

Part 333 for Cathy's blog

Monday 9th to Wednesday 11th March, 2026

Monday 9th March, 2026.

We stayed home today because I had a head ache. I probably just slept crookedly (no, it was not due to alcohol the night before!).

Tuesday 10th March, 2026.

Temple Day : Spean Memay, Phnom Rong Temple and Kok Po Temple

A longer ride today.

We headed west via the Siem Reap Ring Road and joined National Road 6 at the edge of town and headed further west almost to Puok.

We turned right at the start of Puok houses. Just north of Puok we found the Memay Bridge.

Spean (bridge) Memay crosses a now dry river that ran into the West Baray. It allowed the armies and traders to cross the river in Angkorian times.



Although the river was not deep, it was wide. The bridge is 79 m long. Typical of the bridge structure of the time, Spean Memay has laterite arches (21 of them) which allow the water to flow through.



Some interesting plants grow here.



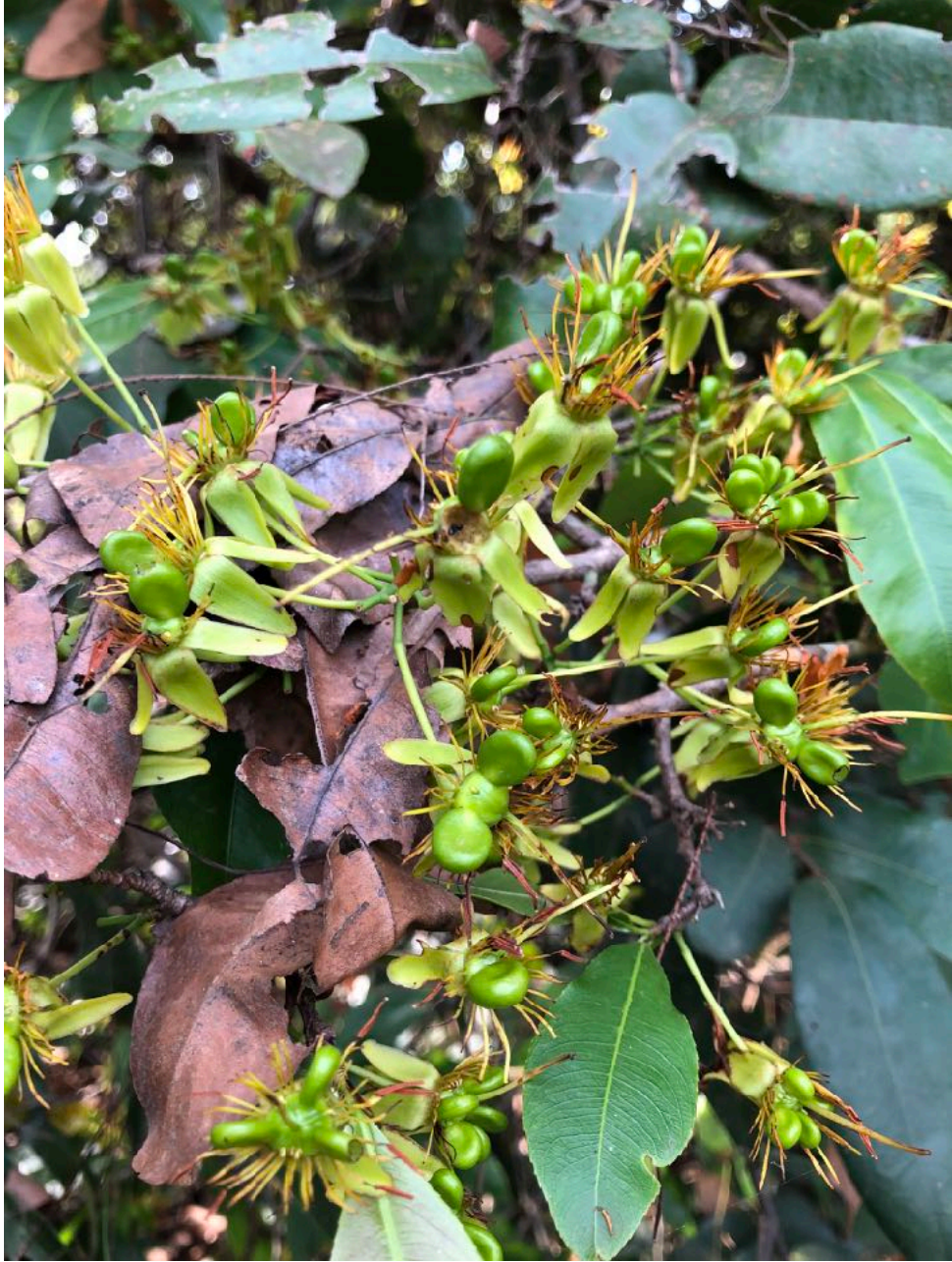






(A potato tree?)







