

Guide to Ayudhya

GUIDE TO AYUDHYA.



Ayudhya or Krung Kao, (i. e. the old capital) as this town is still popularly called, lies 71 kilometres from Bangkok along the Northern line. The journey thither takes only two hours and, if the tourist understands to use his time well then the town and most of its interesting ruins can be seen in a single day, the visitor returning the same day with the last train to Bangkok.

HISTORY.

In the following brief sketch of the history and fate of this illustrious old city, it is intended to supply visitors with such information as is deemed necessary for the understanding of what they are going to see and it ought therefore to be read before Ayudhya is reached. (The attached map will be useful for this purpose besides serving as guide afterwards.)

The part of the Mēnām valley, where Ayudhya is now lying was, some two thousand years or more ago, submerged by the sea, the present gulf of Siam stretching up to where the first hills appear just north of Utaradit. As time went on the land rose slowly, the Mēnām Chao Phraya at the same time bringing down its silt and helping to fill up the old Gulf. The outcome has been the creation of one of the earth's richest agricultural regions. The date of the foundation of the earliest town at Ayudhya is unknown but in view of the geological data it cannot have been much earlier than about A. D. 1000. We know from old chronicles that, long before Ayudhya was made the capital of an independent Siamese dynasty, there were Indian colonists settled in this region. In fact the original town of Ayudhya lay east of the railway line not far from the present railway station, and the island now known as Ayudhya was occupied by an Indian settlement known as Dvaravati. As will be seen from a map of Siam three rivers—the

Angtong and Lopburi branches of the Mēnām and the Pasak river-unite here thus giving to this place a great value commercially as well as strategically. No wonder, therefore, that the enterprising Indian settlers speedily found this out and accordingly took advantage thereof. The original inhabitants of this region were probably the Lawā remnants of whom are still to be found in remote parts of Siam. These people belonged to the so-called Indonesian stock, and were conquered by the Indian settlers, with whom they must have mixed to a certain extent adopting the religion and civilisation of India. Later on they came under the dominion of the Cambodians, with whom they again mixed to a still greater extent and were finally completely absorbed by the victorious Thai. The Thai came down from Yünnan in Southern China, and between A. D. 1000-1300 conquered most of the central parts of Indo-China which they hold to this day.

Politically this early Ayudhya was probably subject to the kingdom of Lopburi, another, Indian colony, whose capital, now an interesting town of ruins far older than Ayudhya, lying some 60 kilometres from the latter along the same Northern line which brings us to Ayudhya. Lopburi itself was long under the dominion of the mighty Khmer or Cambodian empire, which for a considerable time bore sway over the whole country of the present kingdom of Siam until the Khmer were driven back by the conquering Thai about A. D. 1250.

At the beginning of the 14th century Ayudhya was included in the territory of U-Thong, a Siamese (Thai) kingdom in Southern Siam with its capital at Subarn, some 50 kilometres northwest of Ayudhya. (Northern Siam then being divided between the dynasties of Meng Rai in Chieng Mai and Phra Ruang in Sukhodaya.) About this time the ground at Ayudhya had become more elevated and therefore more suitable for cultivation; and because of its site at the confluence of three rivers, the place became an important centre of trade and of boat traffic and people came to settle in

increasing numbers. Some time after that an epidemic having decimated the population of U-Thong, the ruler of that principality moved to Ayudhya. At the same time as both the Phra Ruang dynasty and the kings of Cambodia were then declining in power the king of U-Thong, whose name was Phra Chao U-Thong, and who had hitherto been a vassal of Sukhodaya, was able to proclaim himself an independent sovereign in A.D. 1350. He took the title of Somdech Phra Ramadhibodi and proceeded to build himself a capital on the island formerly occupied by the old Indian settlement of Dvaravati. This new capital received the name of "Krung Deb Dvaravati Sri Ayudhya" and here the kings of Siam resided and ruled for a period of 457 years, i.e., until 1767, when the city was taken and completely destroyed by a Burmese army of invasion. As a result of this catastrophe Phraya Tak Sin, the saviour of the country, who succeeded in driving out the Burmese, established his capital at Dhonburi on the western bank of Mēnām, i.e., opposite the present Bangkok. Then from Dhonburi the founder of the present Chakri dynasty moved the capital to its present site at Bangkok.

