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Creation of Thai Art Based on the Buddhist Belief in the Threefold Spheres of Existence.

การสร้างสรรคไทยจากคติความเชื่อเรื่องไตรภูมิและจักรวาลวิทยาในพุทธศาสนา

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยสร้างสรรค์เรื่อง “การสร้างสรรคไทยจากคติความเชื่อเรื่องไตรภูมิและจักรวาลวิทยาในพุทธศาสนา” เป็นงานวิจัยที่ต้องการอนุรักษ์ สืบทอดแนวคิดเรื่องไตรภูมิและจักรวาลวิทยาในพุทธศาสนาเป็นสำคัญ โดยถ่ายทอดเป็นผลงานศิลปะร่วมสมัยด้วยกรรมวิธีการสร้างสรรค์จากงานศิลปะพื้นถิ่นที่เกิดจากภูมิปัญญาของล้านนามาตั้งเคราะหให้เกิดรูปทรงใหม่ ซึ่งสามารถแสดงออกถึงความเลื่อมใสศรัทธาต่อพระพุทธศาสนา ในแง่ความเชื่อและมรรควิธีที่ปรากฏอยู่ในพุทธธรรม ด้วยรูปทรงที่แสดงระบบความคิดและความเชื่อเรื่องไตรภูมิ อันเป็นสัญลักษณ์ของขั้นตอนในการพัฒนาระดับสภาวะจิตของมนุษย์

Abstract

This creative research titled “Creation of Thai Arts based on Buddhist Belief in the Threefold Spheres of Existence” is a research that strives for conservation and continuation of the concept of the Threefold Spheres of Existence in Buddhism, conveyed into contemporary works of Art using the creative working methods from local Lanna Artists. This is synthesized into new forms that express the faith in Buddhism in terms of belief and a working procedure that appears in the Buddhist Teachings. These forms express the way of thinking and belief in the Threefold Spheres of Existence, which is symbolic for the different stages of human mental and spiritual development.

Introduction

In the past, the beliefs about Triphumi (Threefold Spheres) and knowledge about Buddhist Cosmology are considered to be the crucial fundaments that define cultural forms, traditions and other Thai art crafts. Religious places and architectural models such as stupas, pagodas, palaces and other architectural compositions are all outstanding examples. It is noticeable as well in the areas of wall painting, picture albums, hanging Buddha images, Buddha’s footprints and gilded black lacquer paintings on the Tripitaka cabinet. All mentioned categories of art present the symbol of the world according to the beliefs about

Triphumi and knowledge about Buddhist Cosmology in various forms. Especially, this underlined concept is very outstanding in the art of Lanna culture since in the past Lanna was the centre of all developments: politics, economy, community including art and culture. Many archeological evidence and diverse art prove that they reflect the uniqueness of continual art and culture developing at the same time as Sukhothai, Ayudhaya and Rattanakosin. Up until now, though, the social condition and lifestyle of Thai people are changed from the past, but the beliefs about Triphumi and Buddhist Cosmology are still regarded as crucial artists’ motivations in creating

contemporary art.

Thai contemporary art has been influenced by western concept since the time of King Rama 5th and the transformation from the world of custom and tradition into new modern world which based on scientific thoughts and visions including informative age and globalization. In such an environmental condition, artists' art creations gain more freedom to express and emphasize or even seek for individual uniqueness. These affect art productions which become diverse and different; however, they still maintain traditional and custom scents and forms. Some are developed into Thai contemporary art which become mainstream art at present such as multi techniques painting (the mixture between oil color and sand) present 108 auspicious signs in the work named "Buddha's Footprint" by Pichai Nirund, Triphumi painting in the Universe Series which is composed of animals presenting the world within triangle boundary of Thawhan Dutchanee. This work is very unique in placing human form together with mythical animal form, emphasizing the composed form and 2 - dimensional space. The work is generated with gilded techniques, drawing lines according to Thai tradition. The painting of wall's backside created with Acrylic techniques and Airbrush behind the principle Buddha image in the Ubosot of Phuddhapratheep temple in England by Chalermchai Kositpiphat represents Triphumi concept.

