

AYUTTHAYA – BANG PA-IN BICYCLE TRACK
(Trip to Bang Pa-In)

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.

- ❖ *Continue north along Road # 3477. The road will cross a bridge over Khlong Suan phu. On the left hand side of the road, there is a ship yard; turn left into the boat construction site and make a sharp left southward. This dirt path will lead to the Dutch Settlement (Baan Hollandia). 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.*

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 later on 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 remains still remain buried as unexplored witnesses of a Dutch adventurous past. The Dutch Government constructed an Information Center on site called "Baan Hollandia".

- ❖ *Return to the main road and continue for a few meters. You will arrive at Wat Phanan Choeng.*

Wat Phanan Choeng - Following the Luang Prasert 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 Subhanga 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.

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- ❖ *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 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.

- ❖ *Continue along the main road until you arrive at the busy intersection near the railroad tracks once again. Do not cross the railroad tracks. Make a left and start heading north. You will continue biking in parallel with the railroad tracks (on the eastern side). In a few minutes, you will cross over a small bridge above Khlong Khanom Than. Shortly after, on the left hand side of the road, you will see the entrance gate to Wat Ko Kaeo.*

Wat Ko Kaeo 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 Kaeo 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 Khuei 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 Rojana 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. Do not turn right. 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 Songkhrum 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

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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.

- ❖ *Continue north from Wat Phichai Songkhrum. You will bike over a bridge above Khlong Ban Bat. 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.*

- ❖ *After crossing the Pa Sak River with the ferry, go to U-Thong Road and turn right bypassing Chao Phrom Market. Head north for one block and then turn left on Pa Mairua Road. You will then turn left at the first road you come past. This returns you to the starting point.*



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It was here in the last Siam-Burmese War of 1767, that the advance force of the southern Burmese army under King Maha Norzha was made to march and established its camp. The Siamese King Ekathit ordered Phraya Taksin (the later King Taksin) to take out a force and attack the Burmese fortification. Phraya Taksin captured the fortification at that time that the Burmese received the reinforcements from the southern army. Phraya Taksin found that the forces were insufficient to hold the Burmese fortification, thus abandoned it and returned the city of Ayutthaya.

In 1670, King Nares gave the head of the Dutch Settlement a small plot of land at Wat Phra Sat to make a garden and a place for holidays or excursions. There stood a small brick house on this plot which was marked as property of the VOC in Siam. By 1697 it was turned into a place for storing and sawing sappan wood to replace the workshop at Ban Chao Phraya.

- ❖ *Continue north along Road # 3477, the next reference point is Wat Thammie That.*

Wat Thammie That or the "Monastery of the That Locality" is an active monastery located on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River in Bang Pa-In district. The classic temple has an ordination hall and two vihara within the inner boundary wall. The ubosot were built in the late Ayutthayan style with a three-tiered roof with two porches.

- ❖ *Continue north along Road # 3477. Soon you arrive at the bridge crossing the Chao Phraya River. Keep left and take the U-turn under the bridge. Take left and continue north along Road # 3477, the next reference point will be Wat Chang Thong.*

Wat Chang Thong or the "Monastery of the Golden Elephant" is an active monastery located on Khlong Ko Kaeo in Bang Pa-In district. The temple features the classical mandala Buddhist structures its ordination hall with chedi, vihara and bell tower. Close to the waterside is an old walled lunary chedi.

- ❖ *Continue north along Road # 3477, the next active monastery will be Wat Song Kuson.*

Wat Song Kuson or the "Monastery upholding Benevolence" is located on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River, just south of the Japanese settlement. It has the classic mandala structures in situ (ubosot, vihara, bell tower, etc.). Wat Song Kuson is a post-Ayutthayan era temple.

- ❖ *Continue north along Road # 3477, the next point of interest is the Japanese settlement.*

The Japanese settlement is situated on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River in an area called Ko Kaeo. It was located opposite the Burmese settlement and was separated from the English and Dutch settlement by the Siam Phra canal to the north. The Japanese village ran one km along the river, and extended about half a kilometer inland. The settlement was

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