

Front pages after the bombings

January 2, 2007

Categories: New Year's Eve Bombings in Bangkok



Front pages after the bombings

Thairath, January 2, 2007

Hundred thousand people run away the bomb.
Cancel countdown in the town.

Green left: Blessing gift 2007 from the King – Give will power to each other

Black middle: Hell in town with the bomb – 2 deaths – 10 spots couldn't be controlled.

Green lower: Total of drink driving – 179 death. The measures are useless.

Komchadluek, January 2, 2007

Bomb town – Non-stop turmoil – 8 spots all night – Gaysorn Plaza was hit in the late night – Bangkok severe – Bad luck for foreign lady – Her leg was cut – A bomb was hidden in Central World, but could be saved



Khao Sod, January 1, 2007

Bloody new year – Bomb 6 spots all over town – 2 deaths
Blue middle: Greeting card of the King taken with 10 dog

Daily News, January 2, 2007

Pink right: Blessing of the king.. will power is strength.

Black middle: Multiple bombs – Foreigner lady's leg was cut. The PM is stressed. The militaries strictly controlled. Don't know who did it.

Pink middle: Warning – The infectious diseases spread.

Pink lower: Saddam's dead body was buried in his hometown

Pink bottom: Large number of accidents – 3 days/179 deaths



The most endangered animals in world

January 2, 2007

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[The most endangered animals in world](#) – *China Economic Net*, January 2, 2007

Many animals are being endangered or at the edge of disappearing. The following four species are the most endangered animals in the world. Today white elephants are very rare. The white elephant is a native of Southeast Asia — Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand...

Political problems and political solutions

January 2, 2007

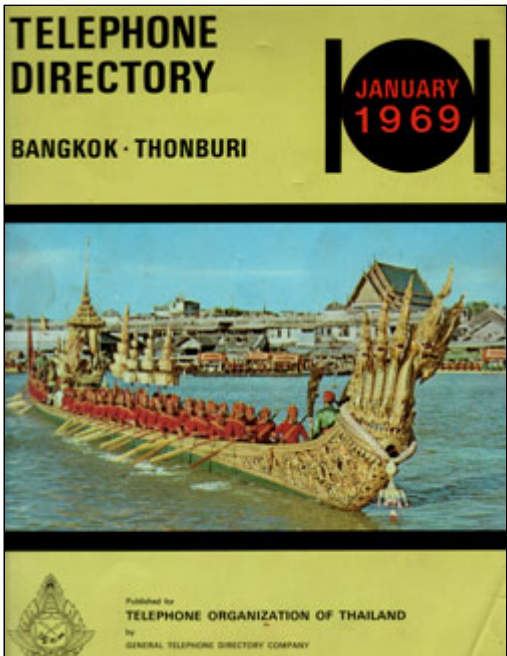
Categories: Thai Politics

Political problems and political solutions – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, January 2, 2007

With regard to the current speculation on the possibility of the next government being formed by a coalition of the People Power Party (PPP) and 3 minor parties: Ruam Jai Thai/Chart Pattana, Matchimathipatai and Pracharat. I wish to comment that the Electoral Commission's investigation, of allegations of vote-buying, is likely to cause some grief to the PPP. Another factor to be taken into account is that the PPP and its three allies might experience some hardship, in running the country, if the opposition parties exercise their right to veto their coalition government on its performance .

TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, 1969

January 3, 2007
Categories: History



"Hotel Dusit Thani – Opening late autumn 1969"

All this month: Scans from the *TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969*



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RAMA IV SALADANG CIRCLE
WESTERN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS

(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "Biggest Hotel in town"

NaraiNotel

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500 DELUXE GUEST ROOMS
Incomparable Facilities



- * LA ROTONDE
Revolving French Restaurant
- * LAKSMI
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- * CAROUSEL
American Cocktail Bar
- * PIZZERIA
Italian Coffee House
- * DON JUAN
Cellar Bar

222, SILOM ROAD, BANGKOK, THAILAND. Convention room for 1000 persons

PHONE: 31070.
CABLE: NARAIHOTEL

Peter Lee
General Manager

Room rates:			
Single	US\$	12.00	13.00 14.00
Double	US\$	15.00	16.00 17.00
Suites	US\$	30.00	40.00 75.00

(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)



Victory Hotel

Nicest and cosiest first-class 125-room hotel, air-conditioned throughout, in the very heart of Bangkok business centre. With restaurant, bar, post office, souvenir store, sight-seeing facilities and new ultramodern coffee shop 24 hour service.



RATES

Single	US \$	8.50
Double Twin	US \$	12.00
Suite	US \$	17.00

Plus 10 % Service charge.

322 Silom Road, Bangkok, Thailand
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(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "Victory Hotel"



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- ▷ PUBLIC EXCHANGE
- ▷ CARRIER
- ▷ MICROWAVE

(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

NIPA LODGE HOTEL
 THAILAND FAMOUS RESORT HOTEL AT PATTAYA
 BEACH




 NIPA LODGE HOTEL

Pattaya Beach, Thailand
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Telex : 2243 (Italthai)
Mail : G.P.O. Box 2641, Bangkok

BANGKOK RESERVATION OFFICE
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Tel. : 56148 - 56187

(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

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(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "Try Air-Siam"

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(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "Electronic desk calculators"

Sharp SHARP

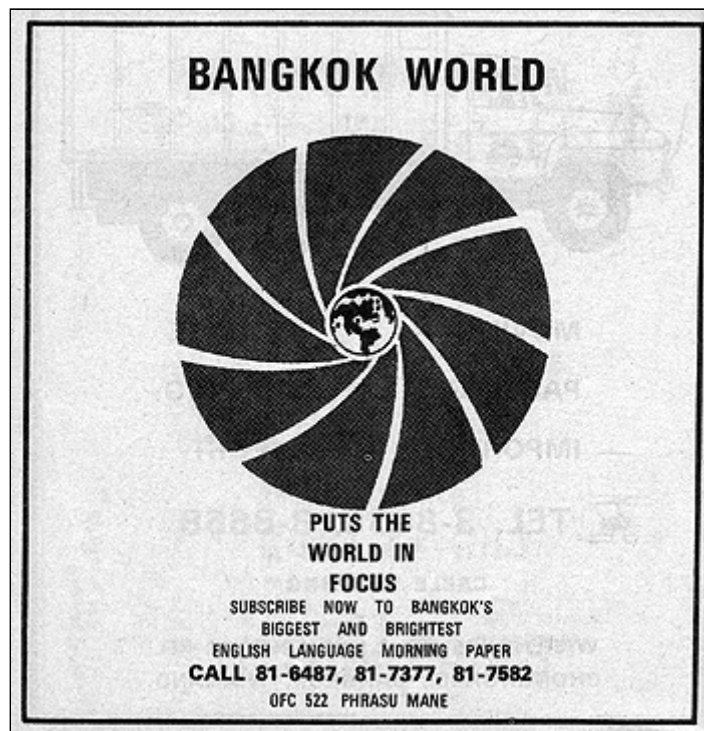


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(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "Sharp Television "



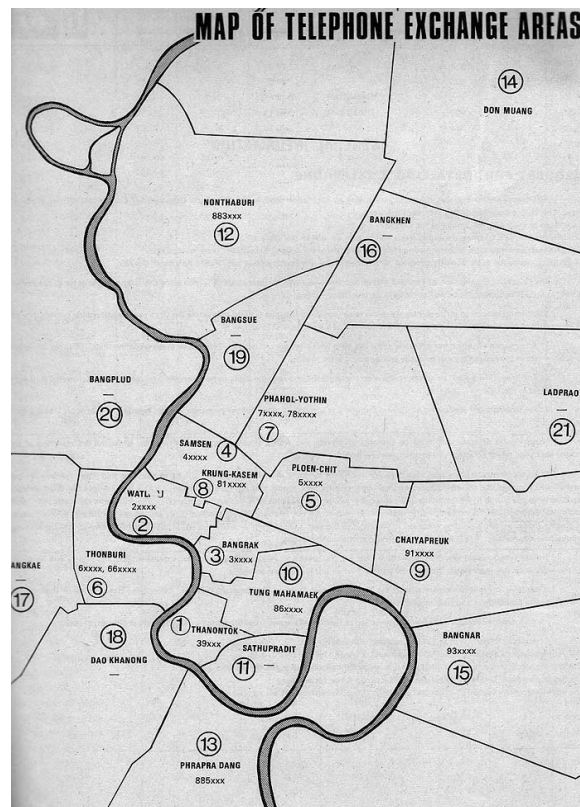
(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "Bangkok World"



(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

[Change of telephone numbers in 1969](#)



(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

Go where the "In Crowd" goes
Crowd in

THE BALCONY



TEL. 3-4342

People Watching — Drinking — Dancing....
TONY AGUILAR — ALEX CHICO
PEPITO AGUILAR — BERT SAN JOSE
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NEW ROAD AT CHARTERED BANK LANE
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EXCLUSIVE NIGHT CLUB OFFERING . . . WE PRESENT
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THE FINEST FOODS EXPERTLY PREPARED BY
FAMOUS CHEFS PLUS A COMPLETE STOCK OF THE
WORLD'S FAMOUS LIQUORS AND WINES

CALL 5-6041
135/21-22 GAYBORN ROAD, BANGKOK

(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "Charming Bird Bar"

1969: "Paragon"

Buri Classified Directory — "Service That Saves You Time" Swimming - Tailors 213



PARAGON

- SWIMMING POOL FILTERS
- SWIMMING POOL EQUIPMENT
- POOL CHEMICALS.

S. NAPA TRADING R.O.P.
448/2 PETCHBURI ROAD. 81-5779

(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

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Where did you put the billing file?

Yes.

Do your office staff treat you (and your clients) like this? If so, send them to us and notice the difference.
A few of those firms who have already done this include:
Shell, Esso, U.S. Summit, Max Factor, Wheelock Marden,
Aeronautical Radio of Thailand and Siam Cement Co. Ltd.



TEL. 81-0872



(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "Where did you put the billing file? Yes."


1969: "Continental breakfast
12.00 baht"

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DINNER	30.00	BAHT

PLUS 10% SERVICE CHARGE

(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

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GO SAAB**



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32 SUKHUMVIT 15, BANGKOK TELEPHONE 54221-2-3

(Source: TOT Telephone Directory, Bangkok-Thonburi, January, 1969)

1969: "The pride of engineering from Czecho-Slovakia"

EC's role should be respected

January 3, 2007

Categories: Thai Politics

EC's role should be respected – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 3, 2007

Regarding the claims of the People Power Party (PPP) that the Electoral Commission (EC) has been attempting to prevent its rise to governmental power through the use of 'red' and 'yellow' electoral penalty cards. The PPP has announced its plan to form a coalition government with 3 minor political parties, and has also said it will abolish the EC once it is in power. I would like to pinpoint the fact that there were many allegations of vote-buying and other breaches of electoral law both before and during the General Election on December 23. The EC's roles should be respected, as its mission is to put a stop to political sleaze and to support the nation's democratic system.

Tragedy in Thailand manipulated for low-blow return

January 5, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

["Tragedy in Thailand manipulated for low-blow return"](#) – Spong, January 5, 2007

The mainstream press in the UK has wasted no time in linking the death of a holidaying seven-year old English boy to his use of videogames, with misleading headlines cropping up following a tragic electrocution in Thailand...

Bold moves proposed to prevent ASEAN from atrophy

January 5, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Bold moves proposed to prevent ASEAN from atrophy](#) – IANS, January 5, 2007

A high-level group has proposed bold moves to turn the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) into a more disciplined regional grouping or risk fading 'into the sunset,' the group's report said Saturday...

[Asian leaders talk security under threat of bombs](#) – Reuters, January 6, 2007

...Post-coup bombings in Thailand, frequent talk of unrest in the Philippines and Myanmar's continuing refusal to heed calls for democracy underline the region's instability and jar with the summit's theme of "One Caring and Sharing Community"...

EP Zoo tigers part of threatened species

January 6, 2007

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[EP Zoo tigers part of threatened species](#) – *El Paso Times*, January 6, 2007

The Malayan tiger is also known as the Indo-Chinese tiger. Wild tigers can be found in Asia, across countries including Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia and Russia...

Vietnam prepares for boom times

January 6, 2007

[Vietnam prepares for boom times](#) –

BBC, January 6, 2007

...Vietnam now attracts more overseas investment than India does; it is second only to China in the Asian economic growth league...

Blue Dragon – January 7, 2007

January 7, 2007

Categories: Gem Scam

A reader reports: *My sister and I also recently fell prey to this scam.*

It was on the last full day we were in Bangkok (Monday 30 October) that visiting temples, including the "lucky" temple, was arranged for us by a Thai man we met on the street. Friendly and helpful (and given some of our nightmare experiences with taxis and tuktuks, we were highly appreciative of this), we allowed him to help organise the tour understanding we would go to the export centres. We had planned to just go along as a thanks to the tuktuks driver, as we thought they got a little something out of it and we were only paying 20 baht for the whole time they took us around. It seemed a fair trade off, and we never intended purchasing anything.

The second temple we visited, we were met by another Thai man. This time he spoke to us about how lucky we were to see this temple and how not many tourists knew about it, how he was visiting the temple as he was about to be wed in Chiang Mai, and that he'd come to Bangkok to organise a suit and visit the temple for a blessing. Also how he'd bought jewellery, as he came during the one week in the year that the wholesale export centres sold their jewellery to the public, absent the 195% tax and very well priced. He told us about how he had a sister who lived in Sydney, who sold it at Angus and Cootes for more than what she paid in Thailand, thereby making a good profit and how we should visit the centre too and do the same. He was very friendly, very chatty about things other than jewellery, and we happily talked to him. He suggested the Royal Lapidary.

We went to the Royal Lapidary and after a quick glance over the silver jewellery, just settled on purchasing a couple of small, relatively inexpensive, items for ourselves. That should have been the end of the story.

On to the next temple for more sightseeing.

This time, we bump into two tourists and they say hello and talk to us about the temple and unfortunately, jewellery. Dressed, looking and sounding like tourists, my sister and I made the mistake of thoroughly falling for their suggestion of purchasing more expensive jewellery at the Blue Dragon – 18ct white gold, with sapphires. They sounded so genuine, and gave the story that so many others before us have heard. How they come every year, make a profit, etc etc. This time it was Andy the chef from London (I've heard he also comes from the US), and his friend being a Belgium guy. Saying how I knew someone in London etc, Andy even gave me the name of his restaurant – Mango Leaf – and his email address. Andy says, and confirmed by his Belgian friend, that it's the last day for the sale to the public and that they had bought themselves items for around 5,000 pounds, encouraging that we should do the same. He even knew an Australian who had done it, selling the jewellery at Michael Hill jewellers. They say that the public, with this special offer, can only buy a set or three pieces, and they reiterate that its being sold without the additional 195% tax. Further, they say not to let on that you're buying to resell, as the wholesaler cannot sell to the public unless it's for souvenirs/personal use, according to Thai law.

Buoyed by the fact that we've heard it now from tourists as well and despite the fact that it sounds too good to true (should have trusted that old adage!), we advise our tuktuk driver to go to the Blue Dragon as suggested by the tourists.

Its not hard to guess what happens next. We bought jewellery which we weren't that interested in, with the sole purpose for resale overseas. We then went on to Phuket where we enjoyed a week of holidaying. As soon as we got back to Sydney (ie. Same day), we went around to the jewellers looking to sell – and received disheartening replies. One jeweller was kind enough to look at our jewellery though he was not interested, and at least reassured us there was nothing wrong with the jewellery themselves. However, the ring I had purchased (I had only purchased one item) he valued at AUD\$1500. I had paid around AUD\$2500. Moving on to other jewellers, we had no such luck. In fact, as soon as we said they were sapphires, many jewellers guessed where we'd just come from.

So the next day after spending a night thinking of how we're going to get rid of the jewels and still clueless about being scammed, I decide that I should do a little research on Thai sapphires, so I can at least know about what I'm attempting to sell. It was rather crushing to see instead all the links to websites warning about gem scans, and then to go into one to read of several experiences just like our own.

My sister and I are really upset about this. It has thoroughly ruined our experience of Thailand – in particular, Bangkok where we were approached by many other 'friendly' Thais, and now distrust what their ulterior motives were given they suggested places to shop. It is unfortunate that after being approached by a few, this particular elaborate scam eventually paid off for the scammers and cost my sister and I thousands of dollars.

If there is anything we can do, I'd like to know it. But because we're back in Australia now, I'm doubtful that there are any avenues open for us to seek a refund other than attempting to contact mastercard and see what can be done. As a very minimal relief, at least the jewellery we have isn't fake. But, knowing that you've paid an extra thousand for something that you don't need nor truly wanted due to an elaborate scam has managed to really tarnish our overall holiday experience in Thailand. Its become the worst I've ever had and has really fostered an intense distrust for supposedly "friendly" people in Bangkok. This is especially as I look back on some of the other encounters I had that were seemingly innocent, and realise that those 'friendly' people were likely trying to make me buy something as well, despite the pleasantness of their 'chitchat' to begin with.

Utterly disillusioning and disheartening. Thank you Bangkok for a wonderful holidaying experience.

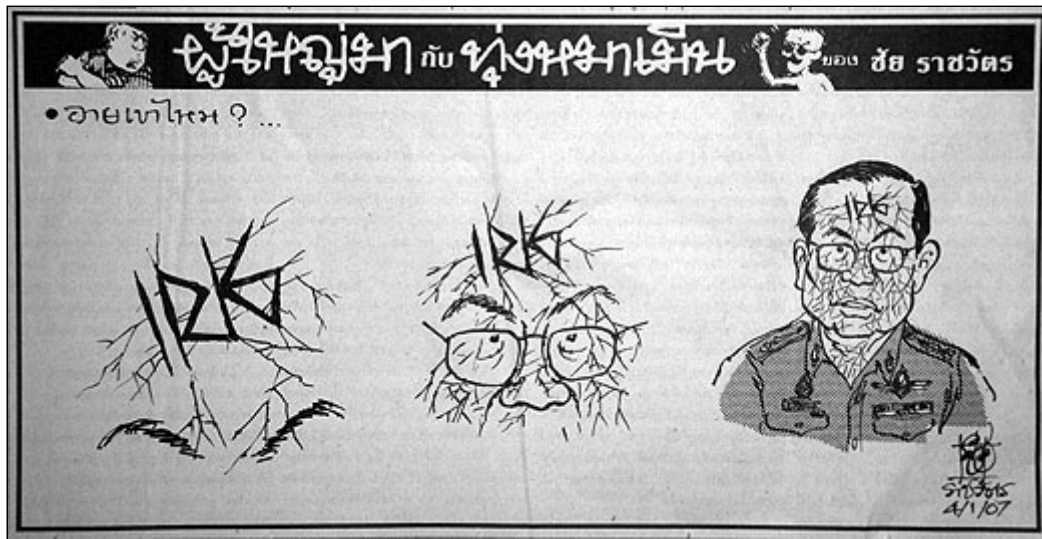
I really hope the postings and publicity of other tourist's activities on numerous websites and elsewhere help to garner some sort of response, particularly from government, as to the scams that are going on. That they're able to get away with this behaviour, and that some of these places are also practically (if not outright) protected by police, is utterly deplorable.

More on the
[Gem Scam & maps to the scam stores](#)

Post-New Year's Bombing Editorial Cartoons

January 7, 2007

Categories: Analysis, Editorial Cartoons, New Year's Eve Bombings in Bangkok



Ashamed?

Thairath, January 6, 2007 by Chai Rathchawat



Achirawit sir! Now there is a threat of bombing where you are, sir.

Komchadluek, January 7, 2007 by Kooy



Be optimistic after the bombing in Bangkok
Thairath, January 7, 2007 by Chai Rathchawat

Top left: The husband smiles when his wife, who normally shops, begin to stay at home.

Top middle: One baht coins have more value because they are used to call in bomb scares.

Top right: Youths' habits are watched more closely.

Bottom left: Tik! Tik! Tik! Nowadays malicious mothers begin to change their minds about leaving babies in the garbage bin.

Bottom middle: Foreign investors see the opportunity to invest in close circuit television business in Thailand.

Bottom right: Small Buddha image market will be improved greatly.

Bright green light across sky surprises many in Singapore

January 7, 2007

Categories: Singapore

[Bright green light across sky surprises many in Singapore](#) – *Channel Asia News*, January 7, 2007

Brahman cattle magazine

January 8, 2007

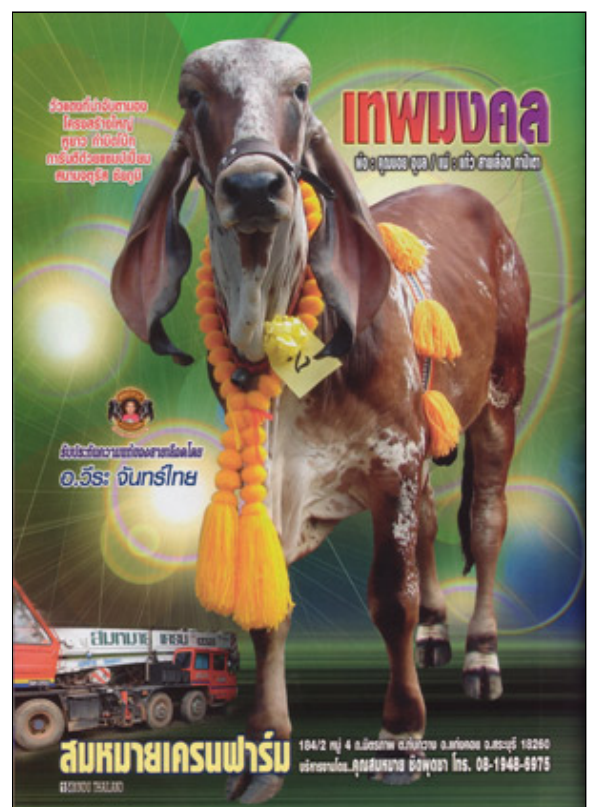
Categories: 2Bangkok

Brahman cattle magazine – January 8, 2007

Scans from the Brahman cattle-lover's magazine that features many full pages ads selling prize cattle.

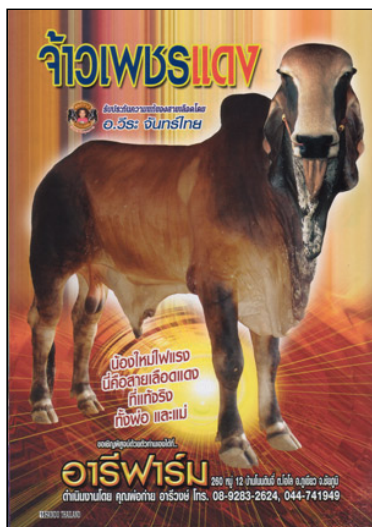
Left: *Indu Thailand* magazine, Petchthong 555, Respiro 778 Blooding, Chokamnuoi Farm

Below: Thai cowboy Veera's column

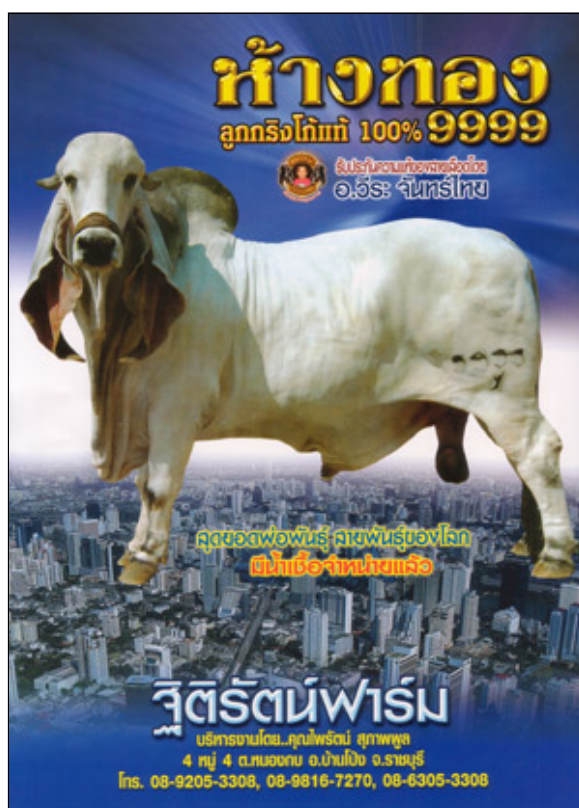


Above: Khun Boy Ubon, Father: Blue Brazil, Chuwit Farm

Above: Thepmongkon, Sommaicrane Farm



Above: Jaopetchdaeng,
Aree Farm



Above: Hangthong, Real Gringko 1000% 9999, guarantee the genuine of
blooding by Ajarn Veera Chanthai, Thitirat Farm

The day it snowed in Thailand

January 8, 2007

Categories: Weather

Right: "Snowfall caresses Chiang Rai" on January 8, 1955 at 18:00 –

(Upper right) *This is a photograph of winter in Chiang Rai in 1955. On that day, January 8 at 18.00 after rain, small hail and ice flakes that looked like snow fell and made a white color on the ground.* (Lower right) *This was taken on the next day 14 hours after the snow fell there was still snow on the ground. After 38 hours the snow melted.* (Source unknown.)



Global Markets Face ‘Severe Correction,’ Faber Say...

January 8, 2007

[Global Markets Face ‘Severe Correction,’ Faber Says](#) – Bloomberg, January 8, 2007

...Faber also advises investors stay away from shares in Thailand, where he and his family are based. The nation's SET Index has been the world's worst-performing benchmark in the past month, sliding 15 percent as currency controls introduced by the central bank and bombs in Bangkok spooked investors.

"Valuations in Thailand are very inexpensive but I wouldn't buy tomorrow," said Faber. "We have some political problems in Thailand right now. I'd wait for a couple of months."

The SET is valued at 10 times estimated earnings, the lowest among 14 Asia-Pacific markets tracked by Bloomberg. MSCI's regional index is valued at 18 times...

Tsunami two-year progress report: Thailand

January 8, 2007

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

[Tsunami two-year progress report: Thailand](#) –

ReliefWeb, January 8, 2007

In Thailand, the tsunami killed 5395 people and injured 8547 (with some 2932 still unaccounted for). The six provinces affected were Krabi, Phangnga...

The Giant Swing Main Page

January 9, 2007

Categories: Giant Swing - Sao Ching Cha



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Giant Swing

Above: October 21, 2006

Below: October 28, 2006

[Giant Swing bows out after 224 years](#) – *The Nation*, October 7, 2006

Don Entz reminds us: *Actually, the Giant Swing is bowing out after only 86 years, because 1920 was the last time it was replaced.*

Also: [Restoring the Giant Swing](#) – December 23, 2006

Also: [Details: The Giant Swing before restoration](#) – April 25, 2005

Also: [Historic photos of the Giant Swing](#)



Topping off the Giant Swing – *Post Today*, January 9, 2007

Above: Post Publishing's great photo of the top piece being lifted on to the Giant Swing



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Giant

Swing gets new look – *Bangkok Post*,
July 19, 2005

Initial repairs on the ancient giant swing near city hall have been completed by a private firm to allow the swing to withstand bad weather until the end of the rainy season, when the swing will undergo major restoration work...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The money was spent on cleaning it, checking damage caused by termites, eradicating the termites, putting epoxy glue in its connecting parts, coating it with carbon fibre sheets and giving it a new red paint...

