



# Sounding the Center : History and Aesthetics in Thai Buddhist Performance

By Deborah Wong

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*Sounding the Center* is an in-depth look at the power behind classical music and dance in Bangkok, the capital and sacred center of Buddhist Thailand. Focusing on the ritual honoring teachers of music and dance, Deborah Wong reveals a complex network of connections among kings, teachers, knowledge, and performance that underlies the classical court arts.

Drawing on her extensive fieldwork, Wong lays out the ritual in detail: the way it is enacted, the foods and objects involved, and the people who perform it, emphasizing the way the performers themselves discuss and construct aspects of the ceremony.

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## **Sounding the Center : History and Aesthetics in Thai Buddhist Performance** By Deborah Wong **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"The most compelling aspect of the book, for me, is the ethnographic description. Whether she is describing performances of the ceremony, the elaborate preparation of food and floral offerings, conversations with practitioners, or even her own learning process, Wong writes with a sure eye for color and detail."  
(Margaret Sarkissian *Ethnomusicology*)

"This book provides a new perspective to the study of music in mainland Southeast Asia by connecting music and dance with social structure and history of Thai society. . . . [The book] not only provides new insight into the role of music in contemporary Thai society, it also serves as a useful reference for corresponding research in other areas of mainland Southeast Asia."  
(Giovanni Giuriata *The World of Music*)

#### From the Inside Flap

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Drawing on her extensive fieldwork, Wong lays out the ritual in detail: the way it is enacted, the foods and objects involved, and the people who perform it, emphasizing the way the performers themselves discuss and construct aspects of the ceremony. Only those who have been initiated by a master can manifest the divine in the human realm. The power held by the master musicians, Wong shows, is both ritual and social; they are not just ritual experts, they are also leaders at the government-run national conservatory. This combination of political recognition and esoteric knowledge, Wong suggests, has helped Thai classical music endure in the face of changing patronage and the challenges posed by the urban environment that supports it.

#### About the Author

**Deborah Wong** is an associate professor of music and director of the Center for Asian Pacific America at the University of California, Riverside.

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##### Desmond Gorman:

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, going to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book may be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the guide untitled *Sounding the Center : History and Aesthetics in Thai Buddhist Performance* can be

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