

AYUTTHAYA HISTORICAL RESEARCH

AYUTTHAYA  
EASTERN  
BICYCLE TRACK

History of Ayutthaya

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WWW.AYUTTHAYA-HISTORY.COM

# AYUTTHAYA - EASTERN BICYCLE TRACK

## (The Ayodhya Loop)

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This bicycle tour is designed to bring you beside some of the most important historical sites east of Ayutthaya's city island. There is a high concentration of old ruins, foreign settlements, and active temples in this area, which makes this tour pleasant and full of surprises.

The full-day tour will take 6 to 8 hours depending on the time spent at each location point. Riders may not want to stop at every highlight listed on this tour itinerary. A few highlights on this itinerary have been listed more for the sake of smoother navigation and referencing, although they may also appeal to many bicyclists as points of interest. Individual cyclists can choose where to stop according to their own tastes and time constraints.

This area east of the city island possibly existed prior to King U-Thong's foundation of the Ayutthaya kingdom in 1351. Evidence suggests that it may have been populated as early as the Dvaravati era (6th to the 11th centuries); and that the Khmers later set up an outpost here as early as 850-1100 AD. This Khmer city was named 'Ayodhya' after one of the holiest Hindu cities of India.

The area was later invaded by Anawrahta, the King of Pagan (r.1044-1077) and controlled by the "Burmese" for about a hundred years. After the Burmese influence waned, it was conquered once again by the Khmer and held until the mid 13th century. The Tai seized political power shortly afterward by combining the Lavo and Suphannaphum Kingdoms. When King U-Thong arrived at Wiang Lek in 1347, a number of these architectural structures still existed.

Evidence also suggests that Chinese merchants set up in this area as an important stopping point for conducting trade with the Sukhothai kingdom. These ancient Ayodhya communities were situated on the stretch of land formed by Khlong Hantra, Khlong Ban Bat (Kamang), Khlong Khao San, and Khlong Suan Phlu. This area was originally connected to the city island, since the Pa Sak River had yet to be dug for defensive and navigational purposes. However, the boundaries of the ancient city are still subject of debate.

If you are interested in viewing photographs of the temples in advance or would like additional historic information about these ruins, visit our website at [www.ayutthaya-history.com](http://www.ayutthaya-history.com).

### **Tips and Warnings**

Bicycles can be rented in different locations on Soi 2 Naresuan Rd, which is the starting point of this tour. It is also possible to rent bikes near the train station, which is closer to the area of this tour. Bike rental costs 30-40 baht (about \$1) per day on average, which makes bike touring an inexpensive way to see the city. Ayutthaya's terrain is mostly flat and easy to ride, but many streets and side roads are poorly marked, so use the map to simplify navigation.

Be cautious as traffic in and around Ayutthaya is sometimes chaotic and dangerous. Motor vehicles often fail to see cyclists and pedestrians, so you must closely watch out for *them*. Motorcycles are a particular cause of local accidents. Dogs and potholes can also be

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dangerous, especially in remote areas. Weather can be very hot, so make sure to drink plenty of fluids and wear sun block. It is inadvisable to drive at night due to the lack of lighting.

The theft of bicycles is uncommon in Ayutthaya, but backpacks and cameras have been stolen on rare occasions. It is best to keep valuables with you when visiting the temples on route.

If you would like some information about lodging and restaurant options, please visit: [www.ayutthaya-info.com](http://www.ayutthaya-info.com).

### **Who are we?**

Ayutthaya Historical Research [AHR] consists of a small group of researchers/writers with the aim to promote Ayutthaya's cultural heritage. We are local expatriates who have been living in Ayutthaya for many years and would like to share our knowledge with future visitors. Therefore, we have personally tested each of these suggested routes by cycling and/or walking. More information on the authors can be found at: <http://www.ayutthaya-history.com/Authors.html>

### **In emergency or accident:**

Contact the Ayutthaya Tourist Police Station: 035/241446, 035/242352 or 1155.

