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## **RESPONSE TO THE USE OF STORYTELLING IN THAI MUSEUMS: THE CREATION OF 'SACRED SPACE' IN ARCHITECTURE RELATES TO THE IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA IN THAILAND COULD BE POLITICAL**

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### **Abstract**

*If 'sacred symbol' causes the image of the Buddha to be 'sacred,' what does this occurrence effect space surrounding them? In Thailand, the creation of the image of the Buddha is an extraordinary achievement both visually and in its motive. The image of the Buddha is also believed to be a 'sacred symbol' with a 'sacred space'; but how does this belief affect us as spectators. How can we understand a proper meaning of the image of the Buddha when we are at the museum not at the site? In this article, I have questioned and discussed that the storytelling of the image of the Buddha in a museum should be shown significantly because of the ordinary existence of its 'sacred space. Whether 'sacred space' was political and still exists or no longer exists, it is, nevertheless, a representation of past human belief. It is also essential to convey storytelling accurately and that designing area in the museum will largely affect the audience. In this writing, I focus on the use of storytelling in Thai museums; case study why the creation of 'Sacred space' in architecture relates to the image of the Buddha in Thailand could be political. The article aims to respond to development plans of museums in Thailand. As a*

*result, the interpretation of 'Sacred space' in architecture relates to the image of the Buddha can apply to installation and space design in the museums. With a proper storytelling of the image of the Buddha, this can help spectators to understand better in Thai histories, political influences on arts and will lead Thai people to feel to preserve their art properties.*

### **Keywords**

Storytelling in Museums, Sacred Space in Architecture relate to the Image of the Buddha,  
Political Influences on Arts

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## **1. Introduction**

From the architectural point of view, functional modern buildings have been designed for art collection, such as museums. Nowadays, there are many kinds of art, which are displayed in many different ways in Thai museums. Interestingly, innovations and technologies are widely used to manage the museums and to exhibit works of art. However, some forms of art are unique, for example, Buddhist art. Although there are more comprehensive of perceiving Buddhist literature, the historical interpretation is essential to lead us to appreciate the actual meaning of the works of art. Museums, a new form of education, have likely applied storytelling as the historical interpretation to communicate with the viewer. Storytelling is a simple way to guide people to understand the meaning of object of arts. However, what will we expect to see Buddhist art such as the image of the Buddha in a museum? What kind of story should be telling? We need to understand that the image of the Buddha or a symbol of the Buddha is the main subject of the Buddhist art and interprets the Buddhist faith. At the site, the sculpture of the Buddha image has been believed to have a relationship to 'sacred space.' However, how can we narrate 'sacred space' in the museum? In this article, I will focus on the use of storytelling on the subject of why the creation of 'Sacred space' in architecture relates to the image of the Buddha in Thailand could be political. In effect, these will lead us to identify, what is different perception to look at the image of the Buddha in a museum and a temple? Moreover, how we can develop the use of storytelling in the Thai museums appropriately.



**Figure 1:** *Comparison the image of the Buddha in museum and at site*

In Thailand, from a museum database (20th July 2017), there are 1,457 museums across the country. Museums have divided into two types; one is a general museum, and another is an online museum. The report explains that there are about 1,453 general museums and only four online museums which all have registered in a museum database. However, we currently notice that the number of museums in operation is slightly adjusted which can see from numbers below;

- Remain opening museums are about 1,362 or 93.48%
- Museums in process are 49 or 3.36%
- Under construction, museums are 22 or 1.51%
- Being closed museums are 24 museums or 1.65 %

To sum up, they are 1,359 general museums, and three online museums are still open while 23 general museums and only one online museum are closed. It is fascinating to note that many museums in Thailand have rapidly increased every year. However, some museums are not in operation. From the museum database, most successful museums are related to anthropological aspects, which included Thai faith in Buddhism. This surely confirms us that a subject of Buddhism is highly appreciated by Thais. Additionally, I participated in the workshop of ‘Civic Space and Museum Supporting Facilities’: Museum Academy in Thailand 2017, arranged by the National Discovery Museum Institute in Bangkok. The workshop was a remarkable effort to encourage participants to rethink what museums in Thailand should be like in the future. They selected curators, researchers and museum’s owners to take part in the

workshop. As one of 25 participants, I had managed a focus group interview to get information about the concept of how to develop storytelling in Thai museums. The result of the focus group interview was that they all agreed to use storytelling in the museum, which has now become fashionable. However, they were all concerned if technologies and medias could be overused in the museums. To link to this idea, we can further look through the article of ‘ The Challenge of Digital Storytelling for Cultural Tourism’ written by Associate Professor Kittichai Kasemsarn , published in the Journal of Faculty of Architecture, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkraban, on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2015. He pinpoints that

