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FAKE CAKE: THAI WEDDINGS

Volume II

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Volume II

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the Architectural Association School of Architecture

May

2021



FAKE CAKE: THAI WEDDINGS

Damnonen Techamai

WORDS & IMAGES

FAKE CAKE

WORDS & IMAGES

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FAKE CAKE

WORDS & IMAGES

Words & Images

The aim of this volume is to present the argument of the thesis and some cultural footnotes to explain the hybrid that is created in the contemporary Thai Wedding through words and images. Words and images are also the elements that help to construct and form the wedding spaces presented in Volume I, and were cited as evidence for the study as well as forming the analysis.

The first section of this volume is a collection of Thai words and English terms that are used throughout the thesis. They are organised in alphabetical order, regardless of language. All Thai words are translated into two layers of meaning. The first layer is their denotation or description provided by Thai and English dictionaries, as well as meanings found in other historical, cultural and psychological research studies. The second layer is their associated meanings that have emerged from Thai society. I call them 'local meanings' or connotations in Barthes's terminology. These latter meanings have been provided by the wedding experts whom I interviewed during my field studies in 2016 to 2019. They are interpreted by myself, the author of this thesis. All Thai transliterations into English are also my own, and are in italics.

The second section is a collection of images of wedding elements. Some of them come with descriptions provided by Thai wedding experts, wedding photographers, caterers, makeup artists, dressmakers and wedding designers. Some images are taken by myself during my research field trips. They also come from collections of images taken from the National Archives of Thailand, the internet, and Thai wedding magazines. All images are categorised in accordance with the layout of the first volume: The Body, The Objects, and The Spaces. The images in this section could be seen as, first, links to the written images provided by the wedding experts and, secondly, as illustrations of 'the motivated form' in Barthes' term. *

* "Motivation is necessary to the very duplicity of myth: myth plays on the analogy between meaning and form, there is no myth without motivated form.", See more detail about the motivated form on p. 150. in R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, Rev. ed., London: Vintage, 2009.

FAKE CAKE

WORDS & IMAGES

WORDS

บ่าวสาว

Bao-sao or bao-sao

noun. This is a compound noun made up of *bao* shortened from *jaobao* (a groom) and *sao* shortened from *jaosao* (a bride). *Bao-sao* translated as ‘groom-bride’ in English. *Bao-sao* is used in both written and spoken Thai to refer to a married couple or to the couple getting married. One thing to be noted is that in English, when people speak of a couple getting married the collective phrase begins with the bride, i.e., ‘bride and groom’. In the Thai phrase, the groom (*bao*) comes first, followed by the bride (*sao*). So, for example, whereas in English one would say, “the bride and groom share their first kiss.” In Thai it would be “*bao-sao* share their first kiss”.

The word *bao-sao* reflects the patriarchal nature of Thai society in which the male plays a role as the leader of his family and in society. Thai society regards the female as having a following or supporting role in relation to the male and to society. There is a Thai proverb that illustrates the notion of patriarchy in the Thai family/society: “*chang thao na, chang thao lang*”. It is a metaphor using the image of the elephant – *chang* – to represent the family/society as an entity with the male as the front legs: *thao na* and the female as the back legs: *thao lang*. This way of describing the relationship between the sexes illustrates Thai society’s view that the leading role of the man and the following role of the woman is natural and necessary for society (the elephant) to function, as the elephant can’t walk properly if the back legs precede the front legs. This patriarchal relationship has been embedded in the structures of the wedding ceremonies since they originated, and its power is reflected in the wedding objects and in the wedding processes: see *ngan chao, jaopaap, phuyai, krabi* and *po* for example.

Volume I: p.92, 97, 194.
Volume II: pp.51-54, 65-100, 111-112, 114-118,
121-127, 129-137, 139-140, 142-143, 145, 147-148,
151-152.

แบล็กดรอพ

Backdrop

noun. This is a space where wedding guests take photos of themselves with the soon-to-be married couple before moving to the ceremonial hall. The backdrop space is composed of different props which are based on the wedding theme, such as wedding logos, flowers, prints, fabrics, Roman columns, the wedding couple’s portraits and other decorative items. In addition, many wedding receptions add more props for the photo-shoot at the wedding backdrop. For instance, selfie sticks, elaborate selfie props, gold or silver balloons, paper moustaches on sticks, wedding signs on sticks, wedding hashtags, dolls, cut-outs and more.

It is unclear when exactly these photographic backdrops were incorporated as one of the ritual wedding elements in Thai weddings, but today they have become a fundamental part of the Thai wedding. We can see the backdrops at almost every Thai wedding ceremony, in both urban and rural areas. The wedding backdrops are commonly designed by the wedding couples along with the wedding organisers, taking their inspiration from wedding backdrop ideas and techniques available on websites, in wedding magazines and on social networking sites.

The basic functions of the wedding backdrop in Thai weddings are as a welcoming element which provides space for the bride and groom to greet their guests, and to provide beautiful scenery for the wedding photo-shoot. The backdrop is one of the wedding elements that can express the themes,

Volume I: p.85-86, 120-123, 125-126, 164-165, 181, 183, 189-190, 193-198.
Volume II: p.121, 125, 129, 137.

พุทธ
Buddh

Volume I: pp.06-08, 79.
Volume II: p.09, 147, 168, 170, 175-176, 181, 184, 187-192.

