

# Thatsana Nataya Chatri Dance: A Creative Conservation Process of Performing Arts for Competition

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ทัศนานาฏยชาติตรี : กระบวนการสร้างสรรค์เชิงอนุรักษ์ศิลปะการแสดงเพื่อการแข่งขัน

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## Abstract

The research on Thatsana Nataya Chatri Dance : A Creative Conservation Process of Performing Arts for Competition was aimed at 1) to study the creative process of performing arts for competition ; 2) to devise the creative process of performing arts for competition ; and 3) to apply the process for the competition. The study was conducted using the qualitative research method in Bangkok (Thailand) through documentary study and data from field observations, interviews and focus group meetings. Data were collected from 50 informants consisting of 10 experts on the subject, 30 practitioners and 10 general information providers. The data collection instruments consisted of participatory and non-participatory forms, structured and non-structured interview schedules and focus group note forms. The data were verified by the triangulation technique and presented using the descriptive analysis. The results of the study reveal that the creative conservation process of performing arts should be initiated by those who have experienced using a prior knowledge in the pursuit of new knowledge. The new knowledge is combined to generate creative work with the conservation process in 8 aspects : a study of format and regulations of the competition, a study of basic information on performing arts, defining the performance format, a fieldwork to acquire an in-depth information, the data analysis, design of performing arts, performance rehearsals and presentation. Inventing the conservation process of cultural performing arts Thatsana Nataya Chatri dance consists of 33 dance postures and 14 transformed patterns. The performance requires 6 dancers, 3 males and 3 females. Costume features both male and female classical and modified dancer's costumes. The duration of the show takes 5 minutes. As for the application for the competition, this creative work has been selected by Dramatic Works Association (Thailand) to represent Thailand at the Lombok International Dance Sports Festival 2015 held in Lombok, Indonesia. The team has been awarded the Second Place in the Traditional Dance category.

**Keywords :** creative conservation process, performing arts, Thatsana Nataya Chatri dance, competition.

### **บทคัดย่อ**

การทำวิจัยเรื่อง ทัศนานาฏยชาติรี : กระบวนการสร้างสรรค์เชิงอนุรักษ์ศิลปะการแสดงเพื่อการแข่งขันโดยมีวัตถุประสงค์ 1. เพื่อศึกษากระบวนการสร้างสรรค์เชิงอนุรักษ์ศิลปะการแสดงเพื่อการแข่งขัน 2. เพื่อประดิษฐ์ศิลปะการแสดงสร้างสรรค์เชิงอนุรักษ์เพื่อการแข่งขัน 3. เพื่อนำไปใช้สำหรับการแข่งขัน วิธีการดำเนินการวิจัยด้วยวิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพแบบวิจัยและพัฒนาในพื้นที่กรุงเทพมหานคร โดยการศึกษาจากเอกสาร หลักฐาน และข้อมูลภาคสนาม จากการสังเกต สัมภาษณ์ สันทนากลุ่มผู้ให้ข้อมูลมีจำนวนทั้งหมด 50 คน ประกอบด้วย กลุ่มผู้รู้ 10 คน กลุ่มผู้ปฏิบัติ 30 คน กลุ่มผู้ให้ข้อมูลทั่วไป 10 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล ได้แก่ แบบสังเกตแบบมีส่วนร่วม และไม่มีส่วนร่วม แบบสัมภาษณ์แบบมีโครงสร้าง ไม่มีโครงสร้างและแบบสนทนากลุ่ม การตรวจสอบข้อมูลโดยการใช้เทคนิคการตรวจสอบแบบสามเส้าและนำเสนอผลการวิจัยโดยวิธีพรรณนาวิเคราะห์

