DELIA LIBERTA. Built by the Austrians 50 years after the Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797 ● 34, to link Venice with Milan. The bridge ended the thousand-year separation from the mainland and shook the city's economy to its roots as Venice, already in the throes of the industrial revolution, saw



* Half a day

BRIDGES TO VENICE

NATURE



WILD HABITATS, 9
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KOUPREY

Once a widely distributed

species, the kouprey is today

one of the most seriously

threatened large mammals in the world.

The banteng is a

species of wild ox

native to Southeast



RED RHODODENDROS

Much of Thailand's natural heritage is due to the shape of the country, a stretched ribbon of land over 900 miles long, spanning both seasonally dry zones and habitats where rain falls throughout the year. The present-day Thai landscape has been molded by the actions of various colonists in the past, with farming being the most important influence. About 20,000 square miles of the country are set aside as conservation areas (for example, northeast Thailand national parks \$\triangle 122-3), many

of which are open to the public, offering visitors an opportunity to encounter a wide range of plants and animals within a

natural environment.

BARKING DEER

Also called

muntjac, these

are found in woodlands, rain

forests and

vegetation

TROPICAL RAIN FOREST

It is one of the richest

ecosystems on the

planet today.

solitary animals

monsoon forests with dense

UNDERWATER

WORLD

It supports a great proportion of the country's interesting and

True evergreen rain forest exists only in the

extreme southern MINER DECIDEOUS FOREST region of peninsular Thailand, near the Malaysian border varied wildlife.

LEAF MONKEY (1)

large,

especially adapted

that of a

EVERGREEN

RAIN FOREST

AND GIBBON (2) These primates dwell in the forest canopy and feed on fruit and leaves. The leaf HORSBUIL

The strong and often ornate beak of the hornfull is perfectly modded for picking an cracking large fruit and seed pods from a wide range of forest plants.

lies at an altitude of 2,300-2,600 feet above

The Asian black bear is a forest dweller that feed-

mainly on nuts and fruit, as well

MONTANE EVERGREEN FOREST

This is typified by an open canopy with trees festooned in lichens and epiphytes. Trees are also much shorter

HILL EVERGREEN RAIN

FOREST Climbing from montane and less straight when compared with those of lowland forest. evergreen forests, an unclear transition zone of slightly smaller trees that are widely spaced apart

> WILD One of a large

number of valuable plants that grow wild in the forests of Thailand, the wild ginger plant is believed to have a number of medicinal healing properties that

FUNGI As part of the

are now being

investigated

nutrient recycling scheme of the natural forest, fungi play an essential role in all

forests and

woodlands

The only viable population of green peafowls remaining in Thailand is found in the Huai Kha Khaeng

RIVERINE GRASSLANDS

Open patches of riverine grassland and savanna are important feeding and browsing areas for many forest herbivores. Many areas of grassland were formerly forested but regular outbreaks of fire prevent woody regeneration of these area

MONITOR LIZARD

The monitor lizard is a diurnal species that feeds on insects, eggs. fish, other lizards, snakes, nestling birds and small mammals DRY DECIDLOUS WOODLANDS

Extensive dry deciduous woodlands with some dipterocarp species still occur in the north and east of the country

BAMBOO FOREST

Bamboo rones! Bamboo stands are present in monsoon forests and generally thrive in areas previously cleared by man, blocking out most growth beneath their lofty foliage.

Wildlife Sanctuary where about 300 birds gain refuge.



MANGROVES

Coastal mangrove formations help protect shorelines from

erosion and also provide a safe haven and nursery ground for a huge variety of fish species.

> GLORIOSA SUPERBA

■ TROPICAL FORESTS

Tropical forests are like a kaleidoscope of different worlds. They cover a fifth of the earth's land surface and are home to about half of the known species of animal and plant life. The forests ▲ 122-3 are confined to a belt

around the equator, where the stable climate.

temperature and humidity permit a great diversity of vegetation and wildlife.



These are diurnal primates living in groups of 15-30 animals, feeding on fruit, small vertebrates and insects. They are mostly found in hill forests.



Constant temperature and high humidity levels favor the growth of lianas, trailing vines, lichens and epiphytes.



The buttress or stilt-like roots of the trees help support them in the shallow soil.



The dark forest floor is alive with communities of omnivorous insects such as ants and



162 FEET

EMERGENT LAYER

above the canopy are

home to insectivorous

bats and birds such as

eagles and hornbills.

122 FEET

CANOPY LAYER The canopy is a continuous layer of foliage about 22 feet deep that supports a broad variety of animals. Mammals like flying squirrels, gibbons and macaques feed FLYING on the rich supply SQUIRREL of fruit,

leaves.

bark and nuts

FOLIAGE

coating is a

algae and moss.

TAPIR

A shy forest-dweller, this herbivore is often

found near quiet rivers and wallows, feeding on leaves and small trees.

79 FEET

The leaves of the canopy can change their UNDERSTORY Mammals like the peculiar binturong, pangolin and civet move freely in the positions in order to catch the maximum understory between the ground and the upper tree layer in search of morsels and a safe place to rest. amount of sunlight. Their drip-tips allow the rain to drain away and the waxy protection against

41 FEET

FOREST FLOOR At the top of the food chain are predators such as tigers or leopards that stalk their wary prey in the shade of the lower canopy and the forest floor.

GROUND

The plants, insects and fungi that dwell at ground level are fed upon by mammals and birds.



BINTURONG

Resembling a small bear, the binturong has a bushy. prehensile tail that enables it to feed in the trees as well as on the ground.



SHAFR-FARED

MESIA

SUNBIRD

PALM CIVET

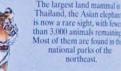
The agile small-toothed palm civet is a nocturnal species that searches for insects, fruit and small mammals in the branches of tall secondary forests.



SLOW LODIS

This is a solitary nocturnal primate with large eyes and a thickly furred body.





CLOUDED LEOPARD Living in tall secondary forests the clouded leopard is a nocturnal predator that feed on pigs, deer, monkeys and smaller animals.

NUTRIENT STORAGE

While in temperate forests a high

proportion of nutrients is held in a soil (left-hand columns, above)

the poorer tropical soil, they are held in the biomass (right-him)

columns, above). Because the se-

soil nutrients are found near the

surface, the roots of the trees

ELEPHANT

seldom grow deeper than 26 feet



The scaly armor plating of the pangolin allows it to roll into a tight ball when threatened. It feeds exclusively on ants and termites.



Different forms of plants and animals have evolved in harmony on the forest floor to recycle decaying materials such as leaves and tree trunks, returning valuable nutrients back to the soil. In time these are taken, up by other plants, sustaining the incredible diversity that exists in the forest and thereby continuing the natural cycle that began millions of years ago. The harmony and natural balance of this network is threatened by deforestation, shifting agriculture and human intrusions.



BROWN-THROATED SUNBIRD

The orchid family is the largest of the flower kingdom, with more than 35,000 wild species and as many hybrids. Thailand's tropical forests A 122-3 and mangroves 12 host an amazing diversity of both terrestrial and epiphytic species, presenting a vast array of

shapes, sizes, vibrant colors and intoxicating perfumes. Breeders in orchid farms ▲ 150 continually produce new hybrid species using artificial cross-pollination and propagation methods. Their creations are in great demand for the

international cut flower market.

> VENUS SLIPPER This yello terrestrial

orchid is found growing at low altitudes in limestone crevices near the coastal areas of Thailand, southern Burma and Cambodia

CORYBAS

This terrestrial orchid named after the Corybas, the dancing priests of Phrygia, because of its helmet-shaped sepals, lives in the dark undergrowth of the rain forest. It thrives on the abundant supply of moisture and

nutrients of the forest soil.

CYMBIDIUM SIAMENSIS

Cymbidium orchids, from the Greek word kymbion, which means boat-shi were praised by Confucius as the queen of all flowers." Although such orchids occur all over Asia, this particular ivory pecies is native to Thailand where it grows at altitudes of between 1,000 and 2,500 feet.

GARDENS IN THE AIR

Falling organic litter lodged between the tree branches forms a rich soil in which epiphytic plants such as bromeliads and orchids grow Orchids are non-parasitic species.

Their elaborate structure allows them to make the most of the supply of rainwater and nutrients without damaging their host plants. Petal Anther cap Labellum

VANDA COERCLEA

This specticular blue orchid Thailand belongs to the Vanda family. It grows at high altitudes between 3,300 feet and 4,600 feet, and can be found in the mountains around Chiang Mai

SUNBIRDS

In their search for nectar, sunbirds carry pollinia from flower to flower thus acting as pollinating agents

PSEUDO-COPULATION

Some orchids produce an aroma similar to that of female organs of insects, thus deceiving their pollinators. Lured into mating with the flower, the insect shakes the pollinia out of the anther cap. involuntarily causing pollination.

AFRIDES ODORATUM

The poetical name of this orchid, "children of the air", refers to its epiphytic habit. Also known as the "foxtail orchid," this fragrant flower comes in various shades of ivory, magenta and pink

BULBOPHYLLUM CONCINNUM

A common sight in mangroves and wetlands. this flower belongs to the largest group of orchids. Its rhizomes creep on tree roots and branches, producing clusters of golden spiky petals.

DENDROBRIUM TRIGONOPSIS

As indicated in its name dendrobrium from the Greek word dendron (tree), this aerial species grows on trees. Though its habitat ranges from the tropical forests of Malaysia to the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas, this flower is mostly found in the depth of the jungles of Thailand, Burma and Laos

CATTLEYAS

POLLINATION

Bees and wasps

are the most

pollinators of wild orchids. When the

insect lands on the

labellum, the pollinia adheres to its body. It

is then transferred to

other flowers

This variety of orchid named after William Cattley, the first horticulturist successfully to grow epiphytic orchids in England, is the most popular orchid in cultivated collections. Orchidists and breeders artificially crosspollinating species within genus or

intergenetically, carerate the most dazzling hybrids, many of which are developed for the cu

MANGROVES

Mangroves and intertidal mudflats are of great conservation value in Thailand, helping sustain valuable inshore fisheries and protecting the coast from erosion. With a constant supply of water, sunlight and nutrients the rate of growth of mangrove trees is very fast. The most extensive and species-rich mangrove ecosystems are found along the west coast of the peninsula ▲ 112-5. There are also several important mangroves and mudflats on the east coast, as well as in the inner gulf, although large areas have been converted to prawn ponds. The total area of mangrove forest is about 2,300 square miles most of which

are along the

fruit of the Nipa

forest



Crab-eating macaques are one of the numerous mammal species living in this environment.



Charcoal making is one of the many threats facing the coastal mangrove forest. Shrimp farming is another.



Free form furniture, made from the roots of the mangrove.

west coast. Hardy fruits of Amoora
calcullata and Xylocarpus gremata. There are few flowers or fruits in the mangrove

Cross section of the mangrove coastline. The swamps are criss-crossed by tidal channels, which are often bordered by the Nipa palm. The mangrove's enormous root systems are the dominant feature of the habitat. It extends to the low tide mark, below which the roots cannot obtain enough oxygen for growth. Where the ground rises above high tide mark level away from the open sea, the surroundings gradually assume the character of mangrove the surroundings gradually assume the character of lowland rain forest.

Below the water level, the mud and the to a plethora of marine life, including fish, crabs and molluses.

The Brahmini kite

circles above the

mangrove.

stuarine crocodile is rarely seen. Forest

A mangrove coast in southern Thailand, covering sinking limestone ranges millions of year old. As the sea level changes, the mangrove forest cover advances or retreats.

clearance and aquaculture projects are responsible for its dwindling numbers A 08



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harmful

The collared kingfisher (1) gray heron (2) and little cormorant (3) are bird species common in the coastal swamps and mud flats

water level

Rhizophora mucronata produces pointed spikes (right) that form effective instant seedlings. Equipped with tiny leaves at the top end, they drop off the parent into the mud below and take root at once. Apart from this unusual mode of propagation, Rhizophora mucronata produces conventional seeds as well.



RICEFIELDS

CRIMSON HERON

An extraordinary amount of human energy is invested in producing the rice crop throughout the year. Rice plays an important

> 1. PREPARING THE LAND The farmer and the water buffalo

rag a heavy plow to loosen up the

water-logged soil, and their trampling actions also help

to redistribute the

valuable nutrients

stored in the

soil. Prior to

planting, a heavy log is

pulled across the

muddy

base to

firm bed for the young

seedlings

prepare a

role in the daily lives of the people, providing the staple diet for the Thai population as well as being a major export crop. Many cultural rituals are closely tied to the cultivation of rice and complex calculations are made to predict forthcoming rainfall patterns and the bounty of future crops. Little has changed in the ricefields of Thailand

▲ 126 over the centuries and, in addition to providing an important wildlife refuge for a large number of species, they also remain a source of great spiritual and intellectual inspiration.







The bright green seedlings clustered in ricefields prior to transplanting and the sun-drenched fields of rice that await harvesting are familiar await barvesting are familiar sights in Thailand.

BIRDS OF THE RICEFIELDS The ricefields provide a rich feeding haven for a variety of birds. Some of the most common of these are the munias, a group of small, seed-eating birds that feed on ripening rice. These, in turn, attract aerial predators such as the black-shouldered kite and marsh harrier, which may also feed on amphibians such as frogs.

EGRETS AND HERONS The rich aquati and terrestrial life of the ricefields attracts large numbers of herons and egrets in all seasons Although egrets and herons usually feed alone, they often roost together, which probably assists in detecting predators A 107



Through careful management of the water level, the plants flourish, grain heads develop and swell as the sun ripens the swaying stalks. This stage of growth is the least demanding in terms of labor

input, but there are always water levels to be controlled, dykes

to be repaired and nursery beds to be tended elsewhere in the ricefields.



BEAST OF BURDEN

Although mechanical means of plowing ricefields are now available, most farmers still prefer traditional means of cultivation involving the use of the water buffalo as a general beast of burden. Known locally as the "Asian tractor", the water buffalo is also an important source of milk and meat for many people. Its hide is used in clothing and its dung is collected as a fertilizer or as a source of fuel for burning.

LIFE AT THE WATER'S EDGE

The ricefield provides an ideal habitat for reptiles, fish and amphibians. Many of the fields are deliberately stocked

with carp and catfish, which feed on decaying plants, algae and insect larvae Frogs also help control the level of harmful insects, thereby

eliminating the use of costly and often destructive pesticides



PAPAYA TREES

All available land is

cultivated. Papaya and banana trees are frequently planted on the verges of the ricefields.

2. Transplanting the Steplings
Once the ricefield has been flooded and
suitably prepared, bunches of bright green
seedlings are transplanted from the tiny
nursery beds where they were raised. This
work is done entirely by hand, people
laboring all day to set out row upon row of
tender young plants. The softened mud base
facilitates the planting process and seedlings
quickly take root in this habitat.



4. HARVESTING

4, HARYSTING

The harvesting of a paddy crop marks the end of a long period of hard labor and no time is lost in cutting the ripened golden stalks lest wild animals or inclement weather threaten to destroy the season's efforts. Rice stalks are harvested using a sharp sickle; the cutter lays the stalks tenderly on the ground in his wake. Later these will be collected and stacked, prior to threshing.



The ricefield mouse and rat are common inhabitants of all ricefields and open grasslands, feeding on fallen grain, seeds and insects. The rat may also feed on rice plants and may be a

where the dry grain is stored.



COMB

a frequent visitor to ricefields and it nests on the

edges of wooded marshland.

The long stalks of ripe corn are harvested and then beaten over a drum to dislodge the grains from the chaff. Winnowing

sifts off any remaining waste

while the plump rice grains are dried in the sun before being stored.

HARVESTING THE RICE AND THRESHING

It flies with broad wing beats.

DUCK

The comb duck



■ BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Ecdysis

10-12 days

TRADITIONAL SILK LOOM

Several spectacular species of butterfly are found in the mountain ranges of north and northwest Thailand, near Chiang Rai, Pai, Mae Hong Son, and in the national park northwest of Chiang Mai A 140. In the cultivated zones, ricefields and rubber plantations, few species have survived the process of deforestation. The entire zone from

Lampang to Chiang Mai is undergoing reforestation but the plant species being used do not produce a habitat favorable to the reestablishment of butterfly species. Certain "cosmopolitan" species of butterfly can travel for

miles across oceans. The first explorers to arrive in Siam found several well-known European, African and

North American species.

1. Dor Inthanon, highest point in Thailand (8,547 feet), poor wil and ear mall mountain butterflies are found

Check (6,600-8,250 feet), few cultivated areas and little highlant forests. Habitat of small butterflies.

Chang Mai plains, pierides and swallow-tail butterflies
 Mac Chaem, cultivated valley (1,580 feet) with a wide ramp

Mae Chaem, (untivared variety (1,380 feet) with a wide range of butterflies within the low vegetation.
 Mae Surin rain forest (330-4.950 feet), privileged home as most beautiful specimens in Thailand.
 Khun Yuan (1,659-3,300 feet), a zone where rain forest butterflies live side by side with the small valley species.

THE SILK INDUSTRY

The silk industry in Thailand is now located mainly in the northeast of the country. The larvae of the Mulbern bombal probably the best-known Thai moth, produce silk. This moth denot exist in the wild. Having long been domesticated, it has ever lost the ability to fly.



ATROPHANEURA POLYEUCTES A jungle butterfly

STICOPHTALMA CAMADEVA that sometimes This is the biggest diurnal butterfly in Thailand and ventures into towns and villages South East Asia with a wing span of 5.6 inches.

TROIDES AEACUS

The Troides aeacus reigns in the north. Its caterpillar deters birds and insectivorous reptiles by living n a poisonous liana, the aristoloche which protects it against predators. This butterfly has recently been

designated an endangered species.

ACHERONTIA

The Acherontia lachesis, which lives in the northern mountains, is the Thai cousin of the European "death's head hawk moth" (A. atropos). It is a nocturnal butterfly and will risk its life to penetrate beehives to gorge itself on the honey.

TERINOS CLARISSA

The Terinos clarissa belongs to the alides family. This small butterfly is mauve, varying in shade with the angle of vision. It flies

discreetly close to the ground in the deep forest and at rest it is camouflaged against the vegetation.



PAPILIO ARCTURUS

The black part of the wings of the Papilio arcturus looks as though it is sprinkled with emerald dust. This spectacular butterfly can often be seen along mountain

BHUTANITIS LIDDERDALI

tracks

This butterfly is from the northern mountain valleys. At rest, its hind wings are covered by the fore wings, hiding their magnificent colors and allowing the with its surroundings.



1 to days

LIFE CYCLE

OF THE MULBERRY

BOMBYX

1-2 days

Ovigenesis

4-12 days Pupation

Silk spmnin

After ecdysis the silkworms are placed on bamboo. trays, known as jo, where they secrete a fibrous slime that protects them until metamorphosis



A mural painting from Wat Phumin in Nan Province, shows a Lanna lady selecting spools of yarn while working at a The



Cocoons are taken from the jo and boiled to remove the sticky sericin coating the silk



The filaments are spun and eventually skem are produced. Each cocoon yields about 2.00

feet of usable thread (mai luad), although it

total a mature cocoon can contain over I mil

of thread in about 30 layers. Silk made from thread still coated with sericin is called raw

silk. Natural silk or tussah is the silk produc

by undomesticated caterpillars living in tree

The raw thread is bright yellow. Before weaving it is washed first in a herbal mixture made from the bark and leaves of the banan tree, and then in a ke solution made from a thorny vine that is commonly found on thorny vine that is commonly found on hillsides, then dyed. Traditional dyes used include lae, indigo, krajai berries and thalan-roots. To the east of Chiang Mai, on the way to Charoen Muang, it is possible to visit a magnanerie (silkworm rearing house) and to taste chrysalides which have been grilled after the remeable of their silk filturents. the removal of their silk filaments







Green turtles are exploited for their shell, flesh and eggs, and their numbers have been decimated wherever they occur.

The coral reef ecosystem is one of the richest habitats on earth. Coral colonies are composed of countless individuals - polyps - that feed on plankton. Although coral reefs can cover a large area. they grow very slowly: it may take 1,000 years for a reef to grow just 3 feet. When corals die, their skeletons remain and a new generation of polyps can grow on top of them. Each type of coral has its own distinctive shape, adding further to the splendor of the reef ecosystem.



COACHMAN FISH

The name of this fish derives from the long, whip-like appendages that often hang from its dorsal fin.



Originating in the Indo-Pacific region, this species is quite aggressive



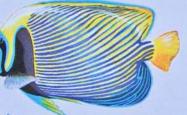
This fish has one of the largest territories of all coral-reef dwellers.



Its common name refers to an erect spine in its dorsal fin, which cannot be released until a second spine (the trigger) is withdrawn.

Parrot fish have large scales and a

typically bird-like beak formed of fused teeth.



CORAL REEFS AND POLYPS

Coral reefs provide an important source of food and income to local Thais. A coral polyp is a soft, almost transparent animal that builds its skeleton outside its body. Polyps feed at night by extending their tentacles, each of which is armed with a series of stinging cells that paralyse any passing prey. The moray eel is a key predator in the reef ecosystem; it hides in crevices, lunging out to seize unsuspecting fish.



HISTORY



PEOPLE OF SIAM, 17 PREHISTORY, 18 THE FIRST MILLENNIUM, 18 THE SIAMESE KINGDOM, 19 THE LANNA KINGDOM, 20 CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, 21

TRIPLE BANDIT CLOWN FISH This fish lives in close association with sea anemones.



PEOPLE OF SIAM

DEMOGRAPHY
Thailand has a total population of 63 million; about one third is below the age of 20.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

71.3 years, while

for women, it is

76.3 years.

The average life span for Thai men is Thailand is a mosaic of peoples and cultures, and has had remarkably little racial conflict. This may be due to the fact that the central Thai have ruled more by consensus than by force. The widespread practice of Theravada Buddhism has also promoted racial harmony.

THE THAIS. At the beginning of the first millennium, a people known as the Tai migrated from what is now southern China into the Chao Phraya River valley. When the Tai first arrived, the region was inhabited by Austro-Asiatic

groups speaking Mon and Khmer; the present-day Thais are the product of the assimilation and fusion of these three groups. Many Thais still live in southern China (particularly in Yunnan, Guangdong, and Guangxi). Today four subdivisions of Thais are recognized in the country; the central Thais (from the region between Sukhothai and Phetchaburi), who speak the standard Thai taught in schools; the Pak Isan Thais (a mixture of Thai and Khmer in the northeast), who also speak standard Thai:

the Pak Tai Thais (south of Phetchaburi), who have a darker complexion and speak a dialect largely incomprehensible to

central Thais; the northern Thais, who speak a different dialect and who are a fusion of Thai immigrants with Karens and Lawas (Austro-Asiatic). Each of these groups had largely independent histories until recent centuries.



BUDDINSTS
Ninety-five percent of its population are Buddhists, making Thailand the largest Theravada Buddhist country in the world.

THE CHINESE. As traders, the Chinese arrived long before the Thais. They settled more permanently, at first in coastal cities in the south and then in other areas. The peak period of Chinese migration was in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and they now form a substantial part of most urban populations. Thanks to extensive assimilation, it is difficult to distinguish them as a separate ethnic group.

THE LAOS. Much of the northeast is inhabited by groups of Lao-speaking people – Lao Wieng, Yuai, Yo, Lao Kao and Phutai – who migrated (some were forcibly moved) mostly during the last century and are today among the poorest in

the country. Like the Thais, they belong to the Sino-Tibetan group. They are renowned for their weaving skills, and some groups were once distinguished by their dress, rather like today's hill tribes; these elaborate costumes can still be seen during village festivals. Though Buddhist, many still practice older animistic rituals.

THE KHMERS. Khmer-speaking people are also numerous in some parts of the northeast, particularly in Surin province near the Cambodian border. Most of them migrated during the 19th century when Siam occupied a large part of Cambodia. In the 1970s, the war in Cambodia drove millions of Khmer refugees into Thailand. The refugees' repatriation or resettlement took over a decade to complete.



LANGUAGE Eighteen million people in Thailand speak Lao.

THE SHANS. The Thai Yai (right), called the Ngiaw by the Thais, belong to the Tai linguistic family and migrated from the Shan states of Burma in the 19th century. Today the Shans are scattered throughout the north, especially in Mac Hong Son and Mac Sariang.

THE MUSLIMS. Thailand's largest religious minority, Muslims live mainly in the southernmost provinces. In Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala, separatist violence has erupted where an ethnic Malay majority speaks Yawi (ancient Malay), though not among the Thai-speaking Muslims of Satun. Ninety-nine percent of Thai Muslim



are Sunni. Those Muslims
who are not ethnic Malays are
mainly descendants of Persian,
Middle Eastern and Indian traders
(left) who had settled in Siam during ³
the Ayutthaya and early Bangkok
periods.

THE MONS. These people, who live mostly in Nakhon Pathom, Samut Songkram and Samut Prakan, are not ancestors of the ancient Mon culture that once ruled over portions of central Thailand, but relatively recent Buddhist immigrants from Burma.

HILL TRIBES. The majority of the hill tribes ▲ 146, 152-5 in northern Thailand are relatively recent immigrants to the region. Only the Karens and the Lawas (right) were settled in the country before the arrival of the

Thais. The hill tribes form a minority. In 1999, their total population was about 873,700. Apart from the Karens and the Lawas, this group also includes the Miens (Yaos), Lisus, Lahu Shis and the Blue and White Hmongs. While aspects of religions such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam have been adopted by some hill tribes, animism is still in evidence.





A Karen with traditional pendants

TAK For t

PREHISTORY

ROCK PAINTINGS

Several caves or rock faces are decorated with paintings from simple handprints to complete tableaux showing scenes of hunting, fishing and dancing. These could date back to the 4th century BC. Some are easily accessible, like those at Khao Chiang Ngam, 124 miles from Bangkok on the road to Khorat.

TRIPOD (c. 2000 BC) This pottery tripod was found at Ban Kao, in the

Kanchanaburi province. It was probably copied from a tin prototype, and is reminiscent of the Chinese bronzes of the Han dynasty.

3000 BC First civilizations in Mesopotamia.

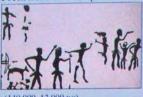
2700-2300 BC Egyptian pyramids of Kheops, Khephren and Mykerinos buih.

1765-1122 BC Shang Dynasty.

566-486 BC Buddha.

219 BC Hannibal crosses the Alps. PLEISTOCENE. Evidence of Pleistocene cultures, dating from 600,000–130,000 BC, have been found in various parts of

Thailand, from Lampang in the north to Krabi in the south. The earliest implements found were pebble tools, followed by early flake tools (300,000–290,000 BC), then by Proto-



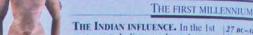
Hoabinhian pebble tools (140,000-13,000 BC)

HOABINHIAN. This term was coined by a French archeologist in Vietnam in the 1920's and covers a period from around 120,000 2000 BC. The earliest Hoabinhian tools in Thailand were found in caves in Mae Hong Son and Kanchanaburi, In the former, the American archeologist Chester Gorman found tools and seeds of various cultivated plants including betel nut, black pepper, bottle gourd and cucumber. These have been dated by carbon-14 tests to as far back as 9700-6000 BC, far earlier than previously suspected. More sophisticated tools like the polished adze and the edge-ground knife appeared in the cave around 6800 BC Pottery has also been found at the same level.

BAN CHIANG \$\times\$ 117. The discoveries of a prehistoric culture at Ban Chiang, in the northeastern province of Udon Thani, have aroused considerable archeological controversy, with some historians questioning the early dates originally ascribed to the appearance of copper and bronze. Most now accept that the initial dating of 4000 BC is too early but still maintain that the two metals could possibly be dated to between 2500 BC and 2000 BC – later than their first appearance in the Middle East but approximately contemporare easiet.

2000 BC – later than their first appearance in the Middle Eas but approximately contemporaneous with copper in China – and that Thailand had a

and that I hailand had a true Bronze Age. Painted pottery found in the burial sites at Ban Chiang and elsewhere in the northeast was produced relatively late in the culture's history, between 1000 BC and 500 BC. The most recent level of the Ban Chiang excavation is dated at around 250 BC.



century Ab, Indian merchants began arriving in peninsular Thailand in search of new products to trade. They brought with them Indian ideas of art, architecture, religion and government that dominated the south over the next five centuries and later spread to other parts of the country. At first Hindu images were

produced, but, from the

5th century onward, Buddhist images appeared in greater numbers, reflecting this new religion, which also came from India.

SRIVIJAYA A 103. Beginning in the 8th century AD a new, more warlike empire called Srivijaya was established in the southern peninsula, originating from Sumatra. It remained the principal force in the region until the 13th century. Many historians disagree about the exact center of the empire, but one of its important centers was Ligor, or Nakhon Si Thammarat. Wholly Hindu at first, Srivijaya later also practiced Mahayana Buddhism and beautiful images were created for both religions.

DVARAVATI ▲ 81-2. What is traditionally called the Dvaravati Period extends from the 7th to 11th centuries AD; a more accurate name might be Mon, for during this period, several Mon kingdoms rose in central Thailand, first at U Thong near the subsequent Thai capital of Ayutthaya, and later at Lopburi and Nakhon Pathom. All three were centers of Theravada Buddhism, the sect eventually adopted throughout the country. The Mons eventually succumbed to the more powerful Khmers.

KHMER EMPIRE. In the 7th century AD the rising Khmer Empire began to extend its power over the northeastern region. By the 11th century it had reached the Chao Phraya River valley. The great period of Khmer monument building commenced with the reign of Suriyavarman I (AD 1002-50) ▲ 118. The principal religion in the early centuries was Hinduism, which was replaced with Mahayana Buddhism by the late 12th century. Khmer power began to wane in the 13th century.

MIGRATION OF THE THAIS. It is thought that in the 11th century AD Thais migrated in large numbers from Yunnan in southern China, driven by a desire for greater independence and better farmland. They formed two groups of kingdoms, in the north near the Mekong River and further south at the edge of the Chao Phraya River valley.

St 27 BC-4D 14 Foundation of the Roman Empire

> AD 330 Foundation of Constantinople

> > Votive tablet the Srivijava era.

Buddhist settlements at Dunhuang

40 348

AD 395
Fall of the Roman
Empire.

AD 518-907 Tang Dynasti

> AD 571-631 Mohamus

WHEEL OF THE LAW This wheel dates from the 7th centure and is a symbol of the law taught by Buddha.

AD 762 Foundation of Baghdad.

AD 800-14 Reign of Charleman Holy Roman Empire

AD 960-1274 Sung Dynasty.

AD 1066 The Norman Conquest in England

AD 1096-9 The First Crusude

18

1253 Guillau Rubrou

Karako

1245

feun de

H

1274 Death o Thomas Aquinas

Arrival of the China Chi

1276

1338 Beginnin Hundres between France.

Black De reaches in 1368–16 Ming Dy

1492 Christoph Columbu discovers Americas

1602 Foundatie East India

1644-191 Qing Dyna Soldiers and elephants, in celadon, from the Sukhothai era.

THE SIAMESE KINGDOM

1245 Jean de Plancarpin travels to Karakorum

Guillaume de Rubrouck travels to Karakonum.

1274 Death of Thomas Aquinas

of

ies

land

Arrival of Marco Polo in China.

1279-1368 Yuan Dynasty

Beginning of the Hundred Years War between England and

1348 Black Death reaches Europe

1368-1644 Ming Dynasty

1492 Christopher Columbus discovers the Americas

1602 Foundation of Dutch East India Company.

1644-1911 Qing Dynasty POWER STRUGGLE IN SUKHOTHAL

In the first half of the 13th century, probably in the 1240's, a Thai chieftain later known as King Intradit joined forces

with several other groups, overthrew the Khmer overlord at Sukhothai A 251, 254, and established an independent Thai kingdom of the same name Sukhothai remained small under its first two rulers: it expanded dramatically, however, during the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng (left). exerting either direct or indirect power over much of present-day Thailand through force

and strategic alliances. Ramkhamhaeng is also credited with devising the Thai alphabet as well as a paternalistic system of monarchy that is regarded as ideal even to this day. Aside from its

political achievements, Sukhothai is also remembered for its superb Buddhist art and architecture, which were distinctively Thai, and which are still considered the finest ever created in the country. Also notable were the beautiful ceramics produced first at Sukhothai and later at the satellite city of Si Satchanalai. Sukhothai's empire

began to fall apart rapidly after Ramkhamhaeng's death and by 1320 it had once more become a small kingdom of little regional significance. By 1378 it had become a vassal state of Ayutthaya.

THE RISE OF AYUTTHAYA. Ayutthaya was founded on the Chao Phraya River by King Ramathibodi in 1350. Over the next four centuries, it grew from a small, fortified city into one of the great capitals of the region, its power reaching far beyond the fertile river valley. The capital fell to the Burmese in 1569, but less than two decades later regained independence under the able leadership of the future King Naresuan, who proceeded to extend its rule over most of the southern peninsula, the north, and both

Cambodia and Laos. Relations with Europe began with a treaty between Siam and Portugal in 1516. The Dutch received permission to build a trading station in 1604, followed by the British in 1612. By King Narai's reign in 1656, Ayutthaya

already had a cosmopolitan population of nearly a million. The first French Catholic missionary arrived in

Ayutthaya in 1662, joined by others two years later. Given land on which to build churches and schools by King Narai, they became an important force in relations between the two countries. The first Thai embassy sent to France was lost at sea in 1681, but a second arrived safely in 1684 and formally requested a French mission to Ayutthaya. The first of these missions arrived in

1685, headed by the Chevalier de Chaumont! a second arrived two years later. A Thai embassy accompanied the first on its return to France and was received at the court

of Louis XIV. Following the death of King Narai in 1688, conservative elements assumed control and expelled many Europeans during the latter part of Avutthaya's rule A 124.

THE FALL OF AYUTTHAYA. Shortly after King Ekatat assumed the throne in 1758, Ayutthaya was attacked once more by the Burmese under King Alaungpaya. A second invasion led by Alaungpaya's son, Hsinbyushin, succeeded in capturing Ayutthaya, after a siege lasting more than a year. The city was burned and looted by the victors and more than 30,000 of its inhabitants were taken to Burma. Son of a Chinese father and a Thai mother, the future King Taksin was a military officer at the time of Ayutthaya's fall, Within seven months he managed to rally Thai forces, expel the Burmese from the ruins of the city, and establish a new capital at Thonburi, further down the Chao Phraya River.

THE CHARRI DYNASTY. In March 1782 a revolt broke out against King Taksin ● 20 ▲ 134, who was thought to have become insane. He was replaced by a prominent military commander who, as King Rama I, founded the Chakri Dynasty and, for strategic reasons, moved the seat of government across the river to a small trading port known as

Bangkok, King Rama IV, or King Mongkut (r. 1851-68, left), is best known as the hero of The King and I. To the Thais, however, he is remembered as one of the most farsighted Chakri rulers, who negotiated important treaties with European powers. introduced modern sciences, and set his kingdom on the path to reforms that undoubtedly helped save it from the

colonial fate that befell all its immediate neighbors. During his reign from 1868 to 1910, King Rama V (below), or King Chulalongkorn as he is better known, carried his father's reforms further. He abolished slavery, reorganized the

governmental system, and built the first railways. The first Thai king to visit European capitals, Rama V also sent most of his sons abroad for further education. Though forced to concede a considerably large sector of Thai territory to France and England, Rama V was able to preserve his country's independence

1787 American Constitution drafted

of Russin

Catherine II

1762-96

The French Revolution

1804-14 Napoleon Bonaparie

1868-1912 Meiii Period in Japan

Suez Canal opened.

RAMA V SURROUNDED BY HIS FAMILY This portrait w painted by the Italian artist Gelli.





THE LANNA KINGDOM

6TH CENTURY AD

571-632

Erik the Red discovers Greenland.

A Bodhi tree at Wat Pong Yang Kok in Lampang Luang.

The First Crusade Jerusalem taken.

Foundation of Tenochtitlan by the Aztecs

Constantinople taken by the Turks.

Vasco da Gama discovers sea route to India.

Wat Ched Yod at Chiang Mai, built in 1455.

Northern Thailand, which has a history largely independent from the rest of the country, appears to have been populated by different groups of Thais, who assimilated with local inhabitants and settled in the fertile valleys of the north around the first millennium. Present-day Chiang Saen was the seat of the Ngong Yang kingdom, and was one of the main centers. Chiang Saen

150 and Payao, another center, were both in contact with India, through Burma, and traded with the Srivijaya empire. The decline of the latter led to the emergence of a trade route to China and ultimately to the birth of a powerful kingdom in the north.

> HARIPUNCHAI (LAMPHUN) ▲ 141. Mon immigrants from the Dvaravati kingdom of Lopburi founded the city of Haripunchai in the 7th century, as well as a string of fortified towns around it. Devout Buddhists, the Mons were a key force in the conversion of the Thais in the north

and Haripunchai remained an important cultural center for centuries.

KING MENGRAL Unification of the small northern principalities was achieved by King Mengrai, a Ngong Yang chief of mixed Thai and Lawa blood. Embarking on a grand scheme for conquering the whole region, he founded Chiang Rai ▲ 151, seized Haripunchai in 1292, annexed Payao and, in 1296, founded his new capital of Chiang Mai. He thus established the powerful Lanna kingdom, which was to last for 600 years before being annexed by Siam. For a considerable period, toward the end of the kingdom, it was in effect under Burmese or Central Thai control ▲ 134, 136.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF LANNA.

The 15th century saw the flowering of the Lanna kingdom, which was powerful enough to host an international Buddhist gathering in 1455. Trade, art

and education flourished, despite the

(today parts of Laos, Burma and

King of Lanna.

occasional feudal battles between vassals and princes. The west bank of the Mekong

Thailand) was also ruled by the

THE BURMESE INVASION.

Quarrels over the possession of

a powerful talisman, an image of the Buddha, led to a Burmese invasion in 1558 and Lanna became a vassal state of the King of Pegu, governed by Burmese-appointed rulers. King Naresuan of Ayutthaya, fighting the Burmese who had

invaded Siam, expelled these rulers from Lanna in 1598 and for the next 1 years Ayutthaya remained the dominant power in the north.

THE BURMESE ERA. In 1615, the Burmese King of Ava reestablished control over Lanna, which lasted for more than a century. Actual Burmese presence in the north, however, remained minimal and had very little effect on most of the population. The

darkest period in the history of the north began with the rebellion of General Thip, who defeated a Burmese army and proclaimed himself King of Lampang in 1727. His successors eventually ruled in the 19th century, but before that, the King

of Ava sent army after army into Lanna and Siam. After the fall of Ayutthaya, Kawila of Lampang and King Taksin of Thonburi joined forces against the Burmese. Having reconquered Chiang Mai in 1776, however, the Thais were forced to abandon the impoverished city. Lanna and Laos were decimated by the endless war; towns such as Chiang Saen, Luang Prabang and Vientiane, previously spared by the Burmese, were destroyed by the Thais to prevent their recapture. The strain, accumulated over many hard-fought battles, took its toll on Taksii and affected his mental health. He became eccentric and cruel toward his subordinates. In

1782, an élite group

of officials led by Phya San rebelled, forcing Taksin to abdicate.

THE 19TH CENTURY. Independent but impoverished, 19th-century Lanna was governed by the family of Kawila ▲ 143, nominally a vassal of Thailand, but in fact autonomous. Not until 1874 was a Thai High Commissioner sent to administer the north and during the reign of King Rama V the region was slowly incorporated into the Thai kingdom, Laos, east of the Mekong, annexed by King Rama I during the Burmese War, was ceded to France in 1893, following a show of force by gunboats 1588 defeated.

1910

Annexa by Japa

Outbre War O

1917 Russia

1922 Mussi march

1927 Lindb solo fi Atlan

The old walls of

John Kay invent flying shuttle.

Chiang Mai.

1769 Richard Arkwright erects spinning mill

A BURMESE PRINCE Mural painting a Lampang (left).

1837-1901 Reign of Queen

1894 Japan declares war against China.

Chao Kaew Nawara last king of Chiang Mai (1911-39)

1936 Spani

Outbre War To



CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

1910 Annexation of Korea by Japan.

become a modern nation recognized by the Western world, its boundaries apparently more or less secure. The following 80 years, however, were to be turbulent and marked by momentous events both inside the country and beyond.

1914 Outbreak of World War One.

1917
Russian Revolution.

1918 End of World War One.

1922 Mussolini's Fascists march on Rome.

Lindbergh makes first solo flight across the Atlantic.

1933 Hitler appointed chancellor.

1936-9 Spanish Civil War.

Outbreak of World War Two.

In 1910, at the time of King Rama V's death, Thailand had

FROM RAMA VI TO MODERN LEADERS. The first Thai ruler to be educated abroad, King Rama VI continued many of the reforms initiated by his father. In 1913, a law was passed requiring Thai citizens to have surnames for the first



time: the first university, Chulalongkorn, was established in 1917; the country entered World War One on the side of the Allies; and unequal treaties with Western powers were renegotiated in Thailand's favor.

END OF THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY. King Rama VI's successor, Rama VII (above and below), inherited numerous economic and social problems. On June 24, 1932, a small

group of foreign-educated military officers and civil servants staged a coup d'état calling for a constitutional monarchy. The king, who had already been thinking along such lines himself, granted their request. Later, he became dis-

illusioned and abdicated in 1935, spending the rest of his life in England. Prince Ananda Mahidol, then a boy of 10, was named his successor and a regency council was appointed until he completed his studies in Switzerland.

POWER STRUGGLES. The two dominant figures in Thai politics during the 1930's were Luang Pibulsonggram, later known as Field Marshal Pibul, and Dr Pridi Panomyong. Both men were educated in France. These two leaders held



different views on many issues and were in frequent conflict. By the end of the decade, Pibul had become the country's Prime Minister and Dr Pridi had held several senior posts, including that of Minister of Foreign







Pearl Harbor

THE PACIFIC WAR. In 1940, following the fall of France skirmishes broke out along the borders of Thailand and Indo-China which resulted in the return of areas in Laos and Cambodia to Thailand the following year. Upon the outbreak of the Pacific War on December 8, 1941, Japan demanded free passage through southern Thailand for its attack against British territories. Unable to resist, Pibul granted permission and, further, issued a declaration of war against Great Britain and the United States in January 1942. A Free Thai underground movement was organized by Pridi during the war, not only bringing him back to power but also enabling Thailand to avoid being treated as an enemy nation following Japan's defeat.

THE NEW KING. On June 9, 1946, the young King Ananda (right) was found shot dead in his room at the Grand Palace during a visit from Switzerland. His younger brother thus came to the throne as King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX, in circumstances that were both tragic and politically explosive.



Indian Independence.

Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. End of

World War Two.

1048 Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

1950-3

1953

Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing reach

ammit of Everest.

Korean War.

TUMULTUOUS TIMES. The next three decades saw a number of coups and counter-coups. Accused of complicity in the death of the king, Pridi was forced into exile by Pibul, Though Pridi attempted two comebacks, in 1949 and 1951, both ended in failure and he retired first to China and finally to France. Pibul remained in power until he, too, was overthrown by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat in 1957. In October 1973 Thai students staged a series of massive demonstrations that overthrew the military government and sent its leaders into exile. Three years of chaotic democracy ensued, but in 1976, alarmed by the unrest and by the fall of Indo-China to communists, rightist elements returned to power in a violent coup in which several hundred students were killed.

A UNIQUE MONARCHY. One of the outstanding forces in contemporary Thailand is the monarchy that has evolved under King Bhumibol Adulyadej (below) following his official coronation in 1950. Though theoretically operating under constitutional limitations similar to those that apply in Britain, the king has achieved an imposing moral authority rivaling that of his absolute ancestors, largely through an extensive network of royally initiated programs aimed at rural development. Today the king and other members of the royal family spend much of the year outside Bangkok, overseeing such projects as crop substitution for northern hill tribes to replace their traditional opium poppy and improved water

resources in the arid northeast. The great respect earned through these endeavors has enabled the king to act as a decisive mediator in times of severe civil unrest, particularly during the student revolution of 1973 and, even more dramatically, during the political upheaval of 1992 when he made an unprecedented television appearance to effect a compromise between the opposing groups.

Treaties establishing EEC come into force.

Assassination of John F. Kennedy.

1969 First men land on the



MODERN THAILAND. Thailand's recent history has been marked by further military coups, successful and otherwise, but it has also enjoyed steady economic and social progress. During the eight-year premiership of General Prem Tinsulanonda (1979–88), a local communist

insurgency ended, relations with neighboring countries improved, and the incremental reintroduction of democratic institutions gained increasing public support among the general population. Meanwhile, Thailand achieved the status of a "Newly Industrialized Country", with manufactured exports overtaking agricultural produce in

national revenue.



1975 End of Vietnam War

Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia, falls to the Vietnamese. First European space shuttle launched.

1986 People Power movement inseats Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos.

1989 Berlin Wall is demolished. Tiananmen Square massacre takes place.

1990

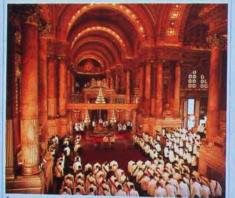
1991

Iraq invades Kuwait.

Operation Desert Storm liberates

Collapse of the Soviet Union.

Bangkok Post



In a temporary setback, bloody suppression of antidictatorship protests forced the resignation of the nonelected Prime Minister General Suchinda Kraprayoon in May 1992. While this unrest damaged the country's image

of stability, many knowledgeable observers saw this as an encouraging sign that predominantly middle-class demonstrators succeeded in resisting the traditional military

dominance in politics. For the next fourteen years a series of democratically elected, if fractious governments avoided military interference. Peaceful elections continued in spite of an unprecedented economic upheaval that began with a devaluation of the Thai baht in 1997 and spread throughout Asia. Thailand suffered the closure of many financial companies, banks, and manufacturing plants, resulting in social problems and scores of unfinished building projects that had started during the boom. A bailout effort by the International Monetary Fund, together with positive steps by the Chuan Leckpai government, put the country on the road to recovery. Fortunately, Thailand was able to avoid the serious social disruption that afflicted some of its neighbors, with villages reabsorbing migrants and the middle class calmly reverting to simpler lifestyles discarded during the pre-1997 consumer boom.



CONTEMPORARY CULTURE. The economic crash had positive effects too. It brought a reassessment of things lost during the boom, when the emphasis was on development and consumption of imported brands. A renewed pride in Thai products and traditions emerged, combined with new cosmopolitanism. Initially, this focused on small-scale fairs. Soon designers incorporated indigenous materials and forms into Thai brands with a contemporary style. Now exported worldwide, this fusion style predominates in furniture, fashion clothing, lifestyle objects and the interiors of increasingly upscale shops, bars, restaurants, hotels and spas. Thailand was an early focus of the world spa boom, which has helped revive traditional massage and herbal therapies. Thai cuisine has also received imaginative attention as high-quality culinary practices have swept cities and resorts. This refinement has been mirrored in the arts. With international film festivals becoming frequent, Thai films have improved in quality and number, winning awards at Cannes and earning more abroad than at home. Thai contemporary art has experienced huge innovation, diversity and international acclaim. Even in music, Thai singers are starting to record in

English for foreign sales.
Greater sophistication has also brought new thinking. Many young urbanites identify as "indie", or independent. This less deferential outlook will likely bring further changes to a society already transformed.



Thailand aspires to be regarded as a fully developed country and a regional hub in myraid activities. This

involves vast construction and huge budgets. The SkyTrain and subway, launched in 1999 and 2004 respectively, have already changed life in Bangkok and more lines will follow. Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi Airport is among the world's biggest, though many problems plagued its opening in 2006. By virtue of its location, the country is becoming a transit hub. Highways and possibly railroads will soon traverse Thailand from Vietnam to Burma, and China to Malaysia. China has blasted rapids and built ports on the Mekong to turn the river into a trading channel while damming it for hydro-electric power. Various construction plans will open up remote or protected areas to development. As well as new dams and roads, a long-mooted shipping canal and oil "land bridge across the narrow Kra Isthmus would create a shortcut between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Although the tourist industry aims to shift from quantity to quality, arrivals will doubtless grow, especially from Korea and China. It is becoming clear that after periods under the influence of Japan and America in the 20th century, Thailand in the 21st century will once again turn its attention northwards.

1992 Bill Clinton (Democrat) elected President of the United States

1993 UN-sponsored elections take place in Cambodia.

1994 End of US embarge on Vietnam.

1007

Asian econor

Handover of Hong

Kong to China. ASEAN accepts

Burma, Laos as

1998 India & Pakistan test nuclear weapons Fall of President Suharto in Indonesas

1999 Cambodia joins ASEAN.

members

Bali bombii Tulibai ousted Afghan

2001

Sept 1 World the US

2003 The US sends to

2004 Indian Tsunan

2005 Hurrican

North Ki nuclear



2000 George W Bush becomes US President.

Sept 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the US.

Bali

THAKSIN'S RISE AND FALL. The liberal constitution of 1997 ushered in an era of strong governance, with consolidated parties ultimately not restrained by new watchdog institutions. Thaksin Shinawatra, a telecommunications tycoon and Thailand's richest man, won the January 2001 election with his populist party Thai Rak Thai (Thais Love Thais, TRT). After narrowly winning a corruption trial, Thaksin brought about unprecedented reforms, including farm debt moratoriums, cheap universal healthcare, and cash handouts to each village. Encouraging entrepreneurship and expecting officials to act like CEOs, Thaksin's cabinet stoked booms in stock, property and consumer credit, Fuelling nationalism, it repaid the IMF loan early. The economy withstood a series of calamities: the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Avian Flu epidemics, the Bali bombings and the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Inundating resorts along Thailand's Andaman Sea coast

2002 bombing. Taliban ousted in Afghanistan 2003

on 26 December 2004, the tsunami led to some safety and planning improvements, though land grabs and hasty rebuilding repeated the ad hoc development

The US sends troops to Iraq.

2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami

2005 Hurricane Katrina

2006 North Korean nuclear test

of Thai tourist infrastructure. In political and social policy, TRT appeared to be emulating Singapore. A "social order campaign" included violent drug suppression, random raids on bars, earlier closing times, youth curfews, the taming of Patpong's adult shows and proclamations against revealing clothing. Increased bloodshed in the Muslim deep south raised concern about human rights that led to a reconciliation commission, though separatist violence continued. Allegations against Thaksin of corruption, rights abuses and offending the monarchy snowballed into mass demonstrations in late 2005. Protests intensified when Thaksin's family sold its telecoms firm to Singapore, avoiding tax. After the opposition boycotted Thaksin's snap re-election in April 2006, politics entered hiatus during celebrations for the King's Diamond Jubilee in June 2006. The Army Chief, General Sothi Boonyaratglin, broke the impasse through a bloodless coup on 19 September 2006, stranding Thaksin in exile. Largely accepted by the public, the junta's Council for National Security abolished the constitution and appointed a government of bureaucrats under retired General Sarayud Chulanond. The regime aimed to heal social divisions and hold elections before 2008 under a new constitution, but New Year bombings in Bangkok, business disputes with Western allies and continuing tensions clouded progress. Thailand's return path to democracy and normalcy remained unpredictable.

ARTS AND TRADITIONS



BUDDHISM, 24 BUDDHISM IN THAI LIFE, 25 FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS, 26 OFFERINGS, 27 SPIRITUAL ABODES, 27 ELEPHANTS, 28 ROYAL BARGES, 29 COSTUME, 30 REGAL COSTUME, 31 SPECIAL ATTIRE, 32 THAI CLASSICAL MUSIC, 33 THEATER, 34 POPULAR THEATER, 35 THAI PUPPETS, 36 THAI PLEASURES, 37 FESTIVALS, 38 BASKETS IN TRADITIONAL LIFE, 39 THAI FOOD, 40 KAENG PHED PED YANG (A THAI DISH), 41 THAI FRUITS AND SWEETS, 42 THAI LANGUAGE, 43

BUDDHISM

The primary aim of Buddhists is to overcome the suffering of this world by salvation through enlightenment. Mahayana (Greater Vehicle), or northern Buddhism, is found in China, Korea, Tibet and Japan.

Theravada, or southern Buddhism, the only surviving school of the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) system,

originated in Sri Lanka and incorporates elements of Hinduism and local beliefs. It predominates in Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia.

DIVINE KING

This bejeweled image of Buddle shows the identification of shows the identification of Buddhahood with kingship in Buddhahood with kingship in Cambodia, where under Jayaaraman II, Mahayana Buddhism was declared the state religion. This devanta (dvine king) cult was introduced by Jayayarman II in the acts the rentury and early 9th century and influenced Buddhist iconography in the 11th century when the Central Plains of Siam were under Khmer rule.

A SYMBOLIC ACT

WHEEL OF THE LAW Known as dharmacakra, the wheel symbolizes the living nature of Buddhist

A SYMBOLIC ACT
Siddhartha Gautama (563–483 BC), the founder of Buddhism
and better known as Sakyamuni or Buddha, was educated as
an Indian prince. One day he rode from his palace
accompanied by his groom, Chana, while the gods muffled
the sound of the hooves with their hands. In the countryside,
he cut off his long hair and beard, and donned plain clothes
to symbolize his renouncement of the world and
decision to become an ascetie.

refers to a deer park near Benares, where Buddha preached

teachings, the perpetual changing of all objects and beings, and the constant quest for salvation. The deer

his first sermon, "setting in motion the Wheel of the Law."

VICTORY OVER MARA Mara, the god of death, tried to prevent

Salyation, fearing that his own kingdom of deaths and rebirths would be in peril. He vainly attempted to dislodge Sakyamuni from his meditations by sending an army of demons and by tempting him with his beautiful daughters and their voluptuous dancing. But when Sakyamuni performed the earth-touching mudra, and the earth trembled, Mara fled

MEDITATION

It is one of the many ways of reaching enlightenment, a state that can be described in Buddha's own words: "There is a sphere which is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, which is not the sphere of the infinity of space, nor the sphere of the infinity of consciousness, the sphere of nothingness, the sphere of nothingness, the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, which is neither this world nor the other world, neither sun nor moon. I deny that it is coming or going, enduring, death or birth. It is only the end of suffering." reaching enlightenment, a state that



BODHI TREE The tree under which

the future Buddha obtained full enlightenment was a fig (Ficus religiosa). There he sat,

vowing not to move until he had gained enlightenment, successfully resisting Mara's assaults. Many temples in Thailand were built around sacred Bodhi trees brought back as cuttings from India by pilgrims.

> MERCIFUL BODHISATIVA

Avalokitesvara is one of the most popular Bodhisattvas, who sees all the misery of the world and treats it with

compassion, and is often depicted with 11 hands and 1,000 arms, each symbolizing one aspect of the help he can provide

reach full enlightenmer and terminate the chain of rebirths However, in Mahayana Buddhism Bodhisatty: intercessors and enlightened individuals

BODHISATIVE

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Buddhism

voluntarily postpone the own nirvana indefinitely order to des the salvation mankind.

> Acquirin Thai Bude through a acts. The r food to me morning, v include pro and other i caged bird new temple



"MUDRA"

Mudra are the hand gesture found in Buddhist iconography. This 14th-century image of Buddha shows the (touching the earth) made when Sakyamuni called the earth to witness his attainment of Buddhahood.



BUDDHISM IN THAI LIFE

Thailand is one of the most strongly Buddhist countries in the world: 95 percent of the population practice Theravada Buddhism (a branch of Hinayana Buddhism). As Buddhism is the state religion, the King has the right to appoint the supreme patriarch of the sangha (Buddhist clergy). General awareness of the way of life of the sangha is strong, half the male population has gone through a period of monkhood in their lifetime. Monks are highly revered. In towns and villages the wat (temple) is the heart of social and religious life.

MONE Some monks pass their time studying) Buddhist scriptures and practicing meditation Many others.

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however, perhaps the majority, play an active role in daily life, sometimes as teachers, ometimes as advisors in village disputes

Monks are called on, too, to preside over a wide variety of ceremonial occasions, from funerals to the opening of a new business. ACQUIRING MERTI

Thai Buddhists acquire merit through a number of traditional through a number of traditional acts. The most common is offering food to monks in the early morning, while others include presenting robes and other necessities to monasteries, releasing caged birds, and building new temples,

RENUNCIATION OF WORLDLY GOODS This 19th-century photograph reflects the typical life of monks, who in following the footsteps of Prince Siddhartha, renounce material possessions, pain and passion in pursuit of enlightenment.





BUDDHIST ART Buddhism has been the greatest source of inspiration in That art, producing not only countless images but also temples and their elaborate decorations. The purpose is not to create objects of beauty but to express the piety of the artist and thus gain merit.



19999999

MEDITATION The purpose of meditation is to cleanse the mind of irrelevant thoughts and enhance concentration on the central aim of achieving nirvana. There are a variety of schools. with different teachers and with the sam

MONKS AS TEACHERS For centuries the only schools in Thailand - necessarily limited to boys - were those in temples, where monks offered instruction where monks offered instruction in secular as well as religious matters. Despite the growth of state education, senior priests are still regarded as scholarly sources of wisdom; their philosophical books are widely read and they are often consulted



robes symbolizing purity; carrying an incense stick, a candle and a flower, he is then carried in a gala procession to the temple, where the ordination where the ordination ceremony is conducted by resident monks.

dressed in white



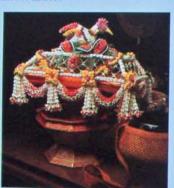
Short-lived though they may be, traditional Thai flower arrangements qualify as genuine works of art. The object is not to reflect nature but to fashion something that, at first appearance, could hardly be less natural; Thai flower arrangements are often reminiscent of the complex patterns on painted porcelain or intricately set pieces of jewelry. Women of the royal court were celebrated for their skill at

producing such creations and the art still continues today in numerous offerings for both religious and secular occasions ▲ 265.



"BAI-SRI"

Bai-sri are special creations used in a number of Thai ceremonies. These are based on a structure of These are based on a structure of defty folded banana leaves, which are then further adorned with such flowers as jasmine and sometimes food. Bai-sri cham, for instance, has a central banana-lear cone filled with cooked rice topped by a hard-boiled egg: surrounding it are other size. surrounding it are other cones decorated with various flowers This is often given as a token of respect by a student to a teacher or presented as a good-luck



GIFT PRESENTATION

Flowers and garlands are used to embellish gifts. This beautiful flower arrangement covers robes and items presented to monks on special occasions.



Jap Pann"
Jad paan, or bowl arrangements, are also called poom, because of the traditional rounded pyramidal shape, which resembles a budding lotus. The core, 4 to 8 inches high, is made of moistened earth, sawdust, or styrofoam. The entire core is tightly embedded with flowers which resemble multi-colored pieces of multi-colored pieces of porcelain. Bowl porcelain. Bowl arrangements are often used in wedding ceremonies when they are placed beneath the hands of the bride and groom, to receive holy water poured by the guests.

"Mato"
Exquisitely fashioned malai, or garlands, play an important part in Thai social and religious life. In the most common kind, fragrant white jasmine buds are threaded thickly together, with accents of color provided by other flowers such as roses, marigolds. and orchids. There are also highly comple and orchids. There are also highly compile versions requiring many hours of work. Nearly everyone who visits a shrine bring a malat as an offering to the resident spirit. Taxi drivers hang a garland from the dashboard to avoid accidents, and Buddhist altars in Thai homes receive a fresh one daily. You are also likely to be given a malat if you move into a new house, see leaves of the property of into a new house, get engaged, or depart from or arrive at a party.



Rathong, the elegant little boats set adrift on waters during the Loy Krathong festival \$38, belong to the bairs of category, the base being composed of banase leaves folded to resemble an open fotus blossom. In the banase category, the base set of the banase leaves to the banase l then decorated with flowers, incense sticks and light candles and sent out as an offering to the water spin on the night of the full-moon in the 11th hunar mem-usually in fate October or early November. In recent years, kruthong have been made

olorful papers arranged around a base of styrofoam.

