

**THE ADAPTATION OF BUDDHIST ART MOTIFS AS  
ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY  
BUILDING INTERIOR DESIGN: THE CASE STUDY  
OF 5-STAR HOTEL LOBBIES IN CHIANG MAI**

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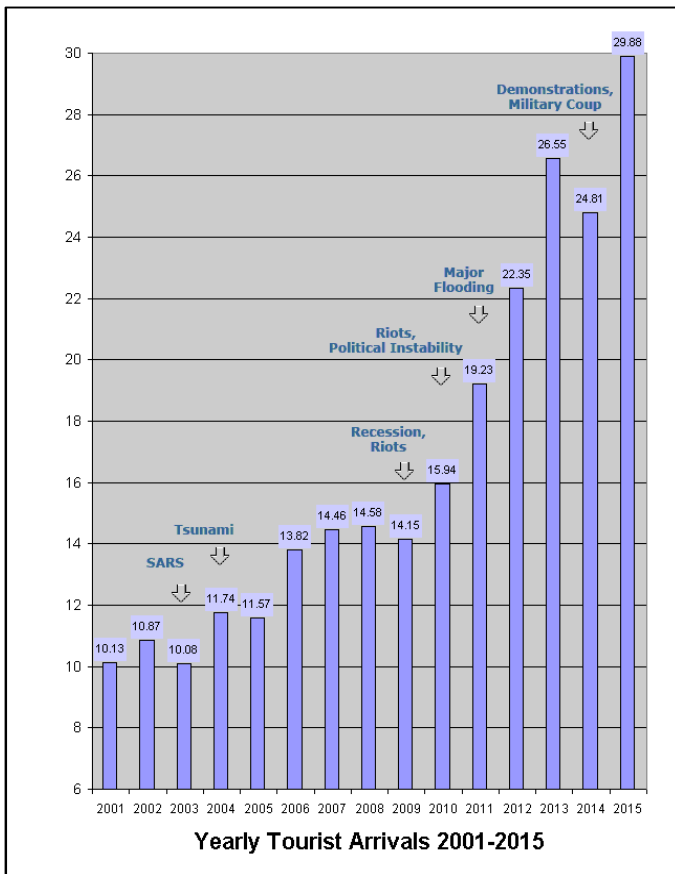
**Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to explore how Buddhist art motifs can be integrated with the space decorations. Nowadays, applying Buddhist art motifs in decorating and enhancing the interior space has become a trend, involving the technique of “reproduced design”. The objective of this research is to have an overall view of the application of Buddhist art motifs as architectural ornaments in space decorations. The scope of this research focuses only on five-star hotels in Chiang Mai. Qualitative data, which involved direct observations at the site and in-depth interviews with certain individuals, was conducted. As well, quantitative data was collected from hotel users. The findings showed that Buddhist art motifs have been applied as decorative items, as guardians or protectors, to create a certain ambience and for aesthetic value. These Buddhist art motifs come in varying sizes and forms. Wood was identified as the preferred material, followed by iron, silver, paper, cloth, stucco and plastic. Lastly, all hotel users were impressed with the aesthetic factor created by the selection of Buddhist art motifs. Two hotels, namely, Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai and Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort Chiang Mai, have applied the highest number of Buddhist art motifs in their lobby space.

**Keywords:** Adaptation; Buddhist art motifs; space decorations; architectural ornament

## Introduction

Thailand has emerged as being among the top tourist destinations in the world. This can be seen from the yearly tourist arrivals in Thailand, which has positively increased over the last 15 years (Figure 1). Thailand’s government has successfully planned and promoted several tourism-related campaigns over the past few decades. These include Visit Thailand Year (1982 and 1987), Amazing Thailand (1998-1999) and also the latest campaign of Discover Thainess (2015-2016) (Sritama, 2014). As a result of these campaigns, Thailand was ranked at Number 9 in the world for International Tourism Receipts, with US\$38.4 billion collected (UNWTO, 2015).



**Figure 1:** Yearly Tourist Arrivals between 2001 until 2015. Source <http://www.thaiwebsites.com/tourism.asp>. [Accessed: February 12, 2016]

Most of the tourists who come to Thailand spend a significant part of their expenditure for accommodations, on average, about 31%. Thailand's hotel industry has received full benefit from these arrivals by generating 61% of their revenue from room occupancy. These statistics provide a general idea that accommodations available in Thailand have achieved a certain level in which tourists feel comfortable and are attractive enough to be chosen as places to stay.

In this regard, one interesting question is how do these accommodations attract and serve the tourists in the aspect of providing the best design and ambience in their respective premises? To answer this question, it is important to find out how the stakeholders from the hotel industry have participated in the current campaign of Discover Thainess. This campaign, "... emphasising on the distinctive character of "Thainess" which entails the Thai way of life, Thai culture and Thai experiences that distinguish Thailand as a unique tourist destination" (Arunyik, 2014), consists of seven unique aspects. These are Thai food, Thai arts, the Thai way of life, Thai wellness, Thai festivals, Thai wisdom and Thai fun (Athena, 2016). Therefore, how these architects or interior designers have integrated vernacular identity with contemporary accommodation buildings is the focus of this study.

