

TAVARAVADI PERIOD - HARIPUNCHAI KINGDOM (DVARAVATI) BE 1172 -1835

MAP



HISTORY

Haripuñjaya (Thai: ھرึภุญชัย RTGS: Hariphunchai, also spelled Haribhuñjaya) emerged as a prominent Mon kingdom in Northern Thailand, thriving from the 12th or 14th century BE until the 19th century BE. Its epicentre, Lamphun, shared the same name as the kingdom during its heyday. In a pivotal turn of events in 1292, the Tai kingdom of Lan Na, under the leadership of Mangrai, laid siege to and successfully captured the city.

Legend, as recounted in the Camadevivamsa and "Jinakalamali" chronicles, attributes the founding of Haripuñjaya to a revered hermit named Suthep in 1172 BE. According to this narrative, the Mon ruler of the Lavo Kingdom (modern-day Lopburi) dispatched his daughter, Jamadevi, to be the inaugural queen of this burgeoning city. However, contemporary scholarship regards this date as too early, and the actual commencement of Haripuñjaya is now estimated to be around 1293 BE.



At this juncture, much of what is presently central Thailand was under the governance of diverse Mon city-states collectively known as the Dvaravati kingdom. Queen Jamadevi, a pivotal figure in the kingdom's history, bore twins, with the elder inheriting the throne of Lamphun while the younger assumed rulership in the neighboring Lampang. This pivotal event laid the foundation for the unfolding saga of Haripuñjaya's cultural and historical significance in the region.

During the reign of King Adityaraja, Haripuñjaya faced a notable conflict with the Khmers in the twelfth century. Inscriptions in Lamphun from 1213, 1218, and 1219 highlight King Sabbadhisiddhi's significant contributions to Buddhist monuments during this period.

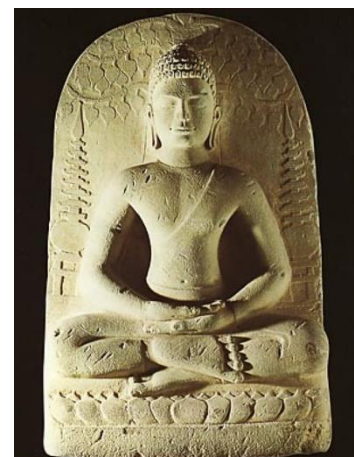
Historical accounts mention that the Khmers attempted to besiege Haripuñjaya multiple times in the 11th century, according to Lamphun inscriptions. While the authenticity of these events remains uncertain, contemporaneous records confirm the fall of other Dvaravati Mon kingdoms to the Khmers during this period. The early 13th century marked a golden era for Haripuñjaya, with chronicles exclusively emphasizing religious activities and architectural endeavors rather than conflicts. Nevertheless, the kingdom faced a critical juncture in 1292 when the Tai Yuan king, Mangrai, orchestrated its downfall, integrating Haripuñjaya into his Lan Na ("One Million Rice Fields") kingdom.

Mangrai's strategy to subdue Haripuñjaya commenced with the deployment of Ai Fa (อ้ายฟ้า) on an espionage mission, creating turmoil within the kingdom. Ai Fa succeeded in sowing discontent among the population, thereby weakening Haripuñjaya and facilitating Mangrai's takeover. In the aftermath, Phraya Yi Ba, the last monarch of Haripuñjaya, was compelled to flee south to Lampang as the kingdom succumbed to external pressures.

ART

The Dvaravati era ushered in a transformative period marked by the arrival of Indian traders and Buddhist missionaries, who not only introduced their religion but also left an indelible imprint on Thai art and architecture. Early Dvaravati Buddhist sculptures bear unmistakable traces of Indian influence, with depictions of the Buddha in seated meditation and intricate representations of Buddhist deities.

Elements of Indian architectural styles, such as ornate pillars and arches, seamlessly merged with Thai artistry in these sculptures.



