

'CIVILIZED BANGKOK' IN GLOBALIZATION: THE REPRESENTATION  
OF BANGKOK IN OFFICIAL TOURIST GUIDES, 1998-2013

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วรรณพร พงษ์เพ็ง : "กรุงเทพอารยะ" ในกระแสโลกาภิวัตน์: การนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์กรุงเทพฯ ในคู่มือแนะนำเที่ยวของรัฐ พ.ศ. 2541-2556 ('CIVILIZED BANGKOK' IN GLOBALIZATION: THE REPRESENTATION OF BANGKOK IN OFFICIAL TOURIST GUIDES, 1998-2013) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: รศ. ดร. สุจิตรา จงสถิตย์วัฒนา, 353 หน้า.

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจแนวคิด "กรุงเทพอารยะ" จากการนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของกรุงเทพฯ ในคู่มือแนะนำเที่ยวของรัฐที่ผลิตระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2541-2556

สมมติฐานการศึกษา คือ "กรุงเทพอารยะ" เป็นภาพลักษณ์หลัก ที่นำเสนอผ่านอัตลักษณ์สำคัญของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวทางวัฒนธรรมในกรุงเทพฯ อันประกอบด้วย "ความหลากหลายทางวัฒนธรรม" และ "การสร้างสรรค์วัฒนธรรมอย่างผสมกลมกลืน" การนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์นี้แสดงให้เห็นคุณค่าทางวัฒนธรรม และสร้างภาพลักษณ์ที่ดีให้ประเทศไทย

วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษา เพื่อจำแนกภาพลักษณ์แบบต่างๆของกรุงเทพฯ และวิเคราะห์กระบวนการประกอบสร้างและนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์ "กรุงเทพอารยะ" ที่ปรากฏในคู่มือแนะนำเที่ยวของรัฐ การศึกษาพบว่า ภาพลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของกรุงเทพฯ ประกอบด้วย "เมืองพุทธ", "เมืองแห่งประวัติศาสตร์ศิลป์", และ "มหานครแห่งอาหาร" ภาพลักษณ์เหล่านี้ประกอบสร้างขึ้นจากลักษณะ "ความเป็นไทย" ที่มีคุณค่าสูงสุดด้านความงาม, ความศรัทธา, ความบันเทิง, และความเป็นเลิศด้านรสชาติ

จากการวิเคราะห์กระบวนการนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์พบว่า ลักษณะของ "กรุงเทพอารยะ" ที่นำเสนอในการศึกษานี้มีสองด้าน ประการแรก กรุงเทพฯเป็นศูนย์กลางของอารยธรรมพุทธศาสนาและราชสำนักที่สืบเนื่องจากสมัยสุโขทัยถึงรัตนโกสินทร์ ประการที่สอง กรุงเทพฯเป็นมหานครเก่าแก่ของภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ ที่ได้รับอิทธิพลจากอารยธรรมโลก รวมทั้งวัฒนธรรมที่สร้างขึ้นในเอเชียและเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้

ในบริบทโลก การประกอบสร้างภาพลักษณ์ "กรุงเทพอารยะ" มีลักษณะสอดคล้องกับกระแสการท่องเที่ยวของโลก ส่งผลให้กรุงเทพฯเป็นเมืองท่องเที่ยวชั้นนำของโลก

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The study aims to explore the concept of “Civilized Bangkok” from the representation of Bangkok cultural images in official tourist guides in the period of “Amazing Thailand” campaign from 1998 up until 2013.

In this study, it is hypothesized that ‘Civilized Bangkok’ is the most prominent characteristics of the identity of Bangkok’s cultural attractions selected to represent civilization in official tourist guides. This includes a *‘diversity of cultures’* with *‘well-blended’ formation* represented on different ‘value-based’ concepts that has created a positive image of the Thai nation.

The objectives of this study are to identify images of Bangkok and analyze the construction and representation of “Civilized Bangkok” based on official tourist guides. It is found that there are three images of Bangkok including Buddhist City, City of Exotic Arts, and Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines. These images are constructed from the characteristics of the epitome of “thainess” in aspects of beauty, faith, entertainment, and tastes.

From the process of representation, the characteristics of “Civilized Bangkok” is represented based on two aspects. Firstly, Bangkok has been portrayed as the center of continuing Buddhist and Royal civilization from Sukhothai period to Rattanakosin period. Secondly, Bangkok represents the status of Old Metropolis of Southeast Asia that had been influenced from world civilization and cultures originated in Asia and Southeast Asia.

In global context, the construction of “Civilized Bangkok” is corresponding to global tourism which enhances Bangkok to be one of the foremost tourist city in the world.

Field of Study: Thai Studies

Student's Signature .....

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## CONTENTS

	Page
THAI ABSTRACT .....	iv
ENGLISH ABSTRACT .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
CONTENTS .....	vii
CHAPTER I .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Rationale of the Research .....	1
1.2 Objectives .....	12
1.3 Major Arguments .....	13
1.4 Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology .....	13
1.4.1 Conceptual Framework .....	13
1.4.2 Research Methodology .....	16
1.5 Literature Review .....	16
1.6 Definition of terms .....	31
1.7 Significance of the study .....	36
1.8.1 Publication .....	37
1.8.2 Online Data .....	40
CHAPTER II .....	42
BANGKOK TOURISM BACKGROUND .....	42
2.1 The Development of Bangkok Tourism .....	43
2.1.1 The establishment of tourism organizations .....	43
2.1.2 The development of tourism facilities and accommodations in Bangkok....	46

	Page
2.1.3 The development of tourist attractions in Bangkok.....	49
2.1.3.1 Before the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign.....	50
2.1.3.2 The 'Amazing Thailand' campaign and afterward, 1998 – 2013 .....	59
2.2 The representation of Bangkok images .....	64
2.3 Identities of Bangkok cultural attractions compared to Thailand provinces .....	77
2.4 Identities of Bangkok cultural attractions compared to leading Asian tourist cities.....	79
CHAPTER 3.....	84
BANGKOK AS A 'BUDDHIST CITY': THE REPRESENTATION OF 'CIVILIZED BANGKOK' FROM BUDDHIST CULTURE .....	84
3.1 Background of the image as a ' <i>Buddhist city</i> ' .....	85
3.2 The promotion of Bangkok as a ' <i>Buddhist city</i> '.....	93
3.3 The representation of ' <i>Civilized Bangkok</i> ' from the characteristics of Buddhist Attractions .....	101
3.3.1 Old Buddhist cityscape: The expression of traditional Buddhist practices through the preservation of Bangkok's Old Town .....	101
3.3.2 The expression of faith from the great creation of Buddhist temples and Buddha images .....	114
3.3.3 The center of Buddhism in Thailand and Southeast Asia .....	135
3.3.4 The integration of art and science in a Buddhist monastery: Wat Pho, the representative of an educational center of the country and Southeast Asian .....	145
CHAPTER 4.....	152



BANGKOK AS 'THE CITY OF EXOTIC ARTS': THE REPRESENTATION OF 'CIVILIZED BANGKOK' FROM FINE ARTS CULTURE .....	152
4.1 Background of Bangkok's image as 'the City of Exotic Arts' .....	153
4.2 The promotion of Bangkok as 'the City of Exotic Arts' .....	155
4.3 The Representation of Bangkok as ' <i>the City of Exotic Arts</i> ' from the characteristics of masterpieces Rattanakosin court art, Performing arts and Thai silk.....	163
4.3.1 Iconic Rattanakosin court arts in state museums, state theatres, and national ceremonies: The epitome of 'Thai beauty' in Bangkok tourist space .....	164
4.3.1.1 The representation of Palace museums and Handicrafts collection: 'Royal heritage' as representative of Rattanakosin civilization .....	165
4.3.1.2 The representation of royal barges in museums and ceremonies: 'Exotic golden fantasy' as a spectacle attraction.....	191
4.3.1.3 The representation of Khon under royal patronage performance: The remaining ancient Southeast Asian performance in Bangkok	195
4.3.2 'Nithatrattanakosin' (นิทรรศรัตนโกสินทร์): The integration of Rattanakosin cultural arts exhibited as Thai civilization .....	199
4.3.3 Contemporary Thai classical dances (นาฏยศิลป์ไทยร่วมสมัย) of Siam Niramit (สยามนิรมิต), Aksara Theatre (โรงละครอักษรา), and Joe Louis Theatre (โรงละครโจหลุยส์): The representation of 'Exotic Thai' in Bangkok cultural shows .....	204
4.3.4 'Thai silk textiles' of Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation: The development of local Thai products into world famous products .....	212

	Page
CHAPTER 5.....	220
BANGKOK AS A 'METROPOLIS OF EXOTIC CUISINES': THE REPRESENTATION OF 'CIVILIZED BANGKOK' FROM FOOD CULTURE .....	220
5.1 Background of Bangkok's image as a 'Metropolis of Exotic cuisines' .....	220
5.2 The Promotion of Bangkok as a 'Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines' .....	223
5.3 The representation of Bangkok as a ' <i>Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines</i> ' from the characteristics of ' <i>Thai cuisine</i> ' in Bangkok tourist spaces.....	232
5.3.1 ' <i>Exotic Thai cuisines</i> ': The presentation of ' <i>Exotic Thai culinary art</i> ' in world famous hotel restaurants and leading restaurants of Bangkok .....	234
5.3.1.1 The presentation of types and characteristics of 'Exotic Thai food' .....	239
5.3.1.2 The presentation of decoration with respect to Exotic Thai Food..	256
5.3.1.3 The presentation of the Exotic Thai Art of Dining .....	271
5.3.2 World famous Thai cuisine: The constructing of Thai Tastes in Bangkok food culture context.....	292
CHAPTER 6.....	297
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION .....	297
6.1 A Summary of the research .....	297
6.2 Discussion .....	303
6.3 Suggestion for future research .....	310
REFERENCES .....	311
VITA.....	353

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Rationale of the Research

In the context of tourism, the process of cultural identity image making is important as this is the method differentiates the characteristics of cultures among the cities visited by tourist in the world. Apart from this, cultural identity also reflects *the stability of the nation in terms of culture*, in other words, '*civilization*'. Civilization implies a firmly developed culture in one's nation, reflecting '*the ensemble of ordered society, systemized knowledge and technological innovation*',<sup>[1]</sup> to be used as a tool for balancing power from the external and must be standardized to become a subculture of the influential countries where a prototype culture originates. In this linkage, civilization is connected to *globalization*. As said, '*Civilization has always implied globalization. Thailand was no exception*'.<sup>[1]</sup>

*Paritta Chalernpow Koanantakool*<sup>[2]</sup> discusses the influences of globalization on the cultural movement in society, stating that '*Globalization involves a process of movement of flows that transcend national boundaries and leads to a range of responses*'. Apart from this, scholars in cultural studies explain the influences of globalization on the identities of culture in tourist destinations. As stated in "*Heritage Tourism in Southeast Asia*"<sup>[3]</sup>:

Within this context of globalization, governments play key roles in regulating capital and markets, in sponsoring and shaping tourist assets, in controlling and promoting the movement of tourists, and in presenting certain images of the nation and its constituent populations both to its own citizens and to international tourists. Globalization as a phenomenon of increasing importance in cultural construction, heritage and identity formation, and in tourism development, has been much more explicitly theorized during the past decade or so.

In the stream of globalization, Thailand is in the process of constructing a certain image of the nation. Official Thai tourism is the main sector responsible for this mission. In this phenomenon, there are numerous cultural attractions brought into this process, and many types of attractions emerged around the *Amazing Thailand* year. Bangkok, as *'Thailand's center of prosperity in terms of economy, commerce, investment and also a tourist attraction'*<sup>[4]</sup> has been developed and promoted as well.

The *'Amazing Thailand 1998-1999'* campaign was one of national strategies promoted to solve economic problems. The introduction of *'Amazing Bangkok 1998'* noted that the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) took advantage of the economic downturn, stating: *'Today, hotels and shopping venues offer amazing bargains following the depreciation of the Thai baht currency in 1997'*.<sup>[5]</sup>

Recently, the National Economic and Social Development Council also took action to rebrand *'Amazing Thailand'* to *'Miracle Thailand'* in the 11<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Development Plan<sup>[6]</sup> Using the same strategy, the BMA has tried to make Bangkok *'a sustainable and livable city of culture and economic opportunity'* by adopting His Majesty's initiatives in developing Bangkok in to a cultural mega city with a good quality of life with the 12-year Bangkok Development Plan (2009 – 2020). These go along with the policies of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) as the main overseers of tourism development of Thailand/Bangkok - - - to push Bangkok to be *'the World' Best City for tourism'*. The success of this campaign is attested by numerous international tourism

awards Bangkok has received for its various attractive destinations. Here are some examples:

Bangkok was named the World's Best City by the travel magazine Travel+ Leisure in 2008, 2010 and 2011 because of its excellent variety of food, shopping, cleanliness, scenery, hospitality, art and culture and cost-worthiness. At the Asian Network of Major Cities 21 (ANMC 21) meeting in 2009, Bangkok was voted *'the most attractive city to visit among major Asian cities'* by foreign tourists. Most recently, Bangkok was named the *'World's Best-Value City'* as a part of the Value for Money Awards 2011 ranking by the Sunday Times Travel Magazine, the most popular monthly travel magazine in UK.

In addition, recently the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) Deputy Governor Wallop Suwandee received an award at Japan's United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) Fukuoka Office. Such prizes are organized by the Fukuoka Office, together with related Japanese agencies under the theme *"Living Environment and Urban Revival"*, awarding a city or a pilot project that lifts the quality of life of its people, along with environmental development. The criteria for winning the award includes promotion of life safety, the importance given to art and culture, correlation between the town's landscape and its people's way of life, the town's creative projects, and being a pilot scheme for other cities in the future. *Bangkok presented itself with the project, 'The Living Bangkok Heritage*. The areas of Tourism Policy and Cultural Management show that the image making efforts and the policies of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)/ The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) are quite effective because Thais and foreigners are likely to be more interested in travelling in Bangkok.'<sup>[7]</sup> In addition, *'recently released Global Destinations Cities Index by MasterCard, Bangkok is the winner! The capital of Thailand, according to the Index, posted 18 percent growth rates in the past two years. How has this happened? Bangkok topped out London for the number one spot in 2013 for a number of reasons'* as follows:

Bangkok has a rich and colorful culture, one of the most welcoming people on the planet, spectacular temples, spicy Thai food, but the main reason for the number one spot....shopping! Bangkok has some of the finest world-class shopping centers. The spacious and chic designs attract visitors into the air-conditioned luxury malls where shoppers have a potpourri of fine restaurants, designer shops, books stores, you name it, it's there to choose from. (...) Bangkok is one of the cities with the fastest increase in air-travel connectivity. Affordability - is another reason why Bangkok is so attractive, said Ms Alicia Seah, CTC Travel's senior vice-president of marketing and public relations, it also has both an urban landscape and nature. I've been coming to Bangkok for over 19 years and the first impression that made this country so attractive was it's people. Well know as "The Land of Smiles" they are some of the most polite and friendly people you'll ever meet. Another great reason to come to Thailand are the lush tropical islands of the South!'.<sup>[8]</sup>

Another example is cited in the column, '*Bangkok: still the world's greatest backpacker hub?*'<sup>[9]</sup> This writing gives reasons why Bangkok is the world's greatest backpacker destination, and the reasons are the city has so much attractiveness for visitors;

*Southeast Asia is the backpacking Mecca of the world, and the gateway to it is Bangkok. It was like that 20 years ago and it's the same today. But that's not to say things haven't changed – they have, and for the better. You can still sit down in any bar along the world's most famous backpacker strip and strike up a conversation about your travels with people from all across the world. The only difference is that now you can enjoy budget accommodation with a few home comforts'.*

The success of Bangkok tourism, as mentioned, obviously continues to be represented in publications and online data of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Thai Airways' in-flight magazines since the start of '*Amazing Thailand*' promotion in 1998 to 2013. These official tourism organizations have been promoting Bangkok as the Metropolis of Art

and Culture which is based on the image of the country's enduring traditions in the face of rapid modernization. As with the nation agencies, they selected some aspects of Thai society and culture to showcase the country's civilization in the Rattanakosin period where Bangkok is the center of this formation.

The outstanding image of Bangkok is that of a Metropolis of Art and Culture – the contrasts of the harmonious with the amazing mixture of traditional Thai culture and multi-culture from foreigners inherited since the early Rattanakosin era; Western culture in the colonial era influencing the transformation of the country; and urban culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century influenced by the new globalization. The sense of '*amazement*' is related to this mystique blend and found nowhere else in the world, as well as being different from other Southeast Asian countries.<sup>[10]</sup> This image has not changed much for the past 15 years, as follows:

Bangkok was once called the Venice of the East because of its many canals. Although many canals have been filled-in, taking away some of the city's old-world charm, it is still one of the most intriguing places worth visiting in Southeast Asia. Many visitors keep coming back to the city, some for business, some for vacations and some even to settle down here. Without doubt, modern-day Bangkok is a tourist mecca of the East offering a greater variety of things to see and do than any other city in Southeast Asia.<sup>[5]</sup>

'You will find that it's really worth getting to know Bangkok: Not simply as a cultural monument to the past or as a dazzling 21<sup>st</sup> century metropolis, but as an endless source of the pleasures of discovery and rediscovery'.<sup>[11]</sup>

'Essentially, a paradox, a seemingly impossible blend of old and new, Bangkok can be all things to all people. Here, in what the Thais call 'The City of Angels', are fulfilled dreams of both classic Oriental wonder and contemporary indulgence.'.<sup>[12]</sup>

'As Thailand's capital for over 200 years, the city is a melting pot of invaluable cultural heritages, dotted with spectacle and unique historical sites tourists have always dream off!' <sup>[13]</sup>

'Its aged-old Orient culture and mystique blended with present-day modernity'. <sup>[14]</sup>

In the past 15 years, since the start of the *Amazing Thailand* campaign in 1998, the representatives of the state and state enterprise have been producing cultural guides in large numbers, both for publication and online data. They aim to construct cultural identities that effectively represent a '*civilized nation*' through tourism media in order to reflect the cultural and financial stability of the country. It can be seen that the content included selected information about cultural attractions. On one side, the material portrays related historical background and other relevant details about attractions; on another side, it represents the identities of the objects based on value-based concepts.

The outstanding image of Bangkok is '*well-blended cultural diversity*' constructed in accordance with the strategies of national tourism organizations by gathering all types of cultures in Bangkok, representing them as attractions. They can be divided into three groups as follows.

*The first group* is cultural attractions of both Thai and ethnic people, in the form of tangible and intangible heritage, inherited and handed down from generation to generations, as well as the transformation of traditional local ways of life, beliefs and practices of *Bangkokians* in the modern period. The significant characteristics are their traditional appearance and values. Also, there is a presentation of a long history of communities and the nation, traditions and ways of life in old communities, and royal practices in the form of ceremonies, traditions, and cuisine.



*The second group* is the set of culture that has been brought into cultural management, mainly by preservation, reinvention, and establishment, launched by the state and private sectors to form and set their identities, values, as well as the way to express such characteristics in order to fit with the consuming process in Bangkok and the objectives of management so that, in some types, their identities are not necessarily 'authentic' as originated in the traditional period. The resources are preserved with reinvented cultural attractions, such as festivals, ceremonies, plays, sports events set for specific occasions. Apart from this, this group includes cultural attractions established as the hub of knowledge and cultural entertainment, such as museums, libraries, theatres, art and cultural centers of both the public and private sector. In addition, palaces, temples, monuments and memorial sites, and old buildings are counted as tangible heritage that is 'well-managed' to transform the national symbolic element to public space. As can be seen in many tourist guides, the mnemonic sites in Bangkok, monuments and memorials, have been selected to emphasize the importance of 'person' and 'story' that forms the Thai nation. These sites are the symbols and physical sites whereby the nation's biography is collectively memorialized. The monuments of the kings have been selected to depict the history of the country, glorifying the honor of the kings and their bravery. Other monuments and memorials also reflect the important wars in Thailand, the beliefs of Thais and the invention of the past. Here is a list of mnemonic sites: King Taksin the Great Monument, King Rama I Memorial, King Rama III, King Rama V Equestrian Statue, Statue of King Rama VI, Victory Monument, Democracy Monument, Monument to War Veterans, the Shrine of *Chao Pho Ho Klong*, and *Mae Phra Thorani* Twisting Her Hair.

*The last group* includes attractions indicating progressive development and urban consumerism trends, such as shopping complexes, community malls, theme parks, street markets, street food, spas, international and Thai fusion food<sup>[15]</sup> pubs, bars, and trendy restaurants. They reflect the interaction and exchange of global culture that has been circulated, changed and selected to fit with the circumstances in Bangkok, motivated by a development discourse, trading and business. Apart from

this, modern ways of life and street fashions are also considered for the tourist gaze. All of these cultural attractions are located in well-managed transportation areas, with a welcoming, healthy and relaxing atmosphere.

The above is as often mentioned in the background of Thai tourism, “*that in the past, the principal attractions offered by Thailand have been the important Buddhist religious edifices, archeological sites, the rich cultural traditions of the country’s people*”.<sup>[16]</sup> Then, ‘*It is therefore characteristic of the Thai tourist industry that it offers a very board selection of accommodations and other services, ranging from relatively cheap to extremely expensive.*’ Significantly, Thai tourist industry has been changed in order to welcome visitors, not only Westerners, but also from all part of the world, mainly in Asia.<sup>[10]</sup>

It has been observed that there are a variety of identities and values of each types of culture indicating the characteristics of a civilization. For instance, palaces, temples and monuments share outstanding identities in the form of ‘*Thai traditional*’ and ‘*European*’ architecture. The physical identities, in general, having Thai traditional features or blended traditional Thai and European styles, are the prominent characteristics. Various values are represented, for example, the Grand Palace as the symbol of the Thai nation; Democracy Monument as the symbol of Thai democracy; and ‘*Wat Pho*’ as the first university of Thailand. These exemplars are the evidence of Thai civilization as they reflect the ‘*ensemble of ordered city*’,<sup>[1]</sup> sharing the same standards and political ideology that originated in the West, as well as expressing the wisdom of Thai ancestors. The historical sites also function as a body of knowledge of society and culture from the past. It has been observed that there are some interesting ideas about the events and persons represented through these images. For instance, since the historical background of the Grand Palace and ‘*Wat Phra Kaeo*’ (วัดพระแก้ว) is presented as a symbol of the Thai nation, the story focuses on the victory of the Chakri Dynasty and the significance of the site as it houses the scared Emerald Buddha image. In this process, such representation has eliminated some factual data,

such as that the Emerald Buddha was taken from the Lao. Next, as it is fine art, the aesthetic sense is also represented. The outstanding physical identities are established, such as *'refinement'*, *'beautiful'*, *'traditional'*, *'old'*, *'natural'* and *'charm'*, with the value based on these motifs. In addition, the characteristics of physical identities are represented as a reflection of Thai society and culture, Thai wisdom, the faith of creators and the process of cultural formation, which Thai ancestors adopted from Indian civilization and adapted to use as a symbolic tool for political and social stability in the traditional period.

There is another interesting point promoted as being a strength of Thai tourism, which is the variety of choices for cuisine and shopping. Bangkok has been represented as *'the gastronomic capital of the world'* and a *'shopping paradise'*. The notable identities of these images are multiple choices when it comes to consuming. Eating: there are plentiful types of cuisine and places for dining. Shopping: there are numerous types of products and markets with a wide range of prices and quality. In this context, the process of constructing the characteristics of *'civilization'* with respect to food and goods is in making the identities and values of such products for consumption, as well as the significance of each one. For example, traditional Thai cuisine of the royal court or *'chao wang'* food has the identities of *'refinement'*, *'beautiful appearance'* and *'fineness'*, as well as being represented as having *'national major identities'*, a description reflecting Thai royal life, the highest rank in Thai society, wisdom, and virtue, and a linkage between dishes and Thai ceremonies or rituals. In this process, *'chao wang'* food has an image unlike general Thai cuisine, Chinese cuisine, International cuisine and street food. Another example is the 'markets' in Bangkok. In tourist guides, there are numerous types of shopping places, such as floating markets, flea markets, street markets and shopping complexes. The number of places indicates economic growth; the types of places have dissimilar identities, both in terms of physical identity and the significance of each place.

Furthermore, in terms of cultural formation, it has been observed that selected cultural attractions also represent many interesting processes to blend different cultural characteristics in order to create a new attraction. In the second group, cultural attractions have been established as the hub of knowledge and cultural entertainment, such as museums, theatres, art and cultural centers, of both the public and private sector. The concept of civilization is based on various types of knowledge and entertainment Bangkokians consume. It can be seen that cultural attractions indicating the consciousness of national heritage is the largest source of data<sup>[17]</sup> as evidenced in the form of museums that collect local Thai wisdom, traditional Thai culture and the historical background of Thailand. Apart from this, traditional Thai culture is transformed into modern performance art in contemporary theatres. An example is Siam Niramit Theatre that offers a world class spectacular show of Thailand's arts and cultural heritage in a 2000-seat theatre.

In addition, there are a large number of art and cultural centers organized by the public and private sector that have collected many masterpieces of traditional, contemporary and modern visual arts, both by Thai artist and foreign artists.<sup>[18]</sup>

An example is the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre. This is a contemporary art museum located in the centre of downtown Bangkok. The Center has a modern interior with a round centre space in the main entry hall and several glass enclosed spaces (...) This has become a center for cultural dialogue, networking, and creating new resources from both the public and the private sectors.

As for cultural attractions indicating progressive development and an urban consumerism trend, there are abundant 'trendy' shopping complexes, restaurants, spas, amusement parks, cuisine establishments, pubs, bars and so on, that represent Bangkok consumerism trends.<sup>[19]</sup> On one hand, they share similar physical identities to those in foreign countries<sup>[18]</sup>; on the other hand, they reflect creation of identity by adapting 'thainess' motifs into their appearance, or having uniqueness formed by Bangkok socio-cultural identities.<sup>[18]</sup> Examples are as follows:

Jazz Bar and Clubs as cited, when the riverside Oriental Hotel was established in 1876 as Siam's first luxury hotel, jazz as a musical genre had yet to develop. But in 1953, as the sound waves reverberated across the world, the hotel's Managing Director Germaine Krull heard the echoes and the tune of cash registers ringing. That's when she created the Bamboo Bar, luring pianist – singer Maurice Rocco from the US to entertain guests nightly. It was an overnight success;

Siam Park: the main attraction of this park is a large artificial seaside area complete with waves. There are waterfalls, towering slides, whirlpools and an assortment of water-based activities. Other attractions include a children's playground, and aviary, an open zoo and a botanical garden. Great for family!;

Asiatique the Riverfront: This is Asia' newest and largest waterfront themed retail and entertainment center created through the renovation of real historic building. Witness and discover real history of King Rama V's golden era with a breathtaking panoramic view of the Chao Phraya River and a synthesis of cultures, East and West, resulting in a variety of gastronomical delights of more than 40 restaurants.

Lastly, some data development in Bangkok tourist guides can be seen in their information, the type of attractions, and the way to travel in and around suburban Bangkok. Significantly, the number of traditional Thai cultural attractions is the largest category, still represented as the root of the nation. This indicates that '*traditional Thai culture*', as related to '*the nation, religious, the king*', is still the main attraction in this regard. The characteristics of '*traditional Thai culture*', in this context, shares similar cultural characteristics in publications produced under the responsibility of the National Identity Office of the Prime Minister, Royal Thai Government.<sup>1</sup> In addition, apart from 'Wat Pra Kaeo' (วัดพระแก้ว), 'Wat Arun'(วัดอรุณ), 'Wat Pho' (วัดโพธิ์), and other famous sites, in the most recent 15 years, the tourism public sectors have been

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<sup>1</sup> Such as in the book Thailand in the 1990s and Thailand in the 2000s.

renovating many historical and natural sites in Bangkok to explore some new angles of attractions and fill in the missing pieces of Bangkok's historical background.

From this explanation, the prominent cultural image of Bangkok is that of a 'diversity of cultures' with 'well-blended' formation indicating Thailand's potential to preserve and cultivate the uniqueness of cultural attractions in the rapid pace of modernization. Sets of cultural identities mainly focus on the identities of 'traditional culture' and 'modern culture'. They are dissimilar in their originations and were brought into the process of cultural formation in Bangkok by different methods to express their values in various ways. This points out that the intermingling between 'Thai civilization' and 'modern civilization' has been formed by inside and outside discourses of both the nation and international relations. The relationship of such cultures, cultural management and development discourses are pertinent in the study of the concept of civilization that has been constructed and is represented as the fruit of a globalized world.

## 1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 To identify images of Bangkok based on official tourist guides from 1998-2013

1.2.2 To analyze the construction and representation of 'Civilized Bangkok' based on official tourist guides from 1998-2013

### 1.3 Major Arguments

This study focuses on image making represented through official tourist guides since the '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign from 1998 up until 2013. This is a period when Bangkok cultural images have been produced in large numbers and many cultural attractions have been selected to impress visitors. This phenomenon has been supported by the official tourism sectors of Thailand to increase income and enhance Thai economic stability.

In this study, it is hypothesized that 'Civilized Bangkok' is the most prominent characteristic of the identity of Bangkok's cultural attractions selected to represent civilization in official tourist guides. This includes a '*diversity of cultures*' with '*well-blended*' formation represented on different value-based concepts that has created a positive image of the Thai nation. These characteristics indicate that Thailand has the potential to preserve its heritage and cultivate the uniqueness of its culture in the era of rapid modernization. Because of these factors, the images have successfully constructed '*Civilized Bangkok*' as '*Thai civilization of the modern period*'. The 'multi-character' culture of 'Civilized Bangkok' makes Bangkok a unique city in Southeast Asia, as well as the model of cultural formation achievement.

### 1.4 Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology

#### 1.4.1 Conceptual Framework

The word 'Globalization' in this study is used in terms of global context. In global context, there are modern culture and global tourism trends that come from the development of Bangkok tourism. In connection to global tourism, globalization causes the phenomenon of cultural attractions to emerge in various form, such as invented cultural sites, blended cultural identities, blurred cultural authenticity, and promotion of cultural preservation.

In 'Globalization, Urban Competition, and Tourism', Costas Spirou<sup>[20]</sup> explained the linkage of factors influencing 'the globalization of tourism', in that the globalization of tourism is the outcome of the same political and economic factors that can be identified in other industries. The rise of a worldwide economic system is supported by cultural and social changes in information technology and mass media. As business entrepreneurs engaged in activities across all continents, differentiating between travels, tourism, leisure, and accommodations grew more difficult, blurring their relationship. Such influences have caused responses in many ways. Featherstone also noted that 'These flows lead to multidirectional responses described as cultural integration and cultural disintegration processes which take place not only on an inter-state level but processes which transcend the state-society unit can therefore be held to occur on a transnational or trans-societal level'.<sup>[21]</sup>

Civilization is the discourse standardized by a nation agent to be used as a 'tool' to generate 'power' from the centric sector of the nation<sup>2[22]</sup> and balance the power from outer society. In this study, the characteristics of 'civilization' are represented through Bangkok's cultural images. The outstanding characteristics of the images can be divided into two parts – a sense of the Thai nation and to indicate progressive development and global consumerism trends. *The sense of the Thai nation* is transformed into 'material culture', or is the product of cultural formation in a society in terms of forming 'concrete things', such as architecture and handicrafts, and into 'non-material culture', such as festivals, ceremonies and plays. Both types of culture are mainly cultivated from the monarchy and Buddhist monastic order, the main institutions uniting the people in Thailand. The preserved cultural attractions imply the firm establishment of these institutes for a long time, as well as other virtues of Thais especially with respect to 'faith' and their 'wisdom' to cultivate such a glorious culture. The integration, cultivation and development reflects 'the ensemble of ordered

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<sup>2</sup>'Nation' is 1.an aggregation of people or peoples of one or more cultures, races, etc, organized into a single state: the Australian nation.



society.<sup>[1]</sup> In other words, it is the value of the traditional world, which the nation agent, in tourism context, keeps producing both to differentiate Thai identities from other countries and to assure the nation's stability through culture.

The characteristics of civilization indicating progressive development and global consumerism trends share '*modern values*' that emphasize materialistic things, such as '*comfortable*', '*luxurious*', '*easy*', '*trendy*' and other standards of living. The set of such characteristics is the standard of the word '*charoen*', whose meaning of *spiritual growth shifted to indicate material progress*'.<sup>[1]</sup> Accordingly, the linkage between civilization and globalization is reflected in the process of '*representation*'. In general the term '*representation*' means "*The description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way*".<sup>[23]</sup> From data sources, to represent Bangkok cultural images, there are many of Bangkok cultural attractions selected to construct the characteristics of "Civilized Bangkok". This study employs the word '*representation*' as the process of '*making*' images to be included in tourist guides, with such images continuously represented by the process of representation in a tourism context.

Stuart Hall (2003) explain the concept of '*representation*' as follow:

*Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the 'real' world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imagery worlds of fictional objects, people and events.*<sup>[24]</sup>

As mentioned above, the term '*language*' refers to the writings or the texts. In the linkage between '*concepts*' and '*language*', language functions as the medium to be used for expressing ideas in content. On one side, the images portray related historical background, other relevant details about attractions and the characteristics of Bangkok cultural attractions that have been managed by the state and private sector; on another side, it represent the identities of the objects based on value-based concepts. In a global context, the image of 'Civilized Bangkok' is represented based on the status of Bangkok as the capital city of Thailand and an important metropolis of Southeast Asia where modern cultures and traditional Thai culture co-exist.

### 1.4.2 Research Methodology

This study employs the document analysis approach and applies the Theory of Representation, supplemented with in-depth interviews with authorities.

### 1.5 Literature Review

There are a number of pieces of research that examine Bangkok in many aspects of study, including fields of historical, socio-cultural, geography and consumerism analysis; tourism in Bangkok consisting of trends, cultural management, consumption, visitors' attitudes and communication; the images of Bangkok in travel writings before colonialism, during the period of colonialism, and the stage of touristization; and research regarding the '*thainess*' constructed under cultural discourse in a globalization context.

- Bangkok as the center of Thai civilization and modern civilization in historical, socio-cultural, economic, geography and consumerism contexts

พัฒนาการทางสังคม-วัฒนธรรมไทย (๒๕๕๔), ศรีศักร วัลลิโภดม. This book overviews Thai society and culture in the aspects of the adaptation of people in the old settlement, the interaction of the economy and society with respect to the development of politics and culture, the origin of the Thai people and the Thai nation, the evolution and changes of Thai society and culture since the establishment of the 'kingdom' to the present day, globalized period.

230 ปีศรีรัตนโกสินทร์ (๒๕๕๖), under the research project ‘๑๐๐ เอกสารสำคัญเกี่ยวกับประวัติศาสตร์ไทย’, วินัย พงศ์ศรีเพียร. This research collected and analyzed relevant data on ‘Bangkok’ in many aspects based on the state of Thai civilization during the Rattanakosin period. It overviews the evolution of Bangkok, the city creation by the kings, the management by the state, the faith and believes of Bangkokians, the images of Bangkok from Western views and in Thai literary works, the viewpoints of the Thais on Westerners from Thai literature, and development in the modern period.

‘Bangkok Modern’: The transformation of Bangkok with Singapore and Batavia as models (1861-1897) (2012), studied by *Udomporn Teeraviriyakul*. This dissertation makes the argument that the transformation of Bangkok, particularly from a moat-fortified to a modern city with a form of Western modernity, occurred gradually from the reign of King Mongkut and the adoption of King Chulalongkorn’s experience visiting Singapore and Batavia, not as it is commonly believed after the Grand Tour to Europe in 1897. Evidence of this is the reform in appearance of Bangkok, the construction of roads, shop-houses, and modern infrastructure.

The Vietnam War and Tourism in Bangkok’s Development, 1960 -1970 (2001), studied by *Porphant Ouyyanont*. This paper explores the reasons behind Bangkok’s rapid growth in the 1960s, concentrating on two particular influences: the Vietnam War, and its related developments, and the first significant impact on the development of Bangkok’ service and construction industries. It points out that the reasons for the increase in tourism were the stable political atmosphere and the development of Bangkok as a crossroads of international air transportation. The hotel industry and retail industry both expanded rapidly due to tourist demand.

The Enduring Integration of Art and Culture of the Early Rattanakosin Period: The Achievements of the People of Bangkok (2004), was undertaken by researchers of Silpakorn University. This research project incorporated five areas of study focusing on cultural integration. Although it is an overview in perspective, the study clearly shows that cultural diversity has long existed in Bangkok, tracing back to the Ayutthaya period. There is data that reveals that traditional 'Ayutthaya culture' was pursued in the lives of the people of Bangkok. The first area of study is on the 'influence of Brahmanism-Hinduism during the early Rattanakosin period', aiming to explain how Brahmanism-Hinduism was integrated and used in royal ceremonies, culture and traditions. In the research on the 'Role of Thai Ramayana in Early Rattanakosin Mural Paintings', it is found that the content of *Ramakien*, whose origin can be traced back to India, is related to the praise of a hero with all the moralities of a perfect ruler. It has impressed the Thais, whose land had been ruled by kings. Also, since most Thais practice Buddhism, which is a religion having Dharma for teaching, as well as having Jataka and the Lord Buddha's greatness, some personages of *Ramakien* are depicted in artwork portraying some episodes of the Buddha's life. Another study is on Chinese cultural legacy during the early Rattanakosin period as viewed from mural paintings. The study aims to compare and analyze the similarities and differences in Chinese motifs found on murals in their motherland and in Bangkok. In particular, it reflects the lives and culture of Chinese in Bangkok during the early Rattanakosin period. The next study is on royal medicine and traditional Thai medicine integration in the Bangkok metropolitan area. It shows the conglomeration of Thai, Indian, Chinese, Western medicine traditions. The last research is on 'Thai culture in Bangkok from the Westerners' Viewpoints'.

Bangkok: Place and Representation (2002), written by *Mark Askew*. This writing examines Bangkok in the historical background, development and transformation of the city to a modern day metropolis. This book gives an overview of the characteristics of Bangkok as the abode of various ethnic people and their important role in the economic growth.

Thailand's Boom and Bust (1998), by *Pasuk Phongpaichit* and *Chris Baker*, in particular, Chapters 3 and 7, explains the global economic influence on Thailand (and Bangkok) becoming an urban, exporting capital, and the characteristic of 'City Thais' in the stream of capitalism.

Analysis of the physical composition of Rattanakosin City: location and its relation with the palaces, the temples, the official buildings, housing, markets, canals, bridges and roads (1991), was research by *M.R. Nangnoi Saksri* and scholars of Chulalongkorn University. This research examined the physical composition of 'Rattanakosin city', the expansion of Bangkok and the change of landscapes from the reign of King Rama I to King Rama IX, focusing on the areas along the Chao Phraya River, Padung Krung Kasem Canal, and the relationship of places, communities, transportation, and the relationship among the locations and socio-culture in such areas.

Cultural Modernity: A Spatial Aspect of Dusit Palace-Wat Benchama Bophit-Ratcha Damnoen Avenue in the Reign of King Rama V (2005), by *Kanokwan Chaitat*, explains the outset of '*cultural management*' in the three principal spaces: Dusit Palace-Wat Benchama Bophit-Ratcha Damnoen Avenue in the reign of King Rama V. It indicates that a vision of modernity for King Rama V was the change of conceptual modernity represented through civilization or 'chareon', leading to a structural differentiation between private and public, novelty and tradition. The change in such spaces minimized the idea of

Brahman cosmology which influenced Siamese kingship in the traditional period.

Temple of The Emerald Buddha: Reflections of the Complexity of the Religious System in Thai Society (1999), studied by *Kanako Ueno*, discusses and illustrates that there are structural-functional relationships: hierarchy, complementary, linkage and co-existence between Buddhism, Hinduism and animism in the Thai religious system.

The Social Production of Art in Thailand: Patronage and Commoditisation, 1980-1998 (1998), by *Virginia Henderson*, describes the patronage and commoditization in the context of social production of art, in particular, and Bangkok as the center of production parallel with other provinces in Thailand. It also portrays the historical background of the development of art in Thailand from early art in temples, the role of art in the traditional period, and European influences during the turn-of-the-century, nationalism, the economic development following a Western capitalist model, and internationalization following the 1960 National Development Plans.

'Saxophone Pub & Restaurant': Music Taste, Identity and Cultural Space of the City Dwellers (2004), by *Nantawat Chatuthai*, explains the historical background of the 'jazz bar' in Bangkok, selecting 'Saxophone Pub & Restaurant' as a case study. The emergence and continuity of such entertainment reveals the relationship between 'taste', 'cultural consumption' and collective cultural consumption in Bangkok since the 1980s, spreading from the USA to other regions.

Thai Food Culture: A Case Study of Thaprachan Food System (1992), by *Bhavivarn Noraphallop*, analyzes the system of 'food culture' in old communities, Thaprachan, particularly the historical background of a community, and changes in the aspects of numbers of street food, types of food, and raw materials, influenced by the development of the cityscape.

- Bangkok Tourism in the aspects of trends, cultural management, consumption, visitors' attitudes, and communication.

Cultural Heritage Atlas of Rattanakosin (2004), by *Rasri Buruttratana* and *Piyanan Ramruai*, explains the historical background of cultural management of the old buildings built in the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn in the former 'modern zone'; and the influence of modernization on the transformation of Siam and Bangkok in that period, in particular the change of water based to land based areas. It is also portrays the map of cultural heritage in Bangkok.

Cultural Landscapes and Management plan for Cultural and Historical Tourism in Palaces dating from King Rama VI's Reign (2008), by *Nantawan Muangyai*, analyzes cultural landscapes and architecture as the key factors to explain how being Thai has been affected by the West, in a positive way. In particular, the study addresses the process to manage and represent their significances and values in an appropriate way, in order to impress visitors in a tourism context.

Management Plan of Historic Site for Cultural Tourism Attraction: Management Plan Proposal for IRIH Center at Ministry of Defence (2005), by *Korn Prabhasabhakdi*, gives the background of the history of the Rattanakosin period; and, acknowledges the value of the cultural and architectural heritage to the community.

'The Community' and 'The Civil Society' on Pra Arthit Street Area among Habitable Urban Revitalization (2001), by *Attama Pocapanishwong*, gives the background of the process to 'reinvent' and manage a community under the theme 'Urban Revitalization' in Bangkok and the socio-cultural characteristics in the Phra Arthit street area. It also indicates that such 'Westernness' forming is not suitable for Thai socio-cultural circumstances.

The Relationship between Community Identity and Tourism Development in Samphanthawong District, Bangkok (2005), by *Vorrachai Rojanaporntip*, aimed at studying the relationship between community identity and tourism development in Samphanthawong District. The research identifies community identities, factors attracting tourists to decide whether to travel into the area. In addition, the research studies problems and guidelines for sustainable tourism development in order to maintain the community identity.

Symbolic Interactive Communication of Tourism industry in Postmodern age of the 'Amazing Thailand Campaign' (2000), by *Sudawan Techaboonwong*, analyzes the symbols appearing in tourism advertisements. Most of them convey a symbolic meaning about Thai culture: handcrafts, gastronomy, objects, buildings, places, nature, leisure activities, vehicle, performance, Thai people, animals, and plants.

Culture Related Attitude and Behavior of Overseas Tourists Staying at Khao San Area (2009), by *Saravudhi Vajrapanti*, studies primary information of cultural related attitudes and behavior of overseas tourists staying in the area of Khao San Road. The finding reveals that the sampled tourists expressed their attention was directed at variation in genders, ages, nationalities, and tourist experiences. It also indicates that the cultural attractions that successfully



impressed tourists are as follows: Thai cuisine, temples, historical attraction, Thai lifestyle, art galleries, museums, and Thai massage.

A Study of Factors Influencing International Tourists' Hotel Selection: A case study of Independent Leisure Tourists to Bangkok (2008) by *Chutapa Tantisuwanna*, aimed to examine which hotel attributes could affect international tourists; which elements of hotel attributes have a major impact on selection; and formulate suggestions to hotel operators to improve their attractiveness. In particular, attributes that can influence international tourists' hotel selection are location, price, image, security, services, general facilities, guest room, staff and atmosphere. All such criteria are a part of Bangkok images in a tourism context.

'The communication and identities of Khao San Road' (2003) was prepared by *Krongkeaw Wattanamongkolrat*. This paper analyzes the identities of Khao San Road represented in print media and electronic media, the process of image making; the point of view of people in a community to such images; the media factors influencing Khao San Road identities; and, the process to construct such identities. The study describes the historical background; the transformation of the area from a rice-ferry landing, nobleman and merchant settlement to a tourist destination around 1979; the population and geography. The outstanding images related to Bangkok tourism are backpacker attraction, famous '*phad thai*', low-price products and cheap hostels.

Chinese tourists' attitude toward shopping tour in Bangkok (2009), by *Kanpana Sarapat*, examines Chinese tourists' attitude and behavior through data collected from both primary and secondary sources in order to analyze and recommend strategies for Thailand to further develop shopping tourism.

Factors Correlate to A Decision to Visit Rattanakosin Island of Thai Tourists (2009), by *Supavadee Payonpak*, studies attitudes and factors that influence the decision making of domestic tourism in Bangkok Metropolis. Although this study focuses on Thai tourists, the results of the research reflect the important factors motivating the decision of tourists: the beautiful attraction and benefits from travel, such as leisure, all such matters are similar to image making in official tourist guides.

Communication Effectiveness of Tourism Promotion Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (2009), was studied by *Jaruwan Puangchaicharn*. The result of the study reveals that the communication process to promote tourism in Bangkok has four important components: the sender, Bangkok Tourism Division Culture, Sports and Tourism Department; the receivers, Thai and foreign tourists; the message, information about Bangkok tourism; the channel, mass media interpersonal media and other media. The strategies are reactive strategies and proactive strategies using communication media strategies and communication message strategies.

Communication Strategies in Conveying National Identities in Tourism Campaigns of Thailand and Malaysia (2006) was studied by *Siriporn Wutthigul*. The relevant results are a description of 'Thai identities' used as the representatives of Thai culture, society, and people, selected to be represented in Thai tourism campaign after the tsunami disaster in the south. The selected icons are architecture, dress, vehicles, handicrafts, cuisine, paintings, religion, musical instruments, language, massage, natural resources, flowers, multi-ethnic people and characteristics of Thai people.

Strategy in Printed Materials for Foreign Tourists by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007), by *Srisuda Wanapinyosak*, reveals the process of TAT launching strategy to impress visitors through printed information; firstly, to study policies and market plans of TAT; secondly, to survey visitors requirement; and to survey their attitudes on printed materials. The results found that most foreign visitors are satisfied with Thai images in data sources, including special interest brochures, sales posters, and destination brochures, and provincial maps.

A Study of Satellite Advertising in the 1998-1999 Amazing Thailand Campaign (2002), by *Arunsri Bureewachira*, examines the factors that affected the production of television advertising under the 1998-1999 Amazing Thailand Campaign. This research looked at the presentation methods, verbal and non-verbal language, including investigation of the symbolic meanings in the scoped data. Significantly, the results show that the symbolic meaning could be grouped into five categories: symbols representing Thai characteristics, Western characteristics, Asian characteristics, and Asian characters as a traveler. The related information described in this study could be used as references of the set of images of 'Thailand/Bangkok' promoted at the start of the Amazing Thailand Campaign.

- The images of Bangkok in travel writings

Thai Culture in Bangkok from the Westerners' Viewpoints (2005), by *Penlak Wongchongchaiharn*, under the research project 'The Enduring Integration of Art and Culture of the Early Rattanakosin Period: The Achievements of the People of Bangkok' of Silpakorn University, gives an overview of Bangkok images in Western writings, mainly non-fiction: annals, diaries, semi-academic writings, from the Ayutthaya period to the present day. The writings selected to

be studied show that the viewpoints of Westerners were different depending on their status, knowledge, self-interpreting, and purposes of writing. There are both positive and negative images of Bangkok and neutral opinions based on 'fact' that they experienced in the city.

The Translation of Multilingual Dialogue in The Scribe (2006) was studied by Sudarak Suvannanon. The relevant details that support this study are in the section *'the analysis of communication context'*. Sudarak explains the background of the writer, his writings and expat literature, portraying the images of the *'red light district'* around 2000 in Bangkok, before Bangkok declared the regulation of entertainment zoning. There is a stereotype attached with racial, constructed picture of Thai women in negative images.

'Imagining Siam' (2008), was studied by *Caron Eastgate Dann*. This writing examines how Thailand, as a culturally determined Western construct, might fit into the paradigm devised and described in *Orientalism* of *Edward W Said's* classic 1978 study. The prominent contribution of this book is that it analyses travelogues and travel literature about Siam/Thailand, and offers a broad view on the perception and understanding of Western writers since the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. In particular, the discussion of some excerpts portrayed images of Bangkok in various aspects.

'thainess' through Exotic Accent: A Discursive study of Representation of Thailand in Lonely Planet (2011), by *Natthanai Prasannam*, analyses the construction of *'thainess'* in the Lonely Planet Guide (2009) through the discursive approach and Edward Said's conception of Orientalism. It is found that the content structure focuses on a socio-cultural overview of Thailand and the details of tourist attractions. In some parts, it explores Bangkok images. Other aspects of *'thainess'* are constructed through the myths of quality

travelers, amazement of *'thainess'*, political instability, inadequate freedom of expression, social problems and other Thai habits. The findings proved that the author, as a Westerner, still understands *'thainess'* through an imperial lens, parallel with other writing by Western travelers since 19<sup>th</sup> century.

An Investigation on Figurative Language Employed in English Advertisements in In-flight Magazines (2012), undertaken by *Preeda Pathumratanathan* and *Pataraporn Tapinta*, analyzes figurative language employed in ads of 'Sawasdee' and Fah Thai in-flight magazines. It reveals that alliteration, comparison, metaphor, personification, and rhetorical questions are the most common types of figurative aspects found in ads. The contents cited in the data resources produced the following themes: privacy, comfort, relaxation, and happiness; which all are relevant to a modern picture of Bangkok.

The Colony and the Knots: Bangkok in the Novels by John Burdett (2013), by *Suradech Chotiudompant*, reveals that Bangkok in novels serves as a contact zone where Eastern and Western characters come into contact and interact with each other in a network of power relations. The analysis also examines the othering process the author uses in making sense of the East through the strategies of stereotyping and East – West binary opposition.

- *'thainess'* constructed under cultural discourse in a globalization context

Thai images: The culture of the public world (1997), was written by *Neils Mulder*. This book criticizes the images of Thai culture in the public world, from social studies curriculum, elementary up to university level, the press, and contemporary fiction. He discusses the emergence of a culture of modernity and trends in the evolution of urban Thai public opinion. It found that economic and political issues shape current public discourse, molding the middle-class

culture of modernity in Thailand. In particular, he analyzes '*Thailand in the 90s*', a book produced under the auspices of the National Identity Office of the Prime Minister of Royal Thai Government, in the way that the sets of images were painted as an '*official image*'. The basic picture is one of a nation united by an old history, with the countryside represented as the inspiration of the Thai way of life, values and attitudes, as a result of which, tradition and religious are alive and well, and form the foundation of life, even in the urban setting of Bangkok. Thus, in spite of apparent Westernization, Thai culture is pervaded by its historical continuity.

From 'National Exhibition' to 'The Siamese Kingdom Exhibition': Reflections of Siamese History in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn and King Vajiravudh (2006), by *Kanthika Sriudom*, illustrates the significances and development of 'Siamese Fairs and Exhibitions', from the 'National Exhibition' in 1882 to 'The Siamese Kingdom Exhibition' in 1926, in the reigns of King Chulalongkorn to King Vajiravudh. The study reveals that the Siamese participated in many international exhibitions to demonstrate Siam as a civilized nation; the knowledge of modern management was passed from the elite to the government officials and to the public; the organization of fairs and exhibitions in Siam relied on the modern bureaucratic system, which had a clear line of management; and lastly, fairs and exhibitions in Bangkok reflected the growth of Bangkok as a modern city.

Communicating National Identities in Muay Thai (2011) was studied by *Tikamporn Eiamrera*. The research aimed to analyse the production process of nationalism in 'Muay Thai' from the past to present, as well as to examine how 'Muay Thai' communicates 'Thai national identity' in a contemporary society; analyzing documents historically and investigating media texts cross-sectionally. The findings revealed that there were four historical phases of

'Muay Thai': (1) the Warrior era (2) the King's Warrior era (3) the Sportman era and (4) the Commodization and National Identity era, which have changed in accordance with social and cultural factors in each phase. Especially in the final phase of Commodization and National Identity, 'Muay Thai' has adopted the concept of 'nationalism' from the West. Significantly, there are five significant functions of Muay Thai in the construction of 'Thai national identity': ascribe 'ourselves', generate 'otherness', support a creative economy, construct the taste of Thai entertainment, and articulate 'thainess' in the process of globalization.

Constructing 'thainess' within International Food Space Thai Gastronomy in Five-Star Hotels in Bangkok (2011), by *Niphatchanok Najpinij*, analyzes the characteristics of Thai gastronomy and the process of constructing "thainess" through Thai gastronomy in Thai restaurants located in five-star hotels in Bangkok. It applies Stuart Hall's concept of the 'circuit of culture' as the framework in the analysis, and found that each restaurant reveals "thainess" through the physical setting and enhanced atmosphere with Thai art and architecture; a Thai style of service with politeness and hospitality; culinary practices; and Thai values, wisdom and ways of life.

The construction of 'thainess' in modern Thai art (2012), by *Kasamaporn Seangsuratham*, analyzes the process of construction 'thainess' in the area of modern Thai art consumption. It reveals that official organizations and elites in Thai society have been constructing 'thainess' based on the representation of 'nation, religious, and the king', whereas the private sectors of both Thai and Westerners participating in this context produce more various pictures of 'thainess' in accordance with their perception.

The Emergence and Development of Thai Contemporary Arts and Artists: A Case Study of Thai Independent Cinema (2007) was studied by *Takayuki Akiba*. This thesis reveals that artist challenge two notions: the notion of art and the imaginary 'thainess' constructed in the period of modernization/nation-building. The study also explores how the identity crisis in the globalization era brought about the phenomenon.

Seditious Histories: Contesting Thai and Southeast Asian Parts(2006), was written by Craig J. Reynolds. The chapter '*National Identity and Cultural Nationalism*', reveals that the publication of English books and pamphlets, the first of which, *Thai Life*, came out in October 1981, for the consumption of foreign visitors, suggests something else about the government's promotion of Thai culture, namely, the connection between Thai culture and tourism. Like many developing countries with monuments and ruins, Thailand sells itself aboard by commodifying its culture and tradition.

อัตลักษณ์ไทย: จากไทยสู่ไทยๆ (2554), was written by Pracha Suveeranon. The relevant analysis to the study, is the analysis of influences of the economic crisis ('Tom Yam Kung') in 1997 causing the emergence of 'nationalism ideology' (อุดมการณ์ชาตินิยม), a nostalgic 'thainess' (การโหยหาความเป็นไทย), Thai folk wisdom (ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่น), and 'self-sufficiency' (การพึ่งพาตนเอง), and the change of Thai identities from traditional to ordinary life. All such discourses are analyzed in the context of products designed by the middle class in Thai society.



## 1.6 Definition of terms

### Traditional culture

In the “Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary”, *‘tradition’ is the passing of beliefs or customs from one generation to the next; a belief or custom pass on in this way; any established method, practice, etc.*<sup>[25]</sup> The word *‘traditional’* in this study, indicates the characteristics of Buddhist culture, Fine Arts culture, and Food culture of Rattanakosin court that cultivated in the *‘traditional period’*<sup>3</sup> and handed down to the present in Bangkok tourism spaces. The word *‘traditional’* is used to identify such characteristics of high culture. In addition, the term *‘traditional’* will be used to evaluate the characteristics of culture; it may be replaced by other words such as *authentic, original* and *classical*.<sup>4</sup>

Next, traditional culture would be defined as National Heritage, if they have been passed on from earlier generations, and have values in four aspects: *‘aesthetic value’*, *‘historic value’*, *‘social value’* and *‘artistic value’*. In official tourist guides, the set of *‘national heritage’* is traditional Thai culture. Apart from this, some lists of intangible cultural heritage, heritage of cultural wisdom (มรดกทางภูมิปัญญาวัฒนธรรม), registered by the Ministry of Culture, 2012: performing arts (ศิลปะการแสดง), traditional handicrafts (งานช่างฝีมือดั้งเดิม), folk literature (วรรณกรรมพื้นบ้าน), sports (กีฬา), social regulation and ritual (แนวปฏิบัติทางสังคมและพิธีกรรม), body of knowledge and nature and cosmology regulation (ความรู้และแนวปฏิบัติเกี่ยวกับธรรมชาติและจักรวาลวิทยา) and language (ภาษา).<sup>[26]</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See explanation in *‘Traditional period’*.

<sup>4</sup> For example, *‘traditional Thai hospitality’* (Spa paradise of Asia), *‘Thai Traditional Massage’* (Spa paradise of Asia), *‘the playing of traditional music’* (Bangkok Sports), *‘authentic Muay Thai’* (Bangkok Sports) and *‘Thai classical dancing (with gives thanks for answered prayers)’* (Erawan Shrine).

The term *'traditional'* is also employed to classify the characteristics of identities and values of tangible and intangible culture portrayed in official tourist guides, most of such cultural attractions are evaluated as national heritage.

#### Global Culture, Urban Culture, Modern Culture and 'Bangkok modern culture'

This study identifies the term *'global culture'* as cultures that come with urbanization transforming a society to be a modern state. It also indicates the world current from all directions that influences consumerism trends, as well as infrastructure and accommodation development in Bangkok. The types of such consumption are defined in other texts as *'global culture'*, *'urban culture'* and *'modern culture'*. This study will use the term *'Bangkok modern culture'* to describe the outcomes of global culture in specific spaces, that is Bangkok in 'the modern period'.<sup>5</sup>

#### Cultural Formation

The word 'formation' in the *'Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary'* <sup>[25]</sup> means: (1) the action of forming something or the process of being formed; (2) a thing that has been formed, esp. in a particular or characteristic way; (3) a particular arrangement or pattern. The study defined, *'cultural formation'* as a forming process on culture; indicating the method of inheriting, preservation, reinventing, establishing and developing cultural attractions in Bangkok; the blending of different characteristics of culture to form a new one; the combination of cultural identities to make values; as could be seen in the three groups of attractions in Bangkok.

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<sup>5</sup> See definition of 'Modern period' in the topic Modernization.

### Civilization

In connection with this study, the term 'civilization' can be categorized into two types: 'Thai civilization' and 'modern civilization'. Civilization of the Thai nation handed down from former generations to the present is classified as '*Thai civilization*'; whereas the state of advancement of material growth, consumerism trends and result of development discourse on society and culture can be grouped as '*modern civilization*'.

The study employs the term '*civilization*' as the characteristics of a civilized nation reflected on its people and the creations of cultural attractions of a society. "Civilization" is the achievement of cultural formation of which people and society have been created, collected, cherished, inherited, learned, developed and changed in order to reach the stage of glory in materials and instill good values and attitudes of people in the nation; and shaped up by the national discourse and development discourse.

### Exotic

Generally, the definitions of 'exotic' in dictionaries follow that cited by the Oxford Dictionary: '*Originating in or characteristic of a distant foreign country such as exotic birds*', or as in the sentence '*they loved to visit exotic places*'; attractive or striking because colourful or out of the ordinary, as in the sentence, '*The colour combination gives an exotic appearance, setting this daffodil apart from others*'.<sup>[23]</sup> The Collins Dictionary also cites, '*beyond one's ken, bizarre, colourful, curious, different, extraordinary, fascinating, glamorous, mysterious, outlandish, peculiar, strange, striking, unfamiliar, unusual*'.<sup>[22]</sup> Thai tourism organizations have employed this word as a sensational or emotional word to promote Bangkok cultural images aimed to attract foreign visitors using the characteristics of mystic or spectacle beauty, tastes of herbal and spices, and Bangkok cityscape, especially the riverine scenic view.

The term '*exotic*', in this study, has been selected by the state to portray the characteristics of Bangkok cultural attractions that are connected to Thai high arts. This word also suggests a sense of fascination, miracle, and striking because Thai culture in Bangkok tourist spaces is not generally founded in other tourist cities as they have been created from traditional cultures in the region of Asia and Southeast Asia in Bangkok cultural context. In official tourist guides, this word is used such as: 'Exotic Thai where you find the best of Thai arts and crafts', 'Exotic Temples', 'Exotic Fruits'; or in Bangkok being rewarded as the 'Best Exotic Destination' at IITM Hyderabad 2012, for example.<sup>[27]</sup>

### Modernization

The term '*modernization*'<sup>6[28]</sup> in this study, is used to explain the process and reflection of development on the characteristics of society and culture in Bangkok. In other words, modernization is urbanization that sets the pattern of consumption in Bangkok to be mass, segment/group, and individual consumption.<sup>[29]</sup> based on capitalism.

### Modern Period

The term '*modern period*', in many situations, is ambiguous and difficult to define. This study will focus on a time period by considering the characteristics of attractions, '*Bangkok modern culture*', in tourist guides developed in the context of 1998-2013.

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<sup>6</sup> Janit Feangfu explained that 'Modernisation' (kan-tham-hai-than-samai or kan-tham-hai-pen-samai-mai) and 'development' (kan-phattana) became the order of the day to take the country and its people out of the state of 'lack' as they were concretised and delivered by national policy. Also refer to Thak (2009: 463), The Thai translation of 'being modern' or 'to be modern' as than-samai, which literally means 'to catch up with the time/era', implies the absence or the lack of capacity to keep abreast with the given time or era. *Than-samai* also connotes 'modernity or the best of the era – in science, technology, industry, education, statecraft, business, etc.'

Hence, the term *'the modern period'*, as referred to in the hypothesis *'Thai civilization of the modern period'*, will be defined by characteristics of *'modern civilization'*, chiefly on the set of attractions in Bangkok after the IMF crisis (1997), such as department stores, communities malls, Japanese food fever, fusion food in trendy restaurants, boutique spas, spas for men, for example, and city development mainly, infrastructure and accommodation having influence on changes in Bangkok images differently from the former Bangkok tourism campaigns.

#### Traditional Period

This study uses the term *'traditional period'* to identify the period when Bangkok was established as the center of *'Thai civilization'* in the Rattanakosin period, reflecting the identities and values of the outcomes produced and handed down under the structure of society, religion and political discourse, in the time before 1932, the year Siam changed from absolute monarchy to a democratic state. All such cultures are represented as the consequences of *'royal reform'*.<sup>7</sup> The term *'traditional period'* will be employed to explain the background of tangible and intangible heritage cited in the scoped data, with the identities and values represented as evidences of nation civilization.

#### Official tourist guide

Official tourist guide is a publication or online data giving information about attractions, mainly composed of descriptive information and pictures, such as historical background, characteristics, significance and maps. The study includes in-flight magazines of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited, *'Sawasdee'*, and selected advertisements, columns, trends and activities news sections that relate to attractions in Bangkok. In addition, brochures, handbooks

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<sup>7</sup> In this context, obviously the representatives of *'Thai civilization'* are the contributions to *'royal reform'*, prominently, the city creation, the patronage of national heritage, the integration of communities in Bangkok, and the development of the city.

and illustrated books or supported by Tourism Authority of Thailand and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration also have been included as data sources.

### Bangkok, Rattanakosin

The study employs the term '*Bangkok*'<sup>8 [30]</sup> used as the name of the capital city of Thailand, the center of '*Thai civilization*' and '*modern civilization*' as explained previously; whereas '*Rattanakosin*' will be used as the time period since the establishment of Bangkok as the capital of Thailand to the present and a style of artistic materials of cultural attractions in the scoped data sources.

## 1.7 Significance of the study

1.7.1. To understand the characteristics of 'Civilized Bangkok' as constructed and represented through Bangkok cultural images in official tourist guides

1.7.2 To contribute a deeper understanding of Thai society and culture in the modern period in the context of global tourism

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<sup>8</sup> The title of Bangkok was derived from two words 'bang' or 'hamlet', and 'kok' which is shorten from the word 'ma-kok' or 'olive/plum tree'. *Askew* gave an extended explanation that Bangkok's official name is generally abbreviated in Thai as 'Krung Thep', or 'City of Angels'. The city's full name is in fact, much longer. The English translation is as follows,: 'The City of Angels, Great City, the Residence of the Emerald Buddha, Capital of the world Endowed with Nine Precious Gems, the Happy City Abounding in Great Royal Palaces which Resemble the Heavenly Abode Wherein Dwell the Reincarnated Gods, A City Given by Indra and Built by Vishnukarm.' See further details in Bangkok: Place, Practice and representation Page 15-16.

## 1.8 Scope of the study

This study encompasses data in official tourist guides, both publications and online data, in English versions, produced or sponsored by the state and state enterprises of Thailand from the start of '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign in 1998 up until 2013. The main sources of data are Bangkok Tourism Division under the Division of Culture, Sports and Tourism Department, Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai Airways International Public Company Limited as they are the main official sectors having the duty of producing and promoting Bangkok cultural images. In addition, official tourist guides of these sectors have been widely used by visitors and continuously produced in large numbers.

### 1.8.1 Publication

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Bangkok Colours of the night (Thomas Renaut and Natayada na Songkhla,1999, sponsored by TAT)

### 1.8.2 Online Data

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(2012, Oct 5).

## CHAPTER II

### BANGKOK TOURISM BACKGROUND

*'Bangkok tourism'*, in this study is the touristization<sup>[31]</sup> of Bangkok as the center of Thai tourism. This is the process by which tourism in Bangkok has been industrialized according to state agencies' plans of creating, developing and diversifying tourist attractions to be consumed by visitors. Touristization is also connected to strategies, communication, representations and branding or rebranding images of tourist destinations. To analyze the background of Bangkok tourism, this chapter will examine Bangkok tourism since the outset of touristization in Thailand from the 1960s to the studied period between 1998-2013, the years of the *'Amazing Thailand'* campaign, in the following points: the development of tourism in Bangkok as the center of Thai tourism, focusing on global currents impacting Bangkok tourism; the establishment of tourism state agencies; the development of tourist facilities and accommodations in Bangkok; and the development of touristic destinations in Bangkok. After that, campaigns and trends set up by tourism organizations of Thailand, as well as factors behind trend formation, will be looked at, along with images of Bangkok at the outset of touristization in Thailand between the 1960s to the mid-1990s produced by the state and state agencies, mainly Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) / Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Thai Airways publications, supplemented with relevant research.

Lastly, the study will identify images of Bangkok from cultural attractions by examining the development of tourism trends in Bangkok since the '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign from 1998 until 2013.

## 2.1 The Development of Bangkok Tourism

The specialists <sup>[32]</sup> have divided the development phase of Thai tourism generally into three phases – 1960s, 1970s-1980s, and 1990s-2000s – based on the significant changes in development plans, establishment of tourism organizations, the impact of tourism on social and environment changes, the prospects of Thai tourism with respect to campaign launches, and cultural reinvention in tourist destinations. In relation to Bangkok tourism, this study reveals that factors influencing tourism development in Bangkok are: economic and political world trends, the state policies and the relationship between Thailand and other countries. Bangkok has long been the center of Thai tourism at the outset of Thai touristization, prominently at the start because of the influx of US military during Vietnam War period, 1960-1970, and by the globalized world trends that increased tourism in Thailand and Bangkok. The process to develop tourism also relates to the establishment of tourism organizations, the development of tourist facilities and accommodations, the promotion of Bangkok tourism worldwide, and the development of tourist attractions in Bangkok.

