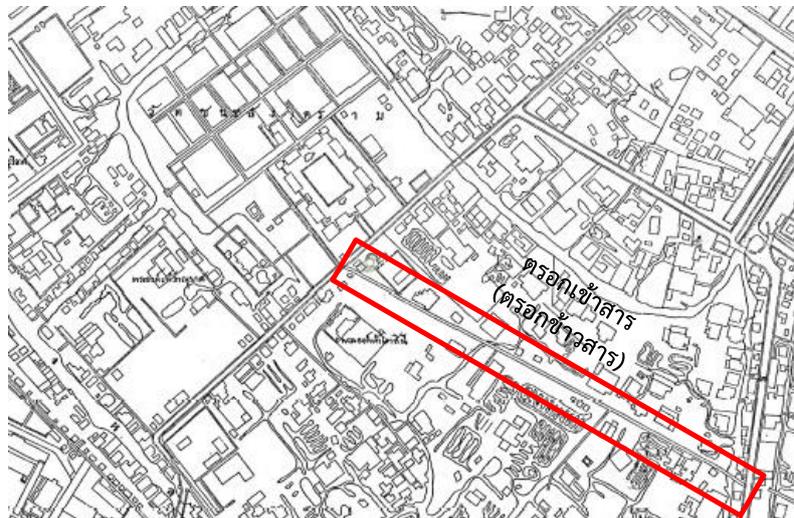


Khaosan Road: A Hot Spot of Guesthouses in Banglamphu

Khaosan Road is a popular place for foreign tourists with tons of guesthouses. Before becoming Khaosan Road as seen today, it was an alley where not many people lived. Later, the development made it become more attractive for Thai and foreign tourists.

History

Khaosan Road, which means milled rice, was built in 1892 during King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V). He had Prince Narisara Nuwattiwong to build a new road, starting from Wat Chana Songkhram to the east at “Trok Khaosan” (Trok means alley.) The king gave it the original name “Khaosan Road”. It is 413.50 centimeters in length and 15 meters in width.



A map of Bangkok in 1887 around Trok Khaosan

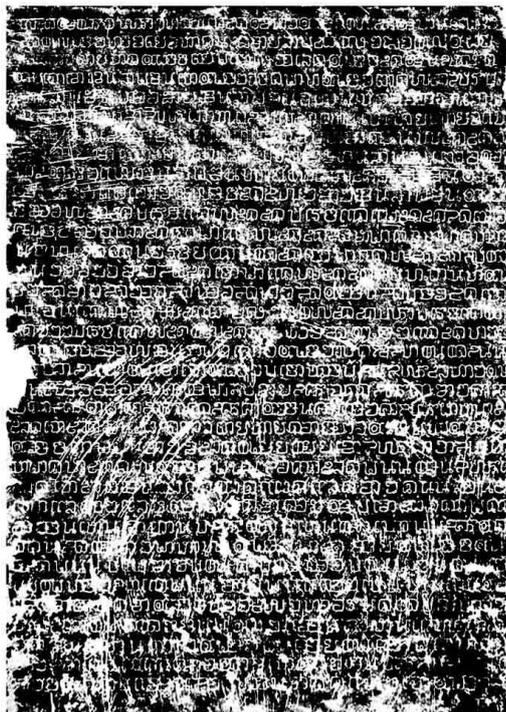
Source: https://oer.learn.in.th/search_detail/result/116102



Khaosan Road around 1945 – 1946 taken by Peter Williams Hunt

Source: http://www.silpa-mag.com/culture/article_19050

According to a documentary on May 13, Rattanakosinsok 111 (1892), the word “เข้าสาร” (Khaosan) means “ข้าวสาร” (Khaosan) or “milled rice” in English. The first syllable of these two words are different spelling and sound in Thai but same spelling in English. Back to the Sukhothai Kingdom, people pronounced “เข้า” (Khao = rice) according to the first part on lines 18 – 19 of the King Ramkhamhaeng Inscription Sukhothai province B.E. 1835 (1292), the inscription “ในน้ำมีปลาในนามีเข้า” (There are fish in the water and rice in the fields). During the reign of King Rama VI, rice was pronounced “ข้าว” (Khao), later it has been named “ถนนข้าวสาร” (Khaosan road) since then. In summary, the word “ข้าว” is pronounced different intonation in different time periods.



