

# WINTER FAIRS IN BANGKOK, THE REPRESENTATION OF PRE WWII BANGKOK LEISURE

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## ABSTRACT

Winter fairs were seasonal leisure places in Bangkok before the World War II era. These fairs were established at Wat Benchamabophit (Marble temple) and Sanamseupah area, which both are close to royal residences. The fairs had been popular due to their various leisure activities such as performance entertainment, retail shops and particularly, gambling. The winter fairs had been divided as the elites' area (Pumeebandasak) with the entrance fee and the commoners' area (Sampek) without any fee. This reflects how the winter fairs had served as the leisure spaces for both the elites and commoners. In fact, on occasion entrepreneurs had to ask permission with the interior minister to set up gambling by guaranteeing charitable aims rather than their own business profits. It reflects the unique leisure and entertainment in Bangkok before the World War II era. That also reflects a social transformation from rural leisure places such as Wat fairs (Buddhist temple fairs) or local gambling dens to the winter fairs-complex entertainment spaces with modern electricity and urbanization. The winter fairs are not only the representation of Bangkok leisure before the World War II era but also reflect a unique social transformation, modernization, and urbanization within the history of Bangkok.

Key words: Winter fairs, Gambling, Bangkok, Leisure and Social history

## Introduction

Most of urban Bangkok studies tend to research areas because of unique physical characteristics or symbolic Bangkok landmarks. Bangkok has been and remains an important capital city with many various paradoxical elements: modern skyscrapers and sacred statues; luxurious penthouses and poor slums; well-known wats (Buddhist temples), tourism, popular sex tourism, and a chaotic city plan. These unique factors are an obstacle for adapting Western urban architectural or Asiatic informal sector approaches. Many urban approaches are not adequate to study urban Bangkok clearly; both approaches are quite suitable for cities in their own social and culture structures, but not for the chaotic and paradoxical structures of Bangkok.

I would like to study my topic with a representation approach which explains a cultural or social phenomenon following Askew Marc Richard<sup>1</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Richard Askew. (1994). **Interpreting Bangkok: The Urban Question in Thai Studies.** [Bangkok](#) : Chulalongkorn University. and Marc Richard Askew. (2002). **Bangkok: Place, practice and representation.** [London](#) : Routledge.

King Ross<sup>2</sup>. It also describes their transformation and evolution. Moreover I will also adapt the main idea of a micro-history approach about urban studies<sup>3</sup> for my topic which represents phenomenon itself and how it applies to larger social structures and themes. These approaches encourage my article to be more critical and focus on social history.

As my literature reveals, there is a lot of research about Bangkok's social and culture transformation before World War II era. The research explains rapid westernization and modernization in Bangkok, which had affected many political, economic, and cultural transformations; for the elites and nobles this brought centralization, bureaucratic reform, a free trade economy instead of royal mercantilism, a modern tax system, imported European product favors, New European leisure activities and so on. With European technological advantages, Siamese governments hired many foreigners to be advisors and officers for modernization and development especially in electricity and modern road construction. These affected Bangkok urbanization continuously during this period. The Siamese elites and nobles enjoyed European lifestyles such as royal residences in Bangkok suburb and many leisure places: gourmet restaurants, dancing ballrooms, nightclubs and so on. Nevertheless, in Bangkok, the old-fashion leisure spaces were still popular—particularly, urban wat fairs (Buddhist temple fairs). These were events rooted in rural Thailand; they were outdoor festivals and would ultimately become winter fairs.

This article aims to describe and analyze winter fairs in Bangkok, the Siam capitol (present Thailand) as the representation of Bangkok leisure and entertainment before the World War II era. During that period, Bangkok had still been the prime city of Siam.<sup>4</sup> Since western modernization had arrived, Bangkok continued to develop and grow following European westernization. There were various changes to physical spaces and attitudes in the Bangkok area. Modern electricity transformed Bangkok into a night life city with new leisure and transformed the everyday life of Bangkok residents. Modern road construction also afforded new emerging suburb residents a link to the commercial area and new leisure places. Not only did modern electricity and road construction bring emerging European leisure places, but they also encouraged wat fairs, an old fashion leisure place. The winter fairs, the modernized form of wat fairs, were organized at the area next to royal residences.

