

***Lakhon Phanhang: Thai Traditional Theatre in the Modern World***

**Phakamas Jirajarupat**

Royal Holloway College  
University of London

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

### Declaration of Authorship

I, Phakamas Jirajarupat, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: P. Jirajarupat

Date: 22 Dec 2014

## Abstract

This thesis concerns the historical development of *lakhon phanthatang*, a dance-drama form that emerged originally in Thailand as a commercial theatre under the patronage of royalty in the nineteenth century, was formulated as a traditional dance genre in the 1940s by the Fine Arts Department, modernised in the 1980s and is today taught in dance academies. *Lakhon phanthatang*'s primary *raison d'être* is the representation of non-Thai ethnic groups, including Chinese, Burmese, Mons and Khake (Muslims) and it draws eclectically on the costumes, movement styles and ethnic stereotypes of these Others. This thesis examines transpositions and aesthetic shifts in the form over time with a focus on the modernisation, formalisation and traditionalisation, revival, survival and adaptation of *lakhon phanthatang*, looking particularly at Krom Silapakorn's theatre productions, the process of learning and teaching in higher education and theatre in rites of passage. The thesis analyses both aesthetic practices and various socio-cultural contexts, based on research on texts and documents, interviews and the author's first-hand experiences as an audience member, dancer and instructor of *lakhon phanthatang*. Analysis of *lakhon phanthatang* in the modern world demonstrates that *lakhon phanthatang* is a gateway for Thai theatre to develop traditional in modern society. The continuing survival of Thai traditional theatre requires not only the preservation of art forms as museum pieces but also making these art forms come alive for present-day audiences and engaging theatrical forms with contemporary society.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and support I received from several individuals who have generously contributed their valuable knowledge and experience, allowing me to complete the research I undertook for this doctorate. My postgraduate studies at Royal Holloway, University of London were supported by scholarships from Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok Thailand. Without this financial support, my PhD research in the UK would not have been possible.

First and foremost among many, I would like to express my greatest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Dr. Matthew Isaac Cohen, whose deep knowledge and crystal clear guidance have been precious and valuable to my work. His unfailing support and understanding have sustained me, academically and psychologically, throughout my period of studies at Royal Holloway. Dr. Cohen, you have always been there whenever I needed you. I could not have finished this piece of work and entered the international academic arena without your valuable guidance and encouragement.

My deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Sarinthorn Vidhayasirinun, who not only has patiently and calmly guided me through the difficult and challenging process of PhD research, but has also shaped my intellectual thinking. You have always been with me since I took my first steps as a PhD student, until the very end. Your valuable comments, suggestions for this thesis and the *dhamma* lessons you have imparted me for life have helped me triumph over all the obstacles and difficulties strewn on my academic research path. I cannot imagine how I would have done without your support.

I would like to thank my academic adviser, Dr. Dick McCaw for his advice and committed encouragement. My deep and sincere gratitude also goes to Dr. Catherine Diamond for her worthy advice and her comments to improve the accuracy of my thesis. I would also like to express my greatest gratitude to Professor Emeritus Dr. Surapone Virulrak, my first teacher, who introduced me to the world of Thai traditional dance research and also inspired me to conduct research in Thai traditional theatre and present it to the world.

In the process of writing-up, I am indebted to several friends, who have provided me with their generous utmost support. I would like to say a warm thank you to Dorawan Somthong and David Easey, Sumanus and Chris Lawson, Arifani Moyo, Dr. Brahm Prakash, Dr. Meera Sarma, Dr. Michelle Chan, Dr. Yajai Bunnag, and Dr. Alessandra Bruni Lopez y Royo who all have guided me through the vagaries of the English language and helped to correct my grammatical mistakes. Thanks are also due to Dr. Tamara Aberle, Jiwan Yang, Assistant Pawinee Boonserm, Krailas Jitkul, and Assistant Dr. Sukanya Sompiboon, who shared their knowledge of Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Studies with me. I know you are the best, thank you all!

I would like to express my big thanks to my British family, Dr. Ann Hutchinson and her husband Ivor Guest, who have always made me feel at home. Your laugh and love made my time in London bright and warm even on my bluest day. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Wassana Hafenrichter and family, Harry and Sangvane Parson, Molnapa Punboon, Sirisouk Wang, Sunisa Bhokanandh and her family, Srana Watananusak for all their love, support and friendship that have helped me get through my moments of despair and loneliness during this difficult period of my life. I would also like to thank Poranee Johnson and the Thai

Dance Academy team, as their love of Thai dance and culture nurtured my passion for Thai dancing even when I was in a foreign country.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to Pramate Boonyachai, Dr.Surat Jongda, Dr. Pairot Thongkhamsuk, Dr. Supachai Chansuwan, Wantanee Muangboon, Anucha Sumaman, Pimrat Navasiri, and all Krom Silapakorn artists, all of whom gave me valuable interviews and shared their dance talents, and also provided me with insights into different perspectives on Thai traditional theatre. Big thanks are also due to my friends, Piyawan Ukamthorn, Urairat Chinglek, the Thai team at Bangkok Pattana International School and St. Andrew International School in Bangkok, Thailand for their support and their blessings.

I owe my greatest debt of gratitude to my colleagues, staff and students at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, especially Professor Dr. Chommanard Kijkhun, Assoc. Prof. Supawadee Pothiwetchakul, Asst. Prof. Somsak Buarod, Sakul Muangsakorn, Manissa Vasinarom, Thareeporn Sangkahamanthorn, Asst. Prof. Dr. Chutima Maneewattana, Dr. Nattaporn Rattanachaiwong, Dr. Kusuma Thepparak, Wutichai Khathawee and Naradhip Markanta who have always generously shared with me their knowledge, love, friendship and given me their blessings for my studying abroad. My deepest gratitude also goes to Komsorn Thanathammetee, my beloved friend: though you are no longer in this world you are in my heart forever.

Last but not least, I owe my gratitude to my 'hybrid' family (Sae Chong and Jirajarupat) especially my super mom, whose love, care and support have made me strong. Finally, my special heartfelt thank you goes to Cheerawat Wanta, my beloved husband and sunshine of my heart and life. Thank you for always being there for me through my toughest and happiest moments in life.

This thesis is wholeheartedly dedicated to Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong, Boosara Mahin, Prince Narathip Phraphanpong and Seri Wangnaitam, whose lives and artistic creativity have contributed to the past, present and future of *lakhon phanthat* and Thai traditional theatre.

## Table of Contents

<b>List of figures</b> .....	11
<b>Introduction</b> .....	13
Statement of Research Aims.....	17
Theoretical Framework.....	19
Some Recent Studies on <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> and Thai traditional Theatre.....	25
Other Related Southeast Asian Theatre Studies.....	33
Discourse of <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> .....	37
Research Methodology.....	47
Organisation of the Thesis and Thematic.....	48
<b>Chapter 1: A History of <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i></b> .....	52
Introduction.....	52
Urbanisation and Modernisation of Bangkok in the Nineteenth Century .....	55
Entertainment in urban Bangkok.....	61
<i>Lakhon</i> of Chao Phraya Mahin: Dance-Drama before <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> .....	71
Boosara Mahin: A Siamese Touring Dance Troupe in Europe.....	85
Prince Narathip and the Development of Hybrid Dance-Drama Theatre.....	91
Conclusion.....	99
<b>Chapter 2: <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> in the Nationalist Period</b> .....	106
Introduction.....	106
Krai-thong and His Spear: The First <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> Production of Krom Silapakorn.....	108
Beginning of the Story.....	109



Krom Silapakorn: The Route of the Hybrid Dance-Drama and Theatre Styles to <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> .....	114
The Revival of Traditional Theatre.....	121
<i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> as a Genre.....	127
<i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> in the 1940s and 1950s.....	134
Conclusion.....	151
<b>Chapter 3: The Modernisation of <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i>:</b>	
<b>Seri Wangnaitham's <i>Phuchanasibtid</i></b> .....	154
Introduction.....	154
Social and Cultural Change in Bangkok in the 1980s and 1990s.....	155
Seri Wangnaitham and the Modernisation of Thai Traditional Theatre.....	160
<i>Phuchanasibtid</i> : From Modern Novel to <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> .....	165
The Dramatic Innovations of <i>Phuchanasibtid</i> .....	169
Audiences: A New Phenomenon of Thai Traditional Theatre.....	177
Conclusion.....	187
<b>Chapter 4: <i>Mae Tup Kon Mai</i> (The New General)</b> .....	
Introduction.....	192
Play Translation.....	193
<b>Chapter 5: <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> in Contemporary Times</b> .....	
Introduction.....	214
<i>Ram</i> and <i>Rabam</i> : Dance in <i>Phanthang</i> Style.....	217
<i>Lakhon</i> Productions of Krom Sialapakorn in the 2000s: An Overview.....	220
Young dance Artists, Institutional Conservatism and the Pressures of Modern society .....	222
<i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> of Krom Silapakorn Today.....	224

<i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> in the Academic Context:	
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.....	239
Curriculum, Lessons and Evaluation.....	240
Production.....	250
<i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> : Survival and Development in the academic context.....	257
Conclusion.....	263
<b>Chapter 6: <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i>: Survival in Death</b> .....	269
Introduction.....	269
Ending but Beginning.....	270
What Performance and Why?.....	273
<i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> in the Death Ritual.....	277
Conclusion.....	287
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	289
<b>Glossary</b> .....	300
<b>Appendix</b> .....	303
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	319

## List of Figures

Fig.1. The first cast of <i>lakhon phut</i> based on the Arabian Night episode ‘The tale of the sleeper awakened’ in 1879.....	63
Fig. 2. A gambling hall in the Chinese community in Siam.....	68
Fig. 3. Siamese Theatre.....	75
Fig. 4. The Prince’s Theatre.....	77
Fig. 5. The programme of the Prince’s Theatre performed on 25 <sup>th</sup> November 1889.....	79
Fig.6. The Boosara Mahin Siamese Theatrical Troupe.....	88
Fig. 7. La Danse Siamoise by Vaslav Nijinsky.....	89
Fig. 8. Fan Dance by Boosara Mahin Thai theatrical dance troupe in Berlin in 1900.....	90
Fig. 9. Front page of <i>Phra Law</i> programme in 1948.....	140
Fig. 10. The programme of <i>Rachathirat</i> production in 1952.....	142
Fig. 11. Phra Lor, Nai Kaew and Nai Kwan in scene <i>Phra Law Tam Kai</i> .....	146
Fig. 12. Kammani, a major Chinese character in <i>Rachathirat</i> in 1952.....	147
Fig. 13. Phra Lor, Phra Phun and Phra Pheng from <i>Phra Lor</i> production in 1948.....	149
Fig. 14. Kai Keaw in <i>Phra Lor</i> Production.....	150
Fig. 15. Comic actors in <i>Phuchanasibtid</i> production.....	172
Fig.16 The main performers of the <i>Phuchanasibtid</i> productions.....	175
Fig. 17. Setting of <i>Phuchanasibtid</i> production.....	176
Fig. 18. Audiences waiting to buying tickets for <i>Phuchanasibtid</i> at <i>Sang Keet Sala</i> .....	179
Fig. 19 Ja-det and Kusuma in <i>Phuchanasibtid</i> on <i>Sang Keet Sala</i> stage.....	180

Fig. 20. Newspaper advertisement for the television program <i>Rai Karn Round Kur Kon Thai</i> (We are the Thai Programme).....	183
Fig. 21. Anucha Sumaman in the sit pose in <i>Rabam Boek Rong Pama</i> .....	231
Fig. 22. <i>Yor Yod Phra Lor</i> by Anucha Sumaman.....	235
Fig. 23. <i>Talok Salachak</i> of <i>Lakhon Phanthang</i> .....	237
Fig. 24. An example of hand-written dance notation.....	246
Fig. 25. A ticket of <i>Wipitassana</i> .....	251
Fig. 26. <i>Lakhon nok</i> production of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in 2011 performed by laboys.....	256
Fig. 27. Obscene joke in <i>lakhon nok</i> .....	256
Fig. 28. <i>Lakhon phanthang Rachathirat</i> in a solo dance examination.....	262
Fig. 29. The scene ‘Phra Lor La Mae’ (Phra Lor Leaves to His Mother) in <i>lakhon phanthang Phra Lor</i> as performed at the funeral.....	276
Fig 30. <i>Lao Arlai</i> (Laotian Lament Dance).....	280
Fig. 31. <i>Pama Arlai</i> (Burmese Lament).....	282
Fig. 32. The male dancers of <i>Lao Arlai</i> .....	283
Fig. 33. Female dancers after a performance of <i>Pama Arlai</i> .....	283
Fig. 34. <i>Lakhon phanthang Phya Phanong</i> at the funeral.....	285
Fig. 35. <i>Lakhon phanthang Phra Lor</i> at the funeral.....	286

## Introduction

I was born in Bangkok and was raised in a conservative Thai-Chinese family that still observes Chinese traditions. We worship and pray to Chinese gods alongside the Buddha. The Chinese New Year is more important to us than the Thai New Year and my grandparents prefer chopsticks over spoon and fork, even when they eat spicy Thai food. My uncles and aunts still use Chinese names as their nicknames, though they have Thai names as their official names. I belong to the third generation of my family growing up in modern day Thai society and I am expected to inherit all these family customs. However, many things have changed. I was taught by my grandmother and my mother to cook Chinese food using Thai ingredients. I was taught to prepare a Chinese altar and oblations for worshipping at both Thai and Chinese festivals. My cousins and I do not use Chinese names even though our grandparents call us by the Chinese names they have given us. My grandparents spoke Chinese dialect with us and we frequently answered them in Thai. My family background is mixed and I have experienced a mixed culture and tradition since childhood.

I began to learn traditional Thai dance when I was ten years old. My mother took me for lessons at the temple<sup>1</sup> near my house because she wanted me to be able to perform on stage and wear a beautiful Thai costume as she had seen on her favourite Thai television drama programme, *Lakhon Cak Cak Wong Wong*.<sup>2</sup> It was my chance to know something different from my family background and culture. I subsequently began to study Thai dance intensively at high-school level at the Dramatic Arts College in Bangkok. I was assigned to the group of *lakhon* (dance-drama) students practising the moves for female characters. The first two years of my

studies were devoted to preliminary training in physical and dance skills. When I was in my second year of studies, I was selected to perform Indian dance at the National Theatre. The dance had been choreographed by a *khon* dance master of the college, who had been to India to study *kathakali* Indian dance-drama. I wore a sari and wore thick make up on my eyes to make them look sharp and big like the eyes of Khake, as South Asians are known in Thailand.

I continued my studies at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts at Chulalongkorn University and my experience of non-Thai dance grew further, through practising *lakhon phanthat* intensively. As a dance student, I was taught that *lakhon phanthat* is a Thai traditional dance theatre style. But in performance Thai traditional dance movement, singing, music and costume are blended with non-Thai traditional dance styles in accordance with the nationality or ethnic origin of the characters that appear in plays. The staged stories are based on the foreign chronicles and literature of Thailand's neighbours such as Laos, Burma and China. The most popular *lakhon phanthat* repertoire items are *Phra Lor*, a tragic love story about King Lor and two princesses of Muang Srong, and *Rachathirat*, about the war between Burmese and Mons, based on Mons chronicles. In a Thai dance history class I was provided with general information about the pioneering practitioners of *lakhon phanthat*, why this theatre form emerged and what this theatre form represented. I and my friends were fed this information devoid of any contextual analysis of cultural diversity and related issues. We did not know why and how this theatre form from the nineteenth century had become a traditional form presented by Krom Silapakorn<sup>3</sup> and taught in the performing arts departments of universities (Virulak, *Wiwattanakarn* 182).

In the second year of studies, I learned *lakhon phanthatang* plays from the *Rachathirat* repertoire. At the end of term my friends and I had to present a final project based on *lakhon phanthatang*. I was selected for the role of Mei Manik, a major Mons female character in the episode *Phraya Noi Chom Talard* (*Phraya Noi* visits the market). I was not inspired by this dance. I felt uncomfortable with its movements and was careless in executing the dance choreographic patterns that had been devised to portray the differences among people of varied nationalities within the play. I always thought that as I was learning Thai dance my expertise in portraying female characters ought to be in authentic Thai dances such as *khon*, *lakhon nai* and *lakhon nok*. I was not the only one who had this attitude. Many friends of mine thought the same. Therefore, when the time came for my solo dance exam, the most important final dance exam for all the senior dance students, I selected a short dance piece from *khon*, dancing the role of Nang Benyaguy, a beautiful niece of Tossakan (the Thai name for Ravana).

My attitude about *lakhon phanthatang* changed when I became a Thai dance lecturer in the Performing Arts Department, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. I was assigned by the department to teach theoretical and practical Thai dance and theatre subjects and *lakhon phanthatang* was included. I had to revise my dance knowledge and brush up my skills in *lakhon phanthatang* in order to teach my students. Thus, I spent a lot of time to recall the dance movements of the *lakhon phanthatang* story of *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat*. I had to find a way to make myself comfortable with the off balance stance of the body, the shoulder swaying and the use of hand gestures in the *lakhon phanthatang* style in order to teach the students. I made an effort to embody the mixed dance forms, based on a hybrid mix of Thai theatre dance and other styles such as Chinese, Mons, Burmese and Laotian dances,

which I call *phanthangness*. I define *phanthangness* as the qualities or characteristics of a hybrid dance. *Phanthangness* emerges when Thai dance forms meet the Other's dances or theatre elements. A new form of dance or theatre is created which is composed of Thai and non-Thai dancing. Eight years into my dance academic career, I not only taught but also performed *lakhon phanthang* and danced in *phanthang* style. I was selected to perform in *phanthang* dance style and to perform *lakhon phanthang* dance –drama on many occasions. These experiences made me feel more and more comfortable with the *lakhon phanthang* dance movement style and taught me that *phanthangness* is not about the presentation of other national dance movements but about the presentation of Thai dance through the Other's dance-movement style.

My family background and dance experiences drove me to know more about hybridity in cultural life and in dance. I was compelled to find out the way to live and learn through hybridisation. I started to question critically Thai performing arts in the context of modernity with my research paper about the Thai puppet theatre, *The Survival and Adaptation of Traditional Thai Puppet Theatre (Joe Louis Theatre)*, which I presented at the World Dance Alliance Global Summit in Brisbane, Australia (see Jirajarupat 2008). This research inspired me to investigate how Thai traditional dance and theatre survive and adapt themselves to modern Thai society. As I am a Thai dance lecturer, I realised that the current way of teaching Thai traditional dance and theatre do not encourage learners to think out of a traditional frame. This can be seen from the theses of postgraduate students majoring in performing arts and dance, which are mostly devoted to the study of dance characteristics, the study of dance history and the notation of dance movements (see Makpa 2006). Furthermore, I have witnessed that dance students are taught to replicate the tradition in the name of



preserving national heritage. However, in contemporary Thai society, pervaded by the influence of other Asian nations such as Korea and influences from the West, Thai dance students, artists and scholars seem to preserve their tradition without any awareness of the changes in Thai society and the rest of the globe. This awareness of change has become the inspiration for my research concerning *lakhon phanthat* and the contemporary world.

I realise that *lakhon phanthat*, in both its form and content, is a fair demonstration of how Thai traditional theatre meets Otherness and embodies Burmese, Laotian and Chinese arts. It demonstrates how Thai theatre adapts itself and thus survives in the modern world while influenced by factors such as urbanisation, westernisation, and globalisation. Through *lakhon phanthat*, I see a picture of interpretation of Otherness via a Thai artistic perspective and in return the influence of Otherness over Thai traditional arts. This study goes beyond the investigation of the factors that have changed Thai traditional theatre in contemporary times. The analysis of *lakhon phanthat* in the modern world shows the role of the Other within Thai society, Thailand's relation to Asia and the changing concept of Thai identity. Furthermore, *lakhon phanthat* exemplifies the traditionalisation of Thai theatre as affected through the agency of artists, audiences, monarchical system, national art organisations, national policies and educational institutions.

### **Statement of Research Aims**

The survival and adaptation of *lakhon phanthat* in contemporary Thai society are analysed in this thesis in relation to the different contexts at play such as the patronisation of dance-drama and theatre by the royal court, the political value,

education and economic development and the ideology of Thai national identity. I principally examine the historical background and transposition and shifts in theatrical aesthetics, as well as the revival and survival of *lakhon phanthatang* within Thai higher education. The research questions of this thesis can be grouped into four sets, each one carrying subsidiary questions:

1. What are the significant factors of change in Thai popular theatre and the key issues influencing their development, from popular theatre to traditional dance genre in the context of Thai modern and contemporary society? This main question can be broken up as follows:
  - Why did dance and theatre in *phanthatang* style emerge in the nineteenth century?
  - Why has *lakhon phanthatang* as a hybrid dance-drama and theatre form been categorised as traditional theatre?
  - What is the relationship between the hybridity *lakhon phanthatang* and its traditionalisation?
2. What are the key issues involved in formulating *lakhon phanthatang* as traditional theatre? An exploration of this question involves asking the following:
  - What are the characteristics of *lakhon phanthatang* in the period of standardisation?
  - Are national policies and the notion of Thainess an influence on the standardisation of *lakhon phanthatang*?
  - Has *lakhon phantang* in the post-World War II period changed the concept of Thainess?

- What does the *lakhon phanthatang* of the post World War II period have in common with the *phanthatang* dance and theatre of an earlier period?
3. Why does *lakhon phanthatang* reach peak popularity on the National Theatre stage in the 1980s? This main question can be subdivided into:
- Why do theatre practitioners choose the *lakhon phanthatang* form to modernise traditional theatre and reinstate its popularity?
  - What are the characteristics of modernisation in *lakhon phanthatang*?
  - What is the contribution of the modernisation of *lakhon phanthatang* to the Thai traditional dance of the future?
4. How has *lakhon phanthatang* been seen by the dance practitioners within higher education and within the community? This fourth question will deal with the following:
- Does *lakhon phanthatang* as a kind of traditional dance-drama position itself equally with other traditional dance-drama forms?
  - What are the key issues of differentiation between *lakhon phanthatang* and other dance forms as traditional dance-drama?
  - How is *lakhon phanthatang* viewed in the post-traditional society?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The concept of traditionalisation as formulated by Chicago sociologist Edward Shils (1981) is important to this research. Tradition according to Shils is the pattern of beliefs and actions that humans persist in using in society. The essential method of tradition is the pattern of human creation by human ideas and imagination,

essentially ‘anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to present’ (Shils 12). This transmission encourages the existing pattern of tradition. However, the transmission of tradition can be changed, upon realisation that old traditions are not good enough. Shils also argues that past traditions encourage the emergence of new traditions in society by reworking and adapting older ideas. Humans in society accept the new tradition, which derives from the old one via reinterpretation, and reconstruction of older traditions. Traditionalisation, however, opposes tradition. It denotes the intentional process of fixing the form of the work of art from the ancient time. I apply the terms tradition and traditionalisation as elaborated by Shils to Thai theatre, whereby *lakhon phanthat* at present is classified as a Thai traditional theatre form. The dance form and its choreographic pattern have been modified and reinterpreted because the old dance form does not match societal changes. The traditionalisation of *lakhon phanthat* is the result of the negotiation that has occurred between the old dance form and the concept of modern theatre. As a consequence, *lakhon phanthat* has become fixed and is labelled traditional theatre.

Shils’s theory also inspires me to think about the factors that lead to traditional change: what Shils describes as endogenous factors and exogenous factors. Endogenous factors are the changes of internal circumstances in society such as changes in human ideas and activities. For example, in the past Thai people believed that making a living by dancing was an unacceptable and shameful occupation for women in Thai society, whereas at present this belief has changed, and being a dancer is not only a popular job but also one that is thought to bestow a high income. There is also greater institutional support. Exogenous factors are those external aspects which impact tradition, such as foreign influences and macroeconomic changes.

Shils argues that an alien tradition might blend with the original tradition by modification (98). Recently, Thai traditional dances have been facing challenges brought by alien traditions. Alien traditions are the forms of external traditions which influence old Thai traditions. Thai traditional theatre has long been confronted by alien traditions and foreign influences as evidenced by the *lakhon phanthatang* theatre form and the *phanthatang* dance patterns. The monarchy, government, schools and universities are the specific institutions that support the stability of Thai tradition and moderate its changes.

The process of changing tradition in Thai theatre and dance does not mean that everything is completely renewed. *Lakhon phanthatang* is a mixed form comprising Thai and non-Thai art, however, its performance form still remains within the spectrum of Thai traditional theatre. Thai dance artists of the young generations combine the different dance and theatre traditions with the aim of making something new which encourages diverse people to understand traditions comparatively. They renew the field of performance and make art that communicates effectively with audiences. In addition, they are also preserving the form as national heritage. The preservation of tradition in Thai theatre relates to what Shils calls ‘substantive traditionality’, which refers to ‘the appreciation of the accomplishments and wisdom of the past and of the institutions especially impregnated with tradition, as well as the desirability of regarding patterns inherited from the past as valid guides’ (21). Traditional Thai theatre today relates to this, although its form is modified and adapted to the modern social and cultural context. The ancient dance form of the past is still valued over that of the present, as in the case of the two traditional *lakhon phanthatang* repertoires, *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat*. These repertoires are being handed down from the past and have been regularly presented

on the National Theatre stage. In addition, these repertoires are taught in the universities as the classic model of Thai *lakhon phanthat*. *Phuchanasibtid*, as a modern *lakhon phanthat* repertoire, is not accorded the same prestige.

In my analysis of post-traditional aesthetics and society, I take my theoretical inspiration from Anthony Giddens, especially the essay 'Living in a post traditional society' which is published as the second chapter of the book *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* by Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash (1994). Giddens refers to the idea of 'tradition in modernity', which reflects the impact and influence of modernity upon tradition and vice versa. Giddens states that 'modernity has rebuilt tradition as it has dissolved it' (56). This brings me to examine the social and political contexts in search of how modernity in Siam/Thailand impacts on traditional theatre and how Thai traditional theatre is transformed in the post-traditional society.

Furthermore, Giddens also provides interesting insights into the 'guardians' and 'experts' in society, those who have the authority to preserve and modify tradition. These guardians and experts have different characteristics. The guardians have powerful status within the traditional order, whereas the experts use their skills and knowledge to deal with the direction of tradition in modern society (Giddens 65). In the case of Thai traditional theatre, the guardians and experts are located first and foremost in the royal court, at the top of the hierarchy in Thai society, and issue directives that come down to the common people who have the duty to perform. For example, Seri Wangnaitham, a former director of the Performing Arts Division of Krom Silapakorn, held roles as both guardian and as expert. His authority under the national art organisation was to protect and preserve traditional dance-drama and theatre as part of national heritage, which cast him in the role of guardian.

Meanwhile, he operated as expert, propagating knowledge and, with the ability to assess practice from a non-traditional stance, modernising and creating the new production *Phuchanasibtid*, which responded to social changes and to the needs of *lakhon phanthang* audiences in 1980s.

I regard *lakhon phanthang* as form of hybrid theatre to which one can apply the poststructuralist concept of hybridity (cf. Damrhung 'From Phar Lor' 111). The hybridity concept is a notion largely derived from post-colonial theory. It may sound inappropriate to apply a post-colonial concept to a country such as Thailand, which has never been colonised. However, the political and social contexts of Thailand demonstrate a condition of semi-colonialism, or in the words of Michael Herzfeld (2002) crypto-colonialism. Furthermore, post-colonial theories allow one to understand how Thai culture deals with Western hegemonic culture and its neighbouring cultures (Jackson 37).

A useful source on hybridity for our purposes is Robert J.C. Young's *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (1995). Young notes that 'hybridity makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference' (27). Hybridity describes a new form that is created from mixing two or more different forms or things or species such as languages, plants, animals and cultures. Such new forms are 'amalgamation rather than contestation' (Young 21). I am inspired by the concept of hybridity as formulated in Young's work and have found it helpful to understand hybridity in Thai performance. In Thai traditional theatre, the historical background and the theatrical elements of each performance express a relationship between the Thai indigenous performance form and other performance styles or narratives such as the adaptation of the *Panji* story from Indonesia which becomes the *Inao* story performed for the court. Many Thai traditional theatre forms have

characteristics of hybridity. However, such hybridity is subsumed under the umbrella of traditional theatre.

Also useful in the context of this discussion is the concept of cultural hybridity of Homi Bhabha as formulated in his essay 'Cultures in Between' (1996). Bhabha claims that cultural hybridity is a reflection of colonialism, and develops from a confrontation with an unequal cultural authority. The particular characteristics of cultural hybridity, according to Bhabha, are ambivalence and uncertainty (58). Bhabha's work helps to understand why *lakhon phanthatang* is difficult to define and why its boundaries are porous. *Lakhon phanthatang* in the perception of Thai dance scholars is situated in between the old traditional dance forms such as *lakhon nai* and *lakhon nok* and the new theatrical inventions of the nineteenth century (cf. Yupho, *Silapa Lakhon Ram* 96). The forms and context of *lakhon phanthatang* sometimes overlap with and are also differentiated from the old traditional theatre forms. I apply the concept of hybridity in my investigation of how cultural factors influence the development of the form and context of *lakhon phanthatang*.

A further concept elaborated by Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (2010) is that of 'mimicry.' This term helps me to describe the hybrid characteristics of Thai traditional theatre. Mimicry, as a term, refers to the colonial impact upon the indigenous culture. Its meaning is 'almost the same but not quite' (Bhabha 122). Mimicry troubles the power of colonial authority. Bhabha explains that representation through mimicry involves 'partial presence' and expresses an ambivalent identity which attacks colonial authority, in particular through culture and national history (Bhabha 123). The mimicry Bhabha is talking about is the imitation of colonisers by colonised. The concept allows me to think about the hybridity of Thai theatre from yet another viewpoint, enabling me to understand the



hybridisation of *lakhon phanthatang*. The invention of *lakhon phanthatang* shows how non-Thai dance and theatrical elements have been used as an ingredient in the overall performance. Therefore, although the hybridisation of *lakhon phanthatang* is the process of making Thai theatre by mimicking some other theatrical elements, the other elements need to be refined in consonance with traditional Thai theatrical performance (Dumrhung interview).

### **Some Recent Studies on *Lakhon Phanthatang* and Thai Traditional Theatre**

There are very few studies focused on *lakhon phanthatang*. The few that are available rehash descriptions provided by the earlier authors. The majority of publications, especially those in Thai language, are centred on dance notation and the historical background of dance and theatre forms in both the folk and court dance genres, and tend to be more descriptive than analytical. However, there are a few English language publications about Thai and Asian theatres, which are very important as sources for this thesis. In this section, I would like to discuss some recent studies of Thai theatre, which have been drawn upon in this thesis and which are related to my research questions.

*Theatre in Southeast Asia* (1974) and *The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre* (1993) written and edited respectively by James R. Brandon provide a clear discussion of the interrelationship of theatre forms in Southeast Asia. Brandon uses four perspectives: historical background, theatre as art, theatre as an institution and theatre as communication, which lead the readers to an understanding of the background, functions, and aesthetic value of Southeast Asian theatre. His work reflects the interesting perspective of a Western researcher. In terms of cultural factors that influence Thai theatre, I apply his ideas about three different supporting

categories within Asian theatre, the court theatre, the folk theatre and urbanisation. Court theatre is regarded as 'high art' with sophisticated dance movement and plays, whereas folk theatre is viewed as serving the community with uncomplicated forms. Urbanisation encouraged the rise of commercial theatre forms - Asian theatres appear to share histories and characteristics with one another. New theatrical approaches are seen as coming from Western theatre and appeared in Asia as a result of the exchange of artists and through the educational system. Brandon's works allows me to understand theatre in Southeast Asia as a chain of cultural diversity.

Another most valuable English-language publication, this one by a Thai scholar who writes on the development of Thai theatre, is *Dance, Drama and Theatre in Thailand: The Process of Development and Modernisation* by Mattani Rutnin (1996). This book offers important historical background to the modernisation of dance, dance-drama and theatre in Thailand. Rutnin leads her readers to the roots of dance-drama in Thailand, which relates to three main institutions of Thai society: *ban* (home, village), *wat* (temple) and *wang* (palace). She mines various sources such as the chronicles of Thailand, Sukhothai inscriptions, old Thai literature and interviews to support her arguments. The most interesting insight in Rutnin's book is into the process of modernisation of dance, dance-drama and theatre in Thailand. She sees modernisation as originating with the king, who is in the position of leader in developing, enriching and patronising Thai performing arts. In the case of *lakhon phanthatang*, this dance-drama form was developed through the royal court even though the emergence of this dance-drama form was a form of popular theatre serving the diverse society in the nineteenth century.

Among the Thai language publications, the most relevant for Thai dance and theatre students is *Tamnan Lakhon Inao* (The origin of Inao dance-drama),

contributed by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (1965). Prince Damrong Rajanubhab is one of the most influential Thai theatre court scholars also nicknamed ‘Father of Thai History’. Most of his works are devoted to the study of Thai history in several aspects, and are regarded as valuable reference. This particular publication provides both the historical background of Thai dance and theatre as also an analysis of the socio- cultural milieu of the creation of the theatre form. This book is divided into three parts: the first part is about the history, styles and customs of *lakhon ram*.<sup>4</sup>The second part talks about the *lakhon Inao* (Inao dance-drama) and *Inao* chronicles in Thai literature and dance-drama. The third part details the dance-drama chronicles from the Ayuthaya period to the time of the reign of King Chulalongkorn.

This book compiles valuable information, handed down from the royal court combined with Prince Damrong’s first-hand experience. He states that *lakhon ram* acquired its style and methods from India. He argues that the theatre and dance-drama of Siam and other neighbours such as Burma and Java were Indianised (221). The last section of this book is very useful for my thesis. It provides me with the socio-cultural context relating to Thai theatre in the past. *Lakhon Chao Phraya Mahin*, which was the first private dance troupe before the emergence of *lakhon phanthat*, is mentioned in this section. Furthermore, this section shows why *Lakhon Chao Phraya Mahin* gained popularity in the reigns of both King Rama IV (r. 1851-68) and King Rama V (r. 1868-1910) (378-379). Moreover, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab also analyses the factors that instigate changes in Thai traditional dance-drama such as the political policies, the foreign community and the theatre and dance patronage by the royal court. I have used data from this book and also considered the Thai performing arts through this lens. In addition, I rethink what led to present changes in comparison with the past. I found that in the post-traditional society, the

educational system, globalisation, urbanisation and capitalism are important factors to be considered with regard to the status of Thai dance-drama and theatre today.

Dhanit Yupho, the former Director-General of the Fine Arts Department in 1956-1968, wrote many important books about Thai dance-drama and theatre and Thai culture. Most of his publications were bilingual (Thai-English). His works *The Khon and Lakon (Masked Dance and Dance-Drama)* (1963), and *Sinlapa Lakhon Ram Rue Khumu Nattasin Thai (The Art of Thai Dance-drama, or A Handbook of Thai Dance)* (1988) give information about the characteristics of Thai dance and theatre in each genre, the training process, the scripts of the plays, the dance convention and the historical background of the establishment of the School of Music and Dance in Thailand. In *The Khon and Lakon* (1963), the author provides a collection of programmes of *khon* (masked dance) and *lakhon* (dance-drama) in Thailand, presented by Krom Silpakorn from 1945 to 1962. Furthermore, the author also gives history and details on each performance style. The programmes collected therein allow me to study the old dance styles, which were first presented after a period of major political change in Thailand. Through this book I learnt when the first *lakhon phanthatang* production by Krom Silapakorn was presented and where. This book provides information for comparing between Thai traditional performance of today with that of the past. The other book, *Sinlapa Lakhon Ram Rue Khumu Nattasin Thai* (1988) gives the historical background of Thai dance as well with an interesting section about the daily life and training of Thai dancers in 1934. I have used this source to look at the dance training in the Thai revolutionary period, which brings me to think about the different process of Thai dance training in the past in the context of a private dance troupe and the dance training offered through the educational system today. I also reflect on how these two training systems engage

dance students and note the differences between them. This has encouraged me to develop my own ideas about *lakhon phanthat* training in the educational system today.

In the context of a literature review of Thai traditional theatre, it is impossible to avoid discussing the publications by Professor Emeritus Dr. Surapone Virulrak, a key scholar in Thai theatre and dance studies in Thailand. His Thai language book *Wiwattanakarn Nattasil Thai Nai Krung Rattanakosin (Evolution of Thai Dance and Dance Drama during the Bangkok period 1782-1934)* (2000) gives the whole picture of Thai theatre and dance from 1782 to 1934 discussing the interrelationship of Thai theatre and society in each period.

The author proposes that the specific social structure of Thailand and the Thai way of life have shaped Thai traditional performance and its development. Meanwhile, performances from neighbouring countries and multi-ethnic communities have also influenced the development of Thai theatre (Virulrak *Wiwattanakarn* 10). Virulrak provides solid information about Thai traditional performances since the Sukhothai period and in-depth critical information about each kingship of the Rattanakosin era from King Rama I (r. 1782-1809) to King Rama VII (r. 1925-1934)

Virulrak states that several societal factors have influenced the development of traditional dance and dance-drama in Thailand. Firstly, the royal court plays an important role in encouraging and modifying dance and dance-drama. Secondly, the social and hierarchical systems impact on the emergence of commercial theatres. Thirdly, the economic system is creating a new social structure in society so the entertainment in cities is developed to support new spectatorial needs. Fourthly, the gambling halls in the past were the place that encouraged the interaction between

performance and multi-ethnic communities. Fifthly, multi-ethnic communities and Westernisation brought new traditions and cultures which became a source for inventing newer, mixed performance styles. All these factors are helpful to understand the emergence of popular theatre in the mid nineteenth century.

Another helpful source by Virulrak is the article 'Theatre in Thailand Today' published in *Asian Theatre Journal* in 1999. This article gives the background of each Thai theatre form and performance style of the court and of the commoners. Virulrak also informs readers about a new theatre genre, the *lakhon phut* (spoken dance-drama), which emerged in Thailand in the early twentieth century inspired by Western theatre. In the early twentieth century, Thailand was going through a period of social revolution and transition into modernity. Not only were society and the ways of life changed, but dance-drama and theatre were also modernised. Virulrak evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of the theatre circumstances in Thailand by analysing the duration of live performance programmes, theatre sponsorship, theatre facilities, the identity of performers and composition of audiences, box office income and the role of electronic media such as radio and television for diffusion. Furthermore, he discusses theatre education, which is an essential part of the development of theatre in Thailand today.

Through this article, Virulrak explains the decline of Thai theatre in modern society by considering the economic, political and social changes and the impact of modern technologies. Virulrak uses the term 'second hand performance', in connection with the phenomenon of watching and listening to performances via live media programme (Virulrak 'Theatre' 104). People can watch broadcast performances wherever and whenever they need, without restrictions of time. Virulrak seems to focus on the positive effects of modern media on traditional

theatre neglecting the aesthetics of the art. In actuality, television programmes have their own regular programme style. They tend to be modern entertainment and melodrama, which gained popularity and which attract more viewers than traditional dance-drama. The article has made me question the role of modern media in ensuring the survival of *lakhon phanthat* in modern society, something that will be addressed in chapter five and chapter six of this thesis.

Altogether research into Thai traditional theatre appears primarily in the form of unpublished theses and journal articles. There are a few master degree dissertations which relate to *lakhon phanthat*. However, none of these dissertations provides a comprehensive study of the socio-cultural factors that have shaped *lakhon phanthat*; they tend to discuss the historical background of the dance form and provide a notation of dance movements. The master degree dissertation from which I have drawn most is a study by Sompit Sukvipat titled *Puchanasiptit: Lakon Panthat Khong Arjarn Seri Vangnaitham (The Conqueror of Tenth Directions : Lakon Panthat by Seri Vangnaitham)*(1976). Sompit examines *lakhon phanthat* through the *Phuchanasiptit* production by Seri Wangnaitham. Her study provides a descriptive overview of the history of the *lakhon phanthat* genre, analysing and notating its dance technique and theatrical elements, as used in this production. This dissertation gives important data based on interviews with the director and the first cast of the production. However, Sompit does not provide an adequate critical analysis of the development of the production in relation to the historical background and socio-cultural context. Nevertheless, this work has been a primary source for my own research, which reconsiders the relationship between the traditional production in 1980 and the social changes of this period, points that Sompit does not elaborate upon

*Lakkarn Pen Burengnong Nai Lakhon phanthang Phuchanasibthit (The Principles of Burengnong in Lakhon phanthang Phuchanasibthit)*(2007) by Rattthasat Chanchareon is another master degree dissertation, which focuses on *lakhon phanthang*. The dissertation studies the performance principles of a major character, that of Burengnong, in *Phuchanasibthit*'s production of Krom Silapakorn. Chanchareon's work provides the narrow overview of *Phuchanasid* production's history, including the adaptation of *Phuchanasibthit* in a literary form for the performance. However, the main focus of this dissertation is the dance principles and dance techniques for Burengong's role. Chanchareon analyses the remarkable dance techniques of the *Phuchnasibthit* production looking at adherence to the rules and Thai dance customs while the dancers perform accompanied by the singing; the use of naturalistic acting while speaking and the use of random movement gestures while singing and speaking alternately. Chanchareon's study has provided me with an idea of how *lakhon phanthang* has been modernised and modified by modern theatre techniques. Through her work I can see the awareness of Thai artists of the influence of social changes on Thai traditional performance.

Vasinarom's study *Nattaya Pradit Kong Chao Chom Manda Khien (Choreography of Chao Chom Manda Khie)* (2006) is a master degree dissertation that focuses on the life and work of Chao Chom Manda Khien, who was Prince Narathip's mother and King Rama IV's consort. Vasinarom's work analyses the choreographic style of Chao Chom Manda Khien through the most famous production *Phra Lor* of Prince Narathip dance troupe, which was handed down to Krom Silapakorn. Vasinarom proposes that *lakhon phanthang* by Chao Chom Manda Khien was created basing it on her dance experience in *lakhon nai* and then the dance movements were further stylised through borrowing from other dance styles



such as Laotian dance. She also points out that Chao Chom Manda Khien was a traditional dance guru who dared to break the rules of the tradition by allowing her performance to have a death scene on stage.

### **Other Related Southeast Asian Theatre Studies**

Apart from the above mentioned studies, there are several publications that focus on Asian tradition in modernity which have been useful for my analysis of Thai traditional theatre in the modern world. Among them I count *Bangsawan: A Social and Stylistic History of Popular Malay Opera* (1993) by Tan Sooi Beng. Tan's work provides an excellent documentation of *bangsawan*, a popular Malay opera in the Malay Peninsula from 1880 until 1980. The historical background of the forms and the problematic multi-ethnic appropriation of Malaysian national culture have been included in this publication as well. Tan opines that *bangsawan* is not a traditional theatre form -- it is a form of popular theatre, however the Malaysian government has classified *bangsawan* as *teater tradisional*. Her study analyses social-economic changes, urbanised entertainment, government intervention and policies, all related to the process of turning *bangsawan* into traditional theatre. Tan argues that tradition and modernity are neither completely opposite ideas nor something that involves transformation without retaining the original characteristics, and this seems to be the case for *bangsawan*. Tan's work is very useful for my thesis as Thailand and Malaysia are close neighbours and thus share some culture and traditions so *bangsawan*'s modernisation provides a useful model. I apply some of Tan's ideas on what constitute the influencing factors for the changes from traditional theatre into *bangsawan* in my investigation of *lakhon phanthang*.

Matthew Isaac Cohen's *The Komedi Stamboel: Popular Theatre in Colonial Indonesia, 1891-1903* (2006) is the another major study of Southeast Asian theatre that has been useful for my thesis. Cohen's work provides a picture of the Indonesian popular theatre *komedi stamboel* in urban Indonesia at the turn of the twentieth century. Cohen also presents the cultural dynamics, which influence popular theatre. Additionally, Auguste Mahieu, the key figure in shaping the *stamboel* is discussed and Surabaya and the social conditions of nineteenth century Indonesia have been investigated as having had a major influence on the emergence of this theatre form. This publication also provides me with a model for my investigation of Thai popular theatre in the nineteenth century before popular theatre was transformed into traditional theatre in present times. Another substantial work also by Matthew Isaac Cohen is 'Contemporary *Wayang* in Global Contexts' published in the *Asian Theatre Journal* (2007). Reading this has inspired me to investigate *lakhon phanthat* anew. In this journal article, Cohen discusses how *wayang* (puppet theatre) interacts with the world and how Western artists such as Edward Gordon Craig and Richard Teschner adapt traditional *wayang* into their art making. I learnt from this article about looking at points of cultural intersections between the East and the West, which create the complex hybridity of art forms.

*In Search of Korean Traditional Opera: Discourses of Ch'anggŭk* by Andrew Killick (2010) has also been useful, providing me with important conceptual tools when looking at *lakhon phanthat* in modern Thai society although Thai and Korean traditional theatre remain contextually different. This book talks about a Korean traditional opera called *ch'anggŭk*, which derives from *p'ansori*, the old narrative Korean singing. Killick describes the history of the performance forms from a Korean and an outsider's perspectives. He also comments critically on Korean

traditional opera comparing it with the other performance forms such as the Beijing Opera in China and *kabuki* of Japan, Korea's neighbouring countries. But the adaptation of traditional performances to the modern world is one aspect of his research. He also searches for the traditional by making national, gender, aesthetic and cross-cultural comparisons and looking at the post-colonial condition. The author analyses the changes in performance patronage from people to society, which affect performance styles, contents and manner of performance. The interesting point for me is the analysis of traditional performance using hybrid popular theatre theory. Hybrid popular theatre is a performance form, which emerges when the indigenous art forms adapt into other performance styles and are stimulated to change by local audience demands.

### **Some Sources for an Analysis of National Identity, Thainess and Political Factors**

A major concern in this thesis is the socio-cultural context of Thai society. I found other sources that can be related to political and social contexts in Thai theatre. *Wattanatham Banthung Nai Chart: Karn Plean Paleng Khong Wattanatham Kwam Banthung Nai Sangkom Krungthep (Culture of entertainment in country: The changing of culture of entertainments in Bangkok society)* by Pattravadee Phuchadabhirom (2006) offers the reader the picture of Thai theatre and music development from 1948 to 1957. This is the period after the change from absolute monarchy to the democracy. Phuchadabhirom's work discusses the paradigm shift of entertainment in Thai society, as shaped by political and cultural policies. The author suggests that 1947 was the beginning of the period of introduction of Western culture into Thai society. The Thai government supported Westernisation and Western

cultural entertainment in society. Therefore, the entertainment of that period was modified following Western performance styles. Entertainment was patronised by the middle classes rather than benefitting from royal patronage as in the past.

In the context of a study of class and social status, the article by Palita Chalermpong, 'Thai Middle-Class Practice and Consumption of Traditional Dance : 'Thai-ness' and High Art,' in *Local Cultures and the 'New Asia'* (2002) should be mentioned. In this article, Chalermpong analyses the status of Thai traditional dance in Thai society, seeing it through Thai middle class daily life focusing on the relationship between high art and the elevation in status of the Thai middle class following industrialisation. The author also suggests that the Thai middle class has the potential to support Thai dance and theatre, not only by spending money to attend cultural performances, but by also becoming guardians of the arts. The Thai middle class accepts Thai dance as traditional wisdom, without being critical of the construction of this tradition. Chalermpong states that, since 1980 political policies and economic development have significantly contributed to the phenomenon of new wealth in Thailand (217). The new wealth or 'new middle class' are a group of people whose consumption behaviour is focused on modern high technology and spending a lot of money on expensive goods. The major point made by the author is that the Thai middle class adopts traditional dance as a recreational activity and as a tool for enhancing social status. In addition, Thai society has opened up a space for classical dance education to support its consumption by the Thai middle class. The highly competitive private dance schools have increased rapidly in Thailand, because Thai dance has become a fashionable commodity. All the dance schools have to create new things, which attract Thai middle class consumers. Chalermpong also suggests that nowadays Thai middle class creates and manages its own life style to

include the high arts. The directions of Thai art might change in the future, for better or worse.

The development of Thai traditional theatre is not only related to political factors and social status but also to the discourse of Thainess and national identity, which have a great impact on the direction of Thai traditional theatre. *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand* (2010) edited by Rachel Harrison and Peter A. Jackson, is a compilation of essays focusing on the interaction between Siam/Thailand and the West and how Siam/Thailand confronts with the Other/foreign countries as a country which has never been colonised. This publication provides a wide range of essays dealing with history, film studies and cultural studies. The book also suggests that Thai identity is the result of the complex hybrid character of Thai society. *National Identity and Its Defenders: Thailand Today* (1989) by Craig Reynolds focuses on Thai identity in various aspects. Furthermore, it discusses the relationship between Thai national identity and globalisation. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* by Thongchai Winichakul (1994) looks at the issue of the transformation of Siam into the modern Thai nation and how Thainess was created and deconstructed on the basis of this change.

### **Discourse of *Lakhon Phanthang***

In this section, I would like to give a critical account of the definition of *lakhon phanthang* and the hybrid characteristics of this dance-drama form. My intention is to consider some of the current discourses on *lakhon phanthang* as the basis for this thesis.

### **The Terminology of *Lakhon Phanthang***

As a traditional dance student, I was taught by my teachers that *lakhon phanthang* is a traditional theatre, whose performance is not fixed. *Lakhon phanthang* presents foreign stories with mixed costumes and music tunes. The dance movements are a mix between Thai and other dance styles. Furthermore, my teachers introduced me to the literary works used for this theatre form. This is what I learned and knew about *lakhon phanthang* when I was a student. When I began working on this thesis, I also began to ask questions revising everything I knew. I found that the definition of *lakhon phanthang* that I was taught is very ambiguous, and limited. Thus, I would like to start by discussing *lakhon phanthang* as it is generally understood.

The term *lakhon* means dance-drama in various styles, not only the traditional forms but the modern forms as well (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 10) while the term *phanthang* can be interpreted in various ways. *Phanthang* in the Thai etymological sense can be divided into two words, *phan* meaning thousand, and *thang* meanings ways, so in this sense *phanthang* means ‘a thousand ways’ (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 118). In contrast, the other meaning of *phanthang* is ‘crossbred chickens and/or animals that have parents of different species’ or a ‘set of objects or things such as porcelain that are incompatible in style with others’ (Royal Institute 997). Not only are animals, plants or things called *phanthang*, but humans of mixed race parentage are also described by this term.

Thai theatre scholars give the meaning of *lakhon phanthang* as follows: Udomplon states that *lakhon phanthang* is the mixing of performance genres, a mix of *lakhon ram* (dance-drama) and realistic acting. The stories are foreign modified with Thai dance movements. There are songs and dialogues by the characters to

present the narrative. The stories enacted derive from various multi-ethnic groups such as Burmese, Mons, Laotian and Chinese (141). Theapayasuwan says that *lakhon phanthat* refers to dramatic performances with Thai dance movements which are not as strict with Thai dance traditions and customs as other forms. Dialogues and songs are the means for telling fast-paced stories. This dance form is easy to practise because the performance may show either elegant dance movements or unsophisticated dance styles (150). Yupho states further that *phanthat* is used to differentiate the genre from other Thai traditional dance-drama styles. He mentions that *lakhon phanthat* differs from Thai traditional performances in its acting style and recitation, and its use of dance movements to accompany the latter (Yupho *Silapa* 193-194). Sukvipat explains that *lakhon phanthat* is an inauthentic form. This performance does not necessarily include elaborate dance-drama movements but simpler dance movements in the Thai style (9). These definitions of *lakhon phanthat* demonstrate that the concern is to establish that *lakhon phanthat* is a mixed dance form. The term *phanthat* in the sense of ‘dance-drama in a thousand ways’ is not directly put across through all these explanations.

Furthermore, Professor Emeritus Poonpit Amadtayakul, a famous Thai theatre and music scholar and ethnomusicologist, stated in the course of an academic seminar about *Rachathirat*, held at Banditpattanasilp Institute in Bangkok Thailand in 2012, that the term *Phanthat* refers to a dog (a mongrel) and was a derogatory word used by a court dance guru with reference to *Lakhon Chao Phraya Mahin* at the Chao Phraya Mahin theatre in the reign of King Rama V, which displayed mixed dance performance styles (Boonyachai interview). However, the term *phanthat* at present is more positive. In the arts, it connotes a thousand ways rather than a crossbred chicken or a mongrel. The new forms of Thai traditional *lakhon*

created by Krom Silapakorn, or those which cannot be fitted in Thai theatre genre classifications, are mostly described as *lakhon phanthatang* or sometimes as dance in *phanthatang* style.

During my fieldwork in 2012, I interviewed many Thai dance scholars and artists on the question of ‘what is *lakhon phanthatang*’. I tried to probe the limits of the genre by asking whether *Mong Kut Dok Som* could be classified as *lakhon phanthatang*.<sup>5</sup> I pursued this line of argument with my interviewees because this story is about a Chinese family in Thailand. The singing and soundtrack of this television production are in mixed Thai and Chinese style. The costume of each character is designed on the basis of the nationality of each character - the third wife of this family is a former Chinese Opera star so her regular costume is *cheongsam*. The characters use their own dialect when they speak. I described *Mong Kut Dok Som* on the basis of the definition of *lakhon phanthatang*, which I learned when I was a student. In response to my question, most of the interviewees said that *Mong Kut Dok Som* cannot be called *lakhon phanthatang* because it has not been presented in *lakhon Ram*, the traditional dance-drama form. These responses point to the existence of alternative ways of defining *lakhon phanthatang*. The characteristics of *lakhon phanthatang* have been described and taught widely in Thai dance institutions, but there is still little consensus on what constitutes *lakhon phanthatang*.

### **Hybridity in *Lakhon Phanthatang***

*Lakhon phanthatang* in the perception of modern Thai theatre scholars such as Pornrat Damrhung and Parichat Jungwiwattanaporn is a form of hybrid theatre. However, Jungwiwattanaporn states that *lakhon phanthatang* contains an element of hybridity but not in the sense of Western hybridity (Jungwiwattanaporn interview).



Thai hybridity is constructed under the frame of Thainess and the cultural statements and the authority of art organisations.

Hybridity describes a new form created from mixing two or more forms, things or species, such as languages, plants, and animals – this includes cultures. However, new forms that are called hybrid are an amalgamation rather than contestation (Young 21). Young's explanation of hybridity fits the hybridity of *lakhon phanthang* in Thai traditional theatre. The hybrid characteristics of *lakhon phanthang* not only refer to the mix between Thai theatre forms and Western theatrical forms as in other hybrid performances such as *bangsawan* of Malaysia and the *komedi stambul* of Indonesia. It also includes a mix of Thai traditional dance and Thai folk dance forms, or a mix between Thai and other Southeast Asian regional dance forms. Additionally, the Thai theatre hybrid characters include a collage of two or more different sources to create the new form.

The hybridity of *lakhon phanthang* does not aim to imitate other theatre forms in an 'almost the same but not quite' manner to quote Bhabha (122). The hybridisation of *lakhon phanthang* uses appropriation, pastiche, and adaptation of different theatrical elements into a Thai dance style for the purpose of making something new. This process relates to the term mimicry described by Bhabha, which refers to a repetition and reformation through a discursive process. The mimicry representation is 'partial presence' expressing ambivalent identity (Bhabha 123). However, traditions, cultures and performances, developed or shaped into a hybrid form also retain characteristics of their original form (Um 6).

### **Characteristics of *Lakhon Phanthang***

*Lakhon phanthang* has to have elements of the Thai traditional dance form. Wantanee Muangboon, one of the directors of Krom Silapakorn, states in an interview that *ram* or dance movements are a requirement for creating *lakhon phanthang*. However, this does not require use of a sophisticated dance as in *lakhon nai* (court dance). Pothiwetchakul also suggests that if a production presents foreign stories without any Thai dance movement it cannot be called *lakhon phanthang* (interview).

The dance movements in *lakhon phanthang* can be both Thai traditional dance and a mix of Thai and non-Thai dance movements. The traditional hand gestures, body balance, leg positions are used in *lakhon phanthang*. However, the dance movements are mainly based on Thai traditional dance gestures and some dance gestures' symbolism is created to denote the foreign characteristics. For example, the symbolic dance movements for acting as a Chinese character are represented by hand gestures. Thai dancers use their index and middle fingers to point out and other three fingers held together to denote a Chinese character, whereas Laotian and Mon characteristics are shown by swaying the shoulders following the music tunes. Thai traditional hand gestures such as *jeeb* (the end of the thumb and index fingers touching, the other three fingers extended) and *wong* (straight arms with hands curved) are also used to denote Laotian and Mon nations.

The literary works used for *lakhon phanthang* are foreign stories. They might derive from Thai literature such as *Phra Lor* (King Lor) and *Phya Phanong* (King Phanong), *Phuchanasibtid* (Conqueror of the ten directions) and new plays adapted from Thai famous novels (Chanchareon 11), or might come from foreign literatures, chronicles and tales such as *Rachathirat* (the War between the Burmese and Mons,

based on the Mon chronicle) (Yupho, *Khon* 221), *Samkok* (Romance of the three kingdoms, a story from Chinese literature) (Rutnin, *Dance Drama* 118). In addition, *lakhon phanthat* can also present a Thai story but some characters in the play need to be of other ethnicities. For example, *Khun Chang Khun Phane* is an old Thai literary work, in which the story takes place in the Supanburi province (the middle part of Thailand). In this story, the two wives of Khun Phane, Sroy-Fa and Sri-Mala are ladies from the northern part of Thailand. Another example is *Phra Abai Mani* (King Phra Abai Mani), in which Nang Laweng, one of major character, is a European and *Kria-thong*, which narrates the story of the Pichit province in the northern part of Thailand: they have been used for *lakhon phanthat* (Yupho, *Khon* 185-251). However, the plays of *lakhon phanthat* today are mostly about other nationalities. *Khun Chang Khun Phane*, *Phra Abai Mani* and *Kria-thong* are now used for other Thai dance-drama theatre genres. The language in the play is both poetic prose and colloquial dialogue and sometimes it includes foreign words (Damrhung 372).

The music and songs of *lakhon phanthat* are presented by a Thai classical orchestra called *wong pi pat* (Sukvipat 50). This band consists of six musical instruments: *ranad ek* (bamboo xylophone), *khong wong* (gong), *thapon* (drum), *klong thad* (a pair of big drums), *pi* (Thai flute) and *ching* (cymbals). This is an ordinary musical ensemble for Thai dance and theatre. However, the most remarkable musical style of *lakhon phanthat* is the so-called *phleng ok phasa*, which refers to music and singing in different accents and tunes to represent foreign characters. Pamela Myers-Moro in *Thai Music and Musicians in Contemporary Bangkok* (1993) explains *phleng ok phasa* using the term *samning*, which refers to musical style presenting a foreign place and people such as *phleng laaw* or Lao

songs, *phleng pama* or Burmese song, and *phleng jeen* or Chinese songs that ‘the musical features associated with each tone either derive from and/or are imitations of the distinctive music of the nation, though all have been molded to suit the Thai music style. They are representation of foreign musics, springing from the impressions of the composer’ (Myers-Moro 73-74).

The costume of *lakhon phanthatang* is also in mixed style. Rutnin suggests that the costume for *lakhon phanthatang* has been modified to present more realistic costumes following the national culture indicated in the plays (*Dance, Drama* 118). However, it is difficult to explain how costumes in *lakhon phanthatang* are mixed as it has no fixed rules or a colour dress code as other Thai traditional dance theatre forms (Muangboon interview). In one *lakhon phanthatang* production, the costume of each character is designed in relation to the background of character. A Chinese character wears the Chinese opera costume including Chinese opera make-up style whereas a Lao king wears a Thai traditional dance costume but the headdress is changed to differentiate from a regular Thai traditional dance costume. Some costumes’ cloth might be based on *khon* but the jewellery and headdress may be derived from *lakhon nai* (court dance-drama).

### **Discourse of *Lakhon Phanthatang* and *Lakhon Nai*: Equal but Unequal**

*Lakhon phanthatang* is classified as a traditional theatre genre and categorised in the group of *lakhon ram*, same as *lakhon nai*, *lakhon nok* and *lakhon chatrri* (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 10-12). Therefore, the status of all these dance-drama should be equal as a group of traditional theatre genres. However, *lakhon phanthatang*, a traditional dance theatre in hybrid form, is perceived as an inauthentic traditional dance form and less sophisticated than other high art forms such as *lakhon nai*

(Sompit 15, Muangboon interview). This notwithstanding, *lakhon phanthang* and *lakhon nai* share theatrical elements with each other. *Lakhon nai* or royal court dance-drama can be based on only four stories such as *Inao* (*Panji* tale), *Rammakien* (Ramayana story in the Thai version), *Unarut* (the grandson of Krishna's story) and *Dalang* (*Panji* tale in different poetic language) (Damrongrachanubhap 334). The stories *Inao* and *Dalang* originated from Javanese tales, and *Rammakien* was taken from an Indian epic so the stories originate in foreign literature. This is one of the characteristics of *lakhon phanthang*, that of presenting a foreign story. However, *lakhon nai* is the king and royal family's entertainment. So, the language in the plays is beautiful and highly formal. The language in *lakhon nai* plays uses elegant poetic prose. The aesthetics in *lakhon nai* plays relies on more elegant language and on dramatic imagination. In contrast, *lakhon phanthang* might be composed using poetic prose language but it emphasises the use of colloquial dialogues for telling stories and to add a comic emotion.

*Phleng ok phasa* is used in *lakhon phanthang* and traditional dance-drama form as an expression of another national culture. In the *Inao* story of *lakhon nai*, *phleng ok phasa* is used in this theatre form to present Javanese / Indonesian musical flavour and set the ambient of the performance. The significantly different theatrical element is the costume. *Lakhon phanthang* presents a mixed costume, that can be changed and adapted, *lakhon nai*, in contrast, must be presented using the Thai traditional costume *yun khrung*, richly embroidered with a beautiful headdress similar to that of *khon* but without the mask (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 118). In addition, dancers of *lakhon nai* are mainly female dancers, whereas for *lakhon phanthang* there is a mixed cast.

All these characteristics are evidence of a difference in sophistication between *lakhon phanthat* and *lakhon nai*. It is the reason for the low status of *lakhon phanthat* in the perception of Thai dance artists and students, which I will discuss in chapter five. This is not about the popularity of the dance form in society but about the creation of an artistic hierarchy within traditional dance and theatre.

The roles and duties, including the development of the dance forms, impact upon the admiration felt for traditional theatre. I would like to give an example to clarify this statement. Generally, the *Inao* story is used in *lakhon nai* performance, as mentioned. There is a play called *Inao Tang Java* (*Inao* in Javanese style) performed on the Thai National Theatre stage. Performances present the *Inao* story in its Javanese ambience. Javanese costumes and gamelan are used. The dance movements are a mix between Thai and Javanese dance styles. *Phleng ok phasa* is used and the singers sing in Thai dialect. In this case, it would seem that *Inao Tang Java* presents elements of hybridity just like *lakhon phanthat*. However, *Inao Tang Java* is not classified as *lakhon phanthat* but as *lakhon nai* because the *Inao* story is used for *lakhon nai* and is symbolic of the royal court dance, which is a high art form, the same as *khon* performance (Muangboon interview).

*Lakhon phanthat* emerged as a popular theatre form for the common people and was modified later by the court. *Lakhon nai*, on the other hand, was first developed by the court and for the court, which is at the peak of the Thai social structure. *Inao Tang Java* and *lakhon phanthat* are evidence of the cultural value of court art. The two genres are neatly separated from one another by their historical origins in different social strata.

## **Research Methodology**

The research for this thesis has been conducted using both ethnographic and historical research methods, by which I became involved in *lakhon phanthatang* in various ways. My research approaches are drawn from the fields of dance and theatre arts and cultural anthropology, allowing me to scrutinise the diversity of *lakhon phanthatang* in Thai society. Alongside with the ethnographic and historical methods, I am involved with *lakhon phanthatang* as a dancer, a lecturer and as a member of the audience. This thesis is based on documentary research, personal interviews and personal *lakhon phanthatang* practice. Part of the documentary research was done at Royal Holloway, University of London and at the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London whereas the archival research and the interviews were mostly conducted in Bangkok, Thailand. Furthermore, online interviews were also done while I was based in London. Taking into consideration the analysis of data yielded by the ethnographic approach, Martyn and Atkinson explain further that:

The analysis of data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider, contexts. What are produced, for the most part, are verbal descriptions, explanations, and theories; qualification and statistical analysis play a subordinate role at most (3).

My ethnographic research is based upon one year of fieldwork conducted between July 2012 and July 2013 in Bangkok. During my fieldwork period, I

observed, performed, gave lectures and led discussion groups on *lakhon phanthatang*. I also conducted interviews with Thai dance scholars and lecturers, Thai dance artists, professional cultural workers and audience members with the aim of helping me to understand more closely the particular dynamics of *lakhon phanthatang* in Thai society.

### **Organisation of the Thesis and Thematic**

The first chapter of this thesis offers an historical and socio-cultural overview of the diverse Siamese community in the nineteenth century. The chapter describes the context for the historical development of dance-drama in *phanthatang* style. Additionally, the emergence of the popular urban culture in Siam is also analysed in this chapter, identifying it as what engenders the development of *lakhon phanthatang* in dance-drama form by the court and subsequently by Krom Silapakorn. I focus on the question of how the social and cultural environment of Siam in the nineteenth century impact on the emergence of the popular theatre. *Lakhon phanthatang* is interpreted as a means by which Thai people of the period responded to the diversity of Siamese society.

Chapter two concerns the process of formulation of the dance-drama form as *lakhon phanthatang* in the period of the political revolution of the twentieth century. The revival, standardisation and assimilation of the popular theatre forms into traditional theatre are the main focus of this chapter by means of an account of how the old theatre forms were reinstated on the first National Theatre from the 1940s to the 1950s. I investigate why the term *lakhon phanthatang* has been used and how the term's meaning impacts on the understanding of form, content and context of this



performance. I analyse how popular theatre in the nineteenth century has been revived and systematised in this period of socio- political changes.

