AYUTTHAYA HISTORICAL RESEARCH [AHR]

AYUTTHAYA NORTHERN BICYCLE TRACK

THE WAR LOOP

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[2010]

[WWW.AYUTTHAYA-HISTORY.COM]

This bicycle tour is designed to illustrate important historical sites related to warfare between the Siamese and the Burmese. The route focuses on the northern rim of Ayutthaya's city island, and much effort has also been placed on showcasing the city's beautiful scenery such as canals, rivers, rice fields, and other countryside views.

The tour will take 5 to 6 hours depending on the time spent at each location point. Riders may not want to stop at every highlight listed on this tour itinerary. A few sites have been listed more for the sake of smoother navigation and referencing. Individual cyclists can choose where to stop according to their own tastes and time constraints.

This route has been designed with specific historic sites in mind where important battles took place. For example, in 1549, Burmese troops fought with the Siamese, who had been greatly weakened due to dynastic disputes. This conflict resulted in the heroic death of Queen Suriyothai, an event much popularized in Thai folklore and film. In 1563/64 there was another Burmese invasion known as the "White Elephant War". This conflict arose when the Siamese king refused the Burmese king's request that some white elephants be presented to him as a gift. 1568/69, the Burmese attacked again, which led to the first fall of Ayutthaya and resulted in Siam becoming a Burmese vassal state.

In 1759/60, the Burmese besieged Ayutthaya yet another time; however, the Burmese King died in an accident and Burmese troops were forced to withdraw. Finally, in 1766/67, the Burmese sacked Ayutthaya for the second and last time. The city was destroyed, the inhabitants mostly killed or taken away as war captives, and the numerous temples deserted. The capital then moved shortly to Thonburi and was ultimately set up Bangkok.

If you are interested in viewing photographs of these temples and ruins in advance or would like additional historic information about the warfare mentioned, visit our website at www.ayutthaya-history.com.

Tips and Warnings

Bicycles can be rented in different locations on Soi 2 Naresuan Rd, which is the starting point of this tour. Bike rental costs 30-40 baht (about $1) per day on average, which makes bike touring an inexpensive way to see the city. Ayutthaya's terrain is mostly flat and easy to ride, but many streets and side roads are poorly marked, so use a map to simplify navigation.

Be cautious as traffic in and around Ayutthaya is sometimes chaotic. Motor vehicles often fail to see cyclists and pedestrians, so you must closely watch out for *them*. Motorcycles are a particularly dangerous cause of local accidents. Dogs and potholes can also be dangerous, especially in remote areas. Weather can be very hot, so make sure to drink plenty of fluids and wear sun block. It is not advisable to drive at night due to the lack of city lighting.

The theft of bicycles is uncommon in Ayutthaya, but backpacks and cameras have been stolen on rare occasions. It is best to pack valuables with you when visiting the temples.

If you would like some information about lodging and restaurant options, please visit: www.ayutthaya-info.com.

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Who are we?

Ayutthaya Historical Research [AHR] consists of a small group of researchers/writers with the aim to promote Ayutthaya's cultural heritage. We are local expatriates who have been living in Ayutthaya for many years and would like to share our knowledge with future visitors. Therefore, we have personally tested each of these suggested routes by cycling and/or walking. More information about the authors can be found at: http://www.ayutthaya-history.com/Authors.html

In case of an emergency or accident:

Contact the Ayutthaya Tourist Police Station: 035/241446, 035/242352 or 1155.

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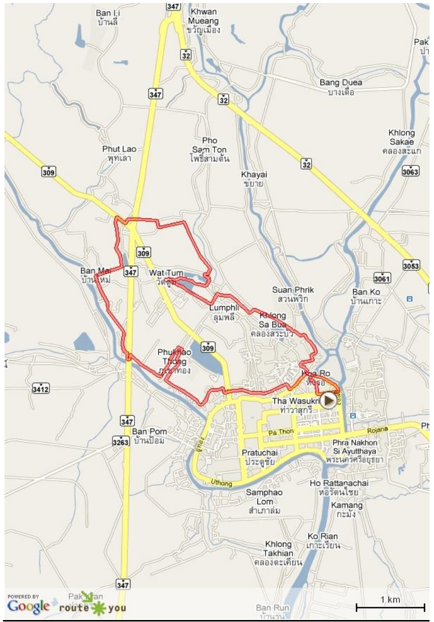

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The Route

Historical signboard in situ is marked as (*)
Entry fee required is marked as ($)

