THE PUPPET HOUSE KHUN SIRIRAT PANSEN

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Abstract— The study of Thai tradition puppetry (Hun Krabok) performed by the Puppet House of Mr. Sirirat Pansen is aimed to research the history, compositions and performance pattern of this puppet show. The researcher had conducted the following methods which were related document analysis and in-depth Interview with the master of Thai classical dancing art, including the owner of the troupe and related persons. All the acquired data was synthesized and represented in descriptive research and analyzed in qualitative research methodology. The study revealed that Thai tradition puppet show performed by the Puppet House of Mr. Sirirat Pansen as known as Khun Rat Puppet troupe had been held since 1999 or 16 years ago. This troupe was inherited their performance by Granny Arb Kaew-On from the famous Cherd Choo Chamnansilp troupe in Amphawa district, Samuth Songkham province Puppet house of Khun Rat produced over 250 puppet figures and performed more than 16 stories. The compositions of puppet performance by the Puppet house of Mr. Sirirat Pansen were puppet figures, story, play, scene, puppet theatre, music and puppeteers which these compositions usually were prepared before opening the stage. The puppeteers are the most important key to enhance the performance complete and accurate according to the heritage pattern of puppetry The owner of the house conducted the ritual ceremony to pay respect to the late master along side with the puppeteers. The band played Sanrasoen Phra Barami song (song to glorify H.M. the King prestige) and Wa song. Followed by fiddle playing Sang klala song, then the puppet show began to play. One puppeteer performed and narrated for one puppet figure. The story had been played by puppetry alternated by human dancing in fully dressed for their roles as Lakhon Phanthang pattern. The performance between puppet and actor were smooth, harmony and beautiful giving utmost satisfaction to the audiences.

Keywords— Thai Dance Poppet Hun Krabok.

I. INTRODUCTION

Thai puppetry show, according to the archaeological evidences, has been performed since Ayutthaya period to Rattanakosin period which are Hun Luang (large puppet), Hun Chine (Chinese puppet), Hun Lakhon Lek, and Hun Krabok (Puppet).

Thai puppet has been influenced by a kind of Chinese puppets called "Hun Hainan (Hainan puppet)" since King Rama V period by Mom Rajawongse Toh Payakasena (M.R. Thaor). He received Hainan puppet pattern from Mr. Neng who lived in Sukhothai Province in lower northern Thailand and adapted the pattern into Thai puppet to perform. This pattern was appeared in puppet's head with 2 hands and its figures was made of cotton wood put on with clothing material on its neck which its width equaled to the length of its arms. The hands of the puppet also were attached on the corner of the same cloth in order that the puppeteer could control the puppet easily with the core wood sticks on both hands and its figure. This was the reason why we called this show the puppet. The most famous story to play was Lakhon Nok and Lakhon Nai such as Phra Abhaimani written by Sunthorn Phu and The Ramakian. Since the study of the House of Lakhon costume in production, cultural management and embroidering process : case of the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen has been conducted, the findings pointed out that the House of Lakhon costume where the puppet show was performed, produced 250 puppets and this place usually has performed several shows such as Phra Abhaimani. Every time this troupe has performed, they created puppet theatre, singing pattern, music, scene, puppet figures, puppeteers. Therefore each show was interested by the audiences enormously.

As a result of this, the researcher focused on the study of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen especially in the followings aspects; history, compositions and puppet performance style. This study was conducted in qualitative research approach.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

2.1. To study the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen history.

2.2. To study the composition and pattern to perform of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen was the qualitative research equipped

with documentary analysis, in-depth interview and field study in order to discover the research findings about history, composition and pattern to perform of the puppet show by Khun Rat troupe. The research methodology were as followings.

Research method

Stage 1: Studying the performance of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen.
Data collection about history, composition and pattern to perform of the puppet show by Khun Rat troupe from books, texts, journals and researches related to the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen. The in-depth interview with the troupe owners, actors and concerning persons was conducted by purposive collection method and field study. The researcher observed the performance demonstration of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen including interviewed with the concerning persons.

Stage 2 : Studying the history of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen. The data was acquired by analysis included with the in-depth interview and field study about history, composition and pattern to perform of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen. Addtionally, data from the interview with the puppet troupe owners, actors and concerning persons were gathered to establish the frame of question in the interview. Data selection was conducted by purposive collection method in order to granted data related to history, composition and pattern to perform of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen. The interview was conducted with 2 actors and 4 concerning persons about the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat.

