

2020 |
1st Quarter
**January –
March 2020**



**Buddhist & Pāli College of Singapore
Alumni (BPCA) - Quarterly E-Bulletin**

Key Events

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Current School Activities

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2020

As 2020 welcomes the Year of Rat, the Committee of BPC would like to wish you and your family a healthy, happy and peaceful New Year. This Lunar New Year marks not only the beginning of the 12-year Chinese Zodiac cycle, but also the outbreak of the deadly virus Pandemic.

The first case of global COVID-19 outbreak was confirmed in Singapore on 23 January 2020. The Authorities have raised the nation's Disease Outbreak Response System Condition (DORSCON) level from Yellow to Orange on 7 February. To combat and contain COVID-19, the school took precaution, cancelled all festive activities scheduled, as well as all BPC classes until further notice. On 22 February 2020, MV temple required all visitors to complete travel declaration form. 18th March onwards, all classes were moved to online learning,

through the use of ZOOM.



BPC 6D5N Trip to Chiangmai, Chiangrai and Sukhothai

Past Activities

From 1 to 6 February 2020, 30 BPC teachers, students and friends, led by Bhante Seelananda embarked on our 1st 2020 trip to Chiangmai, Chiangrai and Sukhothai in Thailand, organised by the BPC Alumina.

Sukhothai, Thailand Historical Park Tour

Day 1_1 February 2020:-

We started the day on a 3-hour coach ride to **Wat Rong Khun**, commonly known as the **White Temple**.



Wat Rong Khun, commonly known as the **White Temple**, is a privately owned art exhibit.

The temple was opened to the public in 1997.

After which, the group proceeded to **Wat Rong Suea Ten** commonly known as the **Blue Temple**.

This is a temple that stands out from the others because of its sapphire blue. It is not an active temple and no monks live here.



After a full day of travelling and sight-seeing, we checked in to Chiangrai Khamtana Hotel, a colonial style hotel with modern amenities and rest for the night.

Day 2_2 February 2020:-

Heading towards Chiangmai.

The Black House Museum, was set up by Thawan Duchanee who spent more than 50 years building it.



Along the way, we visited Bann Dum, The Black House Museum.



Back in Chiangmai we visited **Wat Chedi Luang** built between 1385 and 1402 during the reign of King Saen Muang Ma.

Day 3_3 February 2020:-

Offerings to Sangha

1) Soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash.

2) Basic Staples Needed.

3) Unsalted nuts such as walnuts, cashews ... 'natural' peanut butter, jelly, vegetarian oyster mushroom sauce.

Enroute to Sukhothai, we visited **Si Satchanalai Historical Park**, saw the ruins of **Wat Chang Lom** which was built in the Sukhothai period, circa 14th Century A.D. The main stupa of Wat Chang Lom is round in shape which indicates the art influence from Sri Lanka. The base of the stupa is surrounded by a total of 39 elephant sculptures which accounts for the name of the temple. Today, what is remained from the beauty of yesteryear is only the incomplete sculptures destroyed through the passage of time.

At the Park, we also visited the ruins of **Wat Chedi Jet Thaew Temple**, the largest temple compound and main attraction of the Park. It consists of 32 chedis of various style arranged in a U-shape around the principal chedi. And spent some time at Nang Phaya Temple, the temple of the Queen.

