

## **LAKHON PHANTHANG: IN BETWEEN TRADITIONAL THEATRE AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THAILAND**

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### **Abstract**

In the past, lakhon phanthang emerges as a commercial theatre in Siam in the nineteenth century however at present it is named as a Thai traditional theatre. Under the Thai traditional theatre label, lakhon phanthang has been selected to present on the various Thai dance curricular in Thailand in order to preserving and developing the traditional dance-drama form. This paper examines the transmission of lakhon phanthang to the young generations through the dance educational system in Thailand by focusing on the existing of lakhon phanthang at three universities; 1) Buditpatanasilpa Institute 2) Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and 3) Chulalongkorn University, which are the prominent institutions in providing traditional dance and theatre education in Thailand. The finding represents the reflection of the role of educational institutions in the codification of performance. The process of learning and teaching lakhon phanthang are proposed as a set routine rather than a creative opportunity. Dance and theatre education in today's educational system does not encourage the development of traditional forms but is seen primarily as a means of preserving them.

**Keywords:** Lakhon phanthang, Thai dance education, Thai traditional theatre

### **1. Introduction**

The royal speech of his majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX) on the occasion of the graduation ceremony of Silapakorn University on 12th October, 1967 stated that art and scientific knowledge are essential knowledge to the development of humanity and the country (Fahchumroon, 1996, p. 2). Art and culture encourage people learn and understand the root of national identity, and, on the other hand, scientific knowledge will provide modernity to

country and keeping people up to date with the world. In Thailand, the king and the royal family highly patronise art and culture, particularly Thai classical dance and music. During the first period of King Rama IX's reign, the monarch highly supported Thai traditional dance and music with the intention of preserving and promoting these arts in conjunction with the development of country.

In the past, the teaching and learning Thai dance basically practiced in the court or an aristocrat villa by using the traditional teaching methods. The dance masters presented how to dance to their students. Then, the students imitated the dance movements from the masters (Damrongrajanubhab, 2003, p. 125; Brandon, 1974, p. 155). The dance knowledge was transmitted by imitating and practicing repeatedly, which differed from the dance study in the modern society. At present, Thai dance and music subjects are mandatory courses for all schools as its represent the tradition and culture of the nation. Therefore, all Thai students have an opportunity to learn and close to the Thai performing arts through the curriculum. In the higher educational level, there are more than 41 universities across country offer the bachelor's degree, which related to the Thai performing arts, Thai classical dance, and Thai dance and theatre (Sukee, 2011, p.81-84). All these universities can be categorised into 3 groups; the university based artist school, the university based the teachers' training college and the formal university in both government and private universities. Lakhon phanthat is one of a tradition theatre, which is offered to the Thai performing arts students. In the Thai theatrical academia, lakhon phanthat is recognised as a Thai traditional theatre form even it forms is associated with other dance style's elements. The historical background and the development of lakhon phanthat from the popular theatre in the late nineteenth century to the royal dance theatre in the early twentieth century brought about the continually development under the Thai theatrical academia.

## **2. Lakhon phanthat in dance educational system**

### *The university based artist school: Buditpatanasilpa Institute*

The one university based an artist training school is Buditpatanasilpa Institute KromSilapakorn providing the higher education in dance and music in form of the formal

educational system. The mission and aim of this institution is educating the students on dance, music, composing and singing arts, and visual arts in the national classic and folk and international arts from the beginning to the professional level. Teaching, performing, researching and academic services are the main roles and duties of this institution. Additionally, the institution has a mission in supporting, creating, preserving and disseminating the national art and culture which demonstrate the national identity. Buditpatanasilpa Institute Krom Silapakorn originates from Rongrain Nataduriyangkhasat (School of Classical Dance and Music) under the authority of Krasuang Thammakarn (Ministry of Education) in 1934, the first school of arts, which was separated from the education under the royal patronage after the end of absolute monarchy (Rutnin, 1996, p.189). Rongrian Nataduriyangkhasat offered the primary and secondary educations. The curriculums of this school were clearly situated to benefit the students by providing the dramatic art knowledge coexisting with the general education. The fifty percent of the studies in each academic year has spent on the studying of general subjects such as Thai and international histories, English studies, morality and psychology studies, health and physical educations, which based on the fundamental education rules and regulations of Ministry of Education. The other has spent on the performing art subjects. At the beginning, the dance and music teachers of this school were the members of the private dance troupe of royal family and aristocracy from many regions (Pramate Boonyachai, personal communication, April 8, 2013).

