A comparative Study of Indian Kathakali and Thai Classical Masked Play

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Abstract

This is a qualitative investigation to compare the classical Indian Kathakali dance and Thai Classical Masked Play (Thai Khon dance or Khon) in term of performance elements.

The research results revealed that Thai khon dance has developed from Chuck Nak Dukdamban Play, swordplay, and grand shadow play. Chuck Nak Dukdamban Play has influences from the legend of Cambodia's Chuck Nak Dukdamban Play in the period of King Jayavarman II, Somdet Phra Ramathibodi II, Somdet Phra Maha Chakkraphat, and Somdet Phra Chao Prasat Thong who are kings of Ayutthaya, Thailand. It was showed that this Cambodian play took place in a coronation ceremony which is similar to Thailand's. The performers were divided into group of scrupulous men and devils. The ending of the performance was the victory of the scrupulous group. The style of fighting in Khon is adapted from swordplay, and the characteristic of the performance is adapted from grand shadow play. Before the practicing stage, performers from both countries, Thailand and India, have to pay homage to their teachers which are called "A-rung ngetum" for Indians and "Krob-kru" for Thais. The study found that Indian Kathakali and Khon are similar in terms of posture, and tow techniques known as Teab Learm and Ten sao. These techniques are done to strengthen performers' legs to carry other performers' weight to do an acrobatic pyramid. However, the position of performers' legs is different; Indians use half-sitting technique whereas Thais use a full one. Kathakali performers are exclusively males, whereas Khon performances included female

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cast members. That is the reason why the protagonists and the ones who act as human beings do not need to wear masks only make-up. For both performances, the performers use their hands to communicate which is called dancing art terminology, but performers in Kathakali move faster with Mudsa (interpretation of dramatic composition). In contrast, Khon is focused on neat movements according to patterns of Thai classical plays.

In Kathakali, the characters are divided into two groups: dhama and unscrupulous ones. Khon's characters are put into four groups: Pra (main actor), Ngang (main actress), giants, and monkeys. The story used in Khon is a version of the Ramayana, but Kathakali's are Mahabharat and a plot that praises Shiva. Open-air theaters with lamps are the place for Kathakali, and also the small chairs are set as props. Khon existed both outside and inside theaters with props such as a royal chariot and stool. Musical instruments used in Kathakali consist of Janedai drums, Mattalam drums, flutes, and cymbals. For Khon, melody is produced by a Piphat ensemble which consisted of xylophones, gongs, flutes, drums, two-faced drums, and cymbals. Both kinds of dance can be performed in general occasions. India is the country of the highest growth of civilization, and culture has been spread according to the theory of culture spreading . This theory is based on several factors to propel culture (e.g., economy, society, and culture); therefore it is linked to cultural exchange. Thailand has been influenced by India in the aspect of Buddhism spreading and development strategies in politics, government administration, religion, tradition, and dancing arts. Knowledge from the book of Indian dancing art was adapted properly to be a pattern of Thai dancing art by developing some parts to suit Thai culture.