Day 4_4 February 2020:-

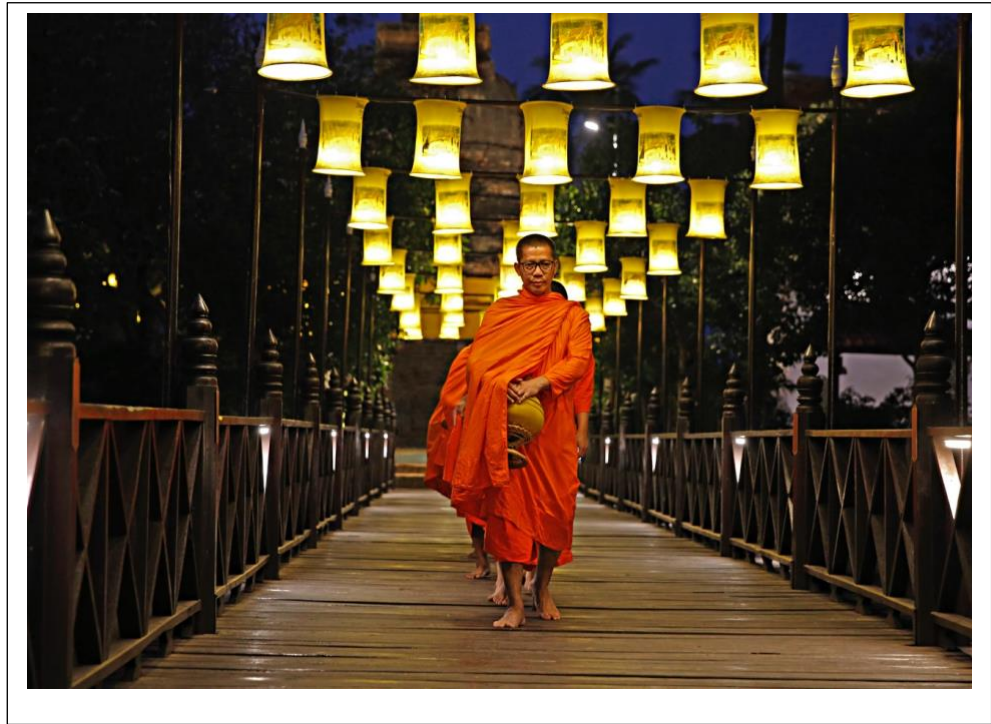


This morning we got an opportunity to perform our 1st dana during the trip.

By 6.00 a.m. all of us who went to the supermarket the day before to buy our items for dana lined up along the wooden bridge leading to **Traphangthong Temple in Sukhothai** all ready to accumulate some good kamma.

Excerpt from <https://bodhimonastery.org/the-personal-quality-of-generosity.html>

Kapiya is a lay student or assistant of such monk.



Monks came by the temple with their kapiya.



*Sukhothai
Historical Park
is maintained
by Fine Arts
Department of
Thailand with
help from
UNESCO,
which has
declared it a
World Heritage
Site*



A full day tour this time, to **Sukhothai Historical Park** visiting ruins of the royal palaces, Buddhist temples, the city gates, walls, moats, dams, ditches, ponds and canals.

We saw the King Ramkhamhaeng Monument, the **Phra Si Mahathat Temple** and a ruin vihara – **Si-Sa Wai Temple** which was once a Hindu shrine but later converted into a Buddhist monastery.

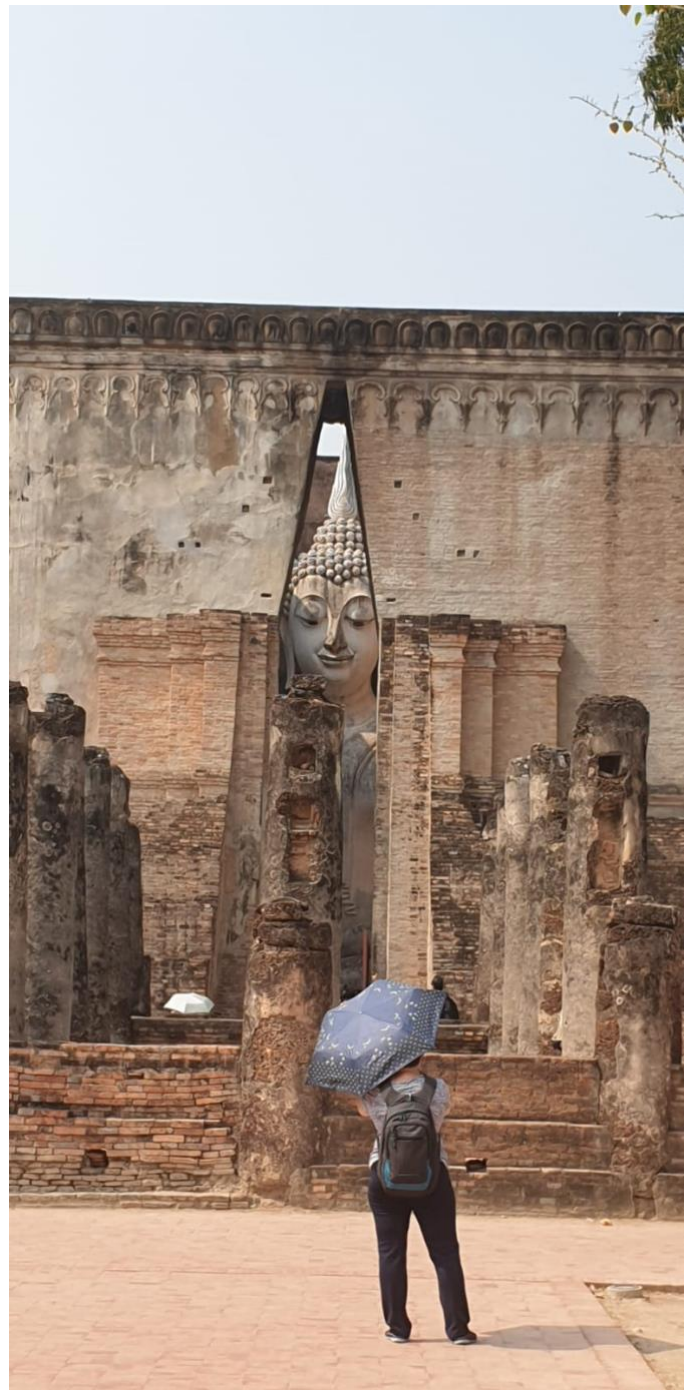
Traphang-Ngoen Temple, **Sa-Sri Temple**, Sorasak Temple and **Sri Chum Temple** were all within the full day's itinerary. A vihara worth mentioning here is the **Sa-Sri Temple** which is well-known for the Singhalese-style chedi built on an island in the middle of Traphang Trakuan Pond. The temple was probably built in the late 14th century and the bell-shaped chedi is thought to contain the ashes of King Li Thai. The vihara sits a stucco Buddha image and at the south stands nine chedis of different sizes.



