

การฟื้นฟูนาฏศิลป์กัมพูชาหลัง พ.ศ. 2522



นางสาวสุน แปน

ศูนย์วิทยพัทยาการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา (สหสาขาวิชา)

บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2551

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

THE REVIVAL OF CAMBODIAN CLASSICAL DANCE AFTER 1979



Ms. Hun Pen

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Southeast Asian Studies

Interdepartmental Program

Graduate School

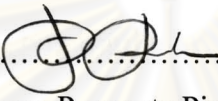
Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2008

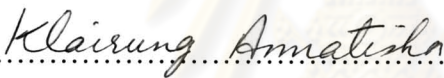
Copyright of Chulalongkorn University


Thesis Title THE REVIVAL OF CAMBODIAN CLASSICAL
DANCE AFTER 1979
By Miss Hun Pen
Field of Study Southeast Asian Studies
Thesis Principal Advisor Assistant Professor Theera Nuchpam, Ph.D.


Accepted by the Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree

 Dean of the Graduate School
(Associate Professor Pornpote Piumsomboon, Ph.D.)

THESIS COMMITTEE

 Chairman
(Klairung Amratisha, Ph.D.)

 Thesis Principal Advisor
(Assistant Professor Theera Nuchpam, Ph.D.)

 External Member
(Duangden Boonpok, Ph.D.)

ศูนย์วิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

สุน แปน : การฟื้นฟูนาฏศิลป์กัมพูชาหลัง พ.ศ.2522 (THE REVIVAL OF CAMBODIAN CLASSICAL DANCE AFTER 1979) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ผศ. ดร. ธีระ นุชเปียม, 100 หน้า.

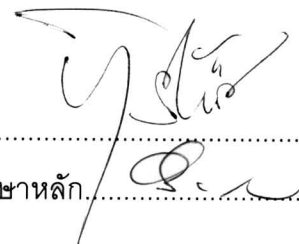
วิทยานิพนธ์เรื่อง “การฟื้นฟูนาฏศิลป์กัมพูชาหลัง พ.ศ. 2522” เป็นการศึกษาวิวัฒนาการของนาฏศิลป์กัมพูชาตั้งแต่คริสต์ศักราชที่ 1 จนถึงปัจจุบัน โดยมีจุดเน้นที่ยุคหลังสมัยเขมรแดง วัตถุประสงค์สำคัญของวิทยานิพนธ์คือ การให้ความกระจ่างเกี่ยวกับบุคคล กลุ่มพลัง และเหตุการณ์ที่มีส่วนหล่อหลอมการรื้อฟื้นนาฏศิลป์กัมพูชาหลังจากที่ต้องเกือบสูญสลายไปในช่วง พ.ศ. 2518-2522 ในการศึกษาจากแง่มุมทางสังคม วัฒนธรรม ประวัติศาสตร์ และการเมืองของศิลปะแขนงนี้ วิทยานิพนธ์มีเป้าหมาย 2 ประการ ได้แก่ การศึกษาลักษณะของการฟื้นฟูในช่วงสมัยปัจจุบัน และศึกษาพิจารณาสิ่งท้าทายบางประการที่นาฏศิลป์ต้องเผชิญ ในการใช้วิธีการศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพด้วยการสัมภาษณ์นักรำที่มีชีวิตรอดจากสมัยเขมรแดง รวมทั้งการทบทวนเอกสารทางวัฒนธรรมและสื่อต่างๆ ผู้ศึกษาพบว่า การฟื้นฟูครั้งนี้เป็นผลมาจากการสนับสนุนของผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียหลากหลาย ที่สำคัญที่สุดคือ นักรำนั่นเอง ซึ่งได้ทุ่มเทกำลังกายและความทรงจำเชิงสร้างสรรค์ที่นำไปสู่การรื้อฟื้นการรำในรูปแบบดั้งเดิมขึ้นมา ส่วนที่มีความสำคัญรองลงไปก็คือชนชั้นสูงที่ตลอดช่วงสมัยในประวัติศาสตร์ของกัมพูชาได้ให้ความสนใจเรื่องการอนุรักษ์และฟื้นฟูศิลปะแขนงนี้มาโดยตลอด อย่างไรก็ตาม หลังจากที่ได้รับภารกิจฟื้นด้วยพลังทรัพยากรทั้งที่เป็นบุคคลและสถาบันแล้วนาฏศิลป์กัมพูชาก็ต้องเผชิญกับสิ่งท้าทายอย่างใหม่ในปัจจุบัน ในช่วงทศวรรษที่ผ่านมานาฏศิลป์ได้ประสบกับกระบวนการทำให้เป็นสินค้าอย่างหนึ่ง ซึ่งเป็นผลโดยตรงมาจากการขยายการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างชาติและความกดดันด้านอื่นๆ ของโลกาภิวัตน์ ผลกระทบของโลกาภิวัตน์ที่มีต่อการใช้ประโยชน์ รูปแบบและหน้าที่ของนาฏศิลป์สะท้อนการทำท้าวอย่างใหม่ที่เผชิญประชาชนกัมพูชาในช่วงที่พวกเขาต้องต่อสู้เพื่ออนุรักษ์รูปแบบทางศิลปะที่เป็นส่วนสำคัญของอัตลักษณ์ของชาติไว้

สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา

ปีการศึกษา 2551

ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก



4989514020: MAJOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

KEYWORDS: CAMBODIA, CLASSICAL DANCE, REVIVAL, KHMER ROUGE, PERFORMING ARTS, GLOBALIZATION, CIVILIZATION, NATIONAL IDENTITY, CULTURE, PRESERVATION, COMMODIFICATION

HUN PEN: THE REVIVAL OF CAMBODIAN CLASSICAL DANCE AFTER 1979. THESIS PRINCIPAL ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. THEERA NUCHPIAM, PH.D., 100 pp.

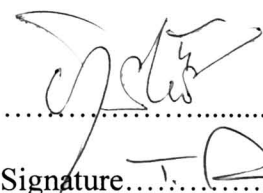
The Revival of Cambodian Classical Dance After 1979 explores the evolution of classical dance dating from the first century to the present day, with an emphasis on the post-Khmer Rouge period. The essential objective of this research is to clarify the actors, forces, and events that shaped the reconstruction of classical dance after its demise during the 1975 – 1979 period. In tracing the socio-cultural, historical, and political roots of this art form, the thesis has a two-fold objective: to study the nature of the revival in the modern day period and to examine some of the contemporary challenges facing classical dance. Using qualitative methods of direct interviews of dancers from the Khmer Rouge period, as well as a review of cultural documents and media, the author finds that this revival was due to the support of a wide variety of stakeholders. The most important of these has been the dancers themselves, who have contributed their energies and creative memories to the restitution of the original dance forms. Of secondary importance are the ruling elites who throughout Cambodian history have taken an interest in preserving or restoring classical dance. Having been resurrected with the power of human and institutional resources, however, Cambodian classical dance is facing another challenge today. Classical dance has in the past decade experienced a commodification which is a direct result of an increase in international tourism and other pressures of globalization. The impact of globalization on the utility, form, and function of classical dance represents the next challenge facing the Khmer people as they struggle to preserve this important part of their national identity.

Field of Studies Southeast Asian Studies

Student's Signature

Academic Year 2008

Principal Advisor's Signature.....



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of many people and organizations. I would like to thank first and most importantly my parents for their invaluable kindness, wisdom, and guidance both during my thesis and throughout my career and life. In addition to my parents, I must also mention my three wonderful sisters: Hun Nearyroth, Hun Peakneary, and Hun Chanpey for their generosity and encouragement at many times during this challenging period. To Tucker McCravy I am grateful for his caring support.

It should be noted that without the financial sponsorship from the Asian Cultural Council and the coordinating efforts of Mrs. Cecily D. Cook, I would not have been able to undertake this research. In terms of my career as a classical dancer, I am blessed to have been a student of Master Chea Samy, who has shaped and molded me into who I am today. This thesis is dedicated to her memory. I must also express my thanks to the kind cooperation of my key informants: Sot Samon, Em Theay, Ros Kong, Sing Somadocho, Chao Veasna, and Pum Bunchanroth.

I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Duangen Bookpok, Chairman and Dr. Klairung Amratisha, for all their suggestions toward the improvement of my work. Finally, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my advisor, Professor. Dr. Theera Nuchpieam who has given me his continuous counsel and wisdom throughout this entire process.

CONTENTS

Abstract (Thai).....	iv
Abstract (English).....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Photographs.....	ix
Glossary.....	xi
Chapter I - Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Objectives / Research Question.....	7
1.3 Hypothesis.....	7
1.4 Significance.....	8
Chapter II – Brief History of Cambodian Classical Dance.....	9
2.1 Funan Period (first – sixth century A.D.).....	10
2.2 Angkor period.....	11
2.3 Dance Survival During King Ponhayat.....	13
2.4 The Reign of King Norodom.....	16
2.5 Dance during 1906, King Sisowath (1904-1928).....	17
Chapter III – Classical Dance in Modern Cambodia.....	22
3.1 Classical Dance During King Sihanouk’s Period (1941 to 1970).....	22
3.2 Classical Dance During Revolutionary Period (1970 to 1975).....	28
Chapter IV – The Revival of Classical Dance After 1979.....	37
4.1 First Wave of Revival Work (1980 to 1991).....	37

4.2. Re-institutionalization (1991 to 1993).....	49
4.3. The Problem of Rebuilding (1994 – Present)	54
Chapter V – Cambodian Classical Dance in the age of Globalization.....	62
5.1 The Place of Classical Dance in the Age of Globalization.....	62
5.2 Regional Versus Global Culture and Classical Dance.....	71
Chapter VI - Conclusion	76
References.....	83
Bibliography	85
Biography.....	89



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Picture 1	Female dancer made of terra cotta discovered at <i>Wat Kumnou Angkorbury</i> , Takeo (from Pich Tum Kravil 2001)	11
Picture 2	Hanuman made of terra cotta discovered at <i>Wat Kumnou Angkorbury</i> , Takeo (from Pich Tum Kravil 2001)	11
Picture 3	Dancers dressed in male classical dance costume during King Ang Doung's period	16
Picture 4	Students training in classical dance in the royal palace at the Chan Chaya pavilion	27
Picture 5	Students training in classical dance in the royal palace at the Chan Chaya pavilion	27
Picture 6	Master Soth Samon training the giant role with the female students in the royal palace at the Chan Chaya pavilion	28
Picture 7	Master Scholar Chheng Phon	41
Picture 8	The generation of dance students in 1990 practicing the lexicon of 4,500 dance movements at the theater of Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh	48
Picture 9	Master Chea Samy teaching dance to her pupils at the Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh	48
Picture 10	Master Chea Samy dressing the crown for her pupil for the performance of golden mermaid at the Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh	49
Pic. 11-13	Master Chea Samy and her pupil dressing in golden mermaid at the Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh	55
Picture 14	The first generation students of the B.A of Choreographic Arts and Directing at the Royal University of Fine Arts	57
Picture 15	Lecture about the classical dance being given at the Center for Culture and Vipassana	68
Picture 16	The performance of <i>L'histoire est bleue</i> in front of Angkor Wat complex in 2005	75

ABBREVIATIONS

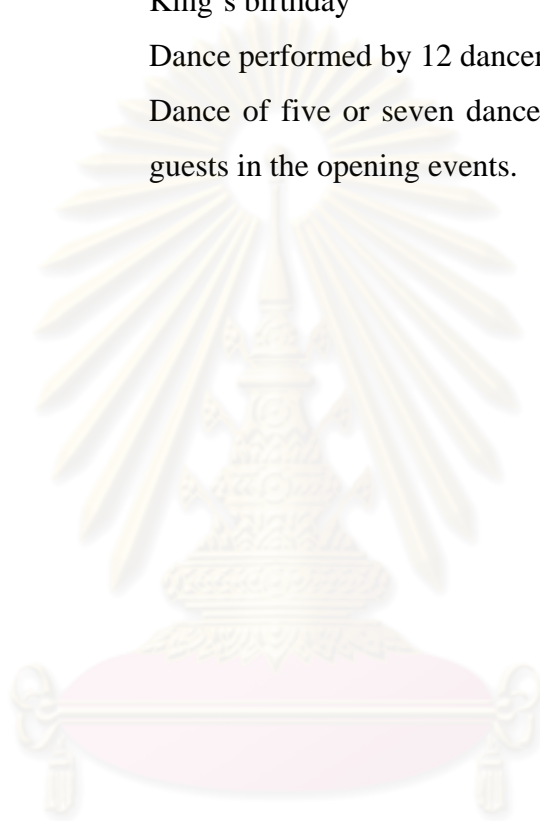
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CGDK	Coalition of Government of Democratic Kampuchea
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
DRK	Democratic Republic of Kampuchea
FUNCINPEC	Royalist United National Front for a Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GRUNK	Government Royal d'Union National de Kampuchea
KCP	Kampuchea Communist Party
KPNLF	Khmer People's National Liberation Front
KPRP	Khmer People's Revolutionary Party
KR	Khmer Rouge
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PNGC	Provisional National Government of Cambodia
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
RUFA	Royal University of Fine Arts
SOC	State of Cambodia
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

GLOSSARY

Apsara Dance	Created by Queen Kossamak and other scholars and dance masters in 1962
Cha Chon Cha	Rhythm made by mouth which dancers use when there is no Pean Peat music to accompany the dance
Channchaya Pavilion	Also known as the 'Moonlight Pavilion', serves as a venue for the royal dancers, as a venue for the king to address the crowds and as a place to hold state and royal banquets
Phochani Pavilion	An open hall originally constructed as a classical dance theater
Chatomuk Conference Hall	Used for conferences, theater performances or other official events for the government
Chu Chai Dance	A dance performed to admire the period of adolescence
Damnaktaksun Pearum	A place where the dancers lived with their dance masters during 1960s
Golden Mermaid Dance	An episode of Reamaker
Mahaboros Khmer:	Chronicle of Khmer history which describes about the leaders who served the country.
Mitt	Means “friend or comrade”, a term which was used to address someone during the Khmer Rouge regime
Muni Mekhala:	Dance with two female performers - female role and giant role – performed to teach about ignorance and knowledge
Old People	People who originally lived in the villages before the forced evacuations of the Khmer Rouge in 1975
Pin Peat	A music orchestra that was attached to the sacred ceremony and also used to accompany the classical dance performances
Samput Changkbven	Piece of cloth about 2.5 or 3.0 meters long that dancers wear on their lower body for dance training

Samput Silk	Skirt made by silk
Sbeiy	A piece of cloth that is draped over the left shoulder
Ta Yae	A sacred dance performed for the religious ceremonies, especially to pray for peace, security or happiness when the country is in times of disaster.
Tang Tok	King's birthday
Tep Monorom	Dance performed by 12 dancers as the finale of a show.
Wishing dance	Dance of five or seven dancers performed to welcome guests in the opening events.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This art form is the important element which reflects the glory of Khmer civilization. The arts are often seen as a reflection of a society's political, economic, and religious state, as well as its conflict.

Scholar and professor. Director Hun Sarin

1.1 Background

The civilization of Angkor is the pride of the Khmer people, who have always found their sense of identity in the magnificence of this kingdom. Of the thousands of stone carvings on the bas-reliefs, many of them focus on the beauty of Khmer classical dance, heralding it as the quintessence of Khmer civilization. In terms of foreign interest in Cambodia, we can usually categorize it into curiosity about three things: Angkor Wat, Cambodian classical dance, and the Khmer Rouge. For most Cambodians, however, Khmer civilization is epitomized by the wonders of Angkor Wat. In addition, classical dance plays a critical role as a cultural artifact of Khmer civilization. The verities of celestial dance on the bas-relief of the temple architecture show the various forms of Khmer arts. Therefore, Khmer classical dance is one of the major manifestations of the Khmer civilization. As I will mention in the next chapter, there are 1,600 dancers and 3,000 Apsara figures on the wall of Angkor Wat and other temples which demonstrate the human resources devoted to this art. Today, some of those figures are missing. For thousands of years, this art form was a type of worship with close links to the ruling king and the temple. The dancers themselves were considered messengers between heaven and earth. Classical dance and other art forms have faced many difficult stages throughout the political history of Cambodia. If we examine the history of classical dance, what has been an important change through the times is its function and virtue. In ancient times, sacred dance was performed for ritual ceremonies to help the country when it faced difficulties as well as to worship

the king. The performances originally belonged to court rituals conducted in the palace to which ordinary people had no access. In terms of virtue, the dancers' costumes and make up symbolized purity and peacefulness while the smiling facial expressions of the dancers conveyed notions of compassion, love, and forgiveness. Sacred or classical dance's near disappearance during the ancient Brahminic cult around the 14th century brought about the dispersion of the sacred dancers attached to the numerous Sivaistic and Vishnuistic temples. These temples soon became deserted as the years when by and classical dance tradition continued only because it fulfilled a social need, not because it reflected Brahmanic cult practice. Originally, sacred dance was created to perform the sacred ceremonies according to the Brahminic cult and was meant to serve the gods. This sacred dance was performed in ritual ceremonies in Brahminic cult and to entertain the king as he was considered at that time a god. When disasters struck the country - war, drought, or famine, the purpose of the sacred dance was to ask for the blessings of the gods – peace, happiness and prosperity for the people. Yet, Brahmanism was replaced by Buddhism in the reign of King Jayavarman VII (1181-1218). At that time, the status of classical dancers as sacred slaves or earthly wives of the powerful gods was still retained. Furthermore, sacred dance remained true to its essence and origins.

During the French rule, the function of classical dance evolved; at present performances are staged for the public and a limited number of innovations have been introduced to revive the ancient Khmer dance tradition. Some of the traditional stories in classical dance were revised and new themes were adapted to the historical period or events. There were some original dances which were recreated with new themes depicting the 1980s and the relations among Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam as well as the glories of Marxism and Leninism. Dances in the present day also depict the interactions between foreigners and Cambodians. Despite these changes, the essence and form of classical dance have been preserved, but some of the soul has been lost. Why is the soul of classical dance so important if the techniques are still alive? What are the forces that can possibly destroy the soul of dance? What do scholars agree the soul or essence of Cambodian classical dance?

Classical dance is one of the aspects of cultural heritage which Cambodia considers a national treasure. This dance form contains the immutable lexicon of 4,500 basic dance movements which form the basis of a repertoire consisting of about 40 dance-Dramas and about 60 dance piece sequences. There are four main characters in Cambodian classical dance. They are: Yeak (Giant role), Neay Rong (male role), Neang (female role) and Svar (monkey role). It is traditionally performed by women for all four roles but the monkey role was suggested to be performed by men instead of women in the 1960s by Queen Kossamak. This art form has been transmitted one generation to the other by memories without interruption for more than one hundred years. It has today acquired international prestige due to its antiquity and extremely refinement. Classical dance has been conserved throughout a century of remarkable changes, especially due to Her Majesty the Queen MohaKhsat Tayani Kossamak Nearyrath who attends to the respect of the traditions. According to our knowledge, there were at least 21 dances and about 11 dance-drama pieces created during 1950-2007; others were lost during that period.

Classical dance, nearly destroyed during the Khmer Rouge period, was the expression of nearly one thousand years of cultural refinement which reached its zenith during the Angkorian period. As history clearly shows, most art forms were under siege during the Khmer Rouge period; classical dance was no exception. classical dance was targeted by the Khmer Rouge as a symbol of the monarchy and therefore something to be eliminated. In the face of the purges by the Khmer Rouge, classical dance faced near extinction in Cambodia. All texts pertaining to the choreography of dances were burnt or destroyed, and the only surviving relics of the art form were the masters themselves.

After the fall of Khmer Rouge January 7, 1979, classical dance was promoted and seen not only during the visits of international officials, but also for the common people of all ages in cities and remote areas. At the present time, classical dance can be seen in the public, at hotels, restaurants, as well as on special occasions and at the national and international festivals. Classical dance nowadays has spread in popularity

throughout the country especially in tourism areas, and it is no longer seen only as a sacred ritual but as a form of entertainment.

As the potential for revival derived from the strength of human resources, it was necessary in the post Khmer Rouge period to encourage and capacitate these living testimonials to an art form – the dancers themselves (*who numbered less than one dozen*) so that they could revive or resuscitate the lost art of Cambodian classical dance. As this thesis will show, however, the task was not easy. The word ‘revival’ itself implies a resurrection of a tradition, custom, or practice in its original form. As I will argue, however, this was not the case with Cambodian classical dance. Due to lapses in memory and the complete devastation of all scripts, a certain portion of the legacy was lost to oblivion. I would estimate that approximately 90% was able to be resurrected, and creativeness accounted for the remaining 10% which was lost. It is important to recall that the fixed nature of Cambodian dance vocabulary allowed the masters to creatively and collectively reconstitute the dances without trespassing the boundaries of the art form.

