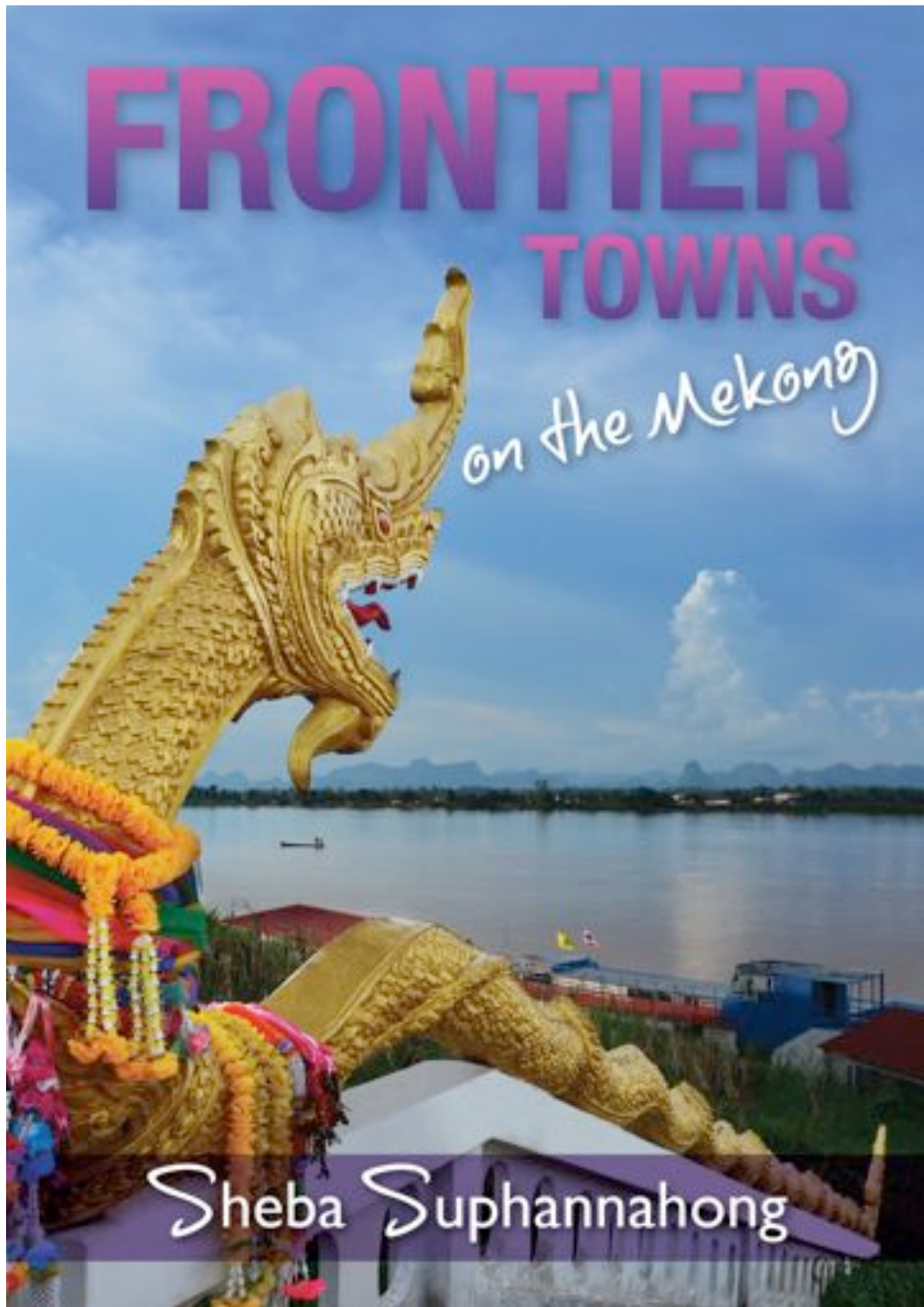


FRONTIER TOWNS

on the Mekong

Sheba Suphannahong



Frontier Towns on the Mekong Available in all major eBookStores

This brochure provides a peek at a few of the subjects.

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Appreciation

Sheba Suphannahong

www.indochinapeninsula.org

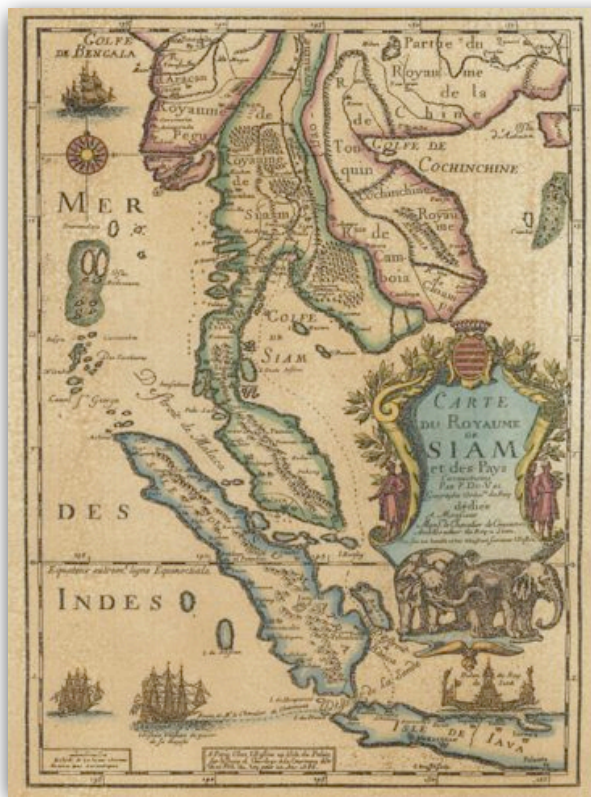
More information on back cover.

