

SPAFA JOURNAL




Hanoi to Halong Bay



A Publication of the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts

Volume 15 Number 1 January - April 2005 • ISSN 0858-1975





SEAMEO-SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts

SPAFA Journal is published three times a year by the SEAMEO-SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts. It is a forum for scholars, researchers, professionals and those interested in archaeology, performing arts, visual arts and cultural activities in Southeast Asia to share views, ideas and experiences. The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPAFA.

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- ▶ Help enrich cultural activities in the region;
- ▶ Strengthen professional competence in the fields of archaeology and fine arts through sharing of resources and experiences on a regional basis;
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Homepage : http://www.amarin.co.th

Annual Subscription Rates:

US \$27 (Air Mail)
US \$24 (Surface Mail)
US \$19/Baht 465 (Within Thailand)

Cost Per Issue: US \$6/Baht 150

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Hanoi to Halong Bay

Panita Sarawasee, a researcher at the Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre in Bangkok, recently travelled to Vietnam to experience the world of the minorities in the Indochinese country. She stopped by in Hanoi to spend some time there, and shares her impressions of the city, the arts and culture, through her photographs.



*Midday traffic; view from
the Opera House*



*Golden dragons, symbols of nobility and power;
snake along a door of Thien Chu
(the Pagoda Leading to Heaven)*



Boat houses on Halong Bay

With colonial legacies, traditional treasures and modern life-styles fused together, Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, is a charming place of shaded boulevards, attractive lakes and green parks which offer enjoyable walking tours. It is also a big city – with a population of 3.5 million people – filled with motorbikes, bicycles, cars, trucks and buses on its streets. Friends living in Hanoi described crossing the street in Hanoi as an art. Riders on motorbikes will not stop at crossings; they will only try to avoid hitting you. Indeed, my first experience of summoning up the courage to cross the busy Hanoi streets, where traffic lights did not exist, remain my first and lasting impression of the city.

Hanoi is a city of museums and art galleries. Numerous art shops have opened along the streets, particularly around Hoan Kiem Lake. I visited the National Fine Arts Museum, which presented a diversity of paintings, many of which were created in the traditional way with silk or lacquer, but it was obvious that western trends have an intense influence on Vietnamese painting. It was not difficult to spot the influences of Gauguin and other European masters. There were Cubist works depicting Vietnamese anti-colonialism, and these were especially interesting to me.

I wanted to learn more about the revolution against the colonisers, so I went to the Revolutionary Museum. The exhibition focused on the 19th century, beginning with the Vietnamese resistance against the French invasion, up till 1946. Old documents, paintings, photographs and artifacts formed part of the collections. I also went to Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, which impressed me tremendously. It was not a museum as a place that exhibited only old, rare, and exotic objects. Most of the objects were those made or used by the locals, and with video screens showing the making and use of the objects, I was able to appreciate the items and their contexts. The visit was completed with an attendance of the local performing arts, a popular water puppet entertainment show at the theatre on the lake.



House of the Bahnar, one of 50 minority groups in the highlands - an outdoor exhibit in the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology



Large golden door knob of intricate relief



Museum of Vietnamese Revolution, a handsome colonial building



Embroidered picture with design of a lotus pond, Vietnamese handicraft



Traffic at downtown Hanoi



Thap Rua (Tortoise Tower) on an islet in Hoan Kiem Lake

According to a legend, a magic turtle once rose from the depths of the Hoan Kiem Lake to retrieve a sword, which the Emperor Le Loi used to drive out the Chinese invaders, giving the lake its name, Ho Hoan Kiem, which means 'Lake of the Restored Sword'.

"If you want to see Hanoi, you can't miss Hoan Kiem Lake," Ying, my friend who lives in Vietnam, has said. I agree with her. There was a vibrancy of life on the sidewalks around the lake, where old men and teenagers exercised in large groups, and where postcard/souvenir vendors and romantically-inclined couples wandered. The area seemed to be a meeting place and landmark for locals and tourists alike. I particularly liked being at the lakeside café, sipping coffee and observing the liveliness of the place.

During my travel in Hanoi, I often came across flower vendors carrying many kinds of flowers on their bicycles, and selling the flowers directly from their bikes. The ways they arranged the variety of flowers into bamboo baskets represented wonderful deftness and creativity. Pichet, my other friend who lives in Hanoi, told me that urban dwellers are fond of flowers, and during the Tet Festival (Vietnam's Lunar New Year), flowers can be found on altar and in the living room of every house. After Tet, he said, garbages in Hanoi consist of a great amount of flowers and blossom peach branches!



St. Joseph's Cathedral, a reminder of European Catholic influence



Early morning exercise at Thong Nhat Lake (Lenin Lake)



Flower trade show in the open-air market



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15. The bridge leading to Tran Quoc Pagoda
16. A door guardian, gracing the entrance to a pagoda
17. Offering of burning incense in Ngoc Son Temple
18. Ho Tay (West Lake), also known as the Lake of Mist
19. A variety of foodstuffs for sale in local market
20. The Presidential Palace, originally the residence of the Governor-General of Indochina
21. Traditional food; a bowl of nuoc mam (fish sauce) is indispensable at a Vietnamese meal
22. A young vendor with his handmade mini-models
23. Embroidered silk banners hang in the hall of Ngoc Son Temple
24. A woman collecting pond snails in West Lake



Top: Souvenirs in the Old Quarter

Left: Tran Quoc Pagoda, on an islet off the shore of West Lake

Right: Rice for sale in the Old Quarter (rice is a Vietnamese staple)

The Old Quarter, north of Hoan Kiem Lake, also known as 36 Street, is a fascinating maze of narrow streets. The names of these streets reflect the wares that used to be sold there. On 36 Street, the opportunities to use up my Dongs (local currencies) were limitless. On display and sale was a variety of products, such as printed T-shirts, silk products, paintings, ethnic handicrafts, lacquerware, water puppets and so on. The majority of budget travellers would know Hanoi's Old Quarter of backpackers' hotels, internet cafés, travel agencies and restaurants; but even though this area serves tourists, its function for the local people has not changed – the residents of Hanoi still shop there as they have been doing for hundreds of years.



Elaborate façade of the entrance to One Pillar Pagoda

Food and paper money prepared for departed souls

One Pillar Pagoda honours Quan The Am Bo Tat, the Goddess of Mercy

A French legacy in Vietnam: baguettes

A large drum in the Temple of Literature

Hoan Kiem Lake is not the only lake in the city; there are eighteen lakes in Hanoi, West Lake being the biggest. Apart from lakes, you are also never far away from a temple or pagoda. I visited the One Pillar Pagoda, a monument made entirely of wood. This famous tourist attraction rests on a single stone column in a pond. Not far from it is the Temple of Literature, which was dedicated to Confucius, the Chinese philosopher. It was built – as Vietnam's first university – for the sons of princes and mandarins in the 11th century.



*Top: Children in a daycare centre
Bottom: Journey along the river to the Perfume Pagoda*

A trip around Hanoi would not be complete without a visit to Perfume Pagoda, the most spectacular cave grotto in Ha Tay province, about 60 km from the capital. It is a complex of pagodas and Buddhist shrines built into the limestone cliffs of Huong Tich Mountain (Mountain of the Fragrant Traces). To get there, we took a bus for two hours on a narrow road, and rode on a boat for about an hour along scenic waterways between limestone cliffs and paddy fields. During March and April here, the stream is filled with small rowboats on which Buddhist pilgrims travel to the cave grotto to pray for good fortune. My friends and I spent about two hours climbing hundreds of steps to the cave grottoes above the temple. We were told by our Vietnamese guide that some cave grottoes were shelters for Vietnamese nationalists during the colonial period. Upon reaching the top of the hill, we were rewarded with a spectacular view of the valley.



*Top: Embroidered silk banners hang from the eaves of Thien Chu Bell Tower
Bottom: The gate to Thien Chu (of Perfume Pagoda)*



37. Animal statue in Thien Chu courtyard

38. Roof detail of Thien Chu Bell Tower

39. The gate of a pagoda

40. Altar watchman's belongings on the floor

41. The valley and fields among the limestone mountains of Huong Tich Mountain

42. In the courtyard of Thien Chu

43. Thien Chu Bell Tower

44. In front of the monks' residence in Thien Chu

45. One of the wooden statues in Thien Chu



A community of fishermen in Cat Ba Harbour cluster together for companionship



Fruit vendor peddling



View from one of the cave grottoes

Halong Bay, a popular site for tourists, was a destination that I have long wished to visit. My journey to the picturesque site, 150 km from Hanoi, was a two-day trip. Considered to be Vietnam's greatest natural wonder, the bay is dotted with 3,000 islands, and was designated a World Heritage site in 1994. Halong, which means "Alighting Dragon", derives its name from a legend that says the region's topography was created by the lashing of a dragon's tail as it made its way from mountain to sea.

