



King of Kings : Presentation of the Heroic Image in Royal Barge Procession

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INTRODUCTION

- Royal Ship Lyrics or Royal Barge Procession Chant is the chant in a rhythm to let the rowers of each boat to row the barges in the synchronized manner. Apart from beautiful rhythm, the lyric in a Royal Barge Procession Chant describes the extravaganza of the barges in the procession, praises the King, expresses the worship to Lord Buddha and depicts the beauty of the nature and places along the route of the procession. (Ruenruethai Satchaphan, 2013: 46).



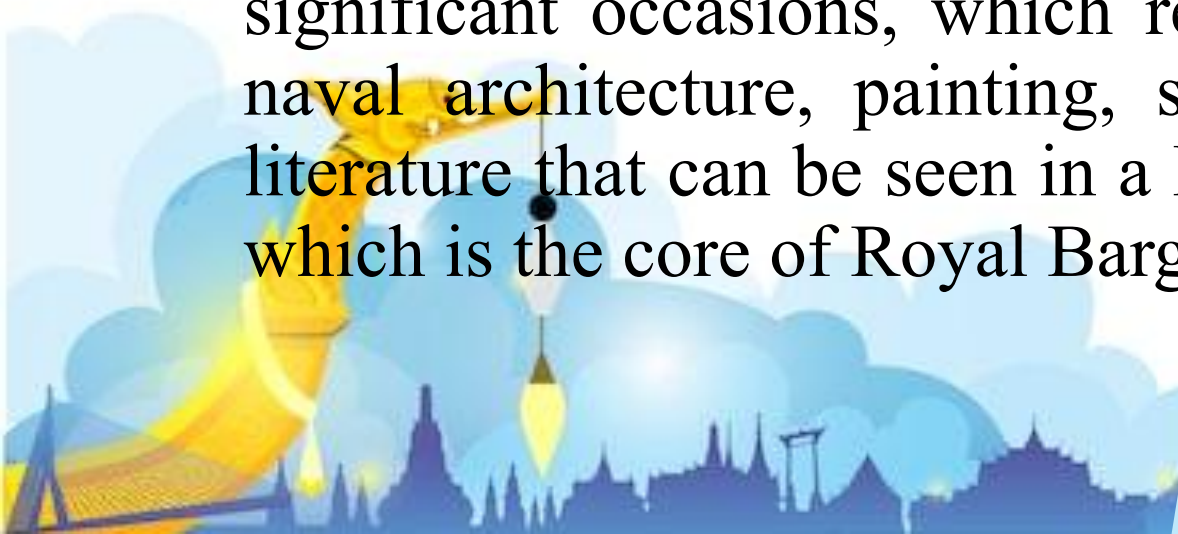
INTRODUCTION

- Barge procession chants can be categorized into 2 types, namely, leisure chant and Royal Barge Procession Chant. However, at present, leisure boat chants have become less significant because people have changed their main transportation mean from waterborne transport to land transport. Hence, leisure boat chants have disappeared from Thai society, leaving alone the Royal Barge Procession Chants which are chanted during a royal water procession. (Sorati Chaisa-at, 2006: 121).



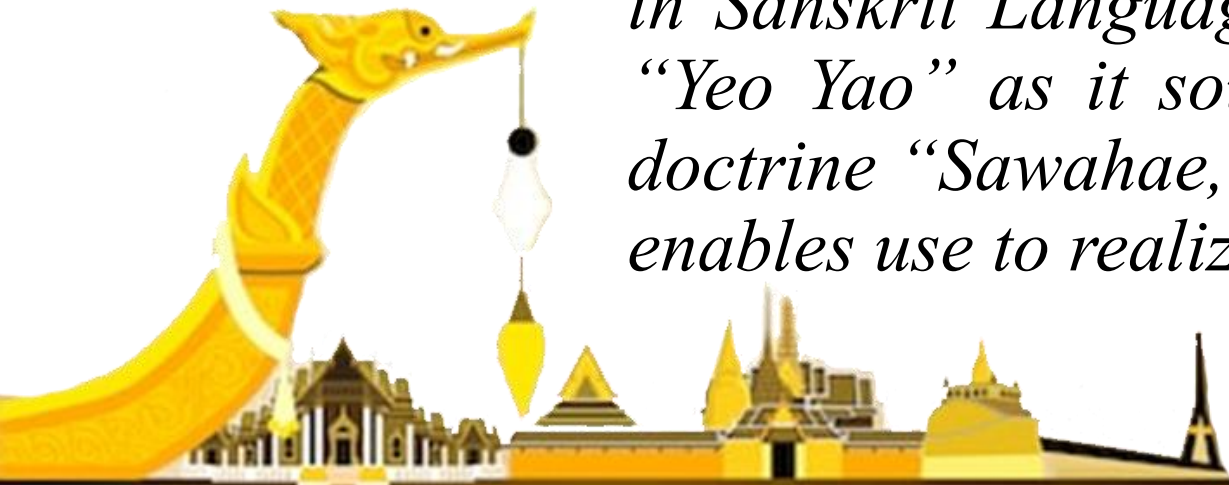
INTRODUCTION

- Therefore, Royal Barge Procession Chant is a unique cultural aspect of Thailand. It can be said that Thailand is the only country in the world that has Royal Barge Procession, especially in the reign of His Majesty King Rama IX (the Father of His Majesty King Rama X, the current king), in which there were Royal Barged Processions arranged throughout the reign when there were significant royal ceremonies and significant occasions, which reflects the wisdoms in the respects of naval architecture, painting, sculpture, performance art, music and literature that can be seen in a Royal Barge Procession Chant or Verse which is the core of Royal Barge Procession.



