

SPAFA Affairs

Indonesia Hosts Seminar on Traditional Performing Arts

How to preserve and enrich the traditional performing arts in Southeast Asia amidst the technological changes taking place was the topic of the Seminar on Technological Development and the Traditional Performing Arts recently held in Jakarta, Indonesia. It was convened jointly by the SPAFA Sub-Centre for the Performing Arts and the SPAFA Coordinating Unit and hosted by the Directorate General of Culture of Indonesia.

Discussions centered on the different aspects of the traditional performing arts: their status in contemporary society; their curriculum requirements to increase people's awareness and appreciation, how they are affected by tourism; the role of the government and other pertinent institutions in their preservation, and strategies for their enhancement and preservation.

Measures For Preservation

The differences in the way the traditional performing arts are kept alive in the three participating countries — Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand — were brought out by the delegates from each country. Indonesia and Thailand, the participants concurred, have a strong tradition in the arts, especial-



The Indonesian officials at closing ceremony: Mrs. Satyawati Suleiman, SPAFA Governing Board member for Indonesia; Professor Dr. Haryati Soebadio, Director-General of Culture/Chairman SPAFA, National Steering Committee for Indonesia; Dr. F.X. Soetopo, Director, SPAFA Sub-Centre for the Performing Arts and Chairman, Organizing Committee of the Seminar.

ly music and dances. These are preserved by making them a part of the school curriculum as in Thailand and by continuing to make traditional performing arts a part of its daily life as in Indonesia.

The Philippines, on the other hand, has to contend with various foreign influences in its search for what is indigenous arts. However, it was observed that currently the Filipinos give more attention to the traditional performing arts. They have become the inspiration for new creative works of art. The same thing is observed in Thailand where

the musicians are creating new arrangements for some of their classical music.

TPA In Modern World

The preceding observation led the participants to agree that a balance between the efforts to preserve the indigenous art and to adapt them to the contemporary world should be sought. They recommended that the traditional performing arts in their real form be given as wide exposure as possible. At the same time, they should also serve as a nucleus of new creative works, thus assuring its continuity.

A limiting factor in the promotion and preservation of the traditional performing arts is the shortage of teachers of this subject. The delegates suggested that this be included in the course offerings of higher studies, particularly in education, and the lower levels of schooling. They also recommended that a non-degree extension course for future teachers and others interested in the arts be provided. The SPAFA Coordinating Unit was enjoined to convene another workshop to prepare the various curricula needed.

Role Of Tourism

The tourism industry as it stimulates the presentation of traditional performing arts also poses a problem in their preservation and protection. To counteract this, government and private institutions involved in tourism and culture should cooperate to insure the authenticity of the cultural presentations shown to tourists. The workshop also called for the professionalization of the tourism industry and provision of tourism education with focus on culture in all levels of education.



1. The opening ceremony of the seminar: the officials shown are l. to r.: Dr. Rosa C.P. Tenazas, Mr F. X. Soedjana, Inspector General, Ministry of Education and Culture; Mrs. S. Suleiman, and Mr. F.X. Soetopo.
2. Delegates from Indonesia, the host country.



The Kandagan Rampak Dance

The seminar underscored too the major role the government plays in the preservation of indigenous dances and music. This can be done by offering incentives to artists, as awards and recognition for their efforts, and providing the necessary facilities and funds necessary for their continuation, like research and documentation. It also noted the contribution of international foundations, like the Asia Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the JDR III Fund, in this effort.

Preservation Strategies

A number of strategies for the preservation of the traditional performing arts has also been forwarded. One suggestion was to perpetuate materials — traditional instruments, costumes, sets, etc. — and methods used in their staging. A way to do this is through establishment of a museum in each country. Another is through documentation of various classical music and dances. It is an area, the participants concluded, where modern technology could be of great use. Television, films, cassette and disc recordings could be utilized to record and preserve the traditional dances and music. The print media like books and magazines can also disseminate information on them.

To revive the interest in this art, the participants urged that festivals



Thai delegates demonstrate how to put on the costume of an important character in the Ramayana.

and competitions be conducted in each country and among the Southeast Asian countries. They also suggested that a board be formed to govern the standard of performance of the traditional dances and music.

Apart from the sessions, the delegates also attended cultural shows presented by the host country. Traditional dances of Indonesia were performed for the benefit of the participants.

The delegates to this seminar came from the three SPAFA member countries. Some observers, staffmembers of international foundations and officials of various In-

donesian institutions involved in art, also took part in the seminar. The list of delegates follows: Indonesia: Dr. I. Made Bandem, Mr. Sal Murgiyanto and Mr. I.G.B.N. Pandji; Philippines: Dr. Virginia F. Agbayani, Mrs. Vilma R. Santiago-Felipe, Prof. Andrea Veneracion, and Mrs. Amelia B. Aguila; Thailand: Mrs. Panida Sidhivarn, Mrs. Somsamorn Subnusun and Mr. Chaturong Montrisart; and the SPAFA Coordinating Unit: Dr. Rosa C.P. Tenazas and Mr. Djasponi.

The observers are the following: Mrs. S. Suleiman, Mr. D. Djajakusuma, Mr. Anak Agung Muter, Mr. Surady Soehoed, Dr. Terry Bigalke and Mr. Abas Ali Basyah.

Export of.....

¹⁴ "The Export Ceramics found in West Borneo" by Tom Harrison, **Oriental Art** Vol. 2, 1959

¹⁵ "Annual Report of the Oriental Ceramics Society."

¹⁶ "The Unearthed Cultural Relics at Bhambore" **Oriental Art**. Vol. 1, 1960.

¹⁷ Similar to 14.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ "The Ceramics Road" by Tsugio Mikami.



Representatives from Thailand and the Philippines.