ช่อเจ้าสาว
Chao jaowsao

Volume I: pp.131-140.
Volume II: pp.59-62, 112, 132, 144.

stories, taste and personality/identity of the wedding couples using a specific organisation of its photographic elements (both imitation and real). The wedding backdrop, in general, is an element of shooting photographs, of meeting and greeting, an object of expression and appearance. This appearance is a space for a photographic moment in which everyone is turned into a celebrity within the actual and the photographic spaces.

noun. Shortened from 'Buddhism', *Buddh* is a religion that originally comes from South Asia and teaches that personal spiritual improvement will lead to nirvana, a transcendent state in which there is neither desire nor suffering. The subject is released from the effects of karma and the cycle of death and rebirth. Thai-Buddhism is composed of a complex set of beliefs. There is a belief in ghosts (animism and ancestors), Brahman, magical beliefs, sacred objects, superstitions and the supernatural. These beliefs are considered to be fundamental for many Thai people regardless of their formal religious belief. This includes a belief in Feng shui for many Thai people. The complex set of beliefs is reflected in Thai wedding spaces, in their process and elements such as the choices of colours, names, dates, times, numbers, foods and flowers (see *mongkon*). Thai-Buddhism is one of many factors that produces a heterogeneous mixture within the contemporary Thai wedding spaces: also see *nganchao*, *nganyen* and details of the wedding elements and processes in the wedding packages.

noun. A flower bouquet, a bridal bouquet or a bouquet carried by the bride. Though starting as a Victorian invention, nowadays the bridal bouquet is very popular in many wedding cultures around the world, including Thai weddings. As in the West, in the Thai context, it is believed that the person who can catch the bridal flower bouquet from the bride when she tosses it to the female guests will have good fortune or luck and that she will be the next person to get married.

In addition, many couples put money in their flower bouquets in order to make their toss ritual livelier and more fun. Currently, an additional ritual alongside the flower toss is the 'doll toss' for the groom. The function of the doll toss is the same as the bridal flower throwing ritual. The groom throws the doll to his male guests and, in many cases, the groom also puts money in the doll or gives money to the person who catches the doll.

The acts of throwing the bridal flower bouquet and tossing the doll in Thai receptions today are cheerful hybrid activities involving the groom, the bride and their guests. At the most general level, tossing the flower bouquet or the doll is more like a game or performance, with the basic function being to entertain the guests at the wedding ceremony and not, as was the ritual's origin, to distract the crowd as the couple ran away to the marriage chamber. As an object of the bourgeoisie, the bouquet has an image of wealth and luxury attached to it.

ดอกไม้
Dokmai

noun. Flower, flowers play at least three roles in Thai weddings. First, they are primary decorative items in the wedding's ceremonial space, which can bring various kinds of atmosphere to the wedding venue. Second, flowers serve as ritual elements since rose petals, garlands and bouquets are often involved in the rituals. Lastly, the flowers are symbolic elements conveying literal and metaphorical messages to the participants and guests.

The most basic function of the flowers in the wedding is as a decorative item for creating the 'perfect venue' on the wedding day, and for creating a 'perfect atmosphere' in the ceremonial space, including during photoshoots. The flowers can represent many things, such as the couple's identity, love, romance, calmness, happiness and even sadness. The flower is a language and a sign. It can communicate and deceive people. (See *phaung malai* and *chao jaowsao*).

Volume I: pp.122-123
Volume II: pp.49-54, 57-62, 177-118, 125, 137.

ไฟอาบ
Fai ap

verb. To shower the ceremonial spaces with specific lights is called *fai ap*, and is provided by the wedding designer/organiser in a form of an additional item in the wedding package (see *prop*). *Fai ap* is a lighting technique used for creating an atmosphere to the wedding. It must be categorised as an atmospheric element as well as an element of signs that produces the images for the wedding space and the photographs. *Fai ap* can turn the wedding ceremonial spaces and images from 'realistic' into 'dreamlike' and 'idealistic', creating a fairytale atmosphere.

Volume I: p.157
Volume II: pp.49-55, 11-112, 142, 148.

ฝรั่ง
Farang

noun. Foreigner, Western people, particularly white people: Americans and Europeans. The word *farang* is also used for describing objects and things that come from other countries, especially Western countries and most often referring to the UK, France, Italy, Switzerland and the United States. Examples in the context of this thesis include: cake, cars, architecture, watches, flowers, cuisines, dresses, chandeliers, the white wedding, champagne and wine. *Farang* when used as a term to refer to either a person, people or objects also has its own subclassifications and significations. For example: lace from China can be seen as cheap, low taste and fake, while lace from France can be seen as expensive, authentic and a luxury item. The term *farang* also refers to "the great other" (see *kwampen europe*). The term used in this way connotes superior qualities in comparison to local Siamese/Thai counterparts.*

Volume I: p.122, 126
Volume II: pp.27-36, 39-62, 65-66, 77, 79, 85-88, 91-98, 107, 111-112, 117-118, 121-122, 126-127, 131-132, 140, 142, 144, 148, 151-152, 155-164.

* M. Skulsuthavong. 'Thainess' and Bridal Perfection in Thai Magazines. Cardiff University: Thesis in Doctor of Philosophy, 2016.

เจ้าภาพ เถ่าแก่
Jaopaap, taogae

noun. *Jaopaap* or *taogae* is the president of the wedding reception ceremony and engagement ceremony. It can also refer to a Chinese male who is an adult and wealthy, a Chinese male who is the owner of his business, the owner of the ceremony, a person who hosts the ceremony or a person who represents the host of the ceremony. *Jaopaap* is a significant and necessary element of wedding ceremonies. One question that many people ask when they hear of someone's wedding is, "who is the president of the ceremony?" He is a representative of the guests, the couple, the parents, themselves and the wedding ceremonies.

Jaopaap will often be a male who has a higher rank or is in a higher social position than anyone else at the ceremony, such as a prime minister, minister of the state, marshal, dean, chancellor, deputy chairman, mayor or boss of the groom or the bride, or of one of their parents. He could also be a senior person or respected relative of one of the two families, especially of the groom's family.

Jaopaap in Thai weddings can be part of three ceremonies: the bedding ceremony (a senior married couple who are invited to prepare the bridal bed), the *khan maak* ceremony and the reception.

In the wedding, *Jaopaap* is an element associated with social status and authority. He is also treated as an auspicious body/object both in and for the ceremonies. The position of *Jaopaap* in Thai society illustrates the structural system of seniority, which produces and controls hierarchy, and patriarchy. At a certain level, his/her power generates and constructs an informal relationship network in Thai society. This relationship network formed a structure of Thai society from before democracy was introduced until today.

Volume I: p.96.
Volume II: p.113, 128.

