

Chapter 4

Religious Complexity in *Wat Phra Kaeo*

This chapter is an attempt to illustrate the religious complexity in *Wat Phra Kaeo*. The data is presented in terms of religious complexity in art, architecture, rituals and people's behaviors.

4.1 Religious Complexity in *Wat Phra Kaeo*: Art and Architecture

Ringis (1990: xxxiii) interestingly says that

In all Thai Buddhist architecture, from the sublime classic beauty of the grand royally sponsored wat to the rustic monasteries tucked away in seemingly forgotten corners of the land, there is a continuity of design and decoration that reflects ancient artistic traditions. These artistic traditions have been devoted over the centuries entirely to the expression of religious ideas and beliefs.

I will classify those religious ideas and beliefs expressed and woven over the centuries in the artistic traditions in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha into the three categories as follows; Buddhist art and architecture, Hindu art and architecture and other decorated figures. When the art and architecture observed in *Wat Phra Kaeo* share more than one religious platform, it will be specially mentioned.

4.1.1 Buddhist Art and Architecture

According to the principles of Buddhist architecture⁽⁹⁾ a temple should include the following construction;

- (1) an *ubosot* (for the monks to perform religious ceremonies)
- (2) a *chedi* (for housing sacred relics or images)
- (3) a *viharn* (to house various Buddha images)
- (4) a *mondop* (for storing the Buddhist scriptures)
- (5) a belfry (to sound the time for ceremonies, prayers, etc.)

Although the Temple of the Emerald Buddha does not have residential area for monks, it contains the necessary structures mentioned above. As for the belfry, it probably has not been much used because the Emerald Buddha Temple does not have residence for monks, its presence is, however, necessary in order to fulfill the requirements of Buddhist architecture. The Temple of the Emerald Buddha contains the following construction (See Plan 3 on page 25):

- (1) → *Ubosot*
- (2) → *Phra Si Ratana Chedi*
- (3) → *Viharn* of the Gandara Buddha
Viharn Yod
- (4) → *Phra Mondop*
Ho Phra Monthien Tham (Supplementary Library)
- (5) → Belfry

The *ubosot* is the most important construction in the temple compound. It faces east in keeping with ancient Indian concepts regarding the sanctity of the four directions of the Universe. It is usually surrounded by eight boundary stones, set at each corner and the four cardinal points. These stones, typically flat like leaves, known as *bai sema*, mark the limits of consecrated

ground.

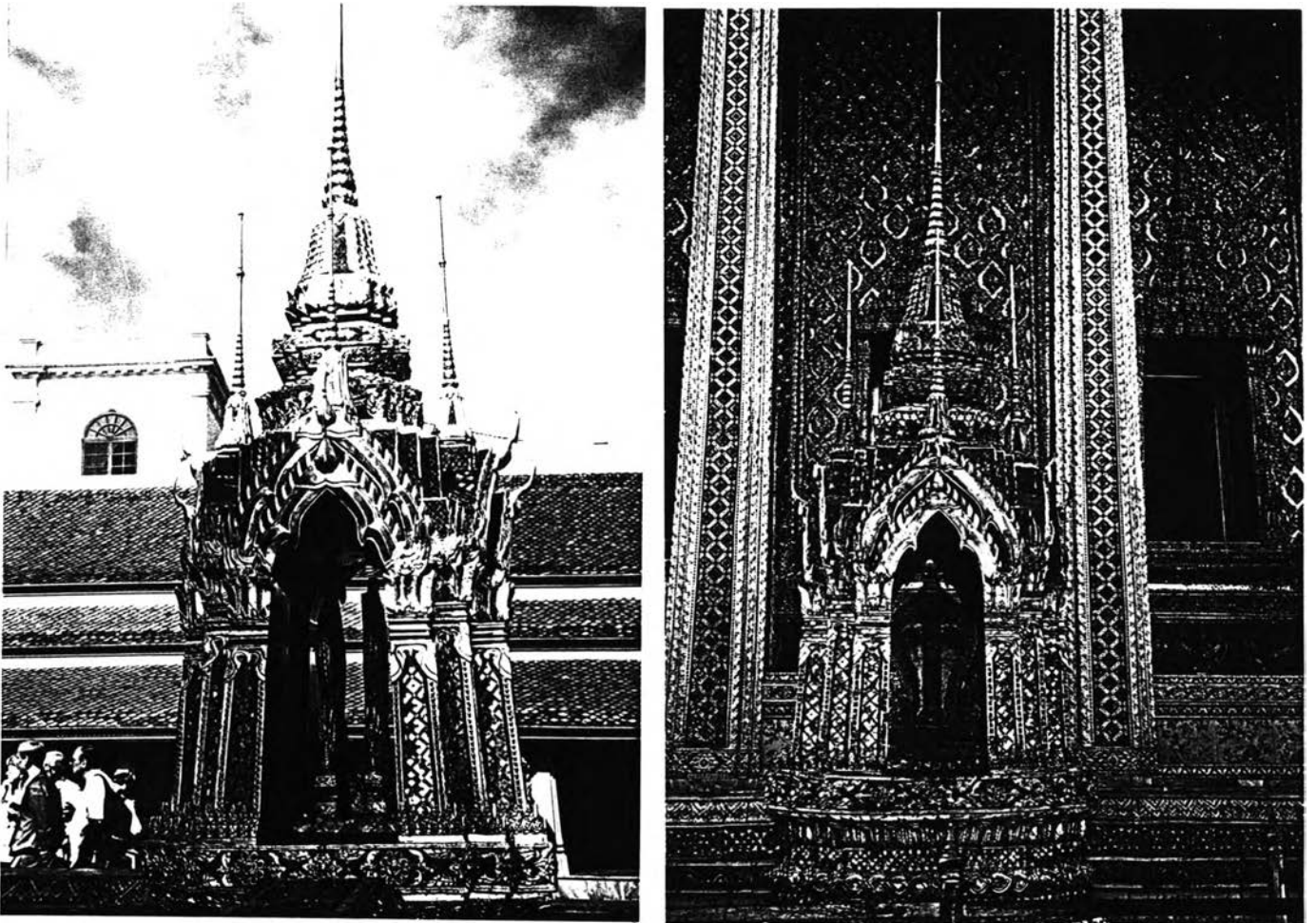
When an ordination hall (*ubosot*) is being built, or even renovated, various consecration rites take place with monks officiating and lay people participating. During those rites large round cannon ball like stones (*luk nimit*) are buried with due ceremony at the eight cardinal and subcardinal points of the building. Representing the direction of zenith, the ninth *luk nimit* is buried inside, in the center of the building or under the presiding Buddha image.

Thus, the *bai sema* tablets erected outside, above the ground, mark the points at which the *luk nimit* have been buried. Usually at each cardinal point only one *bai sema* tablet is erected. However, the presence of double or triple *bai sema* stones at the appropriate points of the ordination hall indicates either royal patronage or that the building has undergone more than one consecration. Sometimes the *bai sema* tablets are encased and protected by elaborate canopies of shrine-like appearance. This is the case at the Emerald Buddha Temple, where the gilded tablets and their canopies are set (at the eight cardinal points) into the low wall surrounding the consecrated ground of the ordination hall which enshrines the sacred Emerald Buddha image. (Ringis 1990:73)

It is said that such stones traditionally designate a Buddhist building where the ordination ceremony may be carried out. *Bai sema* stones which enclose the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Kaeo* are shown in Picture 1 on the next page. It is interesting to note that the outer walls which surround the whole of the Grand Palace including the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, also show a series of patterns the shape of *bai sema* stone on their edges, which define the sacred

area. (See Picture 2)

The lower edge of the roof of the *ubosot* is decorated with bells and ringers in the same shape of bhodi leaf as the *bai sema* stones. It is said that when the wind blows their musical tinkling is meant to make the visitor feel that he or she has entered a sacred realm.



(Picture 1) Double *Bai Sema* Stones



(Picture 2) Wall edges in the shapes of *bai sema* stones

The interior of the *ubosot* is a reflection of Buddhist beliefs in contrast to the outside which reflects Hindu beliefs (to be discussed later). Firstly, the Buddha images. Inside the *ubosot* contains many Buddha images. In addition to the Emerald Buddha image ①, for example, there are two large, crowned, standing bronze Buddha's that were dedicated to King Rama I ② and II ③. There are ten other crowned, standing, bronze Buddha's ④~⑬ that were created for the Chakri Kings to commemorate specific members of the Royal Family. There is a Buddha image designed by King Rama IV ⑭ and a very small silver (now tarnished) Buddha image holding a fan to his face ⑮. This is said to have extremely been important to King Rama I because he took it with him into battle on the back of His elephant. All of these have a royal umbrella over their heads except the one designed by King Rama IV. These images are arranged around the Emerald Buddha image as shown in Figure 4.

Secondly, if you look around the interior of the *ubosot*, you may notice that there are mural paintings of Buddhist philosophies as well as Buddhist stories and values surrounding the Emerald Buddha. The western wall behind the Emerald Buddha image depicts the Buddhist cosmology (the *Traibhum*) containing the three worlds of desire, form and non-form, or in Thai, *kama bhava*, *rupa bhava* and *arupa bhava*. According to the *Traibhum* this universe consists of those three spheres and each sphere is further divided into planes. More details are illustrated and explained below.

(Table 3) Buddhist Cosmology: the *Traibhum* (the Three worlds)

Sphere	Plane	inhabited by	characterized by
<i>arupa bhava</i>	1 4 } heavens	highest gods	no form no sensual enjoyment
<i>rupa bhava</i>	1 16 } heavens	higher gods (Brahma)	existence of forms no sensual enjoyment except of a kind of intellectual enjoyment
<i>kama bhava</i>	1 6 7 10 11 } heavens } worlds hell	deities and gods human beings demons, ghosts, and animals	existence of forms sensual enjoyment

It seems to preach visually the most basic Buddhist teaching to the visitors of the Temple by showing the relationships between heaven and hell and good and evil.

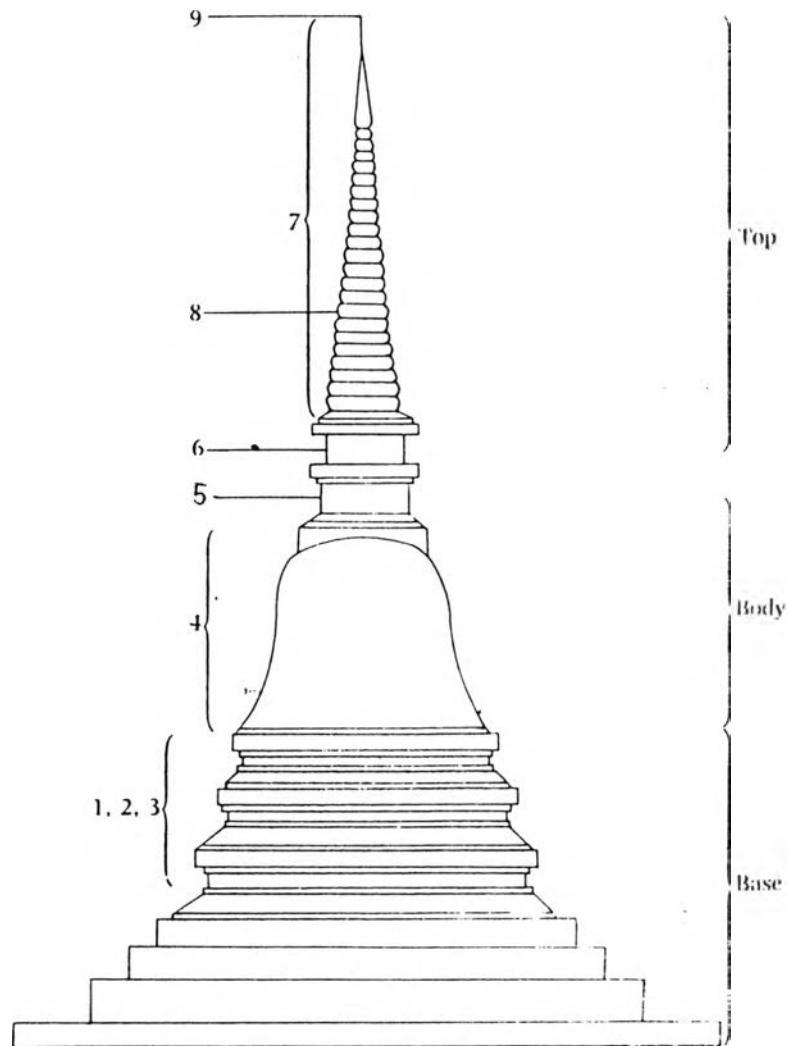
The eastern wall represents the Buddha subduing Mara and his attainment of enlightenment which is probably one of the most meaningful and valued scenes for Buddhists.

The northern and southern murals above the windows tell of the life of the Buddha and between the windows the *Jataka* tales (the previous lives of the Buddha). These two Buddhist tales, especially the latter seem to be the most familiar to Thai people and seem to play the biggest role in teaching the lay people Buddhist values.