*“digital storytelling has significant impacts on people's daily life in myriad ways: from marketing, advertising and promotion, management, and education, to personal motivation, cultural media and media and entertainment”*

He also concludes that

*" 1.) digital storytelling can effectively enhance online users' experience and motivation to visit the real cultural places 2.) digital storytelling and virtual technology can provide to support cultural tourism regarding accessibility (too expensive to visit, too inhospitable, too far away, too fragile, too dangerous, or no longer exist) and 3.) The technology can present precise and formal data about the historical place with entertainment and provide storytelling to attract online visitors' interest”*

So that applying a proper content in storytelling is the most crucial issue. Attending the workshop was an excellent opportunity for me, it can help me to reconfirm that a selection of important subjects of storytelling is critical. It is also essential to convey storytelling accurately and that designing area in the museum will mainly affect the audience. In this writing, I focus on the use of storytelling in Thai museums; case study why the creation of ‘Sacred space’ in architecture relates to the image of the Buddha in Thailand could be political. The article aims to respond to development plans of museums in Thailand. As a result, the interpretation of ‘Sacred space’ in architecture relates to the image of the Buddha can apply to installation and space design in the museums. Firstly, it is important for us to understand how we can examine its ‘sacred space’? In my previous writing ‘The relationship of sacred space to Image of the Buddha,’ I summarized that ‘sacred space,’ for me, it can be linked to the theory of phenomenology. Thus, we can divide the method of creation of ‘sacred space’ into three ways;

1. The creation of the Buddhist symbol ‘sacred space’ is within the image of the Buddha

2. The creation of 'sacred space' in architecture relates to the image of the Buddha.
3. The limitations of 'sacred space' of the image of the Buddha

To refer to the creation of the Buddhist symbol 'sacred space' is within the image of the Buddha, we can look through sacred symbols in Buddhist art. There are two main styles of the image of the Buddha, Shakyamuni or the present Buddha and Maitreya or the future Buddha. Both relate to two doctrines of Buddhism, Hinayana/Theravada, and Mahayana. The characteristics of these two main images of the Buddha demonstrate a significance of the different meanings of the symbol. In his essay, *Basic Writing, the origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger, define the work of art as a symbol, as follow,

*' Allegory and symbol provide the conceptual framework within whose channel of vision the artwork that manifests another, this one element that joins with another, is the 'thingly' feature in the artworks. It seems almost as the thingly element in the artwork is like the substructure into upon which the other, proper element is built'*

This paragraph insists that the symbol can lead us to discover the ' truth of the art' which is the main topic of Heidegger's theory.

Heidegger also mentions that the knowledge of art may not convey the whole meaning of the essence of art. In effect, what does Heidegger think about the association of 'art and space' if he believes, that art is art itself?

*' We should have to learn to recognize that things themselves are places and do not merely belong to a place...The interplay of art and space would have to be thought from out of the experience of place and region. Art as sculpture: and on occupying of space. The sculpture would not deal with space.'*

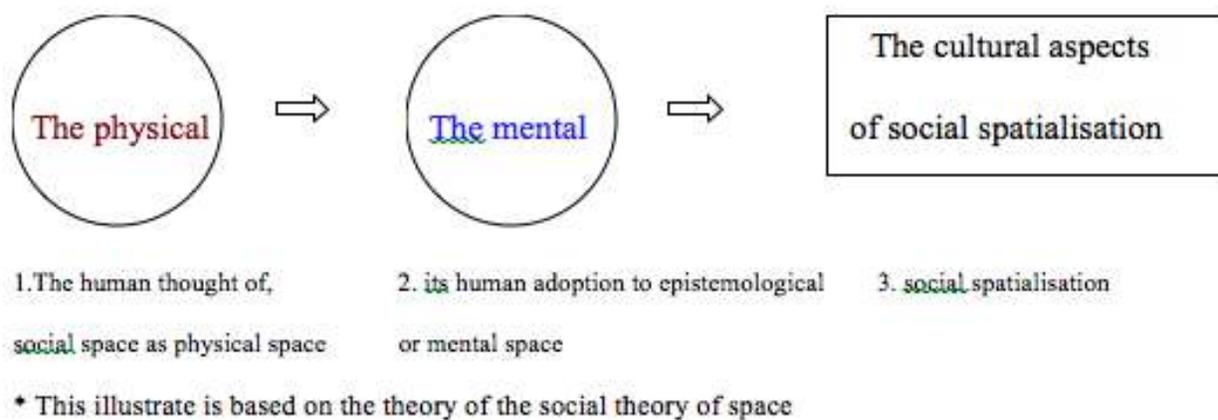
(Heidegger, the Basic writing: the Origin of the work of art )