❖ *From the starting point on "Farang Street", turn left on Pa Maprao Road and head west. Take this road one block until reaching the canal known as Khlong Makham Riang. Turn right, and ride north parallel to the canal. This route will curve around an active temple named Wat Senasanaram. This road will continue until it reaches the night market on U-Thong Road. On the right hand side you will see the walls of the Front Palace, now known as the Chantrakasem Museum. On your left hand side you will see the walls and guard towers of the old prison. Inside this structure, Wat Khamin can be found.*

Chan Kasem Palace, also called the Front Palace, was located to the east of the Grand Palace. After the first fall of Ayutthaya in 1569, King Maha Thammaracha (r. 1569-1590), realized the poor defenses of the city and started to upgrade them. Around 1577, he ordered the building of a fortified palace on this strategic spot. The palace became the residence of every *uparat* or second king. In 1767, the palace bore the brunt of the Burmese attack as the defense walls in its vicinity were pierced, burned and ruined. King Mongkut (r. 1851 - 1868) ordered the reconstruction of the palace and named it "Chan Kasem Palace". The place is now a national museum. ($)

Wat Khamin is a temple ruin located near the Hua Ro Market. It was once the local temple of the Khamin village. The temple was later contained inside the boundaries of the old provincial prison. Many of the old prison's walls and turrets shield it from view.

❖ *From U-Thong Road, turn left and head west (just past the 7-11). On your right hand side, you will see a large market with curved walkways and an obvious Chinese-influence. This is known as the Hua Ro Market. On the far end of this market there is an area that sells vegetables and food stuffs. This is where you can find the bridge that provides a shortcut to the north side of the city. If you walk your bike a few meters further down U-Thong Road, it is possible to see where a portion of the Maha Chai Fortress was located. Only a small memorial wall marks the spot where the city's walls were breached in 1767.*

Talad Hua Ro is a local fresh market in existence since 200 years. The name Hua Ro is derived from the "Thamnop Ro" located in its vicinity, a kind of weir made of wooden beams positioned in the water to break the speed of the river in order to prevent damage to the embankments. The water speed breaker was situated at the confluence of the former Lopburi and Pa Sak Rivers in front of the old Maha Chai Fortress. The market is being touristic promoted as a traditional market. (*)

❖ *Once you have crossed the bridge, you will be on the north side of the city. There will be some monk's living quarters (kuti) in easy view. This is one part of Wat Mae Nang*

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Plum. Its more interesting artistic structures are on the opposite side of the road, so continue north for a short distance until you come to the main road and spot it.

Wat Mae Nang Plum is an active monastery established in 1377. The monastery bears the name of a certain Lady Plum, an old woman who was visited by King Naresuan (r. 1590-1605) one night according to a local legend. Following the *tamnan* history, this temple was repaired by King Naresuan and renamed as Wat Mae Nang Plum, in commemoration of the old lady. The most important features are: the chedi surrounded with decorative stucco lions. There is also a beautiful Buddha image in the ordination hall called Luang Phor Khao or the White Buddha. (*)

❖ *Turn right on the main road. Continue one block east until you go over a small bridge. Just past this bridge, on the left hand side, there is an entrance to an active temple. This is Wat Sam Wiharn, and it is the first major Point of Interest on this route.*

The main highlights at **Wat Sam Viharn** are its large bell-shaped chedi and a huge reclining Buddha image that is advertised as being over 600 years old. During the White Elephant War (1563-1564) Burmese King Hongsawadi stationed forces at Wat Sam Viharn and prepared to attack the city. In1767, Burmese forces set up a stockade in front of Wat Sam Viharn and used this strategic location to launch an assault on the Maha Chai Fortress. They set up a bridge across the river, and dug tunnels that they could set on fire. This enabled the Burmese to breach the walls of the city. The city collapsed afterward and the new capital was moved to Thonburi/Bangkok.

❖ *It is best to take the exit beside the large bell-shaped chedi at Wat Sam Viharn. This way you can avoid one of the more dangerous curves in the city. Turn left at this particular exit and head north for 750 meters. It will only take about three minutes before reaching Wat Chedi Daeng, which will be on your left.*

Wat Chedi Daeng is an active monastery. Historically, Wat Chedi Daeng played an important role in a number of conflicts. King Borommakot (r. 1733-1758) set up an army of 10,000 troops at Wat Chedi Daeng to prepare for battle with Cambodia. In 1760, the Burmese troops installed one of their stockades here to prepare a siege of Ayutthaya. In 1767, one of the Burmese stockades was at Wat Chedi Daeng. Large and small guns were stored in this stockade, and then these were fired at the Capital. Ayutthaya fell soon afterward.