Traveling in a junk named "The Soul of Sea", we were taken to islands and grottoes in the bay. On the way, many local vendors on rowboats came alongside the junk to sell their products, snacks, variety of fruits, fresh crabs and shrimps. Cat Ba Island, the largest island in Halong Bay, was our last destination. It is a fast growing town, full of hotels, restaurants, and karaoke bars. If you seek serenity, it would be better to stay overnight on the boat. My friends and I chose to spend time in the evening sitting at a table on the waterfront, drinking fresh sugarcane juice, and watching people and the water flow by. Vietnam offered many places and ambience for such silent observation of life passing by. ■



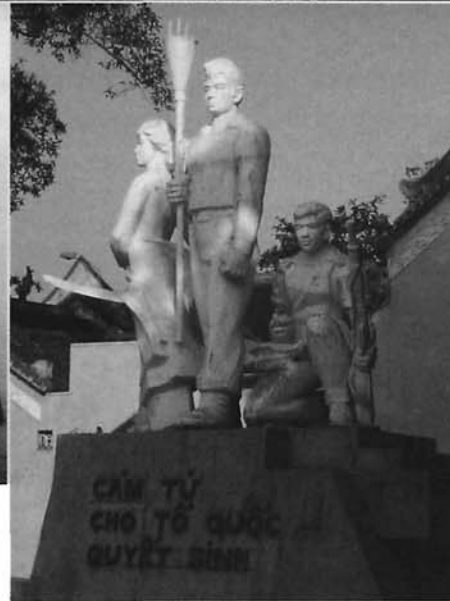
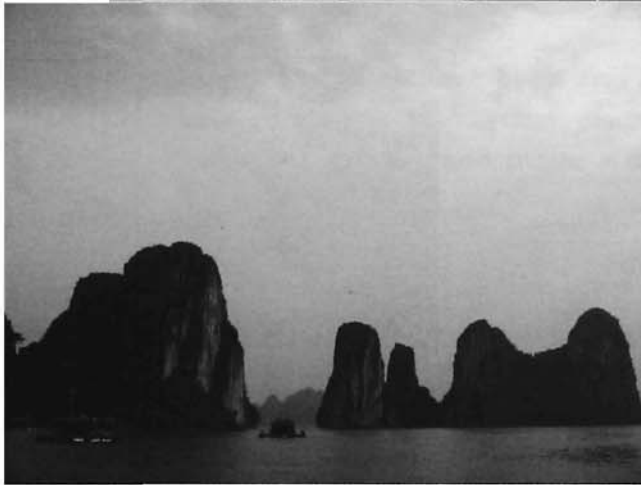
Floating minimart



No urban parking problems here



Leaving a magnificent Halong Bay



Top Left: Traditional Vietnamese architecture; the Temple of Literature

Top Right: Wild, or Mountain rice, being grown at Houg Son Mountain, southwest of Hanoi

Bottom Left: Three thousand islands rise from Halong Bay

Bottom Right: Monument of Martyrs, Hoan Kiem Lake



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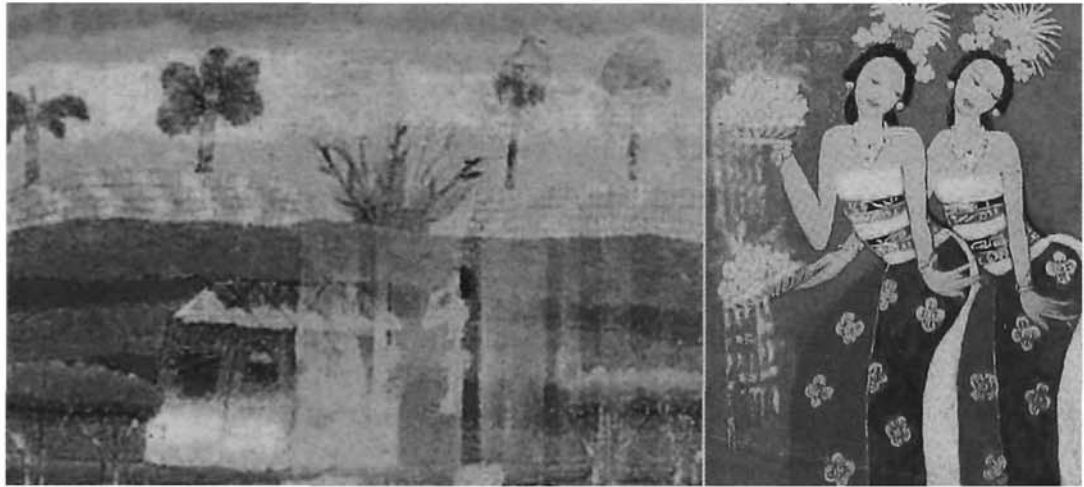
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56. Thien Chu Bell Tower
57. Bun rieu, crab-paste noodle soup
58. House of the Bahnar

59. The gate to Thien Chu (Pagoda Leading to Heaven)
60. Fisherfolk plying the water of Halong Bay
61. Roof detail of Thien Chu Bell Tower



Women's Art/Space – Bali

Paintings in Bali have been and are produced mostly by men. What about women artists, you ask. Soraya Merican visited the Indonesian island, and made a discovery.

The next time you go to Bali, pay a visit to any of its art galleries and count the number of paintings by women artists. The discrepancy is stark. Researching on the state of women's art on the island of Bali may turn out to be an impossible exercise, for the simple reason that almost no Balinese art gallery showcases works by women. Except one.

For the past twenty years, the walls of the Seniwati Gallery of Art by Women have been adorned by artworks created only by women.

This gallery provides local women artists with a unique space for them to express themselves.

Gallery founder and director Mary Northmore said problems faced by local female artists led her to set up the showroom.

"They face numerous challenges which stem from the traditional roles they're expected to play. Balinese men are more visible within the public sphere – they own businesses, they travel more. Women, on the other hand, are bound to their homes," she said.

The biggest problem encountered by local women, she explained, was that they have no time to paint.

"Their time is taken up by cooking, cleaning, feeding the children and taking part in religious ceremonies. All these come before her painting, which traditionally, has never been part of a Balinese woman's life.

"If she's lucky, she'll have an hour a day to paint. None of the artists in the gallery [Seniwati] are prolific, but it's the very best they can do. They're not interested in churning out art to make money. They do it because they love it," she said.

Unlike their fathers or husbands, Balinese women have limited access to the art world.

"Men can easily enter a gallery with a painting and say, this is my art, you should buy this and represent me.

"It's extremely difficult, if not impossible for women to do that. It's not in line with accepted Balinese female behaviour, which is to be subservient, to not push yourself into society, to not be egotistical," added Northmore.

Balinese women who want to paint have to go out of their way to do so. Northmore recalls a young woman from a remote village who wanted to paint the sea.

"She lived far from the coast, so she had to cycle to the beach. This meant she had to borrow a bicycle. But because she had to cycle, she had to make a pair of trousers, when all she had were sarongs.



Mary Northmore



Seniwati Gallery



“Every little thing presents a challenge for a local female artist, and it doesn’t help when they’re not seen as potential art producers,” she said.

Northmore first started looking for local female artists when she arrived in Bali twenty years ago. Two male Balinese art experts told her there were none.



“One of them said: There aren’t any women artists here. Balinese women have no sense of colour.’ The other man said, ‘Balinese women don’t like to get dirty.’ I found that extremely unacceptable, and decided to look for them by myself,” she said.

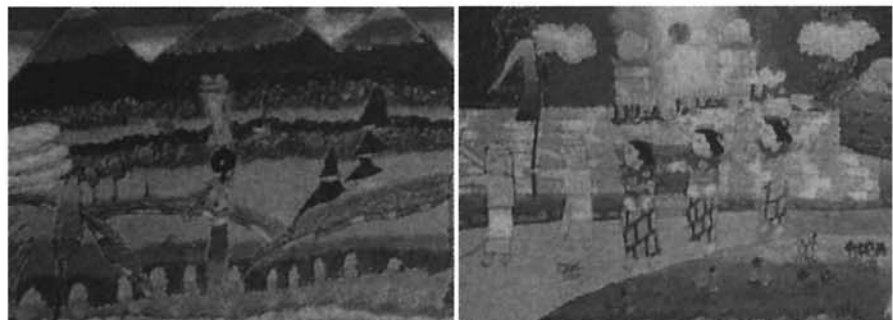
She soon managed to track down some women artists after visiting a few villages, and with the help of her late husband, famous Indonesian artist Abdul Aziz, set up the gallery.

Women artists, according to Northmore, appear to have a style different from men.

“They never portray themselves as sexual objects. They paint subjects like nature, motherhood, children, pregnancy. These are things that a man can never understand and therefore, depict.

“Their art is also easily understood – they paint straightforward things. It is great to look at a painting and understand immediately what the artist was thinking.”

Bali’s younger artists are also benefiting from the gallery. For the past 12 years, Seniwati Gallery has held annual workshops for



Paintings on display at gallery

schoolgirls. Forty of the most talented girls in Bali are selected to join their workshops, which are conducted by two established women artists.

