

RATTANAKOSIN PERIOD 2325 TO WWII IN 2482 BE

HISTORY

After the upheaval of the civil war and the brief reign of King Taksin's Thonburi Kingdom, a new era dawned with the establishment of the Kingdom under King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke (Rama I) in 2325 BE. Relocating the capital from Thonburi to Bangkok, he laid the foundation for "The House of Chakri," the enduring royal lineage of Thailand. Throughout the Rattana Kosin Period, successive Chakri monarchs endeavored to unify the fractured remnants of Ayutthaya's legacy, prioritizing cohesion among sovereign leaders. The first three Chakri Kings, through astute governance, brought about a much-needed era of political stability absent during the Ayutthaya era.

Subsequent rulers, including Kings Rama II, III, and IV, embarked on modernizing efforts, instituting ministries, and appointing chief ministers to streamline governance. King Rama IV displayed a keen interest in Western knowledge, a trend that intensified with the ascension of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V). Faced with pressures from elder statesmen and officials, Rama V initiated a wave of European and Western reforms, engaging with Western powers to shield Siam from colonization. Educated by Western tutors himself, he sought to reform the monarchy along Western lines, abolishing traditional protocols like kneeling and crawling before the monarch.

King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) envisioned a monarchy modeled on Western principles, blending absolute authority with enlightenment ideals. While modernizing the monarchy, he upheld many ancient rituals and religious practices associated with kingship. His successor, King Vajiravudh (Rama VI), carried forward his father's reformist zeal, steering the monarchy into the 20th century. Upon his passing in 1925, he was succeeded by his brother, King Prajadhipok (Rama VII).

The watershed moment came in June 2475 BE, when a group of educated individuals and military personnel known as "The Promoters" orchestrated a bloodless coup, compelling King Prajadhipok to grant a constitution to the people of Siam. The charter, granted in December 2475 BE, marked the end of nearly 150 years of absolute Chakri rule, relegating the monarch to a symbolic role. However, the reverence for the monarchy persisted, enshrined within the constitutional framework. Despite relinquishing legislative powers, the monarchy retained its traditional respect and inviolability. King Prajadhipok abdicated the throne.

Succeeding him briefly was King Ananda Mahidol, Rama VIII, whose reign was tragically cut short by an untimely demise in 2489 BE.

We thus consider that this event coupled with the end of WWII in addition to the onset of the Benjapakee set ushered a new art period, the post-Rattanakosin for any better name (see file number 9).

AMULETS

The most important amulets in the Rattanakosin Period are:

The “Phra Somdej” Amulet (The top amulet in Thailand) Phra Somdej is named after the maker and conductor for their crafting, Somdej Phra Putacharn Toh Bramarangsi.

The “Phra Kring”, the revered metal amulet renowned for its small size and distinctive rattling sound, has become a familiar object of worship in contemporary times. Yet, delving into the annals of history unveils a profound legacy of Phra Kring's creation within the realm of Suvarnabhumi.

A/ Phra Somdej

The crafting of amulets

The narrative of Phra Somdej Amulets traces its origins to the moment Somdej Toh embraced monkhood in B.E. 2350. Initially, these amulets bore a simple and unadorned nature, fashioned from readily available materials found in the modest environs of his temple. Ingredients such as dried rice powder, bananas, ash from prayer incense, and petals and pollens from worship flowers, blended with sugar cane as a binding agent, formed the rudimentary compositions. Over time, local craftsmen from neighboring villages stepped forward, offering their expertise to fashion more intricate molds, enhancing the quality of the amulets.

Although Somdej Toh embarked on this journey at a tender age, the zenith of Phra Somdej Amulets production occurred between B.E. 2394 and 2407, coinciding with the ascension of King Rama IV to the throne. During this period, Somdej Toh, now revered as a sage monk in his early 60s to late 70s, earned accolades and titles from the King, including Phra Rajakhana, Phra Dharmakiti, Phra Thepkawee, and Somdej Buddhajarn, spanning from B.E. 2395 to 2407.

Numerous significant occasions, such as royal celebrations and the birth of King Rama V in B.E. 2396, marked the production of Phra Somdej Amulets during this epoch. A decade later, Somdej Toh oversaw the creation of a colossal Buddha statue at Wat Keschaiyo in Angthong Province. Concurrently, he orchestrated the crafting of 84,000 Phra Somdej amulets, known as Phra Somdej Wat Keschaiyo, named after the temple where they were meticulously fashioned and blessed.

This era witnessed a refinement in the art of crafting Phra Somdej Amulets, as royal craftsmen, including Luang Vijarn Jearamai and Luang Sittikarn Borirak, were entrusted with designing and molding these sacred artifacts.

Phra Kata Chinabanchorn

Amulets are associated with holy blessings, kata and Phra Somdej amulets are no exception.

The genesis of the renowned "Victor's Cage" kata (Phra Kata Chinabanchorn) traces back to a pivotal moment in the life of Phra Somdej Toh. Legend holds that during one of his journeys to visit relatives, he stumbled upon an ancient Buddhist manuscript buried within the ruins of a temple near Kampaengpetch. It was in the quietude of the night, around 3 am, that he experienced a profound awakening. In a vision, he encountered what he described as a "Messenger" – a spirit embodied in the form of a youthful figure, adorned in resplendent white attire and possessing penetrating eyes.

This Messenger imparted upon Phra Somdej Toh a sacred mandate: as one who walks the path aligned with the teachings of the Lord Buddha, he was tasked with the responsibility of bestowing amulets upon the people. However, it was imperative that he comprehend the art of bestowing blessings and empowerment upon these artifacts. He needed to learn the intricate nuances of infusing them with his own will, mindfulness, and the appropriate rituals essential for their creation.

Upon awakening from this divine encounter, Phra Somdej Toh delved into the study of the ancient manuscript he had unearthed. Within its weathered pages lay forgotten mantras and chants, imbued with potent energies of protection and empowerment for the faithful. With unwavering dedication, he meticulously translated and reinterpreted these ancient scripts, endeavoring to elucidate their meanings for clarity and accessibility.