In the area of present day Thailand, Buddhism has a long history, perhaps as long as the formation of local polities. Buddhism reached and spread into this area through many phases. There is legend that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Emperor Asoka of India sent Buddhist missionaries to nine areas to disseminate Buddhism. Suvannabhūmi, which was one of those nine areas at that time, comprised of present day Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Vietnam (Kandarapanguwe, 1991), and also Southern Burma, Laos and the Malay Peninsula (Kusalasaya, 1983). While Theravada Buddhism has taken part in the lives of people in this area since the beginning, Mahayana Buddhism also arrived twice in Thailand: (a) first when the King of Srivijaya (1300 B.E.) from Sumatra expanded his kingdom to the south of Thailand, especially to Surastradhani, Pattani and Nakorn Si Thammarat; and (b) during the reign of the Khmer Kings (1002 A.D.), in which the Khmer empire expanded to large areas of present day Thailand. Theravada Buddhism was again strengthened

after King Anuruddha (1600 B.E.) became the king of the whole of Burma. King Anuruddha expanded his kingdom until Lanna and Lanchang in northern areas of Thailand. Since then, Theravada Buddhism has become the dominant religion after King Ramkamheang had decreed it into this position.

The northern region of Thailand, which has been subject to more Burmese influence, has experienced many religious activities from Burma, India and Sri Lanka. In fact, the northern region of Thailand, especially Chiang Mai, has many buildings and Buddhist monasteries that were built by copying Indian style temples, such as Wat Ched Yod. King Tilokaraja sent some of his people to India just to get the plans of the temple in order to build Wat Ched Yod in Chiang Mai.

## **Objective**

To have an overall view of the application of Buddhist art motifs in terms of the user impression and relationship between Buddhist art motifs and space decorations.

## **Scope**

The scope of this study focuses on hotel buildings in Chiang Mai from the Thai Hotels Association (THA). The hotel buildings included in this study has been limited to only five-star hotels. The reason why only five-star hotels were chosen was primarily to avoid bias during the evaluation. All hotels that were chosen needed to be in the same star rating category since hotels in different star rating categories have different specification from each other. As well, five-star hotels generally have enough capital to present a brand identity, making it easier for them to design and implement such identity as they desire. Chiang Mai province was chosen because “Chiang Mai is the most award-winning province in Thailand” (National News Bureau of Thailand, 2014), and also because “the area has many main cultural attractions in Thailand” (Horwath HTL, 2015). Moreover, Chiang Mai was named the Top City in Asia, as well as being ranked second as one of the World’s Best Cities in the Travel + Leisure World’s Best Awards 2016 reader’s survey (Travel and

Leisure, 2016). In this study, the hotel lobby area was selected to be observed for the research purposes. Due to some factors, such as hotel guest privacy, safety and comfort, the lobby was chosen because “the lobby plays a crucial role in branding and creating the hotel’s desired atmosphere” (Rutkin, 2005). In addition, the hotel lobby is also the first place that can create an impression for the guest, and the beauty and attractiveness of the lobby design can influence hotel guests in their decision-making, particularly whether they would want to stay or otherwise (Countryman and Jang, 2006).

### Materials and Methods, Area Descriptions, Techniques

**Sampling Design and Data Collection:** This study involved direct observation at seven five-star hotels in Chiang Mai province, with the purposive sampling technique applied for this study. By using purposive sampling, the samples were chosen based on the specific criteria of being a five-star hotel in Chiang Mai only.

**Table 1:** List of the five-star hotels in Chiang Mai province

No.	Name of the hotels
1	LE MERIDIEN HOTEL CHIANG MAI
2	DUSIT D2 CHIANG MAI
3	DHARA DHEVI CHIANG MAI
4	FOUR SEASONS RESORT CHIANG MAI
5	RATILANNA RIVERSIDE SPA RESORT CHIANG MAI
6	SHANGRI-LA HOTEL CHIANG MAI
7	THE ANANTARA CHIANG MAI RESORT

In-depth interviews were also undertaken with various hotel representatives. The main purpose of these interviews was to obtain information on the hotels in terms of their history and background, as well as the overall design scheme of the hotel and their lobby areas. Furthermore, surveys were conducted by distributing questionnaires to hotel users. All the data from the surveys was analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. For this study, hotel users were specifically fourth year architecture students from Chiang Mai University. The main reason why such users were chosen was because: (a) the hotel did not allowed the author to interview hotel guests staying in the hotel; (b) such students are familiar with the architecture and design terms in the survey questions; (c) they generally have a background in Lanna architecture and design; (d) they have already undertaken a hotel design assignment; and (e) they can communicate in English.

**Measurements:** To evaluate the hotel lobby area, the researcher applied a hotel checklist (Table 4) during the direct observation process. The hotel checklist was used to examine the interior architectural space of the hotel lobbies “delimited by three planes—a floor, a wall, and a ceiling” (Ashihara, 1981). At each plane, any religious elements were documented either by photographs or sketches. These religious elements were categorized into building structure and building non-structure. For building structure, the items include: (1.1) roof structure; (1.2) columns; (1.3) beam; (1.4) support structure; (1.5) walls; and (1.6) flooring. For building non-structure, there are: (2.1) doors; (2.2) windows; (2.3) ventilation; (2.4) ceilings; and (2.5) decorative components (lighting; furniture; human objects; animal objects; religious objects; sculptures; plant; ceramics; lacquer; mural painting; painting; basketry; silverwork; wood carving panels; textiles; stucco; accessories). The total number of Buddhist art motifs applied in these lobby area was analyzed according to the user impressions, aesthetic value, size, form, function and the material used.

