



**INTERPRETATION OF WAT ARUN RATCHAWARARAM (THE TEMPLE OF DAWN):  
THE APPLICATION OF SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM PRINCIPLES  
IN AN INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์

**By  
Kanjaphorn Polprateep**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
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Program of Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism  
(International Program)  
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The interpretation of Wat Arun Ratchawararam (The Temple of Dawn), is the subject of a detailed analysis in the research presented here. This research concludes that Wat Arun Ratchawararam - a powerful symbol of Thai Buddhism and a highly recognised symbol of traditional Thai culture in the modern city of Bangkok - is poorly understood and poorly interpreted to the Thai people and foreign visitors alike. In fact the low standard of interpretation is working counter to the sustainable management of the place and is threatening its cultural heritage values. Qualitative research used in this research has revealed some important underlying values of the place and some important opportunities to change the method of interpretation in a way that will provide for more sustainable management over the long term.

Four research hypotheses were explored in depth and proved in this research. The first of these hypotheses is the architecture and fabric conservation at Wat Arun have been managed in appropriate way for authenticity. The second hypothesis is the architecture, fabric, cultural practices, cultural landscape, and cultural meaning are major cultural significance of Wat Arun. The third hypothesis is the existing interpretation at Wat Arun is a major issue to create visitors understanding and appreciation of Wat Arun. The latest hypothesis is Wat Arun has an effective interpretation program for sustainable cultural tourism. The information of Wat Arun which are history and background, physical characteristics, architecture, fabric, conservation policy, cultural practices and rituals, cultural meaning, cultural significance, the monastery's authenticity, threat and risk factors toward the monastery, and the existing interpretation were studied and analyzed comprehensively to verify the research hypotheses.

The research reveals that the first and the second hypothesis are reliable in that the architecture and fabric conservation at Wat Arun have been managed authentically and sustainably - the architecture, fabric, cultural practices, cultural landscape and cultural meaning create the perfect cultural significance. However, the third and the fourth hypothesis, regarding the interpretation and its effectiveness are opposed by the findings of the study. It can be demonstrated that the existing interpretation at Wat Arun does not assist visitors with an adequate or appropriate understanding and appreciation of Wat Arun. The existing interpretation program lacks effectiveness. It is not contributing to sustainable cultural tourism achievement.

All aspects of the cultural significance and their interpretation at Wat Arun have been examined in detail and considered in the formulation of a new interpretation strategy. From this an interpretive theme and key message of Wat Arun under the theme "Spiritual center" is offered as the central point of a new form of interpretation. Through this the four significances of Wat Arun would be explained to confirm why the monastery is indeed a "Spiritual center". Twelve sub-themes and key messages are designated as a framework for fundamental messages which will be told to visitors through a new interpretation program of Wat Arun. Seven opportunities to restructure and develop interpretation of the monastery are described comprehensively to provide for sustainable cultural tourism there. Finally, an interpretive plan is presented using five main communication tools and the means of their application for communicating the interpretive themes and key messages of Wat Arun and its architecture.

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Program of Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism Graduate School, Silpakorn University Academic Year 2010

Student's signature.....

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Background and statement of significance of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

Thon Buri is known as a part of Bangkok. It used to be the capital city of Thailand in the Thonburi reign when King Taksin the Great was on the throne during 1767 - 1782. After King Taksin the Great reign, King Rama I moved the capital city across the river and named it Krung Thep which is known as Bangkok to foreigners. Thon Buri was not linked by bridge to Bangkok until 1932 and was officially incorporated into the city only in 1971. At present, Thonburi is a part of the Rattanakosin preservation area. Many historical and cultural heritages have been accumulated in this area.

There are some interesting riverside temples along the Chao Phraya River, especially in the Thon Buri area. However, the most prominent and famous temple seems to be Wat Arun Ratchawararam Ratchaworamaha Viharn or the Temple of Dawn. Wat Arun Ratchawararam or Wat Arun is situated on the west, or Thonburi, bank of the Chao Phraya River opposite to Wat Phra Chetuphonwimonmunkhararam (Wat Pho). Wat Arun was built in the Ayutthaya era, the old capital city of Thailand (Thailand has four era or periods; the Sukhothai era, the Ayutthaya era, the Thonburi era, and the Rattanakosin era. At present, it is the Rattanakosin era). Originally it was named Wat Makok, and later, Wat Makok Nok.

It has been told that after fighting his way out of Ayutthaya which was besieged by the Burmese army, King Taksin arrived at this temple just as dawn was breaking. He later had the temple renovated and renamed it Wat Chaeng, the Temple of Dawn. Wat Arun has served many important roles. Firstly, in the Thonburi period, Wat Arun was the chief temple. In 1779 (Fine Art Department 1978), Wat Arun was enshrined the valuable Buddha statue, the Emerald Buddha, for five years before it was instated at Wat Phasrirattanasadsadaram or the Temple of the Emerald Buddha until now. Secondly, Wat Arun is the crown temple of King Rama II and part of the

ashes of King Rama II has been kept under the pedestal of Buddha statue at Phra Ubosoth or the ordination hall.

Thirdly, Wat Arun had been announced for being one of the important heritage places of Thailand since 1949 because the temple embraces both valuable tangible and intangible heritage. From Thonburi till the Bangkok period, the temple has been renovated and extended several times, several essential and fabulous architectures have been accumulated here. The most prominent structure, at the front, is Phra Prang which was built in Khmer-style chedi (or pagoda) and is 67 meters high. Adjacent to this at each of the four cardinal directions are smaller Prangs and Mondops. All of these structures are decorated with brightly colored pieces of porcelain. These magnificent Phra Prang have become a landmark of Bangkok. Besides, there are a great deal of fabulous architectures in the temple, i.e., the luxury Phra Ubosot or the Ordination Hall, Phra Viharn or the chapel, the rock giants, the building of Buddha's footprint niche, Chinese statues and rockeries of ballast for the temple decoration, etc. Thus, it can be seen that Wat Arun is an important tangible cultural heritage at the Rattanakosin preservation area.

Not only being a tangible cultural heritage, Wat Arun is also an intangible cultural heritage place because The Royal Barge Procession, one kind of famous Royal Thai Tradition which was established for The Royal Kathin Ceremony has been accommodated only at Wat Arun on special occasions. This great royal tradition is paramount and evokes to being a spiritual tradition of Thai society. Moreover, Buddhist activities or rituals are regularly provided at the temple. These rituals are intangible heritages which are associated with local people leading to the creation of spiritual or social values to the local people. Due to its tangible and intangible heritages, the Fine Arts Department announced that Wat Arun is to be one of the most important heritage places of Thailand in 1949 (<http://www.archae.go.th/monument/middle/Bangkok/110/p81.pdf>: accessed in February, 2008).

Fourthly, Wat Arun functioned as a religious place since before the Thonburi era till the present. Moreover, the temple manifests as being a landmark of the city. This reputation causes the temple to be the most prominent tourist attraction at Thonburi. The temple is conserved and promoted to be a traveling place by related



organizations, i.e., Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), Fine Arts Department, and Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). Lastly, Wat Arun is a cultural heritage site which fulfills of cultural significance in all criteria. The fabric of the temple can express Thai historic vestiges. Thai people can study some of the history, beliefs and traditions of ancestors from the architecture and fabric in the temple.

From the details of Wat Arun's significance described above, Wat Arun should be conserved and its authenticity safeguarded for being the cultural heritage of Thailand. Moreover, being a famous tourist destination, the monastery has provided inspiration, enjoyment, and rest to countless visitors. Therefore, Wat Arun should have a suitable interpretation plan to educate visitors for pursuing sustainable cultural tourism which leads to protection of the authenticity and integrity of the temple.

### **Goals and objectives**

The goal of this research is to create an in-depth study in the context of historical, architecture, cultural significance, cultural meaning, authenticity, conservation management and the interpretation at Wat Arun in order to develop the principles and application in an interpretive plan for the monastery. The results of the study which is developed for the principles and application of the interpretive plan can that be applied to Wat Arun with high effectiveness and obtain a sustainable cultural tourism purpose at the end. Furthermore, this study will lead to the other research relevant to Wat Arun and other cultural heritage places in Thailand which are religious places for pursuing the aim of architectural conservation and sustainable cultural tourism in the future. The objectives of the study are identified as follows;

1. To examine the architecture and cultural heritage of Wat Arun.
2. To estimate the cultural significance for understanding site's value for developing in an appropriate Wat Arun interpretation principle.
3. To investigate and analysis the existing interpretation both on and off site for finding a strategy, strong and weak points of the interpretation and developing in an appropriate Wat Arun interpretation principle.
4. To examine visitors' attitudes and their behavior toward Wat Arun and its interpretation for providing interpretation guidelines to meet the tourists' requirements and a sustainable cultural tourism.

5. To formulate interpretation principles for reaching sustainable cultural tourism at Wat Arun by evaluation and carefully analysis of the collected data.

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. The architecture and fabric conservation at Wat Arun have been managed in appropriate way for authenticity.
2. The architecture, fabric, cultural practices, cultural landscape, and cultural meaning are major cultural significance of Wat Arun.
3. The existing interpretation at Wat Arun is a major issue to create visitors understanding and appreciation of Wat Arun.
4. Wat Arun has an effective interpretation program for sustainable cultural tourism.

### **Research Questions**

1. How many the attractive places at Wat Arun and what are their history, cultural meaning, significance, and how the monastery conserves the architecture and fabric for safeguarding authenticity?
2. What are the cultural practices which have been done at the monastery?
3. Should Wat Arun be obtained by so-called complete cultural significance?
4. What are the threats and risks factors resulting in architecture and fabric deterioration?
5. How does Wat Arun launch an interpretation program to the public for orientation, education, and entertainment purposes?
6. Should the interpretation be both on and off-site to be effective for sustainable cultural tourism?
7. What are the opportunities to restructure and develop interpretation of Wat Arun?
8. How the interpretation plan for sustainable cultural tourism should be developed and implemented in appropriate direction in the future?

### **Scope of the Study**

This research will focus on Wat Arun and its surrounding areas (Wang Doem and Arun Ammarin Road). The architecture and fabric, the conservation process, cultural landscape of Wat Arun are comprehensively studied. Cultural practices, behaviours and attitude of both Thai and non-Thai visitors and relevant people are also studied and criticized. Buddhism knowledge related to the rituals and cultural meanings of the architecture are studied and analyzed. Interpretation of both on and off-site will be embraced and critiqued. The landscape of the buffer zone which is located at Thonburi on Wang Doem road and Arun Aummarin road are included in the research.

### **Limitations**

There are three limitations of this study. Firstly, the literature and relevant research of Wat Arun are difficult to find and the information of the monastery is ambiguous. The literature of interpretation for a cultural heritage site and relevant literature of this field are limited to available resources. Secondly, the study involves a religious place; technical terms in Buddhism must be exploited and described for clear understanding. Some of the Pali and Sanskrit language are presented in the technical terms and they must be explained by definition in this research. Lastly, for the technical terms of Thai traditional architecture must be translated into English. Whilst, the various types of terms used for cross cultural translation are found there are limited resources to confirm the accuracy of the terms after English translation. These three limitations are major drawbacks which appeared in doing the dissertation.

### **Research Methodology**

The qualitative research is exploited for finding the result of the research questions and verifying the research hypotheses of the study. This type of research will be very useful in that it has the ability to gain in-depth data and details related to the issues studied. This research strategy will emphasize on the specific content and subject of the research under the research framework and then investigate and interpret in every aspect to understand and answer the research questions for the

research hypotheses verification at the end. The process of the qualitative research methods used can be described as follows;

### 1. Literature Review

A literature review will be an important method for collecting data related to Wat Arun that can provide a fundamental understanding to the background of the monastery in context from the past to the present. The information of the architecture and fabric are embraced by this method to elucidate background, significance, development, and conservation. The cultural practices, Buddhism knowledge are also to be obtained for understanding cultural meaning and tradition of the religious place. Furthermore, a theoretical framework will be accomplished in accordance with the literature review. The data will be collected from books, journals, newspapers, archives, relevant researches, and electronic media.

### 2. Survey and Behavior Observation

The survey of the site is an essential method to investigate the existing architectural heritages, settings, physical characteristics and cultural landscape. The buffer zone of Wat Arun will be investigated. The existing interpretation on-site is surveyed to understand the interpretation policy and application. Visitor behavior is observed to seek their behavior while accessing at the site. This method will provide useful data of visitors for formulating an interpretative principle of Wat Arun.

### 3. An Interview

An interview is conducted to gather more detailed information. This method will approach the relevant groups of people; visitors and monks. For visitors, the content of message will involve their attitude toward the monastery and experience that they get from visiting the site. Besides, visitors' opinions toward interpretation will be asked for measuring the effectiveness of the interpretation plan and application. For monks, the questions will concentrate on the fundamental background of Wat Arun and information of the site in aspects of Buddhism knowledge, rituals, and cultural practices will be asked. The conservation and management plan, and interpretation plan will be contained in the questions.

The collected data will be synthesized from the small part to the holistic part by an inductive approach for answering the research questions. The results will be

reported in a descriptive presentation. Photographs and maps will be presented for increasing report elucidation.

### **Process of the Study**

1. A study of literature related to interpretation and sustainable cultural tourism for theoretical framework definition.
2. Research planning and preparation.
3. Surveying the site gathering general information, topography, physical landscape, architecture, cultural practices and interpretation.
4. Participant observations and in-depth interviews.
5. Collecting data and documentation for more information from the archives, journals, newspapers, text books, relevant theses, and electronic sources.
6. Report, Analysis, and interpretation of the data.
7. Develop and formulate the interpretation plan.
8. Summarize the research and provide recommendations.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### 1. Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expression and values. Cultural Heritage is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage (ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter 2002: p.23).

#### 2. Tangible Cultural Heritage

Tangible cultural heritage encompasses the vast created works of humankind, including places of human habitation, villages, towns and cities, buildings, structures, art works, documents, handicrafts, musical instruments, furniture, clothing and items of personal decoration, religious, ritual and funerary objects, tools, machinery and equipment, and industrial systems (ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter 1999: p.24).

### 3. Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible cultural heritage can be defined as embracing all forms of traditional and popular or folk culture, the collective works originating in a given community and based on tradition. These creations are transmitted orally collective re-creation. They include oral traditions, customs, languages, music, dance, rituals, festivals, traditional medicine and pharmacopeia, popular sports, food and culinary arts and all kinds of special connected with the material aspects of culture, such as tools and the habitat (ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter 1999: p.23).

### 4. Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism refers to a level of tourism activity that can be maintained over the long term period because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place (ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter 2002: p. 24).

### 5. Cultural Tourism

Cultural Tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on the culture, and cultural environments including landscapes of the destination, the values and lifestyles, heritage, visual and performing arts, industries, traditions and leisure pursuits of the local population or host community. It can include attendance at cultural events, visits to museums and heritage places and mixing with local people. It should not be regarded as a definable niche within the broad range of tourism activities, but encompasses all experiences absorbed by the visitor to a place that is beyond their own living environment (ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter, 2002: p. 22).

### 6. Interpretation

Interpretation refers to the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site (The ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage site 2007: p. 3). While Interpretation Canada announced that interpretation is a communication process, designed to reveal meanings and relationships of our cultural and natural heritage, through involvement with objects, artifacts, landscapes and sites ([www.heritageinterp.com/whatis.htm](http://www.heritageinterp.com/whatis.htm): Accessed in September, 2008).

### 7. Conservation

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. Conservation encompasses the activities that are aimed at the safeguarding of a cultural resource so as to retain its historic value and extend its physical life (UNESCO 2003: p.10).

### 8. Cultural Significance

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. It is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects (The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999: p. 2).

### 9. Fabric

Fabric means all the physical material of the place including components, fixtures, contents, and objects (The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999: p. 2).

### 10. Cultural landscape

A cultural landscape is a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values (UNESCO 2003: p. 14).

### 11. Setting

Setting means the area around a place, which may include the visual catchment (The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999: p. 2). This includes natural and built aspects, fixtures and the activities associated (UNESCO 2003: p. 11).

### 12. Buffer Zone

A buffer zone means an area surrounding the property which has an essential influence on the physical state of the property and/or on the way in which the property is perceived (UNESCO 2008: p.26). Besides, a buffer zone has restrictions placed on its use to give an added layer of the property protection.

### 13. Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the genuine status of a listed monument, group of monuments, or site, usually of national and/or regional significance. It is a measure of

the degree to which the values of a property may be understood to have been credibly, truthfully, and genuinely expressed by the attributes of the property (UNESCO 2004 : p.29).

### **Synopsis of Chapters**

#### Chapter 1. Introduction

Background and statement of significance of Wat Arun, goals and objectives, and significance of the study are explained in this chapter. In addition, the details of research methodology are indicated.

#### Chapter 2. The Architecture of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

In this chapter the architectures of Wat Arun their history and background are described and explained comprehensively.

#### Chapter 3. The History and the Buddhist activities of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

The history of Wat Arun and the history of changes that have been made, and the various actions taken over the years to conserve it are explained. The Buddhist activities which have been done at Wat Arun are reported.

#### Chapter 4. The Analysis of the Cultural Meaning and Cultural significance of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

The cultural meaning in the form and decoration and the cultural significance of Wat Arun are analyzed and reported comprehensively for finding significance of the temple and creating interpretation plan.

#### Chapter 5. The Analysis of the Authenticity of Wat Arun Ratchawararam and the Threat and Risk factors to Wat Arun Ratchawararam

The authenticity are assessed and reported. Furthermore, threats and risks of the architecture and fabric deterioration are identified and evaluated.

#### Chapter 6. Current Practices and Successes in Communicating Key Messages of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

The type and details of communication tools which are used for presenting Wat Arun both on-site and off-site are reported. Strong and weak points of the interpretation are analyzed and declared for being the useful information to formulate the interpretation plan.



#### Chapter 7. Opportunities to Restructure and Develop Interpretation of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

Opportunities to restructure and develop Wat Arun's interpretation program are discussed. The ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites, ideas of the experts are exploited for being guideline to discuss content of this chapter for enhancing and develop the monastery's interpretation effectiveness.

#### Chapter 8. Interpretive Themes and Key Messages of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

The clear identification of interpretive themes and key messages are provided in this chapter for being a framework to delivery essential information of Wat Arun to visitors through interpretation program.

#### Chapter 9. An Interpretation Plan of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

The principle of interpretation plan and implementation are described explicitly for Wat Arun's sustainable cultural tourism.

#### Chapter 10. Conclusion

The summary results of the research are explained and the recommendations for Wat Arun interpretation program should be done at present are advised. The useful suggestions to proceed relevance study also provide at the end of the chapter.

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## Chapter 2

### The Architecture of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

This chapter presents a detailed description of Wat Arun's architectural structures. From a physical survey of the site, it is found that there are 16 structures of importance. Each is an attraction for visitors. Details of these structures are provided below including a site map, history, creative design concept architectural design, layout, and photographs.

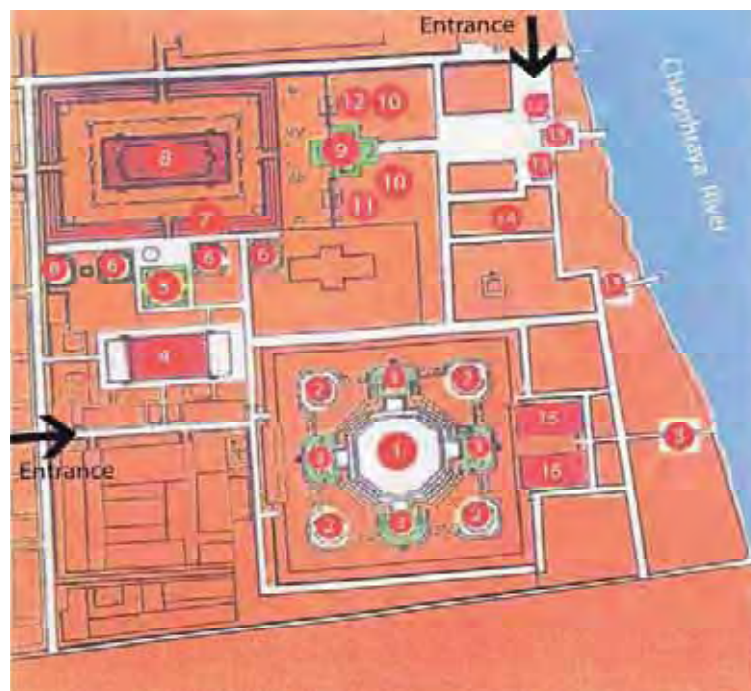


Figure 1: Map of Wat Arun

Source: Adapted from Brochure of Wat Arun, Bangkok, Thailand

1. The Principle Prang or Phra Prang
2. The Satellite Prang or Prang Thit
3. The Porches or Mondop Thit
4. The Chapel or Phra Viharn
5. The Buddha's Footprint Niche
6. The Four Satellite Pagoda or Chedi
7. The Peripheral Balcony or Phra Viharn Kot
8. The Ordination Hall or Phra Ubosoth
9. Entrance Way with Spire Roof
10. Demons
11. Nai Ruang Pavilion
12. Nai Nok Pavilion
13. Riverside Pavillions
14. King Rama II Monument
15. The Old Ordination Hall or Bot-Noi
16. The Old Chapel or Viharn-Noi

### **The Principle Prang or Phra Prang**

There is no exact evidence to indicate when Phra Prang has been built. However, it can be assumed that Phra Prang may have been created at the end of Ayutthaya reign. The evidence identifying this assumption is when King Taksin arrived Wat Arun and founded the new capital city after Ayutthaya was besieged and destroyed by Burmese army. It was found that Phra Prang has already been settled.

This monument has been settled in front of Wat Arun, behind the old chapel or Viharn-Noi and the old ordination hall or Bot-Noi. At first, the height of Phra Prang was just only 2 meters. Later, in Rattanakosin period, King Rama II commanded to reconstruct Phra Prang for being Phra Mahatart and the land mark of city.

However, the process of reconstructing this beautiful structure was finished only to the foundation stage when King Rama II passed away. The reconstruction of Phra Prang was continued by King Rama III. Moreover, he created the new building for monk residences in the temple.

Following the attention of King Rama II to construct this new monument, as Phra Mahatart, and to make an important landmark of city, it was built to an ultimate height of 67 meters, with a circumference of 234 meters at the base. Phra Prang was constructed on the water's edge. Phra Prang Wat Arun is still the highest prang in Thailand.

Phra Prang's design is meant to symbolize Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, Tridhātu concept or the three realms. The Hindu-Buddhist cosmology could be described as follows;

*Buddhist cosmology can be divided into two related kinds: spatial cosmology, which describes the arrangement of the various worlds within the universe, and temporal cosmology, which describes how those worlds come into existence, and how they pass away. Spatial cosmology can also be divided into two branches. The vertical (or cakravāda) cosmology describes the arrangement of worlds in a vertical pattern, some being higher and some lower. By contrast, the horizontal (sahasra) cosmology describes the grouping of these vertical worlds into sets of thousands, millions or billions. The vertical cosmology is divided into thirty-one planes of existence and the planes into three realms, or dhātus, each corresponding to a different type of mentality. These three (Tridhātu) are the Ārūpyadhātu, the Rūpadhātu, and the Kāmadhātu.*

*The Ārūpyadhātu (Sanskrit) or Arūpaloka (Pāli) or "Formless realm" would have no place in a purely physical cosmology, as none of the beings inhabiting it has either shape or location; and correspondingly, the realm has no location either. This realm belongs to those devas who attained and remained in the Four Formless Absorptions (catuh-samāpatti) of the arūpadhyānas in a previous life, and now enjoys the fruits (vipāka) of the good karma of that accomplishment.*

*The Rūpadhātu (Pāli: Rūpaloka) or "Form realm" is, as the name implies, the first of the physical realms; its inhabitants all have a location and bodies of a sort, though those bodies are composed of a subtle substance which is of itself invisible to the inhabitants of the Kāmadhātu. The beings of the Form realm are not subject to the extremes of pleasure and pain, or governed by desires for things pleasing to the*

senses, as the beings of the Kāmadhātu are. The bodies of Form realm beings do not have sexual distinctions.

*The beings born in the Kāmadhātu (Pāli: Kāmaloka) differ in degree of happiness, but they are all, other than arhats and Buddhas, under the domination of Māra and are bound by sensual desire, which causes them suffering. This realm consists of heaven, Sumeru, earth, and Naraka.*

*The third realm consists of heaven, Sumeru, earth, and Naraka. Heaven is the bounded planes floating in the air above the top of Mount Sumeru including 4 worlds; Parinirmita-vaśavartin or Paranimmita-vasavatt The heaven of devas- “with power over (other’) creations”, Nirmānarati or Nimmānaratī- The world of devas “delighting in their creations”, Tusita– The world of the “joyful” devas. This world is best known for being the world in which a Bodhisattva lives before being reborn in the world of humans, and Yāma – Sometimes called the “heaven without fighting”.*

*Sumeru (Sanskrit) or Sineru (Pāli) is the name of the central world-mountain in Buddhist cosmology. Etymologically, the proper name of the mountain is Meru (Pāli Neru), to which is added the approbatory prefix su-, resulting in the meaning “excellent Meru” or “wonderful Meru”.*

*The concept of Sumeru is closely related to the Hindu mythological concept of a central world mountain, called Meru, but differs from the Hindu concept in several particulars.*

*Naraka or Niraya is the name given to one of the worlds of greatest suffering, usually translated into English as “hell” or “purgatory”. As with the other realms, a being is born into one of these worlds as a result of his karma, and resides there for a finite length of time until his karma has achieved its full result, after which he will be reborn in one of the higher worlds as the result of an earlier karma that had not yet ripened ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist\\_cosmology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_cosmology) : accessed in June, 2008).*

This Khmer-style prang comprises three main elements as follows;

- The Principle Prang or Phra Prang
- The satellite prang or Prang Thit

- The four porachs at the cardinal points or Mondop Thit

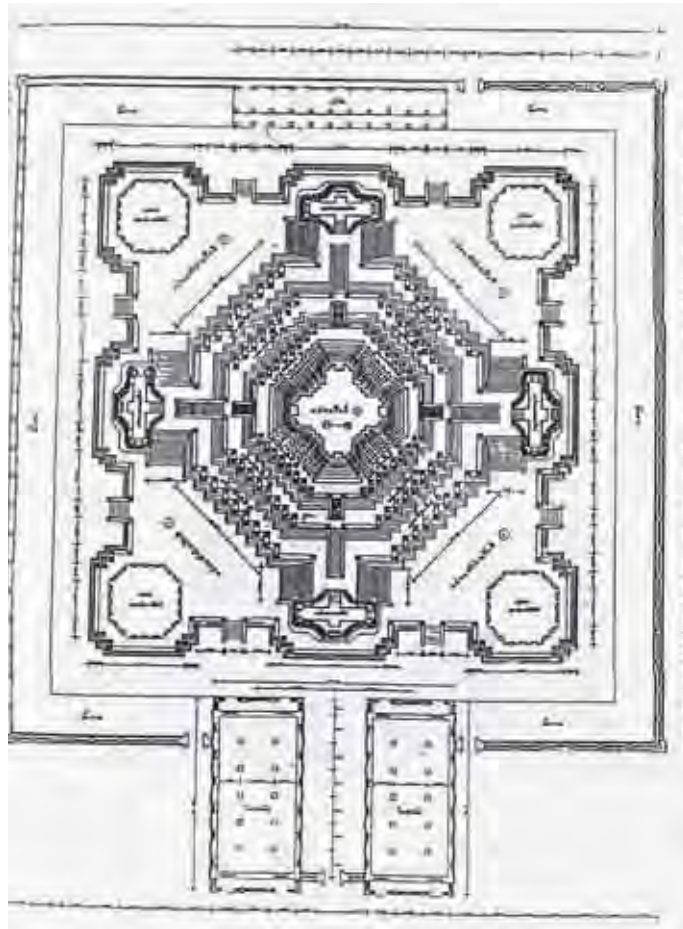


Figure 2: Floor plan of Phra Prang  
Source: Anaspong Kraikriengsri : 1992

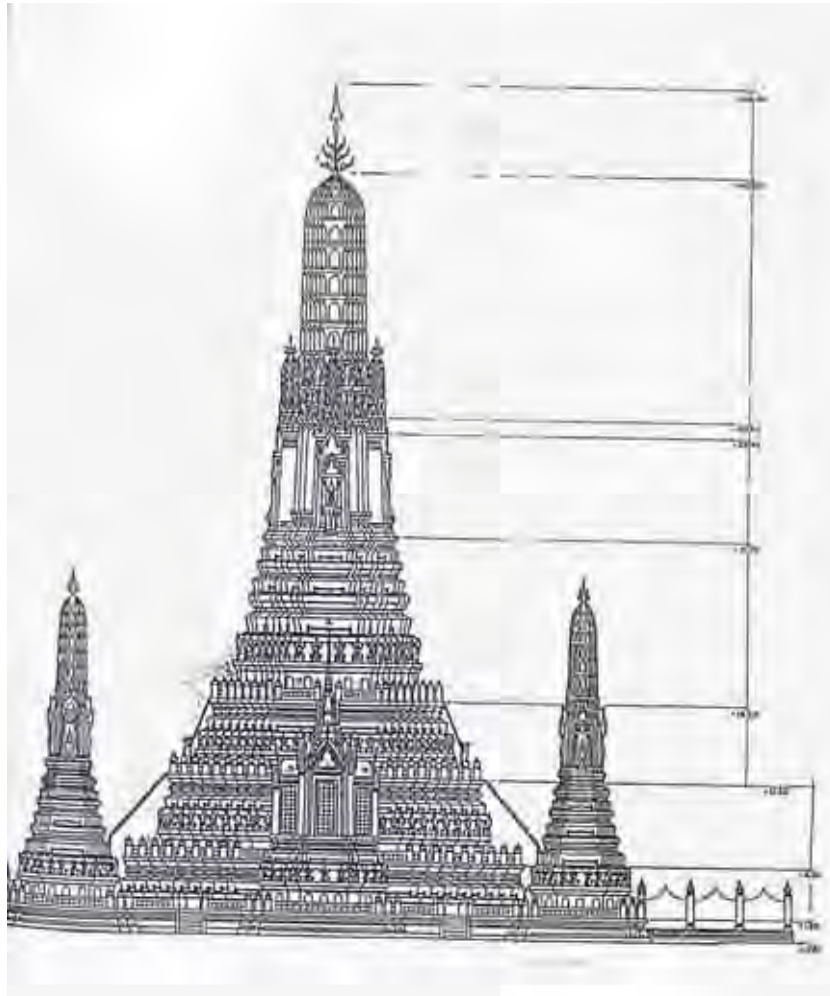


Figure 3: Architecture Layout of Phra Prang  
Source: Anaspong Kraikriengsri : 1992

The concept to build Phra Prang was adopted from Tridhātu concept (the three realms). Thus, the architect built the central prang to represent Sumeru or Mount Meru. In the Buddhist cosmology, the world-mountain of Sumeru is an immense, strangely shaped peak which arises in the center of the world, and around which the Sun and Moon revolve. Its base rests in a vast ocean, and it is surrounded by several rings of lesser mountain ranges and oceans.

The three worlds are all located on or around Sumeru which are: the Trāyastriṃśa devas live on its peak. Trāyastriṃśa devas refers to the world “of the Thirty-three (devas)” is a wide flat space on the top of Mount Sumeru, filled with the gardens and palaces of the devas. Its ruler is Śakra devānām indra, “lord of the



devas". Besides the eponymous Thirty-three devas, many other devas and supernatural beings dwell here, including the attendants of the devas and many apsarases (nymphs) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist\\_cosmology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_cosmology): accessed in June, 2008).

The Cāturmahārājikakāyika devas live on Mount Sumeru's slopes. The Cāturmahārājikakāyika devas is the world "of the Four Great Kings" is found on the lower slopes of Mount Sumeru, though some of its inhabitants live in the air around the mountain. The devas who guide the Sun and Moon are also considered part of this world, as are the retinues of the four kings, composed of Kumbhāndas (dwarfs), Gandharvas (fairies), Nāgas (dragons), and Yaksas (goblins) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist\\_cosmology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_cosmology): accessed in June, 2008).

And the Asuras live in the ocean at Mount Sumeru's base. The world of the Asuras is the space at the foot of Mount Sumeru, much of which is a deep ocean. It is not the Asuras' original home, but the place they found themselves after they were hurled, drunken, from Trāyastriśa where they had formerly lived. The Asuras are always fighting to regain their lost kingdom on the top of Mount Sumeru, but are unable to break the guard of the Four Great Kings ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist\\_cosmology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_cosmology): accessed in June, 2008).

Sumeru and its surrounding oceans and mountains are the home not just of these deities, but also vast assemblies of beings of popular mythology who only rarely intrude on the human world.

Besides, Sumeru Mountain is surrounded by an ocean, called Nathi Si Thandorn, while the Himavant Forest and Anodata Pond are at the foot of the mountain. The beings living by the mountainside also include humans, nagas, garudas, ogres, ogresses, and yogis (<http://www.ancientcity.com>: accessed in July, 2008).

Therefore, the story about the three worlds in Sumeru, normally occurred as the decoration around Phra Prang.

Phra Prang's foundation which is called Tan Phai Tee is made by stone ties. The central prang has totally four levels. Each level has delicate details and graceful decorations.



Figure 4: The first floor of Phra Prang

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

Reaching to the first level, there are eight entrances, stone stairs, from the foundation or Tan Phai Tee. These stone stairs are set between minor prang and Mondop in each cardinal points.

Next from the first floor is terrace of the second level. Traditionally, the floor or terrace of Phra Prang is called Taksin or Pra Taksin.



Figure 5: Ornamentation of Phra-Prang (left)

Figure 6: Kinnaree, mythological creature in small cove (right)

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007

The colorful porcelain in flower, tree, and leaf shapes are used to decorate around the base of the second floor as a symbol of the Himavant Forest which is located at the foot of Sumeru.

For the second level, there are eight points of stairs to climb to the second terrace. Visitors can use the stairs left or right sides which are set at each Mondop.

At the second level base, it has many of small coves. Inside the coves, they are placed with Kinnorn and Kinnaree which are mythological creatures, half bird-half human living in the Himavant Forest.



Figure 7: Marn Bak at Cheung Bart

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007

The upper of the base at each level are called Cheung Bart. Cheung Bart in this step has rows of demons (Māra) or Marn Bak, decorated with pieces of porcelain, line in the exterior of the main prang. There are totally 64 demons or Marn Bak at this Cheung Bart.

Next level, there are only four stairs which are set in front of each Mondop at the cardinal points for climbing up to the third level.

The upper of the third floor is the base of the forth terrace level. In this base or Taksin also have small coves with Kinnorn and Kinnaree inside, alternating small coves with an ear of paddy in a vase inside. 46 monkey dieties or Krabi Bak are also used to decorate Cheung Bart at this step.



Figure 8: Porcelain Brahmās or Brahmās Bak

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

The highest level that visitors can reach has only four entrances; the stairs are set at the same direction as the stairs of third level. Encircling the exterior of Cheung Bart of the upper of the fourth terrace is 52 porcelain Brahmās or Brahmās Bak. Brahmās could refer to one of trinity gods, the creator, in Hinduism which has rooted deeply in Buddhism, or any of the deities of the Ārūpyadhātu or of the Rūpadhātu in Buddhist cosmology.

Above of Brahmās Bak, four statues of Hindu god Indra on his ride, the elephant Airavata, were built in arch at cardinal points.



Figure 9: Statue of Indra on Airavata elephant (left)

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

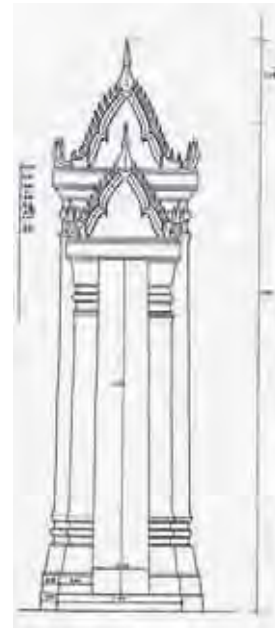


Figure 10: Lay out of the arch (right)

Source: Anaspong Kraikriengsri : 1992

In Buddhist, Indra or Śakra devānām indra is the king of gods, or the ruler, living on the top of Mount Sumeru. In Hindu, Indra is also the king/chief and other major gods serving under him would be Agni (god of fire), Varun (god of water), Vayu (god of wind), Surya (sun god), Chandra (moon god), Kaama or Kama (god of sensuality and desire) and more. These gods live in Swarga, which is the heaven in Hinduism (<http://www.sanatansociety.org>: accessed in August, 2008).

Hindu gods are found to mix undeniably in Buddhist since, next, four peak small prangs at cardinal points and 16 Narayana or Vishnu or otherwise Rama of Hinduism on his ride. The Hindu god, Narayana or Vishnu is the preserver and protector of creation (<http://www.sanatansociety.org>: accessed in August, 2008).

Garuda, mythical beasts that are half-man, half-bird (Rosalyn Thiro 1997 : p.77), and serving Narayana as his ride , and holding serpents or Nāgas, are shown at this area.





Figure 11: Narayana, Rama of Hinduism and Garuda, mythical beasts at four peaks small prang

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

The peak of central prang which is called Yod Noppasoon is decorated by 1.20 meters height and 185 kilograms weight with 52 centimeters diameter of golden crown or Monkut at the highest point.



Figure 12: Yod Noppasoon and golden crown or Monkut at the highest point

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

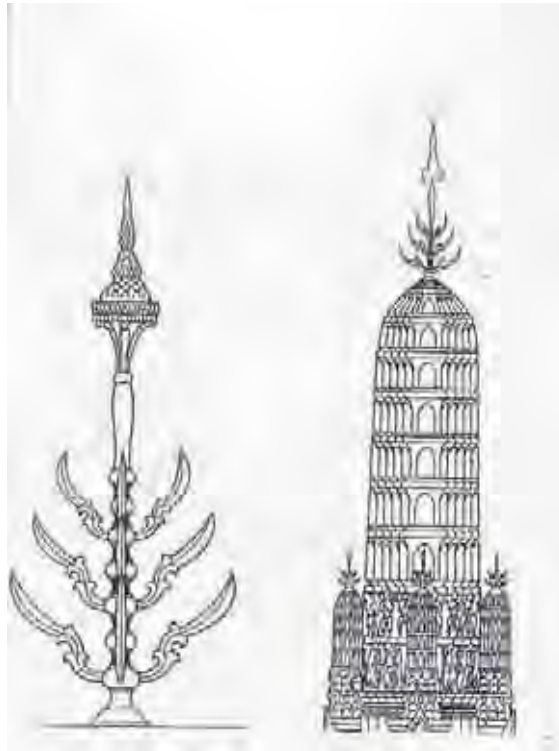


Figure 13: Layout of Yod Noppasoon and lay out of the peak of Phra Prang

Source: Anaspong Kraikriengsri : 1992

This golden crown or Monkut was created for the image Buddha at the main chapel of Wat Nangnong, but King Rama III brought this golden crown to put on the peak of the main prang instead.

Prince Dumrongrachanuparp assumed the way to bring golden crown to the highest point of main prang by the claim of Chao Phraya Kosatipbadee (Tuam Boonark) that King Rama III would have prepared for Prince Monkut to come to the throne afterwards (Anaspong Kraikriengsri 1992 : p.41).

It could be seen that Phra Prang was decorated by colorful porcelains. These porcelains were donated by local people (Roselyn Thiro 1997: p. 123). Some of them were beautiful ancient bowls called Banjarong.





Figure 14: Indented corners of Phra Prang's base which are decorated by Chinese ceramic

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007

There are five entrances to reach Phra Prang area and it could be found royal seal of King Rama I-V in each entrance. The fence of Phra Prang also has royal seal of King Rama II for ornamentation and informing that Wat Arun is a royal temple of King Rama II.



Figure 15: Royal seal of King Rama II at the entrance of Phra Prang (left)  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

Figure 16: Royal seal of King Rama II at the fence of Phra Prang (right)

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007



Figure 17: Royal seal of King Rama I at the entrance of Phra Prang  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure 18: Royal seal of King Rama III at the entrance of Phra Prang  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure 19: Royal seal of King Rama IV at the entrance of Phra Prang  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure 20: Royal seal of King Rama V at the entrance of Phra Prang  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

Not only colorful porcelains are decorated at Phra Prang, there are Chinese statues standing around the base for ornamentation.



