



What's Inside...

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 2 | Community's Note | 12 | Your Shot |
| 3 | Thailand Inside and Out | 13 | Dish of the Month |
| 6 | Volunteer's Account | 14 | Social April Activities |
| 9 | Volunteers' Corner | 15 | Ao Nang News |
| 10 | Feature | 16 | Arrivals in May 2011 |
| 12 | News & Update | 17 | Contact Details |

Community's Note



PARICHART CHAIPIKUL
Community Projects Director
Projects Abroad

Welcome to Projects Abroad Thailand. Welcome to Thailand Newsletter!

It is the time for water splashing again. Unfortunately, we start this summer with the rain! Luckily there was sunshine on Songkran Festival Day or Thailand New Year; 13th-16th April, which our feature is too. Most of volunteers were very excited and if you plan to join us but not sure when is the best time, coming to Thailand over April is the good idea as well as you will not miss out the fantastic festival in Thailand.

The school break has started again and same as our English camp that comeback again. This year we are proud to present that we have almost 80 pupils from 4 schools with age range from 10-13 years old attended our camp. Our theme this year is 'Go Green' to concern about global warming.

Not only an English camp, but this year we also have a workshop call 'English Teacher Development' for the teachers who from the schools where are our network placement. This workshop has organize due to we wish to solve the problem that we found from the school; language barrier and lack of confidence in speaking English. This workshop will help those teachers to improve their English, make them more confidence.

Of course you can imagine how much does it amazing for those activities and look forward to see all pictures!!! But first of all, enjoy your leisure time with our April issue. And I will come back to you with the stories of English camp and all other activities during this school break in next issue ☺

Happy Songkran Day!

Sincerely,
Ant

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Thai Art

Thai visual art was traditionally primarily Buddhist. Thai Buddha images from different periods have a number of distinctive styles. Thai temple art and architecture evolved from a number of sources, one of them being Khmer architecture.

Sukhothai artists tried to follow the canonical defining marks of a Buddha, as they are set out in ancient Pali texts:

Skin so smooth that dust cannot stick to it

Legs like a deer

Thighs like a banyan tree

Shoulders as massive as an elephant's head

Arms round like an elephant's trunk, and long enough to touch the knees

Hands like lotuses about to bloom

Fingertips turned back like petals

Head like an egg

Hair like scorpion stingers

Chin like a mango stone

Nose like a parrot's beak

Earlobes lengthened by the earrings of royalty

Eyelashes like a cow's

Eyebrows like drawn bows



Contemporary Thai art often combines traditional Thai elements with modern techniques.

Traditional Thai paintings showed subjects in two dimensions without perspective.

The size of each element in the picture reflected its degree of importance. The primary technique of composition is that of apportioning areas: the main elements are isolated from each other by space transformers.



This eliminated the intermediate ground, which would otherwise imply perspective.

Perspective was introduced only as a result of Western influence in the mid-19th century.

The most frequent narrative subjects for paintings were or are: the Jataka stories, episodes from the life of the Buddha, the Buddhist heavens and hells, and scenes of daily life.

Literature in Thailand is heavily influenced by Indian Hindu culture. The most notable works of Thai literature are a version of the Ramayana, a Hindu religious epic, called the Ramakien (see February Newsletter), written in part by Kings Rama I and Rama II, and the poetry of Sunthorn Phu.

There is no tradition of spoken drama in Thailand, the role instead being filled by Thai dance. This is divided into three categories- khon, lakhon and likay- khon being the most elaborate and likay the most popular. Nang drama, a form of shadow play, is found in the south.

Puppets are made of buffalo hide, while the story is narrated by songs, chants and music.

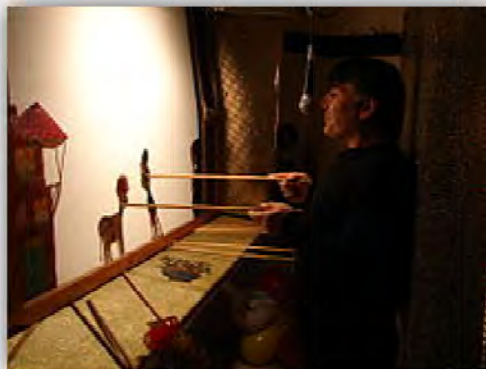
Nang Yai literally means "large shadow puppet". It is a high art form that originated from the beginning of the fifteenth century CE. Nang yai performances were a popular means of entertainment during the Ayudhaya period and are mentioned in a poem called Bunnovat Khamchan written by the Buddhist monk Mahanag sometime around the years 1751 to 1758 CE, at the end of King Boromakot's reign.



