

Chiang Mai's Royal Crematorium: Siamese Influence Evident in Lanna Cremation Heritage

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Received 2023-09-24; Revised 2024-04-24; Accepted 2024-04-26

ABSTRACT

The Chao Luang crematorium was a temporary architecture made for the cremation and funeral of Chao Luang Chiang Mai (King of Chiang Mai). The creation of the Chao Luang crematorium reflected the social and political pressures of Siam that influenced Lanna territories during the reign of Phra Chao Inthawichayanon in 1873 till 1932 (coup d'etat), resulting in a change in the architectural style of these funeral structures. This research aims to study the architectural style changes of Chao Luang crematorium in Chiang Mai from the moment when Siam began to draw power from Lanna to the central part of the territory. The study results reveal that, originally, the funeral rites of Chao Luang followed a specific form of Lanna rituals. However, during the reign of Phra Chao Inthawichayanon, the 7th Chao Luang of Chiang Mai, new power from Siam was imposed on Lanna, which resulted in changes to the Lanna architecture and cremation traditions, aligning them more closely with Siamese traditions. Eventually, the traditional Lanna rituals were amalgamated into the style of Siam. The evolving architectural style of the Chiang Mai Royal Crematorium provides evidence of Siamese colonization's ongoing impact on Lanna.

Keywords: crematorium, Siam, Lanna, Chao Luang, Hastilinga, Chiang Mai

INTRODUCTION

A crematorium is a temporary structure used in funeral ceremonies. The term 'crematorium' (Pramerumas) is believed to have been brought to Lanna from Bangkok during the period when Siam dominated the Lanna territory, dating back to the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910). Originally, in Lanna, the term 'funeral castle' or 'Prasat Sob' was used, signifying the journey to heaven, or Phiman, the dwelling place of the gods.

With respect to the traditional forms of cremation for kings or rulers, Siam and Lanna shared a form of architecture that combined the best of both cultures, though in ancient times, the Siamese used a crematorium, while a funeral castle was used in Lanna. These structures were architectural marvels constructed from temporary materials such as wood, paper, wooden planks, cloth, or other natural elements typically used in funeral ceremonies.

After the cremation ceremony, the crematorium or funeral castle might be burned along with the body, or, if still usable, it might be donated to a temple for public use. These structures had been

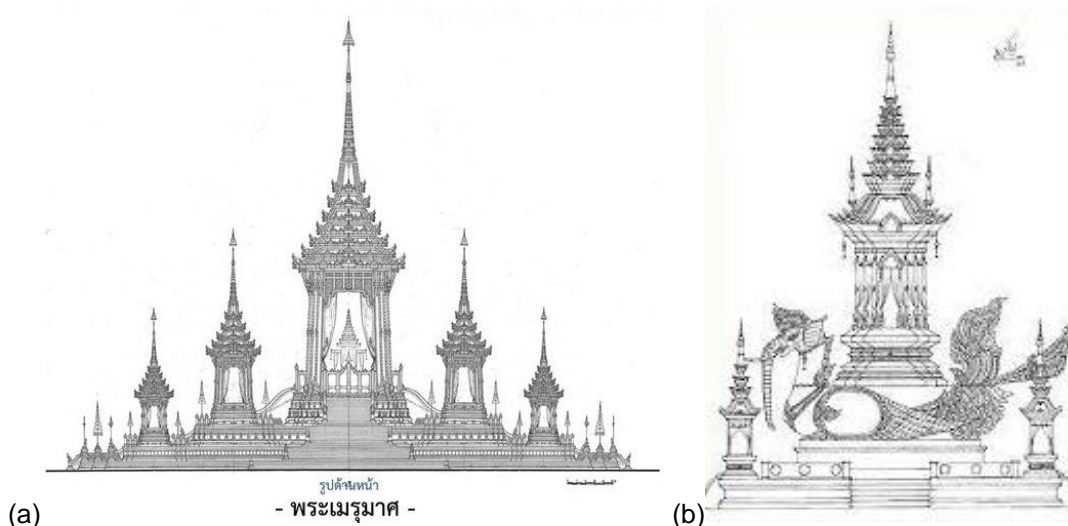
used since ancient times, serving as a representation of the Tribhum world—a concept used by Lanna to divide various ritual areas and provide meaning to death by categorizing the world into different levels.

In the Tribhum world, when a member of the ruling class dies, they are believed to be reborn in a higher realm. As a result, the rituals supporting this journey must be carefully crafted. Both Lanna and Siam shared this belief in the Tribhum, differing only in the detailed arrangement of ritual styles (Rodsap et al., 2014; Somjai, 1998).

The Tribhum cosmology heavily influenced the funeral practices at Chiang Mai's Royal crematorium, blending elements from both Siam and Lanna traditions. This unique approach was employed for funeral ceremonies dedicated to kings, royalty, city rulers, and esteemed monks. According to the Tribhum universe, the supreme realm Arupa bhumi is where Arupa Brahma resides; Nirvana is positioned below it, and Rupa bhumi is situated above. Kama bhumi is further divided into the Heavenly Realm and Tukati bhumi.

Figure 1

Comparison Between Siam royal's Crematorium Style and the Crematorium in the Hastilinga Bird Style



Note. (a) Adapted from *Pra mayrumad 'sa whan chan pra yhad' nai yuk sadchaniyom* [Royal crematory 'Economy heaven' in Realism period], by P. Krajaejun, 2017, The Momentum (<https://themomentum.co/momentum-feature-crematory-in-realism-period/>). Copyright 2017 by Pipat Krajaejun; and (b) From *Phasad-nok-hadsadeeling* [The Hastilinga bird crematorium], by Phasad-nok-hadsadeeling, 2014, Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/464952416936252/photos/a.465176613580499/657224174375741/?type=3>).

The utilization of the Hastilinga bird in funeral ceremonies, once a common practice not only in Lanna but also in the historical Champasak State connected to Thailand, was discontinued when Phra Chao Nongya Ther Kromaluang Sapsitthiprasong assumed the governorship of Ubon Ratchathani

The Lanna State in the past was comprised of areas beyond the borders of contemporary Thailand; in fact, it also included Chiang Tung and Xishuangbanna in present-day Myanmar. Siam was located in the region that now comprises the central area of Thailand. Chiang Mai is adjacent to the Ping River, while Bangkok is next to the Chao Phraya River, which is formed by the merging of the Ping, Wang, Yom, and Nan Rivers in the northern part of Thailand. Lanna, in this research, is defined as the area of the kingdom north of Siam, with its southern boundary adjacent to the Kingdom of Siam. To the west, the Salween River created the border between Lanna and the Shan State. In the east, the Mekong River divided Lanna from the Lan Xang Kingdom. To the north of Lanna was the city of Chiang Rung. There are many cities in the area, such as Mueang Chiang Tung, Chiang Rung, Chiang Kwang, Mueang Yong, Mueang Pu, Mueang Sad, and Mueang Nai. Lanna's influence over these cities waxed and waned over time. However, as the western colonial era was beginning (around 19th century), the kingdom also fell, at different times, to Myanmar, China, and Laos. With the territory of Lanna bordering Myanmar, the Burmese culture also influenced Chiang Mai, while Bangkok was predominately influenced by Ayutthaya culture, which, in turn, was received from Cambodia.