Stage 3 : Data analysis
Data from documentary synthesis and the interview with the troupe owners, actors and concerning persons were concluded to find the history, composition and pattern to perform of the puppet show.

Stage 4 : Data synthesis on the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen.
Data from documentary analysis and the interview were synthesized and investigated by the experts then, the result was revised again. The findings were written in research report, drafted the report and prepared the presentation proposed to the advisors in order to be accurately revised according to the comments. Finally, completed report was finished.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to produce the effective research and complete all the research objectives, the researcher designed the details related to research methodology which was consisted of population and sample selection, variables, research tools and method to create the tools, data collection and data analysis which were as the followings.

1) Samples : The samples using in the study were composed of the puppet troupe owners, actors and concerning persons in the study of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen. This samples were selected by purposive collection method from 3 groups of the population which were the puppet troupe owners, actors and concerning persons.

2) Variables : This study emphasized on the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen therefore interesting variables for this research were history, composition and pattern to perform of the puppet show.

3) Research tools : the composition of research tools for this study was unstructured interview for the troupe owner interviews. The interview format was divided the aspects to study as frame of research which was composed of open ended question for 2 actors and 4 concerning persons. Also the researcher categorized the aspects to study for creating interviewing frame which were consisted of history, composition and pattern to perform of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen.

4) Data Collection : Data collection process started with documentary analysis as a guideline in establishing interviewing frame. The researcher had made an appointment to interview with the puppet troupe owner, actors and concerning persons. First, unstructured interview had been applied about the puppets of the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen once a week and the respondents gave necessary data related to the study about the puppets of the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen.

5) Data analysis : The process of data analysis could be divided into 2 part.
Part 1 : Documentary Research or documentary analysis had been categorized all data into several items that were related to the research objectives and grouping the contents to various aspects. The findings were mainly presented in descriptive research.
Part 2 : Conclusion and result analysis from the interview could be analyzed the data according to the frame of interview question. Documentary research had been conducted in order to discover the conclusion. Data analysis from the interview had been done in order to seek for the findings. Data analysis from related documents, data from the interview and field study had been underway to check and confirm the data accuracy.

6) Data presentation : The researcher concluded and synthesized the data in order to present the study of the puppets of the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen in descriptive statistics of qualitative research.

V. THE RESULT



Picture 1 the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen
Source: Orawatana Niamauthai (Interviewed on March 25, 2015)

The puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen or so called "the puppet of Khun Rat's Troupe" was found that they made their first appearance in 1999 which was 16 years ago. This troupe was inherited their performance by Granny Arb Kaew-On from the famous Cherd Choo Chamnansilp troupe in Amphawa district, Samuth Songkham province. Mr. Sirirat Pansen has been inspired by the show and began to practice for puppetry and making puppets. Later, Later, this puppet show was combined with traditional and courtly dramas (Lakhon phanthang) in order to fulfill the audience satisfaction and it was called Hun Krabok Orktua or puppetry combining with human dancing. Puppet house of Khun Rat produced over 250 puppet figures and performed more than 16 stories such as Phra Abhaimani episode the war of nine troops, Rod Thasen episode the return of Phra Rod and Phra Law episode Phuen and Phaeng courting with Phra Law.

The compositions of puppet performance by the Puppet house of Mr. Sirirat Pansen were puppet figures, story, play, scene, puppet theatre, music and puppeteers which these compositions usually were prepared before opening the stage.

Furthermore, the pattern to perform the puppet show was to begin with scene and theatre setup. Those puppet figures and master figure were placed at the back of stage by turning their faces toward the scene and separated the puppet figure of master aside. The music band was at the right of the stage, then classical Thai orchestra played Sathukarn song. The owner of the house conducted the ritual ceremony to pay respect to the late master along side with the puppeteers. The band played Sanrasoen Phra Barami song (song to glorify H.M. the King prestige) and Wa song. Followed by fiddle playing Sang klala song by Saw Ou, then the puppet show began to play. One puppeteer performed and dubbed for one puppet figure. The story had been played by puppetry alternated by human dancing in fully dressed for their roles as Lakhon Phanthang pattern. The performance between puppet and actor were smooth, harmony and beautiful giving utmost satisfaction to the audiences.

VI. RESEARCH DISCUSSION

According to the related documentary research and data from the interview about the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen, there were the important aspects to discuss as the followings.