❖ *A national monument is located just 500 meters north of Wat Chedi Daeng (about three minutes cycling). It will be on your right-hand side of the road and is difficult to miss.*

There are four large bronze monuments featuring **Burmese war elephants** in full battle gear with armed guards beside them. These sculptures were originally located at Thung Makham Yong battlefield as a component of the Queen Suriyothai Memorial Park and afterwards moved to the Phaniat elephant kraal until relocated to its current location. War elephants had a *mahout* in the front and a center guard in the back. The elephant was equipped with a war *howdah*, where the warrior sat while fighting. Four guards surrounded the elephant beside

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each of its legs. These sculptures were molded after the Second World War by esteemed artist, Khun Khaimuk Chuto, who was the first female sculpture and clay modeler in the country. She died in 1996.

❖ *The next point of interest can be viewed from the War Elephants Monument. The white walls and brown wooden posts of the elephant kraal are located right beside the road (on the same side). Cyclists may want to also take a brief detour from this site to see the live elephants at Phaniat. To do this, simply take the first right and head 400 meters. The live elephants are on the right hand side of the road. However, for this bike route, we will continue on the same road as before, heading north.*

The **elephant kraal of Ayutthaya** is the only one left in Thailand. The main outlook is the Ko Jawet Maha Prasat pavilion, which is where the kings watched the elephant being trapped. The kraal itself is a big cage surrounded with logs that spread out on both sides into the former jungle area. King Maha Thammaracha (r.1569-1590) moved the old elephant kraal to its present site after Ayutthaya's first fall to the Burmese in 1569. A restoration of Ayutthaya's ancient kraal was finalised in 2007.

❖ *From the locations of the War Elephants Monument and the Elephant Kraal, continue north on the same road that you've been cycling on. The next Point of Interest is about 2km away and will take around 10 minutes. The first major turn on the left hand side will lead to a bridge over the Bang Khuat Canal. Do not cross this bridge. Instead take the paved road that runs parallel to the canal because it is more scenic and easier to navigate. This route will bypass Wat Pom Raman in only a few minutes.*

Wat Pom Raman or the "Monastery of the Mon Fortress" is an active monastery situated on the east bank of Khlong Muang (the old Lopburi River). In situ is an ordination hall built in the Late Ayutthaya style (1629-1767). This temple is associated with Mon settlers.

❖ *Continue on the scenic road that parallels the Bang Khuat Canal. On the opposite side of the river you will see a mosque (Masajid Nurun Yaman). There will be two bridges in view. Turn left at the second bridge and cross the canal to the other side.*

❖ *Take this new road south until it reaches a fork near the end, then turn right and take the better paved road. This scenic route will continue in the northwestern direction, and a different canal will be situated on your right hand side. A road sign marks the turn off for Wat Tha Klong, but it is written only in Thai. For this reason, it may be preferable to skip this turn off and continue on the same road that parallels the canal.*

Wat Tha Khlong or the "Monastery of the Harbour of the Herd of Elephants" is an active monastery. During the "Ayutthayan" years, this was a place where elephants were concentrated, hence the many elephant images visible at the temple. The temple ground was once surrounded by a large moat probably as a natural barrier to keep the elephants on site.

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❖ *Continue on the same scenic road that parallels the canal (which will be on your right hand side). Eventually, this road will come to an end. Bicyclers can either turn left or right (both turns are part of this route). However, take the left turn first to see the next Point of Interest, which will quickly lead to an entrance gate for Wat Tum.*

Wat Tum is located on the south bank of Khlong Wat Tum, a canal which had its mouth at the old Lopburi River. Wat Tum lays south of Wat Chumphon, Wat Chang Yai and Wat Chang Noi, three temples related to warfare, where in its vicinities war elephants were trained and troops were gathered prior to go for battle. Some sources state that King Naresuan held the ceremony of "Drinking of the Water of Allegiance" at this temple, a very important ancient rite. The monastery must have been badly damaged during the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767. The site was not looked after until in the early Ratanakosin period during the reign of King Rama I (r.1782-1809), when Siam recovered slowly from its wounds of the Burmese war, the temple was restored and occupied by monks.