As a result, despite sharing a common belief foundation, there were variations in the cremation traditions and ceremony forms of the two regions due to distinct influences. Notably, during the period when Siam successfully unified the country, the cremation tradition in Lanna underwent changes. This transformation was particularly evident in the funeral ceremony of Chao Luang Chiang Mai, which was adapted to resemble that of Siam.

This research aims to determine the reasons behind and details of the alterations in the pattern of crematorium rituals, as well as to explore the underlying factors driving such changes. The findings seek to provide insights into the impact

of these modifications on the cremation culture of Chiang Mai. Additionally, it aims to document nearly forgotten rituals, preserving them as crucial elements of the Lanna cultural heritage.

Figure 2

Map of Lanna, Siam, and Neighboring Countries Such as Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia.



Note. The red dot indicates the location of Chiang Mai in Lanna and Bangkok as the center of Siam. The map shows the routes of major rivers, such as the Ping River and the Chao Phraya River, which connect Chiang Mai and Bangkok across a distance of more than 800 kilometers.

METHODOLOGY

Terminology

- Chao Luang: the title of the ruler of cities in Lanna
- Phra Chao: the title that the King of Siam gave to Lanna's ruler. This title

represented the highest status among Lanna's rulers.

- Phraya: the title of the high status of Siam nobility. The highest title was "Chao Phraya," and the lower was "Phra."
- Busabok: part of Thai architecture, it was a pavilion with a pointed roof. Sometimes the "Busabok" is placed above the castle; it may then be referred to as "Yod Busabok" since 'yod' means a tip or end point.
- Thesaphiban: the centralized governance system of Siam which was created in the period of King Rama V of Siam.
- Phiman: the name of the accommodation of angels in Tribhum. It was represented in physical aspects by Siam and Lanna with a structure called a "Prasat" or castle.

Methodology

This study aims to understand the changes in architectural patterns and significant ceremonies in Chiang Mai that resulted from political and governance transformations. The focus is on comparing the funeral ceremonies of Lanna lords with those of Siamese Kings, and examining their influence on Chiang Mai's governance during the studied period.

The study is divided into different periods, ranging from the governance of the 6th Chiang Mai Lord to the 9th—the last lord during the transition from the 5th to the 9th reigns in Siam—and after the dramatic political changes in 1932.

The study's objective is centered around funeral architecture, specifically comparing the funeral structures known as "Prasat Sop" in Lanna to the Siamese equivalent, "Pramerumas." The investigation is further divided into:

1. Analyzing the funeral ceremony patterns in Lanna and Siam, and exploring the backgrounds beliefs and cultural origins to understand their similarities and differences.
2. Examining the historical context of political changes in Lanna and Siam

leading up to the pre-unification era to understand the causes and motivations behind these transformations.

3. Studying changes in Lanna funeral ceremonies in comparison with political changes during the mentioned period.
4. Summarizing the patterns of architectural changes in funeral ceremonies in Lanna and the influences impacting these transformations.

Objectives

1. To study the crematorium of Chao Luang Chiang Mai through the historical architectural perspective.
2. To determine the reasons for and details of the changes in Lanna's cremation ceremony during the period when Chiang Mai was a vassal state.
3. To study the influences of Siam on the Lanna Culture through the important ceremony of royal cremation.

RESULTS

Lanna Cremation Traditions

Lanna's cremation traditions were divided into four types of funeral rites based on status: Chao Luang, ruler, monk, and ordinary people. The rites were similar, but the details were different. At the level of Chao Luang and monk, there were details of the ritual patterns that were much grander and more complex than those of royal family members and ordinary people. The body of Chao Luang and those of senior monks who were very respected would have been cremated in a castle-shaped structure made of hardwood that had 12 pillars and was built on the back of a Hastilinga bird. A castle-shaped structure was also built for corpses of royal family members, but without the Hastilinga bird. On the other hand, for the bodies of the rich, hardwood was used to make a structure with no more than eight gable pillars, or, perhaps, a structure with six pillars based on a Pak Kraban prototype (a type of structure for a cremation ceremony). In the

case of a structure for an ordinary or poor person, bamboo was used, with no more than six poles and without a gabled top; it may have had a roof of the style called Meow Kuap (Ketprom, 2008).

The funeral tradition of Chao Luang being placed in the castle on the Hastilinga bird was mentioned in the legend of the Singhanawat at the 6th Regional Chronicle Meeting in 1728. Chao Fa Yod Kham Mueang (the name of the king) had ruled the city for four years and had died at the age of 25. Therefore, a Hastilinga bird was built with a castle sitting upon its back, and this structure was used in the royal cremation. In the Yonok chronicle, Phraya Prachakitkorrajak (Cham Bunnag) (the title of the Siamese nobility) mentioned, when discussing the funeral of Nang Phraya Wisutthiratchathewi (the consort of the king), ruler of Nakorn Ping Chiang Mai, that Phraya Saen Luang (the name of the king) was decorated with Phiman Busabok (a kind of cremation castle) "sitting on the back of the Hastilinga bird" (Cittasamvaro, 2010; Somjai, 1998).

This makes it apparent that, in the past, a funeral ceremony for Chao Luang in Lanna involved building a castle on the back of the Hastilinga bird. Moreover, the funeral rite using the Hastilinga bird was performed not only in Lanna, but in the former Champasak State – a region which covered an area that, today, straddles a

border, including parts of Laos and northeast Thailand. Nowadays, this tradition is only followed in the funeral ceremonies of senior monks. The reason for this was mentioned when Phra Chao Nongya Ther Kromaluang Sappasitthiprasong (a sibling of the king of Siam) became the governor of Ubon Ratchathani (a city in the northeastern part of Thailand) and witnessed the funeral of the governor at Thung Si Mueang, Ubon Ratchathani. Because he was concerned that the funeral using the Hastilinga bird was too similar to the cremation of the royal crematorium at Sanam Luang (the royal plaza in Bangkok), the tradition was disallowed for Lanna royalty, but continued to be allowed for the cremation of senior monks (Somjai, 1998; Sukata, 2019).

Figure 3

Crematorium With Pak Kraban Roof

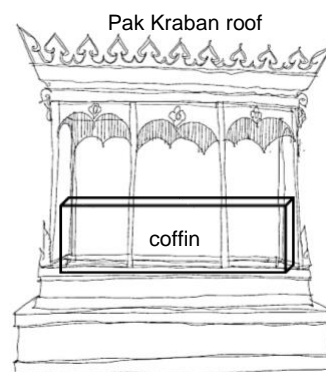
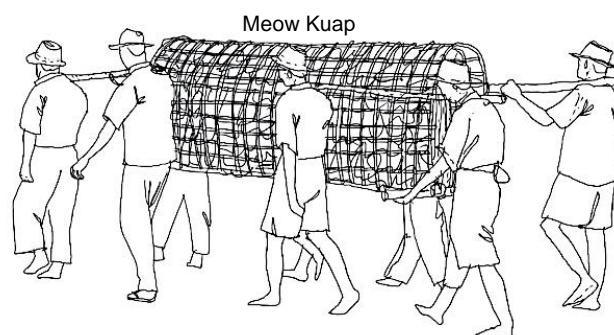


Figure 4

A Body is Carried in a Lanna Yoke With a Cover Known as Lanna's Meow Kuap.