การสร้างภาพ
Karnsangphap

noun. Image-making, the activity or process of producing the image. *Karnsang* means constructing or making; *phap* means image or picture. In this study, I use 'image' in two senses: 'image' as mental images/perceptions (see *phapluck*) and 'image' as photographic images: photography and videography (see *rupphap, menu*). *Karnsangphap* is a process of making the images or a representational image. *Karnsangphap* or *sangphap* (adj.) is used for describing events (see *naangthom*) persons or acts for which the images, the appearance or surface is of more importance than their substance. (see *nata* and *phapluck*). The Thai wedding ceremony is one example.

Volume I: p.176.
Volume II: p.27-36, 40-41, 44-46, 47-54, 65-152.

กระบี่
Krabi

noun. *Krabi* is a sword in English. A sword is a long-bladed weapon of war. In Thai wedding receptions, the sword is a wedding element: it is a component of the wedding cake-cutting ritual. The sword is used not only in Thai military weddings (in the past, the military sword indicated the groom's status — a military rank), but many young civilian wedding couples are also using the military sword instead of a typical wedding cake knife for their cake-cutting ceremony.

It has become a primary element/prop in weddings provided by wedding venues. The basic function of the sword is “for cutting the wedding cake”. The colour of the sword is typically silver or gold and it is usually decorated with a coloured ribbon – typically white or pink – which is tied in a long-tailed bow and/or decorated with a small flower bouquet on the hilt. Below is one description of the role of the wedding cake sword at a Thai reception:

“Hi! I have various wedding cake swords to choose from (either rent or buy). It is a product from abroad (Europe and South America) of high value, rare, gorgeous and perfect for a wedding ceremony. The important thing is that it looks very, very beautiful in the photograph more beautiful than other ordinary swords.”

*“We wish to fulfil the wedding needs of the young couple, for the sake of completeness in every detail.”**

The description tells us about another role of the sword in Thai receptions. From the description, it can be seen that the basic function of the sword is no longer just to cut or slash into the wedding cake. Since the wedding cake in the Thai wedding ceremony is now most often a huge fake cake, the sword has also taken on a vague or empty function because it used to be the element used for cutting. It now stands for a symbol of cutting, the element to be looked at, the element for the photoshoot and a sign. The sword becomes an element for producing the image of a successful groom and his family.

Volume I: p.96.
Volume II: pp.51-53, 111, 120, 129, 152.

*Username: mapmap, 6 March 2014, 23.02pm.
<https://pantip.com/topic/31746690> (accessed May 19, 2018).

คำ คำคำ
Kham, kham-kham

noun. (1) A mouthful, one spoon and one piece. (2) A word or one word in the Thai language. Thai cuisine is usually shared. That is, all the dishes are brought to the table at once, and they are all shared and enjoyed together, with rice served in separate bowls. For this reason, food served as a series of courses, or from a buffet, or eaten as *kham* (or *kham-kham*) i.e., finger food – as is usually the case at weddings – is an alien way of eating for many Thai people, especially the elderly. Finger foods eaten as *kham-kham* are considered to be a solitary, individual meal, while according to Thai tradition a meal is a collective experience: food is meant to be shared with others.

Volume I: p.108.
Volume II: pp.55-56.

ขาว สีขาว
Khaw, srikhaw

noun. White, white colour, white or 'whiteness' is commonly associated with virginity, purity, innocence and cleanliness in many cultures. Christianity associated white with innocence and purity, and even before white became the conventional colour of the bride's dress and associated with weddings many religions, including Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, had been using white in the context of a wide variety of spiritual rites and sacred ceremonies such as birth ceremonies, funeral rites, ordination ceremonies for nuns, Brahminical ceremonies, housewarming ceremonies, etc. In Thai society, white represents purity, youth, innocence and propitious things. White has been a symbolic colour of weddings since the mid-seventeenth century, when in 1840 white weddings and the white wedding dress became fashionable after the wedding of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Royal weddings continue to have an impact on weddings in many cultures. There are several reasons for this: one is the TV broadcasts of royal wedding ceremonies and the popular press and media online, and another is the commercial photographic industry.

The author and scholar Chrys Ingraham has noted that in the nineteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the white wedding dress was reserved for well-to-do women in Europe and the USA. However, today it is worn by brides of many cultures across the world to celebrate their marriages.* Before then, other colours such as blue, green, gold, red and yellow were most commonly used for the bridal dress.

In Thailand, before the period of Thai modernity, colours and styles for Thai weddings and Thai bridal dresses were varied, and did not necessarily include white. Couples normally dressed in their newest or best clothes for their weddings, or borrowed dresses from their relatives or parents. Historically, Thai brides began wearing white wedding dresses and the grooms began wearing suits or military government uniforms at the beginning of Thai modernity (1932-1957). Since this period, white attire and white wedding dresses have become the norm in Thai weddings.

In Thai society, while white remains the most popular colour for wedding dresses, there are several other colours which are commonly used for auspicious reasons, such as gold, silver, ivory, champagne, pink, red, blue, etc. There are only a few colours that Thai people avoid for wedding ceremonies. These include purple, black, dark grey and dark blue. They are colours which in the Thai context are associated with death, bad luck, departure, sadness, and are otherwise inauspicious. These are also colours used for mourning ceremonies: purple, for example, is considered to be a colour for widows in Thailand. Thai-Chinese people also have their own auspicious colours for weddings. Both the bride and groom in a Thai-Chinese wedding wear red, signifying good luck. White for them is the colour for funeral ceremonies, the so-called the Chinese Kong Tek rite, so white is inauspicious as it is associated with death, dead bodies, and mourning.

Volume I: p.42, 64, 91, 162, 185.
 Volume II: p.27-36, 47-45, 66, 131-133, 145, 153-154, 157-158, 160,

* C. Ingraham, *White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture*, New York: London: Routledge, 1999.

คนรับจัดงานแต่งงาน
Khon rup jud ngan tang ngaan

noun. A person who organises, designs and decorates the wedding ceremonies and the wedding objects.

