



the IndoChina Peninsula

The Land of the Siam

Lois & Marilyn

Thailand, 14 to 25 January 2013

Arrival – ready for shopping



Lois & Marilyn traveled to the opposite side of the world with only carry-on luggage!

The first purchase was a watch for Mom. The same *sales-lady served us -- she also helped Mom when she purchased her watch here in January 2012. (*transgender / kathoey).



Plenty of "everything" in the **Asiatique**, a night-bazaar on the river-front.



Within short time, both Lois & Marilyn needed suitcases for their new possessions.



Buddhist Temples

(NOT made in Disneyland)

Bangkok also has some of the most awesome temples in the world – and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha is a “**MUST**”!

Here are three angels in the Temple (Wat – in Thai)!



Wat Pho – the Temple of the reclining Buddha (46 meters / 150 feet long) is another “**MUST**”. Even the official-photo-op from President Obama’s visit was made here.

Therefore, we see Lois standing in the same place as President Obama!

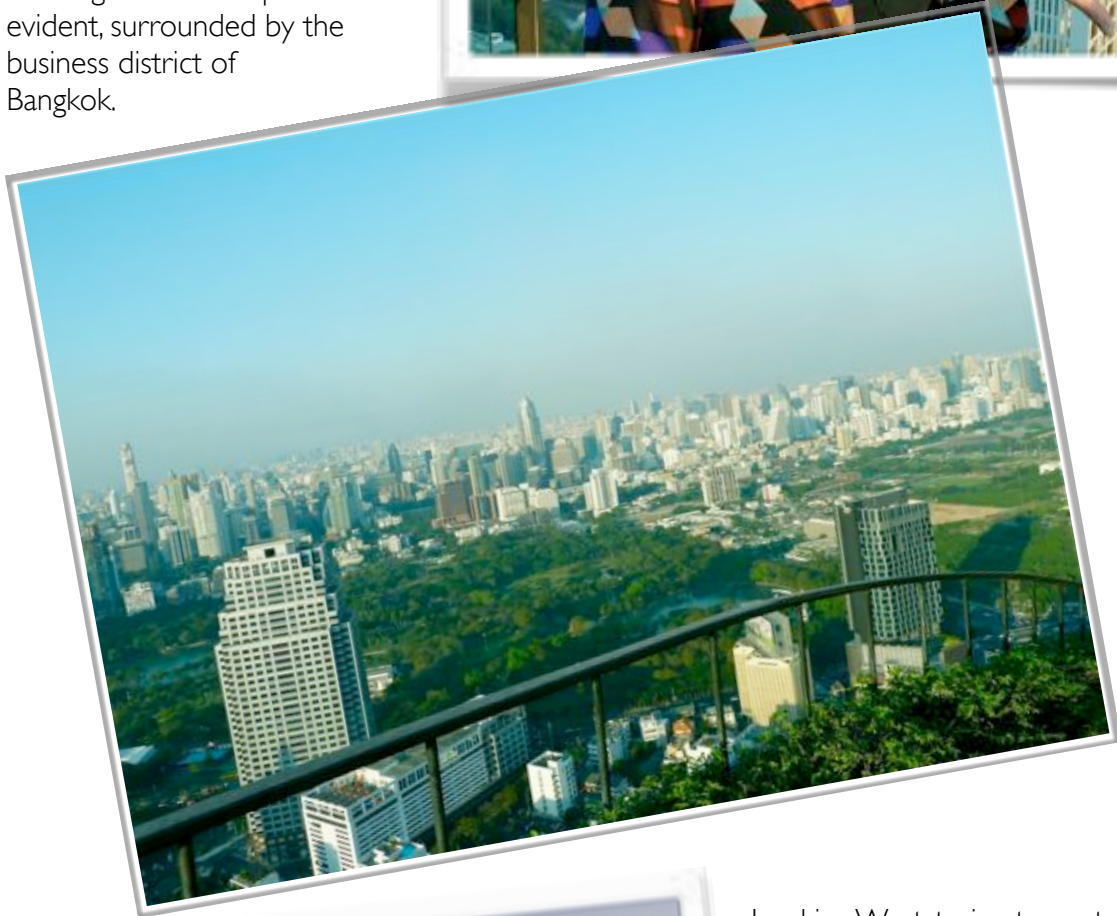


The Banyan Tree & Vertigo....