Note. Meow Kuap is a cover used to cover the body wrapped in a mat. Bent bamboo was sometimes used to cover the burial bed; it was shaped like a mosquito net wrapped with Mulberry paper. It could also be decorated with artificial flowers for beauty. The function of the Meow Kuap was to cover the body for appropriateness, and to prevent insects from flying around the body. Adapted from *Ham sob sii maew rongpayaban overbrook chiang rai* [Carries a corpse in Meaw the overbrook hospital in Chiang Rai], by Huglanna, 2018 (<http://www.huglanna.com/index.php?topic=11619.0>).

Tribhum world and Lanna cremation tradition

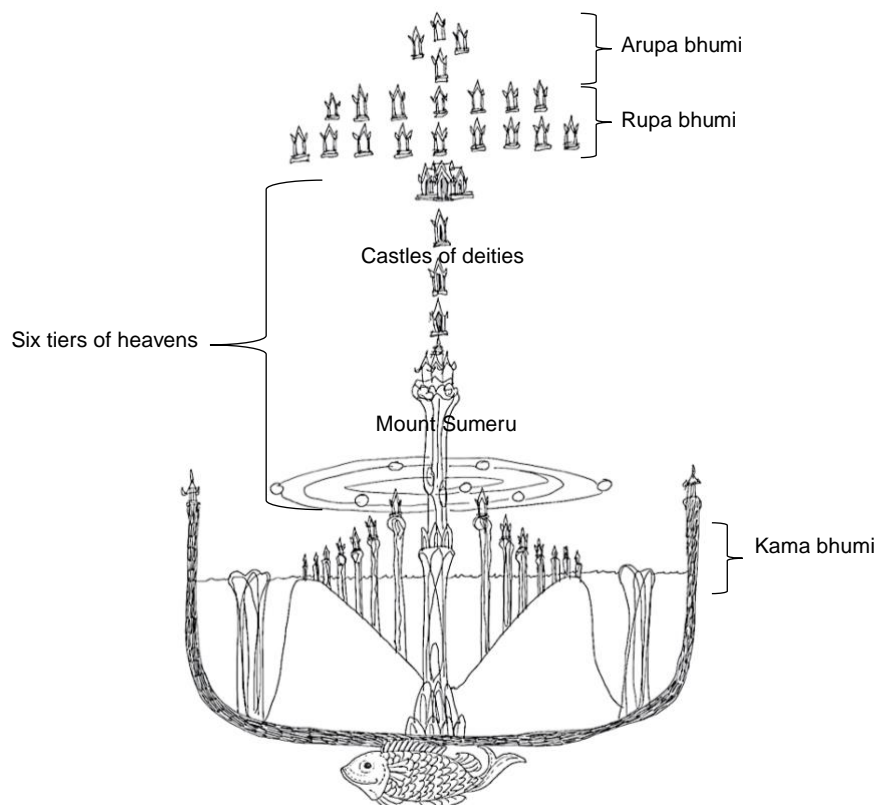
Tribhum is a Brahmin-Buddhist worldview based on beliefs about the formation of the world according to ancient Indian cosmology. In the Tribhum, the universe is divided into three realms, namely, Kama bhumi, Rupa bhumi, and Arupa bhumi. Sumeru (Mount Sumeru) which is the center of the universe in the Tribhum.

Both Siam and Lanna were influenced by and used their beliefs about Mount Sumeru to model the funeral ceremony of those who had merit. It may be that Siam chose to use Mount Sumeru to simulate the Tribhum cosmology in performing funeral rites for kings and royalty. Lanna, however, applied these beliefs in funeral rites for rulers of the city and elderly monks. In the

universe of Tribhum, Arupa bhumi is referred to as the supreme realm where Arupa Brahma dwells. Above is Nirvana, and below is Rupa bhumi, which is the dwelling place of the Brahma with vision and emotion. The third level of the realm is Kama bhumi, which is divided into two parts: the Heavenly Realm, consisting of one layer of humans and another six layers of the Heavenly World; and the Tukati bhumi, which is the world of various beasts, devils, and monsters. Mount Sumeru is at the center of Kama bhumi, and, at the foot of Mount Sumeru, there are seven levels of surrounding mountains called Khao Sattabriphan. Between each of the mountains, there are seven layers of seas called Si Thandorn. Outside the 7th mountain, there is a large island called Continent, consisting of 4 continents: Uttarakuru, Jambudvipa, Bupphavidha, and Amornkoyan (Ketmankit, 1985; Saksee et al., 2012).

Figure 5

Tribhum Picture Shows the Division of Different Worlds (Bhumi).



Note. Adapted From *Wannakam samai Rattanakosin Ithem2 Tribhumlok winijchayakatha* [Literature in Rattanakosin era, part 2: Prophetic three worlds] (p. 05), by PrayaThammapreecha, 1992, Fine Arts Department (<https://sure.su.ac.th/xmlui/bitstream/id/89572dbd-cb2e-452e-b1c9-89aec085b1ab/fulltext.pdf?attempt=2>).

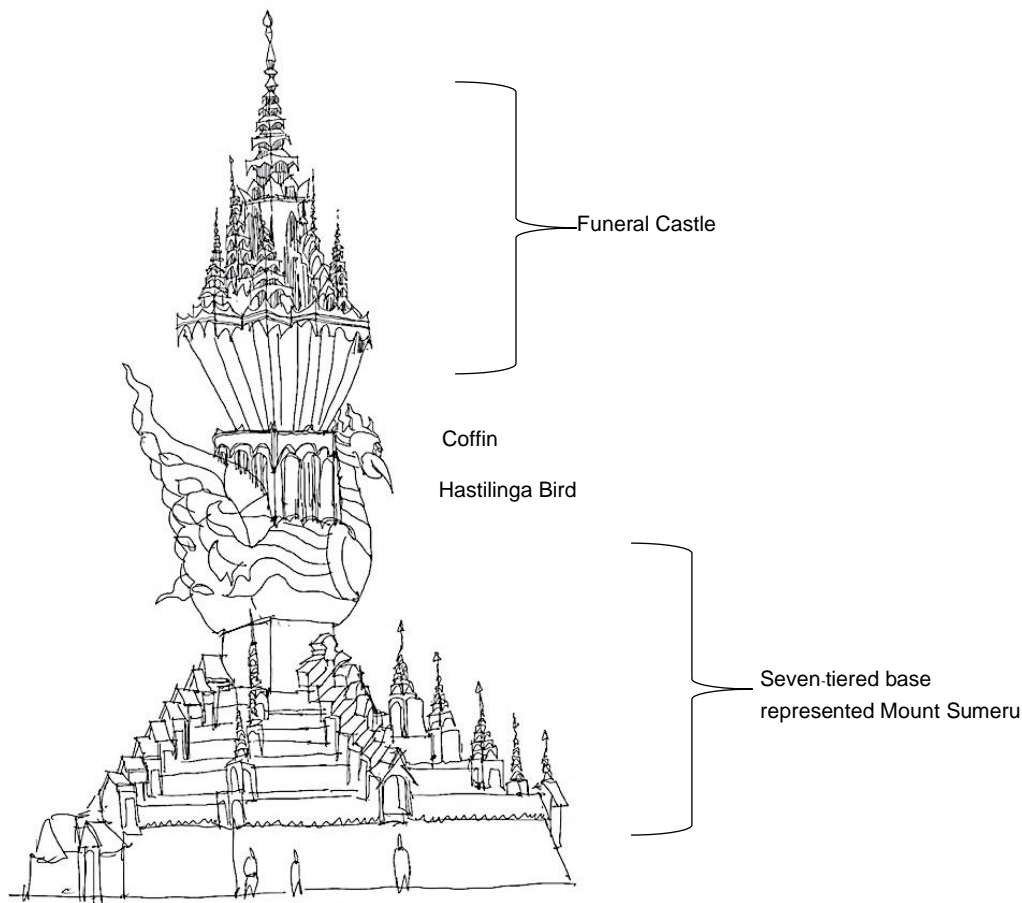
Therefore, the simulated world of Phiman—various castles—is a simulation of the world of angels on Mount Sumeru. Either the crematorium or funeral castle in Lanna simulates the Phiman world. The reason for this simulation is the belief in the deity of the city ruler, which was a system of governance accepted and used in the region. Both Siam and Lanna found commonality in such beliefs; therefore, the cremation traditions of the rulers shared the same aim – that is, to show the world of the deity, the world of the deceased kings or rulers who were on the way back. However, it is worth noting that the simulated world is in Kama bhumi or Lokiya bhumi, but only ascends to the six-level heaven. Therefore, the

