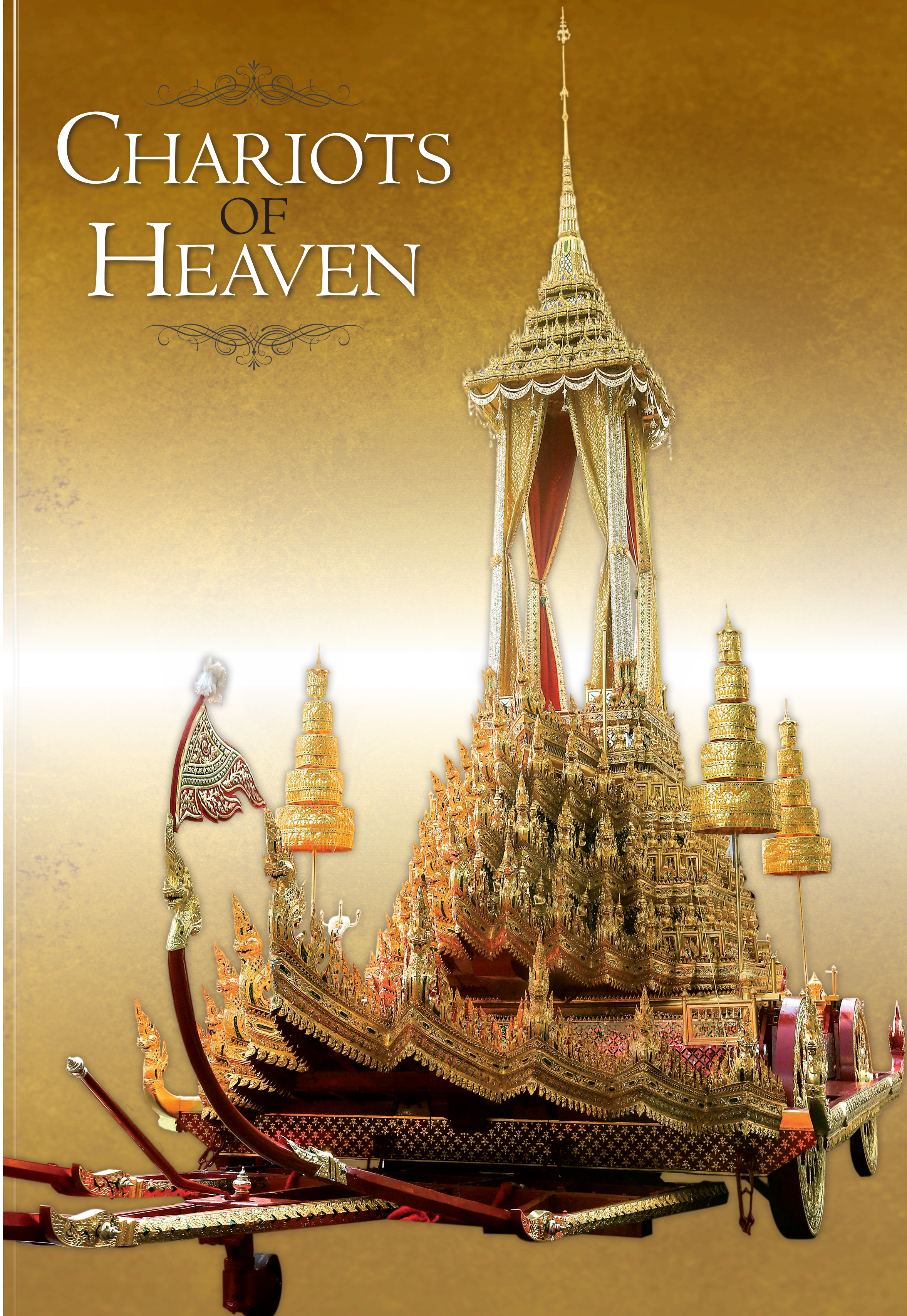


# CHARIOTS OF HEAVEN



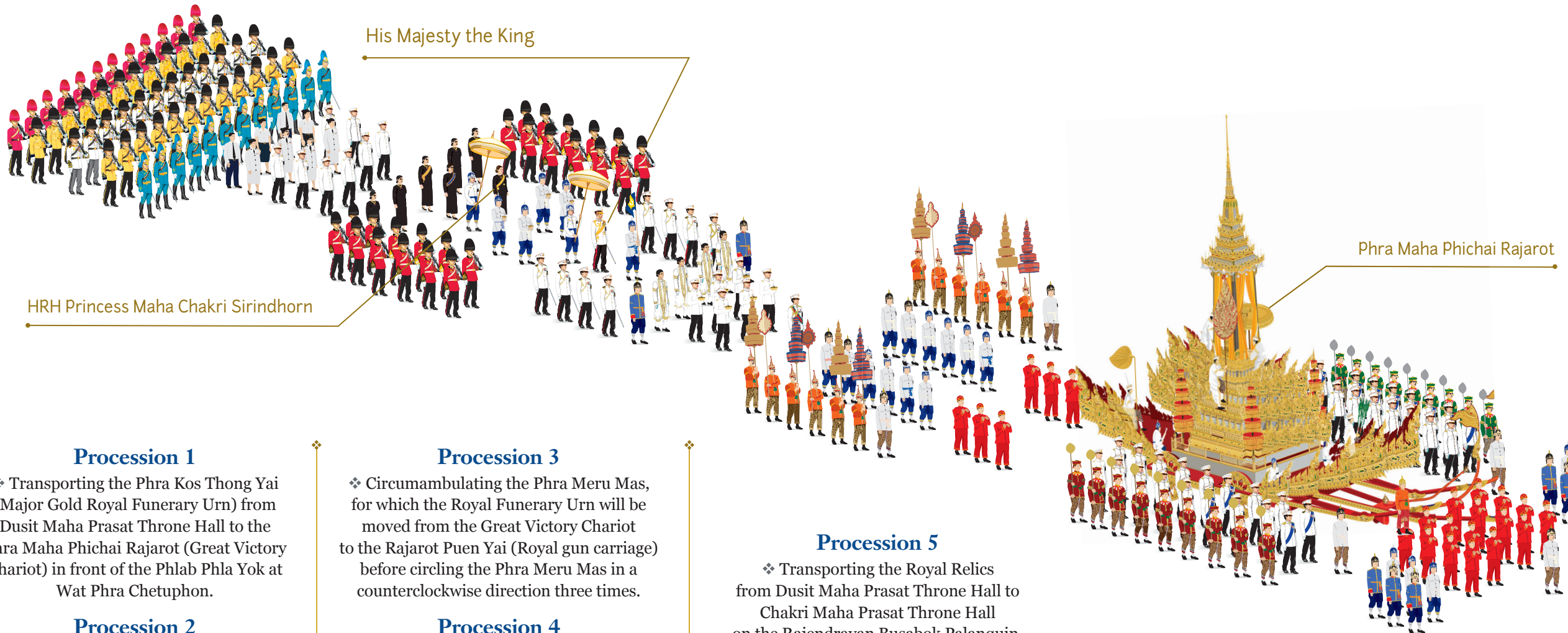
Bangkok Post

❖ Wednesday, October 25, 2017 ❖



# ROYAL PROCESSIONS

The ceremonial processions are the most important part of the royal cremation ceremony. The main elements of each stage are the royal chariots and royal palanquins, which play different roles. The format used today follows the same model laid down decades ago by King Rama VI. It is divided into six parts:



## Procession 1

❖ Transporting the Phra Kos Thong Yai (Major Gold Royal Funerary Urn) from Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall to the Phra Maha Phichai Rajarot (Great Victory Chariot) in front of the Phlab Phla Yok at Wat Phra Chetuphon.

## Procession 2

❖ Carrying the Royal Funerary Urn on the Great Victory Chariot from the front of Wat Phra Chetuphon to Phra Meru Mas at Sanam Luang.