For me, his theory raises the question of whether time affects the motion of space. I do not agree that art and space are not combined, or art is independent of space. For example, if we look on the religious symbol as the 'truth of art,' which meaning without an understanding of the narrative, is the symbol still a symbol? If we look at the Wheel of Law in a museum without the image of the Buddha, do we have a feeling of the teaching or the learning of the lesson of Buddhism? If 'sacred symbol' causes the image of the Buddha to be 'sacred,' what does this

occurrence effect space surrounding them? It is useful to look through the theory of 'the production of space' by Henri Lefebvre and to understand the association of space to politics.

## 2. 'The Production of Space' by Henri Lefebvre

In general, the writings of Lefebvre obviously support the Marxist theory, in particular in a social context. We might say that he is a materialist or structuralist who invented and believed in the important theme of 'everyday life,' for example, the construction of society. Nowadays, his theories are no longer mainstream; nevertheless, they remain a value to art historians. For me, the reason for writing about his theories is to compare different ideas and approaches to *space* based on different social conditions. Moreover, I believe that the relationship of the 'sacred space' to the image of the Buddha, is affecting the change in society. First, I would like to introduce Lefebvre's theory of 'The Three-Part Dialectics within Spatialisation' which all lead to socialism. It is derived from both historical sediments within the everyday environment and from utopian elements that shock one into a new conception of the spatialisation of social life. Interestingly, the analysis of space is based on the social concept of defining 'the social theory of space' as various 'levels in space.' This concept attempts to the formal link between the human body and a spatial object. For example;



**Figure 2:** *The Cultural Aspects of Social Specialization's Lefebvre*

Lefebvre uses these 'level in space' to describe the dimension of 'space,' which are *Spatial Practice, Representation of Space, Space of Representation, History of Space, Historical Space and Abstract Space* and defines them one by one.

## **2.1 Spatial Practice** or the physical space

The first practice is easily explained as a screen of 'everyday perception.' This is the production and reproduction of specific places or space towards the social configuration. It includes buildings, urban morphologies, and the creation of zones and regions for specific purposes, i.e., parks; sites concern death (graveyards) and remembrance, (memorials, battlegrounds, **museums**, historical walks, and tours). So, it is an everyday happening, which created 'human' space and the form of space, or specialization can exist because of human use. In this way, this leads to my idea how we feel when we see the image of the Buddha in a museum and when we see in the context of a religious site such as, temple.

## **2.2 Representations of space** or the mental space

This is another complicated analysis of Lefebvre's theory about space. Lefebvre writes ' *Representations of space are the logic and forms of knowledge, and the ideological content of codes, theories, and the conceptual depictions of space linked to production relations.*'

It is a philosophical theory of, which attempts to separate the working of a human body from the mind. Of course, this is the opposite of the concept of space of myths.

## **2.3 Space of representation** or the social space

' *Space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'...this is the dominated...space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus representation spaces may be said..to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs.*'

Rob Shield says that Lefebvre picks up the interesting point of sign systems in architecture; such as semiotics and metaphors and its uses in space. According to Lefebvre's concept, 'Spaces of Representation' is 'lived in space' and 'discourses of space.' His point of reference is Dada and Surrealism. The surrealist way of using space is imaginative and individual. Lefebvre thinks that it is possible to show the spatialisation of 'live space' as 'lived experience.' In this way, the perception of Lefebvre in 'Spaces of Representation' is a new style of producing space, which differs from the norm of architectural theory. Although this analysis of 'level in space' just shows the possibility of space and its representation, it suggests us that the form of space exists in human use. So, what is 'sacred space'? Moreover, it is interesting to note

that Lefebvre includes the 'sacred space' in his work of in 'A History of Space.' Lefebvre convinces that 'space' is produced by humans and for humans. He sees space as serving human being.

