

splendid and  
sacred sites in  
**THAILAND**



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The glorious beauty of Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram or Wat Phra Kaeo as seen from the Ministry of Defence in the twilight. Wat Phra Kaeo was constructed in 1783 in the reign of King Rama I the Great in the Chakri Dynasty. The Ministry of Defence's construction, the building with the European architecture, was completed in 1884 in the reign of King Rama V the Great. In the past, it was used as a military school.





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The Royal Grand Palace has been the residence of the Kings of Thailand (King Rama I the Great up to King Rama V the Great) of the Chakri Dynasty. The architecture of the palace has been designed in harmony with the Occidental and Oriental style.

In 2015, the Palace was ranked third of the “ World’s most visited palaces and castles” by the international news agency CNN’s website, CNN.com.



Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhklaram Ratchaworamahawihan or Wat Pho is a temple of the reign of King Rama I the Great of the Chakri Dynasty. It has the most number of chedis in Thailand, and has 4 chedis of importance known as the Phra Maha Chedi Si Ratchakan (Rama 1-IV), which are large chedis adorned with beautiful glazed tiles.

## Temples, Palaces, Houses in Thailand

The Kingdom of Thailand is a country that is located in the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. It consists of various topography: The North is towering mountains with Doi Inthanon as the highest peak in Thailand (2,565 metres above average sea level); the Northeast is mainly a high plateau; the Central Region is lowland suitable for agriculture; the East has both mountains and sea; the west comprises a mountain range coming down from the North, and the South that is embraced by the sea with mountains, islands, and beautiful sea.

Thailand also has a long history beginning with the establishment of the Sukhothai Kingdom in 1249, which is

considered to be the first kingdom of Thailand and prospered for 120 years. This kingdom, subsequently, initiated exquisite cultural heritage that has been preserved until today. Outstanding features include a sphere-shaped chedi with lotus flowers that is regarded as genuine Sukhothai art that included styles from Buddhism, motifs, that can be found in numerous ancient sites throughout Thailand or a Srivijaya style chedi that was influenced by the Khmer style prasats and flourished in this country before the Sukhothai Kingdom which were modified to be tall and slender as well as decorated with more Thai designs.

Following the Sukhothai Kingdom came the Ayutthaya Era, which was a period of prosperity and relations with the West. Architecture in this era was created by the elaborate craftsmanship of artisans from various branches that is uniquely

Ayutthaya and was modified from the Sukhothai Era and Khmer art styles. Most of the architecture is related to Buddhism, and the outstanding features that can be clearly seen are the curved Buddhist temples, monks residence that were built on water, etc.

The Ayutthaya Kingdom existed for 417 years before declining and entering the Thonburi Kingdom, which was a short period of only 15 years before changing to become the Chakri Dynasty of Rattanakosin in 1782, an era that has continuously prospered up to the present.

The architecture of the Rattanakosin Era is a progression from the Ayutthaya Era and was also influenced by the West. Therefore, there are various attractive temples and palaces of the Rattanakosin Era. In the early part of this era, the architecture

was in the Ayutthaya style, but in the reign of King Rama III, the temples were influenced by the Chinese. Then in the reign of King Rama V the Great, the Western style came to have a role in Thai architecture. As for the present, newly-constructed temples have a combination of the traditional Thai style with the individual concept of the designer that has resulted in architecture that is noticeably interesting.

Furthermore, from the design of temples, palaces and houses of the various eras of Thailand, it can be said that touring to see the ancient sites, temples and palaces in Thailand can be regarded as an opportunity to experience the beauty of various periods of time that will give you a long-lasting impression.



The Prang of Wat Arun Ratchawararam Ratchaworamahawihan or Temple of Dawn is considered as a masterpiece of the early Rattanakosin Era. Its construction began during the reign of King Rama I the Great but was completed in the reign of King Rama III. After that, there was restoration up till the reign of King Rama V the Great. The main feature of the Prang is the short close niches that are distinctively attractive. On the top of the chedi, there is a crown. Besides this, there is a combination of Chinese art, which are the glazed tiles and Benjarong ceramic from China, which is the outstanding art of the reign of King Rama III and decorates the Prang beautifully.

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The Reclining Buddha at Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhlaram Ratchaworamahawihan is the largest reclining Buddha image in Bangkok and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in Thailand. It is 46 metres long, and it has the beautiful Buddha image characteristics of a royal ranking of the country. Its special feature is the overlapping left and right feet that are alike and have 108 auspicious signs on the feet.

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## Bangkok

Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, has existed for more than 230 years and prospered closely with Thailand. In the Rattanakosin Era, the city has numerous temples and palaces, which have exquisite architecture that is inherited artistic traits from the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya Eras that were established before the Rattanakosin Era by hundreds of years. The artisans of the Rattanakosin Era created, modified, and added till their work became the art of the present day. The exquisite beauty of most of the temples and palaces in the ancient times of the Kingdom of Thailand include Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram (Wat Phra Kaeo), the Grand Palace, Wat Arun Ratchawararam Ratchaworamahawihan (Temple of Dawn), Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkharam Ratchaworamahawihan (Temple of the Reclining Buddha), Wat Saket Ratchaworamahawihan (Golden Mount), etc.

Besides this, the East and West styles were intermingled together harmoniously from the relationships with various countries around the world. Not neglecting the gentle beauty of the traditional Thai art style, this resulted in one of the most admirable beautiful places: Wat Benchamabophit Dusitvanaram (Marble Temple), which is an attraction that tourists should not miss.



This viewpoint from the sky displays the existence of “Rattanakosin Island” that is surrounded by the Chao Phraya River to the west and canal (Klong Lot) to the east. It is the centre of government, religion, and culture. The capital city of Thailand is also located on Rattanakosin Island including the Grand Palace that is the residence of the king, Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram or Wat Phra Kaeo, Wat Mahathat that is where the Buddha’s Relics are enshrined and is the residence of the Supreme Patriarch, and Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhklaram Ratchaworamahawihan, which is the first university in Thailand for example.





On the opposite side of Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram is the Ministry of Defence, which originally was a military school constructed in the reign of King Rama V the Great. The architecture is of the neoclassic style.

When the sun is hidden in the sky, the area of the Grand Palace and Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram (right side) is brilliantly stunning with the light decorating it.

Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhklaram Ratchaworamahawihan or Wat Pho was constructed in the Thai style of architecture but is intermingled with Chinese art that can be clearly seen; e.g., adorned with Chinese-style stone doll sculptures that display the Thai-Chinese relations during the reign of King Rama III. The major restoration of Wat Pho of that period was the attractive combination of Chinese art with Thai art.



The gold chedi is a form of artwork that came from the late Ayutthaya Era. It is a decorated chedi comprising a base that has 3 giants. There are 2 gold chedis located nearby Prasat Phra Thep Bidon in Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram.



Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhklaram Ratchaworamahawihan or Wat Pho is a temple of importance in Thailand. Besides its architectural beauty, it conceals historical accounts and legends that relay the impressive intellect; e.g., the stone inscriptions of Wat Pho that have compiled a knowledge base of all sciences etched on the stone and other constructions in the temple. These inscriptions were announced as a Memory of the World by UNESCO Asia in 2008.



Besides the beauty of the European architecture of the Ministry of Defence's building, the area in the front of this building has 40 large cannons that were produced during the late Ayutthaya till the Rattanakosin Eras. It is regarded as an interesting outdoor museum.



Loha Prasat was constructed during the reign of King Rama III and is the only metal castle remaining in the world. Another 2 structures use to be in India and Sri Lanka, but have since collapsed.

Loha Prasat is located in Wat Ratchanatdaram and is a 3-storey structure with 37 metal spires above the windows. The centre of the building has a wooden spiral staircase going to the top of the Prasat, which is where the Buddha's relics are enshrined. At present, the 37 spires are being restored to be covered in gold leaf in accordance with the royal concept of King Nangklao (Rama III), who had the Loha Prasat built, but the king passed away before it was completed.



Loha Prasat is located in Wat Ratchanatdaram and was constructed by King Nangklao (Rama III) of the Chakri Dynasty. There was a royal concept that it would be built instead of the main chedi like at other temples. At present, the entire temple including the 37 spires is being restored to be covered in gold leaf instead of its smoky black colour, which is in accordance with the royal concept of King Rama III. This will be completed by 2017.



Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangklaram Ratchaworamahawihan or Wat Pho is a centre of science and arts of Thai wisdom similar to being the first university of Siam. Its prominent highlight is the Phra Maha Chedi of 4 reigns. The large green chedi is from King Rama I the Great's reign, the yellow chedi is from King Rama II's reign, the reddish-orange chedi is from King Rama III's reign, and the blue (blue mixed with purple) chedi is from King Rama IV's reign.



The sculpture of the deity on the upper part is Nang Apson and the lower part is a lion, one of the attractive sculptures of animals of the Himaphan Forest, which was constructed during the reign of King Rama V the Great. They adorn the front of Prasat Phra Thep Bidon. The gold chedis flank the sides of the Prasat. King Rama I the Great ordered the construction in memory of his royal parents in accordance with the ancient tradition.



*Top Left*  
Phra Si Rattana Chedi is decorated with gold tiles and is a replica of a chedi in Wat Si Sanphet, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya. It has stucco motifs and various species of plants on the walls of the giant images from the Ramakien that are the guardians protecting the entrance.

*Bottom Left*  
The decorative designs on the Phra Chedi Rai, which is a chedi enshrining the ashes of the Royal Family at Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhlaram Ratchaworamahawihan uses bowl tiles coated with enamel that are designs of flowers, and it is considered as a chedi with 12 short angles that is the most beautiful of the Rattanakosin Era.



*Top Right*  
The chedi of 5 kings is located on a single base with the largest one being in the centre. It is called "Phra Chedi Mu Ha Than Dieo" and is found in Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhlaram Ratchaworamahawihan. The chedis contain the Buddha's relics and the 4 niches of the Phra Wihan Khot are decorated with coloured glazed tiles with beautiful designs.

*Bottom Right*  
The roof of Prasat Phra Thep Bidon, Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram is shaped like a 4-tiered tetrahedron. The front facing the south has 5 tiers, and the balcony on the top of the prang has 12 pillars decorated with tiles. The roof, gables, Hong's tail and Naga are also covered with coloured tiles.



The enchanting attractive marble ubosoth of Wat Benchamabophit Dusitwanaram Ratchaworawihan was designed by Prince Narisara Nuwadtivongs, Chief Engineer of Siam. The interior of the temple is divided into a Buddhist temple and Sangha. This temple is considered to have the most outstanding layout of Thailand.



The prang of Wat Arun Ratchawararam Ratchaworamahawihan is an outstanding architectural Thai structure has been developed from ancient Khmer stone castles and is like Mount Meru, the centre of the universe. The prang's shape was developed from the tall Khmer-style fort of the Ayutthaya Era till it became the prang of Wat Arun, which is identified with the real Thai of the Rattanakosin Era.

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## The North

Not only is it a stunning land of undulating mountains, verdant forest, clean waterways, and spectacular caves that are considered as the appealing enchantment for large numbers of people to visit the North, this region is also full of historical heritage starting from the Yonok Chiang Saen Kingdom, which was the first kingdom of the North and had its capital in Chiang Saen (at present it is Amphoe Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai province). This continued onto the Hariphunchai Kingdom that is present-day Lamphun province and then onto the greatest kingdom of the North: Lanna, which had its capital in modern-day Chiang Mai, until the prosperous era of the Sukhothai Kingdom that was a period in which the Thai alphabet was created and was the first time in more than 700 years.

The long history of the North has been passed down in the temples and historical sites that are found throughout the region. Regardless if it is the ancient city of Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai province that has 2 outstanding chedi styles: bell-shaped and castle that have a combination of Sukhothai, Burmese and Chinese art; Wiang Kum Kam, Chiang Mai province that was the first city of the Lanna Kingdom, but fell into ruin because of flooding. When some excavations were done in 1984, numerous ancient Lanna architecture was discovered. Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai, Lamphun province was a chedi built before other chedis of the Lanna Kingdom. It had a square-shaped chedi that was the art style of Hariphunchai, a round based bell-shaped chedi, and a Lanna-style chedi; the Sukhothai Historical Park, Sukhothai province had a chedi with a funnel-like float file that was the feature of the Sukhothai art style that appeared most prominently. All of this is beautiful architecture, especially those that have a valuable story over a long period of time.



Wat Rong Khun also known as the “White Temple” was constructed in 1997 by Achan Chalermchai Kositpipat, a renowned artisan of Chiang Rai province. He restored a small temple in his home city in a new format by using architecture and Buddhist art to be a unique individual style. It is a replica of an imaginative heaven that can be experienced. The ubosoth is where the Buddha image is enshrined, and the temple uses white paint to represent sacredness and white glass to represent wisdom in which this shines brightness between the human world and the universe.