This is a new service in Thai society. This means that their role is unclear. A person who works in this career also reluctantly called herself/himself either ‘wedding designer’, ‘wedding decorator’ or ‘wedding organiser’ as their role is mixed between the three categories. Wedding designers/decorators invented and developed their roles and services to serve the new needs of Thai couples. Their task is more like that of a curator, who invents and curates the images of the wedding and suggests them to their customers in the form of the wedding packages. (see *menu*, and pp.165-197 in the section of *The Images*)

In contemporary Thai society, there are not many wedding planners. However, in Bangkok and other large cities, there are many wedding organisers. These assist with many services, especially in planning wedding receptions and decorations. Many wedding organisers have begun to work with the other wedding services and providers such as venue/hotel managers, videographers, photographers, dressmakers, florists, makeup artists, hair designers and other suppliers. These services are sold together as wedding packages, advertised in the format of a catalogue, menu, or set of images in their portfolios, along with many references, including in wedding magazines; see pp.111-154.

The wedding organisers are becoming more and more important in the contemporary Thai wedding in their roles of planning and operating entire wedding ceremonies, as ceremonial designers who guide, curate, invent, suggest and (re)produce the elements of wedding, and as controllers of ceremony, who determine the forms and practices of contemporary weddings through their wedding packages and other products.

Another role of the wedding organisers is to make sure the reception and wedding ceremonies run smoothly. One interesting fact is that Thai wedding organisers have to work closely with wedding photographers and videographers, such as during discussions about the sequence of the ceremonies, and settings for photo shoots. Many wedding organisers also use the photographs and videos from wedding photographers and videographers as examples of their services or as references (see *rupbeap* and *nata*). These materials are also used for producing their portfolios and catalogues in order to help them to sell and discuss the wedding packages with future clients.

Volume I: p.10, 79.
 Volume II: p.64, 111-154.

ความเป็นยุโรป
Kwampen europe

Volume I: p.22, 107-108, 110, 130, 158, 180.
Volume II: pp.27-36, 41, 44, 45, 47-62, 65-66,
77-80, 85-88, 91-94, 97, 107, 111-112, 117-122, 126-
127, 131-132, 134, 139-140, 142, 151-152, 155-164.

noun. *Kwampen europe* is translated as ‘Europeaness’ in English or a term used to refer to the representation of practices, objects and things that are brought to Thailand from European cultures. Such representations have an image of Western cultures, and especially middle-class and upper-class European cultures attached to them. Europeaness includes arts, music, architecture, book, furniture, the wedding veil, the white wedding dress, the bridal bouquet, chandeliers, fair skin or even having freckles on the face.

Europeaness has been represented in Thai society by the Thai royal family and the upper-classes. It is also represented in mainstream media, including in celebrity cultures/events and objects such as body types, clothes, accessories, cars, foods, flowers, plants and architecture. Europeaness in these categories mean they have the image of wealth and luxury attached to them. They are something that connotes a meaning of superior qualities – “the great other”. * Europeaness also has become a fantasy object for many Thai people who see royal families, celebrities and farang as role models (see *farang*). ‘*Kwampen europe*’ and ‘*kwampen thai*’ in this context could be taken to mean “the great other” or “the otherness”.

* M. Skulsuthavong. ‘Thainess’ and Bridal Perfection in Thai Magazines. Cardiff University: Thesis in Doctor of Philosophy, 2016.

ความเป็นไทย
Khwampen thai

Volume I: p.22, 107-108, 110, 130, 158, 180.
Volume II: p.42, 55-56, 89-90, 101, 128-130, 145,
147, 171-176.

noun. *Khwampen thai* or ‘Thainess’ has ambiguous meanings. Scholars of Thai studies tend to relate Thainess with the appearance or the performance of being Thai and through consumption of anything labelled as ‘Thai’. “The real Thainess” as perceived by the Thai scholar Kasian Techaphira is the culture of Thai people who live in Thailand. It is a culture based on economic conditions, attitudes and local world view. *

The meaning of Thainess as suggested to me by a caterer, is the use of local Thai ingredients, foods, cooking techniques and cultural elements that often refer to the past, tradition, or a common nostalgic element of Thai people’s life: *baitoei* (pandan leaves), *baitong* (banana leaves), *namphrik* (chili paste), *kaiyang* (grill chicken), *somtum* (papaya salad), wood and wooden objects.

Thainess is re-presented in Thai weddings through objects and practices. The forms that attract the Thai middle-class are often objects and practices that belonged to upper-class and celebrity cultures (see *kwampen europe*) such as contemporary Thai weddings, Thai finger foods and Thai silk wedding dresses. Thainess in a sense is an invented concept for the Thai middle-class and upper-class. (see *backdrop*, *logo*, *video presentation* and other elements as reflections of meaning for Thainess).

โลโก้
Logo

noun. A symbol that expresses the couple's personality under the specific wedding theme. Many wedding logos are designed by the brides and grooms together with their wedding organisers/designers. The logo is the first element of the wedding ceremony that the couples and their organisers/designers will design in terms of appearance, style and colours. It is just like designing a trademark for their business, which in this case will be launched to the public soon in a form of the wedding event.

The logos are generally composed of the initials of the bride and groom's nicknames by putting the initials together as a monogram. The wedding logos identify the wedding couple. The logos are a symbolic representation of the couple as well as a symbol of their wedding. The styles of Thai wedding logos are various. Fundamentally, they are a mixture of Thai and Western/European ornamental styles such as Classical, Baroque, Rococo, Art Nouveau, Neoclassicism and Modern.

Nonetheless, as with other wedding elements, wedding logos are designed according to the specific colour and theme of each wedding ceremony, for example, 'Vintage', 'Rustic', 'Loft', 'Bohemian' and 'Minimalism'. The primary function of the logo in weddings is as a decorative element and wedding symbol. As decorative items, the logos are used for decorating the wedding venue's ceremonial space, props, and the photoshoot, being placed in the centre of the wall at a stage backdrop, put on top of the wedding cake as a cake topper, etc. As a symbol, the logo is an element used to promote and establish the couple as a new 'brand', or the merger of two people and two families. They appear on invitation cards, souvenirs, envelope boxes as well as the backdrop and entranceways. As a representation and expression of the wedding couple and their (ideal) wedding through its appearance, the wedding logo is an important element for the bride and groom to decide upon. Even though the logo is the smallest element in the wedding ceremony, it is a crucial feature which has a quality of both the 'looked at' and hybrid element. The logo is where the 'ideal/dream/desire' of the young Thai couple is concealed and revealed through its physical form.