The visitor, who already, when sightseeing in Bangkok, wondered at the many Hindu-sounding names for kings and places there, will probably by now have got the explanation that this is due to the old civilisation introduced from India, a civilisation, which to the peoples of Indo-China, has played much the same role as that of ancient Hellas did to the peoples of Europe. For those, who know the immortal epic of Ramayana, India's Illiad, it will be easy to recognize the name of Ayudhya in that venerable and wonderful capital where the father of the heroic Rama, the wise king Dasaratha, reigned; and indeed at its height of splendour the Siamese Ayudhya could scarcely have been less splendid than its Indian prototype was. The history of Ayudhya has been very chequered and often very bloody. During its 417 years of existence as a capital it was invested 8 times. On most of these

occasions it proved impregnable by reason of its strong strategical position, surrounded as it was on all sides by rivers and strengthened moreover during floodtimes by its inundated outskirts which thus afforded no easy foothold for an enemy, and finally because aid to the beleaguered city could be brought by the help of the many waterways that meet here.

During the reign of king Ramadhibodi, the territory of Ayudhya was greatly extended, Cambodia being badly beaten on several occasions and during the reigns of his successors the rest of the territory which now comprises the kingdom was added. The Sukhodaya dynasty for example disappeared and its territory was annexed to that of Ayudhya's. The city itself was provided with strong brickwalls and many splendid temples and palaces were built. But it also knew evil days. In 1569 during the reign of king Phra Maba Chakrabarti, a strong army of Mons—i. e. the former inhabitants of Burma—a nation now nearly annihilated and absorbed by the afterwards victorious and ruthless Burmese—attacked and took Ayudhya. The kingdom then fell under the sway of the Mons until it was liberated by Siam's greatest national hero Phra Naresvara the Great, who, about the year 1600, gave to Siam the most extensive limits she ever reached. Already during the first half of the 16th century Portuguese traders and missionaries were allowed to settle at Ayudhya, and from the beginning of the 17th century the intercourse between Siam and the European nations as well as the Japanese became very brisk. The most interesting period falls during the reign of King Phra Narayana the Great (A. D. 1656-1688) the most famous ruler of the dynasty founded by Phra Chao Prasat Thong (1630-1655). Ayudhya was then the scene of intense commercial activity, its harbour full of foreign shipping, its riverbanks lined with European and Japanese factories where Portuguese, Dutch, English, French and Japanese rubbed shoulders with each other. Moreover with a liberality unknown at that time in Europe, the king permitted French Catholic missionaries to settle

and preach their religion; he even built a church for them at Lopburi. That was also the time of Constantin Faulcon, a Greek adventurer, who won the confidence and favour of the king to such an extent, that he was raised to the high rank of Chao Phraya Vijayendra and, becoming the king's councillor, induced him to exchange embassies with the "roi de soleil" King Louis 14th of France. As a matter of fact one of the earliest and best written descriptions of Ayudhya is by La Loubère, who was sent as an ambassador from France to the court of King Narayana. This brilliant and picturesque period was, however, destined to a sudden end by the outbreak of a revolution in 1688. Faulcon, who by his pro-French policy had evoked the discontent of the nobles of the kingdom, was killed and his royal master died shortly afterwards. A new dynasty ascended the throne and as it did not favour intercourse with foreigners to the same extent Ayudhya soon became a sort of closed town and the former bustling trade practically came to an end. The rulers of this last Ayudhya dynasty did not show the same ability as those of the preceding one, and this fact induced the Burmese, who had waxen powerful after their final victory over the Mons to attack Siam. A huge Burmese army invaded the country in 1763 and few years afterwards the capital was invested. It resisted heroically for 14 months and was finally taken in 1767 and then only through lack of ammunition and food. The last king of Ayudhya, Phra Chao Ekadas, a tragic figure, escaped from his fallen capital and disappeared in the swampy land towards the southeast. The city was sacked, burnt and utterly destroyed with Hunnish thoroughness. The sacred places even the statues of the Buddha were not spared by the barbarians; while the unhappy inhabitants were treated in a similar manner, a huge booty and thousands of prisoners of war being taken away to Burma. Such was the end of Ayudhya "the incomparable."