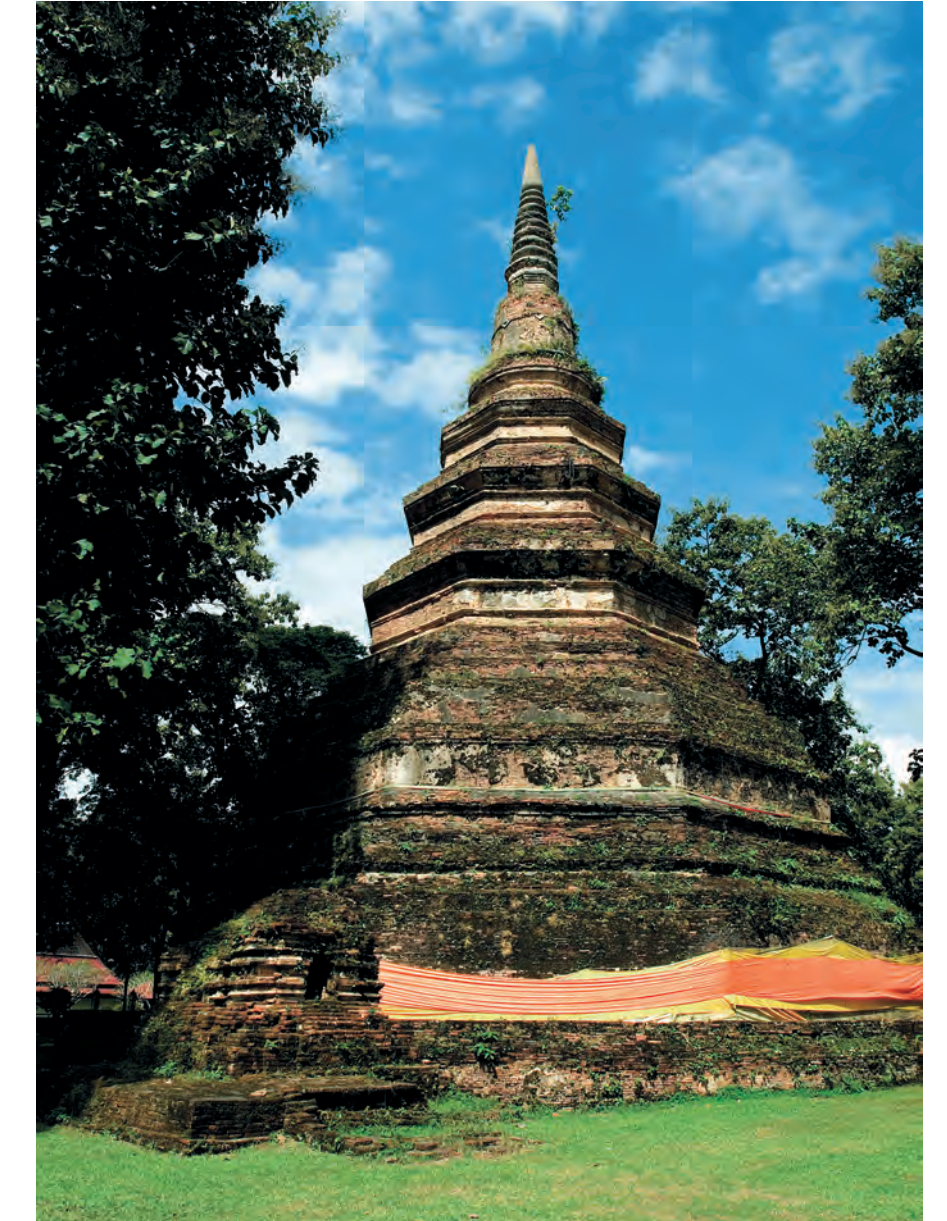




Wat Pa Sak was built by King Saenphu, ruler of the Lanna Kingdom, in 1295 when Chiang Saen was the capital of Lanna. He planted 300 teak trees around the wall; thus, it became known as “Wat Pa Sak”. The temple had importance during Buddhist Lent for the monks of Lanna. The important ancient site is the principal chedi with the prang tip and is decorated with exquisite stucco motifs and contains the Buddha’s relics of the right ankle bone that were brought from Patna, India.



An ancient Buddha image of the Chiang Saen Era, “Luangpho Pha Ngao” was found in the ruins of the plaster base of the large main Buddha image in the image hall of an abandoned temple outside the walls of ancient Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai province. It is an important trace that displays the prosperity that overlapped various eras of Chiang Saen.



The principal chedi of Wat Phrathat Chedi Luang in the centre of Chiang Saen of the Lanna architectural style is the largest and tallest in Chiang Saen. It is 88 metres high and 24 metres wide and built by King Saenphu.



Phra Borommathat Phuttha Nimit Chedi, Wat Phrathat Pha Ngao, Chiang Rai province was built to cover the original principal chedi inside in 1981, as well as celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rattanakosin by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit and Her Royal Highness Princess Sirindhorn, who laid the foundation stone.



Phrathat Doi Tung (the photo is Phrathat Doi Tung that was restored by Khruba Si Wichai. Presently, it has been restored in the original Chiang Saen style by the Fine Arts Department) according to legend was the first phrathat in Lanna and built during the Yonok Nak Phan Era. It enshrines the Buddha's left collarbone. Originally, there was only one chedi but in the reign of King Mangrai another was constructed. Khruba Si Wichai restored it to be a bell-shaped chedi with archways facing the 4 directions (see photo) before the Fine Arts Department restored it to be an octagonal-shaped chedi of the Chiang Saen style as seen at present.



Various Buddha images that are on the forecourt of Chedi Chet Yot, Wat Maha Photharam allow Buddhists to pay homage. Many of the strange-looking images are hard to find elsewhere; e.g., in the photo, the left image is in a sitting posture holding an alms bowl, the central image is in a sitting posture meditating, and the right image is in a sitting posture with the right hand held above the head.



*Right*  
Wat Maha Photharam, Chiang Mai province that was built by King Tilokarat the Great, a ruler of the Lanna Kingdom requested that Siha Khot Senabodi (Moan Dam Pharakhot) to travel to make a copy of the chedi at Bodhgaya and other related items of Buddha images of India to be built here. The Si Maha Phot from India was used as the centre of the temple; thus, Wat Chedi Chet Yot has a special design that is different from Lanna architecture found elsewhere.

*Top Left*  
The important highlight of Chedi Chet Yot is the surrounding outer wall that is decorated with amazing attractive plaster designs of deities and flowers, which is the handiwork of Lanna artisans. This is unlike anywhere else and is also a prototype of Lanna sculptures of deities.

*Bottom Left*  
The pagoda of King Tilokarat the Great is located in the grounds of Wat Maha Photharam, a large Lanna-style chedi that enshrines the ashes of this Lanna king, who built this temple.



Phra Mahathat Naphamethanidon (brown) is located on the peak of Doi Inthanon, Chiang Mai province, the highest mountain in Thailand. The chedi was built to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of His Majesty the King in 1987.

Phra Mahathat Naphaphonphumsiri (Blue) was built next to Naphamethanidon on the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary in 1992.



The sculptures of Phaya Nak, King of the Nagas, are decorated with stucco in the Lanna style in a pair at the foot of the stairs going up to Chedi Luang in all 4 directions. They have a special characteristic in which they are a five-headed Phaya Nak, and each head is decorated with beautiful gems.



The pair of sculptures of Phaya Nak, King of the Nagas, at the foot of the stairs going up to the main image hall of Wat Chedi Luang, Chiang Mai province outstanding feature is the expanded hood of the head. The whipped tail coils back to the arched doorway of the imagehall, and has been recognised as the most beautiful Lanna style Phaya Nak of the North that is the handiwork of artisans.

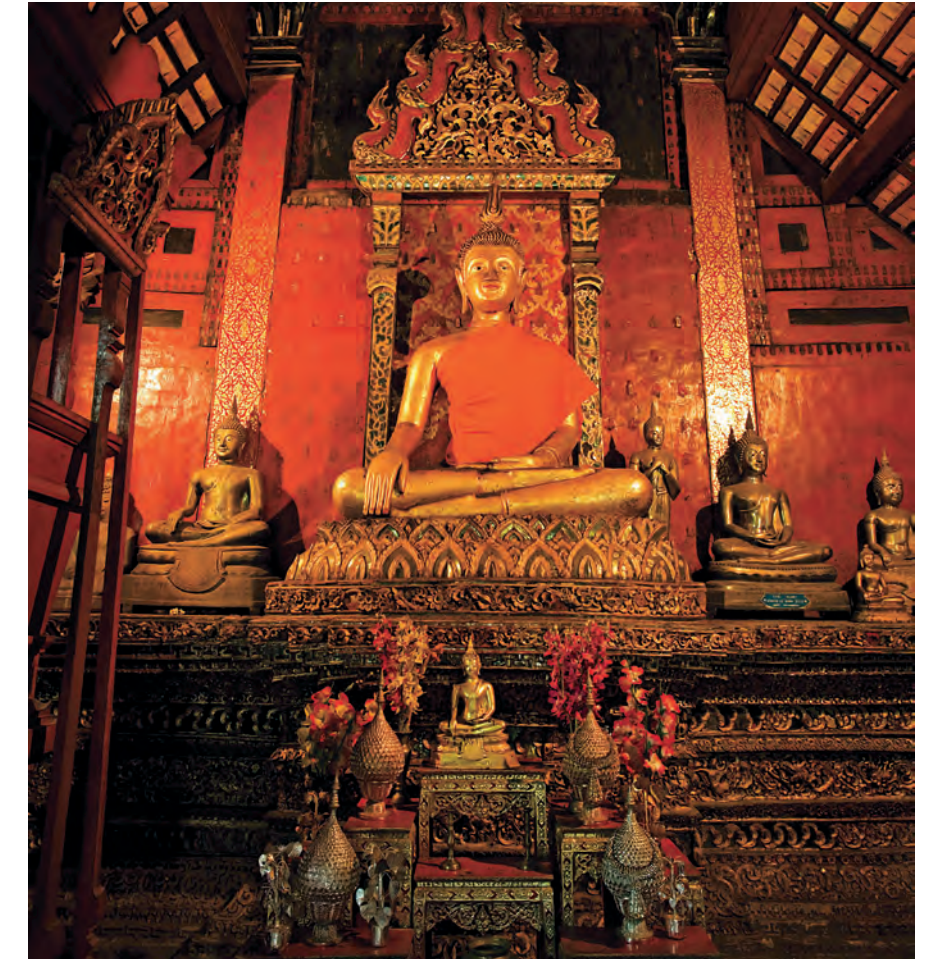


Phrathat Chedi Luang, originally called “Ku Luang”, was the largest chedi of the Lanna Kingdom. The east portico of the chedi housed the Emerald Buddha for 80 years. It was first built as a small chedi by the 7<sup>th</sup> king of the Lanna Kingdom in a square shape in memory of his father, King Kue Na. In the reign of King Tilokarat the Great, the base was expanded to be 56 metres wide and 95 metres high, as well as had statues of elephants around the chedi. Following this, in the reign of Queen Chiraprapha the Great, Chiang Mai experienced a major earthquake and the top of the chedi collapsed as can be seen in its present condition.



The image hall of Wat Inthrawat or Wat Ton Kwen has valuable beauty for its Lanna architecture and art. The structure and architectural materials comprise carved wood from the work of expert artisans. The gables of the image hall are decorated wooden partitions with coloured glass. The arched edges are made of carved wood designs alternating with Naga heads. The column heads are designed with moulded sculptures of deities and flowers. The gables wing has carved Naga's heads in clusters intertwined with gold square cavities to let the air flow. The ridges are carved in wood with a dancing Kinnari at the end of the gable and a swan's tail engraved with a dragon spitting out a Naga. This is one of Lanna's beauty. This image hall has been selected as a prototype of a Royal Pavilion in the Royal Flora Ratchaphruek, Chiang Mai.

The principal Buddha image in the image hall of Wat Ton Kwen. Behind the image is a crystal archway adorned with metal votive casting. There are 2 types: Buddha Bo tree leaves and Nagas arranged together as an archway. On the walls, there appears some traces of mural paintings.



The local tetrahedron-shaped pavilion of Wat Ton Kwen is the only one remaining in the North. The pavilion has porticos extending out on all four sides. The centre has a two-tiered overlapping gable covered with baked clay tiles, and the gable apex has a special feature created by ancient artisans, who designed it so birds could not grasp hold of it. The centre of the back of the roof has a small finial in the Lanna style that is known as Prasat Feuang.



The Royal Pavilion, Royal Park Ratchaphruek, Chiang Mai province is in the Lanna architectural style constructed to commemorate the celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne and His 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary. The upper part of the Pavilion displays exhibitions of the Royal Duties and the lower part has photographs of His Majesty's Coronation and Royal Projects.



The beautiful applied architecture of the Lanna style of Wat Den Sali Si Mueang Kaen or Wat Ban Den, Tambon Inthakhin, Amphoe Mae Taeng, Chiang Mai province in which Khruba Thueang Nathasilo, a renowned teacher of the North brought various beautiful styles of architecture and Lanna sculptures to be applied and integrated in the area of the temple that originally was only the village temple.

The Burmese style stucco art of a lion is a Lanna art when Myanmar (Burma) ruled the area. It is well decorated and follows the staircase upwards in Wat Den Sali Si Mueang Kaen.



The marble Buddha image is one of the images that was produced in abundance with various materials. It is enshrined in various angles of Wat Den Sali Si Mueang Kaen for Buddhists to pay homage in accordance with their belief and faith.





Phrathat Doi Suthep was built in the reign of King Kue Na, the 6<sup>th</sup> ruler of the Lanna Kingdom, to enshrine the Buddha's relics that Phra Sumanathera brought from Sukhothai. The area of the mountain is sacred and is 1,053 metres above average sea level. It used to be the residence of a hermit called "Wasuthep", which is the origin of the name "Doi Suthep". Originally, there was only a phrathat on top of the mountain; no temple or monks.

Phrathat Doi Suthep is in the Chiang Saen style of architecture and is plated with tin sheets that is covered with gold leaf. This is called "Thong Changko" and reflects the glittering gold.



The stucco Naga staircase is decorated with tinted glass from the bottom upwards to Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep. There are 306 steps on the stone staircase and constructed when Phra Yanamongkhon Phothishera, a monk from Lamphun, came to stay during Buddhist Lent at Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep during 1458-1557. Around 1910, it was made into a brick and mortar staircase adorned with seven-headed Naga sculptures on both sides.