"We provide the girls with materials such as paint, crayons and paper, and take them on painting trips once a week. They're happy just being able to paint. I find it very satisfying that they get to do what they love doing, because they might not have the opportunity to do so at home," said Northmore.

The children's paintings are hung in the foyer. The paintings are colourful, vibrant and full of minute detail – the *batik* print on a mother's sarong, the checks in a father's shirt and the different shades of green in a rice field. Few visitors leave unimpressed when they discover that the youngest artist featured is six years old.

The gallery's scholarship fund has also helped finance the education of a few young women in university and art school.

The fund is financed by sale proceeds from the children's artwork, which includes paintings, painted umbrellas, a colouring book and royalties from a book called 'The Balinese Dream', which was illustrated by children.

Half of the proceeds of a painting go to the artist, while the other half goes into the scholarship fund.

Northmore is happy but not content with how Bali's women artists have progressed.

"There've definitely been positive changes. Many of our artists have developed, they've sold many paintings and shown their work overseas, but I measure the gallery's success by the extent to which we've changed people's way of thinking.

"Women artists should be recognised globally, and we hope that other groups around the world will see this, and pick this up wherever they are," she said.

Seniwati Gallery of Art by Women is open daily (except Mondays) 10am - 5pm, and is situated at Jalan Sriwedari 2B, Banjar Taman, Ubud, Bali. Except for the gallery's permanent art collection, items available for sale include paintings, calendars, bookmarks and umbrellas. For details, contact 0361-975485 (phone & fax) or emailseniwati@dps.centrin.net.id. Visit the gallery's website at www.seniwatigallery.com

New human species?

Scientists are now arguing that the famous skeleton of a human species – dubbed the “Hobbit” – does not belong to a modern pygmy with a brain disease. A detailed study of the hobbit's brain suggests that it is a new human dwarf species, but detractors persist in supporting the theory that it was merely a small human being with a disease.

Last year, an Indonesian-Australian team of archaeologists and scientists discovered a skull and bones belonging to a new tiny species called *Homo floresiensis*, that lived on the Indonesian island, Flores, until 12,000 years ago. The sensational find of the 18,000-year-old remains were made at a limestone cave in Liang Bua.

Indonesia's most prominent palaeoanthropologist Teuku Jacob and other researchers have contended that the remains were those of a modern human (*Homo sapiens*), rather than a different species. They believed it was a pygmy, and that its brain – smaller than a chimpanzee's – was diseased by a rare brain-shrinking disorder (microcephaly).

The new study, published in the *Science* magazine, weighs in on the controversy generated by this astounding discovery. Scientists involved in the study explained that *Homo floresiensis* possessed features of more advanced brains, and were able to hunt with sophisticated tools which indicated advanced intelligence. Researchers are also hopeful that the remains might provide DNA as they are not fossilised.

The stunning find may rewrite the history of human evolution, with scientists calling the species “the most extreme” figure of the extended human family... and the shortest. This year, the team that found the *Homo floresiensis* remains is planning to resume their search for more evidence in the many limestone caves where the discovery was made in September 2003.

Blame it on the stone

An art work in the museum of Carlisle, England has been accused of bringing misfortune to the northern English city.

Councillor Jim Tootle proposed a motion to destroy the 14-tonne stone, which is inscribed with a 1,069-word curse, but the city council rejected it. Written by the Archbishop of Glasgow in the 16th century, the inscription as a curse against criminals in the region, who blackmailed, raped, and plun-

dered. The boulder was displayed in a museum since 2001, and floods, foot-and-mouth disease, sporting failures and job losses have been afflicting the city ever since.

The controversy arising from whether the stone should be destroyed has generated a debate beyond parochial interests. It has made news in the international media.

Batanes

They say that for more than a hundred years, time has stood still in Batanes, a group of islands in the north of the Philippines. Idly as the situation may be, it is about to change soon when the Unesco World Heritage list is finalised this year, possibly including the Philippine islands.

There are no condos, entertainment complexes or Seven-Elevens on these isolated islands which form the smallest province in the country. However, visitors are arriving and the local authorities are pressed to cope with its growing attraction for tourism or restrict the number of tourists because of inadequate capacity and facilities, and the risk of damage to preservation sites.

As the Unesco nomination becomes more widely known, foreign and local travellers are descending on the islands where they can enjoy white-sand beaches, limestone cliffs, pristine forests, rolling hills, ancient architecture, and archaeological sites, etc..

Consisting of three inhabited volcanic islands, the Batanes is 860 kilometres north of Manila, and can be reached by 60-seater turboprop airplanes. The islands are populated by about 15,000 inhabitants known as Ivatans, whose main livelihoods are in fishing and farming.

Screaming or hearing a scream

Stealing a Munch art work seems to have become a favourite sport in Norway. In March, three more Munch were hauled away, seven months after ‘The Scream’ and ‘Madonna’ were stolen from the Munch Museum in Oslo.

‘The Scream’, a masterpiece of Norwegian artist Edward Munch, has become a recognised symbol of fear and anxiety, portraying a surreal scene of a figure screaming or hearing a scream with a swirling sea of stark colours in the background.

Munch himself has written about the painting, saying that he was walking with friends when the sky became blood red, causing him to stand there "trembling with anxiety," and sensing an infinite scream passing through nature.

It is believed that experts know the place in Oslo that inspired the scene in the painting, and that the slaughterhouse or psychiatric asylum close by might have provided the sound that Munch managed to express in his now famous painting.

Oldest biped found

Paleontologists have announced the discovery of the oldest biped skeleton ever found. An Ethiopian-US team of researchers said in a news conference in Addis Ababa on 5 March 2005 that the find will "revolutionise the way we see human evolution".

The bones, dated to between 3.8 and 4 million years old, were unearthed at a site about 60 km from Hadar (where Lucy, one of the first hominids, was found in 1974) in the Afar region, northeast of Ethiopia.

Scientists discovered twelve hominid fossils, complete tibia, parts of a femur, pelvis, clavicle, scapula, vertebrae and ribs.

Botero's fat figures

Sculptures and art works of Colombian artist Fernando Botero are part of a huge exhibition in Singapore that has been attracting much attention.

The 72-year-old Botero was on the island to launch the show of more than 70 paintings and drawings, and 36 sculptures created over the course of three decades. The paintings and 14 smaller sculptures are displayed in the Singapore Art Museum.

Twenty-two of the monumental bronze sculptures that probably contribute most to his fame are installed at Changi Airport, and in various outdoor locations around the Esplanade arts centre by the sea.

The phenomenal exhibition came about with the Singapore government's support of over US\$120 million for the next five years for the creative sector. Following significant events held for other famous foreign artists on the Southeast Asian island, Botero's corpulent nudes are helping Singapore in its attempt to become a global arts city. The exhibition ends on February 27.

Renaissance copycats?

British artist David Hockney is facing a barrage of challenges from scientists for his theory that Renaissance masters projected images onto canvases to trace over them.

He suggested that artists of that period used a projection technique (the camera obscura, a pin-hole device) to achieve realism in their work, but art historians insisted that lenses sharp enough to capture a precise image were not available then.

David Stork, a Standard University physicist who opposed Mr. Hockney's theory, will hold a conference on electronic imaging in San Jose, California, in January to prove that it would have been impossible for the lenses and concave mirrors at the time to be used for projecting images onto canvases. He will analyse Georges de la Tour's 1645 painting 'Christ in the Carpenter's Studio' as part of the demonstration.

Bringing Bangkok to Barcelona

Inside an historical church in Spain, a tall steel construction presents photo images of buildings in Bangkok that were uncompleted or abandoned. Nearby is a ludicrous set-up of a Thai television talkshow studio, with replicas of windows and kitsch furniture. Displayed in the same area is a compilation of photographs of everyday life, a collage of Asian and Western faces. La Capella, a 17th-century church in Barcelona, has become a venue for edgy and idiosyncratic art that brings Bangkok to the city of the Catalans. For this unprecedented event, two Thai curators Gridthiya "Jeab" Gawee Wong and Klaomard "Meo" Yipintsoi co-operated in an exhibition, 'Bangkok, Bangkok' to present in Europe the works of artists such as Manit Sriwanichpoom, Jibby Yunibandhu, Wit Pimkanchanapong, Propon Kumjim, Kornkrit Jianpinidnan, and Thasnai Sethaseree.

In an effort to offer various interpretations of Bangkok that may counter the "exotic" image it exudes in the mind of an European, the exhibition shows complex perspectives of the chaotic capital of Thailand. With themes that are critical, detached, and melancholic, the art works offer views of the artists' experiences of the city, and also reflect on the character of its residents.

From 'Dream Interruptus', Manit Sriwanichpoom shares his bleak view of the physical scars on Bangkok in the black and white depictions of

towering constructions in the city that were left in limbo as a result of the economic troubles in 1997. Artist Thasanai, for his part, interviews tourists from Barcelona on their impressions and feelings after having travelled to Thailand. Carried out in a talk show, the interviews ('Thailand Is Not My Idea') are exchanges between dwellers of the two cities, and also an expose on the how we generalise and exoticise cultures and places foreign to us. A collection of photographs taken by Barcelona residents while they were in Thailand is on display in contribution to this discussion.

