



SEACS SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY EXCURSION :: DESTINATION: THAILAND January 17-20, 2019

SEACS members, fly on your own flights and schedules, and **meet on Thursday, 17 JANUARY 2019 at the “Meeting Point”, International Terminal, Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok at 12:00 Noon**—where you will be met by SEACS President Patricia Welch and our two local specialists—Ruth Gerson and Noel Hidalgo Tan. [Leaving the flights separate from our trip enables you to fly up a day or two in advance if preferred, or that very morning—your choices to arrive before 12:00 noon on the 17th include Jetstar Asia, Scoot, Malaysia Airlines, Thai Airways and Singapore Airlines. Book your own flights!

From the airport, we will travel by mini-bus(es) to the **Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum** (Bangkok University, Rangsit Campus, Pathum Thani) where Assistant Curator Khun Atthasit Sukkham and Noel will guide us through this extensive and impressive collection, where former member Roxanna Brown was Director. The contents of the museum today, and the way they are displayed, are the result of her research on shipwreck ceramics and is an extensive and beautiful display.

After our visit, we will travel to the historic city of **Ayutthaya**, the second Siamese capital after Sukhothai, founded in 1351 and destroyed by the Burmese in 1767. There we will be met by SEACS Life Member Khun Pimpraphai Bisalputra, owner with husband Jeffrey Sng of the beautiful boutique hotel iuDia (www.iudia.com), located among the ancient ruins of the ancient city. There we'll relax alongside the river and enjoy two programmes: Khun Pim, a well-known collector, will give us a talk on “The Art of Collecting” and share with us her extensive *bencharong* collection.

After an informal Thai dinner catered in the hotel, Noel will share with us the story of the Tang-era Arab dhow found in a Thai shrimp farm pond—the *Phanom Surin* wreck. (When the visitors' centre is completed in late 2019/2020, SEACS will return to view the site at Samut Sakhon and the preservation centre at Ratchburi.) Members can choose to stay overnight either at the iuDia hotel or a more modest nearby recommended hotel (Sippa Ayutthaya) on a first-come, first-served basis as rooms at both hotels are limited (see price difference below on registration form—choose which one you'd like to stay at, we will book for you at our special SEACS rates.

Friday morning, 18 January, after breakfast, we'll visit the local museum's ceramics collection guided by Khun Pim, Noel and Ruth. Then we head back to Bangkok, stopping for a simple roadside lunch, to visit the ceramic museum of the Bangkok Insurance Company. This very special and beautiful private museum is not open to the public, but we hope it will be open to us to visit on Friday afternoon if it finishes its current renovation project on time. If not, we have two alternatives we can discuss at the time: viewing of a royal historic batik collection currently on special exhibition in the Queen Sirikit Textile Museum at the palace or ICONSIAM (billed as a global landmark on the Chao Phraya River and spectacular beyond Imagination).

After leaving the museum, we will check into the Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel & Towers alongside the Chao Phraya River, with direct access to our Saturday venue, Bangkok's most famous antique, replicas and crafts shopping mall—River City. (You will book yourselves into

the Royal Orchid so you may choose your room according to your taste and budget—but do not delay please to avoid disappointment.)

Dinner Friday evening will be at the 5-star heritage centre ‘**Lhong 1919**’ alongside the river; a private launch will pick us up and return us to our hotel after a beautiful traditional Thai dinner (with enough time at Lhong 1919 to roam amongst the many fine handicraft shops and displays there).

Saturday, 19 January we visit the special *Bencharong Exhibition* which has been curated by SEACS life member and well-known author, Dawn Rooney. Lunch is on your own. That afternoon, we will attend the special conference being held in conjunction with the exhibition. Speakers include Dawn, Khun Pim, Paul Bromberg (Editor of *Arts of Asia* and author of a forthcoming book on Thai silver and nielloware). Dinner on your own; we will offer you several nearby choices so you may join up in small groups if you choose.

Your Sunday is free to spend as you like: River City runs a free boat to Sapan Taksin, which is where the Bangkok Skytrain is located. From there you can take the train directly to the National Stadium, disembark, and walk to the Jim Thompson house, where amongst all the treasures on display is the most extensive *bencharong* display open to the public.

In addition, you will have the opportunity to view a special exhibition on your own either Saturday or Sunday at River City held in conjunction with the National Palace Museum, Taipei. They will be presenting a first-of-its-kind interactive Chinese art exhibition. Here’s your chance to experience some of China’s most famous art works such as the long scroll painting *Up the River during Qingming*, a virtual reality adaptation of *Roaming through Fantasy Land*, paintings by Giuseppe Castiglione and much more. The exhibition tickets are THB 250 per adult (ca. S\$10.50)—an outstanding value. More information at the website: <https://expatlifeinthailand.com/news-and-event/river-city-bangkok-presents-first-ever-interactive-chinese-art-exhibition/>

Return plans are up to each participant—fly home Sunday, or if you choose to stay on in Bangkok, arrange your own transfer to another hotel or more nights at the Sheraton. No final transfer to the airport is included in the excursion price.

Your tour planners: SEACS members Patricia Welch, Khun Pim Bisalputra and Khun Dawn Rooney. Accompanying us are long-term resident and fluent Thai speaker **Ruth Gerson**, former docent at the Bangkok National museum and author of Oxford University Press’ *Traditional Festivals of Thailand*; and **Dr. Noel Hidalgo Tan**, a SEACS and Siam Society speaker who works at SEAMEO-SPAFA promoting the archaeology of Southeast Asia and authors the excellent blog SEAArch – The Southeast Asian Archaeology Newsblog (subscribe at www.southeastasianarchaeology.com).

Questions? Call Patricia at 9733-6435. This trip is limited to 12 participants (plus your tour guides and leaders).