

Masjid Yami U-Islam - This mosque is distinguished by its tall minarets, which is a rare feature among the mosques of Ayutthaya. It was founded beside Khlong Takhian in 1877 under the name of Masjid Al-Iqwan during the reign of Chulalongkorn. It was originally made of wood and much smaller, but the mustafa, called Kru Pa by most people, thought the building was getting old and damaged, so he raised a budget of approximately 500,000 baht for repairs. This expanded the mosque to multiple levels and added its distinctive minarets. It was then formally registered in July 1956. The size of its congregation expanded so much that prayer areas were set up outside in 1996. It can be visited from Wat Khok Jindaram by simply crossing the bridge between sites and making the first right hand turn.

- ❖ *The canal will continue westward along a scenic route for nearly a kilometer ahead. This section is filled with net-trap fisherman and livestock herders. The canal will curve in a hook-like shape toward the north. This area is especially prone to blockage from water hyacinth. If it is too thick and congested, you may have to turn back. Once you have made it past the hyacinths, you will kayak north toward the next historical site. It will be on the right hand side of the canal.*

Wat Samphao Lom or the "Monastery of the Capsized Junk" is an active temple with Buddhist clergy. The large ordination hall or ubosot has been completely renovated, though traces of its brick foundation and interior walls are still observable. This monastery's highlights are its beautifully decorated 3-D murals, and some of this artwork quite literally reaches out at you. Many scenes from Buddha's life (jākatas) are elaborately portrayed in intricate detail. This monastery was built when people moved here from Bang Kaja, where the sinking of boats was a problem due to the fast moving confluence of Pa Sak and Chao Phraya rivers. Wat Samphao Lom's name refers to sunken boats, but it is also known as Wat Thum Mai (newly made monastery).

- ❖ *Continue north. You will pass underneath a concrete bridge for motor traffic. Afterwards, there are 1-2 wooden bridges that lay low. These can be difficult to navigate when the water level is high. You sometimes have to disembark and push your kayak beneath it. At other times, you might have to remove a few planks of wood to make room (and make sure to put them back afterwards). Locals sometimes drag fishing nets across the canal at this point, which can contribute to the building up of water hyacinth as well. The next historic site will be on the left hand side of the canal.*

Wat Klang Khlong Takhian is an active monastery with Buddhist clergy. There is not much left of its foundation. It was situated on the opposite side of the Chao Phraya River from Wat Wang Chai, which was the estate of King Chakkraphat before being crowned in 1548. In addition, an Ayutthaya-period brothel was located opposite of Wat Klang Khlong Takhian, across from the canal, closer to St Joseph's Church. The modern highlights of Wat Klang Khlong Takhian include a large trunk of a Thakian tree that is believed to contain the spirit of a female ghost. (+)

Wat Khok Jindaram is an active Buddhist monastery situated on the opposite of Khlong Takhian from Masjid Yami U-Islam. Most structures in situ reflect the Rattanakosin period. Mirrored-like and large white walls are consistent features. The monastery's windows, gables, doorways, and roof are elaborately decorated in red, green, and blue and adorned with golden ornamentation. Golden images are placed above eaves, and some gilded markers are highlighted with a Wheel of Dharma. Curiously, there are two ordination halls on site. Other stone carvings include a number of lions (singh) on the boundary markers and a small golden Buddha image has been placed at its entrance, and a beautifully carved Buddha image can be found on one side of the ordination hall. Several small chedi are scattered around the monastery premises.

- ❖ *Turn right, and head west into the lower mouth of Khlong Takhian. You will immediately see a mosque on your right hand side. This is Masjid Yamnamin. You may also see a second Muslim historic site nearby, Kudi Chao Pa. On the left hand side, there was once a village for Makassarese refugees before it was destroyed after they rebelled against King Nara in 1686. The next two sites are about 10 minutes west.*

Masjid Takhia Yakhin, also known as Masjid Tak, was established in 1610 by a Muslim Shrike from India (who entered Siam as a slave). The mosque is named after a Buddha monk who converted to Islam after being dazzled by magical feats performed by the Muslim Muslim cleric. According to local legend, the Muslim performed miracles such as cracking up a fresh coconut to reveal live shrimp inside. The body of the Muslim mystic is said to still be entombed on site in an octagonal shrine marked by a domed roof. Thai Buddhists sometimes visit this shrine to pray for their wishes to be granted. If one comes true, the Buddhist sometimes donate a few bahts to the mosque. As one passes the mosque, a temple known as Wat Chetuphon, King Chulalongkorn visited the site while heading down Khlong Takhian as he had it repaired for the Siam Muslims who had lived there since the reign of King Mongkut. He donated a ceremonial cabinet to the mosque that is still on site. (+)

- ❖ *When you have come to the lower mouth of Khlong Takhian, which will be on your right, you can immediately start and start the second stage of this kayak trip. A second option is to continue kayaking south for another 10-15 minutes. There is an old Muslim historic site (also on the right) that will be of interest to a few kayakists.*
- ❖ *Continue kayaking south. On your left, you will see a Buddhist monastery called Wat Sang Karon. At this point, you should left your kayak to the west side of the Chao Phraya River as Khlong Takhian will be coming up on the right hand side. The site of a Portuguese Jesuit settlement will also be on the right hand side, but you will not be able to see it by kayak.*

