

*AAUW Learn and Explore Series Presents:*

## **Vietnam and Cambodia: Women and Their Worlds**

*An intimate look at the impact and influence of women in these ancient civilizations*



**February 19-March 7, 2010**

With Host

**Carolyn Garfein, AAUW President**



**Specially Prepared for the  
American Association of University Women**

### **Vietnam and Cambodia: Women and Their Worlds**

As a part of our ongoing Director's Travel and Study Series, designed to expand knowledge and understanding of women in other areas of the world and the issues that are important to them, we are proud to offer a superb opportunity to learn about the intriguing contrasts of the Vietnamese Mekong world and the magnificence of the Cambodian Khmer civilization. Please join us in this deluxe custom tour and experience a once in a lifetime journey, designed specifically to give us "insider" access to the women we meet and the influence they have had in shaping these two cultures. Our fully guided and escorted tour begins in the marvelous city of **Hanoi** where we explore the old city, visit the Women's Union, and enjoy a traditional Cheo musical performance. From **Hanoi**, you travel to **Danang** before driving to the splendid Viet-Chinese port town of **Hoi An**. Your last stop in Vietnam is **Ho Chi Minh City**, where you wander the markets, peek into the Cu Chi Tunnels, and marvel at the Cao Dai religion. Heading down into the Mekong Delta, you will take a boat at **Cai Be**, and drift on a Sampan to a floating market. Next we travel to **Phnom Penh**, the capital of Cambodia. Your journey finishes in **Siem Reap**, exploring the temples of the Angkor Civilization and ending with a very special visit to Angkor Wat at sunrise. Throughout our tour, there will be opportunities to visit and learn of the challenges and victories of the women of these remarkable countries. In our continuing effort to facilitate interaction and development of personal relationships, our tour is limited to 16 guests.

## Summary of Events Focusing on Women

- Meeting with Ms. Thuy Mui, Deputy Director of Hanoi Cheo Theater
- Meeting with women doctors at Acupuncture Institute
- Meeting with women at the Vietnamese Women's Union
- Possible conversation with women students at the university
- Conversation with the wife of your guide, who holds a top management position with the Sofitel
- Conversation with women hat makers in Hue
- Conversation with women cooking at the Vuon Y Thao Garden Restaurant, where you have a cooking lesson and dinner
- Meeting with either Ms. Tran Thi Huong Gian, owner of the Asian Ruby Hotel in Saigon or Ms. Thi Thuy Nga, owner of the Chateau Restaurant in Saigon.
- Opportunity to meet and talk with children and caretakers at the Apsara Foundation in Phnom Penh
- Conversation with women at Nyemo, where you will have lunch, a restaurant run by vulnerable women in Phnom Penh
- Meeting with an NGO in Phnom Penh that works with trafficking of women
- Time at the Artisans d'Angkor to talk to the women artists
- All throughout the trip, there will be time to talk with women – mothers, grandmothers, girls – and get a sense of their lives.



## ITINERARY

**Day 01:** Leave the States.

**Day 02:** Transit

**Day 03:** Arriving in Hanoi, you will be met by our operator, clear customs and immigration, and head over to your hotel. After washing up, changing clothes and a brief lunch, you will take a cyclo ride around the city.



Hanoi, located at the confluence of the Red and Duong Rivers, has come a long way from the stilt houses of the stone and bronze age dwellers of four and five thousand years ago. Myths link Hanoi's origins to the center of the earth, visions of soaring dragons, and fears of invasions or fierce winds from the north. Between Chinese power struggles, peasant rebellions, invasions from warring Mongol hordes, the French occupation, and American bombing attacks, the city has undergone and continues to undergo tremendous growth and change. Today's Hanoi, "the city inside a bend of the Red River," is a blend of thousand-year-old temples, tube houses, neo-Parisian buildings, and new, modern hotels and office buildings.

After the ride, you will have an early dinner.