Perched high above Bangkok, the Vertigo serves its clients an ever-changing kaleidoscope of views over this city.

Looking South; behind Marilyn, one can see the Phra PraDaeng Peninsula – a less developed “green lung” of Bangkok.

Looking North: Lumpini Park is evident, surrounded by the business district of Bangkok.



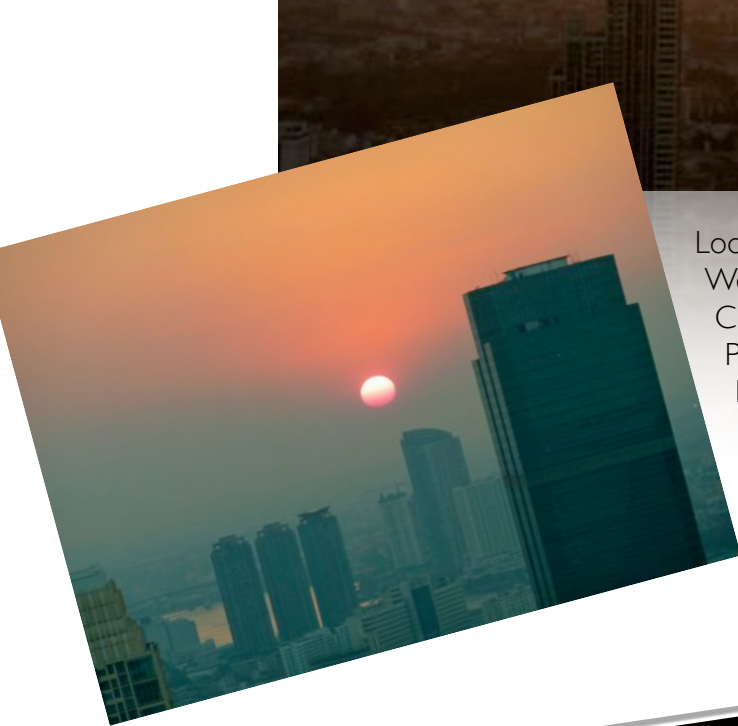
Looking West: trying to capture the beauty....



A 360 degree panoramic video can be seen at:
www.indochinapeninsula.org
(The Banyan Tree & Vertigo)

The Banyan Tree & Vertigo....

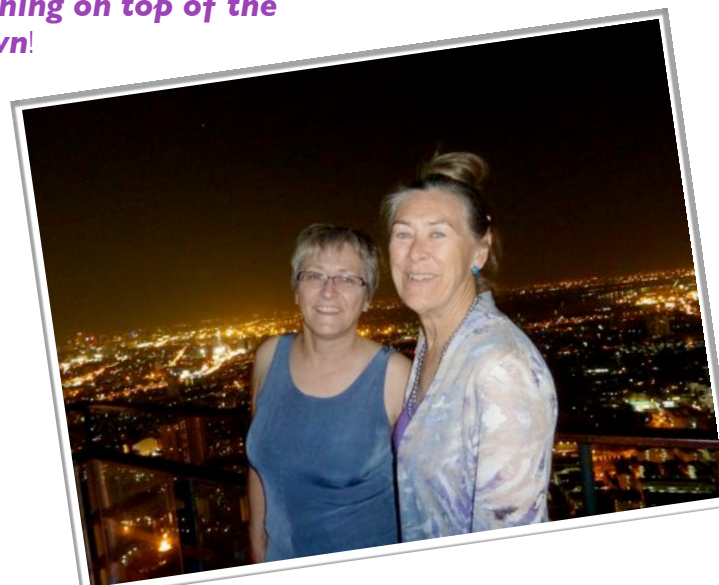
The Vertigo (the top part the Banyan Tree) provides a magnificent view of the setting-sun.