### 2.1.1 The establishment of tourism organizations

Since the 1950s, Europe and the Americas lacked the average growth found in developing nations. Tourism has been continuously a major source of income of many countries, especially in Asia and the Pacific. This surge reflects the successful introduction of new destinations. Following the economic crisis of 1997-98, there was a decade of patchy recovery and the global crisis beginning in 2008. <sup>[20]</sup> For Thailand, the main factor that led the country to promote tourism was the change of world events after the end of World War II, setting a new form of social interaction among cities in

the world as cited, 'Thailand globalization process was the nation's industrialization time resulting in a modern economic transformation (...) emphasizing the change of economic transformation of the nation as a capitalist society'. This change produced new middle classes that increased the numbers of tourists in much of the region. To manage tourism, Thailand established several tourism organizations.

Before the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign was set up, tourism in Bangkok was planned systematically through the establishment of the Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) in 1960. The first tourism plan was launched in 1976 cooperating with the Institute of Tourism Development Consultants, the Netherland, and Checchi's Report prepared by the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) that conducted research on tourism in Asian and Pacific countries. At the beginning, Thai touristization was officially promoted by Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat (1957-1963). In the history of tourism foundation, he addressed the significance of tourism promotion and the reasons why Thai people should support this organization, stating: *'...However, what is more is the role the tourism industry will play in spreading to the whole world the culture, virtue and moral principles of the Thai people. As a consequence, the world will come to appreciate Thailand for what it is...'* <sup>[33]</sup>

Three decades later, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) was established to replace the Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) in 1979 to plan and develop the tourism industry directly. The main purposes that have been focused are <sup>[34]</sup> : (1) To promote optimum growth of international travel and tourism to and within Thailand; (2) To develop a tourism industry that best utilize the attractions and opportunities of all of Thailand with respect to the requirement and potentials of international tourism; (3) To provide a program for promotion of those travel markets which will provide the greatest sustained economic benefits to Thailand; (4) To provide additional facilities for local travel and recreation for residents of Thailand and increase opportunities for social interchange between visitors and local residents; (5) To assist in the economic development of Thailand through the establishment of new employment, extensions of handicraft and manufacturing industries, savings in foreign currency and increased

foreign exchange earnings; and (6) To accomplish these objectives in a manner which will preserve and exchange the social, cultural and historic aspects of Thailand.

Apart from aiming to promote the cultures of the country worldwide and increase nation income, the outcome of tourism development at the outset was the progressive development in basic facilities, infrastructure, accommodation<sup>9[35]</sup> and Western entertainment in Bangkok. As could be seen in the 1960s-1980s, there were large numbers of modern structures constructed in Bangkok, which gradually enlarged to nearby provinces.

Afterward, from the '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign in 1998 up until 2013, the cooperation between state agencies and the private sector has been highly developed to create more tourist attractions. Tourism in Bangkok has been supported, especially tourism plans that are set directly for Bangkok tourist areas in accordance with the establishment of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the national tourism committee, the office of the permanent secretary under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration establishment of the Bangkok Culture, Sports, and Tourism Division to manage tourism in Bangkok directly<sup>10</sup>. This division is the main segment of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration that has responsibility to develop the quality of life of people by sports and recreation, to preserve and promote historical and cultural values, and drive Bangkok to be the best metropolis for tourism.<sup>11[36]</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Transportation and places to stay were also constructed to support international trade and business between Thai-US in the period of cold war.

<sup>10</sup> The first Bangkok tourism development plan was set from 2004-2008, the second plan is between 2011-2013.

<sup>11</sup> Translated from "สำนักวัฒนธรรม กีฬา และการท่องเที่ยว ซึ่งเป็นหน่วยงานหลักของกรุงเทพมหานครที่ดูแลด้านการท่องเที่ยว มีวิสัยทัศน์ 'เป็นองค์กรหลักด้านการพัฒนาคุณภาพชีวิตที่ดีของคนกรุงเทพมหานคร ด้วยกีฬา นันทนาการ ดำรงไว้ซึ่งคุณค่าทางประวัติศาสตร์และเอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม และนำกรุงเทพมหานครสู่การเป็นมหานครด้านการท่องเที่ยวระดับโลก".

Apart from this, each local office has promoted their tourist areas under different projects and characteristics of attractions in the 50 districts.

### 2.1.2 The development of tourism facilities and accommodations in Bangkok

After World War II ended in 1945, and during the Cold War time (1945-1989), capitalism spread from the USA to other regions. Transportation was developed both to support international trade and travel; and industry, technology, consumerism and communication became main factors shaping the state of modern civilization. Transportation was highly developed: *'Post-World War II global economic expansion fueled the development of air travel in the 1950s, and there has been an average increase of 9 percent annually since that time'*.<sup>[37]</sup> After the interruption of World War II, air travel entered a period of massive development in Asia, and Thailand was at the forefront. The Aerial Transport Company of Siam evolved into Siam Airways Company. In 1947, Pacific Overseas Airlines (POAS) was formed by combined Thai and American interests. Two years later, POAS and Siam Airways joined to become Thai Airways Company Limited (TAC), offering scheduled flights within the region by Lockheed Super Constellations. During the early 1960s, the airline flew to nine overseas destinations within Asia. In 1971, TAC made its first flight to Sydney, and the next year it started flying to Copenhagen. Flights were added to London and Frankfurt in 1973, to Rome in 1974 and to Paris and Athens in 1975.<sup>[38]</sup> Apart from this, Thai Airways International Public Company Limited started to offer flights within Asia and gradually extended routes in 1971-1975 to Sydney, Copenhagen, London, Frankfurt, Rome, Paris and Athens. The growth of infrastructure in Bangkok and the development of Bangkok as a crossroads of international air transportation expanded due to tourist demand as Lt. General *Chalermchai Charuvastr*, Director of the Tourist Organization of Thailand (1960-1976) states: *'The tourism industry of Thailand can be well developed thanks to its possession of two original assets: First, Thailand is an aviation center of Southeast Asia where several airlines stop at Bangkok on their routes to Europe, India, Hong Kong, and Tokyo'*.<sup>[39]</sup> In the 1960s, infrastructure, accommodations and



entertainment in Bangkok gradually developed to serve visitors in Thailand and the expatriates living or visiting Bangkok. At that time, Bangkok, prominently, was promoted as the center of Thai tourism, whereas other provinces in Thailand were not much improved and developed for tourism. Below are some excerpts of modern facilities and accommodation that developed at the start and rapidly growth around the 1980s as cited in *'Holiday Time in Thailand'* and *"Sawasdee"* magazine. From the 1960s-1970s: *'Most exciting of all are the shopping centers around Rajaprasong, Patumwan and Pleonchit areas. Since the empty lot became the site of Erawan Hotel, the surrounding has become the smart district where the best shops and restaurants are located....'*<sup>[40]</sup>

In this period, *'there were large retailing shopping arcades, such as the Central department store, Daimaru, and Rajdamri shopping arcades. These department stores served the sophisticated markets of middle class and upper income Thais and foreigners and sold a wide variety of merchandise, almost all it imported'*.<sup>[40]</sup> The success of department stores expanded to serve the boom in tourism. Apart from this, there were many 'tourist class' hotels constructed in Bangkok between 1961-1967 as *Porphant*<sup>[41]</sup> referred to in Thailand Yearbook 1968, such as Rama (1961), Capital (1962), Nana (1963), Victory, Park, Imperial (1964), Rex, Crown, Amarin, Federal (1965), Montien, Peninsula, Rajah, Bangkok Tower (1966), and Siam, Narai, First (1967).

*Porphan Ouyyanont*<sup>[42]</sup> explained the reasons behind Bangkok's rapid growth in the 1960s:

...US military involvement in the Vietnam War had a significant impact on the development of Bangkok's service and construction industries. Particularly important was a major burst of construction activity in the 1960s: new suburbs developed and hotels and other commercial building sprang up. The financial, commercial and tourist industries experienced rapid growth, and the construction followed in their wake. The presence of US military in Vietnam indirectly in Bangkok.

Tourism added to the expansion of services and construction. Among the reasons for the increase in tourism were the stable political atmosphere and the development of Bangkok as a crossroads of international air transportation. The hotel industry and retail industry both expanded rapidly due to tourist demand.

'Roles of Administrators of the TAT and the TAT in tourism Industry'<sup>[43]</sup> also states:

The first phase (1960-1981), the emphasis was on the development of services which were basic factors of the tourism industry so as to respond to the main objectives of tourism promotion. This could be seen in the co-operation between the TAT and the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, in organizing the first training program for professional tour guides in 1960. The reason was that tour guides were considered to be the country's representatives who could create and disseminate correct information to tourists through understanding. In term of hotel services, the TAT sought co-operation from academic institutions---both domestic and overseas, and form hotel to organize training in hotels service from basic to executive levels.

However, in the overview of tourism the 1970s, the development program between 1975-1980 shows that Bangkok needed to improve basic facilities and transportation, and solve pollution problems. As cited<sup>[44]</sup>:

Complimentary factors	Supporting facilities	Accessibilities
-Combat pollution, improving the environment with landscaping and development control.	-improving traffic and transport. -regulate the taxi system. -License hotels, restaurants and the shop industry. -Add 4,500 hotel rooms.	-improved airport facilities. -Link railway terminals.

A few decades after that in the 1980s, Bangkok rapidly developed supporting facilities and accessibilities, although pollution problems and traffic still remained. Over the next 10 years (the 1980s), during the post-Cold War period and economic miracle in Asia and the ASEAN, many countries were regarded as emerging '*tigers and dragons*'. Bangkok developed modern accommodations and attracted more and more visitors to travel. Then in the 1990s, the period of the '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign was launched while the IMF crisis spread in the Asian region, start from Thailand to other countries. Not long after, Thailand recovered and developed accommodations and infrastructure in Bangkok that helped visitors easily to get around the city. In 1999, the Bangkok mass transit system was successfully open for the public, sky trains first ran through Bangkok inner areas and were extended to outer Bangkok.<sup>12</sup>

Low-cost airlines and Suvarnabhumi airport were established to link more destinations around the world. In this time, Thai Airways joined four of the world's major airlines to form Star Alliance, the largest airline association in the world. In addition, many hotels in Bangkok have gained world and Asian top ranking in many aspects.

### 2.1.3 The development of tourist attractions in Bangkok

The highlighted Bangkok attractions can be categorized into five groups according to significance and environmental landscape, as cited in the latest Bangkok tourism development report<sup>[36]</sup>: (1) *Eco-tourism tourist* areas are those having unique natural resources which possibly relate to communities cultural practices; (2) *Arts and sciences educational attractions* refers to tourist sites or activities responding to various requirement of visitors. These set of attractions could be set or established differently depending on the changes in each period, such as specific museums, science and technology learning centers, and MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, exhibitions); (3) *Historical attractions* are important historic,

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<sup>12</sup> Before this period, Bangkok tourism promoted for Tram (1967), buses, taxis, and boats.

archeological, and religious sites having old age and significant historical events, such as ancient remains, historic parks, old communities, temples, religious places, and historic buildings; (4) *Recreational attractions* are tourist sites that were built for recreation, exercise, entertainment and knowledge acquisition. They may not have significance in historical, archeological, religious, art and cultural aspects, but have contemporary characteristics such as entertainment zones or entertainment places, zoos, amusement parks, public parks, and stadiums; and (5) *Cultural attractions* are the attraction in forms of ways of life, festivals, performances, dress, and local products showing inherited and conventional wisdom of the ancestors, such as the floating market in *Damneonsaduak*, *Loykratong* festival, and *Songkran* festival. The types of attractions above, however, have developed and changed in types and numbers before and after the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign. This next topic will examine the background of Bangkok attractions which have been developed and changed.

#### 2.1.3.1 Before the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign

Bangkok, as the capital of Thailand, one of the Southeast Asia countries, was first developed and traditional culture was promoted to serve visitors from the West, those from the US being the main group. The promotion was set as an '*alternative tourist destination*' aimed at representing the originality of the ancient city, an exotic natural site, and gradually to bring heritage into the cultural management process. In this period, after the end of the world war, many nations also searched for their roots and identity as *Phraya Anumanrajathon* cited (1958): '*After World War II was over, all nations take an interest on other cultures; as well as are united in action to establish their own cultural organizations to research and propagate cultures of each nation*'. Nation identity was, in fact, used as a tool for balancing power since the colonial era. Before tourism increased in Southeast Asia, cultural heritage was presented as nation-building imageries to force and balance power of colonialism from the West by stressing the long history of the nation, and showcase the epitome of 'thainess' in terms

of culture, as stated by Reynolds: *'Along with modern dress, a distinctive political system, and national culture, heritage was promoted as part of the nation-building project in the 1930s'*.<sup>[45]</sup> This phenomenon led Thailand, or Siam before 1932, to have some progress on cultural management, such as the establishment of the Antiquarian Society in the reign of King Chulalongkorn, the writings of King Vajiravudh on the ruinous state of monuments bequeathed by ancient Thais in Sukhothai, the establishment of the Archaeological Service, and the collection of chronicles from every corner of the kingdom to be deposited in the Wachirayan Library by Prince Damrong. This made Bangkok *'the historical archive of the fledgling nation-state'*, as well as aboard in the exhibition of *'Pavilion Siam'* showcased at the Paris Exposition in 1889, in the reign of King Chulalongkorn, for instance.<sup>[46]</sup> The promotion of Thai national heritage in Bangkok, at that time, was very early for cultural management, although it was not officially for tourism. Passing the first and second world wars, the development of national heritage in Bangkok developed in the age of tourism industrialization in the 1960s. At the start, the development was supported officially by the state and raised as a national agenda, as appeared in the following:

*King Bhumibol* expressed an opinion on the culture on the Commencement Day at Chulalongkorn University Hall, 21 April 1960: *'...Tradition and culture are of great benefit to our lives. The tradition and culture that we possess are valuable national treasures. We should therefore be pleased with our precious gems, and join hands in preserving them for the sake of national progress.'* In this year, *Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat's* speech, given at the inauguration ceremony of the Tourism Organization of Thailand on 18 March 1960, showed the objective and significance of tourism in Thailand; *'...In order to attract more visitors to Thailand, it is necessary for the host country to offer something which is unique to our country, e.g. the hospitality of the Thai people, its beautiful landscape and even its spiritual and material progress...'*<sup>[47]</sup>

The discourse of nation civilization was produced and subsequently the preservation of Thai national heritage started around 1977, as *Craig J. Reynolds* stated:

Kanpattana (development) was achieved at a significant price. While there had always been dissident voices in Thailand, official acknowledgement of the environment, social and culturally disorientating costs of economic change did not occur until the Fourth National Social and Economic Development Plan was brought forward in 1977.(...) Specially, the conservation objectives of the Fourth Plan centered on the preservation of a number of ancient cities (including Sukhothai) and the preservation and rehabilitation of the old part of the city of Bangkok, known as Rattanakosin Island. Other measures of this period included the formation of the Office of the National Culture Commission (ONCC) in 1979, with its brief to formulate plans, promote and develop culture, drawn on 'culture' in relation to educational economic and political development as well as participate in the enforcement of culture-related laws (ONCC 1989).<sup>[48]</sup>

The discourse on cultural development was launched by the state: *'Especially since the economic boom of the 1980s, and even through the economic gloom of the late 1990s, heritage in Thailand has become big business. Glossy magazines, commercial advertising, and tourism promotions market 'moradok' – the Thai word originally meaning 'inheritance' but decreed by officialdom to stand for the English word 'heritage' – in the family, the village, the provincial center, and the nation'*.<sup>[48]</sup>

Such development related to the background of cultural renovation in Bangkok, particularly Rattanakosin as the main site: *'In 1995, the Rattanakosin Committee proposed a plan for the development of Bangkok centering on the Old City on Rattanakosin Island where the Grand Palace, the Palace of the front Palace Prince (now the National Museum), and various monasteries were built in the late eighteenth century'*.<sup>[48]</sup>

In the connection with Bangkok tourism, the promotions evidence that at an early point, the main attractions in Bangkok were historical and cultural sites located in Rattanakosin Island. The management of culture focused on national heritage as cited in the campaign promoted by TOT<sup>[49]</sup>: ‘Bangkok, the capital, is even dotted with many places of interest and is also full of cultural activities. The glittering temples, museums, markets and shops, Thai classical dances, canal and river cruises, floating markets, and life along the Chao Phraya River are all charms to international visitors’.

The editorial's first message of the TOT publication's first issue, June 1960<sup>[50]</sup> stated:

Our pages can but offer words and pictures: they, to our regret, inadequately express the wonder of strolling through the quiet courtyards of a glittering Bangkok temple, the silence disturbed alone by tinkling temple bells and your hushed footsteps- for here is peace and riverine. Or the busy bustle of a klong, its rippled waters sucking softly at the piles of stilt-borne homesteads wherein, (...). Or else, in the narrow winding streets of a native market place, the cries of vendors palpitating in the hot air, elbowing one's way through a teeming, jostling, crowd of several nationalities.

Here are the summaries of ‘*Bangkok traditional culture*’ represented in official tourist guides before the Amazing Thailand campaign. In the facet of traditional culture promotion, the highlighted Bangkok attractions were reinvented festivals and inherited ceremonies. The traditional cultures selected to attract foreign visitors, who at that time mainly came from Western countries, were the royal barge procession to present Kathin robes, the floating markets, Thai boxing, and traditional Thai dancing. It is evident that inheriting, preservation, and revitalization has long been significant methods for tourist attraction development. In the 1960s publications that promoted traditional culture in Bangkok, there were seven wonders cited in magazines: *the Grand Palace, Wat Arun, the floating market, Thai boxing, the royal barges, Phra*

*Pathom Chedi, Thai dancing (Mekhala and Ramasun)*. The important idea TOT conveyed to visitors was the characteristics of traditional Thai culture formed by *'this independent kingdom'* maintaining basic traditional culture; *'while the pressures and vagaries of history have occasioned changed an inevitable process-those changes have been outward in form or pattern, rather than inward or fundamental in character.'*

<sup>[51]</sup> Tourist sites include the National Theatre, Wat Ratchapradith, the Golden Mount, the Marble Temple, 'Nakorn Khasem' market (ตลาดนครเขษม), 'Wat Trimitr'(วัดไตรมิตร).

In the 1970s, there were some columns in TOT's publications that tried to promote unseen sites in Bangkok, for example, *'A Bit Off the Beaten Path'*<sup>[52]</sup> published in 1974 listed *'interesting sights'* in and nearby Rattanakosin Island as follows: the city foundation pillar, old books markets, *'Mae Phra Toranee'*, Rajadhiwas Wiharn, and Suan Pakkad. In 1971, a column *'Three Unusual Houses in Bangkok'* portrayed the uniqueness of Thai style decorative art in *'Jim Thompson House'*, *'Suan Pakkard Palace'*, and *'Kamthieng House'*. Ceremonies and festivals<sup>[53]</sup> in Bangkok were *'Tod Kathin'* (ทอดกฐิน), *'Phra Chedi Klangnam'* (พระเจดีย์กลางน้ำ), *'Phu Khao Thong'* (ภูเขาทอง), *Loy Krathong*, *Songkran*, etc. Later, around 1966, there was the kite fighting season, Thai boxing at Rajdamnern and Lumpini Stadiums, the lotus festival at *'Bangplee'* (บางพลี), temple fairs, the ploughing ceremony (พระราชพิธีจรดพระนังคัลแรกนาขวัญ), royal silver jubilee ceremony (งานพระราชพิธีรัชมังคลาภิเษก), Thai handicrafts festival (งานเทศกาลหัตถกรรมไทย), and the King Lertlanaphalai memorial ceremony (งานพระบรมราชานุสรณ์พระบาทสมเด็จพระพุทธเลิศหล้านภาลัย). For activities in tourist agencies in the 1960s and 1970s, the agency titled *'Thai Silk Home Industries'* in Bangkoon Tian, along with elephant shows, cock-fighting, fish-fighting, Thai silk weaving, and Thai classical dance shows. In the 1970s, there were more agents, but not much change in activities promotion. However, now some cultural attractions have become extinct or have changed (as not recorded) their location in the recent period; in particular, ways of life and festivals, such as *'Phra Chedi Klangnam festival in Phra*



Phradaeng, some exquisite exotic scenes, such as floating bamboo-houses along canals, trading by boats, the week-end market at Sanam Luang, local market at Pratunam, and activities, i.e., Siamese fighting fish, battling kites, sword fighting, cockfighting near Rajdamnern Road, floating markets at Taprajan and Tatien. With respect to '*Bangkok modern culture*', there has been gradual development of the city. It can be said that '*Bangkok modern culture*' is the set of attractions that have characteristics more variable than '*Bangkok traditional culture*' because of the characteristics of the urbanized city of Bangkok that sets their circuits as stated: '*the propensity to travel is higher in towns, where the population is better informed and more responsive to new trends in recreational pursuits*'.<sup>[54]</sup>

Regarding modern culture in Bangkok, at the outset, the picture of modernity in Bangkok was 'Americanization' from the National Economic and Social Development Plans of which Thai-American as the alliance in-handed was set out. The mass consumption was in the form of department stores, express outlets, theatres, goods, for example. In Matthew Phillips's '*US Popular Representations of Thailand and the Construction of Uniqueness*',<sup>[55]</sup> this phenomenon was a '*feature of everyday life*'. Thailand '*had already achieved that status*' (or '*full freedom to live abundantly*'). He also refers to the book '*Any Old Place with You*', of which William Zinsser wrote in 1957 about his trip to Thailand. In the part when he visited Bangkok, the city was portrayed as '*unreal Thailand*' because of modernity that was rapidly urbanized by US and touristic scenes set by the state<sup>[56]</sup>:

(the Grand Palace)...Of course it is a photographer's paradise, and our companion were giddy with the pleasure of capturing it all. But each time one of them would frame a picture exactly as he wanted it, five or six others would wander into the scene. Nothing demolishes the purity of Siamese court so much as tourists straggling about in their pale faces and flashy suits, but rare was the picture taken that day didn't have a half-dozen Americans in the foreground, peering into their own cameras<sup>[57]</sup>.

'We want to see *rural* Thailand. We cannot get to know your country if we stay here in Bangkok' (...) Indeed, whilst he recognized the face that Bangkok was a modern city 'clogged with shiny American cars,' and full of 'air-conditioned theatres' showing 'Hollywood films', the implication was that these were more signs of Americanisation than of any 'authentic', internally led process of development.

Apart from daily facilities and fashions, night entertainment or soft industries, such as night clubs and bars, sprang up around the 1960s<sup>[58]</sup>:

...That the Vietnam War also stimulated growth of hotels, restaurants and what might be turned 'soft' industries (night clubs, bars and brothels) was partly explained by an increase in the number of tourists as well as increased US spending, together with Rest and Recreation (R&R)...Bangkok as the gateway to Thailand, and thus a center for all travelling in the kingdom, Bangkok attracted most of the tourists and the US military personnel...

In the 1970s, Bangkok rapidly developed places for relaxation as reported in 'Thailand Profile 1975'.<sup>[59]</sup>

Life in Bangkok metropolis means business during the day time. For the majority it means a hard struggle for decent living. For the small minority who have succeeded and those who want to take a break from monotonous daily activities, evening life in Bangkok can be a very pleasant one. There are so many places to while away a few hours. Patpong, close to the most luxurious hotel, Dusit Thani, and near the Wall Street of Thailand, is an area of one business block but boasts more than fifty night spots along the Petchaburi Extension, a road of many kilometres klong.

In the same report, as for public parks in Bangkok around 1975, there '*exists practically no decent public park for the relaxation of about four million city dwellers*'. In addition, at that time there were only two small public parks – Lumpini Park was '*little*

to *boast about* and another one was still being developed. Regarding urban cityscape, from the survey of an overview of tourism in the 1970s, the development program between 1975-1980 shows that Bangkok needed to improve primary attractions, increase open-air amenities, parks, botanical gardens, etc., as well as develop and improve water recreation facilities and klong cruising. Here is a summary of *'Bangkok modern culture'* in terms of recreational activities included in official tourist guides before the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign.

In the 1960s and afterward, there was money transfer through Government Savings Bank for international visitors who travelled up-country using the Government's Cheque; tourist transport at Suriwong Road, Kunjara Travel Agency at Charoen Krung Road, Boon Vanit Travel Agency, Harbour's Tours on New Road, and Everett Travel Service on Patpong Road boasted air conditioned comfort of the latest sedans. Products for shopping highlighted handicrafts, Thai silk, jewelry, and antiques, such as in the 1960s, many ads promoted Thai silk products of *'Bangkok Silk Co., Ltd.'*, S. Theb Thai Silk Factory, Thai Antiquarium at Amarin Hotel, Thai Handicrafts at Narayana Phand, and jewelry, carvings, ladies accessories at *'Fortune Jewelry'* Petchburi extension. In the 1980s, high quality leather goods were also promoted. Such fashions have been continuously promoted until the present day. In addition, exhibitions in the 1960s-1980s were such as Thai painting at British Council; sports at the Queen's Cup Horse Racing ; zoos at Kao Din; Bang-Kae; amusement parks, and *'Bangkok-on -sea'*.

In the columns *'Bangkok Diversion'* <sup>[60]</sup>, there were many restaurants and night clubs described in the 1960s, such as the Ambassadors Club at Erawan Hotel, Bamboo Bar and Normandie Grill at the Oriental Hotel, Club Keynote on Patpong, Moulin Rouge on Rajadamneon, Palm Restaurant at Ploenchit, Dairy Farms on Suriwong Road, Little Home Bakery on Vorachak Road. Apart from Western meals, Eastern dishes, Thai food, Chinese food, Japanese food, Korean food, Muslim food,

and Indian food were served at Palm Restaurant, Salinee, the Golden Dragon, Hoi Thien Lao, Mizu's Kitchen, the Thiparos, and Taj Mahal Restaurant. Before, most of such shops were part of hotel services. In the 1970s, these shops were independently opened. In the 1970s, international restaurants and night clubs increased consistent with hotel development in Bangkok. There were 65 Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Muslim, and European restaurants located on Sukhumvit, Silom, Ratchadamneon, Phetchaburi extension, Pathumwan, and Suriwong.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1980s, some new trends of dining were promoted, such as barbecue dinners and buffet luncheons, and various types of cuisines were added, such as Indonesian food, Franco-Swiss cuisine, Italian food, and vegetarian food. Night entertainment also increased and was categorized into many types, such as pubs, bars, night clubs, and night clubs with hostesses. In addition, '*culture corner*'<sup>14</sup> of both Thai and international agents in Bangkok, were promoted and significantly increased, such as modern art centers, galleries, trading centers, women's clubs, and language centers, along with new sports, such as '*ice skating*'. Shopping areas were extended from old areas to new city area, and promoted by categorizing types of product in each zone: '*Silom-Surawong-Charoen Krung (New Road)-Oriental Ave*' were famed for high standard hotels and fine shops; '*Rajdamri-Ploenchit-Gaysorn*' were popular for shopping centers and fashionable shopping areas for teenagers; '*Pathumvan Road or Rama 1*' had hotels, shopping complexes, shops, theatres, bookshops, and modern fashions; '*Pratunam area: Petchaburi Rd.*' was a site for hotels, shopping arcades, straw goods, and busy '*klongs*'; '*Ratchadamneon Ave.*' had the famous Thai souvenir shop (Naraya Phand), and the weekend market; '*Market and offbeat bargain at off prices Banglampoo*' had several unusual boutiques and shops from the lowest to

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<sup>13</sup> See more details in [Holiday Time in Thailand](#) published in 1970s.

<sup>14</sup> See more details in [Holiday Time in Thailand](#) published in 1980s.

highest quality; *'Bangrak'* was a large Thai style market area; *'Sanam Luang'* was the site of a huge weekend market; *'Pahurat (Indian Market)'* was very famous for Asian and Western fabrics, saris, sarongs, and hand-made household items; *'Pak Klong Talaat'* was the largest wholesale-retail market under one roof in Thailand; *'Sampeng Lane'* sold everything from fabrics, handmade apparatuses, and second-hand items; *'Teves flower market or talaat Thewarat'* had planting tools and trees, flowers, orchids, etc.; *'Chinatown's thieves market (Nakhorn Kasem)'* sold everything from motorcycles to birds nests Chinese paper lanterns to ancient remedies; *'Wat Ratchanadda'* was the location for amulets.

#### 2.1.3.2 The 'Amazing Thailand' campaign and afterward, 1998 – 2013

In this period, there are some changes and new angles of developed for Bangkok tourism as cited in the website of TAT<sup>[61]</sup> :

As the political, economic, cultural, culinary, and spiritual capital of Thailand, Bangkok features both old-world charm and modern convenience, at times served up in an apparently chaotic manner, but always with a gracious smile (...) Bangkok contains, from exotic temples, which underscore Thailand's strong Buddhist history, to modern shopping malls, which make shopping an integral part of any Bangkok holiday. Bangkok features attractions guaranteed to please visitors either simply passing through the city or spending their entire Thailand holiday in Bangkok. Nearly every Bangkok holiday includes a visit to Thailand's Grand Palace, arguably the premier Bangkok sightseeing attraction. Situated in the heart of Bangkok's Rattanakosin Island, the gleaming spires of the Grand Palace are conveniently located nearby Bangkok's most spectacular temples, including the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Phra Kaeo), the Temple of Dawn (Wat Arun), and Wat Pho, which features an enormous reclining Buddha and was home of the first Thai massage school in the kingdom. These iconic destinations are top

attractions to all visitors who travel to Bangkok looking to appreciate Thailand's unique cultural traditions.

In fact, there are more than 400 functioning Buddhist temples throughout the city and it's not uncommon when you travel in Bangkok to spot saffron robed monks collecting morning alms or traveling throughout the city, including along the Chao Phraya, the 'River of Kings', which passes alongside the Temple of the Dawn. The winding Chao Phraya is connected by numerous canals from which Bangkok has earned its nickname the 'Venice of the East'; when you travel around Bangkok, a cruise on the Chao Phraya, a visit to a floating market, or an exploration of the cities 'back alley' canals (khlongs) are themselves unique Bangkok attractions. Other historical and cultural Bangkok sightseeing 'must sees' include the National Museum, Vimanmek Mansion, and Suan Pakkad Palace, all of which either house fine art or are national treasures in their own right.

Beyond Bangkok's historical district, there are plenty of other attractions that make a Bangkok holiday both enjoyable and memorable. The downtown districts along Silom and Sukhumvit Roads have a convenient electric rail system, including an elevated sky-train and underground subway that have made travel in Bangkok both easy and enjoyable. Connecting hotels directly to shopping malls and traditional markets, such as Mah Boon Krong Center and Chatuchak (JJ) weekend market, the MRT and BTS systems have literally elevated Bangkok shopping to world-class status. Of course, no Thailand holiday is complete without experiencing Thailand's vibrant nightlife. Whether, the purpose of your Thailand holiday is to immerse yourself in Thailand's unique culture or simply to splurge in Bangkok shopping malls, when you travel to Bangkok you are guaranteed a fascinating experience of both old-world charm and modern convenience and luxury.

Thus it can be seen that Bangkok developed tourist destinations differently from former periods in the aspects of type and number. There were five types of attractions in this period, particularly the expansion of areas from inside Bangkok to the outskirts, the network of local communities, non-profit organizations, private sector and academic institutions, local official sectors, and temples in each district, as well as cultural management in a large scope, both for international and local tourism. The report of the BMA summarized the number of areas in Bangkok with different potential that were promoted by the tourist network: 12 eco-tourist areas, 2 arts and sciences educational attraction areas, 7 cultural attraction areas, 14 historical attraction areas, and 15 recreational attraction areas. In this period, the state supported and promoted new attractions in various aspects in order to extend tourist sites outside the center of Bangkok, as well as upgrade well-known attractions to meet an international standard.

However, it can be noticed that the tourist areas famous for international tourism are mainly located inside Bangkok's old town, near the center area, that had been expat communities, such as Phra Nakhon, Dusit, Ratchadevi, Samphanthawong, Pomprabsattruphai, Chatuchak, Sathorn, Bangrak, Pathumwan, Sukhumvit, Klongsan, Bangkok Yai, Yannawa, Thonburi, approximately 30% of the entire area. These districts have significant historical background, in particular, the symbolized space as the national spirit in Rattanakosin Island. The surrounding areas of the old town and extended areas, such as Samphanthawong, Pomprabsattruphai, Dusit, Klongsan, Yannawa, Bangkok Yai, Sathorn, Bangrak, and Thonburi, are old communities of various ethnic groups since the early part of the Rattanakosin period and before that time. Apart from this, the center of business, services and creative areas, such as Pathumwan, Ratchadevi, Sukhumvit, and Chatuchak, have been marked as entertainment and shopping hubs of Bangkok. The report of TAT<sup>[62]</sup> cited famous attractions for international visitors as follows: the top 10 places international visitors have visited are national heritage sites, palaces, temples and museums: the Royal

Grand Palace, Vimanmek Mansion, Wat Phra Sri Rattana Satsadaram, Wat Phra Chetuphon Vimolmongklaram, Wat Arunratchavaramahaviharn, Wat Trimitvittayaram, Phranakorn National Museum, the Royal Barge National Museum, Jim Thompson House Museum and Museum. Ten other places are old communities, shopping streets, shopping plazas, floating markets, and night entertainment places: Taling Chan Floating Market, JJ Market, Suanlum Night Bazaar, Pratunam and Prathumwan areas, Yaowarat area, Hualamphong Railway Station, Khaosan Road, Asoke area and Soi Cowboy, Nana area, Phatphong area-Silom Road. The survey also revealed that there is not much difference in the purpose of visits and types of attraction international visitors prefer to visit. Asian, European, American, Australia, and Canadian mostly have ever visited the famous sites as mentioned. In particular, the four favorite activities are recreation, shopping-visiting exhibitions-visiting trade shows, visiting scared places, and having Thai spa and massage. Regarding the types of product, garment and dresses comes first, followed by food, handicrafts, and souvenirs.

In terms of cultural activities, many data sources show that the traditional festivals and ceremonies are still promoted. *'Amazing Bangkok 1998'* <sup>[5]</sup>; the first manual guide of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, shows that there were a large numbers of ceremonies and festivals promoted in this period. The ceremonies can be divided into two groups. The first is Buddhist ceremonies, such as Magha Puja, Visakha Puja, Asalha Puja; and the second are Brahman rituals, such as Royal Ploughing ceremony. Thai festivals include Loi Krathong and Candle Festival, Venice of the East, Songkran Festival, Thai sports and kite flying. Festivals, celebrations and entertainment influenced by the West are the King and Queen Birthday celebrations, New Year celebration, music in the park, and beer festivals. The others are ethnic *'Thai-Chinese'* festivals, celebrations, and ceremonies, as in the Amazing Chinatown project arranged to promote Amazing Thailand Year held on Yaowarat Street on the first weekend of each month. Activities included Chinese-style flower decorations; Thai &



Chinese cultural performances; various contests and product sales. The international sport and festivals include the ASEAN Art Festival (1998), which featured arts and architectural exhibitions, and various art performances, including paintings, dances and music from ASEAN countries. Apart from this, modern attractions and cityscape development have been cited in official tourist guides in more types and numbers. For example, the high living standard, good transportation, and green spaces in the city, such as canals, walking streets, cycling routes, public parks; learning hubs, such as libraries, museums, art and culture centers, and entertainment, such as theatres and nightlife attractions. In addition, international activities and fairs were also included to attract visitors, such as fashion fairs, leather fairs, gift and house wares fairs, motor shows, gems and jewelry fairs.

To summarize, cultural attractions and recreation areas in Bangkok have changed and been continuously developed to attract more visitors, as well as catch tourist trends in different periods. The cultural attractions that originated from traditional culture in Bangkok have changed in various ways. Royal practices, in particular, royal ceremonies, arts and crafts, Thai dancing and royal cuisine reflecting the inherited faith of people in the royal institute, artful practices, and royal patronage to Thai art and culture, have not changed their form of expression and occasion to be performed. In spite of this, it is obvious that many craft and cultural products have been promoted and supported as part of the national heritage. Local practices, at the outset of Bangkok tourism, especially in Thai and Chinese communities, have been promoted for simplistic ways of life, the exotic taste of cuisine, religious festivals and other activities. Later, there has been an increase in ethnic communities in Bangkok being promoted as tourist destinations, such as Mon communities in and nearby Bangkok, Sikh, Indian, Vietnamese, etc. Prominently, in the 15 years of the '*Amazing Thailand*' campaigns, old communities of both Thai and ethnic people were selected to be promoted. In addition, the decline of natural areas and the rapid urbanization in

Bangkok throughout 50 years, led to an increase in 'Bangkok modern culture' and advancement of cultural management. Significantly, there were large numbers of heritage sites, especially museums, promoted in the 15 years. From traditional types at the outset, such as the National Museum and Royal Barge Museum, various types of cultural knowledge hubs – cultural centers, art centers, museums, and libraries – were established to collect and manage cultures and bodies of knowledge of Bangkok. Modern attractions were also changed from '*American culture*' constructed under development plans with the support of US to '*global culture*' that comes from all directions.

## 2.2 The representation of Bangkok images

As previously explained, Bangkok tourist attractions have developed by means of cultural management and influences from world tourism trends. Bangkok has now become a destination for visitors in various groups from one purpose to multi-purposes. These changes have caused large numbers of cultural attractions in Bangkok to have more characteristics by integrating concepts of consumption into tourism development, and taking the mixture between traditional and modern, Thai, ethnics and global cultures into the contemporary Bangkok scene. While some local and royal practices are represented as solid culture retaining originality amid rapid modernization, many other cultural attractions have been developed and changed to fit with the stream of changes. Temples have become temple complexes, because they are set as a museum, meditation practice center, and sacred space. Local communities have become '*living museums*', with ordinary ways of life brought to represent their civilized characteristics through activities and events. Hotels have more services, and are now not only for staying, but for spa treatments, fitness, dining, listening to music, and watching performances.

The representations of Bangkok tourism are paralleled with developments and changes, as mentioned previously. To do so, this study has selected three groups of official tourist guides to analyze – TOT/TAT, Thai Airways, and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration – and it was found that there are different scopes and methods to represent Bangkok images in each of these tourist guides. Tourist Organization of Thailand first published a monthly magazine to give information about cultural attractions in Thailand and tourism news for foreign visitors<sup>15</sup>, with 'Holiday time in Thailand', being volume Number 1 in June 1960. TOT continuously published information about the overall images of Thailand, with Bangkok as the main part in the early decades, and added other attractions in leading tourist provinces in latter decades. The images of Bangkok in the publications was brought online in the mid-1990s, with '*Holiday time in Thailand*' made over to an online publication to highlight Bangkok as the modern city with various attractions.

'Sawasdee', the monthly magazine of Thai Airways, has long promoted tourism in Bangkok, starting in the 1970s. The image of Bangkok at the outset of the promotion was as the center of Thai civilization. The interesting points have been of images that compare other countries in all the regions of the world, plus with a variety of up to date events, activities, festivals and ceremonies in Bangkok.

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration first published Bangkok tourist guides in 1998 to promote attractions in Bangkok according to Bangkok tourism plans that were established. Hence, there are many more images of Bangkok represented in the data sources of BMA than those in TOT/TAT and Thai Airways publications. Attractions have been represented under the main theme of '*Amazing Bangkok*' and have been

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<sup>15</sup> There are many articles introducing tourist sites and other cultural shows such as on Wat Pho, Wat Suthat, Battle 'Krabai-Krabong', stone rubbings, Mae Thoranee, Chao Phraya River, water as a way of life, the handicrafts of Thailand, flower arrangement, vegetable carving, Thai silk, shopping for the house, Thai dolls, Thai Monks, and Gastronomic Adventure, etc.

selected to show outstanding characteristics by collecting all attractions in Bangkok, as in *'Amazing Bangkok'*, *'Bangkok 2000'*, *'Bangkok Bangkok'*, *'Bangkok Style 2010'*, and *'Bangkok Style 2011'*; focusing on *'Unseen Bangkok'* as in *'100 Unseen in Bangkok'*, *'Saneh Bangkok'*, *'Bangkok's secret: Ferrying through off-the beaten tracks in this colourful and diverse city'*; separating types of attractions near rivers and canals, shopping lover, fantastic cuisine, beauty and health treatment, or museums; categorized by zoning, such as in Rattanakosin Island, Yaowarat, and Silom-Bangrak; lastly, separated by methods to travel, such as by cycling, walking, or ferrying. Apart from this, publication and online data produced in different administrations have different focuses and numbers. Data sources conducted in the period of Dr. Phichit Rattanakul (1996-2000) as the Bangkok governor include *'Amazing Bangkok'*, *'The must see site in Bangkok'*, and *'Bangkok 2000: City of culture'*; Samak Suntaravech (2000-2004) included *'Bangkok Bangkok'*; Aphirak Kosayothin (2004-2008) launched *'Saneh Bangkok'* project and produced *'100 Unseen in Bangkok'*, *'Experience the charm of Chao Phraya River'*, *'The shining of ART'*, *'Bangkok museums: A Guidebook to Museums in Greater Bangkok'*, *'Bangkok's Secret: Ferrying through off-the beaten tracks in this colourful and diverse city'*, and e-books, etc.; M.R. Sukhumbhand Paritbatra (2009-present) has launched many projects, such as *'Bangkok Smile'*, *'the Best in Bangkok'*, *'World's Best City'*, and *'Miracle Bangkok'*, and a large number of tourist guides have been produced, such as *'Bangkok Style 2010'*, *'Bangkok Style 2011'*, *'World's best city'*, *'Bangkok Guide Map: World Best City'*, *'Bangkok Smile Bike'*, *'Bangkok Attractions'*, *'Bangkok's Guide to Rattanakosin'*, *'Bangkok's Secret: 70 of Bangkok's most remarkable attractions'*.

The concept of 'exotic' and 'civilized' in foreign travel writings and Bangkok official tourist guides

As the core images of Bangkok in a tourism context are based on the characteristics of 'exotic' which is also perceived as 'civilized' cultures. This part will describe the context of word use in travel writing of both foreigners and Thai to understand concepts and background of Bangkok images in a larger scope. In the area of colonial studies, the word 'exotic' generally refers to the Third World or remote areas or countries from the center. Many foreign travel writings reveal that the word 'exotic' refers to unmodernized cultures, tropical environment, or situations in Bangkok which foreign visitors may confront. For example, Exotic scenes of Bangkok were first described as an unusual experience, and in a remote area. *Somerset Maugham*, a 'perspective traveler', visited Bangkok in 1923, and wrote in '*The Gentleman in the Parlor*' (1930):

With their straight streets, their arcades, their tramways, their dust, their blinding sun, their teeming Chinese, their dense traffic, their ceaseless din. They have no history and no traditions. Painters have not painted them. No poets transfiguring dead bricks and mortar with their divine nostalgia, have given them a tremulous melancholy not their own. They live their own lives, without associations, like a man without imagination. They are hard and glittering and as unreal as a backcloth in a musical comedy. They give you nothing.

Similarly, S.J. Perelman, another visiting author after the Second World War, wrote in '*From the very beginning*', '*Its character is complex and inconsistent; it seems at once to combine the Hannibal, Missouri of Mark Twain's boyhood with Beverly Hills, the Low Countries and Chinatown*'.<sup>[63]</sup> Next, many Western writings have employed the word 'exotic' in a negative sense based on personal interpretation, knowledge background, and purpose of writing. For example, in the colonial era, unfamiliar things, such as traditional culture and ways of life in Bangkok, were described as exotic scenes. The relevant words were 'barbarian', 'humble', and 'dirty'.

Such opinions were from the fact that, *'Thailand still looks mainly to the West for her development models, and 'many foreigners continue to look down on the substantive differences that exist between traditional Thai and so-called 'modern' ways of doing things.'*<sup>[64]</sup> For example: Bangkok was *'uncivilized'*, and Thais were *'by nature warlike'*, as said in Anna Leonowens' writing<sup>[65]</sup>:

I could wish for a special dispensation to pass without mention the public prisons of Bangkok, for their condition and the treatment of the unhappy wretches confined in them are the foulest blots on the character of the government. Some of these grated abominations are hung like bird-cages over the water; and those on land, with their gangs of living corpses chained together like wild beasts, are too horrible to be pictured here.

After the end of absolute monarchy, *Andrew A. Freeman* represented the image of Bangkok in his book, *'A Journalist in Siam'* (or, *'Brown Women and White'*), as a city of multicultural relationships. In this book, there were many points about the manners of the Thai people and their interactions with foreigners, as well as the world view expressed by educated Thais during this period. He portrayed exotic scenes in Siam in the 1920s, as stated in the foreword: *'Of course, elements of exoticism do appear within the book pages'*. He talked about the *'Bangkok white community'* where foreigners *'formed a sort of cloistered society'* and *'arrogant in its isolation and condescending in its attitudes towards outsiders'*.<sup>[66]</sup>

In the modern day, Bangkok has been described as an exotic city, with images of unplanned cityscapes, chaos, hot weather, unpredictable Thais behavior, etc. Famous tourist guides such as Lonely Planet<sup>[67]</sup> state: *'Thais are continuously shocked by foreigners shouting and swearing in public, particularly over something as minors as not being understood. Locals can sit calmly in a traffic jam that would leave a Westerner frothing at the mouth...'*<sup>[68]</sup>; Bangkok is *'large and unplanned'*, *'can be tough to get around'*, *'street names often seem unpronounceable to begin with, compounded by the inconsistency of Romanized Thai spellings'*, for example.<sup>[69]</sup>

Similarly to 'Very Thai'<sup>[70]</sup>, Philip Cornwel-Smith have portrayed everyday popular culture and daily lives in Bangkok such as 'the elephants go looking for you, while they wander city for living', 'Insects Treats, a snack for city folk', 'Taxi Altars, garland offerings to the journey goddess, Mae Yanang, typically hang with amulets from the rearview mirror', etc..

In documentaries, writers also express their feeling from the views of strangers, even have lived for many years in the country, because of the complexity of Bangkok, both with regarding the character of Thais and the surrounding scenes, the multicultural interaction and the sense of exotic in places, as well as the high contrast between 'modern'- 'traditional' scenes in Bangkok. The following are examples: 'It began to occur to me that Thailand as a place of exile something fosters a taste for self-invention which is not her cosmology'<sup>[71]</sup>; 'This is an exciting time to live here in growing cosmopolitan Asian City, to be part of an unfolding new complex international culture.'. <sup>[72]</sup> Similarly the illustrate book, 'Bangkok Colors of the Night'<sup>[73]</sup>, captures a mixture of dissimilar components of Bangkok and represented the outstanding image based on diverse ethnic mix appearing in forms of architecture and ways of life.

In addition, fiction written by Westerners convey the sense of exotic modes by fantasizing, for instance, many titles of Thailand have been employed to described Bangkok scene: the city of angels, the word 'angel' standing for a prostitute or 'call girls'; the land of freedom, the word 'freedom' meaning freely doing everything, or 'disorder'; the land of smiles represented in an ironical way, such as 'the deceitful smile'<sup>[74]</sup>. Apart from the characteristics of the people, large numbers of works of fiction have narrated the dark side of Bangkok – criminal, turmoil of politics, human trafficking, and red light district, etc. – and the relationship between Thais and expats.

In connection to Thai tourism survey, the word 'exotic', or the sense of exotic has similarly been employed by foreign visitors to describe cultural diaspora, in particular the contrasting cultural scene, the characteristics of the people, the environment, and security, as recently reported in TAT research.<sup>[75]</sup>

Briefly, the concepts of 'exotic' represented in these foreign travel writings have been stereotyped based on the purpose of the writings, viewpoints that come from unfamiliarity, and the Western civilization standard with unequal cultural values.

However the characteristics of 'exotic' Bangkok cultural images in some foreign travel writings are equally to 'civilized' since Thai tourism sectors have aimed to promote a beautiful scenic view of Bangkok as a riverine city. These ideas can be traced back to the sentimental writing of *Anna Leonowens* who came to Bangkok in King Mongkut's period, and the memoir of William Warren in 1985. This shows that not only a negative side of Bangkok images was represented, but also positive pictures. In '*The city of Bangkok*' a part of Anna Leonowens' '*The English Governess at the Siamese Court*', Bangkok is a picturesque city with beautiful '*meinam*', fantastic temples and pagodas, a neater cultivation, villages quaintly pretty, and dark foliage contrasting boldly with the more lively and lovely green of the betel, the tamarind, and the banana. Many times she used words such as beautiful, graceful, refreshment, imaginable, enchanting, brilliancy to portray the '*oriental fancy*' of Bangkok. The composition she depicted in fictional style made the narrative more colorful as mentioned below:

But the traveler, faithful to the picturesque, will cling to the beautiful Meinam, which will entertain him with scenery more and more charming as he approaches the capital,---higher lands, a neater cultivation, hamlets and villages quaintly pretty, fantastic temples and pagodas dotting the plain, fine Oriental effects of form and colour, scattered Edens of fruit, the durian, the orange,---their dark foliage contrasting boldly with the more lively and lovely green of the betel, the tamarind, and the banana ....So oriental fancy and profusion deal with things of use, and make a wonder of a commonplace.<sup>[76]</sup>



Another example is by *William Warren* in 1985. He described the characteristics of the composition of Bangkok that had attracted him 25 years ago:

...A quarter of a century ago, of course, Thailand was a rather different place, particularly the city where Thai Inter and I made our headquarters(...) there was a leisurely big-small town feeling, with jaunty Padi cabs on the streets, plenty of trees, and frequent festivals where you always ran into a lot of people you know. Jim Thompson, famed for Thais silk, was gilding the lily slightly when he told a reporter from New York Times that he went to his office every morning by boat(...) including one along the old airport road that was filed with pink and white lotus and thus represented a very exotic welcome to the tourists who were just beginning to come in sizable numbers.<sup>[42]</sup>

The ideal Bangkok scene cited above was in 1960. Bangkok was at the start of development after the end of the Second World War, so that there were undiminished old local ways of life, a natural environment, and cityscape.

Focusing on Thai high cultural promotion as the representatives of Thai civilization, TOT selected the characteristics of mystic beauty of Thai high arts to represent civilization based on an exotic presentation. As found in official tourist guides produced by the state, the outstanding image of Bangkok promoted in the 1960s, and 1970-1980, is as the center of Thai civilization. Traditional Thai culture was prominently promoted in this period. Bangkok cultural images were highlighted to produce a positive image of the country.

For example, TOT, at that time, aimed to bring back the image of 'exoticism' in 'Old Bangkok' and change the sense of exoticism from women during the period of the Vietnam War<sup>[16]</sup> Around that time, TOT emphasized the 'exotic': *'the cultural sites and natural sites and amenities the country has to offer. This emphasis is most concisely expressed in the slogan 'Thailand-the Most Exotic Country in Asia'*. Exoticism was rendered visually in the illustrations adorning promotional publications, which tended to show temples, classical dancers or hill tribe people on the cover. In the part of Bangkok, the slogans promoted Bangkok as the 'Civilized Metropolis': preserve the gracious past

and the leading city of future growth in Southeast Asian. In this promotion process, TOT selected pictures that could effectively attract visitors, at that time mostly from the West.

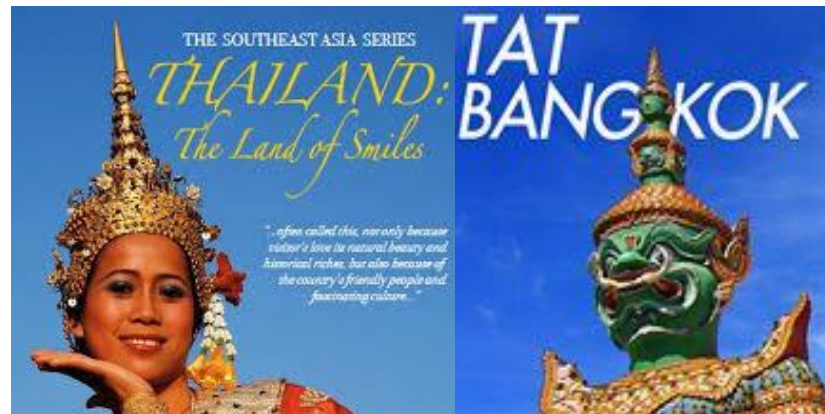


Figure 1

TOT ads promoting Thailand and Bangkok as an exotic destination<sup>16</sup>

The images of purity and the originalities of such components were also promoted by TOT. Around this time, the very concrete image of Bangkok as an exotic scene appeared in TOT's logo. The emblem of TOT/TAT was initially created by considering 'what symbolized Thailand from the point of view of the international tourist arrivals', as cited in 'Reminiscence of the TOT', Lt. General Chalermchai Charuvastr, Director of the Tourist Organization of Thailand, 1960-1979, explained the background of the emblem of TOT/TAT:

What I first thought about was an emblem to represent the TOT. In designing the emblem which is still in use until now, I asked myself what symbolized Thailand from the point of view of the international tourist arrivals. I found the answer to this question in the film 'Around the World in Eighty Days', starring David Niven, in which the hero's visit to Thailand was presented through two main images - - the prang of

<sup>16</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <https://www.pinterest.com/irisheyesphyl/smile-you-re-on-candid-camera/> ; (Right) <https://www.facebook.com/tatbangkok>.

the Temple of Dawn and the royal barge on the Chao Phraya River. These two images were then used for the emblem, an aero plane, flying from behind the Temple of Dawn, was added to symbolize travelling from aboard.

This emblem was encircled by the name 'Tourist Organization of Thailand' in the Below part, and its Thai initials reading 'Or Sor Tor' at the top. The graphic design was done by Mrs. Myers, an American designer, who gave the final touch to the emblem, the outcome of which is what we have in the present day.



Figure 2

The iconic royal barges and the prang of Wat Arun designed as TOT/TAT logo and Thai Airways ad<sup>17</sup>

The next example is the very first poster designed by Lt. General Chalermchai that highlighted traditional scenes in Bangkok: 'I also designed the very first poster for TOT, by juxtaposing the prang of the Temple of Dawn with Thai culture: the result was a poster with the prang of the Temple of Dawn in the background, and a half-length portrait of a classical dancer wearing a traditional headdress in the foreground. This poster was entered for the contest at a PATA Annual Conference and won the first prize'. The reasons for choosing traditional culture to promote were from considering the cultural resources

<sup>17</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <http://thai.tourismthailand.org/home>;

(Right) <http://www.thaicabincrew.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=40347>

in the country that were different from others in this region. In addition, at that period tourism in Western countries had patterns which were definitely different from Thailand. To attract them was to impress by things they did not have. It can be seen that at the beginning, TOT published *'Holiday Time in Thailand'*, a monthly English magazine to promote Thai tourism for foreigners, and *'to make foreigners understand Thais better, and thus gave foreigners a sense of respect for Thais in general.'*<sup>[77]</sup> To achieve this aim, sets of *'exotic'* Thai cultures showed the epitome of *'thainess'*. These icons originated from the practices of royal ceremonies and Buddhism. For example, the traditional activity in Bangkok first promoted was the royal barge procession to present *kathin* robes to Buddhist monks at the Temple of Dawn.<sup>[78]</sup> The success was evidenced when Pan American World Airways Company asked for permission to publicize this picture as a PAN AM advertisement, which was distributed to the company's branch offices worldwide, to make foreigners thoroughly acquainted with Thailand. Three 1.6 mm. documentary films on Thai tourism were made showing tourist sites, including the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the Grand Palace, important Buddhist temples, the floating market. Moreover, brochures were published. The TOT, in co-operation with the Department of Fine Arts, also sent cultural troupes to perform Thai dances in Europe and the United States of America. Continuously to the mid 1980s, the characteristics of *'exotic'* cultures of remote countries, i.e., Asian and Southeast Asian countries, largely were modified by tourism development and cultural management that shared similarities in features and types of attraction with developed countries in the West. This change has been continuous to the present. The term *'exotic'* has been intentionally used to welcome visitors from dissimilar cultures to explore undiscovered Thai culture due to the world tourism phenomena. Focusing on Bangkok tourism, with respect to the used of the word for sensualizing international visitors perception, TAT, as the main tourism sector of Thailand, still employs the word *'exotic'* to be equal to *'civilized'* culture based on its antiquity, refinement, and integration of oriental herbs

and spices of Thai cuisine as the main attraction. This is a process of constructing a 'civilized image' of Thailand and Bangkok in that the state has been employing the term 'exotic' and related words to give a sense of fascination, miracle, and to be striking in order to portray Thai culture in Bangkok tourist spaces to contrast or improve some negative viewpoints by foreigners toward Bangkok. To make this clear, this section will examine Bangkok images in official tourist guides from 1998-2013. Notably, Bangkok promoted its potential to preserve national heritage in the age of rapid modernization: *'Thailand and the Thais have exclusive prominent identity especially as well as a private life style based on a foundation created, instilled, and succeeded for centuries by our ancestors.'* [79] The attempt to manage cultural materials in progressive development, as mentioned, was to highlight Bangkok as the place of intangible cultural heritage: *'intangible cultural heritage does not only represent inherited traditions from the past but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part.'* [80] All sorts of attractions impressed visitor because they had identities and values, different from other cities in Southeast Asia.



Figure 3

Logos representing Thailand and Bangkok cultural images<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Photo credit: (Upper) <http://logosociety.blogspot.com/2010/06/amazing-thailand-logo.html>

;(Lower) <http://www.bangkoktourist.com/>

Significantly, a sense of amazement, as promoted under the concept of the *'Amazing Thailand'* campaign, was formed by the characteristics of attractiveness, *'colorful or unusual features'* that cannot be founded anywhere else in the world.

Such characteristics, in other words, were the traditional and modern cultures reflected in *'Civilized Bangkok'*. *'Traditional culture'* kept the essence of *'exotic'* in contemporary Bangkok. With respect to *'modern culture'*, Bangkok images were highlighted on the interactive exchange of global cultures, which highly influenced the ways of life of Bangkokians in former periods. The characteristics of Bangkok society where cultures have persisted and been changed by the intermingling of *'traditional and 'modern'*, or *'local'/'royal'-'global'* cultures, could be defined as *'contemporary Bangkok'*. Over 15 years, the image of Bangkok as a *'civilized city'* was portrayed as a *'diversity of cultures'* with *'well-blended formation'*. The characteristics of cultural diversities were of the differences in cultural types – Thai-ethnic-global culture – cultural ages – traditional-modern period – and cultural origination – royal-local-urban practices. All such characteristics were shaped by (1) the socio-culture of Bangkok, and (2) cultural management, so as to blend dissimilarities of cultural characteristics in the proper direction. The groups of attractions in this study have been divided into three groups according to their circuits/procession: *'Bangkok Traditional Culture, both Royal and Local practices'*, *'Cultural Management in Bangkok'*, and *'Bangkok Modern Culture'*.

The first group represents *'traditional values'* based on the strength of Buddhist concepts in practices of royal and local cultures, as well as the adaptation of Bangkok local communities to preserve their authentic identities as inherited culture. The second group represents culture and a body of knowledge that is managed by the state. In this process, traditional and modern culture has been mingled to fit consumerism and the objectives of management. The third group, moved by the economic sector, franchise businesses, free trade, and global consumerism trends, represents *'modern*

*values*' in an urbanized Bangkok context. Hence, the characteristics of '*civilized Bangkok*' represent the strength of society of Bangkok that can maintain cultural roots, the ability to adapt traditional culture to modern transformation, characteristics of cultural identities in forms and expression, on value-based concepts reflecting the cultural standards of Bangkok society in a large scope. The identities of '*Bangkok cultures*' was the most important features selected to attract visitors. Identities of Bangkok cultural attractions were compared to cultural attractions of other provinces in Thailand and Asian cities. The data resources and tourism report show that the outstanding identities of Bangkok attractions were different from other provinces in Thailand and Asian countries, as well as having kept some characteristics of the central region of Thailand and Southeast Asian civilization.

### 2.3 Identities of Bangkok cultural attractions compared to Thailand provinces

To the extent that the cultural identities in Bangkok are concerned, the characteristics of the epitome of '*Thinness*' and '*modernness*' in Bangkok socio-cultural aspects have a uniqueness different from 'thainess' in other provinces. This is especially so for the historical background of the city, the significance as the Thai capital city and the center of Thai civilization of the Rattanakosin period, cultures of local Thai and ethnic groups in each district, natural environment and cityscape. All the factors of Bangkok cultural attractions have remarkable characteristics, particularly in the forms of '*Rattanakosin*' artistic styles, cultural bodies of knowledge cultivated from the wisdom of Bangkokians, old communities' practices, and the current global trends in an urbanized Bangkok.

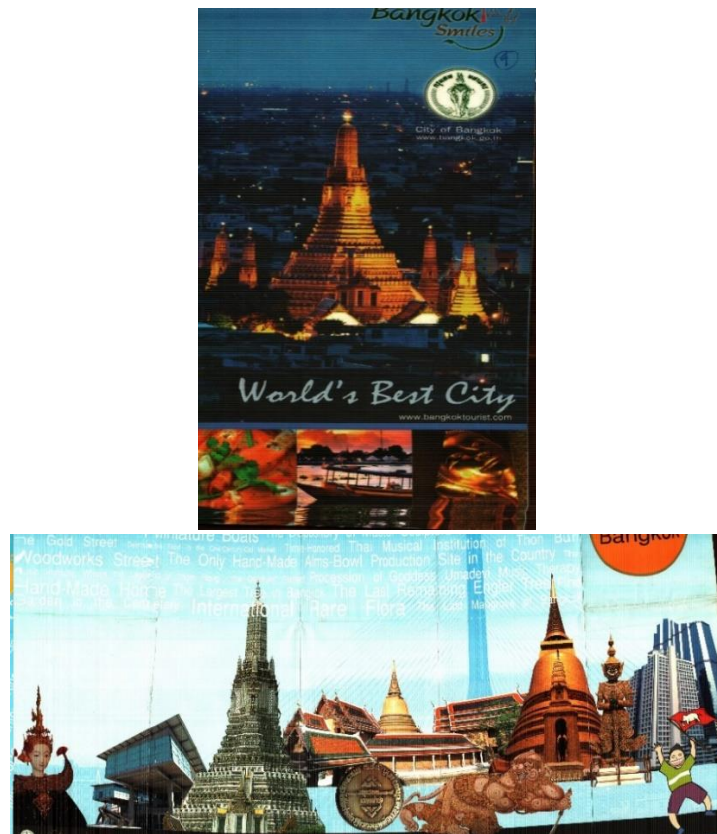


Figure 4

The promotion of Bangkok cultural attractions in the 'Amazing Thailand' period<sup>19</sup>

This can be compared to other provinces as mentioned in the main themes of the 'Amazing Thailand tour programmer' initiated in 1998<sup>[81]</sup> that related to Bangkok tourism and still keeping the following themes: Amazing Tastes, Amazing Cultural Heritage, Amazing Arts and Lifestyle, Amazing World Heritage, Amazing Sports and Entertainment, and Amazing Agricultural Heritage.

<sup>19</sup> Photo credit: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration



## 2.4 Identities of Bangkok cultural attractions compared to leading Asian tourist cities

In a wider scope, Bangkok cultural images have characteristics different from leading tourist cities in Asian and Southeast Asian countries, although some matters share similarities. This section will overview cultural attractions in leading tourist capital cities that are marked as the competitors of Bangkok, then show how Bangkok has been represented as a civilized nation under the context of Asian cities. The recent report, *'Global Destination Cities Index'*, conducted by Yuwa Hedrick and Desmond Choong,<sup>[82]</sup> stated: *'The top destination city by international visitor arrivals in 2013 is Bangkok, which managed to surpass London by a very slim margin. This is the first time an Asian city is in the top rank since the index was launched in 2010.'* Considering only Asian cities, there were eight cities following Bangkok that were mentioned: 4<sup>th</sup> – Singapore, 7<sup>th</sup> – Dubai, 8<sup>th</sup> – Kuala Lumpur, 9<sup>th</sup> – Hong Kong, 11<sup>th</sup> – Seoul, 14<sup>th</sup> – Shanghai, 16<sup>th</sup> – Tokyo, and 18<sup>th</sup> – Taipei. The report of the BMA<sup>[83]</sup> stated that Bangkok in 2012 was trying to develop and manage tourist destinations to have a standard similar to other leading tourist capital cities in the world, such as London, Paris, and Rome. Above all, it should be concerned with five capital cities in Asian. Tokyo is famous for the well-blended high modern technology, unique traditional culture and beautiful natural sites in four seasons; Beijing has fame for world heritage sites, beautiful natural sites, history and modern innovative set for tourism; Seoul has attractive characters, the mixture between old and new, especially banding 'Korea' via modern media, and the continuous planning for four seasons selecting traditional cultures and international festivals to attract visitors all year; Dubai is well-known in luxurious buildings, invented islands and outstanding architecture. From the above, in general, the tourism selling points have been the history of the nation, well-blended multi-cultures, intermingling between 'old' and 'new', as can be categorized into four types: traditional culture, cultural and body of knowledge management, the intermingling of traditional - global culture, and global culture in the metropolis. The

basic images that each city promotes are the unity of the nation, the high-minded people, the beauty of the cityscape, and above all, the cultural attractions. The information shows that there are many iconic attractions that Bangkok has selected to represent the characteristics of civilization as comparable to those promoted in Asian cities. The very basic signs Asian countries use to denote '*friendliness and welcoming*' are greeting gestures as *McCartney* explained in the topic '*Tourism Destination*'<sup>[84]</sup> :

Asian destinations are known to be friendly and welcoming, with the Asian smile and welcoming gestures – such as slight bowing, with hands placed together featuring in travel promotions. Iconic images such as those of the Singapore Girl from Singapore Airlines of the Thai or Malaysian woman bowing, dressed in traditional garments, are part of marketing and advertising messages.