Buddhists like to climb the stairs to pay homage to the phrathat by walking clockwise outside the surrounding rampart of the phrathat.



Wihan Lai Kham, That Luang, and ubosoth of Wat Phra Singh Woramahawihan, Chiang Mai province shine brilliantly at dusk with the light. This temple of importance was built in the reign of King Phayu, the 5<sup>th</sup> ruler of the Mangrai Dynasty of the Lanna Kingdom, to pay respect to his father, King Kham Fu.



The stucco designs are the beauty of Wihan Lai Kham. On the northern wall, the murals tell about the story of Songthong, which is the only place in Thailand they can be seen. The southern wall has murals about the story of Suwannahongse. The details of the paintings reflect the way of life of the people of the past, which is interesting.



Wihan Lai Kham houses the Phra Buddha Singh image, or as it is known by the Lanna people "Phra Singh". This image was brought from Sri Lanka, and it is the origin of Wat Phra Singh.



Chedi Wat Phra Sing is a replica modelled on Phrathat Hariphunchai of Lamphun province. The interior has the Buddha's relics that Phra Sumanathera brought from Sri Lanka.



The large chedi of Wat Buppharam was constructed at the same time as Phrathat Doi Suthep to enshrine the Buddha's relics in 2 chedis that Phra Sumanathera brought from Sukhothai.

Wat Buppharam or Wat Suan Dok is a temple in the grounds of the Lanna Kings Royal Park. It was built to be the residence for Buddhist Lent for Phra Sumanathera, a Buddhist master, who came to disseminate Buddhism in Lanna as well as built a chedi to enshrine the Buddha's relics. In the area of the temple is the location of "Ku Chao Nai Fai Nuea" or the Chiang Mai Royal Cemetery, a cluster of white chedis that house the ashes of the royal family of Chiang Mai.



The principal chedi in the Burmese style of Wat Saen Fang is called “Chedi Mongkhon Saen Mahachai”, which was restored from the original Lanna-style chedi during the reign of King Saen Phu. It was restored in the Burmese style of architecture to be like the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar.



The Lanna-style Buddhist chapel integrated with the two-storey Western architecture of Wat Saen Fang was built in 1910 from the faith of Princess Dara Rasmi during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) the Great.



Wat Umong Phaya Mangrai was constructed to be a temple for 5 monks of the Aranwasi Sect (forest monks) who had travelled from Sri Lanka to disseminate Buddhism in Chiang Mai. The chedi that was built modelled on Sri Lankan architecture and had a major restoration during the reign of King Kue Na as well as built the chapel.



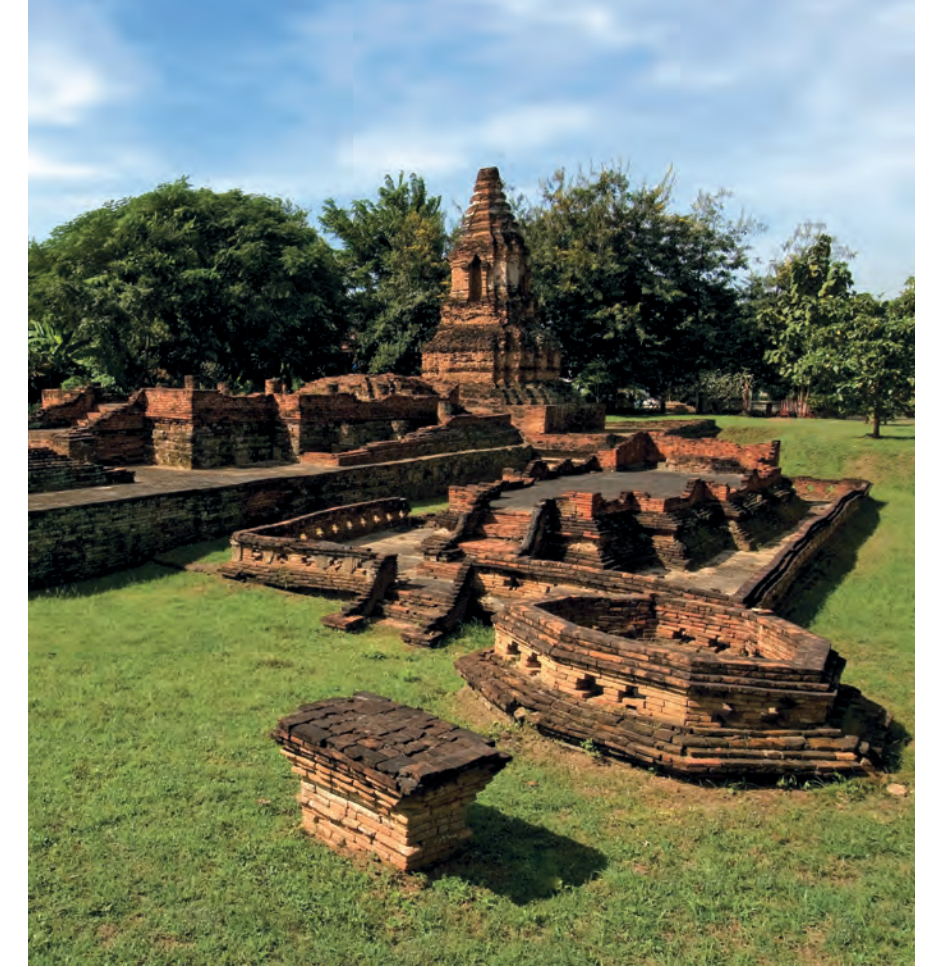
One of the many ancient sites that was found in the area of Wiang Kum Kam, the former capital of the Lanna Kingdom before the establishment of Chiang Mai, at Wat That Khao parts of the principal Buddha image were discovered, which was restored through faith.



Wat Nanchang, an ancient site that was only discovered in 2001 does not have a chedi top, but only the base, surrounding walls and parts of it under 1-2 metres of soil. It maintains a stucco design at the top of the stairs of a dragon spitting a Naga out of its mouth, lion, Hemarat, and qilin, which are in an exquisite condition.



Ku Kham Luang in Wat Chedi Liam of Wiang Kum Kam was modelled on the Suwanchangkot Chedi or Chedi Kukut, which is outstanding architecture of Nakhon Hariphunchai that was annexed as part of the Lanna Kingdom.



Wat Pupia is another temple in Wiang Kum Kam that has a lot of clearly seen traces of architecture, especially the principal chedi of the prasat. It has various elaborate beautiful stucco designs of plants. There are Buddha images enshrined in the area of the 4 archways.



Phra Phuttha Maha Udom Mongkhon Nanthaburi Si Nan was cast on the auspicious occasion of His Majesty the King's 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Birthday Anniversary on 5 December, 1999. It is a 9-metre Buddha image with a head finial made with a total weight of 27 Baht of gold. It is located at Wat Phrathat Khao Noi and is a viewpoint of Nan.



The cruciform Mondop City Pillar of Nan is located in Wat Ming Muang, Nan province. It is decorated with exquisite beautiful stucco designs.

Wat Si Phan Ton was built by King Phan Ton, ruler of Nakhon Nan of the Pukhok Dynasty. The wihan is decorated with enchanting attractive stucco designs and coated with glittering gold. Inside the wihan, there are wall murals of the Buddha's life and the history of Nan.







Phrathat Chae Haeng, an important chedi of Nan, was built on a small hill known as Doi Phu Phiang Chae Haeng by King Khran Mueang, ruler of Nan, in 1348, to enshrine the Buddha's relics that were brought from Sukhothai. It is extremely beautiful in the glistening light of the night.



At first when Phrathat Chae Haeng was built during the reign of King Khran Mueang, it was only 1 wa high, but later it was continually renovated for more than 100 years. At present, the Phrathat is 17 wa high and covered with gold leaf that makes it glisten together with the indigo sky making it look elegant.



The cruciform wihan of Wat Phumin in the centre of Nan has beautiful and unique architecture. It is outstanding because of the construction concept that includes the ubosoth, wihan, and chedi to be together.



The murals inside the wihan of Wat Phumin besides telling about the Jataka tales, hell and heaven in Buddhism, also tell about the life of the ancient people of Nan in detail including the dress, traditions and customs, daily life. This is especially displayed in the “Pu Man Ya Man”, which is a painting of a man and woman talking together. The man’s body is tattooed and the woman is dressed in the local style with beautiful movements and full of life.



The principal Buddha image in the wihan of Wat Phumin is decorated like anywhere else because it is an image with 4 faces facing all 4 doors. The faces look like the face of Chao Chetabut Phrommin, the creator.



Chedi Chang Kham, Wat Luang Klang Wiang, Nan province has Sukhothai style architecture. Its highlight is the base of the chedi that is decorated with half a body of 6 stucco elephants on each side or a total of 24 animals.



Phrathat Cho Hae, an important chedi of Phrae, has Chiang Saen style architecture of an octagon with 12 recesses overlaid with gold. The tiered umbrella top is decorated with an oblation in the Lanna style, and it has an iron fence around the Phrathat. In each direction, there is an archway of a Lanna phrathat decorated with beautiful stucco designs.

Phra Attharot, a standing stucco Buddha image in a blessing posture, is 18 sok tall. It was constructed at the same time as Phra Phuttha Chinnarat and enshrined in Wihan Kao Hong behind Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat, Phitsanulok province.



Phra Phuttha Chinnarat, a Sukhothai style image in the wihan of Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat, Phitsanulok, is considered to be the most beautiful image in Thailand. It was built in the reign of King Lithai, a ruler of the Sukhothai Kingdom, when he travelled to rule Phitsanulok to counter the invasion of the Ayutthaya Kingdom.

Wihan Phra Mueang Kaeo, Lamphun province, is where the body of “Luangpu Khruba Wong” Khruba Chaiya Wongsas, the creator of Phra Mahathat Chedi Si Wiang Chai, is kept.



Phra Mahathat Chedi Si Wiang Chai, Wat Phra Phutthabat Huai Tom, Amphoe Li, Lamphun province, is made of laterite and was constructed as reminder to show clemency to animals by 5 Buddhas and presented to His Majesty the King on the occasion of the Sixtieth Anniversary Celebrations of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Accession to the Throne 2006.



Wat Chong Kham and Wat Chong Klang look beautiful in the evening with the light reflecting off the water of Nong Chong Kham making a dazzling sight.



From the northern direction of Phrathat Doi Kong Mu on top of the mountain to the west of Mae Hong Son, the city and the airport can be seen below.



In the night, Phrathat Doi Kong Mu dazzles with the adorning light splashing onto the 2 beautiful Mon style chedis. The large chedi was created by Chong Tong Su, a Tai Yai merchant, in 1860 to enshrine the relics of Phra Mokkalana that were brought from Myanmar. The small chedi was built by Phraya Singha Natharacha, the first ruler of Mae Hong Son in 1874 and enshrines the relics of Phra Saributr.





The chedi of Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang is to the west.



The naga staircase goes to the south of the chedi of Wat Phra Kaeo Don Tao Suchadaram, Lampang province.



The Buddha image in the wihan of Wat Phra Kaeo Don Tao, Lampang province. The interior of the wihan is decorated with exquisite designs of wood carvings and tinted glass.



Wat Chedi Sao, Lampang province comprises 20 white chedis. According to history, they were built by King Milinda who had a discussion with 2 venerable Buddhist saints and requested for a hair from both saints to enshrine in these 20 chedis.



Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang, Lampang province is where a hair, cheek bone, and throat bone of the Buddha is enshrined. This Lanna chedi was created to be the centre of the universe, which is a replica of Mount Meru.



Wat Chaloem Phrakiet Phra Chomklao Rachanuson, Amphoe Chae Hom, Lampang province has beautiful architecture as shown in the wihan, chedi, and various pavilions. It is established in a prominent order on top of a steep limestone hill surrounded by verdant forested mountains.



Ku Phrachao Lan Thong is a royal chedi enshrining the principal Buddha image of Wat Phrathat Lampang Luang, Lampang province. The interior of the wihan is very spacious and is beautiful Lanna architecture. The chedi has preserved its original state to be one of the most perfect in Thailand.



Suwan Chedi or Pathumwadi Chedi is a square chedi comprising archways with standing Buddha images on all sides in the area of Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai, Lamphun province. It is an outstanding piece of architecture of the Hariphunchai Kingdom constructed by Queen Pathumwadi, consort of King Athitayarat, ruler of Hariphunchai, 4 years after building Phrathat Hariphunchai.



Behind the ancient archway of bricks and mortar that has elaborate designs is the location of the principal wihan of Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai that was rebuilt to replace the old structure that collapsed in a storm in 1923. Inside the wihan over the crystal altar are 3 large stucco Buddha images covered with gold leaf as well as a medium-sized metal Buddha image from the early and middle Chiang Saen Era. These images are very valuable.



After King Athitayarat, ruler of Hariphunchai, first established Phrathat Hariphunchai, it was restored many times. What can be seen at present is the Lanna architecture that came from the Buddhism of Sri Lanka that entered the Lanna Kingdom during the reign of King Tilokarat the Great in 1443.



“Maha Chedi Si Khruba”, the chedi of Wat Phrabat Tak Pha, Amphoe Pa Sang, Lamphun province, has integrated style architecture between Phrathat Doi Suthep at the base and Phrathat Hariphunchai at the top. It has images of the 4 masters of Lamphun: Khruba Phomma, Khruba Pho Peng, Khruba Kham Pira, and Khruba Inthachak that the people of Lamphun highly respect.



Wat Pa Daraphirom, Amphoe Mae Rim, Chiang Mai province. It is categorized as a third class royal temple with a tranquil area, which is suitable for the practice of meditation. The compound of temple is shady and gorgeous applied Lanna architecture can be seen.







