

# **Preliminary Itinerary for Cobb & Associates**

## **Cambodia & Vietnam**

**June 20 – July 4, 2005**

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### **Day 1. June 20.**

Depart Los Angeles bound for Bangkok.

### **Day2. June21.**

**Bangkok.**

Upon arrival in Bangkok transfer to the Amari Airport Hotel, conveniently located inside the airport building.

***Accommodations:*** Amari Airport Hotel

***Meals:*** Aloft

### **Day 3. June 22.**

**Siem Reap/Cambodia**

A short morning flight takes the group to Siem Reap where we will be met by our guide Mr. Dara. Transfer to the Victoria Angkor Hotel.

Angkor was built between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century when Khmer civilization was at the height of its extraordinary creativity. From Angkor, the kings of the mighty Khmer Empire ruled over a vast territory that extended from the tip of what is now southern Vietnam northward towards Yunnan in China and westward toward the Bay of Bengal. Angkor's hundreds or so temples constitute the sacred skeleton of a spectacular administrative and religious center whose houses, public buildings and palaces were constructed of wood - now long decayed -because the right to dwell in the remaining magnificent structures of brick or stone was reserved for the gods.

Enjoy an afternoon visit to Angkor Thom, the once great city of the Khmer rulers. Built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century under the direction of the greatest Khmer ruler, King Jayavarman VII, Angkor Thom had a population in excess of one million, making it one of the largest cities in the world. The city was constructed when Baphoun, the previous capital, was sacked and destroyed by the invading army of the Cham, a rival kingdom based in the central highlands of neighbouring Vietnam. The Cham, like the Khmer were greatly influenced by contacts with Indian traders, and absorbed the ritual and mythology of Hinduism.

During its zenith Angkor Thom covered an area of more than 10 square kilometers, making it larger than any city in Europe.

The highlight of any tour to Angkor is the Bayon Temple, built by Jayavarman VII in the exact center of the city of Angkor Thom. It is decorated with 1,200 meters of bas-reliefs incorporating over 11,000 figures. The famous carvings on the outer wall of the first level depict vivid scenes of everyday life in 12<sup>th</sup> century Cambodia. The temple is a dazzling rising dais of faces – some 54 towers carved with 200 figures looking out on to the world.

**Accommodations:** Victori Angkor Hotel  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 4. June 23.**

**Siem Reap**

Morning visit to Angkor Wat, believed to have been constructed between the years 1113-1143 during the reign of king Suryavarman II. The temple was built as a funerary monument to the king. Its astounding arrangement of bas-reliefs, encircling the main temple building, should be followed from the left to right in accordance to Hindu funerary ritual.

The temple area is massive – 208 hectares demarked by a laterite wall. The moat, which surrounds the land area of the temple is 200 metres wide and spans a perimeter area of 5.5 kilometers.

The five towers of Angkor Wat are only in full view from specific angles – as you walk across the causeway to the west gate entrance, for example, only three towers are visible. There are theories that relate the height and position of the towers to astronomical forecasts of the equinox and angle of the sun's rays as they strike the earth at that time.

Conclude the morning at Ta Prohm temple which stands as a monument to the awesome power of the jungle. The roots of trees have, over the years, pried the stones of the temples asunder and the many beautiful friezes are covered by the branches and leaves of the huge trees. Courtyards and cloisters are clogged with jumbled piles of delicately carved stone blocks and bas-reliefs are carpeted by different kinds of mosses and plants. The effect is stunning.

Lunch will be at the Foreign Correspondent Club in Siem Reap.

After lunch set out for Preah Khan which was built by Jayavarman VII in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. This rarely visited monument is being carefully preserved by the World Monuments Fund, a non-profit New York based organization. This was originally a Buddhist monastery but most of the original friezes and carvings have been tampered with and now depict Hindu epics and deities.