INTRODUCTION

- The researcher has observed that the Royal Barge Procession of Thailand has received influences from India as Somdet Krommaphraya Damrongrachanuphap hypothesized (cited in Ruenruethai Satchaphan, 2013: 43) :
 - *“Royal Barge Procession Chant is a magical spell in a sorcery doctrine. Originally, the chant might have been sung in Sanskrit Language but time passed by and it was cut to “Yeo Yao” as it sounds nowadays. Still, it is called in the doctrine “Sawahae,” “Chalawahae” and “Mulahae,” which enables use to realize that it originates from India.”*



INTRODUCTION

- From the quoted expression, it can be assumed that the composition of a Royal Barge Procession Verse may be influenced from Sanskrit Language. Nevertheless, in latter eras, Royal Barge Procession Verses are composed in different fashions on terms of contents, forms and purposes. In latter eras, a Royal Barge Procession Verse is composed when there is a special occasion, and has the aims of describing that special occasion and, most importantly, praising His Majesty King Rama IX (the Father of His Majesty King Rama X, the current king). It can be said that the norm of Royal Barge Procession Chant has been changed from describing the extravaganza of the barges and the beauty of the nature to praising the king (Sorati Chaisa-at, 2006: 124), as the following example.



หัตถ์ทิพย์แห่งท่านไ้ กำจัดไข้กำจัดเข็ญ
ถอนทุกข์ขุกลำเค็ญ เย็นทั่วหน้ามาทุกฉนำ
แผ่นดินที่ทรงครอง แผ่นดินทองแผ่นดินธรรม
คราวเข็ญเข้าครอบงำ ทรงดับเข็ญทุกคราวครัน
เหน็ดเหนื่อยนั้นหนักนั้ ทรงงานหนักอเนกอนันต์
วันพักเพียงสักวัน ก็แสนน้อยดูนานเกิน

His hands wipe away all suffering and sickness
Dispels all darkness, bringing to the people light and
coolness.

The Land that he rules becomes a golden land, a just land
Whenever hardship appears, He dispels it with his
hardworking hands.

So much work, so many things and people in need
A day of rest, For Him, a rare thing indeed!



วังทิพย์คือท้องทุ่ง
ร้อนหนาวในราวเนิน
อย่างพระบาทที่ยาตรา
พระเสโทที่ถั่งทัน

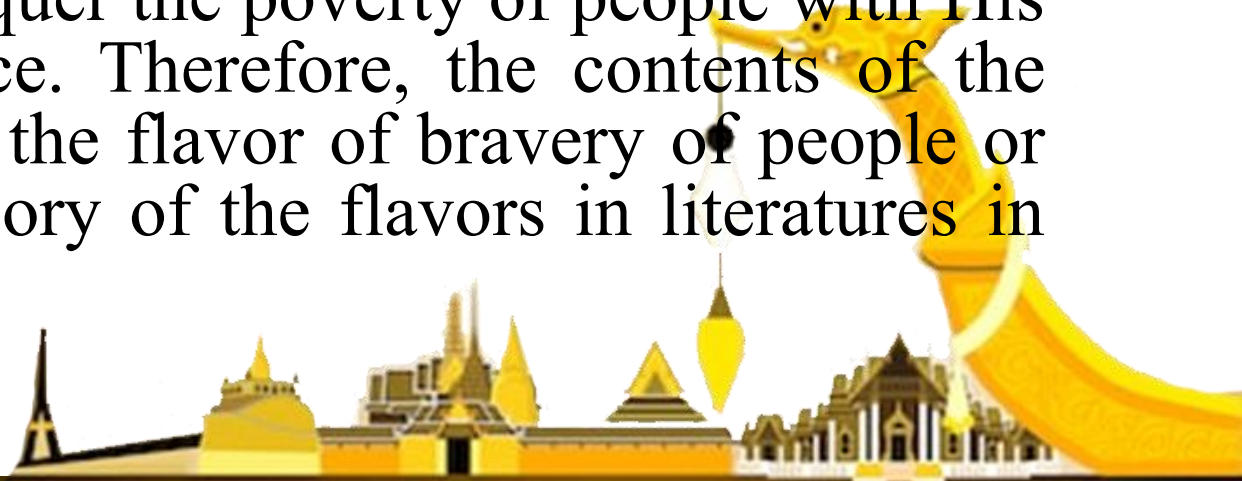
ม่านงามรุ่งคือเขาเขิน
มาโลมไล่ต่างรสสุคนธ์
ยาวรอบลำฟ้าสากล
ถ้าไหลรวมคงท่วมไทย

His Palace is the Fields, His curtains - the mountains
The heat and cold of the day, all surround him like perfume.
If one can count His Footsteps, would measure around the
globe
The sweat he shed for His people, would have flooded the
nation.



