



**THE SIAM
SOCIETY**
UNDER ROYAL PATRONAGE

120[™]
ANNIVERSARY



seacha
SOUTHEAST ASIAN
CULTURAL HERITAGE ALLIANCE

STUDY TRIP

The Siam Society in operation with Southeast Asian Heritage Alliance (SEACHA)
Part of the proceeds from this trip will be allocated for the benefit of SEACHA's ongoing operations and activities.

Thailand's Diverse Heritage: A Melting Pot Culture

Saturday, 9 to Thursday, 14 November 2024

with Mr Jim Stent

Council Member of The Siam Society and Advisor to SEACHA



As a crossroad of mainland Southeast Asia, Thailand has absorbed peoples from all over Asia and Europe over the centuries. These various immigrant groups have shaped Thai culture, each contributing in its own way. The language, cuisine, architecture, urban design, and belief systems of Thailand reflect these disparate influences. Varied cultural strands make up the rich fabric of Thailand's "melting pot" culture: Mon, Lao, Persian, Indian, Chinese, Tai and European. Language, cuisine, ancient archaeological sites, religious buildings, and historical districts with vernacular architecture illustrate the different cultural influences that have shaped the Thailand of today. These sites span the length of Thai history from the mysterious Dvaravati period, through the Ayutthaya kingdom, to the present Rattanakosin period.

Conducted by The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage for the Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance (SEACHA), this trip programme is designed to introduce Thai culture in a way that the average tourist would find less accessible. Consistent with the mission of SEACHA, at several of the sites visited, experts will discuss the

conservation issues faced in preserving the authenticity of the sites, pointing out both successes and failures. Part of the proceeds from this trip will be allocated to support SEACHA's ongoing efforts to promote cultural heritage preservation and sustainable cultural practices across Southeast Asia.

This 4-day, 5-night trip programme will take us to see Old Bangkok through the eyes of Thailand's leading experts on art history and architecture, to tour the temples of Ayutthaya with the World Monuments Fund, to learn of Phetchaburi's fine woodcarvings, and to witness the long-standing religious diversity in the Kudi Chin neighbourhood. Meals have been planned to present a range of Thai, Chinese, and Lao flavours that make up Thailand's culinary heritage.

Organisation Background

The Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance (SEACHA) SEACHA is a network of ASEAN civil society organisations working together to promote cultural heritage preservation and sustainable cultural practices.

The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage is a Thai cultural non-profit organisation that promotes the study and knowledge-sharing of cultures, history, arts, and heritage conservation of Thailand and its neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. The Society's activities are guided by its motto: "Knowledge Gives Rise to Friendship".

Under the leadership of Mr Jim Stent, Council Member of The Siam Society and Advisor to SEACHA, the trip will take place from Saturday, 9 November to Thursday, 14 November 2024.

The tentative programme will be as follows:

Day 1: Saturday, 9 November 2024: Bangkok

- Arrive at Suvarnabhumi Airport/ Don Mueang International Airport, and transfer to Hilton Bangkok Grande Asoke Hotel by own arrangement.
- Check-in at Hilton Bangkok Grande Asoke Hotel by 16:30.
- 17:30 Meet at The Siam Society Under Royal Patronage (located across the street from the Hilton Bangkok Grande Asoke Hotel)
- Tour **The Siam Society**, led by Kanitha Kasina-Ubol, Managing Director of The Siam Society.
- 18:30 Thai Welcome Dinner at The Siam Society lobby. Trip orientation by Jim Stent.
Overnight at Hilton Bangkok Grande Asoke

Day 2: Sunday, 10 November 2024: Old Bangkok

- 08:30 Depart The Siam Society by bus to Bangkok's historic district around Yaowarat Road. Yaowarat Road is the centre of Bangkok's extensive, colourful and thriving Chinatown, with well-preserved shop-house architecture. Markets and shops sell everything, with an abundance of traditional southern Chinese foodstuffs available.
- Morning: Walking tour in Chinatown, Yaowarat, and nearby areas led by Dr Yongtanit Pimonsathean, Associate Professor in the Architecture Faculty of Thammasat University, Thailand's leading expert and practitioner of architectural heritage preservation.
- Noon: Lunch at a traditional Teochew Chinese restaurant
- Afternoon: Visit the **National Museum Bangkok**, led by Professor Piriya Krairiksh, leading Thai art historian and past president of The Siam Society. The National Museum contains an exceptional collection of Thai Buddhist sculptures and other treasures.
- After visiting the museum, the group will visit two royal temples.