There were many similarities and differences between these fairs which represented Bangkok's specific society and culture. There were various performance entertainments, retail shops and gambling within winter fairs the same as in Wat fairs. However, the unique winter fairs characteristics were

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<sup>2</sup> Ross King. (2011). **Reading Bangkok**. Singapore: NUS Press.

<sup>3</sup> Nancy Stieber; editor: Eve Blau (1999). Microhistory of the modern city: urban space, its use and representation. In **Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians Architectural History. Volume 58/Number 3/September 1999**. Cambridge: Harvard University.

<sup>4</sup> Porphant Ouyyanont. (1998). Bangkok in Early Rattanakosin period history (1782-1855). In **Sukhothai Thammathirat Journal. Volume 11/Number 2/May-August 1998**. Nontaburi: Sukhothai Thammathirat University. p.115.

divided areas for the elites' area (Pu-mee-ban-da-sak) with the entrance fee and the commoners' area (Sam-pek) without any fee. It represented a unique form of leisure and entertainment in Bangkok. It also reflected a social and cultural transformation from wat fairs to winter fairs, a complex leisure space with electricity and urbanization. The advent of the winter fairs also explain overall Bangkok social and culture structures before the World War II era. Through a social history perspective with representation and micro-history approaches, we can analyze the emergence of winter fairs within the greater context of Bangkok's unique urbanization.

#### Wat fairs and its leisure activities in Bangkok society

During late 1850s – early 1920s, Bangkok was westernized and modernized following European influences. Bangkok was the most westernized city than the other cities in Siam. Not only western foreigners who had been living in Bangkok, but most Bangkok people were enjoying this emerging modern city with new western fashion apparel, luxury imports, leisure places, residences with and so on. Even as many new western leisure places emerged, the original leisure places like wat fairs still stood. Wat fairs, the outdoor fairs organized within Buddhist temples' areas had been the popular leisure place prior to this period. Wat fairs took place regularly, for around 3 – 10 days on Buddhist holidays, the Songkran period (traditional new year festival), or unique holy events. Wat fairs were organized in free spaces of Buddhist temples where local people living nearby could visit and enjoy without any entrance fee. There were various leisure activities within such as acrobatic performances, local dramas with traditional orchestras, Chinese operas, food or toy stalls and gambling entertainment. Most people could also make a merit or pay their respect at the holy sites of temples after their leisure activities in nearby wat fair spaces. A remarkable rural wat fair was the Praputthabath wat fair at the scared Buddha footprint temple located in Saraburi, the north of Ayuthaya (former capital of Siam kingdom). Normally, this wat fair was organized in late January or early February.

In Bangkok, the Pukaothong wat fair (Golden mount wat fair) was the most popular wat fair. The golden mount is an artificial mountain established at the Saket temple located in an early Bangkok suburb. The fair was usually organized during Loy Kathong festival (river goddess worship event) for 3 days on the middle of November. A lot of people participated in the Loy Kathong event and enjoyed the fair. Due to the holy Buddha relic located inside the golden stupa at the top of the artificial mount, most people climbed to the top to pay respect. The Golden mount fair was popular not only among Bangkok urban residences but also rural people according to one attendee:

“When I (Kanjanagpan as memo writer) was young, most of Bangkok female residences liked to travel the Pukaothong wat fair in the morning. Even though there were not a lot of people or shop stalls, they got to the top of the mount to only pay the respect and visit scenic outlooks. They would not travel around fair after the high noon when most shop stalls were open for fear of being groped during the crowded period. During late afternoon to nighttime period, there were a lot of women from outside Bangkok, visiting the fair and they would scream because the groping... Sometimes I saw many rural ladies

going inside blocked paths, the Pontawens (policemen) had to bring them out.”<sup>5</sup>

The account describes different people within the Golden mount fair. It also describes the wat fairs surrounding and popularity with many crowds which the Pontawens, policemen controlled and patrolled within wat fairs. Moreover this fair separated many different entertainment spaces for many people: such as the north space of the Golden mount for food stalls and a large drama theater; the south space for many shop and toy stalls (firecrackers, wood animal figure toys, dolls); and the west space for strange-looking shows (monkey circuses, large snakes, human curiosities).<sup>6</sup> Children could enjoy this wat fair with many shows and toy stalls, so the wat fair was a leisure place for all generations.