Chapter 1, Introduction; IndoChina on the Mekong

Frontier towns are notorious and most will have their stories of intrigue. Nakhon Phanom, on the Mekong and in the heart of IndoChina, has a history which is unequalled in length of time -- as well as upheavals. Spending a few days in Nakhon Phanom will tell you much about IndoChina on the Mekong, various ethnic groups and life-style are still shaping the history of this region. IndoChina 2013 Google map, *Chapter 2@Map Heart of the Mekong*

We shall not bore you with details, however; a quick overview cannot be avoided because few places on earth have such a long -- and action-packed history:

- Less than 300 kilometers north-west of Nakhon Phanom is the Ban Chiang Archaeological site, this is the most important prehistoric settlement so far discovered in south-east Asia. Already in the 5th millennium BC this place was humming with remarkable human cultural, social, and technological activities. Ban Chiang is now a UNESCO site -- more about this at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/575>
- Less than 500 kilometers to the south is Angkor Wat, (Siem Rep, Cambodia) capital of the Khmer Empire from 790 to around 1300 AD. Recent satellite imaging has revealed Angkor to be the largest pre-industrial urban center in the world! Although little is known of the Khmer people, they are generally acknowledged as the world's greatest architects -- Angkor Wat is one of the best examples. Most of the Wats / Temples mentioned in Frontier Towns are Khmer in origin. *Chapter 8@Birth-day & Temple / Wat*



IndoChina Peninsula

In 1686
the French
Ambassador
in Siam
had this map
made for the
King of France.

- According to chronicles in the Cham Museum in Da Nang, Vietnam, the Champa kingdom, founded in 192 AD left traces of its civilization over vast territories, throughout the present day IndoChina Peninsula. <http://www.chammuseum.danang.vn/English/Home/>
- Around the start of the 1st millennium, the Tai tribes began migrating south into south-Asia (west of the Khmer Empire) - with large-scale migrations taking place between the 7th and 13th centuries (the Khmer referred to these people/tribes as Syams).
- The Champa Kingdom, a federation of several smaller states called Mandala -- comprised of several ethnic groups started to grow around the Mekong Basin in the 1500's; as the Khmer Empire crumbled.
- Only a few centuries ago, the land on both sides of the Mekong throughout this region belonged to the Sri Kotrabun Kingdom.

It was when the French landed on the shores in the South China Sea (*Golfe de Cochinchine*) that an attempt was made to forge these various ethnic groups into more modern-style nations, however; the endeavors of the French were stopped on the west side of the Mekong! *Chapter 12@The Mekong -- from Source to Sea.*

As the French forces moved westward, from the South China Sea, they sponsored the notion of modern nationhood amongst the disparate Lao territories, primarily in an attempt to remove the Lao people from the cultural orbit of neighboring Siam.

Along the Mekong, they encountered the courts of the King of Siam and were outwitted mainly through capricious and unconventional tactics -- which proved more appropriate than military-might. Perhaps it was the subtle-confusion-tactics that the rational European mindset could not surmount. *Chapter 1@languages* explains another part of the subtle-confusion-tactic!

Whatever, under the Convention of 13 February 1904, a new frontier was drawn, and the Mekong became the eastern border of Siam, in this Isaan region. Therefore, the Eastern part of Siam always was populated by people originating from various

Chapter 3, Foodie-Tour & Fun-Festivals; Foodie Dream-Holiday

Foodie-tours are taken seriously in Bangkok and anyone that is serious about this subject would delight in spending a day or two chilling at the many wonderful restaurants in and around, Nakhon Phanom:



- A wide variety of delicious dishes
- The meals are healthy (FRESH products) & light in calories
- Restaurants are open to the Mekong & environment
- People eat throughout the day, usually from 6:00 to 21:00
- Beautiful smiles and genuine-care about your happiness
- Around 100.- THB will usually provide you with a great meal.

IF you can tell us of another place in the world that can offer all of the above, please let us know
(Sheba.Suphannahong@IndoChinaPeninsula.org) and we will give you five copies of Frontier Towns on the Mekong free!

Foodie-street

This lovely street is a great place to start, there are four wonderful restaurants (linked to family homes) each of them offer food that will test your "resistance" -- and then the Mekong walkway at the end (50 meters) offers more temptations. Even if you are not a Foodie – guessing that you will still find pleasure in this!

Mam always has made great-food and Mam opened her new restaurant, **Baan Ahan Thai** in 2013. Baan Ahan Thai has plenty of open-air seating as well as air-conditioned section. Mam's day starts at the market, purchasing the best of seasonal products. She then makes up a variety of home-style dishes, renowned throughout the region. These specialties are served deli-style. Everything is "arroy macht macht" (delicious very much). Great food – wonderful ambiance – and Mam will be equally delighted to improve her English through a nice chat with you. Telephone: +66 (0) 88 516 4874; Open: 7:30 to 21:00 – closed on Saturday.

Sam Tam Khun Paew, remember (previous page) "Sam tam (papaya salad); this famous dish originated in this region because there is an abundance of papaya." Well, Khun Paew is renowned for making the best in the region, she is a "chef par excellence" – give it a try. Telephone: +66 (0) 89 943 0683.

Kai Yang (grilled chicken) just beside Khun Thaew is the BBQ-chef. She uses only the finest ingredients to assure that the chicken and fish which come off of her coals are *delicieux*! Your backyard BBQ will never taste the same after this... Telephone: +66 (0) 88 516 4874

The Chom Chon Shop on the corner also has wonderful Thai food - and a couple of cute coffee-bars; all of this within 50 meters of the Mekong walk-way on Foodie Street.

There are, of course, numerous restaurants on the Mekong walkway. However, on the next page we mention two because along with the great food, they also have beautiful views and a menu in English. These are only a short distance north of Foodie Street, *Chapter 2@map showing Nakhon Phanom.*



Chapter 3, Foodie-Tour & Fun-Festivals; Restaurants on the Mekong

If you want something a little out of the ordinary, continue along the walkway until you find the **Chelsea Riverside Restaurant** which sits above the Mekong. Khun Duan had a Thai restaurant in London for many years. More recently, she spends more time in her birth-place on the Mekong.