Volume I: p.80, 86, 89-91, 196.
Volume II: p.123, 125, 129.

มาลัย พวงมาลัย
Malai, phung malai

noun. Flower garlands are known as *malai* or *phaung malai* in Thai. The garlands are a ‘pair element’ (see *lekmongkon*). In Thai weddings, the garlands will be used in both the traditional Thai ceremony in the morning (see *ngan chao*) and the reception ceremony in the evening of the wedding day (see *ngan yen*). Traditionally, the garlands in Thai weddings are ‘twin garlands’ also known as ‘groom-bride garlands’ or in Thai *malai fad* (*fad* means ‘twins’) or *malai bao-sao* (see *bao-sao*).

These garlands are worn around the necks of the bride and groom during the ceremony. The garlands will be placed around the necks of the wedding couple by the guest of honour in the opening ceremonies of both the traditional Thai ceremony and the reception. The garlands thus are symbolic of the beginning of the ceremony and the beginning of married life and identifies the newly wedded couple during the wedding ceremony. They are also a representation of the person who has been invited to place the garlands around the couple’s neck (see *jaopaap*), who will often be a male with a high social status, ‘a big name’ in the society, such as a prime minister, minister or CEO (see *phuyai* and *jaopaap*).

In the traditional Thai ceremony, the twin garlands and the twin threads (The twin threads is an element in the water blessing ritual, known as the “conch shell water pouring ritual”, which was adopted from Hindu-Brahmanism. This ritual is a part of the traditional Thai ceremony in the morning ‘*ngan chao*’. The main accoutrements for the water blessing ritual are a set of conch shell tray, holy water tray, hand pillows, holy white paste and two circular nuptial sacred threads or the twin threads in Thai called *mongkon fad*) are paired up. It is believed that after the wedding ceremony, the couple should put the twin threads under or inside their pillows or the bedsheets and keep them in their bedroom for auspicious reasons. Thus, traditionally, the garlands in Thai weddings are auspicious elements, signifying ‘pair’, ‘couple’ or ‘beginning’, and bringing good fortune and luck (see *mongkon* and *lekmongkon*). As sacred objects associated with a superstitious power and a representation of the one who has given them to the couple, it reveals male power, the success of the families and indicates the status of the whole families in society. This power reveals itself in front of the public on the stage in the wedding ceremonial spaces and in the photographic images.

Volume I: p.120, 194.
 Volume II: pp.111-112, 125, 129-130.

เมนู
Menu

noun. 'Menu' in Thai is a borrowed word from the English language. It is a list of products that can be bought from a service. It is often presented together with images as examples of the products available. Unlike menus in Western societies, in many restaurants and for many modern services in Thailand, such as weddings, the menu is little more than a list of reference images with prices. This is especially true for the wedding packages and pre-wedding packages provided by wedding experts. In this way, the images in the menu have become a reference image, (see *rupbaep*) or the final product that the customers expect and will get from the wedding services. In some sense, the use of a menu for weddings is a stolen 'form'. It is a new form of production: menu, catalogue, images, etc. which is produced and curated by the wedding experts and their team, whose work therefore is that of curating their customers' desires.

Volume I: p.153.
Volume II: p.39, 42-43, 47, 56-60, 63, 155-196.

มงคล
Mongkon

adjective. Refers to bringing a good fortune, success, money (wealth) and luck, practices that protect people from bad fortune or evil. *Mongkon* is also used to refer to all types of life events that are organised to contribute to well-being, or those which are considered auspicious events, such as a ceremony conferring luck on a new house, to confer merit, a wedding, funeral, graduation ceremony and so on.

When used as a noun *mongkon* refers to auspicious things or objects such as amulets, the number 9, holy water, that Thai people believe that will bring them happiness and prosperity or protect them from bad luck or all kinds of perils. Thai-Buddhism is composed of a complex set of beliefs. Therefore, for Thai people the belief in the auspicious is also complicated. Auspiciousness can be associated with any form of practices and objects as long as people see them as appropriate for their situation. The definition of what is auspicious or inauspicious is flexible and adjustable. It is a subject to be interpreted by experts and ceremonial counsellors such as monks, Brahmans, savants, astrologers and local fortune-tellers. In a context of the contemporary Thai wedding, the wedding designer and the couple with their families have to compromise in order to incorporate their beliefs of auspicious things with the ideas of modern weddings. For example, they can specify that an auspicious number, colour theme (gold, white, red) cake, foods, flowers, date and time be included in the wedding plans. In other words, in a contemporary Thai wedding, at a level of both forms/objects and practices, these are enhanced by an auspicious dimension.

Mongkon, when used as a noun '*lekmongkon*', can refer to a number that is considered to be auspicious. Auspicious numbers play an important role in the selection of the time and date of wedding ceremonies. *Lekmongkon* also includes the number of objects and things that will be using in the wedding ceremonies, such as the number of cake tiers, the number of groomsmen and bridesmaids, and the amount of the dowry. Auspicious times and dates are of the greatest concern for Thai Buddhist families. Auspicious times and dates can be chosen from the general Thai Buddhist lunar calendar. There is also a Thai wedding calendar available on the Internet, provided by

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wedding business websites such as wedding studios, organisers, planners and wedding magazines. This calendar indicates auspicious dates for weddings all year round.

A basic rule for auspicious dates and times for Thai weddings is that they must be an even number such as 2, 4, 6, or 8, as well as the number 9. The even number stands for ‘a couple’, ‘a pair’, while the number 9 stands for ‘good luck’, ‘growth’ and ‘step forward’. Many young couples and their parents prefer to consult with one of the ceremonial counsellors listed above who determine the best auspicious dates for the wedding day and times for the rituals in the ceremonies – the water blessing ritual, the bride price ritual, the *khan maak* parade, the ring ritual and the bedding ritual, etc. – by calculating the birth dates and times of the couple using a horoscope table.