The outstanding architecture of Wat Chang Lom is the identity of Sukhothai. The bell-shaped chedi has stucco elephants around the base.



Si Satchanalai Historical Park, Sukhothai province is a large ancient attraction that is in its original state surrounded by the nature of shady groves. Each place has outstanding architecture; e.g., at Wat Chang Lom, the bell-shaped chedi on a high base that has archways decorated with Buddha images and surrounded by large stucco images of elephants; Wat Chedi Chet Thaeo is like a royal cemetery that houses the ashes of the royalty and comprises Sukhothai style architecture with its 10 chedis. Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Mueang Chalieng is a chedi that was influenced by the Khom Kingdom of the Sukhothai Era.



The principal prang of Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Mueang Chalieng in the Si Satchanalai Historical Park was originally in the city centre. It has numerous traces of Khmer art.



Sukhothai Historical Park's or Old Sukhothai City's centre is Wat Mahathat. The chedi has a lotus bud shaped spire, and it is an important feature of Sukhothai architecture and principal of the temple. It is elegant in the middle of the Historical Park amidst an environment of undulating mountains.



Phra Borommathat Nakhon Chum, Kamphaeng Phet province is an ancient chedi of Nakhon Chum of 600 years ago built in the reign of King Lithai of Sukhothai in 1357. Originally, it was a chedi with a lotus bud shaped spire, but later it was renovated by King Taka and Pha Po, a Karen wood merchant. It is a Mon chedi and at present is painted gold.



The laterite stirrup Buddha image in Wat Phra Singh, Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park, Kamphaeng Phet province displays the wisdom in using laterite in architecture and various images overlaid with plaster and decorated with beautiful stucco designs.

Burmese art appears throughout Wat Thai Watthanaram, as it is a temple in Amphoe Mae Sot, Tak province that is on the border of Myanmar.



Chedi Phra Borommthath Ban Tak, Tak province is a replica of the Shwedagon Pagoda of Myanmar.



The interior of Wihan Luang, Wat Phra Borommathat Thung Yang, Uttaradit province has wall murals about Sang Thong that connects with another 2 important places: Wiang Chao Ngo and Bo Namthip that are nearby the temple.



Chedi Phra Borommathat Thung Yang enshrining the Buddha's relics was built in the reign of King Lithai of Sukhothai. Originally, it was a funnel-like float filled chedi before it was restored to be a Burmese style by King Taka. This chedi collapsed due an earthquake in 1901. The new renovation was a bell-shaped chedi as can be seen at present.



The archway of Mueang Lap Lae, Uttaradit province has stucco images telling about the legend of Mueang Lap Lae, a city that you could not lie. These are next to the entrance.

The temple of Luangpho Phuttha Rangsi, a Buddha image, is Sukhothai art. Originally, it was enshrined in the Mondop Phra Phutthabat, Wat Phra Yuen Phutthabat Yukhon, Uttaradit province. It is made of cement and plaster. Later, the mortar cracked and a beautiful bronze Buddha image was discovered, so a chapel was built to house the image.

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## The Northeast (Isan)

From archaeological evidence, there has been human settlement for thousands of years since prehistoric times, as seen from cave and cliff paintings; such as, at Pha Taem. This was the beginning of evidence of ancient civilisations of Thailand like the pottery aged 1,800–5,600 years old at the Ban Chiang Archaeological Site, Udon Thani province that in 1992, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared to be a World Heritage Site. There are also cultural traces of the Dvaravati Era, Khmer culture, Lan Xang culture to the Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin Eras.

In the past, the Northeast had relations with the Lan Xang Kingdom that included all of present-day Lao PDR. with the Mekong River as the boundary. The numerous architectural art that appears in the ancient sites of Isan is the Lan Xang style, which has a unique straight-tipped prathat with lotus petals; such as, Phrathat Phanom, an important ancient site of Nakhon Phanom, Phrathat Si Song Rak of Loei province, etc.

Besides the Lan Xang style that appears in the temples of Isan, there are various other ancient sites in this region. This is a result of in the past this region was a long route going from Angkor Wat in Cambodia connecting to Phimai in Nakhon Ratchasima province, Thailand. There was accommodation for travellers and Khmer-style religious sites built on this route. Important and beautiful stone sanctuaries include Prasat Hin Phimai, Nakhon Ratchasima province as well as Prasat Hin Phanom Rung and Prasat Mueang Tam, Buriram province. These Khmer stone sanctuaries that appear in Thailand have the local art style of Thai artisans intermingled in them and do not look like any of the stone sanctuaries in Cambodia.

Architecture created by the people is not the only thing that Isan has; there are also historical attractions originating from nature. This is sandstone eroded by the wind, water, and sun over thousands of years and looks similar to a mushroom, a Chinese hut and many other items depending on a person's imagination to see this impressive beauty of architecture that is the work of

nature at the Pha Taem National Park, Ubon Ratchathani province. Besides these various sandstone shapes, this national park has a cliff face of history on the bank of the Mekong River. This is the prehistorical coloured paintings aged about 3,000–4,000 years old along the cliff for about more than 100 metres.

The architectural art of Isan is considered to have prominence and differs from the Upper Northeast and the Lower Northeast. This difference has originated from the past 100 hundred years before Thailand became united like it is today.

Prasat Hin Phimai is evidence of the Khmer civilisation. The Prasat is still intact and the largest one of its kind in Thailand. Its structure is a mixture of Brahmanism of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the change in belief to Buddhism in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by the Khmer ruler who was a Buddhist, King Chaiworaman VII. The front of the Prasat faces south, the route of ancient stone castles to Yasodharapura, the capital city of the ancient Khmer Empire.







Prasat Hin Phimai's outstanding principal prang is surrounded by curved porches in accordance with the belief of the centre of the universe. The curved porches and archways are primarily made of red sandstone.



Not only is the construction elaborate, but also the decorative art of Prasat Hin Phimai is beautiful. The sandstone carvings on the lintel tell a story of the Ramakien, which reflects the religious belief that is regarded as the impressive skill of the Khmer artisans in ancient times.



The long Thai-Cambodian border in South Isan appears to have stone castles that is historical evidence reflecting the prosperity of the Khmer Empire of more than 1,000 years ago. Prasat Ta Muean Tot in Surin province is one of the clusters of prasats at Chong Ta Muean. The beauty of this small prang and baray or pool can still be seen in perfect condition.



On top of an extinct volcano of Buri Ram is the location of Prasat Phanom Rung, a pink sandstone castle, attractively decorated and constructed as a dedication to Shiva, the supreme god of Brahmanism. The Prasat reflects the greatness of the ancient Khmer civilisation through various details of the structure and decorations.



The beauty of Prasat Phnom Rung from the pink sandstone that came from a nearby rock source. The meticulousness of each detail like the centre of the universe in accordance with the belief in Brahmanism. The name Phnom Rung comes from Khmer language 'wanam rung' that means great mountain.



The carved designs of the decorations of Prasat Phnom Rung like the image of Nang Apsara or Nang Fa in accordance with the belief of the ancient Khmer artisans beautifully replicate the clothing, dance postures to the art of dancing to future generations.



Not only the immensity of the Prasat, but also the carved designs on the lintel of Prasat Phnom Rung still reflect the meticulousness and strong faith of the Khmer ancestors; e.g., the lintel of the reclining Vishnu.



Clothing, accessories, and way of dressing of Nang Apsara reproduced on the carved sandstone is evidence in the decoration of the stone castles of the ancient 1,000-year-old Khmer Empire. This is also shown in applying Nang Apsara with the dance postures of “Shiva Nataraja”, which is an image of Shiva in accordance with the Brahman belief. It is an attractive combination and interpretation from the past to the present.



Prasat Muang Tam is a Khmer religious site that was constructed during the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries following the route of the ancient stone castles. Its highlight is the principal prang that is surrounded by 4 small prangs as well there is the carved stone designs on the lintel and meticulous decoration.



On top of the cliff of Khao Phanom Dongrak is Pha Mo I Daeng that is also the Thai-Cambodian border in which appears 3 carved images of the Hindu belief. This is the work of artisans of the Khmer Empire that reflects the prosperity of the culture and ancient border area that included Isan (Northeast Thailand) and Cambodia as one for a thousand years.

In the centre of Yasothon, Wat Mahathat Yasothon is a spiritual centre of the people of Isan. In particular, is Phrathat Ananda, an ancient chedi that was built by royal artisans and influenced by the art of Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. The chedi is 25 metres tall and enshrines the relics of Phra Ananda, which are in the centre of the Phrathat. The top has a lotus flower and a special feature of a flower calyx extending out the four sides, which is different from other places.



The images of the lifestyle and faith of the people of Isan clearly appears in the architecture of Phrathat Rueang Rong, Si Sa Ket province. The combination of the cultural art of the local people of 4 ethnic groups of South Isan comprising Lao, Suai, Khmer, and Yoe is seen in the construction of the chedi. The interior is divided into floors telling about the local culture. There is a local museum replicating the Isan lifestyle of the various ethnic groups as well it is surrounded by Dharma stucco work and beautiful sculptures of the Isan lifestyle.



The magnificence of Phrathat Na Dun, an important religious site of Isan, was constructed on top of the ancient archaeological site of Nakhon Champa Si. Excavations discovered various ancient objects that were found to belong to the Dvaravati Era. At present, this important phrathat is like a Buddhist diocese of the people of Isan.



From the beginning that it was an ancient site of Khmer art till the time of the Ayutthaya Era, there has always been overlapping construction at Phrathat Kong Khao Noi. This attractive white chedi has a history linking it with a local story of the people of Yasothon and Isan called "Kong Khao Noi Kha Mae" (The small rice basket that killed mother).



On the bank of the Mekong River at Nong Khai province, Luangpho Phra Sai is enshrined in a spiritual centre of the people of both Thailand and Lao PDR. This is related to a legend from the reign of King Setthathirath and is 1 of 3 important ancient Buddha images of Thailand from the Lan Xang Era comprising Phra Soem, Phra Suk and Phra Sai. At present, Luangpho Phra Sai is regarded as the Buddha image of Nong Khai for its beauty as well as gold. The width of the face is 2 feet 8 inches, and it is highly respected by the people of both banks of the Mekong River.

Sakon Nakhon City got its name as the land of forest meditation, as it was full of austere Buddhist masters and strong faith in Buddhism. At Wat Pa Udom Somphon, Amphoe Phanna Nikhom, there is the museum of Achan Fan Acharo. The peaceful beauty of the museum's building that is shaped like a chedi on a base with three lotus folds. Inside is the life story as well as a display of his possessions. Achan Fan's spirit still exists. As a monk of the Maha Nikaya Sect, he is regarded as an important student of Achan Man Phurithatto, a Buddhist master who is highly respected by the people of Isan.





Besides the beauty of the banks of the Mekong River, the peacefulness in the past was something that developed a group of important Buddhist masters in Isan; e.g., Luangpu Thet Thetrangsi who selected the bank of the Mekong River to perform Vipassana meditation at Wat Hin Mak Peng, Amphoe Si Chiang Mai, Nong Khai province. In addition to the strange-looking rocks by the Mekong, there is a chedi enshrining the ashes of Luangpu Thet as well as a display of his possessions and life story in the shady peaceful area of the temple.



The image of the Buddhist faith has descended on Isan side by side with history. This is not only seen in the architecture in the large cities, but also in caves and mountain forests; e.g., at Wat Phuttha Nimit on Phu Khao, Amphoe Sahatsakhan, Kalasin province, an ancient reclining Buddha image leaning on the left side is etched on the cave wall. It is more than 2 metres long and is the work of ancient artisans. Historians estimate that this may have been a symbol of Makkallana, a chief disciple of the Lord Buddha that ancient artisans created in accordance with their faith.



Besides the beautiful and sacred Phrathat Choeng Chum, the interior of the wihan is where Luangpho Ong Saen, is enshrined. It is a Buddha image that is the spiritual centre of the people of Sakon Nakhon and Isan.

Phrathat Choeng Chum is an ancient chedi that is highly respected by the people of Sakon Nakhon. The beauty of the gold tiered-umbrella top of the Phrathat was created to cover the footprints of 4 Buddhas: Phra Kakusantha, Phra Konakhom, Phra Kassapa, and Phra Kodom or Phra Si Ariyametrei. This was done in accordance with the Buddhist faith.



The antiquity and sacredness of Phrathat Phanom is the thing that reaffirms the faith of the Buddhists along the bank of the Mekong River. The Phrathat was constructed by brick on a square base with the top having carved designs of a Si Maha Phot tree as well as covered with gold and decorated with beautiful gems.



When it is time to pay respect to Phrathat Phanom, the most attractive image is the Buddhists of Nakhon Phanom and the surrounding area who unite together and dress in local clothes to come and pay homage to the Phrathat.



Prasat Ta Muean or Prasat Bai Kreem is the smallest prasat in the cluster of Prasat Ta Muean. It has a porch extending to the long hall and was a rest house for travellers.



Prasat Ta Muean Thom is the largest prasat in the cluster of Prasat Ta Muean. The word "Thom" in Khmer language means large, and it was used for ancient ceremonies. Its beauty is seen in the sandstone carvings in the building as well as it was built on natural rock that the Khmer ancestors believed was sacred and is known as "Sam Ya Phu Siwa Lueng".



The decorative detail of Prasat Sikhoraphum is full of beauty and elaborate talent of the Khmer artisans. The pillars of the door frames on both sides of carved sandstone are of Nang Apsara holding a lotus.



The decorative detail of Prasat Sikhoraphum is full of beauty and elaborate talent of the Khmer artisans. The pillars of the door frames on both sides of carved sandstone are of Nang Apsara holding a lotus.