Punya Wijnthanasarn created a huge indoor painting named Universal Territory, which presents Universal diagram according to Triphumi beliefs. The series of paintings called Himmaphan Forest according to the Royal Command of Her Majesty the Queen by Preecha Thaothong exhibit the story of Himmaphan. Apichai Piromrak and Metha Kongsonthi work with tabular structures and 108 auspicious signs on the Buddha's footprint along with the creating abstract painting

under Buddhist philosophical concept about the transformation of samsara. Though those art works try to present form and content according to Thai beliefs with new techniques and methods, their objectives and results are quite contrastive to the previous works. This is because the fact that lifestyle and Thai culture have been changed.

The creative research structure consists of 2 parts. The first one will research from documents and Thai traditional art in Lanna boundary. This includes the survey and collected data of the present artist's artworks which represent Triphumi beliefs and cosmology. The second part is the creation of contemporary Thai arts by gaining wisdom and knowledge from primary analysis used for artist's motivations. Regarding this, they reveal the faith towards Buddhism in both beliefs and Buddhist practice introduced in Dharma. The creation of work is presented through the form reflecting thought system and Triphumi beliefs which are symbols of human's mind development.

Methodology

1. Collecting and researching both primary and secondary documents about Triphumi and Buddhist cosmology in Lanna Culture.
2. Collecting data of traditional and custom art of Lanna and other contemporary works which present idea of Triphumi and cosmology. They will be used as fundamental data to create individual art objects.
3. Creating and designing art objects based on the information from 1 and 2 above. The data and knowledge collected from the research will set the concepts and forms of the works. This also includes the sketched design which will be developed to the created work presenting thought system and individual beliefs about Triphumi.
4. Concluding and writing a report .

Research Findings

Principles of Belief on Triphumi and Buddhist Cosmology

The principles of belief on Triphumi are important foundation of the structures of society and Thai cultures. This is also true in other Buddhist countries in the eastern hemisphere. This is because the gist of Triphumi helps to foster the belief in doing good deeds, staying away from sins, trusting in reciprocal deeds, receiving fruits of good deeds and revering from fruits of bad deeds composed of happiness along with being free from happiness and sadness.

Literature of Triphumi and Cosmology '*Triphumi and Cosmology*' is a Buddhist literature of Therawaat sect and is popular among Southeast Asian countries of the same sect such as Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia. Having appeared in the history of Buddhist literature since 19th Buddhist era, these book are about the principals of the world and universe within Lanna cultures. These 3 book were written by buddhist philosophers. They are as follow

1. *Chakkawaltheephanee* (Life and Universe) It is about the universe and all the living beings are present within it, and composed by Sirimungklajaan, a Lanna Buddhist monk (2020 – 2100 Buddhist Era). He resided at Suan Kwan Temple (Palace Temple at present) outside of the city wall of Chiang Mai in the year of great snake in 882 Thai minor era (2063 Buddhist Era).

2. *Lokabanyati* (Worldly Regulations) This book was composed by Sathumkosatera monk. It is not known whether his background was from Burma or Sri Lanka. The year written is not known, but it is believed to be around during 19th Buddhist era. The original manuscript kept by National Library in Bangkok is a copy of Burmese characters in Pali transcribed on a palm leaf. The year written is unknown. The content is about the regulation of the changing of the world.

3. *Lokasanthashotarakhuntee* (Shape and Light of the World) The scripture states that a monk named Mahapunnachantatera wrote it in

2290 Buddhist Era at Nong Wa Temple, Petburi City during the period of His Majesty Bharomekote. It is assumed that Sirimungklajaan, a Lanna Buddhist monk, composed it in 2063 of Buddhist Era. The gist talks about the beginning and crumbling of the world.

Meanings and Components of Triphumi

The term 'Triphumi means "Three Worlds" composed of all sorts of the status of all living creatures. They are: 1) Kamaphumi: Sensual Plane, 2) Rupaphumi: World of Monks, and 3) Arupaphumi: Formless Sphere. Whichever status one is in has to depend on one's good and bad deeds. All living beings herein circulate endlessly within Triphumi; it is called samsara or 'Cycle of Birth and Death'. The content of the Triphumi is distributed into 3 main lands. It is mainly called Lokiyaphumi: the worldly sphere. It is then divided into other 31 minor regions.

1. Kamaphumi 11: Sensual Plane is the place where the lowest status of life lives. This sphere is related to sensuality, lust, greed, and anger. People still have greed, anger, and lust. The land consists of Apaya⁴ (states of loss and woe) and Kamasugati bhumi⁷ (Sensuous Blissful Planes).