Greeting gestures as mentioned also represent the respective relationship and shared values in Asian cities that serve for service. Bangkok has emphasized the image of a long-history nation, similar to Seoul, Tokyo, and cities of China. For a long time, these cities have preserved traditional culture through the origination of large numbers of unique ceremonies, festivals, and food culture, which is their main attractiveness. Apart from this, the practices of royalty, localism, and Buddhism have also been important factors causing these cities to have their own uniqueness. Those cities that were colonized or governed by other influential countries have selected a balance of cultural integration as their strong point. This idea appears in official tourist web pages of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Kuala Lumpur. In fact, all the cities in the Asian region have promoted multi-cultural identities, but with a different focus on the process to blend such characteristics, as well as the major cultural characteristics of the nation. Bangkok has raised '*traditional Thai culture*' as the major Thai identity, along with other ethnic cultures, such as Chinese, Mon, Indian, Vietnamese, and colonial culture that has partially influenced cuisine, architecture, street markets, and ways of life in communities. Similarly, Dubai and Hong Kong have raised one culture as the major culture of the nation. Dubai has been shaped by '*the Islamic traditions of*

*Arabia, with religion touching all aspects of everyday life*', although it has *'a diverse and multi-cultural society'*.<sup>[85]</sup> Hong Kong has promoted Chinese ethnic culture, Cantonese as the major national culture, and Westernization under British influence for over 150 years, while having little features of other minority ethnic groups, such as Sikh. Distinctly different is Kuala Lumpur, where the three major ethnic groups, Malays, Indians, Chinese cultures, equally have influenced the large scope of nation culture; Singapore follows this concept by citing Chinese, Malays, Indians and Eurasians cultures as the main national culture that co-exists in Singapore's cosmopolitan landscape. This is noticeably different from China, Tokyo, and Seoul, as they have emphasized the strength of their roots grounding in Buddhist sects and cultural expansion to other countries in this region, both in ancient time, such as Korean cultural influence on Japanese culture, and many more by Chinese culture, or recently in the globalized world, such as Japanese pop culture and Korean fever. In terms of cultural management, Bangkok has promoted large aspects of cultural heritage which have been preserved and reinvented compared to those represented in Asian neighbors. Although Bangkok may not be famous for high standard museums, as in Singapore, Tokyo, and China, the types and number of museums have remarkably increased. Recently, the success of cultural management is evident, Trip Advisor, the world largest tourism website, states that *'Wat Pho', the Grand Palace, 'Wat Arun', 'Wat Phrakaeo'* have ranked the 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> most attractive heritage sites in Asia<sup>[86]</sup>; *Wat Prayurawongsawat* also won a UNESCO award for its *'both technical achievement of the work on the chedi and the attached hall, Pharin Pariyattithammasala, and the outstanding social impact sparked by the conservation project'*<sup>[86]</sup> The identities of cultures under this management process has caused Bangkok to become a unique city, such as the icons of Rattanakosin artistic styles, as well as specific Bangkok's socio-cultural background. Part of the cultural attractions formatted by the intermingling of traditional and global culture in contemporary society


shows that Bangkok's typical icons share characteristics of those cited in other countries, such as street food, night markets, street markets; aesthetics of cuisine, art, architecture in fusion food, performance art, contemporary architectural design; relaxation by traditional-boutique spa, and massage, etc. However, under such features, Bangkok has expressed its blended cultures, between traditional and global, into this phenomenon, such as *'Thai spa and massage'*, *'Thai fusion cuisine'*, *'contemporary Thai art galleries'*, and *'Thai boxing stadiums'*. The global culture cited in the table above reveals that leading tourist cities in Asia have developed iconic attractions for shopping, recreation, and entertainment in the same pattern. In this process, Bangkok does not beat out tourist cities of China, Tokyo, Seoul, Singapore, and Hong Kong. For instance, Bangkok does not have botanic gardens as in Singapore that the British built in colonial era; has not built themes park like Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, and Dubai; is not the location of world iconic architectural landmarks like Dubai, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing, and Singapore that have labeled as the world tallest, biggest building, or duplicated famous European icons. However, Bangkok has enough standard accommodations and facilities to serve visitors in a wide range. Focusing on Southeast Asian capital cities, there are only four countries listed in tourism top destinations: Bangkok, Singapore, Dubai, and Kuala Lumpur. On this par, Bangkok has distinctive characteristics of culture. Compared to the lesser Southeast Asian cities, Bangkok, obviously shares characteristics of religious cultures, royal practices, and food cultures with those of Vietnam, Lao, Myanmar, and Cambodia. However, Bangkok has surpassed them in terms of modern civilization, cultural management on traditional culture, and branding iconic Bangkok attractions, especially in cuisine, spa and massage, handicrafts, architecture, and performances. The success is evident from top Thai food ranking in surveys of many famous world tourism agents. Several countries of world regions have borrowed titles of Thai cuisine for branding their restaurant, as well as Thai spa and massage are widely spread to

many countries in Asia. <sup>[86-88]</sup> To summary, the concept of '*Civilized Bangkok*' promoted by state agencies has long been developed in accordance with the influences of globalization, starting with the big change of global relations after the end of World War II. The direction of images promoted has been continuously shaped by state plans that have considered world tourism trends and the attractiveness of Bangkok cultural identities for international visitors, so the terms '*exotic*' and '*civilized*' have been brought to be interpreted and represented through large numbers of tourist guides. Along with this process, the new wave of globalized culture has spread to all regions. The images of civilization promoted under '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign intensively focused on contrast and the well-blended characteristics of cultural identities between '*traditional*' and '*modern*' in contemporary Bangkok.

This study will focus on the representation of Buddhist culture, fine arts culture and food culture in Bangkok tourist spaces. These Bangkok cultural attractions are the representatives of Thai civilization of the modern period that have been considered by the state as Thai high culture. In the next chapters, the outstanding images of Bangkok, '*Buddhist City*', '*The City of Exotic Arts*', and '*Metropolis of Exotic cuisines*' will be analyzed and supplemented with a discussion on a wider scope based on the data sources and relevant tourist publications, in order to understand how such images have been constructed to represent the characteristics of '*Civilized Bangkok*'.

## CHAPTER 3

### BANGKOK AS A 'BUDDHIST CITY': THE REPRESENTATION OF 'CIVILIZED BANGKOK' FROM BUDDHIST CULTURE



Historically, the image of Bangkok has been promoted as a 'Buddhist city' where Buddhist cultures play important roles for all ranks in society. The Buddhist practices, Buddhist arts, and Buddhist city creation have been selected to welcome visitors by being 'exotic', which is perceived as 'civilized'. The characteristics of civilized Bangkok, in this context, are indicated by the glorious stage of advancement in cultural practices since the establishment of the Rattanakosin kingdom, influenced by Buddhism as the main religion of the society. The analysis will elaborate the characteristics of Buddhist culture in Bangkok tourism space that represent 'civilization'. The identities highlighted as the outstanding features will also be supplemented to compare to other provinces in Thailand and Southeast Asian countries in relevant aspects.

Focusing on the representation of Thai tourism sectors as compared to those constructed in relevant the data sources, this chapter has selected the iconic charms which have been promoted in official tourist guide in the scoped area to analyze how selected icons have portrayed the picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist city. To create a more rounded picture, the study will also overview the images of a Buddhist city as portrayed in foreign travel writings since the Ayutthaya period in order to show the linkage of visitors' perception of Bangkok with a Buddhist image to the construction and representation of Thai tourism sectors.

### 3.1 Background of the image as a '*Buddhist city*'

In general, the concept of a '*Buddhist city*' is a city influenced by Buddhism in the aspects of the creation and archive of representations and expressions of worship of the Lord Buddha, as well as showing the faith of Buddhist to revere Buddhism. Religious practices of many tourist cities in other Asian countries have been influenced by Buddhist sects, mainly Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. These two religious sects are differentiated by the selection to suit the socio-cultural background and other beliefs of each society, such as Brahmanism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, and animism. All can coexist in one society and make for complex practices, which strikingly colorizes the image of Buddhist cities in Asian. Focusing on Bangkok in a tourism context, the '*Buddhist city*' image is represented by the uniqueness of Buddhist practices, Buddhist art and Buddhist city creation. The distinction of such characteristics shows the diversity of '*Thai Buddhism*', highlighted by Theravada Buddhism co-existing with Hinduism and animism. Apart from the influences from such religious sects, iconic attractions have been specially promoted to create a linkage between old townscapes and water culture in the modern Bangkok, which imitated the former old Buddhist kingdom. Knowingly, the oldest image of Thailand and Bangkok in a travel context is as a '*Buddhist city*'. There are large numbers of Buddhist temples, Buddha images, traditional religious practices, and ways of life showing the continuing Buddhist civilization since the '*Thai kingdom*' was established in Sukhothai, as seen in the data sources. For example, the narration of Loy Krathong festival first being

conducted by 'Nang Noppamas' (นางนพมาศ) a concubine in the Sukhothai court; the royal barge procession for kathin ceremony performed by King Narai of the Ayutthaya court; or the many Buddha images from the old Buddhist kingdoms in the past and some old temples of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai period, all collected in iconic Buddhist temples, palaces, and national museums. Not only as mentioned, but also many travel writings, both of foreigners and Thais, have portrayed this picture. To make this idea concrete, the next topic will elaborate how the characteristics of a 'Buddhist City' have been represented in a Thai and foreign travel context from the past to present.

#### Thailand and Bangkok 'Buddhist City' images portrayed in foreign travel writings

This topic will provide an overview of Bangkok images as a 'Buddhist city' represented in a foreign travel context from past to the present day. The contents will show the reflection of travelers' views on Buddhist culture since the Ayutthaya period in the aspects of Buddhism as the evidence of faith, the characteristics of Buddhist art, and Buddhist practices that show traditional ways of life in contemporary Bangkok.

Tracing back to the past, the image of a Buddhist city was portrayed in many Western writings. From the viewpoint of foreign visitors, the beauty of temples was the only mark of the prosperity of the kingdom among the uncivilized surroundings. In the Ayutthaya period, *Père Qui Tachaerd*, a French envoy, expressed his feeling when he first visited *Wat 'Phra Srisanphet'* (วัดพระศรีสรรเพชญ์) in 2230 B.E. The enormous golden Buddha image enshrined there was more precious than those of European chapels.<sup>[89]</sup> Similarly, in the chapter about Ayutthaya in visitors' eyes in *Vinai Phongsripian's* Memory heritage of the Ayutthaya Kingdom that referred to the writing of *Christopher Fryke* (B.E. 2225), Ayutthaya was portrayed as a large kingdom where more than 50,000 stupas and pagodas pointed to the sky. Such outstanding characteristics of the cityscape were similar to a European forest in the winter.<sup>[90]</sup> This was evidence of the people's faith in Buddhism in the kingdom that created precious Buddha images, as well as the wealth of that era. Such a picture was from the fact that



Ayutthaya was once the center of Buddhism and the most progressive developed metropolis in Southeast Asia. Such a picture was represented later in the Rattanakosin period when colonialism spread to the region, and Siam was the only nation that had survived from Western power. As evidenced in the reign of King Rama III, there were large numbers of Buddhist temples established and renovated. <sup>[91]</sup> Buddhist temples were repeatedly epitomized as the representation of the civilization of the nation and the city, specifically, the great renovation efforts in the reign of King Rama III that appeared in many writings. In *'The English Governess at the Siamese Court'*, Anna Leonowens narrated the Buddhist practices in the court which were performed. Also, the beauty of state temples, such as Wat Phra Kaeo, was cited: *'the temple itself is unquestionably one of the most remarkable and beautiful structures of its class in the Orient'*.<sup>20[92]</sup>

In addition, she described temples as sacred spaces that closely related to Thai people's life, such as *Wat Sah Kate*, the national burning-place of the dead where cremation rite were performed with horrible circumstances, or in contrast it was a serene place surrounded by canals where *'priests watch and pray for the regeneration of mankind'*. *'Siam on the Meinam from the Gulf to Ayuthia'*, by Maxwell Sommerville, an American scholar who visited Bangkok in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was first published in 1897. This book portrayed the picture of *Wat Pho* and *Wat Cheng*. He described impressive and exotic scenes of temples. Specifically, his writing focused on the importance of temples as a place for religious devotion and the influence of Buddhist doctrine on the faith of the people. For example:

During entire days spent at Wat Pho, the most impressive scene was at early morning, when the laboring classes were astir. When the sun had saluted Buddha, came the simple-hearted women of the city with their

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<sup>20</sup> See more details in the following chapters; "The city of Bangkok", "The temples of the sleeping and the emerald idols", "Siamese Literature and Art" and "Buddhist Doctrine, Priests, and Worship".

offerings of tea. Boiled bamboo, etc., for their patron Guatamas at the various shrines...<sup>[93]</sup>

He gave the elaborated details of the niceties of artistic style which was unique and conveyed Buddhist symbols such as *'this central pagoda fulfills its mission by pointing and leading the eye heavenward to Nirvana, for its interior is almost without an entrance'*.<sup>[94]</sup> The iconic Temple of Dawn was also imprinted in famous Asian writer's work named *'The Temple of Dawn'* written by Yukio Mishima. The story takes place around 1941-1967. Partially the picture of the prang was described as a masterpiece of art,<sup>[95]</sup>

...With the first rays of dawn over the Menam River, thousands of porcelain fragments turned into so many tiny mirrors that captured the light. A great structure of mother-of-pearl sparkling riotously...The pagoda had long served as a morning bell tolled by its rich hues, resonant colors responding to the dawn. They were created to evoke a beauty, a power, and explosiveness like the dawn its self.

This is similar to the beautiful Chinese song, *'The sound of the Temple's bell'* sung by Ge Lan released in 1959.<sup>[96]21</sup> Some phrases in this song narrate the beauty of the palace, houses alongside Chao Phraya River and Wat Arun. The sound of the temple bells was used to convey the singer's love emotion, particularly, the beauty of *the temple* that dissuaded her not to leave this place. *The beauty of the temples was narrated in the writing of Somerset Maugham*. He described his impressions about Buddhist temples in Bangkok in the period of the Second World War as follows:

...They are unlike anything in the world( . . . ) It makes you laugh with delight to think that anything so fantastic could exist on this somber earth. They are gorgeous; they glitter with gold and whitewash, yet are not garish; against that vivid sky, in that dazzling sunlight, they hold their own, defying the brilliancy of nature ( . . . ) The artists

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<sup>21</sup> This song was from a 1959 movie called: "Air Hostess". It was one of the first Chinese movies that was shot on location outside Hong Kong mainly in Singapore and Thailand.

who developed them step by step from the buildings of the ancient Khmers had the courage to pursue their fantasy to the limit (...) I know is that they are strange and gay and odd, their lines are infinitely distinguished, like the lines of a proposition in a schoolboy's Euclid, their colours are flaunting and crude, like the colours of vegetables in the greengrocer's stall at open-air market, and, like a place where seven ways meet,<sup>[97]</sup>

In the reign of King Rama VII, *Andrew A. Freeman* an American editor of the Bangkok Daily Mail, an English- and Thai language newspaper owned by King Pradjadhipok, described Bangkok scenes that affirmed that temples were the only representative of Bangkok civilization, as cited in ' *A Journalist in Siam*': 'Except for the many temples, the city is architecturally as unattractive as a sprawling mining camp.(...) Siamese seem to have forgotten the noble art of building which was theirs for many hundred years.'<sup>[98]</sup> Such detail is similarly represented in foreign travel writings of that time. In the 1960s to 1980s, tourist guides written by foreign travelers described the characteristics of Buddhist city as follows:

In the writing of the 1960s, *A.B. Griswold*, 'What is a Buddha image?'<sup>[99]</sup> introduced readers to Bangkok as a Buddhist city as follows:

The tourist who comes to Bangkok and visits the monasteries --- 'temples' as they are vulgarly called --- will see in every *vihara* and ordination-hall a Buddha image. Nearly always larger than life-size and often colossal, occupying the place of honor; he will see an indefinite number of lesser ones distributed in halls and galleries --- often several hundred of them, and in certain monasteries more than a thousand. Frequently he will see people prostrating themselves before an image, offering flowers and incense, and displaying every sign of fervent devotion. If he goes into the National Museum, he will find that there are more Buddha images than works of any other one kind on display.

Apart from the comments and experiences of these writers, the image of Bangkok as a city housing precious Buddha images also appears in novels such as 'The Solid Gold Buddha' written by *W.H. Canaway* published in 1979. The story set

the Buddha image of 'Wat Trimit' at the center of story. Especially in details, the picture of Buddha images were described similar to the real image and historical background was provided which help readers touch the sense of an exotic Buddhist city around the 1960s. Later, for example, many writings of the 1990s selected various angles of Buddhist practices to show a '*peculiar side*' of the city, the contrast between a scene of high development and Buddhist practices. The writer picked up Buddhist practice scenes in daily life, such as monks walking with bowls that also reflects Buddhist worship of Bangkok people. Especially in Western travel writings, the explanation usually has focused on the following:

The relationship between spiritual Bangkok and economic Bangkok is a complex one. The city is every bit as money-obsessed as London, Tokyo or New York, yet office workers still find time to leave offerings of lotus flowers and incense at shimmering Buddhist shrines. (...)As always before the morning rush hour you'll find a Bangkok full of monks, meditation and the atmospheric pealing of temple bells. In fact, Buddhism informs most aspects of life --- shopping malls erect spirit shrines to appease the local guardian spirits; Buddhist amulets adorn the dashboards of air-conditioned cabs; and bus drivers and passengers not their heads in respect as they pass Buddhist monasteries.<sup>[100]</sup>

Similarly, in 2008, '*Bangkok Glit and Glamour*' was published. This travel sketch portrayed the picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist city by selecting 'Wat Arun' as the landmark: "*The Chao Phraya River is in the heart of Bangkok. The river is crowded with tourist boats every day. This is the best location to view the beautiful Wat Arun 'Temple of Dawn'. The prominent shape of the ancient temple is illuminated by the vivid twilight clouds, making the temple look even more impressive*".<sup>[101]</sup>

Recently, the extravagant temples in Bangkok have been portrayed in the Lonely Planet travel guide, '*Bangkok Cityscape*'.<sup>[102]</sup> Joe Bindloss described Bangkok Buddhist city in '*Wat's the story*' as follows:

Bangkok boasts an impressive 400 wats and Buddhists donate huge sums of money for their upkeep. Despite the Buddhist rejection of material possessions, some wats have become staggeringly wealthy. Wat Trimit in China town contains a five-tonne Buddha statue made from solid gold. Wat Phra Kaeo, built along with the Grand Palace, houses the most revered Buddha image in Thailand, the Emerald Buddha, brought here in 1778 by King Rama I. Wat Pho, the temple of reclining Buddha, is the oldest temple in Bangkok and has the largest collection of Buddha images as well as the largest and most famous reclining Buddha in the country.

The components of temples, for him, are *'incredibly ornate'* created by traditional techniques. Apart from the beautiful Buddhist art, temples were recorded as the centers of community activities and learning: *'Buddhist temples tend to be incredibly ornate, with soaring tiled roofs and hectares of gold trim and mirrored mosaics. Most have a dominant Buddha image and a cluster of smaller statues. Neighborhood Buddhist temples are often community centers and centers of learning.'*<sup>[102]</sup> However, some writings have misinterpreted or overly described the scene. For example, the guidebook *'Bangkok Encounter'*<sup>[103]</sup> of *Lonely Planet* published in 2011 described the 'strolling' of two monks in the Rattanakosin area: *'A meditative stroll through the streets of bustling Ko Rattanakosin'*. Additionally, the reason that has causes many Buddhist practices to be handed down to the present has also been explained in foreign travel guide, as for example:

But despite the international veneer, a Thai value system – built primarily on religious and monarchical devotion – is ticking away, guiding every aspect of life. Almost all Thais, even the most conspicuously consuming, are dedicated Buddhists who aim to be reborn into a better life by making merit (giving donations to temples or feeding monks), regarding merit-making as the key to their earthly success.<sup>[104]</sup>

The details reveal that the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city has been closely related to Buddhist temples and practices since the early travel writings by foreign travelers. The outstanding characteristics that attracted them are the enormous size, large numbers, and golden Buddha images, as they reflected the highest faith of

the Thai people in Buddhism. In the Ayutthaya period to colonialism times, the construction of Buddhist temples was the only evidence of the glorious state of civilization, while the surroundings were unclean and undeveloped. The pictures related to such were the ways of life that showed a good mind influenced by Buddhism. Interestingly, the iconic Buddhism temples widely that have appeared in foreign travel writings are 'Wat Phra Kaeo' (วัดพระแก้ว), 'Wat Arun' (วัดอรุณ), 'Wat Pho' (วัดโพธิ์), and 'Wat Saket' (วัดสระเกศ) since the reign of King Rama III, since they are the significance state temples and are located in beautiful settings, particularly near canals, the Chao Phraya river, the Grand Palace and in Bangkok central areas. Apart from this, 'Wat Trimit' (วัดไตรมิตร) has also been narrated in Western novel for its precious large golden Buddha image.

In the early period of Thai tourism, the traditional Buddhist city image was challenged by the influx of development that damaged the good Thai ways and Buddhist ethic. The famous attraction for those who mostly came from the West has been Bangkok's red light districts that attract many visitors. In this stream of negative change, Bangkok's image as a dangerous metropolis where murder, human trafficking, and unsecure life are portrayed in fiction and non-fiction. However, some data sources reveal that the image of a traditional Buddhist city still appears in foreign travel writings, but with more comparative pictures to other iconic tourist destination in the world in aspects of a highly developed material culture with some preserved traditional areas. In this competition, Bangkok is a leading tourist city where traditional Buddhist temples and practices cause the city to differ from other Buddhist cities in the region. Regarding image making by the Thai tourism sectors, the positive viewpoints appearing in such data have been imitated in official tourist guides as this is a key to attracting international visitors, especially the concept of the 'exotic' Buddhist temple scene. Apart from such positive pictures, there have also been some negative images, such as *'the city of brothels'* as in the famous song *'One Night in Bangkok'* released in 1985, or recently in the set of Bangkok songs released through *'Le cool Bangkok'* online magazine which portrays the contrasting picture of a Buddhist

city and a dangerous city. The disrespect towards Buddhism, in other words, the negative image of Bangkok city and Thailand from that view, has been parallel with reimagining by official tourist sectors through the times<sup>[105]</sup>, as will be elaborated in the next topic.

### 3.2 The promotion of Bangkok as a '*Buddhist city*'

This topic will elaborate the characteristics of Buddhist attractions as represented in a Thai travel context. The explanation in the first part is about the conceptual idea of a '*Buddhist city*' reflecting Buddhist attractions. The explanation is based on the outstanding pictures promoted before the Amazing Thailand campaign and during such campaign. The second part will be about the iconic Buddhist attractions that have been selecting to represent the image of Bangkok as a '*Buddhist city*', focusing on their types and identities. The outstanding picture of Bangkok is as the center of a Buddhist kingdom in the region. The evidence is in the large numbers of Buddhist historic sites and religious practices in many provinces of the country showing the traces of the glorious past of the old Buddhist kingdoms. Apart from Bangkok, the former old Buddhist cities that have been promoted in official tourist guides are Buddhist historic sites in provinces where the great kingdoms once were located. In the northern region, Chiang Mai, Nan, and Lampang have been prominent as Buddhist cities with significant Buddhist culture of the '*Lanna-Thai*' kingdom. In the northeastern region, Ubonratchathani, Nakhonphanom, and Nong Khai have been boasted for their rich Buddhist folktales, festivals and old Buddhist temples of '*Northeastern-Thai*' kingdom. Apart from the well-known Buddhist provinces as mentioned, central and southern Thailand have promoted many sites in Lopburi, Nakhonpathom, Petchburi and Suphanburi, Nakhonsrithammarat and Suratthani for their significance as the center of Buddhism in the former period of Thai state establishment. Next are provinces located at the center of the Buddhist Thai kingdom or significance province of that time, Sukhothai, Ayutthya and Phitsanulok. Apart from Buddhist historic sites in provinces mentioned above, Buddhist festivals and ceremonies commemorated in other provinces follow the main Buddhist days,

comprising Visakha Puja, Songkran, Loy Krathong, Buddhist Lent and the end of Buddhist Lent, but have a different process of commemoration and expression. Each region also has many Buddhist activities, such as paying homage to Buddha relics in Northeastern Thailand. The establishment of Buddhist temples where special characteristics in architecture and Buddhist statues in form, size and location are also popularly promoted as new Buddhist tourism phenomena,<sup>[106]</sup> such as the largest floating building imitated from the Suphannahongsa royal barge at 'Wat Sralongreua' (วัดสระลงเรือ, สระลงเรือ) Kanchanaburi; temple buildings constructed in Thai style made of old wooden Thai houses from Lamphun, Ayutthaya and Ang Thong at 'Wat Thamkhaowong' (วัดถ้ำเขาวง) Banrai, Uthaitani; and the beautiful decorated bottle of 'Wat Phrathat Phakaeo' (วัดพระธาตุผาแก้ว), Phetchabun. Among the large numbers of attractions mentioned above, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Bangkok are the most prominent Buddhist cities in Thailand. The historic Buddhist sites in Sukhothai and Ayutthaya have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites. Slightly different from Buddhist attractions in Bangkok, the city was established after the end of such former Buddhist kingdoms, aged not over 300 years. For that reason, Buddhist attractions in Bangkok have different features noted for its '*centerness*' of the most recent Thai Buddhist kingdom, especially living practices in Buddhist monasteries and well-preserved Buddhist art in the old city area. For international awards, there are only a few iconic attractions that have been mentioned as world heritage, such as Wat Pho, Loha Prasat and Wat Prayunwongsawat for their great archive of knowledge, rare and beautiful Buddhist architecture and significance to old community living culture. However, in a general view, the well-known Buddhist temples in Bangkok, mostly in Rattanakosin Island, are famous for their exquisiteness of Buddhist arts, historical background and cultural management. All those mentioned may not be the oldest, but are worth visiting as they are the evidence of the great faith of the Thai nation in Buddhism, as well as the wisdom of creators to create and produce such national heritage. The next topic will survey Bangkok Buddhist attractions promoted before Amazing Thailand campaign and during the scoped period.



### Bangkok Buddhist attraction before the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign

The concept of a '*Buddhist city*' (เมืองพุทธ) has been used in Thai travel writings from the early promotion in the 1960s to the present. Along this process, the creation of Buddhist arts, festivals and ceremonies, and other relevant cultural practices that are Buddhist ways of life, all have been counted as the components of images of the city and the nation. Traditionally, the representation of Bangkok along this trend focused on the unique identity as the center of Buddhism in Thailand and in Southeast Asia. Many significant Buddha images of the old Buddhist kingdoms were collected in Buddhist temples, palaces, and the National Museum in Bangkok.

The national Buddhist ceremonies and festivals in Bangkok were selected to show their values being the epitome of '*thainess*', particularly the aesthetic, artistic, historic and social values as cited in the following excerpts. Both Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) and '*Sawasdee*' calendars promoted the iconic official Buddhist days of Songkran Day, Loy Krathong Day, Visakabuja Day, and the royal barge procession in *kathin ceremony*. The most highlighted attraction was the royal barge procession. The iconic Buddhist temples were in Bangkok's old town, Rattanakosin Island. The characteristics promoted were '*the exotic golden fantasy*'<sup>[107]</sup> of state temples comprising Bangkok Buddhist city landmarks, Wat Phra Kaeo, Wat Pho, and Wat Arun. Apart from this, temples were located in adventurous sites, such as Wat Saket housing the great Buddha relics on top of the Golden Mount, and temples having spectacular Buddhist architecture, with 'Wat Benchamabophit' (วัดเบญจมบพิตร) or the Marble Temple repeatedly promoted in official tourist guides of this period.

Apart from Buddhist historic sites, as mentioned, on the occasion of special national celebrations, such as Bangkok Bicentennial 200 Years in 1982, Buddhist attractions were selected to represent the glorious '*Rattanakosin Civilization*'<sup>[108]</sup> comprising of following:

Merit-making ceremony in homage to the Royal Parents at the Grand Palace,

Ancient traditional alms-giving at Sanam Luang,

Homage-paying land procession to the Triple Gem and Royal Ancestors,

Chor Fa raising ceremony at the temple of the Emerald Buddha,

Royal Barge Procession to pay homage to the Rama I Memorial at the foot of Memorial Bridge,

Chanting ceremony and communal meditation by 209 senior monks at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, and

Royal homage-paying ceremony to the nation's guardian angel and celebration of royal paraphernalia at the Dusit Mahaprasat Hall.

As described above, the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city before the '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign focused on traditional Thai Buddhist attractions. The highlighted tourist charm was officially conducted on national special occasions, and also originated in the court or were practiced in national Buddhist days. Remarkably, many Buddhist attractions, such as temples in Bangkok's old town, were not fully managed by tourism organization.

#### Buddhist attractions promoted in the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign

In the scoped period after the promotion of the '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign, the characteristics of Bangkok as a Buddhist city show the high contrast of modern Bangkok and old religious culture, which has long been practiced, preserved and reinvented in the Bangkok period.

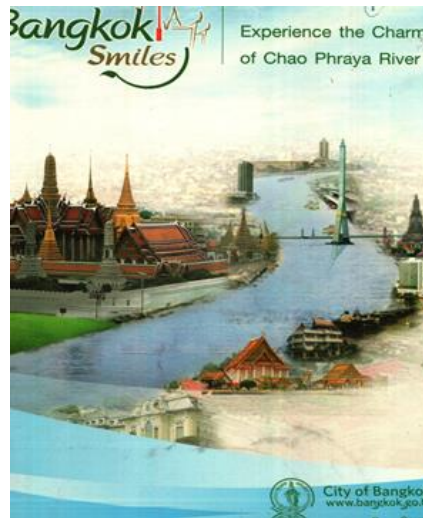


Figure 5

Iconic Bangkok Buddhist historic sites in Rattanakosin Island  
promoted in official tourist guides<sup>22</sup>

The outstanding identities of Buddhism as promoted, in this context, show that in the Bangkok tourism space, the concept of '*civilization*' as reflected on such cultural attractions has had various forms and characteristics, both '*superb*' and '*simple*', as has appeared in royal and local Buddhist art and activities. Other contexts, such as amulet markets and meditation schools, show that the evolution and changes of Buddhist practices in Bangkok contemporary space are dynamic with interesting angles. The significance of such practices also is evidence of the nation and Bangkok's well-founded cultural evolution influenced by Buddhism in a large scope. Before elaborating on this point, a survey of the images of Buddhist city of Bangkok in the relevant data sources will be provided. The representation of Bangkok as a Buddhist city can be categorized into two parts based on the aspects mentioned above, temples and Buddhist practices. The state temples represent the glorious root of the nation as they are the sacred places archiving national heritage showing the prosperous arts of the kingdom and also the significance places for national ceremonies. Apart from state

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<sup>22</sup> Photo credit: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

temples, local temples have been representative of the unity and long history of old communities in Bangkok and suburb areas as they are the center of local festivals and places for archiving Buddha images and Buddhist art of communities. Knowingly, the represented icons or motifs of a Buddhist city are the prang of 'Wat Arun' (พระปรางค์วัดอรุณ) and the Emerald Buddha of 'Wat Phra Kaeo' (พระแก้วมรกต), the beautiful Marble Temple or 'Wat Benjamabophit' (วัดเบญจมบพิตร), and the world heritage of 'Wat Pho' (วัดโพธิ์). Apart from the well-known temples as mentioned, the ordinary life of Bangkokians, such as people giving food to monks and paying homage at temples or shrines, has also been counted as representative of Buddhist practices. The construction of the image as a Buddhist city has been based on the significance of the temples as places for ceremonies and festivals performances, and the beauty of religious art collected in the temples. Buddhist attractions also reveal the order of religious practices in Bangkok. Theravada Buddhism is the most prominent, partially integrated with Hinduism. Other religious sects, Mahayana Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism of Thai-ethnic people have not been the iconic attractions, but show the blending of Buddhist art and ethnic religious art, such as the pediment of 'Bang Luang' Mosque (มัสยิดบางหลวง), or the coexistence of faiths of Thai and Chinese people, as in the old Buddha image called 'Sam por kong' (สามปลอก) of Wat Kanlayanamit in the Yaowarat area. The variety of religious sects as mentioned has long been promoted in the recent campaign. Next are the Buddhist practices in daily life, such as praying and paying of a bet at iconic sites showing the co-existence of religious beliefs of Buddhism-Brahmanism and animism of *Bangkokians* through traditional Thai dancing shows and other items dedicated for their homage. The Buddhist practices may be in the form of '*Buddhist products*' as in the amulet markets where large numbers of votive tablets are produced and transformed to products that are promoted as attractive streets in urban Bangkok: the Thaprachan and Wat Baworn areas. Lastly, a new trend that is now a choice to visit Bangkok and Thailand is to retreat oneself in meditation. This activity has recently been promoted as a Buddhist

attraction. For example, the promotion in TAT online, *'The Path to Inner Peace and Well-being'*<sup>[109]</sup> has cited that:

Meditation is part of Thai life, and it is not necessary to be Buddhism to benefit from it. It can be applied to daily life, aiding concentration and leading to a state of calm. Each year Thailand has attracted visitors from all over the world who wish to discover the secret of the peaceful and meditative lifestyle. Meditation teaching may range from English day classes at centers and temples in Bangkok to intensive, month-long courses at tranquil forest retreats in rural provinces.

The lists of Buddhist meditation sites in Bangkok include Young Buddhists Association of Thailand (YBAT), The International Buddhist Meditation Centre (IBMC), 'Wat Paknam Phasi Chareon' (วัดปากน้ำ ภาษีเจริญ)<sup>[110]</sup> and 'Wat Mahathat' (วัดมหาธาตุ). Focusing on mediation in a temple, such as Wat Mahathat, the famous course is Vipassana class in English which is provided for free. Such a program is an example of a Buddhist practice in a Thai temple to make them world famous. Even in hi-class hotels, meditation rooms are set aside for visitors who would like to attain inner peace. This is programmed in Spa and Ayurvedic courses, such as The Oriental Hotel,<sup>[111]</sup> etc.. Focusing on famous sites in this period, the promotion material also shows the success of historic site preservation in Rattanakosin Island. From this boom, the invented activities in Buddhist temples, temple tours along the river and canals, cycling to visit famous temples in Rattanakosin Island were created to attract foreign visitors. 'Nine temples tour' also was a new activity set following local tourism: 'January 1-31, Bangkok; The New Year is thought to be auspicious time to obtain blessings from above and Thais believed that 'making merit' at nine temples in one day further betters your chances of good luck. Pray for prosperity in 2010 at one of Bangkok's nine sacred temples tours and marvel at the splendid architecture. [www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org)'.<sup>23[112]</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Besides in tourist guide such as "Experience the Charm of Chao Phraya River" produced under project "Bangkok Smiles" has promoted "Temple Respect Tour" to visit 9 temples in each occasion, purpose, and different routes.

However, in some cases, the new attractions are not well-known for international visitors. For instance, *'Religious Procession on the River'* (งานชักพระ/งานแห่พระบรมธาตุ) at 'Wat Nang Chi' (วัดนางชี) in Phasri Chareon District, is the only one of its kind in Thailand, different from Southern practice. Other examples that have been promoted in *'100 Unseen in Bangkok'* are *Sunthon Phu's abode in Wat Thepthidaram*, *King Rama III seat at Wat Ratchaorasaram*, *'Love legend of Mae Nak'* at Wat Maha But, and artifacts produced or kept in temples, such as, *'Sacred artifacts and charms of Wat Baworn'*. Apart from famous Buddha images, Buddha relics and the replica footprints, there is the amulet 'Phra Kring Pawaret' (พระเครื่องปวเรศ), which is well-known among Thai amulet collectors as it is the first of its kind that was first made in Rattanakosin period. Such new angles of Buddhist tourism, as mentioned, were similarly promoted for local tourism, not for international visitors who would not know or have such interests as Thai people. For that reason, it was found that in foreign tourist guides and Bangkok tour guides for foreign visitors, the iconic attractions were still mostly the same as ever promoted in former Thai tourism, that being well-known Buddhist attractions having outstanding characteristics of beauty, sacredness, and body of knowledge can be easily reached, consumed, and understood.

In conclusion, in Thailand and Bangkok tourism promotion material, the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city was constructed from the variety of Buddhist practices. As explained, the perception of Buddhist practices by foreign travelers since the Ayutthaya period to the present was the glorious state of Buddhist temples as the oldest picture selected to attract visitors from the West at the start. Apart from this, old Buddhist ceremonies and festivals were also reinvented to show exotic Thai. Such traditional concepts still appeared in the Amazing Thailand campaign, but there were many new Buddhist tourism trends. The prominent activities were the touristization of Buddhist temples, such as Buddhist meditation in temples, the establishment of museums or mnemonic sites in temples, and other special activities set for popular Buddhism in Buddhist monasteries.

### 3.3 The representation of '*Civilized Bangkok*' from the characteristics of Buddhist Attractions

This part will provide detail and analysis of the highlighted Buddhist attractions that have been selected to be promoted as representative of '*Civilized Bangkok*' in the aspects of 'beauty', 'sacredness' and 'knowledge', which are the prominent selling points of the Buddhist attractions. Each section will point out how such attractions are managed to attract visitors, then how they represent the characteristics of civilization, which comprises cultural significances in four aspects: aesthetic and artistic, historical, scientific, and social. Accordingly, cultural management background also needs to be explained for such items to attract foreign visitors, as well as the development of Buddhist tourism in the scoped period.

#### 3.3.1 Old Buddhist cityscape: The expression of traditional Buddhist practices through the preservation of Bangkok's Old Town

Initially, the start of the 'Bangkok and Amazing Thailand 1998-1999' campaign was held at Rattanakosin Island. There were many activities related to '*Wat, Wang, and River*', as cited in the tourism movement promoted in '*Holiday Time in Thailand*' in December 1997. Rattanakosin Island was branded as the '*Immortal City*' by the revitalization of traditional Buddhist activities, including '*the Buddhist promotion week on Visakha Puja Day*', '*Rattanakosin Songkran Festival*', '*Rattanakosin Loykrathong Festival*', and the old image of '*Venice of the East*' by cleaning up the Chao Phraya River and canals for cruising trips. Through the long promotion, Bangkok's old town was managed for tourism and recently has been extended from the inner area to outside Rattanakosin Island. Focusing on this study, the scoped area of Bangkok's old town, the area of Rattanakosin Island, have large numbers of state Buddhist temples that make the characteristics of the area different from other newer Bangkok districts. These include the glorious Grand Palace and Wat Phra Kaeo, the beauty of Wat Arun and the Chao Phraya River being the prominent marks. All that have been mentioned were selected to be representative of the old Buddhist city showing the well-managed

and good preservation by the state. In the scoped period, there were a large numbers of tourist guides promoting Buddhist tourism relating to these places, both conventional activities and new creative activities, combined in the iconic sites, as mentioned. The identities of the places and practices in this context were colored and variously represented. The analysis will then focus on how such attractions were managed to attract international visitors and represented the prosperous Bangkok as a Buddhist city.

#### Temple of the Emerald Buddha and the Grand Palace

Throughout the Rattanakosin period, this complex has been continuously renovated and developed without any interruption by wars and colonialism, as in other countries in this region, especially since the Rattanakosin Island preservation plan was launched. The glorification of the nation also has been conducted by the state and promoted in a tourism context. The Temple of the Emerald Buddha or 'Wat Phra Kaeo' (วัดพระแก้ว) is located at the outer section of the royal enclosure, west of the Grand Palace. As a place, it is a national religious practice complex composed of a state temple, royal field and the Grand Palace. Such place also represents 'sacred space', where the epitome of Thai beauty is integrated with the faith of Thai people reflected by the highlighted attractions at this site. In particular, the image of the Emerald Buddha, or 'Phra Phuttha Maha Mani Rattana Patimakorn' (พระพุทธรูปทองคำ) (พระพุทธรูปทองคำรัตนโกสินทร์), praised as the most revered Buddha image of Thailand, is housed here.

In relation to Buddhist practices, there are two iconic Buddhist practices, the *Visakha Puja* ceremony and the *Songkran* festival, which have been promoted annually to show the 'traditional value' of Thai culture as influenced by Buddhism. Among the Buddhist days celebrated in Bangkok, Visakha Puja is the most important as it is the most significant celebration of the Lord Buddha. Historically, this ceremony was first established in the reign of King Rama II (2360 B.E.), after the kingdom had revived its religious relationship with Sri Lanka. This Buddhist ceremony was accepted in the royal court and then followed by ordinary people. It is believed that this day is a great day in



Buddhist tradition as it was the date that Lord Buddha was born, became enlightened, and passed away. Now, Visakha Puja day has been legitimated by UNESCO as an international day of importance. The activities are to keep the Buddhist precepts, offer lanterns, worship with fireworks, and walk with lighted candles around a temple. In the extensive 3-days of Visakhabuja, monks will give sermons and tell the story from 'Pathomsimphot katha' (ปฐมสมโพธิกถา) in royal temples where people can join. The present day activities and procession follows the old days.<sup>[113]</sup> The calendars of festivals and ceremonies cited in 'Sawasdee' magazine promoted Visakha Puja Day annually:

Bangkok May 8

The holiest day on the Buddhist calendar, the festival marks the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha on the day of May's full moon. Buddhists across Thailand visit their local temples, give alms and join in candle-lit processions. For more information, contact the Tourism Authority of Thailand on +6622257612.<sup>[114]</sup>

Along the chain of practice, *the special occasion held is the Miracle Year of Amazing Thailand 2012 – Visakha Puja Celebrations 2012 in Bangkok.*<sup>[115]</sup> The Jayanti celebration, the 2,600th anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment was launched by Buddhist Organizations of Thailand. Bangkok conventionally is the center of such activity: *'The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has joined forces with the Council of Buddhist Organizations of Thailand to celebrate the 2,600th anniversary of Buddha's Enlightenment. The event is part of the Miracle Year of Amazing Thailand 2012 project promoting tourism in the Kingdom'.*

Activities include paying respect to Lord Buddha's relics, watching an exhibition on mindfulness, making merit, practicing meditation, listening to sermons and more. A candle light procession (wian thian) will also be held in Bangkok at Sanam Luang on Monday (4th June 2012) to mark the end of this major day of celebrations. Buddhists pay respect to relics of the Lord Buddha.

Noticeably, the great Buddhist celebration also was linked to auspicious events for the monarchy:

The Jayanti celebration and ceremony is celebrated worldwide and it additionally marked the auspicious year for Thailand's birthdays of His Majesty the King's 85th year anniversary, Her Majesty the Queen's 80th year anniversary, and HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn's 60th year anniversary. The Visakha Puja Day reminds Buddhists the importance of Lord Buddha's teachings, both spiritually and socially. In Bangkok, the event was officially opened by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

To follow the traditional Visakha Puja celebration, TAT/BMA have set themes and activities to show the image of Bangkok as a great Buddhist city and the center of the country by emphasizing the chain of practice and beautification showing Buddhist faith as follows. *Firstly*, activities showing Buddhist faith from the long chain of Thai and Sri Lankan Buddhist practices that share similarities, whereas keeping the unique Thai conventional practice, that is, paying homage to sacred Buddha representatives of the nation, relics and the Emerald Buddha, also the propagation of Buddha statues: *'Other religious activities include merit-making, chanting of Buddhist stanzas and concentration practice. The highlight is a ceremony to build nine large golden Buddha statues to be located in nine regions of the country.'*<sup>[116]</sup> Apart from this, there is the contest of *'Soraphanya' reciting* (การสวดสรรภัญญะ) conducted by the state showing the special skills of Thai students on mantra chanting. *Secondly*, beautification showing the highest faith of Thai people through ads and program tour shows the highlight activities, including viewing the beauty of temples, palaces, flower decoration, and candle light. Apart from this, the contest of flower trays also is to show Thai flower art arrangement. The characteristics of beauty constructed from the mentioned scenery and activities leads to a sense of faith in the sacred space. Similarly, for the Songkran festival, Buddhist activities are set for the general people, and are also tourist related, to paying homage to the Buddha. Generally, Songkran festival has been promoted in the tourist calendar, such as in *'Sawasdee'* magazine:

Songkran across Thailand 13 to 15: From a Sanskrit word meaning, 'assign' or 'moving', the national holiday marks Thailand's New Year and is a time for great festivity across the country. It is traditionally a time to spend with family, with customs that include Buddha statues for good luck, visiting the temple for prayer and water fights in the streets. For information, visit [www.tourismthai.org](http://www.tourismthai.org)

The picture of Songkran festival in Bangkok can be categorized into two types. Firstly, conventional Buddhist practices that include the sense of 'sacredness', 'serenity', and 'unity' have been constructed similar to Visakha Puja Day. The second is the most popular iconic festivities for foreign visitors, 'water splashing', with the sense of fun/ 'sanauk' (สนุก) being the prominent picture. 'Sawasdee', April 2013 stated that: *'Nobody knows how to have a good time better than the fun-loving Thais. Street parties, parades, beauty pageants, cultural shows, singing-dancing – all thumb of blaring music and cream of glee - make up the kaleidoscope of festivities at Songkran.'* <sup>[117]</sup> These two pictures are the reason for TAT to label Songkran 'the amazing festival' that mixes the sense of respect and fun together, as Mr. Suraphon Scetserani, governor of TAT announced: *'Songkran stems from ancient traditions of great subtlety and charm' and 'It's like the Western holiday of Thanksgiving and Christmas rolled into one, and is very popular with visitors who want to experience true Thai sanuk.'* <sup>[118]</sup> Although the common activity that is the most popular among foreign tourists is splashing water, the conventional picture of Songkran festival that has long been promoting is traditional Buddhist practices: *'at present, Sanam Luang is a park where people can relax in the historic heart of the city,....., the ritual bathing of monks in Songkran Festival are still carried out regularly every year'* as cited in *'The must see sites in Bangkok'* <sup>[119]</sup> and *'Essentially, this is a spiritual festival, the traditional Thai New Year where families gather to reflect on the previous 12 months. Sanaam Luang at dawn, hours before the splashing starts, is the grandest site of merit-making when throngs of devout Buddhists come to give alms to the monks in spectacular*

*display of faith*<sup>[120]</sup> for example.<sup>24</sup> Such traditional practices represent the significance of the water festival that unites Thai people to make merit. Washing Buddha images is central to the Bangkok Songkran festival, which differentiates the activity between Bangkok and the newly invented water festival, such as in Singapore where water splashing is the highlighted activity<sup>[121]</sup>. As in the royal space, the characteristic of 'sanuk' is cut off,<sup>25</sup> which creates the difference from other tourist areas such as *Trok Khao San* and *Silom* that have promoted water splashing as the highlighted activity, which is like the carnival in Western countries, La Tomatina or 'tomato fight' festival in Spain, or color splashing for Hindus in India. There was an effort to keep the core activity of the rites of washing the Buddha image or 'song nam phra' (สรงน้ำพระ) to celebrate Thai New Year, in which lustral water is specially made by mixing fragrance or flower showing Thai refinement, and to cut off the other picture of Songkran festival in tourist sites of Bangkok.

From this overview, the characteristics of civilization were constructed from the main image of place and practice. Both the Visakha Puja ceremony and Songkran festival highlight the significance of place as the center of Buddhism where the faith of Thai people has been constructed through various activities, all related to revering Buddhism. The most outstanding picture represented from these Buddhist practices is the iconic aspect of 'Buddhist faith'. In this frame, the characteristic of the 'Thai

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<sup>24</sup> Such promoted activities are similar to the former period, such as in the promotion of January 1983, 'Holiday Time in Thailand', "April 13-15 Songkran festival, Thailand's merriest festival, commemorates old Thai New Year. Celebrated with special event in Chiang Mai. Merit-making ceremonies, house-cleaning, honoring elders, bazaars, parades, folk-dancing and boisterous water throwing characterize the festival."

<sup>25</sup> Also, articles written by foreign scholars such as John Hoskin's writing in Sawasdee, published in April 2008 used the word "wild celebration" to convey the characteristics of Songkran in Bangkok where "crazy" water fighting contrast with "the purest spiritual roots". Similarly to "April Showers for Bangkok" written by Anne Fiske in Sawasdee magazine (April 2001), where she concluded "The traditional festival has adapted itself admirably to modern Bangkok...It only looks like war".

*Buddhist community*' has been constructed by focusing on Buddhist activities and people gathering to pay homage to important Buddha images of the nation. Following former conventional practices has been the main concept. Bangkok's Songkran festival held at Sanam Luang follows the festivals from the Ayutthaya period, as described in *Chami Jotisalikhorn's* article *'Splashing Good Time'* in *'Sawasdee'* magazine, *'In the later Ayutthaya period, the ritual was expanded to include the bathing of the Buddha image, the building of sand pagoda.'*<sup>[117]</sup> In relation to Bangkok's Buddhist attractions, the image as a center of Buddhism has been constructed from place and practices centralized by activities in the historic area functioning as the heart of Bangkok and Thai nation. The complexes of the Meru Ground, or *Sanam Luang* – the Grand Palace – the Temple of the Emerald Buddha are un-separated sites linked together. The sacred Buddha image, *'Phra Phuttha Sihing'* (พระพุทธสิหิงค์) is paraded from inside the Grand Palace to the outside space in order to be the center of the Songkran festival. The idea to bring a sacred Buddha image from the inside sacred space to a public area is similar to that performed on Visakha Puja Day, but slightly different because on Visakha Puja Day regional Buddha images are gathered from four regions of Thailand in Sanam Luang, as well as the making of a pavilion for Buddhist to pay homage, have a candle light procession and offering robes in four direction (ทอดผ้าป่าสี่มุมเมือง) in duplicated sacred spaces in Sanam Luang. As a tourist attraction, such space has special characteristics where sacred space is officially opened for visitors to see/join these activities. This event shows the management of space to link inner and outer areas welcoming visitors to sacred space that has been transformed to public space. The image of an old Buddhist city, where a long chain of conventional practices are represented through conventional practices, is where the core activities are highlighted. Visakha Puja Day<sup>26</sup> highlights candle-lit

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<sup>26</sup> However, there have also been new activities created by state organizers, including exhibitions about the significance of Visakha Puja Day, Dhamma discussions on interesting topics, Dhamma speech competition for youth, and cut-price book sales.

processions and paying respect to the holy relics of the Buddha, Buddhist chanting and meditation practice, and recitation of the Tipitaka (in Pali) over 24 hours. Songkran festival includes preserved conventional activities such as paying homage and washing the sacred '*Phra Phutthasihing*' image (พระพุทธรูปสี่หิ๊งค์) and Buddha images from four regions of Thailand, as well as receiving holy water from four famous temples from the regions. In this regard, the representation of Bangkok as a '*Buddhist City*' has been constructed from the characteristics of Buddhist activities, the '*Buddhistisation*' of such practices and the process to centralize relevant Buddhist activities in the main historic site of Rattanakosin Island. All have been constructed to create the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city.

#### Chao Phraya River and the Temple of Dawn

The image of Bangkok as an old Buddhist city had long been representing through the picture of Wat Arun and the Chao Phraya River as explained in *Chapter 2*, both in foreign and Thai travel writings. This can be categorized into two Buddhist attractions: '*Loy Krathong*' and the royal barge procession. From such representations, temples, Buddhist practices and the Chao Phraya River can not be separated. They are portrayed as one picture in order to convey the sense of place where '*serenity*', '*Thai beauty*', and Bangkok as the '*Venice of the East*' are combined<sup>27</sup>. In the context of riverine cultural tourism, there are many program tours conducted to highlight such sites and iconic destinations, including night fairs, '*The Night of Wat Arun Fair*' or Ratri of Wat Arun in the early of 2000s, and Chao Phraya cruising in Loy Krathong Night which has been continuously promoted over 15 years.

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<sup>27</sup> Although there are many water-cities in Asia that once claimed to be the "Venice of the East" including Osaka, Calcutta, Suzhou, and Edo or Old Tokyo, Bangkok city is the prominent tourist city promoting such image through the set of practices as mentioned. See more details in Alex Kerr's "Bangkok Found", Page 52.

Chao Phraya River and the Loy Krathong festival has become an iconic tourist sites colorized by modern decoration and includes a Chao Phraya cruising trip. The highlight of this festival is the light decoration of boats and thousands of krathong floating along the Chao Phraya River: *'Witness the spectacular fireworks display by the legendary Chao Phraya River. Make sure you book a riverside hotel in advance as they are usually packed on this occasion. On the river now you also see bio-degradable krathongs which are made from bread or banana trunks'*.<sup>[122]</sup>

The construction of the historical background Loy Krathong based on the chain from the Rattanakosin court to the Sukhothai court can also found in many tourist guides. From such narration, *'a romantic legend about Sukhothai'* <sup>[122]</sup>, the characteristics of this festival have been romanticized: According to the story, there was at the royal court of Sukhothai's King Ramkamhaeng (1279 to 1298) a beautiful young lady named Nang Nopphamas, the daughter of a Brahmin priest. One year, in the 12<sup>th</sup> lunar month, she witnessed the king and his courtiers picnicking on a boat on the city's canals as part of the celebration of Phra Mae Khongkha. However with her knowledge of Brahmin rituals, she felt the Thai ceremony lacked a certain touch of beauty and enchantment.<sup>[123]</sup> The sense of romantic as the selling point also appeared in foreign writing of 'Sawasdee' magazine from its name, such as *'a poetic festival'*<sup>[124]</sup>, or as stated, *'such scenes take place every November on waterways throughout Thailand in the country's loveliest festivals, called Loy Krathong'* <sup>[125]</sup>, and *'as it floats away it takes with it all the bad luck that has dogged you through the year'*.<sup>[126]</sup>

In connection to Buddhism, some tourist guides also cited that *'Loy Krathong honours the Lord Buddha and gives thanks to the river goddess'* <sup>[127]</sup>, or *'Buddhist redefined it (a Brahmin ritual of Loy Krathong Pratheep, which was an act of worship to God Brahmin, Narayana and Isva) as a pious homage to the Lord Buddha's footprint.'* <sup>[128]</sup> In Bangkok, this festival has highlighted the beauty of thousands of lights from candles on large numbers of krathong, which is not directly related to Buddhist sermons or homage, and not necessarily held at temples. The focus on fire also appears in other iconic Loy Krathong festival, *such as Lantern flying* or *'Yi Peng'*

(ยี่เป็ง) of Chiang Mai along the Ping River to worship Phrathat Chulamani, or in Tak with a chain of krathong made of coconut shells instead of banana leaves floating along Ping River. For that reason, the Chao Phraya River in Bangkok has been symbolized as a *'sacred river'* where the ritual is practiced. The light and beauty of the krathongs is a symbol of respect to the revered Buddha. This is slightly different from the most fabulous celebration of the origin of Loy Krathong in five days at Sukhothai Historic park where the recitation of the Mahachat is performed.

#### Wat Arun, the Chao Phraya River, and the Royal Barge Procession

The representation of Wat Arun has focused on its historical significance as the center of the old Thai kingdom in the Thonburi period, *'designated as a royal temple during King Taksin in 1767'*,<sup>[129]</sup> and also the symbol of the beginning of the Rattanakosin period. Such a picture has been portrayed through light and sound shows that depict the history of this historic site and the whole history of Thailand in the Rattanakosin period: *'The show is a light and sound spectacle that uses a computerized control system...the history of the Thai nation from past to present is told in the show'*.<sup>[130]</sup> Apart from the historical significance, the beauty of the architecture, particularly the prang of Wat Arun located nearby the Chao Phraya River, has become the selling point in many tourist activities, such as cruising along the Chao Phraya River as a part of *'delicious dinner'*, along with Thai dancing and Thai cuisine, the beauty of iconic Buddhist complexes *'elegantly standing'* is a most well-known scene that has long been promoting as thus described:

...a popular highlight of the cruising is the Stupa of Wat Arun (The temple of Dawn) which is spectacularly adorned with lights at night. This unique architectural style stupa which is elegantly standing on the bank of the Chao Phraya River to welcome all visitors is a well-known landmark of Thailand. A short distance from Wat Arun, you will see the magnificent Grand Palace which deserves to be one of the most beautiful palaces in the world. The glittering reflection of the lights similar to a shining crystal is a breathtaking sight and a memorable experience that cannot be missed.<sup>[131]</sup>



As mentioned above, the Chao Phraya River has been portrayed as the river of 'relaxation' and 'romance'. Such an idea also appeared in an article written by Pip Moran in 'Sawasdee' magazine<sup>[132]</sup>: *'on the last evening of their trip, they discovered an altogether different Bangkok. A place of reflected lights and cooling breezes; of relaxation and romance; subtle of flavours and melodious music.'* Apart from this, now officially Wat Arun invites foreign visitors to *'climb the steep stairs of the central prang of this renowned Bangkok river landmark. From near the top of the 'Temple of Dawn' you can take in a spectacular view of the Chao Phraya and the city'*.<sup>[133]</sup>

From such activity, *the sense of respect to the temple is lessened, and more focused on the beauty of scenery and adventurous activity.* This picture of the contemporary riverine tourism scene is differently represented from that highlighted in the very iconic image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city in the 'Grand Royal Barge Procession', which is the epitome of Thai beauty, Buddhist faith, and the sense of amazement from the mythical narration on Thai craft production selected to attract visitors. The official conventional Thai Buddhist practices, Wat Arun, the Chao Phraya River, and the royal barge procession are united to convey a unique sense and equally in one picture.

During the 15 years of the Amazing Thailand campaign, the most prominent ceremony was the celebration of the Sixtieth Anniversary Celebration of His Majesty the King's Accession to the throne. This was the *'grandest events staged in Thailand'*<sup>[134]</sup> that was organized to show monarchs and heads of states from 29 nations from around the world. Before the Amazing Thailand campaign, *'the first Royal Barge Procession of the present reign took place on May 14, 1957, as part of the 25th century celebration of the Buddhist Era, with 39 barges in the flotilla'*.<sup>[135]</sup> This was also first branded as the mascot of Tourism Authority of Thailand since establishment.

The identities of place and practice from this picture highlight the beauty of the riverine scenery where the architecture of Wat Arun has been promoted for its similarity to Khmer architecture, and also the characteristics of the royal barge procession has

been portrayed as the legend of the old Buddhist kingdom so that the outstanding image of such components are 'semi-reality' in a mythical scene, as described in 'Sawasdee' magazine, 2006. *Harold Stephens* compared the royal barges to general barges and Cleopatra's barges on the Nile River:

A Royal Barge Procession to anyone who hasn't seen one might not sound like a grand affair but that is not the case at all. We usually think of a barge as a flat Below centerscow that carries cargo, and is either pushed or pulled by a tug boat. Not a very romantic image. But let not the name be misleading. The term 'barge' in this case is a misnomer, for these Thai Royal Barges are nothing like the word 'barge' described in dictionaries. The Royal Barges of Thailand are not 'flat Below centerscows for carrying cargo' but instead beautifully crafted works of art seen nowhere else in the world, except perhaps, those that at one time in history were Cleopatra's barges on the Nile River...<sup>[136]</sup>

The relationship of Wat Arun, royal barges, and the Chao Phraya River has been represented in one picture with the characteristics of the epitome of '*Thai beauty*', '*Buddhist faith*', and remarkably Thai riverine culture as the outstanding components. The management of such practice is also important as this procession is open for public viewing. 'Sawasdee' magazine described that, '*The flotilla will assemble at 17.00 hrs. The principle barge will be positioned at the Rama VIII Bridge section of the Chao Phraya River. The royal barge procession will depart from Wasukri Pier and cruise 4.5 kilometres downriver to Wat Arun — Temple of Dawn*'.<sup>[135]</sup> Such procession passes and stops at two historic sites, *Wasukri Pier* and *Wat Arun*, similar to the past. *Wat Arun* is the destination, with each barge functioning as the carrier of a Buddha image, Buddhist monks, and Buddhist inscription: '*The Barge Suphannahong carried an image of the Lord Buddha; the Anantanakaraj carried the Holy Scripture; and the Royal Escort Barge Anekkochatbhuchong carried a group of Buddhist monks. And now we have another Royal Barge Procession June 12th. Don't miss it*'.<sup>[135]</sup> As well, monastic robes and the elaborate floral offerings to the monks at *Wat Arun* for the King's Katin Ceremony are carried.

To summarize, all Buddhist practices that are related to the Chao Phraya River and the iconic Buddhist temple 'Wat Arun' have identities of place and practices that have been constructed from the process of 'Buddhistize'. This makes the characteristics of civilization reflected by iconic Buddhist festivals and ceremonies show the main concept of creation and the process of epitomizing Buddhist creation by Buddhist faith. In the aspect of tourist attractions, such characteristics have been selected by the state to highlight their significance as national historic sites. They are the evidence showing the chain of a long history of Buddhist kingdoms and the establishment of the Rattanakosin era with Bangkok as the center. In such a representation, the imitation of practices, especially the motifs recognized worldwide, are comprised of iconic handcrafts that are the royal barges and the process to commemorate taken from Buddhist narratives. Such key factors cause '*Thai Buddhist practice*', in this context, to have uniqueness for its '*mythical*' appearance, which has been colorized by modern decorative technique. From the analysis, preservation of the Buddhist cityscape shows a continuity of significant Buddhist sacred sites connected to Bangkokian practices from the establishment of Rattanakosin to modern Bangkok. The sacred temples, Buddhist shrines, the Grand Palace, the Chao Phraya River and old communities have been linked to express old Bangkok cultural routes where Buddhist sacred sites are the center of '*civilization*' that evidence the power of Buddhist creation. The image of '*civilized*' Bangkok as a Buddhist city is represented by Buddhist culture comprising Buddhist creation and practices at iconic Buddhist attractions. The main Buddhist values that have been selected to represent '*traditional Thai values*' are the faith and mercy of Bangkokian Buddhists, all of which reflects the influence of Buddhism on the variety of places and practices in Bangkok. In this representation, the outstanding picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist city are the long roots and firm establishment of a great Bangkok where 'royal practices' and 'local practices' link people together by Buddhist festivals and ceremonies. The set of Buddhist practices conducted in the national sacred space include Visakha Puja, Songkran, and Loy Krathong, representatives of the integration of people to form one Buddhist

community. Last but not least, the outstanding identities from touristization are from the making of sacred space and the highlighting of beauty. Firstly, the making of sacred spaces in tourist areas has been managed by linking national sacred space to public space and creating a sense of respect through Buddhist activities. This has been done through the centralization of Buddhist holidays at the Grand Palace, Wat Phra Kaeo, Sanam Luang, and Wat Arun, and the symbolization of place through practice as in the celebration of Loy Krathong along the Chao Phraya River. Secondly, for the beautification of Buddhist attractions, iconic '*Thai beauty*' is magnified as seen in the royal barge procession and Loy Krathong festival. The intensification of the characteristics of beauty has focused on significant motifs narrated in Hindu-Buddhist stories showing the great creation to the most revered Buddha. Royal barges are representative of such a concept. As well, the playing of the concept of faith can be seen in the numerous lighted *krathong*, which is the main attraction for visitors.

### 3.3.2 The expression of faith from the great creation of Buddhist temples and Buddha images

This topic will analyze the concept of '*Buddha Puja*' (พุทธบูชา) in Bangkok as a Buddhist city that has caused great contribution to the creation of Buddhist temples and Buddha images. This section will also focus on the characteristics of faith and Buddhist art represented in the picture of the highlighted attractions and how they reflect the civilization of a Buddhist kingdom where Bangkok is the center. Then, the study will describe the identities of selected iconic Buddhist attractions, in particular, with respect to tourism to answer the question of how they have been managed to attract foreign visitors. Such highlighted Buddhist attractions have the outstanding characteristics of Buddhist art of the Rattanakosin period and partially the standard of beauty of Thai Buddha images which has been handed down from the first Thai Buddhist kingdom in the Sukhothai period. In the promotional literature, special characteristics cited have been of the most exquisite, accomplished, valuable, and biggest Buddhist attractions of its kind that can only be founded in Bangkok. In connection with the characteristics of a civilized Buddhist city, such creations also

reflect the prosperity of the state and Bangkok with respect to Buddhism, the economy and politics.<sup>[137]</sup> Not only Buddha images and Buddhist temples, but relevant religious buildings in temples and the whole well-preserved Buddhist cityscape also evidences the state of civilization from its establishment to the present day. Similar to that concept, TAT and the BMA have organized activities and promoted Buddhist attractions to convey conventional concepts through image making in official tourist guides. The data sources have portrayed the picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist city in the construction of a significant Buddhist national heritage that has been integrated and continuously developed by the state. The special characteristics of Bangkok as a Buddhist city has been prominently promoted as a consequence of the Thai Buddhist creation concept based on faith. The concept of *'beauty'* in Thai architecture has been employed to explain the characteristics of *'beautiful'* temples, especially royal temples or the Grand Palace.<sup>[138]</sup> This word is exceptionally used for *'divine'* things'; in Thai society, the venerable *'Buddha'* and *'King'*, as the representative of the Buddha and all symbols relating to them, are the most important sacred personas/things that should be highly beautified. The data sources reveal that such prosperous heritages has been grouped as *'superb'* art of the kingdom. The influence of different religious art styles as religious concepts and practices, to be used as symbols of victory over those countries, is progressive in terms of culture as a *'civilized nation'*, and shows the relationship of the Thai nation. The beauty of Buddhist art appearing in the promotional literature of royal temples can be evaluated by the following concept: *Viboon Leesuan*<sup>[139]</sup> refers to Keerati Bunjuea's idea, aesthetic elements are the three elements of material art composed of *'beauty'*, *'picturesqueness'*, and *'sublimity'*. Religious art and Buddha images, for example, have both characteristics of *'beauty'* and *'sublimity'*, as they are made for paying homage, where the characteristics of beauty are designed to serve such a purpose.

Similar to what has been represented as the characteristics of aesthetic elements, is the element of *'amazement'* in tourist guides. Buddhist attractions can be identified with *'picturesqueness'*, as mentioned. The elements are taken from many

motifs conveying a sense of the *'exotic'*. In this context, it is the form and expression of images of Rattanakosin Buddhist art that has the uniqueness of beauty. Therefore, the analysis will focus on the many artistic *'motifs'* of different cultural styles that have been brought to form a new motif by the skill of the creators who selected and blended them in a proper manner. Many have been represented as superb art made to *'surpass'* the original. In connection with the iconic Buddhist attractions, this study has categorized *'the great creation'* of Buddhist attractions into three parts. Each one shows the *'faith'*, *'creation'* and significantly tourist management of iconic Buddhist attractions. The first part is about the components of Buddhist constructions promoted and highlighted in official tourist guides. The second *part* is about the creation of exquisite state temples – *'Wat Phra Kaeo'*, *'Wat Pho'*, *'Wat Ratchanadda'* and *'Wat Benchamabophit'*. The third part is the unique conventional Buddhist cityscape marked by the highlighted Buddhist architecture of the iconic state temples that creates the *'special'* Bangkok tourist cityscape. In this context, there are two characteristics of Bangkokians represented together: *'faith'* and *'wisdom'*. The creation of Buddhist art has resulted from the faith to revere Buddhism. The wisdom has been the essence of the creation of Buddhist architectural technique appearing in selected the iconic attractions. The *'great'* creations and wisdom have been defined by the characteristics of *'amazement'* for the craftsmen's technique, the origin of Buddhist art mainly from Buddhist narratives – Ramakien, Traiphum – and decoration using rare precious materials. All of these have constructed the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city. The characteristics of *'great wisdom'* appearing in iconic Buddhist attraction will be described in the following topics. The first part concerns the components of Buddhist constructions promoted and highlighted in official tourist guides comprising of following iconic attractions.