Moreover, a ‘revival’ took a very different tone in modern times. As of late, Cambodian classical dance has enjoyed a renaissance, particularly in the last eight years. Some of the renaissance has, however, been characterized by stylistic and costume innovations in Cambodian classical dance. Modern day artists and troupe directors have taken liberties in improving costumes, choreography, as well as the composition of the dances themselves. While remaining faithful to and drawing upon the immutable lexicon of Cambodian dance moves, these artists have managed to transform certain classical dances for the benefit of local and international audiences. It is said that these innovations are an effort to maintain the relevance and popularity of the classical art form. It is important to remember that the achievements, the subsequent decline, and the latter development and innovation stages are all interrelated.

There is a lack of understanding of the significance of classical dance including its meaning and its role as well as its revival and survival, because there

have been only a few studies done by researchers. The aim of this thesis is to study the revival of Cambodian classical dance. This thesis will seek to focus mainly on the period after the Khmer Rouge 1979 until the present time. It should be noted that this study makes no attempt to delve into the political component of classical dance but to talk about the facts concerning the revival of the classical dance. The revival of classical dance will focus on the history and struggle of Cambodian classical dance in the post Khmer Rouge period, with special focus on the revival work and dance in contemporary Cambodian society. I will endeavor to provide a brief outline of the various chapters in order for the reader to understand how I plan to approach this complex and important topic.

First, however, a definition of the term 'classical dance' in the context of Cambodia is necessary. As any devotee of classical dance or cultural politics will know, the term 'classical dance' itself can connote any one of multiple meanings depending on the political and historical period being referenced. Cambodia classical dance is known by various names - sacred dance, Royal Ballet or Court Dance, *Lakhon Lueng* or Khmer classical dance.

The term 'sacred dance' was introduced to Cambodia during the beginning of the Brahminic cult period. The term "sacred dance" was changed during the French rule period to *robam preah reacha trop* or *lakhon lueng*, which literally means "dance of royal wealth." It was known by this name up until 1970 and the *Lon Nol* regime when it once again changed its name to *robam kbach boran Khmer*, which means "Khmer classical dance." It is important to note that this term does not make any reference to the royal court. "Khmer classical dance" remained in use during the reign of the People's Republic of Kampuchea in 1980s. In 1993, after the United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) organized general elections in May with the result of two prime ministers, the term *robam Kbach boran Khmer* was changed back to Royal Ballet of Cambodia. However, on November 7 2003, the Royal Ballet of Cambodia was proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. In the literature it was listed both as the royal ballet of Cambodia and also Khmer classical dance.

To move on to the chapter outline, I begin with the first and move through the sixth chapter. The first chapter will underline the significance of this study. It will briefly engage in methodology, as well as the limitations inherent in this research study. Chapter One will also provide detail on the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two will paint a brief history of Cambodia classical dance with the aim of giving insight and understanding to the reader. This history will be divided into two periods: the ancient time and the period of King Sisovath's rule from 1904 to 1928.

Chapter Three will delve into an account of the dance during King Sihanouk's period and the revolutionary period 1970. It will discuss how the artists – specifically the dancers – managed to survive during the cruelty of the Khmer Rouge regime. Again I will look at two periods: the Sihanouk period and the Revolutionary period.

Chapter Four moves on to the revival of Cambodian classical dance after the Khmer Rouge, in the period from 1979 to 1990s. It will attempt to analyze the revival of classical dance, and to note the importance of how the revival work was done during that time. Of especial note here is the treatment of the artists by the regime and how the artists were for the most part placed under the patronage of the Royal court. I will try to explore the motivation and impetus for the revival of classical dance and its accompanying innovations, as well as some of the challenges and obstacles faced in this movement.

Chapter Five marks an important turning point in the history of classical dance. Here I explore the recovery of the monarchy from 1993 to 2007 and the accompanying 'survival' as well as decline of Cambodian classical dance. A description of the evolution of classical dance within the context of globalization will be carried out here. I divide it into two parts: the place of classical dance in globalization and the tension between regional and global culture vis-à-vis classical dance. The final chapter concludes with an overview, and raises some important questions as well as offering some critical recommendations for the future of

Cambodian classical dance.

Concerning methodology, the author relied on a combination of informal personal interviews, data extracted from primary sources such as cultural documents (films, government publications, etc.), notes from seminars by scholars in the field, and the author's own personal experiences. As a classical dancer myself since the age of 5, I have attempted to interweave my own personal experience, recollections, and knowledge with the narrative of this thesis. In the collection of sources for this project, the author did not find much literature available on the revival of Cambodian classical dance. Therefore, this thesis has had to rely primarily on the sources mentioned above. The limitations of this approach, of course, may be the inherent errors of subjectivity as well as the potential dangers of drawing inferences from a limited data set of interviews. Nonetheless, the author feels the findings that have been presented are robust. It is my hope that the reader will take from this thesis some valuable insights and information about the revival of Cambodian classical dance, a subject of importance for scholars of Cambodian cultural and political history.

1.2 Objectives / Research Question

The main objective of this thesis is to answer the following research question: What are the actors, forces, and events that shaped the reconstruction of classical dance after its demise during the period of 1975 – 1979? I am especially interested in focusing on the development and survival of Cambodian classical dance from 1993 until the present day, including a critical examination of the present challenges facing Cambodian classical dance in the age of globalization.

1.3 Hypothesis

From 1979-1991 Cambodian classical dance underwent both a revival and a preservation phase. There have been significant developments in Cambodian classical dance since 1991 that are related to political and economic factors and the globalization era. My hypothesis is that a number of stakeholders – Cambodian

government, people, scholars, but most importantly the dancers themselves, were responsible for the revival of classical dance.

1.4 Significance

Hopefully, this thesis can help researchers to understand more about the identity and history of Cambodian classical dance as well as the struggle for survival which has relevance to the present status of the art form. It also can be used as an archive for the next generations who wish to learn and know about Cambodia classical dance.



CHAPTER II BRIEF HISTORY OF CAMBODIAN CLASSICAL DANCE

Since Khmer classical dance has played a significant role in Cambodian civilization, Khmer people have always associated the history of classical dance with the Khmer legend of the Hindu Brahman Kuandinya and the Khmer Queen Nagi Soma. In Khmer language, Cambodian people are commonly known as Phreah Thong and Neang Neak while the Chinese recorded, are Hun Tian and Lui Ye. It is believed that Khmer classical dance was influenced by Indian culture in the 1st century. The legend tells that there was an Indian merchant named Kuandinya who arrived in Cambodia under the rule of Nagi Soma during the Funan dynasty in the 1st century. Kuandinya insisted on entering the Kingdom, but the Khmer queen resisted. The two engaged in combat, but the Khmer queen lost the battle. She allowed the Indian merchant to enter the kingdom and settle in the city, and soon afterwards the Khmer queen actually married Kuandinya. According to historians, after the two were married, Kuandinya and Nagi Soma, he became the first king of Funan and the Indian Brahmanism cult was introduced to the Khmer Kingdom.¹ Thus, sacred dance, which is now called classical dance, was created to perform at the sacred ceremonies according to the Brahmanic cult. This legend of history has been transmitted as an oral tradition and therefore cannot be relied upon for accurate information. Furthermore, the complex history of Cambodian classical dance and its interrelation to cultural histories of neighboring countries has in the past been a source of disagreement among scholars. Cultural politics, especially in the context of classical arts, have always been a source of historical dispute among scholars in the region. Hence, it should be noted that this chapter makes no attempt to resolve this disputes. The focus of this chapter is instead to provide a brief history of classical dance and to trace the evolution of dance and its influences on the present day art form.

Cambodia possesses a long and unique cultural history, the product of thousands of years of civilization. While some of this culture is literally carved in

¹ Ly Team Teng, [*Khmer Literature*], (Phnom Penh: Seng Nguon Huot Publishing House, 1960), 1-4. (In Khmer)

stone, other elements are more ephemeral, existing only in the collective memory of the people. Classical dance or Royal Ballet is one of Cambodia's oldest and most sacred art forms (or divine arts), dating back from between the 1st to 6th century (Funan or Norkor Phnom Kingdom).

2.1 Funan Period (first – sixth century A.D.)

Indian civilization penetrated into Cambodian society during the first century of the Christian era. The influence of Indian civilization is not only in religion, architectural construction, and traditions, but also in performing arts. There is no accurate evidence about the birth of sacred dance or classical dance, but scholars have suggested that classical dance may have been born during the Funan era in the 1st century. Archeological evidence of terra cotta dancers dating back to between the 1st and the 6th century supports this claim. These terra cotta female dancers and the monkey figure, Hanuman, holding terra cotta sticks were found at *Wat Kumnou Angkorei Preykabash* in the district of Takeo province. Though these figures were discovered in the 6th century, their origins date back as early as the 1st century. Moreover, according to inscription numbers K557, K600 and K137, found at *Wat Kumnou Angkorei* in the reign of King Jayavarman I (655-681), describe the offering of musicians as well as the “Ballet Girl” dancers to the god Shiva.² Moreover, Sanskrit and ancient Khmer inscriptions unveiled from the reign of King Mahendrarvarman (600 – 616 A.D.), essential sources for understanding Khmer history, religion, tradition, arts, and culture, have revealed that there were musicians, singers, and dancers during that period as well.

² Pich Tum Kravel, *Khmer Dances*, (Phnom Penh: Toyota Foundation, 2001), 35.



Picture 1: Lady female dancer made of Terra cotta discovered at Wat Kumnou Angkorhuri, Takeo (Pich Tum Kravil 2001)



Picture 2: Hanuman made of Terra cotta discovered at Wat Kumnou Angkorhuri, Takeo (Pich Tum Kravil 2001)

These figures - female dancer and monkey dance figures - reflect the strong influence of Indian arts, especially in relation to Hinduism which is believed to have been brought into Cambodia with the Indian Brahman Hun Tean. Further evidence of such a link can be found in the Ramayana Khmer which expresses similar characteristics as Indian epics.

A close scrutiny of the female dancer form in terra cotta reveals that there are differences between this figure and present Cambodian classical dance. One example is the stretching of the two legs with her ankles oriented externally. The figure appears raising her two hands over her head with her left fingers pointed outwardly. Her right fingers are oriented inwardly in parallel with her leg. In contrast, contemporary Khmer classical dance usually expresses these same gestures with curved lines.

2.2 Angkor period

In addition, other evidence proving the existence of two dancing stages can be found at Prah Khan temple, one near the main tower, the dance for entertainment, and the other near prasat Kroab Leak, the place for dedication to the gods. On the

occasion of these ceremonies the Ta Yae dance was usually performed. This dance still remains in name and is performed during the present day to worship the king, in religious ceremonies as well as on special occasions. The inscriptions of Preah Khan reveal that there were 1,000 female dancers who stayed at the temple to dance at the ceremony and worship at the temple. According to Ta Prohm inscription, there were 18 high Buddhist monks, 2,740 servants for managing ceremony, 2,232 assistants and 615 female dancers.³

In the years from 1113-1152, King Soreyavarman II paid homage to the Brahmanic cult and registered this religion to become the state practice. He built Angkor Wat which has numerous bas-reliefs of celestial dancers on the walls that represent the relationship of religious beliefs and sacred dance during that time. Furthermore, in the reign of King Jayavarman VII (1181-1218), there were 1,622 dancers.⁴ Sacred dance was glorified throughout the kingdom. The queen Indradevi, head of Cheaysrey School, directed the sacred dance group to perform stories of Jatakak.⁵ Classical dance was performed for the gods and for religious ceremonies. Present historical accounts tell *us about the* typical day of a dancer in the reign of Jayavarman VII 800 years ago. The 15-year-old apsara, or celestial dancer as Royal Ballet dancers were called, would get up in the middle of the night, put on her ceremonial clothes, elaborate headgear and crown jewels, and join a torchlight procession to the Bayon temple, where she would dance at dawn in a religious ceremony, her bare feet gliding on rose petals strewn over the stones.⁶ It was so important that classical dance maintained its sacred nature and therefore each dancer needed to keep herself pure.

³ Royal Government of Cambodia, *Khmer Classical Dance*, (Phnom Penh: Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and UNESCO, 2007), 15.

⁴ Samrang Kamsan, Un Tem, Sek Bunhouk. *The main concept of Khmer Culture and Development*. (Phnom Penh: Center Culture and Vipassana, 2000), 19. (In Khmer)

⁵ Kravel, 38.

⁶ Loviny Christopher, *The Apsaras of Angkor*, Trans. H.E. Khieu Kanhrith and Sun Heng Meng Chheang, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2003), 42.

Unfortunately, in the thirteenth and fourteen century following the Thai attack of Angkor, the kingdom declined rapidly. Despite the fall of Angkor, classical dance was not completely lost to the Khmers. The art form maintained its own direction and integrity until Preah Bat Ang Doung's reign, at which point the reemergence of Cambodian classical dance had brought a new change of survival and development.

2.3 Dance Survival During King Ponhayat

In the reign of King Ponhayat (1393-1463 A.D.), the female dancers survived and practiced the dances at the palace near the king. King Ponhayat moved his capital from Angkor several times, yet he always brought the dancers along with him. There was, however, no evolution of art during that period. It is commonly believe that that there was a change in naming the female dancers or royal ballet or *Lkhon Luang*.⁷ Based on existing records such as *Mahaboros Khmer*, we know that female dancers were developing their skills well during the reign of the King Ang Chan Raja or Ang Chan I (1516 – 1566 A.D.). He was one of the most powerful kings during the post-Angkor period and built his capital at Lovek. King Ang Chan I paid a great deal of attention to the performing arts, dance, music, and male as well as female dancing art forms. Eventually, he organized art performances to celebrate the honor of high officials who served the country.⁸

After the Lovek period, classical dance always existed in the royal palace and gradually the dancers stopped playing the role of servants to the gods at the temple. During the reign of Prah Raj Samphea, (1629 – 1634 A.D.) the king himself was a famous poet. When he moved his capital from Udong to Koh Khlok, many dancers were brought along with him. Today, there are some younger dance masters who have remained at Kien Svay.

⁷ Kravel, 41.

⁸ Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and UNESCO, 23- 24.

The period of history from 1806 to 1841 in Cambodia was a turbulent one. The kingdom at the time was the lynchpin in a bitter rivalry between neighboring Thailand and Vietnam to wrest power and territory from the Khmer Kingdom. The ruler during this time, King Ang Chan (1806 – 35), was required to appease both Vietnamese and Thai forces, though the former assumed rule over Cambodia after a victorious battle in 1811-12. Two decades later, the Thais invaded again in an attempt to capture Cambodia, but were repelled by the Vietnamese. In 1834 when Ang Chan died, the Vietnamese emperor Ming Mang attempted to make Cambodia a vassal state of Vietnam. His policies and protocols were widely unpopular in Cambodia, however, and a rebellion broke out in 1840. The Thais were shrewd enough to come to Cambodia's side, and the battle raged between the two opposing camps for five years. Eventually the Thais and Vietnamese agreed to a ceasefire and compromise, placing King Ang Duang (son of Ang Chan) on the throne. The latter would be for some years at least required to pay his respects to both Bangkok and Hue.⁹ There is no evidence of classical dance work during this period.

But during the reign of king Ang Duong (1840 – 1859 A.D.), King Andoung himself was an unusual monarch, having spent most of his life in Thailand; he returned to Cambodia in 1841 after having spent nearly twenty-two years in Thailand. Upon his arrival, it was reported that “he found classical dancing on the verge of total disappearance.”¹⁰ It is believed that his power was largely circumscribed by that of the Thai king, who still exercised a great deal of influence in the Cambodian kingdom. As king Ang Duong was mostly concerned with ceremonial and religious duties, it is reported that for this reason he began to busy himself with the restoration of Khmer classical dance. When considering his opinion of classical dance, it is useful to remember that King Ang Doung understood Thai customs much better than Khmer, and was in fact even more fluent in Thai language than Khmer. Concerning

⁹ ASEAN Focus Group,

http://www.aseanfocus.com/publications/history_cambodia.html (Accessed September 15, 2008)

¹⁰ Paul Russell Cravath, “Earth in flower: An historical and descriptive study of the classical dance drama of Cambodia” (PhD diss., U. Of Hawaii, 1987), 144.

the changes to the dance form, they revolved mostly around the attire and costumes. It is interesting to note that one of the most potentially revolutionary changes suggested by the Thai monarch was to allow dancers to perform outside the royal palace. This King Ang Doung did not permit, and thus maintained a tradition that continued through the reign of King Monivong (1929-1941). Turning to the costumes, the most notable change Angdoung made was to formalize the clothing of the dancers so that it was less revealing; it was believed that the semi-nudity of ancient times was “no longer suited to the morales and beliefs of the time.”¹¹ Before Ang Doung’s reign, the costumes were still Angkorean in style, but the costumes the king personally designed were very limiting to the movement of the dancers and “completely changed the appearance of the dancers.”¹² One other important change that King Andoung undertook was to remove all foreign influences from the dance form. In particular the Vietnamese elements were purged. The other changes that King Andoung suggested were relating to the movements, and most are believed to have been borrowed from the Thai court. Ultimately it is suggested that King Andoung’s transformation involved an evolution from semi-nude dancers with static movements to more heavy clothing but more artful choreography. One of the last final renovations in the dance was that King Andoung separated the male dance troupes from the female dance troupes, On the whole, very little is known about this development however. King Andoung is widely credited with giving Khmer dance new life and vigor; and for preparing it for the next period of Khmer history when it was truly to flourish under his successor.

¹¹ Cravath, 150.

¹² Cravath, 151.



Picture 3: Dancer dressing in male classical dance costume during King Ang Doung period.

2.4 The Reign of King Norodom

King Norodom (1859 – 1904), son of King Andoung, who was also educated in Bangkok, presided over the greatest flourishing of Cambodian dance in the modern period. Only children of high officials or dignitaries had the chance to be trained as dancers at the royal palace. The king paid great attention to the training of classical dance, and called upon the best dance masters throughout the country to train young dancers. Most of these dance masters had received titles of Khun, Mam, and Neak Mneang. These classical dancers were obliged to perform for the king or during special ceremonies. Cambodia also became a protectorate of the French during that time (1864). King Norodom has been known for his receptiveness to regional cultures as well as his courting of outside influences. During his early trips to Singapore and Malaysia, he brought back musicians and teachers who were allowed, even as non-Khmer artists, to learn classical dance and perform for the king. It is said that the Burmese and Laos, in particular, thus were able to influence Cambodian classical dance. As the French took control of the Kingdom in 1884, Norodom began to focus more of his attention on classical dance, at the expense of his equally famous court entertainment known as yike (combination of comedy, dances, songs, mimes.)¹³ King Norodom was extremely strict in his control of court dancers, allowing each dancer

¹³ Cravath, 156.

permission to leave only one day per year. At that time there approximately 500 dancers in his troupe, which was divided into 3 groups. King Norodom spent much of his time at court supervising the dancers and paid a great deal of attention to the development of the dance as well as the dancers. It is said that during the time of King Norodom, there was cross-over between the Thais and the Khmers in terms of classical dance traditions. One of King Norodom's most important contributions was the construction of a dance pavilion in the palace in 1866. Another notably expansion during the time was that classical dance began to spread throughout the country – with theaters and performances in Battambang and other provinces. It is believed by dance scholars, however, that the “court dancers represented a standard of form and quality against which secondary traveling troupes measured their own repertoire and style.”¹⁴ Shortly before King Norodom's death, the modern royal troupe staged its ‘first-ever’ full length production of the Ramker. A year later, the King died, and his dancers, “too distressed . . . to continue their dancing” abandoned the Court.¹⁵ Only one fifth of the original dance troupe remained. During King Norodom's time and the period of external foreign influence, the most important evolution of Khmer court dance was its popularization and that it was becoming a cultural tradition and heritage that belonged more to the Cambodian people and less to their king.