The great golden Phra Sri Rattana Chedi is the main *chedi* in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. This *chedi* is the cosmic symbol of Buddhism in Thailand, and is prominent in one or many forms in every temple. Historically, this dome-shaped structure was thought to have evolved from the ancient burial mounds of India, mounds to commemorate or enshrine the relics of great men. At its most basic the *chedi* may represent, in architectural form, the cosmology of Buddhism. There may be disagreement as to what it was originally intended to mean, but present interpretations ascribe various cosmological implications to it. Although there are many variations of *chedi*, depending on regional and historical differences, Figure 5 on the next page represents the basic structural levels of *chedi* in Thailand. The Phra Sri Rattana *Chedi* is bell-shaped and covered with gold mosaic which was added by King Rama V. This was constructed during the first reign in order to contain Buddha relics and also represents the cosmology of Buddhism as represented in other *chedi*s in Thailand. It is arranged in a straight line with the *mondop* (Library) and the Phrasat Phra Thep Bidorn (Royal Pantheon) on the same base. The *chedi* houses Buddha relics. The *mondop* stores the Buddhist scriptures. The Phrasat Phra Thep could have housed the Emerald Buddha image according to original plans, even though it was impossible because it was far too small for royal ceremonies

once the building was completed. It is said that the straight line made by those buildings echoes the classic arrangement of *chedi* s which have been characteristic of Buddhist architecture since the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya period.

(Figure 5) Basic components of *chedi*



Source: Courtesy of the Department of Fine Arts

“THAI TEMPLES AND TEMPLE MURALS” Rita Ringis 1990: Singapore

(Key) Base: square base platform(s) surmounted by circular, octagonal, or redented platform levels usually in sets of three, signifying the *Traibhum* or the Three Worlds (1, 2, 3). Body: 4 Relic chamber, 5 Harmika. Top: 6 Shatt, 7 Conical spire, 8 Circular tiers representing the heavens, 9 Lotus bulb shaped final representing Nirvana.

The Phra *Mondop* is the main library in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha situated to the rear of the Royal Pantheon on the same base. It is said that the earlier building had been constructed in the middle of a pond to prevent attack by termites - a common practice during the late Ayutthaya and early Bangkok period. Phra *Mondop* houses *Tripitaka*, Buddhist scriptures. It shows some Buddhist elements in its art and architecture. For example the exterior walls are decorated with glass mosaic in a lotus bud design. At the base of the pillars are four sandstone Buddha images in Borobudur style.

Ho Phra Monthien Tham is the supplementary library. This building is also constructed to house various versions of the Buddhist Scriptures and is used as a building where monks and novices can take exams. On Buddhist Holy Days Ho Phra Monthien Tham as well as the *ubosot* is used by Thai Buddhists to listen to sermons.

In both buildings one can see the *mondop* style at architecture; Thai style architecture with a seven-tiered spired roof. The entrances of Phra *Mondop* and the central door of Ho Phra Monthien Tham also contain this seven-tiered style of architecture.

While the *mondop* is used for storing the Buddhist scriptures, the *viharn* is to house various Buddha images. In the compound of *Wat Phra Kaeo*, there are two *viharns* for the purpose of storing important Buddha images; the *Viharn* of the Gandhara Buddha for the Gandhara Buddha image used in the Royal Ploughing Ceremony, and the *viharn* Yod for the Nak Buddha images together with other important Buddha images.

To the east of the *ubosot* and the Royal Pantheon there are eight *prangs* standing in a row at regular intervals. They are different in colour but are the same height and style. Despite their Hindu origin they represent various aspects of Buddhism. According to Suksri (1998 :62), from North to South;

- (1) white *prang* represents the Buddha
- (2) mid blue *prang* represents the *Dhamma*
- (3) pink *prang* represents the *Sangha*

- (4) green *prang* represents the *Bikshuni*; the Buddhist nuns.
- (5) dark purple *prang* represents the *Pacchekabodhi* Buddhas; those who attained Enlightenment but did not preach.
- (6) pale blue *prang* represents the *Chakravarti*; the previous emperors of the Kingdom.
- (7) reddish brown *prang* represents the *Bodhisattva*; the Buddha in his previous lives.
- (8) yellow *prang* represents the future Buddha

In conclusion one can see Buddhist traditions in the mandatory aspects of Buddhist architecture, the art items contained in each building, the interior of the *ubosot* , etc. The *chedi* is the only building that shows Buddhist traditions both inside (Buddha relic) and outside (Buddhist cosmology). Other buildings tend to be Buddhist inside and Hindu outside.

4.1.2 Hindu Art and Architecture

While Buddhist traditions tend to be seen in content inside a building, Hindu traditions tend to be observed outside especially in the decorative parts.

When discussing the decorative art of the temple, Hindu gods and mythical beings are prominent. One can see Hindu elements here and there in the Temple area. The followings are the Hindu gods and mythical beings observed in *Wat Phra Kaeo*.

- (1) God Vishnu (one of the three main Hindu gods, the preserver)
- (2) *Garuda* (half-man and half-bird being, mount of the Hindu god Vishnu)
- (3) *Naga* (mythical serpent)
- (4) *Yakasha* (Demon guardians)
- (5) Half-animal and half-celestial beings
- (6) *Singh* (mythical lion)
- (7) *Hanuman* (white monkey in the *Ramakien* story)
- (8) God Brahma (one of the three main Hindu gods, the creator)
- (9) *Hong* or *Hansa* (sacred goose, mount of the Hindu god Brahma)
- (10) God Indra (lord of heavens)
- (11) *Erawan* (three headed elephant, mount of the Hindu god Indra)

In Hinduism there are three supreme gods, each of whom personifies one major aspect of the cosmic cycle, Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer. These three Hindu gods are represented in Thailand together with some other important deities such as Indra, *Ganesh*, etc. and these greatly venerated deities are collectively called *Thevada* or *Theva* or *Thep*.

Vishnu is considered as the most important and venerated Hindu god in Thailand. Vishnu has four hands and in each hand he holds a conch-shell, a *chakra* (discus), a club, and a lotus flower⁽¹⁰⁾. It is said that when

religion goes into decline Vishnu appears on earth in one of his incarnations. The ancient texts describe many incarnations but ten are commonly recognised. Lord Buddha is sometimes considered as one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. The seventh incarnation is extremely popular in Thailand: Rama. Rama is the hero of the Indian epic, *Ramayana* popularly called *Ramakien* in Thailand. The successive Chakri Kings are titled "Rama". The present King is called King Rama IX. In this sense Chakri Kings are then perceived to be "Rama" or "Vishnu" the Hindu god.

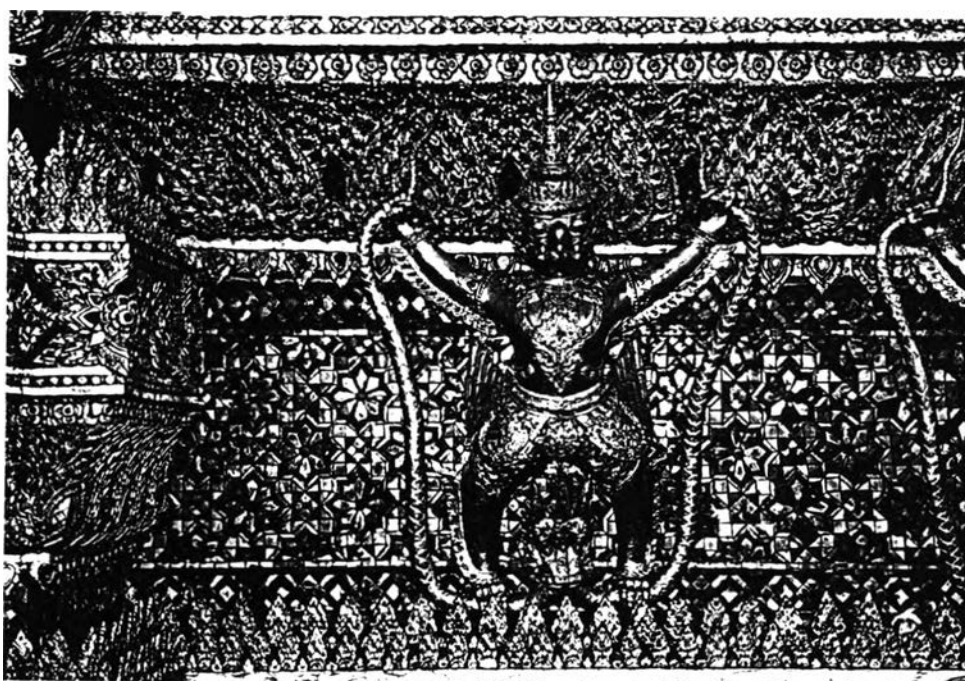
One can see the Hindu god Vishnu on the main gable of the *ubosot* in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. There are the glittering figures of Vishnu mounted on his vehicle. *Garuda* holding *naga* is displayed on the magnificently carved and gilded triangular gable board of the *ubosot*. Traditionally gable-boards display variations of these Hindu gods and guardians, but Vishnu may be displayed only in Royal Monasteries. Such gable-boards are reminders of the Hindu heritage of Thai monastic art.

In the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, apart from Vishnu figure, we can also see Brahma mounting *hansa*, his sacred goose, and Indra mounting his three headed *erawan* elephant; both on the pediments of Ho Phra Montien Tham. In addition to the Hindu Trinity other various heavenly gods are also depicted throughout the Temple murals and are often used in decorations of the Temple.

Garuda, a half-man half-bird mythological being is the mount of Vishnu. It is a motif well represented and seen on Royal buildings and the Royal Thai Insignia and Official Seal. *Garuda* is also the throne carrier. It is also represented above the head of the King. It is considered to be very prestigious. It is also the personal emblem of the King; an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Garuda is very popular in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, a temple under Royal patronage. It is displayed with the Hindu god Vishnu and *naga* on the pediment of the *ubosot* and the Royal Pantheon. *Garuda* is also seen in architectural and decorative forms in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. For

example, “*chofa*”, the finials on the roof ridge of the *ubosot*, *Viharn Yod* and *Viharn* of the Gandara Buddha represents the head of *garuda*. “*Lam yong*”, the sloping edge of the roof of the *ubosot* represents the *garuda*’s arms. (See Architectural Elements in Figure 6). The most prominent ornamentation of *garuda* is a row of 112 richly-ornamented gold-leafed *garudas* surrounding the base of the *Ubosot*. They have crowns and are standing on *nagas* grasping their tails. (See Picture 3.) This kind of ornamentation is seen on the exterior of *Phra Mondop* as well, particularly around the base. There is a row of small gilded stucco praying *garudas* alternating with *asuras*.



(Picture 3) *Garuda* holding *naga* at the base of the *ubosot*.

Naga is a water serpent which has multiple flaring and crowned heads with many mythological meanings: fertility, rainbows, creation, etc. *Naka* is widely used in architecture; particularly on the roofs and superstructures of Thai-style buildings as a guardian figure. *Naga* is very popular in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha as well .

Naga is often seen with *garuda* in the decorative art of *Wat Phra Kaeo*. As mentioned earlier they appear as pairs around the base of the *ubosot*, and are

displayed together with the Hindu god Vishnu on the gable-boards of the *ubosot* and the Royal Pantheon. They are also a Royal Insignia of the second reign. In addition *Naga* is also adapted in architectural form on the roof of the *ubosot*. The gable-board is edged with carved decoration terminating in *hang hong*; the finials on Thai temples at the lower edge of the roof appear in the form of *naga* heads. (See Figure 6 on page 57.) The brackets rising from the columns known as *kantoe*y are in the shape of *nagas* with heads pointing down, signifying the *naga* as protector of the Buddha before he attained enlightenment. (See Figure 6.) *Naga* is also often used to decorate the balustrades of the steps to the temple (the Royal Pantheon, etc.), the window frames (the Ho Phra Mak, the Ho Phra Monthien, etc.) and the door frames (the Ho Phra Monthien, Belfry and so on). *Naga* is considered a guardian of the earth's water and the link between the world of man and gods. So it is used as the pathway to the sanctuary (the inside of the temple) from the earthly plane (the outside).

Around the upper terrace of the Royal Pantheon seven pairs of various half-animal/ half-celestial beings are situated. They are believed to live in the mythological forest called *Himaphan* or *Himavamsa* where rice grows abundantly without cultivation. In *Himaphan* there exist the following mythical animals:

1. *Asurapaksa* head of a giant/ lower body of a bird (See Figure 7)
2. *Asurawayuphak* head of a giant/ lower body of a bird (8)
3. *Thepphanorasing* head of a male angel/ lower body of a lion (9)
4. *Thepphakinnon* head of an angel/ lower body of a bird/ musician (10)
5. *Thepphapaksi* head of an angel/ lower body of a male-bird (11)
6. *Apsorasiha* head of a female angel/ lower body of a lion/ dancer (12)
7. *Singhaphanon* head of a monkey/ lower body of a lion (13)

☆ Further details are shown in Chart 1 on page 59.

These mythical animals are also seen on the exterior in the mother of-

pearl inlaid doors of the *ubosot*.

Other examples of mythical animals are *Singh* and *Tantima*. *Singh* is the mythical lion living in the *Himaphan* forest where one can see 12 bronze Khmer lion guardians ⁽¹¹⁾ standing at the base of the steps leading into the *ubosot* of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. *Tantima*, whose body is a bird, but whose head is a garuda, is a mythical bird also living in the *Himaphan* forest. A pair of bronze sculptures of *Tantima* birds are seen on both sides of the steps on the east and west sides of *Viharn Yod*.