Another pivotal influence on Thai Buddhist art during the Dvaravati era was the Mon culture, preexisting in the region before the arrival of Indian traders. The Mon people, known for their craftsmanship and artistic prowess, left an enduring mark on early Dvaravati sculptures adorned with elaborate carvings and intricate designs. The fusion of Indian and Mon styles birthed a distinctive form of Thai Buddhist art, characterized by its elegant simplicity and harmonious compositions.



An iconic representation of Thai Buddhist art from the Dvaravati era is the Buddha image in the "Calling the Earth to Witness" pose, also known as the "Earth Touching" pose. This statue captures the Buddha in meditation, with a hand touching the ground symbolizing enlightenment. Its simple and serene expression exudes calmness and peacefulness, while other renowned postures include the 'Haam Yaat' forbidding relatives and the 'Haam Samutra' holding back the ocean.

Beyond sculptures, Thai Buddhist art from the Dvaravati era extends to various artifacts like votive tablets, relief carvings, and stupas. These pieces, adorned with intricate carvings and designs, adorned temples and religious sites. Stupas, in particular, held significance in preserving Buddhist relics and symbolizing the Buddha's teachings.

One eminent stupa from the Dvaravati era is the Phra Pathommachedi Stupa, situated in central Thailand. Revered as one of Southeast Asia's tallest stupas and a crucial Buddhist site in Thailand, it showcases intricate carvings and sculptures. The Phra Pathommachedi Stupa stands as a testament to the exceptional skill and creativity of Thai Buddhist artists during the Dvaravati era.

AMULET FAMILIES

1/ Phra Rod Family

The smallest in the series which is one of the top five amulets ranking from the past with height of not more than 25mm.

Phra Rod in the figure of the Buddha in the seated position (Pang Marvichai). Sitting cross legged with the right hand on the right knee and the left hand on his lap, has a meaning of the evil spirits capturing as recorded in the history of Buddhism. Phra Rod has a meaning for surviving through all dangers or being safe from all dangerous encounters.

The materials for making Phra Rod were selected by spiritual hermits and Queen Jamadevi and composed into the mix such as the earth from the high plain of respect, the pollen of particular flowers used for worship and other holy powder



conducted for the mix. Other amulets made and conducted by Queen Jamadevi shared similar characteristics but differed in sizes and are bigger than Phra Rod.

There are 5 Pim (mold type per size): Pim Yai, Pim Grang, Pim Lek, Pim Tearn, Pim Tor.

2/ Phra Liang Family

“To evade all forms of danger.”

This amulet is truly exceptional, boasting intricate details that set it apart from others of its size. With a lifespan spanning thousands of years, it holds a unique allure. The crown,



adorned with three petals reminiscent of the revered Phra Sib Song, adds an element of strangeness and beauty. The elongated front and slightly pointed chin of the Buddha image perfectly harmonize, creating a dignified and valuable appearance when adorned with the crown. Phra Liang's eyes are a standout feature, being round, large, and prominently convex with a fleshiness that adds depth.

Despite its modest size, every part of the Buddha image is a testament to the craftsmanship of a highly skilled artisan, showcasing remarkable attention to detail. The ears of Phra Liang are adorned with kundas, long earrings gracefully draping over the shoulders, seamlessly integrating into the popular decorative pattern. The precision in the creation of this amulet extends to even the smallest features, such as the

intricately carved grooves of the goblet, exemplifying the artisan's unparalleled skill.

The chest section of Phra Liang bears a regal resemblance with a discernible neck filter or necklace embellishment. Emanating from both shoulders are the gracefully dangling tips of the earrings, enhancing the prominence of the chest pattern and seamlessly blending into this region. The body or torso of Phra Liang exudes beauty and well-proportioned symmetry, presenting a V-shaped structure characteristic of authentic Hariphunchai art amulets. The abdomen is neither swollen nor overly flat, devoid of any visible umbilical cord, and features a small line running its length, symbolizing the edge of the lower garments or pond.

