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S P A F A

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THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR  
ARCHAEOLOGY AND FINE ARTS  
OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN  
MINISTERS OF EDUCATION  
ORGANIZATION

#### SPAFA OBJECTIVES

TO PROMOTE THE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES THROUGH THE PRESERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS AS WELL AS THE TRADITIONAL ARTS.

TO HELP ENRICH CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION.

TO STRENGTHEN PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN THE FIELDS OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND FINE ARTS THROUGH SHARING OF RESOURCES AND EXPERIENCES ON A REGIONAL BASIS.

TO PROMOTE BETTER UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA THROUGH JOINT PROGRAMMES IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND FINE ARTS.

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THE SPAFA JOURNAL IS A MEDIUM FOR THE VIEWS, RESEARCH FINDINGS AND EVALUATIONS OF SCHOLARS, RESEARCHERS AND CREATIVE THINKERS IN BOTH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FORUMS ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY, PERFORMING ARTS, VISUAL ARTS AND CULTURAL-RELATED ACTIVITIES.

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'NIEW' CHINESE OPERA ARTISTE, BANGKOK.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY RUANGCHAI RUANGPAISARN

# When Should Laws and Ethics Be Applied to the Management of the World's Cultural Heritage?

BY PISIT CHAROENWONGSA

PAPER FOR THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE CONVENTION ON THE MEANS OF  
PROHIBITING AND PREVENTING THE ILLICIT IMPORT, EXPORT AND TRANSFER OF  
OWNERSHIP OF CULTURAL PROPERTY JOMTIEN, THAILAND, 24-28 FEBRUARY 1992

In my involvement for over the last two decades with anti-looting and ethics of collecting issues, I have written editorials in the *Silpakorn Journal* of the Fine Arts Department and a number of papers. In them I have urged cultural managers, law enforcement personnel and academics in the fields of art and archaeology to think more of the ethics, and intent of protective laws, than just the laws. On one occasion I was appointed representative of the Thai Government to testify in the public hearing before the Chicago City Council on October 25, 1988, for the return of the Phanom Rung lintel. My testimony is shown in Appendix A.

I would like also to be recorded here as an admirer and supporter of this Convention. In Appendix B is an unsent letter of acceptance I drafted in 1988 for the department's consideration.

In this paper, however, I would like to present my views on two issues in connection with the management and preservation of cultural resources. The following text is based on my suggestions to the Thai team on their request to bring to the attention of the meeting at the 79th Interparliamentary Council in Guatemala City, some time in 1988.

1. Means for ensuring that economic development does not endanger the cultural heritage of developing nations.
2. Means for bringing under control the international trade in antiquities, by:
  - a. Strengthening existing international

agreements on the illicit antiquities trade,

- b. Bringing pressure to bear on nations and museums that continue to act unethically or illegally with respect to the acquisition of looted and smuggled antiquities, and
- c. Promoting bilateral exchanges of cultural materials.

#### MEANS FOR HARMONIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION

In the developing nations of the world, the damage caused by fixations on economic factors to the exclusion of environment and cultural factors is often very great. By now, most nations give lip service to protecting the natural environment. Yet many seem to be aware that their cultural environment is of equal importance, and equally in danger. Examples exist, in Asia and elsewhere, of nations that have given cultural preservation such a low priority that they have become virtually cultural deserts: sterile assemblages of modern structures in 'international' style, with citizens wearing international clothing and the artists among them producing second-rate, derivative 'international' art. Such nations have no consciousness of history or roots in the past; their cultural environment resembles that of a gigantic airport.

Not all nations follow this road. But the situation is rapidly getting worse. As of today, any one of several western European countries contains as many truly old buildings as do entire continents in the developing

world. Soon it may be necessary for Asians, Africans and Latin Americans to go to Europe or North America to see ancient cities, to observe ancient art, and to see traditional cultures that are still fertile and alive.

The solution is not just to create more government-run cultural institutes that will sponsor a little traditional music and literature, and design a few more 'traditional' buildings that resemble giant peasant's houses made of reinforced concrete. Instead, it is necessary to raise general cultural consciousness among a nation's people. Public and private enterprises should be urged to preserve historic buildings and sites even when this will inconvenience them. Individuals should be restrained from destroying or looting monuments, even when on private land. Efforts should be made to promote the popularity of genuinely traditional art, as well as works that represent a valid synthesis of the traditional and modern. Artists should be trained to know the difference between a valid and invalid synthesis. The world already has too many Asian ox-carts painted in the style of Van Gogh.

#### MEANS FOR BRINGING UNDER CONTROL THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ILICIT ANTIQUITIES

The illegal excavation and export of ancient art objects is only one of the many problems faced by nations wishing to preserve their cultural heritage. Domestic markets for looted antiquities are often even more active than the international antiquities trade, which is a serious problem nonetheless. It causes the

destruction of many important historic monuments. And it is a symbol of exploitation of the poor by the rich and of arrogant disregard for the rights of the peoples of the developing world. As such, the international trade in illicit antiquities must be stopped.

Three methods for stopping it may be suggested:

A. The relevant international agreements must be strengthened. The existing UNESCO Convention on Cultural Property is badly compromised by Article 7, which contains the strange provision that nations from which objects have been stolen must pay "compensation" at market value in order to get those objects back. Either Article 7 should be altered by UNESCO or the issue of "compensation" should be the subject of supplementary bilateral and multilateral agreements among antiquity-exporting and antiquity-importing nations. Could this clause be amended, I wonder, to the extent that it clarifies "an innocent purchaser" as any person who has bought the property in good faith and which said property is accompanied by a permit from the solicited state? In this case, the "compensation" can be well accommodated in the article.

B. Pressure should be brought to bear on individual institutions as well as nations, to induce them to adhere to a correct ethical position with regard to the acquisition of illicit antiquities. Among the major antiquity-importing nations, only the United States has ratified the UNESCO Convention. The other

antiquity-importing nations should be persuaded to ratify it as soon as possible. Museums and other cultural institutions in importing nations should be urged to stop acquiring antiquities that are illicitly exported or illegally excavated. It is not enough for those institutions to say "We need proof that these objects were illicitly exported." Virtually all objects in certain categories are of illicit status from the point of view of the exporting country. Before acquiring such objects, the institutions should say, "We need proof that

these objects were ethically excavated and legally exported from their country of origin."

It is true, many nations are quite willing to allow the importation of objects that were illegally imported. A crime in Thai or Guatemalan law is not necessarily a crime in the laws of the United States or Switzerland. But pressure can be brought to bear.

One way to exert pressure on antiquity-importing nations and on antiquity-acquiring museums is to boycott them when international loan exhibitions of ancient art objects are sent out from antiquity-exporting countries. Nations that have not

ratified the UNESCO Convention could be made ineligible to receive such exhibitions. And museums known to be active in acquiring illicit antiquities should not be allowed to host those exhibitions.

The most practical way of implementing this suggestion would be through formal or informal agreements at the ministerial level among antiquity-exporting nations. No treaties or other binding documents would be needed. It would be sufficient for officials in nation 'A' to be able to contact officials in nation 'B' requesting that given exhibition not be loaned to a particular museum in nation 'C' until that museum has agreed to begin adopting an ethical attitude toward the acquisition of illicit antiquities. The simple fact that such an agreement existed, with antiquity-exporting nations cooperating to control the antiquities trade, would persuade many museums to be far more careful about the objects they acquired.

C. Strong encouragement should be given to the establishment of bilateral exchanges of objects between museums in antiquity-importing and antiquity-exporting nations. Exchanges of study collections with minimal market value could begin as soon as the relevant regulations on the part of national archaeological and museological services can be modified. Exchanges of objects with greater value and cultural importance would have to be considered more carefully and thus would take longer. But the benefits would be very great. Museums would be enabled to expand their collections, and to

acquire materials that would not only be interesting to the public but far better documented than most objects in their collections. This could be very damaging to the antiquities trade, which depends for its existence on the fact that museums have no other way of acquiring important objects of ancient art and thus are willing to purchase such objects even though these objects have no proper documentation and are often fakes.

If a regular method existed whereby museums could acquire important art objects through exchange with other museums, along with detailed information on provenance, interpretation and dating, museums in collecting countries would not feel forced to do business with the shady and often dishonest dealers who specialize in smuggled antiquities. At the same time, museums in antiquity-importing countries could improve their own collections. As noted above, national regulations and laws would in most cases (although not in Thailand, where the relevant law the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums of 1961 explicitly permits the exchange or sale of antiques "in excess of need") have to be altered for such exchanges to be possible. However, the effort involved would be worthwhile. The benefits would be great.

Whatever is the outcome of this and other meetings in the future to attempt to curb the looting of archaeological sites and illicit trades in antiquities, the attitude of purchasers will never change. One excuse we are familiar with is that

artifacts can be better taken care of, better displayed, and seen by more people in bigger museums in richer countries. The fact that 'looted artifacts' are much less educational than scientifically and systematically excavated specimens have not been willingly acknowledged. I am not arguing that every object of antiquity should remain in their country of origin; what I want to emphasize is how we can collect them ethically, and legally, and how we can benefit from them, both educationally and economically. In turning a blind eye to plundering and illicit trading activities, we lose the entire history of mankind.

#### *Appendix A*

##### *A statement*

*given as testimony before the Chicago City Council Committee, Special Events and Cultural Affairs, in the public hearing considering Mr. Gutierrez's resolution asking the Art Institute of Chicago to return the stolen Vishnu Lintel, on October 25, 1988*

*by Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa*

*Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to you today and to clarify some aspects of the controversy which have been obscured.*

*I speak to you today as a representative of the Thai Government, which is seriously concerned with the Art Institute's failure to act. As a direct participant with firsthand knowledge of the recent events, I should like to outline*

*the history of the negotiations, and in doing so I base my remarks both on our correspondence and the Art Institute's public statements.*

*First, let me assure you that the lintel is stolen property and anyone who says otherwise is fiddling with semantics. It was removed from a protected national monument without knowledge of the competent authorities. That is illegal in Thailand, as it would be here, and is stealing. It was not sold on the open market because there is no open market for antiquities in Thailand. All antique dealers must keep a record of objects they are clearing for sale, and the lintel was not duly registered. Furthermore, by Thai law no antiquity can be legally exported without a permit from the Department of Fine Arts, and no such permit was obtained for the lintel. So it is, by definition, stolen property.*

*Still, we have never accused the Art Institute of stealing the lintel. Regrettably, however, the available evidence does conclusively demonstrate the Art Institute did not acquire the lintel in good faith. They were notified of its illegal removal on several occasions prior to accepting it as a donation. Notably, they were put on notice in 1972 verbally by Prince Diskul (when he and Hiram Woodward rediscovered it), several times in writing in 1973 by Woodward, in 1976 in writing by the Fine Arts Department, and again in 1982 in writing by Woodward shortly before it was accessioned.*

*The first response we received in writing was to our request of June 28, 1976. This remarkably brief letter of then president E. Laurence Chalmers is an exercise in lack of candor. The entire letter reads:*



Dear Dr. Chongkol:

This acknowledges your communication of June 28th.

The object to which you refer was exhibited for a period of time at the Art Institute of Chicago, but is no longer on display.

In answer to your request, this object is the property of the Alsdorf Foundation, Chicago, Illinois.

Sincerely yours, E. Laurence Chalmers"

Notice please that:

The Art Institute dissociates itself from the piece, suggesting they no longer have it;

No mention is made of the museum's close ties to Mr. Alsdorf, who was at that time Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and it can be safely assumed that he knew of the request and the museum's response;

An incomplete address is given for the Alsdorf Foundation.

(As an aside, I remind you that recently, as recently as yesterday, the Art Institute has been maintaining the lintel was on continuous public display from 1967 to 1988. Their own letter here as well as Woodward's 1982 letter show otherwise.)

After the response from Chalmers, we then, through our Embassy, sent a detailed letter dated November 4, 1976 to the Alsdorf Foundation. This letter provided proof that the lintel was stolen and included photostats of the lintel,

which was photographed at Phnom Rung in 1960. The Alsdorf Foundation allegedly sent two letters to the Thai Government in response, both asking for proof that the lintel was stolen. These letters were never received, and the Art Institute has never specifically said which department of the Thai Government they were allegedly sent to, nor have they produced the letters. If they did exist, this request for proof could only have been a superfluous stalling tactic since such proof had already been furnished in the Embassy letter.

So the Art Institute knew well that the

legality of the lintel was questioned, and they knew we wanted it back. Nor is it likely they forgot. In 1982, shortly before they accessioned it in 1983, Woodward again wrote, this time to Mr. Wood, who was by now director, saying "I was saddened to see that the Alsdorf Foundation lintel...had been put back on display" and "my position today is the same as it was in 1973...no American museum should appear to condone such destruction by putting on display its fruits."

Not only did the Art Institute fail to follow accepted museum standards by not conducting an investigation of the

provenance of an object before accessioning it, they flaunted these standards by disregarding the hard evidence of questionable provenance that had been repeatedly laid in their laps.

As a matter of fact, although the Art Institute certainly knew the origin of the lintel by 1972, they continued to mislabel it, vaguely stating it was from Cambodia, perhaps out of fear of being implicated in illegality. By not properly identifying the lintel as belonging to the art-historically significant Phnom Rung temple (of the Lopburi style), but instead providing falsified information, the museum compromised its scholarly and educational duties.

We renewed our attempts to recover the lintel in February of this year, hoping to receive it in time for the inauguration of the restored temple. The inauguration was first scheduled for April, then postponed until May in the belief that progress was being made.