Restoration

[work of Giant Swing begins](#) – TNA, May 12, 2005

GIANT

SWING: Replacement time for historic icon –

The Nation, April 19, 2005

The construction of a replacement for the 45-year-old Giant Swing in Bangkok's Phra Nakhon district is a possibility if the proper timber is supplied, Deputy City Clerk Phichai Chaiphaphojphanich said yesterday...

Phichai said superficial renovations and partial replacement of damaged components had been ruled out. However, the BMA was

going ahead with a major renovation job and was simultaneously trying to locate suppliers of ideal timber so the weather-scarred structure could be replaced.

The ideal timber for the replacement was either golden teak or ironwood (takhien).

The replacement would require four entire logs, 25 metres in length and 50 centimetres in diameter...

Plan to

build a new B10m Giant Swing – Bangkok

Post, April 19, 2005

Deputy city clerk Pichai Chaipotpanich yesterday said city hall would propose replacing the 21-metre-high wooden Giant Swing with a brand-new one, costing the city about 10 million baht as it would include a higher foundation for the wooden structure and landscape improvement of the vicinity.

The BMA would need four logs, possibly teak, which should be 25 metres long and 50 centimetres in diameter. They might be imported from Burma but city hall would be willing to buy from local suppliers if they existed.

The current Giant Swing is 45 years old, though the original one dated back to 1784. Pending acquisition of new logs and the construction of a new one, the current Giant Swing would have to be repaired well enough to survive the upcoming rains. In the old days, the Giant Swing was used in a ceremony honouring the Hindu god Shiva.

Giant

Swing ceremony to be performed before restoration

– TNA, April 18, 2005

Bangkok's famous Giant Swing is to swing into action once again for a special ceremony to be carried out before restoration on the ancient structure begins, Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayothin revealed today.

Although the ceremony will not replicate the daring and dangerous Brahmanic feats of old, it will involve Brahmanic ritual.

...The restoration on the swing, constructed in 1784, is expected to begin mid-year, and the BMA hopes to revive the ancient Giant Swing ceremony in 2006 or 2007.

Fears

for giant swing – *The Nation*, February

26, 2005

Bangkok officials plan to hasten repairs to the ageing Giant Swing, fearing it would not withstand a major storm. The weakening of the structure is obvious even to passing motorists.

Urban planning officials have found peeling of the swing's wooden pillars and deep cracks, particularly at their base.

In September 1996, the Public Works Department reinforced the posts by fastening iron bands around them and building a circular concrete foundation.

However, the swing, which will be 221 years old on April 8, is in no danger of collapsing for the time being.



Old, old Giant Swing photo – January 30, 2007

Anyone know the date of this photo? And what is the bell-shaped object by the swing?

Defiant Humor: The Best of Harn Lay's Political Cartoons

January 9, 2007

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Defiant Humor: The Best of Harn Lay's Political Cartoons](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, January 9, 2007

Defiant Humor: The Best of Harn Lay's Political Cartoons from The Irrawaddy is now available from the Irrawaddy Publishing Group.

World's largest tiger reserve threatened by gold mining

January 9, 2007

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[World's largest tiger reserve threatened by gold mining](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, January 9, 2007

[Thread on this article on the forum](#)

The world's largest tiger reserve—the Hugawng Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in far northwest Burma—is threatened by extensive gold mining operations that not only devastate the environment but lead to human right violations and social problems in isolated communities, according to the Kachin Development Networking Group...

More restrictive laws, penalizing political parties...

January 9, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

More restrictive laws, penalizing political parties – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 9, 2007

Regarding the Electoral Commission moves to probe vote-buying allegations that have arisen from the recent general election. Many 'red' and 'yellow' cards will be awarded to parliamentary candidates of the People Power Party (PPP), if these probes conclude that PPP members have been breaching the electoral laws on vote-buying. This situation has led to a widespread perception that the 2007 Constitution is placing a great deal more emphasis on the penalization of political parties found to have engaged in electoral law breaches. I would like to add that another reason why the PPP is faced with a growing threat of political disbandment is because it is frequently thought to be a proxy of the now-defunct Thai Rak Thai Party – as formerly led by deposed PM Thaksin Shinawatra.

Thailand exudes confidence

January 10, 2007

Categories: Tourism

[Thailand exudes confidence](#) – TravelVideo.tv, January 10, 2007

Thailand's Tourism and Sports Minister Dr. Suwit Yodmanee has confirmed the government's national targets for 2007 of 14.8 million foreign tourists and 82...

Dangerous business in Vietnam

January 10, 2007

Categories: Vietnam

[Dangerous business in Vietnam](#) – *The Age*, January 10, 2007

...Having a more generous cleavage or a slimmer nose is the new dream for many up-and-coming Vietnamese women, but demand has far exceeded supply, leaving women in the hands of unqualified surgeons often working in unsafe conditions...

Thai fisherman stumble upon rare giant terrapin

January 10, 2007

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Thai fisherman stumble upon rare giant terrapin](#) – AFP, January 10, 2007

...The mangrove terrapin, known scientifically as Batagur Baska, has not been observed in the wild in Thailand for over 20 years, WWF Greater Mekong said in a statement on Wednesday.

But a 50-centimetre (20-inch) female was discovered January 3 entangled in a fishing net in the southern Phang Nga province...

Foreigners rip new rules on ownership

January 10, 2007

Categories: Property and Development

[Foreigners rip new rules on ownership](#) – Bangkok Post, January 10, 2007

...But the moves are seen as a step backward at a time when competition is intense for foreign direct investment. Thailand, which is already facing a protracted political crisis, saw investment applications in the first nine months of 2006 halved to \$5.4 billion from the same period in 2005.

"What is Thailand doing? Countries like Vietnam are looking to relax foreign limits, and we are looking to tighten them?" Mr Depew asked...

"The main problem with this army-sponsored government represented largely by retired army generals is lack of experience in politics. ... Ministers are using a 'learn on the job' method. The result is simple _ confusing policies exposing their inexperience and hurting foreign investment, investor confidence, domestic consumption and the country's image," Vikas Kawatra, head of institutional sales at Kim Eng Securities, said in a note to clients.

"Imposing restrictions on FDI is simply wrong _ even though the intention behind the move is to punish the deposed PM Thaksin Shinawatra. I think these two steps aren't the last silly moves expected from this government."

Citicorp Securities said hopes of a possible compromise were shattered, and called the moves the "worst-case scenario". It recommended its clients remain underweight in the Thai equity market...

The Thai western that time almost forgot

January 11, 2007

Categories: Film and TV

[The Thai western that time almost forgot](#) – *The New York Sun*, January 11, 2007

...Pushing kitsch to the level of transcendence, "Tears" is the kind of bloody, color-coordinated nightmare that a Thai hairdresser would have after sitting through a spaghetti Western marathon. With digitally pushed colors searing your eyeballs and costumes as carefully appointed as a drag queen's coronation gown, it's supposedly a throwback to Thailand's cowboy movies of the 1950s, but we have to take first-time director Wisit Sasanatieng's intentions on faith, since that's a genre whose prints are now almost entirely lost to age and jungle rot...

Thai gang may have hit Malaysia army post – paper

January 11, 2007

Categories: The Thai Deep South

[Thai gang may have hit Malaysia army post – paper](#) – AlertNet, January 11, 2007

Thai criminals may have been behind a mysterious grenade attack on a Malaysian border post this week that wounded four soldiers, a Malaysian newspaper said on Friday...

Shellfish workers lobby Parliament over Thailand move

January 11, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Shellfish workers lobby Parliament over Thailand move](#) –

Fish Update, January 11, 2007

Fish processing workers, affected by seafood giant Young's threat to move shellfish operations to Thailand, today lobbied the Scottish Parliament in a bid...

Children's Day with the Military at Royal Plaza

January 13, 2007

Categories: 2006 Coup



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Children's Day with the military at Royal Plaza –
January 13, 2007

This Children's Day the military brought back tanks, along with humvees and helicopters, to Royal Plaza for photo-taking opportunities with children.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Kanchanaburi's Baan Unrak orphanage: A place to call home

January 13, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Kanchanaburi's Baan Unrak orphanage: A place to call home](#) – *The Nation*, January 13, 2007

Taxpayer foots 250,000 bill to bury rotting vegetables in Thailand

January 13, 2007

Categories: Thailand in the International Media

[Taxpayer foots £250,000 bill to bury rotting vegetables in Thailand](#) – *Daily Telegraph*, January 13, 2007

...It hopes that projects in countries such as Thailand and China will help to “offset the carbon footprint” caused by British ministers and officials who take to the skies.

The news has been welcomed by workers at Siam Products, a huge processing factory in Kalasin, north-east Thailand.

For years, they have tolerated the stench of waste water filled with rotting vegetables going straight into ponds as part of a process that turns cassava into starch for food and pharmaceuticals.

Under the EEA scheme, the waste water and vegetables will be put into large holes from which the foul-smelling methane should be siphoned off and converted into electricity used in the factory...

Transparent garbage bins for Bangkok's public parks

January 14, 2007

Categories: Security

[Transparent garbage bins for Bangkok's public parks](#) – TNA, January 14, 2007

Transparent garbage bins are now being installed at all public parks here, as one of the stepped up security measures following the deadly bomb attacks in the Thai capital on New Year's Eve, Bangkok governor Apirak Kosayodhin said Sunday...

Also, in order to boost security, BMA workers will collect garbage discarded by households more often and there will be no large-sized garbage bins on footpaths of main roads, he said. Garbage bins at bus stops here will also be re-designed and, of course, and be replaced with transparent ones in the near future...

Labor poster

January 15, 2007

Labor poster –
January 15, 2007

Right: Child labor is banned in places like this

Interestingly, this poster is at Fortune Town which specializes in the sale of pirated software, movies and music.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

US-Thai military exercise ‘will be double standard’

January 15, 2007

Categories: Thai Military

[US-Thai military exercise ‘will be double standard’](#) – *The Nation*, January 15, 2007

The public should keep an eye on whether the United States adopts a double standard in dealing with the Thai military junta vis-à-vis the Burmese junta, said political scientist Surachat Bamrungsuk of Chulalongkorn University.

If the US decides to go ahead with the Cobra Gold joint military exercise with Thailand, it would be tantamount to being lenient towards the junta, said Surachat, an expert on the Thai military...

Pornphimon Trichoke, a Chulalongkorn University re-searcher and an expert on Burma, said there was no hope of seeing civilian rule there in the next 20 years, until its huge natural gas reserves run out. “It’s far-fetched and I don’t think I will see it during my lifetime,” he said.

Communist tunnels in Songkhla

January 16, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Asiper)

Communist tunnels in Songkhla – January 16, 2007

An earlier [thread on the forum about the tunnels](#).



(Photo: Asiper)

Blue Dragon – January 17, 2007

January 17, 2007

Categories: Gem Scam

Gem scam story: Blue Dragon – January 17, 2007

A reader reports: *Hello,*

I was recently in Thailand and managed to become another foolish tourist scammed in Thailand. When I returned to Japan (I am a canadian currently teaching in Japan) I searched the internet for name Blue Dragon where I was directed to your website. My heart sank as I began reading and realized I had been scammed for over 33,000 baht. My story is identical as the others on the website, the pictures of where i was approached, visited, and finally scammed matched perfectly. It all started when tried to enter the grand palace and was approached by a man who I thought was security (he was wearing I.d. and was standing with a policeman) and he told me it was only open to thai in the afternoon however because it was New Year's Day (2007) however, I was very lucky because I could visit the happy buddha. He then talked to the tuktuk driver and told me it would be 40 baht all day. This was my first ride in a tuktuk so I just assumed they were very cheap.

At

the happy buddha the tuktuk driver was very friendly then had to go to the bathroom. I then met a man who spoke English very well and drove a nice car and claimed to be businessman here for a very special sale that happened only on New Years which matched the government employees story so I (being gullible) believed it. I went to Blue Dragon next where I was led to the VIP room. They are extremely professional as they don't pressure you to buy anything yet say the right things that make you want to. I was told of how the blue sapphire mines were closing this year and the value will increase significantly. In the end I bought a blue sapphire for 108,500 baht. I will try to scan all the receipts and paperwork as well as business cards. Thank you very much for your informative website because I would have never thought anything of it until I went to Tokyo to try and resell it at Mikimoto Jewellers as I was told I could...

Again I can't thank you enough for the information you provide on your website. I felt so foolish and embarrassed because I was warned not to get scammed however, from now on I will research the scams before going to a foreign country or just spend 20 dollars and pickup a lonely planet guide. But it's a little more comforting to know I am not the only one out there.

More on the
[Gem Scam & maps to the scam stores](#)

The Gem Scam reports (pre 2008)

January 17, 2007

Categories: Scams

[Return to Gem Scam main page](#)

[Latest news](#)

Older news

Getting a free ride from the gem scammers – December 13, 2007

A reader reports: *I am currently in bangkok, just spent the day touring some temples (many of my choice) for only 20 baht. And yes, while i did have to visit some jewelry stores, i am a poor student who would have no interest in buying anything anyway! I read about the scam in Lonely Planet (and more on your website) and I just knew not to buy anything, so I acted like an idiot to get a cheap ride around town. I even agreed to go to a random fashion store and pretend like i would buy something for 10 minutes, presumably so my driver could get a voucher. I think this would be a great way for tourists to take the scam in their own hands and use it to their advantage. Maybe your tuk tuk will ditch you, but just act dumb to the next one that approaches. It was almost amusing to watch the scam play out exactly as you warn, and know it for what it was. If I can add to your site, I would love to help others from being duped.*

Gem scam report –

November 24, 2007

A reader reports: *On September 22nd 2007 my husband and I were caught by the above shop in a gem scam. We had travelled through Malaysia and Thailand and had 2 days in Bangkok prior to flying home. Our story is like the many others told, being approached by a talkative Thai when we were making our way to the Grand Palace. We were told that the Palace was closed for prayer and would reopen in 2hrs. It was our lucky day as it was the last day of the Government promotion towards tourism. Tuk Tuk drivers with white number plates could only charge 30 baht for 2hrs to show tourists 4 other smaller temples. One of the 4 places was the government Export centre where donations could be left for the orphans of the tsunami and the tuk tuk driver would get his coupon for the gasoline and his time. This chap then summoned a white plated tuk tuk and off we went. At our second stop which was the lucky Buddha we were approached by another friendly Thai who voiced his surprise that we had found this very special Buddha and reinforced the fable about the government promotion and how tourism was dropping off and how the government were trying to remedy this. He asked us what the biggest export earner for Thailand was, ah not silk or palm oil, no, gems, rubies and sapphires and how the Golden Argosy was the government approved shop during the promotion. We could buy one set per passport and avoid the 200% govt and vat tax.*

Needless to say this second person's story made it sound believable.

We ended up at the Golden Argosy, with many other farangs arriving by, tuk tuk. The shop looked professional and the manager was wearing a Government badge on his lapel. To cut a long story short I purchased a pair of sapphire earrings to go with my late Mums ring that she had left me. I left the shop happy with my purchase but the more I thought about it the more uneasy I became about the circumstances leading us to this one gem store.

On our way back to our Hotel I called in at a TAT office and asked if there had been a government promotion and alas there had been no such thing. Once back at our hotel I looked up the rough guide and read about the gem scams and went on-line to find your page and a photo of the very shop we had bought from.

Instead of sight seeing on our last day we spent it running over to the Jewellery Trade Centre Building to try and get the gems valued before making a complaint.

Being Saturday they were closed so over to the tourist police with our story. They told us it was a scam and the ear-rings would be a real gem and not glass but would be only worth a quarter of the price we paid. They said it wasn't worth laying a complaint. The tourist police rang the Golden Argosy and spoke with the manager before we told him we were coming back for a refund in cash. The manager initially said he couldn't pay in cash, but my husband was firm and told him to have it ready as we paid in cash the day

before. We didn't try to haggle for the full refund as we had willingly signed a document stating 80% return in the first 3mths if not happy. We got our cash and I was able to give him an earful of what I thought about him and his dishonesty, but he only laughed. He knew that everyday more gullible tourists would walk through his door.

Thank you for your website it enabled me to return the ear-rings before leaving the country. I have certainly learnt a lesson but still feel puzzled how easily we were duped.

Gem scam report – November 12, 2007

A reader reports: I want to report and share my experience on leela lapidary gem scam. On 9/23/2007, my boyfriend and I were on our first trip to Thailand, and the story is not even worth repeating: we were told the palace is not open on Sunday to tourists until 1pm and only then they would have free sarong to lend to tourists who wear shorts, and we were recommended to see two other temples by a guy in uniform who claimed to be the guard at the palace, and arranged TU TU ride for us to go to these other places to kill some time. Anyways, we went to some temples and Thai center, which is Leela Lapidary, and there I was persuaded to buy a top quality ruby pendant and after negotiation I bought it at 40% off the sticker price, for 35K baht. Of course, later we came to realize the palace was open the whole time, and we became suspicious, and on our last day in Bangkok, I did my research and read all about leela lapidary and the gem scam on your web site. Thank you for all the good work!

When I return to Hong Kong, I went to two jewelry shops, both expressed doubts as to its authenticity and the shop owner in my neighborhood was a lot more frank about it. I immediately called my credit card company to dispute the charge and went to the Thai tourism authority's office in Hong Kong and filed a claim. I was told by the latter it will take 1-2 months and can only get 80% refund. But to my surprise, today, two weeks after I disputed the charge with my credit card company, I got the full refund before even being asked to return the 'ruby'!! what a ruby I guess.

I am pretty sure it's the credit card company who made it happen not the tourism office, the latter made clear to me it'll take them two weeks to translate my claim to Thai before sending to Thailand authority. So if you paid by credit card, don't forget to try dispute the charge, and don't be fooled by the positive reports on leela lapidary, and don't blindly believe the gem is real and you only overpaid. It seemed to me that the more expensive/top quality gem at leela lapidary were more likely to be fake than their cheaper ones. BTW, the 'ruby' I bought was a beautiful stop-light red color, which later I read no genuine natural ruby is of that color. I am very lucky and I learned a hard lesson.

Latest scam report –
October, 2007

A reader reports: We were caught by the gem scam in an almost copycat of other stores on the site. We paid £2,500 for a ring that was valued back home at £1,500. I contacted Leela Lapidary and spoke to Mr. Paul the Manager and gave him a choice—either he refunded the £1,000 and I keep the ring or the credit card company would reclaim the full amount of £2,500 on the grounds of poor quality of goods. He asked for the valuation to be sent to him and he would refund the £1,000. I sent it (via) registered mail and within a week it recorded letter arrived informing us that he would indeed repay the £1,000. It did take three weeks of phone calls, but the money was indeed refunded to our credit card... I still cannot get over the fact that we were caught, but you live and learn as the saying goes. I'm just glad we got our money back and have a ring to the value we paid...

Gem scam "gas voucher" –
October 17, 2007

A reader notes: Hello! We were in Bangkok in August and fell for a new line we hadn't heard before: "The government is giving out free gas coupons, so I just need to drive by and get you to sign the voucher." Where did we end up? Jewelry store, of course. We had to walk home in the rain. Awful. Please let your readers know!



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Gem scam report from Golden Argosy – October, 2007

A reader reports: *I am sending my report on what happened to us on August 11th 2007 at the Golden Argosy. Having given some thought to this I think we should put pressure on the credit card companies to refuse to deal with the gem scam shops. We would never have bought a gem if we had not been able to pay by Mastercard. The fact that the shop offered the Mastercard service lent it some respectability.*

Swindled in Thailand

Towards the end of a two week holiday in Thailand we spent a few days in Bangkok. It was the worst part of the holiday and left a nasty taste in our mouths because we ended up being swindled.

On our first day there we had bought a tour of the city with car and guide. She took us to see the two most famous temples and, at our request, arranged a short boat trip along the canals at an over-inflated price. We then were taken to four individual tourist shopping outlets. It turned out that she signed in at each one we visited so that the shops obviously had an arrangement with the tourist agency. We resisted buying anything at three of the shops and bought just a few things at the handicrafts store but the techniques of hard selling were used at all of the shops.

The next day we decided to visit the Grand Palace and took a train and water taxi as close as we could get, intending to walk the rest of the way. After getting off the boat we stopped to check our map and a man came up to us. What followed from then on was the Gem Scam which happens all too frequently in Bangkok.

The scam was elaborately done and we were manipulated so well that, even though we found some of the coincidences bizarre we did not think anything was wrong while it was happening.

The first man engaged us in conversation and helped us to find a tuk tuk driver who would take us to see the Grand Palace for 40 baht as it was a special Thai holiday (the day before the Queen's birthday) and the driver could get coupons for petrol. As tourists usually get ripped off when catching a taxi or tuk tuk we were grateful for this man's help.

The tuk tuk driver in turn told us that the Grand palace was closed at the moment and offered to take us on a tour of some temples around the city that were not usually open to tourists but this was a special day. We agreed to this and off we went to visit the temples.

At one of the temples containing the Lucky Buddha we met a man who engaged us in conversation. He had just got married, so he said, and he had come to the Lucky Buddha to ensure a happy marriage. He asked us where we were from and then said that he had visited England a few years ago and had paid for his trip by

buying gems in Thailand and then selling them in London making 100 per cent profit. He was planning to do the same when he went to Sydney on his honeymoon to cover the costs. He told us many Thais bought gems in lieu of a pension for their old age as the gems increased in value each year particularly as they are now becoming quite rare. We ought to go to the Thai Export Centre and buy some jewellery to take back to England. Today was a special day as the Government allowed these shops to sell to tourists and ordinary Thais on just a few days each year and today was such a day. He had just bought some to trade in Sidney and cover the costs of his honeymoon.

After meeting the man we got back in the tuk tuk and the driver told us he would take us to the Thai Export Centre. We now thought this sounded like a good idea as it would be nice to get something valuable and that would appreciate in value over time that we wouldn't be able to afford in England.

The shop was called the Golden Argosy Factory Export Center Co., LTD and it looked respectable and official. We told the salesman we would go up to £200 but he said we could not get anything for less than £300. We were looking at pendants in rubies or sapphires and the cheapest ones were about £400 to £500. The one we eventually chose was a simple sapphire and we bought a chain to go with it, the whole cost around £540. The salesman offered a refund of 80% if we returned it within 2 months and a certificate to go with the purchase. It all seemed above board especially as the shop accepted Mastercard which we assumed gave us a degree of insurance if the purchase should go wrong in some way.

When we got back to our hotel I decided to look up gems in our guide book on Thailand. The section in the index was headed gem scams. When I read the description of the typical scam it described exactly the scenario that had just happened to us. We were due to catch the plane home early the next morning so we did not have time to go back to the store and claim our 80% of the price for returning the goods.

When we got home I went to a reputable jewellers. The jeweller confirmed that the stone was a sapphire and that together with the setting and chain it was worth between £100 and £150. So we have lost around £400. We feel absolutely foolish for having been taken in like this but the crooks knew exactly how to work us so that we did what they intended. When I found the above website and read the stories of other people who have been scammed it is clear that the Thai authorities have no intention of cleaning up the gem shops and their criminal gangs. However we wonder why Mastercard agrees to work with these people as I suspect they know exactly what these businesses are up to. It is a disgrace that Mastercard allows these stores to use its facilities to fleece tourists. It is tantamount to Mastercard aiding and abetting in a crime. We would never have bought the sapphire if we had not been able to pay by Mastercard and we thought we were protected because we had used the card. Obviously we were wrong. I think that we should all contact Mastercard to pressure them into withdrawing their services from these shops. Maybe that will be more effective in curbing the activities of the criminals.

Latest scam report from Golden Argosy – October 6, 2007

A reader reports: Have returned to Australia via Bangkok today 11th September 2007 after 15 days in Phuket with family (wife and 2 children aged 5 & 4). We then had 2 nights in Bangkok on way home...

Very elaborate Set up occurred for us after advised we could not enter the kings palace as after 1530 palace was only open to Thai people (absolutely no mention of blue sapphires at this stage). Very well dressed older thai gentleman explained other temples nearby showed us by writing on our map in english. He professed to be employed by thailand tourism commission and showed us a badge – he hailed tuk tuk and we went to a close by large temple. Tuk Tuk driver very friendly and did not suggest any side trips only that we wished to visit temples for tourism purposes. At 2nd of temples tuk tuk driver stated he needed the toilet and 2 minutes later a "student" walked by and started conversation. Where we come from? how old are kids? Ages? First trip to Bangkok ? etc really really friendly – thai people have really been friendly and loved our kids to death the last 2 weeks!!

After some 5 minutes "student" asked if we knew of a 1 week special offer of sale of blue sapphires that will end this afternoon (Saturday 1800) – time was then approximately 1630. After some 10 – 15 minutes of the student elaborating that he had travelled the world by buying blue sapphires on this 1 week of the year (storyline went that govt allowed these stores to sell less 200% tax for 1 week only – first 4 days were for students last 3 for tourists and other Thais) He was really convincing – mentioned that he had sold sapphires in UK (3000 pound profit) & USA (4000 US dollar profit at tiffany's in New York). Easily done as all jewellery came with guarantee and also weight and certificate of authentication and all legal as was for personal use or gift. Clincher was that after February next year all blue sapphire mining will cease in thailand and that this was the last opportunity for this type of trading and that blue sapphires were about to get a whole lot more expensive. IN fact the student's mother had bought a large necklace to later divide after the sapphires went up in price. He himself had bought a bracelet to leave for overseas.

At about this time the student innocently asked Where is driver? we explained his need for toilet. 2 minutes

later driver arrives and of course we are extremely interested in this opportunity.

Go to Golden Argosy and get all the same spiel – VERY FORTUNATELY for us we did not carry our credit card. Was in the safe at our hotel. We decided we were keen to purchase a \$3000 (AUD) bracelet but no credit card. NO problem – organised gift wrapping, certificate of authentication including gold weight gem weight & picture of item of jewellery, guarantee of 80% refund in 1 month, 70% in 3 months, and they would take us to our hotel to collect funds. Had to hand write out a letter stating for gift purposes only.

Fortunately for Bangkok notorious traffic as we had a long hard think about this on the 50 minute trip back in Taxi (paid for by Golden Argosy staff member) and decided we would make some enquiries before handing over payment.

Spoke to Concierge who stated to be very careful as he had heard of this type of thing and when I showed him the card he stated I was the 4th guest today to share the same story (2 earlier had returned and settled for refund – not sure of amount)

We apologised profusely to the lady who came with us and gave her 200 baht for taxi fare and that if it all checked out we would call Golden Argosy the next day and if they were genuine they would understand. She did not argue took the money and walked away.

We were extremely lucky and looking back cannot believe how easily we were fooled. The story appears so genuine, from all people involved and no one ever gets pushy they basically leave it up to the individual. (Greed always is a sure seller as it plays on most peoples intuition) This must be a massive operation involving obviously hundreds of people yet I figure the results must be staggering. We were staying at a very plush 5 star American hotel chain and on that day the concierge fielded 4 queries similar to mine. I wonder how many did not query and never figured the sting until getting home or were caught and become too embarrassed to mention the fact.

I am relaying this in the hope that someone will read it and take heed of this blatant and outrageous rip off. We have visited Thailand twice and love the country and its culture and people. However can never be too cautious either at home or away so take care and remember tuk tuk drivers only make a minute portion of their wage as abiding and friendly taxi drivers – the majority from kick backs and commission from getting passengers to part with their money...

