

CHAPTER II

THE DYNAMICS OF TOURISM AND TOURISM POLICY IN THAILAND

A. The dynamics of tourism in Thailand

Figure 2.1 Map of Thailand



Source: *U.S. Department of State*, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/ci/th/> (accessed November 17/11/2015).

Thailand is located in the center of Southeast Asia and it is the mainland countries which has the borders near countries in ASEAN, such as Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, and Cambodia. Thailand's size is around 514, 000 square

kilometers, making it marginally smaller than Texas, which is also the most industrial urban area in the country. Looking over a map of Thailand will reveal a country whose borders form the rough shape of an elephant's head. There are two major river systems running through Thailand, the Mekong River and the Chao Phraya River, and both are used to support irrigation and to transport Thai exports. Thailand is divided into six geographical regions, based on natural features including landforms and drainage, as well as human cultural patterns. They are, namely: the North Region, the Northeast Region, the Central Region, the East Region, the West Region and the South Region of Thailand. Although Bangkok geographically is part of the central plain, as the capital and the largest city, this metropolitan area may be considered in other respects a separate region. A mountain border with Myanmar to the north and west, a long stretch of the Mekong River separating Thailand from Laos to the north and east, and the Mekong River and the Dongrak Mountains delineating the border of Cambodia to the east¹. The southern border, Hala bala's mountain in Yala is connected with Malaysia.

The diversity of the regions is in fact the most pronounced attribute of Thailand's physical setting. The different places are different languages and cultures. As for the country's racial composition, 80 percent of the population is Thai. Around 15 percent is Chinese, the largest minority group. Other minority groups include the Malays, Indians, hill tribes, the Burmese of Myanmar, and refugees from the Indochina countries. Ethnic Malay Muslims are found in

¹ <http://www.tourismthailand.org/Thailand/geography> accessed on 15 october 2015

Thailand's southern provinces. The hill tribes, found in the mountains in the north, include the Lisu, Karen, Mien, Akha, and the Hmong. As for religion, most Thai people are Theravada Buddhist. The approximately 5 percent of the population that is Muslim lives south near the Malaysian border.² Other religious groups in Thailand consist of Christians, Taoists, Hindus and Sikhs.

Thailand is a country that has never been colonized and firstly found in 1238. Thailand has been using monarchy system since 1932. The king of Thailand is the chief of the state and the prime minister is the head of the government. In the beginning, Thailand was named Siam, but in 1939 it changed into Thailand, which means land of free. In addition, Thailand has divided in 77 provinces and Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand. Bangkok is the central of political, commercial, industrial, educational, and entertainment of the country.

Thailand is a country that is rich of resources. The abundance of different resources in Thailand has the influence to the society, such as it can help the economic growth. It is not only just natural resources, like rubber, natural gas, timber or tungsten it also has many industries including textiles, jewelry, and circuits. Tourism is a part of it as well. Another most important sector is agriculture. Thailand produces rice, tapioca, corn, coconut, soybeans and etc.

² United Nations Thailand, "Thailand Info," <http://www.un.or.th/thailand/geography.html> (accessed September 6, 2012).

1. Historical Tourism in Thailand

Thailand is a country that has many historical backgrounds about tourism. During the second half of 19 century, the world was spread of “modernization.” The King Mongkut (Rama IV) reformed and then, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) laid the foundation for the international tourism in Thailand. The international tourism in Thailand was open economic policies to lead the construction of western oriented hotels and tour activities, and the extensive travels throughout Europe infused tourism with symbolic value and legitimacy within the country³.

Tourism which was established and grew as a regulated, and organized industry began during the regime of Marshall Sarit Thanarat (1957-1993). Sarit opened the economy to foreign investment and encouraged tourism growth. In addition to providing tax holidays and other investment incentives to local and foreign tourism operators, the Sarit government invested heavily in infrastructure, resulting in vast improvements in road construction, water and electronic power supply, banking, trading, communications, and the government services.⁴

In 1960, Sarit established the Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) to oversee tourism advertising and promoting tourism of Thailand. TOT is an organization to specially promote and make a good image of tourism in Thailand by using laws and public statements. Sarit provided the institutional and

³ Nick kontogeorgopoulos, tourism in thailand:patterns, trends, and limitations, pacific tourism review, vol 2, p226, 1998

⁴ Meyer, W(1988), Beyond the mask, Saarbrucken, Germany/fort Lauderdale, FL; Verlag Breitenbach, Pacific tourism review , vol 2, p 226, 1998

organizational framework for international tourism in Thailand. It was in the Vietnam War, because at that time the tourism industry was rapidly growing. However, the world changed the nature and scope of the industry.⁵ In 1979, the government established the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) into Thailand.