For the survey, the respondents were given a set of evaluation based on nine items: (a) style; (b) arrangement; (c) lighting; (d) colours; (e) furnishings; (f) materials; (g) workmanship; (h) function; and (i) aesthetics. For each item, the respondents evaluated using a 7-point Likert Scale. This

method was adapted from a previous study by Countryman and Jang (2006), albeit in which only four elements were used. For this study, five new items were created:

(a) *Arrangement*: Elements of Design (line, shape, form, colour, value, texture, space) and Principles of Design (pattern, contrast, emphasis, balance, scale, harmony, rhythm, unity, variety) are two strong factors that are involved in producing certain designs. By applying these two factors, proper arrangement will be produced and reflected to the observer. In this case, the respondent will perceived the application of Buddhist art motifs in the lobby area more properly and well organized;

(b) *materials*, the application of different materials will give different feelings when the object is touched (Stepat-DeVan, 1980);

(c) *workmanship*; the quality of workmanship can be produced by various techniques such as hammering, stitching, casting, or spinning. These techniques may create different effect on the object surface and this will give different impressions towards people (Stepat-DeVan, 1980);

(d) *function*; each object can function with either holistic, daily use or aesthetic value. Supported by personal knowledge and experience, they user can determine whether the object was applied correctly (Stepat-DeVan, 1980);

(e) *aesthetics*; to attract people attention, a particular object should have a certain aesthetic value. However, how much they can appreciate the aesthetic value will depending on their background and experience.

## Results

From Table 2, only 13 out of 27 items consist of Buddhist art motifs in different styles. This shows that less than half of the overall total items applied Buddhist art motifs to enhance the interior of the hotel lobby area.

**Table 2: Hotel Checklist**

No.	Hotel's Name	Building Structure				Building Non-Structure																					
		Roof Structure	Columns	Beams	Support structure	Walls	Flooring	Doors	Windows	Ventilation	Ceilings	Decorative Components															
												Lighting	Furniture	Human Objects	Animal object	Religious objects	Sculptures	Plants	Ceramics	Lacquer	Mural painting	Painting	Basketry	Silverwork	Wood carving panels	Textiles	Stucco
1	Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai								✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓									✓	
2	Dusit D2 Chiang Mai																										
3	Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai	✓												✓	✓												
4	Le Maridien Hotel Chiang Mai																										
5	Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort Chiang Mai	✓													✓										✓	✓	✓
6	Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai			✓					✓	✓																✓	✓
7	The Anantara Chiang Mai																										



## Discussion

The number of 5 star hotels that use Buddhist art Motifs in Chiang Mai

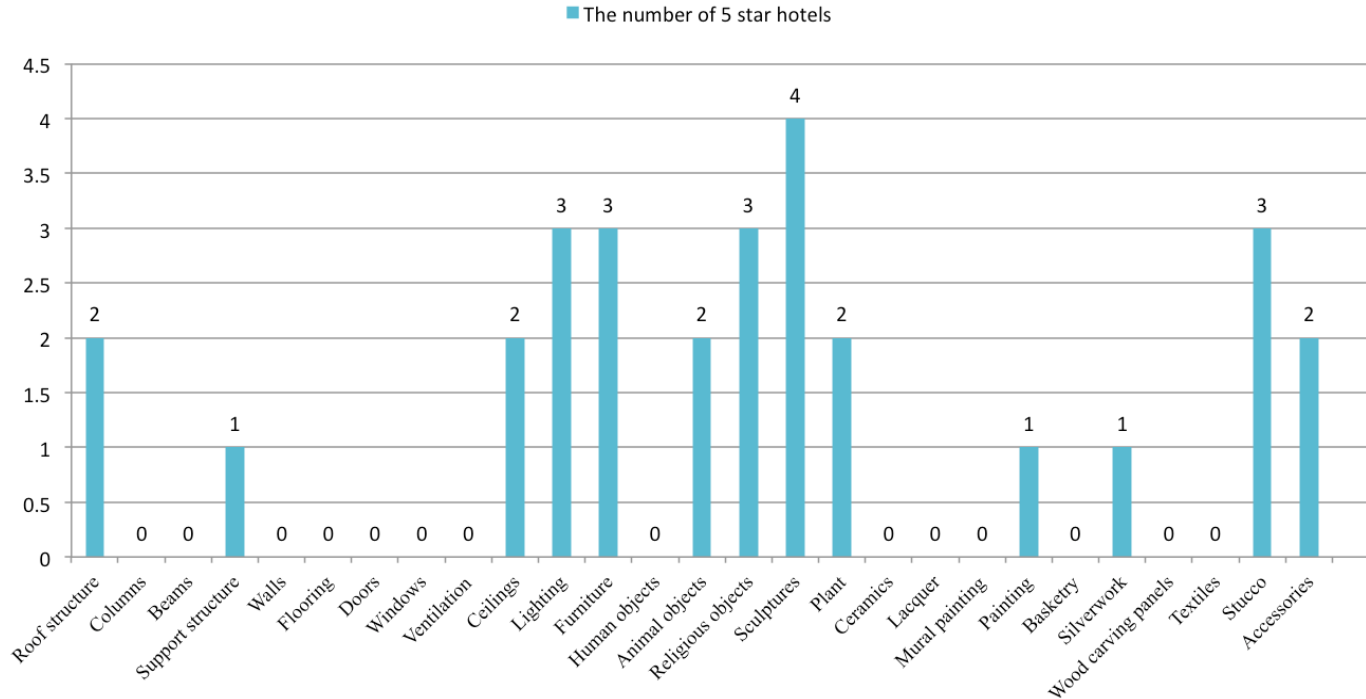


Figure 2: The number of 5-star hotels that use Buddhist art motifs in the lobby area in Chiang Mai province

Regarding Figure 2, there are four areas that will be discussed in this paper:

(a) Size:

Buddhist art motifs can be found in various sizes. However, these motifs are more applied into medium and small scale objects in the hotel lobby area. The reason why medium and small scale object has been mainly produced is because they are easier to make, save cost and time and are easily installed. Small scale objects are typically made from plant matter (Figure 3), while medium size objects are:

- support structures (Figure 4);
- animal objects (garuda (Figure 5: (a)), singha<sup>1</sup> (Figure 5: (b)), naga<sup>2</sup> (Figure 5: (c) & (f)), swan (Figure 5: (d)), elephant (Figure 5: (e));
- lighting (Figure 6: (a), (b) & (c));
- sculptures (Figure 7);
- accessories (offering box (Figure 8: (a)), Soom Dock<sup>3</sup> (Figure 8: (b)), pahn (Figure 8: (c));
- religious objects (buranakata (Figure 9: (b)), kinnara (Figure 9: (c)),
- dewa (Figure 9: (d) & (e));
- ceiling (Figure 10: (a) & (b));
- furniture (Figure 11: (b));
- paintings (Figure 12).

Finally, large-sized objects include:

- lighting (Figure 6: (d) & (e));
- religious objects (Figure 9: (a));
- roof structure (Figure 13: (a) & (b));

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<sup>1</sup> Singha is a mythical lion from the Himmaphan forest. This figures usually comes in pairs at the entrance to a temple or another sacred structure. Himmaphan is a mythical forest in Buddhist-Hindu cosmology that is located in the Himalayas below the heaven of the gods. Himmaphan was inhabited by both real and imaginary animals.

<sup>2</sup> Naga is serpentine like divinity that dwells in the subterranean and water regions. *Naga* guard the hidden treasures of the earth and control rainfall. They are the arch enemies of the *garudas*. The struggle between the two is a frequent theme in art.

<sup>3</sup> Soom Dock is use to put flowers for ordination hall in the temple.

- furniture (Figure 11: (a));
- stucco (Figure 14);
- silverwork (Figure 15).



**Figure 3:** Plant (a) Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai, (b) The Anantara Chiang Mai



**Figure 4:** Support structure at Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)

**Figure 5:** Animal object (a)-(d) Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai, (e)-(f) Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort



(a)

(b)

(c)



(d)



(e)

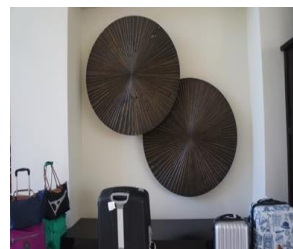
**Figure 6:** Lighting (a)-(c) Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai, (d) Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai, (e) Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai,



(a)



(b)

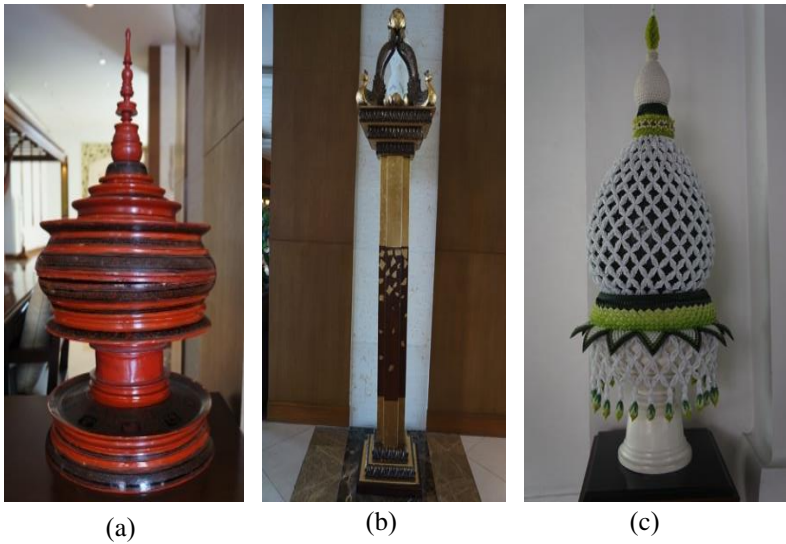


(c)

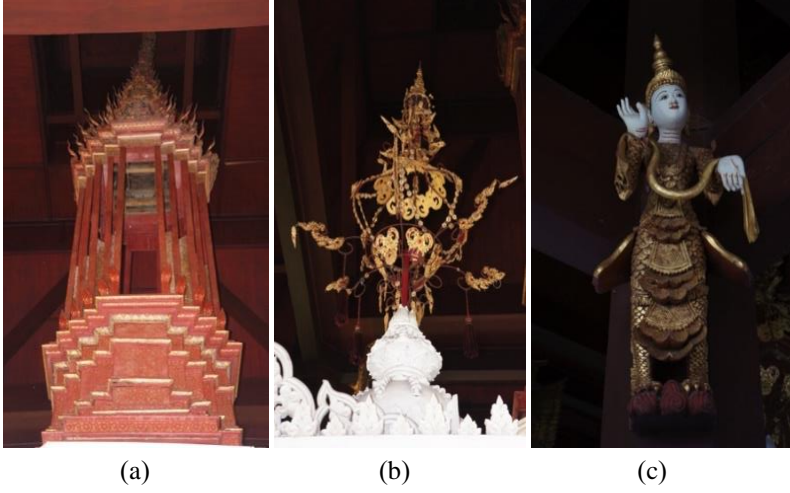




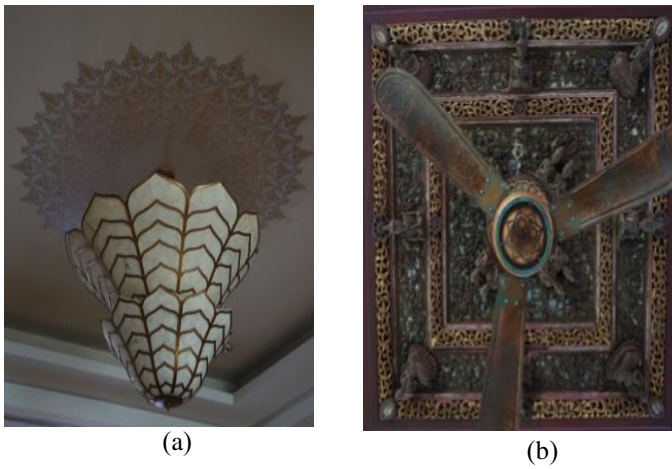
**Figure 7:** Sculpture (a) Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai, (b) Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai, (c) The Anantara Chiang Mai, (d)-(e) *Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai*



