

Women Teachers' Roles in Thai Performing Arts

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ABSTRACT

This study of the women teachers' roles in Thai performing arts employed the qualitative research approach and the descriptive research method. The objectives were: 1) to explore inheriting methods of Thai performing arts by women teachers; and 2) to investigate the women teachers' roles in inheriting Thai performing arts. From the study results, two major changes were identified in the inheriting Thai performing arts of women teachers before and after the regime changed in Thailand in 1932: 1) the educational system changed from being within the Royal Court to performing arts schools; and 2) the teaching approach changed from the person-to-person training for techniques, specifically selected appropriate dance to the whole-class teaching and learning according to the curriculum. However, teaching methods were kept unique for original performing arts styles. The contribution of women teachers in Thai performing arts, as analyzed and synthesized from the in-depth interviews of 18 purposively selected informers based on the Role Theory under the Teacher Council's 1996 Teacher Ethics on the Nine Behavioral Patterns for Teachers was found to include the following behaviors. In Part 1 of the Role Theory, components which enhance roles consisted of the Teachers' Ethics behavioral patterns Items 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7, with the numbers of 2, 1, 5, 1, and 2 behaviors, respectively. In Part 2 of the Role Theory, critical components influencing the roles consisted of the Teachers' Ethics behavioral patterns Items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9, with the numbers of 1, 5, 1, 2, 2, 1, and 1 behaviors, respectively. Finally, the legal components were the ethics which govern the teachers' ethics, all of which were regarded as principles for expressing behaviors.

Keywords: role, women teacher.

1. INTRODUCTION

Performing arts is the art of dramaturgy, dancing, and music. According to the performing art scripture, dancing, music, and singing are essential components which need to be included together. Thai performing arts have been influenced by Indian culture, particularly on the god and the legend of dancing. The Nataraja or the dancing form of Lord Shiva exhibits 108 dancing patterns of Mahesh. The first dancing performance was at Chidambaram district, Mandras city, in the south of India, which is in Tamil Nadu. The first dancing scripture 'Natayasatr' was written by a great hermit called Protmuni, and it has become a highly influential treatise for teaching dancing until the present.

The influence of performing arts in South-East Asia entered Thailand both directly and indirectly through the people of Java and Khmer before modified to suit the unique Thai styles and transferred until becoming its own patterns, learning and training styles, tradition, and custom. Performing art experts of Thailand have ascribed that the culture of Indian performing arts has spread into Thailand since the Ayutthaya period. As evident in the construction of Shiva Nataraja Thewalai in 1800 B.E., the year when the

Kingdom of Sukhothai was first established. Therefore, performing arts of Thailand originated from India (Supawadee Potivejkul, 2004).

In the early Rattanakosin, the performance trainings were transferred systemically through the Royal Court, the center of the Kingdom's civilization. Therefore, people from all social classes who were talented in performing arts desired to become a civil servant of His Majesty the King. Hence, vigorous recruitments were needed in order to obtain the best applicants for the training. During the era of King Rama V, all institutes related to performing arts under the Royal support were merged and operated under the Chamberlain (Bunditpatanasilpa Institute, 2015). Later on, King Rama VI established the Department of Fine Arts and the Department of Mahorasop, respectively. Then, King Rama VII established the first Performing Arts and Music School in Thailand.

From the above review, it was interested to investigate how women teachers inherited Thai performing arts in the woman era of the Royal Court through to the teaching and learning in educational institutes and in the social media period of the present, in order to bridge the inheriting of the nation's performing art culture, from one generation to the next.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To explore inheriting methods of Thai performing arts by women teachers
2. To investigate the women teachers' roles in inheriting Thai performing arts

3. SCOPES OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study covered the roles of women teachers in Thai performing arts according to the educational system of performing art schools and the publicizing of performing arts in the Office of Performing Arts as informed by four teachers: Archan Lamoon Yamakup, Acharn Chaleuy Sukavanich, Lady Phaew Sanitwongsenee, and Archan Jamriang Putpradap.

4. KEYWORDS

Women teachers refer to the female teachers who had been selected for inheriting Thai Dance from the Office of Performing Arts by training Thai Dance teachers in Performing Arts schools and the Office of Performing Arts.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research employed the descriptive research approach in the study, and study phases are shown in Figure 1.