In the Temple of the Emerald Buddha one can also see the characters from the *Ramakien* story, the Thai version of the Indian epic poem the *Ramayana*, which is adopted from Hindu tradition. There are four important characters in the *Ramakien*, Rama, Sita, *Hanuman* and *Ravana (Thotsakan)*. In the story Rama is assisted by

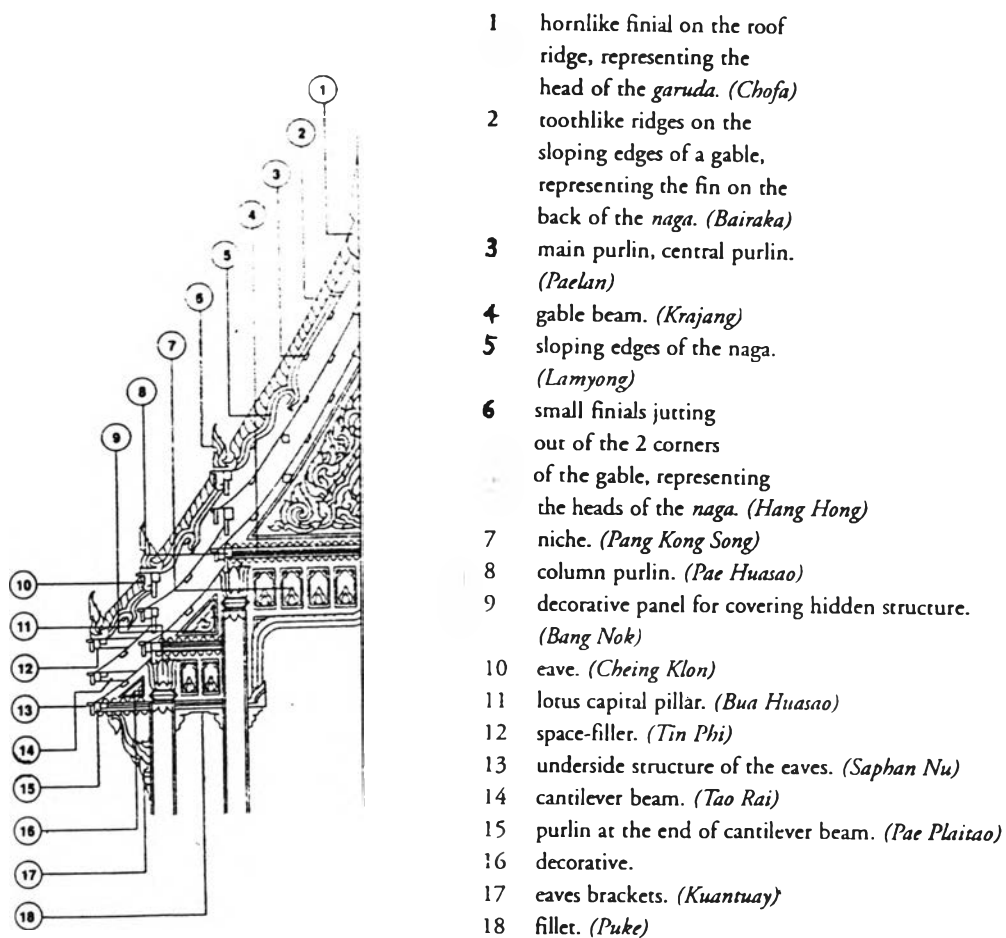
Hanuman; a monkey of semi-divine ancestry. These characters are depicted on the walls of the *Ramakien* cloisters which form a covered gallery surrounding the entire Emerald Buddha Temple complex. Altogether there are 178 panels. The first panel beginning from the north gate opposite to *Viharn Yod* and then proceeding in an anti-clockwise direction.

In addition to those four main characters, *Yaksha* is also an important and popular character in the *Ramakien* story. In Thai art, *Yakshas* are the familiar demon guardians of the temples. The best known of which are six pairs of giants who stand at the gate of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha passing through the gallery. They are all standing facing the *ubosot*, which means that they are guarding the Emerald Buddha from all evil spirits. Each demon guardian represents an important role in the *Ramakien* story. (Table 4 on page 58.)

Yakshas, the demon-guardians are also seen in other places as well besides the gates.

One sees them surrounding the neck of the 8 prangs, also supported by monkey bearers at the base of two gilt *chedis* in front of the Royal Pantheon in dedication to King Rama I's parents, guarding the entrances of the Viharn Yod and the Royal Pantheon.

(Figure 6) Architectural Elements of the Temple Roof



- 1 hornlike finial on the roof ridge, representing the head of the *garuda*. (*Chofa*)
- 2 toothlike ridges on the sloping edges of a gable, representing the fin on the back of the *naga*. (*Bairaka*)
- 3 main purlin, central purlin. (*Paelan*)
- 4 gable beam. (*Krajang*)
- 5 sloping edges of the *naga*. (*Lamyong*)
- 6 small finials jutting out of the 2 corners of the gable, representing the heads of the *naga*. (*Hang Hong*)
- 7 niche. (*Pang Kong Song*)
- 8 column purlin. (*Pae Huasao*)
- 9 decorative panel for covering hidden structure. (*Bang Nok*)
- 10 eave. (*Cheing Klon*)
- 11 lotus capital pillar. (*Bua Huasao*)
- 12 space-filler. (*Tin Phi*)
- 13 underside structure of the eaves. (*Saphan Nu*)
- 14 cantilever beam. (*Tao Rai*)
- 15 purlin at the end of cantilever beam. (*Pae Plaitao*)
- 16 decorative.
- 17 eaves brackets. (*Kuantuay*)
- 18 fillet. (*Puke*)

Source: Courtesy of the Department of Fine Arts

Rita Ringis "THAI TEMPLES AND TEMPLE MURALS"

1990: Singapore

(Table 4) The Twelve Giants at the gates

Entrance	Giants	Colour	Features (such as crown)
* East 1	<i>Indrajit</i>	green	bamboo shoot crown
	<i>Suryatop</i>	red	bamboo shoot crown
2	<i>Virunhok</i>	purple	crown topped with naga
	<i>Mangkorngun</i>	green	crown topped with naga
* South 1	<i>Totkiritorn</i>	green	bamboo shoot crown elephant trunk nose
	<i>Totkirijun</i>	brick red	bamboo shoot elephant trunk nose
* West 1	<i>Chakrawat</i>	white	4 heads and 8 arms
	<i>Asakornnarsa</i>	dark purple	a double tier of heads
2	<i>Sahasadeja</i>	white	one thousand heads arranged in five tiers and two thousand arms
	<i>Tosakanth</i>	green	three tiers of three heads and one on top
3	<i>Virunchamban</i>	navy	crown topped with a chai cockerel tail crown
	<i>Mayarap</i>	pale mauve	cockerel tail crown

* East 1 in line with the Royal Pantheon/ East 2 in line with the *ubosot*

* South 1 in line with Srirattana Sasada

* West 1 in line with the rear of the *ubosot* (where foreign visitors enter the temple)/ West 2 in line with the western side of the Phra Sri Rattana *chedi*/

West 3 in line with the northern side of the Phra Sri Rattana *chedi*

☆ See also Plan 3 on page 25.

KEY TO CHART ON DISTRIBUTION OF
THE FEATURES AMONG THE STATUES

A. Face

1. Demon
2. Man
3. Woman
4. Monkey

B. Crown

1. *Kranok* spire
2. *Hang lai* or eel's tail spire
3. *Chai* or victory spire
4. Forehead piece added to the base of victory crown
5. Crown ear piece placed in front of the ear
6. Crown ear piece placed in back of the ear

C. Ears

1. Pointed animal ears
2. Human ears

D. Hair

1. Hair present
2. No hair

E. Neck

1. Adam's apple visible
2. Smooth neck

F. Chest

1. Long-sleeved covering
2. Bare
3. Bare with breasts

G. Arms

1. Human
2. Non-human, concave upper arm
3. Feathers lining arm from elbow to wrist
4. Right arm bent, hand on hip; left arm raised
5. Left arm bent, hand on hip; right arm raised

H. Hands

1. Human
2. Claws
3. Holding flower
4. Dance gesture
5. Hands joined in *wai*
6. Leaning on staff or pole
7. Holding sword

I. Waistband

1. With hanging pointed sheath
2. Without hanging sheath

J. Lower body

1. Bare-legged hind quarters of a lion, emblem on thigh
2. Bird legs with knee-length down resembling britches
3. Ankle-length trousers over human legs
4. Feathers lining leg from knee to ankle
5. Pointed bird hind quarters

K. Feet

1. Claws
2. Paws
3. Human

L. Wings on hips

M. Tail

1. Cock
2. *Kranok*
3. Lion

N. Posture

1. Facing front
2. Upper body twisted right, lower body twisted left
3. Upper body twisted left, lower body twisted right

(Figure 7-13) The Mythical Animals at the Royal Pantheon



Figure 7
Sketch of Asurapaksa



Figure 8
Sketch of Asunawayuphak



Figure 9
Sketch of Thepphanorasing



Figure 10
Thepphakinnon



Figure 1 /
Sketch of Thepphaksi

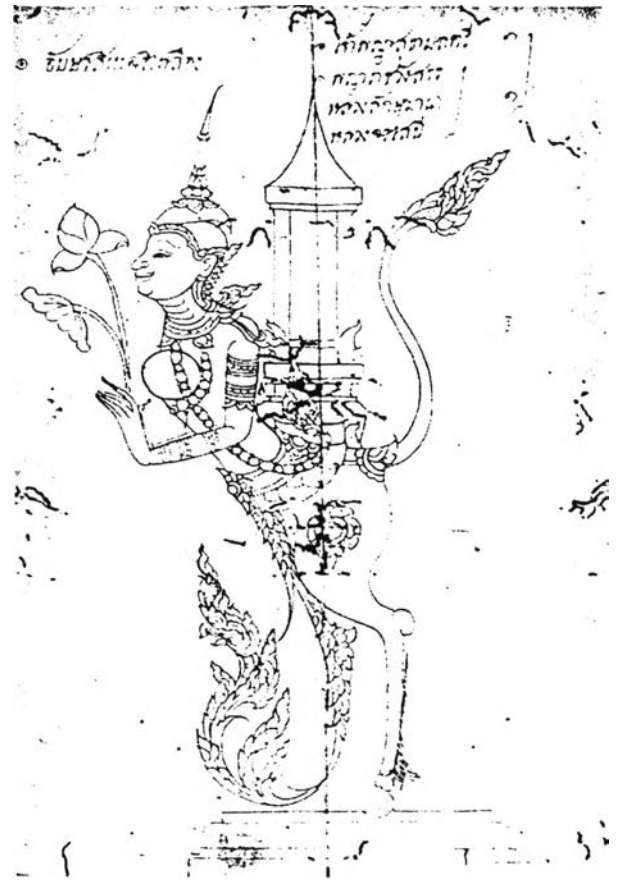


Figure 2
Sketch of Apsorasiha



Figure 3
Sketch of Singhaphanon



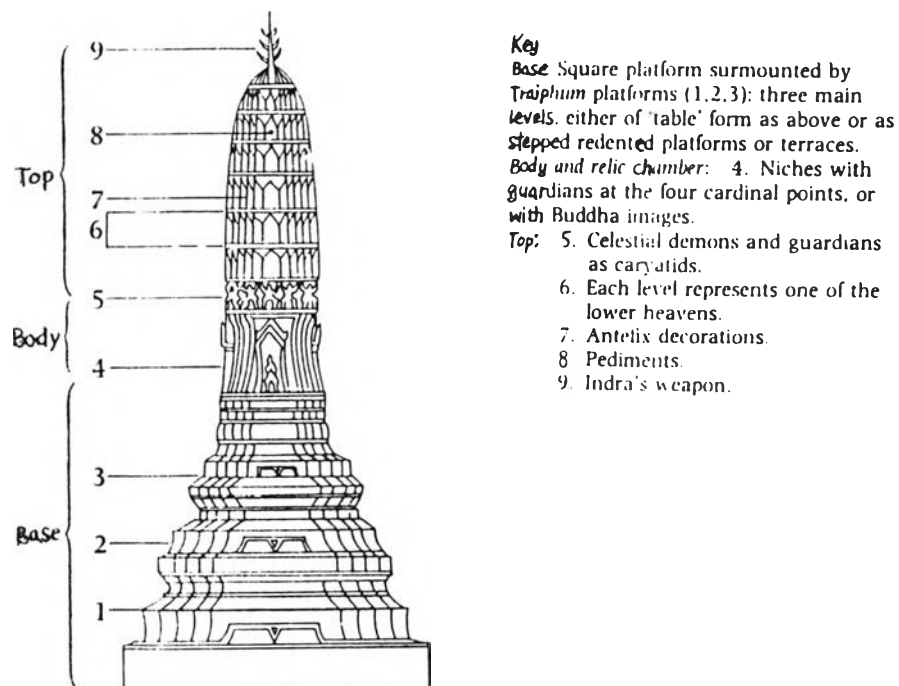
Figure 3
Sketch of Singhaphanon

Source: The National Library of Bangkok

Besides the decorative Hindu gods and mythical beings, other Hindu elements can sometimes be seen in the superstructure of the Temple.

Despite their dedication to the Buddhist aspects, *prang* is supposed to originate in the Hindu tradition, in other words, it is a Thai adaptation of the Khmer-style sanctuary tower, the architectural symbol of Mount *Kailasa*, the home of the Hindu god Shiva ^(1 2) in the *Himalayas*. The Thais modified and replicated original Khmer-built structures into their own interpretation of *prang* for the *chedi* as the focal relic chamber of a temple. (See Figure 14.)