simulation of such a world revolves around the form of the castle building and decoration as the heaven in both the living, the Royal Palace, and at the time of death, the crematorium, and the funeral castle (Cittasamvaro, 2010; Rodsap et al., 2014).

In Lanna, because of the great faith in Buddhism of the Lanna people, the funeral of an elder monk was equivalent to that of the ruler of the country. Another factor may have had to do with the influence of Myanmar and Mon (an ethnic group that that is now part of Myanmar), who often performed funeral ceremonies for senior monks as great as city rulers.

Figure 6

Burmese Senior Monk Crematorium



Note. Crematorium simulating a funeral castle sitting on the back of a bird with a seven-tiered base that represents Mount Sumeru. Adapted from *Sathapatthatakam pramerumas nai Siam* [The Siamese royal crematorium architecture] (p. 29), by N. Saksee, 2012, Bangkok Bank & The Association of Siamese Architects.

The Story of the Hastilinga bird and Lanna cremation tradition

The deep significance of the Hastilinga can be understood from the Story in Tribhum Loka Vinijchaya (a book that describes Tribhum), which mentions the funeral of people in Uttarakuru Continent:

"...and then put it in the open place. There will be a kind of bird in the land of Uttarakuru Continent that takes the body to the nest so that the land will not be dirty. The bird sometimes carries the body and leaves it in another land or on the coast of the sea or Jambudvipa. Different teachers call this bird by different names, namely, the Hastilinga bird, eagle, or Kod bird. Some teachers say that it does not take the body by its beak, but by the claw..."

(PrayaThammapreecha, 1992, as cited in Somjai, 1998, p. 31)

The legend of Champasak (a region in Laos) talks about the Hastilinga bird carrying the King's body. Later, Sita, daughter of a great teacher skillful in archery, successfully defeats the Hastilinga bird. After that, Phra Devi, the queen, allowed the custom of cremating the King along with the Hastilinga bird (Ketmankit, 1985; Somjai, 1998).

In Siam, there was a belief in the Garuda, a mythical bird with a human-like form. The concept of Garuda was derived from Tribhum, and often portrayed as the divine ruler (as Narayana which is one of a deity forms of Vishnu) riding on Garuda. Garuda was heavily utilized as an emblem in Siamese architecture as the bird was associated with the king, and adorned representations of Phramerumas. These practices reflected a shared understanding of Tribhum between Lanna and Siam concerning the significance of Garuda in their cultural and religious narratives (Chua, 2018).

Figure 7

This Picture is Adapted From a Funeral Image of Uttarakuru People From the Tribhum Book.



Figure 8

The Size of the Head of the Hastilinga Bird Compared to the Size of the Craftsman's Body.

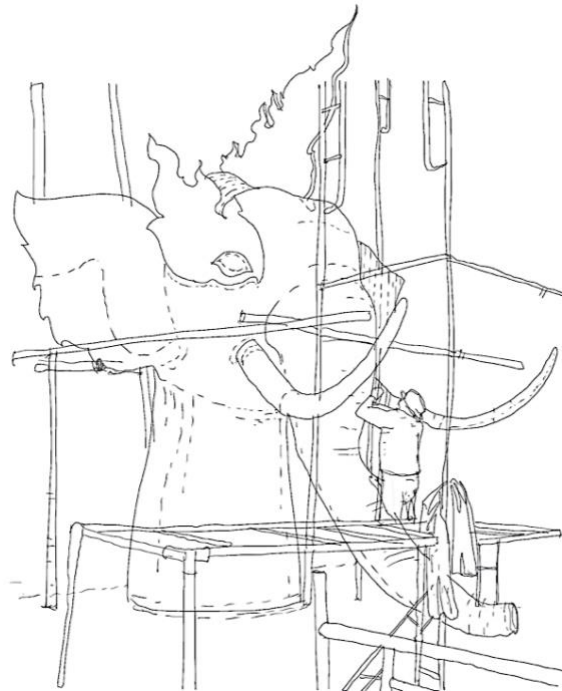


Figure 9

A Picture of the Hastilinga Bird and a Funeral Castle Taken in Nong Tong Sub-district, Hang Dong District, Chiang Mai Province in 2020.



Funeral Castle

Coffin

Hastilinga

Note. This photo shows an example of a senior monk's funeral ceremony in Chiang Mai, where the Hastilinga bird is still used.

The Hastilinga funeral ceremony uses both manpower and resources intensively, as it requires many skilled craftsmen and laborers to build both the funeral castle and beautiful Hastilinga bird. In addition, on the day of the funeral, the Hastilinga bird and the funeral castle need to be dragged from the temple to the cremation site, which is usually in the middle of a field. There, four bamboo poles are set up along the four corners around the Hastilinga bird. "Pha Phidan," which is the robe of the deceased monk, is attached to the end of the four bamboo poles.

Setting fire to the Hastilinga bird and funeral castle involves the bizarre custom of using fireworks to hit the castle and the Hastilinga bird until they burst into flames (Somjai, 1998).

Funeral Castle and Chao Luang's Crematorium

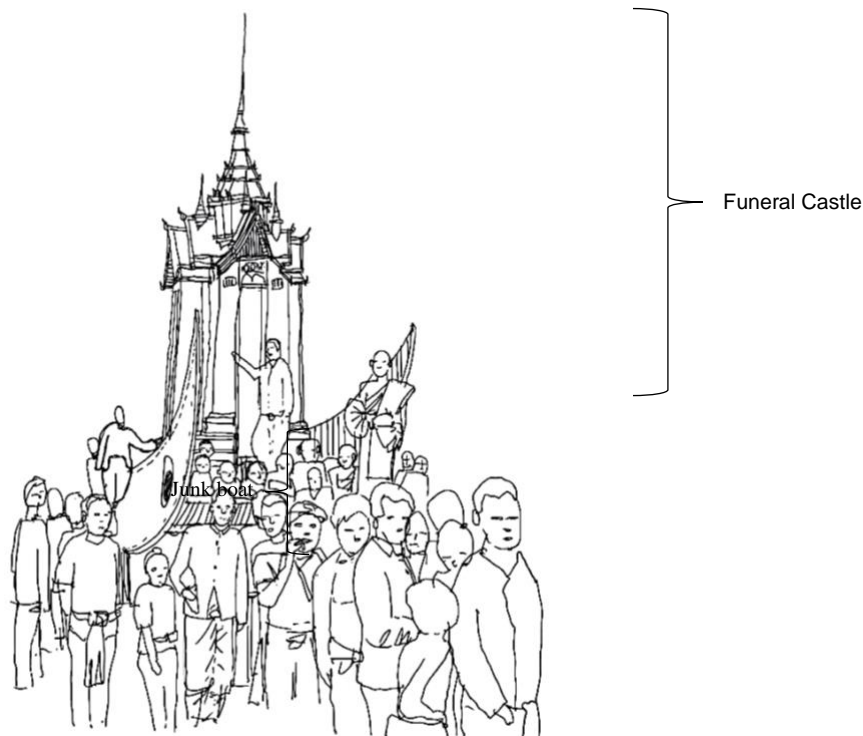
Lanna used to be a vassal state of Siam. With respect to the cremation of Chao Luang Chiang

Mai, in looking at the background in Lanna legends, it seems that there may have been a funeral in the style of a funeral castle on the back of a Hastilinga bird or a funeral castle in 1816 in the funeral of Phra Chao Kawila (the first Chao Luang Chaing Mai) (Saksee et al., 2012; Somjai, 1998).