ORNATE "KRATHONG"

According to legend, Loy Krathong originated in Sukhothai ▲ 128, 135, as a palace pastime in which royal ladies competed to see who could produce the most spectacular krathong. The same sense of competition remains today, with some creations towering more than 3 feet high in a variety of fantastic shapes Prizes are awarded to the most

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A wide variety of traditional Thai occasions call for an offering of one kind or another. Some are secular: an auspicious birthday celebration, greeting an honored guest or the opening of a business. By far the greatest number, however, are religious in nature,

presented during special merit-acquiring rituals and almost any visit to a Buddhist temple or shrine. The composition of such an offering varies considerably and may range from flowers and symbolic items to food and paper money - all, of course, arranged attractively.



BASIC OFFERINGS

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onth.

The basic offering made to images of Buddha and on ceremonial occasions consists of incense sticks, candles and flowers, usually lotus buds. The first symbolizes life's fragrance, the second suggests its transitory nature, and the third is a reminder of the impermanence of beauty - all gnificant concepts in the Buddhist faith.



Thod kathin, held at the end of the annual Rains Retreat, are ceremonies in which groups visit temples to present varie necessities to the resident monks. Besides new robes and Buddhist literature. offerings may include financial donations, in which case the money is elegantly arranged in the form of a tree that is proudly carried in a gala

procession to the monastery. Such trees are often displayed for several days in front of the house of the donor, and anybody can join the merit-acquiring ceremony by adding their own contribution to the

MEALS FOR MONKS

On Buddhist holy days the laity often offers the midday meal to monks at a temple as a means of acquiring. Much care goes into the presentation of the various dishes, which are traditionally displayed on shaped banana leaves and decorated with fresh flowers and delicately carved fruits

Far older than Buddhism in Thailand is belief in spirits, as well as various gods and demigods. There are spirits who guard individual pieces of land, for instance, and others who watch over villages and capital cities or make their home in trees and caves. The general term for such invisible beings is phi ▲ 150, but special names are given to many who enjoy demigod status. To avoid difficulties and ensure harmony and prosperity, all must be placated, sometimes with a special abode of their own, always with carefully prepared offerings. Such animistic beliefs do not clash with Buddhism; rather they coexist comfortably and often overlap in ways mystifying to outsiders.

SPIRIT HOUSES

The guardian spirit of a particular compound, whether residential or commercial, is generally provided with a small house on the property; the exact site must be determined by an expert and has nothing to do with esthetic considerations. Elevated on a post, the houses come invariety of forms, some simple wooden replicas of a traditional Thai

dwelling, others ornate cement creations that resemble miniature Buddhist temple buildings down to the smallest decorative detail



ELABORATE OFFERINGS Spiritual abodes in wealthier compounds are lavishly supplied with a variety of

meals, carefully arranged on plates.





To promote harmon and goodwill, the

guardian spirit is placated with daily offerings by house-hold members, the most basic being fragrant incense sticks, candles and flowers. Employees and shopkeepers regularly present offerings at the spirit house of their workplace while actors and dancers do so before a performance. Chinese shop-keepers usually have a spirit house for the local spirits and a small shrine painted in red, dedicated to the Taoist gods









The elephant, which once roamed wild in large numbers in Thai forests, has played an important cultural and economic role for centuries A 117. "White elephants" were revered as symbols of royalty; the

Thai national flag used to show a white elephant on a red background, until the adoption of the present striped flag in 1917. The royalty of Avutthava rode into battle on war elephants, and King Rama IV offered a supply of the animals to US President Buchanan. Valued for their skill and might, elephants once provided the main work force in the teak forests of the North.

> Now, most of the remaining domesticated elephants entertain tourists A 140.



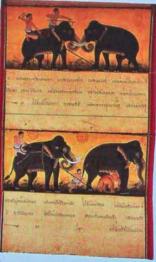
ELEPHANT TUSKS

While their collection is deplored by environmentalists today, elephant tusks were treasured possessions in the past; some, like the ones shown we, were carved with Buddhist motifs, while others were mounted for display in palaces.



SOUTHERN ROUNDUP

SOLTHER ROLDER
In southern Thailand, as elsewhere,
wild elephants were captured by
driving them with drums, trumpets
and gunfire into stockades, where they were tamed and trained.



TRAINING MANUALS

IRANNG MANAIAS
As far back as 2,000 years ago. Sanskrit manuals
outlined precise procedures for capturing and, most
importantly, training wild elephants. The manuscript
book shown above, written during the reign of King
Rama II, undoubtedly drew on these ancient sources, as well as

on the practical on the practical experience of Thai trainers. While force was trainers. While force was sometimes required, the most important part was winning the animal's confidence and affection ▲ 144, 150, 157.



MYTHICAL ELEPHANTS

Elephants figure Buddhism but al in Hindu mythology. The three-headed Erawan, for example, is the mount of the god Indra, while the lion with the head of an elephant and Ganesha was the

elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati, regarded as the god of arts or knowledge



Burmese Crown Pro



and 700 elephants to of the most celebra

encounters in The

history was an elephant-back due

between the

Ayutthayan King Naresuan and a

FLEPHANTS IN HUNTING

Kings and royal princes often rode or elephants while hunting, as seen in the

Howdahs, or elephant chairs came in a wide variety of forms Some were relatively simple secured to the animal's back with leather straps, while the for royalty could

comfortably appointed palanquins Palaces had special platforms for mounting and descending.

THE WHITE ELEPHANT

White elephants – actually a silven gray – were revered as auspicious symbols by rulers in the past, Even toke when one of these rare animals is discovered in Thailand, it is presented to the king and kept in a special enclosure at Chitralada Palace the royal

the royal residence. Ten have been founds far during the resp of King Rama IX.



ROYAL BARGES





An aspect of Ayutthaya noted by almost every early European visitor was the spectacle of the ornately carved and gilded royal barges, sometimes hundreds of them rowed by chanting oarsmen in elaborate costume. The custom was continued in Bangkok, where new barges were built by King Rama I and used to deliver offerings to monasteries along the river. Long in

disuse following the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932, the barges have since been restored or rebuilt, and processions have been held during the Bangkok bicentennial celebrations (1982), King Rama IX's Golden Jubilee (1996) and 6th Cycle Birthday (1999), as well as the Apec Summit (2003).



SUPHANAHONGSA The most important of the barges is the Suphana-hongs or Golden Hansa – the mythical, swan-like mount of Brahma – in which the king rides & 90. The present one, built by King Rama VI in 1911, is made from a single teakwood trunk, 150 feet long and over 10 feet wide at the beam; a full crew consists of fifty oarsmen, two steersmen. two officers fore and aft, one standardbearer, one signalman, one chanter and seven royal insignia bearers.



There are two Ekachai barges in the procession, used to carry religious items. The prows are stylized horns of hera, or horned dragons, the bodie of which are painted in gold-and-black lacquer.





ADORNMENT

Intricately woven floral wreaths, resembling thick rejeweled necklaces adorn the prows of the barges during a procession.

CLASSIC FORMATIONS

The royal barge procession held in 1982 was based on the formation shown in a 19th-century manuscript, probably a copy of a much earlier one. The procession extended for 3,220 feet and involved a total of 51 principal barges, all richly decorated, and 2,192 men. In addition, there were numerous smaller craft, known as rua dang and rua saeng, which acted as outer escorts and attendants; most of these were plain, with slightly raised stem and stern pieces, though a few performed special duties and were decorated with gold leaf. The crews

consisted of officers and men of the Royal Thai Navy, who were carefully trained in traditional ways of propelling the long boats.



In early times, the barges were used in fighting They were manned by crews of 60 to 70 oarsmen, or *rua chai*. Later they were armed with cannons protrudin through the prow, which subsequently began to be decorated with figureheads

from mythology, partly, perhaps, for identification but also to bring good fortune in battle.

BOAT SONGS

outill - Illino

BOAT SONGS
"It was a breathtaking sight," wrote Father Guy Tachard, a Jesuit priest who witnessed a royal barge procession in late 17th-century Ayutthaya." The sound of traditional chanting reverberated along both banks of the river which were crowded with people waiting to see the spectacular event." The rhythmic barge songs still survive, varying in pace to match the different speeds and strokes of the oarsmen.



EARLY IMPRESSIONS

The first visual impressions of the re-barges, in the 17th century, came in the form of sometimes fanciful engrand that accompanied books writen is members of the two French emboses that came to the court of King Nata



COSTUME



"They wear few clothes," wrote Simon de la Loubère of the ordinary Thais he saw in 17th-century Ayutthaya, "not so much by reason of the heat as by the simplicity of their manners." In everyday traditional life, the only apparel for both men and

women was a length of homespun cotton that could be worn as skirt or trousers. Silk was reserved for royalty A 117. Despite the growing popularity of Western fashions, many people in the countryside still regard the old-style dress as being more suited to their ways of life.





"JONGKRABANE" • 54, a length of cloth was wrapped around the waist then pulled through the legs and secured at the back, was popular with women in the past. A similar fashion worn by men was called a pannung

Elegant jewelry gem-studded brooches, buckles, pendants, tiaras, heavy gold belts and body chains

ADORNMENT

has been worn in Thailand since the Dvaravati period. An innovation of the Ayutthaya period was the wearing of particular colors

panician clouds on different days of the week; red for Sunday, yellow for Monday, pink for Tuesday, green for Wednesday, orange for Thursday, blue for Friday, and purple for Saturday.



MENSWEAR





In the late Ayutthaya and early Bangkok periods, some pieces of cloth used by the aristocracy, both silk and cotton, were printed in India, using Thai motifs (above) that denoted various degrees of rank. The most popular of these was called *plus lai-yang*, or "designed cloth," and had to meet stringent esthetic requirements; less prized varieties were called *plus lai-nok-yang*, "cloth not according to design," and *plus laing-yang*, "copied design."



HAIRSTYLES

In former times, Thai men and women cut off almost all their hair except for a growth on the crown, as shown in the above detail from an early 19th-century mural; the remaining hair was compared to a lotus flower. Sometimes after childbirth or on the death of a close relative, women shaved their heads as completely as men did when entering the monkhood. Even today, older countrywomen often wear their hair closely cropped like a man's.



A basic item of attire for most Thai farmers is the loose cotton shirt called mor hom traditionally fastened with string at the h These are dyed dark blue with indigo and worn by both men and women, often with broad-brimmed hat of woven palm leaf to ward off the sun.

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NORTHEASTERS

ELEGANCE In northeastern Thailand, where a sizeable part of the population is ethnically Lao, numerous striking costum particularly during festivals when the best clothing is brought out. embroidery is a notable skill of the region and is used to adorn sarongs as well as sabai; the latter are long pieces of cloth about a foot wide that are draped diagonally over the shoulder

and fall to the



In northern Thailand pasin, as women's sarongs at called, have horizontal stripes and richly decorated areas at the bottom; on silk pasin the decorations at often in gold brocade, a craft for which the region's noted. Certain bright color combinations are decimal.

appropriate only for young, unmarried girls, while older women wear more subdued hues like data blue and purple. Extending almost to the ankles, pasin are worn tightly tucked around the waist and often further secured with a be

TATTOOS

Tattoos are worn by Thai men less for esthetic purposes than to ward off a variety of dangers and bring good fortune; on some men of the far north

elaborate designs of auspicious animals once covered large areas of the body almost like a suit of clothing. The practic has declined in modern times, but still a has its adherents and master tattooists command great respect from believed

«HIS COSTUME CONSISTED OF A PAIR OF TROUSERS, A SHORT BROWN JACKET OF SOME THIN MATERIAL, AND SLIPPERS; ON HIS HEAD HE WORE A LITTLE COPPER HELMET...

AND AT HIS SIDE, A RICH SABRE, " HENRI MOUHOT

Thai royal attire was designed to impress. particularly on ceremonial occasions when the king, sitting high on his throne, wore so many ornaments and jewel-encrusted robes that he resembled a statue more than a living man. Royal children wore similarly elaborate clothing on important occasions, such as the top-knot cutting

ceremony when they came of age. The costumes of court officials - including the patterns of the silk they wore and the accessories they carried - usually varied according to their rank. Each costume was strictly prescribed by

roval order.



TONSURE CEREMONS In the past, both boys and girls had shaven heads except for a tuft of hair on the crown The cutting of this top-knot marked their official coming of age and, especially in the palace, was accompanied by elaborate ceremonies that extended over several days.

A KING AND QUEEN

It was during the reign of King Rama IV.

shown here with one

Western fashions first appeared in royal

circles. When British

photographer John

Thompson was invited to take some royal

photographs in 1865.

Field Marshal's

the King posed for one in "a sort of French

traditional dress.

uniform" as well as others in more

his queens, that



A ROYAL PRINCE Royal princes of the mid-19th century wore rich gowns and sarongs of silk, the patterns of which were forhidden to those of lesser rank. Imported cloth from China and Japan was highly esteemed because of its comparative rarity, but Cambodian and Laotian silks were also prized. The brimmed hat came into fashion during the Ayuthaya period, probably as a result of foreign influence.



A KING IN STATE Despite a few Western innovations, full ceremonial dress for royalty has changed remarkably little

from the ancient past, as demonstrated in this photograph (left) of King Rama VI (1910-25).

Prominent among
its features are the tiered Great Crown of Victory with wing-like appendages on either side, a tight-fitting, high-necked tunic and trousers of gold-brocaded silk. special slippers and a richly embroidered and bejeweled robe. Some of the same features can be seen on images of the Buddha in royal attire made in the late Ayutthaya and early Rattanakosin periods



Western dress became widespread under King Rama V. shown on the right, the first Thai ruler to travel abroad and experience Europea culture at first hand Men of the court adopted European suits and uniforms se enthusiastically that

WESTERN INFLUENCE

within a short time the old Thai costu had virtually disappeared in palace circles





ROYAL WOMEN The women of King Rama V's court were inspired by the fashions of England's Queen Alexandra, particularly her blouses with puffed sleeves. Sometimes these were worn with cumbersome Victorian skirts, someti with more graceful Thai pasin, or sarongs.

DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION

At important ceremonies princes would wear clothing and jewelry similar to that of their elders

ROYAL REGALIA

The royal regalia received by each king on his coronation, include a number of swords, jeweled slippers, a fan and a staff, among other items, most dating back to the first Chakri ruler

As well as the clothing already described as being worn by royalty and ordinary people, both past and present, there is another category in Thailand: that of special attire, real and imagined. The real includes the saffron robes prescribed for monks, a familiar sight in and out of Thailand's numerous temples, as well as certain military uniforms and costumes for special ceremonies. The imaginary takes in most of the early Western views of Thailand and its people, some recorded on the scene

than by a desire to portray reality.

After ordination, a monk discards the clothing of the outside world and adopts priestly robes made of saffron-colored cotton cloth. These consist of three pieces of cloth, one worn sarong-like around the waist, another as a shoulder sash, and a third long enough to envelop the first two are worn inside the monastery. New priests are instructed in the prescribed way of tying the robes. Vegetable dyes were traditionally used, but today most cloth is dyed with chemicals.



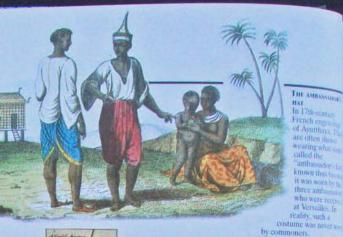


CEREMONIAL COSTUME

The figure on the right is dressed in one of the ornate costumes worn during the plowing ceremony, an ancient Brahminic ritual that originated in Ayutthava to mark the beginning of the riceplanting season. It is similar to a court costur consisting of a tall hat, richly brocaded tunic and pantaloons, and a semi-transparent gown trimmed with gold brocade. The goid brocade. The ceremony was revived by the present king and is held annually in Bangkok during May at Sanam Luang, across from the Grand Palace.



This old engraving shows a monk wearing the full set of three robes and standing near one of the gilded, tiered parasols seen in Buddhist temples.



THE ORIGINAL HAT An original specimen of the ambassador's hat is preserved at Lopburi



National Museum.



ambassador - E.

who were recen

AMBASSADOR'S ATTIRE One of the ambassador were received by Louis XIV in Paris is shown above

Dusit



THAI AMBASSADORS AT VERSAILLES

The three Thai ambassadors who were received by Louis XIV in 1686 at Versailles caused a sensation, because of the lavish gifts they brought and also because of their

A MANDARIN

his visit to

17th-century

A Siamese Mandarin" and

tucked between the

legs, a blouse and an

passador's hat

The figure, from Simon de la

exotic dress. Thai motifs appeared on Frestextiles and tapestries and their fancy costumes became the subject of endless engravings and calendars.



Military uniforms have changed considerably over the years, becoming more Westernized. The soldier shown above is wearing one feet wearing one favored in late Ayutthaya and early Bangkok.

The earliest Thai musical instruments were given names that reflected the sounds they made, such as krong, chap, ching, so and khong. Later more complex instruments were created, many adapted from foreign cultures like Indian and

Khmer. During the Ayutthaya period, an instrumental ensemble was composed of four to eight musicians; this was expanded to twelve in the early Bangkok reign of King Rama II. There are

now about fifty different types of Thai musical instruments, including many regional variations. Music accompanies most traditional Thai

occasions, from the classical dance festivals to folk theater and boxing matches.

Closely akin to the Western xylophone is the instrument called ranad, one of the six basic components of most musical groups that accompany classical dancing and many ceremonies. The runal comes in a number of types, some slightly curved and others flat, producing different tones. Its musical purpose is usually to produce variations on the principal melody and the rhythm. The keys are made

of bamboo or seasoned wood mounted on a wooden



Music dates back to the earliest days of the kingdom, as suggested by the stucco frieze below showing a group of musicians in the Dvaravati period (7th-11th century). Dvaravati instruments, the result of Indian

influence, were adopted by the Thais, who went on to produce a number of new instruments. These are mentioned in the Tribhumikatha, one of the first books written in Thai, as well as on a stone inscription attributed to King Ramkhamhaeng

of Sukhothai

often several yards long and requiring several men to carry them, are frequently heard at festivals.

> WONG! Known as khong wong lek (small) or khong wong yai

(large) depending on their size, these consist of a circular series of small gongs suspended on a rattan frame and provide the melody in a



that music, providing a, rhythmic excitement that rises and falls. In small ensembles, the most common type is the relatively small, double-ended klong tad thapon, but in the north buge drums called klaving yao,



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Large gongs ▲ 141 are often elaborates mounted, like the one above, which is suspended between a pair of elephant task Smaller versions are used in most ensemble Smaller versions are used in most ensemble along with aylophones, drums, the oboe-like pinar, the circular khong wang yai, and a se of small cymbals called ching lek. In addition the role they play in muss, gongs were traditionally struck to announce

important events.



ENSEMBLE

A typical small musical ensemble is called a pumband. The majority of the instruments are percessibut there is always at least one reed, the puma, while sounds somewhat like a bagpipe. In the illustrator above, the man on the right is using a flute-like instrument composed of varying lengths of hollow bamboo; this is most often heard in the northeast a is of Lao origin.

Thai musical performance. There is no doubling in parts, so if two are involved only one plays the melody while the other plays variations.

STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

The clukhbay is a thick-necked guitar-like instrument requiring great skill, it is heard only in larger orchestras and traditional Thai stringed instrument is the saw sam sai, a fiddle composed of a triangular ecoconut shell, an ivory neck, and three silk strings; King Rama II was a noted saw sam sai performer, so enthusiastic that he exempted from taxation all plantations that grew the triangular coconuts needed for its manufacture.

The classic Thai theater is the khon, a masked drama performed in dance and gesture at the royal court; it probably originated in Indian. temple rituals and came to Thailand by way of Indonesia. The story lines are drawn from the Ramakien, the Thai version of the Indian Ramayana. During the Ayutthaya period, men

played both male and female roles because the movements were thought too strenuous for women to perform, though by the early 19th-century Bangkok period both men and women were appearing on the stage together. All records of the story were lost with the destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767; King Rama I of Bangkok, together with literary members of his court, wrote a new version in 1798 and

later additions were made by King Rama II.



made of lacquered papi

ting the personalities of the characters being

portrayed.

mache, decorated with gold and jewels, reflec

"KHON" TROUPES

Khon performers are trained from early childhood in the dance steps and gestures which require considerable physical strength and agility A royal troupe was part of the palace retinue in both Ayutthaya and early Bangkok; later, a number of high-ranking princes had troupes of their own.

NARRATION

Narrative verses accompany khon performances. The verses are recited or sung either by a chorus or by a



single narrator sitting with a musical ensemble consisting of woodwinds, gongs, drums and other traditional instruments

The familiar story is told through stylized postures and gestures, which express action. thought and feeling. Anger is shown by stamping a foot. Raising the upper lip with a pinch of the fingers conveys a sm and, thus, pleasure. Stiffening of the body with a certain arm motion suggests ambition, while supporting the brow bending and with one hand expresses sorrow. Discriminating audiences decipher the most subtle gestures and evaluate a performance on the basis of them



Traditional khon performances were presented by

torchlight in palace halfs and courtyards with no complicated scenery to distract from the

complicated seenery to distract from the characterizations, Gradually, however, they moved outside the palaces in the early Bangkok period and could be seen in public theaters especially erected for the purpose during festivals and ceremonies. The shorter version of the Ramakien written by King Rama and the characterization produce are

II is the most popular, and only selected episodes are offered to contemporary audiences. Even these are comparatively rare, however, the average visitor sees

only brief excerpts performed between courses at Thai

restaurants catering for tourists.

Khon costumes are made of heavy Khon costumes are made of neavy brocades decorated with costume jewelry and closely resemble the dress of royalty and celestial beings in classical Thai mural paintings. The major characters are identifiable by the color of their dress. Phra Ram, the hero, wears deep green, while his brother Phra Lak wears gold and the monkey-god Hanuman wears white. Phra Ram, Phra Lak and Nang Sidu usually do not wear masks: Thotsakan, the villain, has a green mask on which small faces are painted to indicate that he is a 10-headed demon and Hanuman, a white hero, wears deep green, while his and Hanuman, a white ian one with a mischievous expression. Green masks denote high rank and purple and blue masks are for minor characters



THE "RAMAKIEN"

The Ramakien A 77, on which the khon is based, is an epic The Ramakien ▲ 77, on which the khon is based, is an epic account in lyrical verse of the triumph of good over evil. The hero is Phra Ram, a king of Ayutthaya and also a reincarnation of the god Vishnu. His consort. Nang Sida, is abducted by the wicked King Thotsakan of Longka (Sri Lanka) and the lengthy drama recounts the ultimately successful efforts of the King and his brother Phra Lak, sasisted by the clever monkey-god Hanuman, to rescue her. Ferformances were often staged on two consecutive nights for a total of more than 20 hours; a khon staging of the entire Ramakien would require 311 characters and take more than a month of continuous performance.





POPULAR THEATER

When the khon moved outside the limited confines of the royal palace and became part of the popular culture, it did so in a form known as lakhon. This is less formal and the movements are less angular, more graceful and sensual. The stories are drawn not only from the Ramakien but also from a collection of morality tales called the Jataka and from a Javanese historical romance known in Thai as Inao, Lakhon is subdivided into several variations, the three major ones being lakhon chatri, lakhon nok and lakhon nai: another form of popular theater, relying more on social satire

> ACTORS
> Unlike khon, skilled lukhon and likay performers are able to earn a living from their talents outside places mainly limited to tourists. There are resident troupes of female lakhon dancers an nearly every major shrine, for example, and their senses, are finely servery major shrine. their services are often called upon by people wishing to thank the resident deity for swered prayers: lakhon dancing is also often a feature of festivals and private entertainments.

and pantomime than on pure dance, is the likay.

Similarly, likay troupes tour the country presenting their shows at fairs held in towns and villages, some of the performers becoming major stars among

«THE GREATER PART OF THE PERFORMANCE CONSISTED OF MERELY TWISTING THE FINGERS AND HANDS AND ARMS IN SUCH POSITIONS AS TO MAKE THEM APPEAR OUT OF JOINL.

GRACEFUL FINGERS performan especially those by women, the hands are particularly expressive



are only possible after years of training. The use of long metal nails which originated in southern Thailand with the Inao, can now be seen in other parts of the country; one of the best-known variations is the romantic fawn lep, or "nail dance instay of northern celebrations



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THEATER TRAININ Training for the Thai dance begins at an earl age, with boys and girl at first learning to move their heads, bodies, limbs and fingers to music. Only later do they begin to practice the sixty-eight separate

movements that comprise the more intricate alphabet of the dance, each movement having a picturesque in such as "the bee caressing the flower" or "the stag walking in the forest comprise the stag walking in the forest care."



"LIKAY" Likay performances can be seen at most Thai temple has This combines a burlesque of lakhon with low comes, the plots vaguely follow classical lines, with tradition characters, but much of the humor is spontaneous involving double meanings and puns as well as allusions to local scandals and prominent figures

Derform

One of the principal sources of lakhon chairi is a Javanese romance called Manora, in which the heroine is half-human and half-bird. human and half-bird.
Long, curving metal
extensions (below) amplify
her graceful fingers.
Simpler performances of
lakhon chair can be seen regularly at popular shrines in Bangkok such as the lak muang (the city's foundation stone) and the one near the Erawan Grand Hyatt Hotel, where supplicants whose wishes have been granted pay resident troupes of dancers to

THAI PUPPETS

UCH Boa

> Puppets were once an important part of traditional Thai theater. Predating both the khon and the lakhon was the shadow play, subdivided into nang yai and nang talung. Introduced from the Sumatran empire of Srivijaya, this was a

form of entertainment in 17th-century Ayutthaya. Also seen were hun marionettes, little carved figures that enacted classical

stories in the royal court. A popular version was hun krabok ("rod puppets").



A variety of hun marionette, hun krubok have detailed wooden heads and costumes that conceal a central rod; there are no arms or legs, only hands operated by two sticks hidden within the robe. Chakraphand Posayakrit, a contemporary artist, has fashioned a beautiful new set, which can be seen in occasional performances.

PUPPET DRAMA

Puppets were often dressed in the same costumes and masks found in khon dances. though some were used to perform Chinese dramas and were appropriately attired; considerable skill was required to paint the miniature faces and create the accessories.



Puppet theater was a palace diversion and because of its slow pace never became widely popular outside until recent revivals by Joe Louis Theater, pictured above with hun lakorn lek puppets.

"NANG YAI"

In nang yar, or "big nang." the cowhide nang." the cowhide shadow-play figures are fuge, up to 6 Jees taff and intricately designed, depicting characters from the Ramakien and othe classical romances. Each is mounted on two sticks and held

behind a brilliantly backlit white screen by bearers who dance their parts to the accompaniment of music and choral singing. Some scholars believe the movements of the bearers later evolved into a stylized dance and eventually led to the khon masked drama



A DECLINING ART

A common form of nighttime entertainment in the royal court of Avutthava. nang yai's appeal gradually declined, because of the popularity of the khon.



"NANG TALLING"

Nang talang is a more popular version of the shadow-play found at festivals in southern Thailand. The figures play found at festivats in southern Thailand. The figures are smaller and have one or more moveable parts such as a chin or an arm. Concealed behind the screen along with the manipulators are singers and coincidians whose witty contributions to the performance probably account for the continuing popularity of the form.



and scraped, then darkened with charcoal or tinted with herbs and

"HUN LEK"

"HIS ISK"
Han lek, small hun marionettes, date from the reign of King Rama V; they were modeled either on characters from the khon or from Chinese dramas and manipulated by concealed threads pulled from below rather than from above. These puppers have almost vanished from Thailand's art seen, though one superb set can be viewed at Bangkok's National Museum.



THAI PLEASURES

Sanuk, a Thai term usually translated as "fun," is a much-valued pursuit and covers a wide range of activities. Prominent among them are various traditional sports that, despite such innovations as Western football and bowling, have never lost their appeal to the vast majority of Thais, especially in rural areas. During leisure time, almost any open field or festival offers a display of some kind, from the balletic ferocity of Thai-style boxing to more esoteric amusements such as a struggle between two giant horned beetles or multicolored Siamese fighting fish.

the game of takran, which is also popular in neighboring countries such as Malaysia, involves keeping a hollow rattan ball aloft as long as possible. The circle of players can use their feet, knees, elbows and head but not their hands. Groups of young men start a casual takrane game almost anywhere during a break from work or school. demonstrating remarkable grace and



PROFESSIONAL "TAKRAW" Over the years, more professional forms of takraw have evolved. using nets to separate opposing teams or high baskets through which the ball must be sent, along with strict rules of play. Takraw competitions of this kind are often held in Bangkok at Sanam Luang

and also at the Asian Games The sport has been an Olympic event since the Atlanta Games.



The large male horned beetle, commonly found in the Thai countryside, becomes aggressive when confronted by another member of his sex in the presence of a female. The ensuing battle, which ends when one of the contestants is overturned, is a popular spectator sport in villages, with wagers on the outcome

"CHULA" KITES

The detail above, from an old mural painting, shows a chula, or "male", kite caught temple roof. On breezy afternoons during the hot season, kites of all kinds can be seen above Sanam Luang, the great oval field across from the gold spires of the Grant P.

KITE-FIGHTS. Kite-fights in Thailand are symbolic bur the sexes. The female is a haped literal tar-shaped reation that

equires team up to seventy men to send it aloft and maneuver it. The object is for one of the *chula* to snare a *pukpuo* with a bamboo hook and bring it down in "male" territory; alternatively, the more agile *pukpuo* often succeed in looping their lines around a *chula* and bring it crashing to con their side of the field.



THE MARTIAL ARTS

As this old illustrated manuscript shows, boxing was an important part of self-defense. In the old days, no gloves were used and both hands and feet were bound in cloth that often contained bits of ground glass for added effect. Several Ayutthaya kings were famed for their skill in this graceful yet lethal art.



THAT BOXING

In modern Thai-style boding gas are used but in most other ways similar to the sport of the jast, he part of the body, except the head can be used as an offensive ways Some professional matches gets to a fair amount of betting. This is popular sport is now practiced at over the world.

Festivals are liberally sprinkled throughout the Thai year: religious and secular, national and local, highspirited and gravely reverent. This has been true since the earliest days of the kingdom; a Sukhothai stone inscription, describing an annual merit-acquiring event, says, "They join together in striking up the sound of musical instruments, chanting and singing. Whoever wants to make merry, does so; whoever wants to laugh, does so." Today Thais seize almost any occasion for a chance to don their best clothes and celebrate, whether it be one of the several milestones in the Buddhist calendar or merely some notable village event.



PLOWING CEREMONY

The royal plowing ceremony, an ancient Brahminic ritual marking the start of the rice-planting season, had been allowed to lapse for many years when it was revived by the present king in 1960. Held every May at Sanam Luang. across from the Grand Palace, it is a colorful event that dimaxes with a prediction of the coming harvest for Thailand's farmers.



elements and are basically concerned with bringing rain through the firing

ROYAL HOLIDAYS

Known as bun bang fai, northeastern rocket festivals combine Brahminic. Buddhist and animist

skyrockets and

Many of Thailand' annual events celebrate the monarchy and involve lavish public decorations as well as festivities. These include the birthdays of the King (December 5) and the Queen (August 12), the Outcen (August 12), for date of the founding of the present Chakri Dynasty (April 6). Coronation Day (May 5), and Chulalongkorn Day (October 23), which honors the dynasty's beloved fifth ruler.



Officially. Thailand begins the new year on and riotous festival. Offerings are





CANDLE DESCRIPAL

The beginning of Buddhist Lant, or Plannas, during July, is observed in the northeastern cut of Ubon Ratchathani with the Candle Festival, when hundreds of beautifully carved candles. some several feet tall, are carried in gala parades before being presented to local temples



Officially, Hamilton begins the law year out January 1; at the same time, however, the old solar New Year, called Songkran, continues to be a major two-day celebration in mid-April. This is a typically Thai blend of solemn ritual



LOY KRATHONG

Perhaps the loveliest of That festivals. Los Krathong honors the water spirits through the haunching of little candicht boats, or or tittle candicate touts, of kenthung, in ponds and waterways all over the country. This occurs on the might of the full moon in the 11th huma rounth, usually November, when the rivers and canals are at their highest 2-26 \$\frac{128}{28}\$, \$\frac{139}{26}\$, \$\frac{149}{26}\$.

BEDDHIST OBSERVANCES
This detail from a mural painting shows
the making of miniature sand chedis

\$1, or chedi sar, in temple compounds
during the celebration of Songkran, the
traditional New Year; the act reflects
the origins of the oldest form of
Buddhist monument. The
importance of Buddhism can be
discerned in many festivals.

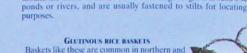




Of all traditional Thai crafts none plays a more significant and continuing role than baskets

▲ 140. Made from a variety of easily obtainable materials - bamboo is the most common but certain reeds, grasses, palms and even ferns are also used - they were born of rural necessity and serve a wide range of needs: catching and keeping fish, carrying rice, storing household goods and steaming food, to mention only a few. Such baskets are basically utilitarian; at the same time, however, many of them display an undeniable elegance of form and delicacy of workmanship that

raises them to the level of genuine folk art.



This bomb-shaped trap, called a sai, is found in all regions and is used for trapping reasonall fish, which swim into the opening and are prevented from escaping by banks around the inside of the mouth. The average length is around 3 feet. Such traps are put



Baskets like these are common in northern and northeastern Thailand, where they are used by farmers as a kind of lunch pail to carry glutinous rice with them when they go to work in the fields. The wooden foot keeps the basket raised from the ground, while the cord makes it easy to transport; the contrasting weaves add an esthetic touch.







SEED CONTAINER

Made of lacquered basketry to make it waterproof and also deter insect pests, this seed container is also decorated with stylized motifs and an outside frame of bamboo slivers. It is used in the north for storing seeds that will be sown during the next planting



WATER BASKET

DUCK-SHAPED CONTAINER

All over Thailand, one can spot narrow necked baskets like the one can below, eleverly designa-keep a trapped fish while preventing a ne-escaping. The loos sma attached at the neck main easy to carry

RICE BASKET

Known as a krabung, this sort of basket is found in all regions of the country. It is neatly woven with bamboo supports up to its widest part and is used for measuring and carrying rice; four loops on the sides enable it to be strung on a carrying pole. Krabung may vary in shape from area to area.

(FISH TRAP)

(FISH TRAP)
This kind of fish trap is normally found in the northeast and is about 3 feet long. It is placed in streams and irrigation systems supplying the ricefields \(\Lambda \) 13, where it is left to as: left to trap any fish that might pass when the ricefields are flooded.



Thai food, like Thai culture, is the product of various influences, blended to form one distinctive cuisine. Ordinary fare in

Sukhothai and early Ayutthaya was simple: mainly fish, fresh or dried, mixed with rice, vegetables, a few spices, and a salty sauce made from fermented fish or shrimp. Other ingredients and flavors came through increased contact with foreign cultures, China and India in particular, and also Europe. Today it covers a wide range of dishes, many of northeast, for instance, are generally regarded

them regional specialties; those of the as the spiciest; in the south seafood is plentiful and Muslim specialties appear on the menu.





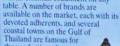




Chillies, known in Thai collectively as prik, were introduced to Asia by the Portuguese from South America in the 16th century and quickly spread so widely that their searing flavor is now basic to numerous cuisines. Thai cooking employs over forty varieties of chilli, ranging from large and mild to tiny bombshells called



prik-kee-nu, which translates as "mouse-dropping pepper," on account of their shape.



Nam pla is a pungent sauce made from fermented fish, served as a salt substitute in early Thai cooking and still an essential condiment on any



ALCUSINE.

Thai food that is prepared and served with enhanced elegance is often referred to as "royal cuisine" since it is supposed to have been inspired by palace chefs. Fruit and vegetables are carved into exquisite shapes, with colors and textures carefully matched, turning each dish into edible art.

A THALMEAL

A Thai meal, even in rather grand households. is an informal affair. Steamed rice forms the centerpiece - loose-grained in most parts of the country, glutinous in the north and northeast - and the other dishes are placed around it, to be eaten in any order a diner prefers. There may be many or few of these, depending on economic status, but there is usually some kind. of curry, a soup and a spiced salad, along with fish sauce, chopped chillies and other condiments, and fresh fruit as a dessert.



FRESH SEASONINGS

Besides chillies, a number of fresh herbs and toots are regularly used in Thai cooking.
Coriander leaves and lemon grass are two of
the most popular, while others include root
ginger, basit, galangal, garlic and the kaffir lime
(both leaves and fruit). the right hand and a dipped into the tari liquid dishes 5pen woven bamboo hau are used to serve the at tables and to car into the fields by war

SHEET RIC A glutinous sunct

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Originally introduced

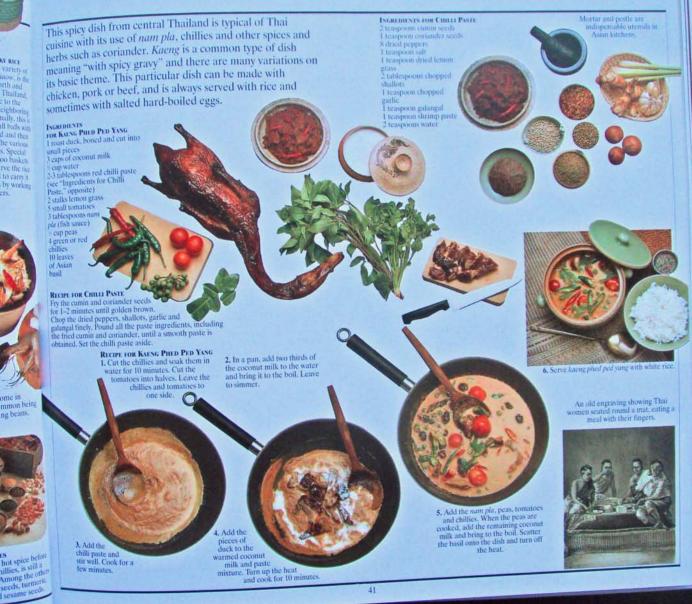
from China noodles often take the place of rice in quick meals supplied by vendors and sidewalk food shops. They come in numerous sizes, the most common being made from rice, flour or mung beam



DRY SPICES

Black pepper, used as a hot spice below the introduction of chillies, is still a popular dry ingredient. Among the ob-are crushed coriander seeds, turners cinnamon, cloves and sesame seed

• KAENG PHED PED YANG



THAI FRUITS AND SWEETS

STREET SWEETS

Khanom is the general Thai word for

"sweet," and many street vendors specialize in one kind

or another to tempt passers-by. The woman shown above

is preparing a popular delicacy known as

khanom krok, in

which a mixture of

thick coconut milk,

rice flour, eggs, and

sugar is cooked on the spot in a special clay

Thailand is blessed not only with a wide selection of delectable fruits but also with some of the best varieties to be found in Southeast Asia. There are more than two dozen kinds of bananas, including a small, finger-sized species noted for its sweetness, as well as mango, durian, pineapple, jackfruit, rambutan, mangosteen, melons, lychee, papaya, guava, fresh coconuts and countless others. Fruit frequently serves as the dessert course, but there are also other choices. including a variety of confections that are eaten as snacks

between meals.



FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CARVINGS The art of fruit and vegetable carving was a

renowned skill among women of the royal palace and even today many otherwise inary dishes in restaurants are enhanced by a radish or spring onion transformed into an unexpected flower. In the hands of a true expert almost any firm-fleshed fruit becomes an object of extraordinary beauty.



The Portuguese were the first Europeans to open trade relations with Ayutthaya, in the 16th century. Among their cultural influences that still survive are a number of delicate sweets



based on egg yolks and sugar, sometimes spun into a mass of thin threads through a special device made for the purpose



On special miniature fruits called look choop are made from a mixture of mung-bean paste and sugar, then flavored with fragrant essences and realistically colored with food dyes. The creation of these requires considerable skill, and like fruit and vegetable carving was once associated with the

women of royal and aristocratic households. Decorative baskets of the little fruits are often presented as gifts on birthdays and other celebrations



COCONET MIL A mamber of T desserts um sweetened own milk Though noodles may be so in this way, much tapings_rice-6 dumplings to resemble longs see and sweet black

jelly cubes. There often coloreda shocking pini, n green food diesa



Presentation is an important part of the appeal of Thai sweets. Coconut custards and jellies are often wrapped individually in banana leaves, which imparts a subtle flavor as well as serving as a useful container, while egg-yolk confections are rolled into golden balls and cakes are cut into varied shapes. Other popular ingredients

include glutinous rice, sweet potatoes, pumpkin. palm sugar, slivers of fresh young coconut and mung-bean paste.



FRUIT AND FRUIT VENDORS

Few Thai street scenes would be complete without a fresh-fruit vendor; his moveable shop dispenses a selection of succulent pincapple, green mango, crisp guava (often dipped into a mixture of dried chillies and salt), banana fritters, prickly rambutans, ruby-ted mangosteens, and juicy slices of chilled watermelon.

DURING

A controversial fruit among Westerners becar of its distinct smell | his rotten onions and state cheese," one writer described it), the dura highly prized by Than, fetching high prices dur its short fruiting season The creamy flesh is as eaten together with sweetsticky rice. Numerous hybrids have been produced by Thai gnace bearing such imagination names as "Golden Pillon "Frog" and "Transvestill the last so called because its seeds will not germin

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THAI LANGUAGE





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Thai is a pentatonal language belonging to the so-called group of Tai-Kadai languages that includes Shan and Khun in Burma, Thô in Vietnam, Buyi and Zhuang in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces of China, and long-extinct languages such as Ahom in Assam. Most of the words are monosyllabic. There are five main dialects in Thailand. Literature is mostly written

in the central dialect spoken in and around Bangkok. Due to the early importance of Buddhism, a strong Sanskrit and Pali influence can be felt in the vocabulary as well as in the syntax. One of the main difficulties in learning Thai lies in the various conversational styles. There are several speech levels in spoken Thai, which depend on age, sex and social factors. The firstperson pronoun, for instance, can be rendered in numerous ways ranging from the very humble, when speaking to the king, to the most dismissive.

No Kho Kho Khoo Khoo-ngo Cho cho So choo yo do to the the 93 2 9 9 9 9 20 3 2 2 2 27 9 9 8 29 theo no the po ppo fo ppo fo ppo mo yo ro to roll so so

THAI ALPHABET

According to tradition, the first Thai alphabet was created in 1283 by King Ramkhamhaeng, Rama the Powerful of Sukhothai, who based it on Mon and Khmer versions of an old South Indian script. All these scripts are organized around a horizontal line that runs throughout the words. The script of modern Thai follows very strict phonological rules. It consists of 44







consonants and 32 basic vowels that cannot be used alone and are written in close relationship to the consonants in order to create syllables.

MANUSCRIPTS
Old Thai manuscripts were written on two kinds of material: khoi paper, made from the bark of a local tree, and palm leaf. To make the latter, the leaves of palm fronds were dried and trimmed to form flat sheets; the calligraphy was eiched with a sharp needle and the surface rubbed with ink to fill in the engraved areas. Palm leaf books were used only for religious texts and were rarely illustrated. Khoi books consisted of sheets folded concertina-fashion into a series of panels. These were often illustrated and dealt not only with religious subjects but also, especially in early Bangkok, with such secular matters as anatomy, warfare, the martial arts and auspicious elephants.

ARCHITECTURE

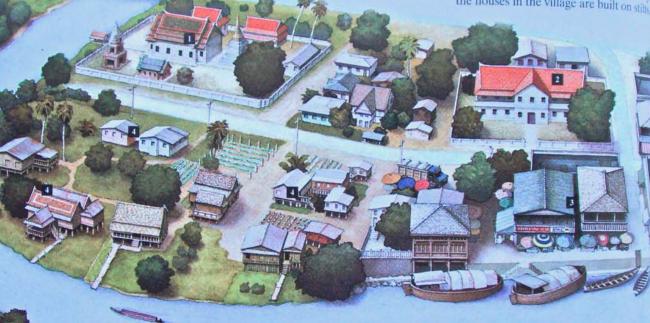


THAI VILLAGE, 44 TRADITIONAL THAI HOUSES, 45 THAI TEMPLE, 46 SIAMESE ARCHITECTURE, 47 RATTANAKOSIN ARCHITECTURE, 48 LANNA RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE, 49 THAI RELIGIOUS MONUMENTS, 50 LANNA CHEDIS, 57



1. Temple 2. School 3. Market and shophouses 4. HOUSES ON STILTS 5. VEGETABLE FARM

The typical Thai village is built along a waterway; these forms principal artery of communication in the countryside, Each village is self-contained, comprising a Buddhist temple, a school and a market. Usually, a cluster of Chinese shophouse make up the village market. To stay above floodwaters, many of the houses in the village are built on stills.





TRADITIONAL THAI HOUSES

The basic Thai house of the past, rarely seen today, was a simple structure of bamboo and thatch, raised off the ground for protection against floods and wild animals. Most family life

took place on a veranda-like platform outside the one or two rooms that served as sleeping quarters. In time, this model evolved into more complex structures of wood, varying in both form and decoration to suit conditions in different regions but always retaining their essential simplicity.



ROYAL HOUSES

Royal houses wer commoners except that they were generally closer to the ground and had more decorative features



early Hangkok is the A tames occupied that survives from early Bangcok is the Tamesk Deeng, or 'Red House, 'A 50 now in the compound of the National Museum, Built by King Roma I is a residence for one of his success, it was originally in Ayutthora style but acquired more Rattanakosin elements during several mirror. King Rama V presented the house to the museum as a reminder of an architectural style then becoming ture

CENTRAL PLAINS HOUSES

FLOATING HOUSES

Early Bangkok had many floating

shophouses, where the family lived and

floorboards in such

fitted to allow for

movement as the water rises and falls.

structures are loosely

traded. The

The hest-known traditional house style is found in the Central Plains. Elevated on stout round posts, it has steep roofs with curved bargeboards and paneled walls leaning slightly inward; the vanous components are prefabricated to enable easy dismantling and reasembly. The simplest house consists of a single unit with an outside veranda, while those accommodating larger families might have several separate units



"SALA"

Sala or pavilions, are open That roofs where people relax and watch the world go by. They can still be seen in many parts of the countr entrance to canals, and in



arranged around a central platform

ROOF GABLE ("NGAO")

A distinctive feature of the Central Plains house is the elegant curved decoration at the ends of the peaked bargeboards surrounding the gables. Known as ngao, it evolved from Khmer architecture and appears in elaborate forms on religious buildings and palaces. A stylized version can also be seen in domestic houses.



Paneled walls are a relatively recent addition to the Thai



Houses belonging to more prosperous families usually have a gate, often sheltered by a Thai-style roof that opens on to the central platform. A jar of water is placed at the bottom of the steps so that visitors and residents can wash their feet before ascending







1. "Bot"
The bot, or ubosot, where new monks are ordained, is the most the wat compound

important building in though it may not be the largest or most impressive. It is always surrounded by eight boundary stones (bai sema) demarcating the consecrated area, which is outside the authority of any

The Thai temple, or wat, is actually a complex of buildings and religious monuments within a single compound, often varying in both age and artistic value, designed to serve a number of practical purposes in the surrounding community. One section houses the resident monks, for instance, while elsewhere there are structures for worship, for meetings, for education, for cremations, for enshrining relics and ashes of the deceased.

The focal point of village life, a wat is erected as an act of merit by the community as a whole or by a private patron and is best appreciated through an understanding of its different functions.

(NOT FEATUR The viharn is monks and t who come to sermons. Th compound s here is with viharn, othe compounds several. Vih bots are sim architectura distinguisha presence of 2. "CHEDI"

"VIHARN"

A chedi, or reliquary m where relic Buddha or of importan are enshrin chedi is ofte main reason the constru the wat con 3. BELL TO Most wat o

contain a b The bell is monks to p 4. MONKS' The monks in a wat cor individual l where the r monks live.

largest unit

reserved fo abbot 5. & 6. "He Ho trai, or the middle (5) or on a platform (6 the manusc from termit other dome 7. "SALA KA The sala ka

usually serv meeting hal 8. "SALA" Other sala i compound: by visitors a pilgrims.

9. CREMATO

in a tall, tow structure will leading to th consigned to



SIAMESE ARCHITECTURE

Thai architecture evolved from various cultural influences, adapted and subtly transformed into something distinctly different. The process began at Sukhothai, where the first models were stone-roofed Khmer temples and Mon structures. The Thais introduced wooden roofs and more ornamental features, such as colored tiles and ceramic adornments. Other architectural forms came from India, China and Sri Lanka. During the Ayutthaya period.

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in the d are us Thai architecture achieved its own unique style.



No Sukhothai-period viharns exist today in their original form, but as shown by this model displayed at the Sukhothai Archeological Park, they were rectangular, open-sided structures with sloping wood roofs in two sections, the lower part supported by pillars with lotus capitals. Ceramic decorations were liberally used \$\times 129, 130.



AYUTTHAYA-PERIOD

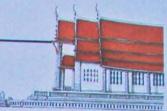
LIBRARY WINDOW
This window of gilded wood, adorned with inlaid mosaic, is in an Ayutthaya-period ho trai, or library; the late 17th-century structure was moved from the old capital to Bangkok.

AYUTTHAYA-PERIOD DOORS

Shown here are doors at Wat Yai Suwannaram in Phetchaburi, which date from the Ayutthaya period. Beautifully carved and gilded, they are particularly fine examples of the graceful curves that characterize Ayutthaya



Ayutthaya-style religious structures \$\times\$ 125 were designed to impress with their size and splendor.



A characteristic of the viharns and bots of the period A characteristic of the viharns and hots of the period was a concave curve of the base called thong sampao. Interiors tended to be dark, to emphasize the mystery and royalty of the Buddha, while claborate decorations were used on the outside. The example shown above is Wat Na Phra Meru, bullt in the 15th century and restored by King Rama III of Bangkok.



AYUTTHAYA-PERIOD

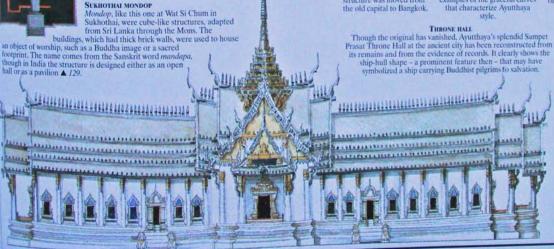
SLIT WINDOWS

Windows with narrow openings, like the one shown here from Wat Na Phra Meru in Ayutthaya. were of Khmer origin and contributed to the darkness of the interior.



LOTES CAPITAL

Columns surmounted by water-lily or lotusbud decorations structures dating from the Sukhothai to Ayutthaya periods; in Bangkok, the lotus capital was replaced entirely by the water-lily motif. This example is from the Viharn Daeng in Ayutthaya Province.



RATTANAKOSIN ARCHITECTURE

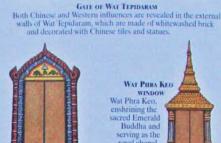
At the beginning of the Rattanakosin, or Bangkok, period, a conscious attempt was made to recreate the splendor of Ayutthaya. Some of the first buildings were replicas of former ones, with careful attention paid to every detail. Later Rattanakosin decorations became even more elaborate than those of Ayutthaya.

influenced by Chinese motifs and love of color. Western influences became predominant under King Rama V, when foreign architects were brought in to design palace buildings and even temples reflected the new styles.

WAT SUTHAT BOT Built by King Rama I, founder of Bangkok, the finely proportioned bot of Wat Suthat is 264 feet long and stands on two terraces. adding

to its

imposing A colonnade surrounds the structure and bears the weight of the massive four-tier roofs. The interior is decorated with well-preserved mural paintings.



WAT RAIABOPTT WINDOW Wat Rajabopit, built by King Rama V, displays both traditional and Western styles. Windows like the one above are decorated with mosaics and carvings, and walls and pillars in the temple are covered with colored porcelain tiles.

00000000



is the most splendid of all temples. constituting a virtual textbook of classical architecture and decoration. The window shown above reflects the richness and intricate detail of its adornment.



typical of Rattanaka

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WAT PHRA KEO MONDOP

The mondop at Wat Phra Keo, data from the reign of King Rama Lin regarded as the most beautiful example of Rattanakosin architect Square-shaped and surmounted is slender spire, it is supported outset by tall elegant columns and is corrected to the same state of the sa with an incredible profusion of lavish decorations.

WAT BENCHAMABOPH (MARBLE TEMPLE)

(MARBLE TEMPLE)
Popularly known as the Marbie
Temple, Wat Benchamabopit

\$\times 92, 132\$ was built toward the end
of King Rama V's reign and
displays an celectic blend of calmo
influences. The walls are covered
with marble brought from Carran.
Italy, while the collow roof tiles at Italy, while the yellow roof tiles-Chinese. The bot has stained-gla-windows as well as massive marke Khmer-style singha (guardian lions), flanking the doors.



WAT SUTHAT VIHARN

Wat Suthat viharn, one of the finest

surviving structures of early Bangkok, has a double-layered

roof and eight doors preceded by porticoes. The gables have magnificently carved

various religious symbols, while the

interior is divided into three sections by two rows of

columns

BELL TOWER

Covered with

adorned with

pointed finials

and ornate decorations, the

bell tower at Bangkok's Wat Po ▲ 79

exemplifies all the best qualities of

Rattanakosin art

The temple was a

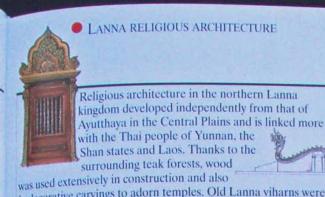
favorite with early Chakri rulers,

particularly King Rama III.

glazed tiles and

CHINESE INFLUENCE

Chinese architectural styles and decorations were popular during the reign of King Rama III, as can be seen in the viharn of Wat Tepidaram.



in decorative carvings to adorn temples. Old Lanna viharns were open, like those of Sukhothai, and the columns supporting the roof were often low.



brick base, the viharn is built entirely of wood, including wooden tiles, and is open on all four sides; low columns support the huge tiered roof.



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LIBRARY OF WAT PHRA SINGH Library of Wat Phra Singh Wat Phra Singh's library is a small wooden building, raised on a high brick base, decorated with stucco deities. The library itself is adorned with intricate inlaid decorations and reflects pure Lanna style at its best 1 26. WAT PHRA SINGH

This early 19th-century viharn at Wat Phra Singh is possibly the finest example of late Lanna style surviving in Chiang Mai. It is a closed structure with brick walls and a wooden façade; guardian serpents stand

on the entrance stairs ▲ 136.

KU OF WAT PHRA THAT LAMPANG LUANG A unique feature of Lanna architecture

is the ku, a brick structure used to house the Buddha image. Similar to a chedi, it is gilded and placed inside a temple. The *ku* above is in Lampang province \$\tilde{L}\$ 142, 145. WAL PHEMIN

Wat Phumin in Nan province ▲ 146 was established in 1596 by a local ruler and restored in 1865 and 1873. Its main building, serving as both bot and viharn, is a unique structure built on a perfect cruciform plan, with four axial porches builting to for the builting of the structure of the province of the structure of the structure of the structure. leading to four Buddha images placed in the center. On the interior walls are lively murals depicting the Jataka stories and painted about a hundred years ago. The stairways of two opposite entrances are flanked by naga with the tail at one doorway and the head at the other. The chapel has a five-tier roof, decorated with naga symbolizing the water flowing down from Mount Meru.

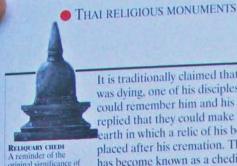
MONDOP OF WAT PONGSANUK TAI

of the region, which have been influenced by

This graceful mondop at Wat Pongsanuk Tai in Lampang ▲ 143 is a typical example of old Lanna style. Completely open on all sides, it has a tiered roof with CEREMONIAL GATE. WAT SUAN DOK

Monumental gates, like this one at Wat Suan Dok in Chiang Mai, are false upper stories and a cage enclosing four Buddha images typical of the north and were also a feature of now-vanished palaces. flanking a Bodhi tree. The decorations display a wit and ingenuity lacking in Wat Suan Dok was once a wiang, or fortified monastery, built on the site of a royal garden ▲ 137, 143. many modern temples

Bangkok tastes.



RELIQUARY CHEDI
A reminder of the
original significance of
the chedi is this
example, made of
limestone and standing
19 inches high; dating
from the 7th and 8th
centuries, it was found
in Saraburi Province
and is now in the
National Museum.

It is traditionally claimed that, as the Buddha was dying, one of his disciples asked how they could remember him and his doctrines. He replied that they could make a mound of earth in which a relic of his body could be placed after his cremation. Thus began what has become known as a chedi, a monument that over the years became taller, narrower, and often of considerable size, used to enshrine relics of the Buddha or the ashes of important people, religious and royal. Chedis are found in every wat, often along with prangs, an older type of monument adapted from Hindu architecture, and introduced to Thailand by the Khmers.



one shown on the right, which stands on a square foundation and has four square tiers ascending in decreasing size; located at Wat Phra Boromathat in Chaiya 103, it dates from the 8th century but has been restored several times, most recently in 1901 and 1930.

SIMOTHAL LOTUS-BLD CHIDI
The monument after which Wat Chedi Chet
Thaew is named was built during Sukhothai's
classic period, in the mid-14th century, at the
satellite city of Si Satchanalai. An almost
identical copy of one at Wat Mahathat in
Sukhothai, it has a lotus-bud finial, a feature
unique to Sukhothai religious architecture
and found on other Sukhothai monuments
throughout the kingdom

131.



▲ 124, built of stuccoed brick and laterite in 1424. A rare collection of gold objects was found in 1957 in a large crypt beneath the prang.

originated in Sri Lank first appeared in To religious architem PHRA PATHOM CHEDI The orange-tiled, bell-shaped Phra Pathom Chedi at Nakhon period, it has been as since throughout To Pathom is reputed to be the history up to the present. The or tallest in the world, 352 feet high and 315 feet in diameter. shown above, at W It was built in the 19th Yai Chai Moogack century during the reigns of King Rama IV and Rama V. Avutthaya 238 feet bi and encases a much earlier composed 132-foot monument dating from the and was built Dvaravati period King Ran Several monuments are similarly built around one or more older A 96

Wat ARLY
Wat Arun, or the Tempe
of Dawn, is one of
Bangkok's major
riverside landmarks
A 88. The central ptus,
221 feet high, stands
on a 122-foot base,
originally only 51 feet
high, it was raised to be
present height during the
reigns of King
Rama II and Rama III
Stairways lead up at
the four cardial
points, and there are

BELL-SHAPED CHIE

Stairways lead upthe four cardinal points, and there as smaller prungs at each of the four corners. All are decorated with multicolored ceramic.

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Anterior Large Co.

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Temple

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Rama III.

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CHEDI AT

War Lat Hin This chedi at Wat Lai Hin, in the Kokha

district of Lampang Province, dates from the late 18th century.

hs proportions are modest but the form attests to the grace

and elegance of
Lanna style

A 144,

Early Lanna chedis display a number of Sinhalese features and are similar to those of Sukhothai. The region had extensive religious contacts with the outside world; in 1455, during the reign of King Tilokaraja, Chiang Mai was the site of an international Buddhist gathering. Later, in the 19th century, Burmese influences ▲ 137, 144, altered both temperature.

oth temple buildings and monuments.

Generally, Lanna chedis are smaller than those in the Central Plains, with the notable exception of Wat Chedi Luang in Chiang Mai, which was raised to 300 feet before its destruction by an earthquake in 1545.

CHEDI AT WAT CHIANG MAN

WAT PHRA SINGH This chedi at Chiang Mai's Wat Phra Singh

consists of a square block topped with a

tiered spire, an

form that is

in Sukhothai

A 130.