It is believed that the most auspicious months for weddings are December and January. In the Thai Buddhist calendar, which is based on the lunar eclipse, December is the first month of the year whilst in the Gregorian calendar, December is also one of the even months – the 12th month of the year. January is the first month of the year in the Gregorian calendar. These two months are meaningful for Thai couples for two reasons: one is the first month, associated with ‘the beginning’ — ‘the beginning of the married life’ – and the other is an even number month, which stands for ‘a pair’, ‘a couple’, ‘a set of one unit’ or ‘togetherness’. Auspicious numbers are applied to the numbers of wedding objects, times, practices, date of all ceremonies, even the price of the wedding objects and services.

Mongkon as a noun ‘*srimongkon*’ can also refer to an auspicious colour. Colour in Thai weddings is a combination of the belief in auspicious colours and the yearly global trend in wedding colours. Colours that are associated with an auspicious aspect to an event are white, red, silver and gold. At the same time, many Thai people also avoid using colours that are associated with inauspicious things/objects or inauspicious events like a funeral. The colours associated with unfortunate events are black, dark colours and also white, which is the funeral colour for the Thai-Chinese people. Today, the variety of colours used in the typical contemporary Thai wedding does not rely only on what is considered auspicious according to traditional beliefs, but rather on whatever the bride’s and groom’s favourite colours are, or whatever the wedding colour trend is in a particular year as determined by wedding specialists, wedding magazines, wedding organisers and wedding dressmakers. For example, the colour trend for weddings in 2017 included 10 colour themes: natural white and green; mauve and grey neutral; navy coral and gold; cranberry, orange and ivory; peach, gold and green; red and dark grey; and gold, burgundy and green.

In 2015-2016, the most popular colours in Thai weddings were navy blue, lapis blue and dark blue. In 2017-2018, the favourite colour was burgundy red and the most common colour was white. It can be said that Thai weddings today are primarily influenced by the annual colour trend and only secondarily influenced by auspicious colours, which are based on individual families’ beliefs.

หน้าตา
Nata

Volume I: p.104, 136, 138.

noun. ‘This is a compound word; *na*’ means the face and *ta*’ means the eye or eyes. On the one hand, *nata* can refer to the physical form of things such as face, feature, appearance and image. On the other hand, it refers to the image in our minds or mental imagery, mental perception. It can produce reputation, dignity, status, eminence and prestige. ‘Lost’ *nata* can produce the opposite (see *phapluck*). Its meaning is similar to the concept known in the West as ‘face’, in sense of ‘gaining face’ or ‘losing face’.

งานเช้า
Ngan chao

noun. Contemporary Thai wedding ceremonies are composed of morning and evening ceremonies, namely *ngan chao* (noun) and *ngan yen* (noun). Both ceremonies are objects to be photographed and filmed. *Ngan chao* is a morning ceremony, which includes the *khan maak* ritual known as ‘the traditional Thai wedding ceremony’ or ‘engagement ceremony’. The guests in the morning ceremony are often family, close relatives and friends. The morning ceremony begins with a ritual carried out by Buddhist monks, known in Thai as *phi ti shong*. In this ceremony, typically 9 monks (see *lek mongkol*) are invited to the wedding venue in the early morning of the wedding day to perform the merit-making ritual for the new wedding couple. After the monks arrive at the venue, the couple begins the ritual by offering food to the monks, together spooning cooked rice and foods into the monks’ alms bowls. One interesting aspect of this ritual is the belief that the person whose hand covers the other while giving alms bowls to the monks will have superior power than the other in their married life. Traditionally, it is suggested to brides that they cover the dominant hand of their groom. Again, this reflects the patriarchal structure/power that is embedded in the structure of the ritual: in a reverse process of revealing male power, in an anthropological sense the gesture is supposed to help her to overcome that power. In this aspect, the food offering is the first ritual process that the groom and bride perform together, in the spirit of the ‘unity ritual’ on the wedding day.

After the food offering, the monks continue to chant and give a blessing to the newly married couple for their health, happiness and prosperity in their further married life. During or after the chanting, the monks will sprinkle holy water on the couple’s heads and sometimes on other participants, guests and over the ceremonial spaces. After the monks sprinkle the holy water, the newly married couple brings a set of foods, known in Thai as *sangkaphan*, to the monks. The remaining holy water will be kept for the following ceremony called *namsang* or the ‘conch shell water’. The monk ritual is considered to be the only ritual in the Thai weddings that is related directly to religious beliefs while the others are more related to Thai societal norms and family. The *khan maak* ritual or engagement ritual, would in the past have been held on a separate day from the wedding ceremonies.

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Volume II: p.147.

Traditionally, the ceremony took place at the bride's house, or in rare cases at the groom's house. By contrast, today, the engagement ceremony and wedding ceremonies are commonly scheduled on a single day. The *khan maak*'s venue could be anywhere. Now, both the *khan maak* rituals and the reception ceremonies can take place either at the same venue or at different venues. The *khan maak* rituals consist of five rituals: *khan maak* parade, bride price ritual*, wedding ring ritual, water blessing ritual and bedding ritual.

* After the bride's family accepts the *khan maak* parade, the next ritual is the bride price ritual. The bride price ritual begins with the bride's mother unwrapping the bride price, which is set on the tray, then the mother acts out counting the bride prices under the careful scrutiny of seniors from the two families. Then, the seniors from both families throw auspicious seeds (grams, sesame seeds, paddy, flowers, silver and gold leaves) over the unwrapped bride prices, and after that the bride's mother wraps the bride prices together with the auspicious seeds and carry the bride prices on her shoulder. Traditionally, the bride's mother has to act ("on an act of pretending") that the bride prices are very heavy.