Figure 21: Chinese statue surrounding Phra Prang (left)

Figure 22: Animal rockery at Phra Prang base (right)

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008



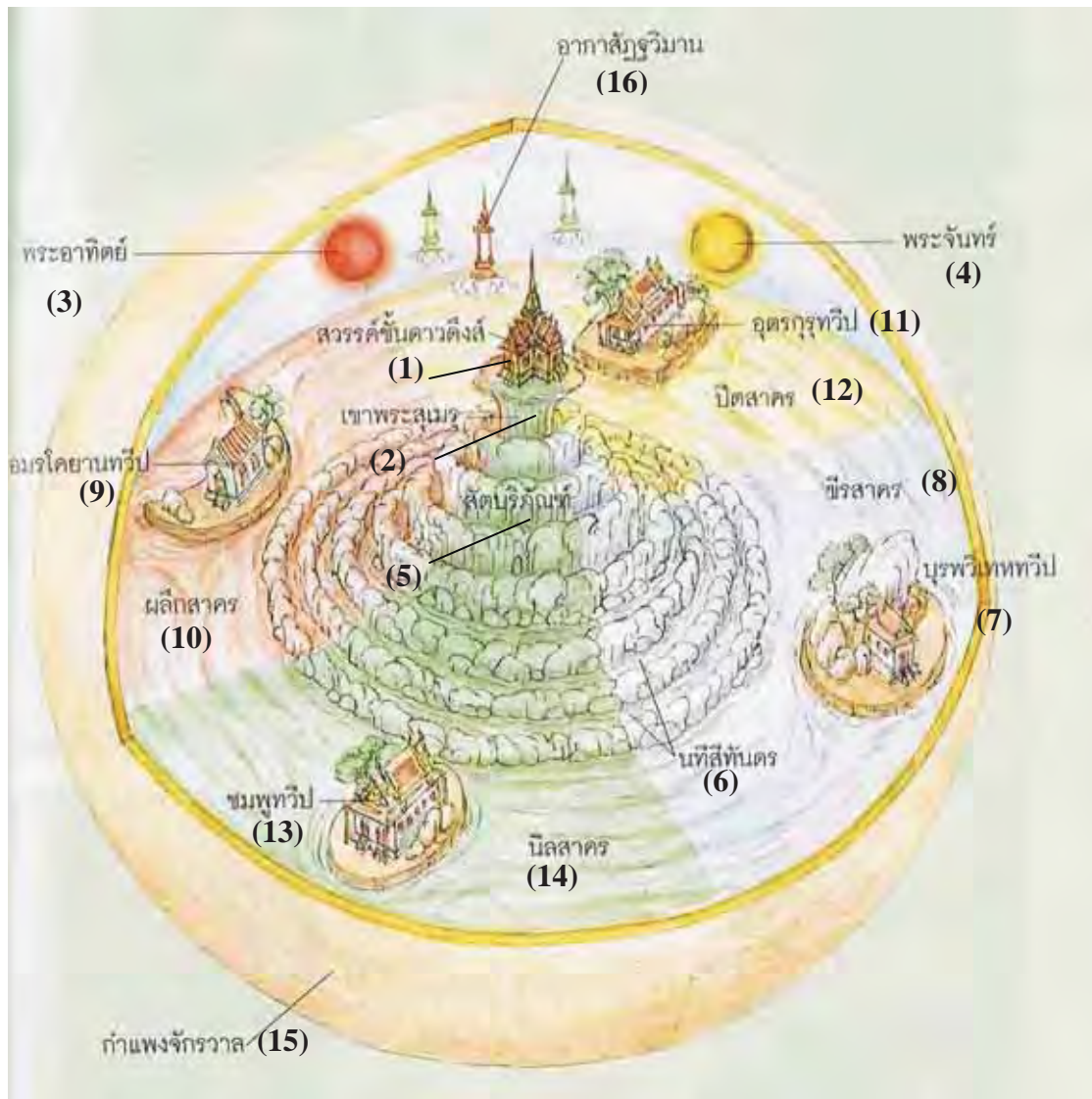


Figure23: Tridhātu layout Source: Sudara Sujchaya 2004 : p, 129

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Trāyastriṃśa heaven          | 2. Sumeru or Mount Meru |
| 3. Sun                          | 4. Moon                 |
| 5. Sattaboritpun                | 6. Nathi Si Thandorn    |
| 7. Pūrvavideha or Pubbavideha   | 8. Khira Sakorn         |
| 9. Aparagodānīya or Aparagoyāna | 10. Palerk Sakorn       |
| 11. Uttarakuru                  | 12. Pita Sakorn         |
| 13. Jambudvīpa or Jambudīpa.    | 14. Nila Sakorn         |
| 15. Universal wall              | 16. Agasatha Vimarn     |

The overview image above shows the layout of the Tridhātu concept. It adheres to the belief that the universe has a circular shape. Sumeru or Mount Meru is the highest mountain standing in the middle of universe. Trāyastriśa heaven which is home of Śakra devānām indra, lord of the devas, locates at the top of Sumeru or Mount Meru. Several heavens are located above Śakra devānām indra's home. Sun, moon, and stars orbit in the sky above. Surrounding Mount Meru, seven rings of mountains are called Sattaboritpun saddle and among these mountains are Nathi Si Thandorn ocean.

There is ocean around Mount Sattaboritpun till horizontal or Universal wall. In the ocean, there are four continents. The shape and colour of the ocean of each continent, and the characteristics of human beings who live in each continent are different.

Pūrvavideha or Pubbavideha locates at the east of Mount Meru and is shaped like a semicircle. People who living at here have round face like a moon and the white ocean is called Khira Sakorn

Aparagodānīya or Aparagoyāna locates at the west of Mount Meru and is shaped like a circle. People have a face like half-full moon. There is a crystal ocean named Palerk Sakorn.

The north of Mount Meru is Uttarakuru and is shaped like a square. People have a square face and the ocean has golden colour named Pita Sakorn.

The lastest continent settles at the south of Mount Meru named Jambudvīpa or Jambudīpa. Human live here. Also Lord Buddha and arhats - spiritual practitioners who had "laid down the burden" and realised the goal of nirvana, originated at this land. The continent is said to be shaped "like a cart". The green ocean is called Nila Sakorn. Among boarder of Jambudvīpa and universal wall is Himavant forest. Several hells settle under universal.

When comparing Tridhātu layout with layout of Phra Prang it can be observed that the principle prang or Phra Prang represents Mount Meru because Śakra devānām indra statue revealing on the top of Phra Prang. And the satellite prangs or Prang Thit symbolize of the four continents.

Moreover, surrounding decorations present the concept of Himavant forest i.e., kinnorn, kinnaree, Kumbhāndas (dwarfs), Gandharvas (fairies), Nāgas (dragons) ,and Yaksas (goblins) creating for ornamentations at Phra Prang and the satellite prang.

In additions, colour porcelains in floral and leaves style on Phra Prang also represent Himavant forest.

In summary, it could be claimed that Phra Prang created concept coming from Hindu-Buddhism cosmology or Tridhātu concept when comparing the layouts of Tridhātu and architecturs at Phra Prang.

### **The Satellite Prang or Prang Thit**



Figure 24: The Satellite Prang

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007

There are four Satellite Prang or Prang Thit at the corner of the first level surrounding the principle prang. These four Satellite Prang have been established at the four cardinals in the northeast, southeast, northwest, and southwest.

All of Satellite Prang is similar shape and decoration. Small coves of Kinnorn and Kinnaree are also used to decorate the base of Satellite Prang. Alternating 27 demons and monkey deities (Marn Bak and Krabi Bak) are settled encircling the exterior of Cheung Bart above these small coves.

Inside the niches of each Satellite Prang are statues of Vayu or Pra Pai, the god of wind on horseback (Rosalyn Thiro 1997: p.123). Phra Pai is serving under Indra, king of gods.



Figure 25: Marn Bak and Krabi Bak encircling the exterior of Cheung Bart  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure 26: Phra Pai on horseback at Satellite Prang  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991





Figure 27: Deva clasping hands and Narasingha  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

Above the Phra Pai's arch, there are figures of god or Deva clasping hands and figures of Narasingha, mythological creatures, half lion-half human. Narasingha is one of incarnations of Vishnu for the purpose of killing the demon Hiranyashasipu who had gained the boon of immunity from attacks by man, beast, or god (<http://www.sanatansociety.org>: accessed in August, 2008).

The peaks of four Satellite Prang also are used the golden Noppasoon for decoration. The exterior of Minor Prang are decorated by colorful porcelain in the same style as the Main Prang and Mondop.

#### **The Four Porches at the Cardinal Points or Mondop Thit**

There are four Mondop at the north, south, east and west surrounding Main Prang. All of these have been installed on the second terrace among Satellite Prang.

Kinnorn and Kinnaree in the small coves are also used to decorate base of Mondops. Above the small coves, it can be found that in each the north and the south Mondop have 18 demons namely Kumbhāndas (dwarfs) which are established surrounding Mondop, while the east and the west Mondop have 18 member of a race of musicians in heavens namely Gandharvas (fairies) at the same position.



Figure 28: The Porch or Mondop Thit  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007

Inside Mondop install difference styles of Buddha image, but there is no evidence to indicate the style of Buddha image because there were deteriorated and left only the base. Until the main restoration in King Rama V period, the king ordered to relocate the Buddha images from cloisters or Viharn Kot to install at Mondop Thit instead.

The north Mondop is for enshrining the statue of Princess Siri Mahamaya (mother of Lord Buddha) standing under Rung tree and giving a birth of Lord Buddha. The statue of Lord Buddha stands on lotus and raises a finger to announce that he will be the enlightened man in the world. Moreover, this statue has two gods holding the base of Lord Buddha.



Figure 29: The north Mondop  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure 30: The image of giving a birth of Loard Buddha (left)  
Figure 31: Buddha image under the Naga's hood (right)  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

Next, the image of the enlightened Lord Buddha is enshrined in the east Mondop. There is a statue of Prang Nak Prok, the Buddha under the Nāga hood at the middle.

The Buddha under the Nāga hood comes from the Buddha history that in the sixth week after Lord Buddha had attained enlightenment, during which time Lord Buddha was in the joy of freedom under a big tree, east of the Phrasimaha Bodhi

Tree, a heavy rainstorm broke out. Then the Muggalint Nāga, appeared a seven-headed serpent residing in a big pond near where Lord Buddha was seated. The serpent coiled itself into the form of a seven-tiered seat for Lord Buddha and spread his head like an umbrella to protect the Lord from the rainstorm (<http://www.ancientcity.com>: accessed in September, 2008).

And two images of enlightened Lord Buddha or images of Prang Marnvichai or Subduing the Māra under the Bodhi and Sai trees are located parallel to the image of Prang Nak Prok.

In the south of Mondop is an image of Lord Buddha Preaching the Sermon to the five disciples. These are new because the old was already deteriorated.

The west of Mondop enshrines the image of a state of complete bliss of Lord Buddha or Prang Parinibbana. This reclining Buddha is established under the Rung tree and some of disciples are located behind the Buddha image.



Figure 32: Buddha image, preaching the sermon to disciples  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure 33: The image of a state of complete bliss of Lord Buddha  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

### **The Chapel or Phra Viharn**

The Chapel or Phra Viharn was built in the reign of King Rama I. It was restored in the reigns of King Rama II and King Rama III, respectively. The chapel is located between the Buddha's foot print niche and the monks' residence. This fabulous building has a three tiered roof. There are five entrances; three entrances are located at the front of the chapel and others are located at the back.



Figure 34: Window and outer wall  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

Fourteen windows are surrounded the building. The outer walls are decorated with ceramics imported from China, originally intended to use for the ordination hall, however, King Rama III was preferred to use for the chapel instead.



There are magnificent flowers painting on every rectangle pillars. The Buddha image named Praputtachumpunut mahaburud lukanaasritayanuborpit is enshrined inside the chapel. King Rama III had it cast in copper in the image of Buddha subduing the Māra. There are four relics of Lord Buddha kept in the head of this Buddha image.



Figure 35: Mural painting at the entrance of the chapel (left): December, 2007

Figure 36: Window and outer wall (right) : June, 2008

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep



Figure 37: Flowers painting at rectangle pillars in the chapel

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007

The famous Buddha image named Phra Arun is also enshrined in the chapel. Thailand took Phra Arun from Vientiane since 1858 and brought Phra Arun to be enshrined at The Emerald Buddha Temple. Since the name of Phra Arun harmonizes to the name of Wat Arun, King Rama IV ordered to relocate this famous Buddha image to the chapel of Wat Arun.



Figure 38: Principle Buddha image in the chapel  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007



Figure 39: Phra Arun  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

### The Buddha's Footprint Niche



Figure 40: The Buddha's footprint niche  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : February, 2008



Figure 41: Colorful ceramic decoration  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

The building of the Buddha's footprint niche is located among four satellite pagodas and the chapel. This building was built in King Rama III reign. It has two stories rectangular foundations and is decorated with colorful ceramics. The niche itself is made of brick, covered in floral ceramic patterns. It contains a finely carved replica of the Buddha's footprint.





Figure 42: Replica of Lord Buddha's footprint  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

In the past, the roof of this building was built in Chinese style. After deterioration in 1895, King Rama V ordered Phraya Rachasongkram to restore it. Restoration was made again in the reign of Phratammachedi, abbot of Wat Arun, the roof of the building has been changed into cement as shown at present.

#### **The Four Satellite Pagodas or Chedi**

The four satellite pagodas are located between the south balcony of the ordination hall and the building of Buddha's footprint niche. These four pagodas are lining up in parallel from the east to the south. All pagodas have same shape and size. The chedi are slender, tapering brick pagodas, marked by the Thai architectural innovation of twenty indented corners at each edge.

Colorful mirrors and ceramics are cut to be beautiful flowers for decoration. The entrance stair in each pagoda is in the north. The four satellite pagodas were created in King Rama III reign and were restored in King Rama V reign.



Figure 43: The Pagoda or Chedi (left)

Figure 44: Buddha image in front of the pagoda (right)

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007

### **The Peripheral Balcony or Phra Viharn Kot**

The ordination hall is surrounded by a peripheral balcony with an entrance at the middle of the balcony in each cardinal point. The structure has yellow and green tiled roofs. Eight metal elephant statues stand near the entrance gate of the balcony with over one meter height in different characters. Elephant statues were created in 1846 for honorable celebrating of King Rama II.



Figure 45: The entrance at the peripheral balcony  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008



Figure 46: The metal elephant  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008



Figure 47: Narayana on his ride Garuda at the gable of the entrance

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure 48: Buddha images inside balcony

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

The peripheral balcony was created in King Rama II reign while murals inside balcony were painted in King Rama III reign. There are 120 Buddha images inside balcony.

In each corner of outside balcony, there are the octagonal marble Chinese pagodas. In the cove of each pagoda contains eight granite statues of Chinese saints which called “poy-sien”.

The eight temple boundary markers or Sum Sama which are located around the ordination hall are housed in marble porches and intricately carved.



Figure 49: The peripheral balcony and surrounding architectures  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

There are 144 lion Chinese rockeries, 112 Chinese solid rockeries, and 16 Chinese noble men sitting on the chair around the ordination hall.





Figure 50: The marble Chinese pagoda  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008



Figure 51, 52: Poy-sien, the Chinese statue in the pagoda  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008



Figure 53, 54: Chinese Statue surrounding the ordination hall  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure 55: The temple boundary markers or Sum Sayma (left)  
Figure 56: Bai Sama in Sum Sayma (right)  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

### The Ordination Hall or Phra Ubosoth



Figure57: The ordination hall

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

The ordination hall is located in the north of Wat Arun. This building is an important and beautiful architecture which was built in King Rama II reign.

Between of the entrance gates of hall, the Buddha image named Phraputtanarumit is enshrined. Phraputtanarumit is royal Buddha image of King Rama II. The structure has a raised base with a double tiered roof. Its outer walls and pillars are decorated with china in floral patterns. Pillar finials are detailed with gold leaf and colored glass. The wall was restored in King Rama IV reign.

The principle Buddha image named Phraputtatummisorrajlokkatattdilok is enshrined in the hall. The image is in the image of Buddha subduing the Māra and was made in the reign of King Rama II. The face is believed to have been modeled by the King himself.

The Principle Buddha image is not only being luxurious characteristic, but also contains the ashes from the cremation of King Rama II in the pedestal by King Rama IV's command. In front of the principal image are the two chief disciples.





Figure 58: The pillars

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008



Figure59: The outer ceiling (left)

Figure 60: The pillar finial (right)

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007



Figure 61: The ordination hall's base  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007



Figure 62: Deva standing with his weapon at the gable  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008



Figure 63: Phraputtanaurmit  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007



Figure 64: The principle Buddha image  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : December, 2007

The wall murals inside the ordination hall illustrate the story of last ten incarnations of Lord Buddha. All of these murals were painted in the reign of King Rama II. They were repainted in reign of King Rama V following their partial destruction by fire.

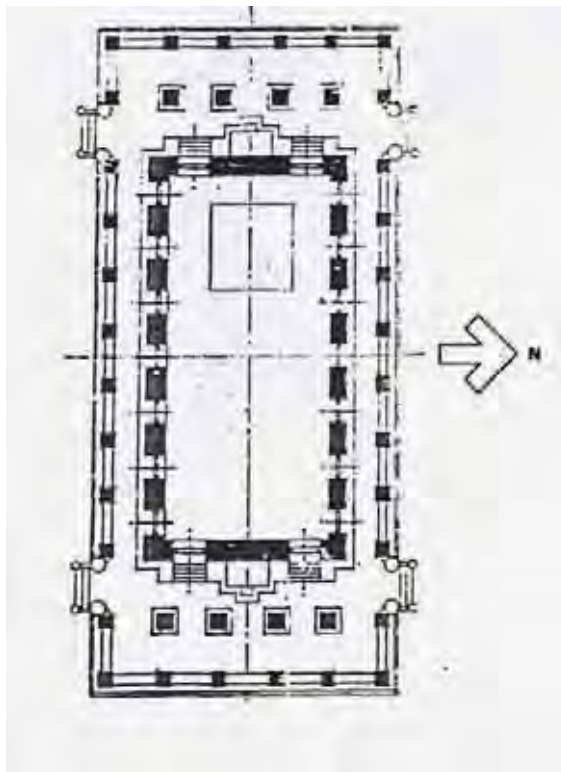


Figure 65: Layout of the ordination hall  
 Source: The Fine Arts Department





Figure 66, 67, 68: Mural painting  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

### The Entrance Way with Spire Roof



Figure 69: The entrance way with spire roof  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

The entrance way with a tall spire roof is the front entrance to the ordination hall. It is located at the middle of the east peripheral balcony. This luxurious entrance was built in King Rama III reign. It has three stories roof, decorated in colored ceramic and stuccowork sheathed in colored china. Porcelains were cut into flower and leaf shapes for gable decoration.

### Demons or Yaksa (Sahassateja and Tasakantha)

There are two Demons or Yaksa, temple guardian figures, standing in front of the entrance way with spire roof, fashioned in stucco and decorated with ceramic. They have approximately 6 meters height. The white figure is named Sahassateja and the green guardian is known as Tasakantha in Ramayana.



Figure70: Sahassateja

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991



Figure71: Tasakantha

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

## Nai Ruang Pavilion



Figure 72: Nai Ruang sculpture (left)

Figure 73: Nai Ruang pavilion (right)

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep, October, 2009.

The pavilions of Nai Raung sculpture is located on the left hand side of the entrance way with a spire roof. The sculpture of Buddhist martyr by burning alive was made in stone. From the story of the Rattanakosin dynasty which was written by Kromphraya Dumrongrachanuparp said that Nai Raung sacrificed himself by burning to death on Friday March, 1790 in front of the hall for sermons at Wat Arun. Nai Raung wished Nirvana and made a vow by using lotus that if he can achieve Nirvana, the lotus will bloom. The following day, the lotus was blooming. Therefore, Nai Raung came to stay at the hall for sermons at Wat Arun for acceptance of the Buddhist commandments and listening to the sermons. At the proper time, he finished listening to the sermons, then came to the front of the hall and wore the cloth coated with oil and burnt himself while the flame was bright he announced the word “accomplishment”. After the cremation, his ashes turned into green, white, yellow and purple. The ashes were kept in the old hall for sermons at Wat Arun. later, his stone sculpture was made for commemoration.

### **Nai Nok Pavilion**



Figure 74: Nai Nok sculpture,  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep, October, 2009

The pavilion of Nai Nok sculpture is located on the right hand side of the entrance way with a spire roof. The sculpture of Nai Nok was made in stone similar to Nai Raung sculpture. The story of Nai Nok was recorded in the history of the Rattanakosin dynasty issue of Chaophraya Tippakornwong that Nai Nok burnt himself to worship Buddhism on Wednesday July, 1861. People found Nai Nok's corpse who martyred himself by burning to death under a Pho tree in front of the old ordination hall at Wat Arun. He practiced serious meditation in the hall for sermons at Wat Arun before burning himself. People made merit and worshiped his corpse very much. So, people highly respect Nai Nok and made his stone sculpture for commemoration at Wat Arun.



### **Riverside Pavilions**



Figure75 : Riverside pavilions  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

There are six pavilions in the Chinese style with bridges, which face the Chao Phraya River. The pavilions have raised floors for visitors to rest, and are made of green sandstone. These pavilions were built in King Rama III reign. The fabrics of the pavilions present the Chinese architectural style. They are aligned the river bank from the entrance canal of Wat Arun to the entrance of Phra Prang.

### **King Rama II Monument**



Figure 76: King Rama II monument  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

King Rama II statue was built in 1996. This monument is located at waterfront near riverside pavilions. King Rama II had ever resided at The Old Palace since he

was Prince Komlaungisarasunthorn, and he had a function to restore Wat Arun follow King Rama I command. When the prince came to the throne and namely King Rama II, he continued to restore Wat Arun and created the significance architectures such as Phra Ubosoth and Phra Viharn. Moreover, he had Phra Prang reconstructed to be Phra Mahathart or the land mark of Bangkok. Therefore, Wat Arun is his crown temple. This monument was constructed to commemorate King Rama II who devoted his part of life to Wat Arun restoration continuously. Thai people who visit Wat Arun always visit the monument to worship the great king.

### **The Old Ordination Hall or Bot-Noi**



Figure77: The old ordination hall  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

The old ordination hall is located in front of Phra Prang. It was built since Ayutthaya reign. There are 29 Buddha images enshrined inside the hall. Moreover, there is a base of King Taksin for sleeping and his statue inside. From the story of dynasties, King Taksin ordained and lived at this ordination hall for a short time before his decease.



Figure 78: Mural painting at the entrance (left)

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

Figure 79: The bedstead of King Taksin (right)

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

### The Old Chapel or Viharn-Noi



Figure 80: The old chapel

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : June, 2008

The old chapel is located near the old ordination hall and was created in the same reign. An importance of the small Viharn is that it enshrines Phrajulamanee Chedi.

From the Buddha history, Phrajulamanee Chedi was built by Tawsakkatawaracha or Śakra devānām indra, (Indra or “lord of the devas”) for keeping Lord Buddha’s hair and relics. The reason to create Phrajulamanee Chedi was that when Lord Buddha-ordained, he cut his hair and made a wish that if he would be enlightened, the hair should drift in the air without falling to the ground.

His hair was found to drift in the air because Indra was holding the hair and then brought them back to his world, the heaven called Trāyastrimśa in Sanskrit or Tāvatisa in Pāli, which is on the top of Mount Sumeru (The word trāyastrimśa is an adjective formed from the numeral trayastrimśat, “33” and can be translated in English as “belonging to the thirty-three (devas)”). It is primarily the name of the second heaven in Buddhist cosmology, and secondarily used of the devas who dwell there) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trayastrimsa>: accessed in September, 2008). He built Phrajulamanee Chedi for keeping Lord Buddha’s hair.

After Lord Buddha passed away into Parinibbana, a state of complete bliss of Lord Buddha or the final deathless state abandoning the earthly body, on the Vesakha full moon day of 6<sup>th</sup> month of lunar calendar, Buddha’s body was cremated and the relics were distributed.

Dona, the Brahman divided the Buddha’s relics into eight equal portions and distributed each of them to the Rulers of the eight countries. Then Dona decided that the right tooth should be kept for himself as an object of respectful veneration. With the “divine eye” of Indra, he knew Dona’s action. He decided that Lord Buddha relics should be kept in suitable place rather than with Dona.

So, he took the relic to enshrine in Phrajulamanee Chedi at Tāvatisa heaven. Since then, all devas always come and pay a respect Phrajulamanee Chedi. In addition, all human being wish to pay a respect Phrajulamanee Chedi at Tāvatisa heaven after they pass away.



Figure 81: Phrajulamanee Chedi  
Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam : 1991

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### **Chapter 3**

#### **The History and the Buddhist activities of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

There are three important aspects of the historical significance of Wat Arun. They are each described here in some detail and the relationship between them is also explained. Firstly, the history of Wat Arun is described. Then the history of the Emerald Buddha is described in the wider context of its relationship with the history of Wat Arun. Lastly the history of the conservation of Wat Arun is reported. These aspects of history are inter-twined with the history of the Rattanakosin era and the historic old town of Bangkok.

The significance of Wat Arun also relates to Buddhist activities that occurred around Wat Arun and the backgrounds of those activities are described to elucidate traditions and social practices which have bearing on the highly significant religious places.

The detail of this part is a fundamental and necessary data which must know before planning interpretive policy for Wat Arun. Therefore, the contents of this chapters detail are as follows;

#### **The History of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

Wat Arun Ratchawararam Ratchaworaviharn or Wat Arun is a first class royal temple which is located on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River.

Wat Arun is located between the Old Palace in the south and the Chao Phraya River in the east. Thaweethapisak School is in the north while Arun Aumarin road is west of the temple.

Wat Arun has a total area of 27 Rai 2 Yain 63 Wa (Thai measurement ).The area is approximately 33 Rai or 13.2 Acres and its surroundings which also belong to the temple, are rented by the private sector and local people.

There is no evidence when Wat Arun was exactly built. According to the map of Thonburi which was made during King Phranarai the Great's reign between in 1656-1688 by the French, Claude de Forbin and De Lamare, (Fine Arts Department 1978: p.3) and the configuration of the buildings (the old ordination hall and the old chapel) which was in the Ayutthaya style, Kromphrayadumrongrachanupraph assumed that Wat Arun was built before King Phranarai the Great in Ayutthaya era. Wat Arun was first called Wat Makok then changed to Wat Makok Nok due to the fact that there was another new temple in the area called Wat Makok Nai (Wat Nualnoradit).

In a later period, in A.D. 1767, after victory over occupied Burmese army, General Taksin and his troops arrived at Wat Arun in the early dawn. He considered that Thonburi was suitable for being a new capital city instead of Ayutthaya since Ayutthaya was destroyed by the Burmese army and required a great deal of effort to restore the demolished city. As a result, Thonburi, was established by self-proclaimed King Taksin to become a new capital city in 1768. The tradition of constructing a Buddhist temple in the precincts of the Royal Palace existed in Thailand since the Sukhothai period (1240-c. 1438 A.D.) In the Ayutthaya reign, there was Wat Phrasrisunphet in the Royal Palace. King Taksin the Great had the frontier of the palace enlarged to Wat Arun's canal. Then, Wat Arun was located in the middle of the palace without monks residing. (Traditionally, the temple in the royal palace accommodates no monks such as the temple of the Emerald Buddha in the Grand Palace and religious activities that occur in the temple are reserved for the monarchy only.)

Turning its status into a royal temple in the palace, King Taksin the Great had the buildings restored, i.e., the ordination hall or Bot noi and the chapel or Viharn noi, and had the name changed to "Wat Cheang" which means The Temple of Dawn. In 1779, SomdejChaophrayamahakasatsuk who was a general in the Thai army and became King Rama I, had the Vientiane army defeated and captured. He then brought the Emerald Buddha and Phra Bang back from Vientien to Thailand.

On 15<sup>th</sup> day of the waxing moon in the 6<sup>th</sup> lunar month in 1779 or Visakhapuja Day, King Taksin the Great ordered to have two images enshrined at Mondop located behind the ordination hall and the chapel in Wat Arun and have the Emerald Buddha



ceremony for seven days. The Emerald Buddha was placed in Wat Arun for five years (1779-1784). Later, King Rama I sent Phra Bang back to Vientian in 1782.

In 1782, SomdejChaophrayamahakasatsuk came to the throne named King Rama I, he decided to move the capital city to the east bank of Chao Phraya River since the new location was a cape and had a river to be a buffer zone for protecting the city from enemies. Moreover, the Thonburi location was settled on the concave side of the river, it was demolished by the water stream. Also the King did not like that the Royal Palace of Thonburi was located between two temples Wat Arun (also known as Wat Cheang) and Wat Taitalard.

Therefore, in 1783, the King assigned Phrayatumathikorn to build the Grand Palace on the east bank of the river. The bricks from the demolished walls of Ayutthaya city and Thonburi city were used for building the Grand Palace. This year, the temple of the Emerald Buddha was built in the Palace by the tradition of having a Buddhist temple in the precincts of the Royal Palace.

The new royal temple was finished in 1784, and the Emerald Buddha was moved from Wat Arun to be enshrined at the ordination hall of the new temple. After demolition of the walls of the Thonburi Royal Palace, Wat Arun was not in the precinct of the Palace anymore. King Rama I then allowed the monks to reside at this temple. Thonburi's Royal Palace was called the Old Palace ever since. The restoration of Wat Cheang or Wat Arun has been done continuously since King Rama I reign until King Rama II reign. After the great restoration was completed, the King had the temple named Wat Arun Ratchatharam. Later the name was changed to Wat Arun Ratchawararam by King Rama IV which has remained until the present.

## The History of the Emerald Buddha



Figure 82: The Emerald Buddha image in Summer, Raining, and Winter dedicated Royal Garments

Source: Sudara Sujchaya : 2004, p.35

The Emerald Buddha is in reality carved from a large piece of green jade. According to a reliable chronicle, in 1434 A.D. lightning struck a chedi or pagoda in Chiang rai , in the northern part of Thailand, and a Buddha statue covered with stucco was found inside. The image was brought into the abbot's residence and one day he noticed that the stucco on the nose had flaked off and the image inside was a green colour. He removed all the stucco and found the Emerald Buddha (The word emerald here means "green colour" in Thai).

People then flocked to worship this precious statue. At that time the town of Chiang rai was under the King of Chiang mai. King Samfangkaen who sent an elephant to bring the Emerald Buddha to Chiang mai , but each time the elephant arrived at the junction of the road to the city of Lampang, it ran to that town. The King sent an elephant out three times and each time the same incident occurred, so he thought that the spirits guarding the Emerald Buddha wanted to stay in Lampang. Thus, the Emerald Buddha stayed in Lampang for 32 years. In 1468, when Chiang mai had a powerful king, King Tiloka Who had the Emerald Buddha brought to Chiang mai and, according to one chronicle, installed the image in the eastern niche of a large stupa called Chedi Luang.

In 1551, the king of Chiang mai who had no son and their, passed away. One of his daughters was married to the King of Lao. She had borne one son, named Prince Chaichettha. When the king of Chiang mai died, the prince, who was fifteen, was encouraged to be the King. Later, King Chichettha went back to Laos for the throne after his father died in 1552. The Emerald Buddha was also taken on his return to Luang Phrabang. So the image remained at Luang Phrabang for twelve years. In 1564, King Chaichettha was defeated by the Burmese army of King Bayinnaung. Therefore, he had to move his capital city down to Vientien where the Emerald Buddha remained for another 214 years.

In 1778, during the Thonburi period, when King Rama I of Bangkok was still the general of Thai army, he defeated and captured the Vientiane army. The Emerald Buddha was then brought back and enshrined at Wat Arun for five years (1779-1784). In the Rattanakosin reign, Bangkok was established as the capital city instead of Thonburi. The image was moved from Wat Arun to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok on 22 March 1784. The Emerald Buddha became the palladium of Thailand and has been ever since (Diskul: p19).

### **The History of Wat Arun's Conservation in the Rattanakosin Reign**

In the Thonburi era, King Taksin the Great restored the independence of Siam or Thailand and moved the capital city from Ayutthaya to Thonburi. The King had to concentrate on protecting the country from the Burmese army during the period of the Thonburi reign (15 years). Therefore, only the necessary parts of the conservation of Wat Arun were done. However, in the Rattanakosin reign, Wat Arun was constantly under restoration. The details of Wat Arun's conservation are shown as follows;

#### **King Rama I Reign (1782-1810)**

In 1785, King Rama I had his son, Prince Komlaungisarasunthorn, resided at the Old Palace which was located south of Wat Arun and assigned the prince to restore the temple. The prince endeavored to restore the entire temple and create Phra Ubosoth or the ordination hall and Phra Viharn or the chapel, but the restoration achieved only the monk's residence at the end of the King Rama I period.

### **King Rama II Reign (1809-1824)**

Prince Komlaungisarasunthorn became King Rama II in 1809. He had architecture restored and built continuously, i.e., Phra Ubosoth, Phra Viharn, and a balcony surrounding Phra Ubosoth. In addition, the old ordination hall and the old chapel were restored in this reign. After that, the King had Phra Prang reconstructed to be Phra Mahathart or the land mark of Bangkok. Phra Mahathart is a Phra Stupa or a Phra Chedi which contains Lord Buddhas' relics. It was built to mark the capital city or the city in which the King resides such as Phra Prang Wat Mahathart in Lopburi, Phra Mahathart in Sukothai, Phra Mahathart in Pitsanulok (Kanlayanamitt 2005: p. 352). However, Phra Prang's reconstruction was only done to its foundation at the end of this reign.

### **King Rama III Reign (1824-1851)**

In this reign, the monks' residence were rebuilt to be the concrete buildings, and Phra Prang's reconstruction was completely finished. Mondop was established to house the replica of the Buddha footprint niche and the four satellite pagodas or chedi, stupa were also built. In addition, King Rama III had the entrance way created with the spire roof and two demons Sahassateja and Tasakanta in front of this new entrance. For Phra Prang, the King considered reconstructing its size for being Phra Mahathart as required by his father, King Rama II. Eventually, Phra Prang was modified from 2 meters to 67 meters height as shown at present.

### **King Rama IV Reign (1851-1868)**

It can be seen that many of architectural buildings in Wat Arun were restored in the King Rama IV reign. The ordination hall or Phra Ubosoth, the exterior walls were decorated by Chinese ceramic in the fallen flora pattern. After finishing the restoration of Phra Ubosoth, the principle Buddha image was named "Phra Praputtatummisorrrajlokkatattdilok" by the king and he had the relics of King Rama II brought to be enshrined in the pedestal of the principle Buddha image.

(The royal tradition of having the relics of the King enshrined at his crown temple came from King Rama IV period. In King Rama IV era, the King had the ashes of King Rama I put in the pedestal of the principle Buddha image in Wat Phra Chetuponwimonmunkhararam, while the ashes of King Rama II were kept in Wat Arun and the ashes of King Rama III were placed in Wat Rachaorasaram,

respectively. The King himself ordered to keep his relics at his royal temple, Wat Rajapradit Sathitmahasimaram. Since then, it became the royal traditional to enshrine the king's relics at the king's royal temple.)



Figure 83: The principle Buddha image at Wat Rajapradit Sathitmahasimaram (left)

Figure 84: The chapel of Wat Rajapradit Sathitmahasimaram (right)

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep: September, 2009

King Rama IV had two arches or Butsabok created at the front and the back entrances to house the crown Buddha Images which were dedicated to King Rama III and himself. However, the King passed away before the arches were completed.

#### **King Rama V Reign (1868-1910)**

In the reign of King Rama V, the whole temple was restored since many buildings had decayed and were in need of repair. The total restoration of the temple by King Rama V could be considered the second largest restoration since the temple was built. While the first large restoration appeared in the King Rama II reign. The arches of Phra Ubosoth were finished in this reign. King Rama II brought his crown Buddha Image "Phraputtanaurmit" to be housed in the arch which was located at the front entrance. On 31 December 1895, the Phra Ubosoth was destroyed by fire. The construction was largely destroyed, such as roof, mural paintings, and entrances, but the Principle Buddha Image was not destroyed and the relics of King Rama II were

saved in time under commanding of King Rama V. Therefore, it was necessary to restore the whole construction and decoration of Phra Ubosoth.

After the destruction by fire, the Phra Ubosoth was rebuilt and the interior mural paintings were repaired. The totally expenditure of this restoration was 12,800 baht. With the restoration completed in 1898, the ceremony of Phra Ubosoth was celebrated during 26-30 July. The relics of King Rama II were taken back to be housed at the same place (the pedestal of the principle Buddha image). After the ceremony, the King had architects in the temple, especially Phra Prang, plan the restoration. Phrayarachasongkram, as a chairman of the reconstruction, was ordered to investigate the decayed buildings and estimate the restoration budget for the king's consideration. Therefore, under Phrayarachasongkram's authority, many of buildings were restored again. Phra Prang's base was fixed and a gutter surrounding the base of each storey was installed. The entrances of Phra Prang were reduced from 9 to only 5 entrances. The others buildings such as the Chinese pavilions, Phra Viharn, Mondop, and the four satellite Chedi were also restored at this time. Phra Prang ceremony festival was performed on 12 – 20 February 1909 after the great restoration was completed.

#### **King Rama VI Reign (1910-1925)**

After the great restoration in the King Rama V period, architecture of Wat Arun still had complete configuration. Therefore, there were not necessary to restore any buildings. Only a dam built in front of Phra Prang for preventing the flood problem and small streets built in the temple were built.

#### **King Rama VII Reign (1925-1934)**

There was no evidence of restoration of Wat Arun in this reign.

#### **King Rama VIII Reign (1934-1946)**

There was also no evidence of restoration of Wat Arun in this reign.

#### **King Rama IX Reign (1946 to present)**

Wat Arun was restored several times in the reign of King Rama IX. In 1948 a Monk's school or Phrapariyat School was established and named Phra Pariyat school "Puagwittayaprasarn" following the name of person who donated money for building the school. In 1950 large deteriorations were found at Phra Viharn, so this building and the Principle Buddha image inside were restored. The following year, the old

chapel and the old ordination hall were restored while the exterior construction of Phra Ubosoth was restored in 1954.

The great restoration in this reign occurred in 1967. According to the abbot Somdejphaputtajarn Won Tittiyano who considered that the configuration of Phra Prang a valuable architectural heritage of Thailand was found to be decaying. Even though the temple was regularly fixed, it was inadequate. Hence, the abbot requested the government to subsidize the Phra Prang restoration. The government gave authority to the Fine Arts Department to take care of the Phra Prang's restoration project. The project took five years and cost 15,500,000 baht.

In summary, it can be seen that Wat Arun has significance in Thai history since the Thonburi era until the present. In the past, Thai monarchs played an important role to encourage the temple's conservation for a long time. Nowadays, direction and the system of conservation has altered, because the political system has been changed from an absolute monarchy to the democracy with the king as a constitutional monarch since 1932. In 1933, the government announced the establishment of a Fine Arts Department to take care of ancient places, ancient objects and valuable art objects. Therefore, the Wat Arun conservation plan which originated from the abbot of the temple was approved by the Fine Arts Department who planned a budget for the conservation. This kind of conservation management system is revealed clearly in the King Rama IX period. However, Wat Arun has a good conservation management plan. The restorations of the architectural heritages have been done extensively which can be seen from integral configuration of architectures of the temple.



Figure 85: Phra Prang restoration in King Rama V reign

Source: Fine Art Department : 2009



Figure 86: The restoration of the Entrance Way with Spire Roof  
in King Rama IX reign

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2008

### **Buddhist Activities in Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

Wat Arun is a sacred place in which Thai monarchs and people have regularly made merit in every important Buddhist day for a long time. Generally, there are three important Buddhist days in Thailand which are Maghapuja day, Visakhapuja



day, and Asalha puja day. Many of Buddhist activities will be done on these essential days at Wat Arun.

Like the other temples, Wat Arun also provides other kinds of activities i.e., Takbarttavo, and Kathin ceremony. For the Kathin ceremony, which is traditionally for the monarch's merit. The royal Kathin ceremony pursues the significance of Thai tradition. This ceremony includes the royal barges procession which is performed several times in Rattanakosin era for conserving Thai venerable tradition. The activities related to the important Buddhist days which are accommodated at Wat Arun, including its backgrounds and histories, are described in this part as follows;

### **Maghapuja Day**

Maghapuja day or Sangha day takes place on the full moon day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> lunar month. Maghapuja means worship on the full moon day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> lunar month in commemoration of the great assembly of disciples. According to Buddhist scriptures, nine months after Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, on the full moon day of the third lunar month corresponding to the zodiacal. In the year 44 before the Buddhist era, or 587 B.C., a total of 1,250 disciples of Lord Buddha from various places spontaneously assembled at Veluvan Viharn in Rajgir for paying respect to the Buddha and to listen to his sermon.

This great meeting is called “Jaturong Kha Sannibat” or the fourfold assembly. This event is considered a very significant day in the Buddhist history because the coincidental meeting happened only once in Lord Buddha era which was the great miracle with four factors involved. Firstly all 1,250 disciples were Arahats. (Arahat is a monk who has achieved nirvana or enlightenment.) Secondly, all of them were ordained by Lord Buddha himself. Thirdly, the assembly was done without the appointment. Lastly, the event occurred on a full moon day.

In the meeting, the Buddha preached to all disciples and that instruction has been called Ovadha Patimokha (Admonition). The Ovadha Patimokha consisted of 13 sections but it was summarized into 4 major sections, namely, the Religious Ideology; General Rules of Religion; Characteristic of Buddhism Propagator; and Buddhism Propagation Techniques. (Phra Udomphrachathorn 2007: p.104). The Buddha's sermon in the assembly could be summed up in three points which are to abstain from

all evils, to do only good, and to keep one's mind pure. An important sermon becomes a fundamental principle and ideal of Buddha teaching and ways to practice applicable to all communities since then.

In Thailand, King Rama IV realized the importance of this day. As a result, he had the royal Magha Puja ceremony performed at the Emerald Buddha temple in 1851. The royal Magha Puja ceremony was officially declared and has continued until present. Later, Magha Puja day was widely accepted and performed throughout the kingdom of Thailand. The Thai government announced this holy day as a public holiday. Therefore, Thai people can do Buddhist activities all day long.

### **Visakhapuja Day**

Visakhapuja day is recognized as one of the most important day in Buddhism because three important incidents in Lord Buddha life, i.e., the birth, the enlightenment, and the passing away, happened on the same month and date ( on 15<sup>th</sup> day of the waxing moon of the 6<sup>th</sup> lunar month) in three different years. From Buddhist history, Prince Siddhatha (Lord Buddha's personal name) was the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Sirimahamaya. In the morning of Friday on 15<sup>th</sup> full moon of the 6<sup>th</sup> lunar month, Queen Sirimahamaya with full 10 months pregnancy went with a great procession passed a garden called "Lumbini Park" to meet her parents. When she arrived at the park at a Sara tree, she started contractions and gave birth to her son there.

