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Mae Fah Luang Art and Cultural Park, Thailand



The collection of Lanna art on display at the Mae Fah Luang Art and Cultural Park has been collected by the Mae Fah Luang Foundation under Royal Patronage. It represents the finest exhibition and collection of Northern Thai artefacts in Thailand.

The Lanna Kingdom was founded by King Mengrai in the 13th century AD. Based upon alliances between smaller principalities, its strength rested upon trading networks developed between areas of southern China, northern Lao PDR, northern Burma and northern Thailand inhabited by

the Khon Muang, or T'ai speaking peoples, clustered in the towns and villages along the river valleys. In the mid-16th century the kingdom was conquered by the Burmese. In the late 18th century it regained its integrity as a vassal state of Siam, but remained a loose federation of up to 57 principalities or city states. It maintained very close relations with Siam until it was officially annexed in 1892. **The Lanna area in northern Thailand is culturally distinct from the rest of the country.** The arts reflect a cultural heritage that celebrates nature, Buddhism, kinship and commerce as well as a diversity of cultural influences from surrounding areas. Chiang Mai, the former capital, remains the center of the northern Thai community as well as the second most important city in Thailand. **The Collection** The collection was created in the 1980s. At that time, many artifacts from the later Lanna period (18th through early 20th century) were being sold into the antique trade and moved out of northern Thailand. The Directors of the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, wishing to make it possible for northern people to continue a relationship with their material heritage, collected different types of artifacts to mark birth years of HRH The Princess Mother. Collection policy focused upon creating a well balanced representation of sacred and ritual objects which would continue to be used in ceremonial events in Chiang Rai and the north of Thailand, while being exhibited and preserved in context at Rai Mae Fah Luang. For several years, an annual northern Thai ceremony of respect for royalty, the Wai Sa, was held at Rai Mae Fah Luang in honor of HRH The Princess Mother. The Wai Sa Mae Fah Luang was the occasion upon which the newly collected and donated objects would be used in public and then placed in the Haw Kham. The Haw Kham Haw Kham is a northern Thai term for royal residence. The Haw Kham at Rai Mae Fah Luang was donated as a gift from the people of Chiang Rai as a residence for HRH The Princess Mother, patron of the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, in appreciation for her regular presence and concern for the people of Chiang Rai. The Haw Kham was built using wood from 32 wooden structures in the north. A prayer for harmony among the component parts commemorates its construction. HRH consented to allow the Haw Kham to become the first museum of Lanna art in Chiang Rai. It houses the collection of sacred artifacts preserved by the Foundation. Opening Hours: 8am-6pm Closed Mondays Entrance fee: 200 Baht. Copyright to VCM

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