Keywords: Classical dance, India, kathakali, khon, Thailand

การศึกษาเปรียบเทียบการแสดงกถกพิของอินเดีย และการแสดงโขนของไทย

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาเปรียบเทียบการแสดงกถกพิของ อินเดีย กับการแสดงโขนของไทยด้านองค์ประกอบของการแสดง ผลการวิจัยพบว่า การแสดงโขนของไทยพัฒนามาจากการละเล่นชักนาคดึกดำบรรพ์ การเล่น กระบี่กระบองและหนังใหญ่ ซึ่งการละเล่นชักนาคดึกดำบรรพ์นั้นได้รับอิทธิพลมาจาก ตำนานของการเล่นชักนาคดึกดำบรรพ์ของกัมพูชา นอกจากนี้ยังพบ หลักฐาน การละเล่นชักนาคดึกดำบรรพ์ในสมัยของพระเจ้าชัยวรมันที่ 2 ของประเทศกัมพูชา และสมัยกรุงศรีอยุธยาในสมัยสมเด็จพระรามาธิบดีที่ 2 สมเด็จพระมหาจักรพรรดิ และสมเด็จพระเจ้าปราสาททองของประเทศไทย แสดงให้เห็นว่าประเทศกัมพูชา และไทยมีความคล้ายคลึงกันในเรื่องของการละเล่นชักนาคดึกดำบรรพ์ใน พิธีอินทราภิเษก ซึ่งลักษณะของการแสดงดังกล่าวมีความคล้ายคลึงกัน คือ มีการแบ่งผู้เล่นออกเป็น 2 ฝ่าย คือ ฝ่ายมนุษย์และฝ่ายอสูร บทลงท้ายฝ่ายธรรม ย่อมชนะฝ่ายอธรรม โขนได้นำหลักการแบ่งตัวละครของการละเล่นชักนาค ดึกดำบรรพ์มาใช้ในการแสดง ลักษณะการต่อสู้ที่ใช้ในการแสดงโขนได้นำท่าทาง มาจากการเล่นกระบี่กระบอง ส่วนลักษณะของการแสดงนำมาจากการแสดง หนังใหญ่ และก่อนที่จะเริ่มฝึกหัดการแสดงผู้แสดงของทั้งสองประเทศจะต้องผ่าน พิธีการไหว้ครูที่เรียกว่า "อารังเงตั้ม" ของประเทศอินเดีย และ "พิธีครอบครู" ของประเทศไทย การฝึกหัดกถกพิและโขนมีการใช้เทคนิคการถีบเหลี่ยมและการ เต้นเสาเหมือนกัน เพื่อฝึกกำลังขาของผู้แสดงให้มีความแข็งแรง สามารถรับ น้ำหนักของนักแสดงท่านอื่นได้ เนื่องจากต้องมีการขึ้นลอยและต่อตัวในระหว่าง ทำการแสดง แต่ลักษณะการวางเท้าของอินเดียผู้แสดงจะตะแคงฝ่าเท้า และงอนุ้ม เก็บนิ้วเท้าทุกนิ้ว จะไม่วางเต็มเท้าเหมือนกับโขน เรียกว่า "Haft-Sitting" ผู้แสดง กถกพิของอินเดียจะใช้ผู้ชายแสดงล้วนเช่นเดียวกับการแสดงโขน แต่ภายหลัง อนุญาตให้ผู้หญิงเข้ามาร่วมในการแสดงด้วย ทำให้มีการเทคนิคการแต่งหน้า แบบละครในเข้ามาใช้ในการแสดงโขนแทนการสวมหน้ากาก โดยจะยกเว้นเฉพาะ

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ตัวพระ ตัวนาง และตัวมนุษย์ที่ไม่ต้องสวมหน้ากากเช่นเดียวกับการแสดงกถกฬิ
ที่นำเทคนิคการแต่งหน้าเข้ามาใช้ในการแสดงแทนการสวมหน้ากาก การแสดง
กถกฬิจะใช้การตีบทเรียกว่า "มุทรา" โดยใช้มือในการสื่อความหมายต่าง ๆ
เหมือนกับโขน เรียกว่า "นาฏยศัพท์" ลักษณะของการตีบทของทั้งสอง
การแสดงจะมีความแตกต่างกัน ผู้แสดงกถกฬิจะเคลื่อนไหวไปมาอย่างรวดเร็ว
และท่าทางการตีบทจะมีความเข้มแข็ง ส่วนโขนจะมีการเคลื่อนไหวที่อ่อนช้อย
งดงามตามแบบแผนการละครของไทย