- ❖ *You will emerge shortly from the northern mouth of Khlong Takhian. This brings you back to the Chao Phraya River. It is better to kayak on your right hand side for the next stage of this trip, as the most important historic sites are on this side. The next one is situated immediately to the right after returning to the Chao Phraya River. If the water is low, you can see beside the riverbank a discarded cement crucifix with a brass marker.*

St Joseph's Church - In 1665, Siamese King Narai granted French bishops a spot near the Chao Phraya River in the Cochin Chinese quarter called "Ban Plahet". In 1665-1666, they built the Seminary of Saint Joseph (later renamed as the Seminary of the Holy Angels). In 1673, King Narai granted another piece of land and offered assistance in building the wooden St. Joseph's Church, which was renovated with bricks in the European style between 1685 and 1695. In March, 1767, the St Joseph seminary was surrounded by attacking Burmese. The settlement fought bravely, but they were few and short of ammunition. After parlaying with the Burmese General and being promised safety and protection for all persons and property, the bishop surrendered on 23 March. The church and seminary, as well as the Jesuit and Dominican churches, were nevertheless plundered. The houses near the church, mostly used by Vietnamese converts were burned down. The fire spread to the church and seminary which were both reduced to ashes. Father Jean-Baptist Pallegoix began restoring the church in 1831, which was completed by 1847. The church has been a place of continuous Catholic worship in Thailand for over 300 years. Hundreds of Christians and many of the missionary priests were buried at the local churchyard. (+)

- ❖ *Kayak in the direction east along the Chao Phraya River. The next stop will be on the right hand side.*

Wat Phutaisawan is situated opposite the mouth of Khlong Chakrai Yai, presently called Khlong Tho, a canal linking the former Lopburi River (presently Khlong Muang) with the Chao Phraya River and runs adjaacent the former Royal Palace grounds. The temple was built in 1353 AD by King Ramathibodi I at the royal residence of "Wiang Lek", the site where he first settled before establishing Ayutthaya as the capital city in 1350. The temple was constructed after his elder brother defeated the Khmers and brought war captives back in 1352. The monastery was possibly one of the first temples constructed in the Ayutthaya Kingdom and has a preaching hall and a great holy reliquary. The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya mention that the army of the King of Ava invaded Ayutthaya in 1549 and set up a stockade in this area. It was also taken by the Burmese during the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767. (+)

- ❖ *Continue kayaking east. Keep alert to the long-tail boats that offer ferryboat crossing in the area, since they don't always pay attention to kayakers in their path. You will soon pass by the Islam Wattana Mosque on your right. Keep kayaking on the Chao Phraya River and you will come to the next historical reference point. It will also be on your right hand side, and a large ferry boat will be carrying motorcycles and pedestrians to and away from it.*

Wat Khun Phrom is an active monastery situated along the Chao Phraya River. The ordination hall is built in the Late Ayutthaya style (1629-1767). The monastery was originally established in 1557. Its highlight is the two Dvaravati-style images at the staircase leading to its sermon hall. One of the originals can be seen at the Chao Sam Phraya Museum. (+)

- ❖ *Go east from Wat Khun Phrom. The next historic site will be a small and active Buddhist monastery on your right. This will be the last official Point of Interest on this route.*

Wat Nang Kui is an active temple located along the Chao Phraya River. The monastery was built in 1587 with the sponsorship of a wealthy woman called Lady Kui. The monastery was left empty after the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767 until it was renovated during the Reign of King Rama III. (1824-1851). Wat Nang Kui is known for its sandstone Buddha image, which is believed to have been discovered underwater by a monk. One Buddha image in situ has a highly distinctive and unusual smile (Luang Phor Yim). One highlight at this temple is a large carving from the trunk of a Takhian tree (Mae Takhian Thong). Locals claim that a female spirit with magical powers still lives in this wood. (+)

- ❖ *Continue kayaking east. You will return to the confluence of the Pa Sak and Chao Phraya River once again. On your right, you will pass by Wat Bang Kaja. Feel free to visit this active Buddhist monastery if you missed at the beginning of the route. At this point, you will also see a large brick fortress on the left.*

Pom Phet (Fortress) - The brick walls of Pom Phet were built around 1580. Archaeological evidence suggests that the original walls were 6.5 meters thick. It was strategically located at the confluence of the Chao Phraya and Pa Sak River - an important harbor area used by foreign ships. On the ground floor of Pom Phet there were eight cannons and another eight between the crenellations on top. It has been recently renovated in 2010.

- ❖ *Return Route - It is easier to swing over to Pom Phet and return to the Pa Sak River from the river bank on that side. The water current tends to be less swift on the western part of the Pa Sak even during rainy season. You will clearly see Wat Phanan Choeng on the opposite side. Once you have made it around the bend you will recognize the earlier temples from this route - including Wat Ratanachai, Wat Ko Keaw, Wat Khua, and Wat Pichai. You will also bypass both Khlong Khao San and Khlong Bin But once again. Continue kayaking north toward the Pridi Banomyong Bridge. The starting point is on the right hand side just after the bridge.*



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