The lap or thigh area is aesthetically pleasing with well-balanced proportions, as Phra Liang assumes the diamond meditation position, placing the right foot over the left foot. The arms are gracefully positioned, with the right arm slightly spread out from the body, crossing the right knee area, and the palm resting on the floor of the throne. The left arm mirrors a rhythmic placement, spread out slightly and resting across the lap, reminiscent of Phra Rod's arms, with the palm open directly above the left heel, revealing a robe-clad figure across the inside of the left leg.

The base of the seat, crafted with meticulous care, surpasses the beauty of any other Buddha image base. Despite its modest size, the statue is adorned with numerous details, showcasing the dedication invested in making this amulet truly exceptional.

The base of Phra Liang is divided into three levels, with two types of upper bases: the round lotus base and the square lotus base. The middle base layer takes the form of an elephant's head, symbolizing the elevated status of the Buddha sitting above it. This unique base features three elephant heads with distinct details such as ears, trunk, and tusks. The trunk orientation of each elephant head is a defining feature of Phra Liang Lek Pim Niyom, contributing to the overall dimensional aesthetic. The third-floor base supports the layers above, ensuring a perfect and unobtrusive presentation of the Buddha image, resembling the base of Phra Rod.

3/ Phra Kong Family

“To be stable and withstand harm.”

Phra Kong Kru Wat Phra Kong Ruesi Lamphun possesses a distinctive form reminiscent of a fingertip. Seated in the Maravichai posture atop a two-story base, the image is adorned with a total of 20 meticulously crafted Bodhi leaves, symmetrically arranged with 10 on each side. The branches and stems of the genuine Phra Kong Bodhi exhibit a natural delicacy, appearing sharp and slender with an artistic craftsmanship that imparts a lifelike sway, as if gently caressed by the wind. This authenticity contrasts sharply with the stiffness often found in counterfeit reproductions.



The head bears a resemblance to an inverted bowl, characterized by a broad top tapering down to the chin. The ears, thick and elongated, almost reach the muscular shoulders, with the right ear appearing more prominent than its counterpart on the left.

Adorned in robes draped like a blanket, the contours of the robe gracefully follow the curve around the neck, emphasizing the large and plump breasts. Two distinct lines of the robe are observed, with the upper line forming a complete circle, while its parallel lower counterpart is half the size, serving as a crucial hallmark of an authentic Phra Khong Tae.

Phra Khong Tae exudes a proud, elegant, and robust appearance, characterized by a bold and brave posture that captivates with a sense of longing.

An essential aspect to scrutinize is the body of the Buddha, particularly its aged area, where the texture of the genuine Phra Khong stands unparalleled. The nuanced details and unique characteristics of this ancient piece distinguish it unmistakably.

Phra Kong Kru Kao

Phra Khong, revered by the people of Lamphun in ancient times, commanded immense popularity and respect, owing to the clear demonstrations of invulnerability and resilience that captured both the eyes and minds of the onlookers. In the parlance of ancient gangsters, Phra Khong symbolized "tough skin," impervious to hits, penetrations, and shots—an embodiment of the highest virtues attributed to the Buddha. This exceptional quality truly manifests in His Majesty, the Phra Khong of Wat Phra Kong Ruesi, which comes in a myriad of styles, including those with beautiful faces and others with no visible facial features.



The size variations of Phra Khong range from large to small, and its cast color exhibits a diverse palette. The amulet boasts a robust and rock-like body, with some variations even featuring decomposed designs. Phra Khong surpasses the quantity of other amulets in the

Lamphun family, with an extensive presence stemming from numerous excavations conducted in various temples and historical sites across the region. The sheer abundance of Phra Kongs is a testament to their historical significance, as many ancient mounds, remnants of collapsed structures, have yielded these sacred artifacts.

In Lamphun, each Phra Kong holds a unique identity, with individuals endowing them with nicknames and monikers. One particularly distinguished name is "Lamphun Dam, Lamphun Daeng," signifying the Phra Kong of the crypt in Lamphun—a title that has become synonymous with the city itself. As the most prevalent amulet found in this ancient city, Phra Khong stands as a symbol of Lamphun, embodying its rich history and cultural heritage.