Khun Duan bakes her own bread, fresh every day. Bread was unknown on the Mekong until the French appeared – and even then it never became popular. However, Khun Duan is reviving the tradition with great bread, so IF you feel the urge for a sandwich, or other European-type food, head down to the Chelsea Riverside. During the HOT months (March to June) Khun Duan is often in London, therefore, the restaurant is closed. Telephone: +66 (0) 80 089 0457 Open 10:00 to 20:00

Ruan Rim Nam is a collection of small houses on the Mekong River Bank. As each corner in each house is different, it usually takes a few minutes to decide where you want to sit. Service and food are as delightful as the atmosphere. Easy to find along the Mekong walkway – north of Chelsea Riverside Ruan Rim Nam; telephone: +66 (0) 42 514 787; open 11:00 to 22:00

The View Kong Hotel has a wonderful open-air restaurant on the Mekong. The food is great and the entire atmosphere is fun at the View Kong. telephone: +66 (0) 42 513 564-70

River Beach (about 3 kilometers north of Center-Point) Chapter 2@map showing Nakhon Phanom.

This small (yet sprawling) restaurant has bungalows over the Mekong, a corner for karaoke-fans and still quiet corners (here & there). Of course, great food, fun ambiance, busy throughout the day. Open from 11:00 to 22:00. Telephone: +66 (0)42 512 551.

Pla Jum Chom Kong (Fish with view on Kong); about 5 kilometers north of Center-Point.

A few years ago Khun Tum made the first fish-restaurant, with small bungalows clinging to the riverbank of the Mekong – with the tanks of fresh fish in the Mekong below. A soup-pot is placed on the table, along with vegetables and freshly sliced fish – then it is up to the people at the table to manage affairs! That is, put into the stew that which they want to eat – delicious, fun and so very special to enjoy perched above the Mekong with a beautiful view.

Since Khun Tum opened the first restaurant, a few copies have also been made. IF you want the original – telephone: +66 (0) 8 8026 7160 - to make sure that you find the right place – first picture in this chapter is from Khun Tums; Chapter 3@food on Mekong

Open: 10:00 to 21:00 On the Apiban Bancha Road (212) , turn-off and take a small road down to the Mekong.



From the Center-Point in Nakhon Phanom, follow the road going South along the Mekong for about two kilometers. Just beyond the RiverView Hotel, there are numerous small restaurants on the Mekong. All of them have good food and pleasant ambiance to “chill”. Most are open until around 22:00.

Beer: Thailand is also known for making great beer and many people enjoy Thai beer with their meals.

Wine: Thailand has numerous viticulture – and they are making increasing great wine -they are even winning international wine competitions. Wine is not yet popular with the local-folks in Nakhon Phanom, however, you will find wine in some of the larger restaurants.

kaw nam lac: this is the local alcoholic concoction that the brave try!

kaw nam lac: orange juice with chilli peppers and rum – if it sounds like fun ...

Chapter 2, Logistics; Hotels

Nakhon Phanom has remained particularly “authentic” and to date there are no large franchise in this region. This assures a true adventure in IndoChina, however, it could make finding the correct lodging a little more complicated, especially for the foreign visitor (not speaking Thai).

Therefore, following you will find a list of some the popular hotels in, and around, Nakhon Phanom. In some places you will find good English spoken, however, in most cases, you will find rudimentary English. In ALL places, you will find people that WANT to speak English with you! Most have studied English in school, but have not had an opportunity to speak it. Your patience and attempt to communicate, using English, will be much appreciated.

Three of the largest hotels on the Mekong, all of them have especially good views of Mekong and mountains, South end of walkway between one and two kilometers from Center-Point; *chapter 2@map showing Nakhon Phanom:*



- **The View Kong;** <http://www.viewkonghotel.com/index.php>;
Tel: +66 (0) 42 513 564-70 (700.- to 2,500.- THB)
- **River View;** <http://www.nakhonphanomriverviewhotel.com/>;
Tel: +66 (0) 42 522 333-40 (900.- to 9,000.- THB)
- **The River;** opening in December 2013, will be largest and most upscale hotel in Nakhon Phanom;
www.therivernakhonphanom.com;
• Tel: +66 (0) 80 669 2999 / +66 (0) 42 522 999
- **Khongpumork Homotel** is on the North end of the walkway, about two kilometers from Center-Point
www.khongpumork.com; Tel: +66 (0) 8 572 6767 (500.- to 900.- THB)
Khong = Mekong
Pu = Mountains
Mork = Misty
YES! They have rooms with a beautiful view on the misty limestone mountains.

The Siam Grand Hotel; www.siamgrandhotel.net; telephone: +66 (0) 42 512 750 (500.- to 900.- THB)

Designed, built & managed by Khun Bill, pleasant stay guaranteed.

Throughout the Siam Grand Hotel you will find exquisite photos of the region. Bill's brother, Khun Boom, is a professional photographer and his pictures are treasures from Isaan. The picture of the Friendship Bridge near Nakhon Phanom Chapter 2@ASEAN is from Khun Boom's collection.

Here are three hotels that are less expensive, each a short walk away from the Mekong:

- **Wind sor Hotel:** +66 (0) 42 511 946 (around 300.- THB)
- **Grand Hotel:** +66 (0) 42 511 281 (around 200.- THB)
- **First Hotel:** +66 (0) 42 511 253 (around 150.- THB)

More information about hotels in Nakhon Phanom at: http://www.agoda.com/asia/thailand/muang_nakhon_phanom.html

The Nakhon Phanom Tourist office can also provide you with an up-to-date list of hotels, telephone: +66 (0) 42 513 490 - 2



Chapter 5, Explore with the Sky Lab; Sky-Lab* tour – the vicinity of Nakhon Phanom

If you do not speak Thai, best to arrange this day with someone that speaks English in your hotel.

The suggestions for this day are all within a 10 kilometer area, therefore a sky-lab would be the perfect vehicle to chauffeur you around. The best way to do this is to hire the sky-lab for the day, so that your driver will wait for you as you visit the different places. The cost for the sky-lab services for the day should be negotiated before you leave (between 800.- & 1000.- THB). The drivers are safe and honest and once they know your destinations, you will have the comfort of knowing that you have an interesting and fun day.



