

A Comparative Study on Performing Identity of Khon Ramayana Dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram

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Abstract: This study aims to: study the history of Khon Ramayana dance of Thailand and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; study the current state of Khon Ramayana dance in Thailand and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram in the Lao People's Democratic Republic; to compare the identity of Khon Ramayana dance of Thailand and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Tools for data collection consist of observation form interview form and group discussion. Target group consists of four knowledgeable persons or experts in the performance of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram. Performers include 12 actors and musicians of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram. Presentation of the study results is applied with descriptive analysis methods. The study found that Khon is one of the high-class performing arts of Thailand that has a magnificent beauty and a dance style resembling Lakhon Nai (the royal court dance drama play), showing the story sequence like a drama play while Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram is one of the outstanding performing arts in Laos that has been inherited to the present in Vientiane. For the current conditions of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram there are elements of the performances that have changed from the past to the present which was influenced by the culture of performances from neighboring countries. This indicates the identity of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram that both performances still retain the ancient traditions and still an indication of nationality transmitted through the acting style, dance style, narration and dialogue narration, music and costumes which may have some limitations that make the performance somewhat incomplete but still remain exquisite and structured, so, the performing arts are of people's awareness to be appreciated by the value of arts and culture through the performance of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram.

Key words: Comparison, identity, Khon Ramayana dance, Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram, nationality transmitted, limitations

INTRODUCTION

Ramayana (Thai version: Ramakien) is a literature that appears in the Ramayana epic, originated in India. Ramayana has spread to Suvannabhumi region where Lao, Khmer, Thai, Indonesian, Burmese all receive Ramayana epic to create literature or be retold according to their own interpretation and have the title changed due to preferable pattern of performances of each country (Aemsaart, 2016).

In Thailand, the performance is called "Khon", playing the Ramayana epic of which the content resembles Ramayana in neighboring countries. In addition to reflecting literary values, the content also points out beliefs, values and ideals of that particular society-loyalty, humility, respect for the oath, gratitude and courage. In

addition, Ramayana is a literature that not only shows the great power of the monarchy according to the belief that the king is referred to an avatar of god who has come down to overcome misery; it also emphasizes virtue and compassion. Originally, the Ramayana epic literature was purposed for a prayer to worship gods, especially, god Vishnu. It has been developed from the prayers to use actors as characters to represent god and to praise the gods as well. Later it was adapted to represent the status and representation of the king who was referred to be a part of god Vishnu descended into a human being to subdue the sufferings and eliminate the sufferings for human beings, reflecting merits and god-like power of the king. The royal play then became part of the monarchy and symbol of the king used to display in various ceremonies to strengthen the status of the king that is

different from the general people including kings of the other countries. The royal play also has a procedure, pattern and rules that are reserved for a royal use, exclusively for the king.

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the epic has been chosen and adapted according to local beliefs and became a literary story known as "Phra Rak Phra Ram" and "Phra Ram Jataka" which reflect the beliefs that blend between Buddhism, Brahminism and ghost respect through the livelihoods of Lao people such as honoring the younger people and conservative practice. The literature also demonstrates the political, administrative, economic and lifestyle aspects of the Lao society, similar to Ramakien of Thailand. "Ramakien" is an important Thai literature which originates from the "Ramayana" that has been influenced by the ancient Khmer through the state of Lawoe located in the Chao Phraya river basin, which was in the same age as Angkor Wat before inheriting later to Ayutthaya period. The early "Ramakien" received from Khmer is considered unique among the rulers, being performed at ancient rituals such as "Nang Yai" (Grand Shadow Puppet Theatre) which has later evolved into a performance called "Khon" then Khon became widely known to wider public and despite having been rooted in India, the performance has been created to have a unique style of Southeast Asia that cannot be found anywhere in India.

