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CENTRAL REGION STYLE FOLK PERFORMANCE OF ANGTHONG PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT: This research was qualitative research. The objectives of this study were to: 1) collect information on types and troupes of central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province, and 2) study the history and style of central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province. Documents and field data were collected for a period of not less than 20 years (until 2022) by the central region folk Performing troupes in Ang Thong Province. The tools were preliminary surveys, interview forms, and informal observations. The results showed that there were 4 types of central region folk performances in the in Ang Thong Province and there were the following performance troupes: 3 Khon Sod, 7 Likay, 1 Ram Tone, and 23 Chatree drama.

Khon Sod is a performance caused by villagers to sing and dance. It is based on various types of performances such as Nang Talung, Khon, Chatree drama, and Likay. It's a fast-paced, humorous story.

Likay originated from the recitation of praise and was introduced in Thailand by Muslims in the south. It is an entertainment that conveys the performance through singing, dancing, dialogue, and gestures that the audience can understand.

Ram Tone is a folk song performed by memorizing lyrics without written notes. The reason why it is called "Ram Tone" is because it uses the "Tone" that looks like a single-faced drum as the main instrument for rhythm.

Chatree drama is a show for entertainment and a ritual of belief in the performance of offerings to the sacred things. It features a fast-paced, playful, and humorous manner through singing and dialogue in the lyrics to increase understanding.

KEYWORDS: Central region folk performance, Ang Thong Province

1. INTRODUCTION

Folk performances in Ang Thong Province are cultural heritages that have been around for a long time since the Ayutthaya period. It is a performance that focuses on fun and expression of witty emotions, wit, language, beliefs, religion, and traditions.

Ang Thong Province appears in the Ayutthaya period royal chronicles in terms of its important role, especially during the reign of King Naresuan the Great. Due to its location and geography consisting of lowlands and rivers, it influences the lifestyle and livelihood of people. Abundance has become a source of agriculture and a source of rich arts, traditions, and lifestyles. Ang Thong Province has an approximate area of 981 square kilometers. The administrative area is divided into 7 districts. Folk songs and folk games are famous local culture singing and dancing (Department of Academic Affairs, Ministry of Education, 1991: 1-6).

General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister, said that the cultural wisdom heritage is a national treasure that Thai ancestors have created since the past. It is also a valuable cultural identity and should be preserved as a sustainable national heritage (Department of Cultural Promotion, Ministry of Culture, 2013: 2).

Chai Nakhonchai, director-general of the Department of Cultural Promotion, said that the culture is the result of prosperity that humanity has created, accumulated, and inherited as a social cultural heritage from one generation to the next, such as cultural identity in folk literature, language, performing arts, social practices, rituals, traditions and festivals, folk games (Department of Cultural Promotion, Ministry of Culture, 2018: 8)

Folk songs are poems of the villagers that have been passed down from generation to generation. The distinguishing feature of folk songs is the simplicity of the verse as well as the independence of language and style, and the way of life of the people in the agricultural society that creates unity among the troupe without written recordings, but using the oral tradition method (Sujarit Buapim, 1995 : 28-30).

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It can be said that the folk performances are the basis of all performances because they are conveyed from everyday life that express ideas, beliefs, and lifestyles and are passed down from generation to generation in old and new forms according to the era (Renu Kosinanon, 1999 : 1-2).

Nowadays, science as a new civilization is gaining attention of people all over the world but the drama arts are an old thing that has evolved over the centuries. Although radio television is an emerging electronic device, performances can be adapted to television and the tactics of performance are adapted accordingly (Boonluea Thephayasuwan, M.L., 1985: 108-117).

The wisdom of folk performances in Ang Thong Province is the art and culture of people in every district of the province, which has many types and troupes. More importantly, many artists and performance troupes have their own unique talents, reputations, vocal styles, and performances.

Based on the above reasons, the researcher was interested in studying and collecting information about the central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province. In this regard, research and conservation of the performing arts troupe was carried out along with the classification of cultural heritage of the central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To collect basic information on the genre and troupe of Central Region Folk Performances in Ang Thong Province.
2. To study the original history of central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province

3. SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The central region folk performance troupes in Ang Thong Province that has performed for a period of not less than 20 years (until 2022)

4. METHODOLOGY

The research on central region folk performance in Ang Thong Province was qualitative research. The methods for collecting information were used as follows:

