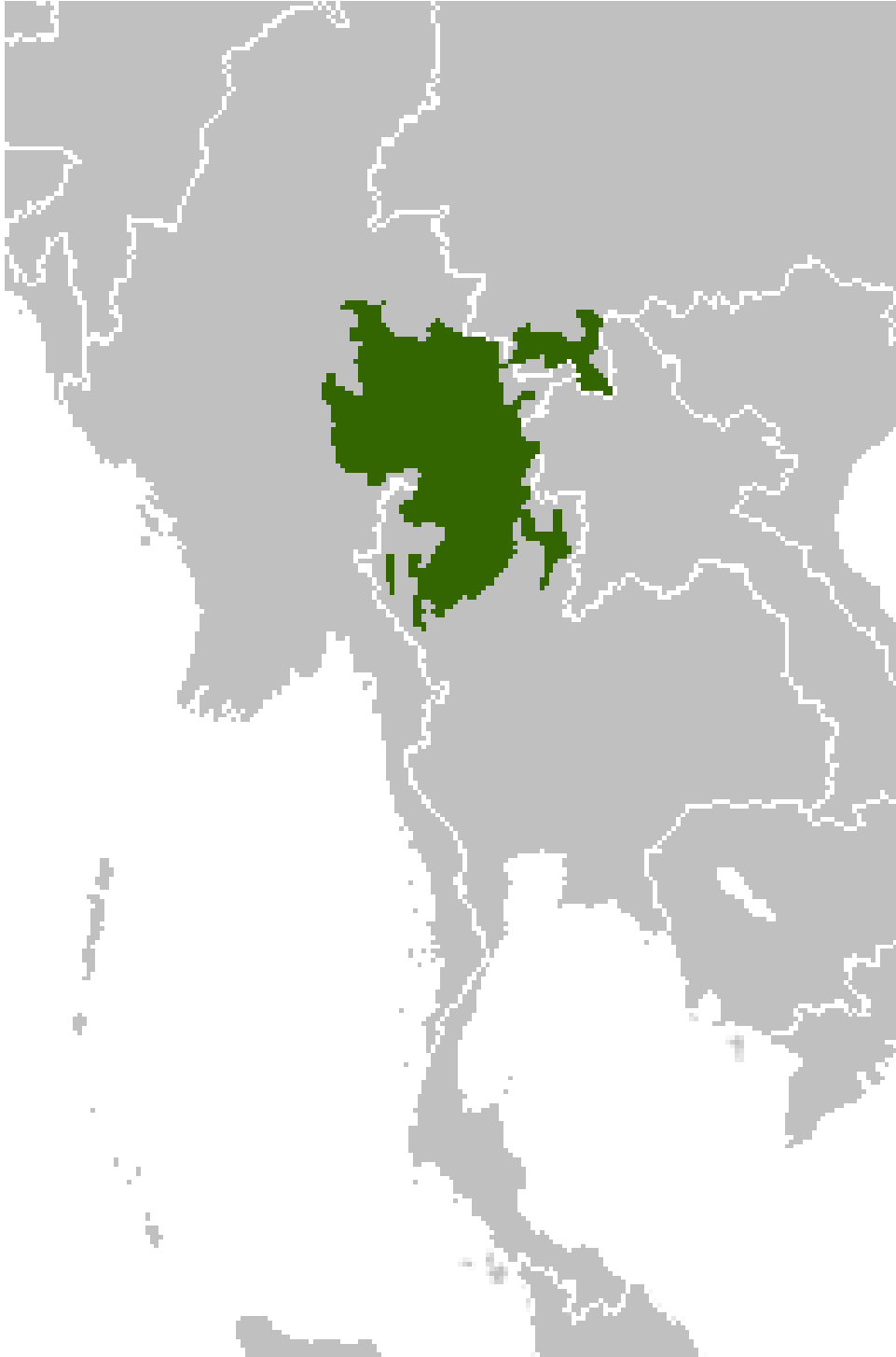


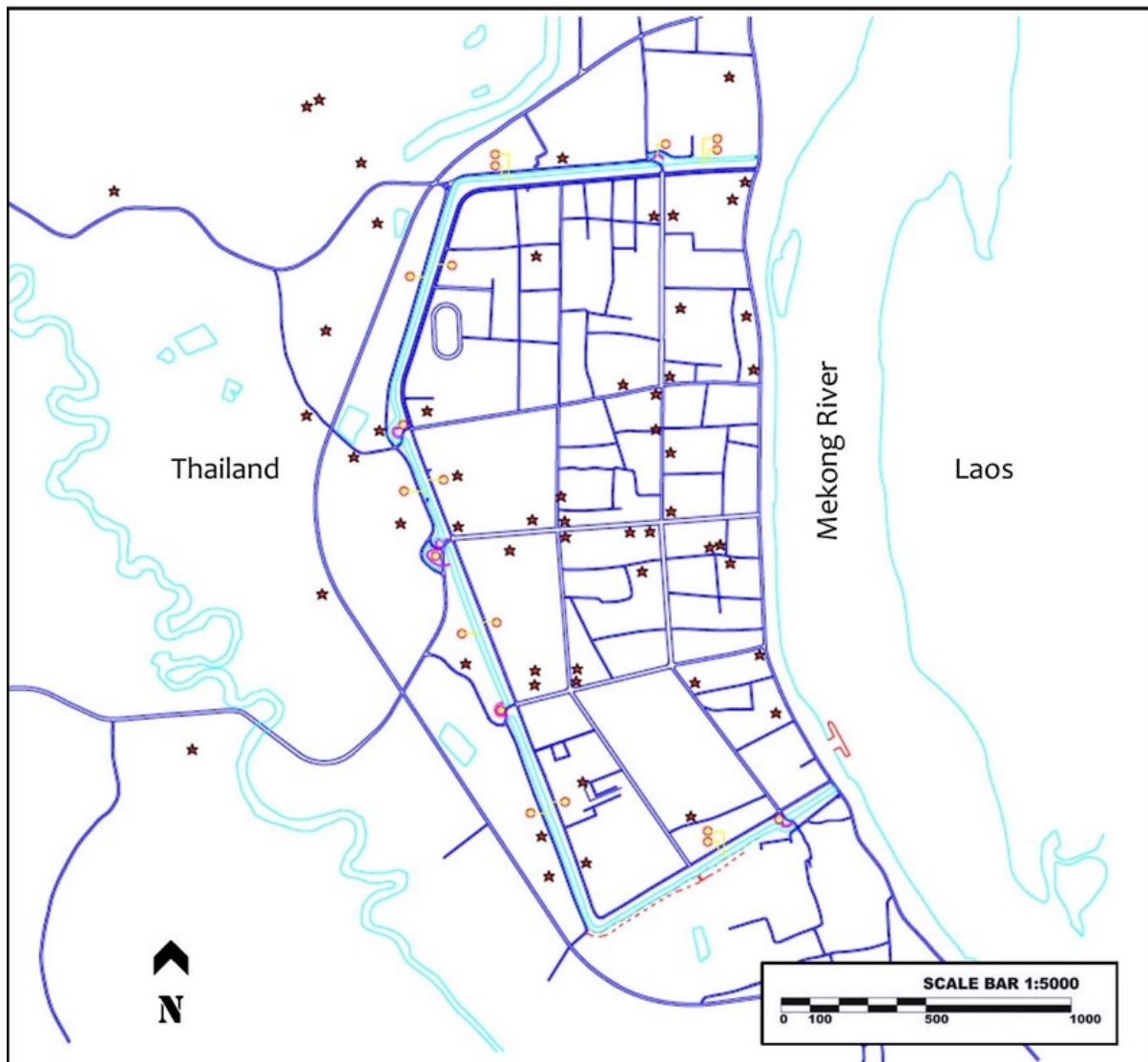
## CHIANG SAEN PERIOD BE 16 TH TO 19 TH CENTURY