2.5 Dance During 1906, King Sisowath (1904-1928)

Subsequently, King Sisowath come to the crowned in the 1904 focused on the reorganization of classical dance and tried to perfect it. In order to ensure the development of classical dance, the king invited the mother of King Sothearos, Khun Than to teach the dance. « Khun Bossaba » - as she was also known - was a good dancer and played an important role in the history of Khmer classical dance. During King Sisowath's journey to France - “*Le voyage de S.M Sisowath, Roi du Cambodge, en France en 1906*”, the King brought along with him a dance troupe of 42 dancers to perform during the Tang Tok ceremony in Marseilles. This was a result of the royal

¹⁴ Cravath, 166.

¹⁵ Cravath, 167.

decree of the palace dated 7th May 1906. Classical dance during that time was *Rabam Preahreachatrup or Lakhon Loung*, which means “Dances of the Royal Wealth.” The performances and dancers were entirely financially supported from the royal palace budget. Performances were given only for members of the Royal court. For instance, they performed during the Tang Tok ceremonies that took place in the Royal palace for three nights and three days and also to welcome the Royal guests and for religious ceremonies as well. Dancers’ living conditions were firmly under the royal palace’s regulations according to the decree of royal palace Chatomuk, Phnom Penh, date 4th May 1906.¹⁶

*Dancers of Rabam Preahreachatrup who wish to resign need to wait until the king returns back from the trip for his majesty’s decision. The authority has been given to Prince Sutteavong for him to make decision to punish with a lawsuit.*¹⁷

For the trip to Marseilles, the dance troupe was supported by the king and the Royal budget, had new costumes and jewelry made. They rehearsed these dances in the Royal palace before departing to France. The regulations for the trip were as follows:

1. *It is hereby ordered that Oukgna Brasear Sak be given the power to direct Rabam Preahreachatrup of the royal palace to Marseilles, on the occasion of the Tang Tok ceremonies for a duration of 5 months: 3 months in France and 2 months for travelling.*
2. *It is hereby ordered that Princes Samphatie be given the power to discipline and watch over dancers and all the female servants of*

¹⁶ l’Okñã Thiounn, [Voyage of his Majesty Sisowath, King of Cambodia, to France, in the year of the hors, 8th of the decade, 3rd year of his rule, corresponding to the occidental year of 1906, Ed. Michel R. Antelme, (Phnom Penh: Éditions de la Bibliothèque Nationale du Cambodge, 2006), 11. (In Khmer)

¹⁷ Thiounn, 11.

Rabam Preahreachatrup. Presentation of the report to Oukgna Brasear Sak for his approval is required.

3. *The dancers of the Rabam Pheahreachatrup are requested to commit their willingness and loyalty to the King in accordance with the tradition and regulations of the Kingdom. Financial support for dance training and salaries will be supported by the king. Dance costumes and dance jewelry shall remain the property of the king. At present, the king has giving the authority to Oukgna Brasear Sak to punish to anyone of you who commits a mistake against the law.¹⁸*

There were more than a hundred dancers in the Royal palace during King Sisowath's reign and the important responsibility of dancers' training was under the supervision of Princess Samphatie. All performance activities of the royal dance troupe during the reign of Sisowath were under the guidance of the palace minister Samdach Chaufea Thinoun, who was also known as Okhna Veang.¹⁹ These dancers were living under the royal household and the management of Princess Samphatie. Their commitment to the royal palace was a condition for entry. Their living conditions were decided according to their status. Chea Samy, who started to enter the royal palace when she was six years old in 1925, was under Princess Samphatie supervision. At that time, the Princess was taking charge to make sure that children received proper training and their basic needs were met.

The performance trip to France was a remarkable success. The French reported how the refined beauty and sophistication of the classical dance revealed to the world Cambodia's glorious civilization. Later on, however, classical dance entered a period of decline. In 1911 the King allowed the dancers to leave the company whenever they wished, and he also encouraged the younger ones to attend school.²⁰ Months later, the *Rabam Preahreachatrup* lost strength and vitality. In

¹⁸ Thiounn, 20-21.

¹⁹ Cravath, 184.

²⁰ C. Meyer, "Royal Cambodian Ballet," *Nokor Khmer 1* (1969), 13.

1922, the King turned eighty six years old, and became burdened with other concerns and did not have the financial means to support classical dance in the Kingdom. This time a small group of dancers gathered together for another trip to France but this brief revival of classical dance did not last long.

In the last year of the reign of King Sisowat, the French protectorate authorities began to take a direct interest in the *Robam Preahreachatrup*. The art director George Groslier was called upon to help revive daily rehearsals and ways of restoring the faded prestige of classical dancing. In 1928 when King Monivong was crowned, the royal palace and the French authorities came to an agreement that there would be a company of dancers placed under the direction of the Ecole des Beaux Arts - translate. This new change was accepted by the King because he thought it was the only possibility to save classical dance in Cambodia. However, it turned out that this experiment did not last very long. The dancers who used to live in the Royal palace under the Royal household administration became civil servants. These civil servant-dancers were under strict discipline by their school concerning daily rehearsals. With this renewed interest, classical dance made remarkable technical progress. The troupe experienced another major success at the Saigon Exhibition in 1928. Despite the strict discipline imposed upon the dancers by the French directorship, the dancers were allowed for the first time freedom in their private lives. This particular freedom extended to marriage. Most of the dancers took full advantage of their new situation. When the Royal Palace called upon them to return, they felt reluctant and unable to reunite with the old tradition again. In this period, the number of classical dances reduced to less than twelve.

In 1931, the French colonial Government could not ask the king to produce the Royal Ballet, which was part of his Royal household, just to please strangers he did not know. Princess Say Sang Van, a dancer in the Royal Ballet, was married to Prince Vong Kath, the youngest brother of the King of Cambodia. But after domestic disagreements, she left the court and formed her own company of classical dancing. Thereafter, she offered dance performances to the French Colonial Government upon request. Say Sang Van's company was officially recognized by the French as one of

the true Khmer classical dance companies. She acquired the rights to stage gala performances for distinguished French visitors in the salons of French residences and on other special occasions at the temple of Angkor Wat. The palace dancers preserved the tradition of performing only during ritual ceremonies under the devotion of Khun Meak, a star of the classical dance back in the period of King Sisowat, and a mistress of the crown king Monivong. She put all her efforts and dedication toward regularly training the young dancers in the Royal Palace in order to restore the classical dance. This well-trained Royal company later came under Princess Kossamak (King Monivong's daughter) direction. Classical dance was still, in fact, under the monarch's power until the 1960s. Performances and training were done only in the Royal palace under the Queen or King's sister's direction and it was only performed for Royal palace occasions.

In summary, classical dance underwent a number of transformations during the French colonial period. These transformations usually involved contestations of power and control over the display and function of classical dance. Furthermore, this is evident from the patronage system of the royal family and the colonial interests of the ruling French elite.

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER III

CLASSICAL DANCE IN MODERN CAMBODIA

3.1 Classical Dance During King Sihanouk's Period (1941 to 1970)

On April 25, 1941, at the age of 18 years, Prince Norodom Sihanouk was crowned King of Cambodia by the French protectorate authorities. Sihanouk ascended the throne at a time of global political turmoil; France was facing trouble in World War II and regional resistance to their colonial presence in Vietnam. Far from being a 'puppet king' as was anticipated at the time of his appointment, King Sihanouk very quickly grew adept in the art of resistance, political intrigue, and the fight against imperialism. As a result of his experiences with the regional Asian powers and the French colonial power, he became a staunch advocate of complete independence for Cambodia. It was also during this period – after the defeat of France, that Thailand demanded the province of Battambang from the French. Since the Japanese had taken control of Indochina, Cambodia's future was uncertain. Sihanouk exploited this uncertainty by seizing a power vacuum in 1946 and drafting a constitution. The local Issarak (Resistance) movement in Cambodia simultaneously increased their hostility to foreigners as negotiations for the French to leave Cambodia were underway. In 1950 France agreed to grant Cambodia nominal sovereignty. Shortly thereafter in 1951, the Cambodian Communist movement was born, an event which was to have far-reaching consequences for the country in years to come. Eventually, Sihanouk's skilful maneuvering and his 'personal crusade for independence caused France to finally accede to Cambodia's claims for independence. On November 9, 1953, Cambodia became free from French colonial rule. King Sihanouk realized that independence was a critical turning point for Cambodia. He was moreover convinced that it would be necessary to "revolutionize the monarchy and to link the people to a conception of government which combined both conservatism and social and economic reform."¹ He soon began undertaking

¹ Roger M. Smith, "Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia," *Asian Survey* 7:6 (1967), 355.

these reforms, and thus ushered in a new era in Cambodia's political, economic, and social history.

During this period of political instability, the status of the classical dance troupe was not stable. Dance troupes were divided and the remaining dancers who were devoted to their own masters continued their dedication to preserving the dance. Despite these efforts, however, classical dance at that time nearly disappeared. With the reduction of dancers' salaries, the king decided to contribute a monthly stipend to the Royal dancers. This situation continued until Cambodia gained independence in 1953 from the French.

After independence during King Sihanouk's reign, classical dance reached its peak which was known as the golden era. The important people who made contributions to the success of classical dance during this period were: Queen Kossamak, Khun Meak, Chea Samy and Mum Eamdopey, and others as well. Queen Kossamak Nearyrath, daughter of the ruling monarch King Sisowath Monivong, put an end to the all-female requirement for performances and allowed men to play monkey roles. She played the most important role in reviving classical dance on the stage and revitalized the dance form in terms of costume and choreography. Under the support and direction of Queen Kossamak Nearyrath, dancers trained and rehearsed in the Royal palace and performed for the Royal court during ritual ceremonies as well as on government occasions. Queen Koshamak Nearirath devoted a great deal of attention to the training and salary support for these dancers. There were 48 main dance masters: 17 female role dance masters, 13 male role dance masters, 6 demon dance masters and 12 monkey dance masters. This troupe trained in the royal palace during King Sihanouk's period, and some of them were previous dance masters from the reign of King Sisowath Monivong (1928-1941). First hand testimony from a number of dance masters - Soth Samon, Ros Kung, and Sin Somadokcho corroborates the fact that the main female dancers were living at the Damnaktaksun Pearum which was part of the royal household. These female dancers were housed with a dance master and were provided with lodging, dance training, and a salary from the royal palace. They held trainings during regular hours at Chanchaya dance hall in the royal

palace. There were about one hundred dancers and these dancers were selected to be trained by Queen Kusamak Nearyrath and the principal dance masters.²

According to interviews, in order to be selected to be trained as a dancer at the royal palace, children were required to know how to dance. This required that the child's mother begin training the child at a very early age in order to be prepared for appraisal and hopefully selection by the queen.³ Those who were fortunate enough to receive this honor started training at the royal palace at the early age of 5 or 6 years old. The training routine was invariant; every morning the children would assemble and sit in rows according to the dance role they were expected to perform. Reciting the 4,500 movements – the extensive vocabulary of Cambodian classical dance - was a required rehearsal at the beginning of every morning of practice starting early in the morning. From start to finish, this exercise would take approximately one and a half hours. Thereafter, children would be separated to receive specialized training according to their dance roles – the ‘giant role’ trained separately from the ‘monkey role’, for example. Thursday was a special day for dancers to pay their respects to the masters by offering five pieces of incense sticks before starting the dance training. Children were trained in this way for at least five years before they were considered capable of performing on stage. The queen encouraged her young charges by offering rewards to the most talented dancers. All performances were of course underwritten by the palace, and the dancers themselves received a monthly stipend. Pum Bunchanrath, whose father was the queen's driver, often accompanied his father to the royal palace to watch children rehearse their monkey dance. Chanroth would sometimes imitate what he saw when he returned back home. Upon seeing the young child's talent, Master Chap, who was considered a great monkey dance master during that period, accepted the young Chanrath to study monkey dance under his tutelage. After studying monkey dance for a few years, Pum Bunchanrath was presented to the queen and was provided with the ID card which identified him as a student. In 1959,

² An interview with master Sin Somadocho at the Apsara association in Phonm Pen, on the 26th March 2008.

³ Ibid.

he received an accompanying stipend of 20 riel per month. In 1968, the most talented dancers numbered fifteen: thirteen female dancers and two monkey dancers who were selected by the queen to receive civil servant identification cards and thus be eligible to receive a salary from the royal palace. These fifteen dancers thereafter became dance instructors at the Royal University of Fine Arts.⁴

Queen Kossamak dedicated herself to working on dance choreography, teaching and preserving the art form as well as introducing innovations. It is estimated that twenty-one new dances and eleven new dance-dramas were created during the period of 1950 to 2007.⁵ These choreographed dances and dance-drama pieces were created by Queen Kossamak and the principal dancer masters along with other well-known dance scholars such as Hang Thun Hak and Mam Emdokpey. One of the most unique and magnificent of classical dance pieces was the Apsara dance introduced in 1962. Queen Kossamak Neariath together with her scholars and masters conducted research at Angkor Wat temple and with their savvy and creativity were able to accurately bring the stone carvings to life in the form of dance. The costume of these dances was based on the bas-relief of Apsaras found throughout the temple ruins. The now famous Apsara dance was first successfully performed solo by Princess Norodom Bupha Devi.⁶ Soon after, with a new idea to make this dance even more magnificent Queen Kossamak Neariath added six more female dancers to the Apsara dance. This innovation remains until the present day. The meaning of the dance was to glorify the kingdom and the beauty of the female Apsara as it can be seen in the lyric of the Apsara dance. This dance was performed for the royal events such as the king's birthday, Tak Tok ceremony, and for the distinguished guests. The make up that the dancers wore for these performances was like every other dance and remained the same as in the ancient style. The make-up artists would use Chihun powder in

⁴ An interview with dance master Pum Bunchanroth, at the ministry of culture and fine arts, Phnom Penh, on the 11th August 2008.

⁵ Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, *Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cambodia*. (Phnom Penh: Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and UNESCO, 2004), 25-28.

⁶ A conversation with master Ros Kung at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Phnom Penh on the 11th August 2008.

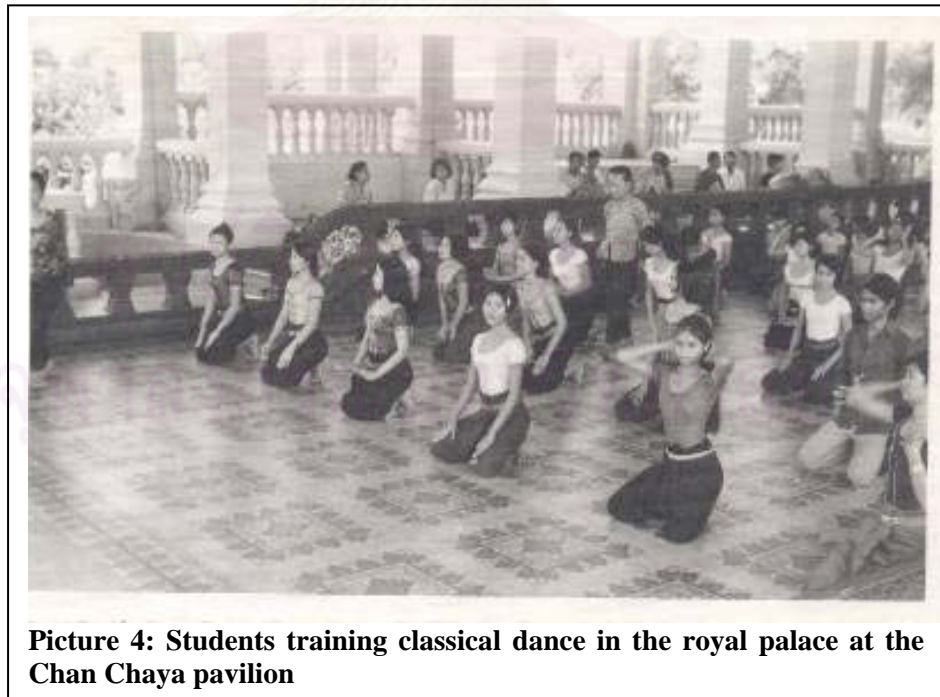
order to paint their faces white. The eyes and eyebrows were outlined with black and this was accentuated by a pure gold coiffure, jewelry, and an outfit consisting of a pure silk *Samput*⁷ wrap around the lower part of body and a *Sbaiy* around the upper part of the body. The facial expression was infused with the softness of a smile which symbolized the sacred attitude and the dancer's efforts to bestow compassion upon the audience. Before the performance, the dancers usually paid respect to their dance masters by offering five pieces of incense sticks in order to receive a blessing which would enable them to have a successful performance. The glory of classical dance was seen and admired throughout the world. The performances were not only performed in the royal palace for national and international distinguished guests, but also performed abroad by princesses Buppha Devi, a granddaughter of Queen Kossamak. Princess Buppha Devi had been sent to study dance with Master Khun Meak, Mom Chhavary and Mom Pong. But she always had her grandmother as her special dance teacher since she was 4 years old. By the time she was 14 years old, she went on her first dance trip to China for the Chinese leaders Chou En-Lai and Chairman Mao Tse Tung. She performed Tep Monorom dance and Chu Chai dance.⁸ These two great leaders were much impressed and admired the beauty of classical dance as performed by princess Buppha Devi. In 1958, Princess Buppha Devi and five other dancers went on a trip to New York to perform an episode of Reamker, golden mermaid, the Cambodian version of Ramayana. The fame of classical dance continued to spread and by the time she was about nineteen years old she performed an Apsara dance in front of the French film production.

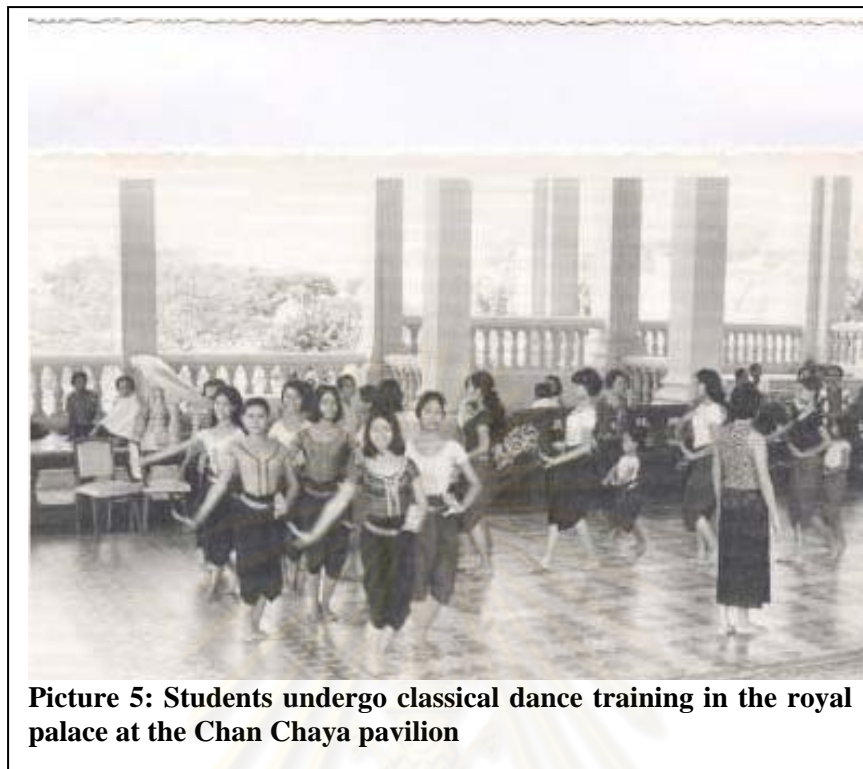
With numerous dances and dance-dramas pieces created during the period of 1950-1970, classical dance was performed by the Royal palace dancers with the support of the government both at home and abroad in China, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Malaysia, India and Europe. In 1965, The Royal University of Fine Arts was established by King Norodom Sihanouk. Prior to this the existing art school,

⁷ A piece of 3 meter of cloth made by silk.

⁸ Julie B. Mehta, *Dance of Life: The Mythology, History, Politics of Cambodian Culture*, (Singapore: Graham Brah (Pte) Ltd., 2001), 88.

Sala rajana or School of Cambodian Arts, had been founded by George Groslier in 1917-1918. This school was not considered a university but in 1965 when The Royal University of Fine Arts was established the royal government integrated *Sala rajana* into the university. Appointed by the King, Vann Molyvann was the first rector of the University and Hang Thun Hak was the first Dean of the Department of Dramatic and Choreographic arts. There were five departments in The Royal University of Fine Arts: the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, the Department of Archaeology, the Department of Plastic Arts, the Department of Music, and the Department of Dramatic and Choreographic Arts. Classical dance was registered in the Department of Choreographic Arts. Students who entered the school were strictly selected. During that time, dancing was a very popular subject to study. There were around two hundred dance students who were selected to study with the dance masters from the Royal palace with the fifteen dance masters who were selected in 1968. Up until that time, the dance training still remained in the royal palace under the direction of queen Kossamak Nearyrath.