**Sky-Lab; this is the local re-incarnation of the tuk-tuk (for the rest of the world). It all started in Mr Pong's Garage in Udon Thani 1978; less than 200 kilometers from Nakhon Phanom. One of the older trishaw (tricycle) drivers was tired of pedaling, however, felt that he could not retire. Therefore he stopped by Pong's place and asked if Khun Pong could put a small motor on the trishaw/tricycle so that he could continue to make deliveries (from the local market) using his trishaw.*

When the competition (still pedaling) noticed how much more work the old man was accomplishing with this small motor – more trishaw drivers pedaled to Pong's Garage for small motors. Mr Pong then did some research to figure out which size motor would best meet the needs of the Trishaw pedallers – especially delivering farm produce to / from the local market.

*Mr Pong (and the trishaw pedallers) felt that this was definitely an invention of great importance, and it should have a name celebrating this fact. As they searched for a name – it came plummeting into the Indian Ocean on 11 July 1979; NASA's space station called the "Sky-Lab". The trishaw/tricycle pedallers immediately felt a kinship - both were evidence of research resulting in new forms of transport! Therefore, they decided to formalize the name of their tricycle's with motors – and they called them **Sky-Labs!***

Seriously – they were right to recognize the importance of this revised transport. It changed their lives and it is still the main form of taxi-transport throughout the region. The NASA Sky-Lab is hardly even a memory for most people – however, each and every day tens of thousands of people, throughout Isaan, call upon their Sky-Lab to provide transport.

Pronunciation in Thai: sa-KAI laeb!



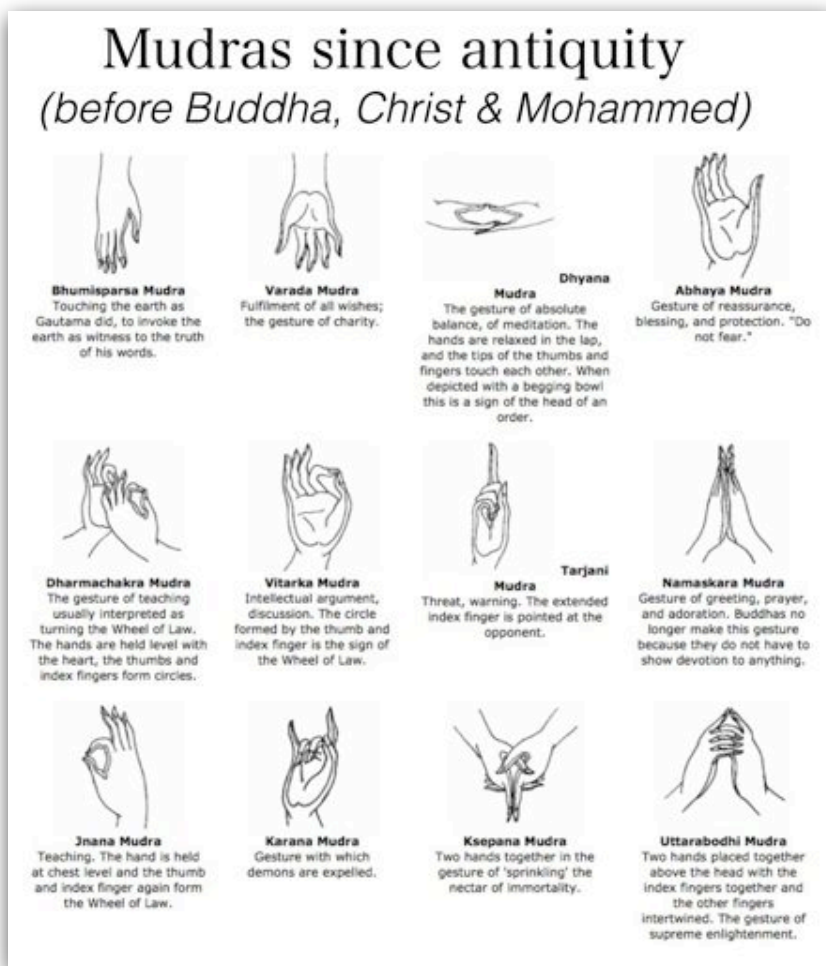
Chapter 8, Buddhist Temples /Wats Mudras

You will notice that most images of the Buddha follow traditional patterns and to understand this, one should have a short introduction to the subject of Mudras.

Mudras are positions of the body that have an influence on the energies of the body (your health and emotions). Mostly the hands and fingers are held in some position, but the whole body may be part of the mudra as well.

They are so old that their origins cannot be traced. They have been in use for thousands of years across all cultures. Mudras have been found on all continents, practiced by people of all religions -- and also those professing NO religion. Many people consider them as natural to the body as other daily needs of the body.

Crossing the fingers for prayer (Christian religions) is a mudra! The "Namaste", (Wai in Thailand) -- where the hands are held in front of the chest, the palms touching is the most popular mudra in Thailand.



The Buddha also embraced these concepts and images of the Buddha always have the hands in mudra-positions. They are used as a spiritual practice, on the path to enlightenment and good health.

Mudras are also a fundamental part of holistic-healing (the Mudras work on the nerves, and are considered a neural science). They are again gaining in recognition as scientific studies have proven that practicing them daily has the ability to maintain and/or improve your health, happiness and well-being.
<http://www.mudravigyan.com/Mudra.html>

Birth-Day Wats / Temples near Nakhon Phanom, Thailand

In Frontier Towns on the Mekong, we write about Wat Phra That Phanom, a pilgrimage site for most Theravada Buddhist in Thailand.