Furthermore, the gambling entertainment attracted more adults to the wat fairs. Even though there were many local gambling dens in Bangkok, the gambling entrepreneurs had to ask permission with Nakornban ministry (the urban ministry, present the Interior ministry) to establish gambling activities within the wat fair spaces. The Nakornban ministry controlling the Pontawens agency (Police office) continuously tried to restrict and reduce gambling dens in many cities.<sup>7</sup> The ministry allowed special gambling organization for only wat fairs events or holidays which could bring related gambling profits and rents to subsidize temples or public charities. Even the minister had allowed only a “play by cash, receive with gifts” gambling style, not a casino style with a cash payout. Many gambling entrepreneurs tended to organize gambling dens in the fairs because these chances couldn’t take place during other times of the year. There were many gambling allowances within wat fairs such as the Wat Prachetoupon fair (Wat Pho fair) located at the famous reclining Buddha temple space near the Grand palace:

“ I (Kuenchamniyotha, the gambling entrepreneur) would like to ask permission for gambling allowance such as rotating sticks, images markers, throwing things into vases, hooking gifts, delving coins, drawing lots, tugging things with yarns, throwing forward, throwing dices pass obstacles and shooting aims. I will collect these profits for the temple reconstruction. The gambling stalls will take placed on April, 12- 15 R.S.124 (124 Ratanakosin year or 1906) with asking permission for the Pontawens allowance to keep security.”<sup>8</sup> On April, 11, R.S.124 (1906) the Nakornban ministry accepted the offer stating, “...Please send enough Pontawens to keep security during the event... About the gambling, we allow just only these 10 types with play by cash, receive with gifts style.”<sup>9</sup>

This clearly reflects the gambling entrepreneurs paradoxical linking of the benefits of gambling on the temples behalf. Following many gambling activities, there were many gambling games with basic tools which allowed

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<sup>5</sup> Kanjanagpan. (nd). **Bangkok when 70 year ago**. Bangkok: Ruengsrin. p.160-161.

<sup>6</sup> **Ibid.** p.155-156.

<sup>7</sup> Nuttaya Ussavapongnant. (2005). “Bonbia”- Chinese Gambling in Thai Society, 1824-1917: A Socio- Cultural Study. MA diss., The Faculty of Liberal Arts. p.61.

<sup>8</sup> Thai national achieved. (R.S.124 or 1906). Rama V Nakornban 7.7 ngor./21 (๕.๕ ๗.๗ ๔./21) document. **Topic: Kuenchamniyotha (Srin) ask permission for shop stalls opening and gambling allowances at Wat Wat Prachetoupon during Songkran holidays.** p.2.

<sup>9</sup> **Ibid.** p.4.

gamblers to play the games easily and quickly. The need for the Pontawens, policemen responsible for keeping security, reveals the nature of the crowd at wat fairs. The Pontawens were necessary in many wat fairs to keep security about pick pocketing, sexual molestation and fighting. The Pontawens ensured that gamblers could not cheat the gambling entrepreneurs, which encouraged their businesses to be more profitable. In addition, under command of the interior ministry, the Pontawens also ensured that the gambling owners did not organize casino gambling, a forbidden game. Though roles of the Pontawens represented how chaotic the crowd was within the wat fairs. Even the famous Golden mount wat fair with the remarkable relic also had many gambling activities according to one attendee: “Most of outside stalls (of Golden mount wat fair) were gambling stalls not only throwing loops, rolling small ball, shooting aims same as general gambling dens but also adding more hooking gifts, rotating sticks and throwing dice.”<sup>10</sup>

Many wat fairs were well-known leisure places with local temples’ holy symbols where people liked to pay respect. Furthermore, contemporary popular entertainment such as performances, shows and especially gambling brought significant crowds to wat fairs. Gambling entertainment within wat fairs served to increase attendance and the participation of temples – which benefited from gambling profits for the temples’ reconstruction. On the other hand, gambling people were also attracted by the various other leisure activities within wat fairs. There was the win-win situation between gambling entrepreneurs, wat fairs, and the temples. Not surprisingly, the winter fairs were influenced by the wat fairs.

