

Optional Tour for Conference Participants

Saturday 13 October 2018

1. Sanam Chandra Palace

Before ascending the throne, the then Crown Prince Vajiravudh (later H. M. King Rama VI) came to this city to pay homage to the big pagoda. He wished to build a palace here as a retreat and a residence during his pilgrimage trip to the pagoda. The construction began in 1902 by the end of the Fifth Reign (1868 – 1910). It was completed in 1911. H.M. King Rama VI named it Sanam Chandra Palace.

Sanam Chandra Palace is located in the town of Nakhon Pathom, about 2 kms west of Phra Pathom Chedi. It occupies an area of about 355 acres with a big court in the middle, surrounded by ring roads, with water canals on the outer perimeter. The beautiful halls that located in the middle of the Palace include:

Phiman Pathom Hall, the first hall to be built in the Sanam Chandra Palace. A 2-storey European building in which King Rama VI resided before his ascension to the throne.

Vatchari Romya Hall, this is a 2-storey hall. It was built in Thai architecture: multi-layered roof with colourful tiles on the turret; with a swan-like finial on the roof ridge, representing the head of garuda and small finials jutting out of the 2 corners of the gable.

Samakki Mukmat Hall, a Thai style hall. The building is raised 1-metre above the ground with 2 staircases running down on both sides. This hall is connected to the Vatchari Romya Hall by a door. It was a meeting hall for King Rama VI.

Phra Tamnak Chali Monkol-asna, located nearby in the Southeastern direction. The 2-storey building is of European architecture, plastered in caramel-yellow, with roof tile in red.

Phra Tamnak Mari Ratchrat Banlang, a 2-storey wooden building and painted in red. The building is located opposite Phra Tamnak Chali Monkol-asna and are connected via a walk way. This walk way resembles a bridge with a roof, walls, and windows.

Phra Tamnak Tabkwan, this a teak building with a palm leaf roof. It is situated on the opposite side of the road from Phra Tamnak Tabkaeo, a little further away from Phra Tamnak Mari Ratchrat Banlang. Under the royal command of King Rama VI, the teak building was constructed to preserve traditional Thai architecture. It was also used for merit-making and classic Thai performances.

Phra Pikkaneesh Shrine, it was built to house the image of Phra Pikkanaesuan (or Ganesh), the Indian god of arts. The shrine is located in a large field, in front of the Sanam Chan Palace and is in the center of the Palace compound.

Ya-Lei Monument This is an actual size iron cast figure. The dog, Ya-Lei, was very close to the heart of King Rama VI. Ya-Lei was a hybrid dog born in the Nakhon Pathom prison. Ya-Lei was a very smart and loyal dog. The King was very fond of Ya-Lei, so much so that Ya-Lei was envied, and was later shot by an envious person. King Rama VI was much saddened when Ya-Le passed away and

commanded that a copper statue of Ya-Lei be cast and placed on a pedestal in front of Phra Tamnak Chali Monkol-asna.



2. Phra Pathom Chedi

The Phra Pathom Chedi, which means “Holy chedi of the beginning” is regarded the oldest Buddhist monument in Thailand. The very impressive chedi (stupa) with its orange roof visible from far away is with its 120m height and circumference of about 236m the largest Buddhist chedi in the world.

The history of the chedi goes back all the way to around the 3rd century BC, when Buddhism was introduced to Thailand. The Indian Emperor Ashoka decided to send out monks over many parts of Asia, including Thailand, to spread Buddhism.

The chedi was modeled after the Great Stupa of Sanchi in Central India, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and that was built in the 3rd century BC by order of Emperor Ashoka. Monks from India brought over relics from the Buddha that were enshrined in the Phra Pathom chedi.