Picture of David to give you an idea of the size of the arches.



A more modern bridge over an almost dry river.

The first rains will come in April, just a few heavy thunderstorms and then more rain in May (the start of the wet season).



A quick stop at Phnom Rong temple... this is all the sandstone carving (quite different pattern!).

Then it was on to Kok Po Temple.



Kok Po temple is quite dilapidated.

Built in the early 8th Century, some people say it is “pre-Angkorian”. The bricks certainly tell us it is “old”. It was a Hindu temple.



Brick work.



Kok Po temple with restoration work done.



Some carved sandstone (again, different in style to the more modern and famous temples).





It was quite an impressive building, despite the collapsed walls on the other side.



Out here, north of Puok and west of Siem Reap you are in the Cambodian countryside. Much of the land has been cleared for rice farming. The sun bakes the land.



The colours are striking. Add in some gum trees with their pale trunks and you get a good contrast of red dirt road, blue sky, green leaves and white tree trunks.



Road works. Drainage. Powerlines.

**And
boys**



local

(photo

from the video I took of them).

taken

Time to ride home, shower and drink lots of water.

Wednesday 11th March, 2026.

Temple Day: Gate of the Dead and the Victory Gate



The is the road to the Bayon, just through the South Gate. This pony will be dressed up and you can have photos taken with it. You can see anything on the roads in Siem Reap.



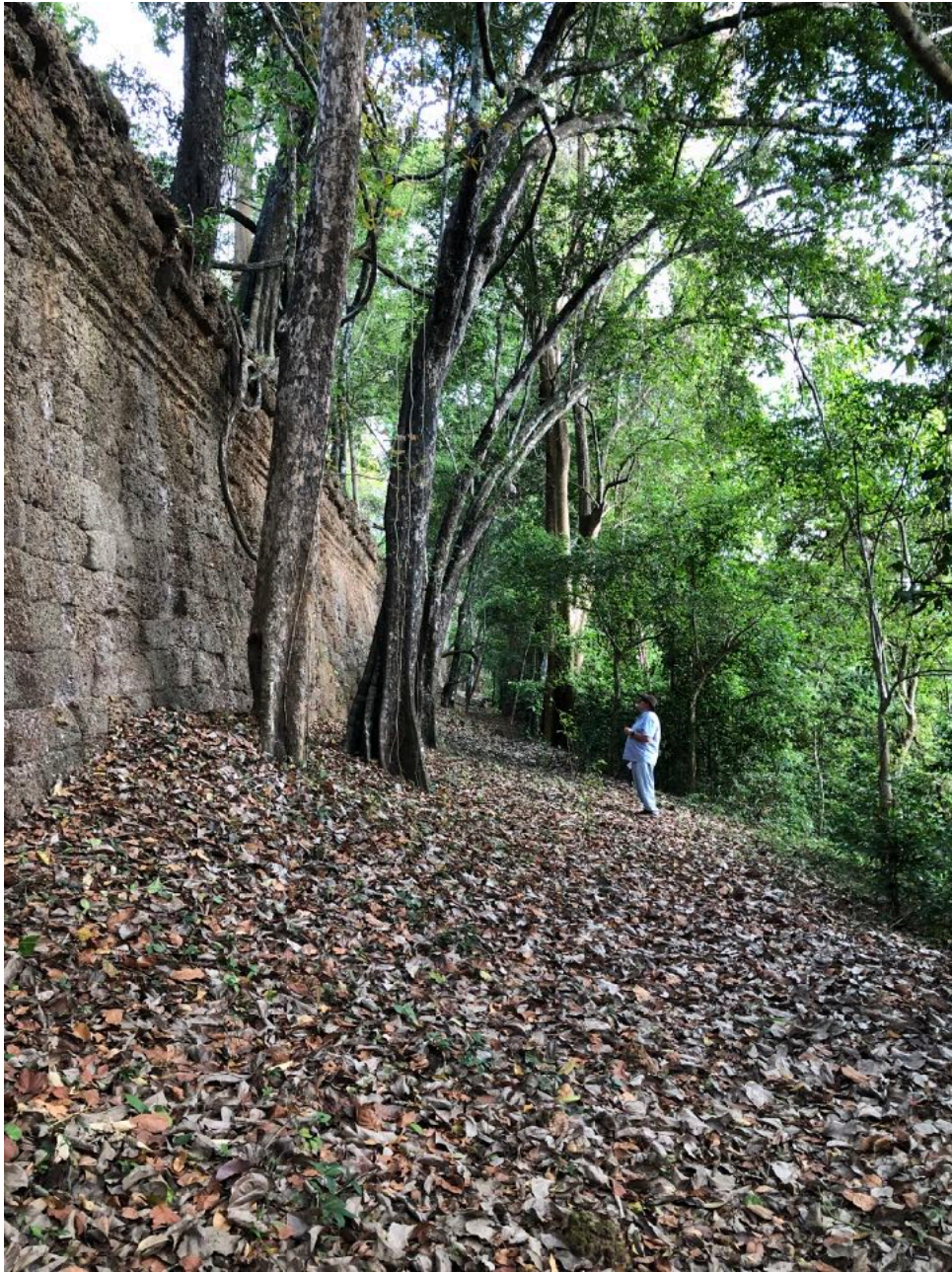
The moss on these statues has almost died.