The exhibition includes the screening of two motion pictures, made by some of Thailand's most intriguing film directors. Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Michael Shaowanasai contribute 'The Adventures of Iron Pussy' (a nostalgic comedy and critique of male dominance and irresponsibility); and Pen-ek Rattananurak's 'Last Life in the Universe' adds a poetic melancholy about Bangkok life.

'Bangkok, Bangkok' raises the urban issues of political manipulations, alienation, cultural changes, and identity, a source of many of the artists' work. The exhibition is one aspect of an interaction process between the two cities, which has been initiated by Marti Paren, who will also curate an exhibition of Barcelona artists in Bangkok later in the year.

Thai royal regalia

A government official of Thailand announced that the country will request the United States for assistance in retrieving an ancient royal Thai crown which sits in an art museum in San Francisco.

There have been reports that the centuries-old treasure, dating from the Ayutthaya period (between the 14th and 18th centuries), is now displayed at the Asian Art Museum in an exhibition that features a large number of works from the Ayutthaya period, which came to an end when the Burmese sacked the former capital.

The Thai government did not mention the justification for the crown – owned by a private collector – to be returned to Thailand, and Thai archaeologist, Srisakara Vallibhotama, advised that Thailand would have difficulty proving its claim to the piece, which is yet to be determined as genuine.

He said that a huge amount of royal regalia was looted from the Ayutthaya ruins during the time

of Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsonggram, and were sold. The thieves were finally caught, and treasures retrieved are now exhibited at Chao Sam Phraya Museum of Ayutthaya.

Mammals fed on dinosaurs

A stunning discovery in China may prove that, more than a hundred million years ago, mammals ate small dinosaurs. Scientists reported that the fossil unearthed in Liaoning, northeast of China, is the specimen of a primitive carnivorous mammal similar in size to that of a large cat. The Early Cretaceous mammal, known as *Repenomamus robustus*, is no more than 60cm long, and weighs about 7kg.

Inside its stomach contained the remains of a small dinosaur, *Psittacosaurus*. The find challenges the commonly-held evolutionary notion that early mammals were timid animals, about the size of squirrels, hunted by huge reptiles.



Also unearthed in the same location was the fossil of an unknown species of mammals, now called *Repenomamus gigantis* or *giganticus*. It measures 90cm long; weighs over 13kg; and is considered the biggest of early mammals ever found. Fossils of mammals from the time that predatory dinosaurs roamed the earth are usually not much larger than rats or mice. *R. gigantis* is the size of a dog today, a staggering twenty times bigger than most mammals which existed during the early Cretaceous. More fragmentary evidence from Liaoning prompted researchers to suspect that there were even larger mammals. Coupled with the discovery of fossils of little dinosaurs in the same area, specu-

lations emerge, such as whether mammals dominated reptiles in this part of China?

It has been held for a long time that mammals were small because larger dinosaurs hunted them. After the extinction of dinosaurs some 65 million years ago, mammals grew bigger. A question being asked now is: did mammals drive small dinosaurs to grow larger, and also off the ground? The Liaoning area in China has yielded an abundance of small feathered dinosaur fossils and that of early birds, fish and mammals. The Yixian rock formation in the region is a class of rich fossil beds containing river sediments and volcanic ash.

The Opera Gallery

Adding to Singapore's growing allure as an arts destination, the Opera Gallery on Orchard Road offers European masterpieces for view and sale. Gilles Dyan, French, opened the gallery in 1994, and it has since become a prominent spot in the art scene of Southeast Asia. One of its recent exhibitions included works of Renoir, Picasso, Chagall, Modigliani, Miro, Botero and other famous artists. It was the biggest show of masterpieces displayed for the first time in the region. There is a perception that collectors and enthusiasts in Asia have developed an appreciation for European art, and subsequently interest as well as demand have increased. The gallery also promotes Asian art, showing and selling the works of emerging and established Asian artists. Early this year, Opera Gallery opened in Hong Kong to enhance its niche position of responding to the need for and interest in European art within Asia.

Scanning Tutankhamen

The Egyptian mummy of King Tutankhamen was removed from its tomb in the Valley of the Kings for the first time in 83 years – for a CT scan. In 1922, Howard Carter, British archaeologist, discovered the remains of boy pharaoh Tutankhamen, believed to be the 12th ruler of the 18th dynasty of ancient Egypt. The young Tutankhamen ruled Egypt about 3,300 years ago, ascending to the throne when he was approximately 8 years old. He died circa 1323 BCE in circumstances that are not established. Tutankhamen was 17, and was buried in a hurry, adding to the mystery of his death that some suspect could be a murder. In January this year, scien-

tists placed the mummy in a box, and put it through a CT scan. The CT machine, brought from Germany, was inside a special vehicle parked near the tomb. During the 15-minute scan, 1700 images were made that may provide more clues or even determine the royal lineage of the Egyptian ruler, his precise age at death and its cause. The team involved in the operation consisted of researchers, doctors, antiquities officials and restorers, who will carry out restoration of the mummy after the CT scan.

Differences on cultural diversity convention

A majority of members, France and Canada prominent among them, is pressing for the right to protect their cultures from foreign competition, by way of a binding convention safe-guarding cultural diversity from the free trade regulations of the World Trade Organisation. The United States, leading a minority of countries, insists that trade barriers, and the lack of free flow of investment and knowledge prevent the open exchange of cultures, and thus do not help create cultural diversity.

China, African countries, a large proportion of South America, and the European Commission (which represents the 25-nation European Union in trade negotiation) are behind France and Canada. Japan and India are among countries supporting the US position for free trade of cultural contents and expressions. While the US insists on a free and open exchange of information and cultures, countries such as France want protection for, e.g. their film industry. The French have the only thriving film industry in Europe (65% of box office goes to Hollywood, for the others in Europe, Hollywood commands 90%). Agreeing on the benefit of cultural diversity is easy; but behind the vibrant catchphrase lurk political and economic issues that make it difficult for countries to agree on a convention for protecting it.

A hundred and ninety Unesco members have, since 2003, been drafting an agreement on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expression. The convention should be ready for approval at the end of this year, but there has been so much diversity of ideas that the members could not yet achieve consensus on how to officially title the convention.

It is symptomatic of the differences that afflict this multi-national effort to promote cultures and traditions. Free flow of ideas, fine. Preservation of customs and indigenous languages, yes. Equal status for cultures of rich and poor nations, definitely. But as soon as the politics and money matters creep into the discussion, agreement sneaks out through the back door.

Germany, Spain, England and Denmark are reported to be seeking assistance to their movie industries. The US on the other hand, can easily foresee the disadvantages of restriction on cultural exchanges, as it is the largest exporter of audio-visual products, films and TV programmes.

There are expectations that amendments and more amendments to the draft convention will be made, and that the document may end up unratified by the US. Many nations may not be too concerned; once they have signed on to the convention, they would be able to legitimately protect their culture and cultural products.

However, attention should be given to whether countries, which are economically unable to protect their culture, will be helped by the adoption of such a convention.

Art for heart's sake

In what seems to be a perfect match, enterprisers of art institutes are bringing singles together in art tours and events. The Guggenheim Museum in New York is now offering special tours of the museum for singles. Natasha Schlesinger, an art historian, organises these visits called 'Art Date' so that small groups of people can interact and get to know one another.

The Metropolitan Opera, Roundabout Theater and San Francisco Opera have also gotten into the act of helping out the lonely hearts. Metropolitan's 'Meet at the Met' is an event which consists of a performance and two drinks for US\$95. It operates on the basis that if you buy more than one ticket for the show, you may be separated from your companion, sitting next to a stranger, as a way for people to meet. The success of the event has encouraged other theatres in America to organise similar opportunities.

Sources: AP, AFP, Science, Bangkok Post

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The Great Choreographer, Thanpuying Paew Sanithwongseni

Thanpuying Paew Sanithwongseni's works in Thai performing arts, used as teaching material in schools, have been subjects of extensive studies. Savaparr Vechsuruck researches the life of the choreographer and the choreographic principles of her work, by studying essays, articles, performance programmes, official announcements, records in the Government Gazette, reviews of performances, and interviews.

Thanpuying Paew Sanithwongseni (1903-2000), one of the most famous choreographers in Thailand, was trained in court dances during her childhood, from 1911 to 1915, in Suankularb Palace, the royal residence of H.R.H. Prince Asdang Dejavudh Krom Luang Nakhon Rajasima. She later served as performing arts expert in the Department of Fine Arts between 1948 and 1992. During these forty-four years, she choreographed a total of 164 dances, consisting of her own creations, collaboration with others and adaptations. The dances were in the form of the *Khon* masked drama, dance drama, group dances and solo dances.



