

Case Study: A visit to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha

READING AND VOCABULARY

Reading 1

History

Wat Phra Kaeo, which literally means “the temple of the Emerald Buddha”, was built in 1782 at the same time when Bangkok was built. King Rama I, the founder of the Chakri Dynasty, intended this temple to be the palace temple, the temple within the Grand Palace, the same way as Wat Phra Si Sanphet in the Royal Palace of Ayutthaya and Wat Mahathat in Sukhothai. Not only is it the oldest temple in Bangkok, Wat Phra Kaeo is also the most beautiful temple. Its great beauty is due to the fact that this temple enshrines the Emerald Buddha, one of the most venerated Buddha images in Thailand. The construction of the temple was not completed in the reign of King Rama I, who built only the ubosoth, the mondop, Hor Phra Nak and the gallery. Other buildings and structures were added to the temple in later reigns.

Vocabulary

Add	(v.)
Complete	(v.)
Construction	(n.)
Due to the fact that	(conj.)
Dynasty	(n.)
Founder	(n.)
Literally	(adv.)
Reign	(n.)
Structure	(n.)
Venerated	(adj.)

Comprehension

Exercise 1

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

- ___ 1. Bangkok and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha were built in 1782.
- ___ 2. Wat Si Sanphet was the palace temple.
- ___ 3. Wat Phra Kaeo is not the oldest temple in Bangkok, but it is the most beautiful temple.
- ___ 4. King Rama I built all the buildings in the temple.

Exercise 2

The Temple of the Emerald Buddha is important in four ways.

What are the four important things about this temple?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Reading 2

The passage is a situation when a tourist guide is giving the information of interesting spots.

1. This is the *rishi* figure, or the hermit figure. He is regarded as the patron of medicine. In front of him are a mortar and a grinding stone. In the old days people could come to grind their herbal medicines in this mortar for greater efficacy. The figure was cast in bronze in the reign of King Rama III.



2. Now we are in the gallery, which surrounds the compound of the temple. On the walls there are mural paintings depicting scenes from the *Ramakien*, the Thai version of the Indian *Ramayana*. These paintings show the continuous story. The first scene is located opposite the *Viharn Yot* and you can proceed in a clockwise direction. These murals were first done in the reign of King Rama I. On the pillars there are marble slabs engraved with poems describing the scenes.



3. These are the demon-guardian statues. They are in different colours as each one represents an important demon character in the *Ramakien*. For example the green one represents *Tosakanth*, the demon king, and the white one represents *Sahassadecha*, one of *Tosakanth*'s warriors.



There are altogether six pairs of demon-guardian statues. All of them stand facing the ubosoth, or the ordination hall, meaning that they are guarding the Emerald Buddha from evil spirits. These demon-guardian statues were built in the reign of King Rama III.

Character	(n.)	Patron	(n.)
Clockwise	(adj.)	Pillar	(n.)
Demon	(n.)	Proceed	(v.)
Depict	(v.)	Represent	(v.)
Evil spirit	(n.)	Medicine	(n.)
Face	(v.)	Mortar	(n.)
Gallery	(n.)	Rishi (hermit) figure	(n.)
Grind	(v.)	Scene	(n.)
Grinding stone	(n.)	Warrior	(n.)
Guard from	(v.)	Efficacy	(n.)
Guardian	(n.)	Version	(n.)
Herbal medicine	(n.)		

Comprehension

Exercise 1

After reading this passage, if the tourist asks you the following questions, how will you answer them?

Tourist: Why did the people in the old days bring the herbal medicines to grind in the mortar in front of the rishi figure?

Guide: _____

Tourist: What do the mural paintings on the gallery walls depict?

Guide: _____

Tourist: What is the Ramakien?

Guide: _____

Tourist: Why doesn't each demon-guardian statue look the same?

Guide: _____

Tourist: Why are the demon-guardian statues standing facing the ordination hall?

Guide: _____

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Compound Noun

From the passage, notice that some phrases may be written in the form of a compound noun, for example '*hermit figure*' instead of '*figure of hermit*', '*grinding stone*' instead of '*stone for grinding*', '*demon character*' instead of '*character of demon*'.

Write a compound noun from each of the following noun phrases.

1. the army of monkeys =
2. the bearer in the form of a demon =
3. the bearer in the form of a monkey =
4. the guardian of the door =
5. a design in black and gold =
6. a figure of *rishi* =
7. an object made of stone =
8. a hall for ordination =
9. a hall for making merit =
10. a statue of a demon-guardian =

Reading 3

The three structures on the elevated platform

Guide: On the elevated platform you can see three structures of the same height. The one nearest to us is the Golden Stupa. The building in the middle is the Mondop or the library, and the building next to it, which has a prang spire, is the Royal Patheon. Let's walk up the stairs and have a closer look.

On the elevated platform

Guide: This is the Golden Stupa. It was built after the model of one of the three large stupas at Wat Phra Si Sanphet in the former capital of Ayutthaya. This kind of stupa is in the Ceylonese style having a circular base and a round bell-shaped central body with a ringed-spire.



Tourist: What does it contain?

Guide: Usually a stupa is built as the principal monument in a temple. It represents the Lord Buddha. Therefore it contains the Buddha's relics inside.

Tourist: The stupa still looks new. Was it built recently?

Guide: Actually this stupa was built in the reign of King Rama IV or more than 130 years ago. However, the golden tile mosaics were applied to the stupa in the reign of King Rama V.