Latest scam report from Leela Lapidary Company –
September 28, 2007

A reader reports: I am very surprised to see on your site positive reports in regard to Leela Lapidary Co., Ltd.

I am a recent victim of the jewelry scam (August 2007). It is worth emphasising that the touts at the entrance to the main tourist attractions often stand next to the official guards, they are well dressed and speak good English within ear shot of the guards. Sometimes they even have official looking identification tags. After having a series of 'chance' encounters similar to those described by other contributors to this site, my wife and I ended up at Leela Lapidary Co., Ltd. where we foolishly bought some jewelry. Everything was genuine: real rubies, 18 ct gold etcetera. The problem is that back in Britain a professional valuation has shown the jewelry to be worth almost exactly half the price that we had paid! Please warn your readers.

It is a great pity that action is not being taken to rid Bangkok of these scammers. My experience has left me with doubts about the integrity of the Thai people in general. Should I ever visit Thailand again I simply would not trust anyone...

Leela

Lapidary – September 25, 2007

A reader reports: We were caught today by the classic scam – being accosted near the Golden Palace, being told it was closed over lunch for some reason and in the meantime he could get a tuk tuk for only 20 baht to take us to two other temples. We eventually ended up at Leela Lapidary where we admired and chose a Sapphire Ring. Fortunately, we did not have a credit card with us and realised during the course of the afternoon (after discovering that the Palace had not been closed etc.) that we had been set up. When the agent arrived at our hotel to take payment I was able to insist on getting my 1,000 Baht deposit back and the incident was closed without any tears.

The deciding point was finding information about the scam on your website – so well done and thank you.

Latest gem scam from

Golden Argosy – September 7, 2007

A reader reports: *I just suffered the standard thai gems scam. It was at the "Golden Argosy Factory Export Center", former "Blue Dragon..."*.

I details of the scam are not new to what you've read so many times.

I got back 83% of what I paid, but worst than the lost money is the feeling of embarrassment and humiliation.

What I am more scared about is that the police is also in the game, the tourist police as well as the normal police. They do absolutely nothing, they supported the store manager when he was claiming that the 17% I lost was to cover the export charges, the VAT and the credit card charge... when we all knew there is no such charges when the transaction is cancelled.

The police did not even want me to take a picture of the store, which I did.

The credit card charge cannot be cancelled, requires a claim which they would win since all papers are signed by me. I could not even return the goods without signing a paper confirming I was satisfied and no further actions would be taken. Didn't want to do so but, with the police in the room, they would not accept the goods otherwise.

I'll try now with the embassy and writing about this to the main tourist web pages.

More: Tourist police in Bangkok is completely corrupt by the way, they are in the game. When I took the picture of the store, the police tried me not to take it claiming he already had one pic... it was a pic of the same store but with different name!!

They came with me to ask for the refund but supported the guy in the store claiming he had charges of 17% that I must pay for... police and hotel security (sheraton) supported him, simply amazing!

Latest gem scam report –

May 4, 2007

www.scamspotters.com reports: *On Dec 22, 2006, I was defrauded in the purchase of Jewelry from SNP JEWELRY LTD in Bangkok, Thailand. This scam is very elaborate using numerous employees and agents representing themselves as tourists contacting real tourists at various tourist sights and in the conversation making false testimonials on behalf of the jewelry store. This Fraud is well documented on the Web...*

Latest gem scam report –

April 24, 2007

A reader reports: *Not sure if you are still collecting reports about the scam with Leela Lepdiary Co in Bangkok ? but alas my wife and I were yet another victim !! Very much in the same way described on your web site, we went to the Golden Palace by taxi and were met at the entrance by a Thai local who said he worked at the Palace and was on his break. He also informed us that the Palace was shut for lunch and in the meantime he could get a tuk tuk for only 20 baht to take us to two other temples and the Thai Centre for some shopping. We eventually ended up at Leela Lapidary and my wife fell in love with a Sapphire Ring. Alas, we purchased it ,and were then taken to a clothes making shop. We were encouraged to go into this shop whilst the Tuk Tuk driver had to put more gasoline in his vehicle. When I refused to go in that we would wait for him to get back once he filled the tank he became agitated and then gave in and said he would take us back to the Golden Temple, which we found had been open the whole time.*

At this point our hearts sank as we knew we'd been scammed.

We were devastated and, much like the article on the web, would not like to return to Bangkok.

A very harsh lesson.

Yindee scam –

April 18, 2007

A reader reports on the Yindee scam: *I wanted to pass on my Thanks for your articles – My wife and I had been to Bangkok many many occasions but last trip – April 5th 2007 will be remembered as we were in Yindee shop in Bangkok and I started to get suspicious and used my Blackberry to search Yindee and found your story – which as was amazed was exactly the same as we had experienced !*

Nearly word for word...

Not wanting to cause a scene as I was unaware how dangerous these characters could be on their own turf I got my wife to leave after making an excuse.

Once again Thank you for exposing these guys – your story saved me from being a statistic!

Latest scam from Yindee –

March 26, 2007

A reader reports: *Unfortunately I fell victim to the scam too.*

I want everyone in my country to know so hence I sent the below article to all the papers. They said they are going to publish it. Additionally I have sent a copy to the ministry of foreign affairs of Thailand and my country as well.

Here's what I wrote:

I have just returned from a trip to Bangkok and would like to highlight that scams are still rampant in the city. In particular, gem scams. A quick check on the internet showed that these scams dated as far back as the 1950s and today, it is still very much alive.

A typical scam begins when a tourist visits a shopping mall, especially Central World. There is a 4-face Buddha located outside the building in front of Isetan. A local will then approach the tourist. He may pass off himself as the inspector of the statues or as a professional such as a lawyer. He'll then tell you that you should visit the lucky Buddha temple as it is only open once a month. If the tourist is agreeable, he will call for a tuktuk to send the tourist to the temple and back for just 40 baht. He will then inform the tourist that gem stones in Thailand carry great value and that a wholesale shop is opened to the public and is offering a 30% discount. He will encourage the tourist to visit the mining after praying at the lucky temple for it is not often that the wholesaler opens his shop to the public and great bargains await the buyer. Furthermore, he will add that local retailers such as Lee Hwa purchase their stones from them and that the stones will fetch high prices back home over time. With his convincing ways, there is a high chance that tourists who are not familiar with precious stones and the country may be enticed by the deal. The tuktuk driver will take the tourist to the temple and while in the premises, another person will come along and speak to you in Thai. He will appear to be surprised that you are not Thai and chat with you for a while on his background before talking about the gem wholesalers. He is likely to produce receipts, or show rings that he had supposedly just purchased before praying at the temple and urge you to proceed to the shop before they close.

Regardless of whether the tourist asks the tuktuk driver to go to the shop, the latter will bring the tourist to the shop and admit that he is given a petrol voucher for bringing the tourist there. The latter is encouraged to just go in to have a look. Thereafter, the owner of the shop will take over with the sales pitch. A friend of mine who relayed this incident to me told me that they are very convincing and a tourist may be enticed to buy one or two pieces for himself. The greedier ones may purchase more of up to US\$5000 as claimed by the retailer as the Thai government will impose tax if the amount exceeds US\$5000. Furthermore, the retailer is offering a 30% discount store wide.

During my visit there, I was unwillingly brought to such a shop in the same scenario as described. However I remembered the advice given by the locals to not trust anyone who approaches you with fantastic deals. As the old saying goes, "If it is too good to be true, it is." Many of us do bear that in mind but forget all about it when faced with such a scenario. My friend bought a ring for himself and found out through a geologist here that such scams are very common and that the stones are genuine but are usually overpriced. A test confirmed that the stones were natural but were treated to enhance their colour and hence carry no real value to the stone. Google "thai gem scams" will reveal many similar stories from websites such as

<http://www.angkor.com/2bangkok/2bangkok/Scams>

I am writing in to inform others who may be unaware of such scams that target tourists. Many of these gem scams go unnoticed as it does not make economic sense to return to Bangkok just to demand a refund. Some retailers will get the tourist to sign a form stating that no refund is allowed and there is very little recourse that can be done after the transaction is through.

I urge all travelers to do some research on the country of their visit before they arrive there and to report any scams that happened to them to the local authorities in the hope that follow-up action can be done to reduce the number of scammers on the streets. The fact that the gem stones are genuine but overpriced means that the local authorities cannot do much legally unless the stones are fake and hence it becomes a criminal act. In some cases, the officials and police officers are corrupt, while others may refer you back to the retailer to

resolve the issue on their own.

Be street-smart and do not allow strangers the chance to approach and sweet talk you into a bargain. If in doubt, simply walk away and ignore them, or request information from the tourist police or the local tourism board before making any purchases. Remember the golden rule, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is! In cases targeted at tourists, it always is.

Latest Blue Dragon report: "certainly not a bargain, but essentially a fair price" –

March 17, 2007

Dear 2Bangkok.com,

My story is virtually identical to the report from 2/17/07 and occurred 2/23/07. The same exact scenario, in the same place, with exactly the same set of characters including the young fellow in the nice 4WD (a gold Lexus RX300) but his wife were inside the temple that day. With my business associate and I, he posed as a recent student whose father (conveniently) worked for British Airways and was based in London, the same place my associate was from. He knew all the London jewelry stores, all the right places, and said all the right things to build a level of confidence.

Given this is my 3rd trip to Bangkok, I will admit it struck me as odd that there actually a guy who stopped traffic for us to go into the Blue Dragon and that despite the very professional environment, all of the customers were Farang. My friend and I bought two nice sapphire and diamond pendants for around 29,000 Baht each (she thought it was a good deal; I thought it seemed a bit high, but she is much closer to jewelry than I). Ordinarily I would have probably done a little more homework, but we were pressed by our departure flights that evening. So, we took our goods and went away happy, abandoning the tuk-tuk driver somewhere along the way since we were out of time. On my flight home to the US, the whole episode was still gnawing at me; too many friendly people advancing themselves, going out of their way, without a hand held out (which is so atypical in BKK tourist haunts). Once I got home, I got on the internet to search the Blue Dragon Export and low and behold the first hit was your web site with the string of stories. Like everyone else my heart sank and I pondered what to do and how to go after the Blue Dragon, but I figured it was totally driven by how much they had ripped me off for, since in all likelihood the best I could hope for was to enforce the 80% buy-back policy. I elected not to queue up my business associate in London on our "deal" until I had some facts. I had one of the very reputable jewelers in my city appraise the piece and was surprised. Not as pleasantly surprised as the Aussie chap who posted he actually did get a good deal, but surprised to find that after a few minutes with microscopes and meters and such, the jeweler concluded it was, in fact, a pretty nice piece, even though it had some color enhancement added to one of the sapphires. His conclusion was that I basically paid the equivalent of what I would have paid in the States; certainly not a bargain, but essentially a fair price.

Evidently, the mounting pressure on the Blue Dragon from all your exposure, along with Lonely Planet, and others has curbed their greed somewhat. That said it's annoying to be hustled and it's emotionally and financially draining to get genuinely scammed, so please keep the posting flowing. I got lucky this time and I will darn sure do my homework next time before making any spontaneous purchases of a significant nature.

Gem scam story: [Blue Dragon Factory Export Center](#) – March 12, 2007

Gem scam story: [Blue Dragon Factory Export Center](#) –
September 14, 2006

Blue Dragon

success story – February 24, 2007

A reader reports: my fiancé' and i have a bizarre story in relation to the blue dragon gem scam. As mentioned in all the stories we have read, the exact order of events happened to us and lead to the purchase of a sapphire/diamond engagement ring worth 1400 aussie dollars.

Everything seemed fine and we were very happy.

On our return to Australia we found your website and could not believe what we were reading-that we had been scammed, we were devastated. More than anything we felt humiliated and embarrassed, as we are well traveled and generally street savvy.

The unique part of our experience is that we actually had not been scammed, we have had our engagement ring valued at a reputable and accredited jeweler here in Perth Western Australia and to our amazement

*the ring is worth 2800 aussie dollars- double what we paid.
i can't work this out, i am extremely happy and relieved but also
completed puzzled. Do these organizations in Bangkok only rip off every
second customer? and we got luck of the draw, or do they choose there
victims carefully? so as not to rip off the wrong people.
i thought i'd share this experience and would be interested in any
other views.*

Gem scam story: [Blue Dragon Factory Export Center](#) – February 17, 2007

Blue Dragon scam – February 10, 2007

Nui writes: *I just read your web page on the Thailand Blue
Dragon
Scam. Guess where I have been today? Anyway, I just thought
you might
like to have these photos that we took today to post on your
website.
They show the lucky Buddha, the temple and the outside.
We didn't buy anything – (thank you lucky Buddha!)
Anyway, thanks for your website and we will spread your
message...
PS. While we were there, a couple had a printout of your
website in
their hands and were spreading your message loudly in the
store. Just
to let you know, this is about the 10th store we've been invited
into
in Bangkok in 5 days. Advise your patrons do NOT enter a tuk
tuk in
Bangkok AT ALL. Everywhere else is fine.*



(Photo: Nui)

Gem scam story: [Blue Dragon Factory Export Center](#) – January 17, 2007

Gem scam story: [Blue Dragon Factory Export Center](#) – January 7, 2007

Gem scam story: [SSS Jewelry changes its name is SNP Jewelry](#) – December 27, 2006

Gem scam story: [Blue Dragon Factory Export Center](#) – December 23, 2006

Gem scam story: [Blue Dragon Factory Export Center](#) – December 17, 2006

Latest from the Thai Gem Scam Group – November 21, 2006

The Thai Gem Scam Group writes: *...we're working on clearing out a
backlog of information that we've received. We'll be
adding more stuff, but in the meantime, we have new
pictures of people involved with SSS Jewellery,
receipts of Piyanamee and we've also updated our
information regarding Internal Trade in the hopes
that someone else can repeat the experience we've
added earlier today. You can see these on our site at the following links: [Receipts](#) – [People](#) – [Internal Trade](#)*

Latest gem scam report –
October 27, 2006

A reader reports: *We have just returned from a trip to Bangkok, and unfortunately were involved in what we*

think was now a scam.

This is further confirmed after visiting your website and noticing that the place we bought the Jewelry from was mentioned.

Our experience is as follows:

On our last day in Bangkok, after a lovely morning sightseeing, we were approached by a tout offering a tuck-tuck ride for 40 bahts taking us to various other tourist attractions, from near the Grand Palace, which was apparently closed. This tout took us over to a tuck tuck, and explained to the driver that we wanted to go to various places, and he was to wait for us. We thought this was a good deal, and so accepted. Our first stop was a Happy Buddha. It was very quiet when we arrived, and the driver told us to take our time. Upon entering the grounds, we were greeted by a gentleman who seemed very interested in where we were from etc. etc. After general smalltalk, he pointed out on our map a number of places that we might want to go to, one of them being The Oscar, which he said, was a wholesale jeweler, and for this week only, selling items to the public. We thought nothing of this, and then proceeded to enter the Buddha. Once inside, another man came in, and prayed to the Buddha, and then turned to us, and started to engage us in conversation. We found it quite moving, as he also told us he had just got married, as had we, and that this Buddha was lucky. He then told us he had also visited The Oscar, and it was a worthwhile visit, as today was the last day that they would be open to the public.

We returned to our tuck-tuck, and asked him to take us to The Oscar; on route to our next attraction, which he did.

Upon entering the store, we were greeted by a professional older lady, who explained the technicalities of precious stones, being the four C's etc.

We were obviously so taken in by the events of the afternoon, and after a great length of time, foolishly purchased a ring, which we now believe could be worth at least a third of what we paid for it. It was not until we returned to our hotel that we started to suspect that all was not as we had thought. As we had signed various papers, stating no refund was available unless the item was not genuine, then we felt there was nothing we could do. We did check with our hotel, and they advised us to go and get the ring valued, which we did, and this confirmed our suspicions.

We would be grateful if you could add this to your website to warn off other tourists, and possibly let us know if there is anything else we could do to prevent this happening again.

Latest scam from Yindee –

September 30, 2006

A reader reports: I am writing this email with regards to a gem scam that my friends and I personally involved. On August 30, 2006 I went to Bangkok on holiday trips with family. A week earlier, my friends also went to Bangkok and encountered similar gem scam. Another friend also went to Bangkok in May 2006 also encountered the gem scam by tuk tuk driver who bring them to gem store.

In the morning, we took a walk from Bangkok City Inn Hotel to Pratunam Centre, near World Trade Centre & Pratunam market. Upon reaching Pratunam Center, we were approached by a Thai security guard at Pratunam Centre told us that the day was the lucky Buddha day, opened once a month/ year and that we should go to the temple. He even asked a tuk tuk driver to drive us there.

Once we reached the temple and went inside, we were approached by another Thai saying that he is a business man from US and told us that he has just brought gems from a wholesale gem store that was having a special promotion where they sold gems at wholesale prices to public. He claimed the gems could be resell at higher prices to "Poh Kong" and "Poh Heng" (renowned gems shops) and kept promoting Yindee gem store having 30% discounts, only limited to buying one set at discounted price. He even shown us the receipt he purchased from the store and arrange tuk tuk to bring us to this gem store.

Upon reaching the gem store (Yindee Lapidary Co. Ltd., 1091/75-77 Petchburi Rd. Soi 33, Makasan Bangkok 10400 Thailand. Tel: 253-1540-1 Fax: 651-6784),

we were told the same story about them being a wholesaler and that they were having a special promotion where they sold to the public at wholesale prices. So, we are trapped in the gem scam – overpriced gems were bought.

Actually, we also have some doubt to identify real tourist police as they just show us their ID and also recommend tourist to purchase gems. Is there any identification of tourist police?

I think that many tourists also trapped in this gem scam ([refer](#)) and hope that Thailand local authorities could help to minimise the cases with educational info. highlighted and distributed in tourist leaflets and maps, newspaper and transportation signboard like BTS station and bus station to alert tourists. I think more tourist maps in English with relevant alert should be display in airport too. Previous visit to Bangkok only found tourist maps in Japanese.

Latest scam from Yindee –
September 15, 2006

A reader reports: I am the lucky customer of YINDEE LAPIDARY unlike this lucky fellow that did not bite the bait.

I am from Singapore and my story is similar to him except I was looking for the 4face buddha. For the hours, I have been pondering on WHY...I fell into it. Being street smart and experienced in life, I just do not understand.

I posted my story [here](#).

["Tough Bangkok Experience for Whitey"](#) –

HollywoodMachine, November 17, 2005

Story about a tailor shop scam: "Forget it, man! I might as well just catch a PERSONAL AIRCRAFT to the river for that price!!", I exclaimed.



Latest scam from Yindee –
August 29, 2006

A reader reports: Just came back couple days ago from Bangkok. on the 2nd last day of my trip 22 Aug 06, me & my gf met this Thai guy outside Isetan, world trade centre, at the 2 shrines. His opening line was talking about how to pray to an elephant god but his accent was quite thick so we din really catch what he was saying.

After that, he asked us where we were going (Pratunam market), he recommended us to go to pray to "Lucky Buddha" before going there. "Lucky Buddha" is opened only once a month to the public, so we thought we were really lucky & he went on to ask what we were working as & he said he been to S'pore a few x & he'll be going there nxt chinese new year as he has lawyer friends there, he's been to lucky plaza, sim lim etc. He even showed us his Thai ID. Thai No. 1 is short, fat, dark & in his 50s, speaks English with a thick accent

like has phlegm in his throat.

Then he told us about this jewelry shop also only open once a month to tourists but they only limited to buying one set at discounted price, cause the shop is a wholesaler to big jewelry shops in s'pore like ang chang, poh heng etc & it charges 100% export tax to them. Once again, we thought we were lucky.

He then called for a tuk tuk (told us to hire tuk tuk with only blue uniforms & yellow tags cause they're regulated... can anyone verify if it's true?) to take us to "Lucky Buddha" temple ie. Wat Disallongsaram (near Bangkok Palace Hotel), followed by the jewelry shop & finally our destination (Pratunam).

Upon reaching the temple which was like located inside a small road, the tuk tuk driver waited for us while we went in. It was a rather small temple with many stray dogs running around (minimum 30). We couldn't really locate the door as we saw 2 wooden doors but they were closed. As we went round the corner, a Thai man appeared out of nowhere & we asked him where the entrance was. He said "oh u're not thais?" & brought us in. My gf had noticed later on he was wearing socks with sandals despite his long sleeved shirt & pants attire.

After praying to the "Lucky Buddha" (come to think of it now, there was only this huge Buddha which looked kinda cramp inside accompanied by a few other statues, it seemed really run down compared to other temples), he told us it was 100 yrs old & only opened once a month to public cause other days of the month are for the monks to pray for the thai people.

Then he asked us how we got to know of this temple & of course we told him about thai man no. 1 (cause not many ppl will know about this place..... yeah right), & where we were going next. He then told us about the same story about how the jewelry shop was giving discounts & only for tourist open once a month etc etc, in between asking us what jobs we held. (seems like checking out if u're rich enough to buy jewelry)

He then pulled out a receipt from his pouch for a set of sapphire jewelry (like for ear rings, bracelet the lot) which was priced at \$96,200 Baht or about US\$2,600.00 (which was stated there, probably for potential prey to have an easier conversion). Told us he was a silk businessman flying to London morrow where he'll sell it off at Harrods for twice the price or US\$5,000. He actually had a loophole at one point but we din realize that time, ie. He mentioned only tourists could buy 1 set at discounted rates so how could he an authentic thai buy it at a discount. Thai No. 2 is slim & in his late 40s, he has got big bug eyes & as he talks u'll see his eyes open quite big.

After we left the temple, the tuk tuk brought us to the jewelry shop "Yindee Lapidary Co Ltd". The staff welcomed us warmly & spoke not bad English. The shop was empty except for a Caucasian family who were selecting gems. The boss, a thai Chinese in his 50s (with a big nose & long ears) would welcome us warmly & offered us drinks (saying even if you don't buy, it's ok as they're registered with S'pore-Thai chamber of commerce, he'll show you the book even). They'll then proceed to educate you on how to select gems & how to tell a real one from a fake one, using a diamond tester (to convince you that your purchase is real).

At this junction, another guy (turned out to be a Singaporean !!!) who'll come over & show his receipt to the boss (there's other staff around but why only to the boss?) & they seemed to know each other well, like hi how are you etc? He's in his 50s, slim, has gold bracelet & rings encrusted with diamonds on his hands, probably to impress you that he made \$ through this method, when he talks he looks toothless but has teeth in the upper row.

He then chit chatted with us like asking us where we were from & say oh he's from there too, later on breaking into our dialects to strengthen the "bond" with you. He'll tell us the same thing bout him coming here to buy only 1 set with cert & all & selling it back to local gold shops for a profit, been here 3 x but his wife never saw it. He told us to tell the shop that we are buying it for personal use but after that we sell it off later. As he left he din seem to collect anything from the counter.

The staff would proceed to show us all the expensive sets of jewelry & when my gf enquired on individual pieces then did they show us separate pieces. We went down to view the cheaper pieces (so called cheapest sapphire ring was at S\$580), but we did not have any intention on buying, so we left the place with just their namecard which they welcomed us back again (my a**).

We were very lucky in that we didn't purchase any gems or forced to cause the gems you buy are not fake, they've certificates to prove & diamond testers but just that the prices have been marked up & are not as good quality as you think they are. We were even considering buying some for investment the next time round till my very good friend told me it was a scam & I looked it up...

Another gem scam report – August 24, 2006

Latest report: The Scam published in the www.2bangkok.com describes exactly how I had been cheated into buying a worthless sapphire for 160,000 Baht at the Blue Dragon Factory Export Center Co., Ltd. on August 14, 2006..... We were planning to visit the Wat Pho when a 'friendly' Thai near the Grand Palace recommended to us (myself and my 3 nephews & niece) to take a tuk tuk around to the Thai Export for some

great buys. We were then taken to the 'Happy Buddha' first where we ran into yet another 'friendly' Thai who 'insisted' that we must go buy some sapphire. So we went and spent 160,000 Baht on a 7.6 carat blue sapphire and thought the Thai people are so nice and friendly... little did we know we had been cheated so badly until we got home and found out similar stories in the web.

I love Thailand and believe most of the people there are honest. Unfortunately this sapphire scam has ruined my impression for Thailand as a favorite holiday spot and I for sure will share this story with all my friends and colleagues.

Gem scam – August 23, 2006

Latest report: I didn't realize that I got scammed by Blue Dragon until last Monday I found your website. I experienced the same story with others who got scammed...start from a student who told me a door to grand palace, a man (he said he works for grand palace) who told that grand palace is closed, he stopped tuk-tuk for me, recommend to go to Blue Dragon, then tuk-tuk driver went to toilet....it's all the same story with others !!!!! I am still so shocked at this moment. I've spent TB 29,000 at Blue Dragon and found out that the ring and pendant I bought worth no more than TB 5,000... I even gave a tips to the tuk-tuk driver and my name card to the young man telling him that he can contact me when he visits...

There is agreement letter that I signed saying that Blue Dragon will provide 80% refund if purchase not more than 3 months, 70% if more than 3 months but less than 1 year, no refund after one year. But to be honest I don't know when I can afford to go back to Bangkok, also doubt whether they really will give me the refund after I read from your web about the violence happened during refund negotiation. I checked with local shop, the gems worth less 1/4 price.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Gem scam corner – April 19, 2006

Above is the wall bulge at Wat Pra Kaew on Naphralan Road where gem scam touts are allowed to stop tourists within meters of the entrance to the temple. Within sight and earshot of guards at the entrance, the touts tell tourists the temple is closed and hustle them into tuk-tuks for "free" tours of the city that end at gem scam shops like [SSS Jewlery](#) and [Blue Dragon](#). It is fascinating to watch as temple guards view tourist after tourist being whisked away to gem scam shops.

In the past, gem scam stores were forced to change location and names, but during the TRT government years, gem scam shops seem to have enjoyed an

immunity from having to open under new names or change location. This could be because, as with other problems, the government simply [declared the gem scam problem solved](#).
[Google Earth Placemark showing the site](#) – [Download Google Earth](#)

SSS Jewelry foiled! – April 17, 2006

A reader reports: *I just would like to thank you. Thanks to your website I succeeded to get a refund at SSS Jewelry after a gem scam. The story was the same as all the others. I'm French, and a friendly French guy told me how lucky I was to be there, etc... It was the 1st of December 2005. I bought for US\$ 3000 just before living to Cambodia Vietnam and Laos for almost 2 months. It's only one month later, in Hanoi that I've discovered the scam, thus I flew directly to Bangkok to try to get a refund on the 31th of December, what a great new year's day! Actually, the gems were in a safe in SSS and I only had a lousy receipt. I've decided to make a report at the Tourist police. Police officers were very helpful, I've made a report and they phoned SSS, then I had to talk to the manager through the phone. I told them that I will stay in Bangkok in front of their shop until I get a fully refund. She was hard to negotiate with. After a few phone calls we sort out with a 95% refund. They came to the police, and give me a bank voucher with an agreement paper to sign. Two weeks later the transfer was not done. I had to phone again (I live in Singapore) to put pressure telling I was still in Bangkok (I was actually in Singapore) and that I will have to go to the police again. I eventually get the refund one week following the last call. They don't like to go to the police so much, so we have to use it. I would like to add that French embassy is really useless since they just told me Nobody couldn't do anything. It's a shame. Thanks so much for reporting it and giving us some advice to get back our money. I've been a bit unaware to leave so much money there. I still like Bangkok, charming city, it's a pity that there such a scam.*

Latest scam story from Piyamanee – February 9, 2006

From an email: *I would like to report another scam concerning the Piyamanee shop. What happened is very similar to the stories you published. On 1st Jan 2006, our first day in Bangkok, a Thai person approached us while waiting for a bus and was very friendly to us. We told him that we wanted to visit the weekend market. He told us that the market is closed the morning because of new year. On a map he showed us what places we could visit instead and he also told us not to pay more than 10 Baht to the tuk-tuk driver because there is the Export Promotion on where tuk-tuk drivers can claim petrol vouchers. He then left us so we didn't find anything suspicious. We then decided to take the tuk-tuk going to the black buddha. There another friendly Thai man told us about his experience in Brighton/ England where he studied English. He also mentioned that he financed his study by buying and selling jewellery at the export promotion which is coincidentally on at the moment – and of course – last day! He said that during that promotion there is no tax, hence a 40% tax reduction and if you pay cash you then receive another 20%. During the promotion tourists are only allowed to buy one set of jewellery. We didn't really believe much what he was saying. However, after 10 min a French tourist came to the place and when the*

Thai man asked him about the export he coincidentally knew about it. He confirmed that he buys there every year jewellery and that this is the way he finances his flights to and from France. Now we started believing the story about the Expo promotion and so we headed it. It was a bit of a surprise that the Expo was just a jewellery shop called Piyamanee – several times mentioned in your website.

