

## **Part 351 for Cathy's blog**

**Tuesday 5th to Thursday 7th, May, 2026**

**Tuesday May 5th, 2026.**

Today we arranged to meet Meet Ginge at Smiling Creatives. It is a "loose" group of artists, but primarily organised by Ginge himself. He has a nice space (courtyard) in front of a progressive child care centre. He has a large 3D printer and two computers, all donated.

Ginge will take your ideas, design a 3D piece and print it for you. Sometimes they have days where you can paint various 3D pieces, with the proceeds going to running the group. For other groups, like schools etc, he can organise to make the plastic pieces to paint and sell, with profits going to the other group.

He has held painting days there too.

We talked about his work and his ideas and about some of the things happening in Siem Reap (like the abundance of influencers and "money makers") ...

We are conscious that there are still refugees living in the city because their land is now occupied by the Thai army.

We also know that the funding for many NGO's (American based organisations) has stopped.

Siem Reap (and Cambodia) is a developing nation and the local people need support (not exploitation).

And with the closure of the scam centres, there are thousands of foreign nationals with no incomes and no way to get back to their own countries.

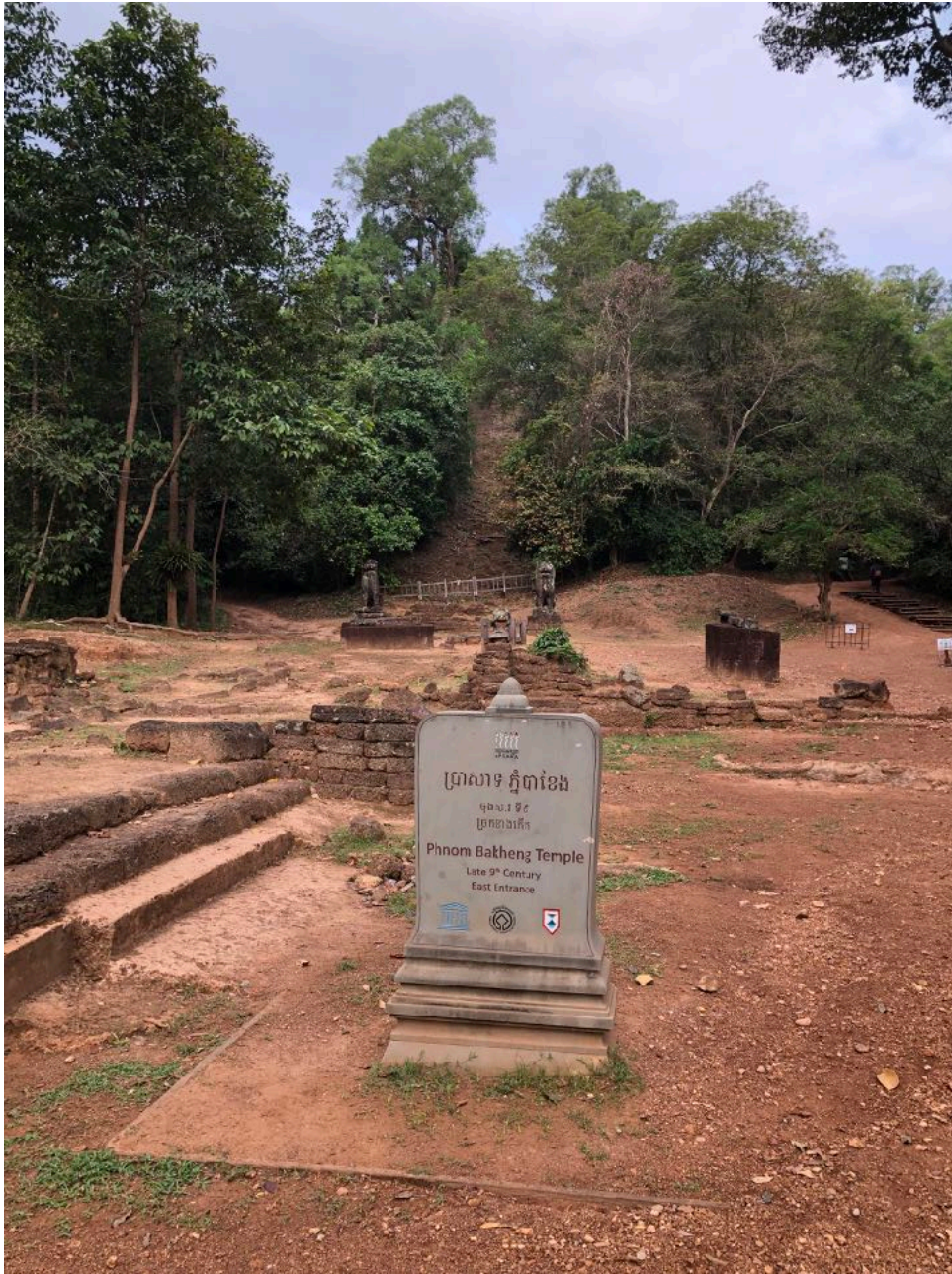
And finally, a business employing 6000 locals (at the border with Thailand) has just closed. This means 6000 (more) unemployed people, some of whom will make their way to Siem Reap.