### The Temple of the Emerald Buddha: The complex of the epitome of faith

The special characteristic of Wat Phra Kaeo is that of a complex of the epitome of faith comprising many significance pieces of Buddhist art that are *'the only one'*, representing devotee dedication to revere Buddhism and the kings or the incarnation of the Hindu god, Vishnu. The outstanding motif promoted is as follows:

- *The iconic Ramakien mural paintings in Wat Phra Kaeo*

Said to be the longest mural painting in the world, the murals narrate the story of Ramakien, or Ramayana, the epic of India in the Thai version and are one of the iconic motifs for visitors to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Bangkok's Guide to Rattanakosin boasts: *'there are murals of Ramayana which are most beautiful and longest in the world totaling 178 chambers in all'*.<sup>[140]</sup> How does this mural painting evidence civilization of a Buddhist kingdom? The story of Rama has spread in South Asia and Southeast Asia: *'As the Rama story is also well-known to other countries in Southeast Asia, it serves as the common background of culture and the common ground among the Southeast Asian countries...'*<sup>[141]</sup> Similarly, as explained in *'A tale for all regions, A text for all seasons: Interpretation and reinterpretation of the Ramayana in Southern Asia'*: *'the Ramayana has transcended barriers of language, region, and culture to become central to the social, political, and religious formations of a vast spectrum of nations and civilisations from ancient times to the present day'*.<sup>[142]</sup> In Southeast Asia, the Ramayana was widely revised to suit *'different natural environments, customs and cultures'*.<sup>[143]</sup> For Thailand, the identities of this mural painting are from the idea of revision of the Indian Ramayana to the Thai version in the central Buddhist kingdom. This also shows the mission of the king of Rattanakosin court to hand down such an idea which was the first time a Thai Buddhist kingdoms had created the story of Rama with its own narration. The Ramakien mural paintings of Wat Phra Kaeo is said to be the longest mural painting masterpiece of traditional Thai Buddhist art which has been continuously painted from the period of King Rama III to King Rama V based on the text conducted by King Rama I. Apart from the long murals with finest decoration, there are many highlighted scenes selected to attract

visitors. *'Bangkok Style 2010'* portrayed the picture of the large Hanuman swallowing Rama's pavilion in his mouth during the Maiyarap Battle.<sup>[144]</sup> The characteristics of beauty have also been promoted through the supreme beauty of its highly developed art technique *'by the famous artists of the Rattanakosin period'*.<sup>[145]</sup> The characteristic promoted is: *'The fresco cycle of Wat Phra Kaeo, located within its principal arcade, narrates the events of the Ramakien. The story, its episodes and the many digressions are recounted in striking images, stretched over 1,000 metres of continuous painting'*.<sup>[146]</sup> Such exemplar shows the influence and relationship between literature and mural art, progressing from oral to written literature and to visual art. This shows the religious art circuit in the court linking to general art consumption in the central state Buddhist temple. The unique visual art form, mural painting, is different from other Buddhist cities in the region by Thai art technique and the revised contents. Compared to other Buddhist temples in Bangkok and Thailand, there is only the selection of some episodes or they do not attempt to reproduce the national version like this. Different from other Buddhist cities and old Buddhist cities in Southeast Asian, the Ramakien mural paintings of Wat Phra Kaeo are the most accomplished and still well-preserved. The iconic Ramakien mural paintings are representative of Southeast Asian Buddhist countries that have successfully *'epitomized'* and *'blended'* the concept of Hinduism-Buddhism through the production of religious art<sup>[147]</sup> which is well-preserved for conventional symbolic function. The process to propagate and instill such ideas has reached the zenith of its kind in the Buddhist region at that time to present day.

'The Guardian Giants' and mythical creatures at Wat Phra Kaeo-the Grand Palace, Wat Pho, and Wat Arun: The complex of 'Thai mystic' in Buddhist temples

Apart from the iconic mural paintings based on Ramakien, the use of characters from Ramakien, Traiphum and the jataka tales in the form of giant and mystical sculptures, are prominent attractions in *'Wat Phra Kaeo'*-the Grand Palace, *'Wat Pho'* and *'Wat Arun'*.



*'All things weird and wonderful in Thai culture are worth exploring in detail for a better understanding of the country and its history'*<sup>[148]</sup>

The article in 'Sawasdee' mentioned above describes the mythical imagery in Wat Phra Kaeo-the Grand Palace. *John Hoskin*, the writer of this tourist article, talked about numerous mythical statues in state temples in order to welcome readers visiting Bangkok. The outstanding picture of Bangkok represented from such iconic imagery is that of a mythic city, one of the characteristics of exotic, what has been promoted under the '*Amazing Bangkok*' theme. Although every culture has its lasting legends, Thailand and Bangkok has Thai art decoration and ideas using characters from Buddhist narratives in symbolic Buddhist constructions, such as '*kinnaree holding the Tripitaka*', '*naga with five heads protecting sacred Buddhist building*', '*yaksa guarding in front of a temple's gate*', '*yaksas shoulder the basement of pagodas*', and '*Garuda cuts an imposing figure*'. The imitation from the prime sources of artistic inspiration from Ramakien, Traiphum and the Jataka tales are representatives of '*Thai mystic*' or the exotic Thai for foreign visitors. Articles of TAT, BMA, and 'Sawasdee' magazine selected huge mythical creatures to attract visitors:

...if Yaksa can be seen as the Mr. Universe among Thailand's mythical population, the title of Miss Photogenic would go to kinnaree, a lovely creature half-woman and half-bird. As with the guardian giants, kinnaree are popular features of temple statuary, those at Wat Phra Kaeo attracting so much tourist attention that they must rank as the most photographed of Bangkok's exotic images.<sup>[148]</sup>

The above mentioned statues were created according to King Rama III's command. He adapted such idea from China in order to create iconic symbols in significance temples he had renovated at that time. Such '*Thai mystic*' in *Buddhist temples* has been constructed from following parts.

Firstly, the use of the Ramakien text of King Rama I which remade and adapted the story to a Thai context as in the description of scenes and use of 12 characters refined by traditional Thai craftsman technique creating a refinement of painting and a prominent attractiveness: *'...the 6-metre-tall 12 Guardian Giants standing on a square base with a baton in their hands can be found at every entrance to the corridor. The Giants are made of stucco and adorned with coloured tiles...'* <sup>[145]</sup>

*'Temple of the Emerald Buddha: Reflection of the complexity of the religious system in Thai society'* written by Ueno explained that: *'in terms of art and architecture one can clearly see Buddhist features in the Temple. It fulfills all the requirements of Buddhist architecture and shows Buddhist elements in art. For example, the mural painting inside the ubosot depict many Buddhist scenes from Buddhist stories.'* <sup>[149]</sup> Apart from this, the influence of Hindu-Buddhist cosmology also appears in the temple:

In addition, Hindu influences are also clear in the temple art because Hindu-Buddhist cosmology determines the art and form of the structures. Mythical beings placed around the Royal Pantheon are good examples. The temple is the highest Royal temple serving the King: the incarnation of Hindu god Vishnu. This also helps to add Hindu elements to the art. <sup>[150]</sup>

Secondly, *'animistic'* belief as evidenced by the housing of significance characters in order to protect a Buddhist temple, as cited in a tourist guide, *'the statues of the giants holding batons reflect the belief that the giants will dispel evil and protect Buddhism'*. <sup>[145]</sup> Thirdly, to construct the story of the battle between the yaksa of Wat Cheang and Wat Pho, a local tale in such area. The story also appears in some tourist guides. Their battle caused the establishment of *Tatian* (ท่าเตียน), an old community located between two Buddhist historic sites, Wat Chaeng, or Wat Arun, and Wat Pho. However, it was founded that the two yaksa, *'Sahasadecha'* (สหัสเดชะ) and *'Thotsakan'* (ทศกัณฐ์) are always picked to be the landmark of Wat Arun. Instead of highlighting *'Phaya Satthasun'* (พญาสีทาสุน) and Phaya Khon (พญาขจร) at Wat Pho, huge crafted Chinese figures are always selected to be promoted. Being made by Thai craftsman

technique, housed in Buddhist temples, by the belief of *'Hindu-Buddhism'* and *'animism'*, partially linked to the historical background of the Buddhist sites with local narration, it can be said that the characteristics of Buddhist creation in this context is that of *'a complex of Thai mystic'* which is different from other Buddhist complexes in the region.

The numerous stupas and pagodas in the center of Rattanakosin Island: The symbols of highest faith of Bangkok as a Buddhist City

The iconic view reflecting the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city is the numerous tall stupas, pagoda, and prang in Rattanakosin Island. Such edifices mark the sacred space in old town Bangkok centralized at Wat Phra Kaeo- Wat Pho-Wat Arun and also mark two other sites at Wat Saket and Wat Ratchanadda. Condense sacred space marked by numerous stupas and pagodas as prominent Buddhist architecture can easily be seen and can be used as a mark for Bangkok's old town. Traditionally, the concept of constructing such structures as described by the Thai scholar, *Sisak Wanliphodom* who explained in his book, the significances of the great relics in Siam Civilization <sup>[151]</sup> which can be summarized as, the expansion of Theravada Buddhism from Sri Lanka to Burma, Mon, Thai, and Cambodia caused these Buddhist cities to construct many stupas and pagodas in order to centralize their communities. In Thailand, there are a large number of sacred structures enshrining relics. Such tradition has been continuously practiced through time, until Bangkok was established as the center of the Thai Buddhist kingdom. As mentioned for Bangkok, such a concept was still handed down, but slightly changed from the past. Apart from Wat Phra Kaeo, many significant state temples were established and selected by the kings to enshrine Buddha relics. Not just one important state temple, but other state temples archived relics of the Buddha. Wat Saket and Wat Ratchanadda are the most prominent examples. Obviously, the outstanding identity is as the center of the highest respect and faith of the nation. In addition, the kings and royal family ashes, along with Buddha images, were collected on top and within such constructions.

The following iconic attractions are famous for their historic value and special characteristics of religious arts that can only be founded in old town Bangkok. In addition to being representative of the center of Buddhist faith, such creations also have uniqueness, showing the complexes of religious art, Buddhist chedi. They evidence the great integration of Thai Buddhist art and foreign cultural art. This also reflects the significance of Buddhist sacred sites in Bangkok as the symbol of the country's prosperity. The characteristics of such structures comprise many art styles: Hindu mythology motifs, Chinese art motifs and material, and Sri Lanka architectural art forms. All of these have been integrated with supreme Rattanakosin religious art, as appears in the following promotions. The pattern and position of the stupas, pagodas, and prang follow Hindu-Buddhist cosmology. The decoration, which is the outstanding feature, was taken from Chinese mosaics and mythical figures attached to the buildings. The Chinese art motifs that were brought to blend with traditional Thai art are part of the temple structures and decoration. Most of these that have been represented in tourist guides have unique characteristics. For example, the porcelain tiles with various colors, such as pink, green, blue, red, and white, different from traditional glittering glass tiles.<sup>[152]</sup>

Wat Arun, the highest prang in Bangkok and Thailand: the outstanding characteristics of Wat Arun are as excerpted,

*'the stupa of the Temple of Dawn is one among the first logos of Bangkok and Thailand'*<sup>[153]</sup>; 'the prang cluster was designed to represent the traditional universe structure, with the stupa as Mt. Meru, the center of the universe where the god Indra resides. The four satellite stupas represent the four main continents. Each stupa is elaborately decorated with colorful chinaware fragments in magnificent floral designs'<sup>[154]</sup>; 'the Prang is covered with pieces of porcelain, which Chinese boats coming to Bangkok used as ballast. The main Prang, steep steps lead to the two terraces that from the base of the Prang'.<sup>[154]</sup>

Wat Pho houses the most number of pagodas in Thailand and praised for their artistic beauty<sup>[155]</sup>. The significant pagodas are those that enshrine great Buddha relics under their base. The four great pagodas were constructed for each reign from King Rama I to King Rama IV. The first one, named '*Phra Maha Chedi Srisanpetchadayana*' (พระมหาเจดีย์ศรีสรรเพชดาญาณ), was built to cover '*Phra Srisanphet*' (พระศรีสรรเพชญ์) the most important Buddha image of the Ayutthaya kingdom.

Wat Saket, the only pagoda locating on 'a mountain' in Bangkok and the only one that enshrines original great Buddha relics<sup>[156]</sup>. Wat Ratchanadda is fame for the Loha Prasat. It is the only one with metal spires in the world that still remains and is well-preserved, as promoted in '*Bangkok Style 2010*', '*according to the legend, the first 'Loha Prasada' was built by Lady Visakha in offering to Lord Buddha at Buppharam Temple in India. Famous 'Loha Prasada' was built by King Dutugemenu of Anuradharapura, Ceylon in the year 161 A.D...today the two mention Loha Prasada have been completely destroyed*'.<sup>[154]</sup> The significance of this attraction has been promoted following the statement in the Mahavamsa scriptures of Ceylon by the command of King Rama III. However, it was only completed in the present reign of King Bhumibol. Therefore, the picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist City has been based on the creation of numerous stupas and pagodas in Bangkok's old town, focused on the traditional image of old Buddhist kingdoms: Ayutthaya and Sri Lanka in India. There has been the imitation of the Ayutthaya Buddhist cityscape in the temples: Wat Pho with numerous pagodas, the Golden Mount of Wat Saket, located on '*a mountain*' similar to the old one in Ayutthaya, and the highest prang of Wat Arun, similar to Wat Chaiwattanaram of Ayutthaya. Apart from the Thai Buddhist kingdom, as mentioned, there is the following of Lankan Buddhist convention in many aspects. The highlighted attractions are the great relics which were originally derived from Sri Lanka and enshrined in the Golden Mount, as well as the creation of the rare '*Loha Prasada*' at Wat Ratchanadda following the Mahavamsa scriptures of Ceylon, the great chronicle of Sri Lanka. The innovation that integrated such conventional concepts is prominently seen from the decoration by

Chinese porcelain, which may not be the core of the stupas and pagodas, but is strikingly impressive to visitors by the refinement and rare colorful materials.

The creation of great Buddha images: The representative of wealth and wisdom of Bangkok as a Buddhist City

Wealth is measured in many ways around the modern Kingdom, with one constant being the use of pure and precious metal in particular...no country has a greater reputation of being rich in mines than the country of Siam, and the great quantity of idols and other craft works which are there seen, evinces that they have been better cultivated there in former times, than now they are.<sup>[157]</sup>

The above writing in 'Sawasdee' magazine is an excerpt of *Monsieur de la Loubere's* writing which *Anthony Windsor* referred to when promoting the iconic golden Buddha images of Bangkok and Thailand. Generally the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city has been partially constructed from the wealthy of the nation by seeing numerous golden Buddhist structures in temples. The real and imitation gold are included in such a spectacle. For conventional Thai Buddhist creations, gold is an important material used in handicraft production. Buddhist structures and Buddha images made of gold or imitation golden ornaments are representative of Buddhist faith. The value of such material is employed to evaluate a Buddhist's intention to dedicate their belongings and property to support Buddhism, both spiritually and socially. Apart from iconic golden Buddhist temples comprising the golden spires of Wat Phra Kaeo, the huge gilded chedi of the Golden Mount, and numerous chedi in Rattanakosin Island, there are golden Buddhist attractions that have been selected to be representative of the great creation and wisdom of Thai Buddhism: 'Wat Trimitr' (วัดไตรมิตร), 'temple of the golden Buddha' and the reclining Buddha of 'Wat Pho' (วัดโพธิ์). The size and material of Buddha images evidence the faith of devotees. The large numbers of Buddha images promoted in the data sources attract foreign visitors because of the numbers, enormous size and valuable golden materials. They have

been highlighted for a long time, both in foreign and Thai tourist guides. Focusing on these two iconic Buddha images, the outstanding characteristics selected to promote are the size and posture of the reclining Buddha, and the amount of genuine gold in the golden Buddha of Wat Trimitr. How are these mentioned identities reflect in the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city?

a. *The Reclining Buddha of Wat Pho*

Wat Phra Chetuphon Vimolmangkalaram Rajwaramahaviharn, or Wat Pho, has a famous, enormous reclining Buddha. Foreign visitors generally call Wat Pho, *'the Temple of the Reclining Buddha'*. The enormous Buddha image was made on King Rama III's command with special characteristics showing the creativity of Thai craftsmanship. Compared to other Buddha images in Bangkok, Thailand, and region, the reclining Buddha of Wat Pho is the third biggest of its kind in Thailand. It is smaller than the reclining Buddha *'Chaksri'* of Wat Buddha *'Chaksri'* in Singhburi province (พระนอนจักรสีห์) and the reclining Buddha at Wat Khun Indrapramun in Ang Thong province (พระนอนวัดขุนอินทประมูล). However, it has been promoted as *'the most beautiful'* and noted for the advancement of creative Buddhist art, as excerpted: *'Although the reclining Buddha of Wat Pho is the third longest reclining Buddha in Thailand, the statue is known to be the most beautiful reclining one in the country'*.<sup>[145]</sup> The characteristics of being *'the most exquisite'* is prominently seen from the feet, three metres high and five metres long decorated with mother of pearl, depicting 108 auspicious images to describe the Buddha's great characteristics:

...Considered the most exquisite reclining Buddha image in Thailand, King Rama III had this gold-plated monument built in 1832. The face measures 15 metres in height with the whole image totaling 46 metres. The dimensions of the feet are three metres high and five metres long. The soles are laid with mother of pearl, depicting 108 auspicious images, with rowels in the middle, according to the descriptions of Buddha's great characteristics.<sup>[145]</sup>

Traditionally, a Buddha foot print is made separately to symbolically represent *'the presence of Buddha or the idea of his teachings having travelled to a specific place'*<sup>[158]</sup> Creatively invented by King Rama III and court craftsmen, they merged this concept and the characteristics of a Buddha foot print to be the big feet of the Reclining Buddha. Wat Pho has connoted the significance of being a sacred place, including the prototype of a Buddha foot print which clearly elaborates the details about the Buddha's great characteristics that also functions as the exhibition of Buddhist knowledge. In Thailand, there is only one Buddha footprint with the 108 auspicious images of the Tawaravadee period at '*Wat Khaodeesalak*' (วัดเขาดีสลัก), Suphanburi province, and those of Sukhothai period, Ayutthaya period with some different details.<sup>[159]</sup> Apart from the peculiar invention, the beauty of the mother of pearl causes the Buddha footprint on the enormous reclining Buddha to surpass other conventional Buddha images in the region. The decoration using mother of pearl in this creation was also the first adapted for a Buddha footprint in the world.

*b. The Golden Buddha of Wat Trimitr*

The biggest golden Buddha image in the world and *'the most beautiful Buddha style'* (in the data sources this always refers to Sukhothai Buddhist art) of the Thai kingdoms, are the prominent characteristics of the Sukhothai Trimitr Buddha image, or *'the Golden Buddha'* for foreign visitors. *'Bangkok Style 2010'* state:

Of interest: Phra Buddha Maha Suwan Patimakorn

Also called the Sukhothai Trimitr Buddha image, this statue was given the following mention in the 1991 Guinness Book of Records: 'Highest intrinsic value is the 15<sup>th</sup>-century gold Buddha in Wat Trimit Wittayaram in Bangkok, Thailand. It is 3.04 metres in height and weighs an estimated 5.5 tones. The gold under the plaster exterior was found only in 1955.'<sup>[145]</sup>



According to its historical background: ‘...*Wat Trimitr Wittayaram* was formerly called *Wat Sam Cheen* (meaning *three Chinese in Thai*) as it was believed that it was one of three built by three Chinese.’<sup>[145]</sup> The housing of ‘*the Sukhothai Traimitr*’ Buddha image was enshrining at Wat Phrayakrai and then transferred to the recent Wat Traimit in year 1935. The significance of the Buddha image represented, in this context, also makes special mention of the Chinese Buddhist community outside Rattanakosin Island. One of the most precious Buddha images of Thailand from ‘*the oldest Buddhist Kingdom*’ is enshrined in the oldest Chinese community of Bangkok. Apart from the use of the precious material and the beauty of the figure marking the wealthy state and the epitome of religious art that is well-preserved and revered by Thai people, this iconic Buddha image also shows the integration of different Buddhist sects in Bangkok.

From such a connotation, the picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist city in the present period shares a similarity with those of great Buddhist states in the past as there is still maintained the most precious representative (*or as always called ‘the classic one’*) of the early glorious Buddhist kingdoms in this region, as well as preservation of the high status of such iconic Buddhist figures through times. The second part is the creation of exquisite state temples: Wat Phra Kaeo and Wat Benchamabophit, the representatives of the center of traditional and ‘*modern*’ Buddhist state. Apart from the overall image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city through the complexes of the epitome of Buddhist art and architecture, the outstanding iconic Buddhist architecture is that which has been imprinted in Thai and foreign travel writings for long time comprising of ‘Wat Phra Kaeo’ and ‘Wat Benchamabophit’. The characteristics of the ‘*exquisite*’ Buddhist architecture represented through these two prominent Buddhist temples show the advancement of religious architecture of ‘Bangkok Buddhist art’ and the preservation of conventional and developed city creations. There are two prototypes of ‘*Thai beauty*’ represented in this context: the traditional one with the high beautification of ‘Wat Phra Kaeo’ and the ‘*classic*’ one with

a *'well-blended'* architectural in Thai-Europe style. These iconic state temples function as representatives of the power of the monarchy and the new modern state of the Thai nation. Importantly, such royal temples appear in terms of valuable artifacts, knowledge and masterpieces of art integrating into the temples. This also can be indicative of the state of a civilized nation.

The picture of a traditional Buddhist state prominently appears through the joint Wat Phra Kaeo area and the Grand Palace. The characteristics of such sacred spaces are different from other Buddhist cities in the region. This is particularly true with respect to the aspect of the well-preserved conventional royal sacred place and Thai heritage, which also marks the complexes as being the epitome of *"thainess"* comprising the most refined Buddhist decorations and the blending of Thai religious architecture with various art techniques developed throughout the Rattanakosin period. The image of *Bangkok as 'the City of Angels'* has been constructed from the exquisite and exotic Buddhist art in the area of the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha complex. The creation of the golden glittering Thai architecture of the Grand Palace and the state temples in Rattanakosin Island represent heaven on earth. Each building in the Grand Palace has a unique Rattanakosin architectural style which also follows conventional Thai Buddhist creation concepts, which is to build the most significant state temple in the same area as the Grand Palace and imitate golden and precious decoration to personify the heaven served for the god-like kings. This concept was derived from Buddhist literature, Three Worlds According to 'Phra Ruang' (a Sukhothai King).<sup>[160]</sup> In the area of the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha, there is exquisite Buddhist art and architecture as follows:

Firstly is that of the finest Thai decoration that appears on iconic Buddhist structures: 'the longest and most beautiful Ramakien mural paintings', 'numerous mythical creatures and giant yaksa', 'Phra Mondop housing the Tripitaka revised by the royal order of King Rama I', and 'Prasat Phra Thep Bidon or the Royal Pantheon'.

Secondly, the integration of various architectural art styles appearing on the iconic constructions:

- the unique 'Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall' that combines a prasat-top design on a British architecture style building marking the only one throne Hall in the world where Victorian style and three-spike Thai style coexist, *'the fascinating idiosyncrasy of the structure bespeaks the attempt of the Thai society to merge its traditional values with the import of global ideas'*<sup>[161]</sup>,
- next to Prasat Phra Thep Bidon, there is the model of world heritage of Cambodia's 'Angkor Wat- Angkor Thom' with the only one complete reproduction,
- Srivichai style statues made by volcanic rocks from Java around Phra Mondop,

The iconic structures mentioned above convey the stability of the Thai Buddhist state that have been able to blend various foreign cultural art styles effectively to construct a state temple. The connotation from different art forms and materials signifies the symbols of the Thai state that were employed to balance political power of colonialism, as seen in the blending of prasat-top design on British architecture; the relationship between Siam and colonizer as in the Srivichai style statues made by volcanic rocks from Java given by the Dutch government; and the great power of Siam in the past over the old Hindu-Buddhist kingdom as in the model of 'Angkor Wat-

Angkor Thom'. The second one is the picture of Thai-'Classic' Buddhist architecture which combines the prototype of European architecture, a royal hall in the Palace of Versailles in France, and the best marble from Italy to construct, 'the Marble Temple' or Wat Benchamabophit.

*Wat Benchamabophit, or 'Thai temple with Western interior décor',*<sup>[162]</sup> was Rama V's state temple. Rama VII, however, renovated it and considered it his state temple as well. It has been labeled the '*temple of fine penta-chrome*' because all the main structure in the monastery – the ordination hall, the image hall, the pagodas, the gallery, and the pavilions – are decorated with fine five-color chinaware. The ordination hall, in particular, is in Gothic style, believed to emulate a royal hall in the Palace of Versailles in France. The traditional concept to establish a state temple as the center of 'old world' view such as Wat Phra Kaeo-the Grand Palace was changed in the reign of King Rama V. The establishment of '*the Marble Temple*' is the evidence of this. The linkage among significance modern sites mark Bangkok's new town in the reign of King Rama V: Anantasamakhom Throne Hall-Wat Benchamabophit-Dusit Palace. In such a connection, the Marble Temple was the symbol of a new Buddhist state<sup>[163]</sup>, the mural paintings in *Wat Benchamabophit* do not narrate *Traiphum* and *Jatakas*, but were for decoration; the seals on the pediment represented the power of the ministries of the new modern state over other territories; and the cloister functioned as a '*museum*' collecting large numbers of Buddha images from different regions, both from territories and foreign countries (also now it is the largest Buddha image museum in Southeast Asia). The collection also symbolized the power of Siam over those other areas. Focusing on the iconic construction, the ordination hall, there are different '*Thai motifs*' combined with Western art and concept as described:

Wat Benchamabophit (The Marble Temple) made of prime Italian marble in the style of Thai architecture, the temple is regarded as the most beautiful of its kind. King Rama V ordered HRH Prince Chitchareon (Prince Narisara Nuvativongse) to design and construct the main chapel. The design decorated with marble is created with the cooperation of Italian engineers and architects from the Civil Engineering Department. On the inside of cloister coverings, there appear patterns of a Thai-style technique called *rai rot nam* glided in gold and black. The ceilings are painted in red with decoration of Thai- style constellation amounting to 610.<sup>[140]</sup>

Accordingly, the highlighted royal temples are representative of a religious cultural experiment of the Rattanakosin period originated from Buddhist influence. The beauty of the state temples was cultivated from its proper form and expression, the meaning behind the creation, and the creative art of decoration. The influence of foreign art styles in this period were additionally used as the 'tool' for city creation. The late Ayutthaya model in the form of temple plans, structures and decoration was followed after the collapse of the great kingdom, as well as to symbolize the Buddhist kingdom and Deva right of the king. The influence of Chinese art, which was popular in the reign of King Rama III, could create a sense of unity among the Chinese people with the kingdom. As for the influence of European art in the reign of King Rama IV and afterward, the adaptation and imitation was a symbol of the progressive development of the nation. All of these evidence the role of state Buddhist temples that have represented the center of the state and Bangkok where the complexes of religious creation, the interaction and interchange of cultural art were performed.

The third part is the unique conventional Buddhist cityscape marked by the highlighted Buddhist architecture of iconic state temples that has created a special Bangkok tourist cityscape.

This part summarizes Bangkok cultural routes, of which Buddhist temples distinctly mark the characteristics of Bangkok's old town. In *'Bangkok Angelic Allusion'*, Barry Bell explained how Bangkok has uniqueness in terms of architectural landscape. He said one of important factors is that of the numerous Buddhist temples with different roof forms marking and differentiating traditional Thai buildings from ordinary modern buildings: 'Bangkok's roof are the most striking of these visions. Mysterious powerful in their disengaged reality, they float above the darkened streets to offer beacons of hope in the quest for symbolic order...The shimmering roofs construct a different, more enticing city than its terrestrial counterpart...'.<sup>[164]</sup> Bangkok is the *'city of images'* (as cited in this book), easily and effectively *'recognized in the city's tourist posters and brochures'*. Such opinion is also evidenced in many ads in the data sources that all raised Thai Buddhist architectural forms as the selling point for sightseeing, both from riverine and land views. For instance: *'Pick one night, any night, and let the placid river lull you to encounter a dreamlike wonder: the exquisite golden radiance of the Grand Palace, shimmering like an angelic abode against the pitch-black quilt of the night, offset on the opposite bank by a brilliantly lit Wat Arun.'*<sup>[165]</sup> Not only is the big picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist city a city of images mark by various Buddhist architecture, the Bangkok tourist cityscape also has uniqueness of spaces that could be categorized as follows. Firstly, the characteristics of 'island'-scape where the selling point is a riverine scene and state temple complexes comprising (1) traditional landmarks: Wat Arun, Wat Phra Kaeo, and Wat Pho; (2) new extended landmarks: Wat Prayoon designated by UNESCO; and (3) new iconic Hindu and Buddhist sacred sites: Wat Suthat-Giant Swing which was selected for the new logo by the BMA. Articles in 'Sawasdee', for example, promoted the old island cityscape where the Buddhist temples were marked as the center. Among this set of Buddhist temples, the traditional picture is of the prominent sites. Their identities with respect to beauty and sacredness in the Buddhist complexes, as mentioned, have been variously portrayed in official tourist guides. The well-known picture of Wat Phra Kaeo and the Grand Palace located in the same area with the

shining light of the dawn or being lighted at night, contrasted by surrounding modern buildings, has been repeatedly promoted to show the exquisite beauty of the architecture, the most splendid in the city. The characteristics of beauty was cited by *Doosadee Thaitakoo*: *'the more modern style-buildings are put up, the more uniqueness of old architecture are visualized'*.<sup>[166]</sup> The idea to see such beauty also appears with many new activities, such as a cycling route in Rattanakosin Island and cruising along the Chao Phraya River. The landmarks of these activities are Wat Phra Kaeo, the Grand Palace, and Sanam Luang. For example, River cruises to enjoy Bangkok's night scenery were promoted in the *'World's Best City'* tourist guide 2008:

'There are many river cruise services in Bangkok for sightseeing along the Chao Phraya River. Visitors will enjoy the beautiful atmosphere and special lighting which highlights major attractions on both sides of the river showcasing Bangkok's exquisite architectural heritage such as Wat Arun, Wat Phra Kaeo and the Grand Palace'.<sup>[167]</sup>

Such promotional literature highlights the architectural style that differentiates the surrounding modern buildings and shop houses, which is not much different from the before-Amazing Thailand campaign. In this context, Buddhist temples have been colorized by light decoration, along with the significant sites that reflect the old world charm along the Chao Phraya River. Focusing on this site, many tourist guides have used the picture of Wat Phra Kaeo as the symbol of a glorious Thai Buddhist kingdom, which is inseparable from the Grand Palace, the heart of the country. The light decorations at night and the glittering roof of 'Wat and Wang' is a significant feature that makes this site more attractive. This picture follows the traditional concept of creation, constructed by the faith and dedication of precious ornament to the most revered Buddha images and kings.

Next is the *'Boulevard': European cityscape linking the old Bangkok cityscape* comprising Wat Benchamabophit-Wat Phra Kaeo/ Sanam Luang-Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall-Democracy Monument. Along this main route, there are two distinct Buddhist structures, the 'Golden Mount' at Wat Saket and Wat Ratchanadda. This route shows the relationship between the imitation of a conventional Buddhist cityscape, conventional Buddhist structures and a Western cityscape and landmarks. As well, in this regard, there was a new Buddhist landmark promoted in this period, *'Wat Ratchanatdaram is another royal temple built by King Rama III with the unique Metal Stupa (Lohaprasada), where visitors could get a good bird's eye view of the city. Most of the buildings have been built in the style of Thai architecture'*.<sup>[168]</sup>

Apart from this, the relationship between old markets and Buddhist temples cause a variety of scenes, 'lively markets' and the 'serenity and beauty of temples', as seen in the *'Tourist Map of Rattanakosin'*.

*'Route 2: A bird's eye view of the city'* highlighting the beauty of a panoramic view which focused on the Golden Mount and the Loha Prasat and connected to Wat Suthat where the old market around Dinso Road is still preserved. Apart from approaching the sacred shrines of the holy relics, from the Mahachasadabodin Pavilion visitors could explore major multi-racial communities of Thai, Chinese, and Indian around Wat Suthat.

*'Route 4: A Gem of the Thai Kingdom'* highlighting Wat Phra Kaeo-the Grand Palace that *'represents the pinnacle of Thai architecture and fine craftsmanship'*. Along this route major markets (Tha Chang Wang Luang-Tha Phra Chan), old palaces which is the National Museum, and Wat Mahathat were promoted for the preservation of an old Buddhist cityscape where the center is in the state temple and the Grand Palace.



*'Route 5: A tour of a royal garden'* selected two state temples as the highlighted sites, the Marble Temple and Wat Pho. Along this route there are two old markets, Pak Khlong Talad and Talad Tha Tian, marked for old Buddhist communities.

All these reveal that the routes to explore historic sites in Bangkok's old town were based on different views and ways to visit each site. The promotion of iconic Buddhist temples were major attractions that differentiated the characteristics of the cultural routes and made the picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist city the old world charm from the contrast of a Western cityscape and buildings to the preserved conventional Buddhist cityscape. In the big picture of contradiction, there was also the varying senses of places between old communities and Buddhist temples where the bustle of old ethnic communities coexisted with Thai Buddhist temples. In addition, the coexistence of the riverine landscape and state Buddhist temples maintained the well-known picture of Bangkok as a Buddhist city, with *'Venice of the East'* still existing with tourist attractions.

### 3.3.3 The center of Buddhism in Thailand and Southeast Asia

This topic will focus on the representation of Bangkok in the aspect of being *'the center of Buddhism in the region'*. It is clear that there are large numbers of Buddha images and Buddha relics archived in Buddhist historic sites. The data sources reveal that similar to religious architecture and Buddhist cityscape, Buddha images of the Rattanakosin period were from gathering, collecting, imitating former Buddhist kingdoms, and inventing new models with high art decoration. In this process, the image of Bangkok as the center of Buddhism has been continuously constructed through time in order to firmly establish the Thai Buddhist state. Similar to conventional Buddhist centralization, Bangkok Buddhist attractions in this group have been portrayed as being representative of the 'kingdom's prosperity' and power. The concept to create, collect and propagate divine Buddha images in the Buddhist region

has traditionally been practiced through time, both for spiritual and social purposes. Generally, in *'Buddhist cities'*, there are many collections of sacred Buddha images and relics archived in temples, museums, and palaces. Bangkok shows an outstanding identity in that it is the largest center of collections of Buddha images that indicates the great power of Siam over other Buddhist cities in this region, the strong faith of Thai people and the chain of Thai Buddhist kingdoms.

Compared to other cities in this region, in those Southeast Asia countries that were under the control of a colonizer, their precious Buddha images were brought to museums in Europe and the USA. While in Thailand, or Siam at that time, there were gathered, collected and created large numbers of significance Buddha images of the *'Thai nation'* that were compiled and archived at the Grand Palace, the Marble Temple, and the National Museum.<sup>[169]</sup> Such efforts were influenced from European traditional methods for archaeological research and in order to represent a long history of the nation.<sup>[170]</sup> The *'political independence'* and *'cultural independence'* were important connotations that the royal court asserted into the representation of Bangkok as a Buddhist city as imaged at that time. From the data sources, the image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city was an outstanding picture of the center of Buddhism in Thailand and Southeast Asia region where the largest collection of Buddha images were archiving showing the long flourishing Buddhist kingdoms in this region. The outstanding identities of Buddha images collection are as summarized below.

The largest collection of Buddha images from the oldest Buddhist Kingdom before Thai Buddhist Kingdoms were established to Buddha images of Bangkok period

There are collections of Buddha images from ancient Buddhist kingdoms comprising Srivijaya and peninsular area, Khmer and Lopburi, and former old Buddhist kingdoms located in Thailand region – Lanna Thai, Sukhothai, Uthong. There were also many Buddha images with different artistic styles – Lanna, Sukhothai, and Ayutthaya – from old Buddhist cities in Thailand’s northern region. As for Rattanakosin Buddha images, in the early part of the reign of King Rama I to King Rama III, there was the replication of Ayutthaya. For example, King Rama I brought bronzed Buddha images from old Buddhist cities of northern Siam to install in Bangkok. In the next reigns, there was the phenomenon that caused the imitation and invention of the supreme Buddhist art of its kinds in the royal court and also the gathering of Buddha images scattered and existing in each province to be archived in Bangkok. In such collections, the various styles and ages of Buddha image have the following outstanding characteristics including *‘The rare version and the only one survived, and the only one invented styles’*.<sup>28</sup> Among the large numbers of Buddha images enshrined in state temples as mentioned, only some iconic Buddha images are popular among foreign visitors. The significance of such images was established through religious practices and places where representative Buddha images have been collected. The image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city as the center of Buddhism in Thailand and Southeast Asia has been constructed from the largest archive of representative Buddha images which were enshrined and kept in different places. The schools of Buddha images collected at the National Museum, the Marble Temple, and the Grand Palace, numerous Buddha relics and the great relics enshrined in state Buddhist temples leads Bangkok to have

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<sup>28</sup> See also in Appendix.

various facets. These can be divided into two pictures based on the image of 'the center of a sacred Buddhist Kingdom'. The first, *'the city of faith'*, is the overall image of Bangkok constructed from large numbers of archived Buddha images and Buddhist practices related to the iconic ones: 'Wat Phra Kaeo', the Marble Temple, and the National Museum. The second one, *'the city of pilgrims'*, has been constructed from the promotion of the most revered Buddha images of the country, Buddha relic homage, Bodhi trees in state temples, the memorial to the Lord Buddha's enlightenment, particularly in these Buddhist historic sites of 'Wat Phra Kaeo' and the Golden Mount. Bangkok boasts a collection of representative Buddha images and relics archived in the National Museums, the Marble Temple, and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the Golden Mount and the Grand Palace. To consider these set of representative Buddha elements as Buddhist attractions, this study will identify the highlighted ones which were continuously promoted in the data sources. The analysis will then consider the characteristics of such places and significance of the representatives of the Buddha that have been managed and represented as Buddhist attractions.

The first part will analyze how the cultural significance of iconic Buddha articles are represented. Collections Buddha images have cultural significance in Thailand and in old Buddhist kingdoms located in Thailand. They are the symbol of the Thai nation and a great Buddhist kingdom. Their prime characteristics and values are derived from the narration of historical background and characteristics of religious art which combine 'sacredness' and 'beauty' into the Buddha images. A must visit sites are that of enshrined revered Buddha image of the country – the Emerald Buddha and 'Phra Phuttha Sihing' (พระพุทธรูปสี่หิ๊งค์) – as they have been praised as National Buddha images, and the most beautiful and revered Buddha image named '*Phra Buddha Chinnarat*' (พระพุทธรูปชินราวาศ) which King Rama V copied from Wat Phrasrirattanamahathat, Phitsanulok. These iconic Buddha images are representative

of the long root of Sri Lankan-Thai Buddhist kingdoms that appeared in historical background. The data sources also referred to such details that could draw upon the long Buddhist chain between Bangkok and Sri Lanka through Buddhist history in this region. In religious practices, the iconic Buddha images, as mentioned, function as the center of faith and ritual, such as the Emerald Buddha and 'Phra Phuttha Sihing' (พระพุทธรูปสีหิงค์) in national Buddhist ceremonies and festival. They are also the destination for Buddhist pilgrimage as in the Emerald Buddha and the great relic at Golden Mount. Not only is the chain and conventional concept of Buddhist creations of the Rattanakosin period, Ayutthaya and Sukhothai periods represented through their historical background, such iconic Buddha images also show the picture of Bangkok as the only one and continuous Buddhist city among the Theravada Buddhist cities in the region that could preserve the original function of the Buddha images and their sacredness through time. More significant is that of the direct and strong relationship to Sri Lanka, the origination of Theravada Buddhism in the world. Apart from this, *the great relic at the Golden Mount* is also popular as it is an important sign of the great Buddhist Kingdom and the chain of 'Kabilabad' (กรุงกบิลพัสดุ์), Sri Lanka and Bangkok has been closely linked for this reason; at that time King Chulalongkorn of Siam was the only Buddhist king in Southeast Asia who could maintain Buddhism, the national religion in the time of European colonization. <sup>[171]</sup>

The second part will consider Buddha images in Buddhist historic sites as tourist destinations in order to analyze how their identities are represented. The attraction of Buddhist historic sites where iconic Buddha images and large numbers of representative Buddha images are enshrined and archived is based on the following characteristics: the number and types of images in the collection and the relevant factors to such iconic representative Buddha images comprising the characteristics of the place, location, and display. Such components indicate the state of civilization of Bangkok as will be explained.

- Numbers and types of representative Buddha images collected and archived in Buddhist historic sites and the National Museum

The early 'national museums' of the Thai nation comprised the Marble Temple, the Grand Palace and the National Museum. As they were established for '*the propagation of Siam's international reputation as a progressive nation-state with a distinctive civilizational lineage, or cultural heritage (to use the contemporary phrase), as well as the knowledge to conserve, study and present it*'.<sup>[172]</sup> According to such purposes, '*Wat and Wang*', which conventionally functioned as sacred places, were transformed to be the center of the wealth and body of knowledge of the nation. Next was the gathering and collecting of precious, rare, and beautiful cultural heritage. In this process, the symbolic meaning of representative Buddha images, both in the region and nearby Buddhist cities, were constructed through the characteristics of beauty and sacredness. Bangkok has been constructed as the center of Southeast Asian Buddhist knowledge. In the Marble Temple, for example:

In the cloister sit 52 bronze Buddha images in total. Some original and others are modelled on ancient Buddha images. At King Rama V's command, they have been brought here by HRH Prince Damrong from all over the kingdom and other Asian countries such as India, Japan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.<sup>[140]</sup>

The National Museum is the largest Buddhist art collection in Southeast Asia, famed for its complete Buddhist art founded in this region, which also extends the linear Buddhist historical picture through each iconic element comprising Mon and Dvaravati, Srivijaya and peninsular, Khmer and Lopburi, Lanna Thai, Sukhothai, U-Thong, Ayutthaya, and Rattanakosin collections. The '*of interest*' promoted in '*Bangkok Style 2010*' were The Torso of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara as an example of Srivijaya art that dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, The head of a Bodhisattva in the Khmer style dating back to the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, etc.

Wat Phra Kaeo Museum, This museum exhibits the seasonal costumes of the Emerald Buddha, various offerings presented to that sacred image, and samples of architectural temple fragments that have been replaced by new ones. The stone seat from the Sukhothai period was removed from the Wiharn Yod to be installed as a throne under a White Nine-tiered Umbrella of State in this museum so that the public can pay respect to and remember the beneficence of King Ram Khamhaeng the Great.<sup>[173]</sup>

Apart from official museums, numerous collections of Buddha images in the main hall are also worth a visit as they indicate the highest faith of Buddhists. Buddhist historic sites, as mentioned, also have a uniqueness of place and are the main representative of Buddhism. As previously explained, whether many statues and images are displayed for symbolic purpose, the center of such places also highlights Thai national Buddha images: the Emerald Buddha, the icon of 'Wat Phra Kaeo' (วัดพระแก้ว) and the Grand Palace; '*Phra Phuttha Sihing*' (พระพุทธรูปสี่หิ้งค์), the icon of '*Buddhaisawan*' Chapel (พระที่นั่งพุทไธสวรรย์) at the National Museum and '*Phra Buddha Chinnarat*' (พระพุทธรูปชินราช), the icon of Wat Benchamabohit.

- Collection and display:

In the aspect of visual consumption, the iconic national museums have distinct characteristics. The exhibit of the epitome of '*thainess*', in this context, is from Thai Buddhist architecture of different styles. The beauty of the Grand Palace-Temple of the Emerald Buddha is where conventional concepts to pay respect to the Buddha images are practiced. These are different from 'the Buddhist gallery' displays in two places: the prototype of conventional Rattanakosin art and the Marble Temple, the model of a classic one, and the National Museum was originally the palace of the Prince Successor called '*Wang Na*' (วังหน้า) where the conventional pavilion, chapel, and hall kept Buddhist art in one area.

### The National Museum: a Buddhist gallery in a royal palace

Each building in the National Museum has special architectural characteristics which cannot be found in other Buddhist historic sites. The details are cited in the official webpage of the National Museum and official tourist guides. Here are some exemplars:

The Buddhaisawan Chapel (พระที่นั่งพุทธไธสวรรย์), housing the Phra Buddhasihing, an important sacred Buddha image. The paintings inside this chapel are the oldest murals in Bangkok. Issares Rajanusorn (พระที่นั่งอิศเรศราชานุสรณ์), a restored private residence of King Pinklao, King Rama IV's brother. The Red House (พระตำหนักแดง), originally one of the private living quarters of Queen Sri Suriyen, wife of King Rama II. In addition, there are several minor pavilions which were once used for ceremonial occasions. Each one is an example of Thai architecture of the Bangkok period including the Sala Longsong Pavilion, the Samranmukhamat Pavilion, the Mangkhalaphisek Pavilion and the Patihantasanai Pavilion.<sup>[169]</sup>

### The Marble Temple: A Buddhist art gallery in a temple

The display at Wat Benchamabophit shares the conventional concept of a Buddhist temple building that arranges Buddha images around the viharn, or surrounds the central Buddha image, such as in 'Wat Suthat' (วัดสุทัศน์) where the large covered gallery around the viharn features Buddha images in meditation pose. However, the set of Buddha images at Wat Benchamabophit has uniqueness, *'representing famous images and styles from all over Asia, Thailand and other Buddhist countries'*.<sup>[174]</sup> The decoration of the columns/posts, the ceiling, and the beauty and finest bronze Buddha images are components that lead to the representation of a Buddhist gallery as a unique space. The masterpieces are Buddha images in walking posture and self-mortification derived and copied from India (now



Pakistan). The first one is also praised as the most beauty Buddha image of its kind which can beat European masterpieces.

'Wat Phra Kaeo' (วัดพระแก้ว) and the Golden Mount: a destination of Buddhist pilgrimage

The conventional concept of pilgrimage originated in India and Nepal where four places directly related to the Buddha's life, *'the four holy places of Buddhism'* and significant temples in Buddha's lifetime are the destination. In Southeast Asia, Myanmar, Yunnan of China, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, as Buddhist cities, also have sacred temples and old historic sites for pilgrimage.<sup>[175]</sup> In a tourism context, Bangkok has promoted significant places to attract Buddhist visitors to visit temples where relics, Bodhi trees, and important Buddha images are enshrined. The two popular Buddhist historic sites for pilgrimage are Wat Phra Kaeo, housing the Emerald Buddha, and the great relic at Golden Mount. The image of Bangkok as a destination for Buddhist pilgrimage has been constructed from these sacred motifs. The first one, *'the Emerald Buddha'*, is representative of the zenith of sacred Buddha images of the Rattanakosin Buddhist Kingdom. In such a picture, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the Emerald Buddha's beauty and historical background, and relevant national Buddhist practices, the highest beauty of Buddhist art and architecture, are all significant components that centralize the faith of the Thai nation on this iconic Buddhist attraction. Such characteristics of place, practice, and an iconic Buddha image made from a rare material, green stone with its feature like emerald, decorated by glorious seasonal costumes, the conventional practice of Rattanakosin court showing finest Thai handicraft, are represented to showcase the epitome of 'thainess', with the attractiveness based on 'beauty' and 'faith'.

The second one, the great relics of the Buddha of the Golden Mount and the Bodhi Tree from Sri Lanka, are copies of original sacred Buddhist historic sites in India. The attraction is their location, the 'mount' is located in order to be able to see panoramic views of old town Bangkok, as promoted: *'To visit the chedi at the top of the mountain-like structure, visitors climb the stairs on one side to the top, from where they can enjoy a clear panoramic view of inner Bangkok. After which they are steered down via the stairs on the other side.'*<sup>[176]</sup> In such a representation, Wat Saket and the Golden Mount have been constructed and represented as sacred space, as well as representative of a Buddhist city in Asia and Southeast Asia that was the first to receive genuine Buddha relics directly from Sri Lanka. Official tourist guides, such as *'Bangkok Style 2010'* promoted that:

The relics enshrined in the Golden Mount Chedi are considered genuine. The discovery was made in 1898 when William Claxton Peppe, a Briton living in India, found an urn containing the relics in an ancient stupa in Piprahwa village near Lumpini, believed to be Lord Buddha's birthplace (...) It could thus be surmised that the relics were one-eighth of the actual ashes allotted to the Sakya royals after Buddha's cremation.<sup>[176]</sup>

Similar is the Bodhi tree: *'to the east of the Golden Mount Chedi is one of the Bodhi trees that monks brought back from Sri Lanka to present to King Rama III. The Bodhi tree is very meaningful to Buddhists as it is believed that the Lord Buddha became enlightened whilst sitting underneath one.'*<sup>[176]</sup> Apart from such motifs, there is also the temple fair popularly promoted for people to pay homage to the great relics since the reign of King Rama V.<sup>29</sup> The practice, the sacred representative Buddha

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<sup>29</sup> Historically explained in "ความหมายของพระบรมธาตุในอารยธรรมสยามประเทศ", ศรีศักร วัลลิโภดม กล่าวว่ "พอถึงสมัยรัชกาลที่ ๕ ได้พระบรมธาตุในพระมหาสถูปเจดีย์ที่บรรจุพระบรมธาตุครั้งพระเจ้าอโศก มหาราช จึงอาจนับได้ว่าเป็นพระบรมธาตุที่แท้จริงแต่ครั้งพุทธกาลทีเดียว จึงได้โปรดฯ ให้ประดิษฐานไว้ที่พระ

images, and the characteristics of location, as mentioned above, are the attraction of this Buddhist iconic site which has been handed down since the start of the enshrinement in 1898 for the reason, *'Upon the discovery, Lord Curzon, the then viceroy of India had the relics redistributed to Rama V, the then King of Thailand, revered by his subject as 'the upholder of Buddhism in the Buddhist world'.<sup>[176]</sup>*

### 3.3.4 The integration of art and science in a Buddhist monastery: Wat Pho, the representative of an educational center of the country and Southeast Asian

Wat Pho is represented as evidence of a highly developed Buddhist city of Thailand for its great integration of Buddhist art and 'science'/ knowledge (ศาสตร์). Such a representation has been promoted as a progressive concept generating Buddhist knowledge and secular knowledge that goes further than the general Buddhist temple in the country and region, conventionally done while other Buddhist countries at that time were dominated under colonization. The success of the campaign to remodel the general form and types of knowledge in monastic space was continuously constructed by the command of King Rama I to King Rama III. A Buddhist scholar, *Peter Skilling*, explained that historically Bangkok was modelled as a center of regional Buddhism, as evidenced from Wat Pho since the first reign of the Rattanakosin Era: *'(Rama I) set high moral and intellectual standards, and he embarked upon ambitious building projects that entailed the remodeling of temples, the repair and reconstruction of images, the installation of relics, and the production of scriptures and paintings'<sup>[177]</sup>* In the reign of King Rama III, there was great renovation and construction that made over Wat Pho as the center of Buddhist knowledge of the country, in particular the inscriptions with knowledge of variety of fields, the construction of the Reclining Buddha decorated with a 'novel style' on the footprints,

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เจดีย์ภูเขาทอง ให้เป็นสถานที่ศักดิ์สิทธิ์ของพระนคร เพื่อให้คนได้มาสักการะ และมีงานเทศกาลไหว้กันเป็นประจำทุกปี", หน้า ๑๑๔.

the making of the hermit statues teaching ‘*Thai yoga*’, and ‘Khao Mor’ (เขามอ) or small hills decorated with Chinese pagodas, lantern poles, figurines, four-legged animal figures, and rare plants and herb. Such attractions are now iconic tourist sites popularly promoted in tourist guides. As overviewed above, the characteristics of civilization, taken from the representation of ‘Wat Pho’, is that of the exhibit of data revealing the ‘*essential knowledge*’ of the state through the lens of the kings which partially shows the development and integration of what was obtained from Asian wisdom to be the heritage of the Thai Buddhist state. This also shows the professional skill and wisdom of the kings, scholars and craftsmen of the Rattanakosin period, as will be explained.

The first part will explain the branches of knowledge that show ‘civilization’ of Thailand, where Bangkok is the center. The process of collecting and propagating various branches of knowledge in Wat Pho was the first time for the country to embed significant knowledge for development and was the representation of a ‘civilized nation’ to other countries. The collection of knowledge was based on former wisdom, ethical standards, social events, cultural practices and Buddhism. The collection of data has been summarized from the official webpage of Wat Pho as follows<sup>[178]</sup>:

Thai literature as inscribed and painted: the inscriptions of didactic literature comprising the first Thai proverbs, ‘Supasit Phra Ruang’ (สุภาสิตพระร่วง), which was developed from the conventional idea of Thai society since at least the Ayutthaya period; ‘Kritsana Son Nong’ (กฤษณาसन้องคำฉันท์) developing from Mahabharata, the great Indian epic; the inscriptions of Ramakien (จารึกเรื่องรามเกียรติ์); Thai jingles (กลบท กลอักษร) which are the highest technique of Thai word-playing founded nowhere else in the world; Thai verses narrating the renovation of Wat Pho (โคลงต้นเรื่องปฏิสังขรณ์วัดโพธิ์), which is the academic and professional idea of cultural creation; popular folktales categorized as ‘unending stories’ (นิทานลูกโซ่), such as the stories of

an old woman and man with their nephew; and the mural paintings narrating Jatakas and popular Thai literature of the time. Buddhist art: *in* a museum of Buddha images with different styles showing Buddhist art, the Buddha marks and the Buddha attitudes. Buddhist tales: portray the origin of deities, demons and serpents in heaven, and the legend of Nang Songkran rooting from a Pali inscription. Buddhist history: taken from the annals of Lanka (พงศาวดารลังกาที่แปล) portraying the history of the Lanka royal family and Buddhism in Lanka. *Medical science*: *in* a library of inscriptions of Thai traditional massage around 'Sala Rai' (ศาลาราย) or satellite pavilions, such knowledge also being developed from the Ayutthaya period. Social, political, and national culture: A portrait of the royal kathin procession, the originality of Nang Songkran, an inscription narrating foreigner characteristics (โคลงภาพคนต่างภาษา), and an inscription demonstrating ancient routes in the sea and land, etc. Archaeology: such as the mural paintings about ancient weapons. Other beliefs of Thai society: such as astronomy and painting and text explaining the characteristics of good elephants, horses, cats, and cow horns. The mentioned branches of knowledge reveals that the Thai nation of the Rattanakosin era has a long history, and is not a new state (although at that time it was the early part of new dynasty), as evidenced by the zenith of knowledge rooted in Thai and India civilization that informs literature and Buddhism texts (relatively close to Sri Lanka), the advanced idea to pave the way for establishment of central education, and to collect both canon and trivial knowledge of the time.

The second part will analyze the identities of iconic attractions in Wat Pho that also show the great integration of Buddhist art and science, the progressive creation to establish a school of Buddhism, or in other words, '*civilization*'. The outstanding identities of iconic attractions in Wat Pho are based on their content and representation. The content, or characteristics of knowledge, as mentioned, have distinct details which are different from other Buddhist cities, both in the country and in the region. The representation of such knowledge is by the creation of art. The method to propagate

such knowledge is based on the transformation of knowledge from 'text' and 'oral' to visual art (painting, sculpture) and inscription in order to serve for 'self- learning' of Thai people: *'thus it is naturally recognized as the very first higher educational institute of the country that is open to people at large to learn by themselves'*<sup>[179]</sup> In the aspect of an iconic Buddhist attraction, Wat Pho has managed tourist space to highlight the outstanding identities of place and practice as follows.

The must visit site is that of the Epigraphic Archives of Wat Pho which is representative of the collection of Thai knowledge with Asian and local roots. In 2009, the Epigraphic Archives of Wat Pho was designated by UNESCO to 'the UNESCO Memory of the World (MOW) for the historic inscriptions and hermit statues teaching *'Thai yoga'*, *'Wat Pho itself has become one of the most important tourist destinations of Rattanakosin Island, and in 2009 it was included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Program.'*<sup>[180]</sup> The declaration stated:

The Epigraphic Archives of Wat Pho (Temple of the Bodhi Tree) in Bangkok is a unique collection of 1,431 stone inscriptions in Thai language and scripts made in 1831-1841 on both religious and secular subjects, representing a wide range of Thai knowledge of Asian and local roots of the time in the context of over five centuries of global exchanges in trade, politics and culture. It was a conscious effort by King Rama III and Thai scholars to preserve and make them visible to the public with the ultimate aim in general education on cultural heritage, diversity and civilizations.<sup>[181]</sup>

Current, former, update, and even future knowledge was collected by using conventional methods to inscribe. Such a process represents the conventional Thai writing style which reveals the beauty of handwriting and the concept of knowledge creation of Thai society. Next is the exhibition of Buddhist knowledge. The invention of religious art is the outstanding aspect in this regard. There are many attractions in Wat Pho represented as the exhibition of 'faith' and Buddhist knowledge. However, the

most prominent is the footprint of the Reclining Buddha which shows *'creativity'* and *'Thai beauty'*. The creation was to demonstrate the characteristics of 108 auspicious symbols made by marquetry, Chinese art on the Buddha's feet. That was the first creation of such Buddhist art in the world. Lastly is the image of a *'temple of the healing art'*<sup>[182]</sup> which has been successful in branding Thai massage as a product of Bangkok to world tourists. The creation ranged from the development of traditional knowledge to contemporary healing services, from traditional knowledge described in the history of the Lord Buddha and literature to concrete exhibitions in the form of park decorations, 'Khao mor' (เขามอ) or the copy of a mountain influenced from Chinese art decoration. The data sources, such as *'Bangkok Style 2010'*, cited that *'the plants here include those described in the history of the lord Buddha as well as a mixture of herbs, and flowers.'*<sup>[144]</sup> Such a creation was made to fulfill the idea of medical science which was also inscribed around the Sala Rai. Next are the hermit statues teaching traditional Thai yoga. These iconic sculptures are not only a *'medical museum'* presented by art, but also a park for relaxation. The idea to make hermit statues was developed from Indian yoga, or traditional Indian Ayurveda of Jivaka or *Shivago Komarpaj*, the great doctor in the Buddha's lifetime. The medical texts were derived from the Ayutthaya period.<sup>30</sup> Tourist guides have many versions of the historical

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<sup>30</sup> Such method also appears in many Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Laos and Cambodia. Referred from [www.spa-london.org](http://www.spa-london.org), 25 October 2014. In Sawasdee magazine, November 2002 has explained that Thai massage had long developed and was a "homegrown wisdom". In Ayutthaya period, there was evidence "Thai massage" as recorded by Simon de la Loubere, a French man in 1690, "when a person is sick in Siam, he begins by causing his whole body to be molded by one who is skillful herein, who gets upon the body of the sick person and tramples him under his feet" (Page 48). Besides, there was a village doctor called *nuad cha leoi sak* that had developed to *nuad ratcha samnak* for the king.

background of 'Thai massage' originating from Wat Pho, from India and then was integrated with Thai wisdom, as mentioned, or '*seems to have roots in traditional Chinese acupuncture techniques which manipulate internal energy using pressure points*'.<sup>[183]</sup> The '*best blended*' between Indian yoga and Chinese gave birth to a form of '*Thai massage*'. It also differs from general methods as in Swedish massage which denotes the purely physical kneading of muscles and joints. Significantly, the essence of the technique is close to Buddhist teachings. Firstly, it emphasizes spiritual aspects as it is taught and practiced in a Buddhist temple, which shows a manifestation of *metta* or loving kindness, a basic Buddhist virtue. Secondly, the process to massage starts from meditation, or a state of contemplative mind throughout the healing. Thirdly, for the persons in pain, they need to be selfless in order to release all suffering which also supports the healing. As a tourist attraction and cultural product, the school of Wat Pho '*Thai massage*' is the only place that has been managed to serve visitors in all aspects, for historical tours and traditional healing with a unique method and art demonstration. In the data sources, the selling point of the iconic massage school was on its original and long practice among Thai people as passed on over generations.

In summary, iconic Bangkok touristic sites have been represented as the result of a long continuously preserved and developed Buddhist culture, with no interruption of great wars and colonialism as in other Buddhist cities. As a result of political and cultural independence since the establishment of Rattanakosin kingdom, there are many outstanding Buddhist attractions that evidence the firmly established Buddhist society with continuous development that differs from other Buddhist cities in this region. '*Rattanakosin Island*' is representative of the old Buddhist kingdom that is still preserved and practiced, a sacred area of many iconic 'Buddhism motifs' that are conjoined. The epitome of '*thainess*' and refined craftsmanship is the attraction that beats other Buddhist cities. The Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the center of kingship and Buddhism of the nation, is the biggest complex of Hindu-



Buddhist faith and practice that is specially beautify by Rattanakosin signature artwork. In such a complex, the world's best ones are created. The national iconic ceremony of the world, the royal barge procession, is '*buddhistized*' to be linked with the kathin ceremony, but still highlights the high beautification to glorify the king based on Hindu-Buddhist concepts. The significance of state Buddhist temples as the center of national knowledge, and a body of knowledge originated in Buddhist temples and from Buddhism, are the outstanding attractions. Bangkok Buddhist museums have various types ranging from the Grand Palace, state temples to the National Museum. These places were established in the time of colonialism. While other Buddhist cities were interrupted by Western colonizers, Bangkok paved the way to establish the symbol of a great Buddhist kingdom. Wat Pho and the famous Thai traditional massage are the best exemplar of the great contribution of the monastic order to the public and the high developed of a Buddhist society. In the aspect of factors influencing the selection of Bangkok Buddhist attractions by the state, the data sources reveal that Thai tourism organization selected the core image of Bangkok as a Buddhist city, which the oldest image is appearing in foreign travel writings since the time before touristization, as Buddhism is the core culture of Thai society. In a tourism context, iconic Buddhist attractions were colorized to attract visitors. This causes the relevant concepts of '*the exotic city*', '*the land of smiles*', '*the sacred city*' and '*the city of pilgrims*' have been constructed through the process of representation.

## CHAPTER 4

### BANGKOK AS 'THE CITY OF EXOTIC ARTS': THE REPRESENTATION OF 'CIVILIZED BANGKOK' FROM FINE ARTS CULTURE

In a Bangkok tourism context, Fine arts culture (วัฒนธรรมประณีตศิลป์)<sup>31 [184]</sup> has been represented as the evidence of Thai civilization originally influenced by faith and beliefs created in the form of art works as a representations of Buddhist art, as described in *Chapter 3*. Apart from the representations of Buddhist art, there are also other sets of Thai fine arts that have represented the civilization of the Rattanakosin period, not only in traditional and contemporary forms and expressions, but also as a part of the contemporary concept of arts and handicrafts as consumed in Bangkok tourism space. In the period of 'Amazing Thailand', there were iconic Bangkok cultural arts promoted according to cultural management. All represented the image of Bangkok as the center of a continuing Rattanakosin civilization. In such a picture, the

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<sup>31</sup> The term "fine arts culture" refers to "Thai art works" created by traditional Thai art techniques as referred to in the definition of the Department of Fine Arts under the Ministry of Culture of Thailand. Related to this are Thai crafts, Thai performing arts, and Thai architecture. Thai art works in this group are the representatives of Rattanakosin court arts initially created in the court and state culture that has been managed by the state to propagate publically and which has had an influence on contemporary Thai art works in tourism spaces. This also includes local Thai handicrafts developed by court agents and the private sector to meet tourist taste in a global tourism context.

development of cultural arts highlighted crafting and traditional Thai art works in museums, Thai fabrics and silk, traditional and contemporary Thai performing arts. Such cultural art attractions were the representatives of the epitome of Thai fine arts of 'the modern period' that have been preserved, produced, practiced and managed to attract foreign visitors in a contemporary context. The characteristics of 'Civilized Bangkok' have thus been represented in various facets.

This chapter will analyze the outstanding characteristics of Bangkok cultural art attractions that were selected to portray the image of Bangkok as 'the city of exotic arts' to answer how the characteristics of 'exotic' in this term conveys the civilization of Bangkok.

#### 4.1 Background of Bangkok's image as 'the City of Exotic Arts'

In a tourism context, exotic arts have been colorized to represent the traditional culture of tourist cities. In general, the characteristics of a city of exotic arts in Asia and Southeast Asia focus on their rich cultural arts influenced by Buddhist culture, local beliefs, and the natural environment. From various writings, the terms '*exotic art*', '*local art*' and '*primitive art*' have been employed to explain the characteristics of cultural art in form, materials and expression. A guidebook '*Exotic Asia*'<sup>[185]</sup> from the 1990s labelled exotic Asia as a paradise for shopping. Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia were popular countries for Westerners. Apart from this, South Pacific countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Tahiti, were also counted as exotic destinations. For such purposes, handicrafts made in Asian countries and traditional performances were selected to attract visitors. The uniqueness came from handmade materials from different cultural backgrounds that could be grouped as having influence from religious beliefs, court culture, and nature. For instances, '*Bandung 1962, Opal of the East*'<sup>[186]</sup> promoted the traditional performances of locals and primitive dances Tan Serimpi, Reong and Kendang

Pancha dances, and Angklung local music instruments. *'Bali and her temples 1962'*<sup>[187]</sup>, selected exotic arts influenced by Balinese religion, such as stone buildings with rich carving, performances glorifying and paying respect toward the gods. *'Ba Hambang in pictures'*<sup>[188]</sup> of the Khmer Republic promoted exotic art, ancient bowls and Hindu art. *'Meet you in Malaysia'*<sup>[189]</sup> and *'Magnificent Malaya'*<sup>[190]</sup> promoted Chinese, Muslims, Hindu and local Island cultural arts, such as Malayan brocade and sarongs, jewelry, carpets, china and glass ware, rattan furniture, and Kelantan silver. Compared to other exotic cities in the region as elaborated above,<sup>[191]</sup><sup>32</sup> because Thailand and Bangkok has been continuously represented as an independent kingdom and the center of high cultural arts development, the characteristics of *'exotic Thai'* in this context has portrayed images of Thailand and Bangkok as an old civilized kingdom where the continuing practices and creation of cultural arts is related to the historical background of Thai kingdoms and Bangkok, both in the 'traditional' and 'modern' period. Bangkok cultural arts has been portrayed with an image of a highly developed nation with strong rooting cultural arts where there has been continuing art development supported by the royal, state and private sectors, as will be discussed in the next topic.

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<sup>32</sup> The writer has analyzed the characteristics of "Thai high arts" and summarized that Thai Kingdom historical background has more broadly based patronage than those of their mainland Southeast Asian counterparts--largely because of Thai's more salubrious political and economic situation so that Thai Kingdom high culture is produced based on Buddha teaching and other "classical" issues depicted in the arts itself--- the idea of heroism, loyalty, morality, beauty, and the like.

#### 4.2 The promotion of Bangkok as ‘the City of Exotic Arts’

*‘Like other countries with a long integrated history, Thailand has her own traditions, customs and culture in terms of sports, drama, dance, and music...’<sup>[192]</sup>*

The representation of the city of exotic art from this view has been to portray the image of a civilized city where cultural arts preservation and production are firmly and systemically developed. The image of Bangkok as the city of exotic art has especially highlighted the significance of Bangkok as the center of Rattanakosin archived heritage. This evidences the ‘golden age’ of cultural art creation of the modern period that has been continuously preserved, reinvented and created based on the blending of traditional Thai art of the former Thai kingdoms and the recent global trend. Although there are large numbers of cultural arts ranging from globalized cultural art to Bangkok local cultural art, most of the representatives of Thai civilization still highlight Thai handicrafts showcasing Buddhist and Thai court influences, Thai performing arts rooted in Rattanakosin court culture and recently contemporary Rattanakosin civilization exhibitions. There have been only a few local handicrafts selected to be promoted and only one famous Thai product developed by blending Thai and Western art ideas, which is ‘*Thai silk*’.