Overnight at the Intercontinental. (D)

**Day 04:** Today you will begin to tour Hanoi, accompanied by your guide. Your path will take you past the granite and concrete mausoleum where Ho Chi Minh lies in state and the government buildings to the Museum of Fine Arts. In front of the museum is the Temple of Literature, called "Le Pagoda des Corbeaux" by the French, because of the huge flocks of crows gathering in the mango trees near the entrance. Built in 1070, the complex consists of five courtyards dedicated to Confucius and the pursuit of Confucian thought and behavior. It is here that Vietnam's first university was founded. Leaving the museum, you will walk around Hoan Kiem Lake in the middle of the city passing the One Pillar Pagoda, built in 1049 by Emperor Ly Thanh Tong to celebrate the birth of his only son, and Ho Chi Minh's house, given him by the people of the country in thanks for his leadership.

In the afternoon, you can also visit the **Ethnic Museum**, perhaps one of the best in the country. Here you will get a sense of the different cultures and customs that abound in this tiny country.

Perhaps the most interesting area you will visit is the **Old Quarter**. Here many tiny streets join to sell a huge diversity of products. In the old days, each street bore the name of the product sold – "Shoe Street," "Noodle Street," and the like. Today, the streets sometimes sell a variety of items, but often the names are accurate. The Old Quarter also houses some of the most interesting art galleries. You spend some time visiting several of the most respected galleries, meeting with the owners and artists.



Early in the evening, you can enjoy a special Cheo musical performance in an old home in Hanoi, followed by dinner. Cheo arose in the northern part of Vietnam in the Red River Delta as part of the Viet *Kinh* (peasant) tradition. In many ways, the goal of the musical performance was to spread a moral philosophy promoting good and condemning evil. Influenced somewhat by Confucian thinking, the cheo performances depict an idealized society and depict the ideal relationships and behaviors of the people. The performance will take about an hour and include a welcome ceremony and extracts of two famous Cheo plays.

Overnight at the Intercontinental. (B,L,D)

**Day 05:** Part of the day will be spent at either the Acupuncture Institute or the University and part at the Vietnam Women's Union (<http://www.hoihpn.org.vn/?Lang=EN>). During your visit to the Acupuncture Institute, you will have the opportunity to watch sessions with patients and see some of the different acupuncture techniques.

Should you visit the university, you can meet with some of the teachers, see the classrooms and talk with the students.

At the Women's Union, you can talk with different people, learn about their activities, and get a sense of the major issues facing women in Vietnam.

Overnight at the Intercontinental. (B,L,D)

**Day 06:** After breakfast, you catch VN 245 (1010/1120) south to Hue, the ancient imperial city of the Nguyen Kings. After dropping your bags, you can begin to explore the city.



Hue, originally called Phu Xuan, was built in 1687, and became the cultural, religious and economic capital of the Nguyen Dynasty from 1744 to 1945. The actual name of the city was a corruption of the name *Than Hoa*, where *Hoa* signified “peace” or “harmony” in Vietnamese. Sadly, the city really did not know much peace until the present day. Although the Nguyen kings founded the city, Hue was occupied by the Tay Son rebels from 1786-1802. In 1802, Emperor Gia Long was crowned in the city and renamed it “Hue”. Between 1802 and 1820, there were more than 100 peasant uprisings in the city. In 1833, the French attacked Hue so ferociously that the Emperor Hiep Hoa allowed the city to become a

French protectorate.

Later, in 1885, the French reasserted their sovereignty

in the city, burning the Royal Library and carrying off many objects of value and gold and silver decorations. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city was devastated once again during the Tet Offensive. The communists occupied the city for 25 bloody days and hid among the various palaces and buildings of the Citadel. In an



effort to dislodge the Communist troops, the Americans and South Vietnamese furiously bombed the palace, destroying most of the structures. Today, with the help of UNESCO and other organizations, the Vietnamese are beginning to reconstruct and restore some of the palace buildings.

In the afternoon, you can head into town to visit the market and the ancient Royal Citadel, begun in 1805 and the greatest legacy of the Nguyen emperors. Like the citadel, the city of Hue itself is a walled city, and was designed by a French architect. It was divided into three parts – the Common City, the Imperial City, and the Forbidden City. The Forbidden City was modeled on its namesake in Beijing. The water that surrounded the city was a symbol of the ocean and the world. Altogether, in the early days, there were 880 palaces in Hue, of which less than 20% survived the war. Many of the buildings and palaces faced south, the direction of prosperity and of the warm winter winds. The eastern side of the city faced the sea, and represented the prosperity of the universe. The west was paradise, where humans went after death, the home of Amitabha, the God of the Western World. Few houses in Hue face north or have windows on the northern side, as that direction historically was “the way of the enemy” – China. As mentioned above, the citadel was destroyed during the bombing of Hue. For the Vietnamese, this was a tremendous artistic loss.