We invited the Art Institute officials, including Mr. Alsdorf, to attend the opening beside Princess Sirindhorn Mahachakri as she presided over the ceremonies. We sent them suggested wording for a plaque to be placed permanently at the temple in honour of the Art Institute. In short, we were very hopeful that the restoration of the lintel could mark the beginning of an enduring and friendly relation which would promote cultural exchange and bring other Thai cultural treasures to the Chicago public. We saw no reason that should prevent us from establishing close ties with the Art Institute, as we had done successfully before with the Smithsonian, the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, and other leading



museums.

In response, the Art Institute seemed unimpressed by gestures of good will, and they have demanded nothing short of an outright exchange. The ferocity with which they have issued this demand is extremely distasteful to us. They have even gone so far as to falsely claim we offered them a gift and then withdrew the offer. Let it be known that no such offer was ever tendered. And the Art Institute has made a mockery of the concept of negotiation, for they have acted with utter inflexibility, changing only the words, never the substance of their demand for ransom, whether it be designated "exchange," "gift," "permanent loan" or "revolving loan." Such uninspired, quibbling hardball is hardly the best way to fulfill the educational duties of a great museum. As a possible token of appreciation, we have made several generous offers, which could bring aesthetically better objects to the Chicago viewing public than a simple exchange settlement, yet not one of our offers was greeted with the slightest interest. (By the way, all of these statements can be substantiated by the correspondence.)

Specifically, at the negotiations of July 21, we offered to loan three of the very best pieces in our heritage to the Art Institute successively over a ten year period. We hoped that over the course of

that period we would develop a new relationship with the Art Institute leading to further cultural exchange beyond the next decade.

We had noble hopes, and suffered bitter disappointments. The negotiations broke down, because the Art Institute engendering an atmosphere of distrust again wanted to manipulate the offer into a permanent loan.

Why should we treat the Art Institute as a respected colleague when they persist in dealing with the Government of Thailand as if we were traders of shady ethics? And I finish with this question: if the Art Institute feels it necessary to treat us in this way, who, may we presume, has the disreputable intentions?

#### Appendix B

No. 0704/  
Fine Arts Department  
Na Phra Thart Road  
Bangkok, 10200  
Thailand  
May , 1988

Secretary-General  
UNESCO  
7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris  
France

Dear Sir,

Thailand is pleased to inform you that it has ratified the Unesco Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. However, in accordance with the provisions of Article 23 of the Convention, Thailand denounces the provisions of Article 7, (b), (ii) that requires the requesting State to pay compensation to the receivers of objects stolen from that State. Thailand reserves the right to demand the return without compensation and at the expense of the persons or institutions currently in possession of any object which the Thai Government deems to have been illicitly exported.

This letter constitutes the instrument in writing conveying a denunciation as described in Article 23, paragraph 2 of the Convention.

Yours sincerely,

Archaeology Division  
81/1 Sri Ayutthaya rd.  
Bangkok 10300

# MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY

BY WILFREDO P. RONQUILLO

*The maritime archaeological heritage of the Southeast Asian region is rich and unparalleled. The Southeast Asian territorial waters have served as the passageways for maritime trade, commerce and population movements in the region. For such a vast area the distribution of artifacts found in underwater archaeological context have been sparse and distributed widely through time but adequately delineate the area's phenomenal cultural past.*

*Former land archaeological sites situated in the region's continental shelves dating to the Pleistocene Period are now presently inundated by water. In more recent times numerous Southeast Asian as well as foreign boats, water vessels and other large ships which sailed the Southeast Asian seas and waterways sank and floundered in the region's waters. Hundreds of junks, sunken galleons and other trading vessels are believed to lie under Southeast Asia's territorial waters.*

Succeeding frequent use of the region's seas and other waterways by the indigenous population as well as by foreign navigators and merchants gave them a central role in the development of a unique Southeast Asian culture and history. The role of maritime shipping and trade networks in shaping Southeast Asia's history and culture has been overwhelming as has been indicated by the archaeological materials recovered from land archaeological sites and through historical accounts (SPAFA 1884). Recent cursory maritime archaeological activities in Southeast Asia indicate the tremendous potential of underwater archaeological materials in complementing existing archaeological evidences and augmenting historical data.

Lately a number of the region's important underwater archaeological sites have been plundered by treasure-hunters, commercial salvors and poachers, resulting in the unfortunate depletion of the region's maritime archaeological resources (Bacani 1992:20-25).

The adequate protection and preservation of these maritime archaeological resources has now become a priority that needs to be immediately addressed if we are to elucidate Southeast Asia's rich historic and cultural past. These submerged archaeological sites and wrecks now form part of Southeast Asia's significant archaeological and historical records and are important components of the region's non-renewable maritime cultural resources.

The purpose of this paper is to

propose and present management objectives for maritime archaeology for the Southeast Asian region. Aspects of policies, depletion of the region's rich maritime cultural resources, development of the region's capacity for maritime archaeological research, conservation and cultural tourism and public awareness, shall also be addressed.

## ASPECTS OF POLICIES

The lack of clearly delineated policies and legislations for the preservation and protection of the Southeast Asian maritime archaeological resources make it difficult for the member-states of Southeast Asia to adequately pursue a concerted course of action towards the protection of these important and non-renewable resources.

The intrusion of underwater treasure-hunters in Southeast Asian waters is a result, not so much by the implementation of strict policies in other parts of the world which safeguard their underwater cultural resources, as by the present prevailing conflicting policies and lack of strong legislations in the Southeast Asian region. This current situation, unfortunately, has abetted the depletion of the region's maritime archaeological resources (Gatbonton 1987).

The general policies of the majority of the member-states of Southeast Asia accommodate the active involvement of treasure-hunters in the region's territorial waters.

1. The commercial exploitations of maritime archaeological sites are prohibited in Thailand. A recent incident wherein the Royal Thai Navy confiscated over 10,000 pieces of recovered Thai ceramics looted from a shipwreck in the Gulf of Thailand indicates that country's will to stop the illegal looting of their underwater archaeological resources (Vatcharangkul 1992).

2. Vietnam has not publicly revealed a policy on this matter. However, it has been reported that Vietnam is disposing of, through auction, 28,000 porcelain items found off the southern port of Vung Tau in 1989 by a fisherman (Bacani 1992).

3. The Philippines is presently enforcing a policy of granting underwater archaeological exploration and excavation permits requiring the supervision of National Museum personnel. Permit grantees are given a portion of the finds. A separate office in the Philippines grants permits for treasure-hunting activities, the definition and limitations of which are still subjects of controversy (Ronquillo 1992:1-6).

4. Malaysia at present grants permits in wrecksites which have "no direct significance for Malaysian history." To ensure serious commitment on the part of the private sectors who are issued permits to survey and salvage historic wrecks, the company has to be locally registered with

Malaysians having shares. In addition, the company has to submit a bond or bank guarantee amounting to 200,000 Malaysian Ringgit. Only applications to survey and salvage a specific wreck are entertained (Taja and Mohd Radzi 1992).

5. The Indonesian Government has, since 1989, taken positive steps to revise its laws in their effort to safeguard their underwater heritage. In 1992 a new law concerning Items of Cultural Property ensure penalties of a maximum of ten years in jail and/or a maximum fine of one hundred million rupiah whomsoever intentionally damages or destroys cultural property and the site together with the surrounding area in which such (cultural) property is located or are carried off, moved, or are taken away (Ambary 1992:6-7).

Illegal searches and explorations for items of cultural property or valuable objects by means of diving, taking away, etc. without the permission from the authorities or the Indonesian Government is now meted with a penalty of a maximum of five years in jail and/or a maximum fine of fifty million rupiah. The proper enforcement of these ideal laws, however, still needs to be undertaken (ibid:7).

In addition to the above difficulty is the large Southeast Asian maritime areas that may not be adequately protected by the region's navies and coast guards. The present prevailing situation is conducive to the depletion of the region's maritime archaeological resources.

## D EPLETION OF THE REGION'S MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of underwater treasure hunters, poachers and salvors operating in Southeast Asian territorial waters. This has been sufficiently presented in Asiaweek's March 6, 1992 issue.

In 1985 tradeware ceramics, porcelains and gold ingots from the Amsterdam-bound Dutch merchant ship Geldermalsen, which hit a reef off Sumatra and sank in 1752 was salvaged by Michael Hatcher a British national based in Australia. The cargo from this wreck fetched \$15 million at auction undertaken by Christie's at the Amsterdam Hilton. In all 150,000 porcelain pieces and 125 gold ingots were sold at the auction.

Rights to the Portuguese vessel, the Flor de la Mar which sunk off northern Sumatra are being contested by both Lisbon and Jakarta. Malaysia is also interested on this wreck. It wants back historical items they say the Portuguese plundered from the Malacca sultanate.

Recent technological breakthroughs in the field of underwater exploration equipments and techniques put the region's maritime archaeological resources at greater risk. Due to these

advances in underwater technology the region's maritime archaeological resources are becoming easily accessible at an increasingly faster rate which may eventually result in an unprecedented degree of destruction.

The existence of conflicting policies and weak legislations concerning the maritime archaeological resources by the region's member-states may well be one of the major reasons for the entry of numerous underwater treasure-hunters in Southeast Asian waters.

## D EVELOPMENT OF THE REGION'S CAPACITY FOR MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The development of the Southeast Asian region's capacity for maritime archaeological research is one priority that must be addressed to properly protect and preserve the region's maritime archaeological resources.

SPAFA has undertaken steps in this direction. It has conducted a total of six Training Courses in Underwater Archaeology since 1978. These were all three-month courses which were all held in Thailand, the SPAFA Sub-Centre for Underwater Archaeology until the present time.

SPAFA has been, in addition, instrumental in sending Southeast Asians to participate in the Training

in Underwater Archaeology at the Department of Underwater Archaeology at Marseilles, France. These 3-month courses were undertaken in cooperation with the French Government. A Thai and a Filipino were able to avail of these trainings.

These training course included theoretical and practical aspects of underwater archaeological research, techniques in underwater archaeological explorations and excavations, history of sea-faring and navigation, and ship-building. The practical aspects of the course included the proper and effective use and maintenance of equipments, basic conservation techniques for underwater archaeological materials, and techniques of recording, dating and mapping.

In spite of the numerous SPAFA-sponsored Training Courses in Underwater Archaeology no member-state of SEAMEO and ASEAN is, at present, fully capable of conducting long-range underwater archaeological research work on their own. This may now be the right time for the region's member-states, (through SPAFA), to determine steps so that the Sotuheast Asian member-states may start to undertake cooperative and joint undertakings in maritime archaeological research. It is now fitting to approach the maritime archaeological sites in the Southeast Asian region with long-range management strategies as contrasted to short term procedures to individual underwater archaeological sites.

Closer cooperative ventures in

Australia, France, and the United States with academic and professional institutions such as the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology at Western Australia, the Direction des Recherches Archaeologiques Sous-Marines (DRASM) in Marseilles, France and the Institute for Nautical Archaeology at the University of Texas now need to be strengthened.

## C

### ONSERVATION OF UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTS

An important aspect that goes hand in hand with the capacity to undertake proper maritime archaeological research is the knowledge and application of appropriate conservation techniques to underwater archaeological materials. Maritime archaeological research is done only if and when adequate conservation measures are ensured or the maritime archaeological materials recovered.

Two SPAFA Training Courses in the Conservation of Underwater Archaeological Objects have been undertaken, one in 1978 and the other in 1984. Both training courses had durations of three months. As the requirement for properly trained conservators of underwater archaeological materials is expected to increase in the Southeast Asian region in the near future SPAFA needs to promote additional training courses in this specialized field of

conservation.

Active networking with underwater archaeology laboratories which have the technical expertise and personnel, such as the Western Australian Maritime Museum laboratory at Fremantle, Western Australia, would be an adequate first step to fulfill this important exigency of preserving the archaeological materials recovered from the region's underwater archaeological sites.

## C

### ULTURAL TOURISM AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

The region's maritime cultural resources have important tourism applications. Properly protected and managed these maritime archaeological sites may be converted into recreational underwater sites for the appreciation of tourists. The potential of underwater archaeological sites as recreational sites and tourist attractions are now only starting to be realized by the tourism industry and, properly managed and protected, may well be a good source of income for the region's tourism industry.

An increased public awareness and appreciation of Southeast Asia's maritime archaeological heritage may well be one of the best deterrents to the depletion of the region's important and non-renewable maritime



archaeological resources. The region's diverse populations— school teachers and students, Customs, Coast Guard and Navy officers, local and foreign tourists, sports divers—need, through public education, to be made aware of the value of their regional maritime archaeological resources. Politicians in the region, more importantly, should likewise be made aware of the significance of the maritime archaeological heritage. This hopefully may lead to the enactment of stronger legislations for their protection. Appropriate funding may likewise be ensured for the proper enforcement of these legislations as well as for underwater archaeological excavations and publications of results.

Museums, Research Centres for Archaeology and Departments of Anthropology/Archaeology in universities in the Southeast Asian region may need to incorporate public education programmes which are designed to inform the public about the region's rich maritime archaeological resources through exhibitions, lectures, tapes and slides.

Regional organizations such as SPAFA and ASEAN now need to exert greater effort to enhance public education programmes on the importance of the the Southeast Asian region's maritime archaeological resources.

SEAMEO-SPAFA and ASEAN, as the two regional organizations which are

in the forefront of cultivating the awareness and appreciation of Southeast Asia's cultural heritage as well as promoting and enriching the archaeological and cultural activities in the region, now need to redirect their efforts to ensure the effective protection and preservation of the region's rich maritime cultural heritage.