Looking West; the Chao Phraya River is visible with the sun setting behind it.



As night-time descends on the city – yet another stunning scene unfolds. Obviously -- three ladies **are** enjoying their **evening on top of the town!**



Phra PraDaeng

– we went by boat...



We took a long-tail boat (from our hotel near the Saphin Taksin) down the Chao Phraya River to Phra PraDaeng.



This is the Rama 9 Bridge, one of the many large bridges over the river. Part of our journey on the river can be seen in the background of the pic of Marilyn **(The Banyan Tree)**

previous subject.



The Banyan Tree Hotel is the building in background center with three pillars that have space between them, bridges joining them each 10 floors. **So near -- and yet another world!**



Phra PraDaeng & the bicycle ride

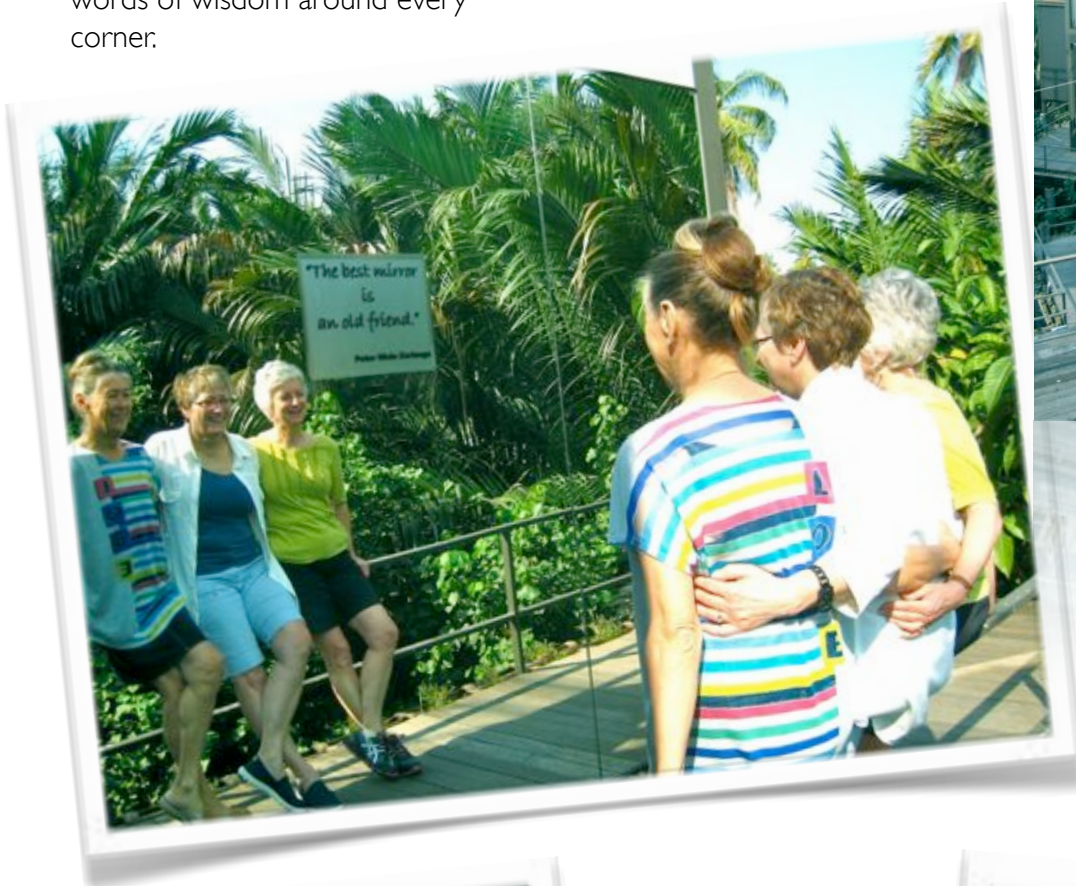
We stayed in the Bangkok TreeHouse Hotel, a new concept eco-tourism hotel.