กลุ่มธรรมและกลุ่มอธรรม ส่วนโขนจะแบ่งเป็น 4 กลุ่ม คือ พระ นาง ยักษ์
และลิง เรื่องที่ใช้ในการแสดงจะใช้เรื่องเดียวกัน คือ รามายณะหรือรามเกียรติ์
แต่กถกฬิจะใช้เรื่องมหาภารตะ และเรื่องที่สรรเสริญยกย่องพระศิวะในการแสดง
ส่วนโรงละครที่ใช้ในการแสดงกถกฬิจะใช้เวทีกลางแจ้ง และจะมีตะเกียงในการให้
แสงสว่างระหว่างทำการแสดง นอกจากนี้ยังใช้ม้านั่งตัวเล็กเป็นอุปกรณ์ประกอบ
ในการแสดง สำหรับโขนจะใช้ทั้งเวทีกลางแจ้งและเวทีแบบมีหลังคาในการแสดง
มีการใช้อุปกรณ์ต่าง ๆ เช่น ตั่ง ราชรถ เป็นต้น นอกจากนี้เครื่องดนตรีที่ใช้
ประกอบการในการแสดงกถกฬิ ประกอบด้วย กลองเจนได กลองมัตดาลัม ขลุ่ย
ฉิ่ง ส่วนโขนจะใช้วงปี่พาทย์ ประกอบด้วย ระนาด ฆ้อง ปี่ กลอง ตะโพน และฉิ่ง
บรรเลงประกอบการแสดง โอกาสที่ใช้ในการแสดงกถกฬิจะแสดงในงานทั่วไป
เช่นเดียวกับโขน ประเทศอินเดียเป็นประเทศที่มีความเจริญทางอารยธรรมสูงสุด
ส่งผลให้มีการเผยแพร่ทางวัฒนธรรมตามทฤษฎีการแพร่กระจายทางวัฒนธรรม
จากที่หนึ่งไปสู่อีกที่หนึ่ง โดยอาศัยปัจจัยทางด้านเศรษฐกิจ สังคม และวัฒนธรรม
มาเป็นกลไกในการขับเคลื่อนทางวัฒนธรรม จนเกิดการถ่ายโยงและแลกเปลี่ยน
ทางวัฒนธรรมกันขึ้น ซึ่งประเทศไทยก็ได้รับอิทธิพลมาจากการเผยแพร่
พระพุทธศาสนา และวิทยาการต่าง ๆ ของประเทศอินเดีย ได้แก่ การปกครอง
การเมือง ศาสนา ประเพณี และนาฏศิลป์ โดยเฉพาะด้านนาฏศิลป์มีการนำ
คัมภีร์นาฏยศาสตร์ของอินเดียมาเป็นแบบแผนและข้อปฏิบัติในการเรียนการสอน
นาฏศิลป์ของไทย โดยปรับเปลี่ยนให้เหมาะสมและเข้ากับวัฒนธรรมของตนเอง

คำสำคัญ: นาฏศิลป์ อินเดีย การแสดงกถกฬิ ไทย การแสดงโขน

Introduction

India has a long history and the Indian civilization has influenced many countries around the world, especially those countries in Southeast Asia. Thailand is one of the countries that has been affected by Indian cultural expansion in a variety of different fields, including politics, religion, traditions and art. The first instances of cultural exchange occurred due to contact with Indian merchants. Rather than being adopted in their entirety, Indian cultural traditions were absorbed within the existing Thai systems and mixed with local customs. For this reason, the culture from India was adopted differently in different areas of Thailand, based on the local environment and social context. Nevertheless, the fundamentals of culture were very similar from community to community and region to region.

