

**HUMANITARIAN TRIP TO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA
FOR ROTARIANS AND FRIENDS
NOVEMBER 6TH THROUGH NOVEMBER 22, 2009**

Join a small, select group of 15 people for a two week trip to SE Asia. The trip will include cultural sightseeing, visiting non-profit organizations doing a variety of humanitarian work in the region, sampling the delicious cuisine, and enjoying the interesting shopping and handcrafts of the region. An added bonus of the trip is our briefing from HALO Trust about the landmine situation in western Cambodia. More than 6 million landmines were placed along the border with Thailand in the 1980s and today at least ½ of them remain, maiming and killing local villagers who now need the land for their livelihood. Many Rotary clubs have been funding demining in this area for the past five years and trip participants are encouraged to work with their clubs to help with this humanitarian endeavor. Rotarians will end the trip will ideas for many new humanitarian projects their clubs can sponsor. For those clubs that have funded mine action, you will have the rare chance of seeing the HALO offices and speaking with some of the deminers.

Our first day finds us in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, capital of the country and a dynamic, bustling city with wide boulevards, a picturesque riverfront with interesting shops and an array of wonderful restaurants. In the city we will visit a school for poor girls from the countryside, spend a sobering hour or two at the infamous S-21 prison from the Khmer Rouge days, visit an orphanage with children rescued from the dump, and, if time, tour a free clinic for the poor. Cultural activities include the Royal Palace, the National Museum, and a traditional dancing and shadow puppet show. Time permitting, we will meet with US Embassy personnel for a briefing about the country's history and its current economic and political situation. One doesn't leave Phnom Penh without taking in the unique Russian and Central Markets, home to everything you can image and great fun for wandering, looking, or buying. Our hotel is the 4- star Cambodiana along the River.

Next we fly to Siem Reap, a must see cultural city, home to the World Heritage Site of the Temples at Angkor Wat. We will spend a full day at the temples as there is much to see and the temples are spread over miles of the countryside. Our second day in town we will have a briefing with HALO Trust, our demining partner in Cambodia. HALO has offices in Siem Reap while there we can see the landmines and other unexploded ordnance they have destroyed. The rest of the day is free for shopping at the local market or relaxing at the beautiful pool and garden of the Soma Devi, our 4 star hotel in Siem Reap. You also have the opportunity of visiting the two humanitarian projects run by Rotarians in the city. That night, we will have a joint dinner with the local Rotarians.

Next we fly to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) for three days, the business center for all of Vietnam. A frenetic city of several million, Saigon has really come of age in the past several years, making it a sophisticated stop-over for us. For Americans, the Reunification Palace is a must-see, as is the War Remnants Museum, both carryovers from our time here in the 60s and 70s. We will also travel outside the city to the Cu Chi

Tunnels, another remnant from the 1960's. You will also want to visit the Khai Silk store and Ben Thanh market, both favorites of past groups.

Next we fly to Da Nang, the fifth largest city in Vietnam. Its location on the South China Sea gives us the opportunity to enjoy two days of R & R at the beautiful Furama Resort. Your choices include swimming in the sea or the huge infinity pool, working out, getting a massage, or just sitting in the sun. Nearby are Hoi An, another World Heritage Site and Marble Mountain with its huge Buddha and Temple and the opportunity to see stone craving artisans at work.

After leaving Da Nang, we will travel about 1.5 hours by bus north to Hue, the old Imperial Capital. Along the way we have a chance to see the beautiful countryside and also some of the war cemeteries from years ago. Our hotel in Hue is the Imperial, a new five star hotel in the center of town and close to the Perfume River. There will be time for a trip up the River, as well as a cyclo tour of the Citadel, home to the Emperors.

The next day we will take a small minibus north to Dong Ha, near the former DMZ and the site of PeaceTrees Vietnam, a 12-year old NGO founder by two Americans. PeaceTrees has demined hundreds of acres while also building a village for poor families in the area. It also has a Landmine Education Center that brings in children from throughout the province to learn about the dangers of cluster bombs, landmines and other unexplored ordnance.