Khon is a show that is not originated from one kind of plays but an integration of plays performed at different traditions combined into a new thing called "Khon". For instance, the art of narration, dialogue narration, the Na Phat music and dance styles. Some elements of the presentation style come from Nang Yai while the art of costume and acting style associated with rituals come from the Duekdamban play (ChakNakDuekdamban), martial arts uses of weapons, riveting movements. Some elements are taken from Krabi Krabong performance which the puppeteers applied for some other time until it becomes the dance style of the present performers. Khon is not originated from one kind of plays but integrated from plays performed at various traditions. The performing arts that should be taken as a model; each type of the plays is indicated as follows: the art of narration, dialogue narration, the Na Phat music and dance styles are derived from Nang Yai performance, the art of costume, the appearance of costumes and performances related to rituals are derived from the Duekdamban play, martial arts, uses of weapons, riveting movements, come from Krabi Krabong performance. Nang Yai performance which is taken to the show is applied for some other time until it becomes the Khon dance style at the later time. Nang Yai is one of the oldest performing arts of Thailand, featuring the use of big puppets in the show (Tepwong, 2005). As well as the Lao Khon performance, also known as Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram. There is a form of performance influenced by cultural diffusion, influenced

by Khmer by Thailand and by the traditional dance, until developed into a modern dance style of Luang Prabang at present. For the dance style, movements can be divided according to the 4 main character which are Thao, Nang, Yak and the monkey and the transfer of the dance is the transfer of knowledge between the teacher and the student directly, the 'Fon' or dance style is therefore, unique to each person with the naturalness of using the body through the dance style of each person (Lertlam, 2015).

Therefore, the Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram are part of the performing arts that is considered the integration of art and science in various fields including literature, musical work, dancing, craftsmanship and self-identity but still exists under the original literature from the Ramayana epic like other countries that share similarities in many ways including the acting style, belief or even the dance style, music in the play. These are interesting issues for the study of the influence and cultural diffusion, relationship of the performing arts in various related fields.

With the importance mentioned above, the identity of the performing arts of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram appeared through various areas of cultural elements of each country. Culture in performing musical arts and dance is considered an important tool in linking good relations between countries and increase the opportunity to exchange knowledge and create a culture together, resulting in good relationship that can communicate the identity of the countries with similar cultures in ASEAN as well as can be disseminated as knowledge of performing arts in a regional cultural society including the principles of how to connect, blend the culture of acting with aesthetics, creating awareness and appreciation of the good relationship that will lead to the goal of mutual success in the region.

Objectives:

- To study the history of Khon Ramayana dance of Thailand and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of Lao people's Democratic Republic
- To compare the identity of Khon Ramayana dance of Thailand and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of Lao People's Democratic Republic

Research framework: For the study titled "A comparative study on performing identity of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram", the researcher divided the analysis topics into identity of Khon Ramayana dance of Thailand and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of Lao People's Democratic Republic. Conceptual framework is based on identity concept and structural functionalism theory, cultural diffusion theory, aesthetic theory and symbolic interaction theory, analysis of information can be described as follows (Fig. 1).