Winter fairs, complex leisure places.

The winter fairs took place during late 1910s – early 1930s at Wat Benchamabophit (Marble temple) and in the Sanamseupah area (later the ministry of culture) which were both located next to royal residences. Actually, the winter fair was connected to the Wat Benchamabophit fair. The wat Benchamabophit fair had been organized within only the temple space during the winter season for this temple reconstruction<sup>11</sup>. This fair had been so popular for so long, that it expanded – more shop stalls were built for the fair in the Sanamseupah area opposite to a former fair area; this larger fair had become the winter fair.<sup>12</sup> The winter fairs were the new leisure place in Bangkok and developed directly from the wat fair. Because the fair space expanded into Sanamseupah, the government land nearby suburban royal residences<sup>13</sup>, the fair was now within the public sphere rather than a sacred one:

“Chaopraya-thammakorranathibodi, the palace minister received the King Rama VI command that his majesty the king talked about the winter fairs where had founded at Wat Benchamabophit for subsidizing the temple’s

<sup>10</sup> Kanjanagpan. (nd). **Bangkok when 70 year ago**. Bangkok: Ruengsrin. p.153-154.

<sup>11</sup> Poonpitsamai Disakun. (1957). Amusement within Wat Benchamabophit **In Ruam Chut Sarakadee (Bundle Documentary)**. Pranakorn: Klangwittaya. p.228.

<sup>12</sup> Panitda Sanguansereevanich. (1998). Wat fairs, Arram fairs, unforgotten passion. In **Art&culture. Volume 19/Number 5/March 1998**. Bangkok: Matichon. p.86.

<sup>13</sup> [Maurizio Peleggi](#). (2002). Suburban Playgrounds In **Lords of things: the fashioning of the Siamese monarchy's modern image**. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.p.75.

reconstruction.

Due to the reconstruction had been completed nearly; his majesty the king would like to bring the fair to the royal Sanamseupah field for subsidizing the royal naval maintenance charity. ...His majesty the king would like to organize the winter fair at Jitladda area, the royal Dusit palace space. The fair's profits will be spent for maintaining Mahadlek luang school (Vajiravudh College, an important Siamese public school). This school was established by His majesty's private fund for his majesty's subjects to improve following the modern civilized way<sup>14</sup>

These factors prompted the entrance fee system within the winter fairs, because the fairs' function was no longer for Buddhist temples events but more concentrated on profitable leisure entertainment, focusing on public charities instead. It also advocated for many gambling entrepreneurs because they permitted gambling entertainment allowances as long as they benefited public charities during the winter fairs:

"Following 163/13546 command on December 27, 2461 B.E. (1918), please sent officers to do the gambling allowances permits for the winter fair at the Jitladda area. A lot of gambling stalls will take place at this fair on January, 7-10 2461 B.E. (1918, former Siamese calendar had counted date April 1 as new year day not January 1 following international calendar yet) the same as at Wat Benchamabophit fairs."<sup>15</sup>

The gambling was a critical part of the fairs' organization. When a winter fair had a particularly large space, this fair's organizers separated a specific area for gambling activities:

"His majesty the king would like to have the winter fair at Jitladda area for the national interest, to buy King Rama VI type guns for the Seupah military unit. It will take place on January, 5-10 2463 B.E. (1920) with information.

