

Phra Prathom Chedi

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Most of ancient architecture in Thailand is related to religious in Buddhism or Brahmanism, such as Chedi or Stupa, Ubosoth (temple), Vihara, Sanctuary etc. The Buddhism architecture in Thailand got an idea from Indian Arts. In Buddhism Era, People who respect Buddhism did not make any respect image or movement. Until Buddha went to Nirvana and after ceremony in Kushinagar, Buddhism got a Buddha's relic. The Buddhism architecture began from this period. We began to build the Stupa for Buddha's Relic and build many Chediya for remembrance of Buddha.

300 years after Buddha, King Ashoka the great period, Buddhism went out from India, the Northway from Gandhara to China. The East way to Lanka, Burma and Thailand. We got the Indian Arts from this period and we develop these arts later.

Phra Prathom Chedi is the oldest monument in central of Thailand, and it shows the Indian's civilization. In this period in Thailand, we name Davarati Period.

Phra Prathom Chedi was found in 1831 by the Royal Prince, King Mongkut, who became King Rama IV. In that time, the Prince was monk in Buddhism. He went 60 kms, down from Nagkok and he found the ruin Stupa which was a very old one. After he became King, he studied from description. We believe that this Chedi was built by Sona Thora from King Ashoka period. Phra Prathom Chedi was in Amaravad to Kuppta period. About 7-10 Buddhism's Century this Stupa was separate to 3-levels. The first level Gotta square shape decorated to Stucco about Buddha's story.

King Rama IV of Thailand conserved Stupa by building the big Chedi over the old Stupa which was ruined. The king intimated the old one by building the old Stupa in one corner of big Chedi and he painted the picture of the old and the new one on Mural Painting in the building nearby.

Phra Prathom Chedi means the first Stupa, Prathom means the first and Chedi is the Stupa. Phra Prathom Chedi is 108 meters high. The diameter is 96 meters. It became the biggest monument in Thailand. The conservation of the big Chedi, we got 3 years to study. The field surface is in a very bad condition. It got cracked all around and we tested the foundation of Chedi. We spent 7 years in conservation. The first step after scaffolding, we began to get the ruin surface out of Chedi. The old Morta which does not strand will get out by cleaning and dry it. We use stainless steel for covering the Chedi. And use new technique to help us. After finish this work, it cost about one million dollars.