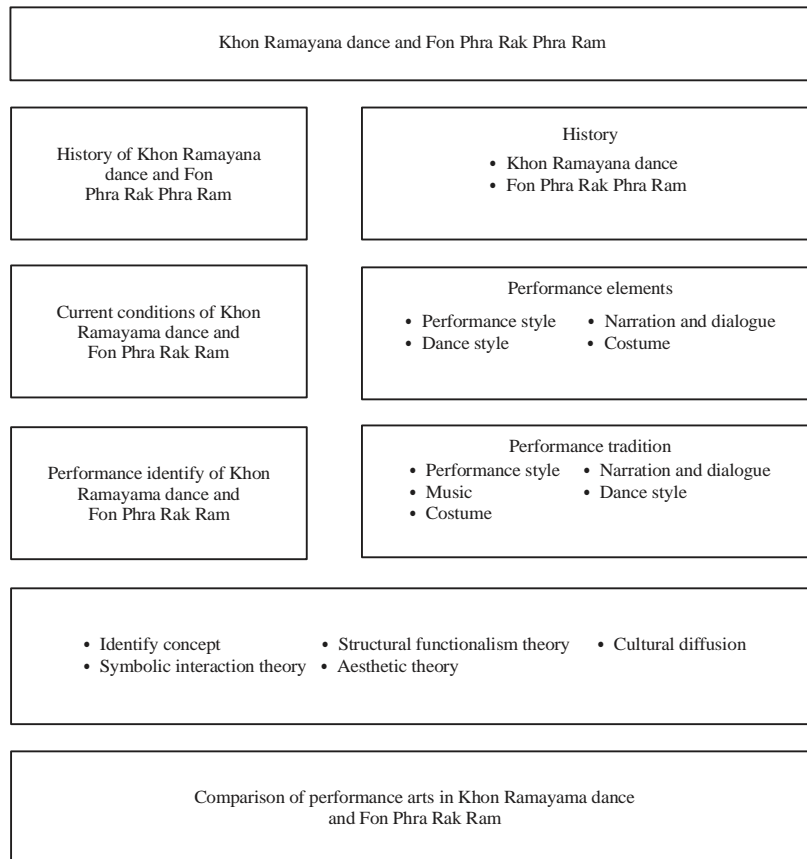


Fig. 1: Research framework

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a qualitative research that collects data from academic documents, textbooks, research papers, innovative media and data from the field. In terms of research contents, body of knowledge about the identities of the Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram is based on the concept of identity, the theory of cultural diffusion, aesthetic theory and symbolic interaction theory by field study from interviews to analyze the data according to the research objectives by using the following information:

- Study the documents and research paper such as articles, texts, thesis and etc., about Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram
- Create an interview question in accordance with purpose of the study then identify the questions, group and create the interview questions as part of the research tools

Apply specific interviews to 3 target groups including: key informants including 4 experts in literary works of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra

Ram and 6 experts in the performance of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram. Casual informants, including 12 performers and musicians in the Khon Ramayana dance performance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram. General informants, including 10 people.

Research tools: Basic survey is applied with the 4 key informants to find basic information in the study area to understand about Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram. Interviews, 2 types of interviews are applied.

Structured interviews: Using in-depth interviews for data collected from masters of Khon and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram. Structured interview was created according to the research objectives and related issues, study the concepts, theories and related papers to create an interview form before proposing to the thesis advisor for checking the spelling, questions and content coverage then improve the contents according to advisor's advice.

Non-structured interviews: An open-ended interview with open answers to collect the in-depth information

specific to each person in the Khon performance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram. Descriptive method is used, capturing the issues of the answers to be interpreted by using the concept to achieve information for the study.

Observation: For observing general conditions of those involved in the study using participant observation and non-participant observation at the same time.

Creditability of the tool: when collecting data, the researcher examined the credibility by using the data triangulation principle to collect data repeatedly under the various contexts of places, individual, concept theories. After the interview and analysis, the researcher has submitted a set of document to the informants to check the accuracy of the content and to have the data cross-checked.

Data collection: To provide complete research, the researcher assigned the duration of the research for the field study to be from January, 2017 until April, 2019. Data collection was based on information consistent with the objectives, the researcher uses two methods of data collection:

- Document information: information collected from the study of documents in both Thai and Foreign languages to study the identity of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram
- Field research: data collected from the study areas achieved from interviewing 3 target groups
- Key informants including 4 knowledgeable persons and experts and in the performance of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram
- Casual informants, including 12 performers and musicians of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram
- General informants including 10 people who are supervisors of the performances and the audience

Data analysis: The researcher has conducted data according to the objectives of the research by analyzing two types of data, namely the analysis of document papers and field-data analysis as follows:

Data analysis for the documentary part: Method of Agreement was applied which consists of conceptual validation and theory which is considered by various sources of the document to verify the accuracy of the information.