Chompunut Kultitikit (1994) found that the earliest forms of Indian dance were created to show respect to the gods. They were particularly important for revealing the emotions of members of the community. For this reason, dance took an important role in local ceremonies and was an integral part of everyday life. The exact origin of classical Indian dance is unclear, but there are frequent mentions in early texts about courtiers making rhythms with percussion instruments and dancing to crude musical beats. As documented in historical Chinese texts, an important part of Indian culture was music, specifically instrumental music and dancing (Wanlipodom, 1992). Indian styles influenced existing Thai music, which evolved into three distinct types: *khon, lakorn and fon-ram.*

Thai *khon*, or masked dance, is a type of stage performance that originated in the Ayutthaya period and is believed to be the basis for many future types of dramatic Thai art. The art form has been preserved over the centuries and is categorized by the all-male ensemble and the head masks worn by performers. Compared

with the performing arts of India, khon closely resembles kathakali in both style and script. The Ramkiat (Thai version of the Ramayana) is used for the story of all khon plays, while the original version is used for the story of the kathakali. In both stories, good triumphs over evil.

Aside from purely entertainment, the Indian art-form is also used to worship the Gods and sacred symbols. For this reason, the dance postures must be elegant and precise. Kathakali is an ancient and well-respected performing art. There are a number of specialist dance schools, the most prestigious of which is the 15-year old Kathakali School in Kerala, Southern India. The school attracts many people interested in classical Indian dances and each year, there is a large intake of new students.

Due to the foundation of a new curriculum in Thai and Asian dance, the researchers were interested in comparing and analyzing Thai khon and Indian kathakali. The particular interest is the comparison between practice methods, the meaning of dance postures, costumes, make-up, musical instruments and opportunities to perform. The objective of this research was thus to compare the art of khon and that of kathakali.

Research methodology

This was a qualitative investigation that lasted one year and eight months between June 2009 and January 2011. The reception area was purposively selected as Banaras Hindu University of India in Varanasi, where the researchers spent two months examining kathakali from June to July 2009. The researchers specifically analyzed practice methods, style and meaning of dance postures, costumes, make-up and musical instruments. Information was gathered from documents and field study. Academic documents were studied for information relating to both khon and kathakali.

Specifically, information relating to the two dances was sought, including the history and characteristics of the performance, costumes and make-up, performance opportunities, the instruments used in performing and the relationship between the two different dances. The information gathered from documents was then organized into groups according to the aims of the research and the importance of the facts. Field research has been conducted to find out information regarding five areas of dance practice, which were training methods, style and meaning of dance postures, costumes, make-up and musical instruments. Web respondents were purposively selected and interviewed on their knowledge of the five areas. Sound recordings of all interviews were made to analyze the comments afterwards. Video recordings of both types of dance performance were also made to enable the researchers to analyze dance postures and performances. This also facilitated easier comparison between the two dances. The results were analyzed in two categories: 1) the history of the dances and 2) the performance characteristics of the dances. All data was validated using a triangulation method. Results were analyzed inductively using typological analysis based on the research aims. The results are presented here as a descriptive analysis.

Results

1. The development of Kathakali

Indian people believe that the origins of classical Indian dance lie with the Hindu gods. The two gods with the closest relationship to classical Indian dance are Brahma and Shiva. According to legends and traditional stories in India these two Gods are associated with the origin of classical dance. There are four key components in classical Indian dance, which are known as jaturapinai. The four components are Wajikapinai (sound and lyrics), Aharayapinai

