



SPAFACON2021

**Papers from the SEAMEO SPAFA International Conference on
SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND FINE ARTS**

13 - 17 December 2021

Editor: Noel Hidalgo Tan

SPAFACON2021 is published by SEAMEO SPAFA, the Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts established by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization. SEAMEO SPAFA focusses on archaeology and fine arts in Southeast Asia, and promotes awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the region. Its member-countries are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam; and its associate member-countries are Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom.



SPAFA CON2021

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2021 SEAMEO SPAFA
ISBN: 978-616-7961-55-2
ISBN (e-book): 978-616-7961-54-5
DOI 10.26721/spafa.pqcnu8815a

Publisher

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INTRODUCTION

This volume contains the extended abstracts from the papers presented at the SEAMEO SPAFA International Conference on Southeast Asian Archaeology and Fine Arts, which was held online from 13 to 17 December 2021. Also known as the SPAFACON2021, this conference was organised online due to the pandemic. Despite the disruption brought about by Covid-19 to our in-person events, training programmes and field research, it is heartening to see that archaeology and cultural heritage has continued under new modes of communication and collaboration.

This fourth iteration of the SPAFACON is also scheduled a year earlier than our usual triennial cycle to commemorate the 50th anniversary of SEAMEO initiating a centre dedicated towards archaeology and the fine arts. Over the past year, SPAFA has also been highlighting this legacy of international cooperation and capacity-building by sharing our photographic archives on our social media.

I am delighted by the high level of enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity brought by the participants to the conference. During our call for papers we received close to 90 submissions, but owing to the pressures of time and the online format, we were only able to accept 34 papers for the conference. The variety of papers present here, although a small set compared with our usual proceedings, reflects the breadth of the centre's ambit – covering not just archaeology, but also performing arts, visual arts, museum studies, and other aspects of Southeast Asian cultural heritage.

I would like to thank all the participants, without whom this conference would not be possible in its present form, in particular, our Governing Board members who represent every country in Southeast Asia, and to the Ministry of Culture, Thailand and the Ministry of Education, Thailand for their long-standing support of SEAMEO SPAFA and its activities.



Mrs Somlak Charoenpot

Centre Director

SEAMEO SPAFA

THE SERIES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DANCES: A HISTORICAL STUDY AND DANCE MOVES RECORDING WITH LABANOTATION

ระบำชุดโบราณคดี: การศึกษาเชิงประวัติศาสตร์
และการบันทึกท่า ร าด์ วยلابานโนเทชั่น

10.26721/spafa.pqcnu8815a-26

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Abstract

The Series of Archaeological Dances is a creative work of Thai dance inspired by information and evidence of ancient antiquities and sites discovered in Thailand to make the archaeological evidence found to be alive again in the form of Thai theatre and dance. The name of the historical period of art identified by the scholars are used to define the names of five performance of the Archaeological Dances, namely, Dvāravatī Dance, Srīvijaya Dance, Lopburi Dance, Chiang Saen Dance, and Sukhothai Dance. Each performance has its own unique style with no related content to each other. This series of dances were premiered on 25 May 1967, in front of King Rama IX and Queen Sirikit. Regarding to the movement of the body, there is unique identity that reflects the ethnicity of the area and the civilization from the land where the archaeological evidence of each era was discovered. They were created according to the imagination of the choreographers of the dance posture. In addition, The Series of Archaeological Dances are popularly performed on various occasions continuously until present day.

ระบำชุดโบราณคดี เป็นผลงานสร้างสรรค์ด้านนาฏศิลป์ของประเทศไทยที่ได้รับแรงบันดาลใจจากข้อมูลและหลักฐานด้านศิลปะโบราณวัตถุสถานที่ถูกค้นพบได้ในพื้นที่ประเทศไทย เพื่อต้องการให้หลักฐานโบราณคดีที่ค้นพบได้กลับมามีชีวิตชีวาอีกครั้งในรูปแบบของนาฏศิลป์ โดยใช้ชื่อยุคสมัยทางศิลปะที่นักวิชาการประวัติศาสตร์ระบุไว้ มากำหนดเป็นชื่อของการแสดงจำนวน 5 ชุด คือ ระบำทวารวดี ระบาศรีวิชัย ระบาลพบุรี ระบำเชียงแสน และระบาสุโขทัย การแสดงแต่ละชุดเป็นลักษณะแบบเอกเทศ ไม่มีเนื้อหาเกี่ยวข้องกัน จัดแสดงรอบปฐมทัศน์เมื่อวันที่ 25 พฤษภาคม พ.ศ. 2510 ต่อหน้าพระที่นั่งของในหลวงรัชกาลที่ 9 และพระราชินีในรัชกาลที่ 9 ในด้านการเคลื่อนไหวร่างกายมีเอกลักษณ์ที่สะท้อนความเป็นชาติพันธุ์ของพื้นที่และอารยธรรมดินแดนที่ค้นพบหลักฐานโบราณคดีแต่ละยุคสมัย ซึ่งใช้รูปแบบการสร้างสรรค์ของนาฏศิลป์ไทยตามจินตนาการของผู้ประดิษฐ์ท่ารำ นอกจากนี้ระบำชุดโบราณคดีได้รับความนิยมในการจัดแสดงอย่างต่อเนื่องในวาระต่าง ๆ มาจนถึงปัจจุบัน