From 1965 and 1975, the emerged American troops brought enormous social and economic changes to several parts of Thailand due the large presence of American troops. In addition to a large number of military and economic aids into Thailand, The US established military bases throughout the country, particularly in northern and northeastern of Thailand.⁶ The American military presence in Thailand brought three major changes to the tourism industry. First, it is not only led to a direct increase in foreign visits through Rest and Reaction (R&R) trips taken by American soldiers, but it also popularized tourism via international media images, leading indirectly to an increase visits by travelers from the US and where else (mostly males)⁷. Second, it provided the stimulus for incipient tourism development. In particular, as businesses and services grew to meet the leisure demands of American GIs, the infrastructural foundations for future mass tourism development were laid across the country, especially in Bangkok. Third, as Cohen outlined, tourism activities associated with GIs on R&R vacations, as well as those of the thousands of American troops stationed permanently in Thailand, strongly shaped the international image of Thailand, while simultaneously, and

⁵ Ibid, 227

⁶ Ibid, 227

⁷ Cohen E, (1996). Thai tourism: Hill tribes, islands, and open-ended prostitution. Bangkok: white Lotus, Pacific tourism review p,227 1998

consequently, attracting a certain type of tourist from the mid 1960s onwards. Specifically, touristic images of Thailand as a mystical, exotic kingdom associated with cultural attractions were, after the 1960s, complemented by images of Thailand as an erotic destination associated with more mundane sexual and recreational pursuits.⁸

In addition, Thailand's tourism industry is also explaining the global travel trend towards enhanced diversity of attractions and activities. The four Ss of tourism are sun, sea, sand, and sex to remain the significant in Thailand.⁹ The government always fined the best solution to solve the prostitution problem not to increase in the future. Moreover, it is hard to control it because some of the officers also involve with it.

2. Suvarnabhumi Airport

Suvarnabhumi airport is the biggest airport in Thailand and also the tenth busiest airport in the world, sixth busiest airport in Asia, and the busiest in the country¹⁰, having handled 53 million passengers in 2012, and is also a major air cargo hub, with a total of 95 airlines. Suvarnabhumi was officially opened for

⁸ Ibid 6

⁹ Ibid 226

¹⁰ "[Air Transport Statistic](#)". AOT PLC. Retrieved 16 Feb 2015.

limited domestic flight service on 15 September 2006, and opened for most domestic and all international commercial flights on 28 September 2006¹¹.

Suvarnbhumi Bangkok International Airport is one of two international airports serving Bangkok, Thailand. The other one is Don Mueang International Airport. There are a lot of people per day who use the Suvarnabhumi airport to be the first choice if they want to come to Thailand. It can promote and hold up the economic the second sector of economy sector of Thailand and it is also comfortable for the tourists.

B. Types of tourism in Thailand

There are many types of tourism in the world, and Thailand is a country that has many types of tourism. All of them are famous and get good feedback from the tourists.

1. Adventure tourism

As a type of tourism in Thailand with comparatively long adventure history and many new sides of adventure tourism have recently emerged in Thailand. Various kinds of adventure on water, land, and air can be enjoyed in Thailand. This involves exploration of exotic locales and remote areas and engages in various adventurous activities. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand's official website the major adventure tourism activities in Thailand are:

¹¹ USA Today, "[Bangkok's new airport opens to first commercial flights](#)", USA Today, 15 September 2006.

Caving, Trekking, Elephant Trekking, Waterfall Abseiling, Whitewater rafting, Mountain Biking, Snorkeling, Sea Kayaking, Zip Lining, Skydiving¹²

2. Historical tourism

Thailand has several interesting historical sites available for tourism. Although, in north, east, west and south all of these there are many of historical place for tourism. So, do not worry that which part that tourist went to surely there have beautiful historical place for travel. Such as the historical parks in Ayutthaya and Si Satchanalai, where the past glory of the Thai Kingdom can be felt, or the archeological sites of Ban Chiang and the Dinosaur Museum, which take visitors back to ancient times.¹³

3. Medical tourism

The Kasikorn Research Center in association with the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand in 2012 found that 2.5 million international patients have flown from various parts of the World to Thailand for medical treatment.¹⁴ With 37 prestigious Joint Commission International (JCI), United States accredited hospitals offering excellent medical services; the medical tourism industry is

¹² Ali Sharafuddin M, Types of Tourism in Thailand, *e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)*, Vol.12, No. 3/4, p 211, 2015 Tourism Thailand. (n.d). *Activities*.
<http://www.tourismthailand.org/See-and-Do/Activities/> accessed on 12/10/15

¹³ TOURISM IN THAILAND: FOREIGN TRAVELER NUMBERS, NUMBERS, TYPES OF TOURISM AND , FAMOUS HOTELS
http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Thailand/sub5_8g/entry-3315.html accessed 19/11/15

¹⁴ PR Web. (2015). *Thailand's Medical Tourism Statistics Revealed on myMEDHoliday Blog*. Retrieved from <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/10/prweb11207275.htm>

expected to make 100 billion baht by 2015.¹⁵ Affordable treatment charges, excellent infrastructure and services, World's best post-medical experiences like spas, retreats and massage centers give Thailand a cutting edge against its competitors in this market. Mostly in Bangkok, there are many foreigners come to Thai's hospital for medical reason.