I'm not sure what the solution is.

We passed on 2 bags of David's clothes (which have "shrunk").

**Wednesday May 6th, 2026.**

**Temple Day : Bakheng**



**The ruins of the eastern entrance (ground level) of the Bakheng. This is almost opposite the ticket check point.**

**It is a long (and winding) walk up the hill from road level.**



**Bakheng lion.**



**Patterned spider.**



**Interesting fruit.**



**Statue.**

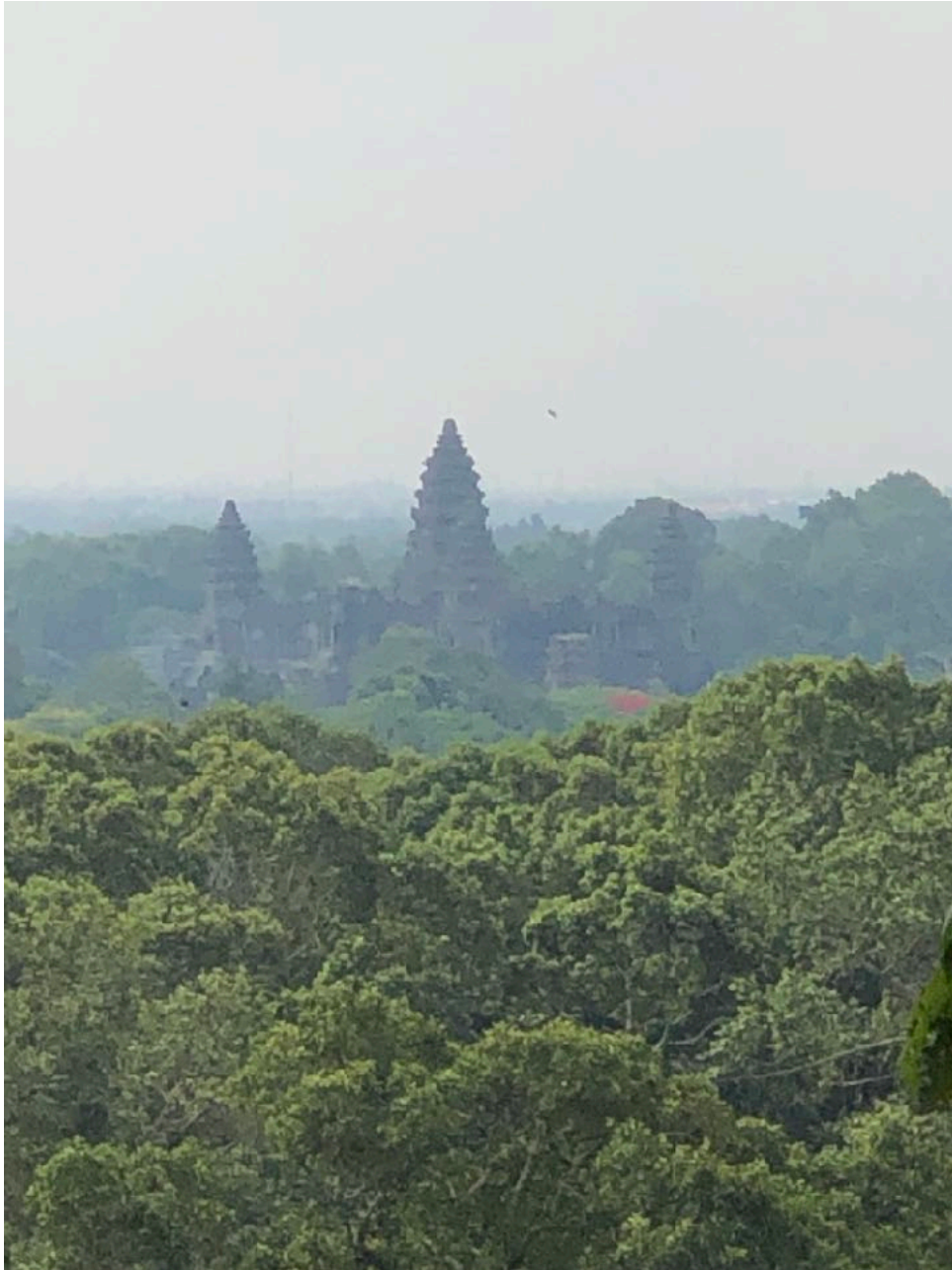


**Outer buildings and the crane at the temple.**

**They have been working on the Bakheng since we came to Siem Reap.**



**Hundreds of blocks stacked neatly.**



**You can see Angkor Wat from the top of the “mountain”. People go to the Bakheng to watch the sunrise (this is looking east).**



**This is the straight path down to ground level (you cannot walk this way).**

**After the long walk up the “mountain”, there are the steps of the temple!**





**Some of the towers and the lions by the steps.**



**At the top (with Angkor Wat just showing).**



**Some of the finished repair work.**



**The crane.**



**Carving. Some of the carvings up here are almost too worn out to recognise.**

**Worn carvings.**





**It would have been magnificent work in its day.**



**These brick outer buildings indicate there was a temple here from quite early on in Angkorian times.**

Time to head home for a swim.

**Thursday May 7th, 2026.**

**Temple Day : Ta Som**



**Some of the visitors near the ticket check point this morning.**



**And monks (and a dog) walking past the Elephant Terrace.**

Ta Som is a beautiful temple at the furthest corner of the Grand Circuit road around the (more famous) temples here in Siem Reap.

In the past two years, works have removed the tree growing over the eastern gopura, at the “back” of the temple. Unfortunately, this tree was picturesque and now the scaffolding and “bare” temple look less pretty.

We understand it is done for the safety of visitors and to protect the remaining structure (an entrance gate).

At this end of the dry season, the moat is now bare and the little stream that ran along the east side of the temple is dry.

The “jungle” is scrappy.

The whole area is less than the pretty scene it was.

I think some works on clearing up the vegetation, taking away the years of rubbish that have just been raked under the trees and buried with leaves and even a wooden seat or two, would spruce the place up a bit.

I won't hold my breath.

