

Thesis Title	A Study of the Architectural design at Wat Phra Chetupon Vimol Mangalaram
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ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes to study and evaluate the architecture of Wat Phra Chetupon Vimolmangalaram in accordance with the art history procedures. The study comprises the historical, architectural, and symbolical approaches.

The historical approach begins with the history of construction which encompasses the social conditions that provide for the motivation to create the particular architectural expression. The major reconstruction of Wat Phra Chetupon occurs 8 years after the establishment of Krung Rattanakosin. The small riverside monastery where Chao Phraya Maha Kasatsuk camped with his troops on his way to subdue the Thonburi unrest was transformed. The social condition of the time necessitates Phra Buddha Yodfa's reformation where the religion of Buddhism provides guiding principles. Krung Rattanakosin is made the center of the Buddhist world view as is apparent in the reorganization to harmonize religions and political ideals.

The architectural study of the physical aspect finds the division of the buildings into two distinct groups in the plan. Boundary walls mark the two areas which contain buildings arranged in different orientations; yet there is an axis to unify the two parts into a whole. The bigger group of buildings located in the inner area exemplifies the centralized organization, with Phra Ubosoth at the focal point surrounded by Phra Viharnat the four directions, and then the galleries. The other group of buildings in the outer area shows the linear organization, with Phra Mondhop in the center flanked by the Sala Kanparian and the Viharn of the Reclining Buddha. The unifying axis is the hypothetical line connecting the focal buildings of the two groups. Phra Maha Chedi is constructed on this axis between Phra Ubosoth and Phra Mondhop. The key architectural value of the primary cluster lies in the construction of Phra Ubosoth with the double galleries as outer boundary, the like of which has not been found. There is depth to the conceptual design of the double galleries of different sizes; the smaller galleries being on the outside with four corners cut off to the corner lines of the big galleries inside, making the double galleries a rectangular

structure with oblique corners. The specific proportions notable in both the plan and the perspectives indicates a meticulous design with special meanings.

The study of the symbolical aspect of the architecture of Wat Phra Chetupon begins with the recorded documents of monastery building in the reign of Phra Buddha Yodfa. The latter part of the dedication of the merit to the gods and men of Monkon Dawipa portrays the contemporary world view. Further research finds such world view expounded in the Trai Bhumi loka Vinichayakatha, a Buddhist literary work newly revived at the time. The book expounds a particular view of the habitable world similar to that of Phya Lithai's Trai Bhumi Phra Ruang, but with greater details. Phra Buddha Yodfa's Trai Bhumi, in its peculiarity, postulates the "landhead" Sisa Pathapi, in the middle of Champu Dawipa, as the site of the Buddha's high seat on which enlightenment occurred. The importance of the seat called Ratanabanlang in the central commanding position is emphasized by surrounding sites of the 6 Maha Sathans, the Uta Maha Sathans, the city region and the rural region; all within the place called Machima Pradesh, the dwelling place of men in Champu Dawipa. Moreover, the Ramakien a literary work to glorify the dignity of the King, is another inspirational source providing decorative motifs, especially for those of the gable panels.

The final part of the study considers the architectural characteristics of Wat Phra Chetupon as an expression of the time and the contemporary, social values and conditions. The main feature of the creativity, that of the double galleries, is traced to the world view of the Trai Bhumi Loka Vinichayakatha as the source of inspiration. Other elements in the centralized organization of the planning confirms the hypothesis that the architecture of Wat Phra Chetupon in the reign of Phra Buddha Yodfa is the materialization of the idea of Machima Pradesh as the center of Champu Dawipa. It is in accordance with the political ideals to establish the new capital of Krung Rattanakosin as the center of the Buddhist religion.

The valuable architecture of Wat Phra Chetupon reflects the creative genius of the builders of early rattanakosin, whose continuous architectural development serves the needs of society at that crucial time in history. The architectural achievement of that transitional time between Ayuthya and Rattanakosin periods must be recorded.