## **2.4 History of Space**

### **2.4.1 The Absolute Space**

Lefebvre's theory begins with the 'space' of nature, the absolute space. The absolute space can be simply described as a form of natural or primitive space. Lefebvre gives as an example of the absolute space relating to social icons, such as, *frontiers*, *liminal zones* and *temporary camps*, which are all created without human properly measure. Lefebvre also said that the method of the absolute space is based on humans common sense, so that, they (humans) are able automatically to visualize the differences between natural and supernatural space. Moreover, for Lefebvre, the absolute space often originates from primitive communities in the sense of anthropomorphism. This process insists that, in a primitive community, the representation of the absolute space is based on a comparison of various functions of areas. Therefore, the one, which is not for human's participation, is, for the religion. Lefebvre notes that it could have appeared between 500BC and 0 AD. Therefore, to sum up, the absolute space of Lefebvre's historical theory, is something to do with how human mentality reflects the nature of its environment, particularly, regarding separating the different uses of spatialisation. However, for me, Lefebvre's theory about the 'sacred place' is more reasonable.

### **2.4.2 The Sacred Space**

The 'sacred space' is both sacred and political. *'It represents a political supersession of absolute space by the first truly 'social' spaces of the despots of the Asiatic mode.'* This analysis further explains that the absolute space remains existing in the 'sacred space,' but is transformed logically into phenomenal enclosed spaces: caves, nooks, crannies alleyways and the domestic. In this sense, we can probably say that the association between the 'absolute space' and 'sacred space' is an inner link. For me, the absolute space here, seems to combine with the phenomenal spatialisation, but how and why is the absolute space transformed into the 'sacred space'? What is the primary factor of this spatial change? Is it politics?

Moreover, Lefebvre also mentions that *'Absolute space does not disappear but is merely subdued and displaced.'* Lefebvre postulates that the emergences of the city-state, despots and divine kings in Asia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome bring about the spatialisation of the sacred space.

Lefebvre notes that it occurred between 500 and 100 BC or 0 and 10 AD. There are two points of his concept of the analysis of the sacred space, which fascinated me.

#### **2.4.2.1 The Concept of Gender in the Sacred Space**

Lefebvre mentions that these ancient states represent a potent symbol of men and their power. The states present power of man as being at the center of the cosmos and represent the gods. In effect, I think this idea is worthy of note. Does it mean that all spaces in men's use preserved for the sacred?

#### **2.4.2.2 The Idea of City-State and its Change**

This approach is close to his contribution in 'The Space of Architects.' Lefebvre insists that the developing building and new project of a civil structure have obliterated historic spaces. This means the changes in society affect the use of space. Also, Lefebvre put this concept of social change within the sacred places, while clarifying the meaning of political space in the topic of 'Historical Space.' However, in my opinion, political space *is* the sacred space.

It is probably the same thing, especially in the hierarchical systems of Southeast Asian society, I will show the images of the god's king at HariHara, Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom in Cambodia and Sukhothai in Thailand in the next topic.

### **2.5 Historical Space**

Lefebvre maintains that historical space is highly political. The importance of the empire building is significant. The message from gods is to hold political and administrative power. As I understand, the historical space means to show that God's power is transferred to a human. All this point, religious theme in art and architecture becomes popular. Also, Lefebvre shows that it is the medieval period, which uses symbolism (Vertical and icon) to represent religious images. In the same way, the representation of space often enters religious architecture. This can be seen in Thai temples as well. In architectural terms, perspective was invented and used to convey the dimension of space and became highly sophisticated. The technique of showing the *shape* of space was an extraordinary invention of humanity. At this point, we can see that people learned how to produce space in many different ways and means. Space appeared everywhere, space became historical and not just 'sacred.' Creating in art was another way in which people deeply expressed it. Lefebvre notes that it appears between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. However, I still believe that 'sacred space' and 'historical space' is not greatly different, but there is a continuity between them. One thing where 'sacred space' differs from 'historical space' is in the

open space. Historical space opens a public whereas sacred space is mysterious and keeps for the particular purpose.

## 2.6 Abstract Space

Although the abstract space of Lefebvre's theory concerns capitalism, it is interesting to note how changes in society are the inspiration for the way of human being and believing. His idea mentions 'private property' as a new kind of spatial representation. Many modern buildings take over the land, and that provide for people's needs. Therefore, we can see the abstract space in the period of capitalism, is concerned with the economic and commercial aspect of people's life. The representation of 'abstract space' became layers, segments, and masses. After this period, Lefebvre calls it as 'contradictory space,' which is perhaps the 'global space' of the 21-century.