Nang Yai is the source of modern mask dance, and incorporates various episodes of an Indian epic called Ramakien in Thai and Ramayana in India. Nang yai performance also adopts the Ramayana as a leading story and the performance is episodic in each show.

The performance of large shadow puppets is traditionally held in open spaces such as a lawn or village dirt space.

The main components of Nang Yai are a 6 by 16 white screen held by four bamboo or wood poles on each side. The screen is trimmed by red strip. Behind the screen stands tinder or a bonfire lit up to reflect the shadows of the puppet. The puppet figures are made from perforated cow or buffalo hide, each weighing about three or four kilograms. The biggest puppet is one which characterizes a place, weighing around five to seven kilograms.



Nang Yai can be found presently throughout Thailand. For example, in central Thailand, Nang Yai is performed at Khanon in Rachaburi, Wat Plub in Petchaburi, Wat Sawang Arom in Singburi, and Wat Pumarin in Samut Songkram, while in eastern Thailand it can be found at Wat Donin in Rayong Province. During the course of the show there is a Thai band that plays music in accordance with each episode of the performance. Also important in each shadow is a dubber.

The music of Thailand includes classical and folk music traditions as well as string, pop, and more recently – reggae and ska styled music, although this is not traditionally used in puppet shows or dance demonstrations.

---Social Manager/Editor

Experiences for life...

I really feel like I've come into my own during my time at Projects Abroad. Initially, I will admit it that I wasn't sure what to expect when arriving here, ideas of meeting lots of new people and partying as a group and experiencing life as one of the volunteers – as part of something was what interested me. I knew I wanted to do something beneficial along the way and not be destructive or abusive in any way, so signing up to be a conservation volunteer seemed flawless to me. I can party and holiday and at the same time can help rebuild the damage done to vast varieties of natural habitats and life, go diving as a specialist so I don't feel like just another impacting fun diver.

After 2 months here though, I realize that it's so much more than that. Albeit lots of fun with the other volunteers, this trip has come to mean a lot more to me than I ever anticipated. The Mangrove days were, to begin with, a nasty, sweaty, muddy, mosquito ridden alternative to the dive days. I could understand why we were there, but at the same time found it quite pointless. I now relish days at the mangrove forests. It's exquisite, the trees, the river, birds and lizards, the burning sun through a gap in the branches. The invading undergrowth of thick thorny vines and bamboo creepers are no match for my freshly sharpened machete and despite the natural annihilation I'm participating in, I feel a deep sense of connection as I know I'll be replacing these cut lengths with brand new mangrove saplings. The mud is cool on my left hand and the machete stuck to my right glove, little mudcrabs crawl in and out of the ever appearing-disappearing holes created by my feet and knees, and provide entertainment between machete strikes. Birds call above, some landing not far from where I sit and sing the morning news to each other. The river, muddy brown and unclear plays host to all kinds of marine life that is surprisingly easily visible through the murky water, boxfish of a variety which I have never seen on a dive, tiny juvenile trumpet fish and sergeant majors to name but a few. The wind picks up through the trees and cools us all down, mercifully. As I get to my feet, I turn around to see what progress we've made and in all perfect honesty, I'm astonished. We have planted around 150 saplings and cleared no less than 80sqm. On arriving at the mangroves for the first time it was just overgrown, smelly, hot, and full of bugs and mud. I saw it as a kind of torture method but now it becomes clear that it's an incredible, versatile habitat full of life and energy and I feel so happy to be a part of its re-building process. The diving days are self explanatory, of course we love diving. It's not always incredible dives with hundreds of awesome animals, sometimes the visibility is dreadful and the dive becomes purely navigational skill practice. This is incredible too though, a real eye opening experience that tests your abilities, patience and skill as a diver.

All I would basically like to say is that any preconceptions of the idea of Projects Abroad any potential volunteers may or may not have had are most likely going to be the opposite of what you fall in love with over here in Thailand. I leave Thailand with incredible memories and unforgettable experiences that otherwise I wouldn't have ever had the opportunity to encounter and learn from. I return to France a changed person, for the better. I see things differently now and take experience from things that normally I would have scorned.

Thankyou to all the staff at Projects Abroad Thailand (especially Ben's radical and sometimes borderline sense of humour) for a life changing experience!

As translated by Ben Lemon, written by Solene Irion.