(costumes and make-up differentiating the characters), Sattawikapinai (movements) and Ankikapinai (postures). The combination of these components of Indian dance determines the specific type of dance. Nritta is the name given to dances that include only movements and postures. Nritya is the name given to dances that combine movements and music. Natya is the name given to dances that combine each of the four elements of Indian dance as one single story. When defining dance postures, the body itself is divided into three specific sections. Anga is the term used for the head, hands, chest, waist, bottom and legs. Pratyanga is the collective term for the neck, shoulders, back, stomach, elbows, ankles and knees. Upaanga is the collective term for the eyes, nose, lips, teeth and cheeks. Usually, the anga lead the dance movements and the pratyanga and upaanga follow. The movements in classical Indian dance are essential to creating feeling or mood in the performance. "Where the hands go, the eyes follow, where go the eyes, there the mind, where the mind is, there is feeling; where there is feeling, there is mood, or Bava" (Gopal & Dadachanji, 1953). The aesthetical or physical representations of these moods are based on essential states of being or mentality known as the rasa. There are nine rasa, each of which is assigned to a Hindu god and denoted by a particular color. The nine rasa are: 1) Śṛngāram, meaning love and attractiveness; this is assigned to the god Vishnu and marked by the colour green. 2) Hāsyam, meaning laughter, mirth and comedy; this is assigned to the god Ganesha and marked by the colour white. 3) Kāruṇyam, meaning compassion and tragedy; this is assigned to the god Yama and marked by the colour 'dove-grey'. 4) Vīram, meaning heroic; this is assigned to the god Indra and marked by the colour wheatish-brown. 5) Bhayānakam, meaning horror and terror; this is assigned to the god Kala and marked by the colour black. 6) Bībhatsam, meaning disgust and aversion; this is assigned to the god

Shiva and marked by the colour blue. 7) Adbhutam, meaning wonder and amazement; this is assigned to the god Brahma and marked by the colour yellow. 8) Raudram, meaning fury; this is assigned to the god Rudra and marked by the colour red. 9) Śāntam, meaning peace and tranquility; this is assigned to the god Vishnu and also marked by the color white. Mudra are prominent in all Indian classical dances. A mudra is a symbolic gesture used to convey meaning with the hands rather than using words or sounds. The dances of Kerala in Southern India use 24 hand positions as the basis for all postures, which are derived from the Nataya Shastra, a famous treatise on the performing arts written at the turn of the millennium in classical India. These are depicted below in figure 1.

Figure 1: The 24 mudra of Keralan dances (source: Devi, 1990)

Kathakali is a creative classical dance of southern India. The dance originated on the Malabar Coast of South-western India. The Malabar Coast is characterized by its palm-fringed, white sandy beaches and its many ports have a long history of welcoming missionaries and explorers, including the Ancient Greeks, the Ancient Romans, the Arabs, the Dutch, the English and the Chinese. The cultural exchange that such contact allowed is clearly visible in the culture and architecture of the region. The ethnic groups of the region are the Aryan and the Dravidian people. Kathakali was created during the seventeenth century in Calicut. In 1655, a dance drama named Krishnagiti was created to retell the story of Krishna. The dance was specifically created for performances in high temples and royal households. The raja of Kottarakkara in Southern Kerala invited the dance creator, Manavedan, Sri Samoothiri Maharaja of Kozhikode, to bring his performance to the town. Manavedan refused, claiming that the people of Southern Kerala were too uncivilised to witness his art. As a result, the raja penned his own dramas based on the Ramayana. These were called Raman Attam and were played on eight consecutive nights, one act per night. After the performance, the raja enlisted the help of distinguished local artists to help develop and improve the play. The drama was subsequently dispersed to all parts of India and enjoyed particular fame in the South and the city of Varanasi, where the researchers spent some time investigating the Kathakali dance. The crucial difference between the new drama and the old drama was the accessibility to the lower classes. The previous dance dramas were only performed in the temples, which restricted access to those outside the elite. The new developments included performances both inside and outside the temples, so now the lower classes were able to view the performances. Changes to the performance characteristics of traditional Indian dances included the replacement

of masks with make-up, more elaborate postures, increased use of mudra, greater role of musical instruments and alterations to costumes. The style of dance became known as Kathakali and the current center is the state of Kerala.