1. The study and research of documents, books, and research related to folk performance wisdom in Ang Thong Province was carried out using document analysis.
2. The fieldwork were made to collect data from people with knowledge of central region folk wisdom, folk artists, and heads of folk performance faculties in Ang Thong Province using participatory observation and non-participatory observation, and formal interview and informal interview. The data collection was done in every district of Ang Thong Province, totaling 7 districts.
3. The data was collected to analyze and synthesize the data for the specified purposes.
4. The focus group were organized by academics, artists, and people involved in the central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province.
5. All data were compiled and analyzed, synthesized along with discussion, and research conclusions.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher studied information from related documents and research using observations and interviews, focus group, and questionnaires. The accuracy and completeness of the interview data are checked and only those that are important and relevant are selected. Finally, descriptive analysis data were presented in accordance with the objective issues determined by the researcher.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The main points of the research on central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province could be summarized according to the research objectives into 2 parts:

Part 1: To gather basic information on genres and groups of central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province.

Documents and field data were collected for a period of not less than 20 years (until 2022) by the central region folk Performing troupes in Ang Thong Province: 1. 3 Khon Sod 2. 7 Likay 3. 1 RamTone, and 4. 23 Chatree drama.

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1. Khon Sod of 3 troupes: 1. Chansamruaysilp 2. Sitchansamruaysin, and 3. Pornphisanu

2. Likay of 7 troupes: 1. Plaingam Lukmaharaj 2. Chamrun Sit Khun P. 3. Rangwan Tukkathong, Wat Sa Kaeo, model 1 4. Fah Mai Sithomhuan 5. Chaiya-Ann Mitchai 6. Somsak Lukangthong 7. Ta Lok Rub Lor Tor Lan Nai Ta

3. RamTone of 1 troupe: Samko

4. Chatree drama of 23 troupes: 1. Samneang Lukpamok 2. Phayao Lukpamok 3. Thongjua Premjit 4. Naree Rungruengsilp 5. Jeerasak Phusit Sithomhuan 6. Namoiy Piromsilp 7. Sontaya Nadtasilp 8. Ngewrai Rungruengsilp 9. Somchit Rungruengsilp 10. Naree Khanongsilp 11. J. Jintana Jeamjit Sitnarai 12. Anan Rungsawang 13. Sinuan Yodrak 14. S. Rungsuriya Namsilp 15. Fahsai Malaiporn 16. Chamlong Charoensin 17. Wichan Samruaysilp 18. S. Payong Namsilp 19. Chanchai Wisetsilp 20. S. Pensri Usa Namsilp 21. Nantaya Wairun 22. S. Cha-Ongsilp 23. S. Rattana Kruawan

Part 2: To study the history and form of folk performances in the central region in Ang Thong Province.

1. Khon Sod

1.1 Chansamruaysilp

History - Mr. Chan Pancharoen, founder of the troupe and Mr. Supakrit Chantachot's nephew has inherited the position of the current head of the Khon Sod "Chansamruaysilp". Mr. Supakrit Chanthachot was born on January 29, 1944, 77 years old. The current address is located at 1/24, Village No. 6, Bang Sadet Subdistrict, Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province, and telephone number: 089-809-3050. The service fee starts from 15,000-65,000 baht, depending on the show and travel distance (Supakrit Chantachot, interviewed on October 22, 2021).



Figure 1 ***Chansamruaysilp***

Sourece : Supakrit Chanthachot, 2021

1.2 Sitchansamruaysin

History - It started with the gathering of the students of Teacher Chan Pancharoen who performed in the troupe of "Chansamruaisin". Later, it was established as a troupe of "Sitchansamruaysin" Mrs. Phitsamai Chucherd was born on November 17, 1957, aged 64 years. The current address is located at No. 19, Moo 5, Yan Sue Subdistrict, Mueang Ang Thong District, Ang Thong Province, and telephone number: 086-772-24. The service fee rate is about 65,000-70,000 baht, depending on the distance (Pissamai Chucherd, interviewed on October 24, 2021).

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Figure 2 ***Sitchansamruaysin***

Source: Santivech Sopha, 2021

1.3 Pornphisanu

History - Mr. Phitsanu Payakwong named the group in the beginning as the troupe of "Saha Farm Wisetsilp" to honor those who supported it. Later, the budget support was canceled, Mr. Phitsanu Payakwong changed the name to the troupe of "Ponphitsanu". Mr. Phitsanu Payakwong is 80 years old. The current address is located at No. 24, Moo 10, Muang Tia Subdistrict, Wiset Chai Chan District, Ang Thong Province, and telephone number: 087-152-1041. The service fee is about 65,000-80,000 baht, depending on the duration and distance (Phitsanu Payakwong, interviewed on October 22, 2021).