The culmination of his efforts gave rise to what is now celebrated as one of the most revered Buddhist mantra chants in the nation: the Chinabanchorn Kata. This transformative work not only preserved the spiritual essence of the ancient teachings but also made them accessible to generations to come, perpetuating the legacy of wisdom and compassion established by Phra Somdej Toh.

Materials

The materials utilized in Somdej Toh Amulets exhibit a wide array of varieties. Each batch does not necessarily contain all materials; instead, each commences with a primary base of plaster combined with a mixture of materials from a designated list, as follows:

- Holy Powders: Primarily composed of Ittijay, Pattamong, and Tri-Nisingha Powders, exhibiting hues ranging from orange, blue, light green, grey, yellow, to white.
- Diamond Plaster: A resilient white plaster sourced from China, traditionally employed in porcelain production for millennia.
- Blessed Metals: Also known as Mythical Metals, predominantly ferrous-based with appellations such as Flowing Iron and Leglaid.
- Marble Powder: Finely powdered marble, characteristic of Wat Sila Thi Khun varieties of Phra Somdej Amulets.
- Holy Grains: Derived from the pulverization of older amulets, weathered by time, into granules for incorporation into new amulets. These primarily encompass brown grains from Phra Sumkor Amulets. Other grains include crushed Nampee

Steel utilized in high-quality sword crafting, as well as fragments of gold and silver flakes from assorted artifacts.

- Soropong: A type of white earth utilized in amulet crafting.
- Oyster Shell Plaster: Available in various forms crafted from both baked and raw shells.
- 7 Sites Earth: Earth and sand amalgamated from seven distinct or sacred sites, contingent upon the temple of origin and the intended blessings to be conferred upon the Amulet. These sites comprise The 7 City Piers, The 7 Forests, The 7 Salt Plains, and The 7 Boat Wharfs.
- Pong Luang Earth: A yellow earth variant employed in amulet creation.
- Bael: A natural fruit gum.
- Sun Dried Offerings: Occasionally, surplus food offerings from the faithful would be left for the monks. After consumption or distribution to the needy, rice would be sun-dried and powdered for incorporation into the amulets.
- Honey: And on occasion, raw sugar cane syrup.
- Glutinous Rice: Rice flour utilized to fill and aid in the binding process.
- Tung Oil: A robust Thai Linseed Oil serving as a binding agent, amalgamating the various elements within the amulets.
- Ash: Carefully gathered from worship candles and incense remnants left by devotees at the feet of Buddha statues following prayers.
- Old Scripture: Aged scriptures typically inscribed onto palm leaves using a heated needle, burning the letters into the leaf. When these became too worn to be legible after years of recitation and prayer, monks would meticulously powder and incorporate them into new amulets.
- Sawart Flower: Recognized internationally as Nicarbean (Latin: *Guilandina bonduc*).
- Special Herbal Mixtures: Two distinct blends of local herbs employed in Phra Somdej Amulets. "Krajae," a fragrant perfume powder of the era, and "108 Powder," consisting of 108 different herbs and pollens specifically intended for these sacred amulets. Unfortunately, the exact ingredients of the latter have been lost to time.
- Lotus: Sourced from Sattabut Lotus flowers.
- Jasmine: Fragrant dried Jasmine flowers, often presented in garland form as offerings to the monks.
- Ratachapruet Flower: A resplendent golden flower known as the "Pudding-Pipe Tree" outside of Thailand (Latin: *Cassia fistula*).
- Galong Flowers: Referred to internationally as the Snowy Orchid (Latin: *Bauhinia acuminata*).
- Betel Leaves: Numerous varieties exist, but the two local types utilized in Phra Somdej Amulets are locally recognized as "Plu Ruamjai" and "Plu Songharnng".

B/ Phra Kring

The construction of Phra Kring boasts a rich and extensive history, spanning across the ages within Thailand. Originating from a single source, this revered amulet has diversified into various branches, each associated with renowned temples and institutions. Among

these, notable establishments include Wat Bowonniwet Vihara, Wat Chakkrawat Ratchawat (Wat Sam Pluem), and Wat Suthat Thepwararam.

The genesis of Phra Kring traces back to the traditional Buddha image format, featuring a seated figure atop the inverted lotus petals in the Marawichai posture. Notably, the left hand of this Buddha image clasps a pot of medicine and a vajra, symbolizing its association with "Phra Bhaisajkuru," a revered figure within the Mahayana tradition known as the teacher of pharmacy and medical treatment.

The influence of the Mahayana sect, spreading across regions like Tibet, China, and Cambodia, fostered a belief in the creation of Phra Kring for worship. Referred to as Phra Kring Nok or Phra Kring Yai in Thai parlance, denoting Phra Kring originating from outside the country, these amulets are distinguished by their larger size. Reflecting their Chinese origin, the Buddha images feature a distinctive plump face, symbolizing their cultural identity and often serving as sacred objects for royalty.

AMULET FAMILIES

1/ Phra Wat Phlap Family

Phra Wat Phlap Doll print

Wat Phlap Buddha is considered the origin of the White Powder Buddha. It was built by His Majesty the Patriarch Suk (Wild Chicken) when he was still a monk. It is a monk built and placed in a pagoda inside Wat Phlap. Later, this temple was given the royal name Wat Ratchasittharam.

The temple boasts a diverse collection of prints, ranging from standing monk statues to large doll prints, and various small prints. Among these treasures is the revered Large Doll Print. This exquisite depiction of the monk showcases flawless proportions and a pristine appearance, with a complexion as pure and white as newly formed calcium skin. It's this immaculate quality that often leads observers to mistake it for a newly crafted statue. However, true appreciation of the Buddha's essence requires an understanding of Buddhist art and the nuances of its craftsmanship. A genuine Buddha statue must exhibit substantial size, with a head that is large and rounded, reminiscent of an alms bowl. The arms should be clearly defined and gracefully attached to both sides of the chin.