After visiting the Citadel, you can head over to the Fine Arts Museum and then visit the wonderful old An Hien Garden House. If time permits, you might want to walk back to the hotel along the river, passing the book and card sellers.

Overnight at Le Residence. (B,L,D)

**Day 07:** This morning you can take a boatripe on the Perfume River and visit some of the more interesting sites of Hue – Minh Mang’s Tomb, the Tien Mu Pagoda and the Khai Dinh Tomb.



Perhaps more than any other city, Hue reflects the former glory of the nation of Vietnam. The history of Hue goes back to the 3rd century BC, when it was the capital of the Han Dynasty’s Nhat Nam district. From the 5th to the mid-14th century, Hue was a capital of the central Vietnam Kingdom of Champa. Then, in 1601, Lord Nguyen Hoang decided to build his capital here, about seven miles from the coast, founding the ancient imperial city of the Nguyen kings. The last emperor, Bao Dai, abdicated his throne in 1945 before 150,000 people, as the Japanese marched into the city. Today, Hue is known as “The City of Beauty,” and is the culinary center for central Vietnam. With Hue’s historical significance, the city was awarded the status of World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1994.

Minh Mang’s Mausoleum, located at the confluence of two major rivers flowing into the Perfume, is a more traditional holy site. Begun in 1841, it was finished in 1843. Ming Mang is remembered as an ardent anti-Christian, and the builder of two great steamships. Actually, he was not so much “anti-Christian” as he was anti-missionary, fearing that missionary influence would undermine the monarchy.

Leaving Minh Mang’s tomb, you will visit the Tien Mu Pagoda, made famous in our century, when the presiding monk immolated himself in a protest against the South Vietnamese regime.

Your boat ride ends at the completely different Khai Dinh royal burial place, flanked with a grandiose dragon staircase leading to its European-like castle built in the 1930's. Khai Dinh was the father of Emperor Bao Dai, and his tomb was completed in 1931.

On your return to the city, you can stop in the conical hat village and see the famous Hue hats and incense sticks being made.

Mid-afternoon, you will head to the Vuon Y Thau Garden. Here, under the auspices of Vietnamese cooks, you will have a Vietnamese cooking lesson and dinner.



Overnight at Le Residence. (B,L,D)

**Day 08:** Early in the morning, you will drive over the Hai Van Pass (Pass of the Ocean Clouds). Once known as the Mandarin Road, because it was reserved only for important mandarins, this winding road presents incredible vistas of the beaches and hills of Vietnam – some of the most spectacular in the country. As you drive, you cannot but note the shrines to accident victims. Since paying respects to the dead helps to ensure that the life force of the victims will enter into and protect us as living motorists, you may want to stop and take a moment before the shrines.

As you approach Danang, you can make two stops. You can pay a short visit to the Cham Museum, to learn a bit about the art and history of these seafaring people who settled Vietnam's coasts. The Chams settled the central coast of Vietnam from the east – Indonesia, Polynesia, and Malaysia, bringing with them their traditions first of Hinduism and later of Buddhism and Islam. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the kingdom had been destroyed and few monuments remain. The museum here houses a few carvings and temple pieces that have been gathered from diverse Cham sites. Sadly, most of the best pieces were taken back to European museums by the French.



An optional stop is Marble Mountain - five limestone hillocks, once islands, which are said to represent the five elements of the universe. Caves within the mountains shelter Buddhas, Bodhisatvas, local genies, and the remnants of Vietnam War history. During the Vietnam War era, the Viet Cong hid in caves in the mountains and sniped at the Americans on the beach below. Behind one of the Buddhist monuments is a cave where they also operated a field hospital and command center. Today charming pagodas and statues dot the hillsides, covering many of the bullet holes in the rocks. The town below is known for its marble sculptures, and its inhabitants will do their best to sell you anything they can.