One photograph shows the funeral of Phra Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong, the 6th Chao Luang Chiang Mai; it involves the use of a funeral castle in the Chaturamuk style (a four-gabled roof) after Chiang Mai became part of Siam. The gables were stacked in many layers, with the crown of Cho Fa (top knot of gable decoration) and Bairaka (decoration of the rim of gable). This style of funeral castle is considered the funeral castle of kings and rulers of Lanna. The base of the funeral castle was in the shape of a Sampao boat (junk boat). According to Lanna folklore, it is called Sa Pao Kaew and Sa Pao Kham (glass junk boat and gold junk boat), which refers to a boat that takes people on a transmigration to Nirvana (Kuphanumat, 2016).

Figure 10

A Funeral Castle of Phra Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong.



Note. Adapted from *Khueng sattawat nai muu kon Thai lah kon Lao: attacheewaprawat* [A half century among the Siamese and Lao an autobiography] (p. 120), by D. McGilvary & C. Tanrattanakun, Siam Pratet Publishing.

Figure 10 shows the funeral castle of Phra Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong, the 6th King of Chiang Mai. It was reported that, at the funeral, the body was bathed and buried at the royal camp, Ban San Phranet (a village in Chiang Mai), and that his body was covered with gold leaf. When it came to the auspicious day, the process of transferring the coffin into Chiang Mai took place. The funeral procession consisted of the military, monks, ordinary people, musicians, and Chao Inthanon, the next Chao Luang, riding an elephant and carrying the body into a golden Busabok followed by a procession of monks, his headdress, officers leading his horse and elephant, and, finally, the northern royal family members.

In the later era of Chiang Mai history, after becoming part of Siam, although still a vassal state, Chiang Mai had full freedom of self-governance, including reaping benefits from their own state affairs, with which Siam did not interfere at all. Being a vassal state merely required the sending of gold and silver flowers to Bangkok every three years. Such autonomy had been enjoyed in Lanna since the reign of Phra Chao Kawila (Reign 1774-1782), the first ruler of Chiang Mai, and extending to the reign of Phra Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong (Reign 1856-1870), with all these rulers governing in Lanna tradition (Arkarapoti Wong, 2021a, 2021b). The ceremonies in both kingdoms were similar, including the cremation traditions used for the cremation of Chao Luang upon his death.

Traditionally, it is assumed that when any Chao Luang died, the funeral ceremony was performed either by building a castle on the back of a Hastilinga bird or building a castle alone, as was the case for the funeral of Phra Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong. Chiang Mai's customary era came to an end when Phra Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong died around 1870. After that, Chiang Mai's administrative power was gradually consolidated into Bangkok.

Several events allowed Siam to impose its influence on Chiang Mai. One of the major causes was the death of Somdet Chao Phraya Borom Maha Sri Suriyawong (Chuang Bunnag), (died in 1883). His position at the time of his death, at the beginning of the reign of King Rama V, was the regent of Siam. At that time, Siam had a conservative regime that did not interfere in the governance and interests of any of its vassal states. The administrative power in Siam was in

the group of Somdej Chao Phraya Borommaha Sri Suriyawong (Arkarapoti Wong, 2022a). However, in the decade prior to 1887, the influence of the group of Chao Phraya Sri Suriyawong had deteriorated greatly, and the younger brothers of King Rama V were mature enough to assist with political duties. Siam began to draw the power of the colonies into Bangkok (Arkarapoti Wong, 2021b, 2022b; Arkarapoti Wong & Chindapol, 2022; Ongsakul, 2018; Sattayanurak, 2014).

When Chao Luang Kawilorot Suriyawong died in 1870, Bangkok took this opportunity to appoint Chao Luang Inthanon as ruler of Chiang Mai in 1873. The history recorded by Rev. McGilvary reports that Chao Luang Inthanon, or later, Phra Chao Inthawichayanon (Reign 1873-1897), the 7th King of Chiang Mai, had a docile nature, and did not possess strict ruling traits like the former King of Chiang Mai, Phra Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong. In fact, it is reported that he was only interested in making a Ku Chang (elephant tomb) in a strange way. As a result, the duty to rule the country fell to his wife, Phra Nang Thip Kesorn, and his younger brother, Viceroy Boonthawong. This change of power raised Chiang Mai to the status of an important city in Lanna, and it became the target of the process of consolidating power into Bangkok (McGilvary & Tanrattanakun, 1994; Ongsakul, 2018).

This creation of a system of governance that changed from a vassal state to Thesaphiban (an intendant system) was a steady and systematic one. As Chiang Mai was considered one of the counties of Siam, Siam sent the governor of Thesaphiban to administer the country with the former rulers. He created a bureaucratic system and sent civil servants to work in Thesaphiban provinces. These developments eventually helped assimilate Chiang Mai into the influence of Siam (Khrouthongkhieo, 2016).

However, in the reign of Phra Chao Inthawichayanon, the 7th Chao Luang of Chiang Mai, a funeral ceremony was held for Viceroy Boonthawong, who died in 1882. He was the ruler who had played a role in the administration of country affairs in the reign of Phra Chao Inthawichayanon as if he was the second Chao Luang. Rev. Jonathan Wilson recorded a story about the funeral of Viceroy Boonthawong:

"The funeral of the late 2nd Chao Luang was held this afternoon. Thousands of people, rulers, and followers joined the ceremony. Preparations were perfectly made for the funeral ceremony. The funeral procession was beautifully organized. The funeral car was large and decorated as a symbol of a gigantic dragon with the head of an elephant. On the dragon's back, there was a pagoda-shaped crematorium decorated with colorful gold and silver paper, just like the dragon's body. The top of the pagoda was 40 feet above the ground, and thousands of people took part in the ceremonial hauling of the funeral car with ropes where Chao Luang of Chiang Mai and high-ranking rulers led the procession...." (Cort et al., 2018, p. 124)