All the rest is similar to the stories on your site. The shop provided a courtesy car, so that we can bring the jewellery straight to the airport and send them with EMS to our country.

Only the next day we became suspicious and then we found your web site.

With the jewellery out of the country there was little we could do.

In England we did an evaluation of the gems. The were genuine and the value was not too far off what we paid, however, if we wanted to sell to a jewellery shot, then we would only receive around 25% of the 80,000 Baht we paid.

What is disappointing, that the Thai government is still allowing Piyamanee to trick tourists day after day after so many reports.

A non-scam at the Blue Dragon

– February 1, 2006

Every once in awhile gems sold by gem scam stores DO turn out to be worth more than what they were sold for: I only found out about the scam after I've returned to Canada from christmas holidays and looked on the internet. It was just like the stories–went to the palace, was redirected by a thai with a shirt and a tie to the lucky buddha temple instead of seeing the closed palace, where a young Thai gentleman claiming he used to be a student and sold Thai sapphires in New York to support his world travels. Tuk Tuk took me to blue dragon factory export centre, where I was foolish enough to buy a necklace that I couldn't afford on my visa.

I had been awaiting the results of a jewellery appraisal which I got back today because I thought it would strengthen my case with the VISA people. It turns out that it was appraised at a significantly higher value (around 60% more) than what I had paid. The accredited jeweller in Canada I had gone to was skeptical, so he sent it to another lab in Toronto to see if the sapphires had been irradiated to deepen their color. The lab in toronto, which is accredited with both canadian and us gemnological institutes, came back with a similar value.

While the market resale value would be significantly lower than the appraised replacement value, it seems like the Blue Dragon Factory Export Centre didn't rip me off, despite all their pictures and stories on the Internet.

Latest Blue Dragon scam story –

January 27, 2006

It was our honeymoon in Thailand and on our last three days before going back to Stockholm we were visiting Bangkok for the first time. On the morning of the first day in Bangkok we were looking around when we were approached by a very nice middle aged man who asked us about what we were looking for and if we would like to see the temples. He started to talk about how he had been to Sweden on his honeymoon and talked about famous places in Sweden for about 10 minutes. We liked the guy who was very nice to talk to. He mentioned something called the export promotion that he urged us to visit in Bangkok. He then stopped a Tuk Tuk and talked to the driver, telling him to stop at the places we wanted to visit (including the export promotion). After we had visited some temples the Tuk Tuk driver had to find a resting room and we were waiting in the Tuk Tuk when another guy approach us asking us were we

came from and how we liked Thailand. This guy was very friendly and he seemed very academic/well educated and his English was excellent. We told him about the export promotion and he was very amazed to hear that we knew about this. He told us that he had visited the export promotion a couple of years ago and that he had made a very good deal and that it was only open for one week a year and that we were very lucky because this was the last day they were open this year. He then talked to us for a while about the Thailand economy, that jewelry was very important and that the government was sponsoring jewelry once a year in order to promote this industry. I said to the guy that I was not going to buy anything because I do not know much about jewelry but we were still going to visit the place just to look. The guy just said that the quality was guaranteed by the government and that he did not know anything about jewelry either and still made a very good deal. Then the Tuk Tuk driver came back and we went to the export promotion which gave a very good and professional impression. I know that I took a great risk when I invested in 2 pieces of jewelry for about USD 7000. One argument they had was that we would be treated as VIP customers which entitled us to use their company car with a driver to show us Bangkok within the next 2 days and then take us to the airport, which they also did. In retrospect I understand that this was only to make sure that we did not find out about the fraud early enough to stop the credit card payment, we were too busy being guided around in Bangkok with their company car. Back in Sweden I made a valuation of the jewelry and found out that the value was about half what I had paid and I also found information on the Internet that this was a fraud. I was very disappointed, to say the least and I am now planning to go back to Bangkok within the next few months to visit the store together with the tourist police and claim my money back.

Latest gem scam report
– January 11, 2006



(Photo: Anthony Mak)

A reader reports: I want to report you that I am a new victim for the gem scam!!(20 Dec 2005) The scam shop is S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership.

The story almost same as the latest scam story on your main page (22 Dec). I am with my wife go the museum and it is close, then we met a Thai dress like the security guard (uniform) of the museum. He told us, he is the security officer of the museum, He was very 'kind' to told us museum closed on Mon and Tues. Then he started introduce us place to visit. Just like all the story, (1) 40m Buddha, (2) today is Buddha must visit the black Buddha (sitting Buddha for good luck), (3) SSS Jewelry, (4) also a Buddha but forget name. Then he say take tuk-tuk cheaper and must take government

tuk-tuk (now then i know there are not government tuk-tuk!!), he teach us how to bargain then finally we get 40 baht go all the place he introduce. (The tuk-tuk driver also can speak English n very polite, at first we thought he very respect the officer, now then i know he was try to please the us!!)

The first 40m Buddha is ok, no people talk with us. When we reach second place black Buddha (sitting Buddha), one Thai man accidentally touch my shoulder (now then i know he did it purposely). Just like the previous story, he can speak very good English and claimed that he run a Thai restaurant in USA. In fact, he played the role to explain details, to answer questions, and to lure victims to S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership. The baits (lies) are that 1. the shop is on sale now, only once per year. 2. The shop is the only one controlled by government, so it is much cheaper than any other jewelry shop. 3. Besides, Thailand Ruby's export tax is 100%, very high, so it is the good time to buy 4. I can resell it in my home country to earn my the traveling money. 5. He has done it every years more than 14 years. (He claimed that he wait for the shop's discount every year and comes back to this home country Thailand for vacation.) 6. He showed his purchasing receipt by S.S.S. Jewelry from his wallet to make an image that all he told to me was true.

After that when we try to go out from the temple, another foreign tout talk to us. He talked to me naturally and claimed that he came from London and often visited Thailand. During visiting the temple, he chatted many things with me and mentioned he also bought jewelry from the S.S.S. Jewelry shop every year and resold them on other countries to earn traveling money. Similarly, he showed his purchasing receipts form S.S.S. Jewelry to enhance the those lies!!

After that, we still no intend to go the SSS jewelry cos we have not plan to buy jewelry!! Then i ask the tuk-tuk driver skip the SSS jewelry and go to next temple, and i will pay the same fee. But the tuk-tuk driver insist must go SSS jewelry then go another temple, because the route already confirm. Then we thought he respect the officer so much, and he must follow his instruction to bring us to all the place !! (I really think too much – stupid guy!!) So we just follow to SSS jewelry At the shop we saw few foreign also purchase, so we didn't take caution. We are attract by the jewelry, n the sales people start saying it is the last day of the discount week, only foreign tourists can buy and every tourist only can buy three items. The ruby in their shop is really much cheaper and good quality. Any items sold from this shop only can be for personal use, not allowed for reselling. The jewelry is warranty for life, if later we don't like the design can bring back to change the design!!

Then we are failed into their trap, we bought a ruby with diamond pendant 38,000 baht. Then the manager very 'kind', they will provide safe for the jewelry and send to the hotel on next day we back. Then advise us don't tell people we buy jewelry because dangerous. And advise us take taxi go other place, don't take the same tuk-tuk again. They even stop the taxi for us and we back to our hotel.

After back hotel, we thought we get a good deal. And we start recall today journey, I start worry anything wrong in between, but how I think I still felt the security guard are 'good' man, and impossible to ask other foreign tout to cheat (I was wrong, they are so professional!!) So we just thought everything OK Then the next day morning the delivery man see the jewelry to hotel and then we went to airport. At airport I did check the duty free jewelry, a pair of ear ring 22,000 baht, then my pendant bigger than it cost 38,000 (But I don't know the quality). So I think my pendant still OK Then we back Singapore (21 DEC 2005).

When I back home, I start surf net to check email, happen I was curious how much jewelry tax Thai government charge. Then I found www.2Bangkok.com

*!!! Its too late found out Gems Scam and the SSS jewelry is on the list!!!
Then the next day I go other jewelry shop to see a similar product only
cost SGD400-SGD500 (around 24,000 baht), but I bought the pendant around
SGD1600 (38,000 baht).*

*I think I cant get back my refund, COs I already back Singapore
I have found the photo of Thai man who he can speak very good English
and claimed that he run a Thai restaurant in USA on the Thai gem scam
group website. I had circle the face.*

*I also found the photo of SSS [jewelry
shop manager](#) on the [Thai
gem scam group website](#).*

*Latest Blue Dragon scam: "She had to make
a living somehow" – January 1, 2006*

Latest scam report from [Blue Dragon](#):

*Recently, in August me and my partner were scammed for \$5000NZD at
the Blue Dragon Jewellery Store in Bangkok, the day before we were due
to fly back to NZ at 5 in the morning. Being the inquisitive person
I am, when checking emails I decided to look into how much I would be
able to sell my jewellery for when I reached Tiffanys in Auckland, and
not finding a store by that – I smelt a rat. After some digging,
mainly just typing blue dragon into Google and reading on your site
I discovered I had been had, badly. We called back their "VIP"
driver service and while she did come to get us, it was late and the
store was closed. She first claimed to know nothing about it, then she
admitted she knew full well what they did and claimed she had to make
a living somehow. Unsurprisingly the Tourist Police and Police were
apathetic and unhelpful. Thanks to Thai Airways we were able to change
our flight to stay in the country to return to the store in the morning
and when we did they were all standing outside the store waiting for
us because we had made such a scene with their driver – they obviously
did not want us scaring away their new victims in the store. They started
yelling in Thai at our tuktuk driver to keep going but we jumped from
the moving tuktuk and demanded a refund. The manager of the store came
out, and took us to another location nearby – which was, surprise
surprise, a TOURISM store they are running. She took us into the back
room and refunded us the 80% "buyback". So we lost a \$1000,
but thank god, after reading some of the stories on the site, it wasn't
all or more...*

*I prompt every person who has been had to return to Bangkok, and push
for their 80% buy back, they will honour that (but not happily!). Just
think, if you were going to lose \$10,000 it is worth you plane ticket
back with the chance of getting some of that money back.*

*Incredible gem scam story: [‘Finally,
she became tired and really went crazy, not pretendedly, by her body
language such as her short breadth, shaking shoulders, beating desk
hands, and angrily opened eyes’](#) – December
22, 2005*

*Gem scam: [Piyamanee](#)
– December 20, 2005*

*Gem scam: Blue Dragon – November
23, 2005*

*My girlfriend and I were walking down the street near sleeping Buddha,
and one friendly gentleman walked up to us. He said he was a university
teacher and began to ask us where we have been, as well as ask me about*

sites in his country. Then he told me of a couple places that "we couldn't miss our second last day in Bangkok." He showed us one temple and one jewelry market that we must go, because the temple was opened once a month, luckily, it was "today" and the jewelry shop was only open this week and today was last day. So he called a tuk tuk over to take us to the temple, jewelry market and our hotel and only 30 Baht for the trip. We thought we met a nice guy, so just followed the tuk tuk.

When we arrived the temple (I could not remember the temple name), it was doing innovation, very few people visiting. The time we were going to the jewelry shop, the tuk tuk driver said he need to go toilet, and he went quickly, we were just sitting in the tuk tuk and waiting. At the meanwhile one "kind" man approached us and asked same questions such as where we have been, where we were going etc. when we told him

we were going to that jewelry shop, he looked very surprised and asked me how I knew that news, then he told me something like: the shop only opened one week for students who study in other countries, that was a government policy to support them due to collapsing of economic since 1997, because now government had no more money to support them, that was why they allowed students to bring out the jewelry to sell with very much different prices as scholarship. And most important was the mining of sapphire was decreased, the price of it was increasing every year. He also bought two rings for himself, due to limitation of non-student buyer. Everything looked real, and we very trusted him. After he told us everything, the tuk tuk driver came back and took us to the shop. I purchased two sapphire rings for parents and girlfriend...

The address of the shop is

Blue Dragon factory export center
463/9-12 1st floor

look-luang road, Mahanak Dusit, Bangkok 10300

Once I came back to Singapore, I showed them to my friend who owned a jewelry shop, he says they were only few hundred Singapore dollars which I spent 4,000 Singapore dollars. Finally, I realized that is a scam.

Later: Could you let me know exactly what their advice to you was? TAT told me they will report this to tourist police and usually they will take 2 weeks — 4 weeks to process, and asked me to wait for their news. after that i kept calling the person i spoke to whom is called kunbanjipong (that is what i can remember the name), but they always gave excuses saying the person not in. so i have no idea about that.

By the way, so far i did not contact the Gem store yet, but i asked my friend to come down with all the documents, Gems and my passport as well, but the store kept saying i must come down personally. As you know we signed with the store that we can sell back the gem anytime with 80% of original price?

Later: To:

I have already received your complained from the Office of Tourist Development .The Tourist Police have checked at the Blue Dragon Jewelry company. The shop had agreement refund products in 90% condition that two ring each worth 1. 46,000 baht and 2. 51,900 baht of them have a different price you claimed. Tourist Police have already checked receipt found that is corrected two ring worth 98,300 baht. Please check your receipt again Because you didn't sent it to me,I can't confirm .So jewelry shop had agreement refund money to you 88,470 baht if you

agree bring back jewelry by your or ask your friend action behave on you together with power of attorney contact tourist police.

Best Regards,

Pol. Cap. Kriangkrai Prompakde

Later: *Just want to let you know that i got my 90% of money back last month. like what you said, nobody can get the money back if the person is not in bangkok, i came down to Bangkok again to get my money.*

here just want to say thanks again for your information provided, and hope you can post my story on your website to help more people.

Gem scam: Blue Dragon Factory Export –
November 21, 2005

Great story from tourists who did not get scammed by Blue Dragon:
I would like to inform you about another case of the gem scam. Finally we didn't buy the stories, but the way it was brought to us was very convincing.

On our last day in Thailand, 15 November 2005, we were on our way to the national museum when we were approached by a well dressed "student" in politics. We were on the big square in front of the museum at the time. The guy started a polite conversation in good English and asked where we were staying (khao san road). He told us that the museum was closed for public holiday and that he knew some places we must see: the big standing Buddha, an old temple recently visited by the crown princess of Thailand and some other things. He also asked us if we had heard of the "export". When we said no, he seemed to be surprised, as commercials for the "export" had been all over TV and radio for the last days. This was the last week of the "promotional export" and thus the last opportunity to buy gems for very good prices, actually it was the last day! (at that time we thought it's a little strange that a promotional week ends on Tuesday, so we were careful already). The man approached a tuk tuk driver (an old man, looking trustworthy) and told us we should pay no more than 80 baht for the whole tour, including the promotional at the export. We agreed with the tuk tuk driver and he brought us to the standing Buddha. At this site we were not approached by anyone and afterwards, we were taken to an old temple. We visited this place and afterwards, the tuk tuk was replaced. It was standing next to a beautiful, expensive car, a Toyota fortuner, licence plate number — 6093 (we took a picture of the car). Our driver told us he had to go to the bathroom and we waited near the tuk tuk. A young, very good looking guy who sat on a bench, stood up, opened the car and took place in it. We started a conversation with the guy about the nice car and he told us it was from his father, who worked as a judge in Bangkok (to make the story trustworthy of course). Then he told us that he worked in London for a bank, after finishing his studies in another place in England. He asked us where we were going next. We said to the export and he was very pleasantly surprised that we knew about the place. He told about the way Thai students pay for their studies abroad, buying sapphire jewelry tax-free and selling it in Europe for multiple prices. He told us this system was supported by the Thai Government. Profits were up to 100 percent immediately and 135 percent after 1 year. He was in Bangkok that time, because it was the week of the promotion, the week Thai students were allowed to buy the gems. He also told about the once in a lifetime opportunity for tourists, only this week they were allowed to buy the precious gems for the same prices as the Thai students. His friends from England came over this week to buy gems. He told that we should not say that we were interested in buying for

investment, because then we should not be allowed to buy anything. We should say it was for souvenir. He told about Japanese tourists who were kicked out of the export because they accidentally said they would use the gems for investment. Their money was refunded but they were not allowed to buy anything from the export anymore. He also told about the closure of the Thai sapphire mines, because of exhausting. To be short, he made it a very convincing, trustworthy story, full of believable details. He also asked us about our credit cards (what kind). He talked for an hour. When we finished our pleasant conversation, our tuk tuk driver came back, apologizing for the long visit to the toilet (saying he had stomach-problems or so). We said good-bye to the friendly student and the driver took us to the export.

When we came to the site, we were surprised. It was de Blue Dragon Factory Export. This is where their scam went wrong, because more than a week before, we were taken to the same store by another tuk tuk driver (without the whole circus around it). So much for things as "only one promotional week etcetera". We saw the story through, but decided to play a little longer (let them work for their scam!). We went into the store and were treated with high regards. We admired the beautiful stones and after a great effort of the salespersons to make us buy the stones, when stood up and left the building. Our nice tuk tuk driver seemed to have become another person. He was a little aggressive and yelled about petrol coupons and that he would take us to another place, something very big (?). We told him to bring us back to khao San road, as agreed, but he persisted in taking us to another place first. We can also be very convincing though, and finally he brought us, uninterrupted, back to the place we asked. Here ends our story. Fortunately we didn't get scammed, but we didn't see the museum either. But the warning is clear: be aware, keep thinking about the thing said to you, they are still out there, they are still active!





Gem scam comic – November

1, 2005

In a [thread on the forum](#), jpatokal points out a [Japanese gem scam comic](#).

Latest gem scam report: SSS Jewelry
– October 31, 2005

A reader writes: *I came for the 1st time in Bangkok for 3 days on transit on my way back home from Australia.*

I never heard from gem scam before and during the 1st day (on my way to Grand Palace), almost the same story than the "S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership (May 14, 2004)" happened to me. I used to be very suspicious and the first guy came to me I was! But it didn't implies

anything for me and I thought "lets go have a look,..." The way I was convinced was when I met the friendly French (my first language), who told me approximately the same than in the story and also show me a receipt... same story, they just gave me free day city tourseeing with one of the employee after the purchases.

I was aware about the gem scam in the evening when I read a bit more my travel book (thanks Lonely Planet). I jumped on a computer and searched on google with the "sss jewellery scams" keywords and the first results was your website. I learned that my credit card was canceled and the transaction suspended (thanks to the security part of my bank didn't find normal a such big amount in Bangkok after a 3 months with low amount in Australia). We decide with my bank to cancel the card and all operations on my credit card until my return, but they told me that the transaction will be done until nothing can prove that was is illegal or fraudulent After a bad night, I phoned to my embassy (I was lucky enough to have the sister of a friend working there...) who gave me the procedure. I've been to the tourist police (wasn't very helpful from my point of view) who told me to go to the S.S.S. Jewelry to ask a refund. I arrived there, and told them the story with my credit card, that I have almost no more money until my return back home, pushed a loads of pressure (tell the tourist police to put their name in the report, asking the 2 different address given by my embassy to prove the value of the gems to be able to cancel the contract, telling them I gonna stay in front of their shop until I leave to tell everybody who want enter about their practices...).

After something more than one hour and an half I finally obtained a refund of almost 93%.

I was lucky to learn about the gem scam before I leave Thailand, it's just a shame that for this reason, I'm not going to leave this country with a good impression of this country (everybody around me who where in Thailand told me it's a great country with very "friendly" people). Here was my "bad story", hope can help other people to get around!

Gem scam report: SSS Jewelry –
October 14, 2005

A reader sends his account of the scam: *This is to report my recent Gem Scam at Bangkok.*

First of all, Thank-You for setting up this website. It is very helpful.

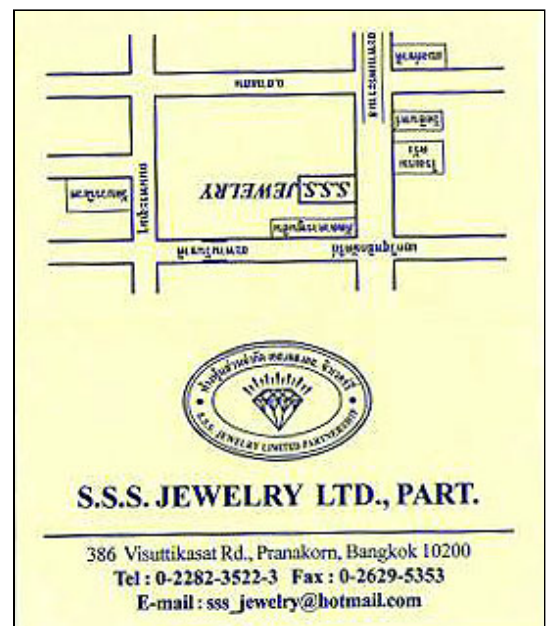
Secondly, I just found out that it is not necessary greed that got the victims. It is important for people to know that, since I'd never thought of that before. I was just so happened to be thinking about buying something for my mother, and the price seems to be

something I can afford.

Date: September 29, 2005

Location: Bangkok, 386 Visuttikasat Rd., Pranakorn, Bangkok

Result: received 100% credit back onto my credit card, but paid 5% cash to the store for credit card charges.



Approx. 10a.m.

– got out of the hotel.

– approached by a Tuk Tuk taxi driver, telling me the place I was going was not going to be open to public until 2 p.m. because it was Buddha day etc...

- taxi propose to drive me to a few other tourist attractions before dropping me to my original destination. (1. Big Buddha, 2. Sitting Buddha, 3. SSS Export Center, 4. River Boat, 5. King Palace.)
- met these so called tourist at Sitting Buddha, telling me stories about the Expo and Thai government 7 days special on tax free jewelry.
- I wasn't aware of it, because buying jewelry was not on my list.
- went to this SSS jewelry shop. They weren't pushy on selling the jewelry I was thinking about getting something for my mother. It seems okay, since the price is something I can afford, and I can pay by credit card, as well as it comes with a certificate. (I was counting on my credit card protection, working with the certificate.)
- got back to the hotel, and found out from your website that it is a scam.
- called my credit card company to have this on file.
- went to the local Tourist Police station, and spoke to the police.
- the tourist police soften up after hearing this is on the US Embassy website.
- The store manager was trying to get me to go to their store to talk this over, and I refused.
- With the help of the police, I was able to get 100% credited back onto my credit card. They asked for a 5% cash, for the service charge they have to pay for the credit card company.
- tried to contact Mr. Manat Soiploy by phone and email, and have not receive a response from him...

Gem scam report: Piyamanee

– August 10, 2005

This letter illustrates how the police have been dealing with the scam lately—simply claiming there is nothing they can do because the stores are doing nothing illegal.

2Bangkok.com Staff,

In May of 2005 I was the victim of the Piyamanee gem scam. My embarrassing story was identical to the [May](#)

[25th posting on your website](#) – same wats, same set-up, same American involvement (Brad Hammer – I'll tear out his jugular if I ever see him again), even the same fake email address was used.

I came across your website and scam postings a few weeks ago. Luckily, I had the opportunity to return to Bangkok a few days ago.

I visited the tourist police office, where an incredibly helpful interpreter sympathized with my situation. She indicated that, unfortunately, this is a common story... but there was nothing she could do because these bastards are "not doing anything officially illegal." She did mention that I was lucky that Piyamanee was still in business.

When I went to return my jewelry today for the shameful 80% refund, I was not greeted by the smiling, uniformed staff of my first visit.

Instead, scowling, plainly-clad women looked at me with confusion. When I entered the store, my heart sank as I saw that their entire inventory had been removed. The store looked closed. When I inquired about returning my ring, they were hesitant at first, but then began the return process diligently.

As I waited for my refund, I was told by a middle-aged man that the store had gone out of business and that I was lucky I hadn't shown up a few days later, as they will be closed for good. This sketchy guy was probably lying through his teeth... it's likely that they are just changing locations and name.

I can only hope that other scammed individuals that are still in Bangkok can get there before it's too late.

It's not a happy ending, but it's better that it could have been. I

can't thank you enough for your helpful website and advice. Without your selfless contribution to the better good, my financial losses would have significantly greater. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I hope that your staff continues to stay abreast of the latest mischief in Bangkok. If there is anything else I can do to help, please let me know.

*Thank you again,
An American tourist in Bangkok*

PDA-friendly

list: Bangkok gem scams – May 30, 2005

John from Isan writes: *My brother-in-law plans to come to Bangkok for some gem shopping in the near future. I condensed the bare details of your Gem Scam section and sent it to him for downloading to his handheld computer (or Palm Pilot). Maybe it would be helpful to your other website readers. Since police won't help, it all boils down to the availability of easily-retrieved information for friends and contacts to get a hold of.*

Gem scamming at an all-time high: Piyamanee story – May 28, 2005



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Gem scamming at an all-time high – April 26, 2005

2Bangkok.com has been receiving 2-3 scam reports a day over the last few months—an all-time high since we began monitoring the scam in 1990. Almost all reports concern Piyamanee (468-470 Bamroongmuang Rd. Thapsirin, Pompapsattupai) and Blue Dragon Export (436/9-12, Loog-Luang Road, Mahannak, Dusit). We have also been receiving reports from RS Siam Export Centre Co Ltd (Chula Soi 12, Pathumwan, not far from the Chula Soi 6 former scam shop). Other scam shops still open are Yindee (1091/75-77 Petchburi Rd, Soi 33, near D'Ma Pavilion Hotel, Makasan) and S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership (386 Visuttikasat Road, Banpantom, Pranakorn).

The shops are bolder than ever, even putting large 'TAT' (Tourism Authority of Thailand) signs on the front of their shops. In any event, tourist should be wary of locations with 25-30 tuk-tuks parked in front. This is a sign that tuk-tuks are used to hunt out and bring in tourists to the shop.