ผลการวิจัยพบว่ากระบวนการสร้างสรรค์เชิงอนุรักษ์ศิลปะการแสดงนั้น ผู้ที่สร้างสรรค์ควรจะเป็นผู้ที่มีประสบการณ์โดยการนำความรู้เดิมจากอดีตแสวงหาความรู้ใหม่ ผสมผสานให้เกิดผลงานสร้างสรรค์เชิงอนุรักษ์โดยมีขั้นตอนกระบวนการสร้างสรรค์ 8 ด้าน ประกอบด้วย 1. ศึกษารูปแบบและระเบียบของการแข่งขัน 2. ศึกษาข้อมูลพื้นฐานทางด้านศิลปะการแสดง 3. กำหนดรูปแบบการแสดง 4. ลงพื้นที่ภาคสนามเพื่อหาข้อมูลเชิงลึก 5. นำข้อมูลที่ได้มาวิเคราะห์ 6. ทำการออกแบบศิลปะการแสดง 7. ฝึกซ้อมและ 8. นำเสนอผลงานการประดิษฐ์ศิลปะการแสดงสร้างสรรค์เชิงอนุรักษ์มีทั้งหมด 33 ทำการแสดง รูปแบบการแปรแถวมี 14 รูปแบบ ผู้แสดงจำนวน 6 คน แบ่งออกเป็นนักแสดงที่แสดงเป็น ชาย 3 คน หญิง 3 คน การแต่งกายจะแต่งแบบยีนเครื่องพระ-นางประยุกต์ ทำนองเพลงดนตรีแบบผสมผสานดั้งเดิมและประยุกต์ระยะเวลาในการแสดง 5 นาที ส่วนการนำไปใช้สำหรับการแข่งขันนั้น ได้รับคัดเลือกจากสมาคมนาฏกรรมประเทศไทย ไปแข่งขันที่ เมืองลอมบอก ประเทศอินโดนีเซีย ในงาน The Lombok International Dance Sport Festival 2015 ผลการแข่งขันปรากฏว่าได้ อันดับที่ 2 ประเภท Traditional Dance Team Adult

**คำสำคัญ :** กระบวนการสร้างสรรค์เชิงอนุรักษ์ ศิลปะการแสดง ทัศนานาฏยชาติรี การแข่งขัน

## Introduction

Cultural performance is a science indicative of the aesthetics and identity of the people in society. Cultural performance plays a vital role in the life of man including in ritualistic ceremonies for expressing cultural identity and creativity. This is evident in the dance specifically performed for healing the persons affected by or exorcising the evil spirits commonly performed in the Northeast of the country. This is similar to the rituals performed at the shrines to worship the gods of Hinduism – Brahmanism in India [1] or the candle procession to celebrate the Buddhist lent festival in the Northeast of Thailand. In addition cultural performance also functions to sooth the mind of the people and to affirm the identity of the people in the nation. It is an intricate way to proclaim the people's customs and practices traditionally handed down to the later generations. It is a cultural product meticulously and exquisitely created by man that is meant to entertain the audience, thus creating a feeling of acquiescence among its followers. For the cultural performance to function properly, it requires many elements such as the performing procedure, costumes, musical instruments, as well as singing melody, a combination that leads to achievement. Cultural performance is deemed as an aesthetic discipline in the fine arts.

Moreover, elements are essential to make cultural performance of each social and ethnic group to be esthetics, such as environment, culture, tradition, religion, etc. Therefore, the patterns of performance are varied depending on differing social and ethnic characteristics, making it impossible to determine whether the cultural performance of one group is better than that of the other. The present research was faced with selecting performance when she was selected by Dramatic Works Association (Thailand) to represent traditional performing arts competition at Lombok International Dance Sport Festival held at Lombok Island in Indonesia. This festival was an event that contestants from several countries took turn in presenting their chosen performance in the presence of the judges and audience. At the beginning, it was rather difficult for researcher to make a decision what Thailand's performance to be chosen as an entry. The fact is that the nature of Thai traditional performance is rather slow in its dance movement and the emphasis is on the gracefulness of the dance itself. This is in contrast to performance from countries like China and India, where the fast movement is their strong point, which naturally gives a thrilling emotion to the audience. Other pressing problem is time allowed for the performance. Three to five minutes of performance time is too short for Thai traditional performance. More importantly, researcher and those who entered the contest and were never experienced that kind of event before. Since Thai traditional performance is an important parameter for determining the scope of creative arts, to prevent any error that might arise, researcher

decided to make a detailed study by acquiring data from documentary sources as well as a field work as the basis for the creative process of performing arts for competition.