The Gate of the Dead, (restored carvings) Indra riding the three headed Airavata.



**The Gate of the Dead (from outside Angkor Thom).
Heads of Jayavarman VII, on three towers above Indra
riding the Airavata.**



David by the wall (outside Angkor Thom, with the moat behind him).

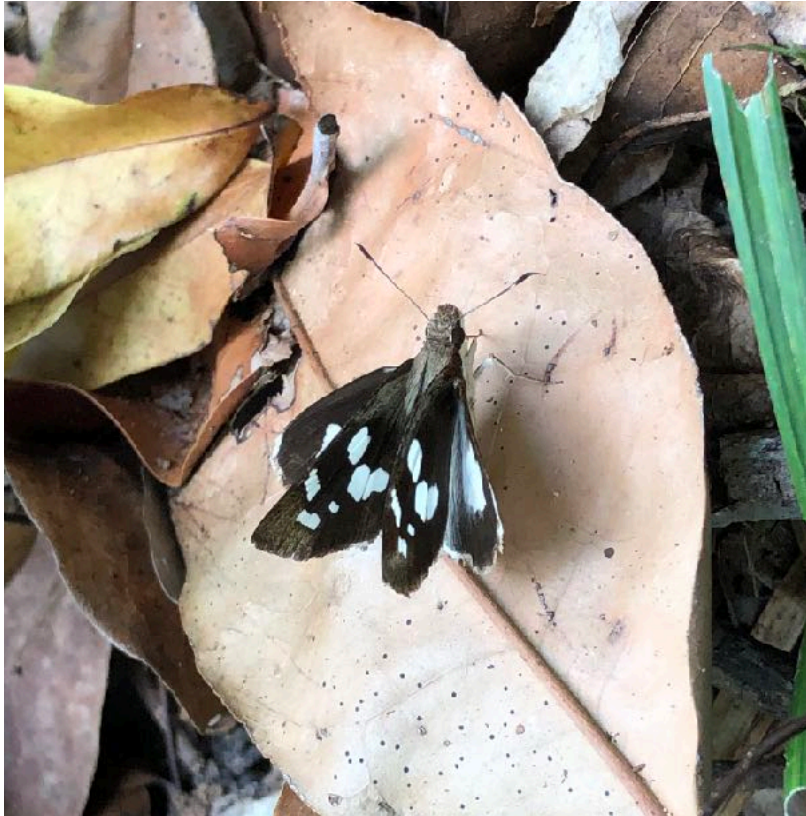


Dragonfly by the moat. The water in the moat (both here at Angkor Thom and at Angkor Wat) is carefully controlled. The weight of the temples is stabilised by the weight of the water in the moat.

If the moat isn't full of water, it poses a danger to the stability of the temple.



Not a mosquito...