As we wrote in December, 2004 ([Gem scam flourishing](#)), 2Bangkok.com has learned that the government has abandoned efforts to deal with the scam in the face of terror fears in Bangkok—especially around tourist areas downtown where the stores are protected. Gem stores are no longer being forced to change names to continue operating as before. When disgruntled tourists want refunds, authorities have devised a temporarily workaround using Department of Internal Trade rules that state tourists are entitled to a 70-80% refund under any circumstances. This rule is used to quickly compensate scammed tourists without having to report the store as a scam shop. This allows the case to be settled and the store to continue operating. Only tourists lucky enough to still be in the country get refunded and most people never realize they had been duped. In addition, all stores get tourists to sign forms stating no refund is possible and that the gems are not for resale. They also provide a generic guarantee of authenticity certificate. Neither of these forms has an address. If possible, the store will neglect to give the seller a receipt. In the past during these peak scamming periods when publicity began to turn negative, the government invariably responded with an announcement that all scamming has ended. This has not happened yet, but we make the prediction that such an announcement is likely under the present circumstances.

Latest Blue Dragon scam report – March 8, 2005

A scam victim writes: *Myself and a friend only had two days in Bangkok, and did not know how we should spend our time. Due to our short visit I did not research Bangkok or buy a Lonely Plant book I just thought we would make it up as we go. We walked into a temple which was across the road from our hotel. Not being there for long we were approached by a man who gave us an idea what we should with the remainder of our time. He mentioned three sights that we should visit and he also mentioned the Thai Export Centre. We met a Tuk-Tuk driver outside of the temple where we had been visiting and he proceeded to take us to our first stop, which was a temple which contained a black Buddha which was supposed to be 600 years old and bring good luck. After a short time looking around this temple we were approached by a local man who could not believe that we had turned up to this scared site by chance, as he had driven ten hours to visit the Buddha as he had recently been married and wanted to bring luck to his new family. Of course he had a story; he mentioned that due to Chinese new year the Thai Export Centre was selling jewelry without the usual 150% export tax, and he often bought jewelry to fund his trips to Australia to visit family. He mentioned that many Thai students conduct the same exercise in order to fund their studies whilst in Australia. He went on to say that the Thai government has authorised this discount as they want more tourists to come to Thailand. He also pointed out that we should not mention that we intended to sell the ring as the Export Centre would not sell us the jewelry. Finally he also said that it was a secret and that we should not tell anyone else as it was a Thai secret. This local guy must have been up for an academy award as we both took the story hook line and sinker and purchased a ring for \$1400 AUD. Upon my return to Australia I have often thought that Thailand is a great place as the people are friendly and I wished I had spent more time in the country, that is up until I have read the other stories of people getting scammed. I don't think I will ever go back to Thailand, but if I do I promise to*

make another visit to the same temple and hope that I am again approached as I am bound to do something involving my fist and his head.

Calling all Blue Dragon scam victims

– December 18, 2004

In 2004, while gem scamming reached new highs (according to the reports we receive), the government took action. They simply declared the problem solved while the stores remained open. A victim of [Blue Dragon](#) is organizing a lawsuit against them. If you are a victim [email](#) us and we will put you in contact with him.

Blue Dragon

strikes again – November 13, 2004

A victim writes: I am writing to inform on my bad experience with "Blue Dragon Factory Export Centre." I wished I had seen your website earlier, and read about the scams prior to my trip to Bangkok in April 2004.

We were told at Grand Palace that the place was closed due to King's visit. Anyway to cut the story short, we ended up at Blue Dragon Factory Export Centre.

The sales manager explained on the "Sapphire Sale" and how it was meant to benefit the tourists and students. We were told about how much money we could make by reselling the greatly discounted Sapphire back in the UK. The sales manager of Blue Dragon even showed us a few business cards of reputable Jewelers in the UK that would offer us a good price for the Sapphire. Well, thinking it would end up being a self-financed trip, we selected several items amounting to £8,200. Payment was made using three credit cards.

As there were changes to be done, the manager at Blue Dragon offered to amend the pieces at no charge, and to deliver the items to our hotel the following day. The items were not delivered as promised the next day and instead we were told that it would be couriered within a week to our UK home address.

The pieces never came, and our persistent International calls to Blue Dragon were either not answered or transferred till eternity. We finally decided to put a stop to the credit card payment. It has since been 6 months; Blue Dragon is still disputing the stop-payment action with fictitious documents and witnesses. It is frustrating that our holiday to Bangkok was marred by the scams carefully laid by such "jewelers."

S.S.S. Jewelry foiled –

October 29, 2004

A reader writes: I'm writing to say thank you for putting all this information about a gem scam online. I have just came back from Thailand and also was involved into this affair. Luckily I read your web side before I left the country. I wanted just to see if there is any information about the store I bought 2 rings, over 1000 Euro. And I was terrified what I found out.

Next morning I started to look for some help and get my money back.

I followed your advice given online and at the end of



(Photo: Anthony Mak)

*the day I
got 100% of my money back!!!
I need to say that without help of Tourist Police
located just on
the corner with Tourism Authority of Thailand few
blocks from
S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership at 386
Visuttikasat Road, Banpantom,
Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200 I wouldn't have been
refunded.*

Yindee Lapidary strikes again

– October 4, 2004

Another tourist had their trip to Thailand ruined
by Yindee Lapidary. He emailed several local agencies asking for help,
but, as usual, none responded. Then he sent his story to *The New
Paper* who gave it a [write](#)

[up](#). 2Bangkok.com has been puzzling over

Yindee and wondering about the protection it receives. It is well outside
the downtown area where shops protected by officials. And it does not
use the pool of employees used by the downtown stores. The entire setup
has a more permanent feel than the downtown shops. The fact that this
shop has been operating under the same name for two years indicates
confidence in their protection and untouchability. More on [Yindee](#).

Latest scam report from S.S.S. Jewelry

on Visuttikasat Road – June 28, 2004

*...Me and my boyfriend have just returned from Thailand. We had been
saving up the money to go for over a year and I had always wanted to
visit Thailand for as long as I can remember.*

Now, sitting at home I feel that I have had the worst holiday ever!!!

*The country was beautiful and some of the people were very nice. However
we were cheated out of money at every opportunity, taxis, tuk-tuks,
gifts, clothes and the most sickening jewelry. While*

*in Thailand I found out I had passed my exams and would be graduating
from university after four years. As a gift my boyfriend brought me
some jewelry (preceded by the nice men telling us all about Thailand
and the amazing offers available on jewelry), which has been valued
at £400 in England, and we paid £850 in Bangkok. Do the*

*people of Thailand think that just because we are from England we have
an endless pot of money that can be given away to rich Thai jewelers?...*

*If you have read through this email thank you and I would be very grateful
if you could warn other people about s.s.s. Jewelry ltd, 386 Visuttikasat
Road, Banpantom, Bangkok 10200*

S.S.S. Jewelry on Visuttikasat Road

– June 4, 2004

Anthony Mak reports on the latest gem scam shop within blocks from the
main Tourism Authority of Thailand office:

*I would like to confirm the recent story about S.S.S. Jewelry posted
on your web site.*

My wife and me were approached 2 times (31st of May, and 1st of June).

*First time by an "English teacher" on Khao San Road, second
time at the exit of BTS National Stadium station. For whatever reason,
they always claim a very low price tuk-tuk ride to raise people's interest,
my turn was 20 baht per hour; because of tourist promotion by government.*

*We took the proposal and eventually reached the shop, took a glance
and left. Then probably the tuk-tuk driver knew we did not make any
purchase, he just drove us to a nearby pier and drop us off!*

Latest gem scam shop: S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership – May 13, 2004
S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership at 386 Visuttikasat Road, Banpantom, Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200 is using touts (both Thai and foreigners) at Wat Pho and the Grand Palace to lure tourists in with the same old promises of 100% profit when gems are resold outside of Thailand.

Sources at TAT informed us in the past how they felt humiliated to have such activities so damaging to tourism just a few blocks from their offices and be unable to do anything about it.

We also have another report from Yindee and one from Blue Dragon. As we mentioned in the past it seems that the gem scam shops are only targeting Asian tourists these days. The only reports we are getting are from Malaysian, Hong Kong, Singaporean and Taiwanese tourists.

Another from Blue Dragon

The highly protected store strikes again... The full report is [here](#). Some of the most interesting comments from the victim:

Today I went to the Tourist Police to lodge a complaint. The lady I spoke to was so unhelpful and was very patronizing towards me. However, I stood my ground and was very firm with her stating that I had been told lies and had been cheated by the shop. After a few minutes she told me to take a seat and a representative from the shop would be there shortly...

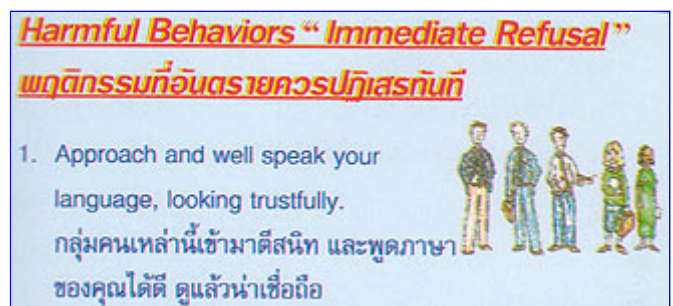
Rotating staff at gem scam stores
– April 1, 2004

It is well known that the single powerful cartel that runs the Bangkok gem scam stores rotates staff from store to store once a store changes names. The Thai Gem Scam Group points this out: *We got a scam update on [Blue Dragon](#), and it appears that a driver for Universal/Majestic is now working for them. This is the [character](#) in question. We've identified him as "Loi" on [our site here](#).*

Tourist Police anti-gem scam brochure –
January 8, 2004

This brochure is being given away at the Tourist Police Office in the south end of Don Muang Terminal 1. Despite the anguished English, at least someone is trying to alert the public. We were impressed to see our long-standing advice that “real” Thais do not just walk up to strangers and strike up a friendly conversation being featured in the brochure. It was stunning to see mention of the gold shops in relation to the scam. The front and back of the brochure is here-> [146kb](#) and [130kb](#).

The Tourist Police Office also has a bulletin board in front of the office with photos and stories of how the Tourist Police helped travelers (this appears to be updated monthly).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Latest scam report for Leela

– December 11, 2003

Latest Leela scam report: *I was offered a 20 baht city tour by a*

"tuk tuk" driver outside the hotel that covered a few temples.

After finish touring the first temple, I wanted to go to the second destination, and the driver said he wanted to go to toilet and leave me alone in the car park, then I was approached by another Thai, he said that he has a restaurant in Germany and coming back to Thailand for holiday. Then he said that this week is the last week that we can buy cheap rubies and sapphires as they are having promotion here in Thailand, and also mining in Laos has shutdown so the price of gems will increase next year. Then he showed me a receipt telling me that he has bought a few items from a shop call LeeLa. Then the driver returned and offer to bring me to the shop where I spent 11,000 baht. (The gems were later appraised to be worth a much less.)

Gem

scam report from the Loog-Luang Road location

– December 8, 2003

436/9-12, Loog-Luang Road, Mahannak,
Dusit—one of the best-protected
gem scam locations.

See how easily the former shop (Imperial
Jewelry

Export Co. Ltd.-**below right**) is reopened
under a new name

(Blue Dragon Factory Export Center Co.
Ltd.-**right**).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com, December 2003)

Names of scam shops operating from this
location in the past:

Imperial Jewelry Export Co. Ltd. (last
report mid-2003)

Ma Mere Gems Collection Co., Ltd.
(last report December, 2000)

Blue Sapphire Gem Co., Ltd. (last report
October, 2000)

TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd. (last report July,
2000)

Latest scam report (November 2003): *I was on the street and was approached by a Thai telling me that today is birthday of lucky Buddha and said that I should go there since I were Buddhist. Then he helped me to arrange the "Tuk Tuk" to go to the temple. Upon arriving there, it was not many people around and then I was approached by another Thai saying that most of the people are chatting inside. Then he introduced himself as a PR in Singapore and having a Thai restaurant near orchard road, then he told me the Ruby and Sapphire going to have price increase due to mining in Laos will be closed soon, he then showed me a receipt when he bought a few Ruby and Sapphire from a shop called "Blue Dragon", and said that today is the last day for*

the promotion. He said that he will sell those ruby and sapphire once he go back to Singapore and said that he can easily earn double the investment as what he did last year. He offered me to visit him in Singapore to help me to sell if I can't get a good price in Malaysia. He gave me his tel number in Singapore (which I tried and it is not working) and his restaurant website (again the URL does not exist). Then the driver fetched me to the second shop called blue dragon and I spent 64,600 baht there. (The gems were later appraised to be worth a few hundred ringgit.)

This store was the first (that we know of) to try to protect itself by making customers sign a [declaration](#). The customer must hand-write "Souvenir for family—not for resale."



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com, January 2003)

436/9-12 Loog-Luang Road

– December 5, 2003

Despite the government's declarations that there are no more gem scam stores, the stores are still open and cheating tourists as usual. Indeed, on the day the government announced all the rogue stores were closed, we received several scam reports and the group of downtown locations that we have followed for a decade were all open.

The 436/9-12 Loog-Luang Road location is operating under the name "Blue Dragon." This is one of the best-protected locations. Tourists who complained were interrogated by the police and told they risked getting beaten up by gem gangs if they pursued their cases further. Presently the shop is called **Blue Dragon**, before that, **Imperial Jewelry Export Co. Ltd.**, before that, **Ma Mere Gems Collection Co., Ltd.**, before that, **Blue Sapphire Gem Co., Ltd.**, before that, **TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd.**...

Each reopening of the Loog-Luang Road location is attended by several... high officials. We have attempted to be ready during one of these reopenings to photograph the proceedings, but we always miss it. There will be more to report on this location soon.

[Gem scam](#)

[refund](#) – November 17, 2003

[New](#)

[Tourist Police chief & more gem scamming from Leela Lapidary](#)

– August 14, 2003

[Police](#)

[raid Gems Gallery](#) – *Bangkok Post*,

July 12, 2003

Tourists claimed the shop had sold them poor-quality, overpriced jewellery.

Scamming the gem shops –

June 20, 2003

A tourist with time on his hands who teamed up with a tuk-tuk driver:
...It was 1997 and I hit Bangkok after swinging thru England and Europe on a three month "round the world" trip. After a few weeks in Ko Samui I need to return to BKK to replenish my funds thru a money transfer which ended up taking 3 days... during my previous stays in

Bangkok I had befriended a tuk tuk driver who called himself "Tony" and always searched him out for the precise reason that he had never taken me for the "scam ride."

Well, this time I was well short of the funds... Normally I would have Tony take me to my venue of choice, pay him a very reasonable rate plus invite him to a beer or two because he always shared some tidbit of info and was good with a joke.

After telling him of my situation he suggested he could help me out if I was willing to reverse the scam with him. Seeing that I still had a day to wait for my cash infusion I took him up on his offer. I spent the afternoon going from gem shop to gem shop spending at least 20 minutes ohhing and ahhing, basically acting like a tourist with more money than sense while Tony collected his cut for bringing a sap to the fleecier. The hard part was escaping, but they always seemed to believe that I had to return to my hotel for cash. Twice the shops sent someone along with us to my hotel. In both cases I insisted the tout from the shop wait in the lobby while I slipped out the side entrance to meet Tony around the corner, down the street.

We hit five places that afternoon and later that evening Tony treated me to a great dinner at a little storefront cafe with Singas and a few shots of "snake water" with all on the money he made "setting me up"...

[Owner of gem shop to face fraud charges](#) – Bangkok

Post, May 30, 2003

Police confiscated 30 million baht worth of jewellery items from the three-storey First International Lapidary Co Ltd on Rama VI road for quality checks. They also arrested seven tuk-tuk drivers luring foreign tourists to the shop and charged them with causing a public disturbance.

Plenty of gem scamming – May 22, 2003

We received our first scam report from Gems Palace (115/1-3 Prachathipatai Road, Bangkhunprom, Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200), a shop we had been watching for some time. This shop employs a French man who meets tourists near the Grand Palace with friendly advice about how much money can be made at the store. The shop is just a few units away from the notorious 121-123/125 Prachathipatai Road scam location which is presently called Kawin Gems. We have also received reports of gem scam shops offering to let customers pay by Mastercard, however the charge made is a cash advance directly from Thai Military Bank (Banglaphu branch). Like similar situations with Visa, the local Mastercard company does not seem concerned that known gem scam shops have credit card machines that say "Thai Military Bank" and are using them directly on their premises. Tourists who think their purchases are protected because they paid by credit card are surprised to find the transaction booked as a cash advance directly from Thai Military Bank. A "young American named Brad" is helping lure tourists in with stories of how he makes a 110% profit by reselling Thai gems in San Francisco.

[Move to stamp out 'Zero Dollar' gem tours](#)

Many tourists had given up on Thailand after hearing about firms offering Chinese "free" tours on condition that they buy jewellery, which turns out to be poor quality and over-priced...

Asset

clamp threat for gem stores – Bangkok

Post, May 8, 2003

The scams hurt tourism and affected the country's competitive edge in the gems trade. He cited one incident in which potential Chinese customers who heard about the scams turned away from a Thai gem exhibition staged in China. Mr Korn said tourist complaints against jewellery shops made little headway as tourists often had to return home before legal action could be taken. The proprietors, meanwhile, reopened their shops under new names and at new locations to continue cheating.

Typical response to the gem scam – April 24, 2003

An anonymous response (signed "Tourist Assistance Centre") to a tourist cheated by the gem scam store Mahachai. Mahachai closed in September, 2002 and immediately reopened as Chalermthai which closed in December 2002. Earlier in 2002, the shop was called Benjarong (until March 8, 2002), U-Thong, and Chalermkeht (late 2001-early 2002). Changing the name like this prevents the store owners from having to pay refunds.

—Original Message—

From: Tourist Assistance Centre

Subject: The Jewelry Purchased from Mahachai Co., Ltd., Bangkok

Dear ,

Kindly refer to our e-mail dated February 7, 2003 concerning the jewelry you purchased from "Mahachai" located in Bangkok.

Please be informed that we have forwarded your case to the Tourist Police Division for preliminary investigation. According to their report, the store has permanently ceased its business operations without giving any notice. As a result, the police officer could not find any responsible person to negotiate for the refund on your behalf.

However, to take legal action against the store, you are advised to file the official police report with the inquiry officer in person or authorize any representative (an attorney) to do so on your behalf.

The representative should be able to provide all details of the incident for the judicial process; in some cases the complainant will be asked to proceed to the court for testimony. Therefore, we would like to request the complainant, who wishes to act against the store, to directly forward the case to an attorney. For more information on legal action, please contact the Tourist Police Division, Section 5, Sub-division 2 at Tel. (662) 281-5051 or E-mail: tourist@police.go.th .

Please kindly understand that we have considered this problem a serious matter and have uninterruptedly endeavored to solve it. We have coordinated with the concerned authorities to join in an effort in initiating prompt action and seeking practical and effective measures to discontinue such unfair practice. We also published special leaflets that aim at exposing this gem racket to be distributed to tourists in various places.

We are sorry that the matter has turned out this way and sincerely hope that you would understand the situation.

Yours sincerely,

Tourist Assistance Centre

Tourism Authority of Thailand

(<http://www.tat.or.th>)

Gem scam

shops try to protect themselves – April 20, 2003

We received yet another scam report about the well-protected Look-Luang Road location. The location is the key. The store just changes names occasionally so the authorities can claim nothing can be done to get refunds for cheated tourists. This shop is also using a new tact to attempt to be immune from charges of lying to and overcharging tourists—having purchasers sign a declaration that says the following:

- 1. We are not a government shop but we are registered by the Ministry of Trade and Commerce.*
- 2. Goods purchased are not refundable but if you're not satisfied you're entitle to change any items within 3 months.*
- 3. All goods purchased are strictly for personal use or for souvenir only and no refund is possible.*



However victims/customers are still reeled in by touts who hang out in front of Thai cultural attractions with promises that tourists can resell gems overseas for big profits. It will be interesting to see if the shop stands by the exchange promise. The victim reports: *I was one of those who got scammed, just as you describe it here on your site. On April 7, 2003 I was visiting Bangkok after working there and, while shopping, we were taken to a temple where we met a friendly fellow who directly us to buy jewelry for cheap.*

Attached please find my receipts and "verification" of the worth of the items – a necklace and matching earrings from Imperial Jewelry Export Co., Ltd. 463/9-12 Look-Luang Road, Mahanak, Dusit, Bangkok, 10300 Thailand.

Since discovering your site, I have halted payment on my credit card and will had the items appraised. Worth about \$400, total—paid about \$1200. Going to refuse payment on my credit card, send it back... Thank you for existing and warning others about this – it's a shame I learned it too late. Among the many names this store has operated under in the past are Ma Mere Gems Collection Co., Ltd, Blue Sapphire Gem Co., Ltd, and TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd.

[PM](#)
[aims to stop scams by jewellery shops](#) –
Bangkok Post, April 6, 2003

The crackdown will become particularly tough from the end of this month when the war on drugs finishes, Mr Thaksin said on his weekly Saturday radio show. "Many tourists will again come to Thailand when the Iraq war and the Sars scare end. On their arrival, tourists will see only the right things and there must be no more cheating..."

**TOURIST POLICE, SECTION 5, SUB-DIVISION 2
JEWELRY COMPLAINT FORM**

[Burapa Lapidary](#)
– March 26, 2003

Another typical scam from last year, but this one has plenty of official papers including the scam shop's business registration papers and the police form for jewelry complaints that ends with the question, "What would you like the police to do for you?" Burapa is already closed and the scammed tourist was told he could not get his money back.

[Fund](#)
[to protect gem buyers?](#) – *The Bangkok Post*,
March 18, 2003

This happens periodically—the authorities feel compelled to make some kind of gesture to show they are dealing with the gem scam when in reality it is just a case of public relations. It's hard to start on what's wrong with the latest plan:

Shops guilty of overpricing risk losing their licences... The scam shops are not licensed—they run under police protection.

...in addition to penalties of up to seven years in jail and/or a 140,000-baht fine. As any of the downtown police officers or TAT officials will tell you, all the store has to do is change its name and there's nothing that can be done.

...according to last year's records, about 20 foreign tourists were deceived... This is most likely a reporter's error—about 20 tourists a day are cheated.

The new measure calls for shops that are members of the Thai Gem and Jewellery Traders' Association to set up a fund to be used to make refunds to customers who are not satisfied with goods purchased. Again, the gem shops are unlicensed and none are members of the Thai Gem and Jewellery Traders' Association.

Non-member shops must place a bank guarantee at the Business Development Department is required. As long as they are unlicensed, this will not help.

There's no mention at all of the gold shops who are behind the entire racket.

Tough

new rules to target gem scams – *Business Day*,

March 7, 2003

Authorities are once again promising to do something about the gem scam.

At the same time, 2Bangkok.com is still receiving scam reports from the venerable Loog-Luang Road location: ...*Adisai said the prime minister wanted something done soon because he feared the country's image was being tarnished by poor practice in the industry...* *Business Day* also mentions the [Thaigem.com](#)

[gem scam warning](#) 2Bangkok.com first reported on last week. MCOT also has [the story](#):

Mr Wattana said that under new legislation proposed by the prime minister, tourists would be able to return gemstones or jewellery that did not meet the specified standard, weight or quantity within 48 hours of purchase...He conceded that two days might not be enough for foreign tourists to prove whether or not their purchases were genuine.

Thaigem.com gem scam warning

– March 2, 2003

This flyer is being handed out to tourists on Silom Road in downtown Bangkok. It is a good example of a local gem dealer taking measures into their own hands and warning people about the gem scam. The Tourism Authority of Thailand has never mounted more than a passive campaign despite abundant evidence of scores of tourists cheated *every day* for *decades*. And those entering Thailand on the national airline are still told Thailand is a good place to buy gems without a word of warning.

Burapa Lapidary

Another typical scam from last year, but this one has plenty of official

papers including the scam shop's business registration papers and the police form for jewelry complaints that ends with the question, "What would you like the police to do for you?" Burapa is already closed and the scammed tourist was told he could not get his money back.

[Gold shops laundering drug money](#) – *Bangkok Post*,
February 6, 2003

We posted this article only because 2Bangkok.com has been alleging for some time that Bangkok gold shops are really behind the gem scam...



Above -121-123/125 Prachatipatai Road scam shop immediately after being closed early in January, 2003. This location is now doing business again as Kawin Gems.

Dheves Gems reopens as Kawin Gems
– January 25, 2003

The 121-123/125 Prachatipatai Road location has changed names again. Just two weeks ago the shop was closed and now it is already doing business again under a new name (names are changed so the shop does not have to pay refunds to cheated tourists). Formerly, it was Dheves and before that Marin Gems. We have not received any scam reports about Kawin yet, but considering how many times this location has changed names, it would be crazy to trust them. Also: The 318 Krungkasem Road location around the corner (former home of scam shop Orchid) also shows signs of being refurbished.

Imperial Jewellery Export Co. Ltd
– January 24, 2003

We've received another scam report from 436/9-12, Loog-Luang Road, Mahannak, Dusit – Same location for over three years—only the name changes periodically. Previous shops in this location were Ma Mere Gems Collection Co. Ltd, Blue Sapphire Gem Co. Ltd, TGJ Thai Center Co. Ltd. This is a slick-looking shop operating from one of the best-protected locations. Tourists who complained were interrogated by the police and told they risked getting beaten up by gem gangs if they pursued their cases further.

Yindee's fame – January
5, 2003

We are getting more and more reports on Yindee and the shop is turning up in the international press too. Asiaone.com has a [story all about Yindee](#). Here's a blog entry about some tourists to Thailand who [narrow missed being scammed by Yindee](#). Our map to the store is [here](#). Here's a [typical Yindee scam report](#). It is

likely that all this exposure means they will be closing soon to avoid legal action and paying refunds.

Who runs the gem scam?

– January 3, 2003

Bang (or Hang) Thong Thong Bai/Ranghang Thong Thong Bai gold shop is one of linchpins of the gem scam. It is used to cover the money trail by giving cash advances on credit cards and selling gold to tourists which is exchanged for overpriced jewels. What this means is that all the money from many gem scam shops is flowing back into this gold shop, but why isn't this shop ever mentioned in any "official" discussions of the scam? With perseverance, you can demand police file reports on the gem shops and eventually the gem shops will have to change their names, but police outright refuse to mention this gold shop in reports.

We have obtained the [ID card](#) for the "manager" of the shop, Mr. Suvit. And there's also some more details and graphics added to this [in-depth scam report](#).

Unprecedented:

Police arrest scammers for assaulting tourists

– *Bangkok Post*, December 24, 2002

Thewet Gems Shop (also spelled Thaevej) is a shop renowned for openly beating up foreigners who complain against it. *The Nation* reported Thewet had "dozen fraud and physical-assault charges" filed against it and although it has been blacklisted by police (meaning it has to be closed), it remains open because "influential persons in uniform" protect it.

Yindee Lapidary Co. Ltd

It's the high season for tourism and all the gem scam shops are scamming as never before. Here's another one from Yindee at 1091/75-77, Petchburi Rd. Soi 33, Makasan Bangkok 10400 Thailand. Tel: 253-1540-1, Fax: 651-6784.

We went to Thailand in the hopes of having a wonderful honeymoon and now the whole experience has been overshadowed by this incident. We were very disappointed that such things happened to us and the local authorities did not inform us of such scams

One day in Bangkok: Nine tourists/1,204,320 baht scammed/police refuse to help

– December 19, 2002

Here's an incredibly detailed report from October 17, 2002 that shows the extent of the gem scamming on a single day. In five of the cases the infamous goldsmith Hang Thong Thong Bai/Ranghang Thong Thong Bai was involved—and don't bother to file a report against them—the police will refuse to take it.

