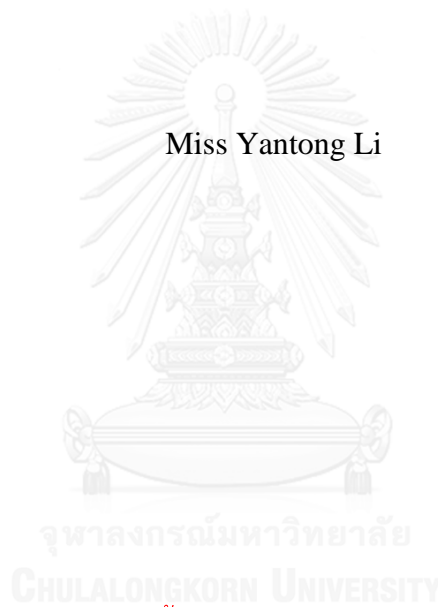


TRADITIONAL KHON MASK PERFORMANCE AS INTANGIBLE
CULTURAL HERITAGE (2006-2014):
CASES OF DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS KHON TROUPE, HER MAJESTY
QUEEN SIRIKIT'S SUPPORT FOUNDATION KHON PROJECT AND
THE SALA CHALERMKRUNG KHON TROUPE

Miss Yantong Li



บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)
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การอนุรักษ์การแสดงโขนในฐานะมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมและภูมิปัญญา (พ.ศ. 2549-2557):

กรณีศึกษาโขนกรมศิลป์ากร โครงการโขนมูลนิธิศิลปาชีพ

ในสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์ พระบรมราชินีนาถ

และโขนศาลาเฉลิมกรุง



วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาอักษรศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาไทยศึกษา

คณะอักษรศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2559

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

เขียนลงที่ : การอนุรักษ์การแสดงโขนในฐานะมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมและภูมิปัญญา (พ.ศ. 2549-2557): กรณีศึกษาโขนกรมศิลป์ากร
โครงการโขนมูลนิธิศิลปาชีพในสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์ พระบรมราชินีนาถ และโขนศาลาเฉลิมกรุง (TRADITIONAL KHON
MASK PERFORMANCE AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (2006-2014): CASES OF DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS
KHON TROUPE, HER MAJESTY QUEEN SIRIKIT'S SUPPORT FOUNDATION KHON PROJECT AND THE SALA
CHALERMKRUNG KHON TROUPE) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ศศ. ดร. ดินาร์ บุญธรรม, หน้า.

วิทยานิพนธ์เรื่องนี้มุ่งนำเสนอการวิเคราะห์แนวทางการอนุรักษ์การแสดงโขน ในฐานะมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมที่เป็นนามธรรม โดยมีกรณีศึกษาคณะโขน 3 คณะ คือ คณะโขนสำนักการสังคีต กรมศิลปากร โครงการจัดแสดงโขนพระราชทาน มูลนิธิศิลปาชีพ สถาบันสิริกิติ์ ในสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์ พระบรมราชินีนาถ ในพระบาทสมเด็จพระปรมินทรมหาภูมิพลอดุลยเดช และคณะโขนศาลาเฉลิมกรุง การวิจัยนี้จะศึกษาบทบาทและวิธีการของคณะโขนทั้งสามในการอนุรักษ์และสืบทอดการแสดงโขน โดยใช้วิธีวิจัยเอกสารเป็นหลัก หลักฐานสำคัญได้จากเอกสารชั้นต้นประเภทข่าวหนังสือพิมพ์ เอกสารชั้นรองประเภทหนังสือ งานวิจัย และวิทยานิพนธ์ รวมถึงข้อมูลที่ได้จากการสัมภาษณ์และการไปสังเกตการณ์การแสดงโขนในโอกาสต่างๆ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า การแสดงโขนในประเทศไทยปัจจุบันได้รับการอนุรักษ์และสืบทอดไว้ด้วยบทบาทของสถาบันทั้งสาม โดยพบว่าสำนักการสังคีต กรมศิลปากรมีบทบาทหน้าที่หลักในฐานะองค์กรภาครัฐที่รับผิดชอบการอนุรักษ์มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมของชาติ ได้แก่ การให้การศึกษาเรื่องโขน การฝึกหัดและผลิตนาฏศิลป์โขน และการจัดแสดงโขนในวาระต่างๆ ทั้งที่เป็นโอกาสทางราชการและการจัดแสดงต่อสาธารณชน โครงการจัดแสดงโขนพระราชทาน มูลนิธิศิลปาชีพ สถาบันสิริกิติ์ มีบทบาทในการอนุรักษ์การแสดงโขน โดยมุ่งอนุรักษ์เครื่องฟัสตราภรณ์ต่างๆ สำหรับการแสดงโขน เช่นเครื่องแต่งตัวโขน หัวโขน ศาสตราวุธ เครื่องประกอบฉาก ตลอดจนการสร้างฉากที่ยิ่งใหญ่อลังการด้วยงานศิลปะไทย และการประยุกต์เทคโนโลยีสมัยใหม่เข้ากับการแสดงโขน เพื่อดึงดูดความสนใจของผู้ชม ในขณะที่คณะโขนศาลาเฉลิมกรุง มีบทบาทในการอนุรักษ์การแสดงโขนที่มุ่งสร้างบทโขนให้เกิดเป็นคอนเสิร์ตที่แสดงเรื่องราวของตัวละครเอกตัวใดตัวหนึ่งในเรื่องรามเกียรติ์ เช่น พระรามและหนุมาน ให้มีการดำเนินเรื่องที่รวดเร็ว บทร้องและบทเจรจาน้อย แต่มีการแสดงท่าทางต่างๆ เป็นภาษาสากลเพื่อให้นักท่องเที่ยวและผู้ชมชาวต่างประเทศเข้าใจเรื่องราวและลักษณะการแสดงโขนของไทยได้ง่าย

บทบาทและวิธีการในการอนุรักษ์การแสดงโขนขององค์กรทั้งสามมีส่วนช่วยให้การแสดงโขนในสังคมไทยปัจจุบันยังคงได้รับความนิยมนจากผู้ชมทุกเพศทุกวัย และจะได้รับการสืบทอดต่อไปในอนาคตด้วย



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KEYWORDS: KHON PERFORMANCE / INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE / DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS / SUPPORT FOUNDATION / SALA CHALERMKRUNG

YANTONG LI: TRADITIONAL KHON MASK PERFORMANCE AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (2006-2014):CASES OF DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS KHON TROUPE, HER MAJESTYQUEEN SIRIKIT'S SUPPORT FOUNDATION KHON PROJECT AND THE SALA CHALERMKRUNG KHON TROUPE. ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. DINAR BOONTHARM, Ph.D., pp.

This thesis aims to identify the traditional *Khon* mask performance as intangible cultural heritage. Three selected cases: the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe will be examined, in terms of their significance and the roles they play in safeguarding *Khon* performance in Thailand today. In this research, the main resource of information comes from the secondary sources; and some others are from the documentary research, qualitative in-depth interviews and observations.

Conclusions of this study indicate that the *Khon* mask performance has been safeguarded through the efforts of these three organizations; each of them plays significant roles in safeguarding *Khon* performance today. The study also shows that the main safeguarding approach of Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe is to fulfill the official commission assigned by the Royal Thai Government to educate the knowledge on *Khon*, to train *Khon* artists and to organize *Khon* performances for the State functions and the regular *Khon* performances; Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project focus on the approaches of recreating high quality *Khon* costumes, masks, props, scenes in the authentic traditional Thai style, especially from the early Bangkok period, training young performers and artists and creating modern and high techniques of scene making to attract the audiences and the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe mainly focuses on the approach of introducing the *Khon* performance in adjusted versions to the tourists and the foreigners. Finally, by the three organizations' efforts, the traditional *Khon* performance has been ensured its viability and continuation to the future generations.

Field of Study: Thai Studies

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Student's Signature

Advisor's Signature

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
TAT	Tourism Authority of Thailand
The SUPPORT Foundation	The Foundation of the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and rationale

Located at the center of mainland Southeast Asia, Thailand is a country endowed by both natural attractions and a rich cultural heritage. The various evidences such as magnificent historical sites and splendid religious architecture throughout the kingdom demonstrate the richness and diversity of a proud civilization.

By definition, “*Heritage*” is something that people inherited from the previous generation, judged to be important, a part of the past that has contributed to the present (Apinya Baggelaar Arrunnapaporn, 2013) (page 257). In 1964, the “*Venice Charter*” referred “*Cultural Heritage*” to “monuments and sites” which dealt with the architectural heritages; then in the following years, the concept has been gradually broadened; more attention has been paid to the diversity of cultural heritage (Bouchenaki, 2003).

In 1994, the “*International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)*” released a “*Nara Document on Authenticity*” conceived in the spirit of *The Venice Charter* (1964) and proposed that, “All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expressions which constitute their heritage”¹; thus to include both tangible and intangible dimensions in the scope of cultural heritage.

¹ Article 3 and 7, the *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994). ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites). Available at <http://www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf>

Since the beginning of the 21st century, “recognizing that the process of globalization and social transformation has given rise to threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage”², various international instruments such as the *UNESCO’s Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003 which aims “to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage, to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned, and to raise awareness at local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage...”³, and the *Hoi-An Protocols for Best Conservation Practices in Asia* in 2009 which calls for countries “to understand the organic relationships between the physical components of the landscape and the intangible practices and values which impart cultural significance to a landscape...”⁴ have all appealed to more recognition of living meanings and spiritual values of our cultural heritage (Denes, 2013) (page 249).

Today, the definition of cultural heritage by UNESCO is defined as “the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.”⁵ Therefore, there are two types of cultural heritage are often expressed, tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage.

² The “*Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*”, General Conference of the UNESCO, Paris, 2003.

³ Article 1, The “*Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*”, General Conference of the UNESCO, Paris, 2003.

⁴ 4.3 (1), “*Professional Guidelines for Assuring and Preserving the Authenticity of Heritage Sites in the Context of the Cultures of Asia*”, Hoi An Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia, UNESCO, 2009.

⁵ UNESCO Office in Cairo. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/cairo/culture/tangible-cultural-heritage>

For the “*tangible cultural heritage*”, it includes those buildings and historic places, monuments, artifacts, etc. which are considered worth to be preserved for the future generations; these include objects significant to the archaeology, architecture, history, science or technology of a specific culture.⁶

“*Intangible cultural heritage*” means the “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognized as part of their cultural heritage and transmitted from generation to generation”; such as the traditions, spiritual rites and art forms, etc.; “this intangible cultural heritage is constantly recreated by the involved communities and groups and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity”.⁷

In 2003, the *UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* identified five domains of intangible cultural heritage:⁸

- a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- b) performing arts;
- c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- e) traditional craftsmanship.

⁶ UNESCO Office in Cairo. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/cairo/culture/tangible-cultural-heritage>

⁷ Article 2.1, Text of UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris, September 29th to October 17th, 2003. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00006>

⁸ Article 2.2, Text of UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris, September 29th to October 17th, 2003. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00006>

In Thailand, *Khon* (โขน) is a traditional masked dance performance that has a history of centuries dating back to the Ayutthaya period. Originally performed in the court, this elaborate dance is one of the most ancient and classical art forms combining various parts of the country's artistic works; for instance, the handicrafts, art created language, music, dance, acting arts, and so on.

As one of the UNESCO's five categories of intangible cultural heritage and regarded as a high and classical performing art, *Khon* is valuable by being an official standard for other types of performing arts in Thailand and can be recognized as an intangible cultural heritage according to its spiritual and cultural values as follows:

In most of cases, since the *Khon* performance depicts the story of *Ramakien*—the Thai version of Indian epic, *Ramayana*; it contains the faiths and beliefs of Hinduism and some principles of Buddhism. *Khon* maintains the sacred rites of paying homage to the Hindu deities and respectful dance and music masters, e.g. the “*Wai Khru*” Ceremony (ไหว้ครู, paying homage to teachers); and each episode of *Khon* performance has an educational meaning to spread the moral concepts such as the loyalty, gratitude, integrity, modesty and so on. These spiritual elements make *Khon* an uplifting and inspiring traditional performance to record the ancient wisdom and morality of Thai people.

Meanwhile, *Khon* is also an art reflects Thai way of life and the traditional cultural values. The way to gain necessary knowledge and train the skills of *Khon* by the form of master-apprentice relationships illustrates a social norm and tradition in Thai society; and the occasions of performing and watching the *Khon* performances (e.g. in funerals and celebrating festivals) reflects the customs of the local community. Constantly transmitted by the communities and groups it belongs to; existing along

with the social history and providing people who relating to this art a sense of identity and continuity; *Khon* is an intangible cultural heritage regarded by the related communities as a part of their cultural heritage.

However, with the change of times, the situations of intangible cultural heritage can be constantly changed under different social contexts and different generations. The development of the society might bring new attractive elements to the public and causes people's lack of attention to some expressions of intangible cultural heritages, especially the traditional performing arts.

In the past, options of entertainment in Thailand were limited, such as the *Hnang* (หนัง), the *Khon* (โขน) and the *Lakhon* (ละคร). However, nowadays, the effects of modernization and globalization brought various kinds of new technologies and modern life styles to the Thai society; the easier access to multi-cultures from other countries also blurring the boundary of "Thai culture" and "Universal culture". Attracted by the popular English songs and hot Korean dances, people are immersed in the excitement of this fast-paced era, gradually lost their interest in those traditional art forms. Therefore, to prevent these traditional performing arts as cultural heritages from being lost or forgotten forever, or freezing as antiques to be displayed in museums; it is significant to safeguard these heritages, ensuring the viability of the heritages and forwarding them to the future generations.

Furthermore, since the *Ramayana* epic has had a wide influence in the region of Southeast Asia, there are similar types of *Ramayana* masked plays in other Southeast Asian countries. In Indonesia, the story of *Ramayana* started to be performed in the Javanese masked *Topeng* dance with the arrival of Hinduism in the archipelago (Spiller, 1999) (page260-267). The masked dance drama in Cambodia is called

Lakhon Khol, which usually performs *Ramakier*—the Cambodian version of *Ramayana*. In Myanmar, the “Ramayana play” is based on *Yama Zatdaw*, the Burmese version of *Ramayana*. There’s also a masked play called *Khon* in Laos, but the episodes are based on *Phra Lak Phra Ram*, the Lao version of *Ramayana*. Recent years, in the International Ramayana Festivals; Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines also launched their own versions of *Ramayana* performances. Therefore, the *Khon* performance is not only a precious cultural heritage need to be safeguarded in Thailand, but also an art need to be safeguarded as the representation to identify and to promote the cultural similarities among the ASEAN community.

The term “*Safeguarding*” introduced by UNESCO refers to “measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage; it means trying to ensure that the heritage continues to be practiced and transmitted within the community or group concerned.”⁹

Therefore, in order to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, and keep the intangible alive, it must remain relevant to a culture and be regularly practiced and learned within the involved communities and generations; then the safeguarding activities must always involve the communities, groups and appropriate individuals to bear such heritage.¹⁰

To recognize the significance of *Khon* performance as an intangible cultural heritage, different groups and organizations in Thailand have paid their attentions and efforts in practicing, preserving and promoting this traditional masked performance. Among those groups and organizations, the governmental organization the

⁹ Article 2.3, Text of UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris, September 29th to October 17th, 2003. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00006>

¹⁰ UNESCO, 2011. *What is Cultural Heritage?* Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00002>

Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, the royal support from Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and the Sala Chalerkrung Khon Troupe are three outstanding organizations that play a significant role in safeguarding *Khon* performance today.

1.2 Research questions and objectives

Based on the above discussion, the research questions for this study are: Firstly, which organizations are good examples for playing remarkable roles of safeguarding *Khon* performance as an intangible cultural heritage in Thailand? Secondly, how these organizations see the significance of *Khon*? Finally, from the year 2006 to 2014, what approaches have these three organizations taken to safeguard the *Khon* performance?

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify *Khon* as intangible cultural heritage; and to examine the selected cases in terms of their significance and the roles these three organizations have played in safeguarding *Khon* performance in Thailand today.

1.3 Major arguments, theories or hypothesis

The launching of the Sala Chalaermkrung Khon troupe in 2006 with attractive performances in order to draw public attention to this traditional art form marked a starting point in the long-term revival of *Khon* as a cultural heritage.

The traditional *Khon* mask performance has been safeguarded and promoted through the efforts of a number of groups and organizations. The Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project

and the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe are three organizations playing significant roles in safeguarding *Khon* performance today.

The three organizations—Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe might regard “safeguarding” differently:

-It is the official commission assigned by the Royal Thai Government for the Department of Fine Arts to safeguard the *Khon* performance as one of their direct responsibilities¹¹;

-Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project focuses the safeguarding process on two approaches: first is the preserving approach to recreating high quality *Khon* costumes, masks, props, scenes in authentic traditional Thai style especially from the early Bangkok period; and the second is the applying approach to creating modern and high techniques in the scenes to attract the audiences;

And for the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe, its approach of safeguarding *Khon* is to introduce the performance in adjusted versions to the tourists and the foreigners.

In their efforts, the three organizations have safeguarded *Khon* performance and ensured the viability and continuation of this traditional art as a “living heritage” to be transmitted to the future generations.

¹¹ The direct responsibilities of Department of Fine Arts are including: to enforce the laws concerning ancient monuments, ancient objects, art objects and museums; to maintain, preserve, revitalize, promote, create and disseminate national art and culture in the aspects of a)museology and archaeology, b)literary, history, traditions, library and archives, c)performing and visual arts; to provide education on performing and visual arts both in and out of school systems; and to conduct studies and research for the preservation and transmission of all branches of Thai national heritage. Source from http://www.accu.or.jp/ich/en/links/O_THA2-more.html

1.4 Significance and usefulness of research

This research will contribute towards the scholarship on traditional Thai *Khon* performance and the efforts in safeguarding this art form.

1.5 Boundary of study

This thesis only considers three selected cases: the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and the Sala Chalmkrung Khon Troupe among all the schools, groups and organizations around Thailand which practice, preserve and promote *Khon* performance today; as the good examples to be studied and analyzed.

The study only focuses on how these three organizations make their contributions to safeguard traditional *Khon* performance as an intangible cultural heritage from the angle of cultural studies and general artistic views. It does not look in-depth of the design of scripts, dance and music from the professional artistic perspective.

This study mainly focuses on three organizations' safeguarding approaches and processes for *Khon* performance from 2006 to present. The year 2006 was chosen because this year is marked as a starting point of the long-term revival of this traditional art form in Thailand: in this auspicious year, to celebrate His Majesty's 60th Anniversary Accession to the Throne, a number of celebrated activities including *Khon* performances were held; the *Khon* performances organized by Sala Chalmkrung Khon Troupe since 2006 and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project since 2007 got a lot of attention and attractions to the public audiences. Later on, during the year 2006 to present, there were more public and organizations paying their attentions to *Khon*; this makes this specific period especially deserves to be observed and studied.

1.6 Limitations of study

On the one hand, for this topic, most of the literatures about *Khon* are written in Thai language, only a few of source materials are in English or Chinese. Due to the limitation of my Thai language proficiency, this would cause inconvenience for collecting the data and information for the research.

On the other hand, there are difficulties to gain access to the people of top management from the three organizations; therefore this study uses secondary sources as the major research source; only a number of audiences attending the three organizations' performances will be interviewed to get useful information as primary sources.

1.7 Literature review

In this part, the thesis briefly reviews the previous studies about the definition of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; the concept of “safeguarding intangible cultural heritage”; general information about *Khon*; its origins and history; evolution and development of *Khon* from ancient time to present; the meaning of *Khon* in present Thai society and the general background of the three selected organizations.

At present, the works to define the term of “cultural heritage” and “safeguarding intangible cultural heritage” are mainly by the sources of the *ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)*, the UNESCO and its related conferences texts; in Thailand, various articles about cultural heritage's preservation composed by researchers and experts are recorded in a book *Protecting Siam's Heritage* (2013), provides the explanations of the meanings of the above mentioned terms and uses case studies to demonstrate the protecting practices and approaches.

There are a number of studies that provide the basic information about *Khon*. The books describe this art which largely benefit to this thesis are mainly three books, the *Khon Masks* (1989) and *The Khon and Lakhon: Dance Dramas Presented by the Department of Fine Arts* (1963) written by Dhanit Yupho; and *Thai Puppets & Khon Masks* which written by Natthapatra Chandavij and Promporn Pramualratana (1998). In these three books, the essential information about *Khon* are explained and illustrated.

Besides, various studies which introduce the classical performing arts and theatres in Asia have also included the general information and origins about *Khon* in their works; such as the works of Jukka O. Miettinen (1992), James R. Brandon (1993), and Chaturong Montrisart (2004). The research titled *The Khon Drama of Thailand* of Anchalee Tunsakul (1973) was one of the earliest theses written in English to introduce the form of *Khon* performance in details. Then the latest English publication about *Khon* is Jack M. Clontz (2014)'s *Khon Masks: Thailand's Heritage* with a focus on the classifications of *Khon* masks.

About the history, evolution and development of *Khon*; the book written by Mattani Moj dara Rutnin (1996) is an academic work which thoroughly explains the evolution and development of *Khon* from the Ayutthaya to Bangkok Periods; meanwhile, Thapanee Sangsitthiwong (2014)'s dissertation *Khon: Thailand's National Performing Art and Cultural Media in Contemporary Thai Society* also analyzes the characteristics and situations about *Khon* in various periods under the different social backgrounds.

For the present meaning of *Khon* in Thai society, Srisurang Poolthupya (1981)'s research paper "*Thai Customs and Social Values in the Ramakien*" examines the relations and connections between the classical literature *Ramakien* and real situations in Thai society; shows that how the Thai customs and social values in *Ramakien* were reflected in the present society of Thailand. The academic work of Stephanie Laird Krebs (1975), and the books of Mattani Moj dara Rutnin (1996) and Angkarn Kallayanapongsa (et.al) in 2006 indicated the meaning of *Khon* in Central Thailand.

Although there are no direct works telling the background of Department of Fine Art's *Khon* Troupe; the information about its general background are included in a number of studies which refer to Thai classical dance drama especially *Khon* and *Lakhon*; such as the works of the Department of Fine Arts (1963), Mattani Moj dara Rutnin (1996), Prince Dhaninivat and Dhanit Yupho (1989) and Somchai Fonramdee (et.al.) in 2014, etc.