Moreover, the Buddha's posture is crucial. Tight arms gently rest upon the lap, while both legs exhibit robustness and solidity. The right leg typically crosses over the left leg, completing the serene and dignified pose.



Phra Wat Phlap Large belly print

The amulet of Wat Phlap was broken into pieces around 1922. When Sangkhawaranuwong Thera (Chum), the head monk of Wat Phlap, found out, he asked other monks to help gather all the remaining amulets and move them to a monastery.

Phra Wat Phlap is a special kind of amulet made from white powder. It's said to be one of the first Buddha amulets made this way, similar to Phra Somdet Bang Khun Phrom. The main ingredient in making these amulets is magic powder, mixed with tung oil and seashell cement. Other things like flower pollen, incense sticks, and chili sema are also added. The method of making these amulets was invented by Somdej Phra Sangharaja (Suk), who used it to create the first amulet called Somdet Arahant at Wat Mahathat. Later monks followed his method, including Somdet Phra Phutthachan (To) of Wat Rakhang, Thonburi, who used the Buddha image from Wat Phlap as a model for his own amulets.



Phra Somdej Araham

Phra Somdej Araham, an ancient and revered amulet from Wat Mahathat, is steeped in magic and holiness. It originated from the original amulet of Phra Somdej created by Luang Pho To of Wat Rakhang Khositaram. This creation was attributed to Chao Prakun Somdej Phra Sangharaja Chao (Suk Kai Tuen), a revered master who imparted knowledge to Chao Prakun Somdej Phra Buddhacarya (To Phrom Rangsi).

The history of Phra Sangharaja Chao (Suk Kai Thuen), also known as Phra Sangharaja Kai Thuen, is significant. He served as the fourth Supreme Patriarch of the Chakri Dynasty and was the royal teacher during the reigns of Rama 2, 3, and 4. Born in the old city of Suk, he demonstrated extraordinary compassion, earning respect from both villagers and royalty alike.

Many became his disciples, witnessing his ability to summon feral chickens from the forest for alms.



The construction of Phra Somdet Arahant at Wat Mahathat began around 1817 when Phra Sangharaj Yanasangwon (Suk Kai Thuen) was still a royal monk at Wat Phlap. The first auspicious print, known as the Kesa Flame Phlaeng print, was created during this time. Later, upon his appointment as Somdej Phra Sangharaja and his move to Wat Mahathat, he brought the Phra Somdej Araham and placed it in a chedi there.

The materials used in creating Phra Somdet Arahant are similar to those of Phra Somdet Wat Rakhang Khositaram, including shell cement, food scraps, offering materials, and Itthije powder. However, the proportions vary. The amulet comes in two colors: white and red, with the red color possibly resulting from the mixing of cement with betel nut or borneol.

The amulet's design features a rectangular shape with a seated Buddha image in a meditation pose on a 3-tiered base, covered with glass similar to Phra Somdet Wat Rakhang Khositaram. The detailing includes thin, sharp, and long hair, a round face, small convex ears, and a closer alignment of the right side of the Buddha image to the face than the left side.

2/ Somdej Wat Rakang Family

Somdej Wat Rakang has 5 main prints (not necessarily an authoritative number) as follows: - Pim Yai or Pim Prathan (Big print) - Pim Than Saem - Pim Chedi - Pim Prok Poh - Pim Ket Bua Tum

Phra Somdej Pim Yai or Pim Prathan

According to the teachings of "Treyampwai" and the "Tha Phrachan School," esteemed figures in the monkhood have collectively acknowledged the unique significance of the Phra Prathan print, evoking deep reverence and admiration.

Each print boasts its own allure and elegance, crafted with royal precision. However, the Phra Prathan print stands out for its exceptional beauty and dignity. When examining the surface, one can discern the likeness of a majestic figure, characterized by broad shoulders, a firm countenance, and intricate artistic lines adorning its entirety. This bold print, as elucidated by the Triyampavai theory, commands attention with its imposing size and awe-inspiring presence, surpassing other prints in grandeur.

The legend of the original Phra Prathan print, known as Ong Sia Dom or Ong La, continues to spark excitement among enthusiasts. Just a few years ago, the discovery of the Kamnan Mana statue, with its distinct red hue contrasting against a pristine white surface, captured the imagination of many. The journey of this revered print, passing through the hands of three great masters before reaching its current state, underscores its esteemed legacy within the realm of Buddhist artifacts.

Examining the intricate details of the mold, one can discern the meticulous craftsmanship imbued with the principles of the Wat Mahathat Tha Phrachan School. From the prominent Buddha image with its open chest and shoulders to the nuanced alignments of the glass frame lines, each element reflects a commitment to perfection. Delving deeper into the content, the surface of the Buddha image exudes a delicate, yellowish-white hue akin to flower pollen, while the rear features a thick layer of plaster

adorned with symbolic markings, evoking a sense of natural beauty synonymous with Somdej Wat Rakhang.

Within the Phra Somdet Wat Rakhang collection, comprising large prints categorized into six types: Khueang, Airy, Chalud, Pom, Sandad, and Small

Phra Prathan print has two variants.

Ket Lod Sum: this primary Buddha print has its head tip touching the arch.



Ket Thalu Sum: this primary Buddha print has its head tip piercing through the arch.



Phra Somdej Pim Than Sam

Phra Somdej Wat Rakhang, Than Sam print, is the most popular amulet after all the prints mentioned above.

The reason why this type is called “Pim Than Sam” because it has the appearance of a sitting Buddha in an upside-down bell. The ears are beveled.

There is a line between the bottom of the Buddha image and the top base. and under the top base and the middle base There is a line connecting the bottom of the Buddha image and the top base. and between the top base and the middle base

This print comes in two different sizes, and multiple seat base styles.



Phra Somdej Pim Chedi

The Pagoda Print.



Phra Somdej Pim Prok Pho (Bhodhi)

Phra Somdej Wat Rakhang Bodhi amulet (8/9 Bodhi amulets on each side). This amulet was kept in a dark place for a long time. The surface of the amulet will have tan oil stains appearing that appear thick/thin all over the Buddha. As for the meat, it will be like a swollen liver, which means it's a mass.