##### Bangkok: The center of continuing Rattanakosin civilization

The concept of exoticism, in this respect, has been derived from the original and exceptional art creations of Bangkok. They can be grouped as the representatives of Rattanakosin art of the modern period. The characteristics of the ‘*exoticism*’ of ‘Thai exotic art’ from Thailand and Bangkok cultural art attractions have been different from those promoted as Asian and Southeast Asian cultural arts since the influence of cultural art creation is from the fact that ‘*Thailand has been both a politically*

*independent kingdom for all of its history and one of the most ethnically unified nations in Asia*.<sup>[193]</sup>

#### 'The cities of exotic arts': Bangkok and regional cities of Thailand

Bangkok has been promoted as the center of cultural art creation of Thailand: *'Bangkok is the focal point of virtually all artistic activity in Thailand. The capital contains most of the nation's art galleries, exhibition halls, and art schools, and its where most Thai artists and collectors live.*<sup>[193]</sup> 'Exotic Art' of Bangkok, in this context, has been influenced from Buddhism, court culture and Bangkok local culture. The outstanding characteristics of *'Bangkok cultural art'*, as compared to regional cultural art of Thailand, are not the same. Northern, southern, and northeastern Thailand have promoted their local arts as being influenced from former ethnic cultures, whereas Bangkok has been represented as the center of Thai civilization of the Rattanakosin period. Bangkok, in this context, is the center of the Thai Kingdom so that the epitome of *'thainess'* in the aspects of cultural art creation has been selected to show such status. Before the Amazing Thailand campaign, the types and iconic attractions of Bangkok cultural art were continuously developed, as will be described.

#### 1960s: The beginning of Thailand and Bangkok as exotic destinations

In the 1960s, Thailand was promoted as *'the paradise of treasure hunters'*<sup>[194]</sup> for Western visitors, as there were large numbers of rare handicrafts. The representation of Bangkok, in this context, focused on the significance of Thai traditional art continuously handed down from the past to present day. Handicrafts were a large part of Thailand's tradition. To welcome foreign guests, TOT selected traditional Thai dance, Thai silk, Thai dolls and Thai art works showcasing how the cultural flourished in the country for a long time.

In the first phase of the promotion, the public sector was the main organization that controlled and created representations of Thai cultural art. In this period, Thai local art in other regions were not much developed to be promoted as tourist attractions. There were a few handicrafts from northern and northeastern Thailand, such as Siamese Sakalok Pottery made in Chiang Mai, products of hill tribes, handicrafts made for Buddhist ceremonies as in kathin ceremony in Northeastern Thailand, Thai celadon and Thai bronze ware from Sukhothai. The outstanding characteristics of Thai products were their traditional style that could be traced back to the early Thai kingdoms, such as the production of Thai celadon and Thai bronze ware.<sup>33</sup> Thai woven baskets and furniture was promoted for their original design, being well-made and reasonable price.

Bangkok cultural art was first promoted as being representative of Thai high arts of the kingdom, such as masterpieces of Buddhist arts, Rattanakosin court art – khon dance, traditional Thai dances – produced by the Fine Art Department – Mekhala and Ramasun dance in the National Theatre. Apart from this, there were typical Thai arts made by the private sector, such as Thai silk made by P. Shinawatra. The covers portrayed pictures of khon masks and Thai classical dancers. In articles introducing Thai culture, there were many Thai art pieces selected to represent the beauty of Thai art as in *'Holiday Time in Thailand'* 1960 promoting Thai royal barges as *'the wonder of the world'* and Mekhala and Ramasun dancing. The masterpieces were the carving of teak doors of Wat Suthat and the inlays in mother-of-pearl doors of Wat Phra Kaeo. *'Holiday Time in Thailand'*, 1963 promoted Thai silk, Thai classical dancing and *'the*

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<sup>33</sup> The promotion cited that, *"pottery in Thailand dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century when Chinese potters visited the northern Kingdom of Sukhothai. Remains of old kilns have been found in several regions and the vases and plates have become collector's items."* See also in Holiday Time in Thailand (1963),n.p..

*handicrafts of Thailand*: 'Thai silk' was a famous product for its 'exciting colors and textures'<sup>[195]</sup>; 'Thai jewelry', both precious and semi-precious stones, were popular among visitors as they were made and designed in traditional and contemporary styles; 'Thai bas-relief figures' were famous for their beautiful golden color and traditional Thai lines; 'Thai dolls' were enchanting for their fine decoration and traditional Thai clothing such as farmers with typical dress, dancers wearing Thai costumes, Thai classical dancers, and the Hanuman character; 'Thai celadon' was famous for its decoration and fine texture. There were many kinds of Thai celadon products, such as Chinese tea-pots, kitchen wares, home decoration, etc. 'Thai masked actors' decorated with 'gems' made by papier-mâché in life-size were promoted for their astonishing qualities; 'Thai bronze ware' were in traditional style, such as Nielloware punch bowl, temple bells, lacquer ware vases, wall plaque showing royal barges, and in contemporary style, such as a set of bronze cutlery, candlesticks, cigarette boxes and fondue cookers. The favorite patterns for rehouses silver were the characters from the Indian Epic, the Ramayana, religious symbols, flowers and classical dancers. Popular products of that time were stone rubbings from Thai literature scenes from the walls of Wat Pho.<sup>[196]</sup>

1970s: The growth of 'Thai Exotic' services in Bangkok hotels, Antiques in Bangkok museums and shops, and regional tourism

In the next phase, the decade of the 1970s, there were more traditional Thai arts museums promoted in official tourist guides. The imitation of court culture by the private sector, such as five-star hotels, adopted traditional Thai art decoration such as flower arrangement, fruit and vegetable carving, and performances to attract foreign visitors. In this period, there were also many antiques shops around Bangkok. The highlighted attractions were as follows.



In a publication of Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT), the National Museum was promoted as the major repository of the country's national treasures and one of the outstanding museums in all of Southeast Asia, '*no other museum in this part Asia has collection to compare either in size or in quality*'.<sup>[197]</sup> Traditional Thai houses in Bangkok – Suan Pakkad Palace, Jim Thompson's House and Kamthieng House – were 'Three Unusual Houses in Bangkok'.<sup>[198]</sup>

Thai Entertainment in hotels<sup>[199]</sup>;

'The Ways...A Thai?'

Of course, she is Thai. She naturally does things her own ways;

From the way she sits and dines, even the way she smiles.

This evening, experience these new ways by sitting the ways she does,

Dining on the choicest Thai dishes, enjoying the exotic Thai classical dances, and happily smiling on your way home.'

In other provinces of Thailand, cultural art attractions partly followed the Bangkok Fine Arts Department, such as in '*Shows in Thai Village at Suan Samparn*'. There were local dances of each part of Thailand, such as Bamboo dance, Nora dance and Ram Wong Thai marriage ceremony, local handicrafts, and Chiang Mai umbrella-making.<sup>[200]</sup> Thai silk of Chon Bod of Khon Kaen province,<sup>[201]</sup> wood craving, lacquer ware, parasols of Bor Sang, and the '*eastern jars industry*', were included in an article '*The River people of Ratchaburi*',<sup>[202]</sup> for instance.

1980s: The reimagining of Thailand and Bangkok as the center of an exotic destination in Southeast Asia

In the 1980s, Thai classical dance flourished and was popular among foreign visitors as a part of Thai style dining in hotels and restaurants. In addition, in other parts of Thailand, local handicrafts were developed by the state. In this phase, the image of 'Exotic Bangkok' was rebranded differently from the late 1950s to 1960s in that there was more official cultural promotion events and growth of Thai handicrafts production both by the state and private sectors in Bangkok and provincial Thailand. For example, a TOT publication portrayed the image of Thailand as a country that had cultural richness as there were artisans in all parts of the country. In this decade, there was the promotion of '1982 PATA'SYEAR' to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the city's founding that showcased '*marvel at beautiful and rarely performed ceremonies and cultural events (...) participate in the wealth of exotic and fascinating experience*'<sup>[203]</sup>; '*Intercrafts Conex 81*' or International Crafts Conference and Exhibition which CONEX participants in Surinam, Rwanda, Gambia, Fiji, Ecuador, Greece, Cyprus, Chile, Korea and Bhutan, etc. promoted their handicrafts in Bangkok.<sup>[204]</sup> Such a concept also appeared in foreign tourist guides as '*Exotic Asia*'<sup>[185]</sup>. Thailand, and Bangkok, was not a third world country and undeveloped city as in India, Burma and Philippines, as there was a large amount of rare, fine, and valuable cultural art. Thailand was a shopping goal for home furnishing accessories, antiques, textiles and primitive arts.<sup>[205]</sup> There was, at that time, 17 provinces of the country marked as exotic destinations. Among these provinces, Bangkok was continually promoted as the center of a flourishing Thai cultural art heritage and the paradise of shopping, '*the royal court continues to promote many of arts and crafts as do the many families that produce quantity products for tourists and export markets.*'<sup>[206]</sup> Not only Thai products, other famous Thai cultural arts comprising traditional Thai performances, Thai heritage museums, Thai

fine arts in national ceremonies were well-known among foreign visitors. Thai handicrafts became well-known. The iconic ones were jewelry as *'Thai jewelry design are originals'*<sup>[203]</sup> and *'tradition of beauty'* displayed in hotels as in the promotion of the Siam Intercontinental Hotel.<sup>34</sup> <sup>[207]</sup> Apart from this, there were large numbers of hotels that set a courtly atmosphere as in the first class service and traditional Thai décor at the Dusit Thani, dining in a superb setting of Suwanna Hong, Suwanna Hong, the golden swan preset genuine Thai classical dances and dining, etc. Not only traditional Thai art decoration and traditional Thai services, there were convention at hotels and restaurants that served Thai cuisine while showing traditional Thai dances,<sup>35</sup> as in dances depicting scenes from the Ramayana at Piman restaurant. At the Dusit Thani, there was a one-hour performance in the Sukhothai room such as Ramwong, Daowadung dance, Mekhala and Ramasoon, Ram Klong Yao, etc. The Indra Hotel held its show in the Sala Thai Room with the dances including the fight between Rama and Thotsakan. Regional arts were handicrafts of Chiang Mai, such as indigenous crafts of villages of Bo Sang, San Kamphang wood carving, umbrella decoration, and lacquerware<sup>[208]</sup> Southern handicrafts included mat weaving, Pattani earthen ware, talung puppets made from carved buffalo skin, and Kor-lae boats of the South.<sup>[209]</sup> *'Northeastern Art'*<sup>[210]</sup> were from Khorat, Khon Kaen, Loei and Nakhon Phanom, and Loei, such as *'Ban Chiang Pottery Museum'* in Udon province representing the high level of advancement of an eighty-century old civilization. Religious art was also

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<sup>34</sup> The representatives of 'thainess' as a high culture were from the 'bai-sai', a decoration of rolled banana leaves and threaded flowers, The lady's little nook comprises a betel nut set made out of carved wood, a royal dinner set composed of the 5-color benjarong, and a silver rice bowl surrounded by an array of desserts, the miniature fruits with fine crafting.

<sup>35</sup> The restaurants included Nopakao room at Chao Phaya Paradise restaurant, Sala Norasingh, Suwannahong, Dusit Thani, Bahn Thai, Indra Regent Hotel, Maneeya restaurant, Piman restaurant, etc.

highlighted, such as the splendidly patterned bong fai in Bun Bong Fai festival of northeastern villages; in Southern Thailand, there was beautiful fine art in old palaces, such as the Chabangtikor in Pattani, the Saiburi old palace, the Yahring old palace.<sup>[211]</sup>

The promotion of Bangkok cultural art attractions in the period of 'Amazing Thailand'

Focusing on Bangkok cultural arts attractions, the city of Bangkok promoted a variety of exotic arts range from traditional to contemporary. The city was branded in 2006 as '*Bangkok, The Asian Metropolis with as rich and colorful history*'<sup>[212]</sup> that had both royal and local exotic art. The outstanding example, which is representative of Bangkok cultural images, is Rattanakosin court art. Rattanakosin court culture has been represented as the high culture of the Thai nation that originated in Bangkok. The high art could be found in various types of Bangkok cultural art attractions, ranging from national heritage in museums to contemporary art attraction. For example, there was flower arrangement and Thai perfume that originated in the court and was promoted in a column titled '*Common Scents*' to show Thai aesthetics in Thai homes. The second exemplar is that Thailand was branded as '*the Royal Kingdom*' because there has been significant cultural heritage developed from royal patronage, as in the ads of '*Thai Tracks*' that portrays the trial of the New and the Noteworthy in the Royal Kingdom.<sup>[213]</sup>

Bangkok cultural art attractions in this period can be categorized into three groups: museums, performances and Handicrafts.

#### 4.3 The Representation of Bangkok as '*the City of Exotic Arts*' from the characteristics of masterpieces Rattanakosin court art, Performing arts and Thai silk

The representation of 'Civilized Bangkok' derived from Bangkok cultural art attractions reveals that the main image of Bangkok has been that of the center of continuing Rattanakosin civilization. From such an image, standard Rattanakosin civilization has been selected to be portrayed through the representation of the cultural significance of Bangkok exotic arts. Bangkok exotic arts, in this regard, are the epitome of "thainess", which has been managed by state organizations and leading private sector enterprises comprising Rattanakosin court arts, performing arts as exhibitions in museums and contemporary Thai performances, and silk products. These iconic works of art can be divided into two groups. The first is '*traditional Thai exotic arts*', as in Rattanakosin court arts in state museums and contemporary museums of Bangkok. Although they share a similar purpose of collecting national heritage, the characteristics of knowledge propagation and media technique are different. This issue will be discussed then. Next are the royal barge processions and khon performances as the prime exemplars of Rattanakosin court art. These two iconic attractions are different from contemporary Thai performances under private sector management. The second one is '*contemporary Thai exotic arts*' developed to catch tourism trends. There are two types as products and performances comprising world product Thai silk produced by Queen Sirikit's Foundation, Joe Louis puppets, Aksara Theatre and Siam Niramit's performances.

This topic aims to analyze how the outstanding characteristics of such Bangkok cultural art attractions have been represented as Rattanakosin civilization of the modern period.

#### 4.3.1 Iconic Rattanakosin court arts in state museums, state theatres, and national ceremonies: The epitome of ‘Thai beauty’ in Bangkok tourist space

The characteristics of ‘Thai beauty’, in this regard, can be divided into two facets: conventional beauty and contemporary Rattanakosin court arts. Beauty, in this respect, is the most outstanding cultural aspect that state organizations have highlighted in official tourist guides as the strong point of iconic Rattanakosin court arts in Bangkok tourist space. In such area, there are three groups of Rattanakosin court arts represented as evidence of Rattanakosin civilization: handicrafts as art objects in state museums, khon performances in state theatres, and the royal barge procession. As attractions, they have the characteristics of attractiveness of Thai high arts, which in this context is ‘exotic Thai’ in forms and expression integrating different techniques, materials and types of art works. Here are some promoted details of such works:

*The iconic and oldest attraction, Royal Barge Procession, ‘exotic golden fantasy’<sup>36</sup>,*

*Fashioning tradition at the Museum of Textiles showcasing ‘Artistry in Silk’<sup>[214]</sup>,*

*Khon Thai Masked Dance at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre, ‘the highest Thai performing art’<sup>[215]</sup> and ‘one of the most elaborate forms of court’<sup>[216]</sup>,*

*Masterpieces in the exhibition ‘Arts of the Kingdom’ at Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, ‘Regal treasures’, etc.*

The superb characteristics of the Thai art works mentioned reflect ‘*Thai civilization*’ of the modern period based on continuing Buddhist culture and royal culture. These two cultural institutions have cultivated masterpieces that are connected

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<sup>36</sup> Already cited in chapter 3.

to national ceremonies or the representations of Thai cultural arts in international relations. The Grand Palace of Thailand is represented as heaven on earth and the model for Cambodia's Grand Palace. Vimanmek Mansion is the only decorated golden teakwood palace in the world. The royal barge procession is the only remaining water ceremony in Southeast Asia, and its crafting has been promoted as the most beautiful art works of the world. Hand-woven textiles of Her Majesty's creation are the best exemplars of the integration of traditional and local Thai handicrafts with international taste. The prominent characteristics of the Rattanakosin court as attractions are their variety that has been managed for entertainment and self-learning in museums. Khon, the iconic Thai classical dancing, is shown in stage performances and museums. Similarly, royal barges are in national ceremonies and a museum. For such reasons, the overall image of Bangkok as an exotic city, in this context, is that of the center of Rattanakosin art creation. Iconic traditional arts of the Rattanakosin period also have a prominent identity as they are the prototype of traditional Thai fine arts. The uniqueness, the epitome of beauty, the first and only one of its kinds are the selling points. The analysis will be then categorized into three groups based on the different types of Bangkok cultural attraction in various places and practices.

#### **4.3.1.1 The representation of Palace museums and Handicrafts collection: 'Royal heritage' as representative of Rattanakosin civilization**

The most outstanding characteristics of royal heritage is that of being aesthetically appealing. Such an identity has been constructed from the cultural significance of palace museums and handicraft collections in different places. These sets of masterpieces have been transformed to be art objects in order to exhibit the symbolic meanings of royal regalia as evidence of being civilized.

How do such characteristics represent civilization of the Thai kingdom? As promoted in official tourist guides, museums represent the history and social changes of a society, *'Museums are the centers of significant artifacts which represent the history and information of people and their social changes'*, included in a message from the governor of Bangkok in '100 Museums of Bangkok'.<sup>[217]</sup> The characteristics of palaces and royal regalia have been selected to be archived and to portray the continuing creation of Bangkok and the Thai kingdom. The study reveals that there are two aspects of the creation concept and the creation process reflected by the characteristics of royal regalia as represented in the data sources. Firstly, the characteristics of traditional society, which in this context, emphasize the influences of Buddhism and hierarchy of Thai cultural arts in palace museums in Bangkok. The representation of the outstanding characteristics of traditional Thai art works reflects the civilization of the Rattanakosin period in that there are characteristics of the prototype of high arts representing the epitome of 'thainess'. There is a certain exception and allowance to create royal regalia differentiating ordinary items from 'Sacred articles'. Also, there are certain patterns used to make such sacred articles and precious decorations – 'gold', precious ornaments, patterns of lines, figurine motifs, etc. Apart from certain rules to create traditional Thai arts, novelistic creation is also represented as the outcome of the wisdom of Thai craftsmen.

Secondly, iconic masterpieces have continually developed identities in that there are Ayutthaya influences, foreign techniques, and modern trends. Apart from those aspects of the characteristics related to traditional society and the continually developed identities of masterpieces, the characteristics of civilization have been constructed from the cultural significance of palace museums in that they are representatives of educational hubs of the country where the transformation of 'sacred space' to 'educational space' marks the long development of the nation. Remarkably,



palace museums in Bangkok have also promoted their outstanding characteristics of architecture, obviously differing from other metropolis in the region, as well as boasting their heritage archives in two aspects. First, palace museums have architectural symbols representing 'civilization' of each phase of Rattanakosin cultural development. Second, in a wider aspect, such continuing and unique creations of palace museums represent the status of the Thai nation and the city of Bangkok as the only independent kingdom in Southeast Asia where city creation had been concerned as the symbol of civilization through time.

The next section will elaborate how the palace museums in this context have been managed to attract visitors based on their identities of 'place' and 'royal regalia'.

a. Museum routes: The reflection of Bangkok city creation from iconic architecture

In a wider aspect, palace museums are marks of city creation. These iconic state museums have been managed to attract visitors based on their cultural significance. In the period of 'Amazing Thailand', there was a link between each palace museum as they were managed as landmarks of Bangkok historical route in and outside the old town of Rattanakosin. In the area of 'Old City Bangkok' (กรุงเทพฯ เมืองเก่า)<sup>[17]</sup>, there are four iconic museums in palaces and the adjacent state parliament: Bangkok National Museum Phra Nakhon (พิพิธภัณฑสถานแห่งชาติพระนคร), the Temple of the Emerald Buddha Museum (พิพิธภัณฑวัดพระศรีรัตนศาสดาราม), the Royal Elephant National Museum (พิพิธภัณฑสถานช้างต้น), the Royal Thai Decorations, Orders, and the Medals Museum (ศาลาเครื่องราชอิสริยยศ เครื่องราชอิสริยาภรณ์ และเหรียญกษาปณ์) in the Grand Palace. In addition, recently the Museum of Textiles was established in the Grand Palace complex. Apart from 'Old City Bangkok', in 'West Bangkok', or the Thonburi district, there is the Royal Barge National Museum (พิพิธภัณฑ

เรือพระราชพิธี).<sup>[218]</sup> Next, in eastern Bangkok there is 'the harmony of modern and classic culture' at Suan Pakkad Palace Museum.<sup>[218]</sup> Lastly, there is the permanent exhibition of 'Arts of the Kingdom' (งานศิลป์แผ่นดิน) at Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall in Dusit Palace showcasing the masterpieces of the Sirikit Institution. The characteristics of the historical routes as mention have been represented to show how creation of the city was marked by establishment of palaces. Apart from state temples, as described in Chapter 3, Bangkok palaces also have functioned as the expanding markers of the city. Such a concept of city creation has special characteristics in that there are 'multi-characters' of palace museums coexisting with the traditional Bangkok cityscape marked by temples and riverside communities.

Next, the images of a city of exotic art has been represented by the relationship between Bangkok historic sites, palace museums and art object collections. As an important historic site, Rattanakosin Island, or Bangkok's old city, is the center of Rattanakosin civilization evidenced by the state temples, as described in Chapter 3, and the establishment of the Grand Palace, and other palaces in and around the island. The extension of the historic areas can be considered from other iconic palace museums outside the inner part of Rattanakosin old town to 'West Bangkok', or the Thonburi district, and 'Eastern Bangkok'.

#### Palace museums in Bangkok: the center of Rattanakosin civilization

The image of Bangkok palaces, in this respect, is that of the center of civilization of the Thai kingdom and the city of Bangkok. The study reveals that in Bangkok tourist spaces, the selling points of Rattanakosin masterpieces as tourist attractions have been based on the outstanding characteristics of the architecture of the museum palaces that have the distinction of being landmarks in Bangkok. Firstly, the representation of architectural beauty is based on aesthetic and artistic significance. The representation of 'Thai beauty', in this regard, can be derived from

the characteristics of the epitome of 'Thai beauty', the wisdom of Thai craftsmen to create such Thai aesthetics, and exquisite Thai decoration blended with Western architectural styles. Apart from numerous temples and modern buildings, the Bangkok cityscape has been marked by different palace architectural styles. From the data sources, iconic palace museums have been highlighted as must-visit sites for visitors who would like to see traditional Thai architecture and masterpieces of European architectural styles outside Europe. As there is a variety of Thai architecture and classic Western architecture, the representation of the 'City of Exotic Arts', in this context, is based on the architectural uniqueness of Bangkok, of which the prominent aspect is 'traditional Thai' coexisting with masterworks of Western palaces, and the integration of Thai-Western art styles. The well-preserved and remaining old palace, as mentioned, are also representative of the cultural independence of the Thai nation through colonial times.

The sense of the places represented in this context is based on the characteristics of the museum architecture with different identities that can be divided into two pictures: 'Exotic golden fantasy' and the old world charm amidst bustling Bangkok.

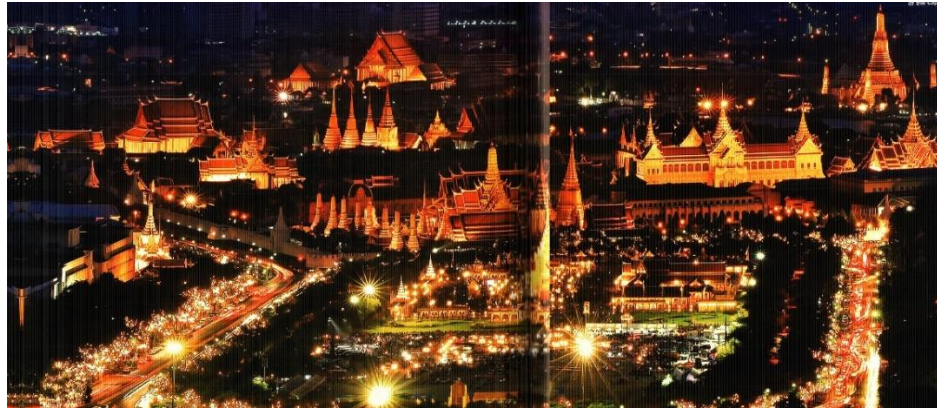


Figure 5

The promotion of Rattanakosin Island as  
the representative of Bangkok, 'Heaven on Earth'<sup>37</sup>

From such images, 'golden color' and 'glittering' are the most outstanding features appearing on palace architecture in various ways, the exotic golden fantasy of the Grand Palace: *'this dazzling complex is the absolute landmark of not just Bangkok but Thailand itself'*<sup>[219]</sup>; and the golden teakwood of Vimanmek Mansion, the golden decoration on mural paintings of Suan Pakkad Palace and the National Museum. Apart from this, the wonder of the iconic palace museums comes from the contrast and harmony of color and decoration as compared to the atmosphere in Bangkok. The most attractive sights represented in the data sources are the dazzling and glittering golden color of the palaces (and temples as described in Chapter 3). Wood carving is the second most outstanding characteristics of the palace museum architecture that has been promoted to showcase Thai craftsmanship, as in Suan Pakkad Museum Palace and Vimanmek Mansion:

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<sup>37</sup> Photo credit: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

*'many parts of the mansion (Vimankek) are open to allow the public to experience this glorious architectural gem'*<sup>[220]</sup>

*'the museum's collection of traditional pavilions is one of the best exemplar of traditional domestic architecture in the city.'*<sup>[219]</sup>

As they were once palaces of the kings and royal family members, under the current management of the palace museums, there has been a transformation of 'sacred space' to public space. Symbolically, the construction, wall paintings, and national heritage in each museum have been constructed to represent the image of Exotic Bangkok. These iconic palace museums are the representatives of the treasures of the Thai kingdom. *The Grand Palace*, as described in Chapter 3, represents a complex of exotic Thai fine arts, *'ornate wood carvings, refined murals, and traditional Thai sculpture adorn all corners'*.<sup>[219]</sup> In this compound, *the temple of Emerald Buddha Museum* and *Museum of Textiles* are also located. Apart from the traditional architecture created by the *'wang luang'* school (สกุลช่างวังหลวง), there are representatives of the *'wang na'* school (สกุลช่างวังหน้า). *The National Museum*, in this context, also is represented as the prime heritage of the vice-king's palace. Since there are various palaces and pavilions, this museum has also become a complex of high arts. Such a picture evidences the fine arts of the Rattanakosin period that were developed by different schools: *'the main branch of the National Museum Bangkok is in the compound of Wang Na Palace, or the Front Palace. Built in 1782, the same year as the Grand Palace...'*<sup>[221]</sup> In addition to Rattanakosin architecture, there is some of the best Ayutthaya architectural style remaining in Bangkok. Suan Pakkad Palace Museum is representative of a masterpiece of this traditional period. The highlighted architecture is 'Hor Lai Rod Nam' (หอหลายรดหน้า) or the lacquer pavilion where the exquisite mural painting showcase Thai beauty of the Ayutthaya period. Next

is the novel creation of King Rama V's period, *Vimanmek Mansion*. This mansion has been branded as 'the world's largest golden teakwood mansion'<sup>[144]</sup> and the best example of superb 'Thai-Victorian' architectural style. Lastly, *Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall museum* is representative of the modern period of Siam, or modern Siam. Apart from the Italian architectural style and the construction using the best marble from carara, there were many 'Thai motifs' that appear on the roof paintings narrating the kings and their creation of the city, such as the construction of the prang of Wat Arun, pagodas of Wat Pho, the Grand Palace, Phra Buddha Shinnasri, and Garuda, etc. From the details, the palace museums have aesthetic and artistic value due to the characteristics of their architecture and decoration. Each one has distinct characteristics and is represented as the prototype of Rattanakosin architectural styles.

b. Royal regalia: The representation of continuing Rattanakosin civilization

There are two prototypes of 'Thai beauty' that represent the civilization of Bangkok and the Thai kingdom: 'traditional' and 'contemporary'. They are praised as the most beautiful and unique products of the court, or as precious heritage handed down through time, and thus are characteristic of iconic exotic arts and considered to be representative of a continuing Thai civilization in the Rattanakosin period. The purpose of royal art production was to glorify Rattanakosin royalty and the Buddhist kingdom. There are three groups of royal regalia in the Grand Palace Museum, the National Museum, Vimanmek Palace Museum, and Suan Pakkad Palace Museum.

Royal Regalia in traditional style

The first group of royal regalia are golden ornaments and property of Buddhist kings, and members of the royal family, dedicated to the Buddha collected from old Buddhist cities around Thailand. The second group is private royal regalia and royal

art works used in national ceremonies. The last group includes traditional Thai music and performing instruments. Each group has different outstanding qualities in terms of precious materials, creation techniques, and symbolic meaning indicating the status of the kings, the Thai nation, and the city of Bangkok as the center of the Rattanakosin kingdom. With respect to craftsmanship, there are many techniques showcased in palace museums representing the long and continuing developed of Thai craft making skills, comprising nielloware, lacquerware, mother-of-pearl inlay, wood carving and textile weaving and decorating. Such techniques have their own roots and development. Consequently, the status of Bangkok as the center of a continuing Rattanakosin civilization based on the outstanding qualities of royal handicrafts can be explained as follows.

#### The use of 'Gold': Bangkok as a part of Suvarnabhumi civilization

The use of genuine gold and gold gilding as the main part of royal regalia is the most outstanding characteristics of Thai high arts that signifies the most precious art of the kingdom, the status of Bangkok as a sacred city for the kings and the wealth of the Rattanakosin era. The image of Bangkok, in this context, also represents the old metropolis where high culture has been influenced by the old civilization of the Suvarnabhumi region. This influence also appears in the former official name of Bangkok.<sup>[222]</sup> The representation of precious handicrafts made of 'gold', in this regard, has symbolic meaning not only as a part of Buddhist civilization with a long continuing developed, but also Bangkok represented as a part of gold culture, the oldest concept of high cultural creation in the region of Suvarnabhumi. For example, in the promotion of old royal regalia and Buddhist handicrafts, such as the Emerald Buddha's attire, Buddhist cabinets, royal vehicles, royal barges, and golden handicrafts showcased in the exhibition 'Arts of the Kingdom' at Ananta Samakhon Throne Hall.

Refinement and Variation of creation techniques: High cultural creation techniques of the Rattanakosin court

Apart from the 'golden and glittering' handicrafts, the traditional concept of creation focuses on high beautification with a high degree of decoration and refinement. The original concept was influenced by Buddhism and Hinduism on Buddhist arts and royal regalia. There are certain patterns and methods to create such sacred items appearing in the form of Thai motifs – '*Lai Rod Nam*' (ลายรดน้ำ) is a prominent example. The prominent techniques include wood crafting, embroidery, and golden Nielloware. Compared to Southeast Asian high arts, many Bangkok handicrafts encompass surpassing characteristics that also reveals the advancement in the creation of court art. <sup>[223]</sup>The iconic items are Buddhist cabinets, both in the National Museum and Suan Pakkad Palace Museum, Queen Sirikit's clothes collection at the Museum of Thai Textiles, royal vehicles and the famous royal barges. The uses of teakwood, wood, gold and the integration of precious decorations also convey fertility and the artistic wisdom of Thai craftsmen. With respect to the types of fine arts, there are three main groups that show the influence of ancient oriental civilization on Rattanakosin court arts. The first group is gold and golden ornaments or decorations of Buddhist kings and members of the royal family dedicated to Buddhism collected in the National Museum. The second group is private royal regalia and royal art works used in royal ceremonies comprising the collection of royal Thai decorations, orders, and medals at the Grand Palace, the Emerald Buddha's attire and ornaments at the Wat Phra Kaeo Museum, royal vehicles in the National Museum and the Royal Barge Museum, royal textiles and weapons in the National Museum and the Grand Palace, etc. The last group is traditional Thai music and performing instruments, such as khon masks and puppets in the National Museum and Suan Pakkad Palace Museum.



The outstanding aspect of the decorative arts of each masterpiece is the significant identity that differentiates royal Thai arts from local and foreign handicrafts. The historical background of the exemplars reveals that there was the integration of foreign cultural arts – embroidery from Persian culture, Nielloware making from the Portuguese, natural scenes, flowery and animal figure from the Chinese, weaving techniques from the Japanese, and glass decoration and porcelain from Europeans – in the Rattanakosin court which was partly derived from Ayutthaya court art and Asian, European and even ancient art of the old kingdoms in the region.

#### Royal Regalia in contemporary styles

The next topic will be the selection of royal art works of the recent reign, which in this context will be considered as ‘contemporary’ Thai court art styles. Interestingly, Rattanakosin court beauty has been continuously developed through time. In the recent reign, there are two exemplars of the epitome of ‘*thainess*’ showcased in state museums.

*First, golden handicrafts in the exhibition of ‘Arts of the Kingdom’ at Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall; and second, Thai textiles in the Museum of Thai Textiles at the Grand Palace,*

Both of these are artistic practices under Her Royal Majesty Queen Sirikit of the recent reign and have been promoted as high art products aimed at showing the great culture of the nation. The study will pick these two outstanding practices that comprise handicrafts and clothing. The contents will show how these supreme art objects were produced, and what are the characteristics of contemporary ‘thainess’ in terms of ‘beauty’. Such iconic attractions have identities in their forms and expression, materials and creation techniques. These objects also have the conventional concept of glorifying ‘sacred things’, using traditional techniques of embroidery and gold

materials, and combining novel materials, forms and expressions. The reflection of Thai court culture, in this context, is that other than changes between time periods, the transformation of traditional culture also has been practiced in between classes, royal and local as well as traditional Thai to international taste.

- Golden handicrafts in the exhibition of 'Arts of the Kingdom' at Anantasamakhom Throne Hall: The creation and integration of traditional and novel Thai handicrafts

This section will describe traditional Thai handicrafts promoted as the representatives of supreme Thai art in the recent Rattanakosin style. These selected art objects have partially appeared as attractions in museum exhibitions. One of the most outstanding art works that was designed by replication of former masterpieces of former reigns are the masterpieces showcased in the exhibition '*Arts of the Kingdom*' at Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, as cited in the official website of TAT in 2012. The art works were products of students in the Gold Nielloware and Gold & Silver Department of the SUPPORT Training Center at Chitralada Villa. The creation of handicrafts was from the replication of traditional practices, combined with novel things. The concept of creation traditionally has been to glorify the king, and under the new concept, to the queen, for their high benevolence. Symbolic motifs taken from Hindu mythology were traditionally employed to convey their kindness, and new motifs such as the rice motif, the product of the king's project, are now included in the art works. Next, the selected products show the replication of many masterpieces of architecture and craftsmanship that have been praised as the epitome of traditional Rattanakosin style. The motifs that were employed are both from traditional Thai style and Chinese motifs that appeared in temples and palace decorations, such as creatures in *Traiphum*, *kanok* motifs, flowery line (lotus, and Chinese cotton), Buddhist art motifs (the footprints of the Lord Buddha and '*phum Khao Bin*' rice motif). Lastly,

the techniques used include many traditional methods, such as embroidery. Prominently, the art works have been represented as the finest and most exquisite masterpieces of Rattanakosin:

*Attraction Details:*<sup>[224]</sup>

Ananta Samakhom currently hosts the fifth edition of *'Arts of the Kingdom'* exhibition that displays sophisticated art pieces and crafts made of precious materials by the craftsmen of Sirikit Institute, an organization under the royal patronage to help raise living standards in rural areas by encouraging them to learn and create traditional crafts. The masterpieces include a model of royal barges made of gold and a 10 meter tall carved teak panels. See more details in [www.artsofthekingdom.com](http://www.artsofthekingdom.com)

To describe how they were created needs extended information as describing in the exhibition website. The characteristics of beauty and purposes of formation are as follows:<sup>[225]</sup>

*Busabok Mala*, a royal throne, is a masterpiece crafted in gold and shimmering with diamond embellished designs. The spire is topped with a motif of a sheaf of rice, while the gold finials of the tiered roofs are of gold diamond studded floral designs. The richly glowing tiered roofs are crafted in gold nielloware, supported by four redented columns in khram gold damascene inlay, and screened by golden drapes in 'Lai Kaeo Ching Duang' (ลายแก้วชิงดวง) diamond decorated floral motifs. Golden khram Naga serpents entwine the columns with their heads down and tails rising to support the structure. Many of them were designed by imitating supreme art works in the Rattanakosin period such as *'Busabok'* imitating the model of *Buddhai Sawan* Throne Hall. The art work also shows the rank and the characteristics of fine arts made to suit high status, such as the creation of *Busabok*, a regalia of rank as described, 'A

*Busabok* is classified as a regalia of rank. A *Busabok* that has two 'Kren' or extended structures on both sides is known as *Busabok Mala*.<sup>[225]</sup> Similarly, 'The Kong Throne', a small throne named after the shape of the curved armrest which connects to the back rest. Because of its small size and light weight, it is used both as a royal throne and as a palanquin as the occasion requires. The Wanares Bovorn Asana Throne, or the Gold Khram Damascene Inlay 'Kong' Throne, was modeled on the carved wooden lacquered Kong Throne from the reign of King Rama I. It was used by the King during a royal barge procession, and also during the coronation ceremony of King Mongkut, Rama IV, as well as King Chulalongkorn, Rama V.

The next exemplar is the model of royal barges, such as the *Mongkol Suban* royal barge based on the original *Mongkol Suban* royal barge of the third reign. Another one is the model of the *Sri Prapasorachai* royal barge created by artisans of the Sirikit Institute that has a hull and keel made of gilded silver. The ribs are made of gilded carved wood, while the bulwarks are made of gold niello, painted with a puttan floral motif. The bow is decorated in the shape of the mythical Haera, or half naga, half crocodile, covered in gold lacquer. The stern is decorated with carved gold and coloured enamel. In the midst of the royal barge stands a *busabok* throne of gold and diamonds, with coloured enamel. The model of the *Sri Prapasorachai* royal barge was based on the original royal barge built during the reign of King Rama I, but which was destroyed by bombs during World War II, leaving only the bow which has been preserved at the National Museum Bangkok.

Apart from this, many crafted works are made by replicating scenes from famous literature. The exemplars show full-furnished scenes embroidered with famous motifs in Thai court literature, both conventional types and new ones. There are novelistic creations changing from mural paintings to miniature handicrafts. For example, the embroidered screen on the theme of 'Inao' combines the technique of padding parts

of the pattern such as the lead characters, for added depth, followed by the use of sequins, a technique that was very popular during the fifth reign. A total of 18 popular episodes have been portrayed, with images of a palace, the shrine on Mount Vilitsamara, a royal procession, flora and fauna, rivers and streams. The top and Bottom center borders feature the Garuda and the royal crown in tribute to King Rama II, while the 80th birthday anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen is symbolized by images of colourful swans set against floral vines. The next example is the carved fretwork teakwood panel on the theme of Sang Thong. The exquisite skill is unique in its ability to string together the scenes from both sides of the panel. It depicts scenes from the poetic narrative '*Sangthong*', the literary creation of King Rama II, starting with Nang Chan, Phra Sang's mother, carving a squash, to the scene where Rojana drops the garland, the polo match, the unmasking of Phra Sang and the return to the city. The stunning carved fretwork wood panel has immense depth and dimension, and amazingly links to scenes on the other side of the panel. The human images within the panels are lifelike, while the frames show intertwined naga serpents to mark the Year of the Dragon. Lifelike sculptures of Chao Ngor and Rojana adorn either side of the panel. The scene such as the '*The Surindhorn Sura Apsaras screen*' painted a scene as described on another embroidered curtain that hangs in the living room of *Nang Wanthong* as described; '*The Surindhorn Sura Apsaras screen* has a gilded base of gold leaf on which is painted a scene as described on another embroidered curtain that hangs in the living room of Nang Wanthong, the heroine of the folktale 'Khun Chang – Khun Phaen'. It depicts the god Indra leading an entourage of beautiful and elegantly clad Apsaras or angles to explore the universe'.<sup>[225]</sup>

Creatures in mythical scenes are used, such as the mythical animals, plants of the Himavan, the sacred mountain of Kailash, as described:

All the mythical animals of the Himavan are on display, from the garuda, naga and kinorn, or half man half bird. Plants from the mythical forest are abundant,

as are the deities and their courtiers, the demons, the treasure troves and the sacred mountain of Kailash, the abode of Shiva. The borders of the panels are the same as the other side with the intertwined naga serpents, but the sculptures are of the mythical male winged Kinorn and female Kinaree.<sup>[225]</sup>

Different techniques may co-exist in one work, such as the gold niello screen on the theme of 'Ramakien' and the 'novel style' of exotic plant figures. The outstanding technique is that of the skill in embossing silver, then decorate with gold paint and silver niello for depth and dimension. Next, an exquisite embroidered screen in the traditional style of embroidery incorporates materials made from strips of beaten silver and gold interspersed with the finest of multi-colored silk threads and strands of silver and gold threads as well as brilliant and crystal drops. The '*Himavan Forest*' design was most popular during the reign of King Rama V as described in the *Khun Chang – Khun Phaen* folktale recounting the gorgeous hanging curtain in the living room embroidered by the heroine, Nang Wanthong.

Buddhist motifs, such as the footprints of the Lord Buddha, also are employed in the handicrafts. This is also a novel idea to use the footprints of the Lord Buddha in miniature handicrafts as excerpted: This handiwork (...) takes pride of place in front of the tiered platform that ensconces the Emerald Buddha in the Busabok Pavilion in the Ordination Hall of the Chapel Royal of the Grand Palace. It was crafted to pay homage to the Emerald Buddha on the occasion of His Majesty the King's Fifth Cycle Birthday Anniversary on December 5, 1987.<sup>[225]</sup>



Figure 6

A novel idea to use the footprints  
of the Lord Buddha in miniature handicrafts<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, the shape of the pagoda '*Phoom Khao Binh rice motif*' also has been used as in the gold nielloware bowl interspersed with the 108 auspicious symbols. The bowl is placed on top of a circular platform that is held aloft by mythical nagas or serpents. It was crafted on the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's Fifth Cycle Birthday Anniversary in 1992, as well as to pay homage to the Emerald Buddha. Following traditional concepts of creation, the art work was also made to glorify the great kindness of their Majesties the King and Queen who have dedicated their lives to improving the well-being of farmers, as in poem '*Arts of the Kingdom*' on Gold Khram Damascene. The poem was written in a script resembling that of Prince Naris, and decorated with gold khram damascene inlay, combining literary artistry with traditional Thai craftsmanship.

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<sup>38</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.artsofthekingdom.com/th/index.php>



Figure 7

Woven lipao vines and a beetle wing collage decorated in contemporary style<sup>39</sup>

Lastly, some pieces in contemporary style have been made from *'traditional'* concepts but using new form and materials. For example, some pieces were uniquely made for the king and the queen of the 9<sup>th</sup> reign. Such styles are from materials and motifs initiated in this reign, such as woven *lipao*, using swan figures as appears in the walls, decorated with panels of woven lipao vines decorated with a beetle wing collage. The swan and the naga chandelier is decorated with a beetle wing collage and crystal. The screen is made of carved wood enhanced with woven lipao vines with a beetle wing collage. The focus of the room is the portrait of Their Majesties the King and Queen in a gold niello frame in traditional, as well as swan, motifs. Above the frames are the royal emblems of Their Majesties topped by the royal crown. The materials used in these art works the mixing of silk, wood, diamond, silver, gold with supreme skill.

<sup>39</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.artsofthekingdom.com/th/index.php>



- Thai Textiles in the Museum of Thai Textiles at the Grand Palace

The best examples of Thai fabric beauty have been recently showcased in the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles located inside the Grand Palace. Interestingly, this exhibition shows the turning point of traditional Thai clothing fashion from the court to official nation clothing of Thai women in the country. The promotion of TAT cited:

...exhibitions telling the story of how Her Majesty Queen Sirikit has helped turn Thai silk from local handicraft into a symbol of Thailand, through her SUPPORT Foundation founded in 1976, to celebrate the occasion of her 80th birthday. Highlights are HM Queen Sirikit's personal collection of dresses designed and tailored from Thai textiles by international and local designers...<sup>[226]</sup>

Before the SUPPORT foundation was officially established in the 1970s, Thailand had just celebrated 'a *monarchical revival that rejuvenated symbols and rituals*'.<sup>[227]</sup> For that reason, conventional ceremonies were revitalized and national dresses were made. In addition, there was another reason causing national dresses to be created. In the 1960s, the tour of Europe and the US launched by King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit led the project to seek 'fashionable' dresses, but keep a 'traditional Thai' essence. From the official website of the museum, the historical background of fabric design reveals that the purpose of the designing process was to establish the uniqueness of the national clothing to surpass former typical dresses in style in order to mark the iconic Thai fabric fashion on the world stage. Historically, '*Unlike other countries Thailand did not have a distinct national dress, though as with many countries since the mid 19th century, royal court dress was becoming steadily westernized*'.<sup>[228]</sup> The process to beautify the novel look was initially from working with a team of Thai designers, together with Parisian designer *Pierre Balmian*, and researching the body of knowledge of royal textiles from the surviving fabrics and photographs of court ladies from the 1850s to 1925. Then, in the late 1950s, the team

created a collection of three dresses based upon the wrapped and draped style that Thai women traditionally wore, but constructed them according to modern Western tailoring. Such creations personified the traditions and craftsmanship of Thailand using hand-woven Thai silk in brocade, patterned and embroidered styles. To describe how such blended style were made to look fabulous, the study will pick the eight styles of royal favor to explain how such characteristics were formed. The titles of the traditional Thai dresses are: *Thai Chakri*, *Thai Siwalai*, *Thai Chakraphad*, *Thai Chitralada*, *Thai Boromphiman*, *Thai Dusit*, *Thai Amarin* and *Ruen-ton*. These styles were designed by adapting former Thai women dress to new concepts of wearing<sup>[229]</sup>. There are three designs for '*Pha Sin*' and five designs for '*Na Nang*' costumes. The decorations were made by weaving and brocading with gold lace on the skirt, breast cloth, and embroidered breast, using traditional Thai techniques of folding and twisting to wrap a 'Thai skirt'. Silk fabric was embroidered with gold lace and pearls. To make this clothing suitable for moving, cutting out techniques, along with zippers and buttons, were matched to the blouses. The attractiveness of Thai national women dresses is in the embroidered textiles. Apart from the iconic dresses, as mentioned, there is more casual and official clothing that shows an international Thai look made of silk mud-mi, integrated with embroidering techniques, a design made by Western designers.

In 'Gallery 1' of the museum, there is artistry in silk showcasing the royal style of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit<sup>40</sup>. The designs of this attire uses hand-woven textiles from different regions of Thailand, cut in Western styles, such as an evening dress or ball gown decorated with embroidering technique using Western accessories, such as feathers. However, they were made using Thai color style, golden, and deep blue, red,

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<sup>40</sup> See also in visitor's guides produced by Museum of Textiles.

green and brown. In summarize, the term 'Exotic Thai Arts' has been represented as a part of Oriental Art, but with the uniqueness of Thai Art because of the influences from ancient civilizations in the Orient: the Khmer Civilization, Persian Civilization, Chinese Civilization, and Indian Civilization. Although represented as Rattanakosin civilization since it was created in the Rattanakosin period, the representation draws back to former concepts and art techniques originated in such kingdoms. Focusing on the influence from Thai Kingdoms, Ayutthaya civilization has been represented as being influential on the court art of the Rattanakosin period. In summary, the iconic masterpieces produced in the Rattanakosin court have outstanding characteristics in that they show the continuing development by a conventional lens and integration with different cultural art influences. The oldest root of ancient civilization represented here is the golden culture that spread to all the regions of Southeast Asia and formed a symbolic system. Bangkok high culture, in this regard, was derived such a concept from Ayutthaya to create court arts as in the iconic royal barges, royal regalia and Buddhist cabinets. The representation also portrays the advancement of cultural art of the recent Rattanakosin court from masterpieces produced under the support of Queen Sirikit's foundation as in her personal dresses in classic Thai styles and modern Thai styles and gold handicrafts exhibited in 'Arts of the Kingdom' at Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall. The characteristics of 'Exotic Thai' represented by court handicrafts showcased in palace museums have attractiveness because of the spectacular appearance. Such identity was produced to showcase their extreme expression, especially by golden adornment with refined decoration. The representation also portrays the relationship between 'Thai beauty' of handicrafts and state ceremonies; royal barges and royal processions, khon masks and khon performance, the Emerald Buddha's attire and the Buddhist ceremony for changing the attire in three seasons, royal vehicles and funeral ceremonies, and royal

embroidered robes and headdresses for auspicious occasions. Such relationships reflect the role of royal regalia and Buddhist handicrafts in that the golden decorations emphasize the sacred practices of the kings, and their symbolic figures and classes of different degrees of expression also signify different statuses.

Focusing on how the iconic items were created, the representation portrays influences from Ayutthaya court arts from the reign of King Narai, the golden age of Ayutthaya civilization, as in royal barges; influence of Chinese puppets, but surpassed by beautiful clothes as for the Thai puppets archived in the National Museum. As they have been continually developed, they are uniquely different from mass produced products, modern products, and those of other tourist cities even in Southeast Asia region because there are no other cities that have prolonged the status of a 'Buddhist city' and a 'royal city' through time similar to Thailand.

c. The relationship of palace museums and collections of royal regalia: The representation of civilization complexes of the Rattanakosin period

Palace museums have been managed according to conventional concept as King Rama IV, King Rama V and King Rama VI paved the way in collecting, presenting and searching for Thai heritage. Large numbers of collections from the recent reign have been handed down from that period. The characteristics of the architecture of buildings and museum collections, or exotic arts, symbolically represent Thai civilization originally archived and created in the court. In Bangkok tourist space, there are certain criteria marking hierarchy and ordinary/local tourist spaces. Craft works are located in palace museums, modern art is in modern galleries, high arts heritage is in palace museums, and folk arts heritage is in local temples and village museums.

This topic will analyze the representation of places and collections as evidence of Rattanakosin civilization. It can be seen that the representation of palace museums and collections of royal regalia has managed to present cultural significance. As

explained, palace museums and royal regalia have the characteristics of hierarchy. The relationship between palace museums and collections portrays images of Bangkok society – the wealthy, powerful, and peaceful Thai kingdoms, and elites' artistic taste of that time. For this reason, the characteristics of such relationship that has portrayed 'Civilized Bangkok' are a complex of civilized symbols.

The first group is traditional palace museums, Buddhist and royal arts collections

The representation of the architecture of the buildings of palace museums highlights the characteristics of such creations as factors influencing the transformation of sacred space to public space. As described in the previous topic, palace museums at the National Museum and the Grand Palace have unique architectural characteristics. There are two palace museums in this group: the National Museum and Wat Phra Kaeo Museum in the Grand Palace.

*The National Museum and traditional Thai high arts collection:* this palace complex is the oldest and biggest museum in Southeast Asia. Containing not only Buddhist heritage, as described in Chapter 3, there is a large amount of heritage of Thai kingdoms and ancient heritage of the Southeast Asia region and European, such as the ancient Roman lamp from Alexandria. The National Museum complex consists of five traditional Thai pavilions: Siwamokphiman Hall, Bhuddhaisawan Chapel, Issarawinitchai Hall, Issaretracha Nusorn Residence, the Prapas Phiphittaphan Building, and the Maha Surasinghanat Building. Each one was constructed and reconstructed through time in order to house 10 collections, as cited in the 'Shining of Art'. The 10 collection rooms in the National Museum include:

Thaksin Bhimuk Hall- Theatre Arts and Games Collection

Wasantaphiman- Ceramic Collection and Ivory Collection

Wayusathan Amares Hall- Royal Regalia Gold Treasures and precious Objects Collection

Prisadang Bhimuk Hall- Old weapons collection

Pachima Bhimuk Hall- Mother of Pearl Inlay Collection

The Eastern Mukdet Hall- Wood carving collection

Phrommet Thada Hall- Costumes and Textiles Collection

Burapha Bhimuk Hall- Musical Instrument Collection

Bhimuk Monthian Hall- Old Transportation Gallery

The Muk Krasan Hall- Precious Objects collection

These collections have been promoted as 'real Thai heritage': *'As the capital of Thailand for over two centuries, Bangkok has numerous attractions for visitors. Of these, the museums exhibiting real Thai cultural heritage from the past to now, stand out as interesting places to visit.'*<sup>[230]</sup> The National Museum has distinct historical significance as old palaces of the royal Rattanakosin families, national significance as a place for archiving heritage, and artistic and aesthetic significance for the iconic Buddhaisawan pavilion and more.

Next is the Temple of the Emerald Buddha Museum and royal regalia collections. The representation of Wat Phra Kaeo as a part of the Grand Palace complex and archived collections inside this museum portray an image of an old civilized kingdom. Such a picture has been constructed through the representation of accessories and ornaments of the Emerald Buddha and personal royal regalia. Interesting, although the complexes of Wang Na at the National Museum and Wat Phra Kaeo Museum both represent the most precious and 'real Thai' heritage, there are distinctive characteristics in the civilized symbols constructed through each place and collection. The Grand Palace complex has been managed as the highest sacred space

of the 'Buddhist Kingdom' because of the Buddhist ornamentation for the Emerald Buddha and gold attire of the Emerald Buddha. This is slightly different from the National Museum collections in that such collections present the evolution of Thai kingdoms and categorize significant heritage that marks how the civilization of Thailand as a part of Southeast Asia has developed and been constructed based on fine arts.

The second group is 'Thai-European' classic styles

There are two significant palaces of the turning period from 'Old Siam' to 'Modern Siam' comprising Vimanmek Palace and the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall. They were built on King Chulalongkorn's command in order to establish a new city outside Rattanakosin Island.

*Vimanmek Palace Museum and King Rama V's personal collections:* As explained previously, this teakwood palace museum is the prime exemplar of classic Southeast Asian-European architecture in the region, as Bangkok is the only Southeast Asia city where popular and treasured teakwood was successfully used to build the biggest size and in a creative way. The representation of the cultural significances of the collection of art objects also conveys wealth and national economic stability, the noble taste of King Chulalongkorn, and the relationship of Thai and foreign countries. The promotion in a tourist guide cited that *'the museum contains the original furnishings, and many of King Rama V's personal belongings are also on display, including silverware, ceramics and decorative items crafted from ivory.'*<sup>[221]</sup>

From such characteristics of palaces and collections, the image of Bangkok at that time was as the foremost Southeast Asia city that embraced European fashions and Asian artistic taste.

*Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall and the epitome of royal taste of the time:* the representation of 'Thai-classics' of Rattanakosin fine arts has been portrayed through the identities of palace architecture and collections. The architectural uniqueness of

the building was created to present the status of Siam and Bangkok as a civilized nation. This also marked the wealth, independence, and progressive development of the country during the colonial period.

'The Italian Renaissance architectural style was originated from the interest of the architects in the work of the Greek and Roman artists. The dome-roof style was more popular than the pointed roof or tower. The design of Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall is similar to the style of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome which is regarded as the finest building of the Renaissance period. The ceiling consists of the arches linking the tops of pillars on both sides. The top of the marble pillars are decorated with leaves in the Greek Corinthian style.<sup>[144]</sup>

In the recent reign, this building has been managed to archive the recent 'Rattanakosin classic arts'. Such masterpieces are well-matched and contrast two different artistic styles, as well as presents how Bangkok has maintain the status of a 'civilized complex' through art production.

The last group is private palace museums. *Suan Pakkad Palace Museum and private collection of their Royal Highnesses Prince and Princess Chumbhot of Nagara Svarga*: this private palace is representative of a museum of Thai elites in Bangkok and Thailand with a large number of artifacts from around the country, and where the only one masterpiece of its kind of from Ayutthaya has been preserved. For this reason, the image of 'civilized Bangkok' has been extended from a formal national museum to a personal Thai heritage museum. There are many masterpieces including a khon masks collection, the lacquer pavilion, gold-and-black lacquer manuscript cabinets, and ceremonial vehicles, as cited in an article 'A palace of Memories', by William Warren.<sup>[231]</sup>, and in many official tourist guides as excerpted,

A set of masterpieces, including a khon museum in the traditional Thai house no. 7, 'Khon masks, part of costumes worn to resemble the dress of, in this case, celestial beings'<sup>[232]</sup>, 'a dazzling collection of paper mache masks used in khon'<sup>[233]</sup>,



‘Several were later added to this to house a growing assortment of rare items. Some were heirlooms belonging to Prince Chumbhot’s family, such as gold-and- black lacquer manuscript cabinets, ceremonial vessels exquisitely decorated with inlaid mother-of-pearl designs,...<sup>[234]</sup> etc.; ‘Yet the jewel of Suan Pakkad remains the Lacquer Pavilion. Formerly consisting of two separate structures-a ho trai or library for storing Buddhist manuscripts and a ho kien or room with painting murals...’<sup>[235]</sup> ‘almost all of the original design had disappeared but was repaired according to the old design. This is the only building of its type which still remains in Thailand.’<sup>[144]</sup> This place also represents the status of a center of traditional Thai heritage archived as cited, ‘Every room in Suan Pakkad is home to artifacts from all over the country’<sup>[145]</sup>.

In conclusion, the complexes of Rattanakosin civilization represented from the relationship between palace museums and traditional Thai fine arts collection is that of an old ‘Oriental’ civilization in the Asian and Southeast Asia region influenced by the cultural significance of Rattanakosin civilization. The creation of fine arts has been cultivated in a Bangkok social context, which in this term has focused on a ‘Buddhist City’ and a ‘Royal City’ of Thai kingdoms. For that reason, the outstanding identities of palace museums and collections convey the characteristics of Buddhist arts and royal regalia which also portray the continuing status of Bangkok as the center of Buddhist and royal cities of the country.

#### 4.3.1.2 The representation of royal barges in museums and ceremonies:

##### ‘Exotic golden fantasy’ as a spectacle attraction

Apart from the fine crafted royal barges in the Royal Barge Museum, a strong point of Bangkok tourism is the royal barge procession because of the characteristics of a spectacle of barges and the Buddhist exotic city scene, as explained in Chapter 3.



Figure 8

The spectacle scene of Royal Barges, the Grand Palace and the Chao Phraya River<sup>41</sup>

As they were created to glorify the power of the kings and as a royal navy troupe, the characteristics of royal barges and the procession have been symbolized systematically. 'River of Kings'<sup>[219]</sup>, a tourist guide explained: 'Crafted centuries ago since the first reign, the royal barges were for important royal or religious occasions. Each barge is carved from a huge piece of teak with prows carved into mythical creatures of the Ramayana epic. They are gilded in gold and intricately decorated with tiny shimmering pieces of glass'. The analysis is further described in '*Proud to be Thai*'. There are many types of barges, decoration styles, and materials used for the ornamentation.<sup>[236]</sup>

In the recent reign, King Rama IX has preserved old concepts and styles of creation that appeared in the former reigns, but some details have been changed to suit recent time, such as to arrange the procession similar to King Narai of Ayutthaya period's, but King Bhumibol cut off the trailing barges, the characteristics of animal head's figure were copied to carve work and suitable for the rank of passenger/sitter including Hongsas, Garuda, and Naga. Such features convey the concept of the king's

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<sup>41</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.welovebooking.net/th/systems/view/34/>

greatest power, from the great royal troop. It could be noticed that the decorations also portray a war scene in Hindu mythology, such as the figure of the iconic *Narai Songsuban* royal barge that replicates a fighting scene between Naraya riding Garuda to tear the Naga into two parts.<sup>[237]</sup> The procession is also interesting as its movement is controlled by traditional Thai poems, the red color of oarsmen dresses contrasts with the glittering golden barges, the details of the curtain decorated in traditional Thai style, the head of the oarsmen both in front and back sides fully dressed with different green and blue clothes, and the front of *hongsa* is attaching the white yak hair arranged in layers. The beauty of the royal barge procession is from the arrangement of the procession, the movement that shows both song and rhythm, clothing and barge colors, shape of components in proper design, and the finest craftsmanship. The beauty as mentioned is guaranteed as the iconic *Suphannahong* royal barge received the world ship trust maritime heritage (เหรียญรางวัลมรดกทางทะเลขององค์การเรือโลก) from United Kingdom in year 1992 because of its beautiful crafted work. In connection with Buddhist practice, this royal ceremony has integrated the concept of Buddhism and Hinduism. To describe such details, the study has selected pictures published in 'Sawasdee' magazine in 2000 showing 12 selected barges with special characteristics, each barge described by Thai poets. In particular, the head was taken from Hindu mythology. In this regard, the procession, figureheads, and story from Hindu mythology have been employed to celebrate the great Buddhist *kathin* ceremony, a time for the laity to express gratitude to monks. Here are the details:

The Asura Wayuphak (The Bird-Ogre Wayuphak) Barge

Equal in rank to the Asura Paksi

Paddles rising like winged birds

Joyously climbing the skies

From the royal barge song by Commander Thongyoi Saengsinchai of the Royal Thai Navy, written for the Kathin Robe presentation by His Majesty the King at Wat

Arun.<sup>[238]</sup> Historically, in the Ayutthaya period, as the geography of the kingdom was in a basin, many riverine traditions were cultivated and then were set as royal convention in order to be cherished by the people who mostly were agricultural farmers. The significant one was the royal barge procession that was officially enacted in monarch law. In the reign of King Narai of Ayutthaya, there is evidence that the royal barge procession was first set. The revival of old traditions and ceremonies in the reign of King Rama IX includes the Ploughing Ceremony and the '*Kathin*' Ceremony by the royal barge procession, restored after the end of absolute monarchy in 1932. This historical background was also narrated in '*Bangkok's Guide to the river and canal*'<sup>[239]</sup>. Knowingly, the renewal of the royal barge procession has become one of the most outstanding iconic traditional ceremonies of the nation, at least since the early period of TOT promotion as explained in *Chapter 2*. Its function in this process is mainly for royal vehicles to pay homage to the Buddha in a *kathin* ceremony and indirectly to show foreign visitors the glory of the Thai nation. During the reign of King Rama IX former royal barges have been created and renovated, such as the royal state barges of *Narai Song Suban* of the Ninth Reign and the *Anekjatibhujonga* (อเนกชาติภูษงค์) bearing royal *kathin* robes for the monks. In terms of symbolization through practice formation, the royal barge processions have employed many Buddhism and Hinduism symbols to form this ceremony.

The relationship of Wat Arun, royal barges, and the Chao Phraya River is represented in one picture with the characteristics of the epitome of '*Thai beauty*', '*Buddhist faith*', and Thai riverine culture as the outstanding component. The management of such a practice is also important as this procession is open for public viewing. '*Sawasdee*' magazine described that '*The flotilla will assemble at 17.00 hrs. The principle barge will be positioned at the Rama VIII Bridge section of the Chao Phraya River. The royal barge procession will depart from Wasukri Pier and cruise 4.5 kilometres downriver to Wat Arun — Temple of Dawn*'.<sup>[136]</sup> Such a procession passes and stops at two historic sites, *Wasukri Pier* and *Wat Arun* as in the past. *Wat Arun* is the destination, with each barge functioning as the carrier of a Buddha image,

Buddhist monks, or Buddhist scriptures, as cited: *'The Barge Suphannahong carried an image of the Lord Buddha; the Anantanakaraj carried the Holy Scripture; and the Royal Escort Barge Anekkochatbhuchong carried a group of Buddhist monks. And now we have another Royal Barge Procession June 12th. Don't miss it.'*<sup>[136]</sup> As well, there are monastic robes and elaborate floral offerings for the monks at Wat Arun for the King's Kathin Ceremony.

#### 4.3.1.3 The representation of Khon under royal patronage performance: The remaining ancient Southeast Asian performance in Bangkok

Bangkok is the only city in Southeast Asia where there are many 'khon' (โขน) performances performed in national and private theatres. The original art of khon arts has been preserved in the recent Rattanakosin court. Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand where traditional khon performances are still practiced to glorify the King in special occasions, but which have been changed in performing time and occasions to attract visitors. Although traditional khon performances are not the most famous attraction for foreign visitors, similar to contemporary Thai shows (will be elaborated then), the representation of fine arts in this context has been selected to showcase Rattanakosin civilization reflected by khon adornment, khon masks and clothing. Such components are outstanding identities causing this traditional performance of Thailand to differ from the *'Monkey dance' of Cambodia*<sup>[240]</sup> and *'the Yamazat - a Myanmar version of the Ramayana epic'*.<sup>[240]</sup> Formerly, in the court of Ayutthaya *'...dance and dance-drama, both khon luang and lakhon luang, were forms of tribute to the divine kingship, and hence excluded commoners and other members of the nobility. They were created to assure the king's position as the sole, absolute god-like.'*<sup>[241]</sup> Such concepts were adopted from the Hindu system of deva-raja which defined the king and placed him above the common people. To glorify his god-like position and especially the success and prosperity of the kings, the main scenes selected to be performed were war scenes in order to personify the kings as *Rama*, one who had strong control

over the military. *Khon* performance in the Rattanakosin period was derived from the concept as mentioned from Ayutthaya, and the practices were developed, particularly the characteristics of beauty, with unsurpassed technique in the reign of King Rama IX. Generally, the performance was set only for the court, or a royal reception. In the recent times of Bangkok touristization, there are many *khon* shows supported by the Fine Arts Department and of Queen Sirikit's project, *'The Foundation For the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen'*. This section will select data sources from royal Thai dramas practiced under royal patronage, occasionally performed on special days and events in the National Theatre and Sala Chalemkrung to analyze the characteristics of *khon* dance, particularly the beauty of clothing, ornament, crafted work, and dancing.

The selected tourist guides cited that this performance is the *'national dance'* with highly beautified expression. For example, *'Saneh Bangkok'* <sup>[242]</sup> stated: *'Khon initiated as a royal art since the Ayutthaya period, now apart from being staged on the country's special occasions, this masterly art can be enjoyed easier at the following venues'*. *Khon's* story and beauty are explained as: *'the marvelous Thai performing art –Khon or the classical masked dance-drama usually based on tales from the Ramayana epic. Visually stunning, Khon, in which performers wear extremely ornate costumes with masks and move in a rhythmical, puppet-like fashion, is highly recommended'*; or as stated:

Attraction Details.<sup>[243]</sup> Experience the haute-beauty of *Khon*, the traditional Thai classical masked dance based on the Ramayana Epic, at one of the oldest yet most legendary theatre, Sala Chalemkrung. *Khon* was originally limited to the royal court and is now regarded as one of the finest performances that involve lavish costumes, well-trained dancers and live Thai music.

The beauty of *khon* is its exquisiteness, as explanation in the publications of official organizations, as follows. The art of performance comprising dance and 'battle songs'<sup>[244]</sup> that make up *khon* performances have the outstanding characteristics of being 'high art'. The significant components of the performance are their 'movements' called *khon dance* which was designed to represent the power of the troops. The dance also moves simultaneously with the rhythm of traditional Thai musical instruments and weapon dancing. The art of painting and decoration are also interesting. Since the late Ayutthaya period, *khon masks* have been highly furnished as this was a significant component of dressing that showed different types of characters, emotions, and classes of performers. The decoration and painting of mask has many techniques which could be summarized as follows. As there are numerous characters that perform, '*khon masks*' are classified by the following types. They are categorized by the characteristics of the faces, such as '*manlike*' and '*deva-like*' faces. The face parts of both humans and deva are drawn similar to general human beings. To make the faces convey emotion, the painter will draw curved lines on the mouth and eyes. Next, the face of non-humans specially emphasizes their anger as the outstanding characteristic. The face of monkeys and other animals will be created superbly, more beautiful than real animals by imitating the facial features and beautifying with different colors and lines. The characteristics of the faces may be classified by headdresses which copies the king's headdresses. *Khon masks* also are differentiated by mixing five basic colors in order to increase the numbers of faces and types of headdresses. Each part of the face, such as the eyes and mouth, are drawn differently for different characters. The art of body and clothing decoration can be categorized into two groups, *body adornment* and *fabric adornment*. The body adornment is made by many techniques, similarly to other court arts. The materials used are gold, copper, and nickel. The characteristics of adornment have been

replicated from antique gold jewelry, mostly decorated in the early Rattanakosin style, the famous line in King Rama III's reign. The adornment of fabric and clothing is comprised of different clothing characteristics. The colors of the clothing are designed to suit the character types, similarly decorated by 'glittering' material, silk, beads, and wings of green jewel beetle that are selected to beautify the clothing of the different characters.