Until now, literature about Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* Project written in English is scarce, the main sources of the organization's background information is from Thailand's *The Nation* Newspaper; besides, there is a Chinese academic paper published at the Journal "*Sichuan Drama*" (2014) written by researchers of Thai Studies Center, Sichuan Province; provides some introduction about the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* Project and some related activities.

For Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* Troupe, the book written by Angkarn Kallayanapongsa (2006)'s *Khon: Thai Masked Dance Sala Chalermkrung* and Pornrat Damrhung's articles in 2005 and 2011 introduced the purposes to initiate Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* Project and the details of the creation of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performances.

In conclusion, a number of studies have been discussed the definition of cultural heritage, the meaning of “safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage”, provided the background information about the traditional *Khon* performance and explained the origins of three selected organizations; however, there have been few studies analyzed the process and approaches of the three organizations in their efforts of safeguarding the *Khon* performance as an intangible cultural heritage.

1.8 Structure of the research

This study will be divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Research background and rationale
- 1.2 Research questions and objectives
- 1.3 Major arguments, theories or hypothesis
- 1.4 Significance and usefulness of research
- 1.5 Boundary of study
- 1.6 Limitations of study
- 1.7 Literature review
- 1.8 Structure of the research
- 1.9 Methodology

Chapter 2: Background of Khon

- 2.1 General information about Khon
- 2.2 Debates on the origin of Khon
- 2.3 Evolution and development of Khon from the Ayutthaya to Bangkok periods
- 2.4 Khon in present day Thai society
- 2.5 Khon in Central Thailand

Chapter 3: Background of three Khon troupes

3.1 Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe (Krom Silpakorn)

3.2 Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project

3.3 The Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe

Chapter 4: Safeguarding approaches to Khon by the three organizations

4.1 Determination of the term "safeguarding intangible cultural heritage"

4.2 Approaches of safeguarding Khon by the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe

4.3 Approaches of safeguarding Khon by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project

4.4 Approaches of safeguarding Khon by the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe

Chapter 5: Conclusion

1.9 Methodology

The research methodology of this study is based on secondary resources, documentary research, qualitative in-depth interviews and observations. The documentary research includes articles from magazines and newspapers. The interviewees will be the audiences from the *Khon* performances organized by the three organizations; for each performance, 10-15 members of the audience will be interviewed and investigated respectively.

In this research, the main resource of information is from the secondary sources, and some others are from the primary sources. Meanwhile, the qualitative technique is also used as the way of data collection. By asking some prepared questions and analyzing the answers, the face-to-face interviews with the audiences from the performance of the three organizations are going to assist gathering the data and the

information. By the observations of the live *Khon* performances or performance videos of each group, it would also assist the analysis procedure.



CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND OF KHON

2.1 General information about Khon

The traditional dance-drama called *Khon*, is a spectacular mask performance which is regarded as a high class performing art¹² in Thailand. It combines various aspects of the country's arts, such as dancing, martial art, singing, acting, music and so on. Each of them has a typical Siamese style that makes the *Khon* performance uniquely and combines the elements of Thai culture.

Khon is a kind of oriental "Pantomime"¹³ which all the main characters do not utter any sound during the performance; they only express their emotions by body gestures and dance movements accompanying with the recitations and singing from the chorus and the instrumental music from the classical orchestra.

There are mainly four types of characters in *Khon* performance, the "Tua Phra" (ตัวพระ) or male human/deity characters, for example *Phra Ram* (King Rama), *Phra Lak* (Prince Laksaman), *Phra Isuan* (The god Shiva), etc.; the "Tua Nang" (ตัวนาง) or female human/deity characters, e.g. *Nang Sida* (*Sita*), *Nang Mondho* (*Mondho*), the mermaid *Suvarna-matcha*; "Tua Yak" (ตัวยักษ์) or demons such as *Totsakan* (*Ravana*) and "Tua Ling" (ตัวลิง), the monkeys like *Hanuman*. Other characters typically include the animal roles such as the golden deer in the episode of "*Phra Ram chasing a*

¹² The *Khon* is identified as a "High class performing art" mainly due to three reasons: First, *Khon* was originally a kind of Hindu ritual made for the Gods in the ancient time; second, it was a court art under patronage of the king in the past, the ordinary people could rarely watch the performance at ordinary time, they could only watch the performance at some special and important occasions, such as the royal ceremonies and ceremonies; third, it is a classical performing art which inherited from the Ayutthaya Period.

¹³ The "pantomime" is a type of performing art which was developed from England and has a long theatrical history in Western culture. In the performances, the actors do not speak their lines and only express their emotions by gestures, accompanying the rhythm of the instrumental music. Source from wikipedia "Pantomime". Available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantomime>

golden deer (พระรามตามกวาง)” and “*Tua Talok*” (ตัวตลก); the clowns wearing masks covering only half of their heads.

One reason that all the actors in *Khon* performance do not utter their own sounds for their roles is—“originally all the characters in former days wore masks (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 108)”, so it is not convenient for them to make narrations and dialogues by themselves. Then the actors have to wear masks with different designs and features to distinguish their roles and to indicate the roles’ characteristics; therefore, the *Khon* mask is a very significant prop in the *Khon* performance.

At the same time, the *Khon* masks could also indicate the personality of the roles; for instance, the masks of gods, hermits and humans are with a gentle, grace and kindness appearance of design; the masks of demons, conversely, have the anger, fierce and hatred looking and the masks of monkey roles with an acrobatic and playful looking.

Furthermore, different figures in the *Khon* performance wear masks with specific colors, which again make the characters easy to be recognized. For example, *Phra Rama* has a green skin complexion and *Phra Lak* has a golden complexion; hence the masks of these two characters would have the same colors according to their skin colors determined in the *Ramakien* texts.

Table 1: Skin and face colors of significant characters in Ramakien

Name of Character	Lineage	Color of the figure
Phra Ram	Human	Green
Phra Phrot	Human	Red
Phra Lak	Human	Golden
Phra Satrut	Human	Purplish
Totsakan	Demon	Green
Kumpakan	Demon	Green
Indrajit	Demon	Green
Maiyarap	Demon	Purple
Phipek	Demon	Green
Hanuman	Monkey	White
Pali	Monkey	Green
Sukreep	Monkey	Red
Ongkot	Monkey	Green





Photo 1: Khon Mask of Phra Ram



Photo 2: Khon Mask of Totsakan



Photo 3: Khon Mask of Hanuman

Sources:

Photo 1: <http://board.postjung.com/576251.html>

Photo 2: <http://my.dek-d.com/uewomuitearukou/supertest/?id=26961>

Photo 3: http://pdamobiz.com/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=254098&PN=52

The situation changed since the nineteenth century, from the reign of King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V, 1868-1910), perhaps due to the influence of the Western theatre make-up such as ballet and drama; the deities, human and female characters in *Khon* performances no longer wear masks and started to take make-up techniques instead like in *Lakhon* performances (ฐาปนีย์ สังสิทธิ์วิวงศ์, 2557) (page 67), makes the roles of human beings to be played more naturally. Since this period, the human and divine figures wear certain make-up, headdresses and ornaments instead of mask to indicate their roles (Dhanit Yupho, 1989). For example, to manifest the character of *Phra Isuan* or the god Shiva, there will be a tiny piece of diamond decorated between the eyes of the performer to represent the third eye of *Phra Isuan*.

However, probably due to the large number of the actors, the demon and monkey figures nowadays still wear masks during the performance. Therefore, besides of the unique design and color of each mask, the elaborate costumes and headdresses they wear can also distinguish their characters and status. There are mainly four types of costumes for the *Khon* performers based on the four categories of main characters; they are costumes for demon and monkey figures, male and female characters.

Since the *Khon* performers do not speak on their own, all the dialogues and recitations are voiced from the chorus, which in Thai called “*Kon Pak*” (คนพากย์); doing the jobs as narrators or reciters. There are two categories of “*Kon Pak*”: the *Kampak* (คำพากย์), or the narration; and the *Cheraca* (เจรจา), the conversation or dialogue (Anchalee Tunsakul, 1985) (page 73), taking the duties of describing the

actions of actors on the stage. They have to be very familiar with the plots of the drama and have a good understanding of the dancers' gestures; thus could be well cooperate with them and at the same time using utterances to guide the dancers' movements.

On the other hand, the theatrical art *Khon* uses music to lead and direct the performers' dancing and acting movements. In this case, the vocal and instrumental music used in *Khon* are believed "to be borrowed from drama of the *Lakhon Nai* type" (Dhanit Yupho, 1963) (page 3). While performing, along with the actors' body gestures, there are vocal music song by singers and the melodious music play by the traditional Thai instrumental band which is called "*Piphat*" (ปี่พาทย์).



Photo 4: Traditional Thai Piphat band

Source:

<http://kanchanapisek.or.th/kp6/sub/book/book.php?book=1&chap=9&page=t1-9-infodetail08.html>

The music from *Piphat* is one of the factors that make the *Khon* performance unique and attractive. Formerly the essentials of a *Khon* orchestra consisted of five pieces, known as “*The Five*” (เครื่องห้า); including: *Pi Nai* (ปี่ใน), *Ranad Ek* (ระนาดเอก), *Gong Wong Yai* (ฆ้องวงใหญ่), *Tapone* (ตะโพน), *Klong Thad* (กลองทัด), and *Ching* (ฉิ่ง) (H.H.Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabn Bridhyakorn & Dhanit Yupho, 1989) (page 5). With the later development of orchestral instruments, the number of the instruments has been increased (Anchalee Tunsakul, 1985) (page 74).

Meanwhile, the orchestra members not only had to be familiar with all the melodies of the musical instruments, but also understand all the movements of the dancers (H.H.Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabn Bridhyakorn & Dhanit Yupho, 1989) (page 5).

Table 2: Pleng Na Phat (เพลงหน้าพาทย์) / Music in Khon performance (เพลงที่ใช้ประกอบการแสดงโขน)

Pleng Khao-man (เพลงเข้าม่าน, Music of Entering the Curtain)	ใช้ประกอบการเดินเข้าฉากในระยะใกล้ๆ ของตัวละครเอก Used when the main characters show up at the near scenes.
Pleng Sa-mer (เพลงเสมอ)	ใช้ประกอบการไปมาในระยะใกล้ๆ Used when come to the near scenes.
Pleng Cherd (เพลงเจ็ด, Music of Puppet Manipulation)	ใช้ประกอบการไป มาในระยะไกล ๆ และใช้ในการต่อสู้ Used when characters are leaving to the far scenes and used during the fighting scenes
Pleng Tra Nimit (เพลงตระนิมิตร)	ใช้ประกอบการแปลงกายของตัวละครเอก Used when transforming/disguising to other characters.
Pleng Choob (เพลงชูป)	ใช้ประกอบการเดินของนางกำนัล เช่น นางกำนัลเชิญเครื่องเสวยเข้ามาถวายทศกัณฐ์และพระญาติวงศ์ในเวลากินเลี้ยง Used when female courtiers walking from one place to another point.

Pleng Lohm (เพลงโลม)	ใช้ประกอบการโลมเล่าเกี่ยวพาระหว่างตัวแสดงที่เป็นตัวเอก มักต่อด้วยเพลงตระนอน Used in the romance scenes.
Pleng Tra-norn (เพลงตระนอน)	ใช้สำหรับตัวเอกเมื่อจะเข้านอน โดยมาบรรเลงต่อจากเพลงโลม Used when the main characters going to sleep, mostly following the Pleng Lohm.
Pleng Ood (เพลงโอด)	ใช้ประกอบการเศร้าโศกเสียใจ Used at the sorrow scenes.
Pleng Loh (เพลงโล)	ใช้ประกอบการเดินทางทางน้ำ เช่น นางสุพรรณมัจฉานำบริวารปลา มาทำลายถนนที่กองทัพพระรามสร้างขึ้น Used when traveling the water ways.
Pleng Cherd Ching (เพลงเชิดฉิ่ง)	ใช้ประกอบการเดินทาง การเหาะ เช่น เบนุกายเหาะมายังเขาเหมติรัน Used when the character flies.
Pleng Cherd Klong (เพลงเชิดกลอง)	ใช้บรรเลงต่อจากเพลงเชิดฉิ่ง Used following the Pleng Cherd Ching scenes.
Pleng Rua (เพลงร้าวต่างๆ)	ใช้ประกอบการแปลงอิทธิฤทธิ์ หรือแปลงตัวอย่างรวดเร็ว Used when using the supernatural power or simply transform.
Pleng Kraow Nok (เพลงกราวนอก)	ใช้ประกอบการยกทัพตรวจพลของกระบวนทัพฝ่ายมนุษย์ Used when the King reviews the army before launching the troop to the battle field.
Pleng Kraow Nai (เพลงกราวใน)	ใช้ประกอบการยกทัพตรวจพลของกระบวนทัพฝ่ายยักษ์ Used when the demon King reviews the army before launching troops to the battle field.

Source: <http://www.bspwit.ac.th/S-PROJECT/WEB-DESIGN/WEB-DESIGN%202551/Khon-Project/003.html>

In most of cases, the *Khon* performance only depicts the story of *Ramakien* which describes the war between *Totsakan*, the demon King of *Longka*, and *Phra Ram*—the righteous King of Ayutthaya, with the ending that good defeats the evil—*Phra Ram* finally conquered the evil demon *Totsakan*. However, the stories of Lord Vishnu’s ten

incarnations called in Thai “*Reung Narai Sib Pang*” (เรื่อนารายณ์สิบปาง) could also occasionally be depicted for the overture of *Khon* performances.

There have been various versions of *Ramakien* ever since the Ramayana story was introduced to Thailand. The most complete one is the version composed by King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke (King Rama I, 1782-1809) of the Chakri Dynasty; then King Buddha Lert-lah Nabhalai (King Rama II, 1809-1824) recomposed another version of *Ramakien* by choosing some parts of King Rama I’s version, to make the new version more suitable to make the *Lakhon Nai* (female dance drama in the court) scripts. To make *Khon* performance, King Rama II also composed another set of scripts with three episodes: “*Nang Loy*”, “*Nagabas*” and “*Prommas*” for the *Khon* scripts.

There are five representation styles of *Khon*, namely: *Khon Klang Plaeng* (โขนกลางแปลง), or the open-air mask-play; *Khon Rong Nok* (โขนโรงนอก), which the play is performed on the stage with a pole; *Khon Na Chor* (โขนหน้าจอ), or the “mask-play in front of the shadow play screen”; *Khon Rong Nai* (โขนโรงใน), a combination of *Khon* and *Lakhon Nai*; and *Khon Chak* (โขนฉาก), the *Khon* performed on a modern stage with new techniques such as scenes, stage lighting and sound system, etc. This form of the *Khon* performance has been regularly staged since 1946, and now it is the most popular type for this traditional performance (Anchalee Tunsakul, 1985) (page 53).

The *Khon* performers are normally male, one of the reasons is *Khon* functioned as a ritual dance for some state ceremonies and a court theatre, so it has to follow the norms that female should not performed in such entertainments. Another factor is,

most of the characters in *Ramakien* are demons and monkey warriors acting with fierce or restless personalities; hence it is not that appropriate to be acted by female performers. The last element may attribute to this factor is the strength requirement for the *Khon* performers and the training processes of *Khon*: the training of *Khon* is tough, strict and energy-consuming; and for the performers, both the masks and costumes are heavy and need a quite healthy physical condition, therefore, male are more likely to meet these requirements. However, there were still some female *Khon* performers which called “*Khon Phuying*” (โขนผู้หญิง) trained in the royal court of the Early Bangkok period since the reign of King Rama II (Rutnin, 1996) (page 57).

In the *Khon* traditional formalities, no performance may end in a tragedy; if in any episode *Phra Ram* or *Phra Lak* is wounded or lost consciousness in the battle, the performance must continue until they are cured or restored to life (H.H.Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabn Bridhyakorn & Dhanit Yupho, 1989) (page 23). This is perhaps because that in *Ramakien* and *Khon*, *Phra Ram* is the embodiment of the good and justice; if any plot shows the end of episode as the “good damaged by the evil”, it would not be conformed to the theme at all. Besides, the final defeat and death of *Totsakan* is considered as a taboo and never played in the *Khon* performance because it is believed that this may bring bad fortune to the troupe and the kingdom; meanwhile, since *Totsakan* is a half deity who is from the lineage of the god Brahma, it is also not appropriate to perform his tragic ending.

2.2 Debates on the origin of Khon

Tracing the history of *Khon* in Thailand is a difficult task today. There are no clear records or existing sources which help define the exact origin of this old

performing art. The origin of this masked dance-drama *Khon* is still on debates today. Based on the current findings, the probable origins are mainly including:

The first assumption of *Khon*'s origin is the “*Chak Nak Dukdamban*” (ชักนาคดึกดำบรรพ์, pulling a giant serpent), a kind of the ancient ceremonial performance depicting an episode of the Hindu myth “*Churning of the Milk Ocean*” (กวนเกษียรสมุทร) that performed at coronation ceremonies during Ayutthaya Period (1351-1767); in these performances, it involved parades in which a seven-headed serpent (*Naga*) was pulled by two groups of performers dressed as demons and deities respectively (Rutnin, 1996) (page 6). The dresses and movements of the performers are same as in *Khon* performance, and there are also two sides—deities and demons involves in this ceremonial performance as well as in *Khon*; therefore it may speculate that *Khon* mask dance have their probable origins from this ceremonial performance.

Secondly, the prototype of *Khon* may be traced back as far as the Sukhothai period (1238-1438). One of the evidence is a mention to the footwork which related to a technical term “*Ten*” (เต็น), an important component in *Khon* movements; especially for the demon and monkey characters; for this term “*Ten*” which means “to jump or to move with legs and feet”, there was already a record for it in stone inscription No.8 of the Sukhothai period, under the reign of King Lithai (1347-1368) (Rutnin, 1996) (page 6); hence this is probably the earliest evidence of a prototype of *Khon*.

Another factor that could be used in tracing the prototype of *Khon* performance to Sukhothai period or Early Ayutthaya Period (14-16 Centuries) are some sculptures and paintings found in these regions; such as the *Yak* (demon) guardian figures made of glazed ceramic found in Sukhothai region which can dated back to the Sukhothai

Period (Photo 5); and similar demon figures depicted on a wood carving gable of an ordination hall from Wat Maenang Pleum from Early Ayutthaya Period (Photo 6); the costumes these demon figures wearing and their facial appearances look relatively like the demon characters in the *Khon* performing art (Rutnin, 1996) (page 30). Therefore, it could be concluded that the *Khon* costumes and masks are quite likely to have their prototypes from those architectural evidences of Sukhothai and Early Ayutthaya Periods.



Photo 5: Demon guardian figure made of sandstone from the Sukhothai Period (14-15 Centuries) now displayed at Ramkamhaeng National Museum, Sukhothai Province.



Photo 6: Group of demons depicted on a wood carving of the gable of an ordination hall from Wat Maenang Pleum, Ayutthaya from the Ayutthaya Period.

Sources:

Photo 5 :

<http://www.thapra.lib.su.ac.th/supatlib/picture2.php?check=slide&keyword=1>

Photo 6: http://www.oknation.net/blog/home/blog_data/425/2425/images/Wood5.jpg

Thirdly, the battle scenes involved in *Khon* performance may have an influence from the ancient Siamese war dance which known as *Krabi Krabong* (กระบี่กระบอง) (Clontz, 2014) (page 4). This war dance *Krabi Krabong* is mentioned in inscription as early as 1458 AD; it involves the sword (*krabi*) and baton (*krabong*) fights accompanying with music and developed into a dance; the acrobatic dances of the *Khon* are said to have been influenced to a large degree by this form of ancient Siamese martial art (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 108).



Photo 7: The ancient Siamese martial art—Krabi Krabong

Source:

http://www.ilovethaiculture.com/young/ewt_news.php?nid=234&filename=index

The *Krabi Krabong* employed the open-leg position which similar as the gestures of demon and monkey roles in *Khon* performance. In this traditional mask performance, the monkey roles normally use the sword as their weapons and the demons use the batons, and their fighting movements also have certain similarities with the *Krabi Krabong* fighting scenes. Therefore, the third possible origin of *Khon* performance is from the war dance *Krabi Krabong*.

The fourth possible origin of *Khon* performance is based on the theory that “the Ayutthaya Kingdom may have adopted *Khon* from the Khmer Empire”; in the thirteenth century, when Ayutthaya conquered Angkor, the capital of Khmer in 1431, they brought back artists, dancers along with the court dance traditions from Khmer and later on adopted it with the Thai tastes and developed it into Thai styles (Miettinen, 1992) (page 41).

The evidence is, to observe the bas reliefs in the gallery of Angkor Wat in Siem Reap, Cambodia; we could find the tiered headdress of *Ravana* similar to the storied headdress of *Totsakan* in Thai *Khon* performance. The “Battle of Lanka” fighting gestures in these bas reliefs are quite similar to those of the scenes on battle between the armies of *Phra Ram* and *Tosakan* in Thai *Khon* performances. At the same time, the images of demons and monkeys shown on these bas reliefs also show the similarities to the *Khon* characters in both Thailand and Cambodia even in the present time; the scenes make us feel even like we are watching a *Khon* performance. Therefore, this indicates how *Khon* has a possibility of originates from the Khmer court dances or at least Khmer art had influenced to this Thai performing art (Shah, 2001) (page 11).



Photo 8: Demons fighting with monkeys in the Battle of Lanka on the bas relief of Angkor Wat

Source: <http://people.virginia.edu/~ag7rq/cambodia11/118angkorwalls.JPG>

Finally, there is another traditional performing art in Thailand which may have some influence on *Khon*—the “*Nang Yai*” (หนังใหญ่) or large shadow puppet which performs in front a white cloth screen with the manipulators holding the leather puppets and dance accompany with music rhythms from the classical orchestra and the narrations from the *Kon Pak*. Some people assumed *Khon* may has an origin from *Nang Yai* because these two arts “have many features in common” (H.H.Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabn Bridhyakorn, 1948) (page 26-32); for example, they use the same kinds of *Piphat* classical music instruments, the episodes and poetic narrations derived from same *Ramakien* texts and share similar dance movements and fighting gestures, etc.