The

Nation: gem scam protected by "influential persons in uniform"

– December 11, 2002

It seems that twice yearly the local papers write stories on the venerable gem scam. *The Nation* has a pretty good one today that includes the first ever admission we have seen (in English) that police are powerless: *Sanit said some jewellery-fraud networks were under the protection of "influential persons in uniform" and named one such major shop that continues to operate even after being included in an 18-store blacklist. "All the other stores have been closed*

down; this one is still open," he said. They do cop out on mentioning actual shop names except for Thaevej Gems (the shop famous for being able to openly beat up tourists who complain).

The Nation includes a link to 2bangkok.com, but the link is wrong.

The local papers have never gotten a link to this site correct when the link is to one of our inside pages. The article does mention what 2b has suspected from the volume of scam stories we have received this year: Over the past 10 months, tourist police have received almost 700 jewellery fraud complaints compared to 535 cases for the whole of last year.

Dheves Gem Company, Ltd. still open and scamming

– December 8, 2002

Remember this address: Dheves Gem Company, Ltd., 121-123/125 Prachatipatai Rd., Bangkhunprom Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200 Thailand, Tel: 0-2629-3516-17, Fax: 0-2629-3519. Dheves has been scamming for some time under its present name. Formerly it was called Marin Gems.

[Orchid says it is a government](#)

[shop](#) – November 11, 2002

Another vacation ruined. This scam shop was formerly called **Phanfa** (last report July 2002) and before that, **Thai Mining**, all in the same location.

From an email we received: I have spent wonderful 10 days in Thailand, enjoying great Thailand history monuments, meeting very friendly and deeply religious Thai people. I really felt great respect for Thailand and its people preserving their history, way of live and Buddhist traditions. Unfortunately one episode in Bangkok, involving Orchid jewelry store (318 Krungkasem Road, Bangkhunprom Sub-District Pranakom Bangkok 10200, tel. 0-2282-4381), spoiled my impression of Thailand and left a bitter taste of visiting your wonderful country.... This is a shame that a corrupted company like Orchid impersonate Thailand government and ruins Thailand reputation among American tourists and business people. I do not understand how such Orchid behavior, that frames Thailand government at the international level, in particular in the United States, could be tolerated.

I have tried to contact Thailand police by email, but I do not quite understand their answer. It sounds like they are not going to do anything because I am out of Thailand.

Attempted scam at Leela Lapidary

– November 11, 2002

589 Prasumen Rd, Wat Borwornives, Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200 Tel : 629-4513-16
Fax : 629-4517

Another email: Approached initially outside the pawnshop near the Shangri-La hotel by a middle aged gentleman who made a passing remark about Leela. He then marked it on my map and helped me to organize a tuk- tuk.

At the next stop, The Golden Mountain, the driver made me pause until I was approached by a convincing Thai airline pilot (with business card) – who gave me the whole spiel – how he uses stewardesses to smuggle the rings to London.

I arrived at Leela Lapidary asking for present for my wife. The store looked very professional – but I did not want any of the merchandise they offered, and they must have realized that I was not a good mark. The interesting twist is that Friday night I realised that it was a scam. The next day, Saturday, I went to look for the initial man. He was there looking for new marks at his "intersection".

He told me that he gets 5% and the tuk-tuk driver gets 100 baht. He also said that the store was genuine but had a high mark-up of about 30%. Is this true?

While I was in the store there were other tourists – I hope it was not all fake jewelry. If it was fake – it was a pretty good show – as I have been to many top jewelry stores and this was a good match.

[Attempted scam at Yindee Lapidary](#)

– November 2, 2002

Remember this address: Yindee Lapidary Co. Ltd, Petchburi Rd. Soi 33, Makasan, Bangkok.

[Attempted scam at Christie's Lapidary](#) – October 30, 2002

If there was any doubt that the authorities are doing nothing about the gem scam, we are once again getting a scam report a day (this happens each year during the tourist season).

It's scamming season – October 29, 2002

The reports are flowing in as the high season approaches. From a report sent to the Thai Gem Scam Group: *I am a Singaporean, just got back from Thailand, was another victim, usual story, bought from a shop on Prachanipatai Road on 25/10/02, the name of the shop is Dheves Gems, I paid with credit card at a goldsmith Jarukorn Goldsmith 2103 Phaholyothin Road, Samsennai Phayathai.*

Orchid at Krungkasem Road
– October 28, 2002

From a report sent to the Thai Gem Scam Group: The store at 318 Krungkasem Road, Bangkhunprom Sub-District, Pranakorn (Tel: 0-2282-4381) is now called Orchid. It was formerly called Phanfa and before that Thai Mining. Changing the name allows shops to continue to operate after they have cheated tourists. The scammed tourist also writes about a feature of the scam that is becoming more and more common: *Some of the scammers are Europeans. I told the first of them (the one who find my the tuk-tuk) that French was my native language. Before I even entered the shop, seven people were used to fool me. One of them where from France, another one from Belgium. Those two were the ones who really convinced me. I was (stupidly) not prepared to be scammed by what seemed to be other friendly tourists.*

Mahachai already Chalermthai? –
October 19, 2002

We've already received a new report (via the Gem Scam Group), that Mahachai was changed to Chalermthai and was closed (to prevent tourists from getting refunds) by October 17, 2002.

[Mahachai Gem Scam Shop](#)

– October 19, 2002

Remember this address: 27-29 Soi Chalemket 2, U-kol 1 Street, Thepsirim, Pomprabsatrupai.

Today the shop is called **Mahachai**.

In March it was called **Benjarong**.

For a few months before that it was called **U-Thong**.

And before January 2002, it was called **Chalermkeht**.

From an email: *I've recently returned to the US from Bangkok, and I was involved in a scam involving Mahachai, the jewelry shop, and Hang*

Thong Thong Bai, the gold shop. I was taken by a Tuk Tuk driver and was persuaded to buy some sapphire jewelry by an American tourist at a temple called Wat Suthat. The same process that always happens occurred. Once the set of jewelry was chosen, I was taken to Hang Thong Thong Bai to purchase gold with my credit card that supposedly was worth what the jewelry was worth. I was pressured and coerced during the entire process. The purchase went through, and the jewelry was sent home like most incidences. While in Thailand, I filed criminal cases through the tourist police and the Department of Commerce. At this point, I'm still waiting for something to happen. The jewelry scam took place on August 13th, 2002 in Bangkok. I spent 3 extra weeks filling out paper work and going to court to try and put these crooks in prison. I hope my time and effort pays off. You have my permission to post everything that I have said above. I've scanned the receipt from the gold shop and the business card of the jewelry shop.... Thanks a lot.

Thai
gem scam profiled in *The Observer*

– September 1, 2002

A chronicle of the Gem Scam group that started earlier this year:

A member of the TAT staff walked out of the police station and kicked a cabinet and said that the whole place was so dirty he would have to leave.

Police
urged to crack down on gem scams –

Bangkok Post, August 29, 2002

Finally some acknowledgment that the shops are "well-connected" and this is why they cannot be closed: *Some of the firms continued to swindle tourists despite a number of their dealers having been arrested by police, he said. "I believe these firms are well connected as they have been able to prevent complaints from reaching the TAT..."*

Gem Scam shop Vandee closes

– August 28, 2002

We have a report that Vandee has closed—however, if history is anything to go by, a new shop will soon open under a different name to resume the scam. Remember this address: 222 Jakkapatdipong (Lan Luang) Pom Prab, Bangkok 11100. It is on the corner of Lan Luang Road as you drive toward Ratchadamnoen Road. At any time, several tuk-tuks that have brought tourists to be cheated will be parked in front. There is a police station about a block away and two blocks away is the Tourism Authority of Thailand office.

"I'm
sorry to tell you that I will advise all my friends and family to avoid
your country..." – August 9, 2002

Famed untouchable scammers Vandee claim another victim. This is a store on Lan Luang Road. On several occasions TAT officials have privately told 2b that this location is "protected" (the store reopens under different names periodically) and that TAT is furious, but there is nothing they can do about it since it is a "sensitive matter."

Komkien
now Siam – July 30, 2002

Another scam shop just changed its name to keep cheating tourists. It is located at 849/59-61 Chula Soi 6, Bantadtong Road., Phatumwan. Formerly it was Komkien Gems and Jewelry and before that Sincere.



Left: Siam's 'manager'

Thai Mining now Phanfa – July 27, 2002

This is a good example of how the same shop in the same location can change names and keep on cheating tourists. We received a scam report about a shop called Phanfa. It is located at 318 Krungkasem Rd., Bangkhunprom, Sub-District, Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200 Tel: 02-282 4381. It was formerly a scam shop called Thai Mining.

[Scammed by the The Export Centre / Vandee](#) – July 22, 2002

Gem scam stores change names and reopen – 09:07, June 22, 2002

Update from the [Thai](#)

[Gem Scam Group](#): *For victims of Chalermkhet and Thai Mining, we have a receipt of a new store U-THONG on our website. We heard through a source the stores are connected, however, the receipt shows the same address of a store called [Benjarong](#), which ceased operations in early March.*

We'd like everyone to take a look at the [receipt](#) and let us know if you see any similarities with any of your stores. Also, there is a new receipt for Vandee from May 29, 2002. Finally, anyone with a receipt from Thai Manee, can you please send us any phone numbers you have for that store? The Burapa victims are looking for that information.

[Scammed by Vandee Gems Gallery](#) – June 13, 2002

Thailand's untouchables – scam shop reopens just like it has for 20 years – 06:27, June 7, 2002

From the Thai Gem Scam Group: *Something for victims of Majestic and Universal: your store has re-opened. It's been open for almost two weeks now under the name Champion. For those victims who have left their gems with Mr. Soiploy's office, get him to follow that store for refunds. Tell him that ITV has videotape evidence that connects the two stores, in case he tries to tell you that the stores aren't connected. A receipt from Champion is [here](#).*

Their contact information (from their receipt) is the same as Majestic: 25/11 Pisanulek Road, Dusit, Dusit, Bangkok 10300 Thailand Tel: 0-2628-5391, 0-2628-5392 Fax: 0-2280-2644.

[Taxi drivers help with the scam](#) – 08:22, June 6, 2002

A tourist writes in warn about taxi drivers helping with the scam.

ITV features the gem scam – 01:45, May 27, 2002

ITV's report on the gem scam showed police supposedly closing a gem scam store and then the same store running the same scam two days later. There were several hidden camera segments that recorded gem dealers emphatically stating that tourists can make 100% profit on gem purchases by reselling them back home as well as the false statement that "government tuk-tuks" were stationed at the Grand Palace and Wat Po to take tourists to the "Thailand Export Center." Cheated tourists questioned why most of the scam stores were within a few hundred meters of a certain police station that seemed unable to do anything about them. There was a very tense moment when a tourist carrying a hidden camera was recognized by a lady who had remembered cheating him the week before. The tourist had to jump out of the car at a red light to escape.

ITV has advised all the foreigners who participated in the report to go into hiding and leave Thailand as soon as possible as their personal safety will now be in jeopardy.

Hidden cams record the gem scam – 07:41, May 25, 2002

From a press release from the Thai Gem Scam Group: *Thailand's [ITV](#) is airing a report on the Bangkok gem scam on Monday, May 27, 2002. The report will air at 22:45 as part of the "Release Code" show. [The Thai Gem](#)*

[Scam Group](#) participated in the production of the show, providing background information and gathering video evidence.

If you do not know about ITV's undercover camera reports, you are in for a treat. It started a few years ago when ITV filmed police openly taking bribes from truckers at an expressway toll entrance. That report changed the way things are done. Now police only accept bribes with the money folded under a driver's license that is handed to them. Just last week ITV caught a local government official accepting a kickback for the purchase of gravel.

The Gem Scam Group has spent a lot of time recording the scam. We are sure they will be a lot of uncomfortable officials Tuesday morning.

[Photos of alleged gem scammers](#) – May 23, 2002

The Thai Gem Scam Group has added a gallery of photos of people allegedly involved in scamming tourists

Gem scam spin and break-ins – 09:50, May 18, 2002

The [Thai Gem Scam](#)

[Group](#) has been interviewed by Reuters and the local Thai media.

A Thai bystander was apparently agast at the statement given in Thai by the Tourist Police to the local media. Something like *the problem was that the shop had a legitimate license from the Ministry of Commerce. That the problem was difficult to control because it was a case of overpricing. The workers are freelance and can move from outfit to outfit. That they don't think this is a crime etc., but are just employees, and said that today's raid was an example of what the tourist police always do, i.e. go straight down to the store to sort this out for tourists. Asked why the process takes so long, he said it was because they have too few officers, they have to do translations for the reports which all takes time etc etc.* (The reality is that not only will the police not go right down to the store to sort things out, but they will warn you that you risk being beaten up by mobsters if you make trouble.)

There's also been a rash of break-ins. From the [Thai Gem Scam Group](#): *The two gem scam group members who were quoted in the Bangkok Post article on April 19 had their rooms broken into. Nothing was taken from our members, indeed, their room appeared undisturbed, except for the damaged lock on the door. The guest house owner speculated that the perpetrator(s) worked the hallway and were interrupted when they got to our members room. In any event, we advise our members to exercise caution, and those who talk to the media change locations regularly.* If you recall, 2b's webmaster's room was [broken into and searched](#) late last year. 2b has been wondering how long all this bad publicity can go on without the Empire striking back...

Possible gem scam shop? – 07:31, May 17, 2002

According to the [Thai Gem Scam Group](#): *We hear that Creative may now be operating as Sincere...* (May 8-10, 2002)

All gems scam shops closed? – May 13, 2002

Update from the [Thai Gem Scam Group](#): *...don't know if it is the result of us, the weather as the rainy season approaches, media attention, the threat of police action(!) or whatever normally determines their 'natural business cycle' but all of the shops now appear closed, bar the possible offspring of Creative.*



Universal's driver

Universal Gems & Jewelry Export Company
– May 13, 2002

We're just received [another report](#) of someone cheated by Universal. Both an American and Japanese tourist were recruited to help sell the scam. Advice to the cheated tourist from the Tourist Police: "Come back to Bangkok, then negotiate with the boss of the gem store."

By the way, this store was formerly called "Majestic." The Thai Gem Scam Group reports Universal has closed and their sign has been removed.

Strange.. most of the gem scam stores have suddenly closed
– 08:01, May 6, 2002

[The Gem Scam Group](#) sent us an update:*We heard rumours of imminent action against the stores, mainly for PR purposes and to get rid of us, the thinking being that in 2 or 3 weeks, we'll be gone and it will be business as usual. Vandee is still open, but is the only one left. They have been violent against Marin people turning away customers, so we've stopped that tactic. In the meantime, we got some Thai media coverage last week with a meeting at the National Assembly. Nothing more in the English media that we've seen, though all of Thailand is watching the return of Duangchalerm now.*

No help for Burapa Lapidary victims/watch
out for Thai Manee – 08:02, April 26, 2002

From a press release from the [Thai](#)

[Gem Scam Group](#):Despite their earlier promises to help out victims scammed by Burapa Lapidary, the CPB (Consumer Protection Board) now claims that they took no action against the store, have no idea where the owner is, and don't even have investigation or arrest powers. The CPB claimed that their scope was limited to labelling and promotion, and that when they went to Burapa Lapidary regarding claims of jewellery, the owner simply fled. According to the investigating officer, the CPB then took possession of the inventory and will hold it until the owner pays a fine for false advertising. Bizarrely, the CPB claims that if the owner does not pay the fine, the CPB is supposed to hold the inventory forever, rather than selling it off and using the proceeds to repay the victims of the scam.

According to the CPB, investigation and arrest powers rest with the Tourist Police. The Tourist Police, in turn, claim that they are powerless to intervene in jewellery scams because it is considered a civil offence... In a related development, the Thai Gem Scam Group received information that the same people who ran Burapa Lapidary were now operating a new store called Thai Manee, on Thanon Tanao. A group of Burapa Lapidary victims went to the store on April 25, 2002 to seek a refund, but arrived to find the store closed. A search in a back alley revealed an empty Tourist Police van. Witnesses reported that officers from the Royal Thai Police had arrested four people only 30 minutes earlier, and were taken to the Khao San Road Police Station. Officers in that station said that they had no information regarding Thai Manee. The Thai Gem Scam Group is still seeking any Thai government body that is able to assist victims of the gem scam.

Victims of Burapa Lapidary unite – 08:36,
April 25, 2002

From a press release from the [Thai](#)

[Gem Scam Group](#): Burapa Lapidary was seized by the CPB at the beginning of April and the owner subsequently arrested. A group of seven victims met with officials of the CPB, where two of them were repaid their losses from the assets seized. The remaining 5 victims have yet to receive a refund, and planned meetings with the owner, currently out on bail, have been cancelled without explanation. Claims from the five remaining members approach 1 million baht....The Thai Gem Scam Group consists of some 70 members, representing 16 countries, who are frustrated by the inability of Thai authorities to stop the Bangkok Gem Scam. This scam is estimated to cost foreign tourists between \$USD50 million and \$USD100 million per year.

Gem scam victims fight back and get beaten up
– 07:52, April 20, 2002

We were sent a press release from "[The Thai Gem Scam Group](#)" (no connection to 2bangkok.com), concerning their meeting with TAT. Needless to say Thai authorities were not interested in receiving pressure from tourists.

There's also details about the increasingly open conflict between gang members and scammed tourists: *The first occurred on April 17, when a couple attempted to take photographs of one of the gem stores. A group of men rushed the woman and attempted to seize her camera. A second incident occurred at the same store on April 18 when a male tourist attempted to negotiate a refund with the store. The store representative was abusive and aggressive towards the tourist, before a group of men*

began slapping, punching and kicking the tourist in the groin. The representative then uttered death threats against the tourist should he attempt to return.

By far the most disturbing development occurred with the knowledge of the TAT. A group of tourists scammed by the same store had to argue with the TAT representatives and the TP to send a police escort with the group as it attempted to negotiate a refund. After more than 30 minutes of stalling, the police finally agreed to send two officers with the group in a police van. One of the officers warned the store with a call from his mobile, ensuring a group of people waiting at the store when the police van arrived. The group attempted to negotiate a refund on the sidewalk in front of the store, to which the store replied they would send someone to the TP station in 30 minutes. The group insisted that the negotiations take place immediately, at which point the two TP officers drove off, abandoning the group.

Attempts to negotiate a refund proved futile as a violent melee occurred in the courtyard next to the store before spilling out onto the street. Several members received punches, kicks and scratches from nails as they attempted to flee the courtyard and take pictures. A vehicle of the Royal Thai Police happened on the scene and proceeded to take everyone to a nearby station. They were eventually transferred to the Tourist Police, where members of the Group were then bullied into signing false reports written only in Thai. The Group refused and no charges nor action was taken thereafter. Representatives of the store were released .

Here's the story from the Bangkok Post: [Tourists form pressure group](#)

Gem shop owner: I'll reopen again, just like I have for 20 years!

– 08:04, April 21, 2002

More hilarious stuff courtesy of the [Thai Gem Scam Group](#): Chalermkhet did

not take kindly to being confronted with Thai Mining receipts . The guy said he would close up the shop and re-open

it again, just as he's done for the last 20 (!) years. He then continued with a "stupid tourist" tirade before shutting up for the day.

"The Thai Gem Scam Group" website up soon

– 13:31, April 20, 2002

["The Thai Gem Scam Group"](#)

are preparing a website that should be up by Monday. We will post the address when we get it.

Also more news from them: Thai Mining has closed and is now operating as Chalermkhet (or Chalemket, or Chalermket). We have matching signatures from two different receipts as well as eyewitness accounts of people who recognize staff at Chalermkhet as having served them at Thai Mining. Vandee has paid out about a half-dozen Marin claims, but have hinted they will no longer do so. They have paid between 50% and 75% on some 1M baht in claims, so this isn't a surprise.

Marin Gems now operating as Vandee Gems

– 00:20, April 17, 2002

A reader trying to organize gem scam victims writes: [Marin](#)

[Gems](#) has become Vandee Gems, and we suspect Majestic is now Universal. Thai Mining continues to operate, and we are still trying to track down Creative Gems. Burapa Lapidary has been seized by the Consumer Protection office.....And two members have had violence committed

against them when they interfered with the scam in progress or attempted to take photographs of shops or individuals.

Two "lucky" tourists

& Marin Gems Company Limited –

08:25, March 13, 2002

We've received a scam report concerning Marin Gems Company Limited (121-123/125 Prachatipatai Road, Bangkhunprom, Pranakorn 10200 Thailand, 0-22800-777, 0-22800-788).

Gem scam report: Benjarong

– 19:32, March 9, 2002

Another reason for the buyer to beware—the police just don't want to get involved.

The atmosphere of this meeting was very tense. He then tried to convince me to drop the idea of going after these people cause nothing I could gain from it but wasting time and money (appointing the lawyers and those expenses on flying back to Thailand). The process would take long time and it was not worth to it.... A bit strange was that he requested a private conversation with me (without my lawyers' presence) on persuading me to forget about filing a criminal case.

Forget about a refund: Thai Mikimoto has closed

– February 19, 2002

They're not really closed, just changing names and locations. Stay turned to 2bangkok.com: as soon as they're up and cheating again, we'll have more scam reports. From an email: *Just wish to update you that sometime back i wrote about being cheated by Thai Mikimoto. After reading on of the cases listed that the shops closed down and the victims weren't successful in getting back their refund, somehow I was expecting the same thing to happen to Thai Mikimoto and true enough it has happened to me as well two weeks later. I sent my items to Mr Manat almost one month back and Mr Manat just came back to me to say that after trying for several weeks he wasn't successful and I can't do anything since Thai Mikimoto has closed down except bring them to court. After reading some precedents, I think chances of bringing them to justice seems like a waste of time. Is there any other recourse? Please advise. Thanks!*

Note: We know of several people pursuing suits, but do not have any news of how they have turned out other than reports that the plaintiffs were advised by the police that they could be in danger from the scammers and their powerful backers for pursuing such legal action.

Other Thai Mikimoto reports:

Thai Mikimoto scam account I (December 18, 2001)

Thai Mikimoto scam account II (January 10, 2002)

Thai Mikimoto scam account III (January 11, 2002)

Thai Mikimoto scam account IV (January 22, 2002)

Another Thai Mikimoto scam victim – February 17, 2002

From the latest report we've received: *yes, I'm yet another unsuspecting holiday-goer who was cheated mercilessly by the infamous Thai Mikimoto. I understand perfectly that there is no way to get my money back, so I'll just take this a very expensive lesson for the future and will do all I can to expose the problem of gem scams...this is just about*

the only type of revenge a guy like me can exact, though it is in times like these that I regret not being a mobster and having real means to get serious revenge. I only wish I had seen this web page before my departure. I wonder though, if the problem is so colossal, then why don't travel agencies give warning to their customers when they buy their Bangkok ticket? I'm not unloading the blame on my travel agent, but it seems to me that a little informative flyer would be in order....
A victim.

Scammed by Sukothai Jewellers?

They've been closed so kiss your money goodbye! – February 5, 2002

Tourist police advise gem scam victims: you can get back half what you paid – February 1, 2002

The bad shop in this case is Sukhothai Gem Shop. *Bangkok Post* reports: *Four German tourists are demanding action after a jewellery shop tricked them into buying low-quality jewels.... When she filed a complaint with tourist police they told her the most she could hope to get back was half the price she paid. The tourists said they were on Khao San road on Jan 22 when two men posing as taxi drivers offered to take them to Rattanakosin Island and the jewellery shop. Police are looking into the complaint.* (from *More visitors fall for fake jewellery scam*, February 1, 2002)

"I am now very scared"–Thai Mikimoto – January 22, 2002

What happens when you try to get your money back from Thai Mikimoto: *Mr. Sompong (the manager—whereas I have to mention here that I have asked several times for his identification—even together with the Tourist Police and our lawyer—I was never shown any. This was accepted by the Police! Foreigners have to give a copy of their passports, but a Thai person does not need to identify him or herself! VERY STRANGE!)... At the police I was told secretly that the shops can send someone to give people a beating!*

Thank goodness the local police are so helpful...

A quick warning – January 14, 2002

We have a new report of the gem scam occurring at the **Sapphire Gallery** (165-167 Tanao Road, Bowonniwet, Bangkok 10200 Thailand, Tel. 0-22622-12277). Details to come...

Thai Mikimoto uses foreigners to help with the scam – January 11, 2002

We thought since they are in a temple, they should be honest people as they wouldn't lie in a sacred place...

Another Thai Mikimoto scam victim comes forward. This time a helpful

"Spanish" tourist assists the scamming. [A previous mention of non-Thais helping with the scam](#)

Thai Mikimoto scamming goes into overdrive – January 10, 2002

We can hardly believe it. We're getting two new reports *every day* of people cheated by Thai Mikimoto. These guys must be making a fortune! And no, there's basically nothing that can be done to stop other than what we detail on this page. Here's the [latest scam account](#) about them...

[Scammed by Komkien Gems and Jewelry](#)

– January 4, 2002

During the next few days after we made our purchase, we met at least three other strangers on the street, at separate locations, separate times, totally random meetings, who advised us to go to these export shops.... Can you believe the amount of people involved in this whole fiasco? This looks like a disease that has infected the whole nation. How sad for Thailand.

It is interesting to note that Komkien Gems was one of the [27 gem shops supposedly closed](#) in July, 2001 for violating labeling and pricing guidelines.

ITV does a story on the scam – November 27, 2001

[ITV](#) did a general report on the scam tonight (most Thais do not know anything about it). The piece ended with an explanation of why no one gets caught that went something like, "whenever the police come to raid a gem store, they find that the store has already been shut down."

Latest cheaters named – November 23, 2001

From [Help sought to combat gem scams](#) in the *Bangkok Post*: *In the past week, six foreign tourists had filed complaints with the tourist police that they had been deceived into buying low-quality jewellery items, the tourist police chief said. The complainants identified the shops as Nopakao, Imperial Tailors, Sukhothai Gems, and Tanakorn Gems, Pol Maj-Gen Sanit said. He said those behind jewellery scams were usually sophisticated criminals, therefore it would be very hard to identify and arrest the masterminds.*

Take the gem-scam challenge! – November 20, 2001

Showing a relative the sights around town, 2bangkok.com found out what it is like to be a tourist again.

Walk down Chetuphon Road. This is the road between the south side of Wat Po (or Wat Pho) and a block of monastery buildings. The entrance to Wat Po used to be on this street, but it is now on the opposite side.

You will be besieged by people telling you Wat Po is closed. Even if you ignore them, they will follow you all the way around the grounds, clapping to get your attention and yelling "close til 4 o'clock!" It is actually open 8am-5pm daily. There are also a couple of vendors along the way who will chime in to warn you that the wat is indeed closed. One guy followed us almost all the way to the entrance, pleading with us that the wat was not open. Had we listened to him, we would have been offered a free tuk-tuk ride to a gem shop to buy overpriced gems.

After we left the wat, we locked eyes with the same guy on the other side of the street and raised a camera to take a photo just as a bus went by. Waiting for the bus to pass, we could see his feet under the bus as he frantically ran out of range of the camera.

Part of the blame lays with the wat—it does look closed until you get to the north side. It is easy to see why many people are fooled. After all, the promotional material says Thailand is the land of smiling, friendly people.

Note: Be careful about confronting these guys, the one that was following us was wearing—how can we put this—official-looking pants.

