activities like visiting attractions in the city and/or sites that don't require too much of physical work.

Temples in Bantey Srei, Bantey Samre and Pre Rup

After installing ourselves at the hotel, we took a little time to refresh ourselves, have lunch and a short rest after that. Our designated guide along with the microbus that we rented for sightseeing came at 2 p.m. The first thing that we did was to buy tickets for our visits to the temples. On way to Angkor Wat from SR city, there is a sprawling place where visitors buy their tickets. We bought what is known as three-day temple passes that contained



The famous Angkor Wat.

our photos. The process was very quick and efficient (reminded me of entry passes that one gets in Manhattan office buildings that contain instant photos of the person entering). These tickets allowed us unlimited entry to all temples in the area during the three days marked on them.

The temples that we visited on the first day afternoon were in the areas called *Bantey Srei, Bantey Samre* and *Pre Rup* – all about an hour's drive from SR. So, by the time we arrived in the first of those, the sun was no longer so scorching, although it was still quite hot and humid. Fortunately, the area was green and the first two did not involve too much of climbing up. The third one (Pre Rup) is the one from which sunset can be viewed; and we had planned our trip in such a way that by the time we arrived there, the sun had already started to go down. Along with hundreds of other tourists, we found our own vantage point and waited for the expected moment and the spectacular sight. And as the sun changed its colour and was about to go down behind the row of trees at the distance, suddenly there was total silence on the temple top – as if everybody was preparing for a solemn occasion. To me, it was not surprising. After all, that is the time of an important transition – from light to darkness, and from period of activity to period of rest. I always like to spend a few moments at such a time in quietness, looking at nature and enjoying the changeover. And I was happy that the crowd's behaviour helped create the right environment.

The second day started with a visit to the most famous of the temples known as Angkor Wat, situated about six km away from SR city. Built by the Hindu king Surya Barman around the 12th century (implying that this is one of the more recent ones, because there are those constructed during the ninth century), it has one central tower surrounded by four smaller ones in four corners (see picture on p.3). The structure is remarkable for its symmetry as well as style. Some of the walls are full of intricate carvings depicting normal life, war, love, gods and goddesses. The western side of the temple has a moat constructed to protect it. To get a perfect view and reflections in water, one has to visit the temple in the afternoon. However, in order to avoid crowd and heat, we visited the temple in the morning and went back for the view against setting sun in the afternoon.

Two kilometres away from Angkor Wat is an area