2. The components of Kathakali

Kathakali is performed by male dancers and each actor is expected to be able to play any of the characters included in the performance. Female characters are popularly played by boys. The dance is still performed with the objective of worshiping the gods. Development of the characters is restricted by the fact that the stories are traditional tales of the gods. In each performance characters are divided into two categories, good and evil. Noble characters *(Pracha)*, such as kings, heroes and gods, are identified by green face paint and a polite and gentle temperament. High-born evil characters *(Katti)* are identified by the knife-like shape painted onto their cheek and the white mark on their nose-tips and forehead. *Thadi* are bearded characters that can be subdivided into one of three types: *chuvanna thadi* (red beards), *vella thadi* (white beards) and *karutha thadi* (black beards). The chuvanna thadi are wholly violent and evil. The *vella thadi* are predominantly good, higher beings (such as the monkey god, Hanuman). The *karutha thadi* are wild and primitive evil characters. *Kari* are demonic characters, the worst class of character in the performance, and are identified by black face-paint, dotted with red and white markings. *Minnuku* are virtuous and pure characters, including saints, religious people and female characters. A selection of characters is displayed below in figure 2.
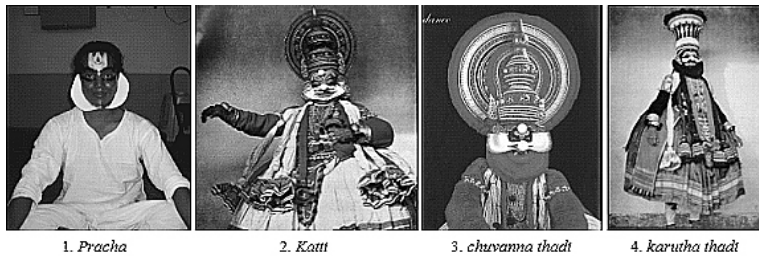
1. *Pracha*   2. *Katti*   3. *chuvanna thadi*   4. *karutha thadi*

Figure 2: Four characters from a traditional kathakali performance. (Source: Bolland, 1980)

Each *kathakali* performer wears an elaborate, heavy costume. The costume is made of an outer skirt comprised of different parts, cloth tied around the waist, colorful and ornate upper body garments, jewelry (including anklets) and large decorative headgear. No specific stage is required for kathakali performances, which is a result of its evolution from temple performances but a large oil lamp is positioned in-front of the performance. Stage curtains *(tirasseela)* are an important part of the production and require two designated members of staff, who are also responsible for topping up oil in the lamp. One key prop during the performance is a small wooden chair, which is used for a number of different roles, including differentiating between height and for sitting. This is an important piece of equipment that must be respected by the actors. The musical ensemble is the final, yet crucial piece of the *kathakali* production, without which the performance may not go ahead. The ensemble includes two important types of traditional Indian drum, *chenda* and *maddalam*. *Kathakali* is usually performed at night and generally lasts at least 3 hours. There is a specific order to the production, which begins with the beating of a drum 2 to 3 hours before the performance to call members of the local communities

to the audience. This stage is known as the *keli-kottu.* The todayam is then conducted, which is a ritual to worship or bless the gods before the actual performance. The actors then demonstrate their skill during the *melappadam.* This is then followed by the *purappadu,* which is when the main actors come to the stage and introduce themselves to the audience. After this point, the play proper begins. The production is completed with a spiritual or religious dance to pay homage to the gods and also to thank the audience.