Figure 3 ***Mr. Phitsanu Payakwong, Head of Pornphisanu***

Source : Somphon Seangwong, 2021

Stages of the show - The Khon Sod performances of the 3 troupes are similar as follows.

1) There is worship of the sacred place, 2) There is a gift to worship the teacher, 3) There is a Piphat orchestra playing to signal the beginning of the show, 4) There is a homage to the hermit teacher by the elder dressed as a hermit with singing, wailing, and acting as announcing the story to be shown, 5) There is a hand dance to worship the sacred things, 6) KhonSod has started, 7) Tuk drums and tone drums are played to end the performance, 8) The actors apologized after the show ended.

Performance elements - The KhonSod of the 3 troupes is similar as detailed below.

1) The story "Ramayana" is used by means of selecting fun episodes, 2) The Pi Phat Krueng Ha or Pi Phat Mon orchestra is used as the music for the performance, depending on the price and budget of the host group. Percussion instruments include tone drums, tuk drums, flutes, cymbals, and krabs, 3) In the singing, the performer will be the one who sings and negotiates. The singing process was exemplified from Li-Kay and Nang Talung, 4) The scene draws on canvas and sets the bed for the protagonist who will be centered on the stage with spectacular lights and colors, 5) The dress is different by embroidering sequins and beads, depending on the type of character such as monkey, giant, hero, 6) The show equipment consists of spears, swords, and arrows.

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2. Likay

2.1 Plaingam Lukmaharaj

History - The troupe was originally named "Laongthip Lukmaharat", founded by Mr. Laongthip Chaloei-arj (father), forwarded to Mr. Bampen Chalei-Arj (son), and is the current head of the troupe. Later, the troupe's name was changed in 1990 to "Plaingam Lukmaharaj". Mr. Bampen Chalei-Arj is 53 years old. The current address is located at 327/Khor, Pa Mok Subdistrict, Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province, 14130, and telephone number: 089-987-592.

Performance style - Popular shows such as Boonthing, Ai Mute, The Man in Yellow Cloth, and Look Kaew Mia Kwan (Bampen Answer-Art, interviewed on October 19, 2021).



Figure 4 Plaingam Lukmaharaj

Source : Miss Wanna Maithong, 2021

2.2 Chamrun

History - It was founded in 1978 by Mr. Chamroon Khammee and he passed away in 2020. Later, Ms. Rungjarat Khammee therefore inherits the troupe. The current address is located at No. 119, Moo 4, Ban It Subdistrict, Mueang District, Ang Thong Province, 14000, and telephone number: 080-109-0704.

Performance style - Popular shows such as J. Chao J. Joan, and Noi Vassana (Rungjarat Khammee, interviewed on 19 October 2021).

2.3 Rangwan Tukkathong, Wat Sa Kaeo, model 1

History - It was established in 1979 by Luang Phor Chabab Khantiko. He has fostered a lot of children, so he wanted to find a teacher to teach Likay to the children and under the name "Wat Sakaeo". There are actors from season 1 - season 8. Ms. Petcharaphan Kongkaew is in charge of the troupe. The current address is located at 132, Moo 6, Bang Sadet Subdistrict, Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province, 14130, and telephone number 085-966-4663.

Performance style - Popular shows are folklore such as Phra Aphai Mani (Phetraphan Kongkaew, interviewed on October 20, 2021).



Figure 5 Rangwan Tukkathong, Wat Sa Kaeo, model 1

Source : Petcharaphan Kongkaew, 2021

2.4 Fah Mai Sithomhuan

History - The troupe was established in 1981. Mr. Kwanchai Sithomhuan is the owner of the troupe and Mr. Praphan Sak Topraman has been broadcasting the show and is the successor. The current address is located at

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24, Moo 2, Ang Kaeo Subdistrict, Pho Thong District, Ang Thong Province, 14120, and telephone number: 099-101-9101.

Performance style - Popular show such as Sanae Nang Joan, dKwan Jai Jom Jon, and Khon Jai Bab (Mr. Praphan Saktopraman, interviewed on October 20, 2021).



Figure 6 Fah Mai Sithomhuan

Source: Mr. Praphansak Topraman, 2021

2.5 Chaiya-Ann Mitchai

History - The troupe was established in 1982. Mr. Somsak Somboon brought his son, Sema Somboon (Chaiya Mitchai) to leave him with Luang Por Chabab Khantiko, the abbot of Wat Sa Kaeo, Ang Thong Province to study Likay. He used his name to show Chaiya Mitchai until Luang Por Chabab passed away. Later, they separated and set up their own troupe under the name "Chaiya - Ann Mitchai". Ms. Priya Samanabaramee, 37 years old, is the owner of the troupe. The current address is 85/4, Moo 3, Si Roi Subdistrict, Wiset Chai Chan District, Ang Thong Province, 14110, and telephone number: 081-910-4663.

