

Thailand

On Thursday, November 18, 1999 after talking with an engineer at FLIR systems about a job, I decided that I would go to Thailand for a 2-week bike ride. I had already purchased my airline tickets and was planning on canceling them if the job at FLIR came through. I really wanted to land that job, but they still needed time to decide. After talking with FLIR I started getting prepared for my trip to Thailand. I already had most of my stuff, but was not sure what I still needed to buy. I also lined up some headhunters to call when I returned from Thailand. That night I made a list of about 30 things that I still needed. (Thursday, November 18, 1999)

In the morning, I called up some headhunters to set up interviews for when I returned from Thailand. Then I went shopping for supplies for my trip to Thailand. I bought a one-way plane ticket to Chiang Ria, bike supplies and camping gear. Then I went home and put all my gear loosely in my car. Next, I drove to my brother's place, where I told him that I was laid off from EDS and was planning on going to Thailand. We went out for a couple of beers and then went back to his place. I ended up going to sleep at about 3:00 AM. (Friday, November 19, 1999)

The next day, I woke up at about 11:00 AM and helped my sister-in-law (Ellen) do some computer maintenance. Then I drove to the mall at the intersection of I-405 and I-5 (just south of Seattle) and bought a money belt. The next stop was the nearby Target store to buy a Fleece sleeping bag and a camping towel. That night, I was reading about the recommended vaccinations for Thailand and realized that I should get some Malaria pills. I called my brother to see if he had any recommendation on getting the prescriptions, but I was not able to reach him. (Saturday, November 20, 1999)

The next day, I bought a new Tripod and went to the emergency room to get a prescription for Malaria pills. The person that wrote the prescription asked if I could take some foot powder to his dad's friend that was in Bangkok. I said sure and that night he brought me the foot powder for his dad's friend. That night, I packed up all my gear and took a short test ride in the parking lot at Annette's condo. Then I boxed up my gear and bike. I was finally ready for my trip to Thailand. I finished the night by watched a movie called Y2K. (Sunday, November 21, 1999)

At 7:00 AM Annette dropped me off at the airport and I went to check in my luggage. Alaska airlines wanted to charge me \$50 for my bike and I explained to them that normally the overseas leg pays for the bike. They called up and found out that Korean airlines did not charge for bikes. Then she asked her supervisor and the supervisor said that they charge the higher price, theirs or the overseas leg. I still was not

convinced and I had the lady call the customer service at their main office. I ended up talking with someone from customer service and they agreed with the supervisor. I explained that Alaskan Airlines was not being very competitive and they agreed that if I travel with a bike, I should probably avoid Alaska Airlines in the future. I explained to them that I have flown on several other airlines and all those airlines charge according to the overseas leg. This was only the second time that I have had to pay for my bike on an international flight. I have never had to pay to get my bike back to the USA (I always had to pay additional for my bike on domestic flights). The lady told me that I would have to pay \$50 to get the bike back Seattle from Los Angeles, but she was wrong. While at the airport, I exchanged money for Thai money and tried to get my seat for my flights on Korean Airlines. I still did not have seats arranged and they would not let me get seats assigned until I showed up. Somehow, I always was able to get good seats. The 50-minute flight to Vancouver, BC, Canada was in a very small plane. The check in line to Korean Airlines was very long. I did not feel like I slept great on the flight to Seoul, but I was well rested when I arrived in Bangkok the next day. (Monday, November 22, 1999)

The flight landed in Seoul on Tuesday morning and after a short layover I was on my way to Bangkok. I arrived in Bangkok at about midnight and was looking for a man holding a sign with my name on it (This was the person that I was bringing foot powder to from Seattle). Most of the people holding signs were well dressed with clearly written signs. I saw a man that was starting to leave with a scribbled sign, shorts and a webbed shirt. I said Hey Mario (This was the name I was given for the Italian guy that I was supposed to meet at the airport) he turned and that is when I met Mario. (Day 1/ Tuesday, November 23, 1999)

I went with Mario to store my bike at the luggage storage area. Then we went outside the walls of the airport and caught a cab. Mario had been to Thailand several times and found that it was about 1/3 the price to take a taxi from outside the walls of the airport, then right at the airport. Mario spoke some Thai and told the taxi driver not to put the meter on; I guess this also helps reduce the price of a taxi ride. Mario ended up getting us to Khao San road for 120 baht. We then found a room for me at the Dior Guest house. Mario and I went for a couple of beers on Khao San road, then we took a taxi to another part of town where I saw a couple of elephants on the road (people owned the elephants and brought them to the street as a method of generating money). We only stayed there for about 1/2 hour had a beer and then returned to Dior Guest house. Mario asked the man at the front desk if I could get a 5:30 AM wakeup call and the man ended up lending me his alarm clock as my wakeup call. I went to sleep at around 3:30 AM and Mario went out for another beer.

I did not sleep real sound that night and woke up at about 5:30 AM. I was worried about missing my 7:30 AM flight to Chiang Ria. I took a cold shower (no hot water)