### *Disclaimer*

*AHR will not be held liable for any loss or damage whatsoever for any suggestions made in relation to the site's promotion of ecotourism. It is the responsibility of the user of the site to take the necessary precautions to avoid any physical injury, traffic incident, animal attack, theft, and damage to equipment. Any reliance on the site's information is therefore strictly at your own risk. Read our disclaimer at website [www.ayutthaya-history.com](http://www.ayutthaya-history.com).*

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## The route

*Historical signboard in situ is marked as (\*)*

*Entry fee required is marked as (\$)*

- ❖ *From the starting point, drive your bicycle past Chao Phrom Market to U-Thong Road (the street that circles the city island). Make a right hand turn and go south until you come to the first side road (soi) on the left. This will take you to the ferry crossing point.*
- ❖ *The ferry boat currently costs 4 baht on foot and an extra 2 baht to carry on your bicycle. The ferry boat is a short and pleasant ride that leads to a point in front of the train station. It is not a problem to carry your bike onto the ferry boat, but there is also the possibility of renting a bicycle near the train station if you prefer.*
- ❖ *Walk your bike to the train station on the other side of the road. There is a small path leading over the rail tracks. This is the safest point to cross. The key landmark is a monastic structure that can be easily seen on the other side of the rail tracks. This is the first reference point of this tour.*

**Wat Luang Phor Kho Hak** or the "Monastery of the Buddha with the Broken Neck" is also locally known as Luang Phor Suriyamuni. This small monastic structure was part of Wat Chang or the Monastery of the Elephant in earlier times.

- ❖ *From the train tracks and reference point you will make a short left hand turn, and then make a right quickly afterward. Start heading east for a few minutes. This small road will have a few natural turns in it, but keep to the east. In 2-3 minutes you will see a large pond. Stay with the road as it will naturally meander to the main road used for the tour. At the next intersection, where the pond ends, make a left and head north. The first point of interest (heading north) is only a moment away on your left hand side. It is an active temple located directly beside the road.*
- ❖ *Note: in the opposite direction, toward the south, you will be able to see a large bell-shaped chedi known as Wat Sam Plum. This is the Rojana Road intersection. You will visit this site later as part of this full-day tour.*

**Wat Samanakottharam** is an active temple with portions of ancient buildings still in situ. One of its oldest structures is a unique bell-shaped chedi, which could date as early as the 14th-15th century. There is also a portion of a second chedi on site, but it has greatly eroded. One ancient sermon hall has been restored to the basic foundation level, and a large Buddha image has been placed on its altar. The history of Wat Samanakottharam is unclear. Written accounts are vague and require further investigation. It is implied that Royal Chronicles refer to this monastery during the reign of King Narai (r.1656-1688). (\*)

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- ❖ *From Wat Samanakottharam, return to the previous road and continue north. The next Point of Interest, Wat Kudi Dao, is only a few minutes away on the left hand side of the road. It is large ruin situated directly beside the road.*
- ❖ *Note: Wat Kudi Dao will later serve as an important landmark and reference point for future steps of this bike tour. Keep it in mind as a later navigation point.*

**Wat Kudi Dao** or the "Monastery of the Star Dormitory" is a restored ruin with many structures and chedi still in situ. Behind the monastery's main entrance gate is a large sermon hall with its enormous columns still intact. Behind this sermon hall is the principal chedi, constructed in the Sri Lankan style. Recent excavations suggest that Wat Kudi Dao was built on the foundation of earlier buildings that predated the foundations of Ayutthaya. However, Royal Chronicles fail to mention it until King Thai Sa's reign (r.1709-1733). The restorations at Wat Kudi Dao began in 1711 and were completed in 1715. Royal Chronicles report that, when the renovations at Wat Kudi Dao were finished, a seven-day festival was held to celebrate its completion. Holy acts of merit were performed by giving alms and making offerings of worship. King Borommakot, who was crowned in 1733, is closely associated with this temple, since it where he most likely served as a novice monk. (\*)

- ❖ *The next Reference Point can be seen just north of Wat Kudi Dao at the intersection. However, turn left before reaching this large ruin because the next Point of Interest is located down the side road.*