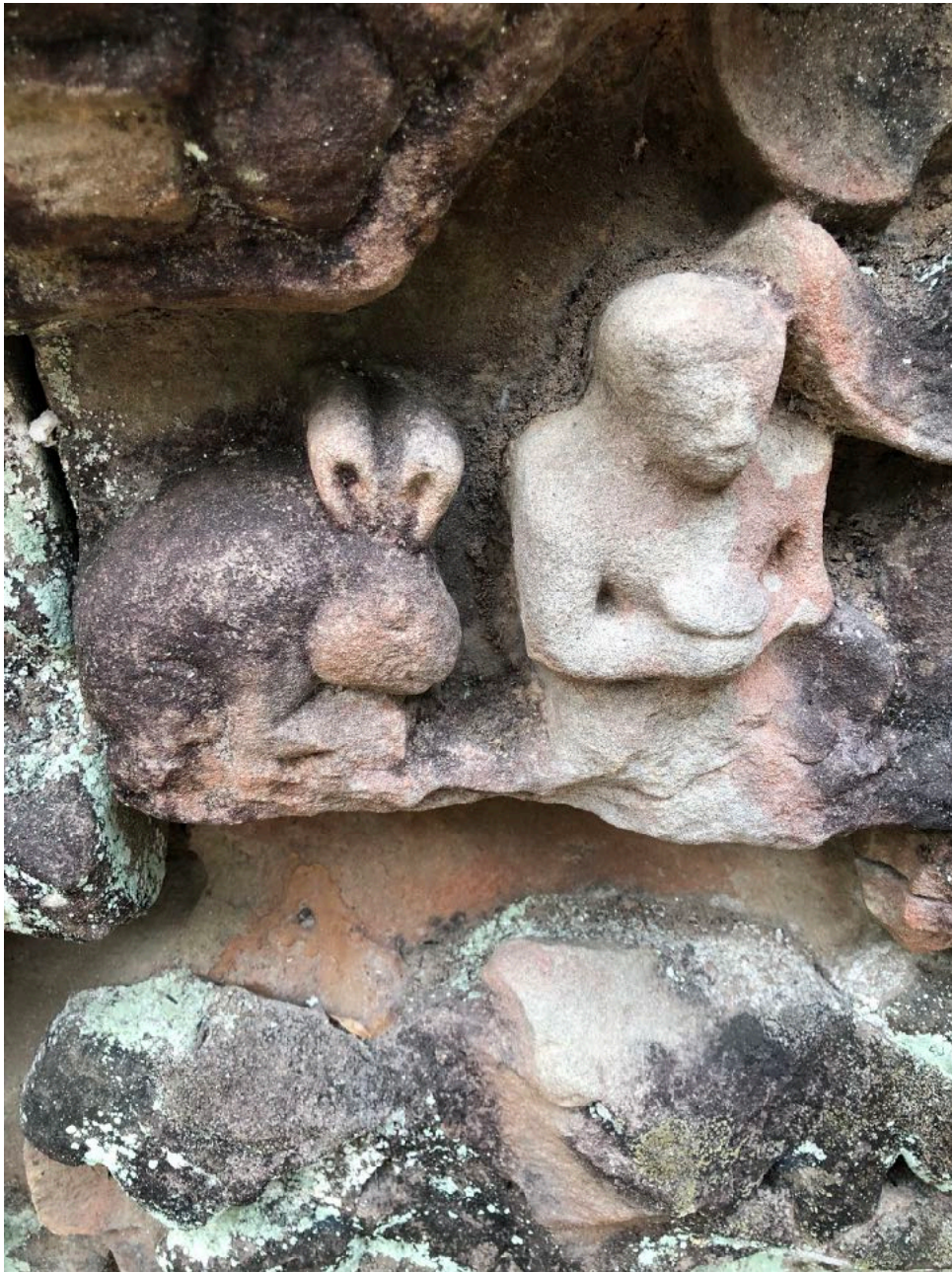
Other than that, the temple itself is still stunning.