Keywords

Thai theatre and dance; Archaeological dances; Dance history; Labanotation

นาฏศิลป์ไทย; ระบำชุดโบราณคดี; ประวัติศาสตร์นาฏศิลป์; ลาบานโนเทชั่น

Introduction

The origin of performing arts is not different from music, visual arts and other arts which occur along with the development of human beings who have begun to think, invent and create basic cultures of life since the Paleolithic Age (Tungcharoen 2006: 176). Performing arts refers to the drama and dance of human beings with physical movements accompanied by singing or playing music. It may or may not be shown as a storyline. Solo Dance and Groupe Dance are included. Furthermore, the dance in each human culture reflects different ways of life, beliefs, traditions, and important events.

Academicians in Thailand's history gave the conclusion that, in the past, the territory of Thailand was an area with diverse cultures. Important historical evidence is the ancient art discovered in Thailand which indicates different ethnic civilizations within Thailand in the past. Later, the art history era was categorised by the evidence of art objects, ancient inscriptions and archives found in Thailand and information from the comparison of similar information on cultures in neighbouring countries.

All the evidence of ancient arts and sites in various human civilizations are useful in the study of ethnography and artistic creation. Based on the importance of creating dance through evidence and archaeological research, Garfinkel (2014: 13) states that "Indeed, the study of the Archaeology of Dance is difficult but not impossible. In this short presentation I have examined how archaeologists can identify dance activity in the archaeological record. While the evidence is not always obvious, the subject matter should not be overlooked altogether. With more awareness, relevant data will be recognised and collected to create a better understanding of dance activities in the past." Therefore, it can be considered that the dramatic arts can be created from the knowledge obtained from archaeological sites. This is to create an understanding of the history of human beings in each culture as well.

In Thailand, there is a dance that arises from the evidence of artifacts from different periods, which is called the "Series of Archaeological Dances". The information on the art in each period (Tungcharoen 1994: 55-59) can be summarised as follows.

1. **Dvāravatī Art:** Dvāravatī period is during the 11th-16th Buddhist century. The centre was in Nakhon Pathom Province. There is evidence of ancient objects in the central region, especially in Nakhon Pathom and Ratchaburi provinces. Most of the sculptures are of stone Buddha images in Theravada Buddhist Doctrine. In addition, there are terracotta and bronze Buddha images and architectural stucco decorations.

2. **Srīvijaya Art:** Srīvijaya area flourished between the 13th and 18th Buddhist centuries in the south of Thailand, especially in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province. The art objects were found in Thailand, Java and Sumatra islands in Malaysia. The sculptures were casted in bronze and made of stone as Buddha images and graven images according to Mahayana Buddhism.
3. **Lopburi Art:** Lopburi period was during the 16th-18th Buddhist centuries. It flourished in the central, eastern and northwestern regions of Thailand. Based on architectural and sculpture evidence, the art characteristics are similar to Khmer art.
4. **Chiang Saen Art:** The art of the Dvāravatī, Srīvijaya and Lopburi periods is considered to be art in prehistoric times of Thailand since the Chiang Saen period. It has been a historical art of Thailand with a clear process to identify the Thai race. It flourished during the 17th-19th Buddhist centuries in the north of Thailand. At that time, it was popular in Theravada Buddhist doctrine to build a bronze Buddha image with glass and colored stones.
5. **Sukhothai Art:** Sukhothai art flourished during the 19th-21st Buddhist centuries having Sukhothai Kingdom as the centre of the royal capital. Theravada Buddhist doctrine accepted that the Buddha images in the Sukhothai period are the most beautiful and popularly made of bronze.

The Series of Archaeological Dances is considered a work under the cooperation of experts in various fields in Thailand such as history, music, dance, and visual arts. It is considered as a creative work of dance that originated in the 20th century and has been a popular performance until the present. It was also a model for many other similar archaeological creations inspired by the archaeological evidence later. Thus, based on such importance, the author aimed to study 2 areas, namely, 1) the history of the Series of Archaeological Dances and 2) the unique dance of the Series of Archaeological Dances together with the recording of the dance posture by Labanotation, which will help to expand knowledge in dance and choreography for the benefit of education and integrated research, including the creation of theatre and dance in the context of Thailand or Asian countries in the future.

The Series of Archaeological Dances

The Series of Archaeological Dances is a concept of dance creation during the 20th century. Mr. Dhanit Yupho, former Director-General of the Fine Arts Department, has initiated the exploration and excavation of general antiques. When art and antiques are discovered, they will be displayed at the National Museum in order to use as evidence and

to facilitate research studies especially in art and antiques discovered in Thailand based on evidence and research from various artistic sources such as antiques, ancient sites, ancient inscriptions and archives of Thailand and neighbouring countries.