To-day the town has revived and is the capital of the circle

of Ayudhya, the seat of a viceroy and centre of the richest rice-producing district in Siam. Ayudhya is sacred soil to the patriotic Siamese, and it is always with a certain pride that descent is claimed from this part of the country.

THE SIGHTS.

As already stated, the principal objects worth seeing in Ayudhya may be visited in a single day if the program is judiciously arranged. The visitor is therefore advised to take the train leaving Bangkok in the morning, which will bring us to our destination in about two hours. The scenery between Bangkok and Ayudhya is rather uninteresting the land being absolutely flat and very swampy. Still if the journey is made at harvest time just before the crop is gathered in the sight of a great plain covered with golden grain rippling in the fresh breeze is not without a certain charm. Shortly after leaving the suburbs of Bangkok one passes Don Muang, the important flying centre with its numerous hangars and workshops. Some aeroplanes are always seen manoeuvring in the air and one is reminded of the fact, that the aerodrome here is one of the finest and most up-to-date in Eastern Asia and that an aerial postal service connects up the far away towns in Northeastern Siam with the capital. A great number of canals or klongs are crossed, one of the most important being Klong Rangsit, which drains a vast area of agricultural land irrigated by numerous canals, a region destined one day to become Siam's foremost rice and wealth producing district. The train soon stops at the station of Bang Pa-In where a glimpse is caught of the roofs of the royal palace lying here on an island in the Mēnām Chao Phraya. Soon afterwards the train crosses a bridge over the broad Klong Ban Pho and here we get a first sight of the distant Ayudhya. Looking to the north over lowlying paddy fields and the broad expanse of the Mēnām we see a forest of big leafy trees and tall palms which hide the view of the town itself from our eyes. As the train rolls on we

thereafter discern dispersed over a big and somewhat undulating plain eastwards of the railway line a number of tall pyramid-shaped piles of masonry partly overgrown with vivid greenery. These are the ruins of the phrachedis and stupas of the eastern part of old Ayudhya destroyed by the Burmese in the disastrous year of 1767. Some few minutes more and we see the river and the town, temples, houses and the smoke belching stacks of the rice and sawmills. Then the train draws up at the station of Ayudhya. We leave the train and hurry down the brick paved road that leads from the railway station to the riverbank. Descending the big wooden bridge where a motley fleet of boats for hire is gathered, we select one the most comfortable, make a bargain with its owner, install ourselves with boy and tiffin-basket under its roof and off we go on our sightseeing.

Some few words explaining the geographical peculiarities of the town and its outskirts may be of use here. As formerly mentioned three rivers unite at Ayudhya, namely the Angthong branch of the Mēnām, also called Klong Bān Gum, coming from the northwest, the Lopburi river, also a branch of the Menam, from the north, and the Pasak river coming from the northeast. The two lastnamed unite at the northeastern corner of the island and the Lopburi branch is connected with the Angthong-river through a canal called Klong Mūang running nearly straight east-west thus forming the northern boundary of the island. This canal was originally the lower course of the Lopburi river which then fell in the Angthong-river at the northwestern corner of the island instead of, as it does now, into the Pasak river. The Angthong river, flowing round the western and southern side of the island, meets with the Pasak river, (which, running from north to south, forms the eastern boundary of the island) at a point a little distance from the southeastern corner of the island where lies an old fort called Pom Bejr (the Diamond fort). From here the two rivers, or rather three, conjoined flow southwards as one broad and tranquil

stream, the Mēnām Choa Phraya, "the Mother of the Waters," towards Bangkok and the Gulf.