(Figure 14) Basic components of the Thai *prangs*



Source: The Artistic Heritage of Thailand, National Museum Volunteers
 and Sawaddi Magazine

Rita Ringis "Thai Temples and Temple Murals"

Another example of Hindu architectural style is the model of Angkor Wat located to the north of the *Mondop*. This is a model of an imposing piece of Khmer architecture of the 12th century. Firstly, King Rama IV had the idea of moving one of the Khmer temples to Thailand. At that time Cambodia was still a vassal state of Thailand. The King wanted his people to see what the Khmer ruins looked like. Having inspected various sites, the King's officials informed him that they were far too large to move. So the King decided to have a replica of Angkor Wat constructed in the Temple compound.

Lastly, it is interesting to note that one can also see Hindu art within the interior of the *ubosot* which fundamentally shows Buddhist teachings, stories and values. The golden altar, or *busabok*, upon which the throne of the Emerald Buddha sits represents the aerial chariot *bushpaka* of the Hindu gods.



(Picture 4) The model of Angkor Wat in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha

4.1.3 Other Decorated Figures

The figure of the Chinese Chao Mae Guan Im is placed at the foot of a sandstone column topped by a bronze lotus in a small fenced area outside the *ubosot*. Chao Mae Guan Im is said to be a *Bodhisattva* in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. So it can be said that it is a Mahayana Buddhist art element in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. It is interesting to see that the statue shows Mahayana Buddhist traditions in this most important and National Theravada Buddhist temple. The statue of Chao Mae Guan Im is worshipped by the people, particularly the Chinese. They believe blessings will be bestowed upon to these who worship her.

The bronze figure of a seated hermit representing a great physician placed at the rear of the *ubosot* by King Rama III is also worshipped by the people. He was believed to be skilled in traditional medicine and there is a legend that he ground medicine for the Buddha. The grinding stone and the mortar are placed in front of the statue so that people who come to worship there can also prepare their own medicine.

4.2 Religious Complexity in *Wat Phra Kaeo*: Rituals

A ritual is a series of actions concerning certain religious beliefs and are traditionally carried out in a particular situation. The rituals performed in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha are supposed to be basically Buddhist in nature because it is a Buddhist temple. However, I found many rituals that have Hindu and animistic aspects attached to the Buddhist rituals. Therefore, in this section the rituals in *Wat Phra Kaeo* will be categorized into three characteristics judged by their origins or the procedures of the rituals: Buddhist rituals, Buddhist-Hindu rituals, Animistic-Buddhist rituals.

Before talking about the rituals undertaken in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the calendar of traditional festivals (rituals) in Thailand will be introduced first. Below are calendrical rituals over 12 months. Some are agricultural rituals, cultural festivals, sporting festivals and Royal rituals. The rituals relating to *Wat Phra Kaeo* will be marked with☆.

(Table 5) Calendar of Traditional Festivals (Rituals) in Thailand

Date	(1999)	Festival	Location	Type
January		Swing Ceremony* ¹	Bangkok	Lunar* ²
February	(1/3)	<i>Maka Bucha</i>	Nation-wide	☆ Lunar
	(2/3)	Changing the costumes of the Emerald Buddha (winter to summer)	Bangkok	☆ Seasonal Decided by Royal court
March-April		Kite Flying	Nation-wide	Seasonal
6 April		Chakri Day	Bangkok	☆ Fixed on calendar
13-15 April		<i>Songkran</i>	Nation-wide	Fixed on calendar

Date	(1999)	Festival	Location	Type
Mid-May	(13/5)	Ploughing Ceremony	Bangkok ☆	Decided by court astrologers
5 May		Coronation Day	Bangkok ☆	Fixed on calendar
May-June		Rocket Festival	North-east, especially Yasothon	Seasonal
May-June	(29/5)	<i>Visaka Bucha</i>	Nation-wide ☆	Lunar
June		Ghost Festival	Dan, Sai, Loei	Decided by village medium
July		Candle Procession	Ubon Ratchthani, Ubon province	Lunar
July	(20/7)	Royal Ordination	Bangkok ☆	One week before Khao Pansa
July	(27/7)	<i>Asalaha Bucha</i>	Nation-wide ☆	Lunar
July	(28/7)	<i>Khao Pansaa</i>	Nation-wide ☆	Lunar
	(28/7)	Changing the costumes of the Emerald Buddha (summer to rainy season)	Bangkok ☆	Seasonal/ Decided by Royal Court, but almost first day of Khao Pansa.
12 August		Queen's Birthday	Bangkok	Fixed on calendar
September-October		Boat Races	Nan, northern region	Seasonal
October	(25/10)	<i>Ohk Pansaa</i>	Nation-wide ☆	Lunar
October		Royal Barge Procession	Bangkok	Decided by royal court
October		<i>Devo</i> Ceremony	Northern region	Seasonal

Date (1999)	Festival	Location	Type
October	<i>Chak Phra</i>	Surat Thani southren region	Seasonal
October- November	<i>Thot Kathin</i>	Nation-wide	Seasonal
23 October	Chulalongkorn Day	Bangkok	Fixed on calender
November(22/11)	<i>Loy Krathong</i>	Nation-wide	Lunar
(23/11)	Changing the costumes of the Emerald Buddha (rain to winter)	Bangkok ☆	Seasonal
November 3rd weekend	Elephant Round Up	Surin, north-east region	Fixed on calender
5 December	King's Birthday	Bangkok ☆	Fixed on calender

Source: Based on "Traditional Festivals in Thailand" by Ruth Gerson and other various sources.

*¹ now discontinued.

*² Thai calender is based mainly on the lunar cycle. The religious and agricultural festivals are celebrated during the occurrence of the full moon. The three main Buddhist events namely, *Maka Bucha*, *Visaka Bucha* and *Asalaha Bucha* also.

The ceremonies which are not mentioned above but should also be introduced are "Buddha *pisek*" and "Oath of Allegiance"*¹. These two ceremonies take place in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

Every *wan phra* during *phansaa*, there are merit-making ceremonies where laymen can come to visit *Wat Phra Kaeo* to listen to sermons and participate in such ceremonies.

4.2.1 Buddhist rituals

The three main Buddhist events in Thailand are *Maka Bucha*, *Visaka Bucha* and *Asalaha Bucha*. *Maka Bucha* is celebrated in late February or early March on the full moon of the third lunar month, *Visaka Bucha* in late May or early June on the full moon of the sixth lunar month and *Asalaha* in late July or early August on the full moon of the eighth lunar month. *Maka Bucha* commemorates the spontaneous gathering of 1,250 followers of the Buddha who came to hear him preach. *Visaka Bucha*: the most important Buddhist event commemorates the three major events in the Buddha's life: his birth, his attainment of enlightenment and his death or passing into nirvana. *Asalaha Bucha* marks the anniversary of the Buddha's first sermon.

On the three most religious days, high ranking monks are invited to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha and people come to the Temple to listen to the preaching and chanting from 8:30 to 15:00. Around 5 o'clock in the afternoon, a Royal member, the King or the Prince, proceeds to the Temple. Particularly on *Visaka Bucha* both the King and Queen (if possible with other Royal Members as well) come to the Temple because it is the most important Buddhist event on Buddhist calendar. On *Asalaha Bucha* the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn usually comes to the Temple. After paying respects to the Emerald Buddha in the *ubosot*, the King (with other Royal Members) circles the *ubosot* three times in a clockwise direction. The King holds a specially decorated set of lotus buds, candles and incense sticks in His hand and raises them in a gesture of devotion.

While the King or the Prince is walking around the *ubosot* along its exterior walls on the marble paved passageway, people circle outside the lower boundary marked by the *bai sema* stones.

Khao Pansaa and *Ohk Pansaa* are also major Buddhist events in Thailand. *Khao Pansa* follows *Asalaha Bucha* marking the beginning of *Pansaa*, the period of the rains retreat. In Thai, the word "*Khao Pansaa*" means to enter the rainy season, and indeed *pansaa* coincides with the rainy season which lasts three

months, from approximately July to October. It is the time when all monks are confined to their monasteries and refrain from travelling or leaving the temple for any length of time. In preparation for this season public ceremonies for acquiring merit take place. Individuals and groups present the monks with items they will need during the period of retreat. Throughout *Pansaa* people continue to bring food to the monks. *Ohk Pansaa* is a special day marking the end of the rainy season. It literally means leaving the period of rain. It also means that monks are no longer confined to the temple and may travel once again around the countryside. On this day people gather at the temple for morning prayers. Throughout the day they honour the *chedi* and other sacred places at the temple.

After dark they light the candles around the entire temple compound and in front of their homes. Many flickering lights announce the end of the rainy season retreat and beginning the season for other merit-gaining ceremonies.

Although the Temple of the Emerald Buddha is not a residential temple, on every *wan phra* during *pansaa*, one or two monks are invited to the Temple for preaching and chanting from 8:00 to 15:00 and people come to listen to them.

Another remarkable Buddhist ceremony which takes place in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha is the Royal Ordination Ceremony. It is carried out in the *ubosot* one week before *Kao Pansaa*. There are two kinds of Royal Ordination Ceremonies. First, Ordination ceremony for the King or other Royal Family Members or important high ranking people; second, Royal Ordination for other people sponsored by the King. The former ceremony is carried out when the King or other Royal Members get ordained. The Royal sponsored ordination ceremony is performed every year. Every year, bright and hard-working boys who have passed the highest grade Pali exam (nine grade) ⁽¹³⁾ are invited by the King from all over Thailand to this Temple to be ordained. They say that four or five boys are honored to be ordained in the *ubosot* of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha every year. After that they go back and stay in their own temples in their own regions.

In addition to the Buddhist rituals mentioned above, every *wan phra*, four

times a month, one or two monks are invited to *Wat Phra Kaeo* and give sermons and chant to people in the *ubosot* from 8:30 to 3:30. Every Sunday *Ho Phra Montien Tham* (the Supplementary Library) is opened to the Buddhist public from 8:30 to 3:30. In the afternoon a monk comes and gives sermons and instructs people how to practice meditation.

4.2.2 Buddhist-Hindu rituals

Despite the fact that Buddhism is now, and has been, for many centuries the official religion of Thailand, it should be mentioned that there are also ceremonies of Hindu origin or those with Hindu elements performed in the *ubosot* of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

The Oath of Allegiance Ceremony is of Hindu origin. In the old day, officials took the oath of allegiance to the King in the *ubosot* in front of the two large standing crowned Buddha images dedicated to Kings Rama I and II. It began in the reign of King Rama IV and it was discontinued after the revolution in 1932 which led to the establishment of a Constitutional Monarchy. Another Hindu based ceremony is the observance of the Coronation Day. Coronation Day (5 May) is the day to celebrate the anniversary of the Coronation of King Rama IX known as *Chatra Mangala Day* (blessing of the royal umbrella). The concept of the coronation in Thai Kingship is Hindu in origin and this ceremony invites the god Visunu to enter the King's body as the earthly Rama, giving the King a divine name and presenting eight godly weapons as part of the royal regalia. Gerson (1995: 64) describes the Coronation Day in recent years;

Today, the observance of Coronation day starts on the preceding day when the King and Queen pay their respects to the ashes of their ancestors at the Amarintra Hall in the Grand Palace. Buddhist prayers follow, and honours are conferred on high ranking monks. On the morning of the Coronation day, their majesties proceed to the Dusit Maha

Prasat Throne Hall, offer food to the monks, light candles of worship, and sprinkle lustral water on the royal regalia. A sort of circumambulation is performed by passing the lit candles from hand to hand three times around the royal regalia. In the afternoon, the King bestows the royal order of Chulachomklao on members of his family and officials. He presents medals to honoured persons on this occasion. The ceremonies conclude with auspicious prayers and blessings.

It is very interesting to see that Buddhist services are held and followed by the Brahmin ceremony. The Buddhistic part is when there are offerings of food to monks and the Brahmanical part is when the King sprinkles lustral water on the Royal regalia.

The Ploughing Ceremony is an agricultural festival which has something to do with the Temple of the Emerald Buddha and also shows both Hindu and Buddhist aspects. *Reak Na*, or the Ploughing ceremony, literally means "the first ploughing". It takes place during the sixth lunar month at Sanam Luang. It is of Hindu origin and the auspicious day and hour are still set by the Royal Brahman astrologers. In the past the Ploughing ceremony in Thailand was conducted by Brahmin priests only, but during the reign of Rama IV some Buddhist elements were added to the rites. His Majesty the King appoints the Ploughing Lord as his representative to carry out the rites. It is a ritual concerned with predicting the forthcoming rice harvest. The first ritual is the prediction of rainfall. Pieces of cloth of different lengths worn around the hips were presented to the Ploughing Lord to choose from. If he choose the longest one there will be little rain during the coming year, if the shortest one is chosen rain will be plentiful perhaps even too much, and if the medium-length one is chosen there will be average rainfall; the most favourable omen of the three. Next is the ritual of ploughing the field. The entire procession enters an area marked by four bamboo fences decorated with flowers and leaves.

The procession follows a red and gold sacred plough drawn by bulls decorated with flowers. Brahmans chant (Hindu element) and blow conch shells. There are drum and umbrella bearers and four consecrated ladies carrying gold and silver baskets filled with rice seed. The Ploughing Lord leads the sacred bulls nine times around the marked field. In the first three rounds the earth is ploughed in three deep furrows. Then he scatters the new rice seeds into each furrow. He completes the symbolic ploughing by walking around the furrows three more times as the new seeds are covered up. The Brahmin priests sprinkle lustral water, chant prayers and blow conch shells as each round is completed (Hindu element). Then comes the test for the success of the next year's harvest. The bulls are presented with seven different types of food and drink, namely, rice seeds, beans, maize, hay, sesame seeds, water and liquor. It is believed that whatever the bulls chose to eat or drink will be plentiful during the year.