To use the art of antiquities from different periods to create a series of dances, it will make the art of antiques of each period come alive. If we can create the dance for each and every period, there will be a series of Thai dance that brings together the arts of different periods with different posture and musical accents which are differently beautiful to be available in the same place, it will motivate the audiences to study the knowledge of ancient artifacts. Therefore, they will try to study the arts and antiquities of various periods in Thailand relying on sculptures, castings, etchings, artefacts from ancient sites of that period, and researching and comparing them with pictures and documents of art and archeology from neighbouring countries and then creating the the dance of each set of antique art objects from each period which is collectively called as Series of Archaeological Dances (Yupho 1967: 5-7)

In the survey process and procedure to create the Series of Archaeological Dances, it was found that the process started with the survey of ancient sites and antiques found in various provinces in Thailand and the information from photographs in historical research books that have been published was collected together with the photos that Mr. Dhanit Yupho have taken. Only the pictures showing the dancing style or inscriptions of the arts that appear in ancient place were collected. After that the data were sorted out according to the era defined by the art historical scholars (Ruangjirayos 2008: 49). In this regard, there is a cooperation from Thailand's experts in music, dance and visual arts (Yupho 1967), namely, the composer who is Mr Montri Tramod, the choreographers including Thanpuying Paew Snidvongseni, Mrs La-mul Yamakupt and Mrs Chalerya Sukhavanich, and the costume designer who is Mr Sanit Disatabandhu.

Art, antiques, and artifacts from 5 period were used to create the Series of Archaeological Dances, and the names of each period were applied as the names of each dance, namely, Dvāraṭī Dance, Srīvijaya Dance, Lop Buri Dance, Chiang Saen Dance and Sukhothai Dance. Each set is exhibited as an independent performance with no related content to each other. The Series of Archaeological Dances were performed for the first time in the time of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit presided over the opening of the ancient art exhibition in a new building at the Bangkok National Museum on 25 May 1967. Later, this series of dances became widely popular and performed in many occasions until the present.

Dvāravatī Dance

Dvāravatī dance was created by investigating, researching and inventing dance postures, musical instruments and costumes from the sculptures and etch images excavated at the Dvāravatī archaeological sites such as Khu Bua Subdistrict, Ratchaburi Province, U Thong District, Suphan Buri Province, Muaeng Khok Mai Den and Muaeng Chansen, Nakhon Sawan Province, and in the Nakhon Pathom Province area. The evidence found were considered by archaeological scholars that the people of Dvāravatī are Mon or a tribe that speaks Mon language. Therefore, the music and dance postures in this dance, therefore, has a Mon mood and tone. The choreographers are Mrs La-mul Yamakupt and Mrs Chalerya Sukhavanich (Yupho 1967).

Srīvijaya Dance

The Srīvijaya dance existed in the middle of 1966. The Thai ambassador in Kuala Lumpur at that time informed that the Prime Minister of Malaysia had an intention to have dances from Thailand to be filmed as part of the movie called Raja Bersong. Therefore, he asked the Fine Arts Department to prepare two dances, namely the Sad Chatree Dance and the Srīvijaya Dance. It was necessary to study and research on Srīvijaya dance and investigate for a model for the dance creation, both from etching images at the Borobudur stupa and ancient antique of the Srīvijaya period that were found in the southern part of Thailand. Many historical and archeological scholars have concluded that Borobudur stupa belonging to the Srivijaya - contemporary Silen dynasty. It was built around the end of the 8th century, so the dance posture was invented according to the etching images and mixed with the posture of Javanese dance. The choreographers are Mrs La-mul Yamakupt and Mrs Chalerya Sukhavanich (Yupho 1967).

Lopburi Dance

Lopburi dance does not refer to the provincial dance or the local dance of Lopburi Province, but it refers to a dance created based on ancient artifacts and ancient sites which was influenced by Khmer or created according to Khmer art as seen in Cambodia and Thailand, such as Phra Prang Sam Yod in Lopburi Province, Prasat Hin Phimai in Nakhon Ratchasima Province and Prasat Hin Phanom Rung in Buriram Province. The Archaeologists define a period of these ancient sites as Lopburi art. Even they were imitated in Thailand but it reflects the influence of Khmer but with some different characteristics, to create our own uniqueness. For this reason, the melody has Khmer mood and tone and the dance was created from the etching images of the stone carved from antiques and ancient sites. The choreographers are Mrs La-mul Yamakupt and Mrs Chalerya Sukhavanich (Yupho 1967).

Chiang Saen Dance

Chiang Saen Dance was built according to the art and antiques and ancient sites of the Chiang Saen period centred on the right bank of the Mekong River in northern Thailand in the area of Chiang Saen District, Chiang Rai Province. Chiang Saen period art has spread throughout the northern Thailand which was called Lanna Kingdom in ancient times. They also spread down the Mekong River into the Lao Kingdom and then forwarded back into Thailand in the upper northeast as well. For this reason, the Chiang Saen dance has traditional northern culture moon and tone mixed with the indigenous culture of the upper Northeast. The choreographers are Mrs La-mul Yamakupt and Mrs Chalerya Sukhavanich (Yupho 1967).