Prince Siddhatha was brought up in the midst of luxury, led the happy life of a privileged youth and married at the age of 16 to Princess Yasodharp or Bimba who bore him a son, Rahula. When Prince Siddhatha was 29 years of age, he decided to leave for ordination because he rejected the five sensual pleasures. Being a priest, the prince imposed self mortification for 6 years until he was reduced to a skeleton. Eventually he found that the extreme practices were not the right way, so he chose the moderate path to reach enlightenment. On his 36<sup>th</sup> birthday, he attained the supreme enlightenment and knew how to end the sorrow, unhappiness and suffering under a Bodhi tree at the edge of the Neranjara River. He knew "Four Noble Truths" from the enlightenment which are the truth of suffering (Existence is suffering), the truth of the cause of suffering (Suffering is caused by desire), the truth of the cessation of

suffering (without desire, suffering ceases to exist), and the truth of the path (the eight fold paths are the way to eliminate desire) ([http://www.chiangmai-chiangrai.com/visakha\\_bucha\\_day.html](http://www.chiangmai-chiangrai.com/visakha_bucha_day.html): accessed in March, 2009).

After his enlightenment, Lord Buddha preached his sermon to the disciples and people for 44 years. When he was 80, Lord Buddha passed away and attained the nirvana on 15th full moon of the 6<sup>th</sup> lunar month. After that, on every 15th full moon of the 6<sup>th</sup> lunar month has been called Visakhapuja day. The performance of the rituals on Visakhapuja day continues in Jambudavipa or India, the motherland of Buddhism, for a long time before Buddhism spread to Sri Lanka and Thailand. The Visakha worship has continued until present. Nowadays, it is declared as the World's Peace day.

### **Aslhapuja Day**

Aslhapuja is a Theravada Buddhist festival which typically takes place on 15<sup>th</sup> day of the full moon of the 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month. According to Buddhist history, after enlightenment for two months, Lord Buddha went to the deer-park at Isipatana near Banares to preach the first sermon for his five ascetics or Pancavaggi. First, the ascetics did not believe that he attained the enlightenment. After the end of the first sermon called “Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta”, Kondanna, one of ascetics understood the Dhamma and took the ordination with a simple saying “Ehi Bhikku” (come, monk) by Lord Buddha. Thus, the first bhikku occurred and became the priesthood or Sangha. Later, the others ascetics, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanama, and Assaji, also understood the Dhamma. The contents of the first sermon are the lecture of Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Paths, following two practices that monk should not do.

It could be said that there were three important events occurring on Aslhapuja day. Firstly, it was the first day that the Buddha announced Buddhism by preaching his first sermon “Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta”. Secondly, there was the first Sangha, Kondanna who understood the first sermon and took the ordination by Lord Buddha. Lastly, it was the first day that the Triple Gems of Buddhist completed which are Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. Hence, Aslhapuja day is an important Buddhist day to worship the Triple Gems; Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. In

Thailand, Aslhapuja day was announced to be important Buddhist day in 1958. The Thai government also announced this holy day as a public holiday which was convenient for making merit and performing worship to the Triple Gems.

### **The Activities on Maghapuja day, Visakhapuja Day, and Asalhapuja Day**

Similar activities have been done on these Buddhist days. In the morning, Buddhists go to the temple to make merit by offering food and other accessories to the monks. In the afternoon, Buddhists listen to the sermon and practice meditation to purify their own mind. In the evening, Buddhists take part in candlelit processions or “Wien Tien”. The purpose of the candlelit procession is to pay respect to Lord Buddha, Dharma or sermon of Lord Buddha, and disciples of Lord Buddha or Sangha.

Although, making merit on these significant days follow the same pattern in every temple, the candlelit procession at night in Wat Arun is different from other places. Generally, the merit walking with candles takes place at outside Phra Ubosoth.

Buddhists will walk around Phra Ubosoth three times to worship “the Triple Gems”. At Wat Arun, the walking procession is performed around Phra Prang which represents Lord Buddha due to the fact that people believes that Lord Buddha’s relics are contained there.



Figure 87: The visitors are making merit by offering food and other accessories to the monk

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : January, 2009



Figure 88: Candlelit processions or Wien Tien on important Buddhist day

Source: Fine Art Department : 2009

### **Takbarttavo**

After six years of the enlightenment, in the seventh rainy season, Lord Buddha went to preach a sermon to his mother, Queen Sirimahamaya at Tavatimsa or Trāyastimśa heaven for three months. After listening to seven scriptures from Lord Buddha, his mother attained Arahantship. Lord Buddha came back to earth in the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> waning moon day of 11<sup>th</sup> lunar month, enormous numbers of people gathered with pleasure to welcome Lord Buddha and offered him food (Food offering is Buddhists' traditional merit). This event was called "Takbarttavo"

Since then, people continually offer food to Sankha in the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> day of the waning moon of 11<sup>th</sup> lunar month for the event commemoration. This tradition is performed at Wat Arun every year.



Figure 89, 90: Food offering to monks on Takbarttavo festival  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2008

### **The Royal Kathin Ceremony**

Kathin has its origin in the Lord Buddha era. A group of monks or Sankha made a pilgrimage to pay homage to Lord Buddha. They had to settle down for a three rainy month retreat while on their way. They reached their destination in tattered and muddy robes. Realizing his disciples' difficulty, Lord Buddha granted monks permission to accept new robes each year at the end of the rainy retreat. Initially, monks prepared new robes on embroidery frames, or Kathin, to be presented to the selected monks. Later, Buddhists gathered to prepare the new robes for the monks. The period for monks to receive the new robes starts from the first waning moon day of the 11<sup>th</sup> lunar month and lasts until the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the full moon of the 12<sup>th</sup> lunar month. The monks can be on a pilgrimage after attending the Kathin ceremony.

The presentation of the Kathin robes or the annual Kathin ceremony became a major merit and important event in Buddhism. Devout Buddhists from the monarch down to common people perform the ceremony as a time-honoured tradition. From history, Thai monarchs in the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya Periods performed the Kathin ceremony which was called the royal Kathin ceremony. In the past, Thai monarchs traveled by land or river procession to present the royal Kathin up to 33 temples in one year (Arsawai 1999: p.69).

At present, there are 16 royal temples selected for presenting royal Kathin robes. Wat Arun is one of the royal temples required by the tradition. On special occasions, Wat Arun is the only royal temple where the King and his monarch travel by royal barge procession to present the royal Kathin. In the past, the royal procession originated from the battle formation in ancient times. The royal processions are categorized to be land and river processions. In the Ayutthaya period, the royal barge processions were regularly held during peace time for the shrine of the Lord Buddha's Footprint at Saraburee.

The greatest and the most significant royal barge procession of the Ayutthaya period took place in the reign of King Narai the Great, for the royal Kathin robe presentation. The processions were arranged both on land and on the river.

In the Rattanakosin period, the royal barge procession was arranged for the royal Kathin robe presentation at Wat Bang Wa Yai or Wat Rakhang, and Wat Hong Rattanaram in the second year of King Buddhayodfa or King Rama I reign. The revival of ancient royal traditions of the Ayutthaya period was the main purpose of this royal barge procession arrangement.

(Arrangement of the royal barge procession was not only for presenting royal Kathin robe presentation. It became a part of major royal ceremonies. From history, the royal barge procession was part of the grand royal procession on the occasion of the King's Coronation in the Reign of King Mongkut, Rama IV. At present, in the reign of King Bhumiphon, Rama IX, the royal barge procession is arranged for both royal Kathin presentation to Wat Arun and other special occasion ceremonies i.e., Bangkok Bicentennial celebration, 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne, Diamond Jubilee of King's Accession to the Throne, and King's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.)





Figure 91: Royal barge cruising to Wat Arun

Source: <http://konnonth.multiply.com/photos/album/143>: accessed in June, 2008



Figure 92: Royal Kathin robe presenting

Source: Fine Art Department : 2009

In summary, Wat Arun has as a status of a religious place which continuously accommodates Buddhist activities for the Thai monarchy and people since the beginning of Rattanakosin reign until present. The activities provided by Wat Arun do not only contribute spiritual value to the local people and Thai social, they also extend and revive the venerable traditions which have become the unique social practices. It could be said that Wat Arun is still functioning as a religious place and the temple is associated with the ways of Thai people's lives.

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มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์

**Chapter 4**  
**The Analysis of the Cultural Meaning**  
**and Cultural Significance of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

For this chapter, the culture meanings in the form and decoration, the cultural significance of Wat Arun are analyzed by using information from documentary evidence which is written or graphic evidence relating to the temple i.e., published materials, reports, chronicles, dispatches, ancient photographs, sketches, and maps, including physical evidence which is evidence derive from the temple itself i.e., the buildings, and materials.

The assessment of the this chapter leads to a statement of the significance of Wat Arun The main objective of this study is to eventually pursue the principle of sustainable cultural tourism and develop an interpretation plan for Wat Arun. Therefore, the contents of this chapters detail are as follows;

**The Cultural Meaning in the Form and Decoration of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

The establishment of the architecture is not only for utilization. Humans express meaning in architecture in different ways depending on the characteristics and types of architecture. Frederick A. Horowitz described that the architecture can express ethnic identities, record ethnic histories, and make political statements (Horowitz, F.A. 1985).

Nelson Goodman noted that all architecture has hidden meanings in their appearance and the meanings of architecture can be interpreted differently at different times (Goodman, N. 1985).

The idea of communicating meanings via architecture could be typically found at cultural heritage sites, especially sacred places. Wat Arun is inscribed to be one of the famous sacred places in the Rattanakosin area. Many of meanings are hidden in the architecture of this sacred place.

Phra Prang, the most magnificent structure at Wat Arun, has several meanings by itself.

For example, the golden crown or Monkut at the top of the Principle Prang implicitly represented that King Rama III chose Prince Mongkut as his crown prince. The golden crown expressed the personal identity of Prince Mongkut and it also revealed the historical and political evidence of the King Rama III period.

There is not only personal identity meaning hidden at Phra Prang, the architecture also represents the identity of the nation because King Rama II had considered that the Rattanakosin reign still did not have Phra Mahathart. Phra Mahathart is a stupa, pagoda or Phra Prang which containing the Lord Buddha relics and was created being symbolic of the capital city (Kanlayanamitt 2005: p. 352).

Therefore he ordered the reconstruction of Phra Prang enlarging its proportions as can be seen at present. After that Phra Prang is interpreted to be Phra Mahathart of the Rattanakosin reign and the identity of Bangkok.

The architectural design and space of Phra Prang conforms the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology concept. Statues such as the statue of Indra, (King of gods in Hinduism), statues of Narayana or Vishnu (one of the gods in Hinduism) at the Principle Prang indicate explicitly that the Principle Prang represents Mount Sumeru, the home of gods following the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology concept. Ornamentations surrounding Phra Prang such as porcelain floras and leaves depict the Himavant Forest which is located at the base of Mount Sumeru.

Moreover, another hidden meaning related to the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology concept for the Phra Prang design can be interpreted that Hinduism has influenced the Thai's belief and Thai's tradition for a long time. With this belief, it is communicated through architecture in the sacred places like Phra Prang at Wat Arun.

The engraved Narayana, one of Hindu's gods, at the gable of the entrance of Pra Viharn Kot and a Deva or god at the gable of Phra Ubosoth show the influence of Hinduism to Thai beliefs.

It is a royal tradition that each king constructs a royal temple for his reign, but in some reigns, the kings could avoid building a new temple because temple establishment is costly and there are a great number of temples in the capital city already. The king would select one of existing temples and restore it for making his royal temple for the reign instead.

Wat Arun was restored by King Rama II in his reign since he was Prince Komlaungisarasunthorn. When he came to the throne, King Rama II continued to restore the temple. Phra Ubosoth (the ordination hall) and Phra Viharn (the chapel) were completely built in his reign. It could be said that Wat Arun had an immense restoration by King Rama II. Therefore, Wat Arun turned its status to being his royal temple.

For this reason, the architecture of Wat Arun serve as a symbol of the royal temple of King Rama II. King Rama II has a statue, the King's royal seals on the fence and the entrance of Phra Prang, the King relics in a pedestal of the Principle Buddha at Phra Ubosoth reveal the King's social status and express a significant relationship between Wat Arun and the King.

The other meaning hidden in architecture which can be interpreted in a way of historical evidence is in Chinese ceramics. Chinese ceramics were decorated for ornamentation at the outside wall of Phra Ubosoth and Phra Viharn. These visible ornamentations show the historic vestige in that; Thailand has been in a commercial relationship with China since the Rattanakosin period.

Chinese statues in Wat Arun absolutely confirm this story. Thailand exported goods such as rice shipped to China in the past. When sailing back, it was necessary to use Chinese rock for ballast to weigh a ship down. From Thai history, in the Rattanakosin reign, Thailand had commercial links with China since the King Rama II period and the growth of commerce was the highest in King Rama III period. Hence, large numbers of Chinese rockeries were imported. King Rama III employed these Chinese statues to decorate several temples in Bangkok such as Wat Prachetuphon Wimonmukhalaram (Wat Pho), Wat Suthattapwarararm and Wat Arun.

Due to the excellent commercial relationship with China, some of Chinese arts and architecture styles were adopted and exhibited in the architecture at Wat Arun. The building of the Buddha footprint niche or Mondop (a square structure with a

pyramidal pointed roof) was created in the King Rama III reign with a Chinese pattern roof. After deterioration in 1895, the building was recreated and the present roof was restored and made in mortar by the order of Phra Thammachedi, the abbot of the temple. The riverside pavilions in Chinese style at Wat Arun indicate the adaptation of Chinese architectures into Thai culture.

Sutsan Suttipisan studied architecture in terms of an interpretation tool. He explained that architecture is one of the most enduring activities of cultural evidence as its extensive, extravagant and has durable properties. The art and design of architecture make our existence not only visible but meaningful. This makes architecture become a topic for discussion, particularly through its dissemination in visual culture (Suttipisan 2007: p.143).

Therefore, the architecture can combine various meanings to the viewers such as historical evidence, personal identity, social and political status, belief, and traditional. Although the architectural heritage can convey a visual message (Suttipisan 2007: p.143), but the viewers or receivers are able to get messages from architecture more or less depending on their experience, understanding, and the ability of interpretation.

From cultural tourism, it is difficult for visitors to understand and interpret the meanings which are hidden in architectural heritage on their own. It is the responsibility of the cultural heritage site's manager to information about those hidden meanings to visitors. If visitors can reach the hidden meanings in architecture, they will understand and appreciate the cultural heritage place. This is a way to cultivate conservation of the cultural heritage in visitor's minds.

### **The Cultural Significance of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

For cultural heritage conservation management, careful study, understanding and assessing the cultural significance of the heritage site are crucial factors which must be done. It is noted by Taylor that assessment of the significance of a place, site, or monument, should be carried out as a necessary preliminary for any conservation action. Moreover, it is also suggested that the goal of conservation is to preserve cultural significance by ensuring that all interventions and actions meet the test of authenticity in all respects (Taylor 2006: p. 101).

Unless the cultural significance is judged precisely, the conservation of heritage sites may jeopardize the significance of the place.

It could be said that a careful analysis of cultural significance leads to a successful conservation management and interpretation plan. Similarly, to pursue an achievement of cultural tourism interpretation plan, the cultural significance of Wat Arun must be analyzed by carrying out a comprehensive study.

Therefore, this section proposes the details of the cultural significance of Wat Arun. Using the principle of various charters for guiding the assessment, Wat Arun has its own cultural values as follows;

### **Aesthetic Value**

The aesthetic value is mentioned in the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China that it is a part of architectural at a heritage site or it could be declared that artistic styles employed in the architecture at a heritage site often transferred its aesthetic value.

Wat Arun, as a cultural heritage site, is found to have graceful architecture. All materials reflect the unique building style, perfect decoration and aesthetic form.

The most distinguished Phra Prang in Thailand can be found at this sacred place. Phra Prang at Wat Arun had been established to be Phra Mahathart and is inscribed for being the highest pagoda of Thailand. Apart from being Phra Mahathart or land mark of Bangkok, Phra Prang also embraces excellent architectural arts such as spatial, composition, building style, decoration and aesthetic form.

The Principle Prang and its surrounding buildings (the Minor Prang and Mondop) depict sympathetic space and composition coming from an excellent design. Phra Prang, in the image of the luxurious Khmer style Chedi, is suitable for presenting its characteristic as a Mount Sumeru following Hindu Buddhism cosmology or Tridhātu concept. With the height of 67 meters, it allows this architecture to be the most outstanding image of the Chao Phraya river bank area.

Besides, with Hindu god sculptures (Indra, Narayana, and Brahmas), mythological creatures (Garudas, Kinorn, and Kinaree), and fixed ornamentations which are made in ceramics, sea shells, and antique porcelains (Banjarong) cut into floras, leaves and the other patterns, the images reflects the delicacy of the artistic style of the buildings to the viewers.



Another gorgeous building, Phra Ubosoth, is the most important place in the temple. It exhibits a unique Thai architectural style at the beginning Rattanakosin era. The exterior walls and pillars which are decorated with colorful Chinese ceramics in a fallen flora pattern on white cement background advocate a charming appearance. The decoration made by gold and colored glass on pillar finals and gables also draws up a sparkling prestige image to Phra Ubosoth.

Inside Phra Ubosoth, mural paintings of Lord Buddha's history were executed on all the walls by famous Thai artists during King Rama III's reign such as Kong Pae, Tong Yu and Ta me. The luxurious mural paintings are compatible with the place and encourage the Principle Buddha image to be even more outstanding.

The entrance way with spire roof to Phra Ubosoth which is located near the river clearly expresses the artistic value. Accordingly, the steeple roof is decorated in colored ceramics. The cutting of more than thousand pieces of colorful porcelain into flower and leaf shapes which are used as the ornamentation at the gable, depicting one of Thailand's traditional craftsmanship styles.

In front of the entrance, there are two goblins or guardian figures fashioned in stucco and decorated with ceramics with the great configurations. Due to the fabulous appearances, they were used as the prototype for creating the goblins in the temple of the Emerald Buddha.

From the description of artistic style of the materials and ornamentations in Wat Arun as above, it can be stated that Wat Arun embraces the architecture which aesthetic value and the aesthetic function of the temple can enhance the public's artistic appreciation through enjoyment and study of the site. The aesthetic value of the site also influences public interests resulting in the stimulation of the site's conservation.

### **Historical Value**

The important events and activities that occurred in the past at a heritage site can create cultural value which is known as the historical value of the site. The most significance event in the Thonburi era emphasized the historical value of Wat Arun is that King Taksin the Great selected the temple to be the royal temple in the palace. Since then, Wat Arun has played important roles involving Buddhist activities for the Monarch in the Thonburi and Rattanakosin periods.

The chronicle of the Thonburi period (Fine Arts Department 1978) depicted that Wat Arun used to be the place for enshrining the Emerald Buddha, the most respectful image in Thailand. After remaining at Vientiane for 214 years, the image was taken back to Thailand and a great ceremony for the image was held for seven days at Wat Arun as appeared in the old chronicles. This important event reinforces the historical value of the temple.

Following his accession to the throne and the establishment of Bangkok as the royal capital, King Rama I decided to revive the ancient royal traditions of the Ayutthaya period (Arsawai 1999: p.67) and one of the tradition's revived was the royal barge procession. The main purpose of the royal barge cruising was the royal kathin ceremony. Wat Arun has been used since the tradition was revived for offering the royal kathin robe until the present day. From historic vestiges, Wat Arun is associated with luxurious royal events since the beginning of Rattanakosin era.

The capital city has been moved to the opposite side of the river and Thonburi changed its status to be only a district, making Wat Arun not the royal temple in the palace anymore, but the temple has still been conserved by monarchy to an extraordinary extent.

The ancient dispatches and the old photographs embraced by the Fine Arts Department reveal that there have been several major events which had been held after the building's restoration and reconstruction such as the Phra Ubosoth's ceremony and Phra Prang's ceremony in the King Rama V period. All of these events inscribed in the documents inform the history of the Chakree dynasty in the way of Buddhism foster and express the historical value of this temple.

The Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Site in China (2002) stated that the historic value of a heritage site derives from the existence of the site which can prove, correct or supplement facts documented in historical records. Existing evidence in the temple used to claim that King Taksin the Great resided there sleeping inside the old ordination hall. The existing base confirmed the relationship among the King and the temple during that period. Moreover, King Taksin's shrine and his statue in the hall created in 1946 manifest that this place is connected to the great king.

In addition, the relics of King Rama II in the pedestal of the Principle Buddha image at Phra Ubosoth and the king's statue located near the river bank are supplementary material that verify that this temple was the crown temple of King Rama II. This evidence also shows the historic records during that period.

Wat Arun's essential events and activities in the past revealed in the chronicles, dispatches, and photographs elaborate historical records of the place. Also the existent materials on the site confirm the historical vestiges. With these characteristics, Wat Arun proposes its historical value and is suitable for being the cultural heritage place.

### **Scientific Value**

Another aspect of cultural significance that should be considered is its scientific value. The scientific value of a heritage site refers to scientific and technological development involved plan and design, construction, and materials of architecture at the site.

The plan and design of the architecture in Wat Arun such as Phra Prang and the surrounding buildings have been applied in accordance with the local knowledge presenting the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology concept. The location at a concave side of the river accelerates land's demolition from the water stream. In addition, the quality of the soil in low-lying land is soft, therefore, the reconstruction of the gigantic building here must employ advanced technology. The reconstruction of Phra Prang is found to have been done more than 150 years ago, it can be noted that the building exhibits advanced building technology during that ancient time.

Although creating Phra Prang 67 meters in height on the river bank is difficult, retaining its configuration seems to be more complicated.

For much of Asia, moisture is a serious conservation issue. Conservation projects should analyze original drainage systems of monuments. They should establish moisture controls including the measurement of moisture content and distribution and should undertake the design of measures to reduce moisture resulting from rain from above and absorption from below ground (Hoian Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia 2003 : p.22).

Restoration techniques of architecture have been applied for architectural form and structural design protection. In King Rama V reign, the gutters around the base

and each terrace of Phra Prang were built by order of the king for carrying rainwater and retarding the deterioration of the building's construction from flooding. Gutter installation around the stone foundations and terraces of an immense building required a practical method from the foreign specialist at that time. This was a way of conservation for moisture control of the building which had been done in the past.

According to the location at the river bank, a concrete wall was installed to solve the flooding problem. Besides, the chemical fluid stained on the surface of Phra Prang is for protecting parasitic plants which leads to structural detriment. These methods are to prevent the disasters which increase the scientific value of the site.

Not only using the technology for the restoration of buildings at the temple, some scientific techniques are also used to recover decorative arts such as mural paintings in Phra Ubosoth which were once destroyed by fire in King Rama V reign.

At present, the vulnerable buildings and ornamentations in Wat Arun have been restored regularly under the technological development.

According to the Burra Charter, the scientific value of a heritage site will depend on the importance of the data involved, on its rarity, quality of representativeness and on the degree to which the place may contribute further substantial information (Australia ICOMOS 1999: p.12).

Assessing the scientific value of Wat Arun from the Burra Charter's definition, the temple assembles invaluable substances such as the relics of the Lord Buddha in Phra Viharn and in Prajulamaneejedi at the small Viharn. Besides, the relics of King Rama II have been kept at the temple. These precious substances are rarity and are enshrined in the temple due to cultural influences.

The buildings in the temple, i.e., Phra Ubosoth, Phra Prang, and mural paintings, attribute Thai traditional architecture and decoration styles. The other materials, i.e., the crown at the top of Phra Prang, Chinese statues, and Hindu god creatures are historical vestiges from the Thonburi and Rattanakosin era in aspects of politics, economics, and traditions. Moreover, Phra Prang has a characteristic to represent the national identity following the aim of reconstruction.

Conserved by technological development until the present, it could be found that the important data and rare substances still remain and indicate the historic

significances of the site . Therefore, Wat Arun attains the scientific value as a part of cultural significance.

### **Social Value**

In some heritage places, it may not be easy to find the social significance related to the local community. However, for the sacred places in Thailand like temples, the social value of the place always clearly appears because the majority of Thai people are Buddhist and a temple is a place to worship the Buddha and make merit. So, the temple as a status of holy place has an influence in the way of life of the local community.

Wat Arun still functions as a religious place encompasses many issues leading to the social significance in the local community. Wat Arun associates with the events that have a profound effect on the community. In the important Buddhist days (Maghapuja day, Visakhapuja day, and Asalha puja day) which occur three times a year, the activities for making merit at the temple have been done continuously by local people i.e., candlelit procession, listening to a sermon, and offering foods and other accessories to monks. Besides, local people take a meditation practice provided by the monks regularly. All of these religious practices are held in tradition from the past to present making spiritual sense to the local community.

One of the beliefs about this temple is that making a merit at Wat Arun will get a shining life as the temple's name (the temple of the dawn). This belief makes Wat Arun one of nine sacred places in Bangkok where people make a merit on special festivals such as New Year and Songkran festivals.

Intangible elements such as spiritual tradition as well as performance, music, etc., are also an essential part of the cultural significance of the historic urban areas (Siririsak 2007: p.71). This idea agrees with a vital tradition of the Thai monarch, the royal barge procession. This royal custom which represents Thai ancient barges, traditional performance, traditional boat song or "Garp Yanee Sip Ed", and the traditional costume of naval officers or oarsmen has been held for the Royal Kathin Ceremony at Wat Arun as a great festival since the beginning of the Rattanakosin era. Wat Arun is required to be only a temple in Thailand involved with the royal barge procession through monarchy's merit. It can be said that the royal barge procession

for the Royal Kathin Ceremony at Wat Arun is intangible heritage yielding in the social significance and is invaluable for Thai social.

Semiotics theory can be applied for the visual sign of architecture. The signifier involves with physical entities e.g., materials, style, and colour while the signified involves with the meaning that is associated with, or given to, the signifier. It can be said that the signified is the mental concepts or thoughts while seeing architecture (Suttipisan 2007: p.147). Phra Prang, the most crucial architecture in Wat Arun, has a famously accepted meaning or significance in that it is a landmark or signature of the city. A landmark of the city manifests Wat Arun's sense of place. Moreover, another sense of place that also elucidates Wat Arun is its significance as a religious place in Rattanakosin's preservative area.

Besides, Phra Prang also creates a sense of belonging to the community in which it is Thailand's nation's treasure. These issues harmonize to the idea of Pearson and Sullivan, they both denoted that one of the key social values, sites may have is their role in establishing and maintaining a community's sense of place and of belonging. (Pearson & Sullivan 2001: p.21). Thus, it can be seen that Wat Arun expresses its sense of place and the temple can establish a sense of belonging to the people too.

The events also have a profound effect on a community, establish attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors fundamental to the community, have intangible heritage leading to social significance, and have a strong sense of place and sense of belonging. All of these factors intensify the social value of Wat Arun and promote the temple to be a commemorative place in Thai peoples' minds.

From the detailed assessment of Wat Arun's cultural significance, it can be seen that the significance of the temple is multifaceted. Tangible and intangible elements of the place have more than one type of significance; both of them are relevance to represent the criteria of the cultural significance as the reliable principle guidelines indicate. This analyzed information states that Wat Arun accomplishes the cultural significance which promotes this precious temple to be a cultural heritage site which should conserve the authenticity of the site.

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## Chapter 5

### **The Analysis of the Authenticity of Wat Arun Ratchawararam and the Threat and Risk Factors to Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

There are two relevant parts in this chapter. Firstly, the authenticity of Wat Arun is analyzed and reported comprehensively. Lastly threat and risk factors which can be offensive to the architecture of the monastery are criticized and reported. The assessment of this chapter leads to a supported information for summarizing a statement of the significance of Wat Arun and formulating interpretation plan of Wat Arun. In addition the result of the last part indicates problems which can destroy the site and lessen the site's authenticity. This information evokes to creating solution for site's protection. Therefore, the contents of this chapters are shown as follows;

#### **Authenticity of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

Authenticity is a highly relevant but complex concept in the management of heritage places. If places are not authentic (not real) then there are few constraints on their interpretation. If a place is not real the stories about it do not need to be real. But if, like Wat Arun, a place has a long history and many layers of authentic significance its interpretation will need to be very clear and focused on the main stories and various levels of significance. The following discussion will highlight the ways in which authenticity is examined and how authenticity may be accurately represented to the host community and custodians of a place as well as to visitors, who may have only a brief encounter with it but who may have nevertheless invested a great deal of their personal resources in reaching its entrance.

The 1972 World Heritage Convention defines cultural heritage monuments as: architectural works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science (UNESCO 2005: p.10).

By this definition, Wat Arun may be categorized clearly as a cultural heritage place since the temple comprises invaluable materials and substances which embrace cultural significance in every basic criterions. On the one hand, Wat Arun is an item of the national asset of Thailand by the reason of presenting outstanding cultural significance, for past, present and future generations of Thai people.

Although the tangible and intangible elements of Wat Arun cannot reach the outstanding universal value which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity as the Cultural World Heritage (Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 2005: p. 3), the tangible and intangible elements of the temple clearly identify the cultural values which benefit overwhelmingly in aspects of history, art, cultural and social practices of the nation.

Safeguarding authenticity is one of the primary objectives of conservation, and therefore the professional standards of conservation practice everywhere in Asia should explicitly address issues of identification, documentation, safeguarding and preservation of the authenticity of heritage sites (Hoi An Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia 2003: p.9). The heritage status, or significance of Wat Arun as a cultural heritage site in Asia, demands that it should be conserved in accordance with the highest standards of conservation and that its authenticity should be protected. But first its authenticity must be explained.

Authenticity refers to the genuine status of a listed monument, group of monuments, or site, usually of national and/or regional significance. It is a measure of the degree to which the values of a property may be understood to have been credibly, truthfully, and genuinely expressed by the attributes of the property (UNESCO 2004: p.29). In order to understand the authentic heritage values of a cultural heritage site,

credible and truthful sources of information must be employed in assessing its significance.

Information sources which are the crucial tools for assessing authenticity of place are defined as all physical, written, oral, and figurative sources (UNESCO 2005). The information sources can enhance a possibility to know the nature, specificities, meaning and history of the cultural heritage place.

The four main factors which must be reviewed in order to identify and assess the authenticity of the cultural heritage place are form, function, place, and essence.

The collected information sources related to Wat Arun which can claim the authenticity of the temple are assessed in the four main factors as follows;

### **Form**

The first dimension to evaluate authenticity is form. The sub details of this topic measuring the authenticity comprise of spatial layout, design, crafts, materials, and building techniques.

The site of Wat Arun is divided into three main parts. The first is the area where the monks' residences are located, called "Sanghavas" in Thai. The second is the location of the architectural structures for rituals, including the Phra Ubosoth, Phra Viharn, and Phra Prang. "Buddhavas" is the Thai name given to this area. The third part is the garden located close to the river. Whilst the Buddhavas is located in the middle, Sanghavas and the garden form part of the whole architectural site.

It is traditional in every temple to separate the monks' residences from the sacred and ceremonial architectural areas. Wat Arun is traditional in its design and layout, to separate those areas clearly since Thonburi era.

the authenticity of the Buddhavas may be analyzed in its form and layout. Architectures of Wat Arun have a compatible design which represents the arts of late Ayutthaya and Rattanakosin era.

For example, the most important architectural form is the Phra Prang and its surrounding buildings (Prang Thit and Mondop Thit). They have a carefully planned harmonious layout.

Phra Ubosoth established in King Rama II reign has an excellent design which exhibits the precious crafts of Rattanakosin. Although the Phra Ubosoth has been

restored many times, the configuration and decoration details still show their present genuineness.



Figure 93: The beautiful scenery of Phra Prang at night

Source: History of Wat Arun Ratchawararam, 2009



Figure 94: Phra Ubosoth or the ordination hall of Wat Arun

Source: History of Wat Arun Rachawararam, 2009

However, it is a hardship that cultural heritage property can maintain its genuineness. Wat Arun takes in to account of this statement.

There are many factors resulting in negative threats on the authenticity of cultural heritage site (UNESCO 2003). Firstly, development pressures, especially infrastructural pressure, and demographic pressure directly affect the authenticity of the place. Secondly, tourism pressure or overwhelming of tourists in the cultural heritage site also arouses the site in danger. Thirdly, illegal activities such as

encroachments, excavations, looting, and smuggling of cultural and natural relics can menace the authenticity. Lastly, natural disasters have a great effect on the authenticity demolition. The cultural heritage site must encounter those negative impacts more or less inevitably.

Retention of the authenticity requires constant attention to protect and conserve the authentic fabric and also to prevent the intrusion of activities that would diminish the authenticity of the preservation of the place. To reinforce or decrease the authenticity depends on the strategy and practical methods. This situation can be noticed obviously in the process of reconstruction. Only the authentic fabric will have been lost, unless the re-building modifies genuine design and practices including the tradition of re-building. The reconstruction of Phra Prang for being the highest pagoda in the King Rama III reign exemplifies this idea. Some of the authentic fabric of Phra Prang was lost during the re-building at that time. However, since the reconstruction had been done completely, several times of the later restorations is still employed authentic design and practices. Therefore, Phra Prang takes in to account of the authentic representative at present.

มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร ส่วนอนุรักษ์มรดก



Figure 95: The restoration of Phra Prang in King Rama V reign

Source: History of Wat Arun Rachawararam, 2009

Material use is one of the conditions related to this matter. Changing the fabric of any material may affect the authenticity. The original fabric will be destroyed

more or less, depending on the quantity of the material used for replacement. It is particularly difficult to avoid change to some materials in the maintenance since new materials may be used cultural heritage conservation. Therefore, the genuineness is finally lessened.

Wat Arun also confronts to this problem. Some of materials have been changed during restoration of some parts of the temple pavements which were stone, are now marble. This change diminishes its authenticity. Nevertheless, the principle pattern of the important buildings such as Phra Prang, Phra Ubosoth, and the entrance way with the spire roof are maintained the original design.



Figure 96: Marble is used to be a new material for adaptation

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2009



Figure 97: The pavement in front of Viharn-noi or the small chapel after adaptation

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2009



Figure 98: Marbles are used to be new materials instead of the old tiles  
for Viharn-noi or the small chapel restoration

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2009



Figure 99: The restoration of the mural paintings in Phra Viharn or the chapel

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2008

### **Function**

In this issue, the use and associations will be considered to find the degree of existing authenticity.

Use means the functions of a place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place (The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999: p.2). From the chronicles, Wat Arun has carried on its function as a religious place since the Thonburi era. Buddhist activities are provided regularly on important Buddhist days such as Wien Tien or the candlelit procession, meditation



practice, preaching sermons, and other merit making. The Buddhist activities in the temple become acceptable social practices.

Besides, the royal tradition in the Kathin Ceremony at the temple which includes the royal barge procession, which has been held continuously for the royal traditional preservation, presents Thai original tradition until the present day.

It can be seen that Wat Arun plays an important role in these events. The events encourage local people and the monarchy to associate with all Buddhist activities here.



Figure 100: Merit making on an important Buddhist day at Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2008



Figure 101: The Royal Barge Procession cruising to Wat Arun in the past

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Rachawararam, 1991

Taking into account tangible and intangible heritages, the temple becomes a famous tourist destination in the Rattanakosin area. Therefore, being a traveling place is another function of the temple.

In the aspect of the impact of use, any negative impact occurring at the site from Buddhist activities and tourism are rarely found because Wat Arun is a sacred place and also a royal temple. Therefore, Thai people respect the place, making the negative impacts such as encroachments, looting, and smuggling unacceptable. A tourist police station is also located in the temple area. Police officers stand by to supervise both Thai and foreigner visitors for their safety every day. In addition, police officers always monitor the tourists' behavior to prevent any negative impact at the place.

An interview with a tourist police officer working at the temple, where he explained about his authority and visitors' behaviors. *“My job is to take care of visitor's safety and notice any improper behavior which can damage the architecture and antiques in the temple. I have been working at this temple for several years. Generally, there are two police officers and a translator at this police station to help us communicate with the foreigners who have a problem or inquire information and can not speak English such as Chinese, and Japanese visitors. Tourist police work here every day from eight till four thirty. We are under Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). None of architecture or fabric of the buildings are destroyed by visitors here. Visitors have appropriate behavior especially foreigners. They only take a look at artistic buildings, admire them and take some photographs. The only problems I have ever encountered are cheating on the price of souvenirs, and stealing a wallet (Sukrit Dutsadeepreecha 2008, pers.comm. 16 October)”*.

Therefore, in the aspect of tourism at the temple, there is less negative impact from visitors to the fabric of the buildings.

However, inconsiderate activities from local people sometimes happen, for example, in one ordination ceremony, some local people cooked at the front of peripheral balcony for the ordination ceremony without realizing that heat, smoke, and humidity from the cooking will deteriorate the Buddha images, mural paintings on the peripheral balcony and surrounding buildings. The inappropriate use of

materials and can accelerate the degradation of the building and lesson its authenticity.

It can be seen that, Wat Arun still functions as a religious and traveling place, Buddhist activities that occur in the temple transform traditions and social practices which are handed down generation by generation. The pristine traditions create a spiritual value in Thai peoples' minds. Hence, both the monarchy and Thai people associate this temple with timelessness since the function of this scared place represents valuable traditions to Thai social.

### **Place**

The Burra Charter noted that place means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views. While setting is explained that the area around a place, which may include the visual catchment (The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999: p.2).

To assess the authenticity of the heritage property, place and setting should be analyzed comprehensively to understand how intact the place is. The site should be analyzed and evaluated from both a architectural point of view and also a religious and cultural view.

The idea of promulgating the Krung Rattanakosin area to be a conservation precinct was initiated among professional architects and other professionals in 1970. It has been suggested that Krung Rattanakosin should be protected from the unsympathetic building developments. After that Inner Rattanakosin and Outer Rattanakosin became the preservation areas and a decree on land-use regulation was announced for high building restrictions. In 1992, the territory of Thonburi located on the opposite bank of the Chao Phraya River was put forward for conservation zoning namely Thonburi Rattanakosin (Karin Klinkajorn 2005).

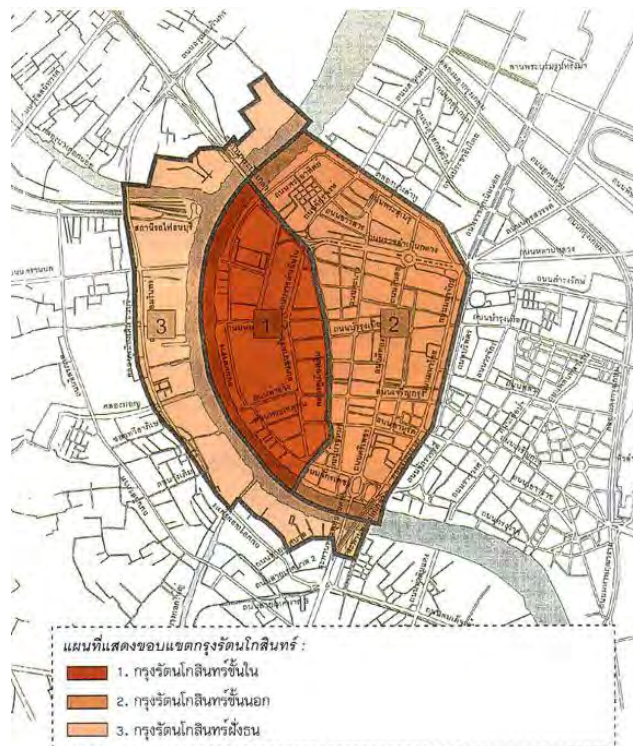


Figure 102: Map of Rattanakosin preservative area

Source: Natural and Cultural Environmental Conservation Division, 2006

1. Inner Rattanakosin
2. Outer Rattanakosin
3. Thonburi Rattanakosin

According to this third preservation district, many of the deserted places such as The Old Palace, and the ancient temples are included in this area, these places are important and are involved in historic vestiges.

Wat Arun, one of the precious temples, is located in Thonburi Rattanakosin preservation area. It can be seen that there is a river and a main road that align parallel to the temple. These two areas are the buffer zone and setting of Wat Arun. The areas directly affect the temple in aspects of transportation and ways to reach the temple and physical vista.

The continuing landscape is one which retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditionally way of life, and in which the evolutionary process, exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution over time (Calma and Liddle 2003: p.105)

The Chao Phraya river is a continuing landscape which creates an associative value to Thai people and the local community. It can be said that the river is the biggest antiquity and irrigation supply for Thai people. Thai people have exploited the river for both consumption and transportation for a long period of time. Moreover, the river takes part in creating a vital cultural identity.

Wat Arun gains a lot of benefits from the river. Firstly, the river is a convenient way for tourists to visit the temple by boat, using either ferries as a regular service, or long tail boats as a private service. Both non Thai and Thai tour groups who have already visited The Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Phra Kaew) or Wat Phrachetuphon (Wat Pho) can easily cross the river to visit Wat Arun by ferries which run all day and avoid any traffic problems.

Secondly, the river has as a status in the setting of Wat Arun and takes part in producing a cultural identity which ties it to the temple through the Royal Barge Procession. Adrian Phillips expressed that the role of landscape in a cultural identity is often strong and is recorded in famous traditions (song, dance and legend), and arts (painting, literature, music and poetry) (Phillips 2003: p. 44).

The Royal Barge Procession has been performed along the Chao Phraya River to Wat Arun for presenting the Kathin robe since the beginning of the Rattanakosin era. Although, the great royal tradition is not established every year at present, it is often performed for special occasions for Thai cultural preservation. So, the Chao Phraya River also plays a strong role in the continuing landscape with the royal tradition which becomes a Thai cultural identity, this appearance is in accordance with Phillips's idea.