Since 1934, the school was changed the names several times in serving the new courses: from Rongrian Nataduriyangkhasat to Rongrian Silapakon in 1935, to Rongrian Sang-khitsin in 1942. In 1945, the school was changed the name to Rongrian Natasin offering the primary and secondary educations and a two-year diploma in music and classical dance studies. Later, in 1972, the school of dance and music was promoted to the College of Art and Music named Witthayalai Natasin, and later a bachelor's degree in music and classical dance studies was first

presented from this college in 1976("History of Witthayalai Natasin," 2013). At the present, in order to manage the dance and music in the modern educational system and the expanding the art school in Thailand, Bunditpatanasilpa Institute Krom Silapakorn under the administration of the Ministry of Culture was established in 1992, as a major educational institution in order to organise the dance and music studies of Witthayalai Natasin across country. Due to the aim and mission of school, it shapes the direction and the teaching and learning method of the school. Assistant professor Dr.Supachai Chansuwan, a former student of Witthayalai Natasin and a former dean of Bunditpatanasilpa Institute stated in an interview on 25<sup>th</sup>May, 2012 that:

The students are expected to know, understand and practice all ancient dance forms such as lakhon nai, lakhon nok, lakhon phanthat and lakhon dukdamban. We [the institution] provide the wide picture of Thai traditional dance and encourage students to learn and understand the main idea of each theatre forms. We believe that if the students are strong in the tradition form, they can apply to the contemporary forms later. Thus, the curriculum will be mainly design by this concept.

Lakhon phanthat is addressed in the dance curriculum of Bunditpatanasilpa Institute accompanying with other classical dance style. Nonetheless, lakhon phanthat seems subordinate to other traditional courts' entertainments such as lakhon nai and khon (masked dance). As Brandon (1974) stated that around the Southeast Asia region, the former court theatre forms, such as Thai khon and lakhon, and Indonesia wayang, and a few folk dances are taught at government schools, while on the other hand most popular theatre forms are ignored (p.165). Regarding to the dance curriculum of Bunditpatanasilpa Institute, lakhon phanthat is placed in a small part of the Thai dance subject named Thai Dance Skill III applying in the first semester of the second year students. This course outline specifies Thai dance and the selected dance drama scene of lakhon phanthat bases on the Phra Lor \* story episode Phra Lor Tam Kai [Phra Lor follows the magic rooster]. The students will be taught and trained lakhon phanthat accompany with various selected dance pieces such as a selected prelude dance from khon and Thai dance-drama, a selected solo dance from

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\*Phra Lor story is considered as a prime example of traditional lakhon phanthat style, which was dramatised by Prince Narathip, the royal family member and developed under the royal patronage since the early twentieth century.

lakhon nai, a group dance from lakhon dukdamban and the dance pieces of phleng na phat. Furthermore, the selected dance movement in battle scene based on lakhon phanthat in Rachathirat\* story has offering to students in the second semester through the dance subject Thai Dance Skill IV (Bundit Khemthong, personal communication, May 10, 2013)

Chansuwan (personal communication, May 25, 2012) states that Phra Lor and Rachathirat repertoires contain the exquisite dance movements, which were choreographed by the court dance master in the past. The dance movements of these two plays are admired in the Thai traditional dance circle as a traditional form of lakhon phanthat and it was applied for the dance course of Bunditpatanasilpa Institute. In theoretical, it might be said that the curriculum and the course outlines are designed in frame of the institute's missions which refer to the preservation more than the modernisation of theatrical arts. Moreover, it shows the conception of how Thai theatrical arts develop and exist in the changing society in the side of education. Pramate Boonyachai, a senior Thai classical dance-drama and Khon master of Bunditpatanasilpa Institute remarked in his interview about lakhon phanthat and Thai educational system on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2013:

Thai dance students should be first strong on the traditional dance style than the other. They are supposed to achieve the advance level of traditional dance style. Then, they could use their knowledge in further developing and modernising the theatrical arts. For example, if the students are strongly acquainted with the Laos and Burmese dance principles in lakhon phanthat, they can apply these principles to another Laos and Burmese repertoire. Additionally, the development of Thai theatrical arts will be generated.