After a second night in Hue, we fly to Hanoi, capital of Vietnam and its governmental center. Hanoi is a beautiful city with many French colonial building still intact. We will be staying at the Melia Hotel, within walking distance of the main shopping street. We will have two cultural sightseeing days that include the Temple of Literature, the Ho Chi Minh Complex (his home and mausoleum) and the Ethnology Museum. Another stop is the main shopping street, a last chance to find some treasures before the trip home. We will also visit a shop where we can watch street children and orphans make the beautiful silk pictures found here. Depending on our time, we may also see a prosthetics factory and a facility for Agent Orange children.

On Sunday, November 22, those returning home leave, and because of the international dateline, arrive home that same day about 5 in the afternoon.

TRIP ADD ONS

There is a possibility for those who would like to extend the trip to spend one day at Ha Long Bay (a World Heritage site), about 3 hours outside of Hanoi. Because this extra tour will fill up early, it must be requested early to ensure space. Cost for the trip will be about \$150 per day, which includes transportation to and from Ha Long Bay. (with travel, the trip is actually two days.)

Others may want to travel to the small colonial town of Luang Prabang in Laos. An hour flight from Hanoi but 100 years back in time, Luang Prabang may be your most favorite

place of all. Nestled between the Mekong and Nan Rivers, the town features a much slower pace than Hanoi, and brims with the ambience of old colonial buildings, small boutique hotels, and excellent French restaurants. A minimum of 4 days is suggested as you can then take the two-day EcoTour adventure consisting of a day-long elephant trek through the jungle, a 3-hour hike to a native Hmong village and later that day, kayaking on the Mekong River. Back in town, you will not want to miss the former Royal Palace, the myriad of temples scattered throughout the city, and the night market where local women bring their hand woven silk to sell at very affordable prices.

The Luang Prabang trip does not have some of the amenities of the rest of the trip and the EcoTour part will be difficult for anyone with limited mobility or health problems. Some of you will not want to do this part of the trip. However, the portion of this trip in town will not present a problem for most people.

Those wanting to include Laos will need to coordinate with Sally on your departure date back home. Cost for this portion of the trip will be about \$175 per day and includes airfare to and from Laos (from Hanoi), your hotel with breakfast in town, and all meals and the overnight during the Eco Tour. Meals in town are not included. A firm price will be available once Sally knows how many people are interested in this trip.

Except for the night in western Cambodia, we will be staying at 4 and 5 star hotels, most with swimming pools and fitness centers. The trip price includes hotels with a full breakfast buffet, all airfares within Asia, all hotel transfers, entrance fees, minibuses to and from the cultural sites, one group dinner. Tuk Tuk transportation in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, taxis, and the Temples at Angkor Wat are not included. Also not included are your incidentals.

Trip cost, excluding the two add-ons, is \$2,950 per person, double occupancy, add \$1000 for single occupancy. Airfares to and from Asia vary by airline, but expect to pay between \$1,000 for economy and \$1,400 for economy deluxe, round trip.

Your tour leader and sometimes guide is Sally Mackle, Rotarian in the Seattle 4 Club. This will be the fourth tour Sally has led, and it will be her sixth visit to Vietnam and Cambodia. Each year, she spends January and February in Phnom Penh, volunteering at a girls' school. Her extensive knowledge of the area will be a plus for you. Expect a few geography and history lessons from Sally along the way.

In addition to Sally, we will have professional tour guides in Hanoi, DaNang and Ho Chi Minh Cities. Their excellent English and in-depth knowledge will allow you to get every question you have answered in detail!

As we will be traveling at the peak season in SE Asia (and also the coolest part of the year, an important reason to travel then) you are encouraged to register for the trip as early as possible. Flights cannot be booked without a name and once a flight is sold out, those registering late will be delayed in a city while the rest of the group goes ahead.

Deadline for registration is June 1. A \$500 refundable deposit is required and is due by June 1 to hold hotel and airline space. All money is due by August 1, 2009. There are no refunds after September 1. As soon as you book, you should get your travel insurance, including both trip cancellation and medical evacuation insurance (medical evacuation in the amount of \$100,000 minimum is required.)

You are encouraged to contact Sally Mackle with questions. She can also give you names of Rotarians on the earlier tours if you would like to talk with them.

Sally's email is sjmackle@msn.com. Phone is 206-465-0029. (Only email until the end of February.)