As policy for an effective and region-wide agreement to help ensure the adequate protection and preservation of Southeast Asia's maritime archaeological heritage the following STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES are here put forward:

1. The Southeast Asian maritime archaeological heritage belongs to the people of the region and is an important component for the proper understanding and appreciation of the area's history, society and culture;
2. The region's maritime archaeological heritage deserves the adequate and effective protection and preservation by the member-states through SPAFA and ASEAN;
3. The maritime archaeological heritage of the region shall consist of all Cultural Properties, including those belonging to other cultures, as long as they are found in Southeast Asian territorial waters—seas, rivers and lakes—and, therefore, may have played an important and significant role in the evolution of the

region's society and culture;

4. Only representatives from BONA FIDE scientific institutions and organizations are allowed to undertake underwater archaeological explorations and excavations activities in Southeast Asian waters; underwater treasure-hunters present a serious threat to the region's maritime cultural heritage and, therefore, are not allowed to interfere with the region's maritime archaeological heritage;

5. Materials recovered from the region's underwater archaeological sites are to be kept together as a total collection in the country where the archaeological resources are found; these should be dispersed only for archaeological analyses and exchange among museums. Under no circumstances should these be apportioned with, separated or sold to any private entity;

6. Museums in the Southeast Asian region should only acquire and display underwater archaeological materials which have been recovered through systematic and legal archaeological excavations.

These STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES are deemed relevant as the Southeast Asian maritime archaeological resources are perceived in regional terms instead of being merely of interest only to the different individual member-states.



## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Until recently there has been no international organization that undertakes activities specifically conceptualized for the appropriate protection and management of the world's underwater archaeological heritage.

In November, 1991 the International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage was formally recognized by the International Council of Monuments and Sites (IC

OMOS) in Paris, France. Conceived and presently operating under ICOMOS Australia the committee is now in the process of (a) identifying problem areas in the administration of and in the international cooperation for the protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH), (2) examination of the mechanisms for extending the concept of World Heritage listing to certain UCH sites, (3) a review of national policies and programmes and (4) the promotion of international projects.

This is one committee that SEAMEO-SPAFA and ASEAN may network with in the near future if only to outline appropriate steps to be undertaken to start, in earnest, the indispensable and immediate protection of the region's maritime archaeological resources.

## OVERVIEW

The importance of the Southeast Asian maritime cultural heritage cannot be overemphasized. It is tragic, however, that these important and non-renewable components of the region's cultural heritage are also subject to plunder, near-sighted exploitation and vandalism. This is unfortunate because a region's maritime cultural heritage, properly managed and protected, has important educational, recreational and tourism applications.

# Status of Malaysian Handicrafts in Social-Cultural and Economic Development

BY ALIAS YUSSOF AND KAMARUL BAHARIN A. KASIM

For Malaysia, handicrafts have been a source of income for the rural economy. It also embodies the cultural tradition of the Malays. The development of indigenous handicrafts in Malaysia can be said to span over the three decades, from the period before Malaysia's independence, to the present. Over the years, national policies, infrastructure and development plans for handicrafts have been formulated as part of a strategy to develop rural industries and employment for the rural population.

Prior to the first Malaysian Plan (1966-1970), this task was entrusted to the agency known as RIDA, the Rural Industrial Development Authority.

RIDA'S commitment to relegating the status of craft activities foresaw the need to establish a Small Industrial Services Institute. Through the institute, programmes and services were extended to craft-makers and such programmes and services

included research and development, marketing research, technical skill, technology transfer and credit facilities.

Several years later, the Council of Trust for the Development of Indigenous People, in short, MARA took over the functions of RIDA. This period saw the creation of the Handicraft Development Centre and the expansion of research programmes such as the establishment of Extension Services Centres on the east coast of Malaysia, the home of traditional handicrafts.

Realizing the importance of cottage industries the Government then, in 1974, established the Malaysian Handicrafts Board under MARA, as a national agency to oversee problems of the handicrafts industry. During this time emphasis was given to provide extension services to other craft areas such as wood carving, pottery, bamboo and rattan work, which in the past had been left to develop on their own. As a result new development centres were opened in other parts of the country.

The third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980) focused on agricultural development in which handicrafts is a major concern. Since handicrafts were considered a vital issue in the rural industrialization development programme, the Handicrafts Board was given larger scope, functions and responsibilities.

In order to give the Handicrafts Board greater authority, the next step taken by the Government, then, was to dissolve the Handicrafts Board and to create a statutory body which would deal with the overall development of cottage industries. Hence, the Malaysian Handicrafts Development Corporation (MHDC) was established in 1979.

#### MALAYSIAN HANDICRAFTS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MHDC's main objective is to stimulate participation in, encourage and promote traditional skills and handicrafts into becoming a commercially viable concern, and to foster its growth from cottage

industry to small-scale industry. As a national corporation responsible for the overall development of handicrafts MHDC provides training and advisory services through its eight development centres situated in different states of Malaysia.

These centres provide training in handloom weaving, matting, woodcarving, silverware, brassware, pottery, rattan and bamboo ware, hornware and batik. These centres also provide design and product development and promotion advisory services.

The most significant contribution made by MHDC in terms of craft visibility is the design output. The impact can be seen through the creative expressions which manifest new modes of thinking and vision. Nonetheless, they still reflect the essence and richness of the indigenous craft tradition. MHDC has a group of talented and experienced designers trained both locally and abroad who are in charge of ensuring that the designs are up to par for the world markets. The designers usually conceptualize their new designs on paper, bearing in mind the limitations of practicality and cost restraints. The designer then goes to the craftsmen who he thinks can create what's drawn on the paper. Occasionally the end product may not be what the designer had in mind, or the workmanship is not flawless due to the intricacy involved. Then it's up to the designer to modify, re-adjust or even give it up totally if it is found to be unfeasible. Sometimes a prototype is also made in the studio.

#### DESIGN COMPETITION AND INCENTIVES

Realizing the importance of design as a strategy for revitalizing traditional products, a national craft competition named WICITRA was launched in 1982 by MHDC. The main aim is to foster innovative ideas and also to encourage design consciousness. This competition, which is held biennially, has created much interest among designers and craftsmen from all over the states of Malaysia.

This competition provides the opportunity for designers and crafts-persons to express their creative talents, drawing upon the traditions and blending them with the needs of the contemporary crafts setting. It also serves to bring together leaders in industry and professionals and crafts experts not only as jury members but also to offer opinions and suggestion.

Because of the encouraging response, more competitions were held again in 1984, 1986 and 1988 respectively.

Honouring master craftsmen is a scheme widely practiced in many countries as a recognition of their contributions to the nation. Incentives of different types such as cash awards, honorary titles and study tours have been given as prizes in appreciation of their contributions and artistic skills.

A similar programme named the Adigum Craft Scheme was launched in mid-1986. Masters in wood carving, embroidery, basketry and metal smithing were identified and honoured under this scheme. Master craftsmen agreed to allow a

documentation of their lives and works to be recorded and special arrangements were made for the transfer of their particular skills. It is hoped that future generations of craftsmen will benefit from this systematic compilation of records and achievements.

#### CRAFT AWARENESS PROGRAMME

Under MHDC several new projects have been initiated to meet varying needs and for the purpose of creating awareness within Malaysian society. As an experiment, an International Craft Museum was established in which foreign countries donated various items typical of their craft heritage. The International Crafts Museum plays an important role in educating the people beyond its traditional role in preserving the art and craft heritage of a nation. As a house of knowledge, it provides local craftsmakers with the opportunity to learn the similarities and to compare the differences of craft traditions.

A National Crafts Museum was established soon after to house national crafts treasures and to preserve the works of master craftsmen. The collection covers a wide range of traditional cultural items from various states of Malaysia and includes award winning pieces of national craft competitions.

While craft exhibitions and demonstrations have remained a popular mode for harnessing public awareness, it was, however, felt that a permanent comprehensive craft information centre was essential. As a manifestation of this desire and need,

Infokraf Malaysia was instituted in 1986. Infokraf acts as a centre for information on the latest developments taking place in the crafts scene. As a national centre for culling the stands of creativity, Infokraf houses the Library and Documentation Centre, and exhibition halls which include a permanent hall which is specially designed to display new products.

The scope of activities conducted by Infokraf was also expanded to include Sunday craft bazaars where craftsmakers can promote and sell crafts items. Infokraf also provides a useful contact point for craft administrators, and for potential craft exchange programmes.

#### MARKETING OUTLET

A centre for marketing handicrafts items was established with funds initially made available through the World Bank. The marketing organization known as Karyaneka (meaning variety of creations) serves as a marketing outlet which has a backup production network. Karyaneka is actually a handicraft village composed of 14 traditional Malay-style houses representing all the states of Malaysia.

Each house exhibits and sells handicrafts from the respective state. Within the village there is a main showroom selling a wide range of unique and colourful handicrafts, both with traditional and contemporary designs.

Karyaneka was set up in December 1981 by the Malaysian Government

under the Ministry of Agriculture and was later moved to the Ministry of National and Rural Development.

Karyaneka's prime objective is to upgrade the standard of living of the rural people by helping them to market their handicraft products. To date, Karyaneka now has 22 sales outlets all over Malaysia. To name a few, the Rusila branch in the east coast of Terengganu, Kuching in East Malaysia, Batu Ferringhi in Penang, Air Keroh in Malacca, the National Museum, the Subang International Airport and many more.

Aggressive promotional efforts carried out by Karyaneka have gained rewards and placed Malaysian handicrafts in the international limelight. Most handicrafts are exported to Singapore, Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States of America. Although the export volume is modest, the demand from overseas markets have been encouraging, prompting Karyaneka to initiate expansion plans.

#### CONCLUSION

The role of the Government in stimulating the direction and growth of cottage industries has resulted in building new confidence among craftsmakers. The drive to create public awareness has also created the demand for authentic indigenous crafts.

The general interest and response on the part of craftsmakers to these issues have produced quality up-market items to meet the need of consumers, apart from fulfilling the

needs of the general public.

Two distinct factors can be attributed to achievements in the product development process. Firstly the designers who are locally trained from the MARA Institute of Technology have introduced new design concepts. Secondly the input from foreign consultancies elevate indigenous forms to forms of expression. These two factors have brought about the development of new products which have been

introduced to the market.

Handicrafts in Malaysia today continue to be symbolically linked with the rural people through the rural industrialization programme. The economic base of handicrafts, however, has caught on as an entrepreneurial opportunity for young persons, thus providing an avenue for income-generating in the rural and urban areas.

Broadening of the craft base will

continue to provide the required environment and incentive, necessary for crafts to survive as a living tradition. As long as this situation prevails, craftsmakers will continue express their creative talents.

As a society, Malaysians will continue to take pride in their craft heritage and in doing so, assure a place for craft makers in the community and the world at large for the everlasting of excellence in craftsmanship.

# SYMBOLISM IN TEXTILES

## AN INTER-CULTURAL

## EXPERIENCE

BY SAVITRI SUWANSATHIT

Symbolism in textiles has been a subject of considerable interest and wide-ranging study by textile researchers, anthropologists, and textile designers in many countries (Gittings 1990, Desai 1989, Bernard 1988, Musee de l'Impression sur Etoffes, Mulhouse 1988). Symbolism can be seen in the colours of the textiles, or it may be implicit in the functions that textiles serve, as well as in their decorative patterns.

Through symbolism, each piece of textile can be studied and understood as a document. It may reveal certain cultural identification, reflect certain customs, beliefs, and values, and give some evidences of historical and cultural significance of a family or a community.



However, in today's world where social and economic changes are rapidly taking place, where cross-continent travels and migrations are a part of everyday occurrences, and where trans-national trades and communications are expanding their networks into every society on the globe, it may not be an easy task to try to look for specific cultural meanings and symbolism in textiles. Everywhere in the world, people's lifestyles are changing. Cultural values are being replaced by modern thinking. Traditional motifs and symbols, once closely associated with the family's or community's spiritual values, are now losing their links and their significance, particularly among the young generations.

Yet in spite of all the changes, it is heartening to find that traditional weaving has survived, or has been revived, in many countries in the world.

In Thailand, ethnic and home weaving once came close to disappearance. After the signing of the Sir John Bowring Treaty, Thailand entered an open market system and began to stress agricultural production for export, while importing an unlimited amount of foreign goods which were mass-produced and were cheaper than the locally hand-produced crafts.

In the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), the government's record showed an alarmingly high rate of increase in the import of foreign textiles, and the king decided to revive the traditional weaving industry, as well as to improve the quality of silk-rearing and silk-

weaving. A Japanese expert on silk-rearing was engaged by the king to study silk-breeding, silk-rearing and silk-weaving in the northeast of Thailand, and to help improve the business. The Japanese expert worked for 10 years in Thailand and made many reports to the government. His mission however was discontinued after the death of the Minister in-charge, and because the mill did not prove cost-effective (Thammasart University and Office of the National Commission: Seminar document in honour of the H.M. the Queen, April 1992).

In the present reign (Rama IX) Her Majesty Queen Sirikit has, for more than 20 years, taken a personal interest in promoting traditional income for peasant women. At the same time, she has also been promoting the appreciation and the everyday-use of traditionally hand-woven fabrics, both in Thailand and abroad. Through her SUPPORT Project, she has effectively helped save this village craft from extinction, trained weavers and expanded their networks all over the country, and promoted it into an industry on a certain level. Her leadership role in the promotion of traditional textiles has been internationally recognized (UNESCO's Director-General's speech at the Presentation of the Gold Borobudur Medal to Her Majesty Queen Sirikit, at Chiangmai University, January 1992).