Pramate Boonyachai's theory may seem place emphasis on the idea that traditional knowledge is the fundamental element in developing and modernising the Thai performing arts and it is quite valid. Additionally, it helps to explain the direction and style of other academic

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\*Rachathirat was a most popular literature in the early Rattanakosin period. The story is about the war between Burmese Kingdom and Mon kingdom in the ancient time. Theme points the unit of people in the country and priding the wise king in governing a country under the war time. Rachathirat originates from the Mon chronicle and it was translated to Thai language during the King Ram I reign (1736-1809 A.D.) by Chaopharaya Phra Klang (Hon). The aim of the literature was for reading book of royal family and elites.

projects by Bunditpatanasilpa Institute. *Silapaniphon* or The Arts Thesis is a compulsory project of the senior students of Bunditpatanasilpa Institute before they complete the degree. In the course description theoretically focuses on the student conducts a research report based either traditional dance or creative dance research papers, including seminars, focus group or exhibition. However, the students are practically required to present two dance projects accompanying with the research reports; a traditional dance project and a creative dance project. The traditional dance project requires that students present a selected solo dance piece or a short traditional dance-drama scene on stage and conduct the research paper in the same dance. The selected traditional dance and research are more derived from the dance pieces or scenes of lakhon nai, lakhon nok and khon than lakhon phanthang. In contrast, the students are required to choreograph a creative dance piece bases on the traditional dance knowledge and personal interest of each students group. The average of traditional dance project and research based lakhon phanthang is 25%, the others are spent to court dance and masked dance respectively ("The Arts Thesis", 2013).

*The University based teachers' training college: Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University*

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University\* was the first university based the teachers' training college offering a two-year diploma in Thai dance education since 1972 and in 1976, there was expanded to bachelor degree in its Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The formerly aim of this course was training their students to become a teacher in both primary and secondary schools (Sophon, 1988, p.175). In 2000, Thai dance education was transferred to under the responsibility of the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in a Performing Arts Department, offering the Bachelor of Fine and Applied Arts degree in Performing Arts. The Performing Arts Department consists of two majors; 1) Thai dance and 2) Theatre arts. The entire course contains the 132 mandatory credits under the four years of studies programme. The purpose of the course is designed differently from the original aim of the teachers' training college in the

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\*Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is originated from Rong Rian Sunandha Wittayalai since 1937, which was a court school educating Thai girls in general knowledge and training the craft skill become Kunlasatri [The Lady]. The school was changed the name and status in serving the changing of educational system in Thailand many times. In 1958, there was changed the name to Wittayalai Kru Suan Sunandha [The Suan Sunandha teachers' training college] focused on the producing and training students to be a teacher. In 1995, the college was changed the name and status to Sataban Rajabhat Suan Sunandha [Suan Sunandha Rajabhat Institution] with the expanding the offered degree and departments. Since 2004 to the present, the name has been changed to Mahawitayalai Rajabhat Suan Sunandha [Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University].

past. According to the new philosophy and mission of university, the new graduate generation is expected to become an expert in their own field accompanies with morality and social responsibility. The educational management and aim of each course and faculty are organised according to this paradigm and the educational propaganda of the state. Consequently, the currently performing arts students are trained and expected to become a dance-theatre artist, a choreographer, a director, a producer and a theatre critic in performing arts field instead of being a teacher in dance and theatre.

Lakhon phanthat is placed in a part of a compulsory subject named “The Classical Dance Theatre II” offering in the first semester of the third year student major in Thai dance. The course description elucidates that “[exploring] historical background, performance elements, and [practising] the dance techniques of lakhon phanthat based on the episode of Phraya Pa Nong, PhraLor and Rachathirat stories. Including [practising] lakhon se pa based on Khun Chang Khun Phan story or a selection of suitable episode depends on the instructors’ choice” (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat, 2013, p. 180). This subject is a three credits subject providing the in class theoretical and practical studies, including independent study of each student. The teaching and learning approach of the course are began with a dance master explaining the historical background of lakhon phanthat and other related information to the students taking time around 20 minutes. Then, they will spend around 2-3 hours per class for dance movement practicing on the selected lakhon phanthat episode.