**Wat Jakrawat** - In situ we find an ordination hall (Th: ubosot) and its principal chedi. The ubosot measures 30 m in length by 16 m in width and faces east. On its west side stands the principal chedi. The whole complex is surrounded by an outer wall or crystal wall measuring 55 m by 35 m and by a moat. Following excavations conducted by the Fine Arts Department, the monastery has been restored three times and probably dates from the Early Ayutthaya Period (1351 - 1491). (\*)

- ❖ *After turning left and heading west for a short distance, you will see an active temple close to Wat Jakrawat (on your right hand side). Turn into its gravel parking lot because this is the next point of interest.*

As an active temple, **Wat Pradu Songtham** has most of the usual structures found at a Buddhist monastery. A sermon hall, bell tower, and monk's quarters are in situ. Most of these are designed in a style reflecting the Bangkok period. The central feature of this monastery is its mural-decorated ordination hall. The murals at Wat Pradu Songtham were painted in 1863. These have greatly deteriorated, but they still provide remarkable images of the lives of Buddha (*Jataka*) and Siamese culture during the Ayutthaya period. The murals of an elephant procession are especially prized. There are some modern chedi in the courtyard west of the ordination hall and colorful renditions of *Naga* images on staircases.

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- ❖ *Return to Wat Jakrawat once again, but this time make a left and continue north on the original road. The next Reference Point is small but still visible ruin beside the road on the left hand side. It might also help to notice the large graveyard for spirit houses directly across the road. Locals place these broken or damaged shrines at this spot so that the ghosts dwelling within will be contained in a holy area.*

**Wat Bot Racha Decha** is an east-oriented ruin with a Buddhist memorial built on top of its structure. A broken chedi with its toppled 9-tiered spire and foundations of a monastic structure can be found in situ.

- ❖ *Take a left at Wat Bot Racha Decha. Continue west on this small side road for 2-3 minutes. Just before it comes to a dead end, the road will veer to the north. You will likely see the top of a large bell-shaped chedi in a forested area. It should be on your left-hand side. This site may be worth visiting for the more adventurous cyclist, since it remains mostly unexcavated and provides an idea of how these ruins look before heavy restorations have been made. A small dirt path leads to it, but explore this site with caution as these jungle areas can be homes to poisonous snakes.*
- ❖ *Note: it is also possible to bypass this step by staying with the main road leading north from Wat Bot Racha Decha. In this case, the next Point of Interest (Wat Ayodhya) will be located just ahead on the left hand side of the road.*

**Wat Viharn Khao**, or the Monastery of the White Sermon Hall, stands in line with the large chedi at Wat Ayodhya, which could be an indication that this ruin could have once been part of a larger monastery. In situ are a brick mound covered with vegetation and the remnants of a bell-shaped chedi. Its style is associated with the Middle Ayutthaya period, although there are no records of its original construction or its historical background.

- ❖ *From the previous reference point, continue biking on the small side road. It will quickly turn east toward the next Point of Interest, which will be only a minute or two away. You will enter at the rear of an active temple and see a large unique chedi in full view.*

**Wat Ayodhya** is a temple still in use by the Buddhist clergy. The architectural highlight is its main chedi with a bell-shaped dome resting on an octagonal pedestal. The stucco design of the dome resembles lotus flowers. A square base (without walls or staircases) supports the main chedi and its four smaller inter-cardinal satellites. It is estimated that this chedi once stood to a height of 30 meters. Behind the chedi lies a brick mound, which was once a vihara, topped with a small Buddha image. Other old structures remaining include two redented pillars (about 2.5 m in height at the eastern entrance) and two chedis built in the reign of King Rama V to contain the ashes of the abbot of that time and his relatives. The new ordination hall was rebuilt upon the ruins of the old ordination hall during the Ratanakosin era. Behind the ordination hall are the remains of a chedi, a three meter high base, built in the late Ayutthaya style. Many historians believe and publications indicate that this temple was once an important temple referred to as Wat Deun or Wat Doem.