Prasat Sikhoraphum is a prasat with 5 chedis of brick without mortar on a laterite base. It has a moat on 3 sides and is the best planned ancient stone prasat to study.



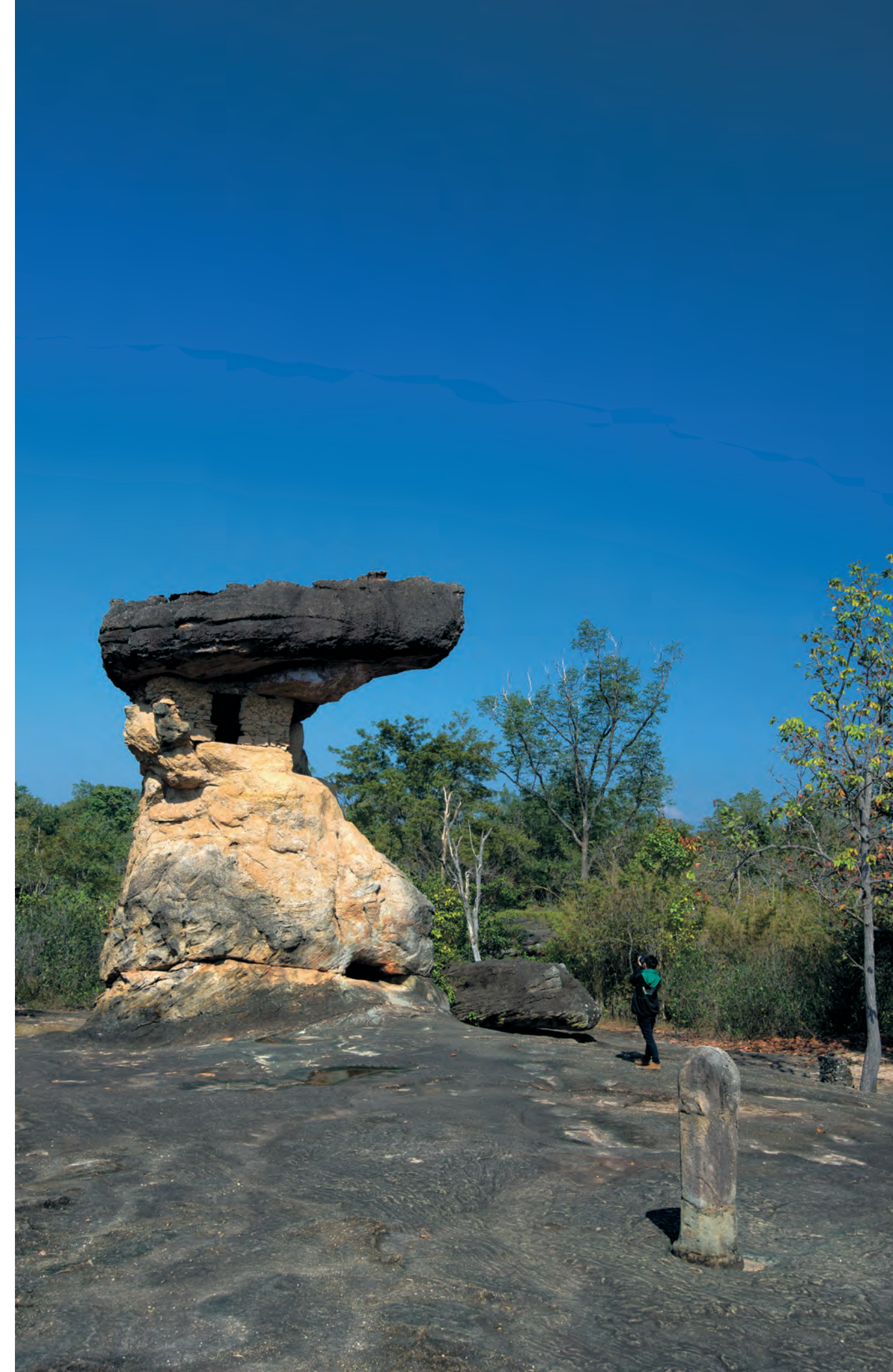
Phrathat Bang Phuan is an ancient chedi on the bank of the Mekong River at Nong Khai by an ancient community that continually prospered throughout various periods. Nong Khai flourished while under the Lan Xang Kingdom till the Ayutthaya Era in which the ancient architecture was restored to be more beautiful. Around the Phrathat, there are ancient sites known as the “seven important sites” in accordance with the Buddhist belief.



Isan is source of valuable civilisation of Thailand, especially at Ban Chiang, Udon Thani province that is archaeological evidence of the early historic period. This was a source of impressive painted striped cord pottery of an ancient community that was established 5,600-1,800 years. It was announced as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1992.



Isan is full of ancient stories about civilisations that display it was a prehistoric land. At Phu Phrabat, Udon Thani province, the ancient Stone Age people had a cultural faith and livelihood that was inherited from the beauty of nature.





From being a prehistory source, the terrain mainly consisted of sandstone. At Phu Phrabat, there was natural erosion from the wind and rain. The area appears to be full of large and small strange-looking rocks that are beautiful and have stories relating to history. From being a prehistory source, the terrain mainly consisted of sandstone. At Phu Phrabat, there was natural erosion from the wind and rain. The area appears to be full of large and small strange-looking rocks that are beautiful and have stories relating to history.



At Amphoe Ban Phue, Udon Thani province, the area is full of many forest temples and Vipassana practicing monks. Wat Pa Phu Kon is a temple built in harmony with the surrounding natural forest and is known as “Phuttha Uthayan” or Buddhist Park amidst an area of 3,000 rai that is peaceful, attractive, and suitable for visitors who want to practice meditation.



The image of the life of the Isan people is reflected through the numerous cultures and traditions. The Bai Si Su Khwan or a blessing ceremony for children, grandchildren and visitors is arranged in a red-orange circle. Wat Chai Si, Khon Kaen province, is a beautiful ancient temple because of its wall murals that is the work of local artisans or as they are known as "Hup Taem". Every detail around the walls, both the interior and exterior, is descended from "Hup Taem" by indigo, yellow, and white colours and tells about the past life of the Buddha as well as the Vessantara Jataka and related stories (Sang Sin Chai), an ancient piece of literature of the local Isan people that is linked together by religion and history.



Songkran is a Buddhist tradition that has been connected to the Thai people for a long time. Phrathat Kham Kaen, Amphoe Nam Phong, Khon Kaen province clearly projects the existence of the old city of Khon Kaen in the architectural art and old legend related to the Maurya King. This replicates the way of life of the Isan people, which is similar to a beautiful image to be admired.





The centre of a prosperous city like Khon Kaen is similar to a progressive centre of Isan. The interior of Wat Nong Waeng reflects the Buddhist faith that has been established and continued for a long time. Phrathat Kaen Nakhon is an attractive ferro-concrete and brick with mortar building. The walls, door panels, and windows on each level are decorated with images of the Buddha's life story, everyday life, and various carvings of exquisite beauty. All 9 levels have various stories including the history of Khon Kaen, the Buddha's relics, as well as a viewpoint where you can see Khon Kaen and the surrounding beauty.





It is stated that Phra Lao Thep Nimit is a spectacular beautiful Buddha image of Isan. The Lao art of the Vientiane artisans has been influenced by Lanna art as shown by the beauty of the face that radiates light up high as well as the proportion of the thighs and feet. It has been a revered Buddha image of Amphoe Phana, Amnat Charoen province for a long time.



Wat Phrathat Nong Bua, Ubon Ratchathani is an attractive detailed Si Maha Pho chedi constructed to display the faith on the occasion that Buddhism came to the country 2,500 years ago. The replica comes from Bodhgaya, India and combines the local Isan art with beautiful decorative designs.



Inside the wihan of Wat Pa Phu Kon, there is a white marble reclining Buddha image. It was designed and carved by leading sculptors, Achan Narit Rattanawimon and Achan Somyot Khamsaeng, and is gently beautiful reflecting emptiness and peace, which is the real core of Buddhism.



The Ho Trai is an area that keeps the Tripitaka or other items of the Buddhist scriptures at Wat Thung Si Mueang, Ubon Ratchathani province. The Ho Trai on the water looks outstandingly majestic with its combined art of Thai, Lao, and Burmese of various proportions including the gables' apex, the tooth like ridges on the sloping edges of the gables, and wooden walls that are full of carved decorations. This attractive Ho Trai received an award of outstanding architecture from HRH Princess Sirindhorn.

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## The Central Region

The Central Region of Thailand is a low-lying flood plain and is considered an area appropriate for agriculture. It is also the area that many people have selected to settle. The geography is appropriate for various occupations as well as protection from enemies. The Ayutthaya Kingdom was one of the magnificent Thai kingdoms and was established in the Central Region. Numerous dedicated artisans came to create the arts of that era as seen in the temples-palaces and came to be known as Ayutthayan art, which is elaborately beautiful. Every day, the exquisiteness of Ayutthayan art can still be seen in various temples; such as, temples in the Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Historical Park that is located on the city island. From a survey, more than 400 ancient temples have been found in an area of 1,810 rai. Outstanding temples that can be easily accessed include Wat Phra Si Sanphet, Wat Na Phra Men, Wat Mahathat, Wat Ratchaburana, and Wihan Phra Mongkhon Bophit. In 1991, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared the Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Historical Park as a World Cultural Heritage Site.

In the past, most communities in the Central Region were located by waterways as these were the main routes for transportation. Numerous important ancient sites were also established by the banks of these waterways, especially along both banks of the Chao Phraya River, which is the major river of the region. It is the location of great temples-palaces; such as, Wat Niwet Thammaprawat and Bang Pa-in Palace in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province and Wat Sothon Woraram Worawihan in Chachoengsao province.

Not only that, before the establishment of the magnificent Ayutthaya Kingdom, in the Central Region, there were the Dvaravati and Lawo Kingdoms. Today, there are still remains of Buddhist architecture of Dvaravati art; such as, Phra Pathom Chedi (old chedi) in Nakhon Pathom province. Regarding important ancient sites of the Lawo Kingdom, there is Prang Sam Yot in Lop Buri and the Si Thep Historical Park in Phetchabun province that displays traces of ancient sites of Khmer and Dvaravati art.

The architecture of the Central Region has different exquisite beauty that has followed the various periods of time, but the historical accounts that have been passed down about these ancient sites have never been forgotten.



Ho Phra Phuttha Sihing Ming Mongkhon Sirinat, Chon Buri province is near the Old Town Hall and enshrines a replica of Phra Phuttha Sihing. It is cast in the actual size in silver. Somdet Phra Ariyavangsagatayana Somdet Phra Sangharaja bestowed the name “Phra Phuttha Sihing Ming Mongkhon Sirinat Phuttha Borisat Rat Kuson Samakkhi Chon Buri Pu Chani Bophit”.

Every year at Songkran, the image will be paraded around the city for the people to bath and pay homage to it.



The Sanctuary of Truth, Chon Buri province is a structure entirely made of carved wood and the largest one of its kind in the world. The top of the Sanctuary has four open porticos, the roof overlaps on all four sides, and the entire structure is decorated with carved wooden sculptures combined with stunning Thai decorations and architecture from the Early Ayutthaya Era to the Rattanakosin Era.



Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom province is an ancient chedi that was assumed to have been built when Asoka the Great sent envoys to initially disseminate Buddhism at Nakhon Pathom in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. The chedi was constructed in the shape of an upside down monk's alms bowl like a chedi in India. When King Mongkut (Rama IV) ordained as a monk, he did a pilgrimage and found the chedi and when he ascended the throne, constructed a new chedi to cover the original chedi. It is 120.45 metres high and is the largest chedi in Thailand.



Phra Mahathat Chedi Phakdi Prakat, Wat Thang Sai, Prachuap Khiri Khan province has been made in the Rattanakosin Thai style of King Rama IX. It was constructed in 1996 to enshrine the Buddha's relics and commemorate the Celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (Golden Jubilee) of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne. The construction concept includes a bot, wihan, and a sermon hall to be together. The height, width, and length is 50 metres each, respectively that refers to the 50 years of reign.



The Chalemongkolasana Residence and Mareeraja Rattabanlang Residence are located in the grounds of Sanam Chandra Palace, Nakhon Pathom. They were constructed during the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) with the inspiration from Chenonceau that is located on the bank of the Cher River, France. They comprise two buildings built to cross the river in which there is a bridge linking the two buildings. They are made in the early Renaissance architectural style and adapted to the climatic conditions of Thailand.

The interior of the Phraya Nakhon Cave is quite spacious and is located on Khao Sam Roi Yot. On the ceiling, there is a shaft that allows bright sunlight to shine down to the cave floor, which is the location of the “Kuha Karuhas Pavilion”, a tetrahedron pavilion built when King Chulalongkorn the Great (Rama V) visited the cave.



Phra Mahathat Chedi Phakdi Prakat, Wat Thang Sai has been built in the Rattanakosin Thai style as a large single building. It comprises 9 chedis, and the large principal chedi enshrines the Buddha’s relics in a movable throne. There are also 8 spherical chedis around the 4 directions. These chedis are elegant and are on an area of 3 rai.



The ubosoth of Wat Kaeo Phichit, Prachin Buri province was constructed in the reign of King Rama V the Great. It is a distinctive building that is the only one of its kind in Thailand, as it has a combination of 4 architectural styles: Thai, Chinese, Western, and Khmer. The plan of the ubosoth, door panels, windows, gable apex, the tooth like ridges on the sloping edges of the gables, and swan’s tails are Thai; the staircase rail, the triangular dragon designs, and roof are Chinese; the Corinthian pillars and the paintings of Westerners around the ubosoth are Western, and the defensive wall and arches are Khmer.