(Original French Version)

Des expériences pour la vie ...

J'ai vraiment l'impression d'avoir trouvé ma place pendant mon séjour avec Projects Abroad. A la différence de la plupart des volontaires, j'avais une petite idée de ce qui m'attendait puisque j'étais déjà venue sur le projet deux semaines en Septembre. Mais dans un laps de temps aussi court, j'étais restée sur ma faim et ai donc décidé de revenir avec l'envie de rencontrer beaucoup de monde, de profiter à fond de la solidarité de groupe que partagent les volontaires, de faire la fête, tout en agissant pour l'environnement. Je voulais allier l'utile au plaisir, et ce projet de conservation me semblait donc parfait. Je peux faire la fête, me sentir en vacances et en même temps tenter à mon niveau de réparer ou limiter les dommages subits par divers habitats naturels et formes de vie. La plongée avec le projet illustre particulièrement bien ce sentiment, puisque nos plongées ont tout le temps un objectif, contrairement à de simples plongées-loisirs qui ont souvent un impact négatif sur le récif.

Après avoir passé 3 mois ici (à la base je ne devais rester que 6 semaines), je me rends compte qu'être volontaire, c'est bien plus que cela. Bien entendu, je me souviendrai des franches parties de rigolades avec les volontaires et les membres du staff, mais ce voyage signifie désormais énormément plus que ce à quoi je m'étais préparé. Prenons pour exemple les jours de travail dans les mangroves. Au début, je les considérais comme le revers de la médaille comparés aux jours de plongée... L'air y est humide, lourd, presque irrespirable quand il s'agit de fournir un effort, on s'enfonce dans la boue, les moustiques nous attaquent... On m'avait bien entendu expliqué pourquoi nous étions là, mais je n'étais pas vraiment convaincue de l'efficacité de notre démarche. Mais j'ai appris à apprécier les mangroves, les arbres, le fleuve, les oiseaux et les lézards, le soleil brûlant à travers les branches. Maintenant, je manie la machette sans problème pour enlever les mauvaises herbes et autres arbustes épineux afin de préparer le terrain pour planter nos jeunes mangroves. La boue s'immisce à l'intérieur de mes bottes et de mes vêtements, la machette reste collée à mon gant à cause du mélange de boue et de sueur, tandis que mon attention est captivée par les centaines de crabes microscopiques qui apparaissent pour disparaître aussitôt dans les trous fraîchement créés par mes mouvements dans la boue. Lorsque je prends une pause, je m'assois sur un petit pont de bois qui offre une vue imprenable sur la rivière et la forêt. C'est là qu'on se rend compte à quel point les mangroves sont des écosystèmes riches. On peut y observer des oiseaux faisant escale sur leur route migratoire. Malgré la couleur brunâtre de l'eau de la rivière, celui qui prend le temps de regarder y apercevra toutes sortes de vies marines, des espèces de poissons-coffres que je n'avais jamais vu en plongeant, des poissons-trompettes juvéniles très petits et sergent majors pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns.. Alors que je me retourne, je suis vraiment étonnée par l'efficacité de notre travail. Nous avons désherbé près de 80m² et planté plus de 150 mangroves.

Il n'y a pas besoin d'expliquer pourquoi on aime les jours de plongée.... Bien entendu, on ne voit pas toujours des centaines d'animaux extraordinaires, il arrive parfois que la visibilité soit si mauvaise que la plongée se transforme en pur exercice de navigation où le but est de ne perdre personne. Et pourtant, même dans ce cas, cela reste une expérience incroyable qui aide à affûter nos qualités de plongeur.

Au final, tout ce que je voudrai vous expliquer, c'est que quelles que soient vos attentes vis à vis de votre séjour avec Projects Abroad, vous serez probablement surpris de constater à quel point vous vous enthousiasmez pour d'autres aspects du projet qui ne vous attiraient pas plus que ça à la base. Je quitte la Thaïlande avec des souvenirs incroyables et des expériences inoubliables que je n'aurai pas eu l'occasion de vivre autrement.

Merci à tout le staff de Projects Abroad Thailand (tout particulièrement à Ben pour son sens de l'humour radical et souvent à la limite du politiquement correct) pour cette expérience qui a changé ma vie.

