

Media Release September 2011

From Courtship to Kinship: Wedding Celebrations of Laos' Ethnic Group
A new exhibition opens at the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, Luang Prabang

On 15 September 2011, a new exhibition will open at the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, providing a rare insight into the wedding traditions of the Lao people and several of the country's ethnic minorities. It will feature unusual artefacts, such as the "celestial crown" of the Yao Mun made of pure silver and human hair, a silk Tai Lao bride's outfit with gold embroidery, and a Hmong brass and bamboo mouth harp. The exhibit will also include stunning documentary photography of rituals and explanations of wedding customs in Laos.

The exhibition, titled *From Courtship to Kinship: Wedding Celebrations of Laos' Ethnic Groups*, brings to life the rich variety of ceremonies, costumes, and customs seen during weddings in Laos. The exhibition topic has been selected in response to the great interest TAEC's visitors have shown in courtship and wedding traditions.

It is also an opportunity to display some of the finest pieces in the TAEC permanent collection, complemented by loan items from Nophao, Ock Pop Tok, Tilleke & Gibbins International, and Victoria Vorreiter. Photographs from Kees Sprengers and Gabriel Shaya and videos produced by SevenOrient are also featured. This exhibition has been generously supported by Dr. William Klausner, Mary Connors, and a number of anonymous private donors.

TAEC is an acknowledged leader in the field of Asian cultural heritage management and education. A museum and cultural organisation in Luang Prabang, TAEC's objective is to promote appreciation for the rich ethnic diversity of Laos through education, outreach, exhibitions, research and livelihoods development. This will be the tenth exhibition TAEC has created since opening in 2007. *From Courtship to Kinship: Wedding Celebrations of Laos' Ethnic Groups* will be on display at TAEC for one year, and entry is included in the regular museum ticket price.

Also at TAEC, the Museum Shop sells fairly traded handicrafts from over 500 village artisans and Le Patio Café serves a selection of ethnic minority food, drinks and cakes.



Yao Mun bride wearing the celestial crown. Photo by Kees Sprengers.



Tai Lao groom in the mid-20th century.



Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre's main exhibition galleries.

Open: 9.00am – 6.00pm, Tuesday – Sunday (closed Mondays).
Entry: 20,000 Kip, free for Lao citizens.
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