งานเย็น
Ngan yen

noun. This is an evening ceremony or reception, known as a 'Western Style wedding'. Unlike the morning ceremony, this reception is more like a social gathering. It is the ceremony that has to be presented to the public. The guests in the reception are the guests of honour, relatives, high school and university friends and colleagues of the wedding couple. Since 2006, the reception has become the most significant and essential ritual for many young Thai couples, particularly when compared with traditional Thai ceremonies (*ngan chao*). Thai receptions are a mixture of the Western 'white wedding' and the 'traditional' Thai wedding ceremony. In this aspect, Thai receptions are very different from the Western reception in terms of the processes, practices and significations. In a Western reception, the groom and bride typically dress up in a Western or international style: the groom wears a tuxedo or suit and the bride dresses in a white wedding dress: in some cases, the bride wears a veil. In the Thai version of this ceremony, guests dress up in different styles, typically in a traditional Thai style mixed with Western styles, or dress in the colour and theme of the wedding. Bridesmaids and groomsmen – a trend in Thai society – dress in the same style or theme as the groom and bride. In many weddings, the bride's mother dresses in the same style as the bride, or a particular dress is designed for the bride's mother.

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Volume II: p.49-54, 111-112, 114-118, 123, 125-127,
129-130, 134, 136, 140, 142, 143-144, 146, 148,
152.

งานถม
Nganthom

Volume I: p.126.
Volume II: pp.49-51, 117.

noun. A type of event filled with decorative objects or techniques, such as flowers, laces, makeup, lights and other wedding elements, used to create a deceptively favourable impression to the naked eye and for the cameras. Nganthom therefore deals with images in terms of the way they look and their presentation (see *fai ap*).

ภาพลักษณ์
Phapluck

Volume I: pp.106, 138.

noun. '*Phapluck*' translates into English as image, characteristic, appearance. It refers to a physical image and a mental perception that is produced through form and the appearance of objects and things, otherwise known as *nata*. *Nata* and *phapluck* are key terms of this study. I found that a concern for *nata* and *phapluck*, or the so-called 'images' are a primary concern in Thai wedding ceremonies, and when many Thai people organise ceremonies and other events that they have to present to the public and *phuyai* (see *phuyai* and *khwampen thai*).

ผู้ใหญ่
Phuyai

Volume I: p.96, 106, 207.
Volume II: p.113, 128, 130, 136, 143, 146.

noun, adjective. The term refers to an adult, older person, a senior, or a respected person. In weddings, *phuyai* means the parents, the grandparents of the couple, the senior guests, the VIP guests and/or the guests of honour and also the president of the wedding ceremony (see *taogae*). As an adjective *phuyai* means superior, 'better than the young', and that she/he is a person to be respected and admired.

Phuyai is a key element in Thai wedding ceremonial spaces. It reflects the importance of being 'the senior, or superior' and of the seniority structure in Thai society. This element is integral to the notion of patriarchy and hierarchy in Thai society, as can be seen by the fact that the president of the wedding ceremony is commonly a male. This notion is also represented through the wedding elements and the wedding processes such as the cake cutting ceremony and the seating plan in a wedding ceremonial hall; see *taogae* or *jaopaap* and *phaung malai*.

โป
Po

adjective. Nude, sexy, obscene, revealing parts of the body which are supposed to be concealed from the public. *Po* belongs to a patriarchal category. It is more often used to describe the image of a female's body than that of a male. In other words, the expression is one of control over women's bodies in terms of appearance and expression, in private and in public space.

Po is an expression of male power in the form of language. The body of Thai woman is divided into two parts: private and public. The private parts are her breasts and the parts of her body between her waist and knees. Becoming a bride means her private parts – and the rest of her body – belong to her groom. Her private parts should thus be concealed from the public view, keeping them for her groom. If her private parts are revealed to the public it can be seen as *po*. However, whether or not something is *po* is not determined or judged based on physical forms as such, but on 'feelings'. For example, the bride in a mermaid bridal dress cannot be judged as *po* (even though the dress reveals her upper legs and the shape of her buttocks and breasts – i.e., her so-called private parts – as long as it is not involved with or expresses 'erotic feelings').*

At the image level, *po* and being *po* is often associated with the image of 'a bad lady' such as a prostitute or jealous female character in Thai TV dramas/shows. This is the opposite image of the concept of 'a good lady' or the ideal Thai woman in Thai cultures: this woman is sweet, tender, well-mannered, loyal to her groom and family, and not too sexy because she conceals her body and her sexual desire. These good manners are not aimed at producing the image of a good lady for the sake of the woman's own reputation alone, but for that of her groom and his family.

Volume I: p.26, 68, 163.

* N. Aeusrivongse, *phakhama phasin kangkeng nai and etc.: wa duay prapheni khwam plienplaeng lea rounng sapphasara*. Bangkok: Matichon. 2014.

พร็อพ
Prop

noun. *prop* is a borrowed word from English. *prop* in Thai wedding can be both an object and a person used by wedding designers in wedding spaces. The *prop*'s function as decorative objects and as objects for the photographs. In a contemporary Thai wedding, most of the objects in wedding spaces are treated as *prop*, whether inanimate or animate; people can also be props. The word '*prop*' or calling the wedding objects props, has shifted the wedding objects that used to belong in the category of the ritual to the category of the event. In this space, the objects are made for producing the images.

The wedding designers have curated/designed the props used at a wedding based on the wedding's theme. Their aim to use props to present the couple's personality/identity. At another level, the prop has become a sign that generates significations and atmosphere to the wedding spaces. All wedding elements, both objects and persons, are treated as props, therefore they are a collection of signs for the weddings that have been designed and curated by the wedding designer, (see *khon rup jud ngan tang ngaan*).

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Volume II: pp.43-60, 65-152, 155-164.

รูปแบบ
Rupbaep

noun. A picture, form, pattern, type or style, format, standard form. In this thesis, *rupbaep* is used in the same sense as 'a reference image'. In the Thai wedding industry, a reference image or reference means examples of products in the form of photographic images or pictures. The reference images can sometimes be in the form of moving images, such as video clips and films. *Rupbaep* is used not so much as a reference for ideas but as a reference of the final product. It is an object to be copied or imitated and to be reproduced in the forms of images, i.e., the wedding photography and videography (see *karnsangphap*).

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Volume II: p.27-36, 39-62, 65-154.