Solène Irion



Kindergarten Graduation's day



Enjoy working on Cleaning day at Ao Nang

More photos can be seen on Facebook Projects Abroad Thailand The Official Group

www.projects-abroad.net

The word Songkran is derived from the Sanskrit language, meaning to pass or to move into. In this context, the meaning implies to the passing and the moving of the sun, the moon and the other planets into one of the zodiacal orbit. And the Grand Songkran Festival which falls on the Aries indicates the new era of the Thai New Year.

The date of the festival was originally set by astrological calculation. Until 1889 the Thai New Year was the beginning of the year in Thailand; thereafter 1 April was used until 1941; 1 January is now the beginning of the year. The traditional Thai New Year or Songkran has been a national holiday since then. It is now fixed on 13 April every year and lasts for 3 days. Songkran Festival on 13 April is Maha Songkran Day or the day to mark the end of the old year, 14 April is Wan Nao, which is the day after, and 15 April is Wan Thaloeng Sok on which the New Year begins. At this time, people from the rural areas who are working in the city usually return home to celebrate the festival. Thus, when the time comes, Bangkok temporarily turns into a deserted city.

The Activities on Songkran Day

One day before Songkran, family members gather to help clean the home and appliances and prepare offerings for the monks for the next morning. The following are things to do on Songkran Day.

1. In the morning, people go to the temple to make merits by offering food to monks and novices, observing the precepts (five or eight precepts) and listening to the Dhamma talk.
2. Freeing birds or fish.
3. Donation is a way of merit making.
4. In the afternoon, they perform the bathing ceremony of the Buddha images, monks and novices who live in a temple.
5. At this time, people from the rural areas who are working in the city usually return home to celebrate the



1. People offering food to monk
2. People perform the bathing monks
3. People perform the bathing of the Buddha images
4. Water Splashing Feast
5. Splashing water

festival and ask for blessings from the elders. It is known as Water Splashing Feast. It might be said that the Songkran Festival is the Respected Festival to the elders or the Family Day. In addition, there is also a ritual performed by monks to the relics of the dead in order to pass on merits to them. This ritual is known as "Bangsukun Atthi". It will be performed once during the Songkran Festival on any of the three days. Thus, when the time comes, Bangkok temporarily turns into a deserted city.



Splashing water is a symbol of Songkran Festival. People begin with bathing a Buddha image. They first make an offering of flowers, candles, and incense sticks to the image. Then they will sprinkle lustral water signifying bathing onto the image as a gesture of respect. A procession of the Buddha image will be made prior to the bathing. After that people will also bathe a Buddhist monk, usually the chief monk, by pouring lustral water over him. The chief monk will change in to the new robe offered to him by laymen, then he will give a sermon and bless people who attend these bathing rituals. Besides this, people will also call on elders and respected ones to ask for their blessings. After that, people will "play" by splashing water at one another.

News & Update

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at thailandmediamanager@projects-abroad.org

Projects Abroad Thailand The Official Group – We now have 485 Members and climbing!

Now you can view our Newsletters on Projects Abroad Thailand The Official Group on facebook. You just click on the link and that's it! Photos can be seen of our weekly activities in our Projects Abroad Thailand the Official Group on Facebook.

Thanks guys!

Articles: Solene Irion (edited and translated by Ben Lemon)
Your Shots: Kathryn Dawson
Cover Photo:
Best Wishes,
Social/Media Manager/Editor - Ben Lemon

Dinner



This month's dinner was held at A-One restaurant - a popular choice among our volunteers for it's awesome Thai food and vast western selection.

By Ben Lemanczyk (Via Kathryn Dawson)



A basic 3 days in pictures. Using Kathryn's camera that she so kindly allowed the use of, I tried to capture the past 3 days in a frame each.

First is a beach clean up on Ao Nam Mao, a dead and dried porcupine puffer fish kind of displays the destruction while paradise sits in the backseat in the form of Krabi's famous limestone karsts.

Second is the lake where we clean our tools after a mangrove day, crystal clear water, surrounded by trees – perfect way to end a mangrove day.

Third is a day out to Khao Phanom Benja national park waterfall, which recently suffered terrible flood damage that caused a landslide killing 15 people. There is still a lot of debris and evidence of chaos up there, but it was lovely to relax under the water!



Rice in ice water

Rice in ice has been a popular Thai meat dish for the summer since ancient times; adding cooked rice to soak with cold water floating with fragrant flowers. The various side dishes that can accompany this are fried vegetables, fried baby shrimp paste, sweet stuffed bell peppers, fried sweet onions stuffed with shredded lettuce and salty fried, sweet fried, or sweet dried fish etc.