Picture 5: Students undergo classical dance training in the royal palace at the Chan Chaya pavilion

3.2 Classical Dance During Revolutionary Period (1970 to 1975)

Toward the end of King Sihanouk's reign over Cambodia, political problems once again started troubling the country. In mid-1965, King Sihanouk broke off relations with the U.S. government, denouncing their aims in Indochina as imperialist



Picture 6: Master Soth Samon training the giant role with the female students in the royal palace at the Chan chaya pavilion.

in nature. The spillover effects of the war in neighboring Vietnam, Sihanouk's own repressive brand of political authoritarianism combined with the decline of the Cambodian economy served to strengthen opposition parties within Cambodia. The most notable of these was a group of Paris trained militants whose disaffection with the ruling regime caused them to regroup themselves under the banner of the then-defunct Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP). This quiet movement, of which Ieng Sary and Saloth Sar were the most infamous members, began in the late 1960's to gather their forces for an attack against Sihanouk, whom they vilified as a U.S. puppet and a despot. Meanwhile, as the conflict in nearby Vietnam escalated, the borders of Cambodia became even more porous and tens of thousands of troops from the neighboring country crossed over into Cambodia. The U.S. began its ruthless bombing campaign of Cambodia in 1969, which over the next four years would bombard the Khmer people with half a million tons of ordnance. General Lon Nol, who had been serving under Sihanouk as Prime Minister, held a pro-Western, anti-Communist ideological stance. These views were in direct contrast to the King's stated view of neutrality and nationalism. With the support of the U.S. government, whose Cold War anti-Communist foreign policy was being played out on the battlefields of Vietnam, Lon Nol organized a coup d'état. While King Sihanouk was on a routine state visit to Beijing and the Soviet Union, on March 18, 1970 Lon Nol convened the National Assembly and deposed him as head of state. Most people had grown weary of the King, but there were 40,000 protesters who marched to the capital to demand the King's reinstatement.

From Beijing, Sihanouk entered into a marriage of convenience with the KPRP to embrace, in his words, "'all Khmer both inside and outside the country--including the faithful, religious people, military men, civilians, and men and women who cherish the ideals of independence, democracy, neutrality, progressivism, socialism, Buddhism, nationalism, territorial integrity, and anti-imperialism.'"⁹ This interim government in exile was known as GRUNK, or the Government Royal d'Union National de Kampuchea. Initially this alliance seemed popular, especially

⁹ <http://countrystudies.us/cambodia/23.htm>, U.S. Library of Congress.

after Lon Nol abolished the monarchy on October 9, 1970 and re-named Cambodia the Khmer Republic. However, over time the Kampuchea Communist Party (KCP), led by Pol Pot himself, began to disdain Sihanouk and threaten his local sympathizers in Cambodia with death. Over time, most of the remaining loyalists in government were purged as the Khmer Rouge began to grow more and more powerful toward the mid-1970s. The King himself was to enter into a long period of more than two decades of self-imposed exile.¹⁰

During Sihanouk's absence, many political factions were vying for the control of Cambodia. Sihanouk and his loyalists with the support of Beijing, Lon Nol and the republican conservatives backed by the U.S., the Vietnamese, and, most importantly, the nascent but important movement called the Khmer Rouge. Over time the latter became the strongest military and political force in the country, and eventually was able to acquire enough strength to take over ruling the country.

During this time of conservative republicanism when the monarchy was dethroned, many of the institutions and traditions were under threat as well. Classical dance, however, was still preserved because the government viewed it as a national treasure belonging to the people. The term Royal Ballet dance was changed to Khmer classical dance and the royal dance troupes were incorporated into the University of Fine Arts which was overseen by the University administration. The training was remained at Channchaya pavilion as well as performance stage for official events. But the study of general knowledge was done at the University. In 1971, more than 40 dancers toured the United States for three months with Chheng Phon as the head of the delegation.¹¹ As part of the 1971 tour schedule, the Khmer dancers also performed at the International Ramayana Festival in Indonesia.¹² The performance at the Kennedy Center was a remarkable success in its glorification of classical dance.

¹⁰ Steven J. Hood, "Beijing's Cambodia Gamble and the Prospects for Peace in Indochina: The Khmer Rouge or Sihanouk?" *Asian Survey* 30:10 (1997): 998.

¹¹ An interview with master Pumbun Chanroth, at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, on 11th August 2008.

¹² Cravath, 237.

Yet back home in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge captured Angkor in 1972, and cast a spell of uncertainty over the entire nation. The Maoist egalitarian ideology of the Khmer Rouge threatened the very existence of classical dance, long revered as a sacred and treasured national art form. As the siege continued, a transformation occurred which began to characterize classical dance as a public art form rather than the exclusive province of ancient kings and the present monarchy.

The Republic government, however, realized that the future of classical dance was at stake, and efforts to document its technique and history were undertaken. The most famous scholar and undisputed expert on classical dance at the time, Hang Thun Hak, was placed in charge of this important effort. During this period, another remarkable dance instructor, musician, scholar and cultural preservationist emerged. It was agreed by all that “Cheng Phon was a visionary of formidable knowledge, dedication and energy.”¹³ He had worked in the 1960s as a performer of folklore dance, and trained as a clown role in classical dance in royal palace for the Queen Kossamak and as well as in the preservation of shadow puppet dance in Cambodia. More recently he had started folklore dance as a performing arts branch of the Royal University of Fine Arts. Cheng Phon acquired greater status as a spokesperson for the preservation of culture, and commanded a great respect among artists as well as the Cambodian people.¹⁴

While these efforts continued, the siege of the Khmer Rouge continued, and in 1974 the royal dance troupe made its last state visit to Bangkok, where it performed at the National Theater. A week after their return to Cambodia, the capital was taken and they never assembled as the royal dance troupe again. On the 17th April 1975, Khmer Rouge armed forces evacuated people out of the city. In late 1975, King Sihanouk returned back to Phnom Penh and was imprisoned in royal palace by Pol Pot until early 1979 when he was evacuated to Beijing. ten days after the Khmer Rouge takeover Phnom Penh, Queen Kossamak, 71 years old at the time, breathed her

¹³ Cravath, 242.

¹⁴ Cravath, 238-244.

last breath in Beijing.¹⁵ The artists who rehearsed in the Royal University of Fine Arts were forced to evacuate along with other Cambodian people. The goal of the Khmer Rouge regime was to “lead the people to succeed in the national democratic revolution, to exterminate the imperialists, feudalists, and capitalists, and to form a national revolutionary state in Cambodia.”¹⁶ From 1975-1979, between one and two million people (20 to 25% of the country’s population) died from starvation, disease, forced labor, or execution during the Khmer Rouge period. Cities were emptied; traditional culture was eradicated. Khmer classical dance suffered a huge blow during the Khmer Rouge regime and many dancers were killed because classical dance was thought as of an aristocratic institution. All performances, religious practices, education, and rituals were prohibited. Most of the documents of Khmer dance had been minimal, and many of the few written records photographs and films that had existed were lost during the Khmer Rouge period. Therefore, some dances were lost because classical dance was passed from one generation to the other by memory. An estimated 80% of all artists died. Those artists were believed to have died from starvation, disease, forced labor or execution from what was called betrayal of Angka.¹⁷ Angka considered people who betrayed Angka as the “enemy”. Thus, enemies were all killed as a result of betrayal of Angka. The term “betray” and “enemy” for Angka referred to educators and those related to aristocratic institutions, such as doctors, professors, engineers, and artists who tried to hide their identity. Angka’s slogan was “To keep is no gain, to kill is no loss” and victims were living their lives under the watch of Angka. The metaphor of a pineapple was used to emphasize that Angka had ‘so many eyes’ for surveillance of the people.

Of interest, however, is how a small number of dancers were able to survive the brutality of the Khmer Rouge regime, despite the fact that the majority perished; the story of the fortunate ones is the subject of this chapter. Master Chea Samy, who

¹⁵ Mehta, 90.

¹⁶ Margaret Slocomb, *The People’s Republic of Kampuchea 1979-1989*, (Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2003), 21.

¹⁷ “Angka” means “the organization” and is a term which was used during Khmer Rouge period.

started her dance training at the royal palace when she was 6 year old in 1925, had lived through four political periods before the Khmer rouge. And she was one of the star female role dancers during the rule of both King Monivong and King Sihanouk. Her profound observation that the performing arts do not die but the performers do is relevant to this period. She revealed that master Khun Meak, a classical dancer during that period, died from starvation during the Khmer Rouge period.¹⁸ Master Chea Samy was married to Pol Pot's brother Saloth Soun. According to her, Saloth Soun was a gentle and kind man. In 1975, Master Chea Samy and her husband Saloth Soun were evacuated out of the city along with other people. She arrived in a village at Kompong Tum province and settled down with her husband as a rice field worker. With a life of struggle to survive with her husband during this brutal regime, she concealed her identity and told the Khmer Rouge that she was a food seller. With not enough food to eat, she and her husband had to work hard with other people without knowing and understanding anything of the regime. In 1978 she saw a picture posted and was surprised to recognize her brother-in-law Pol Pot as the leader of the new regime.

Another story of one of the surviving dancers is as follows. On the 12th August 2008, I had an opportunity to meet with Pum Bunchanroth, one of the two famous dancers of the role of Hanuman, the mighty Monkey King during the 1960s. "Most of the people I knew perished. Perhaps it was the Monkey Dance that kept me alive", said Pum Bun Chanrath. During the interview in August 2008 at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, he recalled how he suffered but eventually survived the Khmer Rouge period.

Master Pum Bunchanroth was born in 1949 and started his dance training in the royal palace when he was 9 years old. In 1975, When the Khmer Rouge took over, professor Pum Bunchanroth was teaching as usual in the Royal University of Fine Arts. All of a sudden he heard the soldiers announce to have people move from the

¹⁸ She pointed to the picture of Khun Meak hanging on the wall in her bed room when I studied classical dance with her in 1990s.

city for three days to be safe from the American bombing. He was immediately evacuated away from the city with his family without bringing any belongings with him. He walked a long way with other people until he arrived at the village and settled down. He was forced to work in the fields under the eyes of Angka. He was also moved from one place to another by Angka without knowing where he was headed. Soon after, he was thrown in jail with about forty other prisoners and tortured; he seemed destined for execution. For many months he lay in jail in line with forty other prisoners on the floor with the chains around their ankles. Every night, soldiers took one of those prisoners, who they considered an “enemy”, to the crocodile fields to be questioned.¹⁹ Usually, the prisoner disappeared or returned back with blood all over his body from crocodile gnaws and eventually died the next day. Living in fear and suffering in the prison, professor Chanroth was under the eyes of Angka as an enemy as well. One day during lunch break, two soldiers came after him and forced him to leave and go immediately to the forest. Upon hearing the word “forest”, professor Chanroth thought that his life would definitely end soon. On the way he met Mitt Sar,²⁰ a soldier’s chief who asked Chanroth about his profession. The latter chose to be honest: "I told them I was a monkey dancer," he says. Mitt Sar had no idea what that was, and so asked him to give a demonstration. But he was so malnourished and thin that he couldn't perform it well. All he could do was a clumsy stand up with a pathetic imitation of itching and scratching. It was enough to send the guard into paroxysms of laughter, and he was kept alive - and well fed - for future performances. About a month later, he was released from prison and returned to the village where his family were still working as farmers.

Below is the story of Eam Teay, who has lived through six political periods. She was a giant role dancer as well as a classical singer in the Royal Palace. She left the palace to return home one day and on the way home she saw the army ordering

¹⁹ Many crocodiles were kept in a field to intimidate the victims, where questioning took place under the gaze of the Khmer Rouge.

²⁰ “Miit” means “friend or comrade”, a term which was used to address someone instead of using their name during the Khmer rouge regime.

everyone to move out of Phnom Penh in three days because of the American bombing. She left with nothing but her dance singing book and Samput Changkbean.²¹

So I moved out of Phnom Penh to live in Batam Bang. They separated me from my child. I worked in the fields with other “old people.”²² While resting from work, they told me to sing and dance for them so I did. One day while I was dancing and singing for them I fainted and fell unconscious so they took me to the hospital. I stayed there for three or four days then the soldiers told me to pack my clothes and go to work in the ‘forest’ with them. But the head soldier refused and said that I should stay to sing a song for the children at the center. So I worked at the children’s center everyday since then. As she was working she heard the news that her child has been killed. One day, when the Vietnamese troops came in I was again evacuated to Batam bang.”²³

There she was able to teach dance to the young people until late 1979 when she moved to the city and rejoined her family.

In an interview with master Ros Kong during the dance rehearsal at the Ministry of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, she said, “Pol Pot told us to move out of the city but said we would return back home in the evening.”²⁴ Upon hearing that she just left without taking anything with her. She walked until she arrived Ken Svay province. She worked in the fields and in the forest like everyone else. Then they evacuated her to Porsat province. She continued to work in the fields. She tried to hide her identity as a dancer but unfortunately, she met someone who had lived in the same village and who knew her when she was young as a dancer and revealed her identity to the

²¹ A piece of cloth 2.50 or 3.00 meters in length that dancers wore on their lower body for dance training.

²² “Old people” were people who originally live in the village and “new people” were people who were evacuated from the city or from somewhere else to relocate with the “old people.”

²³ An interview with Master Eam Teay, at the national museum on the 22nd of March 2008.

²⁴ Conversation with Master Ros Kung at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in 2008.

soldier. She was threatened by the chief soldier to tell the truth but she told him a lie that she was only dancing when she was very young and stopped once she got married. The chief soldier believed her and kept her alive. During that time, it must be remembered that the soldiers hated artists because they believed that artists were politicians. While many of the artists suffered this way during the Khmer Rouge regime, some dancers were able to survive by going abroad. They were aware of the political shift of 1975 so they left in advance with their families before the Khmer Rouge invaded the city. Some of the important dancers during Master Ros Kung's generation in 1960s left Cambodia with her husband in 1975 to France and is still alive today. Many of Pum Buncharoth's friends in his generation left to the United States and were therefore able to meet up with him again in 2001.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER IV

THE REVIVAL OF CLASSICAL DANCE AFTER 1979

In this chapter, I attempt to focus on classical dance after the Khmer Rouge. This study will focus on the powerful role of the artists themselves, in reconstituting the dance. Leaders such as Cheng Phon were able to work for the survival of classical dance. Following this, I talk about the reinstitutionalization of Khmer classical dance which depicts the change of classical dance from its renaissance period to an art form which had great importance in Cambodian cultural politics. Lastly, in the section titled ‘problem of rebuilding’, I will attempt to outline how the vicissitudes of Cambodian politics had an impact on classical dance. Specifically, the question of royal patronage developed into a dynamic which disunified the artists themselves. Overall, then, we see the evolution in this chapter from a revival of classical dance led by a number of stakeholders to an era where the art form itself became more politicized. This also signaled the subsequent decline of classical dance which has continued until the present day.

4.1 First Wave of Revival Work (1980 to 1991)

The chronology of classical Cambodian dance from the 1980s to 1990s shows an uninterrupted evolution of the dance form in spite of political adversity. During this time, Cambodia underwent twin political transformations which culminated in the People’s Republic of Kampuchea. Some scholars believed that in this period classical dance was used as a means for political expression. It was rumored that the Vietnamese occupation in 1980 attempted to force a change in classical dance but with the strong protection and preservation of master Chheng Phon, the dance managed to retain its core identity. Later on the Soviet Union was included in this supposed sphere of influential nations. The commonly held belief among most Cambodians, however, is that the revival of classical dance symbolized not only a triumph over the bloody era of the Khmer Rouge, but a rejuvenation for the society as a whole. It should be noted that, this chapter is not an attempt to analyze whether the arts was used to serve political ends or whether it was purely for purposes of reviving

a lost arts form. The aim is to provide a factual account of the revival of classical dance after the Khmer Rouge. Why was classical dance so important? What did the dances mean to people who had seen only violence and poverty for so many years during the Khmer Rouge?

The Khmer Rouge government, guilty of mass atrocities, genocide, and crimes against humanity ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. The economic, cultural, political and social fabric of the nation was devastated during this time and its population decimated by the systematic torture and killing of the regime. Vietnam's involvement in Cambodian internal affairs had its roots in the departure of French and the end of colonial rule in 1953. Cambodia quickly became a nation over which both China and the Soviet Union sought to exert their hegemony, with the Chinese backing the Khmer Rouge against Vietnam and the Soviet Union providing support to the loyalists against both Vietnam and China. On December 25, 1978, partly in response to cross border raids but largely in order to realize its expansionist ambitions, Vietnam invaded Cambodia. By January 7 1979 they had seized Phnom Penh, ousted the Khmer Rouge, and established an occupation government which was to last for the next 10 years. As a result of the removal of the Khmer Rouge, a massive exodus of nearly 600,000 IDPs (Internally displaced peoples) who had been persecuted during Pol Pot's time fled to the Thai border in search of refuge.

The People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), as the government of Cambodia was then known, attracted international attention to the problem of conflict in Cambodia. The rival factions united in opposition to the Vietnamese occupation, and convened a conference in New York in 1981, the outcome of which was a declaration of principles, including the withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces, the installment of free and fair elections, and a declaration of neutrality by the Cambodian government. In 1982 the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) was formed, composing of the three main factions at that time: the Sihanouk nationalists, the Khmer Rouge, and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF). Of note here is the fact that throughout the Vietnamese occupation, the global community refused to address the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge period, allowing it to hold a seat

alone in the UN until 1982, at which point it was replaced by the CGDK. It was not until ten years later in 1989 that the word 'genocide' was used in connection with these crimes.

In 1985, the prime minister of PRK, Hun Sen, held peace talks with the Vietnamese and rival parties which called for: the removal of Pol Pot and his comrades from political and military power, a complete Vietnamese withdrawal, national reconciliation with free and fair elections, peaceful coexistence in Southeast Asia, a cessation of external involvement in Cambodian affairs, and the establishment of an international body to oversee this agreement. The peace process that ultimately led to the Paris Peace Accord began in 1987 and 1988 with meetings between Prince Sihanouk and PRK Prime Minister Hun Sen. These talks were eventually to provide a solution to the Vietnamese deadlock. After the initial success of these first round of talks, Vietnam announced in April 1989 that it would begin withdrawing its troops and reach completion by September of that year. With an end to the decade of Vietnamese occupation now in sight, it was now the task of the warring factions within Cambodia to bring peace to the nation. This was to constitute the *raison d'être* for the Paris Peace Accords and UNTAC which followed in 1991 and 1993.

Immediately after Cambodia was liberated by the Vietnamese, The Royal University of Fine Arts was again established and at that time was called the School of Fine Arts. After the tragedy of lost art during the Khmer Rouge regime, artists and teachers of classical dance put all their efforts into restoring and preserving classical dance. During the period of extreme poverty in the 1980s, society began to rebuild itself in earnest. A number of artists and dance masters gathered to create organizations and academic departments for the preservation of a wide range of art forms. The work of reviving classical dance, however, had to face a number of challenges such as building capacity – both institutional and human – finding funding and support, and recovering dance materials. In this connection, the work of choreographers in restoring the dance forms was highly successful. An estimate of fifty five dances and twenty two dance dramas of classical dance were reconstituted during the period of 1979 to 2002. International horizons were broadened with

intercultural linkages such as study abroad opportunities for students in India, Russia and Bulgaria. Public dance performances became more common. Margaret Slocomb commented that the Annual Report for 1980 suggests an outstanding degree of activity and great enthusiasm for the task at hand.¹ “Since January this year, the department of Arts has achieved very wonderful results. This makes the work of art feel incomparable delight. Apart from serving their political duties, all art has tried hard to restore dance, which is the heirloom and the tradition of the nation.”² The report continues, “During 1980s, this department conducted performances for foreign guests, other ministries, the public in Phnom Penh and several provinces, in Laos, Vietnam, GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, for a total audience of close to one million people.”³ According to a report from the Ministry of Propaganda, Culture and Information in 1989, there were eighty-eight professional performing arts dance troupes in Phnom Penh and the provinces at that time.⁴

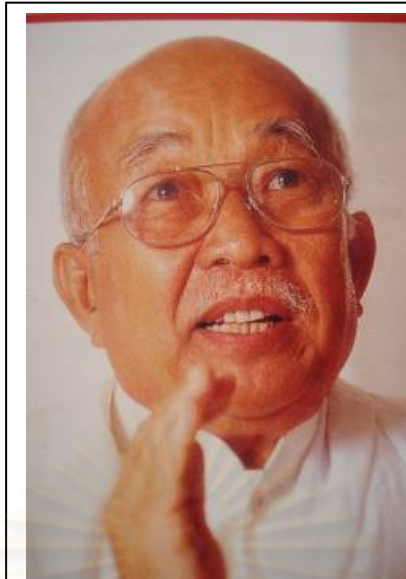
Master Cheng Phon, one of the dancers in the palace during the 1960s and head of a delegation to USA in 1971, devoted a great deal of time to restoring and preserving the lost arts from the Khmer Rouge period. In late 1979 he called upon the surviving artists and gathered them in Phnom Penh while a small number of artists remained in Kumpong Thum province. With his idea of reviving the arts, he understood that human resources were extremely important and that it was best to put all the artists together in one place. In order to accomplish this aim of housing the artists in one location, he secured two apartment buildings; one was behind the national theater and the other located just behind the first one, in Tonle bassac district. These buildings were constructed by Vann Molyvan during the 1950s and constituted an artists’ commune where the artists lived and practiced with the support and funding from The People’s Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) government. Each artist was given one apartment with a monthly salary. These surviving artists were working with two

¹ Slocomb, 183.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Samrang Kamsan, 23.