Field data analysis: the analysis of information obtained from the use of every research tool for data collection to create a conclusion by using 3 types of analysis:

Inductive data analysis: An interpretation of the conclusions from information in a concrete or phenomenal manner.

Data analysis by using theory: As a data classification and non-theoretical analysis which depends on the appropriateness of the data.

Data analysis by data comparison: A comparison of information based on events or phenomena.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the comparative study on performing identity of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram, the researcher divided the contents into 3 main points as follows:

- History of Khon Ramayana dance in Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic
- History of Khon Ramayana dance in Thailand

Thai Khon Ramayana dance has existed, since, the Ayutthaya period. According to the evidence of La Loubere, the French ambassador in the reign of King Narai the great, Khon Ramayana dance is a performance of gestures and sounds of so, (Thai fiddle) and various musical instruments. The performers are wearing masks to hide their faces, carrying weapons. Khon is considered a center of various fields of performing arts, literature, literary arts, dance, musical arts, visual arts using the method of performance and costumes from the Chak Nak Duekdamban play that consists of riveting fighting postures, dance moves, choreography such as the primary position of the Krabi Krabong performance. Khon also applied the art of dialogue narration, Na Phat songs and musical orchestration to be part of the performance. In the performance of Khon, the important part is that the performer must wear a mask that covers the whole head to the neck with two holes at where the eyes are so, the performer can see. Emotions are expressed through the dance styles according to the particular character of the performers such as the giant, the monkey, the angel, etc. The masks are in a lacquer-and-gold-gilded style, decorated with colorful pieces of mirrors.

For the Khon performance in the ancient age, the protagonist and the angel did not have to wear masks; just performed with true profiles. Costumes were the same as the Lakhon Nai (Royal-court Play). For the costumes of the protagonist and the giant in the ancient period they usually have had two colors, one was the color of the shirt, the other, the color of the arms to make the costume look like a body armour which a striped pattern called Phum design or Kra Chang Ta Oi design were used. The monkey costume was a pattern of Thaksinawat circles to



Fig. 2: The dance style of Kwang Thong (Golden Deer), Sita, Rama, Lakshmana in Khon Ramayana dance: ‘Rama follows the deer’ episode

represent the monkey’s hair. The story was narrated by giving a preface telling the story with a melody which was called a story narration and dialogue narration with melody in the style of KapYanee and Kap Chabang by a voice actor called narrator and dialogue narrator who give the intro, accompanied by chorus singing with the music from a five-typed Pi Phat orchestra. The performed stories are Ramayana and Unnarut.

Khon is therefore, advanced performing arts in Thailand that is beautiful, magnificent and delicate. It is a type of performances that uses dance styles according to the Lakhon Nai (Royal-court play). The only different part is the dances that more performers are added to the play as well as the melody that runs through the story which is different from a drama. Anyway, a Khon performance tells the story chronologically like a drama.

- History of Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of Lao People’s Democratic Republic

It is one of Lao performing arts that can be considered as an outstanding performing art that continues to date. In the past, it was the art of acting exclusive for the royal court. At present, even though the monarch of Lao People’s Democratic Republic has disappeared, the Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram performance is revived back to serve the cultural activities to promote tourism to foreigners. Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram began to spread from the beginning of King Fa Ngum’s reign by which he brought the Fon style and patterns from Khmer to be applied as a form of performance. Furthermore, some of the performing styles have been received from the royal court of Thailand. This appears most clearly in the time of Chao Anouvong when being taken as a hostage at the Thai royal court where he learned the traditions, music and dramatic arts. Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram in Vientiane is

not as prominent as that in Luang Prabang. At present, the performances of Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram in Vientiane that are regularly performed are no more because Vientiane is not a major cultural tourism city like Luang Prabang. Anyway, there has been a special performance only in cases of official reception of VIP guests or sometimes the performance is shown abroad.