Today, in spite of industrial growth, the production of traditional textiles in the rural villages in Thailand continues to flourish and play an important role in enriching the country's culture. More and more,

weavers are going back to the traditional methods of dying using natural herbs and products; they are also relearning the traditional motifs and symbols of their ancestors (Pa Saeng Da of Chomthong, Chiangmai and Pa Payou of Roi Et: National Artists honoured by ONCC, 1986, 1987, ONCC publications). On the other hand, textile researchers are finding that traditional Thai textiles embody a rich symbolism which is an area worthy of a serious and in-depth study.

## WEAVING: A SYMBOL OF WOMAN'S CULTURAL ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

In many societies, such as in China, India, Japan, and in some African countries, we find that there are both men and women weavers. But in Thailand, and in all Tai speaking communities, particularly in Laos and Sipsong Panna (in Yuannan, South of China), weaving is strictly the work of a woman.

Young girls in Thai villages, particularly in the north and the northeast, and in Laos, begin to weave simple textiles as soon as they are tall enough to sit comfortably at the loom. Before that they quietly learn by observing their mothers or their grandmothers. By the time they are able to weave their own clothes, mattress covers, pillows, sheets, and blankets, as well as ceremonial textiles such as temple banners and temple mats, they have reached the age of a full-grown woman. Weaving is therefore a symbol of womanhood. It is an important and recognized

activity in a woman's life. It is a woman's past-time as well as her duty. It is her character-training and her education, for she learns, through weaving, to be patient, self-disciplined, and orderly. She also learns the family's techniques and symbols, and all the customs and beliefs that have been passed on through the female members of her family and her community, and thus prepares herself for the role in cultural continuity and transmission. She also learns to create, drawing upon her the inspiration of her natural environment and from the outside world that she has contact with, and therefore weaving is her means of artistic and creative expression. Weaving is also her means of merit-making; thus a woman in the villages in the north, and the northeast of Thailand as well as in Laos and Sipsong Panna, spends a lot of her spare time weaving textiles to be offered to the monks and the temple in the annual religious ceremony (Field visits to Lanna villages, Laos, and Sipsong Panna, ONCC-Lanna Research on Lue Textiles, 1992).

## C OLOUR SYMBOLISM

Every member of the Thai society understands the Thai concept of colour symbolism. We never wear black to a wedding, because black is the colour of death and mourning. People wear white to go to temple on Buddhist Lent days because white is the colour associated with the purity of the mind and with religion.

If a girl wears pink on Monday, her

friend might tease her that, "Today is not yet Tuesday, why are you wearing pink?" King Chulalongkorn was born on a Tuesday and therefore Chulalongkorn University has adopted pink as the university colour.

In many pieces of Thai literature, we read about the significance of wearing or using the 'right' colour for an important occasion. Therefore, there is always a long description of the type of cloth and its colour, to be used, for example, when a prince is about to leave for an important battle, or when a lady dresses for her wedding. The colours used are carefully selected to ensure victory or good fortune for the wearers.

Sunthorn Phu, a great poet of the early Bangkok period wrote in "Swasdi-Raksa" about the traditional significance and association of different colours to be used for each day of the week; for Monday, use pale yellow; for Tuesday: pink; Wednesday: green; Thursday: orange, Friday: sky blue, Saturday: purple, and Sunday: red.

A person born on any day of the week would normally adopt the colour of the day as his or her colour, as already mentioned in the case of King Chulalongkorn. This concept of colour symbolism was probably adopted from India into the Thai society since ancient days together with some of the Hindu practices which have since been a part of the Thai way of life.

The rich colours used by village weavers in their textiles are extracted from herbs, bark, leaves, fruits and

other natural products which abound in the locality. For example, Lac (or Krang in Thai) is extracted to make red colour. Breadfruit wood gives brown colour. Turmeric is used for yellow colour. Ebony leaves and fruits give black colour. Tamarind bark and wood are used for maroon colour, etc.

The names given to different shades of colour again are inspired by the natural setting. For example, for the colour green, we have Guava-green, duck-head green; jasmine-stem green, young banana-leaf green. With the understanding of the different kinds of association for each colour, the symbolism of colour in Thai textiles can be better appreciated.

## T HE SYMBOLISM OF TEXTILES AS RITUALISTIC GIFTS

In the Thai custom, a piece of textile can be offered as a gift to symbolize a certain attitude, or to convey a certain message, or to express a certain feeling.

A woman is courted by a man. She wants to indicate to him that she loves him but cannot yet be with him. She sends him her shoulder cloth.

After an elopement, a daughter from a northeastern village brings home her husband to ask forgiveness from her parents. The couple make an offering consisting of a piece of cloth, candles and joss-sticks. If the offer is accepted, the couple are forgiven and taken in as members of the family.

At the end of a Buddhist Lent, all the women in a northern or a northeastern village gather together, and pool their labour in spinning cotton, making it into yarn, dying them in saffron yellow and weaving them into a long piece of cloth to be presented to the head monk at the village temple, all done within 24 hours in order to gain merit at the Krathin Merit Making season.

A Thai boxer, who has just won an international championship in a foreign country, is interviewed live on television and is watched by his fans in Thailand. He takes out a small piece of cloth which he keeps on his body. It is a cloth torn from his mother's old lower garment, a Pa Sin. It was a gift he has asked from his mother before his departure from Thailand, and he believes in its power to protect him.

At a Thai funeral, a piece of saffron cloth is laid in front of the coffin, with a white thread linking the cloth to the dead in the coffin. A monk comes and blesses the dead before picking up the cloth. It is the last merit-making rite performed by the dead before his body is cremated.

## MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS: THEIR EVOLUTION AND MEANING

Thai traditional textiles are full of intricate and fascinating motifs and symbols. Some are very basic and simple, and are commonly found in other traditional crafts such as in basket weaving and in pottery. Other motifs are more complicated and

have evidently been developed from the more simple motifs. There are also some highly creative designs, with figurative symbols probably inspired by mythology and natural environment. Nevertheless, these symbols and motifs lead us into a secret world of the weavers which can very well traced back to ancient time.

The following analysis is presented to help one gain a quick understanding of some of the symbolism in Thai textiles.

### 1) Basic or proto-type motif

Some of the motifs and symbols commonly found in Thai traditional textiles are grouped below. They are similar to the motifs found in pre-historic pottery of the Ban Chiang Period (BC 4000-AD 200), and in some of the Dongson Period bronze drums.

#### 1.1 Lines and dotted lines



Horizontal lines and dotted lines are very common among Thai Yuen and Thai Lu lower garments (Pa Sin). They are found in Chiangmai, Nan, Laos and Sipsong Panna (China). Vertical lines and dotted lines are common among the black Thai and Pu Thai, Thai Punan.

The stripes created by lines and dotted lines are also common in textiles of the Karen hilltribe in the north of Thailand, in India, China, Bhutan, Indonesia and the Philippines. It is seen in Ban Chiang pottery (Silpa Wathanatham Magazine, Ban Chiang Issue, 1987, p. 55)

#### 1.2 Zigzag Motif



This motif is repeatedly seen as decorative ends of textiles in all parts of Thailand. It is also a common design in Laos, Sipsong Panna, in Indonesia, the Philippines and many other countries including the central Asian countries. It is seen in the pottery of the Ban Chiang Period (Department of Fine Arts, 1962). It is seen in ancient bronze drums found in Laos and Thailand. (National Museum, Vientiane and Nakorn Sri Thamarat).

#### 1.3 Cross Motif



This is also a common motif in textiles from all parts of Thailand and in other countries. This motif also appears on many prehistoric potteries of the Banchiang area (Department of Fine Arts, 1963).

#### 1.4 Spiral and Hook Motifs



These two motifs occur in textiles from all regions in Thailand and in Asia and the Pacific. The spiral motif is very commonly seen on Banchiang pottery (Silpa Wattanatham, *ibid*, Charles Higham 1989, p. 80-81). The spiral motifs is also seen in the Iban textiles from Sarawak, and from Sumatra (Gittinges p. 89-97: p.215).

The spiral motif also appears in the Moari arts (Barron 1978), and in Persian and Afghanistani carpets (Hill & Bernerd and Mural, 1988).

The hook motif is also an important prototype motif for many folk arts in many various Asian countries including Thailand, Laos, Indonesia and the Philippines.

#### 2) Developed and Creative Design

From the simple motifs and symbols seen earlier, weavers in Thailand have been able to develop and create more sophisticated designs which

convey some meanings and appreciation to the trained eye.

#### 2.1 Agricultural and Natural Designs Developed From Lines and Dots

##### a) Rain Drops



(seen on Djok decorative ends of Pa Sin from Chiangmai and Srisachanalai and in northeastern Mudmee (Ikat) Pa Sin from Khonkhaen).

##### b) Flowing Water



(Djok from Chiangmai, Sukhothai)



(Djok from Nam Ang, Manadir)



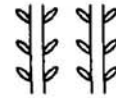
(Koh from Nan and Payao)

##### c) Grass Flower



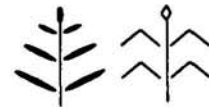
(From northeastern Mudmee)

##### d) Bamboo Stem



(Mudmee from Surin)

##### e) Trees



(Mudmee from Sakol Nakorn)

#### 2.2 Design Developed From Zigzag Motif

##### (a) Mountain



(from Djok in the north)

##### (b) the coil of a great snake



(from Djok and Khit in the north)

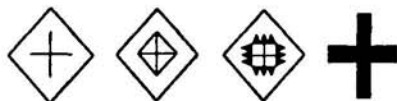
##### (c) The Sunrise



(from Djok and Khit in the north and northeast)

### 2.3 Cross and Diamonds Developed Into Various Symbols

a)



This symbol is interpreted as the sun, the stars or a lamp.

b)



This symbol has been interpreted as a spider, a crab or a scorpion.

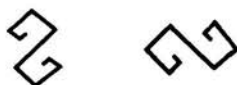
c)



This symbol appears in brocades in the north and the south and is called a flower (Dok Kaew).

### 2.4 Designs Developed From the Spiral and Hook Motifs

a)



This symbol appears in the Northeastern Mudmee and in the Northeastern Djok and Khit in Nan, Uttaradit and Srisachanalai specially when appearing with dots which symbolize water or with

trees.



b)



This has been interpreted as two birds or two swans drinking from the same water. It appears repeatedly in Djoks from Sukhothai and from Chiangmai and Rajburi.

c)



This has been interpreted as a frog.

### 3. Stylized Figuration Designs

In Thai and in Thai-Lao textiles, we find a great deal of intricately stylized and complicated figuration designs with Kochasinghs (elephant and lion combined), with Hongsa (swan) Naga (snake), and frog/human figures. These have been rooted in folk legends and mythology. Many of these mythological figures appear not only in textiles, but also in decorative designs on the temple roofs, temple staircase as well as in temple mural paintings.

a) Naga or Great Water Snake. Naga appears repeatedly in textiles of the Thai, Tai, and Tai Lao people. It

appears also in Khmer textiles.

The snake design is also seen in some rare pieces of Banchiang pottery (Banchiang National Museum's Collection, Udon Thane).

Dr. Sumeth Junsai (Naga, 1988) theorized that the snake or naga is a symbol of the earlier civilization which is the foundation of the cultures of many countries in Asia, particularly of Southeast Asia and East Asia.

We also find the snake (or dragon) symbol in China, Vietnam, Bhutan, and Professor Cam Trong, of the Vietnam Institute of Ethnography Centre (Lecture at Chulalongkorn University, July 1991) believes that the snake is a pre-Buddhist symbol worshipped by the Tai-speaking groups in Vietnam as an ancestor symbol.

In Nakorn Panom Province, in the northeast of Thailand, people still believe that there is a kingdom of Naga at the bed of the Maekhong River, and every year during the Lai Rua Fai Festival, the naga will come up old play with fire balls. Many villagers testified that they have seen the fireballs along the river on Festival Night, and recently the incident was reported on Thai television.

In Hindu and Buddhist mythologies, Naga plays a very important role. We see many stone carvings in the Khmer style in the northeast of Thailand depicting Vishnu sleeping on Naga, and we have a famous Buddha image in the position of the Buddha sitting on the coil of Naga,



with the Naga's heads protecting him. Naga also figures importantly on the roof and staircases of Buddhist temples in Thailand and in Laos. One of the royal barges of the Bangkok kings feature Naga with many heads (Ananta Nagaraj).

#### b) Hongsa Or Bird (Swan)

As common as the naga, the hongsa figure is seen in the Thai, Lao, and Sipsong Panna textiles. Professor Cam Trong of Vietnam (ibid) believes a bird or a swan is another ancestor symbol worshipped by the Tai groups living in

Vietnam. He believes the bird or the swan is the symbol of the matriarch line of the Tai family, whereas the snake is the symbol of patriach line.

In China, a bird or a sphinx are also important symbols often seen together with the dragon or the snake. The dragon is a symbol of masculine strength and power, while the sphinx is a symbol of feminine grace and beauty (Sumitre Pittipat's personal note from China, 1986).

In Thailand as well as in Laos the symbols of snake and bird sometimes

appear near each other on the same textile and sometimes on the same roof of a temple.

## C ONCLUSION

Although the social and cultural contexts in Thailand have greatly changed, it is still possible to study and understand the meaning of symbolism in traditional textiles, if one tries to look for their meanings.



THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA AND  
THE THAI VERSION OF  
R A M A Y A N A  
( R A M A K I R T I )  
OF KING RAMA I OF  
THAILAND (1782-1809)

BY PROFESSOR MC SUBHADRADIS DISKUL

The story of the Ramayana has been very popular in Thailand; there are many versions of the story. It is pronounced in Thai as Ramakian, which probably derives from the word Ramakirti in Sanskrit. The word Rama existed already during the Sukhothai period (about 1250-1450 AD). The story of the Ramayana was referred to several times in Thai literature during the Ayutthaya period (1350-1767 AD) but the extant manuscripts for dance drama exist only from the Thonburi period (1767-1782 AD).

King Rama I of the Bangkok period (1782-1809) composed the whole story of the Ramayana for a dance drama but it was King Rama II, his son (1809-1824), who composed the most popular Ramayana story for dancing. King Mongkut or Rama IV (1851-1868) wrote certain episodes of the Ramayana and it was King Vajiravudh or Rama VI (1910-1925) who was very much interested in Sanskrit literature and composed certain episodes of the Ramayana for dancing. The king also wrote a book entitled "The Origin of the Ramakian," which will be referred to several times in this article.

It is believed by Thai scholars that in India, even before the time of Valmiki, the story of the Ramayana had been known and related by mouth. It was Valmiki who composed the story in Sanskrit verse, so in Southeast Asia the knowledge of the Ramayana would have come from both the tales of the Ramayana related in India as well as that composed by Valmiki. The tales of the Ramayana would have come from southern India as well as from Bengal in the northeast.

Hereupon the differences between Valmiki's Ramayana and that of King Rama I of Thailand or Siam will be described.

The Ramayana of King Rama I was composed for a dance drama, unlike that of Valmiki which was written as a sacred text. The beginning of the stories are not the same.

The Ramayana of King Rama I begins with an eulogy of the king and of his intention to compose this

dance drama. It begins with Hirantayaksha, who rolls the earth and at the end is killed by Vishnu, who transforms himself into a pig. The story continues with the foundation of the towns of Ayutthaya and Langka. The story of Triburam is recounted, to his death by Siva. The account continues with Nontok or Nandaka, who is a yaksha and who is later on killed by Vishnu. Nontok reincarnates as Ravana. His four brothers and one sister are born: Kumbhakarna, Piphek, Tutkhon, Trisien and Sammanakkha. The birth of Pali, Sukhrip and Hanuman are then recounted to where Pali takes Sukhrip's wife, who was given to him by Siva. The story of Montho, who is originally a frog, is then related. Ravana becomes the king of Langka. He helps Siva to straighten Mount Kailasa and receives Montho, who is living with Uma, as a reward, but later on Pali snatches her away when Ravana is flying over Pali's town of Khidkhin. Ravana, however, with the help of his hermit-teacher obtains her back. Pali's son with Montho is born and his name is Ongkhot. Ravana performs a ceremony, taking his heart out of his body and therefore becomes immortal. He then begins to fight with the gods. He sends his son, Ronapak, to fight against Indra. The latter loses the war. Later on Ronapak is renamed Indrajit. The story continues with the birth of a bull named Torapa and the birth of his son Torapi. Another demon, Maiyarab, also performs the ceremony of taking his heart out from his body.

The tale then reverses to Rama's

father, Tosaroth, who has a third wife named Kaikesi. She helps him in his battle against a demon, so Tosaroth grants her a promise of anything she wants from him.

Some of these short stories figure in the Uttara-kanda, which is the last section of Valmiki's Ramayana and are believed to have been added later on. These short stories relate, such as the origin of the family of the demons, but sometimes the names have been changed from Sanskrit into Thai, for instance Kuvera has been altered into Kuperan. Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana (Piphek), the three brothers, all receive a boon from Brahma, not from Siva as in the Thai version. The name Mandodara, wife of Ravana, has been changed into Monthothevi. Ravana is usually called Tosakan (ten necks). For the ceremony of taking the heart out from the body and keeping it in a box, in the Thai Ramayana it is performed by Ravana's hermit-teachers but in Valmiki's it is probably a mantra taught by Brahma to Ravana in order to escape a threat on his life. In Valmiki's Ramayana the original name of Indrajit, Ravana's famous son, is Meghanada, not Ronapak as in the Thai version. King Rama VI thought that the way Ravana tries to kill Montho's son, born from Pali, in the Thai version might have come from other sources such as from one of the Puranas.

As for the origin of the family of monkeys, it is different from Valmiki's account of the birth of Hanuman, Bali (Pali) and Sugriva (Sukhrip). However, the birth of Hanuman in the Thai version is

described in detail; the name of Hanuman's mother is different, but the story in general is very much alike.

1. Now the story of the Thai Ramayana corresponding to the Bala-kanda of Valmiki will be described. Tosaroth, Rama's father, performs a ceremony to ask for children. Vishnu is asked to be reincarnated as Rama. In the ceremony divine rice is cooked. Montho, Ravana's wife, smells its fragrance and would like to taste it, so Ravana has a female demon named Kakanasun to fly after the smell and steal one part of the divine rice. The three wives of Tosaroth partake of the rest. Four boys: Rama, Lakshmana, Prot and Satrud are born. Montho gives birth to a girl, Sita, but Piphek predicts that in the future she will destroy Langka; she is left adrift inside a bowl along the river until she is found by Chanok, a hermit king, who raises her. One day, the four boys of Tosaroth play together, shooting earth bullets. Rama shoots at a dwarf-girl and she promises to have revenge upon him. Prot and Satrud then go to live in the town of Prot's maternal grandfather.

Ravana orders Kakanasun and her attendants to trouble the hermits' dwellings; the hermits Vasit and Visvamit ask Rama and Lakshmana to come and help them. They kill Kakanasun and Savahu, her son, but another son Marich flees to Langka.

Chanok (Janaka), who found Sita when he was a hermit, retires from seclusion and goes back with Sita to his town, Mithila. He then arranges a marriage for Sita to any man who

can lift a sacred bow. Rama and Lakshmana go to Mithila, and Rama is able to lift it. The marriage then takes place with Tosaroth, Prot, Satrud and Indra, the god, as witnesses. On coming back home they encounter Ramasun, a demon, who challenges Rama to fight; but at the end the demon is defeated.

The story then reverses to the buffalo, Torapa, who is killed by his son, Torapi. Torapi then challenges Pali and is destroyed by the latter. Sukhrip, Pali's younger brother, thinks that Pali has died, so he is later banished from the town by Pali. The birth of Mangkornkan, another son of Ravana, is recounted.

In the Thai Ramayana, sometimes the town of Ayutthaya (Ayodhya) is referred to as Dvaravati. Sumantra, a charioteer of Tosaroth, is called Sumantan. The story of Kakanasun, who stole the portion of divine rice for Montho, does not figure in Valmiki's story. This version might have come from one of the Puranas. The names of the four sons of Tosaroth (Dasaratha in Sanskrit) also vary from Valmiki's; except for Rama. Prot comes from Bharata, Lak or Lakshana from Lakshmana and Satrud from Satrugna. Piphek, Ravana's younger brother, also derives from Vibhishana. Marich, a demon, is from Maricha; Savaha, his brother, from Subahu and their mother Kakanasun from Taraka.

In the Thai Ramayana there is also the story of a female named Ahalya, wife of the Rishi Gautama; but in Thai her name is changed into Kala-achana. In the Thai text it is related that she has a son with Indra, that is

Pali (Bali), and another with the sun (Surya), that is Sugriva or Sukhrip. She also has a daughter with her husband, Gautama, named Savaha. The daughter is cursed by the mother because she informs her father about the unfaithful behaviour of her mother. Savaha, according to the Thai text, is the mother of Hanuman whose father is the God of Wind, Vayu.

In Valmiki's Ramayana the four sons of Tosaroth are married after the lifting of the sacred bow, but in the Thai version only Rama is married. On their way back from Mithila to Ayutthaya, in the Thai version, they meet Ramasun (Ramasura), but in Valmiki's they encounter Parasurama, who is also regarded as one of the incarnations of Vishnu. Parasurama is defeated and presents the bow of Siva to Rama.

2. Ayodhya-kanda. In this Thai section Tosaroth prepares to crown Rama as king of Ayutthaya, but a dwarf woman who would like to have revenge on Rama asks Kaikesi, the third wife of Tosaroth, to ask for a promise which Tosaroth had already once granted her. Kaikesi then asks that Rama should go out and live in a forest for fourteen years and let her son, Prot, rule the town instead. Tosaroth has to keep his promise so Rama, Lakshmana and Sita become hermits and leave the town of Ayutthaya. Tosaroth then forbids Kaikesi and her son, Prot, to come to his cremation ceremony after his death; and afterwards he dies of sorrow. When Prot comes to Ayutthaya, he is so angry he threatens to kill his mother. The three wives of Tosaroth, Prot and

Satrud then go to invite Rama to come back, but Rama refuses. The three of them continue their journey.

After Rama leaves the town with his wife and younger brother, he meets Guha near the Ganges River. This name is spelt Khukhan in Thai. In Valmiki's Ramayana it is not said that Kaikesi and Prot are forbidden to cremate Tosaroth's remains, but on the contrary it is Prot who arranges the cremation ceremony. So this episode of forbidding Kaikesi and Prot to join in the cremation ceremony is probably added in the Thai version. In Valmiki's story, both Prot and Satrud also become hermits, though Prot, at the same time acts as a regent for Rama.

3. Aranya-kanda. Rama kills Pirap, a demon, who tries to abduct Sita. Lakshmana also kills another demon, Kumbhakasa.

Ravana goes into the jungle. His younger sister's husband, Jiuha, protects the town for him. He puts out his tongue around the town to protect it. When Ravana comes back he cannot see the town and he throws a discus to kill Jiuha. Sammanakkha, Ravana's sister, is so sad, she goes into the jungle and falls in love with Rama. She is punished by Lakshmana, so she goes to inform one of her brothers Khon (Khara in Sanskrit). Rama kills Khon. Another brother Tut (Dushana) appears, and is killed. So Trisian (Trisira) follows and loses his life in fighting with Rama. Sammanakkha then goes to Langka and praises Sita's beauty to Ravana until the latter falls in love with her. He then asks Marich to disguise as a golden

deer to lure Rama away. Ravana then abducts Sita, fights with Sadayu, a bird, and brings Sita to his garden in Langka. Rama follows, finds Sadayu, and also in his search meets Kumpol (Kumbala) and Asmukhi. Both of them are killed and punished by Rama and Lakshmana. Kumpol, however, goes back to heaven, as his curse is ended.

Viradha is called Pirap in Thai. As for the younger sister of Ravana, in Thai she is called Sammanakkha, from Sanskrit Surpanakha. In this version Trisian (Trisira) is only a general, not her brother. Sadayu is in Sanskrit Jatayu; the same for Asmukhi, the name of a female demon, is in Sanskrit Ayomukhi. Kumpol is in reality Kabandha.

4. Kishkindhya-kanda. In this section Rama finds Hanuman, who becomes his ally. Hanuman then introduces Sukhrip, and the latter asks Rama to kill Pali, which Rama accepts and at last kills him. Then Ongkhot (Angada) and Chompupan, another monkey, become Rama's allies. Sukhrip is crowned as the king of the town of Khidkhin (Kishkindhya). Rama has another ally, Mahachomphu and he sends Hanuman, Ongkhot and Chompupan to Lanka. Ongkhot kills another demon, Pak-lan. Hanuman finds two girls named Busmali and Suvarnamali who show them the way to Langka as well as other hermits and a bird named Sampati, a younger brother of Sadayu. Hanuman then flies alone to Lanka. In Valmiki's Ramayana there are two episodes of Pali fighting with a buffalo. First he fights against Tuntupi, and the second time against

Mayavi, but in the Thai version they mix the stories together into only one episode. Rama, in order to show Sukhrip his strength, shoots an arrow through seven trees and a mountain. This display of strength does not appear in the Thai version. Also in the Thai version Hanuman gets Busmali as his wife. Here it should be explained that though in Valmiki's text, Hanuman observes celibacy, in the Thai version he is a great lover, probably because of the Thai adaptations.

5. Sundara-kanda. Hanuman, on flying to Langka, has to fight against a female demon of the ocean. He then goes on to visit the hermit Narada and later kills the protector demon of Langka. He goes into the town of Langka, finds Sita in a garden and rescues her from hanging herself. Then Hanuman destroys the garden in the Langka palace and kills Sahaskumara, Ravana's son. Indrajit is called upon and catches Hanuman. Hanuman asks to be burnt alive and he burns down the whole town of Langka. Narada helps him to extinguish the fire on his tail by putting it in Hanuman's own mouth. Ravana has a new town constructed by the gods. Hanuman, Ongkhot and Chompupan come back to Rama. At first, Rama is angry for what Hanuman has done, but eventually pardons him.

In Valmiki's Ramayana, angels would like to try Hanuman's power, so they ask Surasa, the mother of all the naga, to stop him, but Hanuman can win her and is allowed to leave. This story of Surasa does not figure in the Thai version. The encounter with the hermit Narada also does not appear



in the Sanskrit text. The name of Sahaskumara is in Sanskrit Akshakumara and is only one person, but in the Thai version they are composed of 1,000. In the Thai version, before Hanuman is burnt alive, Ravana tries to kill him in many ways but is unsuccessful. This episode does not exist in the Sanskrit text. Hanuman extinguishes the fire on his tail in the ocean, not by Narada's suggestion as in the Thai version.

6. Yuddha-kanda. Rama's army moves to Langka. Ravana has a bad dream and Piphek suggests to his brother to return Sita. Ravana is so angry that he banishes Piphek from the town of Langka. So Piphek comes to live with Rama and would like to see the strength of Rama's army. After Ravana hears the noise of Rama's soldiers, he sends one of his military, Sukrasarn, to spy on them. Sukrasarn is caught, punished and sent back. Ravana then transforms himself as a hermit and tries to deprive Piphek from Rama's side, but in vain.