The first temple is **Wat Ratchapradit**. This charming and peaceful temple, located in the northeast corner of the former Saranrom Palace garden, is seldom visited by tourists. It was built in the mid-19th century by King Mongkut (King Rama IV), whose cosmopolitan taste, heavily influenced by Western styles, is apparent in the choice of building materials. The buildings and the chedi are covered with grey marble. The interior murals were painted in the late-19th century and depict the festivals of the Thai lunar calendar. Striking carvings adorn the doors, eaves and gables of the temple. Buddha images in the main building are also very interesting and belong to the same period as the temple.

Construction of the second temple, **Wat Suthat Thepwanaram**, was begun by King Rama I in 1807 and was completed by King Rama III. Its viharn is the largest in Bangkok. The art and architecture of this temple beautifully exemplify the Rattanakosin style. Its 8-metre-high main Buddha image is one of the largest surviving Sukhothai period bronzes. This image was moved from Wat Mahathat in Sukhothai to Bangkok by Rama I. The murals in the immense viharn are some of the most celebrated in Thailand.

- Return to hotel
- Evening: Dinner at own arrangement—several restaurants close to the hotel at various price ranges will be recommended.
- Overnight at Hilton Bangkok Grande Asoke

Day 3: Monday, 11 November 2024: Ayutthaya

- 08:00 Depart The Siam Society by bus for the ancient capital of Ayutthaya.
- Morning: Arrive at Ayutthaya historical district. Tour ancient temples being restored by the World Monument Fund (WMF) in cooperation with the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture. The tour will be led by Mr Jeff Allen and Professor Waraporn Suwatchotikul, leaders of the WMF conservation work. They will explain the history and architecture of the temples and demonstrate the best practice conservation techniques used by WMF.
- Lunch: Lunch at Baan Pomphet, overlooking the river. Traditional Thai food in a lovely setting.
- Afternoon: Continue touring Ayutthaya temples
- Return to Bangkok
- Evening: Dinner at Isaan restaurant (Lao food from the Northeast of Thailand)
- Overnight at Hilton Bangkok Grande Asoke

Day 4: Tuesday, 12 November 2024: Phetchaburi

- 08:00 Depart The Siam Society by bus to Phetchaburi province. Phetchaburi is an ancient town located close to the shore of the Gulf of Siam. The temples and houses of Phetchaburi have a distinctive local vernacular style, featuring splendid wood carving. Mrs Eileen Deeley, Thai and Chinese art historian and member of the Council of the Siam Society, will lead the exploration of this town.
- Morning: On the way to Phetchaburi, the group will stop to visit **Wat Kuthi Bang Khem** and appreciate its carved woodwork. Then proceed to Baan Thung Setthi and visit **Khok Setthi Archaeological Site**, an ancient Dvaravati period stupa.
- Noon: Lunch at a local seafood restaurant.
- Afternoon: Visit four temples of late Ayutthaya and Khmer Bayon styles: **Wat Ko**, **Wat Yai Suwannaram**, **Wat Kamphaeng Laeng**, and **Wat Sra Bua**.

- Depart Phetchaburi to Bangkok
- Evening: Dinner at own arrangement—several restaurants close to the hotel at various price ranges will be recommended.
- Overnight at Hilton Bangkok Grande Asoke

Day 5: Wednesday, 13 November 2024: Thonburi

- 8:00 Depart The Siam Society by bus to the Kudi Chin neighbourhood on the Thonburi side of the Chao Phraya River. This neighbourhood exemplifies the “melting pot” culture of Thailand within a small area, dating back to the late Ayutthaya period. Christians (mostly descendants of early Portuguese immigrants), Buddhists, and Muslims live together cheek by jowl peacefully. In recent years, the neighbourhood has been the subject of considerable historical conservation work. We will walk through the area, taking in the sights, sounds, and scents and visiting **Wat Kalayanmitr**, **Santa Cruz Church**, the Chinese shrine **Kian An Keng**, and a local mosque. We will end at **Wat Arun**, an iconic landmark on the Chao Phraya River.
- Noon: Proceed by boat for lunch at Poomjai Garden (Thai food in a lychee orchard on a Thonburi Canal).
- Afternoon: Return by boat to the Bangkok side, where we will visit the **Thailand Creative and Design Center (TCDC)**, with a tour by TCDC of the restoration of the old General Post Office, and the new wing. This visit shows the well-executed adaptive reuse of an earlier building as well as showcases TCDC as the leading centre of contemporary design in Thailand. Afterwards, we will walk to a nearby neighbourhood of art studios and galleries.
- Proceed by bus to Nai Lert Park.
- Visit Nai Lert Park, an early 20th-century teak wood mansion beautifully preserved as the ancestral home of the present owner (Mrs Bilaibhan Sampatisiri, President of The Siam Society), and also as a museum.
- Evening: Farewell Dinner in Nai Lert Park garden by Ma Maison (Thai food based on Sampatisiri family recipes).
- Overnight at Hilton Bangkok Grande Asoke

