

September 2015

## **Sacred Migrations- Sri Lanka to Luang Prabang**

Watching the news of the mass migrations of people into Europe now, one can easily feel overwhelmed. May this shift in humanity continue to open Hearts for a better future.

Laos has certainly experienced its own challenges and shifts during our lifetime but sacred symbols and art that migrated here have managed to survive for centuries.



The Phrabang Buddha is now peacefully at Home in the Hall above following years of renovation work. This sacred guardian image of the town is believed to have been cast in Sri Lanka. Stories tell of devotees in Sri Lanka, having gathered precious gems and gold, requested the help of hermits from the Himalaya to cast a Buddha image. The hermits had acquired four bone relics of Lord Buddha to be included in the beautifully created statue. The Phrabang was eventually gifted to the King of Angkor in display of deep friendship.

Those who have travelled to Laos may recall hearing the story of Fa Ngum, the Lao prince who was born with a full set of 32 teeth. Considered inauspicious, he was sent down the Mekong in a bamboo raft at the age of seven...

Fa Ngum's raft was rescued by a monk from the rapids (which border modern-day Laos and Cambodia) and he was raised in the court of Angkor.

Fa Ngum later married a Khmer princess and at the age of 33, Prince Fa Ngum was given the sacred Phrabang Buddha guardian as he began his conquest to establish his own kingdom back in his homeland.

Accompanied by his royal wife with the sacred Phrabang and in a grand procession of elephants, Fa Ngum arrived back home and declared Luang Prabang his Kingdom of a Million Elephants in 1353.



The rainy season has brought healthy flow to the rivers along with lush green and a much quieter time for visitors to explore around town. I could spend all day feeling the peaceful energy where the Nam Khan and Mekong rivers meet at the tip of the peninsula of the old town.



Sitting in the beautiful little public park, one can understand why this spot was considered sacred to establish a new kingdom centuries ago.

Luang Prabang is celebrating 20 years of UNESCO World Heritage this 2015.

Another favorite pastime in Laos is delighting the eyes with the beautiful textile arts. The tradition of extraordinary weaving skills continues in Laos. A small shop on the Main Road in town has some of the greatest treasures of textiles!



Kim Thong comes from a family and community of master weavers in Houaphanh province in northeastern Laos. Always a feast for the eyes-

Find Kim Thong Lao Silk Shop opposite the school building just up from Villa Santi on the Main Road. Email: [KinThongLaoSilk@gmail.com](mailto:KinThongLaoSilk@gmail.com)

It's also always great visiting with a dear friend Khamsouk who is one of the best guides I have known for many years.



Khamsouk can help with arrangements throughout Laos and his family run a delightful little guesthouse called **Villa Meuang Lao** just off the Morning Market and steps away from the Mekong. Email: [khamsouk.laos@gmail.com](mailto:khamsouk.laos@gmail.com)

Coming up this next Full Moon of 27 October will be celebrations marking the end of Buddhist Lent...



A magical time in Luang Prabang with lanterns and floats sending off light on the river for a new year ahead.

And don't forget to enjoy sunset by the meeting of the rivers...



Sorry it became too dark to get a photo of my Luang Prabang Salad with sticky rice! There is also no photography permitted of the Phrabang Buddha, so you'll have to come to Laos to see the beautiful standing image.

Have a look at the Laos page on: [www.alamasia.net](http://www.alamasia.net) for more links that may interest you.

May this find you all well with blessings for the upcoming season!