Ravana then asks Benyakai, Piphek's daughter, to transform herself as Sita, and floats to Rama's camp. This trick however is found out and Hanuman, in bringing Benyakai back to Langka, has her as his wife.

Then follows the story of Rama building a causeway to Langka. Ravana asks one of his daughters, a mermaid, to destroy the causeway. Hanuman catches her and has her as his wife. The son of Hanuman and this mermaid is adopted by another demon, Maiyarap. Rama's army then marches on to the town of Langka.

Indra orders Matuli (Matali in Sanskrit), his charioteer, to bring down his chariot for Rama. Rama then sends Ongkhot as a messenger to Ravana to ask for Sita back, but is unsuccessful. Ravana has a parasol set up so that Rama's army cannot see the sun, but Sukhrip destroys the parasol.

Ravana asks Maiyarap to come for help. He abducts Rama but Hanuman kills Maiyarap and brings Rama back. Ravana asks for Kumbhakarna's help. The latter can catch Sukhrip but Hanuman can rescue him. Kumbhakarna tries to perform a ceremony to sharpen his sacred lance, which is called Mokkhasakti, but Hanuman and Ongkhot destroy the ceremony. Kumbhakarna comes out to the battlefield for the second time. He can injure Lakshmana with his lance, but Hanuman can find the medicine to cure him. Kumbhakarna then tries to make himself as a dam so that Rama's army cannot get water, but Hanuman drives him back into Langka. Kumbhakarna then comes out for the last time and is killed by Rama.

Ravana then calls on Indrajit. For the first battle with Lakshmana, nobody wins. Mongkornkan, a nephew of Ravana, comes out to fight and is killed by Rama. Indrajit then comes out to the battlefield again and shoots an arrow in the form of a naga to entwine Lakshmana. Rama shoots an arrow to call down a garuda who drives away the naga. Indrajit then disguises himself as Indra and shoots an arrow at Lakshmana. Hanuman is so angry, he flies up to kill the pseudo-

Airavata. Rama comes out to the battlefield and faints from sorrow. So Ravana sends Sita on a flying vehicle to see that both Rama and Lakshmana have already died but her female demon attendant, Piphek's wife, takes pity upon her and informs her that the flying vehicle will not move if it is ridden by a widow. Later on Rama recovers and Hanuman can bring medicine to cure Lakshmana. Indrajit then comes out again with a prisoner who transforms himself as Sita. He beheads the prisoner so that Rama's army will believe that Sita has been killed, but this trick is also discovered. Indrajit comes out for the last time and is killed by Lakshmana.

Ravana then comes out to the battlefield for the first time. Indra again asks Visvakarma to bring down to Rama a chariot named Vejaiyanta. This time the result of the fighting is even. Other two demons, Sahasdeja and Mulapalam come to help Ravana. Lakshmana kills Mulapalam and Hanuman kills Sahasdeja. Another demon, Saeng-atit, is called upon. He is also killed by Rama. Ravana comes out for the second time and the result of the fighting is again, even. Two other demons come to help Ravana, Satalung and Trimek. Rama kills Satalung and Trimek is killed by Hanuman.

Ravana then tries to perform a ceremony but it is destroyed by Sukhrip, Nilanon and Hanuman. Satthasun and Virunchambang come to help Ravana. Hanuman and Ongkhot kill Satthasun. Virunchambang is also killed by Hanuman, who has during the pursuit,

another wife, Vanarin.

Ravana asks Malivaraj, his grandfather, who can utter sacred words, to come down from heaven and judge the case between him and Rama. Malivaraj, however, after having heard many witnesses who went to Rama's wedding with Sita, sides with Rama and orders Ravana to return Sita. Ravana refuses and Malivaraj then curses him to lose the battle.

Ravana then performs another ceremony, which is destroyed by Pali, according to the command of Siva. Ravana comes out to the battlefield again and can throw his lance, Kabilapat, to Lakshmana. The latter however is cured by Hanuman through the help of Piphek. In curing, Hanuman has to go to Langka to fetch a grinding stone which Ravana uses as a pillow. He ties Ravana's hair to that of Montho.

Another demon, Tapanasun, comes to help Ravana. He is killed by Rama. Ravana's two sons, Tasakhirivan and Tasakhirithorn come out to fight with Lakshmana. They are both killed. During that time, Montho performs a ceremony to get a nectar to revive all the dead demons lost in the battles. She succeeds, but later on the ceremony is destroyed by Hanuman, Nilanon and Chompunan.

Ravana comes out again, but he cannot be killed because his heart is outside his body. It is in a box guarded by the hermit Goputra. Hanuman then asks the hermit Goputra to take him to Ravana because he does not want to stay on

Rama's side anymore. Ongkhot afterwards steals the box containing Ravana's heart. Ravana accepts Hanuman as his adopted son. Hanuman then goes out to have a mock battle against Lakshmana. Later on, Ravana discovers the plot, so for his last battle he transforms himself into Indra but is killed by Rama, by having his heart crushed by Hanuman at the same time. Piphek then invites Sita to come from the garden and meet Rama, but she asks first to walk on fire, to prove her faithfulness to Rama.

Piphek, who later on becomes the king of Langka, has a cremation ceremony arranged for the remains of Ravana. Asakan, another demon, comes to fight and is killed by Rama. Rama then begins his journey back to Ayutthaya with Sita, Lakshmana and the monkey soldiers. He destroys the causeway he built to Langka. Banlaikan, another son of Ravana, follows the army but is killed by Hanuman. The army arrives at the town of Khidkhin, the town of Sukhrip. Rama sends Hanuman and Kukhan to Ayutthaya. They stop Prot and Satrud from burning themselves as Rama has not yet come back after fourteen years. Then Rama is crowned as the king of Ayutthaya.

This section is the longest of the whole story. In the Thai text, after Hanuman comes back from Langka after he presents Rama's ring to Sita, he is rewarded a bathing cloth by Rama. This episode does not figure in Valmiki's version. The mountain Mehendragiri where Rama's army stops on the coast of the ocean in front of Langka is called Hemtiran in

Thai. Kumbhakarna in Thai means the "ear as big as a pot." In Valmiki's Ramayana, Piphek is quite brave, but in the Thai text he is rather cowardly. When he is banished from Langka, according to Valmiki, he is accompanied by four soldiers, but in the Thai version he leaves alone. As for the name of his wife, in the Thai language, it is Trichada (Trijata) not Sarama in Sanskrit. For the name of his daughter, it is Benyakai in Thai, instead of Nanda.

One can perceive that in Valmiki's text, the three episodes in the Thai Ramayana are lacking: (1) when Benyakai, Piphek's daughter, transforms herself as Sita and floats to Rama's camp; (2) Hanuman quarrels with Nilapat during the construction of the causeway to Langka and (3) the story of the mermaid, Suvarnamaccha, and Hanuman.

As for Suka and Sarana, two soldiers of Ravana, who come to spy on Rama's soldiers, in the Thai text they are mixed into a single person named Sukasarn and their appearances are shortened into one episode only.

The story of Malivaraj in the Thai text might have come from Maliyavan, who is the maternal grandfather of Ravana. He also suggests to Ravana to return Sita, but Ravana would not listen to him.

For the episodes of breaking Ravana's parasol and sending Ongkhot as a messenger, in the Thai Ramayana it is reversed in time from that of Valmiki.

The three stories of Maiyarap abducting Rama, Kumbhakarna



making himself as a dam and performing the ceremony of sharpening his lance, Mokkhasakti, never appear in the Sanskrit text.

When Indrajit shoots an arrow as naga, in the Sanskrit text both Rama and Lakshmana are intertwined by a noose and the garuda comes to help by himself. But in the Thai story only Lakshmana is entwined by the noose and Rama shoots an arrow to call down the garuda.

Mangkornkan, Ravana's nephew, is called in Sanskrit Mangkaraksha. Saeng-atit, another demon, never appears in the Sanskrit text. Neither do Mulapalam and Sahasdeja, the other two demons.

Ravana is killed, according to the Sanskrit text, because the hermit Agastayamuni reveals to Rama a mantra called "the heart of the sun (Adiyaharidaya)." This might be transformed into a box containing the heart of Ravana in the Thai version.

So far, we have followed King Rama VI's comparison between Valmiki's Ramayana and the Thai version of King Rama I. Another Thai scholar, Phya Anuman Rajadhon, who has done the same research, surmises that probably the Thai Ramayana derives from the Tamil Ramayana both directly and indirectly. He cites, for example, the story of Maiyarap which does not appear in Sanskrit but exists in Tamil, called Mayiliravana; and there are many Tamil names in the Thai version, for example Asuramayan, Sumantan; Paulastayan, Kurepan, Sudhamantan, Kukan or Khukhan and Anomatan. Mulapalam according to an

explanation of a brahmin in Thailand, is not a person but an army of Ravana's in the Tamil version.

7. Uttara-kanda. As has been said this section is a later addition and full of many anecdotes. Here the writer will describe first the story of the Thai version of King Rama I.

After Rama becomes king of Ayutthaya, he rewards his brothers and many of his soldiers. A town is built for Hanuman to rule. A demon named Mahabal comes to attack Langka, which is ruled by Piphek. Rama sends Hanuman to help him and Hanuman kills Mahabal. Montho, a former wife of Ravana, gives birth to a boy and so does Benyakai, Hanuman's wife. Hanuman later on becomes a hermit. Piphek mistakes Montho's son as his real child, but one day after he grows up the son knows that Ravana, who was killed by Rama, is his father, so he goes to see Chakravatti, another powerful demon, for help. Chakravatti's army comes to besiege Langka and seizes Piphek. Hanuman's son with Benyakai then tries to find his father. Hanuman leaves his hermitage and informs Rama of what has happened in Langka. At this time begins the repetition of what Rama and Lakshmana have done, but the heroes are changed into Prot and Satrud, with Nilapat as a chief monkey soldier. They kill Chakravatti as well as his friend Vaital. Rama performs the ceremony of cutting the mermaid's tail from the son of Hanuman, born from a mermaid who is the daughter of Ravana.

A female demon named Adul

transforms herself into Sita's lady-in-waiting and asks Sita to draw a portrait of Ravana. When Rama finds the portrait he is very angry with Sita and asks Lakshmana to take Sita out into the jungle and kill her. Lakshmana cannot behead her because Sita is still faithful to Rama, so he lets her go to live with a hermit. Sita later on gives birth to a son. One day she takes him out to a river. The hermit cannot find Sita's son so he performs a ceremony to create another boy and both of them become playmates. One is named Mongkut and the other one Lob. They both learn about fighting and magic formulae from the hermit. Rama performs a ceremony called Asvamedha, by letting lose a horse followed by an army which is led by Prot, Satrud and Hanuman. Mongkut and Lob catch the horse and ride it. They fight with Prot, Satrud and Hanuman, not knowing one another. Mongkut is caught and brought back to Ayutthaya but Lob comes to rescue him and they return to the hermitage where resides Sita. Rama follows and fights with his two children. Later on he realizes that they are his sons. Sita will not come back to live with Rama but let the two children go to live with their father. Rama then plays a trick by hiding himself inside an urn and orders Hanuman to inform Sita that he is dead. Sita comes back to Ayutthaya and when she finds out that Rama is still alive she makes a wish to go down and stay in the nether world. The wish is fulfilled.

Rama calls Piphek to Ayutthaya for consultation and Piphek advises that

he should go out to the jungle again for one year. So Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman and the monkey soldiers leave Ayutthaya and kill many demons along their journey. After one year they come back to Ayutthaya and Siva arranges a second wedding for Rama and Sita.

The last anecdote concerns the king of Gandharva who attacks and captures the town of Prot's maternal grandfather, Kaiyakesha. Rama orders Prot, Satrud and his two sons to bring an army to fight them. In this last story, Mongkut, Rama's first son, becomes a hero. At last Rama's army can take back the town.

At the end of the story there is an eulogy for Rama and also a warning to the Thai public that this story is written in Hinduism, not in Buddhism. The date for the beginning of the composition of the Thai Ramayana in the reign of King Rama I is given: 1797 AD.

In the Thai Ramayana, the origins of Rama, Ravana and the family of the monkeys are related at the beginning of the story. Only the banishment of Sita from the town of Ayutthaya, the birth of Mongkut (in Sanskrit Kusa)

and Lob (in Sanskrit Lava) and the fighting of Prot and Satrud are kept at the end.

The story of the banishment of Sita from Ayutthaya is totally different from that of Valmiki; and the war of only Satrud in Valmiki's is totally changed into the war of Prot and Satrud, with Nilapat replacing Hanuman. The revolt against Piphek in Langka by Ravana's son does not exist in Valmiki's. The end of the Thai Ramayana with Rama's ceremony of Asvamedha is like the Ramayana of the Anganikaya version of Bengal, but the story of Rama hiding in an urn does not appear in any of the Indian texts.

For the war with the king of the Gandharva in Valmiki's Ramayana, the general of the army is Prot and his two sons, but in the Thai version it is Prot, Satrud and Rama's two sons. The story of Rama and Lakshmana going up to heaven at the end does not appear in the Thai version, which tells only of the happiness of Rama and Sita.

