

# *Discovering Thailand*

## *Evelyne & Frederic*

They encountered a climate-change of over 50 degrees celsius from their home in Switzerland to Bangkok, - that was only the first of the many differences that they found!



One of the first discoveries was that their elephant had an enormous appetite – here, he is expressing his pleasure over the delicious food that Evelyne & Frederic have provided.



Discovering life on the khlongs in Bangkok.

# Akha Villages

## Kok River Valley

During the days that Evelyne & Frederic stayed in the jungle outpost, we ventured into as many local life-styles as possible.

The homes in this Akha Village are made from vegetation that thrives in the jungle around the village.

This lady is wearing a typical "formal head-dress" of this Akaha Village.

It is interesting to notice that some of the coins used to decorate this are old English coins (notice "Victoria Empress"). Wonder why?

Well, when we visited the Hall of Opium in the Golden Triangle, we learned that up until 1962 the cultivation of Poppies (Opium) was legal in Burma. Furthermore, in earlier years the British Government was purchasing huge quantities of opium from the Hill-tribes and would pay them with British silver coins. Since the hill-tribes were not familiar with the value of British money, the coins were put on a balance: coins/opium. This picture shows such an exchange. Therefore, there was an abundance of British coins throughout these hills.



# Elephants!

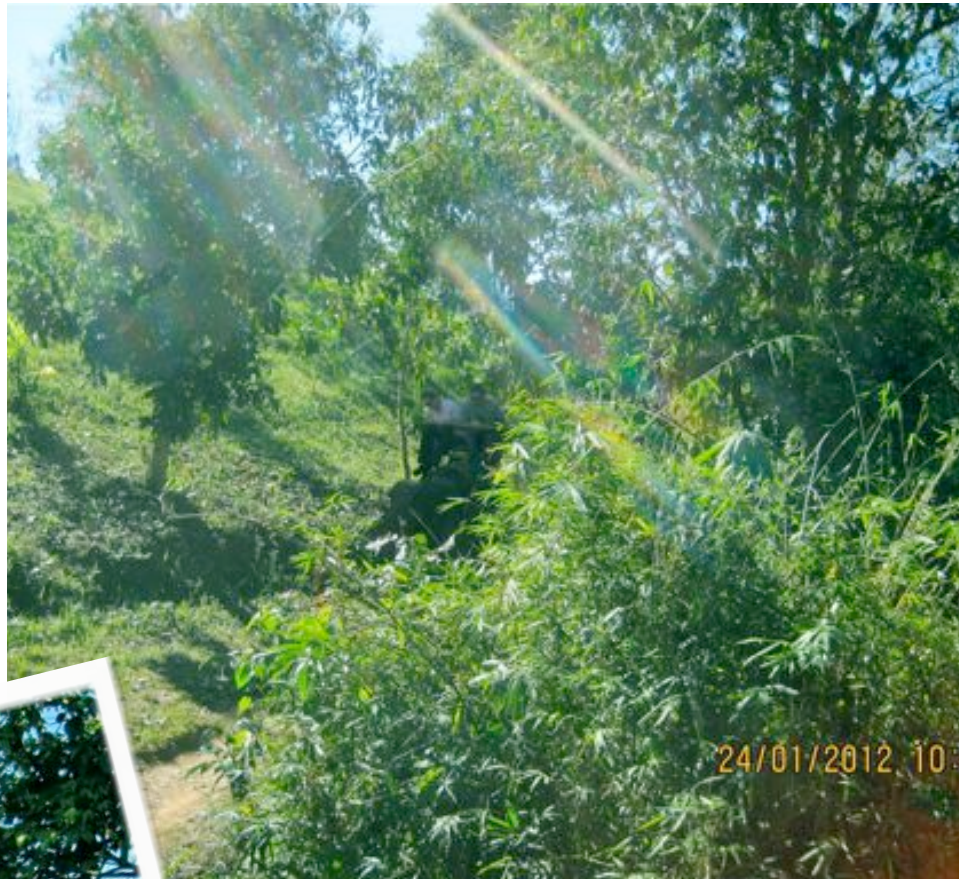
## Jungle-outpost

Indeed, Evelyne & Frederic's elephant was always hungry – always leading them astray – always looking for food.