Sukhothai Dance

Sukhothai is the name of the former Thai kingdom. The capital city was established in the Sukhothai Province. It is considered a kingdom with high prosperous in terms of economy, society and culture. There are many artistic creations that are typical of the Sukhothai Kingdom. The evidence from many ancient sites such as Sukhothai Province, Kamphaeng Phet Province and Phitsanulok Province were found. Even later, the Sukhothai kingdom lost its political power but Sukhothai art has spread its influence into the Lanna Kingdom in the north and in the Kingdom of Ayutthaya in the south of Thailand. The stucco and bronze Buddha images in the Sukhothai period are regarded as the most beautiful fine arts. In particular, the Buddha image in a posture of pacing and slitting of his fingers which is admirable and beautiful. It is also evident in the inscriptions indicating that the people in the Sukhothai Kingdom enjoyed the arts of music and dance. This reveals that the art of dance in the Sukhothai period was the most advanced as well as other field of arts. Hence, Sukhothai dance was created from the accent and words in the inscription together with the stucco style of the Sukhothai Buddha image. The choreographer was Thanpuying Paew Snidvongseni (Yupho 1967).

Unique dance posture of the Series of Archaeological Dances

The Series of Archaeological Dances consist of dance postures inspired by the antique and ancient site used as a model in the creation of each dance. The excavated artwork from each era were intricate in their creation in a harmonious with Thai dance postures according to the imagination of the choreographers (Suntiatchawan 2018: 20-21) having the movements linked from one posture to another posture in a harmonious way.

The movement of the Series of Archaeological Dances is different from the traditional Thai dance as it came from the art appear on the antique and ancient site with repetition

postures, most of which are repeated 6-12 times. The posture with unique identity of the Series of Archaeological Dances are 1) Dvāravatī Dance representing the uniqueness of Dvāravatī people (Mon people), 2) Srīvijaya Dance representing the uniqueness of the people of the Srīvijaya Kingdom (Java), 3) Lop Buri Dance representing the postures in the etching image found in the Khmer Castle, 4) Chiang Saen Dance representing gentle dances and posture based on the indigenous culture of the North; and 5) Sukhothai Dances representing uniqueness of dance posture from the Buddha image in the posture of the Sukhothai period (Suntiatchawan 2018: 22).

Recording the dance with Labanotation

Labanotation, or Kinetography Laban, is the system of recording movement originated by Rudolf Laban in the 1920s. By this scientifically based method, all forms of movement, ranging from the simplest to the most complex, can be accurately written. Its usefulness to dancers is obvious. The system has also been successfully applied to every field in which there is the need to record motions of the human body - anthropology, athletics, and physiotherapy, to name just a few. (Guest 2005: 5)

It was also found that Labanotation started to be disseminated and officially became well-known in Thailand in 1987 from a workshop entitled “Training Course in the Technique of Labanotation and Its Implementation for Teachers and Trainers of the Performing Arts” organised by the SEAMEO Regional Center for Archeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA) (SPAFA, 2011: 8). Based on its importance, the study recorded the dance postures of The Series of Archaeological Dances using Labanotaion, where the samples of dance posture that are unique in each set were selected for recording as follows:

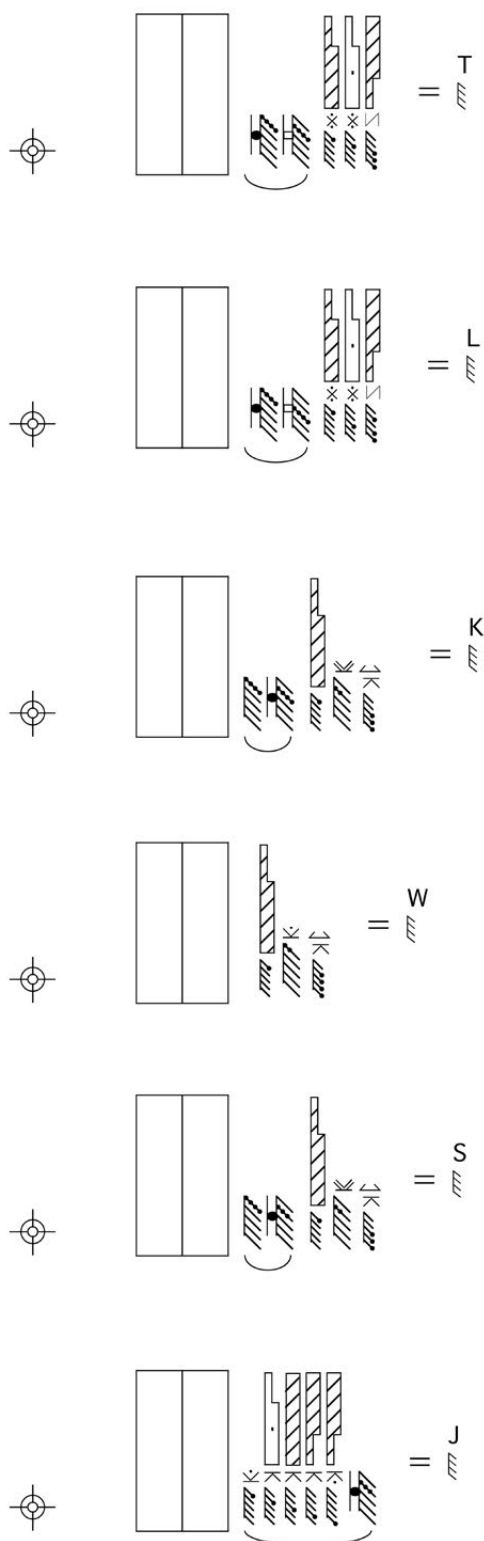


Fig. 1 Glossary of hands pose in Series Archaeological Dances. Source: D Chandnasaro

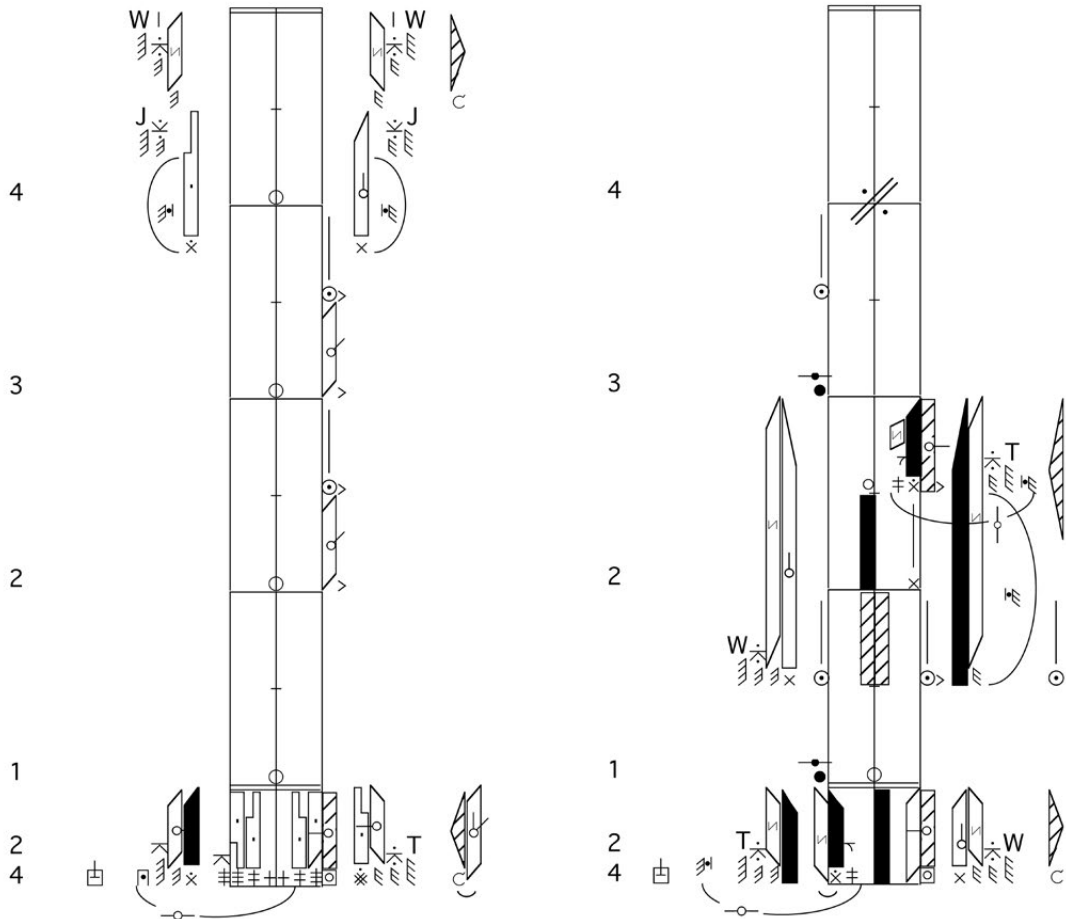


Fig. 2 Two movement sequences of Dvāravatī dance. Source: D Chandnasaro.