## Procession 3

❖ Circumambulating the Phra Meru Mas, for which the Royal Funerary Urn will be moved from the Great Victory Chariot to the Rajarot Puen Yai (Royal gun carriage) before circling the Phra Meru Mas in a counterclockwise direction three times.

## Procession 4

❖ Transporting the Royal Relics from the Phra Meru Mas at Sanam Luang to the Grand Palace. The Royal Relics will be carried on the Rajendrayan Busabok Palanquin, while the royal ashes will be taken on the Minor Rajendrayan Busabok Palanquin, followed by courtiers on foot.

## Procession 5

❖ Transporting the Royal Relics from Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall to Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall on the Rajendrayan Busabok Palanquin, followed by an abbreviated version of Procession 4.

## Procession 6

❖ Transferring the royal ashes to be enshrined at two temples, namely Wat Ratchabophit and Wat Bowonniwet Vihara.

## ❖ PROCESSION 2 ❖

## PROCESSION ROUTES

Oct 26, 2017

### ❖ Procession 1

Phra Kos Thong Yai, the Royal Funerary Urn, is transported from Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall through the Devabhirom exit gate of the Grand Palace to Maharat Road, then on to Sanam Chai Road and Wat Phra Chetuphon.

This 817m route takes about 30 minutes.

### ❖ Procession 2

The Royal Funerary Urn is transported from Wat Phra Chetuphon to Sanam Chai Road, then to Ratchadamnoen Nai Avenue and Sanam Luang.

This 890m route takes about 2 hours.

### ❖ Procession 3

The Royal Urn is transferred from Phra Maha Phichai Rajarot to Rajarot Puen Yai. The latter chariot will carry the Royal Urn to circle the Royal Crematorium in a counterclockwise direction three times.

This 260m route takes about 30 minutes.

Oct 27, 2017

### ❖ Procession 4

Collected royal relics contained in Phra Kos Phra Borom Atthi, the Royal Reliquary Urn, and the royal ashes are transported from the Royal Crematorium to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in the Grand Palace, where the royal ashes will be left. The royal relics will then be transported to Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall.

The 1,074m route takes about 30 minutes.

### ❖ Procession 5

The Royal Reliquary Urn is transported from Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall to Chakri Maha Prasat Throne Hall, where it will be enshrined in the Heavenly Abode.

This 63m route takes just 10 minutes.

### ❖ Procession 6

The royal ashes are transported from the Temple of the Emerald Buddha by royal vehicle to Wat Ratchabophit and Wat Bowonniwet Vihara.



Mahad Lek Luang



Sarawat Klong



Bearers of the Bung Phra Suraya



Klong Chana (Victory drummers)



Tamrod Luang Kh... (Royal constab...)



Indra Choen Jamorn (Bearers of the lesser sunshade)



Phu Bok Krabuan (The processional signaler)



Horse puller



Khrueng Soong Chatra Thong Phae Luad (Bearers of royal regalia)



Trae Sang (Siamese bugle p...)



## KHRUEANG SOONG (ROYAL REGALIA)

An important element in royal processions is Khrueng Soong (the royal regalia). This has been used in royal cremation processions since the Ayutthaya Period (1351-1767).

The key royal regalia item used in the royal cremation procession is known as Chatra, a tiered umbrella that tapers up to a point.

Chatra can be hanging, standing, fixed in the ground or carried in a procession to indicate rank. The latter is known as Ceremonial Chatra.

### There are six kinds of Ceremonial Chatra:

The first is known as Phra Maha Saweta Chatra Kanphirom. This variety actually comes in a set of three, namely Phra Senathipat, Phra Chatrachai and Phra Kaovabha.

The second kind is only ever used during the royal coronation ceremony, or Phra Abhirum Jumsai. It comes in a set of two, namely Phra Abhirum Jumsai Pak Hak Thong Kwang and Phra Abhirum Jumsai Thong Phae Luad.