You can judge the oldness by looking at cracks/claw marks. Along the back edge and worm tracks.

This amulet according to historical records is the 5th amulet, built in the year 1855. Somdej To was 68 years old.

He was promoted to the rank of Phra Dhammakittisophon and became the abbot of Wat Rakhang. The back part is a board back design, 1 of 4 authentic Phra Somdej Wat Rakhang designs.



Phra Somdej Pim Ket Bua Tum

Pre-bloom Lotus Tip print.

This print stands out among others due to its unique convex appearance, resembling a pagoda. Despite its thinness and rigidity, it exudes elegance and compactness, reflecting various Buddhist characteristics distilled into a remarkable form of Buddhist art. This particular style, known as Phra Ket Bum, embodies influences from early Chiang Saen technicians, presenting a fusion of tradition and innovation.

Dividing the Ket Bua Tum print into five categories, notably, the slender Ket Bua Tum print stands out as one of the most cherished among Phra Somdej enthusiasts, often referred to as the "Prince Minister" print. In the late 1970s, a remarkable exchange involving this print occurred, highlighting its esteemed value within the amulet community.



The portrayal of Somdej Ket Bua Tum encapsulates a timeless depiction, capturing the essence of devotion and reverence that resonates deeply with aficionados.

In the 2019 publication by the Fine Arts Department, a Phra Somdej Ket Bua Tum Wat Rakhang amulet by Khun Poj Tha Prachan stands out for its remarkable contents and pristine condition. Such meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail underscore the dedication of artisans like Khun Poj Tha Prachan, whose expertise is acknowledged by both academics and collectors alike.



The first five prints of Wat Rakhang are highly sought after: the large print, chedi shape, Sam base, Kesa Buatam, and Prak Bodhi.

Now, let's consider the 6th print, one amulet with two names:

Phra Somdej Garuda

Phra Somdej Garuda's Bat Head print is controversial: It is often regarded as Bang Khun Phrom only (check the next section), the one with a smooth texture resembling soft skin. Despite being from Rakhang temple, some might mistake it for a fake monk due to its appearance.

Here's where the intrigue begins. Take a closer look at the Phra Somdej Garuda-shaped bowl-headed figure. The outline boasts a large Garuda chest, printed with medium depth and clarity. Its flesh is yellowish-white with fine grain, absorbing red-brown love ceiling on the wall. There are no visible traces, leaving one to wonder if it's a ceiling stain from the crypt's heat.



Flipping to the back, you'll find the surface resembling a betel sheath, unmistakably reminiscent of Phra Somdej Wat Rakhang. Is it truly Phra "Song Klong," Wat Rakhang, Bang Khun Phrom? Regardless, it's still considered part of the authentic Phra Somdej household.

To deepen faith, let's refer to the teacher's textbook. In the book "Phra Somdej" by Burapha Witthaya Treasury, page 168 discusses the topic of Garuda's bat-shaped head as a Kaiser style print.

According to Teacher Treyampavai, this unique print's origins are fascinating. It's believed to be the original square frame type, personally carved by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn herself. This mold gives the Buddha image an ancient and humble appearance, akin to the posture of His Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

Furthermore, the mold's shape differs from others, as it doesn't display the base of the Ruean Kaew arch. This intentional design choice by Her Royal Highness aimed to distinguish it from various designs by Luang Vijarn Jian Nai.

Pra Somdej Pim Kaiser

Legend has it that the print earned the nickname "Kaiser style print" during a meeting between His Majesty King Buddha Luang and King William Kaiser of Germany. Upon seeing the Phra Somdej, Kaiser was astonished and intrigued, thus giving it the honorary title.



The Thailand Genuine Somdej-Toh Amulet Institute shares valuable insights into the Somdej Pim Kaiser, specifically addressing the definitive identification of the Kaiser print. This distinct print is characterized by specific features such as the Garuda's chest and the alms bowl head, observed in two variations: one with hair and one without.

Historically, two conflicting perspectives have emerged regarding the Kaiser print's origin and characteristics. One belief, based on information provided by "Treyampwai" and derived from Phra Achan Kwan and Phra Dhamma Thaworn, asserts that the Garuda's chest and alms bowl head print from Wat Rakhang, known as the Kaiser print, was carved and printed by Somdej Toh himself. This perspective emphasizes the traditional square-framed print with ancient and humble attributes, distinct from other royal technicians' creations.

In contrast, another belief, articulated by Mr. Chalam Chotchuang and his group, suggests that the Kaiser print was crafted by Chang Jon Wongchanglor and Luang Wicharn Jiannai. This interpretation highlights a bowl-shaped head without hair, with a large, round face, lobed ears, and a broad, convex chest. However, discrepancies arise regarding the accuracy of historical facts and interpretations, leading to conflicting accounts.

Notably, the historical method employed by the institute favors the Garuda's chest and alms bowl head print as the true Kaiser print, as per evidence gathered from reliable sources. This print aligns with the description provided by Somdej Rama 5 during his visit to Europe, where he presented it to King Kaiser of Germany as a cherished souvenir. Additionally, the institute refutes claims of other prints being Kaiser prints, emphasizing historical inaccuracies and misinterpretations.

Shall we consider a 7th print or not?

Phra Somdej Pim Hak Sok Kor

Also known as “Broken elbow print” for its projecting elbows and its sharp angular features rather than smoothly round, giving it an almost geometric appearance.



3/ Somdej Wat Bang Khun Phrom Family

Bang Khun Phrom Temple, originating from the Thonburi era, was initially named "Wat Waramtaram" but colloquially referred to as "Wat Waramtaram." Over time, a road divided the temple into two: Bang Khun Phrom Nai Temple and Bang Khun Phrom Nok Temple, later renamed "Intharawiharn Temple."