Phra Nakhon Khiri or Khao Wang, Phetchaburi province is a royal palace that King Mongkut (Rama IV) had constructed as a residence on top of a 92-metre-high mountain. Originally, it was called Khao Sumon. The 3 large mountaintops are the location of the throne hall, the palace, and a temple that were built in a Thai architectural style integrated with Chinese architecture, and the cluster of various buildings were built in the Neo-classic style.



Phra Ram Ratchaniwet or Ban Puen Palace, Phetchaburi province is a palace built in the European style that King Chulalongkorn the Great (Rama V) had the objective of constructing it to reside during the rainy season. It emphasises on the simple modern Baroque style integrated with Art Nouveau. It does not have any strange stucco designs like other buildings of the same period, but the height of the windows were increased and in particular the ceiling provides a feeling of elegance.



The stucco designs of Phetchaburi are very strange and are an important art heritage that has been inherited since the Ayutthaya Era. These are decorated in various proportions of the architecture, especially the gables and roof of the wihan of Wat Mahathat Phetchaburi.



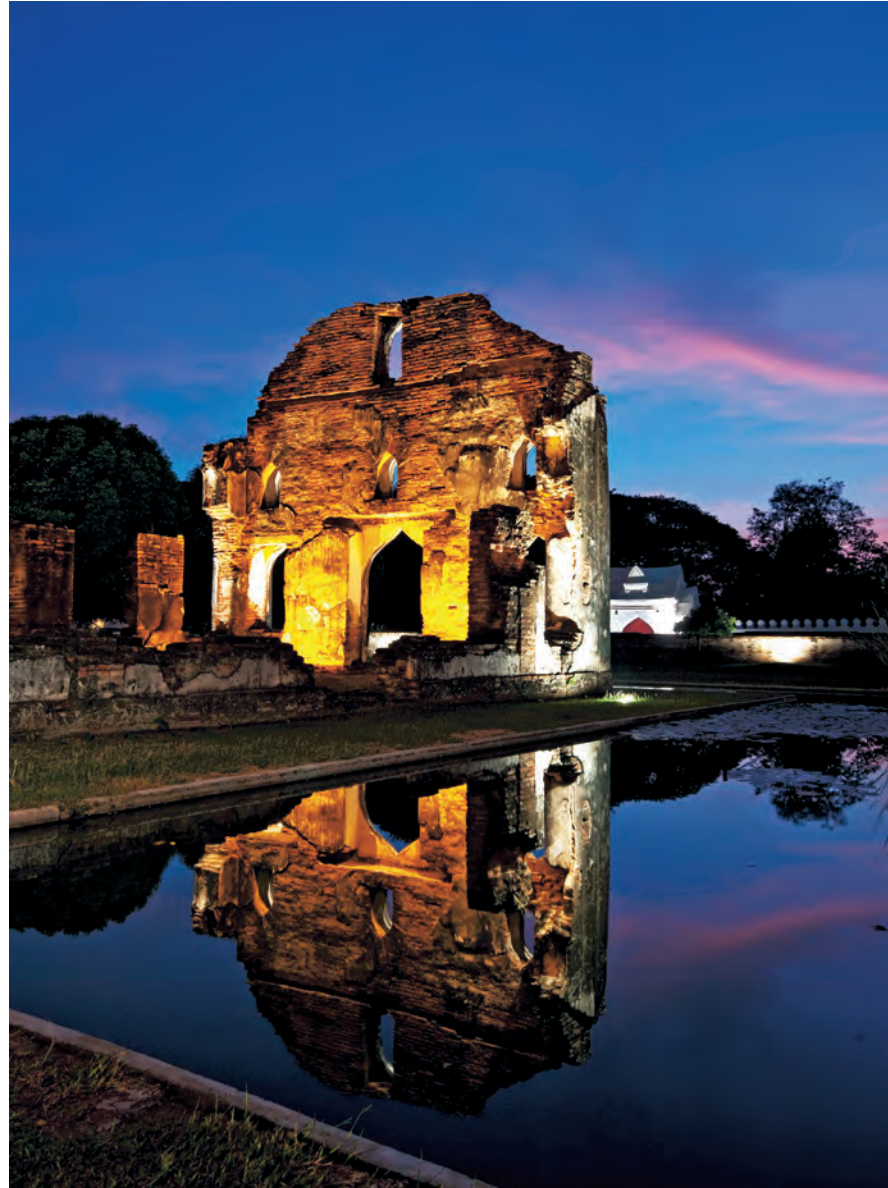
Phra Prang Sam Yot, Lop Buri province is a laterite prasat decorated with stucco in the Bayon architectural style. It was built during the reign of King Chaiworaman VII, as a Buddhist site of the Vajrayana Sect of Lawo or Lop Buri, which was a principality of the ancient Khmer Empire. In the past, it was surrounded by forest in which monkeys came to inhabit in the area of the prasat. After the forest was destroyed, the monkeys remained as can be seen today.



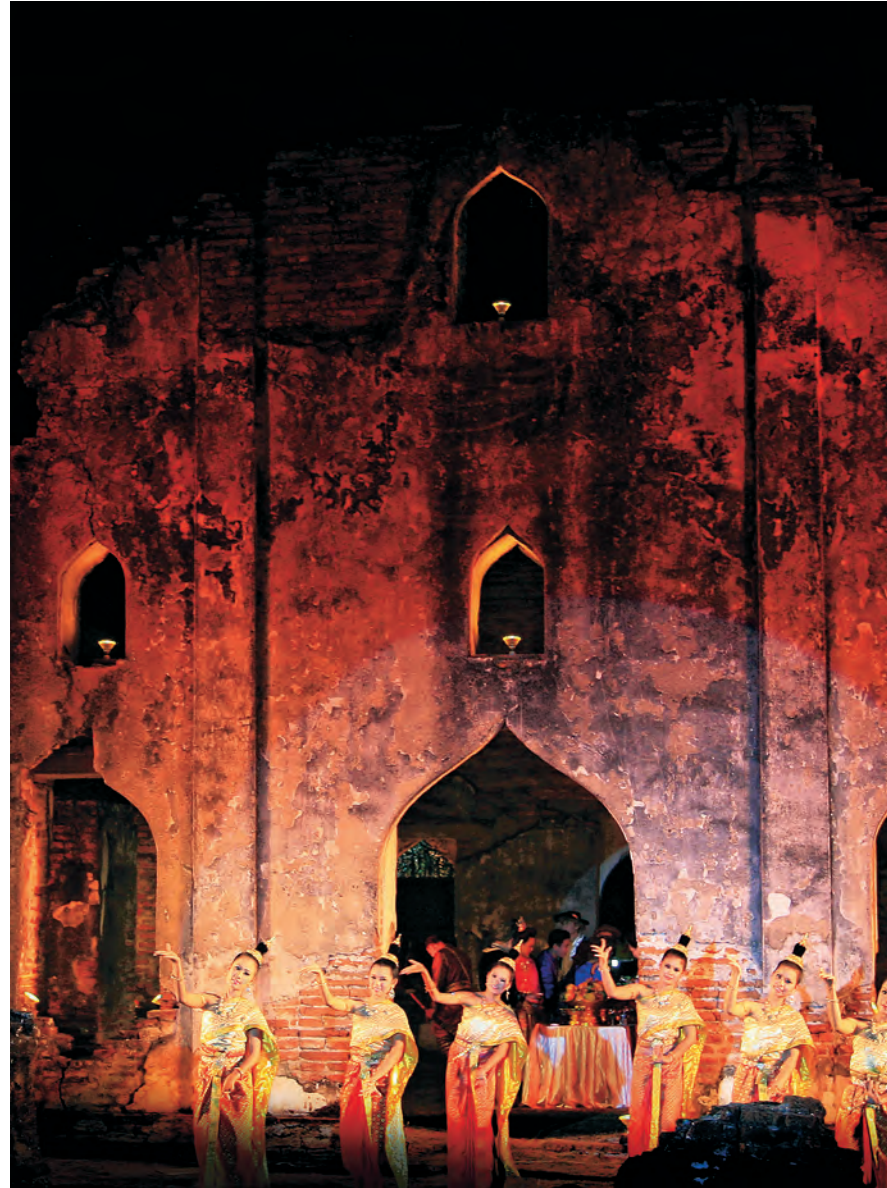
The Lop Buri Dance replicates and applies the costumes and dance postures from the engraved images of Nang Apsara of the Khmer civilisation from numerous ancient prasats.



Phra Narai Ratchaniwet, Lop Buri province was the palace of King Narai the Great of Ayutthaya who had it constructed in 1666. It sits on an area of 41 rai in Lop Buri City, and was used as an administration centre and to welcome state guests. The palace is Thai architecture integrated with luxurious, attractive Western style decorations that it was called the Versailles of the East.



The building for welcoming international delegations or “Ban Luang Rap Ratchathut” was in the outer palace grounds of Phra Narai Ratchaniwet. It was a place for welcoming international delegations, and is located in the centre of the square garden surrounded by a moat with 20 beautifully arranged fountains.



The light and sound performance replicates the past atmosphere in the King Narai Reign Fair in the area of the reception hall.



*Left and Right*  
The condition of the structure of the building that welcomed international diplomatic corps after many hundreds of years had passed.



*Top*  
Chanthara Phisan Hall of Thai architecture was used as an audience hall of King Narai the Great and as an administration centre. After it was abandoned, the Hall was in a state of ruin until King Mongkut (Rama IV) restored it to be the condition as can be seen at present.

Phra Samut Chedi, Samut Prakan province was originally a 12-sided chedi. King Mongkut (Rama IV) restored the chedi to be a bell shape.



Sala Atikowith Wuthikhun, Wat Bang Phli Yai Klang or Wat Phra Non has the largest reclining Buddha image of Samut Prakan province. It also has a statue of the former abbot.



Phra Samut Chedi, Samut Prakan province was constructed by King Phutthaloetla Naphalai (Rama II) together with 6 forts in the area of the mouth of the Chao Phraya River. It is a square chedi with 12 niches on a sand dune in the water. The interior has the Buddha's relics, and it was completed in the reign of King Rama III. Following this, thieves stole the Buddha's relics. King Mongkut (Rama IV) had artisans transfer a round bell-shaped chedi of Ayutthaya be constructed over the original chedi. After that, 12 Buddha's relics from the Grand Palace were enshrined. Later, around the shallow chedi was connected to the mainland as seen today in which it is no longer in the middle of the water.



The King Phutthaloetla Naphalai Museum in the Rama II Memorial Park, Samut Songkhram province comprises 5 Thai houses covering 600 square metres. They display accounts of ethnology and ancient objects that demonstrate the culture, existence, and way of life of the Thai people in the Early Rattanakosin Era.



The bot covered by the Bo tree at Wat Bang Kung is in a Thai naval camp. In the late Ayutthaya Era, King Boromaracha V had the navy establish a camp at Bang Kung called "Bang Kung Camp". They made a fort around Wat Bang Kung to be spiritual support for the troops. After the fall of Ayutthaya, it was abandoned for more than 200 years. The large roots of the Bo tree covered the ubosoth. The interior has amazing beauty.



Luangpho Bot Noi or Luangpho Ninmani, the principal Buddha image of Wat Bang Kung, Samut Songkhram province is enshrined in the bot covered by the Bo tree in which the interior still has traces of wall murals of the late Ayutthaya Era about the Buddha's life.

The Mondop of Phra Phutthabat, Saraburi province was built to cover the Buddha's footprint that is engraved on a rock on the shoulder of Khao Suwan Banphot or Khao Sattaphan Khiri. It was found by Nai Phranbun. King Songtham, ruler of Ayutthaya, said that it is a Buddha's footprint in accordance with the 108 auspicious signs, so he constructed a Mondop to cover it.



Inside the Mondop is enshrined a Buddha's footprint that is 21 inches wide, 60 inches long, and 11 inches in depth.



The top of the square shaped Mondop has a 7-tiered prasat finial. Every archway of the gable is decorated with green glazed tiles. The short pillars have 12 niches covered with gold leaf and decorated with glass around it. The exterior wall is covered with gold leaf and decorated with glass as mountain deities alternating with funnel-like float fill designs. The door panels are decorated with the excellent pearl artwork of Thailand. The interior floor is covered with interwoven silver mats. The way up to the Mondop is a staircase with 3 Nagas. The head of the Nagas at the foot of the staircase is bronze and gold, and each Naga refers to the silver staircase, gold staircase, and glass staircase that descends down from heaven.