However, it is still controversial to conclude whether or not “the *Khon* was originated from the shadow-play *Nang Yai*”, since for people who disagree with this argument, they are more contended that “*Khon*” and “*Hnang*” are the sister-arts that have some artistic elements in common, but they are still two different types of arts and have distinctive features and methods. According to M.R.Kukrit Pramoj, a former

Prime Minister and *Khon* artist, “*Khon* and *Nang Yai* are different branches from the same tree—the story of *Ramakien*. Both of the two arts have some characteristics adopted from each other, for instance the *Khon* may adapted narrations, dialogues from the *Nang Yai*; in contrast, *Nang Yai* also learn dancing movements from *Khon* to make puppeteer manipulate the *Nang* and dance with the music and narrations. Therefore, we could not assert either *Khon* or *Nang Yai* originates from another, since they have been closely integrated from each other.” (ฐาปนีย์ สังสิทธิ์วิวงศ์, 2557) (page 28).

The exact record of the term “*Khon*” was appeared in the Ayutthaya Period. One of the evidence is, the preface to the Manual for the Recitation of the *Ramakien* in Mid-Ayutthaya Period described, “Daylight brings the graceful *Khon* and *Hoon* (หุ่น, puppet); as night falls, the *Nang* shine through the lanterns” (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 9).

In addition, during the reign of King Narai the Great (1656-1688) of Ayutthaya Period, there was also a mention of “*Khon*, *Lakhon* and *Rabam* (ระบำ)” in French diplomat De La Loubère’s book “*Du Royaume de Siam (A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam)*” (Rutnin, 1996) (page 45). In his book, De La Loubère wrote “The Siamese have three types of Stage-plays...the *Cone (Khon)*, *Lacone (Lakhon)* and *Rabam*...That which they call *Cone* is a Figure-dance, to the sound of the Violin, and some other instruments. The dancers are masked and armed, and represent rather a combat than a dance...”(De La Loubère, 1691) (page 49)

The *Khon* has been well-known since the middle of the 17th century in the Ayutthaya Period; the dance drama *Khon* at the court of ancient Siam was firstly has a religious form; as time goes by, the *Khon* gradually lost much of its religious elements and becomes a form of entertainment (Chaturong Montrisant, 2004) (page 116).

To conclude, there are five possible origins for the *Khon* performance, including the ancient ceremony “*Chak Nak Dukdamban*”; have the classical dancing movement “*Ten (เต๋น)*” and facial appearance and costumes of demons in the Sukhothai period’s sculptures as its prototype; may “adopted from the Khmer court” or originated from the martial art “*Krabi Krabong*”; and may have some influences from traditional art Nang Yai. Therefore, we can assume that the origin of *Khon* may be traced from various sources, and it is an applied performing art mixed by different sorts of performances (ฐาปนีย์ สังสิทธิ์วิงศ์, 2557) (page 25).

2.3 Evolution and development of Khon from Ayutthaya to Bangkok Periods

2.3.1 The evolution of the story of Ramakien

For most of the cases, *Khon* performances’ scripts and episodes are derived from *Ramakien*—the Thai adaptation of Indian epic *Ramayana*. There have been various versions of *Ramakien* in Thailand, but some of them were lost with the destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767. Nowadays, the most prevalent ones are King Rama I and King Rama II’s versions of *Ramakien*.

King Rama I's version of the Ramakien

After the fall of Ayutthaya, realized the significance of revive the Siamese civilization and to reconstruct the Siamese art and culture; King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke (King Rama I, 1782-1809) supervised and directed the court poets and scholars to restore and to compile a new set of *Ramakien*; later on this version became to the most complete and famous version, known as “The King Rama I’s Version of *Ramakien* (รามเกียรติ์รัชกาลที่ ๑)” (Rutnin, 1996) (page 54).

To compose this *Ramakien* story, King Rama I not only to put the missing parts of the masterpiece into the manuscripts, but also created some new passages added into the literary work; according to Mattani Moj dara Rutnin, this is “in order to establish complete version of royal standard texts for the prosperity and the glory of the new kingdom.” (Rutnin, 1996) (page 54) Ever since it was completed, the *Ramakien* of King Rama I’s version has been considered as one of the masterpieces of classical Thai literature and one of the most significant parts of the nation’s culture.

King Rama I’s version of *Ramakien* can be divided into four main parts. The first part is the preparation episode (ตอนเตรียม), which introduces the origins of the main characters, their former lives and originated worlds. This is including the foundation of the city of *Ayutthaya* (the city of God); the built of demon’s city—*Longka*; the story of the demon *Nontok*—the former life of *Totsakan*; the birth of *Hanuman* and so on. The first part ends with the Marriage of *Phra Ram* (*Rama*) and *Nang Sida* (*Sita*) at the city of *Mithila*.

The second part of the *Ramakien* states the main factors of all the troubles, reveals how those problems happen among the groups of human, demons and monkeys. In the city of Ayutthaya, King Totsarot has three queen consorts, the chief Queen Kaosuriya and the minor Queens Kaiyakesi and Samudh Devi. By the assistance from the power of hermits and Gods, Queen Kaosuriya gives birth to the incarnation of *Phra Narai* (God Vishnu), named *Phra Ram* in the human exists; Queen Kaiyakesi gives birth to *Phra Prot* and Queen Samudh Devi gives birth to twin sons named *Phra Lak* and *Phra Satrud*.

When King Totsarot decides to retire from the throne, he considers that *Phra Ram* should replace him to rule over Ayutthaya. However, the King's minor Queen Kaiyakesi becomes jealous; she mentions about the free wish that King Totsarot had given to her; suggests his own son *Phra Prot* should be crowned and calls for the King to send *Phra Ram* to wander in the forest as a hermit.

King Totsarot gets raged and even in consequence prohibits Queen Kaiyakesi and her son *Phra Prot* to attend his cremation after his death; but he could not refuse the Queen's request because of his promise. *Phra Ram* willingly accepts his fate, and goes to the forest accompanied by his wife *Sida* and his younger brother *Phra Lak*.

The three royals live a hermit life until one day *Totsakan's* younger sister *Samanakkha* comes to the land of *Chompoo Dvipa* and sees *Phra Ram* in the forest. Got attracted by his youth and charm immediately, she requests to marry him, but got refused. The anger and jealousy of *Samanakkha* leads her break into *Sida's* hut and tries to hurt her, as a result the demon lady got attacked by *Phra Ram* and *Phra Lak* badly; the two brothers even cut off her hands, feet, nose, lips and ears.

Samanakkha gets so humiliated that she goes to seek for her other three brothers' help; but this lead to the death of three demon kings—*Phya Khorn*, *Phya Thoot* and *Phya Treesian*; they were all defeated and killed by *Phra Ram*. Finally *Samanakkha* returns to *Longka* and reports everything to her eldest brother *Totsakan*; the demon King gets so rage that he decides to take revenge. By the enticement of *Samanakkha*, hearing about the beauty of *Sida*, *Totsakan* abducts *Sida* to his isolated kingdom which is a great distance away from *Phra Ram* and *Phra Lak*'s residence.

Phra Ram and his brother therefore embark upon a journey to rescue *Sida*. On the way to the *Totsakan*'s kingdom of *Longka*, the two brothers form an alliance with the monkey armies and gets *Hanuman* as the commander. With the assistance of these monkey armies, *Phra Ram* finally leads his armies cross the ocean and gets the way to *Longka*.

Episode three is abundant with scenes of wars and ends with the death of *Totsakan*. In this episode, there are some minor wars with *Banlaikan*, *Totsapin*, King Mahabala Thepasoon and King Chakrawat of *Maliwan* who intend to take revenge for what had happened to *Totsakan*. However, these stories are less popular because they are not directly related to the main characters.

In the final episode, the relationship between *Phra Ram* and *Sida* is another attractive point. After *Sida* is rescued by *Phra Ram* and his alliances, she returns to the city of *Ayutthaya* and becomes the Queen of the kingdom. One day, when *Phra Ram* goes out one hunting trip, *Sida* remains in the palace. A female demon *Adoon*, a niece of *Totsakan* who wants to take a revenge for *Totsakan* and *Longka*, transforms herself to one of *Sida*'s female attendants. She pretends that she is curious about

Totsakan and asks *Sida* to draw a picture of *Totsakan* to see what this fierce demon King looked like.

Sida agrees and draws a picture of *Totsakan* on a slate. At this time, *Phra Ram* is back, but *Adoon*'s spirit gets into the slate and causes *Sida* unable to rub the picture off. When *Phra Ram* sees the picture, he gets very jealousy and angry by considering that *Sida* must be unfaithful to him.

Phra Ram commands his brother *Phra Lak* to take *Sida* away and to behead her in the forest, but *Phra Lak* could not bear to kill her and simply banishes her into the forest. At this time, *Sida* is already pregnant with *Phra Ram*'s child. In the forest, *Sida* got assistance from a hermit *Phra Watehamarakh* and later on gives birth to *Phra Ram*'s son *Phra Mongkut*, and got another son *Phra Lop* from the hermit's magical blessing.

After the two boys grow up, once they have a fight with their father *Phra Ram* without knowing the fact that it is a fighting between father and sons. Later on when *Phra Ram* realizes that these two boys are his sons; he is so surprised and wishes to reunite with them and *Sida*. Finally, with the efforts and help of the god Indra and god Shiva, *Phra Ram* and *Sida* reconcile and live in happiness.

King Rama II's Version of Ramakien

Another famous version of *Ramakien* is King Rama II's version. In 1815, King Buddha Loedla Nabhalai (King Rama II, 1809-1824) recomposed some parts of King Rama I's version of *Ramakien* and makes this new version a dramatic version which more suitable to choose episodes and create the *Khon* and *Lakhon Nai* performances (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 108).

There are some reasons that King Rama II could focus on his interest on many kinds of arts, to compose his version of *Ramakien* and even to write three episodes of *Khon* scripts. First, during the reign of King Rama II, there were fewer wars and conflicts between Siam and the neighboring states than the previous periods, Siam was under a relatively peaceful and stable situation; besides, the significant tasks of rebuild, restore and reconstruct the Siamese civilization have mostly been done by King Taksin of Thonburi Period and King Rama I of earlier Ratanakosin Period (Rutnin, 1996) (page 57); finally King Rama II introduced a new administrative system, by which the King could distribute administrative tasks to the official controllers—the princes such as Prince Krom Luang Pitakmontri and Prince Krom Meun Jessadabodin and some other ministers. These factors provided King Rama II a good opportunity to focus on his enthusiasm on various arts and culture; especially Thai dramatic literature and classical dance-drama, to expansion them to the highest degree and to lead the Ratanakosin art and culture to “a height of golden era” (Rutnin, 1996) (page 57).

King Rama II was a talented versatile artist on many branches of the arts, such as poetry, music and drama. During his reign, he developed the scripts, dance movements, music and songs for the performances of *Khon* and *Lakhon*; these dramatic creations set models for the later artists and generations (Rutnin, 1996) (page57-59); the standards of performance King Rama II established for the training of classical dancers, teachers, composers and choreographers are still in use today (Shah, 2001) (page 15).

Recomposed for the convenience of making *Khon* scripts, King Rama II’s version of *Ramakien* starts with the searching for the way to *Longka*, and following with other episodes and scenes which interesting and attractive to the audiences as drama plays.

The popular episodes composed by King Rama II including “*Jong Tanon* (จองถนน)”, “*Nang Loy* (นางลอย)”, “*The Battle of Prommas*” (ศึกพรหมาสตร์), “*The Battle of Indrajit: Nagabas* (ศึกอินทรชิต นาคบาศ)”, “*The Battle of King Sahatsadeja* (ศึกท้าวสหัสเดชะ)”, “*The Battle of Maiyarap* (ศึกไมยราพณ์)” and so on.

2.3.2 Evolution and development of Khon from Ayutthaya to Bangkok Periods

Khon was developed into a full form in the Mid-Ayutthaya period around the seventeenth century because during the reign of King Narai (1656-1688) there has been an exact record of performing art *Khon* by the French diplomat De La Loubère’s report.

The Ayutthaya kings and royal members of the later periods from the eighteenth century also contributed significantly to the development and improvement of *Khon*, which set standards and became models for Thonburi and Ratanakosin drama and theatre (Rutnin, 1996) (page 46). The Ayutthaya period saw the prosperity of the Thai performing arts (Miettinen, 1992) (page 41); especially during the reign of King Borommakote (1733-1758).

After the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767, the revival and reconstruction of Siam’s culture and arts were based on the standards of the late Ayutthaya Period by the King of Thonburi and the Kings of the Early Bangkok Period. For the case of *Khon* performance, King Rama I accomplished the most completed version of *Ramakien*, and King Rama II also composed his version of *Ramakien* and set standards for *Khon* components, such as costumes, masks, props, etc. Under King Rama II’s reign, he

also rearranged the *Phiphat* Musical Band and re-innovate the actors' gestures and movements for the *Khon* performance (Rutnin, 1996) (page 59).

In the reign of King Mahacheshadabodin (King Rama III, 1824-1851), *Khon* and other types of classical performing arts were not as popular and developed as the former periods, since King Rama III focused more on the country's economics and Buddhism practices; and paid fewer attentions to the performing arts. Therefore, during this time, there was less support for *Khon* and *Lakhon* performance from the royal palace, this lead to the appearance of some private *Khon* troupes supported by the nobilities (ฐาปนีย์ สังสิทธิ์วิงศ์, 2557) (page 65).

Later on, the performing arts including *Khon* were revived during the reign of King Mongkut or Rama IV (1851-1868); he composed some verses of *Ramakien* for *Lakhon Nai* scripts; meanwhile, since this time, the public have been allowed to establish their own *Khon* troupes and to owned their own performers; women also got allowed to perform in front of the general public (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 108-111).

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910), it was a period which marked Westernization of the country; the first Western-style's theatre was constructed and the realism was introduced into Thai theatre (Miettinen, 1992) (page 42-43). From this period, the deities, human male and female characters in *Khon* performances started to perform without wearing the masks; make-up techniques began to be used like in the *Lakhon* performance (ฐาปนีย์ สังสิทธิ์วิงศ์, 2557) (page 77).

During 1884 and 1885, King Chulalongkorn sent a *Khon* troupe and a nineteen-member *Piphat* band led by Mr. Kram and Mr. Plaek to perform at various London venues, including the Royal Albert Hall of London; this was also the first time in history that Thai *Khon* troupe to put on a show at London's Royal Albert Hall.¹⁴

The reign of King Vajiravudh (King Rama VI, 1910-1925) was a golden period that *Khon* was well developed and improved due to the fact that the King himself was both an artist and a poet who had particular interest in *Khon* and other classical performing arts (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 110). During his reign, King Vajiravudh composed a great number of songs and verses for the *Khon* and *Lakhon*, and made a great contribution by rewrote many *Khon* scripts (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 15& 108).

King Vajiravudh was a scholar in Indian literature who used to study Indian Studies at Oxford University; his interest in Indian literature, especially Sanskrit literature, led him composes a book “The Origin of *Ramakien* (บ่อเกิดแห่งรามเกียรติ์, *Bor-gerd-heng Ramakien*)” and also composed his version of *Ramakien* based on *Ramayana* of Valmiki for *Khon* performance.

In his reign, King Rama VI established the Department of Royal Court Entertainment (กรมมหรสพ) continue to raise standards for the performing arts; he established a specific department for *Khon* known as “*Krom Khon Luang*” (Department of Royal *Khon*) to be responsible for the management of *Khon*

¹⁴ Available at www.nationmultimedia.com/life/Celebrating-our-talented-Princess-30257214.html

performances in his court (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 111).

King Vajiravudh also introduced some new ways of costuming some *Khon* characters, such as the monkey, demon figures and the hermits: the King believed *Phra Ram*'s two Gurus—*Phra Wasit* (พระฤๅษีวชิษณุ) and *Phra Vishwamit* (พระฤๅษีวิศวามิตร) should wear white robes based on the plot of *Ramayana* epic, instead of wear brown robes like other general hermits (Clontz, 2014) (page 266).

During the reign of King Prachadhipok (King Rama VII, 1925-1935), due to the very high expenses of the Department of Royal Court Entertainment; the King had to reduce the number of staff and only kept the most capable performers for state performances (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 111).

The court has been the traditional patrons and supporters of *Khon* until 1932, when the government system of Siam was shifted from the absolute monarchy to the constitutional monarchy. After the government's Department of Fine Arts (กรมศิลปากร, Krom Silpakorn) was established in 1933, it took over the responsibilities of preserving and promoting Thai arts and culture from the court and set up *Natasilp* performing art schools to teach classical performing arts including *Khon* and *Lakhon*. Since then, the general public has been able to watch the *Khon* performances at the National Theatre of Thailand and other locations.

Presently, apart from the Department of Fine Arts, more institutes and private organizations have been established to preserve and practice the *Khon* performance, such as the *Khon Thammasat Troupe* and *Ramkhamhaeng University Khon Troupe* at

Bangkok, *Rong Khon Phetchaburi* (โรงโขนเพชรบุรี) troupe at Phetchaburi Province and so on. Nowadays, there have been a number of modern techniques applied into the *Khon* performances, and some of the performances are focused on particular characters of the *Ramakien* story; for example, the episode of “*The Story of Hanuman*” performed by the Sala Chalermskrung Khon Troupe and the episode of “*The Story of Nongduk*” which organized by the Department of Fine Arts.

Moreover, there are also some commercial *Khon* performances organized as the representation of Thai culture to attract the foreign tourists. One of the examples is a fifteen minutes’ *Khon* performance shows part of the episode “*Hanuman and Supanna-Matcha*” performed in the middle of the open space before the show starts at Bangkok’s Siam Niramit theatre.



Photo 9: Khon performance: Episode of “Hanuman and Supanna-Matcha” performed at the open space of Siam Niramit Theatre

Source: <http://www.tapoma.com/eng/thailand-bangkok-ticket/siam-niramit-show-bangkok.html>

Table 3: The evolution and development of *Khon* from Ayutthaya to Bangkok Periods

Late Ayutthaya Period (1688-1767)	<i>Khon</i> was firstly performed as ritual dances.
Thonburi Period (1767-1782)	Introduction of “ <i>Khon Klang Plaeng</i> (open-air <i>Khon</i> performance)”.
King Rama I (1782-1809)	King Rama I composed the most complete version of <i>Ramakien</i> .
King Rama II (1809-1824)	King Rama II rewrote some parts of <i>Ramakien</i> to make it more suitable to make <i>Lakhon Nai</i> scripts; the King also composed three episodes of <i>Khon</i> scripts: “ <i>Nang Loy</i> ”, “ <i>Nagabas</i> ” and “ <i>Prommas</i> ”.
King Rama III (1824-1851)	First appearance of private <i>Khon</i> troupes.
King Rama IV (1851-1868)	Female performers started to gain permission to perform in the troupes of the royal members and the noblemen.
King Rama V (1868-1910)	Deities, human and female characters no longer wear masks; using make-up techniques instead.
King Rama VI (1910-1925)	Started to have royal <i>Khon</i> schools and Department of <i>Khon Luang</i> ; changes to some characters’ costuming.
King Rama VII (1925-1934)	<i>Khon</i> and other types of classical art forms transferred to be under the care of Department of Fine Arts under the new governmental regime.
Present	<i>Khon</i> is preserved and promoted by many aspects, such as the governmental Departments, royal support, and private organizations.

Source: Thapanee Sangsitthiwong, 2014. *Khon: Thailand’s national performing art and cultural media in contemporary Thai society*.

From the Ayutthaya Period to the present, *Khon* has been through many changes; time has softened the religious and martial elements of the performance and has integrated more *Lakhon*'s influence into *Khon* performance (Shah, 2001) (page 31). Over centuries, the *Khon* has been through continuous improvement and modification to be consistent with the circumstances of each period (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 10).