**Picture 7: Master Scholar
Cheng Phon**

different arts institutions: the School of Fine Arts and the Department of Fine Arts. Both of these two were under the direction of master Cheng Phon who was Minister of Culture during that time. Private transportation was provided for artists to and from practice every day. Another surviving dance group was formed at Kumpung Som (Sihanoukville) under the leadership of master Pum Bunchanroth who was one of the two well-known monkey role dancers during the 1960s. Hundreds of students registered to study classical dance at the School of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. The first dance training class was conducted at *Sala rajana* located behind the present national museum with the first generation of more than one hundred students in 1981. But later on in the 1980s it relocated to the School of Fine Arts, located at the north campus next to the present day Japanese bridge in Phnom Penh. There were about 100 male and female dance students during that time.⁵

They had daily training every morning, six days a week with the master teachers and artists who survived from the Khmer Rouge regime. Students who were selected to study at the School of Fine Arts came from everywhere in the country. The government provided them with an allowance. They were housed in a school dormitory, and given the freedom to visit their family and friends during the holidays.

⁵ [*The flowers of wishing.*] DVD. Cambodian Cinema Archives, 1981. (In French).

A typical daily routine included 4 hours of dance training in the morning, 4 hours of general knowledge in the afternoon, and some hours of Russian language and various other activities in the evening. Starting at 5 am in the morning the symphony of instruments: trumpets, violins, Pin Peat, Sralai, and cha cho cha⁶ could be heard throughout the school. The students' class would start at 7am. Intensive dance practices were usually held in the dance hall where students lined up according to their dancing roles. They were required to do warm-up exercises and basic dance training for at least two hours before beginning to rehearse the dance stories. Most students in the early 1980s were suffering from lack of economic means and so were dressed in simple dark blue pants and shorts for the dance training. It was not until a few years later, however, they were fortunate to have the Samput Changkven to wear for dance training just like it had been in the 1960s. Dance masters were serious about observing the students to make sure they exercised the right discipline during dance movements. After two hours of basic dance training, students were allowed to take a short break and returning back to the class. During lunch break, students from all five departments would queue in line to wait and receive their lunch from the kitchen. In the afternoon, classes began again at 2 p.m., and the focus was on general knowledge until 5:30 p.m. Students were taught foreign languages, such as Vietnamese and Russian and other activities followed in the evening. The government of Cambodia at that time also provided scholarships and study abroad opportunities for dancers and teachers to go abroad to Russia.

The revival of the lost arts required dance masters to overcome the challenges of working together in order to reconstruct the dance moves. In this effort, Chheng Phon, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts, in 1981, worked as the Director of the school was a great surviving leader along with Chea Sami, Soth Samon and Ros Kung. All of these leaders played an important role in preserving and restoring the classical dance. With his experience and knowledge in resurrecting Cambodian dance, Chea Samy returned to Phnom Penh and was appointed by the Ministry of Culture and

⁶ Cha cho cha is a sound made by the mouth for the basic rhythm of classical dance. This rhythm was usually made when there is no Pean Peat music to accompany the dance.

Information to travel around the country to search for surviving artists from the Khmer Rouge period. Chea Samy voyaged around the country to locate lost human talent; it was a difficult and challenging task. She was only able to find a few surviving dancers from her generation. Among these were Master Soth Samon, Master Ros Kung, and a few other dancers of her generation from the 1960s. All these artists who had been reconnected were invited by Chea Samy to return to Phnom Penh and join the artists' commune at Tonle Bassac. The task of reconstruction, however, was impeded by the lack of written documents and had to depend as its only source on the memory of the dance masters: Chea Samy, Ros Kung and Soth Samon. For instance 'wishing dance' created in 1941 and performed during welcoming ceremonies for distinguished guests during King Sihanouk's period was resurrected and restored by the dance masters. Chea Samy and Ros Kung worked together with their collective memory and that of the musicians to reconstitute this dance along and teach it to their students. It was a difficult process which involved respectful collaboration, cooperation, and often took place in front of the students themselves.⁷ These efforts of restructuring succeeded with recreating approximately 90% of the lost dances.

The promotion of dance continued with master Chheng Phon who encouraged his colleagues to create dance pieces for the curriculum. These new pieces were subjected to the scrutiny of the dance masters and critics to see if they qualified as Khmer classical dance. One of these remarkable innovations in the 1980s was the Apsara dance, created by Master Chea Sami. Sami's ingenuity involved changing the lyrics in the beginning of the dance; this also required a modification of the stylistic moves of the dance. The lyrics of the original Apsara dance celebrated the beauty of the Kingdom but they were modified by her to glorify Cambodia's liberation from the Khmer Rouge on 7th January 1979. It was performed by the students of the School of Fine Arts to honor this part of Cambodian history. The Apsara dance was performed for government officials as well as the public on this anniversary. One memorable

⁷ Personal interview with Ros Kung, on the 25th March 2008 at the national museum, Phnom Penh.

performance was staged in 1983 by Pich Tumkravil and was entitled “La Marche Nationale.”⁸ This performance spanned the Cambodian history from the struggle against the French to the liberation on the 7th of January.

At the Department of Fine Arts, Pich tum Kravil was head of the Department and continued to work hard with other surviving artists. The Department of Fine Arts was located at the National Theater in Bassac commune. The surviving artists and dancers were called to join the effort of restoration of the arts. Em Theay, a great giant dancer and classical singer, was invited to the Department of Fine Arts while she was still teaching at the province. Em Theay contributed her energies to transfer her knowledge to the younger generation of dancers. It was a difficult task to revive this arts form. Em Theay and other dance masters had to work closely with other surviving classical dance musicians who used to play music for the classical dancers in the period of the 1960s. Master Em Teay, one of the famous giant dancers and classical dance singers during 1960s, taught dance to the students from her memory and from the dance scripts that she had secretly hoarded during the Khmer Rouge. Master Sim Montha, who was a female dancer and costume maker during King Sihanouk period, tried to remake and resurrect the dance costumes. The majority of these costumes were lost or burnt during the Khmer Regime period. From the remnants that could be gathered from Prasat Tevea in the royal palace and some pieces of shadow puppet, this restoration work proceeded painstakingly.⁹ Lighting and recordation of the theater had to be redone after the destruction of the Khmer Rouge; this was taken care of by Chheng Phon.

During this period of Khmer classical dance revival, performances in the city and provinces took place for public events, government occasions, the annual festival on the 7th January, religious ceremonies, and New Year. All of these performances were conducted by the Department of Fine Arts and School of Fine Art with

⁸ Leakthima Ollier, Chau-Pech and Tim Winter, Eds. *Expressions of Cambodia: The politics of tradition, Identity and Change*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 134.

⁹ [The flowers of wishing.] DVD, (In French)

government support. Although the salary from the government was very little, the dancers' willingness and dedication to perform persisted. Dance performances were also staged which celebrated the various religious traditions in Cambodia. The 'wishing dance' was performed and it was customary during the performance to toss flowers into the audience which would customarily be met with the applause from Cambodian Muslims who were enjoying the beauty of the dance.¹⁰

The renaissance of the dance in the urban areas such as Phnom Penh was also matched by a revival in the provinces as well. Pum Bunchanroth, who had once settled his dance group in Kompong Thum after the Khmer Rouge in 1979, later moved to Sihanoukville in 1981 to promote the revival of lost arts as chief of his own dance troupe. With the direction of master Chheng Phon, he also engaged in the promotion and restoration of dance with the support of the government. In a personal interview, Pum Bunchanroth recalled the success of his troupe's dance performances with the attendance of such honored guests as Chea Sim. For him this was a remarkable achievement in times when the recent memory of the Year Zero still lingered in the public consciousness.¹¹ In 1988, the school became the University of Fine Arts. The success of classical dance revival was ensured by cooperation from many people. The dancers themselves, their students, the masters, the musicians, the Ministry of Culture and government stakeholders, the local universities and institutions, and most importantly the Cambodian people themselves collaborated to ensure the success of the revival.

Thus in the decade from 1980 to 1990, the training of a new wave of classical dancers continued at a remarkable pace, with intergenerational transmission of knowledge proceeding due to the vigor and dedication of still living dance masters. For the oral transmission from the teachers to the students with many of its documents

¹⁰ [*The Tenth Dancer.*] Dir. Sally Ingleton. DVD. Archive film US national Archives Visnews Jim Gerrand, 1993.

¹¹ Personal interview Pum Bunchanroth, on the 11th August 2008 at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Phnom Penh.

lost or destroyed, recovery was a slow and difficult process. But the inspiration, the willingness and the devotion of the artists of classical dance ensured its successful reconstruction. After this period, classical dance entered a new phase during the political era of the 1990s. International aid agencies started to take an interest in developing classical dance and making it more prominent than it had been in the 1980s. Dance troupes began to tour internationally in the 1990s, with folklore and classical dance performances by artists from the School of Fine Arts in such countries as Japan and United States.

In 1990s, classical dance and other forms of Cambodian performing arts entered a new phase of civilization and identity. A large group of 36 Cambodian artists toured around the United States to perform dances for the first time in 1990 since the Khmer Rouge regime. This tour was financially supported by American organizations with the approval of the Cambodian government. The dance pieces which were revived and performed included: Apsara dance, Tep monorum dance, Muni Mekhala, and Ramayana story. With funding from American organizations, new costumes and intensive rehearsals became possible. Because of the fear that some artists might defect, the family and civil status of each artist was closely scrutinized by the Ministry of Interior before departure to the U.S. Preng Chheng, partner of Pum Buntchanroth and important dancer during the King Sihanouk period, was the head of the troupe delegation. The trip was designed to bring classical and folk dance to the United States with the aim of promoting the dance and the lost arts, and to reach out and make a cultural connection to the Cambodian diaspora who were then in the United States. Sadly, however, during the course of various performing tours in the United States, five artists defected and never came back to Cambodia. Blame was placed on members of Cambodian communities in the United States who persuaded the dancers to defect. Though everyone was shocked by the event, it so happens that this became a turning point and an opening for further defections in subsequent tours. When the thirty one artists returned home, they brought a sense of disappointment to the country, especially the devoted dance masters.

This loss of spirit notwithstanding, the next generation of dancers was selected – a group of about sixty children from the ages of eight to fourteen. The difficult question remained – would this be the last generation of dancers to be trained? With the talent and direction of Master Chea Samy, four of the exceptional protégés from the sixty two were chosen to train for the female dance role in private lessons at the master’s home. These lessons went beyond the rudiments of dance movements and delved into the intricacies of these classical compositions. These extracurricular lessons by seventy three year old master Chea Samy signified her devotion to the preservation of classical dance. As one of the most senior and accomplished dance masters, Samy was able to transmit priceless pearls of wisdom and training advice to her four pupils. Every day the pupils would assemble in her living room dressed in Samput Chanken and Ave Lakorn (*short sleeved shirt for dance*) while master Chea Samy sat in her armchair and conveyed the movements to her students. Despite her ill health at the time, she committed herself to inculcating in her young charges the secrets and subtleties of Cambodian classical dance. Only when necessary would she actually rise from her chair to demonstrate a particular technique. The students were made to repeat each movement in detail and commit it to memory, after which Chea Samy would draw them each toward her and pay particular attention to their facial expressions, body, legs and hand movements. She persisted until she was satisfied with each pupil’s performance. This was often a painstaking and time consuming process, but it was an invaluable transmission of knowledge which was lost when Chea Samy passed away.



Picture 8: The generation of dance students in 1990 practicing the lexicon of 4,500 dance movements at the theater of Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh



Picture 9: Master Chea Samy teaching dance to her pupils at the Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh

At the end of the technical component of each training, master Chea Samy would explain the dance techniques in the context of the history of classical dance. This was an attempt to situate the importance of classical dance within the socio-political movements in Cambodia during her time, and to pass on this understanding to her students. Her perseverance and hard work paid off, and these young students were able to give a successful performance to the public at a very young age. Australia magazine took an interest to publish master Chea Samy's work in 1991.



Picture 10: Master Chea Samy dressing the crown for her pupil for the performance of golden mermaid at the Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Pen.

The revival work of classical dance was able to resurrected, in this stage due to the contributions of a numbers of stakeholders and most importantly from the dancers themselves. The work was not static at this point but connected to the following period which the re-institutionalization was to take place.

4.2 Re-institutionalization (1991 to 1993)

The years from 1991 to 1993 marked a period of unusual turmoil and instability in Cambodia's history. Following the collapse of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, the Vietnamese had exerted their rule over Cambodia through Heng Samrin, the head of state for the new People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). As such, the Vietnamese interests in Cambodia were strong, and their forces continued to fight with the Khmer Rouge army. In 1988, negotiations began in Paris that would later culminate in a ceasefire among the warring factions. The two major parties to the talks were the pro-Vietnamese Prime Minister Hun Sen (representing the PRK) and Prince Norodom Sihanouk at the helm of the non-communist, Royalist United National Front for a Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia – also known as FUNCINPEC. The other two important parties were, of course, the Khmer Rouge (on behalf of Democratic Kampuchea), and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, led by Son Sann. The latter had actually joined the Khmer Rouge in 1982 and

thus came under the banner of Democratic Kampuchea, and were led by Prince Sihanouk. When the Vietnamese troops withdrew from Cambodia in 1989, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was renamed the State of Cambodia.

Two years later, the negotiations among the four factions involving neighboring countries as well culminated in the Paris Peace Accord. This accord established the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (also known as UNTAC). UNTAC was charged with ensuring free and fair elections in Cambodia, the establishment of a constitution and a guided transition to a liberal democracy under the stewardship of the United Nations. Most importantly, the accord recognized the legitimacy of the Supreme National Council headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk as embodying "Cambodia's national sovereignty, unity, and independence during the transitional period."¹² This decision paved the way for the return of the prince, who had been in exile in France for the last 13 years following a military coup in the 2nd Indochina war.

Prince Sihanouk was escorted by Prime Minister Hun Sen back to the country in seeming amity. "Sihanouk's return to the royal palace overlooking the Tonle Sap river symbolized at once the rebirth of Cambodia and the uncertainties of a peace fraught with ambiguity and palpable dangers."¹³ These fears proved to be grounded, as Cambodia was later to backslide into sectarian clashes between the forces of the State of Cambodia (SOC) and the Khmer Rouge, who had largely ignored the binding agreements of the Paris Peace Accords. Represented by the newly formed Cambodian People's Party (CPP), the SOC began a brutal suppression of its non-communist opponents – the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party led by Son Sann and FUNCINPEC led by Prince Sihanouk. Thus the UNTAC mandated elections of 1993 were marred by violence on all sides, but voter turnout was high.¹⁴

¹² Frederick Z Brown, "Cambodia in 1991: An Uncertain Peace," *Asian Survey* 32:1 (1992): 91.

¹³ Brown, 88.

¹⁴ Khatharya Um, "Cambodia in 1993: Year Zero Plus One," *Asian Survey* 34:1 (1994): 75.

The results of the election showed that FUNCINPEC and Prince Sihanouk won 45% of the ballots with the CPP taking a close second with 38%. “Over most of the country, people had voted for peace, for reconciliation, for [Prince] Sihanouk, and, perhaps above all, for change.”¹⁵ Intense negotiations ensued over the details of the power sharing agreement between the two parties, who finally agreed to share power equally and elect co-prime ministers of the Provisional National Government of Cambodia (PNGC). Prince Ranariddh, the son of King Norodom Sihanouk, represented FUNCINPEC, and Hun Sen represented the CPP. A new constitution was also adopted which restored the King to the throne, and gave many war-weary Cambodians a needed sense of nostalgia. Of especial importance to Cambodia national identity was the newly formed Constitutional Assembly’s decision to declare ‘null and void’ the American backed coup by Lon Nol of 1970 which ousted the King and to resurrect the Royal Kingdom of Cambodia with King Sihanouk at the helm.¹⁶ The first article of the newly drafted constitution proclaimed that “Cambodia is a kingdom with a king who shall rule according to the Constitution and to the principles of liberal democracy and pluralism.” The king, it was specified, shall “reign but not govern” and will remain as the “shall be the guarantor of the national independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the protector of rights and freedom for all citizens and the guarantor of international treaties.”¹⁷

King Sihanouk’s return to Cambodia following the signing of the Peace Accord symbolized hope for the dancers. One of the celebrated dancers, Princess Buppha Devi also returned back to Cambodia along with her father King Norodom Sihanouk. Soon after her return she was designated Vice minister of Culture under the State of Cambodia government. Classical dance gradually came to be embraced by the monarchy again.

¹⁵ Ronald B. St. John, “Democracy in Cambodia — One Decade, US\$5 Billion Later: What Went Wrong?,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27:3 (2005): 408.

¹⁶ Um, 77.

¹⁷ Consitution of Cambodia, <http://www.constitution.org/cons/cambodia.htm>, (Accessed Sep. 10, 2008).

The number of students and teachers were increasing every year. By 1992, there were about fifty or sixty teachers and three hundred students. Hence, the salary for teachers and staff were still limited. For cultural and identity reasons related to Khmer civilization, the newly appointed Minister of Culture, Nuth Narang, understood how important it was to have classical dance closely attached to the Angkor Wat complex. The School of Fine Arts was therefore prepared to move to Seam Reap where Angkor Wat is located. But it was rumored that the monarchy disapproved, citing lack of supervision by the Royal palace due to the physical distance from Phnom Penh. In order for classical dance tradition to be kept strong, pure and in the right path, the school should be kept in the capital city. The centralization of classical dance attracted the attention of dancers in the province who left their homes to come and join the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. The famous dance master Pum Bunchanroth and his family also moved back and he later became the monkey dance teacher at the school.

A common mistakenly held view is that the reconstruction and revival of Cambodian classical dance was a simple task. The artists and dance masters involved understood that it was a very complex social and artistic phenomenon. Some scholars have paid excessive attention to the economic subsidies provided by the government, when in fact this was only one of the enabling components for the revival's success. Without the dedication, willingness, and cooperation of a wide range of artists and other interested individuals, the revival never would have succeeded. Those involved in the restoration process were primarily concerned with ensuring that the essence of the dance form – a strong sense of morality and spirituality – remained its primary characteristic. According to scholar Chheng Phon, performing arts development depends on two factors: encouragement and criticism. The encouragement should come in the form of material and financial support as well as legitimacy from the state. It should also come from recognition and appreciation by the society and the public who are the audience. Criticism needs to come from scholars with a strong grounding in the accepted theories of classical dance.¹⁸

¹⁸ Samrang Kamsan, 22.

Though classical dance had suffered a serious setback during the Khmer Rouge, it was once again able to revive itself as a great source of national pride and identity for the Cambodian people. Political turmoil ensued, however, with the election of co-prime ministers in 1993. Classical dance was called Khmer classical dance and Royal ballet. The University of Fine Arts was immediately renamed to the Royal University of Fine Arts as it had been in 1965. Cambodian classical dance continued to remain under the tutelage of Princess Norodom Bupha Devi. It appeared that classical dance was about to renew its traditional ties with the royal family.