The history of the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen or so called "the puppet of Khun Rat's Troupe" made their first appearance in 1999 which was 16 years ago. The beginning came from the impression in childhood of Mr.Sirirat Pansen when he went to see the show by the troupe of Mr. Piak Prasertkul (father of Mrs. Cheun Sakunkeo) on television broadcasting on channel 4, Bang Khunprom. The show that day was Phra Abhaimani. It has been 40 years ago; however, it still always impressed Mr. Sirirat Pansen. When the time has come, Mr. Sirirat Pansen could create his troupe and he put all his very effort to carry on the art of puppetry. The first teacher who taught puppet performance to Mr.Sirirat was Granny Arb Kaew-On, one of puppeteers in Mr.Wong Ruamsuk's troupe or the famous Cherd Choo Chamnansilp troupe in Amphawa district, Samuth Songkham province. After that, Mr.Sirirat Pansen seriously started his puppet troupe in 1999. Today Mr.Sirirat's troupe possesses the puppet up to 250 figures and can perform 16 stories. The large number of the shows came from the intention to perform as much as ever been in old days. Yoon Kamol (1997 : 102) stated that since puppet show made first appearance to the people in 1893, many puppet troupe performed numerous shows continuously such as Phra Abhaimani, Laksanawong, Kawi, Malaithong and Komintra. However, the most famous story was Phra Abhaimani episode the War of nine armies, episode the War of Chao Laman, episode the Escape from the Sea Demon and episode the Passion on Nang Laweng's Portrait. Later, this puppet show was combined with traditional and courtly dramas (Lakhon phanthang) in order to fulfill the audience satisfaction and it was called "Hun Krabok Orktua" or puppetry combining with human dancing.

The composition and performance pattern of the puppet House of Khun Sirirat Pansen were mainly consisted of puppet figure appearance, puppetry, music, theatre and scene, puppeteers, famous stories and the occasions to perform. Puppet figure appearances were included heads, body, hands, costume and ornaments. Puppet's head was made by the expert with beautiful adornment then it was attached with the other parts to complete the whole glamorous figure in the original method which was developed continuously in order to the long usage. Years ago, the puppet's body was made of bamboo

tube with 1-2 feet in length, around 1-1.5 inches in diameter. Yet, it was not endure because there were weevils inside bamboo. He changed to use 15 inches plastic tube or PVC tube instead because it was easily to find and its weigh was lighter. The length from one shoulder to the other side of figure was 5 inches and its hands were approximately 1.5 – 2 inches, made of wood or stucco. Both 2 hands were firmly attached on 2 sharpened bamboo reeds which were inserted from puppet hands as handle. This bamboo rods were called "chopstick". The puppet hands were set in Thai classical dancing posture. Puppet costumes were hand made with delicately embroidering in finest pattern and mostly used printed fabric. The cloth of puppet were also delicately embroidered with beads and glittering sequins. According to Chakkrabhand Posayakrit (1999 : 80 – 81) explained that the ornaments for puppet heads such as Thai theatrical crown, diadem, crown, headdress including animal heads like horse or elephant were usually elaborated with lightweight materials.

Music band playing in the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen was Piphat Khrueang Ha, the classical music band of Thailand. Referred to Anan Nakkhong (1986 : 20-21) stated that previously music band playing in the puppet show was Piphat Khrueang Ha, resemble as Khon performance or drama. The most necessary and symbolic music instrument was Saw Ou, Klong Tok and Klong Taew. Puppet theatre and scenery were made of metal as structure which were easily to assemble, remove and restore. Puppet theatre size was 9 meter in width, 3.5 meter in height with 2 doors located aside for performing puppet figure and other 2 doors for the characters entrance which each door was expanded 1.5 meter at side. Scenery was drawn as Thai classical painting which was the painting in bird's-eye view scene in order to depict all details in the palace. Additionally, the scene would be in accordance with the story in the play.

The puppeteers in this troupe were skilled and expert in Thai classical dancing both in control and dubbing the puppets moreover, they had joined this troupe since 1999. The puppeteers were considered that they were the most composition helping puppet show complete and accurate according to inherited puppet performance standard.