2. Rupaphumi 16: Rupaphumi is where the medium status of life live. This is the land filled with happiness, without lust, and practicing monkshood. Rupajhana is dharma practicing of monks, laymen, and gods by contemplating on the 4 levels of minds. People who have performed the precepts will be born in the land called Brahma – loka: the Brahma world. Rupaphumi is composed of 16 minor regions and is often called as Rupa – brahma 16.

3. Arupaphumi 4: Land of intangibles is where the highest status of life . It is the life that has made merits all their lives. Arupa – jhana (Formless Meditation) means good deeds practicing of monks, laymen, and gods by only contemplating on Arupa – dharma (Abstract

things). The ones that only practice the dharma will be born intangible. Arupaphumi is the land composed of 4 minor regions and often called “4 levels of intangible Brahma”. Aside from circulating endlessly within Triphumi composing of 31 regions, there is a way to be free from samsara for Buddhism which is the way to Lokuttaraphumi or ‘Land of Nirvana’. The place where is free from lust, sin and samsara. All living creatures practicing the virtues can eventually and completely achieve the Buddha’s enlightenment. Finally, they will Achieve the Buddha status, Paccekabuddha (Individually Enlightened One or private Buddha) and Arahant. This is composed of 2 parts: they are 1) Ariya – puggala (noble individuals) and 2) ‘Land of Nirvana’.

Buddhist Cosmology

The forms of all universes are all the same. Each universe is composed of 2 crucial parts, land and water. The clear space is the sky. The areas of Land and water are in the half-cut lemon form set upright in the space ocean. Beneath the space ocean, there is great blowing wind supporting ocean water. Every universe is located in this spatial ocean with continuous endlessly arranged order. The appearance of the universe’s surface is in the flat circle plane. Mount Meru is located in the centre of this flat shape. There is also another mountain named Mount Sundhaboriphan (ring shaped mountain encircle repeatedly 7 times). Between each ring shaped mountain, Seetundhon is placed in between. The highest mountain is Mount Meru. The ring shaped mountains are placed in a row from the highest to the lowest from the inner circle to the outer circle. The ending boundary of the circle is the expansive ocean reaching the universe’s mountain wall or universe’s boundary. Within the ocean’s boundary, there are stationed plane in 4 directions.

Mount Meru is the highest mountain in the universe with 84,000 Yode of its height. It is located

in the center of the universe surrounded by the great expansive ocean named Mahanateeseetundhon. The lowest part of the sea reaches the end of the universe and the highest part reaches the heaven where Indra dwells. The upper part of the sea, there is another higher level of heaven. Mount Sundhaboriphan is the ring shaped mountain 7 layer piled in sets surrounding Mount Meru. Nateeseetundhon is placed in between. In the painting, the artist will draw lined pattern as fruit cut shape that is why the painting is seen in bar shapes. 7 bars are beside Mount Meru’s side. All 7 mountains have diverse names: Mount Yukhonthorn, Mount Iisinthorn, Mount Korawig, Moun Sutassana, Mount Naminathorn, Mount Winantaka, and Mount Ussakana. The space between the 7 mountains from Mount Meru to the universe’s mountain wall is surrounded by Nateeseetundhon. Human beings will live on the great land composed of 4 planes. Their names and forms are as follows: the eastern plane called Boorapaviteh, the western plane called Amorradohyarn, the northern plane called Utarakuroot and the southern plane called Chompoo Plane. Beneath the universe, there is a huge fish named Anon supporting the universe. Beneath the giant fish, there is 84,000 Yode air space. Under the air space is a vacuumed space. In the sky, the Sun’s god is sitting on the cart yoked by the Singh and the Moon’s god is sitting on the cart yoked by the white horse. They move clockwise around Mount Meru. There are also an angel palace and a Brahma palace located in the air piled on one another chronologically. The top of Mount Meru is Dowdung with the dwelling Indra the greatest God. The boundary of Mount Meru reaches the end of the universal boundary where the heaven named Jatumaharachika, the bottom of Mount Meru is Bombacaceous forest where there is the dwelling place of garuda. The base of Mount Meru is supported by three pole rocks where these is an evil city. The deeper ground is where naga lives.

The hell is divided into 8 abysses of hells. They are 84,000 Yode under Chompoo Plane. This place is full of sufferings. The biggest pit is called Mahanarok which is divided into 8 pits. The scorching hell is underground but the freezing hell named Naroklogundha is located between the spaces near the universe. The hell creatures try to flee from the sea acid below. They climb and creep against the wall of the universe, suffering from cold and starvation.