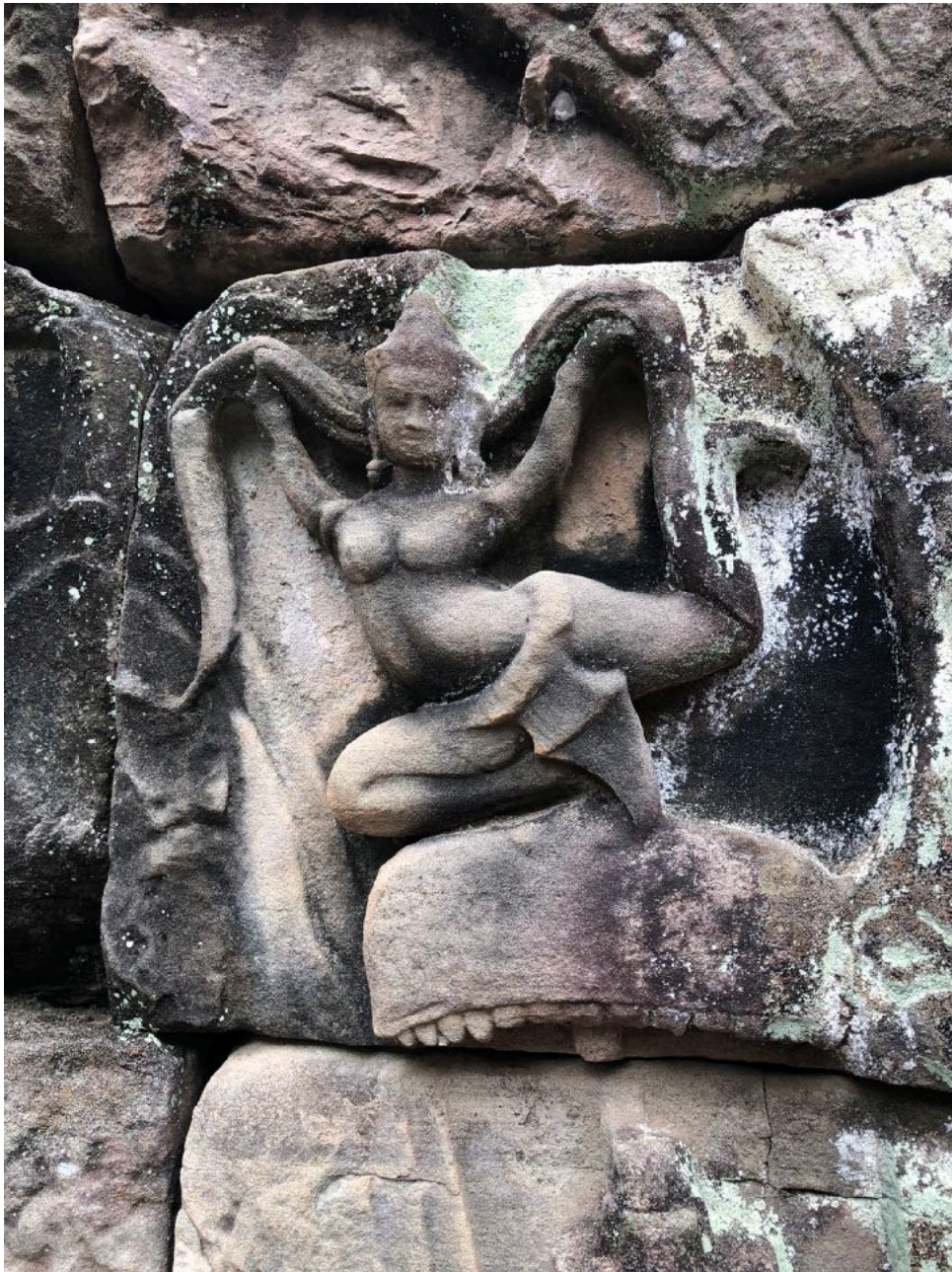
**Once through the west gopura, you get to the first wall surrounding the temple.**



**Inside the second wall, it is crowded with small buildings and carvings.**



**This is the only rabbit we have seen in carvings.**



**This Apsara is worn but still beautiful.**



**The carved lintels are impressive.**



**And the towers have their own wildlife.**



**The towers are well protected by warriors.**



**Here is the East gopura, well scaffolded, but missing the tree.**



### **The scrappy, almost dry moat.**

We met a friend just as we were back at the motorbike. We stopped for little chatting (took 20 minutes) and then we rode home.