2.3.3 The evolution of the categories of Khon

The evolution and development of *Khon* also affects the styles and approaches of *Khon* performance. Today, there are mainly five categories of *Khon* performance: the *Khon Klang Plaeng*, *Khon Rong Nok* or *Khon Nang Raow*, *Khon Na Chor*, *Khon Rong Nai* and the *Khon Chak*; they were performed under different social contexts and by the evolving of three aspects: the performing methods, the performing space and the properties used in the performances (ฐานันท์ สังสิทธิ์วงศ์, 2557) (page 30). The evolution of five categories of *Khon* as follows:

Table 4: The evolution of five categories of Khon

<p><i>Khon Klang Plaeng</i> (โขนกลางแปลง)</p>	<p>-Assumed to be the first category of <i>Khon</i> performance; -Performed in the spacious outdoor space on grass field; -Usually involves a large number of performers, concentrates on the big battle scenes from two sides; -There are <i>Kon Pak</i> to do the recitations, but do not have the singers for singing; -This category of <i>Khon</i> performance is still performs in some public festivities at <i>Sanam Luang</i> or other venues.¹⁵</p>
<p><i>Khon Rong Nok</i> (โขนโรงนอก) or <i>Khon Nang Raow</i> (โขนนั่งราว)</p>	<p>-A form of <i>Khon</i> performance developed from the <i>Khon Klang Plaeng</i>; it is also called <i>Khon Nang Raow</i> because it refers to the dancers sitting on a bamboo pole as bench while make gestures accompanied with the recitations; -There is a stage for performing, and the pole is placed towards the back of the stage; a backdrop with simple natural scenery scenes such as forest and mountain also used in this type of <i>Khon</i> performance; -There are recitations and dialogues, but no singers for singing, generally there are two <i>Piphat</i> bands (Anchalee Tunsakul, 1985) (page 53). -There is another term “<i>Khon Non Rong</i> (โขนนอนโรง)” for this type of <i>Khon</i>, because based on the traditions of <i>Khon Rong Nok</i> or <i>Khon Nang Raow</i>, it should be a preliminary performance takes place in the afternoon before the day of the main performance; the <i>Khon</i> troupe in this previous day will play the “<i>Homrong</i>” (โหมโรง, overture), perform a part of an episode, and staying the night besides the stage to</p>

¹⁵ “Khon, ‘The Masked Pantomime’ ” Available at <http://www.xip.fi/atd/thailand/khon-the-masked-pantomime.html>

	wait for the performance on the second day (ฐาปนีย์ สังสิทธิ์วงศ์, 2557) (page 32-33).
<i>Khon Na Jor</i> (โขนหน้าจอ)	<p>-<i>Khon Na Jor</i> or the “<i>Khon</i> mask-play in front of the screen” is the <i>Khon</i> performance presents in front of a screen of white cloth without scenery on it, similar as the large shadow-play <i>Nang Yai</i> (H.H.Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabn Bridhyakorn & Dhanit Yupho, 1989) (page 22).</p> <p>-Nowadays, this type of <i>Khon</i> performance has almost been disappeared, except for some new experiments to combine <i>Khon</i> and the shadow puppet.¹⁶ For instance, the Sala Chalermkrung <i>Khon</i> troupe used to perform this type of performance at the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre.</p>
<i>Khon Rong Nai</i> (โขนโรงใน)	<p>-A type of court mask-play; a style of female court dance drama consisting of singing, recitations and dialogues(H.H.Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabn Bridhyakorn & Dhanit Yupho, 1989) (page 23).</p> <p>-It is believed that the features of <i>Lakhon Nai</i> (ละครใน) and the ballet have affected the <i>Khon</i> and made the masked play more elegant than before;</p> <p>-“<i>Khon Rong Nai</i>” means “Masked plays resemble <i>Lakhon Nai</i>” or “Masked plays which maintains within the court” (Dhanit Yupho, 1963) (page 3).</p>
<i>Khon Chak</i> (โขนฉาก)	<p>-<i>Chak</i> (ฉาก) means scene or scenery, <i>Khon Chak</i> is the type of <i>Khon</i> performs on a Western theatre stage and in front of the modern backdrop with scenery on it; this form of the <i>Khon</i> has been regularly staged since 1946 (H.H.Prince Dhaninivat Kromamun Bidyalabn Bridhyakorn & Dhanit Yupho, 1989) (page 23).</p>

¹⁶ “*Khon*, ‘The Masked Pantomime’ ” Available at <http://www.xip.fi/atd/thailand/khon-the-masked-pantomime.html>

	<p>-It is the most common form of <i>Khon</i> in the 20th and the early 21st centuries (Ibid.)</p> <p>-The <i>Khon</i> performance created by the Department of Fine Arts continues the style of <i>Khon Rong Nai</i>; but with a new trend to divide the story into parts (episodes) and to provides appropriate scenes for them; this kind of <i>Khon</i> in its modern form is called “<i>Khon Chak</i>”, meaning “Masked play provided with scenes”, which still popular to perform today (Dhanit Yupho, 1963) (page 3).</p>
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2.4 *Khon* in present day Thai Society

The *Khon* is usually performed in special and important occasions: for example, the festivals, religious or local celebrations (e.g. the completion of new temples), and the cremations—this is being considered as the highest honor could be paid to the deceased (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 6); because based on the Buddhist beliefs, Thai people normally consider the funerals and cremations as the time to celebrate a new spiritual status for the deceased.

In addition, *Khon* performance is essential for most state celebrations. Since the reign of King Chulalongkorn, *Khon*, *Lakhon* and *Hoon* have been performed for foreign dignitaries (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 13). Nowadays, *Khon* performances are arranged regularly by the Department of Fine Arts as public programs to educate and entertain the audiences; at the same time, while there is a State or official visits from foreign country, the Department of Fine Arts will organize the *Khon* performances as the etiquette and greetings.

Despite all the changes from past to present, the *Khon* today is still hold some ritual features (Miettinen, 1992) (page 59). The learners and performers who trained in *Khon* have to follow the traditions to perform the ritual of wearing the masks by their head teacher or master; they have to respect the *Khon* masks and pay homage to the dance gods and their masters. The trainers and performers of *Khon* today still hold the “*Wai Khru*” ritual before each performance starts and to take the annual “*Wai Khru*” ceremony reverently.

As a traditional mask performance, *Khon* is still significant and meaningful today essentially because of the story it depicting and demonstrating. The Indian culture had great influences in various aspects of Thailand, such as culture, religion and literature. The Indian Epic *Ramayana* found its way into Thailand most probably in the thirteenth century via the Khmer culture (Miettinen, 1992) (page 46), a number of Thai versions of *Ramakien* story have been composed, and the most popular one is King Rama I’s version.

There are several reasons for the popularity of the *Ramakien* in Thailand: firstly, the social values that are prevalent in the *Ramakien* are the good moralities praised in Thai society; secondly, the *Ramakien* story are written in a poetic form (Srisurang Poolthupya, 1981) (page 1-2), which means it could be easily and appropriately to be arranged for dramatic performances; e.g., in most of the cases, the episodes of Thai traditional Nang and *Khon* performance are derived from the *Ramakien* stories; finally, the story contains significant customs in accordance with the Thai society and features a variety of Thai flavors and elements that Thai people are familiar with.

When the Indian Epic was recomposed to a Thai version; *in Ramakien*, not only most of the main characters' names, dressing, housing and transportation are changed to Thai style, the characters' way of life are changing to a Thai manner; but also the customs and social values indicating the ways of Thai thought and behaviors, could find their way into the story as well.

Significant customs found in *Ramakien* are still in practice in Thai society these days: Thailand is a kingdom whose people pay deep reverence to their monarch; respect for religious practitioners such as hermits (พระฤๅษี) and masters are ancient Thai customs that are still prevalent now; the customs of consulting astrologers is also prevalent nowadays to some extent (e.g. a demon astrologer, Phipek was consulted to predict the potential tendency of the future situations) (Srisurang Poolthupya, 1981) (page 1-2).

The social values that are prevalent in the *Ramakien* as well as in the Thai society are: justice, gratitude, integrity, loyalty, belief in the Law of Karma and the recognition of the transitoriness of all things (Ibid.). With justice, *Phra Ram*, *Phra Lak* and their army alliances stand at the rightness side to conquer the evil—the demons; with integrity, *Totsakan's* two brothers *Kumpakan* and *Phipek* tried to convince the demon King to return *Sida* to *Phra Ram*; the choice of *Pali* to be killed by *Phra Ram's* arrow could also be considered integrity, because *Pali* had done the wrong thing at first (grabbed *Nang Dara* to be his own consort), he kept his words to be killed by the Lord Vishnu as he did swear: “If I grab the woman (meaning *Nang Dara*, which *Phra Isuan* asked *Pali* to deliver to *Sukreep*) from my younger brother, I would die by *Phra Narai's* arrow.”¹⁷

¹⁷รามเกียรติ์ ปฐมบท ตอน พาลีเสียสัตย์. กรุงเทพฯ: สำนักพิมพ์ห้องเรียน, 2556. หน้า 41.

To show gratitude and obedience is also a praised social value in Thailand. One of the examples in *Ramkien* is, when *Hanuman* grew up and decided to leave his mother and learn skills from the outside world, he gave farewell to his mother *Nang Sawaha*; *Nang Sawaha* told him that the one who could recognize his diamond fur and teeth would be *Phra Narai*; he should serve this god and help him to fight against the demons. As a result of being gratitude and obedient to his mother, *Hanuman* followed his mother's words to serve for *Phra Ram* and finally assist him to perish the demon ruler, *Totsakan*. Meanwhile, this also shows *Hanuman*'s loyalty to *Phra Ram* as well.

In a Buddhist society, the belief in the Law of Karma is a prevalent social value that could guide people's way of thinking and behaving. In *Ramakien*, *Phra Ram* accepts the fact that he has to be banished in the forest for fourteen years since he believes that his karma lead to this; so he just follows the karma and stays a hermit life in the forest until one day the former bad karma ends, and his good deeds of defeat the evil bring him good effects: he complete the task from last life and could be able to return to rule his city *Ayutthaya*. On verse, it is *Totsakan*'s immoral doing of abducted *Sida* away from *Phra Ram* caused the effect that he and his numerous relatives and soldiers got a devastating and tragic ending.

Finally, the *Ramakien* illustrates how transitory all things are, and teaches us to recognize the transitoriness of all things. The final message of *Ramakien* is to remind the readers and listeners that no matter happiness or sorrow; wealth or poverty; success or failure, etc.; all of these are not lasting forever. Those who can accept this important social value can attain a peaceful and joyful life (Srisurang Poolthupya, 1981) (page 30-32).

The Thai customs and social values hidden in *Ramakien* make this precious work a piece of national literature which most relevant to Thai society (Srisurang Poolthupya, 1981) (page 32). Nowadays, students in primary and secondary schools of Thailand are still learning the story of *Ramakien* from their textbooks; there are animations of *Ramakien* story on TV and Internet; and the *Ramakien* mural paintings in the wall gallery surrounding the Emerald Buddha Temple of Bangkok are attracting and educating all the people who going to see these mural paintings. For *Khon*, it takes some parts of the story as the episodes to play in the mask dance drama; even in this modern age, audiences of *Khon* still find it is interesting and educational to watch and learn from the performances.

2.5 Khon in Central Thailand

Geographically, Central Thailand located at the central plain, is the region of Thailand which covering the broad alluvial plain of the Chao Phraya River.¹⁸ Socially, Central Thailand is the political and economic center of the country; meanwhile it is also a cultural center that in charge of the most significant parts of the nation's cultural affairs. From past to present, *Khon* has been created and preserved well in Central Thailand for the reason of its significance:

In Thailand, the Nation, the Religion and the Monarchy have constituted the major parts of the culture; these are the most sacred icons of Thai cultural identity. *Khon* is officially recognized by the Central Thai Government as one of the representation of Thai performing culture (Krebs, 1975) (page 88) since it presents the cultural and national identity of Thailand.

¹⁸ Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Thailand

The *Khon* has evolved and developed from sacred Hindu rituals which were at first performed in the Ayutthaya court as part of some royal ceremonies. Later on, with respect to Hinduism, the development of *Khon* has been long interwoven with the royal institute as a dramatic performance in the royal court; it has an important role in praising and demonstrating loyalty to the monarchy; besides, Thai people honored Kings as incarnation of God Vishnu like *Phra Ram*; thus all components of the performance are related to tradition and subtle rites and needs to be standardized and uniformed (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006).

Originally, the earliest exact record about the court drama which has the name of “*Khon*” could trace to the seventeenth century in the Ayutthaya period and in the region of Ayutthaya; then the performing art *Khon* has been highly developed in the same period and same area of Central Thailand; Kings and the members of royal family of later Ayutthaya periods contributed significantly to the development and refinement of *Khon*; set models and standards for the later periods (Rutnin, 1996) (page 46).

After the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767, the establishment of new capital Thonburi was still in the region of Central Thailand; and the revival and reconstruction of Siamese culture and arts including *Khon* performance in Thonburi and Ratanakosin Period were based on the standards of the Ayutthaya Period (Rutnin, 1996) (page 58-59).

After Thailand’s 1932 Revolution, under the charge of the Ministry of Culture and Department of Fine Arts, the first College of Dramatic Arts (วิทยาลัยนาฏศิลป์, *Wittayalai Natasilp*) was established in Bangkok to teach the classical dances and drama including *Khon* by the standards of former court dance and to create officially

standardized performances. Therefore, *Khon* in Central Thailand set up the uniform standards for the *Khon* performers and artists and the twelve regional branches of Dramatic Arts Colleges across the country.

The “*Khon*” has been conserved and supported by the successive Kings from the ancient time; moreover, the Kings have also been spiritual pillars, encouraging all the concerned parties and groups to create and preserve this classical performing art (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006). At present, various institutions and organizations such as the Government, royal foundations, private institutions, etc., from many aspects of the society have jointly following the footsteps of His Majesties the King and the Queen, to safeguard the *Khon* performance as a national art and a valuable cultural heritage.

Among those groups and organizations, the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit’s SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe are three outstanding organizations that playing significant roles in safeguarding the *Khon* performance in Thailand today.

CHAPTER 3: BACKGROUND OF THREE KHON TROUPES

3.1 Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe

Table 5: Background of Department of Fine Arts (กรมศิลปากร, *Krom Silpakorn*)

Year of First Foundation	1911 (First established as <i>Krom Mahorasop</i> , กรมมหรสพ under the reign of King Rama VI)
Year of Re-established	1933 (Re-established by national government)
Location	Bangkok (Near <i>Sanam Luang</i>)
Belonged Ministry	Formerly under Ministry of Education, presently under the supervision of Ministry of Culture
Related Organizations	College of Dramatic Arts, National Theatre, Bunditpatanasilpa Institute (สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนศิลป์)
Purpose of Foundation	To protect, preserve and promote the national arts
First Department Director	Luang Wichitwathakan (หลวงวิจิตรวาทการ)
Staffs	Civil servants, former artists from the court
Publications	Books and Magazines about arts and culture (e.g. <i>Silpakorn Journal</i>); booklets about performances
Division relating to Khon	Office of Performing Arts, Department of Fine Arts

Source: <http://www.finearts.go.th>

Before the 1932 Revolution, all the court arts and culture including *Khon* and other performing arts were under the support and management of the court. During King Vajiravudh's reign, he set up a royal department—*Krom Mahorasop* (Department of Court Entertainment) in 1911 to prepare the royal entertainments and festival activities; due to the passion of performing art *Khon*, King Vajiravudh also set

up a specific royal *Khon* troupe known as *Khon Luang*, for training and encouraging the *Khon* artists and performances. Actually, King Vajiravudh had also founded a fine arts department *Krom Silpakorn* under the Ministry of Royal Court, but all the responsibilities were then limited only to the fine arts.

Then after the Revolution, the responsibilities of taking care of all national arts and culture were transferred from the court to this new set governmental agency—the Department of Fine Arts under administration and supervision of the Ministry of Education (Later under the Ministry of Culture) which founded in 1933. From then on, the Fine Arts Department has been regarded as the highest official authority in Thailand that in charge of protecting, preserving and promoting the arts and culture of the nation.

Under this Department, a new type of *Khon* Troupe was formed by the staffs and performers of *Kong Karn Sangkeet* (กองการสังคีต, Office of Performing Arts) under the Department of Fine Arts; take responsibilities of training *Khon* artists and performers, organizing *Khon* performances for state functions, education and entertainment; and to conserve and keep the continuance of this traditional art.

In the past, the classical dance-drama *Khon* performance was reserved as a royal entertainment and a sacred ritual that the public could rarely see at ordinary times; they could merely gain the chances to see this performances on several important days of a year; such as in some religious and royal ceremonies; under the new government system, this performing art became a public property; the Department of Fine Arts *Khon* Troupe therefore started to take the responsibilities to arrange the *Khon* performances as the public programs.

To provide convenience for organizing and holding dances and drama performances, in 1940s, the Silapakon Hall (โรงละครอนติลปากร, *Rong La-korn Silpakorn*) was constructed under the supervision of Luang Wichitwathakan, the first Director of the Fine Arts Department; this wooden pavilion was renovated and being regarded as a temporary theatre for Fine Arts Department and the *Natasilp* schools to organize performances; later on, the Hall was burnt down during World War II (Rutnin, 1996) (page 224).



Photo 10: Luang Wichitwathakan

Source: <http://www.thaidances.com/vijitvatakran/index1.asp>

In 1950s, another building Krom Silapakon Theatre was constructed and later on replaced by the National Theatre whose construction was completed and opened to the public in 1965. From then on, the National Theatre of Thailand became the place to organize regular classical dance-drama performances such as *Khon*, *Lakhon*, traditional music and some western concerts (Rutnin, 1996) (page 225).



Photo 11: The exterior of National Theatre



Photo 12: The interior of National Theatre

Sources:

Photo11: www.khaosanroadnews.wordpress.com

Photo 12: took by author

Due to the spacious stage it has, the National Theatre is often viewed as a suitable place for the *Khon* performance; especially when the battle scenes are playing and a large number of performers and props are required. The time and episodes Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe chooses for *Khon* performances in National Theatre may differ in each year; but in general, most of the performances are held on weekends for the convenience of the public audiences (Anchalee Tunsakul, 1985) (page 93).

Sometimes the Fine Arts Department Khon Troupe also arranges some open-air performances for significant events and festivals at temples or at the area of *Sanam Luang*. Individuals have been allowed to commission the Department of Fine Arts' Khon Troupe to perform in their private celebrations, such as a celebration of new temple, a private cremation or even a wedding party.

For the performers of Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, they are both staff of Office of Performing Arts, Department of Fine Arts, working as civil servants like those in other departments; and also national artists and performers to fulfil their obligations to train and perform *Khon* performances usually at National Theatre and other places. Normally, the students graduate from the Colleges of Dramatic Arts is the source of the troupe members. Occasionally, some teachers from the College of Dramatic Arts also participate in National Theatre's performances. The performers at Fine Arts Department Khon Troupe receive regular payments from their monthly salary; the financial support of the troupe is mainly from the Government's budget.

The audiences of regular *Khon* performances at National Theatre are mainly students from every level of the educational system; the students from relating art institutions or Colleges of Dramatic Arts; retired people; Thai families and other *Khon* enthusiasts from different age groups and social backgrounds.

3.2 Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project

Table 6: Background of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project

Year of Foundation	2007
Performance Venue	Thailand Cultural Centre, Main Hall
Performance Duration	Around two hours
Ticket Prices	100 Baht for Student Performance; 600/800/1,000/1,500 Baht for Public Performance
Sponsors	Her Majesty the Queen's Personal Affairs Division, The SUPPORT Foundation of Her Majesty the Queen
Purpose of Foundation	To preserve and promote Thailand's traditional arts and crafts for the new generations in accordance with Her Majesty's wishes.

Table 7: List of Khon performances organized by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project from 2007 to 2014

Year of Performance	Episode of Performance
2007	"Prommas" (ชุด พรหมมาศ)
2009	"Prommas" (ชุด พรหมมาศ)
2010	"Nang Loy" (ชุด นางลอย)
2011	"The Battle of Maiyarap" (ชุด ศึกมัยราพณ์)
2012	"Jong Tanon" (ชุด จองถนน)
2013	"The Battle of Kumbhakan: Episode of Mokusak" (ชุด ศึกกุมภकरण ตอน โมกษศักดิ์)
2014	"The Battle of Indrajit: Episode of Nagabas" (ชุด ศึกอินทรชิต ตอน นาคบาศ)

Source: Brochures of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation

Established in July 1976, Her Majesty the Queen's SUPPORT Foundation (The Foundation of the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand¹⁹) is a royal project that initiated by Her Majesty to increase job opportunities for the rural communities; to increase local people's incomes and to improve their livings.²⁰ The Foundation formed women's groups and provide them with equipment, materials, and training in cottage industries, with these professional training, they get the sufficient skills of producing high-quality crafts by themselves, this helped the women to promote their status in the community and make benefits for their families and the local economy.²¹ During the past four decades, the SUPPORT Foundation played a significant role in reviving, preserving and promoting the Thai traditional crafts.

In November 2003, Her Majesty the Queen watched a *Khon* performance which organized by the Department of Fine Arts at Phupan Palace at Sakon Nakhon Province; this was the first time Her Majesty asked the Fine Arts Department to arrange a *Khon* performance with the episode of "*The Story of Nonduk*" for her. Having watched this performance, Her Majesty noticed that the quality of *Khon* costumes of Department of Fine Arts *Khon* Troupe was not in a good condition; through the conversation with performers, she realized that this situation was due to the lack of budget for the troupe; therefore she sponsored some budgets for the troupe to improve the quality of the costumes; from then on Her Majesty started to pay attention to this traditional performing art and watched the *Khon* performances at other provinces for several times.²²

¹⁹ <http://www.thaitradeusa.com/home/?p=8391>

²⁰ Available at <http://th.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

²¹ Available at http://m2.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10152598243754660&id=276059974659

²² <http://www.wenku1.com/view/6C880AF90818B905.html>

To create *Khon* related arts and crafts with a good quality based on the authentic traditional Thai style; Her Majesty the Queen arranged a meeting to gather the experts in *Khon* and related arts to requested that new costumes and other crafts be created; she told them to do these base on the ancient court styles but make them more durable and attractive ("Khon on Command," 2014). By the efforts of Her Majesty the Queen's Personal Affairs Division and Her Majesty the Queen's SUPPORT Foundation; new *Khon* masks, costumes, ornaments and props have been made with high quality and artistic skills. This is in accordance with Her Majesty's wishes to conserve and revive the traditional crafts, and developing them to be suitable for the present-day stage.

After three years' preparation, in 2007, a royal *Khon* performance with the episode of "*Prommas*" was staged at the Main Hall of Thailand Cultural Centre in Bangkok to celebrate His Majesty the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary and Her Majesty the Queen's 75th Birthday Anniversary. This royal *Khon* performance was organized and supported by Her Majesty the Queen's SUPPORT Foundation following Her Majesty's command and wishes to preserve this exquisite cultural heritage *Khon* which in this modern society the younger generations had little knowledge about it.



Photo 13: The exterior of Thailand Cultural Centre



Photo 14: The interior of Thailand Cultural Centre

Sources:

Photo 13: www.lovethailand.biz

Photo14: http://tccenter.blogspot.com/2006/09/blog-post_115797202136569019.html

The performance received a good response from the public; people showed enthusiasm in seeing and enjoying these spectacle *Khon* performances again. Her Majesty the Queen consequently commanded the SUPPORT Foundation to organize the *Khon* performances every year since 2009. Since then, the annual *Khon*

performance arranged by SUPPORT Foundation under Her Majesty's royal command has been called "*Khon Praratchatan*" (โขนพระราชทาน, Royal Khon Performance).

The Royal *Khon* performances organized by the SUPPORT Foundation under the Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen was aimed to provide more opportunities for the public to enjoy the *Khon* performances; to create high quality *Khon* performances with refined and exquisite *Khon* costumes, masks, props, etc. in the authentic traditional Thai style; and following Her Majesty the Queen's command to select young performers from all Colleges of Dramatic Arts and other *Khon* institutes by annual open auditions to promote the new *Khon* performers and to transmit this valuable traditional art and the relating craftsmanship to the new generations.

The regular venue of holding the Royal *Khon* Performances is the Thailand Cultural Center at Bangkok; this modern and well equipped theatre was built in 1985 to celebrate His Majesty the King Bhumibol's 60th Birthday Anniversary; presently it is a popular venue for international cultural troupes, symphony orchestras, and Thai grand performances to be performed for both the Thai and international audiences (Wattana Boonjub et al., 2008) (page 133).