Lots of surprises everywhere in the TreeHouse -- including words of wisdom around every corner.

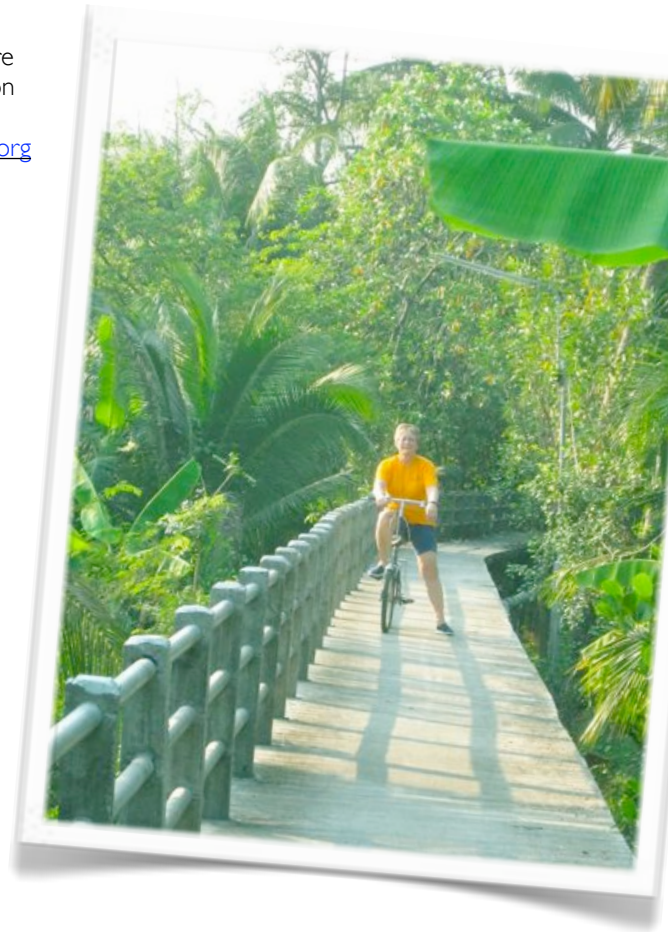


Most of Phra PraDaeng is built on stilts / pillars because the tides from the sea (only a couple of miles further south) raise the water level when they flow in.

Lois rode a bicycle on this walkway on stilts.



A YouTube video tells more about Lois & the bicycle on Phra PraDaeng:
www.indochinapeninsula.org



Fruit in the land of Siam

“In fact, to eat Durians is a new sensation worth a voyage to the East to experience.”



Both Lois & Marilyn arrived in great shape / good health – and with the wonderful food in Thailand, they were perfectly fit for every moment of every day.

Here they are at the Farmers Market within the famous Chatuchak / JJ's Market – eating Durian, which has the honour of being called the **“King of Fruit”**. Durian has a very special taste – and the best way to approach eating Durian is to consider the comments from the British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, in 1858 he wrote: *“The five cells are silky-white within, and are filled with a mass of firm, cream-coloured pulp, containing about three seeds each. This pulp is the edible part, and its consistence and flavour are indescribable.*

A rich custard highly flavoured with almonds gives the best general idea of it, but there are occasional wafts of flavour that call to mind cream-cheese, onion-sauce, sherry-wine, and other incongruous dishes. ...The more you eat of it - the less you feel inclined to stop! In fact, to eat Durians is a new sensation worth a voyage to the East to experience.”

Durian trees are dangerous!
Durian fruit is the size of a football.