❖ *The next step is perhaps the most difficult of this route; however, it leads through remarkably beautiful scenery. Go back to the previous fork in the road, where you had just turned left for Wat Tum. This time turn right and go past the large Bodhi tree. The scenic canal that you drove along earlier will now be on your right hand side (as you head in the opposite direction, eastward). This small countryside road parallels the canal, which you will see on both sides of the road. You will eventually turn left at a paved fork in the road. Avoid turning down any dirt path or ones leading to private property. This turning point is not well marked, and these countryside streets have no names, but you will know if you have made the correct turn because it will shortly lead to many rice fields.*

❖ *The paved road leading to Wat Chang Noi and Wat Chang Yai will twist through these rice fields in a serpentine manner, but keep right until you exit the rice fields. You will come to a fork in the road in about 10 minutes. Turn left at this point (heading westward toward Highway 309) and you will stumble onto Wat Chang Noi on your left hand side. Wat Chang Yai is slightly further ahead and difficult to miss.*

❖ *Note: It is also possible to head directly to Wat Chang Yai from Wat Tum by cycling north along Highway 309. However, we cannot recommend attempting this alternative route as it would be dangerous to bike against traffic.*

Wat Chang Noi, or the small "Monastery of the Elephant", is located in the immediate vicinity of Wat Chang Yai. In situ is a commemoration viharn with a sitting Buddha statue in the "Victory over Mara" pose. The statue is called Phra Buddha Maha Chakkraphat.

❖ *Wat Chang Yai is an active temple just a few hundred meters away from Wat Chang Noi. To find it, just continue westward on the same road for a few hundred meters.*

Wat Chang Yai or the "Great Monastery of the Elephant" is an active temple. In situ is an old ordination hall in the Early Ayutthaya style (1351 - 1491) that has mural paintings from the Ratanakosin period, painted during the reign of King Rama IV. The main Buddha image in the ordination hall is in U-Thong style. On the premises is a monument erected of a war

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The **Queen Suriyothai Mon**ument is situated in an area known as the Makham Yong Plain, which is believed to be the actual site where a Siamese queen was killed in a heroic battle. As the story goes, while perched on the neck of an elephant, King Chakkraphat (r.1548-1569) led his army into battle against Burmese troops. Meanwhile, Queen Suriyothai, fearing for her family's safety, secretly dressed as a male soldier and rode an elephant into the ongoing conflict. Unfortunately, King Chakkraphat's elephant stumbled in battle, putting him at imminent risk of being struck by his opponent's blade. However, Queen Suriyothai suddenly charged in front of the enemy's weapon sacrificing her own life to save her royal husband. This heroic deed helped end the battle and extend the life of the Ayutthaya a bit longer. This memorial was created by Khaimuk Chuto, a highly-respected female student who studied under Silpa Bhirasri. It took until 1995 for the monument to be finally unveiled. Khaimuk Chuto died shortly afterward, and it was her last artistic project to reach completion.

- *Continue biking on the same countryside road for about 450 meters (5 minutes). On the right hand side, a large outdoor Buddha image will be visible from a distance away. This enormous Buddha statue sits beside the Chao Phraya River. Make a right turn to get a closer look of this active temple.*

Wat Pho Phuek or the "Monastery of the White Bodhi Tree" is an active monastery situated on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River. During the White Elephant War in 1563 in the reign of King Chakkraphat (r. 1548-1569), the King of Hongsawadi Bayin Naung set up his main army at Wat Pho Phuek Township on the Pakkhu tax station rice fields as part of an encirclement of Ayutthaya. In situ is a rather new monastic complex with different structures. A large Buddha image in meditation posture faces north along the bank of the river.

- *Continue to bike (southeast) on the same road that parallels the Chao Phraya River. You will come to another fork in the road in only a few minutes. This busy road is part of Highway 347. On your right hand corner there will be a small open-air shrine with a few Buddha images inside.*

Wat Dawadung is a commemoration vihara for a monastery which stood before opposite of it, in a location which is now used by Buddhist nuns.