and woke the guy up that managed the motel to give him my key and his alarm clock. I went to see about getting a cab to the airport, the first guy I asked said 400 baht and I told him I paid a 120 baht to get there and he went down to 300 baht. I then stopped another taxi and was able to talk him down to 200 baht. I then told the first guy that I was going with the other guy and put my stuff in the other taxi driver's car. The taxi driver took the toll road and I ended up having to pay an additional 35 baht. I told the taxi driver that I was going to Chiang Ria and that I needed to get my bike from the international arrival place. He did not understand English and I do not speak Thai, so he ended up dropping me off at the domestic departure gate. It took me a while to find the place that I stored my bike. I asked one man about the location of the luggage storage and he pointed me in the wrong direction, I quickly realized that I was going in the wrong direction and went back to the domestic terminal and found a luggage storage place and they told me that I needed to go to the storage place in the International Airport and gave me direction to that luggage storage area. I finally found my bike and I noticed my ticket said international airport. I asked the guy at the international check-in if I was in the correct place and he pointed to the long line. By the time I made it to the front of the line I was told that I should have been at the domestic terminal (That made since to me, but my ticket said international airport) and that I would not have enough time to make my flight. They were able to book me on the next flight and I then had plenty of time to get to the domestic gate. The new flight left at 10:45 AM. While waiting for my flight, I exchanged some money and I asked the lady to give me smaller bills and she said no. I also bought some postcards and groceries while I waiting for my flight. When I arrived at the Chiang Rai airport, I asked the security guards if there was a place where I could leave my bike box when I finished assembling my bike. They pointed to a place and I took my bike and gear out of the boxes. They watched me put things together and asked me questions about my bike. Since I do not speak Thai and they spoke only a few English words our communications took a lot of guess work. I was finally ready to leave the Chiang Rai airport at 12:48 PM and then asked people which direction to Mae Sai. I biked for about 10 miles and ended up in the town of Chiang Ria. I had to ask people a few times which direction to Mae Sai and I ended up doing a 10-mile loop around the airport. When asking people for direction, I would just get out my map and show them where I was headed and they would instruct me with their hands or I would have them draw instructions in my notepad. I finally started biking towards Mae Sai and at one point some people that were working on the side of the road asked me to help them move some beams. I got off my bike and they laughed and gestured that they did not really need help. I saw lots of people working in rice fields, driving vehicles that had motors that sounded like lawnmowers and people riding motor scooters as I biked to Mae Sai. In Mae Sai, I ended up getting a room at the Chad House. I was walking around town and met a man from Australia and he was traveling with a lady from the Netherlands. After talking with them I noticed that everything in town stopped. All

the vehicles stopped in the middle of the roads and everyone except the Australian and Netherlands couple stood still while the national anthem played over the street's intercom system. I then went over and asked the Australian guy if he noticed everyone stopped and he did not even notice. I told him that they just played the national anthem and he commented on how patriotic Thai people must have been. When I was walking on a back road some kids asked me if I was jogging and I told them I was biking. I think they just knew a few words of English and they could ask me if I was jogging, but did not understand my biking explanation. I went through the motions of peddling and I think they understood that. Back at the Chad house they had an interesting toilet, the type that requires standing and squatting over a hole. In order to flush the toilet, you needed to add more water, I have no idea where the waste went. I ate an excellent dinner at the Chad house. While eating dinner, I watch a teen-age boy fix an old radio (it looked like it had been buried) with vacuum tubes. At this point in the trip I had only had about 10 hours of sleep in 3 days, so I was very tired and went to sleep at about 8:00 PM. (Day 2/ Bike miles 44.28 miles/ Total bike miles 44.28/ Wednesday, November 24, 1999)

In the morning, I talked with 2 French ladies that told me places to stay in Chiang Mia and Chiang Ria. Also the lady that lived in the guesthouse recommended that I visit Chiang Khong. I biked into Tachileik, Burma (Myanmar). On the boarder I saw Japanese tourist taking pictures and had them take my picture When I first entered Burma (Myanmar), I took a great picture of some of the 3-wheeled bikes (Traditional Samlors). The traffic in Thailand moves on the left side of the road (Like Great Britain) and in Burma the traffic is on the right side of the road (like in the US). The traffic changed directions on the middle of the bridge between Burma and Thailand. I was on my way to the Golden temple in Tachileik and met a man that said he lived in Chicago. I then met a 50-year-old man (he looked about 40) at the temple and he sold me some Burmese money. It's not easy to get Burmese money (I wanted the money as a souvenir) everyone prefers the Thailand money. I ended up paying 5 baht for 2 bills. He also sold me some Japanese coins and then he took my picture at the temple. I bought a small Jade Elephant in Burma (Myanmar) and a Golden Triangle T-shirts in Mae Sai. It cost \$5US to enter Burma (Myanmar) and as I was leaving, they stopped me and charged me an additional \$5US for my bike. I cycled 10 miles while in Burma. To reenter Thailand, it cost 50 baht. I checked out of the Chad house and paid my tab. I then packed up my stuff and started biking along the Laos border and stopped at the Sop Ruak (Golden Triangle). I bought a Golden Triangle hat and met a nice lady from Chiang Mai. The lady took my picture in front of the Golden Triangle sign with the Mekong River in the background, then I was taking a picture of my bike and she stopped me and took a picture of me with my bike The lady asked me if I wanted to see her in Chiang Mai, then she walked over to her man friend. I am not sure why she said that. I never went to Chiang Mai. The Golden Triangle is where the