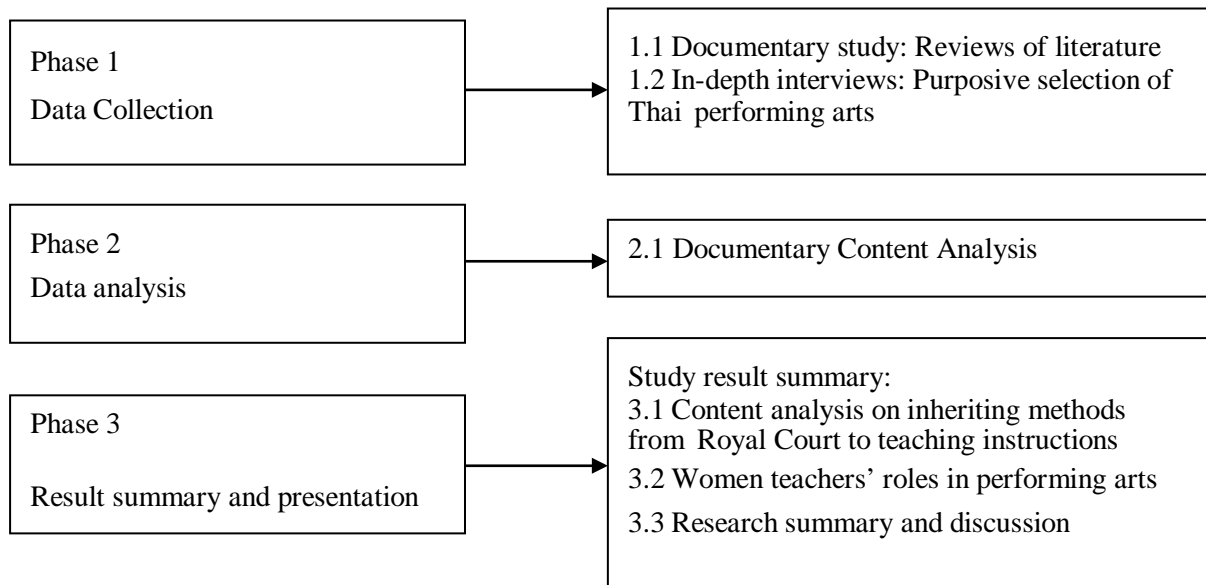


Figure 1

The study was divided into three phases.

Phase 1 Literature Review and Data Collection

The literature exploration and data collection were done with the following steps.

- 1.1 The researcher reviewed related literature through documentary study.
- 1.2 The researcher purposively selected the study samples from Thai performing art experts for the in-depth interviews.

Phase 2 Data Analysis

The data analysis phase was done through the following methods.

- 2.1 Documentary content analysis
- 2.2 Inductive analysis

Phase 3 Summary and Presentation of Results

The result summary and presentation phase focused on the following topics.

- 3.1 Methods of inheriting the performing arts from the Royal Court to teaching instructions
- 3.2 Roles of women teachers in the Performing Arts discipline
- 3.3 Summary and discussion of the results

6. RESULT SUMMARY AND DISCUSSIONS

Two major changes were identified in the inheriting Thai performing arts of women teachers before and after the regime changed in Thailand in 1932: 1) the educational system changed from being within the Royal Court to Performing Arts schools; and 2) the teaching approach changed from the person-to-person training for

techniques, specifically selected appropriate dance to the whole-class teaching and learning according to the curriculum. However, teaching methods were kept unique for original performing arts styles, starting from the teacher performing the target dance, and then the students imitate the dance and practice for fluency, under the teacher's supervision and correction for the correctness and beauty as in the original styles.

The contribution of women teachers in Thai performing arts, as analyzed and synthesized from the in-depth interviews of 18 purposively selected informers based on the Role Theory under the Teacher Council's 1996 Teacher Ethics on the Nine Behavioral Patterns for Teachers, was summarized in Table 1.

Behavioral Patterns based on the 1996's Teacher Ethics	Role Theory/Identified Behaviors from the Interviews
1. A teacher gives love and compassion to the students through taking care, giving helps, supports, and motivation in learning, equally for every student.	<p>Part 1 Components which enhance roles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Giving compassion and love to students as their own children 2) Sense of humour <p>Part 2 Crucial components influencing the roles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Analyzing individual learner, both learning and performing
2. A teacher shall educate, teach, train, and promote knowledge, skills, and appropriate behaviors to students with all capacity, sincerely.	<p>Part 1 Components which enhance roles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Rhythm accuracy <p>Part 2 Crucial components influencing the roles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Good memory, accuracy in the discipline, contents, and knowledge body 2) Teaching without hiding 3) Ability to correct dance performance and personality 4) Teaching students how to think, analyze, and identify 5) Always preparing and reviewing contents before teaching
3. A teacher shall behave and act as a physical, verbal, and mental model for the students.	<p>Part 1 Components which enhance roles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Being a role model 2) Respecting colleagues 3) Acting appropriately 4) Having gratitude 5) Being punctual
4. A teacher shall not behave against the students' physical, intellectual, mental, emotional, and social growth.	<p>Part 2 Crucial components influencing the roles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Using variety of teaching methods