After this sightseeing, you will continue on to Hoi An and the Vinh Hung Resort. (B,L,D)

**Day 09:** Today you will explore Hoi An, nestled on the banks of the Thu Bon River. Before the river silted up, Hoi An was one of the most important trading ports in Southeast Asia, and a center for East-West exchange and trade. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Hoi An was one of the principal Cham cities. Over the years, Indian, Dutch, Portuguese, French, Thai, Indonesian, Spanish, American, Japanese, Filipino and Chinese ships docked in Hoi An. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the result of warfare and

environmental changes, Hoi An was replaced by Danang as a major port. Reflecting the diversity of the traders and missionaries that settled in the port (including Alexander of Rhodes), the ancient architecture is a fascinating mix of Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese. The rooftops of Hoi An retain a magical old world Oriental feel and are a favorite subject for Vietnamese artists. In the early 1980s Hoi An's ancient quarters and historical monuments came under the protection and restoration efforts of UNESCO and the Polish government.



You will spend the day visiting the town of Hoi An – walking the Japanese Bridge, visiting the different Chinese Assembly Halls and pagodas and walking the market. Hoi An is also a wonderful town to shop for silk. In the afternoon, you will take a boat ride to some of the islands in the river. Here you can see some of the potters at work.

Overnight at the Vinh Hung Resort. (B,L,D)

**Day 10:** After an early breakfast, return to Danang where you can connect with VN 321 (0800/0910) to Saigon.

Built on the site of an ancient Khmer settlement and an outpost for early pioneers in the 14th century, Ho Chi Minh City did not begin to come into its own until the early 17th century. The derivation of the name, Saigon, is somewhat vague and centers around its water location. Some say that Saigon comes from the Annamese word *Thay Ngon*, meaning a highly populated area near a dammed river. Others claim that *Sai Con* is a transcription of the Khmer word *Prei Kor* or The Kapok Tree Forest. In any case, the city is fast regaining its reputation as one of Asia's most vibrant cities. The tree-lined boulevards and French colonial architecture hearken to the city's recent past, while the bustling markets, changing infrastructure and dynamism of the people look to the future.



When you arrive, you will tour some of the important parts of Ho Chi Minh City. You can stop at the Re-Unification Palace, the former palace of President Thieu and his predecessors. Today this building is a museum and venue for official receptions. Inside you can visit the private rooms of the president, the "War Room" from where the South Vietnamese forces were controlled, and, most poignantly, the room where the North Vietnamese army finally took control in 1975. Nearby is the Post Office and the Notre Dame Cathedral, built between 1877 and 1883 and one of the city's major landmarks. Neo-Romanesque in form, Notre Dame is the major seat of the Catholic religion in modern Vietnam.

After lunch, you have time to visit the War Museum, fascinating for its depiction of the Vietnam War.



You will end your day at **Cholon**, or "Big Market," Saigon's colorful and large Chinatown.

Overnight in the Caravelle. (B,L,D)

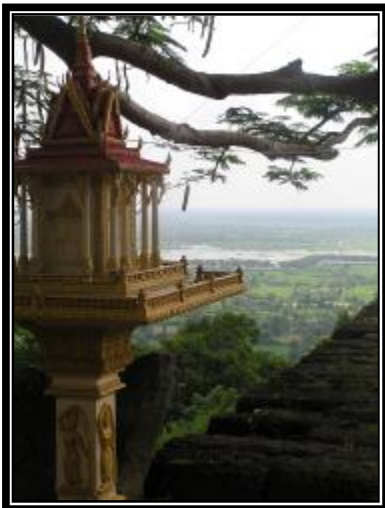
**Day 11:** This morning, you venture out of Ho Chi Minh City to the flood plains of the Mekong Delta, “the mystic serpent with nine tails.” To Vietnamese, the river is *Cu Long*, “The River of Nine Dragons,” referring to the number of mouths as the river empties into the sea. As well as producing over half of the nation’s rice, the Delta area is abundant with fruit orchards and traditional fish farms. Culturally, the area is a diverse mix of ethnic Khmer and Chinese. To some degree, your itinerary will be determined by the seasons - the best being from January to March, and the worst, around November, when the rivers flood.