INTRODUCTION

- A Royal Barge Procession Chant has the main objective of honoring His Majesty King Rama IX (the Father of His Majesty King Rama X, the current king), with the contents that reflect the perseverance and commitment of His Majesty King Rama IX to implementing many Royal Initiatives throughout His Majesty's reign, with the dedication and sacrifice of His Majesty's own convenience to cherishing all the citizens of Thailand. His Majesty King Rama IX had dealt with many problems and crises in order to conquer the poverty of people with His Majesty's bravery and perseverance. Therefore, the contents of the Royal Barge Procession Chant has the flavor of bravery of people or Wirarot in accordance with the theory of the flavors in literatures in Sanskrit Language.



INTRODUCTION

- Royal Barge Procession Chant is unique in term of literal art because of beautiful rhythm and unique attributes with the aim of stimulating rowers' and audience' emotions. From the Literature review, it is discovered that most of the former research works have a key objective to study on Royal Barge Procession Chant with the focus on the technique, especially the technique that concerns literal art. Thus, this research work will study on the Royal Barge Procession Chant with the focus on the Wirarot or flavor of bravery or heroism in accordance with the theory of the flavors in literatures in Sanskrit Language and the Wirarot that depicts the image of the king, which is the extension and fulfillment of the perspective for the study on Royal Barge Procession Chant in a broader sense.

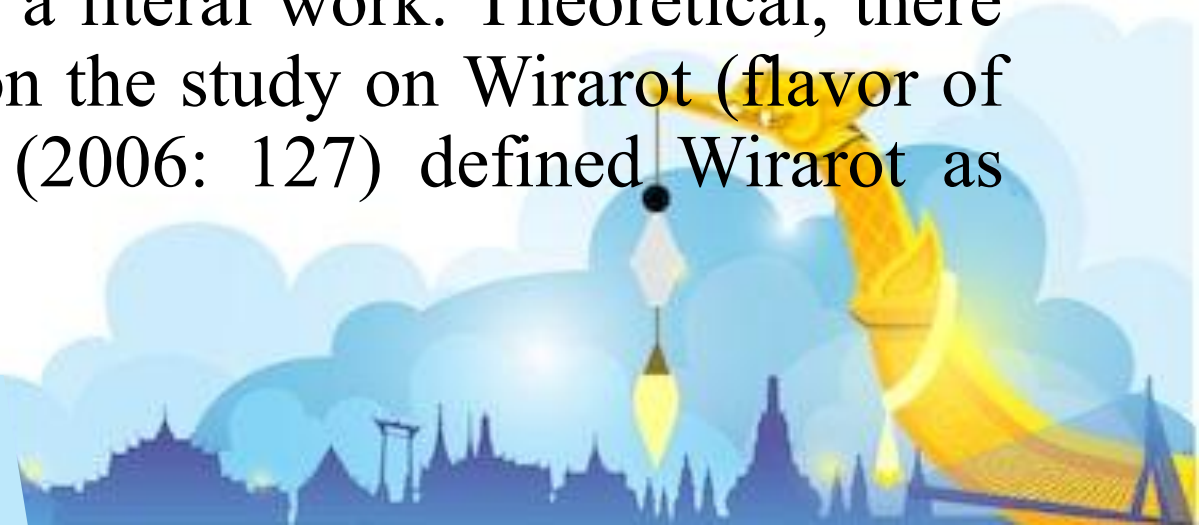
SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- This research work is a descriptive analysis on the data from a book entitled 'Royal Barge Procession Chants from Ayutthaya Period to the Reight of King Bhumibol' published in 2013 by Saeng Dao Printing Press, with Ruenruethai Satchaphan Beijing the Editor-in-Chief. However, this research uses only 15 Royal Barge Procession Chants that are composed in the reign of His Majesty King Rama IX.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BY THEORY

- This research work is conducted on the basis of the theory of the flavors in literatures in Sanskrit Language, which is used as the core theory for the analysis on Royal Barge Procession Chants that are composed in the reign of His Majesty King Rama IX. Kusuma Rakmani (2006: 24) stated that ‘Flavor (Rot)’ is an emotional reaction that happens in the mind of an audience who has sensed the emotion that the poet/author conveys through a literal work. Theoretical, there are 9 flavors but this study focuses on the study on Wirarot (flavor of bravery) only. Kusuma Rakmani (2006: 127) defined Wirarot as follows.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BY THEORY

- *Wirarot means admiration. It is the emotion that emerges from the perception of bravery, which is an attribute of a decent individual. Bravery is expressed in three ways, namely, Thanwira (bravery for giving out ones' belongings). Thamwira (bravery for doing good deeds or performing one's duties) and Ronwira (bravery for fight).*



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- The discussion on research findings is divided into 2 parts in accordance with the research objectives. The first part is the discussion on Wirarot (flavor of bravery) in Royal Barge Procession Chants and the second part presents the discussion on Wirarot and image of the king in various aspects.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