From 2009 to present, each year, there were continuous *Khon* performances organized by the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project almost every day lasting about one month from the beginning of November to the beginning of December. Once the performances of this year finished, the preparation for next year's performances would be started at once. The open audition of selecting the young performers usually takes in the middle of the year, around the month of June.

Due to the high quality and grand scenes are demanded for Royal *Khon* Performances under the SUPPORT Foundation; meanwhile a large number of staffs and performers are involved in these performances; the management of the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* Project is consists of two parts: the Production Committee and the Organization Committee.

Table 8: Production Committee of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* Project (E.g. The Royal *Khon* Performance: "Battle of Kumbhakan: Mokusak Episode", 2013)

Name	Position
Thanpuying Charungjit Teekara (Her Majesty the Queen's Deputy Private Secretary)	Chairman
Thanpuying Supornpen Luangthepnimith (Her Majesty the Queen's Deputy Private Secretary)	Vice Chairman
M.L. Piyapas Bhirombhakdi	Vice Chairman
Dr. Chirayu Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya (Grand Chamberlain, The Royal Household)	Advisor
Thanpuying Manatnit Vanikkul (Her Majesty the Queen's Deputy Private Secretary)	Advisor
Minister of the Ministry of Culture	Advisor
Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture	Committee Member
Director-General of the Fine Arts Department	Committee Member
President of The Bunditpatanasilpa Institute	Committee Member
President of Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin	Committee Member
Director-General of Department of Cultural Promotion	Committee Member
Director of the Office of Performing Arts, Find Arts Department	Committee Member
Director of The College of Dramatic Arts	Committee Member

Source: Brochure of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation, 2013.

Table 9: Organization Committee of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit’s SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project (E.g. The Royal Khon Performance: “Battle of Kumbhakan: Mokusak Episode”, 2013)

Name	Position
Thanpuying Charungjit Teekara (Her Majesty the Queen’s Deputy Private Secretary)	Executive Producer
M.L. Piyapas Bhirombhakdi	Associate Producer
Dr. Anucha Thirakanont	Assistant Producer
Mr. Surat Jongda	Assistant Producer
Mr. Pramet Boonyachai	Artistic Director, Script Writer
Mr. Sudsakorn Chaisem	Production Designer
Mr. Veeratham Tragoolngernthai	Costume and Ornaments Designer
Mr. Peeramon Chomdhavat	Costume and Spectacle Advisor
Mr. Kerdsiri Noknoi	Show Caller, Assistant Director
Mr. Montri Wadlaiad	Make-up Specialist
Deputy Director (Art and Culture) of The Bunditpatanasilpa Institute	Committee Member
Director-General of Department of Cultural Promotion	Committee Member
Director of Institute of Cultural Education	Committee Member
Director of Thailand Cultural Center	Committee Member
Director of Golden Jubilee Royal Goldsmith College	Committee Member
Head of Performing Division, the Office of Performing Arts	Committee Member
Deputy Director (Art and Culture) of The College of Dramatic Arts	Committee Member
Miss Sroythong Cholumjeak	Committee Member & Secretary
Miss Sirada Maleerak	Committee Member & Assistant Secretary
Mrs. Somporn Porananont	Committee Member & Assistant Secretary

Source: Brochure of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit’s SUPPORT Foundation.

There is a variety of the audience group for the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* Performances; many of them are frequent audiences of National Theatre's and Sala Chalerkrung Royal Theatre's *Khon* performances, they come to enjoy the Royal *Khon* Performances of SUPPORT Foundation once a year at Thailand Cultural Center; there are also students from different educational level join the Student Round to watch the performances; meanwhile a number of people come to see the exquisite costumes, props and spectacular scenes produced by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* Project.

3.3 Sala Chalerkrung *Khon* Troupe

Table 10: Background of Sala Chalerkrung *Khon* Troupe

Year of Foundation	December 2005
Performance Venue	Sala Chalerkrung Royal Theatre, Bangkok
Performance Duration	Around one hour fifteen minutes
Ticket Prices	200 Baht for students and seniors; 800/1,000/1,200 Baht for general public
Sponsors	Sala Chalerkrung Foundation, Crown Property Bureau and Tourism Authority of Thailand
Purpose of Foundation	To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne; to preserve Thai traditional art <i>Khon</i> ; and to promote the <i>Khon</i> performance in an international level by attracting tourists and foreign audiences to enjoy this classical performing art in Thailand.

Table 11: List of Khon performances organized by Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe from 2006-2014

Time of Performance	Episode of Performance
December 2005-July 2006	“Phra Chakrawatan” (พระจักราวตาร)
July 2006-July 2010	“Hanuman Chankamhaeng” (หนุมาณชาญก้าแหง, Hanuman the Mighty)
July 2010 –July 2013	“Hanuman Becoming Phra Chakri’s Devotee” (หนุมาณซ้าราชบริพารพระจ้กกรี)
July 2013-December 2015	“Hanuman” (หนุมาณ)

Source: <http://www.salachalermkrung.com/home2.php>

In 1932, to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Bangkok as Thailand’s capital, King Rama VII gave command to build a modern cinema and theatre—“Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre” as a gift to the people; providing a venue for the general public to enjoy the quality entertainment and recreation (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 129). The construction of the theatre was completed in 1933 with an official opening and the first talking movie on show in Thailand.²³

²³ http://www.thaiwaysmagazine.com/bangkok/culture_shows/chalermkrung_theatre_culture_shows.html



Photo 15: The exterior of Sala Chalerkrung Royal Theatre



Photo 16: The interior of Sala Chalerkrung Royal Theatre

Sources:

Photo 15: <http://www.orientalescape.com/thailand/sightseeing/bangkok/khon.html>

Photo 16: <http://www.tapoma.com/eng/thailand-bangkok-ticket/khon-thai-classical-masked-dance-at-the-sala-chalermkrung-royal-theatre.html>

The Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre was designed by Mom Chao Samaichalerm Kridakara who had received his training in architecture in Paris. With an exquisite interior decoration, the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre at the time of its opening was a wonderful modern structure; with the building's air-conditioning system and neon lighting, these made this theatre a very impressive feature (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 130-131).

In 1990s, the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre received a renovation project to restore it to its original glory and added more functions to the theatre. After the renovation, the stage was enlarged to accommodate live performances, the number of seats has been reduced to make the theatre more comfortable for the audiences, the sound and lighting equipment has been updated, and the entry foyer has been air-conditioned; the walls and ceiling also have been modified so that the performance equipment can be more easily to install (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 143). From then on, a variety of cultural activities have been held in this theatre, such as movies, stage performances, Western concerts and business events.

Since December 2005, as part of the celebrating activities of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 60th Anniversary Accession to the Throne in 2006; the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre started to hold a series of *Khon* performances organized by jointly organizers—Sala Chalermkrung Foundation, Crown Property Bureau and Tourism Authority of Thailand. The purposes of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performances are primarily to provide Thai public more opportunities to enjoy this traditional performing art which rarely seen today; as well as to attract the tourists and foreign audiences to watch the performance and appreciate Thai art and culture.

After the first episode of *Khon* performance titled “*Phra Chakrawatan*” got a good feedback from the audiences and remarked a revival point of this traditional dance drama in modern Thai society; regular *Khon* performances started to be performed in Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre every Thursday and Friday at 7.30 p.m. In the following years until 2014, three more episodes have been performed: “*Hanuman the Mighty*”, “*Hanuman Becoming Phra Chakri’s Devotee*” and “*Hanuman*” at the same location and stage.

One of the sponsors of Sala Chalermkrung’s *Khon* project is Crown Property Bureau which always “devoted resources, personnel and funds to conserve and convey the values of Thai culture and beauty of art and entertainment to the future generations”. Since the end of 2005, to support the *Khon* performance at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre; the Bureau has been simultaneously supporting the Sala Chalermkrung Foundation, the Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* Project and the *Khon* Tour Project of Sala Chalermkrung.²⁴

Another sponsor of the *Khon* performances at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre is the Sala Chalermkrung Foundation which always received financial support from the Siam Commercial Bank of Thailand since 1997. This Foundation is also one of the important participants of maintaining the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre as a good venue for *Khon* performances.²⁵

Besides, as one of the supporting units of Sala Chalermkrung’s *Khon* project, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) was established in 1979; during the years, it has been trying to persuading international tourists to travel to Thailand. This time, the TAT is also works to help promote the *Khon* performance among all tourists and

²⁴ Available at www.crownproperty.or.th/en/CSR/Promoting-art-culture-and-conservation

²⁵ Available at www.scb.co.th/en/csr-social-support/support-arts

overseas visitors since they believe that “Apart from those tourist attractions, many tourists have visited because of the variety of arts and culture in Thailand.” (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 4).

Since the late 2005 to 2014, the three sponsors and organizers of Sala Chalermkrung’s *Khon* performances have been work corporately to present this traditional performing art with both authenticity and modern elements. They join hands with great efforts to produce regular and attractive *Khon* performances all the year round to make more general public, tourists and foreigners to pay more attention to this classical masked drama dance in Thailand.

The Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe has been holding *Khon* performances continuously since 2005 to present at this Sala Chalermkrung Royal theatre. Unlike the regular *Khon* troupe, the performers at this troupe are not the constant members inside the troupe; they are selected by the open auditions (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 110). Most of them are students from those artistic institutions, such as the Dramatic Arts Colleges and Buditpatanasilpa Institute; some of them are recent young graduates, and some others are current students at these artistic institutions (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011) (page 45). To perform at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre are good chances for them to practice their knowledge about *Khon* and to be trained by the teachers and masters from Department of Fine Arts to promote their skills.

The main audience of Sala Chalermkrung Khon project is mainly Thai students, *Khon* fan clubs who often watch the *Khon* performances at National Theatre, and tourists who come to visit the historical area of Rattanakosin Island around the Grand Palace and those foreign visitors who bought the package tour including the program of this *Khon* performance.

CHAPTER 4: SAFEGUARDING APPROACHES TO KHON BY THE THREE ORGANIZATIONS

4.1 Determination of the term “safeguarding intangible cultural heritage”

Just like culture in general, the situation of intangible cultural heritage is constantly changing under different social contexts and sometimes under the threat of losing its uniqueness and being homogenized by cultures from other regions of the world. Under the circumstances of modernization and globalization, the intangible cultural heritage is specially needed to be safeguarded and kept it alive by various measures and approaches.

How can we make the intangible cultural heritage in this contemporary world a “living heritage” without losing its core characters? By (Ly, 2007), “living” means “the heritage lives sustainably and is transmitted from generations to generations thank to diverse means and conditions”; therefore, safeguarding living heritage means taking measures aimed at ensuring the heritage continues to be practiced and transmitted within the community or group concerned.²⁶

Mom Rachawong Kukrit Pramoj, the former Prime Minister, versatile artist and author, who had an enthusiasm of traditional and classical Thai culture and art; dancer and teacher of *Khon* masked dance, once stated that:

“*Khon* is both an art and a culture of the Thai nation which cannot be found anywhere else. But *Khon* is an art which has to live in living human beings. It cannot be written in books, or hung as a painting, or set in place as a statue for worship. Those who wish to preserve this Thai art and culture, therefore have to invest in it by

²⁶ UNESCO-EIIHCAP Regional Meeting (2007: Viet Nam), 2008. Safeguarding Intangible Heritage and Sustainable Cultural Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges. Bangkok: UNESCO. p.3.

receiving its training, in order to preserve it within themselves.” (Rutnin, 1982) (page 10-11).

Therefore, to safeguard an intangible cultural heritage, it means “to keep its living spiritual and religious values and ensure the related communities to maintain their role as stewards of their heritage” (Denes, 2013) (page 224). There are three steps to take: Firstly, to recognize the significance of this cultural heritage and regarding it as the nation’s intangible cultural heritage; secondly, to realize the fragility of intangible cultural heritage and to make contributions to record it completely and practice it without losing its authenticity; finally, to transmit the skills and the spirits of this intangible cultural heritage with its cultural and educational meanings within the involved communities from generations to generations.²⁷

The first two measures are in accordance with the definition of “safeguarding” as “measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage”²⁸; the viability of intangible cultural heritage rests in its ongoing creation and recreation; hence the two steps could ensure that intangible cultural heritage’s practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills and associated tangible manifestations can be sustainably maintained by the concerned communities, groups or individuals.²⁹

Furthermore, by the last measure that “transmit it from generation to generation”; it could raise the awareness of younger generations about the importance of this intangible cultural heritage, and ensuring the future of this intangible cultural heritage could be continued by the succeeding ones to remain its sustainability as a living heritage.

²⁷ UNESCO, 2011. *What is Cultural Heritage?* Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00002>

²⁸ Article 2.3, Text of UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris, September 29th to October 17th, 2003. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00006>

²⁹ UNESCO-EIIHCAP Regional Meeting (2007: Viet Nam), 2008. *Safeguarding Intangible Heritage and Sustainable Cultural Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges*. Bangkok: UNESCO. p.4.

To conclude, the essence of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is about the keeping and transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning; in other words, safeguarding focuses on the processes involved in transmitting, or communicating intangible cultural heritage from generations to generations.³⁰ Below are the approaches that the three selected organizations take to safeguarding *Khon* as an intangible cultural heritage.

4.2 Approaches of safeguarding Khon by Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe

Today, the authorized responsibility of safeguarding the nation's cultural heritage is taken by the Fine Arts Department under the Ministry of Culture. Therefore, the safeguarding approaches of the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe are including: to fulfill the official commission assigned by the Thai Government to educate the knowledge about *Khon* to the public, to train *Khon* performers and artists; to organize the state functioned *Khon* performances and the regular *Khon* performances; and to adapt modern changes into the *Khon* traditional art.

4.2.1 To teach the knowledge about Khon to the public

After the Royal Khon Troupe was transferred from the court to the Department of Fine Arts after 1932's Revolution; the *Khon*'s contemporary trends become more educational than artistic or political (Rutnin, 1996) (page 9-10). As the main source of *Khon* performances' scripts and episodes, the story of *Ramakien* becomes to a significant part of the school curriculum in Thai literature. Nowadays, students in primary and secondary schools of Thailand are still learning the story of *Ramakien* from their textbooks; school teachers and university lecturers would take their students to see the *Ramakien* mural paintings in the gallery surrounding the Emerald Buddha Temple of Bangkok; they also organize their students to watch the real *Khon*

³⁰ UNESCO, 2011. *What is Cultural Heritage?* Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00002>

performance at the National Theatre and to assign their students to write reports about the performances.

By the governmental policies, at present, Thai classical dance and music are the compulsory courses in elementary and secondary schools; many colleges and universities in Thailand have elective courses in Thai classical dances or dance-drama. There are also some schools and universities organize *Khon* performances as extra-curricular activities. By these efforts, the knowledge and appreciation on *Khon* could be cultivated in students' hearts from a very young age.

Through in-depth interviews with the audiences who watched the *Khon* performances at National Theatre which was organized by the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, some parents said that they came to watch the performances because their children wanted to come. These children knew the main characters: “*Phra Ram*” “*Hanuman*” and “*Totsakan*” from their school textbooks; they got interested in these roles and curious to see these characters in *Ramakien* story come to reality and “alive” on stage. In this case, not only the parents could bring their children to get to know *Khon*, but also the children could be the ones to bring their parents to know more about *Khon* and get involved in the safeguarding process of this traditional art—some parents came to watch the *Khon* performance the first time by accompanied their children. After they watch the performance, they may find this traditional art more interesting than they have thought, then become more interested in it.

Meanwhile, to educate the science and performing skills about *Khon*, the Department of Fine Arts also using modern techniques to help the public to more easily get knowledge about *Khon*—they record some DVDs about previous *Khon*

performances and occasionally sell them at the National Theatre before the performances start. In some of the DVDs, there is an educational program “Things You Need to Know Before Watching Khon (สิ่งควรรู้ก่อนดูโขน)” developed by *Khon* Master Seri Wangnaitham (Ajarn Seri) to briefly introduces the story and the main characters in *Khon* performance, sometimes there is also an introduction about the typical dance gestures about the four types of main characters, which helps the audiences who have less or little experience of watching *Khon* performance to better understand and become interested in this high art form.³¹



Photo 17: Seri Wangnaitham

Source:

<https://medinfo.psu.ac.th/pr/WebBoard/readboard.php?id=10536>

To encourage the public to appreciate the *Khon* cultural heritage, the Department of Fine Arts also publishes brochures for each *Khon* performance in both Thai language and English to help those who cannot follow the story line, and to help foreigners who cannot understand Thai language. In the brochures, there are introductions about *Khon*, summary of the synopsis and the details about the

³¹ Seri Wangnaitham is a late National Artist and Khon Master, after he passed away in 2007; his student Prasart Thong-aram (Khru Mued) continues his educational program “Things You Need to Know before Watching Khon”. For example, in the Khon performance with episode “Maiyarap Hypnotize the Troop” performed in 2009.

performance. These brochures are distributed free of charge by the theatre staff while they check the tickets and allow the audiences to get into the Main Hall.

To further study the knowledge about *Khon*, the Department's officers and performers conduct studies and researches about the classical performing arts which includes of *Khon*. They send officers and performers to further studies in the Major of Dramatic Arts or other art-related majors at universities, to do research and write their theses about *Khon*. For instance, Mr. Pairoj Thongkumsuk wrote a Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Facts and Performing Techniques of Monkey Characters in Khon" at Chulalongkorn University; meanwhile, Supachai Chansuwan who used to work as the performing artist of the Department of Fine Arts also furthered his Ph.D. study at Chulalongkorn University by writing a dissertation "An analytical study of the dancing patterns and the stylistic dancing movements for the Khon male character: a case study of Rama". This is also a good approach for preserving the knowledge about *Khon*.

4.2.2 To train Khon performers and artists

To safeguard the cultural heritage, it is important that the involved communities maintain their arts and cultures through learning processes; at present, one of the measures is to safeguard the traditional performing art by learning at the institutional educations; in these circumstances, students can formally understand the components of their cultures (ศักดิ์สิน ช่องดารากุล, 2553).

After the responsibilities of preserving the *Khon* cultural heritage transferred from the court to the Department of Fine Arts since 1933, the tasks of training the *Khon* performers and artists were transferred to the Department's *Khon* Troupe as well. To safeguard the *Khon* classical performing art, the Department of Fine Arts has

changed its way of training performers and artists under the modern educational concepts.

In 1934, a performing art school “*Rongrian Nadduriyangkasad* (โรงเรียนนาฏดุริยางคศาสตร์, Academy of Dance and Music)” aimed at teaching and training new generations in classical dance and music was established under the supervision of Department of Fine Arts;³² to best follow the standards of court art style, some of the former experienced and talented court artists and performers were absorbed to become the first group of teachers and masters in this modern artistic academy (Rutnin, 1996) (page 189).

In this school, both art and national curriculums have been created and applied, accompanied with the professional training of classical performing art; later on this *Rongrian Nadduriyangkasad* changed its name to *Witthayalai Natasilp* (วิทยาลัยนาฏศิลป์, the College of Dramatic Arts) in 1972 to set national standards for traditional performing arts, to provide higher educations in dance and music, and to hold the right to confer a certificate or a bachelor degree in education or *Natasilp* (Dance and Music) (Rutnin, 1996) (page 4).

In order to expand education and training of classical arts to the provinces, during 1970s, there have been provincial branches of dramatic arts colleges founded in the four major regions of the country (the north, south, central, and the northeast) under the permission of Ministry of Education. At present, the number of Dramatic Arts colleges in Thailand has reached twelve in total; these educational institutes are functioned of training students in the classical arts of *Khon*, *Lakhon* and traditional

³² “Witthayalai Natasin”. Available at <http://cda.bpi.ac.th/pravat.htm>

dance and music, to give advice to local schools and to promote the knowledge about these traditional arts to public (Brandon, 1993) (page 239).

Table 12: List of Colleges of Dramatic Arts in Thailand

Location	Established Year	Region	Name of the College
Bangkok	1972	Central	The College of Dramatic Arts
Lopburi	1983	Central	Lopburi College of Dramatic Arts
Angthong	1978	Central	Angthong College of Dramatic Arts
Suphanburi	1993	Central	Suphanburi College of Dramatic Arts
Chanthaburi	1984	East	Chanthaburi College of Dramatic Arts
Roiet	1979	Northeast	Roiet College of Dramatic Arts
Kalasin	1982	Northeast	Kalasin College of Dramatic Arts
Nakorn Ratchasima	1992	Northeast	Nakhon Ratchasima College of Dramatic Arts
Sukhothai	1979	North	Sukhothai College of Dramatic Arts
Chiang Mai	1978	North	College of Chiangmai Dramatic Arts
Phatthalung	1984	South	Phatthalung College of Dramatic Arts
Nakorn Si Thammarat	1978	South	Nakhon Si Thammarat College of Dramatic Arts

Sources:

<http://cda.bpi.ac.th/pravat.htm>

<http://gphone.prd.go.th/dp.php?MID=28&DID=324>

https://th-th.facebook.com/cdasp/info/?tab=page_info

https://www.facebook.com/nadtasinlopburi/info/?tab=page_info

Since the Colleges of Dramatic Arts were set up to train students in arts and to prepare them for becoming either professional performers or teachers in primary and secondary schools across the country; the curriculum and methods of training had to undergo many changes to reach the educational purposes (Rutnin, 1996) (page 175). *Khon* are now taught by modern methods from the elementary school level to the college level; there are courses and curriculum set for each academic year, students attend courses in normal education for half a day, and to take the artistic training in another half of the day (Rutnin, 1996) (page 4).

In 1998, another artist educational institution--the Buditpatanasilpa Institute (สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนศิลป์) was established under the Department of Fine Arts in Bangkok (later separated in 2007 and under the direct administration of Ministry of Culture); this institution is functioned to be providing higher education for the art students in every aspect of classical dance and music in Thailand. The students have inherited their dance techniques from teachers at a variety of institutes nationwide and improve their skills at the Buditpatanasilpa Institute under the supervision of qualified instructors (Somchai Fonramdee, Songkoon Chantachon, & Marisa Koseyayothin, 2014) (page 79).