Chapter three focuses upon Seri Wangnaitam's *Phuchanasibtid*, one of the most popular productions of Krom Silapakorn in the 1980s. In this chapter, I scrutinise *lakhon phanthang* in the context of modern society in Bangkok by analysing the cultural factors interacting with the representation of traditional performance. This chapter discusses the new phenomenon of Thai traditional theatre which emerges from the popularity of the older traditional theatre and is underpinned by modernity. I provide a full translation of one episode of *Phuchanasibtid* in chapter four to illustrate this influential *lakhon phanthang* production's verbal texture.

Chapter five concerns itself with *lakhon phanthang* in the present through an analysis of *lakhon phanthang* in two different institutions, *lakhon phanthang* of Krom Silapakorn and *lakhon phanthang* within an academic context. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a picture of *lakhon phanthang* through these different lenses to understand *lakhon phanthang*'s existence as a form of traditional theatre in the modern world. In the first part of the chapter I position myself as audience and an outsider to *lakhon phanthang* as presented by Krom Silapakorn. This part of the chapter discusses the development of *lakhon phanthang* productions within the framework of ancient Thai dance-drama conventions, as aimed at a modern audience. Additionally, I discuss the younger generation of dance artists from Krom Silapakorn, a new wave within a conservative organisation, with influence over the form and presentation of *lakhon phanthang*. Because of them, *lakhon phanthang* productions of this period tend to be modern and new. However, *lakhon phanthang* productions are still presented frequently basing them on the traditional *lakhon phanthang* repertoires. I also talk about the hierarchical structure in Krom Silapakorn,

which is a powerful factor in shaping and/or hindering the creativity and the development of *lakhon phanthang* productions nationally.

In the chapter's next part, my concern is with *lakhon phanthang* within the educational system. I discuss how *lakhon phanthang* is transmitted to the younger generations drawing on my personal teaching experience at the Performing Arts Department (PAD) of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. I show that the teaching of *lakhon phanthang* within higher education provides the link of cultural transmission from the dance of Krom Silapakorn to the dance practice in the curriculum. I give a critical account of the learning and teaching of *lakhon phanthang* within the educational system in which students are encouraged to learn the traditional dance forms and choreographic patterns based on Krom Silapakorn's dancing styles to preserve national art and culture. In addition, students practise *lakhon phanthang* in class by repeating and following the dance movements imparted by their teachers. After class, social media and online services such as YouTube and Google act as the main mnemonic resources for the students.

Chapter six is focused on *lakhon phanthang* in the context of a rite of passage. I argue that *lakhon phanthang* presented at Krom Silapakorn and as taught in educational institutions is the traditional *lakhon phanthang* in terms of repertoire and dance choreographic patterns. But through a rite of passage such as a funeral *lakhon phanthang* communicates to the community. Not only is the theatrical *lakhon phanthang* further developed but the *phanthang* as a dance form is regularly presented as part of a ritual event and as such it continues to evolve. I reflect on this through my own experience, as I danced *phanthang* at the funeral of a mother's friend in 2011 and at a close friend's funeral in 2012. I also discuss why *lakhon phanthang* and dance in *phanthang* style are used at a funeral event as a ritual

performance. *Lakhon phanthatang* and the *phanthatang* dance style are adapted and presented at a sad event to bring people out of their sorrow and to express something about the character of the deceased. Furthermore, I investigate *lakhon phanthatang* and the *phanthatang* dance form as a process reflect on how both these performances speak to a community audience, beyond the form's identity as a national theatrical genre.

## Notes

1. This was a Sunday school arranged in the temple precincts. The purpose of the school was dissemination of the Buddhist doctrine or *dhamma* to children in the community. The students learn *dhamma* in the morning, taught by monks, and in the afternoon they practise Thai dance, Thai music and Thai singing, taught by volunteers from the community. However, the afternoon class is not compulsory; students attend depending on their interest.

2. *Lakhon Cak Cak Wong Wong* is the name of a spoken drama on television presented every morning at the weekend. The plays of this drama derive from Thai literature, folk tales and Buddhist Jataka tales.

3. Department of Fine and Applied Arts in Bangkok

4. Thai traditional dance-drama consists of three genres of performance, *lakhon chatri*, *lakhon nai* and *lakhon nok*.

5. *Mong Kut Dok Som* (The Orange Blossom Crown) is a Thai modern work of fiction written by Taitao Sujaritkul, which was adapted to television soap opera in 2010 and gained popularity among Thai common people. The story is about the leader of Chinese family, who has five wives of different ethnicities: two are Chinese, one is Thai, one is from northern Thailand, and one is a *farang* (Western) lady.

## Chapter 1: A History of *Lakhon Phanthang*

### Introduction

*Lakhon phanthang* is a flexible Thai performance genre. Its very name denotes adaptability. Categorized as both ‘a new form of *lakhon*’ and as a ‘hybrid dance theatre,’ it emerged as a dance and theatrical form in the nineteenth century outside the Thai royal court and underwent further development in response to the modernisation following the social revolution in Siam (the official name for Thailand for the period 1851-1939) (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 12; Damrhung, ‘From Phar Lor’ 112; Montrisant 115). The hybridity of *lakhon phanthang* is inter-Asian, an area of Asian theatre practice that has received much less scholarly attention than Asian-European hybridity. Asian chronicles and tales from Laos, Mons, Burma and China are used for the performance of *lakhon phanthang* mingled with Thai traditional narratives. Dance movements, instrumental music, songs and costumes are borrowed from other Asian performance traditions. Thai theatrical elements are mixed with Chinese operatic costumes and make-up or with Burmese dance costumes and movement. *Lakhon phanthang* represents foreign cultures from a Thai perspective and narrates stories through Thai dance movements. Thai aesthetics informs the new performance form (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 230).

From inception, *lakhon phanthang* was presented on stage using Western theatrical elements, such as electrical footlights. The programme of performances for each week was advertised outside the theatre hall and there was an admission charge. This way of consuming performance was novel in the nineteenth century. It engendered a new relationship between theatre and society, and responded to new

cultural values in urban Bangkok. It was a form that articulated 'the consciousness of a new [middle] class' (Williams, *Marxism* 124).

From the mid-nineteenth to the earlier part of the twentieth century, Siam modernised very rapidly. Modernisation consisted of a strong influence of Western culture which spread throughout Siam, in particular in Bangkok at the royal court and among the common people (Winichakul 38). The Siamese elite linked with the royal court introduced modernity into Siamese society by attempting to integrate Western knowledge and behaviour with indigenous traditions. Modernity was articulated through a royal court perspective as a 'mixture of Westernization and Siamization,' with imitation of Western styles being the norm (Winichakul 42; Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 96). This could be seen in architecture, for example the new palace, the Chakri Mahaprasart Throne Hall in Bangkok and other buildings in the countryside were constructed and furnished by mixing Thai and European styles. Dinner at court was in a European style, consumed while sitting at table and using European cutlery (Peleggi 48). Modernisation, from the standpoint of the commoner, on the other hand, meant something quite different. The arrival of missionaries and their missionary zeal stirred the emotions of Siamese people, who strongly believed in and respected Buddhism and other religious traditions from India, such as Hinduism. The missionaries possessed expertise and skills hitherto unknown to Thais and they brought their new knowledge to Thai society; however, they were seen as inimical to Buddhism (Winichakul 41).

The impact of modernisation on the way of life of Thai people affected their traditional beliefs. Modernity generated a new social structure and renewed the relationship between society and its institutions (cf. Habermas and Ben-Habib 3-4). However, an awareness of change and the fear of losing indigenous traditions also

arose in the consciousness of Thai people. This consciousness was an ‘ambivalent effect’ of modernisation, based on the desire for novelty and a simultaneous awareness of the possible negative effects of modernity (Munakata 100). This is the reason why the missionaries in Thailand, at that time, were not able to convert but succeeded in introducing new knowledge and technologies.

Siam was a culturally diverse nation. Several multi-ethnic communities, such as Chinese, Laotian, and Malay, lived in the city of Bangkok. Each community was at liberty to carry on their traditions and culture. However, Siam retained its own culture and national identity and also integrated foreign cultures into the fabric of Siamese society, thus transforming them (Cornwel-Smith 11). The way of life of the Thai people was modernised through western influence. This includes theatrical practices.

*Lakhon phanthat* is a good example of a form of stylised theatre that was underpinned by the diversity of multi-ethnic cultures and Thai people’s desire to be novel during this period of modernisation. But, as we shall see, *lakhon phanthat* also expressed the ambivalence of modernity. It was developed in parallel with the emergence of the first public theatre in urban Bangkok, established by Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong, also known as Chao Phraya Mahin.<sup>1</sup> The *Lakhon* of Chao Phraya Mahin was characterised by hybridisation of Thai traditional theatre with non-Thai theatre forms. This novel theatre form was for the Thai elite and the middle class, accommodating the taste of multi-ethnic audiences in modern Bangkok. Moreover *lakhon phanthat* was not only performed in public theatres but also at court.

This chapter will focus on the social and cultural circumstances surrounding urbanisation and modernisation in Bangkok, which generated emergent new form of

theatrical culture during the mid-nineteenth century. I would like to propose that *lakhon phanthatang* is one way to explore and represent the diversity of multi-ethnic culture in Thai society. This art form is not the product of an individual but a cultural product of its time. Under the process of modernisation in urban Bangkok, stimulated by Western influence, an inter-Asian cultural hybrid arose in Thailand at this time. I argue that *lakhon phanthatang* embodies an inter-Asian cultural hybrid, which differs from other popular Asian hybrid theatrical forms that came about mainly from a mix of indigenous Asian performance forms and Western theatre, resulting in genres such as *bangsawan* (Malay opera), *komedi stambul* (Malay opera in Java), *likay* (Thai folk dance-drama) and *ch'angguk* (Korean traditional opera) (Cohen and Noszlopy 7; Killick 47). Furthermore, I argue that the diversity we find in *lakhon phanthatang* represents the Thai understanding of other cultures and the way Thais negotiate Asian modernity from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

Before going into the history of *lakhon phanthatang*, I would like discuss the phenomena of urbanisation and modernisation in the nineteenth century.

### **Urbanisation and Modernisation of Bangkok in the Nineteenth Century**

In the nineteenth century, Bangkok, known as the 'Venice of the East',<sup>2</sup> was the busy cosmopolitan capital city of Siam. It was surrounded by the Chaophraya River, a major transportation hub and a major port of trade and immigration (Peleggi 31; Young, *The Kingdom* 1; Kenworthy 1). In Thai, Bangkok was known formally as *Krung Thep* or 'the Great City of Angels,'<sup>3</sup> a reference to the legend that the great city was built by the gods as the dwelling place of angels (Cummings 23). Bangkok rapidly became the centre of political power, economy, culture, and education of the Siamese kingdom. The urbanisation of Bangkok began in the mid-nineteenth century

and the city continued to grow until the first decade of the twentieth century, a period that corresponds with the rule of King Mongkut (King Rama IV, r.1851-1868) and King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V, r.1868-1910). Westernisation had a vast impact on Siam, in particular on Bangkok, during this period, when colonisation from the West spread through South and Southeast Asia. Siam's king introduced foreign policies to keep Western colonialism at bay and governed the country cautiously. Westernisation in Bangkok stimulated the modernisation of society and culture. The arrival of missionaries, to disseminate Christian teaching attempting to convert Thais to Christianity, brought new disciplinary knowledge, such as medicine, printing, astronomy and foreign literature to Bangkok (Kitiarsa 17). In this way, the social structure, political system and customs were reformed widely (Bunnag 55).

The modernisation of Siam was initiated by the monarchy and spread to society at large. In the early nineteenth century, Western modernity was absorbed and localised by the royal court to turn the country into 'a civilised nation'. Then, in the twentieth century, the modernisation of Siam was propelled by a new, urban, educated middle class. Not only were Western ideas, lifestyle, entertainment and sports presented at court, but also the 'educational system, administration, infrastructure, the bureaucracy, the monkhood and the army were modernised under the direction of Western advisers' (Peleggi 14). In addition, royal children, the leaders of the future, were educated in Europe. The royal court absorbed Western culture and believed that the West was a model of civilisation<sup>4</sup> and modernisation' (Baker and Phongpaichit 40; Kitiarsa 18).

Accordingly, the notion of Siamese modernity has been recently redefined in several ways. It suggests civilisation, which implies *farang* (Western)<sup>5</sup> attitudes and behaviour (Baker and Phongpaichit 99; Peleggi 10). It might also be defined as a



new invention, which influences popular beliefs and ways of life opposing indigenous tradition. In addition, the modernity of Siam expresses the process of a 'state of advancement, betterment, progress, even goodness or virtue' (Winichakul 19). Siam embraced Western influence and modernity with an independent approach, which was different from that of its neighbours. It opted to confront the Western powers rather than 'resist Westernisation because of its association with colonialism' (Williams, 'Wave of Cultural' 52).

As Siam was never formally colonised by the West, modernity and its influence were articulated within Siamese national and cultural identity, or Thainess, rather than slavishly following a Western behaviour. Thainess is a notion by which Thais are distinguished from other ethnic groups by emphasising their difference (Winichakul 3). Thainess expresses the characteristics and qualities of being Thai. Sattayanurak discusses the ideology of Thainess under the absolute monarchy as follows: 'When Thailand had to face Western culture that came with superior power, Thailand's ruling class chose to accept Western-style material progress and maintain most parts of 'Thainess' in culture by assigning new definitions to various constituent parts of Thainess to prevent it from being viewed as barbaric' ('Thainess' 8). Thainess from the nineteenth to the twentieth century was centred on the king's power. The different ethnic communities in Thailand at that period lived as subjects of the king. The ideology of Thainess was meant to exclude and differentiate. For example, the terms *chek* and *jeen* refer to the Chinese, *khake* refers to Indo-Malay, Indian, Middle Eastern people, and most Asian Muslim people, and *farang* refers to Westerners, denoting European or white people.

Modernity in Siam was constituted by the hybridisation of the traditional and the modern, and by the diverse cultures in society (Canclini 2). Prince

Damrongrajanubhab stated that ‘The Tai [Thai people] knew how to pick and choose. When they saw some good feature in the culture of other people, if it was not in conflict with their own interests, they did not hesitate to borrow it and adapt it to their own requirements’ (Damrongrajanubhab quoted in Peleggi 10). Kitiarsa notes in the conclusion of his study ‘Farang as Siam’s Occidentalism’ that *farang* played a most important role in helping Thais to create a national and cultural identity, which was part of the modernity project of the country. This modernity project was a ‘production of hybridization’ between the Thai self and *farang* other in the creation of Thai modernity (42). Hybridisation with the West was demonstrated through court fashion. Court ladies were encouraged to wear lace blouses that imitated Victorian costume styles, matched with a lower silk wrap. Gentlemen, especially noblemen, wore *raj-cha-pattern*—a formal white shirt or jacket designed by King Rama V when he visited British-India in 1871, along with a *jongkraben*<sup>6</sup> (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 217). Buildings showed hybridity of style; for example, Dusit Park Palace was constructed in Thai-Western architecture as a royal villa (Smith, *A Physician* 74).

The royal court and the Bangkok public sphere were open to receiving and experimenting with the new inventions and modernity from the West. The royal court appreciated ‘Western materials and Western intellect’ and they used them as a mark of civilisation applying the Western fashions to Siamese court tradition (Peleggi 144). The English language and Western knowledge were introduced into the royal family by the king, who employed Western tutors to instruct the royal children and the court ladies (Smith, *A Physician* 11). New customs and knowledge were propagated by the king, such as commoners being allowed to wear shirts while in the presence of the king, and women being allowed to perform on the public stage.

Western astronomy was used rather than old Thai astronomy (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 144; Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 77). All of these changes attempted to prove that Siam was 'the equal of the West in terms of knowledge' and culture, and also that Siam was a civilised country (Winichakul 57).

Civilised Siam was marked by the way of life and customs of the Thai people in Bangkok. Bangkok grew rapidly as an urbanised society; multi-ethnic communities, transportation, and the economy were developed significantly. The network of canals and road systems was expanded and developed around the city (Peleggi 32). By royal command, commercial buildings and rows of houses were established for foreign merchants to rent. The Royal Thai Mint was established in 1860 and in 1861 construction of the 'New Road' or *Tanon Charoen Krung* (Charoen Krung Road) began, completed in 1864 (Smith, *A physician* 15). A Western architectural style appeared in Bangkok for palaces, temples, and commercial buildings. Public schools and hospitals were established in the city. Newspapers, journals, and advertisements were published in both Thai and English by the royal court and by Western missionaries to inform people about Siam and other countries, even though few Thai people were literate. At that time, newspapers were a channel for communication and expressed the ideas of Thai people. In addition, dramatic literature, such as *Inao*, *Ramakien*, *Rachathirat*, *Samkok*, and other stories, were printed and gained popularity among Thai readers (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 382).

The opening of the Siam economy to global trade increased the latter significantly after Siam signed the Bowring Treaty with Britain in 1855 (Winichakul 13; Bunnag 52). After signing the treaty, the economic system in Siam was developed as free trade rather than monopoly trade by the state (Virulrak,

*Wiwatthanakarn* 155). Import-export firms and shipping businesses acted as bridges between Siam and the outside world. Modern companies such as engineering companies, sugar factories, rubber companies, printing and transport companies, both Siamese and foreign-owned, emerged in large numbers (Wright 198). Commercial buildings, roads, railways and canals were constructed to support capital growth and business activities.

With the expansion of business, free trade, and social development, the population, both Thai and non-Thai, increased considerably in urban Bangkok. By the end of the nineteenth century, Bangkok had an urban population of approximately 600,000 (Wright 248). It consisted of Thais (Siamese), Foreign Asians<sup>7</sup> (Chinese, Laotians, Malays, Cambodians and Burmese, including Middle-Eastern and Indian people) and small number of *farang* (westerners) that had settled in Bangkok. The Chinese represented the largest group of foreigners that had migrated to Siam (Peleggi 36). They ran businesses and traded as merchants and sold various products, such as clothes and food. Malay sailors and labourers settled in the capital and in rural areas (Bowring 90). Laotians, Cambodians, and Peguans (i.e. Mon) were labourers and crafts people. In addition, Westerners from England, America, France and other European countries acted as missionaries, physicians, traders, and state officials. Most private company owners and labourers in Siam were foreigners from China, the Malay Peninsula and Laos, while indigenous people were state labourers and workers in companies. State officers were Siamese, but there were foreigners, in particular European people, that worked as state officers and as assistants to the king as well. The growth of urbanisation and modernisation led to the idea of social and cultural development, including the emergence of commercial theatre and entertainment in Bangkok.

## **Entertainment in Urban Bangkok**

Bangkok as an urban city became a cultural hub that received cultural material from many directions. In the nineteenth century the three major groups in society, which had a role in creating theatre and performance were the royal court, Thai commoners, and the multi-ethnic communities.

The royal court was an important institution in determining the direction of traditions and culture in the country. During the nineteenth century, the royal court acted as a 'coin of Thai identity,' on the one side presenting tradition, and on the other presenting the modern (Damrhung, 'From Phra Lor' 111). Traditional theatres such as *lakhon nai* and *lakhon nok* were revived and encouraged, coexisting with the development of modern Western culture in Siam. For example, after King Rama IV ascended the throne, by royal decree he revived *lakhon phuying*, which had been prohibited from being performed at court during previous reigns (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 166). Moreover the king allowed members of the aristocracy and private dance troupes with female dancers to perform *lakhon phuying* in public. King Vajiravudh (King Rama VI, r. 1910-1925) decreed that Siam should be a lively and joyful country with entertainment available throughout the city. Thai dance and theatre should be seen as symbolic of the country's honour. The king was empowered to request performances at court by private dance troupes on special occasions. Dancers would be handsomely rewarded by the king (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 96-97). This royal decree points to the emergence of a new culture of entertainment, by which the development of dance-drama in the country was encouraged (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 77).

In 1879, a new performance genre, *lakhon phut* or spoken drama in Western style, was first presented and performed at a temporary theatre in the palace of King

Chulalongkorn. The king participated in this performance as a director and as a performer (see fig 1.) together with other royals and members of the aristocracy. The first *lakhon phut* performance was based on a story of the *Arabian Nights*,<sup>8</sup> the episode 'The tale of the sleeper awakened' (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 373; Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 111; Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 227). The *Arabian Nights* had been dramatised in other South and Southeast Asian theatres at around the same time, including Parsi theatre and *komedi stambul* (Cohen, 'On the Origin' 316; Cohen, *The Komodie Stamboel* 347). The first Thai *lakhon phut* was in a style that mixed spoken drama, with monologues and dialogues in western theatre style and Thai traditional recitative singing (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 226).

Outside the court, entertainment and social traditions were even more lively. During the era of the revolution, in a libertarian atmosphere, private dance troupes and theatrical businesses increased in number in Bangkok. Commoners trained their female servants to perform dance-drama on the public stage for business purposes. In Bangkok, commercial theatres emerged to present a variety of performances and shows and it was a highly competitive business. Theatres constantly developed their performance according to fashion in order to attract audiences (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 241). Young notes that in the nineteenth century '*Lakhon* and *Yeegai* [*likay*]' were popular forms of amusement, attracting both Thais and foreigners (*Kingdom*, 163).

The first commercial theatre in Bangkok in the nineteenth century was the Siamese Theatre established by Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong, a high-ranking aristocrat<sup>9</sup> during King Mongkut's and King Chulalongkorn's reigns, who was also the owner of a private dance troupe named Lakhon Chao Phraya Mahin (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 196; Yupho, *Silapa* 95; Damrongrajanubhab and

Narisaranuwattiwong 230). The Siamese Theatre was built on the grounds of Chao Phraya Mahin's residence. Around 1882, this theatre changed its name to the Prince's Theatre, and introduced entrance fees (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 50).



Fig.1. The first cast of *lakhon phut*, performing the *Arabian Nights* episode 'The tale of the sleeper awakened' in 1879. King Chulalongkorn sits in the centre of the picture surrounded by his brothers and other royal family members. Courtesy of The National Archives of Thailand.

The Prince's Theatre presented traditional dance-drama performances (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 102). Later, Chao Phraya Mahin's dance troupe began to perform stories from foreign chronicles and tales. This theatre offered new

productions and new performance styles, which differed from those of other dance troupes (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 51). The new dance-drama style of Chao Phraya Mahin's dance troupe was the basis for the later development of *lakhon phanthang* and will be described at length below.

The other new form of entertainment which should be mentioned here is *lakhon dukdamban*. *Lakhon dukdamban* (the dance-drama opera) originated in 1891 through the collaboration between Chao Phraya Thewetwongwiwat<sup>10</sup> and Prince Narissaranuwattiwong<sup>11</sup> (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 124). This performance genre was based on Western opera, especially its music and chorus. It had its first performance as the new Thai traditional dance-drama opera at Rong Lakhon Dukdamban (Dukdamban Theatre) in 1899 (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 470). This theatre style required the dancers to dance and sing in the manner of Western opera singers. Additionally, the setting and props were an important element of the show, aimed at evoking the appropriate atmosphere (Damrhung, 'Lakon Dukdamban' 370). *Lakhon dukdamban* reflected Western influence and acceptance of Western values in Thai theatre. *Lakhon dukdamban* was first performed for the nobility and became popular among sophisticated audiences, and was often performed to welcome royal visitors. Later, there were performances for commoners who bought tickets to see it. *Lakhon dukdamban* was in business for only ten years, and in 1911 performances stopped because of Chao Phraya Thewet's health problems, and because Prince Naris was no longer able to take an active interest due to his court engagements (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 237).

*Lakhon Mon Luang Tuan*, *Lakhon Krom Phra Narathip*, *Lakhon Narumit* and *Lakhon Luang Narumit*<sup>12</sup>—all of these dance troupe names are linked to these the performances as also Prince Narathip Phraphanpong's dance troupe, managed by the



Prince. Initially, this dance troupe did not own its theatre hall like other companies. Prince Narathip Phraphanpong rented Dukdamban Theatre to perform his dance-dramas, and this dance troupe was often asked to perform at the royal palace (Kamran and Talaluck 45). It performed Thai traditional dance-drama similar to that of the court dance style and also a dance-drama based on historical plays. Later, following advice by King Chulalongkorn, Prince Narathip improved the dance standard and also the themes of the plays. His dance troupe presented new dance-drama styles with new stories, which included love and romance rather than historical tales, such as *Phra Lor* (a tragic love story of a Prince and two Princesses from the Laotian kingdom) and *Arab Ratri* (Arabian Nights) performed in *lakhon phanthang* style (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 120). *Lakhon Krom Phra Narathip* was admired by court audiences and commoners alike; performances exhibited elaborate dance movements and storylines that were considered to be very enjoyable and full of emotion.

*Likay*,<sup>13</sup> or what Young called *Yeegai*, one of the popular theatres in Bangkok in the nineteenth century, was developed by combining *Suat Khake* or *Dikay* (Islamic singing) and *Suat Kharuehhat* (Buddhist chanting at funerals) (Virulrak, *Likay* 29). It modified the Thai traditional performance elements (dancing, singing and music) in its performances (Brandon, *The Cambridge* 240). *Likay* used *phleng ok phasa*<sup>14</sup> in the overture (Tramote, *Karnlalean* 71). The stories were traditional tales. *Likay* dance movements were unsophisticated in style; however, this performance emphasised farcical emotion and feeling, expressed through characterisation and acting styles. In the nineteenth century, the most famous *likay* troupe that performed in Bangkok was *Likay Phraya Petchpranee* (Virulrak, *Likay* 27). This troupe established a permanent theatre in the commercial area and began to sell tickets for

performances, like the Prince's Theatre of Chao Phraya Mahin. The uniqueness of this troupe was in its costumes and plays. The owner adapted traditional dance-drama or *lakhon* costumes and plays, which had been popular with the audiences, to *likay* performances (Mahavajiravudh 3; Damrongrajanubhab and Narisaranuwattiwong 230). These performances were a popular form of entertainment among the lower classes in Siam (Young, *The Kingdom* 170).

In urban Bangkok, not only the permanent theatres, but also *Rong Bon* or gambling halls acted as art centres (Norman 421). The gambling hall allowed interaction of indigenous and foreign performances, among a diverse audience. Halls were located in accessible areas by the river, which was convenient for transportation. The gambling businesses were run by the Chinese:

The Chinese are inveterate gamblers...The gambling establishments are all in the hand of the Chinese. Gambling, like many other things in Siam, is a monopoly and the government sells to the highest bidder the privilege of licensing and controlling all such establishments in the country'...Men, women and little children all frequent the gambling-places (McDonald 149).

Gambling hall owners marketed their casinos by using performance to entertain gamblers. Tired and perhaps unlucky gamblers were thus relieved of their stress (see fig.2). The entertainment in the casino was Thai dance-drama and music, Thai folk songs, Chinese opera, and Chinese shadow puppet, and the shows began 'late in the afternoon and lasted half the night' (Bradley 233-235). Virulrak suggests

that the marketing strategy of the gambling halls was similar to that of casinos in the United States, and that these establishments might therefore be called ‘Casino Theatres’ (Wiwatthanakarn, 133). The gambling hall was a popular place for entertainment and leisure for both nobility and commoners from the time of King Nangklao (King Rama III, r.1824-1851) until a ban on casinos was implemented by King Vajiravudh (King Rama VI, r.1910-1925) in 1917 (Damrongrajanubhab, ‘Tamnam Rueng Lakhon’ 362).

The performances and entertainments of the multi-ethnic groups of people in the Siamese kingdom were an important part of life in the capital. The migration of people from South and Southeast Asian countries to Bangkok allowed Bangkok to become a diverse cultural city (Peleggi 46). Multiethnic groups of people came to Siam and settled in communities within the city and in the outskirts. Each community had its own traditions, customs and entertainment forms. For example, the Chinese communities used their languages and preserved their original religious beliefs and Laotians had their own costumes and hairstyles which signalled their Laotian identity . This included their own music, songs, and dance (Bowring 89).

The Chinese were a large community in Siam. They consisted of Teochew, Hakka, Hokkiean, and other ethnolinguistic groups, brought in for the most part by steam ships during the period of expansion of the Siamese-Chinese trade in the early nineteenth century (Baker and Phongpaichit 34; Peleggi 45). For the Chinese community in Bangkok, *ngiu* or Chinese opera was a popular form of entertainment, also appreciated by Thais (Miller 135). Virulrak states ‘At the beginning [King Chulalongkorn], Chinese operatic troupes were employed from China to perform in Siam. Later, they [Siamese] established troupes to perform Chinese opera. They

performed on various occasions and in various places, especially in casinos’ (Wiwatthnakarn 247).

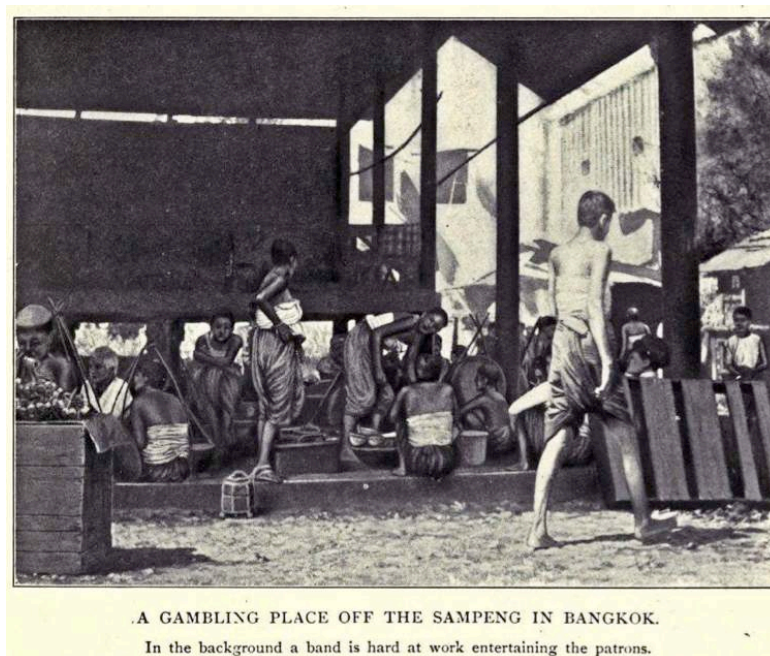


Fig.2. A gambling hall of the Chinese community in old Siam (Whitney 42)

Indonesian advertisements from Semarang (Java) reported the visit of the Giok Bing Hian Chinese opera troupe from Siam to Java in 1877; this troupe consisted of ninety members, including ‘four Siamese ladies’ (De Locomotief: Samarangsch Handels- en Advertentie-blad 25 August 1877).<sup>15</sup> This advertisement is not only evidence of the popularity of Chinese opera within and outside Bangkok, but it also shows that Siamese women were allowed to perform on stage. As Rutnin states, ‘after *Lakhon phuying* was no longer restricted to the royal court, most dance troupes began to use female dancers in all types of dance-dramas. Thus, they were found not only in *Lakhon Nai*, but also in *Lakhon Nok*, *Lakhon khake* (Malay dance-drama in *makyong* style, with Thai dialogue), and later in *Lakhon chatri*’ (81) – and, I would add, in Chinese opera.

The latter gained popularity in the capital also at court. Phra Pinklao (the second king during the reign of King Rama IV) trained his female dancers to perform a Chinese opera in Thai language by the title *Ngiu Wang Na* (Chinese opera of the second king) or *Ngiu Phu Ying* (Female Chinese opera) (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 79). He created a new Chinese opera costume imitating the original operatic costumes from China, which was used in the performances at his palace (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 149). Furthermore, Chinese opera had an influence on Thai commercial theatre, such as *Lakhon of Chao Phraya Mahin* and *lakhon rong of Prince Narathip*. Both dance troupes adapted the theatrical elements of Chinese opera such as dance movements, plays and costumes to their performances (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 247-248).

As for the Laotian community, it had its own entertainment. In 1865, *aei lao* (Laotian folk song) gained great popularity in Bangkok. It consisted of dancing with music or singing with music, and it told romance or love stories, performed by Laotians (Bowring 89). At that time, Thais preferred *aei lao* to be performed at their events rather than traditional Thai performances. With a concern about national heritage and the honour of the Siamese country, King Rama IV issued a royal decree prohibiting the performance of *aei lao*. He feared that *aei lao* would cause a decline of traditional performance and thus negatively affect the entertainment business (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 175).

The Malay community's dramatic arts were known to Thais as *lakhon khake* (Malay dance-drama), which referred to two kinds of performance: *makyong* and *bangsawan* (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 248). Damrongrajanubhap states that Malay performances came into Siam with the Malay immigration at the time of King Nangklao (King Rama III 1824-1851) ('Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 368-369). However, it is usually thought that *bangsawan* appeared in Siam as an entertainment

of the Malay community during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V 1868-1910). During the period of King Rama IV and King Rama V, the government promulgated a royal decree that placed a tax on performance. *Lakhon khake* was also taxed (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 90-91). In addition, Damrongrajanubhab states that the *Lakhon of Ta Sua*<sup>16</sup> (Ta Sua dance troupe) during the reign of King Rama IV performed a dance-drama that imitated the *makyong* style. The costumes followed a Malay design. Singing was in the Malay language, but dialogues were in Thai ('Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 369). This would suggest that Bangkok had Malay dance and music companies and that they may have been engaged to perform for both Thais and Malay people.

Moreover, travelling performance companies journeyed to Siam and presented performances in Bangkok. For example, Giuseppe Chiarini's circus, also known as The Royal Italian Circus, sailed to Bangkok after touring Java, Singapore and Burma. The Royal Italian Circus came to Bangkok in 1882. On 16 October 1882, they were asked to perform over three days for King Chulalongkorn in a big tent in a royal field (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 23). Parsi Theatre and *bangsawan* toured to Bangkok as well. It is apparent that urban Bangkok of this time presented a diversity of cultures and traditions, and that the Thai people accepted other traditions as being part of their culture. Thai theatre has been influenced and surrounded by foreign cultures, but 'the end result of this contact is quintessentially Thai' (Miller 113). The royal court style, in particular *lakhon phuying*, was allowed in a commercial theatre, which collected admission fees. Local and foreign commercial theatre shared and borrowed performance styles from each other, and multi-ethnic cultures generated diverse audiences and increased the demand for performance in society. All of this

contributed to the emergence and development of a hybrid-popular theatre form such as *lakhon phanthatang*.

### ***Lakhon of Chao Phraya Mahin: Dance-Drama before Lakhon Phanthatang***

Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong was born with the name Peng Penkul in 1819.<sup>17</sup> He was a Siamese government official from 1851 to 1894 (Nawigamune, *Tanon* 191). When he was twelve years old, his father<sup>18</sup> put him in service with Vajiranayan (the name of King Rama IV when he was a monk). Vajiranayan was very kind to Peng. He treated him as his own child (Nawigamune, *Natta-kam* 214). After Vajiranayan quit monk status to ascend the throne, becoming King Mongkut (King Rama IV in 1851), Peng followed him and became a royal official.

In 1857, Peng was assigned by King Mongkut to go to England as a Siamese ambassador and royal visitor of Queen Victoria (*Birmingham Daily Post* 9 December 1857). At that moment, he had not yet been appointed with the title Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong. He was still known as Chau Mun Sarbbedh Pakde, a chamberlain of King Mongkut. While he was in England, with a group of other ambassadors, he had the opportunity to see several theatre performances in London and in other English cities. He saw opera<sup>19</sup> and Howes' and Cushing's Circus in Birmingham.<sup>20</sup> He also saw a pantomime performed at Astley's and the Victoria Theatre,<sup>21</sup> and went to the Princess' Theatre<sup>22</sup> and Her Majesty's Theatre<sup>23</sup> in London.

Chau Mun Sarbbedh Pakde spent almost three months in England as a royal visitor. He acquired new knowledge and experience, not only of newer theatrical performance styles and techniques, but also of industrial and manufacturing practices. *The Birmingham Daily Post* reported the visit of the Siamese ambassadors

to Birmingham, saying that they observed the manufacturing of brass and metal. They were curious and delighted to experiment with and learn about new things, and they were convinced that it would benefit Siam's development (*Birmingham Daily Post* 10 December, 1857). In 1858, the ambassadors and their group returned to Siam. Chau Mun Sarbbedh Pakde was promoted to the status of Phraya Bhurudrattananaratchaphanrob by King Mongkut, and then, during King Chulalongkorn's reign, he was further ennobled as Phraya Ratchasupahwadee and Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong (Nawigamune, *Natta-kam* 213).<sup>24</sup>

Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong, or for short, Chao Phraya Mahin, had great artistic talent; he was a producer with his own his dance troupe, a writer, and a theatrical director. In the past, Thai nobility believed that having a dance troupe was guarantee of high honour and superior status (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 366). Therefore, it was a popular trend among the nobility to have their own private dance troupes, taking pride in the skills of their 'prima-donnas' (Young, *The Kingdom* 163). Dancers and musicians were usually domestic servants (Norman, 422). Before Chao Phraya Mahin went to Europe, he too had his own private dance troupe. Sometimes his dance troupe was asked by the king to perform at court on special royal occasions (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 102). After Chao Phraya Mahin returned from Europe in 1858, he was inspired to create a public theatre, which had never existed in Bangkok. As he explained:

...When I [Chao Phraya Mahin] visited Western countries. I saw that the Western countries, such as France and England, had many theatre halls for entertaining people. At the theatre hall, there was a box seat for the queen, the king, the prince, the



emperor, and the empress. They allowed theatre owners to place royal arms in the theatre as a symbol of the honour of the country and of the theatre's owner as well (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 60).

Chao Phraya Mahin, therefore, established a public theatre at his home and named it The Siamese Theatre. However, the exact date and year of The Siamese Theatre's establishment cannot be ascertained. Later, in 1882, the name of the theatre was changed to the Prince's Theatre. This was the first commercial theatre in Bangkok, as mentioned earlier. Mattani Rutnin opines that the Prince's Theatre was named after the 'Prince's Theatre' in London which Chao Phraya Mahin had visited while in England (*Dance, Drama* 221), whereas Prince Damrongrajanubhab notes that the name Prince's Theatre came from the name of Prince Penpatpong, the son of King Chulalongkorn and Chao Chom Manda Morrakot (one of Chao Phraya Mahin's daughters). Prince Penpatpong was Chao Phraya Mahin's grandson. Therefore, the Prince's Theatre would suggest the meaning of 'Lakhon of the Prince' (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 378). I would like to query the information concerning the naming of this theatre. In 1857, Chao Phraya Mahin did not visit the Prince's Theatre as Rutnin states, but the Princess Theatre in London. *The Morning Post* of the 20 January 1858 reports that the Siamese Ambassadors and followers attended the Princess Theatre to see a performance of *Hamlet*. My contention that the Bangkok theatre was named after the Princess Theatre in London is further supported by the date when the Princess Theatre and the Prince's Theater were established in London. The Princess Theatre was built between 1840 and 1841

and demolished in 1931, whereas all of the Prince's Theatres in London were opened later.<sup>25</sup>

Young notes that 'Siam had only one entertainment hall in the capital [Bangkok], where an admission fee was charged' (*Kingdom* 162). The entertainment hall in Young's note (dating from 1898) would be the Prince's Theatre of Chao Phraya Mahin because, during that period, other public theatres in Bangkok had yet to be established.<sup>26</sup> Before the twentieth century, public theatres were not fashionable among Thai people. The custom of going to a public theatre and buying a ticket in order to watch a performance deviated from the Thai tradition whereby Thai people could watch a performance for free on special occasions and at a gambling hall. Initially the Prince's Theatre was not a public theatre; Chao Phraya Mahin wished to use this theatre for creating and rehearsing new pieces and has his dance troupe perform for his personal entertainment and for special guests (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 60). Chao Phraya Mahin created a new performance style, different from that of other dance troupes. He made his troupe perform foreign stories and Thai traditional plays. He also employed dancers skilled in other performance styles, such as Chinese opera, to teach his own dancers and to perform in a mixed dance-drama style (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 119). But people who had watched Chao Phraya Mahin's performances at his theatre were very impressed and asked Chao Phraya Mahin to arrange another performance for which they were happy to pay an admission fee. Chao Phraya Mahin eventually decided to open his theatre as a public theatre and to charge an admission fee, imitating the Western custom, which he had witnessed in Europe (Narissaranuwattiwong 121).

The Siamese Theatre and the Prince's Theatre were located in the commercial area called Tha Tien, which was a prominent riverside market and a port of trade on

the east bank of the Chaophraya River in Bangkok (Phuchadabhirom 71). Audiences could reach the theatre by boat and by road (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 60). The interior of the Siamese Theatre was decorated simply, but it was functional. There was no elevated stage; the performance area was marked out on the floor by mats. The audience sat on the floor close to the performers. At the back of the stage a small seat or small platform was raised for the dancers who performed the queen's and king's roles (Young, *Kingdom* 167). The two exit doors for performers to enter and leave the stage were drawn in the form of the Western pillars. The backdrop was built in the form of a Thai palace wall and small lanterns were hung on the ceiling.



Fig. 3. Siamese Theatre. Image courtesy of Thummachak Prompuay.

On the other hand, the interior of the Prince's Theatre was more richly decorated and more modern than that of the Siamese Theatre (see fig. 4). Electric lighting was used on the stage and in the theatre. A large chandelier and small electric lanterns were hung on the ceiling. The upper parts of the stage doors were

decorated with a Thai gable. Small clocks were placed on the upper part of doors. On the upper backdrop scene, written in Thai, was a sentence that read *Sa Dang Kwam Du Pen Tee Pa Lard Ta* (To present the spectacle of performances). Coats of arms were placed on poles, and in addition, seats for the audience were arranged in the theatre and ticket prices differentiated among seats position. The ticket system not only changed the old tradition of watching theatre performance among Thai people, but also marked a class distinction:

‘This entertainment [performances at the Prince’s Theatre] is a performance for ladies and gentlemen. The seats are an exclusive space and uncrowded with lower class people, who wear dirty clothes or are naked from the waist up. *Phu Dee* [high-class people] dislike seeing *lakhon bon* [dance-drama at a gambling hall] and *lakhon nguan pleak* [a temporary performance arranged for special occasions] which admission fees are not required. They do not want to mingle with poor people. So they prefer paying for a performance at the Prince’s Theatre’ (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 190).

The characteristics of the Prince’s Theatre remind me of an essay by Rustom Bharucha, ‘Note on the Invention of Tradition,’ in *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*. Bharucha states that ‘tradition’ in the nineteenth-century commercial theatre meant ‘spectacle’. It provided audiences with new possibilities of adoring gods and mythological heroes in kinetic, technicolour settings (Bharucha 193).



Fig. 4. The Prince's Theatre. Image courtesy of Thummachak Prompuay

The Prince's Theatre offered a wide variety of performances in both dance-drama and non-narrative dance. The *Chotmaihet Phra Rat Chakit Raiwan* (1935) (Memoirs of the king's daily activities) of King Chulalongkorn records that, in 1880, Chao Phraya Mahin's dance troupe was asked to perform for the king on a royal occasion. During a five-day event, this dance troupe performed *rabam* (non-narrative dance), *Phra Apaimanee*, *Khun Chang Khun Phane*, *Inao*, and *Rachatirat*. On the last day of the performance King Chulalongkorn gave a reward to Chao Phraya Mahin (quote in Nawigamune, *Natta-kam* 56).

In addition, Henry Norman, a British journalist, describes his experience when he went to a Siamese theatre, saying that Siamese people spent the whole night from seven p.m. to two a.m. watching the 'same play, rather a portion of a play' at a

theatre. The stories, from Hindu mythology, were familiar to the audiences. The actors were mostly young girls, aged between seventeen to eighteen years, who had been practising Thai dance-drama from an early age (421). The costumes and dresses were to Norman's eyes very 'exotic' and beautiful, and differed from those of other dance troupes in Bangkok. While the name of this theatre is not mentioned explicitly by Norman, it was said to be owned by a 'most distinguished nobleman, a personal friend of the King,' and thus was likely the Prince's Theatre.

Thai dance-drama costumes and other dance costumes in other styles were used in the performances at the Prince's Theatre. The audiences were made up of ordinary Siamese and foreigners. The theatre had a seating capacity of around three to four hundred (Smith, *Chotmaiheat* 51; Norman 422). The performances at the Prince's Theatre became an attractive form of entertainment for both foreign and Thai audiences, who were bored with the old classical style and sought novelty (Rutnin, *Dance,Drama* 102).

In Thai dance scholarship and in the documentation at the Thai national archives, information about the Prince's Theatre is relatively scarce. Most of the documents mention that the performances at the Prince's Theatre of Chao Phraya Mahin were in a mixed dance form, without providing a more detailed description. However, there is a most valuable rare document, a typescript programme of the Prince's Theatre in Siam, now archived at the Newton Library of the University of Cambridge in England. It is the original copy of the programme of the Prince's Theatre, dated 25<sup>th</sup> November 1889. I would like to quote the entire information from this programme here.

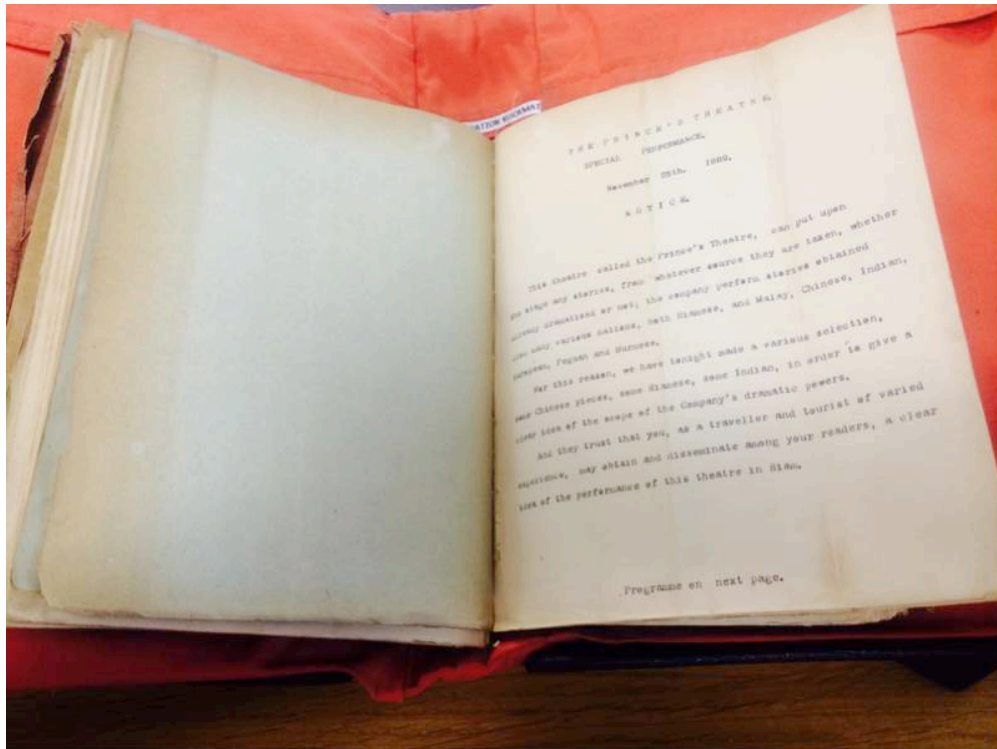


Fig. 5. The programme of the Prince's Theatre performed on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1889.  
Photo by Phakamas Jirajarupat

THE PRINCE'S THEATRE.

Special Performance.

November 25<sup>th</sup>. 1889.

NOTICE.

This theatre called the Prince's Theatre, can put upon the stage any stories, from whatever source they are taken, whether already dramatised or not; the company perform stories obtained from many nations, both Siamese, and Malay, Chinese, Indian, European, Peguan and Burmese.

For this reason, we have tonight made a various selection, some Chinese pieces, some Siamese, some Indian, in order to give a clear idea of the scope of the Company's dramatic powers.

And they trust that you, as a traveller and tourist of varied experience, may obtain and disseminate among your readers, a clear idea of the performance of this theatre in Siam.

Programme on the next page.

Act I.

At the New Year, Te-pra-but and Te-pra-ti-dar, companies of male and female angels, meet together, and dance various dances.

## Act II.

A male angel, named Te-pra-choon, comes down from heaven to meet these companies; they all dance and sing in various ways after Siamese custom, and then after European custom, including a Scotch dance. They will also use the tambourine in one portion of the dance.

## Act III.

Then a female angel, named Ma-ni-me-ka-lar, holding a sacred crystal in her hand, comes from heaven to meet them, and they converse together. Then, they dance together after Chinese fashion; they stand in rank, making the figure of a Chinese dragon (Mangkorn) following the crystal. There is also a fan dance, with various movements. They then arrange themselves in various figures in six pairs, while a seventh pair give the best Siamese figure dances; then after various Pegu, Malay and European dancing, they leave the stage

## Act IV.

A giant named Rama-soon, comes to join these companies of angels, and when he sees the female angel Ma-ni-me-ka-lar, he falls in love with her. But her attendant angels are very frightened at the sight of the giant, and fear they will be killed; and they run in every direction. She herself, however, need not fear, as she has power in her magic crystal. The giant chases her to catch her. But she throws into the air the precious crystal, which she has in her hand; the flash of its brilliant light blinds the giant for the moment, and she disappears.

End of the Angel Piece.

## Act V.

### A Foreign Story called The Adventures of Abou Hassan (Put into Siamese form)

The Caliph of a certain town takes council with his wife, and decides to give a woman named Ooa Dat to be wife to a man Abou Hassan; and they arrange the marriage ceremonies of the pair, and the wedding is carried out.

After a time, Abou Hassan's creditors bring him many bills and demand payment. He, however, has no money to pay. So he consults with his wife Ooa Dat. She advises that he pretend to die; she will then go and beg of the Caliph's wife, who will probably give her money to assist the funeral ceremonies. This plan is carried out and the wife brings back the money that she obtains from the Lady.

The money, however, is not yet sufficient for Abou's wants; so he suggests that his wife Ooa Dat should now in her turn pretend to be dead.

Then Abou goes to inform the Caliph of the sad news of his wife's death, and the Caliph gives him money to carry out the proper funeral arrangements.

That day, however it happened that the Caliph went to see his wife; and mentioned in conversation that he had heard of the death of the woman Ooa Dat. But his wife contradicts him and says that Ooa Dat is not dead; but had that day brought the news of the death of Abu Hassan.



The Caliph and his wife then argue together as to which is right: and they are both in doubt as to what is the truth of the matter.

The Caliph then sends his servant Mesrou to go and find out the facts. On reaching the house Mesrou finds Ooa Dat lying dead; and returns with this report to the Caliph's wife, however, will not believe it: and she sends one of her women to go and see the truth. This woman sees Abu lying dead in the house and returns with this tale.

Then the Caliph and his wife decide to go and see for themselves and they find both husband and wife lying dead: and they have no suspicion of the fraud practised on them; but think it to be really death: and they offer a large reward to any one who will tell the truth as to which of the two died first. Abu and Ooa Dat, on hearing this, at once rise and address the Caliph. He and his wife are terrified at first, thinking that the spirits are rising.

But when they clearly see the deception which had been so cleverly carried out, they laughed at it, heartily, and returned to the palace: and give to Abu and his wife sufficient money for their needs.

Finis.

Curtain and Midnight.

\*\*\*

The programme captures enticing details of the performances at the Prince's Theatre. The plays or the repertoires of the performance of this theatre derive from various national stories, not only Thai and Southeast Asian, but also from Europe. The notice in the programme suggests that it was addressed to foreigners and elite audiences. The programme was in English, a language which in the late nineteenth century was not known by commoners in Siam. It also conveys the notion that this company had highly skilled writers able to dramatise stories from different nations. As I am a Thai dancer, I was fascinated by the variety of performances, which can no longer be found in the *lakhon phanthat* repertoire of today. The first part of the programme is devoted to the performances on an angel theme as found in the Ma-ni-me-ka-lar and Rama-soon story. Foreign dances were inserted into the story. The angel characters in the performance of the Prince's Theatre were not only Thai

angels but also foreign angels. Additionally, European, Chinese, Malay and Pegu (Mon people) dances were inserted in the main plot line.

Act V of the performance is a dramatised story from the *Arabian Nights* episode 'The adventures of Abou Hassan'. This performance is not the first instance of an of Arabic and Persian narrative dramatised in Siam. As mentioned in the early part of this chapter, the first spoken dance-drama of Siam was based on the Arabian Nights story 'The tale of the sleeper awakened' adapted and translated as *Nithra Chakit* by King Chulalongkorn in 1879. Thus, the adventures of Abou Hasan dramatised by the Prince's Theatre Company was a continuation of the *Nithra Charit*. This performance of the Prince's Theatre reflects the popularity of Arabic and Persian literature in the dramatic arts of Siam and the Southeast Asia region in the nineteenth century; the Arabian Nights and related items were also in the repertoire of the *komedi stambul* from the time of its emergence in Surabaya, Indonesia (Cohen, *Komedie* 45-46).

In addition, some information can be gathered from the *Singapore Free Press Newspaper* of 6 November 1893,<sup>27</sup> which is worth quoting:

Bangkok possesses a theatre, which is a somewhat surprising building, with its private boxes, stalls, dress circle, pit and gallery- all amazingly like and unlike a home theatre. There are well-painted drop scenes, and a fine orchestra, though to the English ear Siamese theatre music is an acquired taste. The orchestra, too, do all the talking or singing, the actors only acting in dumb show. Can it be that the French, who were so proud of their 'L'enfant Prodige' and

other dumb show performances some year or two ago, were not original, but borrowed the idea from Siam?

The play now on at the 'Prince's Theatre,' Bangkok is very much up to date, and political to a degree. The fighting, of which there is a great deal, is Siamese *versus* French. The French blue and red uniforms are very well imitated, and the Foreign Legion are a sight to behold. Ruffianly, forbidding and filthy to a degree, I think more unholy looking villains never faced the footlights. The Siamese are beautifully dressed and, need one say that they- the Siamese- are invariably victorious in every encounter. The audience (which is largely composed of women and children) take it all very philosophically and never applaud. Of course there is a prince and a princess, but there seem to be no funny characters-no clowns or comic old men as there are in Burmese plays- actors so really funny that one has to laugh even without understanding a word they say. The Siamese theatre is quite a thing to see once, but to most European once is enough.'

The article provides a clear picture of the Prince's Theatre in 1893. It indicates that the new dance-drama form shown at the Prince's Theatre is neither traditional dance-drama mixed with other Asian theatre forms nor the presentation of Asian stories, as most Thai scholars maintain. It is a story about Siam and France, hinting at the political problems between Siam and France during the colonial period. Moreover, the Prince's Theatre, as mentioned, also utilised modern theatre elements, such as footlights and painted backdrop scenes. Western costumes have been

described and the characteristics of the audience of the Prince's Theatre have also been recorded in the article.

The other innovation introduced by the Prince's Theatre was the word *week* or *wik* (in Thai), which was used to refer to the performance season of the Prince's Theatre. After Chao Phraya Mahin established a public theatre and collected admission charges, the Prince's Theatre offered a performance one week a month during the time of full moon and later, Chao Phraya Mahin extended the period of the performance to two weeks a month (Narissaranuwattiwong 121). Then, the Prince's Theatre regularly housed performances during the time of the waxing moon and was closed during the waning moon period. This arrangement was for the convenience of the audience so that they could go to the theatre and easily return home late at night after the performance had finished (Young, *Kingdom* 162). The term *week* entered the Thai language from the theatre programme of the Prince's Theatre. Chao Phraya Mahin was in the habit of posting the theatre programme at the front of his theatre asking the audiences 'What stories or performances will be shown this week?' (Virulrak, *Wiwatthankarn* 215). In the programme, the word *week* referred to the period of the performance. However, this word was hybridised by audiences. They took the word *week* or *wik* to mean a theatre hall rather than the period of the performance. Since then, the word *wik* has been used widely to denote theatre halls and edifices, such as *wik likay* and *wik rong bon* (theatre at a gambling hall). The Prince's Theatre ran until Chao Phraya Mahin died in 1894. His dance troupe and the theatre were taken over by his son Boosara Mahin,<sup>28</sup> and renamed *Lakhon Boosara Mahin* (Nawigamune, *Ta-non* 191; Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 102).

### **Boosara Mahin : Siamese Touring Dance Troupe in Europe**

*Lakhon Boosara Mahin* became famous and very popular among both Siamese and Westerners in Bangkok. Boosara Mahin inherited the concept of a variety of performance styles from Chao Phraya Mahin. However, he developed his theatre as a variety theatre. A Thai newspaper in 1897 discusses the performances of *Lakhon Boosara Mahin* as follows:

They [*Lakhon Boosara Mahin*] have a *Trae Farang Wong Yai* [Western Brass Band] to provide prelude music. The prelude dance is *rabam* [non-narrative dance], whose costumes are similar to *farang*'s [Western/ European people] god and goddess costumes. The dance movements imitate *Farang Ram Tau* [Western ballet], and as beautiful as in the original Western dance...In addition, the dancers in this troupe perform well in *farang* and *jeen* [Chinese] dance-drama styles...Their performances are more wonderful and astonishing than other theatres in Siam... (Siam Maitri 26 January 1897).

From the above, the performances of *Lakhon Boosara Mahin* were a hybrid performance style, which was a novelty and differed from the traditional performances. Western and Chinese performance styles are also mentioned and were in the repertoire of this troupe. In addition, this dance troupe also performed *Inao* in Javanese style. The dancers wore Javanese dance costumes and showed dance movements imitating those of Javanese dance (Siam Maitri 16 February 1897).

After Boosara Mahin took over the Chao Phraya Mahin dance troupe, in 1898 he established a new public theatre called Rong Lakhon Bot Mahin (Bot Mahin Theatre) in the commercial district (Bangkok Samai 20 April 1898). The new theatre of Boosara Mahin was a beautifully decorated theatre. Its exterior had many small lanterns and flags hanging around the outer wall, and the interior theatre floor was covered with linoleum. Two large chandeliers were hung on the ceiling, which illuminated the theatre. Many chairs were placed as seats for the audience. In addition, big and small boxes were built for groups of people. The theatre had a seating capacity of between six and seven hundred people (Nawigamune, *Tanon* 221). To build the new theatre, Boosara Mahin required a large sum of money. He encountered financial problems, which was the reason why he decided to break away from the court and take his dance troupe on a tour of Europe in 1900 (Nawiggamune, *Natta-kum* 72).

In 1900, France held a world fair, the 'Exposition Universelle', in Paris, which ran from April 15 to November 12. At this fair, many countries around the world brought their products and arts, constructing pavilions to present their national cultures to the European public. Siam participated in this exhibition. In 1899, before the event, Siamese officials discussed the activities to be shown, the products to be exhibited and the construction of the pavilion. They agreed to send Thai crafts, food, musical instruments, and other products to Paris. A *Sala Thai* (Thai traditional style pavilion) was constructed as a symbol of the country. Siamese officials decided that they would not send a royal Thai dance or musical troupe to Paris. They were worried that foreigners would not appreciate Thai music and Thai dance movements, thinking that it might affect the number of visitors to the pavilion, thus compromising the success of the project (Nawiggamune, *Natta-kum* 66).

However, Boosara Mahin considered this exhibition to be a good opportunity to help him earn money and release him from his financial woes.<sup>29</sup> He sent a letter to King Rama V asking for permission to take his dance troupe to Europe as a private dance troupe. King Rama V replied that he would allow Siamese officials, who were on the committee of the project, to consider his proposal. The Siamese officials decided that it was inappropriate to send a Thai dance troupe to Paris. They stated that the female dancers would be in difficulties with the different language, food and weather, stranded in a strange land. In addition, they thought that it might give a bad name to the country (Nawigamune, *Natta-kum*67). But Boosara Mahin did not give up his dream to tour Europe. Finally, King Rama V instructed Boosara Mahin that if he wished to take his dance troupe to Europe, he had to resign from his post as royal chamberlain. Then, he could go to Europe as the dance troupe's director with no connection with the court (Nawiggamun, *Natta-kum* 72). Boosara Mahin resigned at once and took his dance troupe to Europe.

Boosara Mahin and his dance troupe, comprising twenty-three female dancers and twelve male musicians, went to Europe as a touring performance company called the Boosara Mahin Siamese Theatrical Troupe (see fig. 6) (*The Straits Times* 9 June 1900). The Boosara Mahin Siamese Theatrical troupe toured Egypt, Russia, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Singapore, and other countries (Nawigamune, *Natta-kum* 57). The tour was not easy, nor was the journey comfortable. As Cohen mentions in *Performing Otherness: Java and Bali on International Stages, 1905-1952*, 'Most performers who journeyed from Java to Europe or America did not travel in [...] style. Hours of employment were long, wages low, accommodation poor and good food scarce' (11).

The performances of the Boosara Mahin troupe in Europe impressed Western audiences. In September 1900, this company opened performances at the Berlin Zoological Garden, in Germany. The audiences were fascinated by the strange sound of Thai music and songs, and the dance movements and costumes, which were of extraordinary splendor and beautiful colour.<sup>30</sup> At that time, the music and songs of the Boosara Mahin troupe were recorded onto a wax cylinder for playing on the phonogram of Professor Carl Stumpf, who was interested in foreign music and music psychology (Koch, Wiedman and Zieglery 227).



Fig.6. The Boosara Mahin Siamese Theatrical Troupe touring Europe.<sup>31</sup>

It was the first time that Thai music and songs were recorded by foreigners and presented to the world. However, when the Boosara Mahin troupe performed in St. Petersburg, Russia, they were unsuccessful. The company arrived in Russia in October 1900. They performed beautiful varied dances, such as a Fan Dance, a Lantern Dance, and an extract from a Thai dance-drama, but not many people came



to the theatre because of the very cold weather (Nawigamune, *Natta-kum* 48). While touring Russia, however, the Boosara Mahin troupe had an impact on the Ballet Russes choreographer, Michel Fokine, who created a solo performance a decade later called *La Danse Siamoise* which was performed by Vaslav Nijinsky at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg and later at the Paris Opera.<sup>32</sup>



Fig. 7. *La Danse Siamoise* (1910) by Vaslav Nijinsky<sup>33</sup>

The performances of the Boosara Mahin dance troupe not only presented traditional Thai performance but also performance in a mixed style. When the Boosara Mahin troupe opened in Singapore at the Town Hall, *The Straits Times of Singapore* reported that ‘the performers showed the Siamese dance plays, which

were neither entirely Chinese nor Malay in character and had some features of both' (*The Straits Times* 9 June 1900). These mixed traits of the performances of the Boosara Mahin troupe can be seen in a photograph of the Fan Dance, taken on 24 September 1900 while they were in Berlin, Germany.

The fan dance was admired as the highlight of the programme of the Boosara Mahin company. It was a popular performance piece with audiences in both Bangkok and overseas (Nawigamune, *Tanon* 220).



*The Siamese theater group on the stage of the Berlin Zoological Gardens, September 1900.*

*The "fan dance" was one of the highlights of the performances.*

16

**Inside the booklet (P.16)**

Fig. 8. Fan Dance by Boosara Mahin Thai theatrical dance troupe in Berlin in 1900<sup>34</sup>

This picture shows the performers wearing Thai traditional costumes and holding fans. The dance movements were based on Thai dance in terms of body balance and hand gestures. The costumes were in Thai traditional dance-drama style,

showing different male and female characters. But the dancers wore black stockings and shoes and had fans, which were a symbolic prop of Chinese characters in Thai plays. This suggests that this performance was a mixture of traditional Thai dance and Chinese movement styles.

After touring Europe, in 1901, the Boosara Mahin dance troupe returned from Europe to Bangkok debt ridden; Boosara Mahin was unable to pay his dancers and musicians and went into litigation with them over their wages (Nawigamune, *Nattakam* 84). In the same year, Boosara Mahin died and his dance troupe was taken over by Khunying Luanrit Thephatsadin Na Krungthep, who was the landowner from whom Boosara Mahin had hired land to run his theatre before touring Europe. When Khunying Luanrit Thephatsadin Na Krungthep took over the dance troupe, she changed its name to *Lakhon Phasom Samakkhi*<sup>35</sup> (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 102). However, by then, some of the dancers and dance masters had moved on and were in other dance companies such as *Lakhon Chao Khun Chom Manda Pae* and *Lakhon Chao Intrawarorot Suriyawong Muang Chaing Mai* (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 379; Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 253-254). In this way Boosara Mahin's repertoire was reproduced.

### **Prince Narathip and the Development of Hybrid Dance-Drama Theatre**

Pornrat Damrhung states, with reference to *lakhon phanthang*, that a hybrid dance style is a new theatrical invention attracting audiences, both Thai and foreign, beginning in the late nineteenth century. It was part of 'a wave of experiments in dance theatre during the early phase of Thailand (Damrhung, 'From Phra Lor' 112). *Lakhon Chao Phray Mahin* from the Siamese Theatre and Prince's Theatre and also *Lakhon Boosara Mahin*, the hybrid dance and theatre forms of the nineteenth

century, were developed from the commercial theatre and can be considered experimental forms. These commercial theatre forms were largely patronised by audiences who paid a fee to see the performances. However, in a country like Thailand, in which tradition and culture are directly influenced by the royal court, these hybrid theatres not only developed through the inclusion of local diverse audiences, they also successfully interacted with the royal court. The royal court played a part in the formalisation of the hybrid theatre forms through the dance-drama and the productions of Prince Narathip Phraphanpong.

Prince Narathip Phraphanpong or Prince Narathip was of royal blood and contributed to the development of these hybrid theatre forms into *lakhon phanthang* (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 119). Born in 1862, Prince Narathip was the son of King Mongkut and Chao Chom Manda Khein.<sup>36</sup> He was educated in Thai and English at the Royal Language School in Bangkok, which had been established by his older brother, King Chulalongkorn (Gumran 4). Prince Narathip was very good at English and interested in history, archeology, and literature. He wrote several plays, poems, and works of fiction which were popular with Thai readers. Prince Narathip owned a dance troupe from the time he took the royal title of Krom Mamun Narathip Phraphanpong in 1889. His dance troupe presented Thai traditional dance-drama styles, such as *lakhon nai* and *lakhon nok*. Later his dance troupe started to perform the *lakhon rong* (sung dance-drama), which became an archetypal model of Thai traditional sung dance-drama (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 379).

