



Ban Taling Ngam History

The original families of Baan Taling Ngam descend from local islanders, mainland Thai's, and Chinese fisherman as this was the first seaport for merchant traders over 100 years ago. Here they sought water and provisions as they sailed throughout the seas of South East Asia. Some stayed on and blended with the local culture. Many of these families still live here in their ancestral homes.

First named Taling Punk or Damaged Shore after being washed away during a fierce storm in 1900, the name was changed to Taling Ngam or Beautiful Shore in 1942. Taling Ngam offers the breathtaking view of the 5 Islands just off its shores. The sun sets exactly on this place thus offering the most beautiful sunsets on Koh Samui.

The Taling Ngam Temple was built around 1900. It was named Wat Kiri Wongkaram meaning "mountainous temple" for it's pristine placement surrounded by valleys and mountains. The current Head Abbot, Pra Maha Jam-Reuan, is a Samui native. Born in 1935 he was ordained as a monk at 17 years old. He is currently 71 years old and has been in the monkhood for 55 years.

The Mummified Monk is an interesting artefact at Wat Kiri Wongkaram. His name was Luang-Por Rerm-Khun Thummo, born near the temple in 1879. He was 21 years old when ordained but soon made a pilgrimage to Burma where he was initiated into deep mystical Buddhist practices. He returned to Koh Samui and passed away on January 9, 1966 at the age of 87. After 66 years in the monkhood and a life of purity and meditation his body naturally mummified upon his death without use of chemical preservation. Amazingly his hair and nails still grow! Sections of the nails are cut and used as protective charms.

The Elephant Gate was built by the head monk in 1979 as an entrance to Taling Ngam. It's unique beauty and friendly demeanour welcome all who come to this traditional village and to visit this remarkable temple.

July 1945

While withdrawing from Singapore at the end of World War Two, a Japanese supply warship escorted by two warships was sunk between Taling Ngam village and the five islands. It was bombed by two British aircraft. One bomb landed amidships setting off the magazine resulting in explosions and intense fire – it is thought there were no survivors. The escort warships opened fire resulting in one of the aircraft being shot down near nearby Le Meridien Hotel - the crewman survived. The warship was salvaged from the ocean some years after.

In the mid 1970's backpackers started to come to the island.

In the mid 1980's the airport was finished and tourism started to pick up.

In 2004 international hotel and restaurant chains opened their branches on the island.