Bang Khun Phrom Nok Temple eventually became "Wat Mai Amataros," the birthplace of the renowned legend "Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom." Notably, Prince In, closely associated with the esteemed monk "Somdej Phutthachan Toh" (Brahmarangsi), generously supported Bang Khun Phrom Temple's expansion and renovation, sacrificing his wealth for its enhancement.

Following Prince In's demise, Clerk Brand Beetle, ancestor of the Thanakoset family, undertook the temple's restoration, guided by a deep reverence for Somdej Phutthachan Toh. Somdej Phutthachan Toh, a revered figure, frequently visited Bang Khun Phrom Temple, fostering a close bond with the temple's clerk, Yom Uppatham.

It's widely acknowledged that Somdej Phutthachan Toh was the creator of the famed Phra Somdej Wat Rakhang, Thailand's finest amulets, constructed between 2410 and 2414 BE. In 2414 BE, with Somdej Phutthachan Toh's blessing, Clerk Brand Duang initiated the creation of "Phra Luang Pho To" for Bang Khun Phrom Temple's pagoda, aiming to alleviate suffering during times of distress. Utilizing moulds from Phra Somdej Wat Rakhang, five prints were crafted, expanding the temple's amulet collection to nine variations.

These amulets, made from lime, powder, and magic powder provided by Somdej Phutthachan To, carry significant religious importance. Over time, some amulets were retrieved from the pagoda due to their renowned healing properties, particularly during epidemics and wartime.

Despite incidents like theft and war, the temple's dedication to preserving its heritage remained steadfast. In 2450 BE, faced with financial strain, the temple committee decided to sell some amulets from the crypt, known as "Mai Phra Kru," to fund renovation efforts. These amulets, numbering 2,900, were recovered in varying conditions, with the most sought-after being the Phra Pok Bodhi type.

The following set of Bang Kun Phrom family is useful for comparing prints:

- Top row (L to R): Pim Prok Pho, Pim Yai, Pim Sen Dai, Pim Song chedi, Pim Than Saem, Pim Than Koo
- Low row (L to R): Pim Sangkati, Pim Aok Krut Sian Bat, Pim Sai Yat, Pim Bua Toom, Pim Chan Loy



Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom Pim Sendai

Known as the “Thread Print” for its thin dome wall. Within the Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom lineage, its name derives from the intricate lines adorning the Buddha image, resembling delicate threads—a feature widely adored among Buddha amulets.



The moniker "Thread" is believed to carry auspicious connotations, promising only gains and no losses in endeavors, a quality highly coveted by merchants and businessmen alike.

Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom Pim Tan Ku



“Couples base” or “Double base” print, thus called for its unique seat pattern of alternating thick and thin bases.

Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom Pim Ok Krut



Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom Garuda Chest Print (Middle) from Wat Mai Amataros, located in the Phra Nakhon District of Bangkok.

This particular amulet has been revered since ancient times for its sacred power. It is believed to bestow blessings of strength, prosperity, and honor upon its worshippers, making it especially popular among government officials. Amulets like this one are

categorized based on the intricacies of Buddhist art, with three main types: large, medium, and small prints. The “Garuda Chest” print, known for its large, pronounced chest and overall strong features.



Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom Pim Sang Khaati

“Shoulder Robe Print”, identified by its clear robe details from the right shoulder; it is the elephant Ear Print.

Phra Somdet Wat Bang Khun Phrom This Elephant Ear Sang Khaati amulet is another Ultimate Champ amulet from Phra Somdet Wat Bang Khun Phrom. which is a Buddha amulet that His Royal Highness Somdej Phra Buddhacarn To Phromrangi of Wat Rakhang Khositaram But the construction process is different.



Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom Pim Saiyas

The “Reclining Buddha” print, the only Somdej Amulet that does not feature the Buddha in a seated pose.

Phra Somdej Pim Saiyas, shares the same material and patina as other Phra Somdej prints. However, it is remarkably scarce, with only a few known to exist. Its rarity is such that sightings and discussions are infrequent, with just two images observed thus far, each bearing the temple seal on its reverse.

Resembling other amulets from Wat Bang Khun Phrom, this reclining Phra Somdej amulet is characterized by its larger, horizontal shape, though wearing it around the neck may pose challenges. Nevertheless, its contents mirror those of other Phra Somdej amulets from the temple, a fact acknowledged by seasoned collectors. Notably, this amulet's discovery during the crypt's unveiling underscores its significance. Its distinctiveness lies in its carving—a reclining Buddha image—featuring thicker lines and intricate details, particularly evident in the robe patterns.



Phra Somdej Bang Khun Phrom Pim Hak Sok Kor

The Phra Somdej amulet with a double base and a broken elbow, originating from Wat In, Bang Khun Phrom, in the year 1942, holds a significant historical and spiritual value. Crafted by Phrakhru Sangkharak (Ngern), under the guidance of Luang Pu Phu, this amulet embodies a unique blend of tradition and craftsmanship.

At first glance, one might mistake it for the renowned Phra Somdej Than Khu-Arm Hak Sok Luang Pu Phu of Wat In, owing to its similar amulet block. However, Phrakhru Sangkharak's decision to adorn the back with a moon flower talisman sets it apart, making it a distinct creation from a decade-long endeavor. Despite this deviation, the material composition remains consistent, showcasing meticulous attention to detail and preserving the original beauty of the Buddha image.

This Phra Somdej amulet, bearing the imprints of Phrakhru Sang, carries the potent magic powder of Chao Khun Somdet Phutthachan To Phrom Rangsi and the revered Luang Pu Phu Wat In. Its authenticity is underscored by a certificate from the association, affirming its historical significance and spiritual potency.



The popularity of Phra Somdej prints, particularly those crafted by Phrakru Sang at Wat In, is testament to their exceptional quality and efficacy. With a concentration of magical powder from esteemed figures like Somdet Phra Buddhacarya To Phrom Rangsi and Luang Pu Phu Wat In, these amulets hold immense value for collectors and devotees alike.

4/ Kes Chaiyo Family

Phra Somdej Pim Wat Kes Chaiyo

Crafted in homage of the time when Buddha was eating very little, almost starving himself. This was a spiritual practice in which he mortified his body by eating and drinking practically nothing. Eventually he became emaciated and collapsed.