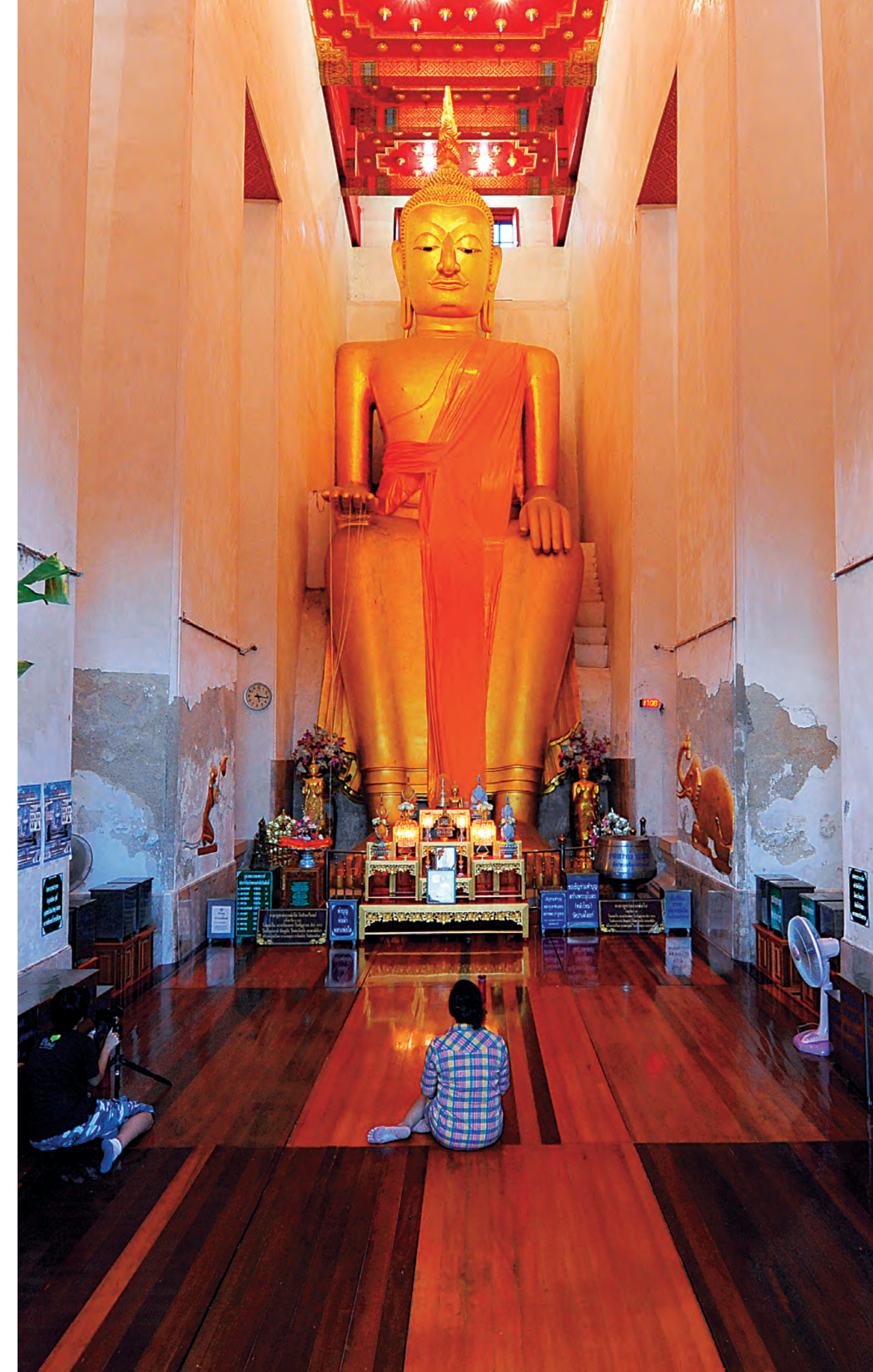


Phra Non Chaksi, Sing Buri province was built before Ayutthaya was a capital city. Inside the wihan is enshrined a large reclining Buddha image of the Sukhothai art style that is 47 metres long.



Buddhists travel to pay homage and perform ceremonies for auspiciousness in the Wihan Phra Non Chaksi, Sing Buri province.

The large ancient Buddha image of stucco covered with gold leaf of the U-thong style is 23 metres high and is enshrined in Wat Pa Lelai, Suphan Buri province. Originally, it was a Buddha image offering the first sermon sitting in the forest, but both arms have been broken and disappeared. Later, the people restored the image and modified the area to be a forest and built a wihan to cover the image.



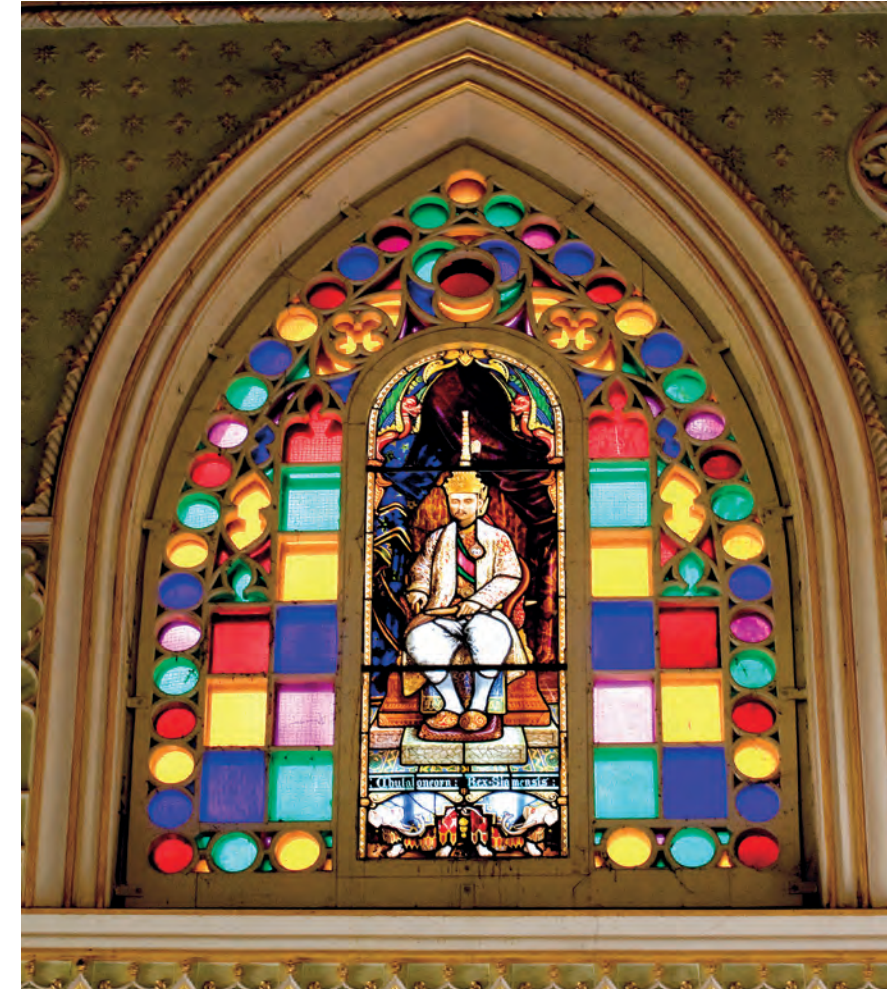


Wat Chai Watthanaram, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province is a form of architecture that received inspiration from Angkor Wat in Cambodia. However, it has a modified shape in accordance with the materials and method of construction of the Thais till the temple had its own architectural distinctiveness. It is located on the outer west bank of the Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya City Island. In the evening, it is extremely beautiful and colourful with the final rays of light from the sky.

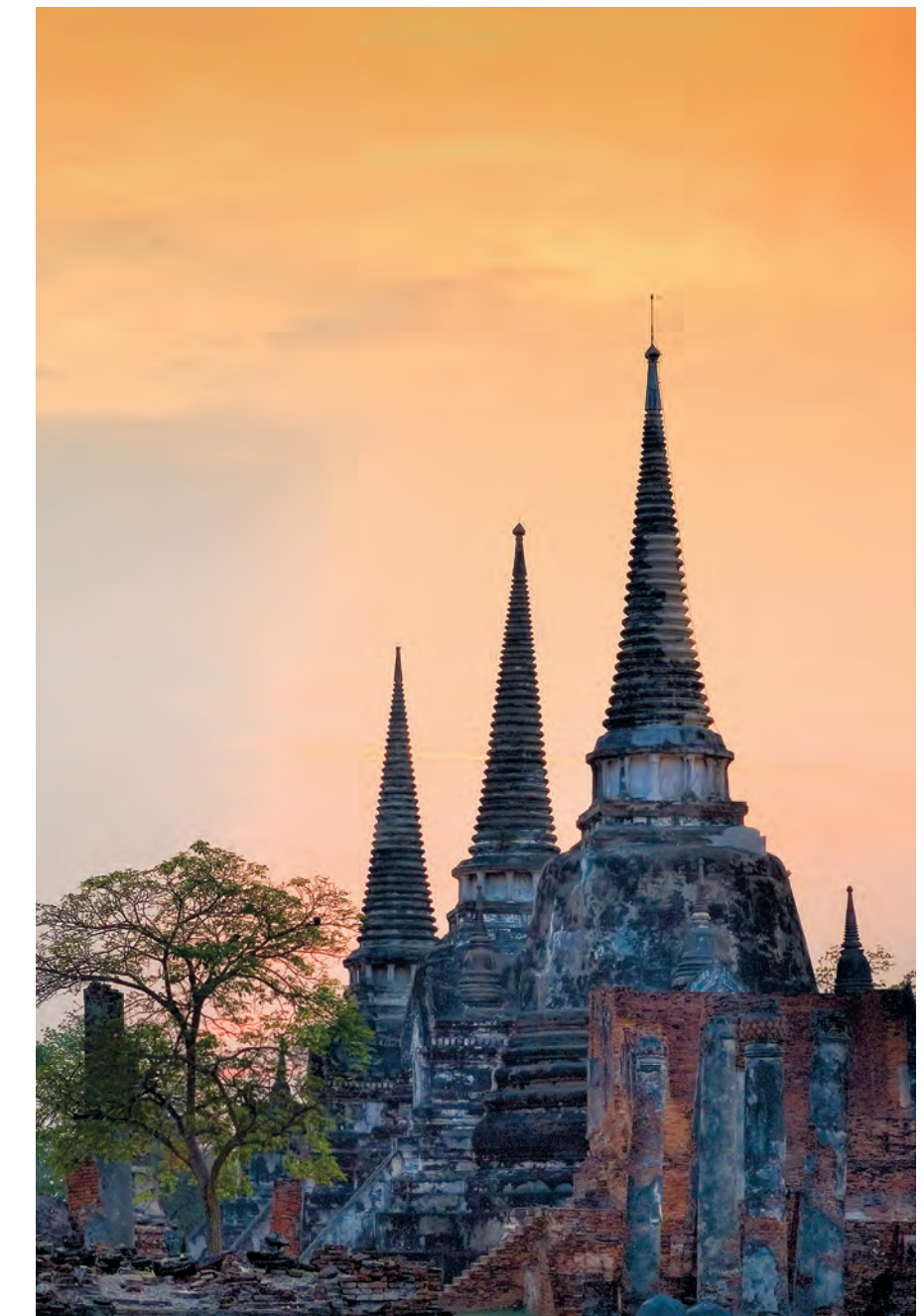


The front of the temple appears to have traces of a large ubosoth base. In the interior are enshrined 3 sandstone Buddha images on a high plaster base arranged in tiers. Also flanking the front of the ubosoth are 2 chedis with 12 recesses.

King Prasat Thong of Ayutthaya established Wat Chai Watthanaram in the year that he ascended the throne in the area that his mother's residence once was. It is the main temple of his reign.



Wat Niwet Thammaprawat, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province was constructed by King Chulalongkorn the Great (Rama V) in the Neo-Gothic architectural style. The interior is decorated in the international style as well it has various utensils. Even though the base enshrines Phra Phuttha Naruemon Thammophat, the principal image, and his followers that could not be on a plaster base like other temples, it has been made like an archway for setting up a cross in a Christian church. The windows are curved and decorated with beautiful stained glass. On the walls in the front of the principal Buddha image is an image of King Rama V the Great created in the stained glass.



Wat Phra Si Sanphet, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province can be compared to Wat Si Rattana Satsadaram in the Grand Palace in Bangkok, which is specifically a Buddhist shrine with no residing monks. It was used for conducting important royal ceremonies. The wihan of the temple is where Phra Si Sanphetchadayan, a standing Buddha image 16 metres high coated with gold, was enshrined. The weight of the image was approximately 171 kilogrammes, and when the Burmese ransacked the city, they melted all the gold. All that remains are the round pillars in the large chedi at Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhklaram Ratchaworamahawihan.



The chedi of Wat Mahathat has archways with Buddha images enshrined around it and is regarded as the only temple with this kind of architecture.



*Top Left*  
On the edge of the wall of the wihan at the front of the temple is a sandstone Buddha's head image of the reign of King U-thong that has become wrapped by tree roots over a long period of time.

The principal prang of Wat Mahathat has been restored in many eras over hundreds of years till finally, the original structure could not hold the weight and collapsed leaving only the base remaining.

Wat Mahathat, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province was constructed in the reign of Khun Luang Pha Ngua. According to an ancient custom, there had to be a temple that enshrined the Buddha's relics as the centre of the city and also the hall of the Supreme Patriarch of the Khamawasi Sect.



Wat Ratchaburana is an ancient temple built during the Early Ayutthaya Era of the reign of King Samphraya. In the centre of the temple is a Thai style prang that is admired for its high base. The front of the prang has a large portico extending out like a booth. The top tapers into a high tip like a corn pod that has a nine-tiered stupa. Under the prang of this temple is where you could see numerous beautiful royal objects and art made of gold. At present, they have been kept in the Samphraya National Museum.



Phra Mongkhon Bophit, an ancient Buddha image consisting of brick lined with bronze of the Early Ayutthaya Era art was constructed around 1538. Initially, it was enshrined in the open air. In the reign of King Songtham, it was moved from the east to the west, and a Mondop was built to house the image. Later, a thunderbolt made it collapse and it was restored as a wihan. After the fall of Ayutthaya, the image and wihan were abandoned and they fell into ruin till 1957 when the government of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram restored them again on the occasion of 2500<sup>th</sup> year of the Buddhist Era.



Wihan Mongkhon Bophit at present has been restored on top of the ruins of the original Wihan.





The reclining Buddha of Wat Khun Inthapramun is a Buddha image of the Ayutthaya Era that is 50 metres long. It is the second longest reclining Buddha in Thailand after the image at Wat Bang Phli Yai Klang, Samut Prakan province that is 53 metres long.