Leaving the railway bridge we head upstream. On both sides the river the banks are lined with houses lying under the shade of big tamarind and mango trees or the feathered bamboo. On the right bank i.e. that of the island, is seen a row of white painted houses; the dwellings of the government officials, thereafter come the more substantial buildings of the land records office and the law court. At the gendarmerie station we turn northwest and a little after we stop at the landing in front of the Wang Nā or Chandra Kasem palace. The part of the Pasak river bordering the eastern side of the island was in olden days used as an anchorage for the royal ships and junks which traded between Siam and the ports in China, Cochinchina, Java and Malaya. To-day too the river presents a lively scene with the many tugboats hauling long lines of paddy and other cargoboats up and down. As previously mentioned the old town on the island was defended by thick and high walls. According to the chronicles these were not less than 3 m. broad and 6 m. high with earthen ramparts behind; there were moreover 16 forts, 11 watergates and 32 landgates. Of all this formidable strength not much is now left. The Burmese conquerors pulled down both the forts and the walls, and later on a great quantity of the bricks was used for the construction of the city walls of the new capital at Bangkok, the inhabitants also took toll of the bricks for all sorts of purpose; then last but not least, when the railway was built, a big lot was used for ballasting the line. To-day but traces are left of the walls, and of the 16 forts recognizable remnants are only found in Pom Bejr as already told. Leaving our boat at the landing we mount the steps, cross the road running at the river edge, this road encircles the whole island and is 12 miles in length-and enter the brickwalled and whitewashed enceinte of the Chandra Kasem palace through a large redpainted wooden gate. In the interior we see two groups of buildings,

one of our left, the other on our right hand i.e. in the northwestern part of the palace square, with a big lawn in the middle. The low oldish looking building on our left is the Museum and contains many interesting relics from the days of old Ayudhya. These include bronze statues of the Buddha, pieces of pottery, carved temple doors, old cannons, stone mortars, weapons etc. notice the interesting bronze model of a temple and the prow of one of the old royal boats carved into the likeness of a Garuda. Behind the Museum and leaning against the palace walls is a long row of stone statues, mostly representing the Buddha, in standing or sitting position. A great number of these Buddhas are represented sitting on the serpent the Naga-which spreads its canopy of five or even seven heads over the head of the sage. These last named statues originate mostly from Lopburi. Special notice is to be taken of some gigantic heads of the Buddha measuring 3-4m. in height. Imagine only the height of a standing statue provided with a head of this size. Besides the statues of the Buddha there are many representing Brahmanic gods. Thus we see the four faced Brahma riding the goose, Vishnu on the serpent, Shiva, Skanda, the elephant headed Ganesha, the goddesses Lakshmi and Uma, sculptured stones representing hermits, dharmachakras (the wheel of the Law) etc. The whole forms a unique collection indeed. Most of these statues date from the era of the Cambodian dominion though some of the Buddhas may be the handiwork of the early Thai who became pupils of the Khmer masters. The Museum with its interesting collections is the work of the indefatigable viceroy of the circle of Ayudhya, His Excellency Phraya Boran Rajadhanindr, himself a learned historian and archaeologist, who has done much for the preservation of the antiquities and ruins of old Ayudhya. The Chandra Kasem palace dates back to the 16th century and has been the residence of kings; now it is the headquarters of the provincial administration. After having inspected the Museum our attention is

next drawn to a tall tower lying near by and as the view from the top of this is quite fine we accordingly mount it and are indeed not sorry for having done so because the scenery which now unfolds itself below us is both picturesque and varied. To the southeast, where we came from, we see the tops of the old delapidated phrachedis out on the big plain that rolls away towards the east till it meets the forest clad Dongrek hills which we sight far away enveloped in a blue mist. There lies the formerly illfamed Dong Phraya Fai (the forest of the Lord of Fire), the home of deadly fever and wild beasts and these are the mountains which bar the northeastern plateau of Siam from the rest of the kingdom. That northeastern plateau is a land of endless forests, huge plains, big lakes and many splendid stone temple ruins, the home of the Lao or Northeastern Thai which to the east is bounded by the royal Mekhong river. Nearby and just below us is the Pasak river, and at the northeastern corner of the island we look down upon the animated and picturesque floating market of which more anon. To the north we can follow the course of Klong Müang and farther away to the northwest we espy the tall mass of Phu Khao Thong, a huge stupa erected by Bureng Nong, the Mon king, in memory of his victory and capture of Ayudhya in A. D. 1569. But just turn round and face southeast and you will see, lying on the big plain, another grand stupa or phrachedi. This is called the great Chedi at Wat Chao Phraya Thai and was built by the Siamese hero, king Phra Chao Naresvara Maharaj, in memory of his victories over the Mons. There they lie, the two old stupas, still defying each other and recalling memories of past battles, defeats and victories. Towards the southwest we discern the spires of the famous Wat Sri Sarbejra (Sisanphet) near by which lay the grand royal palace. In the same direction, but nearer, are the tall phraprangs of Wat Maha Dhatu and Rajaburana. Many other phrachedis and templeroofs can be seen emerging from the green mass of foliage: yellow prangs, white chedis and red tiled templeroofs—a riot of colour indeed. And