It was then that he realized that he still had not found the answer he was seeking, but that self-harm was not the way. So, he left asceticism behind and started a new practice wherein he meditated while also taking proper care of his body. It was this practice that finally led him to the supreme enlightenment that made him the Buddha.

The creation of Phra Somdej Wat Ket Chaiyo by Somdej Phra Buddhacarn (To Phromrangsi) adds to its rarity compared to the more commonly found Phra Somdej Wat Rakhang, large print.

Distinctive features of the Wat Ket Chaiyo print include:

- Okrong and Bai Sri (elephant) ears.
- Rectangular frame around the Buddha image.
- Posture depicting physical torture.
- Unique chest structure with deeper cleavage.
- White texture and sizable mass.
- Wider Krop Kaeo arch compared to other temples.
- Made from shell stone.
- Back showcasing neat decorative borders.

There are many prints, notably by the number of layers of the base, typically 5, 7 or 9 (yet some prints display 3 or 6 layers); all the Wat Rackhan types are represented for each layer-type, plus some idiosyncrasies.

5-layered print (five-tiered base)

Phra Somdej Ket Chaiyo Ha Chan



A 5-tiered model with a solid chest, originates from Wat Chaiyo Worawihan in Chaiyo District, Ang Thong Province. It is associated with Phra Chao Prakun Somdej Phra Buddhacarya (Toh Phrom Rangsi), who journeyed to create the "Luang Por Toh" Buddha image around the year 2407 BE, as an offering to dedicate merit to his mother.



This Buddha image, resembling a square-shaped Buddha amulet made of powder, bears resemblance to Phra Somdej, symbolizing a continuation of Buddhist traditions.

The unique style of the amulet print includes features such as a grooved chest, sloping ears, a wide cut edge, and a glass frame on all four sides. The amulet comes in two sizes: a 7-tiered base, known as the large print, and a smaller version with (a surprisingly) 6-tiered, 5-tiered, or (rarely) 3-tiered bases.

7-layered print (seven-tiered base)

Phra Somdej Ket Chaiyo Jet Chan

A 7-layer print with shoulder-length features, originates from Wat Chaiyo Worawihan in Tong Bang Khae.



During the opening stage, Phra Phaisan Visalo imparted insightful Dhamma teachings: "If you don't want to suffer, don't let yourself be too happy. Dhamma practice isn't just about finding peace or happiness, but also about learning to live with unrest and unhappiness, free from suffering."

This popular 7-layer print, referred to as number 2 or commonly known as the 7-layer print B, is distinguished by its shoulder-length features, notably visible through the curvature of the ears.

Examining the entire amulet print, one can observe defects throughout, likely stemming from the same mould, albeit differences attributed to wear and fading of the mould's decorations. Despite variations,

these 7-layer amulets remain highly sought-after, with the A variant particularly coveted due to its scarcity and equal difficulty in acquisition.



Genuine Buddha amulets, such as this one from Sia Tong Bang Khae, boast impeccable condition and aesthetic appeal, crafted from popular materials suitable for both display and personal use.

9-layered print (nine-tiered base)

Phra Somdej Ket Chaiyo Gao Chan



Phra Somdej Wat Ket Chaiyo, with its 9-tiered base, is even harder to come by than the renowned Phra Somdej Wat Rakhang, earning the epithet "few exist in Siam, Thailand."

Constructed around the same period as Wat Rakhang, its distinctive features include an Okrong design, Bai Sri ears, and a predominantly white and yellowish appearance, reflecting the early Rattanakosin era artistry. Commissioned by Somdej Phra Buddhacarya (Toh Phrom Rangsi) to honor his mother named Ket, the 9-tiered base signifies the "eight paths to nirvana."

Pra Krin Family

Phra Krin Pawaret

A Revered Artifact

Phra Krin Pawaret is a distinguished Phra Krin, commissioned by Somdej Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Pawareswariyalongkorn, with the assistance of Phraya Wiang Nai Naruban. The amulet features a Buddha image in the Pang Mor Ya position, crafted meticulously by ten groups of skilled artisans or royal craftsmen between 1839 and 1891.



Revered for its sacred magical properties, Phra Krin Pawaret holds significant acclaim among enthusiasts and has been highly sought after from the reign of King Rama IV to the present. It commands the highest trading price among metal amulets.

Origins and Rituals

Phra Krin Pawaret's creation was marked by a Buddhist coronation ceremony, accompanied by astrologers' rites, Brahmin rituals, and sacrifice ceremonies to invoke celestial aid. In the early stages, both clay and metal were utilized to create Buddha images classified as amulets. However, metal Buddha amulets, known as Phra Krin, gained more traction in society due to their distinct features and audible chime when shaken.

According to Krom Phraya Damrong Rajanupab, the form of Phra Krin resembles Phra Bhaisatchayaguru, or the Medicine Buddha. Each Phra Krin embodies the healing power of Phra Bhaisajyakuru Vaiduryaprabhatthagata, believed to offer protection from illness

and dangers. The smaller size of Phra Kring symbolizes reliance on the prestige of Phra Bhaisajyakuru to ward off perils during travels.

Historical Context

Phra Kring's construction flourished during the reign of King Nang Klao in 2382 B.E., renowned for its potent Buddhist blessings. Phra Kring Pawaret gained prominence during the reigns of King Rama IV and King Rama V, particularly revered for its association with Somdej Phra Buddhacarya (To Brahmarangsi). Despite numerous creations, the majority were safeguarded within Wat Phra Kaew's crypt, remaining largely unseen by the public.

Material Composition

According to His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch Krom Luang Vajirayanawong of Wat Bowonniwet Vihara, Phra Kring Pawaret typically comprises Nawaloha, a unique substance with a black surface that reveals a champadet color when polished. Comprising nine metals including gold, silver, copper, antimony, melted iron, lead-tin alloy, milk lead, mercury, and zinc, Nawaloha underscores the craftsmanship and sacredness of Phra Kring Pawaret.

