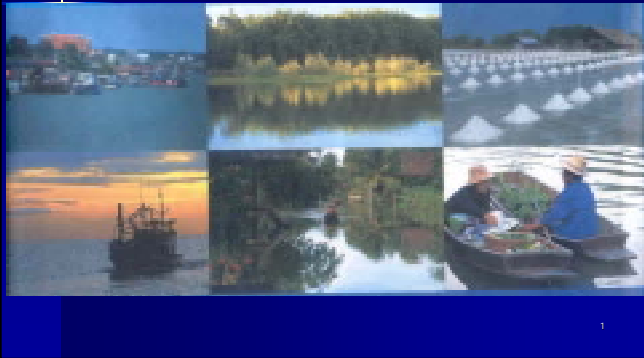


Samut Songkhram



1



2

Back ground

Samut Songkhram, or the “Mae Klong, the Last East Venice of Siam”, is very well known by every Thai. This province reflects the roots of traditional Thai life so dependant on the sea, rivers and brackish waters formed as the tides and fresh water current meet. These offer a host of various ecological systems and make the land fertile with food and natural sources.

3

The province is famous for many reasons. For example, it has shimmering white salt farms full stretching to the horizon. The mackerels here are praised for their fine taste, soft texture and sweet aroma. Some other fresh seafood caught here also affords wonderful flavors. In addition, the produce of “The City of Three Waters”, like chili, betel nuts, betel-vines, sugar, coconuts, fresh sugar sap, Malay apples (*Eugeni malaccensis* Linn.), and great white pomtlos, are in great demand nationwide.

4



5

Although Samut Songkhram is the smallest province in Thailand, it is very big for conserving Thai history, particularly from the reign of “King Rama II, who has been praised as one of the world’s most important persons by UNESCO for his rehabilitation of many branches of Thai art, sculpture, architecture, drama and literature. To honour his memory, the people of Samut Songkhram built the King Rama II Memorial Park. In addition, many ancient temples here reflect the deep roots that have long linked locals to Buddhism.

6

The Mae Klong River Delta has been the birthplace of many of Siam's most respected persons. For instance, In-Jan, the first Siamese twins known worldwide, were born here during the early reign of King Rama II. Luang Pradit Phairo, a poetic music composer and star when Thai music hit its peak during the reign of King Rama VI and Khru Uea Sunthonsanan, the founder of the Thai classical music Suntrapon Band, were born in this province as well.

7

Many of the people still follow traditional customs, which tourists also get to experience. For example the lights from fireflies under lampu trees help tell visitors about the fertility of the land and wisdom that has been preserved through their happy and pleasant smile. This can always impress tourists.

8

Before anyone leaves and says goodbye to Mae Klong, her or she may here the heartbeat of the people in the beauty and peacefulness of the land making a promise that they will proudly persevere in choosing a different way of life and confidently help preserve Mae Klong as "the last Venis of Siam".

9

The Life of Gardeners



"Bangchang Suan Nok and Bangkok Suan Nai" mean that this area in Samut Songkhram is the origin of the royal family "Na Bangchang" It played an important role, supplying vegetables and fruit in the early Rattanakosin period, including chili, onions, garlic, tobaccos, betel palms and betel-vines, to Bangkok.

11

These were all praised for their excellent quality, especially, the big, not too spicy chill peppers with few seeds inside a nutty taste. Betel palms here are known for their fine, soft and firm pulp, more sour and nutty than any others.

12

Arts and Culture



Samut Songkhram has inspired many famous artists because of the province's natural beauty. Talented locals in dances, painting, wood carving, architecture and literature have produced wonderful works and passed on their skills and expertise from generation to generation.

14



13

Wat Amphawan Jetiyaram

This is a second class royal temple built by Somdet Phraamarinthamat (Nak) Queen of Phrabuddha Yodfachulalok (King Rama I) and mother of Phrabuddha Leotlahnapalai (King Rama II), in honor of her mother (San) Phrarupsirisopak Mahanaknaree.

15

The ordination hall, built during the reign of Phrabuddha Yodfachulalok (King Rama I), is a prime feature with its mural paintings, including one by HRH Crown Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Located behind the principal Buddha image, they depict the life of the King Rama II and Bangkok during his reign.

16

Other sites of interest include the Songtham Throne-Hall, a portrait of King Rama II, a stupa, a vihara, a royal residence and impressive monk's cell.

17

King Rama II Park



King Rama II (Phrabat Sombat Phrabhatta Lertlanaphalai) Memorial Park was built by the King Rama II Memorial Foundation under Royal patronage to commemorate the people's gratitude for his rehabilitation of Thai art and culture.

19

His deeds are considered so valuable in the promotion and preservation of Thai art, culture and literature that he was named by UNESCO (United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization) as one of the most important persons in the world.

20

Thai Puppetry



21

The puppets of Samut Songkhram were first created by Khru (Teacher) Neng, a famous actor and player of "pi," a kind of Thai flute, during the reign of King Rama V. He brought Hailam Chinese style puppets to Thailand, and modified them to a uniquely Thai styles.

22

The performance displays Thai musical processions and dance styles. Later, Khru Wong Ruamsuk, who inherited this art, presented the puppet show in the presence of HRH Crown Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorm at the Phrabatsomdet Phraphuttha Lertahnपालai (King Rama II) Festival in 1994.

23

Nowadays, the Samut Songkhram puppet show receives budgetary support from the Thai National Culture Board to produce new puppets. Which are kept at the Provincial Culture Center. These puppets will be used in performances to preserve the art form for future generations to enjoy.

24