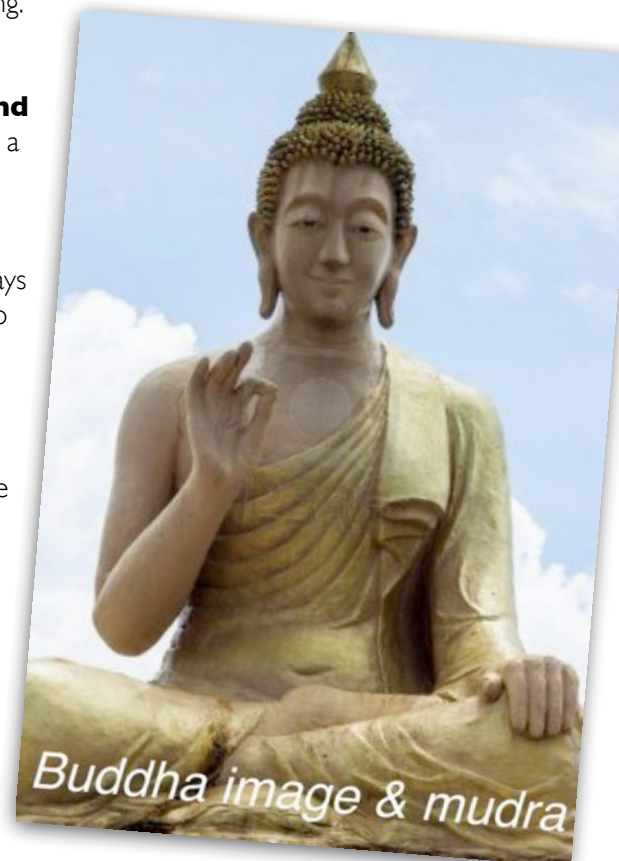
Additionally, there are numerous Temples / Wats in and around Nakhon Phanom that have become known for their relationship to the different days of the week. Most people that make their pilgrimage to That Phanom, also try to visit these important Temples -- especially the one that relates to their birth-day. In the Buddhist tradition, the day of your birth plays an important role in your life (similar to astrology).

Equally important, each day of the week is associated with a Buddha image -- and most people have in their homes an image of the Buddha that corresponds to the day of their birth.

Following is a brief synopsis of the Wats / Temples and Buddha images relating to each day of the week.

More information in Frontier Towns on the Mekong

A PDF download at: <http://indochinapeninsula.org/Frontier-Towns-on-the-Mekong.html>



Sunday

Wat That Phanom

Buddha image -
Pang Tawai Natra
Restraint



Chapter 8, Buddhist Temples / Wats

Birth-day & Temples

Temples and Buddha image for those born on:

- Sunday
- Monday
- Tuesday

Monday Wat Phra That Renu

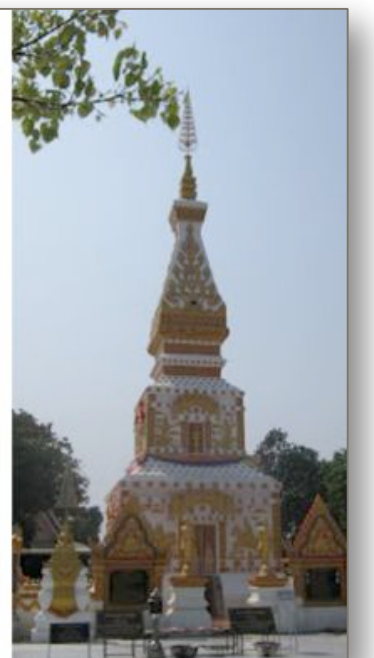
Buddha
image -
Pang
Ham
Yath

**Making
Peace**



Tuesday Wat Phra That Si Khun

Buddha image - Pang Sai Yas
Reclining



Wednesday daytime

Wat Phra That
Maha Chai

Buddha image -
Pang Um Baart
Holding alms bowl



Chapter 8, Buddhist Temples / Wats

Birth-day & Temples

Temples and Buddha image for those born on:

- WednesDAY
- Wednesday evening
- Thursday

(Wednesday is a special day for Buddhist, therefore, a Buddha image for daylight hours and another for night hours).

Wednesday evening

Wat Phra That Maha Chai

Buddha image - Pang Par Lelai
The Blessed One

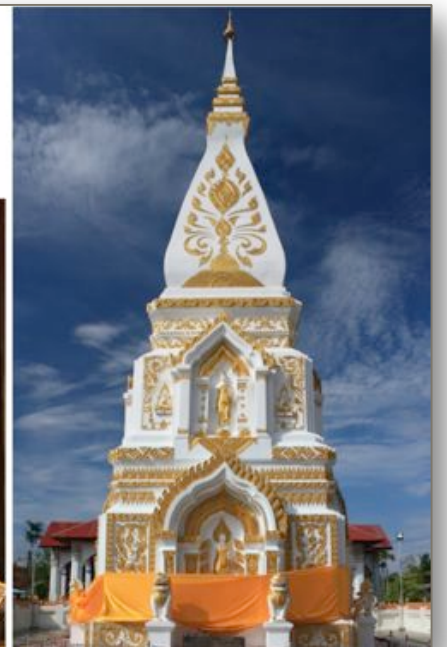


Thursday

Phra That Prasit

Buddha image -
Pang Samah
Thi

Meditation



Friday Wat Phra That Uthen

Buddha
image -
Pang
Ram
Pueng

Contemplation



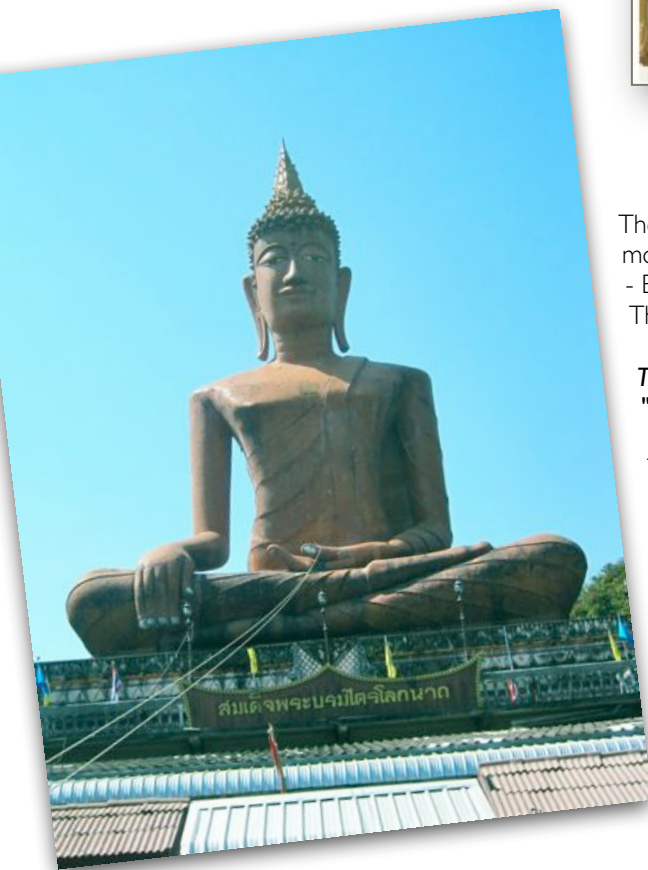
Chapter 8, Buddhist Temples / Wats Birth-day & Temples