Phra Kong Dam

The black hue of Phra Kong Dam amplifies its significance, merging the Buddha power of Phra Kong in various colors into a singular, formidable amulet. Renowned for its unparalleled invulnerability, captivating charm, and the abundant source of good fortune it represents, Phra Kong Dam holds a special place in the hearts of those who encounter it. Its appeal resonates widely, garnering love and admiration from the general populace.

The meticulous design on the back of the Buddha image features a rolled-back design, lending a neat and well-crafted appearance. The sizable fingerprints on the surface are clearly visible, accompanied by mineral grains resulting from the intense internal pressure and heat. The mineral



pellets, formed by the explosive force within, showcase distinctive features such as holes with small burn marks along the edges. Phra Khong amulets often exhibit these mineral pellets bursting from the inside, attributed to the high heat retention of the mineral grains, causing the clay to burst forth in a unique pattern.

The stains on the crypt, adorning the surface of Phra Kong Dam, provide a visual testament to its age and antiquity. Measuring at a width of 1 1/2 cm, height of 2 3/4 cm, and a thickness of 1 cm, this amulet not only boasts exceptional characteristics but also serves as a tangible connection to the rich history and enduring legacy of Phra Khong.

4/ Phra Pem Family

“To become the leader, to gain power, or to obtain an auspicious position within your career or society.”

The Buddha image of Phra Pem Kru Wat Phra That is characterized by its plump and prominent form, seated in the Maravichai posture with crossed legs on a throne base adorned with lotuses and round crystal beads. Beneath the base, a semi-circular arch adds a distinctive touch, featuring seven small lines within.



The robes of Phra Pem follow a similar style to those of Phra Khong and Phra Bang, draped elegantly over the Buddha's figure.

The wall surface surrounding the Buddha is intricately patterned with branches and Bodhi leaves that fill the entire space. Notably, the Bodhi leaves possess arrowhead-like tips, totaling 86 in number, accompanied by 10 Bodhi branches. This unique design enhances the outstanding beauty and elegance of the Phra Pim from Wat Phra That.

In comparison to other Phra Pem images, the Phra Pem Kru Wat Phra That stands out as the epitome of beauty, surpassing its counterparts in terms of aesthetic appeal. It is essential to appreciate and remember the intricate details of this real Phra Pem, meticulously selected for study, to ensure accurate consideration and understanding in the future.

5/ Phra Dvaravati Family

Kru Nadi



Wat Nakhon Chai Si



Kru Sri Thep



SINGLE AMULETS

Phra Bang

“To be attractive and draw positive attention.”

Phra Bang boasts distinctive radiant arches encircling its head, presenting two unique styles: one features a radial arch akin to Phra Khong, symmetrically extending on both sides, while the other showcases an ejected radial arch on the right side, gracefully spreading outwards. A careful observation reveals these nuances.



Widely recognized as a counterpart to Phra Kong, Phra Bang diverges in certain characteristics. The Buddha image exhibits a pale complexion, characterized by a slender waist and a petite physique. Notably, the left arm assumes a 45-degree angle, differing from the bent-elbow posture of Phra Kong.

Phra Bang is celebrated as charismatic renowned for embodying virtues such as good loving-kindness, protection from danger, safety, and a captivating charm that endears it to a broad audience, earning admiration and popularity among many devotees.

Phra Sam Wat Don Kaeo

Crafted with fine clay, the texture is remarkably detailed, and the precision in mold-making leaves a lasting impression, this amulet holds a relatively substantial size, featuring a 3-pointed pattern along the outer edge, adorned with intricate decorative motifs throughout.



A radial line encompasses another layer of small oval grains, enhancing the overall aesthetic appeal.

The Buddha image is portrayed in a meditative posture, seated on a three-tiered throne. The upper layer boasts a long, smooth line, while the second layer takes on a wavy shape reminiscent of a square lotus. The bottom tier is crafted into an upturned lotus, imparting a surprising beauty and an almost magical quality to the overall design.