### MAPS

Lan Na heyday



## Ancient town of Chiang Sen



## HISTORY

### *Kingdom of Hiran*

The Kingdom of Hiran, also known as the Kingdom of Ngoenyang (Thai: อาณาจักรหิรัญเงินยาง), thrived as an early Mueang or realm of the Northern Thai populace from the 7th to the 13th centuries AD. Initially centered on Hiran, formerly known as Vieng Preuksa, situated in present-day Thailand near the modern Mae Sai District in Chiang Rai, it later shifted its focal point to Ngoenyang or Chiang Saen. Ngoenyang emerged as the successor to the Mueang of Singhanavati. Notably, King Mangrai, the 17th monarch of Ngoenyang, subsequently laid the groundwork for the establishment of Lanna.

### *Founding of Lan Na*

Mangrai, the 25th monarch of Ngoenyang from the Lavachakkaraj dynasty, whose mother hailed from a princess of one of the kingdoms in Sipsongpanna ("the twelve

nations"), orchestrated the consolidation of the Mueangs of Ngoenyang into a cohesive realm or mandala. He forged an alliance with the neighboring Phayao Kingdom. In 1262, Mangrai shifted the seat of power from Ngoenyang to the newly established Chiang Rai, christening the city in his own name. Mangrai proceeded to extend his influence to the south, bringing the Mon kingdom of Hariphunchai (centered on modern-day Lamphun) under his dominion in 1284 BE.

Throughout his reign, Mangrai relocated his capital several times. Forced to abandon Lamphun due to severe flooding, he wandered until establishing Wiang Kum Kam, where he resided until 1285 BE, before finally settling in what would become Chiang Mai. He laid the foundation of Chiang Mai in 1289 BE, expanding it to serve as the heart of Lan Na. The territories claimed by Mangrai's Lan Na encompassed the modern northern provinces of Thailand (with the exception of Phrae, which remained under the suzerainty of Sukhothai, as well as Phayao and Nan), Kengtung, Mong Nai, and Chiang Hung (modern Jinghong in Yunnan). Additionally, he established vassalage over and received tribute from regions in present-day Northern Vietnam, predominantly in the valleys of the Black and Red rivers, as well as most of Northern Laos, and the Sipsongpanna region of Yunnan, from where his mother originated.

#### *Founding of Chiang Saen*

In 1272 BE, Chiang Saen was officially founded by Saenphu, Mangrai's grandson, under the name "Mueang Roi." The city, shaped as an irregular rectangle measuring 1500 by 700 Wa (approximately 3000 meters by 1400 meters), was strategically positioned along the Mekong. Saenphu constructed a moat on three sides, utilizing the Mekong as the fourth natural barrier. The city featured an earth wall behind the ditch, and five gates provided access, complemented by eight watchtowers strategically placed in the city and its surroundings. Saenphu, upon completing the city, appointed his son Khamfu as the governor of Chiang Mai and retired to Chiang Saen, where he passed away in 1277 BE.

#### *Expansions under Tilokkarat*

During the reign of King Tilokkarat (1441–1487), the Lan Na kingdom reached its zenith. Tilokkarat ascended the throne in 1441 after seizing power from his father, Sam Fang Kaen. His brother, Thau Choi, rebelled in an attempt to reinstate their father, soliciting support from Ayutthaya. In response, Borommaracha II dispatched troops to Lan Na in 1442, but they were repelled, and the rebellion was swiftly quashed. Tilokkarat further solidified his authority by annexing the neighboring Kingdom of Payao in 1456.

Moreover, Tilokkarat emerged as a prominent supporter of Theravada Buddhism. In 1477, a Buddhist Council convened near Chiang Mai to recompile the Tripitaka, showcasing Tilokkarat's dedication to the faith. He also undertook significant efforts to construct and restore numerous prominent temples. Additionally, Tilokkarat expanded Lan Na's influence westward into the Shan States of Laihka, Hsipaw, Mong Nai, and Yawnghwe.