The first part of the King Ramkhamhaeng Inscription Sukhothai province B.E. 1835 (1292)
 Source: https://db.sac.or.th/inscriptions/inscribe/image_detail/48

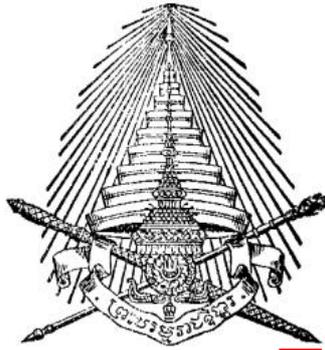
ที่ ๑๘๐/๓๑๘๑

ประกาศให้ทราบทั่วกัน

ด้วย ข้าแตงนิ ยืน เรือง ราว จะ ขอ หนังสือ สำหรับ ที่ ตำบล ถนนเข้าสาร
 ท้อง ที่ อำเภอ พระนคร ด้านเหนือ ยาว ๑๓ วา ๓ ศอก คืบ คืบ ด้านใต้
 ยาว ๑๔ วา คืบ ถนนเข้าสาร ด้านตะวันออก กว้าง ๔ วา ๓ ศอก คืบ ที่
 หาดวงอิทธิมยุธา ด้านตะวันออก กว้าง ๗ วา คืบ คลอง

ถ้าผู้ใด เกี่ยวข้อง ด้วย ที่ดิน รายนี้ ก็ให้ทำคำร้อง มาขึ้น ต่อ กรม
 อำเภอ ภายใน กำหนด ๓๐ วัน นับแต่ วันที่ ประกาศนี้ เบน ต้นไป
 เมื่อพ้น กำหนดนี้ แล้ว เจ้าพนักงาน จะ ทำหนังสือ สำคัญ ให้ แก่ ข้าแตงนิ
 รับไป.

ประกาศ มา ณ วันที่ ๗ ตุลาคม รัตนโกสินทร์ ศก ๑๒๕๕
 (ลงนาม) หาดวง นานา
 เจ้า กรม อำเภอ



พระราชบัญญัติกำกับตรวจท^บใช้

พระพุทธศักราช ๒๔๖๒

พระบาทสมเด็จพระรามาธิบดีศรีสินทรมหาวชิราวุธ
พระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว มีพระบรมราชโองการดำรัส
เหนือเกล้าฯ สั่งให้ประกาศจงทราบทั่วกันว่า

Due to the large rice market in Siam, it was named Khaosan Road. The locals told that this area was a canal, trading along the riverside, before developing to an alley and a road respectively. During the Ayudhya Era, there were rice fields in the north of the capital city; therefore it was assumed that there was also a rice market here. The rice market in Ayudhya conforms to the rice market's location in the Rattanakosin Era. For this reason, Khaosan Road is believed to be the large rice market of Bangkok.



A barge carrying rice on Rangsit Canal, Patum Thani province

Source: <https://th-th.facebook.com/papboran/posts/1699456073559480/>

Before Becoming Tons of Guesthouses

Before Khaosan Road has tons of guesthouses for foreigners, there were residents of the locals and not many people lived here. They travelled by boats. After buses came, Khaosan Road started to be alive. There were many shops selling Buddhism articles such as offerings for monks, Tripitaka, ecclesiastical accessories. These shops were Sor Dhamma Bhakdi, Si Phan, and Buddha Sangkaphan.

The more people from many provinces moved to work in Bangkok, the more residents on Khaosan Road were rented. At that time, most tourists were Thais and not many foreigners. Three more hotels appeared: Phanit Hotel, Nit Charoen Hotel and Wattana Hotel.

Viengtai hotel was established around 1972 – 1973. Tour companies and foreign students were recommended to travel in Thailand. Most hotels cost expensively. At the result, a lot of guesthouses increased and were widely known among tourists.