Mekong River and Sai Rivers combines in Sop Ruak, Thailand. Burma (Myanmar) is between the 2 rivers and Laos is on the other side of the Mekong River. I continued biking and stopped at a small store for lunch. As I was biking towards Chiang Khong, I met a couple of bikers from France. They did not have any camping gear, but it looked like they were on a long-distance bike ride. I stopped at a historic arch between the Golden Triangle and Chiang Khong and a bus offered me a ride. I should have taken the ride; I think this was the day that my fingers started going numb. I started biking up some big hills, I walked my bike most of the way up the hills. It was starting to get dark and I decided I did not want to bike all the way to Chiang Khong. At the top of a hill, I asked a man if there were any guesthouses around and he said I would have to bike another 20 Kilometers to Chiang Khong. It was getting very dark and after biking another 13 Kilometers, I asked a police officer (he was at a road side check point) if there were any places to stay, he also said I needed to go to Chiang Khong. As I was biking, a man on a motor scooter slowed down so I could see the road with his headlight. He followed me for about 4 miles; I showed him that I had a flashlight. The light was not on and he screamed when I pointed it at him. I think he thought it was a weapon. I then turned it on and pointed it at the road. It was getting hilly and I did not want to slow him down any longer. It helped a lot to have him slow down so I could see the road. He ended up turning on a dirt road and I continued biking to Chiang Khong. I arrived at Chiang Khong at about 8 PM. I asked the first open shop about any guesthouses and they pointed to one north of their shop. I ended up getting a room for 300 baht (this was my most expensive room of the trip, the original price was 350 baht). I think it was the same guesthouse that was 200 baht in my Lonely Planet book. I could not read the sign (it was in Thai), so I did not find the name of the place. They gave me a couple of free bottles of cold water. I put my birthday on the sign in sheet and the girl calculated my age. It was a very nice place. I had my own cabin with a hot shower (most places did not have hot water), a sit down toilet that flushed and a view of the Mekong River. I even had a neat lizard and small bed bugs in the room. The toilet leaked water, I was afraid that it might keep me awake, but did not. That night, I ate dinner at the guesthouse. (Day 3/ Bike miles 76.71 miles/ Total bike miles 120.99/ Thursday, November 25, 1999)

I went for a 3.5-mile bike ride in the morning and then I headed back to the guesthouse to pack my gear. On the southern end of Chiang Khong, I stopped to take a picture of some 3 wheeled motorcycles (Samlor Kruengs). The motorcycles are used as taxis and all the drivers came over to look at my bike. They were checking out my tires and gear while speaking in Thai. The taxi drivers where very friendly, but I am not sure what they were saying. I had a good meal a little north of Thoeng. The people that ran the food stand ended up giving me 10 free fried bananas. It took me a while to figure out what they were, they looked like burritos and tasted sweet. I therefore assumed they were bananas. I also bought a souvenir flute and basket in Thoeng. I

often saw neat temples on the countryside in northern Thailand, the temples where often several miles from any towns. I was not able to find a place to stay and it was getting dark. I asked a police officer if they had any guesthouses in Dok Khan and he told me 3 Kilometers down the road. After biking 3 Kilometers and not seeing a motel, I asked some other people and they told me there was a place in 9 kilometers. I ended out biking several Kilometers and came to a bike shop in the town of Phayao and asked for directions to the nearest motel. The guy at the bike shop gave me direction and taught me how to say thank you very much in Thai. It was something like “Pak con Dow”, I started using this phrase often after this and others corrected my pronunciation. I then bike into town and found a festival. I ended up having to ask people at the festival where a motel was, it was tough to figure out where they told me to go. I headed in the direction the people first pointed in and biked until I came to a park with a neat temple in middle of town. I then asked someone for directions to a motel and went in the direction he pointed. I finally found the expensive looking Wattano Hotel in Phayao at 8:45 PM. I did not want to commit until, I found out the price. They wanted to show me the room and I could not figure out how to ask how much. They had no idea what I was asking, I finally showed them money and they wrote the price on a piece of paper. They wrote down 130 baht, but ended up charging 150 baht. It was a very nice motel with a table and a private bathroom with a hot shower. The motel would not let me put my bike in the room, but it seemed OK to lock it up outside. There were other bikes and it was in a compound environment. Nothing happened to my bike. For dinner, I stopped at a market and bought chicken for 15 baht. I ended up going to sleep at about 9:00 PM. (Day 4/ Bike miles 116.48 miles/ Total bike miles 237.47/ Friday, November 26, 1999)

I was a little worried about my bike and woke up at 5:30 AM to check on it. It was OK! I then took a short ride around town and noticed a lot of monks walking the streets looking for money and/ or food handouts. Each monk carried a round container and people would put stuff in the container and then pray at the monk’s feet. I then biked to the park with the temple, a market and back to the motel. I took a hot shower, washed my shirt (after cleaning it still looked dirty, but smelled clean) and started packing my gear. As I was loading my gear on my bike a man from Holland was also loading gear on his bike, we talked and he told me that he had biked several times in Thailand. He was headed to Chiang Mai. He told me he was once engaged to a lady from Chiang Mai and Thailand is a great place to bike. We ended out biking together back to the main highway (I was glad he was there. I was not sure which way to go) then he went north and I went south. In Thailand everywhere people smiled and waved as I biked past them. As I was biking, I saw a sign that said, “Muang Ngao Art Community” and decided to see if there were any souvenirs for sale. It was a very small community; about 7 homes and they had art displayed on decks, in a gallery and artistically shaped homes. There were no souvenirs for sales. There were a couple of