Healing Powers and Miraculous Tales

Phra Kring is renowned for its ability to cure illnesses. Once, Somdej Phra Wanrat (Dang) of Wat Suthat fell ill with cholera. His Royal Highness Somdej Phra Maha Samanachao, Prince Vajirayanawong (M.R. Chuen Naphawong), visited and learned of his condition. He recalled seeing Somdej Krom Phraya Pawaret and requested the amulet be soaked in holy water for the sick person to drink and be healed. Despite initially intending to retrieve the amulet from Wat Bowon, the Supreme Patriarch (Pae) mentioned its sacred place, so it was soaked in holy water and offered to Somdej Phra Wanrat. Miraculously, his illness was alleviated, affirming the belief in Phra Kring's healing powers.

Phra Kring Wan Rat (Wannarat)

Wat Suthat

In 2479 BE, during the promotion ceremony for the clerical title of Somdej Phra Sangharaja (Pae) at Wat Suthat, located near the Giant Swing in Bangkok, the renowned Phra Kring Wan Rat was created. This particular edition, commonly referred to as Phra Kring 79, comprised a total of 464 pieces to commemorate the ascension of Somdej Phra Wanrat to the royal rank in the same year.

Among these, the version crafted by Sia Ball Thaweessap stands out for its exquisite beauty and pristine condition, showcasing remarkable decorative skills. Notably, Mr. Chang



Prasarn Srithai, recognized as the master technician behind this model, has contributed significantly to its popularity. Today, this edition remains one of the most sought-after models within the esteemed lineage of Phra Kring at Wat Suthat

Phra Kring Thep Moli

The inception of Phra Kring, under the guidance of Somdet Phra Sangharaja Pae at Wat Suthat, marked a pivotal moment in its rich history. Commencing with the Thep Moli model in 2441 BE, this revered tradition endured until 2479 BE, epitomizing a legacy steeped in spiritual significance. Notably, the materials used in casting were meticulously chosen, with Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn herself overseeing the procurement of Nawaloha, resulting in the distinct blackened hue known as black bronze.

A notable example from 2479 BE, comprising 464 pieces, illustrates the meticulous process behind each creation. Students, as part of their participation, were required to contribute Pod Duang money or the Royal Seal of 1 baht, along with additional funds for the decorator. These expenses, sanctioned by His Majesty the King, underscored the solemnity of the endeavor.



However, a deviation from tradition arose in 2480 BE, coinciding with Somdej Phra Sangharaja's appointment. This model, totaling about 330 pieces, bore a reddish-yellow hue instead of the customary black. This departure stemmed from a group of students' desire to adorn the Phra Kring with a cover, prompting a dilution of the mixture intended to yield the traditional blackened finish. Nonetheless, His Majesty remained unperturbed, affirming the inherent magic within the Phra Kring Thep Moli.

The illustrious life of Somdet Phra Sangharaja Pae, born as Phae Tissadeva in 2399 BE, culminated in his appointment as the 12th Supreme Patriarch of Rattanakosin. His tenure saw the creation of Phra Kring according to the recipe of Wat Pa Kaew and Phra Kring Pawaret, both imbued with intricate ceremonies and rituals. Even after his passing in 2487 BE, his legacy endured, perpetuating the sacred tradition of Phra Kring construction at Wat Suthat. Guided by the principle of "good inside and good outside," these creations embodied spiritual harmony, resonating with believers for generations to come.

Phra Kring Pathum Suriyawong

Phra Kring Pathum Suriyawong, bearing Khmer influence with a Tibetan visage, holds a significant historical legacy. Initially constructed during the reign of King Rama III in 1839, it was a focal point of a grand royal ceremony. Its subsequent editions were crafted during the reign of King Rama IV, King Mongkut. This period coincided with the ascension of the seventh Supreme Patriarch, Somdet Phra Samnachaokrom Phra Paramanuchitchinoros

(King Vasukri), where a lavish coronation ceremony was held at Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkalaram on August 1, 2394 BE.



The Phra Kring Pathum Suriyawong amulet, characterized by its singular print, features a Phra Kring Pia Thong variant with a stamped Chinese code on its back. Crafted by ancient Chinese artisans, this amulet was imbued with both stamped and unstamped materials, reflecting diplomatic ties with China. Its esteemed history, marked by royal ceremonies attended by Brahmins and Buddhists alike, underscores its significance. Notably, eminent figures such as Somdet Phra Sangharaja No. 7 and Somdet Phra Phutthachan To Brahmarungsi partook in prayers, enhancing its spiritual potency.

Derived from a prototype metal from China, Phra Kring Pathum Suriyawong is composed of brass or gold maho, boasting exceptional craftsmanship evident in its intricate mosquito net pattern. Its authenticity as a genuine Buddha image is unmistakable, making it a prized possession for collectors and enthusiasts alike. The rarity of this artifact, coupled with its rich historical background, makes it a captivating subject for study and admiration. Despite challenges in capturing its essence through photography, the allure of Phra Kring Pathum Suriyawong remains undiminished, beckoning further exploration and appreciation.

Phra Kring Nong Sae

Phra Kring Nong Sae, another esteemed member of the Phra Kring family, holds a unique historical origin. Initially believed to have been discovered in Cambodia atop Phnom Bakheng Mountain, it was later revealed to have originated from Nong Sae, or Muang Sae, in the Nan Chao Kingdom. This ancient territory, once a Chakra of Thai descent, now lies within Hunnan Province, China. Historians speculate that Phra Kring Nong Sae was crafted during the prosperous reign of the Nong Sae Luang Dynasty, likely under the rule of King Phi Lor Goh or Khun Borom..

Discovered centuries ago, at Nong Sae and subsequently found at Khao Phanom Bakeng in Cambodia, Phra Kring Nong Sae symbolizes the friendly relations between the Nong Sae and Khmer Dynasties. Despite its name, Phra Kring Nong Sae does not contain bell beads but features a cast image of Phra Kring, available in both solid and hollow-bottom castings. Notably, its unique design includes a backward-leaning Buddha image,



addressed by the casting technician through a thicker and larger base to prevent toppling during installation.