Initially the dance troupe of Prince Narathip was known as *Lakhon Mom Luang Tuan*.<sup>37</sup> It was frequently invited to perform at the royal palace, but it performed mainly outside the court. However, they did not have their own theatre so they occasionally rented Dukdamban Theatre of Chao Phraya Thewet for their

productions (Vasinarom 31). Later, as the performances of this dance troupe gained in popularity and success, Prince Narathip established his own commercial theatre, imitating the Prince's Theatre of Chao Phraya Mahin (Damrongrajanubhab, 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon' 379). In 1904-1905 Rong Lakhon Wiman Narumit (Magic Palace Theatre) was built and the dance troupe changed its name to *Lakhon Narumit*. In 1906, the Wiman Narumit Theatre burnt down, and on 2 November 1908 Prince Narathip established a new theatre named the Rong Lakhon Pridalai (Pridalai Theatre) (Vasinarom 31).

The Pridalai Theatre was located in the vicinity of Prince Narathip's palace, which was in an urban area surrounded by Western communities and commercial buildings, the so-called *Yan Karn Kha Tawantok* (Western business area) (Vasinarom 262). At that time, the theatre was a wooden building beautifully decorated inside. The stage was a proscenium, including modern theatrical devices. There was a ticket office and a bar for selling alcohol, and various drinks and snacks, with two or three bartenders. The bartenders had to wear a uniform, which was a white, long-sleeved shirt and long white trousers. In the interior of the theatre there were boxes for the audience and amphitheater seats, including a special box for the king and queen, and the rest of the royal family and royal visitors. The performances of the Pridalai Theatre were *lakhon rong* and *lakhon* in hybrid style, developed by Prince Narathip and his group under the supervision of King Chulalongkorn (Vasinarom 35). A most famous production of the Pridalai Theatre was *Sao Khrua Fa*, the Siamese adaptation of the Italian opera *Madame Butterfly*, with the American soldier changed into a Siamese soldier and the Japanese lady into a Chaing Mai lady.

Prince Narathip ran a theatrical business like that of the Prince's Theatre of Chao Phraya Mahin; his theatre presented chronicles and historical stories, which

were famous and successful. But audiences became bored with the chronicle plays. Prince Narathip was made aware by King Chulalongkorn that audiences preferred ‘*farang* things,’ which they saw as modern. They did not want to be old-fashioned, so they did not like the old performance styles and stories; they were utterly bored with them (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 119). If Prince Narathip aim was popularity, it was necessary to match his productions to modern tastes. Prince Narathip adapted and improved the productions, introducing romantic and adventurous stories in the performances at his theatre.

King Chulalongkorn played an important role in the development of Prince Narathip’s theatre. He gave constructive criticism to Prince Narathip about his plays and productions, and also watched rehearsals of new company productions (Vasinarom 35). King Rama V’s intention was to create a new theatre form, modernising theatre traditions as Narathip’s patron and supporter. For example, he sent a letter to Prince Narathip reserving performance tickets for him and his family, and went to the Prince Narathip Theatre to watch performances, mixing with audiences of all classes (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 112). King Chulalongkorn patronisation elevated Prince Narathip’s dance troupe to a royal troupe or royal company, which could produce performances for royal occasions and also be marketed as a public theatre. Since then, *Lakhon Narumit* became known as *Lakhon Luang Narumit* (Royal Lakhon Narumit). This royal support encouraged the development of this theatre in the form and quality of its productions.

*Lakhon Luang Narumit* is not the same dance-drama form, as practiced and performed in the past. They [Prince Narathip’s dance troupe] composed new stories; sometimes they adapted

*farang* stories for presentation at their theatre. Mostly, they presented *lakhon phut* [spoken dance-drama] in their style, which integrated Thai dance movements with character dialogue and sung narration (Vasinarom 41).

Prince Narathip enhanced the theatrical forms by modernising his productions and the theatre itself. He utilised Western theatrical techniques and equipment in his theatre, such as a proscenium stage, and backdrops and wings. Moreover, Prince Narathip wrote his own plays and composed new stories based on Thai folk tales and labeled his plays as being in *phanthang* style. When Prince Narathip started writing Thai dance-drama plays and literature there had been no mention of the word *Phanthang* but in 1908, he used the term *Phanthang* in connection with a new dance-drama based on the ancient Thai folk story of *Phra Lor* (Vasinarom 42). This is the first documented use of the term '*phanthang*' in Thai performance.

King Rama V was directly involved with the *Phra Lor* production as he corrected the script of the play and attended rehearsals (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 120). Damrhung has stated that '*Phra Lor* of Prince Narathip unlike most earlier *lakhon phanthang* pieces such as those created by Chao Phraya Mahin Sakthamrong, was unique and was a fine example of a blend of popular and Western singing and dance, infused with a strong court style' ('From *Phra Lor*' 113).

Prince Narathip modernised his productions by using Western theatre methods. For example, he applied a Western-style division into acts and scenes to his plays and separated the poetic narration by the chorus from the prose dialogues spoken and sung by dancers and actors, as done in Western operetta. Costumes and jewelry were not as in the traditional dance-drama form (Talalak 44). Realistic acting styles and movements were used in his productions. In addition, English words were

inserted in plays. All of this is evidence of the intention of Prince Narathip to modernise his performances following the notion of a Thai imitation of *farang*, which was a core idea for the modernisation of theatre forms, in keeping with royal policies. As Rutnin states, 'It was an effective means of relating private enterprises to the service of the king and of compensating them with royal honour and prestige. In this way, the king was able to create a deep sense of loyalty to the throne among the leaders of society (*Dance, Drama* 112).

The Prince Narathip dance troupe, under the king's supervision and patronage, refined and elaborated theatre productions and theatrical forms by making 'Thai *Lakhon* appear like the *Lakhon farang* [Western dance-drama]' (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 145). During the reign of King Chulalongkorn, in the royal court, Western knowledge and customs were held up as models of modernisation and civilisation. The royal court applied a Western veneer to all court traditions in order to show that Thailand was a modern and civilised country. Thus, Prince Narathip's dance-drama productions were modernised following the direction given by the King's court of a developing country.

Additionally, most of the audience members of Prince Narathip's theatre were aristocrats and members of the elite, educated in and endorsing Western values. Theatre production, then, responded to the taste of the spectators. During Prince Narathip's period, theatrical activity shifted from being one of amusement and variety to a form of theatrical culture for elite consumption. As a royal court company, the performances of Prince Narathip were developed within the standard of royal art. The *lakhon* in the style of Prince Narathip amalgamated the royal court dance style with new dance movements and foreign stories. Elaborate costumes



made with expensive materials, such as diamonds and gold, were part of the presentation.

Rutnin proposed that the *Lakhon* of Prince Narathip was created by ‘the combination of three geniuses’, generating a high quality dance-drama, worthy of the royal court (*Dance,Drama* 150). The high literacy level of Prince Narathip, the musical skill of Mom Luang Tuan (Prince Narathip’s wife), and the choreographic skill of Chao Chaom Manda Khein (Prince Narathip’s mother) turned the productions of this company into modern ones yet retaining the beautiful songs and traditional dance movements as per the standard of the Thai court dance-drama. However, the *phanthang* dance-drama style of Prince Narathip used and borrowed theatrical elements from other dance troupes and from other performances. A study by Vasinaron<sup>38</sup> claims that Chao Chom Manda Khein had a chance to learn about Western traditions at the royal court when she was a consort of King Mongkut. She also learned other dance styles from the foreign consorts of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn in the royal palace. In addition, the performances at other public theatres inspired Chao Chom Manda Khein to choreograph the new dance-drama (48-50).

As for the choreographic style of the *Lakhon* of Prince Narathip, this art form demonstrates the intercultural mingling of dance elements, yet ultimately embodying the aesthetics of Thai traditional performance. *Lakhon* of Prince Narathip also preserved the high standard of royal court arts and traditional dance-drama. It was King Chulalongkorn’s decision to bring outside companies to perform in the *Lakhon* of Prince Narathip.

My personal preference is to have them perform together. She [Chao Chom Manda Khein] accepts that their [Chao Phraya Mahin Company] ideas, stories, role playing, and stage decoration are very good. She has nothing to do with it or against it. The only thing she refuses to compromise on is the dancing and to have the *Lakhon* of Chao Phraya Mahin regard her as *khru* [teacher]. She cannot join with them. It would be rather degrading to her honour and prestige (quoted in Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 148).

The king's wish of integration did not come true: Chao Chom Manda Khein refused to join the Chao Phraya Mahin dance troupe. Chao Chom Manda Khein was highly respected by the people of the royal court. She had many dance students in the palace, so if she was against joining the Chao Phraya Mahin troupe, it meant that her students would side with her (Vasinarom 45).

The Prince Narathip Company cancelled performances at the Pridalai Theatre around 1911 because the Prince became too busy with his official royal engagements (Talak 63). However, the *phanthang* dance-drama style of his company was transmitted to several private dance troupes through the dance pupils of Chao Chom Manda Khein (Vasinarom 75). At present, the *phanthang* dance-drama style of Prince Narathip has become an archetypal model of *lakhonas* performed at the Thai National Theatre. Moreover, the *lakhon phanthang* style of Prince Narathip has been taught to the Thai dance students at the College of Dramatic Arts, Krom Silapakorn, and several other educational institutions. In 1931, Prince Narathip died, and after that Princess Luksameelawan (a daughter of Prince Narathip), a consort of King Vajiravudh (King Rama VI, r.1910-1925), inherited and preserved her father's dance

style, especially the *lakhon rong*. The company named *lakhon pridalai* presented mainly the sung dance-drama.

## **Conclusion**

The Thai hybrid dance-drama theatre namely *Lakhon of Chao Phrya Mahin*, *Lakhon Boosara Mahin* and *Lakhon Krom Phra Narathip* was created and developed within the framework of traditional Thai performance. The *phanthang* dance-drama style or the hybrid dance theatre was not only a new performance fashioned by individual experts, but also it was a cultural product that reflected the social and cultural, royal policies and the commercial changes of urban Bangkok in the nineteenth century. During that period, modernisation and urbanisation had a direct influence on the development of Thai performance and culture. With the desire for novelty of the majority of Thai people, the direction given by the royal court and the cultural diversity of the time stimulated the growth of modernity in Thai performance, as witnessed in the development of the *phanthang* dance-drama form. The modernity in *phanthang* dance-drama still included Thainess. Not only was this notion of Thainess expressed through the emergence of hybrid theatre, but also through other art forms and traditions that grew during the same period. The *phanthang* dance-drama style introduced a new theatrical tradition within Thai society. Theatres were supported through the purchase of tickets rather than through direct royal patronage, as had hitherto occurred. It was a dramatic transformation. However, the role of the royal court did not lessen in importance; it still contributed to the development of hybrid theatre and other national artistic and cultural forms. For example, the royal court supported the *Lakhon* of Prince Narathip as a royal company and determined the direction and quality of performances.

## Notes

1. Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong, was a nobleman in the royal service during King Mongkut's (King Rama IV) and King Chulalongkorn's (King Rama V) reign (Yupho, *Silapa* 94).

2. The Venice of the East was an appellation of Bangkok, as given by the Westerners who travelled and settled in Siam during the nineteenth century. This name derived from the geography of Bangkok, with its canals and rivers. Aspects of the Siamese way of life were related to the river, such as house construction and transportation by boat; as Ernest Young notes 'the water is the true home of the Siamese, and it is on this, their native element, that their real character and genius are best exhibited' (Young, *Kingdom* 25).

3. The 'City of Angels' is also a nickname of Los Angeles in the United States, established in 1781, a year before King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke (King Rama I, r. 1782-1809) of Siam kingdom ascended the throne and established a new capital city named Bangkok (Kenworthy 1). 'Angel' here does not refer to angels in the Christian sense, but to heavenly beings known as Deva or Devata, which denote gods in Sanskrit (Peleggi 3).

4. Civilisation or *Siwilai* is a Thai word that emerged at 'the time of the encounter with the West;' however, Thais have their own way of referring to civilisation according to their time and social condition (Peleggi 10-11). In the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of civilisation in Thai was an attempt to represent Thais to the West and the rest of the world as different from barbarians. Thais were a human group who were morally progressive and behaved the same as the Westerners. Civilisation is a notion connecting Thais to the West and it is a way of enhancing Siamese power in the world (Jackson 155-156).

5. *Farang* or Westerner in Thai refers to a Westerner, a European, or white person. In Thai, *farang* means far from Thai identity and the identity of Asian neighbors; however, *farang* presents an 'ethnocultural mirror' which identifies Thai and other Asian countries as 'We-Self and Western Other' (Kitiarsa 5).

6. *Jongkraben* is a type of traditional trousers, based on one piece of cloth. At the present, *jongkrabeen* is a uniform for Thai traditional dancers worn when they practise dance.

7. The term 'Foreign Asians' is used by Matthew Isaac Cohen in his article about the *komedi stambul* and the Parsi Theatre movement to categorise the foreign Asian population, including Chinese, Arabs, and Indians, in urban Surabaya in the nineteenth century (Cohen, 'On the Origin' 325). Following Cohen I use this term to denote the multi-ethnic population in urban Bangkok. However, in Thai terms, we have different words used to refer to other Asians, such as *jeen* (Chinese), *khake* (Arabs, Indians) and *farang* (Westerner and European).

8. Virulrak claims that the *Arabian Nights* was translated into Thai and performed in spoken drama style by King Chulalongkorn for three reasons. First, the *Arabian Nights* might have been an English textbook that King Chulalongkorn had studied with Anna Leonowens. With his good English ability, he translated this story to be performed as *lakhon phut*. Second, the royal joker performance (*jam aud* or *talok khon* - a short comedic piece performance in spoken drama style performed during a *khon* interval) may have inspired the king to create spoken Thai drama. Third, in 1870, the king visited Singapore, where he saw spoken Western drama, the performance of which may also have inspired him to create spoken drama at court (*Wiwatthanakarn* 229).

9. The Thai nobility were given a rank when they entered the royal services. The rank consisted of five levels, from the bottom to the top, as follows: *Khun*, *Luang*, *Phra*, *Phraya*, *Chao Phraya*, and *Somdet Chao Phraya*. The rank was placed before the official name (Bunnag 7).

10. Chao Phraya Thewetwongwiwat, also known as Chao Phraya Thewet, was a high-ranking official assigned by King Chulalongkorn to take care of several royal departments—entertainment, puppetry, mask dance, xylophone ensemble, and lantern dance—in the late nineteenth century. He also had his own dance and drama

troupe which was considered the best in the city at that time (Rutnin, *Dance-Drama* 98-99).

11. Prince Narisaranuwattiwong was King Chulalongkorn's brother. He was a talented artist in a mix of Western and Thai art styles.

12. At first, this dance troupe was called *Lakhon Mom Luang Tuan*. This name derived from that of Prince Narathip Phraphanpong's consort. However, audiences also knew and called this dance *Lakhon Krom Phra Narathip*. After Prince Narathip established his own theatre, named Rong Lakhon Wiman Narumit, he changed his dance troupe's name to *Lakhon Narumit*. *Lakhon Luang Narumit* was named after his dance troupe and was supported by the royal court as a royal company (Rutnin, *Dance-Drama* 222).

13. Virulrak suggests that the first *wik likay* (likay theatre) probably emerged in 1896 or 1898 by comparing historical evidence between *likay* performances on stage in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the emergence of other commercial theatres such as the *lakhon* of Prince's Theatre and *lakhon dukdamban*. He also proposes that it is fair to estimate that the first *wik likay* was performed in 1897 (Virulrak, *Likay* 26-29).

14. *Phleng* means song, *ok phasa* refers to language and nations such as 'people [foreigner] of twelve languages [nation]' (Baker and Phongpaichit 62). For example, Mon, Laotian, Chinese and other national musical tunes were harmonised into the Thai musical tunes and melodies.

15. I would like to thank Professor Matthew Isaac Cohen, my supervisor, who gave me this interesting piece of information, kindly translating it from Dutch into English.

16. Ta Sua or 'Mr. Tiger,' is the name of the owner of the dance troupe.

17. Anae Nawigamune claims that Chao Phraya Mahin was born in 1821. However, *Chotmaiheat Siamsamai* (a Thai newspaper published in 1882-1883) on 21<sup>st</sup>

November 1883, had a special column written by Chao Phraya Mahin. He wrote that 'he began a dance troupe when he was 23 years old until now (in 1883) he was 64 years old' (61). I infer from this that the year of birth of Chao Phraya Mahin is 1819 rather than 1821.

18. Chao Phraya Mahin was the fifth son of Luang Jindapichit, who was a Siamese official during the reign of King Rama III. Before Luang Jindapichit took an official position, he had been a monk and a close servant of Vajiranayan.

19. *The Era* 20 December 1857

20. *The Era* 3 January 1858

21. *The Era* 10 January 1858

22. *The Morning Post* 20 January 1858

23. *The Morning Post* 15 February 1858

24. The terms Chau Mun, Phraya and Chao Phraya are titles of royal family members and noble men in feudal Thailand. The rank of the title is decided by the king. The ranking from the lowest to the highest are Kun, Luang, Phra, Phraya, Chao Phraya and Somdet Chao Phraya. A noble man can be promoted to a higher ranking and the name after the title can be changed.

25. The Royal Princess' Theatre: [www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Princess.htm](http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Princess.htm). (accessed 10 December 2010)

26. For example, the Dukdamban Theatre, a public theatre, performed Thai opera and was established in 1899 (Virulrak, *Wiwatthanakarn* 215). The Wiman Narumit Theatre and Pridalai Theatre where sung dance-drama and *lakhon phanthat* were performed were established in 1904 and 1908 (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 222).

27. I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Professor Dr. Matthew Isaac Cohen, who found this valuable information about the Prince's Theatre and passed it on to me.

28. Boosara Mahin, But Mahin or Chao Mun Wai Woranat was the name of Chao Phraya Mahin's son. He had been a chamberlain during King Rama V's reign.

29. Boosara Mahin:

[http://www.t-h-a-i-l-a-n-d.org/talkingmachine/boosra\\_mahin/pluethipol.html](http://www.t-h-a-i-l-a-n-d.org/talkingmachine/boosra_mahin/pluethipol.html)  
(accessed 12 December 2010)

30. Boosara Mahin:

[http://www.t-h-a-i-l-a-n-d.org/talkingmachine/boosra\\_mahin/pluethipol.html](http://www.t-h-a-i-l-a-n-d.org/talkingmachine/boosra_mahin/pluethipol.html)  
(accessed 12 December 2010)

31. Boosara Mahin:

[http://www.t-h-a-i-l-a-n-d.org/talkingmachine/boosra\\_mahin/pluethipol.html](http://www.t-h-a-i-l-a-n-d.org/talkingmachine/boosra_mahin/pluethipol.html)  
(accessed 12 December 2010)

32. The Nation Weblog:

[www.blog.nationmultimedia.com/danceandtheatre/2010/07/10/](http://www.blog.nationmultimedia.com/danceandtheatre/2010/07/10/) (accessed 18 January 2011)

33. [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Nijinsky\\_Les\\_orientales.jpg](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Nijinsky_Les_orientales.jpg)

34. Berlin:

[http://www.t-h-a-i-l-a-n-d.org/talkingmachine/boosra\\_mahin/Berlin.html](http://www.t-h-a-i-l-a-n-d.org/talkingmachine/boosra_mahin/Berlin.html) (accessed 12 December 2010)

35. *Phasom Samakkhi* was derived from the combination of two words. *Phasom* literally meaning to mix, to join, to blend, and *samakkhi* which means unity, harmony or cooperation. *Lakhon Phasom Samakkhi* originated from the idea that



Khunying Luanrit Thephatsadin Na Krungthep dancers and Boosara Mahin's dancers would perform together dance-drama as a commercial theatre.

36. Chao Chom Manda Khein was a royal court dancer during King Rama II's reign, and became a royal court dance master during the fourth and the fifth year of reign. She was also choreographer for the Prince Narathip dance troupe (Vasinarom 49).

37. Mom Luang Tuan was the name of a consort of Prince Narathip. Her family background was as court musician. Mom Luang Tuan played an important role as a composer for Prince Narathip's dance troupe. She composed Thai music and songs, in particular the music and songs of foreign accent, to accompany the dance-drama of her husband's troupe.

38. Manissa Vasinarom completed her Master Degree in Thai dance at Chulalongkorn University in 2006. Her research entitled *Choreography of Chao Chom Manda Khien*, was a study of the life and works of Chao Chom Manda Khien, a consort of King Rama IV. At present, she is a Thai dance lecturer at Rajabhat Suansunadha University in Thailand.

## Chapter 2: *Lakhon Phanthang* in the Nationalist Period

### Introduction

*Traditions can change through responses of their bearers to features of the traditions themselves in accordance with standards of judgment, which their bearers apply to them. These standards of judgment may derive from newly presented traditions, from traditions previously unknown in the society although well developed in alien societies (Shils 240).*

Before 1949, the term *lakhon phanthang* had not been used in the classification of the dance styles of Siam though the term *phanthang* was used to describe, sometimes, the *lakhon* productions of Chao Phraya Mahin and Prince Narathip. As discussed in an earlier chapter, in the nineteenth century, dance-dramas and plays in *phanthang* style by both these dance troupes were performed and gained popularity in Bangkok. The innovation of purchasing theatre tickets was introduced during this period in connection with this kind of performance. This entertainment form was developed by the elite and was aimed at commoners. Furthermore, the *phanthang* dance style of that period became representative of Siamese dance and theatre through the touring of the Boosara Mahin dance troupe in 1900. Finally, this popular dance theatre was further developed by court authorities turning it into a court performance.

The transformation of a form of dance/theatre performance described as *phanthang* into a theatrical genre called *lakhon phanthang* is part of a larger movement against the backdrop of the changing political, social, economic and cultural policies of Siam in the twentieth century, by which Thai dance and theatre were formalised and standardised and became national heritage. For example, in

1923, the first textbook about Thai dance movements *Tamra Fon Ram*, which gives a description of traditional dance choreographic patterns and traditional dance movements and includes a discussion of the mythological origins of dance, was published in Bangkok under the patronage of Prince Damrongrajanubhap. Sixty-six dance movements were recorded through photos, a new way of preserving and presenting Thai national dance movements to the world (Damrongrajanubhab, *Lakhon Fon Ram* 2003).

In this chapter, I would like to focus on the formalisation of *lakhon phanthatang* in the nationalist period discussing how the hybrid dancing and theatre forms of Chao Pharya Mahin and Prince Narathip became known as *lakhon phanthatang* and became a traditional theatre genre. The hybrid dance-drama styles and plays of these two dance troupes were first named *lakhon phanthatang* in 1949 and later became the model for the new *lakhon phanthatang* in the repertoire of Krom Silapakorn in 1958. I would like to examine the revival of Chao Phraya Mahin and Prince Narathip's hybrid theatre works by Krom Silapakorn following the end of the absolute monarchy period, with consequences on its subsequent development. Moreover, I argue that the changes in national policies and in the attitude of the Thai ruling class towards 'otherness' in Thai society impacted upon the survival of hybrid dance and theatre forms. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the cultural diversity of multi-ethnic groups, especially the Chinese, in Siamese society, was no longer appreciated by the ruling classes and in the context of the new national policies. Thus, the performance of *lakhon phanthatang* was no longer supported.

## **Krai-thong and His Spear: The First *Lakhon Phanthang* production of Krom Silapakorn**

On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January 1949, the dance-drama production of Krom Silapakorn based on the dance-drama play of Prince Narathip *Krai-thong* was performed under a new rubric: *lakhon phanthang*.

The *Krai-thong* story is set in the Phichit province in the northern part of Thailand. It centres on Chalawan, a fierce crocodile king living in an underwater cave. Chalawan has two wives, Nang Vimala and Nang Luam-lai-wan. When in the cave, they are human in appearance but when they emerge from the cave they become crocodiles. One day Chalawan wanted to eat human flesh so he went out of the cave searching for food. He swam toward the house of the millionaire Phichit. At that time, Taphao-kaew and Taphao-thong, daughters of the millionaire, were also swimming. Chalawan saw Taphao-thong and fell in love with her. Then, Chalawan abducted Taphao-thong and she became his third wife. Taphao-Thong's father was anxious about his missing daughter. He issued a notice that anyone who could catch Chalawan would be rewarded with half of his wealth and the hand of his daughter Taphao-kaew. Krai-thong, a young man, volunteers to fight with Chalawan and wins the day.

The *Krai-thong* production of 1949, offered an excerpt from this larger story, and was presented in four scenes, as follows:

Scene I: Near the Muang Phichit River

Part I On the bank of the river

Part II Inside the cell of the Monk Khong

Scene II: Inside a miraculous cave under the water

Scene III: On the Bank of the river in front of the house of the millionaire of  
Phichit

Scene IV: Under water

Part I In front of the miraculous cave

Part II Inside the cave (same location as in the second scene)

The play begins from with Krai-thong volunteering to fight with Chalawan on the river in front of the millionaire's house. The fighting continues on the river and in the underwater cave of Chalawan. Eventually, Krai-thong kills Chalawan with his spear and a magic spell and returns Taphao-thong to her father. This first *lakhon phanthatang* production of Krom Silapakorn was performed by an all female cast even though Krai-thong was a major male character. The dancers were a group of teachers and students of the School of Music and Dance, together with other artists of Krom Silapakorn.

### **Beginning of the Story**

The *lakhon phanthatang* by Krom Silapakorn as it emerged in the 1940s can be seen as an 'invented tradition'. Invented tradition refers to traditions that are 'invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period- a matter of a few years perhaps – and establishing themselves with great rapidity' (Hobsbawm 4). Adapting an old dance play of Prince Narathip and fashioning a reinvented traditional theatre by the name of *lakhon phanthatang* reflects changes in the cultural and social context of Thailand. In the nationalist period after 1932 practitioners felt compelled to work within defined genres; they needed the security of an institutionalised tradition, even if it required inventing one.

### **Aesthetic Shift**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, both Boosara Mahin and Prince Narathip's dance troupes ended their activities in the first decades of the twentieth century. Boosara Mahin, the owner and leader of the dance troupe that toured Europe, died in 1901 and his dancers moved to other dance troupes. Prince Narathip ended his dance business at Pridalai Theatre in 1911 as he was busy with royal engagements. In addition, the emergence of the new hybrid dance-dramas such as *lakhon rong* (sung dance-drama) caused a fading in popularity of the old hybrid dance-drama forms of Boosara Mahin and Prince Narathip.

*Lakhon rong* (sung dance-drama) was an innovation by Prince Narathip at the end of King Rama V's reign. It was first performed at Pridalai Theatre in 1908; therefore it was sometimes called *lakhon pridalai* from the name of the theatre hall. *Lakhon rong* of Prince Narathip had great success as it presented a new entertainment style which mixed theatrical elements of the hybrid dance-drama of Prince Narathip, *lakhon dukdamban* (the dance-drama operetta) by Chao Phraya Thewet and Prince Naris, and the Malay *bangsawan* (Virulrak, *Wiwattanakarn* 243). Some elements of *lakhon rong* were adapted from Western performance; *Sao Khrua Fa* was derived from Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly* (1903) and *Tukata Yot Rak* from *The Enchanted Doll*. Rutnin suggests that *lakhon rong* differs significantly from *lakhon phanthat* and *lakhon dukdamban* in the stories, dialogue, dancing, the musical accompaniment, the costume and the set designs and thus appealed as a novelty (*Dance, Drama* 142).

New entertainment forms such as cinema and spoken drama, reflecting the notion of civilisation and progress in Siamese society, gained popularity and replaced the old Thai entertainments (Virulrak, *Wiwattanakarn* 286; Barne 69). In the period

of the modernisation of Siam from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the Western or *farang* culture was a model to follow. It affected the taste of audiences, who preferred Western things. King Chulalongkorn commented on the audience of *Sao Khrua Fa* before the end of his reign saying that ‘People like *Sao Khrua Fa* more than other plays, to the point that there have been letters from the general public asking for repeat performances at a particular *wik* (theatre) because this is a *lakhon farang* story’ (quoted in Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 141). Thus, the plays in *phanthang* style, mostly based on chronicles and tales of other Asian nations rather than Western ones, declined in popularity.

Traditional theatre such as *khon* and *lakhon ram* (Thai dance-drama) was preserved and composed anew in the New Siam. However, Rutnin states that ‘the *lakhon ram* in the traditional style was no longer adequate and effective for communicating new concepts and ideas to the modern public, since what was needed was immediate and direct verbal expression rather than a lengthy display of beautiful dance movements and refined gestures’ (*Dance, Drama* 162). This is a reason why the modern performance style, *lakhon phut* (spoken dance-drama), was supported by King Rama VI. The king was educated in England and was very appreciative of and interested in Western theatre. In his time there were many Western plays that had been translated into Thai as also Thai stories adapted from Western originals.

### **Nationalism**

During the reign of King Vajiravudh, the king propagated ‘official nationalism’ to unify the Siamese against the ethnic rebellions in the country (Bowornwathana 34). Simultaneously, Siam in this period was modernised and

presented itself as a modern nation to the world. Chatri Prakitnonthakarn, a Thai architectural historian, proposes that the modernisation of Siam can be divided into two periods. The first was the period of transformation and reformation of Siam society from 'Old Siam to New Siam' starting from the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868) to the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932. The next period was the so-called 'New Siam to New Thai' from the revolutionary period in 1932 until the end of World War II (Prakitnonthakarn 2). 'New Siam' in the first half of the twentieth century refers to the changing social structure, the attitude of the official government and cultural values. The old cultural values and beliefs were challenged and questioned by modernisation.

During the early twentieth century, Siam encountered Western dominance, and the pressures of democracy and communalism. The ruling class, especially the royal court, played an important role in the creation of Siamese identity. Siamese identity in the early twentieth century emphasised nationalism and patriotism. The concept of the three pillars of Siamese society consisting of *Chart* (Nation), *Sartsana* (Religion) and *Phramaha Kasart* (Monarchy/King) had been inculcated into the Thai people. As Sivaraksa states, the concept of three pillars of Siamese society contributed to the creation of a Siamese identity in the early twentieth century (36). Kasetsiri argues that these three pillars of Thai society were arrived at over the long process of building a 'modern nation'. The concept of three pillars had been introduced during the time of World War I (Kasetsiri). Cultural activities and political campaigns in that period embraced this concept. For example, King Rama VI changed the old Thai flag, which was red with a white elephant in the centre, to the new Thai flag with its three-colour strips of red, white, and blue. Red signified nation, white religion and blue the monarchy or king.



Patriotism and nationalism were the basis of political policies during the reign of King Vajiravudh; multi-ethnicity, especially the presence of the Chinese was regarded as harmful to national security. The Chinese in Siam during that period faced many problems. Many of the country's businesses were under Chinese control and money was sent back to China. The problems between Chinese and Thai people grew worse as can be seen in the book by King Vajiravudh entitled *Jews Heng Burapathid* (Jews of the Orient) in which the ethnic Chinese in Siam were identified as being more dangerous than the Jews in Europe (Chansiri 55-56). Consequently, the first decree on Thai nationality was issued by which all people either born in Siam or elsewhere, regardless of their parents' nationality, were Thais with Thai nationality (Kasetsiri 169). Thus it could be inferred that the issue of diversity, especially in connection with Chinese ethnicity, was of public interest. Therefore the plays and dance-dramas in hybrid style of the Mahin family and of Prince Narathip, which told Chinese, Burmese, Laotian and other national stories, were impacted by such policies and debates. Observing a Thai performer in the role of a Chinese could no longer be seen as entertainment, instead, it raised grave political concerns. The hybrid dance-drama and theatre styles or dance-drama in *phanthang* style of the Mahin family and Prince Narathip were phased out of commercial theatres and replaced by new entertainments, as mentioned.

### **Royal Patronage**

Furthermore, the royal court was interested in and patronised *khon* and *lakhon phut* more than other performance styles (Virulrak, *Wiwattanakarn* 286). The *phanthang* dance-drama style of the Mahin's family and of Prince Narathip had been transmitted to other elite private dance troupes. The dancers and the dance masters of

both groups moved to new troupes such as the dance troupes of *Suan Kularb* palace or *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb*,<sup>1</sup> and *Lakhon Chao Khun Phra Prayurawong* or *Lakhon Chao Chom Marnda Pae*.<sup>2</sup> The shift of dancers and dance masters ensured a continuation in the practice of the dance-drama of the Mahin family and of Prince Narathip. However, the *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* and *Lakhon Chao Chom Marnda Pae* dance troupes were not commercial, they only performed at private special occasions. Thus, the hybrid dance-drama and the *phanthang* form were not as popular as in the past. Later, the dancers and dance masters of these two dance troupe moved to Krom Silapakorn and became teachers at Wittayalai Nattasilp (the Dramatic Arts College).

### **Krom Silapakorn: The Route of the Hybrid Dance-Drama and Theatre Styles to *Lakhon Phanthang***

In this section, I would like to focus on how Krom Silapakorn originated, and how the hybrid dance-drama and theatre forms of the Mahin family and of Prince Narathip were transformed there from popular entertainment into traditional theatre in a big melting pot which gathered dancers and dance gurus from private dance troupes to teach and perform under its banner.

In the past, from the early Rattanakosin era to the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Thai traditional theatre had been managed in a loose structure under the court's authority. Thai traditional dances, theatre and entertainment were the responsibility of the Krasuang Wang (Ministry of the Royal Palace) (Krasuang Suksathikarn 278). There were various *krom* or departments such as Krom Khon (Masked-dance Department), Krom Hun (Puppets Department), Krom Piphat (Royal Music and Orchestra Department), Krom Hok Kamen Ram Khom (Acrobatic and

Lantern Dance Department) and Krom Mahorasop (Entertainment Department).<sup>3</sup>

Krom Silapakorn took care of museums, architecture and literature.

The officers of Krom Mahorasop were not full-time artists (Chansuwan 21). They did not report to work in the department every day but they had to attend rehearsals and performances when events occurred (Yupho, *Silapa* 55). The department of dance and music was reorganised during the reign of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925). All departments related to the entertainment of the nation were gathered together in one, the Krom Mahorasop (Entertainment Department). This department was under the direct supervision of the king and under royal patronage. It was the first time that the organisation of art and culture had been systematised, long after Siam's Westernisation and modernisation. Montri Tramote, a former student of Rong Rian Phran Luang and a National Artist of Thai music, reported that

Krom Mahorasop was an art organisation, which included *karn-chang* [artisanship], *khon* [masked-dance], *lakhon* [dance-drama] and *dontri* [music]. King [Rama VI] considered all these arts very important. They were a part of national culture, in need of protection. If the king did not patronise in these arts, nobody would be. Therefore, Krom Mahaorasop was established to protect all these national arts. With the king's leadership, the public can follow in the king's footsteps, resulting in the flourishing of national arts in the future (155).

Krom Mahorasop in the first two decades of the twentieth century was a theatrical lab for King Vajiravudh. The king organised dance rehearsals, amended

dance movements and *khon* plays, and performed *khon* and *lakhon* himself (Malakun 553). In addition, Krom Mahorasop at that time also functioned as a school for the training of artists and musicians who would become the national artists of the future. In 1914, Rong Rian Phran Luang Nai Phra Barom Rachupatham or in short Rong Rian Phran Luang (The Phran Luang School under the Royal Patronage) was established as part of Krom Mahorasop with the aim to train students in *khon*, *lakhon*, and *dontri* (music) and in Western dramatic arts along with the study of general subjects. The students of this school were children whose parents wished them to work as performers or become *mahatlek* (chamberlains) in the royal service. Teachers of dance and music subjects were the senior officers of Krom Marorasop and traditional dance and music professionals. The others were teachers who taught general subjects and came from other schools. Rong Rain Phran Luang produced valued dancers and musicians who were key figures in the establishment of the Dramatic Art College and Krom Silapakorn and still today have influence.

The establishment of Krom Mahorasop and Rong Rian Phran Luang ensured the transmission of Thai dance-drama knowledge from the old generation to the younger ones. The *phanthang* dance-drama and theatre styles of Chao Phraya Mahin and Prince Narathip were passed to the next generation of dancers through this process. Some great dance gurus and dancers of Chao Phraya Mahin and Prince Narathip became teachers and dancers at Krom Mahorasop. However, Krom Mahorasop and Rong Rian Phran Luang were dissolved in 1925 and 1926 respectively after the death of King Vajiravudh. In addition, Siam at that point in time was facing a financial crisis cause by the deprivations of the World War I period and the excessive expenditure of the earlier period (Meechubot 12-14). The

artists of Krom Mahorasop and students of Rong Rian Phran Luang faced unemployment. Some artists from Krom Mahorasop moved to other departments; some retired and returned to their hometowns, and some left the palace and joined private dance troupes (Rutnin, *Dance Drama* 187).

In 1926, the department for Thai entertainment was re-established due to the requirement for Thai dance and music performances for royal visitors and diplomacy (Yupho, *Silapa* 72). Thai traditional dance-drama, theatre and music were revived, and former artists from Krom Mahorasop were recalled to work once again but they were in the service of a new department named Kong Mahorasop (Entertainment Division) under the authority of Krom Silapakorn. In 1929, Kong Mahorasop recruited young boys and girls to practise *khon*, *lakhon* and *dontri* as the former artists of Krom Mahorasop were now old, some nearing the age of retirement. Many students of Kong Mahorasop later became great dance masters and musicians at Krom Silapakorn, e.g. Montri Tramote, Arkom Sayakom, Aram Intraranat, Kree Worrasarin, Chamrieng Putpradub. They played an important role in revising and developing dance and music forms at the Thai conservatoire.

In 1934, a new school of arts and dance was established with the name of Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart. It was initially under the authority of Krasuang Thammakarn (Ministry of Education) but was transferred to Krom Silapakorn in 1935 (*101 Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* 116). This school was the first dance and music school where training in dance and music were kept separate, as two subjects, and under royal patronage, after the end of absolute monarchy (Rutnin, *Dance Drama* 189). Supachai Chansuwan stated in a seminar about the life and works of Luang Wichit Watakarn at Bunditpattanasil Institute on 3 May 2013 that ‘the emergence of Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart seems a revival of the learning and

teaching systems of Rong Rian Phran Luang of King Rama VI (King Vajiravudh 1910-1925) as dance and music were a necessary element to give expression to the civilisation of the country. Education valorised the status of dance and music professionals in Thai society.'

Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart offered primary and secondary education. The curricula of this school were clearly meant to benefit the students by providing knowledge of the dramatic arts together with a general education. Half of the period of study in each academic year was spent on general subjects such as Thai and international histories, English, morality, psychology studies, health and physical education, on the basis of fundamental education rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Education. The other half was spent on performing art subjects. Since 1934, the school changed names several times: from Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart to Rong Rian Silapakon in 1935, to Rong Rian Sang-khitsin in 1942. In 1945, the school was named Rong Rian Natasin offering primary and secondary education and a two-year diploma in music and classical dance studies. Later, in 1972, the school was raised to the status of College of Art and Music with the Witthayalai Natasin. A bachelor's degree in music and classical dance studies was first offered at this college in 1976 ('History of Witthayalai Natasin'). For the early period of the school, there is not a detailed and accurate description of the subjects taught in the performing arts section but it can be surmised that the teaching methods adhered to the traditional training style as in the past (Fahchumroon 104).

The establishment of Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart under the authority of Krom Silapakorn in 1934 is evidence of the enduring transmission of ancient dance-drama and theatre forms in a modern art and culture setting. Under an educational umbrella many traditional dance experts of different backgrounds were gathered who

were specialists in their own dance styles. Pramate Boonyachai, a former student of Rong Rian Natasin, states that seniority is what allowed dance masters of different backgrounds to work together without any disagreement (Boonyachai). The younger dance masters admired the older artists' ideas. The long experience in dance-drama and theatre of the older dance masters was seen as a valuable asset.

As mentioned, Krom Silapakorn was a big melting pot that gathered dancers and dance masters from different backgrounds. Standardising dance knowledge to suit the teaching in one institution was an important task which needed to be accomplished as soon as possible. However, it did not happen immediately after the establishment of the school under the authority of Krom Silapakorn due to the social, political and economic conditions of the country during World War II. Danit Yupho suggests that

In 1935, after the end of the absolute monarchy when Thailand became a modern nation state, *khon*, *lakhon* and *dontri* that had hitherto been preserved under royal patronage were transferred to the civil government under Krom Silapakorn. It is the duty of the Thai people and of the Thai government to protect and patronise the arts as national heritage. However, *khon*, *lakhon* and *dontri* had not been fully revived and improved. The valuable *khon* and *lakhon* performances of ancient times had deteriorated...In addition there were new dance-drama and theatre forms emerging in that period, which caused a serious decline in popularity to the national arts (*Khon* 13).

In the beginning, after the School of Dance and Music was set up in 1934, it came under the supervision of Luang Wichit Wathakan, the first director of Krom Silapakorn. Before becoming director of Krom Silapakorn, he had lived and worked in Paris and London as a diplomat. While in Paris, he had registered to study law and political sciences and attended the Pelman Institute (Witayasakpan 177). In Paris, he had many Thai friends, who were progressive and later became key figures in the coup of 1932. Luang Wichit Wathakan returned to Thailand in 1927 and established a printing house. His books and articles were mostly about history, psychology, but he also published political satires. Later, he resigned from government service to work full-time at the printing house. In 1933, he returned to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was made Director of Krom Silapakorn the following year (Raphiphan 17-18).

At that time the dance and music of Krom Silapakorn were being used as a tool in propagating nationalism, which was a major policy of the government. The art forms of the period had been modified to present an image of Thailand as a civilised nation (Witayasakpan 152). The government implemented a policy of improving traditional dance and music using Western models. For example traditional dancers were forced to wear shoes while performing and traditional musicians were ordered to compose songs with Western music scales. These changes brought discontent among traditional dancers and musicians leading to the misunderstanding that the government did not encourage traditional dance and music (Phuchadabhirom 55).

A new theatrical genre, the *Lakhon Luang Wichit* (Luang Wichit Theatre) was created and promoted under Krom Silapakorn. It aimed to educate and persuade audiences to love and be loyal to the country. The style and presentation of the nationalist plays in the new form were a mix of Thai traditional dance-drama and



other elements, including everyday actions and dialogue. However, traditional dancing, martial arts and singing were inserted during the intermission of these nationalist theatre productions.

Witayasakpan states that Luang Wichit chose *lakhon phanthang* as the basic dramatic form to which western elements could be added (201). However In *An Introduction to Genre Theory*, Daniel Chandler suggests that it is difficult to make clear-cut distinctions between one genre and another: genres overlap, and there are ‘mixed genres’ (such as comedy-thrillers). Specific genres tend to be more easily recognised intuitively but are difficult (if not impossible) to define (Chandler 2). The characteristics of *lakhon luang wichit* seem to overlap with the features of *lakhon phanthang*. The issue concerning plays is an interesting point to note here. *Lakhon phanthang* presents non-Thai stories mostly from Asia such as Laos, Burma and China. *Lakhon Luang Wichit* is similar but most of the main story lines revolve around Thai history and Thai ethics, instilling a feeling of nationalism and loyalty to the ‘motherland’ (Witayasakpan 204).

The new theatrical genre *Lakhon Luang Wichit* gained popularity because it supported national policies. However, the other old dance forms were still taught at Krom Silapakorn but they were performed on stage less often than *Lakhon Luang Wichit*.

### **The Revival of Traditional Theatre**

The revival of traditional Thai dance-drama and theatre was significant after the end of World War II and after Luang Wichit Watakarn left his position as director of Krom Silapakorn. The end of absolute monarchy, the emergence of democracy in Thailand after the coup of 1932 and the economic crisis in Thailand after World War

It affected traditional dance and theatre, whose performance had decreased (Virulrak, *Wiwattanakarn* 326). Witayasakapan states that national policies in the first part of the Phibun period (Marshal Plaek Phibun Songkhram in 1938-1944 and 1948-1957) reflect the idea of 'the monarchy as an enemy' of the government and country and it was an obstacle over the development of the country into a modern nation with a constitution. Therefore, the national policies of this period were against royal rule (102).

However, in 1940s, royalism was reinstated in Thai society in order to fight communism. The three pillars of the Thai social structure, *Chart* (Nation), *Sartsana* (Religion) and *Phramaha Kasart* (King) received new emphasis as the foundation of anti-communism. There were several works of literature written by members of the royal family introduced to Thai people. The remarkable novel *Si Phaen Din* (The Four Reigns) written by M.L. Kukrit Pramoj was published to reinforce the idea that Thais thrived under the absolute monarchy (Sattayanurak 119-120). During this period, the anti-monarchy ideology of nationalism, seen after the coup, was interpreted as having made Thai society worse. Thus, the old traditional culture of the court was reinstated, including traditional dance-drama and theatre. The Thai government realised the significance of these arts and went about promoting and revising traditional dance-drama and theatre (Yupho, *Khon and Lakhon* preface).

But the process of revival could not be completed in a short time. Western culture and tradition were still held as a model to follow in building up a Thai modern nation. For example, in 1944, a new entertainment form called *ram wong* (Thai social dance) was introduced to Thai people in the capital. It was modeled on local folk dancing named *ram thon* (a local social dance). Krom Silapakorn took on the responsibility of standardising this entertainment and promotes it. Traditional

dance movements were used in the dance form together with Western music provided by bands

The performances and the dances from the royal court began to be revived and their genres were reclassified by Krom Silapakorn under the leadership of new director Phraya Anumanrachadhon in 1942. Saichon Sattayanurak suggests that Phraya Anumanrachadhon was a key figure in creating *Kwam Pen Thai* (Thainess) in Thai society in the Phibun's second period (1948-1957) in 1940s (129). His works supported the Phibun's national and cultural policies in building the Thai modern nation but his works also presented traditional Thai society in a positive light, proposing that Thailand was the best country in the world because the Thai people in each region have their own tradition and culture, which is transmitted from generation to generation. In addition, Phraya Anumanrachadhon also revived conservatism, encouraging Thai people to draw on traditional values as the basis of the transition of traditional Thailand into a modern nation. He stressed that 'Thai people have the duty to protect tradition and culture because it is their national heritage' (Sattayanurak 133). Thus it can be said that after World War II, there was a period of revival of traditional dance-drama and theatre, now turned into high art and signaling the cultural richness of the nation.

Phraya Anumanrachadhon clearly stated in the preface of his book about *Ramakien* (Ramayana) that *Nattayasart* (dance-drama and theatre) such as *khon* and *lakhon* have to be protected because these arts are an instrument in transmitting 'Wattanatham Haeng Chart' (Culture of the nation) (Anumanrajadhon 200-201). Additionally, due to the renewed royalism of Thai society Phraya Anumanrachadhon keenly proposed that the monarchy was an important institution for the preservation of the traditions and culture of the Thai nation. Therefore, in 1940s traditional dance-

drama and theatre, especially that of the court was subject to a full revival at the hands of Krom Silapakorn.

The revival of traditional dance-drama and theatre was not only linked to the socio-cultural changes in the country. The connection between Thailand and other countries, especially America, through the United Nations, is also to be seen as an important factor, in that it pushed Thailand to support Thai culture as a tool for managing international relations. In 1949, Thailand joined the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an agency within the United Nation (UN), which is responsible for promoting peace, social justice, human rights and international security via international cooperation in educational, science and cultural programmes. It promoted a culture of peace and the establishing of the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind to prevent another world war. The cooperation between Thailand and UNESCO led to the revival of Thai traditional culture, music and theatre. UNESCO requested lists of music and songs to establish a full directory of music forms and songs from around the world (Phuchadabhirom 81-82). The Thai government cooperated with this request by asking that Krom Silapakorn re-arranged and revised Thai classical dance and music to send an up to date list to the UN. Since then, the Thai government has implemented a systematic policy of preservation of Thai traditional theatre and music as a part of the nation's cultural heritage.

Traditional Thai dance-drama and theatre were revived in many ways. The Thai government supported Kong Karn Sangkit (Performing Arts Division), a sub-organisation of Krom Silapakorn, which took care of Thai traditional dance-drama theatre and other entertainment. The aim of Kong Karn Sangkit was to preserve the Thai performing arts as a branch of national heritage following UNESCO's policies.

The revival of traditional Thai dance-drama and theatre received new impetus when Dhanit Yupho took up the position as Head of Kong Karn Sangkit (Dance and Music Division), Krom Silapakorn.<sup>4</sup> Under his supervision many Thai traditional dance-dramas and theatre forms were revived. The process of revival of Thai dance-drama and theatre began by inviting old dance masters and dancers to become teachers and artists at Krom Silapakorn and the School of Dance and Music (Yupho, *Khon and Lakhon* preface).

The dance masters of that period were both *khon* and *lakhon* experts and they came from many different dance backgrounds, such as Luang Wilas Wong Ngum (Ram Intrarant), a *khon* dance master from Krom Mahoraop in the reign of King Rama VI, Mon Supaluk Pattranawik (Mom Kru Tuan) a *lakhon* dance master (female role) of Chao Phray Thewet in the reign of King Chulalongkorn, M.L Paew Sanitwongseni and Kru Lamul Yamakoup, the *lakhon* dancers of Wang Suan Kularb, Kru Manlee Kongprapat, a *lakhon* dancer of Phra Ong Chao Watchareewong and Kru Phan Morakul, a *lakhon* dancer of Chao Chom Marnda Pae. However, Pramate Boonyachai stated in an interview that during the first period of the revival of dance-drama and theatre forms in Krom Silapakorn, the *lakhon* that was supported was mainly derived from the Wang Suan Kularb by Kru Lamul Yamakoup and M.L Paew Sanitwongseni.

### **Wang Suan Kularb Dance Troupe**

Boonyachai's statement begs the question of why the dance forms of Wang Suan Kularb would influence the revival of dance-drama and theatre by Krom Silapakorn. Wang Suan Kularb was a dance troupe whose patrons were Prince Assadang Dejavut and Prince Chuthathuch Tharadilok, sons of King Chulalongkorn.

This dance troupe was established in 1911 and was regarded as the best dance school (troupe) for *lakhon luang* (dance-drama for the royal court) during the reign of King Vajiravudh (*101 Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* 72). However, the performances by this dance troupe were presented mostly on special royal occasions and at private events of the dance troupe owner.

The dance troupe gathered the best dance masters and dancers to teach young students. Mae Kru Ngeum (Dance guru Ngeum) a former dancer of Chao Phraya Mahin dance troupe and Chao Chom Marnda Khein of Prince Narathip dance troupe became the dance masters of Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe (*101 Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* 86-88). Thus, the *phanthang* dance and theatre styles were transmitted to the students and were based on the *Rachathirat* and *Phra Lor* repertoires, which had been with Chao Phraya Mahin and Prince Narathip dance troupes. However, the *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* troupe excelled at *lakhon nai* and *lakhon dukdamban* styles more than other dance-drama and theatre forms, as most of its dance masters had been royal court dancers during the reign of King Buddha Loetla Nabhalai (King Rama II, r.1809-1824).

*101 Pi Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* (101 Years of Wang Suan Kularb Dance Troupe) discusses the Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe and the practice of Thai traditional dance, including dance in *phanthang* style at the School of Music and Dance, Krom Silapakorn, as follows:

‘The students of Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart [School of Music and Dance, Krom Silapakorn] were trained in traditional dance as the dance students of Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe. The teaching of dance was in very traditional style, with the master dancing at the front of the class and the students

repeating and following the steps of the teachers. In addition, the students of this school were required to wear the red *jongkrabean* [the loincloth]. The red *jongkrabean* became the uniform of the dance students, displaying unity and discipline. This is the custom followed by the dance students of *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb*: they had a uniform, which consisted of a white shirt and a red long cloth' (111-112).

The above passage shows the effort of the dance teachers of Krom Silapakorn in organising and systematising the teaching of traditional dance in the school by applying the traditions and customs of the Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe. It points to the effort made in reviving the old dance forms in the school. The dance and theatre in *phanthang* style, later known as *lakhon phanthang*, were taught at the Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart by the former dance masters of *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb*.

### ***Lakhon Phanthang* as a Genre**

The 1940s was a period of revival of dance-drama and theatre forms but their classification had not been significant. Phraya Anumanrachadhon states that when the literary works are adapted to performance, the story is not important because the audiences already know it. In contrast, it is the art of performance, encompassing dance movements, singing, music and including other theatrical elements that matters. For instance, everyone knows the *khon*'s stories (quoted in Fachamroon 160-161). Therefore, the revival process was at first focused on polishing dance

choreographic patterns, music and movements rather than engaging with a classification of genres

The term ‘Siamese Dance-Drama’ and ‘Performance of Siamese Classical Play’ were popular terms used to refer to the productions of Krom Silapakorn during that period. Moreover, from the 1940s to 1950s, during the leadership of Phraya Anumanrachadhon and Dhanit Yupho as Director Generals of Krom Silapakorn, several textbooks about Thai performing arts, dance-drama programmes, Thai dance-dramas and *khon* plays were published in both Thai and English. These texts aimed to provide knowledge about the Thai performing arts, to promote Thai arts to foreigners and also to elevate the status of the performing arts as a serious discipline in Thailand (Fachamroon 170). The first official textbook about the performing arts was *Athibai Nattasilp Thai* (The description of Thai performing arts) by Phraya Anumanrachadhon published in the Thai language in 1948. This book gave some brief descriptive information on the dance-drama and *khon*. The term *Sang Keat Silp* (the art of dance and singing) was used as a theme in this book, with reference to *rong* (singing), *ram* (dancing), *tam phleng* (music) in Thai performance in both folk and classical forms (Anumanrachadhon n).

Three dance pieces selected from the *Phra Lor*<sup>5</sup> repertoire; -*Phra Law Tam Kai* (*Phra Lor* and the magic cock), *Phra Law Kaw Suan* (*Phra Lor* enters the royal garden) and *Fon Rak* (the dance of love), were discussed. However, the term *lakhon phanthang* was not yet used with reference to these three dances. The dances were described by giving information about the author of the *Phra Lor* plays, a short synopsis of the scenes in which the dances appeared, and some comments by the author. This publication testifies to the effort to begin a classification of Thai dance-drama and theatre, even though superficial. The *Phra Lor* performances in



*phanthang* style of Prince Narathip had not yet been classified as *lakhon phanthang* but were referred to generally as *ram* (dancing). Pornrat Dumrhung suggests that

Genre is not a Thai performing arts concept. Thai artists and audiences, especially in the past, were accustomed to calling the dance-drama forms by the name of their creator such as *Lakhon Chao Phraya Mahin* [Chao Phraya Mahin's dance-drama], *Lakhon Mon Luang Tuan* [Mon Luang Tuan's dance-drama], and *Lakhon Luang Wichit* [Luang Wichit's dance drama]. It seems that the classification of Thai traditional dance began during the reign of King Vajiravudh, when the king presented his modern *lakhon* style, the *lakhon phut*, which was a drama style modelled on Western theatre (Dumrhung interview).

Thus, according to Dumrhung, classification of dance-drama and theatre in Thailand is a new thing. Thai dance artists took on board the concept of a systematisation of dance-drama when Thai society began to adapt itself to the modern world, which coincided with Western hegemony. The West provided a model of modernisation. However, the classification of dance-drama in Thailand did not just appear during the reign of King Vajiravudh as Damrhung claims. It had existed since the Ayudhaya period (fourteenth century) as evidenced in an ancient play which refers to *lakhon nai* (the royal court dance) or *lakhon kang nai* (the dance-drama in the palace) in the Ayudhaya period (Damrongrajanubhab, *Lakhon* 230). Therefore, it should be noted here that the classification of Thai dance-drama and theatre emerged before Siam had a connection with the West.

This notwithstanding, the classification of dance-drama and theatre in the past seems to have been ambiguous and loose in structure. For example, the terms *Lakhon Nai*, *lakhon khang nai*, *lakhon phu ying* and *lakhon nang nai* were used almost interchangeably with reference to the royal court dance-drama performed by female dancers. On the one hand, the words *nai* and *kang nai* literally mean a place inside. On the other hand, the word *nang nai* and *phu ying* refer to the ladies of the court, who work for the king, and to consorts and female dancers. With this in mind it can be seen that the classification of Thai dance-drama and theatre in the past was done by considering where the performance took place and in relation to the gender of the dancers.

On 11st February 2011, a cultural event under the title *Khon Phu Ying Lakhon (Nai) Phu Chai* (Female Khon and Male Dance-Drama) was arranged at Princess Chakri Sirindhon Anthropology Centre in Bangkok. Surat Jongda, a Thai dance-drama and *khon* expert, was a key speaker, and there was a dance demonstration by the students of Wittayalai Nattasilp Krom Silapakorn. Surat Jongda presented new findings which challenged the old paradigm. He showed that *lakhon nai* can be performed by male dancers, and that *khon* can be performed by female dancers. Jongda also suggested that the performing arts are not defined by gender. There are many factors leading Thai dance artists and students to hold this belief. However, Thai people have to modify their received knowledge by carefully considering concepts, techniques, principles and customs in relation to the dance rather than only the gender of the performers (Jongda, 'Khon Phu Ying Lakhon [Nai] Phu Chai'). The classification of *lakhon nai* or court dance as presented by Jongda demonstrates that the ambiguity of old classifications of dance-drama leads to problems concerning the revival and development of dance-drama and theatre. Thai

dance scholars and artists are still adhering to outmoded ideas, thus the *lakhon nai* is assigned exclusively to female dancers and *khon* to male dancers, even though this was not the case in the past.

As for *lakhon phanthatang*, this term was used officially in the *Krai-thong* production by the Division of Music and Drama, Krom Silapakorn in 1949. The programme notes said that ‘The play of *Krai-thong*’ composed by Prince Narathip is in ‘*Lakon Phanthatang* style, different from all other Thai plays but very well suited to the actions of the characters, as the dances are beautiful and the whole performance is like a “*lakon nok*” with features of “*lakon nai*” in some parts’ (Yupho, *Khon* 193-194). This was the first time that the term *lakhon phanthatang* appeared and was used to classify a production of Krom Silapakorn after the revolutionary period. However, the term *lakhon phanthatang* in this programme gives a very brief and unclear connotation of the form and of the characteristics of the performance. The noteworthy feature of this statement is the consideration of other *lakhon* forms such as *lakhon nok* and *lakhon nai* as a term of comparison to highlight difference with *lakhon phanthatang*. The dance forms *lakhon nok* and *lakhon nai* were well known as major Thai traditional dance-drama forms with a long history like the *khon* performance.

The term *lakhon phanthatang* as mentioned above does not refer to a mixed or hybrid dance-drama. The *lakhon phanthatang* term becomes clearer in meaning nine years later, when the new *lakhon phanthatang* production *Phya Phanong* was created by the staff of Krom Silapakorn. The programme of the *Phya Panong* production of 1958 refers to a ‘*Lakhon phanthatang* entitled *Phya Phanong* in six acts’. The programme gives a brief synopsis of the story and a short explanation of the production as follows:

...The name *Phya Phanong* was given to the hero of this romance who was father to Phya Karmuan, the founder of Nan. The term '*lakon phanthang*' is used to define this dramatic performance and denotes a genre which is closely allied to the *lakon nok* or popular play with the addition of more complex music, dance and songs, as opposed to the *lakon dukdamban*, which is allied to the *lakon nai* or court drama. The word '*Phanthang*', it may be added, originally signified 'a mongrel'. Hence the name given to this mixed type of *Lakon* (Yupho *Khon and Lakhon* 231).

Thai dance-drama at the end of 1950s regarded the theatrical elements of the performance such as music, singing and dance movements as more important than the gender of the performers and the place of the performance, as it had been in the early period. The term *lakhon phanthang* was defined by comparing it in form with the popular play *lakhon nok* which was aimed at commoners. This definition also implied that *lakhon phanthang* displayed complex theatrical elements but was more flexible than the dance forms of the royal court. This was the first time that the term *phanthang* was linked with mongrelism to denote the hybridity of the form. This was a cursory gloss but it was the precursor of future classifications of the dance genre as *phanthang*.

The classification of dance-drama and theatre in this period implicitly demonstrates that the revival of dance-drama and theatre in Thailand was really about establishing genres. The classification of Thai dance-drama and theatre through naming and defining the form and characteristics of the performance was introduced

after the old dance-drama forms were revived. All these dance forms became a model for the newly invented dance-dramas of Krom Silpakorn as in the case of the *Phya Phanong* production.

It is very intriguing that the systematization of the dance forms was happening after World War II. Phraya Anumanrachadhon mentions the dance and music activities of Krom Silapakorn of that period by using a metaphor: 'When we are hungry, we want only food. People do not need dance and singing when the stomach rumbles with hunger' (*Karn Ban Leng* 10). This suggests that during the War II, dance and music had been impacted as the rest of society. But after the World War II and when everything in the country went back to normal, entertainment was again available and it was time to re-organise performance.

The classification of dance-drama and theatre genres as effected by Krom Silapakorn was based on three principles. The first principle was *Fern-Fu Lae Prab Prung* (revival and improvement), achieved by gathering Thai dance experts to teach at the School of Music and Dance to pass on the old dance knowledge and wisdom to future generations. The second principle was *Sang-San Lae Peur-Pre* (structuring and promoting), which saw the construction of the National Theatre to support the activity of Krom Silapakorn. In addition, Thai dance-drama and theatre were widely promoted in the country and abroad. The third principle was *Wang Mardrathan* (standardisation), which included the establishment of a performing arts organisation to protect national art. Additionally, dance artists were compelled to improve their skills and knowledge in order to reach the standard set by Krom Silapakorn (Fachamroon 356-357).

This shows that the standardisation of the dance-drama and theatre was part of a gradual process. This is the reason why the term *lakhon phanthang* was more

elaborately discussed in 1958 in connection with the *Phya Phanong* production than when first used in 1949 for the *Kria-thong* production.

### ***Lakhon Phanthang* in the 1940s and 1950s**

In the 1940s, the revival and classification of Thai dance-drama and theatre continued. Seri Wangnaitham gave an interview about the work of Krom Silapakorn since the establishment of the School of Music and Dance in 1934 saying that ‘Luang Wichit created the new *lakhon*, to which he added a few dance movements. Meanwhile Dhanit Yupho (in 1940-1950s) revived the dance-drama by focusing on the *Ramakien* story. *Lakhon nok* and *lakhon nai* were revived but there were a few adaptations to make the production up to date’ (quoted in Fachamroon 175). The revival of Thai dance-drama and theatre in the 1940s was not a smooth process, as Prince Panupan Yukon says:

Krom Silapakorn’s intent and effort is on presenting high quality arts to enhance the arts as an honourable discipline as much as possible...But Krom Silapakorn has to reckon with the limits [*kob-kate*] and potential [*kam-lang*] of the organisation. We [Krom Silapakorn] cannot overstep our limitations and power (Krom Silapakorn, preface).

This suggests that the revival of dance-drama and theatre by Krom Silapakorn during that period was being accomplished under great pressure. The organisation had not enough financial support from the government and was subject to government policies. The terms *kob-kate* (limit) and *kam-lang* (potential) of Krom

Silapakorn implied that Krom Silapakorn had to do with a small number of professional artists and performers.

In 1963, Krom Silapakorn published a book entitled *The Khon and Lakon: Dance Dramas*, which was a collection of the dance-drama and theatre programmes presented by Krom Silapakorn from 1945 to 1962. It was the official book following the revolutionary period which authoritatively classified Thai dance-drama genres. In the preface of the book, Dhanit Yupho, at the time Director General of Krom Silapakorn, stated, in connection with selecting the stories and episodes to be presented on the Silapakorn stage after the World War II, that

In presenting the masked play and the dance-drama, we [Krom Silapakorn] considered only the episodes or the items which were regarded by scholars as displaying good technique, and worthy of being regarded as part of the Thai art of dancing, so that students could learn from them and the public could enjoy. Consequently, the episodes of either *Khon* or *Lakon* have not been arranged in the order of the original stories. We have also modified the items to conform with the taste of audiences, which consisted of both Thais and foreigners, and at the same time we have retained the standard of Thai classical dancing...

In order to make the programme collection more valuable to the reader, and more easy to follow, we have not printed the programmes in the sequence in which they were actually performed, but have arranged them in accordance with the episodes of *Ramakien* (the subject matter of the *Khon*) and

the various categories of the dance-drama, the *Lakon Jatri*, *Lakon Nok*, *Lakon Nai*, *Lakon Dukdamban* and *Lakon Phanthang* (*Khon and Lakhon* vi-vii).

As per Yupho's statement, the taste of post-war audiences was considered as an important factor in the revival of traditional dance drama and theatre. Although deemed a revival, tradition had to be modified to meet the needs of the audiences.

In addition to giving the names of the dance genres of the period, the book is a valuable resource for analysing the *lakhon phanthang* of the time. There were seven dance-drama productions by Krom Silapakorn, classified as *lakhon phanthang* presented at Silapakorn Theatre after the revolutionary period. These are:

1. *Phra Law* on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 1948
2. *Kria-thong* on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January 1949
3. *Khun Chang and Khun Phane* in episode of Phra Vai's defeat on Friday 11<sup>st</sup> November 1949
4. *Phra Abhai-Mani* in episode of Meeting Nang Laweng on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> January 1952
5. *Rachathirat* in episode of Saming Phra Ram volunteering to fight on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March 1952
6. *Khun Chang and Khun Phane* in episode the Campaign of Master Pej and Bua on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 1953
7. *Phya Phanong* on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 1958

*Lakhon phanthang* productions of this period were danced by teachers, dance artists and students of Krom Silapakorn. Rong Lakhon Silapakorn (Silapakorn Theatre) became the exclusive stage for presenting *khon* and *lakhon* productions of



Krom Silapakorn during that period. The traditional *lakhon* and *khon* performances, as well as performances of Western music, were presented routinely every Friday and Saturday at 2.00 pm. and 8.00 pm, and on Sunday at 10.00 am, 2.00 pm and 8.00 pm. Rong Lakhon Silapakorn was an old theatre auditorium in poor condition, with a tinned roof and wooden stage. Due to the noise on the tinned roof during the rainy season, performances took place in the Silapakorn Auditorium only from November to May (Fachamroon 155).