Chompoo plane, the dwelling place of human beings, is divided into 2 parts; the northern part is Himmaphan Forest. Within Himmaphan's boundary, there are 5 mountains which are Sudhassaonkut, Cittrakut, Kalakut, Gantamatanakut, Krailas Mountain. All 5 mountains surround Anodard pond where there is no drought. Water in Anodard pond will flow three times clockwise. It is also the original water source of all rivers in Chompoo plane.

Anodard pond will drain water in 4 directions. The eastern estuary is represented by the lion's mouth, flowing to the land full of lions and draining out in the eastern side of the ocean. The northern estuary is represented in the Horse's mouth shape, flowing to the land full of horses and draining out to the northern side of the ocean. The southern estuary is represented through the cow's mouth shape, where there is the land of human beings. The western estuary is represented through the elephant's mouth, and it drains to the western side of the ocean flowing to the land of elephants.

Anodard pond has 4 watersides. The first one is the bathing area of the enlightened monks who are gathering for meditation around Gantamatanakut. Elephants from Chattathan Family is responsible for taking care of these enlightened monks. The second waterside is the bathing place for God. The third one is for Goddess and the last one is for hermits, ascetic and angle musicians.

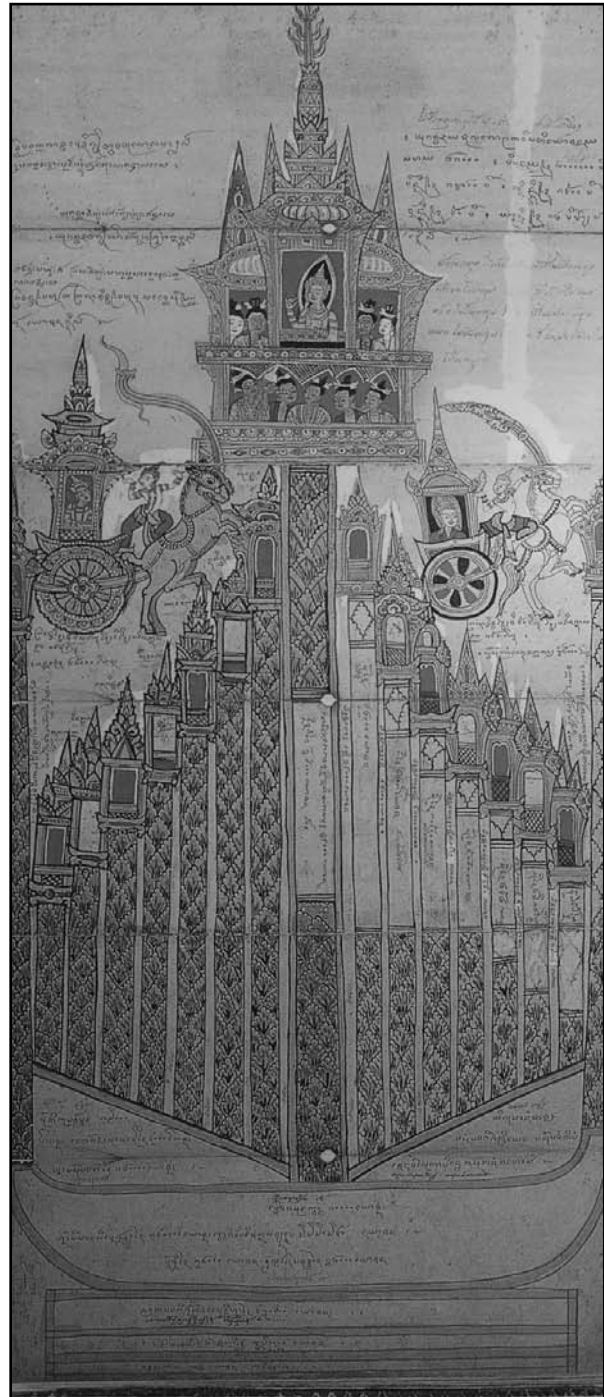


Figure 1 The painting of Mount Meru in Lanna Triphumi Album

The influence of Triphumi on Traditional Lanna Art

Triphumi becomes the original underlined concept and motivation of poets and artists. It is used for composing books, painting, sculpture making, and for other figures of speech. The one who lacks profound understanding about Triphumi will hardly understand those creations. The art creations in Thai Culture are based on beliefs and motivations from Triphumi's architectures, paintings, sculptures, handicrafts and other local crafts. Each work is in different form and format, especially diverse production process.