if you can read Siamese you will be able to gather their names from the inscribed wooden arrows which the thoughtful viceroy has had fastened to the battlements of the tower and which point straight towards the different objects of interest. It will also be noticed that while the riverbanks are densely covered with buildings, the interior of the island lies unoccupied and overgrown with jungle. In the time of old Ayudhya there was certainly a much bigger population on the island than there is now but even then a large unoccupied space was always left in the middle. This was arranged on purpose to serve as a refuge, during times of siege and these were many. In time of peace the people lived in the outskirts of the capital but at the arrival of the enemy they had to seek shelter behind the walls of the fortified city. From the tower one may finally follow the outline of the whole island with the eye by help of the uninterrupted row of big leafy trees which indicate the riverbanks; the circumference of the island is about 14 miles. But now we must hasten down to our boat and continue our voyage, and soon we are at the northeastern corner of the island, where formerly a big fort called "Pom Mahajay" (the fort of great victory) lay. The modern market is built on its site. At this place too was originally a weir, thence the name "Hua Raw," which is still used to design the market. This weir was constructed to prevent the water of the Lopburi branch running exclusively down the channel that was dug to join up the Lopburi river with the Pasak, the channel in question running from the northeastern corner of the island to where the gendarmerie station now lies. On the other side, facing the Chandra Kasem palace, is an island: Goh Loy, where the recently deceased Queen mother used to reside at certain times. At the corner of Goh Loy and just in front of the landmarket we see a big floating market or rather two, one being permanent while the other only exists during some hours daily in the morning. Here are assembled hundreds of sampans loaded with fruits and vegetables,

each sampan manned by a woman wearing the characteristic broadbrimmed strawhat. This scene of busy selling, buying and bargaining is a most animated and interesting one; but about 10 o'clock in the forenoon this market ceases, the sampans disperse and return to the neighbouring villages where the owners live. The permanent floating market consists of two long rows of floating houses moored to the banks of the Lopburi river; each floating house is a shop mostly kept by an enterprising Chinese and his, just as clever, Siamese wife. These shops contain a great number of useful articles necessary to the big moving population living in the paddy and cargoboot always travelling up and downstream, and the selling and bargaining with the passing boats goes on the whole day long. From the floating market we may turn northwards up the Lopburi river and pay the Elephant kraal a visit. (In Siamese called Phaniet Chāng.) It lies at a short distance from the right bank of the river and is a brickwalled enclosure preceded by a kind of palisaded entrance. The walls are massive, to be able to withstand the onslaught of the giants which they are destined to imprison on occasion. On the top of the walls there is room for the onlookers, and several pavillions in ancient style are erected from which the kings with their courts used to watch the capture of the wild elephants. The construction of this kraal dates far back into the history of Ayudhya, and the capture of elephants has here been watched by many kings down to the reign of the late King Chulalongkorn, His present Majesty's father. The wild elephants captured here belonged to the big herds which still roam over the vast swampy plains between Ayudhya and Nakon Nayok (East of Ayudhya, in the Prachin circle.) Months before the actual capture took place at the kraal parties of hunters and mahouts, with their specially trained elephants, went out to the grazing and playing grounds of the wild elephants and selecting a herd of these drove them slowly towards Ayudhya until they finally had them completely encircled and could force them over the Lopburi river and