For me, it is essential to read this theory of the 'History of Space' closely. I agree with his intellectual approaches to 'the history of space, ' and I do believe that space has a history. However, we notice that the appearance of 'abstract space' seems to be isolated from all of these stages (except the contradictory space). The occurrence of 'abstract space' generally reveals to us the start of a contemporary period. Lefebvre certainly states it, especially, as 'abstract space' is defined convincingly than 'absolute space' and 'sacred space.' Perhaps his concept of living with a 'new' form of space is more familiar with our time. However, 'absolute space' and 'sacred space' are the idealistic form of spatialisation. Therefore, what do we do for 'sacred space' in these post-modern times? ('sacred space' mixes with 'abstract space'?) Moreover, how are we to understand the meaning of 'sacred space' when the 'sacred' time is running out? Is 'sacred space' still sacred? Has 'sacred space' ever existed? If sacred space exists, how is it 'sacred,' for whom, and why?

## 3. Why the creation of 'Sacred space' in architecture relates to the image of the Buddha in Thailand could be political

So, is 'Sacred Space' of Image of the Buddha also political? In the book, *Rethinking Architecture: A reader in cultural theory*, in the chapter, 'Is Space political?', Fredric Jameson refers to 'The Residence of Architecture in Politics,' which states that 'architecture can somehow never get out of politics...however, must learn to dwell in it on a permanent if uneasy basis.'

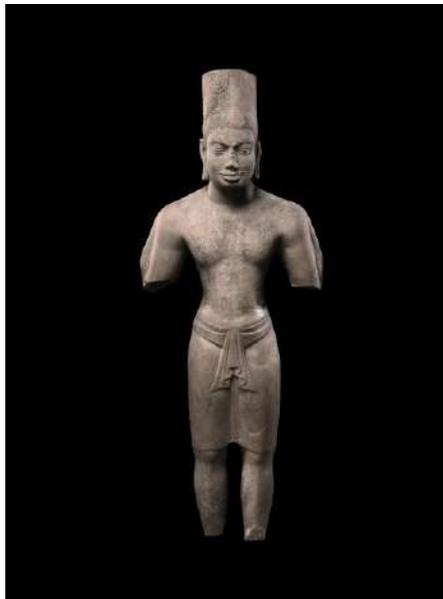
Combining the architectural space with politics is a fascinating subject, but what specific period is the writer discussing? The writer opines that *'..also that we have to do here, not with inventing of forging a relationship between architecture and politics where presumably none existed before, but rather simply with revealing what was there all along, what we may choose not to see but what can, in the last analysis, scarcely be avoided; building codes, zoning, city ordinances, local politics, wards and parishes, bosses, payoffs, unions, the Mafia'*.

His objective is to represent the view of modern society concerning the organization of architecture. Besides, Fredric Jameson further explains that there are two different meanings of the word politics relating to architecture. The first is politics as *'the specialized, local thing, the empirical activity,'* for example, art, literature or the project supporting the policy of the government. The second is politics in the global sense, the combination of society as a whole and non –empirical motion. These different two meanings of politics in the context of architecture come from the movement in the west and in the modern time. Both writers maintain that space is the main theme of *'capital architecture.'* In contemporary times, these ideas rely on the production of *' abstract space'* that is divided into many facets depending on the demands of society. Buildings are the *' Spaces of representation,'* meaning that buildings and space are symbols of human lifestyles. However, is this perspective different from that perspective in the East? Do politics affect the concept of *' Spaces of representation'* in the history of *' sacred space'*? As I see, there is a small difference in the way of expressing the politics in space, between cultures, especially, in the meaning of *'sacred space.'* Moreover, in the East, the relationship between *' Sacred space'* and *' Spaces of representation'* (social space) is absolutely bound up in politics. Before I move on to the association of *'sacred space,'* with the image of the Buddha and politics, I would just like to repeat the Lefebvre's theory of the *' Production of Space.'* This leads to the question of whether *'representation of space'* and *' spaces of representation'* in the sense of orientation is the same.

Although his theory of spatialisation focuses on the western world, Lefebvre's opinion is worthy of note. He makes the interesting point that the European organization is arranging spatialisation differs from the Eastern one. That just underlines that, from the oriental view, the systems of cultural structures and hierarchies are very different from those in the West. Notably, in art terms, Buddhist arts contain a strong and powerful feeling of worshipping the Buddha, and that remains important for the relation of religious art to Buddhism. However, the one thing in

which Lefebvre's idea is similar to the concept of Buddhist art is political perspective. Buddhist art is not only the religious or holy object but also, contains hiding vision of a political space within its 'sacred space.' For example, in South East Asia, the hierarchical system has an influence on architecture in particular on religious buildings, which put the term 'sacred space' into context. For me, 'sacred space' means that it is 'sacred,' because, the creator wishes it to be 'sacred.' The association of 'sacred space,' with the image of the Buddha and the King can be demonstrated on the same lines. To support this concept, I would like to give the example of three different cities in Khmer period, HariHara, Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom in Cambodia and Sukhothai period in Thailand, of which only two cities can be related to 'sacred space' of the image of the Buddha. This literature review could confirm how politics influenced by arts in the past.