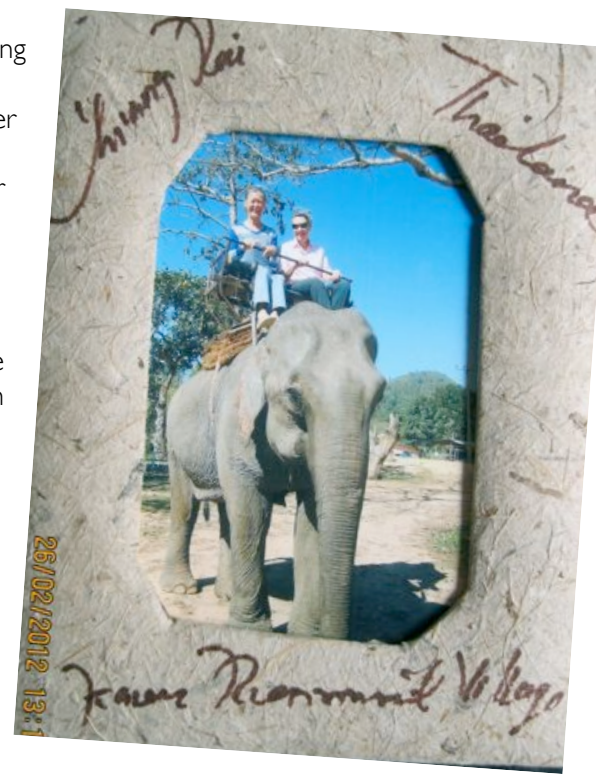
Example – he even took them to the local “super-market” – where they could purchase bunches of bananas without stepping down from the basket on his back.

It is the Karen-hill-tribe that lives in the village on the river with elephants.

One can suppose that it takes a lot of food to keep this body functioning. Fortunately the locals have devised ways to use the remnants from all that the elephants eat (i.e. elephant dung).



Elephant dung is used to make paper and the frame for this picture was also made from



the leftovers of all that bamboo and bananas.

# Black House @ White Temple



## Chiang Rai

Chiang Rai is proud of its eccentric artistic community. Two of the most outspoken and unique projects are the

- Black House
- White Temple

The **Black-House (Baan Dum)** was created by world renowned artist Thawan Duchanee. He was born in Chiang Rai (1939), he studied, worked and had exhibitions in many major cities around the world.

In 1969 he returned to Chiang Rai and started building the first Baan Dum (Black house), this is also his residence and his work studio. Over the years, he just keeps adding additional houses as a means of expressing his feelings. The structures/houses are immense, each with much to discover. One would need to return many times to absorb all that "teacher Thawan" wishes to express.



# White Temple @ Black House

## Chiang Rai

The **White Temple** complex is also a work in evolution and the artist behind this project is Chalemchai Kositpipat.

Artist Chalemchai was a student of Thawan Duchanee (Black House). Likewise, he established a worldwide reputation and then returned to Chiang Rai in 2000 to devote his life to this White Temple.

Chalemchai says *"I want to create arts in my own style and to develop Thai Buddhist arts to be accepted internationally."*

We had the good fortune to meet Artist Chalemchai – and we are delighted that he agreed to the pictures with him. He lives and has his work studios within the complex of the White Temple

The White Temple is a Buddhist Temple, with monks in residence at all times.



# *Doi Tung @ Gardens*

## *Burmese border*

There are two glorious gardens named after Mae Fah Luang (King's Mother) in this region:

- Doi Tung – Mae Fah Luang near the Burmese border
- Mae Fah Luang Botanical gardens near Chiang Rai.



At the Doi Tung Residence/gardens, it seems that the tropical climate along maintenance from a team of enthusiastic hill-tribe gardeners have turned this into a Garden of Eden. Hoping that the pictures can express more than words.



# FareWell

## Northern Thailand



The days in Northern Thailand were pleasantly full, however, to continue their **discovery** they also wanted to go to Chiang Mai and Bangkok. It was then that they discovered the "bonds" that they had developed with many of the local people.

They had stayed for many days at Pee So Pah's guesthouse and all of us had many wonderful meals in her restaurant. Therefore, it was difficult to say "Au-revoir". There were also two ladies from Denmark that were very sad to leave this "**home away from home**".

The Akha Hill House pick-up truck took them to Chiang Rai. Even with the extra motorcycle in the back, everyone found enough space for the ride (40 minutes).

Obviously it was a heartfelt and tearful farewell - everything unfolds in the natural way here in the Jungle-outpost.



Good bye  
Au revoir  
Auf Wiedersehen

"pop ghan ka"  
See you soon  
again



*Hello...*

*Bangkok!*

Bangkok is consistently voted as "The best shopping city in the world".