It is interesting to note here that the sacred rice used for the Ploughing ceremony is blessed by Buddhist rites in the *ubosot* at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha on the eve of the Ploughing ceremony. This Buddhist rite is performed by high-ranking monks wherein an image of the Buddha "Calling Down the Rain" is invited from the Gandhara Buddha Viharn. The King presides over the religious ceremonies and pours lustral water over the rice seeds, the sacred plough, the Ploughing Lord and over the young women who represent heavenly beings and who carry the blessed rice seeds. Among the prayers chanted is the "*Monggol Gatha*". A sample reads as follows:

...Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha are precious Cause why
seed which is sown grows up. May the seed sown this month
grow well, may no misfortune occur to it ⁽¹⁴⁾.

4.2.3 Animistic-Buddhist rituals

The Emerald Buddha image has a set of three costumes for the winter, the summer and the rainy season. The summer and rainy season costumes were made in

the reign of King Rama I and the winter costume was later added by King Rama III. The ceremony of changing the costume of the Emerald Buddha takes place three times a year. At beginning of each season the King or the Crown Prince visits the temple and changes the costume of the Emerald Buddha from season to season. This ceremony is a good example of Animistic-Buddhist rituals that takes place in

Wat Phra Kaeo. The following is a description of the ceremony by Narula (1994: 1-5).

.... Today, the first day of Buddhist lent, the destination of most is the eastern section of the compound, the Chapel Royal, or as it is commonly called, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. In but a short space of time, His Majesty the King of Thailand will arrive to carry on the tradition of great kings before him. For today, on the full moon in July, the Emerald Buddha will be clad in the garments of the rainy season and the skies are yet undecided. The crowds sense the approach of His Majesty. The charge of excitement at being in his presence ripples across the sea of bodies. The white uniforms of the officials part it, making way for the King as the bells ring and the pigeons lift off from the chedi. Royal umbrellas shield His Majesty as he bends to receive offerings of flowers from his subjects. And when the King ascends the steps of the *ubosoth*, the darkened skies burst and at last the rain begins to fall.

High within the ornate interior of the *ubosoth*, seated with its right leg resting on the left in the hero pose of *virasana* atop a gold-covered wooden throne, rests *Phra Kaeo Morakot*, the Emerald Buddha. The golden alter, or *busabok*, upon which the throne sits represents the aerial chariot

Pushpaka of the Hindu gods. His Majesty mounts steps at the rear, reappearing at the level of the Emerald Buddha. He removes the hot season garments. With a cloth, following the traditions of long-gone kings, His Majesty now begins carefully, painstakingly, to wipe the smooth jade of the image. At this moment, from within the pavilion outside, the music explodes in a jubilation of xylophones, horn, and drums. Like the summons of a giant conch shell, the horn crescendos intermittently. Once polished, the Emerald Buddha is crowned with headpiece of a golden *ushnisha* - one of the thirty-two marks characterizing the Buddha's extraordinary nature as described in Buddhist scripture - with gentle curls beset with sapphires, topped with an enamelled flame finial. There follows a robe of gold decorated with rubies. His Majesty smoothes it down, ensuring that it sits well, keeping one hand upon the image's shoulder while, with the other, adjusting the wrap.

Down below, on the geometrically patterned marble floor of the *ubosoth* where the officials of state and religion wait, candles are ritually passed in a circle, their flames visible to the spectators outside.

The rain has stoped; blue is returning to the sky. The guards allow some of those waiting to move into the enclosure between the *ubosoth* and the low boundary walls. The music ends abruptly and His Majesty descends from the hall. In former times, only princes and officials were so blessed, but today the King of Thailand sprinkles lustral water upon all of his subjects who reflect the joy of their belief in the benevolence of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King RamaIX, and in the enduring sanctity of the Emerald

Buddha.

The other example of the Animistic-Buddhist rituals takes place in *Wat Phra Kaeo* is the "Buddha *pisek*" ceremony. It is carried out in the *ubosot* about three times a year according to necessity. During the ceremony many replicas of the Emerald Buddha image, varied in size and type, are carried into the *ubosot* and charged with power from the Emerald Buddha by rites performed by both Buddhist monks and Court Brhamins. They are in attendance to the King or the Prince because it is a Royal sponsored ceremony. (See Apendix 1.) This ceremony is performed especially when money is needed for the building or renovating of the temple. This is raised by selling Buddha images. Special Royal permission is needed from the King for this ceremony. The details of this ritual can be seen in a leaflet distributed by the Temple (See Appendix 1.)

Chakri Day and the King's Birthday are also considered as Animistic-Buddhist rituals relating to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Chakri Day commemorates the founding of the Chakri Dynasty by King Rama I who established Bangkok as the capital city on 6 April 1782. According to Gerson (1996), today, Chakri Day ceremonies are led by the King, accompanied by the Queen, members of the Royal Family, palace dignitaries, and government officials. Respects are paid to the Buddha, the Chakri Dynasty, and its founder, in that order. The King first visits the Temple of the Emerald Buddha and pays respect to the Emerald Buddha in the *ubosot*. Next, he visits the Royal Pantheon and pays respect to his ancestors' statues. Thirdly, the King goes to the foot of the Memorial Bridge and pays respect to a bronze statue of Rama I sitting on an elevated throne overlooking the city of Bangkok. A small alter is set up for the occasion with candles and auspicious floral arrangements. The King lights the candles to pay respect to his forebears. In this ritual, the Buddhist part is when the King pays respect to the Emerald Buddha and the Animistic part is when the King worships his ancestors' statues.

The King's Birthday is celebrated for three days, from 3 to 5 December, with rituals that include Buddhist prayers, merit-accumulating ceremonies

(Buddhist rites), and a visit to the Chakri ancestral hall (paying homage to ancestors seems animistic because it is a behavior that shows a belief in a living soul to inanimate objects). On the first day a military parade is held at the Royal Plaza reaffirming all soldiers' allegiance to the King; a formal ceremony reminiscent of Siam's ancient glory. On the second day the King and Queen preside over the consecration rites of a new Buddha image cast (performed by monks and Brahmin priests) to mark the King's birthday and the reign of each Chakri Monarch. On the King's birthday, Their Majesties perform religious rites at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Buddhist rites). The King chooses the occasion of his birthday for the promotions of officials, a time when prisoners may be granted pardons and the paying of homage before the ancestors' statues in the Royal Pantheon (animistic). A feature of the Birthday festival, as distinct from the *Chatra Mangala*, is that the King, on the day following his birthday, takes a ceremonial bath, attended by the Brhamans, who accompany the proceedings with the usual ceremonial music, while the Army and Navy fire a salute of twenty-one guns. This ceremonial bath is not regarded as an *abhiseka* ⁽¹⁵⁾, but rather as a Hindu bath of purification. Here one can see the Hindu element. However it occupies only a small part of the ritual of the King's Birthday. The main part lies in Buddhist rites and ancestors' worship. So the King's birthday is classified into this category.

4.3 Religious Complexity in *Wat Phra Kaeo*: People's behaviors

This section attempts to classify people's behaviors into three categories as follows; Buddhist behaviors, animistic-Buddhist behaviors, Buddhist-Hindu behaviors. The data of people's behaviors was collected through fieldwork carried out in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The fieldwork was conducted by means of in depth interviews and participant observation at *Wat Phra Kaeo*. The period of field data collection lasted from October 1999 to January 2000. I visited the Temple many times at random intervals and stayed there for about 5 hours each time from the hours of 9:00 am to 2:00 p.m. Particularly from October to November 1999, I visited the Temple every *wan phra* and stayed there for about 5 hours each time from the hours of 9:00 am to 2:00 p.m. Moreover, I observed people's behaviors on special occasions such as *Ohk Pansaa*, *Loy Krathong* (surprisingly a smaller number of people than usual on *Loy Krathong*). I also did surveys on the days of changing the costume of the Emerald Buddha from the rainy to the winter season. Finally, I visited the Temple again in February 2000 and made an interview with an official guide of the Temple to get more information about the Buddhist ceremonies that takes place in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

I carefully chose the research places to observe people, as follows;

- (1) inside the *ubosot* (sitting with the people in front of the Emerald Buddha image)
- (2) at the rear of the *ubosot* (sitting with the people in the merit-making ceremony on *wan phra*)
- (3) around the offering area contains the replicas of the Emerald Buddha
in front of the *ubosot*
- (4) at the northern side of the *ubosot* (sitting on the ground with the people waiting for the Prince to come for the ceremony of changing the costume of the Emerald Buddha)
- (5) around the Ho Phra Monthien Tham (the Supplementary Library)

These were selected as the observation places especially where people gather for their religious activities in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

And, the points observed are;

① People.

What are they like? Their features, clothes, ages, and so on.

② People's behaviors.

How people behave at each place?

Inside the *ubosot*, how people give offerings, how people pay respect to the image, what they do after praying, what they do before leaving, how they sit on the floor and what they do before entering the *ubosot*? etc.

③ Offerings.

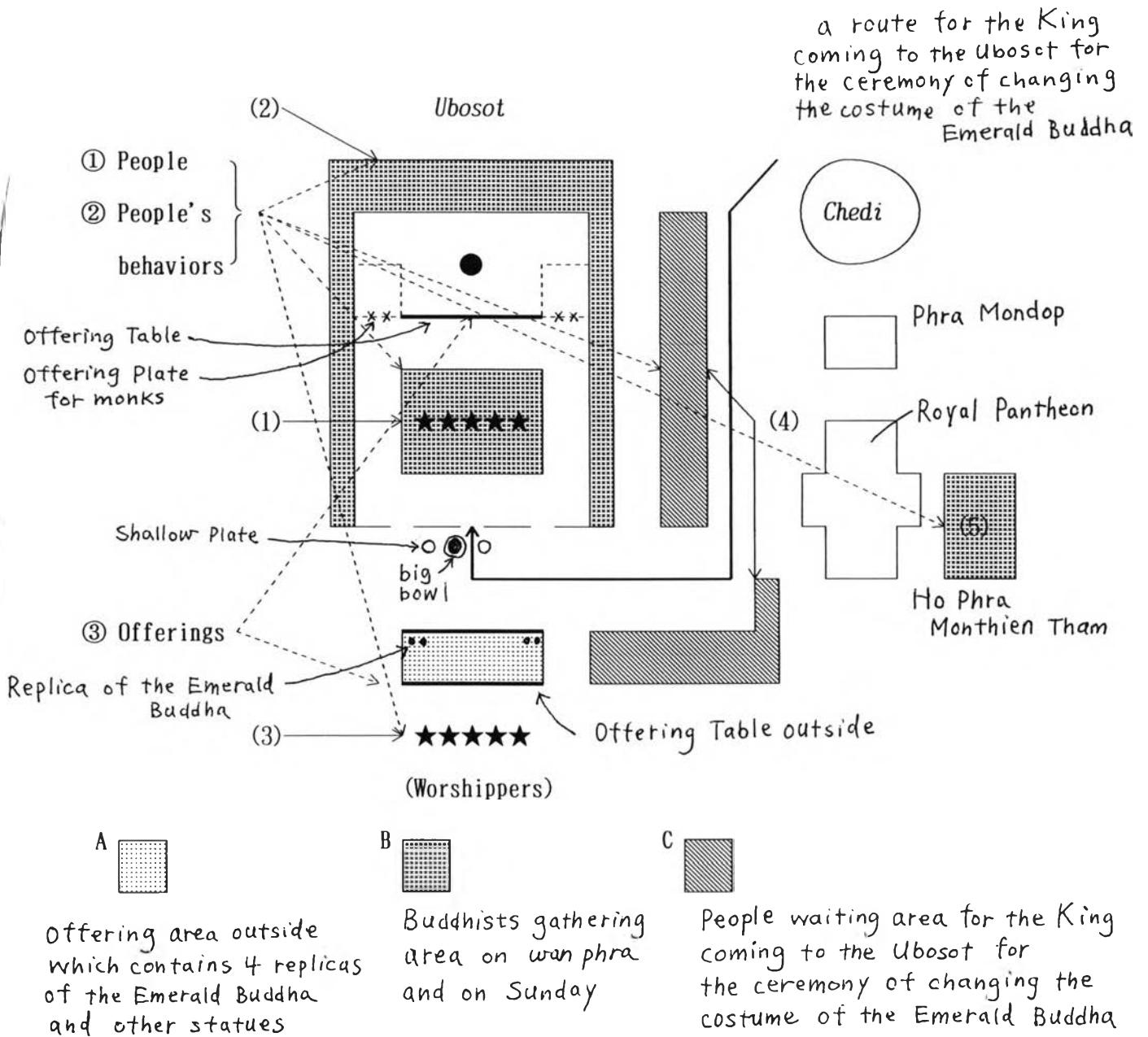
What are the offerings people give to the Emerald Buddha?

(The offerings can reflect their beliefs.)

The fieldwork settings are summarized and shown below in Figure 16 on the following page.

During the period of the fieldwork informant interviews were also carried out with more than 60 people who visited to the Temple. Short interviews were first carried out with a larger number of people and later changed to be in-depth interviews with a smaller number of people to get to know people's beliefs. Because my limited knowledge of the Thai language, I asked two English and Japanese speaking Thai ladies to help me interview Thai people. The official English speaking guide of the Temple also helped me get information about the rituals at the Emerald Buddha Temple. The questions given to the people are shown on page 91.