ธีม
Theme

noun. A theme is a borrowed word from English, transliterated into Thai as ‘theme’. It means to design and organise a wedding according to a particular style, or to relate a wedding to a particular topic. In the Thai wedding, the theme is presented in the form of a series of images. These images have been used not so much as a reference for the wedding’s idea, but as an image of reference (see *menu* and *rupbeap*).

Themes play a key role in contemporary Thai weddings as they serve as ‘a central image’, the organising principle which will be applied to every wedding element throughout the wedding ceremony, from a small elements, and persons to the wedding venue. Many themes in Thai weddings refer only to a colour tone or a wedding colour theme, such as red burgundy, navy blue, pastel and silver (see the colour theme in the section of The Images, pp. 61-62). And the colours are often linked to the idea of auspiciousness (see *mongkon*). An underlying or intrinsic theme for all white weddings and Thai (white) weddings in particular is the idea of the bride as a ‘princess’ – a princess theme.

The themes in Thai weddings are often selected from wedding magazines, wedding books, wedding studios and by wedding organisers/planners. In 2017-18 Pinterest, Facebook, and Thai wedding magazines were the major sources of the wedding ideas and themes for Thai wedding specialists and Thai brides-to-be. Some of these trends included: Fairy tale, Bohemian, Pastel, Vintage, All White, Whitewood and green, Garden, Rustic, Loft, Metallic, Minimal and Candlelit.

Like the wedding industries in other countries, Thai wedding themes generally follow yearly global fashion trends. The themes are also related to local and global social trends such as those seen in Hollywood movies, Thai films, Thai TV soap operas, TV series, music videos, celebrity weddings and royal weddings. These popular movements have a strong influence on the themes of contemporary Thai weddings. For example, the popular theme for Thai weddings in 2013 was ‘Gatsby’. This theme was derived from the Hollywood movie ‘The Great Gatsby’ released in 2013. ‘Gatsby’ was very popular that year and the following one. Another popular wedding theme in Thailand during 2013-2014 was the ‘princess’ theme borrowed from the popular Disney film ‘Frozen’, the highest-grossing film of 2013 (see *prop*).

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เวนิว
Venue

noun. Today, many Thai people begin to call somewhere where weddings take place a ‘venue’, which is a borrowed word from English. This has changed the perception of the wedding’s place, as in the past weddings took place at people’s houses. Thai wedding venues have become more significant since Thai modernity (around 1940s-1960s). At that time, many couples began to arrange their ceremonies in alternative places. This phenomenon has changed the meaning of Thai wedding venues in many ways, as the wedding has moved from the private domain or the community to into the public arena.

Currently, there is a variety of wedding venues found in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. They are various in scale, location and the building types, and include hotels, restaurants and convention centres. Hotels include five-star hotels to two-star hotels. Restaurants include coffee shops. Convention centres include conference rooms, public building halls, and university halls. Other buildings and places include public parks, theme parks, private libraries, private houses and resorts.

Some basic criteria for choosing a Thai wedding venue include: the number of guests, adequate transport links, budget, personal connections/relationships (for example, having a military wedding in military convention hall) and the appearance or “the look” of the venue. Wedding venues in Thai society are important in at least two respects, one being their form (appearance, function and location), and the other being their meaning on various levels. The venues have become a place for producing the images, an object (with a specific image) to buy, which are accessible for the those who can afford it. The venues thus are used as a sign rather than a place for organising the wedding event. They are a product that has classifications which are based on package/price and types such as a private garden, a private beach, a hotel’s rating in the star system. These classifications signify the wealth of their customers.

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133-134, 139, 140, 187, 189, 191, 193-194, 197,
202-205.
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วิดีโอพรีเซนเทชัน
Video presentation

noun. The video presentation is part of the opening ritual of the reception ceremony. Typically, the videos will be played on a big projection screen in the reception hall and will usually be shown before the cake-cutting ceremony. These videos are made by either the couple themselves or a professional videographer. The basic function of the wedding video presentations is to ‘introduce’ the bride and groom to their guests. In this sense, the video presentation plays the same role as an official wedding trailer or teaser.

The content of the wedding video presentation includes an introduction, providing general information about the wedding couple such as who they are, where they come from, which school and university they graduated from, careers and so on. Next is a short story about the couple’s relationship, highlighting the ‘love’ and ‘relationship’ of the couple from the beginning to the wedding day, including the first crush, first date, special relationship moments, to the marriage proposal and ending with making a vow. The video presentation somehow mirrors the wedding gallery in terms of intention: a short segment related to an upcoming wedding that presents the couple’s ideal/dream/desire autobiography. But it has moved from the actual images into the moving images (see *wedding gallery*).

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เวดดิ้งแกลเลอรี แกลเลอรี
Wedding gallery, gallery

Volume I: p.102, 121-123, 125, 131, 149, 174,
 193-196, 198,
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noun. *Wedding gallery* is another borrowed English word. *Wedding gallery* is a space that is used for exhibiting the pre-wedding photography. The wedding gallery is one of many newly invented elements in the modern Thai wedding. The wedding gallery typically is constructed to a rectangular plan. Its shape looks like an arched or tunnel-shaped walkway, often decorated with flowers. The basic function of the wedding gallery is to serve as a gateway, leading all guests to the main backdrop and ceremonial wedding space and to exhibit the wedding photos, which are exhibited on the gallery walls. The floor is normally covered with a white or red carpet or prints in various patterns. The ceiling is decorated based on the wedding theme. It can be decorated to resemble a sky, forest, garden, castle, etc. The personal stories/personalities of the wedding couples are narrated through props such as mirror balls, postcards, ceramic dolls, balloons, prints, fabrics, flowers, plants and trees and so on. The wedding gallery is where the couple's ideas, dreams and desires are narrated and, to a certain extent invented, through props and wedding spaces. An important factor for the wedding gallery is lighting. Similar to other photo galleries, the lighting design is very important for the gallery space. The main function of the lighting design is to highlight the pre-wedding photos on the gallery walls and also to generate a specific atmosphere for the overall gallery space.

FAKE CAKE

WORDS & IMAGES