- *You can easily avoid the clutter of Highway 347. Simply make a right at the fork in the road and go under the bridge. Then make a right hand turn at the first road that you come across. This new road continues to parallel the Chao Phraya River in a southeastern direction. You will quickly spot the large white chedi of Wat Phukhao Thong on the horizon. This is the next area of exploration. Turn left on the side road just north of Wat Phukhao Thong. On the left, you will be able to see the next Reference Point.*

Wat Khok Phrayaram is a restored ruin located in the Phukhao Thong plain. In situ are the foundations of multiple monastic structures. King Tabeng Shwe Thi invaded Siam in 1549 via the Three Pagodas Pass and Kanburi. The Burmese army arrived north of Ayutthaya and put its stockades up in the Lumphli plains. Khok Phrayaram was the location were King

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Chakkraphat (r. 1548-1569) set up his army formations to engage the Burmese in battle. In the fight ensued, Queen Suriyothai was killed by the King of Prome, when trying to help out her husband, when the latter's elephant lost position in combat.

- *The next point of interest is located directly across the road from Wat Khok Phrayaram (just south of it). You can walk your bike across the small footbridge and open the gate. This will open up in front of a large historic monument.*

The **King Naresuan Monument** is located slightly east of Wat Phukhao Thong. King Naresuan is perhaps one of Ayutthaya's most highly revered idols due to his numerous military accomplishments and his role in asserting Siamese independence from the Burmese. The King Naresuan Monument was completed in 1999 and intentionally placed on the site where many battles actually took place against the Burmese - the Phukhao Thong Plain. The monument was created by Chin Prasang, a sculptor from Silpakorn University, which evolved from the School of Fine Arts partially founded by Silpa Bhirasri.

- *The next Point of Interest is Wat Phukhao Thong itself. This is clearly visible as a backdrop to the King Naresuan monument.*

The **Monastery of Phukhao Thong** was built by King Ramesuan (r. 1369-1370 / 1388-1395) in 1387. The actual temple's name refers to the high chedi on its north east side. At the time of construction of the monastery, this chedi was inexistent; hence the temple probably had another name. In December 1568 a large Burmese army invaded Siam and positioned itself around Ayutthaya. The siege lagged on until 30 August 1569 and in the end the city fell through the treachery of Phya Chakri, a Siamese. The invading Burmese forces ransacked and plundered the city, dismantled the defenses and forcibly transported most of Ayutthaya's population to Burma. King Bayin Naung remained at Ayutthaya to witness the coronation of his vassal, Maha Thammaracha (r. 1569-1590), and started the building of a Mon-Burmese styled chedi to commemorate his victory over Ayutthaya. Bhureng Noung returned to Hongsawadi around the period that the chedi's base was constructed. King Maha Thammaracha likely felt not too much excitement in continuing the construction of his neighbors' victory monument and the chedi was never finalized. Prince Naresuan (r. 1590-1605) had a Thai style chedi built on top of the base in 1587 to commemorate Ayutthaya's newly declared independence at Muang Khreng in May 1584 and his victory over the Burmese. King Borommakot (r. 1733 - 1758) had the chedi rebuilt in 1744 on a square pedestal with indented corners and niches on the four sides, running smoothly into an indented dome. This design can still be seen today.

- *Circle around the southern side of Wat Phu Khao Thong to return to the previous road that you were cycling on – the road that parallels the Chao Phraya River – and continue to head in the southeastern direction. On your right, you will be able to see a canal. This is Khlong Maha Nak.*

The **Maha Nak canal** dates back from the period of the Burmese-Siamese war of 1563-1564, also called the "White Elephant War". The Burmese King Bayin Naung requested two white elephants from King Chakkraphat (r. 1548-1569), but the latter refused to deliver. Bayin

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Naung took his army to Siam. The news of the invasion reached Ayutthaya and war preparations were made. Maha Nak was a monk at the Phukhao Thong Monastery. He left the monkhood in order to prepare the defenses north of the capital to counter the upcoming Burmese attack. With his relatives and disciples he erected a stockade from the Phukhao Thong Monastery to Pa Phlu Monastery along the east bank of the Chao Phraya River. Outside the stockade a ditch was dug, hence called Khlong Maha Nak. Parts of this ditch can still be seen on the Phukhao Thong plain.

- *This road will come to a natural bend, due the course of the city's waterways. You will start heading east. The next Reference Point will be on your right.*

Wat Phrom Niwat or the "Monastery of the Abode of Brahma" is an active monastery located on the north bank of Khlong Muang. The temple was initially known as Wat Khun Yuan, making reference to a military Khun Yuan Yonok who ordered its construction in 1564. The temple has been reconstructed in the post-Ayutthaya era, but restored a number of times the last century.