(Figure 15) The Fieldwork Settings



4.3.1 Buddhist behaviors

Through observation it was interesting to notice that most of the people visiting *Wat Phra Kaeo* tend to be Buddhist. Many people who visit the Temple of the Emerald Buddha on *wan phra*, especially older women, tend to dress in white with a white blouse, a white traditional Thai skirt and a long white cloth (*sabai*) on their shoulder. Some people wear a combination of a white lace blouse and a colour traditional Thai skirt or modern skirt. White is said to be symbolic of purity and the colour of Buddhism, so putting on white items on *wan phra* is to be a Buddhist behavior observed in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

On *wan phra* we can see Buddhist patterns of behavior both inside and outside the *ubosot*, i.e., in front of the Emerald Buddha image inside the *ubosot* and at the rear outside the *ubosot*. (See the area A in Figure 16 on page 77, and see Picture 5 and 6 as well.) Filling up the areas people listen to the sermons (*taed*) and chants (*suat mon*), which are given in the morning and the afternoon from the hours of 8:30 to 15:00 by a monk or monks invited to *Wat Phra Kaeo* on *wan phra*. People also practice meditation under the monk's instruction. Two monitor screens (televisions) are set for the people at the rear of the *ubosot* so they can see the monk chanting inside the *ubosot*. At the rear of the *ubosot*, two "gan-taed" s (tray or money tree used to collect donated money) are placed so that people can give donation to the monks. (See Picture 7.) These ritual activities are performed usually at the *ubosot* on *wan phra*. But, on the day before the ceremony of changing the costume of the Emerald Buddha, the activities take place at the Ho Phra Monthien Tham. Also every Sunday, Thai Buddhists gather at the Ho Phra Monthien Tham (open to the Buddhist public on Sunday from 8:30 to 15:00), where, in the afternoon, they listen to sermons and chantings from an invited monk and practice meditation with the monk there.

Apart from the ritual activities on *wan phra* and Sunday, one can also see

Buddhist behavior everyday when people come on to pay respect to the Emerald Buddha in the *ubosot*.

First, we should notice the sitting manner. The following four patterns were observed regarding the manner of people sitting on the floor of the *ubosot* in front of the Emerald Buddha. First is the way people sit on their knees. This is considered to be the most formal position. Second is the way people sit with their legs pointing back to the right or the left. This is called "*nang phap phiap*" and it is the most proper position and more than 70% of the people observed in the *ubosot* sit on the floor in this manner. Third is the way people half-sit half-stand on their knees. Fourth is the way people sit with both legs closed. This is called "*nang khat sa-mathi*" and considered to be meditation posture.

Secondly, we should observe the salutation manners to the Emerald Buddha. Basically, people bow three times in front of the image. However, there are various patterns of bowing as follows. Some people place both hands flat onto the floor and bow three times with the forehead almost touching the floor. Some people, after bowing, place both hands over their heads and slide their hands down to the back of their heads. Sometimes it looks as if the person is having water sprayed upon his or her head. Some people, while bowing, also murmur some words making wishes to the Emerald Buddha. According to Segaller (1997), bowing deeply three times with the head almost touching the floor is called "*grahp*". He says that this is the salutation which all monks (and some lay people) perform in front of the Buddha image in a temple during any kind of ceremony. The significance of the threefold repetition is that the first salutation is to pay respect to the Buddha. The second to his teachings and the third to the *Sangha*. Monks also "*grahp*" before meditation if the place where they are meditating contains a Buddha image. This type of *grahp* is known as the five-point prostration (*benchanga-pradit*); the five points to touch the ground are forehead, the two hands and two knees.

After paying respect to the Emerald Buddha some people leave the *ubosot*. Others may continue sitting on the floor staying for a while looking at the Emerald Buddha or at the mural paintings in the *ubosot*. Some may stay on to meditate. I also saw some people chanting with and without a book of sermon.

Thirdly, we should notice the offerings, whether it is *wan phra* or not, throughout the year, a set of three; lotus flowers, a yellow candle and three incenses (with a small piece of gold paper) is the most popular offering to the Emerald Buddha image. This popular set is sold at the entrances of the *Wat Phra Kaeo*. On Buddhist holy days and Sundays the Emerald Buddha Temple is full of flowers, incense and candles at the offering area, especially outside the *ubosot*. (See Picture 8 and 9.) According to an official guide at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the flowers are for the monks, a candle for the Buddha's enlightenment (yellow colour represents the enlightenment), and each of the three incense for the Buddha's teachings; wisdom, purity and love and kindness. There is variation in the interpretation of the meanings of the three offerings. A woman I interviewed explained to me that one incense is offered to the Buddha, one to the Buddha's teachings, and one to the monks. She said that the flowers were given because they smelled nice; especially lotus flowers which also have deep meanings in Buddhism. She offered a candle because its smoke would reach heaven in the sky.

When I asked, "How often do you come to the *Wat Phra Kaeo*?" or "How many times a month?", surprisingly, most people sitting around the *ubosot* listening to the monks on *wan phra* answered that they visited the *Wat Phra Kaeo* regularly.

4 times a month on every *wan phra* to pay respect to the Emerald Buddha and to listen to the monks. Accordingly one can say that the Temple of the Emerald Buddha functions as a Buddhist center in the same way as other *wats* in Thailand. However, it is interesting to note that most people who came to *Wat Phra Kaeo* also visited their own "*wat*" near their houses to make merit or give offerings to monks early in the morning before coming to the *Wat Phra Kaeo*. They also said that since they gave some food to the monks at their own *wat*

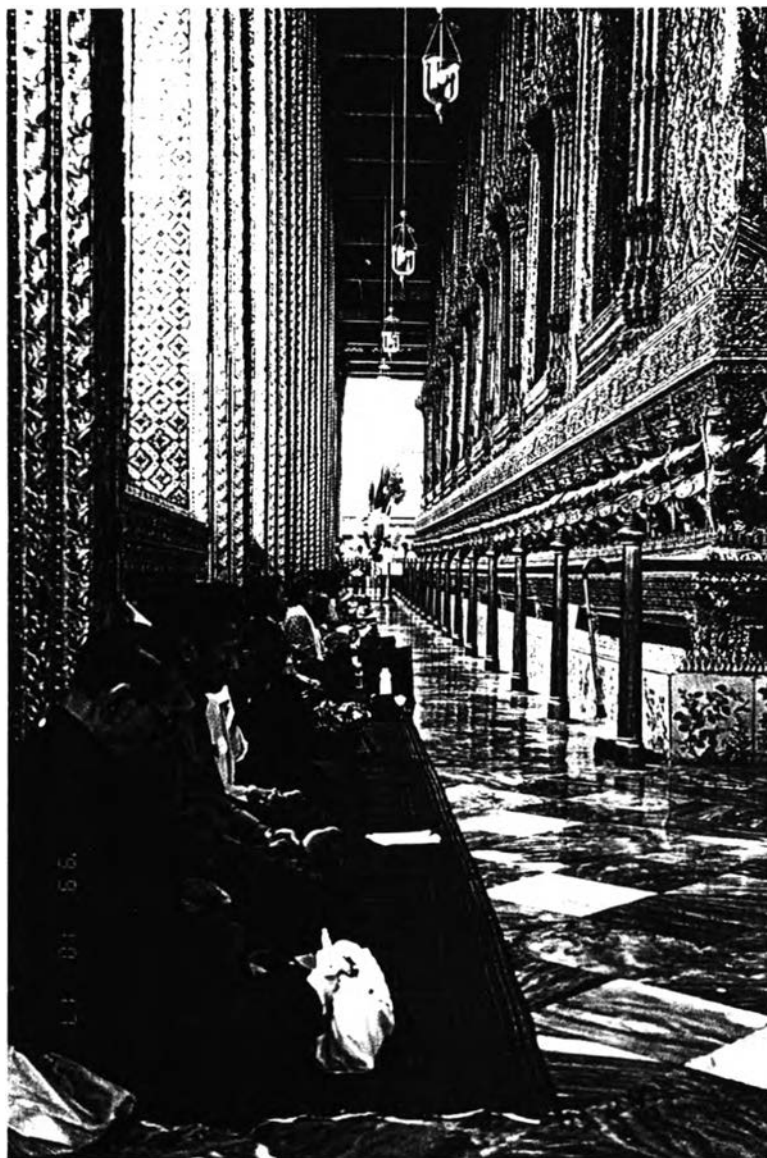
before coming to *Wat Phra Kaeo*, they simply gave a bunch of flowers, incense and candles at the Emerald Buddha Temple.

People who answered that they did not come regularly showed their views as follows; for example, a middle aged woman said that she came to *Wat Phra Kaeo* for the first time bringing her children (a three year old boy and a six year old girl) to make merit (*tham bun*), and a young woman working as a maid said that her aunt, who comes regularly to *Wat Phra Kaeo* on *wan phra*, persuaded her to come and she came to the Temple for the second time.

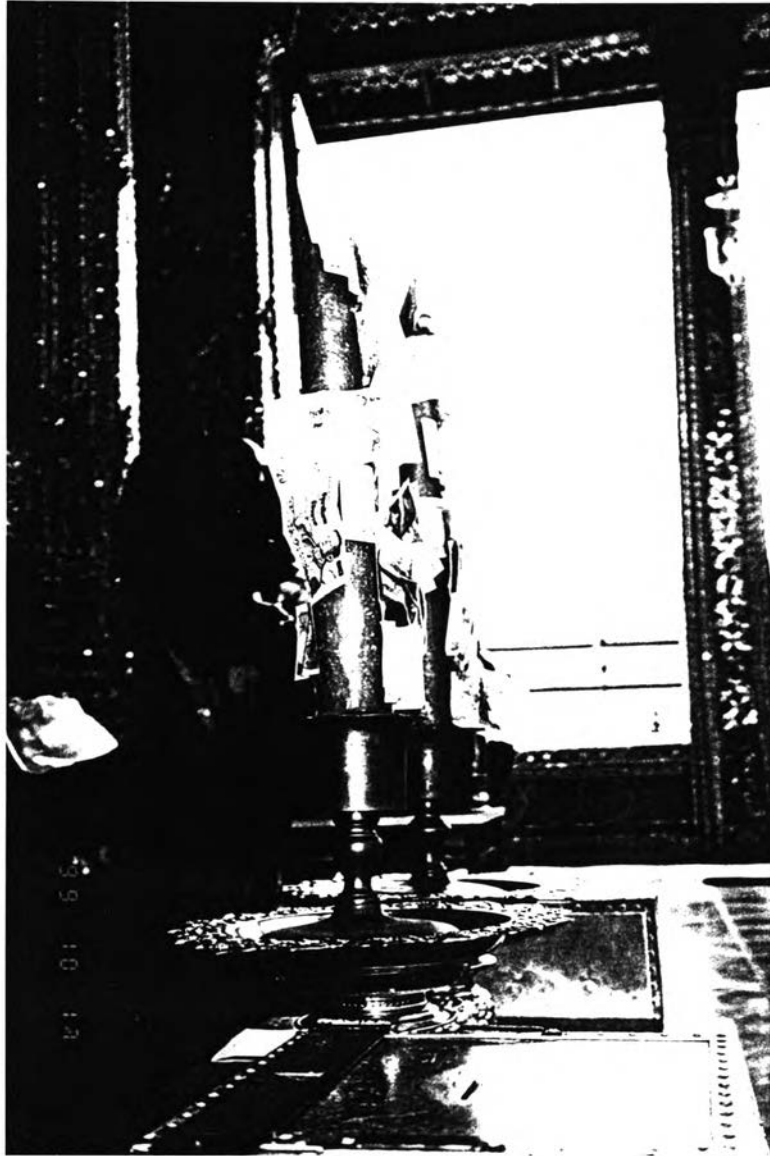
Interestingly, some old women who came to listen to monks regularly at *Wat Phra Kaeo* said that they visited the Temple of the Emerald Buddha together with their friends everytime. I got the impression that some people gather at the Temple not only for their Buddhist purpose but also for social purposes.

(Picture 5) At the rear of the *ubosot* on *wan phra*





(Picture 6) At the side of the *ubosot* on *wan phra*



(Picture 7) "Gan-Taed"s



(Picture 8) Around the offering area outside on *wan phra* ①



(Picture 9) Around the offering area outside on *wan phra* ②



4.3.2 Animistic-Buddhist behaviors

As described in 4.3.1, we can see that people's activities on *wan phra* at *Wat Phra Kaeo* seem to be Buddhist, however, one can observe people's animistic activities as well. The first example is people's behavior before entering the *ubosot*. As Figure 16 shows, in front of the main entrance, there is a big brass bowl⁽¹⁶⁾ and a pair of shallow plates. The bowl is filled with water and there are lotus flowers on the shallow plates. Before entering the *ubosot*, people stop in front of the big bowl, take a lotus flower from the shallow plate and dip it into the water in the bowl. Then they bless themselves with this holy water by waving it over their heads. (See Picture 10.) I asked a staff member of the Temple about the source of water in the big bowl. He told me that during the ceremony of changing the costume of the Emerald Buddha, the sacred water was made to be used for this ceremony. After the ceremony the rest of water would be kept inside the Temple. Everyday a portion of water is taken and mixed with the new water and becomes the sacred water in the big bowl. He said that 1/4 of it came from the sacred water made at the ceremony and 3/4 from the new source. One may notice that one can look up at the Emerald Buddha from the area where the big brass bowl is placed. People believe that the water in the brass bowl is holy and sacred and gives the impression that the water is sacred because the brass bowl is just in front of the Emerald Buddha, if we draw a direct line from the Emerald Buddha to the bowl.