Thirdly, the river's scenery is changeable all the time from its natural features and human activities. However, the relationship between the river and the distinguishing buildings encourages the aesthetic value and harmony with each other. Therefore, the landscape displays an attractive vista to viewers.

It can be seen that the Chao Phraya River is an excellent landscape which is very useful to Wat Arun and raises the authenticity of the temple. In contrast, the river gains a lot of benefits from Wat Arun, the temple is in jeopardy by material demolition from the river such as the natural disaster like flooding, humidity, water

erosion. These factors can reduce the authenticity of the temple. Thus, this is a function of the site's manager to protect the place from those hazard factors.



Figure 103: The scenery of the Chao Phraya River and Wat Arun in the past

Source: Photograph book of Wat Arun Ratchawararam, 1991

Arun Amarin Road is another setting and buffer zone affecting the temple. Visitors can use this road to reach the temple by car. After the Arun Amarin Road expansion, a journey to this area is much easier and visiting Wat Arun by car is quick and reasonably traffic free. Nevertheless, the road expansion under the project of infrastructure development of the city dramatically changed the topography of this historic area. Many of vernacular houses have been demolished and new constructions have replaced them extensively. The development caused the area to be modernization and more crowded. A small number of the old buildings and old houses align on the opposite side of the temple's wall is exists. Fortunately, a decree of land use regulation at Rattanakosin preservation area prohibits high building construction. So there are no skyscrapers appearing in this zone.





Figure 104: Vernacular houses which were demolished due to Arun Aummarin Road expansion

Source: Sudara Sujchaya, 1999



Figure 105: The new Arun Aummarin Road

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2009





Figure 106: The existent old building

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2009

Modernization of this area does not only cause visual alteration, but also, destroys the landscape and the area's natural beauty. Despite the fact that the authenticity of geography and vernacular architectures of this zone are found to be quite degraded, modernization does not affect the architecture at Wat Arun because the temple has a large area and there is a distinct boundary to protect the temple such as the temple's wall, the small street namely Wang Doem, and the old houses.

Intrinsically, it is difficult to refrain from infrastructure development in the city, and development pressures combined with the impact of tourism and other related developments impacts such as natural disasters, tourism pressure on the historic area. This truthfulness appears similar to the development of Arun Ammarin Road and surrounding habitations. However, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) attempts to control the topography of the area in a suitable way such as by setting a small garden on the corner of the entrance of Wang Doem street, developing the pavement and street from cement to stone block, controlling the color of the old buildings, the old houses, the Navy's walls and Navy's entrances in a harmonious color. Hence, the development of the landscape near the temple can be acceptable because the adaptation encourages a good visual catchment and

sympathetic vista even though the authenticity of this zone has been demolished severely.



Figure 107: Wang Doem Road and Navy fortification  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : April, 2009



Figure 108: Landscape adaptation on Wang Doem Road  
Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : April, 2009

In the aspect of sense of place, Wat Arun reveals its characteristics as a religious place for a long time and Phra Prang is admired as a landmark of Bangkok. Thus, Wat Arun is a religious place and part of the identity of Bangkok. It can be said that the meaning of the temple or sense of place exists with genuine sensation and transfers from generation to generation.

### **Essence**

The essence is a topic which must be considered for assessing authenticity. Hoi An Protocols (UNESCO 2003) declared that essence comprised of artistic expression, values, spirit, and emotional impact. These details are sympathetic with the contents of cultural significance elaborated in The Burra Charter. Ken Taylor's point of view supports this. Taylor showed that his idea is relevant with Hoi An Protocols which are the guidelines for assuring and preserving the authenticity of heritage sites in the context of the cultures of Asia. This guideline is the link between cultural significance of heritage sites and concepts of authenticity. The goal of conservation is to preserve the cultural significance by ensuring that all interventions and actions meet the test of authenticity in all respects (Taylor 2006: p.101).

It can be seen that the first three items, artistic expression, values, spirit, of the essence have been analyzed and described in the part of the cultural significance of Wat Arun. Wat Arun achieves the cultural significance in all criteria. The temple fulfills the aesthetic, historical, scientific and social or spiritual values leading to the authenticity of the property.

In an emotional impact aspect, the value of the temple directly contributes emotional sensations to Thai people in that Wat Arun is a crucial place communicating their ancestor's history in the Thonburi and Rattanakosin era to the present generation. All Thai people perceive the prestige of Wat Arun as a Buddhist religious place.

From its function, the temple regularly accommodates Buddhist activities or rituals which people participate in. The involvement of the Buddhist activities or rituals create a spiritual value to Thai people. Therefore, Thai people deem the temple in the aspect of a sacred place more than a traveling place and venerate the temple in the status of the heritage of Thailand.

In summary, Wat Arun remains authentic in many components. The form and design of the architecture have been largely safeguarded. The functions of the place have carried on in the same pattern of being a Buddhism religious place since it began. The temple has provided Thai people with religious centre since it was built. Although, modernization has caused alteration to the surrounding landscape, this does not affect the temple since the alterations appear in the buffer zone. Besides, the

cultural significance of the temple which completely communicates the emotional sensation in that Wat Arun is a valuable national estate and should be venerated.

Although, the temple can be kept original, it can be found that some architectures and landscape are slowly threatened by unsympathetic restoration and development which leads to a gradual decrease of authenticity. Physical loss can also result in a critical loss of meaning, significantly compromising both the aesthetic and functional value and cultural significance (Matero 2006: p.74). Therefore, a strategy and practical methods for any restoration should be carefully considered to support the aim of protecting the authenticity. In addition, any development of the place should be avoided unless it is necessary and compatible to the materials and landscape of the site.

### **Threats and Risks to the Architecture and Fabric Deterioration of Wat Arun**

#### **Ratchawararam**

Established as a temple since the Ayutthaya era, Wat Arun was not only the chief temple, but also the cultural and religious center of the Thonburi reign until King Taksin the Great passed away. The function of the temple for being a cultural and religious place has existed till the present. Furthermore, Wat Arun also presents its function to be a famous tourist destination. The temple can transfer an immense amount of historic vestiges from generation to generation. Therefore, it is necessary to protect or safeguarding the integrity of the place especially architecture, fabric and surrounding areas. Intrinsically, cultural and natural heritage are always at risk. They are at risk from the depredations of war. They are at risk in the face of nature's occasional eruptions and irruptions. They are at risk from the daily forces of slow decay, attrition and neglect. They are even at risk from the hand of overzealous conservationists (Stovel H. 1998).

Therefore, the purpose of this part is to identify categories of threat and risk which affect Wat Arun architectural conservation and to find an adaptable solution to adequately mitigate and prevent these threats and risks. From the survey, it can be found that there are many factors that can threaten the intactness of Wat Arun as follows;

### **Natural Disasters**

A property's physical and cultural integrity also faces an array of indirect threats such as atmospheric pollution, traffic vibration, physical encroachment and intrusive commercial development. To these threats are added natural disasters, some of which are caused by unsustainable and environmentally harmful human practices, and armed conflict (UNESCO 2004: p. 44). The natural disasters have a great negative effect on the architectures and fabric at heritage sites. A great number of properties lie within tropical climate zones, and are therefore subject to heavy rainfall and monsoons. Regular floods in World Heritage properties should be taken into consideration when preparing or reviewing emergency and/or management plans (UNESCO 2004: p. 46).

Thailand is a country in Asia which is located in a tropical climate zone and encounters flood problems every rainy season. Ayutthaya province has a great numbers of cultural heritage places and preservation areas situated on the river bank.

Those cultural heritage sites are regularly devastated by flooding every year. Recently, the Fine Art Department and private sector such as the local community and the temples have tied to solve this problem by creating a permanent dam parallel to the river for the sites' protection.

Constructed on the bank of the Chao Phraya River, Wat Arun also confronts flooding similarly to the other heritage sites at Ayutthaya. However, the temple has had a management policy to deal with this natural disaster for a long time. From historic vestiges, it can be found that the temple created a dam along the river since the past and at present the dam has been continuously fixed and reinforced to preventing flood. Thus, this natural problem which can deteriorate the architectures and fabric at the temple is not found. While flooding affects monuments from below and destabilizes structural foundations, heavy rainfall affects buildings from above, resulting in roof leakage, wall seepage and rising damp. These effects have a long-term impact on the site's integrity as well as undesirable visual consequences. They may also entail further problems such as the growth of micro-organisms and vegetation (UNESCO 2004: p. 46).

Established near the river, humidity from the river and the typical climate accelerate Phra Prang and the other buildings deterioration. Moisture from the Chao

Phraya River is drawn up through the masonry. When this moisture, which contains salts dissolved from the soil, evaporates from the surface of the wall, some of these salts crystallize on the surface, forming efflorescence which usually causes little harm to the masonry. Some of the salts, however, crystallize behind the mortar, exerting pressure within the masonry units. In time, the surface of the wall will become friable, and fragments of brick and mortar will spall away. Phra Prang and the other constructions cannot avoid this natural threat.

Moreover, in a hot and humid country, the weather is perfect for fungi to grow. These micro-organisms can decay everything in time. Besides, it can be found that parasitic plants always appear at Phra Prang. The roots of those plants will slowly bore inside the building, causing a lot of small holes, and eventually make the masonry decay. However, the temple uses a chemical fluid to paint the facade of the building to prevent the vegetation and micro-organisms. In addition, in the great restoration in King Rama V reign, the temple created gutters around the foundation and each terrace of Phra Prang to drain the water in the rainy season because floods may occur with heavy rain and can harm the facade and sculptures of the building.

It can be seen that extreme weather conditions affect certain types of constructions such as wooden structures, sand stone sculptures, bricks, mortar. Tropical climates and extreme temperatures (hot weather) are particular conditions in Thailand that can cause premature deterioration of architecture in cultural heritage site. Therefore, flood, damp and hot temperature are natural disasters which can threaten architecture and fabric at the temple and site's managers should concentrate on these risk factors and find ways to prevent the valuable architecture from these threats.



Figure 109: The dam for preventing flooding at Wat Arun  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2008.



Figure 110: The wall of Phra Prang base showed sign of seepage by dampness  
 causing decays

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2008.

### **Tourism Development**

Tourism has recently become one of the dominant forces in the economic growth of Thailand. In recent years, the Thai government promulgated to promote Thailand to be a famous tourist destination. Public relations campaigns to encourage Thailand as a traveling and business centre were launched such as “Amazing Thailand” and “Seven Wonders of Thailand”. The campaigns were successful in attracting visitors, to increase the number of both Thai and non Thai visitors traveling in Thailand and to activate associated service sectors such as hotels, restaurants, and transportation business etc.



However, the world economic crisis in 2008 or “Hamburger crisis” has affected every business around the world including the traveling business. Furthermore, political problems in Thailand among the yellow shirt group who protest the ex-prime minister Taksin Shinawatt and the red shirt group who supported the ex-prime minister resulted in chronic riots in 2008-2009. This political conflict created a negative image of Thailand. Some countries judged and announced Thailand was not appropriate to visit and Bangkok was a dangerous city.

Although, the political crisis has been solved by the government recently, the growth rate of the tourism industry in Thailand has dropped sharply by the world economic crisis and negative image from those severe riots. Therefore, the government has launched a policy to promote the tourism business again, the traveling campaign to persuade people to visit Thailand and remedy the negative image of the country especially Bangkok which needs a positive image and to make it an interesting tourist destination for foreigners.

According to the government, tourism is a great business which can bring vast revenue to the country and can help the country recover from the economic crisis. However, tourism which is one of the dominant industries in Asia and the Pacific leads to the problem of the carrying capacity of the fragile heritage sites (Siririsak 2009).

In an international seminar of historic cities, conservation identified that over-emphasis on catering for the demands of tourism rather than reinforcing the cultural identity of the city and maintaining is found in Asia. The efforts of tourism development in Rattanakosin have been done by the Thai government which seems to confirm the statement of the international seminar. Fortunately, Bangkok old town or Rattanakosin preservation area has been relatively well protected under the “Master Plan of Conservation and Development of Rattanakosin together with the supervision of the Rattanakosin and Historic Towns Committee appointed by the Cabinet on 4 July 1978 (Siririsak 2009).

Wat Arun, the cultural heritage site which located in the Rattanakosin area has also been taken well care of following the master plan. However, the temple must bare the overwhelming numbers of tourists from tourism development. From the interview with the ticket seller, the average of the total number of foreign visitors

visiting Phra Prang are 400-500 persons per weekday, and the total number of this group is more increase on weekend compared to weekday (Ticket seller 2008, pers.comm. 14 March.).

This unlimited number of visitors may raise the risk to the architectures fragileness in the temple. Although, the survey, found that there were not any illegal activities or improper behavior by the visitors such as excavations, poaching, smuggling of the cultural relics, from the temple. It cannot however insure that the improper behavior from the excessive tourists can be controlled in the future.

Furthermore, even though the temple has a good conservation plan, there is not any plan to cope with the increased number of visitors and the interpretation plan for cultural sustainable tourism in the temple is disappear. Therefore, tourism development is a crucial factor which can threaten this scared place once more.



Figure 111: Foreigner visitors at Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : January, 2009.

### **Development Pressure**

While the impact of tourism and visitor pressure is undeniable, it remains manageable and relatively predictable, which is not the case with development pressure. Although, the Rattanakosin area is closely taken care of by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the Fine Arts Department, it does not mean that this area can protect itself from modernization. Modernization is criticized because it is confused with westernization. The modernization of a society requires

the destruction of the indigenous culture and its replacement by a more westernized one.

To develop the country, Thailand would evolve inexorably from development and modernization. This idea is the extreme opponent to the conservation policy. The development and modernization absolutely influences the visual catchments alteration and the area's genuine mitigation. The infrastructure development is the main factor which can threaten a cultural heritage site, landscape, setting, and the buffer zone of Rattanakosin area.

Road expansion is one of the infrastructure developments exemplified by the environment vista of Thonburi. The growth in the number of habitations such as new buildings and shop houses appearing on this area also deteriorate the original landscape. The preservation area cannot resist these threats. Furthermore, infrastructure developments slowly extend to the cultural heritage site. Unless, the infrastructure development considers carefully in an appropriate way, the cultural heritage site will be risked and threatened. Fortunately, only the buffer zone of Wat Arun confronts offensive development and modernization. These pressure factors do not spread to the monastery. However, the conservation plan should be concerned and aware of these and identify a policy to deal with this issue to prevent the architecture of Wat Arun from threatening development.

In summary, there are three threatening factors which can raise deterioration of the architecture and fabric of Wat Arun. Natural disasters, tourism development, and development pressure become the great obstacles for Wat Arun conservation. If the site management neglects to be aware of these threats and does not find a policy to protect the architecture from these obtrusions, the monastery will be in danger sooner or later. Eventually, the authenticity of Wat Arun will be lost and difficult to recover.

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มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์

## **Chapter 6**

### **Current Practices and Successes in Communicating Key Messages of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

From a survey of the various forms of interpretation used at Wat Arun, it can be observed that there are presentations of factual material and interpreted meanings about Wat Arun both on site and off site. These communication tools can be classified into five principal categories as follows;

#### **Printed Publications**

##### **TAT's Brochure (Tourism Authority of Thailand's Brochure)**

The brochure produced by TAT Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) for distribution to visitors at the site is a fully colour-printed A4 folded in three to DL size, printed in English. It is distributed only to foreign visitors who purchase a ticket at the entrance of Phra Prang. Thai visitors do not pay any entrance fee and do not receive the brochure.

The TAT's brochure is classified into three main sections. The first section is a brief history of Wat Arun. The second section presents highlights of the most attractive parts of the place, which are the Phra Prang or principle prang, the satellite prangs, the porches, the ordination hall, peripheral balcony, the chapel, the four satellite pagodas, Buddha's footprint niche, riverside pavilions and the entrance way with spire roof. Small photographs and brief contents are included to illustrate and explain the highlights.

The remaining part provides a map of Wat Arun which identifies thirteen famous places in the Wat Arun complex.

Many weaknesses can be noted in the TAT brochure. For example, the main heading of the brochure is “Unseen Thailand”. The concept of Unseen Thailand has been used for a long time but now this concept was abandoned because TAT launches new promotional campaign. (The current, promotional campaign for Thailand tourism is “seven amazing wonders of Thailand”. This new concept presents seven travel themes which are Thainess (Thai culture), Nature, Treasures, Beaches, Trends, Festivities, and Health and Wellness ([www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org): accessed in March, 2008).

The words “Unseen Thailand” still appear on cover page of the brochure even though this is an old concept which is now not used. For this reason, it may cause confusion for visitors especially foreigners who are searching for information directly from TAT’s website.

The brochure is very old and looks outdated. The pattern is old, the color faded, and the photographs are vague.

All these may affect visitors impression and their ability to find information from this communication tool.

TAT’s brochure does not contain enough detail. The map shows famous places but does not show others important places i.e., entrances, the main center, tourist police stations, food stalls, etc.

Moreover, the brochure is in English and is distributed only to foreigner visitors. Thai visitors would not gain any useful information from this official brochure.





Figure 112,113: TAT's brochure

### **Wat Arun's Brochure**

Wat Arun produces a brochure of its own. It is the same size as the TAT's brochure (A4 folded to DL) and it provides information in two languages (English and Thai). It is colour printed like the TAT's brochure. The cover page presents photographs of Wat Arun's main highlights, i.e., Phra Prang, Yaksa or Demon (Tasakantha), and the riverside pavilion.

The content of the brochure includes a brief history of Wat Arun, brief information of its most famous parts i.e., Phra Prang, the ordination hall, and the chapel. There are photographs of beautiful scenery included in the brochure.

There is no map of the site in this brochure. Visitors could not use it to find their way to access prominent features of the place from this publication. Moreover, the same weak point of Wat Arun's brochure occurs as TAT's brochure in that the

direction of important features and tourist facilities (entrances, main center, tourist police station, food stalls etc.) are not included.

Although the information is presented in two languages and considering that it provides a good opportunity for enhancing information about the site for both domestic and foreign visitors, unfortunately, the brochure is kept at the main center and not distributed unless visitors ask for it. The poor distribution lessens the chance for Thai visitors to gain an understanding of the history and significance of their most famous and important Wat.



Figure 114,115: Wat Arun's brochure

### **Nine Sacred Places Brochure**

The nine sacred places brochure is a recent brochure that was produced specifically to promote tourism and help the Thai economy during the recent economic crisis. It has a total of eight pages and it is produced in a distinctive format in green with white lettering. The brochure was produced by TAT as part of a promotional campaign called “pay homage and make a wish on New Year’s celebration 30<sup>th</sup> December 2008 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009”. The content of the brochure explains the motto and offerings of each sacred place in bilingual (Thai & English). Wat Arun presents its motto that “has a prosperous life” and its offering is three incense sticks and one pair of candles. The map of the nine sacred places and the way to reach the places are included in the content. Attached to the brochure is an insertion

on A4 which elaborates on the details of the nine sacred places and map in Thai. The brochure is distributed at each place by a TAT officer on every weekend.

From observations, many Thai visitors are interested in the brochure. They asked for the brochure from the TAT officer and read it immediately. The main aim of brochure is to promote tourism to help the Thai economy. The content of brochure is brief, but it covers the message for the main aim and Wat Arun also gets benefits from the brochure in the way of tourism public relations.

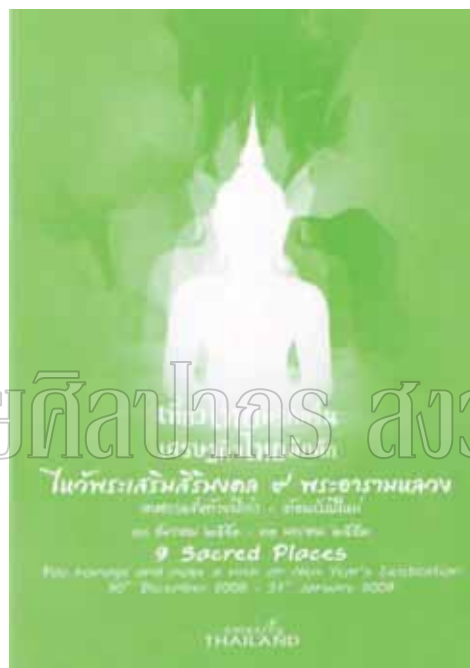


Figure 116: Nine sacred places brochure



Figure 117: Content of nine sacred places brochure



Figure 118: Content of nine sacred places brochure

### **Guide Book of Nine Sacred Places**

The guide book of nine sacred places contains a total of 292 pages. Only the cover page and some photographs inside the book are colorful while contents are printed in black and white in Thai. This book is printed by Than Nam Jai publishing. The guide book provides route tours for making merit at nine sacred places in Bangkok. (Nine sacred places are Wat Phra Sri Rattanasasadaram, Wat Prachetuphon Wimonmukhalaram, Wat Suthattapwararam, Wat Chanasongkram, Wat Arun Ratchawararam, Wat Rakangkositaram, Wat Kanlayanamitt, Wat Bawornnivate Viharn, and Wat Sakesa.) Related photographs and maps are shown for clear information. Comprehensive information in each sacred place is elaborated on in the book.

For Wat Arun's information, the content provides details of the location, history, architecture of the ordination hall, important Buddha images, the entrance way with spire roof, Yaksa, the old chapel, the old ordination hall, Phra Prang and Buddha's footprint niche.

The history of the royal barge is also present in the content. It could be said that the information in this guide book is more exhaustive than the information in TAT's brochure and Wat Arun's brochure. However, this guide book is presented in Thai and distribution is restricted.

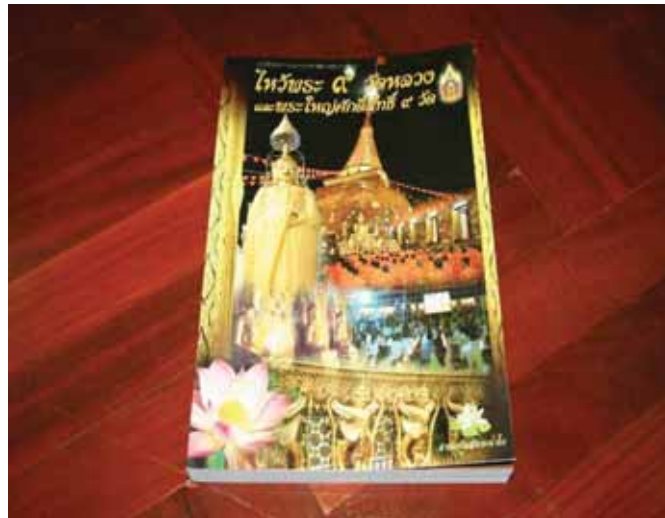


Figure 119: Guide book of nine sacred places

### **Guide Book of Krung Rattanakosin**

The guide book of Krung Rattanakosin is printed by Sarakadee publishing. It contains 216 colourful pages. This guide book provides information of famous places in the Rattanakosin area. The information in this book is divided into 10 areas. Wat Arun's data is explained on pages 189-193 in chapter 10, the south of Bangkok. The book provides exhaustive content in Thai with beautiful photographs. The layout of Phra Prang and details of its components and concept (Hindu-Buddhism cosmology) are described explicitly.

The book also elaborates others important places at Wat Arun i.e., the ordination hall, Buddha images, the entrance way with spire roof, the riverside pavilion, the old chapel, the old ordination hall, and King Rama II monument. A map is used as a tool for giving directions and places. The book also provides a summary of Chinese rockeries or statues with photographs for enhancing the information of the sites decoration.

Readers can gain site information i.e., history, architecture, and accessibility from this guide book. The layout and Phra Prang's creation concept in the content encourage an understanding of Phra Prang to readers. With exhaustive contents, Thai visitors can use this guide book for a self guided tour to travel Wat Arun.



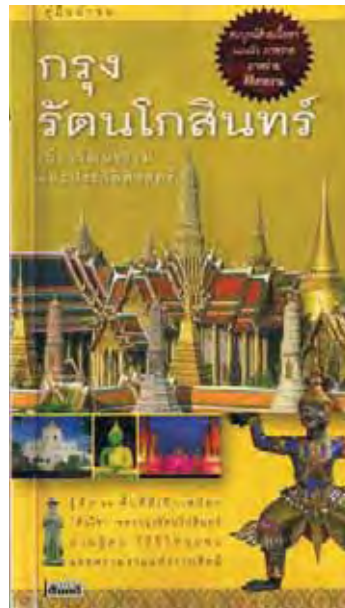


Figure 120: Guide book of Krung Rattanakosin



Figure 121,122: Content of guide book of Krung Rattanakosin

### Signs and Exhibition Panels

There are several types of signs within the buffer zone and within the precinct of the temple. They include maps, warning and information signs, directional signs, promotional activity signs and an orientation sign.

### **Orientation Signs**

There is only one orientation sign at Wat Arun. It is located near the tourist police station at the front entrance of Phra Prang. It is printed on aluminum sheet with a maroon background and white lettering. The sign gives details of the history in Thai and English. The content of it is as follows;

“Wat Arunratchawararam Ratchaworamahawihan: the first class royal temple that was built since Ayutthaya period, used to be called Wat Makok at the first place then changed to Wat Makok Nok due to the fact that there was another new temple in the area called Wat Makok Nai ( Wat Nualnoradit). In the later period, King Taksin the great formed the troop via the river from Ayutthaya and reached the temple in the early dawn, which inspired him to renovate the place, and changed the named to Wat Cheang meaning The Temple of Dawn.

At the time Thonburi was found at the captital in 1768, the king built the new palace that surrounded the temple, Wat Chaeng was the temple in the palace that without monks resided. This is the royal temple of Thonburi; used to be the holding place for the Emerald Buddha and Phra Bang. The Buddha images in, which were brought from Vientiane in the reign of King Rama I, the capital was moved from Thonburi to Bangkok as well as the royal palace. The wall of Thonburi palace was destroyed ever since. As a result, Wat Chaeng was no longer the temple in the palace, and the monks were allowed to reside.

The renovation of the place continued until the reign of King Rama II who changed the temple’s name to Wat Arun Ratchatharam. It was renovated again during the time of King Rama IV. once again, the king changed its name to Wat Arun Ratchawararam.”





Figure 123: Orientation sign

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2008

Wat Arun can be accessed by visitors by boat, car or on foot. Visitors arriving by boat must use the front entrance to reach the Phra Prang area while visitors arriving by car or on foot arrive at the back entrance. Clearly, an orientation sign is required at both entrances, whereas there is only one installation near the front (water side) gate causing visitors who travel by car to miss the message from this communication tool. Moreover, there is important information missing from the single orientation sign: the Phra Prang, ordination hall Phra Viharn and more cannot be found there. As a consequence, visitors without a guide would not have access to any background or details of those famous places from the orientation sign.

### Map Signs

Two map signs appear next to the tourist police station. Both are printed on paper and framed within stainless panels. These two signs have been produced in a cooperation between the BMA (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration) and TAT (Tourism Authority of Thailand). The first of the signs provides a route of famous places located by the riverside in Rattanakosin and the Thonburi area. There are eight recommended places; Wat Arun, Wat Phra Sri Rattanasasadaram, Wat Prachetuphon Wimonmukhalaram, Wat Kanlayanamitt, Santa Cruic Church, Phra Suman Fort, Gung Wu Shrine, and Pak Klong Talard Market. Their details are shown with brief background histories printed on the map.



Figure 124,125: Map sign

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : May, 2008

The second map sign promotes a route canal tour by long tail boats. The map suggests three programs for visitor's choice. Each program includes three or four places to visit. Wat Arun is included in every trip. The map also provides additional brief details of six places, Wat Arun, the Royal Barge National Museum, Wat Racha Orasaram Ratchaworawiharn, Wat Suwannaram Ratchaworawihan, Thonburi Snake Farm and Orchid Farm, which can be reached by long tail boat. It is also noted that there is a warning sign for cheating avoidance also on the map. The description of programs on the map has details as follows;

“Tour A : travel along canals of Thonburi, visit Ban Piam Suk House enjoy Thai classical self defence show. Feed fish at Wat Si Sudaram and visit Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn)

Tour B: Travel along canals of Thonburi, visit Royal Barge National Museum, Taling Chan Floating market, Thonburi Snake farm and Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn)

Tour C: Travel along canals of Thonburi and visit orchard farm at Klong Bang Chueak Nang, appreciate the atmosphere and ways of life along both side of canal, feed fish at Wat Si Sudaram and visit Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn)”

These two map signs can encourage visitors to travel Wat Arun and others attractive places surrounding the Thonburi and Rattanakosin sites. They introduce many interesting places that some visitors may never have heard of before. These messages lead to an increase in the number of visitors traveling to Wat Arun and others attractive places in the area. Moreover, the warning signs for cheating avoidance are useful for foreigners to be aware of cheating while traveling. It could be said that these two maps and signs not only present the tour route, but they also promote other traveling places for visitors.

Although, the maps and signs have many strong points for enhancing various messages for visitors, Wat Arun does not properly use this communication tool for presenting itself. This is due to the fact that the most important exhibition panel for displaying the map of Wat Arun itself cannot be found anywhere. So, by traveling on their own, visitors may be lost because they are confused about the layout and direction while visiting on site.

#### **Attention Signs**

There are many attention signs or notification signs made by Wat Arun. Some of them are printed on aluminum sheet and some are printed on plastic in various sizes. Some of signs are printed in English, some are printed bilingual (Thai & English).

Mostly the messages on signs have both warnings and prohibiting signs, i.e., to be aware of cheating, to wear appropriate polite dress, not to drop waste on the floor, not to stand, sit and enter in some areas, do not drink alcohol and smoke at this sacred place. All these signs could be found in the Phra Prang area, the front entrance and walking track at the temple. Although the attention signs which appear on the site are very useful for visitors, there are some mistakes on the signs as follows;

Firstly, some attention signs are only in English. Secondly, wrong spelling and grammar are shown on the signs. Lastly, the signs have decayed and are of poor quality. All three factors reduce quality of communication and which reduces the information available to visitors.



Figure 126: Wrong spelling showing in English attention sign

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008

มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร ส่วนวนเข็ชสิทธิ์  
The content below reveals the wrong spelling in the content of the above attention signs

“Attention: Visitors are requested to aware of cheaters and not to give money to any unauthorized persons with a book to put your names in. *Admissiion* ticket can be taken from the front and back gates of the main Pagoda only. The Temple of Dawn”



Figure 127: Grammatically wrong on the sign

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008

The content below reveals a wrong grammar in the content of the above attention sign

“Notification to all guides and visitors: Here is an important Buddhist religious place which should be respected by all: Visitors are required to wear appropriate polite dress. If you are not in proper dress, you are advised to borrow outer clothing provided by the temple. Please return the same after use. ***Charges for services, washing and laundering is 20Bht per clothing.*** Your cooperation is appreciated. The Temple of Dawn”



Figure 128: Poor quality of sign at Phra Prang area

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008



Figure 129: Decayed sign which English cannot readable on site for telling visitors not to stand or sit on the sacrificial stone

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008





Figure 130: Attention sign

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : January, 2009

### **Directional Signs**

Directional signs are installed at many points in Wat Arun. Most of them are printed on aluminum sheets with a blue and green background and white lettering. The contents are bilingual (Thai & English). Directional signs inform visitors of the location of important places and facilities i.e., Phra Prang, the ordination hall, the chapel, tourist office box, main office, parking, pier, and toilet etc. Nevertheless, some signs with incomplete English translation are shown on site adding to foreigner visitor's confusion.



Figure 131: Incomplete English translation on sign

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008

Moreover, the English translation in the signs does not properly take into account cross-culture translation. Buddhist and Thai terms are used presuming tourists already understand those terms resulting in a lack of understanding about Thai culture and religion.



Figure 132, 133: Directional Signs

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008





Figure 134, 135: Directional Signs

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008

### Promoting Activity Signs

Various types of promoting activity signs are found on the site. All these types of signs are non-permanent. They are made from polyvinylchloride (PVC vinyl) in several shapes and colors. The signs are rotated due to each activity promotion. Most of them are found in Thai except the promotion signs of making merit at nine scared places. The promoting activity signs appear on site i.e., making merit on Buddhism important days i.e., lent day, Visakhapuja day (full moon of 6<sup>th</sup> lunar month), Asahapuja day (full moon of 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month), Maghapuja day (full moon of 3<sup>rd</sup> lunar month), new year festival, persuasive ordination, and pray and meditation, etc.

Moreover, educational messages for providing information related to activities are also presented on the signs i.e., history and activities on the Kathin ceremony, the history and activities on Buddhism important days. In general, promoting activities signs seem to communicate only to Thai visitors and all of these signs are made by Wat Arun.

The making merit at nine scared places sign is promoted by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) with the aim of reaching both Thai and foreign visitors. Thus, it is presented in bilingual (Thai & English). It could be found that the sign of this activity is promoted in two periods which are New Year festival and Songkran festival.



Figure 136: Promoting sign to pray and make a meditation  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008



Figure 137: Promoting sign for ordination  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008



Figure 138: Promoting sign to make a merit on Pavarana day  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2008



Figure 139: Promoting sign for informing history and activities on Kathin ceremony  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2008



Figure 140: Promoting sign for informing history and activities on Pavarana day  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2008





Figure 141,142: Promoting sign for traveling nine sacred places on Songkran festival  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2009

# มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์



Figure 143: Promoting sign for traveling nine sacred places on New Year festival  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : January, 2009

## Digital Communication Tools

There are three websites providing information about Wat Arun. They are [www.watarun.org](http://www.watarun.org), [www.Tourismthailand.org](http://www.Tourismthailand.org) and [www.9wat.net](http://www.9wat.net).

### [www.watarun.org](http://www.watarun.org)

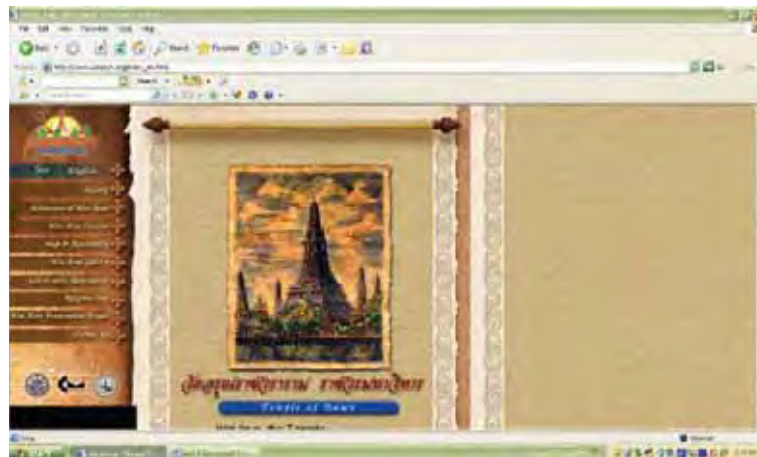


Figure 144: Wat Arun's website

Source: [www.watarun.org](http://www.watarun.org): accessed in April, 2008

มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์



Figure 145: Wat Arun's website

Source: [www.watarun.org](http://www.watarun.org): accessed in April, 2008

This website gives information about the background and history, architecture of Wat Arun, Wat Arun festivals, maps & accessibility, Wat Arun gallery and the Wat Arun preservation project. Other messages i.e., life in early Rattanakosin and religions day are also included on the website. The website is presented in bilingual (Thai & English).

However, when reading the details on the website carefully, it is found that this website has been abandoned. The information on website has not been updated since 2002 and contents are brief and not detailed.

### **www.tourismthailand.org**



Figure 146: TAT's website

Source: <http://www.tourismthailand.org/attraction/bangkok-10-3147-1.html>:

accessed in April, 2008

มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์

This website is created by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and is presented in bilingual (Thai & English). Some of Wat Arun's brief contents are shown in the website on only one page. The content of the website tells the original name of the temple, brief history and Phra Prang's identity of Bangkok. It also mentions about the Royal Barge Procession on Royal Kathin Ceremony. In addition, necessary information i.e., how to get there, opening times, admission fees, and contact address are exhibited on the website.

This website encounters the same problem as the previous website. Short and rough contents are presented on the website and some of information is not updated for a long time such as the new rate of admission fee. These lead misinformation for visitors.

www.9wat.net

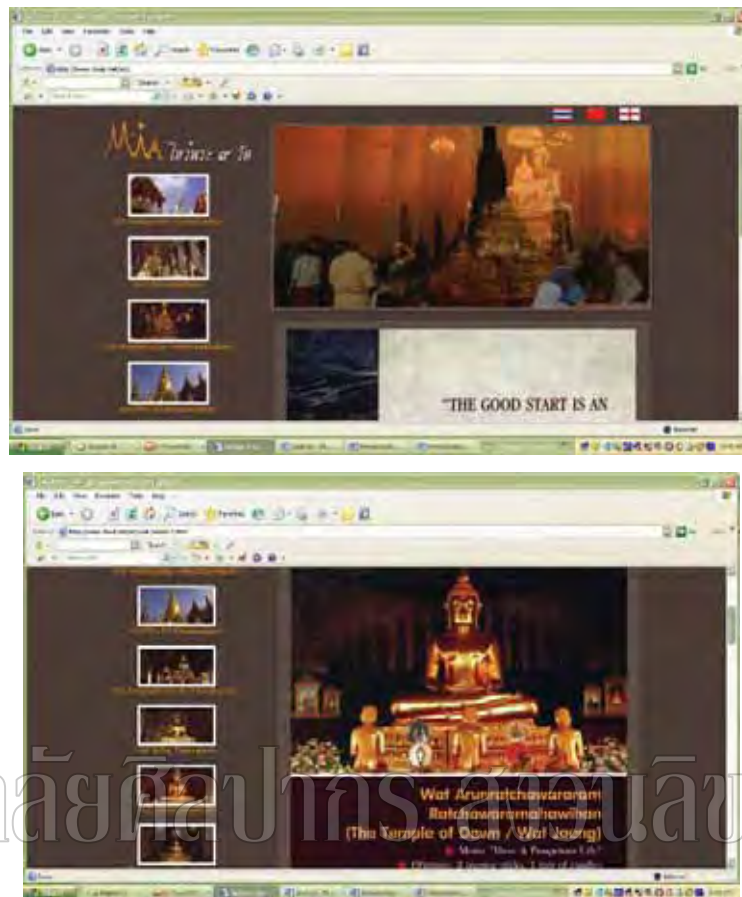


Figure 147,148: Website for promoting to travel nine sacred places

Source: www.9wat.net, accessed in April, 2008

This website persuades visitors to make a merit at nine sacred places and others sacred places. The website is made by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and presented in three languages (Thai, Chinese, and English). “The good start is an integral part of success” is the principle motto shown on the website to encourage readers to make merit at nine sacred places, searching of goodness on the celebration of birthdays, New Year, Chinese New Year and Songkarn festival.

The contents presents messages on various topics i.e., The background of making merit at nine sacred places, making merit at one hundred and eight temples, making merit in the west part of Thailand, and a program tour etc. For information on making merit at nine sacred places, the website explains detailed information in each temple. Wat Arun is presented with its history, background, motto and offerings. The



message recommends many attractions, Phra Prang, the ordination hall, principle Buddha image, the chapel. The website also describes how to get to Wat Arun, but no map of the nine sacred places is found on the website. Various photographs are used on the website which are attractive to readers to visit these places.

## **Personal Communication Tools**

### **Guided Tours and Guided Walks**

Wat Arun provides the services of six lecturing monks for giving walking tours. Four of them speak Thai and two also speak English. Generally, a walking tour takes approximately one hour, but sometimes it depends on the timing of visitors. If they do not have enough time, the lecture may take only thirty minutes. Mostly Thai visitors who use the walking tour service are tourism students. From an interview with a lecturing monk, it could be found that at least twenty groups of Thai student use this lecture service for educational tourism per year. Foreigner visitors using a lecturing monk are always very important visitors or honorable guests. A walking tour by a lecturing monk is provided for students and foreign honorable guests are free of charge. Before using a walking tour service, visitors should book at the main office.

The main content of lectures are the history of Wat Arun, the important places i.e., Phra Prang and the ordination hall, some of culture and Buddhism way i.e., Royal Barge Procession, meditation, and background of Buddhism important days are inserted in the content (Pramahaboonrung Sirichort 2009,pers.comm. 10 January). The free walking tour service at Wat Arun is an excellent way of informing the basic site's orientation to visitors. Comprehensive information can be explained for creating an appreciation and understanding of the site.

Moreover, the lecturers have a great chance to influence visitors' behavior in the way of conservation and sustainable tourism. So, it could be said that the free walking tour provides knowledge to visitors both in-depth and wide range perspective in Wat Arun educational tourism.

Nevertheless, a lack of public relations and insufficient English lecturers, in general foreigners lose the chance to use this service for enhancing the sites data compared to Thai visitors.



Figure 149: A monk is providing information during a Walking Tour at Wat Arun  
 Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2008

### **The Main Office**

The main office is located at the right hand side of Phra Viharn. It opens daily. Visitors can ask for information about Wat Arun at the main office from the monk who regularly stands there. Communication materials i.e., Wat Arun brochures, guide book of nine sacred places are always given to visitors upon request. Politeness and kindness are served to visitors at the main office.

However, not many visitors know that this main office is the information center due to the lack of public relations. Therefore, visitors cannot find more information unless asking monks at the site for the information center.



Figure 150: The Main Office

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008

### Analysis of communication tools at Wat Arun Ratchawararam

Like most places there are several forms of interpretation of Wat Arun which might be deemed conventional interpretation; publications, signs and exhibition panels, digital communication tools, personal communication tools, and the main center. The conventional forms of interpretation are provided by Wat Arun, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and the Private Sector. The table below summarises the relationship among types of interpretation and the producer of each interpretation and relationship among the type of interpretation and presenting language.