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- ❖ *Return to the main road and continue north. The next Point of Interest is only a few minutes away on the left hand side.*

**Wat Dusitaram** earns its name from the Sanskrit word referring to the "Tushita Heaven", the joyful heaven above the earth in which near perfect beings, who are about to become Buddhas, pass their last angelic life before being born on earth to assume the Buddha hood. The monastery's area is quite big, with old and new parts. In the old part, we find a large chedi, a vihara and an ordination hall or ubosot. The bell-shaped chedi is build in Ayutthayan style. Once, a large vihara stood west of this tall chedi. On its ancient foundations a new open hall has been built, sheltering some Buddha images. On the north side stands the former ordination hall or ubosot. It was built in a mixture of the Early and Late Ayutthaya styles. Archaeological excavation indicates that this temple was repaired in the Middle Ayutthaya period, or in the end of reign of King Phumintharacha (r. 1709-1733), or possibly during King Borommakot's reign (r. 1733-1758).

- ❖ *After exiting Wat Dusitaram, you will shift to the next stage of this bike route. Do not cross the bridge to the north. Instead, turn right on the main road and start heading south in the opposite direction.*
- ❖ *Continue biking until you come to the intersection with Wat Kudi Dao and Wat Jakrawat. However, this time, turn left and start heading east. Within 2-3 minutes you will arrive at Wat Maheyong. The road will split in two directions. Take the left turn to view the next Point of Interest.*

**Wat Sika Samud** is located just north of Wat Maheyong. The monastery is surrounded by a moat which following the Fine Arts Department description in situ, was used as sema - a boundary for doing religious rites - called U-Thok sema (U-Thok is royal language for water). The site consists of an ubosot or ordination hall and a principal pagoda on the west. According to archeological evidence, this temple was built in the Early Ayutthaya Period. (\*)

- ❖ *The main entrance to Wat Maheyong is now located further ahead on the right, where a popular meditation center is now located. This temple has recently become a site requiring admission fees. The previous entrance is now blocked off by barbed wire and a locked gate.*

**Wat Maheyong** - It is believed by some researchers that this temple predated the foundation of the Ayutthaya kingdom; however, following the Luang Prasoet chronicles, the monastery was built in 1438 A.D. at the start of the reign of King Borommratcha II (r.1424-1448) of the Suphannaphum Dynasty. During the Burmese war in 1568-1569, the main army of King Bayin Naung encamped at the Maheyong Monastery. He set up his pavilion at the temple and it was here that King Mahin (r. 1568-1569) presented himself to the Burmese King after the fall of the capital on 30 August 1569. King Mahin and the royal family were taken captive to Pegu, but unfortunately the King died of fever on route. Maha Thammaracha of Phitsanulok,



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who joined forces with Bayin Naung against Ayutthaya, was set up as a vassal King. Wat Maheyong later underwent major restoration in the reign of King Thai Sa. (\*) (\$)

- ❖ *The next temple can be reached by returning to the fork in the road in front of Wat Maheyong. This time make a right into the field just ahead. A large bell-shaped chedi will be in clear view to the south. This is the next Point of Interest.*
- ❖ *Note: A few cyclists may also be curious about a small two story building between Wat Maheyong and Wat Chang. This Reference Point is known as Tamnak Maheyong.*

**Wat Chang** or the "Monastery of the Elephant" was given its name due to the elephant statues that once encircled its main chedi. The temple is listed as being built during the reign of King Borommatrailokanat (r.1448-1488), at a time when Sukhothai was being absorbed into Ayutthaya as a vassal state. However some sources believe that Wat Chang was constructed even earlier - perhaps before the founding of Ayutthaya itself. Standing Buddha images were found at this temple, which resemble those of the Sukhothai Kingdom. Wat Chang was restored a number of times during the late Ayutthaya period. King Phumintharacha (r.1709-1733) is one monarch who contributed to repair work.

- ❖ *It will be obvious to any cyclist that there is activity going on directly west of Wat Chang. A new elephant camp has been built in the area that is getting a lot of attention recently. You can enter the camp from Wat Chang with ease.*

**Pang Chang Ayodhya** is a new elephant camp that has recently opened in the Northeast area. In addition to providing elephant rides in the vicinity of Wat Chang, this establishment also has several live tigers on display (charging a fee for photographs). The elephant camp also provides snake shows on occasion. The elephant camp in situ derives its name from the temple in area. However, it should not be confused with the elephant kraal at Phaniat or other elephant camps of historical significance during the Ayutthaya period. This is a modern site.