Wat Chiang Man, founded in 1296 and restored in the 19th century, was probably the first temple built in Chiang Mai by King Mengrai. The chedi, possibly a 15th-century reconstruction of the original, displays the characteristic motif of the square block but here in huge proportions. The base is decorated with rows of buttresses shaped like elephants, a Sinhalese

inspiration that can be found at several temples built during the Sukhothai period, among them Wat Chang Rop and Wat Chang Lom. The bell-shaped upper part is covered with

brass sheets

CHIDIAT WAT PONGSANUK TAI

The chedi at WAI PONGSANOS IAI
The chedi at WAI PONGSANOS IAI
The chedi at WAI PONGSANOS IAI
THE CHEST WAI PONGSAN

THAILAND AS SEEN BY PAINTERS



AYUTTHAYA AS SEEN BY
FRENCH ENVOYS, 52
ARUNOTHAI: LIFE IN THE HAREM, 33
JEK SENG: COSTUMES OF
THE NORTHERNERS, 54
KHRUA IN KHONG: THE GREEN
COUNTRYSIDE, 55
HILDEBRANDT: THE CHAO PHRAYA, 56
CHINE: GLIMPSES OF BANGKOK, 57

WE WENT FOR A WALK OUTSIDE THE TOWN, I PAUSED FREQUENTLY TO ADMIRE THE STRONG GREAT CITY, SEATED UPON AN ISLAND ROUND WHICH FLOWED A RIVER THREE TIMES THE WIDTH OF THE SEINE.» ABBE DE CHOISY

SEEN BY FRENCH ENVOY



The first Western Saim are found in early atlases and accounts of voyages There are many interesting engravings that publications of the travels of French Jesuits and the two French embassies to Ayutthaya in 1685 and 1687. The flurry of diplomatic activities and the arrival in Paris of Siamese ambassadors increased the interest in this newly discovered exotic land. One of the most popular subjects was the grand parade of royal barges carrying the Chaumont and his

retinue to the king's pulace. While the pulace. While the original theme was captraved in the book by Father Guy Tachurd, the subject was elaborated and developed in countless prints such as that



shown left (1). Royal elephants and their rich caparisons were another favorite subject (2). This image comes from La Loubère's works. Prints were rarely weare produced to descriptions and descriptions and descriptions and descriptions and descriptions and descriptions of 33 waterations of 33 waterations of 34 waterations of 34 waterations occur mind of the thermes depicted, the engravantal Reproduced here, a map of Ayunfan (3) and two vicas (4 and 5) of the observatory that suconstructed by Ken Narni and given a the Jesuits to puse their astrological studies.







ARUNOTHAI: LIFE IN THE HAREM

«VIVID PICTURES OF ANATOMY AND JEWELRY, GARDENS AND POOLS, KIOSKS AND MATTED DORMITORIES MAKE THIS WING OF PALACE A STUNNING BLEND OF REALITY AND POFTRY...

THE MARQUIS DE BEAUT

The languid tempera ladies who appear on these pages are the work of Arunothai Somsakul, a contemporary Thai artist. He is inspired by his affection for the elegance of turnof-the-century court life in Bangkok, which he portrays in a decadent, almost Symbolist manner. A large portion of Arunothai's output is manifestly erotic, and even his more decorous works are suffused with an air of almost palpable sensuality. The

oblique looks and whispered conversations of the palace ladies suggest either intrigues or assignations, the imminence of scandal. Even the figures carved in relief on the walls seem privy to many an exciting secret. The concupiscent atmosphere is sometimes reinforced by the presence of small crotic embellishments hidden within the composition that go unnoticed at first – or even second – glance.

The figures conspire in detailed settings that accurately portray the objects of court life at the time. Specific situations are often recognizable: the Vimarn Mek Palace seen through the window behind the gossiping ladies, for example. The paintings are, as is usual with Arunothai, set during the fifth reign, when Western fashions, often somewhat modified, were already being adopted by Bangkok society.







«THE NORTHERN SCHOOL IS CLEARLY DISTINGUISHED BY ITS VIVID PORTRAYAL OF FAMILIAR SCENES CONVEYING A STRONG FEELING OF INTIMACY.»

JEAN BOISSELIER

JEK SENG: COSTUMES OF THE NORTHERNERS



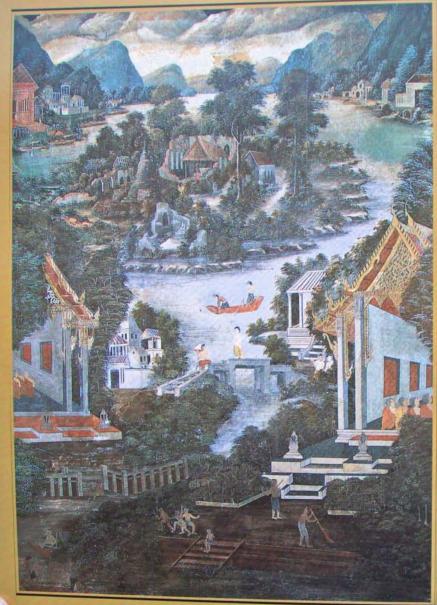






of races and cultures of northern Thailand of horthern Thailand is preserved in the murals at Wat Phra Singh, Chiang Mai. The surviving Lanna murals are engaging portraits of life in the north, before the irresistible influence of the culture of of the culture of Bangkok overwhelmed the more delicate Lanna traditions. The murals were probably painted by a local artist named Jek Seng, who completed them during the late them during the late 19th century. The changing fashious and growing cosmopolitanism of the period are depicted in a detail from a mural (1), where the man watching the buffaloes wears a Bangkok-style parining • 30, evidence that the culture of the capital was already spreading northward at this time. On the same mural, the lofty personages asking for directions are Shan, as is evident from the as is evident from the turbans and striped shawls they wear (2). Their Lue guide is heavily tattosed about the legs and loins and is armed with a red umbreila. The ladies of the market are more conservatively attired; their desise striped their classic striped sarongs, bure bosoms and thin shouldercloths are typically Lanna (3). Life in a typical northern Thai house is also clearly

3
-



The lish green countryside of Thailand did not appear in Thai religious nature of the works and the flat two-dimensional style confined naturalistic elements to the role of embellishments, with which Thai artists filled up small empty corners of their compositions. The influence of Chinese landscape painting was first felt in the 19th century, gradually filtering into the work of Thai muralists and causing larger areas of their paintings to be treated as landscape Even so, it was not until the advent of the artist-monk from Phetchaburi, Khrua In Khong ▲ 101, that the landscape per se became a subject in Thai art. An intimate of King Rama IV, Khrua In Khong

found inspiration in the traditions of Western painting. which he discovered in the form of reproductions brought to Thailand by ambassadors and missionaries. Khrua In Khong introduced the concept of perspective to Thai painting; he also showed affection for the American neoarchitecture, which made its earliest appearance in Thailand during the 19th century, Khrua In Khong added new colors to the Thai painter's palette. showing a clear preference for darker tones. The two images Francesca. here of a river scene (1) and town life (2) were finished at Wat Bowornivet, Bangkok, around 1860, and are intended as figurative depictions of religious teachings The metaphorical

remembras mative Phen Khroa hr Kh stormy skies particularly The the treatment clouds and suns effects one and debt to the Tempo of Giorgione, a se that was fresh in Khrua In Khonz mind at the time geometric persp of some of the buildings is insu by the Flagelia: of Piero della

«THE

SUFI

BAN

HOUSES



THERE IT WAS...THE ORIENTAL CAPITAL WHICH HAD AS YET SUFFERED NO WHITE CONQUEROR; AN EXPANSE OF BROWN HOUSES OF BAMBOO...SPRUNG OUT OF THE BROWN SOILS ON THE BANKS OF THE MUDDY RIVER.»

JOSEPH CONRAD

HONO

YSIDE

terchaha Khong

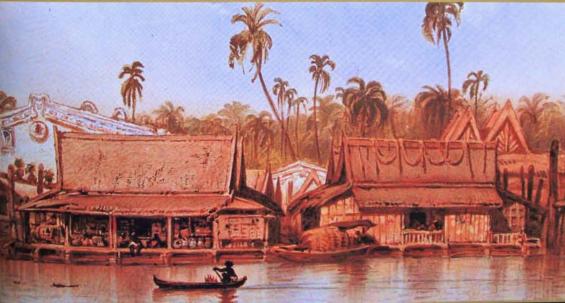
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Ac a viole the Tempo tone, a me fresh in Khong's

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HILDEBRANDT: • THE CHAO PHRAYA





Following the expulsion of the French from Ayutthayu in 1688, a century of isolationism followed During this time few foreigners visited Siam: As a result most of the atlases and books printed contained illustrations adapted from those of La Loubère and Father Guy Tachard, Normal relations with Western countries were resumed during King Rama IV's reign (1851-68) and Siam once again received the attention of writers and publishers, though still very few artists traveled in the country. One of the few artists to visit Siam was Eduard Hildebrandt (1818-69), who produced a series of watercolors of Bangkok and had them published as chromolithographs in his book, Drei Reise um die Erde (London, 1867). The two reproduced here show the banks of the Chao Phraya, which at that time was the at that time was the main thoroughfare of the city. In the first painting, beyond the floating bouses, Wat Arun, a famous landmark, can clearly be seen (1). The second provides a glimpse into one of the many floating shophouses that lined both banks (2). The Chinese temple Chinese temple behind would have been one of the few edifices at the time to be built of brick.

1

2



By the turn of the century. in that period of revolutionary ideas that was to transform the art scene in the West, many artists felt a special fascination for the Orient and its exotic themes. However, only a few were able to experience at first hand the colors and atmosphere of the East, One artist who did was Galileo Chini (1873–1956). He was summoned to Bangkok in 1911 to

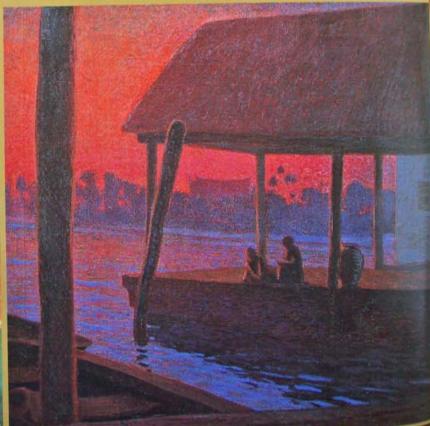
decorate the ceiling of the new throne hall there, which had recently been completed by Annibale Rigotti. Chini spent two and a half years in Siam, painting the vaulted ceiling of the throne room with friezes in the Secessionist style and large frescoes depicting the glory of the Chakri Dynasty. The artist's long, prolific career subsumed many crucial phases in the development of

modern art: the Pre-Raphaelite movement, Secessionism. Symbolism and Divisionism. Underlying these explorations was a solid Florentine mastery of his craft. The friezes in Bangkok are among the most charming of Chini's paintings. However, the work he completed during the Siam years ranks among his finest in that period. The mood suggested in Mesu the

Performer (1), a study of a Thai dancer against a stark black background, is almost erotic, with a touch of the Symbolist manner. Another of Chini's masterpieces is undoubtedly the Chinese New Year Festival in Bangkok (2), its phantasmagoric quality achieved through strength of color and diffused light from an apparent multiplicity of sources. A vague hint of the Futurist work of Boccioni is

creates a s mood an has long be the most popula. That themes in artists; the meratmosphere







CHIN

BANGKOK CHINI GLIMPSES OF BANGKOK



studies with a series of large temperas of figures which are almost scenographic curtoons rather than

paintings. The Brahmus shown in the picture above are an exemplary study on white with the

transfacent and transparent mances of their immaculate clothes rendered with luminous precision.

THAILAND AS SEEN BY WRITERS



THE KINGDOM OF SIAM, 59 SUKHOTHAI/PATTANI, 60 AYUTTHAYA, 67 CHIANG MAI, 62 BANGKOK, 63 NAKHON PATHOM, 66

THE KINGDOM OF SIAM

EARLY ACCOUNTS OF SIAM

AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT

The kingdom of Siam had hardly any contact with the West until the 16th century; at least, no notable account of it is found in Western chronicles. Nicolò de Conti (1395-1469) mentioned the kingdom of Siam, but never visited Ayutthaya, although he crossed the Tenasserim in 1420-30. The first travelers to give a full description of Siam and its inhabitants are the Portuguese. In 1511 Afonso de Albuquerque conquered Malacca, made it a Portuguese stronghold in the Far East, and at once set out to establish relations with all the neighboring peoples. The following is an extract from the instructions given by Afonso de Albuquerque to the ambassador Antonio Miranda de Azevedo in early

"You shall tell the King of Siam that I am sure that he will rejoice with the destruction of the King of Malacca, with whom he has always been at war. Tell him that the King of Portugal will be very pleased that the Siamese ships and people will trade again with Malacca and that this was the main reason for which I took the city. And tell the King of Siam that if he needs the support of our fleet and our men to preserve his nation, I, as captain-general of the King of Portugal, will serve him in everything he will command.**

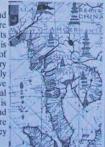
January 1512, and is the first Western document to recognize the importance of Siam.

BRAS DE ALBUQUERQUE, COMENTARIOS DO GRANDE AFONSO DE ALBUQUERQUE. COIMBRA, 1923, PART III, CHAPTER XXXVI

THE KINGDOM OF SIAM

The following, written between 1513 and 1515, is from "A Suma Oriental" by Tomes Pires (1468–1522), who worked as a clerk in the Portuguese trading house in Malacca for over two years; while there is no evidence that he actually visited Siam, he talked with many who did and based this account on their reports. Pires was sent on important missions in India and China and following a series of misunderstandings was eventually imprisoned and killed by the Chinese at Canton. The memoirs of the first part of his adventurous life were first published in Italian by the Venetian scholar Ramusio, in the second half of the 16th century.

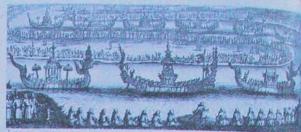
"The kingdom of Siam is heathen. The people, and almost the language, are like those of Pegu. They are considered to be prudent folk counsel. The merchants know a great deal about merchandise...The kingdom is justly ruled. The king is always in residence in the city of Odia (Ayutthaya). He is a hunter. He is very ceremonious with strangers; he moves freely and easily with the natives. He has many wives, upwards of five hundred. On the death of the king a person of the royal blood, usually a nephew, the son of a sister, if he is suitable, and if not there are sometimes agreements and assemblies to decide who will be the best. Secrets are closely kept among them. They are very reserved. They speak with well-taught modesty....



TOMES PIRES, A SUMA ORIENTAL. TRANSLATED BY ARMANDO CORTESAO, LONDON 1944

VENICE OF THE EAST

Soldier, merchant and traveler, Fernão Mendez Pinto (1510-83) lived for many years in the East, writing a record of his pilgrimage in what is perhaps the most original work of this period of Portuguese expansion. A literary masterpiece, the "Peregrinação" was first published in Lisbon in 1614 and has been translated into Spanish, French and English. Fernão Mendez Pinto was in Siam twice in the mid-16th century. The following is extracted from a letter he wrote to the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Jesus.



...In the Kingdom of Sornau which is called Siam where I was on two occas went to the city of Ayutthaya where the court of the King can be found, and I a state that it is the greatest affair that I saw in all those parts. This city is like Ven because one travels more by water than one does by land. I heard it be said a many that there were over two hundred thousand boats but I did not see a league length of waterway which was so full that one could not pass; for many fairs it held on the rivers round the city and these are like the feasts of the idols. And each one of these fairs come five hundred boats and at times over one thousand The King is called Precaocale, which I have been told means the second personal God. No foreigners have been allowed to see his palaces except for the Ambassadors or those who are to become his vassals. On the outside the palace are covered with metal and on the inside there is a great deal of gold. The Km comes out two times in each year in order that all should see him and accompanied by two hundred elephants on which are mounted many lords at captains, and he is accompanied by between five and six thousand guardsmen. It is carried on an elephant, sitting on a very ornate chair and one of his pages sits the elephant's head carrying a gold rope in his hand. On his right hangs a bag ha of coins which he distributes as alms."

TRANSCRIBED IN FERNÃO MENDEZ PINTO, SUBSIDIOS PARA A SUA BIOGRAFIA BY CRISTOVÃO AIRES, LISBON 194-

DUBIOUS MORALS

Little is known of Thomas Herbert, an English adventurer who traveled around to world in the first half of the 17th century. The strange habits mentioned in the follows extract, however, are not entirely fictional, and they are often mentioned by other contemporary authors.

"[The Siamese] have beene (in foregoing times) wicked Sodomites, a sinne s hateful to nature itselfe, that it aborres it; and to deterre these calamites, a life Queen commanded that all male children should have a Bell of gold (in it a Adders tongue dried) put through the prepuse, which in small time not a became not contemptible, but in way of ornament and for musick sake few now are without three or foure; so that when they have a mind to marry, he has his choice of what maid he likes, but beds her not. till the Midwife present a sleepie ophiated potion, during which the Bell is loosed from the flesh, and fastened to the fore-skin, which hinders not but titulates; the unguent is applied, and the cure is perfected. But to see a Virgin here, at virgins yeeres, is as a black Swan, in regards, in green yeeres they give the too forward maids a virulent drink; whose vertue (vyce rather) is by a strange efficacy to distend their mullebria so capaciously that Bells and rope ring too easily: and which is worst (dull memory compels us to write it) the women here are not ashamed (the better to allure men from Sodomitry) to go naked to the middle, where with a fine transparent cobweb-lawn they are so covered. that by a base device is made to open as they go; so that any impure ayre gives all to mens immodest viewes, denudating those parts which every modest eye most scorns...*

> THOMAS HERBERT, SOME YEARS TRAVELS INTO DIVERSE PARTS OF ASIA AND AFRIOUE, LONDON 1638

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TEMPLES OF SUKHOTHAL

One of the greatest figures of the Portuguese Renaissance, João de Barros (1496-1570) One of the greatest figure of India, 1533–67, and, as such, had access to sources and was Factor of the Flories control of Portugal. He wrote the four "Decadas da information about the overseas expansion of Portugal. He wrote the four "Decadas da information about the overseas expansion of Portugal. He wrote the four "Decadas da information about the overseas expansion of Portugal." information and the four Decades day ("Asian Decades"), first published in Lisbon between 1552 and 1615. Because of Assa Assar Assar and the availability of abundant material, João de Barros is sometimes called the Portuguese Titus Livius. Sukhothai had lost its political somenmes cauca in solution of the city was importance when João de Barros wrote his "Decadas", but the fame of the city was obviously still alive, and the great temples were then still standing in all their magnificence.



...In general, the Siamese are very religious and given to venerating God for they build many great magnificent temples, some of them of stone and mortar and others of bricks and mortar; in these temples they place images of human figures, of people whom they say are in heaven owing to their good deeds on earth, and they keep these images as a remembrance. but they do not adore them. Among these images they have one made of clay, which must be about 50 paces long and which they call the Father of Men, and say that God sent it from Heaven, and that it was not made on earth, and that of the image some men were born, who were martyred in the name of God. The largest image made out of metal, of the many they have in that Kingdom, can be found in the Temple of the City of Sukhothai which

they say is the oldest city in the Kingdom. This idol measures 80 palmos and there are a great number of smaller figures, down to human size. The Temples are large and sumptuous and the Kings spend much money on them and every King, as inheritor of the Kingdom, at once starts building a Temple in praise of God, and then builds two or three more, to which they bequeath great revenues."

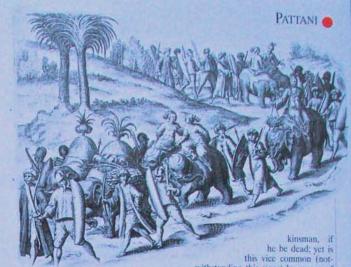
JOÃO DE BARROS, DECADAS DA ASIA,

PATTANI

THE QUEEN OF PATTANI

Pattani, a Malay kingdom on the coast of the Gulf of Siam, was from early times a vassal of Siam. The kingdom is often mentioned in ancient chronicles because of its importance as a trading post between Siam, China and the Indonesian archipelago. The Portuguese and the Dutch had their trade factories there. The following extract, based on reports of contemporary travelers, is found in the "Pilgrimage" of Rev. Samuel Purchas, a British erudite who compiled a geographical description of the world in the early 17th century.

*Patane is a City Southwards from Siam, chiefe of that Kingdome, whereto it siveth name, in the height of seven degrees. The buildings are of Wood and Reede, but artificially wrought. The Mesquit (for many of them are Mahumetanes) is of Bricke. The Ching. Bricke. The Clinois are more then the native inhabitants. Adulterie is here a capital offence, the father of the malefactor being the Executioner, or his next



withstanding this rigor) by reason of the womens unbrideled lust. The Kingdome hath bin governed many yeares by a Queene, who...keepes her selfe close at home among her women; of which some may not marry (but yet may doe worse) others may, having first obtained the Queen's licence. It is seldome that she is seene; yet sometimes she rideth on an Elephant in Progresse, for her recreation. And her Elephants, they have a device to take them in this sort. Some ride into the woods on a tame Elephant, and when they espice a wilde one, they provoke him to fight. Whiles these are fastened in the encounter by the teeth or tuskes, each striving to overthrow the other, some come behinde the wilde Elephant, and fasten his hinder feet, and so either kill him for his teeth, or by famine tame him."

SAMUEL PURCHAS, PILGRIMAGE, OR RELATIONS OF THE WORLD AND THE RELIGIONS OBSERVED IN ALL AGES AND PLACES DISCOVERED FROM THE CREATION UNTO THE PRESENT, LONDON 1617

THE END OF A WEALTHY KINGDOM

Pattani was eventually ravaged and destroyed by the Siamese and incorporated into the kingdom; its inhabitants were brought to Bangkok as slaves. This is what George Windsor Earl saw, two hundred years after Purchas' description.

During many years the Siamese have been making annual excursions into the Malay Peninsula, apparently for no other purpose than to procure slaves. They lately took Queda, a town nearly opposite to Penang, the aggression being connived at, indeed materially assisted by the English, in consideration of some commercial advantages to be granted by the King of Siam.

Two junks, bringing the remainder of the inhabitants of Patani, arrived in the river during my stay. The decks of the junks could not contain these miserable captives, and platforms were erected on the outsides of the vessles for the purpose of affording greater space. These unfortunate creatures were field hand and foot during the voyage, in order to prevent them from throwing themselves overboard, which many would have done had they been at liberty.... Many of the men were wounded, but no consideration was shewn them on that account, not even a bit of cloth being given to bind up their wounds. During the few days of their detention in the factory, numbers of them, particularly of the young children, died from want of food, and from the horrible state of disease which prevailed in consequence of the miscries which they had endured on the voyage. Those who survived were assigned away as slaves to the nobles, and were selected for removal with the utmost disregard to natural ties."

GEORGE WINDSOR EARL, THE EASTERN SEAS, LONDON 1837, REPRINTED SINGAPORE 1971

AYUTTHAYA

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LETTER

Faced with a rebellious nobility and a growing Dutch naval presence in Asia, King Narai (1656-88) turned to the French. A 1684 embassy from Siam to the court of Louis XIV stirred up great interest in Paris and its court society, and led to a flurry of diplomatic activity. Ambassadors and members of the retinue published memoirs of their visits to Narai's great capital Ayuthaya, for a European audience that had only now discovered

Siam. The first French embassy of the Chevalier de Chaumont in 1685 included Father Guy Tachard (1651-1712), a Jesuit priest whose book relates the diplomatic maneuvering that attended this contact between Europe and Asia.

"It was a Surprise to the Ambassador, when he entered the Hall, to see the King so high above him, and he seemed somewhat troubled that he had not been told of it. When his Complement was made. the next thing he was to do in course. was to advance and present his Master's Letter to the King of Siam. It was agreed upon with the Lord Constance, that to show greater respect to the King's Letter, the Ambassador should take it from the Abbott de Choisi, who for that end should stand by his side during his speech, and hold the Letter in a golden Cup with a very long Foot. But the Ambassador perceiving the King to be so high above him, that to reach up to him he must have taken the Cup by the lower part of the Foot, and raised his Arm very high, thought that that Distance suited not with his Dignity, and that he ought to present the Letter nearer hand. Having a little considered, he thought



it was his best Course to hold the Cup by the Boul, and to stretch his Arm but half out. The King perceiving the reason why he acted so, rose up smiling, and stooping with his Body over the Throne, met him half way to receive the Letter: He then put it upon his Head which was a Mark of extraordinary Honour and Esteem that he was willing to shew to the great that sent it."

FATHER GUY TACHARD, A RELATION OF THE VOYAGE TO SIAM, LONDON 1688

A VIEW OF AYUTTHAYA

After a somewhat scandalous youth, mostly spent as a transvestite in high Parisian social circles, the Abbé François de Choisy (1644–1724) became a Jesuit priest and went to Siam with the first French embassy in 1685 as assistant to its head, the Chevalier de Chaumont. The following view of Ayutthaya is from a memoir he published in the form of letters.

"We went for a walk outside the town. I paused frequently to admire the great city, seated upon an island round which flowed a river three times the width of the Seine. There rode ships from France, England, Holland, China and Japan, while innumerable boats and gilded barges rowed by 60 men plied to and fro. No less extraordinary were the camps and villages outside the walls inhabited by the different nations who came trading there, with all the wooden houses standing on Al^eLee Ambaseadeurs du Roy de Siam,envoy au Roy Louis le Grani Emperedr des Francoi en 1080.







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posts over the water, the bulls, cows, and pigs on dry land. The street out of sight, are alleys of clear running water. Under the great green free, out of sign, are ancys of the people. Beyond these camps of the nations are the the little nouses crown the project the little nouses crown the project fields. The horizon is tall trees, above which are visible the sparkling to the control of the cont and pyramids of the pagodas. I do not know whether I have conveyed to you impression of a beautiful view, but certainly I myself have never seen a logone.99

ABBE DE CHOISY, JOURNAL DU VOYAGE DE SIAM, LONDON PARIS

ESTHETICS OF TEETH IN SIAM

"The Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam", from which the follow "The Natural and Folinear History of the Sangaon of State 1, from which the poet extract comes, was written by Nicolas Gervaise (1662–1729), a French pnest who is as a missionary to Ayutthaya in 1683 and remained for four years; published in h the book was used as a source by the better-known Simon de la Loubere

"One thing that the Siamese ladies cannot endure about us is the whiteness of teeth, because they believe that the devil has white teeth, and that it is shameful a human being to have teeth like a beast's. Therefore, as soon as the boys and a reach the age of fourteen or fifteen, they start trying to make their teeth black shiny. They do this in the following manner: the person whom they have chose render them this service makes them lie down on their back and keeps them in position for the three days that the operation lasts. First, he cleans the teeth was lemon juice and then having rubbed them with a certain fluid which makes the red, he adds a layer of burnt coconut, which blackens them. The teeth are weakened by the application of these drugs that they could be extracted painles and would even fall out if the patient risked eating any solids, so for these this days he subsists on cold soups, which are fed to him gently so that they flow day the throat without touching the teeth. The least wind could spoil the effect of the operation and that is why the patient stays in bed and makes sure that he is no covered until he feels that it is successfully accomplished ... **

NICOLAS GERVAISE, THE NATURAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF SIAM, LONDON 168

A SIAMESE FESTIVAL

"A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam" by Simon de la Loubère, who led the second French embassy to Ayutthaya in 1687, is one of the most comprehens sources of information about Siamese life and culture in the 17th century.

"When the Waters begin to retreat, the People return them Thanks for several Nights together with - 3 great Illumination; not only for that they are retired, but for the Fertility which they render to the Lands. The whole River is then seen covered with floating Lanterns, which pass with it. They are of different Sizes, according to the devotion of every particular Person; the



variously painted Paper, whereof they are made, augments the agreeable effect so many Lights. Moreover, to thank the Earth for the Harvest they do on the fin days of their Year make another magnificent Illumination. The first time arrived at Louvo [Lopburi today] was in the Night, and at the time of the Illumination; and we saw the Walls of the City adorned with lighten Lanterns equal distances..."

SIMON DE LA LOUBÈRE, A NEW HISTORICAL RELATION OF THE KINGDOM OF SAID LONDON/PARIS 16

CHIANG MAI

THE KINGDOM OF LANNA

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THE CITY OF CHIANG MAI

Toward the end of the 19th century, Holt S. Hallett made an extensive trip through northern Thailand in made an extensive for a British railway that would go

genet of a come through upper Thailand, and eventually to China. The railway was never ball but Hallen's account of his journey, entitled 'A Thousand Miles on an Elephant man the Shan States", offers a rure view of a region visited by relatively few foreigners at the time. Here is an excerpt from his stay in Chiang Mai in 1876.

#h is a pretty sight in the early morning to watch the women and girls from the neighbouring villages streaming over the bridge on their way to the market, passing along in single file, with their baskets dangling from each end of a shoulderhamboo, or accurately poised on their heads. The younger women move like wouthful Dianas, with a quick, firm and elastic tread, and in symmetry of form resemble the ideal models of Grecian art...The ordinary costume of these graceful maidens consists of flowers in their hair, which shines like a raven's wing, and is combed back and arranged in a neat and beautiful knot; a petticoat or skirt, frequently embroidered near the bottom with silk, worsted, cotton, or gold and silver thread; and at times a pretty silk or gauze scarf cast carelessly over their bosom and one shoulder. Of late years, moreover, the missionaries have persuaded their female converts and the girls in their schools to wear a neat white jacket, and the custom is gradually spreading through the city and into the neighbouring

After passing through the gates of the outer city we entered the market. which extends for more than half a mile to the gates of the inner city, and beyond them for some distance towards the palace. On either side of the main road little covered booths or stalls are set up; but most of the women spread a mat on the ground to sit upon, and placing their baskets by their side, expose their provisions upon wicker-work trays or freshly cut plantain-leaves...Passing from the outer into the inner town, we continued along the main road until we came to the enclosure wall of the palace grounds. The gate of the palace lies 1140 yards from the entrance of the inner town, and leads into an extensive court containing several buildings. The palace faces the gate, and is a substantial one-storied building slightly Chinese in aspect, with brick walls, plastered over with an excellent cement, and a tiled roof. Ascending a flight of steps, paved with black tiles, we entered the andience-hall, which occupied the whole front of the building. The floor of the hall inlaid with various woods, several chandeliers hung from the ceiling and the walls were papered like an English drawing-room, and adorned with long narrow giltframed mirrors. The remainder of the furniture consisted of a lounge, an easychair, a dozen drawing-room chairs, upholstered in green rep, and a small teaable. Through the doors leading into the private apartments some elegantly designed carved lattice-work partitions were seen, which served as screens in the

HOLT S. HALLETT, A THOUSAND MILES ON AN ELEPHANT IN THE SHAN STATES. LONDON 1891, REPRINTED BANGKOK 1988

STOICAL INDIFFERENCE

Carl Alfred Bock (1849–1932), a Norwegian naturalist of the positivist school, was an enthusiastic explorer and a prominent adventurer. Having acquired fame for his Borneo expeditions and published a book "The Head-Hunters of Borneo", Bock set out to explore northern Thailand at a time when the region was impoverished by continuous wars and misrale. Ever in search of the exotic and the sensational, Bock was often to cast negative remarks on the natives, his judgment usually tainted by the delire to make his is a search of the natives. desire to make his "adventures" seem a great deal more treacherous than they



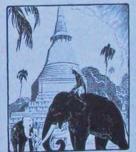
"If a man's face is an index to his feelings, then the Laosians must be bereft of all capacity to appreciate any variety of mental emotions. It is the rarest phenomenon to see any change in their countenance or deportment, except - there is always one exception to every rule - when they are aroused to anger. This statement is more particularly true of the men, but even the women - demonstrative as the sex usually are - are seldom moved to either laughter or tears. Whatever news a Laosian may receive, whether of disaster or of joy, he hears it with a philosophic indifference depicted on his calm stoical countenance that a European diplomatist would give a fortune to be able to imitate. But when any sudden feeling of anger or any latent resentment is aroused, then the passion begins to display itself, if not in any great change of facial expression, at any rate in general demeanor, and in quick restless movements of impatience and irritation.

This natural stoical indifference to their surroundings is fostered by the influence of their religious belief, and by the general state of ignorance in which the people are kept, as well as by their isolation from the rest of the world. They are naturally lazy, and, with a fertile soil which provides them with all the necessaries of life without any appreciable effort on their part, their indolence is encouraged.**

CARL A. BOCK, TEMPLES AND ELEPHANTS, TRAVELS IN SIAM IN 1881-82,

LONDON 1883

ASIAN ARCADY



THE LAND AND PEOPLES OF NORTHERN SIAM

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Reginald Le May served for a time in the early years of this century with the British legation in Bangkok and later as Vice-Consul in the north; still later, he worked as an advisor to the Royal Stamese Government. "An Asian Arcady", from which the following comes, is an account of northern Thailand and of a 700-mile trip he took by elephant in 1914.

"Below my feet the river bank went sheer down for nearly fifty feet; the river itself was a mighty expanse of water flowing swift and clear, with just the top of an island showing, and far away on the other side the bank rose fully as high again, lined with row upon row of tall palms, looking like small shrubs in the distance. On the left, the river took a wide bend to the west, and on the right, another sweeping bend to the east, and in front the great gaunt hills rolled down to meet the river at either bend.

This was the very apex of Siam. North lay British territory, the southern Shan states, and to the East, across the blue expanse, were the Lao states, which are now French soil. What a magnificent boundary to have for one's country! In full flood it must be a still more thrilling sight, but it is only in September or October, when the rains are nearly over and the northern rivers are beginning to rise, that one can see the river at its height. Once in about twenty years, the Mekhong overflows its banks, and when one thinks of their height and of the breadth of the river, the volume of water must be prodigious... Chieng Sen is a mysterious old city, surrounded by a high, thick, strong wall with palisades on top of the brick, and deep surrounded by a figh, thick, strong wan with pairsades on top of the brick, and deep trenches dug outside. How far the wall extends, and what area it embraces, it is difficult to say. The whole city is now so overgrown with plantations of teak, and thick secondary growth, that one cannot see more than twenty yards ahead, except on the main grassy track; but it must be of wide extent, for the District Officer told me that there are actually now tiger and other game living within the walls, and that he had recently fired several shots at a rhinoceros...

BANGKOK

It is sad to contemplate a great city, which once contained seventy-five temples, deserted by all, and even its ruins lost in the jungle; but old Chieng Sen has little hopes of recovery now, for it lies off the main road and the cost of clearing the plantations and undergrowths of brushwood which now choke the city would be too great to repay the undertaking. How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished! So the old city sleeps, a prey to the wild beast of the jungle and those craftier two-legged animals, who come to seek what they can find among the ruins which lie to hand."

REGINALD LE MAY, AN ASIAN ARCADY, CAMBRIDGE 1926. REPRINTED BANGKOK 1986

BANGKOK

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING OF SIAM

After the assassination of Phaulkon and the expulsion of the French from Ayutthaya, Siam remained in almost complete isolation for nearly 150 years. Among the many unsuccessful delegations from the West was that of John Crawfurd, an Englishman. He came to the court of King Rama II in 1822. The following is an extract from Crawfurd's account of his first audience with the king.

"The curtain placed before the throne was drawn aside as we entered. The whole multitude present lay prostrate on the earth, their mouths almost touching the ground: not a body or limb was observed to move; not an eye was directed towards us; not a whisper agitated the solemn and still air....Raised about twelve feet above the floor, and about two yards behind the curtain alluded to, there was an arched niche, on which an obscure light

was cast, of sufficient size to display the human body to effect, in the sitting posture. In this niche was placed the throne, projecting from the wall a few feet. Here, on our entrance, the King sat immovable as a statue, his eyes directed forwards. He resembled, in every respect, an image of Buddha placed upon his throne; while the solemnity of the scene, and the attitude of devotion observed by the multitude, left little room to doubt that the temple had been the source from which the monarch of Siam had borrowed the display of regal pomp."

JOHN CRAWFURD, JOURNAL OF AN EMBASSY FROM THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA TO THE COURTS OF SIAM AND COCHIN-CHINA, LONDON 1828, REPRINTED SINGAPORE 1971

THE FLOATING CITY

Mrs Anna Leonowens, an English widow, arrived in Bangkok in 1862, engaged to teach English to some of King Rama IV's wives and children. She wrote two books about her experiences, "The English Governess at the Siamese Court" and "The Romance of the Harem", which later formed the basis of the popular musical "The King and I". Although her books, written in the style of the serial melodrama, are largely inaccurate, her description of Bangkok is quite realistic.

"The situation of the city is unique and picturesque. When Ayutthaya was 'extinguished,' and the capital established at Bangkok, the houses were at first built on the banks of the river. But so frequent were the invasions of cholera, that one of the kings happily commanded the people to build on the river itself, that they might have greater cleanliness and better ventilation. The result quickly proved the



wisdom of the measure. The privilege of building on the banks is now confined members of the royal family, the nobility and residents of acknowledged influence political or commercial...At night the city is hung with thousands of covered light that illuminate the wide river from shore to shore. Lamps and lanterns of imaginable shapes, colours, and sizes combine to form a fairy spectacle enchanting brilliancy and beauty. The floating tenements and shops, the masts vessels, the tall, fantastic pagodas and minarets, and, crowning all, the walls at towers of the Grand Palace, flash with countless charming tricks of light, at compose a scene of more than magic novelty and beauty. So oriental fancy an profusion deal with things of use, and make a wonder of a commonplace.

A double, and in some parts a triple, row of floating houses extends for miles alon the banks of the river. These are wooden structures, tastefully designed as painted, raised on substantial rafts of bamboo linked together with chains, which in turn, are made fast to great piles planted in the bed of the stream. The Meina itself forms the main avenue, and the floating shops on either side constitute the great bazaar of the city, where all imaginable and unimaginable articles from India China, Malacca, Burma, Paris, Liverpool and New York are displayed in stalls... Naturally, boats and canoes are indispensable appendages to such houses; the nobility possess a fleet of them, and to every little water-cottage a canoe tethered, for errands and visits. At all hours of the day and night processions boats pass to and from the palace, and everywhere bustling traders and agents p their dingy little craft, and proclaim their several callings in a Babel of cries.

Anna Leonowens, The English Governess at the Slamese Coun

THE WOMEN'S BURDEN

George Windsor Earl (1805-65) was a British officer in the Far East and Australia Linguist, antiquarian and author, he wrote several books. His first work, and probable his best, "The Eastern Seas", recounts his travels in the Far East. The book stands among contemporary literature for its acute judgment and sense of observation.

"The Siamese empire is apparently on the decline, a circumstance which may attributed to the ruinous wars in which it is continually engaged, and to enormous church establishment. Every man is obliged to serve as a soldier where called for, and to bring with him provisions for his own subsistence sufficient for supply for several months. Wars, therefore, entail little expense on the government which may account for the readiness with which they are undertaken. The men ware engaged in the are engaged in their usually inglorious campaigns, acquire habits of idleness ab of the enormous mass of priesthood, falls entirely on the women. The body Talapoins or priests is enormously disproportioned to the rest of the inhabitant Bangkok alone, their numbers exceed thirty thousand. Like lilies of the valley to the state of t toil not, neither do they spin, but are idle consumers of the produce of the truly do not even cook their own provisions, not being permitted to do so by creed, but the younger members of the community go from house to house collect the viands which are bountifully supplied by the people. The Talaps received a great accession to their ranks during a late period of scarcity, index

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must be a matter of surprise that all the males do not become members of the must be a manute or mong the privileges of their order may be reckoned exemption priesthood, since discounting and military service, while they are at liberty to retire from from known, taken they please; the mode of life, however, led by these lazy the office wherever to be so agreeable, that they rarely take advantage of the latter prolege. The males affect to consider the women in the light of an inferior order of beings, but these lordly personages seldom enter upon any undertaking of moment without first consulting their wives. The women indeed, may be said to compose the most important portion of the community. They transact the greater part of the mercantile business, and are the principal cultivators of the soil, cheerfully undertaking the most laborious employments in the support of their families.

GEORGE WINDSOR EARL, THE EASTERN SEAS, LONDON, 1837. REPRINTED SINGAPORE, 1971



The future author Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) came to Bangkok in 1888 as a seaman named Josef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, to take his first command as captain of a ship called the "Otago". In "The Shadow-Line". he describes his arrival in the city.

"One morning, early, we crossed the bar, and while the sun was rising splendidly over the flat spaces of land we steamed up the innumerable bends, passed under the shadow of the great gilt pagoda, and reached the outskirts of the town... There it was, spread largely on both banks, the Oriental capital which had yet suffered no white conqueror; an expanse of brown houses of bamboo, of mats, of leaves, of a vegetable-matter style of architecture, sprung out of the brown soil on the banks of the muddy river. It was amazing to think that in those miles of human habitations there was not probably half a dozen pounds of nails...

Some of those houses of sticks and grass, like the nests of an aquatic race, clung to the shores, others seemed to grow out of the water; others again floated in long

anchored rows in the very middle of the stream. Here and there in the distance, above the crowded mob of low, brown roof ridges, towered great piles of masonry, king's palace, temples, gorgeous and dilapidated, crumbling under the vertical sunlight, tremendous, overpowering, almost palpable, which seemed to enter one's

breast with the breath of one's nostrils and soak into one's limbs through every

pore of the skin." JOSEPH CONRAD, THE SHADOW-LINE, **LONDON 1986**

MAUGHAM ON THAI TEMPLES

Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) was a doctor before he gained fame as a novelist and short-story writer. He served as a British agent in the two world wars. Maugham came to Thailand overland through Burma in 1923. The following extract from one of his travel books, "The Gentlemen in the Parlour", records his vivid impressions of Bangkok's famous Buddhist temples.

They are unlike anything in the world, so that you are taken aback, and you cannot for the property of laugh with same the same anything in the world, so that you are taken above, and the same into the scheme of the things you know. It makes you laugh with delight to think that anything so fantastic could exist on this some earth. They are some some earth. sorpeous: they glitter with gold and whitewash, yet are not garish; against that vivid say, in that dazzling sunlight, they hold their own, defying the brilliancy of nature



and supplementing it with the ingenuity and the bold playfulness of man. The artists who developed them step by step from the buildings of the ancient Khmers had the

courage to pursue their fantasy to the limit; I fancy that art meant little to them, they desired to express a symbol; they knew no reticence, they cared nothing for good taste; and if they achieved art it is as men achieve happiness, not by pursuing it, but by doing with all their heart whatever in the day's work needs doing. I do not know that in fact they achieved art; I do not know that these Siamese wats have beauty, which they say is reserved and aloof and very refined; all I know is that they are strange and gay and odd, their lines are infinitely distinguished, like the lines of a proposition in a schoolboy's Euclid, their colours are flaunting and crude, like the colours of vegetables in the greengrocer's stall at an open-air market, and, like a place where seven ways meet, they open roads down which the imagination can make many a careless and unexpected journey."

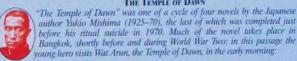
A WELCOME FROM MISS PRETTY GIRL

A calling card was given to Somerset Maugham by a street tout during his visit to Thailand in 1923. Reproduced here is its message, which was recorded in the same book. The gentleman, incidentally, refused the invitation.

"Oh, gentleman, sir, Miss Pretty Girl welcome you Sultan Turkish Bath, gentle polite massage, put you in dreamland with perfume soap. Latest gramophone music. Oh, such service. You come now! Miss Pretty Girl want you, massage you from tippy-toe to head-top, nice, clean, to enter Gates of Heaven.

SOMERSET MAUGHAM. THE GENTLEMEN IN THE PARLOUR, LONDON 1930

THE TEMPLE OF DAWN



"It was still darkish, and only the very tip of the pagoda caught the first rays of the rising sun. The Thonburi jungle beyond was filled with the piercing cries of birds...The repetitiveness and the sumptuousness of the pagoda were almost suffocating. The tower with its color and brilliance, adorned in many layers and graduated toward the peak, gave one the impression of so many strata of dream sequences hovering overhead. The plinths of the extremely steep stairs were also heavily festooned and each tier was supported by a bas-relief of birds with human faces. They formed a multicolored pagoda whose every level was crushed with layers of dreams, expectations, prayers, each being further weighted down with still other stories, pyramid-like, progressing skyward...With the first rays of dawn over the Menam River,...thousands of porcelain fragments turned into so many tiny mirrors that captured the light. A great structure of

mother-of-pearl sparkling riotously... The pagoda had long served as a morning bell tolled by its rich hues, resonant colors responding to the dawn. They were created...to evoke a beauty, a power, an explosiveness like the dawn itself."

YUKIO MISHIMA, THE TEMPLE OF DAWN, NEW YORK 1973

A HUMORIST IN BANGKOK

S.J. Perelman, a leading American humorist, was a regular contributor to the "New Yorker" magazine as well as a playwright and the author of early film scripts for the Mark brothers. Shortly after World War Two he made a trip through Asia, which under the title of "Westward Ha!" became a bestseller, the following extract gives his impressions of Bangkok at a time when it was relatively untouched by mass tourism.

From the very beginning I was charmed by Bangkok, and I propose to be aggressively syrupy about it in the most buckeye travelogue manner. I liked its polite, gentle, handsome people, its temples, flowers, and canals, the relaxed and peaceful rhythm of life there. Apart from its shrill and tumultuous central thoroughfare swarming with Chinese and Indian bazaars, it struck me as the most soothing metropolis I had thus far seen in the East. Its character is complex and inconsistent; it seems at once to combine the Hannibal, Missouri of Mark Twain's boyhood with Beverly Hills, the Low Countries, and Chinatown. You pass from populous, glaring streets laden with traffic into quiet country lanes paralleled by canals out of a Dutch painting; a tree-shaded avenue of pretentious mansions set in wide lawns becomes a bustling row of shops and stalls, then melts into a sunny village of thatched huts among which water-buffalo graze. The effect is indescribably pleasing; your eye constantly discovers new vistas, isolated little communities around every corner tempting you to explore them.*

S.J. PERELMAN, THE MOST OF S.J. PERELMAN,

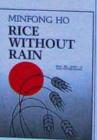
New York, 1978

THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE CITY

Minfong Ho is a Singaporean, but she spent most of her childhood in Thailand, and was for many years a teacher at the University of Chiang Mai. Her first novel, "Rice without Rain", was based on her experiences in northern Thailand during the 1976 student uprising, and it describes the politicization of an impoverished northern Thai village by a group of idealistic young students. The novel opens with a scene from the ricefields.

"Heat the colour of fire, sky as heavy as mud, and under both the soil - hard, dry, unyielding. It was a silent harvest. Across the valley, yellow ricefields stretched, stopped and dry. The sun glazed the afternoon with a heat so fierce that the distant mountains shimmered in it. The dust in the sky, the cracked earth, the shrivelled leaves fluttering on brittle branches – everything was scorched. Fanning out in a jagged line across the fields were the harvesters, their sickles flashing in the sun. Nobody spoke. Nobody laughed. Nobody sang. The only noise was wave after wave of sullen hisses as the rice stalks were slashed and flung to the ground. A single lark flew by, casting a swift shadow on the stubbled fields. From under the brim of her hat, Jinda saw it wing its way west. It flew to a tamarind tree at the foot of the mountain, circled it three times, and flew away. A good sign...

The 1976 student movement was put down by the army, with considerable violence. Many of the student leaders fled to the jungle to take up arms with the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). But most soon found themselves at odds with the CPT's hierarchy. Through a skillful policy of coercion and reconciliation, the Thai government was able to diffuse the Communist threat, and bring the guerillas out of the hills. Today, members of the 1976 movement are among the professional middle classes of havement are among the projessional madic classes of Bangkok, and it was this group's willingness to take risks that led to the eventual victory of the pro-democracy forces, after a bloody confrontation in Bangkok's Sanam Luang square in 1992.





"I am Jinda, daughter of Inthorn Sriboonrueng, she began. To her surprise to found that her voice was steady. It reverberated from all corners of the square, even from the wall of the temple. She felt awed that her voice could reach so be She had practised the speech so many times that it had become automatic, and she had practised the spectral spectral and yet a part of herself. Like a kite with lovely long tail, tugging its way upwards as she held the string, her words flew up. was an exhilarating feeling, and Jinda's voice grew stronger with it. My father he farmed all his life, she said, and yet he has never had enough to eat. Why paused, and in that brief silence she felt that maybe, just maybe, she could help change a bit of Thailand after all. Because he has had to pay half of his harves the landlord, year after year. Flood or drought.' 'Commie bitch!' A shrill voice pierced the air.

Startled, Jinda stopped. Who had shouted that? Why?

Suddenly, a heavy object sailed towards her, landing where the shoe-shine boy he been. There was a loud explosion, and bits of dirt and glass shattered out. In the

rolls of smoke which poured forth, people screamed, and started to run.

Ned grabbed the microphone from Jinda, and urged the crowd to be cain. 'Nothing serious has happened,' he announced. 'A small homemade bomb has just been tossed at us. This has happened in previous rallies. It hasn't hurt anyone. Do not panic, I repeat, do not panic. The speech will continue.'

But something was happening on the far side of the square. The soldiers in the olive green fatigues had fanned out in front of the ambulances, and were advances

towards the centre, pushing the crowd forward.

There was another explosion. It landed further away, but the bomb was deafening and devastating. As the smoke cleared, Jinda stared, stunned. At least five student sprawled motionless on the grass...that was when the distant gunfire started. first Jinda did not know what it was, this sharp staccato rattle. Then she so students dropping to their knees, in crumpled heaps, and she understood.**

MINFONG HO, RICE WITHOUT RON.

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BANGKOK NIGHTLIFE

Born in England, Pico Iyer wrote for "TIME" magazine. He has also written for "Partisan Review", "The Village Voice" and the "Times Literary Supplement". came to Thailand in the 1980's while gathering material for a travel book impublished as "Video Night in Kathmandu", from which the following excerpt is taken

"In seedy and improvident Manila, the bars were the fast-buck stuff of a purities nightmare; while in high-tech and prosperous Bangkok, they were quickshe riddles, less alarming for their sleaze than for their cunning refinence embellished by the country's exquisite sense of design, softened by the case Buddhism, invigorated by the culture of sanuk (a good time). In Manila girls the to sell themselves out of sheer desperation; in Bangkok, the crystal palaces of were only extra adornments in a bejeweled city that already glittered with ambiguities...In Bangkok, moreover, the ambivalence of the girls only intensity the ambiguity of the bars...no gaze was direct, and no smile clear-cut in the city mirrors. And the mirrors were everywhere: one-way mirrors walling the mass parlors, mirrors lining the ceilings of the 'curtain hotels,' mirrors shimmering in bars, pocket mirrors in which each girl converted herself into a reflection of admirer's wishes. Look into a bar girl's eyes, and you'd see nothing but the admirer's wishes, ask her what she wanted, and she'd flash back a transparent to you.' Exemplains to you. Everything here was in the eye of the beholder; everything was just a moof the light.

PICO IYER, VIDEO NIGHT IN KATHMAN NEW YORK

NAKHON PATHOM

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THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PAGODA

Sunthorn Phu (1786-1856) is generally regarded as Thailand's greatest poet, the first to Sunfform ria (1.5)
bring realism into That verse, Born shortly after the establishment of Bangkok as the bring realism unto Triut verse, Boru shorty after the establishment of Bangkok as the capital, he was a particular favorite of King Rama II, during whose reign he wrote perhaps the most famous of his works, "Khun Chang and Khun Phan". Sunthorn Phan he wood for his works in a Thai venre called the "nirat". perhaps the most jamous of his works. Ruth Chang and Shith Phan Sunthorn Phu is also noted for his works in a Thai genre called the "nirat", a sort of travel poem that blends descriptions of actual places with meditations on life and love by the poet. The blends descriptions is from his "Nirat Phra Pathom", about a journey to the famous chedi in following is from his "Nirat Phra Pathom", about a journey to the famous chedi in what is today called Nakhon Pathom.

#At last, we arrive at the Pagoda of the Sleeping Buddha's Temple.

It stands alone and high on a hill; Colossally solid like a parapet,

Mounted on a manmade promontory.

Mounted on a land with sharp corners, showing the front gable,

Covered with a thin sheet of tin up to the top,

Stretching staunch and seamless in brick-and-stucco walls,

Wrought with time-honored and meticulous workmanship.

We walk around the Pagoda at the base,

Seeing deer's traces and hearing wild cocks crowing.

The spot is overgrown with wild creepers,

Winding and sticking in a thick green cluster.

We see secluded cubicles built for monks

Who may take shelter in their pilgrimages.

We are moved by their ardent faith.

At the stairs, we gaze up the slope:

It's so steep that our faces remain upturned. That must be the way to heaven when we die.

We make an effort to help one another upward.

Once reaching the upper level, we are high spirited.

Pity my sons who also come up.

They are not so tired as us adults, though. We hold candles in reverential attitude And walk clockwise around the Pagoda

Three times, according to ceremonious practice.

Then we sit down and pay respects.
We offer incense sticks, candles, and flowers,

Also the candles entrusted to us by many others.

Assone candles entrusted to us by many of the owners had already made their wishes. May they keep their beauty to the end. Nay they be happy, every one of them, until they become enlightened by faith. I've brought these candles with a desire. To be related to them in every life to come.

May our mutual love materialize now
And, m the future, may it be complete.
I salute the Pagoda of the Holy Relices
May the true religious live forever.
I make merit, so the Buddha helps me
increase my power to attain onlightenment.
And Tellise mutuaries my hook.

And Id like my words, my book,

In preserve, clit the end of time and heaven,
Sumfrom the scribe who belongs

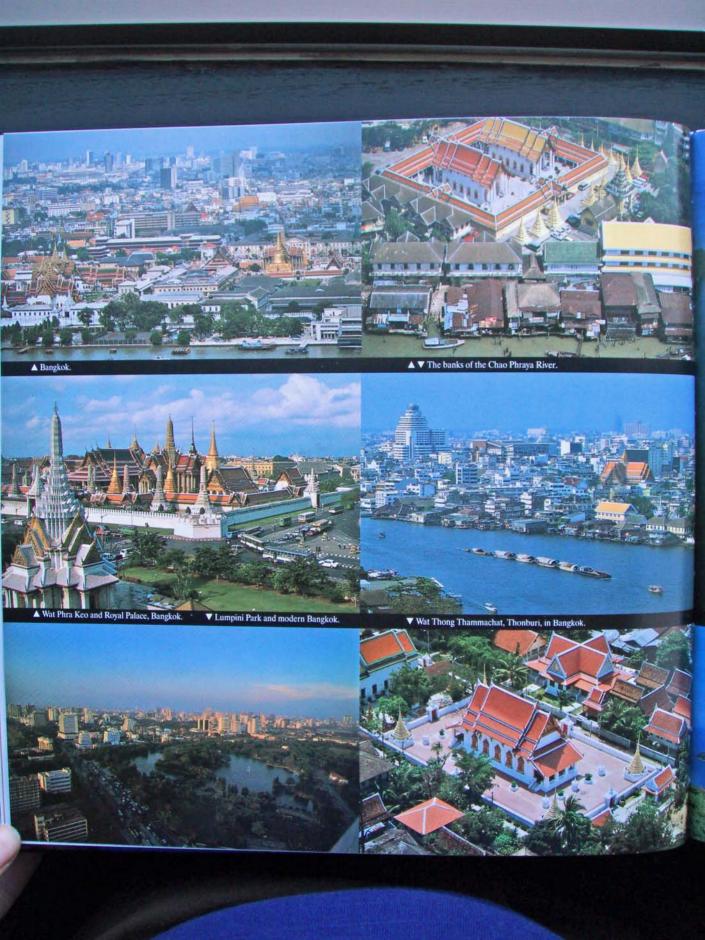
to the King of the White Elephant.

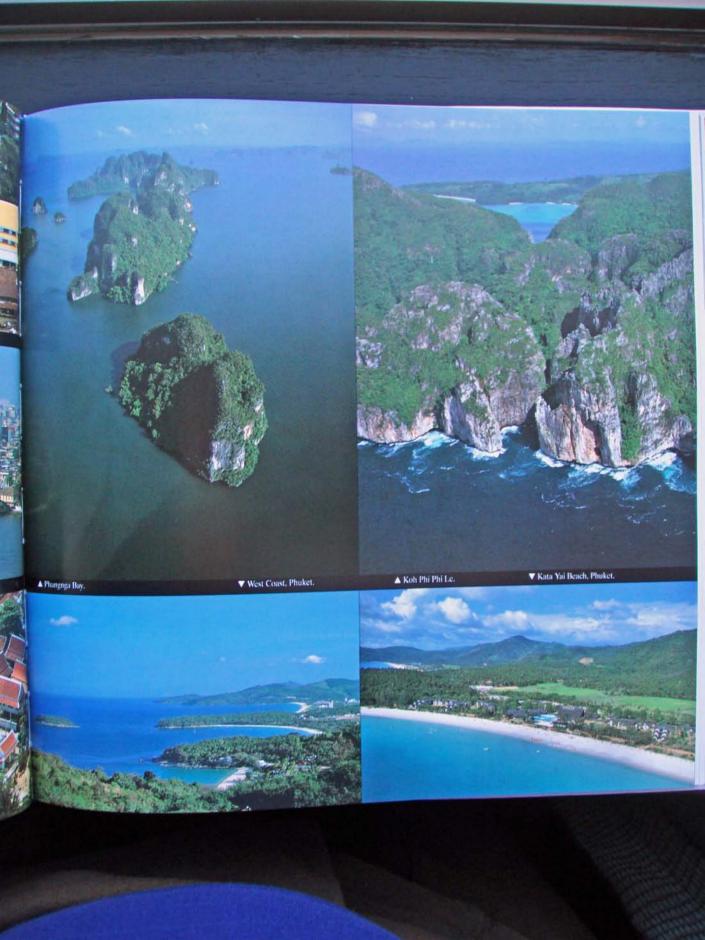
SUNTHORN PHU, NIRAT PHRA PATHOM, TRANSLATED BY MONTRI UMAVIJANI,

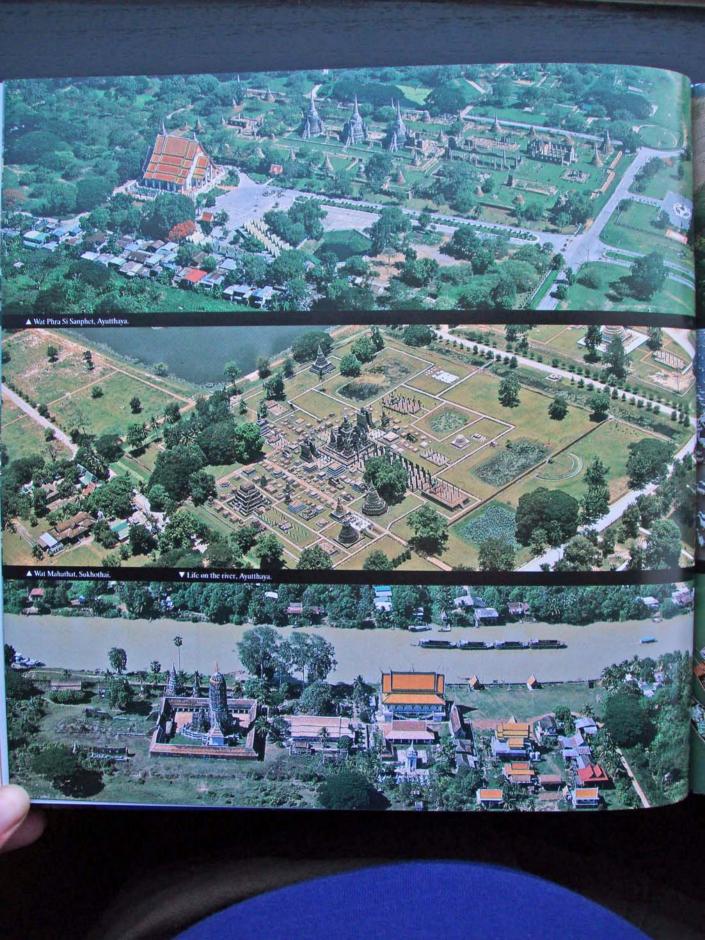
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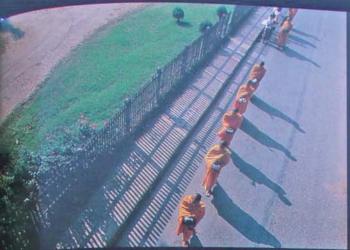


BANGKOK, 70 THE SOUTH, 99 THE NORTHEAST, 116 THE CENTRAL PLAINS, 123 THE NORTH, 132









▲ Monks collecting alms in Chiang Mai.