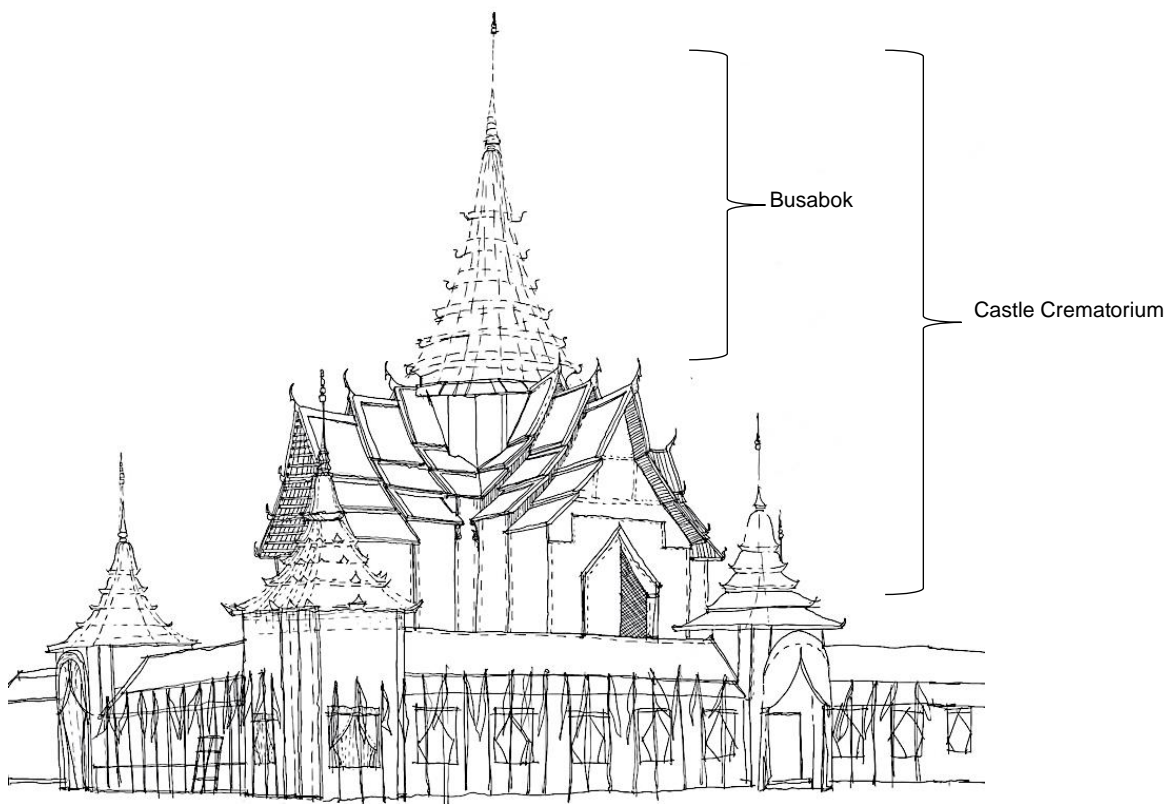
The dragon with an elephant head refers to the Hastilinga bird, showing that, in a funeral of one

of those who ruled the city in the early 1880s, a castle was placed on the back of the Hastilinga bird, as had been done in the past (Cort et al., 2018).

During the reign of Phra Chao Inthawichayanon (1873-1897), Siam had a great deal of influence in Chiang Mai. In addition to the efforts to build a governance system, there were also civil servants stationed in Chiang Mai. Chao Dara Rassamee, the daughter of Chao Luang Inthawichayanon, was sent to King Rama V to become the King's concubine (Arkarapoti Wong & Chindapol, 2022). This practice caused many indigenous cultures to be absorbed into the new Siamese culture. When it came to the funeral of Phra Chao Inthawichayanon in 1897, his crematorium reflected this integration of cultures. That is to say, the crematorium was changed from the original funeral castle to a Siamese Yod Busabok castle crematorium.

Figure 11

Crematorium of Phra Chao Inthawichayanon



Note. Adapted from *100 Pee Ku Wat Suandok* [100 Years of Stupa Suandok Temple], by Akkarachai, 2010, Clipmass (<https://www.clipmass.com/story/12321>).

The crematoriums in the Rattanakosin period, during the reigns of Kings Rama I-IV, were made into castle shapes, and the tops could be constructed in Prang or Busabok style. After the reign of King Rama IV, the royal crematoriums

were made for the whole body. King Rama V changed the practice of having a large crematorium covering the small crematorium because it was wasteful. From that time on, only the small crematorium was made.

Figure 12

Yod Prang Castle Crematorium of King Rama IV



Note. Adapted from *Sathapatthatakam pramerumas nai Siam* [The Siamese royal crematorium architecture] (p. 179), by N. Saksee, 2012, Bangkok Bank & The Association of Siamese Architects.

Figure 13

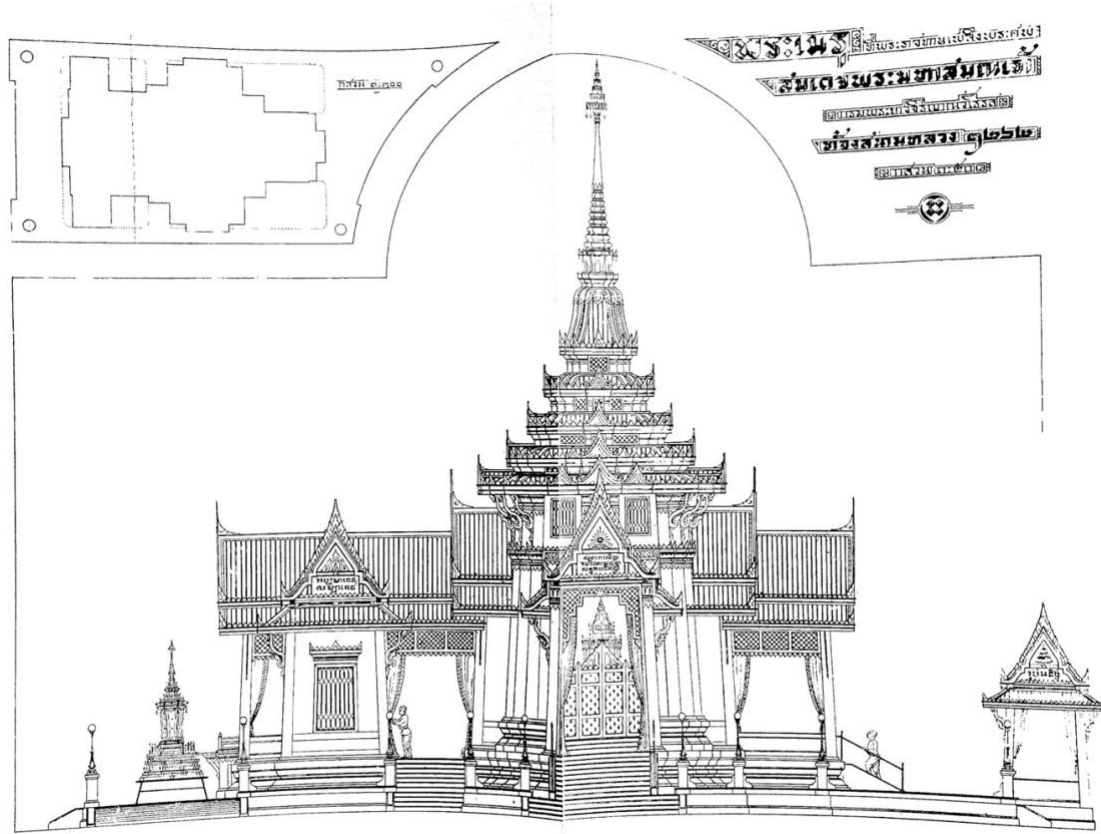
Busabok Crematorium of King Rama V



Note. Adapted from *Sathapatthatakam pramerumas nai Siam* [The Siamese royal crematorium architecture] (p. 26), by N. Saksee, 2012, Bangkok Bank & The Association of Siamese Architects.