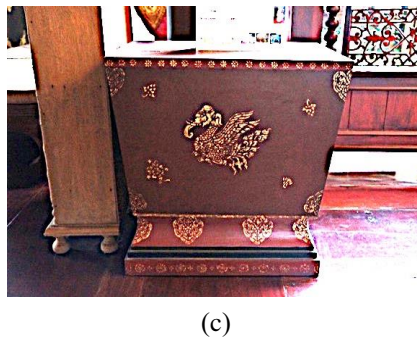
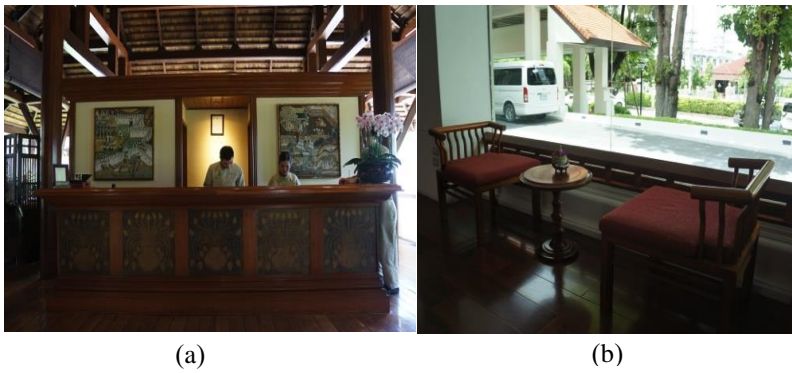
**Figure 8:** Accessories (a)-(b) Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai, (c) *Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort*



**Figure 9:** Religious object (a)-(c) Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai, (d) Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort, (e) Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai

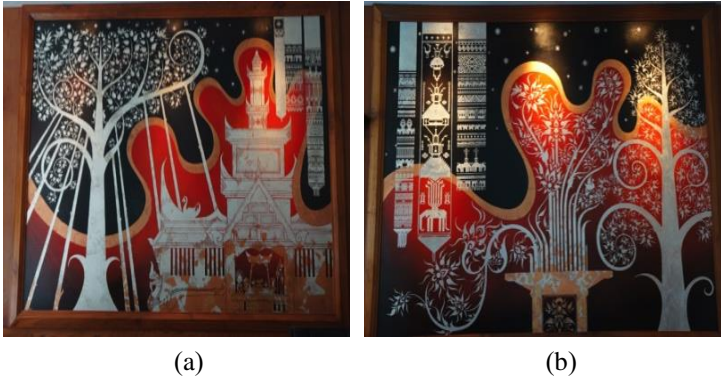


**Figure 10:** Ceiling (a) Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai, (b) Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai



**Figure 11:** Furniture (a) Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai, (b) Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort (c) Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai

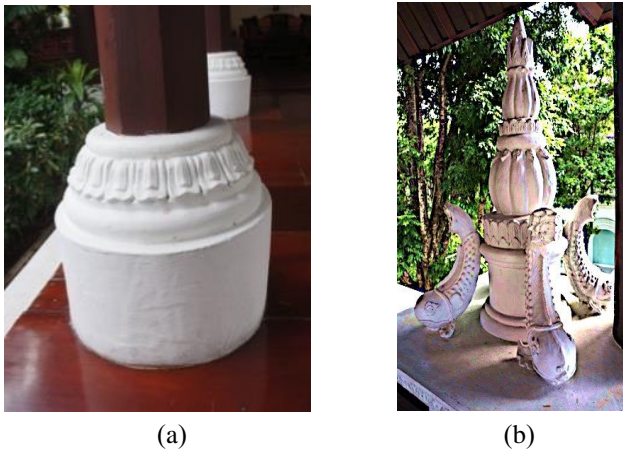




**Figure 12:** Painting at Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort



**Figure 13:** Roof structure (a) Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai, (b) Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort





**Figure 14:** Stucco (a) & (b) Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai, (c) & (d) Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort, (e) & (f) Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai



**Figure 15:** Silverwork at Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort

b) Form:

All Buddhist art motifs can be found applied in various forms, classified into:

fauna

- there are two type of animals: elephants (Figure 5: (e)) and swans (Figure 4 & Figure 5: (d)). Elephants are considered the most favoured animals to use for decoration, either for the interior or exterior of the buildings. This is because for Thai people, the elephant is a symbol of tradition, history, royal, fortune, and superstition. Moreover, elephants are closely related with Queen Maya of Sakya, the Buddha's mother. The elephant also is a symbol of mental strength; due to this symbol, the elephant is typically involved with temple construction and warfare. The swan is a symbol of divine spirit, perfect union, balance and life. Normally, swan is applied at the roof ridges of the temple.

flora

- lotus is the most common flower used. In this study, most of the lotus flower motif are applied as decorations either in vases (Figure 3), at the base of columns (Figure 14: (a)), on the reception counter (Figure 14: (c), (d) & (f) or as a sculpture (Figure 7: (c) & (d)). Lotuses not only represent spiritual purity, they also serve as a reminder to all human beings that we have the potential to attain enlightenment. Another type of holy flower, parichart (Figure 6: (c)),<sup>4</sup> is often applied as lighting fixtures.

mythical animal creature

- all mythical animal creatures were taken from the Himmaphan forest as detailed in Traiphum.<sup>5</sup> These are garuda (Figure 5: (a)); singha

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<sup>4</sup> Parichart is a holy flower which is found in Tavatimsa heaven.