The dancers still obtained a small salary, but they were even busier now with their performances for the government, public events and the Royal Palace. Most of these performances were financially supported both from the government and the Royal Palace. However, with the internal disagreement inside the country, classical dance received less support from the government. The NGO ASPECA which was founded in the 1980s to support poor and orphaned students, continued to subsidize dance efforts. In 1993, a group of dance students supported by ASPECA embarked on a performance tour in France for the Cambodian diaspora. Traditional dances with new costumes were made for the tour. In May of the same year, Princess Bupha Devi became an advisor to the Minister of Culture. Following the elections with the resulting two prime ministers, the School of Fine Arts was renamed as a Royal University of Fine Arts and began to be administered by the Ministry of Culture. RUFA has five faculties: architecture, archeology, plastic arts, music, and choreographic arts. All these departments are able to issue undergraduate degrees. The faculty of choreographic arts is the umbrella faculty for dance, theater and circus arts majors.

Classical dance within the faculty of choreographic arts came under the direction and assistance of HRH Princess Norodom Buppha Devi, one of the most important dancers of her generation. Princess Devi often personally came to the university to assist the dance masters in teaching dance. When preparing for performance tours abroad, she was also intimately involved in the selection of the dancers chosen for the international delegations. Occasionally, classical dance

performances were staged in the royal palace for the benefit of distinguished guests of the royal government. Princess Devi supervised the renewal of costumes as well. During this period, some other dancers who wished to perform in order to secure additional income organized smaller, independent dance troupes to perform at private venues, such as hotels.

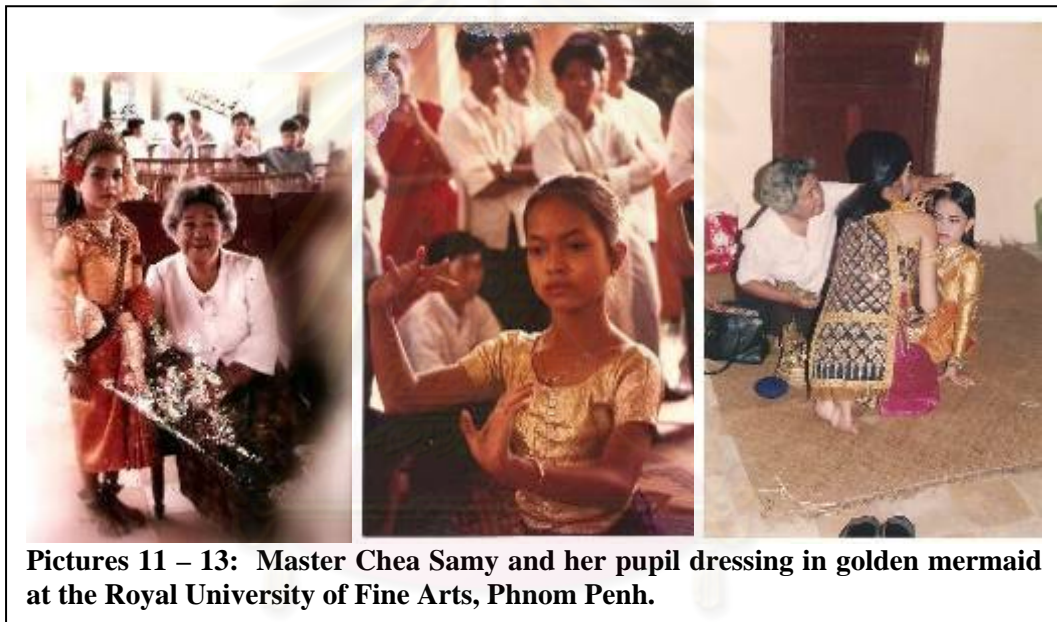
4.3 The Problem of Rebuilding (1994 – Present)

It was also during this time that an unfortunate calamity befell the entire dance community. In 1994 there was a fire at the national theatre as a result of negligence on the part of some careless workmen. This catastrophe seemed to break the spirit of the artists. With no funds and disagreement as to how to proceed with reconstruction, the structure remained in a complete state of ruins with even the roof caved in. This loss and sorrow was felt not only by the dancers but by the nation as a whole. Despite the severe damage sustained by the theater, dancers still continued their training and rehearsals every morning in the remains of the structure.

At the same year, another tragedy struck the dance community with the death of Master Chea Samy. She passed away in 1994. Her passing was considered a great loss of heritage for the entire nation, as she was a living repository for much of the existing dance knowledge and techniques. Not only was she an unparalleled master of the art form, but she had lived since the time of King Sisowath Monivong, her life thus spanning an incredible eight political periods. When she departed, she took all her priceless knowledge of the socio-political evolution of the country with her. Three weeks before she died she passed on her last dance to the author who she firmly believed could carry on this heritage to serve her country in the future. Unfortunately, Chea Samy was not able to finish her dance teaching as she was very ill and had an emergency case of surgery. The surgery process didn't go well, thus, she passed away a few days after. Although her surviving colleagues were burdened with sadness at her death, several of them including dance master Ros Kung and master Soth Samon decided to convene a number of young dance masters. Their intention was to provide an impetus for a redoubling of efforts in the reconstruction of lost dances and

documentaries. Dedicated to the memory of their lost mentor, these masters together with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation started a program course whose focus was the restoring and documentation of the lost art form few years after.

In 1996, Princess Norodom Bopha Devi formed a dance troupe called the 'Royal Ballet du Cambodge'. She was the head of this dance troupe which trained and rehearsed at the Royal University of Fine Arts. The main purpose of this dance troupe was to strengthen classical dance as well as organize performances for the Royal



Pictures 11 – 13: Master Chea Samy and her pupil dressing in golden mermaid at the Royal University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh.

palace, government events and tours in Europe. The appointment of dancers for this troupe was highly selective, and it was considered an honor to be called by the Princess to join. As such, the prestige and honor of being a classical dancer improved a great deal during this time.

Again, in 1996, political turmoil began to be stirred up, and Cambodia was destined again for conflict. The split between co-premiers Hun Sen and Prince Ranariddh began to widen as each side began to increasingly distrust the other and the situation deteriorated into a contestation of political, military and economic power. Hun Sen had the advantage with most of the military force behind him, and was thus able to stage a coup in 1997 to oust his co-prime minister, Norodom Ranaridh. The

following year he attempted to legitimize this coup by holding elections, the fairness of which remain disputed by the international community. While Cambodia was experiencing a political coup, a troupe of dancers with the Royal Ballet of Cambodia company under the direction of Princes Bupha Devi and Preng Cheing, dean of Faculty of Choreographic Arts, went on tour throughout out Europe: France, Italy, Belgium, and Switzerland. Among the dancers were a number of selected dancers from the Royal University of Fine Arts. Funded by the French organization with the approval from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the performance successfully reflected the accomplishments of the royal palace. While the troupe was in Europe, four dancers defected; one of whom did so for political reasons. The motivation of the remaining three is unclear but it is presumed they did so in search of a better life and economic conditions.

After the second general elections in 1998, Princess Buppha Devi again became the Minister of Culture. In the preparation for performances in Europe in 1999, Princess Devi spent her efforts to revitalize classical dance. New dance costumes for a new innovation of the traditional wishing dance were created. She also made stylistic changes to the original ‘wishing dance’ to provide it with a new look. Princess Devi maintained the technique of the dance while modifying the costume. According to the dance costume of the 1960s, dancers used to wear the Sbey cover on upper body. Princess Devi change to have them wear long arm silk fit tied to the body but with the original Samput on the lower body.¹⁹ Princess Devi also developed innovations for the Tepmonorum dance. In addition to these modifications, she increased the number of dancers from twelve to eighteen. She proudly explained that “traditionally, it is the royalty in Cambodia that leads the royal Cambodian dancers.”²⁰ In the past it was the duty of the mothers and the daughters of the Khmer kings to ensure that the dancers received supervision and support. This ensured their survival. In 1999 on the last day of the performance dance tour one dancer defected. With the return of the remaining artists, a few young dancers

¹⁹ A piece of woven silk that the dancers wore wrapped around the lower body as a skirt

²⁰ Mehta, 97.

enrolled in the B.A program of the Faculty of Choreographic Arts. This four year program was successful in producing twenty-three high quality dance and theater students whose major was choreography and directing theater. These students themselves, with the encouragement of the school curriculum, also begin to introduce innovation into classical dance; they graduated from the faculty in August 2003.

In April 2000, Samritechak, a classical dance drama, was performed in Phnom Penh at the RUFA's theater. This innovative dance drama was staged by Cheam Sophilin with the cooperation and advice from senior dancer masters Soth Samon, Ros Kung, Pen Soukoun, Minng Kosany and a few others. Cheam Sophilin was a



Picture 14: The first generation students of the B.A of choreographic arts and directing

former classical dance student during 1980s who later in 1990s immigrated to USA and formed a dance troupe there. This dance piece was an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello* using classical dance techniques. The dance was constructed by drawing from the lexicon of 4,500 dance movements of classical dance. Furthermore, the names of the characters in Khmer Language and the classical dance costume were retained. The song was sung with an adaptation of Khmer lyrics accompanied by Pien

Peat music²¹ while the dancers danced from one scene to another until the story came to an end. With this new adaptation and innovation, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts showed their concern about the potential compromise of the meaning and value of ancient classical dance. Their concerns notwithstanding, the dance piece successful toured the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Southern California, and the Venice Biennale. Following this a new creation exploring the theme of culture shock, entitled “Seasons of Migration”, was done again at RUFA with dance masters and dancers who had worked on the adaptation of *Othello*.

This migration into modern themes in the context of classical dance came under the scrutiny from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and HRH Princess Buppha Devi, whose goal was to ensure the preservation of Cambodian classical dance. “Seasons of Migration” contained four sequences that described the reality of life for Cambodians who had settled in foreign lands and were facing culture shock. The costume adopted was that of classical dance in the 1960’s. This dance struggled to find a balance between the need for innovation and the need to preserve the values of classical dance, as well as to maintain the integrity of technique. The performance toured six cities in USA in April 2005. The tour was successfully performed, but before returning to Cambodia four dancers had defected to the USA.

For the whole of 2001, a total of forty one artists from the RUFA were brought for performance tours of twelve cities and twenty eight performances in United States. Besides the 28 performances, the last of which was held at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C, the troupe also conducted workshops, master classes, demonstrations and lectures to help Cambodian Americans, and especially Khmer children, preserve their artistic heritage. The artists had brought along with them not only a classical dance performance repertoire but also folk dances to performance as well. The dances that were rehearsed for performance on the stage were classical dances that are commonly performed, such as Apsara, Moni Mekhala, Makaw, Reamker and a few other folk dances. This tour was successful and popular

²¹ A classical dance music orchestra that was made by bamboo and wood and it was used to accompany the classical dance.

among the Americans and Cambodian-Americans, and it attracted a great deal of publicity and press. Unfortunately, the troupe returned with six dancers defected. It is important to recognize that although these dancers defected in the aim of searching for a better life, their departure signified a precious loss of human resources to the remaining devoted artists.

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts was concerned that the morality, virtues as well as the sacred values of classical dance were losing their meaning because of the rise of the private dance troupes. On November 7, 2003 Cambodian classical dance became a World Intangible Heritage as voted by UNESCO. Because of this, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts began placing limits on dancers who wished to perform their work. Dancers could not perform without first going through the Ministry of Culture and gaining its approval. A year later, in 2004, under the supervision of Princess Buppha Devi and with the aim of the preservation of classical dance value and its meaning, the dance drama entitle “ Preah Sothun Neang Monorea” was created and toured in France with funding from French organizations. The performance contained many young dancers with limited experiences and dance skills. One again, the tour returned with one dancer defected. The following year dance drama, entitle “Prah Thong Neang Neak” which originally was choreographed in 1930 during King Sisowath Monivong’s reign and re-choreographed again in 1965, was now revised once again by Princess Buppha Devi and officially performed for an audience. With foreign funding, this performance was held in Chatomuk conference hall for about an hour and half. The dance pieces revived were done so with the help from dance teachers, some of whom had never heard of the dance experiences as dancers during 1965. Starting from this point classical dance began to lose its spirit and vitality.

Sustaining regular performances and training for dancers is required to keep the art form alive. This became especially true with respect to the blow for the classical dance community with the sale of the Royal University of Fine Arts in 2005 and the National Theater in 2007. These two cultural centers were considered a part of the national heritage. After the sale of the University, artists were invited to move to

the university's new accommodation, but it was poorly constructed and situated far from the center of the city. Despite this adversity, the university's curriculum continued as before but attendance of teachers and students was a practical problem. In fact, limited financial means prevented the teachers from spending their money for transportation to and from the school. In order to address this problem, King Sihamony generously provided private transportation for some students and teachers. But this solution only partly alleviated the problem.

In the same year, performing arts NGOs in Cambodia such as Cambodian Living arts and Amarita Performing Arts planned and sponsored the Phnom Penh Festival in 2005. The festival was performed on an outdoor stage in front of the national museum to raise public awareness about the need for arts preservation. Two years later, the National Theater was sold. The national theater had become the soul of artists who were devoted to performance. On the last day of the last dance rehearsal before leaving the national heritage theater, dancers sadly recounted that they were offered the amount of \$300 to leave the theater before it was to be demolished. Some argue that although it was a sad fate to destroy such a national heritage, others argued that the building should be sold in order to subsidize a more modern facility. Artists claimed that the proposed site to build the new theater was not suitable, and therefore restoration of the existing theater was the most suitable option. The protest of artists against the sale of the theater lasted for few months. Interviews with the dancers revealed that they were highly emotional about the event and tried their best to prevent the sale. Ultimately and unfortunately, however, they were forced to move to a new place and a facility that was not up to their minimum standards.

From 2005 onwards, the strength and morale of dancers declined rapidly. The loss of purpose that comes with having no place to rehearse and perform their work has taken its toll on the dancers. Some of them are now searching for a different career in order to make their living and some of them still continue dancing but with much less vigor than before.

In conclusion, classical dance during this period was in a period of tremendous flux, in terms of its identity, function, as well as form. Various actors and stakeholders were simultaneously trying to preserve the art form, internationalize its recognition, and appropriate it for their own purposes. The major theme of this period is the encounter between the development of the art form – as a forward looking and progressive undertaking – and the preservation of the art form, proceeding from an inherently static and retrospective vantage point. Yet creativity and preservation continued apace, with results that we shall explore in the next chapter. .



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER V

CAMBODIAN CLASSICAL DANCE IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

The aim in this chapter is to explore the classical dance situation facing the economic growth and the globalization environment. Globalization has had an economic and a culture influence on classical dance. From a cultural perspective, international collaboration and performances have brought about a transformation of technique and a creation of a new dance form. From an economic perspective, globalization has forced the commodification of classical dance and the accompanying devaluing of tradition. I will argue that classical dance is caught between the tension of global culture and regional culture, and is still struggling to reshape its identity within the modern era.

5.1 The Place of Classical Dance in the Age of Globalization

Culture is not static; it develops and changes both invisibly and visibly according to the systems of social action: habits as well as life styles. The perpetual transition of classical dance has resulted in the loss of its unique authentic value. On one hand are the concerns of the politicization of dance and how these factors have influenced the development of classical dance and its current direction. Equally important, however, are the worries that there has been a lack of production in classical dance. In addition to that, we must also consider the effects of globalization on classical dance. Globalization has brought about a deviation from authentic classical dance, and it has been difficult if not impossible to prevent the proliferation of other more profane forms of classical dance. Over the centuries, classical dance has become gradually de-mythologized, popularized, and eventually commodified. Contemporary conservative scholars and artists are especially critical of the performer's themselves and the lowering of standards of integrity and morality for the dancers. The aim of this chapter is to explain the two most important factors characterizing the new transition of classical dance in the present era of regionalization and globalization.

Concerning globalization, perhaps the single more important event in Cambodia's history was the accession to ASEAN. Originally slated to join ASEAN in 1997, the coup led by Hun Sen caused the regional bloc to defer Cambodia's admission. Upon the holding of elections in 1998 and the legitimization of the Hun Sen government, however, ASEAN felt justified in approving Cambodia's accession. On April 30, 1999, ASEAN admitted Cambodia as its tenth and final member. The decade subsequent to integration, from 1999 onwards, has been one of substantial economic, political, and social change for Cambodia. By joining this powerful regional association, Cambodia has opened up its economy, its people, and its society to the forces of modernization and globalization. From a political standpoint, ASEAN membership has signaled increased flows of information and a greater tolerance of diverging viewpoints as well as increased civic participation. Though much power is still held by the prime minister and the judiciary and military are not totally independent, democracy is slowly making inroads into Cambodian society.

On the economic front, market liberalization has resulted in an increase in regional and global trade. The government is giving license to the private sector to contribute to develop, especially in the areas of garment industry, tourism and construction. The tourist industry is centered mostly on the country's historical sites in the Angkor Wat complex. More recently, Cambodian authorities have begun to realize that infrastructure is important in order to maximize the potential revenue from tourism. Roads, telecommunications, and better accommodations for tourists are among the top priorities. Economic growth has picked up since 2005 to average about 11% over the past 3 years.¹ Tourism has enjoyed solid growth over the past 5 years, increasing at the average annual rate (*as measured by tourist arrivals*) of 20% per annum.

¹ Asian Development Bank Website. "ASEAN and the question of Cambodia." *Strategic Comments* 3:7 (2000), pp. 1 – 2. "Cambodian Economic Growth" Asian Development Outlook 2008 . www.adb.org/Documents/Books/ADO/2008/CAM.pdf (Accessed Sep. 10, 2008).

In terms of social and economic development, however, poverty remains a serious constraint to development in Cambodia. With over 50% of children malnourished and the highest infant mortality rate in ASEAN, Cambodia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Focus in this area has been on human resource development, especially in the area of skills and capacity building as well as primary and secondary education. Rural development and agrarian assistance programs have played a key role as well. Of concern, however, is the distribution of land, and the violations of human rights which have surrounded the usurpation of lands from the poor by the wealthy.

The negative aspects to Cambodia's growth feature some of expected social ills which are associated with a nation's global integration. Population growth, the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, prostitution among women and children, the degradation of cultural sites through over use and poor maintenance, the increase in violent crime in urban areas, and the erosion of traditional Cambodian culture with the influx of modern ideas and values are all of concern in present day Cambodia. Lastly, it is important to mention that a substantial portion of the Cambodian government's operating revenues comes from foreign aid.²

Globalization and the development of new technologies, particularly in terms of communication, have caused a loss of balance between culture and development and the effect has been seen in the changes of classical dance. The concern of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts is that the morality, virtue as well as the sacred values of classical dance was losing its meaning and that globalization will have negative effects on Cambodian culture. Since classical dance became a UNESCO Intangible World Heritage, the strict requirements of prior approval from the Ministry have made performances with modern choreography more difficult to plan and execute. Dancers who wish to perform their work have to gain approval first from the

² Asian Development Bank Website. "History and Evolution of ASEAN, Recent Situation in Cambodia, ASEAN & the question of Cambodia, Modernization and Cambodia," <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/ADO/2004/cam.asp> (Accessed Sep. 10, 2008).

Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. This limitation placed on performers and choreographers has been cited as one reason for the lack of performances in the public.

Performances have been rarely conducted by the Ministry alone but occasionally with the support from foreign funds and the cooperation of NGOs. The question here is: Can the task of preservation resist the flow of globalization? Communication across cultures has emerged through technology, and cultural exchange has brought strong foreign influence into the country. Without a doubt, the original work of preservation has been difficult. Equally difficult is to maintain its essence nowadays. Part of the essence of performing classical dance is to have a smiling expression with compassion and lovingness. Chheng Phon often said dancers are required to have a smile like Taprum faces on the Bayon temple which is full of love, care, compassion, peacefulness and calm. Classical dance is a “celestial dance” wherein the thoughts, movements and emotions of the dancer should be in harmony while performing.

But today in the period of transition it is difficult to find a “celestial dancer”. Master Chheng Phon has stated that “L’essence precede la naissance” = The essence always precedes the birth. Today the essence is gone and all that remains is the birth. It becomes a birth without a spirit, a birth without vitality, a birth without essence.³ Classical dance in this sense becomes just commercial exploitation, making money through performing. This means artists are completing their dance training in a very short period without undergoing the right technical requirement. They subsequently start to perform for economic reasons only. Today classical dance seems only to be preserved to fill the demands of entertainment. The difficulty of preserving the authentic value of classical dance still remains. How can a sacred, ancient art form maintain its identity and authenticity in the face of modern day technology, tourism, alongside the urgent survival needs of its performing artists?