27 Gem Shops Closed—19 Reopen Under New Names – July 19, 2001

from **Labelling warning for jewellers following complaints from locals, tourists**, *Bangkok Post*, July 19, 2001

Gold and jewellery stores have been warned to comply with labelling regulations or face legal action in the wake of complaints from local buyers and tourists. The warning came yesterday from PM's Office Minister Krasae Chanawong, who oversees the Consumers Protection Board, following an inspection of shops in Wang Burapha and Ban Mo. The board wants gold and jewellery accessories to carry labels containing prices and details such as weight and stone or metal type.

Some 27 jewellery shops had been ordered closed for their failure to comply, although 19 had since resumed trading under new names, he said. They are Khung Thep Gems Building Co, Ma Mare Gems Collection Co, T.G.J. Thai Centre Co, Bangkok Gems Export Centre, Bangkok Royal Gems & Jewelry, Yod Yiem, Maneeintr, Royal, Siam Jewelry Trading, Jewelry Centre 1986, Victoria Gems Centre Co, Regency Gems, Komkien Gems & Jewelry, Tourist Award Co, Blue Sapphire Gems Collection Co, Monpere Gems Export Co, Gorgeous Gems Export Co, Yindee Lapidary Co and Sapphire Centre.

Vendors who fail to comply can go to jail for six months or be fined 50,000 baht, while manufacturers are liable to a one-year jail sentence or 100,000 baht fine. Mr Krasae said that most shops in the Ban Mo area, the city's well-known jewellery centre, were well-established and apparently observed labelling regulations. The ones with problems were new businesses, several of which closed themselves down after a short time, making it difficult for authorities to track them down, he said. Labelling was needed to combat fraud and to give potential buyers information, he said.

One of the lucky ones... – March 23, 2001

"I have recently returned from Bangkok to Australia and my story is the same as the other published on your web site. I was fortunate enough after discovering I had been scammed to use all of my might and power to get hold of the package that was on its way to Australia.

I was advised to contact My Manat Soiploy who instructed me to contact the Bangkok mail centre immediately. Note, this was because the Monpere Gem Company would not give me the EMS courier receipt. Anyway you ring the Bangkok mail centre then ask for ext 195 (Mr Manat can confirm this number). The Bangkok mail centre will then do everything that they can to assist you in tracking your package, they only require the time you paid for the gems, date and your name. If it has not left the country they will put a hold on it for you to pick up. Mine had left but they gave me the flight number. Australia Post is also aware

of the scam and they located the package and had it sent back to my hotel prior to delivering it in Australia. I handed it over to Mr Manat and is sending me a 70% refund by telegraphic payment. I was one of the lucky ones.

Please put these details on your website. It may save a lot of people their savings. One more thing to add to your page. No where does it state that these gangs can be very dangerous. I got a little overheated with them on my third return. Mr Manat later advised me not to go near the shop again as the gangs are very dangerous."

The Untouchables – December 2000

The gem shop at 436/9-12, Loog-Luang Road, Mahannak, Dusit, Bangkok 10300 is still cheating. Here are their names over the past year. After each name change the "new" shop continues the scam.

July, 2000 -> TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd

October, 2000 -> Blue Sapphire Gem Co., Ltd

December, 2000 -> Ma Mere Gems Collection Co., Ltd

TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd. – August, 2000

[Read the email.](#) So far we have found out that the TGJ Thai Center was closed (presumably by the police) sometime around July 4 or 5, 2000. It seems many people were cheated. The Nang Leurng Police Station (tel. 282-5105, 281-3002) is handling the case. The officer in charge is Pol. Lt. Ahjanah. He says there is not much he can do until they catch the scammers. He recommends keeping the pressure on by getting in contact with *Khao Sut* (tel. 954-3961-7) newspaper. They broke the story and are following it. We contacted them, but they do not seem interested in pursuing the story further. Sources at the Tourism Authority have informed us that the gem dealers have reopened under another name, but they cannot be sure.

[Latest news](#)

“Beware!! Mr. Square Face will come back”

January 17, 2007



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"Beware!! Mr. Square Face will come back" – January 17, 2007
The sign reads: "Beware!! Mr. Square Face will come back"

Bangkok bombs not scaring tourists away

January 17, 2007

Categories: Security

[Bangkok bombs not scaring tourists away](#) – Reuters, January 17, 2007

Thailand expects to draw nearly 15 million foreign tourists this year, up 8 per cent from last year, despite New Year's Eve bombs that cast a shadow over the lucrative industry, a senior tourism official said this week. The bombs, which killed 3 people and wounded 38 in Bangkok, triggered fewer booking cancellations in the first week of January than feared, Tourism Authority of Thailand Deputy Governor Suraphon Svetasreni said.

"The cancellation rate is considered small, less than five per cent on average," Suraphon told Reuters in an interview...

54 US soldiers still missing in Cambodia: Official

January 17, 2007

Categories: Cambodia

[54 US soldiers still missing in Cambodia: Official](#) – *People's Daily Online*, January 17, 2007

Charles A. Ray, former US ambassador to Cambodia, said on Tuesday that there are 54 US soldiers still missing in action (MIAs) in Cambodia...

Arrest of foreign teachers: Two held with fake qualifications

January 17, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Arrest of foreign teachers: Two held with fake qualifications](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 17, 2007

Thailand joins Congo as “not-free” countries

January 17, 2007

[Thailand joins Congo as “not-free” countries](#) – *The Nation*, January 17, 2007

Another major setback for Thailand’s international standing and reputation as it joined Congo as the newly “not-free” countries this year in a major survey of global freedom released Wednesday...

No longer as smooth as silk

January 17, 2007

Categories: Thai Politics

[No longer as smooth as silk](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, January 17, 2007

...The irony is that if the Thai drama were to take place in Burma the likely scenario would be like this: Thaksin would be arrested, charged and barred from leaving the country; like Burma's ousted Prime Minister Gen Khin Nyunt, who is now under house arrest after receiving a suspended sentence of 44 years imprisonment, Thaksin would quickly find himself before a kangaroo court; the generals would make sure he served a lifelong prison sentence; his assets would be seized and members of his family would join him in jail or be confined to house arrest.

Would he get a chance to speak to CNN? The generals would undoubtedly say "Go to hell."

Silom Complex Signs

January 18, 2007

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"Let's get spa" – July 31, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"My Deduction" – June 14, 2007

Latest in a series of odd signs at Silom Complex...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"All About PORK" – January 18, 2007

Several shopping malls around town have sales or promotions based on the "Year of the Pig." Silom Complex expresses this in English with the delightful "All About PORK."

Central Pattana News

January 18, 2007

Categories: Business

[Central Lat Phrao lease extended](#) – Bangkok Post, December 12, 2008

[Tensions looming as Central's lease of SRT land is set to expire](#) – The Nation, April 16, 2007



...Despite Central Group's claim that its offer is the best for a plot in Central Lat Phrao, the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) can still squeeze it for more if the 30-year lease to the private company is to be renewed. *From whatever angle, the SRT has received too little from leasing the 47.22-rai area to Central Group, and it is time the state agency found a way to maximise the possible returns from the commercially lucrative plot...*

[Central Pattana awarded 30-year lease](#) – The Nation, February 23, 2007

According to the statement released by the bureau yesterday, CPN's proposal for developing the site met its design and concept criteria for creating a landmark and a true centerpiece attraction for Bangkok. The plan maps out a complex, including world-class shopping facilities, offices and a hotel...

[Lat Phrao decision due by April](#) – Bangkok Post, January 18, 2007

...The Central Group currently leases the SRT-owned plot on Phahon Yothin Road where Central Lat Phrao shopping centre and the Sofitel Central Plaza hotel are located. The 30-year lease contract is due to expire in December 2008...

Central Pattana Plc, which derives about 15% of its revenue from the Lat Phrao operation, said it had not received any information on the extension, although it has set up a team to study possible areas for renovation in the event that the SRT approves its request...

An SRT source said Central Pattana had submitted a letter to the SRT around seven years ago, inquiring about a possible extension of the lease contract.

It was reported that the company sought an extension for another 30 years and proposed an additional investment and development plan.

But previous governments had not put the matter on the table. They just planned to engage a private company to appraise the property. Now, six qualified firms have been invited to offer proposals.

A source at the Transport Ministry said the Central Group had asked the previous government to consider the extension of the contract.

But some members of the former SRT board, who had connections with politicians, tried to delay the process by seeking written comments from other agencies concerned and the Office of the Attorney General.

[CentralWorld on course to claim crown as largest mall](#) – Bangkok Post, June 9, 2006

CentralWorld will become the largest mixed-used shopping centre in Bangkok when it opens on July 21. About 85% of the lifestyle retail complex will be ready on that day, while the remaining areas, including Zen Department Store and a nearby zone, will be completed in December.

...

CentralWorld has a total project space of 830,000 square metres, which comprises the shopping complex (550,000 sq m), a five-star hotel with 500 rooms, a convention centre over 17,000 sq m, a 45-storey office building covering 80,000 sq m and an indoor parking space for more than 7,000 vehicles.

The office tower has been completed while the convention centre is due for completion in 2006 and the hotel in 2008.

Currently, the 15-billion-baht Siam Paragon, which is located next to Siam Discovery and Siam Centre in the Pathumwan area, has total space of 500,000 sq m.

[SRT reaches agreement with vendors over rents](#) – Bangkok Post, May 8, 2006

...Meanwhile, the arbitration panel has ruled that the lease contract for the 47.22-rai plot of land currently occupied by the Central Lat Phrao shopping complex and the Sofitel Central Hotel is now worth more than one billion baht, and it should therefore be converted into a joint venture between the state and the private sector. Under the law, the company is required to equitably share the benefits with the SRT.

...Central Group has leased the site from the SRT since 1978 to develop a hotel and shopping complex. Under the 30-year contract, it has the right to renew the lease after the contract expires on Dec 18, 2008...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Latest from the Crucible of Construction – November 7, 2005

The tiered steps have been removed from the Central World Plaza and the entire facade is being reconstructed.

A rendering of the end result is [here](#).

More on [Bangkok's Crucible of Construction](#)



(Source: centralpattana.com)

New landmark – August
3, 2005

Several readers asked what is being built in the big hole at Rajaprasong intersection (pictured here – [Central World Plaza at Rajaprasong Intersection](#)). Above is a rendering of what will eventually be in there—Central's new shopping center—Central World Plaza. The glass facade will be 665 metres long and include several more giant TV screens.

This is to provide Central Pattana a new core facility to possibly replace the aging Central Lat Prae facility which accounts for 27% of Central Pattana income. SRT has repeatedly rejected Central Pattana's overtures for a lease renewal in 2008. The upgraded Central World Plaza will give Central the leverage it need in bargaining with SRT and allow them to abandon the facility as a last resort.

More on [Bangkok's Crucible of Construction](#)
– [Central Pattana's website](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

7:42pm, December 31, 2003, New Year's Eve, Bangkok
 The Central World Plaza (formerly World Trade Center)
 is one of the main areas where people gather for the new year's eve countdown.

SRT to take over Central Lad Phrao unless
 new rental rates are paid – translated and summarized
 from *Manager Daily*, June 20, 2005

SRT is asking Central Pattana to pay at least 10 times the current rate of leasing if Central Pattana is to keep Central Lad Phrao within their portfolio. Otherwise, the newcomers are waiting to grab Central Lad Phrao in a second. This negotiation with Central Pattana has to be done by the end of 2006 before the lease expires in 2008. SRT subsidiary is going to run Central Lad Phrao with the joint venture with the private sector which can be Central Pattana if they are willing to pay the new leasing rates. Nevertheless, SRT is going to ask a third party to make an assessment on the market rates of SRT land at Central Lad Phrao before making further negotiation with Central Pattana.

On the other hand, SRT is going to take over Chatuchak Weekend Market since BMA refuses to pay the outstanding debts after introducing new rates. The New Nationwide SRT Land Development Plan will be submitted to the Treasury Department by the end of June 2005. The land not related to SRT's core business will be transferred to the Treasury Department while Bangsue and Makkasan will be run by SRT's subsidiary that is going to run Central Lad Phrao as well as Chatuchak Weekend Market.

The revenue from the new SRT land development will go to pay 42 billion baht debt. The contract with the Treasury Department states that most of SRT land handled by the Treasury Department would have the lease period of 30 years.

SRT would run SRT land development for the section not transferred to Treasury so that SRT would have more revenue to spend on the railway investment such as

- 1) new locomotives to replace the good old GEK and familiar ALSTHOM
- 2) nationwide track rehabilitation which require a new fleet of vehicles

to compact and wash the ballast, the 100 lb welded steel rails, and the concrete sleepers

3) installation of modern signal and telecom systems

4) The new lines which have been waiting for construction for more than 60 years

The SRT land that will not be transferred to the treasury:

1) Central Lad Phrao

2) Chatuchak Weekend Market

3) Bangsue Center and Second City Air Terminal

4) Makkasan Center and First City Air Terminal

[Makksan](#) is still the

main maintenance center even though some heavy machines and even the facility for the local assembly of electrified rolling stocks may be moved to Ban

Phachi to allow SRT getting a generous BOI investment package.

More on [Thai Railways – SRT](#)

[Wal-Mart,](#)

[The Mall eye Lat Phrao site](#) – *The Nation*, March

21, 2005

SRT rejects Central lease extension

– translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*,

March 18-21, 2004

SRT rejects the plan from Central Pattana PCL to extend the lease of Central Ladphrao for another 10 years since the assets of Central Lad Phrao are already worth more than 5 billion baht thus the joint venture act is applied.

After the lease expires on December 18, 2008, SRT will nationalize Central Lad Phrao. Central Pattana can only come up with the group of directors to manage Central Lad Phrao and ensure profitable returns at the exchange for the annual fees to hire those managers.

The largest source of income and profits for Central Pattana PCL is Central Ladphrao:

Central Ladphrao – 27%

Central Rama 3 – 7%

Central Pinklao – 19%

Central Chiangmai – 6%

Central Rama 2 – 14%

Central Pattaya – 4%

Central City Bang Na – 11%

Central Ram Indra – 2%

Central World Plaza – 10%

Other old branches (Wang Boorapha, Chitlom, Silom, Lad Ya) – 1%

Commentary: With the MRTA Subway and the busy transportation on Phaholyothin Road, Central Lad Phrao is the dearest branch of all branches of Central Department Stores.

Even after the 6 year mass transit system has become a reality, Ram Indra and those old branches such as Wang Boorapha, and Lad Ya will be reinvigorated (Central Chitlom and Silom are already connected with Skytrain Stations and Central World Plaza will follow very soon). Central City Bang NA, Central Rama 2, and Central Rama 3 are too far away from the mass transit lines. Only the 2nd phase expansion of mass transit system will reenergize those branches in Thonburi to compensate for the loss of Central Ladphrao.

Expect to see protracted court fighting until the final verdict from the Supreme Court.

Central Pattana hikes rental rates to finance Central

World Plaza – translated and summarized from *Dialynews*, March 19, 2004

Mr. Narit Choeiklin (Deputy Director of Financial and Accountant section, Central Patthana PCL) said the new rental rates will be increased 6-7% for short term leases from the current rate of 1,200 baht/sq-m to fit into the improving economic situation.

Furthermore, the ratio between shorter leases and longer term leases will be changed from 70:30 to 80: 20 since short term lease rates can be adjusted much easier than the long term lease rates.

This lease readjustment will be used to finance the investment of 3.5 billion baht -> 3 billion baht for Central World Plaza Expansion Project and the other 0.5 billion baht for expansion of other branches and projects:

100 million baht for Central City Bang Na

100 million baht for Central Jusco Ratnathibet (taking over from Jusco (Thailand))

300 million for new investment in the following projects:

1) Central Rama 9 (the total investment for Central rama 9 will be 3.4 billion baht which include a subway connection)

2) Central Festival (either Khonkaen or Chonburi with total investment of 1.2 billion baht)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The new giant screen at Central World Plaza –
March 15, 2004

In a further bid to make the Central World Plaza a magnet for mass gatherings in Bangkok (like on New Year's Eve), a massive screen is being erected at the north end of the plaza. In the photo below note the workers climbing on the side of the screen for scale.

[Bangkok](#)

[boasts biggest outdoor ad screen](#) – Asia Pacific

Media Network, April 2, 2004

...Located at the Central World Plaza, the 350,000-pixel LED (light-emitting diode) board measures 132 square metres, more than three times larger than the 40-sq m screen installed by iTV at the Shinawatra 3 Building on Vibhavadi Rangsit Road, which was the largest to date. Installation of the screen and broadcasting system cost about 200 million baht.

More about this area: [Bangkok's Crucible of Construction](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Central Pattana seeks to expand the
Lat Prao branch into Hor Wang High School area
– translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*,
September 29-October 3, 2003

Central Pattana is definitely wants to keep the 47.22-rai of land that houses Central Lat Prao in their portfolio since this branch is the main money maker for Central Pattana. Therefore, Central Pattana agreed to pay SRT 540 million baht as a fine (they already paid 162 million baht) until the end of contract in 2008.

Even though Central Pattana agreed to extend their lease by at least 10 years and pay more rent to SRT, it will take time to conclude the deal due to the Joint venture Act of BE 2535 which is waiting for the decision from the Council of State which will come by the end of 2003.

However, one proposal from Central Pattana has ignited a firestorm of protest from Hor Wang High School. The high school will have to move to another place to make a way for land development by Central Pattana and the move of Hor Want Road northward as a new border line to the site.

Hor Wang School is on 23-rai of SRT land to build a school without paying rent. Therefore, SRT and Central Pattana are asking Hor Want to move to another place to allow commercial development before the ending of the lease on December 18, 2008.

Such an action from their landlord and neighbor have come as a big shock to students, teachers, the headmaster, alumni, and the parents association of the school.

SRT is now trying to squeeze those who postponed their lease payment to revenue by 965 million baht in 2003, 1.056 billion baht in 2004 and 1.143 billion baht in 2005.

As long as Thai Rak Thai is still in power, Central Pattana will have to pay SRT more (including the plan to get more land from Hor Wang School) in exchange for a very auspicious land plot. 90% of lease revenue comes from Lad Prao Branch even though Central Pattana has moved their base

to Central World Plaza at Ratchadamri. It will take time for that location to be at par with Central Lat Prao since Central needs to invest 2.6 billion baht for Central World and another 4.6 billion baht for the 51-floor building. Central Rama 9 needs at least 2-3 years to be ready for opening. In 2001, Central Lat Prao got 1145.84 million baht revenue:

- Central Pinklao – 660.77 million Baht
- Central Ratchada-Phraram 3 Branch – 510.25 million baht
- Central City Bang Na – 314.54 million baht
- Central Festival Center – 146.73 million baht
- Central Airport Plaza 128.44 million baht
- Central Ram Indra – 78.93 million baht
- Langsuan Coronet – 13.52 million baht revenue

After receiving the news from Central Lat Prao that their school must move, teachers from Hor Wang said "Our 4500 alumni will give lots of hell to Central Lat Prao– If Central Pattana is really serious about the land grab, we'll have a serious discussion... "

Hor Wang school was founded in 1966 as Bagnkhen Witthaya School, and changed to Hor Wang School in January 31, 1968. This school now produces 4300 high school graduates—running from Grade 7 to 12—without a lease from SRT, but allows children of SRT workers and officers to study there as a benefit for SRT workers.

During the rumor about a new parliament at Railway Park, Central Pattana also proposed a new Hor Wang school to replace the Railway Engineering School near the SRT golf driving course. The Railway Engineering School would be moved to Kanchanaburi.

Hor Wang also asked SRT in early 2003 to find the new place for the school since the area is so congested and they need at least 10 rai more for the school. Central Pattana would pay for the construction of the new school. However, SRT cannot allocate a new place yet.

SRT and
Central Lat Prao – December 16, 2002

Was Central Lat Prao really built on a garbage dump? The government has been attacking the SRT (State Railways of Thailand) for corruption recently and mention of the Central Pattana/SRT's land deal [came up in Business](#)

[Day](#). The article mainly discusses alleged lease violations, but this is the first allusion 2B has seen in the English-language press about the SRT "dirty land deal." If you have visited Central Lat Prao, you are actually visiting the "new" Bangkok Railway Station. SRT expropriated the land for this purpose, but instead [leased the land to Central Pattana](#)—resulting in landless farmers who gave up their land for the "good of the country," but ended up destitute.

The deal was so notorious it resulted in a specific article in the 1997 Thai Constitution prohibiting expropriations being used except for public utility and related matters. This issue came up last year when MRTA (the [subway](#) company), attempted to develop some of the land they expropriated to be a shopping center and [residents complained that this would be prohibited by the Constitution](#). More about SRT irregularities is featured prominently in *The Nation* and the [Bangkok Post](#) (the *Post* article has an amazing list of peculiar purchasing incidents by the SRT). Considering the distracting corruption scandals the government has had to endure recently, attacking the SRT (widely acknowledged to be an inefficient and corrupt agency that no one wants to defend) may be a quick and easy

way to show the government is being tough on corruption.

UPDATE: [Central threatens to pull out](#)

("When the group rented the land three decades ago from the SRT, the area was only a garbage dump. We have helped the area grow into a developed community," Mr Suthikiati said.).

And yet more: [Inspectors](#)

[measure Ladprao works](#) (which includes the incredible detail that an SRT governor actually *got down on his knees to take measurements at one stage...*) and a [skeptical editorial](#) from the *Post* saying the same thing 2B mentioned above several days ago—that these attacks on the SRT appear to be designed to show that the government is tough on corruption.

[Central Pattana](#)

[close to buying World Trade Center](#) – *Business Day*,

November 13, 2002

The troubled property appears to have a buyer: *Wang Petchaboon*, owned by the *Wanglee* family, halted construction of the office tower after Thailand's 1997-1998 financial crisis, which prompted Siam Commercial Bank and other creditors to cut lending for the World Trade Center complex. The company planned to open a shopping mall, office building and a hotel on the site....

Naris said the government should step in to promote Rama I road, along which many giant shopping centers such as World Trade Center, Siam Paragon, Siam Discovery, Siam Square and Maboonkrong are located. ... Asked about impact of having so many shopping malls on the same street, *Naris* said that he did not see any negative effect.

“The ones in Thailand do not have four breasts”

January 18, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[“The ones in Thailand do not have four breasts”](#) – *Sabah*, January, 2007

Strange translations from the Turkish press: *The chairman of the board of auditors of İzmir Chamber of Commerce Geza Dologh defended the visit to Thailand which received criticisms at the press...*

Court rejects ‘The Beach’ order

January 18, 2007

Categories: Film and TV

[Court rejects ‘The Beach’ order](#) – *The Nation*, January 18, 2007

Man arrested, fined for distributing map of Bangkok dangerous spots

January 18, 2007
Categories: Security

[Man arrested, fined for distributing map of “Bangkok dangerous spots”](#) – *The Nation*, January 18, 2007
...Police said Chanantaporn forwarded emails, which was attached with map highlighting 32 areas of possible bomb targets to several persons.

The 32 spots are located in Bangkok’s Pathumvan district.

He also printed out the map and handed out copies to friends and relatives and gave a copy to a public relations officer at the Sinthorn Building on Friday.

The PR official became panic and faxed the map to many recipients.

Police said Chanantaporn also handed out copies of the map to taxi motorcyclists, who became frightened and alerted the Lumpini police.

Police charged him with creating disturbance and frightening the public and fined him Bt1,000. He has been released after the fine.

Number of Norwegians Dying in Thailand Doubled

January 18, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Number of Norwegians Dying in Thailand Doubled](#) –

ScandAsia.com, January 18, 2007

From 2005 to 2006 the number of Norwegians dying in Thailand almost doubled. Sex and alcohol are to blame...

Thailand GDP = the U.S. state of Arizona?

January 18, 2007

Thailand GDP = the U.S. state of Arizona? –

January 18, 2007

Not sure if this is accurate, but this an interesting [blog post](#) with each U.S. state named for a country that has a similar-sized Gross Domestic Product.



“Edge of existence”

January 18, 2007

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

"Edge of existence" –

January 18, 2007

[Initiative](#) focusing on saving peculiar species... [The top 100 Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered \(EDGE\) mammals](#)... including Thailand's

Bumblebee bat: *The world's smallest mammal, the bumblebee bat is endangered in Thailand where it is known from a single national park. Since it was first described in 1974 this tiny mammal has been disturbed by collectors and tourists wanting to see the world's smallest mammal. Today the main threats are from burning of the forest areas near the limestone caves in which it lives.*

ZSL aims to support an urgently needed ecological study on this poorly known species in Thailand. Questions such as what is the optimum roosting habitat, whether there are any undiscovered populations in between the known Thai and Myanmar populations, what are the main threats facing the bats need to be answered in order for an appropriate conservation strategy to be implemented.

Al-Qaeda funding behind southern insurgency: Govt spokesman

January 18, 2007

Categories: The Thai Deep South

[Al-Qaeda funding behind southern insurgency: Govt spokesman](#) – *The Nation*, January 18, 2007

[PM: Al Qaeda not funding Muslim insurgents in deep South](#) – TNA, January 18, 2007

A thread on this story is [here](#).

New Straits Times sues bloggers

January 19, 2007

Categories: Singapore

New Straits Times sues bloggers – South China Morning Post, January 19, 2007

The pro-government New Straits Times [filed defamation suits against "Screenshots" blogger Jeff Ooi and "Rocky's Bru" blogger Ahiruddin Attan](#) for undisclosed comments about the English-language newspaper. The Southeast Asia Press Alliance, Reporters Without Borders and bloggers have shown support for Ooi and Ahirudin and urged the newspaper to drop its suits. Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said, however, that bloggers cannot dodge the law. The cases filed against Ooi and Ahirudin mark the first time bloggers have been taken to court for comments on the Internet in the country...

Thailand's 1st judicially approved wiretap helps bust drug

January 19, 2007

Categories: Crime

[Thailand's 1st judicially approved wiretap helps bust drug...](#) – *IHT*, January 19, 2007

An international heroin trafficking organization that processed drugs from Pakistan and Afghanistan through a storefront in Thailand has been...