▼ Duck farm, Singhburi.



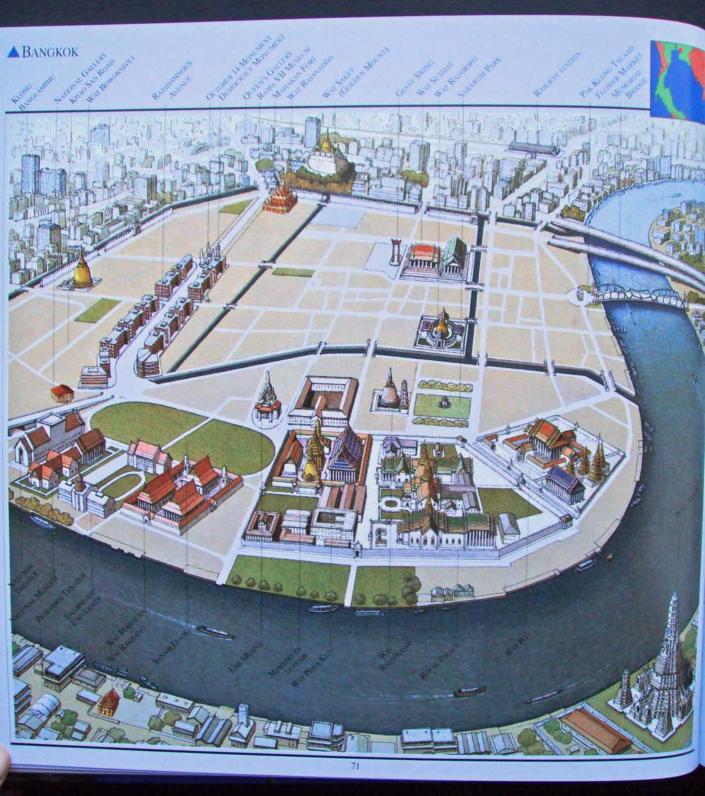
▼ Floating market, Damnern Saduak.



BANGKOK



BANGKOK, 71 HISTORY OF THE CITY, 72 THE GRAND PALACE, 74 WAT Po. 78 RATTANAKOSIN ISLAND, 80 THE CHAO PHRAYA RIVER, 87 KLONGS OF THONBURI, 90 CHINATOWN, 91 **DUSIT DISTRICT, 92** MODERN BANGKOK, 93 PRIVATE MUSEUMS, 94 SHOPPING, 95 BANGKOK EXCURSIONS, 96 KANCHANABURI AND RIVER KWAI, 97 PATTAYA AND ENVIRONS, 98 BEYOND PATTAYA, 99



An early

view of Bangkok from

the murals of Wat Rajapradit

painted in 1864.

of the Royal

Palace runs the

Chao Phraya.

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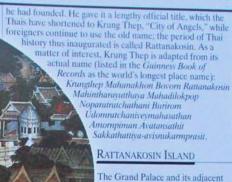
lined with floating

iouses on its banks. Chinese shophouses and Western-style

Behind the roofs

« THE GENERAL APPEARANCE OF BANGKOK IS THAT OF A LARGE, PRIMITIVE VILLAGE, SITUATED IN AND MOSTLY CONCEALED BY A VIRGIN FOREST OF ALMOST IMPENETRABLE DENSITY.»

FRANK VINCENT, 1871



royal chapel, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha - both replicas of Avutthayan structures - were built first on an artificial island created by digging a canal where the river curved sharply, a strategy that had been used at Avutthava. Walled and fortified, the island was the political and cultural heart of the capital for more than a century. A group of Chinese traders who had occupied the site were moved outside the walls, where they formed the nucleus of a flourishing community of narrow streets. wharfs and warehouses that still exists. Spurred by increasing trade with the outside world, relative political stability and immigration (mainly Chinese), the city of Bangkok expanded rapidly. Two new canals were excavated and rows of floating houses • 45 appeared on both banks of the Chao Phraya, and ships began arriving from Europe as well as neighboring countries. The floating houses served as both shops and residences for most of the population. Not until the 1820's did non-royal homes begin to appear on land, the majority on the Thonburi side of the river. By the mid-19th century, Bangkok had a population of 300,000 and was well on its way to becoming a



OF BANGKOR King Rama I was a commander who succeeded King Taksin of Thonburi as ruler in 1782; he also

began the Chakri Dynasty, of which the present king is the ninth monarch. The original buildings of the Grand Palace, as well as numerous temples, date from his seventeen-year



FLOATING HOUSES houses, anchored to stout posts, lined the river and canals of early Bangkok



Both literally and metaphorically, all roads in Thailand lead to Bangkok (derived from bang makok, which means "Village of the Wild Plum"), the center of almost everything: of power both temporal and spiritual, of the ancient monarchy, of commerce and communications, of higher education and the arts, of that indispensable part of life the Thais call sanuk, or "fun." It has a dynamic modern façade. sprawling and often confusing to the newcomer, best comprehended perhaps by looking back to the city's early days.

THE FOUNDING OF BANGKOK

Following the 1767 destruction of Ayutthaya, after 400 years of rule from there, the Thai capital was moved first to Thonburi on the west bank of the lower Chao Phraya River and then, in 1782, to a small trading port

called Bangkok on the opposite bank. King Rama I, who decreed the move, felt the position of the new capital was more defensible and that it offered the space for a capital worthy of the Chakri Dynasty, which

▲ BANGKOK HISTORY OF THE CITY



FIRST RICKSHAW A wealthy Chinaman presented the first rickshaw to King Rama V in 1871; within a generation there were so many on the streets of Bangkok that, in 1901, a law was passed limiting their number. Automobiles arrived the following year. By 1908, there

once numerous

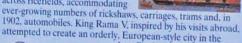
canale

were over 300 cars; the invasion of this modern form of transportation spelled doom for the city's



Early Bangkok was a water-oriented city, with the river and an intricate system of canals, or klongs, serving as the means of communication. The first proper street appeared in 1862, during the reign of King Rama IV, and ran parallel to the

river for a considerable distance. Along it were most of the embassies, trading companies and shophouses selling the latest imported goods. Soon roads began to radiate from the Chao Phrava. through former orchards and across ricefields, accommodating



Dusit district, with broad, tree-lined avenues and parks. But Bangkok resisted any such systematic planning; by World War Two it was sprawling in all directions from the original walled island, A building boom that started in the 1950's and continues to this day has transformed the capital almost beyond recognition to older Thais

MODERN-DAY BANGKOK

Present-day Bangkok covers an area of some 600 square miles, on both sides of the river - forty-five times larger than its nearest provincial rival - and is home to an estimated ten million people, half of them below thirty years of age. (The exact population would be impossible to calculate; many are part-time laborers who come to work between farming chores, while others are still registered as residents of their hometowns despite years in the capital.) They live and work in a variety of centers, often commuting for several hours each day by bus, for long the city's only form of public transport, but now joined by an elevated "Sky Train" and a subway system. Government offices are concentrated mainly in the area around the Grand Palace and Ratchadamnoen Road, while Yaowarat Road and its environs are largely devoted to Chinese business firms and the powerful military has its headquarters behind high walls in the Dusit district. Silom and Sathorn Roads have emerged as the financial district, with Patpong as a major attraction after nightfall; a number of leading hotels are also in this area. Though the streets off Sukhumwit Road comprise the prime residential and entertainment district, new suburban housing estates can be found all around the city with new shopping and recreational facilities constantly arising.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The past decade or so has seen extensive construction along the Chao Phraya, especially on the Thonburi side, not only hotels but also residential condominiums for affluent Thais seeking a location more convenient to their offices. Nearly all of the country's major domestic and foreign businesses are

located in Bangkok, along with the official residence royal family, government ministries, the most prestigious universities and preparatory schools, and the leading sports and cultural facilities. Thanks to this concentration of wealth and power, 90 percent of all the motor vehicles in the country are registered in the city, creating traffic congestion that an extensive network of overpasses and expressways has yet fully to solve. Though government policy encourages decentralization of industry into provincial areas, most of the modern factories are located in or near Bangkok, which is still the focus of the aviation, railway and communications systems, not to mention the extremely busy port of Klong Toey on the river, through which most of the country's imports and exports pass.

THAI TRAMS Horse-drawn tram appeared on the streets of Bangkoi in 1888; by the end of the century. the trams tan or electricity and continued to operate in decreasing number along New Road until the 1960's. The above painting by contemporari artist Arunothai ■ 53, shows fushionably dresed tram passengers in the past.

CHINATOWN IN THE 1950's

Yaowarat Road A is pictured in Chin town during the 1950's, when trame were no longer the only public transp as buses were gri



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▲ BANGKOK THE GRAND PALACE

The mythical halfbird, half-human guruda (above right) – legendary steed of the Hindu god Vishmu – is part of the royal insignia and appears among the decorations on many buildings within the palace compound. As residence of the Lord of Life, as
That kings are known, the royal palace
has been the center of every capital in the country's history.
The Grand Palace, surrounded by a high wall, covers nearly a
square mile and, in its original form, was a conscious
evocation of the one in Ayutthaya, divided into an outer part
for government offices, a central portion containing the king's
living quarters and audience halls, and an inner area for
female members of the royal family and their attendants.
Buildings were added to the palace compound by each of the
first five Chakri rulers, particularly King Rama V, during
whose reign Westernization was rapid.



The Dusit Maha Prasat depicted in a mid-19th-century engraving.

King Rama V alighting at the

Phra Thinang Aphonphimok Prasat

pavilion at the turn of the century. The pavilion is a major

attraction today

EARLY BUILDINGS

DUSIT MAHA PRASAT. Among the original palace buildings that still remain, though modified by later kings, is the Dusit Maha Prasat throne hall. Covered with four-tier tiled roofs and surmounted by a seven-tier gilded spire, it contains a blackwood throne inlaid with mother-of-pearl dating from the reign of King Rama I. The remains of kings, queens and royal family members are placed in the Dusit Maha Prasat prior to cremation. The building is open to the public.

THE PHRA THINANG APHONPHIMOR PRASAI. King Rama IV introduced Western architecture to the palace and was also responsible for one of its most beautiful traditional structures

the Phra Thinang Aphonphimok Prasat (right). This pavilion on the east wall surrounding the Dusit Maha Prasat was where the king changed his robes before descending a flight of steps to mount a





palanquin. The structure displays graceful elegance and a distinctive blend of simple with sumptuous decoration epitomizes classic Thai architecture. It was reproduced at the Brussels Exposition in 1958.

The Grand Residence Group. Also from the earliest period of the palace is a group of connecting buildings known as Phra Maha Monthien, "the Grand Residence." The first three kings of the dynasty lived in one of these, the Phra Thinang Chakraphat Phiman – Phra Thinang is a title bestowed on any structure (building, pavilion, throne and so on) used by a king. It contains the royal bedchamber and it is still traditional for new monarchs to spend a night here upon assuming the

throne, symbolizing their assumption of residence in the palace of their ancestors. In front and connected by a flight of stairs is the Phra Thinang Phaisan Taksin, where coronation ceremonies are held. It also houses two historic thrones, the Royal Regalia, and a small, much venerated image called Phra Siam Thewathirat, regarded as the tutelary deity of the Thai nation. The first Chakri king is supposed to have made regular use of this hall and, when old, to have held private audiences from one of its windows with people in the courtyard below. From the Octagonal Throne on the east side, new kings formally receive the invitation to rule over the kingdom, while from the Phattrabit Throne on the west, they receive the Royal Regalia, consisting of the crown, a sword, a royal staff, a fan, a whisk made of yak's tail, bejeweled slippers, and the Great White Umbrella of State. In the northern wall of the

Phaisan Taksin is a gate known as Thewarat Mahesuan, through which only the king, the queen, and the royal children may walk. This leads to the Phra Thinang Amarin Winitchai, originally the principal audience hall of the Middle Palace where officials of state and foreign ambassadors were received. Dominating this hall - the only one in the group now open to the public - is the Phra Thinang Busbok Mala, an open-pillar construction of ornately carved wood with a tiered roof, made during the reign of King Rama I; to the left and right of the base are lateral extensions that make the structure appear to be floating in the air. The whole rests on a gilded masonry dais that dates from the reign of King Rama III. Curtains were drawn to conceal the king when he entered from the Phaisan Taksin; when it was time for the audience a fanfare sounded, the curtains dramatically parted, and the ruler was revealed in all the magnificence of his Royal Regalia. The Phra Thinang Busbok Mala throne (above right) is reserved for kings and objects of veneration. It holds the urns containing the ashes of previous Chakri kings. From his place on the throne, the reigning Chakri king receives offerings and presides over the prayers of the royal family. Another

sides over the prayers of the royal family. Another throne in the building from the first reign, known as the Phra Thaen Sawetachat, is still used by the King for some of the investiture ceremonies as well as for the annual birthday audience.

Phra Kgo (abost)

The Phra Things Busbok Mala thing which contains functary arms of the Chakri kings (being



A large collection of ancient topian-shrubbery trimmed into fancy shapes-adoms the front courty and of the palace, a decoratin technique that was probably inspired begiants in Chierse

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BANGKOK THE GRAND PALACE

#Ah! well, relets who spoke of Siam as a dream of the Arabian Nights only told the mith, the colours of the East are so brilliant, the outlines so eccentric, the architecture 50 dazzling and covered with ornament, and these twenty palaces joined together hold so much that is wonderful, that it is worth taking the one view.

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AUDIENCE HALL

have traditionally

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Thai kings since Rama V

ambassadors

in the Centra

Andience Hall of the Chakri Maha Prasat,

standing before a splendid wooden

throne plated with silver and

gold niello. On the walls

The Marquis of Beauvoir, 1867



LATER PALACE BUILDINGS

The first Western-style buildings appeared in the palace enclosure during the reign of King Rama IV. These included a suite of rooms in the Siwalai Gardens, behind the Phra Maha

Monthien, where the king lived and kept his collection of scientific instruments, and a tall structure with clocks on four sides. None of these remain today; they were torn down during the next reign, which saw the most extensive additions since the palace was built. King Rama V, the first Thai ruler to travel to Europe, ordered the construction of a new throne hall and royal residence. They were completed in time for the celebration of Bangkok's centenary in 1882.

CHAKRI MAHA PRASAT. Designed in neoclassical style by an English architect, the Chakri Maha Prasat was originally planned as a domed building, wholly Western in appearance; before completion, however, the dome was replaced with the older structures around it. The king and his principal queen moved to quarters on the upper floors of this structure and used

the lower levels for state entertainment; a grand stairway reserved only for the king led down to the women's quarters

behind the throne hall.

SIWALAI GARDENS. Also added most of the present buildings which now contains the the Boromphiman Mansion designed by a German for the Crown Prince, and a few Western-style residences for queens and consorts in the Inner Palace. The gardens were used for receptions as well as a recreation area for the royal women and their children. Toward the end of his reign, King Rama V moved out of the Grand Palace to new

during the fifth reign were in the outer area, one of Royal Household Bureau, in the Siwalai Gardens, architect as a residence

«How can I describe the Barbaric Grandeur, the Parade, THE SHOW, THE GLITTER, THE REAL MAGNIFICENCE, THE PROFUSE DECORATIONS OF TODAY'S ROYAL AUDIENCE!»

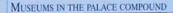
SIR JOHN BOWRING

quarters in the Dusit district but continued to use the older buildings for royal ceremonies, a tradition that was continued by subsequent rulers of the dynasty.

THE INNER PALACE. This was a secret world that much intrigued European visitors to Thailand in the 19th and early 20th centuries. According to Dr Malcolm Smith, an English physician who attended to King Rama V's principal queen and other royal patients, it "was a town complete in itself, a congested network of houses and narrow streets with gardens, lawns, artificial lakes and shops. It had its own government, its own institutions, its own laws and law courts. It was a town of women, one controlled by women. Men on special construction or repair work were admitted, and the doctors when they came to visit the sick. The king's sons could live there until they reached the age of puberty; after that they were sent to live with relations, or with the governors in the provinces. But the only man who lived within its walls was the king." At its peak, in King Rama V's reign toward the end of the 19th century, about 3,000 women lived in this part of the palace,

most of them servants or daughters of noble families who were sent here to learn various refined skills such as cooking. embroidery, and making floral wreaths. With the advent of royal monogamy in Thai girls' school and the Thai Red the next reign, the number steadily decreased as wives and princesses were allowed to move

outside. A few stayed on, however, and the last resident died in the 1970's.



Just beyond the entrance is the Coins and Royal Decorations Museum. It exhibits early Thai coins and various items used as money, as well as medals and other decorations, many of them set with precious stones, presented by Chakri kings. On the ground level of the Chakri Maha Prasat is a display of ancient weapons, while near the Dusit Maha Prasat another museum contains stone inscriptions and palace decorations replaced during renovations. A museum of Thai textiles will open shortly near the front of the compound

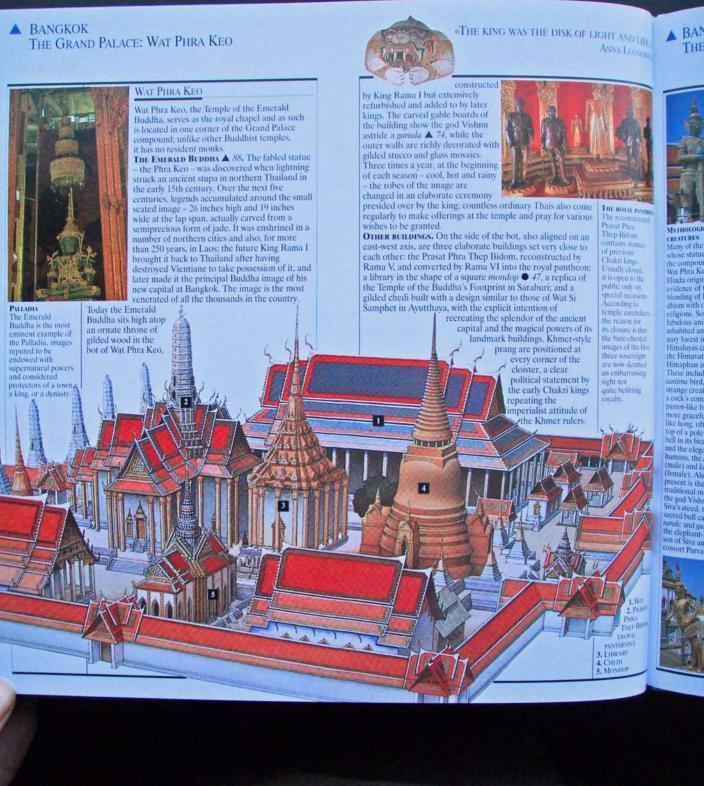


THE REGENT OUTEN Phongsri, the principal queen of King Rama V, was the first of the royal wives to take up residence with the king outside the Inner Palace. She also served as regent during his trips abroad, and founded the first Cross, and, in general, was an important force in the liberation of Thai women from male domination



THE TONSURE One of the dest rituals grandest ri held in the Grand Palace was the Tonsure Ceremony which marked the coming-of-age of children in the Inner Palace. After the tuft of hair was cut by Brahmin priests, the climax of a celebration that lasted several days, male children had to move out of the women's quarter to an outside residence.

are several large. European-style paintings of celebrated meetings between Thai ambassadors and King Louis XIV



Mythologi CREATURES

Many of the whose statue the compour Wat Phra Ke Hindu origin evidence of blending of dhism with o religions. So fabulous ani inhabited an nary forest it Himalayas c the Himavat Himaphan in These includ tantina bird strange creat a cock's com parrot-like b more gracefi like hong, off top of a pole bell in its bea and the elega humans, the a (female). Als present is the traditional m the god Vishi

BANGKOK THE GRAND PALACE: WAT PHRA KEO

«THIS SACERDOTAL DISNEYLAND IS ENTERED THROUGH A GATE SET IN CLOISTERS WHOSE INNER WALLS CARRY MURALS DEPICTING THE "RAMAKIEN"».

ALISTAIR SHEARER



MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES Many of the divinities whose statues adorn the compound of Wat Phra Keo are of Hindu origin, further evidence of the blending of Buddhism with other religions, Some are fabulous animals that inhabited an imaginary forest in the Himalayas called the Himavat (the Himaphan in Thai). These include the tantima bird, a strange creature with a cock's comb and a parrot-like beak; the more graceful, swan-like hong, often at the top of a pole with a bell in its beak: and the elegant bird humans, the kinnon (male) and kinnari (female). Also present is the garuda. traditional mount of the god Vishnu; Siva's steed, the sacred bull called nandi; and ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Siva and his





ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIONS. The various structures at Wat Phra Keo display a virtual textbook of classic Thai decorative techniques and mythological statuary. Entire walls are transformed into shimmering, jewel-like expanses through the use of glass mosaics or carefully fitted pieces of multicolored porcelain; wooden gables and roof supports are richly carved and gilded, and doors and windows are adorned either with intricate mother-of-pearl inlay designs or gold-and-black lacquer paintings. All of them were restored for the 1982 Bangkok bicentennial celebrations, having fallen into a state

of disrepair. The multitiered roofs are covered with colored tiles, chedis and stupus with layers of glittering gold leaf, while the interiors of most buildings are decorated with complex mural paintings. The gates leading into the courtyard are flanked by huge statues of yaksa, or demons, supposed to ward off evil spirits. They are brightly painted and covered with glass mosaic decorations. Several bronze statues scattered around the buildings represent mythical animals of the Hindu and Buddhist pantheon. Around the basement

where the chedi, the *mondop* and the pantheon are built, there are a number of small Chinese gardens embellished by Oing statues of animals and heavenly guards.

Oing statues of animals and heavenly guards.

MURAL PAINTINGS OF THE "RAMAKIEN". On the walls of the
galleries surrounding Wat Phra Keo are a series of panoramic
mural paintings that depict the story of the Ramakien, the
Thai version of the Ramayana, an Indian epic dealing with the
triumph of good over evil. The tale is told in 178 panels, each
occupying the area between two pillars of the many that
support the gallery; poems about the action, composed in the
reign of King Rama V, are inscribed on marble slabs set into
the relevant pillar. Though originally painted by order of King

Rama I when the temple was built, the murals have been restored many times, most recently for the 1982 Bangkok bicentennial celebrations. These works are almost identical to the original 1930 compositions executed under the direction of Phra Thewapinimmit, and reflect the style of that era with Western perspective, the use of shadows, and naturalistic rendering of the land-scape, and with characters drawn in a conventional Thai manner.



REPLICA OF ANGKOR WAT

second king of the

Chakri dynasty also produced a version

A model of Angkor Wat, the famous center of Khmer culture, was placed in the temple compound by King Rama IV, as a reminder of the time when Cambodia was a vassal state of Thailand. The territory was lost in the late 19th century when the French exerted pressure on King Rama V and redefined the borders of Indo-China.





STONE BALLASTS Literally hundreds of Chinese stone figures animals both realistic and whim sical, humans both small and fearsomely huge – are scattered throughout Wat Po; similar ones can be seen in other major Bangkok palaces and temples, Most came to Thailand in the early 19th century as ballast on ships returning empty from the lucrative rice trade and were placed in the temple during King Rama III's reign, a period that also saw an increase in Chinese influence on architecture and decorative motifs Prominent among the statues are the tower ing door guardians, or protective demons, that stand beside each of the sixteen monumental gates leading into the temple and beside those that divide the various compounds. The latter represent Europeans, as shown by their tall, brimmed hats that the sculptors had perhaps observed in Chir port cities and assumed all

foreigners

e oldest and largest temple in Bangkok, Wat Phra 1 Chetuphon, popularly known as Wat Po - derived from its original name of Wat Bodharam - was founded in the 16th century during the Ayutthaya period. It was a particular favorite with the early Chakri kings, most of whom restored



or added buildings to its huge compound. Chetuphon Road, along which King Rama I supposedly rode on his way to Thonburi when he was crowned in 1782, separates the monastic buildings housing some 300 priests from the

enclosure containing the structures used for religious ceremonies. In its heyday, this was the home of more than 500 monks and 750 novices, and the monks' quarters are still a veritable city within the city. Most of the buildings were

reconstructed during the fifth reign, replacing older wooden houses, and the mansions of the most reverend monks are often embellished with precious gilded stucco.

Wat Po's greatest benefactor was King Rama III (1824-51), who was responsible not only for most of the buildings the visitor sees today but also for turning the temple into a kind of open university, filled with displays of educational material. Twenty small hills scattered around the compound, for example, contain geological specimens from all parts of Thailand; a collection of stone Rishi, or hermits, demonstrates

various yoga positions; and inscriptions and mural paintings deal with such diverse subjects as warfare, medicine, astrology, botany and history. Anyone who was interested in either religious or secular knowledge could study the wealth of information compiled from ancient textbooks and presented

to the public in this most democratic way. It was an unprecedented move in a society where knowledge had always been the privilege of the few King Rama I, who was the founder of Bangkok and the first restorer of Wat Po, is credited with salvaging 1,200 statues from the ruins of Avutthaya. The collection contains 689 of the rescued statues. Many others were added to it by later kings. The temple is a veritable gallery of Thai art, practically covering every historical period. Most of the images are displayed along the cloisters and serve to top the chedis containing ashes of the illustrious deceased. In an attemp to preserve these rows of statues renovation work has since been carried out, and they are now encased in glass.

SCHOOL FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE. One aspect of Wat Po's old educational function that

remains very much alive today is the School for Traditional Medicine, in the eastern part of the temple compound. Besides offering courses of instruction in herbal medicines and Thai-style massage, authorized members of the profession offer treatment to the public in the late afternoons: marble engravings on the walls, placed there in the reign of King Rama III, give various rules regarding the subject. Foreigners can take a fifteen-day course in traditional massage, with classes held for two hours daily, while skilled masseurs are usually available from 200 baht per hour.

Within the monks' quarters on the other side of Chetuphon Road, expert masseurs attend to local patients using ancient techniques under the watchful eyes of monks who sanction the operation by spitting holy water on the ailing part, while assistants beat furiously on the drums.

TEMPLE ASTROLOGERS. This temple. very popular with local and foreign visitors, also attracts a large number of street vendors, snake charmers, astrologers, palmists and other entertainers to its premises. It is well known for its colony of resident astrologers.

Risman King Ran demons when the tempi



TREATIST ON MASSAGE

Small building that encircles the chedis of the Fou Kings display a si of murals, shown the techniques of That massage. The subject is further illustrated by stayoga stances and

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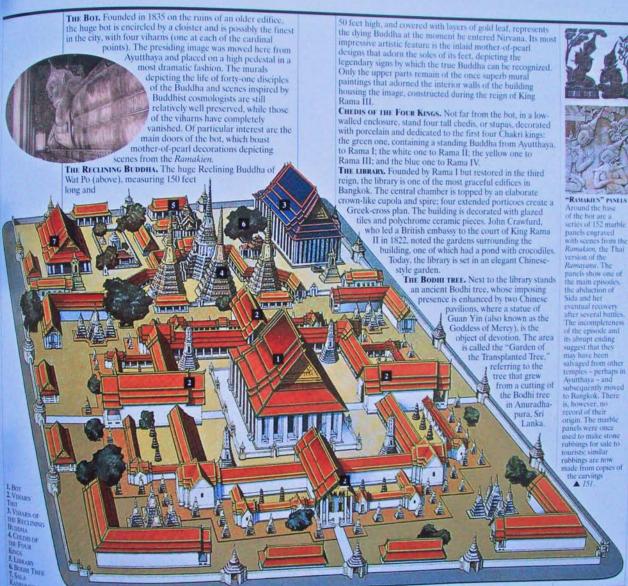
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▲ BANGKOK RATTANAKOSIN ISLAND

•...The Siamese attach great importance to seals which take it

importance to seals, which take the place of signatures in Western evilization. These seals are mostly made of ivory, in the shape of a phrachedee, the devices representing a Houlanian or a Rachasee, an angel or a lotus-flower and sealing wax is used with these seals, but always a vermillionred dye."

Carl Bock

THE SECOND KING

The office of the Second King, who

served as vice-ru

in the Ayutthaya

was a peculiarly Thai

institution that began

period. The position

was abolished in the

reign of King Rama V, when the heir

apparent

known

Crown



The large oval field across from the Grand Palace is popularly known as Sanam Luang, "the Royal Field. More formally, it is called the Pramane Ground, the place where royal cremations are held, the last having been that of the mother of King Rama IX, in 1996, The Plowine



Ceremony to forecast the coming agricultural crop is held here in May, while on the King's Birthday and at New Year Sanam Luang becomes a giant festival, with staged entertainments. On the eastern side are ministries and the city pillar Lak Muang, while on the west are Silpakorn University, Wat Mahathat, Thammasat University and the National Museum. Facing Sanam Luang across a road from the northern side stands the National Gallery \triangle 84.

NATIONAL MUSEUM





A watercolor sketch of Sanam Luang at the turn of the century, when rickshaws were still in existence. A few pedal pedal rickshaws were recently reintroduced for fourists.

Archeology and Fine Arts, later the Fine Arts Department. Two modern buildings were constructed on either side of the old palace in 1967, while a new gallery on Thai history was opened during Bangkok's bicentennial celebrations (1982).

BUDDHAISAWAN CHAPEL. The Buddhaisawan Chapel was built in 1787 to enshrine an important northern Buddha Si Hing, and is now within the grounds of the museum. The interior walls are

painted with exceptionally fine murals showing scenes from the life of the Buddha, while the building itself is an outstanding example of early Bangkok religious architecture. TAMAK DAENG. Tamnak Daeng, or "Red House," was the residence of an elder sister of King Rama I, It was moved from Thonburi by King Rama II to the Grand Palace compound and later, in the fourth reign, to its present location in

the museum grounds. Furniture and other items of the early Bangkok period are displayed inside • 45.

THE MUSEUM COLLECTION.
The National Museum's collection covers the whole range of art found in the country, religious and secular, fine and decorative. Thai and otherwise. The Prehistoric Gallery, for instance,

includes Neolithic tools and pottery dating as far back as 10,000 BC, in addition to painted pots and bronze objects unearthed at excavations in the northeast Numerous creations of the pre-Thai Srivijaya, Dvaravati and Khmer kingdoms are also displayed, as well as those of the early Thai settlements of the far north. Thai Buddhist art encompasses images in stone, bronze and

terracotta from the Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin (Bangkok) periods, together with such religious items as illustrated scripture books, manuscript cabinets and votive plaques. Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays, the museum also

contains a large selection of

miscellaneous arts, among them Thai and Chinese ceramics, theatrical costumes, textiles, furniture, funeral chariots, palanquins, elephant howdahs, weapons, puppets and assorted objects used in royal households. Guided tours in English are offered on certain days of the week by the National Museum Volunteer Group.



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BANGKOK NATIONAL MUSEUM THE IMAGE OF BUDDHA

The earliest reminder of Buddha's teachings was a mound of earth, which eventually evolved into the stupa. Later, feeling the need for a more concrete symbol, adherents to the faith began to make images. Various schools of thought arose concerning the exact features and *mudra*, or gestures, of such images, eventually resulting in a wide range of choices as revealed in the different periods of Thai art. This evolution of the image of Buddha can be seen in those displayed in the National Museum.

DVARAVATI
Dvaravati images
(7th-11th century),
mostly in stone, stucco,
or terracotta, are heavyfeatured and realistic in

appearance, with



LOPNUM
Strongly influenced by
Khmer images, those of
Lopburi (7th–14th
century) have stylized
faces with broad mouths
that seem to be faintly
smiling; later ones are
often in royal attire.

CASTING BUDDIA IMAGES
Bronze Buddha images are cast
by the "lost wax" process,
which involves a clay core in
the rough form desired, a
covering of wax carved into the
shape of the image, and an
outer mold of clay. The wax is
then melted and drained off
and molten bronze poured in
to replace it. Casting often
takes place in a temple
compound, accompanied by a
variety of ceremonies. The
mural shown on the right, in
Wat Bowornivet ▲ 85,
Bangkok, depicts the castings
of three famous images,
namely the Phra Buddha
Chinaraj, Phitsanulok, and two
large images now in Wat
Bowornivet. The event took
place in the late Sukhothai



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The lath-image h curls, a p thick, s scated or blossom

LANNA
The typical northern
13th-20th-century Lanna
image has a round face, large
curls, a prominent chin, and a
thick, solid body; it is often
seated on a lotusblossom base.

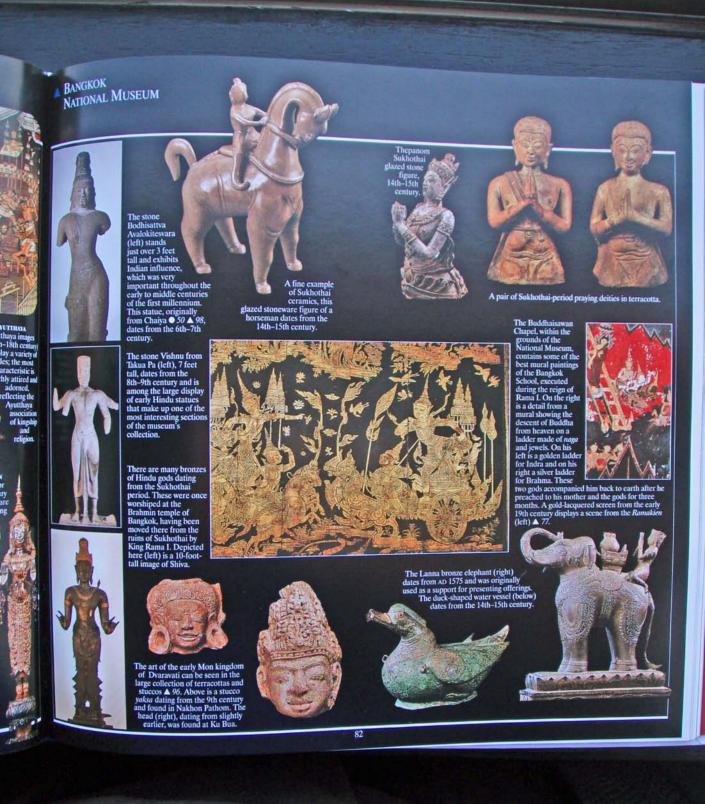


RATTANAKOSIN

SUKHOTIAI
WALKING IMAGE
The outstanding
Sukhothai image.is
considered by scholars
to be the walking
Buddha, with
exaggerated physical
characteristics yet
possessing a fluid grace
and a powerful
spiritual sense.

RATTANAKOSIN A beautiful ivory image of Buddha, late 19th century.





BANGKOK RATTANAKOSIN ISLAND

RATTANAKOSIN ISLAND PLAN

A long-term blueprint intends to "restore" Rattanakosin Island to a state that never existed, with modern buildings since the reign of Rama V to be demolished and broad open vistas opened up, especially along the river Though offering more grandeur, the plan faces strong opposition since it would destroy the charming communities of Phra Chan, Phra Arthit, Pak Klong Talaad and Tha Tien, which are as old as Bangkok and provide a living link to the past. The old shops, markets, apothecaries and other local trades are themselves a popular tourist sight. The plan would also buildoze the National Theater so a lesser known temple could be seen from Sanam Luang.

A VENERATED PIG Overlooking Klong Lord near Saranrom Palace is a large statue of a pig, covered with layers of gold leaf offered by supplicants. This was crected in honor of Queen Sowabha Phongsri, the principal Queen of King Rama V. who was born in the ear of that animal. It has become an important shrine for people of the area, who believe it has the power to





OTHER SIGHTS IN SANAM LUANG

WAT MAHATHAL. This temple dates from before the founding of Bangkok, but was extensively restored during the reign of King Rama I and became one of the city's most important monasteries. The future King Rama IV served as one of its abbots. Today. Wat Mahathat (above) houses a college for Buddhist priests and offers meditation classes for foreigners. On weekends, the temple is usually filled with peddlers who display and sell amulets to visitors. "LAK MUANG." Standing outside the walls of Wat Phra Keo. the lak muang (the city's foundation stone pillar) is in the form of a lingam that serves as the abode of Bangkok's guardian spirit and as the spot from which distances in the

city are measured. First erected by King Rama I in 1782, it is now sheltered by an ornate pavilion (below right) and was joined with the lak muang of Thonburi after the cities merged. Large numbers of supplicants come here to ask for almost anything, from matrimonial harmony to a winning ticket in the national lottery. In addition to making offerings of flowers and incense, many also pay for dancers to perform a propitiatory kind of likay A 35

SILPAKORN University. Silpakorn «Entertain not thy thoughts with worldly things DO NO WORK BUT THE WORK OF CHARITY AND TRUTH. BUDDAUST PRICE

> (Fine Arts) University is housed partly in an old palace of the first reign. It owes its existence largely to Corrado Feroci, an Italian sculptor. Feroci began working for the Thai government in 1924. founded the School of Fine Arts in 1933, and lived in the country under the Thai name of Silpa Bhirasri until his death in 1962. The building fronting Sanam Luang is decorated with a frieze in Art Nouveau style painted by Italian artists. NATIONAL THEATER. Erected in the early 1970's, this huge edifice became the hub of cultural and

and foreign orchestras once performed here. Today only a few classical drama few classical drama murals painted in performances and official foreign 1864, during them

musical activities: dance troupes

shows get staged here, and the building may be demolished to allow a view of a temple that was formerly part of the palace of the Second King. The Thai classical dance school that was once located here has recently moved out.

WAT RAJAPRADIT ★

A small, serene temple built during King Rama IV's reign. Wat Rajapradit (above right) is located in a compound adjacent to the garden of the former Saranrom Palace, where

King Rama IV often said he wished to retire. The main building is sheathed in gray marble from China and raised on a high stone platform, while on both sides of the building are Khmer-style prangs; on the terrace behind the temple is a stupa also covered with gray marble. The doors are adorned with gold-and-black lacquer paintings and the gables and eaves are decorated with fine carvings. Wat Rajapradit has a restful atmosphere not very often found in larger temple compounds, but as the doors are often locked, tourists may only visit the temple on the 1st and the 15th of each lunar month, when the local folk come to pray and present alms to the monks.



Wat Rajapradit

MURALS OF 1864

The bot of Wat Rajapradit is decorated with a unusual set of of King Rama IV These depict vano royal ceremonies held during the twelve months of t of early Bangkok since many of thos

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National Gallery.

Riverside walkway at

Santichaiprakarr

This triangular neighbourhood north of Sanam Luang – bordered by Rajadamnoon Klang Avenue, Klong Banglamphu and the river – was historically associated with artistes who performed in the royal palaces. Today, it remains a hub of cultural activity, with a vibrant streetlife thanks to Banglamphu Market and Khao San Road, Bangkok's district for foreign backpackers. The road and adjacent alleys are lined

with travel agencies, bookshops, silver shops, souvenir stalls, bars, restaurants and guesthouses made famous by the book and film "The Beach". Now a destination in its own right for curious Thais, who come here for the nightlife, Khao San Road is going upmarket. The first permanently pedestrianized road in Thailand, it now includes boutique hotels and stages official events at festivals like Songkran.

NATIONAL GALLERY. This Italianate classical building facing Sanam Luang which once housed the Royal Mint now acts as a repository of Thai art. The small permanent collection includes works by major modern Thai artists, though it has not kept pace with the boom in contemporary Thai art that has drawn international acclaim since the 1990's. Museums proposed at the Thailand Cultural Center on Rajadaphisek Road, and possibly at a downtown site beside Stam Discovery Center, would showcase today's artistic trends. The National Gallery does, however, host major exhibitions of Thai and international art.

RIVERSIDE WALKWAY AND TOURIST BUREAU. On the riverbank under Phra Pinklao Bridge stands the Bangkok Tourist Bureau Headquarters, from which one can catch several guided walking or bicycle tours. A river promenade built on pilings in the Chao Phraya river heads north past several fine mansions now put to diplomatic or cultural use and ends at Santichaiprakarn Park.

PHRA ARTHIT ROAD AND SANTICHAIPRAKARN PARK. This picturesque riverside road is a major hub of contemporary Thai arts. Several of its small restaurant-bars and bookshops hold exhibitions, performances and other events, often in conjunction with the arts festivals held frequently in Santichaiprakarn Park, such as the Bangkok Theater Festival in November, This green space on the river bank contains a Thai-style pavilion, a performance area and Phra Sumen Fort.

WAT BOWORNIVET. Built by King Rama III for his brother, who spent the better part of his life as a monk before ascending the throne as King Rama IV, this monastery is renowned for the murals of the *ubosot*, painted for the first time in Thai history in Western perspective by the monk artist Khrua In Khong ● 55. The temple houses three important large Sukhothai images ▲ 82 and a Buddha from Borobodur donated by the Dutch

government to King Rama V. It is the residence of the Supreme Patriarch of Thai Buddhism.

RAJADAMNOEN ROAD

Rajadamnoen (Royal Progress) Road was created by King Rama V to be a processional avenue from the Grand Palace to his new palace complex in Dusit. Its central stretch, Rajadamnoen Klang Road, is lined with buildings in the grand, streamlined style of the 1940's and served as Saigon in the film "Good Morning Victnam". Decorated with lights and ornamental displays during royal birthdays and important national celebrations, it holds several monuments related to Thai democracy and offers fine

vistas of both Wat Rajanadda and the Golden Mount of Wat Saket. New plans intend to turn Rajadammoen Klang road into a Thai "Champs Elysées", lined with upmarket shops and offices.

offices.

Democracy Monument. Commemorating Thailand's transition in 1932 from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy, the Democracy Monument is a vast sculpture by the Italian artist Corrado Feroci. It depicts an ornamental tray holding the Constitution, surrounded by four wings stretching upward, all set dramatically on a traffic island in the avenue. This was the focus of huge anti-dictatorship demonstrations in 1973, 1976 and 1992. These all ended in bloodshed and a memorial to the victims of the October 14th, 1973, incident now stands nearby at the junction with Tanao Road on the south side of Rajadamnoen Klang Road. Images from the democratic struggles, and occasionally

staged performances, ring its central spire.

KING PRIJADIPHOK MUSEUM. This turreted building at Phan Fah Bridge, where Rajadamnoen Road turns north towards Dusit, now houses a newly opened museum dedicated to King Rama VII, also known as King. Prajadiphok. As well as focusing on his life and reign it explains the circumstances surrounding the King's efforts to cultivate democracy, his transformation into Thailand's first constitutional monarch, and his later abdication.

THE QUEEN'S GALLERY, Facing King Prajadiphok Museum across Phan Fah Bridge at the bend in Rajadamnoen Road, this building owned by Bangkok Bank was converted into

Bangkok's first gallery of modern art. Opened in honor of Queen Sirikit's sixth cycle birthday anniversary, it hosts major exhibitions from home and abroad, including work by royal family members. Changing displays also draw from a permanent collection of pieces by distinguished National Artists and from the Bangkok Bank's annual art competition, which has launched the careers of many prominent contemporary painters.



October 14th Monument



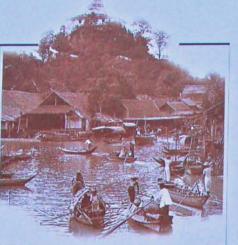
Phra Sumen Fort



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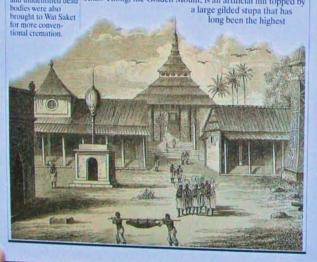


A RESTING PLACE Wat Saket appears in most 19th-century accounts of Bangkok not only because of its Golden Mount but also because it was a resting place for the dead during cholera epidemics, Too numerous for conventional cremation, the bodies were laid out at the temple for vultures to devour. Anna Leonowens, the Englishwoman who was hired by King some of his wives and children, wrote: None but the mitiated will approach these grounds after sunset so universal and profound is the horror the place inspires - a place the most frightful and offensive known to mortal eyes," Paupers and unidentified dead



WAT SAKET AND THE GOLDEN MOUNT

"Just outside the city wall is the Golden Mount, a bell-shaped mound faced with brick, but so overgrown by trees that it has the appearance of a natural hillock...From here we look down upon a forest of palms and plane-trees, through which break the red roofs of the houses. Everywhere rising above the trees are graceful spires and the manifold roofs of temples, with their tiles of rich orange or deep purple, great splashes of color against the clear blue sky..." That was a description by P.A. Thomson in 1910 of the view from the Golden Mount. Today a visitor to the mount enjoys a different view. Phu Khao Thong, the Golden Mount, is an artificial hill topped by



elevation in Bangkok and one of the city's most celebrated landmarks. The stupa is 260 feet from its base to the tip of its spire. A replica of a similar hill in Avutthaya, this was a feat of 19thcentury engineering, begun by King Rama V but not completed until the following reign. The stupa, reached by a flight of 300 steps, contains relics of the Buddha presented to King Rama V by Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, in 1897. The Golden Mount lies within the compound of Wat Saket. Built by King Rama I. Wat Saket is one of the oldest temples in Bangkok, though it has often been restored and few of the original murals and other decorations remain. One of its sanctuaries has a large standing Buddha

image brought from Sukhothai by the first Chakri king. The temple contains a pavilion that was once a temple library and that was moved to its present location from Ayutthaya, It dates from the late 17th century and features gilded panels with Chinese-style motifs and classic lacquered windows. Some of the windows were exhibited in Paris on the occasion of the third centenary of Thai-French diplomatic relations.

The window panel the library of War Saket portray a seof foreigners and ambassadors who used to frequ cosmopolitan Ayunhaya in its

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CITY WALLS

Like Ayutthaya, Rattanakosin island was once surrounded by a high wall. Most of the wall has been pulled down, though stretches remain near the two remaining forts and facing Wat Boworniwet, Phra Sumen Fort has been restored as part of Santichaiprakarn Park, A park is planned for Mahakan Fort.



MONK'S BOWL VILLAGE

Just south of the Golden Mount is Bangkok's last remaining 'village' of metalworkers devoted to making black lacquered bowls of steel and copper with which monks beg for alms. It may be possible to see this handicraft on Soi Baan Baat, off Boriphat Road south of Bamrung Meuang Road. These rare, expensive items are now mostly bought as ornaments.

WAT RAJANADDA

With the removal of a movie theater that long concealed it, the architectural beauties of Wat Rajanadda are now visible to passers-by. Its most interesting feature is the Lohaprasad. started by King Rama III but only completed a decade ago by the Fine Arts Department. It has six levels, each housing small ornamental pavilions, is 110 feet high and overlooks Rajadamnoen Klang Avenue. A new pavilion outside the temple serves as a reception area for important foreign visitors to Bangkok. The temple also holds a major amulet market.



The Lohipti in the compound of Wat



BANGKOK RATTANAKOSIN ISLAND

BAMRENG MEANG ROAD

This road, w

square with

Swing, is almost.

devoted to

various Buddhist

images of all sizes.

well as robes.

fans and alms bowls for

monks, carved altar

Bodhi trees

ceremonial umbrellas, candles

tables, little gilded

and incense sticks and countless other items used in temple

adornment. These are

presented by laymen

to the temples on a variety of religious occasions.

mostly

WAT SUTHAT

Wat Suthat is one of the most important temples in Bangkok. Work on the temple started during the reign of King Rama I, was continued by his successor, and finally completed under King Rama III. The temple's principal attractions are two unusually large buildings. the bot and the viharn, both of which exhibit outstanding classic Thai religious art and architecture.

THE VIHARN • 46. Noted for its graceful proportions the viharn is raised on two platforms and surrounded by a cloister; at the corners of the platform are pavilions enshrining Buddha images in various positions. The gables are richly adorned with mythological animals and religious symbols, and the huge doors, carved in three layers, are attributed to King Rama II, who was noted for his artistry. The interior walls and the two rows of supporting columns are covered with fine mural paintings of the early Bangkok period. The principal Buddha image, Phra Buddha Chakyamuni, was moved to Bangkok from Wat Mahathat in Sukhothai and dates from

the 14th century. It was east together with another much revered image called the Prabu Chinaraj, which is now housed in Phitsanulok.

THE BOT • 46. Constructed between 1839 and 1843 by King Rama III, the bot contains an image known as Phra Trai Lok Chet, in front of which is a

group of disciple figures. Well-preserved murals also cover the interior walls of this structure. The door of the low brick wall that surrounds the bot are guarded by statues imported from China, all representing Western sailors and soldiers and

reflecting the low opinion both the

Thai and the Chinese had of

Westerners in those days.

Sao Ching Cha, once the focus of a colorful Brahmin ceremony honoring the god Siva, when teams of young men swung to great heights in an effort to snatch sacks of money with their teeth, the highest sack being on a 76-foot pole. The ceremonial practice was abolished during the reign of King Rama VII for being too dangerous

The statues of the Westerners, they were fully convinced. were monstrous enough to ward off the evil spirits lurking outside their house

BRAIMIN TEMPLE. Overlooking the square containing the Giant Swing is the Brahmin temple called Devastan. While of little interest architecturally, it is a reminder of the powerful influence white-robed Brahmin priests once exerted in Thailand, particularly in the royal court. Even today Brahminic rituals play a vital part in many ceremonies THE GIANT SWING, Across Wat Suthat is the Giant Swing, or

Sao Ching Cha, the Giant Swing.



MINI CEMETERY

Rajabopit is an cemetery crowded with tombs in assorted styles of architecture, including Gothic and Khmer. These mostly enshrine members of King Rama V

vidence of the high regard in which he held the



WAT RAJABOPIT

Located on a road of the same name. Wat Rajabopit was built in 1870, shortly after King Rama V ascended to the throne, and displays the eclectic approach to architecture that was

characteristic of the fifth reign. Its central feature is a graceful gilded stupa, modeled after the famous one in Nakhon Pathom, with a courtvard surrounded by a circular cloister with marble columns and two-tiered roofs.

interrupted by the bot and three viharns; the exterior walls of the bot, the lower part of the stupa, and the cloister are covered with glazed Chinese tiles in a subtle blending of colors, while the doors and windows o the bot are decorated with mother-ofpearl inlays depicting the five royal orders. The interior of the bot has a vaulted roof that suggests a Gothic eathedral, and its color scheme of pale blue and gold also has a European flavor that contrasts with the classic Thai surroundings.







A COUP ON THE RIVER

THE RIVER
In May 1950,
elements of the navy
staged a coup on a
landing near the
Grand Palace. The
prime minister of the
time was taken at
gunpoint to a battleship anchored in the
middle of the river
and held hostage
overnight. In the
morrhing, planes from
the air force bombed
and sank the ship.
However, the premier
was not aboard: his
captors had gallantly
told him to swim for it
when the bombs
began to fall. He
reached the shore,
rallied his forces and
within 36 hours was
back in full command
of the situation.

Beginning with the confluence of three northern streams snaking 219 miles down to the gulf, the Chao Phraya River ● 56 has played a decisive role throughout much of Thailand's history. It waters the broad Central Plains, creating one of the world's most fertile rice-growing areas; at the same time, it provides access to the outside world, making possible the trade that has nurtured three capital cities on its banks − first Ayutthaya, then Thonburi, and last Bangkok − over more than six centuries. The river was the focal point of Bangkok, not only in its early years but also well into the present century. The double and triple rows of floating houses that once lined its banks have vanished, and bridges − seven in the



metropolitan area – make communication with Thomburi

with Thonburi
easier than the old
network of canals.
Nevertheless.
even today, a
relatively short
cruise along the
Chao Phraya reveals a
cession of major

succession of major landmarks, both cultural and

commercial: the Grand Palace enclosure and countless important Buddhist temples, the oldest foreign embassies, Catholic churches, the wharfs and godowns of trading companies, wholesale markets for agricultural produce brought to the capital by boat, spacious palaces and houses of old, where the city's élite once resided (and, in some cases, still do). The same trip will also suggest a residential revival along the Chao Phraya in the form of new hotels and towering condominiums rising on both sides amid those nostalgic sights; thanks to the increasingly congested traffic and the difficulty of commuting to distant suburbs, residents are now returning to Bangkok's timeless traditional heart.

CHAO PHRAVA EXPRESS

These ferries opens from 6am to 7pm. I connects to the Sa Train station at Sathorn Bridge





CROSS-RIVER HERE
Operated by the
Chao Phraya Espe
Boat Company, the
rum between the in
riverbanks damign
day and until
midnight.

CARL BOCK, 1883

WAT ARUN

With the possible exception of the Grand Palace, no Chao Phraya attraction is as celebrated as the soaring 343-foot central prang of Wat Arun ● 50, the Temple of Dawn, on the Thonburi bank. Dating from the Ayutthaya period and considerably restored, the temple served as the royal chapel during the Thonburi reign of King Taksin. The Emerald Buddha ▲ 76 was enshrined here before being brought to its present home at Wat Phra Keo. King Rama II of Bangkok first conceived the idea of raising the great Khmer-style prang, but due to engineering problems, it was



not completed until the following reign. This, as well as the four smaller ones that flank it, are adorned with ceramic tiles and fragments of multicolored porcelain, creating a jewel-like effect in the sunlight. A platform halfway up the tower offers a panoramic view of the river and Bangkok. Traditionally, at the end of the rainy scason, the king visits Wat Arun and presents robes to the resident monks in a ceremony, a trip that in the past was made from the Grand Palace using a fleet of carved and gilded royal barges • 29.

OTHER TEMPLES ALONG THE RIVERSIDE

WAT KALAYANIMIT ★. This imposing edifice, standing where Klong Bangkok Yai enters the Chao Phraya, was built during the reign of Rama III. The ubosot shelters a huge bronze Buddha image especially popular with Thai Chinese, who honor the image as Sam Poh Kong in memory of the famous Ming cunuch admiral. The temple grounds contain impressive Chinese statues brought as ballast by the rice-trade junks. A stone polygonal chedi was also made in China and assembled behind the ubosot. The murals are very well preserved and give a glimpse of life during that period. A small alleyway and new riverside walkway lead to a charming little Chinese temple and Santa Cruz Church ▲ 89.

WAT PRAYOONWONG. Built during King Rama III's reign, Wat Prayoonwong boasts fine lacquered doors decorated with mother-of-pearl. The temple is also known for its artificial hill surrounded by a pond of turtles that are fed by Buddhist visitors to acquire merit. WAT RAKHANG KOSITHARAM. Across the river from the Grand Palace, a ferry from Tha Chang Pier leads to this wat built in the reign of King Rama L. "Rakhang" means "bell," and the name is partly derived from the numerous bells rung here in the morning and evening. The main building is a particularly beautiful example of early Rattanakosin architecture 48, with fine Ayutthaya-style stucco decorations around the doors and windows, while the ho trai 46, a

library on a raised platform, contains some well-preserved murals depicting the *Ramakien* epic and the Buddhist cosmology. Of special interest are three traditional Thai houses that were occupied by King Rama I before he became the ruler and moved to the temple. The houses, as well as their gold-and-black lacquered windows and ornate entrance-way, were restored for Bangkok's bicentennial in 1982. North of the wat stands Patravadi Theater, the leading space for contemporary dance and drama, and where five traditional works are staged.

oreserved thist cosmo- When King Rama 1

HO PIRK I RM PIDO When King Rama! all donated his former residence to Wat. Rakhang to be converted into a library, the buildings were rearranged, and murals were added. In the early 1980's, these were restored with the help of a wellknown Thai painter-Fun Haripitak.

PAK KLONG TALAAD

Formerly Bangkok's main wholesale market, this sprawling collection of buildings had for over a century served as a central exchange for vegetables, fruit, cut flowers, and other produce brought by boat (right) from the gardens and orchards of Thonburi, as well as others further upriver. With the market moved to the suburbs, the site is to be redeveloped for tourists and river access will result in demolition of some buildings. It is unclear how many vendors will be allowed back and if the flower market will continue to thrive along Chakphet Road. This sight is most spectacular from mid-evening until morning.

THE WANG LEE HOUSE

In between rows of godowns on the Thonburi bank, this is one of the best preserved of the Chinese-style residences once common in 19th-century Bangkok. Like the others, it was built by a Chinese immigrant who came to profit from the city's growing rice trade and who founded several other still-thriving businesses. Most of these houses have fallen into disrepair, but the Wang Lee family has maintained its ancestral home in good condition.



THE PICKLED MURDERER

An unusual feature of Sirina Hospital, on the bank of the river next to the Phra Pink Lao Bridge, is the ten museums that it contains. The most famous is the Museum of the Department of Forensic Medicine where the focus is on crime. The most celebrated exhibit here is the preserved body of Si-Oui, a Chinese immigrant who murdered seven children before he was captured and executed in the 1950's Si-Om suffocated his victims then ate their internal organs in the belief that it would promote longevity - a theory best disproved by his



a Expension of the re-

BANGK

A RIVE

rook to Wat

that the temple

many years

has been a popular tourist attraction for

SOMDET YA PARK

A small riverside park dedicated to the late Princess Mother,

Kings Rama VIII and IX. Named after her

formal title, Somdet Phra Srinagarindra

Boranaraiaionani

the home where she

grew up as commones goldsmith's daughter.

A ceramic frieze

in nursing and

celebrates her years

community projects. The park is just downstream of the Memorial Bridge on the Thonburi bank.

THE MEMORIAL

towering spire of Wat

Prayoonwong, the Memorial Bridge was

the first to link Bangkok with Thonburi. It was opened by King Rama VII at

BRIDGE Just before the

Memorial Park contains a museum in a house resembling

whose sons became

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View of the Chao Phraya at the end of the 19th century

COLONIAL INFLUENCE Overlooking the river, both the French Embassy and the Orienta Hotel date from the second half of the 19th century and originally had the louvered shutters and spacious verandas typical of European buildings of the time The French Embassy has been slightly remodeled recently

THE OLD COLONIAL QUARTER

FOREIGN EMBASSIES. All the early foreign embassies - or legations, as they were then called - were located by the river. The earliest was built by the Portuguese, who had also been the first to establish relations with Ayutthaya, and who were granted permission to erect a trading post and consulate in 1820, during the reign of King Rama II; part of the trading office still remains at the back of the property, while the embassy residence, facing the river, was built later. The British came later, on the site now occupied by the General Post Office, followed by the Americans nearby, the French (next to the Oriental Hotel) and others, all with landings from which the diplomats traveled upriver to the Grand Palace on official business. Today, only the Portuguese and French remain at their respective original sites

ORIENTAL HOTEL. This building started as a small guest house in 1865, calling itself the Oriental and overlooking the river. The guest house burned down that year, and was replaced







customs house for Bangkok until the development of the port "Head Header facilities at Klong Toey, down river. The building was taken over by the fire brigade, but will soon be retrofitted and converted to a luxury hotel. Just behind the building, a narrow lane leads to a small Muslim settlement and cemetery.

CATHOLIC CHURCHES Catholic missionaries began work in Thailand during the Ayutthaya period and one of the buildings of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, near the Krung Thon

Bridge, dates from this time, when visitors stopped at Bangkok on their way to the capital. Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix. who taught the future King Rama IV Latin and French, later resided here. Another river landmark is Santa Cruz Church, near the Memorial Bridge originally built by Portuguese residents after the fall of Ayutthaya and recons tructed by Bishop Pallegoix in 1834; the present cathedral dates from 1913

▲ 88. Also erected by Portuguese Catholics around the same time was the first Holy Rosary Church (pictured), beside the Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel. The present building, though. is of later vintage. The imposing Assumption Cathedral. standing by the Oriental Hotel, is one of Bangkok's largest, and was built in 1910 to replace an older church on the site.