Lois is eating a Mongosteen, called the **“Queen of Fruit”**, no need for “pre-conditioned thoughts” - it is simply delicious! In recent years this has become popular in the form of a fitness juice.

A street vendor selling fresh fruit - already cut, ready to eat.



Healthy Thai-Food –

everywhere...



One of our favourite restaurants was the Chatrium on the Chao Phraya River – along with great food, we also enjoyed the pleasant warm evenings on the River-side.



Lois picks up a locally produced fruit-snack from a street-vendor on Phra PraDaeng.

The Farmer's Market at Chatuchak ;
deliciously healthy & fresh Thai food available everywhere.



Transportation

As Lois & Marilyn discovered, Bangkok's reputation as a huge city with traffic-jams did not apply to them.



They travelled like the locals: They enjoyed the boats (many different kinds of them).



They used motorcycle taxis when needed.

With lots of luggage - a tuk-tuk was once required!

They used the skytrain every day.



Nakhon Phanom – on the Mekong

On 20 January we took the airplane to Nakhon Phanom – about 500 miles NorthEast of Bangkok.

This frontier-town is on the Mekong River separating Thailand and Laos.



Obviously, life is different in Nakhon Phanom and here is the welcome from the airport staff.

Lois & Marilyn stayed in the ViewKong Hotel on the Mekong River.

The mountains on the other side of the Mekong River are in Laos.



This region is rural and still rather peaceful – here is a small river that runs into the Mekong. These pictures make me think of Claude Monet's painting, Bateau /atelier : *The Boat Studio* (1876).

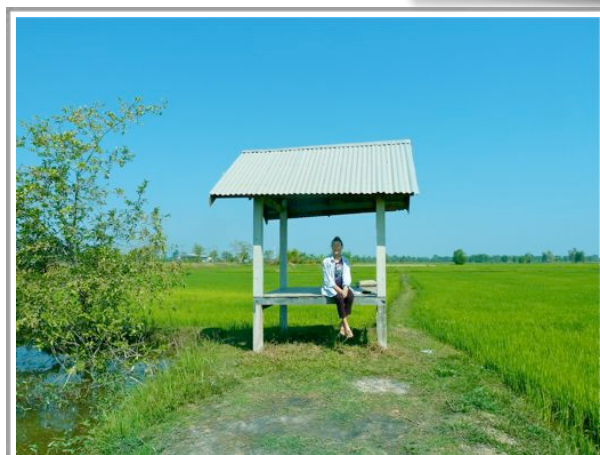


Rice paddies – on the Mekong

Everyone agreed that it was a good idea to plant some rice – and this farmer was **delighted** (rather, *cajoled by Rwd*) to welcome three ladies into his paddy.



The tricky-part is to keep your own feet lightly-planted **on** the mud -- as you try to plant the rice-seedlings **into** the mud. Obviously an interesting & FUN experience for everyone.

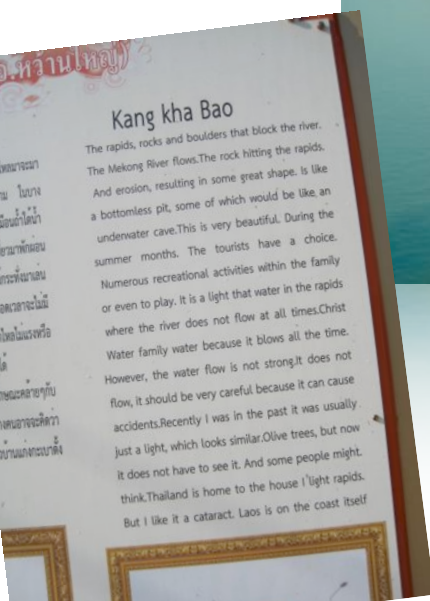


Mekong – the way to Tat Phanom

The Tat Phanom Temple is famous and a pilgrimage site for all Buddhist in Thailand.

