



For Immediate Release
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**Luang Prabang museum announces internationally curated exhibition:
“Seeds of Culture: From Living Plants to Handicrafts”
On display now.**



*Left: Akha woman and child (Laos). Center: Falam Chin woman with her headdress (Myanmar).
Right: Job's tears decoration on Akha hair piece (Laos). Photographs courtesy of Dr Yukino Ochiai.*

LUANG PRABANG, LAOS – September 21, 2016. The Traditional Arts & Ethnology Centre (TAEC) has launched a new exhibition entitled, “Seeds of Culture: From Living Plants to Handicrafts,” on 17 September 2016. This exhibit features the Job’s tears (Coix) plant, indigenous to mainland Southeast Asia, to demonstrate the important relationship between humans and nature. It is guest curated by Dr. Yukino Ochiai, a Japanese ethnobotanist at Ryukoku University, who has researched Job’s tears for over 15 years, amassing an unparalleled collection of objects featuring the plant’s seeds.

This special exhibition provides insight into the clothing and changing lifestyles of the region’s ethnic minorities, including the Akha, Chin, Karen, Jinghpaw and Palaung. On display are unusual artefacts, including a Chin headdress that uses porcupine quills, and magnificent necklaces from 14 different countries in Africa, Asia, and South America. Visitors are treated to a visually stunning display allowing them to explore the meaningful role of the environment in the daily lives of rural ethnic communities. Also, with the addition of discovery corners, an extensive activity centre, and ethnobotanical garden, the museum is perfect for children and adults.

TAEC Co-Director Tara Gujadhur says, “*In the past, ethnic groups gathered different kinds of natural materials from the forests and fields, including cotton, plant dyes, and the seeds of Job’s tears. Nowadays, these natural materials are being replaced by those from markets, such as machine-made textiles, chemical dyes, and synthetic fibres. This is just one indicator of the upheavals these communities are undergoing – resettlement of villages, dependence on a market economy, and erosion of cultural practices and customs. We are looking forward to shedding more light on these issues through this exhibit.*” The exhibition will be open through Fall 2017.

Sponsors

TAEC gratefully acknowledges Professor William Klausner, Exo Foundation, and Saffron Coffee for their generous support of this exhibition.

About the Traditional Arts & Ethnology Centre

The Traditional Arts & Ethnology Centre is the only museum in Laos dedicated to cultural diversity. TAEC is engaged in a broad range of museum and community engagement activities, reflecting its commitment to supporting living ethnic minority communities to preserve and promote their cultural heritage while looking towards the future. Located in Ban Khamyong, Luang Prabang, Laos, the museum and shop is open Tuesday – Sunday from 9am until 6pm. Admission is 25,000 Lao kip for adults, free for children under 12 and Lao citizens. The TAEC Boutique on the main road in Ban Vat Sene sells fair trade crafts made by ethnic groups. It is open from 9am – 9pm every day.

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