WAT YANNAWA

Built in the early 19th century, Wat Yannawa was particularly popular with Chinese residents who began to settle in that part of Bangkok as the city expanded. Though of no great artistic interest, it contains a notable feature - a building designed in the shape of a Chinese junk, complete with huge eyes to ward off evil spirits and surmounted by two chedis.

This was added to the compound by order of King Rama III, who had observed the increasing number of steam-powered ships calling at the capital and wanted his subjects to remember the older kind of vessel to which they owed so much of their prosperity



SIMMESE IWINS Crossing the Cha-Praya in 1824. Hunter noticed a strange creature swimming near to boat. It proved to be the famous Somes twins, Chang and Eng. who, parily with Hunter's support, went on a become celebrated attractions abroad They eventually settled in America where they died in 1874



▲ BANGKOK KLONGS OF THONBURI



THE LONG TAIL.
The hang tair, or stong-tail, boat (tolow) is perhaps the most often seen conveyance along the Thomburi Hongs.
Reportedly developed in Thailand, it has a propeller on a long pole that can be raised to navigate shallow waterways.

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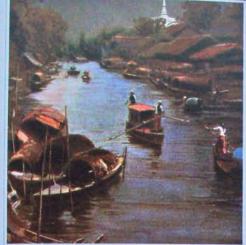
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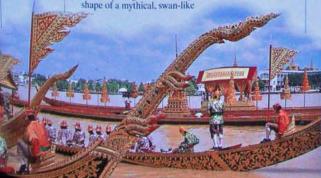
Most of the once-numerous klongs, or canals, of Bangkok have vanished, filled in to widen narrow roads or to create new ones. In Thonburi, however, development has come more slowly, due largely to the lack of bridges across the Chao Phraya until fairly recently, and the klongs retain much of their old atmosphere.

The procession of the royal barges, borne along the bosom of the great mother Menam, with all the accessories of splendour that Bangkok could produce, afforded a sight the heauty of which is hardly to be equalled in any part of the

gorgeous East."

ROYAL BARGE MUSEUM

The Royal Barge Museum, on Klong Bangkok Noi near the point where it enters the river, displays but a few of the spectacular craft that were once used for royal processions along the Chao Phraya. Such processions began in Ayutthaya when, according to one foreign observer, as many as 200 barges were involved, propelled by chanting, uniformed oarsmen "all rowing in synchronized movement and rhythm." The most impressive of the contemporary barges is the gilded Suphanahongsa • 29 in which the king rides, over 150 feet long and requiring a crew of sixty-four, with a prow in the



«THE BROAD DEEP KLONGS ARE THE GREAT STREETS OF THE CITIES AND THE HIGHWAYS OF THE PLAINS,»

ERNEST YOUNG

bird. Another, 149 feet long, is adorned with a many-headed naga, or sacred serpent, while other figureheads include horned dragons, garuda, and characters from the Ramakien. Royal barge processions today are rare, being held on occasions like Bangkok's Bicentennial in 1982, the King's 60th and 72nd birthdays and the King's Golden Jubilee in 1996.

LIFE ALONG THE KLONG ★

"To unaccustomed eyes it is surprising to see a decent old woman with a mop of grey hair deftly maneuvering her canoe amid the traffic as she goes methodically about her day's shopping...On houseboats, people lounge about idly; men mostly half-naked wash themselves or their children, and here and there half-a-dozen urchins scramble about in the water." This description, written by Somerset Maugham in 1923, is still remarkably close to what one sees today on a cruise through the Thonburi klongs. Weathered old wooden houses.



some in the steep-roofed traditional style, still crowd the banks, families still bathe from their doorsteps in the late afternoon, the women preserving their modesty with a sarong; and vendors

in straw hats still paddle small craft laden with various goods. Thonburi has long been famous for its mangoes and durians, and, while some of the orchards have been turned into building sites, many remain along the waterways. Among the most popular klongs are Bangkok Yai and Bangkok Noi, though smaller ones lead off in all directions and offer glimpses of a fast-disappearing way of life.

WAT SUWANNARAM ★

On the southern bank of Klong Bangkok Noi not far from where it joins the river, this well-proportioned temple was built on the foundations of an Ayutthaya-period temple by King Rama I and renovated by King Rama III. In addition to being a good example of transitional architecture of the Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin periods, it is noted for the

beautiful mural paintings in its sanctuary; these works of art are attributed to Luang Vichit Chetsada and Krua Khonpae, two prominent painters of the third reign, and have been restored using modern techniques. On the south wall, behind the principal Buddha image, are scenes from the three worlds of Buddhist cosmology. The entrance wall is covered with a huge mural depicting the victory of Buddha over Mara while the side walls are decorated with rows of praying figures facing the altar and scenes of the last ten Jataka tales of the Buddha's previous lives.





▲ BANGKOK CHINATOWN

→The Chinese here are a model of peaceful intrusion.

thousands who immigrated into Sian

have monopolised trade. Whatever is related to labour in

and soon thriving in their hands. While

represents sheer idleness, his bustling

counterpart from the Celestial empire is a

LION CARICATURE

reflects the tradi-tional lion dance,

regarded as an

sential part

that accompany the official

opening of many buildings

importance of Chinese

in Thai life.

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the kingdom is stimulated, organised

the Siames

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paragon of greediness and painstaking toil.** The Marquis

The several

ccupying the site selected by King Rama I for his royal palace in 1782 was a community of Chinese traders. They moved to a new location, just outside the city walls, where they created a teeming district that became Bangkok's Chinatown, long the center of commercial life in the capital.





Beginning at Wat Pathum Khongka - an old temple also known as Wat Sampheng, built a century before Bangkok became the capital - and running for seven blocks parallel to Yaowarat Road, Sampheng Lane is a noisy covered alleyway lined with shops selling goods of all kinds; wedding mementoes, buttons, imported textiles, kitchenware, gold chains, beads, toys and clothing, to mention only a few. The road eventually emerges at Pahurat, just across from Klong

Ong Ang, a market famous for its numerous shops and stalls selling textiles at prices substantially lower than anywhere else in the city.

YAOWARAT ROAD

Yaowarat A 73 is the main street of Chinatown. The thoroughfare is congested and the air heavily polluted but it is nevertheless full of life and fascinating discoveries. especially down the narrow lanes leading off each side. It once boasted a large number of opium dens, gambling houses, burlesque shows, and brothels (proclaimed by green lanterns hanging outside); these have mostly disappeared, at least on the surface, but the area still retains a raffish, faintly mysterious ambience at night. Paul

«HALF OF THE POPULATION OF THE MENAM DELTA IS CHINESE AND VERY FEW PEOPLE ARE WITHOUT SOME TRACE OF THE CHINESE BLOOD IN THEM.»

HOLT S. HALLETT, 184

Morand, writing at the turn of the century. captured the atmosphere of the area in Rien que la Terre; "With the noise of the street, the fanfare of gramophones, the clattering of mahjong, like hail on a tin roof, one is reminded of China, but it is the pawnshops which give the impression reality. Gamblers come to pawn their jewels, their silken robes, their pipes. The more the pipes

have been smoked and filled with opium, the more they gain for them. Lotteries, cockfights, fish fights, betting on Shanghai races, ten days' journey from here; all are played. Bets are even placed on the number of pips in a melon! It is reported that naval officers, under arrest and confined to their boats, continue to play at sea, by signal! Near the end of Yaowarat Road is an area called Nakorn

Kasem, once known as the 'Thieves' Market" because of its many shops selling antiques and secondhand goods.

CHINATOWN TEMPLES

Chinatown contains temples both large and small, some for Mahayana Buddhists, some for

Taoists, and others for Theravada Buddhists. The leading Mahayana Buddhist temple is Wat Mangkon Kamalawat, on Charoen Krung Road, where enormous candles decorated with Chinese figures are among the altar offerings. Off Plabplachai Road is Wat Kanikaphon, founded by a former brothel owner, where elaborate paper models of luxury items such as automobiles, planes, computers and houses are burned in honor of deceased relatives. This temple is better known as Wat Mae Lao Fang after the brothel owner. Li Thi Miew, a Taoist temple on Plabplachai, has interesting Chinese paintings on the interior walls. Wat Traimit is located close to

where Yaowarat Road meets Charoen Krung Road. It contains the Golden Buddha that was found during construction work at a temple near the river in the 1950's. Originally covered in stucco, the solid gold Buddha was revealed when it was accident-ally dropped during moving, shattering the stucco. The statue weighs over 5 tons. At Odeon Circle nearby, a huge ornamented Chinese gate honors the King' 72nd birthday in 1999



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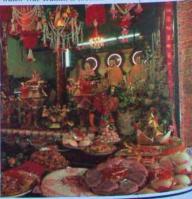
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A client cager awaits the verdict in Chinatown fortune teller consults his almanac. They are consulted on everything from health to the most nuspicious dates for marriage or opening new business.

Vegetarian food offerings at Wat Mangkon Kamalas



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TIMEN ARTISTS

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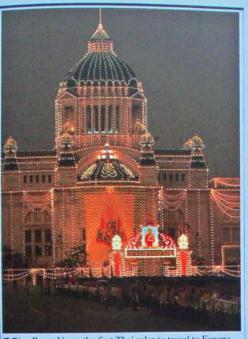
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While in Europe, King Rama V made contact with many artists and posed in their studios. He later commissioned several Italian artists to work in Bangkok; Cesare Ferro was the first to become a Siames court painter in 1904. Besides various portraits of the king. Ferro's works also included the wall decorations of the Throne Hall in the palace. Prince Naris who was in charge of the public works department, was also leen to promote imovative ideas such as Siamese subjects and Western ques. He worked closely with a team of craftsmen and painters, notably Carlo Rigoli, on various projects such as Wat Rajathiwat and the Borom-phaman Mansion. All the Italian artists gave art lessons to Thai painters and influenced the local an scene. However, the one who left a ating impression was forado Ferroci, who to Thailand in 1923 and lived there until his death. erroci produced a umber of royal canes and eventually teams a teacher. He inded the institute a known as spakorn University



King Rama V was the first Thai ruler to travel to Europe.
The result of such trips was a determination to transform Bangkok into a Western-style capital. The main focus of his effort was the Dusit district, which he linked with the traditional center by Ratchadamnoen (Royal Progress) Avenue and where he proceeded to build a new throne hall and palace, residences for members of the royal family (among them Chitralada Palace, where the present king and queen live), and numerous tree-lined avenues suitable for carriage rides. His successor Rama VI followed up his plans on an even larger scale. Since most of Bangkok's expansion has taken place elsewhere, largely to the east, this district still retains much of its early 19th-century flavor, with many of the old buildings occupied by the military and government offices. ANANDA SAMAKHOM THRONE HALL. The center of Rama V's Dusit district was the elaborate, Western-style throne hall. Construction began in 1907, directed by a group of Italian architects and engineers, notably Annibale Rigotti, Carlo Allegri, E.G. Gollo and M. Tamagno, and was completed five years later, after the death of the king. Galileo Chini, whose work the king had admired at the Venice Biennale, was commissioned in 1911-13 to decorate the vault with huge frescoes of notable events in Thai history. For a time following the end of the absolute monarchy the building served as the National Parliament. The square in front of the Ananda Samakhom is decorated with a large equestrian statue of Rama V, modeled by Georges Saulo when the king visited Paris. The statue was cast in parts and assembled in







Bangkok, and was unveiled on November 11, 1908 the 40th anniversary of his coronation. Every year, on October 23, the anniversary of King Rama V's death, many people visit the statue and pay homage to his memory.

VIMARN MER PALACE. This palace is an 81-room structure of golden teak and was originally intended to serve as a residence of King Rama V on the island of Si Chang in the Gulf of Thailand. Due to conflicts with the French over Cambodia, however, he decided to move the structure to Bangkok, and to use it as a residence during the construction of the nearby Dusit Palace. Long neglected after King Rama V's death, it was beautifully restored and furnished with fifth-reign royal treasures by Queen

Sirikit as part of the 1982 Bangkok bicentennial celebrations Queen Sirikit selected the furnishings, which include such curiosities as Thailand's first shower bath as well as historic photographs of the late 19th century.

"BIRTHDAY BRIDGES". During the latter part of his reign. King Rama V started an annual tradition of opening a new bridge on the occasion of his birthday. A number of these "birthday bridges" have been lost to progress, but several remain in all their ornate beauty.

WAT BENCHAMABOPIT. Popularly known as the Marble

Temple, this wat was built at the turn of the century by King Rama V • 48. It was designed by his brother, Prince Naris, with the help of Italian architect Hercules Manfredi. The temple is a blend of architectural styles and decoration: gray marble from Italy, for example, was imported to sheathe the bot and pave the surrounding cloisters, while inside there are stained-glass windows as well as a replica of the famous Phra Buddha Chinaraj image. Around the cloister are fifty-three bronze

reign, and an ancient Bodhi tree.

Buddha showing every style of Thai religious art and some from neighboring cultures. Also in the compound is a building in which King Rama V lived as a monk, the interior decorated with murals showing major events of his







VIMARN MEK PALACE



PHYA THAI PALACE 1910, Phya Thai Palace served as the residence of Queen Sowabha Phongsri. having previously been occupied by Crown Prince Vajiravudh. The Victorian-style buildings were later a luxury hotel then became the Phra Mongkut Military Hospital. It

Con Box II

The thice-wheeled vehicle known as a tuk-tuk (right) is still a cooler, cleaner, cheapet and popular form of transport ation in the city, although it is being gradually replaced by metered taxis.

BANGKOK TRAFFIC With about the least road surface of any world city, Bangkok has failed to keep pace with the relentless increase in vehicle numbers, causing legendary traffic congestion The speed of traffic flow on main streets fell from 8-9 miles per hour in 1984 to 5 miles per hour in 1991 and hasn't despite a decade of construction of elevated expressways and new flyovers. Since 1909, an elevated SkyTrain has linked some central areas and the opening of the Subway in 2004 has helped further. A big reduction in

congestion.

however, awaits completion

of a total

of 180

transit

on seven

lines by 2011.

miles of mass No map can keep pace with modern Bangkok given the speed with which new suburban developments spring up as well as the rapid changes in older districts. The present skyline of towering condominiums, hotels, offices and shopping complexes is actually but a decade or so old. Middle-aged residents can recall a rime when now-crowded areas were serene ricefields and "downtown" meant the shops along New Road and. Lower Surawong. Today, work, place of residence or particular interests are more likely to determine what one regards as the "center" of Bangkok. Sometimes such places overlap. More often they involve long trips through congested



traffic, thus many residents have never even seen the old town sights. If some visitors enjoy strolling about at random, savoring the animated street life that can be found almost anywhere, others with less time would do best to explore one area per day.

DOWNTOWN: SILOM-SIAM-SUKHUMWIT

The SkyTrain united Bangkok's downtown, linking Silom Road via Siam Square to Sukhumwit Road. Located between the river and Lumpini Park, Silom and parallel Sathorn Road house the financial district, as well as hotels, nightlife and travel services. Lower Silom and Charoen Krung Road (aka New Road) is the hub of Thai gems and jewelry outlets. Maze-like Siam Square showcases youth culture, while Sukhumwit's shops and entertainments reflect its upscale Thai and expatriate residents. Day and night the sidewalks at Sukhumwit and Silom throng with vendors offering locally-designed clothing and decor, as well as

NIGHTLIFE SCENES.

Bangkok's bars, clubs and restaurants have grown in sophistication, despite earlier closing times and morality campaigns. Sukhumwit boasts the most glamorous venues, while Silom's trendy bars lie in one of three later-closing mightlife zones. The other zones — at Ratchadaphisek Road and Royal City Avenue — cater to younger Thais, All

fake clothing, accessories and CDs,

three zones also encompass Bangkok's infamous, anything goes adult mehtlife. Despite official and feminist disapproval, and the spectre of AIDs, the go-go bars, see shows and massage parlours continue. One focus is Patpong Road, between Silom and Surawong Roads, and hearby side streets like Soi Thannya, which caters to Japanese. Similar scenes occupy Nana and Soi Cowboy, at Sukhumwit Sois 4 and 23 respectively. Though sex fourism attracts world attention, it is a fraction of local prostitution, which remains an accepted part of life, despite Thai shyness and modesty

LUMPINI AND OTHER PARKS

In the 1920's, King Rama VI created Lumpini (right), the original and largest park in Bangkok. It is busiest in the early morning and late afternoon, with people exercising and playing sports like takraw, plus Chinese

doing fai chi and folk-dance. Green enclaves now dot Sukhumwit, including the statue-studded Benjasiri Park beside Emporium, Benjakitti Park at the lake on New Ratchadaphisek Road, and a new private park at Soi 8, Chuvit Garden.

Paddle betats as a customers at the in Lampin Pass.

> Cor Profabr

ERAWAN SHRINE

During the construction of the Erawan Hotel in the 1950's, work was plagued by a series of mysterious accidents that included the death of several laborers. The Erawan Shrine, containing an image of Brahma, was erected near the site in



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«NOT ONLY DO YOU HAVE BEAUTIFUL THINGS, BUT WHAT IS RARE YOU HAVE ARRANGED THEM WITH FAULTLESS TASTE,» SOMERSET MAUGHAM, IN A LETTER TO JIM THOMPSON.

MISSING JIM The disappearance of Jim Thompson, "the Silk King of Thailand," is one of the enduring mysteries of modern Asia. In March 1967, shortly after his 61st birthday, he went with friends for a holiday in the Cameron Highlands, a resort in northern Malaysia. There he went for a walk alone on Easter Sunday afternoon and never returned. Despite an exhaustive search not to mention advice offered by experts in the supernatural - no trace of him has been found. There are plenty of theories. however, ranging from a kidnap that went wrong to misadventures in the jungle. Interest has been maintained through factual accounts, several novels, and hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles. COLLECTOR'S HOUSE Produced in prefabricated sections. the various structures were brought to the site by river barges. Carpenters skilled in

traditional methods

rebuilt the house

JIM THOMPSON'S HOUSE. Located on Soi Kasemsan 2, off Rama I Road, is the Thai-style house built by Jim Thompson, an American who came to Thailand at the end of World War Two and stayed to revive the Thai silk industry. On the bank

of a klong, he assembled a group of old teak houses from several places into a multi-room house that became the template for

conversion of old Thai houses for modern living. Thompson filled them with his collection of art from Thailand and other Asian countries, including paintings, porcelain, statuary and antique furniture. The house is now a museum open to the public daily, and has a restaurant, shop and gallery focusing on textiles of past and modern usage.

SUAN PARKARD PALACE. The former home of Prince and Princess Chumbhot stands in a large, landscaped tropical garden on Si Ayutthaya Road. It consists of five traditional Thai houses assembled in the 1950's as well as the Lacquer Pavilion, an elegant structure

found in Ayutthaya and probably from the early Bangkok period. The interior walls of the pavilion are covered with fine gold-and-black lacquer paintings. The art collection displayed in the houses covers a wide range, from prehistoric bronze jewelry and pottery found in the northeast to furniture and other items that belonged to Prince Chumbhot's family. The grounds also contain a Khon Museum,

about the traditional masked dance @ 34, and Marsi Gallery, which exhibits contemporary art. The palace is open daily

except Sundays. THE KAMTHIENG HOUSE. Bangkok's only real ethnological collection

farmers - is displayed with audio-visual commentaries at Kamthieng House, in the compound of the Siam Society on Sukhumwit Soi 21. The northern-style teak house, over 200 years old, came from Chiang Mai to Bangkok in sections. Also in the compound is a fine example of a Central Plains house • 45, thus offering visitors a comparison of the two styles. Both are open daily except Mondays.

- fish traps, stoves, cook-ing pots and implements used by Thai

KUKRII PRAMOJ HISTORICAL HOUSE

teak home of the late former Prime Minister has been turned into a museum. This former hub of political culture displays Mom Rajawong Kukrit Pramoj's collection of Thai, Khmer and literary artefacts. Located on quiet Soi Phra Phinit, off Soi Suan Plu, the large grounds and terrace of potted plants are a trove of Thai gardening history. This museum is open on weekends and public holidays



SIAM SOCIETY

The Siam Society was founded by a group of Thais and foreign residents in 1904 for research and investigation in matters

appertaining to Siam. Placed under royal patronage during the reign of King Rama VI, it moved to its present loca-tion in 1933. The Society has an extensive library of books and other

publications on Thailand and the rest of Asia, issues a journal for members, and organizes frequent lectures and exhibitions.

GEMS AND

Export of gen

Gems such as

sapphires, rubies

zircons, garnets

and cat's-eyes are brought into the

country from all

over the world to

be cut and polished

by a growing force of skilled workers,

while the quality

of locally crafted

jewelry has acquired an international

reputation. Many of the gem and jewelry stores are located at

the Jewelry Trade Center at Silom

the industry is

focused

Road, where much of

and jewelry now

ranks as Thailand's

fifth-largest earner

of foreign exchange

DEWELRY

CHATUCHAK MARKET

From early Saturday morning until Sunday evening, one of the busiest places in Bangkok is the great Weekend Market at Charuchak Park, on Phahonyothin Road. Almost everything the country produces is on sale somewhere in this network of several thousand stalls: fruit trees, garden plants, clothing, antiques, handicrafts, fresh and preserved foods, fruit, furniture, porcelain, army surplus goods and pets. Many stalls now also showcase contemporary Thai decor from emerging designers, Most of the prices are negotiable, as they are at all

Thai markets. Mornings are the coolest time to visit.

PERMANNI PLANT MARRET.
Along Kamphaengphet Road
from Chatuchak Market, a
daily plant market offers the
full range of ornamental
trees, shrubs and creepers
available to local enthusiasts,
in addition to pots and
gardening tools. The shops
and sidewalk vendors sell
dazzling displays of orchids at
prices that seem incredibly
low to visitors from
temperate climates.



Beside the Weekend Market spread three contiguous parks boasting attractions. Chatuchak Park has a Rail Hall of Fame, Queen Sirikit Park contains botanical gardens and the Children's Discovery Museum, and Railway Park has a Butterfly Garden and Insectorium.

PRATUNAM MARKET

Pratunam means "water gate", and the huge market by that name stands near the locks of Khlong Saen Saeb, at the intersection of Phetchaburi and Rajaprarop Roads. Vendors sell fabric, accessories and ready-made clothing, attended by scanstresses who can make on-the-spot alterations or even produce a whole outfit. Low prices and an almost limitless choice make it highly popular, particularly on weekends.

Bangkok governor has made a determined effort to tidy the city's streets of sidewalk vendors. None has succeeded, for the simple reason that Thais (and tourists) enjoy coming across unexpected bargains as they walk around and don't mind whatever hazards the vendors might create. Sidewalk

shopping is a city-wide affair, but certain areas are more crowded than others. Upper Silom Road caters more to tourist tastes, merging with stalls filling Patpong after dark, and so does the stretch of Sukhumwit Road extending from Ploenchit to Soi 11, no





doubt because both areas are near numerous hotels. Rajadamri Road from the Rajprasong intersection to Pratunam is another popular spot, as are many streets in Chinatown, Banglamphu and countless other side streets citywide.

SHOPPING CENTERS

Shopping quality has ballooned in Bangkok over the past decade. Most global brands have outlets, alongside Thai fashion and interior design boutiques. Major department stores include Southeast Asia's largest chain Central, as well as Isetan, Robinson's, and superstores like Tesco-Lotus and Carrefour. Malls dot the suburbs and line the contiguous Rama I, Ploenchit and Sukhumvit Roads. This hub starts at Siam Square, which is flanked by teen nucleus Mah Boon Krong, décor-focused Siam Discovery, youth-oriented Siam Center and the upscale Siam Paragon. Where Ploenchit meets Ratchadamri Road stand Central World Plaza, Peninsula Plaza, Narayanaphand crafts hall, computer bazaar Pantip Plaza, eclectic Amarin Plaza and two luxury showcases, Gaysorn and Erawan, Further east, Central's flagship store at Chidlom. Emporium mall, and Playground design complex lead diverse retail options.

ATTRACTIONS IN MALLS. Most malls include cinemas, bowling alleys, playgrounds and restaurants, while some host festivals and themed rides, Siam Paragon is home to Siam Ocean World aquarium, while the Thailand Creative & Design Center in Emporium holds international museum exhibitions.



That SILK Probably the most sought-after produc

is That silk. The material is believed to have originated from the village folk of northeastern Thailand, who weaved it using primitive handle The silk remained popular until its decline at the end of the 19th century when Chinese and Japanese silk impo flooded the local market. The silk industry was review by entrepreneur Jim Thompson after World War Two. The pioneer comp he established remains one of the best and bigge silk producers in the country today The main shop, ope 12 hours daily to accommodate the endless flow of customers, is located at the intersection Rama IV roads.
There are silk clothes and scarfs as well as the material itself, which can be bought by the yard.



BANGKOK EXCURSIONS

THE FLOATING MARKET

Floating markets, consisting of hundreds of vendors congregating by boat, usually in the early morning, at some point on a river or canal, have long fascinated visitors to Bangkok and other parts of Thailand, A few decades ago, the most popular place to view this colorful phenomenon was the canal outside Wat Sai in Thonburi; eventually however this market became overcrowded with tourists.

DAMNERN SADUAK. Today the best of such markets convenient to Bangkok is on Klong Damnern Saduak in Ratchaburi province, a trip most itineraries combine with a visit to Nakhon Pathom. The floating market here takes

place somewhat later than at other places - between 8am and 10am - and offers a busy, photogenic scene of boats laden

with fruit, vegetables, cooked foods and other produce, sold principally by women wearing the broad straw hats and dressed in the blue cotton clothing favored by rural Thai people. For food lovers there are also many restaurants lined along the banks.



SAMUT SONGKHRAM

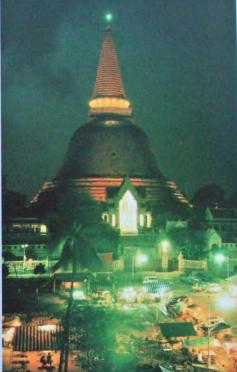
The intact canals and periodic floating markets in Amphawa, in Samut Songkhram province near the Gulf of Thailand, can be seen on tours or during canal homestays. In the charming riverside provincial capital, the Rama II Memorial Park features one of the most well preserved traditional Thai house complexes in Thailand.

NAKHON PATHOM

One of the oldest cultural centers in Thailand, Nakhon Pathom is believed to date from several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era and was an important Mon capital. It was deserted for long stretches at various times in its history, and the present town dates from the middle of the 19th century, when King Rama IV ordered restoration work to be done on its chedi.

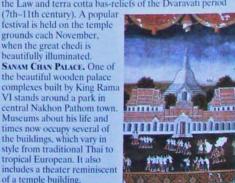
PHRA PATHOM CHEDI. Dominating the town of Nakhon Pathom, and visible from many miles away, is the impressive Phra Pathom Chedi, which, at 352 feet, is the tallest Buddhist monument in the world and the oldest in Thailand • 50. It was

originally built about a thousand years ago but had fallen into a pile of rubble by the middle of the 19th century, when the future King Rama IV, then a Buddhist monk, came on a pilgrimage. Restoration work, which involved covering the old ruins with an entirely new chedi, began in 1853 but - due to numerous technical difficulties - was not completed until the reign of King Rama V. The base of the



chedi is surrounded by a circular cloister, with chapels containing Buddha images from various periods situated at the four cardinal points. A museum houses early religious objects that were found in the area, among them the Wheel of the Law and terra cotta bas-reliefs of the Dvaravati period

festival is held on the temple grounds each November. when the great chedi is beautifully illuminated. SANAM CHAN PALACE, One of the beautiful wooden palace complexes built by King Rama VI stands around a park in central Nakhon Pathom town. Museums about his life and times now occupy several of the buildings, which vary in style from traditional Thai to tropical European. It also includes a theater reminiscent of a temple building





RATCHABURI'S WATER JARS Ratchabur province is noted for its production of huge, glazed water jars, often decorated with swirling Chinese dragons and flora motifs, which are sent to many part of Thailand A recent industry using similar skills is producing fine reproductions of Chinese blue-and

DVARAVATI STUCCOES Nakhon Pathon wa

white porcelain.

an important towa the Dvaravati Mon kingdom (6th-10th century). Excavation at the Chedi Chula Pathom, on the outskirts of the modern town, have led to the discovers of an interesting series of bas-relieb stucco, Other terracottas were found at Ke Bua U Thong. These are now displayed in the museums of Nakhon Pathom, U Thong and Bangkok A 81 They throw light on the ancient Mon aristocratic life of the elegantly dressed court ladies. Mon society was evidently refined and cosmopolitan, in touch with India, Indonesia and perhaps the Mediterranean

RIVER RITUAL

One of the most memorable sights along the canals of Ratchaburi and other provinces is that of Buddhist monks collecting alms by boat from waterside houses Strict rules apply not only to the type of boat used for this ritual but also the seemingly effortless manner in which it is paddled.

▲ BANGKOK KANCHANABURI AND THE RIVER KWAI



CURING SNAKEBITES Here is Ernest Young's recipe, from his book, The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe, for a mixture that could help cure snakebites in the event of an encounter with poisonous reptiles in the parks or rivers: a piece of the jaw of a wild hog: a piece of the jaw of

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a tame hog: a piece of the bone of. a piece of the bone of

a peacock; the tail of a fish; and the head of a venomous snake.

ush jungles and winding rivers lie but a short distance away from the modern town of Kanchanaburi, which is also haunted by a modern epic of heroism and tragedy.

RIVER RESORTS

In recent years, the Kanchanaburi area - particularly the Kwai Noi and Kwai Yai rivers - has become a popular vacation spot for Bangkok residents in search of lush natural scenery. By boat along one of the rivers, or by road, one can travel to rural resorts, some built on floating rafts and others substantial structures with modern conveniences. The Kwai Yai leads to a large, scenic lake formed by the Srinakharin Dam, while the Kwai Noi, the more developed of the two in terms of resorts, winds through Saiyok National Park to a beautiful expanse of water created by the Khao Laem Dam.

ERAWAN NATIONAL PARK

Established in 1975, this 220-square-mile National Park is protected on the west by Saiyok National Park, on the south by Salak Phra Wildlife Sanctuary, on the east by the Kwai Yai River, and on the north by the Srinakharin National Park. Its most celebrated feature is the spectacular Erawan Waterfalls,



a 4,950-foot cascade that is broken up into seven tiers: according to popular belief, the rock above the top level resembles the three-headed elephant Erawan of Hindu mythology. The park is a sanctuary to a wide variety of wildlife, including 80 species of birds, gibbons, barking deer and rhesus monkeys, as well as a profusion of flora; also within its area are two impressive caves, Phrathat

«THE JAPANESE DID NOT CONSIDER HUMAN LIFE OF ANY VALUE WHEN VIEWED IN THE LIGHT THAT THE RAILWAY MUST BE PUSHED ON REGARDLESS OF COST.»

C. A. McEACHERN, PRISONER OF WAR

and Wang Badang, both adorned with huge stalactites and stalagmites. Bungalows and dormitories are available for visitors who want to stay overnight in the park.

THE DEATH RAILWAY

In June 1942, six months after the start of its conquest of Southeast Asia, Japan ordered the construction of a railway from Thailand to Burma as a substitute for the long sea route to Rangoon; it was meant to play a major role in the trans-portation of men and material for the planned invasion of British India. The task was formidable, the track leading through dense malarial rainforest, over rocky mountains, and across swift rivers. For labor, the Japanese deployed about 61,000 Allied prisoners-of-war (POWs) captured in Malaya. Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, plus an estimated 270,000 conscripted Asian workers. Slowly, painfully, over the next three years, the almost impossible task was completed, but at a horrifying cost in human life: over 12,000 POWs and 240,000 Asians died during the ordeal - or 393 men for every mile of the eventually useless Death Railway, as it came to be called by survivors. The bodies of 6,982 victims lie in a tranquil Allied War Cemetery near Kanchanaburi, where the railway began, and a museum displays other grim reminders

of what one writer has called a "supreme monument to folly." A new Australian-funded museum stands at Hell Fire Pass, a particularly poignant cutting excavated through rock by hand. In Kanchanaburi town, the JEATH Museum recreates tableaux of the conditions faced by POWs.

with artefacts and artwork recording the human spirit that survived. The track itself was dismantled after the war but a length still runs along the Kwai Yai River and several of the bridges have been rebuilt. Toward the end of November, an annual fair is held in Kanchanaburi under the auspices of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, featuring a sound and light show at the so-called Bridge On The River Kwai and displays of prehistoric artifacts found in the region.



THREE PAGODAS PASS The pass lies on the frontier between Thailand and Burma and was the historic crossing point for Burmese armies who invaded Ayutthaya. It was also the place where the Death Railway led into Burma, though the tracks were dis-British at the end of the war

> RIVER KWAI Kanchanaburi gained its fame rom the popular film The Bridge on the River Kwai - actually

filmed in Sri Lanka which in turn was based on the novel of the same name by Pierre Boulle, Local entrepreneurs cash in on this fame but the story is entirely





PHILANTHROPY

The man behin Ancient City also created two other landmarks. The Erawan Museum in Samut Prakarn town is a 150-ton bronze sculpture of the mythical three headed elephant Erawan, containing a museum and a nondenominational chapel. His out-landish carved wooden temple at Naklua Bay north of Pattaya also seeks common ground between faiths, in a structure like no other in the world

THE OLD ROAD TO PATTAYA

The old Sukhumwit Road, once the only route to Pattava and other resorts on the eastern gulf coast, leads through Samut Prakarn Province and passes a number of popular tourist attractions before it joins a newer, more modern highway THE ANCIENT CITY. Muang Boran, or the Ancient City, started by a late art-loving millionaire in the early 1970's, contains numerous buildings and monuments - some replicas, others genuine - from Thailand's past, on a 200-acre site roughly shaped like the country itself. One enters from the far south, passing such attractions as the Phra Mahathat stupa of Nakhon Si Thammarat and another from the Srivijaya city of Chaiya • 50, and then moves upward to the north through the splendors of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai. The idea might sound contrived, but it is executed with considerable taste, and expert advice from various authorities - among them a former director of the National Museum - which have been consulted throughout to ensure authenticity of detail. The replicas are one-third the original size, but there are also many original buildings. The village stilt-houses around the



'floating market" and the so-called "Market of Yesteryear" were once Thai houses that have been completely dismantled and moved to the site and then refurbished with original antiques and objects of everyday use. Two northern buildings of significance, a Lanna-style temple from Chiang Rai • 49 and the Shan-Burmese temple from Ngao, have been salvaged from destruction and carefully restored in the Ancient City.

ชาวพัทยายินดีต้อนกับ welcome to pattage

THE CROCODILE FARM. This popular tourist attraction is believed to be the largest of its kind in the world, containing more than 30,000 crocodiles, of both local and foreign species. The reptiles are bred not only to amuse visitors but also as a source of hides for belts, wallets, handbags, shoes and other items. (A brochure described the farm as "a happy compromise between wildlife conservation and commercial

enterprise.") Starting daily at 9am, a show features fearless handlers who "tame" some of the larger and fiercer specimens. There is also a zoo with other animals.



The fast road to Pattaya – and the world's longest elevated expressway – passes through Chonburi, a charmless provincial capital, Si Racha, noted for a locally made chili pepper sauce that bears its name, and Bang Saen, a seaside resort popular with Thai families, before reaching the string of beaches further down the Eastern Seaboard. Pattaya began attracting visitors from Bangkok in the 1950's, thanks to the ease with which its long white-sand beaches could be reached. Accommodation was a few simple bungalows, and the first hotel did not open until 1965. Develop-

ment accelerated during the Vietnam War, when thousands of American soldiers went there on leave, and by the mid-1970's it had become a major resort, with hotels, restaurants and night-clubs extending the entire

length of the main beach. The environmental cost of such rapid expansion has been high, and most of Pattaya's natural charms are gone, though the water has improved greatly in recent years. The free-wheeling nightlife has been cleaned up slightly in response to foreign media criticism, and the town's new status as a residential and educa-tional hub for the industrialising Eastern Seaboard means there are now malls and family attractions too, such as Ripley's Believe It Or Not and Pattaya Aquarium. Many visitors still enjoy its rowdy, laid-back atmosphere, however, and continue to come in large numbers. Those who prefer a quieter atmosphere and more privacy, at least after nightfall, can go further to less developed beaches like Jomtien or to offshore islands such as Koh Larn and Koh Sak. There are several golf courses in the area, as well

CROCODILES Thailand's rive

swamps and coar areas are home is both fresh and are water crocodile. W 12.00c large fresh-water specimicknamed Al Dagwas killed in Clair buri in the 1967 preserved, it was popular afraction fairs all over the country, displayed with a set of his teeth found in its stomach.

TRANSIENT WIVES

The Europeans the trade with Siam provide themselves they will do in Pega with transient was und more or less to similar terms and no one would think it shameful to have a many transient Jushands but on the contrary to be an honour to have been towed by so many different mee.

Captain Hamiltonian Captain Captain Hamiltonian Captain Captain Captain Hamiltonian Captain Capt

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as shooting ranges and

other land-based

sports facilities

▲ BEYOND PATTAYA



On the 4th of January, at 8 o'clock in the morning, we arrived in the city of Chantaboon. It is built along the river, six or seven miles away from the mountains. About one third of the pop-ulation is composed of Christian Annamites. The rest is mostly composed of Chinese merchants, some pagan Anna-mites as well as Siamese. The latter are all fishermen of Annamese descent. Their ancestors sailed all the way from Cochin-China hoping to fish in the northern waters of the Gulf of Siam. Little by little

Mouhot

CHANTABURI

Known in old travel accounts as Chantaboon, Chantaburi has been a center of gem-mining since the early 1400's, Mainly sapphires and rubies are mined in privately owned pits in the countryside, Gem trading is concentrated in a few blocks of the downtown area, where nearly all the shops are devoted to

weekends when traders come from Bangkok to make selections. Chantaburi - or "city of the moon" - is also noted for the its tropical fruits.

KOH CHANG

this, particularly on

they settled in Chantaboon.** Henri The second largest island after Phuket lies off the coast of Chantaboon.** Henri The second largest island after Phuket lies off the coast of Chantaboon.** Trat Province, near the Cambodian border. Along with fifty nearby islands, Koh Chang is a

beautiful marine national park, with numerous beaches and coral reefs. However, the government has targeted the islands for development, and the subsequent construction now threatens the ecosystem. Ferries leave several times daily for the island from Laem Ngob on the mainland, and an airport at Trat now serves the islands.

KOH SAMET

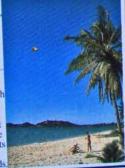
Rayone's GREAT POET Sunthorn Phu (1786-1856), one of Thailand's greatest poets, was a native of Rayong. He was a particular favorite of particular tayorac King Rama II, with whom he collaborated on a number of works, and wrote the still-popular romantic epic Phra Apaimani. A statue has been erected in his memory at Amphur Klaeng, his birthplace.

A long, narrow island 45 minutes by boat off the coast at Ban Phe near Rayong, it has since 1981 been part of a national park that also includes Khao Laem Ya on the mainland, a

move that has limited the tourist facilities overlooking the beaches on its eastern side popular with Bangkok residents. Some resorts are becoming more upmarket.

RAYONG

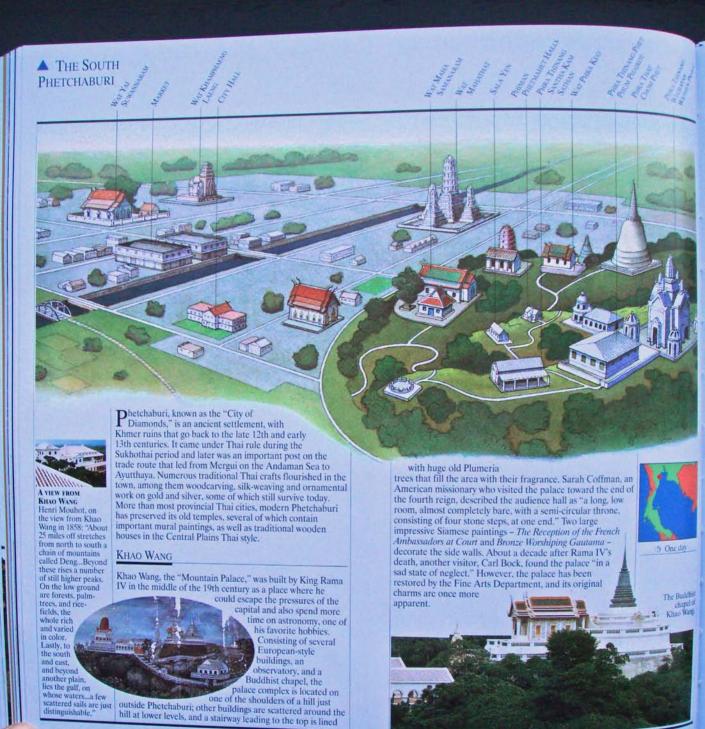
Rayong is a busy fishing port known for the high-quality fish sauce, nam pla, which is produced in many small local factories and sold throughout Thailand. Along the coast are several peaceful resorts. Boats can be hired for visits to the various scenic offshore islands



THE SOUTH



PHETCHABURI, 100 HUA HIN TO SURAT THANI, 102 KOH SAMUL, 104 NAKHON SI THAMMARAT, 106 SONGKHLA, HAADYAI AND PATTANI, 107 PHUKET, 108 PHANGNGA BAY, 112 PHI PHI ISLANDS, 114 KRABI AND OFFSHORE ISLANDS, 115 ISLANDS OF THE ANDAMAN SEA, 116





KHRUA IN KHONG Khrua In Khong, one of King Rama IV's favorite painters, responded to the ruler's keen interest in Western culture by including European buildings and landscapes in his murals. At Wat Bowornivet in Bangkok, for example, he incorporated a building similar to that of Mount Vernon, George Washington's home, along with such contemporary subjects as an

operation for

Cataracts

WAT MAHA SAMANARAM

Located at the foot of the hill near the king's palace, Wat Maha Samanaram was built by King Rama IV. The chapel contains a beautiful Ayutthaya-style Buddha image and is decorated with murals by Khrua In Khong, a

famous priest-painter of the fourth reign • 55. The main scene in the murals depicts the pilgrimage of the Buddhist followers to the Buddha's Footprint at Saraburi.

WAT YAI SUWANNARAM

Dating from the 17th century, Wat Yai Suwannaram is one of Phetchaburi's most beautiful temples. The interior walls of the bot are decorated with some of the oldest surviving mural paintings in Thailand, dating from the late

17th or early 18th century; these show two rows of celestial beings facing the principal Buddha image, a large bronze statue in Ayutthaya style. Within the compound are also several wooden buildings adorned with fine carvings that attest to the high quality of Phetchaburi artisans. The sala

• 46, in front of the bot, has superbly carved doors, one of which has a gash supposedly made by Burmese invaders; inside are painted panels, one of which shows a rhinoceros, at that time found near the city. Except for this particular sala and the bot, the other buildings date from the reign of Rama V, who ardently supported the extensive renovations to the monastery.

WAT MAHATHAT

The most visible feature of Wat Mahathat is its towering central prang, surrounded by a cloister lined with Buddha images. Also noteworthy are the stucco decorations on one of the sanctuaries. which contains a number of Buddha images of the Ayutthaya period as well as several recently restored mural paintings

«PHETCHABURI IS A VERY PRETTY PLACE...JUSTLY POPULAR WITH EUROPEANS RESIDENT AT BANGKOK AS A SUMMER RESORT FOR A CHANGE OF AIR OR A LITTLE BIT OF RUSTICATION.»

FRANK VINCENT

WAT KO KEO SUTHARAM ★

Wat Ko Keo Sutharam, popularly called Wat Ko, lies on the bank of the Phetchaburi River. Inside one of the chapels are some well-preserved murals dating from 1740; one of the figures depicted on the side walls is believed to be that of a Jesuit priest in the robes of a Buddhist monk, possibly recalling an earlier French mission that came through

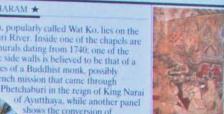
> of Ayutthaya, while another panel shows the conversion of foreigners to Buddhism. The monastic buildings of the temple, raised on posts around a courtvard, have been little altered over the vears; one of the buildings contains a small collection of items that have been



donated to the monastery.

Wat Khamphaeng Laeng is a relatively modern temple that contains within its precincts a very important Khmer ruin dating from the

11th century. Remains of a massive stone wall (khamphaeng laeng in Thai), once encircled by moats, and a prang built in laterite can still be seen. The monument is of historical interest as it marks the southernmost point of expansion of the Khmer empire.



FOREIGNERS IN WAT KO KEO SUTHARAM Foreigners first began to appear in temple murals in the latter part of the Ayutthaya period. The earliest were Chinese, Persians and Indians, who came to trade in the capital; later. Europeans were seen some obviously inspired by the French embassies who came to the court of King Narai in the late 17th century and others by various adventurers

of the time

KHAO LUANG *

This famous cave temple, in a hill just outside Phetchaburi. has long been one of the town's major attractions; it reminded Henri Mouhot, who arrived in 1860, of "the beautiful fairy scenes represented at Christmas in the London theaters." Light from a hole at the top of the main chamber dramatically illuminates a display of enormous stalactites along with numerous Buddha images that have been placed in the cave and that are presented with regular offerings. The late morning hours are the best time to view the effective natural lighting. Monkeys rush out from among the bushes to greet visitors to the cave.



▲ THE SOUTH HUA HIN TO SURAT THANK



The Railway Hotel

played a prominent role in the award-

winning film, The Killing Fields, about Cambodia's trials

under Khmer Rouge

rule. The producers

used the picturesque old building in place of the Royal Hotel,

where many journalists who

covered the war

stayed in Phnom

Phnoi Penh.

HUA HIN

Credit for "discovering" the resort possibilities of Hua Hin, a scenic seaside village on the west coast of the Gulf, usually goes to Prince Chakrabongse, a brother of King Rama VI, who in 1911 took a visiting group of European royalty there for a holiday. The prince built a bungalow by the sea, other members of the royal family soon built houses nearby and eventually a king's palace called Klai Klangwan, "far from care." The entire court moved to Hua Hin for several months of the year, thus giving it a fashionable atmosphere still apparent in some of the spacious old bungalows visible from the beach. Completion of the southern railway line in the 1920's made Hua Hin easily accessible to the capital, leading to the Railway Hotel, a golf course and holiday homes of prominent Bangkok families. Even today, despite the addition of condominiums and hotels, Hua Hin retains a more

sedate atmosphere than Pattaya, its boisterous competitor across the gulf. At Wat Hua Hin, the temple on top of the hill, visitors can enjoy charming views of the town.

MARUKHATHAYAWAN PALACE. Late in his reign, King Rama VI built this enchanting pastel wooden palace on stilts. Restored and open to the public, it stands in Rama VI Army Camp near Hua Hin Airport, just south of the resort town Cha-am. FISHING PORT. One of the most colourful sights near Hua Hin town is the fishing port, where the daily is brought in by fishermen in the early hours of the morning.

RAILWAY HOTEL. A rambling colonial style structure, built in 1923, with broad verandas and a garden of topiary shrubs, the old Railway Hotel fell on hard times when the mass tourist trade shifted to Pattaya in the late 1960's. It has been beautifully restored today as the Central Sofitel Resort

without sacrificing its spacious, airy charm. GOLF COURSE. The golf course at Hua Hin was the country's first, with "a stock of golf requisites and the loan of clubs" available through the Railway Hotel, according to a 1929 guidebook. The 18-hole course overlooking the sea is still one of the most popular in the area, and the fact that it contains a

temple and a topiary gives it a special Thai flavor.

KHAO SAM ROI YOT NATIONAL PARK *

Covering 39 square miles, Khao Sam Roi Yot - literally, "the mountain of three hundred peaks" - was established as a park in 1966. Conveniently situated just a few miles south of Hua Hin, the park boasts numerous

picturesque limestone peaks, the highest rising to 1,997 feet, as well as caves, and unspoiled beaches fringed by casuarina trees. It was formerly famous for its marshes waterfalls and wading birds. However, recent encroachment

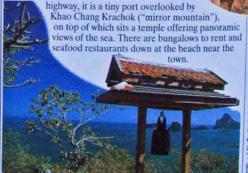
by private shrimp farmers has seriously affected the state of the natural habitat. Several scenes in The Killing Fields were filmed within the boundaries of the national park. Bird life is especially varied in this park, with more than 275 identified species, 60 of which - painted storks, grey herons, egrets and rare imperial eagles among them - are found mainly in the marsh areas. Monkeys and deer are particularly common. Other mammals include crab-eating macaques, Malayan porcupines.

leopard cats and, in the offshore waters, Irrawaddy dolphins. PHRAYA NAKHON CAVE. The largest cave in the park is Phraya Nakhon, named after a ruler of Nakhon Si Thammarat who discovered it two centuries ago when he came ashore in a violent storm; a pavilion in the cave was built for a visit by King Rama V in 1896.



PRACHUAB KHIRI KHAN

Prachuab Khiri Khan is approximately 54 miles south of Hua Hin. Off the main southern



PINEAPPLES

around Hua Hin and along much of the southern peninsula are vas plantations of pineapples, which thrive in the sande soil. Today, Thailand is one of the world's largest producers of canned and free pineapples for exer having long ago surpassed Hawaii Southern pineapp are especially noted for their sweetness and succulence.

FAR FROM CARE Although Klai Klangwan, the m of the royal palace a Hua Hin, means Ta from care," it hards proved so for King Rama VII. He was in residence there when he received word in June 1932e the coup d'état that ended Thailand's absolute monarch Though he agreed grant a constit he later abdicated in 1935 and died in England in 1941.

▲ THE SOUTH HUA HIN TO SURAT THANI

«AT LOW WATER IMMENSE TRACTS OF MUD AND SAND ARE LAID BARE, FOR THE EDIFICATION OF FLOCKS OF PELICANS, CORMORANTS AND HERONS, #

H. WARRINGTON SWITT

CHUMPHON

Despite the construction of a sizeable seaside hotel some years ago. Chumphon has never really found popularity as a resort. It is noted, however, for its supply of edible birds' nests **1**5, gathered from the offshore island of Koh Lanka Chiu. This island (and Koh Tao ▲ 106) can be visited by boat from the port of Paknam Chumphon.

KRA ISTHMUS

Just below Chumphon is the Kra Isthmus, only 15 miles wide and the narrowest point on peninsular Thailand, an area of rocky limestone precipices and breathtaking scenery. For many generations, this spot has been envisioned as the site of a Suez-type canal, which would cut nearly a thousand miles off shipping routes between ports on the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of

Thailand. Several plans have been drawn up for such an undertaking - one proposer even suggested the use of nuclear weapons to ease the task - but thus far none has been successful, doubtless to the great relief of Singapore further south.

RANONG

SRIVLIAVA

The Srivijaya kingdom • 18

which originated in

Sumatra, dominated the southern peninsula of Thailand

between the 8th and

extent, it was a Hindu culture that also

practiced Mahayana Buddhism and

produced some of Thailand's finest art

in stone and bronze.

This bronze

Bodhisattva was

ound by Prince

Damrong at Wat Mahathat, Chaiya,

together with a

number of other

excellent pieces.

Museum in Bangkok ● 82.

and is now preserved in the National

13th centuries. Though historians

disagree over its

Ranong, located on a river of the same name that empties into the sea across from Victoria Point, the southernmost tip of Burma, is a quiet provincial capital whose prosperity is mainly based on tin from nearby mines and a fishing fleet that sails far out into the Indian Ocean. The older houses, like those of Phuket and Songkhla further south, are built in the Sino-Portuguese style of Malacca and some of the downtown streets have covered areades to shelter pedestrians from monsoon rains. The town is noted for a number of hot mineralwater springs, one of which supplies the Jansom Thara Hotel, picturesquely situated at the foot of a mountain just outside the town. Boat trips can be arranged from the port to visit off-shore islands, among them Koh Pa Yam where a company produces cultured pearls. (Entry into Burma is limited to Victoria Point and its casino).

More hot springs - one of which produces 130 gallons

of hot (158°F) water a minute - and tin mines can be found at Hat Sompin, about an hour away from Ranong by car. Another sight is Nam Tok Ngao, a waterfall on the highway southward. It is at its most impressive after a heavy rain.

CHAIYA

An ancient town, Chaiva is believed by some scholars to have been the capital of the great Srivijaya kingdom (8th-13th century) • 18, which ruled most of peninsular Thailand from its base in Sumatra. The only remaining traces of this former glory are the ruins of several once-impressive temples. Wat Phra Boromathat is surrounded by walls and contains a chedi restored by King Rama V in 1901, but dating from the 8th century and considered the best example of Srivijayan architecture • 50, while Wat Keo, which was discovered in

period (below left). A small museum displays antiquities found in the area, mostly within Wat Phra Boromathat itself, with reproductions of important pieces that are now displayed in the National Museum in Bangkok.

1978, has a crumbled brick prang of the Srivijaya

WAT SUAN MOK

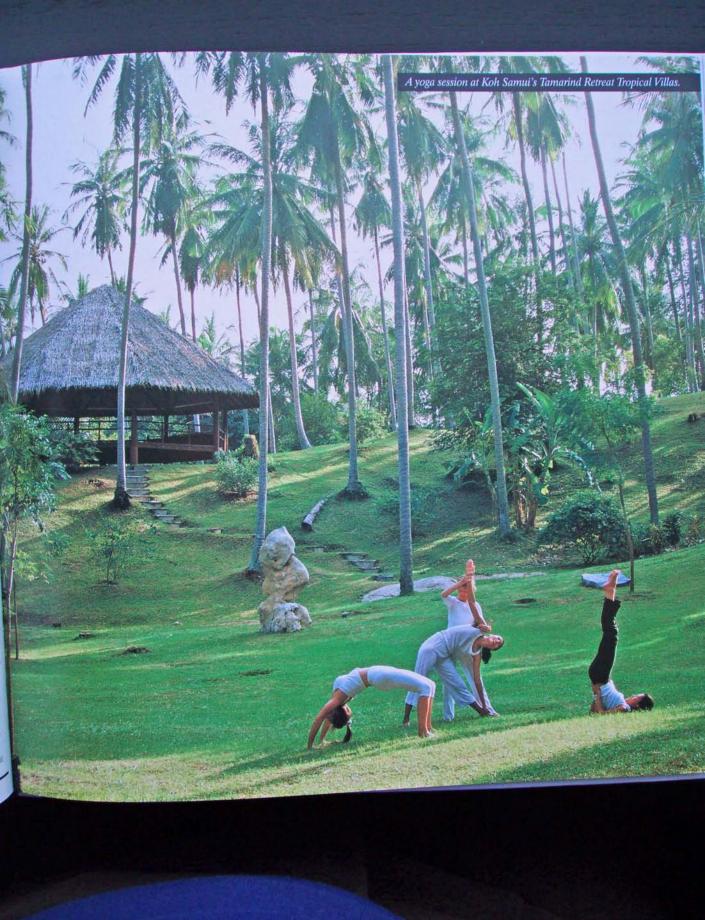
This modern temple, popular with foreigners as a place for retreat and study, is renowned for teaching meditation in English on the first ten days of the month to anyone ready to accept its extremely strict and spartan rules. Notably, half of the places are for women. Otherwise, its most notable feature is a collection of colorful murals left by visiting foreigners depicting a bewildering variety of subjects, ranging from Zen to compositions inspired by Egypt.

SURAT THANI

Surat Thani is an important southern railway and highway center as well as a busy scaport. Although it has a number of excellent seafood restaurants serving dishes and offers attractive views along the waterfront, Surat Thani is of interest to most travelers today mainly as an embarkation point from which ferries leave for Koh Samui, and the islands that lie beyond it.

TEN YOWS A novice monk

takes these ten w I take the vow not to destroy life." "I take the yow not to steal. Ttake the yow to abstain from impurity."
"I take the you not to lie. "I take the vow not to eat at forbidden times. I take the vow to abstain from dancing singing, music and stage plays. "I take the vow not to use garlands scents, unquents.
or ornaments.
"I take the vow not to use a broad or high bed." "I take the vow not to receive gold or silver.



▲ THE SOUTH KOH SAMUI

CHO ON DAY OF

coconuts are sent to Bangkok and other parts of the country annually, and there is also a factory producing coconut fiber. Until the late 1970's the physical charms of Koh Samui were a closely guarded secret among backpackers in search

of budget accommodation. long, virtually empty beaches. and a laid-back atmosphere.

All that has changed. A

second international airport is set to expand the island's air

links, eliminating the need for

a long bus or train journey to

Surat Thani for those in a

hurry. Luxurious villas and low-rise tourist facilities are springing up along the beaches, particularly on the north and east coasts. Koh

Samui now rivals nearby

Phuket as an international destination, though with a mellow, New Age vibe reflected by the rapid growth of spas and alternative healing establishments. The two island resorts also complement each other in climate, since



KOH SAMU SEASHELLS

Caxis comuta is w solid and heavy and has a short spine with



is also solid and heavy, with a high



tow

ind to t (rec Ar ten of 1 But Fut







apart by a curtain that is lifted at the very moment the two animals clash against each other. The fight ends when one of

the buffaloes is pushed out of the arena.



hailand's third-largest island, about the size of Penang, Thailand's third-targest island, about the size of Koh Samui is one of a group of islands lying 18 miles off the coast of Surat Thani. Ferries from the mainland call at the port of Tong Yang, while express boats

berth at Nathon, Koh Samui's administrative capital. Covering 100 square miles the hilly island has a thinly scattered population of about 35,000, most of whom traditionally derive a livelihood from huge inland plantations that produce some of the best coconuts in Thailand. Thousands of

one of Koh Samui's sunniest times; the latter island's wettest months are toward the end of the year. BUFFALO FIGHTING. One of the favorite pastimes of the islanders used to be buffalo fighting. To discourage gambling, the fights that were held every weekend are now restricted to festive occasions such as the Lunar New Year or the Thai New Year. A long ritual is performed before the fight. The brightly decorated buffaloes are splashed with holy water and kept

Phuket's season of

heaviest rain (July through

September) runs concurrently with

9 Two days

THE SOUTH KOH SAMUI



Big Beddha
The Big Buddha
of Wat Phra Yai
towers above the
shrine of Koh Fan
and is dedicated
to the Parmirvana
(reclining) Buddha.
At the entrance of the
temple, a figure
of Maitreva, the
Buddha of the
Pruture, welcomes
monks and visitors
before they ascend
to the colossal
hilltop figure.

WHEELS FOR RENT Motorbikes and automobiles are easily available for tent to those who want to tour the

island on their own

NORTHERN BEACHES.

BIG BUDDHA BEACH (HAT PHRA YAI). This beach derives its name from a 40-foot-high image of the meditating Buddha at a monastery on a small islet called Koh Fan, connected by a causeway. The beach boasts a smooth stretch of sand, calm waters and a generally restful atmosphere. A boat ferries passengers daily over to Hat Rin on Koh Pha-ngan.

BOPHUT BEACH. East of Maenam is Ban Bophut, one of Samui's oldest settlements, with wooden shophouses lining

the main street. The nearby beach is about a mile long, and the placid water, while not as clear as some others, is ideal for water-skiing. Boats ply the route from the village pier to Koh Phangan and a trip on one of these takes about 40 minutes.

MAENAM BEACH. This beach, near a village of the same name and with easy access to Nathon, is a 2½-mile stretch of white sand on a picturesque bay with a great view of Koh Pha-ngan offshore. Bungalows are available at a wide range of prices and boats can be hired for excursions to other beaches.