Teachers and Trainees

In order to preserve the traditional art in its classical forms, continuing the earlier traditions and the model of the performing arts is significant. To ensure the core of *Khon* performing art to be preserved, the *Khon* teachers and masters have to ensure to pass the *Khon* uniform stylistic standards to their students. The first group of teachers and masters in the Department of Fine Arts were the former *Khon* artists from the

court, so they could continue and transfer the traditions and standards for classical dance without interruption.

On the other hand, to be qualified *Khon* students and performers, a set of curriculums and rigid training have to be taken; it takes a *Khon* student ten years to study at the College of Dramatic Arts after they finish the primary education, they receive both general education and theatrical training at *Natasilap* schools. In the past, the masked dance uses the modes of training with particular masters, with the natural, life-long method of teaching (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011) (page 39). In contrast, most of the contemporary performers and dancers are from the modern theatrical schools by the coeducation (Anchalee Tunsakul, 1985) (page 31).

By the efforts of Department of Fine Arts and the educational institutions, a number of outstanding artists were cultivated; they keep the art alive and transferred it to the present and future generations. One of the examples is the late National Artist, Seri Wangnaitham, a foremost *Khon* master who received an advanced education from the Fine Art Department's College of Dramatic Arts in 1954, and eventually became the head of the Department's Music and Performing Art Division. He was honored as a National Artist for acting (drama) in 1988. During his lifetime, he created various *Khon* productions and trained a great number of disciples, such as *Khon* artists Prasart Thong-aram (Khru Mued) and Pakorn Pornpisut (Khru Korn), both of them had worked with Ajarn Seri at the Division for more than three decades ("Khon Master Seri Passes Away at 70," 2007).

4.2.3 To organize Khon performances for the State functions and the regular Khon performances

Khon performances were essential for most state celebrations; from the reign of King Chulalongkorn, the *Khon*, *Lakhon* and *Hoon* have been performed for foreign dignitaries (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 13). Nowadays, whenever there is a State or official visits from foreign countries, the Department of Fine Arts will organize the *Khon* performances as the etiquette and greetings to the state guests. Besides, once there are significant events and festivals such as the bicentennial celebration of the Capital Bangkok's Foundation, the Royal Cremations, the celebration of King Rama II's birthday (February 24th), etc.; the Department of Fine Arts will also arrange some open-air *Khon* performances for these occasions at temples or at the area of *Sanam Luang*.

In the past, the *Khon* classical dance-drama was reserved as a royal entertainment and a sacred ritual that the public could rarely watch it at ordinary times; they could merely gain the chances to see this performances on several State important celebrations; such as in some religious and royal ceremonies. Nevertheless within the new government system, the *Khon* performing art became a public property; the Department of Fine Arts *Khon* Troupe therefore starts to take the responsibilities of arranging the *Khon* performances as the public programs.

To hold the regular, frequent *Khon* performances, an appropriate theatre should be provided by the government. In 1965, the construction of National Theatre has completed and has been open to the public. From then on, this theatre became the place to organize regular classical and modern performances such as *Khon*, *Lakhon*, traditional music and some western concerts. There are more than one thousands seats including the ground floor and the second floor at the theatre. By holding regular

Khon performances at this location, the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe provides a platform for the public to enjoy the *Khon* classical performances and to gain better understanding of this traditional performing art.

Due to its spacious stage, the National Theatre is often viewed as a suitable place for the *Khon* performance; especially when the battle scenes are playing and a large number of performers and props are required (Anchalee Tunsakul, 1985) (page 93). With a view to safeguard the national cultural heritage, the Fine Arts Department presents *Khon* in various episodes and frequent performances at the National Theatre every season (Chaturong Montrisart, 2004) (page 116). The time and episodes which Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe selects for *Khon* performances at National Theatre would be different each year; but in general, most of the performances will be held on weekends for the convenience of the public audiences.

To attract the audiences, a small fee is charged for the tickets of *Khon* performances at National Theatre, the ticket prices are varied from 60 Bhat to 100 Bhat per person. This cheap price provides more opportunities for more people to come to enjoy this traditional art. People who would like to invite their friends and family members to watch the *Khon* performances at the National Theatre may book the tickets in advance, and then introduce the performance to them. Moreover, people from the related areas may come to enjoy the performances at National Theatre as well, for instance, I used to meet Ajarn Ampai the manager of a Shadow Puppet Troupe “*Nang Yai Wat Bandon*” of Rayong Province who took his students to watch *Khon* performance at National Theatre, he said it was the first time these children come to Bangkok and watch the *Khon* performance, he hoped that the children could learn from *Khon* and to improve their skills in *Nang Yai*.

Individuals have been permitted to commission the Department of Fine Arts' *Khon* Troupe to perform in their private celebrations, such as a celebration of new temple, a private cremation or even a wedding party. The Colleges of Dramatic Arts also have travelling dance troupes which not only perform at different provinces within Thailand, but also bring the performance throughout Asia, Europe, and the United States (Rutnin, 1996) (page 4 & 224). By doing so, the Department of Fine Arts has been succeeded in making Thai classical traditions known throughout the country and abroad (Pornrat Damrhung, 1999) (page 45).

4.2.4 To adapt modern changes into the traditional *Khon* performance

Based on the theory of late National Artist—Seri Wangnaitam, “If we do not make the *Khon* performance accessible to the new generation, the traditional art would likely disappear soon.” (“*Khon* Master Seri Passes Away at 70,” 2007) Therefore, to satisfy the modern audiences’ interest, changes and adaptations have to be made in *Khon* performances to keep pace with the times and to attract the audiences.

Table 13: Modern changes of *Khon* under the Department of Fine Arts (1932-Present)

1932-1940s	-Thai traditional dance and drama under the influence of Western theatrical arts; modern theatre designs and techniques learnt from the West and Japan have been applied in classical <i>Khon</i> and <i>Lakhon</i> productions (Rutnin, 1996) (page 239).
1950s -1960s	-The use of the elaborate designs and adaptations of Western theatre techniques to Thai classical theatre; yet still preserving the Thai characters (Ibid.: 240).
1970s	-Started of using spectacular scenery and stage techniques, such as moving rocks, giants, and fantastic animals on stage;

	<p>for the purpose of attracting and entertaining school-age audiences (Ibid.: 240).</p> <p>-Started to apply modern stage techniques such as sounding and lighting systems to modernize the set designs and used mechanical devices to move the stage properties (Ibid.: 241).</p>
1980s-present	<p>-The creations of <i>Khon</i> are more geared towards the tastes of modern audiences, especially the young generations; emphasis on educating the audiences (Pornrat Damrhung, 1999) (page 42).</p> <p>-The complexity of the plots has been reduced (Ibid.).</p> <p>-The recitations have been shortened and made easier to understand (ฐาปนีย์ สังสิทธิ์วิงศ์, 2557) (page 101).</p> <p>-Less dancing than before. The movements are more simplified (Rutnin, 1996) (page 200-201).</p> <p>-The scripts may be chosen from different versions of <i>Ramakien</i>, not limited to only one of them (Ibid.).</p> <p>-The duration of the <i>Khon</i> performance has been modified to around three hours, to adjust to the physical demands of the modern audiences.</p> <p>-Adding the role of clowns, to insert the comedy acts in the intervals of the performance(ฐาปนีย์ สังสิทธิ์วิงศ์, 2557) (page 101).</p> <p>-The <i>Khon</i> productions onstage are now more spectacular and visually impressive by using the modern techniques such as disco lighting and laser lights (Pornrat Damrhung, 1999) (page 43).</p>

To spread the information and news about National Theatre's *Khon* performances, in the past, the only way to inform the general public and the audiences was by the word of mouth or the posters and cutouts hanged outside the National Theatre's main entrance. Generally, the contents on the posters will include the

organizer of the performance (the Department of Fine Arts), name of the episode, the performing location, and the performing time for the coming performance.

In this modern time, the Fine Arts Department finds a new way to spread the news about new *Khon* performances, they create Facebook accounts “สำนักการสังคีต กรมศิลปากร” and “โรงละครแห่งชาติพระนคร” to post the upcoming events and offer a platform for the public to ask questions and give comments on the webpage. Another way that Social Media could help to publicize the *Khon* performance is: nowadays, people like to record the impressive moments and to share their feelings on their personal Facebook account or Line by posting some pictures, descriptions and comments; since a great number of the audiences who watch the Department of Fine Arts *Khon* Troupe’s performances are young generations, many of them will post their experiences of watching *Khon* performance at the social Medias, by this convenient communication and publication, more people may get interested in this art, get to know more about *Khon* and get awareness of its value and importance.

4.3 Approaches of safeguarding *Khon* by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit’s SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* Project

To safeguard the *Khon* cultural heritage, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit’s SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* Project focuses on the safeguarding approaches of recreating high quality costumes, masks, props, scenes in the authentic traditional Thai style, especially from the early Bangkok period; to create modern and high techniques of scene making to attract the audiences; to put efforts into the training of young generations and to hold exhibitions and use new medias to publicize the Foundation’s royal *Khon* performances.

4.3.1 To recreate high quality Khon costumes, masks, props, scenes in the authentic traditional Thai style

In order to keep the viability of classical performing art *Khon*, its components such as costumes, masks, props, music, dances and the stage settings, etc. and the traditional crafts of making these *Khon* components are significant parts need to be preserved and transferred to the future generations. Following Her Majesty's wishes to conserve and revive these traditional crafts, and to develop them to suit the present-day stage; new *Khon* costumes, masks, props and scenes have been created in the authentic traditional Thai Style, especially from the early Bangkok period based on the standards set during King Rama II's period for the *Khon* masks, costumes, props and scenes. As Her Majesty's Deputy Private Secretary Thanpuying Charungjit Teekhara stated, "These art works are playing a role in passing Thai culture and art to the new generations" ("Work of Art," 2009).

Costumes, Masks and Makeup

To create more refined high quality costumes, the SUPPORT Foundation chooses brocade silk or "*Pah Yok*" as the materials, in order to make the new costumes look brighter and more glitter under the light of a modern theatre. The brocade silk which the SUPPORT Foundation uses are from Nakorn Si Thammarat, called "*Pah Yok Muang Nakorn*", its fame dates back to the Ayutthaya period as a court fabric; the brocade are elaborately woven in fine silk with gold and silver thread, the patterns and decorative borders are in a conical pattern of the court style (The SUPPORT Foundation of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand, 2015) (page 60).

For the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project's newly-made costumes, the patterns are more exquisitely than the costumes made by the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe and other *Khon* organizations and groups; the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* costumes were made from the old patterns of the *Khon* costumes of the early Bangkok period which are now preserved in the National Museum of Bangkok. By this effort, the audiences could get chances to appreciate the authentic traditional Thai styles and to understand more about the skills and craftsmanship of *Khon* costumes.

Khon masks is also a very significant part of the *Khon* performance, the SUPPORT Foundation made the new sets of *Khon* masks depending on the needs of each episode with the assistance of the artists from the Department of Fine Arts and other artistic institutions. The foundation uses special ways of making *Khon* masks, especially the use of colors which follow the ways of *Khon* mask making in the early Bangkok period. Meanwhile, other items of adornments also have been elaborately created, for instance the headdresses; and for the accessories, the foundation uses patterns of accessories in the royal collections (Chusri Ngamprasert, 2014).

A highlight of the SUPPORT Foundation's Khon Project is the unique makeup techniques and styles which quite differ from other *Khon* troupes. The way of makeup for the open-faced characters in the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe is more focusing on the application of vivid and bright colors to make the makeup more eye-catching on stage; by contrast, the SUPPORT Foundation uses a novel make-up style based on the imaginations of what the *Devada* (angels) looked like in ancient Siamese mural paintings. Therefore, the makeup of facial color is closer to the skin tone or white color.



Photo 18: The image of Devada in ancient Siamese mural paintings



Photo 19: The make-up of Tua Phra in SUPPORT Foundation's Khon performances



Photo 20: The image of Nang Fa in ancient Siamese mural paintings



Photo 21: The make-up of Tua Nang in SUPPORT Foundation's Khon performances

Sources:

1. Devada in ancient Siamese mural paintings
http://www.jitdrathanee.com/Learning/learner-2/joe_005.htm#.V11GWctf3IU
2. Tua Phra in SUPPORT Foundation's Khon performances
<http://www.bloggang.com/viewdiary.php?id=morkmek&month=07-2014&date=19&group=8&gblog=94>
3. Nang Fa in ancient Siamese mural paintings
<http://uauuction4.uamulet.com/AuctionDetail.aspx?bid=383&qid=83601>

4. Tua Nang in SUPPORT Foundation's Khon performances

<http://www.bloggang.com/viewdiary.php?id=morkmek&month=07-2014&date=19&group=8&gblog=94>

Scenes and Props

Not only are the costumes, masks, makeup and adornments prepared by the SUPPORT Foundation elaborately created, but also the props and scenes have been meticulously produced according to the ancient and traditional styles. The architectural constructions, no matter the God Brahma's Abode in heaven, the grand pavilion of *Phra Ram*, or the *Totsakan*'s Royal Throne Hall of *Longka*; all of these in the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* performances are created in great splendor and richness; and designed in the traditional styles similar as the architectures depicted in the Siamese mural paintings.

To create some props, the production team of the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project conducted researches to make the productions more in accordance with the traditional styles, for example, in order to make the new chariots for *Phra Ram* and *Totsakan* to ride into the battle field in 2012's royal *Khon* performance "*Jong Tanon*", the members of production team went to observe the old royal chariots kept in the National Museum of Thailand and the one at the Office of the Performing Arts, Department of Fine Arts; to make the prop of chariots suitable for the performance (The SUPPORT Foundation of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand, 2012) (page 60).

Music and Dance

To make the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* performances meet the demands of Her Majesty following the traditional *Khon* customs of the Siamese royal courts, some new elements have been added into the performances; such as the prelude

dances or “*Rabam Berg Rong* (ระบำเบิกโรง)” at the beginning of Royal *Khon* performance, this type of prelude dance was performed in *Lakhon Nai* performance in the past. These dances were formerly performed in the court for the function of salutation which the general public rarely has opportunities to watch, this is a good chance for the audiences to enjoy this elaborate dance and to better know about their traditional art.

Table 14: “Rabam Berg Rong” or prelude dances in Royal Khon performances organized by the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project

Year of Performance	Episode of Performance	Prelude Dance (การแสดงเบิกโรง)
2007	Prommas	Dance of Pralaeng (รำประเลง)
2009	Prommas	Dance of Pralaeng (รำประเลง)
2010	Nang Loy	Ging Mai Ngeon Thong (กิ่งไม้เงินทอง, Gold and silver sticks dance)
2011	The Battle of Maiyarap	Chui Chai Ging Mai Ngeon Thong (ฉุยฉายกิ่งไม้เงินทอง, Chui Chai dance with gold and silver sticks)
2012	Jong Tanon	Ram Thawai Phraporn (รำถวายพระพร, "Salutation")
2013	The Battle of Kumbhakan: Episode of Mokusak	Ram Asirawat Phrabatyukon (รำอาศิรวาทพระบาทยุคล, Royal blessing dance)
2014	The Battle of Indrajit: Episode of Nagabas	Dance of the Seven Avatars of Narai (ระบำนารายณ์เจ็ดปาง, Royal blessing dance)

As Dr. Anucha Thirakanont, the director of the Royal *Khon* performance said, “From the very beginning, the SUPPORT Foundation has worked hard to perfect every component to complete the *Khon* performance projects; we not only want to preserve these artistic works, but also want to create a new generation of artisans. Every year we become more skillful and the works are more refined (Kupluthai Pungkanon, 2014).

Performance Durations

For each *Khon* performance of the SUPPORT Foundation’s *Khon* Project, the performance duration is around 2-3 hours; this follows the international standards of the theatre performing arts and also due to the consideration that this may provide more convenience and comfort for the modern audiences who are lacking of patience for a long performance or often busy with works and other daily chores.

The reason that present *Khon* performance has been shorten from the traditional three-days and three-nights continuous performance to three to four hours is, during King Chulalongkorn’s reign, due to the western influence, the King rearranged the duration of traditional performance to make it suit to the modern way of life, to adopted the westernized entertaining time based on the standards of western performance such as ballet, opera and drama (Rutnin, 1996) (page 201). This could provide more benefits for the audiences since they would no longer spend the whole night to watch the *Khon* performance which may damage their health. Moreover, after 1932’s revolution, the Department of Fine Arts also rearranged the performing arts and set standards for the duration of performance no longer than three hours to fit the universal standards of theatre performing arts.

Table 15: Performance duration of Royal Khon performances organized by the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project from 2009 to 2014

Year of Performance	Episode of Performance	Duration of Performance
2009	Prommas	2 hours
2010	Nang Loy	2 hours
2011	The Battle of Maiyarap	2.5 hours
2012	Jong Tanon	3 hours
2013	The Battle of Kumbhakan: Episode of Mokusak	3 hours
2014	The Battle of Indrajit: Episode of Nagabas	2.5 hours

4.3.2 To apply modern and high techniques to the scene making

With the trend of modernization and globalization in Thailand, there have been more new entertaining ways for people to enjoy the recreational times, for instance, go to cinemas, playgrounds, bowling alleys, golf courses, etc.; meanwhile, in today's rapid developing society, the booming technologies such as televisions, computers, I-pads and smartphones also providing more and more convenience as well as entertainment to the daily life. People are gradually losing their interests in those traditional ways of entertainment such as the *Khon* and *Nang Yai* (Large Shadow Puppet); especially for the new generations whose life are so dependent on the modern technologies, they are not only lacking of chances to appreciate these traditional performing arts, but also got assumptions in mind that these are outdated arts with a slow pace, perhaps not that interesting and attractive to them. Therefore, to make the *Khon* performances more accessible to the modern audiences, in particular

the new generations; the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project creatively uses various modern and high techniques in the scene making to attract the public audiences with the spectacular staging effects.

Stage Settings / Scenes

In SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project's performances, the use of modern techniques help a lot in the creation of some grand stage settings: the impressive huge Elephant God Erawan in 2007, 2009 and 2015's "*Prommas*" episode; the broad flowing river in the 2010's "*Nang Loy*" episode and the large lotus pond in the 2011's "*Maiyarap*" episode; the gigantic Hanuman in the episode of 2011's "*Maiyarap*" to hold *Phra Ram* and *Phra Lak*'s pavilion in his mouth with movable arms, eyes and cavernous mouth; the fascinating Undersea Empire of the mermaids and the caused way to *Longka* made by compute-generated special effects in 2012's "*Jong Tanon*" episode; the *Phra Athit* (God Sun)'s chariot and the huge sun suspended in the air in 2013's "*Mokasak*" Episode and the splendor Lord Garuda which helped *Phra Lak* and the simian armies to catch the *Nagas* (serpents) in 2014's episode of "*Nagabas*".

By the modern techniques applied in the stage settings, the scenes looked both modern and visually pleasant. There are some memorable scenes in the past eight years' Royal *Khon* performances: the scene of Hanuman pursuing a magic plant on Mount Sappaya of 2013's "*Mokasak*" episode; the scene of *Phra Ram*'s troop marching across the vast ocean in "*Jong Tanon*" episode of 2012; the scene of *Hanuman* stalling the God Sun's chariot in 2013's "*Mokasak*" performance; the scene of black bear disguised by monkey soldier *Jambuvaraj* to disturb *Indrajit*'s *Nagabas* ceremony inside the Rothan Tree Hollow by fell the mysterious huge tree in 2014's "*Nagabas*" performance, etc.

Stage Techniques

In order to make the performing and stage effects look more realistic, the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project applies modern techniques to create some natural sceneries, for example, to use sounding system to create the effect of thunder; to use the water vapor to create the effect of fog and smoke; to use the light and smog to create the effect of burning fire and so on. Moreover, since the *Khon* were originally tales of fantasy, the set designs should also support the fantastic and romantic of the performance (Rutnin, 1996) (page 237); by this consideration, the SUPPORT Foundation uses the lights and shades, machines and instruments, sounds and computer technologies to increase the mythological effects in the *Khon* performances:

To show the magical power to his son *Machanu* to prove his identity, *Hanuman* made the stars blinking in “*Maiyarap*” episode; when *Hanuman* attempts to stall the God Sun’s chariot, the powerful ray of sunlight burns *Hanuman*’s body at once; then after the God Sun restores *Hanuman*’s life, *Hanuman* goes to look for the magic herb in the Sappaya Mountain, the plant with magical power could makes sound and runs everywhere in the mountain, *Hanuman* transforms his body to an gigantic one and encircles the mountain with his colossal tail and successfully collects the magic plant to cure *Phra Lak*’s wound in the episode of “*Mokasak*”.

Rigging technology also has been used to help some characters fly. In the episode of 2010’s “*Nang Loy*”, when the demoness *Benyakai* (transforms to *Sida*’s body) been put on the fire to “cremate”, *Benyakai* flies to the sky due to the unbearable temperature of the fire; in the episode of 2012’s “*Jong Tanon*”, the two furious monkeys *Hanuman* and *Nilapat* jumped to sky and fights there; in 2014’s “*Nagabas*” episode, when *Indrajit* shoots the “*Nagabas*” arrow which turns into numerous *Nagas*

to strangles *Phra Lak* and the entire simian army, *Phra Ram* discharges the *Phlaiwat* arrow that summons the Lord Garuda who flies down from the sky and chases all the *Nagas* away.

Other Techniques

To make the classical performing art *Khon* closer to reality, the SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* Project also put some familiar things from today's world into the performances, to hint the audiences that the traditional art could also be contemporary. For instance, in 2011's episode "*Maiyarap*", the three Guards outside the City gate of *Badan* who in charge of checking the visitors were played by the clowns.

To insert the role of clowns in *Khon* performances was first adopted by the Department of Fine Arts; nowadays more *Khon* Troupes and organizations including the SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* production team are also taking this idea to make the performances more interesting and entertaining. The clowns usually appear in the half of the whole performance or before the last battle scene, this is the time perhaps most of the audiences get tired from watching the long-time performance. The clowns will make some jokes by using modern Thai slangs and mention to some events or current politics that the audiences are familiar with in their ordinary lives.