1. Architecture: Cosmological beliefs in



Figure 2 Phra Tat Lampang Luang temple in Lampang

designing Lanna architecture become the fundamental thoughts for other issues such as city planning, temple planning, direction setting, Viharn map, Stupa or Buddha's relic pagodas.

2. Painting: Thai Traditional painting presents the concepts of Triphumi and cosmology in Lanna culture. This includes other procedures in representation such as written Lanna Alphabet presented in Triphumi Album. In Lampang, there are powder color paintings on the wooden roof support (Mai Kor Song) in Viharn Namtam Phratat Lampang Luang temple, Local wall painting in Viharn of Bankhor temple, Wang Nua, Lampang Province. There are also wall paintings in Muang, Chiang Mai such as in the inside of Viharn Buak Krok Luang temple in Sankampang, the inside of Viharn Thakam temple in Maetang, Chiang Mai Province. This includes Viharn of Padad temple in Maejam District, wall painting in Viharn Ubosot Phumintara temple in Nan Province and gilded black lacquer on the Dharma cabinet.



Figure 3 Mural Painting at Wat Tha Kham, Chiang Mai



Figure 4 Mural Painting at Wat Padad, Chiang Mai

3. Sculpture: there are sculptures of the Buddha's images, Bodhisattva images, totems, graven images, sculptural ornaments for decorating buildings, palace arches, ancient Thai coin palaces, gable apexes, ornamented ridges, naga stairs, wooden roof supports and other architectural ornamented decorations.

4. Elaborated art could be seen in Lanna Castles for northern monk's funeral ceremonies



Figure 5 Lanna monk's funeral ceremony (Poi-Lor Ceremony)



Figure 6 Sandy pagodas at Wat Pan toa, Chiang Mai

(Poi - Lor Ceremonies), pulpits, candlesticks, the arch ornaments in Narayana on garuda designs and pearl ornamented on wooden Buddha's footprints in Phrasing Woraviharn temple, Muang, Chinag Mai.

5. Local Lanna Art: Buddhism beliefs are regarded as main crucial principles of culture and tradition in Lanna. This has been closely blended with Brahman's beliefs and traditional beliefs related with black magic, along with consideration



Figure 7 Wat Padad, Chiang Mai



Figure 8 the Buddha's footprint form, Wat Phra Singh, Chiang Mai

on other Buddhist issues from the beliefs of samsara, sacred beings, hells, heavens, giants and 12th month rituals of Lanna. They are related to Triphumi beliefs such as the worship of 4 great gods, the worship of the milesto, the offering of alms bowl, monk's funeral ceremony (Poi - Lor Ceremony), the building of sandy pagodas, and Loy Kratong Festival.

Contemporary Art Representing Triphumi and Buddhist Cosmology

The development from modern art to contemporary art has been influenced by western culture since the Thrown of King Rama 4th. This development has continued from the traditional society to the modern one. The new way of education has planted thoughts and scientific visions which manage and control materialistic life and culture.

This has extremely and quickly affected the art world. From 19th century to the present is the period of information and globalization along with the movement and transformation in the world of art. Avant guard artists intend to refuse principles generated in the Modern Era. They seek for new and various art creation in form, concept, techniques and other alternative media which is called Postmodern art. In postmodernism, the artist can express more freedom and emphasize or even seek for the individuality. As a result, diverse styles of art creation are generated at the same time that Thai traditional art is developed to be Thai contemporary art, which is an alternative way of expression in contemporary art.

The follows are all examples;

- The contemporary art of Professor Shalood Nimsamer presents Nirvana land through multi - technique paintings on special surface paper. The composition present a balance between Pagoda forms and tree forms. The work presents the simplicity according to Thai ideology. The color tone is single color emphasizing the form

by drawing black line with hard and light stress on the white backdrop. This represents the calm mind which is free from lust.

- Pichai Nirund applied oil color technique on his work with gold foil and sand on the canvas sized 50*190 Centimeters. The work is motivated by the Buddha's footprint form which is usually found in Thai traditional art. This is adapted to be the contemporary painting. The work is composed of the Buddha's footprint set upright at the centre, representing the balance. The structure of color is composed of gold (from gold foil) red and black. The detail of 108 auspicious signs is found in the tabular structure applying oil color painting blended with the delicate sand.

