

The National Museum of Myanmar



The Present Myanmar National Museum

Introduction

The invaluable historical artifacts displayed at the National Museum of Myanmar showcase the wealth of history and culture of Myanmar. Each object displayed in the respective showrooms reflects Myanmar's social, political and economic pasts, the traditions and technology of that time, and the intricate traits and rituals of the people in the successive periods in the past. The rich collections of Myanmar National Museum include archaeological, ethnological, traditional, religious, cultural and art objects.

Historical Background

The National Museum of Myanmar was first inaugurated in June, 1952, after four years of regaining independence of the country, at the Jubilee Hall built in Shwedagon Pagoda Road, Yangon. In earlier days, the museum was formed as a historical museum and the most attractive historical artifact was the Royal Lion Throne, which was returned from India in 1948 when Myanmar gained its independence. The first chief curator was Daw Nyunt Han, who obtained her museological knowledge from abroad. She helped establish the National Museum after many hardships and difficulties.

Because of the extended collections, the museum was shifted to another building, located at Pansodan Street in Yangon in February, 1970. The museum pieces, such as antiques, cultural objects, arts and handicrafts of indigenous races, royal regalia, musical instruments, decorative arts and an art gallery, were displayed in different showrooms of the three-storey building. However, the building was not owned by the Ministry of Culture.

Construction of the present National Museum began on 23 June 1990. The present National Museum is located at 66/74, Pyay Road, Dagon Township, occupying a land area of 3.804 acres. Six years later, the large 5 storey building with the total dimension of 360 ft by 200 ft was opened to the public on 18 September 1996 in a grand scale.

The National Museum performs the vision of helping to implement the two social objectives of “Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character”, and “Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit”. The highest priority to protect, document, preserve and promote is given to the artifacts.

The Exhibition Showrooms

The National Museum of Myanmar currently houses 14 permanent exhibition showrooms. The floor area of exhibits is 194,800 sq ft.

1. Ground Floor

a. Myanmar Epigraphy and Calligraphy Showroom

Myanmar alphabets, vowels and numbers, evidence of Myanmar calligraphy from successive period and handwritings script of writers in 20th Century A.D are on display.



*Stone Vessel with Pyu Inscription
(1st century AD)*



*Royal Regalia
(Cray Fish Pitcher)*



*Glass Mosaic Screen
(19th century AD)*

b. Lion Throne Showroom



The Royal Lion Throne

The lion throne, the main exhibit of the National Museum of Myanmar, is over 150 years old and made of Yamanay wood and gilded all over. There are also 8 different kinds of thrones (miniature models) of ancient Muanmar Kings.

The Lion Throne was used by the king to adjudicate on law cases. Taken to Kolkata Museum by Colonial officials, it was returned to Myanmar as the gift of Independence in 1948. This is the only original throne left intact as the other 8 were destroyed during World War II.

c. Yadanabon Period Showroom

The models, photographs and paintings of the Mandalay Myanansankyaw Palace, royal furniture and ceremonial costumes of royalty are displayed in this showroom.

2. First Floor

a. Natural History Showroom

Fossilised primate remains from 40 million years ago, fossil invertebrate land and sea animals, fossils of trees barks and seeds from various parts of Myanmar are on display.

b. Myanmar Prehistoric Period and Protohistoric Period Showroom

Articles with approximate age of ten thousand years collected from Padalin Cave, articles of Bronze Age, above two thousand years ago and articles from Pyu period (5th B.C to 9th century A.D) can be seen in this showroom.



*Primate Fossil of
40- million Years Age*



*Figurines of Ancient Myanmar
Performers Troupe*



*Bronze Lotus Bud
(11th century AD)*

c. Myanmar Historic Period Showroom

Dolomite stone votive tablets, terracotta votive tablets, decorated stucco beams, copies of mural paintings, photographs and paintings of the pagodas in Bagan, rubbings of stone inscriptions from 10th to 13th Century A.D and items from Pinya period to Konbaung period including the small scale models of palace buildings can be studied.

d. Royal Regalia Showroom

The royal regalia is made of pure solid gold and studded with jewels, and is displayed in front of the Lion Throne. The royal regalia is used on ceremonial occasions by the King and Queen to receive the homage from their subjects three times a year.

3. Second Floor

a. Myanmar Traditional Folk art Showroom

Relating to religion, travelling, and weaving. Traditional toys and ten kinds of Myanmar traditional arts and crafts are on display.



*Miniature stupa made of
coconut shell*



Myanmar marionettes



*Xylophone comprising
five animals forms*

b. Myanmar Performing Arts Showroom

Myanmar Orchestra, musical instruments of national races and Myanmar marionettes are shown.

4. Third Floor

a. Myanmar Art Gallery

Paintings of past masters and the works of contemporary artists are on display.

b. Myanmar Art Gallery (2)

Oil paintings on tinfoil of the 10 Jataka tales painted in 1926 are on display.

c. Myanmar Ancient Ornaments Showroom

Ornaments of ancestors from Pyu period to Yadanabon period are exhibited.



Oil Painting of Ancient Myanmar Family (19th century)



Gold Signet Ring (Pyu Period)



Oil Painting on tinfoil (1926) "Jataka Tale"

5. Fourth Floor

a. Buddha Images Showroom

Votive tablets from Pyu and Bagan periods and Buddha images from Pyu to Yadanabon period are exhibited.

b. Showroom for the Culture of National Races

Models of national races with traditional costumes, musical instruments and cultural artifacts of national races are displayed.



*Chin ceremonial
Head-dress*



*Mon glass mosaic
decorated stand*



*Buddha image from
Bagan period (11th Century)*

General Information

- Opening Hours : Museum is opened daily from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm except on gazette holidays.
- Activities : Conducted tours by appointment are available, volunteer guided tours are available, and holding special exhibitions are occasionally performed.
- Address : 66/74, Pyay Road, Dagon Township, Yangon, Myanmar.
- Telephone Number : 951-378652, 951-371540.
- Fax Number : 951-378652
- Email : DCICOCI@mptmail.net.mm

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