In "*Maiyarap*" episode, since the scales to weigh the visitors are broken by the weights of both *Nang Piraguan* and *Hanuman*; one of the clowns takes a scanner out from his bag instead of the scales to check the security, this makes the audiences laugh and feel like standing at the entrance of a shopping mall or the security check of the airport. Another example is the episode of 2013's "*Mokasak*", when *Kumpakan* performing a ritual to sharpen the *Mokasak* Spear in the ceremonial hall, to disturb

Kumpakan's ritual, *Hanuman* transforms to a rotting dog's body floating in the river near to the ceremonial hall and *Ongkot* transforms to a crow to eat the dog's body. Two clowns nearby the river smell the stench; one of them takes out a bottle of Air Fresher spray to the air, and says the scent is "Lavender!" These comic elements make the *Khon* performances more attractive and entertaining to the modern audiences.

Finally, a highlight of the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project in using modern techniques is to project English plot summary on the white screens on both sides of the stage. This is a thoughtful design for those foreign visitors to understand the performances.

4.3.3 To put efforts into the training of young performers and artists

To keep the traditional art alive and to transmit the art and artistic skills to the future generations, to train the young performers and artists to carry on the art is very important. In order to encourage different generations to joined hands in safeguarding of this unique Thai art and cultural heritage *Khon*; the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project has been in collaboration with the Buditpatanasilpa Institute, to auditioning students across the country for each year's Royal *Khon* performance (The SUPPORT Foundation of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand, 2013).

For years, students from the Colleges of Dramatic Arts, Buditpatanasilpa Institute, Arts Department of various universities and the members from other *Khon* institutes have all been encouraged to attend the auditions to the Royal *Khon* performances. Normally, the auditions will hold in the middle of the year, after the dancers have been selected from the auditions, they will be trained by the senior artists from the Fine Arts Department to gain higher artistic and performing skills in the following months prior to the performances at the end of the year.

The first time while the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project auditioning the performers, there were only around thirty people attending the audition; however, after the Royal *Khon* performances have been better known by the general public in the following years, more and more applicants have turned up for the audition of Royal *Khon* performances. In 2013, more than five hundreds applicants have applied for the audition of the *Mokasak* Episode; the participate number turned to 795 in 2014 and turned to more than eight hundreds in 2015 (Kupluthai Pungkanon, 2014). The increasing number of applicants shows those Colleges of Dramatic Arts and other art institutions give support to their students to attend the auditions, and believe this would help them to gain the valuable experience in the real performances.

Following Her Majesty the Queen's wish to cultivate more *Khon* performers from the younger generations; the recruiting committee of SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project decided to add more scenes in the performances, providing more opportunities to the interested youths to demonstrate their abilities (The SUPPORT Foundation of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand, 2013). In the battle scenes of the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* performances, there could be more than one hundred performers on stage at the same time, for example, the first battle scene of 2012's episode "*Jong Tanon*". By the efforts of the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project, more young generations have been taking part of safeguarding the nation's cultural heritage and to ensure the continuation of this traditional art.

4.3.4 To hold exhibitions and to publicize the Khon Performance via the Medias

To help the general public to better understand *Khon* and to build a channel to communicate with the public and the audiences, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation had been cooperated with other organizations; held exhibitions

and used some Medias to publicize *Khon*, to increase public awareness of the values of this cultural heritage and to get more people involved in the safeguarding process.

Exhibition 1

When the Bangkok Art and Culture Center was officially declared open on 19th August, 2009, it organized an exhibition called “Virtues of the Kingdom” which consists of “*Khon Prommas*” as a part of the exhibition. This part was assisted by Her Majesty’s SUPPORT Foundation, to provide behind scenes photos, *Khon* components produced by the SUPPORT Foundation and used in the 2009 Royal *Khon* performance to be displayed in the exhibition.

Table 16: Exhibition: “Virtues of the Kingdom”-“Khon Prommas”

Exhibition Name	“Virtues of the Kingdom”—“Khon Prommas”
Exhibition Time	August 11 th – October 11 th , 2009
Exhibition Venue	Bangkok Art and Culture Centre
Organizer	Bangkok Art and Culture Centre
Purposes	-To mark the inauguration of the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre; -To show Her Majesty’s wishes to preserve cultural heritage <i>Khon</i> .
Exhibition Contents	-More than 100 items of costumes and makeup produced by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit’s SUPPORT Foundation which used in the 2009’s Royal <i>Khon</i> performance at Thailand Cultural Centre; -Behind scenes photos about the royal <i>Khon</i> performance; -Some artisans demonstrate how they create those <i>Khon</i> related art works and some makeup artists show how they apply their makeup.

Source:

http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2009/08/23/lifestyle/lifestyle_30110420.php

Exhibition 2

In 2014, the Central Group has joined with Siam Commercial Bank to organize an exhibition—"The Royal Khon Performance: Wisdom of The Kingdom" at Central Chidlom and Central Embassy from July 29th - August 17th. This exhibition was cooperated with Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation's design, to shows the history of *Khon*, the crafts involved in *Khon* performance and its recent revival through the SUPPORT Foundation's Royal *Khon* performances. Some photographs both on stage and behind the scenes were on display in the exhibition; these pictures could help people to understand more about *Khon*, also kept as a piece of visual memory to record the *Khon* related arts and scenes, as a model for the later performances and artists (Chusri Ngamprasert, 2014).

Other highlights on the exhibition were the performance of prelude dances and selected pieces in the past eight years' Royal *Khon* performances and some artists to demonstrated how to wear *Khon* costumes and makeups and how to make the props and scenes.

Table 17: Exhibition: “The Royal Khon: Wisdom of the Kingdom”

Exhibition Name	The "Royal Khon: Wisdom of the Kingdom"
Exhibition Time	July 29 th - August 17 th , 2014
Exhibition Venue	Central Chidlom and Central Embassy Shopping Center at Bangkok
Organizer	The Central Group and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation
Financial Support	Siam Commercial Bank
Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In honor of Her Majesty the Queen's 82nd Birthday; -To show the history of <i>Khon</i> and its recent revival through the Royal performances during the past eight years; -To offer an opportunity to both Thais and foreign visitors to appreciate <i>Khon</i> which combines indigenous skills and knowledge and to appreciate Her Majesty the Queen's gracious support in preserving this unique Thai art and cultural heritage; -To offer a preview of this year (2014)'s performance and generate a better understanding of the art.
Exhibition Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To display the <i>Khon</i> related arts and crafts: the <i>Khon</i> masks, costumes, jewelries, head-dresses, other adornments, and the props and scenery used in the performances produced by the SUPPORT Foundation's artisans; -A photo exhibition to display the previous <i>Khon</i> performances organized by the SUPPORT Foundation; -Short performances of <i>Khon</i> and dances involved in <i>Khon</i>; -Demonstrations on instructions of wearing <i>Khon</i> costumes and how to make some props and scenes.

Source: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/homeThai-wisdom-preserved-30239106.html>

Medias

To publicize the Royal *Khon* performances organized by the SUPPORT Foundation's Khon Project, the mass media is an efficient instrument to spread the information and news about the performances. In this modern age, if need to reach out to audience, TV is the most important medium because through it the art can reach people all across the country. Therefore, there were Royal *Khon* performance advertising videos and the announcement about the information of this coming year's Royal *Khon* performance in TV programs, for example, in the subtitles of the Channel 5's News. There are also advertising videos about the Royal *Khon* performance at the screens of Subway and Sky-Train stations; the videos of previous years' Royal *Khon* performances on Youtube; and the brochures, books and DVDs to introduce and record the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* performances to be sold at Thailand Cultural Center before the performances start.

Furthermore, the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project also use the social medias by creating a Facebook account "*Khon Performance*" and an official website "*โขน*" (*Khon*) at <http://www.sub.khonperformance.com/> to introduce the background of the Foundation's Khon Project and its productions; the related activities, many behind scenes photos, videos and details are posted in this Facebook account and the "*Khon*" website. Through these social Medias, the general public could be more familiar with the creating and producing process of the Royal *Khon* performances.

To better communicate with the audiences, the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* public relations sector also distributed some questionnaires to the audiences to ask their preference about the episode and their suggestions about the performances. While it holds a Royal *Khon* performance, souvenirs about *Khon* were sold at the Thailand Cultural Center, such as the postcards with pictures from various previous

Khon performances organized by the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project. By these measures, more members of the public could get involved in the safeguarding process to this intangible cultural heritage.

4.4 Approaches of safeguarding Khon by Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe

Before the launching of *Khon* performances at the stage of Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre since the end of 2005, the only venue to watch regular *Khon* performances is at the National Theatre of Thailand. Then after the initiating of Sala Chalermkrung's Khon project; it has been providing more chances for the local Thai people to enjoy this traditional performing art as well as encouraging the tourists and foreign visitors to appreciate and better understand this refined Thai art and culture.

4.4.1 To make the Khon performance suitable for the local general public and the tourists and foreign audiences

Organized in corporation with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and to promote the traditional *Khon* performance both locally and internationally, the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe is focus on “providing a new space and style for this classical masked dance drama which better meets the demands of tourists, foreign audiences and those Thai audiences whose lacking of background knowledge about *Khon* and have limited time to fully appreciate the artistry of a complete *Khon* performance (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011) (page 44).”

To make the *Khon* performance easier to reach the target audiences group, a suitable theatre is highly needed. Although the stage of Sala Chalermkrung Roayl Theatre is not as spacious as Thailand Cultural Center and National Theatre's; it is still an enough “contemporary” one combined with a Western design's exterior and a

traditional Thai style's interior that make the theatre attractive for both the local audiences and the tourists and foreign audiences.

Besides, to make the performance more accessible and popular, the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe runs the *Khon* performances continuously on every Thursday and Friday's nights throughout the year. This is due to the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Project believes that a more regular and frequent performance could draw the attention and interests of the general public, tourists and foreign audiences³³ and could provide a great extent of convenience for them.

Chumnong Sangvichien, chairman of the board of the Sala Chalermkrung Foundation once explained that, "Western tourists usually plan their holidays three to six months in advance. If we successfully set a certain regular schedule, they can easily decide to include *Khon* in their program."³⁴ In reality, based on the feedbacks from the foreign audiences; it was true that there were a number of foreign visitors both from Western and Asian countries will include watching *Khon* performance at the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre in their plans while they made travel plans to Thailand."

In order to get the attentions and interests from both Thai and foreign audiences, the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Project uses a new way to innovate the *Khon* performance without losing its core characters. Their creations of *Khon* are still based on the traditional techniques, traditions and performers; but to make the productions more entertaining and exciting with minor innovations of episodes, choreography, stage techniques, and so on; to keep the art in tune with modern times and audiences.

³³ <http://www.thailandqa.com/forum/showthread.php?8374-Reviving-the-art-of-KHON>

³⁴ <http://www.thailandqa.com/forum/showthread.php?8374-Reviving-the-art-of-KHON>

As Associate Professor Pornrat Damrhung, a lecturer at the Department of Dramatic Arts of Chulalongkorn University, one of the producers for Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performance once stated, "There are different ways to revive classical dance, including different design approaches and new ways to tell the story, rather than replicating traditional forms with few changes (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011) (page 46).

Episodes and plots

According to Supachai Chansuwan, a National Artist of Thailand and one of the directors of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performances; the *Khon* project at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre are seeking to "create a new perspective about *Khon* and to allow an easier understanding of its epic story"³⁵. Therefore, the episodes have been performed at Sala Chalermkrung used a new way to tell the story—to focus on the major characters from the story of *Ramakien*.

Supachai Chansuwan noted that, in the traditional Thai *Khon* performances, the plots feature a great variety of characters and it is divided into countless acts; normally it was difficult to tell the whole story about the *Ramakien* in just one episode; hence the Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* Project chose to raise a main character to run the story in order to shorten the story in a single episode.³⁶

Therefore, the first episode of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performance "*Phra Chakrawatan*" which performed from December 2005 to July 2006, was concentrated on telling the whole story of the main character *Phra Ram*, about his life experiences and his main adventures from the beginning to the end (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011) (page 46). The subsequent episodes from July 2006 to present were all have been

³⁵ Source from the booklet of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* Performance.

³⁶ Source from the booklet of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* Performance.

presenting the story through another main character *Hanuman*, the commander of monkey soldier who assisted the side of *Phra Ram* to defeat the evil demon King *Totsakan*.

The production team of Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* performances believes that, choosing *Hanuman*—a heroic and interesting figure as the main character to present the new *Khon* productions; this can makes the audiences both Thai and foreigners, children and adults; feel like they are watching dramas or movies. Because *Hanuman* is not a “perfect” character, he is a commoner who have both good characters (e.g. loyalty and brave) and some disadvantages (e.g. sometimes impetuous and playful). Showing the story of him makes the *Khon* performance more realistic and more related to the audiences. By this effort, the Sala Chalermkrung hopes to change people’s perspective of *Khon* from a distant noble Thai classical dancing art to a performance which can relate to every audience.³⁷

In seeking to show the whole story concisely and more appealing to the tourist, foreign visitors and those Thai audiences who are not familiar with *Khon* performances; the Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* Project have reduced the duration of performance from the standardly three hours to around one hour and a half. For this to happen, they select only a handful of episodes to make the plots, scenes and sequence suitable for telling the story, to make the audiences more easily and convenient to follow the performance on stage (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011).

³⁷ “Appreciating Sala Chalermkrung *Khon*”, Booklet of Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre. p.5.

Narrations, music, singing and dance

To shorten the whole length of the performance and to make it with the best dramatic effects, the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Project speeded up the tempo of music and dances in the *Khon* performances, and used more narrations and dialogues to replace a long singing to fasten the pace of performance.³⁸

Different from the *Khon* performance organized by Department of Fine Arts and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation, in Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* project, there are no separate narrators and female singers; the narrators and singers at Sala Chalermkrung are same two persons, taking duties of both singing and making recitations and narrations. During the performance, they stand on the right side of the stage, to better reach and communicate with the audience.

The traditional Thai orchestra “*Phi Phat*” to play the music for Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* performance is by Mr. Rohitajol (วงโจรหิิตาจล)’s music band,³⁹ which consisted of a small number of musicians (around seven) and a soprano xylophone, an alto xylophone, a large gong, timpani, a two-sided drum and small cymbals (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 123).

Costumes, masks and props

To best follow the *Khon* traditions, the Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* project pays meticulous attentions to all the artistic details; they did a number of researches and consulted from *Khon* experts for the preparation of *Khon* components and scenes (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 60 &105).

³⁸ “For the Love of Khon”, *The Nation*. 24th February, 2008.

³⁹ Available at <http://hanumanshow.com/about-royal.php>

Due to the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe do not have their own man power to make the *Khon* components, they ask some private business help them to make costumes, masks, and props and so on. The new creations of the Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* components are based on the old patterns seen in temple mural paintings and old pictures about these designs (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011) (page 45).

What distinguishes the *Khon* costumes at the Sala Chalermkrung is that the design of Sala Chalermkrung's costumes is more exquisite than the Department of Fine Arts'; the patterns of the costume are also smaller and more refined than the costumes of Fine Arts Department. To make the costumes with an authentic traditional Thai style, the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Project did the design of costumes after consult a number of historical sources, including the National Museum and some materials about Thai classical arts; these magnificent costumes were sparkling under the theatre's light, added a great visual impact to the *Khon* performances (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 114-115).

The *Khon* masks used in the performances at the Sala Chalermkrung Theatre were all made by expert artisans with a lot of experience. For the God and human characters who do not wear masks, they wear thick white make-up with heavily painted eyebrows, lips and eyes, modeled after the *Khon* masks of old (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 112). The only exception for this situation was, at the first episode "*Phra Chakrawatan*"; the main characters of god and human also wore masks; this was very rare to see in a contemporary *Khon* performance, and might be one of the innovations for Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performances.

Scenes and stage effects

A management team was also hired to help the troupe run the stage every weekend (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011) (page 45). With a short duration of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performances, the interval between each scene has also been shortening, and then the changing of scenes had to be as quick as possible. Sometimes, when the successive events presented on stage simultaneously, the Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* Project used *Nang Yai*—large shadow puppet as a “moving scene”; for instance, in the first episode “*Phra Chakrawatan*”.

Modern techniques also have been used in the scene making of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* productions, such as using animations to show the large-scale sets and to introduce some plots. In Sala Chalermkrung's most recent *Khon* performance—the 2016's new episode of “*Hanuman*” (ปฐมบทแห่งจินตนาการ); it used a number of film projections and 3 D-Effects to create grand scenes and to create the effects of some natural scenes (such as thunders and fire) and magical powers.

To achieve good artistic effects, the Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* Project uses contemporary lighting and sounding system to create impressive stage effects. On the left side of the stage, there is a room which has some hi-tech equipment inside; all the light and sound effects are controlled by the staffs in this room. The using and designs of these stage effects make the performers' costumes look glittering under the lights of the theatre, make the atmosphere on the stage suitable for the scenes, and create the shifting set of moods for the audiences. In some cases, lighting and special effects have also been used for certain scenes, for instance when *Hanuman* “transforms” to a white forest monkey in the episode of “*Hanuman*”.

These contemporary scenes and stage effects were designed by artistic directors who have enough work experiences in modern theatres; the modern artists involved in the Sala Chalermkrung's Khon project included:

Table 18: Modern artists involved in the Sala Chalermkrung's Khon project

Position	Name
Executive Producer	Knit Kounavudh
Producer and Artistic Director	Pornrat Damrhung
Choreographer / Artistic Director	Pichet Klunchun
Set and design consultant	Prof. Allan Stichbury
Music Consultant	Sinnapa Sarasas
Music Consultant	Sanchai Ua-Silpa

Source:

Pornrat Damrhung, "Exploring Partnerships with Common Roots: Two New Ways of Combining Classical Dance Traditions in Mainland Southeast Asian Performances". *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities Regular* 14.2, 2011.

Other techniques

To convenient the tourists and foreign audiences, the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Project uses another modern technique helping the audiences to better understand the *Khon* performance: on the top of the theatre stage, there is screen displays moving text in English, to briefly explains what is happening on stage throughout the performance. This was the first time that *Khon* performance has an English subtitle to introduce the plots and scenes.

In addition, sometimes, before the beginning of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performance, there would be a brief "presentation" by a *Khon* master and several students; the students will posture some basic gestures and dance movements in *Khon* and to show usually how they were being trained in the training process. The way of paying homage to the Teachers also partly presented by the master and *Khon* students. This is a good way to briefly introduce the *Khon* customs, traditions and fundamental knowledge about this art.

Just like the Department of Fine Arts and the SUPPORT Foundation's *Khon* Project, in Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performances, there also have the role of clowns insert some comedies to make the audiences feel relaxing and interesting. However, in Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* productions, the role of clowns in the episodes of *Hanuman* were usually played by the "Hermit", *Totsakan*'s master who taking care of *Totsakan*'s heart in a box. This is a way to condense the performance without losing its fun elements.

4.4.2 To run the project with the corporation of senior masters and young performers

The creation of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performances was supervised by the senior Thai classical artists from the Department of Fine Arts; a handful of key teachers and masters from the Dramatic Arts College were taken on as consultants; there are also masters for each type of main character helped in the choreography and training of the young dancers; helped the director to work with the timing and sequencing of the performance (Pornrat Damrhung, 2011) (page 40-45).

Audition

Without having regular *Khon* performers, the Sala Chalermkrung hold open auditions to select all of the roles for each of the episodes to be staged (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 110); all the *Khon* enthusiasts from various artistic academies and institutions including the students from Colleges of Dramatic Arts and Buditpatanasilpa Institute are encouraged to take part of the auditions.

During the selection, *Khon* experts will be there to watch the auditions and to select out the suitable performers for each type of the roles (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 110). Around sixty to one hundred cast members will be selected and then being trained in their specific roles by the senior teachers and masters from Department of Fine Arts, College of Dramatic arts and Buditpatanasilpa Institute to improve their artistic skill to a higher level.

Rehearsals

After the performers get enough professional training, they will take the rehearsals on the actual stage of Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre to get used of the theatre's lighting and backdrops, and practice with the real props; altogether, this rigorous preparation can take as long as three months; daily rehearsals take consecutively even after the actual performances on every Thursday and Fridays(Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 110).

Therefore, the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre has become to a venue that gives the young dancers good opportunities to practice their *Khon* skills in real performances and to work in a new *Khon* troupe under the management, supervision and training from the senior artists from the Department of Fine Arts and other artistic

academies.⁴⁰ The battles scenes which require a large number of performers in the episodes of *Hanuman* provided more chances for the young people to participate in the training, rehearsing and performing of this traditional art.

4.4.3 The use of various Medias and activities to publicize and to promote the Khon performance

Various Medias to publicize the Khon performance

In 2006, the Sala Chalaermkrung Foundation and Crown Property Bureau jointly published a book *Khon: Thai Masked Dance Sala Chalermkrung* in both Thai and English versions to introduce the general information about *Khon*; its history and development from ancient time to present; the story of the *Ramakien* and the *Khon* performances at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre. This book is in aims of teaching the knowledge about *Khon*, publicizing the *Khon* performance among both Thai people and the foreign visitors; also wishes that “this book will pass on knowledge about *Khon* to the general public and to be handed down to the future generations; and help to publicize the Thai classical dance *Khon* to be known worldwide.”(Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006)

At a corner of the Sala Chalaermkrung Royal Theatre’s foyer, there is a counter to sell books, booklet and souvenirs about *Khon* and Sala Chalaermkrung’s *Khon* performances. These products present useful knowledge about *Khon*, *Ramakien* synopsis, the background and objectives of the Sala Chalaermkrung’s *Khon* project.

For each episode of Sala Chalaermkrung’s *Khon* performance, there is a leaflet to introduce the synopsis of the episode, its acts and scenes, together with the origin of Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre and the *Khon* project presents at this theatre.

⁴⁰ “Appreciating Sala Chalermkrung Khon”, Booklet of Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre. p.60-61.

To better publicize and promote the *Khon* performance, Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe also used social media Facebook to create an account “*Hanuman Show*” on May 27th, 2013 and another account “*โขน ศาลาเฉลิมกรุง*” on October 22nd, 2015 to post the latest information about Sala Chalermkrung’s *Khon* performance, the pictures of training and auditioning the performers and publicizing words such as “No matter what age or era, ‘art’ has never faded away from our blood and our minds. Even though they are not seen at all time, but when ‘opportunity’ and ‘inspiration’ come around together, that is when ‘art’ is ready to flourish”⁴¹

Considered there would be a certain number of foreign visitors come to watch the *Khon* performances, the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe put some information about their *Khon* performance in English at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre’s official website and some other English tourist websites to introduce their *Khon* project, and also created a “*Hanumanshow*” website <<http://hanumanshow.com/questions.php>> to tell the details and answer the questions about Sala Chalermkrung’s *Khon* performances, for example, “How to buy tickets for group seats? Is there a synopsis or details of the show? And “Who are the *Khon* performers?” etc.