people making an Elephant shaped house and they waved and smiled. I saw some Thai tourist looking at the gallery and I followed them, as they were invited into a finished elephant shaped home. We all had to remove our shoes to enter the home, the floor was made of polished wood and a lady was polishing the floor so we could walk on it. The main part of the house was shaped like a normal home and then we went up some stairs to a small oval shaped sleeping room. One end of the room had a very narrow stair case that led to a small statue. We did not go up the stairs; we only looked up the stairs. The stairs did not lead to a room they just got smaller and the area went towards a small circle. That was when one of the Thai tourists explained to me that we wear in the Elephant shaped portion of the house, at first, I did not realize it and then it became obvious. Out of all the people (about 7 people) in the Elephant house, only one lady spoke a little English and she would translate things for me. All these people were interested in my bike trip. In one room they had a neat instrument that was made out of flat different sized sticks and was played by hitting a small mallet on the sticks. They let me try the instrument and I played a short tune. It sounded like I knew what I was doing, but in reality, I just lucked into a tune. After I played the tune, everyone laughed and we left the home. There was a lot of road construction and often I was able to bike on the closed paved roads. I biked to the top of a hill and found petroglyphs. I also found a lot with small house shaped boxes on poles, I think it was a cemetery. That day, I wanted to stop at the Elephant training center, but did not find it. It was probably for the best that I did not find it, I did not arrive in Lampang until about 7:30 PM and then I started looking for a motel (Sri Sangar) from my Lonely Planet book. I could not find the motel and ended up staying in another motel, 9 Mithuna Hotel. It was a nice place with a desk, hot shower, private bath and ceiling fan. I then biked into town and looked for food. I found a shopping center with a Kentucky Fried Chicken and went to the food court. I was late and all the food shops were closed. I then biked to a market and found some fried squid. I wanted to buy a few sticks and pointed to the squid and showed the lady my 100-baht bill. I guess she thought I wanted to buy 100-baht worth of squid. She started cooking all these sticks of squid and I decided to buy the 17 sticks of squid for 100 baht. I was very hungry so the mistake was a good one to make. I also bought 2 pops and then went back to the motel to eat dinner. (Day 5/ Bike miles 100.08 miles/ Total bike miles 337.55/ Saturday, November 27, 1999)

In the morning, I went looking for Wat Phra That temple. I meet a man that was living in Thailand with his wife, the couple was from Illinois and they gave me directions to the Temple. Well, they gave me the wrong directions. I did not find the temple and biked 15.29 miles before returning to the motel. I then packed up and biked out of town. I stopped at a gas station and ate at the restaurant next to the station. A man in a truck kept passing me and offered to give me a ride. I showed him where I was headed and was going in a different direction a short distance down the road, so I did not take

a ride. I was walking my bike up a big hill and a man in a big truck signaled me to grab on. I think that was what he wanted me to do, so I grabbed on the truck and he pulled me to the top of the hill. At the Dong Ya Yhao junction, I stopped for lunch and asked a man in front of the restaurant for directions to Si Satchanalai and he gave me directions the long way. I ended up biking through some remote roads to Wang Chin; it was a nice ride with paved roads. On the road I meet a biker from Germany. He was the only other biker that I met while in Thailand that carried all of his camping gear on his bike. He told me that his first bike trip to Thailand, he biked from Germany through Pakistan and India to Thailand. He was going north and I was going south. Since I left Dong Ya Yhao junction, I was unable to find my location on my maps. At about 6:50 PM, I made it to the main road (101) in the dark. I finally found where I was on the map and started looking for a place to camp. Someone stopped to give me a ride and I decided to take it. I tried to explain that I wanted to go to Si Satchanalai and was not able to explain it. He ended up giving me a ride all the way to Sawankhalok and dropped me off the Sangsin Hotel. There were a lot of women hanging around the motel; they may have been prostitutes. A guy at the motel was asking me if I wanted something, I thought he was trying to sell me a lady and I said no. However, I am not sure what he was asking me. The room was very nice with air conditioning and a color TV. I ended up eating at the nearby market and they served me water. I am not sure if it was bottled water, but drank it anyway. Normally, I only drank bottled water and avoided ice. (Day 6/ Bike miles 96.52 miles/ Total bike miles 434.07/ Sunday, November 28, 1999)

I woke up very early and biked to Si Satchanalai historic park (26.89-mile round trip). I arrived at the park a little before 8 AM and checked out all the 13th to 15th century ruins. I saw a sign that said it was 40 baht for foreign visitors to enter the park. I arrived before they started collecting money, so I was able to visit the park for free. Outside the park, I stopped at a souvenir stand and bought a porcelain pot and a small wooden Buddha. After visiting the park, I biked back to my motel in Sawankhalok. I made it back to the motel at 9:30 AM and packed my gear. Then I started biking south. I arrived in Sukothai at about 1 PM and found a place to stay. I stayed at the friendly house (private bathroom with cold shower and add water type toilet/ the standard ceiling fan) and took a short nap when I first arrived. I was reading about the nearby historic park in my Lonely Planet book and noticed that it was divided into 5 parts. And each part required a separate fee. I decided that I would probably only visit one section and asked some of the guest at the guesthouse which section I should visit. A man that I asked said that he already visited the park and let me have his pass. I then biked the 6 miles to the park and visited some of the ruins I biked around the park and I stopped to look at an art market. A man sitting at a table waved me over and wanted to know about my camera. My camera had a tripod connected and I showed him how it worked. He then took me back to his art stand and tried to sell me

2 elephants and a Buddha. I really did not want any of the stuff, but was curious how much the wooden Buddha cost. When I asked him the price and he told me 350 baht. I thought it was way to expensive and shook my head no, told him I would give him 100 baht and then turned and walked away. He stopped me and sold me the Buddha for 100 baht. It was a good deal for 100 baht, but not for 350 baht. He told me it took his dad a week to carve the Buddha. Then he tried to sell me 2 wooden elephants. I told him I was not interested in the elephants and explained that I bought elephants in Africa and Burma (Myanmar). He seemed interested in the fact that I visited Burma (Myanmar). I then stopped at a nice temple and a couple of ladies had me take their picture with their camera. It seemed like they were pretty affectionate to each other they may have been lesbians. I also had them take a picture of me with my camera I then biked out of the park and stopped at a temple with elephants at the base I talked to a couple of ladies on bikes from New York at the temple. They did not seem very friendly. The whole day I had only eaten some fried squash, a couple ice creams and chips which was not much with all my biking. For some reason, I had a slight stomachache, either bad food or hungry. I decided to get dinner at the friendly house and talked with a man from Australia. He was on a big traveling trip and told me some of his stories. He told me that when he was on a bus in Cambodia. He told me when he got off the bus some kids surrounded him. They signaled him to give them money; he pushed one of the kids and ran to get on the tour bus. (Day 7/ Bike miles 74.79 miles/ days maximum speed 18.1miles/ Day average speed 11.1 MPH/ Total bike miles 508.86/ Monday, November 29, 1999)