Your destination is Vinh Long Province, where you are going, was a center for the dissemination of Catholicism in the delta area, and there is an interesting Catholic church in the town. From here, you can head to Long Xuyen, and spend some time exploring that area. From Long Xuyen, you will continue on to Cai Be. In Cai Be, you will board a Sampan, and drift down a small branch of the Mekong, the Co Chien River, to a delightful floating market.

Late in the day you will return to Saigon for a farewell dinner.

Overnight at the Caravelle. (B,L,D)

**Day 12:** After a leisurely breakfast, you will head to the airport to catch VN 817 (1225/1315) to Phnom Penh. Here you will again clear immigration and customs. Leaving the airport, you will see our people holding a sign with your names on it.



Phnom Penh is relatively new as the capital of Cambodia, replacing Angkor. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the emphasis in Cambodia had become more and more focused on maritime trade with Southeast Asia, rendering Angkor unsuitable as a capital for the country. Located at the confluence of the Mekong and the Tonle Sap rivers, Phnom Penh could control the riverine trade from Laos, fish and pottery trade from the Tonle area, as well as goods from the Mekong area, particularly from China. Moreover, culturally, there also seems to have been a shift from the power of the elite Angkor population to the less brahmanical and more cosmopolitan elite centered around Phnom Penh. Thus, as you tour Phnom Penh today, you will find that most of what you see is relatively new, compared to your next Cambodian stop – Siem Reap.

You will begin today, dipping into a bit of Cambodia’s sordid past and end up at the market! The first stop is Toul Sleng Prison, a converted school that became the prison and torture chamber for those seized by the Khmer Rouge.

From Toul Sleng, you can drive out to the very well-know Killing Fields – a very moving reminder of the horrors of the Khmer Rouge Era.

The day will finish with time at the Russian Market. Overnight at the Raffles Le Royal. (B,D)

**Day 13:** This morning, you will see some of the beauties of Phnom Penh. The first stop is the Royal Palace, built in 1866 by King Norodom, with its magnificent Silver Pagoda containing 5000 silver floor tiles.

From the palace, you can next stop at the National Museum, built in 1917, one of the most striking Khmer buildings in Phnom Penh and a repository of the Kingdom's cultural wealth. Here you can see a preview of and read about the treasures you will see the next few days in Siem Reap.

Lunch will be at a special place, Le Rits. Here Nyemo, a local NGO serving "vulnerable women", will give you some insights into what is achievable for this organization working to provide opportunities for women at risk. You can enjoy the lunch at their restaurant and also visit the workshop that is on the premises.

Later in the afternoon, you will visit another NGO that focuses on the issue of trafficking of women.

In the evening, you will pay a very special visit to the Apsara Arts Association to see a classical dance performance. . The aim of the foundation is to educate poor Cambodian children to become professional dancers and musicians, and simultaneously conserve Cambodian arts and culture. During the Khmer Rouge period, most of the dancers, artists, writers, and intellectuals in Cambodia were killed by the government. As such, there is a tremendous need to re-educate the people and revive the cultural heritage of the country. At the same time, Cambodia is a desperately poor country, and Apsara provides young children with the much needed possibility of earning a livelihood.



Overnight at the Raffles Le Royal. (B,L,D)

Day 14: After an early breakfast, you will transfer back to the airport to catch PG 990 (0645/0735) to Siem Reap.



On arrival, you will be met and taken to the Victoria d'Angkor to drop off your things. When you are ready, you can start a full day of touring.

Siem Reap is the cultural home of the Khmer people and one of the ancient wonders of the world. This vast network of Wats, dating back to the 7th century, is the center of some of the most important structures, statues, and carvings produced in the name of the Buddhist and Hindu religions. First rediscovered by Western archeologists in the late

19th century, the "lost city of Angkor" was recently re-opened to foreigners.