- The painting named Triphumi by Thawhan Dutchanee applied oil color and gilded techniques on the canvas. This work is one of the creations in the Universe Series which contains many pieces. The artist designs composition with the high triangular form. The centre of the form presents a human being's body that clearly shows muscles. However, the head of the human being is in bird shape surrounded by various forms of Himmaphan creatures according to artist's imagination. The way the artist work with form and 2 - dimensional space emphasizing other form by gilded black lacquer techniques with the outer lined pattern is the important created process in Thai traditional painting.

- Preecha Thaonthong generated his work with the series of Himmaphan Forest according to the Royal Command of Her Majesty the Queen. His 2 works present Himmaphan which is part of Triphumi beliefs. This work becomes the model for crafts and embroidery made by craftsmen from Bang Sai Arts and Crafts Centre of H.M. Queen Sirikit of Thailand. The composition of this work divides the area into 2 parts. The upper part presents the universe diagram, setting Mount Meru as the centre and having the Sundhaboriphan on

the two opposite sites. The lower space presents the story of Himmaphan Forest, the centre of the forest is Anodard pond with the 4 directed streams. The representation is in the same form and method of Thai traditional painting.

- Chalermchai Kositpipat created a wall painting at Phudhapratheep temple by presenting the Triphumi beliefs and cosmology and following Thai traditional arts. However, the development of new and modern techniques is very outstanding such as the painting with Acrylic and Airbrush techniques. This brings in the connection of colors in the different way from the traditional one that used powder color on the soft - prepared chalk surface. The artist also inserted his own imagination and put his experience into the work.

- Phanya Wijinthanasarn painted with Acrylic technique on the huge blended plane sized 3.20*8.00 Meters. This work presents Triphumi and cosmology as well. The artist arranged the composition in horizontal line. He also applied acrylic technique and gilded technique with drawing line in this painting. The fresh colors were painted on the form's surface according to Thai traditional way. This is one technique of Thai contemporary art. Besides, the expedition of the soul, Acrylic painted on the canvas in the size of 3.20*8.00 Meters, presents Triphumi and cosmology which is created in accordance with the different period of time.

- Apichai Phiromphak and Metha Kongsonthi used a tabular structure and 108 auspicious signs on the Buddha's footprint to create abstract painting presenting Buddhist philosophical cycle of samsara with multi abstract techniques. There are many new generation artists pay attention to and create works in conservative concepts and form with techniques of Thai traditional crafts. This deems that the concern about conservation and the maintenance of Thai craftsmen wisdom still exist and have never been forgotten in accordance with the flowing time as

it is observable in gilded black lacquer techniques of Chanthana Jantim's contemporary painting and the contemporary work of Prasart Searee named Boi Ban Klang Triphumi (The lotus in the middle of Triphumi).

Though, those works try to present form and Thai content with new techniques but the objectives and the work success are completely transformed from the work in the past according to the changed thoughts and beliefs that unavoidably define and control lifestyle and present Thai Culture.

The Creation of Thai Contemporary Art

Concept This presents the faith towards Buddhism in both beliefs and Buddhist practice which are parts of Buddha's teaching through the forms presenting thought system and Triphumi beliefs which are signs in developing human mind's process.

The Composition of Creation

Human beings create art for expressing emotion, feeling, thoughts or even beauty. It is obvious that art is composed of 2 parts; the first part is created by human beings. They are all visible objects or can be perceived by senses; another expression is the result of concrete structure called form or abstract composition which is later understood as content or abstract composition.

Form

The creations are derived from the research and wisdom explanation that appeared in traditional Thai art in Lanna Boundary.

1. The Composition and the specified position of form structure of the work are from the research related with the method of city planning and religious place planning along with cosmological wisdom.

2. The selection of form as part of work composition is from the study of Local Lanna art form such as sandy pagoda's form, form of Kom

- Phad (The revolving Lanna Lamp) and the structural form from Poi-Lor Ceremony (monk's Lanna funeral ceremony).

Content

The creation of Thai art presents the faith towards Buddhism according to beliefs and thought process of Buddha's teaching through the form representing thought system and Triphumi beliefs and cosmology which are the developing of human's mind process.