### **3.1 HariHara, Pre- Angkor or the Foundation of Angkor**



**Figure 3:** *Harihara, Sandstone, Sculpture, late 7<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> Century*  
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/38162>

In the Angkorean period, it is true to say that we are unable to escape the framework of the monarchy and society. Many important cities were built down the century under the power of the king and his people. Interestingly, the city shows a supremely strong sense of belief in the relationship between god and the king. The city of HariHara was built in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and this extraordinary temple of Preah Ko is a great temple represents the 'foundation as of Angkor.' It

was the period of King Jayavarman II ( 802 AD), who was believed to be at the center of the universe and to be a ' god-king' or ' king of the gods.' The king also believed in two gods, which is a new concept of a god's representative. Hari represents Visnu, Hara represents Shiva so that the characteristics of the HariHara deities are a combination of the two gods. Hence, this period is the beginning of the creation of the image of ' god-king,' and it can be seen in the iconography, an art of god as, throughout the temples.

### **3.2 Angkor Wat**

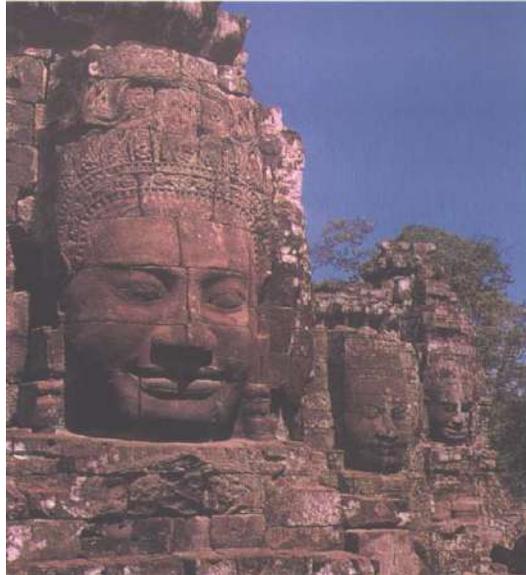


**Figure 4:** *Angkor Wat, symbolizing Meru Mountain (from Wikipedia)*

After the period of the King Jayavarman II, the power of HariHara came to an end and transformed into Angkor Wat. The central aspect of the rule and the representation of the ' god-king' are almost the same. Angkor Wat is the largest of the Khmer temples and was dedicated to Visnu and built by King Suryavarman II in the early 12th century. Not only the construction of the mythic temple; the five towers symbolizing *Meru* Mountain, the enclosing doors representing the edge of the world, and the surrounding moats representing the ocean, signifies the ' sacred place,' but also, its design of building the temple relating to the King is 'sacred.' Angkor Wat is unlike any other temple in the Khmer Empire and is remarkable for its functional construction. The 'sacred' ritual of processing from the western entrance can be linked to the meaning of the King's name, Suryavarman. In his book, *The History of Cambodia*, David Chandler writes that '

*an observer...standing just in front of the western entrance can see the sun rise directly over the central tower of Angkor Wat'. He goes on dramatically to describe the meaning of the King's name that, is Suryavarman, ' Protected by the Sun'. This is certainly the definition of 'sacred name,' which analogizes the King and the Sun, making a powerful symbol of ' god-king'.*