In the next section, I would like to discuss three *lakhon phanthatang* productions of this period, *Phra Lor*, *Rachathirat* and *Phya Phanong*, as these three productions are acknowledged as sources for *lakhon phanthatang* to this day. In addition, these three plays and their choreography are being passed on to the next generation as traditional *lakhon phanthatang* through academic dance curricula. The other *lakhon phanthatang* productions of the period such as *Kria-thong*, *Khun Chang and Khun Phane* and *Phra Abhai-Mani* are no longer perceived as *lakhon phanthatang* as their stories and forms seem to resemble more closely *lakhon nok* and *lakhon sepha* (dance-drama in *sepha* verse).

### **The Stories**

The stories of the seven productions I have mentioned were not limited to those of other foreign nations based on their chronicles. The location of five out of seven productions of *lakhon phanthatang* of this period was the ancient kingdom of Siam. For example, in *Phra Lor*, *Krai-thong* and *Phya Phanong* productions, the location was the northern part of Siam. *Khun Chang Khun Phane* was set in the Suphanburi province, which was an outskirt of Bangkok. There was only one production, *Rachathirat* that related in significant portions to a Mon and Burmese

story. However, *Phra Abhai-Mani* production seems to be an exception, where the main plotline presented a Thai story and whereas Nang Laweng, one of the major characters, was a European (Yupho, *Khon* 240).

If the term *lakhon phanthat* implies Otherness, through mixing Thai and non-Thai dance styles, the story needs to be about non-Thais, according to the definition of *lakhon phanthat* given by contemporary Thai dance scholars and artists. But it seems that the definition of *lakhon phanthat* current in the 1940s was broader than that of the present. *Lakhon phanthat* of this period presents Otherness within the Thai kingdom. Laotian ethnicity was mentioned with reference to the people in the northern province of the Thai kingdom, rather than the actual Laotians in Laos. Furthermore, it seems that stories of rural Thai people were included in the *lakhon phanthat* repertoire. However, the nationality of the characters in the play was also important as seen in the *Rachathirat* and *Phra Abhai-Mani* productions.

Nevertheless, *lakhon phanthat* productions of this period were in line with government policies. The *Phra Lor* production presented on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 1948 was a good example of Thai entertainment, which reflected the definition of Thainess as given by the government. *Phra Lor* is the tragic love story of Phra Lor, a king of Man Suang and Phra Phun and Phra Pang, two princesses of Mung Srong. They were enemy kingdoms, as the father of Phra Lor had killed the grandfather of the two princesses. The story is set in the northern part of Thailand. Phra Lor is the most handsome king of Man Suang. The town dwellers are proud of his charm and believe he is as handsome as an *avatar* of *Indra* (God Indra). Princess Phra Phun and Phra Pang heard a song in which the beauty of Phra Lor is extolled and they fall in love with him. Two maids of the princesses, Nang Run and Nang Roy, plan to go to Phu Chao Saming Prai, a great magician in the hills to ask him to use his magic to

lure Phra Lor and bring him to the two princesses. Phra Lor is compelled to come to Muang Sroung with Nai Kaew and Nai Kwan, his close servants. Finally, Phra Lor meets the two princesses and they all fall in love with each other. The grandmother of the two princesses knows about Phra Lor and her grandchild. She is angry and full of hatred and desirous of revenge for her husband. She plans to kill Phra Lor but her grandchild protects him with her own body. Finally, Phra Lor, Phra Phun, Phra Pang and their servants die together.

The *Phra Law* production was presented in three scenes beginning with the story of Phu Chao Sming Prai calling the magic cock, Phra Law entering the royal garden and Phra Law meeting Phra Phun and Phra Phaeng in the palace (Yupho, *Khon* 253). The programme did not refer to the production as *lakhon phanthang* but as Siamese Dance-Drama. The front page of the programme gave the title and the theatre's name and showed a map of northern Thailand in the background. A small picture of the dancers showed the three main characters: Phra Lor, Phra Phun and Phra Pang. The dancers posed in tableau style and their picture was placed in a heart shape cutout, as seen in the movie magazines of that time. An English translation was provided along with the Thai to explain the production details for the benefit of foreigners in the audience. The programme gave details about the cast, play and a synopsis (Raksiam). Sattayanurak states that government policy in the second period of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram supported the idea of *Ruam Chart or Pen Din Deaw Kan* (United Thai Nation). Thus, ethnic groups throughout Thailand were encouraged to feel a part of the community of Thai people. In the past, the northern part of Thailand or Lanna was a multi-ethnic area, with groups such as Tai Kearn and Tai Lan Chang. They were encouraged to feel Thai. The idea of a united Thai nation

underpinned the policies aimed at building the Thai nation as a great Thai Empire (Sattayanurak 68-69).

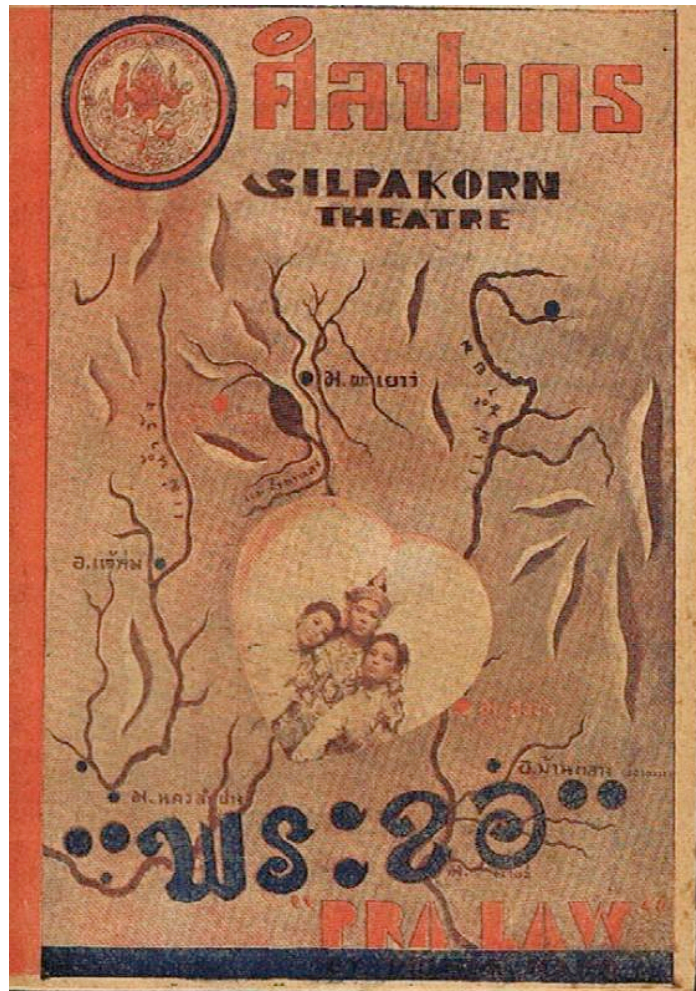


Fig. 9. Front page of *Phra Lor* programme in 1948 Photo: Raksiam

Therefore, the *Phra Lor* production of this period assisted in valorising local communities of Thai people, suggesting that Thai people from the north provinces and Thai people in the capital were all Thai people of the same nation.

Phraya Anumanrachadhon comments on the historical background of *Phra Lor* in a textbook on Thai dance-drama in 1948 saying that

Prince Narathip blended the music and dance of the northern Thai people with the *lakhon ram* of Thai capital. He selected melody and rhythm on the basis of the plotline of *Phra Lor*, which related to the northern area of Thailand. Thus, this performance [Phra Lor enters the royal garden] addressed the close relationship between Thai Chao Neaur [Thai people in the north] and Thai Chao Taai [Thai people in the south especially in the capital city] (123).

Another production that should be mentioned here is *Rachathirat*. On Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March 1952, Silapakorn theatre presented an episode of *Rachathirat*, that of Saming Phra Ram Arsa (Saming Phra Ram volunteering to fight). The programme stated that this production was revived and recast by The Fine Art Department (Yupho, *Khon* 219). The production presented *Rachathirat* in six scenes. It was the first time this story was presented at the Silapakorn Theatre after World War II. This play was a famous story of Chao Phraya Mahin's dance troupe. This production gained great popularity in 1952, when it was performed 112 times, the highest record of performance of any production at Silapakorn Theatre during that period (Fachamroom 149).

The front page of the programme of the *Rachathirat* performance had the picture of Saming Phra Ram, a Mon soldier and Kamani, a Chinese soldier, in a fighting stance. The programme consisted of a cast list and the name list of director, choreographers, composers and musicians, costume designer and scene designer. In addition, the historical background of the *Rachathirat* story was given in the introduction with a synopsis of the scenes. The *Rachathirat* production of 1952 did

not clearly adhere to the nationalistic policies of the government as the *Phra Lor* production in 1948. It only had two non-Thai characters, the Chinese and Mons soldiers.



Fig. 10. The programme of Rachathirat production in 1952. Photo: Krom Silapakorn, *Rachathirat in the Episode Saming Phra Ram Volunteering to Fight* (Pranakhon: Prachan, 1952).

However, it reflects Thailand's perception of China during the cold war period. China had become powerful country and dominated the Asian region, with ambitions of taking on leadership over the region, ensuring its stability. China's behavior was seen as aggressive (Nathan 7). *Rachathirat* in the episode Saming Phra Ram Arsa tells the story of the Chinese Emperor Seng-chow who sends his best soldier Kamani to challenge the Burmese soldier. Should Kamani be defeated, the

Chinese army will be withdrawn from Ava. However, if Kamani won, China would reward Ava (the capital city of ancient Burma). The prisoner from the Mons country Saming Phra Ram, the best of the Mon soldiers, volunteers to fight with Kamani. Saming Phra Ram wins the fight and Kamani dies. This production was presented at the time when the power of China was dominant over Asia in the cold war period. It hints at the defeat of the Chinese army in its attempt to colonise Burma, during the cold war.

On Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 1958, *Phya Phanong* a new *lakhon phanthang* production was presented at the Silapakorn Theatre. *Phya Phanong* was a new story adapted from a legend of the Nan province. It was the first *lakhon phanthang* in the repertoire of Krom Silapakorn, in which the story, dance movements and music were created by the staff members of Krom Silapakorn (Yupho, *Khon* 229). Dhanit Yupho summoned two key figures of Krom Silapakorn, M.L. Phaew Sanitwongseni, a powerful dance master and former dancer of *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb*, and Montri Tramote, a skillful musician and former student of Rong Rian Phran Luang during the reign of King Vajiravudh, to create the *Phya Phanong* story. *Phya Phanong* is about King Ngummuang, the king of Woranakorn (an ancient city of Nan province in the northern part of Thailand) who falls in love with Nang Uasim, a lover of Khun Saiyos (Prince Saiyao), his adopted son. King Ngummuang wants to get rid of Khun Saiyos by killing him but he changes his mind and instead orders Khun Saiyos to govern a distant town. King Ngummuang then marries Nang Uasim and they have a son, who is in fact the son of Nang Uasim and Khun Saiyos. Khun Saiyos learns that Waranakorn kingdom is his, having inherited it from his real father. He leads an army to fight with King Ngummuang and reclaim his kingdom. Finally, the king is defeated. King Ngummuang gives the kingdom back to Khun Saiyos who is rejoined

with Nang Uasim and their son. Khun Saiyos then changes his name to Phya Phanong and governs the Woranakorn kingdom.

The performance was in six acts. The story was set between 1830 and 1890 and its location was the Nan and Chiengrai provinces. Although this story was a new production, the dance choreography and the music and singing resembled the *Phra Lor* story in that it was also set in the northern part of Thailand (Jongda interview). At present, these three stories are in the traditional repertoire of *lakhon phanthatang*, taught to the students of Krom Silakorn and in university dance departments. The production and dancing have been modified to meet the aesthetic requirements of the audience and to make the productions up to date.

### **The Dance Movement Style**

The dance movements of the *Lakhon phanthatang* of Krom Silapakorn from the 1940s to the 1950s were created and transmitted by the dance masters and dancers of *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb*. The dance movements and choreography of the *Phra Lor* production were based on the *Phra Lor* production of Prince Narathip's dance troupe. The production and dance movements of *Phra Lor* of Prince Narathip was passed on to the dancers of Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe by Chao Chom Marda Khein (Prince Narathip's mother) and was inherited by Krom Silapakorn via the former dancers of Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe (Vechnsuruck 29-30). Kru Lamul Yamakoup and M.L Paew Sanitwongseni, who had danced with the Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe, were key figures in the revival of dance-drama and theatre at Krom Silapakorn during that period (*101 Pi Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* 73). The *Rachathirat* production was passed on from these former dancers of Wang Suan Kularb, as in the case of the *Phra Lor* production. However, Pramate Boonyachai



claimed that the *lakhon phanthang* of Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe, especially the *Rachathirat* repertoire was transmitted by Mae Kru Ngeum, former dancer of Chao Phraya Mahin, who became dance master of Wang Suan Kularb dance troupe (Boonyachai interview). The dance movements of *Phya Phanong* were newly created, however, the style is similarly to the *Phra Lor* dance movements.

The dance movements of *lakhon phanthang* are interesting. *Phra Lor* and *Phya Phanong* are stories set in the northern part of Thailand. Thus, the dance movement style has remained faithful to the traditional Thai dance form. The basic hand gestures such as *jeep* and *wong* continue to be used in the choreography. The mixed dance movements in both these *lakhon phanthang* repertoires are not a hybrid of two different dance forms with a view to create a new form. It is, rather, a kind of twist on the existing dance techniques, which makes the dance movements look unusually different. For example, the body in Thai traditional theatre has a centre balance but in *lakhon phanthang Phra Lor* and *Phya Phanong* the body is off balance as can be seen in the figure 11 which shows the dancers Phra Lor, Nai Kaew and Nai Kwan (see fig. 11). Here the body balance is on the right, which differs from the dance stances of Kai Kaew (a magic cock). The magic cock in this picture is shown with the body balance in the centre even though her upper torso leans to the right. Another peculiar dance movement in *lakhon phanthang* is the swaying of the shoulders along with the music and singing, frequently used for Laotian, Burmese and Mon characters.



Fig. 11. Phra Law, Nai Kaew and Nai Kwan in scene Phra Law Tam Kai  
Photo: Yupho, *Khon and Lakhon* 259.

However, the dance movements of *lakhon phanthat Rachathirat* show a more hybrid form than that seen in the *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat* stories. The Chinese characters in *Rachathirat* show hybrid combination of Thai dance movements and Chinese opera dance movements. The Kamani character does not use the basic hand gestures of Thai dance but is given the special hand gesture that imitates Chinese opera in which the index and middle fingers are pointed and the other three fingers are gathered together (see fig. 12). In addition, the movement of the feet consists of jumping, hopping and skipping with the toes mostly pointed forward rather than being lifted up as in the regular Thai dance steps. The Mon character, Saming Phra Ram, in contrast, displays a dance movement style that is a twist on Thai dance forms as in the *Phra Lor* and *Phya Panong* plays.



Fig. 12. Kammani, a major Chinese character in *Rachathirat* in 1952.  
Image courtesy of Anansak Kuldilok

### **The Female Cast**

The cast of *lakhon phanthat* in the 1940s was made up of female dancers, who were dance teachers, students and artists of Krom Silapakorn. The revival trend of this period was focused on the oldest traditional dance-drama and theatre forms by going as far as back in time as Krom Silapakorn could. Old dance masters and dancers from the court and private dance troupes were the chain linking Krom Silapakorn and the ancient dance forms. *Phra Lor*, *Rachathirat* and *Phya Phanong* productions were performed by female dancers, excluding the comedic characters, always performed by male dancers. The use of female dancers can be traced to the dance practices and performance styles of *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb*, which was a royal female dance troupe of the period. It was usual for teachers to pass on their

experience and knowledge to their pupils. In addition, the use of female dancers in performance became the norm, after King Rama IV decreed that female dancers were permitted to perform outside the court, thus allowing private dance troupes to use a female cast for their productions.

However, this idea of using an all female cast differs from the convention relating to dramatic works in the reign of King Rama Vajiravudh, by which the use of *chai cing ying thae* (actual male and female) was encouraged at court and in public performances (Kerdarunsuksiri 55). It also differs from the *phanthang* dance and theatre style of Chao Phraya Mahin in the nineteenth century because the performances at the Prince's Theatre were by a mixed cast. The reason why only female dancers were used in the performances is perhaps that at that time Krom Silapkorn had more female than male dancers. In addition, the male dancers were expected to be *khon* rather than *lakhon* performers (Jongda interview). In the 1940s, the classification of Thai traditional theatre was gender based. Thai traditional theatre at that time was divided into two major groups: *khon* performance, which was for male dancers and *lakhon* performance, for female dancers (Boonyachai interview). However, the sub-genres of *lakhon* such as *lakhon nok* (the dance-drama of the people performed outside court) originally performed by male dancers was also performed by female dancers.

### **The Hybrid Costume**

The costume of *lakhon phanthang* is a hybrid one. The hybridisation of *lakhon phanthang* costumes can be observed in different ways. The first hybrid costume was one which mixed the Thai dance costume with other ethnic dance costumes such as those of the characters in *Rachathirat*. Kamani, a Chinese soldier,

wore a Chinese opera costume, Saming Phra Ram, in contrast, wore a Mon costume in Thai design. The hybrid costume in *Phra Lor* and *Phya Phanong* were mixed in other ways. The costumes of both productions were obtained by hybridising Thai traditional theatre costumes. For example, the Phra Lor costume was based on *yern-kareng* (the traditional costume pattern of *khon* and *lakhon*) with short sleeves, changing the form of headdress. Nai Kaew and Nai Kwan's costume were as seen in folk dance styles. This mixed style could be observed in the costume of *Phya Phanong* as well. King Ngammuang, a king of Woranakon, wore the *yern-kareng* like as the Phra Lor character, whereas Princess Uasim wore the costume of folk dance styles.



Fig. 13. Phra Law, Phra Phun and Phra Pheng from *Phra Lor* production in 1948. Image courtesy of Anansak Kuldilok

I would like to discuss an example of hybrid costume of *Lakhon phanthang* in the *Phra Lor* production. The costume of the Kai Kaew or a magic cock illustrates the process of creating a hybrid costume. As this character is not human, this costume aimed to show the characteristics of an animal character. In the picture of Kai Kaew taken in 1948 (see fig. 14), this costume is shown with a headdress coming from the

*lakhon nai* performance known as *Pan Ju Red*, regularly used for a minor male role character. A small fake cock was placed at the top of the *Pan Ju Red* headdress to denote that this character was not human. The shirt had a modern cut but the trousers were in the *jongkrabean* pattern. There was some embroidery on the collar and the wings. Belt and necklace were in the traditional dance jewellery style.



Fig. 14. Kai Keaw in Phra Law Production. Image courtesy of Anansak Kuldilok

The *lakhon phanthat* productions from the 1940s to the 1950s clearly show the process of the revival and systematisation of hybrid dance-drama and theatre from the nineteenth century to what became *lakhon phanthat*, a national Thai traditional theatre. Some old traditional dance conventions were revived but they were adapted to serve the needs of changing national policies and the taste of the audiences. The English language was used in the programme notes alongside with the Thai language to provide information about the performance to a mixed audience and to promote

Thai traditional dance internationally. The *lakhon phanthat* productions of this period were classified and systematised and became the model for the *lakhon phanthat* of the future.

## **Conclusion**

The role and function of *lakhon phanthat* in the early period of the twentieth century as a popular theatre, representing the diversity of Siamese society, were in decline due to political and social changes. *Lakhon phanthat* was included in the repertoire of elite and royal private dance troupes, which performed this dance form and other Thai dance forms in privileged settings and not as popular theatre. The creation of dance organisations such as Krom Mahorasop and Rong Rian Phran Luang under royal patronage in the early twentieth century set a standard for the national dance form, especially *khon* performance. The *lakhon phanthat* of the period was not supported by the court as its performance reflected Otherness, against the nationalistic policies. After the end of the absolute monarchy, there were several changes in Thai society. Krom Mahorasop became Krom Silapakorn and the management of entertainment earlier under royal patronage shifted to the care of Krom Silapakorn, with governmental support. The dance-drama and theatre productions of Krom Silapakorn had to support national policies. Krom Silapakorn became a melting pot gathering the former traditional dancers and artists to teach at the School of Music and Dance and to perform dance-drama and theatre for the state rather than for the king, unlike the past.

After the establishment of the School of Music and Dance in 1934, the traditional dance-drama and theatre were not immediately revived but a new invention in the *lakhon* form emerged. *Lakhon Luang Wichit* was introduced to Thai

society as a new theatrical form to support national policies under the leadership of Marshal Pleak Phibunsongkram. This new theatrical form could not be categorised as *lakhon phanthat* even though it shared some theatrical elements with it. Traditional *lakhon phanthat* was formalised by Krom Silapakorn after the end of World War II. From the 1940s to the 1950s, six dance-drama productions were revived under the *lakhon phanthat* genre and one new *lakhon phanthat* was created. This was a period of revival of dance-drama and theatre in Thailand and it had an impact on the subsequent standardisation and traditionalisation of Thai dance, dance-drama, and theatre. *Lakhon phanthat* after the end of the World War II was revived with consideration to the original dance movements and performance choreography, as known from the reign of King Chulalongkorn. Therefore, the *lakhon phanthat* of this period was performed by the female dancers. Its costumes were a mix of the standard costume pattern of Thai traditional theatre and folk performance and costumes of other performance styles. Music and singing were provided by a Thai musical ensemble with non-Thai musical instruments to mark other music accents. However, the *lakhon phanthat* of this period was underpinned by nationalism, which was a major governmental policy.

The *lakhon phanthat* from this period of dance drama revival was transmitted to the next generations through the teaching of the School of Music and Dance. Its dance was standardised and placed in the curricula of schools and universities controlled by Krom Silapakorn. Later, other universities opened dance or performing arts departments and took on the set dance choreographic patterns and taught them as part of their curricula, to this day.



## Notes

1. *Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* was a private dance troupe of Prince Aussadangdechavudh, a son of King Chulalongkorn. This dance troupe trained only female dancers and was admired as the best dance troupe in the reign of King Rama V (*101 Pi Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb* 49)

2. *Lakhon Chao Khun Phra Prayurawong* or *Lakhon Chao Chom Marnda Pae* was a private dance troupe founded by Chao Chom Marnda Pae who was a consort of King Chulalongkorn. Virulrak states that after the end of the reign of King Chulalongkorn, the three dance masters, Pao, Plean, and Ka-rue from Chao Phraya Mahin moved to Chao Chom Marnda Pae dance troupe (295).

3. Krom Mahorasop (entertainment department) was in charge of royal traditional performances, which consisted of five different dance forms namely *rabeng*, *mongkhrum*, *kula-tee mai*, *kra-ua thaeng khwai* and *thaeng-wisai* performed by male dancers. These dance forms were mainly performed for royal ceremonies especially the royal topknot-cutting ceremony. The purpose of these dances was not only to provide entertainment but also to praise the king's honour (Jirajarupat 2000).

4. In 1956, Dhanit Yupho was promoted to the post of Director-General of Krom Silapakorn.

5. *Phra Law* was the style of spelling in the 1940s, which I will only use when I cite this term from the original sources from the 1940s. However, in recent academic scholarship, this word is mostly spelled as *Phra Lor* and *Phra Lo*, as in a performance review by Catherine Diamond entitled 'Phra Lor by Patravadi Mejudhon: Manop Meejamrat' (Diamond 2010) and an article entitled 'From Phra Lor to Jai Jao Lor: Representing and Presentation in Thailand's Hybrid Dance Traditions' by Pornrat Damrhung (Damrhung 2009). Therefore, I would like to use the recently spelling style in this thesis so *Phra Lor* will be used throughout, except where indicated.

### Chapter 3: The Modernisation of *Lakhon Phanthang*: Seri Wangnaitham's

#### *Phuchanasibtid*

#### Introduction

In the late nineteenth century the *phanthang* of Chao Phraya Mahin and Prince Narathip was popular. This form represented the multi-ethnic culture of Siam. In the twentieth century following changes in cultural policies, the earlier theatre was classified and preserved as a traditional art form and as national heritage. With the *phanthang* dance-drama coming under the patronage of Krom Silapakorn, the hybrid dance-drama and theatre forms of the late nineteenth century came to be known by the new term *lakhon phanthang*. The dancing of the *lakhon phanthang* of Krom Silapakorn became a traditional form taught to the dance students of the Dramatic Arts College of Krom Silapakorn, following its own pedagogy.

In 1985, Yakhob's popular novel entitled *Phuchanasibtid* was adapted for the theatre by Seri Wangnaitham, and performed as *lakhon phanthang* at the Thai National Theatre. This production reflected the faster pace of modern society, while maintaining the aesthetic values of Thai traditional theatre. It was performed at the Thai National Theatre over a continuous period of eight years and gained immense popularity with audiences across the country.

In the 1980s, the idea of developing and simultaneously preserving traditional theatre was commonly applied to theatres around Southeast Asia. For example, *ketoprak*, a Javanese traditional theatre, was modernised and identified as 'a modern-drama' (Hatley 2008). In Malaysia, *bangsawan*, a popular theatre, was supported by the Malay government, and also developed as a political tool, spread through government policies (Tan 1993). Socio-cultural and economic changes, the pressures

of modern society, political policies, and consumer needs propelled the modernisation of traditional theatres and their conservation in contemporary society.

This chapter considers the modernisation of Thai traditional theatre in Bangkok during the late twentieth century through an analysis of Seri Wangnaitham's *Phuchanasibtid* (1985-1994) by Krom Silapakorn. Additionally, this chapter focuses on how theatrical invention emerges in traditionally-based modern theatre. I would like to propose that *Phuchanasibtid* a newer production, not only established a new form of theatre but also brought about the development of other performance genres in its wake. The analysis of cultural factors underpinning the representation of traditional arts will be examined, demonstrating how this successful performance influenced later Thai popular performances.

### **Social and Cultural Change in Bangkok in the 1980s and 1990s**

With the Green Revolution of the 1970s, Thailand was transformed from an agricultural-based to an industrialised country (Reynolds, 'Thai Identity' 308). The capitalist economy grew rapidly as rural people migrated to the capital in search of work, soon augmenting Bangkok's population. Additionally, the Thai middle class came to play a major role in determining the socio-economic system and political policies (Samudavanija 63). The increase in size and the influence of the Thai middle class went hand-in-hand with changing consumer behaviour in Thailand. Telecommunication businesses expanded their networks, supporting the rapid growth of modern communications. Possessing a new automobile and new technologies became 'symbol [s] of prestige and of middle class status' (Ockey 315). New roads and expressways were constructed around Bangkok for facilitating rapid economic and social development. The goals and values of the Thai middle classes placed them

in opposition to the conservatism of both the aristocracy and lower classes. The middle classes' lifestyle was based on individual desires and aspirations, much more so than on traditional values (Frykman and Lofgren 197).

Walipodom argues that modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation were causes of demoralisation and dehumanisation in the Thai society of this period. The young generations were more concerned about prosperity and social status than morality and ethics (199). An old way of life could no longer support the new social demands. Thai home styles of the past were replaced by condominiums and townhouses and shopping malls were constructed to meet the needs of an urban middle class and its lifestyle. Broadcast media were the preferred modes of entertainment for young people. Television productions were presented in serial form as *telenovela*,<sup>1</sup> and often were supported by the fashion industry in return for promoting their products (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 248). Entertainment and art were mostly dominated by American products. Western pop music influenced local music industry and Thai directors made teen films to respond to new target audiences. Television was an 'open window to the world' for Thais in search of modernity (Katz and Wedell 203).

Thai traditional performing arts, under the control of Kong Karn Sangkit (The Office of Performing Arts Division), a sub office of Krom Silapakorn, declined in popularity. Theatre scholar Surapone Virulrak has critiqued the plight of Thai performing arts of this time, stating that:

Dramatic productions in Thailand in both traditional and folk styles, as well as Western-style theatre, abounded but the typical plotlines remained unaltered. Conventional dramatic stories were

reproduced many times by Krom Silapakorn. The film business spent large budgets in making movies without researching the historical background of stories, and did not enrich human intelligence and the quality of human life ('Ha Yake' 17).

Virulrak argues further that the growth of the entertainment industry served the immediate needs of society rather than having any concern for the development of traditional theatre. The pressure from a rapidly changing society and the increase in consumerism raised concerns in government circles about Thai identity. This occurred not only in Thailand but all around the Southeast Asian region, especially Indonesia and Malaysia (Lindsay 657). The government under the leadership of General Pream Tinsulanonda campaigned to make people proud of Thai culture, and aimed to turn Thailand into an international 'brand name' (Reynolds, 'Thai Identity' 311). For example, the American product Coca Cola was advertised in Thailand with the image of the popular music band *Kharabao*, singing *Pleng Pur Chewit* (Songs of life), with the slogan *Song Serm Khun Kha Kwam Pen Thai* (Promoting the Value of Thainess).

The Office of the National Culture Commission (ONCC) was officially established in 1979 under the authority of the Ministry of Education with the remit of protecting national Thai culture and heritage. The role and duty of this organisation included propagating, protecting, and supporting Thai classical and folk theatre, and encouraging coordinated action between state cultural agencies and private organisations in developing Thai culture.<sup>2</sup> With the formulation of government cultural policies and the establishment of the ONCC, the goal of developing and preserving traditional arts under the pressures of a rapidly changing society became a

major mission for Krom Silapakorn. Theatre productions of Krom Silapakorn at the National Theatre typically responded to the policy of the ONCC to preserve ‘original’ forms of traditional theatre and revive Thai folk performances (Silapakorn 1). Since 1980, Krom Silapakorn expanded the definition of Thai theatre to embrace folk performances. The folk dances and music of each province, which represented local identities, were supported and presented to Thai and foreign audiences. Cultural centres were founded in many provinces, aiming to preserve Thai folk arts and cultures and encouraging Thai people to value Thai arts (Ungsavanonda 78).

The work of *Kong Karn Sangkit* (The Office of Performing Arts Division) of Krom Silapakorn after the 1980s propelled Thai society into modernity. Thai traditional theatre and performances were modernised in theory and in practice. For example, in 1982, the year of the Bangkok Bicentennial, a great celebration was arranged around Bangkok and across the country. Many traditional performances such as masked dance, traditional dance-drama and music were presented on this special occasion. The *Lantern Dance* (ram kom), an old Thai classical performance, created during the reign of King Rama I, was revived and reproduced to commemorate the establishment of the Bangkok province. Moreover, in 1983 Labanotation was introduced as a notation system for Thai dance with the intended purpose of simplifying Thai dance-drama, representing it in a universally understood idiom and thereby bringing Thai performing arts to prominence at an international level. Rutnin states that ‘the 1980s are significant years in the development of contemporary Thai theatre, not only in its expanding activities but also in the interrelationship between various theatre groups’ (*Dance, Drama* 202). Thai arts and cultural activities were presented and promoted at many events. Theatre productions

became the favourite means to raise money for charity among the upper middle class and dignitaries .

Developing and preserving the traditional arts became a major mission of Krom Silapakorn when creating productions for the National Theatre. A study by Australian ethnomusicologist Margaret Kartomi suggests that in the modern period, ‘class, gender, nationality and ethnic minorities, popular art forms, the growing commercialism of art and the destruction of the environment and traditional arts’ became major issues of debate about modernity and the traditional arts (376) in Thailand and Southeast Asia. However, the work of Krom Silapakorn was critiqued by journalists as inadequate for the development of traditional performances. The role of Krom Silapakorn as a Thai cultural guardian also came under attack. On 10th March 1989, the newspaper *Siamrat* reported that Krom Silapakorn had adapted traditional dance movements and introduced comic scenes into traditional dramatic plays such as *khon*. This was deemed to be harmful to the aesthetic value of Thai traditional arts (*Siamrat* 10). Krom Silapakorn seemed to have run into difficulties in trying to maintain a balance between old traditions and the needs of modern society.

Productions at the National Theatre presented the old traditional performing arts styles such as *lakhon nai* (court dance-drama) and *khon* (masked dance) in short episodes and were deemed to be more sophisticated than the new forms of entertainment. But the productions of traditional Thai performing arts by Krom Silapakorn faced a decline in popularity and diminishing audience sizes--a fate shared by traditional performing arts around Southeast Asia in the last quarter of the twentieth century (Kartomi 1995). Something new, and fairly radical by the standards of Krom Silapakorn, would have to be done. And Seri Wangnaitham was the man for the job.

## **Seri Wangnaitham and the Modernisation of Thai Traditional Theatre**

Seri Wangnaitham was born in Bangkok in 1937 into a middle class family and studied at the Witthayalai Natasin (College of Dance and Music) at Krom Silapakorn, completing his bachelor degree in Thai classical music in 1955. He started his career at Krom Silapakorn as a Thai classical musician, but being a well-rounded artist, he also often created short comic scenes performed in between the main acts of the programme of the National Theatre. From 1962 to 1965, Wangnaitham was a scholarship student of fine arts at the East-West Center of the University of Hawai'i in the United States. After he returned to Thailand, he resumed working at Kong Karn Sangkit (the Office of Performing Arts)<sup>3</sup> Krom Silapakorn and, perhaps inspired by his overseas experience, set his mind to modernise the Thai theatre as an actor, playwright, choreographer, director, producer, and orator.

Pairoj Thongkumsuk, a scholar of Thai traditional theatre, has analysed the teaching and artistic style of Seri Wangnaitham suggesting that Wangnaitham is both a modern artist and teacher with a talent for integrating topical commentary into traditional dance-drama (Thongkumsuk 290-294). His expertise was in comic roles, especially in *khon* performance, creating jokes that referenced current issues in society. His farcical scripts were adapted from daily news and contemporary social situations. Clowns provoked laughter among spectators through their always-polite jokes, which never stepped outside the bounds of the story. Through his topical and civil humor, Seri Wangnaitham's productions made a favorable impression on the audience and gained popularity with all age groups.

Wangnaitham's talent in Thai performing arts was not only limited to comic acting. He was also a talented playwright, choreographer, director, producer and orator. Many Thai dance lyrics and plays were written and turned by Wangnaitham



in verse form, for performance at the Fine Arts Department on various special occasions. His diverse opus includes song texts, original plays and adaptations, lyrics for a blessing dance for the birthday of a member of the Thai royal family, adaptations of *khon* plays, and the central focus of this chapter-- *lakhon phanthang*.

In the mid twentieth century, before Seri Wangnaitham took up the position of director of Kong Karn Sangkit, Krom Silapakorn, Thai traditional theatre had been suffering from a gradual decline in popularity. Due to the retirement of older artists and low salaries paid to dance teachers as government officers, Krom Silapakorn was encountering a lack of dancers (Ungsvanonda 47). New entertainment from the West, including modern theatre, television drama, films and radio attracted Thai audiences of all ages and created a new following among the Thai educated middle classes.

Seri Wangnaitham had the idea of modernising Thai performing arts by reigniting Thai audiences' interest in *khon*. Wangnaitham understood that Thai audiences were estranged from *khon* due to a lack of knowledge of its dance movements and of the dramatic characters and stories of the *Ramakien*, the Thai version of the Ramayana. *Khon* needed to be modernised to cater to the tastes of modern Thai audiences, who had little interest in the old-fashioned dance-drama stories (Samosorn 24). Therefore, he re-edited the *khon* plays and composed new episodes writing up full biographies of each individual *khon* character (Rutnin, *Dance,Drama* 197). The spectators could thus follow the life history of a character during a performance of one to two hours' duration. His plays focused on story line and contained clear and concise narration, simple verse, and a comedic scene.

Seri Wangnaitham believed that if the audiences knew the background of each character in the plays that would benefit their enjoyment of the performance

and their understanding of the story (Samosorn 25). In the past, masked-dance plays had been composed in the form of long episodes narrating the story of the battle between *Phra Ram* (Rama) and *Tosakan* (Ravana), the main plot of *Ramakien*. However, the masked-dance plays by Seri Wangnaitham differed from those of the past by focusing on sub-plots such as the story of Hanuman, a white monkey, who is a loyal soldier of Rama.

New episodes by Wangnaitham such as *Hanuman Chan Samorn* (The Story of Hanuman) and *Marn Sur Chur Pipeak* (A Loyal Demon Named Pipeak) became popular with all audience groups, especially young audiences, thus becoming instrumental in preserving Thai traditional art in a changing society. Wangnaitham's approach lessens the complication of the ancient *khon* plays for all audiences. On the one hand, he modified *khon* to become readily intelligible to ordinary people, on the other, this was a way to preserve Thai traditional performance in a changing society<sup>4</sup>. Seri Wangnaitham demonstrated that *khon* is not only cultural entertainment of the nation, but it is also an effective tool for persuading Thai people to live in harmony in and with the state. A good example is the *khon* episode *Pali Son Nong* (Pali's Exhortation to His Brother), as re-interpreted by Seri Wangnaitham and presented at the National Theatre in 1974, the year after a democratic coup, a time when young people had lost trust in the government and were ready to protest at all times (Samosorn 34). This interpretation of *Pali Son Nong* brought out the teachings of loyalty and devotion to the Thai monarchy and persuaded young people to move from disagreement in politics to harmony through shared devotion to the beloved king. The *Pali Son Nong* production was successful and lauded in many Thai daily newspapers. Government officials attended this production and requested that

Wangnaitham continued to put on performances of other *khon* episodes along these lines (Samosorn 35; Thongkumsuk 48).

The modernisation of Thai traditional theatre by Seri Wangnaitham involved not only the re-making of the masked-dance play, but also producing a new performing arts programme for the Thai National Theatre. In 1975, this was the *Sri Sook Ka Nattakam* (Joy from Performing Arts)<sup>5</sup> aiming to encourage people to realise that Thai performing arts are living arts, part of the Thai way of life, and of the culture of the nation (Thongkumsuk 48). The *Sri Sook Ka Nattakam* programme has been running on the last Friday of every month on the Thai National Theatre's stage until present times. Through this programme, the complex performances in sophisticated artistic genres, such as *khon* and *lakhon nai*, were condensed into short episodes. High dance-drama arts and folk dance and music were scheduled together in daily shows. As a consequence of this initiative, audiences made up of both young and older people increased in numbers. They came to the theatre wishing to see their favourite actors or actresses, and witness new performances under Wangnaitham's direction, which were different each time. Wangnaitham not only produced new performances he also directed dance rehearsals. The dancers were from Krom Silapakorn, trained in Thai performing arts for more than ten years and with great experience in dance and performing arts. Therefore, the high quality of performances set the standard for the national performing arts.

These noteworthy efforts did not completely offset, throughout the 1970s, the declining popularity of the traditional arts whose style and content were simply no longer relevant to peoples' lives. Additionally, the retirement of the older dancers of Krom Silapakorn brought about, as mentioned, a lack of Thai dancers trained in the traditional forms (Ungsvanonda 47).

Seri Wangnaitham aimed to create performances that aimed at more than entertaining, striving to provide knowledge of the arts to his audiences. He said of himself:

What I [Wangnaitham] have tried so hard to achieve was the creation of a ‘full-cycle performing art field,’ with good performers, teachers, and viewers, all knowing and understanding one another and with true knowledge of the arts. And I think I have achieved that. My audiences have become so knowledgeable that when a performer puts a decoration or flower in the wrong place, they immediately know it and point it out. (Wangnaitham quoted in Samosorn 33)

Wangnaitham attempted to reinstate the popularity of Thai traditional theatre by developing his audiences through pre-show talks in which he explained plotlines, the symbolic meanings behind dance movements, and any associated cultural custom. The development of an expert audience was crucial to what Wangnaitham called a ‘full-cycle performing art field,’ which depended as much upon knowledgeable cultural producers as on critical spectators.

In 1986, Seri Wangnaitham produced what remains the most famous *lakhon phanthat* to date, his adaptation of the Thai novel *Phuchanasibtid*. This production was presented both on the indoor and the open-air stage of the National Theatre over a period of eight years. The *Phuchanasibtid* production is noteworthy in a number of ways. It used a mix of ordinary language with the refined and elevated language associated with *lakhon* forms; it divided up the novel into clearly delineated acts and scenes modeled on Western dramaturgy; and it adapted the accompanying music in

novel ways. In this way, it became a signature piece of Seri Wangnaitham's artistic style and representative of the modernisation of Thai theatre at the end of twentieth century (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 201).

### ***Phuchanasibtid: From Modern Novel to Lakhon Phanthang***

*Phuchanasibtid* (The Conqueror of Ten Directions) is a classic of Thai literature, a modern novel by the Thai writer Yakhob (a.k.a. Chote Praephan) which was published in the early 1930s.<sup>6</sup> The plot tells the story of a Burmese king who rose from humble origins to become a great monarch. This story is the second episode of *Yodkhunpol*, published serially in the Bangkok newspaper *Suriya* from 1931 to 1932 and in the Bangkok newspaper *Phrachachart* from 1932 to 1933 and subsequently reprinted in book form many times. *Phuchanasibtid* is considered to be an historical romance, which aimed to entertain rather than provide factual historical knowledge (Samosorn 32). Yakhob created *Phuchanasibtid* based on eight lines of the Thai translation of the famous Burmese *The Glass Palace Chronicle*. This historical chronicle was first translated into English by U Aung Thein (a.k.a. Thein Subindu or Luang Phraison Salarak) at the request of his friend Prince Damrongrajanubhab, who wished to learn the Burmese perspective on the hostilities between Siam and Burma, and published in four installments under the title 'Intercourse between Burma and Siam as Recorded in Hmannan Yazawindawgyi of the Burmese' in *The Journal of the Siam Society* between 1908 and 1913. This English version was then translated into Thai by Prince Narathip Phraphanpong under the title *Phraratcha Phong Sawadan Phama* (The Burmese Chronicle) and published in 1913 (Narathip Phraphanpong 2007).<sup>7</sup>

The situations and actions of characters in Yakhob's novel are embroidered history. In the novel's preface, the author states explicitly that 'regarding this book, I humbly inform the reader that I do not dare confirm *Phuchanasibtid* as a reliable chronicle. This story is based on my imagination' (Parephan Preface). Nithi Aeusrivongse argues that *Phuchanasibtid* accurately represents the native rituals, beliefs, culture and tradition of the Burmese and Mon nations. We can only assume that the author conducted research and possessed knowledge about Burmese history far beyond his reading of eight lines of a chronicle. This novel, however, was written by the author with the intention of creating an ambience of history within the frame of literature rather than presenting the facts of history (Aeusrivongse 3-8). Situations and names of characters in this novel are based on actual Burmese history, but they are shifted in the wrong place and time. Readers are not only entertained with the narrative but are informed of the historical aspects too. This is a reason why *Phuchanasibtid* has become a great favourite with Thai readers.

The style of *Phuchanasibtid* is based on old Thai literary works such as *Inao*, *Phra Apaimanee* and *Khun Chang Khun Phan* (Aeusrivongse 14). While set in Burma, it features 'traditional Thai values, concept[s], and literary themes in the modern form of fiction' (Rutnin, *Modern* 33). But it also contains elements of innovation. *Phuchanasibtid* expresses the idea that one's class of birth is less important than what a person might contribute to society and nation.<sup>8</sup> Yakhob created Ja-det, the hero, as a commoner who rose from low-class birth to become a great king of Burma, named Bureangnong, by using his talents, abilities, and ethics. This is in utter contrast with the typical hero of classical Thai literature, in which the hero is usually from the royal family or of aristocratic lineage. However, in line with the ideal characteristics of Thai classical heroes, Ja-det was created to be good

looking, brave, and gallant. The author avoided mentioning ethnic conflicts between Burmese and Thai characters out of sensitivity to his Thai readership. He wanted instead to portray, through the Ja-det character, universally heroic characteristics such as honesty to friends, loyalty to leaders, and unselfishness (Rakthum 81).

Moreover, Ja-det in *Phuchanasibtid* reflects the needs of people and the social conditions of 1932, a year in which class distinctions and inequality of social status were under heavy critique. The old political regime of absolute monarchy in Thailand was at its end and the democratic system was emerging to serve the needs of society. Thai people began to believe in equality, individualism and modernism discarding the values of royal patronage and charisma prevalent under the old system. All these increased *Phuchanasibtid*'s accessibility to Thai readers, who were middle-class, well-educated and hungry for independence and modernity.

Yakhob remade Ja-det as a Thai nationalist hero, thereby effacing some of his distinctly Burmese traits. This is in line with the argument of Sulak Sivaraksa who states that Thai historically have 'wanted to promote Thai identity at the expense of other ethnicities and ended up looking down on our own indigenous cultures and despising our neighbors, the Laotians, Khmer, Malay and Burmese (37).' *Phuchanasibtid* pointed to the revolutionary conditions of Thai society under the garb of Burmese history without causing Thai readers to reflect on the history of conflict between Siam and Burma.

This novel was not only popular with readers,<sup>9</sup> it was also adapted to Thai television drama at least six times, to film production three times, and to *likay* performance several times<sup>10</sup>. This led to the novel achieving popularity and renown with a wide range of audiences. The popular adaptations, particularly *likay* versions, have been charged with taking considerable liberties with the novel and distorting

many of its ideas and purposes (Rakthum 82). Aeusrivongse states that '*Phuchanasibtid* has become a part of Thai cultural heritage. If the author [Yakhob] were still alive, he would find that he has no right to forbid people from critiquing [adapting] his novel anymore (2).'

The popularity of *Phuchanasibtid* is not limited to broadcasting and local folk performance. It was also diffused through Thai traditional theatre. In the late twentieth century, productions at the Thai National Theatre suffered from a decline in popularity after the vast impact of broadcast media, and new entertainment forms such as music concerts, singing, and Western and Chinese films. The Thai National Theatre mostly presented old traditional performances such as *lakhon nai*, *lakhon nok* and *khon*. Thai people felt an overwhelming desire to modernise their way of life in ways that mirrored the Thai political, economical and sociological systems (LePoer 1987).

Entrusted by the board of Krom Silapakorn with creating a new production to bring in new audiences to the National Theatre in 1985, Wangnaitham latched onto the idea of adapting *Phuchanasibtid* into a *lakhon phanthat* (Tangtronjit 48).<sup>11</sup> This was one of his favorite novels; he had read it repeatedly during his studies at the East-West Center as it was the only Thai novel that happened to be in the house where he lodged. He read this novel until he had memorised the details the story and could confidently visualise it (Wangnaitham, 'Phu Yu' 51). Wangnaitham's proposal to adapt *Phuchanasibtid* was initially rejected by conservative classical dance masters because they considered the *Phuchanasibtid* story to be associated with the low-class *likay* drama and thus inappropriate for the National Theatre (Mahapaoraya 14). However, Wangnaitham remained resolute, and in the end his production of *Nam Nom Mae Laochee* (The Feeding of Royal Nanny Laochee), based on a chapter



of Yakhob's novel, premiered on the massive outdoor stage of the National Theatre on November 16, 1986 (Wangnaitham quoted in *Matichon* 2007). Even with no publicity on television or in newspapers, tickets were sold out before the day of the show. When *Nam Nom Mae Laochee* was repeated a week after, it was reported that approximately 2500 spectators were in attendance. More episodes were produced, which were reworked when transferred to the National Theatre's indoor stage in June 1987. In all, some 56 episodes were created between 1986 and 1994, divided up into 7 volumes in the published edition of the plays (Wangnaitham 1991). *Phuchanasibtid* was praised as the most popular Thai dance-drama of the decade by audiences across the country. Audiences had to queue up for more than three or four hours for tickets and it is reported that some people would travel from the provinces and wait in line for a whole day to purchase their tickets.

### **The Dramatic Innovations of *Phuchanasibtid***

Seri Wangnaitham believed that Thai traditional theatre could stand on the same level as modern theatre and media and makes a mark on Thai audiences if it were enlivened discarding some of the more monotonous dance interludes (Mahapaoraya, 'Seri' 25). He desired to modernise Thai traditional performance through his production of *Phuchanasibtid*, having less dancing and more stage drama. His juxtaposition of traditional dance with Western theatrical techniques was a big challenge for Thai traditional dancers and for the staff of the theatre.

Seri Wangnaitham's *Phuchanasibtid* was created in the form of *lakhon phanthang*. The main idea of rendering this novel in *lakhon phanthang* style derives from the main plot, which is originally from a Burmese chronicle. Therefore, other theatrical elements, such as music and singing, costumes, dance movements and sets

have been rendered in a hybrid form. This is the one of the core ideas in Thai performance. Productions choreographed to include a mixture of indigenous Thai theatrical elements and other theatrical styles, are always regarded as *lakhon phanthatang* or *phanthatang* style (Muangsakorn, Vasinaron and Pothivetchakul, interview).<sup>12</sup>

Wangnaitham's production is faithful to the spirit of Yakhob's novel, which reflects the way of life and the humanity of both high-ranking individuals such as kings and queens and low-class characters. The novel's eternal truth about the essential virtue of human beings is also at the core of Wangnaitham's adaptation. The novel is written in a literary register with many idiomatic expressions and metaphors to impress its readers (Watcharaporn 202). Gunawardana proposes that the new Westernised aesthetics of modern theatre in Asia requires a production to begin with a written script and to develop coherent action through characters, situations, and dialogue. Music, dance, singing and stylized gesture, if used, are to be functional adjuncts, not the primary focus (60). Wangnaitham compressed and simplified the language in his adaptation of the novel to dramatic verse. For example, Yakhob long descriptions of the different love that Ja-det feels for his two wives, Chandra and Kusuma, is abridged into a simple but memorable passage in which Ja-det declares that his love for Chandra is based on loyalty but his love for Kusuma is passionate.<sup>13</sup> Such simplifications allowed Wangnaitham to compress Yakhob's 276 chapters of prose (collected in 8 volumes) into 56 *lakhon phanthatang* episodes.

One of the main problems Wangnaitham confronted in modernising Thai theatre was the difficulty of finding traditional dancers that would take on his new acting style. Traditionally, Thai dancers are limited in their display of emotion. They were unable to express feelings through dialogue. Words had to be delivered in a flat,

affectless manner using conventional hand gestures and a limited range of bodily expressions. Ceylonese theatre scholar A.J. Gunawardana wrote in 1971 about the lack of ‘realistic modes of speech’ and the difficulties faced by performers trained in traditional techniques in India, Japan, Indonesia and other Asian countries in adapting to the ‘new acting styles’ needed to portray ‘social and domestic themes’ (Gunawardana 60). *Phuchanasibtid* called upon dancers to memorise and rehearse scripts which were spoken in the manner of modern theatre, not sung as per tradition. The dialogue, though in verse, was closer to everyday speech than to the formal language of the Thai traditional repertoire. In *lakhon phanthang* before Wangnaitham’s production, performers imitated the accents associated with the nationalities of the characters they portrayed. In *Phuchanasibtid*, the cast spoke in standard Thai dialect, even when performing non-Thai characters, so that their dialogue could be easily comprehended by the audience. Only the comic actors spoke in dialect, for comedic purposes (Sukvipat 127) (see fig.15).

Mastering the realistic dialogue and acting was a challenge for the traditionally trained cast. Tuangruedee Thapornpasi, one of the actors in this production, who played the role of queen of the Mon kingdom, says that:

We [Thai dancers] were very concerned about the expression and the acting without Thai dance movements and little confident that we could deliver. The acting style in this production was very new for all of the Thai traditional dancers. At first, the acting of the dancers looked clumsy and uncomfortable. We did not know, for example, how we could move our hands without traditional dance hand gestures (Thapornpasi interview).



Fig.15. Comic actors in *Phuchanasibtid* (Chinese, Burmese, and Mons characters). Image courtesy of the Office of Performing Art, Krom Silapakorn

Some of the dancers learned to act by watching television soap operas and imitating the expression of TV actors. Some dancers were sent to learn special action skills such as martial arts from an expert (Ayuthaya interview). Wangnaitham took on the role of director and also acted as a main character. He personally supervised the acting and dance rehearsals. Rehearsal was the most important moment of this production, during which Wangnaitham taught the new method of performing to the dancers. He started rehearsals for each episode with what he called ‘round-table work,’ a script reading involving all of the actor-dancers in which he described the intentions of the characters to the performers (Sukvipat 135). He cultivated the idea of understanding the characters in the play as an essential skill for performance. Casting strictly followed gender - men played male roles and women played female ones. Unlike previous productions of *lakhon phanthang* there was no cross-dressing in order to emphasise the compatibility between the inner and physical aspects of the performers and the characters they portrayed. Audiences of the *Phuchanasibtid* production were very pleased with this display by the cast hand picked and trained

by Wangnaitam (see fig.16). M.L. Nuang Ninlarat, a wealthy and influential fan of the *Phuchanasibtid* production, commented as follows:

Pakorn Pornpisud, who performed Ja-det, was a very handsome and charming person, and this made him suitable for this role. His dancing was spectacular. Supachai Chansuwan, who played Mangtra, was properly cast and performed brilliantly. He perhaps looked small and was shorter than the Mangtra of Yakhob, but his performance skills, such as acting and dancing, were beyond compare. Both were the audiences' favorite actors. If a scene did not include them, audiences felt unpleasant like a hunger who had not had enough food to eat (73).

Wangnaitam de-emphasised the Thai dance hand gestures in the delivery of dialogue. To appease the conservative dance masters, who were powerful figures in Krom Silapakorn, he retained some traditional Thai dances in his production, and also increased the repertoire of traditional dance by commissioning new dances in the classical style. One of these was a War Dance newly created by traditional dance master Thanpuying Paew Sanithwongseni, which was featured in a battle scene in the episode *Mae Tup Kon Mai* (The New General) (Chanchareon 104).

The music and songs of *Phuchanasibtid*, as in previous *lakhon phanthat* productions, was mainly in the hybrid style known in Thai as *phleng ok phasa* (see Wongthes 2013), which involved reworking non-Thai melodies for a Thai musical ensemble (*piphat*) comprising two xylophones, large and small gongs, a small cymbal, and a battery of drums. *Pleng ok pha sa* is used in *lakhon phanthat* style

because the accents and tunes in the music and songs are not Thai *Phuchanasibtid* contains in all 127 songs in this idiom, classified into five ethnic ‘accents’: Burmese, Mon, *Khake* (Indian, Javanese, and Malay Muslims), Chinese, Thai, and *Nguneu* (Hill Tribes) (Chonlapatan 250-254). Wangnaitham encouraged singers to vocalise the feelings of the characters. A sad song, for example, was sung in a sobbing voice (Sukvipat 137). This allowed the audience to empathise with the characters more easily. Some spectators wept uncontrollably during tragic scenes due to the vocal expression of singers (Yossoontorn 68). The freedom of musical expression warranted to singers and musicians became part of the modernisation of Thai theatre through *lakhon phanthang Phuchanasibtid* with the intention of impressing audiences and simplifying sophisticated literary lyrics. Moreover, it encouraged the singers and musicians to become involved in the story and production because they had to create the vocal expression following the characters in the play, so they had to know and understand the script well, and mastered the interpretation of each character.

Costumes, based on the characteristics of the nationalities and ethnicities portrayed in the play, used color in a new way. Traditional theatre had color-coded costumes. For instance, heroes and heroines were always clad in green and red. Actors would not change costumes in a production, even if the scenes in a play in which they appeared were separated by days or years. *Phuchanasibtid*’s costumes, in contrast, were in colors that complemented the colors of the sets and props, and were compatible with other costumes in the scenes (Chantaraksa).

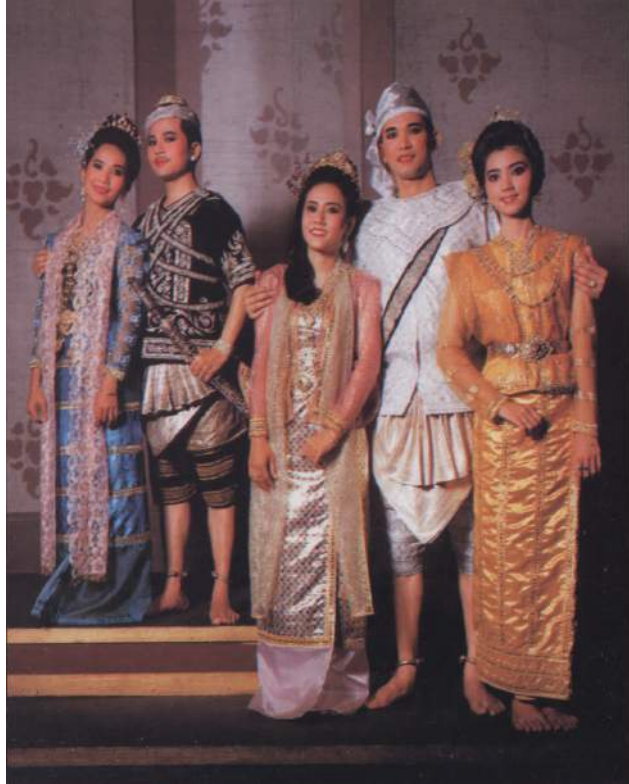


Fig.16. The main performers of the *Phuchanasibtid* productions, the Mangtra character interpreted by Supachai Chansuwan, in a black shirt stands beside his queen Natthawadee. Ja-det interpreted by Pakorn Pornpisud is in a white shirt. The two female dancers standing beside him were Chandra (wearing a pink colour costume) and Kusuma (wearing a yellow colour costume). Image courtesy of the Office of Performing Art, Krom Silapakorn

This production presented bright and colourful costumes much like those of *likay* but in different designs. The design was derived from the costumes of Burmese and Mons characters in traditional *lakhon phanthat* such as the *Rachathirat* story (Thapornpasri). Light and sound techniques were applied to create a realistic ambience (Yossoontorn 69). Some artificial properties and sets, such as a Thai pavilion, hermitage and throne were used, which Wangnaitam specified in his scripts. Painted backdrops depicting pavilions, hermitages, and throne rooms were recycled from old scenery belonging to the National Theatre to cut down costs.

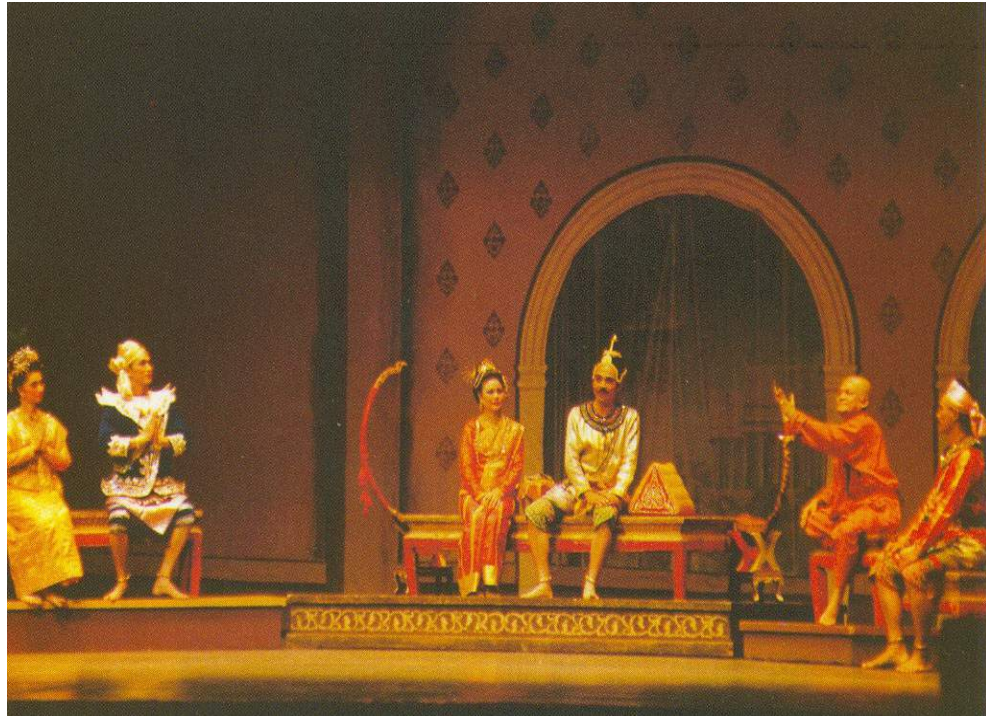


Fig.17. Setting of *Phuchanasibtid* production. Image courtesy of the Office of Performing Art, Krom Silapakorn

Although the main story of *Phachanasibtid* is derived from the Burmese and Mons chronicles, the presentation of this production tends to make use of a Thai theatre style rather than real Burmese theatre style. The Burmese ambience in the plays derives from the old *lakhon phanthat*. The concept of modernisation in Thai theatre, then, does not involve changing or modifying everything, rather, it refers to inventing something which encourages Thai people in a diverse and changing society to understand and cherish their traditions as part of their national heritage.

The process of modernisation of *Phuchanasibtid* resulted in this theatre becoming a syncretic form. According Christopher Balme, the characteristics of syncretic theatre are:

- 1) A new theatrico-cultural system is introduced which eclipses and overlies an existing one.
- 2) The existing system remains dominant. The new theatrico-cultural system is visible only in



the form of a few identifiable elements. 3) A new equilibrium is established between the old and the new systems with a balanced number of elements from both being utilized (17).

*Lakhon phanthatang Phuchanasibtid* embraces the content and form of traditional Thai theatre and mixes it with other dance or theatrical elements but it is of recognisable Thai origin. *Phuchanasibtid* shows elements of Western influence on Thai theatre, but Thai traditional dance remained dominant in the production. The modernisation of Thai theatre through the *Phuchansibtid* production emerged as the result of internal and external changes within the culture. However, this production did not present the indigenous and other theatrical materials ‘in equilibrium’ as in Balme’s third defining point of syncretic theatre. The process of hybridisation of *lakhon phanthatang* in *Phuchanasibtid* is established between Thai, Burmese and Mon theatrical elements but the Burmese and Mon element in the productions were interpreted by Thai artists using Thai theatrical elements in the dance forms. Therefore, the production favoured Thai over other elements.

### **Audiences: A New Phenomenon of Thai Traditional Theatre**

The analysis of Chuenpraphanusorn concerning the audiences of Thai theatre states that before 1995 Thai audiences were drawn to see live performance, including folk theatre in order to see their favourite performers in the flesh (156). The adoration of stars is something associated with *likay* but the same pattern can be seen in more elite forms of theatre (see Virulrak *Likay*). Wangnaitham was aware that the Thai middle class, with their buying power, constituted a new target audience, which could be coaxed away from the mass media and into the National Theatre if stars

could be developed. All the lead actors in *Phuchanasibtid* attracted fans who showered their favourite performers with money, food, and valuable goods as tokens of their appreciation. Additionally, the serial nature of the production wet the appetite of the audience, who awaited the follow-up episodes like spectators of serialised television programs.

In the case of *Phuchanasibtid*, many audiences came to the theatre to see their favourite performers rather than the production. Some audience members offered money and goods to their favourite performers as a reward for giving them pleasure. Consequently, the production at the National Theatre resulted in an increase in the popularity of traditional theatre and acted as a link between the old and the modern world. Interestingly, *Phuchanasibtid* was rarely promoted in the newspapers or other media but gained fame primarily through word of mouth, across the country; Thai fans even flew in from the United States to see performances (Wongthes, *Nattasilp* 9). Many audiences came to the theatre in the early morning of the day before the show and queued up to ensure they could buy tickets for the best seats. There are accounts of spectators lining up for more than 24 hours to purchase tickets and leaving greatly disappointed because the tickets were sold out before they reached the front of the queue. Some spectators gave money to ticket scalpers and agents for buying tickets because they wanted the best seats in the first row and were swindled (Niinlarat 'Lau Thung' 60-16).

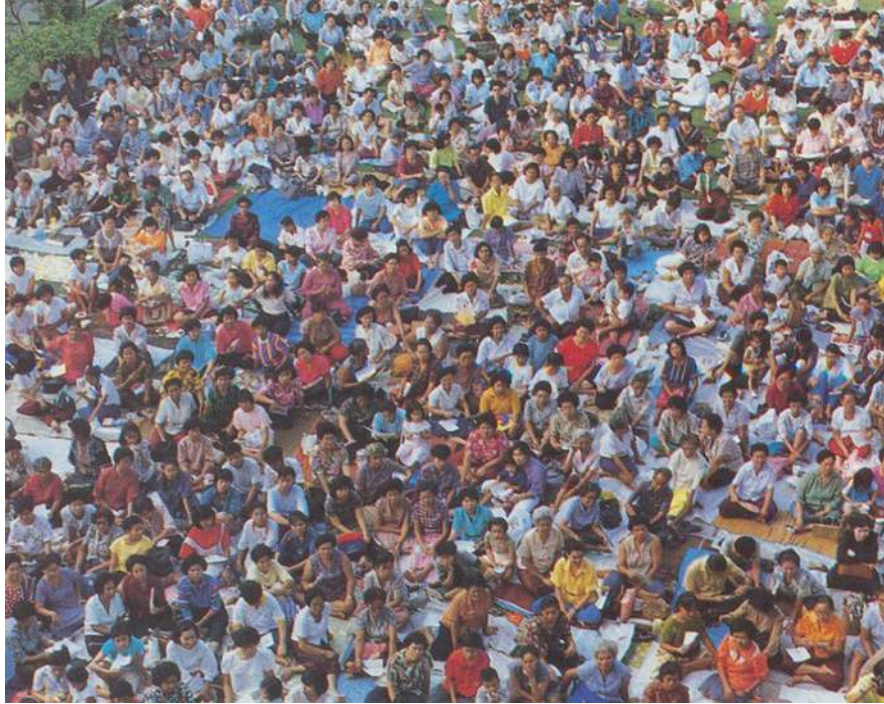


Fig.18. Audiences waiting to buying tickets for *Phuchanasibtid* at *Sang Keet Sala*, outdoor stage of Thai National Theatre. Image courtesy of the Office of Performing Art, Krom Silapakorn

From November 1986, *Phuchanasibtid* was presented on the outdoor stage of the Thai National Theatre, the *Sang Keet Sala* (Music and Dance Pavilion) every Saturday. Ticket admission was 10 baht. *Phuchanasibtid* was a profitable production for the National Theatre reportedly grossing 25,000 baht per show. After transferring to the National Theatre's indoor stage, *Phuchanasibtid* ran mid-month on a Friday (two performances), Saturday (three performances) and Sunday (three performances). The production made significant profits: during the first three years (1986-1989), the production grossed around 7,300,000 baht (around £188,659) (Wangnaitham quoted in *Matichon* 2007). Profits from this production funded training, research, and pensions of Krom Silapakorn artists and the maintenance of props, sets, and equipment.



