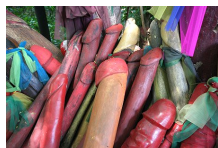


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By: Stefan Anitei, Science Editor



Lingams

[The Phallic Shrine: Thai Temple of the Penises](#)

In Bangkok

There are many kinds of tourists going to Thailand. Some go for the sunny beaches, others for the culture of the country... Did you believe the latter? Hmm, let's face it, old jerks and pedophiles, you go there for the (ow, I was going to say 'f**king') sexual tourism...But amongst the shrines dotting the landscape around Bangkok, there is one of the less known tourist attractions in Thailand: behind the Nai Lert Park Hotel (formerly The Hilton), the strange Chao Mae Tuptim ("Pomegranate" or "Blood Orange") Shrine is located. Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country, with Buddhist temples and Buddha images, but there are also numerous small and large spirit houses and shrines to Hindu Gods and animist deities. [img=2]The traditional offerings in a Hindu shrine are white jasmine flowers, incense sticks and both pink and white lotus flowers. But if you look closely (or not quite), some of the offerings in the Chao Mae Tuptim Shrine, dedicated to fertility and good luck, do not match this reality. In fact, you could say that sexual tourism has adopted here another dimension: while stepping through this shrine, you will have the feeling of walking through a forest of giant penises. This is the lingams' (phallus symbols) shrine. There is a countless number of lingams in the Chao Mae Tuptim Shrine, some a few meters long. Many of the wooden lingams are very brightly colored, predominantly in red."The most powerful sexual rite, of re-integration, requires intercourse with the female partner when she is menstruating, and her 'red' sexual energy is at its peak. For these reasons, the representations in the art of the female counterpart, or initiator, are usually colored red," explains Philip Rawson, an expert of erotic imagery of Tantric beliefs within Hinduism and Buddhism, in his book "Tantra: The Indian Cult of Ecstasy". [img=3]The story says that a woman came to this shrine praying to become pregnant. It seems that her wish was accomplished and after the baby was born, she turned back with an offering of an oversized penis. The news quickly spread about the fertility shrine and many people began coming here with their own offerings of giant penises. The shrine is not found in any touristic ad or catalogue, as most likely, the 'exhibits' are not openly acceptable for the Thai society.