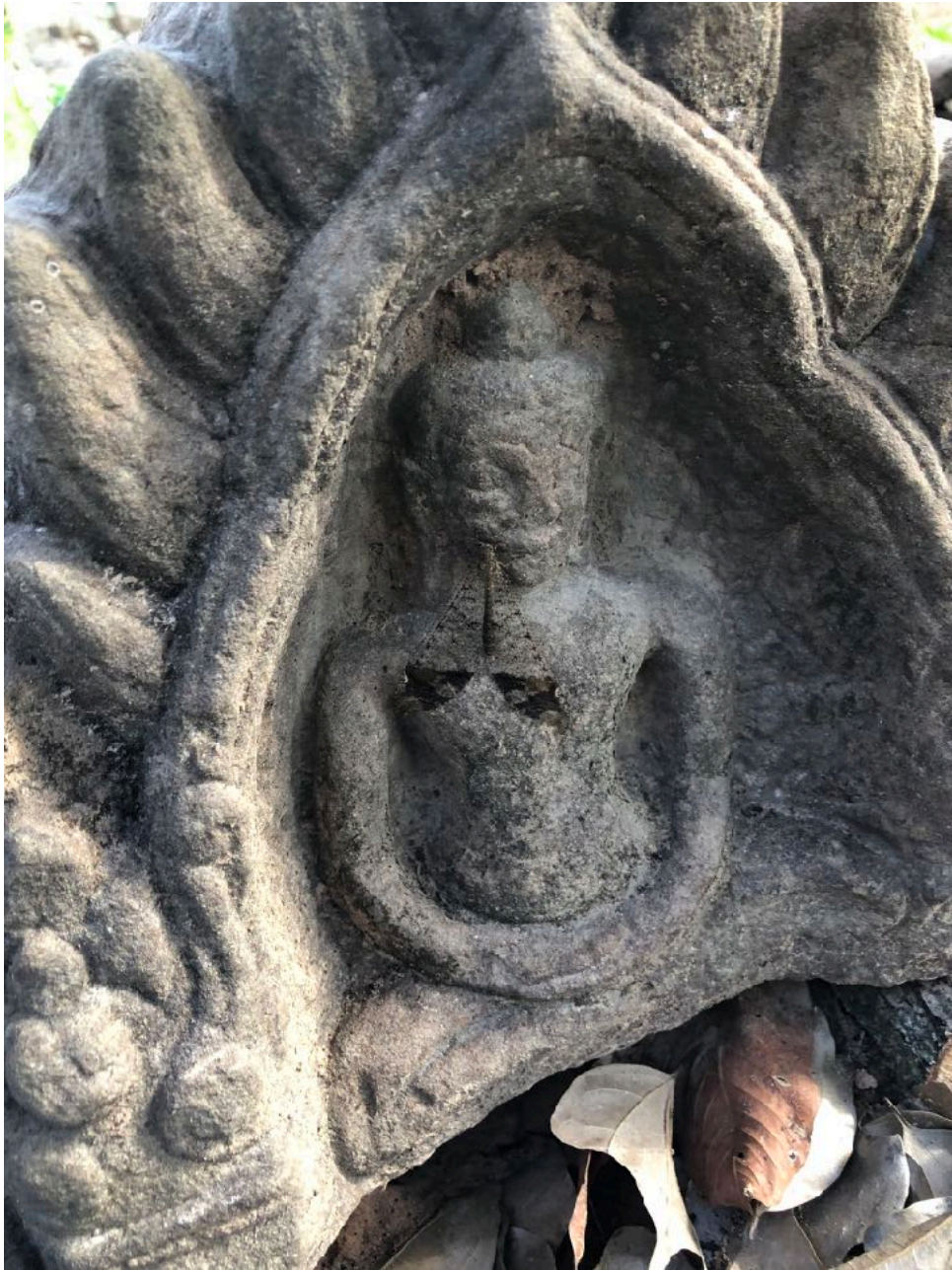


Newly restored causeway at the Victory Gate.