Viengtai hotel on Rambutri Road

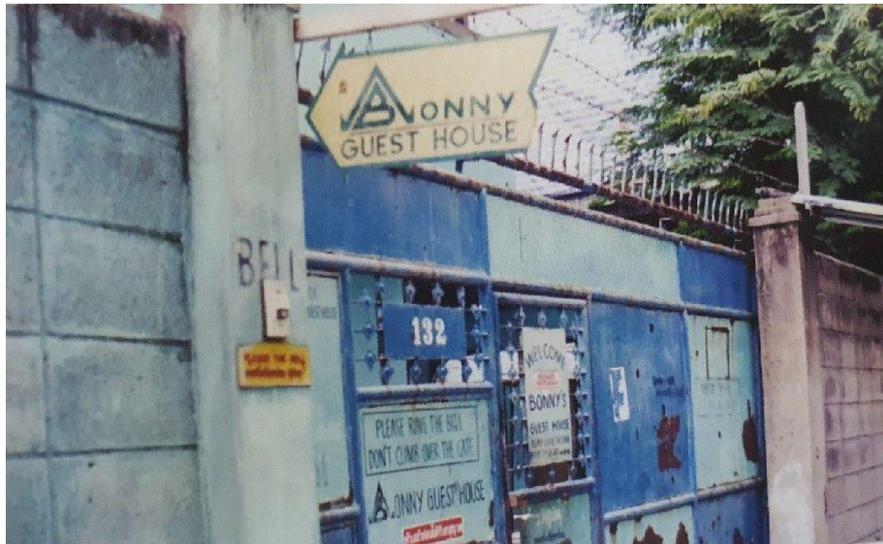
Source: <http://th.soidb.com/bangkok/hotel/viengtai-hotel.html>



IBIS Styles Bangkok Khaosan Viengtai (the renovated Viengtai hotel)

Source: <https://www.ibisstylesbangkokkhaosan.com/th/>

Tum Guesthouse was the first guesthouse on Khaosan Road. It was a wooden house where was divided into many rooms (share rooms) with cheap price. The first group of tourists was Australia students and later it was well-known among foreign tourists. After that, guesthouses increased such as Bonny Guest House. Khaosan Road has been a world-famous street for cheap guesthouses since then.



Bonny Guest House

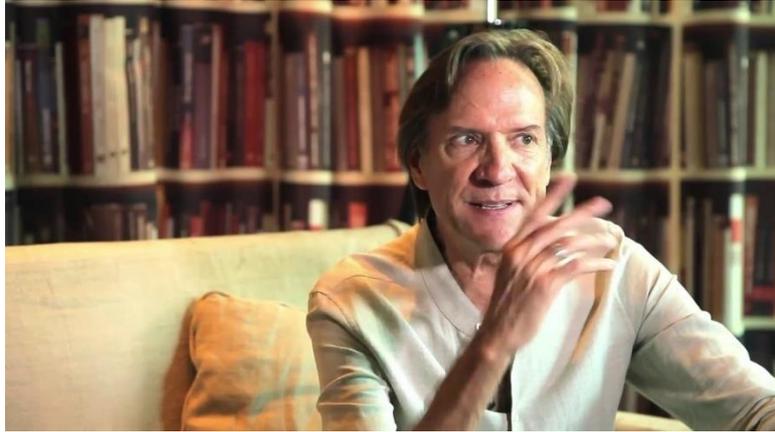
Source: Book “Yum Trok Sok Soi Bon Thanon Khaosan”¹

Khaosan Road: World-famous Guesthouses in Banglamphu

Known as cheap guesthouses among foreign tourists, tourism industry started to grow. In 1987, Lonely Planet’s first Thailand guidebooks were published. It was written by Joe Cummings. He recommended guesthouses on Khaosan Road, and then foreign tourists came to Thailand and checked in these guesthouses following his recommendation in the guidebook.

Many things were changed and developed on Khaosan Road to meet the demand. For example, houses turned into travel company offices, hotels were renovated to welcome more tourists such as New Nit Charoen, Valley House and Charoen Di.

¹ means walk along Khaosan Road



Joe Cummings, the author of Lonely Planet's first Thailand guidebook

Source: <https://peoplethingsliterature.com/2018/09/15/the-best-joe-c-interview-ever/>

Other businesses such as restaurants, stalls and entertainment places on Khaosan Road also started up and thus it has been attracted tourists from around the world.