The second example is the people's manner of offering a bottle of water to the Emerald Buddha image. A bottle of water is often seen as an offering to the Emerald Buddha image both inside and outside the *ubosot*. It is interesting to see some people drink the water after paying respect to the Emerald Buddha with the bottle in their hands over the heads. This manner shows the people's belief that the water in the bottle has turned sacred and it is sacred to drink the water. Such behavior is animistic.

A third example is the people's manner of paying respect to the Emerald

Buddha image. As mentioned in the previous section, people bow three times in front of the Emerald Buddha. Between the bows some people put their hands over the head which looks as if they are sprinkling the water over their heads. This is not the same as the sacred water. It is very similar to the manner of sprinkling the sacred water on the heads, and this behavior also reflects their belief in the sacredness from the Emerald Buddha image.

Finally is the behavior of people drinking sacred water from the bottle of lustral water given to people after the ceremony of changing the costume of the Emerald Buddha on 23rd November, 1999. When the Prince had left the Temple of the Emerald Buddha after the changing of the costume ceremony, I happened to see people almost fighting over the sacred water given by an official after the ceremony. Surprisingly, people had already prepared an empty bottle or a plastic bag in their hands. As soon as the official came out of the *ubosot* with the sacred water, about ten to fifteen people gathered around him. When the official gave the sacred water to a woman, people rushed towards her and surrounded and asked her to share the water. She did share the water with other people, who became very happy. (See Picture 11.) One could observe the animistic beliefs in people's behavior concerning the sacred water as mentioned above. In addition, the indepth interviews with people also reflect people's strong animist beliefs. Three examples of the indepth interviews will be introduced to portray people's animistic beliefs and behaviors.

The following fifteen interview questions are given to people;

1. What brought you to *Wat Phra Kaeo* today?
 2. Why didn't you go to the community *wat* today?
 3. What is your offering to the Emerald Buddha today?
 4. Why that offering? Are there any special meanings in it?
 5. How often do you come to *Wat Phra Kaeo*? How many times a month?
 6. Where are you from? Where are you living now?
 7. What is your job?
 8. What about your family?
 9. In which occasion or for what do you come to *Wat Phra Kaeo*?
 10. The Emerald Buddha is often said to be a special.
Why do you think it is special?
 11. What kind of wish did you make to the Emerald Buddha today?
 12. Have you ever made wishes to the Emerald Buddha before? If you have, what are they?
 13. If your wish is (had been) granted, do (did) you make offerings to the *Phra Kaeo (Ke Bon)*? What do you think will happen to you if you don't do it?
 14. Where else do you visit when you want to make wishes?
 15. Do you have amulets with you today?
- (9~ 15 are used only for the indepth interviews.)

I interviewd more than 50 people and carried out the indepth interviews with 10 people; two men and eight women ranging from 31 to 77 year old. There is a tendency for more Thai women to visit *Wat Phra Kaeo* than men, and more older people visit the Temple than younger ones. Due to this fact more interviews were carried out with older women.

Three Examples of the Indepth Interviews;

Example 1;

Old woman (more than sixty year old) who visits *Wat Phra Kaeo* regularly on *wan phra*. She dressed in white. She has a husband and two children. She is already retired, and their children give her pocket money. The interview shows that she believed in the Emerald Buddha.

Question: Why do you think that the Emerald Buddha is special?

Answer: Because the Emerald Buddha is holy and it reputedly grants one's wish.

Question: What is your offering to the Emerald Buddha today?

Answer: Money. A friend of mine asked the Emerald Buddha to grant her the wish to win the first prize of lottery by offering a small amount of money, but her wish wasn't granted. I think that the Emerald Buddha would not grant such a big wish with such a small amount of money.

Question: If your wish is granted by the Emerald Buddha, will you have to make offerings to the Emerald Buddha? What do you think will happen to you if you didn't do it?

Answer: I would never forget to *kae bon* (make offerings) and I think that if I do not keep the promises, something very bad would happen to me.

Question: Have you ever made a wish to the Emerald Buddha before?

Answer: Yes. I made a wish to the Emerald Buddha that he watched over my house and my family people in safe condition while the house was being built with an offering of some money. After my house was safe throughout the building period, I offered to the Emerald Buddha 1,000 baht.

Question: Do you have amulets with you today?

Not today, but I have amulets at my house.

Example 2;

Middle aged women who a is high school teacher at St. John's. She looks rich with three or four rings of precious stone on her fingers. She said that she came to *Wat Phra Kaeo* one or two times a month to practice meditation or listen to the monk's sermon. On that day she brought her students to *Wat Phra Kaeo* to tell them about the Thai history and culture as portrayed in the royal Temple.

Question: Why do you think that the Emerald Buddha is special?

Answer: Because the Emerald Buddha is a god for the King and brings good luck to the people.

Question: What is your offering to the Emerald Buddha today?

Answer: Money. It would be useful for repairing and keeping the Temple.

Question: What kind of wish did you make to the Emerald Buddha today?

Answer: Good luck for my country and power for the King.

Question: Have you ever made a wish to the Emerald Buddha before?

Answer: Yes. I made a wish to the Emerald Buddha for my promotion.

Question: If your wish is granted by the Emerald Buddha, will you have to make offerings to the Emerald Buddha? What do you think what happens to you if you didn't do it?

Answer: Sure, I believe that bad luck or disaster would happen to me if I break my promise.

Question: Do you have amulets with you today?

Answer: Yes, some. I have a replica of the Emerald Buddha which is exactly the

same in size as the real one at home. It is placed in my bed room and it wears the costume decorated with precious stones like diamonds. I would never change the costume because the person who can do such a thing is only the King.

Example 3;

Fifty year old man who is originally from Korat, working for a construction company and staying in Laos. He has two children. He visits the Temple of the Emerald Buddha when he stays in Bangkok (he usually goes to a temple in Supanburi). He believes in the Emerald Buddha. He came to *Wat Phra Kaeo* to keep his promise with the Emerald Buddha that day.

Question: Why do you think that the Emerald Buddha is special?

Answer: Because the Emerald Buddha is for the Kings.

Question: What is your offering to the Emerald Buddha today?

Answer: Fifty eggs, lotus flowers, incenses, candles, garlands and fruits.

Because my wish was granted by the Emerald Buddha. I could wish a big contract for construction in Vientiane and Nong Khai with the government after competing with other companies.

Question: Have you ever made a wish to the Emerald Buddha before?

Answer: Yes. I asked the Emerald Buddha for a baby. When I finally had a baby, I was ordained for a week.

Question: If your wish is granted by the Emerald Buddha, will you have to make offerings to the Emerald Buddha? What do you think what happens to you if you didn't do it?

Answer: Sure, I believe that bad luck would happen to fall on me if I break the promise.

Question: Where else do you visit when you have a special wish?

Answer: If it is impossible to visit *Wat Phra Kaeo*, I visit a temple in Supanburi or Ayudhaya. As for the *Erawan* shrine, I just "wai" to *Erawan* shrine, but never make a wish.

Question: Do you have amulets with you today?

Answer: Yes, an amulet of a *phra*, *garuda* and King Chulalongkorn.

I made the indepth interviews with ten people including three examples introduced above, and it is interesting to note that most people answered in the same way to Question 10, 13 and 15. (See page 91.)

People answered Question 10 that they considered the Emerald Buddha special because it is the best Buddha image in Thailand, or it reputedly grants one's wish, or it is special for the King.

100% of people gave me the same answer to Question 13. They think that they have to, sooner or later, make offerings to the Emerald Buddha when their wishes were granted. They believe that something bad will happen to them if they don't *kae bon*.

Concerning Question 15, an old woman said that she happened not to have any amulets with her that day, but nine people out of ten answered that they had one or more amulets with them.

One can also see people's Animistic view in the offerings people give to the Emerald Buddha.

Except the typical Buddhist offerings such as flowers, incense and candles, more and more animistic offerings are observed at the temple of the Emerald Buddha. Such offerings reflect people's beliefs in supernatural power of the Emerald Buddha. Observing the offerings, one arrives at the understanding that people treat the Emerald Buddha as if it is a "phi" (spirits). Below I summarized the offerings people gave to the Emerald Buddha. Concerning the offerings, one should be mindful that there are two kinds, to make a wish (*bon*) or just to pay respect (not *bon*) to the Emerald Buddha.

Concerning the Offerings to the Emerald Buddha, below are some examples people offer to the Emerald Buddha;

1. The Case of an old woman;

She offered 99 boiled eggs to the Emerald Buddha on the offering table placed outside the *ubosot* ⁽¹⁷⁾, because her wish was granted by the Emerald Buddha. She promised 99 boiled eggs when she made a wish. She believes that Laotian people like boiled eggs, so the Emerald Buddha does because it came from Laos. She put incense on one of the eggs to let the Buddha know that the offering was from her.

2. The Case of a middle aged woman;

She made offerings of sticky rice, fermented fish and grilled chicken to the Emerald Buddha. She says that these items are also popular because the image came from Laos.

3. The Case of a Chinese-Thai family (mother, father and daughter);

They offered red boiled eggs (more than fifty) to the Emerald Buddha because the mother was cured of an illness. They promised red boiled eggs to the Emerald

Buddha when they asked it for her recovery. They believe that Laotian people like boiled eggs, so the Emerald Buddha does because it came from Laos. Red is an auspicious colour for Chinese people.

4. The Case of an old Chinese-Thai woman and a middle aged Thai woman;

They gave a bottle of water to the Emerald Buddha. An old Chinese-Thai woman put it on the offering table outside the Ubosot, and a middle aged Thai woman put it on the table inside. The old Chinese-Thai woman drank the water after she offered it to the Emerald Buddha. It was because she believed that the water had turned holy. She explained me that offering a bottle of water shows the Emerald Buddha her faithfulness. (water= *naam* in Thai , faithfulness= *naam chai* in Thai)

5. The Case of an older Chinese-Thai woman;

She made an offering of a piece of gold-yellowish paper. She said that the paper was a substitute for gold. She asked the Emerald Buddha for her health while offering it. After offering it she held the paper over the fire of candle and burned it because she believed that her wish would reach the heaven along with the rising smoke.

6. The Case of two Chinese-Thai people;

After they paid respect to the Emerald Buddha by holding a bottle of oil in their hands over their heads, they poured the oil into the fire at the offering area outside the *ubosot*. They believe that keeping the fire burning longer gives them longer lives.

7. The Case of a middle-aged man;

He placed a bouquet of flowers on the table inside the Ubosot just to pay respect to the Emerald Buddha.

8. The Case of a Chinese-Thai forty year old woman;

She offered fruit (persimmons, bananas and *taptims*) to pay respect to the Emerald Buddha. She said that doing so made her feel better (*jaay sabai*).

9. The Case of a thirty-one year old woman nurse at the Mongkut hospital; She offered 99 eggs, a bottle of water, 9 pieces fruit, 9 baht, a set of flowers, incense and candles. Her wish (successful job and study) was granted by the Emerald Buddha.

10. The Case of a middle-aged woman;

She made offerings of 100 eggs, Thai fruit (*lamyai*), Thai sweets, and so on, when her wish was granted. She asked the Emerald Buddha to be present in the Klongtoey slum area where the government had a plan of evacuating the area. She also asked for gold (equivalent to 63,300 baht) to the Emerald Buddha on another occasion, but this later wish has not yet been granted, she said.

11. The Case of the older lady dressed in white; (See Picture 12)

She gave fruit (*maa* and oranges), *pluu* (sweets), a bowl of rice, a cup of water, tobacco and fried eggs. Unfortunately I was unable to interview her.

12. The Case of a seventy year old man who was a local official guarding the boundary (See Picture 13);

He offered oranges, Thai cakes, grilled chicken, sticky rice, 50 boiled eggs, garlands to the Emerald Buddha. He visits the Temple of the Emerald Buddha regularly once a month with offerings and asks the Emerald Buddha for his good health and prosperity.

13. The Case of a woman and her grown up son and daughter;

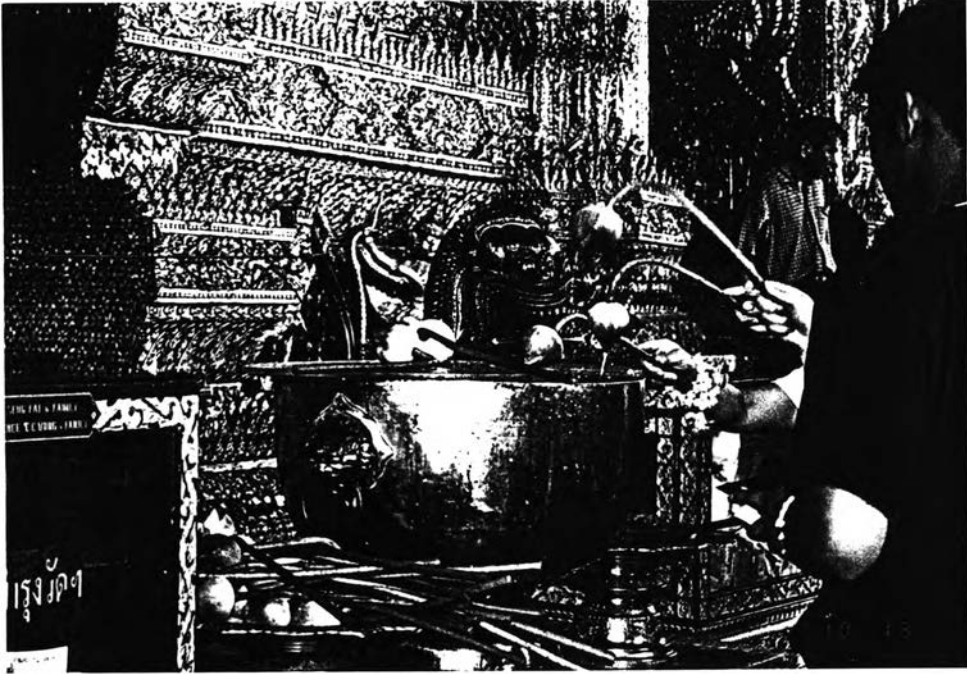
They made offerings of 50 eggs, *naampruk*, Thai desserts. She said that her husband was a driver and she used to work as a maid for a Japanese family.