3. The development of Thai Khon

   Khon is a high-status performing art that dates back to the Ayutthaya period of Thai history and the reign of King Narai. The written record of traditional *khon* dance can be traced back to the memoirs of monsieur Simon de la Loubère, an early French diplomat who led an embassy to Siam in 1647. "…Cone [sic] is a figure-dance, to the sound of the violin, and some other instruments. The dancers are masqued and armed, and represent rather a combat than a dance: everyone runs into high motions, and extravagant postures, they cease not continually to intermix some word. Most of their masks are hideous, and represent either monstrous beasts, or kinds of devils" (Loubère, 1693: p.49). The development of this particular traditional Thai performance has been attributed to three different types of early dance drama. The first type of performance said to have influenced Thai *khon* is the *chak nak duk damban* drama of Angkorian Cambodia. The second influence on *khon* performance is said to have been the weapon-based traditional Thai martial art *krabi-krabong.* The final influence is said to have come from nang yai shadow puppetry. The name *khon* comes from three possible sources: 1) The name of a percussion instrument; 2) A Tamil word meaning to decorate the body to show gender; or 3) An Iranian word meaning to narrate or speak in place of a doll or figure. The
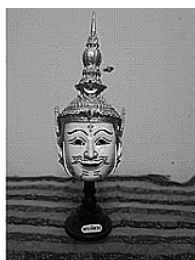
main stories told in *khon* performances are parts or acts of the Ramayana. The first *khon* performances began in the Ayutthaya period and were known as *khon luang*. The popularity continued through until King Rama I and King Rama II of the Rattanakosin era. King Rama III, otherwise known as King Nangklao, did not see the benefit in the original *khon* performances and so the popularity of the dance faded. The art was restored during the reign of King Rama V, during which time roles for ogre characters, monkey characters and musical accompaniment were developed. The developments were largely due to the interest of the crown prince, who trained up his royal guards to perform khon in the court. Upon becoming King Rama VI, King Vajiravudh formed the Department of Dramatic Arts to further develop traditional Thai performing arts, including Khon performance. Over time, the performance aspect of *khon* was increasingly influenced by Lakorn Nai, another type of classical Thai dance.

Khon performers are recognizable by the distinctive headwear worn to portray the different *khon* characters. Masks, known as *hua khon,* were originally designed as a replacement for make-up and are the most important part of the *khon* costume. During the reign of Rama VI, these were later developed for the main characters into faceless headwear, an influence of *lakhon nai.* Now, only animals, demons and monkeys wear full face masks. The idea of the masks themselves may have come from ancient Greek influence or perhaps local prehistoric cultures. Good characters were traditionally identified by beautifully created masks, whereas bad characters were traditionally identified by scary, ugly masks with distinctive features, such as protruding eyebrows. The *khon* headwear is distinguished according to the *Ramakien* play (Thai version of the *Ramayana*) and a list of the characteristics for each individual is given below in table 1, with examples shown in figure 3.

Table 1: A list of headwear characteristics for each group of characters in the Ramakien.

Character	Headwear style
Gods	
Phra Isaworn (Shiva)	White face and an elaborate Thai-style male crown
Phra Narai/Witsanu (Narayana/Vishnu)	Face coloured the purple of the Thai Crape Myrtle flower and an elaborate Thai-style male crown
Phra Phrom (Brahma)	White face with four smaller faces in the crown
Phra In (Indra)	Green face and an elaborate Thai-style male crown with a levelled bottom and a distinctive blunt tip
Buddhist monks	
Hermit's master	Gold and beige colour face with crown
Pirab Buddhist monk	Gold and black face with crown
Humans	
Phra Ram (Rama)	White face with many-levelled pointed crown
Phra Lak (Lakshman)	Gold face with many-levelled pointed crown
Phra Phrot (Bharata)	Vermilion face with many-levelled pointed crown
Phra Satrut (Shatrughna)	Purple face with many-levelled pointed crown
Hermits and philosophers	
Hermit	Crown-shaped headdress, painted with a 'tiger's fur' pattern
Philosopher	White face with 'folded' crown, bound at the ears
Headdresses	
Chada	Pointed head decoration worn by gods and main characters
Crown	Worn by female characters, including angels and women
Tiara	Worn by female giants
Demons	
Big demon	Green or black face, grin, open-eyed. The crown is levelled with faces as part of the second and third levels.