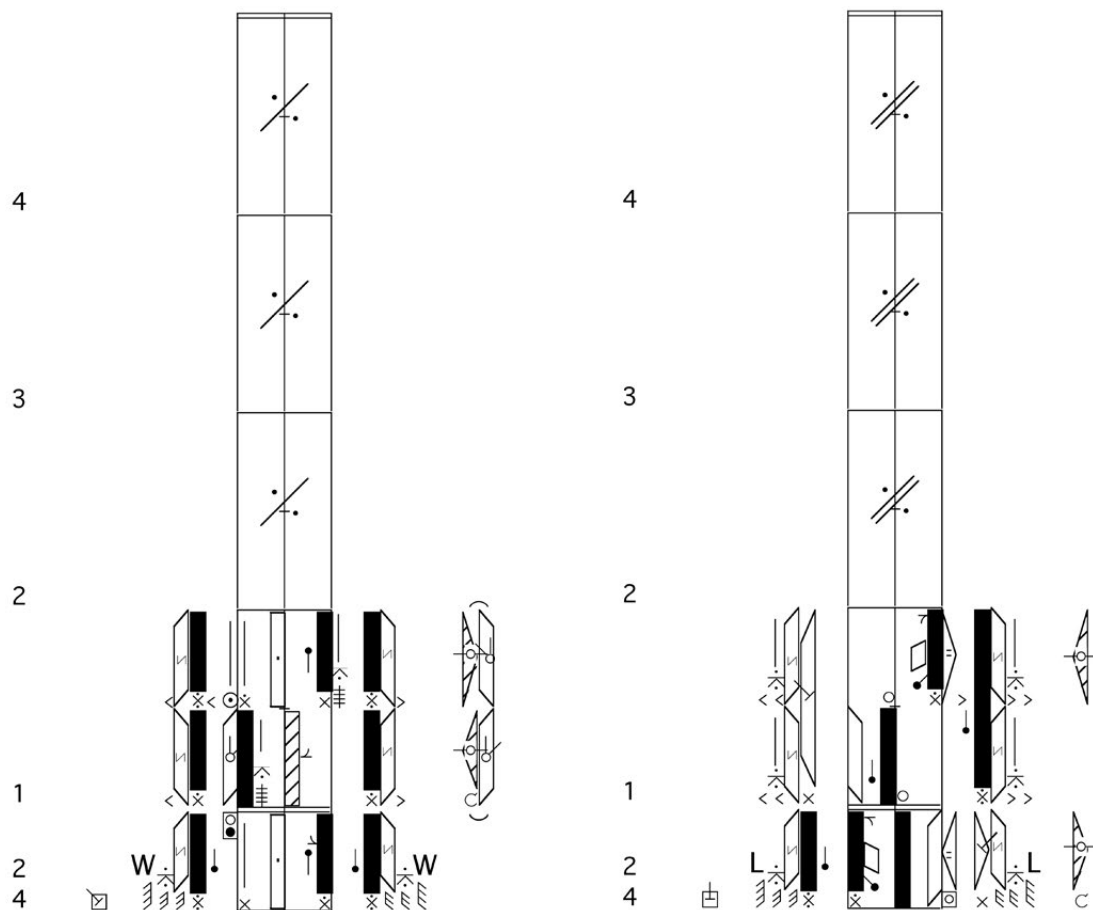


Fig. 3 Two movement sequences of Srivijaya dance. Source: D Chandnasaro.