Performance style - It is a troupe that preserves the traditional Likay and modernizes the style of performance. The popular show such as Kotchasingh, and Look Tee Thook Luem (Priya Somnabarami, interviewed on October 20, 2021).



Figure 7 Chaiya-Ann Mitchai

Source : Mr. Somsak Jaikwang, 2021

2.6 Somsak Lukangthong

History - The troupe was founded around 1986. Mr. Somsak Anusi is the owner of the troupe. Current address is located at 89/6, Moo 3, Champa Lo Subdistrict, Mueang District, Ang Thong Province, 14000, and telephone number: 064-969-1522.

Performance style - The plot is concise, so the audience can easily understand the story. The popular show such as Yupparaj Sam Rang, and Ter Kue Duang Jai (Somsak Anusi, interviewed on October 20, 2021).

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Figure 8 Somsak Lukangthong

Source : Mr. Somsak Anusi, 2021

2.7 Ta Lok Rub Lor Tor Lan Nai Ta

History - The troupe was established around 2001. Mr. Jatuporn Chaloechote is the founder and owner of the troupe under the name "Ta Lok Rub Lor Tor Lan Nai Ta". The address is located at No. 153/Kor, Pa Mok Subdistrict, Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province, 14130, and phone number: 084-002-2333.

Performance style - The show focuses on clowns as well as fun folk stories. The popular show is about folklore (Jatuporn Chaloechote, interviewed on 19 October 2021).



Figure 9 Ta Lok Rub Lor Tor Lan Nai Ta

Source : Mr. Jatuporn Chaloechote, 2021

According to the study and data collection of the 7 troupes of Likay, it was found that he troupe was interesting in terms of storytelling and outstanding artistry, performance style, and popularity. The researcher therefore chose to study the composition of the Likay performance of "Chaiya-Ann Mitchai" as follows:

Performance elements - This troupe combined Likay with stage play by memorizing poems and developing modern costumes to suit the character's role. In terms of musical instruments, there was a mix of international music with Thai music.

3. Ram Tone

3.1 The tone dance performance of "Sam Ko" was restored in 1978. Mr. Thong-ap Kaikeaw, the former headman of the village, used the name of the troupe "Ram Tone Sam Ko". It is played using tambourine, krub, and cymbal instruments. Musicians act as singers and dancers. It is a dance in pairs and uses dance moves according to the lyrics. In the dress code, women wear a loincloth and a sabai, while men wear long trousers, a round neck shirt with short sleeves, which are fabrics or floral prints with a loincloth around the waist. The sequence of steps shown is as follows.

1) Respect for teachers, 2) At the beginning of the song there will be a leader as the voice of the song, 3) The dancers stand in alternating rows of men and women according to the number of pairs, the dancers walk in circles to sing and dance together (Thong-ap Khaikaew, interviewed on 19 October 2021).

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Figure 11 Performance of Samgo

Source: Mr. Kan Malawong, 2021

4. Chatri Drama - The Chatree drama troupe in Ang Thong Province has 23 troupes. According to the study, there are 4 troupes that maintain their unique and well-established performance styles: 1. Naree Rungruengsilp 2. Naree Khanongsilp 3. Lukpa Mok accent, and 4. Sinuan Yodrak. The performance process of each troupe is similar as follows.

4.1 Naree Rungruengsilp

History - Mr. Sakorn Sanochit is the founder of "Naree Rungruengsilp" Later, Mr. Manat Thongtae, who was raised in a troupe since his childhood and had a good knowledge of Chatree drama, served as the head of the troupe and his successor to the present. Mr. Manat Thongtae was born on May 16, 1998, age 23. The current address is at 81, Moo 2, Thang Phra Subdistrict, Pho Thong District, Ang Thong Province, and telephone number 088-277-9278 (Manat Thongtae, interviewed on October 22, 2021).