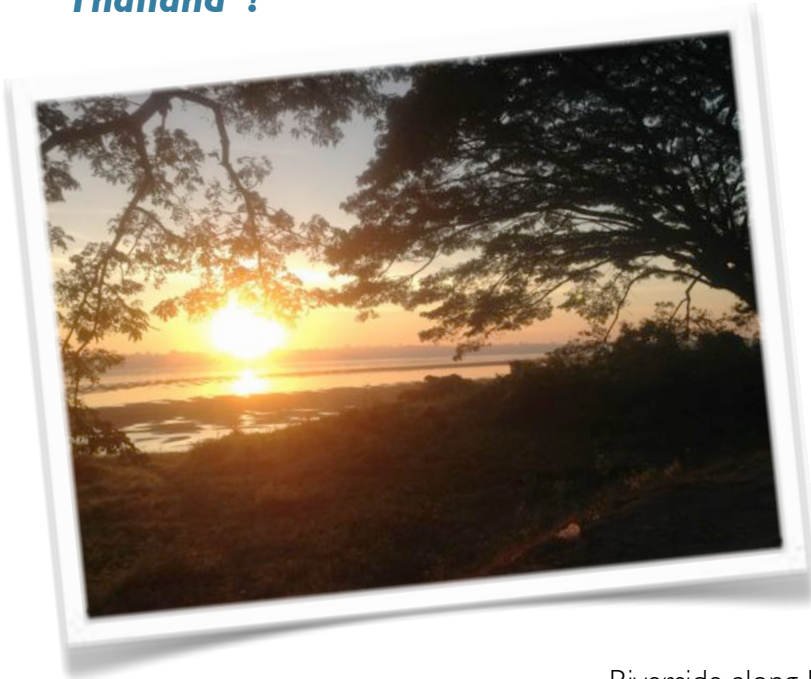


Nearby is the Kang Kha Bao (water-rapids), another beautiful place to relax on the Mekong. The small island in the Mekong is precious -- and sometimes remote. Depending on the time of the year (water level in Mekong goes up in Monsoon season; down in winter months), the island become more, or less, difficult to access.



The Beautiful Mekong & Happy Nakhon Phanom

A recent United Nations study found Nakhon Phanom to be the **“Happiest province in Thailand”!**



The Riverside along Nakhon Phanom is especially beautiful and popular. Laos, on the opposite side of the Mekong is always visible.



This is a water-garden. The vegetables (one sort is called “morning glories”) are sold in the local market - along with being delicious, they are also healthy.



This part of the walkway is like a public fitness-center during the evening hours.

Happy Nakhon Phanom & the Beautiful Mekong

The Nakhon Phanom province (region surrounding the small city) is renowned for the quality of its produce. Fruits, vegetable and flowers (most of the flowers in the huge flower market in Bangkok come from Nakhon Phanom), all are renowned for high-quality.

This is a Ratchapruk tree (with beautiful yellow flowers February to April) on the Mekong Walkway.



Pineapple & watermelon from the farm!

Always a pleasure to spend an evening in a restaurant overlooking the Mekong.



One last pic, for the "Hubbies" ...



From the *home on the prairie* -- to the Mekong!



This gentle and loving Father (& Mom behind the camera) surely provided the foundation so that we had that which was/is needed to move on and continue to learn in this world.

From our **homes on the prairie** to the IndoChina Peninsula is quite some distance -- in many different ways.

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."

- St. Augustine

Along with the good fortune of learning the **pioneering-spirit** at an early age, we have also had the opportunities to partake in this great technological revolution -- making it easier to keep in touch and to travel.

Marilynn (*classmate of Lois in high-school*) has a similar background.



It was a joy sharing everything with both of you during your days on this IndoChina Peninsula. Along with the nostalgia that these pictures carry with them -- **there is also much Gratitude that it was possible to enjoy so many wonderful moments. Many Thanks for making this journey to the opposite side of the world.**

*There will always be much Love coming your way from our home on the Mekong,
Judy, Jones & Luke*