- *The next Reference Point is also on the right hand side of the same road (only a minute or two from the last one).*

Wat Sala Pun or the "Monastery of the Pavilion of Lime" is an active monastery situated on the north bank of Khlong Muang. Wat Sala Pun is renowned for its beautifully hand carved wooden Tripitaka cabinet in which were kept the sacred Buddhist manuscripts, mostly large libretto books made of a type of thick mulberry paper depicting elaborate scenes from the Jatakas, story of Phra Malai , life of the Buddha, etc.

- *The next Point of Interest is 350 meters from Wat Sala Pun (about two minutes). Turn right at this temple and you will immediately see a large reclining Buddha image.*

Wat Phanom Yong or the "Monastery of Wet Nurse Yong" is an active monastery situated on the north bank of Khlong Muang. The monastery was likely built in the reign of King Narai (r. 1656-1688). Destructed in the last war with the Burmese in 1767, Wat Phanom Yong was rebuilt by King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910).

- *From Wat Phanom Yong, you will have to walk your bike across Highway 309. This can be dangerous due to traffic, but there is no other strategic alternative. Cautiously, walk your bike over both sides of the highway and resume biking east on the small road on the opposite side. This section of the city is where the Royal Barges were once located, but nothing is visible of them today.*

The **ancient Dock of Royal Barges** stood on the west bank of the old Lopburi River (actually renamed Khlong Muang or City Canal) opposite the Grand Palace between Wat Choeng Tha and Wat Phanom Yong. The ancient dock was divided in separate trenches each locked up in a wooden and roofed enclosure. There were 20 barge houses adjacently situated, from the mouth of Khlong Khu Mai Rong to Wat Choeng Tha. The dock and the barges were

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destroyed in the Burmese attack of Ayutthaya in 1767. No visible traces remain of it and the landscape has been unfortunately largely altered.

- *The next Reference Point is about 550 meter from the highway that you just crossed (only 3-4 minutes of biking). A large active temple will be visible on the right hand side of the road.*

Wat Choeng Tha is located beside Khlong Muang and boats can easily dock on site. It was situated in a prime location during the Ayutthaya period. The Royal Palace was on the opposite side of the Lopburi River, and the monastery was built at the upper mouth of Klong Cha Krai Yai (Klong Tho). This canal provided access to the Royal Palace and led all the way to Wat Phutthaisawan. Wat Choeng Tha is an active temple with many of its ancient structures still in situ. One of its defining features is a large Khmer-style prang with niches in each of the cardinal directions.

- *Continue on the same road east until you come to the next site. This will be on the left hand side of the road.*

Wat Na Phra Men is located along Khlong Sra Bua and the north bank of the Chao Phraya River just opposite the ancient Grand Palace. The temple was constructed during the reign of King Ramathibodi II (r. 1491-1529) in 1503 and received the name Wat Phra Meru Rachikaram. As its name indicates, it must have been established at a Royal cremation area. Between this temple and the adjacent Wat Hatsadawat once a building was erected in 1564 to conclude an armistice between King Chakkraphat (r. 1548-1569) and the Burmese King Bayin Naung (r.1551-1581). In 1760, the Burmese positioned their guns here and started firing on the Grand Palace. The next day, the Burmese suddenly withdrew north to Ava, along the Chao Phraya River, as the Burmese King Alaungphraya became ill. (Following some chronicles, he was seriously wounded by an explosion of a large gun). After Ayutthaya was sacked by the Burmese troops in 1767, Wat Na Phra Men was left unattended for more than half a century until Phraya Chaivichit (Phuek) who was the city mayor in the reign of King Rama III restored it between 1835 and 1838.

- *Make a right turn when you come to the fork in the road beside Wat Na Phra Men (in front of Klong Sra Bua). This will take you to the area in front of the old Royal Palace, which was the target of much warfare. You have just returned to the main city island and Uthong Road. Turn left and continue heading east. You will be able to see several fortresses and walls on route. The best preserved example of these defensive structures is just past Chikun Road. It is on the right hand side.*

Pom Khao Pluak was a fortress standing at Pratu Khao Pluak or the "Gate of Unhusked Rice", a water gate. The construction of the bastion was in the form of an open book, located on both sides of the canal. This fortress was one of the many fortresses of the city of which Pom Phet or the "Diamond Fort" in the Bang Kaja area at the confluence of the Chao Phraya and Pa Sak Rivers, was the largest and most important one. The crenulations on top of the fortress, providing cover for soldiers manning the wall, are still present and probably designed by Father Tomaso Valguarnera, a Jesuit priest from Sicily.