4. Ecotourism

Thailand has rich natural resources, pristine natural attractions, in a surprising diversity of forms, embracing forests, mountains, waterfalls, rivers, and seascapes, as well as islands large and small, all of which suit adventure tourism activities such as rock climbing, riding the rapids, and diving. They can also accommodate ecological tourism, from trekking to bird watching, and they can learn about the ways of life shared by humans and animals at various elephant centers. Agricultural tourism, another industry on the rise, includes such activities as visits to orchards, tea plantations, and vineyards.¹⁶

5. Cultural tourism

Thailand is rich culturally for example dances, and crafts like batik shirts, bag, and so on. Thai culture features a number of performing arts including drama, Thai dance, and sport. Variety shows that feature a number of different

¹⁵ Medical Tourism Association. (n.d.). *Medical Tourism Survey*. Retrieved from <http://www.medicaltourismassociation.com/en/research-and-surveys.html>

¹⁶ Thailand Foreign Office, The Government Public Relations Department. *TOURISM IN THAILAND: FOREIGN TRAVELER NUMBERS, NUMBERS, TYPES OF TOURISM AND , FAMOUS HOTELS*. http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Thailand/sub5_8g/entry-3315.html accessed on 12/10/15

theatrical arts are common in Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai, and Pattaya. Thai cultural is showing among tourists visiting Thailand. Theatrical performances of ancient Muay Thai boxing matches, Thai tribal dances, and puppet shows are also popular cultural attractions of Thailand.¹⁷

6. Wellness tourism

Thailand is very popular for its wellness tourism. Thai culture with strong influence of Indian culture has developed unique massage and wellness techniques. The massage and wellness techniques are wide in variety options ranging from one hundred baht to a few thousand bahts. It is popular all around the country especially in the streets of Bangkok, Chiang Mai and in the strands of all the beaches. The most popular destinations for wellness tourism are Hua Hin, Koh Phangan, Samui, Phuket and Pattaya. These destinations offer attractive services with all inclusive spas, oil massage with natural herbs, lemon grass, and so on.¹⁸

7. Cruise tourism

Sea cruise tourism is not so popular in Thailand. The only destination is Phuket covered by Royal Caribbean Cruise line. The Thai Government has signed an MOU with Singapore in the month of June 2015 to promote sea cruise tourism.

¹⁷ ibid

¹⁸ ibid, 215

In contrast, river cruise tourism on the Chao Phraya River is already a very popular activity in Bangkok.¹⁹

8. Sports tourism

Sports tourism refers to “travel which involves either observing or participating in a sporting event”.²⁰ Thailand has positioned itself as one of the predominant destinations for sport tourism, especially in the sub segment of golf tourism. Though Thailand denoted 1993 as the ‘Visit Thai Golf’ year and with a move to implement the Emerald Triangle Development Project to enable golfers to play a round of golf over three countries are Thailand, Laos and Cambodia without the inconvenience of immigration formalities it has as really stepped in to the sport tourism niche market arena after the formation of the “Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Kingdom of Thailand” in 2002.

The ministry in-charge of promoting tourism, managing and organizing all important national and international sports events within the kingdom has taken various steps through strategic planning and developing policies for attracting private sector investment in this niche market.²¹

9. Education tourism

¹⁹ Ali Sharafuddin M, Types of Tourism in Thailand, *e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)*, Vol.12, No. 3/4, p 211,2015 Sea Trade News. (2015) *Singapore and Thailand sign MOU on promoting cruise tourism*. retrieved from <http://www.seatrade-cruise.com/news/news-headlines/singapore-andthailand-sign-mou-on-promoting-cruise-tourism.html> accessed on 13/10/15

²⁰ Ali Sharafuddin M, Types of Tourism in Thailand, *e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)*, Vol.12, No. 3/4, p 211,2015 Commonwealth of Australia. (2000). *Towards a National Sports Tourism Strategy*. Retrieved From <http://www.tourisminsights.info/ONLINEPUB/SPORT%20AND%20EVENTS/SAET%20PDF/SportTourismStrategy.pdf> accessed on 14/10/15