### **Aims of the Study**

1. To study the creative process of performing arts for competition.
2. To devise the creative process of performing arts for competition.
3. To apply the process for the competition.

### **Method**

This qualitative study aimed to study the creative process of performing arts for competition, to devise creative process of performing arts for competition and to apply the process for the competition. This research and development work was a qualitative study where data were gathered from documents and collected during the fieldwork. Data acquired were developed and divided into three stages.

Stage One : The study collected data from documentary sources and from the fieldwork through survey, interviews, observations and focus groups. The instruments used in the study consisted of observation, survey form, participatory and non-participatory observation forms, structured and non-structured interview schedules, in-depth interview form and focus group form. Bangkok (Thailand) was chosen as the study area as most of the government and private agencies involved with the research topic are located in this city. The sample for the study, drawn according to the purposive sampling, consisted of 50 respondents, classified into 10 experts in the field, 30 practitioners and 10 general informants. The data were analyzed and synthesized to obtain information indicated in the objectives.

Stage Two : The acquired data were compiled and processed for devising the creative process of cultural performing arts for competition based on six elements of the performing arts : performance process, musical melody, costumes, performance time, rituals [2], and in compliance with the rules and regulations of the competition.

Stage Three : After the creative process of performing arts for competition has been invented, the researcher has led the team of performers to enter the competition. Afterward, an assessment been made and the findings were presented with the descriptive analysis.

## Results

From the fieldwork, it is found that the creative process of cultural performing arts for competition consists of the following elements : 1. A study of format and regulations of the competition ; 2. A study of basic information on the performing arts ; 3. Defining the performance format ; 4. A fieldwork to acquire an in-depth information ; 5. The data analysis ; 6. A design of cultural performing arts ; 7. Performance rehearsals and 8. Presentation.

When the data on creative process performing arts for competition has been acquired, the researcher analyzed and synthesized and devised creative process of performing arts for competition with details based on Objective one. The researcher has been selected by Dramatic Works Association (Thailand) *to represent the country in the cultural performing arts competition at Lombok International Dance Sport Festival 2015* held at Lombok Island in Indonesia on 11 September 2015 on Traditional Dance Adult Team category. Each entry team consists of at least eight performers and the time allowed for the performance session is 3-5 minutes. The criteria for awarding are based on the satisfaction of the audience and judges. The researcher has engaged in a documentary study on the essence of performing arts and previous performances for competition formats. Later a performance format has been defined, based largely on Thai traditional performance, i.e from *“Sat Cha tree Dance”*. A fieldwork has been engaged in Bangkok (Thailand) area for in-depth information through observations, interviews, and focus groups with experts in the field, practitioners, and general informants. The total 50 respondents include staff from Division of Music, Fine Arts Department (Figure 1), *Bunditpatanasilpa Institute, Ministry of Culture, Lakhon Chatree Troupes (Figure 2)*, and those who have been the audience of this type of performance. The cultural performing art then has been designed with the title *“Thatsana Nataya Chatri Dance”* meaning recognition by seeing and experiencing the beauty of performance, with postures showing all 33 dance movements and 14 transformation patterns. Six dancers, 3 males and 3 females, comprise the performing troupe, with costumes featuring both male and female classically modified dancer’s costume. The melody used is a mixture of traditional and modern music. The duration of the show takes 5 minutes. The casting and rehearsals are carried out in full costumes in order to find out the flaws and to make improvement for a better display (Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5).