into the kraal. The final stage of this journey did not come off without frequent fighting between the trained elephants of the hunters and the wild elephants, the latter of course trying to break the cordon and escape back to the wilds. But every time they tried to do so they were driven back again and beaten by their sagacious and cunning tame brothers, with the result that by the end of the long journey the wild giants found themselves imprisoned inside the kraal. The sight of this kraal densely packed with the bellowing and trumpeting giants, now thoroughly frightened and mad with fury fighting in vain for their freedom, has left an ineffaceable impression on the memory of all those who have witnessed it. After the captured beasts have become a little quieter a certain number of them required for taming are picked out and the remainder let loose. From the elephant kraal we return to Hua Raw and enter the narrow Klong Mūang the course of which we follow until we reach the landing at the ruins of the old royal palace. The tour through the klong is far from uninteresting. The banks are occupied by numerous houses built in the characteristic old Siamese style of carved wood and roofed with attap leaves while many old temples stand on both sides picturesquely set in groves of big secular shady trees. The life on the narrow klong is very lively and the tourist gets a good impression of the every-day life of the Siamese peasant, an impression which can only serve to increase his sympathy for this lovable people, especially when one notices the unending kindness which they show to their darling little folks. Just before reaching the palace-landing we pass the mouth of a klong on the right bank of Klong Mūang. We may stop here for a moment and land to visit the old temple by name of Wat Meru Raja, that lies here. In the bôt is a collection of fine statues, one of these being especially interesting as it originates from Nakon Patom and may be of South Indian workmanship and probably dating back to the 5th century. Shortly after this our boatman stops at a big redpainted bridge surmounted by a "sala"

(resthouse); and now we are at the old royal palace. Of this palace, or rather palaces, only the foundations are now left. Still the foundations and some red brick-walls of altogether seven palaces can be seen. One of these was built in the shape of a "prasad" and was gilded. It may have been something like the beautiful Dusit Maha Prasat in the Grand Palace in Bangkok. The oldest of the palaces dates back to the time of King Ramadhibodi. To the south of and near the ruins of the palaces are the remains of a vast temple called Wat Sri Sarbejra, which in the golden days of Ayudhya was the most important temple of the whole kingdom, because here the State ceremonies took place such as the drinking of the water of allegiance. The temple contained a gilt image of the Buddha, 16 metres high from which the temple took its name, the name signifying the emniscent Buddha. A stupachedi (relic shrine) and numerous other chedis containing the ashes of Kings and great princes stood outside the temple, inside which were deposited other important images of the Buddha such as the Phra Lokanath, now in the eastern vihara in the Jetupon temple in Bangkok, and the Phra Buddha Sihing, now in the museum, also in Bangkok. Of all this greatness only ruined and broken piles of masonry are now left. What the barbarous Burmese spared has been violated by that vile creature, the treasureseeker, who does not even shrink from desecrating the statues of the Buddha in his lust for the gold or other treasure which his greedy imagination places in the bowels of these venerable images. The Phra Sri Sarbejna temple was inside the walls of the palace compound, in fact a very well preserved piece of this wall is seen near to the temple. Outside and south of the palace compound stands the ruins of what must, in its days have been quite an imposing building inside which is a grand Buddha sitting. The image is of cast bronze and is known as the Phra Buddha Mangala Pabitra. It is a very fine image and impresses all, who visit it, by the greatness of its conception. No record is available

as to when it was cast but it must be considerably over 300 years old and as far as is known it is the biggest bronze image in existence of the Buddha, with exception of that set up by the Japanese in Kamakura. But we must hasten back to the landing and may here have our lunch, before continuing the journey. This over we go on through the klong in the last part of which, near to where it joins the Angthong river, was formerly situated an arsenal in which the royal river fighting boats were kept. Now we turn the northwestern corner of the island and are then on the broad stream of the Angthong-branch of the Menam. In former days there lay on this corner of the island an important fort by the name of Pom Sad Kob as also a smaller royal palace, Wang Lang, the place now being occupied by the barracks of the third Division of the army. A memorial in the shape of a tall white phrachedi is also seen here, this was erected by King Maha Chakrabarti to the memory of his heroic queen, Somdech Phra Suriyotai, who found her death on the battlefield against the invading army of Mons in A. D. 1548.