*Thanpuying Paew Sanithwongseni
spent a life time in Suankularb Palace*

Born on December 25, 1903, Thanpuying Paew Sanithwongseni, né Suthiboon, spent her childhood, from the age of five to eight, with her cousins in the Grand Palace. These three years were an important period that enabled her to absorb court etiquette, manners and traditions. The lifestyle of the court was a significant foundation for her life, providing her with opportunities to see and appreciate royal performances.

Later, Thanpuying Paew went to serve in Suankularb Palace, where she was educated, and trained in dramatic literature, which she was later able to use for organising performances for the Department of Fine Arts. More importantly, she was trained in court dances by many well-known dance teachers in Suankularb Palace, as well as foreign experts. She practised traditional dances, including slow-quick-rhythmic dances, four musical composition dances and dances that are accompanied by lyrics. On many occasions, she was assigned to perform leading roles. During her four years as a student in Suankularb performing arts school, she accumulated knowledge and skills in advanced performing arts. This formed a solid basis for the development of her expertise in dance and drama.

At the age of fourteen, Thanpuying Paew was married to H.R.H. Prince Asdang Dejavadh, and she had to stop performing, except on special occasions. Being a royal consort, she was exposed to and enjoyed the luxuries of the court, its atmosphere of pomp, fashions, daily routine and the socialising with aristocrats. She was able to experience European culture which was popular among the upper-classes at that time. The exposure to European arts and culture, Western-style plays and dances, ballroom dancing and horse-riding, inspired her to introduce dramatic innovations in the development of Thai performing arts.

When H.R.H. Prince Asdang died, Thanpuying Paew requested for royal permission to revoke her position as a royal spouse. Two years later, she married Major General Mom Sanithwongseni, and accompanied him on official duties to England, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Portugal. During her ten years abroad, she held the role of wife to a diplomat as well as the mother of four children. With the privilege of being in the diplomatic circles, she took part in various social events and cultural activities in Europe, including attending plays, ballets, operas and other art forms. Her background in performing arts enabled her to appreciate the aesthetics of Western performances more than other Thai artists of her time. This exposure to Western dance forms and her expertise in Thai performing arts resulted in her becoming knowledgeable in the Western and Thai theatre, and contributed to her work as a choreographer for the Department of Fine Arts.

In 1947, Thanpuying Paew was invited by the Music and Dance Division of the Fine Arts Department to serve as an expert in performing arts. This was a time when she could use her experience in performing arts and literature to create dramatic scripts and choreographies. Her creations and adapted works for the Fine Arts Department include the 'Blessing Dances' and the seven episodes of the *Inoh* dance drama. Thanpuying Paew also adapted and simplified some of the royal compositions to make them suitable for performance – within the limit of two hours – at the National Theatre. Examples are *Sungthong* and *Ngo-pah*. She also wrote new scripts for some scenes; for example, the scene of "Phra Suthon's Visiting Nang Manorah's Chamber" in *Manorah* and the scenes of "The Maiden in the War Drum" and "Burning of the Sword" in *Kawi* (to which seventy-six new verses were added), and the scene of "Escaping the Water Demon" in *Phra Abhaimani*. Thanpuying Paew served as the sole director in charge of all performances offered by the Music and Dance Division for over four decades. Her duties involved the selection of programmes to present, and teachers to train the cast. She also had to demonstrate her newly-created dance postures to the dance teachers so that they could rehearse the dancers. Thanpuying Paew supervised the whole training process, until the final rehearsal.

During her years with the Fine Arts Department, she dedicated herself to the creation of many spectacular dances and dramas, and became renowned in the performing arts circles. For this reason, H.M., the King bestowed upon her the title of National Artist in Performing Arts (Dance) in 1985. She was the first artist to be decorated with such a title. In her final years, she kindly served as an advisor to other artists and students until she died on September 24, 2000, approaching the age of ninety-eight.

Thanpuying Paew's choreographic works total 164 in number: 138 being her own creations, 10 being the works she collaborated on with others and 16 adaptations. This research is based on her forty-four creations that can be classified into four groups, namely:

1. Dances accompanied by props;
2. Dances for festive occasions;
3. *Mitra-maitree* dances; and
4. Dances in *Khon* masked drama and in the *Lakon* dance drama

Dances accompanied by props

From the six dances of this type that were analysed, it shows that Thanpuying Paew relied much on the choreographic principles of court dances. She modified some human gestures and movements, and incorporated a dance dimension before blending them into a traditional dance style to create a spectacular effect in performance. What she introduced to this kind of dance was the dynamic and complex movement of daily activities; for instance, farming, the use of weapons and fans.

Dances for festive occasions

For eight selected dances of this category, Thanpuying Paew would start by matching the dance concept with the objective of the festive occasions, with dance styles related to the choreographic principles of court dance. In terms of the occasion for celebration, and the music, songs and costumes, other schools of choreography would not be applicable because the frame of reference was purely Thai. She was able to avoid the monotony caused by repetitive dance postures and movements. Performers would firstly present the standard posture dance but when they were to adopt the same posture to relay the same message, she would have them adjust it to vary the dance style in order to attract the attention of the audience. Thanpuying Paew's customary technique was tremendously admired by her audiences and is known as "the coquettish posture".

Mitra-maitree dances

The main objective of five dances of this kind is to combine classical Thai dance with those of the countries that have established diplomatic relations with Thailand. Thanpuying Paew created a dance style to serve the objective by dividing the structure of the dance into three parts. The first part features representatives of Thailand so the dance style is Thai. The second part presents dancers representing foreigners, and the choreographer thus utilizes distinctive dance postures of those countries in this part. The third part is a combination of the first two parts, representing the good-will between the two countries. The Thai dance was adjusted to blend in harmony with the foreign dance.

Dances in *Khon* masked drama and in the *Lakon* dance drama

The study is conducted on twenty-five dances in this category, consisting of eight solo dances and seventeen group dances. Solo dances refer to the dance of major characters in the *Khon* masked drama or in the *Lakon* dance drama in which there is a tradition that the major characters are required to flaunt their artistic ability. Thanpuying Paew's technique in choreographing solo dances was different from that in designing other dance forms. That is, she had to study and analyse the characters, their characteristics, their motives and their situations to decide the degree to which they would be permitted to express themselves on stage to make the audience understand the story. She chose the dance postures and demonstrated them for the performers to practise. During this time, she decided which dance postures could be best presented for performances. This meant that she emphasised the performer's ability as the most important principle in designing dance postures and consequently, people, in general, admired her superb ability in creating dance styles.



"Mue chukaew posture"

Group dances in the *Khon* masked drama or in the *Lakon* dance drama were invented during the time of Thanpuying Paew to make the performances more spectacular. This was well received by the audience. Yet, she would not make these group dances too lavish or too long because she did not want them to divert the audience's attention from the drama. The dance style was designed in such a way as to be in line with the part where the dances were inserted so that the audience experienced the smooth flow of the story. This type of dance was designed with only a few postures because most of the performers were only minor characters, for example, soldiers, ladies of the court and animals. Yet these postures were beautifully designed and Thanpuying's dance expertise could be seen in the dynamic and complex changes in the alignment of the dancers, and the unfamiliar style of grouping. Their appearance on stage would correspond with the setting, and they would not come on to the stage in lines or groups as they did in ordinary group dances.

The following are eleven dances of Thanpuying Paew's own creation:

The Blessing Dance

This dance was first performed by H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn. Thanpuying Paew designed the dance style for a performer who was not a professional dancer, and who did not practise frequently or hold an adequate background in traditional dance. The choreographer chose dance postures that were not too difficult for the princess to rehearse, requiring her to dance to the music of the Thai orchestra. Usually, a single dance posture would be used in this part but Thanpuying Paew made it double to show the princess' special talent. The emphasis was not on the movement of the feet so as to enable the princess to concentrate on the dance postures. The choreographer stressed that for those whose background in dance is limited, their focus should be on the arm movements, not those of the feet.

The Sukhothai Dance

This dance was choreographed with the objective of reflecting the glory of the Sukhothai era through dance. Thanpuying Paew considered the 'Walking Buddha' image of the Sukhothai Period as the symbol of a prosperous and tranquil kingdom. The serene and fluid movements inspired by the image were adopted as dance postures. Lotuses and sculptures of angels were used as accompanying components to the dance, integrating the philosophic significance of symbolism in dance form.



The Walking Buddha pose is presented as dance posture

Kenlong in the garden

This solo dance shows the choreographer's ability in creating dance postures according to the principles of the court dance, with a reputation for being innovative in choreography.