## *Decline*

After Tilokkarat's reign, Lan Na descended into internal turmoil, weakening its ability to fend off neighbors. Paya Kaew, Tilokkarat's great-grandson, attempted to assert Lan Na's authority but faced defeat in conflicts with Ayutthaya and internal factions. In 2088 BE, Lan Na became a tributary state to Ayutthaya. Chiraprapha succeeded her father but abdicated in 2089 BE, leading to Laotian rule under Prince Chaiyasettha. Lan Na later fell to Burmese conquest in 2095 BE.

Unrest in Lan Na led to successful revolts in 2270–2271 BE and 2274–2275 BE, briefly securing independence for Chiang Mai and the Ping Valley. However, Burmese control was restored in 2300 BE, despite attempted revolts supported by Siam. Lan Na served as a launching pad for Burmese invasions of Laos and Siam in 2312 BE.

## *Destruction of Chiang Saen*

During the Burmese rule Chiang Saen played a pivotal role as the military and political center of Lan Na. A Burmese fort and governor were established, firmly integrating the city into the Burmese Empire. The "Chiang Saen Chronicles" from the 24th century even portrayed Chiang Mai's rebellion against Burmese rule negatively. It wasn't until 2347 BE that Chiang Saen, the last Tai Yuan-inhabited region in northern Thailand, fell under Siamese control. King Rama I ordered the city's destruction, sparing only religious sites, and relocated the population to the central Thai basin. Descendants of the Tai Yuan taken during this period can still be found in Ratchaburi and Saraburi provinces.

For years, Chiang Saen lay deserted until British surveyor Holt Hallett's observation in 2419 BE. King Rama V (Chulalongkorn) founded again and repopulated Chiang Saen with families from Lamphun, Lampang, and Chiang Mai. Presently, only a fraction of the old town is inhabited, preserving the remnants of its fascinating history.

## **ART**

During this period, some sources put forward Chiang Saen's Ancient Thai Buddhist Periodic Art and amulets to hold immense historic, religious, and artistic value, representing one of Thailand's significant cultural inheritances. However, compared to the territorial spread of Lan Na, it is not obvious to solely focus on Chiang Saen, which after all was a city, yet this art period is thus defined.

It is fair to say that a distinguishing feature of Chiang Saen art lies in its bold, flowing lines and fluid forms. This artistic style is evident in the plethora of Buddhist sculptures and statues produced during this era, depicting the Buddha in a serene and peaceful pose, surrounded by an aura of calm and tranquility.

## **BUDDHA REPRESENTATIONS**

One can distinguish three types of buddha representations.

### **Run Singh Hneung**

Influenced by the Bhala of India, the Buddha's form is characterized by a plump physique, and the head, along with the topknot, resembles a semi-opened lotus flower. The Buddha's hair, distinctively, lacks individual strands and instead takes on a rounded appearance reminiscent of a cluster of clams. The facial features exhibit a more rounded contour, with curved and rounded eyebrows, a gently outward-curving and prominent nose, an obtuse chin, and a chest that gracefully protrudes. The Sangkati robe drapes like a shirt, extending over the breast robes and creating a distinctive swallow-tail-shaped silhouette. Notably, the robe envelops nearly the entire chest, contributing to the Buddha's distinctive and symbolic representation.



### **Run Singh Sorng**

The second period closely mirrors the compositional elements of the first, with the only notable distinction being a slight departure in the Buddha's physique, characterized by a less plump form. In this phase, the Sangkati and Civara robes exhibit a nuanced shift, covering a reduced portion of the Buddha's torso, extending solely to envelop the navel and stomach while leaving the chest exposed. Additionally, the head and topknot display a subtle alteration, adopting a slightly rounder shape reminiscent of a closed lotus, contributing to the distinctive features of this particular period.



### **Run Singh Sarm**

The third period undergoes a significant departure from the original style, embracing a more pronounced influence from the Sukhothai Period. Notably, the hair of the Buddha's head becomes more flamboyant and elevated, characterized by intricate detailing that delineates fine lines between the hair and the forehead. In the case of a Buddha statue, the lotus throne takes on a distinctive form, predominantly featuring double or interspersed petals, often in two layers. The lines on the lotus throne gracefully curve outward, away from the statue, adding a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing element.