1. There are three shop stalls within the fairs.
  - a. Royal stalls with special leisure activities: gourmet restaurants and so on.
  - b. Pumeebandasak stalls (the elites' area) for inner space.
  - c. Sampek stalls (the commoners' area) for outside space.
2. The "Flying ship" ride with fees.
3. The students' arts and crafts show. The education ministry will design special stalls.
4. About electricity, normally there are 2 installed lights for every stall without any cost. If anyone prefers more lights, please contact electric officers"
5. Some of entrance fee profit will support Seupah unit's arms. Entrance fee is 25 satang (0.25 baht) for only one time. Every day pass ticket is 2 baht. The entrance door will open only Prayom door near Sriayuttha road. There is 10 baht entrance fee for driving a car into the fairs which can be used every day, too.

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<sup>14</sup> Thai national achieved. (2461 BE. or 1918). Rama VI Nakornban 17.15/1 (๓.6 ๑17.15/1) document. **Topic: The winter fairs.** p.2.

<sup>15</sup> **Ibid.** p.20.

6. Gambling entertainment stalls have to ask permission for gambling allowances. These stalls also have to provide their profits to support Seupah unit's arms.”<sup>16</sup>

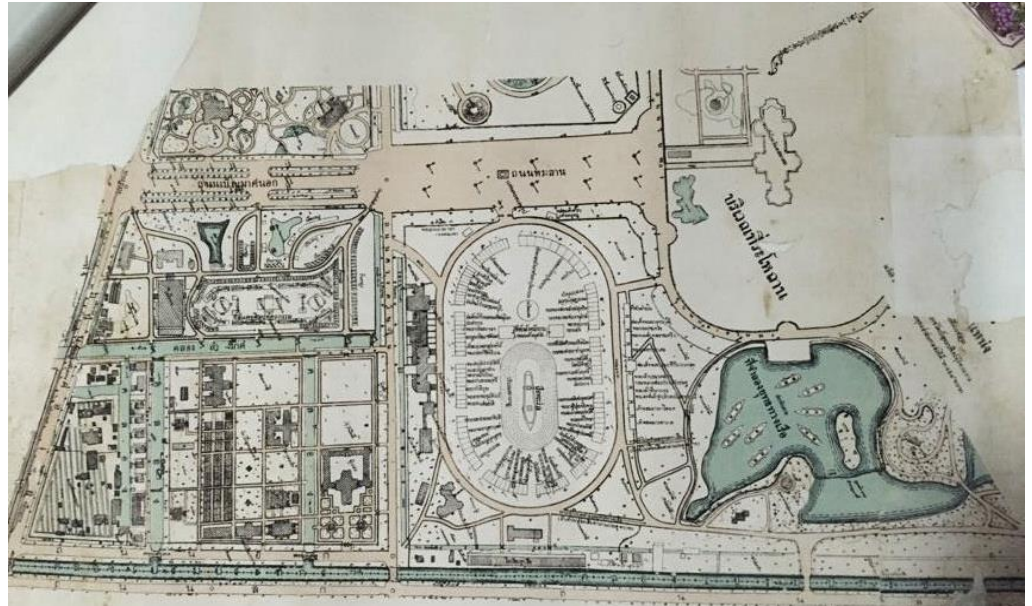


Fig 1. The winter fairs within “the nearby Kaodin map”<sup>17</sup>

In Figure 1, there were many large spaces within the winter fairs. Wat Benchamabophit (Marble temple), the former wat fairs had been established around bottom left side of this map. In the Sanamseupah area, the first shop stalls expansion of the winter fairs was located at a large field around middle of the map. The Kaodin Lake (present Dusit zoo) was located on bottom right, blue area of the map - the former model naval war performance area. There were royal residences nearby the winter fairs such as the Vimanmak mission in the upper right of this map and across from Kaodin lake. The Jitladda palace (not pictured), is located south of the marble temple and the Sanamseupah area just below the canal at the bottom of the map. The winter fairs entrance gate was located on Sriyutthaya road between Wat Benchamabophit and the Sanamseupah area

As you can see, there were a lot of small square lots for shop stalls within the Sanamseupah area. These were many Pumeebandasak stalls (the elites' area) with their owners' name around the “Flying ship” ride, one of the highlight attractions of the winter fairs. This inner area was not far from the model naval war performance area at Kaodin Lake, so many highlight attractions were built within the inner space; these attractions were included with the entrance fee. Unlike the wat fairs, this was a distinct space reserved for only those who could afford it. Meanwhile, the Sampek stalls area was located outside, far away with many other highlight attractions; this was the leisure space for most of commoners who could not afford the tickets. Gambling entertainment and class differences within winter fairs

<sup>16</sup> Thai national achieved. (2463 BE. or 1920). Rama VI Nakornban 17.15/2 (จ.6 น17.15/2) document. **Topic: The winter fairs.** p.8.