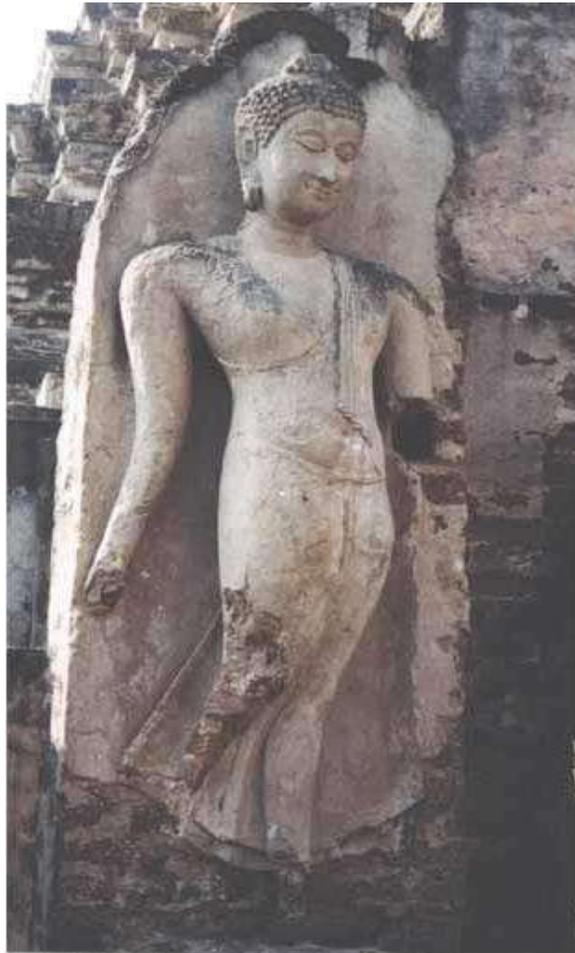
### **2.3 Angkor Thom**



**Figure 5:** *Bayon style, Angkor Thom, 13<sup>th</sup> century*

This period reveals a significant change in Khmer history. The King was Jayavarman VII who turned from the Hindu gods to become Mahayana Buddhist. During his reign, as a powerful King, however, the concept of ' god-king' was altered and became the association of the ' King,' and the ' Buddha' came. The Mahayana King built Angkor Thom with the meaning a great city, a temple-mountain, which is called the Bayon tower. The inscriptions describe him that as ' the great King, faithful Buddhist and a valiant soldier.' The image of the Buddha in this period is magnificent. Interestingly, the image of the Buddha at Angkor Thom conveys two meanings; one is to promote a new religion, Mahayana Buddhism, which can be seen from the stonewall surrounding the city, representing the encircling of the Meru mountain. The other meaning is for the politics and promotes the new King, which we can see from the hundreds of faces looking down on viewers and has a highly political significance of the King looking at us.

### 3.4 Sukhothai, Thailand



**Figure 5:** *The image of the Buddha, Sukhothai, 13<sup>th</sup> –14<sup>th</sup> centuries, Wat Rattana Mahatat*

Sukhothai state is believed to be a first Thai kingdom appeared between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The word Sukhothai means "Dawn of Happiness" which probably represents a "new state" or a "new place" located in a mountainous landscape and a sacred place. Prince Dhamrong Rajanupab says in his book, *Boran Kadee (The Archaeology)* that the Sukhothai image of the Buddha is designed to show a delicate sense of motion. He confidently believes that it is a kind of a revolution in Thai art. In short, the image of the Buddha was built in the middle of 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, is believed to represent the King Ramkamhaeng, the powerful king of Sukhothai kingdom. As seen in my previous article '*The Sukhothai Image of the Buddha: the characteristics and the classification of its idealistic art form,*' I have pinpointed that the image of the Sukhothai Buddha is very magnificent. Its characteristics represent the peaceful time of

the kingdom as liberating from the Khmer empire. The stucco image of the walking Buddha has known as the best walking statues in the Sukhothai style and that presenting with the king's face. Griswold says in his book, *Towards a History of Sukhothai Art*, that Buddha image probably represents the face of King Ramkamhaeng, the King who won over Khmers. Interestingly, Sukhothai images of the Buddha are not only to be found in the sculptural form but also, in statues mostly in temples. Their characteristics and its interpretation depend on the history of the temple. For example: at Wat Sri Chum temple, is a significant monument in Sukhothai history. There is a large stucco image of the Buddha in the attitude of subduing Mara, which is called Pra Achana or 'the Honoured Immovable Image'. This image of the Buddha was created in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is 11.30 m.wide (knee to knee) and 15 m. height. It could be because of the meaning of Pra Achana or 'the Honoured Immovable Image,' a sense of peace, make this image of the Buddha to be sacred. Alternatively, because this image of the Buddha is referred to King Ramkamhaeng, the king who freed the nation that makes space to be sacred.

Regarding political aspect, it may be sensible to note that the 'sacred' space cannot be 'sacred' without human belief in it. Space cannot be limited by itself alone without human involvement. The example of HariHara, Angkor city, and the Sukhothai state tells us that the relationship between the King and religious arts and architecture is sacred, influenced by politics. At that time, religious arts and architecture were often linked to state policy can be seen in Angkor Thom. The new King, Jayavarman VII, came to the throne with the new religion of Mahayana Buddhism, and be originated Buddhist art as well as new building including temple throughout the city. The new King was the disciple of the Buddha and epitomises a holy and untouchable person. Importantly, during his periods, Khmer arts were highly influenced by Thai arts, and that was until the period of King Ramkamhaeng of Sukhothai era. This also implies that the ritual that takes place with the King and the image of the Buddha is 'sacred'.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The creation of 'sacred space' in architecture and the image of the Buddha goes beyond visualization. It is historical, political, and phenomenal effects.