Fig. 19. Ja-det and Kusuma in *Phuchanasibtid* on *Sang Keet Sala* stage in 1986. Image courtesy of the Office of Performing Art, Krom Silapakorn

*Phuchanasibtid* was a long running production, continually presented by the Thai National Theatre as its main programme for eight years. In addition, it was performed at special events, arranged by Krom Silapakorn and other organisations to raise money for charity. This production was one of the longest consecutive and most popular ones of the Thai National Theatre generating new trends. (Phothivechkun interview; Sukvipat 134).

The emergence of fans, also known as *mae yok*<sup>14</sup> (literally, ‘Mother Supporter’) was a new phenomenon started by this production. *Mae yok* were in the past discouraged at the National Theatre, as this mode of spectatorship was associated with *likay* and other folk and popular arts. The National Theatre’s administration believed that it was unseemly for spectators to mount the stage after performances to festoon their favorite performers with garlands (*malai*) of bank notes or flock to the dressing rooms to shower them with gifts in the manner of *likay* performers. Krom Silapakorn was entrusted with the task of preserving the high art

of the country and maintaining the aesthetic values of national art, which meant being vigilant that work on the National Theatre stage did not cross the line that separated it from popular performance. With *Phuchanasibtid* and subsequent *lakhon phanthang* productions, the gap between high art and low art decreased, and *mae yok*, including members of the royal family, housewives, working women, and market sellers, were actively courted. Actors and dancers became closer to the audience, who treated their idols more like movie stars than national artists preserving and protecting the national cultural heritage.

*Mae yok* of the *Phuchanasibtid* production included people of both upper and lower class, and comprised almost entirely women (Ayuthaya; Thongkam; Chantharaksa, interview). They were wealthy and most of them had previous knowledge of *Phuchanasibtid*; they were readers, listeners, television and movie audiences or members of *likay* audiences. Patronage of dancers and productions by *mae yok* usually contributes to the financial status of dance artists. Many performers of *Phuchanasibtid* became rich and famous. Wangnaitham talks about his first reward from some *mae yok* of *Phuchanasibtid*, describing how ‘they [*mae yok*] gave me [Seri Wangnaitham] a mango, a glass of beer and money. Then the rewards became extravagantly expensive such as gold and land deeds (Wangnaitham, ‘Phu Yu’ 47). Pakorn Pornpisut, a famous actor of this production, who performed as the character of Ja-det, describes *mae yok* of the *Phuchanasibtid* production as being like a member of a family; they are like mothers, aunts and grandmothers, who come to the theatre to cheer up their children. The generosity of their rewards to dancers and actors, is like that of the elders towards the young (Pornpisut quoted in Sukvipat 178).

Not only does the emergence of *mae yok* on the Thai national stage seem to bridge the gap between the high and low arts, it also encourages audiences to appreciate Thai traditional art more greatly than in the past. Audiences feel free to express their satisfaction at watching performances by giving rewards to actors of the National Theatre as they do for the local dancers of *likay*. The actors and dancers became closer to the audiences like movie stars rather than as national artists with the duty to protect national art and culture. Additionally, *mae yok* groups of national theatre productions seem to be interested in the different aspects of theatre production. They pay attention to the scenery, the acting of dancers and the comic script of minor roles in the play (Sukvipat 172). *Mae yok* and audiences of *Phuchanasibtid* are committed to seeing the productions in which their favourite dancers perform.

The popularity of *Phuchanasibtid* encouraged the founding of an audience club, the *Chom Rom Round Kur Kon Doo* (We are the Audience Club). The name of this group imitated that of a television program *Rai Karn Round Kur Kon Thai* (We are the Thai Program) produced by Wangnaitham and broadcast on Channel 3 on Mondays and Tuesdays, starting in 1990 (see fig.20). This program aimed to provide knowledge about Thai performing arts and literature. The educated middle class members of We Are the Audience Club played an important role in promoting Wangnaitham's productions at the National Theatre.

Fans could be critical as well as adoring in their appreciation and wrote to newspapers and magazines. For example, in 1991 Wangnaitham produced a new dance-drama in the form of *lakhon phanthang* based on Mala Khamchan's award-winning novel *Chao Chan Phom Hom Nirat Phra Thad In-Kwean* (The Story of the Long-and-Fragrant Haired Princess Chan's Journey to the In-Kwean Stupa), about

the pilgrimage of a Burmese princess to a stupa dedicated to the god Indra. When fans got wind that Wangnaitham would present his adaptation of the novel at the American University Association Language Center (AUA) in Bangkok with performers from the *Phuchanasibtid* production, club members previewed the production, speculating about which actors should be cast in which roles and the challenges of adapting a modern novel to the *lakhon phanthang* dramaturgy (Pinit 44-45). We Are the Audience Club members promoted productions, communicated their personal opinions to the National Theatre's cast and crew, and acted as mouthpieces of the general audience, conveying its sentiments.

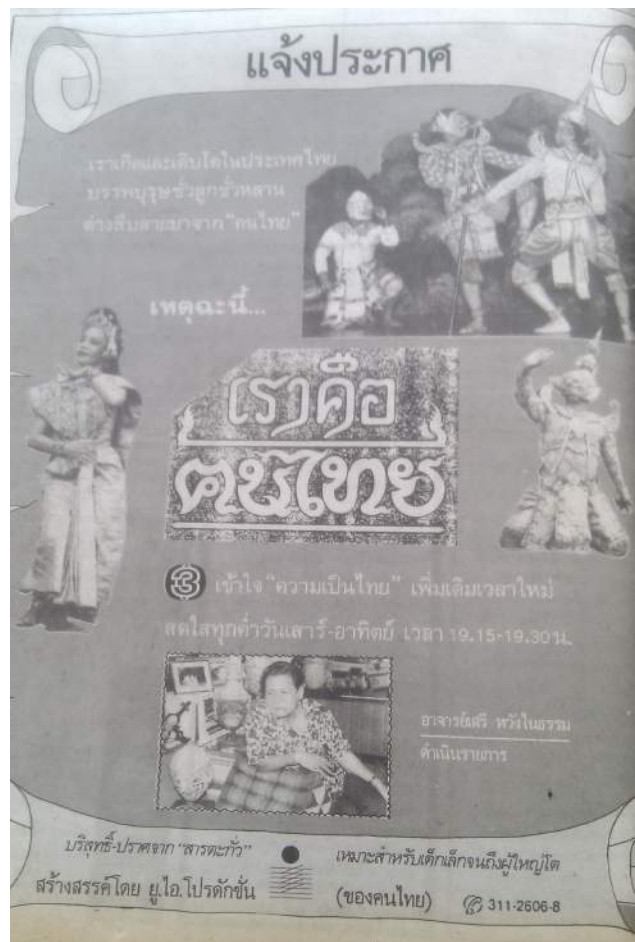


Fig.20. Newspaper advertisement for the television program *Rai Karn Round Kur Kon Thai* (We are the Thai Programme). Photo by Phakamas Jirajarupat

Not only audiences but also the Thai dancers and artists of Krom Silapakorn were most appreciative of Wangnaitham's work. The private dance group named *Kana Round Kur Kon Thai* (We are Thai Dance Troupe) was founded by the Thai dancers and artists, who loved and had faith in Seri Wangnaitham (Mahapaoraya, 'Seri' 30). 'We are Thai Dance Troupe' presented dance-drama and theatre performances at many events with Seri Wangnaitham taking on the role of director, producer and actor. The success of *Phuchanasibtid* encouraged Wangnaitham to produce other new *lakhon phanthang* performances based on Thai folk tales, foreign novels, historical chronicles, and ancient myths such as *Phra Nang Soi Dok Mark* (Princess Soi Dok Mark), a tragic love story about a Chinese princess, *Tam Nan Chao Mae Lim Kor Neaw* (The Legend of the Chinese Goddess Lim Kor Neaw) and *Burma Sia Muang* (The Defeat of Burma).

Not only did Seri Wangnaitham's *Phuchanasibtid* have a great influence on audiences and artists, it also had an impact over other performance forms. After *Phuchanasibtid* achieved popularity, traditional dance performers became famous with audiences. Wangnaitham continued to challenge the abilities and talent of his performers by creating a performance piece in musical concert format entitled *Kusodoor* Concert for the National Theatre named after one of the main characters of the *Phuchanasibtid* story with Wangnaitham himself in the title role (Chonlapatan 270). Singers were drawn from the cast of *Phuchanasibtid*. Songs were based on the film and stage versions of *Phuchanasibtid* and the popular music and song by the Thai jazz band *Soontaraporn* (founded 1939). Short scenes from the *Phuchanasibtid* production accompanied by *piphat* were sometimes inserted; other numbers were accompanied by a Western band. The National Theatre's actor-dancers were not accustomed to performing as singers in a musical concert format and found this quite



challenging (Chonlapatan 323). Performers were sent to study with a vocal music teacher of Krom Silapakorn and had private lessons from professional singers. This developed the vocal skills of the performers and brought new appreciation of *Phuchanasibtid*. Moreover, this concert generated cooperation between the Performing Arts Division and the Western Music Division of Krom Silapakorn—these divisions had rarely worked together in the past.

*Phuchanasibtid*'s popularity spread to television and in 1989, Channel 3 of Thai broadcast television presented *Phuchanasibtid* in the form of television drama, directed by Pisarn Arkraseranee. The famous male star Suntisuk Promsiri acted as Ja-det, Tripop Limpapat acted as Mangtra, accompanied by two female stars, Nattaya Dangbunga in the character of Chandra and Sinjai Hongthai as Kusuma. This was the second time that *Phuchanasibtid* was presented in the form of television drama. Following the broadcast of *Phuchanasibtid* critical reviews appeared in newspapers about the inappropriateness of the casting of the *Phuchanasibtid* television drama version, which perhaps caused its failure, compared with the success of the live performance of Wangnaitham's *Phuchanasibtid* (Wongmontha 25). Pisarn Arkraseranee, the director of this production, stated that the major obstacle was not how to turn it into a movie, but about connecting a younger generation (actors) with the original fans of *Phuchanasibtid* (the novel and dance-drama production's fans) (Chonlapatan 84). The critiques and the comments about *Phuchanasibtid* as a television drama reflected the difficulties in working on the famous novel in the wake of the success of Wangnaitham's *Phuchanasibtid*.

One of the most important outcomes of the popularity of Wangnaitham's *Phuchanasibtid* in relation to Thai traditional dance circles was the enhancing of the reputation of Thai traditional dance artists within Thai society and the admiration of

the public. In the past, being a professional dancer had not been praise worthy, and though Krom Silapakorn were entrusted with protecting national heritage, the artists were not admired (Yupho, *Silapa* 120). Seri Wangnaitham's *Phuchanasibtid* subverted this prejudice. Supachai Chansuwan, one of the main actors, stated in an interview that:

Wangnaitham has been responsible for putting the Krom Silapakorn's dancers on equal artistic footing with modern drama actors. Many dancers from this production became the superstars of traditional theatre. They were very rich and famous thanks to the patronage of their fan clubs; some were offered positions as actors on television dramas and as singers. Thai traditional dancers could be proud of upholding the aesthetic value of Thai traditional arts; their professionalism attracted the admiration of society (Chansuwan interview).

In 1992, with the success of *Phuchanasibtid* on their minds, a group of dance scholars of Krom Silapakorn debated new directions for developing Thai traditional theatre in modern society (Ungsvanonda 49). Guidelines were agreed which encouraged the simplification of traditional dramatic scripts to match modern life; as Rutnin notes, 'the brevity of the modern dramatic scripts is necessary to suit the rapid pace of modern life and of the masses (*Modern* 63).' New multimedia theatrical technologies were encouraged to attract the interest and attention of a young audience. To be commercially viable, it was suggested, Thai traditional dance would need to be integrated with other traditions, such as body massage, and Thai traditional performances should be tailored to the needs of tourism. Audiences

needed to be provided with knowledge about Thai traditional dance-drama so that these arts would not be from the Thai way of life in a modern context (Burusratanaphand 90).

Wangnaitham succeeded in opening up the world of Thai traditional dance to a broad audience who could participate in productions as performers and spectators. Wangnaitham attempted to bridge the gap between low and high art, in parallel with cultivating the concept of a national art. This meant that all kinds of performing arts of Thailand could be presented at the National Theatre. Wangnaitham stated that as the National Theatre was built from the revenues contributed by all Thai people, its stage belonged to Thais of all classes ('Phu Yu' 37). Therefore, local and popular performances deserved to be presented on the national stage as well as the traditional arts. Even *likay* could be performed on the national stage in the wake of *Phuchanasibtid*; *likay* performances by Krom Silapakorn artists, sometimes mounted in collaboration with a *likay* master and folk performers, remain among the most popular programmes at the National Theatre to date.

## **Conclusion**

Seri Wangnaitham was honored as a Thai National Artist in the performing arts in 1988, in view of his artistic talents and contributions to the performing arts. The following year he was awarded the EWC Distinguished Alumni Award 1989 by the University of Hawai'i. He was also awarded an honorary doctoral degree in Thai literature by Bangkok Silapakorn University in 1990 (Luksanasiri 46-47). On February 1, 2007, Seri Wangnaitham died from heart disease at the Mission Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand. His funeral rites were held at Wat Tritossathep under the royal sponsorship of Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn .

Through his production of *Phuchanasibtid* and other *lakhon phanthat* productions, Seri Wangnaitham modernised Thai traditional theatre. *Lakhon phanthat* proved to be more accessible to Thai audiences than other traditional theatre forms. The result, for the National Theatre, was an increase in the popularity of traditional theatre, linking the old world with the new. Thai directors were presented with a gateway that allowed them to modernise theatre and work beyond the limitations of ancient conventions. Wangnaitham challenged Thai traditional artists to use new methods based on Western theatrical techniques such as characterization and inner motivation with the intention of developing and preserving Thai national heritage and cultivating the idea that ‘Thai arts belong to all the Thai people’ (Wangnaitham, ‘Phu Yu’ 34).

Modernising Thai theatre does not necessarily involve a complete subversion, discarding everything. Rather, it is a case of inventing new ways to encourage people to embrace the diversity and changes of society in order to understand, appreciate, and cherish tradition and the value of the arts as a national heritage. Today *Phuchanasibtid* is rarely included in the repertoire of the National Theatre, except in the form of short excerpts as there is no one to replace the Kusodor performed by Wangnaitham and for the two main male roles Ja-det and Mangtra by Wangnaitham’s cast, at least according to dancers and staff of Krom Silapakorn (Muangboon). But it remains a crucial reference point for all Thai performing artists.

## Notes

1. Telenovela is a type of limited run serial drama. It is shorter than soap opera but longer than serial.

2. In 2010, the Office the National Culture Commission (ONCC), Ministry of Education was changed into Department of Cultural Promotion (DCP) under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.

3. The Office of Performing Arts, or *Kong Karn Sangkit* is a sub office of the Fine Arts Department, Bangkok Thailand. This organisation has the duty to conserve, support and disseminate Thai traditional dance and music and folk performance as national heritage. Therefore, the development of Thai performing arts is enacted under the authority of this organisation.

4. The innovations of *khon* performance instituted by Wangnaitham can be compared to those made to Indonesian theatre of the same period. *Lakon carangan* was introduced to Central Javanese *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet theatre) by Ki Nartosabdho (1925-1985), one of the most influential performers in both traditional theatre and music. Nartosabdho's is known for performances that innovated on traditional *wayang* stories, including the humour and experimentation of his new approaches to presenting the narratives of traditional stories (Petersen 106-107).

5. 'Joy from performing arts' is the literal meaning of the phrase *Sri Sook Ka Nattakam*, however, this phrase as used by Wangnaitham refers to variety of performances.

6. Yakhob was a writer and journalist, well known in Thai literary circles in the decades before World War II. His work is understood to reflect the democratic aspirations of the generation of the coup d'état of 1932 and he is still admired as a great Thai novelist working in this period of major political changes.

7. This same chronicle was later translated by Pe Maung Tin and G.H. Luce and published under the title *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma* (1923).

8. These ideas are also presented in *Luk Phuchai* (The Real Man), a novel written by Si Burapha, and other novels of the 1930s. For a discussion of these literary aspects of the novel (see Rutnin 1988).

9. *Phuchanasibtid* was nominated in 1997-1998 by The Thailand Research Fund as one of the hundred Thai-language books that every Thai person should read (see Chiangkun 1999).

10. In 1958, *The Conqueror of Ten Directions* was first produced as a black and white television drama on Thai Television Channel 4 *Bang Khun Phrom*, the first television channel in Thailand. In 1966, this novel was brought to the Thai film industry. On *Likay*, see Smithies 1971 and Virulrak 1996.

11. Wangnaitam perhaps was drawn to employ the *lakhon phanthat* form for his adaptation of *Phuchanasibtid* as it involves a hybrid of diverse theatrical elements. Music, singing, costumes, dance movements, and the ambience of plays mix indigenous Thai elements with other styles. This is a defining feature of *lakhon phanthat* or *phanthat* style (Muangsakorn, Vasinaron and Pothivetchakul interview). The hybridity of *phanthat* allowed the director to produce the dance-drama without the restrictions of convention. *Lakhon phanthat* also offered a tool for narrating the other in Thai terms.

12. This principle can be found, generally, in Southeast Asian performance. The idea is that one name can refer to different kinds of theatre or generate different forms of theatre just as the word *wayang* in Indonesia is used to refer to Chinese opera, Javanese shadow puppetry or even film. However, as with *lakhon phanthat*, the opposite is the case. The word *lakhon phanthat* had been defined, before the emergence of the *Phuchanasibtid* production, as referring to hybrid theatre, able to adapt and develop in different contexts with different contents and characterised by hybridity, in the same way as the theatrical outlook in the production of *Phuchanasibtid*.

13. Chandra is a princess of Burma, the older sister of King Mangtra. Ja-det falls in love with Chandra at first sight. Kusuma is a princess of the Mon kingdom. Ja-det falls in love with her when he goes to war against the Mon.

14. In Thai, the term *Mae* usually refers to a female, the mother of a child or a person acting as mother. *Yok* is a verb meaning to support, lift, raise, carry and donate.

## Chapter 4: *Mae Tup Kon Mai* (The New General)

### Introduction

This chapter translates a script of *lakhon phanthang Phuchanasibtid*, specifically the episode *Mae Tup Kon Mai* (The New General) as adapted by Seri Wangnaitham from the modern novel of Yakhob (Wangnaitham, *Bot Lakhon* 134-147). The modernisation of the Thai traditional play scripts through *lakhon phanthang Phuchanasibtid* production shows how the dance movements have been cut and the dialogues have been emphasised in the Thai traditional theatre plays. This production was first presented on 8 March 1987 at Sang Keet Sala, the outdoor stage of Krom Silapakorn, and transferred to the National Theatre's indoor stage on 5 March 1988. This is one of the three most popular *lakhon phanthang* episodes of *Phuchanasibtid* (Chanchareon). In this episode, all the famous characters, such as Mangtra, Ja-det, Kusodor, Chandra, and Nanthawadee, are presented on stage.

The background to this episode is as follows. Mangtra, King of Tong-U (ancient Burma), commands Ja-det, his adjutant, to be a spy in Mueng Prae (ancient Mon), one of Tong-U's enemies. While Ja-det lives in Mueng Prae, he changes his name to Mang Cha-Ngai, a Mon name. The king of Prae discovers that Mang Cha-Ngai is Ja-det disguising himself as a spy. However, he is not angry but admires Mang Cha-Ngai for his abilities. At the same time, Kusuma, the Princess of Prae, falls in love with Mang Cha-Ngai. The king of Prae offers Mang Cha-Ngai the chance to be a lord chamberlain and asks him to promise to stay in Mueng Prae and not return to Tong-U. Mangtra hears that Ja-det has pledged allegiance to the king of Prae, which angers him as he assumes that Ja-det has betrayed him. He moves the troops to Mueng Prae to test Ja-det's loyalty. However, Mang Cha-Ngai refuses to



fight Mangtra because he is still loyal to Tong-U. Therefore, he send word to Mangtra about war tactics and warns him about Prae's trap. However, Mangtra ignores Ja-det's warning and leads Tong-U's troops to fight with Mueng Prae.

This play is translated to demonstrate the verbal characteristics of the modern *lakhon phanthatang's* playscript. As will be seen, Thai verses and colloquial phrases are used throughout the play to express a character's thoughts and narrate situations. Sometimes verse is used as part of a conversation between characters. Colloquial language is also to be found. When reciting verse, the actors execute dance movement to the accompaniment of choral singing and instrumental music. A normal Thai dialect is used in other dialogue with a modern acting style.

## **Play Translation**

### ***Mae Tup Kon Mai (The New General)***

#### **The curtain goes up.**

**Scene I:** The throne room of Tong-U. The Burmese cabinet ministers Khun Wang Tong-Wun-Yee (the Minister of the Royal Household Tong-Wun-Yee), Neng-Ba and Si-Ong are present.

**Mangtra:** King Ta-Beng-Chawei-D<sup>1</sup> of Tong-U comes in to the throne room.

All the aristocrats are waiting for the king, and then they bow to the king.

The king is surprised when he sees Ja-det entering the hall.

How dare Ja-det come to see him?

*(Ja-det comes to see Mangtra.)*

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** Mang Cha-Ngai [Ja-det] bows to the king and responds to the king.

He is always grateful and his heart will remain loyal to the king.

The kindness of the king will be stored in his heart til his death.

He will serve and protect the king without fear of any danger.

**Mangtra:** The king listens to his words but he still feel angry.

As a great king, he needs to remain calm.

The king looks around the hall to vent his anger.

He sees Tong-Wun-Yee, and then he speaks sarcastically to Tong-Wun-Yee.

**Mangtra:** As General Commander of Tong-U, I am hurt and very sad because our friends have died and their souls were left to struggle in the battle near Muang Prae. Every time, when I close my eyes, I can hear the fire crackling and cries from the flames. Tell me! Are you deaf to all this sound? Or is Tong-Wun-Yee a weak and cowardly man unlike the old brave general. Tell me now!

**Tong-Wun-Yee:** Tong-Wun-Yee listens to the king. The king's sarcastic comments irritate him.

He is an honest and just person so he disagrees with the king.

He raises his hands in obeisance and replies to the king.

As to the king's question, I would like to tell the truth.

The soldiers die in the flames of battle not from carelessness.

Nor are they lack fighting skills in the war.

However, it is because of the General who is careless and  
vain.

The army and navy were defeated because they trusted the  
General.

**Mangtra:** How dare you reply to me like that! Is this from the senior rank General? Your age might be senior but I cannot trust you. You have lost your courage. You let the rebel sit here freely but you do not prosecute him. Is this the appropriate duty of your position?

**Tong-Wun-Yee:** Your Majesty, I, Tong-Wun-Yee, have not been a great General since the reign of Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di but since the reign of Meng-Ka-Yin-Yo, who had all the virtues of kingship.<sup>2</sup> Thus, I know exactly what is my role and what is my duty. Though elderly I have not lost my courage. Rather I am cautious to avoid making mistakes.

**Mangtra:** Ah... Now, you dare to reply me like this.

**Tong-Wun-Yee:** Your Majesty, I cannot understand what Ja-det has done wrong and being called a rebel? Therefore, I cannot arrest him however if your majesty desires for him to be arrested, please order it and I will arrest Ja-det right now.

**Mangtra:** If so, I, Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di command you to arrest Ja-det now!

**Tong-Wun-Yee:** Ja-det, is the accusation of the king true? You act so calm but you must face the truth. I am an outsider, but I believe in your loyalty. And, why are you acting like you accept this accusation?

**Mangcha-ngai:** To be born as Tong-U in this life,  
One must be full of appreciation,  
Whether good or bad, high or low, my destiny is not to  
protest,

My life is his, subject to the King's order whether right or  
wrong.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, why speak in defence when living is like death?

Is it good to be so naive?

I'd rather die than carry this shame.

If I die thus my name will remain as beautiful as a peacock's  
tail feathers.<sup>4</sup>

My loyalty is not for sale, it comes from my body and  
honest soul.

If it can be commanded or compelled, that person is not a man  
but a buffalo.<sup>5</sup>

**Mangtra:**

Oh! Ja-det, you speak with such irony.

You make a fool out of me, you traitor.

A Tong-U's words come from a scorned heart,

With speech that seems loyal but is scheming.

What a disgrace is all this deceiving.

How sad that we had been fed by one mother but you ruin our  
friendship-- why is beyond me.<sup>6</sup>

When you were punished and almost died, I rescued you from  
your deathbed.

I thought you an honest man and yet, you are a son of a tiger, a  
son of a crocodile.<sup>7</sup>

You are an inconstant man, ready to lick your new master.

You are parlous, with an ungrateful mind.

**Mangcha-ngai:** Mangtra, please argue with reason. Do not be over exaggerated.

**Mangtra:** Why!!! What are you going to do to me Ja-det?

**Mangcha-ngai:** If I was in fact loyal to No-Ra-Bo-Di (King of Prae), why was I jailed? Before the armies were defeated, I sent Neng-Ba and Si-Ong to inform you not to separate the army and navy, and to warn you about the camp location. If you situated the camp in the forest, Prae's army would burn your camp down. Neng-Ba and Si-Ong heard my warning and told you. But you, Mangtra, you are overconfident so Tong-U's armies were defeated without fighting as befits brave soldiers. In return, you are angry with me. Is it the carelessness of the General? I may ask.

**Mangtra:** Get out...Take Ja-det out of here and kill him right now!

**Sena:**<sup>8</sup> Your Majesty, Phra Maha Thein Kusodor comes to request to appear before your highness now.

**Mangtra:** I am not available. Why does he come to bother me now?

**Maha Thein:** Mangtra...it is because you are now Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di that you have no respect and admiration to me?

**Mangtra:** Maha Thein, I know why you here already.

**Maha Thein:** Yes, of course... you understand so well.

**Mangtra:** I always knew that Ja-det was your favourite student but I have no desire to see you now.

**Maha Thein:** Okay, good. I would like to thank you for your courage, and for speaking to me with such directness. I am an old man, a worthless man to you. I would like to say something in the direct way as well.

**Mangtra:** I am concerned that you will become your worst enemy because of your favourite student.

**Mangtra:** A man, who is a terror against the kingdom, is not worth the support of a priest.

How can you acquire merit when you are helping the a sinner?

It is like helping a cobra.

You protected Tong-U and expressed such gratefulness,

Why have you no regard for the country, and why instead are you protecting these bastards?

**Maha Thein:** Maha Thein sits still but his heart is on fire.

If he remains in silence, it's like stroking Mantra's ego.

He said, I am damned like a melted candle that burnt out its light.

A student taught by me, repays me with insults.

*(Maha Thein turn to talk with Khun Wang to insult Mangtra.)*

**Maha Thein:** You see Khun Wang Ta-Ka-Yor-Din! Do you not feel sympathy for me? I, myself, with my hands holding the talipot.<sup>9</sup> I used to hold the swords and spears ages ago. Please tell the Lord of the kingdom that before Tong-U is prosperous and peaceful. It was because of Mangsinthu who achieved glory for Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, do not dare to underestimate my love and loyalty to Tong-U. I come here to talk on behalf of Ja-det because I have consider Mangsinthu to have helped Meng-Ka-Yin-Yo (Mangtra's father) and vice versa.<sup>11</sup> I want my pupil to aid Mangtra, the son of Meng-Ka-Yin-Yo, as well.

**Mangtra:** Ha Ha Ha... Wanting Ja-det to help Mangtra! You say this to exempt him from punishment. How absurd, Tong-Wun-Yee. And coming from you, a man who helped build Tong-U with your own hands. If you ask in return for my gratitude, I

will not deny you. But, Ja-det is a destroyer, it cannot compare what you had done with Ja-det in the same page.

**Maha Thein:** Ah...Ta-Ka-Yor-Din, you dare to retort my word. Fine! Might we converse with reason?

**Mangtra:** Fine, we can talk. During my father's reign, he gave you an order. You did it with no hesitation but Ja-det did not. I trusted him but he abused his power and prestige granted by a foreign king. Finally, he failed to fulfill his order. I brought the army to fight with Prae but I lost my soldiers. This you already know.

**Mangtra:** Our army fought like a blind man and lost their lives.

Maha Thein comprehends this, and still begs for pardon.

Many soldiers die, so how do I repay them?

Or let the dead be forgotten; that is the question?

**Maha Thein:** Your majesty, Maha Thein said, the dead are dead.

Even if you kill Ja-det, the dead cannot be revived.

People of Tong-U died because of Prae, so destroying Prae  
would be the solution.

Why do we need to kill our people? I beg you to listen.

Although Ja-det was accused as a rebel or a traitor, the facts  
must be discovered.

Why not, Your Majesty, consider bringing victory to Tong-U?

Send Ja-det with the army to fight and defeat Prae to right his  
wrong.

If he cannot defeat Prae, you can send him to his grave.

**Mangtra:** If this request were to come from anyone else, but you, I would punish them for deceiving me. However, this is you, my royal master, so Mangtra cannot

refuse. But I am not an infant who always follows your order. Thus, I cannot give the betrayer my army and then let him defeat Tong-U.

**Maha Thein:** Mangtra, in this situation, you cannot act hastily like a child. Although Your Majesty is young in age you were born with a high family status. However, you must be cautious, as you are the king of the country. I consider my judgment to be truthful and beneficial to Tong-U. This is why I urge you to send Ja-det to fight with Prae and if he cannot bring back victory, you can send him to his grave.

**Mangtra:** If he surrenders my army to the King of Prae, not only will I lose my army, my revenge will not be completed. So will I not lose everything? And who will be responsible if I lose everything?

**Maha Thein:** I will take this responsibility. I will give you my life.  
I give you my word as guarantee.  
If Mang Cha-Ngai's is disloyal and fails to defeat Prae or  
return in time,  
I, the master who caused such offense will behead myself.

**Maha Thein:** Does this satisfy you, Mangtra?

**Mangtra:** Listening to Maha Thein's firm statement,  
I dare not pick a fight as it may hurt the master's feelings.  
In response to Maha Thein, I do not wish to object.  
You can do what you consider appropriate.

**Mangtra:** I do not want to appear as an ungrateful pupil. If you think this is the suitable solution, then please press on. But please do not forget that you gave me your head as a guarantee. I declare now that I do not want to see any more culprits.



*(Mangtra frustrates Maha Thein, he walks out of the stage. Maha Thein thanks Tong-Wun-Yee and apologise Khun Wang. He suggests Ja-det to go back to his temple first.)*

---

**Scene II:** In the royal garden beside the Chandra's villa

*(Jalengkado is waiting Ja-det)*

**Jalengkabo:** Mang Cha-Ngai, are you alright? How did you get out? Did Mangtra not order his soliders to punish you?

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** If Maha Thein had not arrived here in time, I would have been dead. Was it you who informed Master Maha Thein?

**Jalengkabo:** It does not matter, Mang Cha-Ngai. I am just glad that you survived. I was very worried about you.

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** You have not replied to me yet. Was it you who informed my master?

**Jalengkabo:** Yes, it was me. But, I did it because I was worried about you. I advised Na-Ka-Ta-Che-Bo before sending this news to the priest.

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** Ahhh... Na-Ka-Ta-Che-Bo.<sup>12</sup> Where is he? Is he with you?

**Jalengkabo:** He is with me but only I am waiting here for you. He has gone to town. Do not worry about him. He will be back as soon as he gets bored.

*(Maha Thein comes to see Ja-det. He tells Ja-det about his concerns and asks Ja-det about the plans for the war.)*

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** During my time in Prae, I learned that  
Prae's troops are weak despite the strong navy  
I'm not afraid of fighting the armed forces,

With the help of twentieth thousand soldiers,

We do not need the navy, as bringing more would waste our  
men

We have good war strategies so we have nothing to fear.

**Maha Thein:** Maha Thein is glad to learn about his student efficient  
strategies.

He is very pleased and proud of Mangsinthu's student.

He closes his eyes and foresees the future.

As he sees everything so clearly, thus, he tells his pupil.

Although, I can see that you will achieve victory I am concerned that, at such a young age, you may lose out to Prae's general and his knowledge. This is the first time that you have lead the army and you must bring victory. If I were not a priest and a captive of Mangtra, I would fight with you. However, I will find someone to help you.

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** Maha Thein, in your opinion, who do you think can help me?

**Maha Thein:** On careful consideration, I think a man who has gone through  
difficulties.

This is Ta-Ka-Yee, who has fought alongside me in battle.

If he can be your advisor in this battle,

You will go on to victory.

I will compose a letter, and call him here.

*(Maha Thein asks his other students to bring him paper and pencil to write the letter to Ta-Ka-Yee. Then, everyone leave the stage.)*

---

**Scene III:** In Chandra's Royal Garden

*(Chandra is presented only on the stage)*

**Chandra:** Oh beautiful moon,  
You float in the sky under the moonlit night.  
Even the dark clouds conceal the moon,  
It still floats away unlike me, poor Chandra,  
All this suffering and never-ending darkness,  
When the sky is clear under the moonlit night,  
I wish to see Mang Cha-Ngai as I see the moon tonight.

*(Kantima in the Burmese woman dress comes to see Chandra)*

**Kantima:** Your highness, Mang Cha-Ngai has found ways to prove his loyalty. Why are you unhappy? What are you thinking?

**Chandra:** I feel anxious about two things. Firstly, Ja-det has to lead the army to beat Prae. This war does not worry me. However, the war in Ja-det's heart is my utmost concern.

**Kantima:** Your highness, I don't think that it will be more than Mang Cha-Ngai can handle. He will defeat Prae because he knows Prae inside out. The victory of this war would prove his loyalty and faithfulness to Tong-U and Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di. Ever since I disguised myself as Na-Ka-Ta-Che-Bo, I have come to strongly believe that Mang Cha-Ngai can do it.

**Chandra:** What about Princess Kusuma? Do you not think Mang Cha-Ngai will be anxious about her?

**Kantima:** Your highness, may I say something that would put your mind to rest about the relationship between Mang Cha-Ngai and Princess Kusuma. As far as I

know, despite their relationship, Princess of Prae (Kusima) is in love with Mang Cha-Ngai however; Mang Cha-Ngai does not feel the same.

**Chandra:** Why you are confident of that?

**Kantima:** Before the King of Prae sent Mang Cha-Ngai to jail, the king persuaded Mang Cha-Ngai to marry the Princess in order to protect Prae from war with Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di. However, Mang Cha-Ngai rejected the king's offer. He declared firmly that his wife must be a lady of Tong-U who is always in his heart.

**Chandra:** It does not mean that Ja-det's Tong-U lady refers to me.

**Kantima:** I am sincerely telling the truth of Ja-det's heart's desire, he is loyal to you, Princess Chandra, so please do not doubt him.

One time, I mentioned the name Chandra and he was in tears.

I asked him about the name of the woman in his heart, and he admitted that it was Chandra.

It is the truth. I am so delighted for you. I know that Mang Cha-Ngai stays at the temple of Kusodor with Maha Thein. If you want to see him, I volunteer to send him the news.

**Chandra:** No, Kantima. Please do not. The fire in this Palace just died down; do not add fuel to the fire.<sup>13</sup> You know that Mangtra is breathing fire on Ja-det. If he finds out that I am meeting Ja-det in the palace, our heads will no longer stay on our shoulders. It is getting late; you should return to the palace and I will follow you in a few minutes.

*(Kantima exits the stage. Chandra is left alone.)*

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** Your highness, Chandra.

**Chandra:** Ja-det!

*(The two embrace, holding each other tightly. Then, Chandra cries.)*

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** My dearest princess, it has been a year. I spent every single minute waiting to see you. I never thought that on this day I might meet you and see you in tears. Chandra, my princess, please look at me. *(Ja-det kneel down in front of Chandra.)* In the past, I was a common man with no noble title but with perseverance. I have completed my training in the art of war. This is because of you, who encouraged me. You gave me my life, so why have you chosen to kill me with your words?

**Chandra:** Oh...Ja-det.

**Chandra:** I heard a rumour but I refused to believe it.  
The story of you and Kusuma's engagement, how can I  
prevent such thoughts?  
Please put yourself in my shoes, then you will see the torment  
in my heart.  
I love and care for you with my all, but those pains Chandra  
could not bear.

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** My precious lady, you deserve to be the woman in my  
heart.  
The truth about Kusuma, the Princess of Prae, I love her as a  
friend. No one touched my heart like Chandra.  
I do not wish to protest nor have excuses for such rumours.

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** The time of separation approaches so fast, my dearest Chandra. Please do not fill with rage or anger. I have to leave you and may be gone long, like the changing faces of a waxing moon to a waning moon. I know you are in doubt and may not love me as much as before but I would love to have your blessing.

**Chandra:** I am a Tong-U lady, with strong beliefs in honest love.  
May the power of Buddha act like shining armour.  
And, may all the power in the universe shield the new general  
from attack  
And help him to conquer in this battle both in Prae and in his  
heart. Nothing in this war can harm him.

**Close Curtain-**

*(The curtain closes and a short, semi-improvised scene with Maha Thein, Ta-Ka-Yee, Ja-det, Jalengkabo, Neng-Ba, Si-Ong and Maha Thein's pupils is presented in front of the curtain.)*

**Maha Thein:** I appoint a brave man, Ta-Ka-Yee as my deputy for this battle.  
Please ask for advice from Ta-Ka-Yee about the war strategies.  
Each word and advice from Ta-Ka-Yee are my words.  
You must obey his advice; don't be arrogant or stubborn.

(Maha Thein repeats his order to Ta-Ka-Yee and his pupils and says that tonight is a full-moon night, an auspicious evening, let's go over there. I will perform a ritual of 'cutting a stick' according to Pichaiyuth's bible, and I will make holy water to bless you all.<sup>14</sup> He whispers to Mud<sup>15</sup> 'What about the business I asked you to find out?' Mud said 'The palace sent me news to follow the order of Maha Thein, and everyone in the palace is ready.' Maha Thein orders everyone to go back inside.)

**Scene IV:** Tong-U Palace *(Two royal maids bring food and drink to the palace for the king.*

**Nanthawadee:** Speaking of her majesty the queen of Ta-Beng-Chawei-Ti,

She is preparing food and drinks according to the plan.  
Food and drinks are prepared perfectly,  
Waiting for the king to arrive, with the help of the royal maids.

*(Mae Nom Lao Chee, Lao Chee's nanny, and Kantima arrive at the palace.  
Nanthawadee greets Mae Nom Lao Chee.)*

**Nanthawadee:** I would like to pay my respect to Mae Nom Lao Chee. Please have a seat here. Kantima, please help me look after Mae Nom.

*(Chandra and her maid, Tong-Sa, arrive at the palace. Nanthawadee and everyone greet Chandra.)*

**Chandra:** I am still concerned and afraid that our plan will not  
succeed.

If this plan fails, it's like throwing dust in our eyes.

**Nanthawadee:** My sister, please do not worry.

Phra Mae Chao (the queen mother) will join and bless us to  
achieve success.

*(Maha-Dhe-Wi, Mangtra's mother, and two royal maids arrive at the palace, and everyone greets Maha-Dhe-Wi)*

**Maha-Dhe-Wi:** Yesterday, I saw Mangtra. I made every effort trying to  
persuade him to calm down.

However, he has too much pride and determination.

*(Mangtra arrives at the palace with his six royal bodyguards.)*

**Mangtra:** The greatest black-tongued <sup>16</sup> king of the world, who is  
fearless.

He enters the familiar royal dining room and

His eyes wander and then sees, his wife, mother and sister,

including Mae Nom Lao Chee, are presented.

He can read Mangtra's heart and feels that something unusual

will happen.

He sits at the centre of the dining table and smiling, greeting

everyone.

His heart is anxious to know what will happen; but he

must control his eagerness.

**Mangtra:** Mother, you came to see me yesterday. I met you early this morning and again in the evening, I am very happy. Have you got any business with me?

**Maha-Dhe-Wi:** No, I do not have any business with you, my son. I was free so I thought I might like to pay a visit.

**Nanthawadee:** Please have a drink, your majesty.

**Mangtra:** Ah...Mae Nom Lao Chee, you also visit me. I heard that your health is poor. I am very worried. I have attempted to visit you many times but my time is very limited. Are you getting better?

**Mae Nom Lao Chee:** Due to your kindness, your majesty.

**Nanthawadee:** Your majesty, please have a seat over there and enjoy your drink and food.

**Mangtra:** Oh...My sister Chandra, you are here as well. Regarding Mae Nom Lao Chee' health, I would like you to take good care of her. If there's something wrong, please inform me immediately. Oh... and what about you Chandra, my sister? You have never visited me before this evening. Perhaps you have something to tell me?



**Chandra:** No, I have nothing to tell you Mangtra, my brother. I knew that Maha-Dhe-Wi and Mae Nom Lao Chee were visiting you, so I thought I might join them.

**Mangtra:** So, today must be a good day. I am so glad to meet everyone. Is there anyone waiting outside?

**Nanthawadee:** There is no one outside, your majesty. Please enjoy your dinner.

**Maha-Dhe-Wi:** I heard that our army is well prepared,  
And thus waiting for a new general.  
No one knows who this might be,  
The new general who will fight this war.

**Mangtra:** Mother, everyone in this place knows already. Why do you provoke me by asking this question?

**Nanthawadee:** Your highness, why do you speak to your mother so aggressively?  
*(Khun Wang Ta-Ka-Yor-Din and Tong-Wun-Yee enter the royal dining room,)*

**Khun Wang:** Your majesty, Mang-Sin-Thu, Kusodor (Maha Thein) would like to have an audience with you, sir.

**Mangtra:** What urgent business do you have at this late hour?

**Maha-Dhe-Wi:** Why do you speak like that Mangtra, my son? Do you see Maha Thein as a stranger?

**Nanthawadee:** Please allow him in to see you, Father (Khun Wang Ta-Ka-Yor-Din).<sup>17</sup> Would you please invite Maha Thein in?

*(Maha Thein, Ta-Ka-Yee, Jalengkabo, Neng-Ba, Si-Ong enter the dining room to see Mangtra.)*

**Maha Thein:** These people are loyal to Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di and Tong-U reign. They volunteer to fight and bring Prae to you. Ta-Ka-Yee, a great master of sword fighting from a Karen village will fight on my behalf with his three musketeers:

Jalengkabo, Neng-Ba and Si-Ong.<sup>18</sup> Twenty thousand soldiers assemble outside the palace.

**Mangtra:** Ha ha ha, only twenty thousand soldiers to fight Prae. He will either go on to victory or go to die. Is this the Maha Thein who loves his pupil?

**Maha Thein:** The General of the Army requests only this amount. How can I decline him?

**Mangtra:** Fine!!! By the way, I perhaps have to kill the priest this time.

**Maha Thein:** Stop Mangtra! This utterance is a speech of a drunk Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di. I came here at this hour not to seek an argument with my beloved pupil, my King. I want instead to present you the General of the Army. You can give him permission to go to war according to the ancient royal custom. In this manner, the loyal soldier Ja-det will be cleared of the rebel charge.

**Mangtra:** I have given clearly my permission for him to fight a few days ago.

**Maha Thein:** Then, where is the sword of the absolute power? Why not give him the sword to protect his head?

**Mangtra:** You mean to hide his head? !!!

**Maha Thein:** Oh... yes. Khun Wang Ta-Ka-Yor-Din, why do not you bring Ja-det in? Ahhhh... you are afraid that Ja-det will be the favourite of Mangtra as previously, are you? Go and send him in.

*(A nobleman brings the sword of absolute power to Mangtra. Khun Wang leads Mang Cha-Ngai, who wears the warrior uniform to see Mangtra. Mangtra takes the sword and gives it to Maha Thein instead of Mang Cha-Ngai.)*

**Mangtra:** Maha Thein, my royal master, I am not only a king but also your pupil, who loves and respects you like a son. You gave me your life and head as a guarantee. Someone who betrays Tong-U not only lack gratitude to the motherland

but also to the royal master. Therefore, with the power of this sword I command you to provide this sword to that man on Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di's behalf.

*(Mangtra sends the sword to Maha Thein but Maha Thein ignores him. Then, Maha Thein exits. So, Mangtra has to provide the sword to Ja-det by himself.)*

**Mang Cha-Ngai:** I would like to take leave. I will bring your honour and

power to my soul.

I will fight with loyalty and faithful.

I give my life to you, Your Royal Highness

*(The curtain closes. Ja-det and his army appear on stage and the play concludes with the chorus singing the war dance song.)*

**Chorus:** The new general named Ja-det is brave and strong.

All the troops are ready and the auspicious time is coming to march.

\*\*\*

## Notes

1. Ta-Beng-Chawei-Di is the name of Mangtra after he ascends to the throne.
2. Meng-Ka-Yin-Yo is Mangtra's father.
3. In the absolute monarchy, the king has absolute power. He can send people to live or to their deaths. The king's order is an absolute decision in which everyone has to obey without auguring. In the Thai context, absolute power might be signified by the term Chao Chee Wi, which means 'Lord of Life.'
4. Thai people believe that honour will remain after they die. Even though the body is buried and a soul separated from this world, honour will exist forever. It is likely a

peacock's tail. The peacock leaves behind his tail but the beauty of the pattern and colour remain forever.

5. The word 'buffalo' in Thai is an insulting word used to call an inept person. It is like the word "donkey" in English.

6. Mangtra, Ja-det and Chantra grew up together in the Tong-U palace. Ja-det is a son of Mae Nom Lao Chee (nanny Lao Chee), who was the nanny of the prince and princess of Tong-U (Mangtra and Chandra). The relationship between the three of them is like brothers and sisters. Ja-det fell in love with Chandra since they were teenagers. Mangtra has known about the relationship between Ja-det and his older sister and he supports them.

7. The son of a tiger, a son of a crocodile or in Thai *Luke Sure Luke Ta-Khe* is an insult to call someone who is not to be trusted. Generally, the tiger and crocodile are fierce animals but they will not be dangerous while they are still young. However, they can harm when they grow enough. The meaning is similar to the English expression of nursing vipers in one's bosom.

8. Sena is not the name of character but refers to a low-ranking soldier.

9. The talipot or in Thai *Ta-La-Pat* is a symbol of a priest in Buddhism. Thai monks use talipot when they chant rituals.

10. Mangsinthu is the former name of Kusodor.

11. As noted above, Meng-Ka-Yin-Yo is Mangtra's father.

12. Na-Ka-Ta-Che-Bo is a name of Kantima, a daughter of Ta-Ka-Yee, when she disguises herself as a man.

13. This phrase means Mangtra is still angry at Ja-det.

14. Pichaiyuth's Bible refers to an art of war book.

15. Mud is a servant of Maha Thein Kusodor.

16. Having a black tongue defines someone who has an extraordinary character. For example, Mangtra, a dignified and powerful king, a brave and strong leader who conquered many areas in Burma, is prided as a black-tongued king. However, this word does not mean that Mangtra's tongue is actually black. The term black tongue is also applied to a special dog. Thai people believe that if they possess a black-tongued dog, the dog will convey luck to their family.

17. Natthawadee is a daughter of Khun Wang Ta-Ka-Yor-Din. Before she became queen, Natthawadee fell in love with Ja-det. Mangtra meets Natthawadee at Khun Wang's house and he falls in love with her immediately. So Mangtra asks her to marry him and become queen of Tong-U. Natthawadee has to put Ja-det out of her mind to get married to Mangtra.

18. The Karen people are a Burmese hill tribe.

## Chapter 5: *Lakhon Phanhang* in Contemporary Times

### Introduction

In the twentieth century, continuing into the twenty-first century, *lakhon phanhang* and other forms of Thai traditional dance-drama have come under the direct patronage of Krom Silapakorn. They have been classed as forms of traditional art representing the Thai nation. This categorisation has unfortunately placed Thai traditional dance-drama in a difficult position, threatening its survival and future development within modern society. As Damrhung explains, 'Traditional is a powerful label, a brand that connotes a sense of what is familiar, old, restrictive, sacred, fixed, formal, belonging to our past (for the Thais) or exotic (for others)' ('From Phra Lor' 111). Dumrhung's claim relates to what John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff's discuss as the 'commodification of tradition', the process of turning tradition into a brand, marketing and presenting culture and identity to a broad public (18). Traditional theatre as a brand means making a claim that it is an art object, a heritage form of the Thais. This branding establishes Thainess as an identifying attribute.

According to Damrhung, traditionalism is an obstacle for the future development of Thai dance and theatre forms because its proponents require fixed forms and routines. It is a label that limits the creativity of artists, especially the performers from Krom Silapakorn. Traditional dance and theatre are part of the national identity. *Khon* performance adorns court events, and dance from Krom Silapakorn celebrates the nation-state. Thai traditional dance and theatre's survival risk becoming frozen in time and may no longer reflect the changing tastes and values of a new generation of theatre goers.

This chapter considers the existence of and threats to Thai traditional theatre through an analysis of *lakhon phanthatang* in two different institutions: *lakhon phanthatang* at the Thai National Theatre and *lakhon phanthatang* within the educational system. I argue that the survival and development of traditional theatre, particularly in a dynamic country like Thailand, is threatened by the commonly understood equation of tradition with nation. Traditional dance and theatre are glorified as part of the national identity in the official rhetoric. Thus, productions by national art organisations are frequently restaged verbatim, constricting Thai traditional art into a national heritage frame and resulting into a performance frozen in time. Additionally, Thai traditional dance and theatre are routinely imparted as part of the dance curriculum of educational institutions. Thai students copy dance and theatre choreographies set in Krom Silapakorn. The opportunity to experiment, create and invent new art forms based on traditional dance and theatre is not available, thus leading to stagnation. I suggest in this chapter that a possible way to rescue traditional dance and theatre from their current plight would be to integrate them with the Thai way of life, specifically through ritual events. This kind of events could possibly resurrect frozen traditional performance injecting new life into it. They would give artists scope to experiment creatively and develop new art forms suitable for rituals aimed at serving the needs of local communities and audiences.

This chapter initially discusses *lakhon phanthatang* at Krom Silapakorn giving a picture of *lakhon phanthatang* productions today in the context of a centralised Thai cultural organisation. *Lakhon phanthatang* productions of Krom Silapakorn purportedly aim to serve the artistic needs of an ever-changing society. However, these productions are developed within the framework of older Thai traditional dance forms. Major *lakhon phanthatang* productions today rely on repertoires handed down

by the private and royal dance troupes of the nineteenth century. The single element linking old traditions and modern society is the performers, the young artists of Krom Silapakorn. There are currently new conservative organisations whose aim is to encourage the development of *lakhon phanthat* and other Thai traditional theatre forms. Most of the young artists involved in such organisations have been trained in the performing arts and are experienced in both traditional dance forms and other dance styles. Thus, today's young artists could have some leverage in the contemporary development of Thai traditional theatre. Unfortunately their intervention is hampered by the hierarchical nature of Thai society.

In the structure of Krom Silapakorn, senior dance artists, especially the leaders, are respected elders. Their authority is so powerful that it disenfranchises young and new artists, restricting individual development and creativity in performances. Young artists of Krom Silapakorn are a subordinate group dominated by their seniors who are the leaders within the organisation. This system enhances the leader's position and authority and subordinates have little freedom of expression and no opportunity to enhance their talents. Moreover, this hegemonic ethos within Krom Silapakorn enforces a consensus that art and culture need preserving as national heritage, and that this is the duty that Krom Silapakorn as an organisation must perform (Kaewthep and Hinwimarn 187). This nurtures a deep desire for respecting and protecting tradition, by glorifying the past and preserving the ancient art forms, in that they are a part of Thai national identity.

The second half of this chapter focuses on *lakhon phanthat* within educational institutions. I will discuss how *lakhon phanthat* is transmitted to the new generations through the educational system by drawing on my personal experience of learning and subsequently teaching *lakhon phanthat* in the



Performing Arts Department (PAD) of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. My experience is representative of the way Thai dance is taught in institutions. Education is generally understood to be a process of knowledge acquisition at a personal and social level. Mortimore states that education is a vehicle designed and overseen by the powerful in society - to influence and control the younger generation by passing down prescribed knowledge and national culture. However education – through its capacity to develop independent thinking – is also a means to free the individual from these very influences (3). Education is also perceived as ‘an agent of cultural transmission’ passing cultural values and practices from one generation to the other (Kumar). In this section, I will discuss how *lakhon phanthat* is perceived by teachers and students whose views seem to point to a notion of preservation rather than development potential. Learning and teaching this dance-drama form are perceived as a set routine rather than a creative opportunity. Dance teaching in today’s educational system does not encourage the development of traditional forms but is seen primarily as a means of preserving them.

### ***Ram and Rabam: Dance in Phanthat Style***

*Lakhon phanthat* is frozen in the conservative processes of the National Theatre and the educational system. New *lakhon phanthat* is not created and presented to Thai audiences. Most *lakhon phanthat* productions are repeated from the old of Krom Silapakorn. However, mixed programmes show some creative development in *lakhon phanthat* in the form of short dances or *ram* and *rabam* in *phanthat* style. Before giving a critical account of *lakhon phanthat* of today, I would like to explain the details of dance in *phanthat* style, to help understand the difference.

In Thai traditional theatre, the terms *ram* and *rabam* are typically used to denote short dance pieces in which performers dance with music either with or without lyrics. Graceful movements are choreographed according to the essence of Thai dance. The length of performance is short and they serve various purposes. Dancers may perform to give people blessings or express some form of communal belief. In addition, dance can be performed as an overture or a part of a play to enhance entertainment. Virulrak states that ‘starting from 1946, when King Bhumibol (King Rama IX, r.1946- present) came to the throne, to 1999, hundreds of new types of *rabam* were created to serve a variety of purposes, reflecting the diversification of Thai society’ (*Nattasilp* 571).

*Ram* and *rabam* in *phanthang* style or what I would like to call ‘Thai traditional hybrid dance’ are typically characterised by dance elements mixing Thai and non-Thai dance styles. This dance form shares such hybrid characteristics with *lakhon phanthang* performance. A major feature of *ram* and *rabam* in *phanthang* style is the portrayal of characters of foreign nationality using Burmese, Laotian, Mon and Chinese dance movements within the Thai dance style. Thus, the basic dance form and dance gestures are still Thai dance but present something different from regular Thai dance. The Otherness of this performance lends an exotic taste to Thai traditional performances.

The hybridity in the dance form can be explained in two ways. *Ram* and *rabam* can be hybridised intentionally by merging two or more dance movements from other styles with Thai dance movements. This approach generates a new dance, which is ‘Other but Thai’. For example, *rabam Pama-Mon* (Burmese and Mons Dance) is a Thai traditional hybrid dance displaying Burmese and Mons dance movement styles but still using Thai traditional dance elements in the performance.

Costumes imitate the Burmese ones but they are simplified. The music is based on Thai-Burmese tonalities and Thai-Mons music accents but it is played by a Thai musical ensemble on Thai instruments. The second way is when *ram and rabam* in *Phanthang* style are created through a collage or pastiche of dance elements. This is not a blending of the different dance forms as in the first process. Rather, two or more different dance elements are combined and presented in the new form so that the original element can easily be detected by the audience. *Ram and rabam* in *phanthang* style created this way are described as *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn*.

The Royal Institute dictionary uses terms such as ‘incompatibility’, ‘inharmonious way’ and ‘intermingling lacking aesthetics’ to gloss the phrase *Hua Mongku Tai Mangkorn*. It literally means form or character of something, presented in incompatible and inharmonious ways. The words *Mongku* and *Mangkorn* refer to two distinctive kinds of mythological creatures in the lore of ancient Thailand, seen on the head of the Thai royal barge. This phrase is originally found in the paw and is used with reference to the royal barge, whose head represents the *Mongku* (Thai myth creature) form but whose bottom represents the *Mongkorn* (Chinese dragon). At present, this phrase is distorted as *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn*, where *Mongkut* means a Thai traditional crown, or headdress and *Mongkorn* means Chinese dragon. However, the meaning is still the same.

*Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn* can be compared to what Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philosopher and literary theorist, called ‘organic hybridity’, by which he meant ‘unintentional, unconscious hybridisation’ (Bakhtin 358). *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn* differs from the general *Phanthang* process. The accepted process of making *Phanthang* is the blending of different theatrical elements together to create the new form, but *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn* is about a collage of contrasting

elements which remain distinct. *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn* is a hybrid process, but Phanthangness in Thai traditional theatre needs a kind of unity. Thus, the process of hybridising *lakhon phanthang* refers to the merging and the making of the new dance into a unity. The phrase *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn* does not really convey this sense.

### ***Lakhon* Productions of Krom Silapakorn in the 2000s: An Overview**

In the 2000s, the dance-drama and traditional theatre productions of Krom Silapakorn under the Ministry of Culture were presented on the National Theatre stage and on special occasions according to ministerial decree. At present, the four performance programmes of Krom Silapakorn-- *Sri Sook Ka Nattakam* (variety performance), *Don-Tri Thai Rai Ros Lue* (Thai classical music performance), *Silapakorn Concert* (musical concert) and *Natakam Sang Keet* (Thai dance-drama and theatre) have been presented regularly on the indoor stage of the National Theatre.<sup>1</sup> All programmes adhere to the policy and mission of Krom Silapakorn of preserving, promoting and propagating the performing arts of the country through the administration of the Office of Performing Arts, the *Sam-Nak Kan Sang Keet*.<sup>2</sup> There are two programmes, *Sri Sook Ka Nattakam* and *Natakam Sang Keet*, which present Thai traditional dance and theatre. The first programme, *Sri Sook Ka Nattakam*, consists of variety performances, as per the intention of the pioneer of the programme, Seri Wangnaitham. The programme is made up of 3 to 5 performances of traditional dance and a short episode of *lakhon* or *khon*. The other programme *Natakam Sang Keet*, presents a full dance-drama or a *khon* episode. The performances of each programme are selected and scheduled by the board of the Office of Performing Arts, after considering current trends and popularity of each

item (Muangboon interview). All traditional dance and theatre genres, however, are presented on the National Theatre stage, in rotation. *Lakhon phanthang* productions are part of both programmes.

Wantanee Muangboon, the director and senior dance-drama scholar of Krom Silapakorn states that

The mission of *Sam-Nak Karn Sangkit* (the Office of Performing Arts Division) Krom Silapakorn is mainly that of preserving traditional performances as national heritage. So the development of contemporary dance is not our mission. There are already other organisations taking responsibility in developing this kind of performance. However, we [*Sam-Nak Karn Sangkit*] also invented creative dance to serve a new generation of audiences but within a traditional frame (Muangboon interview).

On one hand Krom Silapakorn is duty-bound to protect and preserve the traditional theatre of the nation. On the other, there is an awareness of the changing mores of society which impact on the taste and needs of the urban audiences of the present. Therefore, the productions of Krom Silapakorn are presented as ‘the coin’ of Thai identity –‘traditional on one side and modern on the other,’ as said by Pornrat Damrhung (‘From Phra Lor’ 111). However, modern here is not meant as Western, and thus it does not refer to modern dance or Western contemporary dance. It refers to the technical theatrical elements which are inserted in traditional theatre to make traditional productions more attractive and more easily accessible to modern

audiences. *Lakhon phanthatang* repertoires have been brought into the present but they have been simplified and adapted for new audiences.

### **Young Dance Artists, Institutional Conservatism and the Pressures of Modern Society**

At the start of the twenty-first century, *lakhon phanthatang* productions of Krom Silapakorn began to move in a new direction engaging with contemporary theatrical elements. The cause for the changes in the productions of Krom Silapakorn was the new generation of artists, employed by the Sam-Nak Karn Sangkit of Krom Silapakorn. New young dance artists, both male and female, with ages ranging from 25 to 35, were recruited by Krom Silapakorn. Most of them were trained at and graduated from Witthayalai Natasilpa and Bunditpatanasilpa Institute, the conservatoires of Thailand. Their youth and their outlook and experience encouraged them to experiment with new dance techniques, applying them to traditional theatre.

Anucha Sumaman, a young *khon* dancer of Sam-Nak Karn Sangkit, Krom Silapakorn, is a good example. He began training in *khon* dance at the age of twelve and completed his bachelor degree in Thai dance at Rajamangala University of Technology. Because of his outstanding classical dance skills, as a student he received the HRH Prince Narisaranuwatiwongse scholarship, awarded to excellent Thai classical dance students. In addition, he received an Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship to study in Surakarta, Indonesia from 2<sup>nd</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008. At present, he is not only a leading traditional dancer of Krom Silapakorn but also a dancer of contemporary dance companies in Thailand such as Jitti Chompee contemporary dance troupe and Patravadi theatre troupe. Anucha Samaman says, 'As a dancer, I am positive that each kind of artwork has its own charm and you do not

have to understand everything. Nowadays, we [Krom Silapakorn] have a bunch of stuff that's easy on the eyes, so why not try something different' (Sumaman quoted in Sang-ou-thai). His view is that, the 'Fine Art Department should commission modern choreography' and collaborations of contemporary dance choreographers with traditional dance artists should be fostered within the conservative organisation', such as Krom Silapakorn ('Anucha Sumaman').

The new experiences and training in other dance styles on the part of the young traditional dance artists have influenced *lakhon phanthatang* and other traditional theatre productions of Krom Silapakorn. A case in point is that of Sumaman, who returned to Krom Silapakorn from Indonesia with his skills in Javanese and Balinese dance. His artistic experiences in other theatrical art forms brought him opportunities to perform beyond what routinely offered by Krom Silapakorn. For example, he was assigned to perform *rabam and ram* in *phanthatang* style a role based on Indonesian theatrical style. Additionally, Sumaman was admired for choreographing some new dances, which are mostly a mixed form of Thai and other dance styles, presented on the National Theatre stage. He states that his performing abilities in foreign forms lend an exotic ambience to the Krom Silapakorn's productions; however, it sometimes has a negative impact on his traditional dance skills (Sumaman interview). It seems that the new skills and experiences of young traditional dancers like Anucha Samaman are beneficial to the development of *lakhon phanthatang* and dance in *phanthatang* style of Krom Silapakorn.

Anucha Sumaman is only an example out of the whole new generation of traditional dancers, of someone who has experience in both traditional and contemporary performance receiving praise and admiration from the senior dance artists. Another example is that of Pimrat Navasiri, a female dancer, who graduated

in Thai dance from Chulalongkorn University. She was trained on the basis of a dance curriculum which gives students the opportunity of experiencing both traditional and contemporary dance. Navasiri says that the major problem for young dancers is the system of seniority, which is very firmly established in Krom Silapakorn. Young dancers are always under the control and supervision of senior artists, therefore, the chances to demonstrate their real ability will depend on official permission from powerful senior artists (Navasiri interview). Thus, young dance artists of Sam-Nak Karn Sangkit, Krom Silapakorn can be an asset in performing and developing traditional theatre and bring a degree of authenticity to Krom Silapakorn productions. However, the seniority system and the conservative attitude of the organisation are still powerful and influence the further development of the theatre.

### ***Lakhon Phanthang* of Krom Silapakorn Today**

Over the past few years *lakhon phanthang* productions of Krom Silapakorn seem to present an ossified traditional theatre form by using the old *lakhon phanthang* literatures, preserving the original dance movements and the strict rules of Thai dance customs. However, Theppayasuwan suggests that Thai performing arts, particularly Thai traditional theatre, needs to be adapted or changed to suit contemporary society and avoid the state of '*nam ning*' or still water, which risks becoming '*nam nao*' or polluted water and which will endanger the future of Thai performing arts (129). Many factors, following the Seri Wangnaitam's period, such as audiences, young artists and social changes, drive Krom Silapakorn into being proactive in avoiding the development of *nam ning* and *nam nao* circumstances. With reference to *lakhon phanthang* productions, they have been modernised and adapted but have remained fundamentally traditional without causing any



antagonism among artists, young and old or among audiences of different generations.

Contemporary *lakhon phanthat* productions are mainly based on traditional *lakhon phanthat* repertoires such as *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat*.<sup>3</sup> Both stories are well-known in Thai literary circles, particularly *Phra Lor*,<sup>4</sup> praised as a best Thai classical verse form or *lilit* during the time of the King Vajiravudh (1910-1925) (Ruengraklikit 1). *Phra Lor* is a tragic love story enveloped in fantasy and superstitions. The story of *Phra Lor* is derived from a folk tale of the northern part of Thailand; however, it was embellished with the addition of elements from *lilit* and is thus known as *Lilit Phra Lor* (Damrhung, 'From Phra Lor' 111; Diamond 367). *Rachathirat*<sup>5</sup> is a story about the hostility between the Mons and the Burmese, therefore its theme and plot are focused on strategies of fighting and acts of bravery. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both repertoires gained popularity and were successful with royal audiences and among commoners (Rutnin *Dance, Drama* 117). Both repertoires were passed on to Krom Silapakorn by the private dance troupes of the nineteenth centuries through the dance masters and dancers of these troupes employed by Krom Silapakorn. The dance teachers brought their knowledge and experience and taught younger artists who went on to perform on the National Theatre stage. These repertoires were standardised and became part of the Thai dance academic curriculum across the country. Despite the changes of modern society, *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat* are still popular and have become the two main stories of *lakhon phanthat* productions at Krom Silapakorn.