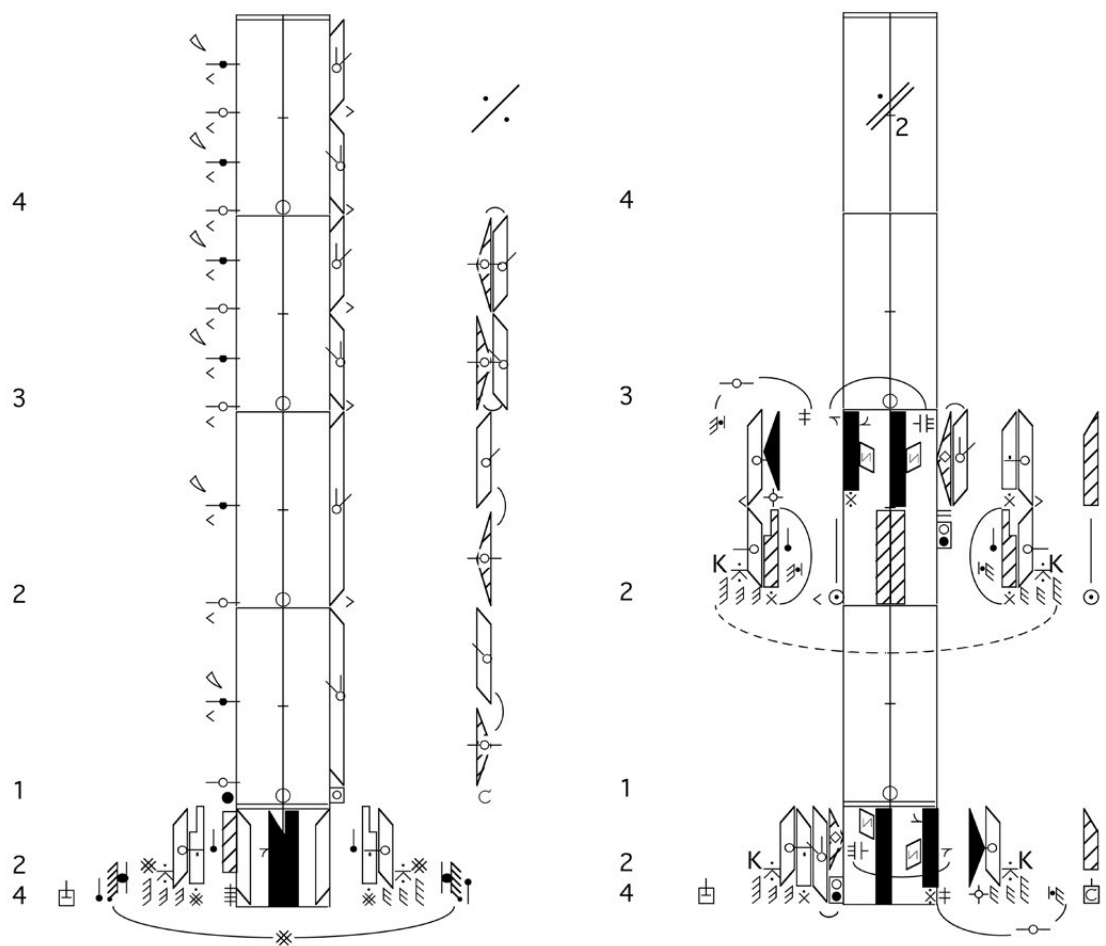


Fig. 4 Two movement sequences of Lopburi dance. Source: D Chandnasaro.

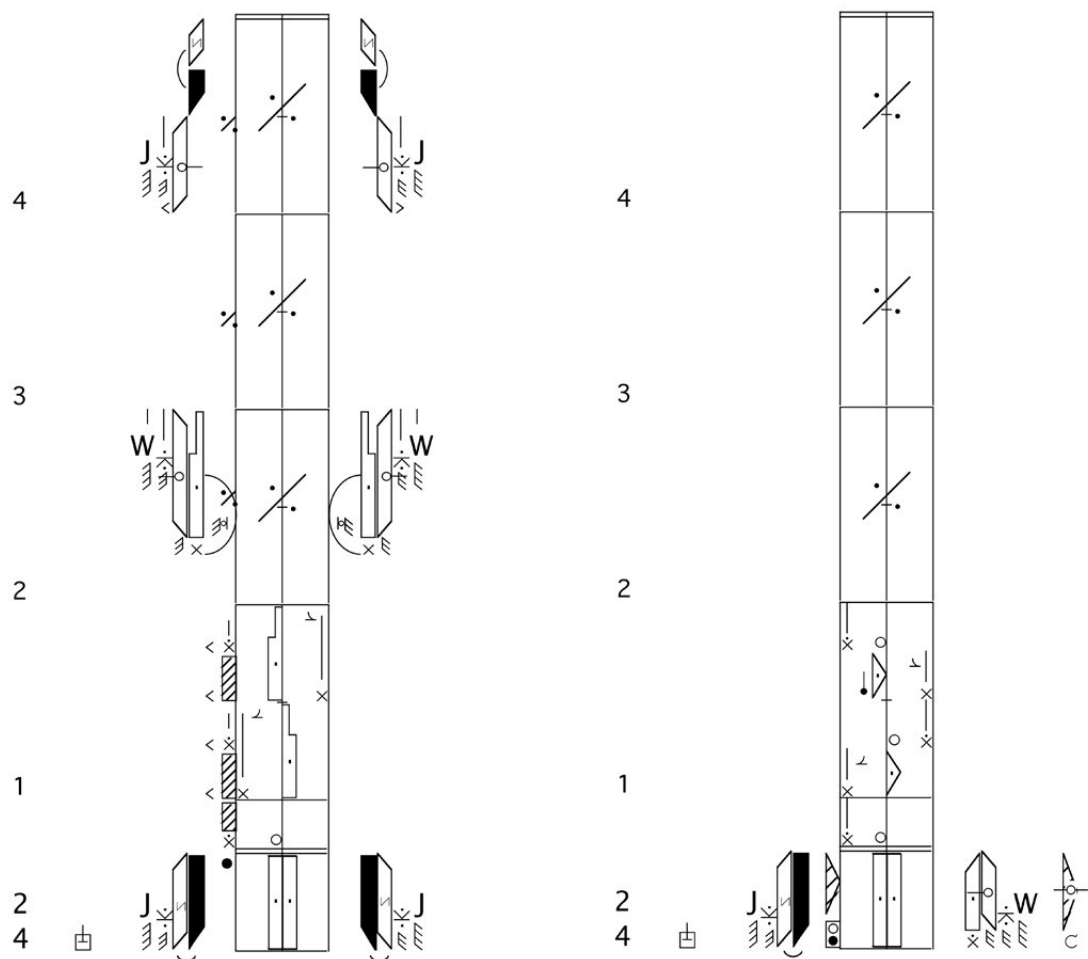


Fig. 5 Two movement sequences of Chiang Sean dance. Source: D Chandnasaro.