In the morning, I biked (5.25 miles) around Sukothai until about 8 AM. I woke up late and only saw 2 monks walking the streets carrying buckets (normally I would see several monks walking the streets in the early (6 AM) morning in towns). I also visited a market that sold fruit I then started biking towards Kamphaeng Phet. As I was biking in Northern Thailand, I often saw interesting farm vehicles that sounded like lawnmower some looked like trucks and others looked more like scooters used to pull loads in and out of the rice fields. I stopped at the historic park a little north of town. When I paid for the entry fee and the people collecting the entrance fee were very interested in my bike. I noticed that the sign had a special extra fee for bikes, but I was not charged extra for the bike. After checking out the park, I decided the ride was getting boring (since I left the mountains) and I did not want to spend 3 days getting to Ayuthaya, so I decided to take a bus. I took a bus to Nakhon Gawan for 55 baht. They wanted to charge me an additional 80 baht for my bike. I thought that was ridiculous to pay more for my bike than me. I semi-complained and they ended up only charging me 40 baht for the bike. After thinking about it, it was very cheap for me (about \$1.44US) and the original price for the bike was also cheap (about \$2.10US). This bus was very comfortable; it was almost as nice as a Greyhound bus from the US. When I arrived in Nakhon Gawan, the bus driver helped me get on an

economy bus to Ayuthaya. This bus did not have a storage compartment on the bottom of the bus and they ended up putting my bike in one of the small seats. The seats were very small and there was no knee room. The ride was not comfortable and a drunken guy was sort of bothering me. He asked me if I wanted water, alcohol or cigarettes. I kept thinking this guy was a con artist; I read how you should not take stuff from strangers on a train. The article said that people often give train riders drugged stuff and this knocks them out and then the people that drugged you steal all your valuables. I do not think this guy was a bad person, because at one stop he introduced me to bus driver (the bus driver's name was Dum). Then the bus driver ended up giving me a free meal and a pop. The bus was headed to Bangkok and I was only going to Ayuthaya, they ended up dropping me off next to the highway. I was not sure where I was and biked south a short distance. I saw a sign that said Ayuthaya was one exit north. I then biked back towards Ayuthaya and stopped at the first populated place and asked about guesthouses. The people did not understand me and drew me directed to one of the bus stops on the highway. I went to the bus stops and noticed a lot of people sleeping there. Before going to town, I saw a bus stop with only one person and went back to that bus stop and stayed there. The bus stop was right next to the road and I still slept great. (Day 8/ Bike miles 69.62 miles/ days maximum speed 24.4 miles/ Day average speed 10.8 MPH/ Total bike miles 578.48/ Tuesday, November 30, 1999)

In the morning, I woke up a little later than usual (about 8:00 AM) even though I was right next to the highway. I met the other man that was sleeping at the bus stop. Then I biked into the town of Ayuthaya. Biking around Ayuthaya, I noticed a lot of 3-wheeled taxis (Tuk-tuks) I found a nice guesthouse (PJ guest house) to stay at for the night. The lady that ran the guesthouse saw me reading my Lonely Planet book and pointed out that it did not accurately describe her guesthouse. She clearly read the comments and pointed out the errors. The book said she was the manager, but she was the owner. The book said she was Japanese, but she was a Thai native. The book said that she spoke some English, but she spoke and read English very well. I then bike to the ruins in Ayuthaya historic park (14th to 15th century ruins). I returned to the guesthouse in the afternoon and the person running the guesthouse asked me if I wanted to join a boat trip. The boat trip circled Ayuthaya in a canal. Two ladies from Vancouver, a lady from Germany and another couple also went on the boat trip. On the boat trip I saw neat boats, a child jumping into the river, a nice sunset, monks and houseboats as we floated around Ayuthaya. After the boat ride, I checked out the food stands near the water and then walked back to the guesthouse. Back at the guesthouse, I talked with a traveler from Australia and then went to a department store to buy a new shirt. I had been wearing the same shirt for most of my time in Thailand and it was getting very dirty. It was time to get a new shirt and I found a nice one for 199

baht. (Day 9/ Bike miles 27.32 miles/ Total bike miles 605.8/ Wednesday, December 1, 1999)

I woke up at about 5:30 AM and found that the gate to the guesthouse was locked. There was another girl locked in and she wanted out. I tried to unlock the gate; I thought that one of the keys they gave us would unlock the gate. I ended up going back to my room and packing my gear. Then I went back out and the gate was unlocked. I took a short ride and then came back to the guesthouse and ate breakfast. As I was eating breakfast, I heard some ladies talking English in the table next to me. I then started putting my gear on my bike and noticed the ladies had Canada patches and Alaska Airline tags on their backpacks. I then asked them if they were from Vancouver BC and it ended out that 4 of the 5 ladies were from Vancouver, BC. A lucky guess, I told them I was from Vancouver, Washington and we talked about the Pacific Northwest. Then they started asking me about my bike ride and as I told them my ride tales, they seemed very impressed. I then started biking towards the train station and one of my front panniers fell off my bike. The panniers were getting very old and the connector were broken off, the panniers were on their last legs. I ended up strapping them back on my bike and a man biked over to me to ask me about my bike ride. This guy was from Vancouver BC, I met a lot of people from Vancouver BC in this town. I told him about my ride and the other ladies I met from Vancouver. Then I biked to the train station. I had a little trouble explaining where I wanted to go, a lady that spoke English helped me get my tickets. Then I went out to wait for the train and I was supposed to check my bike. I asked at the check-in stand, but did not understand what they told me. A lady that worked there took me into this room and they had me pay a fee for the bike, then she showed me where to wait. When the train arrived, she told the people to load my bike. On the train, I sat next to the monks they were sitting in the front of the train car. It was the only place available to sit and I was not sure if I should sit there, no one said anything so I assumed that it was OK. I had no Idea how I would know when to get off the train. My ticket said Pak Chong and I knew what time I was supposed to arrive. I showed one of the monks my train ticket and tried to talk, but since I could not speak Thai, it was very difficult. While on the train people were continuously selling food and often gave the monks free stuff. I even noticed that some of the people selling stuff would jump off the train while it was moving. The monk that I showed the ticket to told me when to get off the train. I then went to the room with my bike and did not know how to ask for help getting the bike off the train. I untied the bike and started lowering it to the ground; a man came over to help catch my bike. I could not find any signs to the Khoa Yai National Park and had to ask several people for directions. As I was biking down the road my pannier fell off again, so I tied it onto the bike rack with a long piece of rope and it stayed attached for the rest of the trip. Before arriving in the Khoa Yai National Park I saw a man with some elephants on the side of the road. I decided to go over and investigate. I found