Type of Interpretation	Wat Arun	TAT	Private Sector
1.Publications			
1.1 TAT's Brochure		✓	
1.2 Wat Arun's Brochure	✓		
1.3 Nine Sacred Places Brochure		✓	
1.4 Guide Book of Nine Sacred Places			✓
1.5 Guide Book of Krung Rattanakosin			✓
2.Sings and Exhibition Panels			
2.1 Orientation Sign		✓	
2.2 Map Sign		✓	
2.3 Attention sign	✓		
2.4 Directional sign	✓		
2.5 Promoting activity sign	✓	✓	
3.Digital Communication tools			
3.1 www.watarun.org		✓	
3.2 www.torismthailand.org		✓	
3.3 www.9wat.net		✓	
4. Personal Communication tool			
4.1 Guide tours and walks	✓		
5. The Main Office	✓		

Table 1: Relationship among type of interpretation and producer of each interpretation.

Type of Interpretation	Thai	English	Bilingual	Multi-lingual
1.Publications				
1.1 TAT's Brochure		✓		
1.2 Wat Arun's Brochure			✓	
1.3 Nine Sacred Places Brochure			✓	
1.4 Guide Book of Nine Sacred Places	✓			
1.5 Guide Book of Krung Rattanakosin	✓			
2.Sings and Exhibition Panels				
2.1 Orientation Sign			✓	
2.2 Map Sign			✓	
2.3 Attention sign	✓	✓	✓	
2.4 Directional sign			✓	
2.5 Promoting activity sign	✓		✓	
3.Digital Communication tools				
3.1 www.watarun.org			✓	
3.2 www.torismthailand.org			✓	
3.3 www.9wat.net				✓
4. Personal Communication tool				
4.1 Guide tours and walks			✓	
5. The Main Office	✓			

Table 2: Relationship among type of interpretation and presenting language

### Summary analysis of the communication tools at Wat Arun Ratchawararam

Wat Arun has established various types of presentation material which seems to be a strong point of interpretation. However, with careful consideration, those materials are not efficient since Wat Arun has no interpretation strategy and planning. Details below show the various weak points of the existing interpretation of the temple;

1. For printed media or publications, it is found that the brochures are distributed to only foreign visitors buying a ticket (Thai visitors pay no entrance fee). The content of distributed brochures is not detailed and its lay out looks outdated. Another brochure is not even distributed unless its asked for. Therefore, Thai visitors gain less benefit than foreign visitors in terms of obtaining information on the site.

Although the guide book of nine sacred places has comprehensive details, it is presented in Thai and distribution is restricted. Although the guide book of Krung Rattanakosin is suitable for an effective self guided tour for visitors traveling to Wat Arun, it is presented in Thai. Hence, foreign visitors gain no benefit from this guide book.

2. Signs and exhibition panels, only one exhibition panel with a brief mention of Wat Arun's history has been installed near the walking track of the front gate. There are no exhibition panels installed at any important buildings, i.e., Phra Prang, Phra Vihara, ordination hall, the Buddha's footprint niche, etc. to describe details of those important architectural places. It should be noted that the map sign of famous traveling places in the Rattanakosin and Thonburi area and a map of the canal tour by long tail boats has been established while the most important exhibition panel displaying a map of Wat Arun itself cannot be found anywhere. Moreover, the decayed attention signs are still used on site. These poor quality signs sometimes can not communicate to visitors resulting in visitors' improper behavior at the temple. In addition, wrong grammar and spellings are found on attention signs. These reflect the low quality of sign production process and may discourage visitors to read them. Also incomplete English translations on signs are shown on the site. It can be found that crowded non-permanent signs i.e., directional signs, attention signs are installed surrounding Phra Prang area making this zone unclean.

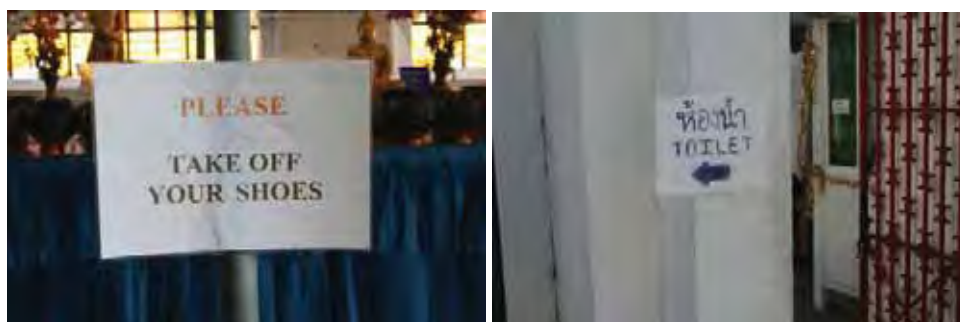


Figure 151, 152: Non-permanent signs on site

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : January, 2009



Figure 153: Non-permanent signs on site

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : January, 2009

3. English translation seems to be an important problem of Wat Arun's interpretation. Buddhist and Thai terms are not only used presuming visitors already understand those terms and the same term is written with various spellings. These weak points give confused information to foreigner visitors. The mistake could be found in many communication tools i.e., signs and brochures.

The examples below show various spellings of Thai terms which are used on different communication tools.

- Phra Prang is written as “Central Prang”, “Pagoda”, “The Great Prang”, “The Main Pagoda”, “Phra Prang” on TAT's brochure, Wat Arun's brochure, attention sign, and directional sign respectively.
- The chapel is written as “Phra Viharn” and “The Viharn” on TAT's brochure, Wat Arun's brochure respectively.
- The ordination hall is written as “ordination hall” and “the bot” on TAT's brochure, Wat Arun's brochure respectively.
- the old ordination hall or Bot-Noi is written as “old ordination hall or Borth-Noi”, “Borse Noi” on TAT's brochure and directional signs respectively.



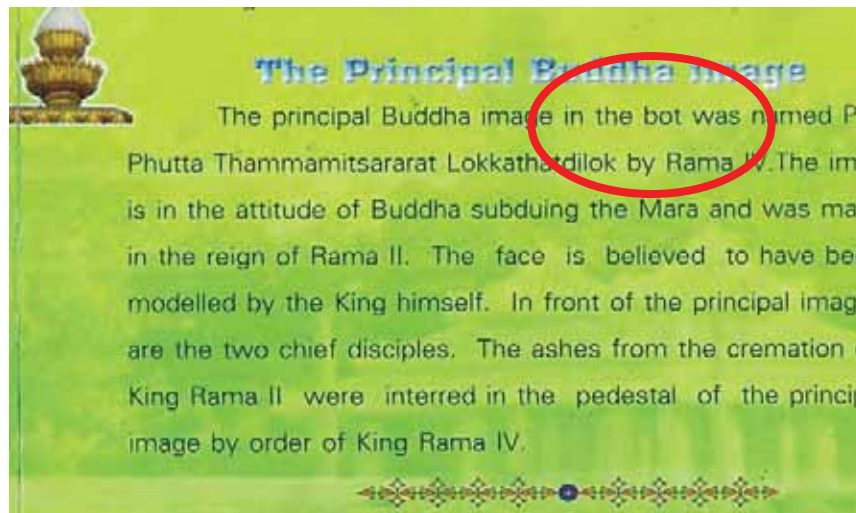


Figure 154: “Bot” in Buddhism and Thai term is used in contents of Wat Arun’s brochure (Generally, Bot means chapel, but from the above message the bot means Ordination hall of Wat Arun)



Figure 155: Contents in Wat Arun’s brochure





Figure 156, 157: The English translation of “Phra Prang” is used in various words in each communication tools making confused information to foreigner visitors.

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2008

4. The two websites of Wat Arun [www.watarun.org](http://www.watarun.org) and [www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org) were created by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) have been abandoned. The first one has not been updated for a long time and contents of both websites are brief and not detailed. From the survey, it is also found that the other digital devices are not applied on site for providing more information and understanding.

5. For personal communication tools, a free walking tour service at the main office which can provide a lot of sites' knowledge to visitors is not promoted. This decreases effective personal communication for gaining and understanding the site's information and Buddhist history to visitors.

From the summary above, it can be seen that the low quality of printed media distribution, problems of signage and exhibition panels, the lack of knowledge of personal communication tools, and out-dated websites indicate a poor interpretation

process and a lack of interpretation plan. These lead to communication breakdown because the message cannot reach the visitors.

From an interviewed with a monk working at the main center about the communication tools, he declared that *“our temple does not have any clear policy about interpretation, presentation and implementation. For past few years, we were concerned more on architectural restoration and landscape adaptation than interpretation process. We grew a lot of trees surrounding the temple for making beautiful scenery and shady areas together with the cleanness of the area. Although the temple got ‘Mak Mai Nai Puttawast award (the award for the greenest area-temple in Bangkok) from BMA last year, there is still no announcement of the award to the public (Prakru Vinitcharnsak Siripath 2008, pers.comm. 1 August).”*

It can be seen that the absent of clear interpretation and management policy is the main problem of interpretation process of Wat Arun, which leads to the weak points of presentation materials.

Opinions obtained from tourists below confirm that the temple has poor interpretation process and communication tools.

*“I came with a group tour of the nine sacred places. I have been here several times by myself, but this is my first time to visit Wat Arun with group tour. I did not get any information from communication tools on site. I only got information of this place from a guide on the way here. Today, I used the back gate to enter Wat Arun, so, I did not see any orientation signs. Last time when I visited this place, I saw an orientation sign about the history of the place standing near the front entrance. I think Wat Arun should install more information signs especially in English. I noticed that most visitors walk around, admire the beautiful architecture and scenery, and talk to each other. If there are many information signs on site, visitors will know more detail of the place (Aumnitt Tantasupaluk 2009, pers.comm. 10 January.)”*

*“I come alone and this is my first time to visit Wat Arun. It is a nice place but I can tell you that not many tourists know Wat Arun and most of tourists go to the King’s Palace. This temple is not very famous....*

*I know nothing about Wat Arun. I saw the big building (Phra Prang) over there from the river and know this place from a map, a tourist map of Bangkok. Even though I am here, I don’t know what it is (the chapel)? Is it a temple or not? I don’t*

*know when this place was built and its history because it doesn't have any paper or information (Danial 2008, pers.comm. 1 August)."*

*"This is my first time to visit here. I come with my friends. I love it (Phra Prang). This is very beautiful. It is quite different from other buildings around here. I know this is a landmark of Bangkok but I don't know the concept or symbolic and history of this building (Rolina 2008, pers.comm. 1 August)."*

The answers from the foreign tourists revealed an outsider's perception (Staiff & Bushell 2003). This evidence indicates that foreign visitors lack Buddhism knowledge and the cross-cultural translation, interpretation and presentation at the site for enhancing the site's information and Buddhism are not realized.

At the conclusion of this detailed analysis of the various forms of interpretation at Wat Arun, and their effectiveness as communication tools, it can be stated that the interpretation is inconsistent, somewhat dated and its effectiveness is low overall. The main weakness is that many visitors do not obtain any benefit, and little information from the different forms of interpretation. There is not any overarching theme or message and there is little coordination between the parties involved in promotion and interpretation at the site. In the following chapters these issues will considered further with the aim of suggesting a better approach through good planning and implementation.

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Aumnitt Tantasupaluk 2009, pers.comm. 10 January

Danial 2008, pers.comm. 1 August

<http://www.tourismthailand.org/attraction/bangkok-10-3147-1.html>

Prakru Vinitcharnsak Siripatth 2008, pers.comm. 1 August

Pramahaboonrung Sirichort 2009, pers.comm. 10 January

Robyn Bushell & Russell Staiff 2003, “Heritage Interpretation and Cross-cultural Translation in an Age Global Travel: Some Issues” , Journal of Parks, Leisure Management

Rolina 2008, pers.comm. 1 August

[www.9wat.net](http://www.9wat.net)

[www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org) มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์

## **Chapter 7**

### **Opportunities to Restructure and Develop Interpretation of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

This chapter provides a discussion of opportunities to restructure and develop interpretation to visitors at Wat Arun. The ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites is used the principal reference and guideline in this discussion based on the forgoing analyses. The ideas of the various experts and authors of the guidelines form the basis of the content of this chapter which is directed to enhancing the monastery's interpretation effectiveness. Seven principles are laid down in the guidelines. They are grouped under the headings; resource and research, cross cultural interpretation, orientation, story telling, guide training, sustainability and evaluation and monitoring. The discussion below is presented under the same headings.

#### **Resource and Research**

Freeman Tilden (1997), considered by most to be the original authority of interpretation, described two concepts of interpretation. Firstly, interpretation is the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact (Tilden 1997: p. 8). The interpretation must present the facts from the interpreter's contemplation. Secondly, interpretation should activate useful curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit. This is a duty of the interpreter to contact with the public. Moreover, Tilden also describes that the well-directed and discriminating research results in an effective interpretation. That means resource and research are important part of interpretation. Tilden's idea, which emphasizes the fact that research can provide valuable information and lead to effective interpretation, harmonizes one of the principle of The ICOMOS Charter.

The charter suggests that interpretation and presentation should be based on evidence gathered through accepted scientific and scholarly methods. A well-researched, multidisciplinary study of the site and its surroundings should be done for distinct interpretation purposes and the sources of the information should be documented, archived, and made accessible to the public. As far as it is known, there has never been a focused program of research at Wat Arun to establish the resource to be interpreted.

David Uzzell revealed his idea that interpretation only becomes truly effective when it is built upon firm theoretical and research-based foundations (Uzzell & Ballantyn 1998: p.3). In an aspect of cultural heritage site conservation, Edward P. Alexander said that research is a continuing need and the life blood of good preservations. Both historical authenticity and proper interpretation demand facts. There is no substitute for it, and no historic preservation should be attempted without research (Tilden 1997: p.5). This statement means that the conservation of the cultural heritage site will be achieved completely in the way of conservation and authenticity protection must exploit facts and research.

From the ideas of the experts and the principle of the ICOMOS Charter, it can be summarized that interpretation must come from the truth which is embraced by trustful resources and reliable research. The results of good resources and good systematic research leads to the facts of cultural heritage sites which are developed to be key messages which can be presented to visitors and create a comprehensive site understanding. In addition, visitors also gain appreciation from the key messages of the site which can encourage conservation into the mind of visitor indirectly. Furthermore, the conservation of the cultural heritage site is based on the fact finding and researching as well.

Although, one of six principles of interpretation from Tilden declared that Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural (Tilden 1997: p.9). It dose not imply that interpretation should present key messages of cultural heritage sites to visitors

depended upon Utopia's imagination without the facts by creating gorgeous art to attract visitors.

It was revealed in an interview with a monk relating to the interpretation and presentation of Wat Arun, that the reason why Wat Arun has little interpretation and presentation both on and off site is that, according to him, *“the history of Wat Arun is difficult to find and the existing history is vague. There is not a definite source to enlighten the information and history of Wat Arun. Some details of data in difference sources have conflict in each other so, we don't have any confidence in some of the data. From this reason, information dissemination of Wat Arun to public is slight (Phramahaboonrung Sirichort 2009, pers.comm. 10 January)”*.

If this information is authentic, and there must be some skepticism about the truth of this comment, it might explain one of the reasons that the information provided at the site is not consistent. However, it is not a valid reason to avoid discussion of the different points of view. After all, the interpretation might well address these differing histories and explain them to visitors in a way that reliably informs visitors about the official concerns.

In practical terms, the monk's concerns should really be addressed in the orthodox way by, doing focused research. Indeed it would be an important opportunity to enhance reliable information about the known and corroborated history of Wat Arun. After that, the interpretation could be restructured and developed so that the existing interpretation and presentation of the monastery may be presented in an effective and accurate way.

### **Cross Cultural Interpretation**

The next aspect to consider is the diverse nature of the audience for the interpretation at Wat Arun the visitors to the site. Richards G. defined that the concept of cultural tourism is the movement of persons who travel to or visit cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs (Richards G 1999: p.24). He also provided a technical definition of tourism, stating that cultural tourism includes all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, i.e. heritage sites,



artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence.

While Tighe (1991) described that cultural tourism comprises of three components; travel, tourist and the sites. In terms of travel, Tighe defined that cultural tourism is travel undertaken with historic sites, museums, the visual arts, and/or the performing arts as significant elements (Tighe 1991: p.387). In terms of tourist he also declared that one who experiences historic sites, monuments, and buildings; visits museums and galleries; attends concerts and performing arts; and is interested in experiencing the culture of the destination (Tighe 1990: p.11). For the last component, the sites, he stated that cultural tourism refers to historical and heritage sites, arts and crafts fairs and festivals, museums, the performing and visual arts; and is interested in experiencing the culture of the destination (Tighe 1986: p.2).

From Richards G and Tighe's ideas, it can be concluded that cultural tourism is related to tourist who visit historical and heritage sites for finding a cultural experience of those heritage sites. However, finding a complete cultural experience is not easy for tourist. It must exploit knowledge and an understanding of the background of the site.

To understand heritage, historical, aesthetic and social significance of buildings, and objects, and landscape of heritage sites requires a cultural repertoire that can not be assumed (Staiff 2008: p.4). Interpretation and presentation can encourage tourist to get information and understanding of the cultural heritage sites. If interpretation and presentation can reach to tourist in an appropriate way, tourist will understand the sites and get a cultural experience ultimately. However, there are limits to heritage interpretation when it is associated with the considerable challenge of communicating to visitors who are not part of the culture of the place being visited (Staiff 2008: p.4). The limitation can be called a cultural boarder zone.

Then there is the issue of the diversity of the audience to be considered. Culture is not the attribute of an individual, but describes ways of life of groups, subcultures, or ethnicities. Each society, ethnic or linguistic group, has common customs, ways of being and ways of thinking. Therefore, culture has multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages, experiences and voices are intermingled (Eilean Hooper-Greenhill 2000: p.12). People within differentiated

social and cultural communities will respond to the cultural heritage sites according to their own perspectives. Sometimes some cannot understand visual culture at cultural heritage sites that are not similarly fundamental of their culture. For example, obviously, westerner's culture absolutely differs from oriental. Western visitors in Thailand always encounter the cultural border zone problem, especially when visiting a Buddhist temple. They do not understand the ways and practices of Buddhism, which are quite different from Christian ways and practices. This problem raises questions for them and presents obstacles to accomplishing cultural meaning and cultural experience when visiting temples in Thailand.

The concept of cultural border zones was discussed by Staiff (2008), who defined cultural border zones as limitations of heritage interpretation for visitors. The limits' of cultural sensitivities and cultural practices, ideology, cross-cultural translation and visitor meaning making are obstacles of heritage interpretation for visitors. From Staiff's idea, the cross-cultural translation issue is very important and should be of great concern. The issue of cross-cultural translation becomes increasingly pressing. The urgency is not just felt at the level of managing cross-cultural behavior within the service-side of the tourism industry, but especially so where cultural heritage is being interpreted for international visitors (Saipradist & Staiff 2007: p. 212). Cross-cultural translation is, therefore not easy and requires deep knowledge of the source culture and the target culture by the translators. Cross-cultural translation can be both destructive of what is translated and creative by communicating the spirit of the original as well as the meaning and the structural form of the original (Saipradist & Staiff 2007: p. 221). In this point, it can be said that to succeed in interpretation, the cross-cultural translation has to be creative by communicating the spirit of the original meaning and the structure form of original.

Before considering the high potential for border zone limitations at Wat Arun now and in the future, it is worth examining the situation at another site examined by Staiff and Bushel (Robyn Bushell & Russell Staiff: 2003). It is the case study of heritage interpretation and cross-cultural at Sukhothai Historical Park, one of the World Heritage Sites in Thailand.

Bushell and Saiff found that interpretation and presentation have many problems of legibility. For example, the signage at Sukhothai Historical Park presents

text assuming that the reader/visitor understands a range of cultural and historical ideas, customs of stylistic art and architecture (e.g., Khmer, Celonese Lanna, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya styles), is able to interpret the iconographical and formal features of the architecture and understand their functions, understand the relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism, and have a working knowledge of Buddhist art and architecture.

Bushell and Staiff concluded that “*Sukhothai Historical Park remained a set of signs that signified ‘antiquity’, ‘heritage’, ‘Thai history’, ‘Buddhism’ and so forth. We read the signs (rather than drawing upon the knowledge associated with the site). The signs we read were, therefore, empty of meaning other than the meaning(s) we imported with us from the west (Bushell & Staiff: 2003).*”

From this case study, it could be seen that cross-cultural translation and visitor meaning making are the main problems of Sukhothai Historical Park interpretation for non-Thai visitors. Another interesting research which studied the existing interpretation at various temples at the Ayutthaya, World Heritage Site in Thailand by Saipradist and Staiff found that the panel interpretation which is provided by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in front of significant architectural features at the temples in Ayutthaya revealed numerous problems associated with the texts. The signs are in Thai and English. The English is invariably a literal translation of the Thai and this leads to considerable problems of understanding for those who read English. In addition, there is no consistency with the spelling of Romanized Thai names or Thai terms, such as the ordination hall within a temple complex which is variously called a bot, ubosot, ubosotha, or uposatha. Mistakes in English and spelling sometimes render a sign meaningless ( Saipradist & Staiff 2007: p.214).

The cross cultural translation problems which were found in interpretation and presentation at both World Heritage Sites in Sukhothai and Ayutthaya resemble the problems which appear in the interpretation and presentation at Wat Arun. The English translation in some presentation such as the direction signs and brochures does not properly take into account cross-cultural translation. Buddhist and Thai terms are used presuming tourists already understand those terms resulting in a lack of understanding about Thai culture and religion. In addition, the same term is written with various spellings in various presentations. For example, Phra Prang is written as

“Central Prang”, “Pagoda”, “The Great Prang”, and “The Main Pagoda” on brochures and various signs. These problems give confusing information to foreign visitors.

Moreover, wrong spellings and grammar are shown on the attention signs. These mistakes may discourage foreign visitors to read them and distort meanings. From the problems relating to the cross-cultural translation in presentations appearing at two famous World Heritage sites, Wat Arun insists that the mistakes from cross-cultural translation is an important problem which should be rectified urgently. If the problems are not addressed, cultural tourism for non-Thai visitors will collapse because they do not gain any cultural experiences from the Thai cultural heritage sites especially the visitors who are traveling on their own. Interpretation and presentation on the site cannot disseminate cultural knowledge to them, the visitors; therefore, cannot fulfill their cultural needs in cultural tourism as the ideas of Richard G.

If interpretation cannot provide cultural understanding and the correct meaning of heritage sites to visitors, especially non-Thai visitors, only an outsiders' perception (the way to perceive merely beautiful and aesthetic experience of a place but cannot appreciate and understand what inside it is) will happen to them. Also insiders' perception of the place will disappear.

One of the principles for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites is access and understanding (See The ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites 2007: p.6). The principle indicates that the diversity of language among visitors and associated communities connected with a heritage site should be taken into account in the interpretive infrastructure. Therefore, language and translation have an influence to visitors to access and understanding the cultural heritage sites.

To develop effective interpretation and eradicate cross-cultural translation problems at Wat Arun, it must exploit cooperation between the involved parties which are Wat Arun, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and private sectors that produce communication tools for Wat Arun presentations. Firstly, the content and text in each presentation should be careful considered, the Thai terms which are translated into English should be defined and the same word used for harmonious presentation and avoiding visitor's confusion. Spelling and grammar must be used in the correct way

to encourage comfortable reading and avoid misunderstanding. Secondly, definitions of involving Thai terms should be elaborated in communication tools especially on site interpretation for example, the exhibition panel to describe the significance and history of architecture at Wat Arun should be established in front of each important architecture and the content must explain the meaning of Thai terms which appear on the text to elucidate non-Thai visitors' understanding. In addition, the meaning of Thai terms should be explained in the other communication tools as well.

These solutions can eradicate cross-cultural interpretation gap or cultural border zone between non-Thai visitors and cultural heritage sites. Visitors will get correct cultural meaning, understand and appreciate the sites, find new information, and meet cultural experiences as their requirement. Furthermore, both outsiders and insiders' perception toward the cultural heritage sites will occur to visitors resulting in the sites' impression. Ultimately the results from appropriate and correct cross cultural interpretation will lead to cultural tourism accomplishment and bring a lot of benefit to the tourism industry in Thailand.

### **Orientation**

Interpretation and presentation programs should facilitate physical and intellectual access by the public to cultural heritage sites (The ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites 2007: p.6). This statement is explained in the first principle, access and understanding, of The ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites. Furthermore, interpretation can assist visitors to develop a keener awareness, appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage sites. Therefore, the first aim of interpretation must be the site's orientation.

Orientation is the first aim of interpretation in order to let visitors know how to reach the place, where important things are, how many activities are on-site and how much time activities will take. Moreover, interpretation should point out any safety hazards and places which people should not visit because they are dangerous (Carter: 2001). Visitors need orientation to the site they are visiting in order to give them a mental map and to appreciate its structure, whether it is a museum, historic house, dockyard or national park. Orientation also enables visitors to understand the scale of

the site and to pace their visit more effectively making it more enjoyably so that they can choose what they want to see, when they want to see it and how much time they need to allocate to each element of the visit. If the site is very large, visitors can see from the outset that they will not be able to visit it all. They can plan which parts they will concentrate on and then visit the remainder on another occasion. This will ensure that they do not hurry through the interpretation and leave out some parts of the story because they have left insufficient time (Uzzell 1998: p.246).

For Wat Arun's interpretation, it can be found that interpretation both on site and off site is a weakness and has no distinct direction. The interpretation cannot completely reach the aim of orientation. The most important interpretation for a site orientation is the site's map which vanishes in almost communication tools. The site's map of Wat Arun can be found only on TAT's brochure. Moreover, distribution of the brochure is limited. It distributes only to foreign visitors who purchase tickets to visit Phra Prang.

So, visitors who visit Wat Arun for the first time and traveling on their own hardly access the site because they do not know how many significance places that they should visit, the direction to reach significance places, where the facilities of the site are. Lacking the site's map, visitors also do not know the scale of the site and they cannot estimate their time to visit each place sufficiency as their requirement. Although, directional signs are installed at many points at Wat Arun, these signs are a small part of the site's orientation and are not enough to accomplish the site's orientation aim. Moreover, they do not present the total image or total size of the monastery, and significant places to visitors.

Therefore, Wat Arun should present the site's map in various communication tools such as brochure, signs, and a website to facilitate visitors to access the monastery and allocate their time to visit significant places or the place which they are interested in. Wat Arun has a large area approximately 33 Rai (Thai measurement) or 13.2 Acres.

From the site of Wat Arun, the monastery is divided into three main parts. The first is the monk's resident which can be called Sanghavas in Thai. The second is the location of the significant architecture for rituals which is named Buddhavas in Thai.

The third part is the garden located close to the river. Whilst the Buddhavas is located in the middle, Sanghavas and the garden form part of the whole architectural site.

The second part of Wat Arun or Buddhavas is an important area which accumulates a lot of significant buildings for making rituals. There are sixteen essential and beautiful places in this area. The architecture in this area are not only beautiful, they also present Thai traditional craftsmanship and Thai historic vestige. Furthermore, the architecture involves Buddhist's rituals. Due to the fact that the Buddhavas area is full of beautiful architecture and presents Thai historic vestige of Thonburi and the beginning of the Rattanakosin era, it therefore, becomes a famous tourist destination of the Rattanakosin Thonburi preservative area.

Enhancing the opportunity to develop interpretation in an aspect of the site's orientation, there should not only be a map of the site provided in various communication tools, but also traveling trails should also be recommended to create more visitors site's understanding and facilitate site roaming to visitors especially visitors who are traveling on their own and visitors who visit Wat Arun at the first time.

Intrinsically, there are two ways to visit Wat Arun, by boat and car. Visitors who visit Wat Arun by boat will enter the monastery from the front gate near the river, whilst, visitors who arrive at the site by car will use the gate which is located near Wang Doem Road. There are advantages and disadvantages from this specific feature of Wat Arun. Visitors can choose the way to visit the site depending on their transport. Visiting the site by using the ferry saves visitors time because it can avoid traffic problems and the ferry's fee is very cheap. This is a good point compared to the other cultural heritage sites. However, the weak point is visitors will be confused about the direction of the site and will not know where they should start their visit. Therefore, traveling trails should be recommended to visitors via communication tools to decrease this problem and enhance a chance to develop interpretation.

Form the survey and studying the site's map of Wat Arun, two mains traveling trails should be guided. The first trail is provided for visitors who arrive to the monastery by boat, and the other is provided for visitors who visit the site by car. For the first traveling trail, it starts from Demons, Entrance Way with Spire Roof, Nai Ruang Pavillion, Nai Nok Pavillion, the Ordination Hall or Phra Ubosoth, Phra



Viharn Kot or the Peripheral Balcony, Chedi or the Four Satellite Pagodas, the Buddha's Footprint Niche, the Chapel or Phra Viharn, Phra Prang and surrounding buildings, the Old Chapel or Viharn-Noi, the Old Ordination Hall or Bot-Noi, the Riverside Pavilions, and King Rama II monument.

For the second traveling trail, it starts from the Chapel or Phra Viharn, the Buddha's Footprint Niche, Chedi or the Four Satellite Pagodas, Phra Prang and surrounding buildings, the Old Chapel or Viharn-Noi, the Old Ordination Hall or Bot-Noi, the Riverside Pavilions, King Rama II monument, Demons, Entrance Way with Spire Roof, Nai Ruang Pavilion, Nai Nok Pavilion, Phra Viharn Kot or the Peripheral Balcony, and the Ordination hall or Phra Ubosoth. Each traveling trail takes approximately two and a half to three hours. For visitors who do not have sufficient time, they can select to visit interesting places by using the site's map which is provided by both on site and off site presentations. The significant places for this group should visit are Phra Prang, Phra Viharn and Phra Ubosoth respectively. This visitation takes only one and a half hours.

However, site's map and suggested traveling trails encourage visitors to gain more understanding of the site comprehensively, help visitors to access the site easily and spend their time while traveling the site effectively and enjoyably. Furthermore, they can allocate their time for visiting each place and they can skip the places where they do not want to visit as well. Therefore, to develop an accomplished interpretation program of Wat Arun for an aim of orientation, site's map and suggested traveling trails are the other chance which must be provided in both on and off site interpretations.

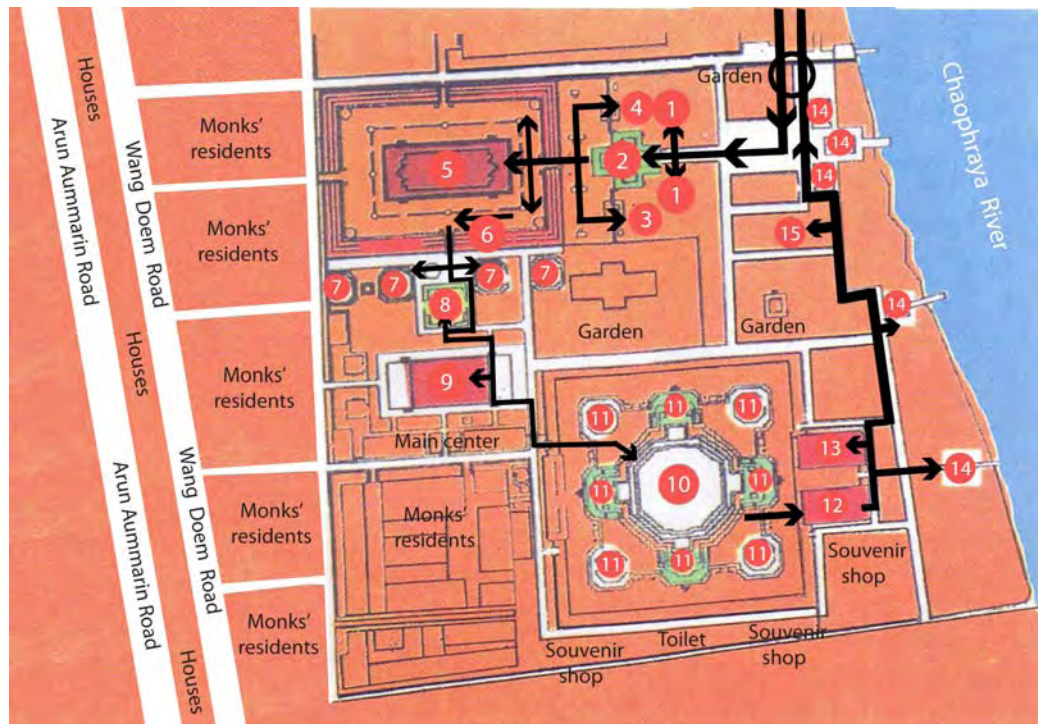


Figure 158: The first traveling trail for visitors who entering Wat Arun from the waterfront gate

มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร ส่วนศิลปกรรม

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Demons                                    | 9. The Chapel or Phra Viharn   |
| 2. Entrance Way with Spire Roof              | 10. The Principle Prang or Phra Prang                                |
| 3. Nai Ruang Pavilion                        | 11. The Satellite Prang or Prang Thit and the Porches or Mondop Thit |
| 4. Nai Nok Pavilion                          | 12. The Old Chapel or Viharn-Noi                                     |
| 5. The Ordination Hall or Phra Ubosoth       | 13. The Old Ordination Hall or Bot-Noi                               |
| 6. The Peripheral Balcony or Phra Viharn Kot | 14. Riverside Pavilions  |
| 7. The Four Satellite Pagoda or Chedi        | 15. King Rama II Monument  |
| 8. The Buddha's Footprint Niche              |  |

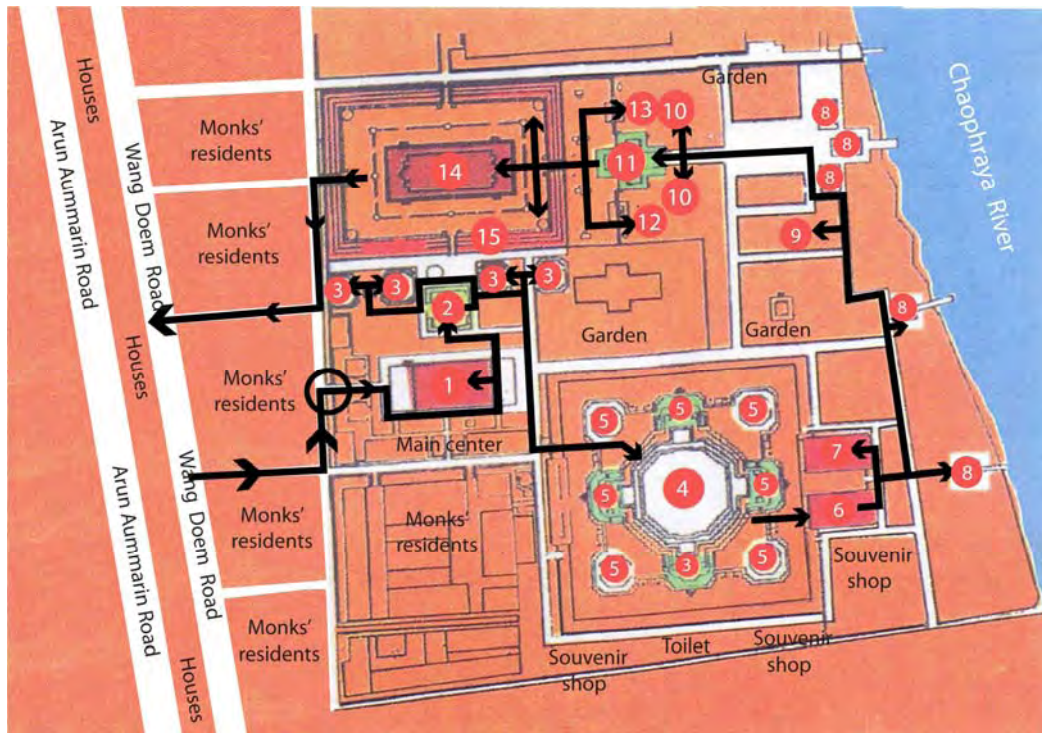


Figure 159: The second traveling trail for visitors who entering Wat Arun from the Wang Doem Road gate

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. The Chapel or Phra Viharn  | 9. King Rama II Monument                      |
| 2. The Buddha's Footprint Niche                                     | 10. Demons                                    |
| 3. The Four Satellite Pagoda or Chedi                               | 11. Entrance Way with Spire Roof              |
| 4. The Principle Prang or Phra Prang                                | 12. Nai Ruang Pavilion                        |
| 5. The Satellite Prang or Prang Thit and the Porches or Mondop Thit | 13. Nai Nok Pavilion                          |
| 6. The Old Chapel or Viharn-Noi                                     | 14. The Ordination Hall or Phra Ubosoth       |
| 7. The Old Ordination Hall or Bot-Noi                               | 15. The Peripheral Balcony or Phra Viharn Kot |
| 8. Riverside Pavilions  |   |

## Story Telling

Wat Arun is an important cultural heritage site which has cultural significance in all categories such as aesthetic value, historical value, scientific value, and social value. In the aspect of historical value, there is a lot of story telling of history related to the monastery, especially the history of Thonburi and beginning of the Rattanakosin period because this area was the palace of the Thonburi kingdom. For the architecture of Wat Arun, there are cultural meanings which are hidden in each fabric and architecture. The cultural meaning of architecture mostly originated from the Buddhism belief such as the concept to create Phra Prang, Hindu-Buddhist cosmology or the three realms concept, the essential of the replica of Buddha footprint in the temple, the construction and ornamentations of Phra Ubosoth etc.

In the aspect of social value, the social value of Wat Arun associates with Buddhist activity of the local community which can be called culture or tradition, for example candlelit procession, listening to a sermon, making merit to monks on important Buddhist days. These activities of the local people have been continuously done for a long period of time and they have been transferred from generation to generation, therefore, these culture or traditions become an intangible heritage and there is story telling relating to the Buddhist important days and activities. Another vital intangible heritage is the Royal Barge Procession for presenting Royal Kathin Robes at Wat Arun which also has an interesting history and story telling.

Hence, Wat Arun has various interesting stories which are related to architecture and the monastery, the stories should be told to visitors. Traditional story telling or memories of historical participants provide an important source of information about the significance of the site and inform a sense of place. Visitors can easily memorize the source of the site and the architecture in the site resulting in an increase in the site's appreciation and realizing the cultural significance ultimately. Visitors will not only get an outsiders' perception such as aesthetic value, they will gain more insiders' perception which is historical and social value of the monastery from story telling. This is a chance to cultivate a visitors' conservative mind to Wat Arun. Furthermore, a story teller can add more messages such as traveling instructions in the site which leads to sustainable cultural tourism to visitors while the story is

told. When visitors appreciate and realize the cultural significant of the site, they will accept conservative message and tend to practice and follow sustainable cultural tourism instructions.

It can be said that story telling can enrich visitors' experience, create more appreciation and understanding to visitors, encourage the thoughtful use of resources and create visitors' memory about a heritage site. Apart from the many benefits of story telling, experts can also emphasize the use of this tool for interpretation achievement. The principle of the ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage site identified that at cultural heritage sites where traditional story telling or memories of historical participants provide an important source of information about the significance of the site, interpretive programs should incorporate these oral testimonies-either indirectly, through the facilities of the interpretive infrastructure, or directly, through the active participation of members of associated communities as on-site interpreters (The ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites 2007: p.7).

To identify and select the relevant and appropriate stories which should be told to visitors, Themes and key messages should be issued to formulate proper messages and story telling. A theme is a central or key idea of any presentation when communicating with visitors. The audience should be able to summarize the main points of the interpretive program in one sentence (Saipradist 2005: p.41). Themes will be a framework and direction of the interpretation. Messages derives from Themes will cover the site's significance and jargon stories will not be presented. Visitors can get clear information from these selected messages. Therefore, theme and key message can help the interpreter or site manager present an interesting story which enhances the site's information, activate visitors' site's appreciation, and create more cultural experience.

In summary, story telling can gain a lot of benefit to the interpretation of Wat Arun. Under proper themes and key messages, story telling will transfer the site's information to visitors, encourage sustainable cultural tourism to Wat Arun, and create impressive experiences towards Wat Arun visitors. Story telling therefore is a good tool for enhancing the opportunity to develop the monastery's interpretation which should be included in Wat Arun's interpretation program.

## Guide Training

The presentation of the interpretation refers to the way the interpretation's content is communicated and launched to the audience/visitor/ tourist. Russell Staiff (2003) summarized that interpretation is very important to heritage sites. It has to be done carefully and meaningfully. Presentation of the interpretation can be done in many forms. It just has to convey the meaning successfully which can be explicit or implicit, depending on what we are interpreting to the audiences. In order to accomplish a proper interpretative plan, there are various kinds of communication tools and techniques using at heritage sites. One of the communication tools which is always used for effective interpretation at the cultural heritage site is personal communication tools

Personal communication tools are more mobile and attractive to visitors than other devices. Personal communication tools are two-way communication. Communicators and receivers have feedback to each other. With this benefit, communicators can answer curious questions from visitor's instantly. Moreover, communicators can get feedback to know whether their on-site interpretation succeeds or not. Personal Communication tools can be applied for interpretation such as organized talks and discussions, guided tours and walks.

One of the most common forms of personal communication is organized talks and discussions. Typically, talks introduce an audience to a subject, presenting basic orientation and introductory information about a heritage site, object or experience. Discussions bring a greater level of interest and awareness about the subject to the audience. Talks and discussions are always set in amphitheaters, visitor centers, museums and around campfires. The props used among talks and discussions are slides and examples of heritage objects e.g. architecture materials, endangered species etc. The greatest strengths of these presentations are that they are very personal and responsive to changing circumstances.