As detailed above, the representation of iconic Rattanakosin court arts in palace museums, national theatres and national ceremonies highlight the epitome of 'Thai beauty' as produced in Rattanakosin courts through time. This is especially so for the production of court arts of the recent reign under the support of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit, as in the promotion of the Royal Barge Museum and the royal barge procession, khon performances and the exhibition of 'Arts of the Kingdom'. The promotion of the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign portrayed Bangkok cultural images based on these attractions as there have been many celebrations and special occasions conducted. The reflection of Bangkok society and culture, in this context, emphasized the characteristics of a 'Buddhist kingdom' and the 'Royal Kingdom' of Thailand that resulted in large numbers of precious fine arts that have been revitalized and preserved. There has also been unsurpassed court culture in this reign which evidences the advancement of Rattanakosin civilization from former Thai civilization and old civilization of the region, especially in the aspects of decoration techniques which developed and integrated traditional practices for novel creations. The most outstanding and attractive has been the court arts decorated with golden and glittering materials. To highlight the status of Bangkok as a mega metropolis where an ancient civilization of Southeast Asia still exists, the image of 'gold' royal regalia and Buddhist arts has been selected to be representative of such status. Next, the characteristics of 'civilized complexes' are also an outstanding image of Bangkok as an 'exotic city' as appears in the representations of 'palace museums and collections'. The outcome of



the fine arts created from such complexes reveals that Rattanakosin civilization, in this context, has been 'the achievement of authentic Thai' creation through time. There is a certain pattern and concept to the creation of court arts. The outstanding characteristics are the handing down of old concepts of royal glorification and Buddhist dedication, the use of gold as the prominent material, the imitation of Thai kanok motifs in various types of fine arts, the imitation of masterpieces of Thai literature of the Rattanakosin courts in handicrafts, and the selection of local sources, such as wood and silk, integrated with various materials.

#### 4.3.2 'Nithatrattanakosin' (นิทรรศรัตนโกสินทร์): The integration of Rattanakosin cultural arts exhibited as Thai civilization

As cultural images of Bangkok represent an independent 'Buddhist City' and 'Royal City', the characteristics of palace museums, national museums and collections have been managed to represent these two outstanding statuses. Nithatrattanakosin was established to portray Rattanakosin civilization based on these two images, but with different modern presentation techniques, the gathering of relevant cultures of local Bangkokians and influences from globalization through the Bangkok period. In a wider scope, Nithatrattanakosin has different characteristics of collection and presented motifs from other Southeast Asian contemporary state museums, particularly in the aspects of the '*longest royal city*', a '*highly developed Buddhist society*', and an '*independent state*' that has effectively selected and integrated Rattanakosin culture in a progressive way.<sup>[245]</sup>

The representation of 'Civilized Bangkok', in this context, has been constructed from the presentation of Rattanakosin civilization in a museum. Focusing on the roles of Rattanakosin exotic arts as integrated sources, the data sources reveal that there has been an integration of presentation techniques that has intensified the uniqueness of Bangkok cultural arts, an integration of iconic Thai art motifs based on cultural

significance and an integration of the cultural significance of museum locations to other historic sites on Ratchadamneon Avenue, as will be analyzed. With respect to the representation based on location, there is the representation of an 'Exotic City' where historical buildings and surrounded places are conjoined. As explained in the museum's historical background, a reason to establish this museum at that location was to mark the gate of Rattanakosin Island where Rattanakosin history and iconic attractions are gathered. The outstanding identities of location are represented based on the significance of the co-existing sites between the Nithatrattanakosin building and extended land marks, such as the Loha Prasat and Golden Mount, '*Maha Jetsada Bodin*' Pavilion (พลับพลามหาเจษฎาบดินทร์) located next to the museum building, as well as Ratchadamneon Avenue, a historic road that leads to the center of Thai kingdom civilization at the Grand Palace and Sanam Luang. As Nithatrattanakosin is a new landmark officially opened in 2010, the representation of the historic route, in this context, portrays images of the city of Bangkok from 'traditional Bangkok' to 'Modern Bangkok', from Rattanakosin traditional state temples, the Grand Palace complex to the creation of 'Modern Siam' in King Rama V's reign with a Champs Elysees model, to the beginning of Thai democracy and construction of Ratchadamneon buildings following a French architecture model and the Democracy Monument created after the end of absolute monarchy. In the period of 'Amazing Thailand', the establishment of Nithatrattanakosin aimed to attract visitors from the outside scenery and the inside performing arts. There are twelve groups of 'Rattanakosin stories' in Nitat Rattanakosin, including Time Machine: City Creation, the relationship between Bangkok/Siam and foreign countries; the 12-old-communities in Rattanakosin Island: the uniqueness of each community; Bangkok, the heart of Thailand: the Chakri Dynasty and the creation of the city after the collapsed of Ayutthaya; the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha: the symbol of

'civilization' of Thailand; Traditional Thai Entertainment on special occasions; the Great Kings of Thailand: King Rama I to King Rama IX; on the 3rd floor, the beautiful scenery of Rattanakosin Island from the top of 'Wat Ratchanatda'; the tourist attractions in Rattanakosin Island exhibited in the museum: architecture, parks, museums, food, shopping areas, 'nightlife'; the sightseeing room: the great architecture from an 'unseen' view; the Great Royal Ceremonies: the renovation of old traditional ceremonies in this reign; the evolution of 'Wang, Wat and Ban': the adaptation and influences from China and the West; and the evolution of 'Bangkokian' lifestyle: from floating houses to the present day living. Such categorized details have been colorized by presentation techniques based on an interactive self-learning process. This source of methods contains presentation media, models, and four-dimension virtual multimedia, multi-touch media, and multi-media animation. These techniques lead visitors to explore Bangkok from a multisensory approach, including watching, touching and hearing. Remarkably, there are many iconic exotic arts presented on Rattanakosin civilization since the presentation techniques help elaborate the outstanding identities of the cultural arts.<sup>[246]</sup> The integration of techniques and fine arts in this context is presented differently from conventional Thai museums, especially, 'Buddhist arts' and 'royal arts'.

The replication of the royal architecture of the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha showcases 'the prestige of the Kingdom', 'the history of the Emerald Buddha' presented to narrate Phra Kaeo Morakot's stories and showcase the three-season attire, the presentation of 'renowned ceremonies' restored in the reign of King Bhumibol, including the royal barge procession, royal ploughing ceremony and traditional Thai beliefs such as 'White Elephant' ceremony, and remarkable entertainment, including khon dance, Ramakien animation, and royal puppet performance. The presentation techniques integrate the outstanding characteristics of Buddhist arts and royal arts that comprise the characteristics of both 'golden and

glittering' decoration and the circuit of each cultural arts. Such identities are presented in this context to show the zenith of Rattanakosin civilization in this reign. The presentation of the contents also focuses on the influences and relationship between 'visual arts' that have been created and developed in progressive ways, as in the royal barge procession that contains both the art of movement, crafted art works, Thai poem rhythms and singing, similar to the traditional Thao performances that integrate the art of movement, decorated art works and singing. Such components are integrated through presentation techniques and stimulate visitors' senses while exploring the exhibition rooms. The next integration is iconic 'Thai art motifs'. Since one of the purposes of the museum is to portray Rattanakosin civilization through the nine reigns, Bangkok cultural arts have been selected, including Buddhist culture, royal culture, Bangkok local culture, and globalized culture. In the 'Impressive Communities' room, local handicrafts showcase how 'local Thais' have produced folk arts, and how such products reflect the characteristics of a Bangkok Buddhist society as the main image. Such a picture has been constructed from many types of handicrafts and local products mostly produced for Buddhist activities, including Buddhist offerings, gold leaf, monk's alms-bowls, priest's waistband, Thai perfume, joss sticks, and palm books.

The next exhibition room is 'the Grandeur Rattanakosin'. The presentation focuses on the role of Buddhist kings to support, enrich and protect Buddhism and national Buddhist or Buddhism-Hinduism ceremonies. The characteristic of 'grandeur' is evidencing by inherited Buddhist culture since the Ayutthaya period. The historical background of the creation of the city of Bangkok has been portrayed through the explanation of its official title. The collections of civilized architecture are the Grand Palace, the enshrinement of the Emerald Buddha and the stories of Chao Wang, or court members. The consequences of such a role are reflected in the next room, 'Prestige of the Kingdom'. Iconic Grand Palace architecture and the Emerald Buddha's

accessories have been selected to present the characteristics of Thai esteem. The next room is 'Remarkable Entertainment'. The presentation highlights the status of Bangkok as the center of traditional Thai performances with support from the court. The term 'remarkable' has been used to present traditional performances of the Rattanakosin period, including both existing ones and others. The highlights are khon performances, puppet performance, and typical Thai dances (รำและระบำ) developed and created in the Bangkok period. The 'Renowned Ceremonies' exhibits royal ceremonies, including the city pillar celebration (พระราชพิธีสมโภชเสาพระหลักเมือง), white elephant celebration (พระราชพิธีรับและสมโภชช้างเผือก), royal coronation (พระราชพิธีบรมราชาภิเษก), royal marriage celebration (พระราชพิธีราชาภิเษกสมรส), the anniversary celebrations of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne (พระราชพิธีเฉลิมสิริราชสมบัติ), and ceremonies for Thai people, including the ploughing ceremony and Phra Siam Thevathirat ceremony (พระราชพิธีบวงสรวงพระสยามเทวาธิราช). Nithatrattanakosin Museum's presentation concept is similar to that of the representation in iconic attractions in that it shows the status of Bangkok as the center of a continuing Buddhist and royal civilization. Significantly, this exhibition also aims to emphasize the status of Southeast Asian heritage of the modern period, of which, in this context, Bangkok is the only metropolis that has been able to preserve its old civilization of this region, as evidenced in many exhibitions, such as The 'Renowned Ceremonies' and 'Remarkable Entertainment' that portray traditional practices of the Rattanakosin period as parts of Southeast Asian civilization. Particularly in the 'Remarkably Entertainment' room, the exhibition explains how traditional Southeast Asian entertainment developed from 'ritual' to 'entertainment'. Next is 'Graceful Architecture', the evolution of Thai architecture is presented to portray how Rattanakosin architectural styles have developed through time.

The iconic buildings are the national museum complexes, Bangkhunphrom Palace, and buildings of each phase of the Bangkok period. In the 'Sight-Seeing Highlights' room, temples, palaces, parks, museums, markets and shopping areas are orderly set in a route to present the charming characteristics of the sites in Rattanakosin Island. The next room is 'the Colorful Thai way of living' from the traditional period to the present day. The last room is 'the Heart and Soul of the Nation'. There is a presentation of how the Thai nation has continuously developed in various aspects, including establishment of the dynasty, creation of the city, protecting wars, renovating the country and creating cultures. Along such a process of development, there has been the kings' benevolence and wisdom leading the Thai kingdom to be able to survive crucial obstacles and pave the way to a bright future. In such presentation, the concept of the great kings influenced by Buddhism is the prominent aspect. In conclusion, the exhibition of integrated Rattanakosin civilization in the Nithatrattanakosin Museum is representative of progressive heritage preservation that brings together traditional Thai fine art cultures presented through modern techniques. The integration shows how 'traditional' and 'modern' creation of cultural art exists in Bangkok tourist space, as well as the significance of 'Buddhist culture' and 'court culture', the representatives of Rattanakosin civilization that has colorized their identities in various ways.

**4.3.3 Contemporary Thai classical dances (นาฏยศิลป์ไทยร่วมสมัย) of Siam Niramit (สยามนิรมิต), Aksara Theatre (โรงละครอักษรา), and Joe Louis Theatre (โรงละครโจ หลุยส์): The representation of 'Exotic Thai' in Bangkok cultural shows**

The outstanding characteristics of 'Exotic Thai' promoting contemporary Thai performances in this context are from the aspect of spectacle. The strong points have been created by the characteristics of well-blended integration of 'traditional' and 'modern' performing arts. As Thai classical dances are managed to attract foreign

visitors,<sup>[247]</sup> the characteristics of classical Thai is changed or combined with modern techniques and art expression of cultural shows. These cultural shows are different from khon performances in times and occasions, the integration of modern stage performances techniques, selected stories, and music. Such trends will be considered, in this context, as evidence of Rattanakosin civilization in the modern period to show how Thai artists have developed and created contemporary Thai performances from court culture and the Fine Arts Department. The iconic classical dances presented on stage shows include khon, puppets, and regional Thai dancing, or local dances that were originally created by the court or developed by the Fine Arts Department.

Khon and puppet performances: Asian and Southeast Asian Shared Culture with unique characteristics

The transformation of times and occasions to perform, and the integration of modern presentation techniques, especially in khon and puppet shows can be considered as trends in tourism. Although these are shared culture, both in Southeast Asia – khon performances – and Asia – puppet theatres – in the traditional period and the recent tourism promotion, Bangkok khon and puppet performances have distinct characteristics of presented content and artistic expression because of the main influences from royal culture or Rattanakosin court culture, and Hindu-Buddhist beliefs.

The representation has highlighted the continuing development of contemporary Thai classical performances. Initially, there were two ancient performances promoted, 'khon' (โขน) and 'puppet'/ hun lakorn lek (หุ่นละครเล็ก). Khon performance, in this context, has been transformed from ritual to entertainment, and from court culture to tourist attraction. Khon developed from lakhon 'deukdamban' (ละครตีกต๋ำบรรพ์) and then was standardized to be royal culture by artistic decoration, copying royal clothing and

performing Thai Ramayana or Ramakien; the music and movement was also created to serve royal tastes. Differently, puppet theatre was developed outside the court, originally popular among noble men since the Sukhothai era. It copied the puppets of Hainan Island off the coast of China<sup>[248]</sup> and was adapted to Thai styles by artistic decoration, head and clothing design, and the movement of khon. The stories of Thai tales were excerpted from Thai literature and the Jatakas. Puppets in the reign of King Rama V flourished under the support of the court as he was interested in the Chinese classics. Thai puppets, at that time, were the fashion and popularly performed at weddings, temple fairs, and funerals.<sup>[248]</sup> The shared values of khon, puppets, and a sort of classical dances in new context have different connotation for Thais and foreign visitors. For Thais this is still about being tasteful consumers, but for foreign visitors this is new entertainment.

#### Court Arts as Bangkok Cultural Shows: From past to present

The transformation of 'classical' to 'contemporary' performance has been for entertainment purposes so that the characteristics of 'Thai art expression' have been differentiated by the artists and the producers. There have also been changes of time and occasion in that the limitation of performance only in the court has changed to be a public product. Such change on the limitation of occasion to perform and types of audience, along with modern techniques as in lighting, stage design, make-up, and, significantly, the interpretation of the producer, has caused the contents and expressions to differ from Thai classical performances of the court. These groups of 'classical dances' have been tourist attractions since before the 'Amazing Thailand' period, as described previously. In Bangkok tourism space, Thai classical dancing was popularly promoted after World War II, as cited in an article 'Dancing School' in 'Holiday Time in Thailand': *'In former times, the audience comprised mainly of Thai people who were well versed in the classics and who could follow the story as well*



as understand the dance movements without even any program notes. But later, after World War II, many foreign visitors came into Thailand and a great number of them were interested in Thai dancing and music.<sup>[249]</sup> They became part of tourist activities in five-star hotels and restaurant services. In early Bangkok tourism, there was not as much modern techniques or integration of different classical performances, as can be seen at this time. There have been many masterpieces of khon and puppet arts created in the reign of King Rama IX. Apart from khon performances under the support of Queen Sirikit, there are puppets or ‘*hun luang*’ (หุ่นหลวง) created by Chakraphan, a Thai national artist. His works are made by himself and have been developed based on those left in the national museum. *Mattani Moj dara Rattanin* explained in a topic ‘*Contemporary Thai Theatre*’ that ‘*his puppets are now done in his individual style, far more refined than the traditional ones.*’<sup>[250]</sup> However, the recent and most popular among foreign visitors are Aksara Theatre, Siam Niratmit and Joe Louis Theatre.

Joe Louis Theatre aims to preserve the originality of Thai puppets that the establisher of the puppet troupe named Khru Sakhon, or ‘Khru Louis’ created during the reign of King Rama IV.<sup>[247]</sup> There is the preservation of the original classical style that highlights the refinement of the puppets. The heads of the puppets and the puppeteers’ movements were developed from khon performances. The selection of scenes and episodes of the plays follow popular scenes in Ramakien, plus some other Thai literature scenes and the famous Jataka tale of the ninth reign, ‘King Maha

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<sup>42</sup> This book also explained the historical background of hun krabok: “*Hun Krabok were created in the reign of King Chulalongkorn as a new form of puppetry. It was slightly influenced by the Chinese Hainan puppets in the form of the puppet itself, but it developed from the traditional Thai hun lek (small string puppets with legs and arms manipulated from below), hun yai (big puppets with the same style and form), and lakhon lek (little puppet dance-drama; the puppets have legs and arms manipulated by rods).*”

Chanok', and also creation of novel dances in Thai styles excerpted from the Three World stories, such as 'the Kinnaree dance'. Here are the lists of cultural shows at Joe Louis Theatre: The Birth of Sut Sakon; God Narai Suppressing Nonduka; Maiyarap War; Kurma Avatar; the Myth of Rahu; the Birth of Ganesha; King Mahajanaka; and the Puppet maker. The 'Miscellaneous Shows' include 'Garuda Seizing Naga' and 'Hanuman Seizing Suphannamacha', combined with khon mask play and classical small puppet theatre. The series of 'perpetuating the legend of performing art' include the birth of Hanuman and Rama, Nang Loi, Hanuman Seizing Benyakai, Churning of the Ocean of Milk, Hanuman yawning out stars and the moon, the battle of Rama and Ravana, and famous scene of Sang Thong, 'Rojana making a wish with a garland', and ending with the blessing dance. Next are 'the Dances' including 'the kinnaree dance' and 'the devanarumit dance'. The contemporary shows are live puppet manipulation. From the data sources, the promotion of contemporary Thai performances originally created and developed in the court have focused on the uniqueness of their shows and proclaim that performances have their own roots and were developed to fit the audience in present day as cited below:

Dated back 180 years ago of the small puppet art history, now the Joe Louis Puppet Theatre is the only place in Thailand that offers this rare entertainment. The puppet shows are truly mesmerizing. Children or even teenagers will be impressed by this fascinating show where each puppet is controlled by three puppeteers who work together in perfect unison to produce the incredibly lifelike human movements of each puppet.<sup>[251]</sup>

The shows of Joe Louis Theatre are different from Aksara Theatre and Siam Niramit in that Aksara's shows are performed with a live orchestra featuring a combination of Thai and European instruments.<sup>[252]</sup> The interior and surrounding stage decoration is 'Asian Baroque style':

Aksara King Power functions as a catalyst for the arts and culture scene in Bangkok, and brings back to life the color and ingenuity of Thai cultural entertainment. A sight to behold, the theatre is adorned with ornate filigree and ancient Thai symbols, while the latest in stage technology brings the theater to life with splendid lighting and music effects. (...) With more than 700 million baht spent on the creation of this 600-seat theatre, and interiors created in the Asian Baroque style, along with the latest top of the line lighting and stage effects technology, the theatre is a crown jewel in King Power's crown.

Siam Niramit performances have more variety of types, presentation techniques, and integration of miscellaneous Thai dances created by the Fine Arts Department and famous local dances, along with the stories of Three Worlds According to 'Phra Ruang' (a Sukhothai King), the narration of Thai kingdoms. The three sessions of Siam Niramit performance narrate the stories of the old kingdoms in this region, Buddhist teachings, beliefs in hell and heaven in the Himmaphan forest and water ceremonies. The show is a combination of khon dance, other local dances in Thailand, as well as traditional body adornment and costumes. The stories of khon may be the same here, but have new music and dressing in ballet suits. 'Saneh Bangkok'<sup>[162]</sup> described the show: *'With over 150 dazzling performers and state-of-the-art special effects, this luxurious 2,000-seat theatre will capture you with their concisely interesting story and stunning techniques presented'*. Similarly, as promoted in "Sawasdee":

Yet another great way to redeem your miles for an exceptional Thai experience, at Siam Niramit, a world-class performance of Thailand's artistic and cultural heritage. This must see spectacle, feature over 150 costumes, with special effects using the world's most advanced technology to produce a stimulating, realistic and inspiring experience. Truly, this is a journey to the

enchanted kingdom of Thailand, at 2,000 seat of the art theatre in the heart of Bangkok on Ratchada road.<sup>[253]</sup>

The identities of classical Thai performances, in this context, have a combination of conventional Thai and modern world class. The characteristics of modern attractiveness include: 'a stimulating, realistic and inspiring experience' (Siam Niramit), 'ingenuity' (Aksara), and 'rare entertainment' (Joe Louis). The identities of iconic Thai classical performances can be considered in the following aspects:

#### Khon and Puppet shows, Thai court arts on stages

Khon and puppet performances are shared cultures of Southeast Asian civilization.<sup>[254]</sup> Bangkok has a variety of these two ancient performing arts to attract foreign visitors, such as the Ayutthaya puppet show of the artist's house at Bangluang canal, and at the iconic theatres, the Joe Louis and Aksara. Khon and puppetry have become famous attractions under the promotion of 'Amazing Thailand' because of the trends in a tourism context to revitalize traditional Thai performances, blend exotic Thai characteristics with modern art and develop entertainment facilities. The trend to present high culture in a tourist context has caused Bangkok cultural shows to have prominent characteristics different from regional performances.

#### Thai dances, the standardization of the Fine Arts Department

Apart from the representation of Thai high arts in a contemporary context influenced by court culture, the characteristics of Bangkok cultural shows have also been influenced by the Fine Arts Department. Siam Niramit cultural shows are representative of the standardization of state performances, which in this context, reflects the continuing development of Thai classical dances. In each act, there are four regional dances reflecting 'Exotic Thai' portraying the centralization of Thai cultural art in Bangkok, as in 'ancient dances' (ระบำโบราณ) such as Srivijaya dance (ระบำศรีวิชัย) and Sukhothai Dance (ระบำสุโขทัย) that presents ancient civilization in regional

Thai areas. Such ancient dances were developed by studying sculptures from archaeology sites in each region to create clothing and dancing styles.<sup>[255]</sup>

*Rattanakosin Civilization, the presented selection of 'Thai Kingdom stories' on stage*

Apart from episodes of from Ramakien and court literature, cultural shows at Siam Niramit portray images of Thai kingdoms in 'The Show', 'Journey beyond imagination', and 'Journey through Joyous festivals'. These can be grouped under Thai civilization from the contents presented through the images of 'a fertile land of fish and rice', Buddhist kingdoms, good kings, cultural heritage of ancient kingdoms in the Thai region and the integration of different local cultures. The joyous festivals selected to be presented are the royal barge procession and Loy Krathong, which is world known as iconic Thai culture. In addition, there are stories of Thai society and culture as mentioned, including scenes from the 'Three Worlds According to 'Phra Ruang' (a Sukhothai King)' in order to portray Thai beliefs in karma. The presentation of 'Thai stories' through selected contents shows the significant concepts of 'civilization' that the producers have followed regarding the conceptualization of state cultural organizations.

Exotic imagination: the characteristics of "thainess", in this regard, have been constructed through performing arts. Since these cultural shows aim to attract foreign visitors, especially the Aksara Theatre and Siam Niramit, the presentation of the content and art of expression have been selected to excite '*the popular imagination*' of being exotic<sup>[256]</sup>. The prominent characteristics of Thai civilization include 'the ancient kingdoms', 'the romantic festivities', 'Venice of the East', 'the land of happiness', and 'the integration of local culture'. These concepts have been selected to represent Thai civilization, where, in this context, Bangkok is the center of such integration through this cultural art experiment. From the presentation of the cultural shows in these three

theatres, it may be said that Bangkok private sectors have constructed the image of 'National Civilization' by tracing back to ancient civilization in the regional parts of the country in order to show the continuing development of cultural arts.

#### 4.3.4 'Thai silk textiles' of Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation: The development of local Thai products into world famous products

*'The Queen of Textiles', There is perhaps no greater symbol for the beauty and richness of Thailand than Thai Silk. With its vivid colours and sensual textures, it embodies all the vibrancy of Thai culture and the grace, elegance and gentleness of Thai people.*<sup>[257]</sup>

Bangkok has been branded with the image of the 'City of Silk' since at least the mid 1940s by Jim Thompson Company productions and became highly popular among the foreign market around the 1970s with the success of Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation.<sup>[258]</sup> Since Thai silk has uniqueness, it has become popular tourist products and known on the world stage. Even in the promotion of Thai Airways, silk is used for hostess uniforms and symbolically presented in the quote, '*Smooth as Silk*' to guarantee high-class service. Through the continuing branding of Thai products, Thai silk is the most prominent. It has been selected by the state to be representative of Thai high class products and has become the symbol of Thailand and Thai people.



Figure 9

Thai silk uniforms of Thai Airways in the past (Left ) and the present(Right)<sup>43</sup>

*Silk culture, World civilization* 'Acclaimed the Queen of fibers, silk boasts a fascinating and romantic heritage, its origin embroidered in a wealth of history and legends'.<sup>[259]</sup> Silk became world known because it was the most precious commodity since the second century B.C. Its name was used to link the ancient world's two superpowers, China and Rome, 'The Silk Road' (เส้นทางสายไหม). Silk was initially the product of the Asian region until Marco Polo, the Venetian explorer, returned to Italy after years of exploring China and Asia. After that, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, silk production was popular in Europe, then Italy and France became important silk traders in the West.<sup>[260]</sup>

*'Thai silk' as a part of 'Silk civilization' in the region of Asia:* the iconic silk representing Thai civilization is mudmee silk of the Queen Sirikit Foundation. It represents the evidence of ancient civilization in the Asia region as Thai Silk in the northeast is the biggest silk civilization in Thailand. From archeology discoveries in the

<sup>43</sup> Photo credit: (Left ) <https://www.pinterest.com/dewtulyalak/thai-airways/> (Right) <http://www.bkkfly.com/News/thai-airways-tiger-wings.html>

village of Ban Chiang of Udon Thani, it is believed that '*Thailand's sericulture history may be as old as China*'.<sup>[261]</sup> The representations of 'Thai silk' can be seen in following aspects.

#### Silk textiles. World famous products

The image of Thai silk has been constructed through time for its quantity and uniqueness, especially the popular of Thai silk in Western countries. The promotion in the data sources highlighted the success of Thai silk branding since the outset of the silk industry in Thailand started by Queen Sirikit. Her Majesty Queen Sirikit wearing silk was voted '*the best-dressed woman in the world*'. From such representations, Bangkok became the hub of luxurious silk; Thai silk made a contribution to the fashion world, as there were at that time no other countries in Asia and Southeast Asia after the Second World War that developed their textiles culture in such way.

#### Thai silk history, the reflection of 'Thai civilization'

From the narration of silk history, there has been a silk culture both in court, local and global contexts, along with the development of a silk culture from ancient civilization, as in '*Mud mee*' silk to become a exclusive, signature fabric for Westerners. As well, there has been the development of silk weaving production by various techniques from foreign countries and branding of 'Exotic Thai silk' through the characteristics of 'thainess'. Apart from gold, silk is another Thai high art that has been branding through time since it was a precious product used as royal gifts and presents in the traditional period. It has also signified the high status of the owners, at least since the Sukhothai period of the Thai kingdoms. The long and continuous silk culture of the Thai nation then appeared in the Ayutthaya and Bangkok period, and developed in many aspects, both the establishment of a department of silk under the Ministry of Agriculture, and through state and private sector production.<sup>[262]</sup>



Silk in court culture was used for court attire, such as '*the pha poom*' textiles (ผ้าปูม), which differentiated ranks of court officials, and as a part of royal dress personifying the image of the re-incarnation of a living god. The integration of Khmer silk culture and Indian silk culture were the oldest influences on the creation of court silk. Other ancient techniques appeared in silk produced in Thai-ethnic communities, such as a 'special technique' called 'double-ikat', a complex process appearing in Queen Sirikit's famous silk products of the northeast, especially in Below Isaan, including Surin, Buriram, Sri-saket and Roi-et. Another name is '*mudmee*' (มัดหมี่) for a Lao-Thai ethnic group or 'pha poom' for the central plain of Chao Phraya and upper part of the Southern peninsula. The Indian silk culture influence on court art also appears in the decoration styles of Queen Sirikit's silk textiles museum. As an iconic product of Thais, the revitalization efforts of the queen's foundation has brought back those ancient civilizations to be alive in the modern day. Silk in local Thai culture was also produced for Buddhist monks to be used in ordinations and for wearing during certain Buddhist activities. Hence, 'silk culture' also relates to other cultures in a Thai society context, including 'women culture', 'Buddhist culture', and 'royal culture'. Such characteristics evidence the complexities of 'Rattanakosin civilization', which in this context, is presented from the cultural significance of 'silk'.

#### The outstanding characteristics of 'Thai Silk' : the variety of 'exotic Thai'

In the region of Asia and Southeast Asia, there have been many textile museums established to showcase textile heritage of a country, including <sup>[263]</sup> China National Silk Museum in Zhejiang, China; a silk museum in Yokohama, the art of nishijin yarn weaving at Kyoto, and new culture fashion of Kobe, Japan; and the Chojun Textile & Quilt Art Museum in Seoul, South Korea. Among these attractions, Bangkok's textile museum has 'silk heritage', which can be considered as being representative of Southeast Asian sericulture since 'Thai silk' has uniqueness of history and identity, with

one side colorized as 'tourist art',<sup>44[191]</sup> and another side for showing authentic Thai in textile museums. The history of silk in a Thai social context indicates that 'Thai silk' is representative of Thai civilization with the outstanding identities being a 'luxurious fabric', 'extraordinary beauty', and an 'exotic textile'. In the 'Amazing Thailand' period, 'Thai silk' produced by Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation and the Jim Thompson Company were still leading products. In the overall image, 'Thai silk', in this context, could attract foreign visitors by the characteristics of 'colors', as one opinion cited in research about branding of Thailand: *'Thai fashion in my mind would be lots of colors, lot of gold. Like an exotic costume.'*<sup>[264]</sup> The following summarizes 'Thai silk' identities excerpted from Jennifer Sharples's Thai Silks<sup>[259]</sup>: Thai silks have a wide variety of imaginative colors, produced with hard weaving and are durable, the material is also extremely versatile, having an ethnic look, and remaining a classic. Mudmee the famous silk has a light and brilliant colors and patterns: *'A coarse texture with uneven, slightly knotty threads distinguishes Thai Silk from the silk of other countries. It is this quantity that makes it perfectly suited to hand-loom weaving.'*<sup>[265]</sup>

The outstanding identity of 'Thai silk' represented in the data sources is 'Exotic Thai'. Such identities were constructed from the integration and development of art techniques as follows.

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<sup>44</sup> See the definition of "tourist art" as mentioned, *"the dialectic of souvenir shop is further complicated by the fact that the foreign traveler typically seek arts and artifacts that will not only be attractive in his home setting, but that he hopes or imagines were culturally authentic in their settings."* Herbert P. Philips, The integrative art of modern Thailand, Page 23.

'Thai Silk' of Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation ( the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques)

Queen Sirikit's silk styles were developed from 'traditional Thai styles' based on Khmer and Indian art decoration in court culture, and ancient weaving techniques of Southeast Asia appearing as Mudmee silk. The beauty of mudmee silk is *'the beauty and special feature of Mudmee is the dye colors that are gradually absorbed into the fabric, making an appeal look of patterns.'*<sup>[261]</sup> Apart from mudmee silk, there are large numbers of Thai village textiles from regional parts of Thailand archived in the museum of textiles, cotton and silk fabrics with different origination representing the ancient civilization left in the region of Thailand,<sup>[261]</sup> such as the typical Tai Vietnamese silk from Khu Bua village of Ratchaburi, the silk Sabai or Pha Bieng of Phutai people in Udon Thani and Roi Et, the Mudmee of southern Isaan, the Mudmee of northern Isaan, Yok or Lamphun silk, Yok or Phum Riang silk, Jok or the Tai Vietnamese silk, and Koh or the Tai Lue silk. Each type represents the wisdom of 'Thai people' that can be trace back for thousands of years. The complex 'silk motifs' and weaving styles are different. The outstanding characteristics are the 'highly elaborate patterns', 'the repetition of designs', 'geometric motifs', and 'natural forms'.<sup>[266]</sup> In addition, there are four types of silk that are adorned with 'the royal peacock emblem' in order to categorized different types and quality: 'a golden peacock' for hand-weaving using traditional methods; 'a silver peacock' for classic Thai silk produced by both traditional and modern methods; 'a blue peacock' for applied techniques blending both traditional with modern techniques; and 'a green peacock' for using synthetic materials produced with modern techniques. Such categories indicate that 'Thai silk' produced by the Queen's foundation has used progressive methods to conserve ancient silk civilization.<sup>[267]</sup>

The survival of a 'silk civilization' has been presented from the prime of ethnic arts. From such outstanding identities, the characteristic of 'exotic Thai', in this respect, ranges from traditional to modern. Silk arts also reflect the continuing ancient

civilization of Asia and Southeast Asia developed in the Rattanakosin period. The significance of silk has been represented both as world heritage, Thai national heritage and community heritage that developed by the court.

In summarize, the study considers fine art culture, in this respect, as the outcome of the creation of the city of Bangkok. As a consequence, the influences of royal culture and Buddhist culture have been selected to present the identities of Bangkok as a 'City of Exotic Arts'. In the whole picture, the characteristics of 'Civilized Bangkok' have been constructed from the complexes of Thai culture, including the relationship between royal and local class, as can be seen in the revitalization and preservation launched by the King and Queen's projects, the significance of women culture on handicraft creation, such as Thai-ethnic textiles, and the influence of different genres of visual arts, from court and state organization to public space. The outstanding characteristic of Bangkok is a traditional society where there are large numbers of Thai fine arts influenced by royal culture and Buddhist culture archived and preserved in museums, theatres, and national practices, as well as the integration of world civilization, Asian and Southeast Asian civilization with Thai civilization.

The characteristics of 'Exotic Thai', in this regard, have been constructed from iconic motifs found in ancient, oriental, Southeast Asian and Thai arts, including golden and glittering arts, wood carving, silk weaving, and decorative, fine, and imaginative arts. Such iconic fine arts also reflect the prominent characteristics of the natural artistry of Thai people. The preservation and development of Bangkok cultural arts reflects the image of the Thai monarchy as the leaders of cultural art creation through time, as well as the status of Bangkok as the center of Thai civilization successful prolonging the status as a 'royal city' and 'Buddhist city', or as an independent state, unlike other traditional cities in Southeast Asia. Secondly, the construction of the represented images, in this context, from the data sources, comes

from two iconic images represented under the image of Bangkok as a 'city of exotic arts' – as a 'royal city' and a 'Buddhist city'. The first is represented as the base of cultural arts produced, developed and supported by the Rattanakosin court from the establishment of the Chakri Dynasty to the recent court of King Rama IX, comprising iconic Rattanakosin court arts in state museums, state theatres, and national ceremonies and Thai silk textiles. The second one is of Bangkok as a 'Buddhist City' represented by Buddhist art in state museums, both traditional and contemporary. Apart from the representation of Bangkok cultural images from royal culture and Buddhist culture, there has been the branding of image from famous Thai silks textiles as 'the city of silk'. The last topic, also relevant to Bangkok cultural management trends, is the popular 'exotic image' of Bangkok constructed through time. In the 'Amazing Thailand' period, the 'identity making', or in this study, the representations of identities, was the important process of Bangkok cultural art promotion that showed the advancement of Bangkok cultural management. In the area of cultural arts attractions, such management focused on the cultural significance of palaces, temples, national practices, and handicraft products. They were managed to attract foreign visitors using the characteristics of beauty, Thai exotic, knowledge, and entertainment in forms of conventional and contemporary museums, performances, and handicraft products.

## CHAPTER 5

### BANGKOK AS A 'METROPOLIS OF EXOTIC CUISINES': THE REPRESENTATION OF 'CIVILIZED BANGKOK' FROM FOOD CULTURE

Thai cuisine, in a Bangkok tourism context, is a popular and iconic attraction for foreign visitors. Bangkok was rebranded from the conventional image of a '*City of Exotic Thai cuisine*' in the past to a '*Metropolis of Exotic Cuisine*' because of Bangkok food culture in a global context. Food culture in Bangkok tourist spaces has various characteristics indicating the status of Bangkok as the center of a continuing food civilization in Thailand with region and international connections. In a tourism context, the characteristics of '*Exotic Thai*' have been variously constructed from '*presentation*', '*tastes*' and the art of dining. This chapter will explore how the outstanding characteristics of '*Thai Cuisines*' in Bangkok tourist spaces represent '*Civilized Bangkok*'.

#### 5.1 Background of Bangkok's image as a 'Metropolis of Exotic cuisines'

The image of Bangkok that has been constructed from food culture is something newly rebranded and represented in state tourism data sources with a variety of exotic Thai dishes. About two decades since the 1980s, Thai food has become a prominent Bangkok attraction successfully attracting foreign visitors from around the world. In the period of '*Amazing Thailand*', the characteristics of Thai food with more various identities have been developed to catch the global food trend. In

particular, world famous Thai dishes have been increasingly branded in leading Bangkok restaurants, and other types of exotic Thai food have also been selected to serve in luxurious style. The aim of such promotions is to guarantee delicious taste, spectacular presentation, and quality dining service based on the characteristics of 'Exotic Thai' food culture in a contemporary context.

The images of Bangkok represented from 'food culture' in foreign travel writings

In the past, foreign travel writings portrayed the characteristics of traditional Thai food from the court as 'exotic' based on highly decorated dishes, but that also presented the 'local' and 'primitive' tastes of an 'uncivilized food culture', particularly uncooked pastes. For example, in the traditional period, '*royal cuisines*' were recorded in travelers' writings. There are two aspects of 'Exotic Thai cuisines' narrated in foreign travel writings. The first one is that Thai food was presented as '*the food of the colonized was disparaged and insulted*' because of its appearances and cooking technique as described by *Gervaise*, a France catholic missionary in 1688, '*...They mix with all their stews a certain paste made of rotten prawns...which was such a pungent smell that it nauseates anyone not accustomed to it...*'.<sup>[268]</sup>

In addition to 'Thai culinary art', Thai decoration style especially amazed visitors for 'exotic appearances', as in *Bowring's* writing in 1877, '*everything was singularly neat and comfortable*', or as *Anna Leonowence's* wrote in 1870 about King Mongkut's palace food, '*his breakfast, though a repast sufficient frugal for Oriental royalty, was served with awesome form. In an antechamber adjoining a noble hall, rich in grotesque carving and gildings, a throng of females waited...*'<sup>[268]</sup>; or the richness of various Thai sauces, fruits, and sweet as described in a Scottish cookbook written around 1911, '*many different kinds of salads and sweets, besides fish and meat were served. The sauces are a great feature in the cooking these being exceedingly rich and varied (...) all fresh fruits are stoned and peeled before being served*'.<sup>[268]</sup>

Rick Falstaff wrote an article on '*Fish*' as an important component of Thai dishes in a special edition of 'Sawasdee' magazine. He refers to the 1853 writing of French chef and author *Alexis Soyer*:

'perhaps it has not been sufficiently remarked (...) that the science of ichthyophagy is generally developed in a direct ratio with the civilization of a people (...) By any such measure – if we define ichthyophagy as the preparation serving and eating of seafood –Thailand is among the most civilized of nations. Thai food is widely various, tasty, eye-appealing, nutritious and inexpensive'.<sup>[269]</sup>

From such writings, the culinary art of the Siamese court has been used to present the civilization of the country, although there have been some unfamiliar Thai culinary practices, such as uncooked sauces, that dissatisfy foreign guests including fish sauce and shrimp paste, which is rather different from now as these items are listed in many Thai restaurants for foreigners. In the period of Bangkok tourism, the state has selected Thai food based on court culinary arts as can be seen in a promotion from early TOT/TAT, Thai Airways, and later by the BMA.



Figure 10

TAT ad presenting traditional Thai food<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.tatnews.org/thai-food/>



## 5.2 The Promotion of Bangkok as a 'Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines'

Bangkok is the foremost gastronomic city in Asia and Southeast Asia, successfully branding national cuisines and food culture on the world tourism stage. Such promotion boomed around the late 1990s, such as being the '*premier city for world-class cuisines*' (TAT). Thai dishes have also been represented as the hospitality of Thai people, with Bangkok as the origin of many exotic foods as in the promotion of Amazing Taste of Thailand 2013 that cited, '*to promote the brand 'Amazing Thailand, Always Amazes You', with a core focus on Authenticity, Value for Money, and Hospitality, which are all reflected in every Thai dishes*'.<sup>[270]</sup> The characteristics of being the '*center of gastronomic metropolis*' in this term refers to a food culture that is related to '*the variety of cuisine*', '*culinary art*', and the integration of food culture since the traditional period in Bangkok. Thai food spread to other countries around the mid 1980s due to the movement of Thai people abroad. However, in a Thai tourism context, the boom of Thai food that caused Bangkok to become a food destination in Asia and Southeast Asia was in the 1990s as at that time Bangkok was gradually branded as the city of food through large numbers of '*famous Thai dishes*' in iconic restaurants. Since the '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign in 1998, Thai food in Bangkok has been branded and rebranded from conventional concepts of '*exotic food*' based on presentation and delicious tastes of Bangkok food attractions.

From the promotions, it can be seen that the characteristics of 'Civilized Bangkok' has been constructed from the outstanding identities of high food culture in a Bangkok tourism context. *The luxurious exotic Thai style, delicious exotic Thai tastes, and unique Thai-globalized integration* have been the overall characteristics of Thai cuisine selected to attract foreign visitors.

The outstanding identities of food culture in a Bangkok tourism context

Food culture in this context reflects the development of Bangkok as the center of Thai civilization from the traditional period to *'the modern period'*. From such a process, different food cultures from old Thai kingdoms, regional food of the country, and Western and Eastern food cultures have been centralized, integrated, and standardized to represent the recent Rattanakosin civilization.

Traditionally, the representatives of 'Thai cuisine' have been dishes from the central region that have been constructed for their presentation and taste from royal food formulation that appears in the presentation of traditional culinary art of iconic Thai dishes since the boom of Bangkok tourism in the late 1970s and later. The revitalization of royal cuisines in high class restaurants started during the boom of the second phase Bangkok tourism, where there were many iconic hotel restaurants in Bangkok that served court dishes in a traditional Thai atmosphere. Another reason is that there was a great change in Thai social structure when elites left their palaces after 1932 and *'hired helpers from around the countryside, who would learn royal cuisines and cook it for their families or open restaurants.'* <sup>[271]</sup> Apart from this process, there were also schools for Thai women teaching how to be a good wife that included Thai cooking courses. For these reasons, there were many court dishes in leading Thai restaurants in Bangkok, as well as a high standard for food culture in Bangkok.

The process to 'centralize' regional and international cuisines in the royal court had been continuous through time. In such a context, tastes, form and expression, and method to eat were centralized, or *'royalized'*, as high culinary art <sup>[272]</sup> Since there was a connection between the Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin courts, the characteristics of 'royal cuisine' has been based on the integration of different food cultures from significant colonial countries and the epitome of *'thainess'* through culinary art experimentation.

### Bangkok food attraction management

With respect to food attraction management, Thai food culture has been managed by the state and private sector to pick up the outstanding identities of 'thainess' as excerpted: There were many food activities launched in this period, such as a Gastronomic Tour and Fair (2010) to illustrate 'Amazing Tastes' of Thai food through festivals and embark on culinary journey exploring the different flavors of Thai cuisine<sup>[273]</sup> in Bangkok, tourist cities in Thailand and other countries around the world; and Buddhist activities related to food as in food offerings.



Figure 11

Food offering activity promoted in 2011 (Upper Left),  
The Oriental Thai Cooking School (Upper Right), traditional cooking class at  
Blue Elephant Bangkok (Below)<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Photo credit: (Upper Left) [http://www.thailandtoursandpackages.com/eur/thailand/tour\\_thailand](http://www.thailandtoursandpackages.com/eur/thailand/tour_thailand) ;  
(Upper Right) <http://www.mandarinoriental.com/bangkok/hotel/leisure-travel/> ; (Below)  
<http://www.blueelephant.com/bangkok/contact-us/>

The attractiveness of Thai food also has resulted in cooking classes being conducted in famous restaurants, such as M.L. *Puang Dinakara*, the Royal Exquisite Thai culinary center, the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Bo.lan, etc.. Cooking classes in famous Thai restaurants also represent traditional Thai culinary art developed from the court, such as the cooking class at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.<sup>[274]</sup> With respect to space management that represents food civilization through '*places*' and '*cuisine*', there has been the revitalization of food heritage in Bangkok old communities, including *Yaowarat*, *Silom-Bang Rak*, *Sam Praeng* in Bangkok's old town, and *Talat Phlu*. Many luxurious restaurants along the Chao Phraya River promote '*luxurious Thai cuisine*', as well as there being old restaurants of Bangkok, such as classy and luxurious restaurants in old houses/palaces along Pramuan Road in Bang Rak and Silom district, including Kanlapaphruek in the Pramuan Palace of Prince Rajni that was famous for royal crackling fried rice noodles (หมี่กรอบขาววัง), Café de Lao, a well-preserved old house restaurant in Silom 19, famous for Thai dishes of papaya salad, roasted chicken, and spicy food; Silom Village between Silom 22 and 23, and the old abode of *Mrs. Lamai Sibunruang* that was rewarded by the Siam association<sup>[275]</sup>; and the river cruise program that integrating traditional performance, modern music, sightseeing scenic view of Bangkok, and Thai and international food on restaurant boats, such as Grand Pearl Cruise, Chao Phraya Cruise and The Grand Chao Phraya Cruise, River Side Cruise, Chao Phraya Princess Cruise, etc..<sup>[167]</sup>

The branding of food cultural has become a key factor that has caused leading tourist cities to be popular among visitors: '*Literature is full of examples of how food has been used in the branding of cities, and food and meals in various forms is a key issue in making destinations appear attractive.*'<sup>[276]</sup> From such phenomenon, city image and food tourism is constructed through food attractions. Not only a whole image of '*food cities*' or '*gastro-cities*', there are many '*places*' in a city branded through activities related to food and places, such as food festivals, food events, and food

museum, etc. Recently in 2008, UNESCO stated that *'a city of gastronomy should have a 'Well-developed gastronomy that is characteristics of the urban center and/or region, and a vibrant gastronomy community with numerous traditional restaurants and/or chefs.'*<sup>[276]</sup> Such shared characteristics of food culture in Asia and Southeast Asia are represented in a tourism context by combining the high culture of culinary art with the integration of food culture from different regions, to be the center of food production. Among leading gastronomic cities in the region, Bangkok has outstanding characteristics of food attractions owing to traditional culture influences, including Buddhist culture and royal culture that have help shape Thai culinary art. Compared to leading food destination in Japan, Hong Kong, and Korea, which are also leading gastronomic cities in this region, Bangkok has a different image of being *'exotic'* because of the religious and royal culture. *'Exotic Thai cuisine'* is comprised of exotic taste, exotic presentation and an exotic atmosphere, all of which are prominent identities of Thai food in Bangkok tourist spaces and which differs from the food cultural of other cities.

#### Strong points of Thai cuisine from the viewpoint of foreigners

Positive opinions of foreigners toward the characteristics of *'Thai cuisine'* are: *'The first 3 items of Thai cuisines image revealed good images for good taste and flavor, fresh and good quality of raw materials, and fine fruit and vegetable carving with beautiful dish presentation and colorful respectively.'*<sup>[277]</sup> A survey conducted by Bangkok University Research Center showed that Thai food, which is diverse in appearance, aroma, color, and taste, is an aspect of Thailand which is most attractive to foreign visitors.<sup>[278]</sup> It is popular among foreign tourists because of its taste, texture and representations. For foreigners, Thai cuisine has *'sophisticated and complex'* characters which indicates the uniqueness of *'thainess'* as cited: Alex Kerr<sup>[279]</sup> described a conversation on Thai food by Vithi Panichphant, Professor at Chiangmai

University, Dr. Navamitr 'Taw' Vitayakul, the owner of Ruen Urai restaurant in Bangkok, and many more Thais. Here are some excerpts:

Alex: What is the Thai food mystique? It brings millions of visitors to Thailand, and you can hardly find a city anywhere in the world without Thai restaurant. What makes a great food culture? Why does Thai food rank as a world cuisine?

Taw: (1) Flavor (2) Regional food, (3) Fusion. This is the most important. We were one of the first to fuse, before people knew about fusion food. Can you think of any food in the world that gives you so many flavors in one mouthful? Taste: sweet, salty, sour, slightly bitter, sometimes spicy, slightly oily. Texture: sometimes crispy and soft in one mouthful. Temperature: hot and cold. Think of the hot crispy fried rice overlaid with strips of cold stringent green mango we're eating now. That's so typically Thai.

Some people use the word 'primordial' to describe Thai food; it comes direct in one go. Vietnamese comes close, but lacks certain zing. Thai explodes in the mouth.

*Berger* clarified the opposites found in Thai food that make it popular in the United States<sup>[280]</sup>. It is a distinctive cuisine with complex and very rich flavors, including combinations of seemingly opposite flavors and textures that are surprising to the American and Western palate. Thais use garlic, chili peppers, lemon grass, lemon juice, lime juice, coriander, tamarind juice, coconut milk, shrimp paste, and fish sauce to generate the food's rich flavors and Thai food varies in hotness from rather mild to exceedingly, mouth-blisteringly hot (...) Thai cuisine is, then, a very sophisticated and complex one; its beautiful presentation and unusual flavors make it very popular with tourists from foreign countries.

### The popularity of Thai cuisine in international food consumption

Thai food and Thai ingredients have been well known in the international market since 1980: *'Thai consciousness was given its waken-up call in the mid 1980s and became positively assertive over those in places where there had been twinkling of interest in things Thai. It was a culinary sea change that was to see a deluge of package, frozen and fresh Thai fruits, vegetables and spices in every corner of the globe.'*<sup>[281]</sup> The iconic foods include, *'Tom Yam, Green Curry and Phad Thai have become welcome intruders in western kitchens and homes'*.<sup>[282]</sup>

Nowadays, Thai ingredients are popular and produced to serve the increasing Thai food consumption. *'Thai tastes'* may be applied to Western dishes. For example, *Ronald Dannhorn*, a columnist of *'Sawasdee'* magazine, talking about a Thai cooking class, said, *'In addition to my newfound confidence in tackling Thai dishes, I have also discovered that the addition of Thai spices and sauces can create delicious variations to my personal repertoire of Western recipes.'*<sup>[283]</sup> Interestingly, there are more dishes showing a 'well-blended' formation of 'tastes' that are also popular for different groups of visitors, such as crab meat in Stir-fried Crab meat in Curry Powder (ปูผัดผงกะหรี่), and Thai seafood sauces, etc. These could be observed from tourist guides of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean visitors.

Next, the outstanding tastes and variety of street food in Bangkok has become more popular among visitors. The terms *'comfort food'* and *'five-star food'* have been used instead of *'unhygienic cuisine'* as in *Collin Piprell's* writing on Bangkok street food in Yaowarat. The lists of delicious 'high price' have been selected to portray the image of Bangkok Chinatown as the hub of the Thailand oldest business district.<sup>[284]</sup>

From *Trip Advisor*, there are a large number of restaurants popular among foreign visitors<sup>[285]</sup>. Bang Rak, Sukhumvit, and Pathumwan are prominent areas for international dining. The attractiveness of Thai cuisines includes *'fantastic food'*, *'beautiful presentation'*, *'elegant setting'*, *'delicious mixed appetizers'*, *'beautiful flower*

*arrangement*, *'delicious desserts'*, *'flavor of authenticity'*. In short, the attractiveness of Thai food in Bangkok's food tourism space in the view of foreign visitors is from Thai tastes, presentation of Thai cuisines and Thai dining atmosphere.

The overview of types and the characteristics of *'Thai cuisine'* in a Bangkok tourism context

The first images of Bangkok food culture highlighted royal food culture that was imitated in leading Bangkok restaurants. The image of *'Civilized Bangkok'* was based on a picture of Bangkok as the center of Rattanakosin civilization where the epitome of *'thainess'* had been constructed through food culture. In the early part of Thailand and Bangkok tourism, *'Thai food'* was not the first attraction in tourism promotion. In the 1960s, there were very few Thai restaurants in the city. The best known included *Jit Pochana*, *Seefah*, and *Sorn Daeng* where visitors and middle-class Thais ate classic dishes, many from the palace tradition'.<sup>[286]</sup> Bangkok at that time was a Southeast Asian city developing mass tourism with support from the World Bank: *'Thailand was the first country in Southeast Asia to develop mass tourism, with help from the World Bank. In Bangkok in the 1960s, a variety of foreign restaurants opened in areas by diplomats and foreign businessmen.'*<sup>[286]</sup> In the next phase, the 1970s were representative of *'Thai cuisine'* with royal dishes in leading restaurants, as referred in *'Sawasdee'* magazine:

*Less than two decades ago, encouraged by tourism, Thai cuisine started to make an impression on countries other than Thailand. Its variety of distinctive flavours have(...) following more than sufficient to ensure a choice of Thai restaurants(...) many of the major cities around the world(...) Even foreign films and television programs now show characteristics of Thai cuisines(...) extending invitations to 'eat Thai' instead of the previously better-known Chinese, Japanese or Italian.*<sup>[287]</sup>



Later in the 1980s, in the period of economic boom: *'The economic boom of the 1980s resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of restaurants in Bangkok and overseas. Under condition of globalization, more people have now tasted the flavors of Southeast Asian food, and have therefore come to expect these tastes to be believable in gourmet restaurants around the world.'*<sup>[288]</sup>

In 1989, Thai Airways opened 'Krua Eaung Luang' (ครัวเอื้องหลวง) to welcome visitors with Thai food. From such a promotion, 'Thai rice', 'Thai herbs', and 'Thai ingredients' became popularly known in international food market. Thai food was upgraded to be luxurious food with international service. Since the 1990s to the scoped period, the state has continuously promoted food culture to attract visitors. The strong point of 'the fertility of the land' and 'variety of cuisines for different groups of people' is the conventional image of Thailand and Thai food culture generally promoted in the data sources: *'Thai food is one of the national major identities that reflects the ways of life, thinking and mind of the Thai people which are hidden in the taste of consumption of meat dishes and sweet food. Thailand is rich with a variety of plants and crops since the ancient times, so that we could cook many type of foods suitable for each group of different people.'*<sup>[289]</sup> Obviously, since the early 1990s and afterward, there have been many Thai dishes branded as being representative of the civilization of Bangkok and Thailand based on their 'presentation' and 'taste'. In world-class hotel restaurants, such as the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, exotic culinary art and the art of Thai dining style has been branded as a part of luxurious Asian heritage: *'We have a long and established history, and are proud of our Asian heritage.'*<sup>[290]</sup>

### 5.3 The representation of Bangkok as a '*Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines*' from the characteristics of '*Thai cuisine*' in Bangkok tourist spaces

Thai cuisine was created by combining different ingredients, herbs, spices and cooking techniques from various regions owing to the status of Ayutthaya and Bangkok as the center of Southeast Asian. The presentation of Thai cuisine has certain conventional forms and expressions originated in the court, which has now also appeared in luxurious restaurants. The characteristics of '*Civilized Bangkok*' represented from food attractions in Bangkok tourist space is that they reflect the achievement of integration and experimentation based on '*Thai presentation*' and '*Thai taste*'. 'Thai cuisine' in Bangkok food space has many strong points for the variety of types, ranging from real Thai taste to standard taste for foreigners, the beauty of food presentation of high class restaurants, and relevant activities for dining. Dining in restaurants is a good example of Bangkok food culture in tourist space as there are significant aspects of Thai culinary culture formed by the representatives of food civilization. The components of food culture, in this context, include food presentation on the table, the menu, dining activities, restaurant decoration, and the surrounded atmosphere. The relevant details presented through the data sources include presentation of the historical background of restaurants and food recipes. To analyze Bangkok food attractions, this study will also use the presentation of famous Bangkok restaurants in international food tourism space through official webpages of such selected eateries which could be categorized according to the types of restaurant; Traditional Thai cuisine in hotel restaurants comprising world-class Thai restaurants established since the early part of Thai tourism and newly opened in contemporary style, longstanding restaurants established since the 1980s and newly opened restaurants that specially focus on traditional Thai cuisine. The study will select Thai food dishes and Thai food dining culture in iconic restaurants to analyze how the aspects of the presentation of traditional Thai culinary arts, and the construction of Thai

tastes in Bangkok food attractions, are the representatives of Rattanakosin civilization of the recent period based on the representation of Bangkok as a '*Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines*'. The iconic Bangkok restaurants selected as the representatives of Bangkok food attractions are as follows:



Figure 12

Selected iconic restaurants in Bangkok<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Photo credit: Official webpage of such selected restaurants

To answer how such culinary presentation has been constructed, and how Bangkok food culture in this context reflects '*Thai civilization*' of the modern period, this study will examine the outstanding identities of food attractions that portray the characteristics of Bangkok food culture in a tourism context from two aspects: firstly, the representation of traditional Thai culinary arts in iconic world famous restaurant hotels and iconic restaurants in Bangkok; and secondly, the constructing of '*Thai tastes*' from Thai dishes of top ranked, world famous menus.

The first aspect, the presentation of traditional Thai culinary arts and the presentation of '*Thai-fusion cuisine*' in iconic restaurant spaces will be analyzed based on selected famous restaurants mentioned above. The last aspect, the construction of famous Thai tastes will consider Bangkok food culture in a wider aspect, that of the reflection of the development of food formation in Bangkok food culture context from the traditional period to the present based on the data sources.

### 5.3.1 '*Exotic Thai cuisines*': The presentation of '*Exotic Thai culinary art*' in world famous hotel restaurants and leading restaurants of Bangkok

With respect to Bangkok food attractions, the characteristics of '*exotic Thai cuisine*' are variously presented based on a restaurant's themes and popular types of Thai food. The term '*exotic*' is used to present how Thais in the past and present consume such food. As such, for dishes served in leading restaurants of the world and in Bangkok, the relevant components of Thai dining art have also been selected to showcase high food culture in a contemporary context. The characteristics of the '*exotic*' aspects of Thai cuisine presented in iconic restaurants can be divided as 1) traditional Thai cuisine recorded in old Thai cookbooks, including food originating in the court and popularly cooked in the old days; 2) regional Thai cuisines of Thailand; 3) contemporary Thai cuisine that has ingredients different from the past; and 4)

popular Thai street food or cooked to order served in luxurious '*Exotic Thai*' style showing influences from the high food culture of the court.

Since Bangkok is the center of the Thai kingdom, food culture from the court has directly and widely influenced the concept of Thai dining in public spaces. Thai court cuisine has been represented the highest standard of food culture in tourist spaces. The image of Bangkok food culture based on 'traditional Thai culinary art' is the oldest picture of '*Thai exotic cuisine*' that has been continuously produced based on the remaining court culture in Bangkok food spaces presented through the finest and most exquisite food presentation, as can be seen in many ads of Thai Airways magazines and hotel restaurants. An example of '*stereotypical*' authentic Thai food from a royal menu is:

...In the late of 1960s, 'authentic' Thai food was primarily available to visitors in the expensive classical Thai dinner and dance shows. Here the staged authenticity of old Siam greeted both wealthy tourists and official visitors. Relaxing on royal silk cushions, and using bronze cutlery and *bencharong* (elaborate polychrome pottery) serving ware, both Thai and foreign guests ate royal dishes in a palace-like setting, replicating the late Chakri dynasty high culture of 'Old Siam' and enjoying the perquisites of elite royal palace culture. Part of the pleasure for tourists was being treated not just royally, but as royalty, with luxurious consumption, servants, and an emphasis on sensuous pleasure.<sup>[291]</sup>

Such characteristics reflect the status of Bangkok as the center of food civilization of Thailand, and also Southeast Asia, owing to the continuing Buddhist and royal civilization, which will be elaborated. The identities of royal food culture of 'Old Siam' have been imitated in restaurants still existing with a variety of interpretations, as in the following lists of famous, world-class restaurants and recently famous Bangkok restaurants popular among foreign visitors;

*Sala Rimnam, 'Authentic Thai Cuisine with a Signature Oriental Touch'*<sup>[292]</sup>

*Benjarong, 'Royal Thai restaurant'*

*Celadon, 'authentic Thai cuisine'*<sup>[293]</sup>

*Blue Elephant, 'This tasting menu has been specially created for our diners who are less familiar with Thai food, so that they may have an exciting yet pleasant encounter with the Thai Culinary Culture'*<sup>[294]</sup>

*Miss Siam at Hua Chang Heritage Hotel Bangkok, 'The charm and romance of legendary Thai cuisine'*<sup>[295]</sup>

*Chakrabongse Dining, 'Offering an exclusively exquisite Royal Thai Cuisine from the Royal Family's own recipes'*<sup>[296]</sup>

*'Naj, luxurious Thai style', 'the trace of Siamese aristocracy' and 'Authentic Thai taste'*<sup>[297]</sup>

*'Bussaracum, Royal Thai cuisine'*<sup>[298]</sup>

*'Thanying, genuine royal Thai cuisine'*<sup>[299]</sup>

*'Ruen Mallika's Uniqueness, 'the sense of 'thainess''*<sup>[300]</sup>

*'Baan Khanitha, superb Thai cuisine'*<sup>[301]</sup>

*'Patar Thai Cuisine, maintain the authentic flavours of Thai culinary excellent'*<sup>[302]</sup>

*'Ruen Urai, finest delicate of Thai cuisine'*<sup>[303]</sup>

*Siam Wisdom at Sukhumvit, 'serving Thai Authentic food and well preparing recipes. We especially emphasize on interacting between flavors and premium quality of ingredients'*<sup>[304]</sup>

The strong point of this group of restaurants is on 'the exoticness' of Thai culinary art. They may also employ words such as 'royal Thai', 'authentic Thai', 'luxurious Thai', 'genuine Thai', and 'superb Thai', etc. to showcase the characteristics of Thai culinary art presentation based on 'Exotic Thai'. In the scoped period of 'Amazing Thailand', there have been many Thai foods selected to be promoted for the 'exotic' nature of Thai recipes, both directly handed down from the courts of the

Rattanakosin period and those that have been learned from famous Thai chefs and cooking schools. However, in a contemporary context, the term 'exotic' is diversely used and interpreted in various ways. The characteristics of food presentation and the art of dining have also been diversely set from Thai court style of the traditional period to the recent time in which 'Thai art motifs' have been selected to be combined with modern arts. From the data sources, traces of authentic Thai culinary art of 'Old Siam' have appeared in the presentation of the art of cooking, the art of food presentation, and the art of dining. The representation of traditional Thai food civilization, as mentioned, will be elaborated based on the data sources and relevant references.

Firstly, there are many royal set menus in iconic restaurants that can be traced to former traditional Thai recipes. In particular, there are classic sets of traditional Thai court foods recorded in traditional Thai cookbooks and Thai literature, such as in *Maekrua Huapa* (แม่ครัวหัวป่าก์) of *Lady Plian Passakorawongse* (ท่านผู้หญิงเปลื้อง ภาสกรวงศ์) and King Rama II's traditional Thai verse describing royal cuisine (กาพย์เห่ ชมเครื่องคาวหวาน). Secondly, there is the art of food presentation as in the handicraft techniques appearing in food decoration by carving, folding and pleating. Such techniques can be traced to traditional skills of a legendary Sukhothai court woman, Nang Noppamas, who created dedicate Kratong for 'Phra Ruang' (a Sukhothai King) of the Sukhothai period for Buddhist dedication, showing the continuing Buddhist and court art in iconic handicrafts. Precious serving dishes made of benjarong, brass, and classic porcelain show such conventional styles appearing in food presentation, as well as showing continuing 'court fashions', such as Sankalok of the Sukhothai period, Benjarong popular since the Ayutthaya period, and classic European fashion in the period of Siam modernization. This is explained in the classic Thai cookbook *Maekrua Huapa* that there were conventional practices for food preparation and serving on precious materials, such as golden plates, silver trays, gold bowls for drinking water

and cleaning the mouth, small fragrant water bottles, etc.<sup>48</sup> Next, the selection of flower arrangements, such as Thai garlands, banana leaves imitated rice offerings, etc., and silk decorations showing the conventional concept of traditional Thai beauty as influenced by Buddhism and the high fashion of legendary Thai silk. Thirdly, the art of Thai dining includes characteristics of traditional Thai architecture in imitation of ‘palaces’, ‘temple paintings’ and exotic locations; traditional entertainment, such as Thai performances; traditional Thai service having the outstanding characteristics of a well-trained manner, such as respect and politeness that show the influence of traditional virtues from Buddhism and court culture. From such concepts of presentation, the characteristics of Bangkok food attractions represent continuing Thai civilization of food culture that has been integrated based on Buddhism and court culture. However, in the recent period trends of Bangkok food attractions, there has been a transformation of the concept of Buddhist dedication and court glorification to become entertainment, satisfaction and attraction by combining components of court dining culture in contemporary food spaces, such as appearing in the presentation of cooking art, food decoration, and dining art, which will be elaborated. The characteristics of ‘Exotic Thai culinary art’, in this term, will focus on the art of cooking, presentation and dining. Such categories show how ‘traditional Thai culinary art’ has been interpreted and variously practiced in iconic eating establishments. In each group, there have been both ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ Thai culinary arts. The

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<sup>48</sup> See also แม่ครัวหัวป่าก์ เล่ม ๑, หน้า ๒๙ – ๔๔. Summarized from “เครื่องเจ้านาย-มีที่๑เข้าเสวย คำสูงขึ้นไปอีกก็เรียกว่าพระกระยาใช้เข้านาสวนร้อนเอาแต่ต้นให้เปนตัว หุงเฉพาะหม้อแลคดลงขามขนาดงามเข้าลายทองมีฝา ออย่าให้เต็มส้อมปากชามนัก แล้วมูลให้พูนฝาปิดรองพานเงินฤาถมเข้าถุงปิดตราด้วยแป้งถุงขี้ผึ้ง ที่๒ เครื่องควา จัดลงจานเชิงลายทองขนาดควา ประดับให้สุมงาม แล้วตั้งบนโต๊ะเงิน เข้าถุงตีตราเหมือนกัน มีจำนวนกับเข้าแลกาพย์ห่อโคลงพระนิพนธ์เห่เรือกำกับไว้ด้วย ที่ขาดก็ประกอบเพิ่มขึ้น โดย พ.ภ. มีดังนี้”, and “เครื่องเจ้านายนี้ เมื่อจะตั้งควรปูเสื่ออ่อนฤาพรมบนเตียงเท่าสิงห์แล้วปูสุจหนี่ทับ ตั้งขันน้ำสเวยทองคำฤาถมตะทอง บ้วนพระโอษฐ์ปากแกร พานรองผ้าเช็ดพระหัตถ์ มีฝิวมะกรูดดลั้บกระแจะแลหวดน้ำอบด้วย”.



first one shows the continuation of court culinary art in legendary hotel and long-lasting restaurants of Bangkok. The second one reveals how traditional Thai culinary concepts and modern dining culture in Bangkok leading restaurants have been integrated.