Figure 14

Yod Busabok Castle Crematorium of Somdej Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Vajirayan Warorot (a Sibling of King Rama V)



Note. Adapted from *Sathapatthatakam pramerumas nai Siam* [The Siamese royal crematorium architecture] (p. 112), by N. Saksee, 2012, Bangkok Bank & The Association of Siamese Architects.

The transformation of such important rituals corresponded to the full influence of Siam after 1887. Lanna rulers were made to adopt Siamese practices. The rise of Siamese influence took the form of manipulating Chiang Mai's sovereignty into Bangkok as well as drawing important economic benefits, such as importation of forest products into the central region. This created crypto-colonialism¹ between Siam and Chiang Mai (Herzfeld, 2012; Winichakul, 1997).

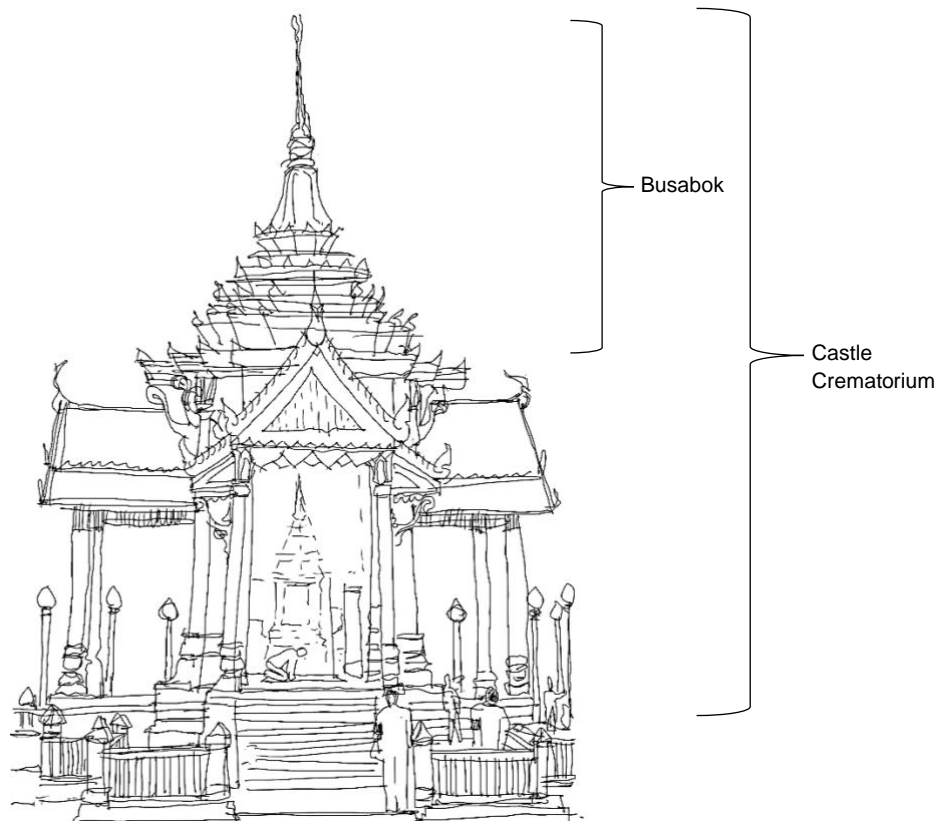
This governmental transformation from vassal state to Thesapiban systematically changed the status of Chiang Mai from that of an independent state to simply a part of Siam. These changes were reflected in the changing cremation

traditions of Chao Luang Chiang Mai, which previously had featured grand and unique funeral rites, such as having the Hastilinga bird or the funeral castle. Changing to a royal crematorium adopted from Siam was indicative of the fact that Chiang Mai had been assimilated into Siam. Once Chiang Mai accepted that it was part of Siam, this affected the form of crematorium used for Chao Luang Chiang Mai. The Busabok crematorium is used only in the crematorium for the King; the crematoriums for other royal family members are still made in the style of a castle crematorium, but with different top decorations such as Yod Prang, Tier or Crown.

¹ This term is used for a country that defines itself as independent, and which has never been colonized, but in reality is under the influence of a colonizing country's power in some certain way.

Figure 15

Busabok Castle Crematorium of Chao Kaew Nawarat, the 9th Chao Luang of Chiang Mai.



Note. Adapted from *Pitee praratchatan pleung prasob chao phuu klong chiang mai ong thi kao* [Crematorium ceremony of the 9th ruler of Chiang Mai], by Huglanna, 2013, Huglanna. (<http://www.huglanna.com/index.php?topic=180.0>).

Under the Thesaphiban system, Chiang Mai became a northern county in 1899. However, in 1932, a revolution changed the government in Bangkok, resulting in the abolition of the absolute monarchy. This governmental change included the abolition of the Thesaphiban system throughout the kingdom, and Chiang Mai became Chiang Mai Province in 1933 (Ongsakul, 2008).

Along with this change in status, the former monarchy and the status of Chao Luang Chiang Mai was also abolished, although the living monarch was allowed to continue to rule until the end of his life. In the case of Chao Kaew Nawarat, the last Chao Luang (the 9th Chao Luang) of Chiang Mai (Reign 1910–1939), when he died in 1939, the position of Chao Luang Chiang Mai died with him. Chao Kaew Nawarat crematorium is therefore considered the last royal crematorium of Chiang Mai ever to be built. It can be seen that the rank of the deceased was expressed through the crematorium. As a vassal

state, when adopting the traditions of Siam, Lanna had to limit the form of the crematorium and could not arrange the ceremony to be equal to that of the King of Siam. Therefore, the crematorium of Chao Luang Chiang Mai had to take the form of a crown.

The relative positions of rulers were, like many positions of power today, in a hierarchy understood by contemporaries. For example, the position of Chao Luang Chiang Mai can be understood in the context of The Act of Feudal Lords, Phraya, Thao Saen Muang of a vassal state. Under the Act, the level of a ruler of a vassal state, such as Phra Chao Inthawichayanon, holding 15,000 rai of rice fields, was comparable to that of Phra Chao Luk Ther (the title for an offspring of the king) who had already been assigned the directorate. Meanwhile, Chao Kaew Nawarat was Chao (lord) of the vassal state (Lower than Phra Chao of a vassal state) holding 10,000 rai of rice fields,

which is comparable to that of Phra Chao Lan Ther (the title for the grandson or granddaughter of the king) who has already been assigned the directorate (Prarachabanyhad sakdina chaonai praya taosanmueng prathetsaraj rosor 118, 1899; Chuanprapan, 1967).

Therefore, Chao Luang Chiang Mai was a ruler of a vassal state; his position was comparable to that of Phra Chao Luk Ther and Phra Chao Lan Ther of Siam, and was not equivalent to the status of the King under the feudal act. Therefore, the Chao Luang crematorium could only be created in the shape of a crown crematorium, which could take many forms, including Busabok, Prang, Crown, or others. However, in Chiang Mai, both Phra Chao Inthawichayanon and Chao Kaew Nawarat chose to use Busabok.