- Current conditions of Khon Ramayana dance of Thailand and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of Lao People’s Democratic Republic
- Current conditions of Khon Ramayana dance in the performance composition

Khon Ramayana in the Thai society is still a valuable dance performance and tied in the way of life as an entertaining performance for the audience. It also represents the honor both in the auspicious and inauspicious events. With fineness and beauty in the composition of the play, Khon is known to the world as a cultural heritage, consisting of the following points (Fig. 2-5).

Performance style: Khon Ramayana dance has different performance styles, characterized by nature of the performance as follows:

- Khon Klang Plaeng
- Khon Sod
- Khon Nang Rao
- Khon Non Rong
- Khon Rong Nai
- Khon Chak Rok
- Khon Na Cho
- Khon Na Fai
- Khon Chak



Fig. 3: Costume identities of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Kwang Thong in Khon Ramayana dance: 'Rama Follows the deer' episode



Fig. 4: Dance style of Phra Ram and Kwang Thong (Golden Deer) in the Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram performance, Thanurit episode

Music for Khon performance: Preferably the five-pieced Pi Phat orchestra; including Ranadek (xylophone), Khongwongyai, Taphon, Thai tympani, Bass oboe and Ching (Thai cymbals).

Dance style: The dance style of the Khon performance consists of the male and female protagonists, the giant, the monkey; the actors must perform the dance according to the story narration and the dialogue narration as well as the Na Phat music.

Khon Ramayana dance costume, Thailand: The costume of Khon imitates the king's costume with uses of colors to represent the body and dividing the patterns in the embroidery according to the position and role of the

particular performer. Current conditions of Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram, Lao People's Democratic Republic in the performance composition.

For Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram in Vientiane, elements of the show has been changed from the original which was influenced by the culture of acting arts from the neighboring countries as follows.

Performance style: Similar to the Khon performance style, the Ramayana story features the male and female protagonists, the giant, the monkey, preferably featuring female performers to play the protagonist role. Ramayana story is usually performed, especially, the 'Phra Ram follows the deer' episode; this episode is also known as "Thanurit" episode.



Fig. 5: Costume of Phra Ram, PhraRak, Sita and Kwang Thong (Golden Deer) in the Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram, Thanurit Episode

Performance music: Using the Phin Phat or Pi Phat orchestra which consists of ranadek (xylophone), ranadthum, khongwong, Thai tympani, taphon, tambourines, flutes, ching (Thai cymbals), chab (cymbals) (Fig. 5).

Dance style: The dance style is based on the melody and the story using the body language, the same as the Thai Ramayana performance which performers consist of male and female protagonists, the giant, the monkey with a dance style that mimics natural postures. Originally, there were lyrics, story narration and dialogue narration. However, at present the performances of Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram in Vientiane only performance along with music is featured.

Costume: Dressed in an imitation of the Lao monarch wardrobe, the giant and the monkey have a face make-up and wear masks while the protagonist wears a crown. Colors of the costume indicate the style, social ranks and title of the characters will appear in Luang Prabang whereas the Vientiane’s performance, influenced by Thai performances, making the dress of the male and female protagonists, the giant and the monkey, look similar to the costume of the Thai Khon performance. Comparison of performing identity of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

From the study of the identity of the Khon Ramayana dance performing arts from performance elements in the episode ‘Rama follows the Deer’, it is seen that the unique characteristics and the pattern in the show are derived from ancient times that still exist as the Khon performance was classified as a high class dance of Thailand, the “retention” in which identity is a matter to

be aware of and help “upholding”, especially when the Thai Khon performance was registered as an intangible cultural heritage, it is necessary that this high performing arts should be carefully preserved.

From the study of the Khon Ramayana dance; Rama follows the deer episode or Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram; Thanurit episode of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic they both share similarities in terms of traditional performance, music, costume, dance style and event for the performance. The study found that.