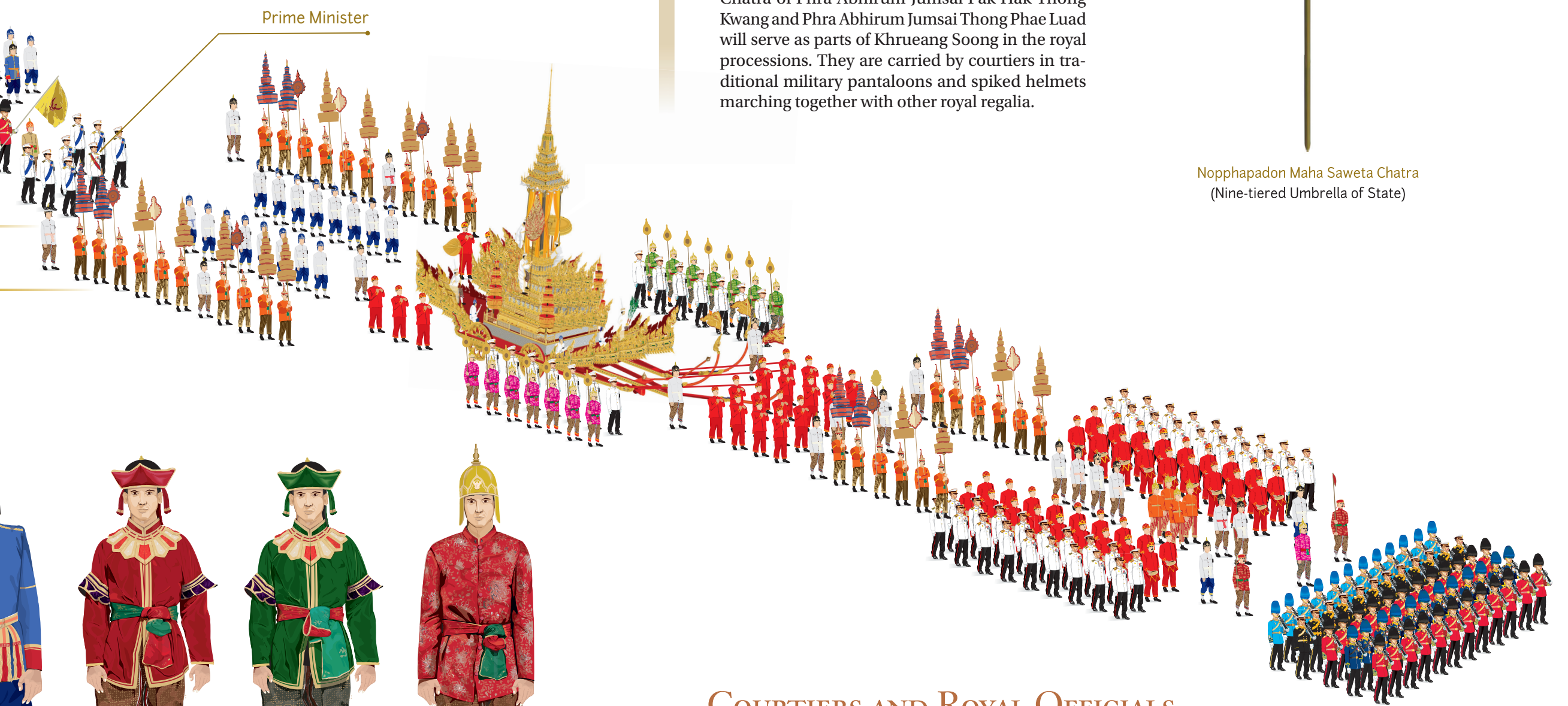
Another version is the Chatra Khrueng Soong Wang Na, which is used for the Front Palace.

The final three are Chatra Khrueng, Chatra Benja and Chatra Ratchawat.

In the royal cremation ceremony of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the five-tiered and seven-tiered Chatra of Phra Abhirum Jumsai Pak Hak Thong Kwang and Phra Abhirum Jumsai Thong Phae Luad will serve as parts of Khrueng Soong in the royal processions. They are carried by courtiers in traditional military pantaloons and spiked helmets marching together with other royal regalia.



Noppapadon Maha Saweta Chatra  
(Nine-tiered Umbrella of State)



## COURTIERS AND ROYAL OFFICIALS

A number of courtiers and royal officials will participate in the six royal processions in various groups, performing different duties and wearing a range of uniforms.