The mentioned ceremonial changes brought about transformations to the city of Chiang Mai in terms of adopting the influence of Siam in various aspects, including awareness of national

integration. Since significant ceremonies at for the lord or other prominent people in Chiang Mai consistently shifted to the Siamese style, this pattern reflects and symbolizes the acceptance by the Chiang Mai elite of this integration and subjugation by Siam. Ultimately, this led to the assimilation of Chiang Mai into the country of Siam and its transformation into a province of the country; acceptance of this assimilation is, in the 21st century, now complete and unquestioned.

In general, it can be observed that the funeral ceremony of Chao Luang's Chiang Mai underwent changes that paralleled the constantly increasing influence of Siam up until the final one in 1939. There was a continual shift from traditional Lanna ceremonial practices to Siamese-style ceremonies. Eventually, once Chiang Mai had become a fully integrated part of Siam, the funeral ceremonies for the Lanna ruler followed the same ceremonial practices as those in Siam.

Table 1
The Changes of Funeral Ceremony of Chao Luang's Chiang Mai and Their Remarks

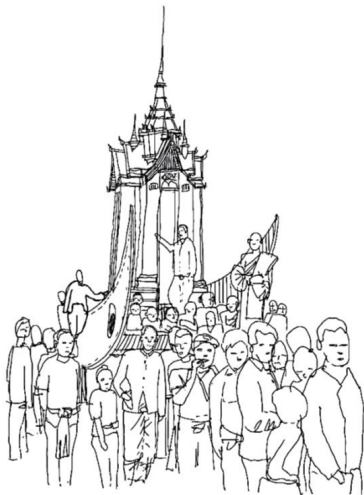
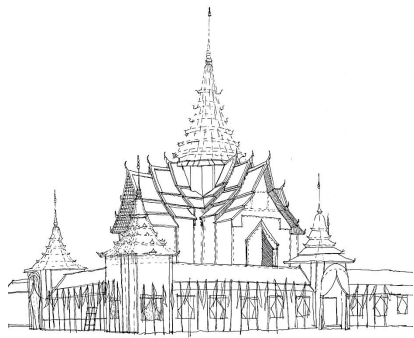
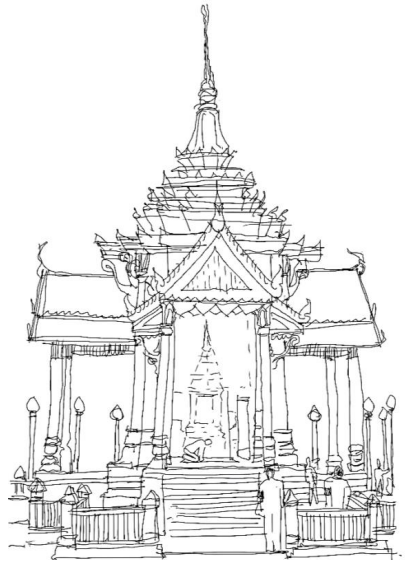
Year	Incidents	Image of architectural changes	External factors	Remark
1870	The funeral ceremony of Phra Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong, the 6th King of Chiang Mai.		Siam had started to exert influence in Chiang Mai, but it was still in the early stages. The funeral ceremony followed the traditional Lanna customs.	The funeral ceremony followed the traditional Lanna customs, including the construction of a funeral pyre and a procession in the Lanna style.

Table 1 (Continued)

Year	Incidents	Image of architectural changes	External factors	Remark
1897	The funeral ceremony of Phra Chao Inthawichayanon, the 7 th King of Chiang Mai		Siam had a significant influence in Chiang Mai, with an increasing effort to centralize governing power in Bangkok, diminishing the authority of local rulers.	The funeral ceremony followed the royal cremation ceremony style of Siam, including the construction of the royal crematorium in the Siamese style.
1939	The funeral ceremony for Chao Kaew Navarat, the 9th King of Chiang Mai (the last King before the abolition of the Lanna feudal system).		The Lanna feudal system had been abolished, and Chiang Mai had become one of the provinces under Siam.	The funeral ceremony followed the royal cremation ceremony style of Siam, with the construction of a smaller royal crematorium to pay homage to the honor of the local ruler, but significantly reduced in size compared to the previous tradition.

DISCUSSION

After the Chao Luang Crematorium was created, Chao Luang Chiang Mai accepted the new power from Bangkok that had taken hold. The power elite of Bangkok did not want equal ceremonial competition from those in Lanna, and demanded that funeral ceremonies reflect Bangkok's dominance. The original ceremony using a funeral castle was adapted to use a crematorium similar to that in Bangkok; moreover, the form of the crematoriums were directed by the royal court in Bangkok, which established the degree of status accorded to Chao Luang Chiang Mai. This led directly to the disappearance of the Hastilinga bird and the funeral castle in the cremation tradition of Chao Luang Chiang Mai.

This change in the cremation traditions had a significant effect on the worldview related to beliefs about the afterlife. The Tribhum worldview led to a crematorium that simulated Mount Sumeru and the various layers of the world of angels for the funeral ceremony of the King. Such simulation represented veneration of the King's return to the realm. In the world of Tribhum, Mount Sumeru and the scope of the ritual reflected the Tribhum universe, in which the center of that universe appeared at the prepared ritual space that connects the belief in the Tribhum. In this way, the core of government power was physically on display for the public to see and feel under the King's rule. Use of the Hastilinga in the funeral ceremonies was tied to a mythical story about a mighty bird (Hastilinga bird) that appeared in both the Tribhum and in folk tales. The simulation of the Hastilinga bird with a castle on its back—the castle or Phiman—was the representation of the celestial world where the angels live, demonstrating the status of Lanna rulers, who were at the level of gods, above ordinary people. The imagery of the royal castle in Lanna's funeral rites was, therefore, an attempt to reflect and integrate the Tribhum worldview in order to project an image to the common people and to reinforce the status of Lanna rulers, who were superior to the public. At the same time, however, these funeral practices also fused local legends with a ghost-Brahmin-Buddhist worldview. After the construction of the Chao Luang crematorium, the original cremation tradition was eliminated from local legends, leaving only a simulation of the world of fictional

gods in the Tribhum that showed the superiority of the rulers, unlike the Siamese style, which did not link to any indigenous beliefs. This made it difficult for understanding of the later rituals to be integrated into the local way of life. Finally, the funeral castle in Lanna cremation tradition was transformed to take on a new meaning.

Nowadays, it has become a common funeral ceremony that is not divided according to rank, as in the past. The Hastilinga bird castle is still being made; however, its use is reserved only for senior monks who are respected by the villagers.

CONCLUSION

The evolving architectural style of the Chiang Mai Royal Crematorium provides evidence of Siamese colonization impacting Lanna. As for the Chao Luang crematorium, it symbolizes the constant rise of Siamese influence with respect to Chiang Mai. When Siam held sway in Chiang Mai in the form of successful crypto-colonialism, Chiang Mai's important rituals to pay homage to the rulers of the city were adapted to conform to the rituals of the new coming power, and such rituals had to be correctly and appropriately modified according to the dictates of the royal court of Siam. The rulers of Chiang Mai, originally equivalent to a king, were demoted, and the crematorium was limited by such this dramatic change in status. Finally, when the position of vassal state rulers was abolished, the cremation tradition was accordingly abandoned as Chiang Mai, which used to be an independent state, was transformed into only one province of Siam.

DISCLOSURE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work is partially funding by the Faculty of Architecture (grant for writing and editing research document), Chiang Mai University. The title of the research is Chao Luang Crematorium. I would like to thank you and acknowledge the funding support that make this research possible to complete.

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