out that he was running elephant tours through the jungle and he offered to sell me a trip on one of his elephants. I told him I had to continue my journey and asked him if I could take pictures with my camera. I don't think he understood anything that I said, but he did end up taking pictures of me with his elephants. He did not ask for anything in return, but I did give him some change. The man with the elephant was with 2 other men and they all wanted to know how many Kilos (I understood the word Kilos) my bike weighed and I let them each pick it up and see what they thought. The ride through the park had a lot of uphill and I ended up pushing my bike most of the way up the hills. When I first arrived in the park, I saw a monkey, but was not fast enough to get a picture. I thought I really missed out on my monkey picture, but while in the park I saw lots of monkeys in the road. Trucks would drive down the road with tourists and feed the monkeys. When at the park headquarters, I was told I could stay at the Yao Wa-Chon dorms. At the dorms, there was a sheriff guarding the rooms and they were all locked up. I asked the man and he pointed to the 3 tents in the grass at one end of the dorms. I went down to the grassy spot and set up my tent. One of the other tent campers (from Israel) talked with me and told me the other 2 tents belonged to people from California. I then went to the restaurant near the park headquarters and ate dinner. At the restaurant, I saw elk digging in the trash and a porcupine. I also met the people from California and a couple from Germany. You could not buy beer in the park, but these people had some beer and gave me one. When I went back to camp, I broke my tent stakes when I was getting in my tent. (Day 10/ Bike miles 33.82 miles/ Total bike miles 639.62/ Thursday, December 2, 1999)

I woke up at about 6:00 AM and the other campers (the Israeli and 2 Californians guys) were all packing their gear and getting ready to hike into the back country. They said they wanted to go into the back country to avoid the weekend's crowds. It was the king's birthday and they expected lots of campers. One of the guys from California had been to Thailand 6 times and always went to the Khoa Yai National Park. He told me about the falls in the park and said that Haew Sai Falls was a lot nicer than the other falls. I then biked to the falls and passing the other campground I noticed it was very crowded. I took the short hike to Haew Suwat Falls and then I continued on the overgrown trail to Haew Sai Falls. The Israeli man told me the trails were very good in the park and the Lonely Planet book recommended a guide because they were so tough to follow. I thought the trail was very tough to follow, but common sense says I went down stream and I needed to go up stream to go back. The trails were a little overgrown and in parts you had to crawl under fallen Bamboo and trees. Once at Haew Sai Falls, I sat to look for birds and enjoyed the remote atmosphere. I do not think the fall itself was so spectacular, but the atmosphere was very pleasant. I then hiked back to the main parking lot and then down to Ochid Falls. On the trail to Ochid Falls, I saw the German man I met the previous day and we talked for about a minute. The trail to Ochid Falls was very good. I then biked back to

camp and packed up all my gear. I still had not paid for camping, so I went back to the park headquarters and paid for one night of camping. They charged me 20 baht. I think they charged me for the dorms and I think I should have only been charged 5 baht for camping. I probably could have easily gotten away with not paying, but felt it was cheap anyway. I then started biking towards Bangkok and saw a lot of monkeys on the road. I ended up getting a lot of great monkey pictures; even got a picture of a monkey picking the rear end of another monkey and a monkey holding onto its child. As I was biking a drunken man stopped on his motorcycle and tried talking with me, I have no idea what he was saying. It sounded like his motorcycle broke down when he stopped. He ended up waving down a car, I am not sure why, then he started up his motorcycle and went on his way. He was a very friendly person and I think he was trying to give me a ride. I continued biking and stopped to hike to Haew Narok Falls, this was the biggest falls that I had seen in Thailand and it was a neat hike. The trail to the bottom of the falls was down a long ladder. I continued biking and a truck stopped to tell me something. The man driving said 10 ### and the lady said 20 ###. I was not sure what they said, I assumed they were trying to tell me how far to the next town, it was started to get dark and I needed to find a place to camp. It turns out the people were talking about elephants; I came around a corner and saw 10 to 20 wild elephants on the road. It was dark and the pictures I took of the elephants did not come out good. I ended up getting pretty close to the elephants and they made some scary noises and stared at me. There was a young elephant with 2 large ones at its side. I was looking at my plane tickets back to the US and found out that I was returning one day earlier than I thought. I had enough time to get back to Bangkok, but would not have enough time to go to the coast. It was a bit dark and I found a place near the road to camp. It was not a comfortable place, I had to move small rocks and then I had a tough time setting up my tent. After getting in the small tent, I realized it was upside down, so I had to get out and turn it over. I ended up breaking the tent stakes a second time. The roads I was sleeping next to had almost no traffic all night. It was a windy rainy night. Good thing my bivy sack was made out of Gore tex. (Day 11/ Bike miles 30.07 miles/ Total bike miles 669.69/ Friday, December 3, 1999)