<sup>17</sup> Thai national achieved. (nd). Map Korborkhor 1 - (3-19). (ทศป.1- (3-19)). **The nearby Kaodin map.**



Both the Pumeebandasak and Sampek areas had a lot of gambling entertainment. Surprisingly, the winter fairs' officers could not keep many gambling stalls within Pumeebandasak area to restrictions; nor could they contain the playing of forbidden gambling games, especially casino style gambling. These casino style games did not follow the "play by cash, receive with gifts" style. Moreover, some Pumeebandasak stalls' owners asked the permission for gambling allowances during daytime but then organized their gambling games at night. At Pumeebandasak, the gambling entertainment was highly problematic:

"The gambling entertainment in the fair was permitted only "play by cash, receive with gifts" style. ...About Pumeebandasak stalls' owners, they only got the daytime permission for gambling allowances but they had organized the gambling games at nighttime because there were people than daytime. In the other Sampek area, there were not any problems because they organized the games following the rules strictly. In case of Pumeebandasak stalls' owners, they had organized gambling entertainment without permission or control. Such as

1. Pra-Intarathep stall, playing two rotating sticks games with casino style.
2. Praya-Ratchamanou stall, playing casino style rotating sticks and card poker without any permission. And also playing hooking gifts with casino style."<sup>18</sup>

It is clear that problematic Pumeebandasak stalls owners were influential people at this winter fair, while many Sampek stalls owners could not violate the gambling restrictions. Most of Pumeebandasak stalls owners were the elites or nobles with wealth or a high ranking social status. Many winter fair officers were not able to control or restrict them efficiently, according to this report: "The Dusit district reported about the winter fair at Jitladda place during January, 7 – 11 2461 BE. (1918). There were many both allowed and not allowed gambling owners. Some forbidden gambling activities had not been prohibited because most of these owners were the Pumeebandasaks (the elites and nobles)"<sup>19</sup> This situation demonstrates that the pre WW II Siamese social and cultural structures had some problematic class differences, emerging even within leisure places. By contrast, the less affluent and influential gambling owners within Sampek area, were controlled more effectively than at the other fair. It also represented how some of the elites or nobles could use their own social hierarchy to apply or violate many rules and restrictions at their will. Furthermore, the winter fairs ticket option for driving a car demonstrated that there were enough private car-users to make this an option. Clearly, many the Pumeebandasaks who were affluent enough to have own imported motor cars. The electricity within the fairs would prompted many night time leisure activities, particularly addictive gambling entertainment. The entrance fee was the key distinguishing factor in the winter fair. By separating the space with a gatekeeper at the entrance, pickpockets were deterred and the inner space behind was reinforced as the leisure place for only elites and nobles.

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<sup>18</sup> Thai national achieved. (2461 BE. or 1918). Rama VI Nakornban 17.15/1 (๓.6 u17.15/1) document. Topic: The winter fairs. p.22-23.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p.29.



The end of the winter fairs.

In 2465 B.E. (1922), the winter fair was established at the Saranrom park, a royal park near the Grand palace. There was also gambling entertainment there: “His majesty the king would like to establish the winter fair at the royal Saranrom park. It will take place during January, 6 – 12 representing harmony throughout this annual fair. ...Sampek stalls will be located outside the royal space. Moreover, the officers will organize gambling allowances for gambling activities.”<sup>20</sup> This event represented the liking of winter fair with royal residence properties and spaces that had, until then, still excluded the commoners and Sampek stalls’ owners.

