

Ploughing Ceremony



The Ploughing Ceremony is held in the morning of the 13th May at Phra Meru Ground (Sanam Luang), in front of the Grand Palace. At the beginning of the ceremony, Phraya Raek Na performs a ride to predict the amount of rainfall during the coming season by selecting one of the three pieces of cloth that are in different lengths, namely, 4 kueb, 5 kueb and 6 kueb (Kueb is a Thai

unit of linear measurement from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the middle finger when a hand is fully spread out). Depending on the selection, the predictions are as follows

If the shortest one (4 kueb) is chosen, it denotes that the rainfall will be abundant; paddy in the upland areas will be plentiful, but paddy in the lowland may suffer from some damages.

If the medium one (5 kueb) is picked, the rainfall will be average, rice will be abundant, fruits and animal meat will be bountiful.

If the longest one (6 kueb) is selected, it means that the rainfall will be very little; paddy in the lowland areas will be plentiful, but paddy in upland areas may suffer from some damages. The piece of selected cloth is to be worn by Phraya Raek Na.

At the auspicious time, after the arrival of Their Majesties the King and Queen, Phraya Raek Na together with his entourage leave the ceremonial pavilion in procession in order to start the ploughing ceremony. After stopping in front of Their Majesties the King and Queen, he proceeds to the ploughing area.

A pair of ceremonial bulls is yoked to the plough handle, and Phraya Raek Na anoints their heads. He then takes the handle of the plough and begins to plough three concentric furrows and three crosswise furrows, and at the same time scatters the rice seeds from the baskets carried by the Celestial Maidens. After that, he ploughs three more rounds to cover the seeds. When the ploughing is over, the bulls are unyoked, and are presented with seven different types of fodder and liquid, namely, rice seeds, mung beans, maize, hay, sesame seeds, water and rice liquor. Depending on what the bulls eat, the predictions are as follows:

Rice seeds or maize: cereals and fruits will be bountiful.

Mung beans or sesame seeds: fruits and food will be plentiful.

Water or hays: the rainfall will be average. Cereals, fruits, food and animal meat will be abundant.

Rice liquor: transportation will improve, foreign trade will grow, and the economy will prosper.

After the ceremony is over, the people who gather to witness the event burst onto the field and pick up the sacred rice seeds to take home and mix them with their rice seeds for auspiciousness or to keep as their luck charms.