The whole area is a model of the Hindu universe, where construction was designed to create harmony between mankind and the gods. Each of the temples must be visualized as a three-dimensional mandala, or representation of the Hindu (and later, the Buddhist) universe. The central shrines are

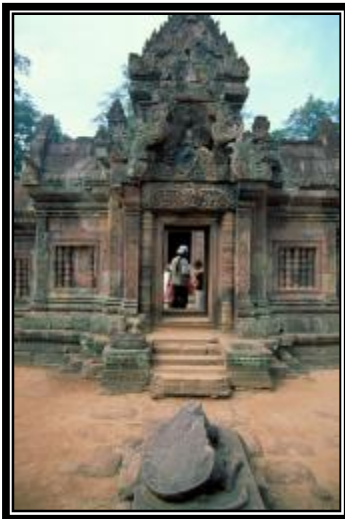


Kailas, the Abode of Shiva, or Mt. Meru, the center of the world to the Buddhists. Cloisters and side chapels are both homes for the protector deities, as well as external envelopes of the cosmic reality. Moats are the seven sacred, concentric oceans surrounding the holy mountain in the center. As you walk across the causeways and up and down the many stairways of the temples, you need to think of yourself as a pilgrim, working your way to the center of the world and the home of the supreme deity.

This morning, you will begin with a visit to the Artisans d'Angkor workshop. Established to revitalize the handicraft industry of Siem Reap, artisans are chosen from poor, disadvantaged rural communities. Stone carving, wood carving, silverwork, silk weaving and laquerware – the standard of work here is among the best in Southeast Asia. You will tour the workshops to see the artisans at work, and visit their gallery.

In the afternoon, you travel through the traditional village of Preah Dak to the 12<sup>th</sup> century temple of Banteay Samre. Built by King Suryavarman II, the genius behind Angkor Wat, this temple was extensively restored. The temple is unique in that over-quarrying of sandstone led to the use of laterite for the roofed corridors. The pediments above the inner doors here include some of the most accomplished carving from the Angkor period.

Then you continue further north to Angkor's ultimate art gallery - the unique and charming jungle temple of Banteay Srei, also called "The Citadel of Women". Although the temple is generally said to be built by a "learned Brahmin" by the name of Yajnavaraha, some architectural historians have suggested that the inscriptions may date from an earlier structure on this site, and the temple is indeed later, marking a high-water mark in Khmer sculpture.



Banteay Srei is dedicated to Shiva as the Great Lord of the Three Worlds, or Tribhuvanamaheśvara. Constructed from pink sandstone, the temple is designed to become smaller and smaller as one approaches the main sanctuary, forcing the pilgrim to bend down more and more to squeeze through the narrow doors. The décor of the temples is the most refined in the Angkor complex, a *tour de force* of sculptures and carvings. Not only are the gods shown in various poses, but you also find depicted, for the first time, local people at various times in their lives – fighting, meditating, walking through forests, and the like.

So fine was the work that it attracted the attention of a young Frenchman named Andre Malraux in 1923, who attempted to make off with several of the most important pieces. Luckily the colonial authorities intercepted him and he spent a short time in prison. He rose to become France's most celebrated Minister of Culture in the 1960s.

Late in the day, you journey to the mountain temple of Phnom Bakheng to see the sunset cast its soft light over Angkor Wat. Here you can take an elephant ride to the summit of the mountain – the signature spot for sunsets in the area, and sometimes crowded!

Overnight at the Victoria d'Angkor. (B,L,D)

Day 15: Rising early, you travel to Ta Prohm in the dawn light. Ta Prohm has been abandoned to the elements, a reminder that while empires rise and fall, the riotous power of nature marches on, oblivious to the dramas of human history. Left as it was 'discovered' by French explorer Henri Mouhout in 1860, the tentacle-like tree roots here are slowly strangling the surviving stones, man first conquering nature to

create, nature later conquering man to destroy. For film buffs, this is also the temple where Angelina Jolie plucked a piece of jasmine before falling through the floor into ... Pinewood Studios.



After soaking up the unique atmosphere of Ta Prohm, you continue to the giant pyramid of Takeo, one of the highest temples in the Angkor area. Built at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it was never completed. Some scholars contend this was due to an inauspicious lightning strike during construction. Others have suggested the high quality sandstone was simply too hard to carve in detail. Either way the views from the top are magnificent, but take care descending the steep stairs.