There were 16 stories this troupe performed the puppet show and the most famous show was Phra Abhaimani. This story was the most appropriate to perform as there were various parts, story proceeding was joyful and giving good view to the audiences. This was in accordance with Montri Tramote (1997 : 27) revealed in book Thai toys that among the several literatures showing in puppet theatre, no other literatures that the puppet show could perform better than Phra Abhaimani written by Sunthorn Phu. The occasion in puppet performance for nowadays has been very rare and should be preserved. the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen has been performed since 1999 in several occasions in Bangkok and suburban. The performance pattern of puppet show after the troupe had been assigned were as the following stages.

Performance preparation stage began with all puppet figures were prepared and placed orderly to receive proper check. The story to perform was edited in proper time duration and prepared several sets for the puppeteers, chorus, musician and stage director. The puppet theatre and scene were well prepared 1 day before the show began. The theatre was built from metal structure in order that it was easily to be removed and built, also metal was strong material. Furthermore, the place where to put those puppets on also made of metal. The music band was Piphat Khrueang Ha from the Office of Performing Art, Fine Arts Department. However, Hun Krabok Orktua or puppetry combining with human dancing, the music band was located on the right side of stage to present all members of the band. Meanwhile, the puppeteers or the actors performed had obligation to prepare the puppet figures at the back of stage. The puppeteers were skilled in controlling and dubbing the puppets and they had been in the team since 1999. They also were masters, civil servants or artists from the Fine arts department.

When everyone was ready, both the performers and the audiences, the musicians were placed, the puppeteers or the actors already prepared the puppets at the back of stage and orderly sorted the important puppets from left to right and practiced their part at back stage. Puppet performing method of this troupe was that the puppeteers were standing while they controlled the puppets which this was easily and flexible to perform and holding the puppets. The most important thing was the middle-age-puppeteers were hard to move themselves. There were microphones hanging from the ceiling for the dubbing. The band played the prelude song and Sathukarn song. Then, the troupe owner lighted the candle to pay worship to the model of Kru Phraprot Ruesi, Kru Phraporakhontham. Then, he house conducted the ritual ceremony to pay respect to the late master along side with 10 puppeteers sitting at the back stage. The band played Sanrasoen Phra Barami song (song to glorify H.M. the King prestige), the audiences stood up. Then, Wa song and Sang Klara song was played by Saw ou. The song Samer played and the Master puppet or Kru Phraporakhontham was performed in Wai Kru pattern to pay respect to the late teachers. According to Prachak Maicharoen (2009 : 42 – 43 concluded that the show began with prelude song played Piphat and when the song finished, Piphat played Wa song followed by Samer song then, the puppets appeared from the theatre. Piphat band played "Chapi song" and "Peen Taling Nok song" in order to open the puppet show. The leading actor or Phra started to perform and proceeded the story. One puppeteer performed both controlling and dubbing one puppet.

Each puppet talked to each other as play. In case of Hun Krabok Orktua performance, the story had been played by puppetry alternated by human dancing in fully dressed for their roles as Lakhon Phanthang pattern. The actor dressed exactly as same as the puppet according to the role specification.



Picture 2 the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen
Source: Orawatana Niamauthai (Interviewed on March 25, 2015)



Picture 3 the puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen
Source: Orawatana Niamauthai (Interviewed on March 25, 2015)



Picture 4 Hun Krabok Orktua performance by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen
Source: Orawatana Niamauthai (Interviewed on March 25, 2015)

CONCLUSION

The puppet show by the House of Khun Sirirat Pansen had performed in 2 patterns which were the puppet show and Hun Krabok Orktua show. There were 16 stories and there were 4 stories were Hun Krabok Orktua shows which were Phra Law, Wong Sawan Chan Sawas, Kawi, Phra Abhaimani. On March 25, 2015 at 17.00 – 19.00 hrs, at the auditorium in Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, Phra Abhaimani episode the war of nine troops had been performed. The audiences were impressed by the show very much. Also the puppets were glamorous and spectacular with elegant style of Thai classical dancing. Especially, Mr.Sirirat Pansen who performed both director and actor role Phra Abhaimani was beautiful. The show presented Thai heritage in puppetry and Thai drama. This troupe also preserved all 250 puppets in well condition.

SUGGESTIONS

1. There should be further study of the puppetry performing nowadays in order to be a guideline for preservation and restoration of puppetry.
2. Data collection and restoration about puppetry including puppet figure making and performance method should be introduced to serve for further study.
3. This study could be a guideline for the puppet creation for the teachers and students in order to apply accurately and also the learning guide in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank the Research and Development Institute, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand for the financial support.

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