#### 5.3.1.1 The presentation of types and characteristics of 'Exotic Thai food'

'*Exotic Thai food*' is presented based on the characteristics of '*extra-ingredients*', '*fine cooking*', and '*well-blended tastes*'. Such characteristics represent the continuation of Thai food civilization of the Rattanakosin period that could be considered from the lists of Thai dishes on the webpages of iconic Thai restaurants in Bangkok. As excerpted from the promotions of each one, there are a variety of Thai foods including:

- 1) Traditional Thai food recorded in old Thai cookbooks, including food originated in the court and popularly cooked in the old days,
- 2) Regional Thai cuisine,
- 3) Contemporary Thai food with changed ingredients different from the past,
- 4) Popular Thai street food or cooked to order Thai food served in a luxurious atmosphere.

The recent trend to present traditional Thai food is to integrate all such dissimilar types and originations to present an 'Exotic Thai set menu' as in following example:

*Ruen Urai* has divided their '*Degustation Menu*' into three menus: '*Classic Thai*', '*Ruen Urai Signature*', and '*Inspired Siamese*', each one showcasing traditional Thai food and contemporary dishes; *Celadon's Horapa* menu includes the celadon appetizer selection, spicy banana blossom salad with grilled sweet Hokkaido scallops, coconut soup with chicken and herbal Thai, roasted duck in red curry, crispy fish with spicy rhizome and hot basil sauce, grilled river prawns with spicy garlic and chili sauce, stir-fried coconut palm heart with shitake mushrooms in soya and garlic sauce, deep-fried banana with homemade coconut ice cream; *Nahm's* set menu includes Thai

canapes, such as egg nests with prawns, almond and kaffir lime, green mango salad with grilled pork and sour leaves, and Chiang Mai larb of guinea fowl, hot and sour soup of chicken, prawns and wild mushrooms, kaffir lime and smoked fish relish, aromatic curry of prawns, stir-fried, steamed and grilled dishes, such as stir-fried pork with dried prawns, apple eggplants and chillies; *Sala Rimnaam's* Thai Set Menu includes steamed prawns with fresh salad and chili lime sauce wrapped in rice noodles, deep-fried herbed crabmeat and minced chicken, fresh pineapple morsel topped with mince chicken and peanuts, herbed pomelo salad with grilled blue river prawn, northern style herbed chicken with lemongrass and galangal, green pork curry in coconut milk, stirred-fried vegetables with oyster sauce, steamed fragrant jasmine rice, water chestnut rubies in chilled coconut milk, rambutan sorbet, and assorted tropical carved fresh fruits.

**a. Traditional Thai cuisine recorded in old Thai cookbooks, including food originated in the court or popularly cooked in the old days**

In connection with rare Thai dishes from the past, the lists of Thai foods selected to be presented in professional restaurants and the long lasting history of each one are noted as follows:

(Chakrabongse Ville); Offering an exclusively exquisite Royal Thai Cuisine from the Royal Family's own recipes, amidst a fantastic view of the River of King.<sup>[305]</sup>

For three decades, Bussaracum has defined royal Thai cuisine. Indeed upon opening in 1982 the restaurant was the kingdom's very first to specialize in royal household dishes, which are known for their distinctive ingredients, decorations and flavors.<sup>[306]</sup>

The pride of Naj is as cited, '*In 1984, Oam Thong Thai Restaurant was established by Mrs. Luckananaj Markawat. Serving superlative and authentic Thai taste, Oam Thong has gained widespread reputation and acclaim among loyal and new customers*'.<sup>[307]</sup>

Ruen Mallika; 'Concept: Thai Restaurant that highlights a fine sensation of premium Thai cuisine. The renowned taste of the recipes, which have been passed on from generation to another, are completed with the charm of the Thai culture and the authentic Thai lifestyle.<sup>[308]</sup>

Patra Fine Thai Cuisine; 'Patara Fine Thai Cuisine is an up-scale dining concept serving contemporary Thai cuisine, maintaining the authentic flavours of Thai culinary excellence.<sup>[302]</sup>

'Siam Wisdom is Fine Dining Restaurant, servicing Thai Authentic food and well preparing recipes (...) A Thai fine dining experience at Siam Wisdom offers an array of exotic dishes inspired by Thai culinary wisdom. Relish the delectable flavours of the Orient amidst the classic and elegant surroundings.<sup>[304]</sup>

The historical background of restaurants and their famous cuisines represent the continuing royal food culture in Bangkok. From the data sources, the characteristics of '*authentic Thai cuisine*' may be influenced by the court both directly and indirectly. Significantly, through the originality of recipes and the skills of Thai chefs in each restaurants, iconic restaurants also attempt to introduce the cooking skills of Thai chefs to present old recipes in such restaurants and show how such cooking skills have created the legendary iconic eateries, as in the promotion of Celadon, Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Bussaracum, Benjarong, and Blue Elephant. Although there are many Thai restaurants that promote the authenticity of court dishes, there are few restaurants with directly handed down recipes from palace kitchens. From the background of some eating establishments, *Thanying* is the only one that has directly followed the legacy of the Sukhothai palace. Thanying restaurant is one of the old royal cuisine restaurants in Bangkok. Many food items of Thanying were handed down from Princess *Sulap-Walleng Vishuddhi* (หม่อมเจ้าหญิงสุลาลัยวณิช วิสุทธิ), a sister of Rama VII and the granddaughter of King Mongkut.<sup>[271]</sup> The authentic Thai menu in court style can be categorized into two groups. Firstly, cuisine originally created by the court ladies<sup>[309]</sup>

such as *Nam Prik Long Rue* (น้ำพริกปลาร้า), and *Khao Chae* (ข้าวแช่). These dishes are cooked in traditional Thai way and use Thai ingredients. The second group is contemporary Thai cuisine or popular menu items for Thais promoted as ‘royal dishes’ because of their exquisite and fine preparation, cooking, and presentation, such as *Phad Thai Gung* (ผัดไทยกุ้ง), *Gang Som Pla Chon* (แกงส้มปลาช่อน), and *Phad Pak Wan* (ผัดผักหวาน). In one set, these food items will be arranged and ordered to be served. As for the characteristics of tastes, *‘partaking of a Thai meal with its contrasting flavours of fiery hot, spicy, sweet, sour, salty and even a mild dish or two accompanying plain rice would not be complete without a serving of one of the numerous Thai desserts or fruits in season.’*<sup>[310]</sup>

As for Thai desserts in the ‘royal tradition’, the ingenuity of the exotic taste, and finest decorated appearance are the outstanding identities of Thai desserts. *‘The sweet taste, delicious, coloring and elaborated details in each kind require a lot of time and skills.’*<sup>[311]</sup> Examples are carved fruit and vegetables used for decoration, the famous, though rarely seen or tasted, Ja Mongkut, and sweets formed from tropical fruit. Although using just basic ingredients, including coconut milk, sugar, and one or two types of flour and flavoring, there are many Thai desserts made of these ingredients. In addition, there are many Thai desserts that originated in the court, including auspicious Thai desserts for Buddhist ceremonies, such as the set of golden desserts ‘*thong yod*’ (ทองหยอด), ‘*thong yib*’ (ทองหยิบ), and ‘*foy thong*’ (ฝอยทอง), all wishing everyone to have gold, money, treasure and prosperity. Original recipes selected to be promoted on menu presentations conventionally follow traditional Thai cookbooks, including Massamun Curry (แกงมัสมั่น), Thai curry (แกงคั่ว), Latieng Fried Prawns & Nut Wrapped in an Egg Net (ลำเตี้ยง), Fried shrimp cake (ทอดมันกุ้ง), extra-ingredient Thai spicy salad (ยำใหญ่), Thai salad with lemon grass and mint (พล่า), Thai chili dip (น้ำพริก), bean paste stew (หลน) ; traditional Thai desserts, including sweet yolk in different styles (ทองหยิบ,ทองหยอด,ฝอยทอง), Thai coconut and flour balls (ขนมต้ม),

pounded unripe rice (ข้าวเม่า), egg custard with mung bean flour (ขนมหม้อแกง), Thai sticky rice with coconut milk and sugar (ข้าวเหนียวแก้ว); and traditional Thai snacks, including Thai dim sum (ขนมจีบไทย), 'Thai samosa' (ขนมคั้งดาว), and Vietnamese stuffed crispy omelet (ขนมเป็๋องญวน). Apart from traditional types of food as mentioned, there are a variety of recipes originating in different palaces referred to in restaurant promotions. *Bussaracum* serves traditional Thai set menus following the lists of royal cuisine recorded in King Rama II's traditional Thai verse describing royal cuisine, *Thanying's* recipes following Sukhothai palace culinary art. *Kalapruek's* recipe imitates Pramuan Palace. *Krua Apsorn's* recipe also refers to the head chef of King Bhumibol's older sister. An example of a royal set menu is *Bussaracum's* Treasured Tidbits. From the details in *Bussaracum's* menu, there is one item recorded in King Rama II's literature called '*Rhoom*' (ห่อหมก). Apart from this, there are four other menu items, including '*Cho Muang*' (ช่อม่วง), '*Kratong Thong*' (กระทงทอง), '*Toong Ngern Yuang*' (ถุ้งเงินยวง), and '*Goong Sorn Glin*' (กุ้งซ่อนกลิ่น) selected to present royal Thai menu:

*Cho Muang* - Steamed handcrafted flower-shaped dumplings naturally colored with butterfly pea flower filled with seasoned minced chicken. *Kratong Thong* - Light crispy rice flour cups filled with blend of shrimp, pork, peas, carrots, corn kernels and seasoned with traditional Thai herbs. *Toong Ngern Vietnamese g* - Minced shrimp and crabmeat wrapped in crispy bean curd to resemble golden bags. *Rhoom* - *Bussaracum* Egg net-wrapped minced pork, crabmeat, and shrimp. *Goong Sorn Glin* - Marinated fresh shrimp ceviche in lime juice and ginger, wrapped in lettuce leaves.<sup>[312]</sup>



Figure 13

Bussaracum's Treasured Tidbits<sup>49</sup>

The next example represents traditional Rattanakosin recipes created in the early part of this period, such as deep fried taro, or '*kang kao puek*' (ค่างคาวเผือก),



Figure 14

Deep fried taro served at Bussaracum (Left)

and deep fried taro served at Blue Elephant (Right)<sup>50</sup>

Such characteristics of food civilization presented from culinary art also convey the revitalization of Siamese culinary art in the Rattanakosin period based on Ayutthaya

<sup>49</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.bussaracum.com/th>

<sup>50</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <http://www.bussaracum.com/th> ; (Right) <http://www.google.co.th/imgres?imgurl=http://2.bp.blogspot.com>

culinary court influence, as in the famous court snack originally cooked in the court of Ayutthaya that became popular in the early Rattanakosin court. There were many recipes of such appetizers <sup>[313]</sup> with new ingredients added, such as taro in the more recent time. The presentation also shows that '*authentic Thai cuisine*' has the characteristics of '*superiority*'/ '*sophistication*' and complexity of cooking techniques that shows the connection between traditional Thai culinary art and fine art culture. Such identities will be described in the next topic '*The art of food presentation*'. Ingredients and cooking techniques show how the ancient food civilization of the Siamese court has been integrated with international food civilization since the traditional period, including the use of herbs and spices showing the connection between Southeast Asia and influential world civilizations from Arab and India food cultures; cooking techniques, frying and steaming, influenced by Chinese food culture, the prominent world food civilization; and presentation concepts based on the concept of Buddhist dedication and royal glorification showing prominent influential culture of Thai society. The important process to construct '*royal Thai tastes*' is that of the selection and integration of Thai herbs with milk and sugar, lime and fish sauce as the main tastes of royal food. Then take these to pound, boil, or mix together, which are the original processes of Thai cooking, or cooking by frying and grilling. The description of each iconic menu item in the selected restaurants shows that the strong point of '*royal dishes*' is that of a balance of '*tastes, scents, and texture*' which also reveals the selection and use of '*exotic ingredients*' and an integrated cooking process. Such processes and large numbers of ingredients represent the influences of a '*metropolis food culture*', the fertility of the land, and the wisdom of Thai chefs since the traditional period. Extracting aromatic scents and balancing tastes are keys to cooking royal cuisine. The aromatic scents represent the characteristics of '*exotic food*' constructed from spices and herbs used in Thai cooking. <sup>[314]</sup> The integration of aromatic scents of each menu item will also be extracted by the cooking process

techniques. The blended tastes and scents are also important characteristics, as in famous spicy soup made of Thai herbs, different types of curry made of spices mixed with Thai pastes, Thai dips eaten with vegetables, both raw and cooked or mixed with coconut milk, and cooked meat and fish. The advancement of cooking techniques has been constructed by adding Chinese ingredients into meat to make minced royal dishes, mixing curry with meat and mixing different types of spices and herbs. Extra-ingredients (ทรงเครื่อง) are also outstanding characteristics of royal dishes, such as in famous 'Phad Thai' (ผัดไทยทรงเครื่อง) in many restaurants and Bussaracum's 'Gaeng Lieng Nopakao' (แกงเลียงนพเก้า), a variety of vegetables with shrimp and chicken in pepper soup. The hot and spicy tastes can be decreased by adding coconut milk and creating sets of vegetables and meat. Lastly, there is the use of expensive ingredients, such as tiger prawns in many of royal dishes. Apart from the characteristics of original exotic creations, many traditional Thai menu items also show the characteristics of 'international tastes' of court cuisines that have integrated different ingredients, herbs, and spices from Chinese, Persian, Indian, Vietnamese, and Lao cuisine to create a Thai menu.<sup>51[313]</sup> The characteristics of superb culinary items from the process to storing Thai desserts with scented candles in closed jars may have been influenced from Persian culinary art, mincing meat with herbs and spices influenced from Chinese culinary art, and to elaborately decorated food imitating nature, minimizing size, and reconstructing shape of food is a traditional Thai fine art influence. Significantly, as such food is selected to be served to international guests, the characteristics of internationalized tastes and beautiful presentation are significant keys to attracting visitors. Iconic court recipes represent the continuing food civilization that originated

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<sup>51</sup> Summarized from “ปริจเฉท ๔ กับข้าวของจาน (... ) พระนิพนธ์กรมสมเด็จพระปรมาภิไธยกับข้าวของจานนี้มีหลายอย่างหลายประเภท ทั้งที่เป็นของไทยแท้ และไทยผสมคือผสมจากกับข้าวต่างประเทศมีลาวจีนแขกปนต้น”.



in the Siamese court since at least the Ayutthaya period and the influences of international relations on Thai food, as can be seen in the Thai food civilization since the Ayutthaya period originating in the court and having significant influence from the center of food civilization of the world, such as Portuguese and European. Such representation can be founded in the description of traditional Thai desserts: *'Originated in Portugal, these Thai desserts were first introduced at the court of King Narai in the 17<sup>th</sup> century during Ayudhaya Period (...) With auspicious names like these, they are always used in ceremonies.'*<sup>[315]</sup> Thai custard made of bean, egg yolk, and coconut milk were also influenced from Persian cuisine, for instance. Other popular menu items in later times, such as green curry, also developed from the integration of Indian spices and Thai herbs; Thai samosa or deep fried taro developed from samosa, a famous Persian snack of the Ayutthaya period; Kanom 'Bueang Krailat' (ขนมเบื้องไกรลาส), promoted as a famous snack in King Rama V's court may also have been developed from the Vietnamese stuffed crispy omelet since at least the early Rattanakosin period; 'Satay Lue' (สะเต๊ะลือ), a Jawa recipes also developed in Rattanakosin court; Thai crispy noodle with extra-ingredients (หมี่กรอบตำรับชาววัง) developed from Chinese cooking fried noodle mixed with Thai herbs; Mieng khum (เมี่ยงคำ) may have been influenced from Burmese and Lanna, for instance.



Figure 15

Bussaracum's Satay Lue<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.bussaracum.com/th>

Apart from menu items in classic Thai cookbooks, there are a large number of traditional Thai dishes created from Thai herbs, spices, and traditional techniques. For example, a Thai fish appetizer '*Miang Pla Salid*' (เมี่ยงปลาสด) consists of fresh rice paper rolls, crispy gourami fish, green mango, and fresh herbs; toasted dried shrimps, toasted coconut, peanut, lime, ginger wrapped in chaplu leaves, palm sugar dipping sauce (เมี่ยงคำ); grilled marinated river whisker shealfish with fresh aromatic herbs in Banana leaves, Thai herb dipping sauce (ปลาเนื้ออ่อนสมุนไพรห่อใบตองย่าง). As for desserts, rare menu items of *Nahm* include kaffir lime in perfumed syrup with candied coconut (มะกรูดลอยแก้วกับขนมใส่ไส้), and tropical fruit in scented syrup with Thai cupcake. Other popular menu items founded in the data sources include water chestnuts in coconut milk (ทับทิมกรอบ), sticky rice in coconut milk and palm sugar served with mango and durian, vermicelli in coconut milk syrup (ขนมปลากุริมไข่เต่า), Thai fruit in chilled syrup (ผลไม้ลอยแก้ว), and deep-fried young rice banana (ข้าวเม่ากล้วยไข่ทอด).



Figure 16

Nahm's lychee in syrup filled with somsa or Thai citron (ส้มซ่า), traditional Thai crispy pancake topped up with sweeten Chinese apple<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Photo credit: <http://th.openrice.com/en/bangkok/r-%E0%B8%99%E0%B9%89%E0%B8%B3-nahm-thung-mahamek-thai-food-general-r6811/photos>

In a contemporary context, there are many changes of 'rare recipes' served. Festive and seasonal desserts are all-year served, such as 'Kanom Bueang Krailat' (ขนมเบื้องไกรลาส), one of the must-try dishes at Bussaracum, promoted as a traditional Thai crispy pancake of winter festivity (เครื่องว่างงานฤดูหนาว) in the reign of King Rama V; or mango with sticky rice traditionally eaten in Thai summer will be served all year due to its popularity.



Figure 17

Bussaracum's 'Kanom Buang Krailat' (ขนมเบื้องไกรลาส)<sup>54</sup>

#### **b. Regional Thai cuisine**

Regional Thai cuisine is also served in the iconic restaurants. To make exotic regional Thai tastes from original Thai exotic ingredients is key to constructing such exquisite dishes. Basic ingredients, such as fish sauce, palm sugar, chili, Siamese galangal, bergamot, lemon grass, are important ingredients. In addition, there are more exotic ingredients, such as wild mushrooms, turmeric mushrooms, cured catfish, mince preserved shrimp, shampoo ginger, lemon basil, and Thai samphire (ชะคราม) selected to cook in exotic regional menu items. In the past, as recorded in *Mae Krua Huapa*, there were only some Northeastern and Southern menu items cooked in the

<sup>54</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.bussaracum.com/th>

court, such as *larb* (ลาบ), fermented fish, and *Kaeng Tai Pla* (แกงไตปลา). Northern dishes were not popular or founded in Bangkok kitchens at that time.<sup>55[316]</sup> However, in the scoped period, there have been many leading luxurious restaurants of Bangkok that have selected regional cuisine that is not generally eaten in Bangkok food spaces. For example, in the promotion of Sala Rimnam, the Mandarin Oriental Hotel menu cited, *‘the selection offered here is the distillation of many of their favourite of the kingdom, gather from every region of the Kingdom, to bring you a classic exquisite Thai dining experience.’*<sup>[317]</sup>

Some menu items;

*Herbal chicken northern style with lemongrass and galangal (ต้มจิ้นไก่)* at Sala Rimnam

*Chiang Mai larb of guinea fowl (ลาบไก่ต๊อก), Northern style pork curry (แกงฮังเล)* at Nahm

*Southern-style roasted curry of pork spare ribs (แกงคั่วกระดูกหมูแบบปากษ์ใต้)* at Ruen Urai

*Laab ped, or minced poached duck breast, toasted rice, chili and lime dressing, served with long beans and green cabbage at Chakrabongse Ville.*

Interestingly, the selection of rare regional dishes directly refers to their origin, such as ‘Chiang Mai’, which is related to its popularity among foreign visitors. The tastes of Northern cuisine also are not too spicy so that foreign visitors can eat them. New Northeastern menu items served also show the influence of popular taste of ‘Thai-Isaan’ that is now also listed as world famous cuisine. The Southern spicy taste is an optional menu for exploring other exotic Thai tastes.

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<sup>55</sup> Summarized from “เป็นที่น่าสังเกตว่าในกระบวนตำรากับข้าวทั้งหลายที่บรรจุในตำราแม่ครัวหัวป่าก็มีแต่กับข้าวภาคกลางและภาคใต้ มีเพียงปลาร้าและลาบเท่านั้นที่เป็นของชาวอีสาน ส่วนอาหารทางภาคเหนือไม่ได้กล่าวถึงเลย”.



Figure 18

Celadon's northern cuisine set menu (Upper Left), Blue Elephant's Isaan Set Menu (Upper Right), and Southern rice mixed with vegetables and budu sauce, and nam tok moo served at Jim Thompson Restaurant (Below)<sup>56</sup>

*c. Contemporary Thai cuisine with ingredients different from the past*

From the data sources, many dishes show that new ingredients are key to making traditional food items have the characteristics of *contemporary*. Traditional Thai dishes have reach the zenith of culinary art from integration of different food cultures since at least the Ayutthaya period and developed through the Rattanakosin period. The making of new dishes in the modern period is effectively created. At the present time, the construction of contemporary Thai dishes is by adding new ingredients, but also keeping the main characteristics of traditional Thai, which is popularly in many

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<sup>56</sup> Photo credit: (Upper Left) <http://at-bangkok.com/celadon-august-highlight-dishes-celadon/> ; (Upper Right) <http://thai.hotels2thailand.com/bangkok-day-trips/blue-elephant-cooking-school-th.asp> ; (Below) [http://www.jimthompson.com/restaurants\\_bars/surawong.asp](http://www.jimthompson.com/restaurants_bars/surawong.asp)

iconic restaurants. For example, the presentation of the *'Inspired by traditional menu'* of *Ruen Urai's* crispy cup filled with diced prawns and garden herb salad (สร้างสรรค์ว่ากระทงทอง), golden deep-fried mini-parcels filled with sautéed minced prawn, chicken and holy basil (ถุงทองไส้กุ้งและไก่ผัดกระเพรา), *Chakrabongse Ville; Krathong Thong lab muu*, or golden fried pastry shell with minced pork, roasted rice, Thai shallots with mint chili lime dressing; and Celadon Spicy crab meat, roasted rice, fresh Thai herbs in crispy pandan cones (ลาบเนื้อปูในกระทงกรอบ). The characteristics of contemporary Thai dishes are also created from cooking Thai sauces, such as tamarind sauce, a very famous one, to eat with different meats, such as grilled lemongrass infused filets of chicken in tamarind sauce (ไก่ย่างตะไคร้ซอสมะขาม), or grilled duck with tamarind sauce (เป็ดย่างซอสมะขาม). Variation of contemporary Thai menu items can be made by substituting popular meat, fruits, and vegetable of the recent time, such as Hokkaido scallops (หอยเชลล์), crab meat (เนื้อปู), steamed snow fish (ปลาหิมะ), salmon (ปลาแซลมอน), lamb (เนื้อแกะ), Wagyu beef (เนื้อวากิว), shemeji mushroom (เห็ดชิเมจิ), grapes, guava, Alaska crabmeat (เนื้อปูอลาสก้า).



Figure 19

Sala Rimnaam's spiced grilled beef salad with grapes<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Photo credit: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/545920786057895143/>

Here are some other examples, Celadon Salad of Spicy Seared Hokkaido Scallops, Lemongrass of Mint leaves (พล่าหอยเชลล์), soup of assorted vegetables, aromatic herbs, crab meat and prawns (แกงเลียงเนื้อปูกับกุ้งสด), steamed snow fish, spicy rhizome, hot basil sauce (ปลาหิมะนึ่งกับผัดกระชาย), lamb massamun curry (แกงมัสมั่นเนื้อแกะ); Miss Siam spicy coconut soup with river prawns, shimeji mushrooms, galangal kaffir lime in young coconut (ต้มข่ากุ้งแม่น้ำเห็ดขีเมจิ), steamed fish shuffle, red curry served in young coconut (ห่อหมกปลาหิมะในเนื้อมะพร้าวอ่อน); and Sala Rimnaam's spiced grilled beef salad with grapes (ยำเนื้อย่างงุ่น). As for *contemporary Thai desserts*, traditional Thai dessert will be served together with famous world desserts, such as deep-fried banana wrapped with young green rice and coconut ice cream (ข้าวเม่าทอดกับไอศกรีม) at Celadon, etc.

***d. Popular Thai Street Food or cooked to order food served in a luxurious atmosphere***

The last type is popular Thai street food or cooked to order food served in luxurious atmospheres. The popular menu items range from quick fried/ stirred food, fried rice and noodles. The ingredients used in these dishes are key to making 'exotic Thai tastes', including the use of chili, fish sauce, fried garlic, Thai vegetables, such as water mimosa (ผักกระเฉด), morning glory (ผักบุ้ง), and chayote (ขอตมะระ). There are also prominent tastes of soups and fried dishes with palm sugar sweet and tamarind sour, and salted fish. Such types indicate the influence of Chinese cooking style, such as using oyster sauce and frying techniques to cook exotic Thai quick food in the following dishes:



Figure 20

Chinese kale with crispy pork at Celadon (Left) and chayote with chili and oyster sauce at Sala Rimnaam (Right)<sup>58</sup>

*Sala Rimnaam's* dishes include fried rice with crispy garlic, fried rice with different meat, fried noodles with bean, shrimp, and tamarind sauce, fried vegetables with chili, garlic and salted fish; or Naj's Sizzling Oyster in hot plate. Interestingly, even in such a category there are novel dishes created based on integration, such as *Sala Rimnaam's* deep-fried tofu topped with spicy mushroom and hot basil leaves (เต้าหู้ทอดราดซอสกะเพรา).

In conclusion, the image of Bangkok as an old city of Southeast Asia is represented by the presentation of an 'Exotic Thai Menu' originating in the Siamese court since the Ayutthaya period. From the data sources, many traditional iconic Thai dishes recorded in classic Thai cookbooks are still served in Bangkok restaurants. There are also numerous traditional Thai menu items claimed to be made in palaces, although not directly recorded in *Maekrua Huapa* and *Karp Hae Chom Krueng Kaw Wan*. The characteristics of the 'Exotic tastes' of Thai cuisine in this regard have been

<sup>58</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <http://nojennyno.blogspot.com/2013/05/bangkok-thailand-food-porn.html> ; (Right) <http://connect.asecho.org/blogs/james-thomas/2015/10/24/echo-ase-asean-day-two>



constructed from Thai herbs and spice as the main ingredients, supplemented with local Thai vegetables, fish, and meat.

As for '*exotic desserts and appetizers*', sweet-smelling coconut, sweetness of palm sugar, and scented flowers are the prominent characteristics, supplemented with the blending of bean, meat, shallots, chilli, and seasonings to make more types. Such tastes have also been modernized by adding trendy imported meat, fruits, or matching with world popular desserts that are also made of exotic Thai fruits. The characteristics of '*exotic tastes*' have been internationalized because of the status of Bangkok as an old city in this region since the traditional period to the present. There have been influences of taste constructed from influential food cultures of Persian, Chinese, Indian food culinary traditions as the main factor that has also caused traditional and contemporary Thai dishes and popular cooked to order Thai dishes to attract visitors in a wide range. In this term of representation, '*Exotic Thai food*' has different characteristics based on the origin. It is not only traditional court and local menu items, but contemporary Thai food and popular cooked to order dishes that are also served in luxurious style. Hence, the term '*exotic thai*' is constructed from ingredients, cooking techniques, and, significantly, food presentation. The presentation of such exotic Thai dishes reveals that the most important key that makes for variation of traditional Thai food, regional Thai food, contemporary Thai food and famous Thai cooked to order food is that a wide range of repertoire has been developed from court culinary tradition and the reasons for the variety of ingredients, cooking techniques, and natural resources in Bangkok food consumption. Such exotic Thai menu items have shared characteristics of the epitome of "*thainess*" constructed from the characteristics of '*extra-ingredients*', '*fine cooking*', and '*well-blended tastes*'. Such identities also portray the image of Bangkok as the center of Thai food civilization originating in the Siamese court of the Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin period to the present.

### 5.3.1.2 The presentation of decoration with respect to Exotic Thai Food

Apart from the characteristics of '*Exotic Thai cuisine*' previously discussed, the presentation of decoration with respect to Thai food is another key to represent Bangkok food civilization. From the data sources, there are three types of '*Exotic Thai cuisine*', including *traditional Thai cuisine originating in the court or popularly cooked in the old days*, *regional Thai cuisine*, and *contemporary Thai cuisine* that have been widely decorated in royal and contemporary exotic Thai styles. As for the last type, popular Thai street food and cooked to order cuisine has not been presented as much in luxurious Thai style. Decoration in royal exotic Thai style can be found in five-star hotel restaurants and long standing Bangkok restaurants. There are '*royal motifs*' appearing in the form of food containers, including Benjarong, brass, and banana leaves, fruits and vegetables carved in traditional Thai style, the imitation of natural shapes, the reconstruction and deconstruction of big-size meat, certain patterns to form main dishes and side dishes, or as a supplement, the use of traditional Thai flower arrangements, the use of banana leaves in the form of triangle-shape cones, and the use of silk. As for contemporary exotic Thai decoration, there has recently been a prominently trend of Thai food presentation in wide ranges owing to the characteristics of cuisine components that are suitable for varying styles. The characteristics of contemporary decoration also show how the epitome of royal cuisine has been modernized to be simpler based on the concept to deconstruct royal expression. Such components also represent the epitome of Thai food civilization with respect to a remaining and continuing culinary convention of Rattanakosin culinary arts in a contemporary context.

#### a. Royal Exotic Thai decoration

The promotion of *'Bangkok 2000'* cited: *'the central region also has what is termed the 'royal cuisine', a more sophisticated version of regional cuisine. Influenced by the kitchens of the Royal Court, dishes are elaborated prepared, making it as much an art form as a culinary masterpiece'*.<sup>[318]</sup> The characteristics of *'masterpiece'* come from the preparation, the process to cook, tastes, scents, texture, and, significantly, presentation on the table. In addition, the right size of Thai sweets for one mouthful, tiny, thin and fragile, seeds removed and maintaining the original shape, palatable and mellow, balance in tastes, texture, temperature, and an arranged food set or food tray are important processes to preparing and serving royal dishes. The outcome of culinary skills to create court cuisine represented in official tourist guides has focused on the expression of the epitome of Thai food presentation, tastes, and dining. Such characteristics of presentation have been constructed based on traditional concepts of royal food culture in a court cultural context; *'Royal food'* is representative of the king's royal status. *'Chao Wang'* Food (อาหารชาววัง), or royal cuisine/court cuisine was cooked within the palaces for *'presenting to the persons of the royal lineage and royal family as well as for use in the important ceremonies and rituals. Chao Wang foods differ from those we are normally eating in everyday life in many aspects, e.g. their meticulousness, fineness in every step of selection, preparation and cooking...'*<sup>[319]</sup> The outstanding characteristics of royal dishes are as *Chef McDang*<sup>[320]</sup> said in an interview publicized via CNN travel website:<sup>[320]</sup>

...I can say with a fair bit of certainty that I know what 'royal' Thai cuisine is, having been brought up eating it while growing up in the palace with my great aunt Queen Rambhi Barni. Firstly, the dishes are no different from those that most Thais eat in their homes. Royal cuisine includes soups like tom yum goong, curries like green chicken and everything else that your average Thai Joe would eat. That said, there are some differences — few of which are on offer at restaurants purporting to

sell royal Thai cuisine -- but they all relate to the way that the food is prepared and served...

The '*aesthetics and extreme*' is the most outstanding characteristics of royal cuisine, as *Chef McDang* explained, '*Fruits are peeled, carved and pitted (seeded) with the peel sometimes carved and attached to the fruit as decoration (...)* Every detail is covered when it comes to the presentation and the appropriate size of each item that is used in royal Thai cookery --masticatory safety, very balanced flavors and aesthetics'.<sup>[321]</sup> The presentation of '*royal dishes*' is evident from the ads in tourist guides and official websites of each restaurant. For example:



Figure 21

Royal cuisine presentation by TAT in 2010<sup>59</sup>

Such appearance shows that the outstanding features are crafting skills for vegetable and fruits, as well as the art to make proper scale and focus point on each dish. The exquisite look, as mentioned, is similarly to those of the Thai line on architecture, as previously explained, as well as the imitation of nature, such as animal and flowers. Such practices can be explained in the topic '*Continuity of the monarchy*

<sup>59</sup> Photo credit: <http://phuketnews.phuketindex.com/travel/tat-fusion-cuisine-183043.html>

*and sophistication of Thai Gastronomy*, *'The two values that have been intricately woven and which support the uniqueness and extraordinary refinement of Thai gastronomy are royalty and Buddhism. Meanings inspired by these two values have influenced all aspects of Thai gastronomy...'*<sup>[309]</sup> Traditional Thai cuisine is one of the Thai fine arts that has the outstanding characteristics of aesthetics and extreme presentation as noted: *'its distinctive majestic style mean the flavorsome masterpieces are like works of arts'*<sup>[273]</sup>. Royal Endeavors's article titled *'The king's carver', a title in commemoration of the King's sixth cycle* quoted:

...the practice of carving food into delicate forms such as boats, flowers and fish, has a long tradition in Thailand. In former times the art was practiced primarily by the women at the Royal court, who would turn cucumbers, papayas, carrots and radishes into exquisite works of art. Even today a Royal Vegetable carver lives on the grounds of the Grand Palace. From such regal origins, the art of fruit and vegetable carving spread to become a popular accomplishment in many Thai kitchens...<sup>[322]</sup>

Hence, royal culinary art has a certain form and expression. From the data sources, the components of decoration presented are from extra-adornment of carving, use of precious containers, silk, banana leaves and flower decoration, the making of each mouthful through natural imitation, reconstruction or deconstruction of food into small proper size. Iconic Thai handicrafts fashioned in the court also show the development of Thai fine art culture of the country since the Sukhothai period. Such types of materials are used in traditional Thai handicrafts. They have been developed from world civilization in this region. Benjarong was developed from Chinese fine art civilization. Brass civilization also is a part of world civilization spread from South Asia to Southeast Asia; exceptionally for the use of banana leaves, which Thailand has outstandingly developed more than other countries in the region of Asia and Southeast Asia due to Buddhist civilization and royal culture continuity.



Figure 22

Nahm menu items served in Benjarong (Upper Left),  
 Blue Elephant's banana leaf tray imitating kratong pleating style (Upper Right),  
 Celadon's miang khum set menu served on brass tray (Center Left), Bussaracum's  
 mango with sticky rice served in brass tray (Center Right) and Thanying's set  
 menu served on brass tray (Below)<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Photo credit: (Upper Left) <http://www.asia-bars.com/2012/10/nahm-restaurant-at-the-metropolitan/>;  
 (Upper Right) <http://www.blueelephant.com/bangkok/> ; (Center Left)  
<http://www.foodspotting.com/places/165152-celadon-royal-thai-cuisiner/>; (Center Right)  
<http://www.expique.com/blog/2015/02/18/> ; (Below) <http://www.bussaracum.com/th>

The shared characteristics of decoration of royal cuisine and traditional Thai handicrafts are in the following points; firstly, vegetable and fruits carving of assorted tropical fresh fruits served after the main dish imitating the characteristics of line, shape and form of craved texture, as well as following the pattern of traditional Thai lines, such as *kanok* in Buddhist handicrafts.



Figure 23

Chakrabongse Villa restaurant's iconic dish presentation (Upper Left); Bussaracum's court culinary art presentation (Upper Right);

Nam Prik Long Rua at Benjarong Restaurant, Dusit Thani Bangkok (Lower)<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Photo credit: (Upper Left) <http://www.chakrabongsedining.com/images/arun> ;

(Upper Right)<http://www.bussaracum.com/th> ; (Lower)<http://www.eugenegoesthailand.com/?p=1671>

Secondly, golden and sweet floral colors are prominent colors. The concept of gold symbolizing auspiciousness and precious sweets appears in traditional Thai desserts, such as egg yolk-based golden Thai sweets. Sweet colors also imitate natural colors of fruits and vegetables that are popularly and tastefully presented, differing from high contrasted colorful fashion of locals. Thirdly, the imitation of the natural shape of flowers, fruits, and animal, such as 'Cho Muang' (ช่อม่วง), steamed handcrafted flower-shaped dumplings, 'Luk Chup' (ลูกชุบ), and Thai dumplings (ขนมจีบไทย) show novel ideas to imitate real natural rather than an ideal image similar to many traditional Thai paintings or sculpture that imitate characters in Buddhist narratives. Apart from fine art creation concept as mentioned, the convention to eat in a noble manner has been constructed from the presentation of the arrangement of food component on a plate in mouthful shapes, such as Thai herbs, beans, shrimp, fried coconut wrapped in leaves (เมี่ยงคำ), and Minced Chicken and Sweet Corn in Crispy Golden Cup (กระทองทอง), which are appetizers of many iconic restaurants. The re-constructed shapes, such as fried-fish extracted bone, the deconstructed shape of big pieces of meat, the integration of food in one dish and centralizing the main dish, are related to the arrangement of the food plate on a table, decorated with a flower garland, or silk accessories on the table.





Figure 24

Thai dumpling at Benjarong restaurant, Dusit Thani Hotel (Left) and  
Thai dumpling at Blue Elephant (Right)<sup>62</sup>



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Figure 25

Bussaracum set menu set in traditional style (Left)  
and Sala Rimnaam's Thai buffet style (Right)<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <http://www.what2seeonline.com/2011/04/royal-thai-cuisine-at-benjarong-dusit-thani-bangkok/>; (Right) [http://www.feastmagazine.com/image\\_8b2766a6-81e4-11e2-a147-001a4bcf6878](http://www.feastmagazine.com/image_8b2766a6-81e4-11e2-a147-001a4bcf6878)

<sup>63</sup> Photo credit: (Left) [http://www.bussaracum.com/th/menu/set\\_menus/](http://www.bussaracum.com/th/menu/set_menus/); (Right) <https://soclaimon.wordpress.com/2015/06/20>

The prototype of court culinary presentation, as described, is also presented based on the symbolic meaning of Buddhist dedication and royal glorification. Serving in a set comprising small plates, using garlands, making floral scented water, using triangle-shape cones made of banana leaves, like 'Baisri' (บายศรี), symbolically represents Mountain 'Sumeru' in Buddhist cosmology. Such characteristics of presentation have been influenced from the concept to offering food to Buddha images, and also for beauty purposes. The high decoration is similarly to fine art creation to glorify the status of God-like and Buddha-like images of the kings.

***b. Contemporary 'Exotic Thai' decoration***

From the data sources, the types of 'Exotic Thai cuisine' popularly decorated in contemporary style include appetizers, desserts, dips and side dishes, both cooked in traditional and contemporary style. Such exotic Thai dishes have characteristics that are suitable for variously decoration to showcase a spectacle appearance from the variety of shapes, appearances, ingredient components and the use of natural ingredient as side dishes. The concept of contemporary food presentation is based on the integration of traditional and modern culinary art. The transformation of the presentation of royal food is practiced by decreasing the high degree of decoration, as well as replacing royal motifs with contemporary Thai symbols as explained below.

Firstly, Thai flowers are used for decoration to present sweet colors, exotic scents, and to represent symbolically traditional Thai cuisine that is finely cooked, such as lotus pedals, small bouquet of rice scented flowers (ดอกขมิ้นนาด), and orchids. Such flowers may be used as ingredients and as a part of the food presentation.



Figure 26

Orchids, bouquet of rice scented and lotus pedal presentation at Blue Elephant (Upper Left), Sala Rimnaam (Upper Right), and Celadon restaurants (Lower)<sup>64</sup>

Interestingly, the connotation of Thai flowers used in this context is constructed from different origins. Purple orchids have been branded as the representative of Thailand because of the successful orchid farms development. Thai Airways, for example, employed the purple color of orchids to create the logo for their airplanes, and also uses orchid pins on airhostess first-class uniforms. The use of lotus also relates to many promotions in tourist spaces, as in the advertisements presenting Buddhists offering food and flowers to monks. These are two examples of contemporary and classic representatives of *'thainess'* variously used in different spaces. Secondly, many local handicrafts are selected to use instead of precious plates and containers. Bamboo, baked clay, and banana leaves are created in local

<sup>64</sup> Photo credit: (Upper Left) <http://www.blueelephant.com/bangkok> ; (Upper Right) <http://therealteammandarinoriental.blogspot.com/> ; (Lower) <http://www.sukhothai.com/default-en.html>

Thai style. They may be used together with high class containers or separately used to represent *'thainess'*.



Figure 27

Jim Thompson Restaurant and Lounge's Thai cuisine set menu (Upper Left),  
 Buffet in contemporary style (Upper Right) and Traditional Thai appetizers at Blue Elephant  
 served in contemporary style (Lower)<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Photo credit: (Upper) [http://www.jimthompson.com/restaurants\\_bars/surawong.asp](http://www.jimthompson.com/restaurants_bars/surawong.asp) ; (Lower) <https://www.expedia.ca/things-to-do/individual-traditional-thai-cooking-class-by-blue-elephant>

Thirdly, decoration using banana leaves is simplified or conventionally created in Baisri, but adapted to present in modern dining, as in the first picture below.



*Figure 28*

Traditional Thai appetizers at Naj<sup>66</sup>

The next example is Miss Siam's traditional Thai desserts set menu decorated with minimized Baisri on a porcelain container.



*Figure 29*

Miss Siam's traditional Thai snack presentation at Hua Chang Hotel<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Photo credit: [http://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g293916-d809638-i110773352-Naj\\_Exquisite\\_Thai\\_Cusine-Bangkok.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g293916-d809638-i110773352-Naj_Exquisite_Thai_Cusine-Bangkok.html)

<sup>67</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.huachangheritagehotel.com/photo-gallery.html>

Presentation of traditional Thai food may simplify the degree of high decoration to be contemporary, or to be presented with a modern concept, such as ‘Yam Yai’ (ยำใหญ่), a traditional Thai dish referred to in King Rama II’s verses, but presented in contemporary Thai style such as using traditional plates, although the characteristics of all the ingredient intentionally show the contrast of texture, color of each ingredient, with egg reconstructed into small pieces.



*Figure 30*

‘Yam Yai’ (ยำใหญ่), traditional Thai dish presented in contemporary Thai style at Siam Wisdom restaurant<sup>68</sup>

The next examples are those retaining the traditional concept of serving a variety of dishes, but changed the palate style.

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<sup>68</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.siamtownus.com/2016/New-1603000013-1.aspx>



Figure 31

Siam's Chaba Thai Set menu at Hua Chang Heritage Hotel (Upper Left), 'Puong Chompu' Herb Garden Set Menu at Sukhothai Hotel in contemporary style (Upper Right), Nahm's set menu for one person served in contemporary style (Lower)<sup>69</sup>

There is also the use of minimized traditional Thai utensils, such as mortar, or *krok* (ครก), and miniature woven bamboo baskets (กระจาดและสาแหวก).

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<sup>69</sup> Photo credit: (Upper Left) <http://food.mthai.com/food-inbox/84322.html> ; (Upper Right) <http://sukhothai.troothmedia.com/blog/Sukhothai-Confidential/Dining>; (Lower) <http://www.tomeatsjencooks.com/795/david-thompsons-return-to-thailand>



Figure 32

Classic Thai shrimp paste chili sauce at Miss Siam restaurant, Huachang Heritage Hotel (Left) and Sala Rimnaam set menu presentation (Right)<sup>70</sup>

In a contemporary context, royal menu items in some restaurants may not entirely follow the prototype of royal dishes as in the past because of different 'interpretations' by the chefs. For example, the decoration of appetizer plates by imitating the shape of Baisri, but instead of using banana leaves, food stylist tie cinnamon sticks with Thai flowers and shredded egg is used to deconstruct the original form of 'Foy Thong' (ฝอยทอง).



Figure 33

Celadon's traditional Thai appetizers served in contemporary style<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Photo credit: (Left) [http://www.thaiairways.com/th\\_TH/hilight\\_destination/life\\_style](http://www.thaiairways.com/th_TH/hilight_destination/life_style) ; (Right) <http://www.ipick.com/bangkok/th/restaurant/30000632>

<sup>71</sup> Photo credit: <http://nojennyno.blogspot.com/2013/05/bangkok-thailand-food-porn.html>



### 5.3.1.3 The presentation of the Exotic Thai Art of Dining

The last component of exotic Thai culinary art presentation is the art of Thai dining. The art of dining evidences knowledge of food chemistry and techniques to extract the quality of the food to cook and eat properly. It satisfies both the human physical and mind needs from the food presentation as explained. Apart from this, there are relevant components of exotic Thai dining style presented in the data sources showing how traditional Thai dining style is practiced in a contemporary context based on following components:

- a. The art of matching cuisine tastes, scents, textures, and temperature.
- b. The art of entertaining guests.
- c. The art of dining in a pleasant atmosphere.

#### ***a. The art of matching cuisine tastes, scents, textures and temperature***

Traditionally, Thai people eat a meal in a set menu. One set comprises rice, curry, soup, dips and vegetables, appetizers, and desserts. From the menu presentations, many iconic restaurants have promoted their set menus as being authentic Thai dining style. Apart from traditional concepts, there is a new trend to eat Thai desserts with tea. As an attraction, serving Thai food in a set or presenting many types of sets for selection is a good choice for visitors. This also helps to complete one meal by including 'tastes', 'scents', 'textures', and presentation. From the data sources, each iconic restaurant has Thai set menus based on traditional concept of Thai dining. There are also some new types of contemporary food items added in the following restaurants: *Sala Rimnaam*, *Celadon*, *Bussaracum*, *Thanying*, *Ruen Urai*, and *Naj* restaurant. The holistic approach to construct of 'the complexes of exotic Thai tastes' is to balance taste, scents and textures in one mouthful and for a meal. This also represents a 'homey atmosphere' in traditional Thai style similar to eating at home, as in the promotion of *Nahm* set menu: 'The set menu is based on the la carte menu in

order to offer as wide a range of dishes as possible. It comprises of the selection of canapes, a choice of one dish from each section of the main courses shared by the table, followed by dessert, the portion sizes are determined by the number of people ordering set menu, all main courses are served family style, arriving together at the same time'.<sup>[323]</sup> Focusing on the outstanding characteristics of different types of Thai cuisine in one set menu, there are appetizers, spicy and tangy salads, spicy and tangy soups/ mild soups, herbal soups, curries, fried rice and noodles. For example, the promotion focuses on rare dishes of *Bussaracum's* royal recipes that will satisfy visitors with signature dishes, including royal appetizers of which in one set there are three main tastes – sweet, salty, and sour – with crispy and tender texture and aromatic scents; royal soups such as 'Tom Jiew Moo/Nua' (ต้มจืดหมู/เนื้อ), which is pork or beef, Thai potatoes in clear soup with Thai sweet basil, Thai holy basil, fresh bird's eye chili, lime juice, and tamarind juice, which is the use of exotic ingredients in rare royal dishes fusing different tastes of sour from lime and tamarind, spicy local Thai chili, and exotic scents of two types of basil leaves. Apart the royal set menu, there are dishes that are sautéed and fried (ผัดและทอด), steamed and baked (นึ่งและอบ), noodles and fried rice (ก๋วยเตี๋ยวและข้าวผัด), which are popular newly created items from traditional recipes and popular dishes for foreigners, such as 'phad thai' (ผัดไทยกุ้งสด), *khao ob supparot* of smoked ham, shrimp, raisins, peas, and pineapple fried rice served in pineapple (ข้าวอบสับประรด), 'pad priew wan sam kasat' which is stir-fried sweet and sour chicken, pork and shrimp with Thai cucumbers, southern Thailand pineapple, tomatoes, and tricolor bell peppers (ผัดเปรี้ยวหวานสามกษัตริย์), and *hor mok talay maprao oon*, which is assorted fresh seafood curried with herbs and coconut milk steamed in young coconut (ห่อหมกมะพร้าวอ่อน). Such famous dishes have prominent tastes of sweet and sour using different Thai and Western fruits and vegetables infused with exotic scents and spices of Thai pastes.

Such characteristics of taste, scents, and texture, matched by integration and cooking techniques, are the outstanding characteristics of Thai dishes that appear in other iconic restaurants. There are both famous menu items for foreigners that integrate sweet and sour exotic Thai fruits with the aromatic scents of herbs and spices, as well as rare recipes and ordinary dishes selected to present the art of ingredient matching. The best examples of classic Thai food are the ancient style of Thai culinary arts showcasing high skill to match a wide range of exotic tastes, scents, textures, and temperature.

Rice in Scented Flower Water (Khao Chae), Classic Thai dining art during the Songkran festival

Kao Chae has been promoted as a '*classic summer treat*' as it is a traditional Thai royal recipe with a long history. It is also the best representative of an artful dish created from the art of traditional Thai dining showcasing how different tastes, scents, textures, and temperature are fused to treat the self and mind in the hot Thai summer. From Kao Chae's '*history*', Bangkok is now one city in the region that still serves this dish and has epitomized Kao Chae's recipes and presentation variously. Other sites are in Thai-mon ethnic districts and Petchaburi, which are also famous for Kao Chae. In tourist spaces, Kao Chae has become famous among '*Bangkokians*' and was re-fashioned as a classic summer cuisine in Bangkok eateries around ten years ago (before the '*Amazing Thailand*' period Kao Chae was not a prominent food attraction). Since *Kao Chae* was originally made for offerings to the Devas and the Buddha in the Songkran festival, the traditional Thai New Year day celebration, the process to prepare and cook is sophisticated, revealing high culinary techniques from the old days. The presentation of various recipes of Kao Chae in Bangkok eateries is the outcome of the culinary wisdom of Rattanakosin court people who developed side dishes to be more various, fine, and show the process to centralize foreign cuisine in Thai court recipes, as in the promotion of Dusit Thani hotel in 2011:

Khao Chae is strictly a luncheon dish and is very popular among Bangkok's working crowd. This uniquely Thai dish has its beginnings among the ethnic Mon community as an offering to the Songkran Goddess. Because of its lengthy and elaborate preparation process, Khao Chae is also called '*ambrosia to the gods*'. Khao Chae is one of the favourite dishes of King Rama V, who is widely revered for modernising Siam during his reign from 1868 to 1910. It is a dish that his cook, Momluang Neung Ninrat, only prepared during the Songkran Festival. <sup>[324]</sup>

In the promotion of *Celadon* and *Dusit Thani*, for example, the attractiveness of Kao Chae is based on the sweet scented Thai flowers such as jasmine and rice scented flower (ดอกขมิ้นนาต), the exotic taste of sweet and salty side dishes as noted: '*Celadon's chef Rossarin has created a set of hand-crafted condiments to accompany the traditional Khao Chae dish of steamed jasmine rice with aromatic chilled jasmine water (...) sweet ground fish and fried shallots, fried shrimp paste balls, steamed stuffed bell pepper with minced shrimp, fried stuffed shallots with ground catfish and crispy pork or beef threads*'. <sup>[324]</sup> Similar to the Dusit Thani recipe, Kao Chae includes five side dishes: Luk Kapi, Hom Yud Sai, Neua Cheak Foi Pad Wan, Chai Pow Pad Khai and Prik Yuak Yud Sai: '*The dish is frequently complimented by fried sweet pepper, sweet fish, salty beef, onion and a platter of colourful vegetables. Khao Chae is eaten by first pouring boiled rice into jasmine water. Some ice is then added. The side dishes are then eaten with the fragrant rice*'. <sup>[324]</sup> From the ingredients of Kao Chae recipes, the complexity of exotic taste is presented from rare culinary techniques. There are several levels of sweetness and saltiness. Each side dish takes a long time to extract such tastes. The contrast of hot weather and scented cold water make this rice recipe different from other dishes. There are many leading Bangkok restaurants that promote a *Kao Chae* menu.



Figure 34

'Kao Chae' (ข้าวแช่) served in royal Thai style at Celadon (Upper Left), Patara (Upper Right); Benjarong, Dusit Thani; (Center Left) Jim Thompson (Center Right), Miss Siam, Hua Chang Heritage (Lower)<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Photo credit: (Upper Left) <http://at-bangkok.com/essential-khao-chaе-thai-summer> ; (Upper Right) <http://www.sentangsedtee.com/news> ; (Center Left) <http://www.posttoday.com/social/PR/355461> ; (Lower) <http://www.painaidii.com/diary/diary-detail/001343/lang/th/>

Thai Tea set menu: The blending of Thai desserts, appetizers and international tea

Many restaurants show that traditional Thai food can be adapted and suitably paired with tea, the world favorite beverage, as in the dessert set served with tea as described:

Mandarin Oriental Thai Set; The Mandarin Oriental takes you on a journey back in time to the British Colonial era with its style and impeccable service. Served in the Author's Lounge (named after the many famous writers who have stayed at the hotel) afternoon tea is a classic experience.<sup>[325]</sup>



Figure 35

Author's lounge Thai desserts set menu served with tea at Mandarin Oriental (Left); Thai dessert and tea set menu at Benjarong, Dusit Thani Hotel (Right)<sup>73</sup>

Tea may be served in any of the Thai cuisine set menus, or as afternoon tea. English tea, for example, is popularly served with Thai desserts and appetizers. There is a wide a range of sweetness, saltiness, and blended tastes of beans and scented herbs in traditional Thai desserts and appetizers, different from other typical English

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<sup>73</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <http://www.highteasociety.com/category/review/page/14/> ; (Right) <http://www.ladyandhersweetescapes.com/2015/07/benjarong-dusit-thani-dubai.html?m=0>

tea set desserts (such as scones with cream and jam, sweet cakes, and pastries), pairing such Thai style tastes creates novel tastes from this experiment.

*b. The art of entertaining*

In world-class hotel restaurants, such as Mandarin Oriental Hotel, and leading luxurious restaurants of Bangkok, such as at the Sukhothai Hotel, there is the royal art of entertaining by traditional Thai performances depending on the concept of restaurant. To entertain guests while dining, as in the traditional court art of banqueting, there are spectacle shows of different traditional Thai dances following the Fine Arts Department creations (as explained in chapter 4).



Figure 36

Traditional Thai dances at Mandarin Oriental Hotel (Left) and  
Traditional Thai dances at Celadon restaurant (Right)<sup>74</sup>

Apart from the traditional concept of entertaining, there is the modern concept to cook and serve 'to show'/ attract diners through cuisines, such as the way to pour tom yum soup served at the table; or as in '*the showing of cooking*' at Miss Siam restaurant, Hua Chang Heritage Hotel: '*A glass partition separates the buffet counter*

<sup>74</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <http://www.mandarinoriental.com/bangkok/hotel-photo-gallery> ; (Right) <http://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g293916>

*from the kitchen, allowing guests to see the chefs working their magic to seduce them with their mouthwatering gastronomic delights. Here, guests can also savor authentic traditional Thai cuisine, artfully prepared and cooked by experienced Thai chefs.*<sup>[295]</sup> Traditional and modern concepts are also combined at *Celadon*: *'Guests can also choose to add a personalized touch with an optional choice of a private butler who is at your service at all times, along with a Chef's demonstration at your table whilst you are serenaded with traditional Thai instrumental music.'*<sup>[308]</sup> As explained, in recent times, there are many concepts to entertain diners. The prominent tradition of court culinary presentations and traditional performances are still practiced.

### c. The art of dining in a pleasant atmosphere

The last characteristic of the art of Thai dining is to have a meal in a pleasant atmosphere. From the data sources, the characteristics of *'Exotic Thai'* that appear in restaurant atmospheres, including decoration, location, and service, are constructed base on *'luxurious'* and *'homey'* style. The contrast blends a luxurious atmosphere with well-trained service providers which is the main concept appearing in iconic Bangkok restaurant promotions. It appears that such components are irrelevant. However, in this context, these two characteristics are combined to represent traditional Thai virtues that have developed from court culture, as will be explained. The presentation of *'legendary'*, *'exotic'* and the *'long history'* of iconic Bangkok restaurants have been constructed from exotic locations in Bangkok in the old days. From such strong points of restaurant locations, the images of Bangkok are represented as a *'River City'*/*'Venice of the East'*, *'Buddhist Kingdom'*, and *'Royal Kingdom'*. Many world-class and leading Bangkok restaurants are located along the Chao Phraya River. Three iconic restaurants have been selected to represent the *'Exotic Thai'* atmosphere, including Chakrabongse Villa, Sala Rattanakosin, and Mandarin Oriental Hotel. The presentation



of the 'exotic atmosphere' of 'Old Bangkok' is the conventional pictures of a Chao Phraya scenic view, Wat Arun, and the Grand Palace;



Figure 37

*Mandarin Oriental Hotel scenic view*<sup>75</sup>

The next is boutique hotel, Sala Rattanakosin. Their promotion is: *Welcome to our boutique accommodation in Bangkok!*

*The kingdom of Rattanakosin was established in 1782 with Bangkok as its capital and included parts of what are now known as Laos, Cambodia and parts of northern Malaysia. the Rattanakosin kingdom continues to the present day. Sala Rattanakosin Bangkok is a luxury accommodation in Thailand, ideally located along the eastern bank of the legendary Chao Phraya River and across the famous temple of the dawn (Wat Arun). Our Bangkok accommodation is just a minute walk from Bangkok's iconic attractions in the old town such as Grand Palace, Wat Po Temple and other significant tourist spots. The surrounding area of our Bangkok lodging, known as Rattanakosin island is the formerly walled town surrounded by the Chao Phraya River and the Old Moat.*<sup>[326]</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.chillpainai.com/scoop/1867/>



Figure 38

Sala Rattanakosin scenic view<sup>76</sup>

The next is Chakrabongse Villa. The presentation of luxurious 'traditional Thai' location is based on the historic significance of the hotel and surrounded sites:

Built in 1908 by HRH Prince Chakrabongse, Chakrabongse House was originally used when he attended royal ceremonies in the Grand Palace and also for picnics and excursions on the river. Later, after the 1932 revolution, it became the residence of HRH Prince Chula Chakrabongse, writer and historian. Today the grounds have been transformed into a magical boutique hotel by his daughter Narisa.<sup>[327]</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.asia-bars.com/2015/02/sala-rattanakosin-riverfront-restaurant-rooftop-bar-bangkok/>

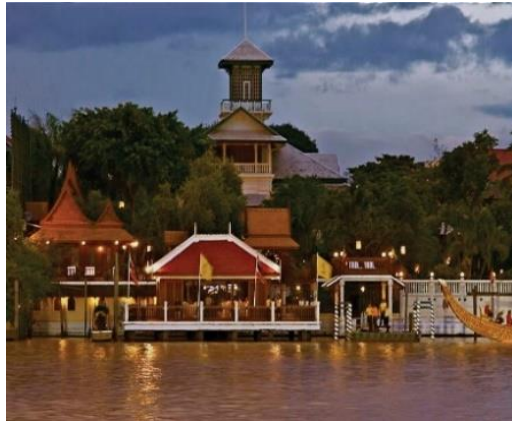


Figure 39

Chakrabongse Villa scenic view<sup>77</sup>

There are also new iconic historic sites promoted, such as Hua Chang Heritage Hotel where the main theme of the hotel restaurant is branded based on the image of historic Bangkok. Apart from the historic significances of the various locations, noble homes in the Silom and Sukhumvit areas have been renovated to present the characteristics of '*Thai serenity*', or as an oasis in Bangkok. Apart from real Bangkok historic sites, as described, the decoration styles of iconic Bangkok restaurants also reveal the main concept of 'civilization' influenced by 'traditional concepts' in contemporary Bangkok food spaces. The selection of the representatives of 'Buddhist kingdom', 'royal palace', 'river city' are the main pictures presented. In addition to the pictures of an old Bangkok landscape and the significant symbolic aspect of a Buddhist and royal city, many restaurants are located in '*historic buildings*' due to their cultural significance, such as the legendary *Mandarin Oriental Hotel*, *Chakrabongse Villa*, and *Blue Elephant Restaurant*.

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<sup>77</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.chakrabongsedining.com/images/surrounding/surrounding01.jpg>

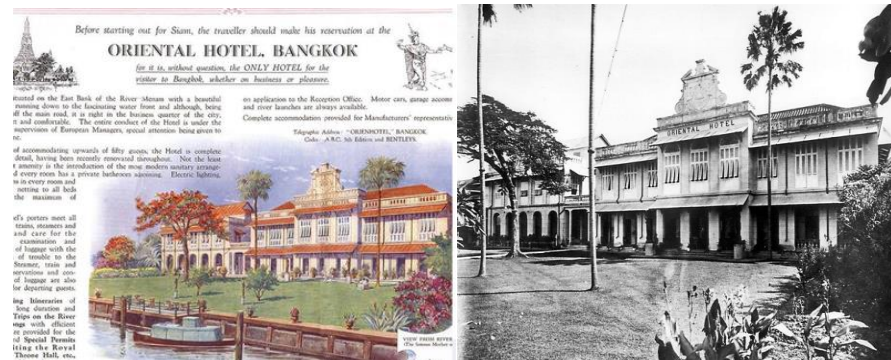


Figure 40

Old Mandarin Oriental Bangkok advertisement (Upper),  
and main building in colonial style (Lower)<sup>78</sup>



Figure 41

Blue Elephant's old century building in colonial style<sup>79</sup>

Focusing on the interior of iconic restaurants, many iconic hotel restaurants have imitated architectural designs from palace decoration styles. The epitome of traditional beauty can be seen in the throne hall decoration imitated at Benjaong restaurant. Comparing Benjaong restaurant to 'Thai heaven', the Dusit Thani Hotel imitates throne hall decoration style along the concept of *'Dusit in Thai is the fourth heaven and 'thani' a city. The concept of Dusit Thani, the city in the fourth heaven, was propounded by*

<sup>78</sup> Photo credit: (Upper) <http://www.luxurydaily.com/mandarin-oriental-bangkok-enshrines-heritage-in-oriental-journey-exhibit/>; (Lower) <http://www.mandarinoriental.com/about-us/history/>

<sup>79</sup> Photo credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/iprahin/8108048738>

*King Rama VI in 1918 as an ideal state of human well being, a model city of freedom and happiness.*<sup>[328]</sup>



Figure 42

Benjarong Royal Thai cuisine restaurant, Dusit Thani Hotel  
decorated in palace style<sup>80</sup>

Other styles include traditional Thai houses made from wood or teakwood. The decoration includes a variety of Buddhist antiques, flower arrangements, and modern chandeliers. This may coexist with modern concepts such as dining on chairs, or traditional style of sitting on the floor. For example, *Ruen Urai* restaurant has promoted its atmosphere, 'Exotic, Elegant and Exquisite' : 'Our restaurant is set in a century-old traditional Thai House built from golden teakwood. (...) The exotic ambience is both elegant and exquisite, perfect for either a romantic dinner or a private party. Enjoy sumptuous signature dishes and cool drinks in this urban oasis'.<sup>[329]</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/lifestyle/restaurants/27251/benjarong-royal-thai-cuisine>



Figure 43

The decoration in traditional Thai style of Siam Wisdom (Left)  
and the decoration in traditional Thai style of Ruen Malika (Right)<sup>81</sup>



Figure 44

The decoration in traditional Thai style of Patara Fine Thai cuisine restaurant (Upper) and  
the decoration in traditional Thai style of Ruen Urai (Lower)<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <http://bk.asia-city.com/restaurants/bangkok-restaurant-reviews/siam-wisdom> ;  
(Right) <http://www.timeout.com/bangkok/bangkok/venue/1%3A25516/ruen-mallika>

<sup>82</sup> Photo credit: (Upper) <http://www.patarathailand.com/thai-restaurant-bangkok-recommend/patara-recommend-patara-thai-restaurant-bangkok-thailand.php> ; (Lower) <http://m.edtguide.com/eat/322915>

The next style is that of classic Thai palace decoration. This is an imitation of palace decoration style that was popularly during the reigns of King Rama V and VI. Many leading restaurants are decorated as such, including *Thanying*, *Bussaracum*, *Baan Kanittha*, and *Miss Siam* restaurants. The decoration comprises porcelain antiques, ginger bread wood design, and royal handicrafts:

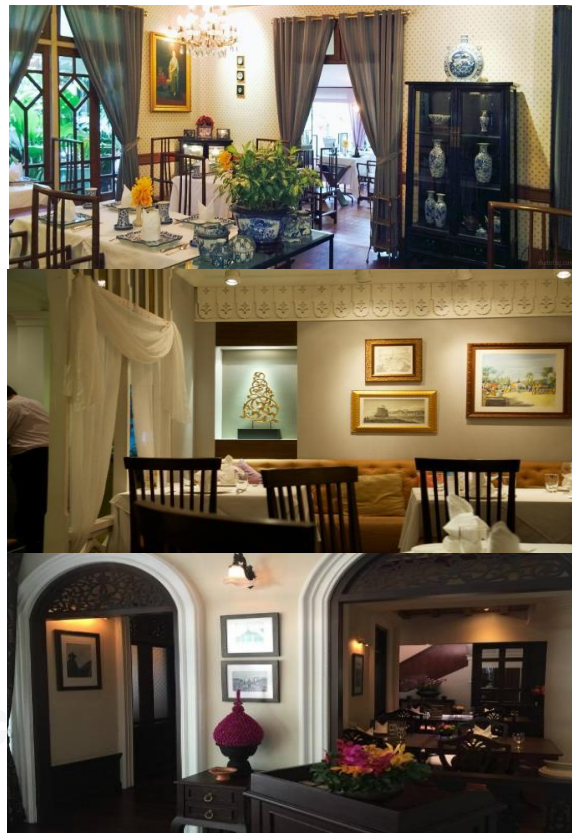


Figure 45

Thanying restaurant (Upper), Bussaracum restaurant (Center), and  
Baan Kanittha's decoration in Classic style (Lower)<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Photo credit: (Upper) <https://www.tripadvisor.ca/LocationPhotoDirectL> ;  
(Center) <https://www.wongnai.com/reviews/61d93fd37a8044f494c289c34dc42980> ; (Lower)  
<https://www.wongnai.com/reviews/9604d3aec2c444b49e8b28ee290bb18f>

The furniture is designed to convey the concept of a hotel. For example, *Miss Siam* decoration style was created to represent King Chulalongkorn memorial bridge, Hua Chang Bridge or Chalermlar 56, the 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the King's accession to the throne: *'This seven-storey building deeply embodies the nostalgic charm of King Rama V period architecture. Period furniture and graceful interior design with Thai motifs in the lobby, as well as the light fixtures, are reminiscent of a diplomat's residence in the reign of the King Rama V.'* <sup>[330]</sup>



Figure 46

Miss Siam restaurant decorated in contemporary Thai style<sup>84</sup>

Also, creation of a traditional Thai atmosphere can be from selecting various 'motifs' of traditional Thai decoration. For example, at the Celadon restaurant at Sukhothai Hotel, the decoration is partially selected using motifs of Buddhist arts and royal decoration style, while serving both international and traditional Thai food to construct a 'sublime serenity' as quoted:

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<sup>84</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.huachangheritagehotel.com/>



### *Sublime serenity*

*A true luxury in this bustling metropolis. A marriage of the golden days of Thailand's ancient Sukhothai heritage and the cosmopolitan luxury of modern-day Bangkok. The hotel thrives on contrasts, each element setting off the next. Spectacular modern facilities and famed service, welcoming you to a green sanctuary that would make you forget you're in the centre of Bangkok, one of the world's most dynamic capital cities. Slowly, gently unfolding over its spacious surroundings, this natural harmony and spatial balance complete The Sukhothai Bangkok's unique atmosphere - and make it truly unforgettable.*<sup>[332]</sup>

The spectacle components are a pond of flowering lotuses and chedis submerging in a water garden: *'Exquisite, award-winning Thai cuisine from the various regions of the country, amidst a pond of flowering lotus. A never-ending Sunday brunch that draws both guests and Bangkok residents alike – epicurean fantasies come true while you marvel at meticulously replicated Chedis submerged in a scenic water garden...'*<sup>[293]</sup>



Figure 47

Sukhothai Hotel's architectural Thai style and atmosphere<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.booking.com/hotel/th/the-sukhothai.th.html>

Similar to other leading Bangkok restaurants, such as *Ruen Urai*, *Naj*, and *the Local*, the pleasant atmosphere is created through exotic Thai architecture of different contents. Traditional Thai noble home styles made from teakwood, decorated with ancient Buddhist cabinet, imitation chedis, and rattan furniture.