Wat Sri Chum in the Sukhothai Historical Park is one of the largest and most mysterious temple in Sukhothai. The temple housed a Phra Buddha image which measures 15.6 meters high and 11.3 meters across the base. The temple was covered by a *mondop* and a roof but is now exposed to nature.

According to historian, there are two great mysteries associated with the temple. One side of the wall has a very narrow stairway leading to the ceiling which was once adorned with slabs depicting the Buddhist Jataka tales. The question of why these slabs were installed is not known as in an age before electricity was installed, it must have been extremely difficulty to view these images overhead in the narrow staircase. Currently the staircase are closed to visitors.

The other great mystery is what lies beneath the temple. A tunnel was found on the north wall of the *mondop* which ran underground below the temple, suggesting the presence of an underground chamber. However, the tunnel was blocked and no excavation has yet been conducted to determine what lies beyond.



Day 5:- 5 February 2020

“if you haven’t seen the view from Doi Suthep you haven’t been to Chiangmai.”

Despite all the stunning natural beauty of Doi Suthep, the main reason to the National Park is to visit **Wat Phra That Doi Suthep**, venerated as one of the most holy Buddhist site in Thailand. The awe-inspiring temple is crowned by an elaborate chedi 24 meters tall and gold plated from top to bottom.



In Theravada Buddhism, many monks(Pali: bhikkhus) go on a daily almsround (or pindabat) to collect food. This is often perceived as giving the laypeople the opportunity to make merit (Pali:punna)

Day 6:- 6 February 2020



On the final day in Chiangmai, we had another chance to do our dana along the stretch of road near to the Chiangmai National Zoo. This stretch of road leads to viharas where many monks reside and came out for their pindapata early in the morning.

Current
School
Activities

2020 CNY celebration

Chinese New Year celebration, which is run every year at Mangala Vihara, was cancelled due to coronavirus concerns.

All Buddhist Pali Courses

All courses carried out via online platform- Zoom Video Communication.

Upcoming
Activities

Introduction to Buddhism Course

Introduction to Buddhism Course was postponed to 1st July 2020, subject to changes depending on the Corona Virus situation and government directives

Certificate Course in Buddhist Counselling (Anusasana)

Course is cancelled and postponed till further notice.

Workshop in Sri Lanka for MA teachers

Workshop has been cancelled in Sri Lanka.

Vesak Day Celebration

Event likely to be cancelled given the present situation.

TaiChi for beginners

All organized activities will be suspended from 27 March 2020 till further notice.

For more information, please contact

Address 30 Jalan Eunus Singapore 419495
Tel 8288-9888
Email bpca2017sg@gmail.com