The Grand Palace is a landmark in Thailand which almost every tourist who came to visit Bangkok would put it in the travel plan. After they view the mural paintings depicted the story of *Ramakien* on the walls of the Emerald Buddha Temple, there are also posters in the Grand Palace to recommend that there would be *Khon* performance relate to this story and makes this story come to life for them onstage at the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre. Some travel agencies will include watching the *Khon* performance at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre in their Tour Package.

⁴¹ <https://www.facebook.com/hanumanthehero/photos>

Various activities to promote the Khon performance

To promote the *Khon* performance, Sala Chalermkrung Khon Project has some promotions to attract the audiences, for example, when buying tickets, the normal ticket prices are 800, 1,000 and 1,200 Baht; but the students can show their student ID card to get a special price for 200 Baht per person; children under 12 years could get free tickets; the elders age 60-64 showing their ID card could get 50% discount; for elders above 65 years can buy the ticket for the price 200 Baht for each person. While buying tickets for group seats, if the number of people reaches to 30, they could get a 20% discount for the price.

As one of the organizers of Sala Chalermkrung's Khon Project, the Tourism Authority of Thailand often help the Sala Chalermkrung to launch some other promotions, for instance, during the time of some important festivals in Thailand, the two organizations may launch special activities to get the general public get involved in, then some of them could get the free tickets for the *Khon* performances at Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre.

For example, in 2015, the Tourism Authority of Thailand launched an activity on Facebook, for the participant who posting pictures at TAT's Facebook account on Mother's Day could get the free tickets for Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performances; one Facebook account could get two free tickets; to celebrate the Songkarn Festival this year in 2016, the TAT also launched an activity for the families; when the audiences coming with the unit of family, they could get the promotion that buy one ticket get one free for the performance on April 9th at 14:00 pm.⁴²

⁴² <http://www.thaiticketmajor.com/performance/khon-sala-chalermkrung-Hanuman-2015-th.html>

Activities in other provinces

Although the Sala Chalerkrung Khon Troupe has its regular performance venue at the Sala Chalerkrung Royal Theatre in Bangkok, in some cases, the troupe also takes their performance to other provinces, such as Chiang Mai and Udonthani. For instance, in 2013, while Udonthani province celebrated its 120 year's foundation, they invited the Sala Chalerkrung Khon Troupe to perform at the Udonthani Museum on January 19-20th, 2013.⁴³ These activities could play the roles of bringing the *Khon* performance to the regional places and making more people know about *Khon* and get a better understand of this traditional performance.

The organizers of Sala Chalerkrung Khon Project also tried to attract young people to come and watch the show; the organizing committee sometimes invited schools to bring their students to the show in the hopes of the young people would be more connected with the *Khon* performance and continue the tradition for years to come.⁴⁴ Sometimes while there were groups of students came to watch the performance, there would be performers posturing their typical dance gestures (such as the gestures of four main types of characters in the *Khon* performance—the male, female characters and the monkey and demon figures); there were also staffs help to introduce and explain the roles to the children. Therefore, Sala Chalerkrung Royal Theatre is like an art centre, providing young generations a chance to get knowledge about *Khon* by watching the performance, not just to acquire the knowledge from their textbooks.

⁴³ <http://m.pantip.com/topic/30067406?>

⁴⁴ <http://www.thailandqa.com/forum/showthread.php?8374-Reviving-the-art-of-KHON>

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Comparison of the three Khon troupes

5.1.1 Performers

For Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe, they two organizations select the performers through the open auditions, therefore the performers are changeable for each performance; this is different from the Department of Fine Arts which possesses a group of civil servants as regular *Khon* performers.

However, three organizations still share the same group of performers in some cases because the most of the cast members who attend the first two organizations' auditions are students from the College of Dramatic Arts and Buditpatanasilpa Institute; besides, the students from these two artistic academies are the main source of Department of Fine Arts' staffs and performers; and from time to time, when the Department of Fine Arts needs a large number of performers for a large-scale show, they will also borrow some performers from these two artistic academies.

For the performers who attend the *Khon* performances of Department of Fine Arts, it is their regular duty as government officials and artists; for Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe, the performers are both volunteers and commissioned to join the performances and taking these opportunities as a good chance to improve their performing skills in real practice.

5.1.2 Budget

The budget to create all the *Khon* components and performances for the Department of Fine Arts is from the Royal Thai Government; for Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* Project and Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* Troupe, they share the same financial support from the Crown Property Bureau, by the reasons that the SUPPORT Foundation is a royal project, and the Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* Project is supported by the Sala Chalermkrung Foundation which has been long-term sponsored by the Crown Property Bureau since the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre has been constructed during the reign of King Rama VII as a Crown property.

5.1.3 *Khon* components

Normally, the Department of Fine Arts has their own staffs to make the *Khon* costumes, masks, props, etc. But when some urgent situations, like in demand of a large number of components, they will commission some private artisans to help make the components;

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* Project also has its own artisans to make the *Khon* components which were designed by the *Khon* artists and experts from Department of Fine Arts and other artistic organizations;

Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* Troupe do not have regular production team and own department to make the *Khon* components; their components are designed by the artists from Department of Fine Arts and College of Dramatic Arts, but made by some private artisans.

5.1.4 Places for performing

Each of the three organizations has a regular place for their *Khon* performances; the Department of Fine Arts and Sala Chalerkrung *Khon* Troupe have National Theatre and Sala Chalerkrung Royal Theatre respectively to organize their frequent *Khon* performances; and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation *Khon* Project takes the Thailand Cultural Centre as the regular venue to perform the Royal *Khon* performances annually at the end of each year since 2009, since the Thailand Cultural Center has the most effective stage techniques to presents the spectacular stage effects and also has a larger stage than the National Theatre to be more suitable for a large number of performers. All these three theatres have modern stages, equipment and seats that are suitable for both the performers and audiences to provide and to appreciate the *Khon* performances.

5.1.5 Feedbacks from the audiences

a. The general feedbacks from three organizations' audience

The *Khon* performances organized by these three organizations provide platforms and more chances for the general public to appreciate this traditional mask performance; if there were no performances arranged by these organizations, it would be rather difficult for people to find a place to watch *Khon* performance, to know more about *Khon* and to get better understanding about this valuable cultural heritage.

Through the in-depth interviews, the audiences regarded *Khon* as a symbol of Thai traditional culture; they enjoy the dance, music and costumes which have a traditional Thai style in the *Khon* performances; a number of children who came to watch the *Khon* performances because of their interests in the story of *Ramakien* and this lead to a closer relationship between the older and younger generations. Most of

the audiences agreed that it was good that the children could have these opportunities to get contact with *Khon*; the performances organized by these three organizations played significant roles in safeguarding this traditional performing art as an intangible cultural heritage.

b. General suggestions from the audiences of three organizations

To safeguard *Khon*, some audiences suggest it would be better if there are more channels to watch the *Khon* performances; for instance, to set a specific TV channel to broadcast the Thai classical performing arts; to increase the performances in other provinces and make more people know about *Khon*. Meanwhile, the schools could invite some *Khon* expert performers from Fine Arts Department to give lectures and demonstrate the performances to the students, to make the children appreciate the real form of this art.

On the other hand, there was another suggestion that since the language in *Khon* performance are narrated in the ancient Thai language; it is also difficult for Thai audiences to totally understand all the dialogues and narrations in the performance. Therefore, if it would have some subtitles written in Thai on screens to show the words of “*Kon Pak*”; the audiences would better understand the performance and might be getting more interested in this traditional performing art.

c. Feedbacks from the audiences of Department of Fine Arts’ Khon Performance

The audiences who went to watch the *Khon* performance organized by Department of Fine Arts at National Theatre consider that, the regular performances created by the Fine Arts Department with various episodes and cheap price of tickets have provided more chances, channels and choices for the general public to watch and to learn about this classical performing art.

Meanwhile, the *Khon* performances created by the Department of Fine Arts also provided opportunities for students and any interested persons who study about Thai literature and performing arts to gain experience and knowledge which could not learn from the classes and textbooks; this can cultivate their interest and enthusiasm with *Khon* and its related arts and culture.

d. Feedbacks from the audiences of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project

The audiences of SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project's *Khon* performance thought the new improvements such as the new made costumes, props and scenes and the modern adaptations such as the using of modern and high techniques in the Royal *Khon* made these performances more spectacular and fantastic.

The audiences were impressed by the lighting, sounding and special effects on the stage, and felt the new creation of the *Khon* performances by the SUPPORT Foundation has narrowed down the gap between the audiences and this classical high class performing art. The young generations were also attracted by the performances because the episodes and stage effects were interesting and exciting, the student round with a special price 100 Baht for each student made them more accessible to these *Khon* performances which have a high quality of the *Khon* components and with an authentic traditional Thai style.

e. Feedbacks from the audiences of Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre's Khon Performance

Audiences who went to watch Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe's *Khon* Performance gave a positive response with the innovation of Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* creations. They thought that the new style of this *Khon* performances were

interesting and accessible to the public who may not have too many experience in watching *Khon* and suitable for the tourists and foreign visitors to get the basic impression for this Thai traditional performing art. The promotions provided by the Sala Chalermkrung attracted many audiences to get curious and to get involved in coming to watch the performances. The frequent performances provided much convenience for the foreign audiences to arrange the travel plan before they come to Thailand because the showing time is more flexible than other two organizations.

Some Thai audiences also agreed that if there were no *Khon* performances at the Sala Chalermkrung Royal Theatre, people would have fewer chances to watch the performance and get knowledge about his art. The compressed *Khon* production by the Sala Chalermkrung *Khon* troupe simplified the *Khon* performances without losing its essences; this could make the audiences more easily to understand the performances and get more interested in it.

5.1.6 Assessment of three organizations' safeguarding process

In my opinion, all three organizations have played significant roles in safeguarding *Khon* as an intangible cultural heritage. The three organizations have different policies and approaches to safeguard the *Khon* performance due to the different status, financial support and manpower.

Among the three organizations, the Department of Fine Arts *Khon* Troupe is the mainstay in the role it plays in safeguarding Thailand's *Khon* performance because the Department is the official authority in Thailand responsible for setting the standards for the *Khon* performing art, to make policies to preserve, protect and promote *Khon*; and also is a permanent organization that has to fulfill the responsibilities to make sure the viability of *Khon* performance. Therefore, although

there have been some modern adaptations in the creation of their *Khon* performances, and, in reality, it is difficult to totally maintain the originality of *Khon*; the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe still has endeavored to a great extent to save the authenticity of *Khon*.

For Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe, the two organizations also have contributed a great deal in preserving the essential performing styles of the *Khon*; meanwhile, their modern adaptations, improvements and innovations in the *Khon* productions also provide exciting and attractive elements for the general public, young generations, tourists and foreign visitors to become interested and to appreciate this form of Thai classical performing art. However, since the two organizations do not have their own regular performers, teachers and artists, sometimes there is a need to borrow performing artists and musicians from the Department of Fine Arts to help them to design, create and perform the performances; and also to assist them in training the performers.

For the people who are willing to appreciate the *Khon* performance for the first time, the Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* performance provides them a fundamental introduction to this unique and classical Thai art; it can serve as a basis for those who have just begun to learn about art and culture in Thailand. The Royal *Khon* performance organized by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project could well present and demonstrate the beauty of this intangible cultural heritage; and the Department of Fine Arts' *Khon* performances could help the public to obtain a better understanding of *Khon* in its "uniform" and "standardized" style.

5.2 The nature of safeguarding the Khon intangible cultural heritage in Thailand

According to the Ministry of Culture of Thailand, “Art and culture relate to a civilization’s historical origins and national identities—reflecting its achievements, local wisdom, stability, as well as the nation’s solidarity that has existed for generations. Thailand’s cultural identities in the form of language, literature, performing arts, music and painting are very unique.” (Wattana Boonjub et al., 2008)

In Thailand, *Khon* is a traditional and classical masked dance drama which combines many parts of Thai arts and culture, including the art created narrating language (poetries, recitation, dialogues and singing); the art related classical literature *Ramakien* which consists of Hindu beliefs, some Buddhists principles and various educational meanings; traditional dance and music in *Khon* performances; paintings, sculptures and handicrafts in the process of making *Khon* components and scenes; *Khon* related customs and traditions such as the “*Wai Khru*” ceremony and so on. Therefore, to safeguard *Khon* is to safeguard many aspects of related arts and culture at the same time.

Meanwhile, since the *Khon* represents the Thai cultural and national identities and all things that Thai people uphold as the pride of being Thai (Angkarn Kallayanapongsa. et. al., 2006) (page 15); to safeguard *Khon* could also be regarded as to safeguard the valuable Thai values and identities within this art form. By recognized the significance of *Khon* and paying efforts to safeguard it by various measures and approaches, it indicates that along with the rapid development of this modern society in a globalized era, “Thai people are still retain their traditions, culture and beliefs, and continue to keep and live with their values and moral concepts such as loyalty, gratitude and integrity; Thai art and culture have been held and preserved

by many generations of Thai people, and the Thais still take pride of their art and culture.” (Wattana Boonjub et al., 2008)

Therefore, the traditional *Khon* mask performance has been recreated and safeguarded by various generations as a precious cultural heritage that should be inherited and transmitted from one generation to the next generation. The traditional *Khon* performance today will no longer simply be ethnic works that have effectiveness in educating the younger generation (Pornrat Damrhung, 1999) (page 52); it also can be used to teach future generations the beauty of Thai arts and culture, to enhance the national pride and to remind people, “One cannot borrow an identity from others.” (Pornrat Damrhung, 1998) (page 11-20)

5.3 Safeguarding efforts from various aspects

Due to *Khon* has an integrated nature with a combination of various classical arts, the creation and perfection of *Khon* performances have to rely on the collaborative skills of many people—the artists, handicrafts makers, sculptors, painters, singers, narrators, musicians, performers and dancers (Natthapatra Chandavij & Promporn Pramualratana, 1998) (page 110).

For the *Khon* actors, they have to undergo a rigorous training for around ten years to be qualified to perform in a live performance; the musicians from orchestra, singers from chorus and the narrators have to be prepared to help explain the characters’ moods and feelings; *Khon* teachers and masters, from past to present, have been made contributions to pass on their knowledge and skills of *Khon* to their students; therefore, *Khon* requires the input of many artistic disciplines, contributed by a great number of artists.

In Thailand, *Khon* has been safeguarded through the efforts and cooperation of various agencies and sectors in society; all of the contributors from different aspects have taken part in supporting, preserving and promoting *Khon* and become the participants of safeguarding *Khon* performance as an intangible cultural heritage today.

Originally preserved by the court, the *Khon* performance has always received official recognition; in recent years, the main groups of *Khon* sponsors include: the national government, royal patronage foundations and private institutions. The government regards the “safeguarding” of *Khon* as the official commission and responsibility; the royal support for the *Khon* performances are due to Their Majesties the King and the Queen’s concerns to preserve and promote Thailand’s cultural heritage for the benefits of all people in and outside the kingdom (Wattana Boonjub et al., 2008); then the private institutions such as the M.R.Kukrit’s *Khon* Institution, Thammasat University’s *Khon* Troupe and Rong *Khon* Phetchaburi’s troupe, etc. which get support from the local communities, and some schools and universities training and practicing the *Khon* performances are making the efforts to maintain the *Khon* performance through a diverse range of activities by people in all areas and social levels.

Besides, the general audiences who have enthusiasm to watch the *Khon* performance arranged by various *Khon* troupes or institutions and to recommend the performances to others are also playing significant roles in nourishing the art of *Khon*; their awareness of the value of this intangible cultural heritage also has its importance in safeguarding *Khon* performance. Through the efforts of all the safeguarding participants: the creators (government agencies, royal foundations, private institutions, artists, performers, teachers, masters and scholars) and the audiences;

various aspects from the society have been made their contributions to safeguard the *Khon* and paid their strengths to ensure the viability and sustainability of this intangible cultural heritage.

5.4 Limitations

Before getting to the conclusion, there are also some obstacles and difficulties for the three selected organizations in the processes of safeguarding *Khon*: for the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, since the financial support of the Division of Performing Arts under Department of Fine Arts is from the Ministry of Culture, and there are various Departments and Offices under this Ministry; after distributed level by level, the budget could be very limited when it reach to the *Khon* troupe. Therefore it is difficult for the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe to create high quality *Khon* components such as costumes, props and scenes, etc. Meanwhile, since the number of seats in National Theatre is limited and often fully booked by in advance by regular Thai audiences; it could be difficult for any other audiences especially some foreign audiences to get the tickets on the day of performances.

For the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project, the difficulty is, although the Foundation has enough budget and staffs, it is lacking its own performers and trainers. Each time when the SUPPORT Foundation prepares for a *Khon* performance, it has to make auditions to select the performers from Colleges of Dramatic Arts, other art educational institutions and to borrow performers from the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe. The trainers to train these performers are also the artists under the Department of Fine Arts. This is an obstacle for the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project to keep and preserve the *Khon* related skills. Moreover, since the SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project has a large number of staffs and performers, and also has

many grand props and stage settings; it is difficult for the SUPPORT Foundation shift to perform in other provinces.

Then for the Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe, it does not have regular troupe members and its own management team; so they have to select the students from Dramatic Arts Colleges and other art institutions to be trained as *Khon* performers and hire some outside artists and experts to organize and manage the *Khon* performances. Meanwhile, due to the limitation of manpower, the Sala Chalermkrung's Khon Troupe do not change the episodes frequently, therefore, there is a lacking of variety for Sala Chalermkrung's *Khon* episodes.

Finally, although the three organizations have tried their best to preserve the “authenticity” of the traditional art *Khon*; in the process of adapting the performance to suit the present-day audiences and stage, some changes are still inevitable and it seems impossible to exactly follow the authentic and original style of this traditional performing art. Therefore, to preserve the cultural heritage, perhaps we need to choose between “survival” and “original”.

5.5 Conclusion

The cases of the three organization shows that, the Department of Fine Arts uses the approaches of teaching the knowledge of *Khon* to foster and increase the public's awareness of the significance of this traditional performing art; adapting modern changes into *Khon* to ensure the viability of this traditional art; training the *Khon* performers and the artists to preserve the skills and techniques of *Khon*; and organizing the state functioned *Khon* performances and regular *Khon* performances to stimulate the state, private sectors and the general public to acquire a good understanding and appreciation of *Khon*.

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project uses the approach of recreating new set of high quality costumes, masks, props, scenes in the authentic traditional Thai style to preserve and revive a wide range of Thai arts and craftsmanship; creating modern and high techniques of scene making to attract the modern audiences to watch the performance and to appreciate the beauty of Thai art and cultural heritage; holding exhibitions and publicize the *Khon* performance via the medias; and putting efforts into the training of young generations to transmit the *Khon* related arts and skills to the future generations.

The Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe uses the approach of making the *Khon* performance more suitable for the local general public and the tourists and foreign audiences to encourage the Thai locals to appreciate the value of their own heritage and to promote this classical art form among tourists and foreigners in a bid to increase their attraction to Thai arts and cultures; running the project with the corporation of senior masters and young performers to combine the *Khon* traditions with the contemporary methods and to provide more chances for the young generations to get involved in the process of safeguarding *Khon* performance; using various Medias and activities to publicize and to promote the *Khon* performance in order to encourage more people get a better understanding of *Khon* and to appreciate the beauty of this cultural heritage.

In conclusion, the safeguarding efforts from these three organizations are overall played the roles of promoting the public's awareness of the value and significance of this intangible cultural heritage; preserving the *Khon* related craftsmanship and performing skills to keep the viability of the art; encouraging the long-term public participation in the safeguarding process of this cultural heritage; and transmitting *Khon* related arts and culture to the new generations.

To provide an assessment, it would be fair to say that all three organizations have been commendable in successfully safeguarding traditional *Khon* mask performance: the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe has succeeded in making policies and setting standards for the *Khon* performance and helping the public to gain knowledge about *Khon*; the troupe also created a wide array of episodes of the *Khon* performance and trained a great number of *Khon* performers and artists.

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project has been successful in creating magnificent performances with delicate costumes, props and grand scenes, and using modern and high techniques to make the performance interesting and attractive to modern audiences, especially the new generations. The SUPPORT Foundation's Khon Project also successfully trained a great number of young *Khon* performers and artists with traditional craftsmanship skills.

The Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe has been successful in making the *Khon* performance easier to understand to the tourists and foreign audiences by focusing only on one of the main characters in the *Ramakien* story, to put English subtitles, and to simplify the narrations and dances. The troupe also successfully provided a most suitable place for the young *Khon* performers and students to practice their performing skills in the real performances.

Although there are some limitations, the intangible cultural heritage *Khon* mask performance nowadays still has been safeguarded as best as possible through the efforts of the Department of Fine Arts Khon Troupe, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation Khon Project and Sala Chalermkrung Khon Troupe; the three organizations play significant roles in safeguarding *Khon* performance in Thailand today. With the three organizations' efforts during 2006 to 2014, they have cultivated the public's awareness of the importance of this intangible cultural heritage, got the

new generations involved in the safeguarding process and ensured the viability and continuation of *Khon* to the future generations. We could predict that by the seeds these three organizations have planted, people would have on-going awareness of the beauty and the value of this cultural heritage. Therefore, the traditional *Khon* mask performance could be transmitted from generation to generation, and still to be preserved and safeguarded well in the future.



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APPENDIX



VITA

Yantong Li was born in Jilin Province, China. During August 2006 to December 2007, she was studied in Bachelor Degree at Yunnan Normal University, China in the Major of Thai-Chinese Studies. After more than one year's study, she got interested in Thai culture, therefore she decided to study abroad in Thailand.

Since 2008, she started to study in the Major of Hotel and Tourism Management at Bangkok University International College, Thailand and received a Bachelor Degree in August 2012. In 2013, she started to pursue her Master's Degree in Thai Studies Program at Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