²¹ Ali Sharafuddin M, Types of Tourism in Thailand, *e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)*, Vol.12, No. 3/4, p 216,2015

Education is the best aspect that human should have in the life, and it is not limited that where should find and get the education, whether it is in our own country or foreign countries. Traveling in search of knowledge is a key human phenomenon. Students undertake study trips and industrial visits as a common practice in schools and higher educational institutions in Thailand. Also many foreigners come to Thailand to learn, engaging in activities ranging from short term cookery. Thai carving courses offered by private institutions to high end professional courses are offered at various national and international universities all around the country.²²

10. Shopping tourism

Shopping is kind of hobby for someone who has much money. Those people can go anywhere to fulfill what they want. Thailand offers an unbelievable range of merchandise for tourists who want to shop to their hearts' delight. There are world famous brand-name products side by side with Thai products, Thai brands, foreign brands, and local folk products, all made available at leading compartment stores, along walking streets, weekend markets, or at many villages and towns, not only in Bangkok. Tourists can enjoy shopping in all major provinces in Thailand, all complete with foreign and Thai goods for their shopping enjoyment.²³

C. Ministry of Tourism and Sports

²² Ibid, 217

²³ ibid

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) was established in 2002 to be responsible for the promotion, support and development of tourism industry, sports sector and sports education. The ministry is functioned with four governing offices the Office of the Minister, the Office of the Permanent Secretary, the Office of Sports and Recreation Development and the Office of Tourism Development²⁴.

1. The Office of Tourism Development

The Office of Tourism Development under the MOTS assumes duties and responsibilities related to the development of service standards for tourist attractions and tourism products and services offered by the Thai tourism industry. This includes the support of standards for tour businesses and tour guides. The Office's goal is to achieve sustainable tourism development and generate economic, social and cultural benefits for local communities as well as the country.

2. Responsibilities of the Office of Tourism Development

The tourist businesses and guides have to register and certify personal information including the issue of permits, extension of permits, suspension of permits and termination of permits, and copy any certification of duplicate and other documents. They promote awareness to adopt professional standards,

²⁴ Amazing thailand, *Ministry of Tourism and Sports*, [Situation Update of the crowd surrounded Phuket's Thalang police station](http://www.tatnews.org/ministry-of-tourism-and-sports/) <http://www.tatnews.org/ministry-of-tourism-and-sports/>.

Accessed on Thursday 15 October, 2015

methodologies and practices in accordance with the Tourism Business and Tour Guides Act and other Ministerial Decrees. Moreover, they also promote and support the movie business in both the production and service sectors, including relevant businesses. The office also establishes a development plan for tourism services and tourist attraction sites, including coordinating, promoting and supporting the implementation of the plan. The offices have to make sure that they follow the Tourism Business and Tour Guides Act and other relevant laws and do not break the roles.²⁵

D. Tourism Authority of Thailand

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) a special organization for promoting the tourism of Thailand was established in 1979. TAT was the first organization in Thailand to be specifically responsible for the promotion of tourism²⁶. TAT supplies information and data on tourist areas to the public, publicizes Thailand with the intention of encouraging both Thai and international tourists to travel in and around Thailand, conducts studies to set development plans for tourist destinations, and cooperates with and supports the production and development of personnel in the field of tourism.

Since the inception of the first local office of TAT in Chiang Mai in 1968, there are now 35 regional offices throughout Thailand. TAT has also established

²⁵ ibid

²⁶ <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/thailand-population/> access on 22 october 2015

many overseas offices the first being in New York, which was opened in 1965. During the past 30 years, TAT has since established 15 more offices in different parts of the world. Thailand's first international tourist office under the TOT banner opened in New York in 1965 and first domestic office in Chiang Mai in 1968. As Thailand's tourism continued to grow and increasingly played pivotal role as one of the country's top export earners, the government saw the need to place greater emphasis on promoting and marketing the kingdom as a tourism destination among global travelers. In 1979, the government brought the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) into existence. Since then, the TAT has grown into a sophisticated tourism marketing organization. Now in its 55th year with headquarters in Bangkok, 35 offices in Thailand and 27 offices overseas, the TAT has helped to make Thailand one of the world's favorite destinations for global travelers. Visitor arrivals grew from 81,000 tourists in 1960 to 24.77 million in 2014.²⁷

Thailand has been more successful to invite international tourists to visit Thailand for travel. The government has work hard to makeed other interested about Thailand. However, it took some several times to do that, and finally has TAT in many countries.

²⁷ *The history of tourism in thailand* , <http://www.tourismthailand.org/Thailand/history> access on 22 October, 2015