One can therefore surmise that the Thai version of the Ramayana composed in the reign of King Rama

I of Thailand (Siam) from 1797 AD is based on the following sources:

1. Valmiki's Ramayana in Sanskrit both from the Uttaranikaya and mostly from the Anganikaya of Bengal.
2. The Tamil versions.
3. Vishnupurana.
4. Hanumannataka.
5. Tullidasa's Hindi Ramayana.
6. The Thai former versions of the Ramayana which have mostly been lost and the Thai adaptations.

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# Korean Performing Arts 1992

## An Impression

BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DR. CHUA SOO PONG

It was in 1978 that I first visited the "Land of Morning Calm" on my way to attend an academic conference in Hawaii. I was then a graduate student working on my Ph.D. thesis at Queen's University in the United Kingdom and a young theatre critic writing for Singapore newspapers and radio. During my four-day visit, extremely brief for a country of immense beauty and richness in culture, I managed to see performances at the newly opened and elegant Sejong Cultural Centre, the National Theatre complex on Namsan, the Konggan Sarang, an exciting new venue which pioneered 'pocket theatre', the Drama Centre, which is now renamed the Seoul Institute of Arts, and an assortment of tourist attractions such as the National Museum, the Korea House and the Palaces. I told myself then, I must come back again, to learn more about the sorrows and successes of the Koreans. How did they manage to build up an impressive metropolis on the ruins of an unfortunate war resulting from the competition for hegemony by superpowers of the 1950s? Can a showpiece like Sejong Cultural Centre contribute significantly to the promotion of performing arts, or, will it become a

*Funded by the Korea Foundation, Singapore's leading dance critic and theatre scholar Dr. Chua Soo Pong was in Seoul to conduct research on "Dance and Theatre in Contemporary Korea". He was affiliated to Seoul National University.*

costly white elephant? Will Korea emerge as a model for the developing countries in their ways of mobilizing creativity of their peoples?

Subsequently, as a guest of the International Cultural Society of Korea and participant of various symposiums and conferences, I visited Korea five more times. Unfortunately, each visit was limited to a short span of four or five days. Therefore, there was only time to catch a glimpse of the exciting, rapidly growing theatre scene of the 80s. This is why I was particularly happy to be able to come this year at the time when the 16th Seoul Theatre Festival was on, thanks to the funding of my visit by the Korea Foundation.

### *The 16th Seoul Theatre Festival*

I saw ten plays, including all the eight plays presented for competition organized by the Korean Theatre Association. Unlike the Philippines National Theatre Festival launched last February and the bi-annual

Singapore Drama Festival, which is organized by the Government, the festival here is managed by a non-government organization, similar to the Bangladesh Theatre Festival. Like my previous experience watching foreign drama performances, I find no difficulty in understanding the situation of pain or joy as portrayed by the characters. This is because the better performers have the ability to project their emotions which transcend language barriers. However, I must acknowledge the helpful translation provided by my two friends, Park and Choi during some performances.

The most striking feature of this theatre festival for an outsider is the high quality of stage and lighting designs of Korean productions. Designers here seem to have no problem in presenting on stage the most unlikely venues chosen by the playwrights to challenge them. From a small aircraft on the snow in "For Aurora" written and directed by Kim Sang-Yol to the symbolic setting of "Yongja and Jintack" by Lee Kang-Back and directed by Chung Jin-Soo, the designers were able to produce the atmosphere needed in the scenes described in the plays. Much credit must be given to Lee Sang Bong of Theatre Sinsi who cast such beautiful light on the snow scene, and it was helped by the well choreographed and imaginatively dressed deer dance. Those who have to design realistic sets too did a good job. Designers of the Semi Theatre featured a village house in remarkable detail while the Theater Boohwal must have done much research to produce a typical middle class Indian living room.

The only exception was "Lover in the Mirror" by the Sacho Theater Group. While the metal pipes scattered around the stage on the various performing spaces made up of platforms of various heights and shapes which looked interesting at first glance, did work for some scenes, in other scenes these pipes became rather distracting.

From the themes chosen by the playwrights who participated in this festival, it appears that they are no longer devoted to only didactic drama which preaches morality, or patriotism, a common approach to drama in many Asian countries. As some of these playwrights see drama as a vehicle for moral edification, the standard ending of their story is that good triumphs over evil. Some of the plays in the festival dealt with more complicated emotional encounters of individuals and their search for new destinations in life. But they are packaged more like television soap dramas rather than great theatre pieces that can arouse a strong reaction from the audience.

It is also interesting for me to note that Korean playwrights seem to have an interest in writing about Korean experiences in other countries, past and present. Such concern is perhaps a reflection of the Korean passion for their countrymen and the strong national and cultural identity the Koreans share. Perhaps in the near future we will also see the disastrous experiences of the Koreans in Los Angeles on stage.

Similar to the situation here, in Singapore, some playwrights think that by moving away from realistic

setting and the school of naturalism means seeking new grounds. The tendency frequently led to scripts which have too many short scenes which renders to play a fragmented effect. Some attributed this to the influence of television and superficial knowledge of avant-garde theatre of the west while others believe that many of these writers simply are unable to command language like the old generation masters to write first class naturalistic plays.

External elements whether smoke, fanciful lighting, ritualistic motifs, folk music or token dances inserted to decorate the plays are no ingredients which can guarantee the success of plays. The strength of a good script rests on its ability to provoke thinking through a focused theme and its ability to show the development of the characters as the play progresses. The actions and their results contributing to the development of the character must be visually portrayed on stage to make an impact on the audience. Many of the festival's plays here were inadequate in character development and incidents were often verbally described rather than unfolded on stage to intensify dramatic conflicts.

Another observation contributing to the weakness of some of these productions was that many fringe characters appearing in the play were played by actors who obviously lack training and experience. I would have thought that Korea, with so many theatre groups and universities offering courses in theatre, would have plenty of fine actors. But the festival's offer showed otherwise,



although actors who played leading roles in most groups were reasonably good.

However, it was the script of Lee Kang Beak's "Yongja and Jintack" well-directed by Chung Jin-Soo, which interested this writer the most as it presented an imaginative approach to the serious issues of oppression, love and friendship. This is unlike other plays that too explicitly narrate a story with clear cut messages and leave no room for the audience to think about the implications and possibilities of the issues. The beauty of this play is that audiences can relate with the hypothetical workplace and identify themselves with the heroine. The tragedy was unfolded through a series of action-packed scenes and the dramatic tension was there all the time. The director, Chung, must be given the credit for interpreting a metaphoric play with vivid clarity. In the small space of Munye Basement Theatre, the designer devised a three-level space effectively. Most impressive was the use of a transparent screen showing the tragic scene where Jintack was whipped by Yongja. Chung also made clear the hierarchical structure of the social environment and cruelty and indifference of those possessing power in this production by his effective blocking of movements, choice of costume and visual images. It was enhanced by captivating ensemble acting. If the lead actor were stonger in his portrayal of Yongja, the play would have been more moving.

Most of the plays presented were technically polished, if not good in total quality. My impression is therefore that Korea has a large number of technical theatre personnel

and it is an area in which Singapore theatre is weak. What I am surprised at is the lack of excellent scripts though I have come across many more from my previous visits and my reading.

What surprised me most was that the audience turnout was poor even for the better productions. This is a serious problem which should be urgently addressed. Is it because of poor publicity, lack of interest, inconvenient ticketing systems? In a city of 11 million people, the audience size is appallingly small.

The press could certainly do much more of course. In Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, much more coverage is devoted to the drama activities, especially during the festivals. Here is Seoul, why so little coverage in the local press? The previews and reviews which did appear however, should not be written by the newspaper staff but by a qualified drama critic. Leaving review writing to journalists is a suicidal move for drama!

One important component missing in a festival of such scale is the absence of any workshops, master classes, panel discussions and other activities of a similar nature. These activities form an important component of any respectable drama festival as they serve many important functions; they will help to create a festive atmosphere and nurture audienceship and active participants. However, I am fully aware that many highly respected theatre groups, playwrights, directors and actors were not featured in the festival this year and therefore I

know that this festival did not fully represent Korean theatre. Nevertheless, it showed drama lovers the areas of concern and theatre groups might like to examine all aspects of their creative products in order to produce a better play the next time round. These observations here, like those by any casual observer, are superficial and I await more opportunities to learn about Korean theatre in which there were many dramatists I greatly admire.

#### *P'ansori*

In his effort to contemporarize a traditional art form, Hoe Kyu, the foremost P'ansori opera director and innovator, has shown us once again his genius in combining the musical quality of P'ansori and dramatic impact of modern theatre in "The Song of Shim Chong" presented by the National Ch'angguk Company. P'ansori emerged in the later half of the Choson period, and was transformed into a popular entertainment in the Enlightenment period, but declined in the context of modern society because of the deterioration of aesthetic sensibilities. Similar to the Filipinos' experiment to indeginize and contemporarize Aterueta and the Chinese to do the same with many simple regional traditional theatre forms, the Koreans have successfully transformed P'ansori opera as an accepted art form with vivid national character.

"The Song of Shim Chong" is a much loved P'ansori, one of the popular versions staged by the National Ch'angguk Company, is a new

version arranged by Kang Han-yong, with Ahn Suk-son playing the title role.

This much loved story was condensed into slightly over two hours to cater for the habits of modern audiences. The P'ansori opera was divided into 15 scenes, unfolding the story of a filial daughter who attempts to help her father regain his sight. The traditional P'ansori features more the kwangdae orai technique and the skills of the drummer. And at times, long passages are devoted to express the emotions of characters thus slowing down the tempo of the drama.

Hoe Kyu is aware of the modern audience's habit of appreciating action-packed drama and thus ensured that no excessive outpouring of emotion by any single character was ever present. The narrator's powerful singing is closely interwoven with the dance and drama of the strong cast of over 40 members of company.

Credit must be given to the stage designer, who constructed two two-storey structures at both sides of the stage, which provides space for the narrator, the musicians and actors to sing or play music or dance in these areas, upstairs and downstairs, sometimes even simultaneously. The backdrops are stylized, and are supported by the more realistic props such as huts, trees, a throne.

The early death of Shin Chong's mother and the sacrifice of her own life as well as her father's misfortune give the story a tragic tone. But "The Song of Shim Chong" includes the reunion of Shim Chong and her mother, Madam Kwak in the Crystal

Palace, who was reincarnated as Lady Okchin, Ppaengdok's mother's sudden proposal to Chim Chong's father and the royal banquet for the blindmen. Because of the constant shift between miserable happenings and at times comical events, the story emulates life and is more believable. Of course, like most stories of traditional theatre of the East, the good triumphs at the end and Shim Chong's father finally recovers his sight with great joy.

This story also allows the staging of several rituals in theatrical manners, such as the funeral, Buddhist dance, and the religious service of the sailors. The village life was also cleverly depicted in the scene where Shim Chong's father encountered the village women at work.

For audiences who are unable to appreciate the beauty of the lyrics, they are certainly delighted by the sensitive singing of the narrator, O Jong-Suk and the dramatic song of the sailors, blindmen and village women. The ensemble acting of the chorus members of the 30-year old company also reveals their wealth of experience. The dancers display equal quality in their diverse forms of dance. In the court dance presented at the scenes of the Crystal Palace, Sujonggung, and the King's Palace, the dancers master their smooth steps with great control. With their voluminous skirts and long flowing sleeves, they made lavish movement patterns with quiet grace. In the Buddhist dance, their strength and agility contrast sharply with their courtly appearance and evoke the religious atmosphere by their exuberant rhythms.

All actors and actresses who played the lead roles were very truthful in their portrayals of various characters. Special mention however must be made regarding the actress who played Ppaengdok's mother, Kim Kyung-suk. Comic role is arguably the hardest of all role types. She knows the boundary well and does not exaggerate to the extent of losing credibility of her character or degrade to merely please the audience. Only mature artists are able to master the art of comedian with sensitivity.

It is reported that "The Song of Shim Chong" has won acclaim in its recent tour of Japan and I am pleased that I had the privilege of watching a polished piece of new interpretation of traditional work. Hoe Kyu has indeed revealed to us the splendour as well as the vitality of Korean traditional performing arts in a memorable example.

#### *Dance*

In today's urban social environment, work pressure piling high, daily experience of human waves at rush hour and bombardment of new ideas from a rapidly changing world in the highly developed mass media, and opportunities for gaining economic independence by women, seem to have made marriage a more vulnerable partnership. We see much more trouble in marriages, from common men working in the factory to royal couples.

It was a delight to see how love and misunderstanding, confrontation and passion were depicted in such humorous ways in dance vocabularies by Park He Chun and Yook Mi Yong,



a married couple in real life, who co-choreographed and danced in a work they created entitled "Les Jeux Interdites."

Using the lighthearted music by Carlos Dalesio, the couple sitting on a sofa, were soon in different poses as the stage light came on and off, from happiness, passion, boredom, annoyance, shock or surprise to anger and frustration. Subsequently the dancers manifested their confrontation and reconciliation in dances in several expressive pas de deux, although at times the transition between dances were not smooth.

This charming dance which won the top prize of the recent Young Choreographer's Fall Dance Festival was later featured together with two other winning items "Bird's Eye View" and "Reminiscence" at St. Mark's Place in New York and Yale University in the United States. Their premiere in America helped the dance community there appreciate the latest developments of the dance scene in Korea.

The Young Choreographers' Fall Dance Festival was one of the highlights of the Year of Dance, which was held from 11th to 24th October.

Korea's dance boom of the 1980s, has paved the way for 1992 Year of Dance's huge success. The last decade was characterized by expansion of dance departments at universities, mushrooming of new performing venues, formation of new dance groups, increasing number of artistes going overseas for dance training, strengthening of dance organizations

and greater financial support for dance from the public and private sectors. Furthermore, the Asian Games and Olympics in 1986 and 1988 have to great extent expanded the dance horizon of Korea as the events provided opportunities for enchanting encounters of East and West.