The performance style, for the ‘Rama follows the Deer’ episode, it is a couple dance performance, featuring a series of scenes when Thotsakan ordered Maris to transform into a golden deer to seduce Sita. Maris followed the command of Thotsakan, transforming into a golden deer and walk to the pavilion. When Rama and Lakshmana left the pavillion, Thotsakan then transformed into a hermit to convince Sita. Sita was angry and cursed on Thotsakan; Thotsakan becomes angry, so, much he turned into a giant and dragged Sita to Langka.

Music and lyrics, the Five-typed Pi Phat orchestra is involved in the play with lyrics and dialogue narration. Songs in the performance consist of Na Phat songs and singing sad songs showing melancholy emotions, war songs, wrath songs, etc.

Dance style features the Khon gestures, the reason the audience saw the Khon players come out to dance for a long period of time is that the actors of the Khon dance are narrating the story. The dance moves are the heart of the Khon performance as it’s the speaking through body language. If the audience know the Khon language they will understand the meaning. The more Khon playing artists are well trained and have the skills to create a dance language, the more they entertain the audience, similar to listening to a professional speaker. There are 3

types of language that can communicate to the audience to understand: postures used to represent the words such as loving, refusing, calling for someone, etc. Postures showing behavior or posture, such as walking, sitting, lying etc. Postures showing emotions, such as angry, love, have a heart for someone, sad, etc.

Costume in Khon Ramayana dance, dress code uses the shirt color to represent the character color such as green for Rama, yellow for Lakshmana, etc. and features a makeup with vivid colors, red lips, etc.

Thai identity of Khon Ramayana dance that appears on the stage performance that was seen different when compared with Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram can be described as follows.

Ramayana epic is depicted, only the name of the episode is differently called-Thai Khon Ramayana dance called the episode 'Phra Ram Tam Kwang' (Rama follows the Deer) while the Lao people's Democratic Republic, 'Thanurit' episode.

Pi Phat orchestra is featured at playing music but bass oboe is used in Thailand, while in Laos, flute. Furthermore, Lao have no lyrics and dialogue narration as it originally had before, due to at present, the lack of performers to sing and give the dialogue narration.

Dance style of the Thai Khon is with Thai melodies and lyrics that follow the mood of the play has story and dialogue narration with Na Phat music, showing the emotion that makes the dance style to be following with the melody, while the Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram, although, it also uses the Pi Phat orchestra, the melodies feature Fon-dance songs. For the story narration as the performers who play Phra Rak Phra Ram are women, the dance styles look sweet and beautiful but Thai Khon uses men to perform the dance, the show therefore focuses on the elegant looks.

Costume, influenced by Thai style, costume of Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram of Vientiane looks similar to the style of Thai Khon as well as the makeup that features vivid colors.

Based on the study of the identity of Khon Ramayana dance in Thailand and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, it's seen that both performances were still in the tradition of performing their own dances that is ancient in various elements, based on various contexts in terms of location, time and occasion. However, the performance identity is still an indication of nationality that is transmitted through the style of acting, dancing, story narration and dialogue narration, featured music and costumes but there may be some limitations that make the elements in the show not perfect as it was before due to social change. Anyway, it still remains elaborate and structured in order for the performing arts to be of people's awareness, to appreciate the value of the art and culture of the world through the performance of Khon Ramayana dance and Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram.