Two of the most important Buddha images in Thailand, the Emerald Buddha, and the Phra Phuttha Shing are made in the Lan Na / Chiang Saen style.

### **Emerald Buddha**

Legend has it that the Emerald Buddha was crafted in India in 500 BE (43 BC) by Nagasena, in Pataliputra, now Patna. After residing in Pataliputra for three centuries, it was taken to Sri Lanka during a civil conflict. In 914 BE (457 CE), King Anuruth of Burma sent a delegation to Ceylon for Buddhist scriptures and the Emerald Buddha. On their return, the vessel veered off course during a storm and ended up in Cambodia.

When Thais seized Angkor Wat in 875 BE (1432 CE) amidst the bubonic plague's devastation, the Emerald Buddha was moved to various locations, eventually reaching Chiang Rai. Historical accounts suggest it surfaced in northern Thailand, Lan Na, in 1977 BE. Legend says it was discovered in Chiang Rai's Wat Pa Yia after lightning struck a stupa, revealing a Buddha statue covered in stucco. Named Phra Kaew Morakot, or Emerald Buddha, it was later enshrined in Chiang Mai's Chedi Luang by King Tilokaraj in 2005 BE (1468 CE).

Made of semi-precious green stone, often called jade or jasper, its composition remains undetermined. Measuring 48 centimeters (19 inches) wide and 66 centimeters (26 inches) high, the statue depicts Buddha in a seated position. While its style suggests late Chiang Saen or Chiang Mai school origins, similarities to Buddha images in India and Sri Lanka hint at a different origin.

Adorned with three sets of gold seasonal decorations, symbolizing summer, rainy, and winter seasons, the Emerald Buddha's regal attire reflects meticulous craftsmanship.

These sets are changed by the King of Thailand or a senior royal family member, with unused sets displayed at the nearby Pavilion of Regalia, Royal Decorations, and Thai Coins at the Grand Palace.



## AMULETS

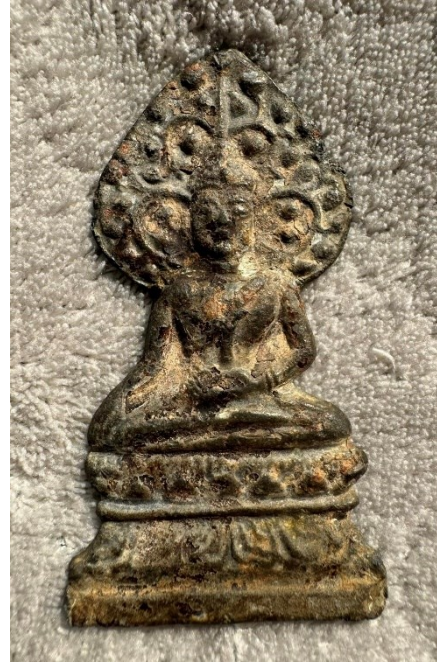
Chiang Saen Buddha amulets are a family of red rust Buddha amulets that are worth searching for. Construction life of more than 700 years Characteristics of the amulet. The amulet is quite large, larger than other amulets. The Buddha image is made of lead and then rusts red. It is a great amulet of the northern city. The Buddhist virtue of Phra Chiang Saen is Phra Sum Rom Pho. Worshipers will experience only peace and happiness.

### Naga Prok Family

Naga serves as a crucial design element within Buddhist temples in Thailand, prominently featured in architectural embellishments and ornaments.

Naga art in Northern Thailand exhibits distinct local characteristics that define the Lan Na / Chiang Saen era, given that Buddhist temples hold paramount importance as venues for observing Buddhist art.





#### DATA SOURCES

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- <http://www.virtualmuseum.finearts.go.th/chiangsaen/index.php/en/archive/10-about-us/79-history.html>
- [https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1850179128789254&set=pcb.7449745078411882&locale=th\\_TH](https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1850179128789254&set=pcb.7449745078411882&locale=th_TH)