Character	Headwear style
Demons	
Small demon	Either grinning green face and bottle-gourd shaped crown (pipek), green face with gritted teeth and an elaborate Thai-style male crown with a levelled bottom and a distinctive blunt tip (indrachit), or grinning, open-eyed green face with a bald head and three small faces at the back (kumpakan).
Foreign demon	White or purple face, depending on character
Main demon soldiers	Grinning green face or grinning, open-eyed white face, depending on character
Minor demon soldiers	Grinning, often bald and colourful
Low-class demons	Mask trimmed with gold leaf
Monkeys	
Hanuman, Sukrib and Jambuban	Individual styles with crowns specifically designed for the monkeys
Pimolpanorn and Sattaplee	18 mongkut masks (16 open-mouthed and 2 closed mouth masks)
Tiowpetch (and group)	9 bald masks with gold-leaf trim
Lower-class monkeys	Red fabric and gold trim
Animals	
All animals	Masks shaped in the form of the particular animal

1. Shiva mask   2. Thotsakan mask (big demon)   3. Hanuman mask

Figure 3: Examples of headwear worn by dancers in modern khon performances.

Aside from individual masks, which are the key distinguishing feature of *khon* characters, each actor or actress is expected to portray his or her character by performing a sequence of specific postures and movements associated with the personality of that character. When matched with the equally distinctive costumes and easily identifiable character sounds generated by the accompanying orchestra, the overall effect is a *khon* performance with clearly recognizable characters that the audience can relate to.

Conclusion

Following analysis of the research results, the researchers compared the *kathakali* dance of India and Thai *khon*. Both *khon* and *kathakali* performers must have passed the *wai kru* ceremony before they are inaugurated as professional actors. The ceremonies are important for paying respects to instructors and teachers before the artists officially move on in their careers. Despite a number of female roles in the *kathakali* drama, productions in India use an exclusively male cast. By contrast, females were allowed to perform in Thai *khon* productions as early as during the reign of Rama V. This was primarily a result of the policy of King Rama III, who took a dislike to the performing art and caused the popularity of Thai *khon* to wane. By the time the dance was restored during the reign of Rama V, there were not enough *khon* teachers to promote the revival. As a result, female teachers from the *lakhon nai* performing art were used to help promote classical Thai *khon*. This caused the pattern of *khon* to develop and integrated the teebot dance form preferred in a *lakhon nai*. Main characters in both *kathakali* and Thai *khon* can be divided into four types. Additionally, both performances use versions of the Ramayana epic. There are differences in the practice styles of both dances, *kathakali* focusing on four separate areas and khon focusing on just

two. A comparative summary of Indian *kathakali* and Thai *khon* is given below in table 2.

Table 2: A comparison of Indian kathakali and Thai khon.

	Indian Kathakali	Thai Khon
Objectives	Religious worship	Religious worship Festival entertainment
Performers	All-male cast Performers may act in any role Small number of main parts	Male and female cast Performers are divided into one of four classes according to the character played Large ensemble cast
Story	Ramayana Mahaparata Indian folk tales Buddhist tales	Ramakien
Dance postures	Use of mudra All parts of body used to create postures Dramatic techniques used during the performance Four-stage practice method	Natyasap technique used to create meaning through postures
Practice	Originally wore masks;	Two-stage practice method
Make-up	nowadays use make-up Use colours to denote character personality	Originally wore masks; nowadays use make-up Use colours to denote character personality
Performance components	Chair used to represent different things Curtains Oil-lantern	Bed Backgrounds Props
Musical instruments	Chenda Maddalam Klui Ching / Chab Kong Lek	Ranak Kong Pi Klong Ching

The results of this investigation show that Thai khon was influenced significantly by Indian kathakali. The biggest catalyst for the spread of Indian culture was Buddhism and the popularity of classical Indian culture grew at the same time as Buddhist missionaries spread the word of the Lord Buddha. Classical Indian culture became integrated into local Southeast Asian culture and was gradually absorbed into the local identity. Aspects of traditional Indian dance are clearly visible in traditional Thai dances, such as the use of elaborate costumes, makeup, musical instruments, dramatic plot, dance postures and color to differentiate between characters. Nevertheless, the two are distinct and unique classical performing arts that have evolved with a character of their own.

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