Bang Po Bay. This beach is still relatively undeveloped, mainly because the rocks and corals break the surface during the low tide. It is, however, one of the best locations for snorkeling and scuba-diving.



NATHON TOWN

On the west coast of Koh Samui, near the jetty for ferries from Surat Thani, is the small town of Nathon. Apart from the grocery shops and basic essential services such as post and banking that serve the islanders, there are also several bars and souvenir shops catering mainly for tourists.

CHAWENG BEACH

The most developed of Koh Samui's beaches, Chaweng is a 4-mile crescent with white sand and clear water. Tourist facilities and nightlife are concentrated in the central section, which also overlooks the best part of the beach. The bars, discos and restaurants are patronized heavily by vacationers from Bangkok, backpackers and rave partygoers from neighboring island Koh Pha-ngan. The few sleazier bars are located in Lamai. Equipment for windsurfing, para-sailing and scuba-diving are available. Water scooters have also invaded the beaches, robbing Koh Samui of its little-island charm.

LAMAI BEACH

After Chaweng, Lamai is probably the most popular beach, appealing to budget-conscious visitors. Besides the wide choice of accommodation and spas, there is nightlife with numerous restaurants and discos. Lower Lamai offers good swimming even when the seas elsewhere are too rough.

COCONUT PLANTATIONS

Until the advent of tourism, and to a large extent even today. Koh Samui's economy has been based on the graceful coconut palms that cover most of the interior, even extending up the mountain sides; an average of two million coconuts are transported to Bangkok monthly, a sizeable part of the national production. The sweet juice of young coconuts is a favorite drink, while coconut cream plays a bigger role in the local cuisine than it does elsewhere

in the south. Some growers have trained monkeys who scamper nimbly up the lofty trunks, select only those coconuts ready for picking, and drop them to the ground.

WATERFALLS

For those who enjoy waterfalls, the interior of Samui offers a number of scenic opportunities. The two most popular are Hin Lat, which spills over several levels and has a pool good for bathing, and Na Muang, which cascades for over 130 feet down a slab of yellow limestone.

OVERIAP STONE This stone is a popular Samul landmark. a huge boulder balanced on a promontory above Lower Lamai Beach, where there are a few bungalows for rent

promotiony above.
Lower Lamia Beach
where there are a fev
bungalows for rent
and a refreshment
stall. Another mile
further up is a point
of land that affords
impressive views of
the island's interior
scenery.

His Ta and His Yai, or "Grandfather Stone and Grandmother Stone," are a pair of much-photographed rock formations suggesting genitals at the tip of a headfand that separates Central Lamai. His Ta points toward the sky, while his companion is a wave-splashed cleft about 132 feet away.



THE SOUTH OUTER ISLANDS

KOH PHA-NGAN ★

Less developed than Koh Samui – at least for the time being – is Koh Pha-ngan, the largest of its neighboring islands, 9 miles away. Covering about 76 square miles, it has a small population of about 8,000, mostly concentrated in the main town of Thong Sala. Tourist accommodation is simple and the atmosphere appeals to backpackers drawn to the health

and meditation retreats. There are dozens of beautiful, unspoiled beaches, among the most popular being Hat Rin, which hosts the famous Full Moon Party every month and has direct boat services to and from Samui. Other highlights include Hat Khuat ("Bottle Beach"), in a secluded cove on the northern coast; and Choloklam Bay, on which there are several stretches of sand. There are daily express boats from Nathon pier to Thong Sala, as well as boats from Bophut Pier and Big Buddha Beach to Hat Rin; all boat services are subject to weather conditions.

Кон Тао

WATER BABIES "Little children,

long before they can walk, are thrown

into the water by

their mothers, who

fasten under their

always keeps the head above water

arms a tin float that

The wee brown dots

splash and splutter about in the luke-

warm current of the

learning the correct

action of the limbs

gaining an acquaintance with this

prevents any feeling of fear. In this way

many children learn to swim almost as

soon as, if not before, they can walk.** Ernest Young

in swimming, and

element that

ever afterwards

river, involuntarily

The "Turtle Island", so called because of its shape, covers only 8% square miles, and takes two hours to reach by express boat from Thong Sala on Koh Pha-ngan, or three to four hours by the regular ferry. Although increasingly developed, the island offers a tranquil ambience. Clear waters and extensive offshore coral reefs make it Thailand's top location to learn diving. Most of the bungalow facilities are on the western and southern coasts of the island. A principal landmark is the triangular beach on Koh Nang Yuan, off the north coast.

ANG THONG NATIONAL MARINE PARK *

Lying 19 miles northwest of Koh Samui, this archipelago of forty islands is characterized by impressive limestone outcrops and blue lagoons. Koh Tao is one of the larger islands in the group; the others vary greatly in size and many have hidden coves with white-sand beaches. Koh Wua Ta Lap ("Isle of the Sleeping Cow") has bungalow facilities, while Koh Mae ("Mother Island") has a beautiful beach surrounded by towering cliffs. There is a daily boat to the park from Nathon, leaving in the morning and returning in the afternoon.



HISTORY

One of the oldest settlements in Thailand, Nakhon Si Thammarat was known to ancient travelers as Ligor and was an important center during both the Srivijaya and Dvaravati periods, over a thousand years ago, Many notable works of art – both Hindu and Buddhist –

have been found in and around the city, testifying to the variety of cultures that influenced its development even before the Thais appeared on the scene. King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai is popularly believed to have visited Nakhon Si Thammarat in the 13th century and to have been so impressed by the teachings of the city's Buddhist monks that he brought a group of them back to the first independent Thai capital.

MUSEUM. The Nakhon Si
Thammarat branch of the
National Museum ▲ 81-2
is the most important in
the country after
Bangkok's. Among the
items on display is an
impressive collection of
early Hindu images and
some of the earliest
Buddhist sculpture. The
Hindu figures, found at
Takua Pa, include a beautiful

Vishnu once wrapped in the roots of a tree. It was decapitated by vandals and when the roots were cut away to move the figure, the missing head was discovered to have been a fake: the original one, now restored to its proper place on the body, was buried beneath the statue.

WAT MAHATHAT. The most revered of Nakhon Si Thammarat's Buddhist monuments is Wat Mahathat, founded during the Srivijaya period (8th–13th century). The temple's dominant feature is a towering 254-foot-high chedi, the spire

of which is covered with gold leaf and studded with precious stones. The chedi stands in an immense cloister covered with colored tiles and surrounding it is a gallery lined with numerous Buddha images. A standing Sukhothai-style Buddha image is enshrined in one of the temple's two chapels while on the altar of the other there are bas-reliefs that show Westerners among the various figures. Outside the cloister of Wat Mahathat is the Viharn Luang, with columns that lean inward in the Ayutthaya style and a richly decorated ceiling.







Wat Mahathai



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NIETLOWARE One of Nakhon S Thammarat's outstanding niello, which arri before the 12th century, probabb from India, An amalgam of dark metals is applied: etched portionso silver or gold to create intricate designs covering trays, boxes, case and other objects. A 15th-century live Ayutthaya decreed that high-ranking nobles could proclaim their position through the position through possession of a melloware pedestal and tray, while in 1687, King Narais recorded as having sent a nielloware bowl to King Louis XIV of France. Bangkok rulers have also traditionally presented the ware presented the water as gifts to foreign heads of state.

THE RESERVE OF THE REAL PROPERTY.

106

THE SOUTH SONGKHLA, HAADYAI AND PATTANI

AMMARA

SONGKHLA

Songkhla, once known as Singora, is the only natural port on the lower Gulf of Thailand side of the southern isthmus and as such has long been an important center of trade, founded and largely developed by Chinese. Much of the trade, along with the money it brought, moved to Haadyai, more conveniently located at a railway junction, with the result that Songkhla has been able to retain some degree of its old atmosphere and crumbling Sino-Portuguese architecture. A hill behind the Samila Beach Hotel, surmounted by an ancient chedi, offers scenic views. Boats can be hired for trips around an inland sea or Thale Sap, which empties into the gulf, or to nearby Muslim fishing villages.

SAMHA BEACH. Few foreign tourists visit the nearby Samila Beach, an attractive strand on the gulf lined with casuarina trees and stalls selling

freshly cooked scafood, though visitors from Malaysia still come during the hot season. At its southern end, intricately painted Khorlae

boats bring in their catches. WAT MACHI MAWAT. This temple boasts several interesting murals showing life around the port in the late 1800's and early 1900's. SONGKHIA MUSEUM. A beautiful

old Chinese mansion dating from the late 19th century, once the residence of a provincial governor, has been restored as a museum

(below). Chinese porcelain, statuary and objects from the excavations of nearby Sating Phra are displayed. Kon Yon. Spread over a hillside on this island is an open-air

ethnographic museum reached by the Tinsulanonda Bridge.

THALE NOI BIRD SANCTUARY



TAILING

IELLOWARE

ne of Nakhon Si

aditional arts a

efore the 12th

entury, probably rom India, Ao

malgam of dark

netals is applied to

tched portion of

ilver of gold in

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designs covering

trays, boxes, uso

iello, which arried

hammarat's

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A form of shadow

play called nang

talung, closely

resembling the

Indonesian wayang

kulit, is frequently staged at festivals in

the far south. The

buffalo-hide figures

have movable parts

and their concealed

manipulators accompany their actions with songs

and often ribald

legs, or chin

Just a few miles north of Songkhla is an 11-square-mile region of freshwater and swamp ecosystem known as Thale Noi. Several canals flow through the area, making it accessible to nature-lovers and bird-watchers.

BIRD-WATCHING. Nearly 200 species of birds including several rare ones such as the lesser adjutant stork, white ibis, spot-billed pelican and gray heron - have been recorded in this nature reserve. Egrets, cormorants, terns and jacanas are also common here. The best period to observe the birds is between January and April. Boats can be hired for a three-hour trip from the nature reserve headquarters to Sala Nang Riam on the other side of the lake. The fishing village offers visitors to Thale Noi a peek at life in this typical southern community.

«IT WAS WITH NO SMALL PLEASURE THAT WE RATTLED DOWN THE ANCHOR IN SONGKHLA, AND CONTEMPLATED THE BEAUTIFUL HILL-GIRDLED HARBOR THAT LAY BEFORE US.»

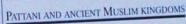
H. WARRINGTON SMYTH, 1898

HAADYAI

Strategically situated at the junction of major railways and roads, Haadyai has become one of the most prosperous cities in the south in recent decades, of little architectural or cultural distinction but with a definite boom-town air of excitement. A considerable part of the money derived from such major southern industries as tin, rubber and seafood processing passes through Haadyai's bankers and businessmen and to this can be added a possibly even greater amount from tourism. Malaysians come in large numbers - around 600,000 a year, according to a recent estimate - across the border just 36 miles away, drawn partly by lower prices for luxury goods

and partly by an uninhibited nightlife not available in their own country. Haadyai has more than 5,000 hotel rooms, most of them filled on weekends, plus hundreds

of discos, bars and massage parlors.



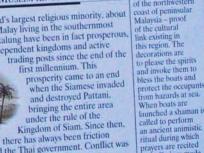
Muslims comprise Thailand's largest religious minority, about two million in all, mostly Malay living in the southernmost provinces. Pattani and Pattalung have been in fact prosperous, independent kingdoms and active

trading posts since the end of the first millennium. This prosperity came to an end when the Siamese invaded and destroyed Pattani, bringing the entire area under the rule of the Kingdom of Siam. Since then,

between the Muslims and the Thai government. Conflict was most evident during the 1960's and 1970's, when many Muslims fled to the jungles to join the communists, and has intensified since 2001, when the Thaksin government changed the way Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces are run. Although Muslim traditions are deep-rooted, there is little



mending nets.















PHEKET'S HER the airport leads toward Phuker In stands a memoral two Plinker herog In 1785, the beau pair railed the residents of Phain (then the islands main town) to defe it successfully again the Burmese invaders in result for which the two hadies were given noble titles by King Rama Luf Bangkok.



OLD HOUSES Adding considera to the charm of Phuket Town are its surviving old Chinese houses (above), built in the Smo-Portuguese to Malacca, Many of to families whose ancestors first came to the island as laborers in the 19th-century tin mines

MOVIE-MAKERS The sceme beaution of Phuket and nee boring Phangaga B have attracted numerous movie mimerous move makers, foreign as well as Thai. Part of the movie The Man with the Goiden Gan was filmed at Phane while Physicis nga, while Phoket's interior was used in Brian De Palma Casnatties of Har and the old District Office appeared as the French embasis in The Killing Field



▲ THE SOUTH PHUKET



THE PLEASURES OF PHUKET

Phuket has a wide range of attractions for visitors. Most are still centered around its renowned beaches para-sailing, surfing, water-skiing, deepsea fishing and romantic cruises on chartered boats, Dive trips vary from half and full day trips to overnight cruises to distant reserves like the Similan Islands

▲ 110. In addition, shops sell handicrafts from all parts of Thailand, countless restaurants offer Thai or foreign cuisine, and attractions such as butterfly farms and orchid nurseries cater to the tourist trade.

PHUKET TOWN TODAY

Phuket Town, the bustling provincial capital, has a population of around 60,000. A recent boom in real estate has spurred developers to build countless shophouses, hotels and condominiums, with an inevitable loss of atmosphere, though many of the elegant old millionaires'

mansions remain. Particularly colorful is the public market on Rasada Street. across from the minibus terminus, where all the local produce is piled in tempting abundance amid busy vendors and haggling customers,

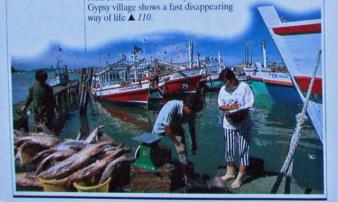


PHUKET AQUARIUM & BUTTERFLY FARM

Overlooking the sea on Chalong Bay, not very far from Phuket Town, the aquarium is part of the Marine Biology Research Center and rears a variety of sea creatures from local waters. It also serves as a hatchery for the eggs of huge sea turtles that come ashore to lay between October and February. The Butterfly Farm and Aquarium both lie two miles north of Phuket Town.

PHUKET PORT

A visit to Phuket's main port, east of the town, reveals the importance of deep-sea fishing. About 350 industrially equipped boats fish the waters around the island and all the way to the Indian Ocean, hauling in about 40,000 tons of seafood annually. The port scene is most colorful when the boats return to unload in the early morning. Further east a road connects to Koh Siray, where a Sea



«THE STRONGEST STATEMENT OF CHINESE CULTURE EVIDENTIAL VEGETABLAN FROM PHUKET IS PROBABLY THE VEGETARIAN FESTIVAL.

CHINESE TEMPLES

Phuket's Chinese character is reflected in a number of temples. The principal ones are at Kathu, where the Vegetarian Festival originated in the 19th century, and Put Jaw Temple in town, both lavishly adorned with red and gold carvings and images of various gods and goddesses. VEGETARIAN FESTIVAL. Held annually in October, this is another manifestation of the strong Chinese flavor that pervades the island. The festival was started by

immigrants who flocked in large numbers from China and nearby Malaya to work in the tin mines, supposedly in response to a mysterious fever that was afflicting them. It now lasts for ten days and, in addition to abstinence from meat and rituals held at various Chinese temples, features gala processions that attract crowds of visitors as well as local believers. Many of the

participants go into deep trances, enabling them to endure a wide range of self-inflicted ordeals, from walking over beds of red-hot charcoal to piercing their cheeks with long metal skewers; such practices are not a part of traditional vegetarian festivals in China and were most probably assimilated over the years from India.



Although Phuket has a sizeable number of Muslim residents, about 60 percent of the population are Buddhists, who attend



one or another of the island's twenty-nine temples. The largest and best-known is Wat Chalong, which contains images of two revered monks who helped put down a rebellion of Chinese immigrants in 1876: the images are kept supplied with offerings of flowers and incense. Another important temple is Wat Phra

Thong (above), on the airport road, where the main attraction is a large Buddha image supposedly made of gold, half buried in the earth; after its discovery by a farmer, the image was left as it was and the temple built to shelter it.

LAK MUANG. In most old Thai cities, a shrine, or the lak muang, was erected at the "central axis," usually around a wood or stone pillar that marked the center of the settlement and provided a home for the spirit who guarded it. In the case of Phuket, the pillar is near the monument to two heroines in the sleepy district of Tha Rua A 108, where the island's principal community once thrived.





A REAVY SMOKER In Phuket, at the of the last century for b

as st foun of th

with

chill rest

in it

monk who was a heavy smoker ber famous Animas was erected in Wa Chalong and evel since has been in supplied with offerings. These offerings commo take the form of lighted eigarettes placed in the most A gentle draft case the eigarenes to continue to bun ? image of the mini. therefore appears be smoking



ALISTAIR SHEAR



A LOCAL DELICACY Prawns are skewered and arranged between lengths of bamboo and left to dry in the sun before they are eaten.



has a reputation for being the hottest in Thailand. As well as standard dishes found in most parts of the country – often with lashings of extra chillies – many local restaurants also offer Malay-style fare that reflects Indian influence in its use of curry powder and turmeric



PATONG BEACH

Stretching for 2 1/2 miles around a bay backed by forested hills, Patong was the first of Phuket's beaches to be developed and is still the only one to offer

a really varied Bangkok-style nightlife. Hotels large and small, restaurants, shops, bars and even a towering condominium line its main street, facing a remarkably clean turquoise sea. Since the Tsunami swamped

Patong in 2004, the damage

has been fully repaired. Lifeguard towers now scan the gently shelving



OTHER BEACHES

Phuket's best beaches lie along its western coast, facing the Andaman Sea. A narrow road connects the 13 major strands, from Mai Khao, north of the airport, to Rawai at the southern tip, each with its own distinctive character.

Mai Khao and Nai Yang.
The northernmost of Phuker's
west coast beaches, these two
sands together stretch for 10
miles and are still relatively
undeveloped and therefore
quiet. The water, however,
is not as clear as at other
beaches, especially at low tide.
RNG To. This fine girls have

Bang Tao. This five-mile-long beach is backed by the five luxury hotels of the Phuket Laguna complex, which are arranged around lakes made from old tin mines.

Pan Sea. One of the most scenically enchanting beaches. Pan Sea offers very good

snorkeling and swimming during the dry season.

SURIN. A picturesque strand with steep hills that rise sharply at the back, this is especially popular with Thai day-trippers on weekends and holidays. The contemporary Thai-style Amanpuri Hotel overlooks one end of the beach. The spectacular Phuket FantaSea show plays nightly at a huge theatre behind the adjacent Kamala Beach, where a fishing

village suffered heavily in the Tsunami.

KARON. Just south of Patong, this bay has two beaches, one an idyllic little cove popularly known as Relax Bay and occupied by Le Meridien Hotel, and the other much longer and now lined with tourist accommodation both

large and small.

KATA. Like Karon, Kata is divided into
Kata Yai (Big Kata) and Kata Noi (Little
Kata). The former, a long stretch of fine
beach, is the site of the Club
Mediterrance and several smaller
facilities; the latter is further south and
has the Kata Thani hotel and several

bungalow complexes.

Nat Han ★. Site of the Phuket Yacht

Club, this largely undeveloped beach has
white sand, clear water and a scenic view
of Phrom Thep cape.

LAEM PHROM THER Phuket's southernmost cape draws crowds of tourists and local people because of its panoramic views of the sea and sunset. As traffic jams are common here, the visitor in search of solitude should look elsewhere.

RAWAL East of Phrom Thep, this attractive strand fringed by coconut palms is located on a shallow, silty bay and so is less popular with swimmers than some other beaches. Boats can be hired here for trips to the offshore islands. Among the most picturesque islands is Koh Keo, where there are meditation cells for Buddhist monks and a graceful chedi.



BEAUTIFUE BEACH!
Kata, Nai Han
and Laem Phrom
Thep (below) are j
three of the beauti
beaches that make
the main tourist
attraction on Phuk



▲ THE SOUTH UPPER ANDAMAN COAST

RUBBER TREES "Beyond the forest the level of the land was higher and there were more rubber plantations nothing but rubber. Thousands and thousands of acres were planted with the dark, dull green heyeas. The trees stood in straight rows, and by the side of each was a stick. On the top of each stick was a porcelain cup upside down. In some places the cup was attached to the tree by a bit of wire below the tin

through
which the latex
flowed when the tree
was tapped. Coolies
passed barefoot and
soundlessly among
the trees and turned

the cups out into large

zinc churns similar to

spout

European milk churns.** M.H. Lulofs

SHELLS The waters around Phuket are a rich source of shells, both rare and common for sale in the numerous shops. Some of the more serious dealers employ divers to search for the rarest specimens at great depths and sell their finds to international collectors at high



RUBBER PLANTATIONS

The first rubber trees, brought from Malaysia, were planted on Phuket in 1903, only a decade after they were first acclimatized to Southeast Asia at Signaporal Relation Conference They have a conference on the conference of the

Singapore's Botanical Gardens. Thus began the vast plantations that are now scattered over the island, producing around 14,000 tons of dry latex annually. Thanks to these plantations and others on the mainland, Thailand is today a major exporter of rubber.

KHAO PHRA THAEO NATIONAL PARK

Located just off the airport road, Khao Phra Thaeo National Park contains the last remnants of the tropical rain forest that once covered Phuket. Near the entrance to the jungle is Tone Sai Waterfall, an attractive site popular with local day-trippers on weekends but virtually deserted at other times.

OFFSHORE ISLANDS

A number of Phuket's smaller offshore islands can be easily reached by boat on short trips. The most popular with visitors, especially snorkelers and scuba divers, is probably Koh Hi, also called Coral Island because of the extensive reefs that

surround it, just east of the tip of Phuket. Koh Mai Thong, a little further, has fine beaches on the far side, while up the eastern coast are Koh Nakha Yai and Koh Nakha Noi. The latter has a cultured-pearl

farm, where oysters are seeded and carefully tended for two years, the amount of time required for a pearl to form inside. Yet another attractive island is a laway at located at the

another attractive island Koh Lawa Yai, located at the southern extremity of Phangnga Bay.





KOH SIMILAN NATIONAL PARK *

Approximately 60 miles northwest of Phuket in the Andaman Sea, the Similan group covers 51 square miles and consists of nine small islands, the name being derived from the Malay word sembilan, meaning "nine." Designated a national park in 1982, the islands have long been uninhabited except for Sea Gypsics \$\int 110\$ who come to fish the rich coral reefs around them. Tour groups have been coming in large numbers, attracted by the unspoiled beaches and the remarkable variety

of underwater life, especially off Koh Miang. The Similans have over two hundred species of hard coral, hundreds of colorful fish and other sea creatures such as huge sea fans and barrel sponges, manta rays and whale sharks. Sea turtles come to lay their eggs on some of the beaches 16, and wildlife on land 10 includes macaques, langurs, bats and about thirty species of birds.



endangered huge black turtles, which some-times come ashore for a breath air. They can lay a many as 150 eggs m 20 inch-deep sandpits. After 50-60 day of incubation, the barchiles head or

VANISHING TURBLE

Visitors to Simil

night should not

disturb the

20 inch-deep sandpits. After 50-60 at of incubation, the hatchlings break ou of the eggs and waddle to the sea guided only by the reflection of moulight. They are eash distracted by artifact light such as camera flushes or lamps.

KHAO LAK

An hour north of Phuket, a rainforested headland opens out onto Khao Lak and Bang Niang beach. Despite unremarkable sand or water, this coast was growing fast thanks to its charm and national park ecology until devastated by the Tsunami. Rebuilding took over two years. Diving excursions reach reefs at the Similans, Koh Surin and Richelieu Rock.

KHAO SOK NATIONAL PARK

The road to Surat Thani passes Thailand's largest remaining tropical rainforest. Stretching from the coast to a reservoir rimmed by karst cliffs, this nature reserve protects many large species including tiger. Kayak trips and hikes can be arranged.



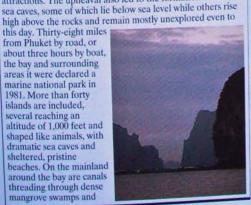




areas it were declared a marine national park in 1981. More than forty islands are included, several reaching an altitude of 1,000 feet and shaped like animals, with

the bay and surrounding

dramatic sea caves and sheltered, pristine beaches. On the mainland around the bay are canals threading through dense mangrove swamps and



Millennia ago, Phang-nga Bay was dry land with scattered limestone mountains; the sea invaded as glaciers melted,

around 10,000 years before the beginning of the Christian era, leaving only a spectacular profusion of mountain peaks rising

from the water to form one of the world's greatest natural attractions. The upheaval also led to the formation of several

caves. Wildlife in the national park includes dolphins, crabeating macaques and huge fruit-eating bats (also known as flying foxes) and numerous species of birds, of which the most easily seen are kingfishers, sea eagles and white egrets.

Mudskippers, that queer breed of fish that use their flapping
fins to move about on land, thrive among the mangroves ■ 12. Most visitors come on day trips from Phuket or Krabi, though excellent food and accommodation are provided by the Phang-nga Bay Resort Hotel.

LIMESTONE BEAUTIES Much of the attraction of Phang-nga's countless caves, both on the mainland and on many of the islands in the bay, lies in their limestone formations. Intricate stalactites and stalagmites and the atmospheric lighting from cave openings produce a theatrical effect.



▲ THE SOUTH PHANG-NGA BAY AND NEARBY ISLANDS

«THE UNIQUENESS OF PONGA DEPENDS UPON ITS LIMESTONE PEAKS, WHICH STAND IN SHARP POINTS AND STEEP PRECIPICES OF OF ITS WATERS, SOME MORE THAN 1,500 FEET IN HEIGHT.

H. WARRINGTON SMOR

PHANG-NGA NATIONAL PARK

The headquarters of Phang-nga National Park are located on Highway 4144, near one of the estuaries leading to the bay. The Phang-nga Bay Hotel is nearby and offers the best rooms in the area. This is also a good point from which to explore by boat the park's fascinating mangrove swamps. The trees have strange root systems that protrude from the water and provide shelter for such creatures as mudskippers, fiddler crabs, lizards and numerous colorful birds,

KOH KHIEN

Koh Khien ("Writing Island") has a large cave, on the walls of which are ancient paintings of men and such animals as sharks, dolphins and crocodiles. These paintings are believed to have been the work of people who inhabited the region 3,000-4,000 years ago and are visible from the sea.

KOH PANNYI

GLOSSARY OF

koh = islandkhao = mountain

hat = beach tham = cave

laem = cape hin = stone ao = bay

thale = sea

MARINE TERMS

On Koh Pannyi, a picturesque little Muslim fishing village of about 400 people nestles in the shadow of an immense

limestone slab that

protects it from the

monsoons. The houses are built above the water on stout piles of mangrove wood obtained from the mainland and most of the people earn their living by fishing and making shrimp paste. Additional revenue comes from the many tourists who visit Phang-nga Bay to photograph its quaint scenery and enjoy a sumptuous scafood lunch at one of the numerous restaurants.

Кон Мак

A flat round island with coconut palms, a Muslim village and beautiful beaches. Koh Mak makes an ideal picnic spot.

KOH HONG

"Hong" in Thai means "room," and this curiously shaped island - part of a group of the same name - contains an extraordinary enclosed waterway lit by an opening above and accessible to small boats. The chamber offers wonderful opportunities for swimming and photography.

THAM KEO

Tham Keo means "Glass Cave," and a shimmering grotto, hung with dazzling white stalactites, is the principal attraction of this island. Small boats enter the cave, which leads to an adjacent cavern with views of the sea below

KOH PHING KAN

Consisting of two separate rock formations leaning one against another, Koh Phing Kan is also popularly known as James Bond Island, thanks to the fact that several scenes from the film The Man with the Golden Gun were shot there. The island has now become a tourist trap, its

natural beauties obscured by boatloads of visitors and others trying to profit from them.

ORIGIN OF PRESS legend linked to a limestone mounts with dramatic dopo that loom over the provincial capital Some farmers in remote times had attacked and selection mistake an elepha god which at once turned into stone The massing cliff in Phang-nga Bay is a to be the petrified form of the pachyderm with in butchered tooks leaning on its flatte



▲ THE SOUTH KRABI AND OFFSHORE ISLANDS

OIL PALMS

Extensive oil palm

around Krabi,

plantations can be seen on the mainland

forming an important local industry. The palms, which yield

processing, originated

an oil used in both

cooking and food

in Africa and were

first acclimatized to

Southeast Asia by the

Dutch during their rule of Indonesia. Known for its stunning karst scenery, Krabi has become a major destination since its airport opened. Like

Phuket and Koh Samui in the early 1970's, it was accidentally "discovered" by intrepid backpackers and cruising yachts only in the 1980's. Shops, accommodation and restaurants are going upscale and spreading

accommodation and restaurants are going along the coast. Krabi's popularity with escapist travelers is not difficult to understand. It has several beautiful beaches with clear water ideal for snorkeling and diving, towering limestone cliffs, a pre-historic shell cemetery, atmospheric caves, mangrove forests

12. rubber plantations, a national park (Khao Phanom Bencha) full of interesting wildlife, when the part to more than

and access by boat to more than eighty scenic offshore islands. Krabi has suffered less from the sort of rapid, uncontrolled development that has disfigured so many beaches on Phuket and other southern island resorts, partly due to the efforts of newly aware Thai environmentalists.

by boat around the sheer limestone cliffs of Laem Phra Nang. Rai Leh's two beaches sandwich all the lodgings, framed by mammoth rocks on the north and south, with an extensive

coral reef at the southern end of Rai Leh West beach. Around another headland and facing the picturesque, lofty island of Koh Narg is a long, palm-fringed strand that many visitors regard as the most beautiful in the region. Between the beach and Koh

Nang, a coral reef offers some limited snorkeling and diving.



SHELL CEMPTERY BEACH Hat Su San Hoi, or the Shell Cemeter

Beach, a located in located in Ban Laem. Pho, about 10 miles from Krab town. Countless petrified shells, some

of which are about 75 million year old, have formed immense slabs of nox along the beach. Japan and the United States are the only other countries where the performance can be seen.

CAVES AND CLIFFS

The limestone mountains around Krabi contain a large variety of splendid caves, several of them popular tourist attractions. Sua (Tiger) Cave, down a jungle trail about 2 miles from Krabi town, is a noted Buddhist monastery for meditation. Along Highway 4, leading to Ao Luk, is a small cavern called

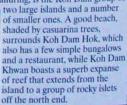
Tham Sadet, while two unspoiled caves. Tham Lot and Tham Phi Hua To, can be reached by boat from Tao Than village in Ao Luk. The so-called Princess Cave in the cliffside of Cape Phra Nang contains a shrine where fishermen leave phallic offerings.

The surrounding cliffs offer
Thailand's best rock climbing;
climbing schools dot the cape.

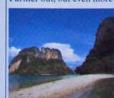
OFFSHORE ISLANDS

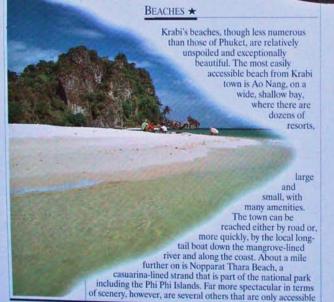
Boats can be hired for trips to the Phi Phi Islands from both Ao Nang Beach and Krabi town, but there are many closer offshore islands that are good for swimming and diving. Koh Poda, 30 minutes by long-tail boat from

Ao Nang, has a large coral reef teeming with colorful fish. Further out, but even more alluring, is the Koh Dam group of









▲ THE SOUTH LOWER ANDAMAN COAST



KOH LANTA

TROPICAL FISH Filled with much marine life, the Andaman Sea shelters a great variety of fish. Among the most beautiful are:



the squirrel fish (Myripristis adustus), which usually hides among the corals;



the sweetlips - such as the striped grunt (P diagrammus), which tastes as good as it looks;



the snub-nosed Chaetodon ephippium, a butterfly fish known for its changing colors;



and the surgeon fish (Acanthurus glaucopareius) whose colors blend with those of the coral.

The latest island candidate to be the 'new Samui' is Koh Lanta Yai, with new investment only mildly denting its sleepy, local character. Reached from Krabi or Trang airports by road and boat via the nondescript Koh Lanta Noi, it is a 15 milelong sliver. Dotting the sheltered east coast mangroves are destructive prawn farms and quaint fishing villages of Muslims and Sea Gypsies. The rugged west has a string of fine beaches, from the busy Hat Khlong Dao, where backpackers gather to party, down progressively tortuous roads to the relatively uninteresting national park headquarters at the southern tip. On the long, swimmable beaches in between, new resorts have earned plaudits for their sleek designs.

ISLANDS OF TRANG

One of the last of the archetypal desert islands left in Thailand, the islands off Trang province offer simple accommodation, which often gets booked up. Least isolated is Koh Hai which has some fine beaches and snorkeling, while acting as a base for excursions to Koh Mook, where the spectacular Emerald Cave, an inland beach, is accessed only by boat and a guided hundred-yard swim, partly through darkness. Koh Mook also features good swimming, snorkeling and sunsets. Koh Kradan has the finest scenery in the archipelago, while Koh Libong is famous for its migratory birds, wildlife and refuge of the endangered dugong.

TARUTAO NATIONAL PARK

Established as Thailand's first national marine park in 1974, Tarutao consists of fifty-one mountainous islands in the Indian Ocean near Malaysia. The largest of the group is Koh Tarutao, about 16 miles off the mainland and 3 miles from the Malaysian island of Langkawi, while the most beautiful is Koh Adang, which has fine beaches, clear water and coral reefs. Dolphins, sea turtles, and rare whales and dugongs are occasionally spotted in the area.

Govern-ment bungalows and tents are available on both Koh Adang and Koh Tarutao. The best time to visit the park is between December and March, when the sea is usually calm.

THE NORTHEAST



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▲ THE NORTHEAST (ISAN)

RATCHASIMA Nakhon Ratchasima (Korat), the GATE

the northeast - or Isan as it is called by Thais - makes up a third of the country's total area, contains seven of its most populous provinces, and offers both varied scenery and numerous ancient sites. However it remains the least known of Thailand's regions among tourists for many reasons. One was its long isolation. Though a railway linked Bangkok with

Nakhon Ratchasima is the most populous town in the northeast of Thailand







TOOLS OF THE TRADE Traditional sil. spinning wheel and implements (above).

"MUDMEE"

Mudmee is a kind of handwoven silk material (ikat) in which the threads are dyed before weaving. Popularized by Queen Sirikit, mudmee is now fashionable among Thai women



region's commercial center in 1900, it was not extended to the large city of Ubon Ratchathani until 1926 and reached Nongkhai on the Mekong River only in 1955. An extension to the Lao capital of Vientiane is now being built. Even as late as the 1950's, there were few all-weather roads in the region, and northeastern Thais did not receive a personal visit from their ruler until the mid-1950's, when the present king and queen made a pioneering tour. Another probable reason was social prejudice. The northeast has long been Thailand's "problem" region, afflicted by drought and hampered by infertile soil, its people often driven to seek a livelihood in Bangkok as taxi drivers, laborers or domestic servants. To other Thais, Isan hardly seemed a place to spend a holiday, nor were foreigners encouraged to do so. Many of these obstacles have now been overcome. Sharing borders with Laos and Cambodia, the northeast suddenly assumed a strategic importance during the Indo-Chinese war and an excellent network of highways was built. Now in peacetime, new bridges and roads connect Isan with the Vietnamese coast. Government concern has brought greater

THAI SILK PRODUCTION

Silk is undoubtedly the most famous of northeastern crafts. Even in the early 20th century, when production declined in other regions due to competition from foreign textiles. the family loom remained a part of most Isan village households and so kept the skill alive. The booming industry of today depends to a large extent on silk production from the northeast, particularly around

Nakhon Ratchasima; at nearby Pakthongchai, for example, the Jim Thompson Company A 94 has the largest handwoven silk facility in the world. Other notable weaving centers are Surin and Roi Et.



BAN CHIANG

In the early 1960's, during the construction of a road, some extraordinary fragments of painted pottery were unearthed near a small hamlet called Ban Chiang in Udon Thani Province. Subsequent excavations led to the discovery of a major prehistoric culture going back to 4000 ac and numbering among its achievements not only the painted pots but also the art of bronze metallurgy, at a period far earlier than any scholars had previously believed. A museum at Ban Chiang displays some of the remarkable items that have made the name world famous among archeologists and one of the exeavations has also been preserved to show the different levels at which they were found. The discoveries at Ban Chiang are still very much a controversial subject; on the other hand, the site has undeniably shaken the traditional view of Southeast Asia as a "cultural backwater" that received its influences entirely from in neighboring outside sources like China and India • 18.

ELEPHANT ROUNDUP

Each year in November the provincial capital of Surin holds a gala elephant roundup in which up to 150 of the huge animals take part, demonstrating their ability to haul logs and serve as mounts in warfare • 28. The Tourism Authority of Thailand organizes special tours from Bangkok by train or bus for this popular event. These often include visits to the nearby elephant village of Baan Ta Klang.

ARCHEOLOGICA REMAINS

at a shig in Bon display in a Bangica museum Genuine pieces should not se confused with discoveries that as in fact manufacture villages.

SHOW ANDRUS

No longer used for logging or warfar elephants now entertain tourists in star in spectation promoted by Thailand's tourist



THE NORTHEAST KHMER TEMPLES



Tour days

The Prasat Phanom Wan, viewed from the outside.

THE KHMER LEGACY

For almost 400 years, from the 9th century onward, much of the northeast was dominated by the Khmer civilization, which was centered around the famous temples of Angkor, in Cambodia. Khmer power extended much further at its peak during the 11th and 12th centuries, covering much of the Chao Phraya River valley and reaching down into the southern peninsula; not until the 13th century did it begin to wane and eventually give way to the rising Thais. The growth of the Khmer empire • 18 began with the reign of King Jayavarman II (AD 802–50), who removed the capital to Angkor, but the great period of building in Thailand came



under King Suriyavarman I
(AD 1002–50), whose father
had seized the throne of
Lopburi from a Mon king and
who himself captured the
Cambodian throne at Angkor.
Northeastern Thailand lay in
the path of Khmer expansion
and was thus regarded as a
natural part of the empire,
while the central region was
an outlying province. Several
monuments were built during
this period in Nakhon
Ratchasima, Surin and Buri

Ram provinces, splendid earthly abodes in stone and brick, and laterite for Hindu deities; temples with rounded prangs that represented the 33 levels of heaven, the highest being occupied by the god Indra. Suriyavarman II (AD 1113–50), who built Angkor Wat, was also responsible for edifices in Isan, among them Phimai in Nakhon Ratchasima. By the late 12th century, Mahayana Buddhism had replaced Hinduism and the last great Khmer builder-king, Jayavarman VII (AD 1181–1218), adapted many of the older structures, including Phimai, to suit the new religion. After his death, the empire collapsed, leaving several temples still unfinished • 18.

PRASAT PHANOM WAN

Built in the early 11th century during the reign of Suriyavarman I, Prasat Phanom
Wan, near Nakhon Ratchasima, is a Hindu temple later converted for Buddhist use. A central prang dominates its rectangular courtyard, surrounded by four older ones. There also is a fine stone lintel above the north entrance to the main sanctuary, which contains a number of Buddha images.



PRASAT

PHANOM WAN

The interior of the 11th-century Prasat

Phanom Wan, with several Buddha

PRASA Locato road end of ee the n resto coope been i TT st to co by

JAWARMAN WI
(AD 1181-1218),
the last of the great
Khmer builder-kings,
adapted many Hindu
temples in northeast
Thailand built by
earlier kings. Jayavarman VII is
considered the last
great Khmer ruler of
the Angkor period.
In less than 15 years,
the borders of the
kingdom were
extended further to
the south and to the
north into neighboring Malaya,
Burma, Annam and
Champa, Under his
rule Mahayana
Buddhism was
declared the state
religion, thus
replacing Hinduism.

PRASAT HIN PHIMAI

Located about 30 miles from Nakhon Ratchasima, off the road to Khon Kaen, Prasat Hin Phimai dates from the end of the 11th century and is one of the finest examples of early Angkorian art, which was later modified to suit the needs of Mahayana Buddhism. The temple has been restored by the Thai Fine Arts Department in cooperation with Bernard Groslier, who had previously been in charge of the restoration work at Angkor.

THE TEMPLE COMPLEX. The complex of buildings stands in a large quadrangle that once also included a town and was surrounded by a fortified wall. The complex was originally an artificial island, surrounded by the Mun River, two other natural waterways, and a man-made canal, the last trace of which has now

disappeared.

GATEWAYS. The imposing southern gate, known as Pratu Chai, or Victory Gate, is a pavilion-like structure with walls of pink sandstone. It faces in the direction of Angkor, with which Phimai was linked by a straight road; traces remain of three other gateways at the other cardinal points.

ROYAL RESIDENCES. Among the notable structures within the walls are a group of royal residences added by Jayavarman VII; a laterite prang called Meru Baromathat (supposedly where the cremation of King Baromathat took place) that once enshrined a statue of Jayavarman VII, now in Bangkok's National Museum; the remains of a pink sandstone prang known as the Hin Daeng; and a central sanctuary, topped by a lotus-bud finial.

THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY. The sanctuary predates the construction of Angkor and was modified when Phimai was converted into a Buddhist structure in the 12th or 13th century. It is the best-preserved part of the complex.



▲ NORTHEAST KHMER TEMPLES

FEMALE DEITY sandstone figure, found at Phanom Rung and relocated at the National Museum of Bangkok, is believed to be Uma, Siva's consort, but since none of her attributes are preserved, her identification is uncertain. She wears a pleated sarong with a twist at the raist and a belt, indicating that she

STOLEN LINTELS In the early 1960's, one of Prasat Phanom Rung's most beautiful lintels vanished. only to reappear

can be attributed to

the Baphuon style

(AD 1010-80).

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Mark



some 25 years later in the collection of

Boston Museum in the United States. After protracted negotiations, the museum agreed to return the piece, which has now been restored to its proper place over one of the temple doorways. A famous lintel carving of Vishnu was also reinstated after it was retrieved from the Art Institute of Chicago, to which the tolen artefact had been donated

PRASAT PHANOM RUNG *

Scenically situated on a small hill in Buri Ram Province and facing the Dongrek Mountains that mark the frontier with Cambodia, Prasat Phanom Rung was built over a long period of time. Three of its brick prangs date from the early 10th century, while the main sanctuary was started in the 11th century but was never completed. The temple has since been restored by the Fine Arts Department with the help of several French experts, and with the same techniques as those used at Phimai. An impressive avenue built by Javavarman VII. 600 feet long and 36 feet wide, leads to the main building atop a series of terraces, the lowest of which has a balustrade of naga (sacred serpents). Situated on an east-west axis, the main sanctuary consists of a prang on a square base with antechambers at the four compass points, the main entrance facing east. Beautifully carved

lintels adorn the doorways, and there are friezes of very fine

quality on the walls and columns. PRASAT MUANG THAM ★

About 3 miles from Prasat Phanom Rung is Prasat Muang Tham (below right). Construction of the temple began in the second half of the 10th century and was completed by Jayavarman V. Consisting of an outer and an inner courtyard surrounded by a laterite wall, Prasat Muang Tham is notable for the well-preserved bas-reliefs on small prangs at the four corners of the outer courtyard and for a large variety of beautifully carved lintels, doorway decorations and stone mullions, all rich in Hindu deities. To the north of the temple is one of the reservoirs built during the period to provide a constant source of water.

KHAO PHRA VIHARN *

The imposing sanctuary of Khao Phra Viharn perches on a spur of the Dongrek mountain range, 1,800 feet above sea level. After a long dispute between Thailand and Cambodia over the ownership of the temple. international law in 1962 adjudged it to lie in Cambodian territory, even

though it is quite easily accessible from the Thai side of the border. Khao Phra Viharn is now open to visitors, with occasional interruptions after being closed for nearly three decades. Built partly during the reign of Suriyavarman I in the early 11th century, then continued later by other Khmer rulers, the complex was built on four different levels, each connected by stairways and each containing the remains of numerous buildings as well as tanks for water storage Walls and doorways are decorated with a profusion of carvings. However, from the architectural point of view, the structures at the summit are more impressive than those below.

PRASAT HIN SIKHORAPHUM

Prasat Hin Sikhoraphum (right), in Surin Province, dates from the late 11th century and is built in the Angkor Wat style. It consists of a central brick prang and four smaller prangs at the corners of a laterite platform; the lintels and pillars of the entrance to the main prang are intricately carved with guardians, apsara (female divinities) and scenes from Hindu mythology.

OTHER KHMER RUINS

Besides major Khmer ruins, such as those mentioned in these and preceding pages, the northeast has thirty other smaller sites. Among the most interesting are Prasat Hin Non Ku in Nakhon Ratchasima Province and Prasat Thamuen Thom in Surin, both in the Baphuon style of the late 10th and 11th

variations upon a theme; the guiding analytic principle is that such provincial Khmer art was made with the standard technology and within the esthetic context of Khmer civilization.** Piriya Krairiksh

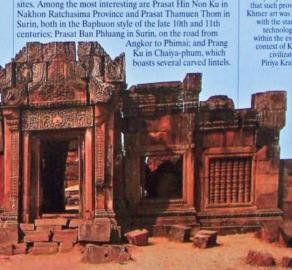
"There is no doubt

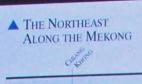
that the Khmer art created in Thailand

contains foreign

the style which evolved in the metropolitan area.

However, the local differences are but







One week

MEKONG MOSAIC of daily life by the Mekong in the 19th century and fishing boats (below) at the confluence of the Mekong and Mun



he world's twelfth-longest river, the Mekong originates I on the Tiberan plateau and winds across 2,500 miles and six countries before emptying into the South China Sea. It

serves as the border between Thailand and Laos for more than 500 miles in the north and the east before flowing on through Cambodia and Vietnam. The most fertile areas of the northeast lie along its the banks, where rich alluvial silt nourishes mulberry and tobacco plantations, gardens and orchards. Sadly, rock blasting for commercial shipping, dams and other



developments are reducing the Mekong's once steady supply of fish, including the nearly extinct gigantic catfish (plu duk in Thai), which can weigh up to one ton. For nearly 20 years after the end of the Indo-Chinese War, the Laotian side of the Mekong was closed to most tourists, Recently, however, relations between Thailand and its neighbor have improved and traffic across and along the river is steadily increasing, bringing greater prosperity to old Thai ports of entry such as Nakhon Phanom, Nongkhai and the northern ports of Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong.

FROM NONGKHAI TO KHONG CHIAM

A road runs along the Mekong from Nongkhai, a port that

erves as the gateway to

the Laotian capital of Vientiane, to Mukdahan, Among the attractions that lie along this scenic route are the Phu Wua Wildlife Sanctuary, across from the Laotian town of Pakse, the

provincial capital of Nakhon Phanom, and That Phanom with its famous chedi. A national park at Mukdahan contains unusual rock formations and Buddhist sites. At Mukdahan, the main highway moves away from the river and leads to Ubon Ratchathani, where each year in July, on the eve of the three-month Buddhist Lent period, there is a procession of enormous carved candles and figures carried on floats through the city streets. A boat can be hired here for the short trip along the Mun River to Khong Chiam, a picturesque confluence of waterways at the point where the Mekong curves and heads toward Cambodia and Vietnam on its journey to the sea.

WAT PHRA THAT PHANOM. Overlooking the Mekong, Wat

Phra That Phanom is the most famous of all northeastern Buddhist temples. Its central chedi, originally built in the 9th century and containing a sacred relic, was modeled after the well-known That Luang in Vientiane. When the spire collapsed during a monsoon storm in 1975, it was regarded as a dire omen and was immediately reconstructed; the present one was inaugurated four years later by the Thai king.



DRE MERON

The Mekong

has as many na

the countries it p

through. Also called

Lancang Jiang in the

thous of ore

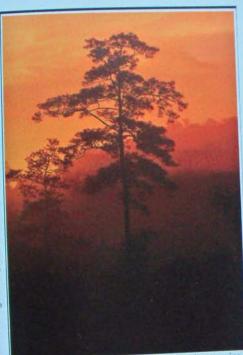


THE NORTHEAST NATIONAL PARKS

FOREST TYPES In Khao Yai National Park some of the last remaining Thai rainforests can still be observed ■ 10. Most of the forests of the dry northeast, however, are deciduous including teak trees and deciduous dipterocarps, so called because of their two-winged seeds. Found in both types of forest are more than 70 species of bamboo. The acidic soil of the northeast also supports pine trees at an altitude of between 1,980 feet and 4,620 feet. The Phu Kradung National Park is famous for its pine trees. Flowering trees thrive in the dry northeast and, after long spells of drought, spectacular blooms appear, Khao Yai's pride are the thousands of species of orchid # 11 that cling to the trees in

wetter parts of

the forest.



The northeast was once a densely forested region, teeming with wildlife. Logging, together with the demands of an expanding population, has denuded vast areas and its former natural wealth can be found mainly in those designated national parks.

KHAO YAI

Covering 869 square miles in four provinces—Nakhon Ratchasima, Saraburi, Nakhon Nayok and Prachinburi — Khao Yai was established in 1962 as the first of Thailand's national parks. It is also the most popular, thanks to its ease of accessibility from Bangkok, 120 miles away. Largely because of the number of visitors (more than one million in 2003), the government has been unable to resist building resorts and golf courses on the fringes of the park. Visitors with permission may also camp overnight in the park. There are picturesque trails through lush forests and a rich variety of wildlife \$\blue{\text{b}} \text{9-10}, including elephants, clouded leopards, gibbons, mouse deer, Malayan sun bears, and such birds as the great hornbil, the Siamese fireback pheasant, the silver pheasant and the brown needle-tail, allegedly the fastest bird in the world.

NAM NAO

Established as Thailand's fifth national park in 1972. Nam Nao covers 387 square miles of rolling hills and pine forests in Chaiyaphum and Petchabun. It was once a stronghold of communist insurgents but has been made safe for visitors since the early 1980's. Thanks to the adjacent Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary, the park is unusually tich in animal life • 9.10, including elephants, Asiatic black bears and clouded

leopards. In 1979 rhinoceros tracks were found in the park. Over 200 species of birds have been confirmed. A popular attraction in the park is Yai Nam Nao Cave, home to hundreds of thousands of bats.

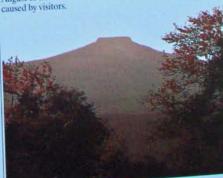
KAENG TANA

Located near Ubon Ratchathani, where the rivers Mckong and Mun meet, the Kaeng Tana National Park covers a sprawling 32-squaremile expanse of land. Although not ranked as one of the popular

ones in Thailand's northeastern region, the scenic park boasts features such as giant sandstone slabs, a cave and a waterfall with rapids.

PHU KRADUNG ★

Phu Kradung is a bell-shaped mountain in Loei Province, crowned with a 24-square-mile plateau of exceptional natural beauty. The climb to the top involves a 5-mile trek, sometimes up steep areas, but there are benches and shelters along the way. Plant life on the cool plateau includes many temperatezone specimens such as rhododendrons, pines and oaks, and among the existing wildlife are elephants, sambar deer, gibbons and 130 bird species. The park is closed from June to August to allow for environmental recovery from the damage



BIRD-WATCHING The majority of

the majority of Thailand's wild mammals tend to be shy creatures and sightings are rare. Birds, on the other hand, are plentful, and visitors to any of the national parks will easily spot several of the estimated 928 species that live in the



HORNBULLS

Easily spotted because of their size and their noisy flappings, hornbuls are among the largest jungle birds, distinguished by a huge beak often surmounted by a casque. After laying her eggs the female immures herself inside a tree cavity.



GIBBONS

Gibbons are among the most endearing of Thailand's native wildlife, swinging like gymnasts from the upper heights of the trees and hooting mournfully at daybreak. They are the subject of continuing research at Khao Yai, where both the white-handed (or lar) and the pileated species live in considerable numbers.

«TODAY, NO LARGE MAMMALS SURVIVE OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF NATIONAL PARKS.» NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF THAILAND, 1987

ENDANGERED SPECIES

The national parks of the northeast provide sanctuary for several once-common animals that are now endangered species. Just under 200 wild elephants, for example, live within the boundaries of Khao Yai, the largest population of any park in the country. A handful of Thailand's estimated 200 remaining tigers may possibly still live there. Thailand signed the international CITES treaty, and increasing attention and resources are dedicated to conserving the country's natural heritage.

LEOPARDS. Though rare today, leopards and clouded leopards may still be sighted in Khao Yai and Nam Nao. Prized for their skin, these beasts have been the target of persistent poachers who flout wildlife preservation laws.

BEARS. The Malayan sun bear is a smallish jungle bear that eats mostly fallen fruit, fish and carrion. It has the misfortune of being highly regarded as a medicinal ingredient by certain groups like the Koreans, who come on special tours just to eat

grilled bear meat. The Asiatic black bear, still existing at Khao Yai and Nam Nao, is a much bigger animal, distinguished by its long hair and a wide V-mark from the upper breast to the shoulders.

THE KOUPREY. A recent discovery by Western zoologists, the kouprey is a bovine distinguished by huge lyreshaped horns and a long dewlap drooping from the neck. Once commonly found along the Dangrek range near the Cambodian border.

the beast was slaughtered for meat during the Cambodian conflict and is probably now an extinct species.

THE GAUR. This is a huge ox up to 10 feet long and 6 feet tall at the shoulder. Black with scimitar-like horns and white legs, they inhabit open forests in herds of six to 20, although one will see only their tracks. Nocturnal browsers, they feed in open spaces and are the prey of tigers, leopards and humans, who have reduced their numbers to under 500 and put them on the endangered species list.



Up to the early 1980's, tiger and leopard skins were openly sold at souvenir shops in Bangkok. Today, they are sold secretly in small border villages



and perhaps only a few of the Javanese species remained in the country. Today, one are left; rhinoceros-horn powder, however, is still sold at exorbitant prices in the markets of Bangkok's Chinatown.

not more than ten Sumatran rhinos

THE CENTRAL PLAINS



AYUTTHAYA, 124 LOPBURI, 127 KAMPHAENG PHET, 128 SUKHOTHAL, 129 SI SATCHANALAL, 131 PHITSANULOK, 132

▲ THE CENTRAL PLAINS AYUTTHAYA

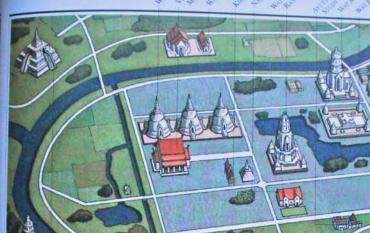
THE CENTRAL PLAN

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PHITSANDOK DI

TREASURES OF GOLD
In a crypt beneath
Wat Raja Burana's
central prang King
Boromaraja II once
hid a collection of
gold objects in

memory of his two dead brothers. They are now housed at the National Museum at Ayutthaya.





HISTORY

Founded in 1350 by King Ramathibodi I, Ayutthaya grew from a small town with mud walls on an artificial island on the Chao Phraya River into one of the largest,

most cosmopolitan cities in Southeast Asia. With only one interruption, when it fell to the Burmese in the mid-16th century, it was the center of Thai power for more than 400 years, its rule extending over the entire Central Plains as well as many areas of the far east and south. The 33 rulers of Ayutthaya adopted the Khmer concept of divine kingship, complete with Brahminic rituals, and built spectacular palaces as well as great Buddhist monuments; most of the

major remains visitors see today were constructed in the city's first 150 years. The peak of opulence came in the 17th century, when ships from all over the world sailed up the Chao Phraya to trade and Ayutthaya had a population of more than a million. During the reign of King Narai (1657–88), two French embassies came from the court of Louis XIV and a Thai embassy was sent to Paris. Ayutthayan power began to decline after the

death of Narai, and a series of wars ensued with Burma. In 1767, after a 15-month siege, the city fell to an invading army that burned almost every building. Led by the future King Taksin, the Thais finally expelled the Burmese, but Ayutthaya was so thoroughly destroyed that the capital was moved further downriver to Thonburi, then Bangkok. The Ayutthaya through models, diorams and multimedia descriptions of life, culture and buildings. A branch of the Center stands in the former Japanese quarter.



WAT RAJA BURANA. Among the best known of Ayutthaya's monuments, Wat Raja Burana was constructed in 1424 by King Boromaraja II, on

King Boromaraja II, on the site where two princes had killed one another in a duel on elephant-back. The king first built two chedis and later a far more imposing temple surrounded by a wall, with monumental gateways, a towering prang on a stepped platform and numerous smaller prangs and chedis • 50.



1

One day

Thailand's oldest paintings decorate the vault of the crypt of Wat Raja Burana.

«THE CITY OF AYUTTHAYA, AT THE PERIOD OF OUR VISIT, CONSISTED OF SOME SIX FISHERMAN'S HUTS AND A BETELNUT VENDOR'S STALL.»

FREDERICK A. No.



An engraving of the ruins of Wat Phra Si

conceived as an island

Lopburi River curved

sharply. Later shunts were dug linking the city with the Chao

Phraya and Pasak

rivers and these in

main courses of the

also provided avenue

within the walled city as well as out into the

of communication

countryside. Huge

when necessary

water gates blocked the access to the city

surrounding

two rivers. Canals

time became the

fortress, formed by

digging a canal at a point where the

Sanphet.

ISIAND CAPITAL Ayutthaya, like Bangkok later, was WAT PHRA SI SAMPHET. Dating from 1491. Wat Phra Si Sanphet (left) was located inside the compound of the king's palace – the foundations of which are still visible – and served as the royal chapel, as Wat Phra Keo does in Bangkok. The three main chedis, although poorly restored, contain the ashes of three Ayutthaya kings, and the extent of the temple's ruins attests to its former splendor,

VIHARN PHRA MONGKOL BOPTI. Near Wat Phra Si Sanphet, this modern building houses a huge seated Buddha image from the 15th century and originally intended to stand in the open air. Restored several times, the image is highly revered by Buddhist visitors. In front stands a fine traditional teak house named after Khun Phan, hero of the epic Khun Chang Khun Phan, from which we have learned much about daily life of that period • 66.

WAT PHRA MAHATHAT is believed to be one of Ayutthaya's oldest temples, possibly built by King Boromaraja 1 (1370-88). Its central prang, of which only the base remains, was once 165 feet tall. Traces of the original stucco can still be seen on some of the surrounding chedis.

Stucco can still be seen on s WAT PHRA RAM. Though founded in 1369, the ruins of Wat Phra Ram (right) date mostly from its restoration in the 15th century. Its main feature is a well-proportioned prang that stands on a stepped terrace adorned with chedis. Some

of the prang's stucco decorations of walking and standing Buddhas still remain. WAT MAHEYONG. This temple is unique as its main feature is a chedi supported by a base with stucco elephants, similar in style to those seen in Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai.



Also known as Chao Sam Phraya Museum, this remarkable collection of Buddhist art, mostly Ayutthayan, is located on Rojana Road and is open Wednesdays to Sundays. A highlight



Wednesdays to Sundays. A highligh of the collection is the treasure found in Wat Raja Burana, which, besides the famed gold objects, comprises a collection of small, intact Buddha images of exquisite workmanship. Worthy of mention also are a set of painted banners with religious subjects and a lacquered book cabinet decorated with a representation of the Buddhist cosmos.

TEMPLES ALONG THE RIVERSIDE

WAT CHAI WATTANARAM, Built in 1630 by King Prasat Thong, Wat Chai Wattanaram (left) was conceived as a replica of an Angkorian temple, with a huge prang surrounded by smaller ones, symbolizing Mount Meru, the abode of the heavenly gods. Now

restored, the temple has lost much of its former charm.