This morning you also visit the remains of an old Angkorian bridge which once spanned the Siem Reap river. Like the Romans before them, the Khmer kings built long, straight roads connecting the outposts of their empire and these included many magnificent bridges. There is also the option to visit the smaller temples of Chau Sey Devada and

Thommanon for avid temple enthusiasts. Lunch at a local restaurant

Angkor Thom is an immense walled city that was the masterpiece of King Jayavarman VII. Following the occupation of Angkor by the Chams from 1177 to 1181, the new king decided to build an impregnable fortress at the heart of his empire. The scale is simply staggering and you will be immediately overwhelmed by the audacity of Jayavarman on arrival at the city's gates. The causeway is lined by an intricate bridge depicting the Churning of the Ocean of Milk from Hindu mythology in which the devas (gods) and asuras (devils) play tug of war with a naga (seven-headed serpent) to obtain the elixir of immortality.



You begin your visit at the Terrace of the Leper King. This intricately carved platform was the royal crematorium, and the statue that was originally thought to be the leper king is now believed to be Yama, the god of death. You continue along the Terrace of Elephants, originally used as a viewing gallery for the king to preside over parades, performances and traditional sports. Intricately carved with elephants, the gallery stretches for hundreds of yards. At the southern end lies the Baphuon, once of the most beautiful temples at Angkor, dating from the reign of Uditayavarman 1 in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Having undergone a massive renovation by the French, Baphuon is now once again open for viewing.

The climax is the enigmatic and enchanting temple of the Bayon. At the exact centre of Angkor Thom, this is an eccentric expression of the creative genius and inflated ego of Cambodia's most celebrated king. Its 54 towers are each topped off with the four faces of Avalokiteshvara (Buddha of Compassion), bearing more than a passing resemblance to the king himself. These colossal heads stare down from every side, exuding power and control with a hint of compassion, just the mix required to keep a hold on such a vast empire, ensuring that a disparate and far-flung population yielded to his magnanimous will. Before clambering upwards, you unravel the mysteries of the bas-reliefs, with their intricate scenes of ancient battles against the Chams and their snapshot of daily life during the Angkor period. You stay here as the sun sinks low over the surrounding forest and the rest of the tourists leave.

In the evening, those who wish can enjoy another dance performance, with many of the most popular Cambodian dances, including the graceful Apsara dance, scenes from the *Ramayana*, known as *Reamker*

in Cambodia, the coconut dance and more. The classical dances include elaborate costumes and date back to the time of the Angkor civilization, while the folk dances are connected to the harvest and the cycle of the seasons.

Overnight at the Victoria d'Angkor. (B,L,D)

**Day 16:** Today is the climax of your time in Siem Reap. Rising at the crack of dawn, you journey out to the "Mother of All Temples", Angkor Wat. Believed to be the world's largest religious building, this temple is the perfect fusion of symbolism and symmetry and a source of pride and strength to all Khmers. Angkor Wat has been described as the "epitome of the mountain-temple, a veritable Meru whose five summits rise to a height of over sixty meters."



Built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by King Suryavarman II, this is most famous temple at Angkor. You venture forth into the darkness to witness Angkor's magic at first light, gathering along the shores of the royal bathing pool, as the shadows began to form and three towers become five - the supreme design of the ancients becoming apparent. Long before the other tourists arrive, you will stay at Angkor Wat and



enjoy a picnic breakfast. As the crowds are just leaving their hotels, you venture into Angkor Wat to enjoy its magnificence in peace and quiet. You begin by unraveling the mysteries of the bas-reliefs that tell of tales from Hindu mythology and of the glories of the Khmer empire. Stretching for almost half a mile, these intricate carvings are a candidate for the world's longest unbroken piece of art.

Following in the footsteps of the devout and the destructive before you, you then continue to the upper levels of the inner sanctuary. The final steps to the upper terrace of Angkor are the steepest of all, as pilgrims of old were to stoop on their pilgrimage to encounter the Gods. Finally the pinnacle, the sacred heart of Angkor Wat, a blend of spirituality and symmetry so perfect that few moments will measure up!