With dimensions measuring at a width of 4 cm, a height of 6 3/4 cm, and a thickness of 1 1/2 cm, this amulet not only captivates with its visual appeal but also serves as a testament to the meticulous craftsmanship and artistic finesse displayed in its creation.

Phra Lue Khong

Phra Lue Khong, characterized by a large head and a compassionate countenance, emanates the aura of a benevolent elder. This Buddha image boasts a broad and muscular appearance, with a sizable head, seated in the Maravichai posture upon a base resembling an upturned and inverted lotus, forming a captivating two-layered structure.



The robe drapes closely to the body, adorned with a sangha gracefully hanging down over the stomach, featuring a jagged tip that adds to its aesthetic allure. On either side of the Buddha image, lonely lotuses are intricately crafted, their heads folded down and attached to the pillars supporting the arch above. The lotus leaves, raising their petioles in a lively bouquet, dance with the wind, lending a dynamic quality to the overall design.

The faces, ears, mouth, and nose of the Buddha image are distinctly visible, complemented by round Phra Sok beads adorning the head, with the crown gently rising from the forehead. The impeccable beauty of Phra Lue Khong is truly a rarity, measuring at a width of 3 cm, a height of 5 cm, and a thickness of 2 cm. While the Buddha image appears substantial, framing it enhances its elegance, making it more beautiful than

any other Buddha type. Ideal for hanging as the centerpiece of an ensemble, this pink Buddha, with black accents passing through the base, radiates beauty beyond comparison.

Phra Lue Na Mongkol

“To become famous and well respected.”

The distinctive features of Phra Lue Na Mongkol are indeed remarkable, reflecting a facial resemblance to a watermelon with plump cheeks, portraying the inherent kindness associated with this Buddha image. The head of Phra Lue Na Mongkol, though appearing bald, is precisely shaped to frame the face elegantly, devoid of any royal crown, as it authenticates the true essence of a Buddha.

The eyebrows are finely detailed, resembling real human eyebrows, gently arched and convex, avoiding the appearance of a brace. The eyes are flesh eyes, not sheep's eyes, characterized by a low gaze, signifying kindness and compassion. The nose



is proportionate and includes a visible groove on the side, while the mouth exhibits grooves on both the top and bottom, creating a subtle, almost smiling expression. The rounded chin adds to the overall natural and undistorted appearance of the Buddha.

The ears of Phra Lue Na Mongkol are beautifully crafted, resembling real human ears, complete with visible earlobes. The Buddha's chest is well-proportioned, not overly large, creating a relaxed and comfortable appearance. The robes, intricately designed, flow smoothly around the Buddha's body, featuring a Sangkhati draped down the abdomen and a unique, close-to-the-skin robe style, characteristic of Mahayana Buddhist art.

Phra Lue Na Mongkol sits gracefully, with well-defined dimensions, showcasing a gentle and non-stiff rhythm in the placement of the arms. The right arm lies comfortably on the right knee, while the left arm is slightly spread across the lap, conveying a relaxed posture reminiscent of general Lamphun monks. The left wrist sags down to the tip of the right foot, highlighting the expert craftsmanship in detailing the robe.



The Buddha sits cross-legged in Phet meditation, showcasing the long sole of the right foot resting on the left leg, with the left foot inserted upwards. The toes of the left foot appear close to the right arm shelf, while the heel aligns with the tip of the left hand. Surrounding Phra Lue Na Mongkol is a distinctive radial arch line, crafted in a single continuous line, exhibiting influences from lotus petal patterns seen in Buddha images from the Dvaravati period.

The base of Phra Lue Na Mongkol is a three-tiered masterpiece, with the top base featuring pairs of square lotuses, the middle base adorned with a small-raised line, and the bottom base supporting the Buddha image with a thick rod. The decorative patterns surrounding Phra Lue

Na Mongkol, particularly those featuring lotus motifs, bear the influence of Mahayana Buddhism, emphasizing the close connection between Lawo city and Hariphunchai.