Crafted from a durable bronze metal akin to gold in strength, Phra Kring Nong Sae exudes a yellowish hue resembling a Chinese wrench, with a dark brown surface akin to Phra Kring Yai. Revered for its remarkable virtues, Phra Kring Nong Sae is believed to possess potent healing properties against sickness and black magic, making it a rare and legendary artifact within the Phra Kring Nok lineage.

Phra Kring Tuk Taen (Tukkatan)

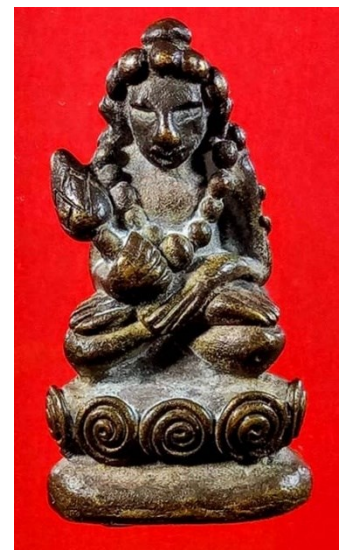
Phra Kring Tukkatan Samadhi, with its distinctive lotus base, belongs to the early period of Phra Kring Nok amulets, which were imported into Siam from abroad. This particular Phra Kring variant encompasses a broad range, including the Chinese Phra Kring Bakeng, Phra Kring Nong Sae, and Phra Kring Tri Ong, among others. Phra Kring Tukkatan gained significant popularity initially believed to be an imported amulet from Cambodia.



However, further examination revealed its absence in Cambodian records, leading to a new belief that it originated in Thailand, possibly along the northeastern border with Cambodia. This belief is supported by the similar characteristics shared with Phra Upakut and Phra Buakhem, reflecting the skills of Thai artisans, particularly those of Mon descent, from the late Ayutthaya to the early Rattanakosin period.

hostile situations.

Phra Kring Tukkatan depicts a seated Buddha in the diamond meditation posture, positioned atop a lotus base adorned with serrated lotuses. Both hands are poised in a coordinated meditation stance, with one hand holding a pot of holy water and the other grasping a vajra or a lotus flower. Its distinctive features, including a face resembling that of a grasshopper, the absence of sakura atop the head, and a prominent round nose bump, earned it the moniker "Tukkatan." Crafted from silver bronze, known as Pod Duang silver material, it boasts a blackened surface, adding to its allure and mystique.



Phra Chaiwat

Arguably not a Phra Krin yet often presented together because of a tradition that has been popular since the reign of King Rama IV involving the use of a bell to offer holy water to monks, which is then used to anoint one's face for protection.



During the reign of King Rama V, there is a record indicating that Somdej Phra Buddha Luang performed a ceremony known as "Casting Phra Chai" to hang around his son's neck as he embarked on a journey to study abroad.

Phra Chai, also known as "Phra Chaiwat," is small in size, comparable to the tip of a pinky finger or the end of chopsticks. During the tenure of Somdej Phra Sangkharat (Pae) at Wat Suthat in 1898, the first model of the Thep Moli version of the Phra Kring was initiated. This tradition continued until he became a monk at Brahmuni in 1916, at which point many followers began to take Phra Kring amulets, deviating from the original practice. To address this, "Phra Chaiwat" was created as a smaller replacement.

Phra Chai features Khmer inscriptions on its base, likely indicating its initial version. Although the exact year remains uncertain, it likely coincides with the construction of Phra Kring Brahmamuni. The gold-plated version of Phra Chai emerged around the same time, becoming more popular than other models, particularly among the Vasuthara family. Luang Supakorn Bansan (Num Wasutharn) requested permission to participate in the casting ceremony, resulting in this coveted gold-plated model. Following casting, Luang Suwan, the royal goldsmith, intricately decorated the amulets with Khmer inscriptions representing various Buddha names.

PRA SOMDEJ TOH DISIPLE PRINTS

Phra Somdej Luang Pu Phu Saiyid



An eight-tiered Buddha amulet featuring broken elbows, crafted by Luang Pu Phu at Wat Intharawihan, Bang Khun Phrom, Bangkok in the 2460s BE.

Fashioned from Buddha amulet powder, it takes a square shape with a hatched design akin to Phra



Somdej. Luang Pu Phu, an immortal monk and direct disciple of His Holiness Somdej Phra Buddhacarya (Toh Phromrangsi), closely assisted "Somdej To" during his travels for overseeing works. Notably, Luang Pu Phu created a statue of Luang Phor "Phra Sri Ariyametriya" at Intharawihan Temple.

His amulets, often referred to as "disciple amulets," enjoy immense popularity and stand at the forefront of those commonly chosen in lieu of Somdej amulets.

Phra Somdej Pim Sen Bat

Monk "Bowl Head" print, called such for the large over-sized head found in these prints.

Phra Somdej Pim Sen Luang Pu Hin Wat Rakang (early batch) Bat Year 2484 BE.

Materials used from Lp Pilan Wat Rakang, Wat Sam Pluem and with 5 magic powders (Pong Ithaje, Phong Patamung, Phong Maharaj, Phong Puttakhun and Phong Trinisinghe).



Phra Somdet Kang Pla/ Hu Bai Sri

Amulets crafted from sacred relics immersed in holy water, featuring fish bone imprints with Bai Sri ears.

The inaugural series of these amulets was fashioned in 2468 BE, comprising a total of thirteen pieces. The imprint bearing the likeness of Luang Pu Toh at Wat Pradoo Chimphli was meticulously designed with the intent of infusing it with extraordinary mystical properties.

Through the quest for auspicious artifacts and various arcane rituals, imbued with sacred magic, predominantly executed by hand. This iteration of the Buddha amulet is often referred to as the "Holy Water Soaking Model," as it undergoes immersion in holy water within a dragon's protuberance. Furthermore, Luang Pu continues to consecrate these amulets throughout the rainy season.



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