After lunch, you will take an afternoon boat trip on the Tonle Sap from out of Chong Kneas. Here you can take a boat ride on the river into the lake. Along the banks and on tiny floating islands, you will see the homes of the local fishermen. The lake itself is beautiful, dotted with hundreds of fishing boats. Once a year, during the monsoon, the swollen Tonle Sap does something absolutely unique, changing course and flowing backwards into the Siem Reap area. Your trip will take you through the flooded forest with excellent birdlife and into the tiny village of Phnom Khrom.

Late in the afternoon, you will return to the airport and catch your flight onward to Bangkok.

Tonight you will sleep at the Airport Hotel. (B,L)

**Day 17:** Home

Day	DESCRIPTION	HOTEL	MEALS INCLUDED
Feb. 19	Leave the States	None	None
Feb. 20	Transit (usually)	None	None
Feb. 21	Arrive in Hanoi, Cyclo ride and Welcome Dinner	Hanoi Intercontinental	D
Feb. 22	Hanoi Touring and Cheo performance	Hanoi Intercontinental	B,L,D
Feb. 23	Meeting with Women's groups and visit to Acupuncture Hospital	Hanoi Intercontinental	B,L,D
Feb. 24	Fly Hue. Visit Citadel	Le Residence	B,L,D
Feb. 25	Minh Mang's Tomb, Perfume River boat ride, Tien Mu Pagoda, Khai Dinh's Tomb, Cooking Lesson	Le Residence	B,L,D
Feb. 26	Drive Hoi An, stopping at the Cham Museum	Vinh Hung Resort	B,L,D
Feb. 27	Hoi An touring	Vinh Hung Resort	B,L,D
Feb. 28	Fly Saigon. Visit city center and War Museum	Caravelle	B,L,D
Mar 1	Visit Mekong Delta and Cai Be Floating Market	Caravelle	B,L,D
Mar 2	Fly Phnom Penh; Visit Toul Sleng and Killing Fields	Raffles Le Royal	B,L,D
Mar 3	Tour the Apsara Foundation; Royal Palace, Lunch at Nyemo for vulnerable women. PM meeting with an NGO involved in trafficking	Raffles Le Royal	B, L,D
Mar 4	Fly to Siem Reap; Artisans d'Angkor, Banteay Samre, Banteay Srei, Sunset Elephant ride to Phnom Bakheng	Victoria Angkor	B, L,D
Mar 5	Sunrise trip to Ta Prohm, Takeo, Chau Sey Devada, Thommanon, Angkor Thom, Baphuaon and Bayon. Dance Show	Victoria Angkor	B, L,D
Mar 6	Dawn trip to Angkor Wat. PM boat trip on Tonle Sap. PM flight to Bangkok	Novotel Suvarnabhumi	B, L
Mar 7	Home	None	None



PER PERSON LAND COST: \$5610.00  
(Note that this cost includes a \$500 donation to AAUW)  
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$1175

**Included in Land Cost**

- Accommodations as listed, including all service charges and taxes and the Novotel Airport Suvarnabhumi in Bangkok before departure
- Cooking class in Hue
- Internal Airfare in Vietnam and in Cambodia
- International flights: Saigon/Phnom Penh and Siem Reap/Bangkok
- Elephant ride in Siem Reap
- Evening visit to Apsara Foundation in Phnom Penh
- Visits to women's NGOs in Vietnam and Cambodia, to be finalized
- Visit to Acupuncture Hospital in Hanoi
- Donations to non-profits visited
- Tips/gratuity (porters, drivers, local guides, etc)
- Domestic and international airport taxes
- All ground transfers
- All excursions with expert English-speaking guides
- Entrance fees to museums, temples, etc.
- All meals as indicated with B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner

**Not Included in Land Cost**

- International airfare to and from the States
- Comprehensive insurance coverage, including medical, evacuation, baggage loss/delay, cancellation ins., etc.
- Visa fees
- Meals where not indicated with a B,L,D
- Other items of a personal nature including laundry, alcoholic beverages, etc.
- Additional expenses resulting from the delay or extension of the trip due to causes beyond our reasonable control

**For Reservation Form and other travel information go to:**

<http://www.mythsandmountains.com/travelCenter.asp>

Website: <http://www.mythsandmountains.com>

E-Mail: [travel@mythsandmountains.com](mailto:travel@mythsandmountains.com)

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