Birthday Temples for those born on:

- Friday
- Saturday

Saturday Wat Mahathat

Buddha image - Pang Naga Prok:
Protection



The Buddha image bhūmisparśa, Touching the Earth, is the position/mudra that is most often seen; it has a special link to every day of the week (sort of the default - Buddha image for the week).

The huge Buddha image (bottom of this page) is in this position.

The bhūmisparśa, Touching the Earth-position / mudrā is usually referred to as "calling the earth to witness" / Renunciation.

The gesture symbolizes the Buddha's renunciation of worldly desires, and as this is the central moral precept of Buddhism it is by far the most common depiction of the Buddha.

Chapter 9, Naga and the Rua Fai / Lighted Boat Festival

1. What is the Nāga?

The Nāga-spirit is common in all the Buddhist countries of Asia, and in many countries, the Nāga concept has been merged with local traditions of serpents and/or dragons that are great and wise.

The legend of the Nāga is an especially strong and sacred belief held by Thai and Lao people living along the Mekong River:

According to folklore, the Naga is neither good nor evil, but rather mischievous and finicky, demanding respect from humans and capable of disastrous interferences if reverence is not offered from time to time. Most Buddhist Temples along the Mekong will have at least one image of a Naga-spirit.

The book-cover of Frontier Towns on the Mekong is a picture of the Naga-spirit that guards the port in Nakhon Phanom. Each day multitudes of people make offerings to this Naga – asking it to protect them.

2. Rua Fai to please the Naga

Now that we know the powers of the Naga – it is easier to understand that centuries ago, the people living in this region came to believe that at an auspicious moment of the year they should honour the Naga. They created a festival called the Rua Fai (*Boat Lighted*) to float hand-crafted Rau Fai down the Mekong on the night of the full moon at the end of the Monsoon season.



Each year for centuries communities in this region have been making their Rua Fai for the Naga of the Mekong. The belief is that by creating this visual delight (i.e. showing the Naga their respect), a Happy Naga would make their life a little easier.

In recent years, as more people learned of this beautiful event, people come from far away to watch the Rua Fai pageant on the Mekong River. Fortunately, the local people have remained true to their traditions, and they continue to make their Rua Fai -- as they did centuries ago. Perhaps the most wonderful part of this event is that the modern/global world has not changed the tradition of the Rua Fai Festival to honour the Naga.

In case you are wondering ...

The boats average around 50 meters in length (150 feet) -- and the lights are burning candles (as they have been for millennium).

The same technology from centuries ago is still used today ...

3. How were the Rua Fai made centuries ago?

The construction of the Rua Fai starts a couple of weeks in advance and the farmers use the natural resources that they have around them. Since bamboo grows abundantly, it is used for the basic structure.

If you are now curious about how they make the Rua Fai, you have two options:

- Visit the Rua Fai Festival
- Read more about it in; *Frontier-Towns-on-the-Mekong*

Amazingly beautiful – amazingly simple!

...and, if it can please the Naga, imagine what it might do for you!

4. Rua Fai and the Happiest place in Thailand!

Most important, it seems that the Naga is impressed and has blessed the Nakhon Phanom province with an abundance of Happiness!

The region around Nakhon Phanom is one of the poorest in per-capita-revenue in Thailand. On the other hand, in 1213, a United Nations study rated this as the **“Happiest Province in Thailand”!**

Festival of the Rua Fai is held every year on the night of the full moon, at the end of the Monsoon season -- this usually means, the last full moon in the month of October:



Chapter 7, Learn with the Locals;

Photo-trip/ sights & tips

Now that you have taken pictures of the beautiful sunrise over the Mekong (from your hotel room on the Mekong) -- time to search deeper to capture the essence of IndoChina.

Most great photographers agree, important to be in the right place at the right time, and when you are in a place as exotic as this Frontier Town, it can be difficult to know -- where to be? And when?

Lucky us! Khun Rwd also loves photography -- and rest assured, he knows how to get you to the right place at the right time for the perfect pic! Rwd's photos of Isaan have been used by many travel publications.

Khun Rwd customizes his photographic expeditions depending on the visitors' wishes:

- Beauty of nature
- Local people
- Typical Frontier Town
- Temples & temple-life
- Nature reserves (in Thailand & Laos)
- River-caves in Laos
- You can also add other subjects to this list.

Depending on goals, number of people, time constraints -- each expedition is different.

If you are interested in working with Khun Rwd for photos, best that you contact him in advance (he is always very busy). However, since photography is Khun Rwd's passion, he tries to assure that photo-trips are a priority (when possible).

- eMail: apiromliving@gmail.com
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Khun Rwd's pictures are on numerous pages throughout Frontier Towns on the Mekong. It has been a delight working with Khun Rwd, and we can easily guess that you will feel the same about any type of trip that you coordinate with him.

Bicycle your way ...

Bicycles are not yet very popular in this region for various reasons:

- The people have not had reason to use them
- Working on the farms provided all the exercise that was needed
- The tropical sunshine can be very hot.

However, for people that DO like to bicycle, the region offers many opportunities:

- Roads are good and relatively flat
- Scenery is beautiful
- Plenty to see, eat and enjoy.