5. A teacher shall not seek for benefits from students out of regular duties, nor perform any act for personal wrongful benefits.	Part 2 Crucial components influencing the roles 1) Being sacrificed 2) Being devoted and making after teaching evaluation continuously
Behavioral Patterns based on the 1996's Teacher Ethics	Role Theory/Identified Behaviors from the Interviews
6. A teacher should develop self-improvement on the profession, characteristics, and vision in accordance with the academic, economic, social, and political development.	Part 1 Components which enhance roles 1) The ability to analyze the audience Part 2 Crucial components influencing the roles 1) Applying knowledge to create work regularly 2) Being a scholar
7. A teacher shall love and trust in teaching profession, and be good member of teaching professional organization.	Part 1 Components which enhance roles Loving friends and colleagues Working in team
8. A teacher shall support other teachers and the community in a creative way.	Part 2 Crucial components influencing the roles 1) Building new knowledge from the existing one and searching for new methods regularly
9. A teacher shall act as a leader in the conservation and development of Thai wisdoms and cultures.	Part 2 Crucial components influencing the roles 1) Establishing instructional system, transferring inheriting culture, and transferring performing arts profession to maintain high-class profession
Part 3 Legal components: 1) Role-based command line of leader-follower 2) Opportunity for apprenticeship as substitute actor	

Table 1. Summary of the women teachers' roles based on the Role Theory under the Teacher Council's 1996 Teacher Ethics on the Behavioral Patterns for Teachers
Source: Wassana Bunyaphithak, 2016

7. DISCUSSION

The inheriting of Thai performing arts since the Ayutthaya period was done in both the Royal Court and local formats. Originally, performing arts of normal people were allowed for only male performers until King Rama IV canceled the rules that prohibited performances by women. Afterwards, Thai performing arts taught by women became common nationwide. In the King Rama VI period, western cultures influenced Thai cultures in many ways, resulting in the development of Thai performing arts and many

types of modern plays.

The study of women teachers' roles in inheriting performing arts from the Royal Court to school system, in order to synthesize contribution of women teachers in the Thai performing arts discipline, divided the roles into two groups. In the Teacher Group, the study aimed at investigating the roles from Archan Lamoon Yamakup, Acharn Chaleuy Sukavanich, and in the Actor Group, investigating the roles from Lady Phaew Sanitwongsenee, and Archan Jamriang Putpradap. Although the role of performing arts teachers in the Teacher Group was as conservationists and the role of teachers in the Actor Group was as developers, the aim of Thai performing arts was to create work from the beauty of nature to performing arts, and from performing arts to be looked naturally beautiful. The major feature of transferring knowledge and knowledge body of Thai performing arts in the Teacher Group and in the Actor Group all had the approach that transfer customs and traditions that pass through the values of Thai culture in all previous eras to the present. These findings were consistent with those from the Department of Fine Arts which claimed that transferring Thai performing arts was very important because Thai performing arts was the science with traditions and national cultures that originated from wisdoms accumulated from ancestors and can be explained. This edifies those who were exposed to the delicate aesthetics (Department of Fine Arts, 2005).

When the science of performing arts become prosperous, teaching and learning of specific courses in performing arts occur in all educational levels in Thailand. Nevertheless, the methods of transferring knowledge have been maintained continuously. The Department of Fine Arts has studied the guidelines for teaching performing arts and found that the discipline had clear guidelines since the early time. That is, the trainers must participate in the 'Wai Kru' ceremony prior to learning, and this has become a firm custom. After that, the teacher performs the dance patterns starting from the basics which take quite long time. The teacher takes time, efforts and attempts to train the learners every day. Then, the teacher begins teaching sets of performance followed by 'Khon' and play, respectively (Pairoj Thongkamsuk, 2005). However, the women teachers both in the Teacher Group and the Actor Group have to create the arts in the conservative and modern styles, improving the performing arts continuously, based on the principle of maintaining the identity of the arts and the national identity. Otherwise, arts will look the same for all nationalities and languages due to the invasion of the Western culture, resulting in the emergence of many performing arts theories in the mentioned period.

It can be concluded that the methods of inheriting performing arts by women teachers have evolved from the women era of the Royal Court to the teaching and learning through performing arts schools and the Office of Performing Arts, acting as a joining point that passes through the national culture of performing arts from one generation to the next.

8. RECOMMENDATION

There should be studies on the roles or teachers of other gender and in other fields of arts. The study should also include the art revolution in the social media era, especially its effects on the conservation, inheritance, publicizing, and development of Thai performance arts, as well as how to maintain knowledge body of performing arts and prevent it from degrading.

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