I did not get a great night of sleep and woke up to the sound of people singing in the hills. It sounded like religious music, maybe monks in a temple. I am not sure where the singing was coming from, it seemed like I was in the middle of nowhere. I biked out of the Khoa Yai National Park. When I arrived at Hua Khao (at junction 33), I started looking for something to eat. These local people dressed in biking cloths watched me. They had nice mountain bikes and tried to talk to me, I could not understand what they said. I then found something that looked safe to eat; (to eat, I normally looked at all the food stands and tried to decide what looked normal) it was cold bony fish and noodles. This was the worst meal I had in Thailand. The traffic was very light and then started getting heavier as I started biking on Highway 33. I then

turned onto highway 305 and the traffic became very heavy. I saw a lot of neat fruit stand and houseboat on the river north of Bangkok, Thailand. The ride followed a river and the traffic kept getting heavier as I got closer to Bangkok. When I arrived at Highway 1 the traffic was so heavy that I could not cross the road. There were bridges crossing the road, so I carried my bike up a flight of stairs. As I was pushing my bike across the bridge a well-dressed man told me he owned a motel on the other side of the bridge. I did not really want to deal with biking in the heavy traffic, so I asked the man how far it was to the airport and how much it cost to stay in his motel. His motel was fairly close and it was a good price, so I ended up getting a room for the night. I took a shower and a short nap. Then I took a bike ride to see if I could find the airport. I ended up biking down this road a long distance and noticed planes landing, so I figured I was going the right direction. The only problem was there was a big military base between me and where I saw planes landing. After a while, I could no longer see planes and had to ask people how to get to the airport. It seemed like I went about 10 miles past the airport and had to back track. At the airport, I tried to see if anyone could help me locate a friend of my dad's, but all I had was his name and no one could help. I could not read the phone book (it was in Thai). I also confirmed my flight, I did not think I needed to but I guess they said I should. In Thailand I often noticed people on bikes and motorcycles going the wrong direction on roads. I figured it was OK and when I was biking back to the motel (the road was too busy to get the other side) on the wrong side of the road a policeman waved me over. He was holding my handlebars and did not want me to go. I tried to explain to him I only needed to go a little farther and I would be back to my motel. He would not let me go and I do not know what he wanted me to do. Finally, someone more interesting came along and he let me go and went over to harass the other person. I normally biked on the correct side of the road, but in this case it would not have been easy. It was actually very annoying when a motorcycle was coming at me on the wrong side of the road. I stopped at the super store, Carrefour, and purchased stuff (pens, food, etc.). Back at the motel the owner had me meet his family and asked me if I could help him and his family get work in the US. He told me they could cook, do electrical work, farm work and just about anything. I told him they needed programmers in the US and he said his son could learn to program. I then went to eat; I went down a dark road with a light up building at the end. As I went down the dark road there were stray dogs all over the alley (stray dogs were all over Thailand; these dogs did not attack people) and the restaurant at the end of the alley had young (probably about 16 years old) women in short dresses singing to the crowd. I decided this was not a good place to eat and decided not to be rude, so I had a beer. When I had the beer, a girl sat next to me and poured the beer. When I was done, I paid her for the beer and went back to the main road to look for something to eat. After eating I went back to the motel and went to sleep. (Day 12/ Bike miles 92.94 miles/ Total bike miles 762.63/ Saturday, December 4, 1999)

I biked to the airport, stored my bike and took the A2 bus into town. I then went back to Khao San road the place (Dior guesthouse) I stayed in on my first night in Thailand. At the guesthouse, I asked where Jim Lathrop and Mario were staying. I went to Mario's room and he was still asleep. I then went to Jim's room and he was there, I introduced myself as the person that brought Mario the foot powder from his (Jim's) son in Seattle. He then introduced me to Nikki from the Netherlands. I ended up leaving my gear in Nikki's room and told the people at the guesthouse to save me the next available room. Then I went to the festival to celebrate the king's 72nd birthday with Nikki. Jim was tired and took a nap while we checked out the festival. Before going to the festival, I put on my jeans, because I had read that you needed long pants to go into the palace. Nikki had on her shorts and they would not let her in the Palace. I went in by myself and checked out all the statues and stuff. Some of the palace walls had neat paintings on the wall and there was a fancy temple in the grounds. They had a restroom at the palace with one door that said men and the other door said women. When I went into the men's room, I found that it was the same bathroom as the women's room. The lines for the stalls had both men and women waiting in the same room. I think Nikki went back to the guesthouse. After going to the Palace, I walked around and checked out the festival. I was walking near the Mae Nam Chao Phraya River and saw some neat gold leafed boats I then went back to the guesthouse to see if I could find Jim and Nikki, but no luck. I walked around Khao San road and found more tourist than any other place that I visited in Thailand. I stopped at a food stand where they had cooked grasshoppers, worms and cock roaches ready to eat. I was able to get a room in the guesthouse, but could not get my bags out of Nikki's room. I had a few beers and ate great food on Khao San road. At one market I saw a large rat on the floor. I think that the crowds in Bangkok for the king's birthday were the most people that I had ever seen in one place. I often saw more than one person on a motorcycle, most of the time there were at least 2 people on each motorcycle. There are even motorcycle taxis. I often saw 4 people on one motorcycle and one time I even saw 5 people on one motorcycle. At the festival, I saw a lot of pictures of the king on signs next to the main street in downtown. When the fireworks started all the people from the side streets came to the main part of town and blocked all the roads. The traffic came to a stop until the firework show was over. Nikki and Jim came back from the festival at about 10 PM and I was able to get my bags from Nikki. Once I had my bags I went back to my room and fell sound asleep. (Day 13/ Bike miles 5.4 miles/ Total bike miles 768.03/ Sunday, December 5, 1999)