Figure 12 ***Naree Rungruengsilp***

Source : Manat Thongtae, 2021

4.2 Naree Khanongsilp

History - Mrs. Lang Pripon is the founder of "Naree Khanongsilp". When Mrs. Lang Pripol died, Mrs. Phisamai Chucherd, her daughter, who had learned to play Chatree from her mother, was the successor of the troupe to the present. Mrs. Pissamai Chucherd was born on November 17, 1957, age 64 years. The current address is at 19, Moo 5, Yan Sue Subdistrict, Mueang Ang Thong District, Ang Thong Province, and telephone number 086-772-2422. The service fee is about 5000-10,000 baht, depending on the distance (Pissamai Chucherd, interviewed on October 24, 2021).

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Figure 13 Naree Khanongsilp

Source: Pissamai Chucherd, 2021

4.3 Samneang Lukpamok

History - Mrs. Samneang is the founder of "Samneang Lukpamok" and is a drama coach for children. Later, the troupe was handed over to Mrs. Boontuen Chaloechote, daughter-in-law, who is the successor to the present. Mrs. Boontuen Chaloechote is 66 years old. The current address is located at No. 153/Kor, Moo 3, Pa Mok Subdistrict, Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province, and phone number: 089-540-8559. The service fee is 5000-10,000 baht, depending on the distance (Boontuen Chaloechote, interviewed on October 24, 2021).



Figure 14 ***Samneang Lukpamok***

Source: Boontuen Chaloechote, 2021

4.4 Sinuan Yodrak

History - Mr. Thanom Buasuwan is the founder of the troupe of Chatree drama and Likay. When he got older, he gave Mr. Anan Buasuwan, the son is the successor. Later, he assigned Mrs. Sawang Buasuwan, his 71-year-old wife, to be the head of the troupe. The current address is located at 103, Moo 5, Tha Chang Subdistrict, Wiset Chai Chan District, Ang Thong Province, and telephone number: 089-242-6086. The service rate is about 3,500-10,000 baht, depending on the distance (Mrs. Sawang Buasuwan, interviewed on October 25, 2021).

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Figure 15 ***Sinuan Yodrak***

Source : Manat Thongtae, 2021

Performance elements - According to the study, the researchers found that the four troupes had similar patterns: At the place of the performance, the performers pay their respects to the teacher first, then the Piphat orchestra plays and the performers sing in front of the theater. The show runs from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and takes an hour break and then continues until 3:00 p.m. When the performance is finished, they sing "Chatree" to bless the teachers, the host, and the audience. Popular shows include Sangthong, Kaew Nama, and Hon Vichai. The background music uses a five-piece instrumental ensemble. Only one scene of the royal palace is used. The protagonist's costume is dressed up, except the clown is not compulsory. The performance equipment consisted of a wooden sword (a bamboo blade that was rounded and the size of a handful, known as a "centipede stick").
Summary of research on basic data on genres and troupes of folk performances in the central region in Ang Thong Province: According to studies and field visits, there were 4 types of folk performances in Ang Thong Province, and there were a large number of folk performance troupes scattered in each district. The appearance of the show style was similar. However, some troupes with special aptitudes had tried to create a unique identity for their own troupe.

7. DISCUSSION

In the management of performance styles of their own troupe in conservation and development of cultural heritage and central region folk performances in Ang Thong Province, there are many interesting types. Nowadays, some types of folk performances have been lost due to lack of acting troupe or successors. Folk performances require passion and skill to become proficient. Today's society has a variety of entertainment media, resulting in folk performing arts that are not as popular as before.

Issue 1: According to the research results in terms of basic information, genre and troupe of Central Region Folk Performances in Ang Thong Province, although there are data on many of the troupes surveyed, some types of performances have been lost because most of them have taken folk performances as their main occupation. Their skill is gained from real-life acting experience as more modern media outlets deprive these artists of their income, resulting in less popularity. In the future, folk performances as national art may be lost.

Issue 2: In each type of central region folk performance in Ang Thong province, each troupe has a history that has been passed down for a long time. In the form of the show, it has been developed and modified to suit the times and needs of the audience by means of using technology in the show or as a public relations medium for preserving the nation's arts and culture.

8. SUGGESTIONS

1. Suggestions for further research implementation

1) The research study found that the research results can be adapted to suit various contexts as a basis for the development of teaching and learning, and the conservation of national arts and culture.

2) The researcher collects and analyzes the data so that it can be further developed or used as a guideline for preserving other arts and cultures.

2. Suggestions for future research

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1) This research is limited to the scope of the study of central region folk performances only in Ang Thong Province. Therefore, the research should be extended to broaden the objectives and other areas.

2) The results can be studied in more depth details of each context. The researcher agreed that it should be studied in order to create a guideline for conservation and development of central region folk performances to be appropriate with the context of Thai society.

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