<sup>5</sup> Traiphum, also known as The Three Worlds, representing a Hindu-Buddhist system of hierarchical layers. Inside the Traiphum, contains four main continents and seven mountains and seven seas, which is surrounding mythical Himalayan and Mount Sumeru. Read more at Nithi Sthapitanonda and

(Figure 5: (b)); naga (Figure 5: (c) & (f)); and norasingh (Figure 7: (b))<sup>6</sup>.

### Buddhist cosmology

- Buddhist cosmology is applied using two scenarios. Firstly, such cosmology is applied as stucco images (Figure 14: (b)). Such stucco images have lotus-bud shapes and fish motifs. The lotus-bud shape represents Mount Sumeru<sup>7</sup> and the four fish represent the giant Anondha fish. This giant Anondha fish has an important role in Buddhist cosmology by supporting Mount Sumeru. In the second scenario, Buddhist cosmology is applied in terms of space hierarchy and layout of the space. At Dhara Dhevi Hotel Chiang Mai, the overall layout of the hotel lobby applied Buddhist cosmology by having a prasat (Figure 9: (a)) structure at the middle of the lobby area. This prasat represents Mount Sumeru, surrounded by four kinnara (Figure 9: (c)) representing the four main continents. The main entrance of the lobby of this hotel faces the east to show the direction the Buddha was facing when he became enlightened.

### Buddhist teaching and philosophy

- as seen in Figure 12, there are many images relating Buddhist teachings or philosophy. The Bodhi tree with the poles (Figure 12: (a)), or locally known as Mai Kam Sari, has significant tradition in Lanna Buddhists practice. The Bodhi tree represents Buddhism, being the tree under which the Buddha became enlightened. The supporting poles beneath the tree's branches represents Buddhism being supported by the lay people. The local people also believe that those who support the branches will be blessed with peace, happiness and longevity. Furthermore, buranakata (Figure 12: (b)) has different meanings for Buddhist follower. Buranakata, or flower pot, in Pali means happiness, peaceful, wealthy and wisdom. The pot, which is filled with water, represents wealthy, richness of food. The flowers in

<sup>6</sup> Norasingh, half-lion, half-human beast, a creature from the forest of Himmaphan.

<sup>7</sup> Sumeru, is a mythical mountain, the centre of the universe which is surrounded by the four continents and seven mountains and seven oceans. Located on Mount Sumeru is Tavatimsa heaven ruled by the god Indra.

the pot represent property and retainer. In other words, each of us represents a flower, which has its own beauty and value. Each flower will give off a sweet smell and when all the flowers are put together in the pot, the atmosphere of love, unity and friendship will fill the air.

#### Lanna Buddhist worship offerings

- in Lanna Buddhist culture there are many type of offerings for the temple and religious ceremonies. Making worship offerings inspires Lanna people to have faith and follow Thamma teach. Lanna people also believe that making offerings to the Triple Gems will give them merit and prosperity in their life. This merit will take them to the restful life after they die. From this study, forms of Lanna lanterns were found (Figure 6: (d) & (e)), Lanna flags, known as tung (Figure 12), soom dock (Figure 8: (b)), hsun-ok (Figure 8: (a)) and pahn (Figure 8: (c)).

#### Buddhist temple architecture

- Buddhist temple architecture is applied in terms of the roof structure (Figure 13), ceiling (Figure 10: (a)), support structure (Figure 4) and cho fa (Figure 6: (b)).

#### Lanna zodiac sign

- twelve zodiac animals can be seen applied at the wall silverwork panel in Figure 15. The twelve zodiac animals are snake, dragon, fish, dog, elephant, goat, rabbit, horse, mouse, deer, monkey and tiger.

#### c) Function

In this study, Buddhist art motifs are more applied as decorative items as compared to building structure (Figure 16). This trend might be because Buddhist art motifs are more easily applied to small and medium scale objects as compared to large scale objects. These small and medium scale objects can be made through low technology, low craftsman skills, low budget, short time period and can be produced in high numbers.