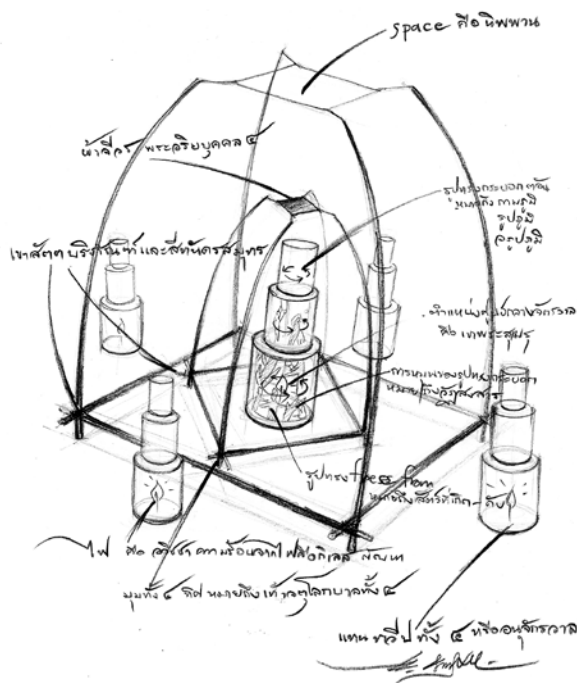


Figure 9 The Sketch of “Creation of Thai Arts based on Buddhist Belief in the Threefold Spheres of Existence”

The Composition of Form and Analysis

This process can be divided in to 4 parts.

1. The centre of the work is the cylinder form made of bamboo structure supplied the outer surface with Sa-Paper, piled in sets with another cylinder form. The inner cylinder form is transparent, stretched with nets and decorated with the cut Sa-paper all area of net surface. The top of the form is applied with the cut paper in the propeller shape using for heat extract. The extracted heat will be beneficial for moving the

cylinder form as we want. The inner cylinder form can be moved by the heat from the light candle at the bottom of the cylinder form. This representation is derived from the local wisdom in making Kom - Phad (revolving Lanna lamp) or Kom Wien (a revolving lamp in front of a transparent cylinder in a lamp inside). The order of form will be arranged in pile in vertical line from the floor upright to the air and will be arranged chronologically from the biggest to the smallest (3 pieces). The pattern of the arrangement comes from Lanna sandy pagoda's concept and form.

2. The outer form that covers the form according to number 1 is in a rectangular shape made of circle bamboo attached with strings. The form is in tapering shape from the base to the tip setting upright to the air. The 4 tips are stretched with monk's mantle in 4 small square shapes. The base structure is also in a square shape. At each corner, there will be 4 tips of tapering poles as the result of pulling square shape fabric at the tips of each pole. Such structure's concept and form is brought from bamboo structure in Poi-Lor ceremony (Monk's Lanna funeral ceremony) which is composed of 4 trunks of bamboo that stick in the round in 4 corners. The tips of all trunks are straight upright to the air. Stretched by monk's mantle in all 4 corners called Pae Daan Prasart (Palace's roof). This structure will be set to cover all 3 cylinder forms that are in the centre of the art object.

3. The structure is in square shape made of tapering bamboo from the bottom to the tip set upright in to the sky. The 4 tips are stretched by white cotton thread that make the shape of the air become in square form. The third structure will be like the second structure. The difference is that there is no stretching fabric on the top and the third form is bigger than another one so that it will properly cover the form according to number 1 and 2.

4. The structure of the cylinder form is made of bamboo supplied the outer surface with Sa - paper, 3 layers piled on one another chronologically, from the biggest to the smallest set upright into the air. Its size will be smaller than the 1st shape. The order of the object is inspired by the form of sandy pagoda of Lanna. A lighted candlestick is inside for the inner lightness. All cylinder forms will be out together in 1 set. The art object will require 4 sets of the cylinder forms and will be set at the left space outside in the middle of 4 sides of the form according to number 3.

Symbolic Meaning Analysis

1. Figure number one. Three cylinders, placed overlapping at the center of the work, are the symbol of Triphumi which consists of the sensual region, the concrete region, and the abstract region. Due to their position, it is the symbol of Mount Meru which is the center of the universe.

2. The spinning cylinders represents the cycle of life, the cycle of birth and death of an individuality in the three regions predestined by the karma which repeats itself endlessly.

3. Other figures which keep spinning in the three cylinders represent creatures that die and are born into the three regions, the sensual region, the concrete region, and the abstract

4. The force originated from fire which spins the three figures represents desire and lust which cause the cycle of life in the three regions.