The two kinds of Thai traditional dance-drama, lakhon phanthat and lakhon se pa, are obviously specified in the course description. However the 75% of the course is devoted to lakhon phanthat than the other. During 2009-2013 academic years, the three stories and selected episode based on lakhon phanthat have been offered for the students as follow:

- 1) Phra Lor in episode Phra Lor Chom Suan -Khow Hong [Phra Lor walks through the garden – Enter to the princess’s room]
- 2) Rachathirat in scene Saming Phra Ram Keaw Phraratchathida [Saming Phra Ram courts a princess]
- 3) Phraya Pa Nong\* in scene Kam Pin Kor Fon [Kam Pin is praying for the rainfall]

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\*Phraya Pa Nong, is a new lakhon phanthat play which was composed by Montri Tramote in 1958 after the traditional dance and art school was first setting in Thailand.

According to Thai dance curriculum of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, the studies of lakhon phanthat is weighted to the traditional lakhon phanthat repertoires like Phra Lor and Rachathirat. PhraLor is selected in an entire episode by the course, which encourages students in exploring and practicing the full process of making and dancing of lakhon phanthat through the hybrid of Thai and Lao dance styles. Rachathirat repertoire in a selected short scene, in contrast, is aimed students to learn and practise only the duo dance movement styles over the hybrid of Thai, Burmese and Mon dance styles. Additionally, the students in groups are required to present a selected episode of lakhon phanthat based on their favourite repertoires as a final project of subject.

The course is aimed to train students become a professional in Thai dance and theatre. Thus the final project of the course is designed for students creating the dance project based on their own Thai traditional dance knowledge. *Silapaniphon* or The Degree Project is a 5 credits subject for the senior students created a performing arts production by presenting in form of Thai performance accompanying with research report. Sakul Muangsakorn (2013) states that the form and styles of *Silapaniphon* of the performing arts department arise from many factors such as the changing of the educational system from the teachers' training college to university, the curriculum, the lecturer team which comes from various educational backgrounds, the personal interest and the proficient in dance of each student, and the social trend (p.282). The mostly final dance projects have been developed and choreographed by the concept of hybridisation between Thai traditional and non-Thai dance forms, which generated the individual style.

Lakhon phanthat style has also influence on the annual dance-drama production of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. In the past, the annual dance-drama productions were a school's tradition since 1950, a first year of presenting a dance-drama production. In the beginning, this production was established in the aim of to commemorate the anniversary of the royal birth day of HM Queen Sunandha Kumariratana of the King Rama V and to raise a fund for supporting the educational activities of school. In 1972, after the expanding of the curriculum from a two-year diploma to a bachelor degree in Thai dance education. The purpose of the annual dance-drama production was changed to serve the changing of educational system of school. It aimed to train and improve students' skills in producing and managing theatrical production. In 1950 to 2004, the annual dance-drama productions of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat



University have been mostly presented in form of lakhon nok and lakhon phanhang (Potiwetchakul, 2005, p. 97). These dance-drama genres were accessible to the target audiences whose were unfamiliar with the traditional dance-drama. However, since 2005 until the present, the trend of the theatrical productions of Suan Sunadha Rajabhat University has been changed to lakhon nok with the reason of the restriction of time and the aim of production.

*The Formal University: Chulalongkorn University*

In 1988, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University established the Dance Department offering the bachelor degree in dance consisting of two major: 1) Thai dance and 2) Western dance. Mission and aim of the course have been focused on training the students become dance artists and/or dance-drama researchers whose are strongly in the advance dance skills (Department of Dance). In 1992, the Thai dance education of Thailand was improved to the higher degree level. The first master degree in Thai Dance was offered to the Thai student by the Dance Department of Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University and in 1999, the first doctoral degree in Thai Dance was introduced by this faculty respectively. The popularity and the demanding in Thai dance studies have been reflected explicitly from the expansion of the curriculums and the degree. In addition, Thai dance educational in Thailand has been developed and evaluated equally another disciplines.