³ Lecture of Master Chheng Phon in 2001 at the Center For Culture and Vipassana.

Another factor of globalization is growing tourism; these tourists can bring positive and negative effects. The positive effect is that they can bring a different culture to introduce to local Cambodians and expose them to the outside world. A negative effect is that conservative people would take it as a threat to their culture. In terms of artists, they have to face troubles in the modern period especially related to their small wages. Therefore, they have to find another way to work in order to survive. This attitude of trying to make money to support their living condition could affect their professional manners. Their meager salary of around \$10 a month was used for living costs such as 20\$ for 50kg of rice. Furthermore, gasoline and other expensive items consume much of their salaries. Since 1993, the frequency of performances at hotels in Phnom Penh has increased. Performances on the occasion of parties for government officials as well as foreigners are being held at the big hotels in the city. By making 2.50\$ for one performance, the artists could manage their living expenses for three days at least. Dancers would normally gather together and rehearse for three times in order to get ready for the performance.

Viewed from a positive light, this subsistence art could be seen as a way for young artists to make a living while at the same time advancing their careers and practicing their skills on the stage in front of the audience. On the other hand, however, the value of the sacred meaning and dignity of the performer and the art form were compromised by these performances. Concerns about the loss of the value and virtue of classical dance became predominant among scholars and preservation artists. Master Chheng Phon expressed his reservations about the moral character of dancers being allowed to enter the profession value. In order to fight against this trend, master Chheng Phon designed a Vipassana course which was conducted at the Center for Culture and Vipassana at Preahhour. The Center issued an open call for students to join and learn classical dance. Students and artists from the dance school were provided with accommodation, three meals a day and the courses of Vipassana were lectured by the master himself. Furthermore, not only did the Center provide courses to teach the other artists but also for students and teachers from all over the country. The aim was to promote classical dance in a way consistent with the traditional dignity and virtues of the art form. Looking back to the ancient tradition of

classical dance, inscriptions reveal to us the importance of dancer's purity of mind and body, as well as their deep sense of spirituality and moral integrity. These notions in fact constituted the essence of classical dance during Angkor period. The inscriptions reveal that in Angkorian times there were 1,600 sacred dancers whom were all schooled in technique as well as morality and virtue:

1) Dance technique for body: Practicing the 4,500 lexicon of dance movements for ten years; adjusting the mind to the rigors of the dance for ten years; learning in mind and body for ten years

2) Soul technique: (First lesson) Purenness of body and speech: moral lifestyle including speech, thoughts, and actions; living calmly and peacefully without causing harm to others.

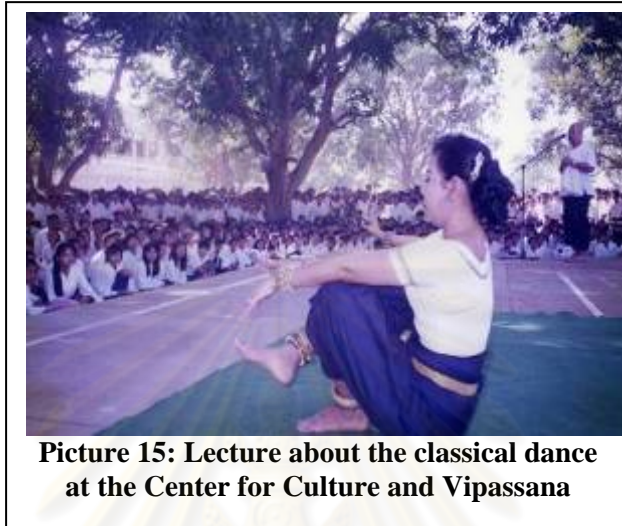
(Second lesson) Pure sentiments – pureness of heart, pure intentions, pure consciousness and wisdom.⁴

The above is the spiritual education consisting of morality and virtues for sacred dancers during the 10th-12th century. However, the contemporary question remains: do the dancers of today need this kind of education? Does this emphasis on pureness of mind and body have any relevance in present day society when economic pressures for the artists seem to be of paramount importance? Occasionally, during performances at the royal palace, dancers were selected by the princess and intensive rehearsals were conducted at least one week before the performance took place. The venue was customarily the Phochani pavilion⁵ and the function of the dance was to welcome distinguished guests and high ranking officials of the royal palace. Usually a \$60 performance fee was provided by the royal palace budget. Thus two classes of dancers emerged: one which was lucky enough to be highly paid and invited to the royal palace, the other which was confined to productions in tourist venues. These

⁴ Samrang Kamsan, 45.

⁵ It is a dance theater in royal palace where dancers performed for the distinguished guests of the royal palace.

two classes of dancers have experienced a certain amount of tension since the post-Khmer Rouge period.



Picture 15: Lecture about the classical dance at the Center for Culture and Vipassana

Once Cambodia joined ASEAN in 1999, business investors focused their attention on the tourism area. Luxury hotels and restaurants were rapidly constructed. The demand for entertainment at hotels in Siem Riep has caused artists to become interested in forming their own private dance companies in order to make money. By 2005, there were seventeen dance private companies with 1009 artists. One dance group is managed by a hotel, three dance groups are managed by restaurants, one group is managed by the Cultural Village Center, seven groups are managed by private dance companies, and one is managed by the Culture and Fine Arts Department of Siem Reap.⁶ Sun Sovanny, director of the Culture and Fine Arts Department, pointed out the positive and negative aspects of having the dance performances in hotels. He stated that the performances have contributed to the promotion of Cambodian classical dance while serving the needs of tourists who wish to see Khmer arts. In addition, they have provided orphans and poor children with jobs and the opportunity to improve their living conditions by becoming dancers. In contrast, the lack of quality control and supervision from dance masters has caused a

⁶ Royal Government of Cambodia, *The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts Magazine*, No 1, 2005, 30.

proliferation of artists who do not meet the basic standards concerning morality, technique and refinement prescribed by ancient classical dance. Moreover, the 'commodification of culture' has resulted in a loss of control over the evolution of classical dance by the traditional stewards of the dance form. Traditionally, professional dancers were required to train every morning, four hours a day at least two years to be able to perform. It usually would take years to be able to perform as has been mentioned in the previous chapter. The rigors of this advance training are not suited to the present day dancers' lives in Seam Reap. Most of the students' motivation for learning dance was to fulfill their financial need or for their education at school. A minority of them do it for love of the arts.

At the Apsara Association, Ros Khon, seventy seven years old, formed the dance troupe after the Khmer Rouge period. Even though she had nine years of training at the Royal palace, she had to quit dancing when her family could no longer afford for her studies and living expenses and she had to help her parents in the field. Living with bad memories from the Khmer Rouge, she formed the dance company out of her desire to preserve classical dance from what she remembered. Despite her poor living conditions, she appreciates the fact that classical dance has contributed to her financial well-being and enabled her to survive. It is not easy to control the many poor students who come to learn dance from her class. The students have to adjust the time to their study curriculum at school while sparing a few hours to perform at night at the hotel or restaurant. For the price of approximately \$250, a group of about twenty two dancers will perform for forty five minutes in front of the audience during dinner. Often times the dancers do not exhibit professionalism, and, once distracted with their wrong dance movements, would look at each other and laugh. At the end of the performance dancers usually come out and take a bow, afterwards offering to take pictures with the audience with a friendly smile on their face.

The growth of tourists and job opportunities has encouraged dancers from the University Royal of Fine Arts to seek their fortune by moving to Seam Reap in order to make their living. At the Cambodian Cultural Village, dancers make their living by taking turns of performing every day to entertain tourists. The ticket cost 9\$ for

foreigners and dancers perform with bare feet under the heat in the summer time without enthusiasm or interest. Today many Khmer scholars view classical dancer performers as mere automatons, soulless dancers who have no sentiment and whose movements bear no connection to the authentic value of the dance. Their performances have no substance, no spirit and no soul. “The more tourists come, artists follow the dollars.”⁷ The flow of economic and tourist growth makes it difficult for classical dance to resist. The sensation of classical dance is lost. Chheng Phon also stated that the modern day growth of technology, video and film can cause the importance of performing arts to diminish.⁸ While the dance performances are available in Seam Reap for the international tourists, local performances for the Cambodian public are rarely conducted.

Coupled with this lack of availability of Cambodian classical dance performances for the public is an increasing interest in imported forms of popular culture in today’s society. On TV nowadays, the concert of pop singers are live every weekend on Saturday and Sunday. The adaptation of songs from foreigners are becoming so popular now among the young generation. Songs in the 1960s have lost their relevance and attraction while pop music and rap from foreigners are often heard on the stage. In order to stage these performances for the delight of the audience, back-up dancers are required. These back up dancers are grouped into two different types: pop dance and traditional dance. Another program which entertains people as well is Karaoke movies. Movie shows and foreign movies are often shown in the evening. People who are free on the weekends would turn on the TV to watch concerts or movies. Meanwhile, in contrast, a student from the Royal University of Phnom Penh laments that the last time she saw a classical dance performance at the Royal University of Fine Arts in 2001. For six years, she has been waiting with pride in her national heritage and high expectations to have another chance to see such a performance.

⁷ A lecture giving by Chheng Phon at the Center for Culture and Vipassana in 2000.

⁸ Ibid.

While private dance companies have been performing at hotels and restaurants, in the last four years large scale annual performances of classical dance have been staged in front of Angkor Wat temple. The production of La Nuit Angkor was a cooperative effort between the French Culture Center and the Ministry of Culture. A large troupe of dancers from the RUFA and the Department of Performing arts in Phnom Penh was brought to Seam Reap to perform. The stage and lighting were designed by French and Khmer technicians to make the performance engaging and lively in front of the temple. High ranking officials from foreign embassies and the Cambodian government were invited to the performance. For all three nights of the performance, tickets were sold out for both tourists and Cambodians.

In another collaborative effort with Korea, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts conducted a performance for about sixty days in Seam Reap during the Korean exhibition. Aware of the pop culture that is spreading through TV and films, the Ministry was concerned to promote the awareness of classical dance and other traditional performing arts. In 2007, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts held a workshop and a short course on classical dance skills training to the private dance troupes in Seam Reap. Seventeen dancers from Phnom Penh were sent for this task. In May 2007, the presentation of classical dances researched by senior dance masters was supported by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Again, the aim was to resurrect the authentic in Cambodian classical dance and present it to the people.

5.2 Regional Versus Global Culture and Classical Dance

As mentioned, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts has been concerned about the effects of globalization on Cambodian cultural traditions, especially classical dance. The rise of private dance troupes in Cambodia, especially, in Phnom Penh and in Seam Reap has been a major concern to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Along with this concern, the emergence of contemporary dance has been another challenge for the preservation of traditional classical dance.

Cambodian classical dance is thus not only faced with the growth of tourism, but the internationalization of its culture seemed to pose challenges as well. In order to survive, some dancers started to look at opportunities to work with westerners in creating a new dance form called 'contemporary dance'. At the same time contemporary dance, which had been introduced by western artists and NGO's in Cambodia, has been gaining prominence. Because of the new limits placed on dancers performing classical pieces by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in 2003 as well as the opportunities provided for cross-cultural exchange, artists gradually took an interest in contemporary dance based on traditional techniques. This new art form has gained the appreciation from most younger generation artists. In fact, contemporary dance forms have been slowly developing in Cambodia since 1994 and had emerged in the limelight by 2004.

In 1994, Prince Sihamoni brought a troupe of ballet dancers whom he had trained in France to stage a performance of contemporary dance in Cambodia. This effort was a collaboration between Khmer classical dancers, French dancers, and Cambodian folklore dancers. For this refined production, the Cambodian dancers maintained their classical dance dress and techniques while the French dancers donned the Somput Changhen (Cambodian traditional clothes) and adopted western modern dance techniques. With Pein Peat music, Sam Sathya, the great Cambodian classical dancer aged thirty two years old, moved her arms and body in classical dance gestures slowly following the rhythm of the music with a compassionate and peaceful smile. The two French male dancers ended the story with a peaceful friendship making. The audience consisted of royal family, high-ranking government officials and representatives from the French Embassy. Staged at Chatomuk theater, the performance was successful acclaimed and received appreciation from the Ministry of Culture and even the conservative Cambodian dance masters and critics

In 1996, I had the fortunate opportunity to participate in another collaborative dance effort, this time between dancers from Montpellier and the Royal University of Fine Arts. About ten selected Cambodian classical dancers and folk dancers were trained for at least about four hours a day with the French artists. The new

choreography piece was a collaborative exchange of ideas, technique and costumes between Cambodian dancers and French dancers. The performance lasted for about one hour and was accompanied by western music. The production received the approval of the Ministry of Culture and took place again at Chatomuk theater for three days, one for officials, and two for the public. Again the performance received no criticism from conservative dance masters. It signaled the introduction of a new art form to Cambodia for both audience and artist. A year later, in 1997 a Cambodian classical dance performance toured in Europe: France, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, and Switzerland. While in Paris this Cambodian troupe also performed the same dance piece as they had earlier performed in 1996 in Cambodia with the French troupe from Montpellier. The performing arts NGO Amrita based in Phnom Penh has been working closely with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts as well as local and international artists to promote classical and contemporary dance through dynamic cultural exchange programs, workshops, and joint performances. In 2003, Cambodia participated in the conference of World Dance Alliance in Malaysia. Two female dancers were able to attend with the sponsorship of the Amrita NGO.⁹ The following year, two more female dancers participated in a Young Choreographers Festival in Indonesia. These festivals enabled dancers to exchange and collaborate and to build relationships for future dance development. With the various workshops dancers were able to exchange and explore their ideas in contemporary dance.

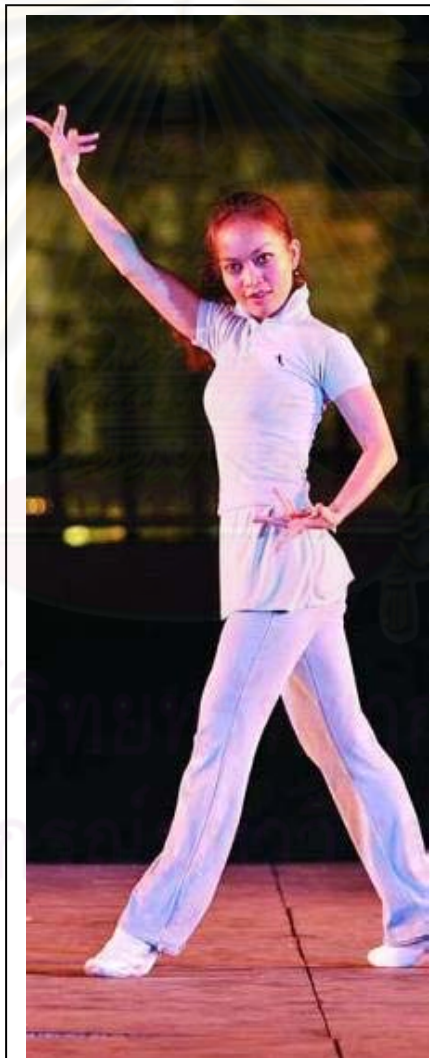
The advent of contemporary dance in Cambodia, though different in purpose, style, and meaning to classical dance, traces its origin to the techniques of classical dance. Fusions and diversions in content, costume, and music serve the basis for innovation. An example of this contemporary form is a dance named “Garuda,” performed and created by the author which expresses the beauty of a female garuda living in peace and harmony with nature in the forest. The costume and music – Sralai and Skor Tum – were traditional, but the motif and the theme innovative. This performance was greeted with remarkable success and recognition from dance scholars and the audiences in Indonesia. Another collaboration dance piece composed by Sam Sathya, a Cambodian classical dancer and Indonesian female dancer from

⁹ The author was one of the dancers who participated in this conference.

Jakarta, was also a dynamic and avant garde production. Using modern costumes and traditional musical accompaniment, Sam Sathya singing in traditional Cambodian dance posture provides the rhythm for an Indonesian dancer in traditional dress executing contemporary dance moves. The performance lasted for about fifteen minutes and provided an excellent example of two women from different cultural backgrounds integrating and weaving their disparate dance traditions into one common theme. The following year in 2005 two classical dancers from Cambodia participated again in the same event and other dancers travelled to different countries to participate in contemporary dance performance and conferences. Not only was contemporary dance performed outside the country, but inside Cambodia as well. Amrita performing arts NGO was also very active in organizing contemporary dance workshops for young artists by having the dancers from abroad work closely with Cambodian dancers. In 2006, a contemporary dance troupe from Malaysia cooperated with Amrita performing arts to conduct a one week contemporary dance workshop at the Amrita performing arts office in Phnom Penh with about twenty Cambodian dancers participating.

With this significant interest, dancers were exposed to contemporary dance methodology as well as the techniques and theories for integration of classical and contemporary dance. In 2005, the French Culture Center in Phnom Penh conducted an annual performance in front of Angkor Wat temple with gala production that was staged with approval from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and financial support from the French Embassy and the French Center in Cambodia. Dancers from The Jean Gallota Company from Grenoble were brought to perform the contemporary dance collaboration and choreography piece with a classical dancer from Cambodia. The dance piece entitled “ L’histoire est bleue” lasted for forty five minutes with a new modern costume of blue color designed by the French dance company with the assistance of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Not to oppose the Cambodian tradition and contrast to the Angkor Wat complex, dancers wore long blue pants with a long and short sleeve shirt. They were accompanied by the Cambodian traditional music ensemble which under the direction of a music teacher from the RUFA who composed a new score adapted to the dance movements. The choreography work was

done by the French director of the company in collaboration with the author. The performance was held for three nights and on the opening day distinguished guests from the French embassy, international officers, and Cambodian high ranking officials were in attendance. The second and third nights were performed for the public. This performance achieved a great deal of recognition from the dance masters, audiences both national and international, most importantly from H.H. Prince Sisowath Kola Chat, Secretary of State of Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.



Picture 16: The performance of L'histoire est bleue in front of Angkor Wat complex in 2005.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

I have attempted in my thesis to show that the revival of classical dance has been a complex and difficult task. On one hand, it has depended on the strength of human capacity and public awareness about the cultural value of dance. On the other hand, the physical resources, most importantly the stage or theater, are one element which has been essential for the success of the revival work. It should not be forgotten that such an oral tradition exists and is actively practiced. The fact of the dilution of the technique and form of the sacred dance, however, leads us to a question of identity. Is it still classical dance? It is indisputable that the work of the revival has saved this art form from perishing totally. Moreover, I have tried to outline that the evolution of classical dance form, its social purpose and meaning, has changed according to the political era and has at times served the interests of the ruling elite.

According to my opinion and that of other scholars, classical dance or sacred dance was born in the 6th century. It had been influenced by the Brahmanic cult and was a sacred ritual attached to the temple and the king which was performed for ceremonies in service to the gods. Hence, the number of dancers supervised by queen Indradevi during King Jayavarman's reign showed that significant human resources were allocated to sacred dance during that time. It was valued highly by the monarchy, and the dancers themselves were accorded special status and required to be of the highest physical and moral integrity. They were all schooled in technique, morality and virtue, according to master Chheng Phon's statement. In addition, the extraordinary duration of their performances shows their belief, commitment, and dedication to worship as devoted dancers of the gods and the king. It also demonstrates that the dancers must have possessed a high degree of patience, calm, and strength of body and soul. Furthermore, it showed how the dancers were highly respected as celestial dancers. After the Angkor declined in the 13th and 14th century, classical dancers remained close to the king Ponhayat when he moved the capital away from Angkor. But classical dance once again emerged and was developed during the king Ang Chan I. The latter paid a great deal of attention to the performing

arts of dance, music in order to honor the devoted officials and royalty of the country. This point marked an important shift in the social purpose of classical dance. During the period of 1806-1840, Cambodia faced a great deal of internal conflict and classical dance seemed to be unheard of until King Ang Doung restored it once again. When King Angdoug returned back to the kingdom of Cambodia after many years living in Thailand, he modified the dance costumes to a certain degree. He still required the dancers to perform inside the royal palace. He let the common people become more involved in the dance and they were able to have some kind of influence to change the dance and put some “modern” elements to replace Cambodian tradition. Apparently, Cambodian classical dance was under the influence of the Thai court during this time. King Ang Duong’s most important contribution was that he used classical dance to reinforce the power of the Khmer royal court and to resist the foreign influence of the Thai. It seemed that in some certain extent classical dance form was influenced from the Thai. After the reign of King Norodom (1859 – 1904), classical dance seemed to be not very well developed as the king was very interested to have foreign dancers to come and do the cultural exchange of dance work while having foreigners learn Khmer classical dance. In addition, the king was interested in a new creation dance drama “Yike” which was derived from classical dance.