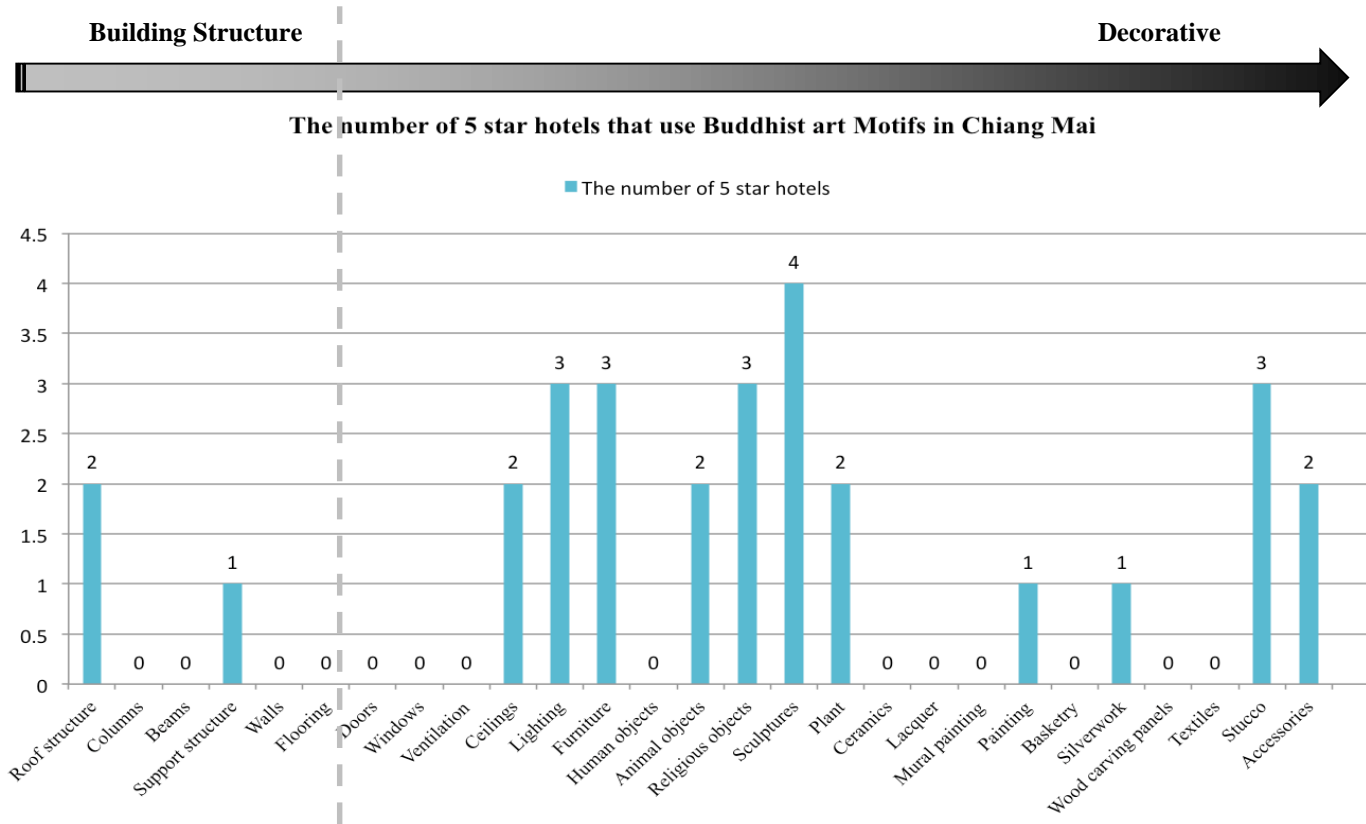


Figure 16: Buddhist art motifs were more applied as a decorations in the lobby area.

Most of the Buddhist art motifs are applied as guardians or protectors for the hotel user - either for the staff or for the guest. The guardians or protectors are in the form of:

- animal objects (singha (Figure 5: (b)), naga (Figure 5: (c) & (f)), garuda (Figure 5: (a)) and elephants (Figure 5: (e));
- sculptures (norasingh (Figure 7: (b)), dvarapala<sup>8</sup> (Figure 7: (a)));
- religious figures (dewa (Figure 6: (a) and Figure 9 (d) & (e))

The designers also apply Buddhist art motifs to create a certain ambience or situation. As mentioned previously, at Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai, they are attempting to depict Theravada Buddhist cosmology based on the Traiphum, but in the context of a Burmese palace, by using a prasat (Figure 9: (a)) at the center of lobby area represents Mount Sumeru. At the same time, the designer also tries to show other characters from the Traiphum by creating garuda (Figure 5: (a)), surrounded by four kinnorn<sup>9</sup> (Figure 9: (c)) and together with parichart (Figure 6: (c)). At Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort, the resort's decorative style represents traditional Lanna Buddhist life. The Lanna people, who are closely related to Theravada Buddhism, have applied almost all Buddhist disciplines in every aspect of their life. Hence, many decorations that can be found in Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort are representative of and reflect the Lanna people around Chiang Mai province by way of their handicraft products and also the character of Buddhist influence in the Lanna area. Those decorations include:

- the architecture (reception counter with traditional lotus-like base – Figure 14: (f); the arch at the main entrance imitating the structure of the temple or palace – Figure 14: (e); the roof structure – Figure 13: (b));
- furniture (the chairs are built in the form of traditional palanquin shape – Figure 11: (b));
- flower decorations (pahn – Figure 8: (c));

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<sup>8</sup> Dvarapala is a door or gate guardian, which is typically portrayed as a warrior of fearsome giant, usually armed with a weapon. Read more at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dvarapala>

<sup>9</sup> Kinnorn or Kinnara, a male divine musician, half-human and half bird in form who lives in the Himmaphan forest.

- Buddhist religious characters (dewa – Figure 9: (d));
- craftsmanship (silverwork – Figure 15).

Another reason why they these Buddhist art motifs were chosen to be applied into the lobby area is because of the aesthetic value. Some of the objects or items were selected without any specific purpose and are not related to the concept (Figure 7: (e) & Figure 8: (b)). In other instances, some hotels have adapted the role of Buddhist temple into their space design. For example, Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai adapted the concept of a Lanna village for their overall hotel design. This hotel applied the concept of a Lanna temple into the lobby design in which the lobby building itself symbolizes a main temple and is located on higher ground. This lobby or “main temple” was designed to face the villas or the rooms, in which these villas and the rooms represent the houses of the villagers.