The *lakhon phanthat* productions of Krom Silapakorn can be described as follows.

First, the existing old *lakhon phanthat* plays are always selected for performance on the Krom Silapakorn stage in simplified versions, rather than creating new plays. As mentioned, the two *lakhon phanthat* stories *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat*, both very popular, were standardised and considered to be traditional theatre already in the 1940s and continue to be performed. Seri Wangnaitham and the team of playwrights at Krom Silapakorn have simplified the plays in line with social changes. They made the story more succinct, to ensure modern audiences could find the old plays more accessible. For example, the *Phra Lor* repertoire<sup>6</sup> was simplified by Seri Wangnaitham in 2002 following the *Phra Lor* version of Prince Narathip Phraphanpong (Thongkumsuk 248). *Phra Lor* was a famous tragic romance play of Prince Narathip Phraphanpong's dance troupe under the direct supervision of King Chulalongkorn (Rutnin, *Dance Drama* 120). This version was divided into three parts and each part contained five to seven scenes<sup>7</sup>. Each part of the *Phra Lor* play of Prince Narathip required some nine hours of performance time (*Dararatsami* 29).

The new version of *Phra Lor* by Krom Silapakorn maintained the main plotline and the beautiful language of the story of the original but superfluous scenes have been cut to streamline the story and repeated dialogues have been eliminated. In August 2010, a *lakhon phanthat* episode based on the story of *Phra Lor*, *Jak Mansuang Tung Mung Srong* (From Mansuang to Muang Srong), which is Wangnaitham's version, was performed on the National Theatre stage.

The episode begins with story of two princesses of Mung Srong, Phra Phun and Phra Pang, who fall in love with Phra Lor and want to meet him after hearing the *Kab Sor Chom Chom Phra Lor* (a folk chanted tale), in which Phra Lor, the prince of Mansuang was extolled. Their maids of honour, Nang Ruen and Nang Roi, contrived to arrange the meeting and sent *Kon Kab Sor* (a singer storyteller) to Mansuang to

sing the praises of both princesses to Phra Lor. In addition, the black magic spells and a magic cock are used to induce Phra Lor to leave Mansuang. Phra Lor travelled to Mung Srong to meet two princesses and while journeying he went to Ka Long River to wash. Before washing he worshipped the mother of the river and he learnt he would die if he entered Mung Srong. However, he cannot resist the power of black magic and his passion for the two princesses. Also, he is a king and thus he cannot retract his word just because he is frightened of death. He goes on to meet the two princesses. The episode ends with Phra Lor meeting Phra Phun and Phra Pang and living together happily ever after in the bedchamber of the two princesses. In this version, the *Phra Lor* story has been presented compressed in 3 hours and in six separate scenes.<sup>8</sup>

The above synopsis is utilised when Krom Silapakorn presents the full story of *Phra Lor* but sometimes only a selection of scenes is presented. The full play is mostly performed in the *Natakam Sangkeet* programme, whereas selected scenes are presented at *Sri Sook Ka Nattakam* and *Don-Tri Thai Rai Ros Lue* programmes.

The new script can be performed in two to two and a half hours, which seems to suit modern audiences. Nevertheless, Krom Silapakorn has been criticised for watering down the story and this has been regarded as a weakness. Rutnin states that the traditional plays of Krom Silapakorn are dramatised and interpreted with disregard for preserving the authenticity of the story. In the *Phra Lor* story, the inner conflicts of *Phra Lor* concerning passion and death have been glossed over. Therefore, the element of tragedy has disappeared from the *Phra Lor* production of Krom Silapakorn ('Karn Lakhon' 166-167). Brandon states that 'most Southeast Asian drama fits none of the West's usual drama types: it is not pure tragedy, comedy, farce, or melodrama. Tragedy has never been known in Southeast Asia '

(*Theatre* 116). However, Brandon is describing the Southeast Asian theatre of old, where indeed comedy often mixes with tragedy. The contemporary *lakhon phanthatang* productions of Krom Silapakorn do not conform to Brandon's description. In the past, the *Phra Lor* story was a real tragedy. Especially the final scene of the play, which shows the death of Phra Lor, the two princesses and their servants, was the poignant culmination of a tragic romance (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 115). However, the views of modern people and artists on how traditional theatre and *lakhon phanthatang* can be modernised do differ. A modern version of *Phra Lor* needs to be a unified production. Krom Silapakorn's productions are much more uniform than they were in the past. The modernisation of *lakhon phanthatang* is more multi-dimensional.

Nonetheless, Brandon's statement can be applied to the dramatic plays of Krom Silapakorn and does reflect the cultural expectations of Thai audiences. *Phra Lor* is a well known and cherished work of literature with which Krom Silapakorn's audiences are familiar. Although the *Phra Lor* version by Seri Wangnaitam may not display pure tragedy and show a lack of Western dramatic interpretation, this is not a major problem. The audience's expectations, when they see *Phra Lor* are not about how tragedy is conveyed, they are there for the beautiful dance movements, music and singing, for the famous dancers and to have the feeling of being part of live performance (Nadgratok).

Furthermore, new short prelude dance pieces in the form of *ram* and *rabam* are inserted in *lakhon phanthatang* productions of which they are now a crucial component. They are presented as a prelude and interlude dance. I will presently discuss the short dance inserted by Krom Silapakorn in the *lakhon phanthatang*.

*Boek Rong* is in form of *rabam* and is performed by two or more dancers. In the past, *Boek Rong* signalled that the performance was about to begin, and sometimes it was used to invoke blessings on the audience. Therefore, *Boek Rong* can greatly differ from the main style of the production. *Boek Rong* of *lakhon phanthang* is currently presented differently. The purpose of *Boek Rong* of *lakhon phanthang* is not only for blessing the audience or a sign of the start of a performance, but it also makes audiences feel part of the ambience.

The new '*Rabam Boek Rong Pama*' (Burmese prelude dance) (see fig. 21) was choreographed by Ratchana Pongprayoung, the 73-year-old senior dancer and National Artist of Sam-Nak Karn Sangkit, Krom Silapakorn. This performance was first presented as a prelude dance of the *lakhon phanthang* episode *Saming Phra Ram Ar Sa* (*Saming Phra Ram* is volunteering to fight) from the *Rachathirat* story at the National Theatre from November to December 2012. This dance was based on *lakhon phanthang* and was announced as a Burmese dance created by one of the major senior dance figures of Krom Silapakorn. When talking to the performer I found out that this dance was based on videoclips he found on YouTube. I referred to the dance as collaboration with the senior artist but the performer disagreed.

Anucha Sumaman, the choreographer and dancer of this piece, stated in a phone interview with me on 12th December 2013 that video clips on YouTube were his resources for the Burmese dance movements. The Burmese dance costume style was sourced through Googling. He attempted to create a new Burmese dance, different from the old Burmese dance style of Krom Silapakorn wishing to present an indigenous Burmese dance.

The costume and dance movements were almost entirely copied from Burmese dance, although music and singing were accompanied by a *pi phat Mon*

ensemble.<sup>9</sup> Ten young dancers performed the fast dance movement style accompanied by the beating of a drum with Burmese accents and tunes. Natt, an audience member who saw this performance, mentioned in her blog that

*‘Rabam Boek Rong Pama* at this time made me feel excited and was enjoyable. Audiences were stimulated by the lively music and the Burmese dance movement style, which made the dancers look like Burmese marionettes. At the end, audiences gave dancers a rapturous applause. It lingered in my mind after I returned home; I searched on YouTube looking for Burmese dance, feeling a hint of nostalgia for *Rabam Boek Rong Pama* by the Krom Silapakorn dancers’. (‘Pai Chom Saming Phra Ram Arsa Part I: Rabam Boek Rong Pama (Going to See Saming Phra Ram Volunteering to Fight Part I: Burmese Prelude Dance)’)

This new prelude dance demonstrates that under the supervision of a National Artist whose background is traditional theatre, a dancer trained in both traditional and contemporary dance styles can bring about a balance between the old and the new, creating a performance which is more realistic in flavour and more attuned to current expectations. In addition, this collaboration also reflects that the admiration powerful traditional dance artists have for the younger artists, acknowledged as the new blood of Thai traditional dance and able to modernise creatively traditional theatre productions, yet crucially maintaining the authenticity of the dance style

within the play. Nattee Nadgratok, a 42-year-old regular audience member of Krom Silapakorn's productions states that

'This performance (*Rabam Boek Rong Pama*) makes me feel that the old traditional dance masters are more open-minded than in the past. Traditional dances are no longer *bo-ran* or old-fashioned dance, and I think audiences are able to appreciate the creativity of an expert in traditional dance. In addition, this dance conveys a Burmese atmosphere, which is the setting of the story. My mother, though she is a real fan of Krom Silapakorn's productions of the Seri Wangnaitham period, also loved this new performance'.



Fig. 21. Anucha Sumaman in a seated pose in *Rabam Boek Rong Pama*. Courtesy of Kittipak Somboondee

The other dance added to *lakhon phanthatang* productions of Krom Silapakorn is *ram* or a short dance piece inserted as an interlude within the main story. This is a new creative dance, just like *Boek Rong*, but it is different in purpose. In the past, the descriptive passages in the play were presented through singing without any dancing. But in present times, in contrast, the new *ram* is accompanied with singing and is used in scenes to describe either a character or a place in the play. *Yor Yod Phra Lor* (The Praise of Phra Lor) is a solo dance, created and inserted in the first scene of the *Phra Lor* production of Krom Silapakorn in 2010, performed and choreographed by Anucha Samaman. The first scene is set in the bedchamber of the two princesses of Muang Srong, as Phra Phun and Phra Pang are hearing the folk melody praising Phra Lor. The princesses fall in love with Phra Lor without ever having met him. *Yor Yod Phra Lor* by Sumaman showed Phra Lor on the basis of the chant. Sumaman states in the interview that

I was assigned the task of creating and performing a short dance piece as accompaniment to *Pleng Yor Yod Phra Lor* sung by Chinnakorn Krailas, a National Artist in Performing Arts and to be inserted in the *lakhon phanthatang Phra Lor*. I choreographed it as a solo dance on the basis of my interpretation of the lyrics, which sung the praises of Phra Lor. I felt free to use the dance movements expressively to the best of my physical skills. Thus, parts of the dance look improvised rather than being a fixed choreography. I wanted to present something which retained the characteristics of *phanthatangness*.



Thus *Yor Yod Phra Lor*, is a new hybrid dance based on the physicality, the dance skills and the creativity of the dancer. I would opine that the choreographer used his dance skills in both Thai traditional dance and Indonesian dance techniques in this performance. However, the different dance techniques have been intentionally merged to make a new dance style, which is neither traditional Thai, Thai-Laotian nor Indonesian, but is a hybrid. The dance style is unrecognisable and undefinable. For example, the body balance and leg movements seem to be those of Javanese and Neolanna dance styles<sup>10</sup> whereas the hand gestures such as *wong* and *jeeb* are from Thai traditional dance. The costumes of this performance are also a mixed style moving away from the traditional costume of *Phra Lor* as seen in the regular production. The style of the dance movements is unlike the Laotian dance seen in *lakhon phanthang* but it not detrimental to the overall aesthetics of the play. Audiences appreciate the dance interlude and regard it as an innovative dance of *lakhon phanthang*.

All these new dance pieces have been the work of a young artist of Krom Silapakorn. But the new dances have not been warmly received by some senior traditional dance masters. I interviewed a powerful senior artist of Krom Silapakorn and she commented that *Yor Yod Phra Lor* by Sumamam was *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn*.<sup>11</sup> I found out that the phrase *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn* as uttered by this senior dancer not only refers to the dance techniques but also the costume, which was presented as a collage of different pieces rather than creating it by seamlessly merging different costumes. The performer wore the Thai dance cloth pattern as can be seen in traditional *khon* and *lakhon*. The long piece of cloth was attached to his hips and trailed on the ground. Jewellery was traditional but the headdress was created with a collage of hairpins from the northern folk dance styles with a hybrid

traditional dance headdress (see fig. 22). The phrase *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn* was used derogatorily to say that the dance was so mixed that it could no longer be fitted into existing dance genres. It is in full contrast with the mongrel denotation of the *phanthang* term. But the meaning and form of *lakhon phanthang* as a hybrid dance allows the young dancer to create a new dance piece without seriously concerning himself with ancient dance customs. The new dance reflects the young traditional dancer's perspective that Phanthangness at present should not be limited only to traditional *phanthang* dance forms. As Sumaman (2013) states 'the hybridity in *phanthang* style should be presented, although the new *phanthang* dance may not be allowed for long on the traditional stage and may not be acknowledged as traditional *phanthang*'.

Another new feature of *lakhon phanthang* at present, concerns the comic scenes in the play. Basically, the Thai comic style can be categorised in three groups: *Lakho'n Yo'i*, *Talok Salachak* and *Talok Naman* (see Polachan 2014). In traditional dance theatre, there are two kinds of comic genres in a production. *Talok Salachak* is a short humorous comic scene based on the main plotline. The jokes or *Jam Uat* relate to the characters in the story. *Talok Naman* occurs during changes of sets to reduce the intensity of the play, so joking is possibly separate from the play's vicissitudes. The main purpose of both comic interludes is to give a humorous account to the audience and to use the jokes to narrate the story or the situation, which will occur in the future.



Fig. 22. *Yor Yod Phra Lor* by Anucha Sumaman. Image courtesy of Phornloet Phiphatrueang

In the *lakhon phanthang* productions of Krom Silapakorn, *Talok Salachak* is an interesting scene. The jokes and the comic style in the production are influenced by Wangnaitham's style. The *Jam Uat* or the comedian is usually a role taken by a senior artist of Krom Silapakorn, trained to be *Jam Uat* by Seri Wangnaitham. Prasart Thongaram, a senior *khon* artist, and an outstanding disciple of Seri Wangnaitham, usually takes the major *Jam Uat* role in *lakhon phanthang* and other traditional performances. He stated that 'after the death of Wangnaitham, he [Thongaram] would keep doing traditional work as Wangnaitham had done before he died. He is ready to follow in Wangnaitham's footsteps' (Thongaram quoted in Phoenix).

The humour is based on daily life and whatever is popular at a particular moment in time. For example, a political issue was satirised in *Talok Salachak* of *Rachathirat*, episode *Saming Phra Ram Ar Sa*, scene II, which is set in front of a prison. In this scene the story of Saming Phra Ram, a former soldier of King *Rachathirat* of Hanthawaddy (ancient Mon kingdom) and main character of the scene, is jailed as a captive at the prison of the City of Ava (ancient Burmese Kingdom). He hears the royal proclamation that the king is looking for a volunteer, well skilled in lance fighting to challenge Kamani, a skilful warrior in the Chinese army. The proclamation states that the one who volunteers to fight and vanquishes Kamani will be rewarded by the king with the position of heir of Ava and the King will give the victor his beautiful daughter, princess of Ava, in marriage. Saming Phra Ram, volunteers to fight because he does not want the Mon Kingdom to be in trouble, should the Chinese army conquer the Burmese Kingdom (Silapakorn 27).

*Talok Salachak* in this scene begins with the two gaolers re-checking the prisoners at the entrance the jail of Ava. Five prisoners appear in the scene and they all have a different physical appearance, which will make audiences laugh upon seeing them: an overweight man, a tall man, a man with a big belly, a thin and small lady boy and an old man. The overweight man wears a white shirt on which the Thai letters น.ป.ช (Nor. Por. Chaw), can be seen (see fig. 23). Generally, the word *Nor. Por. Chaw* literally a red shirt, is understood to be a reference to supporters of the *Neaw-ruam Prachathippatai Tor-tan Pa-det-karn Heng Chart* (the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship). In contrast, the meaning of *Nor. Por. Chaw* in this show has been changed to *Nak Thod Pra Harn Chai* (a death row inmate). The conflict between red shirts and yellow shirts in Thailand is mentioned on stage. However, the audiences recognise the parody of a current political issue and laugh at

it (Nadgratok interview). Not only is there a reference to a political issue but in the same scene of the play, the Korean popular song ‘Gangnam Style’<sup>12</sup> is mentioned, as the five prisoners are asked by the gaolers to show Gangnam Style dance movements, which got a big laugh from the audiences.



Fig. 23. *Talok Salachak* of *lakhon phanthang*. Image courtesy of Nattee Nadgratok

Current *lakhon phanthang* performance has been modified for new audiences and a changing society. Nonetheless, the dance movements or *Tha Rum* are still derived from the ancient dances. In 1934, Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart (Dramatic Art School) was established under the authority of Krom Silapakorn. Former dancers and dance masters from the elite private dance troupes such as the ex-dancers of Chao Phraya Mahin were invited to teach at the school. Thus, the dance movements were standardised (Boonyachai interview). This however does not imply that the dance movements are unchangeable.

At present, *lakhon phanthatang* performers are male and female and are selected on the basis of the character gender in the play. *Tua Phra* (male characters) role are interpreted by male dancers, whereas *Tua Nang* (female characters) roles are performed by female dancers. Contemporary *lakhon phanthatang* casting differs from the past when *lakhon phanthatang* characters were performed exclusively by female dancers. Therefore, *Tha Rum*, which was originally devised for female dancers, had to be modified to suit male dancers while maintaining the original dance choreography or choreographic design (Muangboon interview). The characteristics discussed above can not only be seen in productions at the National Theatre, under the supervision of Krom Silapakorn, but also outside Krom Silapakorn, as *lakhon phanthatang* has been widely disseminated.

Today, *lakhon phanthatang* is no longer performed as a popular theatre or for the entertainment of the royal family and nobility. But it is currently part of Thai traditional theatre education, and its form and style are always based on the *lakhon phanthatang* productions of Krom Silapakorn, which reflect the modernisation of Thai traditional theatre in modern Thai society. However, though the *lakhon phanthatang* productions of Krom Silapakorn present the traditional repertoires rather than modern or newer ones in order to preserve the art form as national heritage, the concept of preserving the art form does not mean that ‘nothing changes’ in performance. *Lakhon phanthatang* as a traditional theatre always changes to serve the needs of society and its time, as Shils discusses. The modifications of *lakhon phanthatang* and its hybrid dance are for the survival and continued existence of traditional theatre in modern society. This dance-drama form is based on the ancient *lakhon phanthatang* of the past. The young dance artists of Krom Silapakorn especially those who have gained experience overseas of foreign dance forms, bringing back

their new knowledge, have developed and created the new hybrid dance forms to be seen in current *lakhon phanthat* productions. I would suggest that this could guarantee the survival of *lakhon phanthat* at present, just like it happened when Seri Wangnaitham went to Hawai'i and brought back his knowledge, modernising *lakhon phanthat* and making it popular. Furthermore, the new hybrid dance forms inserted in the main *lakhon phanthat* productions improve the aesthetics of these productions and allow modern audiences to participate in the performance process.

### ***Lakhon Phanthat* in the Academic Context: Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University**

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University originated from Rong Rian Sunandha Wittayalai in 1937, a court school educating Thai girls in general knowledge and training them in craft skills to become *kunlasatri* (a lady). The school changed its name and status many times. In 1958, it became Wittayalai Kru Suan Sunandha (The Suan Sunandha Teachers' Training College) focused on teacher training. In 1995, the college changed its name and status to Sataban Rajabhat Suan Sunandha (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat Institution) expanding the range of departments and degrees offered. Since 2004 the name has been changed to Mahawitayalai Rajabhat Suan Sunandha (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University).

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University was the first university teachers' training college offering a Bachelor degree in Thai dance education in Thailand. In 1972, under its former name Wittayalai Kru Suan Sunandha, the university offered a two year diploma course which was expanded in 1976 finally becoming a four year bachelor degree course in Thai dance education in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in 1980. The aim of this course was to train the students to become a

teacher in both primary and secondary schools (Sophon 175). In 1988, the bachelor degree in Performing Arts was offered rather than Thai dance education. The aim of the course was to train Thai and Western dance practitioners rather than dance teachers. In 2005, the Performing Arts course was offered by the Performing Arts Department, in the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts.<sup>13</sup> The educational management and the aims of the department are based on the recent philosophy and mission statement of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in accordance with the university's philosophy and the the educational mission of the state. The new generation of graduates are expected to be experts in their chosen subject and honourable, socially responsible individuals. (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat 156).

The Performing Arts Department (PAD) consists of two majors; 1) Thai dance and theatre and 2) Theatre arts. The entire course is made up of 132 mandatory credits in a four-year programme. The department aims at producing graduates, who have a broad knowledge of both Thai and western theatrical arts. Graduates of this course are actors, performing art managers and theatre critics. In addition, they are expected to engage in research in both folk and classical performing arts.

### **Curriculum, Lessons and Evaluation**

*Lakhon phanthang* is a compulsory subject in 'The Classical Dance Theatre 2' offered in the first semester of the third year students majoring in Thai dance. The module description is as follows: '[the module explores] the historical background, performance elements, and the dance techniques of *lakhon phanthang* based on episodes from the *Phya Phanong*,<sup>14</sup> *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat* stories, including *lakhon se pa* based on *Khun Chang Khun Phan* story or a selection of suitable episodes as per the instructors' choice' (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat 180). This is a



three credits module with theoretical and practical studies, including independent study. There are two Thai dance-drama forms in this description, however 75% of the module is devoted to *lakhon phanthat*.

During the 2009-2013 academic years, the three stories and selected episodes based on *lakhon phanthat* were as follows:

- 1) *Phra Lor* episode Phra Lor Chom Suan -Khow Hong (Phra Lor Enters the Royal Garden – Entering the Princesses’ Room)
- 2) *Rachathirat* scene Saming Phra Ram Keaw Phraratchathida (Saming Phra Ram Courts a Princess)
- 3) *Phya Phanong* scene Kam Pin Kor Fon (Kam Pin is Praying for the Rainfall)

The Thai dance curriculum of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University demonstrates that the traditional *lakhon phanthat* of Krom Silapakorn, such as *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat* are core material in the teaching at this level. An entire episode of *Phra Lor* is selected as an exemplary *lakhon phanthat* based on the Thai-Laotian dance style. Only a short scene from *Rachathirat* is selected, in contrast, and it is aimed at students wishing to learn duo dances in Thai- Burmese and Mon styles. *Phya Phanong* is selected by the instructor as an exemplar of solo female character dance of *lakhon phanthat*. Although *Phya Phanong* is based on a Thai-Laotian movement style like the rest of *Phra Lor*, this is the only *lakhon phanthat* story, with a solo dance by a female character (Muangsakorn and Vasinarom interview). Therefore, not only do the students learn about the process of making a *lakhon phanthat* through practising an episode, they are also learning the individual dances based on *lakhon phanthat*.

In a *lakhon phanthang* class, there are two dance teachers, one is for female characters and the second is for male characters, teaching an average of 28 to 30 students. This module is offered to third year students, who have previous experience in traditional dance. Therefore, the traditional exercises such as hand gestures and leg positions used for the warm up, which are a compulsory set of exercises for beginners, are not required by the teachers. Lessons begin formally with the students sitting properly in line on the floor, separating female characters and male characters, and greeting the teachers respectfully by holding their palms in a lotus shape then bowing, with the head down and with the hands placed on the floor. Then, the students begin to exercise reviewing the previously learnt dance section with the teachers. The section will be repeated several times until the teachers are confident that the students can remember the dance movements and the music properly. After that, the new dance section is taught and the dance is reviewed from the previous dance section to the end of the new section several times. The teaching of *lakhon phanthang* does not differ from that of any other kind of traditional dance in which the students learn by rote. The teachers dance at the front of the classroom and the students attempt to follow and imitate their teacher's movements as much as they can. However, the teachers correct the dance positions and movements of the students while the students review the dance.

I have both observed and taught *lakhon phanthang* at PAD on several occasions. Students in class mostly memorise the dance movements pretty well although some parts are very difficult and require much practise. Soraya Nuansa-ard, a student of *lakhon phanthang* comments as follows

The new dance techniques have been introduced in this class.

They differ from the techniques of other Thai dance-drama

forms. Everyone practises swaying shoulders, which is an essential dance technique of *lakhon phanthat* style, and it is very difficult to reach the standards set for this technique. We [students] basically attempt to remember the whole dance movements then after class or in the evening we practise to improve the dance techniques.

In every class, students will memorise the play script in advance and they have to bring their script to class. The play scripts are photocopied from library books and are based on *lakhon phanthat* texts, published under the authority of Krom Silapakorn. Additionally, for some plays not available in print, students are required to transcribe from video clip. During the break, students spend their time taking notes in writing and in some informal dance notation, often with drawings, on their copy of the script to help them recall what they have learned and how their teachers move. Sometimes they may use a device such as a mobile phone to record dance movements (Nuansa-ard interview). The last 10 to 15 minutes before the end, the teachers will summarise what the student have learnt in class, sometimes the teachers may suggest ways to practise the dance at home and/or may assign the students some reading expecting them to memorise a new section of the scripts to be used in the next lesson. The class ends as it began with the students showing their respect to their teachers.

*Lakhon phanthat* repertoires particularly the *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat* plays of PAD Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University are based on Krom Silapakorn's *lakhon phanthat* versions which are set as standard by Krom Silapakorn the national arts agency under government support entrusted with the duty of preserving national tradition and culture. Therefore, several dance educational institutions,

including PAD of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University adhere to a dance technique and format formalised by Krom Silapakorn. Manissa Vasinarom, one of the dance teachers at PAD contributing to the teaching of ‘The Classical Dance Theatre 2’ comments that *lakhon phanthat* in her class is based on the Krom Silapakorn version but some dance movements are adapted to suit students and an educational purpose. Vasinarom graduated with a bachelor and master degree in Thai dance at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts of Chulalongkorn University. She also adds that her *lakhon phanthat* skills were imparted by the guest dance masters of Krom Silapakorn and she transmits this knowledge to her pupils at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Thus even though the *lakhon phanthat* taught at PAD is based on the *lakhon phanthat* of Krom Silapakorn, it is also adapted and modified to suit the students. The modifications of *lakhon phanthat* as I taught it were based on my recalling of my *lakhon phanthat* dance knowledge, as I learned it in the past, combining it with the dance-drama techniques of Krom Silapakorn. The teaching of *lakhon phanthat* through traditional methods continues in modern society. Contemporary media such as VCD and YouTube videoclips, through which traditional *lakhon phanthat* productions by Krom Silapakorn are recorded, have been incorporated in the study of Thai traditional dance. Soraya Nuansa-ard, describes the typical way of reviewing a dance lesson:

We [Soraya Nuansa-ard and friends] spend 2-3 hours in the evening doing extra dance practice on campus. YouTube is the most important medium for me and my friends in reviewing dance movements. It acts as a reminder of the dance movements

and it shows ways to improve our dance skills even though some dance movements in the clips are perhaps dissimilar to what we have learned in class. In this case, we will double-check the dance movements in the notes we have jotted down (see fig. 24).

(Nuansa-ard interview)

Thus at present the study of traditional dance study is linked with online networks as can be seen from the above. Furthermore, cyber search engines such as YouTube play an important role as material for self-study.

The final assignment of 'The Classical Dance Theatre 2' is a case in point. At the end of the course on completion of their training students are required to present a short scene or episode of *lakhon phanthatang*, which differs from what learnt in class. The story, dance scene or episode is selected by the students. They have to study the dance movements and manage the production. The final project presentation takes place in the classroom. Audiences are the class students and other students of PAD. The most popular *lakhon phanthatang* story which is selected for the final project is *Phra Lor* (Vasinarom).

When I searched on YouTube by typing the Thai word *lakhon phanthatang*, the video clips that popped up the most were of *Phra Lor* as performed by Krom Silapakorn artists. There are several scenes, episodes and versions, uploaded on the Internet. Thus YouTube is definitely the first port of call for students and is considered as an efficient resource for self-study. Sumate Fugtuen, a junior dance student at PAD describes in the interview I did with him the process of putting on a *lakhon phanthatang* production for the final project assignment:

We search on YouTube for the *lakhon phanhang* productions by Krom Silapakorn. The *Phra Lor* productions by The National Theatre are the most uploaded video clips. We select a simple scene, such as Phra Lor La Mae [Phra Lor leaves his mother]. This scene has few characters and the complete scene takes only 30 minutes to perform. We imitate dance movements, and dialogues from the clip so YouTube is a very useful resource for us (Fugtuen interview).

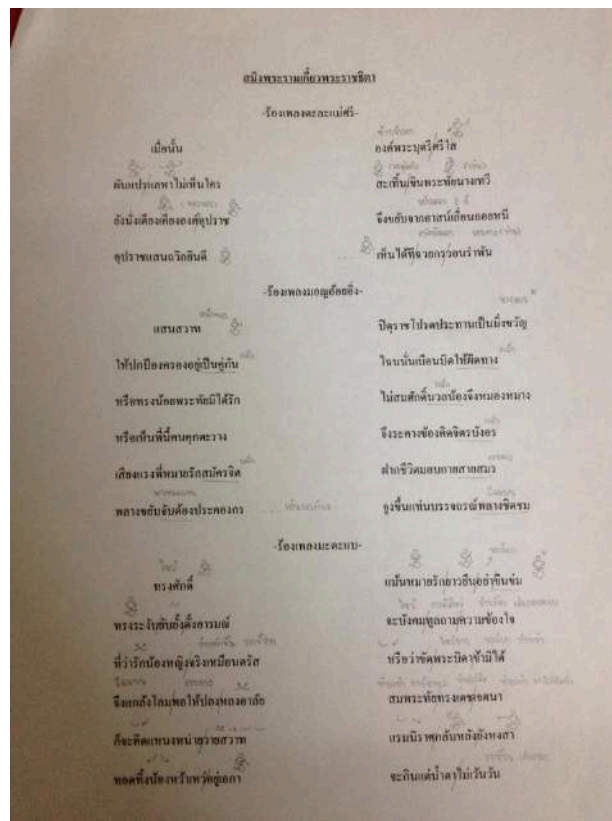


Fig. 24. An example of hand-written dance notation of *lakhon phanhang Rachathirat* scene Saming Phra Ram Keaw Phraratchathida (Saming Phra Ram Courts a Princess). Image courtesy of Soraya Nuansa-ard.

This statement by a junior student reflects the current process of self-study of the traditional dance of *lakhon phanthang*. In contrast, the teaching process in class follows a very traditional method, attempting to emphasise the interaction between teachers and students. I am a dance teacher and have been trained in the traditional dance style. I can confirm that the learning of traditional dance is a very slow process in which teachers have to show accurately a dance movement and correct the wrong dance movements performed by students in a one-on-one situation. Learning to dance, particularly learning traditional dance, means learning by heart, technical difficulties in dancing are worked out through diligent repetition. Learning traditional dance with the help of a teacher is a prerequisite for becoming a good traditional dancer and a dancer of advanced level.

Undoubtedly a digital resource such as YouTube, is another way of helping traditional dance survive in modern society through this new study approach. It seems to encourage the younger generations to access traditional dance easily, everywhere and at all times. However, as a dance teacher, I can offer a different viewpoint. Traditional dance and drama, especially in Southeast Asia, are deeply rooted in society and relate to spirit and ritual, beliefs and cultural values; in a country such as Thailand dance and drama are related to the royal institution. YouTube changes the nature of the interaction between teachers and students. The form of traditional dance-drama possibly survives in a changing society but the values and the aesthetics of the art seem to have been blurred. In the case of *lakhon phanthang* at PAD, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, students do this kind of self-study without an awareness of background, values and meaning of *lakhon phanthang*. Piya Benjauakkarachochai, a junior student at PAD talks about the final assignment admitting that he and his friends did not know much about the *lakhon phanthang*

story but when they were assigned to present it they just searched on the Internet for the appropriate scene, which all members in the group would be able to perform. They cannot narrate the whole story of the selected *lakhon phanthatang* play and know only the details of the selected scene. Imitation of dance movements and theatrical elements is the focus of their production.

The reproduction of *lakhon phanthatang* by the students is reminiscent of the concept of ‘mechanical reproduction’ by Walter Benjamin (2008). Benjamin discusses shifts in perception and their effects in the wake of modernity in art works introducing the idea of ‘aura’, which denotes the originality and authenticity of a work of art that has not been reproduced mechanically in modern society. The aura concept by Benjamin also embraces the atmosphere, history and power attached to the original artwork. In this sense the new mechanical devices of the modern age such as YouTube and Google can help to reproduce traditional Thai dance. However, this reproduction of traditional dance-drama is devoid of aura. The dance movements are only imitated without soul, energy and are devoid of aesthetics. Traditional dance training is about learning by practising with the dance gurus, who correct the dance movements of students putting them in the right position. Every single dance movement taught by dance teachers is not only a movement pattern but also an encapsulation of an intersubjective relationship that can at times be harsh but which ensures the transmission of ‘the soul’ of dance.

The learning and teaching process as explained above place an emphasis on dance practice rather than theoretical learning. However, a theoretical study is also included at PAD and is carried out through written assignments. Teachers assign short reports on topics related to *lakhon phanthatang*. The report topics are descriptive and frequently focused on the historical background of *lakhon phanthatang*, and/or the



dance notation of the dance piece learnt in class. In addition, a brief discussion of the dance principles and customs of *lakhon phanthatang*, are sometimes given during breaks or before the dance practice commences at the beginning of each class. Theoretical knowledge of *lakhon phanthatang*, emphasises the dance principles of the form (Vasinarom interview). Students learn about the difference between the dance movements in *phanthatang* style and those of other Thai dance styles. Additionally, the syllabus comes with a set bibliography consisting of master degree theses from Chulalongkorn University focused on the study of historical and dance notation of *lakhon phanthatang*. Other textbooks are by Thai scholars such as Surapone Virulrak and Danit Yupho, and they talk about Thai dance-drama in general with *lakhon phanthatang* explained in little detail, with only some information on the historical background, and defining it as a mixed theatre form. The accounts include the name of the plays in the extant repertoires.

The assessment should be mentioned, as it gives some scope for reflecting on the instructors' viewpoint on *lakhon phanthatang* in the academic arena. The syllabus of 'The Classical Dance Theatre 2' at PAD, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University specifies that students will be able to perform *lakhon phanthatang* at an advanced level. Thus, 80% of the mark is for the dance practice and the dance production in the final project. The other 20 % will be given to class participation and the written report. An examination will be arranged only once at the end of term, after the students have learned and practised all the dance pieces taught. Students need to review and remember all of them for the final exam. In the exam, students will perform the dance movements as taught, based on three *lakhon phanthatang* repertoires that have been studied--*Phra Lor*, *Rachathirat* and *Phya Phanong*. Students have to perform the

dance movements and actions of the characters in the play as taught by the instructors in order to receive high marks (Vasinarom interview).

For the final examination, there are different approaches. For the *lakhon phanthatang* production based on self-study, the theatrical elements of the production must convey the nationality traits of the character of the selected play; the dance movements are not the main concern. Students have freedom in their selection. Sakul Muangsakorn, an instructor at PAD states in an interview that students can either invent the dance movements or imitate them from a DVD recording. However, if students invent the dance movements, they have to choose them carefully by considering their meaningful relationship with the play. Therefore, the aesthetics of dance movements is not the main concern of the exam but the integration of *lakhon phanthatang* principles and the management of the theatrical production are greatly emphasised.

## **Production**

Since the establishment of the school in the 1950s, there have been annual dance-drama productions presented by teachers and students of the Rong Rain Sunandha Wittayalai (1950-1958). The purpose of the theatre project was to raise funds for school activities. In 1972, after the school changed its name to Wittayalai Kru Suan Sunandha (1958-1994) and the expansion of the curriculum from a two-year diploma to a bachelor degree in Thai dance education, the purpose of the annual dance-drama production was to showcase students' skills rather than raise money for charity. In 1998, the annual dance-drama production of Suana Sunandha Rajabhat University became *Wipitassana* (Variety of performance) --this name was derived

from that of a dance taught in the curriculum—and the senior dance students took on the responsibility of managing and organising the event, supervised by their instructors.

*Wipitassana* by Performing Arts Department, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University since 1998 has been presented at Sunandhanusorn Hall aiming to promote Thai dance-drama to public audiences. Students have to consider the concept and theme of the event, and are in charge of the managing of the performances and the auditioning of the cast. They need to find a sponsor for the production and sell theatre tickets. *Wipitassana* is the major production of the year and one which allows PAD students to present their dance skill to the public. The performances in the event consist of one scene or episode of a selected Thai traditional dance-drama, several folk and classical dances, and a creative dance.



Fig. 25. A ticket of *Wipitassana* by PAD, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in 2013. This ticket portrays the major characters in the dance-drama production and the dancers in the folk dance style. Image courtesy of Tanasit Chomchid.

From 1998 to present times, *lakhon phanthat* has never been selected as a main traditional dance-drama production in *Wipitassana*. *Lakhon phanthat* and other dance-drama forms are set aside although they are all traditional dance-drama taught at PAD. In contrast, *lakhon nok*, the outer court dance-drama is often selected because it is deemed to be more accessible to audiences who are unfamiliar with traditional dance-drama (Muangsakorn interview). This is different from the theatre productions of the past at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University where the aim of the annual theatre production was a commemoration of the anniversary of the royal birthday of HM Queen Sunandha Kumariratana, wife of King Chulalongkorn and to raise funds to support the educational activities of the school. The annual theatre productions of Rong Rain Sunandha Wittayalai gained popularity and the school benefitted from the sale of theatre tickets. The School Hall, recently renamed *Hor Prachum Sunandhanusorn* (Sunandhanusorn Hall), was built from revenues from the annual theatre production (Muangsakorn 34-35).

In 1950 the first theatre production was *Shakuntala*, a Sanskrit play translated into Thai by King Vajiravudh was successfully presented at Rong Rain Sunandha Wittayalai. Other classical Sanskrit plays and Thai folk tales were subsequently chosen as annual productions of the school. These plays were all presented in *phanthat* style performed by amateur dancers, who were not majoring in Thai dance (Potiwetchakul, *Prototype* 97).

The annual dance-drama production of Rong Rain Sunandha Wittayalai became a famous event even though the performers were not professional artists. Tareporn Sangkhamantorn, a former dance teacher (1972-2009) of PAD, whom I interviewed about the annual dance-drama productions says that '*phanthat* style was considered by the dance teachers as suitable to the amateur dancing of the time.

Most of the repertoires--Thai folk tales and Sanskrit classical plays--were not typical of *lakhon phanthatang* however we [dance teachers] adapted these plays and presented them in that form' (Sangkhamantorn interview). The *lakhon phanthatang* style by general scholarly consensus is seen as a flexible dance-drama form, with wide applications (Kijkhun interview). Dance movements, costumes and music were presented in a mixed style of Thai and non-Thai dance based on the national characters in the play. Sangkhamantorn also suggests that

In the past Thai traditional dance-drama was popular among Thai people. Television programmes showed Thai dance-drama on their channels. The National Theatre also presented traditional performances every month. In contrast, the *lakhon* of Suan Sunandha [Suan Sunandha dance-drama productions] presented something new and different from the Krom Silapakorn's productions. Our dance-drama productions were creative and modern for the period. They attracted audiences. Traditional dance-dramas such as *lakhon nai* and *lakhon nok* required formal traditional costume styles. We [Suan Sunandha dance group] had a limited budget so we needed to avoid the high expenditure involved in hiring the traditional costumes. Therefore, the *lakhon phanthatang* style was the best choice for us. We created new dance costumes on the budget we had. We trained amateur dancers [students] to perform in *phanthatang* style, which did not require advanced dance skills.

Sangkhamantorn's statement reflects how *lakhon phanthatang* was perceived by teachers in the past. This perception of *lakhon phanthatang* seems to have had a

positive effect. *Lakhon phanthat* or performance in *Phanthat* style allowed dance practitioners to invent a dance-drama based on a traditional dance form. *Lakhon phanthat* was recognised as a living traditional theatrical approach rather than just a frozen form of traditional dance-drama. It was used to develop several new dance-drama repertoires which could compete with the other traditional dance-drama productions broadcast by the media and produced by Krom Silapakorn. *Lakhon* of Suan Sunandha demonstrated that theatrical productions were very successful and gained in popularity although these productions were presented in the form of *lakhon phanthat* or *phanthat* style as theatre budgets and human resources were limited.

However, *Wipitassana*, currently the annual theatre production of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, as I mentioned earlier, is informed by a different ethos. *Lakhon phanthat* and performances in *phanthat* style are not perceived as in the past. *Lakhon phanthat* is seen as a traditional dance form, not accessible to modern audiences. The dance teachers at PAD recognise that *lakhon phanthat* is a traditional dance form, but it is thought that the style and repertoires do not attract young students, who make up the audience of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University's theatre productions. As Sakul Muangsakorn states, the tickets of this theatre project are mainly sold to the students of Suan Sunadha Rajabhat University. Most of them are unfamiliar with Thai traditional dance. Therefore, *lakhon nok* is an appropriate choice to make the audience appreciate Thai dance within a short time. *Lakhon nok* from a dance teacher's perspective is a dance form offering young audiences the opportunity to enjoy Thai traditional dance more than other forms. The repertoires present a melodramatic plot. The stories are presented by male dancers, most of whom are ladyboys (see fig. 26).

Ladyboys, in the dance teacher's view, entertain audiences better than ordinary male and female dancers especially in the context of obscene scenes with rude language, and in the comic scenes, which can make audiences laugh at the jokes while enjoying the overall story. This is possibly the reason why *lakhon phanthang* is not selected for the annual dance-drama production. Although some story of *lakhon phanthang* such as *Phra Lor* are about love and passion it seems that the story is far removed from Thai people of today. The plot is more serious than the stories of *lakhon nok*, mostly based on Thai folk tales. Additionally, *lakhon phanthang* is performed by both male and female dancers. The cast is selected on the basis of the gender of each character in the play. Thus, some extremely obscene jokes and rude language must be avoided (see fig. 27).

There are other reasons for the *lakhon phanthang* unpopularity and for deeming it inappropriate for presentation as an annual dance-drama production at PAD. These are the limited show time of each production and the lack of skillful dancers in *lakhon phanthang* style. All these factors make *lakhon phanthang* live only in the curriculum as a traditional dance form, which dance students have to know about in theory and in practice. *Lakhon phanthang* as a dance production is fading. Meanwhile, *lakhon nok*, also a traditional dance form is well-liked and deemed to entertain modern audiences better than *lakhon phanthang*.



Fig. 26. *Lakhon nok* production of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in 2011 performed by ladyboys. Image courtesy of Patipat Muktawee.



Fig. 27. Obscene joke in *lakhon nok* at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Image courtesy of Patipat Muktawee.



### ***Lakhon Phanthang: Survival and Development in the Academic Context***

The teaching of *lakhon phanthang* in PAD, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, reflects a picture of *lakhon phanthang* on the preservation track. The traditional *lakhon phanthang* plays *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat*, by Krom Silapakorn are in the dance curriculum and are transmitted to the students. In turn, the popular *lakhon phanthang Phuchanasibtid* by Seri Wangnaitham, is not even mentioned in the curriculum. The preservation of Thai traditional dance has both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, the ancient dance movements and dance-drama forms still exist in modern society and will be transmitted to the new generation as national heritage through the educational system. On the other hand, the traditional forms, choreographic patterns and qualities have been frozen in the preservation process as Pornrat Dumrhung states in an interview given on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2013

The performing arts education in Thailand especially Thai dance studies is designed primarily to exaggerate the preservation campaign mounted for traditional dance and theatre. It lacks development. Thai traditional dance in the future will possibly run into difficulties. The traditional theatre forms not only *lakhon phanthang*, but all of them will be museum arts, of which Thai people perhaps, will know only the name (Dumrhung interview).

In theory, it seems that the study of traditional dance and theatre in Thailand encourages the younger generations to realise that traditional arts are an essential part of the knowledge of the process of dance making in modern society. Pramate

Boonyachai, a senior Thai classical dance-drama and *Khon* master at Bunditpatanasilpa Institute remarked in an interview about *lakhon phanthatang* and the Thai dance educational system on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013: 'If we talk about theatrical education in Thailand, we could say that our [Thai dance] students should be strongest in the traditional styles. Then, they could use their knowledge in further developing and modifying the theatrical arts'. Pramate Boonyachai's statement seems to place emphasis on the idea that traditional knowledge is a fundamental prerequisite for further developing and modernising the Thai performing arts and his point is quite valid. There are several universities in Thailand such as Bunditpatanasilpa Institute, the university based art school--and Chulalongkorn University, that adhere to this notion (Chansuwan interview; Archayuthakarn interview). Thus, the teaching of *lakhon phanthatang* is based on *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat*, inherited from the past.

In practice, however, using traditional knowledge for new creative dance forms sounds unrealistic. In the case of PAD, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, although students have a chance to work on *Lakhon phanthatang* in their final project, they do not invent anything new. The final assignment imitates existing *lakhon phanthatang* clips found on YouTube. Teachers wish to see students integrating their dance knowledge into the final assignment but the process of creating must be based on traditional dance-drama (Muangsakorn interview).

During my field research in February 2012, I held a focus group discussion for the third year students of PAD. All 30 students had studied *lakhon phanthatang* in theory, and some of them had experience of *Lakhon phanthatang* as performers in a short scene or a minor role. In the focus group, I encouraged students to discuss their experiences and how they perceive and recognise traditional theatre, particularly

*lakhon phanthang*. The answers pointed that the students spent classroom time to practise dance movements of *lakhon phanthang* as per the choice of their dance teachers. They thought about how to follow, imitate and remember the dance movements shown by their teachers. A student explained that in learning traditional dance-drama, not only *lakhon phanthang*, the learners have a duty to repeat and protect the form and the aesthetics of the dance movements rather than that of developing a new form based on tradition. The current methods of teaching traditional dance do not encourage learners to think outside this frame. This might prevent students from creatively experimenting with the *lakhon phanthang* form.

In the students' perception, the term *lakhon phanthang* refers to a Thai traditional dance form, which integrates Thai traditional dance with other dance forms in the Southeast Asian region, such as Burmese, Laotian, Mons, Khake (Malay and India) and Chinese, teaching them to differentiate between Thai traditional dance and other non-Thai forms. However, a study of *lakhon phanthang* does not motivate them to have an interest in the primary dance styles of each nationality and the relationship between Thai dance and that of other ethnic groups, learning to share the culture and art forms of the South East Asian region. *Lakhon phanthang* is recognised by dance teachers, students and artists as a Thai traditional dance form in which the form is a hybrid one obtained by combining Thai with non-Thai dance movements. The aim of this hybridised style is to convey a sense of the Other in the Thai production. *Lakhon phanthang* does not aim to present the original styles of other forms (Jongda interview). The concept of *lakhon phanthang*, as cultivated in Thai dance, reflects the notion and the expression of Thainess. Thai people can draw from non-Thai art and cultures, making them Thai: this is the Thai way (see Philip Cornwel-Smith 2005). Therefore, it is unsurprising that *lakhon phanthang*

does not excite an interest in original non-Thai dance styles: it is always perceived as being Thai.

As I mentioned earlier, the assessment of *lakhon phanthatang* is not about inventing a new *lakhon phanthatang* but about duplicating the traditional forms. Thus, the roots of non-Thai dance styles in *lakhon phanthatang* are not evident to the students. Furthermore, *lakhon phanthatang* seems less admired than other traditional dance styles among the students. From 2009 to 2013, the Thai solo dance project has been an important compulsory examination of the senior students at PAD. For this examination, students are expected to present their expertise in traditional dance and they have to demonstrate that their dance skills are advanced. Interestingly, the dances and episodes based on *lakhon phanthatang* have been selected only by an average 15% of the examinees. In contrast, the performances of *lakhon Nai* and *lakhon Nok* were selected, on average, by over 25%. These figures show the students' view of *lakhon phanthatang*. Chommanard Kijkhun, a Professor at PAD states in the interview that because of its dance movements, *lakhon phanthatang* represents unsophistication and is not linked to Thai dance customs. Vasinaron proposes that *lakhon phanthatang* is less a solo or duo dance than other traditional dance genres (interview). Both statements seem to indicate that the characteristics and form of *lakhon phanthatang* are the reason why it is an unpopular choice for the solo dance examination. However, Whutthichai Khathawi, a former dance student at PAD who selected a short episode from *Rachathirat* repertoire for the Thai solo dance project in 2009 (see fig. 28) states that

Each Thai dancer has their individual dance style.

Someone may be better suited to dance very well in *lakhon nai*.

In the case of *lakhon phanthatang*, in my opinion, this genre has

different dance movement styles from other Thai dance forms. *Lakhon phangthang* has special dance techniques, which are difficult to master to reach the aesthetic standards of *lakhon phanthang*. To perform *lakhon phanthang* well, the dancers need to practise hard not only the dance movements but also their acting. (Khathawi interview).

Khathawi's statement provides a different viewpoint on *lakhon phanthang*. His perspective reflects on the issue that the *lakhon phanthang* style is not suited to all dancers. *Lakhon phanthang* is regarded as a Thai traditional theatre but its characteristics of hybridity make it less traditional form. From the viewpoint of dance aesthetics, however, traditional *lakhon phanthang* plays such as *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat* are framed by ancient customs and rules. The dance movement style requires a special skill in representing the ethnicity of the characters in the play, for example, the swaying shoulders and torso and the off-body balance techniques. All these techniques are rather dissimilar from those of other traditions of Thai dance such as *lakhon nai* and *lakhon nok*, which the students have more chances to practice. These are the reasons why *lakhon phanthang* is not a popular selection of traditional dance in qualification exams.

Thai traditional dance studies at PAD enables the traditional *lakhon phanthang* form to survive without distorting it, maintaining the standard and the high quality of the traditional art form. However, whether this traditional form will be developed in the modern world is definitely a challenging proposition. The problem of performing arts studies in Thailand is mainly a lack of development in the teaching methods, which can encourage students to develop traditional theatre in

a changing society. As Rutnin states, traditional teaching methods limit the creativity of the students. The study of theatre in Thailand needs collaboration and a sharing of the professional experiences of both traditional dance teachers and modern dramatists ('The Development' 16-18).



Fig. 28. *Lakhon phanthang Rachathirat* in a solo dance examination of a senior student of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in 2009. Image courtesy of Whutthichai Khathawi.

On the basis of my personal experience in teaching Thai traditional dance, I concur that the development of traditional theatre through the educational system in Thailand does not enable students, realistically, to innovate. For example at the *Wipitassana* event the aim is to promote the aesthetics of Thai dance and theatre among the general public and to encourage students to experience the process of managing a theatre production. The theatrical productions of PAD, are mostly presentations of *lakhon nok* because of the aesthetic expectations of audiences and the dance skills of students (Muangsakorn, Vasinarom, and Pothivetchakul

interview). It seems that *lakhon phanthatang* has survived in Thai society in the academic context but *lakhon phanthatang* is running into difficulty, as it seems to be stagnating. Lack of freedom under the supervision of dance teachers, the restrictions of curriculum and a traditional teaching method impede the future development of *lakhon phantang*.

## **Conclusion**

Pichet Klunchun, a well-known Thai contemporary artist, posted on his Facebook page on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014: ‘Do not let the old norms limit the opportunity to learn new things. New things derive [develop] from the old knowledge, however we won’t know new things if we are only learning by repetition...The most important thing is not to allow yourself and those around you to lose a chance to learn new things.’ Pichet’s statement reminds me of a quote by Damrhung that ‘dance, whether traditional or modern, can be beautiful, but it risks dying if dancers just copy and repeat what they know without trying something new’ (‘From Phra Lor’ 116). Thai traditional theatre today is transmitted in Thai society by the repetition of the old dance choreographic patterns through the performances at the Thai National Theatre and the dance curriculum in the Thai educational system. By considering the survival and development of *lakhon phanthatang*, the resulting picture reveals the existence of other forms of Thai traditional dance-drama and theatre.

Nowadays, preservation is the major framework for ensuring traditional theatre’s survival in Thai changing society. Traditional dance and theatre are regarded as representative of Thai national identity which Thai artists have a duty to protect and preserve. Consequently, traditional dance-drama and theatre are narrow and rigid, the duty is to ‘preserve but not develop’ (Jungwiwattanaporn interview).

Productions are typically re-produced and dance movements are repeated without awareness of how Thai traditional dance and theatre can serve the aesthetic needs of new audiences. Krom Silapakorn has modified some theatrical elements such as costume, comic scenes and the prelude dances, but the repertoire, performance structure and dance customs are still similar to the dance forms of the twentieth century. The traditional dance-drama and theatre of Krom Silapakorn are embedded as a standard among Thai audiences and traditional dance practitioners' perceptions.

The educational system allows a transmission of the form and concept of Thai traditional dance-drama and theatre to a new generation of Thais. The learning and teaching of *lakhon phanthat* in higher education is informed by the customary way of practising Thai traditional theatre forms. The dance choreographic patterns, music, singing, costumes and other theatrical elements devised and fixed by Krom Silapakorn are in the dance curriculum. Most Thai traditional dance teachers in universities have been trained in Thai dance at conservatoires run by Krom Silapakorn, which are located across country. Additionally, there are sometimes artists from Krom Silapakorn who are invited to teach in universities. There is perhaps an answer to why Thai traditional dance and theatre are still conservative and repetitive. In the perception of dance teachers traditional dance, especially traditional dance inherited from the royal court, is seen as fundamental to developing the dance knowledge of students. Hence the new traditional theatre that has been modernised to serve popular needs has been largely ignored by the dance educational system.



## Notes

1. The *Don-Tri Thai Rai Ros Lue* runs on the second or the third Friday, and *Sri Sook Ka Nattakam* runs on the last Friday of every month. *Silapakorn Concert* shows are on the second Saturday and *Natakam Sang Keet* is performed on the first and second Sunday of every month.

2. The Office of Performing Arts, Krom Silapakorn or *Sam-Nak Karn Sangkit*, was established in 1933 under the name *Panaeng Lakhon Lea Sangkit* (The Division of Dance-Drama and Music). The division had the duty of continuing and promoting Thai performing arts as national arts. Staff and members of the division were the dance artists, trained in royal dance troupes and in private dance troupes. After the first school of dance-drama and music in Thailand, *Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart*, was founded in 1934, the dance artists of *Panaeng Lakhon Lea Sangkit* additionally functioned as dance teachers in the school. Since then, the students and members of dance-drama and music division have performed together. After the expansion of the educational system, which impacted upon the structure and development of *Rong Rian Nataduriyangkhasart*, *Panaeng Lakhon Lea Sangkit* was separated from the administration of school in 1942. Both organisations had their own productions. *Panaeng Lakhon Lea Sangkit* changed name many times until at present *Sam-Nak Karn Sangkit*. (Rutnin, *Dance Drama* 171-178; Rutnin, 'The Development' 11-15 and Ungsvanonda 15-16)

3. The term 'traditional repertoires' of *lakhon phanthat* in this sense refer to dramatic stories of *lakhon phanthat*, with characteristics and theatrical elements transferred from the royal court and ancient dance troupes of the nineteenth century to Krom Silapakorn. Dance choreographic patterns, music and singing, play scripts and costumes were standardised and taught to students at Buditpatanasilpa Institution, Krom Silapakorn. The traditional *lakhon phanthat* has been widely disseminated to performing arts curricula of higher educational institutions in Thailand.

4. *Phra Lor* story was dramatised in 1908 by Prince Narathip Phraphanpong, a younger brother of King Chulalongkorn, who was the owner of a private dance

troupe under royal patronage and invented a new hybrid genre of Thai dance-drama and named it *lakhon phanthatang* (see chapter 1).

5. *Rachathirat* was introduced among Thai literary circles by Chao Phraya Phra Klang (Hon) under the royal order of King Buddha Yodfa Chulalok. It was first translated from the Mon chronicles into Thai prose. Some Thai scholars argue that *Rachathirat* was not only for entertainment purposes but also political ones as it exalted the nobility and the king, as protector of the realm (Sartraproong 3). In the midnineteenth centuries, *Rachathirat* was dramatised by Thim Sukyang (Luang Phatthanaphongphakdi), a playwright of Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong dance troupe, and was performed by the members of the troupe at Siamese Theatre and Prince Theatre of Chao Phraya Mahin.

6. In Thailand, there are three *Phra Lor* versions. The first one is *Phra Lor Norraluk* composed by Krom Pharratchawang Bavorn Mahasak Polseap, the second king of the reign of King Nangklao. The second one is *Phra Lor* by Chao Phraya Thewet Wongwiwat composed in the reign of King Chulalongkorn and the third one is *Phra Lor* by Prince Narathip Phraphanphong, which was composed in 1908 under the King Chulalongkorn's advice (see Silapakorn 1970). In 1948, the first *Phra Lor* production of Krom Silapakorn based on the *Phra Lor* play script of Prince Narathip was presented at Silapakorn Theatre rehearsed by Mom (Khunying) Phaeo Sanitwongseni or Mom Achan, a head dance master of Krom Silapakorn at that time. However, the production of that time presented only a selection of three scenes, namely Scene 4: Tam Kai Pu Chao, Scene 5: Kaw Suan Mung Song from the middle part, and Scene 2: Phra Lor Kaw Hong Phra Phuen Phra Pang from the final part (Manissa 61).

7. *Torn Ton* or Beginning Part:

Scene I: Pu Chao Khow Wang

Scene II: Pu Chao Yok Luk Lom Lae Thon Sarm Chai

Scene III: Phra Lor Tong Sanae

Scene IV: Chao Pu Tang Tab Pi

Scene V: Tab Pi Pu Chao Plon Mansuang

Scene VI: Phra Lor Klang Jon Jak Mansuang

Scene VII: Phra Lor Jak Mansuang

*Torn Klang* or Middle Part:

Scene I: Phra Lor Kam Maenam Kalong

Scene II: Long Srong Seang Nam

Scene III: Phra Phuen Phra Pang Cham Haruethai

Scene IV: Tam Kai Pu Chao

Scene V: Kaw Suan Mung Song

*Torn Tai* or Final Part:

Scene I: Phra Phuen Phra Pang Toon La Phra Chao Ya

Scene II: Phra Lor Kaw Hong Phra Phuen Phra Pang

Scene III: Phra Lor Kaw Su Prasart Mung Song

Scene IV: Phra Chao Ya Yu Tao Pichai Pisanukorn Hai Lang Phra lor

Scene V: Phra Chao Ya Tang Plon

Scene VI: Pikat Phra Lor

8. The scenes are as follows

Scene I: The bed-chamber of Princess Muang Srong

Scene II: The bed-chamber of Pra Law

Scene III: Ka Long River

Scene IV: Into the forest

Scene V: The royal garden of Muang Srong

Part I: The arrival of Phra Law

Part II: Nang Ruen and Nang Roi meet Nai Keaw and Nai Kwan

(Phra Law's servants)

Scene VI: The bed-chamber of Princess Muang Srong

9. Pi Phat Mon ensemble is a group of musical instrument consisting of *ranat* (wooden xylophone) Mon oboe.

10. Neolanna dance style is a combination of ancient Thai northern dance and fine art styles and contemporary dance expression. This dance form was developed by the members of the Department of Thai Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiangmai

University, Thailand. The major dance characteristic is the off-balance of the torso and the 'S shape' body position. Music and costumes are based on ancient Lanna styles however the choreographer has freedom in creating movement and also the music. Thus the dancers perhaps perform different dance movements each time. (See Rojjanasoksombon 2006)

11. *Hua Mongkut Tai Mangkorn* is a phrase used in a negative sense. It implies starting with something but ending with another thing.

12. In mid July 2012, the South Korean popular music piece Gangnam Style was released and gained popularity over Asia, Europe and America within six months. It was the most viewed video on YouTube in 2012 (Bairner 87).

13. At present, there are 23 universities based teacher training colleges located in provinces across the country offering a bachelor Degree in Thai Dance and Performing Arts.

14. *Phya Phanong*, is a new *lakhon phanthang* play composed by Montri Tramote and other Krom Silapakorn staffs in 1958 after the traditional dance and art school was first setting in Thailand (see chapter 2).

## Chapter 6: *Lakhon Phanthang*: Survival in Death

### Introduction

This chapter will focus on *lakhon phanthang* in the context of Thai ritual funerals. I will discuss how traditional dance-drama and theatre speak to local communities and how such forms might develop in a community context. In this chapter, I reflect upon my experience as performer of *lakhon phanthang* and dance in *phanthang* style. I locate myself as a dancer to provide a sense of how *lakhon phanthang* and dance in *phanthang* style engage with the death ritual. In Thailand, performances at a funeral aim to bring people out of their state of sorrow by providing humour with what we refer to in Thai as *sanuk-sanan* (see Polachan 2013). *Lakhon phanthang* does not provide comedy but it generates the same sense of fun as *sanuk-sanan* through its novelty. I would like to suggest that *lakhon phanthang* offers something new and creative when performed at funerals.

Krom Silapakorn and academic institutions have their own way to preserve *lakhon phanthang*. The dance form is not being currently developed, unlike the 1980s with the *Phuchanasibtid* productions of Seri Wangnaitham. *Lakhon phanthang*, as a national art, is among the ‘fixed traditions embedded in cultural institutions within the state apparatus’ (‘From Phra Lor’ 110). ‘Most Thai people have learned that all these forms [e.g., *khon*, *lakhon nai*, *lakhon nok*] exist in society but they never use them so the arts are preserved but not developed’ (Jungwiwattanaporn interview). Here, I would like to explore this issue from a different angle, looking at how *lakhon phanthang* is continuously being reinvented through social events, especially in connection with death rituals. The death ritual is a rite of passage, which involves the transition from one phase of life to another. Arnold Van Gennep

describes rites of passage as having three phases: separation, liminality and aggregation. Funerals separate the dead from the world and human society but aggregation occurs at the end of the ritual process to reinstate normal social life into the community of the living (see Gennep 1960). *Lakhon phanthatang* and dance in *phanthatang* style in the funeral ceremonies relate to this phase of aggregation.

*Lakhon phanthatang* and dance in *phanthatang* style are attached to funeral ceremonies to alleviate the sadness of separation. These events acknowledge the sorrowful ambience of separation but the entertainment provide a sense of joy and happiness which brings mourners back to the community. I see the conflict between sadness and joy in the death ritual as creatively productive. From my practical experience, I have learned that *lakhon phanthatang* or dance in *phanthatang* style are allowed to develop formally in this ritual while maintaining their own characteristics and aesthetics. Generally, the death ritual denotes a separation or ending. But for *lakhon phanthatang* and *phanthatang* dance style, the funeral event marks the beginning of a new phase of development and creativity.

### **Ending but Beginning**

In 2011, I returned to Thailand to do field work. I went home to Bangkok, happy and enthusiastic, to collect data. I did interviews with Thai dance scholars, friends, Thai dance artists, and my pupils at PAD of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University as well as at Krom Silapakorn. The time in Bangkok in 2011, for my study, was very bright and clear even though at that time Thailand was afflicted by major floods. On 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011, I received the very sad news that a friend's mother had died from heart disease. Two months later, on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012, a close friend died from blood infection. For the family members and close friends of the

deceased, these funeral events signified the departing from this life of a beloved relative or friend. One might assume their funeral was a very sad event. However, Wong presents a different viewpoint in her study about music and performance in Thai death ritual, suggesting that

Funerals are not mournful events but are traditionally quite upbeat, with emphasis on *sanuk sanaan*, or fun. Buddhism teaches that death is a release from suffering and a gateway to the next life. Entertainment generates an atmosphere of gaiety. At another level, music and dance are intended not for the living guests but for the deceased (104).

The typical Thai Buddhist funeral is in two parts, the funeral proper and the cremation. After people die, the dead body is taken for the bathing rite, in which family and friends pour water over one hand of the deceased. It may be arranged at the temple or at the house of the dead person. Then, the dead body will be placed in a coffin and brought to the temple or *wat* for a funeral event, ending with a cremation. The funeral, which takes three to seven days for ordinary people and sometimes a hundred days for high-ranking, wealthy, elite people and for the royal family, will start in the evening of the day when the body is brought to the temple. The coffin will be placed in the centre of one corner or one side of the hall with pictures of the deceased and a shrine with some lit candles and burning incense and decorations of flowers and wreaths. Every day from around 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. guests come to the *wat* where the funeral is being held and pay their last respects to the deceased by performing *krab*, bowing their heads and placing their bare palms on the floor, and

then, sitting in and outside the hall, listening to the monks chanting. A snack box or even a full meal will be provided to the guests after the chanting is over. The cremation event will be held after the funeral proper. The coffin will be moved to the crematorium. It is carried outside and placed on an ornate cart. A procession takes place to the crematorium led by a few family members carrying the picture of the deceased and an incense pot and behind them there are the monks holding a white thread, which is attached to the coffin while walking to the crematorium. The procession circumambulates the crematorium three times in a clockwise direction. Then the coffin is placed in the crematorium waiting for the cremation.

As for my mother's friend and my friend's funerals, my colleagues and I, including the students at the Performing Arts Department, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, performed at for these funerals. The performances aimed to honour the deceased and entertain guests. Thai custom dictates using music and dances in major rituals and at social events (Myers-Moro 219). During the three days of these funeral events, family members and guests came to the temple before the cremation to listen to the chanting by the monks. Each night from 6 to 8 p.m., there were three to five performances during intervals between the chanting and recitation by the monks. The performers were dance teachers and students of PAD of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The event was like other funeral cremations, the *sala suad sop* (prayer hall) was decorated with flowers and wreaths from the mourners sent as a last regard for the dead person. The coffin was placed at one side of the hall and at the front of the coffin there was a space for guests who showed their last respects to the deceased and which was a stage for the performers. Guests sat on plastic chairs, set in a line facing the coffin in the *sala suad sop*, waiting for the monks to end their chanting and for the performances to begin.