The Hanow's Chuichai solo dance

This is the only *Chuichai* solo dance in *Ngo-pha*, King Chulalongkorn's royal composition. In designing the dance style for this drama, Thanpuying Paew did not want to observe the strict rules of the court's drama. Some characteristics of it were incorporated. The *Chuichai* solo dance by Hanow, the protagonist of the drama, was exquisitely designed to follow the convention of the traditional *Chuichai* dance. As Hanow is a Semang, the choreographer had to translate the personality of this young native into the dance he performs during the



Ta Pongna Or



Male semang character

happiest moment in his life when he is getting married, and is adorned in the most attractive attire. The identity of Hanow was presented through traditional dance postures; his leg and body positions were angular like those of demon and semang characters. The gestures were a combination of the demon character and the male dancer, with the demonic clash of rhythms. Hanow's movements – jumping, springing to his feet and walking – were designed to show his rough manners. The choreographer used the sound of a traditional Thai flute to communicate the performer's emotion. Hanow's snapping of his fingers, his amorous gestures and the nimble movement of his fingers, which are normally associated with the movement of female characters, were all utilized in the dance to reduce the coarseness of the character. It is evident that Thanpuying Paew was able to combine the postures of a male, female, demon and Semang character in representing a male semang who is pleased to get married.

The Sacrifice of Manorah

Thanpuying Paew compared this dance with the sacrifice of Darasa, which was also a sutee (ceremony in which a widow commits suicide). At the same time, she choreographed the dance to show that the sacrifice of Manorah was deceptive. Monorah performs her final dance to escape by flight, not as a dance prior to her suicide like that of Darasa. She thus chose twelve out of the nineteen dance postures from Darasa dance, and appropriately added the gestures of birds – Monorah is a half-bird, half-human creature.



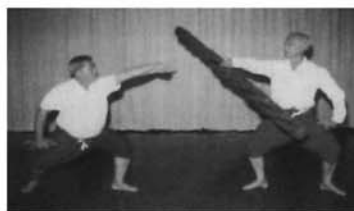
The sacrificial dance of Manorah

The dancer is made to express certain mannerisms to make the audience realize that she is deceiving the court's prophet before she finds the moment to escape.

The battle between Myarap Demon and Hanuman Monkey Warrior

In this performance, Thanpuying Paew was able to present the battle between the demons and the monkey warriors through their

belligerent manners and movements that corresponded, step by step, with the lyrics. The performers do not have to rely on hand gestures to communicate the message to the audience. This shows that Thanpuying Paew was knowledgeable in the military



Warrior in masked drama

procession of demons and monkey warriors, and she was able to design a dance style for it in the masked drama.

The Equestrian solo dance

This solo dance was quite unique during that time because most animal dances were group dances. As Thanpuying Paew was familiar with horses, enjoyed horse-riding, and had the chance to attend horse shows in Europe, she could distinguish some special characteristics in the horses' movements, and apply them to her creation of the equestrian solo dance.



Horse movement

Reviewing the Burmese troop (the troop of King Padung)

This performance had never been attempted until Thanpuying Paew studied the structure of Thai and Laotian inspection of troops and weapons dances. She applied it to her creation of a Burmese version, displaying more evidence of her ingenuity.



Sword dance

Lao-duangdeun Dance

This dance, bringing male and female dancers closer to each other, imitates the manners of young lovers in courtship. The dance style is in harmony with the song. This was the first time that natural manners were portrayed.

Thai-Chinese Relations Dance

The uniqueness of this dance is in the Chinese dance style. The gestures and manners are slightly adjusted to synchronize with Thai gestures and manners.



Thai and Chinese dance style ►

Vichani Dance

The dance is accompanied by lyrics and its distinguished characteristic is the use of fans to suggest various gestures and manners.

Contrabution to Thai Dance

Thanpuying Paew Sanithwongseni was a choreographer who designed dance styles in a systematic way. She would initially study the concept and objectives of the work she was to choreograph. Then, she would do research on the resources through paintings, sculptures, literature and the natural behaviour of humans and animals. After that, she would select manners and movements, and adapt them to dance postures, which were combined with traditional Thai choreographic principles. The refinement and individuality were specially added through her creation of "the coquettish posture," making her choreographic works unique and highly praised in dance circles and by the general public.



The use of various fan gestures

Thanpuying Paew's dedication to Thai dance was immense, and was deservedly honoured by institutions and society. Her works continue to be popular in the present, both in performance and for study, and undoubtedly benefit the development of Thai performing arts, contributing to the depth of its quality.

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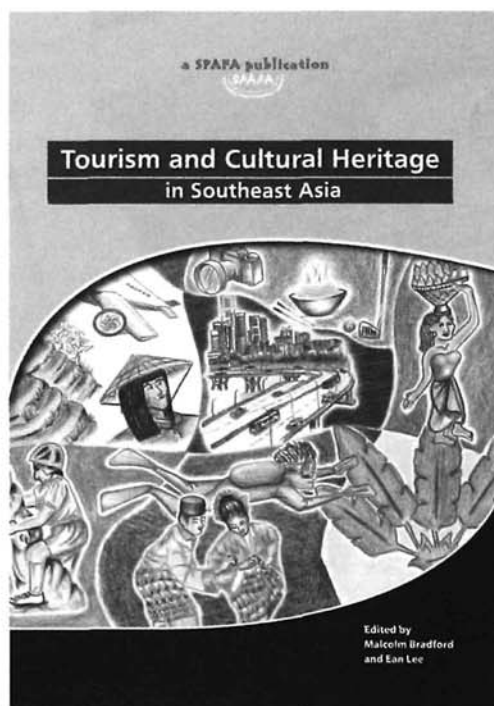
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Ruem An Re: its Evolution

Bhagawin Chantong

Introduction

The ethnic Khmer community in Surin province has a variety of folk genres, especially those pertaining to singing and dancing, which are original and unique. Despite the influences of foreign cultures, its indigenous language, music, melody, singing and dancing have remained relatively unaffected. Load An Re is an example of such a unique folk genre in which anyone can participate. It is a tradition revised and improved in its standard form, re-named Ruem An Re (Pestle Dance), that is performed during the fifth month of the calendar. It was and has been presented alongside the annual Elephant Festival since 1960.

Load An Re ('Load' means hopping and 'An Re' means pestle) refers to traditional folk plays which are not based on standard choreography. It is enacted specifically during the Songkran New Year festival (Kae Jaed: water festival) and focuses on free hopping, jumping and improvisation.

Ruem An Re ('Reum' refers to dance; 'An Re' refers to pestle) is a developed form, with standard choreography, of Load An Re. It is marked by set gestures, music accompaniment, a greater number of performers, and appropriate duration to suit the performance context. Currently, the performance is staged during many festivals, and focuses on aesthetics and the act of entering the pestle arena.

Background of Load An Re

Load An Re is a traditional ethnic Khmer folk performance in Surin, a Thai province on the border with Cambodia. There is no historical evidence of its origins; only ancient tales. Public participation is welcome in the event, which is usually held during the easy period after the harvesting season, on the first day of the waning moon during the fifth month.

The dance gestures are informal as leisurely enjoyment is the major objective of the performance, and the musical instruments used for which are a pair of wooden pestles, a pair of wooden supporters, a

Trua (fiddle) and two Skuals (drum). The participant who enters the pestle arena has to display his/her personality, with improvised movements.

As there is no fixed duration for the performance, the dance often takes place through the night. However, tradition dictates that the merry-making dance end its celebration by the fifteenth day.

Beliefs and Functions of Load An Re

Passed down through generations, the belief behind Load An Re is that the dance festivity begins in Kae Jaed month (fifth month) in the day of Tom Thom (greater holiday). The festivity starts and should last for seven days or till the end of the month. Anyone can join in the activity which is held in any household or community.

The villagers visit the temple during the day, so the Load An Re is usually held at night under a full moon and clear sky (it is before the rainy season). According to ancient beliefs, violation of this convention will result in a curse.

During the period of three days during Tom Tuij (lesser holiday) and seven days during Tom Thom, members of the community refrain from all strenuous labour as it is strictly a period of merit-making in the temple and communal activities, such as Ruem Troj, Kan Truem, Jreang, Chuang Chai, Sa Ba, and the bathing of the Buddha's image, as well as water-throwing during the Songkran festival.

The elderly and community leaders would form a troupe that accompanies a dancing group in a parade, make announcements, and sing ballads in and around the village. The lyrics of the songs pertain to merit-making, cessation of work, folklore, and advise against violating tradition, which would lead to the curse of being harmed by tigers when in the forest or by crocodiles when in water. The caution is mainly to ensure full communal participation.

Clearly, Load An Re has the function of binding individuals and community as a whole. The activities not only create conviviality, but also lead to opportunities among the young in seeking spouses. As a function of the collective, it creates the occasion for the whole community to enjoy gregariously after a long year of agricultural labour. On the other hand, Ruem An Re, as it is modified into a classical art form, functions to uphold dramatic virtues.