- ❖ *Observant cyclists might also spot a bizarre fairy tale house in this area (behind the place with snooker tables). It might provide some interesting material for photographs, but it isn't part of this bike route.*
- ❖ *From the elephant camp, bike west until arriving at the main road once again. Turn left and continue until you come to the same side road across the street from the cement factory. Turn left and the road will lead to the same scenic canal. Bike along the canal until you arrive at the bridge, then cross it.*

**Wat Nang Kham** or the "Monastery of the Mistress Kham" is a restored ruin located in Tambon Phailing, close to the bank of the Ban Bat canal. Following archaeological evidence found in situ, this temple was built in the Early Ayutthaya period. Restoration took place in the reign of King Borommakot.

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- ❖ *Return to the main road and continue going south until you arrive at the surprisingly large chedi in the middle of Rojana Road (mentioned earlier in this itinerary). This site can be seen at a great distance away and is impossible to overlook.*
- ❖ *You must cross the busy street to continue bicycling south of this roundabout chedi. However, there are two options for accomplishing this daunting task. If you are confident that your biking skills could survive the chaotic traffic and dangers ahead, simply circle around the roundabout in synch with motor vehicles until you can continue south ahead from the other side of the road.*
- ❖ *The second option is turn right, eventually hopping your bike onto the sidewalk. It is possible, to bypass all this traffic by going under the bridge (beside Khlong Dusit). In this case, you will take a small path that runs parallel to the bridge. It will lead to another small path on the opposite side of the road. Head back toward the roundabout chedi and turn right on the southern road.*

**Chedi Wat Sam Plum** is located dead-center in the middle of the Rojana Road -- as it leads to/from the Asian Highway. Wat Sam Plum serves as a traffic roundabout, and it is well-known welcoming sign to the old city. Its large chedi is usually decorated and lit up at night. The style of the chedi suggests that it was constructed in the middle-Ayutthaya period. However, it should be pointed out that, King Borommakot (r. 1733-1758) renovated many monasteries in this area during his reign, so it is possible that Wat Sam Plum may have contributed to renovation as well.

- ❖ *Continue heading south on this fairly busy road. It will eventually lead directly to a large temple. This Point of Interest can be seen from the main road from a great distance ahead.*

**Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon** (Great Monastery of Auspicious Victory) has been called many names in the past: Wat Pa Kaeo, Wat Chao Phraya Thai and Wat Yai Chaya Mongkhon. In the year 1357, two princes of Ayutthaya, Chao Kaeo and Chao Thai, died of cholera. King Ramathibodhi I (r. 1350 - 1369) ordered the bodies of both princes to be exhumed and a monastery be established at their cremation site. He gave the monastery the name "Wat Pa Kaeo" or the Monastery of the Crystal Forest. The temple became the home of Buddhist monks ordained and trained in Ceylon (present Sri Lanka). The king conferred the title of "Right side Supreme Patriarch" to the head of the group, Somdet Phra Wanarat. The monastery became known as "Wat Chao Phya Thai" - The Monastery of the Supreme Patriarch.

This temple was repeatedly involved in the history of Ayutthaya. It was here that conspirators gathered in 1548 to consult an oracle whether or not to overthrow the throne usurper Khun Worawongsa and Queen Thao Sri Sudachan; which resulted in Prince Tienracha becoming king in 1549, crowned with the title King Maha Chakkraphat. In 1561, the Patriarch of this monastery fixed the auspicious moment for Prince Sri Sin, the youngest son of the previous King Chai Racha and Queen Thao Sri Sudachan, to overthrow King Maha Chakkraphat. Prince Sri Sin was captured during the rebellion and died in the palace, and the Patriarch was

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executed for his involvement. In 1592, King Naresuan (r. 1590-1605) defeated the Burmese Army at Nong Sarai by killing the Burmese Crown Prince in single-handed combat on elephant. In the battle the King and his brother King Ekathotsarot got separated from their army officers. On return to Ayutthaya the King wanted to punish to death his officers, but the Supreme Patriarch intervened and requested that the punishment be suspended; which King Naresuan granted. It is assumed that King Naresuan ordered the restoration and enlargement of the temple and the principal chedi. The chedi was named Phra Chedi Chaya Mongkhon. Presumably this celebration gave rise to the temple's new name, Wat Yai Chaya Mongkhon - The Great Temple of Auspicious Victory.