The TAT (Tourism Authority of Thailand) has drawn up three bicycle routes that would be particularly interesting: <http://secretary.mots.go.th/nakhonphanom>

These two hotels have bicycles for their guests:

- View Kong; Tel: +66 (0) 42 513 564-70
- RiverView; Tel: +66 (0) 42 522 333-40

If you want to ride beside a local that knows his way around and will surely give you a good workout -- give Khun Nut a call. He grew up in Nakhon Phanom, he is a bicycle enthusiast and he speaks English. Some options to consider:

- One day tour
- Half day tour
- Evening tour along the Mekong, night market and other fun places.

Prices depend on many criteria -- give Khun Nut a call and he can tell you more: Telephone: +66 (0) 95 495 4919

Also information at: www.sriphanomtours.com



Chapter 7, Learn with the Locals;

School -- Dialogue in English and Inspire the Students

In Thailand, all students study the English language (a part of every school curriculum), however, they do not have enough opportunity to practice conversation in English. IF you would take the time to visit a local school – this would be “win-win” for everyone:

- You would see a typical school
- The students would have an opportunity to dialogue in English
- The teacher will be delighted
- You will serve as inspiration to the students.

Khun Suwanna Thane (nickname: Na) is the English teacher at PiyamaharaChalai High School and assures us that it would be a delight to have English-speaking visitors to dialogue with. Khun Suwanna teaches English classes every day (Monday to Friday), therefore, most any day you would be welcome. Of course, best to organize this a little in advance and that is easy – just contact Khun Suwanna:
Telephone: + 66 (0) 82 375 1095
email: nanajoungja@hotmail.com
Facebook: Suwannee Thana

You might also ask someone in your hotel to call the school to coordinate what time you should come and the best way to go to the school. The school is located in the center of Nakhon Phanom – Khun Suwanna is in the picture above with the name of the school in the granite-plate at the entrance.

Your sky-lab chauffeur would wait for you, and you would still have plenty of time for other things on your agenda for that day. Rest assured, Khun Suwanna (+ students) will be grateful for your visit and this experience will most likely give you a sense of having used your time wisely.
Keep in mind that Thai school holidays are from March to May.

Work in the rice paddy

Have you ever wondered how rice is cultivated?

Perhaps your curiosity will grow when you know that it is one of the few crops where large-scale-farming has not yet overtaken the small farmers. Growing rice is a labour-intensive project. Thailand is one of the top rice-exporters in the world – and most of that rice is grown in Isaan.

Therefore, this would be a good occasion to learn more about how rice is cultivated. Planting the rice is the best / healthiest part because one must work in the water-flooded paddy, that is, along with putting the small rice-seedling into the mud -- you are also trying to keep you balance and squishing mud between your toes! The paddies have been cultivated for centuries in this same fashion – therefore, the mud is soft, the water is warm – in truth, the mud might be even better than that found in the expensive health spas! Most people come away from the rice-paddy with renewed energy; sort of like walking on green grass.



More about holistic holidays in *Chapter 7@WWOOF & holistic retreats.*

It might also interest you to know that rice is the main food for over half the population in the world.

IF you want to enjoy some time in the rice paddy, contact Khun Rwd and he can include this in a day tour for you. Keep in mind that depending on the season, many of the farmers might be harvesting – or preparing the fields. Rest assured Khun Rwd will do his best to find a farmer that will appreciate your help!

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Frontier Towns on the Mekong Appreciation

The completion of Frontier Towns on the Mekong brings me special joy -- especially because of the multitude of friends/locals in this Frontier Town that have been awaiting the arrival of this book with immense curiosity.

Frontier Towns on the Mekong is the first book to shine a light on their community and their enthusiasm has been evident with the smiles, and kindness, and help in every way possible. My hope is that this eBook will convey at least a part of the vitality of the local people. The depth of their kindness is difficult to communicate since it goes beyond that which most people know today.

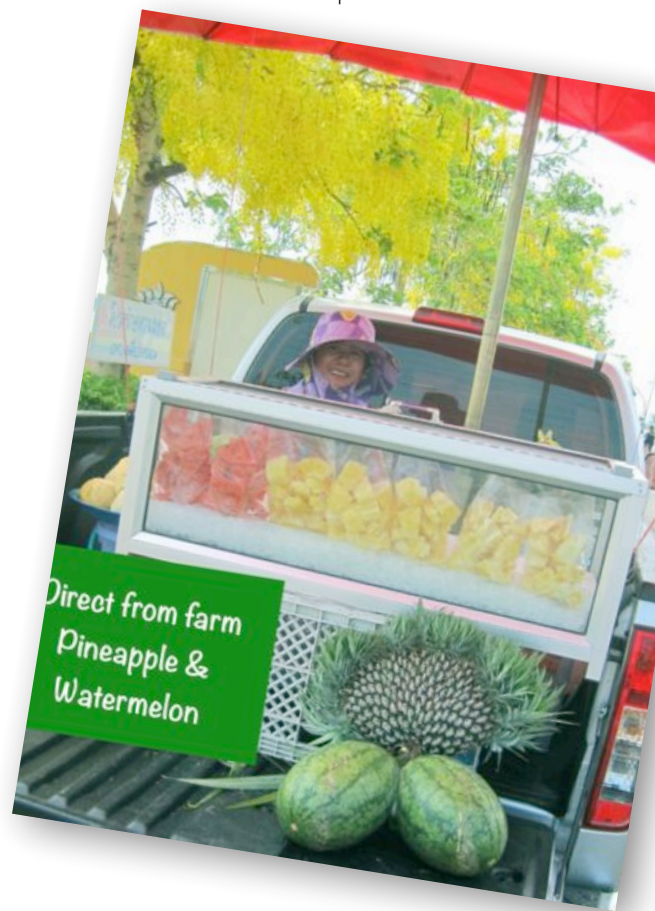
Nonetheless, you can experience the kindheartedness of the locals if you follow some of the suggestions -- Khun Suwana at the local school (Dialogue in English) will melt your heart, and, as mentioned, you will feel that you have used your time wisely. Honestly, few other places in the world where a conversation in English can be so much fun, and rewarding!