Singapore slaps on Thailand's face: FM

January 19, 2007

Categories: Singapore, Thai Politics

[Singapore slaps on Thailand's face: FM](#) – *The Nation*, January 19, 2007

Wall Street English School Advertising Campaigns

January 20, 2007

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"Total English Environment in New York City" – January 20, 2007



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



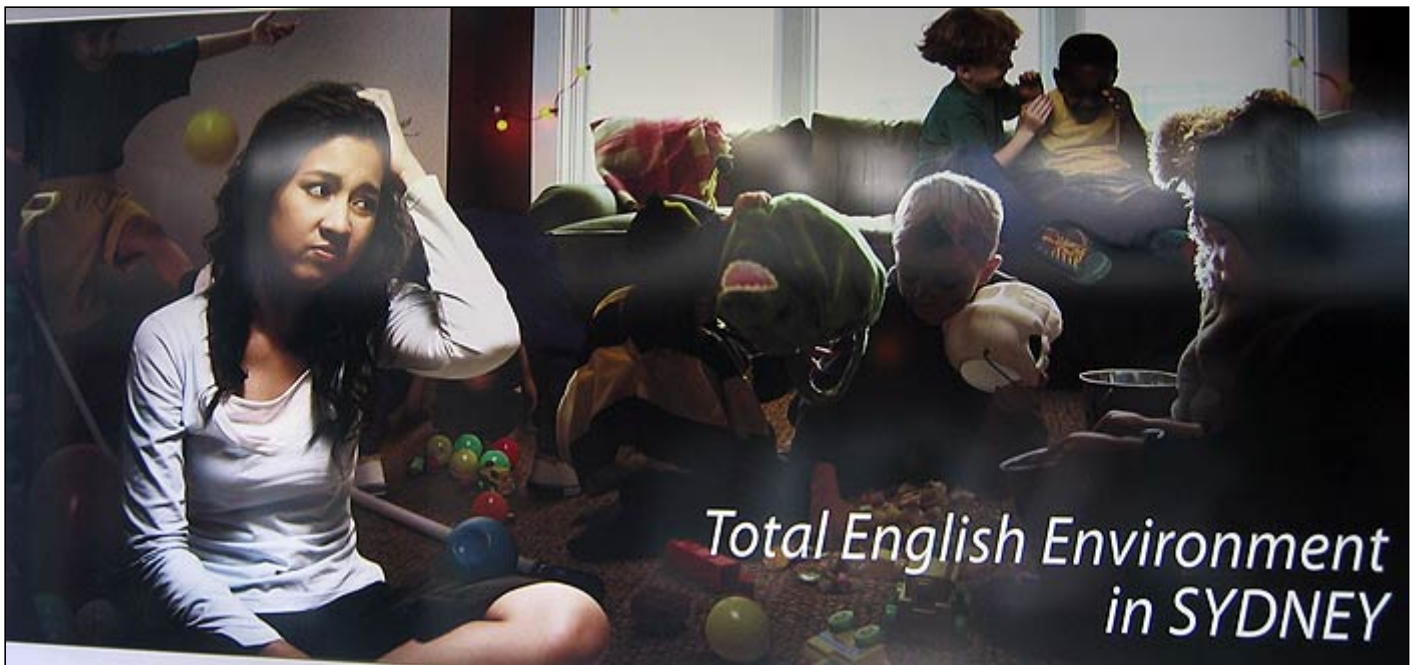
(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Another brilliant ad campaign from Wall Street – January 13, 2007

On the Skytrain platforms is a new hilarious (and true-to-life) billboard campaign for Wall Street Institute (an English school). This one shows a Thai pizza delivery man in London being abused by a bunch of irate *farangs*. Back in Thailand (below), he dons a pink shirt and has a *sanuk* time learning English.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The other set of billboards shows a Thai nanny in Australia taking care of some wild kids. Back in Thailand (below) she also dons a pink shirt and is able to converse with farangs on an equal level.

A group of people, including a woman in a pink shirt, are in a modern office or classroom setting with large windows overlooking a city. The text "97% SUCCESS With Wall Street Institute Multi-Method*" is in the top left. "Total English Environment at WALL STREET LADPRAO" is in the bottom left. "Wall Street INSTITUTE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH FOR ADULTS" is in the bottom right. Contact information "02 660 3000" and "www.wallstreet.in.th" is in the bottom center.

(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

2006: I'm Hot/I'm cool

Above: "I'm hot!" "I'm cool!" – Lighted billboard in subway and skytrain stations for Wall Street Institute (an English school)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Foreign pilots on domestic routes opposed

January 20, 2007

Categories: Airports and Airlines

[Foreign pilots on domestic routes opposed](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 20, 2007

...The association disagreed with the proposal because it would allow foreigners to gain knowledge about strategic locations in Thailand, said Mr Permsak...

Bangkok bombings the work of JI

January 20, 2007

Categories: Terrorism

[Bangkok bombings the work of JI](#) – *The Australian*, January 20, 2007

Thai intelligence agencies say operatives of the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiah were directly involved in the New Year's Eve bombings in the Thai capital that left three dead and 40 wounded. In reports seen by The Weekend Australian, the agencies say a key JI leader in Thailand's southern Narathiwat province was directly involved in the planning of the operation. The link contradicts earlier comments by military-installed Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont who said the bombings appeared to be unrelated to the violence in the south, which has claimed more than 1800 lives since early 2004...

Domestic calls within Thailand not routed through Singapore: MFA

January 22, 2007

Categories: 2006 Coup

[Domestic calls within Thailand not routed through Singapore: MFA](#) – Channel NewsAsia, January 22, 2007

*...General Sonthi had told fellow members of his junta not to talk on mobile phones because the lines were rerouted to Singapore and that confidential information might be leaked.
But MFA said it does not make business or technical sense to route domestic calls in Thailand via Singapore...*

[Paranoid Thai junta to dump cellphones for walkie-talkies](#) – AsiaMedia, January 22, 2007

Two polls

January 23, 2007

Two polls

[Poll: Thai youth disgracing nation](#) – *Bangkok Recorder*, January 23, 2007

Thai people in Bangkok think that today's youth are disgracing their country with their dress code, low morals and lack of respect, according to a new poll...

[Bangkok youths quite happy with lives: Poll](#) – *The Nation*, January 24, 2007

A new study seeking to measure the Gross Domestic Happiness (GDH) of Bangkok and its vicinity, youths aged between 12 and 24, found they were quite happy with their lives and that materialism was a major factor of happiness...

Teflon Thailand proves resilient despite crises

January 23, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Teflon Thailand proves resilient despite crises](#) – *International Herald Tribune*, January 23, 2007

In what has become a metaphor for its economy overall, the tourists and their money keep coming to Thailand...

Thailand risks losing property buyers to neighbours

January 23, 2007

Categories: Property and Development

[Thailand risks losing property buyers to neighbours](#) – *The Edge Daily*, January 23, 2007

Thailand risks losing some of its resort home market to Southeast Asian rivals Malaysia and the Philippines if it goes ahead with plans to close a loophole that lets foreigners own freehold property...

Burma's Fallen Star: Tin Moe (1933-2007)

January 23, 2007

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Burma's Fallen Star: Tin Moe \(1933-2007\)](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, January 23, 2007

Thailand builds reputation as international wine producer

January 24, 2007

Categories: Food and Drink

[Thailand builds reputation as international wine producer](#) – AFP, January 24, 2007

In Thailand's Chao Phraya river basin, workers in boats traverse small canals among lines of vines, tending to Malaga blanc and Pokdum grapes in the world's only floating vineyard...

Interim government needs some crowd support

January 24, 2007

Categories: 2006 Coup

[Interim government needs some crowd support](#) – *The Nation*, January 24, 2007

...Before the coup, the core issue was about the runaway power of a popular government that manipulated the system to serve and enrich vested interests.

...After the Thaksin regime became history, the core issue has turned to the uprooting of its tentacles of power. For the restoration of democratic rule, it is imperative to get rid of flaws that led to the collapse of the system of checks and balances.

When he was in power, Thaksin was seen as a menace to popular democracy. After he was toppled, his legacy has continued to haunt the nation like a ghost trying to hold on to the land of the living...

Important message to our beloved “posters”

January 24, 2007

Categories: Thai Newspapers and Magazines

[Important message to our beloved “posters”](#) – *The Nation*, January 24, 2007

...As you will see, from our internal data base, 10 comments attacking writer Sapon Onkgara came surprisingly from one computer in China and eight from Hong Kong at the time of the investigation...

Thai trains in the past

January 24, 2007

Categories: Thai Railroads



(Photo: Dick van der Spek)

Thai trains 1973-1974

Dick van der Spek writes: *From November 1973 until end of January 1974 I stayed with two colleagues from the Dutch Ordnance Survey in Thailand.*

During this time I took, without preconceived plan, photos here and there. In the first week of December 1973 I caught the train nearby between Lum Sum and Wan Po on the way to Nam Tok.



(Photo: Dick van der Spek)

Thai trains 1973

Dick van der Spek writes: *A steamloc still life is at Nam Tok (Tarsau), in December 1973.*



(Photo: Dick van der Spek)

Thai trains 1979

Dick van der Spek writes: *This diesel train is at the station at Nam Tok in the time that steamloc exploitation was out of sight. Photo 17 july 1979.*



(Photo: Dick van der Spek)

Thai trains 1973-1974

December 1973 in Chiang Mai



(Photo: Dick van der Spek)

Thai trains 1988

Dick van der Spek writes: *On 5 April 1988 we see some loc's at Makassan depot.*

Malaysia – truly Asia or truly bizarre?

January 25, 2007

Categories: Malaysia

[Malaysia – truly Asia or truly bizarre?](#) – *The Age*,

January 25, 2007

...Recent visitors to the Southeast Asian nation have read serious newspaper articles about miracle healers and a mysterious giant ape in the country's southern jungles. Now, there is a woman who apparently secretes gem-stones out of her big toes...

James Love: Racist and Ignorant Reactions on Thailand Compulsory License

January 25, 2007

Categories: Health, HIV-AIDS

[James Love: Racist and Ignorant Reactions on Thailand Compulsory License](#) – *HuffingtonPost*, January 25, 2007

...The reaction in some quarters is that compulsory licenses for patents on AIDS drugs are one thing, but Thailand should not touch patents on treatments for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, or other common diseases.

Implicit in this argument is the view that people who live in developing countries somehow don't need treatments for the same diseases that "we" do, or that global trade rules only permit issuing compulsory licenses for patents on AIDS treatments. It should be obvious this is wrong on both counts...

Thaksin's eel curry

January 25, 2007

Categories: Thai Newspapers and Magazines

Thaksin's eel curry – *Nation Weekend*, January 25, 2007

The illustration portrays PM Samak making a curry with eels (in a Salvador Dali pose). Eels represent the “slippery” party of Chat Thai led by "eel" Banharn Silaparcha who joined the government after pledging not to.

It is “Thaksin's” curry because Thaksin is thought to be the real power behind the People Power Party.



Debate in India: Is rule on yoga constitutional?

January 26, 2007

Categories: India

[Debate in India: Is rule on yoga constitutional?](#) – IHT, January 26, 2007

The question of whether public school students should be required to take up the sun salutation has revealed lingering questions about how secularism is practiced and challenged in Indian politics...

Toilet tutorial

January 26, 2007

Toilet tutorial –
January 26, 2007

The headline reads: Change behavior of using toilet correctly , if you
do not want...



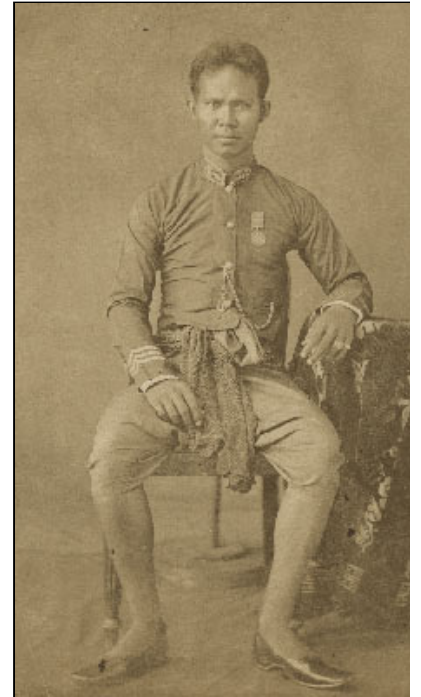
Old photos

January 27, 2007

Categories: Old photos and films



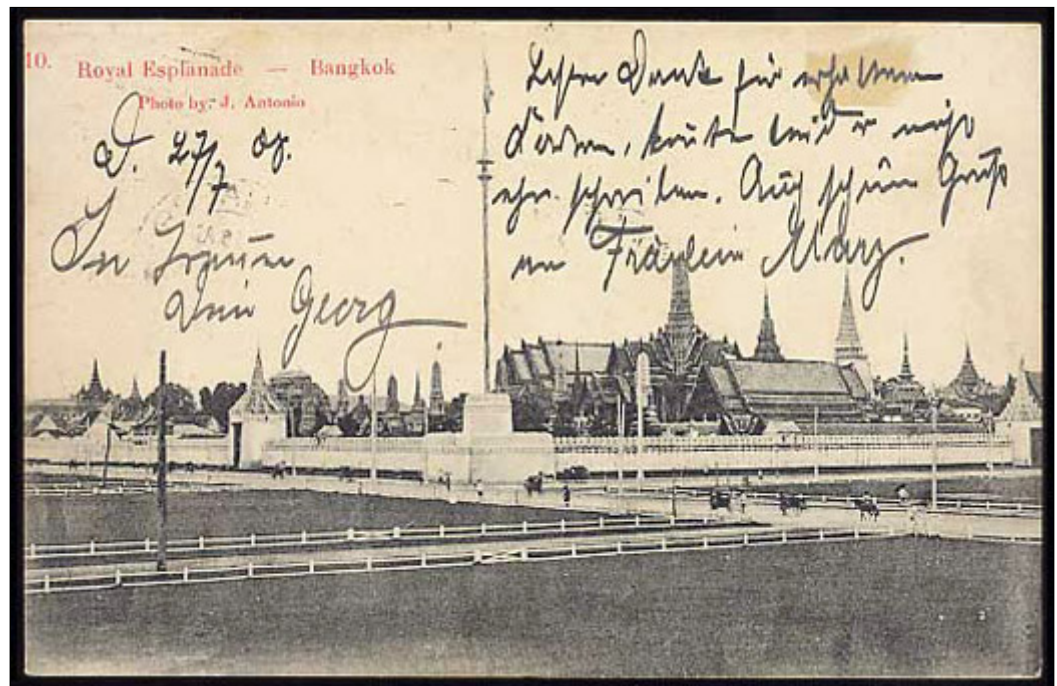
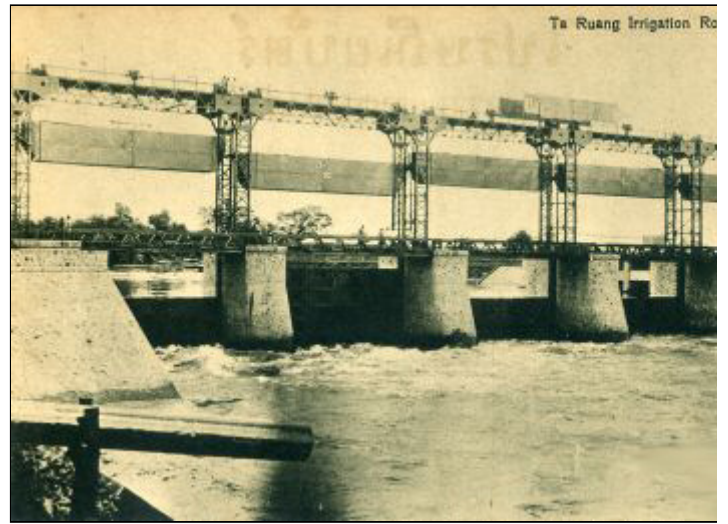
Old portraits – February 5, 2007
Anyone know who this is?



Siamese man – March 17, 2007

"Ta Ruang Irrigation Rock, Siam" –
March 12, 2007

Undated photo. Anyone know the location?



Royal Esplanade, 1908 –
March 12, 2007

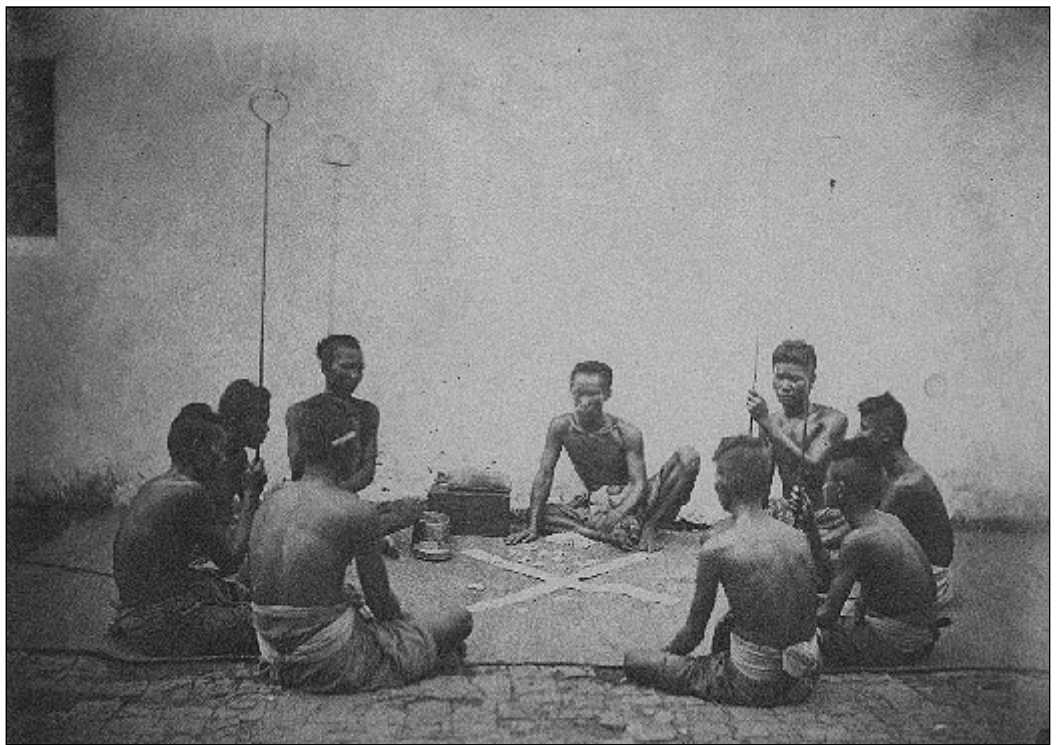
More photos from this area: [Phan](#)
[Phiphop Lila Bridge over the years](#)



Wat Rajanada long ago – February 3, 2007
View from the Golden Mount west along the present route of Rajadamneon Road.
Anyone have any idea how old this photo could be? A thread on this photo is [here](#).



Old photo –
February 2, 2007
Where is this?



Old Siamese photo – January 27, 2007
What is this activity? A thread on this photo is [here](#).



Another old photo
What is this activity? An explanation is [here](#).



Venice of the east – February 8, 2007

Another view (probably from the 19th century) from Klong Mahanak looking west.

Driverless Thai Cars

January 27, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Driverless Thai Cars](#)

—

ASM, January, 2007

The first entrant in the Thailand Intelligent Vehicle Challenge has completed a test run on the campus at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok.

The challenge has been jointly organised by AIT, the Thai Robotics Society, and Seagate Technology (Thailand) Ltd...

An EU-like pact for Asean: A distant dream?

January 28, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[An EU-like pact for Asean: A distant dream?](#) – IHT, January 28, 2007

For investors in Thailand, it's clearly unclear

January 28, 2007

Categories: Business, Law

[For investors in Thailand, it's clearly unclear](#) – Reuters, January 28, 2007

...But Krikkrai only managed to sow more confusion, flying in the face of his boss and revealing the government would continue to allow informal ways to skirt laws that bar non-Thais from owning more than 49 percent of companies in protected sectors.

"If you would like to hold more than 49.99, you still can do," he said. "The provision of the law says the Minister of Commerce, with the permission of the cabinet, can allow even up to 70 percent of foreign equity participation."

Quite what he was talking about, nobody knew.

"It was a good opportunity to clarify the government's position but everybody left the room just as confused," said one Western diplomat...

Singapore sex industry film focuses on pleasure

January 29, 2007

Categories: Singapore

[S'pore sex industry film focuses on pleasure](#) – Reuters, January 29, 2007

Ekachai Uekrongtham loves a sordid story and the award-winning Thai director wants prudish Singapore to hear this one.

This week, Uekrongtham finished shooting “Pleasure Factory,” a film about Geylang, the city-state’s red light district, which he wants to release in the second half of the year...

Outcry prompts spa to tear down phallic fence

January 29, 2007

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Outcry prompts spa to tear down phallic fence](#) – Reuters, January 29, 2007

A Thai spa has agreed to re-model its penis-shaped fence into lotus flowers after it offended neighbours, a government official said on Monday...

Thailand has lower minimum pay: bizman

January 29, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand has lower minimum pay: bizman](#) – Sun Star, January 29, 2007

...Chamber vice president Vicente Lao said the implementation of the minimum wage in Thailand becomes "irrelevant" because workers are paid "very well" based on their productivity.

"Businesses are coming up in Thailand and nobody is following the implemented minimum wage, everybody is paying higher than that," Lao said...

Thailand urges India to reopen Stilwell road

January 29, 2007

Categories: Highways and Roads

[Thailand urges India to reopen Stilwell road](#) – *Livemint*, January, 2008

Thailand has urged India to reopen the historic Stilwell Road, which links north-east India to South East Asia, to enhance connectivity...

“Ultraman take a picture”

January 31, 2007

Categories: Uncategorized



"Ultraman take a picture" – January 31, 2007

A regular 2Bangkok reader and BKK resident writes: *I thought you might like to see the coup-themed Baby Ultraman children's T-shirt I picked up at a neighborhood market this weekend. The back says "ULTRAMAN ARMY". I hope it amuses you as it has amused me... I suppose I can afford to be amused by such things, as I have no say in whoever is running the show in this country anyway.*

Gay Canadian tries to force Thai guy to have unsafe sex

January 31, 2007

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Gay Canadian tries to force Thai guy to have unsafe sex](#) – *Pattaya Daily News*, January 31, 2007

You're only hurting yourself, Thailand

January 31, 2007

Categories: Health, HIV-AIDS

[You're only hurting yourself, Thailand](#) – *The Motley Fool*,

January 31, 2007

When I was in grad school, we were repeatedly bombarded with examples of governments making idiotic, short-sighted moves that hampered the long-term health of their economies and citizens. And now it appears that Thailand has made just such a gaffe. On Monday, Thailand's government announced that it was going to allow either the manufacture or importation of generic versions of Abbott's (NYSE: ABT) HIV treatment Kaletra and Sanofi-Aventis' (NYSE: SNY) blood clot drug Plavix, even though the drugs are still under patent protection and producing generic versions of them would be illegal in many countries...

Pete Doherty Snapped Taking Drugs In Thailand

January 31, 2007

Categories: Thailand in the International Media

[Pete Doherty Snapped Taking Drugs In Thailand](#) – *Star Pulse*,

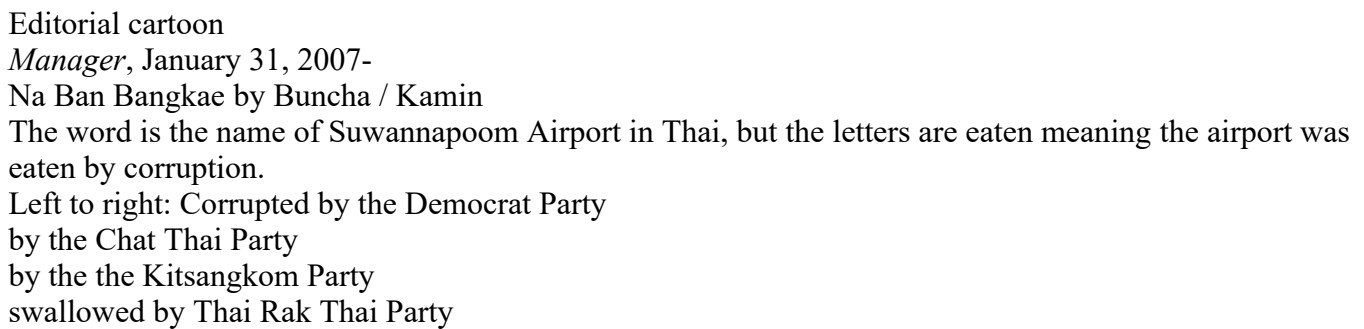
January 31, 2007

...Jess Lea claims she and a friend recognised the singer and invited him back to their room after spotting him buying needles from a drug store in the Thai resort of Phuket.

Lea claims Doherty sneaked off from Moss to buy drugs just days after the pair's romantic ceremony – but the rocker was bombarded by phone-calls from the supermodel...

January 31, 2007
Categories: Editorial Cartoons

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Editorial cartoon

Khao Sod, Yamyai, February 4, 2007

Top, left to right: Bad smelling around the world.

Thaksinomics is the best.

Do you hear? Suwannapoom breaks up.

Bottom, left to right: A poll said the government of old gingers still cheats.

Famous monk deceives female Aussie tourist to rape her.

Foreigners don't dare to come to Thailand because of afraid of Bombs – Bombs in the south – Bombs in Bangkok – Bomb newspapers



Shortcuts, *Thairath*, by Chai Ratchawat, December 24, 2006

From top left to right: Two missiles bearing the NCCC and ASC acronyms are about to hit some people. The results of their actions, using a shortcut, are returning to them.

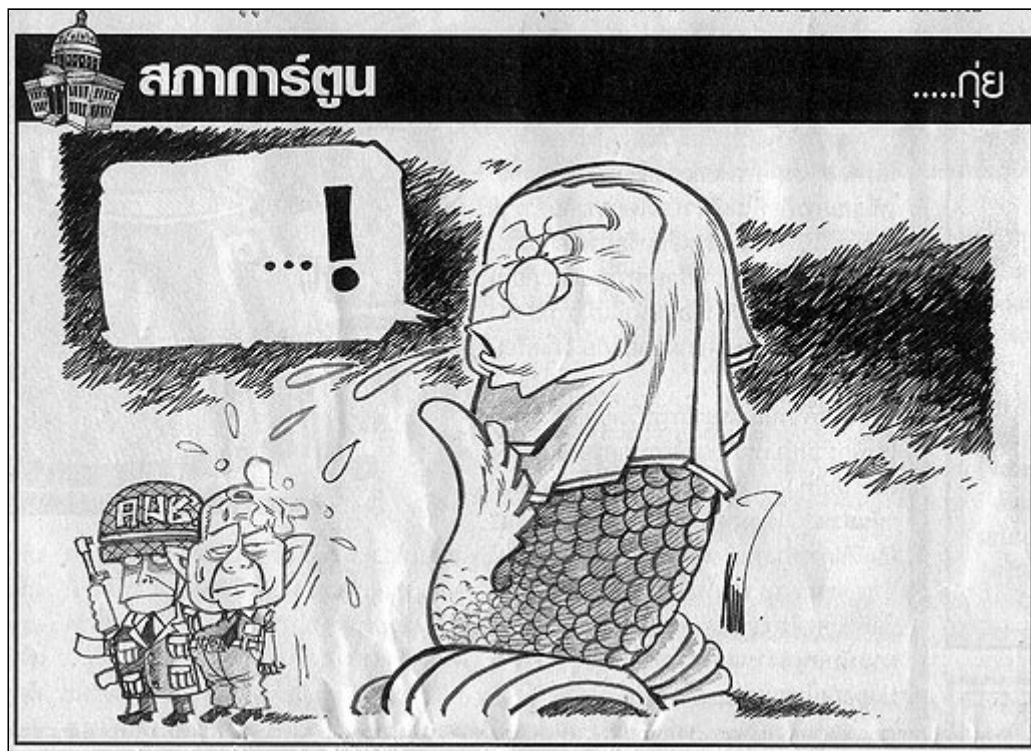
Some people who wanted to hit the jackpot by horse and boxing betting, lotteries and football gambling might end up committing suicide .

Video clips – a quick way to become a star.

Bottom left to right: See death sooner if you drink and drive.

Camfrog – a shortcut to finding people who have something in common with you.

Electric circuits love shortcuts, too.



Editorial cartoon

Kom Chad Luek, January 20, 2007 – Singapore spits on the Thai regime



Editorial cartoons

Thairath by Chai Ratchawat, January 15, 2007

The problem of two families

Left: Son who makes trouble for father.

Right: Father who make trouble for kids.