- ❖ *Continue south on the main road. It will split in only a minute or two of biking. Stay to your right and start moving in the direction west. You will arrive at an important intersection beside some railroad tracks. Traffic can be very busy at this spot on weekends, so use some caution when navigating. Go over the railroad tracks and continue west. This will lead you to the next Point of Interest.*

**Wat Phanan Choeng** - Following the Luang Prasoet version of the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya, Phra Phanan Choeng was built in 1324 (26 years before King U-Thong founded Ayutthaya). The Buddha image originally stood in the open. The Buddha image - made of brick and mortar and covered with stucco - sits in the classic posture of Subduing Mara. It measures (approx) 14 meters at the lap and 19 meters in height including the ornament above the head. Thai people call it "Luang Phor To" or "Great Reverend Father", Chinese or Thais of Chinese origin call it "Sam Po Kong". It is one of the largest, oldest, most beautiful and revered Buddha images of Thailand. The story goes that the image shed tears when the Burmese took Ayutthaya in 1767.

- ❖ *The next reference point can be seen directly across the street from the Wat Phanan Choeng exit. It is shown on this route simply because people will see it and may wonder about this site.*

Wat Monthop (mondop, mabdapa) was a ruin situated closely southeast of Wat Phanan Choeng. It is now viewed as part of the larger temple. In situ are a very large Chinese graveyard and a small Chinese shrine. The remains of the ruin known as Wat Monthop have been placed at an open-air structure in the center of the graveyard. Its Buddha image can be seen from the road. This site is viewed as haunted by ghosts by many locals.

- ❖ *Turn right when exiting Wat Phanan Choeng. This road (Highway 3059) will gradually start turning south. On the right hand side of the road, there is a boat yard used for construction. Turn right into the boatyard and then make a sharp left southward. This dirt path will lead to the Dutch Settlement. Occasionally, a small gate will block this road from bicycles. If this occurs while you are visiting, simply walk your bike a short distance through the boat yard. The Dutch Settlement is to the south.*

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**Dutch Settlement** - In April, 1633, Joost Schouten, the Dutch VOC Chief-trader, was instructed to build a permanent trading post at Ayutthaya. One year later a two-storey brick building enclosed by a stockade was ready and was called "the lodge". The lodge was special because it was a stone construction, which gave it a "high-status", as in Ayutthaya only the monasteries and palaces were made of stone. The VOC-factory was located north of the English trading post and the Japanese settlement – outside the city walls of Ayutthaya.

By 1732, the territory of the company accommodated 240 families, in total 1,443 people. The Burmese attacked Siam's capital in 1760, and the VOC's trading post was greatly plundered. However, the post continued to serve its purpose until the end of the company's presence in Ayutthaya in 1765. The last VOC ships left Ayutthaya in November 1765. The area of the Dutch lodge was latter a scene of heavy fighting against the Burmese in 1767.

A memorial was built at the old VOC settlement during modern times. Some of the foundations of the destroyed factory have been excavated, but most of the remnants still remain buried as unexplored witnesses of a Dutch adventurous past.

- ❖ *Go back to the main road (Highway 3059). Turn right and continue south. You will pass a small bridge over Khlong Suan Phlu (note: this is the approximate location where the British settlement used to be). The Japanese settlement will be located on the right hand side of the road.*

**The Japanese settlement** is situated on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River in an area called Ko Rian. It was located opposite the Portuguese settlement and was separated from the English and Dutch settlement by the Suan Phlu canal to the north. The Japanese village ran one Km along the river, and extended about half a kilometer inland. The settlement was surrounded by canals on the three sides. Its population numbered at the peak of the Siamese-Japanese trade in the first part of the 17th century around 1,500. Trade export consisted of sappan wood, used as dye, lead, tin, forest products and deer hides, used by Japanese warriors to make coats, gloves and firearm cases.