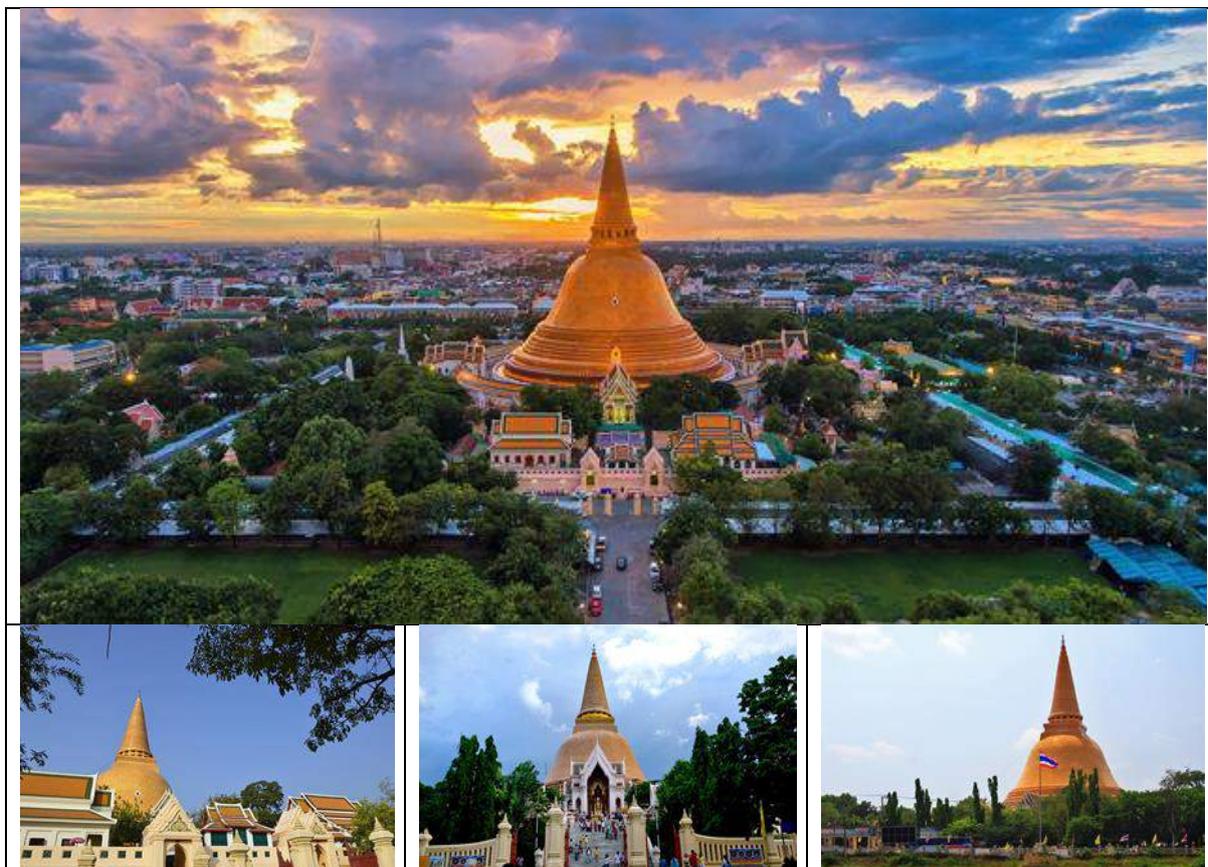
In those days Nakhon Pathom was located on the Gulf of Thailand. Since then because of sedimentation from the Chao Phraya River the land progressed more towards the South and Nakhon Pathom was no longer a coastal city.

When the local river dried up, the city was abandoned and eventually overgrown by jungle, with its inhabitants moving to the nearby town Nakhon Chai Si. Only during the first half of the 19th century the city became inhabited again.

Restoration of the chedi by King Mongkut

King Mongkut, who before he became King, spent many years as a monk travelling the country, visited the chedi a number of times. The chedi at that time was in a very bad state of repair and overgrown by jungle.

After Mongkut ascended the throne in 1851 he ordered the restoration of the Phra Pathom chedi. The original much smaller stupa was to be covered by a much larger chedi to be newly build. After 17 years of construction, during the reign of Mongkut's successor King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) the chedi was completed. The original much smaller stupa still exists today, covered by the large 19th century structure.



The bus/van will depart for the tour from C.U.T. at 14.00 and return to the hotel at 17.00. After that, the bus/van will leave from the hotel for BBQ dinner at C.U.T. Lake at 17:30.