Guided tours and walks are more mobile, linking various attractions together and maintaining a more stimulating environment for learning compared with organized talks and discussions. The guide can introduce the attraction to visitors then run through a generalist commentary about its significance. When visitors wish to

gain a more intimate experience with the heritage site, a guided walk is the best alternative because walkers have greater access to the guide and interpretation must be more adaptable and comprehensive.

However, using personal communication tools, organized talks and discussions, guided tours and walks, for interpretation at the cultural heritage site, requires experts who have knowledge relating to communication, persuasion, sustainable cultural tourism, history, significance, and details of the cultural heritage site.

From the interviews with tour guides who brought tourists to Wat Arun, it can be found that some tour guides gave faulty information of Wat Arun to tourists. One of the tour guides who took care of the tourists traveling to nine sacred places said that *“I am a guide of a traveling trip at nine sacred places in Bangkok providing by Kho Sor Mor Kor (an organization of public transportation of Bangkok). I do not have any training for being guide. I studied the information of each scared place from traveling books. Information and history of each place will be told to tourists on the bus. For Wat Arun, this is the crown temple of King Rama III..... (Guide tour of Kho Sor Mor Kor 2009, pers.comm. 11, October).”*

A guide from Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Trat province said that *“I am a guide of TAT, Trat province. This is a trip for traveling to sacred places. We will spend forty minutes traveling around Wat Arun. The first place to visit at Wat Arun is Demons. Tourists want to see the Demons of Wat Arun as they had heard of them from legends.*

*On the way here, I described a brief history and information of the temple to my tourists. I also informed them how to behave while visiting the temple such as proper dressing, do not poach cultural relics, do not trespass preservative areas etc. I will tell rules of visiting traveling places both natural site and cultural heritage site to my tourists every trip. I graduated in the faculty of Tourism and I studied sustainable tourism course. I always guide my tourists to travel in sustainable tourism way (TAT, Trat province guide tour 2009, pers.comm. 11, October).”*

A guide of a German tour group said that *‘I take care of German tourists. Intrinsically, German visitors have good behaviors toward traveling places. They do not drop any garbage on the floor; they will pay respect to a sacred place. I hardly*



*tell or remind them about these matters. German visitors are aware of sustainable tourism more than Asian visitors. Generally, tourists will spend approximately one hour to travel round this temple and then go to the next traveling place such as Wat Phra Keaw. They will visit Phra Prang, the most famous place of Wat Arun. They will walk around Phra Prang and admire its beauty, the information of Phra Prang is described before reaching her (Freelance guide tour 2009 pers.comm. 11, October)."*

The answers of the guides declared that the first guide lacked the correct significant information of Wat Arun. He wrongly understood that Wat Arun is the crown temple of King Rama III. This mistake leads to transferring the wrong site's information to visitors. This situation may appear for many reasons such as source of information of Wat Arun is difficult to find, the guide may have a low quality because he may not having enough knowledge relating to tourism, and Wat Arun has a poor interpretation program. Although some guides told the rules to traveling sacred places for sustainable cultural tourism to visitors, it does not mean that every guide will be concerned about this matter and tell this message to their tourists.

Furthermore, visitors who get the message may not practice following the guides' recommendations. Some of visitors who are aware of conservative tourism and have proper behavior toward the site, but some do not.

To prevent mistaken messages of the significant site's information being transferring by guide tour to visitors and emphasize sustainable tourism towards the monastery, effective interpretation of Wat Arun, guide training courses should be provided to encourage the interpretation program under the cooperation of Wat Arun, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA).

The guided tour is a personal communication tool; the guide is mobile and attractive to visitors compared to other communication tools. The guides can choose the topic of the site's information, history, and story telling to visitors as their requirements. They can activate and lead visitors to interesting significant tangible and intangible heritage at the site or overlook some parts of those heritages.

The guides are a valuable source of information and advice concerning conditions affecting the environment as well as the visitor experience. They will point out unsafe trail sections and help ensure that trails are maintained for comfortable

walking, as well as alert management to problems of crowding and noise. Like the environmentalists and conservationists, guides are usually concerned about the quality of their clients' experience; congestion on the access road to the site is eliminated, and so on. They may suggest maintaining limits on the numbers of visitors permitted at a site through the use of an effective reservation system (Pedersen 2002: p.49).

Therefore, the guide training course can contribute to the trainee knowing the monastery's information comprehensively. The trainee will get messages in the same direction which follows the theme and key message of the interpretation program. Accurate messages are then transferred to visitors who use the guided tours service. The trainee will be an expert of significant places, traveling trails and traditional activities providing at the site. This can decrease the wrong information to visitors and overlooked significant places and traditional activities. Therefore, visitors who use the guided tour service will gain completely aesthetic, education and entertainment experience from traveling the site by a guide who has passed the training course.

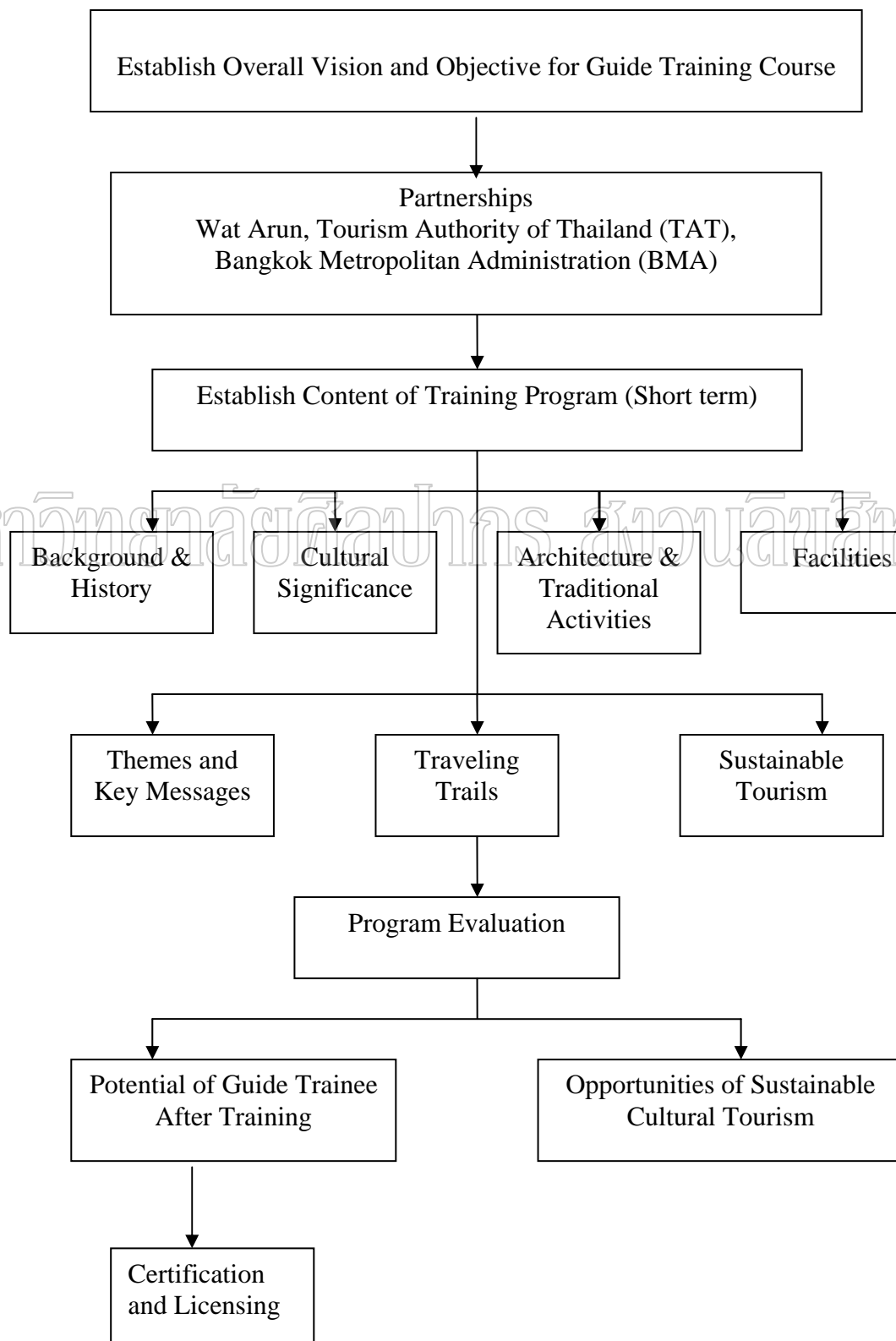
Furthermore, the guides have a high potential to persuade visitors to be aware of the cultural significance of both tangible and intangible heritage and concern to conserve them. Therefore, the training course will train sustainable tourism knowledge as well, the trainee can applied this content to guide and cultivate sustainable tourism to their tourist while visiting Wat Arun and the other cultural heritage sites. This method encourages protecting and conserving the monastery from tourism business.

The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites indicated principle seven that training is one of essential component of the interpretation of a cultural heritage site. The training of qualified professionals in the specialized fields of heritage interpretation and presentation, such as content creation, management, technology, guiding, and education, is a crucial objective. In addition, basic academic conservation programs should include a component on interpretation and presentation in their courses of study (The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites 2007: p.12). Therefore, a guide training course is a suitable opportunity to enhance the effective interpretation program of Wat Arun. Furthermore, this method is consistent to the principle of the

ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites.  
The course study for a guide can be designed so that the content of the course can favor visitors in aspects of educational experience and to the monastery in aspect of sustainable cultural tourism.

มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์

Figure 160: Models for guide training course (short term) leading to encourage effective interpretation for sustainable cultural tourism, with emphasis on opportunities for using personal communication tools in pattern of organized talks and discussions, and guided tours and walks at Wat Arun.



## **Sustainability**

For tourism to be sustainable it should cause no more than a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate income, employment, and the conservation of local ecosystems. Both ecological and cultural sensitivities have to be observed (<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/st-what-is.html>: accessed in March, 2010). Moreover, sustainable tourism must respect local cultures and traditions. Foreign visitors should be encouraged to learn about and observe local etiquette, including using at least a few courtesy words in the local language, while local people will learn how to deal with foreign expectations that may differ from their own.

At present, sustainable tourism is a desirable goal in the tourism business, but most people do not understand its meaning or principles. Interpretation at culturally significant places can assist with the achievement of sustainable tourism places by enhancing visitors' and local peoples' awareness of sustainable tourism issues and the ongoing goals for the care of the sites.

It has been observed at Wat Arun, a highly significant, sensitive cultural heritage site, that problems are caused by foreign visitors who do not understand Thai culture and local people who do not have any understanding of the need for or principles of sustainable cultural tourism. These problems have a negative impact to the temple directly.

Information obtained by surveying local people revealed that some foreign visitors who visit Wat Arun dress in a manner that is considered by the local Thai community to be impolite or lacking cultural sensitivity. The wearing of shorts and singlets, in particular, is viewed as disrespectful by local people who themselves cover their legs and shoulders when entering a temple. The surveys revealed that foreign tourists by and large are ignorant of this cultural norm — visitors do not fully understand the Thai culture or Buddhist traditions. Most foreign visitors who travel on their own, without a local guide, appear to obtain their information from websites before visiting the temple. Unfortunately, the content on Wat Arun's website and TAT's website does not provide any relevant information about these relevant Buddhist sensitivities, or Thai culture, proper behavior or rules for visitors while visiting Wat Arun and other sacred places.

The onsite presentation of information to foreign visitors is limited to a small number of warning signs at the entrances of Phra Prang that advise visitors that they are required to wear appropriate, polite dress. If visitors are not in proper dress, they are advised to rent outer clothing provided by the temple before visiting the Phra Prang area. However, these signs to inform visitor to wear polite dress can be found only the entrances of the Phra Prang area. There are no caution signs at the entrances of the temple — neither at the water front entrance or the Wang Doem Road entrance. As a consequence, visitors who wear improper dress are allowed to access the temple and can travel around the other areas of the temple unaware that they are possibly causing offense. It has been observed that some foreign visitors wearing unsuitable attire can walk around other sacred areas of the temple such as Phra Viharn, Phra Ubosoth, garden etc. completely unaware of their impacts. The Phra Prang is not only a place which visitors should pay high respect to —, every part of Wat Arun's is sacred place hence, visitors who enter the temple should dress properly to pay respect to the site.

มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์



Figure 161: The foreign visitor wearing unsuitable attire at Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008

Wat Phra Keaw or the temple of the Emerald Buddha is a good example of cultural heritage site or sacred place in Thailand which can solve the problem of the impolite dress of visitors perfectly. Wat Arun should imitate and apply Wat Phra Keaw's solution to eradicate this problem on the site. It can be found that the caution signs of Wat Phra Keaw are located at the entrance of the temple to inform that visitors who wearing improper dress that they cannot enter the temple unless they

change into polite dress provided by the temple. Furthermore, there are many staff standing by the entrance to look after visitors who infringe the rule. The staff will not allow those visitors entering the temple and tell them to change their clothes in the room provided before enter the temple. There is not any charge for the clothes, visitors only pay a deposit for the clothes and will get their money back after returning the clothes before exiting the temple. So, there are no visitors who are traveling around Wat Phra Keaw wearing impolite dress.



Figure 162: The caution sign is established at the front entrance of Wat Phra Kaew to inform example of prohibited outfits

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : February, 2010



Figure 163: Visitors who wearing unsuitable attires are borrowing polite clothes at Wat Phra Keaw

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : February, 2010



One of the principles of The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites is sustainability. The details of this principle declared that interpretation and presentation should serve a wide range of conservation, educational and cultural objectives (The ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites 2007: p.10). Therefore, the content of the interpretation and presentation of Wat Arun should give information or education related to Thai culture to visitors especially foreign visitors who do not know Thai culture. Thai culture, the Buddhism way, and rules for visitors while traveling at religious places should be presented through various communication tools such as a website, brochures, signage and personal communication tools (tour guides). The information of these issues especially presented on Wat Arun's and TAT's website can encourage foreign visitors to know Thai culture and practices before traveling to the temple. This can decrease unsuitable behavior from foreign visitors in the aspect of wearing improper dress while traveling at the site.

However, educational content of these issues on Wat Arun's and involved party's communication tools are not enough; the information may not reach all targeted visitors. Hence, caution signs on site should be established at the both main entrances of Wat Arun to inform visitors that impolite dressed visitors are not allowed to enter the site. In addition, staff should stand by at both main entrances to check and warn visitors who infringe the rule. Meanwhile, to facilitate visitors, the temple will provide clean suitable clothes and changing rooms to visitors. Visitors who want to use this service do not pay any charge except a deposit for the clothes. The deposit will be payed back to visitors after they return the clothes. Although the rental clothes service has already been provided at Wat Arun, it is only provided at the entrance of Phra Prang, visitors must pay a charge to rent the clothes, and there are not any changing rooms. In addition, the clothes look unclean; some visitors may hesitate to use those clothes. Therefore, providing clean suitable clothes and changing rooms without charge will give visitors who dress impolite a chance to access the site. This service is similar to Wat Phra Keaw's pattern. Impolite dressed visitors will not be disappointed that they cannot access the site even though they reach the entrance of Wat Arun and the temple will not lose a chance to encouraging tourism business. Furthermore, to establish caution signs, having staff to look after

the visitors, and having rental clothes and changing rooms at both main entrances will eliminate the problem which Wat Arun encounters at present that there are found some of visitors wearing impolite dress in the other areas of the site except Phra Prang's area.



Figure 164: The clothes for rent at Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : August, 2008

Wearing polite dress while visiting Wat Arun Buddhist place is not only a cultural practice of Thai people which foreign visitors must follow to respect the place. There are a lot of local cultural practices which foreign visitors should know and understand before accessing the site because it also often follows that visitors who lack knowledge and understanding of a site, and local cultural practices do not treat the site and its local culture with the respect deserved (UNESCO 2004: p. 109).

Interpretation has a crucial role in ensuring greater cross-cultural understanding and thereby preventing the cultural heritage site from being negatively impacted by the existence of tourism. Therefore, interpretation not only enhances the tourist's experience but provides the local community with a means of managing tourists and engaging their cooperation and understanding in minimizing their negative impact (UNESCO 2004: p. 111).

From the survey, it can be found that Wat Arun's interpretation is not concerned with educating about Thai cultural practices and regulations which visitors should know and follow. There is only a photo-copied sign (non-permanent) made by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) shown at the

waterfront entrance of Phra Prang. The sign is presented in two languages (Thai & English) with rough illustrations. The sign explains about the rules of sustainable tourism for tourist. The content of the sign is divided into two parts. The first part is short recommendations which visitors should do before traveling such as finding out information about the destination, reserving all travel and accommodation in advance. The content also suggests tourist should respect all local culture, traditions and environmental values. In addition, for tourist's safety, the content tells visitors not to believe strangers who offer to help or to accommodate and to select tourism operations that are environmentally and socially responsible. To oppose illegal business the content suggests tourist to do not buy endangered flora and fauna.

For the second part, the eight regulations which tourist should do and should not do at the temple and public places are indicated with rough illustrations. The content involves informing visitors that they should display polite behavior and pay respect to the place of worship. Visitors should dress politely in public places and temples. The rules which visitors should do at the temple are recommended such as do not wear shoes or a hat in the chapel, do not climb upon the Buddha image to take a photograph. Thai traditions are informed in the content for increasing Thai culture knowledge to visitors such as displaying affection for another person in a public place and temples is impolite and inconsistent with Thai tradition, the way Thai's greet another person, "Wai" is suggested, and the other actions local people which can disparage them are informed and prohibited in the content.



Figure 165: Non-permanent sign relating to sustainable tourism at Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : April, 2009

Although, the content of this non-permanent sign can guide visitors in sustainable tourism and educate visitors how to behave properly in public places and the temples following Thai tradition, there are three mistakes that appear in this sign which are content, characteristic of the sign and distribution. For the content, it presents incomplete sustainable tourism substance. One of the rules of sustainable tourism is to provide alternative livelihoods to local host communities. The content of the sign does not inform visitors to support local business by buying local products or patronizing local business services. At Wat Arun there are a lot of souvenir shops with local people selling Thai traditional products. For local business services, there is a business of the rental of Thai traditional dresses for taking photographs which is provided by local people. Furthermore, long tail boat trips traveling along the Choa Phraya River and the Thonburi canal are also provided at Wat Arun. Therefore, the content of the sign should add information to activate visitors to patronize these local businesses to achieve the rule of sustainable tourism.



Figure 166: Souvenir shops at Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : April, 2009



Figure 167: Thai traditional cloth rental business at Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2009



Figure 168: Foreign visitor in Thai traditional cloth for taking a photograph at  
Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2009

For the sign's characteristic, the content was made by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), but it was not designed for being a sign because it looks like a paper photo copy and is pasted on a plastic board. Alphabetic characters are also vague. Thus, its figure cannot attract visitors to concentrate and read it. The sign's figure should be redesigned permanently and be easy to read to attract visitors to read the information.

For the distribution, this is the only sign relating directly to sustainable tourism. Wat Arun has a large area and the temple has two main entrances, so the information of sustainable tourism knowledge should be established at the key areas of the temple such as the two main entrances of the temple, the entrances of Phra Prang, the visitor center or the main office, the entrance of Phra Ubosoth for reaching all visitors who visit the site.

One of the famous world heritage sites, Luang Prabang, also encounters interpretation effectiveness in the aspect of educate about the site's significance, local culture, and the distribution of the communication tools. It can be found that currently the interpretation and development of interpretive skills and techniques has not yet reached its full potential in Luang Prabang. Many of the interpretive materials in



existence have been developed by outside sources, are uncoordinated and are not always accurate (UNESCO 2004: p. 109).



Figure 169: Poster of regulations which visitors should and should not do in Luang Prabang

Source: UNESCO 2004: p. 110.



From figure 169, it is an example to show the lack of effectiveness of the communication tools in Luang Prabang. It is a poster to present regulations which informs visitors what they should and should not do in this world heritage site. The poster was made by the Provincial Tourism Office of Luang Prabang and other private sectors. The poster presents good details approaching sustainable cultural tourism aims. Unfortunately, the poster do not reach majority of visitors because it is not prominently displayed at key locations in Luang Prabang. Some of visitors infringe local cultural practices because they do not know local traditions and miss a chance to get the messages from the poster. For example, the content in the poster informs that showing flesh is offensive in Luang Prabang. However, it can be found that tourists are dressed inappropriately outside the Tham Ting caves which are an important religious site at Luang Prabang (UNESCO 2004: p.109). Similarity the problem of visitors dressing impolite in Luang Prabang also appears at Wat Arun.

The main reason for this appearance comes from the interpretation in both Wat Arun and Luang Prabang are underdeveloped, many visitors are unaware of the significance and value of what they are seeing. They are also unaware of local culture and its meaning. If the cultural reasons for wearing modest clothing are explained to visitors, the visitors are more likely to be sympathetic and follow local dress-code guidelines. Interpretation and presentation are key tools to send messages relating to the site's significance and local culture practices to visitors. Visitors will get the messages from the interpretation and presentation so that improper behavior from visitors will disappear on site because visitors understand the site and local culture, then they will treat the site with a proper respect following local cultural practices.

Negative visitor behavior which appears from a lack of education about local tradition for visitors is not the only reason to harm the cultural heritage site, a lack of knowledge of sustainable cultural tourism of the local people can cause a negative effect to the site as well. The ICOMOS Charter in the Principle of Sustainability manifested that the potential effect of interpretive infrastructure on the cultural value, physical characteristics, integrity and natural environment of the site must be fully considered in heritage impact assessment studies.

From the survey, it can be found some of interpretation infrastructures at Wat Arun are against the principle of sustainability. The non permanent signs of a local

business travel agency were found installed in an unsuitable area near waterfront. A small and untidy sign to promote boat trips on the Thonburi canal is pasted on the other permanent map sign which presents attractive tourist destinations at the riverside in the Rattanakosin and Thonburi area. It results in concealing some parts of the content of the permanent map sign and makes the area disorderly and disturbs the environment.



Figure 170: The non-permanent sign to promote boat trip of a local business travel agency is pasted on the permanent sign of Wat Arun

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2009

In addition, other non-permanent signs to promote boat trip businesses were found displayed in many points near the waterfront such as under trees. There is a sign of this business leaning on a bush with a sound amplifier to inform details of the boat trip. The voice from the sound amplifier is a loud noise all the time which causes noise pollution in the site. Furthermore, making loud noises in the temple is inappropriate. The unsuitable signs and sound amplifier result in a negative impact to the site. These appearances come from unconcerned local people who make their business on the site. They do not have any knowledge of sustainable tourism in that interpretation and presentation should serve a wide range of conservation, educational and cultural objectives. The success of an interpretive program should not be evaluated solely on the basis of visitor attendance figures or revenue (The ICOMOS

charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites 2007: p. 10). They are only concerned to recruit visitors to be their clients for traveling boat trips to increase their revenue. They are not aware that the method of their presentation is inconsistent to the principle of sustainable cultural tourism in that interpretation and presentation of a cultural heritage site must be sensitive to its natural and cultural environment. Moreover, the involving parties such as Wat Arun and Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) also are not concerned about this matter. They leave local people to present their business on the site in an incorrect way which conflicts with the sustainable cultural tourism rule. Giving knowledge or education to local people in sustainable cultural tourism is a good solution to solve this problem.



Figure 171: The non-permanent sign to promote boat trip  
with a sound amplifier

Photograph by: Kanjanaphorn Polprateep : October, 2009

In summary, Wat Arun encounters various problems involving foreign visitors who are unaware of Thai culture and Buddhism way, local people are unaware of the sensitivity of cultural environment, and both of them are unaware of sustainable cultural tourism. These problems lead to an erosion of the cultural integrity and authenticity, and cultural environment deterioration of the site. Furthermore, the cooperation between the management of the site and the involvement of the local people and other organization such as Tourism Authority of

Thailand (TAT) is difficult to find. This problem directly affects the chaotic and uncontrollable presentation of the local people's businesses on the site. Undoubtedly, it creates a negative impact to the temple's environment. Therefore, the site should restructure and develop an interpretation program to pursue sustainable cultural tourism aim, interpretation and presentation should be an integral part of the conservation process, enhancing the public's awareness of specific conservation problems encountered at the site by informing and improving understanding about local culture and the Buddhism way to foreign visitors and enhancing sustainable cultural tourism knowledge to both visitors and local people under the co-operation of Wat Arun, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and the local community. With this method, the cultural integrity and the cultural environment of the site will be protected and enhanced.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Communication is a dynamic, ever-changing, unending process by which people transmit information and feelings to others (Barker 1990: p. 17). In its simplest form, it could be said that communication is the transmission of a message from a resource to a receiver (Baran 2006: p.4). Additionally, communication is defined as a reciprocal process for creating shared meaning. Interestingly, communication experts have never agreed on a single definition of human communication. Harold Lasswell, a political scientist, elaborated his idea in that communication is to answer five questions as follows;

- 1.) Who?
- 2.) Says what?
- 3.) Through which channel?
- 4.) To whom?
- 5.) With what effect?

If we express Lasswell's idea in terms of the communication model, the basic elements of the communication process will as follows:

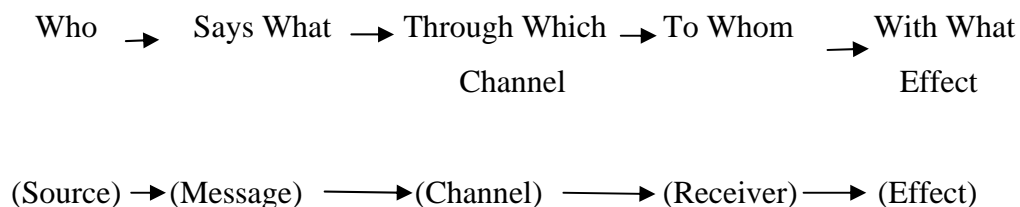


Figure 172: Model of communication meaning adapted from Harold Lasswell's idea

The outstanding point of Lasswell's communication process is the effect. He emphasized that when the source sending a message to the receiver via the channel, means that the effect is occurring. However, it could be noticed that the communication meaning in Lasswell's idea is only one way communication. It means the receiver gets the message from the source but has no opportunity to respond—there is no way of sending a message back to the original source.

Likewise, interpretation and presentation of a cultural heritage site are a communication process. They comprise of five components followed the Lasswell's model. Source compares to the cultural heritage site or Wat Arun. Message compares to key message and content which the monastery would like to inform the public or visitors. Channel means the communication tools which are selected to present the cultural heritage site's message. Receivers can be described as the public, visitors, and target audience of the monastery. Lastly, the effect means cognition and experience of Wat Arun which occur to visitors after they get the site's message through the communication tools. Certainly, the cognition and experience of visitors lead to visitors' behaviours which directly affect the monastery. However, the effect which finally alters visitors' behaviors can be presented in positive or negative behavior toward the site or it may be not any behavior at all.

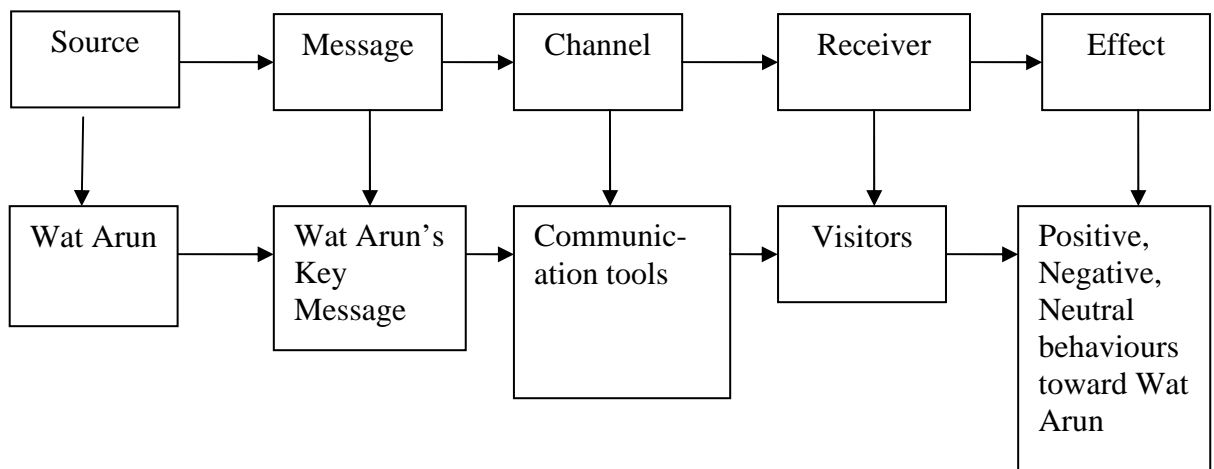


Figure 173: Model of Interpretation of Wat Arun adapted from Harold Lasswell's idea

Positive behaviour should appear after the visitors get the monastery message via the communication tools, and is revealed in patterns of sustainable cultural tourism. Unless, visitors' behavior occurs in a sustainable cultural tourism way, the interpretation of Wat Arun is unsuccessful. The problem is how the site's manager will know the effect from those visitors. The answer to the problem will be discussed after considering the next communication process.

Larry L. Barker presented that communication process which comprises of six basic elements to increase more knowledge and understanding of the principles of communication which are source, message, channel, receiver, feedback, and barriers.

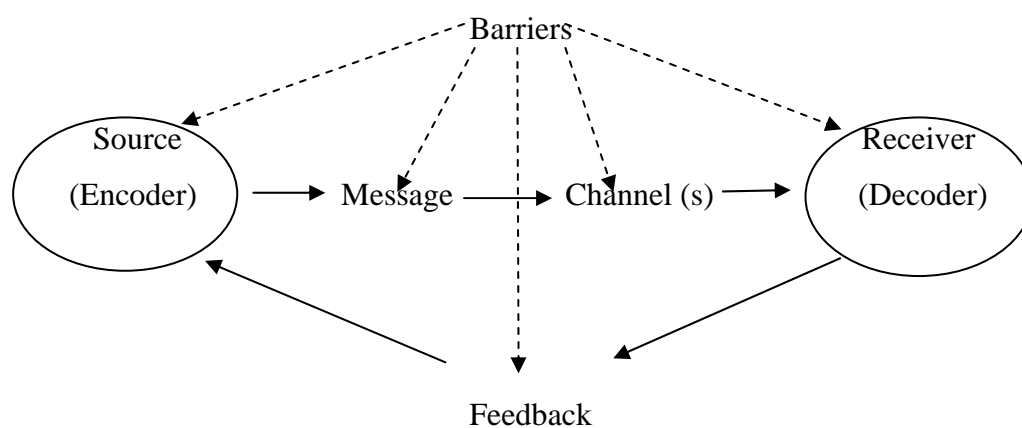


Figure 174: Communication Process Source: Barker 1990: p. 10

From figure 174, the source or encoder makes the decision to communicate and determines what the purpose of the message will be i.e. inform, persuade, entertain etc. The source must encode or create a message by using symbols to get the message across to others. Next, the source selects appropriate channels or devices to transmit the message to the receiver or decoder.

After receiving the message, the receiver will decode or interpret it based on past experiences, perceptions, thoughts and feelings. As decoding the message, receiver's interaction will be occurred by returning the message to the source. The return process is called feedback. Feedback causes the receiver to be the next source of communication. Feedback from this communication process is similar to 'effect' in the Lasswell's idea.

In the communication process, there are many kinds of feedback, i.e., negative and positive feedbacks, delayed and immediate feedbacks. A negative feedback reflects receiver's lack of message understanding. On the opposite side, a positive feedback indicates that the receiver has understood and accepts the source's message. Besides, when the receiver decodes message, it may not be certain that the receiver will respond to the source immediately. This situation can be called the delayed feedback. In communication, the delayed feedback is defined as delayed messages sent back to the source from the receiver. The delayed feedback can be found in mass communication or it can be said that the delayed feedback is one of a characteristic of mass communication.

However, the delayed feedback is not unique to mass communication. It can occur on an intrapersonal level, as when one is temporarily baffled by an optical illusion. It also occurs on interpersonal levels when one person temporarily refrains from commenting about another's remark or suggestion. (Bittner 1996: p. 14) For visitors who get messages from Wat Arun's interpretation program may have negative, positive, delayed or immediate feedback toward the monastery. These situations depend on various factors. Positive feedback is the most feedback which the site manager expects from visitors. However, it is impossible that positive feedback will appear from every visitor.



Barker explained one of element in the communication process “barrier” which influences the appearance of other feedbacks (negative and delayed feedbacks). He indicates that effective communication can be hindered by barrier interacting with each element in the process (Barker 1990: p. 7). Examples of barriers are insufficient or unclear source of information, ineffective or inaccurate encoding, using the wrong channel, and different ways of decoding than the source expected. Thus, if the negative or delayed feedbacks appear after visitors get the messages of Wat Arun’s interpretation program it can assume that ‘barrier’ which may come from the source, message, channel or receiver has happened.

From the communication process of Barker, feedback is very interesting and it harmonizes to “effect” in Lasswell’s communication process. Applying the two communication models to the interpretation program of Wat Arun, effect or feedback must be carefully considered for being key indicators from Wat Arun’s visitors to know how effective the monastery interpretation program is. Furthermore, if unsatisfactory feedback or effects from visitors appear on the site, it is an important function of the site manager to find which barrier causes the failure situation or negative impact to the site. For this problem, evaluation and monitoring can resolve and help to find the reason of unsatisfactory feedback which comes as a barrier or ineffective interpretation program.

For cultural heritage sites, evaluation studies can be used to improve the program or project planning. Information from monitoring and assessment programs can therefore be readily analyzed and applied within the planning and management system. Evaluation can look at all aspects of the management cycle, including the context within which management takes place. The results of evaluating each aspect can be fed back into the management cycle (Hockings 2004: p.25). Evaluation and monitoring are essential parts of a management regime (Pound 2004: p. 67). They can be used to measure various aspects which relate to cultural heritage site management such as tourism impact, visitors’ attitudes toward the site, an existence of cultural significant of the site, and interpretation program.

The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites indicated seven principles that interpretation and presentation programs and their physical impact on a site should be continuously monitored and evaluated,

and periodic changes made on the basis of both scientific and scholarly analysis and public feedback. Visitors and members of associated communities as well as heritage professionals should be involved in this evaluation process (The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites 2007: p.12). However, monitoring is a continuous process and effective only if it is done regularly; if it cannot be sustained, its usefulness is severely limited. As well as their impact, they can help identify and justify needed actions in the changing tourists industry (Pedersen 2002: p.59).

Bruce Mapstone agreed with this idea, he suggested that we should recognize that a lot of monitoring of the cultural heritage site will be effective only in the medium-long-term. We should instigate a critical review of monitoring periodically to update our knowledge and take advantage of best available methods for future monitoring (Mapstone 2004: p. 52). Therefore, to enhance the opportunity for Wat Arun's interpretation development program, Wat Arun should use evaluation and monitoring interpretation programs and communication tools regularly. In addition, visitor attitude and behavior toward the site should be included in evaluation and monitoring as well.

However, evaluation and monitoring should be carried out using a standardized methodology and measurements that can be repeated over time to permit comparison, depending on the type of process to be observed, to reduce as much as possible subjectivity (Boccardi 2004: p. 40) . Evaluation and monitoring techniques can be done in various patterns. Observations, interviews and surveys or questionnaires are always exploited for finding the result of evaluation and monitoring.

Observations can provide more detailed visitors' profiles and are suitable for notice visitors' behaviors while they are traveling at the site. Observations are quick, inexpensive and useful for indicating trends or suggesting targets for an eventual survey or interview. Observations may include: organization (group size), forms of transportation, type and amount of equipment, uses of time, maps of where people go and behavior including languages used and noise levels. Since most people have difficulty analyzing their own behavior and motivations, observations can be a quick and useful technique for monitoring what people actually do (Pedersen 2002: p.50).

Furthermore, observations can be used to notice the quality of communication tools and site's facilities such as decaying signs on site, and incomplete traveling trails etc.

For interviews, although they are labor intensive and costlier than the other techniques, and sometimes interviewer bias may be occurred, they still provide in-depth results. Interviews therefore are especially useful when the subject is complex and less prone to misunderstanding. Face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions usually provide a rich complement of data. Visitor's attitude toward the site, visitors' preferences regarding existing cultural activities, and quality of interpretation program can be acquired by using interviews technique.

Surveys or questionnaires are less expensive than face-to-face interviews. They can reach a broad range of visitors and can provide valuable quantitative data, which is useful for reinforcing interpretation development. However, drawbacks of the data are that they can be impersonal and fail to reveal why visitors feel or behave the way they do. Questionnaires method is only one-way, and they require skills in questionnaires design and data management. Design faults may also lead to distorted information and a loss of time.

It can be seen that the three evaluation and monitoring techniques have both advantages and disadvantages in themselves, a combination of these three methods therefore, should be used to determine and construct the evaluation and monitoring in aspects of interpretation program of Wat Arun and visitor's attitude and behavior toward the monastery. The combination of methods will encourage management to find the data to develop effective interpretation program leading to sustainable cultural tourism at Wat Arun eventually.

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## **Chapter 8**

### **Interpretive Themes, and Key Messages of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

To achieve the purpose of conservation heritage site and tourism management, interpretation is used at various techniques. Themes and messages are one of vital techniques for reaching those aims. Themes and messages can determine and structure interpretive content which evoke the technique of presentation to visitor.

The clear identification of theme for the interpretive plan at a cultural heritage site is the central or key issue to be addressed in the presentation of the place for interpretation. It is not possible to disseminate every item of information to visitor at a site in order to interpret its complex significance, therefore the identification and clear expression of themes helps to organize and edit interpretive content. Theme can be used to formulate and send message that visitor should be able to receive and understand. Themes provide a framework for the identification and delivery of key or essential message to attain the objectives of an interpretive plan.

Sam H. Ham revealed his idea relating to theme that a theme is a whole idea, a brief, an inference or connection that the mind makes. While any statement of fact is a belief, a theme is a belief that captures a lesson learned or moral of the story from an assemblage of factual information. It's the "so what" or "big deal" of the infotainment. Once the isolated facts are long forgotten, themes remain in our minds. All the themes we have incorporated into our psyches (or schema) over a lifetime (Ham 2003: p. 5). Moreover, themes aim at impacting another human being's point of view about a place, a feature, or an idea in a way that produces desired outcomes that are, in turn, consistent with the organization's goals.

In an aspect of interpretation for tourism industry, Ham proposed his idea that a theme is not just some arbitrary statement of fact, but rather a singular statement that captures the meaning that we hope will be internalized in a visitor's psyche (Ham 2003: p.11). However, but not all themes are equally capable of stimulating tourists to think and to wonder. Some themes just don't matter much, while other themes matter so much they provoke us to think and sometimes to ponder new and wonderful ideas we'd never before considered (Ham 2003: p 6).

Generally, the guidelines for theme writing offered is that themes must be written in a single sentence, but Ham mentioned that a whole idea is a whole idea regardless of whether it takes a sentence or a short paragraph to express it in a compelling way. Two-sentence themes are common, and three-sentence themes are not unheard of. Some people call multiple-sentence themes "theses" but psychologically, these turn out to be the same thing once they get between the ears of a visitor (Ham 2003: p.19).

Most interpreters adopt a flat structure based on one or several themes, without message or concepts. This is not a good method to create meaning into visitor's mind and help visitors to remember themes. Messages can put definition and clarity into theme, to provide a frame work that leads to greater visitor understanding. Message also provides a key reference to evaluate the performance of interpretation (Simon Mc Arthur & C. Michael Hall 1996: p.96). Therefore, theme and message should come together to deliver important information to visitor and establish meaning into visitor's mind.

From the survey, Wat Arun has not been found to using theme and message in interpretation program for sending the temple's significant information to visitor. If the temple applies theme and message into the interpretation program, visitor will easily understand Wat Arun's information and know the temple better than the past. This implementation leads to communication achievement of Wat Arun.

Therefore, this chapter provides details of interpretive themes and messages which could be developed and implemented in the Wat Arun interpretation program. The details of themes and messages are derived from the comprehensive analysis of the collected data.



### **Wat Arun Ratchawararam – Spiritual Center**

**Theme:** Wat Arun Ratchawararam - birthplace of the city and modern nation, providing tangible evidence of history from the Thonburi period and the spiritual center of the nation.

**Message:** Wat Arun is the pre-eminant monastery of the modern city and nation; located in the Thonburi Rattanakosin preservation area. There are four very important manifestations of the importance of Wat Arun as a spiritual center of great significance. Firstly it is the chief monastery of the Thonburi period. Secondly it is the crown temple of King Rama II. Thirdly, Phra Prang is not just a large and beautiful prang, but it was conceived and constructed edify the location as the site of the capital of the nation. Lastly, the tradition of Kathin that is common to many wats, is richly enhanced at Wat Arun by the royal processions of barges on the river, which reinforces the importance of the original selection of the site by King Ram II as place of special significance.

Together, these four aspects of significance mark Wat Arun becoming the spiritual center of the nation. These four special significances need to be explained and understood in order to understand the great significance of Wat Arun as a spiritual centre.

#### **Why Is Wat Arun the Chief Monastery in the Thonburi Period?**

After Ayutthaya was destroyed by the Burmese army, King Taksin the Great transported his troops via the river from Ayutthaya and reached the temple in the early dawn. It was a place of safe refuge. The King resolved to renovate the temple, and changed the name to Wat Cheang meaning the Temple of Dawn. Furthermore, the King thought that Thonburi was suitable for a new capital city instead of Ayutthaya because Ayutthaya was destroyed by the Burmese army and required a great deal effort to recover the demolished city. The King had to prepare the troops to defend the country from military foes and to exploit a lot of money to recover the destroyed city was obstacle as well. In addition, Thonburi is located near the Chao Phraya River. The river is not only a good fortification to protect the new city from the Burmese army, but also a good way to escape if the King's troops are defeated by the enemy. As a result, Thonburi became the new capital city in 1768.