### **What Performance and Why?**

Generally, there are no Thai dance customs specifying the performances at a death ritual, however in this context the selected performance piece and/ or music and singing should be related to death or separation. In fact, the most popular performance at funerals is *khon*, however it is mostly performed only on the day of cremation due the high cost of hiring *khon* performers for the funeral. Therefore in the days prior to the cremation, short dance pieces based on *lakhon* are mostly selected to entertain guests rather than *khon*, to offset funeral costs

The funeral for Sompis Nimithut, my mother's friend and for Komsorn Tanathamtee, my close friend, took place at Wat Tritossatheap (Tritosatheap Temple) located in central Bangkok, near my work place. Over the three days before the cremation, there was a performance-intensive funeral due to the fact that the deceased were a Thai traditional dancer and a dance teacher at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University respectively. My colleagues and I were responsible for selecting, rehearsing and performing the dances for the events. Most of the selected performances were based on *lakhon phanthatang* repertoires and dance in *phanthatang* style. On both these occasions *lakhon phanthatang* repertoires and dance in *phanthatang* style were chosen because they were the deceased favourite styles and the deceased were themselves adept at performing them. In other words, these theatrical dance forms were chosen to commemorate their passion rather than out of financial considerations

The performance of *lakhon phanthatang* and *phanthatang* dance style in the context of a death ritual is not an unusual activity as music and dance are an extra component in the death ritual of middle-class and wealthy people. The most popular and well-known music instrument ensemble for death ritual is *pi phat Mon* (Mon

instrument ensemble). A Mon instrumental ensemble is first mentioned in connection with a Thai funeral in 1862 for the Thai royal funeral of Queen Thepsirin, one of the wives of King Mongkut and the mother of King Chulalongkorn, who was a Mon. The correspondence between Prince Damrongrachanubhab, and Prince Narissaranuwatiwong, the younger brother of King Chulalongkorn, states that *pi phat Mon* at funerals became a ‘fashion’ as a result. It was first used for a royal funeral, and then commoners imitated the royal funeral pattern. People assumed that at a funeral there must be a *pi phat Mon* so it was a must at the event of a ‘*sop phu dee*’ (high-class deceased) (Damrongrachanubhab, and Narissaranuwatiwong 249). In Thai Buddhist funerals today, a *pi phat Mon* will be hired to perform mostly at the funeral of high- and middle-class people and of those people whose career or life was related to music and the arts.

*Pi phat Mon* is a music ensemble providing a non-Thai music accent or sound, so-called *samniang*. The different *samniang* songs or in Thai the *phleng ok phassa* contain twelve different music accents that constitute the main music and singing for the funeral accompanied by *pi phat Mon* (Wong 123). As mentioned in a previous chapter, one main characteristic of *lakhon phanthang* is the *phleng ok phassa*, the non-Thai music accent that accompanies it and which is obtained by mixing Thai musical instrument with non-Thai ones. In short, *phleng ok phassa* accompanied by *pi phat Mon* fundamentally links *lakhon phanthang* and the *phanthang* dance style to a Thai funeral.

The funerals, on the one hand, may be a very sad event for the family members of the deceased. On the other, the atmosphere of fun or *sanuk sanan* is retained through the entertainment at the event. The music and singing accompanied by *pi phat Mon* are a good form of entertainment at the funeral and Wong states that

Its performance at any funeral is always a high point: its virtuosity and gradual build up in tempo is simply thrilling. Although the medley can take up to forty-five minutes to perform, it is still a crowd pleaser: it is accessible and exciting, and it tends to transport funeral participants from somberness to gaiety. In short, *Phleng Sipsaung Phaasaa* [the twelve different music accents] is fun, and its mood and character is fundamentally linked to its association with Otherness, the non-Thai, the exotic (123).

*Lakhon phanthatang* and *phanthatang* dance style are similar in the way they entertain. Komsorn Thanathamtee, a former dance teacher at PAD Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University gave me an interview before he died and said that

*Lakhon phanthatang* repertoires are similar to a soap opera but this is presented in the form of traditional dance. The plot and theme are pure melodrama, which contains happiness, sadness, joyfulness and sometimes exaggerated sexual passion. Thus, when the audiences in the funeral watch *lakhon phanthatang*, it seems like they taste various food flavours. They will not be bored and go deep into the sadness caused by the death of their beloved friends or family.

*Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat*, the traditional *lakhon phanthatang* repertoires, are popular at death rituals. The scenes and episodes selected for the funeral rite mainly

relate to the poignancy of separation. *Phra Lor* is the most popular, especially the scenes ‘Phra Lor La Mae’ (Phra Lor Leaves His Mother), ‘Phar Lor Siang Nam’ (Phra Lor Crosses the River) and ‘Phra Lor Long Suan’ (Phra Lor Enters the Royal Garden).



Fig. 29. The scene ‘Phra Lor La Mae’ (Phra Lor Leaves his Mother) in *lakhon phanthat Phra Lor* as performed at the funeral of Komsorn Tanathamtee, Wat Tri Tossthep, 12 January 2012. With Whutthichai Khathawi (as Phra Lor, right) and Dr. Kusuma Thepparak (as Phra Lor’s mother, left). Photograph by Phakamas Jirajarupat.

For the *Rachathirat* story, the short scene ‘Saming Phra Ram Rob Kamani’ (Saming Phra Ram Fights Kamani) from the episode ‘Saming Phra Ram Arsa’ (Saming Phra Ram Volunteers to Fight) is a popular scene of traditional *lakhon phanthat* performed at a funeral ritual, especially on cremation day. The fighting between Saming Phra Ram, a Mon soldier, and Kamani, a Chinese army leader, does not seem to be directly relevant to the death ritual, although at the end of the scene

Kamani dies in battle. However, the Mon and Chinese music accents, the exotic Mon and Chinese costumes and the lively dance movements attract the audience's interest. Traditional *lakhon phanthatang* such as *Phra Lor*, *Rachathirat* and *Phya Phanong* are well-known repertoires among Thai audiences. The popularity of these repertoires provides the audiences at the funeral with scenes and a dancing style that are easily understood and recognised within a short time (Tanathamtee interview). In addition, some music, songs and stories from *lakhon phanthatang* have been presented in other media such as radio, TV and film. Therefore, audiences are familiar with the traditional *lakhon phanthatang* stories.

### ***Lakhon Phanthatang* in the Death Ritual**

Traditional theatre forms like *lakhon phanthatang*, which normally convey a sense of national culture and identity, are brought into the Thai way of life through their inclusion in ritual events. Music and dance in the Thai Buddhist ritual is a sign of wealth and mark the social status of the deceased and his/her family, and offer entertainment for the guests, though some of these arts are of interest to only a few people (Wong 115). *Lakhon phanthatang* is introduced together with other activities as entertainment, bringing the mourner out of the sadness of separation. *Lakhon phanthatang* at a Thai funeral may not increase a Thai audience's interest in traditional theatre. However, it is a way to make traditional music and dance continue to exist in society. Additionally, such rituals allow choreographers to create new performances based on traditional theatre that have the potential of enriching theatrical arts.

I was a dancer at both the funeral for Sompis Nimithut on 12-14 November 2011, and Komsorn Tanathamtee on 11-13 January 2012. On each night of the funeral days, the monks chanted for four rounds with an 8 to 10 minutes interval at

the end of each round. There were 3 to 5 short performances during the intervals of each chanting round. There was no live music accompaniment on the funeral days so a digital recorder was used. The performances were based on *lakhon phanthang* and *rabam* in *phanthang* style. *Rabam* in Thai-Laotian style and Thai-Burmese style and a short scene from the *Phra Lor* and *Phra Ya Panong* repertoires were selected for presentation.

The *rabam* in *phanthang* style that was performed at these events should be discussed. *Lao Arlai* (Laotian Lament) and *Pama Arlai* (Burmese Lament), the short *rabam* in *phanthang* style composed with new lyrics by Komsorn Tanathamtee before he died, were both performed. These dance pieces used the same lyrics. I do translate the lyric:

เทียนอุทัยละลาย ไชพรางพรายแสง	ยั้งเรื่องแรงโรจน์สว่างกระจ่างหล้า
เปรียบวิญญูผู้วายชนม์พันวิญญา	คงความดีเลื่องโลกธาธาจันทร์
อนิจจาเวรมาเนิราศ	เพียงพินาศทรวงในให้ถวิล
ดอกโคกเจ้าเคล้าน้ำตาอยู่อาจันต์	อกแผ่นดินสิ้นดวงแก้วแคล้วคลาดกัน
ไอ้ร่มโพธิ์ ไพศาลชีวานสุญ	แด่อาตุรญาติกาพาโสภคัลย์
คงสังขารนิตราสนิทจิดจรัล	สู่วิมานมาศสวรรคอันรูจี
แรงบุญนำสู่สัมปรายภาพ	ล้วนเลิศลพอาเนิสงศ์สงราศี
ดำรงทิพ (พย) สมบัติพิพัฒน์ทวี	สุขชาติแดนสถานนิพานเทอญ

*The Candle is melting but the light shines to the sky.*

*It is likely to be the deceased, whose virtue is still alive in the world.*

*Alas, fate separates us, my heart is full of yearning and dread.*

*Sadness and mourning are habitual occurrences when the world is without  
you.*

*My dearest, your death brings tears and sadness to me.*  
*I wish you slept in peace at the golden divine castle.*  
*Your virtue will lead you to the magnificent heaven.*  
*You will stay in the glorious heaven and rest eternally in empyrean heaven*  
*and nirvana.*

These lyrics do not represent any Burmese and Laotian characteristics. This feature allowed the lyrics to be accompanied in contrasting music styles. *Lao Arlai* used Thai-Laotian music accents whereas *Pama Arlai* used Thai-Burmese music accents. The *phanthangness* of these two performances was derived from the music accents of *phleng ok phasa pama* (Thai music in Burmese accents) and *phleng ok phasa Lao* (Thai music in Laotian accents).

The dance movements were created in *phanthang* dance style by mixing Thai-Laotian and Thai-Burmese dance movements. *Lao Arlai* was choreographed by Sakul Muangsakorn, a dance lecturer at PAD Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The choreographer intended to use the theatrical elements of *lakhon phanthang* in making sense of the Otherness in traditional dance in combination with daily life actions (Muangsakorn interview). As I was a dancer in this piece, I can state without a shade of doubt that the dance movements of *Lao Arlai* were primarily based on Thai traditional dance movements. The leg gesturing of traditional dance was present in little measure in comparison with the hand gestures. There were a few dance movements where dancers lifted up their legs, which in Thai traditional dance is an attitude called *kra dok tao*. This is a leg position in which the dancers stand on one leg with a bent knee while the other leg is raised with the knee. Muangsakorn states in the interview that

Generally the Laotian dance style as seen in the folk dance forms of the northern part of Thailand does not involve leg gesturing. Thus, *Lao Arlai* was created in the same way. I [Muangsakorn] wanted to maintain the characteristics of Laotian dance. The different music accents and tunes and the dance movements in *phanthang* style which represent a non-Thai ethnicity provide the audiences with a different ambience and an exotic dance style but still expresses Thai-ness’.

*Lao Arlai* in this funeral, as per my experience, was a very easy number to learn. I can remember its dance movements more easily than those of *Pama Arlai*. This is because the dance movements are cast in a very Thai traditional form. The hand positions and leg gesturing are similar to those of Thai dance. There are only a few different technical details, such as the swaying shoulders , which are used in *Lao Arlai*.



Fig 30. *Lao Arlai* (Laotian Lament) in the funeral for Sompis Nimithut performed by Manissa Vasinaron (left), Phakamas Jirajarupat (center) and Chanitsiree Ruanglerttrakool (right). Image courtesy of Sakul Muangsakorn



In the item *Pama Arlai* (see fig. 31), the dance movements were created through a collaboration between Komsorn Tanathammatee and the dancers in the group. I also took part in the collaboration. *Pama Arlai* was created by combining Burmese and Thai dance movements. We devised dance movements to match the meaning of the lyrics. It was interesting that when we danced with lyrics the movements were interpreted and expressed in a Thai dance idiom. In contrast, during melodic and rhythmic sections we made an effort to imitate Burmese dance movements. The jumping, over-bending of the torso and the off-balancing of the body were applied to *Pama Arlai*. We used Burmese dance elements from other Thai-Burmese dance styles of Krom Silpakorn and we also used those movements we saw when watching Burmese dance from Internet video clips. My feeling of being involved in choreographing and performing *Pama Arlai* was one of excitement and I felt freedom when we devised this performance. The term '*phanthang*', which I have used to refer to the style of *Pama Arlai*, released my team and I from the traditional dance frame and expanded our creative framework, allowing us to choreograph the dance as we desired without the constraints of traditional dance customs. The dance movements were newly invented although some parts of the music already had a dance choreographic pattern created by Krom Silpakorn. As the dance was presented at a funeral event, the atmosphere was more informal than in a stage performance.

The costumes of these two dance pieces were newly created without any concern for the traditional Thai-Laotian dance costumes and Burmese dance costumes as set by Krom Silapakorn. Female dancers of *Lao Arlai* wrapped their upper bodies with long cloth and wore the long traditional skirt. This pattern was a mix between Thai middle and northern style.



Fig. 31. *Pama Arlai* (Burmese Lament) performed at the funeral for Sompis Nimithut, Wat Tri Tossthep, 12 November 2011, Dancers (from left to right): Phakamas Jirajarupat, Manisa Vasinarom, Siripong Meechang and Wirut Mingson. Image courtesy of Sakul Muangsakorn.

Male dancers wore a long sleeve shirt and pants, with a pattern imitating the traditional *lakhon* costumes. The symbolic references to Thai-Laotian costume were a long cloth placed on the shirt over the shoulder of the male dancers and their heads wrapped with a piece of cloth. The costumes were colourful (see fig. 32). However, the costume of *Pama Arlai* was different in concept. Female dancers' costumes imitated the Burmese dance costume: it was not exactly the same, but it showed the effort of making the costume match the characteristics of the dance form. The female dancers wore a long hair wig the same as Burmese female dancers and as seen from female characters of Burmese puppets. The skirt was very long and the shirt was translucent (see fig. 33). Male dancers' costumes followed the pattern of the costume of Burmese characters in Thai *lakhon phanthatang*.



Fig. 32. The male dancers of *Lao Arlai* at the funeral for Sompis Nimithut. Dancers (from left to right): Whutthichai Khathawi and Chanitsiree Ruanglertrakool. Photo courtesy of Sakul Muangsakorn.



Fig. 33. Female dancers after a performance of *Pama Arlai* (Burmese Lament) for the funeral of Sompis Nimithut. Wat Tri Tossthep, 12 November 2011 Dancers: Phakamas Jirjarupat (left) and Manisa Vasinarom. Photograph by Cheerawat Wanta.

The death funeral was an unexpected event for my colleagues and I, we learnt of the death of Sompis Nimithut and Komsorn Tanathammatee in the morning and we prepared performances with urgency. For *Lao Arlai* and *Pama Arlai*, I spent 2 to 3 hours in rehearsal before performing in the evening of the funeral day. In fact, I could not remember the entire dance movements that I had just learned only a few hours previously but it was not a major obstacle to my performance. I realised that as I had been trained in Thai traditional dance for over 10 years, my body could easily connect to the sound, and dance movements would flow even though these were a mix of Thai and non-Thai dance styles. It reminded me that *phanthang* dance style and *lakhon phanthang* are a mixed form of Thai and non-Thai dance, they are exotic but Thai. I did not perform Laotian or Burmese dance, I performed Thai dance in Laotian and Burmese style.

There were also many short scenes based on *lakhon phanthang* that were performed at these events. The scene ‘Phra Lor Khao Suan’ (Phra Lor Enters the Royal Garden), a solo dance titled *Long Song Mon* (Dance for Dressing Up in Mon Style), a solo dance based on *lakhon phanthang Rachathirat* and the short scene ‘Kam Pin Kor Fon’ (Kam Pin Makes a Vow for Rain) from *lakhon phanthang Phya Phanong* were selected for these events. All these *lakhon phanthang* scenes imitated dance patterns and songs from the *lakhon phanthang* of Krom Silapakorn but the costumes were modified, with new patterns and colours. The scenes were indirectly related to the death, depicting separation and hopelessness. *Lakhon phanthang* performances at the death rituals were informed by novelty but the traditional *lakhon phanthang* by Krom Silapakorn still had an influence over the participating Thai dance artists and played a part in the selection of performances.

Despite this fact, *lakhon phanthat* in the context of a funeral is more flexible than *lakhon phanthat* performed on the National Theatre stage, as can be seen by its costume, music, and dance movements. *Lakhon phanthat* in a funeral context is adapted to suit the event. The performances presented at a funeral need to be short but the aesthetics of the dance movements has to remain and a story should be simultaneously told (Muangsakorn interview).



Fig. 34. *Lakhon phanthat Phya Phanong* at a funeral. The costumes and props are different from those of performances at the National Theatre by Krom Silapakorn. The god Varuna (the god of rain) performed by Kittikon Boonmee is dressed in the style of *Khon* and his supplicant Nang Kampin (performed by Jutatip Sangkao) and her maid Kamyuang (performed by the cross-dressed Thanarit Rodthadsana) are in folk-style costumes. Photograph by Phakamas Jirajaruapat.

It is not an overstatement that *lakhon phanthat* and *phanthat* dance style can not only survive but have also great potential to be developed in performances held at death rituals. As mentioned earlier, the *phanthat* dance style could be adapted or changed depending on each funeral. Thus, choreographers have to develop

or work with the dance pieces to make each dance or scene appropriate to each funeral.



Fig. 35. *Lakhon phanthang Phra Lor* at a funeral. *Phra Lor* is performed by Komsorn Tanathammatee. Photograph by Phakamas Jirajaruapat.

*Lakhon phanthang* and *phanthang* dance style in the funeral ritual are more flexible and connect more directly with the people than performances at the National Theatre by Krom Silapakorn. The audience at a funeral event may not be a group of people who are interested in traditional dance and they do not generally attend a funeral explicitly to see a traditional performance; however they learn that these traditional dance forms can be entertainment. In addition, and with good commercial sense, *lakhon phanthang* and *phanthang* dance style can be requested and hired to perform at further ritual events, thus providing employment for young graduates of performing arts courses.

## Conclusion

The space occupied by *lakhon phanthatang* today greatly differs from that of the past, especially when this dance form emerged in the twentieth century. *Lakhon phanthatang* used to be a popular theatre serving the needs of audiences in Siamese society at the time of its encounter with modernity. This theatre style was a dynamic form which had the potential to change and be adapted to make it contemporary and lively. *Lakhon phanthatang* today has become a traditional theatre form. The hybridity that characterises it has been distorted and frozen. *Lakhon phanthatang* productions presented by Krom Silaporn on the Thai National Theatre stage are fixed and surrounded with the aura of museum pieces. However, *lakhon phanthatang* performed at ritual events demonstrates a different viewpoint. By changing the space and conditions of performance, *lakhon phanthatang* in the context of a ritual event, especially a death ritual, is alive with creativity and novelty. Social events allow dance artists to reinvent traditional theatre without concerns about dance customs or preservation. *Lakhon phanthatang* and other traditional dance and theatre forms in the context of death rituals aim to bring people out of their sorrow and return them to the community. The purpose of dance in ritual is different from that of dance as representative of national identity. Outside of official national frameworks, there is more space for creativity, agency and personal meaning. Ritual occurrences provide an opportunity for different forms and meanings to come together in dialogue. The funeral of Komsorn, or 'Hall' as I called him, was not simply a re-enactment of a set dance, it involved me dancing to a song of Hall's own composition. In fact, before Hall died he was at work on an experimental *lakhon phanthatang* at my instigation. Hall did not finish the play before his untimely death, and thus our joint plan to innovate *lakhon phanthatang* in collaboration went unrealised. I cite him here out of

respect for his talents. He will always be in my heart and memory and I can only hope that his talent and work in *lakhon phanthang* and *phanthang* dance style will live forever.



## Conclusion

While living in the UK for my studies, I was often questioned by my foreign friends about the place I came from, Thailand. They wanted me to tell them about remarkable places to visit such as beaches, temples, bars and nightclubs. They wished to know what they should and should not do when they visited Thailand. One thing I never failed to mention was Thai food. For Thai people, food is not only something to eat but a way of life, belief and culture. My friends asked me to suggest the Thai food they should try in Thailand, which is quite different from the most popular Thai dishes available abroad like *pad Thai* (Thai stir fried noodle), *kang keaw wan* (green curry) and *tom yam* (spicy and sour soup). I did not hesitate to respond that they should try Isan food, a spicy food from the north-eastern part of Thailand. When visiting the country, should they wish to try food that can give a real feel for Thailand, not only in taste but also in culture, Isan cuisine is the answer.

I cannot tell them that Isan is an original Thai cuisine because it is not. The ingredients are local Thai vegetables and herbs, but the recipes and cooking styles are derived from Laos. Thai people improved on the recipes of the Laotians and on the cooking to suit the Thai kitchen and Thai taste, and this is how it becomes Thai food. Isan food, such as *som tam* (papaya spicy salad), *kai yang* (grilled marinated chicken), *larb* and *nam-tok* (spicy mince / grilled meat salad) and *kaw neaw* (sticky rice) provide the typical Thai food taste, salty, sweet, sour and spicy: sometimes it has a strong smell. However, the typical flavour, especially the spices, Thai chillies and herbs and the way of eating, the food being better savoured if eaten with bare hands rather than using fork and spoon, can give one the feel of something really

Thai. The ambience while having Isan food is more informal, as it is not served in luxury restaurants but often at simple outdoor eating places.

Thinking of Isan and its food culture allows me to reflect on *lakhon phanthatang*. Beginning as a hybrid dance-drama form in the nineteenth century, it was developed and modernised and it became the *lakhon phanthatang* of today, a Thai traditional theatre form of Krom Silapakorn. However, *lakhon phanthatang* is different from other traditional theatres such as *khon* and *lakhon nai*. It has a kind of informality about it that is unusual in a traditional theatre. To use a culinary analogy, *lakhon phanthatang* is like eating Isan food. *Lakhon phanthatang* is very Thai but informal, allowing room for jokes and humour and providing a playful flavour, which other Thai traditional theatres cannot accommodate. *Lakhon phanthatang* has Thai dance elements and other national theatrical elements as its main ingredients. It is 'cooked' by merging or blending the different elements until a new form appears, which is neither purely Thai nor foreign.

As I mentioned in the introduction, I am a Thai woman with a conservative Chinese family background. The mix between Thai and Chinese traditions and customs as effected by my family allowed me as a Thai to experience Otherness through the Chinese customs of my family. There is a parallel with the *lakhon phanthatang* I discuss in this thesis. *Lakhon phanthatang* reflects the perspectives of Thai artists over other national theatre styles. This theatre form reflects Otherness as found in Thai traditional theatre forms. Thai identity and Thai multiculturalism are presented via this theatre form. In short, *lakhon phanthatang* enables Thai people to look at Otherness.

This thesis, '*Lakhon Phanthatang: Thai Traditional Theatre in the Modern World*,' reflects on the contribution of Thai traditional theatre in a changing society.

The thesis charts the traditionalisation of *lakhon phanthatang* in its transition from the commercial to the traditional theatre as national art heritage. The route followed by this theatre form is very long and it interacts with social, political and economic developments. The historical development of *lakhon phanthatang* began as a commercial theatre form patronised by the court in the nineteenth century, reformalised as a traditional dance genre in the 1940s by the Fine Arts Department. The changing Thai society of the 1980s forced the Fine Arts Departments to modernise *lakhon phanthatang* and use this theatre form to convince Thai audiences to return to patronise traditional theatre. Today *lakhon phanthatang* is taught in the dance academies in Thailand. The research in this thesis presents the juxtapositions and aesthetic shifts of the form over time with a focus on the revival and survival of *lakhon phanthatang* from the past to the present.

In chapter 1, my main focus was on the historical background of *lakhon phanthatang* and the emergence of the new theatre form. In the late nineteenth century, the hybrid dance and theatre forms were seen in the commercial theatre named Siamese Theatre (changed to the Prince's Theatre in 1882) of Chao Phraya Mahintharasakdithamrong. *Lakhon phanthatang* was a new theatrical form in Siam and a cultural product of its time. The hybrid dance and theatre form of this period reflected the multicultural society of Siam and the changes in royal policies as also the commercial transformations of urban Bangkok in the nineteenth century. The key factor in the emergence of this hybrid dance and theatre form were the multi-ethnic communities of Chinese, Burmese, Laotians and Mons in urban Bangkok and the need for novelty in the period of Siam's encounter with the West. The new hybrid dance and theatre forms of the commercial theatre accelerated the transformation of patronage from being royal-centred to involving the patronage of a general public.

However, these dance and theatre forms returned to the patronage of the royal court through the *lakhon* of Prince Narathip Phraphanpong. The royal court patronised this dance troupe as a royal company directly supported by the King. I caution that the hybrid dance and theatre forms of this period had not yet been classified or named *lakhon phanthatang*.

The birth of *lakhon phanthatang* as a named form was in the 1940s after the revolutionary period. In chapter 2, I discussed the transformation of dance and theatre from court entertainment and commercial theatre form to dance and theatre for the nation, and mapped out the aesthetic shifts occurring in this period of great political changes. The political and cultural policies of the country encouraged the formalisation and the standardisation of all art forms for the new Thai state. Therefore, the hybrid dance and theatre forms were revived and developed as the traditional art of the nation. One of the key factors in standardising and formalising was the establishment of a School of Music and Dance under the authority of Krom Silapakorn in 1934. The form, context and content of theatre and dance became an important part of education programmes. The formalisation and standardisation of *lakhon phanthatang* was carried out under the notion of Thainess, which intersected with nationalism. The definition of *lakhon phanthatang* in this period demonstrated that the Otherness in *lakhon phanthatang* did not only refer to other nationalities or races outside Thailand but it included the small Thai ethnic groups and the provincial towns outside Bangkok. *Lakhon phanthatang* after its formalisation and standardisation reflects how Thais looked at themselves and the world and their interaction with the world beyond Thailand.

A characteristic of *lakhon phanthatang* in the 1940s was the revival of the old plays and dance movement styles of the *Lakhon* of Chao Phraya Mahin and *Lakhon*

of Prince Narathip by the artists and teachers of Krom Silapakorn, who had trained in these dance styles in their youth. There were five older repertoires revived to performance standard in the *lakhon phanthat* style. The most famous among them were *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat*. In the 1950s, *Phya Phanong*, a new *lakhon phanthat* play, was created by the staff of Krom Silapakorn. The costumes, music and song, and the dance movements presented a mix between Thai traditional theatre elements and other national theatre styles. The cast of *lakhon phanthat* in this period was made up of female dancers, even when characters were male.

*Lakhon phanthat* was modernised in the Seri Wangnaitham's *Phuchanasibtid* production of Krom Silapakorn in the 1980s, the main focus of chapters 3 and 4. *Lakhon phanthat* was chosen as a performance style that could be modernised to reinstate the popularity of Thai traditional theatre. The fact that this theatre form is more informal than other traditional theatre forms allowed artists to insert new material and adapt the form to suit new modern audiences' taste; *Phuchanasibtid* demonstrated that *lakhon phanthat* was more accessible to Thai audiences than other traditional theatre forms. This production bridged the gap between old Thai traditional dance-drama and modern theatre. The modernised *lakhon phanthat Phuchanasibtid* was achieved by adapting a well-known modern narrative to traditional performance, using new methods based on Western theatrical techniques such as individualised characterisation and inner motivation shown in the acting, inventing a new costume design pattern without adhering to the traditional costume codes of Thai theatre, and using a mixed gender cast in the performance. A new phenomenon was generated by this production, namely the *mae yok* who supported Krom Silapakorn and became fans of Krom Silapakorn dancers. *Phuchanasibtid* showed that the modernisation of Thai traditional theatre could

encourage Thai people to understand, appreciate and cherish tradition and the value of the arts as national heritage, based on the notion that Thai arts belong to all Thai people. Chapter 3 discusses and contextualises the historical background, as noted above, whereas chapter 4 provides a translation of the *lakhon phanthatang Phuchanasibtid* play, in particular the episode *Mae Tup Kon Mai* (The new general) adapted by Seri Wangnaitham from the modern novel *Yakhob* to Thai traditional theatre plays.

Chapter 5 is focused on two areas, discussing *lakhon phanthatang* of Krom Silapakorn at present and *lakhon phanthatang* in the academic context. The focus of this chapter is the survival of *lakhon phanthatang* in Thai society as a traditional theatre in a modern and globalised world. The development of *lakhon phanthatang* in this period differed from the modernisation of *lakhon phanthatang* during the Seri Wangnaitham's period. The *lakhon phanthatang* productions of Krom Silapakorn are currently based on the traditional *lakhon phanthatang* productions from the 1940s and seem to be frozen in time. *Lakhon phanthatang* is based on old repertoires such as *Phra Lor* and *Rachathirat* and *Phya Phanong* but new *lakhon phanthatang* repertoires are absent.

The notion of traditional art has become narrow and is all about preserving the dance form as a national art. The traditional *lakhon phanthatang* productions have been modified for new audiences by abridging the plays, creating new prelude *phanthatang* dance forms, and inserting a contemporary comedic dialogue, going no further. Krom Silapakorn at present has many young artists trained in modern theatre techniques and other dance styles from overseas. They can be a valuable human resource for this conservative art organisation as they have the potential to develop the dance and theatre of Krom Silapakorn. But due to the hierarchical structure of the

organisation the young artists can do nothing without obtaining permission from the senior dance artists and this stifles their creativity.

The *lakhon phanthang* of Krom Silapakorn today has become a traditional dance choreographic pattern to be used in the traditional dance curriculum of the dance academies in Thailand which is the second focus of chapter 5. *Lakhon phanthang* in the academic arena is dominated by the transmission of *lakhon phanthang* from Krom Silapakorn to other institutions. *Lakhon phanthang* in chapter 5 is analysed on the basis of my experiences in teaching *lakhon phanthang* at the Performing Arts Department (PAD) at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The analysis demonstrates that *lakhon phanthang* in the dance educational system is a frozen form even though 'education' would imply development and growth. This dance form has been taught in a traditional style by using the *lakhon phanthang* of Krom Silapakorn as a model. In addition, social media and the Internet, especially YouTube and Google, have become major resources for students in reviewing their dance lessons and searching for other dance repertoires they can copy. The students learn the dance movement style based on three traditional *lakhon phanthang* repertoires: *Phra Lor*, *Rachathirat* and *Phya Phanong*. A modern *lakhon phanthang* such as *Phuchanasibtid* is neither mentioned nor taught in class. The transmission of *lakhon phanthang* in a university context does not encourage students to learn about the roots and routes of a hybrid dance theatre before it became fixed as *lakhon phanthang*. The multi-ethnic society, commercial theatre and modernisation of this dance form are not discussed in class. *Lakhon phanthang* is perceived by the students as a kind of Thai traditional dance form, which is informal and requires knowledge of specific dance techniques to perform.

The *lakhon phanthatang* in the context of rites of passage is the main focus of my chapter 6. *Lakhon phanthatang* acts as a form of entertainment in the funeral ritual, bringing people out of the sadness surrounding the funeral events to the stage of aggregation in this rite of passage. The *lakhon phanthatang* discussed in this section demonstrates the creative freedom of artists in modifying the traditional dance form, without concerning themselves with specified dance customs, in order to communicate with people and the local community. It reintroduces novelty through the agency of the artists who come to entertain guests at the funeral with *lakhon phanthatang* and *phanthatang* in dance style. The characteristics of *lakhon phanthatang* and *phanthatang* in dance style performances at a funeral event are the conciseness of the presentation within the timeframe of the event. The content and context of the dance and theatre forms relate to the death and commemoration of the dead person. The costume and the dance movement styles can be modified from those of the traditional form. In addition, *lakhon phanthatang* and *phanthatang* in dance style at each funeral event may be presented in different versions even though the same repertoires are performed. *Lakhon phanthatang* in the context of rites of passage reflects the survival and development of the theatre form through the patronage of ordinary people just like the hybrid dance and theatre forms of popular theatre in the nineteenth century. This theatre form has been modified and recreated in many ways as its name ‘the theatre in the thousand ways’ denotes. The label traditional theatre should not be seen as an obstacle in modernising and developing *lakhon phanthatang* in Thai society today.

The long historical development and the route taken by *lakhon phanthatang*, as presented in this thesis, reflect the notion of ‘very Thai’. Thai people are sometimes seen as very considerate and at other times very serious and strict. The phrase *mai*



*pen rai* (do not worry, it is okay), which Thai people always use represents the ambiguous feelings of Thai people (Chaimanee 41). A tourist visiting Thailand who does something which should not be done in Thailand will hear the words *mai pen rai* from Thai people but will never know how they really feel. They may be angry or they may be thinking something quite different from what they are saying. This is the notion of 'very Thai'. Everything appears to be easy and laid back, but it is not quite that way.

All things can be Thai if presented and adapted to suit the Thai way of life. The stir-fry Vietnamese noodles of the Ayutthaya period were adapted to *pad Thai* after the revolutionary period and became a signature Thai dish for tourists. I mentioned the notion of 'very Thai' here because a study of *lakhon phanthat* in this thesis demonstrates its application to this theatre form. Thai artists borrowed other theatrical elements and mixed them with Thai traditional theatrical elements and then claimed that the new hybrid form is traditional Thai theatre, with the words *mai pen rai* appended as they appropriated something from the Other. In this way the illusion of 'very Thai' can be sustained even while artists actively appropriate and translate non-Thai culture into a national idiom.

The result, as this thesis demonstrates, is that *lakhon phanthat* is a gateway to Thai traditional theatre, allowing Thai dance practitioners to work in a traditional theatre mode beyond the limitations of older conventions. The one limitation of this theatre form is the presentation of Thai traditional dance movements: however, there is no rule or measurement for the dance movements to be seen in performance. Thus, *lakhon phanthat* has the requirement of presenting Thai traditional dance movements but the directors or choreographers have the right to determine how much Thai dance movement will be shown in a production. This is the special

feature of *lakhon phanthat*, which is not present in other traditional theatres. The informality of *lakhon phanthat* makes this dance form accessible to audiences and easier to the eye than other traditional dance and theatre forms. I would like to propose that *lakhon phanthat* within the traditional theatre genres reflects the quality of being a popular theatre, which I would call 'a popular theatre of the nation'. This theatre form is modern, adapted and modified to serve the needs of an audience of today even though it is a national art form that was patronised by the king in the past and by the government at present.

The value of this thesis is not only in the contribution of new and critical perspective on the study of Thai traditional theatre, it also offers the scope for further research on the latter. I was trained in Thai traditional dancing for over fifteen years and I am a traditional dance practitioner and lecturer: my experiences tell me that learning and teaching Thai traditional dance is restrictive. I did not have the courage to step out of the traditional frame and critique Thai traditional dance in Thailand. There are few textbooks in Thai discussing Thai traditional theatre and its relationship with world performance or explaining the relationship between Thai traditional theatre and other Southeast Asian dance and theatre forms. Most Thai traditional theatre forms are studied and researched as individual art objects which have no relationship with other traditional forms and are dissociated from the socio-political reality. Thus, Thai research papers and postgraduate theses are mostly presented on topics such as historical study, dance movement notation and the choreography of Thai dances. However, this thesis '*Lakhon Phanthat: Thai Traditional Theatre in the Modern World*' aims to provide something different. It analyses Thai traditional theatre through a new perspective. I have examined *lakhon phanthat* as an art form which exists in interaction with society. *Lakhon phanthat*,

in my view, is a living art, which will either develop or die depending on whether it reflects societal changes.

In 2015 Thailand will be part of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) under the notion of 'one vision, one identity, one community.' I would suggest that it is crucial to be aware that the arts and cultures of the Southeast Asian region are shared and exchanged all the time. Thai traditional theatre is a national art heritage, but it has interacted with other forms from the region from time immemorial. This thesis offers a case study to shift the understanding of Thai traditional theatre as one art among others in the region. Additionally, this thesis will help Thai traditional dance artists and scholars develop a deeper knowledge of the similarities as well as differences of the world's theatre. This development will encourage Thai artists and scholars to have greater understanding of the integration between Thai traditions and the international evolution of theatre, which can lead to the further development of Thai theatre arts.

## Glossary

**Inao Tang Java**, dance-drama based on *Inao* story. Javanese costume is applied in the performance. The music and song sometime accompany by gamelan ensemble. The script, verse and dance movement are presented in Thai style.

**Khon**, masked dance-drama based on the *Rammakien*, the Thai version of the Ramayana.

**Lakhon**, dance-drama

**Lakhon Dukdamban** is a new Thai dance-drama operetta created in the nineteenth century by Prince Narisaranuwattiwong and Chao Phraya Thewetwongwiwat. Performances imitated the Western opera style. The performers of this dance-drama form are required to sing and dance by themselves. The dance movement styles, music and song and costume as elaborate as *lakhon nai*.

**Lakhon Nai** is a court dance-drama that focuses on elaborate, elegant theatrical characteristics. The dance movements are presented in the traditional style, with graceful, sophisticated movements. The action and emotional expression of characters are very delicate and reflect the sophisticated manner of the court customs (Rutnin, *Dance, Drama* 11). The music and songs are played by the Thai orchestra. The costumes represent the rich embroidery and elegant style of the ancient performance costumes. The stories used for *lakhon nai* are *Inao*, *Ramakien*, *Unaruth* (tales of Krishna's grandson), and *Dalang*. The dancers are all female. The story recitations are very refined.

**Lakhon Nok** or the dance-drama performed outside the court is less elaborate than *lakhon nai*. *Lakhon nok* presents stories from Thai literature and Buddhist Jataka tales (Rutnin 12). The dance movements are based on traditional Thai dance figures but they do not require, graceful, sophisticated movements. The expression of feeling and emotion is via broad farce and direct expression (Montrisart 114). *Lakhon nok* is the entertainment of ordinary people, so the material of the costumes might be simpler than that of *lakhon nai*. *Lakhon*

*nok* dancers are mostly male dancers, playing both female and male characters.

**Lakhon Phuying** is a kind of court dance-drama performed by female court dancers (*phuying* means female). From Ayutthaya (1351-1767) to the early Rattanakosin period (1782 to present), *lakhon phuying* was a king's entertainment performed only in the royal court in honour of the king. The commoners were not allowed to practice or perform *lakhon phuying* in public. During the reign of King Nangkloa (King Rama III, r.1824-1851), however, *lakhon phuying* and several court entertainments were banned in the royal court because of the king's interest in religion and in creating a balanced national budget.

**Lakhon Phut** is a Thai spoken dance-drama emerged in the nineteenth century.

**Lakhon Rong** is a Thai traditional singing dance-drama.

**Likay** is a Thai popular dance-drama which some scholars believed developed from Islamic chanting. Performance mainly serves a middle class audience and the local people. *Likay* generally presents stories based on recent or contemporary situations.

**Ram** and **Rabam**, dance in Thai traditional style.

**Phleng Ok Phasa** is a kind of Thai musical genre in which the tune and accent of the music represent the national music accents and tunes of Others. Sometime it is called *sib song phasa*, which means music of twelve accents. The nationalities in *phleng ok phasa* presented to the communities in Bangkok include Indian, Chinese, Cambodian, Burmese, Mon, Laotian, Malay, Nguei (Tai hill tribe), Japanese, *farang* (Western), Yuan (Vietnamese) and Kha (a hill tribe) (Virulrak, *Likay* 22). In each, the *phleng ok phasa*'s title indicates the nationality of the song, such as *phleng jeen keb bubpha* (Jeen means Chinese in Thai), *phleng mon du dao* (Mon nationality) or *phleng burma dern* (Burmese nationality) (Sukvipat 139-140). Thai musicians compose *phleng ok phasa* by using different kinds of drums that create new rhythms in song.

These kinds of songs accompany many dramatic and dance performances, including *lakhon phanthat* and *likay*.

**Yun Khrung** refers to the style, form and design of Thai traditional *lakhon* and *khon* costumes.

## Appendix

The following is Phuchanasibtid play of Krom Silapkorn in Thai language in episode Mae Tup Kon Mai (The New General).

บทละครพันทางเรื่อง ผู้ชนะสิบทิศ ของยาขอบ  
ตอน แม่ทัพคนใหม่  
เสรี หวังในธรรม ถอดความเป็นกลอนบทละคร

\*\*\*\*\*

- เปิดม่าน -

(สมมติเป็นฉากห้องพระโรงเมืองตองอู เสนาพม่า ขุนวัง ตองหวุ่นยี เนงบา  
สี่อ่อง ฝ้าอยู่ตามที่มังตราออกประทับราชอาสน์)

- มังตรา -                    องค์ตะเบง- ชะเวตี้ ศรีตองอู      เสด็จสู่ ห่องโถง พระโรงหน้า  
พร้อมอำมาตย์ มนตรี ล้วนปรีชา      น้อมเกล้า บังคม บรมไท  
(จะเด็ดออกแล้วคลานเข้าฝ้าถวายบังคมอย่างไม่สะทกสะท้าน)
- เห็นจะเด็ด จู่ฝ้า จ้าวตะลิ่ง      คิดไม่ถึง ชึ่งหน้า ประหมาไหว  
                                  สะดุ้งจิต คิดฉงน สนเท่หีใจ            เออไฉน ไยกกล้า มาหากู
- มังฉงาย -                    ฝ่ายขุนวัง มังฉงาย ถวายกราบ      ศิริราบ ทูลว่า กลับมาสู่  
                                  ด้วยดวงจิต คิดมั่น กตัญญู            ระลึกรู้ ในพระคุณ ชุ่ชี่วัน  
                                  ขอยึดเอา พระคุณ อันอุ่เกล้า        ไว้เหนือเศียร ข้าพเจ้า จนอาสัญ  
                                  จะร้องเปื้อง บาทบงสุ์ พระทรงธรรม    ไม่เคลื่อนคลาด หวาดหวั่น อันตราย
- มังตรา -                    พระเอนอิง นิ่งนึ่ง ฟังคำว่า            ยังประหมา หวั่นไหว มิใคร่หาย  
                                  แต่มานะ จอมกษัตริย์ ระมัดกาย        ข่มให้คลาย วายลง ไม่คองนาน  
                                  ค่อยช่ายตา หาคณ ระบายเคือง        เพื่อเริ่มเรื่อง เคืองแค้น แสนไพศาล  
                                  ข้าเลื่องต้อง ตองหวุ่นยี มิทันนาน      พระเริ่มพาล ค่อนแคะ กระแนะคำ
- มังตรา -                    ถ้าเราเป็นขุนพลเมืองตองอู  
                                  ก็จะเจ็บร้อนด้วยวิญญาณของไพร่พลอันล่องลอยอยู่ ณ  
                                  สมรรภูมิใกล้กำแพงเมืองแปรให้จหนัก ทุกครั้งที่หลับตาเมื่อใด  
                                  ก็จะได้ยินแต่เสียงไม้ต้องไฟปะทุ และเสียงร้องท่ามกลางกองเพลิง  
                                  ก็แล้วท่านขุนพลตองหวุ่นยีเล่า มิเคยได้เป็นเช่นเราบ้างละหรือ

(ตองห่วนยี่ถววยบังคมแล้วก้มหน้านั่งอยู่) ว่ายังงี้...หุหนวกหรือ  
หรือว่าตองห่วนยี่ขณะนี้ซี้ซลาดจนสิ้นความเป็นขุนพลเสียแล้ว ก็จงบอกเรามา

ตองห่วนยี่- ตองห่วนยี่ฟังตรัสดำรัสพาล ก็รำคาญ บั่นป่วน คิดครวญครำ  
วิสัยคง ตรงสุด ยุติธรรม ไม่อาจอำ- พรางเข้า ด้วยเจ้านาย  
ประนมกรเหนือเกล้าเฝ้าประณต แล้วกล่าวพจน์ ตรงเที่ยง ไม่เบี่ยงบาย  
ซึ่งทรงถาม ดำรัส ตรัสบรรยาย ขอถววย ทูลความ ตามสัจจ  
อันพลไพร่ไปตายในกองเพลิง ไซ้ระเริง เหลิงหลง พะวงหลัง  
หรืออ่อนล้า เหลวไหล ไร้พลัง จึงพลาดพลัง แพ้พ่าย ตายเป็นเปื้อ  
แต่เป็นด้วย แม่ทัพ นั้นสับสน ทนงตน กลศาสตร์ ประมาทเหลือ  
ต้องตายแผ่ แยกยับ ทัพบกเรือ ก็เพราะเชื่อ แม่ทัพ จึงยับเยิน

มังตรา - บังอาจนัก ถามอย่างตอบอย่าง นีหรือขุนพลผู้เฒ่าเจ้าปัญญา  
อายุยิ่งชราลง แทนที่จะไว้วางใจได้ ความกล้าในดวงลับลดถอยลงด้วย  
คนทรยศต่อเมืองมารดาเข้ามาถึงที่นี่แล้วยังปล่อยให้หนึ่งลูกชวยขายเป็นอิสระอยู่  
ตั้งนี้เป็นการควรแก้ตำแหน่งและฐานะและตำแหน่งผู้ว่าราชการทหารของท่าน  
แล้วหรือ

ตองห่วนยี่ - (ไม่พอใจ) ขอเดชะ อันข้าพเจ้าตองห่วนยี่  
ไซ้จะได้ดิบได้ดีในรัชกาลแห่งตะเบงซะเวตี้ ก็หาไม่  
หากแต่เป็นขุนพลผู้เกรียงไกรมาแล้ว แต่แผ่นดินเมงกะยินโย  
ผู้ทรงทศพิธราชธรรม การใดควรแก้หน้าที่ การนั้นตองห่วนยี่ยอมรู้จัก  
ยิ่งแก่ชราไซ้ว่าจะเพิ่มความเขลาซลาด แต่ทว่าความแก่นั้น  
เป็นเหตุให้เพิ่มเฉพาะความกลัว ในอันที่จะกระทำสิ่งที่ผิดผิด

มังตรา - อ้อ.... เดียวนี้ท่านกล้าย้อนข้าพเจ้าถึงเพียงนี้เชียวหรือ

ตองห่วนยี่ - (ถววยบังคม) ขอเดชะพระราชอาญามีพินเกล้า ข้าพเจ้ามิได้แจ้ง  
ว่าจะเด็ดทำผิดด้วย อันใด สมควรได้ชื่อว่าทรยศกบฏต่อเมืองมารดา  
จึงไม่อาจกุมตัวเขาได้ แต่มาดมั่นว่า  
พระเจ้าอยู่หัวมีพระราชประสงค์จะให้จับ ก็ได้โปรดสั่งมาเถิด  
ข้าพเจ้าเองจะเป็นผู้กุมตัวจะเด็ด บัดเดี๋ยวนี้

มังตรา - ถ้าเช่นนั้น ฎ...ตะเบงซะเวตี้ ขอออกคำสั่งให้จับกุมตัวจะเด็ดเดี๋ยวนี้



- ตองห่วนยี - จะเด็ด คำกล่าวหาของพระเจ้าอยู่หัวนั้นจริงอยู่หรือ  
ท่านจึงนั่งเหมือนหนึ่งว่าไม่อาจค้านความจริง ข้าพเจ้าถึงแม้จะเป็นผู้อื่น  
แต่ก็เชื่อในความสุจริตแห่งท่านอยู่  
ไฉนท่านมาทำกิริยาเสมอว่ายอมรับความผิดเช่นนี้
- มังฉงาย - เกิดเป็นชาวตองอูอยู่ชาติหนึ่ง แสนซาบซึ่งวางสนาน่าสรรเสริญ  
จะดีชั่วดำซ้ำหรือเจริญ ก็เห็นเกิน เรียกร้อง สิ่งต้องใจ  
ชีวิตเป็น ของเขา เจ้าชีวิต จะให้ถูก หรือผิด ก็ยอมได้  
จะทานหัด ชัดคำ ไปทำไม ถึงอยู่ไป เหมือนกับ ดับชีวา  
เป็นข้าคนเบาความนั้นงามหรือ ขึ้นชื่อ ลืออายุ ตายดีกว่า  
ถึงตัวจาก ผากชื่อ ให้ลือซา ขอรักษา แหวหาง เหมือนอย่างยูง  
ความจริงรัก ักดี ไม่มีชาย เกิดจากกาย สุจริต และจิตสูง  
ถ้ามันต้อง บังคับ หรือจับจูง มันก็ฝูง วัวควาย มิใช่คน
- มังตรา - ชีชะ ดูตุ ไร่จะเด็ด กลเม็ด ถากถาง พุดหวังผล  
จะว่ากู หูเบา ไร่เง่าลัน ทูดไร่ชาติ ทรพล ไร่คนคด  
มิ่งตองอู แต่กาย น้ำลายปาก หากแต่ใจ มิ่งนั้น มันกบฏ  
ปากปราศรัย ใจคอ ทรยศ ออย่าเอื้อนเอ่ย เผยพจน์หมดยางอาย  
เสียแรงเคยรักรวมร่วมแม่นม มาโค่นล้ม เอาเพื่อน ไม่เหมือนหมาย  
เมื่อคราวต้อง อาญา หมายถึงตาย สู้ห่มรัก ยักย้าย ช่วยถ่ายเท  
หมายว่าเป็น เช่นมนุษย์ สุจริต ที่แท้จิต ชาติเชื้อ เลือตะเข้  
ถูกใครขุน คุณควร ก็รวนแรว เพราะใจเล้า เจ้าเล่ห์ เนรคุณ
- มังฉงาย - มังตรา ขอท่านจงกล่าวแต่เชิงเหตุเชิงผลเกิด อย่างก้าวร้ายเสียดลี  
ให้มากเกินไปเลย
- มังตรา - ทำไม มิ่งจะทำไมกู ไร่จะเด็ด
- มังฉงาย - หากข้าพเจ้าสวามีภักดีด้วยนระบดียจริงแล้ว  
ทำไมข้าพเจ้าจึงต้องถูกจำขัง เมื่อก่อนทัพ แดกนั้น  
ทั้งเนงบาและสี่อ่องก็เป็นสักขีอยู่ ว่าข้าพเจ้าได้ส่งข่าวมาทูลเตือน  
ว่าทัพบกและทัพเรือให้น้อย่าให้ห่างกัน กับหากคิดตั้งค่ายในที่นั้นแล้ว  
จะแพ้ด้วยแปรเฝ้าปากรอก คำข้าพเจ้า ทั้งเนงบา และสี่อ่อง ก็ได้บอกได้แล้ว  
แต่มังตราท่านเองต่างหาก ตั้งเอาแต่อวดดี  
ทัพตองอูจึงป็นี่โดยมิได้ประดาบอย่างชายชาติทหาร  
แล้วท่านกลับจะมาพาลเอากับข้าพเจ้า อย่างนี้จะมีเรียกว่าเบาความดอกหรือ

- มั่งตรา - ออกไป เอาใ้จะเด็ดออกไป เอามันไปฆ่าเสียเดี๋ยวนี  
(เสนาคนหนึ่งคลานออกมาถวายบังคมแล้วกราบพูล)
- เสนา - ขอเดชะ พระราชาอาญาผู้มีพละกำลัง บัดนี้พระมหาเถรกุโสดอ  
มาขอเข้าเฝ้าเป็นการด่วน พระเจ้าข้า
- มั่งตรา - ข้าไม่ว่าง จะมากวนใจอะไรกันเวลานี้  
(ลุกขึ้นเดินจะเข้าโรงทางด้านขวามือ มหาเถรออกทางด้านซ้ายมือ)
- มหาเถร - มั่งตราเอ๋ย เพราะความเป็นตะเบงชเวตี้  
ท่านถึงกับทอดทิ้งความไยดีและเลิกยำเกรงแก่เราถึงเพียงนี้เสียหรือ
- มั่งตรา - มหาเถรท่าน มาเพื่อเหตุอันใดนั้น ข้าพเจ้าย่อมทราบดี
- มหาเถร - ไซ้ ถูกต้อง แน่نون พระองค์เข้าพระทัยถูกแล้ว
- มั่งตรา - ข้าพเจ้าแจ้งดีอยู่ ว่าจะได้ดีนั้นเป็นศิษย์หัวรั้งหัวใคร่  
ข้าพเจ้าจึงมิอยากพบพระคุณเจ้าในยามนี้
- มหาเถร - ก็ยังดีอยู่ ข้าพเจ้าขอใจ ที่พระองค์ยังทรงความวิระกล้าหาญ  
กล้าที่จะพูดคำตรงกับข้าพเจ้า ฉะนั้นข้าพเจ้าผู้เป็นเพียงใ้เฒ่า  
อันหาประโยชน์อันใดต่อพระองค์มิได้แล้ว จึงจะขอกล่าวคำตรงบ้าง
- มั่งตรา - ข้าพเจ้าวิตกว่า พระมหาเถรจะพลอยผิด ด้วยศิษย์เอกของพระคุณท่าน  
โดยเหตุกับผลหาสมกันไม่
- มั่งตรา - อันคนคดทรยศต่อแผ่นดิน ไม่ควรผู้ทรงศีลจะเกื้อหนุน  
ช่วยคนบาป ที่ไหน จะได้บุญ  
ท่านก็เคย ปกป้อง รักตองอุ  
แล้วไหน ไม่คิด พิจารณา  
ไม่ควรรผู้ทรงศีลจะเกื้อหนุน  
เหมือนคิดขุน ภูเห่า เข้าตำรา  
และยึดมั่น กตัญญู อยู่หนักหนา  
มาปกป้อง รักษา คนกาลี้
- มหาเถร - มหาเถร นิ่งนั่ง ฟังมั่งตรา  
แล้วนึกว่า ถ้านิ่ง อยู่เช่นนี้  
จึงกล่าวว่า อาตมานี้อาภัพ  
แม้แต่ศิษย์ เคยสอน มาก่อนไซ้  
ข่มอุรา ร้อนใจ ดั่งไฟจี  
ก็เห็นที่ มั่งตรา จะได้ใจ  
เหมือนเทียนดับวายวอดจนมอดไหม้  
ก็ราดิน หมิ่นได้ ถึงเพียงนี้
- มหาเถร - งามหน้าไหมละ ใ้ขุนวังทะกะยอดิน  
เจ้าเห็นใจคนอย่างข้าพเจ้าบ้างไหม อันตัวของข้าพเจ้านี้

เมื่อก่อนที่มือทั้งสองจะมาถือตาละปัตรก็กุมด้ามทวนมาแรมปี เจ้าช่วยบอก  
ผู้เป็นใหญ่ในแผ่นดินเขาด้วยเถอะ ว่าก่อนที่ตองอุจะรุ่งเรืองและสุขสงบ  
จนตะเบงชะเวตี้ลอยหน้าอยู่ได้ทุกวัน มันเกิดเพราะฝีมือของมังสินธุ์ผู้  
ฉะนั้นใครอย่ามาพูดให้หมิ่นน้ำใจกูเป็นอันขาด ว่าอาตมารักสิ่งอื่นเกินตองอุ  
ซึ่งด้านหน้ามาพูดแทนจะเด็ดมันนั้น ก็โดยได้พิจารณาแล้ว  
ว่ามังสินธุ์เคยทำประโยชน์อย่างใดแก่เมงกะยีนโย  
ก็อยากจะให้จะเด็ดศิษย์มังสินธุ์  
ทำประโยชน์ให้แก่มังตราผู้บุตรเมงกะยีนโยเท่านั้น

มังตรา -

อะ ๆ จะให้เด็ดทำประโยชน์แก่มังตรา อะ ๆ  
พูดแต่จะให้คนพันโทษกรรม นำหัวเราะยิ่งนัก ตองห่วนี้  
คนอย่างเจ้าก็เป็นอีกผู้หนึ่งที่สร้างตองอุมาด้วยมือ จะอ้างเอาบุญคุณอย่างไร  
ข้าพเจ้าไม่อาจเถียง แต่คนอย่างไฉ้จะเด็ด มันเป็นคนทำลาย  
จะเอามาเปรียบเสมอกันได้อย่างไร

มหาเถร -

อ้าว... ไฉ้ทะกะยอดิน นี้เอ็งกล้าย้อนคำกูหรือ เอาละ  
เรามาพูดกันโดยเหตุโดยผลเถอะ

มังตรา -

พูดก็ได้ สมัยเมื่อพระบิดาของข้าพเจ้าเสวยราชสมบัติ  
จะสั่งการอันใด พระมหาเถรท่านก็รับทำและปฏิบัติโดยดี ก็แล้วจะเด็ดเล่า  
ข้าพเจ้าผู้วางใจให้ไปทำการกลับไปหลงด้วยยศศักดิ์ให้ต่างดาวต่างแดน  
บำรุงบำเรอ จนการรับอาสนั้นล้มเหลว ข้าพเจ้าไปทำศึกด้วยแปรนั้น  
พาพลไปฉิบหายเสียเท่าไร พระอาจารย์ก็รู้อยู่เห็นอยู่

มังตรา -

ต้องเดินพลอย่างคนที่ตาบอด	ต้องฉิบหายววยวอดจนป่นปี้
มหาเถร เห็นอยู่ และรู้ดี	ยังจะมา พาที่ ขอกภัย
พลไพร่ ตายสิ้น เป็นหมื่นแสน	จะทดแทน เขาบ้าง อย่างไรได้
หรือจะให้ ตายแล้ว ก็แล้วไป	อยากจะได้ ฆอถาม แต่ตามตรง

มหาเถร -

มหาเถร จึงว่า มหาบพิตร	ทุกชีวิต ยับยู่ เป็นผุยผง
ฆ่าจะเด็ด ชาติใช้ ให้ตายลง	ไฉ้จะพิน คึนคัง ดั่งจใจ
ชาวตองอุ ตายแผ่ เพราะแปรฆ่า	ต้องตั้งหน้า ฆ่าแปร เพื่อแก้ไข
จะมาฆ่า พวกกัน ด้วยอันใด	ขอจงได้ ยับยู่ ฟังอาตมา
ซึ่งกล่าวหาจะเด็ดเป็นคนคิด	หรือกบฏ ก็ยัง ต้องกังขา
โยพระองค์ ไม่คิด พิจารณา	ให้ตองอุ กู้หน้า ในราวี้
ส่งจะเด็ด ยกทัพ กำกับไป	เพื่อชิงชัย ดีแปร แก้โทษที่
ว่าเอาใจ ออกห่าง ช่างผู้มี	ถ้ามันดี ไม่ได้ จึงให้ตาย

มังตรา - ถ้าเป็นผู้ยื่นพืดทูลข้าพเจ้าเช่นนี้ ข้าพเจ้าจะขอเอาโทษเสียให้สาสม  
ที่ตั้งใจหลอกหลวงข้าพเจ้า แต่นี้เป็นพระมหาเถรชัตติยาจารย์  
ข้าพเจ้ามังตราจนใจนัก ข้าพเจ้ามิใช่ทวารกอมมือดอก  
จึงจะคล้อยด้วยคำพระอาจารย์ จนถึงกับมอบพลให้แก่ไอ้คนคด  
เพื่อที่มันจะได้ยกกลับมาทิ่มตำเอาแก่ตองอู

มหาเถร - มังตราเอ๋ย ในยามเช่นนี้ ท่านจะเอาแต่ภูมและโทษะจริต  
เช่นนิสัยเมื่อน้อยนั้นไม่ได้ จริงอยู่ มหาบพิตรจะยังเยาว์ด้วยวัยวุฒิ แต่พระองค์  
ก็เลิศด้วยชาติวุฒิ จึงควรตรองการให้ถูกถ้วนควรแก่ฐานะผู้ครองแผ่นดิน  
อาตมาภาพเห็นแก่ความถ่องแท้ยุติธรรม แลเห็นแก่ประโยชน์ของ  
ตองอูไปพร้อมกันดอก จึงได้ทูลให้ส่งจะเด็ดกุมพลไปตีแปร หากมันทำไม่ได้  
จึงค่อยให้ความตายแก่มัน

มังตรา - ก็แล้วถ้ามันเอาพลของข้าพเจ้า ไปสวามิภักดิ์ต่อพระเจ้าแปรเล่า  
ข้าพเจ้ามิเสียทั้งความแค้นที่ยังมีได้แก่ และเสียทั้งพลไพร่ที่มอบให้ดอกหรือ  
ใครจะรับผิดชอบ

มหาเถร - ถ้ากระนั้น อาตมา จะอุทิศ เอาชีวิต ทำนูล ทูลถวาย  
เป็นประกัน มั่นคำ ร่ำบรรยาย ถ้าแม้ว่า มังฆาย มันใจคด  
หรือไม่อาจ ตีแปร ให้แยยับ แลและไม่กลับ คืนหลัง ดังกำหนด  
อาตมา ก็คือครู ผู้ทรยศ จะเปลื้องปลด ตัดหัว ของตัวเอง

มหาเถร - พอพระทัยไหมละ มังตรา

มังตรา - ฟังวาจา มหาเถรเห็นคงมั่น พระอึ้งอึ้ง ต้นใจ ไม่โจงเงง  
จะขึ้นเสียง ถึงคำ ก็ยำเกรง เหมือนข่มเหง น้ำใจ พระอาจารย์  
ค่อนบนนอบ ตอบว่า มหาเถร เมื่อแลเห็น หนทาง ดังว่าขาน  
ข้าพเจ้า สุดซัด หรือตัดทาน เมื่อเห็นการ ว่างาม ก็ตามใจ

มังตรา - ข้าพเจ้าจนจิต ด้วยเกรงจะเป็นศิษย์อกตัญญู  
จึงสู้รู้ที่จะขัดพระมหาเถรได้ เมื่อเห็นว่าเหมาะว่าควร  
จะเอาให้จงได้แล้วก็สุดแต่ใจแต่คำใดที่ขัดติยาจารย์ท่านรับรองและเอาหัวตั้ง  
ประกันไว้ฉันจงจดจำไว้ให้มันเถิด ข้าพเจ้าขอกล่าวเป็นคำขาดว่า  
ข้าพเจ้าไม่ต้องการเห็นหน้า ไอ้คนคด ทรยศต่อแผ่นดินอีกต่อไป

(มังตราลูกสะบัดหน้าเดินเข้าโรงไปเฉย ๆ มหาเถรขบใจตองห่วนยี่ และขอโทษขุนวัง จากนั้นมหาเถรแจ้งแก่ขุนวังและตองห่วนยี่ว่า จะขอปรึกษาด้วยการเตรียมทัพให้จะเด็ด แล้วสั่งกำชับให้จะเด็ดกลับไปวัดก่อน)

- การแสดงหน้าม่าน -

(จาเลงกะโบออกเดินวนเวียน จะเด็ดออกพบ)

จาเลงกะโบ - มังฉาย เป็นยังงี้บ้าง ทำไมเจ้ากลับออกมาได้ เขาไม่สั่งจับตัวดอกหรือ

มังฉาย - ถ้าพระมหาเถรเข้าไปไม่ทัน ข้าพเจ้าก็คงจะตายไปแล้ว  
(มองหน้าจาเลงกะโบ) พี่ท่านใช่ไหม ที่เป็นคนนำความมาบอกพระมหาเถร

จาเลงกะโบ - ช่างเถิด มังฉาย ยังงี้ ยังงี้ ท่านก็รอดพ้นออกมาแล้ว ข้าพเจ้าเองก็ดีใจ เพราะเป็นห่วงอยู่

มังฉาย - ท่านยังไม่ได้ตอบข้าพเจ้าว่าท่านใช่ไหมที่เอาความมาแจ้งแก่พระมหาเถร

จาเลงกะโบ - ใช่ ข้าพเจ้าเอง แต่ที่ทำไปนั้นก็เพราะความเป็นห่วงท่านเป็นสำคัญ ข้าพเจ้าได้ปรึกษากับนาคะตะเซโบด้วยแล้ว จึงทำไป

มังฉาย - นาคะตะเซโบ เออ.....แล้วหนีหายไปไหน ไม่ได้มากับพี่ท่านดอกหรือ

จาเลงกะโบ - ข้าพเจ้าได้นัดหมายให้เป็นผู้ติดตามท่าน ไม่ได้มาด้วยกันดอกหรือ

มังฉาย - มาด้วยกัน แต่ข้าพเจ้าแยกเข้าวังแต่ลำพัง ช่างเถอะ ป่านนี้คงจะไปเที่ยวชมเมือง เบื่อแล้วก็คงจะกลับมาเอง

(มหาเถรออก เรียกมังฉายเข้าไปนั่งแล้วว่า  
เข้าไปปรึกษาขุนวังทะกะยอดินและตองห่วนยี่เขาแล้ว  
ต่างก็หนักใจในเรื่องที่เจ้าจะเป็นแม่ทัพไปตีแปร  
จึงอยากจะถามว่าเจ้าได้คิดกลศึกไว้อย่างไรบ้าง  
และจะเอาพลไปมากน้อยสักเท่าใด)

มังฉาย - ทุกเวลาข้าพเจ้าอยู่เมืองแปร ได้เส็งแล รู้แจ้ง แถงไช  
ว่าทัพบก แปรแล้ว ไม่เท่าไร แต่ทัพเรือ นั้นไซ้รู้ แสนชำนาญ  
แม่นเข้าดี แต่ข้าง ทางทัพบก ไม่วิตก ระวัง เรื่องต่อต้าน  
จะเอาพล ไปมาก ก็ยากนาน สักประมาณ สองหมื่น เลือกพื้นดี

ข้างทัพเรือนั้นไซ้รไม่ต้องการ เปลื้องทหาร เหล่าล้วน ไม่ควรที่  
กลศึก แลเลี้ยง ต้องเร่งตี เป็นไม่มี สิ่งใด ให้กังวล

มหาเถร - มหาเถร เห็นศิษย์ คิดกลศึก ดูล้าลึก มั่นใจ ว่าได้ผล  
ก็ชื่นชม สมหวัง ดังกมล สมเป็นคน ศิษย์ดั่ง มังสินธุ์  
แล้วนั่งนับ หลับตา พยากรณ์ ทุกชั้นตอน ให้เห็น อยู่เป็นครู  
ก็กระจ่าง แจ่มจริง ทุกสิ่งรู้ จึงเจ้าครู บอกแจ้ง แห่งคดี