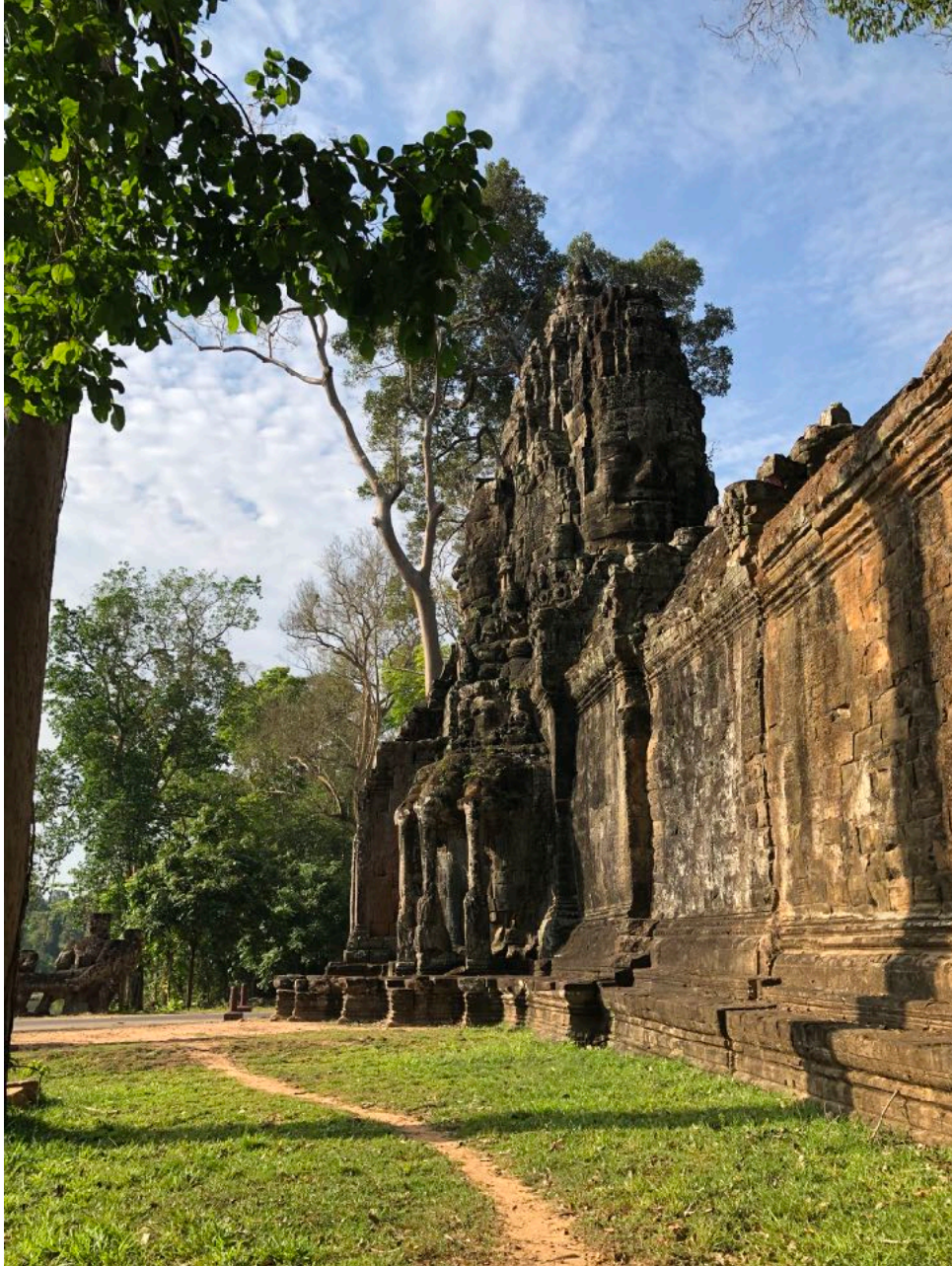
Carvings. These carvings are placed on top of all the walls around the temples. Most have had their (Hindu) deities chipped out. These were probably in the mud by the causeway and out of site for perhaps nine hundred years.



I didn't see this when I took the photo (look carefully).



David and a big tree at the Victory Gate (just to show you how tall and impressive these Angkorian works are!)



The other side of the road out of the Victory Gate.

In ancient times, the returning armies would re-enter the city through the Victory Gate. It is not in the centre of the east wall (the Gate of the Dead is the central gate).

Soldiers would walk down to the Elephant Terrace and “parade” there on the wide open grassed area.

The Gate of the Dead was used to bring the bodies of the fallen soldiers back into the city.



We walked back along the top of the wall.