Let's have a look at another structure, that building with a mondop spire.

The Mondop and Hor Monthian Tham

Guide: This building is the Mondop. It is used as the library or the scripture hall because inside it contains the Tripitaka or the Buddhist Holy Manuscripts, which are kept in a mother-of-pearl inlaid book cabinet.

Tourist: Was it also built at the same time as the Golden Stupa?

Guide: In fact the Mondop was the first building that was built on the elevated platform. It was built in the reign of King Rama I. The Mondop is a square building with a spired roof. The exterior walls are decorated with coloured-glass mosaics. Another beautiful object to admire is the mother-of-pearl inlaid door-panels and the statues of demon door-guardians.



Tourist: Is all the Tripitaka kept in the Mondop?

Guide: That's a good question. As there are several volumes of the Tripitaka, not all of them are contained in the Mondop. The rest of the Tripitaka is housed in Hor Monthian Tham, which is located to the north of the Mondop. Therefore Hor Monthian Tham is regarded as the supplementary library. Inside Hor Monthian Tham there are many beautiful mother-of-pearl inlaid book-cabinets. This building was built by the younger brother of King Rama I. Prince of the Front Palace.



Vocabulary

Admire (v.)

Alloy (n.)

Buddhist Holy Manuscripts (n.) พระไตรปิฎก

Cabinet (n.) ตู้เก็บ

Contain (v.)

Copper (n.)

Elevated platform (n.)

Exterior (adj.)

Inlaid (adj.) ประดับด้วยการฝังวัสดุอื่น ๆ ลงบนพื้นผิว

Library (n.) ห้องสมุด ห้องเก็บพระไตรปิฎก

Mother-of-pearl (n.) เปลือกหอยมุก

Mosaics (n.) ลวดลายที่เกิดจากการนำชิ้นวัสดุมาเรียงต่อกัน

Ornament (v.)

Prince of the Front Palace (n.) ตำแหน่งวังหน้า

ตำแหน่งพระอนุชาของกษัตริย์ซึ่งจะได้เป็นกษัตริย์องค์ต่อไป

Scripture hall (n.) หอพระไตรปิฎก

Spire (n.) ยอดเรียงแหลม ยอดที่มีลักษณะชะลูด

Spired roof (n.) หลังคาที่มียอดแหลม

Square (n.)

Supplementary (adj.)

Tripitaka (n.) พระไตรปิฎก

Comprehension

Exercise 1

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

- ___ 1. The Mondop is used as the library.
- ___ 2. The Mondop is a square building with a prang spire.
- ___ 3. The Golden Stupa is copied from a Ceylonese stupa in Sri Lanka.
- ___ 4. The Golden Stupa was built in the reign of King Rama I.
- ___ 5. The Mondop was built before the Golden Stupa.
- ___ 6. The Mondop and the Golden Stupa are decorated with the same kind of material.
- ___ 7. There are two buildings in Wat Phra Kaeo that are used as the library.

LANGUAGE FOCUS

I. Adjective Clause

An adjective clause is a dependent clause which modifies a noun. It describes, identifies or gives further information about a noun. An adjective clause is also called a relative clause.

Using subjective pronouns: *who, which, that*

<p>The building is the scripture hall. The building houses the Tripitaka.</p> <p>(a) The building which houses the Tripitaka is the scripture hall.</p> <p>(b) The building that houses the Tripitaka is the scripture hall.</p>	<p>➤ In (a) <i>The building is the scripture hall</i> = an independent clause</p> <p>➤ <i>Which houses the Tripitaka</i> = an adjective clause.</p> <p>➤ The adjective clause modifies the noun '<i>building</i>'.</p> <p>➤ In (a) : 'which' is the subject of the adjective clause.</p> <p>➤ In (b) : 'that' is the subject of the adjective clause</p> <p>➤ (a) and (b) have the same meaning.</p>
<p>The person is an abbot. He found the Emerald Buddha.</p> <p>(c) The person who found the Emerald Buddha is an abbot.</p> <p>(d) The person that found the Emerald Buddha is an abbot.</p>	<p>Who = used for people</p> <p>Which = used for things</p> <p>That = used for both people and things</p>

Exercise 2

Combine the two sentences. Use the second sentence as an adjective clause.

1. The demon guardian is Tosakanth. The demon guardian is in green.

2. The prang is dedicated to the Lord Buddha. It is in white.

3. The robe- end hangs over the left shoulder. The robe- end is split.

4. Jataka stories are stories. They are about the previous lives of the Lord Buddha.

5. The king is King Rama I. He made Bangkok capital.

6. The animal is the Garuda. It is the vehicle of God Vishnu.

7. The persons are female members of the royalty. They are allowed to enter the inner court.

8. The temple is the palace temple. It is built within the palace ground.

9. The man was Chao Phraya Chakri. The man brought the Emerald Buddha to Thonburi.

10. The robe- end hangs down to the navel. It is cut in a straight line.

II. Passive Voice

Way of saying

1. A : What's this building

for?
used for?

B : This building
It

is
's

used as

the ordination hall.
the image hall.
the merit- making hall.
the library.
the royal residence.

2. A : What's this building used for?
for?

B : This building
It

is
's

used for

keeping Buddha images.
enshrining Buddha
images.
holding state banquets.
receiving foreign
ambassadors.
preparing the lustral (holy)
water.