This year's Young Choreographers' Festival was supported by the Korean Small and Medium Industrial Bank. It selected 12 choreographers to compete, based on themes, resumes, records of dance companies, video taped choreographers' works submitted by the applicants. Each group gave three performances at the Munye Small Theatre managed by the Korean Arts and Culture Foundation at Dong Soong-Dong.

It was a great honour and privilege indeed for me to join the four distinguished choreographers and dance critics to serve on the adjudicating committee. They were Prof. Suh Jung Ja, Chung Ang University, Prof. Jung Je Man, Sookmeung Women's University, Prof. Kim Mal Borg, Ewha Women's University and Mr. Chang Kwang Ryul of the monthly Music and Performing Arts Magazine Gaek Suk. The committee was chaired by Prof. Park Il Kyu, Director of the Project Department of The Year of Dance.

The 12 choreographers, all under the age of 35, displayed great diversity in their preference of themes, styles and music used in their creative works. From "The Lonely Woman" (by Choe Sang Cheul), "Unusual Traveller" (by Kim Yong Chen), "Bird's Eye View" (by Kim Hee Jin),

"Release Me" (by Park Hwa Kyung), "Rice" (by Paek Hyun Soon) to "Exorcism" (by Park Kyung Lee), these young choreographers have a good sense of musicality and were able to select music, songs or sound effects, including human voices, traffic noises as well as narrators to achieve their intended atmosphere. A few items that have live music were fortunate to have musicians who really understand dance and they played the melodies with their hearts!

"Reminiscence" was also a memorable item which depicted emotional conflicts of relationship in the past and present with dramatic tension. The choreographer used the props, old photos, chairs and dummy well but she would have done better if there were more dancing than static acting and miming.

Unusual lighting, film projection and set used in Kim Hee Jin's "Bird's Eye View" helped the choreographer to create some memorable poses.

Most dancers had strong technique and were well disciplined. The Korean traditional dancers such as those who appeared in "Rice" and "Exorcism" also have broad training in non-traditional dance technique. This is why they were able to meet the choreographers' demand to perform innovative steps.

One area deserving the young choreographers' attention is the directorial skills to select and connect choreographic ideas. Unless they flow smoothly and are clearly presented in dance language, movements, no matter how interesting they look,

might become disjointed sequences and fragmented images. Creating a few nice steps is not enough. To sustain the audience's interest, steps must be created with grace and logic focused on the chosen themes.

The other weakness that was

apparent in some dances was the lack of understanding of music. Some choreographers did not study details of musical phrases and the movements they created did not correspond to music.

Nevertheless, what an excellent

opportunity it was for the young choreographers to receive the financial and logistical support from the organizer and such warm applause from the packed house night after night. Their debut in this festival is a promise for more imaginative work in the years to come.

*Nieu*

CHINESE OPERA IN BANGKOK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUANGCHAI RUANGPAISARN





















# SPAFA Affairs

## Documentation of Non-Print Materials on Culture

In line with the programmes of activities and budget for the fiscal year 1991/1992, SPAFA organized a seven-week training course in the Documentation of Non-Print Materials on Culture (S-T103b) from 19 March to 9 May 1992, in Bangkok and Nonthaburi, with the cooperation of Chulalongkorn University, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University and the National Museum Division, Department of Fine Arts, Ministry of Education.

Among SPAFA member countries, there has been a felt need for training personnel responsible for the custody and preservation of cultural objects, including audio-visual materials which museums, libraries, archives and other cultural institutions, have acquired. These objects are valuable sources of a country's cultural history and deserve greater attention and proper documentation. Therefore, the SPAFA Governing Board have authorized the organization of a series of training courses on this topic. The course, organized March to May, is second in

the series.

The objectives of the course are :

- 1) to train persons responsible for repositories of non-print cultural materials in their proper documentation, such as taking photographs, descriptive recording, cataloging and classifying;
- 2) to train them in the handling, servicing, storing, preserving and restoration of photographic materials.

There are 12 trainees from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Resource persons are experts and teaching faculty members in the relevant fields and cultural institutions, especially from the Department of Photographic Science and Printing Technology, Chulalongkorn University, the Institute of Education Technology, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, and the National Museum.

The course included both theoretical aspects as well as practical exercises which covered more than sixty percent

of the time allocated. There are a wide range of important topics relevant to documentation, such as photography and conservation of photographic images; photographic techniques, film developing and enlarging; storage, preservation and restoration of historic photographs; slide-tape production; television production, classifying and cataloguing of audio-visual materials.

At the end of the course, the trainees were awarded certificates of successful achievement by Dr. Ruben Umaly, SEAMES Director.

## SPAFA Director's Cultural Missions

In the first half of 1992, apart from going to Brunei for the 27th SEAMEC Conference from February 9-12, the Director of SPAFA was invited aboard three times for conferences and a cultural tour.

From April 8-19, he was invited to Turin for the conference of CESMEO on Valmiki's Ramayana. The Director presented a paper on "The Difference Between Valmiki's Ramayana and the



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Thai Ramakian of King Rama I of Thailand." He also took the opportunity to visit Berlin, after the unification of Western and Eastern Germany. He also went to the town of Potsdam to visit the Sans Souci Palace of King Frederic the Great of Prussia. He then went on to Munich and Turin. On his return journey he went first to Milan, and then Amsterdam where he took the opportunity to visit the flower show, then took KLM back to Bangkok.

From May 16-24, he was invited by the French Government to Paris for one week. This coincided with the celebration of UNESCO on the centenary birthday of H.R.H. Prince Mahidol of Songkhla, the father of H.M. the present King. The arrangement was quite a successful event. When H.R.H. Princess Kalyani, the elder sister of the King, presented her paper on the life of her father, who is named as the Father of Modern Medicine in Thailand, on the 18th, the large hall of UNESCO, which can seat 1,300 people was full. After finishing the paper she received a standing ovation. On the 20th H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, a much

beloved princess in Thailand, played in a Thai music recital. In the first half of the event young French musicians played songs composed by H.M. the King. In the second half was Thai music played by Her Royal Highness. Not only was the large hall was full but three hundred people were waiting outside because they could not enter into the hall. Though during that period there was political unrest and rioting in Bangkok, these two events passed on peacefully. The two princesses also received medals of merit from the Director General of UNESCO.

During this trip to France the Director was accompanied by Associate Professor Kamthorn Kulachol who teaches urbanism at the Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, and also works part-time at SPAFA as a programme officer. They went to the town of Lyons together. With the guide of M. Reppelin, who restored the ancient monuments and houses in Lyons, they visited the Gallo-Romain Museum, the old quarters of Lyons, as well as studying restoration work which included the preservation and commercial promotion of old buildings.

They also visited many museums and monuments in Paris. Through the French Government's generosity they also went to Eurodisneyland which was just opened in Paris.

From June 3-19, the Director was invited to the Asia Society in New York to assist in the Conference on the Restoration of Khmer Monuments in Cambodia. He went to New York via Amsterdam by KLM. The Conference in New York lasted three days from June 5-7. The speakers were composed of many nationalities: American, Cambodian, French, Indian, Japanese and Thai. The Indian representative explained how the Indian archaeologists and architects restored Angkor Wat, the most eminent temple in Cambodia. On behalf of Thailand the Director explained how Thailand could help Cambodia by training Cambodian technicians at the Prasat Phanom Wan Centre in northeastern Thailand, where Thailand runs the course with the help of L'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient. The second programme would be to train Cambodian managers or Directors of Culture in Thailand, by SPAFA, and the third programme would be to find

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ways to return stone sculptures taken from Cambodia which are now preserved in the National Museum of Thailand. On the last day three films on Cambodia at the present time and Cambodian refugees in the United States were shown.

After the Conference in New York the Director came to visit cultural sites in Los Angeles for a while before coming back to Bangkok.

## **Professor Yamaguti Visits SPAFA**

The distinguished musicologist, Prof. Yamaguti Osamu, Trustee of the Hyogo Performing Arts Foundation, Japan, visited SPAFA on the July 8, 1992. Assoc Prof. Dr. Chua Soo Pong, Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa and Khunying Maenmas Chavalit welcomed Prof. Yamaguti and explained to him the mission, organizational set up and activities of SPAFA.

Prof. Yamaguti then explained the objectives of the Hyogo Performing Arts Foundation as follows:

1. Form an international base for the creation and exchange of performing artworks.
2. Sponsor the planning, production and presentations of domestic performing arts and well-known overseas artistes.
3. Fund research on the performing arts.

It is hoped that Prof. Yamaguti will be able to assist SPAFA in its training course ST234 "Promotion and Dissemination of Information on Performing Arts in Southeast Asia," scheduled to be held in Singapore in January-March 1993, giving six lectures on "Music in Southeast Asia."

## **Systematic Presentation of Archaeological Data**

During 15 April-June 10, 1992 a training course on the Systematic Presentation of Archaeological Data (S-T132b) was conducted by SPAFA, in cooperation with Silpakorn University, at the University's Sanamchand Palace

Campus, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand.

This is the second in the series of training courses on this subject, of which the first one was organized in 1989, in cooperation with the Philippines SPAFA Governing Board Member. Numerous archaeological excavations in Southeast Asia result in voluminous new data which need systematic organization and presentation by applying modern scientific technology for data processing. SPAFA has been called upon to organize training courses on this topic.

The objectives of the training are:

- a) to acquaint and train workers in the fields of archaeology and museums with the most appropriate methods of categorization and organization of archaeological data, especially the basic use of computer programmes for management and presentation of data;
- b) to improve efficiency and effectiveness in management of sites and artifacts in order to

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facilitate the sharing of information among member countries.

At the end of the course, trainees are expected to understand basic computer work and to be able to proceed to more advanced courses in analyses of various types of data.

Trainees were from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Resource persons, 15 in number, came from Silpakorn University, Archaeology Faculty and the Computer Centre, as well as from the Department of Fine Arts, the Archaeology Division and the National Museum Division. One expert in computer applications for processing archaeological data, Mr. Terry Gibson, came from the Western Heritage Services, Saskatoon, Canada. He conducted the training on Geographic Information System.

Other subjects of the course include: (1) a fresh up course in computer application, (2) museum inventory system, (3) computer graphics, (4) advanced techniques in archaeological data presentation.

Trainees were given the opportunity to undertake individual projects which are appropriate to their archaeological sites and situations in their respective countries.

Trainees expressed their satisfaction in the course, and recommended that an advanced course on the same subject be organized in future by SPAFA.

## **Workshop for Underwater Archaeological Research**

From June 29-July 5, SPAFA and the National Research Centre of Archaeology, Indonesia conducted a workshop for Underwater Archaeological Research in Indonesia.

Twenty-one participants from member countries attended, including three consultants from France, Malaysia and Thailand. Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa, SPAFA Senior Specialist for Archaeology, was advisor to the workshop.

The meeting was successfully conducted at three venues: at the

National Research Centre of Archaeology in Jakarta, in Carita and at the Office of the Regent in Serang.

Valuable statements and recommendations derived from this successful meeting. All participants expressed their concern over the protection, research and management of marine archaeological resources, the site, ship and artifacts. Everyone called for regional undertakings to be conducted through SPAFA, which should act as a centre for information networking or database.

## **Training Course for Facilitators in Development of Cultural Heritage Awareness and Creative Crafts Livelihood Activity to Communities through Art Education**

SPAFA in cooperation with the Cottage Industries Division, Department of Industrial Promotion, Ministry of Industry, Thailand, organized a 2 month training course, from 5 July to 29 August 1992, for arts out-of-school teachers and community development officers from SPAFA member countries.

The course was conducted for most of the time at the Cottage Industries Division premises. Study visits were organized for on-the-spot learning in industrial workshop on textiles, woodworks, ceramics and other related home factories.

The main purpose of the course is to enable the trainees to gain insight, knowledge and skills on training communities to develop up-grading skills in arts and crafts. The ultimate aim is that the communities be able to produce arts and crafts which are

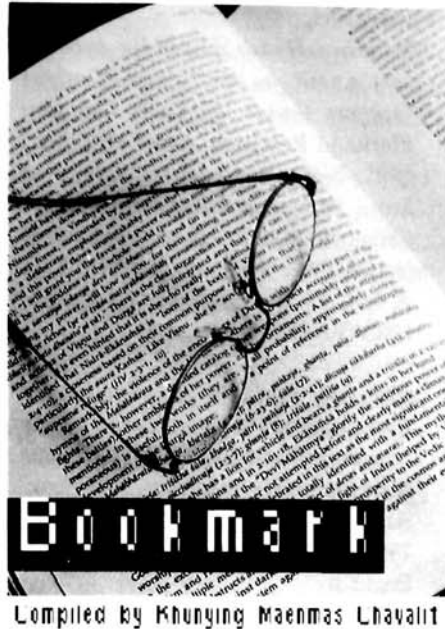
marketable and thus gain additional income to make life more meaningful.

The course covers both theories and practical exercises on relevant subjects, such as the different kinds of crafts which can be produced at home or small factory level, the raw materials and treatment of raw materials for use, techniques in weaving, carving, dying of textiles and the marketing of the products.

For this course SPAFA received

expertise and cooperation from the Canadian Government, through arrangement with the College Edouard-Monpetit, under SEAMEO-Canada cooperation in higher education and research. Mr. Mario Poulin an expert in arts and crafts gave lectures and demonstration on some techniques. He also supervised the practical exercise.

Twelve trainees came from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. They were very satisfied with the group projects they selected to produce.



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