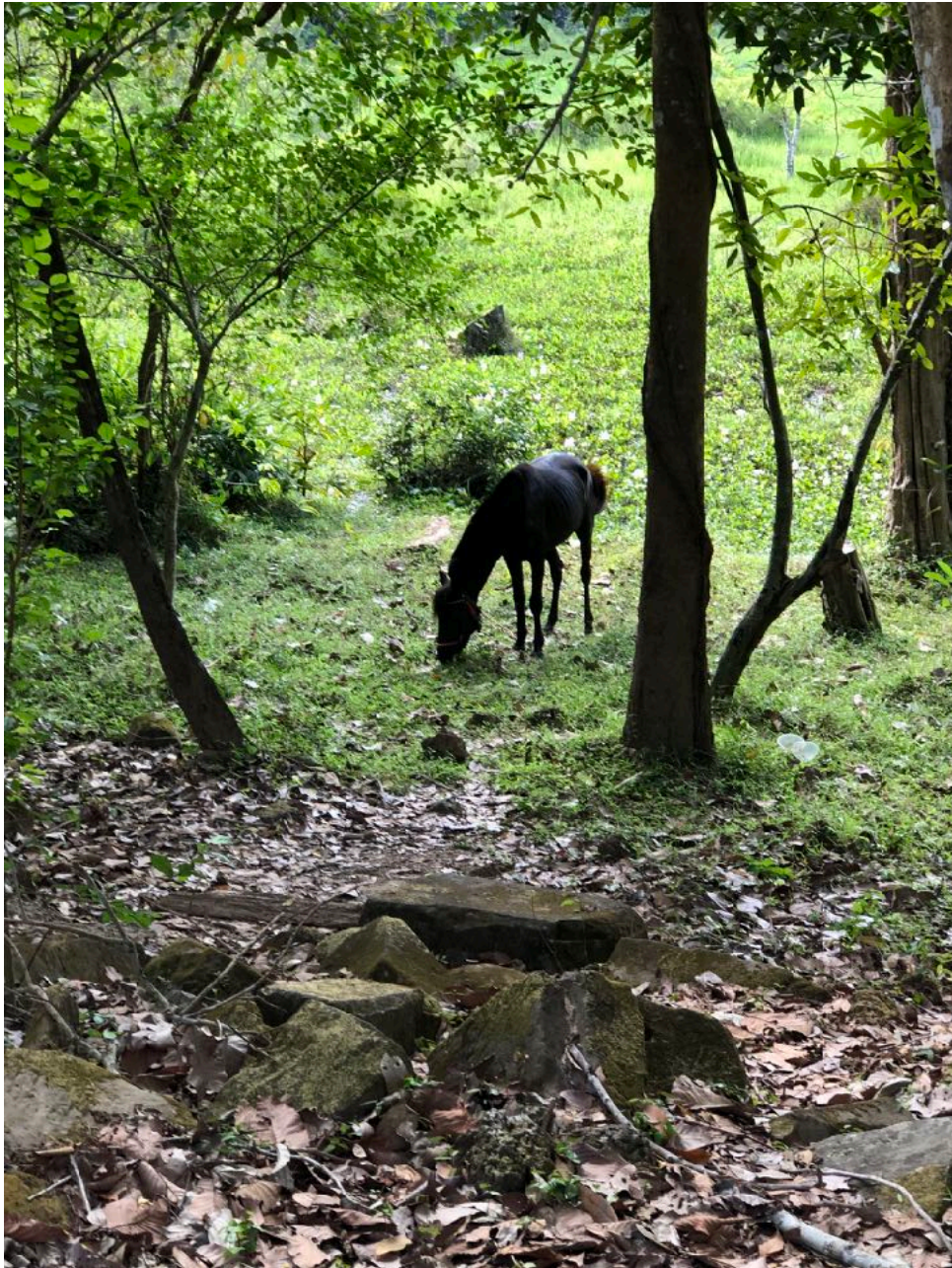
I love these butterflies, with their “tails” looking just like their heads.



And a pretty butterfly too.

The path along the top of the wall is a popular walking and cycling route.





Back at the Gate of the Dead, we found the pony.



And the otter family!

They were scenting the path (and then rolling in it!)





The pony was here for a photo shoot!



A shorter walk, but a busy morning. Then I had my language lesson in the afternoon.

