

Royal wedding of Sita and Rama (Thai Ramayana mural)

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A royal pavillion scene on a mural at the Emerald Buddha Temple shows the wedding of Sita and Rama. On the central platform, Sita sits at the left and Rama at the right of a tall footed dish, designed to represent ceremonial foods on a mound of rice.

Rama, shown with green skin, and Sita sit facing each other with their hands in the respectful wai or Thai prayer position. Behind Sita and Rama, on a taller platform, sit four elder men, representing their royal male relatives. In the left pavillion area sit Sita's royal relatives, who are painted white with gold leaf crowns and clothes, just like she is. In the right pavillion area sit Rama's royal relatives, a few of whom have green skin like his. Rama's kin also wear gold leaf crowns and royal clothes. Some commoners kneel to watch the ceremony at the base of the pavillion steps, and a couple of court musicians can be seen at the lower right.

In traditional weddings throughout Southeast Asia until the present, marriages are viewed as important alignments between two families, not just a love match between two young individuals. Elders do most of the talking at weddings, while the young couple usually sit silent in embarrassment, ornately dressed to match a local ideal of beauty and formality.



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