Background

In ancient times, the rice in ice is a component of the Songkran Festival Month. The ancient tradition says "Festival will be on rice in ice water to monks". It is auspicious to those who enjoy rice in ice water in Thailand, a dish that originated from the palace. The Royal Brit bully gave the rice in ice to His Majesty King Rama V King Rama (Rama 5) and some of his favorite people who ate it together but only in the palace. His death came after the rice in ice had been made available to the general public. The public called it "Rice in ice palace" because it was released from the palace.

April Social Activities

April 2011 Activity Plan

Date	Activity	Time
1 st April - Fri	Snowboarding trip in Chiang Rai (April Fools!) Conservation Vols depart from J Guesthouse Community Vols meet outside Vogue mall Incl. 2 Nights stay at the Sheraton Snowboard rental and lessons, food and drink Projects Abroad covering all expenses	9.30am 9.30am 10.00am
2 nd April – Sun	Quiz Night @ J Guesthouse Community Vols let us know where you will be staying so we can arrange transport. Ride back to Krabi with Patrick	6.00pm 8.00pm
12 th April – Tue	Monthly Dinner @ The Boat Restaurant Community team meet outside Krabi Vogue Conservation team leave J lobby Patrick returning community to Krabi	5.30pm 6.00pm 8.00pm
13 th April – Wed	Songkran! National waterfight! Thai New Year! Community Vols will be brought to J Guesthouse For lunch with the conservation team Walk through Noppharat and Ao Nang Arm yourselves! Water guns, baby powder etc. You are going to get very wet! Patrick to return Community team to Krabi	11.00am 12.00noon 5-6pm
17 rd April – Sun	Railay half-day Climbing Trip Appx 500baht Per person Community team meet outside Krabi Vogue Leave J Guesthouse together to Climbing shop Return to Ao Nang around Patrick returning community team to Krabi	7.30am 8.00am 2.00pm 5.00pm
30 th April – Sat	Crystal Pond Trip Conservation team meet in J Guesthouse lobby Community team meet outside Vogue Cost 200baht Per person Arrive at Crystal Pond Lunch at the pond Return to Krabi & Ao Nang	9.00am 9.30am 10.15am 12.00pm 2.00pm

I hope you all had a very good March (aside from the never-ending rain), but now it's a new month (Happy Thai New Year!!) so come and get involved in the April activities!

All the best,

Ben Lemon
Social/Media Management

Ao Nang News!

There have been a few changes in Ao Nang recently, as far as Projects Abroads goes, J. Guesthouse has new cleaning staff, conservation director Marie has abandoned us all for a few weeks in the Maldives *shakes fist*, old volunteers have left, new volunteers have become the veterans and there seems to be a massive influx of sharks at many of the divesites. Not that I've seen any apart from on a computer screen, but I hear all the stories when the volunteers get back *shakes fist again*. Still no mention of a whale shark though, to which I am quite happily smug about as I have at least 13 whale shark sightings and encounters under my weight belt. There also seems to be some degree of a Dengue fever pandemic. Maybe I shouldn't use the word 'pandemic' but am slightly vexed as to what else to say as three of my friends, colleagues and volunteers have been struck down with this mosquito-bite induced affliction. It's definitely not a reason not to come to Thailand, but it most certainly is a reason to arm and defend yourself from the flying parasites. There are four different types of Dengue fever, each with its own varying stages. There is no immediate cure for Dengue neither, with the common local alleviation to be 'to sweat it out' lying down and filling your body with paracetamol. Having never had dengue I couldn't comment on it in depth, but I have been told it is not dissimilar to the feeling of having all of your bones slowly being broken.

A little word of advice for anyone aspiring to travel to corners of the earth where exotic diseases and afflictions roam free – build up your immune system before you leave your country by eating right, resting right and consuming roughly 1000mg of vitamin-c each day. Be sure to drink lots of water though, because if not the vitamin-c can sometimes crystallize in your system which doesn't sound good. I've always managed to avoid a citrus-y crystal and am not interested in finding out what it does.

I am convinced, however, that due to keeping my immune system on top I have prevented myself from contracting the fever. Mosquitoes commonly bite towards the end of the afternoon and in the early morning, during the day (largely depending on where you are) you should be ok, but as soon as the sun goes down, get the repellent out or put on some long pants - they are quite literally your only defenses.

Contact Details



Projects Abroad

*153/7 Moo 5
Ao Nang,
Muang, Krabi 81000
Thailand*

Media Link

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http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=3042