Phra Phuttha Maha Nawamin Sakkayamuni Si Wiset Chai Chan or “Luangpho Yai” at Wat Muang, Ang Thong province is the tallest statue in Thailand and the ninth tallest in the world. Its height from the base is 95 metres and took 16 years to construct from 1991-2007, as a royal donation for His Majesty the King.



Wat Ubosatharam or Wat Bot Manorom is located on the bank of the Sakaekrang River in the centre of Uthai Thani City. Its beauty is seen in the architecture of the bot, wihan in which the interior has wall murals, chedi of three eras, octagonal Mondop, and Bot Nam, which welcomed King Chulalongkorn the Great (Rama V) in 1906.



The Tak Bat Thewo Tradition, Wat Sangkat Rattanakhiri, Uthai Thani replicates the incident in the Buddha's life when he descended from Daowadueng Heaven to Earth after assisting his mother during Ok Phansa (End of Buddhist Lent). Buddhist monks walk down from the top of the mountain to accept food offerings from Buddhists.



The entire Wihan Kaeo, Wat Chan Tharam or Wat Tha Sung, Uthai Thani is exquisitely decorated with glass that reflects the brilliant light.

Splendid and  
Sacred Sites in  
**THAILAND**



## The South

The South of Thailand is a narrow peninsula on two sides of the sea. The eastern coast connects to the Pacific Ocean whereas the west connects to the Andaman Sea. The South has coastal cities that have been visited by shipping since ancient times. It is also the location of receiving civilisation from various countries including religious influences and cultural art from India and China. Ancient sites in Southern Thailand have outstanding uniqueness and are distinctly noticeable, especially the chedis that have a square base and built in tiers to the top to be an octagonal chedi in accordance with the Srivijaya Era art style. This was a prosperous period of the South since ancient times before the demarcation of the country to become Thailand about more than 100 hundred years ago. Ancient sites of Srivijaya art that appear in the South include Phra Borommathat Chaiya, Surat Thani province that is considered to be the only place of Srivijaya architecture in Thailand that is still in good condition.

Besides Srivijaya architecture, there is also Langka-style architecture that is easily noticeable in which the chedi is an upside-down bell shape; such as, the principal chedi of Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan, Nakhon Si Thammarat that is regarded as one the most important places of worship in the South.

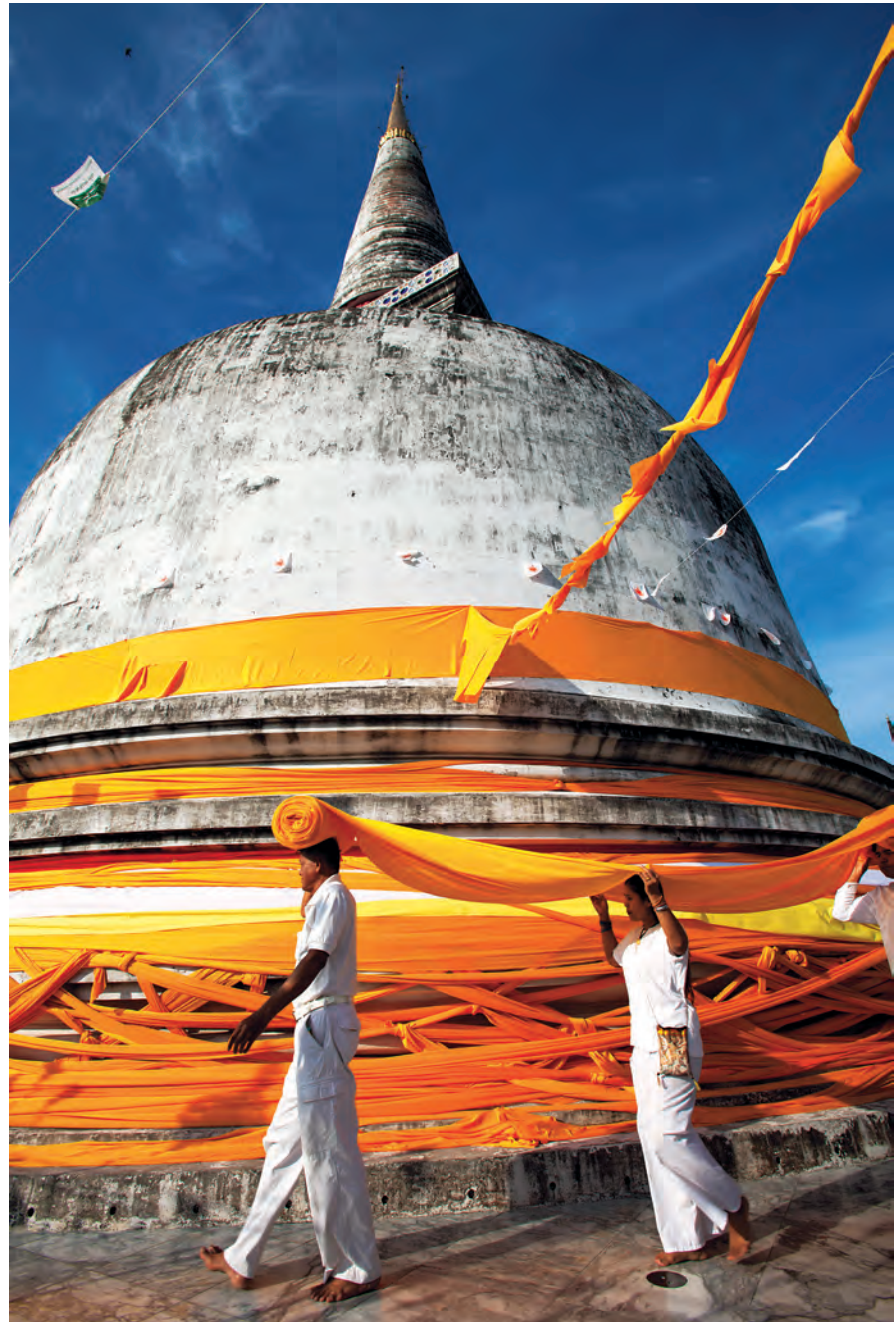
In addition, the geographical feature of the South is a peninsula extending out into the sea with the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea on both sides. This made it a rest point for international mariners in the past. For only this reason, the South has received architectural art from various countries, especially from Indonesia, Malaysia, and China passed down from ancient times. As such, there have been influences in the construction of important religious buildings; such as, the Krue Se Mosque, Pattani province that is more than 400 years old and was built in accordance with the Middle Eastern architectural style. The Pattani Central Mosque is a beautiful mosque and the largest in Thailand built more than 60 years ago with a mixture of the Western and Indian architectural styles to be a very exquisite mosque.

Not only important religious sites are found in the South, there are also clearly seen designs from trading with foreigners in ancient times, which is the Colonial style of architecture from Penang, Malaysia that built houses and shophouses in the old city of Amphoe Mueang Phuket.

Travelling to see ancient sites and communities in the South does not only include seeing the beauty of the places, but also includes knowing more about the interesting history.

Nakhon Si Thammarat city is an important Buddhist city of the South, and has been a learning and dissemination centre of Buddhist Dharma since ancient times under the name "Mueang Tambralinga". Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan's outstanding feature is the image of Phra Mahathat Mueang Nakhon, which dates back to the founding of the city around 311. It has Srivijaya art and has been continuously restored. It appears to be a Sri Lanka style religious site and is surrounded by many chedis and various ancient sites from numerous eras within the temple's grounds.





Not only the construction, but also the tradition of the procession bearing a religious cloth to wrap around the chedi by the people of Nakhon Si Thammarat and the South on Makha Bucha Day, which reflects the Buddhist faith of the people.

If looking down from the sky, you will see Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan being the centre of the ancient city amidst the growth of Nakhon Si Thammarat city. However, the outstanding beauty of the image of Phra Mahathat Mueang Nakhon is the symbol of the existence of a Buddhist city of the people of Nakhon, and Wat Phra Borommathat Woramahawihan has been declared as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO.





The tip of the Southern Thai border appears to have the cultural image of two countries: Thailand and Malaysia. One of the items is Wat Chon Thara Singh, Narathiwat province, or as people know it as “Wat Phitak Phaendin Thai”. This comes from the time when the British ruled Melayu as a colony and wanted to claim Narathiwat under its rule. However, Thailand used the justification of the Buddhist art and faith of Wat Chon Thara Singh to be used in the negotiation of being a Buddhist area in which the British agreed for Narathiwat to remain as part of Thailand.



In the grounds of Wat Chon Thara Singh, there is the beauty of the various architecture in which the most outstanding and valued is the Sala Dharma that is a combination of local Southern and Chinese art. This reflects the long links of the local people and Melayu.



In the large area of 142 rai on this mountain in Amphoe Ra-ngae, Narathiwat province, Wat Khao Kong, Phra Phuttha Taksin Ming Mongkhon is the representative of the peace of Buddhism. This is a massive golden Buddha image that is 24 metres tall and its beauty comes from the Southern Indian art. The image is highly respected by local Southern Buddhists.



The harmony of the Thai people of the Lower South that has been known as the domicile of the Thai Muslims for a long time is seen in the Wadi Al-Hussein Mosque, a spiritual centre of the Muslim people of Ban Talo Manao, Narathiwat province, a small village. Besides being a production source of the Koran that is written by hand on beautiful paper, this is also the location of an ancient mosque with a combination of Southern Thai art and Chinese decoration including carved wooden leaf and floral designs on this wooden building of 300 years old.





The spectacular Western artwork is the main feature of the Central Mosque, Pattani province. This replicates the remarkable culture and faith of the Thai Muslims in the Southern border area. The beautiful large dome and satellite domes in all four directions are reflected in the pool at the front, and it is said that this old mosque since 1954 is very similar to the Taj Mahal of India.



From the old photograph of the Krue Se Mosque, Pattani province, the roof's construction of Gothic art is still incomplete. However, this important mosque of Pattani of more than 200 years old is designed in Muslim architecture that is related to the creation between Lim To Khiam, a Chinese man who turned to the Islam religion and Lim Ko Niao, a shrine that is worshipped by the Thai-Chinese people of Pattani.



Even though the architectural base is still incomplete, the historical evidence of the construction of the Krue Se Mosque is still valuable. Starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century that includes the Ayutthaya Era, the Fine Arts Department, which oversees Thai archaeology and history, registered this mosque as an important ancient site in 1935.



The reflection of faith of the Muslim people of the Central Mosque, Pattani province is purely attractive. If you are a female, then the area for praying is separated from that for men. It is very peaceful in the time of evening prayers amidst the artwork of this luxurious building.



Most people are absorbed in paying homage to Somdet Phatkho, a Buddhist master or as people know him as “Luangpho Thuat” in which there is a legend of him treading on the sea. This reflects the sacredness of Somdet Phato amidst the area of a beautifully constructed temple.



With the integrated beauty of the belief in Buddhism by the Thai Buddhists of Pattani province, Wat Chang Hai seems stunning with its ancient chedi of mixed art from various periods.



A city that is a rice port of the South like Phatthalung province is full of beautiful antiquities to visit. One of these is Wang Kao-Wang Mai, ancient palaces of the ruler of Phatthalung both the old and new, which are located at the same place. This oldness reflects the existence of this large city of importance of the South. Wang Kao is the art of a cluster of ancient Thai houses built since the early Rattanakosin Era while Wang Mai was also constructed as a group of Thai houses. There are 5 buildings with the original designs and developed to be more attractive and stronger. From being the property of the Chantharotchanawong Family, Wang Kao-Wang Mai has become a national heritage in which the Fine Arts Department registered them as an ancient site in 1983.



Following the cave in the mountain forest in Southern Thailand, there appears to be endless archaeological evidence. Wat Khuha Pimuk, Yala province is a clear reflection of having been a source of conducting ceremonies by ancient humans of the prehistoric era till the beginning of the historic period in which there was the belief in Buddhism. The ancient reclining Buddha image that was built by bamboo and clay dates back to 757, which is equivalent to the Srivijaya art period that originally began and spread in the South.



The top of Khao Tang Kuan of Songkhla is the location of a chedi and is evidence of the history of ancient Songkhla. This ancient chedi on top of this hill had a major restoration in the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV) of Rattanakosin in 1866. It is pure white and the top is decorated beautifully with gold.

Songkhla is an ancient city on the coast of the Gulf of Thailand. From evidence, the city was established and moved many times, but what appears most beautiful is the remaining complete antiquities. Khao Tang Kuan is the most interesting place.

The top of the hill is full of ancient structures and sites from various periods. The most outstanding highlight is the Red Wihan, a Western style building built by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) the Great of Rattanakosin. At present, it is viewpoint of the extensive sea and Songkhla city from a high beautiful angle.



The beauty of a small peaceful city like Songkhla not only includes walking among the old buildings of the city, but also the Songkhla National Museum that tells about the prosperity of this ancient city of being a seaport of the past. The trade between the merchants and the wealthy Chinese who helped to develop the city can be seen in the buildings as well as the ancient objects here that also integrated Chinese art.



The building of the museum of applied European art mixed with Chinese art is extremely stunning including the structure and decoration; e.g., the carved wooden accordion doors are decorated with various species of plants. The interior displays numerous ancient and valuable objects that tell about Songkhla to tourists in various aspects.



Islam is another ancient religion that has been close to the Thai people, especially the Thai Muslims of the South. On the top of the hill in the Hat Yai Municipal Public Park, Songkhla province is the Dinul Islam Mosque. The highlight is the spectacular structure built in the traditional Muslim art style, which originated in the Middle East. The central dome is decorated in gold; the archways are also decorated and is open for worshippers. This is the place to also see an excellent view of the city. At present, not only local Muslims, but also tourists come to see this mosque that is known as the "Taj Mahal of Thailand".

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