The dance curriculum of Witthayalai Natasin KromSilapkorn was a prototype of the dance curriculum of Chulalongkorn University (Archayuttakarn, personal communication, March 29, 2013). Therefore, the teaching and learning approaches of university have narrowed to the dace educational conservatism. All traditional dance and theatre forms are offered in the curriculum including lakhon phanhang. In each dance subject will offered two kinds of performances to the students, for example, the students will study lakhon nok, a traditional theatre form in parallel with the study of *Ram Ku* [a duo dance], a traditional dance form. Only the advance traditional theatre form such as lakhon nai and lakhon dukdambun are offered in an individual subject. “Thai Dance Skill for Male/Female Character IV” is a dance subject which offered lakhon phanhang theatre form and *Ram Deaw* [a solo dance], the traditional dance. The percentage of the subject is divided in equally, 50% has spent in training the selected theatre form and the other 50% has spent in training dance form. This subject is for the second year

students offered in the second term. This subject is a three credits subject providing the in class theoretical and practical studies, including independent study of each student as same as the performing art curriculum of other universities. The course description provides the widely information without the specific name or of each performance form. The dance masters have to design and select the proper performing arts' scene and episode for teaching in the class. Phra Lor, Rachathirat and Phraya Pa Nong are the popular repertoires of lakhon phanthat, applied to the course. The episodes and scenes will be selected from these repertoires by the dance master depending on their expert. Additionally, the numbers of student in class is an important factor in selecting an episode or scene of lakhon phanthat by the reason of the course assessment. According to the final course assessment, the students are required in group to perform and produce lakhon phanthat, which they have learnt from the course (Anukoon Rotjanasooksomboon, internet chat interview, September 5, 2013).

Although lakhon phanthat is placed in the curriculum, it has least influence over the dance-drama productions of the institution. Malinee Archayuttakarn, an assistant professor of Thai Dance at Thai Dance Department, Chulalongkorn University states in an interview on 29 March 2013 that

Thai dance Department of Chulalongkorn University is mainly focused on the traditional dance studies particularly the studies of ancient court dance with the result that Chulalongkorn University was founded by the royal policy of King Chulalongkorn [King Rama V] and officially established in the reign of his son, King Vajiravudh [King Rama VI]. Therefore, the court dance and dance-drama forms such as lakhon nai, lakhon dukdumban have been intensively supported and offered to students than the other dance-drama form.

*Peepataya Dukdumban* [A Thai Traditional Orchestra of Chulalongkorn University] is an annual musical and theatre project of the department in cooperate with the Cultural Centre of Chulalongkorn University. This project has been founded in 1987 under the royal patronage of H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Its aim is to revive and preserve the ancient Thai music *Peepataya Dukdumban* of the twentieth century, which was prized and admired as a high standard form of Thai traditional music. Thai dance Department of Chulalongkorn University

will produce and choreograph a dance piece or a short scene of dance-drama in form of tableau vivant accompanying with the Thai ensemble. Since 1987 until present, the dance-drama scenes based on lakhon phanthat only two stories, Phra Lor and Rachathirat, have been selected to present in tableau vivant form in this event only three times (Kamnerdmanee, 2008, p. 210-214). This event reminds the statement of Archayuttakarn, which mentioned implicitly to the direction of the dance curriculum of the department in focusing on the preserving of court entertainment as a traditional art form. Thus, the direction and style of the performance and production by the department will be shaped on this track.

### **3. Preserving or Developing**

According to the existence of lakhon phanthat in the Thai dance education based on 3 selected universities, it demonstrates lakhon phanthat is running on the track of preserving as a traditional theatre form more than the track of developing. Traditional lakhon phanthat such as Phra Lor and Rachathirat repertoires, which were inherited from the court in the past, have been applied to Thai dance curriculums and transmitted to Thai dance students. In turn, a popular lakhon phanthat or the new lakhon phanthat repertoire is not offered and mentioned in the curriculum. These dance educational concepts produce both positive and negative results. On the one hand, the currently Thai performing arts curriculums help to remain the ancient dance form in modern Thai society and transmit the national heritage to the new generation. On the other hand, the traditional forms, patterns and qualities have been frozen in the process of this preserving as Pornrat Dumrhung stated in the interview on 4th April, 2013 that

The performing arts education in Thailand especially Thai dance studies is designed primarily to exaggerate the campaign of preserving traditional dance and theatre but it lacks the process of development. The situation of Thai traditional dance in the future possibly runs into the difficulties. The traditional theatre forms not only lakhon phanthat, but all will be placed as a piece of museum arts, which Thai people perhaps, know only the name.

