

Loy Kratong Festival



In November some may wonder what is going on in Thailand when seeing travel magazine ads, posters at your hotel of Thai girls dressing in traditional Thai clothing with a beautiful floating object. That's a sign indicating that Loy Krathong is on its way. In Thai Loy means to float and Krathong means a circular floating object with decoration of banana leaves, flowers, a candle and incense sticks. All these are related to Loy Krathong, an event which does not occur on the same date every year; instead it counts on the full moon night of the twelfth lunar month. People look forward to going out and launching Krathongs together to predict the romance future by the direction the Krathongs float. However, this season is also good for strengthening relationship in family.



The history of Loy Krathong is rather obscure. Some believe that Krathong was first created by Tao Sri Chulalak or Nang Noppamas in Sukothai. Others overlook its origin yet focus on the purposes of the ritual: to pay respect to the Goddess of the Water showing their gratitude on their plentiful use of water and ask for forgiveness in the ensuing pollution. Floating the beautiful Krathong away, which is the key activity in Loy Krathong, also refers to flying away misfortune and bad things in the past and asking for good luck in the future. Although it is not a national holiday, many activities other than floating Krathong, are conducted in this festival, such as, contests of Krathong-making and Noppamas beauty pageants, local games and performances and firlf you are in the North of Thailand, you can join this spectacular occasion at Chiang Mai where it is specifically called Yee Peng -floating of lanterns into the sky. Or you can go to Tak where a line of thousand glittering lights are seen on the Ping River . When looking closer, you see that Krathongs here are made of coconut shells, threaded together to make chain and that's the story of Loy Krathong Sai. Moreover, this year you can see Loy Krathong Sai made from banana trunk in Samut Songkram too. For sure, the festival in old cities is so famous and attracts a herd of visitors. Glory and ancientness of the kingdom is utterly alive in Phao Thian Len Fai in Sukhothai. In Bangsai District, Ayutthaya, you can feel the grandeur of Loy Krathong Tam Pratip and long boat race at Bangsai Arts and Crafts Centre of H.M. queen Sirikit of Thailand.eworks.



If you are in the North of Thailand, you can join this spectacular occasion at Chiang Mai where it is specifically called Yee Peng -floating of lanterns into the sky. Or you can go to Tak where a line of thousand glittering lights are seen on the Ping River . When looking closer, you see that Krathongs here are made of coconut shells, threaded together to make chain and that's the story of Loy Krathong Sai. Moreover, this year you can see Loy Krathong Sai made from banana trunk in Samut Songkram too. For sure, the festival in old cities is so famous and attracts a herd of visitors. Glory and ancientness of the kingdom is utterly alive in Phao Thian Len Fai in Sukhothai. In Bangsai District, Ayutthaya, you can feel the grandeur of Loy Krathong Tam Pratip and long boat race at Bangsai Arts and Crafts Centre of H.M. queen Sirikit of Thailand.

History of Loy Krathong

A crowd with flickering light of candles and color of flowers decorating floating object is familiar scene in a celebration occurring in a twelfth month in lunar calendar. It is one of wonderful Asian cultures when rivers and canals are full of water. Since we have been a kid, I guess everyone must be impressed with this festive occasion in November - Loy Krathong. Most of us are convinced that floating objects or Krathongs are originated in Sukhothai by Tao Sri Chulalak or Nang Noppamas, who was one of Phra Ruang's wives. However, some assert that the story was written in the reign of Rama III merely to advocate women on role model of a good wife, as no evidence is found to prove the festival's existence. They believe that Loy Krathong has just been celebrated since the end of Ayutthaya. Despite the confusing history, this gracious culture is still alive. People still conducts this ritual not only to worship the footprint of the Buddha on a riverside in India, but also to pay respect to Chulamane Chedi in heaven. Another well-known purpose is to show their gratitude to the Goddess of the Water on their plentiful use of water and ask for forgiveness in the ensuing pollution. Moreover, many people believe that floating the beautiful Krathong away also refers to flying away misfortune and bad things in the past and asking for good luck in the future.



In the past, people in Lanna Kingdom in the north of Thailand also show respect to rivers, but they use fire instead. They float a lantern like a hot-air balloon in the sky which is called Yee Peng. And now we still can find this celebration in Chiang Mai. Interestingly, people other than Thais have the similar tradition. Not far from us, Laos float Pratips (or our Krathong) and Lai Rue Fai (or flowing an ablaze boat) in worship of Water Goddess. This rite is also used to welcome the Buddha after His return from preaching to His mother in the second heaven. In Cambodia, this period is called Ok Ambok which means worshipping the moon. They float Pratips on a full moon night as well. Another neighboring country as Burma has the same culture. They float Krathong to worship the Buddha and Nut or household spirit. Looking upward farther, some of us may be surprised that Vietnam, Korea and Japan have the similar rituals too. They apologize the Water

Goddess and float away ill fortune. It is assumed that the origin is Mahayana Buddhism which was expanded from China. On the other hand, Indians claim that they are the root of this ceremony derived from Brahmin. This festival is aimed to worship Naraya God who sleeps in the milk ocean and He then will throw our sin away.



In Thailand, people enjoy creating their own Krathong made from natural resources, such as leaves and trunks of banana adorned with flowers. Some might use bread instead of synthetic materials showing their concern for environment. Other than flowers, a candle and incense sticks, we often put some coins or betel pepper and nut in our Krathongs. And that's why our Krathongs can't drift any further as they are raided for little money. Nevertheless, Loy Krathong Festival remains the most romantic and favorite occasion for a number of people and still best represents our gratitude.