1) Bravery in Royal Barge Procession Chant

1.1 Thanwira (Generosity)

เสริมส่งดำรงชีพ	ดุจดวงประทีปเกื้อการุญ	His Majesty the King supports careers, like light of kindness. Agriculture is supported by the King ,with ‘New Theory’ of Chai Phatthana Suggested.
เกษตรกรรมพระนำหนุน	“ทฤษฎีใหม่” ชัยพัฒนา	
อุทกภัยร้ายแรงหนัก	พระพิทักษ์ปวงประชา	When flood problem becomes severe, the King protects his followers. With ‘Monkey Cheek’ technique and ‘Pasak’ Damn to keep water.
“แก้มลิง” เก็บธารา	“เขื่อนป่าสัก” กักชลโทร	

RESEARCH FINDINGS

- In the example shown, there mentioned Royal Initiatives of His Majesty King Rama IX that cover supports in the areas of education, public health and agriculture and careers that His Majesty King Rama IX has provided to all people in urban and rural areas. This reflects His Majesty's true great generosity because His Majesty has developed intellectual of all Thai people in order to improve their life quality through His Majesty's Royal Initiatives, the total number of which is 4,741* projects that spread throughout all the regions of Thailand.

* Retrieved in September 2018, from RDPB: <http://www.rdpb.go.th>



RESEARCH FINDINGS

1.2 Thamwira (Righteousness)

- As for His Majesty King Rama IX's righteousness, the discussion can be divided into 2 minor issues, which are the support for all religions and the righteousness in practice as a Thammikaracha (the King with Righteousness).



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- His Majesty King Rama IX is the supporter of all religions because His Majesty has had the intentions to build the Principal Buddha Image for each of all provinces in Thailand and also cherished Buddhism and other religions in His Majesty's Kingdom.
- In addition, His Majesty is also the King of Righteousness because His Majesty has applied principles of Lord Buddha's preaching to the governance, which is reflected in the following example



ทศธรรมล้ำสถิต

พระเดชอดุลย์ดล

ทศทิศไร้ทุกข์ทน

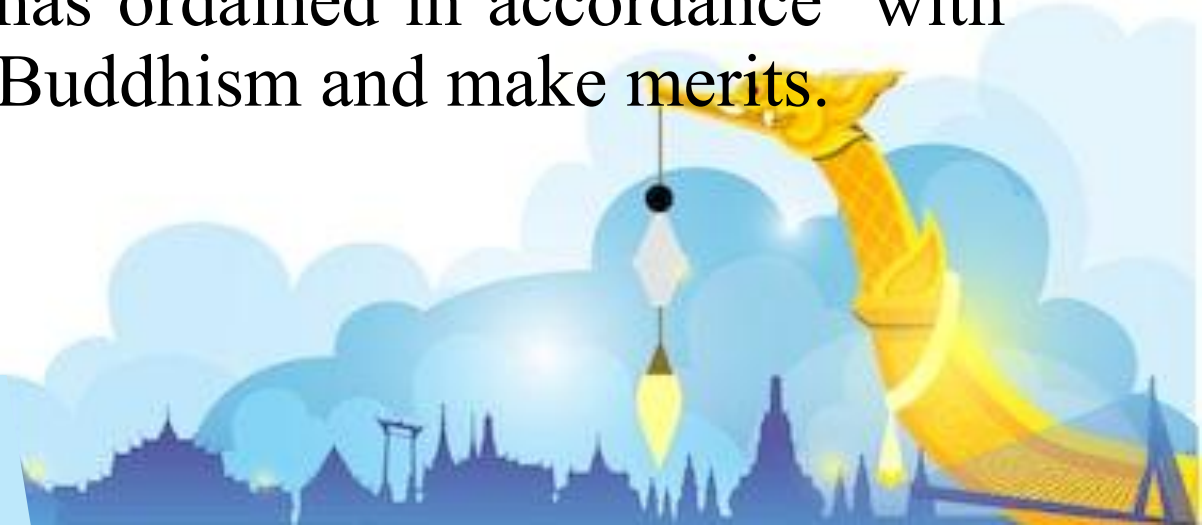
ทั้งสากลจึงเกริกไกร

He practices the Ten Virtues and in ten directions, he alleviates all suffering
His Greatness becomes known all around, even internationally.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- His Majesty King Rama IX has relied on the principles of good deeds in governing people, which has been shown through His Majesty's first formal announcement in the coronation ceremony, "I will govern this Kingdom with good deeds for the happiness of all Siamese people." In addition, the Ten Deeds for Rulers (Thosaphitratchatham) have been mentioned in the chants more frequently than other principles. In addition, His Majesty has ordained in accordance with the royal tradition in order to sustain Buddhism and make merits.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

1.3 Ronwira (Fight)

- As for His Majesty King Rama IX, the bravery for fight does not mean any battle event though His Majesty has been the Supreme Commander by the Constitution of Thailand and has supported the military forces and supported military and police officers' morale.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- From the consideration on all the studied data, it is discovered that His Majesty King Rama IX has had the great bravery for fights, which are the '**Battles with People's Poverty**'. All the 15 Royal Barge Procession Chants that are studied in this research work have mentioned His Majesty's perseverance in working and running His Majesty's Royal Initiatives for the well-being of people throughout His Majesty's reign, as in the following example.