#### d) Material

From Figure 2, 69% (9 out of 13) items can be identified as using wood as the main material. Those items are roof structures, support structures, ceilings, lighting, furniture, animal objects, religious objects and sculptures. Other materials that are used include iron, silver, paper, cloth, stucco and plastic. This trend has been practiced since a long time ago because the northern region of Thailand is a heavily forested area. This is due to a climate that is extremely conducive for the tree growth. By “having rainfall averages 1,200 millimeters annually, and the second highest relative humidity in the country with 6.5 to 8 months of the year, this northern region is largely forested” (Charernsupkul and Temiyabandha, 1978). In the northern region of Thailand, the consumption of wood can be seen in almost every aspect of local people life. Therefore, “the sculptural feeling for wood is complete: wood is made to be monumental as well as decorative” (Jumsai, 1970). Teak is very popular among those who really appreciate high quality in art and construction. This is because of teak’s main characteristic such as “lightness with strength, stability, durability, ease of working without cracking and splitting, resistance to termites, resistance to



fungi, resistance to weather and non-corrosive properties” (Kaosa-ard, 1989).

Another reason why they typically chose wood as the main medium is because some believe that certain species of wood have special significance, such as magical properties, protection, healing power, and fertility.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the application of Buddhist art motifs in enhancing the beauty of the space has been widely accepted by the users. From the Relative Important Index (RII) analysis (Table 3), the aesthetic factor was the highest influence of impression for overall hotels in Chiang Mai, with an aggregated relative important index of 76.67% and was ranked as the top most impression towards Buddhist art motifs for overall hotels in Chiang Mai. This was followed by style factor (RII=75.44%), arrangement and material factor (RII=74.94%), workmanship factor (RII=74.62%), function factor (RII=74.55%), color factor (RII=74.05%) and furnishings factor (RII=73.62%). The lighting factor were the lowest influence towards Buddhist art motifs (RII=73.18%). Hence, the aesthetic factor managed to attract the hotel users in Chiang Mai in terms of various sizes and form, the functionality of the selected Buddhist art motifs and the material that they applied.

**Table 3:** Overall RII analysis for Chiang Mai

Impressions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	RII	Rank
Style	304	278	275	309	327	1493	325	3311	75.44%	2
Arrangement	291	301	262	320	317	1491	307	3289	74.94%	3
Lighting	284	291	259	294	330	1458	292	3208	73.09%	8
Colors	295	285	266	310	314	1470	310	3250	74.05%	6
Furnishings	298	274	279	303	314	1468	295	3231	73.62%	7
Material	320	275	271	291	322	1479	331	3289	74.94%	3
Workmanship	322	275	275	288	318	1478	319	3275	74.62%	4
Function	288	304	267	315	311	1485	302	3272	74.55%	5
Aesthetic	308	275	272	322	334	1511	343	3365	76.67%	1

In other aspects, the way in which these Buddhist art motifs were applied is also dependent on several factors – the architect or interior designer and demand either from the current market or from the client. Each architect or interior designer has their own ideas and thoughts based on their knowledge and background. This gap or differences of ideas will determine which architect or interior designer have strong design flair based on their experience. At the same time, the architect or interior designer will try to follow the current trend to make sure that their design is on par with other architects or interior designers. This practice ensures that their design or their end product follows the current market and is updated with the latest technology and demand. However, from the client aspect, no matter how beautiful the architect or interior designer proposes their design to the client, the proposed design will not necessarily will be accepted by the client. This is because the clients have different knowledge and background about the design and clients are the one who are going to spend the money for the project. Therefore, the architect or interior designer will follow and produce a design based on the client needs.

From this study, Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai and Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort Chiang Mai use the highest number of Buddhist art motifs, with 30% each (8 items) into their hotel lobby. This is followed by Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai at 22% (6 items), Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai at 19% (5 items) and The Anantara Chiang Mai Resort at 7% (2 items). There are no applications in Dusit D2 Chiang Mai and Le Meridien Hotel Chiang Mai (Table 4).

**Table 4:** The rank of hotels based on the application of Buddhist art motifs in the lobby area

Rank	Hotel name	Percentage	Number of items / 27
1	Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai	30 %	8
1	Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort Chiang Mai	30 %	8
2	Shangri-La Hotel Chiang Mai	22 %	6
3	Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai	19 %	5
4	The Anantara Chiang Mai Resort	7 %	2
5	Dusit D2 Chiang Mai	0 %	0
5	Le Meridien Hotel Chiang Mai	0 %	0

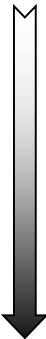

Accordingly, the use of Buddhist art motifs can be categorized into two directions (Table 5). The first direction (sculptures, religious objects, lighting, furniture, animal objects, accessories, plant) are:

- most of the items are priced cheaper
- they are easy to obtain from the market
- the skill of craftsmen are from low to medium level
- the items are not involved with building structure; most of the items are from the decorative items.

The second direction (stucco, roof structure, ceilings, support structure, painting, silverwork) are:

- the cost of production is higher and more expensive
- there is the need to order first or custom make the items from the craftsman or manufacturer
- the items need a high skill of craftsman
- the items are involved with building structure components (roof structure, support structure)

**Table 5:** The general characteristic of Buddhist art motifs in the lobby area

	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Items</b>	
	1	Sculptures	
	2	Lighting, Furniture, Religious objects, Stucco	
	3	Roof structure, Ceilings, Animal objects, Plant, Accessories	
	4	Support structure, Painting, Silverwork	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Building structure</li> <li>-High skills</li> <li>-Order or custom made</li> <li>-Expensive</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cheaper</li> <li>-High availability</li> <li>-Low skills</li> <li>-Decorative</li> </ul>

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