5. The fire which causes heat means ignorance.

6. The bamboo structure number 2 below the square represents Sundhaboriphan and its four angles represents the God protecting human being named Thao Jatulokaban in the cosmology. The above tip of the stick stretched the robe out in four angles represents the four enlightened ones or the four great truths which are the foundation doctrines of Buddhism.

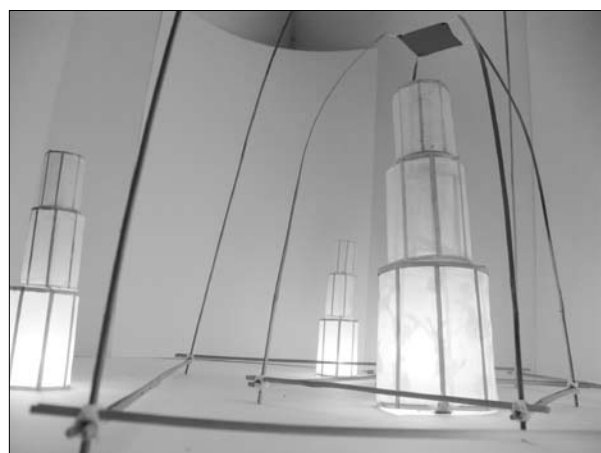


Figure 10 The Creation of Thai Arts based on Buddhist Belief in the Threefold Spheres of Existence

7. The bamboo structure number 3 below the square represents Sundhaboriphan in the cosmology. The numbers of the angles or lines of the structure number 2 and 3 represents the four enlightened ones which, according to the belief in Triphumi, are classified into eight types or represents the eight paths of Buddhism.

8. Based on their positions, the four outside cylinders means the four continents in the universe's morphology. Based on its shape, it means the sub - universe.

9. The above space between the figure number 2 and the figure number 3 means the path to Nirvana.

10. The interrelations between the figure which shapes the inner space and the outside space which surrounds the inner figures which

have consistent interrelations from the center to the periphery represents Patichsamuppada (the Dependent Origination) which means interrelating cause - and - effect. It is also called as Itappachayata.

11. The use of local materials which are natural and fragile symbolizes the Buddhist doctrine about the short - standing nature of things, the five aggregates, and three characteristics of existence that are perishableness, pain, and nonexistence.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Referring to the process of this creative research “The Creation of Thai through the Buddhist belief in the three religions and cosmology”, the researcher began with the study of the primary and secondary documents which involved with the beliefs in the three regions in Lanna cultural context which was considered to be the foundation of this belief. These documents were subtle and complex. They revealed the subtle wisdom of Thai people in the past. They also represented the diligence and the magnificent imagination of Thai artists which are revealed through the traditional art works in Lanna style.

The study classified the contents of the Three Regions in Buddhist view into three levels;

1. The rough level represented as the places where creatures lived, grew, had sex, got sick, and died. They experienced happiness, sadness and suffering depending on the levels.

2. The average level represented the conditions of life which gave the details of the causes of good deeds and sins in each region. For example, it presented the suffering as the creatures in hell, the painful hunger as Praed, the fear and haunted distress as demons, and the comfort and happiness as living in the heaven.

3. The subtle level represented the levels of mind, both high and low. The creative art work consisted of two elements which were shape and idea. To compare these with the Buddhist

philosophy based on the Lord Buddha’s statement, “Behold, monks. Nama are feeling, memory, senses, and mind - controlling. The 4 primary elements and Nama in Mahathuparpa 4 are called NamaRupa”, shape was comparable to body (object) and idea was comparable to mind (abstract).

Although many contemporary works which were inspired by concept, form and creative technique from the past tried to represent their contents and forms in Thai style with new techniques, their purposes as well as their outcomes were totally different from works in the past. This was the result of the changes of Thai culture in the present. However, these adaptations led to the development and changes, which is the nature of the creation of art that is also under the rule of perishableness stated in the Buddhist three Truths. Therefore, to create contemporary works inspired by Buddhist philosophy, the main focus should be on the maintenance of the idea (abstract), which is more important than the form (object) that is naturally changeable and trivial. It is not something that people should pay much attention and regard as their possessions.

In conclusion, the main purpose of this creative research was to create art work that means to preserve and maintain the wisdom in “Triphumi” and cosmology. In terms of form and presentation technique, the researcher used the form and the creation of local art which portrayed Lanna Wisdom with a new form. This work represented the way of thinking and belief in Triphumi which symbolized the process to cultivate human mind according to the purpose of the research.

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