ครองราชย์ก็ร่มราษฎร
ร่มธรรมน้ำพระทัย
สองพระบาทประพาสไทย
สองพระหัตถ์กระทัดวี

ชุ่มชื่นชาติแจกฉัตรชัย
ปิดป้องภัยในธรณี
ประทับไว้ทุกถิ่นที่
ทรงโอบทั่วทุกทวยชน

His Majesty the King cherishes the country like the parasol that protects Thai citizens.

His Majesty's righteousness and generosity can rid the problems every now and then.

His Majesty's two feet have been to everywhere throughout the land.

His Majesty's two arms have embraced all the people of Thai clan.

สองนัยน์สายพระเนตร ทรงเห็นเหตุทุกแห่งหน
สองพระกรรณสดับกล เพื่อแก้ทุกข์ทวยประชา
สองบ่าที่ทรงแบก แต่วันแรกครองพารา
แปดสิบห้าพระชันษา ทั้งสองบ่ามิเคยเบา

His Majesty's two eyes look over
everywhere.

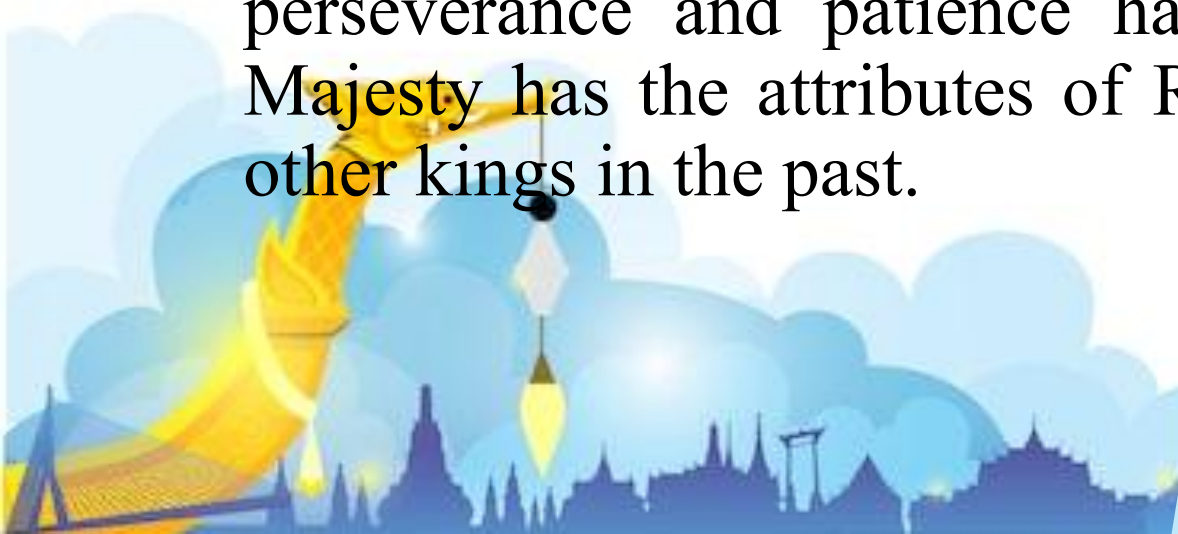
His Majesty's two ears listen to people
with care.

His Majesty two shoulders bear all the
people since His Majesty's very first day
of Kingship.

Until the age of eighty-five, workload
has never dripped.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

- The given example is the Chant for the Royal Barge Procession for His Majesty King Rama IX's 85th Anniversary, which is the last Royal Barge Procession in His Majesty's reign . The poet has shown that throughout the long reign, His Majesty has **battled people's poverty** and the result is that His Majesty could conquer over poverty and problems that Thai people have experienced with. His Majesty's perseverance and patience have been empirical evidence that His Majesty has the attributes of Ronwira, which is different from many other kings in the past.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

2) Images of the King from Wirarot in Royal Barge Procession Chants

- Images depicted through literatures are built through the selection, refinement and highlighting of certain attributes on the bases of truth, and certain beliefs and values. Thus, details of an image of anything or any person work together to convey certain meanings and values in the socio-cultural areas that are related to that thing or person. (Sano Charoenphon, cited in Marasi Sothip, 2008: 18).
- Wirarot that appears in the Royal Barge Procession Chant plays important roles in presenting the images of His Majesty King Rama IX in 5 aspects as follows.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