The tradition of constructing a Buddhist temple in the precincts of the Royal Palace had existed in Thailand since the Sukhothai period (1240-c. 1438 A.D.) In Sukhothai, Wat Phramahathart was the spiritual center of the Sukhothai kingdom. In the Ayutthaya reign, there was Wat Phrasrisunphet in the Royal Palace. Therefore, King Taksin the Great had the front of the palace enlarged to the Wat Arun's canal. Then, Wat Arun was located in the middle of the palace without monks residing and became the chief temple in the royal palace of Thonburi kingdom for fifteen years. (Traditionally, the temple in the royal palace accommodates no monks and religious activities that occur in the temple are reserved for the monarchy only.) Turning its status into a royal temple in the palace, the Emerald Buddha, the most valuable Buddha image of Thailand, was enshrined at Wat Arun for five years (1779-1784).

Later, when King Rama I came to the throne, the capital city was moved to the opposite side of the Thonburi, King Rama I built the Temple of the Emerald Buddha as the chief temple in the Grand Palace. The royal palace of Thonburi has been called the Old Palace ever since and Wat Arun is not in the precinct of the palace anymore.

King Rama I then allowed the monks to reside at this temple and the Emerald Buddha was moved from Wat Arun to be placed at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha until the present.

### **Why Is Wat Arun the Crown Monastery of King Rama II?**

It is a royal tradition that each king constructs a royal temple for his reign, but in some reigns, the kings could avoid building a new temple because temple establishment is costly and there are a great number of temples in the capital city already. History shows that the king would select one of the existing temples and restore it for making his royal temple for the reign instead. The table below reveals the crown monasteries of the Kings of the Rattanakosin period.

Name of the King	The Crown Monastery
1. King Rama I	Wat Phra Chetuponwimonmunkhararam (Wat Pho)
2. King Rama II	Wat Arun Ratchawararam
3. King Rama III	Wat Rachaorasaram
4. King Rama IV	Wat Rajapradit Sathitmahasimaram
5. King Rama V	Wat Rachaborpit Satitmahasimaram
6. King Rama VI	Wat Bawornnivetviharn
7. King Rama VII	Wat Rachaborpit Satitmahasrimaram
8. King Rama VIII	Wat Sutattapwararam
9. King Rama IX	Wat Phraramkoakanapisak

Table 3: The crown monastery of the Kings of the Rattanakosin period.

It can be noticed from the table of the crown monastery that King Rama VII has the similar crown monastery to King Rama V which is Wat Rachaborpit Satitmahasrimaram because King Rama V built this monastery for his crown monastery. Later in the King Rama VII reign, the King considered that there were a lot of monasteries in the capital city therefore, he decided not to create the new monastery following royal tradition and chose this monastery to be his crown monastery and restored it.

Wat Arun was restored by King Rama II in his reign since he was Prince Komlaungisarasunthorn. King Rama I ordered the Prince to live at the Old Palace and restore Wat Arun. When he came to the throne, King Rama II continued to restore the temple. Phra Ubosoth (the ordination hall) and Phra Viharn (the chapel) were completely built in his reign. Moreover, the King had an idea to reconstruct and enlarge Phra Prang for being Phra Mahathart or the land mark of the city. However, the reconstruction of Phra Prang was not completed in his reign. It could be said that Wat Arun had a complete restoration by King Rama II. Therefore, Wat Arun turned its status to being his royal temple. For this reason, the architecture of Wat Arun serves a symbol of the royal temple of King Rama II. King Rama II has a statue, the

King's royal seals on the fence and the entrance of Phra Prang, the King's relics are in a pedestal of the Principle Buddha image at Phra Ubosoth all reveal the King's social status and express a significant relationship between Wat Arun and the King.

### **Why Was the Phra Prang Built on Such a Large Scale and Lavished With So Much Decoration?**

The Phra Prang, which represents the identity of the nation, was built by King Rama II who considered that the Rattanakosin reign still did not have Phra Mahathart for marking the capital city similar to the previous capital cities of Siam such as Phra Mahathart of Sukhothai city, Phra Mahathart of Phitsanulok city, Phra Prang at Wat Phra Srirattanamahathart of Chalieng. (Phra Mahathart is a stupa, pagoda or Phra Prang which containing the Lord Buddha relics and was created being symbolic of the capital city) (Chaot Kanlayanamitt 2005, p. 352). Therefore, the king reconstructed Phra Prang for being Phra Mahathart or landmark of the city. At present, Phra Prang Wat Arun is the most prominent and beautiful Khmer-style pagoda which became the identity of the nation and a famous tourist destination.

### **Why Is the Tradition of Presenting the Kathin Robes to Monks So Important at Wat Arun?**

Devout Buddhists from the monarch down to common people perform the ceremony as a time-honoured tradition. Wat Arun is one of many temples which are selected for presenting the royal Kathin robes by the monarchy every year. On special occasions such as the king's birthday, the anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to the throne etc. The royal barge procession will be arranged for the royal Kathin robes presentation. (The royal barge procession is the ancient royal tradition of the Ayutthaya period. King Rama I decided to revive the ancient royal traditions of the Ayutthaya period, following his accession to the throne and the establishment of Bangkok as the royal capital. Presenting the Royal Kathin Robes was the main purpose of the royal barge cruising at that time.)

Nowadays, Wat Arun is the only monastery in Thailand which the monarchy use the royal barge procession for presenting the royal Kathin robes. It can be seen that Wat Arun involves this essential Thai tradition which is a luxurious and

invaluable intangible heritage and eventually, this intangible heritage becomes a famous tourist attraction in Thailand.

As a result of these four significances, Wat Arun is established as the spiritual center of the nation and performs its status as a valuable national estate.

### **Phra Prang - The Most Prominent and Beautiful Pagoda.**

**Theme:** Phra Prang is a distinguished and readily recognised landmark of the city - the highest and most beautiful pagoda.

**Message:** The most prominent and beautiful pagoda in Thailand, the Phra Prang at Wat Arun, was built in the Khmer-style 219.82 feet or 67 meters high. Phra Mahathart or the landmark of Bangkok was built between King Rama II and King Rama III reign following Thai tradition which indicates that the capital city must have a Phra Mahathart or Pagoda for marking the city. The fabulous Phra Prang and the surrounding buildings (Prang Thit and Mondop) were designed and created to symbolize Hindu-Buddhist cosmology or the Tridhātu concept. The central Prang represents Mount Sumeru or Mount Meru, in the Buddhist cosmology, the world-mountain of Sumeru is an immense, strangely shaped peak which arises at the center of the world and it is a home of the God, Indra or Sakra Devanam.

The rich extent of sculptures and ornamentations at Phra Prang to reveal that this building represents Mount Sumeru. For example, there are four arches of Indra statues near the top of Phra Prang. The four statues of the Hindu god Indra on his ride, the elephant Airavata were built in arches at cardinal points. The statues explicitly indicate that Phra Prang symbolizes Mount Sumeru, home of Indra. The base of Mount Sumeru is the Himavant Forest, therefore, the colorful porcelain in flower, tree, and leaf shapes are used to decorate around the base of Phra Prang as a symbol of the Himavant Forest. Furthermore, the Himavant Forest is a habitation of Kinnorn and Kinnari, mythological animals, half bird-half human. Therefore, Kinnorn and Kinnari sculptures in small coves are found at the base area of Phra Prang.

The sculptures of Demons, Monkey deities, and Brahmas which are used to decorated the base of Phra Prang at each level were added as decoration because these beasts and deities live in Mount Sumaru. Phra Prang was created following the Hindu-Buddhism cosmology concept, so, one of gods in Hinduism, Narayana, Vishnu or

otherwise Rama of Hinduism who is trusted by Hinduism as the preserver and protector of creation is used as one of Phra Prang's ornamentations. Sixteen Narayana and Garuda, mythical beast sculptures who serve as Narayana ride are located above the arches of statues of Indra of Phra Prang. The sculptures of Narayana reflect the Hinduism influence of Phra Prang.

Hindu-Buddhism cosmology is not only a concept leading to the decoration of Phra Prang, there is another cultural meaning which is hidden in Phra Prang's ornamentation. King Rama III ordered that the golden crown or Monkut be put at the top of Phra Prang. This appearance assumed that King Rama III chose Prince Mongkut as his crown prince. The golden crown expressed the personal identity of Prince Mongkut implicitly and it also revealed the historical and political evidence of the King Rama III period.

The four minor Prang or Prang Thit were established at the four cardinals in the northeast, southeast, northwest, and southwest. All of these minor Prang have a similar shape and decoration, and symbolize the four continents which are located in the ocean surrounding Mount Sumeru. Inside the niches of each minor Prang are statues of Vayu or Phra Pai, the god of wind on horseback. Vayu or Phra Pai serves under Indra, King of Gods.

There are four Mondop or Porches at the north, south, east, and west surrounding the Principle Prang. The north Mondop is for enshrining the statue of Princess Siri Mahamaya (mother of Lord Buddha) standing under a Rung tree and giving birth to Lord Buddha. In the east Mondop the image of an enlightened Lord Buddha is enshrined. In the south Mondop is an image of Lord Buddha preaching the sermon to the five disciples. The west Mondop enshrines the image of a state of complete bliss of Lord Buddha or Prang Parinibbana. These Buddha images were relocated from cloisters or Viharn Kod to be installed at Mondop Thit in the King Rama V period.

Being a Phra Mahathart or land mark of the city and the faith of Buddhism is shown clearly via the concept, form, design and decoration of the buildings, therefore, Thai people pay high respect to these sacred monuments.

### **Phra Ubosoth - Heart of the Monastery**

**Theme:** Phra Ubosoth is a precious architecture at the heart of the monastery which manifests the crown monastery of King Rama II.

**Message:** Phra Ubosoth is an important and beautiful piece of architecture which was built in King Rama II reign. Phra Ubosoth is a place for making important rituals such as ordination, presenting the royal Kathin robes to monks. It can be claimed that Phra Ubosoth is a precious architecture of the Rattanakosin era and the heart of the monastery.

Luxurious art and craft from the beginning Rattanakosin can be found in this architecture such as the graceful murals in the hall, the exterior decoration in floral patterns, the gold leaf and colored glass decoration at the gable and pillar finials. The graceful murals in the hall were painted by many famous artists from Thailand at that period such as Pethwagun, Luang Wijitjatsada, Tamee, Kongpai. The story of the murals relate to Lord Buddha history, the last ten incarnations of the Lord Buddha.

The mythological tree which is named “Makkareepol” or “Nareepol” is painted in the doors. Some murals represent hell and some murals tell ancient proverb stories. All of the murals were painted in the King Rama II period and some parts of the murals were repainted in the King Rama V period after they were destroyed by fire.

There are two vital issues expressed in Wat Arun that belong to the crown monastery of King Rama II which are hidden in Phra Ubosoth. The first is the Buddha image named Phraputtanarumit which is placed in the arch between the entrance gates of the hall. From historic evidence, the figure of the image was imitated from the royal Buddha image of King Rama II by the command of King Rama IV. Another reason is in the pedestal of the principle Buddha image, Phraputtatummisorrajlokkatattdilok, which is located in the hall and contains the ashes from the cremation of King Rama II. The royal tradition indicates that the ashes of the king must be kept in the pedestal of his royal temple. Furthermore, the dispatch also identified that the face of the principle Buddha image was modeled by the king himself.

The royal tradition of having the relics of the king enshrined at his crown temple came from King Rama IV. The king had the ashes of the previous king (King Rama I, II, and III) put in the pedestal of the principle Buddha image at Phra Ubosoth



of each King's crown monastery respectively which are Wat Phra Chetuponwimonmunkhararam (Wat Pho), Wat Arun, and Wat Rachaorasarm. The king himself ordered to keep his relics at his royal temple Wat Rajapradit. Since then, it became the royal traditional to enshrine the king's relics at the king's royal temple.

Furthermore, there are some architecture surrounding Phra Ubosoth. Firstly, the monastery boundary markers or "Sum Sayma", "Sayma" is a marker to define a territory for making a ritual for monks. Wat Arun has eight Sum Sayma which are located surrounding Phra Ubosoth. Each Sayma is enshrined in a beautiful marble arch and intricately carved. Secondly, there are 144 Chinese lion rockeries, 112 Chinese solid rockeries, and 16 Chinese noble men sitting on the chair around Phra Ubosoth. Thirdly, in each corner of the outside balcony, there are octagonal marble Chinese pagodas. In the cove of each pagoda contains eight granite statues of Chinese saints which are named "Poy-sien". The Chinese rockeries came from China when Thailand had commercial links with China between the King Rama II and King Rama III period. Thailand exported goods such as rice to China, when sailing back with an valuable goods such as tea leaves, jade, silk, jewelries, ceramics which were light in weight, it was essential to utilize Chinese rock for ballast to weigh the ship down. Therefore, large numbers of Chinese rockeries were imported. King Rama III employed these Chinese statues to decorated several monastery in Bangkok such as Wat Pho, Wat Suthattapwararam, and Wat Arun. Lastly, there are four entrances to enter Phra Ubosoth. Each entrance is located in each cardinal point. Eight metal elephant statues are standing near the entrance over one meter high in different characters. Elephant statues were created in 1846 for celebrating King Rama II. These elephant statues also confirms the issue that Wat Arun belongs to King Rama II crown temple.

However, from the ornamentation of Phra Ubosoth and surrounding area such as various Chinese statues and the murals inside the hall, it can be shown that Chinese culture had an influence in Thai architecture at the beginning of Rattanakosin era. Phra Ubosoth comprises of precious materials which hide various cultural meanings, crafts and art of the Rattanakosin era. Phra Ubosoth is also a vital place for making rituals, so, this precious architecture can be called the heart of the monastery.

### **Phra Viharn - Refuge of Two Precious Buddha Images.**

**Theme:** Two invaluable Buddha images and Lord Buddha relics at Phra Viharn provide a reason for worship.

**Message:** Phra Viharn was built in King Rama I reign. Phra Viharn has three stories roof and five entrances. Fourteen windows surround the building. The outer walls are decorated with ceramics imported from China, originally intended for Phra Ubosoth's decoration. However, King Rama III preferred to use these ceramics for Phra Viharn instead of Phra Ubosoth. There are magnificent flowers painting on every rectangle pillar inside the hall. The decoration makes Phra Viharn one of the most attractive places at the temple. From the restoration plan of the monastery, Phra Viharn has been taken good care of. It was continuously restored in the King Rama II, and King Rama III period. At present, some parts of Phra Viharn are being restored such as the murals inside the hall.

However, the most attractive thing of this place are two valuable Buddha images presiding in the hall. The image of Buddha subduing the Māra named Phraputtachumpunut mahaburud lukanaasritayanuborpit (the principle image) is enshrined here, and Lord Buddha relics are placed inside the head of this image. Another precious Buddha image which has the harmonious name of the temple, Phra Arun, is placed in front of the principle image. This ancient image was brought from Viantiane in 1858. At first, the image was placed at the temple of the Emerald Buddha. Since the name of Phra Arun harmonizes to the name of Wat Arun, King Rama IV therefore, commanded that this famous Buddha image be relocated to Phra Viharn of Wat Arun, from the reason that Phra Viharn is a place to enshrine Phra Arun. Thai people prefer to worship the two images and Lord Buddha relics at Phra Viharn for making enlightenment in the name of Phra Arun.

### **The Buddha's Footprint Niche – an Endowment by King Rama III**

**Theme:** The replica of the Buddha's footprint in its graceful niche is an important representation of the Buddhist faith of the nation.

**Message:** This building was built in King Rama III reign. The niche itself is made of brick, covered in floral ceramic patterns. It contains a finely carved replica of the Buddha's footprint. The building has been restored several times. At first the roof of

this building was created in Chinese style, after deterioration in 1895, the style of the roof had been changed into cement as shown at present. However, the exterior wall still keeps the floral ceramic patterns for decoration.

For Buddhism, there are three things representing the Lord Buddha which Buddhist highly respect, the first is Lord Buddha relics, and the second is Buddha image, the third is the replica of the Buddha footprint. Hence, it can be found those three deputations of the Lord Buddha in religious place including Wat Arun.

### **The Chedi - the Four Beautiful Satellite Pagodas.**

**Theme:** The four satellite pagodas present Thai architectural delicacy at the beginning of Rattanakosin era.

**Message:** The four satellite pagodas were created in the reign of King Rama III.

They were restored in the reign of King Rama V.

According to Buddhist belief, to build a chedi is a way of paying homage to the Lord Buddha. The chedi usually contains Buddha's relics and other scared objects to represent as well as commemorate the Lord Buddha. These four pagodas are lining up in parallel from the east to the south. All pagodas have the same shape and size.

Colorful mirrors and ceramics are cut to be beautiful flowers for decoration. They are slender, tapering brick pagodas, marked by the Thai architectural innovation of twenty indented niches at each corner. Generally, a pagoda or chedi will be created with twelve indented corners, but these four pagodas were constructed twenty notched-rims.

### **Phra Viharn Kot – Gallery of One Hundred and Twenty Buddha Images.**

**Theme:** The Phra Viharn Kot, or Peripheral Balcony houses one hundred and twenty Buddha image - the most perfect gallery in the traditional craftsmanship of King Rama II reign.

**Message:** Phra Viharn Kot surrounds the ordination hall or Phra Ubosoth with an entrance at the middle of the balcony at each cardinal point. One hundred and twenty of the beautiful Buddha images subduing the Māra preside at intervals in this gallery. Phra Viharn Kot was created in King Rama II reign. The gallery is dignified by the murals which were painted in King Rama III reign and the sculptures of Narayana on

his ride Garuda at the gable of the entrance. With harmonious design and form, it was admired by Prince Phrayanarissaranuwattiwong that this was the most perfect gallery which represented the traditional craftsmanship of King Rama II reign.

### **Entrance Way with Spire Roof and Demons – Remarkable Legend of Two Demons and the Beautiful Entrance Way.**

**Theme:** The legend of the guardians and the decoration of entrance way with a spire roof.

**Message:** The entrance way with a tall spire roof is the front entrance to the ordination hall. It is located at the middle of the east peripheral balcony. This entrance pavilion was built in King Rama III reign. It has a three story roof, decorated in colored ceramic and stuccowork sheathed in colored china. Porcelain was cut into flower and leaf shapes for gable decoration.

There are two Demons or Yaksas, temple guardian figures, standing in front of the entrance pavilion, fashioned in stucco and decorated with ceramic. There are approximately 6 meters high. The white figure is named Sahassateja and the green guardian is known as Tasakantha in Ramayana. The legend of these Demons is that they fought with the Demons who are the guardians of Wat Pho which is located opposite Wat Arun. Fighting for a long period of time, the battle area in front of Wat Pho was flattened. Therefore, the area has been called “Tar-Tien” (Tien means nothing left) ever since. With excellent and beautiful figures, the Demons of Wat Arun were exploited to be the model for creating the guardians at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

### **Bot-Noi – Home of the Historic Evidence of King Taksin the Great**

**Theme:** Historic evidence of King Taksin the Great is located in the Bot-Noi.

**Message:** Bot-Noi or the old ordination hall is located in front of Phra Prang. It was built in the Ayutthaya reign. There are 29 Buddha images enshrined inside the hall.

Moreover, there is a base of King Taksin’s platform for sleeping and his statue inside. From stories it was identified that King Taksin was ordained and resided at this place for a short time before he passed away. The historic evidence in the place such as the king’s base can confirm this story. The temple was built with the

King's shrine inside the hall to commemorate the Great King. It can be said that Bot-Noi keeps some part of the King's story, and Thai people visit this place to play homage to the Great King who battled for countries independence and established the Thonburi realm.

### **Viharn-Noi or the Old Chapel-the Story of Phrajulamanee Chedi Which Enshrines in Viharn-Noi**

**Theme:** Phrajulamanee Chedi : The Chedi was built by Lord of the Devas in Viharn-Noi

**Message:** Viharn-Noi is located near Bot-Noi and was created in the Ayutthaya reign. The importance of the small Viharn is that the Emerald Buddha was once enshrined here. Viharn-noi was assumed by Khormphraya Dumrongrachanuparp that it was once a place to enshrine the Emerald Buddha in the Thonburi era for five years (1779-1784) since King Rama I was still the general of Thai army and defeated and captured the Vientiane army. The Emerald Buddha was then brought back and enshrined at Viharn-Noi, Wat Arun. At present, Viharn-Noi is also used to enshrine a customary built Phrajulamanee Chedi.

From Buddha history, Phrajulamanee Chedi was reputedly built by Tawsakkatawaracha or Śakra devānām indra, (Indra or "lord of the devas") for keeping Lord Buddha's hair and relics. The reason to create Phrajulamanee Chedi was that when Lord Buddha-ordinated, he cut his hair and made a wish that if he would be enlightened, the hair should drift in the air without falling to the ground. His hair was found to drift in the air because Indra was holding the hair and then brought them back to his world, the heaven called Trāyastriṃśa in Sanskrit or Tāvatisa in Pāli, which is on the top of Mount Sumeru. He built Phrajulamanee Chedi for keeping Lord Buddha's hair. After Lord Buddha passed away into Parinibbana, a state of complete bliss of Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha's body was cremated and the relics were distributed.

Dona, the Brahman divided the Buddha's relics into eight equal portions and distributed each of them to the Rulers of the eight countries. Then Dona decided that the right tooth should be kept for himself as an object of respectful veneration. With the "divine eyes" of Indra, he knew Dona's action. He decided that Lord Buddha's

relics should be kept in suitable place rather than with Dona. So, he took the relic to enshrine in Phrajulamanee Chedi at Tāvātimsa heaven. Since then, all devas always come and pay respects at Phrajulamanee Chedi. In addition, all human beings wish to pay respect Phrajulamanee Chedi at Tāvātimsa heaven after they pass away.

### **The Riverside Pavilions - the Chinese style pavilion.**

**Theme:** The old Chinese style pavilion reveals Chinese cultural influence in the past.

**Message:** There are six pavilions in the Chinese style with bridges, which face the Chao Phraya River. The pavilions have raised floors for visitors to rest, and are made of green sandstone. These pavilions were built in King Rama III reign. The fabric of the pavilions presents the Chinese architectural style. They are aligned to the river bank from the entrance canal of Wat Arun to the entrance of Phra Prang. The old pavilion is one of the architectures which reflects the beginning of Rattanakosin era, when Chinese culture had an influence in Thai social. Thailand adopted and transferred its neighbor's culture via architectural style.

The relationship between Thailand or Siam (in the past Thailand was called “Siam”) and China has been appeared in Thai historic vestige since the Ayutthaya era via commerce. After the Ayutthaya capital city was sacked by the Burmese army. The commerce between Siam and China was suspended for a while. Later, in the Thonburi era, Siam began to develop relationships with neighboring countries. King Taksin the Great sent an ambassador, Chao Phraya Sritummaracha, and diplomatic corps including tributes to Beijing. The court of China accepted the tributes from Siam and the commerce between the two countries has been flourishing ever since.

In the Rattanakosin era, tributes had been continuously sent to China because Siam got commercial privileges from China and doing commerce in that period was convenience and quite profitable for this reason. Siam exported rice to China and imported silk and willowware. The commerce among the two countries grew to its highest point in King Rama III period.

There were many objectives to creating good relationships with China in that period such as economic recovery, building the nation's security, and developing the

country. Moreover, contacting China resulted in cultural adoption due to a lot of Chinese migrating to Siam and propagated their culture in the country.

Therefore, Chinese culture had an influence to Siamese's way of life in Thonburi and the beginning of Rattanakosin era. Many of architectures which were created in that period revealed Chinese culture. The riverside pavilions at Wat Arun are architectures which presents the cultural influence from China.

### **King Rama II Monument- the King Who Devoted His Life to Buddhism Through His Beloved Monastery.**

**Theme:** The monument of the Great King who devoted his life to Wat Arun's restoration.

**Message:** Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poramenthramaha Isarasunthorn Phra Buddha Lertla Napalai H.M. King Rama II of Siam was the second monarch of Siam under the House of Chakri, ruling from 1809-1824. King Rama II was born on the 24th February, 1767 during the Ayutthaya period at Amphawa, Samut Songkram. His old name was Chim. He was the son of Luang Yokbat of Ratchaburi and Nak of Samut Sakorn, as his father and mother were then known. They would later become King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke or King Rama I (the founder of Chakri dynasty) and Queen Amarindra respectively.

In 1782, King Rama I ascended the throne, and raised his son Chim to the title of Prince Komlaungisarasunthorn of Siam. King Rama I passed away in 1809, the Prince ascended the throne on 7th September in the same year and named Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poramenthramaha Isarasunthorn Phra Buddha Lertla Napalai or King Rama II. His reign was largely peaceful, devoid of major conflicts. This period was known as the "The golden age of Rattanakosin literatue" as the King was patron to a number of poets in his court and the King himself was a renowned poet, musician, and artist. The most notable poet in his employ was the illustrious Sunthorn Phu, the author of Phra Aphai Mani. Sunthron Phu was acknowledged by UNESCO in recognition of his literature works.

King Rama II composed a lot of famous dramas such as Ramayana, Enau (an adaptation of Indonesia folk lore which relating to the story of a hero whose name was Enau). Enau was lauded to be an excellent dance drama by the literature club



since the King Rama VI period. The King also composed the famous Thai traditional song named “Bulun Loylearn”. This song originated from a dream of the King. After playing a Thai traditional musical instrument, a three string fiddle, till late at night, the King slept and dreamt that he visited a beautiful land which resembled heaven. It had a lightened full moon and a sweet sounding melody.

When the King woke up, he remembered the beautiful melody then, he wrote the song from the impressive dream and named it “Bulun Loylearn” which meant the gorgeous lightened full moon in his dream. Later, it became a famous Thai traditional song.

In addition, he devoutly practiced Buddhism and left a profound culture for the Thai nation. From the dynasty story, King Rama II had resided at The Old Palace since he was Prince Komlaungisarasunthorn, and he had a function to restore Wat Arun following King Rama I command. When he came to the throne, he continued to restore his beloved monastery and created the significant architectures such as Phra Ubosoth and Phra Viharn. Moreover, he consecrated Phra Prang Wat Arun, which has become a symbol of universal beauty. Therefore, Wat Arun is his crown temple.

In 1967, the United Nations honored King Rama II as a World Cultural Leader whose Royal initiation constitutes a rich and common heritage of humankind.

Therefore, this monument was erected by descendants of King Rama II who devoted his life to Wat Arun’s restoration. The monument was inaugurated on behalf of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great of Thailand or King Rama IX by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on 2nd November, 1996, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this present reign.

### **Nai Raung and Nai Nok Sculptures-Two Buddhist Who Sacrificed Themselves by Burning to Achieve Nirvana**

**Theme:** The story of two martyrs who burnt themselves for Buddhism worship and Nirvana accomplishment.

**Message:** The pavilions of Nai Raung and Nai Nok Sculptures are located on the left and right hand side of the entrance way with a spire roof. The sculptures of Buddhist martyrs by burning alive were made in stone. From the story of the Rattanakosin dynasty which was written by Kromphraya Dumrongrachanuparp mentioned that Nai Raung sacrificed himself by burning to death on Friday March, 1790 in front of the

hall for sermons at Wat Arun. Approximately nine to ten days before being burnt alive, Nai Raung and his two friends, Khun Sritatkromma and Nai Tongrak went to Phra Ubosoth of Wat Kruth, they wished Nirvana and made a wishful request by using lotus that if they can achieve Nirvana, the lotus will bloom. The following day, only the lotus of Nai Raung was blooming. Therefore, Nai Raung came to stay at the hall for sermons at Wat Arun for acceptance of the Buddhist commandments and listening to the sermons. Moreover, he coated wool with oil and laid it on his arms, then ignited the wool for worship everyday till the day of martyrdom by burning alive. At the proper time, he finished listening to the sermons, then came to the front of the hall and wore the cloth coated with oil and burnt himself while the flame was bright he announced the word “accomplishment”. After the cremation, his ashes turned into green, white, yellow and purple. The ashes were kept in the old hall for sermons at Wat Arun.

The story of Nai Nok was recorded in the history of the Rattanakosin dynasty issue of Chaophraya Tippakornwong that Nai Nok burnt himself to worship Buddhism on Wednesday July, 1861. People found Nai Nok’s corpse who martyred himself by burning to death under a Pho tree in front of the old ordination hall at Wat Arun.

Nai Nok told people that he wished Nirvana by acceptance of the Buddhist commandments and practicing meditation. He practiced serious meditation in the hall for sermons at Wat Arun and never told others when he sacrificed himself by burning. People made merit and worshiped his deep devotion very much.

Generally, burning was used as a means of execution in many ancient societies. According to ancient reports, Roman authorities executed many of the early Christian martyrs by burning. It can be found in 1184 that the Roman Catholic Synod of Verona legislated that burning was to be the official punishment for heresy, as Church policy was against the spilling of blood. It was also believed that the condemned would have no body to be resurrected in the afterlife. Burning was also used by Protestants during the witch-hunts of Europe. In the United Kingdom, the traditional punishment for women found guilty of treason was to be burnt at the stake. It can be seen that burning was a torment to heretics and severely guilty persons in ancient time because burning is cruelty. Therefore, using burning to worship religion

is hardly to be found because it must exploit extremely bravery and faith. So, people highly respect Nai Ruang and Nai Nok and made their stone sculptures for commemoration at Wat Arun.

Table 4: The summary of interpretive themes, concepts, and key messages of Wat Arun Ratchawararam

Place	Theme	Message
1. Wat Arun Ratchawararam -spiritual center.	Wat Arun Ratchawararam - birthplace of the city and modern nation, providing tangible evidence of history from the Thonburi period and the spiritual center of the nation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The chief monastery in the Thonburi period.</li> <li>- The crown monastery of King Rama II.</li> <li>- Phra Prang, land mark of the city, is located at here.</li> <li>- The only monastery in Thailand at present which the monarchs use during the royal barge procession for presenting the royal Kathin robes.</li> </ul>
2. Phra Prang- the most prominent and beautiful pagoda.	Phra Prang is a distinguished and readily recognised landmark of the city - the most prominent and beautiful pagoda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phra Prang was built following Thai tradition for being Phra Mahathart to mark the capital city</li> <li>- Phra Prang was designed and created to symbolize Hindu-Buddhist cosmology or the three world's concept.</li> </ul>
3. Phra Ubosoth- heart of the monastery.	Phra Ubosoth is a precious architecture at the heart of the monastery which manifests the crown monastery of King Rama II.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phra Ubosoth is the heart of the monastery because the important rituals are performed at this place.</li> <li>- The cultural meanings which are hidden in the fabric at Phra Ubosoth reflects Wat Arun is the crown monastery of King Rama II.</li> </ul>

Place	Theme	Message
4. Phra Viharn-refuge of two precious Buddha images.	Two invaluable Buddha images and Lord Buddha relics at Phra Viharn provide a reason for worship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are found the Lord Buddha's relics inside the principle Buddha image in the hall.</li> <li>- Phra Arun is the harmonious name of the monastery.</li> </ul>
5. The Buddha's footprint niche-an endowment by King Rama III.	The replica of the Buddha's footprint in its graceful niche is an important representation of the Buddhist faith of the nation.	The replica of the Lord Buddha's footprint is one of three things representing the Lord Buddha.
6. Chedi or the four satellite pagodas- the four beautiful satellite pagodas.	The four satellite pagodas present Thai architectural delicacy at the beginning of Rattanakosin era.	The four pagodas differed from the other pagodas in that there were constructed with twenty notched-rims.
7. Phra Viharn Kot – gallery of One Hundred and Twenty Buddha Images.	The Phra Viharn Kot, or Peripheral Balcony houses one hundred and twenty Buddha - the most perfect gallery in the traditional craftsmanship of King Rama II reign.	With harmonious design and form, it was admired by Prince Phrayanarissaranuwattiwong that this was the most perfect gallery which represented the traditional craftsmanship of King Rama II reign.
8. Entrance Way with Spire Roof and Demons-remarkable legend of two demons and the beautiful entrance way.	The legend of the guardians and the decoration of entrance way with a spire roof.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The beautiful entrance pavilion decorated in colored ceramic and stuccowork sheathed in coloured China.</li> <li>- The legend of the battle between the guardians of Wat Arun and Wat Pho which originated the place named 'Tar-Tien'.</li> </ul>

Place	Theme	Message
9. Bot-noi - home of the historic evidence of King Taksin the Great	Historic evidence of King Taksin the Great is located in the Bot-Noi.	King Taksin's base for sleeping at Bot Noi confirms the Thonburi's history that King Taksin had ever lived at Wat Arun.
10. Viharn-Noi- the story of Phrajulamane Chedi which enshrines in Viharn-Noi	Phrajulamane Chedi: The Chedi was built by Lord of the Devas in Viharn-Noi	The story of Phrajulamane Chedi in Viharn-Noi which was built by Lord of Deva, Indra, for keeping Lord Buddha's hair and relics.
11. The Riverside Pavilions- the Chinese style pavilion.	The old Chinese style pavilion reveals Chinese cultural influence in the past.	The beginning of Rattanakosin period, Chinese culture had a lot of influence in Thai social and Thai people presented it via architectural style. The old Chinese pavilion is one architecture which insists this issue.
12. King Rama II Monument- the King who devoted his life to Buddhism through his beloved monastery.	The monument of the Great King who devoted his life to Wat Arun's restoration.	King Rama II took excellent care to restore Wat Arun since he was Prince Komlaungisarasunthorn. Therefore, the king's monument was constructed to commemorate the king who devoted his life to the monastery's restoration.

Place	Theme	Message
13. Nai Raung and Nai Nok Sculptures-two Buddhist who sacrificed themselves by burning to achieve Nirvana	The story of two martyrs who burnt themselves for Buddhism worship and Nirvana accomplishment	Nai Raung and Nai Nok wished to achieve Nirvana so, they seriously practiced Buddhist commandments and meditations. Eventually they both burnt themselves at Wat Arun to worship Buddhism and reach their desire. People respect two brave men and made their stone sculptures for commemoration at Wat Arun.

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มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์

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## **Chapter 9**

### **An Interpretation Plan of Wat Arun Ratchawararam**

Interpretation is an essential part of sustainable cultural tourism and cultural heritage conservation. To enhance public and visitor awareness for a comprehensive understanding of the cultural heritage site by using a full range of potential activities and various mediums which are considered carefully to evoke the site's appreciation, encourage thoughtful use of the resource, minimize improper behavior of visitors which can threaten the cultural heritage site and fragile areas in the sites, and maintaining the site's authenticity. These points lead to the successful objective of sustainable cultural tourism and cultural heritage conservation. Wat Arun is an important cultural heritage site which has a long history and immense significance. Besides, the temple functions as a sacred place and famous tourist destination. Therefore, an interpretive plan and implementation for enhancing visitors' awareness relevant to the site must be established for the purpose of sustainable cultural tourism at Wat Arun .

For the cultural interpretive plan of Wat Arun, it must consider the site's significance and details, objectives of the plan, the target visitors, theme and messages which the site's manager would like to deliver to visitors. All of these components are reviewed comprehensively, and identified clearly to plan the particular cognitive, affective and behavioral experiences of the visitors which are the aims of the plan.



This part attempts to develop effective interpretive techniques or communication tools which can convey themes and messages to visitors as follows;

### **The Objectives of the Interpretive Plan**

1. To create an understanding and encourage appreciation of the history and significance of Wat Arun.
2. To explain the background, significance, and relevant story of architecture, fabric, and religious activities together with an appreciation of the beauty of those items.
3. To orientate a site map which includes , architecture, fabric, activities, and facilities of Wat Arun for visitors.
4. To enrich the visitors' experience and knowledge about Thai culture and Buddhist tradition by learning through Wat Arun.
5. To entertain and increase the satisfaction to visitors while traveling to Wat Arun creating an impressive memory which leads to visitors' returning to the monastery again.
6. To educate sustainable cultural tourism and influence an appropriate visitors' behaviors in order to reduce negative impact on Wat Arun.

### **Target Audience**

Without adequate planning, most interpretation programs eventually become ineffective and ultimately redundant. One essential process which supports a successful interpretive plan is analyzing the target audience. To define a target audience or target visitor cannot be overlooked for an interpretive plan. If the site's manager does not penetrate a target audience before selecting the interpretation techniques or communication tools, the interpretive plan will fail. So, in this part the target audience or visitors of Wat Arun interpretive plan are divided into two groups. The information of visitors will be analyzed and identified in both demographic and psychographic characteristics as follows;

#### **Thai Visitors**

The demographic characteristics of Thai visitors are both male and female

including children visiting the temple with their parents. The age range of visitors is 5 to 60 years old. For the educational background of Thai visitors, it varies from primary school to master degree. For social-economic status of Thai visitors, it averages between C – B plus. The psychographic characteristics of Thai visitors, is that they mostly Buddhist. The first motivation of Thai visitors for visiting Wat Arun is to make merit and do Buddhist activities, i.e., meditation, making merit walks around Phra Prang on important Buddhism festival days, joining the Royal Kathin Ceremony day, etc.

The second motivation of this group is the visitor who mainly wants to do something with friends. The visitor who visits the temple for this purpose can be called socialize. To admire the aesthetic value of architecture in the temple is the other minor motivation of this visitor group. This group would also like to see scenery, and the landscape of the monastery. To relax and get away from routine life, enjoy the outdoors, do activities with the family are also the minor motivations of these target visitors.

The last motivation of this group is the visitor who visit Wat Arun for education purpose. This group is student who study related to tourism, history, and architecture or visitors who are interested in history and Thai traditional architecture and Buddhism.

### **Foreign Visitors**

The demographic characteristics of foreign visitors in terms of age and gender are similar to Thai visitors. It was found that the educational background of this target group is higher, which is above high school or college graduation. Visitors from Europe, America, Asia and the Pacific are the main target audiences for traveling to the temple. Social-economic status is above C plus level. Motivation to visit Wat Arun for foreign visitors is the fabulous attraction of architecture. This group would like to admire Phra Prang as a land mark of Bangkok and other beautiful buildings. In addition, the way of Buddhism creation and tradition are the minor points of foreigner attraction. This visitor group dislikes to being rushed or having no choice in the way they experience the area. They would like to do a variety of related short walks of up to one hour. They prefer to sit down in the area and have a detailed

discussion about the experience which they encountered and criticize the site's characteristics and the appearance of the site.

### **The Total Visitors' Experiences**

The experiences which visitors will get from Wat Arun after the new interpretation plan is launched are described as follows;

#### **Aesthetic Experience**

The strong point of Wat Arun for visitors is its aesthetic value. Wat Arun accumulates a lot of beautiful tangible and intangible cultural heritages. Visitors would like to admire the aesthetic value on the site. Interpretation will orientate the traveling trails for visitors to easily approach the tangible heritages. Visitors can admire the aesthetic architecture and fabric by accessing the traveling trails which are provided. The suggested traveling trails can facilitate visitors and do not confuse visitors' or waste their time. Besides, the timetable of rituals and activities programs which are shown in various mediums help visitors to know the programs of those rituals and activities and come to admire the aesthetic value of intangible cultural heritage. Therefore, visitors will get a complete aesthetic experience from the site by interpretation and presentation leading to.

#### **Education Experience**

Creating an understanding of Wat Arun its aspect in history and its significance is the first objective of the interpretation plan. Visitors can gain knowledge of this issue from the interpretation and presentation. This results in a deep understanding of the site and the site's appreciation. The interpretation also proposes the background and relevant information of each architecture and ritual to visitors. Furthermore, interpretation also presents and inserts sustainable cultural tourism content to visitors via various selected mediums.

Therefore, visitors are not only getting an aesthetic experience from the cultural heritage site, but also gaining an education experience both information of the site and knowledge of the sustainable cultural tourism.

### **Entertainment Experience**

Generally, on the outer realm of the experiences are the various levels of experience participation. Visitors can become absorbed in the experience such as talking to each other while they walk on traveling trails. They can choose levels of active participation, such as joining in rituals and other activities on the site. They can choose passive participation such as watching an interpretive activity or attending an interpretive demonstration. No matter what experience they choose, they can get an entertainment experience from the application of the interpretation on the site.

### **Escapist Experience**

Intrinsically, people encounter pressures and various problems in their daily life and they want to escape from the routine which causes stress from pressures and problems. Traveling is one selective way to escape the routine and make people relax. Similarly, traveling to Wat Arun gives an escapist experience to visitors. They can release their stress by beautiful scenery and architectural admiration. They can participate in Buddhist rituals such as meditation that makes their mind peaceful.

They can join the activities in the Wat Arun festival for entertainment purposes. The interpretation plan can support and offer the escapist experience to visitors.

From the experience realms, visitors can choose to immerse themselves into each type of experience depending on their desire. However, the interpretation and presentation function is to encourage visitors to approach positive experiences while traveling to Wat Arun leading to satisfaction and visitors returning.

### **Interpretive Techniques**

For the cultural interpretive plan of Wat Arun, it must consider the site's significance and details, objectives of the plan, the target visitors, theme and messages which the site's manager would like to deliver to visitors. All of these components are reviewed comprehensively, and identified clearly as presented in the previous part to plan the particular cognitive, affective and behavioral experiences of the visitors which are the aims of the plan.

This part attempts to develop effective interpretive techniques or communication tools which can convey themes and messages to visitors as follows;

## **Information Technology and Computer Programs**

For these communication tools, visitors can access depending on their interests and capabilities. The information is stored as text, photographs, illustrations, maps and audio recordings, and in some instances, interesting information may be printed out as a simple note sheet by the visitors. Information technology and computer programs should be undertaken as follows;

### **Website**

**Objectives:** - To give significant information about Wat Arun and the site's orientation.

- To provide knowledge and useful information for Wat Arun sustainable cultural tourism.
- To attract visitors and persuade them to visit Wat Arun to increase the number of visitors.