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- *Continue heading east on UThong Road. You will soon come to a large bell-shaped chedi on the right hand side of the road.*

Wat Khun Saen is a restored ruin located on U-Thong Road west of the Hua Ro market. The highlight here is a large bell-shaped chedi that has been expanded over the years, which creates the unique appearance of a small chedi being consumed by a larger one. There is also the foundation of an ordination hall and portions of a wall surrounding the monastery. King Rama IV (1851-1868) ordered the restoration of Wat Khun Saen and enlarged its central bell-shaped chedi. However, King Mongkut died before this project could be finished. As a result, the restoration of Wat Khun Saen was permanently halted and the monastery has remained inactive ever since. (*)

- *Continue eastward on UThong Road for a few more minutes. On your left hand side, just before the Hua Ro market, you will be able to see a small monument that marks a visibly important event of Ayutthaya's history.*

Pom Maha Chai was an important fortress located in the area where Hua Ro Market currently stands today. The remains of it were completely buried underground until 2009. While constructing a new convenience chain store, a portion of the fortress was accidentally dug up, causing a halt in the process. It was eventually covered with soil once again, but a commemorative wall was erected at the site as a memorial. This can be seen beside U-thong Road near the market's entrance. Despite the small size of the memorial wall, Pom Maha Chai played a vital role in Ayutthaya's history. It was situated at a strategic point where the old Lopburi River reached the main city island. In 1767, Burmese were able to set up a bridge in front of the Maha Chai Fortress. Burmese soldiers then raced across this bridge and dug mounds to set the city walls on fire. On April 7, 1767, Burmese breached the walls at Pom Maha Chai and invaded the city. The ancient Ayutthaya kingdom was then destroyed, marking an end of the Siamese capital.

- *At this point you have made a full loop. The only step remaining of the war tour is to return to your original point of destination.*

Disclaimer
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elephant and a statue of King Naresuan (r. 1590-1605). The vicinities around Wat Tha Klong, Wat Chang Yai, Wat Chang Noi and Wat Chumphon were all related to elephants and warfare. It is in this area that army and battle formations were prepared, and troops concentrated prior to move out. It was also here that different pre-battle rites were performed.

- *Take the northern exit at Wat Chang Yai. Turn left and you will arrive at Highway 347 in only a minute or two. This is one of the unavoidable dangerous crossing points on this route. You will have to walk your bike to the other side of the road when traffic allows. Unfortunately, Ayutthaya has not built any walkover bridges for bike or pedestrians on this highway, but it is still much safer to cross the highway at this section.*
- *Take the small road on the opposite side of the highway. This will lead to another canal in only a minute of biking. Turn left at the canal and you will arrive at Highway 309. The next temple is visible just across the street. Cross the highway to the other side, while closely watching out for speeding traffic. The next reference point is located beside Highway 309.*

Wat Kuti Lae is an active monastery on the edge of Tambon Ban Mai. In situ is an ordination hall built in the Late Ayutthaya style.

- *Continue cycling on Highway 309 until you pass Wat Kuti Lai. The take the first left. This will take you on a scenic countryside road with plenty of rice fields and small ponds. You will head in the direction south until the road begins to shift naturally westward. Stay on this road, and the next reference point will be easy viewable on your right.*

Wat Bamrung Tham is an active monastery located in Tambon Ban Mai (Makham Yong). In situ are a new monastic complex and an old decontecrated ordination hall in the Early Ayutthaya style. The new uposot, built in the Late Ayutthaya style, is a remarkable very slender hall with a three-tiered roof. Wat Bamrung Tham was a small local temple serving the community during the Ayutthaya era.

- *From Wat Bamrung Tham, continue to bike in the same direction, until you come to a fork in the road. Turn left at this point at start heading southeastward. This new road runs parallel to the Chao Phraya River, which will only briefly be viewable on your right hand side. The distance from Wat Bamrung Tham to Wat Ket is about 900 meters (approximately 15 minutes). Wat Ket will be viewable on your right hand side; the Queen Sri Suriyothai Memorial will be viewable on your left hand side (directly opposite of each other).*

Wat Ket is an active monastery situated on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River. In situ is a new monastic complex with different structures. North of the ordination hall stands a monkop surrounded by a gallery and topped by a small prang, containing a Phrabat or Buddha footprint. In the weekends there is a large market held on the temple premises.

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