- ❖ *Note: one of the three Portuguese settlements was located directly opposite of the Japanese Settlement, on the other side of the Chao Phraya River. This site can still be seen today, but not on this route.*
- ❖ *Immediately after exiting the Japanese settlement, turn left and head north toward Wat Phanan Choeng. Continue backtracking until you arrive at the busy intersection near the railroad tracks once again. Do not cross the railroad tracks. This time make a left and start heading north instead. You will continue biking north in parallel with the railroad tracks (on the western side).*
- ❖ *In a few minutes, you will cross over a small bridge above Khlong Thanon Tan. Shortly after, on the left hand side of the road, you will see the entrance gate to Wat Ko Kaew. However, just before entering, look for a different structure nearby that has*

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*fallen into ruin. This former temple may also be of interest to some cyclists because all four walls of the ruin are intact.*

**Wat Prasat** or the “Monastery of the Palace” is situated close to the active temple Wat Ko Kaew and would have been accessible by using Khlong Khao San or the Pa Sak River. This ruin has been partially renovated and metal scaffolding keeps its four walls from collapsing. In situ is a single sermon hall aligned in an east-west axis. All four walls have been fairly well-preserved, but the roof has totally collapsed.

- ❖ *The final Point of Interest on this route is Wat Ko Kaew. To visit this site, simply make a left from the main road at its well-marked entrance. It is situated next to Wat Prasat.*

**Wat Ko Kaew** or the "Monastery of the Crystal Island" is situated on the east bank of the Pa Sak River on an island formed by Khlong Khao San in the north and Khlong Thanon Tan in the south, and confluence at the mouth of Khlong Dusit. In situ is a large and prosperous monastic complex. Ko Kaew is mentioned a few times in the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya as a strategic location where the Burmese positioned part of their army when attacking Ayutthaya.

- ❖ *Continue on the same road north. You will cross a small bridge over Khlong Khao San before coming to the next Reference Point. You will see a small active temple on the left hand side of the road.*

**Wat Kluey** or the "Banana Monastery" is situated on the east bank of the Pa Sak River. The temple is mentioned in the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya as being the place where the Siamese Luang Saraseni and his followers set up camp in December 1766 prior to the fall of Ayutthaya, at par with Phraya Kamphaeng Phet.

- ❖ *Continue north on the same road until arriving at Rochana Road (also the Pridi Banomyong Bridge). For safety reasons, it is advisable to turn left and curve around the bridge toward Krung Sri River Hotel. Then make a second left at the first road you come to. Resume biking north. If you prefer, it is also possible to keep going forward and go directly under the bridge to the other side. Either way, the next reference point will be on the left hand side of the road.*

**Wat Phichai Songkhram** or the “Monastery of War Victory” is a temple still in use by the monastic clergy. It is a classic built temple with an ordination and sermon hall. A copper plate at the monastery indicates that it was built shortly before the final war between Burma and Ayutthaya in 1765. The temple is mentioned in the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya as being the place where the Phraya of Kamphaeng Phet (later King Taksin) with his followers set up camp in December 1766. Phraya Kamphaeng Phet, convinced that Ayutthaya would soon be lost to the Burmese, decided to seek his fortune by escaping south. Folk tale states that he went to pray at Wat Phichai to seek good fortune in his planned escape to the south (though other versions suggest this event took place at Wat Samana Kotharam instead).

## AYUTTHAYA - EASTERN BICYCLE TRACK (The Ayodhya Loop)

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- ❖ *Final Step: Continue north from Wat Phichai Songkhram. You will bike over a bridge above Khlong Khao San. Keep going north until you see the Seven Seas restaurant. Then turn left just ahead at the train station. This will lead you to the ferry boats.*
- ❖ *From the opposite side of the Chao Phraya River, you can with the same route used previously. However, we recommend that you cut back on traffic risks by bypassing Chao Phrom Market. Head north for one block and then turn left on Pa Maprao Road. You will then turn left at the first road you come past. This returns you to the starting point.*



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