WAT YAI CHAI MONGKOL. A lofty chedi dominates Wat Yai Chai Mongkol (right) on the opposite side of the river. It was given its name by King Naresuan to commemorate a battle fought against the Crown Prince of Burma in 1592. Naresuan's victory brought independence to Ayutthaya after 15 years as a Burmese vassal. In the complex is also a huge image of a reclining Buddha in brick and stucco ● 50. WAT NA PHRA MERU. Located across the river

north of the palace, this temple • 47 was the only wat in the city not razed by the Burmese. It has been restored a number of times but still has a finely proportioned bot and a viharn. The viharn contains a large Dvaravati stone Buddha seated in European style, his hands on his knees, which some scholars think originated in Nakhon Pathom. The bot has a large gilded image in distinctively regal attire.

WAT PHANAN CHOENG. Facing the main city from across the river, this landmark with five prangs has been tidily restored. Built shortly before Ayutthaya became capital, it is now a

major stop on boat cruises. The main building enshrines a huge seated Buddha image, 57 feet tall, the object of particular devotion to Thais of Chinese descent.

ELEPHANT CORRAL

Off the road from Ayutthaya to
Ang Thong is the Elephant
Corral. Repaired by King
Rama I of Bangkok and
restored by his successors, it
was once the place where wild
elephants were rounded up, sorted, and
eventually trained for work and use in warfare.

CHANTARAKASEM PALACE

Originally built for King Naresuan (1590–1605) when he was Crown Prince, Chantarakasem Palace was reconstructed in the 19th century by King Rama IV of Bangkok, who used it as a summer retreat.

Overlooking a main street now in the modern town, one of its elegant buildings contains a small but interesting collection of objects found in Ayutthaya.

MONUMENT PRESTRIVION The Fine Arts Department is

Department a gradually reduced the monaments of the Ayutthrya. However, the mature of the brick monument is such that the is such that the camnot be stabilized cannot be stabilized without complete



reconstruction. Buddhists generally frown upon damaged. Buddhis images, so statues found among the ruins are being replaced with repleasin cement, often made by unskilled craftsmen, while the original pieces are treasured by discerning collectors.

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ELEPHANT SHOWS

Although the Elephant Corral was not used for its original purpose the destruction of Ayutthaya, later Bangkok kings staged spectascular counding there as a form of entertainment for distinguished vision from abroad. One of the last great shows was recorded by photographera for the country of the country of the photographera for the country of the last great shows was recorded by photographera for the country of the countr

THE CENTRAL PLAINS AROUND AYUTTHAYA

For many centuri the Chao Phraya

has been the mair

transporting rice

and other produc to Bangkok and t

outside world.

usually in long

processions of

huge teakwood

barges pulled by tugboats. Filled

heavy rice sacks,

the round-bottor

barges appear to

be almost subme

The Aisawan Ti

Asna pavilion at Bang Pa-In.

in the water.

highway for

Typically of the fifth reign, the structures represent a variety of architectural styles, set in a large park around ponds and waterways. The only one of the royal residences open to the public is the Chinese-style Vehat Chamroon Palac constructed entirely of materials imported from China. In addition, there is an Italian-style palace, a circular pavilion with steps leading down to a pool, the graceful Thai-style Aisawan Tippaya Asna pavilion in the middle of a lake, and, across one of the waterways, a Buddhist chapel in neo-Gothic style with stained-glass windows. Scattered around the extensive gardens are European statues as well as monuments erected by King Rama V in memory of members of his family. one of them to a much-loved Queen who was drowned in a



small riverside village established in 1982 by Queen Sirikit as a place where farmers are given the opportunity to learn the traditional crafts and thus acquire a supplementary source of income. There are regular demonstrations of basket making, cloth weaving, and leatherworking. A souvenir shop markets the finished products.

Located on the riverbank below Bang Pa-In is Wat Phai Lom, rare open-billed storks fly over the temple from Bangladesh

boating accident.

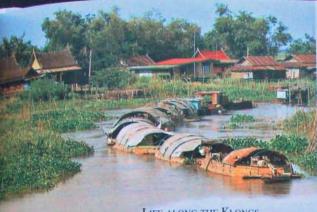
Located on the river near Bang Pa-In, Wat Phai Rong Rua is worth visiting mainly as a curiosity, since its grounds are filled with large, rather garish statues depicting scenes from Buddhist hell and the grim fate that awaits those unlucky enough to go there.

BANG SAI

Bang Sai, also near Bang Pa-In, is a

WAT PHAI LOM

famous as a bird sanctuary. Each December, thousands of and head for their nests among the treetops to raise



LIFE ALONG THE KLONGS

Leading off the river in this area are numerous klongs, or canals, all dug centuries ago to facilitate communications. Cruising along these, one can catch glimpses of a lifestyle that has largely vanished in most other parts of the country: elegant wooden houses in the Central Plains style, raised above the ground on tall posts; huge hump-backed barges loaded with rice, being towed to the markets and warehouses of Bangkok; vendor boats supplying waterside houses with various necessities; the spires of Buddhist temples rising above feathery bamboo groves; and stretching away on either side, all the way to the horizon, the vast ricefields # 13 that have traditionally nourished and enriched the kingdom. RICE FARMING. The majority of rural Thais are rice farmers,

following an ancient cycle that begins with plowing the fields in April or May just before the rains; the young seedlings are then planted and carefully tended until harvest time, usually in late November or early December.

TRADITIONAL HOUSE PRODUCTION. In Ang Thong Province, a short drive from Ayutthaya, many skilled craftsmen earn their

livelihood by prefabricating the components of traditional Thai-style houses: paneled walls, gables, roof beams, and the characteristic curving bargeboards. These are then transported elsewhere, mainly to Bangkok, and assembled on a framework of pillars in private

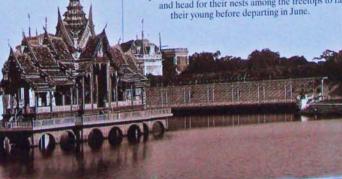
compounds • 45.

BANG PA-IN

THE THAI HOUSE The classic Central Plains house is raised off the ground on stout pillars, with a veranda in front where most family activities take place. The walls can slightly inward and the roofs are deep; traditionally it has bargeboards that curve gracefully at the end, adding to the general

A few miles down the Chao Phraya River from Ayutthaya is the Bang Pa-In Summer Palace. The site was first used by the royal court as a retreat from the hot weather in the 17th century but fell into ruin after the fall of Ayutthaya; it was restored by King Rama IV in the mid-19th century, though most of the buildings that exist today date from the reign of King Rama V,

who regularly spent his summers there.



The numberless

canals that thread

plains in every

their way across the

ossible direction.

Siam into a veritable

labyrinth of winding

waterways. The klongs differ in age,

appearance and size,

Ernest Young

as do the roads of

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▲ THE CENTRAL PLAINS LOPBURI

The state of the s

The fortifications of Lopburi were built with the help of the French engineer Monsieur de la Marre, who came to Siam with the mission of the Chevalier de Once known as Louvo, Lopburi served as an important city during the Dvaravati period and also as an outpost of the Khmer empire. King Narai of Ayutthaya (1656–88) began using it as a summer retreat and eventually spent so much of his time there that it became virtually a second capital.

KING NARAI'S PALACE. Known as Phra Narai Rajanivet, this palace was built by King Narai between 1665 and 1677 and was the scene of most of the important events during his reign. High crenellated walls with imposing gateways surround the large compound, which was divided into separate areas for

government offices, ceremonial buildings and the king's private residence. French architects assisted in the design of part of the palace, particularly the Dusit Sawan Thanya Maha Prasat, where the king often received foreign ambassadors. Here, King Narai spent the winter months going out in search of wild elephants, often hoping to find an auspicious white one; walked through gardens described by Simon de la Loubère as "delightful,"; discussed affairs of state with his

chief minister, the Greek adventurer Constantine Phaulkon: and, in a hall said to have been ablaze with mirrors brought from France, met with the envoys of Louis XIV. It was here too, in the spring of 1688, that he fell ill and died. The palace was restored and used again as a residence by King Rama IV in the 19th century. The buildings from the latter period are now used to display the finds from excavations of prehistoric sites in the Central Plains as well as items from King Rama IV's reign, including giant shadow puppets and various pieces of furniture. A collection of Lopburi-style Buddha images is displayed in the throne hall. The King Narai Fair every February reenacts scenes from his reign, with spectacular parades and shows.



«Louvo stands most pleasantly and in a most who air; the compass of it is very large and it is becop populous since the king hath been pleased to live Father Gr

PHAULKON'S RESIDENCE. "One of the most amazing of the adventurers who have made the east the scene of their exploits" is how Somerset Maugham described Constantine Phaulkon, and many other writers and historians have agreed. Born in 1647 on the island of Cephalonia, then under Greek rule, he came to Asia as a cabin boy on an English merchant ship and after a series of adventures turned up at King Narai's court in Ayutthaya. A natural talent for politics, together with a gift for languages and what must have been considerable charm, led him to the highest echelons of power; by 1685, he was in charge of Ayutthaya's foreign trade and was one of the king's closest confidants, with the royal title of Chao Phraya Wichayen. The remains of Phaulkon's Lopburi residence - he had another, much grander one in Ayutthaya - stand in a compound with those of a Catholic church and a house built for members of a French embassy that came in 1685, all in a blend of European and Thai styles. Though the French mission was regarded as a success, it increased opposition to Phaulkon among conservative courtiers. When King Narai fell mortally ill in 1688, one of them, Phra Petchara, staged a revolt; Phaulkon was arrested, tortured for several days, and finally beheaded near a lake outside Lopburi.

WAT PHRA SAM YOT. Built in the 13th century and located in the center of old Lopburi, this

Khmer temple has three laterite prangs, two containing damaged Buddha images. The laterite blocks were once covered with elaborate stucco decorations, of which little remains. The temple hosts a

banquet each November for the many feral monkeys in the area that make the town famous among Thais.

WAT PHRA SI RATANA MAHATHAT. Lopburi's most important religious structure, Wat Phra Si Ratana Mahathat dates from the period of Khmer rule but was restored and enlarged by King Narai. It contains a large laterite prang as well as a brick viharn, added by King Narai, with the Persian-style pointed arch windows seen throughout Lopburi.

PHRA PHUTTHABAT

Phra Phutthabat, more commonly known as the Temple of Buddha's Footprint, is a much-revered shrine about 17 miles from the town of Saraburi. The sacred footprint – measuring 5 feet long – was discovered during the Ayutthaya period, but the buildings that enshrine it today were built by King Rama I of Bangkok and his successors. Many hermits still live in caves in the surrounding hills.

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▲ THE CENTRAL PLAINS KHAMPHAENG PHET TO SUKHOTHAI





A WESTERN VISITOR

In 1882, traveler Carl

Bock spent a night in

Khamphaeng Phet on

north. He dined with

province, an occasion

the governor of the

follows: "The menu

was a good one, and

the dinner was served in a style that would

have done credit to a

Soon after I returned

table of the governor, I was disturbed by the

noise of drums and

gongs, accompanied by the desultory dis-

charge of firearms in

all directions. Hastily

getting up, I crossed

which stood opposite to my sala, where I

over to a temple

found the priests assembled in full

force, surrounded

multitude of natives

gazing at the great

dragon swallowing

moon, and cadeavoring by dreadful clamor to avert the calamity.

In other words

there was an eclipse of the moon.

by an excited

from the hospitable

first-class hotel

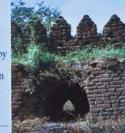
his way to the far

he described as

hamphaeng Phet, on the left bank of the Ping River, was one of the most important centers of the Sukhothai kingdom, although its principal monuments were built somewhat later than those of the other satellite city of Si Satchanalai. It was in Khamphaeng Phet that the last ruler of Sukhothai submitted to King Boramathat of Ayutthava in 1378.

INSIDE THE "DIAMOND WALL"

Khamphaeng Phet ("Diamond Wall") was surrounded by massive ramparts of earth topped with laterite. The two principal temples are Wat Phra Keo (top and right), which has two large seated Buddha images, and Wat Phra That, which has a chedi surrounded by columns. Also of interest is the lak muang, the city's foundation stone pillar.



OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF KHAMPHAENG PHET

The finest of Khamphaeng

Phet's ruins lie outside the city walls, where the surroundings were more conducive to prayer and meditation. Wat Phra

Non enshrines the remains of a reclining Buddha, while Wat Phra Si Iriyabot (above left) has images of the Buddha in four attitudes – standing, walking, seated and reclining. Wat Chang Rob, "Temple Surrounded by Elephants," is notable for the remains of a large chedi surrounded by imposing elephant buttresses made of laterite covered with stucco, a decorative motif that originated from Sri Lanka. Two FORTS. At the southern and northern corners of Khamphaeng Phet's walls are the remains of two forts (above) :Phom Chao Indra and Phom Phet. The latter has been excavated, is well preserved and suggests the impressive scale of ancient fortifications.

SUKHOTHAL

Sukhothai was the northernmost citadel of the Khmer empire and had flourished for centuries before the Thais began emigrating from the north in increasing numbers. During the first half of the 13th century, when Khmer influence was waning, a Thai chieftain later known as King Intradit united various groups,

overthrew their Khmer overlord, and founded the kingdom of Sukhothai, the Pali version of which means "Dawn of Happiness." Sukhothai's power lasted less than two centuries before it became a vassal of Ayutthaya in 1378, but it enjoyed a brilliant flowering in both politics and culture. Under its third and most famous ruler. King Ramkhamhaeng (1279-98), direct or indirect

rule was extended over much of present-day Thailand, and a Thai alphabet was devised. Most impressive of all were the remarkable achievements in art and architecture. Drawing from a variety of cultures not only Khmer but also Mon Indian and Sinbalese -Sukhothai artisans created superb temples, Buddha images and ceramics that

were also distinctively Thai and are generally regarded as the finest examples of the country's cultural heritage • 19.





RESTORATION OF SUKHOTHAI

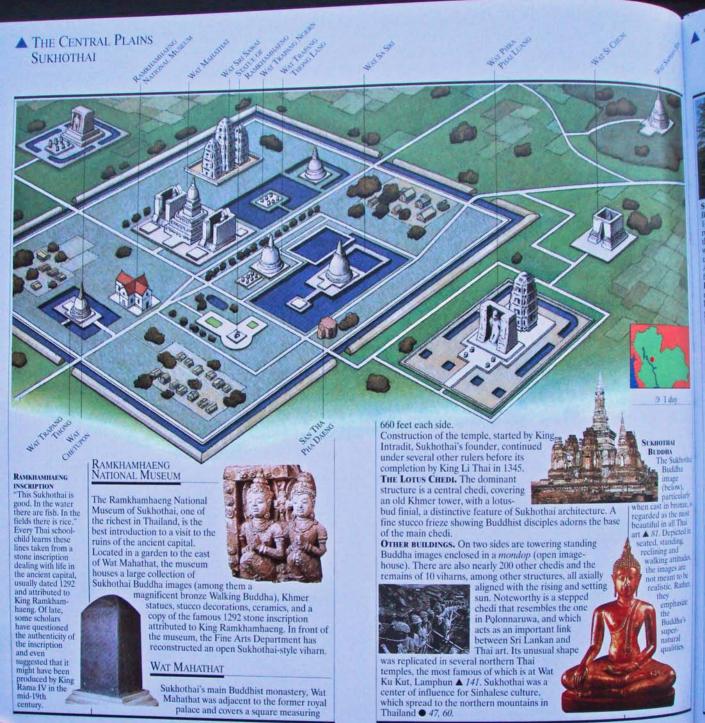
Declared a national historical park by the Thai government, Sukhothai has also received international attention in the form of aid from UNESCO. Over the past decade, many of the ancient capital's principal monuments have been carefully restored and villagers who had settled in the ruins were moved elsewhere. The original layout of the city was revealed and enhanced by dredging the moats and ponds, which had filled with silt over the centuries.



According to legend, the beautiful Loy Krathong festival held water spirits

LOY KRATHONG

at the end of the rainy season to honor the originated at Sukhothai. The festival has been revived under the auspices of the Tourism Authority with a gala event that includes spectacular illuminations, colorful parades and thousands of lotus shaped floats set adrift on ponds and waterways • 38.



THE CENTRAL PLAINS SUKHOTHAI



SUKHOTHAI KINGS Between 1238 and 1488, Sukhothai was ruled by nine kings, the last three of whom served mainly under the control of Ayutthaya. The most famous was King Ramkhamhaeng. under whom the kingdom achieved its greatest power, though the scholarly King Li Thai (1347–74) is remembered as the author of the Tribhumikatha (the Three Worlds of Buddhism)

the oldest Thai

LOTUS CAPITAL

The lotus capital is one of Sukhothai's

unique contributions

to religious architecture. Though possibly

inspired by finials from the Mon period at

Pagan in

Burma, it is

enough in

be called

OTHER TEMPLES WITHIN THE WALLS

WAT SRI SAWAI. A Khmer-style temple southwest of Wat Mahathat, Wat Sri Sawai (left) was probably dedicated to the Hindu god Siva in pre-Thai times before it became a Buddhist shrine. Three well-restored prangs adorned with some of their original stucco decorations stand behind the remains of the principal sanctuary, which was added in the 15th century.

Wat Sa Sri. Picturesquely sited on an island in a pond northwest of Wat Mahathat, Wat Sa Sri (right) shows the refinement of Sukhothai architecture. Roofless columns rise from the base of the main sanctuary, which also contains a large stucco Buddha image; behind are two elegant chedis.

one of them in rounded Sinhalese style.

War Trapang Thong Lang. This temple has some remarkable stucco decorations (left) on the outer walls of a square chapel. Perhaps the most famous is the southern panel, which shows the descent of the Buddha from heaven surrounded by celestial attendants and which is regarded as one of the masterpieces of Sukhothai art.

WAT TRAPANG THONG. Situated on an island set in a peaceful pond, this temple (below) is marked by a bell-shaped chedi. The viharn has been reconstructed and the temple reconsecrated.

WAT TRAPANG NGERN. Located just behind Wat Mahathat, this temple comprises a number of buildings sited around a big pond. The main feature is an elegant lotus-bud chedi. Many

visitors enjoy walking across the wooden bridge to the islet that once housed a viharn.

SAN THA PHA DAENG. East of Wat Sa Sri, inside the city walls, San Tha Pha Daeng is a Khmer laterite sanctuary consisting of a square cell and an antechamber. It is believed to be the the oldest building in the Sukhothai area, dating from the first half of the 12th century.

WAT CHETUPON

Located south of Sukhothai's city walls, Wat Chetupon is notable for an interesting, partially ruined chedi with images of the Buddha in the four ritual attitudes in stucco bas-relief; the tall standing Buddha is particularly fine. A wall of gray stone surrounds the compound.

WAT SAPHAN HIN

Situated west of the city on a small hill, Wat Saphan Hin derives its name (Stone Bridge) from the stone stairway leading up to it. Within the columns that remain of the viharn is a 41-foot-tall standing Buddha built against a thick brick wall that provides support for the huge image. In the groves and on the surrounding hills there are ruins of monasteries once inhabited by forest-dwelling ascetic monks.

WAT SI CHUM

This temple, southwest of the walled city, is one of the most impressive religious monuments in the area • 47. It is dominated by a huge structure, 50 feet tall, enclosing a seated Buddha of stucco-covered brick almost the same height and 37 feet wide at the lap; the image is referred to as Phra

Achana in the 1292 stone inscription attributed to King Ramkhamhaeng. Within the wall is an enclosed stairway, the ceiling of which is lined with engraved slabs of stone. The reason for the construction of the stairway, which leads to the top of the structure, is not known. Some have suggested that it may be linked with a legend that the image could speak to supplicants below.



WAT PHRA PHAI LUANG

North of Sukhothai's walls and partially surrounded by ponds are the extensive ruins of Wat Phra Phai Luang (below), which rivaled Wat Mahathat in size and importance. Originally, three concentric moats surrounded the main religious complex, consisting of a group of buildings. The complex, besides the religious symbolism related to the representation of the Primordial Ocean, undoubtedly served a practical purpose, similar to the one in Angkor. It is thus evident that the original layout of the city of Sukhothai was set out by the Khmers according to their religious beliefs. The temple originally had three Khmer-style prangs, only one of which remained when it was converted into a Buddhist temple by the Thais. On the same terrace are the remains of a viharn and a chedi, decorated with Buddha images in stucco. A nearby structure enshrines the Buddha in walking, standing, stitting and reclining attitudes.

Each of the 100 engravings depicts a self-contained scene from the Jataka tales moralistic stories dealing with the Buddha's previous lives. The slabs may have been made for Wat Mahathat and later moved to Wat Si Chum for safekeeping.

STONE SLABS

or St CiteM Perhaps the earliest examples of graphic expression found at Sukhothai are the

incised drawings

of Wat Si Chum

above the stairway



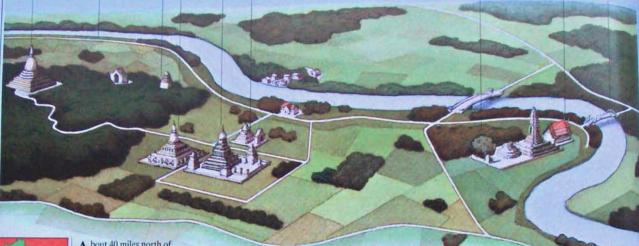
130

▲ THE CENTRAL PLAINS SI SATCHANALAI

ACTOR OF SOLUTION

CHARLE

Wil Pro-State





Half a day

BAN KO NOI EXCAVATIONS

Anyone interested in ceramics should visit an ancient kiln site at Ban Ko Noi, a few miles north of Si Satchanalai. Here a Thai-Australian project headed by Don Hein has uncovered more than 200 kilns and evidence of more, many of them predating those of Sukhothai by four centuries.

A bout 40 miles north of
Sukhothai, on the west bank of the
Yom River, Si Satchanalai was a satellite city
usually governed by a son of the
Sukhothai ruler. Though smaller
than the capital, it was similar
in plan and has a more
picturesque location
overlooking the river and
rural scenery; the two cities
were linked by the Phra Ruang

Highway. A number of impressive
Buddhist temples were built in Si Satchanalai, some as
beautiful as those at Sukhothai, and a nearby district to the
north became famous for kilns that produced superb ceramics
known as Sawankhalok, the name given to the area during the
early Ayutthaya period.

WAT CHANG LOM. Located in the center of the old city, Wat Chang Lom was built in the late 13th century. Its main feature is a large bell-shaped chedi that enshrines relics placed there by King Ramkhamhaeng; around the base of the chedi are several elephant buttresses, hence the name "Temple Surrounded by Elephants."

WAT CHEDI CHET THAKW. Covering a large area, this temple consists of a sanctuary and seven rows of chedis, which probably contain the ashes of Si Satchanalai rulers. Adorning one of the chedis is an impressive stucco image of a seated Buddha protected by the hood of a naga, or sacred serpent ● 50.

WAT KHAO PHANOM PLOENG. WAT Khao Phanom

Ploeng, "Temple of the Mountain of Fire," is located on a hill within the city, accessible by a steep flight of steps. The laterite columns of the temple remain, along with a restored seated Buddha image and a tall chedi.

The hilltop site affords sweeping views of the old city and the countryside.

KILNS

The popular legend that the art of making ceramics came to Sukhothai through Chinese potters brought back from a mission during the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng has been disproven. Nevertheless, ceramics were certainly a thriving export of the kingdom since the early 14th century. The first flask-shaped kilns were built in Sukhothai itself, outside the city wall, but around 1350 the craft moved to three main sites near Si Satchanalai, where superior clay was available. Water jars, bowls, jarlets, covered boxes and numerous other items were produced in bulk, mostly for export to the Philippines, Indonesia and Borneo; the glazes were equally varied, ranging from dark brown to sea-green celadon.

WAT PHRA SI RATANA MAHATHAT ★

Located just a mile from Si Satchanalai, in the village of Chalieng, Wat Phra Si Ratana Mahathat is one of the most remarkable Sukhothai-style temples, believed to date from the 13th century but restored and altered during the Ayutthaya period. The temple complex is aligned on an east-west axis and consists of several ruined buildings, a large Sinhalese-style chedi, and a magnificent prang showing Khmer influence. Among the images are a large seated Buddha and a standing Buddha partially imbedded in the ground; the walls of a sanctuary near the prang are decorated with very fine stucco reliefs that include a beautiful walking Buddha.



Phra B Chinat

iw Kin

FISH MOTH

characteristic motifs on bowls and dishes produced during the Sukhothai period is that of a gracefully curving fish, drawn in surrounded by flower and leaf patterns, the fish has an appealing light-hearted quality appealing to the eyes.



▲ THE CENTRAL PLAINS PHITSANULOK

PHRA BUDDHA CHINARAJ Such is the fame of Wat Mahathat's Phra Buddha Chinaraj that many replicas have been made for other temples in the country. The most noted was enshrined by King Rama V at Wat Benchama bopit (the Marble Temple), the last royal monastery to be built in Bangkok at the beginning of the present century ■ 48

bout 35 miles away, Phitsanulok is often used as a meeting base for visitors to Sukhothai. It is an

almost entirely new provincial capital, as much of the old town burned down in the 1970's.

FLOATING HOUSES

Along the Nan River that flows through Phitsanulok, there can still be seen many of the floating houses and shops that were once characteristic of all Thai towns on waterways, including Bangkok. Some of the floating houses have



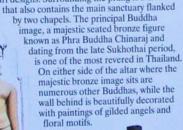
been converted by their enterprising owners into restaurants where visitors can enjoy their meals and watch life go by on the river • 45.

WAT MAHATHAT



Wat Mahathat, more formally known as Wat Phra Si Ratana Mahathat, is the most important temple in Phitsanulok and well known throughout the country; thanks to its large compound, it

escaped serious damage from the fire that destroyed many buildings nearby. Its dominant feature is a gilded, Khmerstyle prang, built during the Ayutthaya period, and the doors of the main sanctuary are beautifully decorated with inlaid mother-of-pearl designs. Surrounding the prang is a cloister





THE NORTH



CHIANG MAI MAP. 133 CHIANG MAI, 134 TEMPLES OF CHIANG MAI, 136 CHIANG MAI CRAFTS, 138 CHIANG MAI EXCURSIONS, 140 LAMPHUN, 141 LAMPANG, 142 TEMPLES OF LAMPANG, 143 WAT PHRA THAT LAMPANG LUANG, 145 NAN VALLEY, 146 MAE HONG SON, 148 MAE RIM AND FANG, 150 CHIANG RAI, 151 HILL TRIBES, 152 CRAFTS OF THE HILL TRIBES, 153 CHIANG SAEN AND THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE, 156

- 1, WAT SUAN DOK 2, SUAN DOK GATE 3, WAT PHRA SINGH 4, WAT MENGRAL 5, WAT MENYONGKON 6, WAT PUAK HONG

- 7. SUAN PRUNG GATE 8. CHANG MAI GATE 9. BANNEN FOLK ART MUSEUM 10. WAT CHEDI LUANG 11. WAT PAN TAO 12. MENGRAI SHRINE

- 13. CHIANG PUAK GATE 14. WAT CHIANG MAN 15. BUS STATION 16. WAT KUTAO 17. TAPAE GATE 18. WAT BUPPARAM
- 19. WAT SALES FAME
 20. NIGHT BAZANS
 21. OLD MOAT
 22. CHIANG MAI ART &
 COLTUME MISSES &
 23. THREE KINGS MOMENTS



«THERE IS AN EXCELLENT PATH TO CHIANG MAI WHICH ELEPHAND CAN FOLLOW, ARRIVING THERE IN NINE MARCHES & An Englishman's Stamese Journals, 1890-92



which lies 430 yards to the west of the river, is divided into two parts, the one embracing the other, like a letter L, on the south and east sides. The inner city faces the cardinal points, and is walled and moated all round. The inner city contains the palace of the head king, the residences of many of the nobility and wealthy men. and numerous religious buildings In the outer city which is peopled chiefly by the descendants of captives, the houses are packed closer together than in the inner one, the gardens are smaller. the religious buildings are fewer. and the population is more dense. The roads in both cities are laid out at right angles to each other; no rubbish is allowed to be placed outside the gardens of the houses, which are palisaded; water is led into the town from a stream flowing from Loi Soo Tayp (Doi Suthep); the floors of the houses are all raised six or eight feet from the ground; and the place has an air of

trim neatnes Holt S. Hallett, A Thousand Miles on an Elephant, 1890.

ppealing in both culture and scenery, the Chiang Mai valley is one of the most popular Thai destinations. It may no longer be the remote Shangri-La described by early visitors - who had to journey for weeks by river and elephant to reach it - but it still possesses a beguiling blend of ancient ruins, local crafts and continuing traditions



HISTORY

Once the cultural, religious and political center of a northern kingdom known as Lanna Thai, Chiang Mai (once known as Zimme) was founded in 1297 by King Mengrai, who had previously established the city of Chiang Rai and also conquered the old Mon capital of Haripunchai (Lamphun today) • 20. A northern legend says Mengrai had the assistance of two allies, King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai and King Ngam Muang of Phayao, and that the site was selected because an auspicious assembly of rare animals had been seen there: two white sambar deer, two white barking deer, and a white mouse with a family of five. Over 90,000 laborers were supposedly involved in the construction of the city. By the time of Mengrai's death in 1317, he had set up a well-organized kingdom that extended from the northern frontiers of Sukhothai to the southern provinces of China, as well as a dynasty which would rule the north for another 200 years. The original walled city of Chiang Mai, containing the royal palace, noble houses and several important temples. was modified often by subsequent rulers. Chiang Mai's golden age came in the reign of King Tilokaraja (1441-87), during which a major Buddhist conference was held there in 1455 and numerous splendid temples were built. A period of instability followed, marked by wars with Ayutthaya and Burma, By 1558 Chiang Mai had fallen to the King of Pegu, and most of Lanna Thai remained under Burmese

control for the next two centuries. King Taksin of Thonburi • 20, who expelled the Burmese after the fall of Ayutthaya, recaptured Chiang Mai in 1776 but shortly afterward the impoverished city was abandoned for 20 years, its population being moved to Lampang. It was revived by King Rama I in 1796, with a son of the

Prince of Lampang as ruler, and remained semi-autonomous until the late 19th century. The last Prince of Chiang Mai died in 1939, by which time the city was merely a provincial capital under control of the central government.



CHIANG MAI TODAY

Modern Chiang Mai, with a population of around 200,000, is Thailand's second-largest city after Bangkok, and is growing fast. The government increasingly earmarks Chiang Mai for development. Its airport is becoming a regional and international hub and the tourist season is being extended year-round with attractions like the Night Safari, golf courses and the Chiang Mai Zoo. Increasing numbers of Bangkok residents fly up to the cooler 'Northern Capital' to visit and even to live. Luxury hotel chains have recently opened here. including Mandarin Oriental,



Sheraton, and the Four Seasons. These and smaller boutique hotels on the river and within the moated old town reflect the resurgence of traditional architecture and design. The city's handicraft

heritage has spawned not only a huge industry of traditional crafts, textiles and souvenirs, but also of cutting-edge contemporary interior designs exported worldwide. Chiang Mai has also become a major center for New Age therapies, following renewed interest in

traditional Thai remedies. Proud of this cultural legacy, khon meuang ('townsfolk') have supported a revival in Lanna pride after a century of modernization. This regional sensibility is not political, but expressed in new festivals, design, music, dance and a reappearance of northern fabrics in clothing. While progress has come in the form of unsightly highrise buildings, traffic congestion and air pollution, numerous

Buddhist temples and shady side streets offer ample

opportunities to discover the city's fabled charms.

present one in the 1950's. Five other bridges now span the river in the city area



THE OLD AND THE NEW

Chiang Mai in the 1940's (left), and the city today (above). It some of the main streets have lost their charm due to modern construction, many smaller ones still to recall a more lesurch past, with picturesque temples and bungalows set in shady compounds among fruit trees.



3 Five days

ROAD TRAFFIC

Dodge through the cars on a bicycle, a motocycle or a tuktuk, which can all be hired by the day.

NAWARAT BRIDGE The first bridge built across the Ping River

in Chiang Mai was the Nawarat, which leads into Tapae Road. Originally a covered

▲ THE NORTH CHIANG MAI



THE OLD TOWN

The original layout of Chiang Mai was altered by several of King Mengrai's successors. The walls and surrounding moat, which today form a square around the old town, date only from the early 19th century, though the ruined gates and bastions have been rebuilt in recent decades. This square precinct contains many of the most important temples, which are best appreciated by walking from one tranquil, shady compound to the next. Chiang Mai's main artery, Rajadamnoen Road, is pedestrianized on Sundays when it becomes a huge market.

THREE KINGS MONUMENT & CITY MUSEUM. The central meeting point of the old town is the plaza where three bronze statues depict the pact between King Mengrai of Chiang Mai. King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai and King Ngam Muang of Phayao to establish the city. Behind it stands the Western classical edifice of the former provincial authority. It now contains a museum describing the city from prehistoric times to the present day. Rather than focusing on artifacts, it features easily comprehensible models, dioramas, photographs and film clips.



A restored section of the walls near Suan Prung Gate (top) and the banks of the Ping River (above).

THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The town center lies between the Ping River and the reconstructed Thapae Gate, a plaza in front of which hosts events and entertainments. Around Tapae, Charoen Prathet and Chang Klan roads congregate many hotels, guest houses, travel agencies, shops and restaurants.

NIGHT BAZAR. Originating as a cluster of stalls on Chang Klan Road and conveniently located near several hotels, the night bazaar now includes modern shopping centers and a galleria where antiques and traditional crafts and fabrics predominate. All around, shops and sidewalk vendors offer a variety of souvenirs and practical items. Most of the local specialties are here: woodcraft,

lacquerware, silverware, sausages, fruits, clothes, accessories, home decorations and hill tribe products. Bars, restaurants and traditional dance shows keep the bazaar district vibrant until at least midnight.



The Three Kings Monument.

PING RIVER

The Ping River, which was once a considerable distance away, changed its course over the centuries and now flows through the town. One of the four main northern waterways, it stretches for over 350 miles. Until the Bhumibol Dam was built near the town of Tak in 1964, it was possible to go most of the way by boat from Chiang Mai to Nakhon Sawan and then on down the Chao Phraya to Bangkok. The dam is one of Thailand's biggest hydroelectric projects.

EAST BANK RIVERSIDE. Though concrete embankments blight the city's side, the verdant east bank between Naowarat Bridge and Wat Kate has become the hottest place to socialize at night. Several tree-shaded restaurant-bars provide food, music and river views from rustic buildings or conserved historic structures. This was a teak shipping district and several wooden buildings surviving along Charoenrat Road house galleries or boutiques. A riverside walk runs north of Wat Kate, while boats embark for tours from just north of Naowarat Bridge, passing handsome mansions, restaurants, waterwheels and a herb garden. South of Naowarat Bridge on Charoenrat Road stands the tourist office.

WESTERN CHIANG MAI

The most fashionable residential area is along Huay Kaeo Road, which leads to Doi Suthep, the mountain that overlooks the city. Starting at Kad Suan Kaew, a shopping center housing a theater, the road is flanked by hotels, bars, shops, condominiums and Chiang Mai University, one of the most favored places to study outside of Bangkok.

CHANG MAI NATIONAL MUSEUM. With labels in English, this

CHIANG MAI NATIONAL MUSEUM. With labels in English, this two-storey collection traces northern Thai history. Exhibits range from archeological finds and ceramics to items related to trade, health and the rise of the handicraft industry. Buddhist art forms the bulk of the artifacts. Located on the Superhighway ring-road just northeast of Wat Chet Yod, this building with Northern crossed kalae finials typifies many mid-20th century local edifices, with its Thai-style roof

capping a concrete block. CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM. Thailand's first contemporary art gallery not only explains the development of traditional and modern art in the north, but also offers a major space for temporary exhibitions. Many of these shows are curated to international standards. The grounds, at the southern end of the university on the corner of Suthep and Nimmanhaemin Roads, feature large sculptures and the Hobby Hut puppet theater, which performs folk tales on weekends. CENTER FOR THE PROMOTION OF ARTS & CULTURE. On the western side of the University Art Museum compound, five exquisite northern buildings have been reconstructed; three Lanna houses, a rice granary and a Thai Lue house. These form a living museum; Origin runs short courses here in English on authentic Lanna arts. Under renowned master Vithi Phanichphant, experts lead participants in dance, music, martial arts, flower offerings and other skills to impart a



The building that once housed the provincial authority is now the Chiang Mai

City Museum.



Wooden sculpture on the grounds of the Chiang Mai University Art Museum.



15th-century Lannastyle bronze Buddha head known as the Phra Saen Sae Buddha, on display at the Chiang Mai National Museum.

▲ THE NORTH TEMPLES OF CHIANG MAI



An aerial view of Wat Phra Singh in about 1930.

WAT PHRA

SINGH PAINTINGS

paintings at Wat Phra Singh, believed to be

the work of a local

Jek Seng, are the

best-preserved in Chiang Mai. In addition to scenes from Jataka stories, they vividly depict everyday northern

life a century ago, from children's

games to interior

The late-19th

century mural

artist named

WAT PHRA SINGH

One of Chiang Mai's most important sanctuaries, Wat Phra Singh was founded in 1345 by King Pha Yu of the

Mengrai Dynasty to enshrine the ashes of his father, King Kham Fu. The lofty main viharn, however, was built in 1925 and has recently been restored. Of greater interest is the older Viharn Laikam on the left, perhaps the finest building that survives in Chiang Mai, built in late Lanna style in 1806 or

1811 • 49, 51. This structure houses the famous Phra Buddha Singh, an early Lanna bronze image brought from Chiang Rai in 1400; the head of the original image was stolen in 1922 and the present one is a replica. The walls of the viharn are decorated with some fine murals painted in the late 19th century. Also notable in the compound is a wooden bot with beautiful stucco decorations and a graceful, elevated library adorned with carved wood

OTHER TEMPLES WITHIN THE WALLS

and glass mosaics.

WAT CHEDI LUANG. Located on Phra Pokklao Road, Wat Chedi Luang is noted for its enormous ruined chedi. The structure was originally built in 1401, enlarged and raised to a height of 300 feet by King Tilokaraja, and destroyed by an earthquake in 1545. What remains has remnants of beautiful stucco figures

and destroyed by an earthquake in 1545. What remains has remnants of beautiful stucco figures flanking the steps and a seated Buddha in a niche. Also in the compound, to the left of the entrance, is an ancient gum tree, below which a small building



shelters Chiang Mai's City Pillar; according to local legend, King Mengrai, founder of the city, was killed by a bolt of lightning near this spot in 1317.

Wat Pan Tao. Near Wat Chedi Luang on Phra Pokklao Road, Wat Pan Tao has one of the most beautiful Lanna-style vibarus, with walls made wholly of wood panels and a roof resting entirely on wooden columns. The doors and windows of the vibaru are decorated with exceptionally fine gilded stucco work.

MENGRAI SHRINE. Located across from Wat Pan Tao, at the corner of the Ratchadamnoen intersection, the Mengrai Shrine honors the founder of Chiang Mai and the dynasty that ruled the Lanna kingdom for 600 years. Local devotees regularly bring offerings to the shrine.

WAT PEAK HONG. Not far from Suan Prung Gate, on a lane off Samlan Road, Wat Puak Hong has an unusual chedi in the form of a round, stepped pyramid dating from the 16th or 17th century. Decorated niches on the chedi shelter images of meditating Buddhas.

WAT CHIANG MAN. Located on Ratchaphanikai Road, in the northeastern corner of the old city, Wat Chiang Man is believed to be the first temple built by King Mengrai ◆ 20 ▲ 134 on the spot where he camped when Chiang Mai was being constructed. Most of its buildings, however, are of more recent date, the chedi itself probably being a 15th-century reconstruction of the first one ◆ 51.

A 19th-century wooden bot contains an interesting collection of bronze images, while two more recent vibarns enshrine a number of revered images, among them the tiny crystal Phra Buddha Setang Khamanai, which probably dates from the 7th century and is believed to have the power to bring rain.

TEMPLES ALONG TAPAE ROAD

WAT SAEN FANG. Just off Tapae Road, at the intersection with Kamphaengdin Road, a lane flanked with naga (sacred serpents) leads to Wat Saen Fang. Burmese influence is strong in its tall chedi, adorned with golden parasols, a large building where the monks reside, and a recently restored viharn resplendent in fresh red and gold paint.





NEW YEA

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The shape of the chech of War Puak Hong is probably inspired by that of Chimese pagodas. Although unusual, a is not the only one in the north; a similar one can be seen at Wat Rampoene, just outside Chiang Mai

MENGRU IMGE

MENGRU IMME Though a moder temple made entirely of cemen, Wat Mengrai, off Ratchamanka Road, Lane 6, is of interest because of its ornare stuccoed entrance gate and a Buddha image cast during King Mengrai's reign and believed in resemble the first ruler.

▲ THE NORTH TEMPLES OF CHIANG MAI



NEW YEAR FLAGS

traditional Thai New Year • 38, held in

Buddhists build small

mid-April, devout

temple grounds to

represent chedis. On

each they place a little flag of colored

PAPER LANTERNS

decorated with

colorful paper lanterns. These

lanterns are

the doors framed by

arches of

branches * of the tree.

and

hung outside

During the festival of

houses and temples in Chiang Mai are

Loy Krathong • 38,

piles of sand in

paper as an

auspicious adornment.

During the celebration of

Songkran, the

WAT BUPPARAM Facing Wat Saen Fang on Tapae Road, Wat Bupparam is a blend of Burmese and Lanna styles. The facade of the main viharn, for example, has Burmese-style arches under a Lanna roof, while another small wooden viharn with stucco decorations is classic Lanna and enshrines three large Buddha images ▲ 82.

WAT MAHARAM. This temple contains a chedi and a viharn in Burmese style while the bot is

Lanna. Of particular interest are the witty caricatured figurines of mythological beasts that stand on the wall facing

WAT BUA KROK LUANG

Across the Ping River, on a side lane off the road to San Khamphaeng, Wat Bua Krok Luang has a viharn containing the second most important mural paintings in Chiang Mai, after those in Wat Phra Singh. These were painted more than a century ago and show the life of the Buddha and scenes



WAT UMONG

from the Jataka tales.

Wat Umong, at the end of a long, winding lane off Suthep Road, contains underground cells for meditation and is one of Chiang Mai's oldest monasteries. Of the original stucco decorations, only a few fragments of naga and the guardian giants known as yaksa remain. The chedi, which rises above the old meditation cells, is a recently built monument, though the cells themselves contain faint traces of the oldest surviving paintings in early Lanna style, dating from the

15th century. The new monastery in the compound is popular with Western Buddhists, who are welcome to join in the retreat and meditation.

WAT CHED YOU

Also known as Wat Potharam Maha Viharn, Wat Ched Yod is located outside the city walls on the highway near the Chiang Mai branch of the National Museum. Its principal feature is a chedi unlike any other in the north, composed of seven chedis on a laterite base with a barrel-vaulted chamber inside. The shape was possibly inspired by the Indian Mahabodhi temple of Bodhgaya or by



Mon replicas in Burma, Most northerners are convinced of the former source and claim that it was built by King Tilokaraja in 1455 for a major Buddhist gathering. The fine stucco decorations on the walls represent 70 celestial deities.

WAT KUTAO

Wat Kutao's unusual chedi is probably the main reason for visiting the temple, which is not very far from the National Stadium. Showing Chinese

influence • 48, it consists of a series of hemispheres superimposed in descending order of size. Wat Kutao was supposedly built in 1613 to hold the ashes of a Burmese ruler of Chiang Mai.

major religious ceremony during

WAT SUAN DOK

About half a mile west of Suan Dok Gate is Wat Suan Dok, the "Flower Garden Temple, which was built on the site of a royal garden. The temple's huge, bell-shaped chedi, similar to those in Sukhothai, was erected at the end of the 14th century by King Ku Na in honor of a well-known monk named Maha Tera

Sumana. The latter had come from Sri Lanka to teach in Chiang Mai and supposedly lived in the garden. Near the chedi is a complex of tombs and other structures containing the remains of Chiang Mai's royal family. Wat Suan Dok is the scene of a



characters by using the attire of rulers, who were Burmese at the time • 51

reflects a tradition of

idealizing heroes and

other noble

A ROYAL CEMETERY Behind Wat Suan Dok are the funeral chedis of the royal family of Chiang Mai.



▲ THE NORTH CHIANG MAI CRAFTS

on the

of religio

Thai items

enforced, Wood-

carvers turned to Burma as a source of

inspiration, since

Burmese religious

included in the official ban.

CELADON WARE

Pale blue-green celadon is one of

Chiang Mai's most popular crafts. The Mengrai Kilns, started by a former

British consul who

settled in the city, produce fine replicas of old

designs, both Thai and Chinese, which are now being exported and sold in leading shops all over the world.

Partly because of skills handed down from generation to The themes of traditional Thai generation and partly because of its long relative isolation from the changing fashions of Bangkok, Chiang Mai has woodcarving were more often than not religious. In the early 1980's a ban preserved its strong crafts tradition, with skills that have remained unchanged for centuries. These

constitute an important aspect of its attraction for modern visitors as well as a profitable export industry for many local producers.

WOODCARVING

Considering the extensive forests of teak and other hardwoods that once covered the northern mountains, it is not surprising that woodcarving ranks high among the

local skills, as can be clearly seen in the splendid gables, panels and roof supports that decorate almost every temple in the region. Though wood is scarcer today,

craftsmen still produce a wide range of furniture, animal figures, trays and other wooden items. The largest concentration of dealers is at Ban Tawai. off the highway, south to Mae Hong Son.



POTTERY

Local potters make a handsome array of lightly glazed earthenware water jars and pots used in most households; according to northern tradition, jars of cool water were placed outside gates for the relief of thirsty strangers who passed by. Celadon pottery production - which moved to the northern town of San Khamphaeng after the collapse of Sukhothai and eventually died out there - has also been revived by several local companies whose handsome tableware, vases and lamp bases are being exported and sold throughout the world.

LACQUERWARE

Lacquerware, which probably came to Thailand from Burma, is made by applying successive coats of translucent colored lacquer to a wood or bamboo base, then embellishing it with designs. The most popular decorations are gold-and-black lacquer paintings, either figures or traditional motifs. Many household objects, from simple bowls to large cabinets, are made by this ancient process, which can be observed at the cottage factories in the Chiang



Mai area, especially on the road to San Khamphaeng.

UMBRELLAS

The small village of Bor Sang ▲ 135, on the San Khamphaeng Road, is almost entirely devoted to the production of umbrellas. These are made of handmade paper stretched over a frame of bamboo, then lightly lacquered to make them relatively waterproof and

adorned with colorful flower patterns by artists. The umbrellas come in varying sizes, from tiny to huge, and are popular as souvenirs or as sunshades on patios and terraces.

TEXTILES

Northern weavers are noted for the quality of their silks and cottons, as well as for their skill at embroidering them with bands of brocade and woven designs. These are traditionally produced in sarong-length pieces for women, the silk being reserved for special occasions and the cotton for everyday wear, a cotton sarong for men, called a

phakoma • 30, comes in plaid patterns. The villages of San Khamphaeng and Pasang, near Chiang Mai, are noted for their weaving, and a wide selection is also available at the night bazaar.

SILVERWARE

Even though silver is not mined in Thailand. silverware has long been a Chiang Mai specialty. particularly bowls with intricate repoussée designs that are used in

numerous ceremonies. The main community of silversmiths is based at Wualai Road, near Chiang Mai Gate, where one of the characteristic sounds is the constant clangor of hammer on metal. In addition to the classic bowls. more contemporary items like trays, teapots and tableware are also produced. In former days, the silver was generally obtained by melting down old coins from British India and Burma. Some of the hill tribes still produce their distinctive silver jewelry by this method, but the Chiang Mai artisans now import their silver from abroad. The price of a silver item is based not so much on the workmanship as on the quality of



A set of beautiful crafted betel-nut boxes was an accessory found in every anstocrate household and many ordinary one as well, consisting if lacquerwate tras and assorted containers used in the once-universal ritual





the metal.

«THE WOODWORK OF THE TEMPLES IS BEAUTIFULLY CARVED AND GILDED, AND RICHLY INLAID WITH GLASS AND TINSEL OF VARIOUS COLOURS.»

HOLT'S, HALLETT

Thiang Mai not only celebrates more festivals than anywhere else in Thailand, but does so with an enthusiasm that attracts tourists and native visitors from all over the country. Dates of the festivals may vary from year to year since some celebrations are based on the lunar calendar. so it is best to check beforehand when planning a trip. The Chiang Mai Flower Festival, replete with colorful parades of blossom-covered floats, takes place in February. Since the 1990s. April now starts with a celebration of Lanna culture. with dance and music performances, and a gad muang, a traditional fair with stalls under red umbrellas, local produce in traditional containers, and most vendors and visitors dressed in Lanna clothing. Also in early April, the Shan community holds a Poi Sang Long ordination festival over three days to rival the equivalent in Mac Hong Son, with costumes and parades around Wat Pha Pao on the outer northeast edge of the moat. Soon after, Songkran • 38, the traditional Thai New Year, is celebrated for a full three days beginning April 13 and blends solemn religious ceremonies with riotous throwing of water on passers-by. Late October

or November brings Loy Krathong • 26, 38, the magical water festival, when by the light of a full moon thousands of little lotus-shaped boats are set adrift on the Ping River and all sorts of activities take place on land. The year ends with the Winter Fair, three days of shows, sports and competitions, and a popular beauty pageant to select Miss Chiang Mai. Every alternate cool season, the

city's streets and temple grounds become an open air gallery of contemporary artworks and performance art for the Chiang Mai Social Installation, lasting several weeks. FESTIVALS AROUND CHIANG MAI. In addition to these major city functions, innumerable smaller ones that are equally high-spirited are held in surrounding towns. In January, for instance, the little umbrella village of Bor Sang, which is approximately 3 miles from San Khamphaeng, stages a

> in August the annual harvest of longan - a highly prized lychee-like fruit known in Thai as lamyai - is celebrated by the people of Lamphun. The paper umbrellas made in Bor Sang are waxed and painted in vivid colors with flowers and scenes from folk tales. Beauty contests are an essential element of any northern Thai festival, large or small, resulting sometimes in such singularly colorful events as the selection of a Miss Garlic,



CONTEMPORARY NORTHERN DESIGN. Since the mid-1990s. Chiang Mai has become the focus of a major export industry in modern interior decorations and furnishings with a northern Thai character. A host of young

designers simplify classic forms using minimalist lines and materials like ceramic, wood. rattan, water

hyacinths. candles, incense, fabric and saa paper, which is handmade from mulberry pulp. They sparingly apply Lanna decoration inspired by textiles, stencils, carvings, lacquerware and gold leaf appliqués. Widely exported, the resulting style influences interiors and products seen across Thailand, though the focus in Chiang Mai are several shops, galleries and boutiques around the Huay Kaew Road end of Nimmanhaemin Road.





of entertaining guests in Chiang Mai is with a khantoke dinner – khan meaning "bowl" and toke being a low round table made of lacquer or rattan. Guests sit on the floor around the table and help themselves to various dishes, generally eaten with glutinous rice, a specialty of the northern region.

The traditional way

S IS BEAUTIFULLY CARD WITH GLASS AND THE

Horny

Control of the contro

GOLDEN CHEDI

The famous golden chedi of Wat Phra

That Doi Suthep, 79 feet high and

39 feet across

at its base, is covered with

engraved gold

plates; on the

vith beautiful

platform around it

are four ornamental

umbrellas, brightly gilded and adorned

filigree decorations, while the walls

of the surrounding

cloister are painted with murals from

the life of the

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▲ THE NORTH

EXCURSIONS FROM CHIANG MAI

DOI SUTHEP

Overlooking Chiang Mai, the 5,283-foot mountain called Doi Suthep is part of the twin-peaked Doi Suthep-Doi Pui National Park. There was no proper road up the mountain

until the mid-1930's, when a monk named Phra Khruba Srivijaya initiated the construction of one, mainly with volunteer labor, to help pilgrims who wanted to visit the famous Wat Phra That Doi Suthep near the summit. It offers spectacular views and much lower temperatures even in the hottest months. The National Park headquarters

are just beyond the temple car park.
WAT PHRA THAT DOI SUTHER.

According to legend, holy relics discovered during the reign of King Ku Na (1355-85) were placed on the back of a white elephant, which carried them to Wat Suan Dok. The elephant was then set free to wander and it climbed Doi Suthep to the site of Wat Phra That, where it dropped dead. The present complex dates from the 16th century and was expanded or restored several times. A flight of 290 steps, bordered by a naga balustrade, leads up from the parking area

to the temple, which has beautifully decorated buildings and a Lanna-style chedi covered with engraved gold plates, flanked by four ornamental umbrellas.

PHUPING PALACE. Built in 1972, Phuping Palace is about 2½ miles beyond Wat Phra That Doi Suthep and serves as the royal family's northern residence. The buildings are closed to the public, but when the royal family is not present the extensive gardens are open. January is the best month to see the numerous temperate-zone plants and trees in flower.

CHIANG MAI ZOO & NIGHT SAFARI

The Chiang Mai Zoological Park, near the foot of Doi Suthep, began as the private collection of Harold Young, an American working in Chiang Mai, and was taken over by the government in 1965 after his death. It has more than 500 animals in an attractively landscaped setting. Two pandas from China have brought many new visitors, while a Night Safari and elephant park expect to become major tourist draws.

SAN KHAMPHAENG

The 8-mile road from Chiang Mai to the village of San Khamphaeng passes the Bor Sang umbrella village \triangle 138 and is lined with shops selling various handicrafts. San Khamphaeng is famous for its handwoven silks and cottons, sold at many shops along the main street.

«FINE FRUIT TREES, AND BEAUTIFUL BAMBOO CLUMPS IN THE GARDENS BORDERING THE ROAD, FORM A MAGNIFICENT AND SHADY AVENUE.»

HOLT S. HALLET

HANDICRAFT VILLAGES

Several villages devoted to handicraft production lie on or just off the Chiang Mai-Chom Thong highway. In Muang Kung the people make household pottery, while Hang Dong specializes in woven bamboo baskets • 39. In Ban Tawai, there are hundreds of woodcarvers, and modern facilities for shipping their products around the world.

DOI INTHANON NATIONAL PARK

Covering 193 square miles, the only temperate rainforest in Thailand is a popular day trip from Chiang

Mai. The park includes the 8,465-foot Doi Inthanon, Thailand's highest mountain. At the top is a chedi containing the ashes of the last ruler of Chiang Mai. Pilgrims paying homage once had to go up on foot or on ponies. During the 1970's, despite protests, the army built a 28-mile road to the summit, opening it to more visitors. However, the park still has many unspoiled trails, waterfalls (such as the Mae Ya falls in the

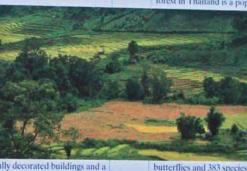
southern part), mountain butterflies and 383 species of birds. The road passes twin chedi dedicated to King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit, as well as Royal Projects of temperate flowers and

fruit, all open to the public.



Less than a mile beyond the turn-off to Doi Inthanon is Wat Si Chom
Thong. It contains a Lanna-style chedi • 51 from the 15th century and sheathed in brass plates, as well as a more recent
Burmese-style chedi. The viharn, built in
1516 and restored in 1817, is beautifully decorated with intricate woodcarvings.







Woodcarving is a favorite occupation, in which some technical artistic skill is displayed, and the native chiefs and some of the princes constantly employ men to make ornaments. Carved seroll work for doors, posts, household articles, is in much request.

Carl Bock

WAT PHRA THAT HARIPUNCHAL

The compound was originally built to face the river, with the entrance at the back of the temple. There is a mixture of styles, as is often the case in Thailand. A newly built covered wooden bridge now crosses the river in front of the temple



new expressway can now be used for the trip to A Lamphun, 16 miles south of Chiang Mai, although the old road is still the more attractive of the two; some people, indeed, regard it as the most beautiful in the north, lined as it is with stately trees growing to 66 feet tall and meeting at the top to form a cool canopy. On the way, it passes large plantations of lamyai, a fruit much prized in the north, and the basket-weaving village of Saraphi.

SERENITY

The tranquil terracotta face (right) is on display in the museum opposite Wat Phra That Haripunchai.

WORLD'S LARGEST GONG One of the most

popular attractions in Wat Phra That Haripunchai is an enormous bronze gong. Cast in 1860, this is supposedly the largest gong in the world • 33.



Lamphun, now a quiet town on the Kwang River, was once an important cultural center. Founded in AD 660, it was the capital of the Mon kingdom of Haripunchai and remained independent until it was incorporated into the Lanna kingdom by King Mengrai in 1281. The walls and moat that can be seen today date only from the early 19th century, but a number of fine temples attest to the city's ancient glory • 20.

WAT PHRA THAT HARIPUNCHAI

One of the major temples in the north, both historically and architecturally, Wat Phra That Haripunchai, facing the Kwang River, was founded in 1044 by King Athitayaraj of Haripunchai on the site of a former royal palace. A modern viharn, built in 1925 to replace the original, houses the Phra



Chamadevi, also in Lamphun. Elsewhere in the compound are a viharn enshrining a standing Buddha known as Phra Chao Tan Jai and a pavilion containing four Buddha footprints, one inside another, MUSEUMS. Some of the many Buddha images presented to Wat Phra That Haripunchai have been been placed in a

small museum within the temple grounds. Opposite Wat Phra That Haripunchai is a small branch of the National Museum. It contains a fine collection of bronze Buddha images, together with stucco and terracotta figures of the early Haripunchai period found during archeological excavations in the area.

WAT CHAMADEVI

Also known as Wat Ku Kut, Wat Chamadevi contains Lamphun's oldest monuments: two brick chedis decorated with stucco figures of the Buddha. According to the noted authority Jean Boisselier, these ruins date from 1218 and are among the last surviving examples of Dvaravati-period (7th-11th century) architecture. The larger chedi, Sat Mahal Pasada, is in the form of a stepped pyramid 69 feet high and 51 feet wide and was possibly inspired by a similar monument at Polonnaruwa in Sri Lanka; it served as the model for similar structures elsewhere in the region. The other small chedi is octagonal and dates from the same period.

WIANG KUM KAM

Wiang Kum Kam, which can be visited on an excursion or on a trip to Lamphun, is a recently unearthed old city built by

King Mengrai shortly before he founded Chiang Mai. He lived there for six years before the site was destroyed when the Ping River changed its course. Among the temples in the area, Wat Chedi Liem has a tall chedi - it is similar to the one at Wat Chamadevi - which was restored at the turn of this century with the addition of Burmes style decorations. Wat Chan Kham has a spirit house where the soul of King

Mengrai himself is believed to reside.

McKean Institute

Not far from Wiang Kum Kam, on a small island in the Ping River, is the McKean Institute, where leprosy patients are treated. It was founded in 1908 by Dr James W. McKean, a Presbyterian missionary, and has become internationally recognized for its approach to the once-dreaded disease.