1. Movement Vocabulary of Load An Re and Ruem An Re

Both Load An Re and Ruem An Re share specific yet common bodily movements. The table below will identify the commonalities shared by both forms. They include: Kom Tam, Ram Kwang, Mai Huang Tua, Karn Jeeb, Jangwa Kao Saak, Karn Song Tua and Kohn Ngon or Sapohk Hak. A brief description is as follows:

i. **Kom Tam** (Curving down). The bending body is the characteristic posture of the performer when entering the pestle, and moving to throbbing rhythms. Sometimes, accidents happen when the performer is inserting his/her leg into the pestle. Performers, therefore, have to curve down to look at the clap of the pestle all the time. In Load An Re, the attention of the performer is directed more towards the throbbing rhythm than the graceful choreography.

ii. **Ram Kwang** (Widened hand gesture). The hand gestures of village performer are located higher than classical style. The great virtue of Ram Kwang is that you can balance your body well.

iii. **Mai Huang Tua** (Free movement). The shoulder, waist, hips and body are left to free manipulation while the rest of the body is weighed down to follow the rhythm in full scale.



Jeeb Kod New



Jeeb Kad New

iv. **Karn Jeeb** (Finger gestures). There are two prevailing styles:

1). **Jeeb Kod New**: The bending of base knuckle of the forefinger which points towards the performer's body, while the other fingers are stretched outward, and the wrist is slightly bent. (picture on the left).

2). **Jeeb Kad New**: The configuration is similar to Jeeb Kod New, but the thumb is folded around forefinger. (picture on the left).

v. **Jangwa Kua Saak** (Entering the pestle). The rhythm of inserting the leg into throbbing area, which is the main highlight of both Load An Re and Ruem An Re. The rhythm is composed of two main categories:

- 1). **Jueng Mui**: Inserting one leg. There is only one pattern to this procedure.
 - 2). **Jueng Piir**: Inserting two legs. There are three patterns: Jueng Piir, Malob Doeng and Kaj Paka.
- vi. **Karn Song Tua** (Body balance). The significance of body balance in both folk forms differs from classical arts style which follows foot pace and gravity. The balance requires a lot more defiance of gravity, particularly so in the Malob Doeng pattern. Here, the performer steps forward on beat 7, bends his body forward on beat 8, transfers his body weight to the back feet immediately before beat 1. His head must maintain a forward bent, while he continues stepping forward until beat 6. The resulting pattern is akin to the natural swaying of the wind-blown leaves of a coconut tree.
- vii. **Kohn Ngon** (Bending hips). This characteristic physical posture of the ethnic Khmer group, bent hips, is influenced by the daily activity of bowing down. Such a posture is, of course, regarded as unorthodox when compared to the formal bearing of the body in classical dance.

Evolution of Ruem An Re

The first modification of Load An Re into a more refined performing art form, and subsequently re-named Ruem An Re, took place in 1952. The first presentation of Ruem An Re was in the Student Arts and Crafts Exhibition held at Suan Kularb College in Bangkok in 1953 during the term of M.L. Pin Malakul Na Ayuthya, then under-secretary of Minister of Education. The next revision was in 1955 for the occasion of honouring the presence of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and the royal family during their visit to the northeastern provinces. Since 1960, Ruem An Re has been introduced as a part of the Elephant Festival.

Four main aspects of the evolution can be traced as follows:

- i. Entering the pestle arena (Jangwa Kua Saak)
- ii. Concept of choreography
- iii. Performers
- iv. Costumes

i. Jangwa Kua Saak

There are essentially two methods of entering the pestle arena: with one or both legs. The following are the variations of entry:

- 1). **Jueng Mui** is the method of inserting one leg into pestle arena in a delicate manner adopted from Load An Re of Wat Sala Loi community. The rhythm was adjusted to synchronize with the music.



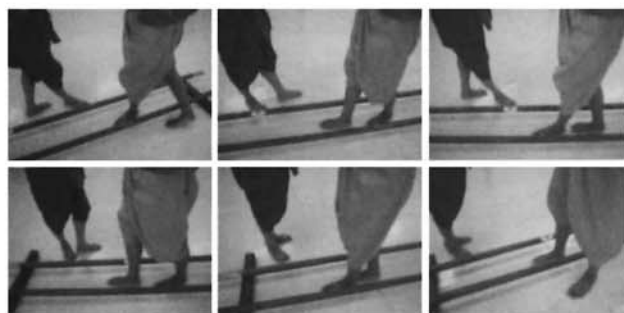
Jueng Mui

- 2). **Jueng Piir** is the method of inserting both legs at the same time, to the quick tempo of Jueng Piir music. The relation between the steps, the clapping and drum tempo therefore need synchronization.



Jueng Piir

- 3). **Mlob Doeng** is the most difficult pattern involving inserting both legs since the performer has to tiptoe both legs across the sticks. The steps were re-invented with the clapping rhythm to make it look more delicate and synchronized.



Malob Doeng

- 4). **Kaj Paka Sapadan** is a term referring to picking flowers (Kaj Paka) as offerings to teachers (Sapadan). The method of inserting both legs, in moderate motion, was invented in 1978.

Overall, the choreography can be arranged as follows: 1) Slow Jueng Piir; 2) Wai Kru (gestures of respect to teachers); 3) Kaj Paka; 4) Jueng Mui; 5) Malob Doeng; and 6) Quick Jueng Piir. The performance often ends with spectacular improvisation, such as Kabal Jangkuang, Bong Snan, and Angaeb Ngueb.



Kaj Paka

ii. Concept of choreography

- 1). **Imitation of human behaviour:** This includes the natural human action or behaviour in daily life, such as walking, running, and so on, taking into account as well that the stimulation from emotions or music causes change and variation in actions.



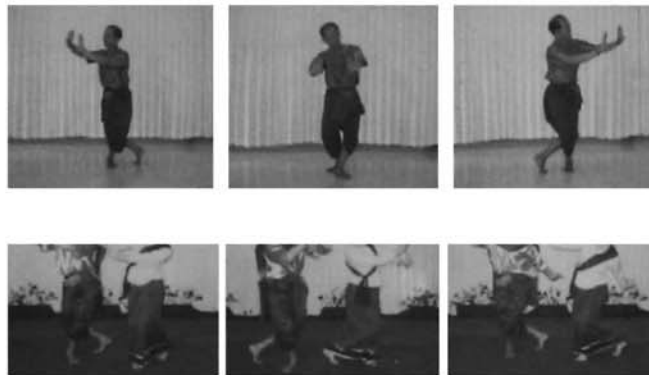
Dai Pad Mek Cher (weaving through branches)



Tamrai Yol Pru (swaying tusks of elephants)

The dance patterns of Load An Re which imitate human actions are 1) Boh Lui: swatting fly. 2) Bong Boi: shading from sun. 3) Dai Pad Mek Cher: weaving through branches. These patterns are revised and adopted into slow Jueng Piir of Ruem An Re, as shown below

- 2). Imitation of animal behaviour. An example is the beginning patterns of Kaj Paka Sapadan, which employs actions derived from the behaviour of elephants, such as Tamrai Yol Pru (swaying tusks) and Tamrai Yol Dai (swaying trunks). These actions of Load An Re take after the elephant which is an icon as well as pride of Surin town.



Kaj Paka Sapadan in Ruem An Re



Tamrai Yol Dai (imitating movements of elephant's trunk)



Jueng Mui in Ruem An Re

- 3). Imitation of nature: this involves the appreciation of the beauty of nature, resulting in the movement of swaying trees or branches. In Malob Doeng (swaying leaves of coconut tree), the hands of performer represent the movement of leaves, as figures below show:



Malob Doeng in Load An Re



Classical Malob Doeng in Ruem An Re

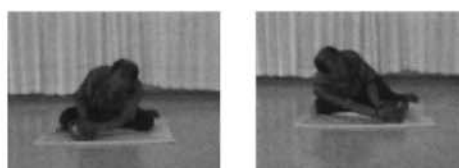
- 4). Imitation of Supernatural Behaviour: one significant ritual of the ethnic Khmer is Ma Muat – a trance ritual for healing the sick. When modern medicine fails, the patient usually relies on Ma Muat. The ritual, supervised by a lady medium called Ma Muat, is marked by offerings, costumes, and music accompaniment. Commencing with Wai Kru (paying homage to the teacher) and inviting the spirit into Ma Muat, the medium then dances to the music in various patterns and tempo, in strong or delicate manner

depending on the emotion of the spirit. The spirit will send messages through the medium to participants or family members of the sick with instructions on what the spirit itself wants or would like them to fulfill.