See table,

**Table 1:** *The Analysis of the ‘Sacred Space’ to the Image of the Buddha*

<b>Terms</b>	<b>The image of the Buddha and spaces</b>	<b>Effects</b>	<b>Results</b>
1. In historical terms	The image of the Buddha+ Buddhist text +Sacred symbol	Ritual and Sacred Space for the Buddha.	Representation of the Buddha
2. In political terms	The image of the Buddha+ Hierarchical system+ social space	Sacred space and Sacred place for the kingship.	Representation of the king and the Buddha
3. In phenomenal terms	The image of the Buddha +Ritual and conventional environment + sacred and religious objects	Sacred space and social environment.	Representation of ‘sacred image of the Buddha and Space’

The above result can merely describe in three terms,

1. In historical terms, ‘sacred space’ developed from the Buddhist literature (Sacred space’s Lefebvre)
2. In political terms, ‘sacred space’ represents the power of the King (Historical space’s Lefebvre)
3. In phenomenal terms, ‘sacred space’ comes from the ritual environment (Sacred and historical space’s Lefebvre)

To create a storytelling of ‘sacred space’ in architecture relates to the image of the Buddha in the museum (as a representation of ‘abstract space’s Lefebvre’). Therefore, we must reveal and communicate all aspects of those terms, which should concern these two main factors.

#### **4.1 Perception of Audiences (contents)**

According to the existence of ‘sacred space,’ has let me investigate the difference of perceptions the image of the Buddha in a museum and a temple. The museum staff should survey the perception of audiences and analyses answers before create contents and storytelling. For example, asking if one goes to a museum and looks at the image of the Buddha in Sukhothai period, and reads the information, which states that this image of the Buddha was made in the 14<sup>th</sup> century under the great Thai King. Does one feel anything when one is standing in a modern place (a museum) in front of a religious object, which represents the past? Does one ever imagine where it used to be and in what kind of environment? However, if the answer is ‘ No,

this object of art is well installed and no need to know its pasts (environment)', it could also tell us 'sacred space' has become *a global space*. Thus, the museum staff can apply contents of storytelling only based on these two terms;

1.1 In historical terms, 'sacred space' developed from the Buddhist literature  
(Sacred space's Lefebvre)

1.2 In political terms, 'sacred space' represent the power of the King  
(Historical space's Lefebvre)

On the other hand, the answer to the perception of the image of the Buddha in a museum is that 'Yes, it is different from at a religious site, need the environmental design.'

Thus, the museum staff can apply contents of storytelling based on all three terms

1.1 In historical terms, 'sacred space' developed from the Buddhist literature  
(Sacred space's Lefebvre)

1.2 In political terms, 'sacred space' represent the power of the King  
(Historical space's Lefebvre)

1.3 In phenomenal terms, 'sacred space' comes from the ritual environment  
(Sacred and historical space's Lefebvre)

Analysis of media as tools for storytelling: Applying social contexts to interact and to communicate how 'sacred space' was powerfully invented in the past is needed. Digital storytelling, for example, presenting with multimedia, animations, documentaries or another form of moving images would be useful.

#### **4.2 Space Management (Space)**

In fact, the sensations of looking at the image of the Buddha in a museum are different from those of looking at in a religious site. In a religious site, where images of the Buddha are often surrounded by religious monuments, such as pagodas and *chedi* that we are unable to see in a museum. Obviously, we lost a sense of political space in a museum. Hence, the relationship between the perception the image of the Buddha and the arrangement of this 'sacred space' is significant. So, space in the museum needs to be designed. Innovations and technologies can be accessed.

Analysis of media as tools for storytelling:

From those two factors, we can use media as these following suggestions;

1. Applying social contexts to interact and to communicate how 'sacred space' was powerfully invented in the past is needed. Digital storytelling, for example, presenting with multimedia, animations, documentaries or another form of moving images would be useful.

2. Creating virtual space and narrating 'sacred space' as political symbols could be idealistic. Thus, the sacred environment is affecting. The environment surrounding the image of the Buddha leads to the existence of 'sacred space.' Therefore it is important to note that the installation of the image of the Buddha is significant because of the ordinary existence of its 'sacred space.' Thus, even if there is no proper answer to the question of where placing the image of the Buddha is to be placed. It raises the awareness of the way in which the work of art should be displayed, in Thai museums.

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