King of Loovo - the Mon cupital now known as Lopburileft her home in the 7th century and hait Haripunchar on the site of the present town of Lamphia. The location was chosen by shooting as arrow into the air and noting where it fell The city thus founded by Queen Chamadess as she then became, was to remain for many centuries the cultural and religious centes

War Chamadevin Lamphun is named after Haripuncha was later joined by a fortified settlements in the region that formed a small federation; some were entrusted to relatives of the Queen, among them Lampang, which was supposedly founded by one of her sons. This is one of the few episodes in Thai history in which

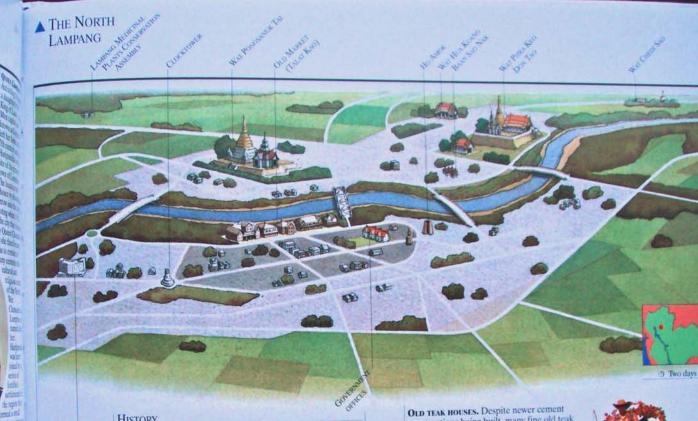
of the North

Amongst the ruins of Wiang Kum Kam, the shapes of some chedis

a woman is credited with the founding of a

significant kingdom





distinctive

style of Lanna

temples • 49 is

captured in this old

engraving based on a sketch by Carl Bock, who visited the town in the early 1880's.

A H

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HISTORY

Located in the valley of the Wang River, a tributary of the Ping, Lampang is the second-largest town in northern Thailand. Its long history goes back to the 7th century, when it was supposedly founded by a son of the Haripunchai queen. Chamadevi ▲ 141, who had established a

Mon kingdom in the north. Originally known as Kelang Nakhon, it had four outlying fortified satellite settlements, of which only Wat Phra That Lampang Luang still exists • 49. Lampang theoretically became part of the Lanna kingdom under Mengrai, though in many ways it

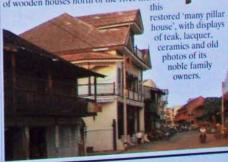
was ruled autonomously; like Chiang Mai, it was occupied by the Burmese for three centuries. The specific location of Kelang Nakhon is unknown, but the town was on the opposite bank of the river from the main part of today's city. In the early 20th century, Lampang was a center of the

northern teak industry, with a population of more than 20,000 and some 4,000 working elephants; it was also visited yearly by ten caravans from the Shan states of Burma, bringing goods that ranged from lacquerware to opium.

constructions being built, many fine old teak mansions survive along the river.

OLD MARKET. Known as talat kao, this market district along the river retains much of its charm. The shophouses display a mixture of Chinese, Burmese and Western influences, and many are adorned with Victorian fretwork imported by Burmese carpenters. Some have been converted into houses and restaurants.

BAAN SAO NAK. An extensive neighborhood of wooden houses north of the river includes



DRAWN CARTS

Horsi

The symbol of Lampang, at leas Thai visitors, is th horse-drawn cart Such carts were originally imports from England in early years of the present century a while they are no longer as commo they once were, enough remain to give the town a leisurely ambience and offer a please way to explore it.

lampang women during a local festival.

A THE NORTH TEMPLES OF LAMPANG

MOSAIC CEILING "The only note of incongruity. Reginald Le May in 1926, "was a series of small gilt angel figures (of the Raphael type). pendent from the ceiling. How easily and only too well they learn from the West!" Such figures of cupids as well as horses and soldiers of Victorian inspiration had been widely used by Mandalay artists since the early days of the British occupation of

WIANG LUANG LAKON Each year, usually in February, a festive parade called Wiang Luang Lakon is staged in Lampang. This celebrates the plendors of Queen Chamadevi's 7th-century court. with hundreds of participants in colorful period dress.







WAT PHRA KEO DON TAO

The most important temple in Lampang. Wat Phra Keo Don Tao supposedly once enshrined the famous Emerald Buddha, which is now housed at Wat Phra Keo in Bangkok ▲ 76, 88. This image, according to legend, was being brought from its place of discovery in Chiang Rai to Chiang Mai in 1436 when the elephant bearing it stopped in Lampang and refused to proceed; it therefore remained in the town until 1468, when King Tilokaraja finally took it to Chiang Mai. The name of the temple, however, comes from another image, the Phra Keo Don Tao, which was housed there before it was moved to Wat Phra That Lampang Luang. The only original structure remaining in the temple is a 165-foot

> most interesting building is a Burmese-style structure built in 1909 as a donation by a Thai prince. The latter has a three-tier roof, elaborate mirror mosaics and superb woodcarvings. The principal viharn, Phra Chao Thong Tip, was constructed in 1930 by the venerated northern monk Khruba Srivijaya and contains a fine Buddha image. A small museum in the temple

«THIS COUNTRY OF LANNA..., MAKES THE STRANGER FEEL THAT, IS HE MUST BE EXILED FROM HIS NATIVE SHORES, HE COULD NOT FIND A LAND OF GREATER CHARM AND SYMPATHY TO SPEND HIS DAYS, REGINALD LE MAY

compound displays a collection of Lanna-style furniture. WAT SUCHABA, Adjacent to Wat Phra Keo Don Tao, Wat Suchada is regarded as part of the same monastery. Built by residents of Chiang Saen who were forcibly resettled after their hometown was destroyed at the beginning of the 19th century, it has a chedi and two viharns in late Lanna style: the main viharn houses a large brick and stucco Buddha and has some beautiful lacquer decorations.

OTHER OLD LANNA TEMPLES

WAT SENG MEANG MA *. Also one of the Chiang Saen temples, Wat Seng Muang Ma is located on Thamma Oo Road. It contains a small but well-proportioned chedi, as well as a viharn that enshrines a large Buddha image and has

some interesting paintings on wood panels dating from the turn of the century (above).

WAT HUA KUANG, Like Wat Suchada, this was built by resettled Chiang Saen people and has an interesting old viharn in late Lanna style, as well as Chiang Saen images and manuscripts on the art of casting bronze that the

displaced people brought with them. WAT PONGSANUK TAI ★. Located on Pongsanuk Road in Wiang Neua, the area occupied by the old Lanna town of Lampang, Wat Pongsanuk Tai is regarded by many as the most charming temple in the town. Within a treefilled new monastery is an old one, almost intact, in Lanna style on a high platform that can be reached by flights of steps on each side. A Lanna chedi

• 49, 51 is covered with copper sheets and also on the platform is a splendid opensided structure with a tiered roof and a mondop (right) in old Lanna style and a newer viharn containing a reclining Buddha image. All the buildings are gracefully proportioned and elegantly decorated. Ku Ya Sudha ★. "The Grotto of

Grandmother Sudha" is the local name of the gatehouse of a nowdestroyed monastery on Wiang Neua Road. Decorated with deities in stucco,

it dates from the 15th century and is one of the oldest examples of Lanna art. Ho Amok. The Octagonal Tower is one of the few parts of Lampang's ancient fortifications that remain today. Located in the modern part of the new town, on the west bank of the Wang river, it served as a lookout and is today a venue of a grand shamanistic ceremony in honor of the spirits of the town.

CHIANG SALA At the beginning of the 19th cents with the support King Rama Lot

Bangkok, the Chi

• 20, launched a determined effort to increase the population of Lampang and Chiang Mai, depleted by so many years of war. In 1804, he destrated Chiang Saen and resettled the inhabitants in Lampang This group was responsible for the construction of a number of temple and the casting of major Buddha images in the







EARLY TOURISTS

destroyed by fire

early in 1991, Wat Sri

Lampang's Burmese-

contained some fine

paintings. Among the

IN LAMPANG

Unfortunately

Chum, one of

style temples.

lacquered wall

subjects depicted

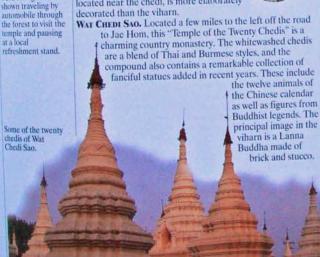
were foreigners.

WAT PRATU PONG * Not far from the Ho Amok and near a remaining part of the old city wall is Wat Pratu Pong. which, although slightly restored, is still one of the best examples of classic northern style. The gable is decorated with a fine woodcarving of a mythological creature with a serpent emerging from its mouth, while the doors of the temple are also exquisitely carved.

BURMESE TEMPLES

After the Burmese Occupation, many Burmese came to the north in the late 19th century to work in the timber trade and some became prosperous resident businessmen. The latter built or restored numerous temples A 149, which partly accounts for the strong

Burmese element in northern architecture • 49, 51. WAT PHA FANG Located opposite the office of Thai Airways on Airport Road. Wat Pha Fang is one of several temples in Lampang that show a strong Burmese influence, even though it has been recently restored. Its chedi, for example, is typically Burmese, while each of the surrounding chapels contains an image in Mandalay style. The bot, which is located near the chedi, is more elaborately decorated than the viharn.



TEMPLES OF LAMPANG LUANG

Located about 12 miles west of Lampang in the Kokha district, Lampang Luang was once a wiang (citadel) established during the early Haripunchai period. Protected by three earthen ramparts separated by moats, the site was part of a group of satellite fortresses associated with the ancient city of Kelang Nakorn.

WAT LAI HIN ★. The first temple in the Kokha district, Wat Lai Hin • 51, is located on high ground overlooking a stream and ricefields. The main viharn, in old Lanna style, has elaborate stucco decorations on the gable and fine lacquerwork inside, both possibly 200 years old, while the gatehouse dates probably from the 15th or 16th century

WAT PONG YANG KOK ★. Just past Wat Phra That Lampang Luang on the road to Hang Chat, Wat Pong Yang Kok has a beautiful open wooden viharn in the old Lanna style. Inside are some famous lacquer decorations featuring a motif of the bodhi tree repeated throughout.

THAI ELEPHANT CONSERVATION CENTER *

One of the most natural ways to encounter Thai elephants is this large wooded complex 23 miles northwest of Lampang on the main road to Chiang Mai, route 11. Developed from a training center for young elephants, it offers shelter for pachyderms left unemployed by the 1988 logging ban and an elephant hospital, some of whose patients can be visited. Courses at the mahout school are also open to foreigners. Most daytrippers come in time to see the animals bathing in the lake before watching the non-exploitative shows at 10am and 11am daily and at 1.30pm on weekends. Elephant rides are also available. Displays explain elephants' lives, history, cultural importance and current predicament. To help raise





THE PHRA KEO Don Tao

believed to have magical powers, the Phra Keo Don Tao, now housed at War Phrathat Lampang Luang, was much coveted by northern rulers of the 15th



THUNG KWIAN

MARKET Thirteen miles from Lampang, near the Thai Elephant Conservation Center. Thung Kwian Market makes for a fascinating stop on route 11 to Chiang Mai. It sells a breadth of traditional forest products from herbs and honeycombs to boar meat and edible insects. A foundry produces elaborate ceremonial blades. Another section stocks a huge range of the Lampang pottery tableware bearing a distinctive painted motif of the town symbol, the chicken.

▲ THE NORTH WAT PHRA THAT LAMPANG LUANG

- L. PIRKA TAL CHEDI WITH BUDDINARILICS
- PRINCIPAL VIIIARS
- 3. VIIIARS RULL DC 1802 4. VIIIARS (CONTEMPORARY)
- 5. VIHARN NAM TAM (KARIN 10111 CLNTURY)
- 6. VIHARS REPOSTRUCTED IS 1967 7. BOT BUILT IN 1924
- 8. Mosticar housing Bridging Stronger 9, CERUMONIAL GARLHOUSE LENGTHORS
- PORTRODED ENCLOSURE 10, STABOWAYS FLANKED BY NAGE
- 11. BOOM THEE
- 112. VIII. AREA WITH PINCA KED DOS TAGRERIAS BORDEN TREE WITH DECORATE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SECTIONS OF THE SECTION OF THE SECT



WAT PHRA THAT LAMPANG LUANG ★

Many an enchanted traveler has called Wat Phra That Lampang Luang the most beautiful temple in Thailand. Showing a spectacular display of Lanna religious architecture 49 and decorative skills, the temple was founded in early Haripunchai times, and contains a 165-foot chedi believed to contain genuine relics of the Buddha. This and all the most important buildings are located within a porticoed enclosure, situated on top of a hillock; the main entrance is a monumental gatehouse adorned with stucco-work. Lions and

naga (sacred serpents) guard the steps. The main viharn behind the gate-house is an opensided structure built in 1496 and restored several times. The painting on the wooden panels below the roof caves date from the late 19th century, but the building was actually reconstructed by

Phra Khruba Srivijaya in the 1930's

Also in the enclosure are a bot, three viharns and a mondop containing a camera obscura image of the chedi. The Viharn Nam Tam is probably the oldest surviving Lanna building, and has been beautifully restored to its original form. Paintings from the 16th century were revealed during the restoration. In an enclosure to the side stands a simple viharn housing the Phra Keo Don Tao Buddha image. Beside it, hundreds of decorated carved wooden crutches rest against a vast multi-trunk bodhi tree. Lampang Luang is the main surviving example of a fortified settlement, which was built around a citadel, or wiang. This type of stronghold was once very common in northern Thailand, and was used for military

purposes until the 18th century, when it was occupied by the Burmese. In 1736, Lampang Luang became the scene of a famous duel between the Burmese general and the Thai hero, Tip Chang, who had cleverly sneaked inside the walls through a drain to confront the enemy. Today the farming community is still clustered around the temple, which was built on high ground, though its fortifications have been dismantled. Traces of three parallel earthen ramparts – separated by two moats filled with water – can still be seen in the village.

The main vibarn enshrines a gilded kn • 49 (pagoda-like structure inside the

temple) containing

the presiding Buddha image (below).

祖祖祖祖

西原書店がお 東京市

145



Nan can be reached from Chiang Mai by road in four hours or by air in 45 minutes. The road trip is worthwhile since it offers the opportunity to enjoy some pleasant rural scenery and also to visit interesting attractions along the way.

PHRAE

HILL TRIBES

The Phi Thong

Luang, "Spirits of the Yellow Leaves," who

live in the Nan area.

are among the most

elusive of the hill

tribe groups, still

following a

prehistoric

Only in the

lifestyle • 17.

1960's was their

existence confirmed

by an expedition that

came across some of

them in their jungle

hiding place. In the Nan Valley are

also several hundreds

Austro-Asiatic tribe that inhabited the

attival of the Thais.

region before the

of Khamus, an

virtually

Coal mining and, until recently, logging have traditionally been the sources of Phrae's prosperity, still evident in some fine old wooden mansions and a thriving local furniture industry. Baan Vongburi is an

authentic old mansion with its teak fretwork, old furniture, documents and decorations preserved and open to the public. Phrae's biggest teak house, Baan Pra Tab Jai, was built in 1976 from 130 ancient logs to house an eclectic display of objects for

tourists to see local craftwork. Burmese influences can be seen in Wat Chom Sawan, while the most famous temple is Wat Phra That Cho Hae, atop a teakcovered hill just outside the town.

PHAE MUANG PHI

Phae Muang Phi, the "Ghost City," is located off Highway 101 on the way to Nan. This is actually not a town but a shallow depression where soil erosion has resulted in a number of strange rock-like formations that do indeed resemble the deserted dwellings of some mysterious race.

Nan Town ★

As late as the 1910's, Nan was capital of a semi-autonomous principality, founded in 1368. Until around 1450, the city had a close relationship with Sukhothai, then came under the indirect control of the Lanna kingdom. It was ruled by the Burmese from 1558 to 1788, before it pledged allegiance to

authority until the central government finally assumed full control in 1931. Spread out along the west bank of the Nan River, the modern town has a prosperous air, with many shops selling luxury goods.

TEMPLES

WAT PHUMIN. This temple is the leading landmark of Nan, established in 1596 by a ruler named Phra Chao Chetabutra Phromin and extensively renovated in

1867. The cruciform viharn has steps leading up to splendidly carved doors on each of the four sides, while the interior is dominated by four large Buddha images facing the cardinal

points • 49. Of special interest are the murals probably painted at the turn of the century by Tai Lue artists. These mainly depict the Khatta Kumara and Nimi Jataka tales and contain a wealth of detailed visual information about the dress, tattoos and hairstyles of the period.

WAT PHRA THAT CHAE HAENG. Located southeast of the town on the

opposite bank of the Nan River, this temple is noted for the enormous naga (serpent) stairway that leads to the entrance. Inside the courtyard is a 180-foot-high golden chedi with four smaller chedis, while the viharn is a beautiful structure showing Laotian influence.

WAT CHANG KHAM VORA VIHARN. This temple, directly opposite the local branch of the National Museum, dates from 1406 but has been restored several times; it once contained five Buddha images commissioned in 1426 by a Nan ruler, only one of which - a 5-foot walking Buddha in solid gold - is kept at the temple in the monks' residence

WAT PHRAYA PHU. This houses two of the other images. both made of bronze in the Sukhothai style. Wat Suan Tan, on the western side of town, enshrines the important Buddha image known as Phra Chan Thong Thip, a fine example of Sukhothai style, while Wat Satharos on the northern outskirts has an unusual chedi

mounted on a high square base.



NAS BOAT RACES Held to celebrate the end of Buddhist Lent in late October or early November, the Nan boat races take place along a stretch of river near the Governor's residence Over 40 naga-prowed boats, each with up to 50 oarsmen. participate in this colorful event, one of Thailand's most exciting festivals Ernest Young wrote in his book, The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe, "In these races no consideration is paid to fouls. The object of each crew is to reach the winningpost first, and any crew is allowed to prevent its opponents attaining that desirable end, by any means they care to employ. The consequence is

that the first part of the race revolves itself into a series of ramming manoeuvres. There is a fierce struggle between the rival crews who try to upset each other. The intense excitement prevails amongst the spectators as two boats near other.



A THE NORTH MAE HONG SON LOOP

One of the most scenically stunning trips in Thailand is the loop west from Chiang Mai that takes in the little provincial capital of Mae Hong Son A 148. The clockwise southern and anti-clockwise northern routes each take a full day's driving to reach Mae Hong Son. Since there is much to see en route, many travellers break overnight on each leg of the trip to make a jaunt lasting several days, though a new road via Mae Chaem shortens the southern route. If there is time for only half the loop, travellers can fly to or from Mae Hong Son.

SOUTHERN ROUTE VIA CHOM THONG AND HOT



Continuing south on the Chiang Mai-Chom Thong road past Hot leads to the first metalled road to reach Mae Hong Son. It was opened in 1965 and has been extensively improved in recent years. It winds through some of Thailand's most beautiful scenery. with misty mountains, verdant valleys and forests of pine trees planted to replace those cut down by the hill tribes. The view is at its most spectacular as the road descends steeply into the narrow valley of the

Pai River where Mae Hong Son is located.

OB LUANG GORGE. A narrow defile with steep walls, the Ob Luang Gorge is one of Thailand's most celebrated beauty spots. Nearby is a nature park, where trails lead 650 feet down to the bottom of the gorge.

MAE SARIANG. A small town 62 miles from Hot on the road from Chiang Mai to Mae Hong Son, Mae Sariang has wooden shophouses and a rickety bridge that spans the Yuam River and leads to the mountain range bordering Burma. Two local temples are worth visiting for their Burmese-style architecture

• 51. Wat Utthayarom, which dates from 1896, has three chedis, one of which has nine spires, while nearby Wat Boonruang is much more elaborately decorated and has the monks' quarters in a longhouse raised on stilts. A dirt track leads south from Mae Sariang along the Burmese border all the way to Tak, but as it is known to be unsafe, the route is seldom used by foreigners.

A newly metalled road quickens the southern route slightly.

SOUTHERN ROUTE VIA MAE CHAEM

have charming murals.

An old Shan-style teak mansion in Pai

but is worth taking in its own right. Just before Chom Thong ▲ 140, take the road up into Doi Inthanon National Park, then take a left onto route 1192, which crosses the mountain's shoulder and drops precipitously into the Mae Chaem valley, before heading north up the valley on route 1088 and east on route 1263 to join the southern route at Khun Yuam, passing Mae Surin Waterfall and some of the sunflower fields for which Mae Hong Son province is famed. MAE CHAEM. Long isolated, this valley retains many traditions lost elsewhere. It is renowned for the teen chok weaving used in Lanna skirt hems, particularly in the settlements of Ban Tha Pha and Ban Thong Fai. Near Ban Tha Pha are two of the valley's well-preserved rural temples, Wat Pa Daet, and Wat Yang Luang, both of which







NORTHERN ROUTE VIA PAI

If anything, the later northern route via Pai is even more dramatic. Taking the Chiang Mai-Fang road north past Mae Sa ▲ 150 and Mae Rim, turn left at Mae Malai onto route 1095, which follows a route that Japanese occupiers in World War II forced local people to build as a link into



Rice paddy fields around Pai.

increases, the road passes Mok Fa Waterfall, Pong Duet Hot Springs and a viewpoint. Shortly afterwards, a turning to Huay Nam Dang National Park offers an even greater lookout over ranges of mountains, with a view most magical at sunrise. Continuing past Pai, the road offers a side-trip to Tham Lot, an enormous cave with a river running through it that can be explored with a guide. Before the road drops into Mae Hong Son, a viewpoint presents an awesome vista of forested hills marching off west into Burma, with the border less than 13 miles away.

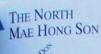
PAL Until a decade ago, this quaint village on the Pai River was a quiet community farming rice on terraced fields. Originally populated by Shan, it is home to many minorities. including a large Muslim-Thai presence. Backpackers discovered its charms as a place to relax, but it developed in an culturally rich way. Not only were old buildings retained, but many of the guesthouses and small hotels feature painting studios, cooking schools, jewelry workshops, massage training centers, herb gardens, art galleries and surprisingly cosmopolitan food. Five miles south of Pai, the Tha Pai Hot Springs bubble in a forested setting. The same distance south but on the west side of the river, Pai Gorge features small eroded canyons. Pai is a good base from which to trek to hill tribe villages, visit nearby waterfalls or go whitewater rafting. Things will likely change faster with the planned opening of a small airport.



Thai border with Burma follows a geological fault line. Though there is little seismic activity superheated water surges to the surface at steaming springs Accessible springs include Pong Duet. on the road to Pai, and Tha Pai Hot Springs, five miles south of Pai. Downstream from the scalding sulphurous outlets, where That tourists like to boil eggs, it is possible to bathe in the warmed

redicinal hot water





TONG SON TONG

START START

S. Prider See

W. Charles



underbrush for cultivation creates the third mist: smoke. From February through April, smoke can at times cause respiratory problems and force flights to be cancelled, though most of the time the area is a delight to isit.

by

Mae Hong Son is the closest place in Thailand to a Shangri-La. Though it has certainly been discovered by the outside world, it retains an allure through its remoteness, beauty, tribal folk and natural setting within a narrow forested

valley. Initially popularized by trekkers looking for less disturbed hill tribe villages to visit, the town has become a tourist base for urbanites wanting a retreat and adventure-seekers seeking thrills like mountain biking, horse riding and whitewater rafting. Mae Hong Son is known to Thais as the "town of three mists". In the rainy season, misty clouds swirt through the

surrounding peaks.

During the cool season, light fog cossets the

lake and temple spires in the morning. By the hot season, temperatures rise to 100°F, and the burning of rice stubble and forest

Though constituted as a city by the ruler of Chiang Mai in 1874 and as a province under the Ministry of

Interior in 1893, Mae Hong Son is regarded as the back of beyond by most people in Thailand. It remained isolated from the rest of Thailand until 196 metalled road was

Thailand until 1965 when the metalled road was opened. Mae Hong Son is in fact so remote that it was a favored place of exile for government

officials charged with serious offenses against the State.
Today, however, a regular domestic air service links the city
with Chiang Mai, thus opening up the valley to tourism.





D Four days

Shans, who belong to the same ethnic

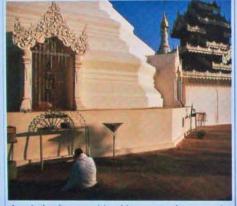


MAE HONG SON TODAY *

Nestled amid forested, mist-shrouded mountains, Mac Hong Son still has a tranquit feeling of remoteness, a leisurely ambience that comes as a welcome contrast to the bustle of most other modern northern towns. The liveliest time of day is between 6am and 8am, when a busy market springs up behind the Mac Tee Hotel, with stalls selling food, clothing and household goods, and colorful hill tribe people mingle with the local populace. Otherwise the chief charm of Mac Hong Son is strolling about seenic Jongkhum Lake, visiting various temples in the area, and enjoying its cool climate during the winter months.

WAT PHRA THAT DOI KONG MU ★

Doi Kong Mu is the name of the small hill that dominates Mac Hong Son, often covered with mist in the morning. A road leads to Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu at the summit, where there are a number of Buddha images and two chedis – one built in 1860, the other in 1874. The mist



SHAN ORDINATION CEREMONY

Each year in early
April the Shans of
Mae Hong Son
observe a colorful
ritual known as Poi
Sang Long. This
marks the initiation
of young boys into
the monkhood • 25
and involves a gala
procession in which
the novices are
carried to the
monastery with
dances performed by
participants dressed
in animal costumes.



clears in the afternoon, giving visitors spectacular panoramic views of the valley and the surrounding mountains; the wonderful experience is enhanced by the tinkle of bells from the tops of the chedis, which are quite dramatically illuminated after dark.

Loy Krathong. The water festival

38 is celebrated in Burmese
fashion in Mae Hong Son. Instead
of being set adrift on rivers and
ponds, as in the rest of the
country, the lotus-shaped krathong
are attached to paper lanterns and
released into the air from the top of
Doi Kong Mu overlooking the town.



OTHER TEMPLES

War Hua Wiang. Located near the morning market, Wat Hua Wiang is a dilapidated wooden temple that houses an exceptionally fine brass seated Buddha, a replica of the one in Mandalay. Sections of the image were cast in Burma, then transported overland and by river and assembled in Mae Hong Son.

WAT KHAM KHO. Across the road from Wat Phra Non, Wat Kham Kho was built in 1890; the covered walkway from the main gate and the viharn have elegant filigree work on the eaves. The viharn contains five principal Buddha images, the central one being Burmese in style. In front of the altar there is a beautiful 80-year-old

peacock throne inlaid with colored glass. WAT PHRA NON.

Located at the foot of Doi Kong

Wat Phra Non, a rebuilt temple that houses two large Buddha images made of plaster over brick. One, 40 feet long, is in

the reclining position, and the other is seated; both have realistic, painted faces in the Burmese fashion. Just behind this temple are two huge stone lion statues carved in Burmese fashion. They guard the

entrance to the old deserted footpath up Doi Kong Mu. A few steps further on is a row of six chedis built on an elevated platform – all that remains of Wat Muay Toh.

WAT CHONG KAM AND WAT CHONG KLANG ★. These are two Burmese-style temples in the same compound, picturesquely sited beside a small lake and surrounded by a palm grove. Of

special interest is a collection of 33 wooden figures. These figures are kept in a small barred room just inside the entrance to the vibarn of Wat Chong Klang. Representing figures from the Vessantara Jataka – one of a collection of stories dealing with the Buddha's previous fives – these were brought from Burma in 1857. Near Wat Chong Kam is Luang Pho To, which enshrines a revered 16-foot-tall brick and plaster Buddha image.

Deserted Wat Hua Wiang has an elaborately decorated corrugated-iron roof.



Detailed filigree work is a feature of Shan temples



▲ THE NORTH MAE RIM AND FANG

"The road to Tatong

forest, with a high

running north and

south, rising abruptly

to the left. The trees were literally covered with orchids, which

were just past their prime, the dry season

flowering. Many other

being the time for

varieties of flowers.

colours and often of

gigantic size, flourished in the open

patches between the

remember to have seen anywhere such a

profusion of flowers as when travelling

through Lao and in

they seemed more

this particular district

abundant than ever."

Carl Bock

trees. I do not

of most gorgeous

mountain-chain,

lay through a somewhat open



ne of the most scenic drives in the Chiang Mai area is through the Mae Sa Valley, an increasingly developed area that begins with a left turn at Mae Rim, about 7 miles out of Chiang Mai on the road to Fang. Several resorts have appeared in the valley over the past few years. with terraces on the mountain slopes and neat, landscaped gardens of mostly temperatezone plants. There are also rustic cottages that attract city-dwellers longing for a change of scene and a taste of country life without the usual discomforts. The winding

road eventually slopes down to the Chiang Mai-Chom Thong Highway. The scenery, however, is most attractive along this least developed section.

ORCHID FARMS

There are several orchid nurseries in the Mae Sa Valley, all open to visitors for a nominal entrance fee. In addition to dazzling displays of blooming plants • 11, both native and

hybrid, most of the nurseries also have demonstrations of orchid propagation and shops selling such souvenirs as orchid blossoms coated with gold.

FA MUI ORCHID. One of the most beautiful of northern Thailand's indigenous orchids is Vanda coerulea, known in Thai as Fa Mui, the natural color of which is a heavenly blue that comes in a variety of subtle shades. This is prized by foreign orchid growers for

hybridization and was used to produce the famous Vanda rothschildiana (right) • 11.

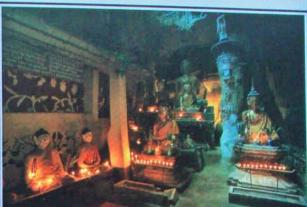
ELEPHANT-TRAINING CAMP

One of the most popular tourist stops along the Mae Sa Valley road is an elephant-training camp near the Mae Sa Waterfall. The animals and their trainers give a performance









at around 9am every day. Elephant rides through the jungle to the Mae Sa Valley Resort can also be arranged.

CHIANG DAO CAVES

Doi Chiang Dao, at 7,540 feet Thailand's third-highest mountain, is 45 miles from Chiang Mai. Nestling at the foot of the mountain are the Chiang Dao Caves, accessible through a narrow entrance at the top of a covered stairway. They consist of several chambers (above), the first of which receives some light from an opening above and is the most impressive. Shan Buddhists have long venerated the caves and have placed a number of large Buddha images there. Further in, more steps flanked by a long naga lead down to a large reclining Buddha carved out of the limestone and a life-sized statue of one of the Buddha's disciples.

PHI POB PEOPLE Legend has it that the little town of the little town of Chiang Dao was once inhabited by people possessed by phi pob, spirits • 27 who ate the entrails of their victims. Like lepers. such people were sent to live in remote communities far away



FANG

Founded by King Mengrai • 20 in 1268 and once a prosperous, independent city, Fang was destroyed by the Burmese at the beginning of the 19th century and deserted until 1880. The present

TO CHIANG RAI BY BOAT

town is mainly of interest because of its proximity to Burma and the colorful tribal people who come to its market to sell their goods.



Tha Thon is a small village on the bank of the Kok River, about 14 miles north of Fang, From a landing near Wat Tha Ton, long-tail boats leave at 12.30pm daily for a three-hour trip down the river to Chiang Rai, which offers exciting rapids and exceptionally beautiful natural scenery. A three-day trip can be made by bamboo raft. Booking for the trip should be made 10 days in advance.

The Fang valley, is peppered with picturesque farming communities made up of simple native huts with thatched roofs, reflecting a timeless way of life

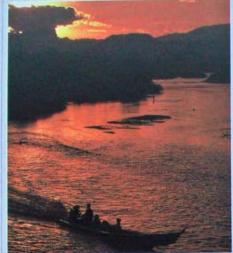
in striking contrast to the bustling. modern ways of larger northern towns and cities



▲ THE NORTH CHIANG RAI

HILL TRIBE TREKS northern mountains to enjoy the scenery and visit remote and exotic hill tribe villages became an important part of Chiang Mai's appeal in the 1980's. especially with adventurous travelers. That area eventually became "overtrekked," at least among more dedicated enthusiasts. so the focus shifted to Chiang Rai, then to Pai and Mae Son Dozens of agencies opened in these places, offering everything from daytrips and two-day excursions to treks lasting a week or more, with a wide range of prices and amenities available Look for an agency that meets your particular requirements. keeping in mind a few basic considerations. The best time for trekking is the cool, dry season from November through the end of February; March through May can be

hazy, while during the rainy season the mountain trails are often muddy and slippery. Most of the villages provide a place to sleep, and food is generally part of the trek package, but bring along snacks to supplement the limited variety of food available there.



Though relatively little remains of its past, Chiang Rai has an ancient history, having been founded by King Mengrai in 1262 • 20, on a site protected by the Kok River and by three small hills. Its strategic location near the border made it an important trading center but also ensured that it would suffer during the frequent wars between Thailand and Burma; for a long period during the 19th century it was more or less abandoned, with only a few hundred families remaining within the old city walls. Prosperity returned slowly – as late as 1970, it had a population of only around 10,000 and has had a strong visible effect only in recent years.

CHIANG RAI TODAY. Modern Chiang Rai has little to offer in the way of physical beauty or exotic atmosphere, being for the most part a typical Thai provincial capital full of nondescript rows of cement shops and drab, dusty streets. Nevertheless, it has enjoyed a considerable boom over the past decade, thanks to its proximity to the fabled Golden Triangle and its convenience as a base for trekking expeditions into

the nearby hills. New hotels, including a large one on an island in the Kok River, have risen almost everywhere, along with restaurants and shops catering to foreign tourists and numerous agencies that organize visits to tribal villages.

CHIANG RAI TEMPLES. Wat Phra Singh, on Singhakai Road, once enshrined the revered image known as Phra Buddha Si Hing, now at the temple of the same name in Chiang Mai; a replica is kept at the Chiang Rai temple. Wat Phra Keo, on Ruang Nakorn Road, contains an early bronze Chiang Saen image and a reconstructed chedi, where in 1436 the famous Emerald Buddha was discovered. Wat Ngam Muang has an

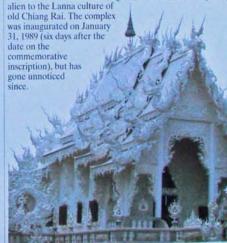
ancient chedi with the remains of King Mengrai. Wat Doi

Tong is on a hill that commands a fine view of the Kok River.



CITY WALLS. In the late 1980's, the municipality of Chiang Rai became aware that the city's claims to an ancient and glorious past are not supported by an adequate amount of archeological and architectural evidence, and tourist attractions are somewhat wanting in the town. It was then decided to build them and sponsors, historians and artists were called in to help to restore the glory of the city. The first objective was the city walls. The original walls were pulled down in 1920 on the advice of Dr Briggs, an American missionary physician who argued that they were not only useless but were also a permanent source of all kinds of illnesses because they obstructed the flow of fresh air. Initially, it had been hoped that a complete city gate and a good part of the walls could be rebuilt, but no evidence whatsoever was found to help with the reconstruction except an engraving showing an elephant passing through a gate against the rays of the rising sun. The elephant was quickly taken as a vardstick, and assuming that its height may have been at least 8 feet, a stretch of cement wall covered with bricks was quickly built. It measured 330 feet long and 16 feet high, with an opening in the middle (no evidence upon which to reconstruct the gate was found). This "antiquity" now stands proudly in front of a shopping center.

CITY PILLAR. The second achievement was the construction of a city pillar, which Chiang Rai never had. This was erected on a hilltop – Doi Chomthong – on the outskirts of the town where a telephone exchange was about to be built. Pittaya Boonag, a lecturer from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Chiang Mai, was called in to design a city pillar according to Thai cosmology, and he ended up with a complex of 108 granite pillars surrounding "the navel of the Universe," a larger column of phallic shape 5.5 feet high. The design represents major features of the universe as illustrated in various Thai murals in Bangkok, and therefore completely alien to the Lanna culture of





A MODERN ARTIST TEMPLE rarely built in Thailand and most of those conform to a standard template based on the Bangkok formula. ometimes regardless of regional character. One exception, Wat Rong Khun, is among the most beautiful and unusual in the country. Located just south of Chiang Rai, it is the brainchild of Chalermchai Kositphiphat, a local painter who became a nationally known figure. Most famous for his murals at the Thai temple in Wimbledon, London, Chalermchai designed the Wat Rong Khun viharn and its causeway in a style combining Lanna nesthetics and a personal flair that reminds some o Antonio Gaudi's Sagrada Familia cathedral in Barcelona. The florid tracery and fantastical depictions of mythical creatures are familiar from his modern Buddhist paintings, only sculpted in all-white stucco. Featuring more of his muri inside, the temple became a destination for pilgrims and art lovers even before its completion.

A THE NORTH HILL TRIBES

THE FIRST

HILL TRIBES

The Lahus were the first hill tribes to

migrate to northern

Thailand in the last

quarter of the 19th century.

The Akhas were

the last to arrive

and their first village

was erected in 1905

took place in the

The largest migration

the mountains of Thailand's far north, along the borders of Burma and Laos, are home to a number of tribal groups, each with its own distinctive culture and traditions. Only one tribe, the Karens, has lived in the region since ancient times; others began migrating in the 19th century into what was then rugged hills, left unpopulated by the Thais, who are lowland farmers. Some have come only in relatively recent years, driven by the wars in Indo-China and the unrest in northern Burma. The total tribal population is estimated at about half a million, divided into two general ethnic groups. The Hmongs and the Miens (known to Thais as the Yao) belong to the Sino-Tibetan group, while the Karens, Akhas, Lisus and Lahus are members of the Tibeto-Burmese group.



The tribes • 17 do not possess definite territories but live interspersed in a number of settlements, each at a preferred altitude. Traditionally all the tribes are semi-nomadic. They will settle on the hills, clear the land by fire, and cultivate it for a few years until the soil is impoverished. They will then move on to another hill site. Slash-and-burn cultivation has caused considerable damage and efforts are being made to resettle them at lower altitudes where the land can be irrigated. However, tribesmen find difficulty adapting to the heat in the valleys and to new developments in rural life.

OPIUM CULTIVATION

With the exception of the Karens, the hill tribes are mainly opium cultivators. The practice of opium cultivation was originally forced upon the Hmongs by



«WHEREVER YOU GO...MAY YOUR FEET NOT STUMBLE, YOUR ARMS NOT FALTER; MAY YOUR WORDS PROVE TRUE, YOUR HOPES BE FULFILLED...AND ALL YOU UNDERTAKE FLOURISH.»

TRIBAL BLESSING





opium to the Marseilles gangsters to finance the war against the communists. When the Hmongs migrated, they spread opium cultivation and trade in the region. Subsequently the Americans through the CIA encouraged opium cultivation to win the support of the Hmongs in the secret war against the Pathet Laos. Only when public opinion became concerned about drugs did the Western powers try to stop opium cultivation, forcing Third World countries to ban what had become a major source of income and a powerful political tool. While the military elites of many Indo-Chinese countries are still actively involved in the opium trade and drugs keep reaching the West, the big losers are the hill tribes, who see their only source of income under constant threat. Once addicted to opium, most tribesmen now turn to heroin, and cases are reported of children below school age who are already addicted. An interesting scheme to eradicate

opium cultivation has been initiated by the King of Thailand, who has sought to introduce new commercial crops to replace the opium poppy as well as to bring better medical treatment and social welfare to the tribal groups. Among the crops introduced successfully thus far are coffee, vegetables, strawberries, peaches, lychees and apples. As a result of such efforts, opium production has dropped drastically in the country, many hill tribe children are receiving a basic education in settled villages, and their elders are more often seen mingling with the majority Thais in lowland towns and cities.

Old postcards from the early 20th century depicting typical Akha attire (left) and Karen dress

THE KARENS

lumbering about 250,000, the Karens are the largest hill tribe group. They are skilled farmers and have become sedentary, living on irrigated land. Karen women are noted for their skill in weaving cotton, commonly red or orange, which they embroider and decorate with seeds.



CRAFTS OF THE HILL TRIBES THE MIEN

"Hill tribes" is not an ideal term for these diverse peoples of Thailand. Though they each possess a strong ethnic identity, their communities are dispersed throughout northern Thailand, with no unifying "tribal" organization. These groups do share some characteristics that justify the name of hill tribe, differentiating them from the other ethnic groups of northern Thailand. One of these characteristics is a rich material culture. The Mien

or Yao peoples are among the most "Chinese" of the hill tribes, probably originating from southern China about 2,000 years ago. There are large numbers of Mien in China, Laos and Vietnam. They first migrated to Thailand from Laos in the mid-19th century. They use Chinese script, their social organization is patriarchal, and their religion shows a strong Chinese influence. They share with other groups great skill in textile-making, specializing in crossstitch embroidery work.

MIEN TEXTILES Homespun cotton cloth, dyed a deep indigo is the basic material for most Mien that cloth is from Thai lowlands. The naturally dyed homespun silk, the embroidery the warp or weft. buy threads, in new colors, and prefer the cross-stitch, in which diagonally across the warp and weft. The turban, waistcloth and pants of a traditional woman's outfit are embroidered; the tunic with its red fur collar is not as fully



APPLIQUÉ
The appliqué technique allows women to adorn their textiles with shapes which are more organic than motifs on embroidered cloths. Though still symmetrical, the shapes are made of complex lobes and tendrils. The appliqué example shown above is from a saddlecloth, white braiding highlighting the appliqué shapes.



ANCESTOR FIGURES

ANCESTOR HOURES
The Mien traditionally practice forms of ancestor worship that owe much to Chinese ritual. Ancestors' names are recorded in a special book, and recited when offerings are made. Ancestor figures such as this one symbolize the generalized presence of the ancestors, who are informed of births and weddings, and who provide protection to their descendants.



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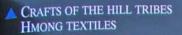
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Mien religion draws its visual expression from archaic forms of Chinese folk religion. These paintings depict figures in a large hierarchical heon of gods and spirits





«A TINY NEEDLE, STRANDS OF BRIGHT THREAD, AND THE GENIUS OF A HMONG WOMAN – THESE ARE THE INGREDIENTS OF SOME OF THE MOST EXQUISITE NEEDLEWORK TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE.»

PAUL AND ELAINE LEWIS

Hmong women are particularly skilled in the production of textiles. Their traditional version of the backstrap loom is unique, equipped with foot treadles for shifting the warp threads. They are the only group among the hill tribes to use the batik resist-dyeing technique, producing designs in blue and white monochrome. These designs are often enhanced with a layer of embroidery. To a modern eye, the Hmongs' mastery of geometric designs is especially pleasing. Special clothes are worn by young women at New Year, but the Hmongs traditionally reserve their full repertoire of textile expression for ornate funerary costumes, as in this woman's set.

FUNERARY ELEGANCE
Burial clothes are made by
the wife for her husband
and herself. Made from
hemp cloth, apart from
the pants or skirt,
there are three or
more upper richly
embroidered
garments.











3.63

CHILDREN'S JACKETS
The Chinese-style asymmetrical front fastening is highlighted with fine embroidery in this child's jacket. The abstract embroidery motifs are particularly attractive and even the smallest clothes are richly adorned.

SPIRIT LOCKS
This silver of many kinds favored by Hmong men and women, is said to represent a lock, localize the soul

binding the soul to the body. It hangs from a neck ring. The incised patterning seems to be derived from the embroidery patterns used in women's collars. These collar pieces (right), made by the women of the White Hmong subgroup, demonstrate a range of embroidery and appliqué techniques. Measuring around 5 by 6 inches, they hang from a flap down the

CRAFTS OF THE HILL TRIBES SILVERWORK OF THE LAHU AND AKHA

The Lahu, Akha and Lisu peoples are distinguishd from the other hill tribes by their languages, all in the Yi subgroup of the Tibeto-Burmese family. These hill tribes migrated to Thailand from the Shan states of Burma and from Yunnan, China in this century. Though all the peoples of the Golden Triangle use silver ornaments, arguably the most dramatic use of the precious metal is by these three Tibeto-Burmese speaking groups. Silver is plentiful in Yunnan and the upper Irrawaddy in Burma, and has been used in mainland Southeast Asia for centuries. But it

became even more popular in the region thanks to the influence of the Europeans, who brought in relatively cheap New World silver to trade for Asian goods. Today, silver is still used for exchange and as a currency. Aluminum is now replacing silver for

some uses.



above, can be worn around the neck in the around the heek in the front or hanging from a solid neck ring at the back, over a jacket. Elongated bell-shaped beads and a set of stylized grooming implements such as tweezer and

Small silver

NECK RINGS
Plain flat silver neck
rings are particularly
favored by Akha
women. Often they
serve as a kind of a
base for the many
silver ornaments that
may be dangled from
them, in front or at the
back. They are often
covered by the ornaments
that hang from the
headdress. The omega
shape, with the scrolls at each
end, is a popular form in much
Southeast Asian jewelry, though this
is a particularly vigorous expression of
the basic form. These rings are flat, but
others may be hollow, with a similar shape
but rounded in profile. Neck rings
like these are often copied in aluminium,
to deter robbers.



Apart from opium, the hill tribes also use the more respectable tobacco. The two pipes pictured here are solid silver, the bottom one exhibiting some cloisonné decoration as well. They could have been used by any of the three groups considered here, or indeed by the Miens or Hmongs



BANGLES Many of these dramatic twisted wire

bracelets are made by

Chinese silversmiths. They are hollow and some feature

igraved designs. They are worn predominantly by the Akha people.

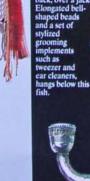
ANHA HEADGEAR

Adorned with silver coins and hollow silver balls, beads and buttons, Akha head-

buttons, Akha head-dresses show one of the most striking uses of silver by a hill tribe group. This piece (right), with a large trapezoidal silver plate at the back, is in the Loimi-Akha stde facered

style, favored by recent migrants from Burma. It is

worn by young girls on festive occasions







THE NORTH CHIANG SAEN AND THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE





Two days

Wat Phra That Chom Kitti.



HISTORY

The origins of Chiang Saen ● 20 are obscure. However, most historians agree that a town of considerable influence probably existed earlier on the site before the city of Chiang Saen was founded in 1328 by Phra Chao Saen Pu, a grandson of King Mengrai ● 20. Chiang Saen became associated with Chiang Mai and was ruled by Lanna kings until 1558, when it was invaded by

the Burmese, who remained in control for more than two centuries. In 1804, forces loyal to King Rama I seized the city and burned it after which the city was abandoned. Chao Inta, an offspring of the Prince of Lamphun, brought back the descendants of its former population and rebuilt the town 70 years later.

CHIANG SAEN SIGHTS

Chiang Saen's former importance is underlined by the fact that the Fine Arts Department lists 66 ruined monuments within its once-fortified walls and 75 outside. Among these is Wat Pa Sak, the city's oldest chedi, built in 1295 and adorned with fine stucco decorations; the structure displays a number of influences, in particular that of the early



Haripunchai period. About half a mile away, atop a hill accessible by 350 ancient steps, is Wat Phra That Chom Kitti, which contains an 82-foot-high chedi (left) on a rectangular base. At Wat Chedi Luang, an octagonal chedi rises 190 feet, supposedly constructed in 1331 and rebuilt in 1515. Nearby is the Chiang Saen Museum, which displays several Chiang Saen benoze images as well as objects unearfied during excavations at Wat Chedi Luang. Along

the road leading to the old town are several other ruined chedis, most notable among them being Wat Mung Muang and Wat Phra Buat.

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

The so-called Golden Triangle – a term coined by journalists and since then often used by novelists – is the area where Thailand's borders meet those of Burma and Laos. Its

notoriety stemmed from the fact that over 50 percent of the world's opium supply was produced there. Converted into heroin by secret refineries, it eventually found its way to the streets of major Western cities, bringing "gold" to dealers who act as middlemen, but not to

INLAND PORT Chiang Saen is being transformed by an influx of ships from China. To ease their passage, many rapids in the Mekong have been blasted. With dams altering the water flow, this has serious consequences for fisherfolk, small boats, irrigation and biodiversity. Chiang Saen town has also changed through the physical presence of Chinese traders, products and traffic



▲ THE NORTH THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

THE LOST ARMY took over mainland China in 1949, the 93rd Army of the Knomintang was cut off from the forces of Chiang Kai-shek. which were then retreating to Taiwan The army settled on the Thai border, and sustained itself with opium cultivation and smuggling. They made Doi Mae Salong their stronghold for more than 20 years. Their presence was tolerated by the Thai government as it was felt that they were useful to keen communists at bay. The Kuomintang forces have since surrendered and the government accepted them as Thai citizens.

MAE Su Situated at the pinnacle of the Golden Triangle, the atmosphere in this frontier town is more Burmese than Thai.

ARHA VILLAGES
The Akha, while not major opium-poppy growers, still cultivate the crop on a small scale outside their

the tribal people who actually grow the poppies. Thailand's share of the market has dropped dramatically in recent years, thanks to a royal program to introduce new crops for the tribes; but sizeable quantities are still coming from beyond its borders. Although geographically inaccurate, a spot designated as the center of the triangle is located near Chiang Saen where the Kok River joins the Mekong, complete with a noticeboard and a picnic pavilion.

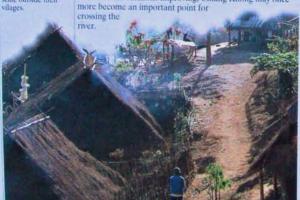
HALL OF OPIUM **. Located a few minutes north of Sop Ruak, this museum explains the history and impact of the drug trade through reasoned expo-sition rather than preaching. Multimedia displays covering 60,000 square feet explore opium's former medicinal use, drug suppression efforts and the effects of heroin on the user. It also traces the origin of poppy growing in Thailand by hill tribes in recent decades. Most dramatically, a 150-yard tunnel simulates the coming down from a heroin high, illustrated by what has happened to famous addicts. It ends on a positive note in a Hall of Reflection.

ANATARA MAHOUT SCHOOL. Located opposite the Hall of Opium, this opulent resort and spa includes an elephant camp on its grounds, where foreigners can learn the art of being a mahout. The course is run to standards of the Thai Elephant Conservation Centre in Lampang \$\(\) 144.

RIVER TRIP TO CHIANG KHONG

From Chiang Saen visitors can hire a boat down the Mekong River to the small town of Chiang Khong. The trip takes about two hours and offers some scenic views, particularly of the less developed Laotian side, With

Thai-Laotian relations improving. Chiang Khong may once



«THE MYSTERY OF OLD CHIANG SAEN STILL HAUNTED ME...LONG LINES OF WOMEN, PRIESTS, SOLDIERS AND PRINCES KEPT PASSING BEFORE ME, WHISPERING THEIR HISTORY FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE JUNGLES.» REGINALD IS MN. 1926

MAE SAL

Thailand's northernmost town. Mae Sai is focated on the Mae Sai River, which forms the border with Burma. Numerous shops on the Thai side of the border sell Burmese herbal medicines and everyday products, though most of the souvenus originate in Chiang Mai. One exception is jade. Countless shops sell jade items created in local workshops, many of which can be seen in action. Except during occasional periods of military or political tension, the immigration checkpoint at the bridge is open to foreigners who wish to cross and spend the day in Takhilek town, though it is possible to continue on to Chiang Tung and the Chinese border. This new land route looks set to increase trade with China, and add a Chinese as well as Burmese character to Mae Sai's frontier feel.

Dot MAE SALONG *. A popular excursion from Mae Sal, this mountain is inhabited by the Akhas and Miens. Most of the villages along the road set up bazaars, which attract tourists. At the end of the road is Santi Kiri, inhabited by the families of the former Kuomintang army. The village is now developing into a hill station with hotels and guest houses, but the town still looks very much like a typical Chinese settlement. Most of the products in the market are imported over the mountains from China. Many families here are Chinese Muslims from Yunnan.

Dot Tung ★. The late Princess Mother lived the latter part of her life in this remote outpost, where she initiated civic projects such as crop-substitution schemes among opium-growing tribes. Her Mae Fah Luang Foundation runs several Royal Projects here, from crafts centers and a zoo to an arboretum right on the border. Most visitors tour her former home on Doi Tung, which means "Flag Mountain". She styled Doi Tung Royal Villa after both Luana architecture and the chalets of Switzerland, where she spent much of her young life. The Mae Fah Luang Garden is probably Thailand's best

ornamental park. Mac Fah Luang has also

applied its wealth of local

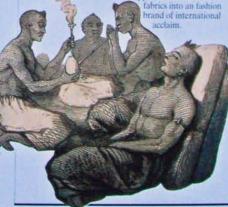


Орим

opium is prepared from the juice of Baparer somethenia. See of the more than 250 species of puppy, which requires sorry specific climatic and geographical conditions for commercial cultivation. The plant grows best at altrodes of 2,000 to 7,000 feet and prefers a relatively dry climate crop production con year to year the produce of the weather. When the petals fall, the seed pool is sliced to prefer the produce of the weather which is milk whith at first but dries to a guinning from the stored for years without fosting its potency. A 152.



The vapors of opaim fill up her empty head. Reclining her bust on the silky cushious. She follows in the ether the fanciful reverte. That phantasy unravels to her yes.



atated otherwise.

1 Son of King Rama V
Robert Lery, c. 1890
2 Elephant hurt at

c. 1890 3 Chao Phraya Rivet, Robert Lenz, c. 1890, Wat Arun gate, Robert Lenz, c. 1890 4 Floabing houses, Bangkok, Robert Lenz. c. 1898

5 Phra Mongkel Bopil Ayutthaya, photograyure from photograph taken by Martin Huriman, Iron Burmit, Ceyton, Indo-China, 1930. 7 Illustrator, Bruce

8-16 Illustrators: Osman Asan, Seah Kam Chuan, Cheong Yim Mui, Manfred Yee, Anuar Bin Abdul

15 All photographs xcept nest collection by Lawrence Lim

16 Page from manuscript on Thai military art, National Museum, Bangkok 17 Thai people at Si

Satchanalai, old photograph, c 1900 Siamese People, from H. Mouhot, Travets in Laos 1858-60 London 1862

Siamese woman; from Gulde to Bangkok. Royal Railways, 1927 Siamese man (center). Robert Lenz, c. 1890. Northern Thai women at Chiang Mai, old Laotan girls, from H. Mouhot, Travels in Siam, Cambodia and Lags 1855-60 London

Shan women, old photograph from Milne and Cochrane, The Shans at Home. London, 1910. Muslim traders, mural painting in Wat Bowornivet, Bangkor Karen, from C. Bock Temples and Elephants Lawa, old photograph, from E. Seidenfaden, The That Peoples, Bangkok Siam Society, 1967

18 Hunting scene, cave painting from Khao Chan-Ngam, In The Stone and Metal Ages in Thailand Bangkok, 1988 Three-legged pol. from Ban Kao 2000 B.C Manunci Museum

bracelete, Sgan Pakkard Palace collection, Bangkok Drawing of a Ban Vishou from Wang Sa National Museum Bangkok Srivijnya volive tablet National Museum, Bangkok. Wheel of the Law

Wheel of the Law, Dvaravall period, 7th century, National Museum Bangkok, Phimal Temple, 19 Elephant and

illustration from The Romance of the Rose by King Rama VI. Gold rings. Ayutthaya period. National Museum, Ayutthaya. Miniature gold fan Ayutthaya period. National Museum. Ayuthaya. Louis XIV receiving Thai ambassadors in Paris, in Chakri Throne Hall, Bangkok Rama IV. from Sir J. Bowning. The Kingdon and People of Stam London, 1857. Rama V and family, painting by Edoard Gelli 1899, Royal

Palace, Bangkok 20 Bodhi tree, lacquer on wood from Wat Pong Yangkok, Lampang Buddha images. Wat Chamadevi, Lamphun. Wat Ched Yod, Chiang

A Burmese prince (center), painting on wood, Seng Muang Ma. Lampang Detail of Lanna woodcarving Old walls of Chiang Mai. old photograph Last king of Chiang Mai.

old photograph. 21 Rama VII in state. old photograph, Rama VII entering Chiang Mai on an elephant, old photograph, Field Marshal Pibul (left), from The Bangkok Dr Pridi Panomyong (right), from The Bangkok Post

arry portrad of King Imamibol

22 Postcard of Ananchi Samakhom Throne Hall c. 1915 Contemporary stamps Rama VIII Bridge, photograph by Robert McLeod. McLeod, Technopolis Science Museum, photograph by Robert McLeod 23 Bangkok SkyTrain, © Charlotte Shaligosky.

Bangkok Sky Train station, photograph by Robert McLood. Page from astrology manuscript, 19th century, William Warren

24 Old map, Michael Sweet, Antiques of the Orient, Sangapore, Stone Buddha head, Ramkhamhaeng, Sukhothai Archeologica late 18th century. National Museum. Lopburi. Wheel of Law and deer Dvaravati period, 7th century, National Museum, Bangkok Mural depicting the Buddha cutting his half Buddhaisawan Chapei Bangkok. Gold Buddha, Chao Gold Buddha, Chao Sam Phraya National Museum, Ayutthaya, Stone bodhi free, Ayutthaya, 17th century, National Museum, Bangkok Bronze Padmanan bodhisattva, Chaiya 9th-10th century, National Museu Sandstone eight-armed bodhisattva, Prasar

Muang Singh in Kanchanaburi, late 12th-early 13th century, National Museum. Bangkok. Detail of mural from Wat Thong Thammachat. Bangkok. Detail of mural from the Lacquer Pavilion, Suan Pakkard Palace.

25 Monk contemplating death, Robert Lenz, The Buddha collecting alms, lacquer panel, Suan Pakkard Palace. The Buddha in meditation, contemp-orary sculpture in Wat Thammakai, Bangkok. Serenity, painting by Surasit Souakong, oil on canvas, © Visual

Dhamma Art Gallery 26 Flower Stamese flags.
Portrait of King Ananda arrangements.
27 Offerings and spirit Spirit house (top right), photograph by Alberta

28 Elephant carving on bullock cart. Ivery tosks carved with the Buddha and other Buddhist motifs, Robert Liniz, c. 1890, Elephant hant to Pattani, engraving from De Bree Voyages, Frankfurt 1607 Page from treatise on elephant training showing capture of wild

elephants, manuscript from the Second Reign, National Library. Bangkok. Detail from 19th-century manuscript (top), National Library, Elephant parade old postcaro Page from treatise on elephant training showing mythical elephants, manuscript from the Second Reign National Library. Bangkok. Page from a treatise on elepharts showing a hunting scene, 19th century, National Library, Bangkok Howdahs, from Father G. Tachard, Voyages de Siam des Pères Jésuites envoyés par le Roi aux Indes et à la Chine, Pans. 1686 White elephant, engraving, 19th century 29 Royal oarsman

Royal barges (center), c. 1900. From manuscript showing royal barge procession, 19th century, National Library, Bangkok Royal barge, old postcard Royal barges (nght) engravings, from Father G. Tachard, Voyage de Siam des Pères Jésuites envoyés par le Rol aux Indes et à la Chine, Pans. 1686. Royal barges used in lighting, S. de la Loubère, Du Royaume de Siam, Paris, 1691

30 Woman going to a festival (top right), detail from mural. Wat Bowornivet, Bangkok. Women adorning themselves (center). detail from mural, Wat Suthat, Bangkok. Woman wearing a jongkrabane, Robert Lenz. c. 1890. Group of men wearing loin cloth, from 19th-century manuscript The Pilgrimage to Saraburi.

Farther wearing a mor

Men with cropped hair, from mural from Wat. Phumo, Nan, late 19th

34 Chales crest ambroidery on silk. Royat Palace, Bangkok Hama VI on throne, old

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NUMEROUS SPECIALISTS AND ACADEMICS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS GUIDE, SPECIAL THANKS TO WILLIAM WARREN, DAVID STONE AND LUCA INVERNIZZI TETTONI.

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> WITH UPDATES BY Philip Cornwel-Smith

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK Stefan B. Polter and Sarah Anderson

> COVER Paule Seux/Getty

PRACTICAL INFORMATION TRANSLATED BY NATHALIE PHAN EDITED AND TYPESET BY BOOK CREATION SERVICES, LONDON PRINTED IN THAILAND BY PHONGWARIN PRINTING LTD

> ARCHIPELAGO GUIDES Published by Editions Didier Millet Pte Ltd. 121 Telok Aver Street, #03-01, Singapore 068590 e-mail: edm@edmbooks.com.sg

www.edmbooks.com

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> First published 1994 This large-format edition first published 2000, reprinted 2001 Second edition 2002, reprinted 2003 Third edition 2004 Fourth edition 2006 Fifth edition 2007

> > ISBN 978 981 4217 34 7