**Accommodations:** Victoria Angkor Hotel  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

**Day 5. June 24.**

**Siem Reap**

Start the day very early in time to watch the sunrise from the top of Phnom Bakheng, one of the two hills dominating the plain of Angkor. From here you will have a spectacular view of Angkor Wat. We return to the hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast we set out for a visit to the Angkor Hospital For Children funded by a the New York non-profit organization, Friends Without A Border. Friends Without A Border (Friends) was founded in 1995 by internationally acclaimed photographer Kenro Izu. After a series of visits to photograph the Angkor monuments Izu dedicated himself and his photography to Cambodia's children. Using his photography to raise awareness and financial support, Izu's dream was realized in 1999 with the opening of Angkor Hospital for Children (AHC).

Over the past 5 years AHC has treated over 200,000 children and the range of services it provides has grown. The Capacity Building and Health Education Program, and the AHC Medical Training Program have flourished and begun to make significant impact on the medical structure in Cambodia.

Friends remains a small organization with great ambitions, maintaining small offices in N.Y., Tokyo and Phnom Penh. Friends employs only three staff members and maintains a modest budget. Funds are raised through grants, donations, annual events and the generosity of donors.

In the late morning we depart for a visit to the floating villages of Chong Khneas, located just south of Siem Reap on Cambodia's great Lake Tonle Sap and return to the hotel for a late lunch.

Afternoon excursion to Banteay Srei, an architectural jewel located about 16 miles north of Angkor Thom. It was built by Jayavarman V (968-1001) and dedicated to Shiva. This large monument, considered by many to be the most perfect of Khmer temples, is famous for its exquisite carvings executed in pink sandstone. Banteay Srei is a concentrated expression of an Angkorean temple – for once virtually complete in its decoration, with a wealth of religious symbolism.

Dinner tonight will be at Chez Sophea, a small restaurant owned by a French man situated in the jungle just outside Angkor Wat with a view of the temples.

***Accommodations:*** Victoria Angkor Hotel

***Meals:*** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **Day 6. June 25.**

**Hanoi.**

We depart on a flight to Hanoi. a charming city with pleasant lakes, shaded boulevards and verdant public parks. The city center is an architectural museum piece, its blocks of ochre buildings retaining the air of a provincial French town of the 1930s. Spend the day exploring Hanoi's Old Quarter with over 1000 years of history packed into the maze of streets and alleys and shops where you can find everything from local food to antiques. During the 13<sup>th</sup> century Hanoi's 36 guilds of craftsmen and artisans established themselves in the Old Quarter. Subsequently each street has been named after the specific product which was produced and sold here. Even to this day, this area retains the essence of life from centuries past.

Upon arrival we will be met by our guide Mr. Cong a former teacher who will travel with us until our departure. Transfer to the Hilton Opera Hotel.

This afternoon enjoy a stroll through Old Quarter. Dinner will be held at the Wild Rice Restaurant.

***Accommodations:*** Hilton Opera Hotel

***Meals:*** Breakfast, Dinner

### **Day 7. June 26.**

**Hanoi**

Full day to explore the city sites which include Hanoi's famous One Pillar Pagoda, built of wood on a stone pillar to resemble a lotus blossom. From here continue on to the Temple of Literature the site of Vietnam's first university dating back to 1076.

We will also visit the History Museum which includes exhibits from Vietnam's prehistory as well as pieces from the Khmer kingdoms.

Lunch will be at the Emperor Restaurant.

**Accommodations:** Melia Hotel

**Meals:** Brekafast, Lunch

**Day 8. June 27.**

**Hanoi**

Full day excursion to the Perfume Pagoda. After a 1 ½ hour drive, we will travel by row boat to this complex of pagodas and Buddhist shrines which are built into the limestone cliffs of the Huong Tich Mountains. This is one of Vietnam's most famous pilgrimage sites.