One notable aspect of the period of King Sisowath (1904-1928) was the glorification of classical dance. Classical dance was well conducted under the supervision of Princess Suphady. The discipline placed on dancers was very strict as it was controlled by the royal household. With the trip to France, performances were remarkably successful to show the vigor and vitality of classical dance. But when the reign of King Sisowath changed to King Monivong, classical dance again changed direction. With the split of different groups, classical dance not only served the performances of the king but also those of the French. It was noted that dancers were allowed to have freedom for the first time of their married life. They also became civil servants under the French government administration.

When it comes to the golden era of King Sihanouk period (1941 to 1970), classical dance reached its high point in terms of fame and development. The work of

choreography and promotion took place abroad and domestically. Theater and stages were made available for classical dance performances. The reputation of classical dance spread internationally yet locally only monarchs and high ranking officials were able to view classical dance performances. The number of dancers increases and they continued to be highly protected by the royal palace. A discipline of dance training was required of the dancers in order to provide them with solid dancing skills. With a handful of dance masters and the supervision of queen Kossamak, many dances and dance dramas were created. The classical dance costumes were created by researching the bas-reliefs at Angkor Wat temple. One notable transformation of classical dance during King Sihanouk's period was that Queen Kossamak disallowed women from performing the monkey role any longer. This custom has continued until the present day.

When Lon Nol ousted King Sihanouk in 1970, classical dance was still viewed as a national treasure. The dance, however, was removed from the royal household and placed under the administration of the Royal University of Fine Arts. During this regime, classical dance was performed abroad as well as domestically. Many dance documents were produced during this period. When the country fell into the darkness of the Khmer Rouge era, classical dance practice was abandoned. Documents and films of classical dance were burnt and most of the artists were killed.

When the regime of Khmer Rouge was replaced by the new regime of People's Republic of Kampuchea take placed, classical dance experienced a rejuvenation. This was only possible by the reuniting and the collaboration of the surviving artists. Without the willingness and support from the government at that time, classical dance would have never recovered from the dark years of the Khmer Rouge. Today, it is remarkable to note that 90% of classical dance forms and pieces have been restored. Many dance students were also registered to study at the School of Fine Art at that time. Classical art forms were promoted throughout the country. People from every walk of life, even remote villagers, were able to see classical dance performances. The successful performances abroad also contributed to the dynamism

and strength of the movement. In 1993 with the installation of two prime ministers, the situation again changed.

Starting from this point, Cambodian classical dance was re-named to the Royal Ballet of Cambodia and the school was changed to Royal University of Fine Arts. This symbolized in many ways a return to the royal past. The increase in the number of dance performances at hotels in the cities was emerging during that time. The division of performance troupes between the audience of the royal palace and the public audience could also be seen. In courses convened at the Center For Culture and Vipassana, renowned master and scholar Chheng Phon called on the artists to be aware of the virtue, and spiritual value of classical dance form. The counterculture of globalization was threatening this important aspect of the sacred dance. The loss of the national theater and the death of an important human resource in master Chea Sami in 1994 were not only a sorrow for the nation, but a tragedy for the classical dance tradition.

Another unfortunate loss for classical dance was the sale of the national theater. Also, The sale of The Royal University of Fine Arts was another loss of the arts center even, the new school was built to replace but the vigor of artists working as a whole was decreased and the building was not up to standard. The proliferation of private dance companies and the increase of new choreography work from outside the Royal University of Fine Arts were a major concern of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. In addition, another focus of concern was the impact of globalization on the value of classical dance. In 2003, classical dance was registered as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cambodia by UNESCO. From this point, new classical dance choreography work as well private dance companies were under the critical approval of the Ministry Culture and Fine Arts. From 1993 until recent years, classical dance has experienced ups and downs but performances abroad and domestically continue to be conducted under the supervision and support of the royal government with the assistance from foreigners.

In chapter V, I explored Cambodian classical dance in the context of globalization, and tried to show that classical dance faces new challenges and potential as well. Two important areas are the forces of globalization and the innovation from classical dance to contemporary dance. In the tourism area in Seam Reap, where private dance companies are trying to fulfill the needs of tourist entertainment through classical dance, the dance techniques are deteriorating. On one hand, in this situation classical dance has lost its quality of dance technique and its vitality as well as the soul and the spirit. On the other hand, performance at the hotels or restaurants by making some money, in fact, has contributed to improve the living conditions for artists and poor children in some way.

The challenge of classical dance in tourist areas is not the only factor concerned. A new emergence of contemporary dance is yet another development in the evolution from classical dance to contemporary dance. With the financial support of Arts NGO and cross-culture exchanges, artists are being exposed to new elements of art form. In fact, contemporary dance has been gradually introduced in Cambodian society since 1994. However, with a renewed interest in culture exchanges, workshops and conferences, this movement has become more active during the last four years. “Contemporary dance base on traditional dance” is the term that Cambodian artists would use nowadays to describe this new art form. The question remains: does this signify the decline of classical dance as we have known it in Cambodia?

As I have demonstrated in this thesis, Cambodian classical dance in modern times has undergone a number of important transformations. In general, the trend has been a movement from a more closed, sacred, tradition imbued with strong notions of spirituality and morality, to a more accessible, contemporary, and popularized form of classical dance. This evolution has mirrored the socio-political and economic changes in the country throughout the last five decades. This dichotomy of the ‘sacred’ as the original, ancient tradition of classical dance and the ‘profane’ as the present day commercialization of the art form, is popular among some present day scholars. Conservative critiques often argue that the authenticity and value of classical dance

are undermined by the recent commodification of classical dance – most notably for touristic consumption. The lament that the essence of Cambodian culture is somehow being lost or co-opted by consumerists for financial gain can be the subject of debate. The assertion is that the sacredness of classical dance is being degraded by performances whose sole objective is to create monetary value from tourism. Dancers, it is said, have become motivated for personal profit alone and completely alienated from the true spirit and soul of classical dance. Regrettable as this state of affairs may seem, a closer inspection of this argument is needed. The assumption that ‘culture’ and ‘value’ and ‘authenticity’ are fixed terms with static meanings is, in my opinion, flawed. Culture, as I mentioned above, is not static; it is constantly changing, moving, adapting to societal forces. classical dance, being a cultural form of artistic expression, is no different. If we can agree that culture “‘is indeed hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic¹’ how to respond to the argument that its essence or authenticity is undermined and disrupted by market forces?”² We should move beyond binary distinctions between “authentic, good, having value” and “inauthentic, bad, valueless.”

In the case of Cambodian classical dance, though the spirit and soul of the ‘inauthentic’ reproductions or tourist performances of dance may be absent, it could be argued that the very existence of ‘second-rate’ copies of authentic classical Cambodian dance make the latter even more valued in society. Moreover, if tourists do not usually have the chance to witness authentic classical dance performance is it not preferable to have them witness ‘inauthentic’ performances – than nothing at all ? If we assume that our goal is to spread Cambodian culture and increase international appreciation for the beauty and grace of our art forms, then we should choose the former. To return to the terms ‘authenticity,’ ‘sacred,’ and ‘value,’ we should question the meanings of these words. Of importance here is the question: Who defines these terms? If authenticity is based on tradition and rooted in history, before

¹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993) xxix in Robert Shepherd , “Commodification, culture and tourism.” *Tourist Studies* 2 (2002):188.

² Shepherd, 188.

which year is Cambodian classical dance still considered to be ‘authentic’? If the interpretation is based on style and excellence of technique, who should be the judge of the ‘authentic’? To recall an earlier point made in the thesis, culture is always changing, as are the people of that culture. There can never said to be a fixed, isolated period of ‘pristine time’ where everything was still untainted by contact with the outside world. Cambodian dance has been, is, and always will be a cultural form of artistic expression which is dynamic, fluid, capable of both the sacred and profane, yet whose roots are intertwined with the heritage and traditions of Khmer civilization.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

REFERENCES

- Asian Development Bank. "ASEAN and the question of Cambodia." *Strategic Comments* 3:7 (2000), 1 – 2. "Cambodian Economic Growth" Asian Development Outlook. www.adb.org/Documents/Books/ADO/2008/CAM.pdf (Accessed September 10, 2008).
- International Finance Group. "History and Evolution of ASEAN." <http://www.dof.gov.ph/afmm/asp/history.asp>. (Accessed September 1, 2008).
- Brown, Frederick Z. "Cambodia in 1991: An Uncertain Peace." *Asian Survey* 32:1 (1992): 88-96.
- Brown, Frederick Z. "Cambodia in 1992: Peace at Peril." *Asian Survey* 33:1 (1993): 83-90.
- Cravath, Paul Russell. "Earth in Flower: An Historical and Descriptive study of the Classical Dance Drama of Cambodia." Diss. University of Hawaii, 1987.
- Hood, Steven J. "Beijing's Cambodia Gamble and the Prospects for Peace in Indochina: The Khmer Rouge or Sihanouk?" *Asian Survey* 30:10 (1990): 977-991.
- Kravel, Pich Tum. *Khmer Dances*. Phnom Penh: Toyota Foundation, 2001.
- Loviny, Christophe. Ed. *The Apsaras of Angkor*. 2002. Trans. H.E. Khieu Kanhrith and Sun Heng Meng Chheang. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2003.
- Mehta, Julie B. *Dance of Life: The Mythology, History, Politics of Cambodian Culture*. Singapore, Graham Brah (Pte) Ltd., 2001.
- Meyer, C. "Royal Cambodian Ballet," *Nokor Khmer* 1 (1969): 1-17.
- Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. *Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and UNESCO, 2004.
- Ollier, Leakthina Chau-Pech and Tim Winter. Eds. *Expressions of Cambodia: The politics of tradition, Identity and Change*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Roberts, David. "Democratization, Elite Transition, and Violence in Cambodia, 1991-1999." *Critical Asian Studies*, 34:4 (2002): 520 – 538.
- Royal Government of Cambodia. *The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts Magazine*. Phnom Penh: Department of Book and Reading, publication years 2000-2007.

- Royal Government of Cambodia. *Khmer Classical dance*. Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and UNESCO. Phnom Penh: 2007
- Samrang Kamsan, Un Tem, Sek Bunhouk. *The main concept of Khmer Culture and Development*. Center Culture and Vipassana, 2000. (In Khmer)
- Sarin, Hun. [*Classical Music of Cambodia*]. Phnom Penh: Publication sponsored by Prime Minister Hun Sen, 2000. (In Khmer).
- Sarin, Hun. [*Khmer Orchestra*]. Phnomh Penh: Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, 2003. (In Khmer).
- Shepherd , Robert. “Commodification, culture and tourism.” *Tourist Studies* Vol. 2 (2002): 183-215.
- Slocomb, Margaret. *The People’s Republic of Kampuchea 1979-1989*. Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2003.
- Smith, Roger M. “Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia.” *Asian Survey* 7:6 (1967), 353-362.
- Sodhy, Pamela. “Modernization and Cambodia.” *Journal of 3rd World Studies*. 2004: 153-174.
- St. John, Ronald B. “Democracy in Cambodia — One Decade, US\$5 Billion Later: What Went Wrong?” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 3 (2005): 406–28.
- [*The Tenth Dancer*.] Dir. Sally Ingleton. DVD. Archive Film US national Archives. Visnews: Jim Gerrand, 1993.
- [*The flowers of wishing*.] DVD. Cambodian Cinema Archives, 1981. (In French).
- Thiounn, l’Okñã. [*Voyage of his Majesty Sisowath, King of Cambodia, to France, in the year of the hors, 8th of the decade, 3rd year of his rule, corresponding to the occidental year of 1906*.] Ed. Michel R. Antelme. Phnom Penh: Éditions de la Bibliothèque Nationale du Cambodge, 2006. (In Khmer)
- Um, Khatharya. “Cambodia in 1993: Year Zero Plus One.” *Asian Survey* 34:1 (1994), 72-81.
- Teng, Ly Team. [*Khmer Literature*]. Phnom Penh: Seng Nguon Huot Publishing House, 1960.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brandon, James R. *Theater in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- [*Cambodian Ballets.*] DVD. Gaumont Pathe Archives, 1964. (In French).
- [*Cambodian Dancers.*] DVD. 1985. (In French).
- [*Cambodian Dances of King Norodom I.*] DVD. Association of the Brothers of Light. 1899. (In French).
- [*Cambodian Dances of King Norodom II.*] DVD. Association of the Brothers of Light, 1899. (In French).
- [*Cambodian Dances.*] DVD. Gaumont Pathe Archives, 1961. (In French).
- Chanda, Nayan. "Civil War in Cambodia?" *Foreign Policy* 76 (1989): 26-43.
- Chandler, David. *Khmer History*. Trans. Chan Channa, Mam Vannary, Prak Sonnara, Seng Soth. Phnom Penh: Center for Khmer Studies, 2005.
- Coe, Michael D. *Angkor and The Khmer Khmer Civilization*. Ancient Peoples and Places Volume 109. London: Thames and Hudson, 2003.
- [*Dance in the land of the Khmers.*] DVD. Cambodian Cinema Archives. (In French).
- [*Dance in the land of the Khmers.*] DVD. Norodom Sihanouk. (In French).
- Davaruth, Ly an Ingrid Muan Reyum. *Cultures of Independence*. Phnom Penh: Reyum, 2001.
- [*Drawings on Cambodian Dancers by Auguste Rodin.*] DVD. Rodin Museum, 1906. (In French).
- Edwards, Penny. *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945*. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.
- Eng, Soth. *Morhaboros Khmer*. Phnom Penh: Culture Press, 1991.
- Eng, Soth. *Morhaboros Khmer*. Phnom Penh: Culture Press, 1992.
- Girling, J. L. S. "The Resistance in Cambodia." *Asian Survey*, 12:7 (1972), 549-563.
- Gordon, Bernard K. and Kathryn Young. "Cambodia: Following the Leader?" *Asian Survey* 10:2, (1970): 169-176.

- Gottesman, Evan. *Cambodia After the Khmer Rouge: Inside the Politics of Nation Building*. Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2004.
- Graves, James B. *Cultural Democracy*. Chicago: University of Illinois, 2005.
- Groslier, George. [*Cambodian Dancers*.] Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1913. (In French).
- Higham, Charles. *The civilization of Angkor*. London: Phoenix, 2001.
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Imagawa, Yukio. "The recent situation in East Asia and Cambodia." *Asia-Pacific Review* 5:1 (1998): 127 – 137.
- Kamm, Henry. *Cambodia: Report from a stricken land*. New York: Arcade Publishing, Inc., 1998.
- [*Kampuchean Apsaras, Cambodia still dancing*.] DVD. INA, 1982. (In French).
- Kiernan, Ben. "Introduction, Conflict in Cambodia." *Critical Asian Studies* 34:4(2002): 483-495.
- Kimly, Seng. *Khmer Art's History*. Phnom Penh. Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, 2002.
- Liefer, Michael. "Cambodia: In Search of Neutrality." *Asian Survey* 3:1 (1963): 55-60.
- Marston, John A. "Post-Pol Pot Cambodia." *Critical Asian Studies* 37:3 (2005): 501 – 516.
- Miettinen, Jukka O. *Classical Dance and Theatre in South-East Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. *Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*. Phnom Penh: Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, 2003.
- Muller, Gregor. *Colonial Cambodia's 'Bad Frenchman': The rise of French rule and the life of Thomas caraman, 1840-1847*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Narom, Keo and Prum Sisaphantha. *Apsara Dance. Committee of Research on Arts and Culture*. Phnom Penh: The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, 2003.
- Noun Korn. *Lakhon Neovknong Chivit Bracheacheat Khmer*, 2000.

- Osman, Mohd. Taib, Ed. *Traditional Drama and Music of Southeast Asia: Papers presented at the International Conference on Traditional Drama and Music of Southeast Asia, Kuala Lumpur, 27th to 30th August, 1969*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1974.
- Owen, Norman G. Ed. *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Singapore University Press - NUS Publishing, 2005.
- Peou, Sorpong. *Intervention and Change in Cambodia*. Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2000 and Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000.
- [*Performance of the Cambodian Royal Ballet in Paris.*] DVD. INA, 1994. (In French).
- Ratner, Steven R. "The Cambodia Settlement Agreements." *The American Journal of International Law* 87:1 (1993): 1-41.
- [*Reamkar, the dance with gods.*] DVD. 1993. (In French).
- Research Committee on Arts and Culture. [*Khmer Performing Arts*]. Phnom Penh: 2003.
- Roberts, David W. *Political Transition in Cambodia 1991-99: Power, Elitism and Democracy*. Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001.
- Royal Government of Cambodia. [Documents on the National Candidature for the 2nd Proclamation of Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible World Heritage]. Phnom Penh: Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, (Year of Publication). (In French).
- Sam, Sam-Ang and Chan Moly Sam. *Khmer Court Dance A Performance Manual*. Phnom Penh: Khmer Studies Institute, 1989.
- Samoth, Sakou. [*Khmer Classical Dance: Folklore, Lakhon, Musique.*] Phnom Penh: Editions Angkor, 2006. (In French)
- Schnitt, Diana. Ed. *Khmer Court Dance: A Comprehensive Study of Movements, Gestures, and Postures as Applied Techniques*. Phnom Penh: Khmer Studies Institute, 1987.
- Short, Philip. *Pol Pot: the History of Nightmare*. London: John Murray Publishers, 2004.
- Simon, Jean-Pierre. "Cambodia: Pursuit of Crisis." *Asian Survey* 5:1 (1964): 49-54.
- Soubert, Son and Suong Leang Hay. *Case Study on the Effects of Tourism on Culture and the Environment*. Series on Culture and Tourism in Asia. Published by

UNESCO. 1995

Stubbs, Flora. "Translating Tragedy: Classical Dance Version of Shakespearean Play Travels to Hong Kong." *The Cambodian Daily* 2 Mar. 2002: 8.

Szaz, Zoltan M. "Cambodia's Foreign Policy." *Far Eastern Survey* 24:10 (1955), 151-158.

Thompson, Virginia and Richard Adloff . "Cambodia Moves toward Independence." *Far Eastern Survey* 22:9 (1953): 105-111.

Thy, Yong and Choy Yiheang. [*The Identity of Cambodia.*] Phnom Penh: Somebody's Press, Some Year. (In French).

Turnbull, Robert. "A fragile dance." *Far Eastern Economic Review* 161:52 (1968): 36.

Vannpat, Tach and Keo Sophun. [*The gods of Angkor.*] Phnom Penh: Ministry of Propaganda and Culture, 1989. (In Khmer).



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

BIOGRAPHY

Ms. Hun Pen, born 23 August 1981 in Cambodia, is a performing artist with over two decades of international experience as a professional Cambodian classical dancer, and expertise in the areas of contemporary dance, choreography and modern theater. She first began her dancing with Master Chea Samy when she was 5 years old. In 1990, Hun Pen commenced her training in classical dance at the Royal University of Fine Arts, where she specialized in the female role (*neang*). Seven years later she received the prestigious award of Most Outstanding Dancer and Student from the university. The following year she was honored by Princess Bopha Devi with the accolade reserved for artists of exceptional talent and merit. In 2000 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports recognized her with the title of Cultural Ambassador for the nation that year. For the academic year 2001-2 she was elected as the first ever female president of the student body for the faculty of choreographic arts. During that time was also invited to join the Young Intellectuals Association, where she was acknowledged by the government as one of the nation's top young intellectuals. Ms. Pen spent a year abroad in the United States from 2002-2003 studying at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Upon her return she completed her bachelor's degree in choreography from the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh in 2003. In 2004 and 2005, she worked at the Cambodian Living Arts in Cambodia as co-director of the Living Arts Festival Project. During this time, Hun Pen taught art history and dance part time at the University Royal of Fine Arts. In 2004, she studied modern dance, Ballet classic dance and Jazz dance at the Cite International des Arts in Paris. She also lectured art history to the Cambodian students while in France as well. In 2005 she moved on to work with the Gallota Company in Grenoble as a culture ambassador, choreographer and dancer. The following year she returned to Cambodia to conduct research for the Center for Khmer Studies located in Seam Reap. In 2006, Pen was appointed by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts as a coordinator of the Royal Ballet Project for the Ministry and UNESCO. In 2007 she received an appointed Deputy Chief of Choreographic Department at the Ministry of Culture.