*“Thatsana Nataya Chatri Dance”* has been competed on the category of Traditional Dance Adult Team with 12 teams from other countries, such as from Indonesia featuring the performance of Yogyakarta and Bali ; Malaysia, China, Belly Dance, Thailand, etc. The winner of the first place was the performance of Indonesian Balinese performance called *“Legong Kuntir Dance”* (Figure 6), whereas the performance from Thailand titled *“Thatsana*

Nataya Chatri Dance” ranked the second place (Figure 7), and another Indonesian Balinese performance called “Legong Dawa Dance” fetched the third place. (Ngarmying, D., 2017)



Figure 1 : Interview the Expert of Fine Arts Department



Figure 2 : Interview the Practitioner of *Lakhon Chatree Troupes*



Figure 3 : The Rehearsal of *Thatsana Nataya Chatri Dance*



Figure 4 : The Costume of Thatsana Nataya Chatri Dance was designed by Fine Arts Department



Figure 5 : The Judges



Figure 6 : The First Place was Legong Kuntir Dance of Indonesian Balinese



**Figure 7 :** The Second Place was Thatsana Nataya Chatri Dance of Thailand

## Discussion

1. The creative process of performing arts for competition has following processes and elements : a detailed study of regulations and format of the competition, a study of the basics of performance, defining performance format, a fieldwork for in-depth information, data analysis, a design of performing arts, rehearsals and presentation. This is consistent with the concept of Iamsakun, C. (2010) [3] who states that a person who designs creative performance should take into account of the elements, with creative process as key principles. Similarly, Puangsamlee, P. (1971) [4] states that elements of the performance is indicative of cultural prosperity and self - valued. The beauty of the performance is based on several elements. A person operates the performance will have to show understanding of the various elements, most importantly the performer, costume, music, performing gesture and place of performances.

2. On the devise of the creative process of performing arts for competition, it is found that the performance consists of 33 postures, 14 transformation patterns, 6 performers - divided into the three males and three females, modified male-female dancer's costume, a mixture of traditional and modern music and a 5-minute show time. This finding is in line with the aesthetic theory of Baumgarten (1986) [5] stating that aesthetics that exists in nature and as a result of the creation of man comes from sensory perception. However, to understand the beauty requires sensory perception, emotion, meaning of creations and the individuality [6].

3. As for the use of the performance for the competition event, it is found that the entry has won the second place among 12 contestant teams. The outcome is in consistent with the concept of Harold, Koontz and Cyril, and O'Donnell [7] stating in effect that planning is to decide in advance what to do, when and how do, and who will do it.



Planning is to bridge the gap of the present and the future as needed and makes things happen as desired.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the study are in line with the details set in the objectives of the study. The researcher has been able to come up with the creative process of performing arts for competition, devise the creative performance and participate in the competition. Although the result of the contest is not totally satisfying, that is second place in the Traditional Dance Adult Team category, the researcher still feels proud with such achievement. This is the first time for both the researcher and the performers who have no experience in the field of competition to win such a prestigious award. Performing arts of each country vary and all display an aesthetic aspect ; it is difficult to judge the performance of one country to be more beautiful than the other. From the analysis and assumption of the researcher, the reasons why Thailand's entry has won the second place are the following : the uniqueness of the performance process, a rousing musical melody and the spectacular costumes. The researcher also speculates that the reason why the Thai entry has not fetched the first prize is because of the fact that Indonesian Balinese performing arts' use of body gestures, in particular, the facial expression to express emotions is something to be commended. This is something that is lack in the Thai performance. In addition, the inexperience of the contestants is the cause for nervousness, anxiety and errors during the competition.

### **Suggestions**

The findings from this research can be used as a guideline of the competition, especially for those who have never experienced the performance event both at home and abroad before. The findings may be used by interested individuals who look for the relevant information.

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