

Research Title	Concepts and Styles of Buddha Images in The Reign of King Rama 4 - King Rama 7 and Development of Contemporary Sculpture Styles
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The objectives of the research on the concepts and patterns of Buddha images during the reigns of King Rama IV to King Rama VII and the development of contemporary Buddha images are to study the concepts and patterns of Buddha images during the reigns of King Rama IV to King Rama VII and the development of contemporary Buddha images and to offer suggestions for the development of contemporary Buddha images. The research is conducted with the qualitative research method. The research tools include 1) documentary analysis 2) focus group with experts and 3) structured interview with specialists. The research finding shows that during the reigns of King Rama IV to King Rama VII, Thailand received scientific ideas from the West, which resulted in the modification of the style of Buddha images. Influenced by such ideas together with new artisanal knowledge from the West, the art forms in that period represented a harmonious combination as shown in the following styles of Buddha image: 1) the new royal Buddha images created by royal sculptors in the reign of King Rama IV, which, similar to the Lanka style, did not have the “Ushnisha,” or cranial protuberance but still retained the flame-like aura, short ears, and a naturally folded robe 2) the Buddha images that were modeled from records of ancient traditions 3) the Buddha images created by civilians such as artisans and local artists which appeared in various forms 4) the realistic Buddha images with a Western-like appearance 5) the Buddha images that were brought in

from major provinces 6) other variations of Thai traditional Buddha images which were made of enameled gold, silver, bronze, gold plates, jade, cement, and other alloys. There are also contemporary Buddha images which refer to the Buddha images that have been created since the revolution in the reign of King Rama VII until today. The Buddha images in this category have a pluralistic style. In other words, the images still retain the identity of the ancient Buddha image, such as the ChiangSaen style, Sukhothai style, or Gandhara, and conform to the ideal characteristics stated in the “Mahapurisalakkhana” (the 32 signs of a great man) by portraying the Buddha in the sitting position in a triangle frame but also incorporate some modern concepts, such as a realistic Buddhist robe or a subtle appearance of muscles. In general, even though there is a slight reduction in the ideal characteristics, the Buddha images still maintain the core of these characteristics, such as the flame-like aura and the “Ushnisha,” in order to show the differences between the Great Man and an ordinary human, and to give an impression of sacredness. It can be considered that the development in the style of Buddha images emphasizes the beautiful characteristics so that they are more outstanding yet still observe the ideal aesthetic concept. The Buddha images reflect the philosophy of Buddhism of truth seeking from the “Visual Image” to the “Mental Image” The Buddha images can be considered symbols of the propagation of Buddhism that liberates mankind from “Samsara” which is the cycle of life, death, rebirth, and suffering. This is the reason that Buddha images take an excellent physical form, which is perceived as the “Conventional Truth” and when humans practice the teachings, they will be free from the conventional truth and eventually attain the “Absolute Truth”.