From Siam Paragon - the ultimate in luxury shopping - to the street markets. No other city in the world can even come close to all that Bangkok has to offer.



# River & Khlongs

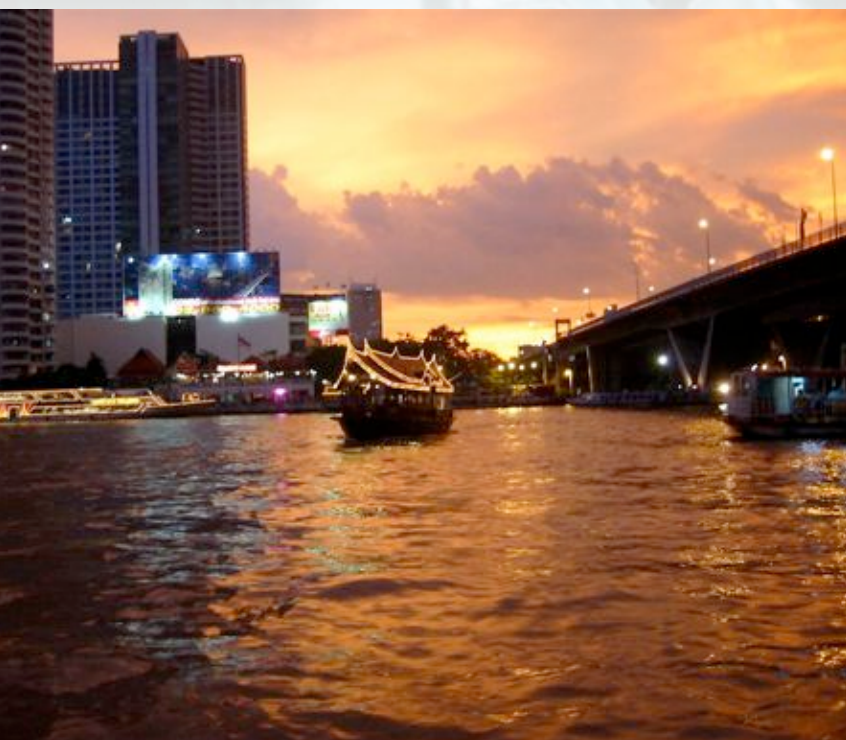


boats, cross river ferries, long-tail boats, public boats and more....

## Bangkok!

The mighty Chao Phraya River which runs through Bangkok is a "working-river" and an endless source of fascination for most people.

From this window, one can see the huge tug-



# Shrines for prayer

## Central Bangkok



Despite being a modern, cosmopolitan metropolis with skyscrapers, a sophisticated Skytrain system and mega-malls that feed a consumerism culture like those of most big cities in the world, Bangkok has another unique edge - the shrines and spirit houses.

Common throughout Thailand, spirit houses can be found outside almost every house and building. The doll house-sized homes are set atop a pedestal and placed in an auspicious location, which allows residents, workers and others to offer prayers and small gifts to appease spirits, represented by doll-sized human figures, or perhaps a small figurine of Buddha.

Shrines, on the other hand, are places of worship where you'd go to pay respect to sacred religious icons in Buddhism (especially Brahma influences) and Hinduism, who in turn could grant you love, happiness, good fortune, success, luck or even fertility.

Erawan Shrine in Bangkok is Brahman, not

strictly Buddhist. And yet, this famous shrine attracts more visitors than many of the city's temples. It was erected during the mid 1950s, after the Thai government had decided to build the luxury Erawan Hotel on this location. However, the first stages of the construction were beset with so many problems that superstitious labourers refused to continue unless the land spirits were appeased.



The Ligam Fertility Shrine (beside parking lot of Swissotel in Bangkok) giving thanks for having a child.



# The last breakfast



## Bangkok!

Up to the last minute of the last day – we enjoyed our leisurely breakfasts – catching up on family events and planning the day. These breakfasts were especially pleasant in this small garden/room on a quiet soi – and yet very near to the skytrain station (*Tonglor*) - and busy Sukhumvit road.

Later this day – Evelyne & Frederic returned to Switzerland and Judy returned to Chiang Rai.



This is Pip from The Thai House. During the visit Evelyne promised that she would return and that her **next-first "Discovery"** would be through a cooking class from Pip ... therefore, we all know that sometime soon we will again enjoy a lovely holiday together.