The Pakum Kru (paying homage to teacher), Pongwil Patuel (rolling cup), Kawued Joll (throwing cup away) and Pan Joel or Joel Ma Muat (trance) from Ma Muat ritual are shown in the figures below:



Pakum Kru in Ruem An Re



Pongwill Patuel in Ma Muat



Pongwill Patuel in Ruem An Re



Kawued Joll in Ma Muat



Kawued Joll in Ruem An Re

Table 1: Ruem An Re choreographic concept and development

Folk patterns	Ruem An Re patterns
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Imitation of human behaviour: Dai Pad Mek Cher, Boh Lui, Bong Boi 2. Imitation of animals: Tamrai Yol Pru, Tamrai Yol Dai. 3. Imitation of nature: Malob Doeng 4. Imitation of Ma Muat: The Pakum Kru, Pongwil Patuel, Kawued Joll and Pan Joel or Joel Ma Muat 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revised into patterns of stepping out of pestle arena 2. Revised into Kaj Paka Sapadan patterns in Kaj Paka song 3. Revised into slow Malob Doeng synchronized with 8 musical beats 4. Revised into additional patterns of paying homage, performed with Kamua Mae song (teacher song)

Table 2: A Comparison of Folk Ruem An Re with Classical Ruem An Re

Folk Ruem An Re	Classic Ruem An Re
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body bent low, wide hand gesture. 2. Bowed knees, slightly stretched, bent hips. 3. Each ending pattern set to rhythm of drum. 4. Gestures concentrate on concept of patterns rather than gracefulness. 5. Delicate pacing. 6. In Jueng Mui pattern, the slanted head follows upwards Karn Jeeb (see page 37) in front of the leg. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open face, stretched body, hand curved at eyebrow level for female and at temple level for men. 2. Slightly bowed knee, body torsion, slanting and flexible, following steady clapping. 3. Each ending pattern synchronized with musical beat. 4. Gestures concentrate on gracefulness rather than concept. 5. Pacing follows classical patterns. 6. In Jueng Mui pattern, the slanted head follows high moving hand in front of the leg.

iii. Performers

In the past, Load An Re was enacted only by women. The men were spectators, occasionally dancing near the pestle arena to make advances to the women. Traditionally, this paves the way for the

young to become acquainted with the opposite sex, leading to courtship and consequently, marriage.

After its refinement as Ruem An Re, male performers were included, especially in the three patterns of stepping into the pestle arena; namely, Jueng Mui, Jueng Piir, Malob Doeng as well as improvisation in the last session. The first presentation in 1950 was the first time that four male performers participated in all sessions whereas the others were women dressed in male costumes.

In 1955, in front of His Majesty's Royal Presence, all of the performers were female except for one in the last session of improvisation. The woman performer playing the male role had to dress in male costumes, such as round-neck shirt, shoulder loincloth, Joeng Krabehn (cloth around waist), etc..

At the Elephant Festival in Tha Tum district, in 1960, twenty-five pairs of male and female performers participated in the Ruem An Re, and this has become the standard composition since.

iv. Costumes

Load An Re costumes comprise mostly of silk shirts and silk tube-skirts of the best quality. In Ruem An Re, the costumes are revised from formal wear made of local silk, accompanied by ornamentation.

1). Female costumes

The Sampuad Hoel skirt, which is costly and the best, can be categorised under two types: Hoel Pabow and Hoel Tongkoh. The shirt is usually one with round neck, tight shape and plain colour – pink, green, lac, indigo or white. It is worn with a plain-coloured Chanood Lerk (shawl) wrapped around the right shoulder, that ends in a bow-tie shape at the edge at the left waist. The ornament, Jaarr (silver breast chain) wraps around the left shoulder and over the shawl on right shoulder. Kajorr (silver earring) or Takau Raya (golden chandelier earring) are shown in the figures below.



Jaarr



Kajorr



Takau Raya

Table 3: Overall Comparison of Load An Re with Ruem An Re

Load An Re	Ruem An Re
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Held on the annual Kae Jaed festival or the fifth month from the first day of waning moon or Tom Thom (greater holiday). 2. No formal choreography, but it focuses particularly on stepping into the pestle arena. 3. The step patterns are improvised. 4. Miscellaneous music, except the song for paying homage. 5. The pestle-clapping patterns differ in each household or community. 6. No fixed costumes. 7. Woman performers except during the last session. 8. No set duration. 9. No fixed musical instruments: 1 Trua, 2 Skuals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The performance is in conjunction with the annual Elephant Festival. 2. The step patterns are specifically created and set. 3. The patterns are arranged in this order: Kaj Paka, Jueng Mui, Malob Doeng and Jueng Piir. 4. Each song has a corresponding choreography. 5. The pestle-clapping has five distinct patterns. 6. Fixed costumes of formal styles for male and female. 7. Male and female performers are paired up, with at least four couples. 8. Fixed duration of not over thirty minutes. 9. Fixed musical instruments: 1 Pii Slai, 1 Trua (could be more), 1 Pii Aw, 2 Skuals and other percussion.

2). Male costumes

Joeng Krabehn. A long cloth is wrapped around the waist and fan-folded along its edges. The folded portion is passed between the legs and hitched at the back waist. The cloth is silk-woven with double-thread and each thread is of a different colour, such as the combination of black and green to create luminosity. The silk shirt is of a plain colour, with round neck and short-hand breast slit with one button at the end placed inside Joeng Krabehn. There are two pieces of loincloth – one wrapped around the waist and the other around both shoulders, with both ends hanging.

The Ruem An Re costume, which every performer must possess, is regarded as a unique ethnic Khmer identity in Surin. It is inexpensive as it is a household or heritage item.

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Female and male costumes

Reyum: Promoting the Arts and Culture of Cambodia

Founded in 1998 (by Ly Daravuth and Ingrid Muan), the Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the research, preservation, and promotion of traditional and contemporary Cambodian arts and culture. Activities conducted by Reyum are free and open to the public. Through exhibitions, events, and publications, Reyum aims to stimulate an exchange of ideas, while fostering creative expressions and encouraging further research. The institute is located across the street from the Royal University of Fine Arts and the National Museum of Cambodia in Phnom Penh, and offers a space as a point of encounter for students, scholars, residents, expatriates and foreign visitors.



Entrance to Reyum

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Training at the institute

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- Music concerts
- Film screenings
- Lectures



Publications

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Reyum focuses on two areas of publishing: general interest books in conjunction with its research and exhibition projects; quality Khmer language books for children, through a partnership with the Kasumisou Foundation.

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The Reyum art school is funded by a generous grant from the Kasumisou Foundation.

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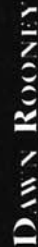


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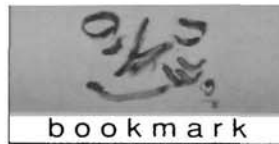
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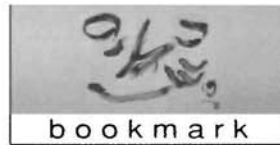
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Sawasdee. A Monthly magazine published by
Thai Airways International Public Company Ltd.,
Tel. (662) 331-9690,
E-mail : thailand@emphasis.net
ISSN 0251-7418

National Library of Australia News. Published
monthly by National Library of Australia Council,
Publication Branch, National Library of Australia,
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia
Tel. (02) 6262 1593 Fax: (02) 6273 4493
Website: www.nla.gov.au
E-mail: mbush@nla.gov.au

American Libraries. The magazine of the
American Library Association is published monthly

except bimonthly June/July by American Library
Association, ALA, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago,
IL 60611, USA
Tel: 800-545-2433 ext. 5108
Website: www.ala.org
E-mail: membership@ala.org

The Journal of the Siam Society is a forum for
original research and analysis. Published yearly
by The Siam Society, under Royal Patronage,
131 Sukhumvit Soi 21 (Asoke),
Bangkok 10110 Thailand.
Tel: (662) 6616470-7 Fax: (662) 2583491
Website: <http://www.siam-society.org>
E-mail: info@siam-society.org

Humanities Diliman is published semi-annually
(June & December) by the Research
Dissemination and Utilization Office, Office of the
Vice Chancellor for Research and Development,
University of the Philippines Diliman, Lower
Ground Flr., Phivolcs Bldg. C.P. Garcia Ave.,
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Portuguese, Russian, Bahasa Indonesia and
German. India Perspectives published by The
Ministry of External Affairs, India. Editorial
contributions and letters should be addressed
to the Editor, India Perspectives, 149 'A' Wing,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001.
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Prof. John Miksic (*Southeast Asian Studies Programme,
National University of Singapore*)

The main theme of this masterclass will be the study of ancient urban sites. Prof. Miksic will discuss strategies for fieldwork, and techniques for survey and excavation, which he and his students have used on ancient city sites in Java, Singapore, Burma, and Cambodia. Attention will be given to two specific techniques, Energy Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence (EDXRF) of ceramics, glass, and metals, and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of human skeletal materials. In addition, he will touch upon the link between research design and theory building.

Local Organizer:

IIAS in cooperation with the Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University

Featured speakers:

Dr Ian Glover (*University College London, UK*)

Dr Bion Griffin (*University of Hawai'i, USA*)

Dr Pierre-Yves Manguin (*L'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient
in Paris, France*)

IIAS invites last year Master's and PhD students from the Netherlands, Europe and Asia to apply. Students are expected to provide a description of their research interests and to prepare data and questions received from the organizers one month prior to the masterclass. To guarantee quality and the exchange of knowledge, the number of participants will be limited.

Accepted students may participate free of charge. Post-doctoral scholars and professional archaeologists may participate by registering and paying a fee of € 50.

For further information:

www.iias.nl/ancienturbanism

Deadline for registration:

1 December 2004

Registration and Information:

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Vietnamese woman gathering snails as
a means of income