**Details:** The website provides exhaustive information of Wat Arun such as background, statement of significance, cultural significance, attractive places or highlight spots and their story, festivals and essential activities (rituals) and their timetable. These parts include photographs and illustrations to reveal clear and pictures of the site and the activities for visitors. Site's map, temple's facilities, way to reach the temple, and address with telephone number to contact and inquire the site's information are also described explicitly for visitors convenience. Recommended traveling trails on the site will be presented to help visitors roaming the site comfortably. Visitors who access Wat Arun's information can print out the data for a travel self guiding.

In addition the data will provide knowledge relating to Buddhism, Thai tradition, and rituals to create visitors' understanding while traveling the site. Rules for traveling cultural heritage and religious places are included to mitigate negative impact of the temple. This information provides knowledge for visitors before hand and encourages them to visit the place with respect. Furthermore, the website will be updated regularly creating visitors' attractions and provided in two languages (Thai and English).

### Computer Kiosks

- Objectives:** - To orientate significant information of Wat Arun to visitors while roaming the temple.
- To educate knowledge and useful information for Wat Arun sustainable cultural tourism.

**Details:** Computer kiosk is important orientation information for visitors who arrive to Wat Arun and would like to get significant data of the site by themselves. Basic orientation such as site maps and directions, distances, facilities, attractive places, recommended traveling trails, and how to access the site safely and comfortably will provide on this digital tool. In addition, visitors can access more complicated information such as history and significance, highlight spots and their background story, and other information from the website. The rules to visit this sacred place and sustainable cultural tourism knowledge will be included to remind visitors to have appropriate behavior and understand the sustainable cultural tourism purpose. This data educates visitors and avoids threatening factors which affect the fragile area at the site. Computer kiosks should be served at the front and the back gate of the temple, the entrance of the attractive places such as the entrance of Phra Prang and Phra Ubosoth, and Visitors Center. Furthermore, the program is provided in two languages (Thai and English). Touch screen pattern is applied for fast and easy access.

### MP 3 Players

- Objectives:** - To explain significant information and story of the architecture and places in each traveling trail.
- To educate knowledge and useful information relating to architecture's conservation for sustainable cultural tourism purpose.
  - To entertain and increase satisfaction of visitors from admiring beautiful architectures and scenery leading to good memories for visitors.

**Details:** MP 3 player, a self guiding tour device, is a suitable interpretive tool for visitors who wish to pass through Wat Arun on their own. There are many traveling trails on the site for visitors' to select. Each trail takes approximately thirty to forty minutes. Several stops and short walks for visitor to admire artistic buildings and sight seeing are given on device by playing old Thai traditional melodies. Visitors can

replay the MP 3 player to listen to vague or unclear content again for complete understanding. An example of a traveling trail is Phra Prang and surrounding buildings (Prang Thit and Mondop Thit). Visitors can get history of Phra Prang, Hindu-Buddhist cosmology concept of design and creation, details of Phra Prang's ornamentation and sculptures, and cultural meaning in the form and decoration of the building. In addition, the story of Phra Prang significance which is relevant to the nation and Buddhist will be included in this communication tool. Phra Ubosoth and Phra Viharn Kot, Entrance way with spire roof and Demons is another traveling trail which will be provided on this communication tool. The MP 3 player provides in-depth information for each traveling trail in aspect of history, background, significance, artistic, Buddhism, Thai tradition, and sustainable tourism of the site etc. to visitors. Renting the MP3 player should be done at the ticket booth.

### **Audio-Visual Devices**

**Objectives:** - To explain significant information of Wat Arun for creating site understands to visitors.

- To educate knowledge of Buddhism and cultural practice on site to visitors.
- To explain the rules for traveling in religious place and educate sustainable cultural tourism to visitors.

**Details:** The advantages of Audio-visual devices are that they can appeal to visitor senses by both sound and sight at the same time. Programs can respond immediately to demand and can be repeated over and over again with minimum effort or cost. The most important advantage, they can be adapted to visitor groups of varying size. Hence, from these advantages Audio-visual Devices is one of interpretation that is undertaken at the site. Video presentation will be presented in a presentation room at the Visitor Center for groups of visitors. The content reveals the history, background, significance, important architectures, tradition, festival and rituals of Wat Arun. The length of the Video presentation takes fifteen to twenty minutes. Different languages will be provided for each group so they can understand.

## Signs and Exhibition Panels

The first and most basic form of sign or label performs an orientation or strategic information role. Orientation information is usually based around directions, distances and names whilst strategic visitor information is a broader concept which includes all basic information a visitor needs to access a heritage site and experience safely and comfortably such as topography, weather conditions, facilities and services, charges and crowding. Moreover, the cost to produce and maintain of these communication tools is cheaper compared with others, and they are long lasting.

With their effective qualifications, signs and exhibition panels are chosen and developed for the interpretive plan as follows;

### **Directional Signs, Map's Site Panels, and Map's Suggested Traveling Trails**

**Objective:** To orientate Wat Arun and facilitate visitors while traveling at the site.

**Details:** Having a vast area and a lot of attractive places, directional signs and map site panels are necessary to be established in many spots at Wat Arun. Site maps and directions enable visitors to understand the scale of the site, choose the place they want to visit, and allocate their time for accessing each place effectively and enjoyably. Map of suggested traveling trails also provides for visitors who traveling on their own and would like to visit every places on the site. This map can help visitors roaming in the site convenience.

Directional signs are presented on metal for long lasting use. The colours of the signs are painted in the same colour for a harmonious look. The lettering will be painted a different colour from the background board for a distinguished appearance. The signs are in two languages (Thai and English).

The name of places and facilities including arrows for showing direction are provided on the signs. The same pattern of a specific name, place, architecture, ornamentation or sculpture will be indicated as well as a cross-cultural translation that will be applied on the signs for avoiding visitors' confusion. For example Phra Prang will be presented as the word 'Phra Prang' on every directional sign. The signs do not allow other words instead of Phra Prang such as "The Great Prang" or "The Principle Prang". The directional signs are installed at many points of the walking track and the entrances. Site map panels and suggested traveling trails map panels are



presented on metal. The map will show the site's plan with important places, facilities of the site, and suggested traveling routes. The panels are installed at the front entrance and the back entrance of the temple, and The visitor center.

### **Caution Signs**

**Objectives:** - To explain the prohibitions to visitors while accessing Wat Arun.

- To warn visitors to be careful of cheating.

**Details:** Being a sacred place and having fragile areas, Wat Arun decrees the rules for making visitors especially non-Thai visitors realize the prohibitions and improper behavior which should be excluded. The restricted actions such as improper dress and the fragile areas intrusion are announced on the caution signs. In addition, other caution signs inform visitors to be careful of cheating in the ticket and souvenir price, and unauthorized persons. The characteristic of the caution signs are similar to the directional signs in that painting, material and languages. These signs are established at important spots such as the entrances of the temple, the front of The Visitor Center, and the entrances of each fragile area.

### **Exhibition Panels**

**Objectives:** - To explain a brief history and the significance of Wat Arun for increased visitor understanding.

- To explain brief details and background of architecture on site to create visitors understanding and enhancing the site's appreciation.
- To educate Buddhism, rituals, and cultural practices to visitors.

**Details:** There are three types of exhibition panels developed in the interpretive plan. Firstly, the most essential exhibition panels introducing the brief history and significance of Wat Arun are provided at the front and the back gate, and the front of the Visitor Center. This content is in two languages (Thai and English), and the cross cultural translation must be extremely concerned for Non-Thai visitors absolute understanding. The panels are made in metal. They have a brown background and white lettering for comfortable reading.

Visitors will get the fundamental information of Wat Arun from this exhibition panel before they have access to the attractive places on the site. The information which they get from the panel helps them to easily understand and appreciate the monastery and architecture on the site.

Secondly, the exhibition panel which describes aspects of background, meaning, significance, and function of architecture will be developed and installed at the front of each building such as Phra Prang, Phra Viharn, Phra Ubosoth, Viharn-Noi, Bot-Noi etc. This communication tool is appropriate for visitors who have limited time to travel the site, and avoids using the information technology tools. They will get brief information of those buildings by reading the panels. The knowledge which is explained in the panels encourages the visitors to understand those buildings and appreciate them while looking around.

The panels are presented on metal board. They also have similar characteristics as the first exhibition panels and they are also in two languages (Thai & English). The cross cultural translation also must be done carefully as the same as the information in the other tools for the clear understanding of Non-Thai visitors.

Thirdly, the exhibition panels to describe the activities and relevant information. These panels will be developed and installed occasionally on important Buddhist days on which the rituals and activities are established such as Maghapuja Day, Visakhapuja Day, Asalhapuja Day, the Royal Kathin Ceremony.

The content describes the history, significance, rituals, and cultural practices which are done by Buddhist on those important days to educate Buddhism and Thai cultural practices to visitors. Being temporary events, the exhibition panels will be presented on PVC vinyl in several shapes. They are two languages (Thai & English). The panels will function as indoor and outdoor exhibition. They are installed at the hall of the visitor center and surrounding areas of Phra Prang and Phra Viharn where the ritual will be established.

### **Publications**

Generally, the most popular publication tools which can be found on heritage sites are pamphlets and brochures. These interpretive products can give more details to visitors compared to sign and exhibition panels. Therefore, in this interpretive plan, a brochure is developed for distribution.

- Objectives:**
- To orientate the plan of Wat Arun, and its architecture to visitors.
  - To guide the attractive places which visitors should access.
  - To give a brief knowledge of important architecture on the site.

**Details:** The brochure is presented on an A4 sized sheet of paper folded into thirds to form a DL format. It is printed in multi-colour and provided in two-languages (Thai& English). The messages will comprise of a brief history, background, and significance of Wat Arun. Details of important architecture are included. Beautiful photographs of Wat Arun are shown to attract visitors. The brochure includes a site map to facilitate visitors to use this tool for a direction guideline. Visitors can get the brochure at the Visitor Center and ticket booth at no charge.

### **Personal Communication Tool**

A personal communication tool is more mobile and attractive to visitors than other devices because it is two-way communication. Communicator and receiver have feedback on each other. With this benefit, the communicator can answer questions from visitors instantaneously. Story telling which make the site memorable will be told by communicator. Moreover, the communicator can get feedback to know if the interpretation on-site is a success or not and improvement of interpretation will be done later. So, an onsite lecturer and walking tour will be provided in the interpretive program.

**Objectives:**

- To describe the significant information of Wat Arun to visitors.
- To explain the details, significance, and storytelling relevant of the architecture.
- To educate sustainable cultural tourism to visitors.
- To educate about Buddhism, cultural practices, and Thai tradition to Visitors.

**Details:** An onsite lecturer is provided for groups of visitors who would like to study the site in-depth. The lecturers are expert monks who have excellent knowledge relating to Wat Arun. Visitors must contact and reserve this interpretive program at the visitor center before visiting. The program takes approximately two and a half or three hours. The lecturer and visitors will walk and visit the attractive places following the traveling trail. The lecturers can explain in two languages (Thai and English). There is no charge for this program. The lecturer will describe the history and significance of the temple, and explain information such as background, significance and story of each attractive place. Moreover, sustainable cultural tourism,

Buddhism, and cultural practices are educated to the visitors. Visitors will get a clear knowledge of the site and essential information from this program. In addition, they can ask the lecturer questions and share experiences and opinion with each other and the lecturer. These points can lead to making a site memorable and develop understanding.

### **Visitor Center**

The visitor center has the highest profile in the interpretation sector and it can offer both display and exhibit-oriented items to visitors. Many communication tools in the interpretive program are accumulated here, i.e., computer kiosks, MP 3 rental, video presentation, lecturer, publications. The visitor center offers scope for several methods of interpretation to be used together or on different occasions to suit different requirements. Visitors can get enough site information from the visitor center. Moreover, good service from staff creates a good site impression resulting in visitors returning. Therefore, the visitor center must be included in all kinds of communication tools of the interpretive technique.

- Objectives:**
- To orientate fundamental information of Wat Arun to visitors for comfortable site access.
  - To give significant information relevant to Wat Arun and the architecture on the site.
  - To educate knowledge and useful information on Wat Arun for sustainable cultural tourism.
  - To educate Buddhism, rituals, and cultural practices to visitors.
  - To introduce the basic rules which visitors should and should not do on site.

**Details:** The visitor center is an essential and the first place which visitors should visit to find out significant information about Wat Arun. There are staff to give information to visitors all day. The visitor center opens daily between 8 .00 a.m.- 6.00 p.m.. Visitors can find the basic information of Wat Arun by asking the staff or searching the information from computer kiosk which is installed in the visitor center. For group tours, a video presentation is provided in the presentation room, visitors can get the useful information of Wat Arun from the content of video presentation. The

brochures are provided without charge at this place, visitors can get the brochures from here to use them for a self guided tour. In front of the visitor center, the main signs and exhibition panels are shown for creating more site understanding such as, the site's map panel, the suggested traveling routes map panel, the exhibition panel of the brief history and significance of Wat Arun.

In addition, the caution sign is installed to explain the rules which visitors should follow on site. In the essential festival of important Buddhist day, the temporary exhibition panels are installed in front of the visitor center to present the detail of those important Buddhist days occasionally. Visitors can find all the information about Wat Arun at the centre, with a warm welcome and good management of information presentation visitors will have a positive impression and return in the future.

### **On Site Activities**

On site activities are typically an amalgam of verbal and non verbal techniques. There are many types of activities applied for educational activities whilst those activities can entertain visitors and encourage visitors' satisfaction. On site activities are developed in the interpretive program will be named "Wat Arun Festival". The objectives and details of theme will be shown as follows;

**Objectives:** - To entertain visitors and festival participation.  
 - To create a memorable site in visitors' minds.  
 - To educate about the history of the temples in Thonburi era.  
 - To educate the knowledge of cultural practices and authentic Thai tradition to visitors.

**Details:** The Wat Arun Festival embraces many kinds of activities which visitors can participate in including entertainment and education programs. The festival will be established on the garden near waterfront once a year for two days at a weekend. There is no entrance fee for the festival. A historic theme park will be established on the Wat Arun festival. Staff or volunteers dress up in period costume to demonstrate and contrast individual characters, day-to-day behaviors and overall lifestyle. This event can gain first hand experience of past customs, engage in a traditional customs

and understand and appreciate old Thai traditions to visitors. Moreover, the activities during the festival make the experience entertaining for visitors.

There are many booths selling authentic Thai foods, desserts, and beverages and staff will demonstrate cooking of food and desserts. Theatrical Performance is one of the most creative and artistic forms of the festival. It can attract target audiences especially children. Thai traditional puppet shows will present Thonburi history, important issues in the Thonburi period, and the royal barge cruising to Wat Arun for royal merit on the Kathin ceremony etc.

Story telling will be narrated by a individual with substantial imagination and acting skill. Many involving stories of Wat Arun will be presented for increased education and creating a memorable experience of the temple to visitors.

The Knone Drama, Thai traditional drama performed by dancers wearing masks will be shown at night. The story of Knone is always that of the Ramayana and is told in verse. The shows can entertain visitors and introduce Thai traditional drama to non-Thai visitors. Visitors can look around and participate in the activities.

In summary, the seven interpretive techniques which are developed and applied to the interpretive program of Wat Arun cover the objectives of the plan. These techniques can convey the message to visitors in aspects of site's orientation, information explanation, entertainment and sustainable cultural tourism. . The techniques present interesting information, exciting experience and encourage a positive impression about Wat Arun effectively leading to sustainable cultural tourism on the site and visitors returning again and again.

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## **Chapter 10**

### **Conclusion**

Wat Arun Ratchawararam or the Temple of Dawn has a reputation as both an important religious place and a famous tourist destination in Bangkok. Wat Arun accumulates much significant architecture and provides cultural values to Thai social which have been transferred from the past, to the present and through the generations. For these reasons, the monastery has been made a cultural heritage site of Thailand. This status means that Wat Arun must conserve its tangible and intangible heritage. For cultural heritage conservation, interpretation plays an important role to inform and raise public awareness of its precious values as a cultural heritage place. The public needs to be educated how to contribute and protect the heritage in the site, and cultivate sustainable cultural tourism in the public's mind in case the cultural heritage site is also a tourist destination.

Therefore, this dissertation presents an in-depth study of Wat Arun to develop a sustainable cultural tourism interpretive plan for the monastery's application under the goal of the cultural heritage conservation of Wat Arun. There are many parts relevant to Wat Arun which are studied and analyzed in this research. Firstly, the context of history and background of Wat Arun and the site's physical characteristics have been gathered and reported to know the fundamental useful information. Secondly, the architecture and fabric have been surveyed and studied in aspects of history, concept, form and design and decorations. Thirdly, the history of architectural conservation and the architectural conservation policy have been learnt to analyze to safeguard the authenticity.

Fourthly, the research includes a study of essential cultural practices or rituals and their background which are established at Wat Arun. The cultural meanings which are hidden in the architecture are analyzed as well. Then the authenticity of the monastery have been assessed and reported. Furthermore, the threats and risk factors which can threaten the site's longevity have been explored and described for developing guidelines for a conservation policy in the future. The collected data has been integrated leading to an assessment of the statement of significance and the cultural significance of Wat Arun which has been explained in the contents of this research.

Next, the clear identification of interpretive themes and key messages of Wat Arun and its significant architecture have been expressed for being framework and essential messages which will deliver to visitors through the interpretation program.

Then, the current practices or the existing interpretations of Wat Arun have been surveyed and criticized comprehensively to search for strong and weak issues of their applications in every appearances such as objectives, media use, theme, concept, message, distribution of media etc. and evaluate their effectiveness in aspects of orientation, education and entertainment to visitors for sustainable cultural tourism purposes.

The results of the existing interpretation of Wat Arun listing the weak and strong points leads to seeking opportunities to restructure and develop the interpretation of Wat Arun. Seven opportunities (resources and research, cross cultural interpretation, orientation, story telling, sustainability, guide training, and evaluation and monitoring) can enhance the monastery interpretation effectiveness are discussed and proposed comprehensively based upon the ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites and the experts' ideas.

Lastly, the principle of interpretive plan for sustainable cultural tourism at Wat Arun have been developed and presented to elevate the application of interpretation efficiency.

The research exploits the qualitative research method for collecting data. The combination of the qualitative research methods have been applied such as a literature review, survey, behavior observation, and in-depth interviews. For the literature review, the source of information comes from books, journals, newspapers, archives, relevant researches and electronic media. The data of physical characteristics and



architecture of the site, the buffer zone, and the existing interpretation have been embraced by the survey method. Interviews of monks, local people and visitors contribute to the researchers' understanding of the conservation and interpretation plan and visitors' opinions toward Wat Arun.

From the study, there were found interesting and important issues which were summarized into many invaluable tangible and intangible heritages at Wat Arun. For the tangible heritages sixteen important and interesting architectures are established. However, the most important architecture at Wat Arun are Phra Prang and Phra Ubosoth respectively. Phra Prang attracts visitors with its reputation of being landmark of the city, and its aesthetics. Meanwhile, Phra Ubosoth's beautiful appearance and invaluable ornamentations, were less of an attraction to visitors because it is reserved for being a place for doing rituals and the place's orientation has low efficiency. Therefore, the number of visitors visiting Phra Ubosoth are small compared to the number of visitors visiting Phra Prang.

The architecture and fabric of Wat Arun present the cultural meanings implicitly and explicitly. The hidden meaning in the architecture and fabric of the monastery reflect historical evidence, political statements, personal and national identity, belief, and tradition.

Phra Prang the most magnificent architecture has several meanings by itself. The architectural design and space of Phra Prang conforms to the Hindu Buddhist cosmology concept. Every ornamentation and sculpture depicts the story of Tridhātu concept or the three realms. The concept of Phra Prang construction can be interpreted as the religious belief of Thai people in that Hinduism has influenced Thai beliefs and tradition for a long time. Whilst the implicit meaning revealed at the top of Phra Prang, the golden crown, this ornamentation expresses the historical and political evidence of King Rama III's period in that Prince Mongkut was chosen to be crown prince. This issue indicates the historical evidence and political statement of the King Rama III period. Many artifacts such as King Rama II statue and his royal seal on the gable of the entrance of Phra Prang and Phra Prang's fence symbolize the meaning that Wat Arun was the crown temple of King Rama II. This issue presents the cultural meaning in the aspect of personal identity while, people get the meaning of Phra Prang in the aspect of national identity.

In addition, adopting architectural traditions from neighbouring countries such as China in the past is manifested in the architecture and ornamentations such as the Chinese pavilion and Chinese ceramic decoration at Phra Prang, Phra Viharn, and other buildings. Therefore, tangible heritages at Wat Arun reveal various cultural meanings both implicitly and explicitly which demonstrate the beliefs and aspirations of Thai people.

Wat Arun provides many types of Thai tradition relating to Buddhism. Those traditions are regularly established on important Buddhist days (Maghapuja, Visakhapuja, Asalhapuja day, and Kathin festival) and attract Thai visitors to participate the rituals. The traditions have been conserved and have been established from the past to the present. The most attractive tradition is the Royal Kathin Ceremony at the monastery. Thai people and foreigners would like to admire the royal barges cruising along the Chao Phraya River to Wat Arun for presenting the royal Kathin robe in the festival. All of these traditions for making merit become the intangible heritage of Wat Arun.

For architectural conservation, the architecture and fabric of Wat Arun has been conserved continuously. Restoration work had been done in King Rama I, King Rama II, King Rama III, King Rama IV, King Rama V and King Rama IX period. It can be claimed that the tangible heritages here have a good conservation under the corporation between the abbot and monks who manage the monastery and Fine Arts Department which has an authority to approve the conservation plan and subsidize the budget of conservation.

Therefore, the authenticity of architectures has been safeguarded in aspect of form and design. The genuine rituals endowing by this sacred place regularly associate with Thai people resulted in the existence of the sense of place (a religious place). This research results prove the first research hypothesis is reliable in that the architecture and fabric conservation at Wat Arun have been managed in appropriate way for authentic existence.

Although, Wat Arun has a good conservation plan to protect the intactness of its heritage, the monastery encounters some threatening factors (natural disasters, tourism development, and development pressure) which can harm the architecture genuineness inevitably by accelerative architecture deteriorations. The Wat Arun

conservation plan must concentrate on these threat factors and prevent the architecture from these risks which will eventually cause an incomplete authenticity.

On the point of the cultural significance, every component of cultural value completely overwhelms at Wat Arun. The architecture and fabric on the site show aesthetic value and attract visitors who admire these gorgeous tangible heritages. Besides, the architecture and fabric can depict the historic vestiges of Thonburi and the beginning of Rattanakosin era. People can study Thai history especially in Thonburi period from the site because Wat Arun was the royal temple of Thonburi capital city and the monastery was located at the palace's precinct at that time. This point increases the historical value of the site. Furthermore, the creation and restoration of architecture and fabric at the site reflect the ability of scientific and technological exploitation of the ancient times. The reconstruction of Phra Prang from 2 meters to 67 meters height at the river bank in the past 150 years exemplifies the high ability of technology adaptation for the reconstruction. The protection process of architecture and fabric for avoiding natural disasters and other threatened factors by using new technology has been found at the site. This issue indicates that Wat Arun also has scientific value. Being a significant holy place, the monastery has enormous influence on the way of local people's life and Thai social. The traditions and rituals are continuously provided by this heritage site making the place a spiritual center of Thai social. The status of Phra Prang (the land mark of the city) arouses Wat Arun for being a national asset which has precious value to Thai people. Therefore, Wat Arun consists of social value, one component of cultural significance. After the analysis of the collected data on this point, it can be confirmed that the second research hypothesis is correct. The architecture, fabric, cultural practices, cultural landscape, and cultural meaning create the perfect cultural significance of Wat Arun.

From the survey and analysis of the existing interpretation; it can be found that the interpretation encounters various problems which give little benefit to visitors by its low efficiency. Existing interpretation both on site and off site encourage only the site's information to visitors without direction and explicit objectives. There is not any overriding theme or message. These problems derive from the interpretation plan of Wat Arun that has never been issued. Therefore, the interpretation is inconsistent and its effectiveness is low overall. Lacking an interpretation plan

altogether gives ambiguous and insufficient information of Wat Arun and a decrease in visitors' opportunity for appreciation and understanding the site especially the foreigner visitors who are traveling on their own. Behavior influencing of visitors for sustainable cultural tourism has appeared a little in the way of caution signs. There is not any presentation to explain why sustainable cultural tourism is important to the cultural heritage site and visitors should respect and behave on the site following the sustainable cultural tourism pattern. This situation directly effects the site in the way of how visitors behave properly while traveling on the site avoiding site deterioration.

Cross cultural translation of specific terms such as Thai traditional architecture is used in various translations as the same term. This mistake caused visitors' confusions. The wrong spellings in English are found in many signs and exhibition panels leading to visitors being discouraged to read them. Furthermore, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing interpretation on the site is also invisible.

The problem of low efficiency of the existing interpretation derives from three main reasons. The first reason is history and information of Wat Arun is ambiguous. Explicit information is difficult to find compared with the others sacred places in Rattanakosin area i.e., Wat Phra Kaew (Wat Phra Srirattanasardsadaram or The temple of the Emerald Buddha) and Wat Pho (Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimonmagkhalaram or The temple of the Reclining Buddha). It is also hard to find academic research involving architectural management and tourism. This reflects to less presentation of architecture's information.

The next reason is the conservation and management plan of Wat Arun is managed by the abbot and monks under the Fine Arts Department supervision. The conservation of architecture at the monastery is nearly perfect. It can be found the architecture has been restored steadily in an appropriate way. On contrary, the interpretation is ineffective because the abbot and monks are not experts in the field of interpretation and they give essential priority to architectural conservation and site's management more than interpretation. Besides, there is not an expert organization supervised the interpretation program at Wat Arun. The last reason is that there is little coordination between the parties involved in promotion and interpretation at the site.

Therefore, it can be summarized that the third and the fourth research hypothesis are not reliable. The existing interpretation at Wat Arun is not a major issue to create visitors understanding and appreciation of Wat Arun. Moreover, Wat Arun has an effective interpretation program for sustainable cultural tourism achievement is opposed from the research results.

To enhance Wat Arun's interpretation effectiveness, opportunities to restructure and develop the interpretation to visitors at Wat Arun are discussed. Seven opportunities are proposed based on the guidelines of the ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites and the various experts' ideas. The first opportunity to restructure and develop the interpretation of Wat Arun is research and resources. Information provided at the site is not consistent and little because the history of Wat Arun is difficult to find and the existing history is vague. In addition, some details of data in difference sources are in conflict with each other. Hence, focused research should be done to present reliable information and the history of Wat Arun.

The second opportunity is cross cultural interpretation. Wat Arun has a problem of cross cultural interpretation. The English translation in some presentations does not properly take into account the cross cultural translation. Buddhist and Thai terms are used presuming international tourist already understand those terms. Furthermore, the same term is written with various spellings in various presentations. These problems give confusing information to foreign visitors. Therefore, cross cultural interpretation problems at Wat Arun should be of great concern and eradicated immediately under cooperation between the involved parties which are Wat Arun, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and private sectors that produce the communication tools for Wat Arun presentations.

The third opportunity to develop Wat Arun's interpretation is orientation. The interpretation of Wat Arun cannot completely reach the aim of orientation. The most important interpretation for a sites orientation is the site's map which vanishes in almost all communication tools. To facilitate visitors who are visiting Wat Arun for the first time and traveling on their own, the site's map and two traveling trails are created for the site's orientation purpose. The site's map and suggested traveling trails

encourage visitors to gain more of the site's understanding, helping them to access the site easily and spend their time while traveling to the site effectively.

The fourth opportunity is story telling. Wat Arun is an important cultural heritage site which is full of tangible and intangible heritage. For the tangible heritage, there are cultural meanings which are hidden in each architecture and fabric. The cultural meanings involve Buddhism belief. Similarly, Buddhist activities of local community which become an intangible heritage provided on site have a lot of stories originated from Buddhism.

Furthermore, the monastery has a lot of storytelling related to the history of Thonburi and the beginning of the Rattanakosin period. All of these stories tell and provide an important source of information about the significance of the site. Under the framework of interpretive themes and key messages which are issued in chapter six, the proper story telling of the tangible and intangible heritage and history of Wat Arun should be transferred to visitors to enhance the site's information, activate visitor's site's appreciation and create a more cultural experience. Story telling therefore is a good tool for enhancing the interpretation effectiveness of Wat Arun.

A guide training course is proposed as the next opportunity to develop the sites interpretation. Guide tours and walks are common communication tools which are always found in traveling places including Wat Arun. From the study, some tour guides who brought tourist to Wat Arun gave faulty information of Wat Arun to tourists.

Moreover, it can be found that each tour guide gave the site's information in a different direction. They transferred the site's information without themes and key messages. Therefore, a guide training course should be provided to train the tour guide who will bring tourist to Wat Arun under the cooperation of Wat Arun, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). According to the guide training course, significant information in the same direction which follows the theme and key messages of the interpretation program are then transferred to visitors who use the tour guide services. Furthermore, tour guides who pass the training course can apply the knowledge relating to sustainable tourism in the training course to cultivate sustainable tourism to visitors resulted in protecting and conserving the monastery from tourism impact eventually.

It has been observed at Wat Arun that problems are caused by foreign visitors who do not understand Thai culture and local people who do not have any understanding of the need for or principles of sustainable cultural tourism. These problems lead to a negative impact to the temple directly. Therefore, sustainability is the next opportunity to enhance interpretation's effectiveness which can reduce a negative impact causing by unknown sustainable cultural tourism of visitors and local people. It can be found two main problems relevant to unknown sustainable cultural tourism of both foreign visitors and local people which harm to the site explicitly. The first problem is unsuitable attires of foreign visitors and another problem is disorderly presentation of local business. Wearing unsuitable attires of foreign visitors who visiting Wat Arun can be solved by adding content of Thai culture, the Buddhism way and rules for visitors while traveling temple in various communication tools such as website, brochure, signage and personal communication tool (tour guides). These information can enlighten foreign visitors in that how to behave while traveling at the temple so, the number of visitors who wearing improper dress at Wat Arun will be decreased.

Presentation of local business such as the non permanent signs of a local business travel agency causes the area disorderly and disturbs the environment. Moreover, presentation technique of the business by using sound amplifier results in noise pollution at the site. These appearances conflict with sustainable cultural tourism severely. Enhancing sustainable cultural tourism knowledge to local people under the co-operation of Wat Arun, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and the local community is recommended to eradicate chaotic and uncontrollable presentation of the local people's business on the site.

The last opportunity is evaluation and monitoring. It is necessary to know the effect or feedback from visitors toward Wat Arun. Effect or feedback from visitors must be carefully considered for being key indicators to know how effective the monastery interpretation program is. Evaluation and monitoring are essential tools to embrace the data. In addition, aspects of visitors' attitude and behavior towards the site should be collected by evaluation and monitoring. The site's manager can analyze the data from evaluation and monitoring to improve the interpretation program and avoid negative feedback from visitors which can do harm to the site. The process of

evaluation and monitoring in these topics should be done regularly. Observations, interviews and questionnaires are the recommended approach to gain the specific information.

From collected data, the researcher expresses the interpretive themes and key messages of Wat Arun and its architecture for being a framework and fundamental message which will be told to visitors through an interpretation program of Wat Arun. A spiritual center is an interpretive theme of Wat Arun. The other twelve themes of significant architecture at the site are clearly designated and exhaustive details are explained as well as elaborate on those themes. Under the theme “Spiritual center” the four significances of Wat Arun are explained to confirm why the monastery is suitable as a spiritual center.

This interpretive themes and key messages can help visitors get important and accurate information of Wat Arun with the same directions. Visitors will be aware of the existence and importance of the monastery and the cultural properties of the site.

Therefore, the interpretive themes and key messages can be an incentive to visitors to have a desire to conserve Wat Arun for being a spiritual center of national eternally.

There are four significances of Wat Arun under the theme ‘spiritual center’.

Firstly, Wat Arun is the chief monastery of Thonburi period. Secondly, it is the crown monastery of King Rama II. Thirdly, Phra Prang, the land mark of the city, is located here. Lastly, Wat Arun is the only monastery in Thailand at present which the monarchs use during the Royal Barge Procession for presenting the royal Kathin robes on special occasions.

The last chapter the researcher proposes the principle of an interpretation plan for sustainable cultural tourism at Wat Arun to solve the low effectiveness of the existing interpretation. The main goal of this plan is orientation, education and entertainment. Wat Arun orientation is a goal to introduce the site in the context of map’s site, architecture, fabric, activities and facilities to visitors. Besides, the orientation also means to introduce the monastery to the public and persuade them to visit the site.

The plan will present the interpretation in the function of education to create a comprehensive understanding of the history and significance of the site, and tangible and intangible heritage to visitors. This purpose will encourage appreciation of the



site in visitors' minds and realize the site value. Furthermore, the knowledge of sustainable cultural tourism will be inserted in the interpretation. While the interpretation can entertain visitors, create an impressive experience for visitors, and make visiting repetition eventually. To attain those goals, the theme and message are developed and applied for presentation in the selected medium. The appropriate medium will convey the message and cover target visitors with high efficiency.

An valuable area for further research would be a detailed investigation of visitors' attitudes toward Wat Arun as a cultural heritage site and as a tourist destination.

Ongoing research of interpretation effectiveness, or evaluation of the effectiveness of the interpretation, should be done often. The site's manager could evaluate the findings of these two studies and take appropriate steps to improve the efficiency of the implementation of the interpretation plan or, if necessary, change it and its application. Remember that what worked in planning yesterday may not work today. Therefore, the site's manager always needs to keep learning how to do it better and implement things he or she learnt from the interpretation plan. The research would help the site's manager in this matter.

One example of how interpretation might be improved in line with new technological developments and the rapidly growing use of personal communication devices, would be to introduce interpretation by digital means. Digital technology is changing rapidly at present and its influence on people is spreading widely. The rapid growth of MP 3 players, and related technological platforms, and the advent of Web 2.0, which can be called new media or digital technology media, will directly effect the growing tourism industry. Staiff (2010) proposed that the arrival of new media has both advantages and disadvantages. The new media may replace some contemporary media such as signage, brochures, and guide-books in the future because compared to those media; the Web/MP3 player combination is extremely economical and highly individual. Visitors can already search information about the interesting cultural heritage sites from Google or Wikipedia through digital communication tools such as iPod and iPhone.

The combination of personal communication capabilities and advanced digital technology can allow visitors to be active and passive receivers instantaneously.

Visitors can access unauthorized media or websites and find information about the place. Meanwhile, they also can post their thoughts or impressions about those places on websites. Staiff elaborated on this phenomenon — that Web 2.0 users are famously described as ‘producers and consumers’ — that they generate their own content through discussion boards, blogs and social networking sites like Face Book, My Space, You Tube and Wikipedia (Staiff 2010). Although, these websites are unauthorized and some information is unbelievable, visitors are fond of searching the data because it is very fast and convenient.

The negative aspects of the digital technology media are intensely debated. One item of debate concerns the future role and guides. Could local guides become redundant in the future or not? How will it be possible to control content on unauthorized websites? These issues require deep consideration. The revolution in digital technology and its likely effect on cultural heritage places, will simply make this engaged and embodied process much more obvious and the need to understand it, an imperative (Staiff 2010). The old ideas about heritage interpretation can no longer be sustained because of the revolution of digital technology. Therefore, in the future, research should be made into the new media and unauthorized media to understand its impact and the changing behavior of the users, and its relationship to the interpretation of cultural heritage sites.

In conclusion, the interpretation of Wat Arun is still ineffective, if the relevant parties such as the abbot and monks who manage the monastery, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will not concentrate on this issue and are not aware that interpretation is a major tool to contribute to architectural conservation at cultural heritage sites, the relevant parties will not find a solution to raise the quality of the interpretation. Similarly, the results of the research and the proposal of the principle interpretation plan will be futile, if the distribution of the research is restricted only to a narrow realm. Therefore, the researcher hopes that after reading this research, the reader will realize the value of Wat Arun and the other cultural heritage sites and become a mouthpiece to support and protect the precious place and the other valuable cultural heritage places of the world. Lastly, the researcher would like to say thank you and deeply appreciates the reader who scarifies their precious time to read this dissertation and wish all readers

will visit and access Wat Arun Ratchawararam or the Temple of Dawn to admire its cultural significance and behave in the monastery following a sustainable cultural tourism way.

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มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร สงวนลิขสิทธิ์

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## Appendix

### Glossary

**Stupa:** Stupa (stūpa in Sanskrit, thūpa in Pāli) is an architecture which is built for containing holy thing such as Lord Buddha's relics, Buddhist saint's relics. Buddhist creates stupa in a purpose for recalling and reminding faith, cheerfulness and good deeds.

**Chedi:** Chedi means a place or material which should be respect. Chedi in Buddhism has four types. Firstly, Tart Chedi contains Lord Buddha's relics. Secondly, Boripok Chedi is object or place which Lord Buddha had ever used. Boripok Chedi also means four pilgrimage places relating to Lord Buddha which are, Lumbini (the place of birth), Bodh Gaya (the place of his enlightenment), Isipathana of Sarnath (the place where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon), Kusinara (the place where Lord Buddha passed away), Thirdly, Dharma Chedi contains Buddhism doctrine. Lastly, Utasik Chedi means an object or place which is created and devoted for Lord Buddha such as Buddha image, Chedi.

Chedi has many types such as Monk's alms-blow shape or Lunkka shape, Bell shape which is evolved from Lunkka shape, Prism shape, Prang shape which is derived from Siva lingam.

**Prang: Prang** is an architecture which has tall finger-like spire shape, usually richly carved. On its pinnacle is a Trishul, the "weapon of Indra". This was a common feature of Khmer religious architecture and was later adopted by Thai builders, typically in the Ayutthaya (1350–1767) and Bangkok periods. In Thailand it appears only with the most important religious buildings such as Prang of Wat Mahathat in Phitsanulok, Phra Prang Wat Arun.

**Pagoda: Pagoda** is a term by which Europeans designate religious temples and tower-like buildings of the Hindoos and Buddhists of India, Farther India, China, and Japan, usually but not always, devoted to idol worship (Webster 1913).

**The royal temple's ranking:** There are three categories of the royal temple in Thailand which are the first class royal temple, the second royal class temple and the third class royal temple. All of these royal temples have specific name to indicate the level of class.

The first class royal temple means a significant temple which has a Chedi and this Chedi contains the monk's relics. The first class royal temple is divided into three levels which are Ratchaworamahaviharn, Ratchaworaviharn and Woramahaviharn respectively.

The second class royal temple is a temple which has a significant Chedi and it is divided into four levels which are Ratchaworamahaviharn, Ratchaworaviharn Woramahaviharn and Woraviharn.

The third class royal temple is a temple which is located in upcountry. This class has three levels which are Ratchaworaviharn, Woraviharn and ordinary temple (this last level is called only the name of the temple without the name of ranking).

For the meaning of these temples's ranking, Ratchaworaviharn means the temple which King, Queen or Crown Prince built and restored personally.

Woraviharn means the temple which King, Queen or Crown Prince built and restored for being honour of someone. It also includes the temple which was built and restored by people and the monarch accepted it for being the royal temple. Ratchaworamahaviharn and Woramahaviharn mean the large size of the royal temple or the temple which has an immense architecture.

### Guideline of Questionnaire for tourist

1. Which of the following groups would you place yourself in?

- local resident
- Tourist on independent holiday
- Tourist on inclusive/package tour
- Visiting friends/relatives
- Business
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the main characteristics of Wat Arun that made you decide to visit?

- Accessibility
- Historical interest
- Peace and quiet
- Entertainment & recreation
- Scenery and countryside
- Particular activities
- Just passing through
- Specific attractions
- other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which of the following, if any, influenced your decision to visit Wat Arun?

- a previous visit
- advice from friends/relatives
- advice from a Tourist Information Center
- Brochure
- Tourist guidebooks
- Newspaper/magazine \_\_\_\_\_
- Radio programme \_\_\_\_\_
- TV programme \_\_\_\_\_
- Website \_\_\_\_\_

4. On-site communication tool can enhance site's information to you or not?  
Why?
5. If on-site communication tool cannot provide the site's information to you, do you have any recommendation for the communication tool improvement?
6. What would you say was the most enjoyable part of your visit to\_\_\_\_\_?  
Why\_\_\_\_\_?
7. And what have you enjoyed least\_\_\_\_\_?
8. Do you know the meaning of Phra Prang and its reputation?
9. Would you recommend Wat Arun to someone else?
10. How likely are you to come back to Wat Arun in the future?

#### **Guideline of Questionnaire for monk**

1. Would you please tell me a brief history of Wat Arun?
2. Where is the most significant place in the temple and why?
3. Comparing among Phra Prang and Phra Ubosoth, which one is the most important and why?
4. Who has a responsibility to manage the temple in aspect of management, conservation and interpretation?
5. Please explain the process of the temple's conservation.
6. For interpretation of Wat Arun, there are any parties involving this issue or not? If yes, who are they and how they involve to interpretation?
7. Why the temple gives essential priority to the temple's conservation more than interpretation? How the temple will resolve this problem?
8. How many Buddhist activities does the temple regularly provide? What are those activities?
9. Which one is the most important activity and why?
10. The temple charges the entrance fee of Phra Prang from foreign visitors, the temple using these fees in what purpose?
11. The temple provides free guide tour to visitors or not? How?
12. How many visitors use free guide tour service in each month?



## **Autobiography**

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