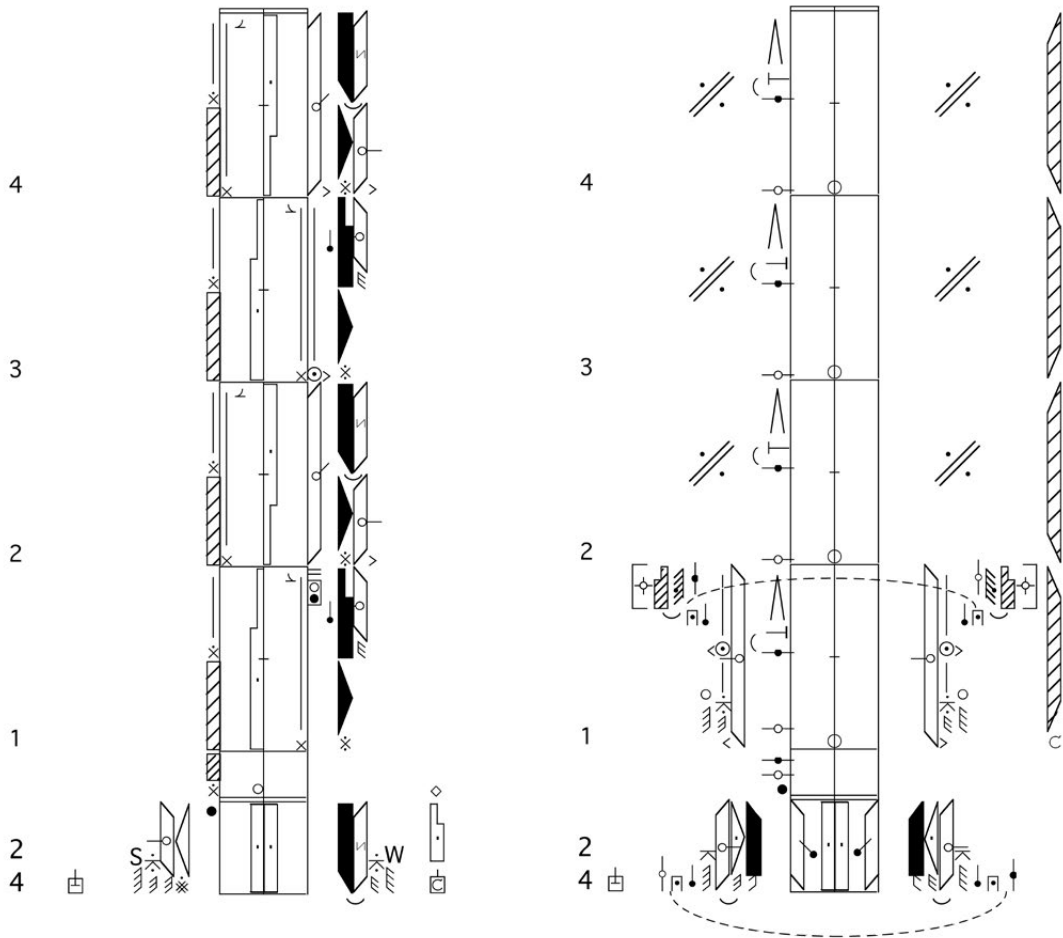


Fig. 6 Two movement sequences of Sukhothai dance. Source: D Chandnasaro.

Conclusion

The Series of Archaeological Dances was the idea of creation of Thai dances in the 20th century of Thailand created by Mr. Dhanit Yupho, the former Director-General of Fine Arts Department, with intention to publish knowledge on ancient antique discovered in Thailand during the 11th-21th Buddhist century based on evidence of creation from art of stucco, ancient scripture, achieves, ancient remains, and other kinds of ancient antique. The name of each era was used as the names of 5 dances including Dvāravatī dance, Srīvijaya dance, Lopburi dance, Chiang Saen dance, and Sukhothai dance. The Series of Archeological Dances was firstly performed when King Rama IX and Queen Sirikit opened an ancient antique exhibition held at new building of Bangkok National Museum on 25 May 1967. Subsequently, The Series of Archeological Dances has become popular and published and it has been performed in various occasions up till now.

From analyzing unique dance moves of the Series of Archaeological Dances, the results revealed that the choreographer of these dance moves relied on her own imagination based on her foundation on Thai theatre and dance. Each dance has atmosphere of ethnics that are similar to Thai ethnic (or “Siam” in the past) as follows: 1) Dvāravatī dance presents uniqueness of Dvāravatī people (Mon people); 2) Srīvijaya dance presents dance moves of Srīvijaya people (Java); 3) Lopburi dance presents dance moves obtained from etch in Khmer sanctuaries (Khmer); 4) Chieng Saen dance presents delicate and gentle dance moves and manner of northern culture; and 5) Sukhothai dance presents unique dance moves from walking Buddha posture in Sukhothai period. To record Thai dance moves with Labanotation, it is a kind of recording method that has been preferred and used with dances of every race. It could record unique dance moves of the Series of Archaeological Dances correctly and precisely and it was also able to be developed by developing dance notation scores to research on Thai dances and analysis on body movement in the following opportunities.

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