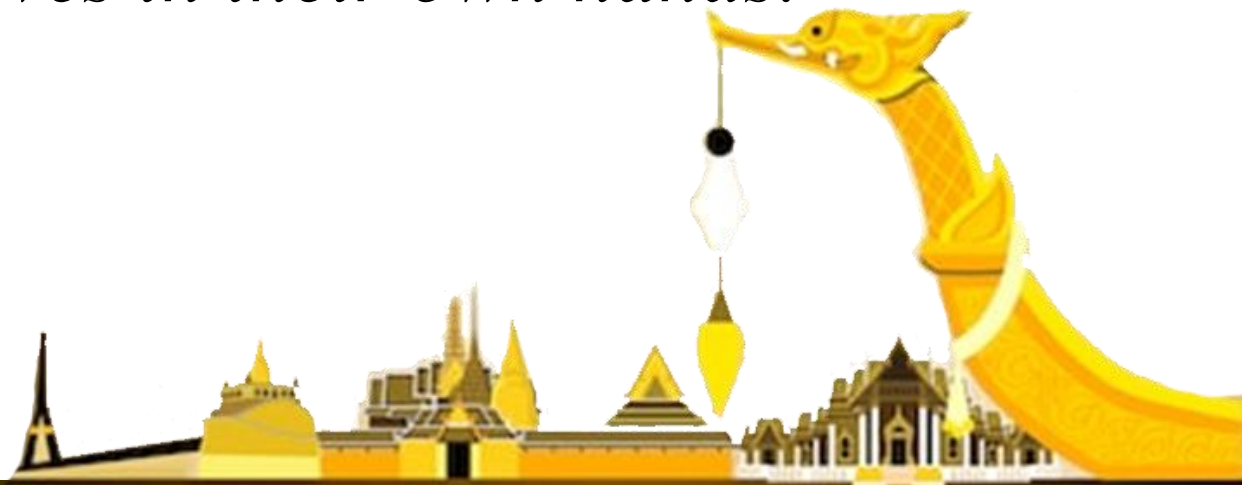
2.1 King of Development

- His Majesty King Rama IX is the King of Development, especially the development of people. The United Nations has presented the Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award (UNPD) in 2013. Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations delivered the laudation, as follows:



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- *Your Majesty has made an extraordinary contribution to human development. As the world's "Development King", Your Majesty has reached out to the poorest and the most vulnerable people of Thailand – regardless of their status, ethnicity or religion – listened to their problems, and empowered them to take their lives in their own hands.*



RESEARCH FINDINGS

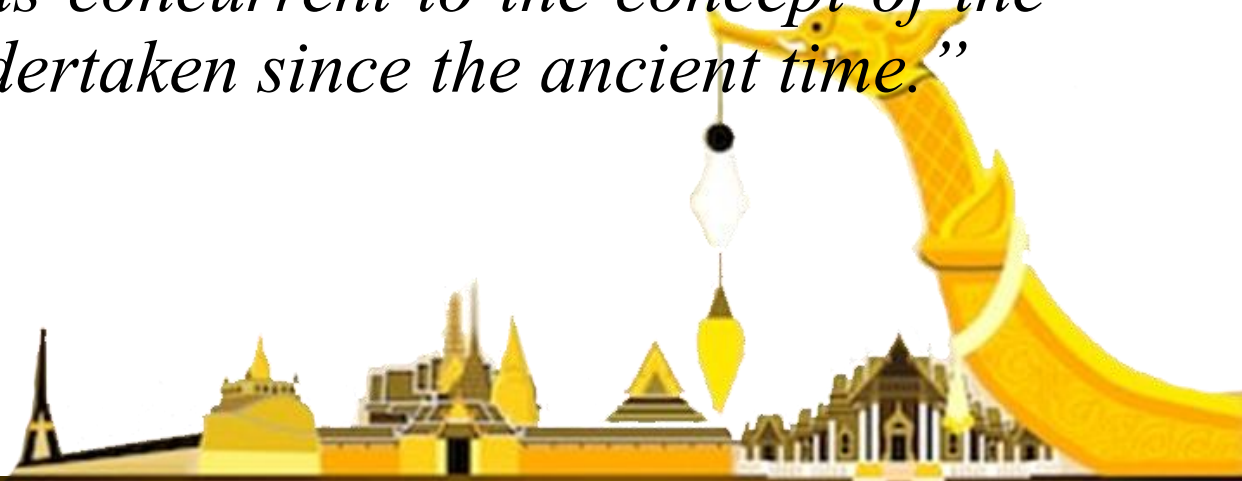
2.2 King of Righteousness

- All the 15 studied Royal Barge Procession Chants mention that His Majesty King Rama IX, rules the country on the bases of the principles of Dhamma or good deeds. This discovery concurs with the idea of Khamyuang Warasitthichai (2006: 66) as follows.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- *“Royal Barge Procession Chant especially highlights the righteousness of the King, reflecting that Thosaphitratchatham (10 deeds for rulers), especially kindness, is the mean for the King to dissolve people’s problems. the King’s sacrifice of self-convenience and dedication to hardship from works are roles of the King in the light of religion. In addition, the King’s efficient implementation of Buddhist principles to governance is concurrent to the concept of the Righteous King, which has been undertaken since the ancient time.”*



RESEARCH FINDINGS

2.3 Father of the Kingdom and Spirit of the Nation

- His Majesty King Rama IX is a king that stays close to his people. In the studied Royal Barge Procession Chants, His Majesty is referred to as the ‘Father’ and the Spirit of the Nation, as in the following example.