(มหาเถรแจ้งแก่มังฉายว่า การศึกครั้งนี้ถึงข้าจะวางใจว่าเจ้าจะเอาชนะได้  
แต่ก็ยังวิตกว่าความเยาว์ด้วยอายุของเจ้าจะเป็นรองจนอาจเพลิงพล้ำแก่สติ  
ปัญญาของรานองผู้อุปราชเมืองแปรครั้งนี้เป็นครั้งแรกที่เจ้าจะออกศึกในฐานะ  
เป็นแม่ทัพ และจำเป็นจะต้องเอาชนะชนะให้จงได้ หากไม่ขัดด้วยเพศบรรพชิต  
กับการที่จะต้องอยู่เป็นตัวประกันตามสัญญาที่ให้ไว้แก่มังตราแล้ว  
ข้าเองก็ใคร่จะออกไปคอยดูแลช่วยเหลือเจ้า ในเมื่อทำเช่นนั้นไม่ได้แล้ว  
ก็ยังคิดที่จะต้องหาใคร สักคนหนึ่งไปช่วยเจ้า)

มังฉาย - พระมหาเถร เห็นว่าใครเล่าเจ้าคะ ที่ข้าพเจ้าควรจะไปพึ่งพาอาศัย  
เสมอได้ด้วยพระมหาเถร

มหาเถร - ข้าตรวจตรองมองเห็นเป็นเหมาะมั่น คนคนนั้น บั่นบุก มาทุกที่  
เคยรบเรียง เคียงบ่า กับข้านี้ เขาก็คือ ตาคะยี ยอดฝีมือ  
แม่นเจ้าได้ ไปด้วย ช่วยแนะนำ เป็นต้องกำ ชัยชนะ ได้ขึ้นชื่อ  
แต่จะต้อง เถิดมา เพื่อหาหรือ ข้าจะเขียน หนังสือ ถือนำกาย

เปิดม่าน ฉากอุทยาน  
(ตะละแม่จันทราออก)

จันทรา - จันทรเอย จันทรา เจ้าลอยฟ้าคลาเคลื่อนคืนเดือนหงาย  
แม่เมฆตั้ง บังเดือน ยังเคลื่อนคลาย ไม่เคราะห์ร้ายเหมือนกันกับจันทรา  
มีแต่ทุกข์ รันทด เข้าบดบัง ไม่หยุดยั้ง ยาวยืด มีदनักหนา  
ยามเมฆเคลื่อนเดือนหงายเฝ้าหมายตา อยากเห็นหน้ามังฉาย คล้ายเห็นจันทร

(กันทิมา (แต่งหญิงพม่า) ออกมาเฝ้าตะละแม่จันทรา)

กันทิมา - ตะละแม่เพคะ เรื่องมังฉายจะได้แก้ตัวเพื่อพิสูจน์ความภักดี  
ก็เห็นว่าจจะบรรเทาหลงแล้ว แต่พระพักตร์ตะละแม่เจ้าก็ยังคงเศร้าอยู่ดูเดิม  
ยังทรงกังวลด้วยเรื่องอื่นอยู่อีกหรือเพคะ

- จันทรา - ข้าพเจ้ากังวลอยู่ด้วยเรื่องศึกถึงสองศึก  
ศึกหนึ่งคือศึกที่จะเด็ดจะต้องยกไปตีแปร ศึกนั้นข้าพเจ้าไม่สู้กังวล  
แต่ว่าอันศึกภายในหัวใจของจะเด็ด ณ เมืองแปรนั้นสิ  
เป็นอีกศึกหนึ่งที่ข้าพเจ้าเป็นห่วงยิ่งนัก
- กันทิมา - ข้าแต่ตะละแม่เจ้า อันการศึกสงครามซึ่งมังฆงายจะยกไปตีแปรนั้น  
ข้าพเจ้าคิดว่าคงไม่เกินป่าเกินแรง อย่างไรเสียมังฆงายก็คงหักเอาได้ด้วยกลศึก  
เพราะล่องรู้ลู่ทางอยู่ทั้งภายนอกและภายในยิ่งเป็นการซึ่งจะต้องพิสูจน์ตนเองถึง  
ความจงรักภักดีต่อตองอู และ ตะเบงซะเวตี้ด้วยแล้ว  
เท่าที่เห็นและติดตามนายท่านเมื่อปลอมเป็นนาคะตะเซโปนั้น  
ข้าพเจ้ามั่นใจว่า มังฆงายนายท่านจะทำได้แน่
- จันทรา - แล้วเรื่องตะละแม่กุสุมาพระลูกหลวงนั้นเล่า เจ้านิกหรือจะมีเป็นกังวล  
จนทำให้มังฆงายต้องพะว้าพะวัง
- กันทิมา - ข้าแต่ตะละแม่เจ้า  
หากจะทำให้ตะละแม่ทรงคลายวิตกในเรื่องความสัมพันธ์ระหว่าง  
มังฆงายกับตะละแม่กุสุมาลงได้บ้างแล้ว ข้าพเจ้าก็ขอกราบทูล  
เท่าที่ข้าพเจ้าเห็นและสืบรู้ว่า  
ตะละแม่กุสุมากับมังฆงายนั้นแม้จะมีสัมพันธ์ต่อกัน  
แต่ก็ดูเป็นมั่นคงจริงจังแต่ข้างธิดาพระเจ้าแปร แต่ข้างมังฆงายนั้น  
ข้าพเจ้าหาได้สังเกตเห็นเป็นจริงจังไม่
- จันทรา - เจ้าแน่ใจได้เพียงใด
- กันทิมา - ก่อนที่พระเจ้านระบรดี จะทรงตัดสินใจสั่งจับมังฆงายเข้าคุกนั้น  
ได้พยายามกล่อมใจอยู่ถึงสองครั้ง  
ในอันที่จะให้ขุนวังมังฆงายยอมอภิเษกด้วยพระลูกหลวง  
เพื่อว่าจะใช้เป็นเครื่องหน่วงมิให้ตะเบงซะเวตี้รู้ความเข้าตีเมืองแปร  
แต่ทุกครั้งมังฆงายก็ปฏิเสธและยืนกรานอย่างมั่นคง  
ว่าจะมีคู่ครองก็แต่เฉพาะเป็นสาวตองอู ผู้อยู่ในดวงใจตลอดเวลาเพคะ
- จันทรา - นั่นก็มิได้หมายความว่า หลิงตองอูผู้นั้นจะต้องเป็นข้าพเจ้า
- กันทิมา - ข้าพเจ้าแท้จริงไม่เกรงใจ ว่านางใน ใจจะเด็ด ปรารถนา  
เป็นเพียงแท้ ตะละแม่ องค์จันทรา ขออย่าทรง สงกา ข้าแนใจ  
วันข้าเจ้า เอาความ ตามไปขอ พอเอ่ยออก ชื่อจันทรา น้ำตาไหล

ข้าแกล้งถาม นามนาง กลางหทัย ก็รับว่า มิใช่ใคร คือจันทรา

กันทิมา - จริง ๆ นะเพคะ ข้าพเจ้าเองยังเคยปลื้มใจแทนตะละแม่ท่าน  
ขณะนี้ข้าพเจ้าทราบว่าคุณวังมั่งฉายไปพักอยู่กับพระมหาเถรที่วัดกุสุโธ  
ถ้าตะละแม่ท่านจะใคร่พบละก็ ข้าพเจ้าจะเป็นคนติดต่อให้ก็ได้เพคะ

จันทรา - อย่างนะกันทิมา ไฟในวังเริ่มจะเบาบางลงบ้างแล้ว  
เจ้าอย่าคิดเอาน้ำมันมาราดรดอีกเป็นอันขาด เจ้าก็รู้อยู่แล้ว  
มั่งฉายพิโรธจะเด็ดยิ่ง เหมือนกับไฟที่ไม่ปาน  
ขึ้นไปพาหรือนัดหมายจะเด็ดเข้าวัง ความทราบถึงมั่งฉายละก็  
อย่าว่าแต่จะเด็ดเลย แม้ข้าพเจ้าหรือนางกันทิมาเองหัวก็จะมิ ตั้งป่า  
นี้ก็ค้ำมากแล้วเจ้ากลับขึ้นไปตำหนักก่อนเถอะ อักสักครู่ข้าพเจ้าจะตามไป

มั่งฉาย - ตะละแม่จันทรา พะยะคะ  
จันทรา - (หันไปมองเห็นจะเด็ด) จะเด็ด  
(ทั้งคู่เผลอเข้ากอดกัน ครู่หนึ่งจันทราพรากร่างออกแล้วร้องไห้)

มั่งฉาย - ตะละแม่น้องท่าน เป็นเวลาร่วมปีที่ข้าพเจ้ารอวันนี้  
ฝ้าปรารภนาจะให้มาตั้งอยู่ทุกลมหายใจ  
ข้าพเจ้าไม่นึกเลยว่าครั้นวันนี้มาถึงสมฝันแล้ว กลับต้องมาพบกับรอยน้ำตา  
บนใบหน้าตะละแม่ท่าน (ตะละแม่จันทรานั่งร้องไห้เฉยอยู่) ตะละแม่จันทราเอ๋ย  
อันเรือนแขนของข้าพเจ้านี้ แต่ก่อนกาลน้องท่านเคยเอ๋ยเอื้อนไว้ว่า  
ได้ตกอยู่ในเรือนแขนของข้าพเจ้าแล้ว  
ทุกซั่มมาแต่ครั้งใดก็ปลาสนาการไปจนสิ้น ก็แล้วครั้งนี้เล่า  
ไยตะละแม่ท่านจึงสำแดงกิริยาเหมือนดังเรือนแขนของข้าพเจ้าเป็นเรือนไว้ศพ  
บรรทุกไว้ซึ่งความโศกเศร้าเช่นนี้  
ตะละแม่จันทราโปรดได้เมตตาแจ้งแก่ข้าพเจ้าด้วยเถิด  
ว่าตะละแม่ท่านเป็นทุกข์ด้วยอันใด

จันทรา - อันอ้อมแขน ซึ่งแสนจะอบอุ่น เคยได้คุ่น คุณรัก เลิศหนักหนา  
ไม่ถึงปี ที่ผ่าน กาลล่วงมา ไม่นึกว่า กลับกลายเป็นได้เช่นนี้  
ความอ่อนนุ่ม ชุ่มชื้น ไม่เย็นยาว ราศีดาว เข้าขัด แส่นบัดสี  
จะอิงแอบ แนบหน้า ก็ราศี จะยินดี อิงกาย ก็อาลัย

มั่งฉาย - ใจดอกแก้ว ดอกอู ผู้จันทรา เพียงเห็นหน้า ยอดยุพิน ก็หมิ่นได้  
ช่างเสียแรง แฝงฝ่า กล้าเสี่ยงภัย ช่างเสียที่ ที่ใคร ได้พบนาง  
นับประสา ว่าใจ จะได้สุข กลับได้ทุกข์ ซอกซำ ด้วยคำอ้าง



ไม่ถามซัก สักคำ รำระคาง

ไม่แถมผิด คิดอย่าง ช่างมั่งตรา

มั่งฉาย -

ตะละแม่จันทราผู้สูงศักดิ์

ขอตะละแม่ท่านจงมองดูข้าพเจ้าให้เต็มตาอีกสักครั้งหนึ่งเถิด  
(คุกเข่าลงต่อหน้านาง) แต่เดิมนั้นข้าพเจ้าเป็นเพียงชายผู้หาศักดิ์ตระกูลมิได้  
ลำพังวิสัยจะเด็ดเพียงลำพังที่ไหนจะหนักไปด้วยความวิริยะพากเพียร  
จนอาจเรียนรู้วิชาพิชัยสงคราม แลพอกพูนขึ้นด้วยคุณสมบัติ  
ซึ่งจะเด็ดเป็นได้ถึงเพียงนี้มิใช่ความปรานีแห่งตะละแม่เมืองตองอูเป็นผู้มีส่วน  
เทิดชูและปลูกปั้นมาดอกหรือ แลเมื่อตะละแม่มีส่วนสร้างคนผู้ขึ้นขึ้นมาแล้ว  
บัดนี้ไฉนจึงกล่าวคำเหมือนว่าจงใจจะแก่งทำลายให้ข้าพเจ้าไปตายเสีย  
เมื่อจาก

จันทรา -

โธ...จะเด็ด...(โผเข้าถึงตัวจะเด็ดลุกขึ้นแล้วเข้ากอดไว้)

จันทรา -

ข้าพเจ้า แจ้งข่าว เขาเล่าลือ ถึงมิได้ เชื้อถือ เช่นคำว่า  
แต่เรื่องท่าน มั่นหมาย กุสุมา จะไม่นึก ตรีกตรา ได้อย่างไร  
โปรดเอาใจ จันทรา มาสู่ท่าน จะรู้ว่า ไหวห้วน นั้นเพียงไหน  
ไหนจะรัก ไหนจะห่วง ดังดวงใจ หัวอกใคร ไหนจะห้วน เท่าจันทรา

มั่งฉาย -

นางเอย นางแก้ว สมควรแล้ว ที่เป็นนาง กลางใจข้า  
ขอบอกความ ตามจิต เจตนา อันนางผู้ กุสุมา ธิดาแปร  
ข้าเคยคิด รักอย่าง นางเป็นมิตร ไม่ฝั่งจิต เช่นจันทรา ตะละแม่  
ไม่หลีกเสียด เบียงเบน เป็นเพียงแท้ ไม่ขอแก้ ข้อข่าว เล่าลือกัน

มั่งฉาย -

เวลาแห่งการพลัดพรากนั้น ย่อมมาถึงรวดเร็วเหลือประมาณ  
(ดึงนางเข้ามากอด) ตะละแม่จันทรานางแก้วของข้าพเจ้า  
ขอแม่อย่าได้คิดเอาแต่ความหึงหวงและโกรธแค้นครองไว้เลย จงเอ็นดูเถิด  
ข้าพเจ้าจะจากนางไปนี้ คงจะนานวัน  
มิใช่จากแต่ข้างขึ้นแล้วกลับมาสู่ในข้างแรมนั้นดอก  
แม้บัดนี้แม่ท่านจะยังข้องระคาง  
จะมีอาจปลงใจรักข้าพเจ้าเสมอเมื่อก่อนได้สนิทใจ แต่ก่อนจากไป  
ข้าพเจ้าก็ใคร่จะได้รับพรจากปากแห่งนางแม้สักเพียงคำน้อย

จันทรา -

ข้าพเจ้า สาวตองอู ผู้ยึดถือ ความสัตย์ซื่อ ในรัก สมัครมัน  
ขอยึดเอา พุทธคุณ คุณชีวัน มาเป็นเกราะ คุ่มกัน สรรพภัย  
เชิญอำนาจ สัจจัง สิ้นทั้งหลาย จงคุ้มครอง บัองชาย นายทัพใหม่  
ให้ชนะ ตีกแปร แลศึกใจ อย่างวันไหว ในสงครามตามประจัญ

- ปิดม่าน -

- การแสดงหน้าม่าน -

(มหาเถรกับตะคะยี่เดินออกมาด้วยกัน

แล้วสนทนาว่าในเมื่อสหายได้รู้เรื่องต่าง ๆ เกี่ยวกับภูมิหลังของจะเด็ดแล้ว  
พร้อมทั้งยอมรับเป็นตัวแทนอาตมาไปในกองทัพครั้งนี้ อาตมาก็เหมือนยก  
ภูผาออกจากร่าง ขอขอบใจสหายรักตะคะยี่มาก  
จากนั้นมหาเถรเรียกลูกศิษย์ทั้งหมด จะเด็ด จาเลงกะโบ เนงบา สีอ่อน มีด  
ถนอม ออกมาสั่งความ)

มหาเถร -

กุมอบให้ ตะคะยี่ ที่กล้าแก่น  
ซึ่งจะคิด หักหาญ ในราญรอน  
อันคำใด ออกจาก ปากของครู  
จงทำตาม ทุกคำ รำพาที่

เป็นตัวแทน ของกู ผู้สมร  
จงผันผ่อน ปรึกษา ตาคะยี่  
นั่นก็คือ คำกู เป็นถ่วงถ่วง  
อย่าอวดดี ดื้อดึง จงฟังพา

(มหาเถรสั่งส่ำทับแล้ว แจ้งแก่ตะคะยี่และบรรดาศิษย์ว่า

คืบนี้เป็นคืบเดือนเพ็ญฤกษ์ผานาที่คืนัก เข้า  
ไปทางโน้นกันเถิดกูจะทำพิธีตัดไม้ข่มนามให้ต้องตามตำราพิชัยยุทธ์  
กับจะได้ทำน้ามนตร์รดให้ แล้วกระซิบสั่งมีดว่า  
เรื่องที่ถูกให้ไปติดต่อกันนั้นได้ความว่าอย่างไร  
มีดบอกว่าในวังส่งข่าวมาแล้ว ให้เป็นไปตามพระมหาเถรสั่งการ  
ข้างในวังนั้นพร้อมแล้ว มหาเถรจึงสั่งให้ทุกคนไปข้างใน)  
(ผู้แสดงทั้งหมดเข้าโรง)

- เปิดม่านฉากพระตำหนักเมืองตองอู -

(นางพระกำนัลตองอู 2 คน เชิญถาดน้ำจันท์และเครื่องแกกล้มออกตั้งเตรียม  
พระมเหสีนั่งนทวดีออก)

นันทวดี -

ฝ่ายโฉมยง องค์มิ่ง มเหสี  
ถึงกำหนด นัดหมาย ได้เวลา  
รอเสด็จ ทูลกระหม่อม ผู้จอมวัง  
ทั้งผู้คน ช่างใช้ ถวายงาน

ในตะเบง- สะเวตี้ ศรีสง่า  
มาจัดเครื่อง โภชนา สุราบาล  
พร้อมพรั่ง ทั้งสุรา และอาหาร  
ให้จัดการ เป็นพิเศษ เจตจำนง

(แม่นมเลาซีกับกัณฑ์มามาถึง นันทวดีเข้าไปต้อนรับ กัณฑ์มาถวายบังคม นันทวดีไหว้แม่นม)

นันทวดี -

ข้าพเจ้าขอเคารพแม่นมเลาซี เชิญนั่งเสียดตรงนี้เถิดแม่นมท่าน  
กัณฑ์มาเจ้าช่วยดูแลแม่นมแทนข้าพเจ้าด้วยเถิดนะ

(ตะละแม่จันทรากับนางตองสาออก นันทวดีเข้าไปรับ  
ทุกคนถวายบังคม ตะละแม่จันทราไหว้แม่นมเลาซี แล้วเดินมาหานันทวดี)

จันทรา - ข้าพเจ้ายิ่งหวั่น และพรั่นจิต เกรงจะผิด พลาดความ ตามประสงค์  
แม่นไม่สม ดั่งจิต คิดจ้านง จะเป็นผง เข้าตา น่านหวั่นใจ

นันทวดี - พระพี่นางอย่าระคางคิดขุ่นข้อง เราพี่น้อง ร่วมจิต ร่วมชิตไกล่  
พระแม่เจ้า จะมาด้วย ช่วยอวยชัย เห็นจะได้ ดั่งถวิล จินตนา

(พระมหาเทวีออก มีนางพระกำนัลติดตามมา 2 คน ทุกคนถวายบังคม)

มหาเทวี - เมื่อวันวานแม่ไปหามังตราเขา ค่อยโลมเล้าเห็นอ่อนหย่อนนักษณา  
แต่ยังถือ ทิษฐิ มิรอร่า ทั้งที่ท่า กล้าแข็ง แรงเอาการ

(เสียดตะโกนจากในโรงว่า “องค์ตะเบงชะเวตี้เสด็จแล้ว”)

(มังตราออก มีทหารองครักษ์ติดตามมา 6 คน (ใช้ทหารพม่า) ส่งเสด็จแล้วกลับเข้าโรง)

มังตรา - พระปิ่นหล้าฟ้าดินองค์ลั่นด้า ผู้เลิศล้ำ สีนหาท แสนอาจหาญ  
เสด็จสู่ ห้องเสวย เคยสำราญ พระภูบาล ชายนเตร ทศนา  
เห็นทั้งเมีย ทั้งแม่ แลพระพี่ แม่แม่นม เลาซี อยู่พร้อมหน้า  
ก็หมายรู้ อยู่ใน ใจมังตรา ว่ามีไซ้ ธรรมดา แล้วครานี้  
เข้านั่งกลางพลางทักพระพักตร์พริ้ม ทำแย้มยิ้ม ทักทาย ไม่น่ายหนี  
แต่ในจิต คิดระแวง แคลงฤดี พระภูมิ นั่งข่ม อารมณไว้

มังตรา - เสด็จแม่ เมื่อวานก็เสด็จไปให้เฝ้า เมื่อตอนเช้าลูกก็ได้พบ  
มาตอนค่านีก็ได้เห็นเสด็จแม่อีก น่านปลื้มใจจริง ๆ  
ทรงมีพระธุระอะไรระมังพะคะยะ

มหาเทวี - ไม่มีอะไรหอกลูก แม่อยู่ว่าง ๆ ก็เลยแวะมาเท่านั้นเอง

นันทวดี - เชิญเสวยน้ำจันท์เถิดเพคะ

มังตรา - อ้อ..แม่นมเลาซีก็มาด้วยหรือคะ (แม่นมถวายบังคม  
มังตราวางแก้วเหล้าเดินเข้าไปนั่งลงข้างแม่นม) ชาวว่าแม่นมท่าน  
สุขภาพไม่ค่อยจะดี ข้าพเจ้ามังตราเป็นห่วงนัก  
ว่าจะไปเยี่ยมหลายครั้งแล้วแต่ก็ไม่มีเวลา หายดีแล้วหรือคะแม่นม

เลาซี - เป็นพระมหากษัตริย์คุณแก่แม่นมแล้วเพคะ

- นันทวดี - (เข้าไปเฝ้า) เชิญ  
ทูลกระหม่อมไปประทับเสวยน้ำจันทน์และเครื่องโภชนาหารที่พระแท่นโนนเกิด  
เพคะ
- มังตรา - อ้อ พี่จันทราก็มาอยู่กับเขาด้วย พุดถึงเรื่องแม่นมเลาซีแล้ว ข้าพเจ้า  
ขอฝากฝังไว้ด้วยนะ ถ้าหนักหนาอย่างไร ช่วยแจ้งให้ข้าพเจ้าทราบทันที  
(นันทวดีส่งจอกเกล้าให้เสวย มังตรารับจอกมา  
พอจะยกขึ้นดื่มทำเป็นนีกอะไรขึ้นได้อีก) อ้อ..แล้วพระพี่นางจันทราละ  
ไม่เคยมาหาน้องเพลานี้ วันนี้ถ้าจะมีธุระอะไรมาแจ้งกระมัง
- จันทรา - ไม่มีเรื่องอะไรหรอก น้องมังตรา พี่เห็นพระมหาเทวีกับแม่นมเลาซีมา  
ก็เลยตามมาด้วย
- มังตรา - วันนี้ถ้าจะเป็นวันฤกษ์ดี ได้พบกันพร้อมหน้าพร้อมต่าน่าป्ली่มใจ  
ที่ข้างนอกถ้าจะมีใครรออยู่อีกกระมัง
- นันทวดี - ไม่มีดอกเพคะ เชิญเสวยให้ทรงพระสำราญเกิดเพคะ
- มหาเทวี - แม่ได้ข่าว ว่าพล จัฒพร้อมสรรพ รอแต่คน กำกับ แม่ทัพใหม่  
มีรู้ว่า จะประกอบ มอบให้ใคร เป็นแม่ทัพ ยกไป เพื่อราวี
- มังตรา - เสด็จแม่ และใคร ๆ ในที่นี้ ต่างก็รู้ดีแจ้งดีอยู่แล้วทั้งนั้น  
จะมาแก้งถามกันทำไมอีก
- นันทวดี - ทูลกระหม่อม ทำไม่รับสั่งกับเสด็จแม่อย่างนั้นเล่าเพคะ (ถวายจอกเกล้า  
มังตรารับไปดื่มรวดเดียวหมด แล้วรินดื่มเองอีกจอกหนึ่ง)
- (ขุนวังทะกะยอเดินกับตองห่วนยี่คลานเข้าเฝ้า)
- ขุนวัง - ขอเดชะ พระบารมีปกเกล้าปกกระหม่อม  
บัดนี้มังสินธุโกไสดอมหาเถรมาขอเข้าเฝ้า
- มังตรา - พระเจ้ามีธุระอะไรหนักหนา คำมีดอย่างนี้แล้ว

- มหาเทวี -                    ทำไมตรัสอย่างนั้นล่ะลูกมั่งตรา  
นี่พ่อเห็นพระมหาเถรเป็นคนอื่นไปแล้วหรือลูก  
(มั่งตรารินเกล้าตี๋ม)
- นันทวดี -                   โปรดให้ข้าเฝ้าเกิดเพคะ ท่านพ่อ ไปนิมนต์พระมหาเถรเข้ามาเกิด
- มหาเถร -                   คนเหล่านี้คือผู้จงรักภักดี ต่อตะเบงชเวตี้และแผ่นดินทอง  
อันจะอาสาไปรบสู้ เอาเมืองแปร มาถวายแทบพระบาท  
ผู้ไปแทนอาตมาคือตะคะยี้ครูดาบดงกะเหรี่ยง กับอีกสามทหารเสือกู่พระทัย คือ  
จาเลงกะโบ เนงบา และสีอ่อง ส่วนไพร่พลอีกสองหมื่นนั้น  
ประชุมทัพอยู่ลานประทุมพลแล้ว
- มั่งตรา -                   สองหมื่น ฮะ ๆ ๆ จะไปตีแปร ให้พลไปแค่สองหมื่น ฮะ ๆ ๆ ๆ  
มันจะไปตีหรือมันจะไปตาย นี่นะหรือมหาเถรผู้รักสานุศิษย์
- มหาเถร -                   (ซึกเคื่อง) อ้าว ก็ไอ้ตัวแม่ทัพมันยืนยั้นจะเอาเท่านั้น  
อาตมาภาพจะไปยึดเยียดให้มัน  
ยังงี้ เออ...แปลกดีแะฮะ
- มั่งตรา -                   ก็ดี ถ้าอย่างไร ข้าพเจ้าจะได้ฆ่าพระกันคราวนี้แหละ
- มหาเถร -                   (โกรธ) หยุคนะมั่งตรา  
นี่ตะเบงชเวตี้จ้านรจหรือว่าน้ำจันท์มันปราศรัย ข้าพเจ้าเข้ามาเพลา  
นี้ใช้ว่าจะมาต่อคำด้วยกษัตริย์ผู้เป็นสานุศิษย์ แต่จะพาแม่ทัพนายกองมาเข้าเฝ้า  
เพื่อขอพระราชทานอาญาสิทธิ์ และพระราชานุญาตเคลื่อนทัพ  
ตามโบราณราชประเพณี เพื่อบรรดาศิษย์อันมีจิตภักดีต่อแผ่นดิน  
มันจะได้พ้นราคินด้วยข้อหาว่าเป็นกบฏ
- มั่งตรา -                   ข้าพเจ้าก็ได้กล่าวอนุญาตไว้มั่นคงแล้ว แต่วันก่อน
- มหาเถร -                   แล้วพระแสงดาบอาญาสิทธิ์เล่า  
จะมีทรงพระราชทานให้มันไปคุ้มหัวคุ้มเกล้าดอกหรือ
- มั่งตรา -                   ก็แล้วมันไปมุดหน้าซ่อนตัวอยู่ที่ไหนเล่า
- มหาเถร -                   เออ จริง ไอ้ขุนวังทะกะยอเดิน ทำไมเจ้าไม่อนุญาตให้ไอ้จะเด็ดเข้าเฝ้า  
อ้อ กั้นหรือ ก้วจะกลับโปรดเช่นเดิมหรือ ไป...ไปพามันเข้ามา

(อำมาตย์พม่าผู้หนึ่งอัญเชิญพานใส่พระแสงออกมาตั้งเตรียมจะส่งถวายให้มังตรา ขุนวังพามังงายในชุดขุนศึกออก มังตรามองสบตาแล้วสะบัดพัทตร์ไปทางอื่น มังงายเข้าถวายบังคมแทบพระบาท มังตรายังทำบั้นปิ้ง อำมาตย์เชิญพานพระแสงเข้าถวาย มังตราหยิบพระแสงแทนที่จะส่งให้จะเด็ด กับส่งยื่นไปทางมหาเถร)

มังตรา -

(พูดหนักแน่นแกมประชด) ข้าแต่ท่านมหาเถรชัตติยาจารย์ ถึงแม้ข้าพเจ้าจะเป็นกษัตริย์ แต่ทว่าเป็นสาธุศิษย์ผู้ถือเอาพระคุณเจ้าเป็นดุจบิดา อนึ่งเล่าศึกครั้งนี้พระคุณเจ้าสู้เอาศีระและชีวิตเป็นประกัน ผู้ใดมันทรยศต่อตองอุโทษมันมิใช่แต่เพียงอกตัญญูต่อแผ่นดินแลกษัตริย์ หากแต่มันผู้นั้นเท่ากับทรยศต่อชัตติยาจารย์เจ้า อันคุ่มเกล้าคุ่มหัวดุจบิดาบังเกิดเกล้าของข้าพเจ้าด้วย ฉะนั้นเพื่อเป็นที่ประจักษ์แจ้ง พระแสงอาญาสิทธิ์เล่มนี้ ขอพระคุณเจ้าจงเป็นเช่นหัตถ์แห่ง ตะเบงชะเวตี้ หยิบยื่นให้แก่ผู้ซึ่งสู้สุดส่าห์เอาชีวิตเป็นประกันนั้นเถิด)

(มังตรายื่นพระแสงดาบให้แก่มหาเถร มหาเถรนิ่งอยู่ แล้วเบือนพัทตร์ไปเสียอีกทางหนึ่ง มหาเถรมองดูแล้วลุกหนีเข้าโรงไปเฉย ๆ มังตราหันมาเห็นมหาเถรหายไป ก็รู้ว่ามหาเถรไม่พอใจ ถือดาบนิ่งอยู่ จะเด็ดคูลานเข้าไปกราบพระบาทแล้วนั่งพนมมือต่อหน้ามังตรา มังตราตัดใจยื่นพระแสงอาญาสิทธิ์ให้ต่อมือจะเด็ด แล้วลุกเข้าโรงไป)

มังงาย -

ข้าพเจ้า กราบลาบรรมบาท เชิญพระราช อาญาสิทธิ์ ใส่เกศี จะทำการ ด้วยจงรัก มั่นภักดี และถวาย ชีวี แทบบาทา

- ปิดม่าน -

- การแสดงเวทีล่าง -

แม่ทัพ คนใหม่หน้าใจเพชร ชื่อจะเด็ด สามารถ อกากกล้า  
พร้อมทุกหมู่ ทุกหมวด ตรวจตรา ได้เพลา ฤกษ์ดี กรีฑาพล

- จบการแสดง -

## Bibliography

- Aeusrovongse, Nidhi. *Khon, Karabao, Nam-nao and Nang Thai : Wa Duai Pleang Phasa Lae Nana Mahorasop*[*Khon, Karabao, Melodrama and Thai Cinema: Regarding to Music, Language and Many Kinds of Entertainments*. Bangkok: Matichon, 1995. Print.
- ‘Anucha Sumaman.’ *Cat and Net: Contemporary Thai Lifestyle* . N.p., 05 01 2012. Web. 25 Nov 2013. <<http://www.catandnat.com/pages/content/anucha-sumaman>>
- Anumamrachadhon. ‘Karn Ban Leng Pleng Dontri Sum Rab Pra Cha Chon Kong Athibodi Krom Silapakorn [Concert for People by the Director-General of Krom Silapakorn]’. *Unarut*. Phra Nakorn: Chareantham. 1948.Print.
- Ayuthaya, Yaowaluk Palakawong Na. Personal Interview. 22 Febuary 2012.
- Bairner, Alan . ‘When ‘East’ meets ‘West’: reflections on cultural exchange.’ *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science*. 1.2-3 (2012): 87-96. Print.
- Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit. *A History of Thailand*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.Print.
- Bakhtin, M. M., and Michael Holquist. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- Bangkok Times [Bangkok] 17 Dec. 1900.
- Bates, Thomas R. ‘Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony.’ *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 36.2 (1975): 351-366. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter, and J. A. Underwood. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. London: Penguin, 2008. Print.

- Bhabha, Homi K. 'Culture's In Between'. *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Eds. Hall, Stuart, and Paul Du Gay. London: Sage Publication, 1996. 53-60. Print.
- Boonyachai, Pramate. Personal Interview. 08 Apr 2013.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge, 1984. Print.
- Bowornwathana, Bidhya . 'History and Political Context of Public Administration in Thailand.' Trans. Array *Public Administration in Southeast Asia: Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Macao*. Florida: CRC Press, 2011. 29-52. Prints.
- Bowring, Sir John. *The Kingdom and People of Siam; With a Narrative of the Mission to that Country in 1855*. London: John W.Parker and Son, West Strand, 1857. Print.
- Bradley, Dan. 'Visit to a Gambling Establishment.' in Mary Backus, ed. *Siam and Laos, As Seen by Our American Missionaries*. Philadelphia: Preabyterian Board of Missions, 1884. 233-235. Print.
- Brandon, Jame R. *The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press , 1993. Print.
- . *Theatre in Southeast Asia*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974. Print.
- Bunnag, Tej. *The Provincial Administration of Siam 1892-1915*. Singapore: Printers & Converters (Pte) Ltd, 1977. Print.
- Burusratanaphand, M.L.Walwipha. *Nattasilp Thai [Thai Performing Arts]*. Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1993. Print.



- Canclini, Nestor Garcia. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia Lopez. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. Print.
- Chalermpow, Palita K. 'Thai Middle-Class Practise and Consumption of Traditional Dance: 'Thai-ness' and High Art'. *Local Cultures and the 'New Asia'*, Ed. C.J.W.-L. Wee. Singapore: Institutes of South-east Asian Studies, 2002. 217-241. Print.
- Chanchareon, Ratthasart. 'Lakkarn Pen Burengnong Nai Lakhon Phanthang Phuchanasibthit [The Principles of Burengnong in Lakhon Phanthang Phuchanasibthit]'. MA thesis. Chulalongkorn University, 2007. Print.
- Chansiri, Disaphol. *The Chinese émigrés of Thailand in the twentieth century*. Youngstown, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2008. Print.
- Chansuwan, Supachai. 'An Analysis of King Rama VI's Thoughts on and His Role in the Dramatic and Music Educational Enhancement: A Case Study of the Phranluang School under the Royal Patronage.' Diss. Chulalongkorn University, 1995. Print.
- . Personal Interview. 12 May 2012.
- . Personal Interview. 25 May 2012.
- Chantaraksa, Noppawan. Personal Interview. 15 March 2012.
- Chonlapatan, Krom. *Pare Sayum Porn [The Married of Pare]*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1992. Print.
- Chuenpraphanusorn, Teeradet. 'Karn Wikrol Botbaht Lae Kha Niyaom Nai Sue Pean Ban Lakhorn Saepa Khunchang Khunphan [The analysis of roles and values in folk media Lakhorn Saepa Khunchang Khunphan ]'. MA Thesis. Chulalongkorn University. Bangkok, 1995.

- Cohen, Matthew Isaac. 'Contemporary Wayang In Global Contexts.' *Asian Theatre Journal*: 338-369. Print.
- . *The Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theater in Colonial Indonesia, 1891-1903* . Ohio: Centre for International Studies Ohio University, 2006. Print.
- . 'On the Origin of the Komedie Stamboel Popular Culture, Colonial Society, and the Parsi Theatre Movement.' *Bijdragen tot de Taal ,Land-en Volkenkunde* .157.2 (2001): 313-357.Print.
- . *Performing Otherness; Java and Bali on International Stages, 1905-1952*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.Print.
- Cohen, Matthew Isaac and Laura Noszlopy. 'The Transnational Dynamic in Southeast Asian Performance.' Introduction. *Contemporary Southeast Asian Performance: Transnational Perspectives*. Ed. Laura Noszlopy and Matthew Isaac Cohen. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. 1-24. Print.
- Comaroff, John L., and Jean Comaroff. *Ethnicity, Inc.*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Print.
- Cornwel-Smith, Philip. *Very Thai: Everyday Popular Culture*. Bangkok: River Books, 2005. Print.
- Cummings, Joe. *Bangkok : City of Angels*. Singapore : Periplus Editions, 2005.Print.
- Damrhung, Pornrat. 'From 'Phra Lor' to Jai Jao Lor' : Representing Presentation in Thailand's Hybrid Dance Traditions.' *Re-Searching Dance : International Conference on Dance Research*. New Delhi: India International Centre, 2009. 110-117.Print.
- Damrhung, Pornrat. 'Lakon Dukdamban.' *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre*. Ed. Leiter, Samuel L. Vol.1. Connecticut: Green Wood Press, 2007. 370. Print.

Damrhung, Pornrat. 'Lakon Phan Thang.' *Encyclopedia of Asian Theatre*. Ed. Leiter, Samuel L. Vol.1. Connecticut: Green Wood Press, 2007. 372. Print.

--. Personal Interview. 4 April 2013.

Damrongrajanubhab , H.R.H. Prince. *Nirat Nakhon Wat [Nirat Poetry about a Visit to Angkor Wat]*. Bangkok: Phrae Phitthaya, 1971. Print.

---, H.R.H. Prince. 'Tamnan Rueng Lakhon Inao [The Origin of Inao Play].' *Lakhon Fon Ram : Prachum Reng Lakhon Fon Ram Kab Rabum Ram Ten, Tamnan Reng Lakhon Inao, Tamnan Lakhon Dukdambun [Dance, Drama : The Articles of Dance-Drama, The Origin of Dance, The Origin of Inao Play, The Origin of Thai Operatic Dance-Drama]*. Bangkok: Mathichon, 2003. Print.

Damrongrajanubhab, H.R.H. Prince and H.R.H. Prince Narisaranuwattiwong. *Pleng Dontri Lae Nattasilp Jak San Somdet [ Song, Music and Thai Performances from Prince's Correspondence]*. Ed. Punpit Amattayakul. Bangkok: College of Music, Mahidol University Publishing, 2009. Print.

---. 'Rake Me Piphat Mon Nai Nguan Sop [The First Mon Instrument Ensemble in Funeral].' *Phleng Dontri Lae Nattasilp Jak Sarnsomdet [Music Song and Dance from Sarnsomdet]*. Ed. Poonpis Amartayakul. Bangkok: College of Music, Mahidol University, 8 Jul 1940. Print.

*Dararatsami Saiyairaksongpandin [Biography and work of Dararatsami, Princess, consort of Chulalongkorn, King of Siam]*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn, 1999. Print.

Diamond, Catherine. 'Phra Lor (review).' *Asian Theatre Journal*. 27.2 (2011): 366-369. Print.

Elihu Katz, E and Eberhard George Wedell. *Broadcasting in the Third World : Promise and Performance*. United States of America, 1977. Print.

EWC. 'East-West Centre Associated Office.' Winter 2006/ Spring 2007. 10 October 2012<[http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/resources/alumni/Newsletters/Alm\\_Win06Spr07.pdf](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/resources/alumni/Newsletters/Alm_Win06Spr07.pdf)>.

Fahchumroon, Sirichaicharn. 'The Evolution and Scenario of the Colleges of Dramatic Arts in the Thai Art and Culture Development.' Diss. Chulalongkorn University, 1996. Print.

Frykman, Jonas and Orvar Lofgren. *Culture Builders: A Historical Anthropology of Middle Class Life*. Trans. Alan Crozier. New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1987. Print.

Gennep, Arnold Van. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1960. Print.

Gunawardana, A.J. 'Theatre in Asia : An Introduction.' *The Drama Review : TDR* 15.2 (Spring, 1971): 47-62. Print.

Habermas, Jurgen and Seyla Ben-Habib. 'Modernity versus Postmodernity.' *New German Critique* 22. Special Issue on Modernism (1981): 3-14. Print.

Hafenrichter, Wassana. Personal Interview. 2 November 2012.

Harrison, Rachel, and Peter A. Jackson. *The Ambiguous Allure of the West Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010. Print.

Hatley, Barbara. *Javanese Performances on an Indonesian Stage : Contesting Culture, Embracing Change*. Singapore: Nus Press, 2008. Print.

'Her Majesty's Theatre.' *Morning Post* [London] 15 Feb. 1858.

Hobsbawm, E. J. *The Invention of tradition*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Print.

Jackson, Peter A. 'Thai Semicolonial Hybridities: Bhabha and García Canclini in Dialogue on Power and Cultural Blending.' *Asian Studies Review*. 32.2 (2008): 147-170. Print.

Jirajarupat, Phakamas. 'Royal Traditional Performances' MA thesis. Chulalongkorn University, 2000. Print.

---. 'The Survival and Adaptation of Traditional Thai Puppet Theatre (Joe Louis)', in C. Stock (ed.), *Dance Dialogues: Conversations Across Cultures, Art Forms and Practices*, Proceedings of the 2008 World Dance Alliance Global Summit, Brisbane, 13-18 July 2009. [On-line version via <http://www.ausdance.org.auin>] accessed on 10 Feb 2010.

Jongda, Surat. Personal Interview. 24 Jan 2012.

---. 'Khon Phu Ying Lakhon (Nai) Phu Chai [*Female Khon and Male Dance-Drama*].' *Princess Chakri Sirindhon Anthropology Centre*. Princess Chakri Sirindhon Anthropology Centre, In 13 Feb 2011. Keynote Address. Web. 12 Jun 2014.  
<[http://www.sac.or.th/main/activities\\_detail.php?lecture\\_id=138&category\\_id=7](http://www.sac.or.th/main/activities_detail.php?lecture_id=138&category_id=7)>.

Jungwiwattanaporn, Parichat. Personal Interview. 12 April 2013.

Kaewthep, Kanchana, and Somsuk Hinwimarn. *Sai Tarn Heng Nak Khit Thrirtsadi Sedtatsart Karn Mung Kab Suesarn Suksa [Socio-economic theory and Communication]*. Bangkok: Phapphim, 2008. Print.

Kerdarunsuksri, Kittisak. 'The Transposition of Traditional Thai Literature into Modern Stage Drama: The Current Development of Thai Theatre.' Diss. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2001. Print.

- Kamran, Plernpit. 'The Biography of Prince Narathip.' in *Phraprawat Lae Ponguan Khong Phrachaobarmawongther Krom Phra Narathip Phraphanthong [The Biography and Works of Prince Narathip Phraphanphong]*. Bangkok:
- Kartomi, Margaret J. 'Traditional Music Weeps and Other Themes in the Discourse on Music, Dance and Theatre of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26.2 (1995): 366-400. Print.
- Kasetsiri, Charnvit . narr. 'Phramaha Kasat [King].' *Chart, Sasana, Phramaha Kasat: Nation, Religion, King.* . The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. Web. 9 May 2014.  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITM-kQ2GRbQ&index=4&list=PL8AAC82F8A70E2F35>>.
- Kenworthy, Jeff. 'Automobile Dependence in Bangkok : An International Comparison with Implications for Planning Policies.' *World Transport Policy & Practice* .1.3 (1995): 31-41. Print.
- Kijkhun, Chommanard. Personal Interview. 30 January 2012.
- Killick, Andrew. *In Search of Korean Traditional Opera : Discourse of Ch'angguk* . Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010. Print
- Kitiarsa, Pattana. 'Farang as Siamese Occidentalism.' *ARI Working Paper*. Vol. No.49. Singapore, September 2005. Print.
- Koch, Lars-Christian, Albrecht Wiedmann and Susanne Zieglery. 'The Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv: A Treasury of Sound Recordings.' *Acoustical Science and Technology* .5.4 (2004): 227-231. Print.
- Kraidy, Marwan M. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005. Print.
- Krasuang Suksathikarn. *100 Pi Krasuang Suksathikarn [100 Years of the Ministry of Education]*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing Group, 1992. Print.

Krom Silapakorn, *Dontri Samrap Prachachon Po So 2491-2492 [The Programme of Performances of Popular Music at the Fine Arts Department, 1948-1949]*.Pranakhon: Krom Silapakorn, 1949. Print.

---, *Rachathirat in the Episoade Saming Phra Ram Volunteering to Fight*.  
Pranakhon: Prachan, 1952.Print.

Kumar, Bharat. 'What do you mean by the term education?.' *Preserve Articles*. N.p.,  
22 Feb 2011. Web. 6 Apr 2014. <[www.preservearticles.com/.../what-do-you-mean-by-the-term-education.html](http://www.preservearticles.com/.../what-do-you-mean-by-the-term-education.html)>.

'Lakhon But Mahin [Boosara Mahin dance-troupe]' *Bangkok Samai* [Bangkok Times] 20 Apr. 1898. n. page. Print.

LePoer, Barbara Leitch. Thailand : A Country Study. 1987. 20 November 2012  
<<http://countrystudies.us/thailand/>>.

Lindsay, Jennifer. 'Cultural Policy and the Performing Arts in Southeast Asia.'  
*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (1995): 656-671.Print.

Lofgren, Orvar. 'The Nationalization of Culture.' *Ethnologia Europaea* 19.5 (1989):  
5-24.

Luksanasiri, Julailuck. 'Seri Wangnaitham : The Doctoral of Arts in Thai Literature,  
Silapakorn University.' *Augsornsart Silapakorn* 13.1 (1990): 46-47.Print.

Mahasarinand, Pawit. *The Nation Weblog ; Dance and Theatre*. 2 July 2010. 18  
August 2011  
<<http://blog.nationmultimedia.com/danceandtheatre/2010/07/10/entry-1>>.

Mahapaoraya, Thida. 'Buk Kon Kead Lae Nguan Seri Wangnaitham Nak Karn  
Lakhon [Man, Honour and Works of Dramatist Seri Wangnaitham].'  
*Kra Jok Song Jai Pai Su Wiwa Tong-U*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1992. 14-20.  
Print.

- Mahapaoraya, Thida. 'Seri Wangnaitham Pood Thung Kwam Rak Khong Ja-det [Seri Wangnaitham is talking about Ja-det's love].' *Preasayumporn*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1992. 19-30. Print.
- Malakun, Pin. 'Rong Lakhon Lae Karn Sa-dang Lakhon [Theatre and Performing Arts].' *Saranukrom Phrabatsomdet Phra Mongkutklaochaoyuhua [The Encyclopaedia of King Vajiravudha]*. 1981. Print.
- McDonald, N.A. 'The Chinese in Siam.' In *Siam and Laos, As Seen by Our American Missionaries*. Ed. Mary Backus. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Missions, 1884. 145-161. Print.
- Miller, Terry. 'Appropriating the Exotic: Thai Music and the Adoption of Chinese Elements.' *Asian Music*. 41.2 (2010): 113-148. Print.
- Montrisart, Chaturong. 'Thai Classical Dance.' in Chua Soo Phong, ed. *Traditional Theatre in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: UniPress, 1995. Print.
- Mortimore, Peter. *Education under Siege: Why There is a Better Alternative*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2013. Print.
- Muangboon, Wantanee. Personal Interview. 12 May 2013.
- Muangsakorn, Sakul. 'Dance Principles of Suan Sunandha Dance School's Choreography During 1998-2010.' MA thesis. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2013. Print.
- . Telephone Interview. 29 Aug 2013.
- Muangsakorn, Sakul, Manissa Vasinaron and Supawadee Pothivetchakul. Group Discussion. 20 February 2011.



Munakata, Iwao. 'The Ambivalent Effects of Modernization on the Traditional Folk Religion of Japan.' *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*. 3.2/3 (1976): 99-126. Print.

Myers-Moro, Pamela. *Thai Music and Musicians in Contemporary Bangkok*. Berkeley: University of California, 1993. Print.

Nadgratok, Nattee. Internet Chat Interview. 14 December 2013.

Natt. 'Pai Chom Saming Phra Ram Arsa Part I: Rabam Boek Rong Pama (Going to See Saming Phra Ram Volunteering to Fight Part I: Burmese Prelude Dance).' *Welcome to My Home*. 14 Nov. 2012. Web. 11 Sept. 2013. <<http://www.bloggang.com/viewdiary.php?id=bookkii&month=11-2012&date=14&group=24&gblog=71>>.

Norman, Henry. *The Peoples and Politics of the Far East : Travels and Studies in the British, French, Spanish and Protuguse Colonies, Syberia, China, Japan, Korea, Siam and Malaya*. New York: C. Scribner, 1895. Print.

Narisaranuwattiwong, H.R.H. Prince. *Banthuk Ruang Khwam Ru Tang Tang Somdet Chaofa Krom Phraya Narisaranuwattiwong Prathan Phraya Anuman Rajadhon [Notes on Various Subjects from Prince Narisaranuwattiwong to Phraya Anuman Rajadhon]*. Bangkok: Samakhom Sangkhomsat Hang Prathet Thai, 1963. Print.

Nathan, Andrew J., and Robert S. Ross. *The great wall and the empty fortress: China's search for security*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. Print.

Navasiri, Pimrat. Internet Chat Interview. 20 November 2013.

Nawigamune, Anake. *Natta-kam Chao Siam [Siamese Dramatists]*. Bangkok : Saitharn, 2002. Print.

--- . *Tanon Sai Ardeed 2 [On the Path of the Past 2]*. Bangkok : Saitharn, 2004. Print

Nidthayasuwan, Phanya. 'Lakhon Phnathang Reang Phuchanasibtid.' *Kra Jok Song Jai Pai Su Wiwa Tong-U*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1992. 26-37.Print.

Ninlarat, M.L.Nuang. 'Kai Pen Kai Nai Phuchanasibtid [Who is who in Phuchanasibtid].' *Kra Jok Song Jai Pai Su Wiwa Tong-U*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1992. 70-80.Print.

\_\_\_\_. 'Lau Thung Karn Pai Jong Tua Lakhon Rue Phuchanasibtid Na Rong Lakhon Hang Chat Mur Por Sor 2531 [Talking to the Buying Ticket for Phuchanasibtid Production at Thai National Theatre in 1988].' *Kra Jok Song Jai Pai Su Wiwa Tong-U*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1992. 60-65.Print.

Noppawong Na Ayuttaya, Supitcha. An Analytical Study of the Phuchanasipthit of Seri Wangnaitham. MA Thesis. Silakorn University: Bangkok. 2003. Print.

Ockey, Jame. 'On the Expressway, and under it: Representation of The Middle Class, The Poor and Democracy in Thailand.' *House of Glass: Culture, Modernity, and the State in Souteast Asia*. Ed. Yao Souchou. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 2001. 314-337.Print.

Parephan, Chote. *Phuchanasibtid*. Bangkok: Padungsuksa, 1999.Print.

Peleggi, Maurizio. *Thailand: The Worldly Kingdom*. London: Reaktion Books, 2007.Print.

'Ped Karn Lakhon Pisead Khong Chao Mun Sarapead Pakdee [The Opening of Chao Mun Sarapead Pakdee Dance Troupe]' *Siam Maitri*. 26 Jan. 1897. n. page. Print.

Petersen, Robert. 'Lakon Karangan: The Legacy of Ki Nartosabdho in Banyumas, Central Java.' *Asian Theatre Journal*: 105-112. Print.

Phoenix, 'Arlai Kru Seri Wangnaitham [The Commemoration of Seri Wangnaitham].' N.p., n. d. Web. 8 Apr. 2014.  
<<http://medinfo.psu.ac.th/pr/WebBoard/readboard.php?id=10536>>.

Phuchadabhirom, Patravadee. *Wattanatham Banthung Nai Chart: Karn Plean Paleng Khong Wattanatham Kwam Banthung Nai Sangkom Krungthep* [Cultural Entertainments in Country: The Changing of Cultural Entertainments in Bangkok Society]. Bangkok : Mathichon, 2006. Print.

*101 Pi Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb [101<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Lakhon Wang Suan Kularb]*. Bangkok: Tanakarn Krugthep, 2012. Print.

Pinij. 'Chao Chan Phom Hom Bon Wetee Lakhon Khong Arjarn Seri Wangnaitham [Princess Chan: A Production of Seri Wangnaitham].' *Siamrat Sabda Wijarn*. 3-9 November 1991: 44-45. Print.

'Podchananukrom Chabab Ratchabandittayasatarn Po So Song Ha Si Song [The Royal Institute Dictionary in 1999].' *The Royal Institute*. The Royal Institute .Web. 6 Apr 2014. <<http://rirs3.royin.go.th/dictionary.asp>>.

Polachan, Wankwan. "Buddhism and Thai Comic Performance." *Asian Theatre Journal*. 31.2 (2014): 439-456. Print.

Potiwetchakul, Supavadee. 'The Educational Management of Dramatic Arts in the Ratanakosin Era.' Research. 2006. Print.

Potiwetchakul, Supavadee. 'Prototype of Opening Dance Performance for the Thai Dance Theatre in the Rattanakosin Era (King Rama IX Reign).' Research. 2005. Print.

---. Personal Interview. 1 December 2012.

Pornpimonpan Ratchanee, Mom Chao Ying. Introduction. *Bot Lakhon Rueng Phra Lor Phraniphon Phra Chao Baromwong Tur Krom Phra Narathip Phraphanphong [Phra Lor play script of Prince Narathip Phraphanphong]*. Bangkok: n.p., 1953. Print.

‘Princess’s Theatre.’ *Morning Post* [London] 20 Jan. 1858

Prakitnonthakarn , Chatri . ‘Sang Kom Lae Karn Muang Nai Satapattayakam ‘Siam Kaw’ Su ‘Siam Mai’ Po So 2394-2490 [Social and Politic in Architecture from ‘Old Siam’ to ‘New Siam’ in 1851-1947].’ *Na-Jua [The Gable]*. 3.4 (2006): 34-49. Web. 6 May. 2014.  
<[http://www.thapra.lib.su.ac.th/objects/ejournal/NaJuaHistNo4\\_2549/article03/index.html](http://www.thapra.lib.su.ac.th/objects/ejournal/NaJuaHistNo4_2549/article03/index.html)>

‘Provincial Theatricals.’ *The Era* [London] 20 Dec. 1858

‘Provincial Theatricals.’ *The Era* [London] 3 Jan. 1858

Raksiam. ‘ Jak Rong Lakhon Luang - Su-ji Bat Khon Lakhon [From Royal Theatre- Khon and Lakhon Programme].’ *Mai-Het Prathed Siam [Remarkable Siam]*. N.p., 16 Aug 2013. Web. 5 Jun. 2014.  
<<http://www.bloggang.com/viewblog.php?id=lovesiamoldbook&date=16-08-2012&group=1&gblog=28>>.

Rakthum, Mankhon. ‘Yon Roi Ja-det [Looking back to Ja-det].’ *Preasayumporn*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1992. 81-88. Print.

Raphiphan, Rudeechanok. ‘Luang Vichit Plays.’ MA thesis. Chulalongkorn University, 2003. Print.

Reynolds, Craig J. ‘Introduction : National identity and its defenders.’ *National identity and its defenders : Thailand, 1939-1989*. Ed. Craig J. Reynolds. Clayton: Monash Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991. 22. Print.

- Royal Institue. *Phodjananukrom Chabab Ratchabanditthayasathan Po So 2542* [Thai-Thai Dictionary by Royal Institue 1999]. Bangkok: Nanmee Book, 2003. 997.Print.
- Rustom , Bharucha. *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Ruengraklikit Chonlada. *Arn Lilit Phra Lor Chabab Wiklor Lea Tod Kwam* [The Analysis and Interpretation of Lilit Phra Lor]. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn, 2001.
- Rutnin, Mattani Mojdara. *Dance, Drama, and Theatre in Thailand : The Process of Development and Modernization*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Book, 1996.Print.
- . *Modern Thai Literature: The Process of Modernization and the Transformation of Values*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1988.Print.
- . ‘Karn Lakhon Samai Mai Kab Kan Pattana Nattasilp Lae Lakhon Thai [Modern Theatre and The Development of Thai Traditional Dance and Dance-Drama].’ *Nattasilp Lae Dontri Thai [Thai Traditional Theatre and Music]*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Bangkok: Thai Khadi Suksa, 2009. 161-183. Print.
- . ‘The Development of Theatre Studies at the University Level.’ *J. Natl. Res. Council Thailand*. 14.2 (1982): 1-19. Print.
- Samosorn, Amporn. ‘Seri Wangnaitham Master of Classical Theatre.’ *Kinnaree* 8.6 (1991): 23-36.Print.
- Samudavanija, Chai-Anan. ‘State-Identity Creation, State-Buliding and Civil Society, 1939-1989.’ *National Identity and Its Defender: Thailand Today*. Ed. Craig J.Reynolds. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002. 49-70.Print.

- Sang-ou-thai, Proudphisut. 'Interview: Anucha Sumaman.' *The Asia City Network*. N.p., 03 May 2012. Web. 25 Nov 2013. <<http://bk.asia-city.com/events/article/interview-anucha-sumaman>>.
- Satayanurak, Saichon. *Phraya Anuman Rajadhon: Prat Samanchon Phu Neramit Kwam Pen Thai [Phraya Anuman Rajadhon: A Common Intellectual Who Creates Thainess]*. Bangkok: Matichon, 2013. Print.
- 'Seri Wangnaitham Ardeed 'Yam Krom Silp' Phu Term Lom Hai Jai Sai Rong Lakhon Heng Chart [Seri Wangnaitham : A Former Security Guard of Thai National Theatre, Fine Arts Department].' *Matichon*. 5 February 2007. 12 Dec 2012  
<[http://www.moe.go.th/news\\_center/news05022550\\_07.htm](http://www.moe.go.th/news_center/news05022550_07.htm)>.
- Shils, Edward. *Tradition*. London: Faber and Faber, 1981. Print.
- Siam Maitri* [Bangkok] 16 Feb. 1897.
- 'Siamese Theatrical Co.' *The Straits Times* [Singapore] 9 June. 1900.
- 'Silapakorn Chee Karn Pub Plaen Silapakorn Sadang Hai Sodklong Kab Sangkom [That Adaptation of Performance for Society].' *Siamrat* 10 Mar. 1989: 10. Print.
- Silapakorn, Krom. *The Annual Report of Krom Silapakorn in 1980*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1981. Print.
- Sivaraksa, Sulak. 'The Crisis of Siamese Identity.' *National Identity and Its Defenders: Thailand Today* Ed. Craig J. Reynolds. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002. 33-48. Print.
- Smith, Samuel J. *Chotmaiheat Siam Samai Leam Tee 1 Lae Leam Tee 2* [The Memoirs of Siam Times, Book 1 and 2]. Bangkok: Samakhom Kijwattanatham, 2005. Print.

- Smith, Samuel J. *A Physician at the Court of Siam*. London and Hertford: Shenval Press, 1947. Print.
- Smithies, Michael. 'Likay: A Note on the Origin, Form and Future of Siamese Folk Opera.' *Journal of the Siam Society* 59 (1971): 33-64. Print.
- Sophon, Chommanard. 'The Development of Thai Dance Professional in Thailand.' MA thesis. Chulalongkorn University, 1988. Print.
- Special Performance. November 25th. 1889*. Bangkok: Prince's Theatre, 1889. Print.
- Suan Sunandha Rajabhat. *The Student Guidance*. Bangkok: Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2013. Print.
- Sukvipat, Sompis. 'Phuchanasibthid: Lakhon Phanthang Khong Arjarn Seri Wangnaitham'[The Conqueror of Tenth Directions: Lakhon Phanthang of Master Seri Wangnaitham]. MA thesis. Chulalongkorn University, 1967. Print.
- Sumaman, Anucha. Internet Chat Interview. 19 November 2013.
- Tan, Sooi Beng. *Bangsawan : A Social and Stylistic History of Popular Malay Opera*. Singapore : Oxford University Press, 1993. Print.
- Tangtronjit, Somsri. 'Jak Wiwa Tong-U Su Preasayumporn [From the Wedding of Tong-U to the Wedding of Prae].' *Preasayumporn*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1992. 47-64. Print.
- Talalak, Neansiri. 'Dance-Drama of Prince Narathip.' in *Phraprawat Lae Ponguan Khong Phrachaobarmawongther Krom Phra Narathip Phraphanthong [The Biography and Works of Prince Narathip Phraphanphong]*. Bangkok: Munenithi Narathip Phraphanphong-Worawan, 1979. 29-68. Print.
- Thai Post [Bangkok] 18 Apr. 2010.

- Thanathamtee, Komsorn. Personal Interview. 11 November 2010.
- Thapornpasi, Tuangruedee. Personal Interview. 22 March 2012.
- ‘The Siamese Ambassadors in the Birmingham Manufactories’ *Birmingham Daily Post* [Birmingham] 10 Dec. 1857.
- ‘Theatre & co.’ *Era* [London] 10 Jan. 1858
- Thongkam, Porntip. Personal Interview. 3 April 2012.
- Thongkumsuk, Pairoj. *Seree Vangnaitam, National Artist, A Style of Being a Teacher, Who Passed on and Creates Thai Dramatics*. Bangkok: Dok Baear Publishing, 2005. Print.
- Tramote, Montri. ‘Don Tri Thai’ [Thai music]. Lak Sana Thai [Thai Art Characteristics]. Ed. Sanitwong Na Ayuthaya, Nion. Bangkok Bank., n.d. Web. 22 April 2011.
- . ‘Krom Mahorasop [The Entertainment Department]’. *Anusorn Nung Chapanakij Sop Nai Prawit Banthurat 11 Tanwakom Po So 2522 [The Funeral Commemoration of Mr. Prawit Banthurat 11 December 1979]*. Bangkok: Aksorn Thai, 1979. Print.
- Ungsvanonda, Chitsuphang. A Study of Organizational Development Impact on Traditional Thai Dances (Ad.1952-2006). M.A. Thesis. Thammasart University. Bangkok: Thummasart University, 2008.
- Vasinarom, Manissa. ‘Nattayapradit Khong Chao Chom Manda Khien’ [Choreography of Chao Chom Manda Khien]. MA thesis. Chulalongkorn University, 2006. Print.
- Vechsuruck, Savapar. ‘Choreographic Principle of Thanpuying Paew Sanithwongseni.’ Diss. Chulalongkorn University, 2004. Print.



‘Visit of the Siamese Embassy to Birmingham’ *Birmingham Daily Post*  
[Birmingham] 9 Dec. 1857

Virulrak, Surapone. ‘Ha Yake Ban Thung [Five Intersection of Entertainments].’  
*Thairat* 1 January 1990: 17. Print.

--- *Likay* [Folk dance-drama] . Bangkok : Kurusapha, 1996. Print.

---. *Nattasilp Thai Ratchakarn Tee Kaw [Performing Arts during the Reign  
of King Rama IX]*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2006. Print.

---. *Wiwatthanakarn Naatayasilp Thai Nai Krung Rattanakosin [The Evolution of  
Thai Traditional Performances]*. Bangkok : Chulalongkorn University, 2000.  
Print.

---. ‘Theatre in Thailand Today’. *Asian Theatre Journal* 7.1 (Spring, 1999): 95-  
104. Print.

Walipodom, Srisak. *Socio-Cultural Development in Thai History*. Bangkok: Amarin  
Printing, 2001. Print.

Wangnaitam, Seri. *Bot Lakhon Phanthang Rue Phuchanasibtid Lem 1-7  
[Phuchnasibtid Plays 1-7]*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1991. Print.

---. ‘Phu Yu Buang Lang Lakhon Dang Phuchanasibtid [Someone  
behind the scene Phuchanasibtid Production].’ *Kra Jok Song Jai Pai Su Wia  
Tong-U*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing , 1992. Print.

Watcharaporn, Prakard. *Pra Wat Nak Pra Phan Thai [The Biography of Thai  
Writers]*. Bangkok: Saitara , 2001. Print.

Whitney, Caspar. *Jungle Trails and Jungle People: Travel, Adventure and  
Observation in the Far East*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1905. Print.

- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1977. Print.
- Williams, Terry E. Miller and Sean. 'Waves of Cultural influence.' In *The Garland Handbook of Southeast Asian Music*. Ed. Terry E. Millier and Sean Williams. New York: Routledge , 2008. Print.
- Winichakul, Thongchai. *Siam Mapped : A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. Chiang Mai : Silkworm Books, 1998. Print.
- Withayasakpan, Jiraporn. ' Nationalism and the Transformation of Aesthetic Concepts: Theatre in Thailand During the Phibun Period.' Diss. Cornell University, 1992. Print.
- Wong, Deborah. 'Mon Music for Thai Deaths: Ethnicity and Status in Thai Urban Funerals.' *Asian Folklore Studies*. 57.1 (1998): 99-130. Print.
- Wongmontha, Seri. 'Lakhon Dee Dee Kor Me Sit Pang Dai Tha Mai Rawang Rueng Wang Tua [The Inappropriate casting may leads the failure of protduction].' *Thai Rat* 10 January 1990: 25. Print.
- Wongthes, Sujit. 'Nattasilp Chao Siam [Siamese Dance].' *Matichon* 19 November 1986: 9. Print.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 'Phuchanasibtid Lakhon Khong Kromsilapakorn [Phuchanasibtid, A Dance-Drama production of Fine Arts Department].' *Kra Jok Song Jai Pai Su Wiwa Tong-U*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1991. 20-29. Print.
- Wright, Arnold. Ed. *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam: Its History, People, Commerce Industries, and Resources*. London: Lloy's Greater Britain Publishing Company, 1908. Print.

Young, Ernest. *The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe: Being Sketches of the Domestic and Religious Rites and Ceremonies of the Siamese*. Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co, 1898. Print.

Young, Robert J.C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. Cornwall: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Yossoontorn, Jintana. 'Pai Do Lakhon Phuchanasibtid [Go To See Phuchanasibtid Production].' *Kra Jok Song Jai Pai Su Wiwa Tong-U*. Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1991. 60-70. Print.

Yupho, Dhanit. *Silapa Lakhon Ram, Ru Khu Mu Natasin Thai [The art of Thai dance-drama, or A Handbook of Thai Dance]*. Bangkok : Krom Silapakorn, 1988. Print.

---. *The Khon and Lakon*. Bangkok : The Department of Fine Arts, 1963. Print.