Day 6: Thursday, 14 November 2024: Bangkok

- Depart back to the airport at your own arrangement

Booking:

Contribution of THB 36,000, with the option of a single room surcharge for THB 10,800. Should you choose to arrange your own accommodation the contribution will be THB 26,000. Please be informed that the contribution should be made to the SEACHA account, kindly follow the following payment instructions: Please pay by cash or cheque payable to “Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance”. Transfer or remittance can be made to the **Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance account at TMBThanachart Bank (ttb), saving account no. 909-2-19074-4. SWIFT Code TMBKTHBK. Kindly note that the foreign bank charges or bank remittance fees should be paid by the Applicant/Sender, the payment should be in full amount with “Thai Baht” only. Your reservation will be confirmed as soon as the payment has been made** and for those who reserve your seat in advance, we kindly request you to make a payment 45 days before the start of the trip (i.e. by Monday, 23 September 2024). Once payment has been made, please send the deposit or transfer docket to studytrips@thesiamsociety.org.

*Please always check the email address before you reply, if it is a reply to tss@thesiamsociety.org, kindly change the address to studytrips@thesiamsociety.org.

Inclusions:

- The contribution includes accommodation (double sharing basis) at the Hilton Grande Asoke Hotel, meals as mentioned in the programme, transportation and sightseeing cars, entrance fees, gratuities, and other costs incurred to make this trip possible.

Exclusions:

- The contribution excludes all air tickets from the country of origin, transfer car from/to the airport, foreign bank charges or bank remittance fees, visa fees (if any), dinners on days 2 and day 4, personal expenses, personal food and beverage consumptions, etc.

Please note that the Hilton Bangkok Asoke Grande Hotel has been selected as the group hotel, due to its convenient proximity to The Siam Society, where each day's tours will depart from, and for its quality and price.

Trip participants wishing to arrange alternative accommodation near The Siam Society may do so but must make their own reservations (the cost of the Hilton Grande of THB 10,000 will then be deducted from the total trip contribution owed by the participant). For more inexpensive accommodation, we suggest the FuramaXclusive Asoke Bangkok Hotel, where rooms run around THB 1,800 per night per room (approximately USD 50)

Cancellation charges:

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| More than 45 days before the start of the trip: | Full refund |
| 30 days to 45 days before the start of the trip: | 50% of the tour cost |
| Less than 30 days or cancellation without notice: | No refund |

***The cancellation charges will also depend on the date we pay the deposit to the hotel and services. If we have to pay those costs before the 45-days prior to the start of the trip, our officer will send an email to inform every participant before we make the payment as only a partial amount of the payment can be refunded after that point.**

Covid-19 policy

Due to a lower number of worldwide infections, many countries have relaxed their travel restrictions and quarantine requirements regarding Covid-19.

Nevertheless, when travelling as a group, The Siam Society would like to remind you of the following measures that we have put in place:

- We suggest performing a self-administered ATK test before the commencement of the trip. Participants can also carry ATK test kits, along with their preferred set of medicines (for consumption if infected with Covid-19) with them.
- In the event that trip participants test positive during the trip, the group will continue to follow the planned itinerary. To ensure the health and safety of all trip participants, those who test positive shall adhere to appropriate self-isolation measures as directed by the trip leader.
- Those tested positive with severe symptoms shall be treated in accordance with the health measures stipulated by the local government. Medical costs shall be at the expense of the trip participant(s).

For further information and bookings, please contact Khun Thun at 02-661-6470-3 ext 205, or studytrips@thesiamsociety.org. The Society's office is open from 09:00 to 17:00, Tuesday to Saturday.