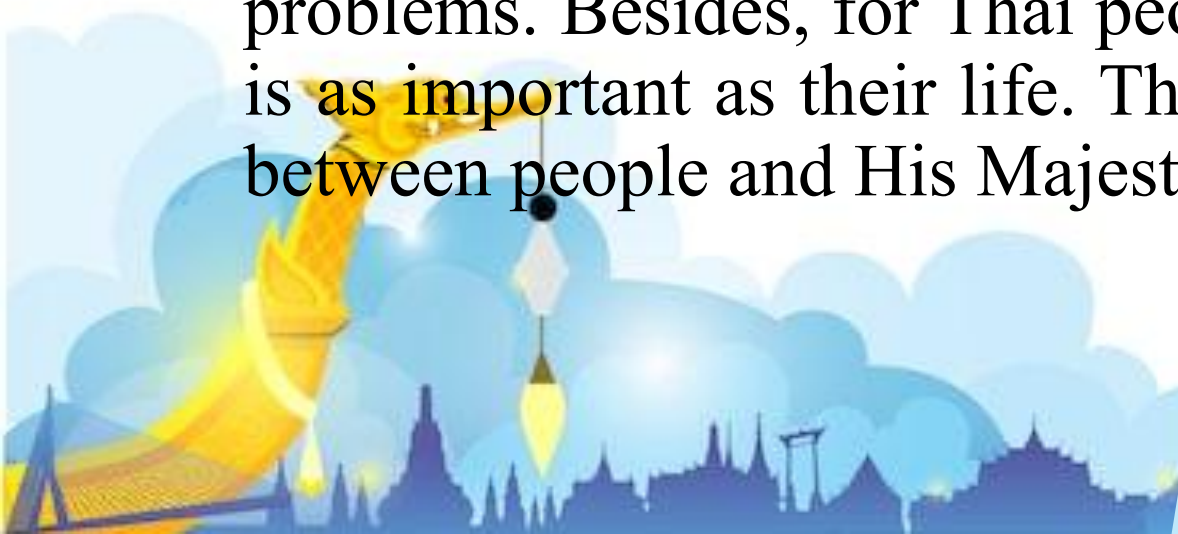
RESEARCH FINDINGS

ราชันขวัญสยาม ปิ่นเพชรงามปักธานี His Majesty is the top Jewel in our Nation
ร่วมพระบารมี ศรีไพทจักรชัยชน His virtues envelops us like an umbrella.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

- From the aforementioned example, it is apparent that His Majesty King Rama IX is the Father of the Kingdom and the Spirit of the Nation. Siriwan Nanthachanthun (2007: 26) stated that the perspective that Thai people have towards His Majesty King Rama IX is that His Majesty is the Father of the Kingdom and People. This is because His Majesty cares about people and find solutions to solve all the people's problems. Besides, for Thai people, His Majesty is a beloved king and is as important as their life. Thai people always reflect the close bond between people and His Majesty.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

2.4 Bodhisattva

- From the studied Royal Barge Procession Chants, His Majesty King Rama IX has had one of the characteristics of a Bodhisattva, which has had an avatar to fight difficulties that people face with, which is a merit making of a Bodhisattva. The author of the chant used as the example has also wished that His Majesty would achieve enlightenment if it was the wish of His Majesty.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

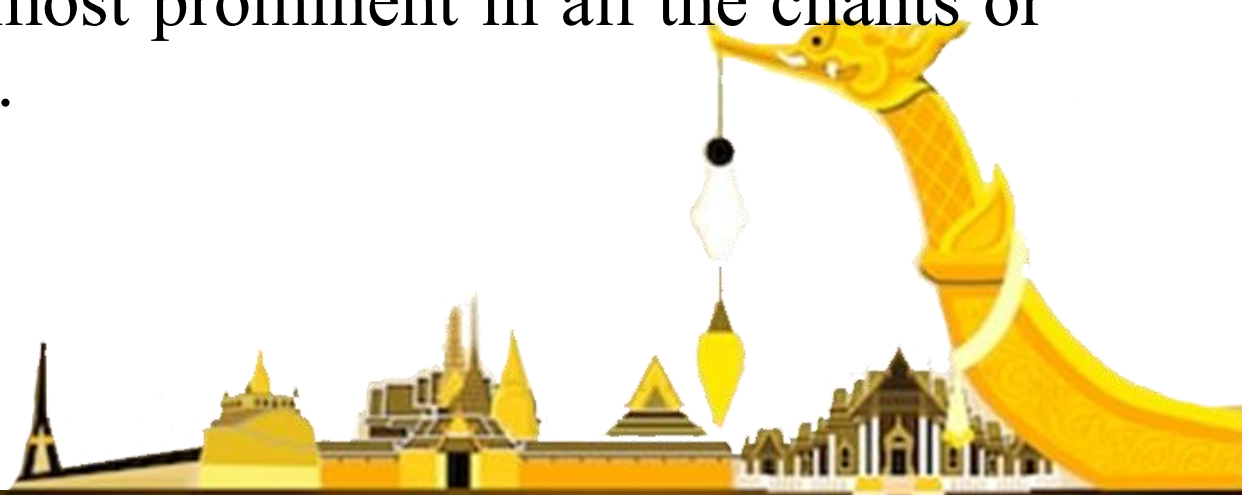
2.5 Great Wise Man of the Country

- His Majesty King Rama IX has had expertise in different fields and has excelled in various sciences. His Majesty is the Great Wise Man of the Kingdom, with efficiency in performing all tasks, intelligence and knowledge that are necessary for ruling the country.



CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

From the study on the Wirarot (flavor of bravery) from 15 samples that are Royal Barge Procession Chants that are composed in the reign of His Majesty King Rama IX (the father of His Majesty King Rama X, the current king), it is discovered that all the 3 types of Wirarot, namely, Thamswira (generosity), Thamwira (righteousness) and Ronwira (fight) are found in the samples; and from all the 3 types of Wirarot, Ronwira is found out to be most prominent in all the chants or verses to praise His Majesty the King.



CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

- Wirarot in Royal Barge Procession Chants is a key element that reflects the image of His Majesty King Rama IX in 5 aspects, namely, the King of Development, the King of Righteousness, the Father of the Kingdom and the Spirit of the Nation, a Bodhisattva and the Great Wise Man of the Kingdom. Images from Wirarot has depicted His Majesty as the ‘Unique King’, as mentioned by Prakhong Nimmanhemin (1999: 24) as follows.



CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

“Poets who compose literatures to praise His Majesty King Rama IX depict that His Majesty is a human being and King under the Constitution. The attributes that poets always praise are His Majesty’s kindness, closer relationships with people than any other kings in other eras, and sacrifice for the happiness of people. His Majesty has the tasks to make people happy. The key image of His Majesty reflected through literatures to honor His Majesty is that His Majesty King Rama IX is the Unique King.”



CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

- To praise or to honor the king is a norm for the composition of Thai literatures. The part to praise the king has existed since the ancient time, which is a key attribute of Thai literatures. Pathama Thikhaprasoetkun (2013: 17-18) stated that a literature to honor a person or something consists of 3 parts, namely, Introduction Part which is traditionally necessary for all Thai literatures, the Content Part that praises the king by describe the attributes and works of the king, and the Closing Part that includes the objectives of the composition and the dedication of the literature to the king. Thus, it can be assumed that a Royal Barge Procession Chant is influenced by the style of literatures to praise the king. Even though the compositions may vary from those in the past, the key objective to honor the King still remains.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study on Wirarot in Royal Barge Procession Chants composed in the reign of King Rama IX reveals that the chants partly make audiences feel admiring, praising and appreciating the great kindness of His Majesty King Rama IX (the Father of His Majesty King Rama X, the current king). Not only has the image of His Majesty been witnessed among Thai people but the image is also perceived by foreigners, as reflected in the speech delivered by the King of Brunei Darussalam, on behalves of all the delegates who are the rulers or representatives of rulers of various countries who attended the Royal Banquet that their Majesties the King and the Queen of Thailand threw at Boromratchasathitmaholan Throne Hall on Tuesday 13th June 2006, as follows.



CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

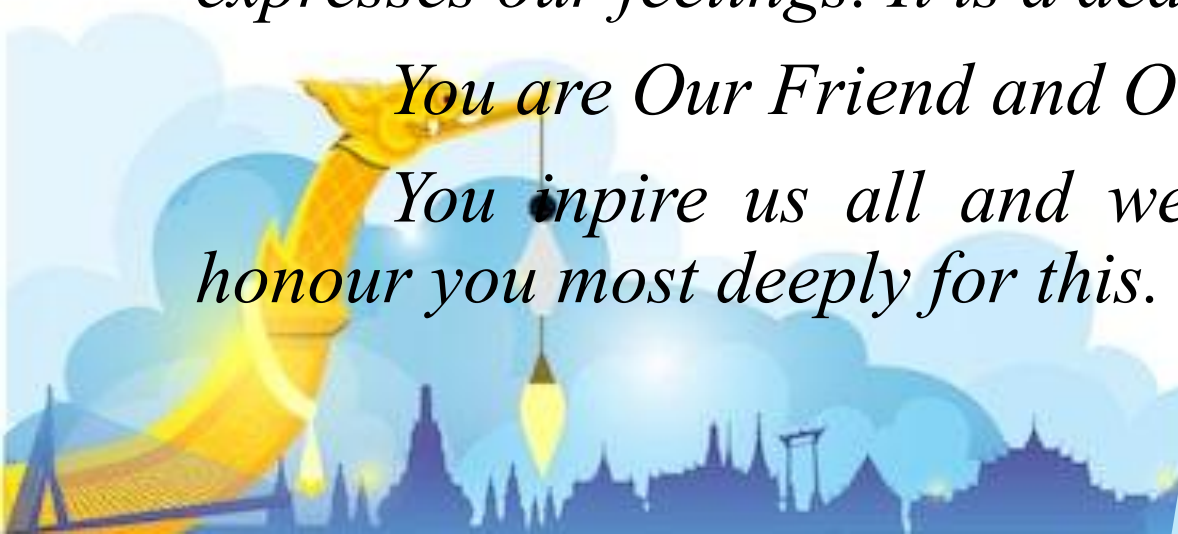
Your Majesty,

In recognizing all these accomplishments some accounts of your reign have accorded you the title “The Great” . We can all understand why.

But, for us who have come to honour you here, a simpler title expresses our feelings. It is a dear and very special title.

You are Our Friend and Our Most Respected colleague.

You inspire us all and we, Your Majesty’s peers and admirers, honour you most deeply for this.



CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In conclusion, from the study, it can be concluded that Wirarot in Royal Barge Procession Chant plays a remarkably significant role in reflecting the image of His Majesty King Rama IX of Chakri Dynasty who not only is the 'Unique King' but also the 'King of Kings' in the opinion of almost all Thai people forever.





In Remembrance of
His Majesty King
Bhumibol Adulyadej
The Great

