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CHATCHAI PIN-NGEAN : STONE LAYING CEREMONY IN THAI SOCIETY
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 WANDEE B.A., M.A., APINYA BUASUANG ,M.A.,PORNTHIP USUPARAT ,M.A. .
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 The objectives of this study are to examine historical background and characteristics of stone laying ceremony in Thai society, as well as to analyze the process and role of the ceremony in the present day. The integrated methodology employed in this study comprises historical documents, expert interviews, and three case studies. Data are then synthesized to conclude the findings. In addition, the researcher has closely participated in all three case studies as an assistant ritual performer.

Results from the findings show that stone laying ceremony in Thai society is a ritual originating from main pillar raising in housing ceremony which is a typical belief in Thai society, and in deity in Brahmanism, as well as procedures of stone laying ceremony in the European culture. Therefore, stone laying ceremony in Thailand nowadays is a combination of belief in ghosts of the areas, belief in Buddhism, in Brahmanism, and the European belief. The stone laying ceremony in Thai society appeared for the first time in B.E. 2419 as the stone laying ceremony in Buraphabhirom Palace. Since then, the ceremony before constructing buildings has become a meaningful ritual. The characteristics of stone laying ceremony is to scale a model of building area in the ritual area. There are adorned fences demarcating the four corners of the ritual area. Things, used in the ritual, cover two categories : belongings for performing the ritual, and offerings. The former includes foundation stone, foundation box, auspicious wood, golden/otter/silver bricks, and nine-color precious stones. The latter includes tree of welcome ceremony, various kinds of food, desserts, and fruits. These things are required in all due respect substituted things have to be replaced identified in a list, otherwise they cannot be included. Offerings must be read aloud, Thai classical music is performed and food is offered to pay tribute are to deities and, monk chant.

The stone laying ceremony had become a necessity in Thai society especially for building owners in order to give them confidence that their buildings will be completely constructed. The ceremony was to bring prosperity to those who live in the area, and it is possible that this ceremony lasted long according to the old Thai belief.