### 1. Mahad Lek Choen Phra Saeng Wang Khruang Na and Lang

Leading and trailing bearers of the Royal Ceremonial Sword and leading and trailing bearers of the Royal Ceremonial Sword at the Supreme Patriarch's Carriage and at the Great Victory Chariot.

### 2. Bearer of Royal Items

They are responsible for carrying the Bung Phra Suraya (Royal Sunshade), Bung Saek (Sunshade), Phra Klod (Royal Parasol), Jamorn (Lesser Sunshade) and Pad Bok (Long-handled Fan). They are joined by Pusamala Prakong Phra Kos, or attendants of the Royal Urn.

### 3. Chariot and Palanquin Officials

These officials are tasked with pulling and controlling the chariots and bare palanquins used in the royal processions.

### 4. Signalers and Markers

Responsible for giving signals to guide the movement of the royal chariots and palanquins. They also handle processions such as Phu Bok Kabuan, offering signals to guide the movement of the Great Victory Chariot. For Sarawat Klong and Sarawat Trae, they serve as superintendents of drums and brass instruments. In the case of Pratu Na and Pratu Lang, they serve as front and rear markers.

### 5. Musicians

They include Ja Pi, Ja Klong, a master piper and master drummer; Trae Farang, Trae Ngon and Sang, who are buglers, Siamese bugle players and conch shell blowers, respectively; and Klong Chana Daeng Lai Thong, Klong Chana Ngoen, Klong Chana Thong, which refers to drummers of various kinds of drums.



g Khu Hae (Stables)  
Brahma Choen Phum Thong (Bearers of gold floral offerings)  
Indra Choen Phum Ngoen (Bearers of silver floral offerings)  
Brahma Choen Jamorn (Bearers of the lesser sunshade)



Sang (Bugle players)  
Mahoratuek (Master piper, master drummer)  
Thong Sam Chai (Jagged Flag bearers)  
Nam Riew (Procession leaders)



## RAJAROT-RAJAYAN (Royal Chariot and Palanquin)

Rajarat and Rajayan refer to the royal vehicles which have traditionally been used for royal cremations since the Ayutthaya Period.

According to a Brahman doctrine, a king is an avatar of the three mighty gods: Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. The death of a king means his return to heaven.

Royal funeral ceremonies are an act to honour a deceased king and see him off on his way to heaven, so they must be prepared and performed strictly according to protocol and procedure.

Apart from the construction of the royal crematorium, preparations for the procession of the royal urn and royal paraphernalia are also important. The royal chariots, vehicles and palanquins as well as rehearsals must be well-prepared to ensure the procession goes smoothly.

In the reign of King Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty, seven royal chariots were built for the royal cremation of the king's father in 1796. The seven are Phra Maha Phichai Rajarat, Vejayanta Rajarat, three Rajarat Noi and two smaller chariots for carrying scented offerings.

Some of these royal chariots, including Phra Maha Phichai Rajarat, have been restored for the royal cremation of the King Rama IX. ❖

### RAJAROT NOI

❖ The royal chariot is similar to Phra Maha Phichai Rajarat but smaller size. It is also made of gilded and carved wood and decorated with mirror fragments. The pole extension is in the shape of a Naga serpent. The first Rajarat Noi is for carrying the Supreme Patriarch who recites Dhamma scriptures during the course of the procession. The second Rajarat Noi is connected to the Phra Kot, the royal funerary urn, via a ceremonial cloth sash (Phra Phusa Yong). The third Rajarat Noi carries a high-ranking royal family member who tosses donations to the people along the route to the Royal Crematorium.



### PHRA MAHA PHICHAJ RAJAROT (THE GREAT VICTORY CHARIOT)

❖ Phra Maha Phichai Rajarat is made of gilded, carved teak wood, decorated with mirror fragments. It was built in the reign of King Rama I for the royal cremation of his father, Somdet Phra Pathom Borommahachanok, in 1796. Since then, it has become the tradition to use the chariot to carry the bodies of kings, queens or celestial-ranking royals. There is a Busabok (small pavilion) on the Phra Maha Phichai Rajarat.