I woke up at 7:00 AM and wanted to go to the floating market. After talking to Jim, I found out it might be too late. I then went to breakfast with Jim and Nikki. We ate at the place where a friend (Jill) of Jim's was staying. Jill was not at the place and after breakfast we saw Jill walking to the motel/ restaurant. Jim talked to Jill for a minute and then he went with me to see about taking a boat ride on the Mae Nam Chao

Phraya River in Bangkok. We ended up getting on the ferryboat. The boat took us a long distance down the river and we went for a walk. We found a fish market and watched people sort fish and shrimp. Then we started walking back to the ferry and at one point Jim told me to look at the chimney on a temple. He said it was a crematorium where they burned the bodies of dead people. At that point, I recalled seeing a funeral in Northern Thailand with a fire (Maybe they were burning a body). Jim also pointed out that most of the stray dogs were female and then he told me that people ate the male dogs. I then recalled eating some weird meat on the bus up north; maybe I was eating dog meat. We then took the ferry back to the Dior guesthouse. We ate lunch at a fancy restaurant next to the river with slow service. I had an expensive shrimp meal and it was not real tasty, but the view of town and the river was nice. When we returned to Khao San road, I went souvenir shopping. I bought a wooden mask, a bracelet, 2 necklaces and a wooden frog. I then took a shower and got a Thai message. Jim highly recommended the messages, but I guess it did not seem that great to me. I then set up a shuttle ride to the airport through the guesthouse. It ended up costing only 60 baht for the shuttle to the airport. On the shuttle, I met a man from New Zealand that was going to Israel from Thailand. I spent too much money and had to exchange more currency in order to get my bike out of storage and to pay my exit tax. I then took my bike out of storage and started to disassemble it and get it ready for the flight home. As I tied my bike together for the flight a lot of people watched. I ended up tying all the parts and tires to the bike and did not box the bike. I was ready for my flight by 8:00 PM and they would not let me check my luggage, it was too early for my flight. I then went to eat at the Kentucky Fried Chicken in the airport. I went back to check-in my luggage (I was still 2.5 hours early) and that time there was a long line to check-in luggage. I messed around for a while then I started heading to the gate. I went down the wrong hall and then I went down the correct hall and made it to the plane for the last boarding call. I was almost late for the flight, even though I had been at the airport for hours. (Day 14/ Bike miles 0 miles/ Total bike miles 768.03/ Monday, December 6, 1999)

I arrived in Seoul, Korea at 8:30 AM and took the subway into downtown Seoul. Before going to town, I had to exchange money and noticed people with lots of \$100 US bills and a person with a stack of foreign bills exchanging money for Korean currency. On the subway a guy saw me looking at my subway map and showed me how to tell where I was, it was a very easy system to understand. I walked around town and checked out the outside of a couple of temples. I ended up going to the art district and buying stuff. I bought 4 wooden figures (2 pairs). The figures looked very similar. I just bought them at 2 different art stores. The guy told me they were for hanging hair clips on; they are neat little statues with Korean writing on the base. The traffic in Seoul was a lot more organized than in Thailand and I saw several police roaming the streets. Most of the cars were either Hyundai or Kia. People are very

friendly in Seoul; I was looking at my map and a guy came over and gave me directions to the place I was trying to find. I had about 2 hours until my flight departed and I started looking for the purple subway system to the airport. I could not find the subway and had to ask directions. The whole time I was walking around downtown I only saw 2 people that did not look like Korean people, I saw 2 blond ladies. I then hurried to the airport, by the time I went through customs I only had 30 minutes until the flight took off. I arrived at the gate and then I noticed that I was an hour off and I actually had 1.5 hours until the flight took off. Good thing I was not an hour off in the other direction. I had to pay some sort of exit tax for Korea, but I forgot how much it was. I bought a neat box at the Korean airport, all the prices at the airport were in US dollars, but they would let you buy stuff with Korean money. At the airport in Los Angeles, California I called Korean airline to see how I could get my frequent flier miles for my trip (I forgot to tell them before I left) and they told me I could mail a copy of my receipts and boarding passes to Delta Airlines. I then took my last leg of the flight to Seattle. When I got off the plane I walked up to Annette (She was there to pick me up at the airport) and she did not recognize me. I stood there and watched her and she looked at me a few times. I thought she was just being funning, then I walked over to her and she finally recognized me. I guess she did not recognize me with a thin beard (2 weeks' worth), a necklace and a cap. We then went back to her place and I showed her all my souvenirs. I then called and left a message to tell Jim Lathrop that I brought stuff back to him from his dad. Next, I called Glen Ranson to remind him that I would be at his office the next morning for an interview. Then I watched a James bond movie with Annette and then went to sleep. (Day 15/ Bike miles 0 miles/ Total bike miles 768.03/ Tuesday, December 7, 1999)

I woke up at 6:00 AM and started getting ready for my Interview with Impco Technologies. I had plenty of time to get ready for my interview, but for some reason I was about 15 minutes late to the interview. I did take one wrong turn that cost me about 5 minutes, I should not have been late I am not sure what happened. I was very tired and the interview lasted 6 hours. I think it's probably not a great idea to go on an interview the day after returning from a long flight. I started driving home and stopped at a rest stop to take a nap. Then I continued and stopped at Dave's place. Dave cooked spaghetti for dinner and then I continued driving back home. I took a nap at another rest stop on the way home and arrived back at my apartment in Vancouver a little after midnight. (Day 16/ Wednesday, December 8, 1999)