Some private business entrepreneurs asked permission to organize the fair which was similar to the winter fairs. Kimceng Susungkorakarn, the Pustakan store owner, with Jea Penpakkun and Tek Somreanprasok asked permission to organize a products exhibition with performances and gambling entertainment similar to the winter fairs at the royal Saranrom park on January, 7-14 2471 BE. (1928) instead of winter fair in the previous year.<sup>21</sup> This event indicated that the private business sector was starting to invest in leisure and entertainment. They also wanted to organize gambling entertainment, and promised to give profits to charity. The entrepreneurs wanted to cut 50% of the profits for King Rama VII’s projects: Wat Prakrew reconstruction and subsidizing the Chaopraya river bridge (present Memorial Bridge) construction, the royal dynasty’s monument.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the government did not permit the use of the royal Saranrom location because it was only for royal or non-profit public events. The government suggested the entrepreneurs choose Lumpini area (Suburb park) instead. Fortunately, the government allowed them to organize the fair with gambling allowances<sup>23</sup>, due to their charitable purposes and because the organization of the fair would be paid by the private companies. From these events, emerged private fairs with both their own entertainment and charitable causes. These private fairs would become a mainstay in the leisure and entertainment scene in Bangkok. After the establishment of the private fair at Lumpini in 1928, there were no more winter fairs organized around Royal residences. The winter fairs had permanently developed into private events and would go on to resemble something like a modern-day exhibition.

In conclusion

Characters\ Places	Wat fairs	Winter fairs	Private fairs
Locations	Temples spaces	Nearby royal residences spaces	Parks and including the royal park
Organizers	The temples’ monks or elites groups	The governments with elites and nobles groups	The business entrepreneurs groups
Periods	According to	During early	During early

<sup>20</sup> Thai national achieved. (2465 BE. or 1922). Rama VI Nakornban 17.15/3 (๓.6 ๗17.15/3) document. Topic: Stalls opening allowances within the winter fair. p.3-4.

<sup>21</sup> Thai national achieved. (2471 BE. or 1928). Rama VII Royal secretary. 99/45 (๓.7 ๓๙. 99/45) document. Topic: Kimceng asked permission for organizing products exhibition at Saranrom and Lumpini. p.3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p.4-7.

Characters\ Places	Wat fairs	Winter fairs	Private fairs
	Buddhist holiday, Songkran day or unique holy temples' events	January (winter season)	January (winter season)
Fairs purposes	Temples reconstructions	Government affairs supports	Government affairs supports
Entrance fee	Not appeared	Appeared	Appeared
Space separations	Blur	Between Pumeebandasak, the elites' area (inner space) and Sampek the commoners' area (outside space)	Between Pumeebandasak, the elites' area (inner space) and Sampek the commoners' area (outside space)
Gambling allowances	Appeared	Appeared	Appeared
Driving cars within fairs allowances	Not appeared	Appeared	Not appeared

Table 1. The fairs characters and styles comparison

The fairs were transformed in various ways during late 1850s – late 1920s from the wat fairs to the winter fairs and also to private fairs (exhibitions). Fairs had provided many leisure activities for various people. Within the crowded chaos of the fairs, was an underlying representation of Bangkok's society, culture, and urban development. The ever popular gambling entertainment within fairs brought profit, value, rules and restrictions; these rules were relaxed for the rich and enforced on the poor. The winter fairs transformed from open, community-based leisure events to separated functions for the affluent. Many suburban areas such as Golden mount for wat fairs and suburb royal spaces for winter fairs were used for urban leisure activities. Bangkok urbanization and modernization allowed many people to enjoy the attractions within the fairs. The winter fairs micro-history with their many implications, reflects social changes, urbanization, and modernization within Bangkok itself. There were many paradoxical elements, such as gambling for the benefit of charity and sacred temples. The fairs also demonstrated the social hierarchy of the time: the Pumeebandasaks who obeyed and disobeyed the gambling laws at their prerogative and the police who were powerless to enforce them. These leisure activities, while they reflected daily life before the World War II era, provide a deeper understanding of Bangkok history within a larger historical perspective.

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#### Figure source

Fig 1. Thai national achieved. (nd). Map Korborkhor 1 - (3-19).  
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