### PHRA YANNAMAS SAM LAM KAN (THE TRIPLE BEAM ROYAL PALANQUIN)

❖ The golden palanquin with three beams was built in the reign of King Rama II for use to carry the royal urn of King Rama I. It is a large palanquin made of carved and gilded wood, enclosed on three sides. It is used to transfer the royal funerary urn from Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall in the Grand Palace to Phra Maha Phichai Rajarat (the Great Victory Chariot). The royal urn is placed upon the Phra Maha Phichai Rajarat on the eastern side of Wat Phra Chetuphon (Wat Pho). Phra Yannamas Sam Lam Kan is 7.73 meters long and 1.78 meters high and weighs 700 kilograms. It requires two shifts of 60 bearers each to carry the royal urn.



### RAJENDRAYAN BUSABOK PALANQUIN

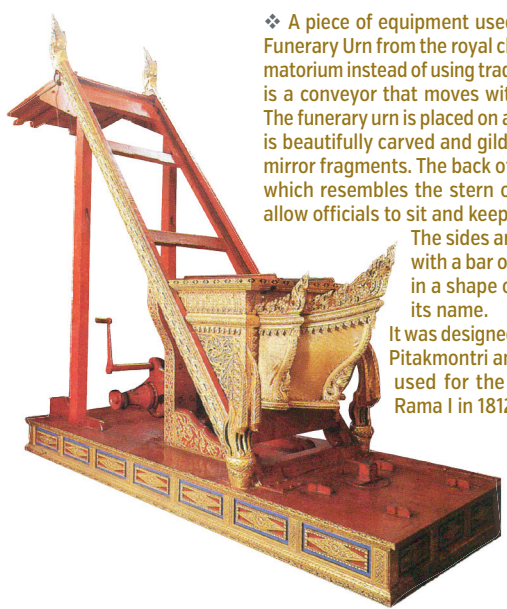
❖ The palanquin was commissioned by King Rama I in the form of a busabok pavilion with 12 recessed corners and a 5-tiered roof made of carved wood that is gilded and decorated with mirror fragments. There are four carrying poles for a team of 56 men but two poles are the norm. This is used for full processions called khabuan si sai (4-line procession), such as the Coronation procession when the king is carried from the royal resident complex to pay homage to the Emerald Buddha in the Chapel Royal. It is also used to carry the relics of kings, queens and celestial-ranking royals from the cremation ground to the Grand Palace.

### KROEN BANDAI NAK (NAGA CONVEYOR)

❖ A piece of equipment used to transfer the Royal Funerary Urn from the royal chariot to the Royal Crematorium instead of using traditional scaffolding. This is a conveyor that moves with the help of a winch. The funerary urn is placed on a square platform which is beautifully carved and gilded and decorated with mirror fragments. The back of the Kroen Bandai Nak which resembles the stern of a boat is lowered to allow officials to sit and keep the urn steady.

The sides are lined with gold cloth, with a bar on both sides decorated in a shape of Naga serpent, hence its name.

It was designed by Prince Krom Luang Pitakmontri and built in 1811 and first used for the royal funeral of King Rama I in 1812.



### RAJAROT PUEN YAI (ROYAL GUN CARRIAGE)

❖ This chariot is used instead of the Phra Yannamas Sam Lam Kan (the Triple Beam Royal Palanquin) to carry the funerary urn of a king or celestial-ranking royal who held a military rank during his lifetime. The chariot will be used to carry the royal urn of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej to circle the Royal Crematorium in a counter-clockwise direction three times. The tradition started during the reign of King Rama VI for the royal funeral of Field Marshal Prince Krom Luang Nakhon Chaisri Suradej in 1916 and used most recently for the royal urn of King Rama VIII to circumambulate the royal cremation for the royal funeral in 1950.



*In remembrance of our beloved monarch, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.  
His gracious benevolence will be in our hearts forever.*

The management and staff of ABB Limited (Thailand)