Figure 48

Naj restaurant's decoration<sup>86</sup>

### Thai Hospitality as an art form

Hospitality is also an important factor that makes a pleasant atmosphere. The outstanding characteristics of a very well-trained, gentle, respectful manner and 'smiling face' are promoted as representative of Thai people in this context. There are both male and female servers professionally trained to meet a high level standard, especially in luxurious hotel restaurants, but also with the outstanding characteristics of Thai court art of hospitality, as in the promotion of Sukhothai hotel<sup>[333]</sup>.

*Your comfort, your needs, your wants, all catered to with the utmost care and attention. At this Bangkok luxury hotel, you will find legendary Thai hospitality, which has been perfected to an art. Our guests feel it in the warmth of every smile that greets. In the gentle way that welcomes them into our world, a place apart. In the details, ever so subtle, yet always sublime.*

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<sup>86</sup> Photo credit: <http://restaurant.his-j.com/jp/jp/detail/BKK0030.htm>

From such characteristics of manners, the art of service has been constructed from many aspects of *'traditional Thai values'*, including a respectful manner similar to courtly, well-trained people, a *'service mind'* from a willingness to help other people influenced by the concept of *metta* in Buddhism, and a *'welcome smiling face'* as an ordinary characteristic of Thai people.



Figure 49

Mandarin Oriental Hotel service style<sup>87</sup>

Apart from this, there is another outstanding image of 'Thai women' that has been constructed to support the presentation of *'professional Thai service'* in leading restaurants. The influence from court culture is the main key to standardizing such Thai service style in that particularly gentleness is blended with confidence to form a new value of women expression.

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<sup>87</sup> Photo credit: <http://www.mandarinoriental.com/bangkok/hotel-photo-gallery/>



Figure 50

Mandarin Oriental Hotel (Left) and  
Blue Elephant service presentation (Right)<sup>88</sup>

The influence of 'traditional values' on the art of Thai hospitality also appears in the imaginative image of 'court women' constructed from the Buddhist narrative, '*Three Worlds According to Phra Ruang*' (a Sukhothai King) referring to heaven, as in *Dusit Thani* hotel's promotion.

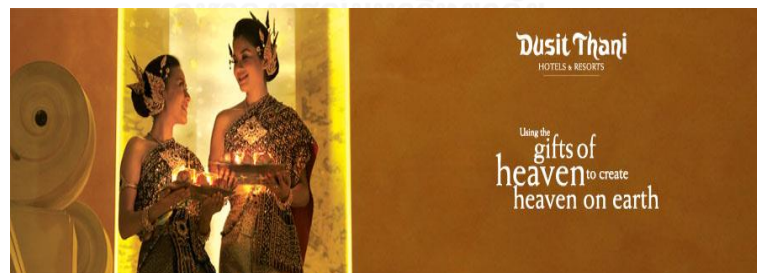


Figure 51

Dusit Thani Hotel's hospitality presentation<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Photo credit: (Left) <http://www.highteasociety.com/2013/02/review-mandarin-oriental-hotel-bangkok/> ; (Right) <http://www.google.co.th/imgres?imgurl=https://s-media-cache>

<sup>89</sup> Photo credit: <http://enewsletter.dusit.com/corporate/062010/>

In conclusion, *'Exotic Thai cuisine'* in world-class, long lasting, and newly promoted leading restaurants of Bangkok is a prominent feature of Bangkok food attraction. Such places comprise a wide range of types and characteristics of *'Exotic Thai cuisine'* constructed from *'tastes'*, *'presentation'* and the art of dining originating from the Siamese court since the Ayutthaya period. The presentation of *'Exotic Thai cuisine'* reveals that Bangkok has continuously been a metropolis in Southeast Asia where globalized food culture has had an influence as evidenced by the large numbers of court dishes that have been integrated into the culinary culture, influenced by world food civilizations, mainly from Persia, China, and India, as well as neighboring countries. There has also been a connection between court culture, Buddhist culture and food culture represented in this context. Such relationship portrays the image of Bangkok as an old metropolis in this region that has successfully epitomized and centralized regional ingredients to create *'court recipes'*.

The standard of *'tastes'*, *'presentation'* and *'the art of dining'* that originated in the court has also been transformed in a contemporary context as in the process to simplify a high degree of decoration, changing the types of meat, vegetable, or fruits in famous Thai dishes. From the data sources, *'Exotic Thai cuisine'* is also represented as an outcome of the continuing Buddhist Kingdom and Royal Kingdom seen in the dining art presentation of many iconic Bangkok restaurants, revealing the core concept of court culinary culture to match different cuisine tastes, scents, textures, and temperature, the art of entertaining by traditional performances, and the art of dining in a pleasant atmosphere.

### 5.3.2 World famous Thai cuisine: The constructing of Thai Tastes in Bangkok food culture context

Famous Thai food has now become representative of *'thainess'*, representing the food civilization of the country. In the *'Amazing Thailand'* period, the characteristics of exotic Thai tastes have been presented to show the healthiness, sophisticated culinary art, and diversity of Bangkok food culture in tourist spaces. Such characteristics of Thai food are shared characteristics of Asian cuisine promotions. Compared to popular Asian food, such as Japanese, Hong Kong, and Korean, famous iconic Thai food presentation has a uniqueness of the variety of types and tastes which are increasingly ranked as the world's favorite dishes.

From 1998 to 2013, there have been famous Thai food promoted for foreign visitors, such as 1) tom yum kung, 2) green curry, 3) phad Thai, 4) pad kaprow, 5) kaeng phet pet yang, 6) tom ka kai, 7) yam nuea, 8) moo sate, 9) kai phat met mamuang himmapan, and 10) panaeng<sup>[334]</sup>; chicken dishes such as sticky rice, som tam, kai ho bai toi; Isaan spicy beef salad, or nam tok moo, Musman curry and glutinous rice with mango. However, only some of these have become symbols of Thailand and branded as classic Thai dishes through time. Famous dishes are *Tom Yum Kung*, *Phad Thai*, and recently *Musaman curry*. Although there is now both traditional and contemporary exotic Thai cuisine, as previously described, many famous dishes cooked in traditional ways still are representative of Thai delicious tastes for foreign visitors. The outstanding characteristic of taste is that of 'amazing tastes' or unexpected tastes coming from traditional Thai culinary art. The promotion of world famous Thai cuisine represents Thai food civilization as influenced by three food cultures of the traditional period, including from Persia, India and China, infused with Southeast Asian culinary culture. Although many countries in the region have been partly influenced by these culinary cultures, Bangkok food attractions have uniqueness of Thai tastes owing to court culinary culture that standardized such characteristics.

In the period of '*Amazing Thailand*', famous Thai food represents Thai food civilization that has continually developed in Bangkok as the center of Thai civilization of the modern period. The image of Bangkok food cultural is represented by world famous Thai dishes. There are outstanding 'Exotic Thai Tastes' of iconic menu items popular among visitors: spicy and herbal soups, sweet and spicy curries, spicy and sour mixed salads, sour and sweet fried noodles, and sweet coconut milk with sweet fruit. The outstanding characteristics of the tastes as mentioned are now popular, both for Westerners and Asian people. Related to this strong point of 'exotic Thai tastes' of world famous Thai dishes stemming from the status of Bangkok as an old city of Southeast Asian, such iconic dishes are cooked by blending Asian culinary art with international ingredients. The characteristics of Thai tastes is '*It is essentially a blend of centuries-old Eastern and Western influences harmoniously combined into something uniquely Thai*'.<sup>[335]</sup> The key to delicious Thai taste is the right balance of various flavors. The prominent tastes are hot from spices and herbs, sweet and sour tastes from palm sugar, tamarind, lemon and kaffir lime, all blended by coconut milk, or extra-ingredients. Such process causes popular Thai dishes to attract people around the world and create a distinction of taste: '*The National Restaurant Association (1995) compared Thai cuisines with other and found that Thai cuisines provided hot and spicy food which was a unique flavor not found in other cuisines*'.<sup>[336]</sup>

The promotion for many iconic restaurants have employed words such as '*Orient*' and '*Charm of the oriental*', a conventional concept to attract Western visitors by way of presenting oriental art of dining through food attractions; The recent trend has been to attract both Western and Asian visitors by the exotic Thai characteristics art of dining and menu items. The '*exotic tastes*' represent the image of '*Civilized Bangkok*' as an old city of Southeast Asia that initially created classic dishes since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as in the promotion of Musman curry. Apart from this, many world famous dishes also reveal the advancement of Thai culinary culture that has a more

sophisticated taste of herbs and spices than other Southeast Asian countries, as in the most famous menu – Tom Yum Kung, and Isaan food. *Phad Thai* is another iconic Thai dish representing the integration of Thai and Chinese food, and Thai provinces. These all represent the image of Bangkok food cultural in a tourism context portraying Thai civilization through culinary culture. To explore the reflection of Thai food civilization in this regard, this study has elaborated the uniqueness and advancement of Thai culinary culture as a part of Asian food civilization based on the presentation of world famous Thai dishes in the data sources.

The representation of a continuing food civilization from world famous dishes has focused on advanced food formation originating in Bangkok through time. The most outstanding image is that of the invention of famous recipes from ancient Southeast Asia herbs and spices from Arab, Indian and Chinese sources. Many ingredients from international cities came to Thailand because of the status of Ayutthaya and Bangkok, the center of trade in Southeast Asia since the Ayutthaya period. Many basic ingredients in Thai kitchens, such as chilis, peppers, Kiffir lime, shrimp paste, tamarind, sugar, lime, and kamin, were obtained from international trade between Thailand and countries, and some from Europe, such as milk, butter, and eggs. The construction of '*Thai tastes*' from a variety of ingredients and sources has been continuously formulated through time, which also reflects Bangkok's image as a metropolis of globalized food culture since the traditional period.

The origin of world famous Thai dishes portrays the continuing development of food cultural. The oldest set is the primitive tastes of Southeast Asian food represented by Isaan food – somtam is the prominent local spicy salad popularly promoted in the data sources. The influence of central Thai taste on the original taste of somtam Lao, for example, has led to sweet, sour, slightly spicy, and blended tastes of extra-ingredients that reflects the variation and popularity of this dish in Bangkok. Similar is Tom Yum soup that is made from local herbs which are ancient ingredients of this



region, such as Siamese galangal and Siamese kaffir lime, which employs the word 'Siamese' to indicate their origination. The traditional globalized menus originating in the court are cooked from coconut milk mixed with different pastes, added with world famous spices since the Ayutthaya period, such as Musman curry. Other famous dishes are green curry and red curry that may have been created at that time or later in the Rattanakosin period. Chinese food had much influenced on Thai noodle dishes, such as Phad Thai. It is now a classic dish and representative of Thailand because of its popular taste. The shared characteristic of tastes in global food culture is the answer why this set of famous Thai dishes is popular among foreign visitors, both Western and Eastern. Some ancient Thai dishes, such as shrimp paste chili sauce, fish sauce with chili, spicy jungle soup (แกงป่า), Isaan Dill Soup (แกงอ่อมอีสาน), and Southern Thai spicy curry (แกงไตปลา), are not popular dishes as there is the strong characteristic of primitive taste of Southeast Asia by infusing fermented fish, fish sauce, and having a very spicy taste. These are different from world famous dishes that have been integrated with popular spices mixed with the creamy taste of coconut milk, with sweetness as the leading taste. The representation of Bangkok food cultural as the center of Thai food civilization has been constructed from the characteristics of exotic tastes that were centralized in the court, or in the later period, influenced from court culinary concept as cited: *'Cuisine from the central region is more delicate. It is about balance the four principal tastes of hot, salty, sweet and sour.'*<sup>[337]</sup> The prominent characteristics of famous exotic Thai tastes are based on court ingredients, which also reflect the status of Bangkok as an important port city of the country and region in the past. Apart from this, there has been the centralization of tastes and processes to construct the characteristics of 'thainess' through ingredients of 'somtam Thai' (ส้มตำไทย) and 'phad Thai' (ผัดไทย). These two iconic Thai dishes directly used the word 'Thai' to differentiate their Central Thai and Thai nation nature from Laotian and Chinese food, respectively. This word is used to connote 'thainess' constructed from Thai

culinary culture. Apart from the sweet and extra-ingredients added to somtam Thai, Phad Thai was branded as a Thai national cuisine from state policy to become a world favorite food. Its ingredients also represent the diversity of Thai culinary culture that mixes ingredients from different origins. Apart from these main Thai dishes, traditional Thai dessert made of rice and fruit is another representative of the world famous exotic taste of Thailand. Glutinous rice with mango, or 'kawneo mamuang' (ข้าวเหนียวมะม่วง), has been promoting for its popularity. Bangkok's nickname has been titled the '*Big Mango*' for Westerners owing to the fame of mangos in the 1990s. The combination of rice mixed with sugar and coconut milk eaten with mango is a traditional Thai culinary innovatively pairing different tastes. This menu is different from other countries in the region that also have rice culture and tropical fruits.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### 6.1 A Summary of the research

This study aims to explore the concept of 'civilization' from the representation of cultural images of Bangkok in official tourist guides in the period of the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign from 1998 until 2013.

The 'representation' is the process of 'making' images to be included in data sources, with such images continuously represented in a tourism context. To represent cultural images of Bangkok, there are many Bangkok cultural attractions that have been selected by the state to construct the characteristics of 'Civilized Bangkok'.

The first objective of this study has been to identify images of Bangkok. This study found that the concept of civilization in this regard is represented by the construction and representation of cultural images of Bangkok, including as a Buddhist City, a City of Exotic Arts, and a Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines. Such images as portrayed in official tourist guides were the main data sources of this study. This study reveals that a 'Buddhist City' is the oldest image of Bangkok and Thailand portrayed in official tourist guides. In this regard, the relevant concepts of an 'exotic city', 'a sacred city' and 'a city of pilgrims' have been constructed through the process of representation. The second image is as a 'City of Exotic Arts'. This is another old image of Bangkok connected with the representation of a 'Royal City', a 'Buddhist City', and a 'City of Silk'. The last image recently branded in Bangkok tourism promotion is that

of a 'Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines'. Apart from this, popular images, including 'Venice of the East', 'Heaven of Earth', 'the City of Angels', and 'the Land of Smiles', are represented as a part of the three iconic images mentioned. They are shared images partially presented from attractions in Bangkok tourist spaces.

The second objective of this study has been to analyze the construction and representation of 'Civilized Bangkok' based on official tourist guides. In connection with the concept of civilization, the image of 'Civilized Bangkok' has been constructed from Bangkok cultural attractions in three Bangkok tourist spaces: Buddhist attractions, fine arts attractions, and food attractions. Each attraction has components that construct the identities of Buddhist culture, fine arts culture and food culture of Bangkok in tourist spaces and represent the characteristics of civilization. In this study, these can be identified as the aspects of Thai culture in Bangkok tourist spaces that have been selected as being representative of 'Thai civilization of the modern period' because they have the characteristics of being the epitome of 'thainess' with aspects of Thai beauty, Thai faith, Thai entertainment, and Thai tastes of the recent Rattanakosin era. Such characteristics portray the continuity of Buddhist civilization, fine arts civilization and food civilization of Thailand and the city of Bangkok.

These aspects of Thai culture also have been praised as high culture since the establishment of the Rattanakosin era as they originated in the courts of former Thai Kingdoms and have been handed down to the Rattanakosin court, or have been managed by the Rattanakosin court to be used as tools for creation in each phase of the development of Bangkok as a city. In the period of 'Amazing Thailand', these cultural attractions have been managed by the state and partially selected by the private sector to be managed as tourist attractions in Bangkok.

Each aspect of Thai culture, in this regard, has components that help construct the characteristics of civilization. Iconic Buddhist attractions include Buddhist art, Buddhist practices and Buddhist city creation. As for fine art cultural attractions, there are three types of Bangkok cultural arts including masterpieces of the Rattanakosin court arts, performing arts and Thai silk. The last type of attraction is food in Bangkok

tourist spaces. There are three aspects – exotic Thai taste, presentation and dining art – that can be considered as attractive to tourists, all presented as ‘the epitome of Thai culinary arts’.

With respect to the representation of the images of Bangkok as a ‘Buddhist City’, a ‘City of Exotic Arts’ and a ‘Metropolis of Exotic Cuisines’ from such constructions, the data sources reveal that official tourist guides employ the word ‘exotic’ widely in foreign travel writings to represent the characteristics of Bangkok cultures in a positive aspect. The first method is to present the strong points of Bangkok Buddhist attractions, Bangkok fine arts attraction, and Bangkok food attraction. The outstanding characteristics of such attractions represent ‘Civilized Bangkok’ based on the epitome of *‘thainess’*. From the data sources, the most outstanding identity of Buddhist attractions, fine art attractions, and food attraction is that of ‘Thai beauty’. The shared characteristics of the ‘epitome of beauty’ presented in such attractions is that of ‘mystic beauty’ created by adornment creating spectacle and an exquisite appearance. Such characteristics have been influenced by concepts of Buddhist dedication and royal glorification.

Bangkok attractions have shared characteristics of being ‘exotic’, which attracts foreign visitors by its spectacle. The most important process to attract foreign visitors by such characteristics is to romanticize Bangkok cultural images. The Oxford Dictionary defines the term ‘romanticize’ as ‘*Deal with or describe in an idealized or unrealistic fashion*’.<sup>[25]</sup> Such a process of presentation appears in a wide range of attractions. The romantic image of Bangkok is the idea cultivated from stock images appearing in some of former travel writings of foreign travelers, the Three Worlds, the ideal concept of a Thai Buddhist kingdom, and the continuation of an independent Thai kingdom produced by the state, particularly the images of a Buddhist City, a Royal City, Venice of the East, and a City of Heaven in Buddhist attractions (Rattanakosin Island, Loy Krathong festival and the royal barge procession), fine arts attractions (Bangkok cultural shows), and dining attractions in luxurious restaurants of Bangkok.

From the process of presentation, the characteristics of the representation of 'Civilized Bangkok' are based on the following aspects. Firstly, Bangkok has been portrayed as the center of continuing Buddhist and royal civilization starting in the Sukhothai period, and continuing to the Ayutthaya period and the present Rattanakosin period. Such an image is represented by the characteristics of Buddhist culture, fine arts culture and food culture in Bangkok tourist spaces that have been continuously created based on the former creation concept, in particular, the city creation concept, that has been influenced by Thai Buddhist culture and Thai royal culture. For this reason, the outstanding characteristics of iconic Bangkok attractions have ranged from classic Thai prototypes, contemporary Thai style and modern Thai style.

Secondly, in a wider aspect, Bangkok also represents the status of an old city in Southeast Asia that has been influenced by world civilization and cultures originating in Asia and Southeast Asia since the traditional period. The prominent civilizations include: Buddhist civilization evidenced by Buddhist attractions in Bangkok that also portray the relationship between Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhism and Thai Buddhism in Bangkok; Gold civilization of the Suvannabhumi region appearing in Buddhist art and royal handicrafts, and also traceable in presentation of royal Thai desserts; Silk civilization represented by the origination of *mudmee* silk in the Southeast Asia region; Spice culture represented by the world famous Thai menu, Musaman curry; Rice culture appearing in the court menu as Khao Chae and glutinous rice with mango. Each Bangkok cultural attraction also shows the advancement of cultural formation in Bangkok tourist spaces that has more sophisticated and fine characteristics because of the handing down of court culture and state organization management, particularly, Buddhist art, silk, gold handicrafts, Benjarong, banana leaf and flower arrangement, and classic Thai culinary arts.

The characteristics of Bangkok as the center of '*Thai civilization of the modern period*' have been mainly constructed from Buddhist culture and royal culture in Bangkok tourist space. Accordingly, there has been the presentation of '*centralization*' and '*standardization*' of Thai regional culture and foreign cultures in Bangkok since the

start of the Rattanakosin era. Bangkok is the center of a continuing Buddhist civilization and the centre of Buddhism in Thailand and Southeast Asia, as there are Buddha images archived in Buddhist museums that are widely respected in ancient Theravada Buddhist kingdoms. As well, classic Buddha images praised as the most beautiful style of Thai kingdoms portray the image of Thailand as the first kingdom in the region that established a Buddhist state after the collapse of the Khmer empire. Bangkok is also represented as the center of silk production in Southeast Asia developed from an ancient silk civilization in the region, both from traditional concepts and by modern integration; the only Southeast Asian city that has khon and puppet performances developed continually through time; and, the center of royal food civilization in Thailand and as the foremost gastronomic city in Asia that has developed culinary art from royal culture. The successful cultural formation reveals the advancement of the idea to create such attractions to be presented as the outcome of the constructing of 'thainess' from a process of integration of dissimilar origins and types of culture. This has caused a 'multi-character' nature of Bangkok cultural attractions and reveals the advancement of the formation of Thai cultural based on the imitation of traditional masterpieces from Buddhist art, royal handicrafts under the support of Queen Sirikit, and court culinary culture.

Next is the significance of this study, of which there are two contributions. Firstly is to understand the characteristics of 'Civilized Bangkok' that have been constructed and represented through Bangkok cultural images in official tourist guides. The second contribution is to contribute to a deeper understanding of Thai society and culture in the modern period in the context of global tourism. From the construction and representation of 'Civilized Bangkok', this study reveals that the characteristics of Thai culture presented through Bangkok cultural attractions is a complex of high cultures that originated and were developed in the traditional period of Thailand. There are three aspects of Thai cultural formulation representing Thai civilization in this context.

Firstly, the main Buddhist civilization influencing Rattanakosin civilization from the traditional period to the scoped period, integrated with royal culture that appears in the characteristics of exotic Buddhist arts, fine arts, and royal Thai cuisine.

Secondly, Bangkok cultural attractions show the progression of Rattanakosin civilization in each significant phases of this era: City creating from Buddhist cosmology and modern concepts, the centralization and establishment of the Chakri dynasty, the development of court culture, and the tourism period showing the continuous concept of civilization constructed by the court influencing state tourism organization practices.

The last aspect is regarding influences from globalization, or global tourism trends, on Thai culture in Bangkok tourist spaces. Firstly, there has been the preservation and revitalization of Buddhist culture and fine arts culture of the traditional period. In the 'Amazing Thailand' period, there have been iconic state museums, both established in the traditional period and in recent times that have been promoted to construct Rattanakosin civilization by the presentation of Bangkok as the center of Thai Buddhist civilization, the Thai Royal Kingdom, and as an old Southeast Asian city.

Secondly, there has been the transformation of the idea of consumption of royal performances and royal cuisine in Bangkok tourist spaces. The conventional concept to create such cultural arts as glorification symbols in ritual space, or for court consumption, has changed to being tourist attractions which, in the data sources, reveals that the originality of the characteristics of court arts have been extracted to present 'exotic Thai' in Bangkok tourist spaces.



## 6.2 Discussion

From a summary of the research of this study, there are relevant topics that should be discussed to provide an understanding of Bangkok tourism studies in the aspects of the representation of cultural images of Bangkok. This study reveals how the image of 'Civilized Bangkok' has been represented in a global context. In such a process, there have been three stages included in branding the civilized image of Thai culture in Bangkok tourist spaces in the 'Amazing Thailand' period by state tourism organizations.

### The selection of Bangkok cultural attractions

The selection of Bangkok cultural attractions as the representatives of Thai civilization has aimed to portray the image of Bangkok as the center of an independent state, as a continuing Buddhist civilization of this region, and the continuing high culture development by the court. Such selection reveals that the state has had its narration constructed from the historical background of each attraction selected to narrate the result of a city creation by the court of the Rattanakosin era.

There are relevant aspects related to the selection of Bangkok cultural promotion in this context. The most important concept has been to continue the cultural values of Buddhist and royal culture as Thai national heritage that had been established through the city creation during the Rattanakosin period by the court until the 'Amazing Thailand' period. The state has been selecting and promoting attractions to represent images of the court as the leader of cultural development of Thailand. This can be seen in the promotion of Thai high arts created and developed by the court agents – the Crown Property Bureau, the SUPPORT Foundation – and have been selected by Thai tourism organizations to be the representatives of Thailand and Bangkok. The selected attractions are obviously representative of the image of Bangkok as the center of an independent state where the court agents have been using Thai high culture as the representatives of the nation to represent the status of the court symbolically as a tool for balancing power in crucial times

and to increase income for country development in the period of Thai tourism. In such a frame, the representation of Bangkok cultural attractions has been highly selected to portray the image of the Thai nation through Buddhist and royal arts in tourist attractions since the outset of Thai tourism.

The highlighted aspects are as follows,

Royal Barge procession, the first promotion used as the symbol of Thailand at the outset of Thai tourism development, and then occasionally launched in many auspicious times in the period of 'Amazing Thailand'.

The establishment of Wat Phra kaeo Museum, the Royal Thai Decorations, Orders and the Medals Museum, Royal Barge Museum and the Royal Elephant Museum for the celebration of 200 years of the Rattanakosin era in 1982.

The promotion of Thai masterpieces supported by the SUPPORT Foundation since the period of the Cold War, particularly textiles from Northeastern Thailand, and has promoted such products as the representatives of Thailand, as well as the establishment of a museum of Thai textiles in the period of 'Amazing Thailand'. Another highlight is the exhibition of Arts of the Kingdom established in 1992 and opened as a permanently museum at Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall in the period of 'Amazing Thailand'.

Notably, in the period of 'Amazing Thailand', apart from cultural activities launched by tourism organizations at Sanamluang and iconic royal barge processions, there have been more cultural attractions supported by the court established as museums. The most prominent are Nithatrattanakosin and the exhibition of Arts of the Kingdom. They were promoted to construct the image of Bangkok as the center of Rattanakosin civilization that was officially constructed since the first celebration of the anniversary of 200 years of the Rattanakosin era.

Remarkably, Bangkok tourist spaces, both managed by the state and private sectors, show influential concepts of ideal images of the Thai nation produced by the court, mainly from the selection of narratives propagated by the court, the Three Worlds, Ramakien, and the stories of Nang Noppamas. From such a frame, the representatives of each Buddhist kingdom have been selected to construct and represent Thai civilization based on the image of the golden ages of Thai Buddhist and royal kingdoms handed down from the Sukhothai, Ayutthaya to Rattanakosin periods, as can be seen from iconic motifs of Buddhist and royal fine arts in Bangkok cultural attractions.

From the selection as mentioned, there are many types of Thai cultures in Bangkok that have been included and excluded. The representatives of 'Civilized Bangkok' have been originated, developed and propagated to the public by the court comprising Buddhist culture, fine art culture, and food culture in Bangkok tourist spaces that have been specifically selected to be included as part of Thai civilization.<sup>90</sup> Such selection has been contrasted with the negative images appearing in each phase of Bangkok tourism development, such as the city of brothels, the city of economic failure and the city of political turmoil. This has been a successful mission of the state to portray a set of civilized images through the representation of Thai high cultures in tourist spaces.

The key to the selection is that such highlighted attractions must efficiently attract foreign visitors, which in this context the state has highlighted to the characteristics of a '*diversity of cultures*' with '*well-blended formation*' that have been used to construct the characteristics of 'Civilized Bangkok'.

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<sup>90</sup> There are other sets of culture in Bangkok popularly appearing in foreign tourist guides that have been excluded, such as street food, tattoos, insect eating, red light districts, etc.. From such a contrast, there are opposite images produced by the state, such as images of Thai women as skillful artists, Bangkok as Buddhist city, and Bangkok as the center of Thai culinary arts.

### The construction of Bangkok cultural images

Thai cultures in Bangkok tourist spaces have been constructed by the process of cultural formation which blends a dissimilarity of cultures in three aspects: ages, types and origination. The result of such process makes the 'multi-character' aspect of Thai culture different from other tourist cities. In Bangkok, urban culture coexists with traditional Thai culture. Modern cultural management has been applied to manage Buddhist culture and fine arts culture originating in the court. Each masterpiece showcases the advancement of ideas to mix former and new techniques and sources to create something new. The second aspect is that there is a variety of Thai cultural types in Bangkok tourist spaces comprising Buddhist culture, fine arts culture and food culture. Such differences have shared characteristics of handicrafts influenced from Buddhist and royal culture. The third aspect is that dissimilar origination of productions of world civilization and shared cultures in the region of Asia and Southeast Asia have formed the characteristics of Thai high arts. The formation to blend such differences appears as the most outstanding characteristics of Thai culture promoted through products, services and attractions in Bangkok tourist spaces. In a tourism context, such formation successfully attracts visitors because of these reasons. Firstly, Thai culture in tourist spaces has shared characteristics of international favourites, especially the characteristics of refinement, standards of royal Thai cuisine, handicrafts made of precious and beautiful materials, and services. Secondly, there are otherwise distinct characteristics dissimilar from other tourist cities, even in the region of Southeast Asia due to centralization and standardization by the court.

The successful '*well-blended formation*' in this term is also connected to globalization. Since nowadays, globalization causes people around the world to open their minds to accept different cultures with such characteristics being shared favorites, as in the characteristics of Thai culture that is internationally accepted in terms of attractiveness, including the refinement handicrafts, precious gem and gold decoration, Thai tastes of iconic Thai cuisines, the art of Thai service and hospitality. Such

characteristics of the culture are rooted in Thai habits and represent the influences of Buddhism and court culture. From the representation, there are two aspects that should be discussed. Firstly, to internationalize traditional Thai virtues in tourist spaces is worldly recognized as the strong point of Thai tourism. This could be founded in Bangkok food space as in following presentations. The concept to express fertility from variety of cuisines in a meal is applied to European meal courses. The characteristics of sensory integration while dining from aromatic sweets, main dishes, entertainment and scenic view which had standardize as court culture also satisfied international visitors because of its supreme expression. The concept to make a mouthful pieces, for example, is conventional Thai culinary art that is also convenient for international diners. Thai manners reflecting from gentleness, respectful and welcoming service also could satisfy all visitors. Such hospitality influences from courtly standard and Buddhist teaching to make a relationship between people has both sublimity and warmth. Secondly, in the heritage management area, modern techniques are applied to exhibit Thai beauty with iconic motifs imitated from heaven scenes in the Three Worlds as the main source. This basis of traditional Thai art expression corresponds well to modern concepts to consume cultural attractions through fantasizing and exciting modes. As the study reveals that in the period of *'Amazing Thailand'*, there has been a wide range of traditional culture selected to be managed and presented by modern concepts, which is different from the past in that Bangkok cultural attractions had highlighted their ancientness, being handing down from an original Buddhist heritage and royal heritage in the Rattanakosin period. As the characteristics of 'exotic Thai' has been greatly influenced from global tourist trends in this period, as seen in Rattanakosin Island cultural show, the decoration of the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha at night, Bangkok cultural shows, and dining activities in traditional Thai luxurious restaurants, there has been a transformation of conventional concept of places and practices as being sacred space and ritual practices to now being attractions which are romanticized by modern techniques of cultural management and presentation

of data sources. This makes the characteristics of mystic beauty presented from this method to be a mixture of *'real'* and *'imaginative'* pictures that has been much more intensely highlighted by romanticizing traditional cultural. Apart from shared virtues and international favorites, the success of Thai cultural formation in this context is also dependent on the different cultural background of visitors. The attractiveness of such characteristics has amazed foreign visitors, both from the West and Asian region, by the identities of Bangkok cultural attractions that have both shared and different characteristics. For Western visitors, Buddhist culture, fine arts culture, and food culture in Bangkok tourist spaces amazes them by the uniqueness of *'exotic Thai'* without any relevant cultural background. Interestingly, for Asian visitors, there is a shared cultural background, in particular Buddhist culture. Royal culture of Thailand has the characteristics of sophisticated and refined handicrafts owing to the continuing development and revitalization by the court and state, which is different from other Southeast Asian cities. Food attraction is now noteworthy because of the characteristics of exotic taste, presentation and dining culture developed from the court. The integration of old food civilization of the world and the Asian region has caused Thai food to attract foreign visitors in a wide range by the shared popular taste of international favorite flavors, but with a unique integration of herbs and spices. In addition to the results of cultural formation as mentioned, other factors that cause international visitors to select Bangkok as a world leading destination are the best values that are worth paying for, especially low price airlines, accommodations and services in leading hotels of Bangkok.

#### The representation of 'Civilized Bangkok'

From the selection and construction, the representation of *'Civilized Bangkok'* is now a successful process to equalize the sense of exotic and civilized culture of Thailand on the global stage, and makes new choices for international visitors to explore Bangkok cultural attractions. In a global context, tourism has been an important factor that links different cultures to be blended and shared. From such a phenomenon, internationals are

gradually opening their mind and interested to learn the differences of each city, particularly in the area of main stream tourism where the representatives of national culture have been selected, managed and promoted by the state. Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), as the main tourism sector of the country, has enhanced Bangkok cultural images to be one of the foremost tourist cities in the world from the outstanding characteristics of Thai culture, including the refinement of both handicrafts and mindfulness of the people. Such sophisticated Thai cultural attractions have been selected as the representative of 'thainess', which in this term refers to natural Thai artistic and habits that have been handed down as Thai civilization. The concept to compare and contrast cultural images is a key to highlighting Bangkok cultural attractions. The promotion of Bangkok cultural images has been carefully selected to differentiate Bangkok from other provinces of Thailand based on its status of the center of Thai civilization, while representing an important metropolis of Southeast Asia where many ancient shared cultures have been developing through time. As this representation has been promoted internationally, the theme 'amazing'<sup>91</sup> was selected to attract visitors. Such a concept corresponds well to the characteristics of 'civilized' based on the concept of 'exotic' that causes a surprise because these set of Thai cultures are not generally founded in other places. Next, the representation of Bangkok as 'Civilized Bangkok' also indicates the potential of Thailand and Bangkok to preserve Thai heritage and cultivate the uniqueness of its culture in the era of rapid modernization. The outcome of cultural management reinforces Bangkok cultural images as an old metropolis in the region where its cultures have been formed by selecting and blending world civilization and old cultures in Asian and Southeast Asia. The success of cultural formation achievement from Bangkok tourism development has

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<sup>91</sup> The term "amazing" is defined as "very surprising, especially in a way that makes you feel pleasure or admiration". See also <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/amazing>, 3 July 2016.

been retained through this period and afterwards. There have also been new tourist services, both managed by state agencies and the private sector in this period, such as hostels in historical attraction areas, cultural tours and online media produced by Thai and foreign bloggers covering Bangkok cultural attractions worldwide.

In conclusion, a study of Thai cultural image making in a tourism context with respect to aspects of influences of Thai cultural background on the promotion and management of tourist areas has not been widely examined; as well, Bangkok cultural images in the aspect of the influence of traditional culture on tourism representation has not much studied. This study explores such ideas and confirms that Buddhist and royal culture are influential cultures causing Bangkok cultural attraction to differ from other tourist cities in the world. Knowledge of this aspect could be applied in many areas of Bangkok tourism studies.

### 6.3 Suggestion for future research

For further research relating to Bangkok tourism studies, there are many topics that could be developed from this study including the representation of cultural images of leading tourist cities both in Thailand and Southeast Asia, the characteristics of dynamic Bangkok cultures in a global tourism context; the re-branding of '*Amazing Thailand*' campaign in the future and policy-making of Bangkok tourism that should be focused on Asian tourists as they are now an important tourist group having shared cultural background with Thai culture, such as Buddhist tourism for Chinese tourists; lastly, Bangkok local tourism should be researched with respect to policies and cultural management plans to catch tourism trends that can attract both Thai and foreign tourists.



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## APPENDIX

### A. Relevant tourism development plans

Images of Bangkok promoted in official tourist guides are the capital city of Thailand as the center of '*Thai civilization of the modern period*', the leading capital city in the Southeast Asian region, and the city for living. There have been four development plans prepared to manage Bangkok in these aspects as follows: the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the Bangkok Development Plan, the National Tourism Development Plan, and the Bangkok Tourism Development Plan. All these plans have both directly and indirectly influenced Bangkok development in the era of rapid globalization. The transitional stage of '*traditional world*' and '*modern world*' has been mingled, bargained, and been set as a discourse of nation development. In this phase, words such as '*development*', '*national identity*' and '*civilization*' have been interpreted and brought to practice.

The National Economic and Social Development Plans<sup>[338]</sup> are plans of Thailand forming the overall picture of the development of the country. Thai tourism was first addressed in the 4th plan, although the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> plans did not directly cite 'tourism development strategy'. The purposes are to increase the promotion of domestic tourism, regulate the tourist industry, and upgrading manpower in the tourism industry. From the start of the Amazing Thailand campaign in 1998 to 2013, there were four National Economic and Social Development Plans. The 8th plan (1997-2001) aimed to push Thailand as the center of Southeast Asian tourist city and encourage Thai people to travel in the country. The 9th plan (2001-2006) focused on the concept of Livable City (เมืองน่าอยู่/ชุมชนน่าอยู่), the reinvention of ways of life in local communities, local Thai wisdom, and natural sites in the city; manage urban cities and the countryside to be safe, convenient, hygienic, calm, orderly places; push the self-sufficiency economic to be the model of development. The 10th plan (2007-2011) focused on balancing rapid globalization and 'thainess' in terms of culture; the promotion of many alternative medical practices; and urgently reinventing to be a '*green*

city'. The 11th plan (2012 -2016) follows the vision, '*A Happy society with equity, fairness and resilience*' based on the following objectives that relate to tourism's image: to promote a fair society of quality so as to provide social protection and security; to strengthen social and local communities to ensure positive adaptation to changes; and to enhance the efficiency of production and services based on local wisdom, knowledge, innovation and creativity.

In the Bangkok development plan, apart from following the National Economic and Social Development Plans since the first plan in 1961 to develop and solve urban problems<sup>[339]</sup>, the Bangkok development plans also raise Bangkok tourism to be considered. For example, the '*Bangkok Agenda 21*' launched by the BMA in 1998 set the city's course for environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development. The plan raised the issues of the environment, culture, and tourism as top priorities.<sup>[340]</sup> A seminar report, 'กรุงเทพมหานคร: วิสัยทัศน์ 2010', states that Bangkok must develop tourist areas to serve large numbers of visitors; apart from this, in order to develop the city to be a '*mega city with a good quality of life*', and 'กรุงเทพเมืองสวรรค์ตามแนวพระราชดำริ' (2009-2020), Bangkok must be develop in many aspects, such as the economy, society, hygienic condition and people's mental health; lastly, the values of cultures, history, and preservation must be supported.

The national tourism development plans also have been involved in promoting tourism of Thailand. They have been used to frame tourism development in the appropriate manner and direction. In 1976, the 1<sup>st</sup> national tourism development plan was launched. The main objectives of this master plan were: utilizing Thailand's special attractions as much as possible; providing convenient means of transportation to tourist attractions and recreational areas for Thai people, and promoting cultural exchange between tourists and the local people; expanding production of arts and handicrafts; achieving the objectives aforementioned while maintaining a socio-cultural and historical identity. The first plan also offered a relative clear scheme emphasizing concrete methods of arts and culture conservation. The latter plans have been maintained the objectives as mentioned. Recently,



one objective of the current plan (2012-2016) aims to move Thailand's tourism competitiveness up at least 15 places, which would put it among the top five destinations in Asia. In order to achieve this aim, five strategies have been set for implementation: (1) develop infrastructure and logistics linked with domestic and international tourism; (2) develop and rehabilitate tourist sites and improve various rules and regulations to accommodate more tourist arrivals; (3) develop the creative economy which is the focus in the 11<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development plan; (4) create confidence in Thailand's good image among visitors; and (5) strengthen the participation of the public sector, civil society, and local administrative organizations in tourism management.

The Bangkok tourism development plan was first launched to manage Bangkok tourism directly in 2011-2013. <sup>[341]</sup> The vision has been to push Bangkok to be the best metropolis for tourism (มหานครท่องเที่ยวที่ดีที่สุด). The aims are to develop eco-tourism towards international quality and standards on a sustainable basis. The missions are to develop and promote tourism in Bangkok by emphasizing people participation and recognizing conservation of the environment and local wisdom, as well as to establish criteria and develop quality tourism in Bangkok to achieve international standards. The roles and responsibilities are planning Bangkok tourism development under the government policy, the National Economic and Social Development Plan and the Bangkok Development Plan. Coordinating with related parties, including local people and the public and private sectors, is stressed in order to promote and develop tourist attractions, restore and maintain sites and also the environment for tourism, along with promoting eco-tourism based on local wisdom. Promotion of tourism in various media and developing Bangkok tourism services in order to meet international standards and facilitate tourists as a tourism information center. Strategies for tourism development focus on eco-tourism site development and promotion on a sustainable basis. The objectives are to increase the number of attractions developed and managed as eco-tourism sites by defining 12 sites in a Sustainable Tourism Community Project in 2008; and set strategies for tourism development to meet international standards.

## B. Bangkok tourism Campaigns

### Before the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign

Paradech Phayakhavichian (2007) stated that the concrete campaigns were set in the second phase of Thai tourism promotion, 1979-1991. In this phase, the Bangkok tourism development plan was first addressed in the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the 4th plan, 1977-1981, as part of the national agenda. In addition, there were many campaigns promoted between 1986-1991, such as *'Brilliant Thailand 1986'*, *'Visit Thailand Year 1987'*, *'Thailand Arts and Crafts 1989'*, *'I love Thailand 1990'*, and *'Exotic Thailand- See More of the Country, See More of the People 1991'*. Reynolds states: *'A series of campaigns followed that played unabashedly on Orientalist clichés about the exotic East'*<sup>[342]</sup> because these campaigns before the *'Amazing Thailand'* campaign focused on traditional culture in Bangkok with activities and events promotion.

The continuous six years of campaign setting was a success and attracted more international visitors than ever, significantly, by the economic boom in the early 1990s, or as Reynolds stated: *'Globalisation meant, among other things, the expansion of Thai business into less developed parts of the region, fulfilling the bold declaration of Chatchai Choonhavan to turn the battle field of Indochina into marketplaces'*.<sup>[343]</sup> The boom year was *'Visit Thailand Year 1987'*, as recorded in Thai Airways historical background, *'The 'Visit Thailand Year' campaign proved a huge success for the nation and the nation's flag carrier'*. In this year, new domestic and international passenger terminals were built at Bangkok International Airport to cater to this campaign. As for the campaign, *'Thailand Arts and Crafts 1989'*; *'The promotion campaign was aimed principally at boosting the country's exports of handicraft products, but it sought also to increase tourist spending part of the border strategy to turn Thailand into a 'shopping paradise' (The nation, 14.8.88), in the process bolstering the country's earnings from international tourism.'*

In brief, the success of branding Bangkok images through campaigns and trends in this phase focused on the strength of Thai culture, in particular traditional Thai practices and handicrafts.

### Amazing Thailand campaign and afterward, 1998-2013

Until the Amazing Thailand 1998 campaign was set, large numbers of attractions were represented and were remarkably successful, both in Bangkok and other provinces in Thailand. This campaign was conducted to help the economic crisis that started in Thailand in 1997, and expanded to other countries in the Asian region. The important 'win-win' strategies to save and balance budgets of both the state and private sectors had a hand in running this campaign throughout the 15 years.

*Paradech Phayakhavichian* (2007) described the third phase of tourism as follows: in the third phase, 1992-2001, the main tourism development plan focused on sustainable tourism because of the emergence of social, cultural and environment problems resulting from the rapid development to urbanize the country in the second phase. Bangkok tourism partially addressed this issue by developing tourism in Bangkok. Prominently, the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign was first launched in 1998-1999 and continuously produced more variety of attractions and upgraded cultural products to change from low to high quality tourism. Similarly, as described in 'Roles of Administrators of the TAT and the TAT in tourism Industry', the third phase, 1990– present, is when TAT has aimed at developing sustainable tourism and quality market programs so as to preserve tourist areas and to attract more quality tourists to visit the country and stay longer. Rules and regulation on immigration were changed, allowing tourists from fifty-six countries to remain in Thailand for thirty-day without a visa. The country has also been promoted as a gateway to the economic hexagon of the region. Another important role played by the TAT administrators has been their participation in various international tourism organizations. All of these positions have made Thailand better known in the international scene, and thus been beneficial to tourism development. On this topic, this study will examine campaigns and trends that have been promoted throughout the 15 years.

Continuous themes have been set throughout this period for foreign markets under the main concept of 'amazing'; with more emphasis placed on the highly modernized stage, being uniquely Thai and well-blended, paradoxically traditional and modern cultures. In 1998-1999, 'Amazing Thailand' was promoted. Bangkok set the theme 'Amazing Bangkok'

to follow. The following are lists of 'sub-themes' that have been launched throughout the 15 years.

'เอกสารประกอบพิจารณาพระราชที่ 3.2 การเตรียมงานปีท่องเที่ยวไทย ๒๕๔๑-๒๕๔๒ (*Amazing Thailand 1998-1999*)' <sup>[344]</sup> reported the aims of the campaign promotion was to represent Thai tourism by different methods, more colorful than in former periods. The main visitor targets were first East Asia, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Indonesia; the second group was from Europe, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Scandinavia, and East Europe; next were from the United States and Canada, Brazil in South America and South Africa, the last group. In order to attract a variety of international visitors, TAT launched many activities, including arrangement and promotion of the royal barge procession ceremony, a Thai ceremony that could not be seen anywhere else in the world, and development and continuous support of activities in each province, including Bangkok, such as local festivals, music festivals in Bangkok, etc. Apart from this, Bangkok was supported especially as a shopping hub, by means of organizing a '*shopping street*', promoting '*Thai food*' by organizing a Thai food festival and food seminar, and launching tours to promote particular amazing Thai culture, such as '*Amazing Taste of Thailand*', '*Amazing Thai Boxing*', '*Amazing Tropical Thai Fruits*', and '*Amazing Cultural Heritage*'.

After that, there were many campaigns promoted the '*amazing*' theme, such as '*Happiness on Earth*', '*thainess*' and '*Miracle Thailand*' / '*Miracle Year of Amazing Thailand*'. TAT's news <sup>[345]</sup> reported campaigns throughout 2011-2013; for example, TAT's annual action plan of 2012 aimed to highlight '*thainess*' such as Thai boxing, Thai cuisine, Thai health and wellness, Thai culture and heritage and many other such aspects of the country's identity. In 2013, the project '*Find Your Fabulous*' was launched showcasing Thailand's thriving health and wellness industry. This was followed by '*World Gourmet Festivals*' in which TAT followed the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual World Gourmet Festival, and '*International Bangkok Drum Festival*' held to show the important role of many different kinds of drums in enlivening global music, particularly the role of Thailand and ASEAN countries in using drums in many aspects of life. Next, '*Top Ten Thai street foods*' was launched to promote Bangkok street food under the concept of '*24/7 Everywhere...Easy Tasty Street Food*' cooperating with

CNNGo's that named Bangkok as the world's best city for food. TAT also conducted an 'exciting campaign' by showcasing Thai food at its best to a worldwide audience. The Songkran festival was also promoted under the project '*Falling in Love with Thailand & the Thai Songkarn*' around town, Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhklaram Ratchworamahawihan (Wat Pho), Wat Saket Ratchaworamahawihan, Wat Ratcha Orasaram, and Wat Suthat Thepwararam Ratchaworamahawihan, and a cultural fair near Siam Paragon. TAT promoted Thai culture in international festivals that selected both traditional and contemporary Thai cultures for promotion, such as the Thai Tourism festival in Tokyo, and in Australia. A campaign promoted the top three creative tourist activities: Thai massage, Thai cuisine, and Thai boxing. A campaign launched for shopping also upgraded the image of Bangkok as the center for shopping paradise, from elegant Thai silk to some of the world's best-designed jewelry, healthy spas, and therapeutic products to the best brand-name products, from local handicrafts, decorative and designer items. A 'Stopover Bangkok' campaign was a unique effort to attract airline transit passengers to enjoy Bangkok attractions for a few days and nights and visit thematic tour categories: Adventure and Excursion, Art and Culture, Beauty and Spa, Ethnic and Local Tour, Fine Dining, Golf Day and Night, Health and Medical, Shopping, Show and Entertainment, Thai cooking class and transportation. The recent '*Miracle Year*', *Amazing Thailand 2011-2012* was aimed at promoting seven miracles of Thailand: (1) the Thai Monarchy, (2) 'thainess', (3) Thai Heritage, (4) Arts, Culture, and Traditions, (5) Nature, (6) Health and Wellness, and (7) Thai Cuisine.

Bangkok tourism has been themed partially follow Thailand tourism themes, as well as creating its own campaigns: *Amazing Bangkok*, *Bangkok Smile*, *Saneh Bangkok*, and *Miracle Bangkok*. Each project has selected remarkable tourist attractions with fresh perspectives to promote the following campaigns.

*Amazing Bangkok*, particularly focused on art and senses routes, BKK night crawlers, floating and exotic markets, gourmet routes, shops, spas, and shopping routes.

*Bangkok Smile* aimed to promote five groups of attractions: festivals, art and culture, river and canals, cuisine, shopping, and spa & health. This campaign, promoted around 2011, focused on five selling points: Thai Culture and Festivals, the River, Dining and

Shopping, Health, and Value to meet the requirements of visitors. Surveys conducted by TAT indicated that the purpose of foreigners' visiting was to eat delicious food, shop, have spa treatment, visit historical and cultural sites.

*Saneh Bangkok, or Attractive Bangkok, promoted images of Bangkok as the city of culture via many methods, such as producing Bangkok stamps printing famous representatives of Bangkok : Phra Buddha Saiyat (The Reclining Buddha Image) at Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhalaram, the Giant Swing, Wat Suthat Thepwararam, namphrik (chili dip), Industrial Ring Road bridges night sightseeing, the Chao Phraya River, Wat Arun Ratchawararam, Phra Mondop, Wat Phra Si Rattanasatsadaram, the Ramakien mural paintings in the enclosure gallery, Wat Phra Si Rattanasatsadaram, the trade and business centers in Bangkok, shopping paradise, Ratchadamnoen Avenue night sightseeing, and Chatuchak weekend market, the biggest weekend market in Bangkok. *Miracle Bangkok* focused on Asian markets, which commemorated three special royal occasions: His Majesty the King's 84th Birthday, Her Majesty the Queen's 80th Birthday, and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn's 60th Birthday. This campaign was aimed at reinforcing the 'Amazing Thailand' brand image and promoting 'thainess' and Bangkok as a quality leisure destination, as well as creating an environmentally-conscious travel.<sup>[346]</sup>*

The campaigns launched throughout the 15 years show significant changes of Bangkok tourism trends from exotic attractions in the former period to contemporary cultural products ranging from exotic Thai to globally famous attractions.

C. A list of outstanding attractions of each district <sup>[52]</sup>

District	Characteristics and Significances	Attraction
1. Phra Nakhon	Old Town area and official buildings locating along the Chao Phraya River	Grand Palace, The Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Suthat Thepwararam, Temple of the Reclining Buddha, National Theatre, Pakklong Talad, Sanam Luang, Nithat Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall, etc.
2. Dusit	Densely inhabited district, military office area, national official building site, and commercial area	Vimanmek Mansion, Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall, Aphisek Dusit Palace Building, Equestrian Monument, the Marble Temple, Dusit Zoo, etc.
3. Ratchathewi	Commercial, service, tourist, and historic areas	Phaya Thai Palace, Suan Phakkad Palace Museum, Victory Monument, Ban Krua Nueo community, Aksara Theatre, Pratunam shopping street, King Power complex, etc.
4. Phaya Thai	Commercial, service, residential, food area	Soi Aree, Banana Family Park, Bang Omsin Museum, the archives of the Public Relations Department and Broadcasting

		Hall Museum, Stamp Museum, and Siam Palace, etc.
5. Din Daeng	Commercial, service, residential, and recreation area	Wat Fatimah, Wat Prommawongsaram, Thai youth center, Esplanade, Thai Ratchadalai Theatre, Hof Art Center, Fortune Tower complex, IT Mall Fortune, etc.
6. Wang Thonglang	Medium density residential area and commercial zone in the northeast district, recreation area	Wang Thonglang Park 1 and Park 2, Center of Quality of Life, Chaopraya Bodindecha Museum, Wat Samakkhitham, Hidayatullah Mosque, etc.
7. Huai Khwang	Commercial, service, and dense residential area	RCA, Siam Niramit, Thai Boxing stage, Thai cultural Center, The Ninth Square, Siam Jusco Ratchada, Robinson Ratchada, TA-DOO Art Galleries, Phraram Kao Temple, etc.
9. Pom Prap Sattru Phai	Location of historic preservation area and historical attraction zone	Wat Leng Neoei Yi, Wat Thepsirin, Ban Bat communities, Wang Woradit Museum, Li Ti Peaow Shrine, Bo Bae market, Klong Thom market, Damrong Rachanuphap Library, King Rama VII museum, etc
10. Nong Chok	An important eco-tourism area of Bangkok	Nong Jok Garden, Darul Muttaquin Mosque, etc.



11. Lat Krabang	Eco-tourism area, dense residential area in the south of the district and industrial settlement in the northeast part of the district	Bird-watching park, fish park and local temples, etc.
12. Min Buri	Cultivated land, dense residential and commercial area, and cultural attraction sites	Darullmadah communities, Thai traditional dancing (ลิเก ี่เหยบ), small boat museum, etc.
13. Khlong Sam Wa	Field and canal sites and recreational areas	Safari World, The Lake Sea golf club, local temples, and mosque, etc.
14. Khan Na Yao	Recreational, residential and commercial areas	Fashion Island, Siam Park, golf courses, cactus garden, local temples, etc.
15. Saphan Sung	Cultivated and canals area, semi urban-rural area	Fields, gardens, farms, canals, Muslim communities, local temples, etc.
16. Prawet	The center of the outskirts, location near the international airport	Rama IX Garden, fish garden, Seacon Square, Muslim communities along canals, etc.
17. Bueng Kum	Natural site and recreational area	'Free Thai' garden, Bangkok Sculpture Center, local temples, etc.
18. Bang Kapi	Dense residential area	Shopping complexes, sport centers, Prasat Museum, and temples, etc.
19. Sai Mai	Eco-tourism area and communities	Fish garden, Dok Mai Road, Buddha Khaya Chedi, Khon

		mask-making group, local temples, etc.
20. Don Mueang	Official building area and non-dense residential area	Royal Thai Air Force Museum, Nation Memorial, Aquarium Museum, 'Sapan' Araya Wattanasilp garment galleries, parks, etc.
21. Bang Khen	Medium-sized business and residential area	Golf course, sport park, shopping complex, Dharma sanctuary, tree market, temples, botanical and animal museums, Teacher-training Museum, etc.
22. Lak Si	Small-sized commercial building area, housing development	Golf courses, Thai kite center, Lak Si Temple, etc.
23. Lat Phrao	Medium to dense residential area, and recreational site	Sunflower field, Guan Yin Shrine, and temples, etc.
24. Chatuchak	Dense commercial, residential, and serviced area	JJ market, Central Ladprao, Or Tor Kor market, Bon Marche market, Train museum, parks, etc.
25. Bang Sue	Dense commercial and residential area, wood production source	Wood street, center of Thai music instrument production, local temples, etc.
26. Bang Na	Medium density urbanized area, location of international exhibition and conference hall	Central City Bangna, golf courses, international exhibition and conference hall, etc.

27. Phra Khanong	High density urbanized area, location of row houses	Bird garden, Thai Pharmacy Museum, and local temples, etc.
28. Suan Luang	Low density residential area	Mahabut Temple, Khom Temple, mosque, museums of poet and Buddhasilp, canals, etc.
29. Watthana	The center of business, trading, embassies, and Bangkok theatres	Pridi Banomyong Institute, Thai craftsman house, Siam Association, Ban Kham Tiang Museum, etc.
30. Khlong Toei	New commercial area	Bangkok Planetarium, Plainern Palace, Queen Sirikit Convention Center, shopping complex, Klong Teoy port, etc.
31. Yan Nawa	High density commercial, service, and residential area	Pho Man temple, Wat Yannawa, etc.
32. Bang Kho Laem	Plain area located along the Chao Phraya River, high density residential area	Suan Luang communities, mosque, park, and temples, etc.
33. Sathon	Center of trading, business, service, and diplomacy locating in a historic site	Kukrit Museum, Saint Louis Church, local temples, etc.
34. Bang Rak	High density commercial and residential area, location of many temples and museums	Maha Uma Devi Temple, Bangkok Folk-life Museum, Silom Road, etc.
35. Pathum Wan	Center of trading, business, service, and embassies	Luxurious shopping complexes, etc.

36. Chom Thong	Dense residential area with canals and fertile orchards	Floating market (Wat Sai), snake garden, and local temples along canals, etc.
37. Thon Buri District	Historic site preservation, old communities and temples	King Taksin the Great Monument, King Rama I Bridge, Wat Kalayanamit Woramahawihan, etc.
38. Khlong San	Historical site preservation, old communities, and temples	Muslim and Thai communities, mosques, memorial park, Phatayakul Home Museum, food area in Lad Yaroad, etc.
39. Bangkok Yai	Historic site preservation, old communities , palaces and temples	Old palace, fortresses, Wat Arun, Ton Son Mosque, etc.
40. Bang Phlat	Dense residential area and historic sites	Rama VIII Bridge, Khon mask and Thai ornament making community, shopping complex, etc.
41. Bangkok Noi	Historic site preservation, old communities , and temples	Royal Barge Museum, old temples, medical museum, Wang Lang community, Ban Bu community, etc.
42. Taling Chan	Communities along canals and orchards	Floating markets, Sirindhorn Anthropology Center, museums and Ardel galleries, etc.

43. Thawi Watthana	Plantation area, medium density residential area	Orchid garden, Sanam Luang II market, Aksa Road, Small Buddha Image Museum, etc.
44. Thung Khru	Plantation area, medium density residential area and orchards	Orchards, ostrich farm, fish farm, local temples, etc.
45. Phasi Charoen	Semi urban-rural area, canals	Floating market, local temples, etc.
46. Rat Burana	Semi urban-rural area, canals	Herbal parks, Thai musical instrument house, local temples, etc.
47. Bang Khun Thian	Trading and industry area, eco-tourism site, mangrove forest	Seaside, canals, local museum, Mon community, shopping complex, etc.
48. Bang Bon	Low medium density residential area, trading and industry area, agricultural area	Orchards and local temples, etc.
49. Bang Khae	Residential, industrial ,and agricultural area	Siam sculpture center, marsh, local temples, Chao Mae Tubtim Shrine, shopping complex, etc.
50. Nong Khaem	Semi urban-rural area, canals	Orchid farm, Thai Boat Museum, local temples, and sword-fighting training school, etc.

#### D. Buddha image in dissimilar versions recorded in official tourist guides

*The rare version and the only one survived;* The most important Buddha image resided at Wat Suthat named Phra Srisakyamuni (พระศรีศากยมุนี) derived from Wat Phrasimahathat, Sukhothai. At the basement of statue is also one of the most important Buddhist art that is the sculpture of the Buddha Attitude of his first sermon (ปางปฐมเทศนา) and the sermon of Lord Buddha to his mother in heaven (ปางโปรดพระมารดาในสวรรค์), the rare Dhavaravati Buddhist art remaining in the region. The Buddha image is the biggest bronze-made material that is still surviving in the world. Phra Srisakayamuni (พระศรีศากยมุนี) is the old and most revered Buddha image of Sukhothai period. *The most significant Buddha image of the nation;* The Emerald Buddha (พระแก้วมรกต) and Phra Phuttha Sihing (พระพุทธสิหิงค์) the well-known and most revered Buddha images in Lanna region which Thai Kingdom had derived to enshrined in the most significant state temples, the Emerald Buddha at Wat PhraKaeo and Phra Phuttha Sihing in the Buddhaisawan Chapel (พระที่นั่งพุทไธสวรรย์) at National museum. *The only one invented styles;* Apart from this, King Rama I had molded many important Buddha images such as The first decorated Buddha image (พระพุทธรูปทรงเครื่อง) in Rattanakosin style named Phra Buddhachulachak (พระพุทธจุลจักร) and Phra Buddhachakrapongsa (พระพุทธจักรพงศ์) installed at Phra Suralaiphiman Chapel (หอพระสุราลัยพิมาน), Phra Buddhapatimachaiwat (พระพุทธปฎิมาชัยวัฒน์) the Subduing Mara (ปางมารวิชัย) Buddha image of King Rama I enshrined in Grand Palace. The Deva statue of King Uthong derived from Wat Buddhaisawan (วัดพุทไธสวรรย์) decorating with silver and was named Phra Thepbidon (พระเทพบิดร), the first stucco Buddha image of Rattanakosin installed in Wat Mahathatywaratrungsarit (วัดมหาธาตุยุวราชรังสฤษฎิ์). Next in the reign of King Rama III, the king had supported art work, there were many Buddha images installing in temples such as the traditional decorated Buddha images wearing King Rama I and King Rama II's dresses installed at Wat Phrakaeo. The statues were finely enameled bases (ลงยาราชาวดี) and filled inside Buddha relics in their topknots. It was the king's intention to highly furnish such style dissimilar from gigantic model of former periods. Additionally, the king also informed royal staff to 'research' Buddha stories from old scripture, and 'select' various styles of Buddha images to use as models installing at Phra Paritta Hall

(หอพระปริตร) in Royal Palace. In the reign of King Rama IV, the king had dedicated golden Buddha images to the Kings of Ayutthaya, Thonburi period and former kings. He also created new style of Buddha images by applying realistic art to form the model and use Lanna-Chiang Sean Buddha model such as Phra Nirantrai (พระนิรันตราย) enshrined in Phrasuralaiphiman Hall (หอพระสุราลัยพิมาน) in Grand Palace. The king also had created Phra Siam Devadhiraj (พระสยามเทวาธิราช) to protect the kingdom enshrined in Phaisantaksin palace (พระที่นั่งไพศาลทักษิณ) Grand Palace. The imitation of old masterpiece ones; King Rama I had molded Phra Phutthalalai (พระพุทธรูปเหล็ก) filling inside with Buddha relics at Wat Phrachetuphon, Phra Khanthararat (พระคันธารราษฎร์) the significant Buddha image used in Royal Ploughing Ceremony (พระราชพิธีพืชมงคลจรดพระนังคัลแรกนาขวัญ) and national rain praying ceremony (พิธีพืชมงคล) archived in the hall of Phra Khanthararat (หอพระคันธารราษฎร์). In the reign of King Rama V, the king was interested in Buddhist art. The artistic style followed King Mongkut's creation. He also imitated Buddha images in Lanna-Chiangsean style, such as Phra Buddha Chinnarat (พระพุทธรูปชินราช) and Phra Buddha Norasri (พระพุทธรูปศรี), and enshrined them at Wat Benchamabophit. King Rama the sixth followed former convention. He had built and renovated large numbers of Buddha images such as Phra Mahanakchina (พระมหานาคจีน) at Wat Baworniwetwihara, Phra Buddhasaiya (พระพุทธรูปไศยาสน์) at Wat Rachathiwat, and Phra Kaeomorakotnoi (พระแก้วมรกตน้อย) engraved from Russian jade at Grand Palace. King Rama VII had followed the Buddha image of King Rama IV such as Phra Buddhamanusak (พระพุทธรูปมณูสสนาค) at Wat Baworniwet.

## E. Timeline of Bangkok cultural attractions and important tourist events in Bangkok

1949 POAS and Siam Airways join to become Thai Airways Company Limited

1957 The first Royal Barge Procession of the present reign as part of the 25th century celebration of the Buddhist Era

### 1960s *(the influx of American GIs in Bangkok)*

-The Royal Thai Government established the Tourist Organisation on March 18, 1960

-1 June 1960 TOT published 'Holiday Time in Thailand' magazine

-The Tourist Organisation was renamed the Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) in 1963

-The tour of Europe and the US launched by King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit

-Bangkok became the center of Thai tourism

-The first training program for professional tour guides at Chulalongkorn University

### 1970s

1971 Thai Airways first published 'Sawasdee' magazine

1976 SUPPORT Foundation was founded to celebrate a monarchical revival that rejuvenated symbols and rituals

1979 Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) was established to replace TOT

### 1980s - 1990s *(Economic boom in Asia and the ASEAN)*

1982 The celebration of Bangkok Bicentennial 200 years, Museum of Wat Phra Kaeo, Royal Barge Museum were initiated,

1986 'Brilliant Thailand' campaign

1987 'Visit Thailand year' campaign



- 1988 the Royal Thai Elephant stables were converted into a museum
- 1989 'Thailand Arts and Crafts' campaign
- 1990 'I love Thailand' campaign
- 1991 'Exotic Thailand-See More of the Country, See More of the People' campaign
- 1992 the 1st exhibition of Arts of the Kingdom at Anantasamakhom Throne Hall to celebrate Queen Sirikit's 60 years,
- Suphannahong Royal Barge received the world ship trust maritime heritage from the United Kingdom,
- The Royal Thai Elephant Museum was opened to commemorate the 60th birthday of HM Queen Sirikit
- 1995 the Rattanakosin Committee proposed a plan for the development of Bangkok Old City on Rattanakosin Island
- 1996 the first time Narai Songsuban was used by King Bhumibol
- 1997- 1998 (*IMF crisis*)
- The Amazing Thailand campaign was initiated as part of recovery efforts from the 1997 Asian Crisis
- 2003 -Royal Barge Procession showcased in APEC conference
- Museum of Thai textiles was opened to celebrate the occasion of Queen Sirikit's 80th birthday 'the story of how Her Majesty Queen Sirikit has helped turn Thai silk from local handicraft into a symbol of Thailand'
- 2006 - Royal events including Royal Barge Procession as the country commemorated the 60th anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibhol Adulyadej's accession to the throne
- 2007 the celebration of 225 years of Bangkok

2008 The exhibition of Arts of the Kingdom was officially made a museum at Anantasamakhom Throne Hall to celebrate the auspicious time of King Bhumibhol's 60<sup>th</sup> year of coronation and the King's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday

2009 Nithatrattanakosin was opened; many land marks on Ratchadamneon Avenue were renovated

2011 - The Epigraphic Archives of Wat Pho was certified as the Memory of the World International Register by UNESCO

-The celebration in occasion of Wat Pho was certified as the Memory of the World International Register by UNESCO and commemorated the auspicious year of His Majesty the King's 84<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Her Majesty the Queen's 80th Birthday



## VITA

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