They came to the Temple because they wanted to build a new house. They asked the Emerald Buddha to watch over the house and her family while it was being built.

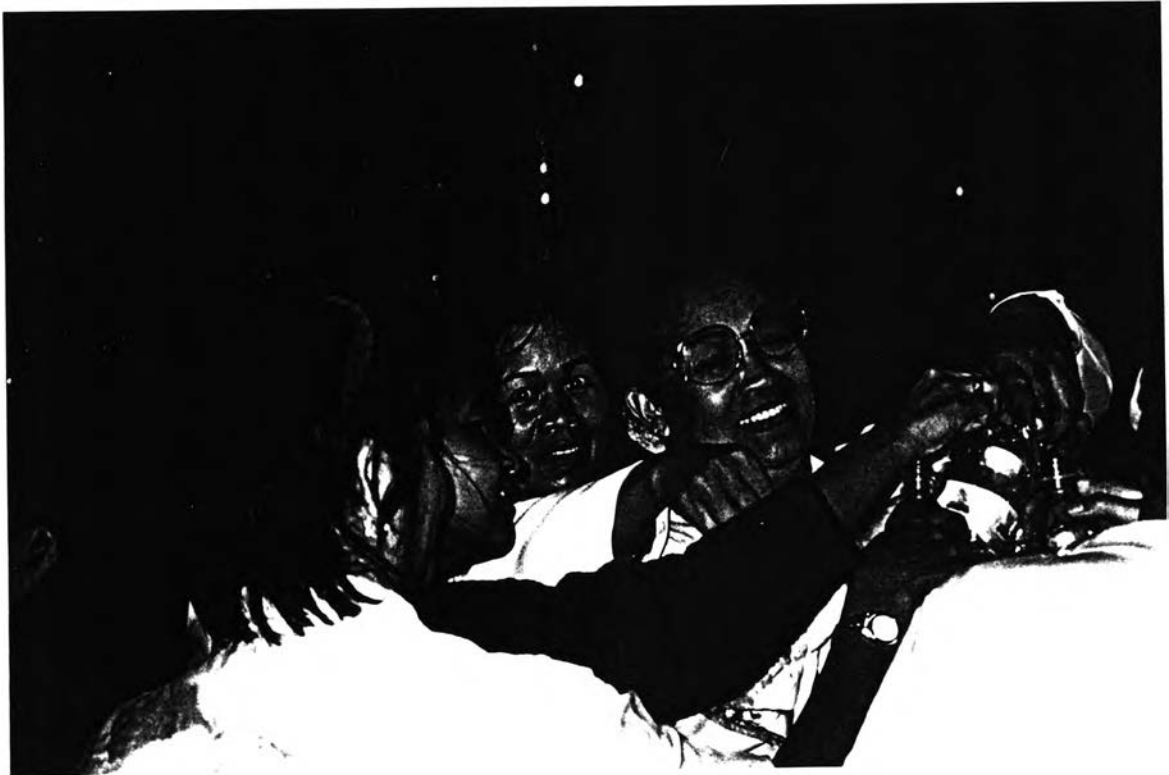
14. The Case of an unmarried middle-aged woman;

She gave Thai fruit, 100 boiled eggs, *naamprick* and sticky rice to the Emerald Buddha, because her wish (promotion) was granted.

Concerning the wishes made to the Emerald Buddha, popular examples are family health and happiness, promotion, success in job, success in study, prosperity, becoming richer, lottery, gold, construction safety, own health and recovery from illness. "Family health and hapiness" is the most popular wish as a result. There is an interesting story about the lottery. My Thai language teacher who helped me interview Thai people told me with excitement that she had won 2,000 baht in the lottery. She explained to me that she bought it near *Wat Phra Karo* on her way to the Temple. She said with a serious expression "I will buy lottery tickets again at the same place before coming here, and if I win some money again I would offer a part of it to the Emerald Buddha."



(Picture 10) Behavior around the big vase



(Picture 11) Behavior around the sacred water



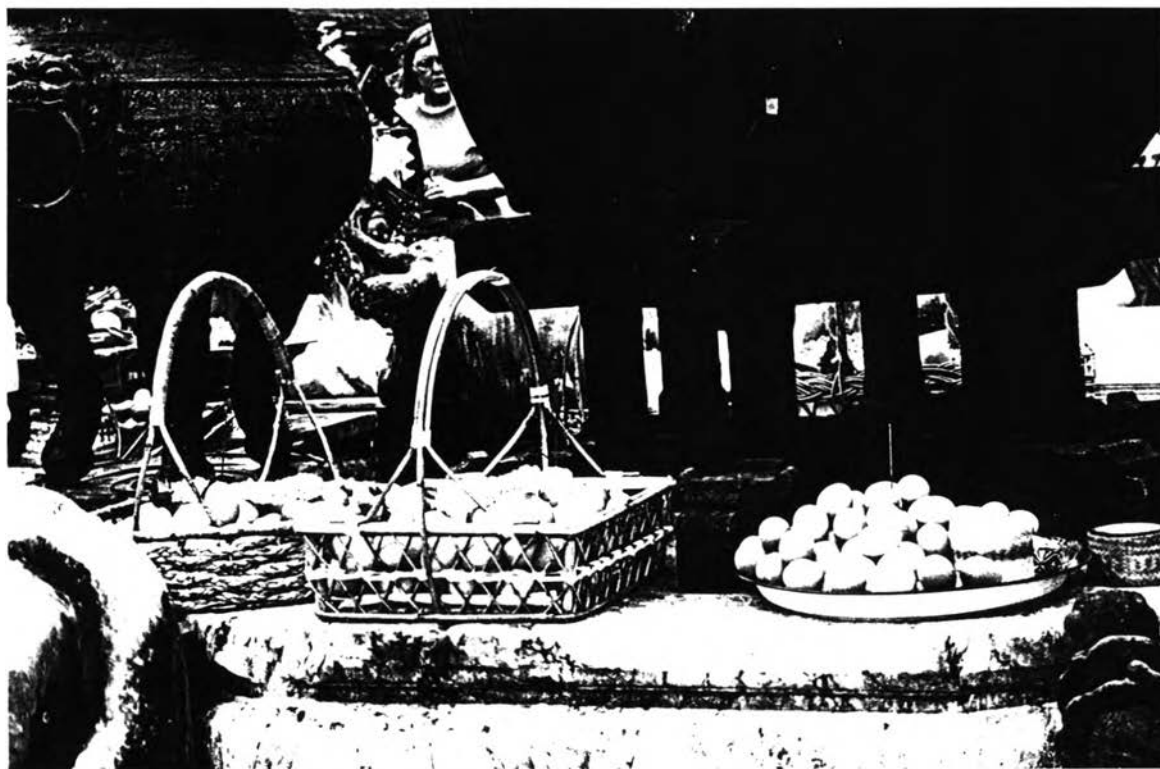
(Picture 12) The Case 11: An example of offering



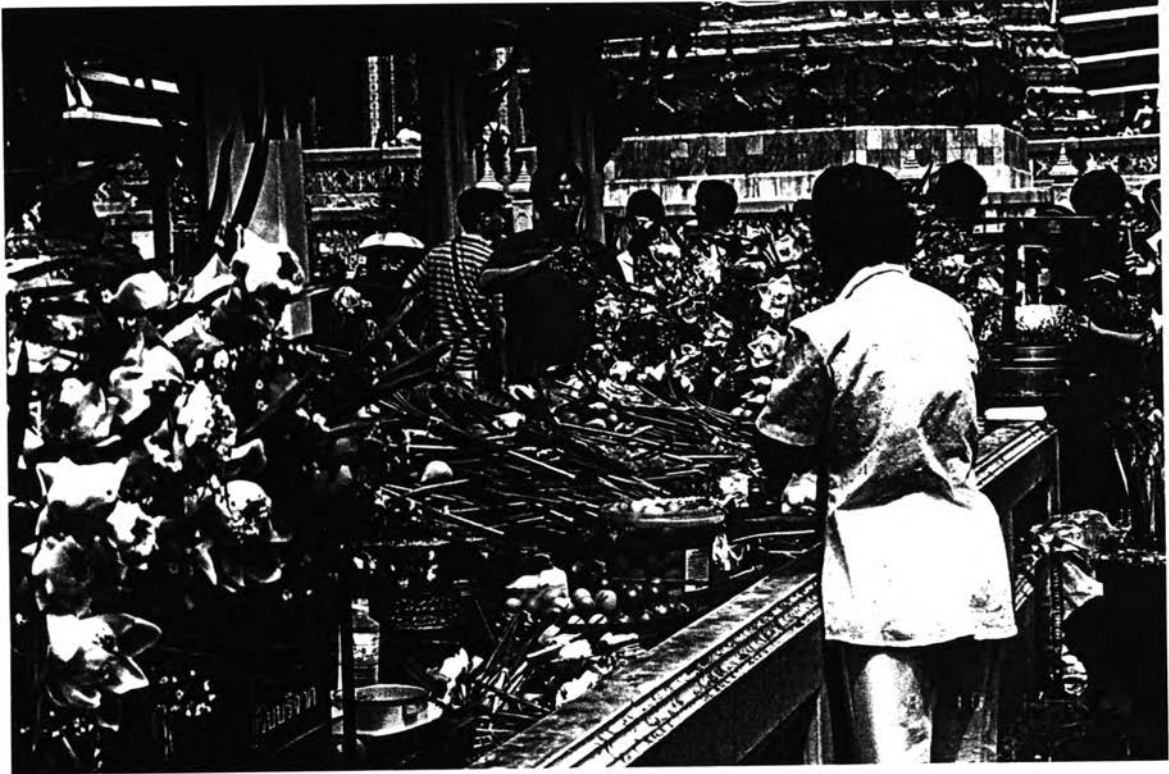
(Picture 13) The Case 12: Seventy years old man and his offerings



(Picture 14) Boiled eggs as offering ①



(Picture 15) Boiled eggs as offering ②



(Picture 16) Boiled eggs as offering ③



(Picture 17) Boiled eggs as offering ④



(Picture 18) Boiled eggs as offering ⑤



(Picture 19) Food as offering

4.3.3 Buddhist-Hindu behaviors

It is thought that most Thai people who visit the Temple of the Emerald Buddha say "I am Buddhist," and "Wat Phra Kaeo is special because it is the temple for the King". Their Buddhist-Hindu behaviors are based on these answers.

When the ceremony of changing the costume of the Emerald Buddha was held last November, I visited the Temple and strongly felt the people's great admiration and respect for the King and other Royal Family Members.

Sitting on the ground along the red carpet (see Figure 16, C.) the crowd was waiting for a long time for the Prince (as an official had informed them that the Prince would come to the ceremony in place of the King). Some were waiting, talking with their friends some were relaxing and some were chanting with a book in hand. The figure of an older lady was very impressive to me. She was involved in chanting with her book (*bot suat mon*) and was sitting facing the *ubosot* which enshrined the Emerald Buddha. She would look up at the Emerald Buddha through an opened window from her sitting position. (See Picture 20.) When the Prince passed by, the people looked up at the Prince. They looked happy and excited to see the Prince. As soon as the Prince entered the *ubosot*, the people changed their position and sat facing towards the *ubosot*. While the Prince was performing the ceremony, they were waiting for the Prince to finish, still facing the *ubosot*. When the prince came out of the *ubosot*, the people changed their position again and sat facing towards the red carpet. The prince walked back to the gate sprinkling lustral water over the people's heads. (See Picture 21.) The people were eager for the holy water to fall on them.

The people's behaviors observed around the Prince reminded me of a Hindu idea of the divine god king which had been adopted into the Thai kingship a long time ago. On that day I felt that this idea has still remained with the Thai people, so I classified them as Buddhist-Hindu behavior patterns.

As mentioned before, the Oath of Allegiance Ceremony was performed in the *ubosot* of *Wat Phra Kaeo* in the past. Although it is discontinued now, I heard that some lay people still used the *ubosot* as the place to make their oath. For example, there was a man who did something bad, and his parents or friends took him to the *ubosot* in *Wat Phra Kaeo* to let him take an oath in front of the Emerald Buddha image never to do that again. This had nothing to do with the Oath of Allegiance Ceremony from the past. Some people just borrowed the idea of the Oath Ceremony. However, the idea seems to have Hindu aspects because the Oath of Allegiance Ceremony has Hindu origins, so it is also classified as Buddhist-Hindu behaviors.



(Picture 20) An impressive older lady waiting for the Prince to come



(Picture 21) The Prince sprinkling lustral water over people