For the identity of Khon Ramayana dance performing arts in Thailand, based on the comparative study on the performing arts elements, namely the style of acting, dance style, music used in the performance, story narration and dialogue narration, costume, it's found that Khon Ramayana dance is a play that depicts a story and is a collection of many types of art which is considered to have a very cultural value. According to Tepwong (2005) Khon Ramayana dance is not originated from one kind of performances but it's a play that comes from many traditions including art of narration, dialogue narration, music, the Na Phat music and dance styles. The choreography comes from the Nang Yai (Grand Shadow Puppet Theatre). The art of costume comes from the Chak Nak Duekdamban play and martial arts. Arts in using weapons come from playing Krabi Krabong. In addition, it's found that the performance features wearing masks which is similar to the Ramayana performances of other ASEAN countries. The transmission of Ramayana epic of each country is different. According to Nathalang (1987) who studied the transmission of Ramayana and found that when a story tale spread from one source to another, it would change in various ways as follows-changing the details, increasing the contents, switching the contents and tend to change due to the contexts and eras. Anyway, in the midst of changing, a story tale is able to always maintain the storyline or its identity throughout the transfer period. The unique identity of Khon Ramayana dance is the story narration and dialogue narration which are considered the heart of the Khon Ramayana dance performance. In addition, the narration and dialogue narration cannot be found in any education system but must be learned only from the teacher. The dialogue narration is a communication for the gesture of the Khon actor and helps to give the aesthetics in the dance for the audience to appreciate and be entertained by the show. According to Aristotle's aesthetics concept on the materialistic aesthetic viewpoint, aesthetic is the perfection that comes from the shape form color, composition that harmonizes and is well-balanced. According to Plato, the true beauty is in the realm of imagination. The model of the beauty, depending on what is similar to the imagination in the prototype would be considered the true beauty; the affection and the enjoyment are something of value that follow. In terms of costume, it was found that the costume is an imitation of a king's wardrobe and then develops the style to be appropriate but still retains the traditional pattern. Khon Ramayana dance costume is a beautiful work, exquisite and is considered an essential part of the Khon performance. According to Jongda (2013) Khon and drama costume is designed with creativity, in accordance with imagination of beauty, the nature of the ideal person or ideal character that does not exist. The Khon costume is unique with glitter with embroidered patterns on the

fabric with decoration of various materials handled with exquisite workmanship and have created the pattern according to the character of the particular character. The costume also helps to enhance the dance style and movement.

To summarize, the identity of Khon Ramayana dance performance is an expression of the movement of art that communicates with body language with story narration, dialogue narration, playing beautiful music and exquisite costumes.

For the identity of Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram performing arts in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, based on the study, it has been found the dance style is performed according to the story but only for the Thanurit (Rama follows the Deer) is considered popular until today. Phra Ram in the Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram play is a character from a jataka, depicting a Bodhisattva that reincarnates with a magic weapon. Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram prefers not to use men in the performance, the express of grace of being god is therefore not equal to Rama in Thai Ramayana. In accordance with the study of dance and choreography by Klinchan (2016) the geometry that gives a neutral feeling will appear as a dance style of the male protagonist in a still position. Whenever it's in a still position, the character must have a graceful, dignified body to set the body correctly according to the position level that has been defined elegant according to Thai dance style. In addition, it was found that Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram has no story narration and dialogue narration but using gestures to play with the music that has meaning and melody to match the events, emotions and feelings of the actors, resulting in that the audience may sense the performing aesthetics at some extent. Anyway, the actors of Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram try to communicate with the audience with facial and eyes expressions which is also known as the inner feelings with imagination and movement skills in accordance with the rhythm and melodies of the music.

CONCLUSION

Costume of the Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram performance is influenced by the Khon Ramayana dance in terms of shape, color and pattern, showing the integration and absorption of culture of the two nations having a chance to meet, exchange and join together. This corresponds to the theory of structural functionalism that social and cultural systems have a duty as a medium for the society

members to be able to adapt and exchange the environment, including customs, traditions and culture (Pantasri, 2011).

SUGGESTIONS

Performing arts is considered vulnerable but valuable for the nationality; succession from generation to the next generation then is important. If there is no successor to those art, it could be lost. Recommended that it should be documented or preserved as knowledge using the academic process as reference for future research.

Modern and integrated technology is recommended for the collection of information as well as the display process in order to extend the knowledge for future generations to study.

One missing part of Fon Phra Rak Phra Ram in Vientiane the singing part. Due to some limitations, even if there has been in the early days before, this causes the missing part for a record. Recommended that this singing part be studied and recorded because the singing performance is an important element as well as the dialogue narration that is considered the heart of Khon Ramayana dance.

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