Khun Rwd (an authentic pioneer) is also in this Frontier Town to provide guidance -- which is always as delightful and refreshing as are the days on the Mekong.

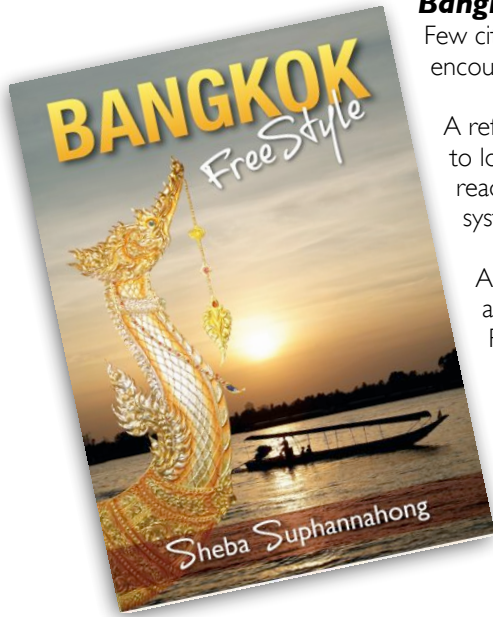
Much gratitude goes to Khun Rwd; from the start (along with his very busy agenda) he always provided answers to the questions. He also contributed pictures, wonderful restaurants, translations, etc.. Thanks to his help, we delved ever deeper into this Frontier Town, its history and all that contributed to the making of a unique town on the Mekong.

And last, but not least, appreciation to you, the eBook reader and pioneer. Every effort was made to present clear information about this Frontier Town so that you could come to this region for challenges and/or chill-out -- shaping your experience around your interests. We hope that your stay in this Frontier Town was FUN and that the memories will continue to provide joy.

There is much appreciation for your trust,
Sheba Suphannahong
www.indochinapeninsula.org



More books from IndoChina Peninsula



Bangkok FreeStyle

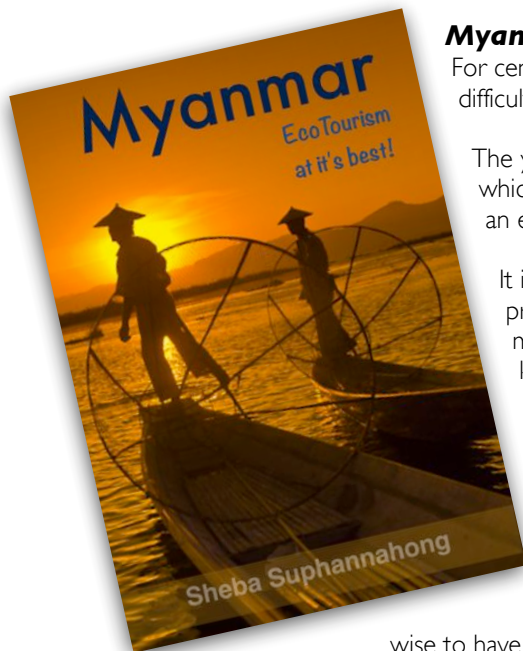
Few cities in the world are as exotic and complex as Bangkok and this unique book encourages the reader to journey at their own pace, delving into their personal interests.

A refreshing guide using the iBook/tablet capacities and the Internet persuading the visitor to look at this metropolis from an alternative viewpoint. With the freedom to wander, the reader will discover traditional lifestyles, unconventional (yet formidable) transportation systems; life in the streets and retreats behind the temple facades.

Along with a peek into world famous luxury hotels on the Chao Phraya River, there are also ample suggestions for enjoying long-tail boats and the lore of the lifestyle along the River and the khlongs.

Bangkok FreeStyle gives you the opportunity to observe the paradoxes, to learn about ancient Siam and to enjoy this modern megalopolis.

Over 150 beautiful pictures -- and each pic is worth a thousand more words.
The perfect companion to discover Bangkok – on your own terms!



Myanmar -- EcoTourism at it's Best!

For centuries Burma has been a country shrouded in myths and mist, and even today difficult to separate fact from fiction.

The years from 1988 to 2011 (when the name was changed to Myanmar) are those which the contemporary world learned about -- however, that segment has also come to an end, and finally the doors on the road to Burma/Myanmar are opening.

It is a rare occasion when an entire nation has an opportunity to leap-frog into our present world, and, of course, the path can be difficult for many. Tourism is one of the most important sectors that can help Myanmar move forward. Educated travelers know that their visit can change the lives of many people – and most people want to make sure that the money they spend goes towards communities that use it wisely.

Fortunately, since 2012, Myanmar has been working with renowned leaders on subjects of Community Involvement in Tourism. They are working with the local people so that revenue from tourism contributes to a better life for everyone. The rural communities are also learning how to reply to the needs of the "connected-visitors".

If you want to experience Burma (and yet you will arrive in Myanmar) it would be wise to have some additional information. ***Myanmar – EcoTourism at it's Best!*** provides the intrepid traveler with essential information so that you can explore Burma, as well as enjoy modern Myanmar -- and know that you also contributing to a stable future for the people.

eBookStores: eBookIt, Amazon, Apple, Google, Sony, Ingram

www.IndoChinaPeninsula.com

About Sheba Suphannahong

This is the third continent that Sheba calls home. On the first two continents (America & Europe) she was known as an explorer, a pioneer and successful businesswoman. She was avant-garde with new technology, traveled to exotic destinations and worked tirelessly for the environment.

Those past experiences shaped Sheba so that it is like a natural instinct to write eBooks about this IndoChina Peninsula, and at the same time help keep the grassroots green.

"The new technology (iBooks/eReaders) make it logical to share with the world all that I discovered during my pioneering days in Bangkok and this Frontier Town on the Mekong. Both Bangkok and this Frontier Towns have rich and exotic cultures to explore and these books are perfect for the bold, the brave, and those that want to use technology for new insights.

This IndoChina Peninsula holds much intrigue for a pioneer and Sheba is already active on two new books – first priority is ***Myanmar – ecoTourism at it's Best***; and then ***Jungle Outposts & the Golden Triangle***.

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