In theoretical, it seems the study of traditional dance and theatre in Thailand encourages young generation to realise that traditional arts are an essential knowledge of the process of dance development in the modern society. In practical, however, the encouragements of using traditional knowledge in applying to new creative dance forms sound as though an unrealistic concept.

During my field research in February 2017, I conducted a focus group discussion for the second year student of the Performing Arts Department (Thai dance), Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in Bangkok, Thailand. All 30 students have been studied lakhon phanthat in theoretical view, and someone experienced lakhon phanthat as a performer in a short scene or a minor role. In the focus group, I encouraged students to explain their experiences and how they perceive and recognise the traditional theatre particularly lakhon phanthat. Summarily, most of the time in class is spent to practise the dance movements of the traditional dance-drama episode choice's by the dance master. Historical background and theatrical elements are mentioned the most in the class, although, they can find all these information from books, researches and other sources in the library and on the internet. In dance practise, the main idea is the mimicry the dance movement showed by the teachers. The recently methods of teaching and learning traditional dance do not encourage learners thinking outside the frame. The learning of traditional dance-drama forms and patterns including lakhon phanthat have been set as a Thai dance customs which learners have a duty in repeating and protecting the quality of form rather than developing the new dance form based on tradition.

By the student's perception, the term lakhon phanthat explains a traditional dance form which integrates Thai traditional dance form with the other dance forms in Southeast Asia region. Burmese, Lao, Mon, Khake [Malay and India] and Chinese dance movement styles by lakhon phanthat persuade them to learn and define the differentiation between Thai traditional dance and others. Lakhon Phanthat is named as a Thai traditional theatre but the characteristic of hybridity in itself decreases the degree of traditionalistic. In the dance aesthetical view point, the traditional lakhon phanthat such as Phra Lor and Rachathirat has framed with the ancient custom and rule. The dance movement style requires a special dance skill in representing the ethnicity of character in the play, for example the swaying shoulder and torso techniques, the off-body balance technique. All these techniques are dissimilar from the other tradition Thai dance forms. However, a study of lakhon phanthat cannot lead them to interest in the primary dance styles of each nationality and the relationship between Thai dance and others in sense of sharing cultural and art form of the region.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Thai traditional dance curricula in Thailand enables the traditional lakhon phanthat form to continue and survive through the times without much distorting in standard and quality of traditional art form. However, there is facing an interesting challenge of how this traditional form will be developed under the modern world. The existing problems in performing arts studies in Thailand is the lack of development in learning and teaching methods, which can encourage the students in developing traditional theatre into the changing society. Rutnin (1982) states that "the traditional teaching methods, which are applied in curricula, limit the creativity of the students" (p.16-18). Based on my personal experience in teaching and learning Thai traditional dance, the development of traditional theatre through the educational system in Thailand does not enable students to realistically innovate the traditional theatres for the modern society. The annual theatrical production of each educational institution is a good example in describing the direction of representing traditional theatre by the students. A task of the teaching and learning in Thai dance is a producing of an annual theatrical production. The aim of the event is to promote the aesthetic of Thai dance and theatre to the public and to

encourage students in experiencing the process of managing theatre production. Traditional theatre and dance forms will be selected to perform on stage depending on the primarily aim of curriculum and the expertness of dance teachers of each school. For example, the annual music and theatre productions of Thai Dance Department of Chulalongkorn University Peepataya Dukdumban are emphasised on court dance style and masked dance, which are appropriate to the event's theme and focus of curriculum. The theatrical productions of the Performing Arts Department of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University are in contrast. There are mostly presenting lakhon nok more than the other kinds of traditional dance form by considering the reason of the art perception of audiences and dance skill of students. However, lack of realistically academic freedom in teaching and learning traditional dance studies in Thailand is a major problem blocking the development of traditional theatre under the illusion that education is a development.

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