**Accommodations:** Melia Hotel

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Day 9. June 28.**

**Hue**

Morning transfer to the airport for our flight to Hue, which served as Vietnam's political capital from 1802 until 1945 under 13 emperors of the Nguyen Dynasty. Traditionally the city has been one of Vietnam's cultural, religious and educational centers. This 19<sup>th</sup> century capital of regal pavilions has preserved its air of gracious reserve and faded glamour. In the afternoon enjoy a cruise on the Perfume River to the Thien Mu Pagoda, one of the most famous structures in all of Vietnam. Its 35 foot high octagonal tower was built in 1844 by Emperor Thieu Tri and has become the unofficial symbol of Hue. Each of the seven stories is dedicated to a Buddha.

**Accommodations:** Saigon Morin Hotel

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 10. June 29.**

**Hue**

Spend the day in Hue where sightseeing will include the Citadel of Hue which was built at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Emperor Gia Long. Continue on to the Royal Tombs which are the tombs of the emperors of the Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945). Most of the tomb complexes consist of a temple for the worship of the emperor and empress, a stele pavilion which details a glorified history of the emperor, a lotus pond and a sepulcher where the emperor's remains are buried.

**Accommodations:** Saigon Morin Hotel

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Day 11. June 30.**

**Danang/Hoi An**

Enjoy a spectacular drive to Danang and Hoi An along an unspoiled coastal road. Drive past abandoned Ounset huts and past the huge American airfield before arriving at the Marble Mountains, a steep hillside scattered with Buddhist shrines and huge caverns lit up by sticks of incense and haunted by the looming shadows of 20 foot Buddhas. Inside are a number of caves in which Buddhist sanctuaries have been built over the centuries.

En route to Hoi An pass the famous China Beach.

The town of Hoi An which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999. Foreigners have been coming to Hoi An since the 15<sup>th</sup> century – Dutch, Portuguese, British, French, Japanese and Chinese – to purchase silk, fabrics, tea, pepper and Chinese medicine. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hoi An trade declined, partly as a result of internal conflicts, but mainly because the mouth of the Thu Bon River silted up, rendering the sea approach too narrow. The port of Danang gradually supplanted Hoi An.

The legacy of maritime trade in Hoi An left an eclectic mix of merchant architecture with housing in French, Chinese or Japanese style. Hoi An is one of the rare places in Vietnam where you can find genuine Vietnamese architecture which miraculously escaped the war. The city is small and compact and the historic quarter is home to 20,000 people.

***Accommodations:*** Hoi An Beach Villa

***Meals:*** Breakfast, Lunch

**Day 11. July 1.**

**Danang/Hoi An**

Full day excursion to My Son, considered to be one of Vietnam's most impressive Cham sites. The monuments are set in a verdant valley surrounded by hills and overlooked by Hon Quap Mountain. My Son became a religious center under King Bhadravarman in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and the site continued to be occupied until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the longest period of development of any monument in Southeast Asia. Most of the temples were dedicated to Cham kings associated with divinities, especially Shiva who was regarded as the founder and protector of Cham's dynasties.

**Note:** The local Cham Museum houses the finest collection of Cham sculpture in the world. Many of the sandstone carvings are absolutely stunning. The museum, built by the French in 1916 houses no more than 300 objects displayed in its four large open-air galleries. However, the cumulative effect of the collection is spectacular. Mr. Cong often works as a curator in this museum!

***Accommodations:*** Hoi An Beach Villa

***Meals:*** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 12. July 2.**

**Danang/Hoi An**

We will have a full day to stroll through the narrow streets of Hoi An and visit its pagodas. There are a number of good restaurants in Hoi An. It is also recommended to take a look at the art galleries along Nguyen Thai Hoc Street.

***Accommodations:*** Hoi An Beach Villa

***Meals:*** Breakfast, Dinner

**Day 13. July 3.**

**Danang/Hoi An**

Enjoy a free day to relax at the beach or finish last minute shopping. Take an evening flight to Saigon. Remainder of the evening at leisure.

***Accommodations:*** Majestic Hotel  
***Meals:*** Breakfast

**Day 14. July 4.**

Return to the U.S.

**Projected cost: \$3900/participant exclusive of travel to point of departure (LAX), occasional meals on your own, visa and exit fees and guide tips.**

**Registration deadline: May 1, 2005**