Borne by the current we glide down the river, following its bends and enjoying the scenery on both banks which are clothed in a luxurious tropical vegetation of big old mango and tamarind trees tall graceful sugar or cocoa palms and the swaying and rattling feathered bamboos. We pass several places of interest especially on the right bank, first, just before the river bends towards the east the big Mon settlement and the imposing ruins of Wat Sanam Jai, the middle tower of which is built in the shape of a Cambodian prang. We may land and ascend this tower but the going is difficult as the ruins are surrounded by dense jungle. Thereafter we pass the Annamite settlement with its old Catholic cathedral, St. Joseph, where French missionaries still reside. Next comes the Cham colony (The Cham belongs to the Malay race and formerly possessed a high civilisation brought to them from India, they were mighty temple builders and lived in the present Annam but

have now been almost entirely annihilated by the Annamites.) Here lies one of the most important temples in Ayudhya, Wat Buddhaisvarya built by the first King of Ayudhya, who also had his temporary residence here before building the royal palace on the island. The temple consists of square galleries containing no less than 108 sitting Buddhas, and inside this square a tall and very conspicuous prang soars up, there are also other buildings of interest and the Buddhist bishop over the circle of Ayudhya resides here. On the other side of the river i. e. on the island are still traces left of the house built by King Narayana for the French ambassador. The French factory lay on this bank too. The traffic on this part of the river is not so lively as on the Pasak river but an interesting sight is provided by the big rafts of teaklogs which with their crews come drifting slowly down on their long voyage from the forests in Northern Siam to the saw-mills in Bangkok. And now we have reached the point where the rivers join in front of the old fort Pom Bejr from where they flow southwards as one broad stream, the Mēnām Chao Phraya. Before continuing our voyage, this time going up the Pasak river, to reach the railway station, let us stop a moment at an interesting temple called Wat Phra Chao Banan Choeng, which stands on the southern bank of the Pasak river near its confluence with the Angthong-river. This temple was constructed in the year 1324 and contains a huge Buddha in sitting position and as the temple building, containing the image, is rather narrow with very high walls the head of the Buddha is nearly lost in the darkness under the roof thereby adding to the place an air of real mystery. In the walls are many hundreds of small niches each containing an image of the sage. The present statue is over 300 years old and is in a perfect condition. The temple is much venerated by the numerous Chinese population of Ayudhya and you may get your fortune told from here we proceed to the railway station which we ought to reach in good time, at the station beautiful fans made of vultures

or peacock feathers and other souvenirs from Ayudhya are offered for sale at quite reasonable prices.

Though the excursion just described may be done in the stipulated time i. e. between the arrival of the first train at Ayudhya and the departure of the last train still it is not advisable to try to go through the whole program because one has then to hurry on the whole time which will spoil the pleasure of the sightseeing. It must also be remembered that Klong Müang is only navigable from August to January, the water being too low for the remainder of the year. If the tourist therefore can only spare one day for seeing Ayudhya and this is during the favourable time then let him follow the route as described above, minus the elephant-kraal, he should then have plenty of time. If he comes during the time from February to July he ought to go by boat to Wang Chandra Kasem after having seen that place he can hire a carriage at Hua Raw and go by the road to the Royal palace, after having returned to the river take the boat again, visit the floating market and the elephant-kraal whereafter he may go down to Wat Phra Chao Banan Choeng and Pom Bejr and finally return to the railway station. By following this restricted program he will still have got a good impression of the places and things worth seeing in this old capital.

The best course to follow is to go by train to Ayudhya, go through the whole program and return by motor launch to Bangkok. The visitor will then see other interesting places in addition to those already described. When going down the river Menam from the point of confluence at Pom Bejr already mentioned one will be reminded about the days when there were many European traders living in Ayudhya. On the right bank down to Klong Takien will be seen the ruins of two old Portuguese churches for here lay the Portuguese settlement. On the left bank one has first the Chinese colony stretching southwards from Wat Phra Chao Banan Choeng. Thereafter comes the Dutch settlement, where ruins

of their factory and an old churchyard with interesting tombstones are still to be seen. Next we have the English settlement and finally the Japanese. On the opposite bank south of Klong Takien was the settlement of the Macassar Malays and descendants of these Malays and their mosque called Takia still exist here. Then we pass the island Goh Rien and finally south of Wat Protsada, on the left bank, the place called Khanon Luang i.e. the royal customs house. Here the foreign ships coming up the Menam Chao Phraya had to stop and notify the authorities and obtain the necessary permission before they could proceed into the city area and anchor in front of their respective nationality's settlement.

The journey from Ayudhya to Bangkok by ordinary motor or steam launch requires about six hours.