Observing the intricate details and patterns, it is evident that the Mahayana side of Buddhism has played a significant role in shaping the artistic elements of Phra Lue Na Mongkol. The careful consideration of these details provides a deeper understanding of the rich cultural and historical influences that contribute to the unique beauty of this Buddha image.

Phra Tham Sua

A significant amulet from the Tavaravadi Period is the Phra Tam Sua, also known as "The Amulets of Tiger Cave" located in Supanburi. These unbaked clay amulets predominantly originated from the Khao Kog mountain cave in the U-Thong District of Thailand, which was formerly a domain inhabited by tigers, leading to the distinctive name "Phra Tam Sua."

The discovery of Phra Tam Sua took place in the year 2487 BE, and subsequent findings revealed various sizes of the same type of amulets scattered across the cave on the mountain ridge, extending from south to north in the U-Thong District.



Phra Tam Sua is believed to have been crafted in the early or slightly before the Dvaravati Era, approximately 1,200 to 1,800 years ago. During this period, the local community practiced both Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism. Priests and holy hermits were responsible for creating these amulets, serving as sacred images to enhance the charisma of leaders or kings during significant occasions. Various ceremonies were conducted to seek blessings from revered holy gods, Buddha, angels, and hermits, and these blessings were believed to reside within the amulets. Placed in numerous caves, Phra Tamsua became objects of veneration for those who discovered them, believed to bestow charisma and blessings upon the wearers.

Phra Nang Chamdevi - Queen Jamadevi (พระนางจามเทวี)

In the year 1172 BE., a hermit named Suthep discovered the city of "Jinkamali" in the northern part of present-day Thailand. The Hmong ruler of the Lavo Kingdom (modern-day Lopburi) at that time, recognizing the significance of this city, sent his daughter, the esteemed "Jamadevi" (also spelled Cham Thewi), to be its inaugural queen. Although historical records initially dated this event to 1172 BE., the consensus now places its actual inception around 1293 BE. During this period, the majority of what is currently central Thailand was governed by various Hmong city-states collectively known as the Tavaravadi Kingdom. Queen Jamadevi, upon her reign, gave birth to twin sons, with the elder assuming rulership in Lampoon and the younger overseeing neighboring Lampang.



Queen Jamadevi, the first of her name and the sovereign of the Haripunchai Kingdom, was a deeply devout Buddhist with unwavering faith in her hermit gurus, whom she held in high esteem. Evident in her commitment to Buddhism, she initiated the construction of numerous temples and pagodas, personally creating amulets and commissioning others to do so. To safeguard these sacred artifacts, she ordered them to be housed beneath these structures. The amulets, each named after the embedded spells and the location where they were crafted, served various purposes, including personal worship, carrying as relics for well-being, protection, respect, and resilience against suffering.

As a valiant Queen of Haripunchai, Jamadevi led her troops into battle on numerous occasions, consistently achieving victory. Her distinguishing feature was the sword she always carried by her side, marking her as one of the first, if not the very first, Warrior Queens in the region's extensive history. When distributing her amulets, priority was given to her soldiers, ensuring they received handcrafted artifacts imbued with powers of protection, safety, survival, and general well-being. Queen Jamadevi's legacy as a ruler and a protector of her people continues to resonate through the annals of history, defining her as a notable and revered figure in the chronicles of Thailand.

TALISMANS

Phra Rod Ruesi/Phra Lersi Family

Spiritual Hermit figure amulets for wellbeing and protection, the most famous of which are Narai Hermit, Narod Hermit, Ta Fai (Fire Eyes), and Na Woa (Oxfaced)

Ruesi Phor-Poo



Ruesi Narod



Ruesi Ta Fai



Ruesi Ta Wua



The materials used for making amulets at this early stage were sun dried after being moulded and then touch finished into shape. The latter stages included baking in small purpose-built kilns blessed for amulet making.

DATA SOURCES

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