

Research on the Thai Khon of Thailand: Implementation of Thai Khon Costume to the High-end Fashion Design

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Keywords: Thai Khon costume, mask, Traditional handwork, high-end fashion design

Abstract: Thai Traditional drama (Khon) clothing is shaping the role internal abstract the artistic skill of, to show the role of identity, age, temperament and characteristics, and show the art works of traditional drama in particular period, customs and delineate the situation and attach it belongs to the traditional drama play the art of drama clothing, belonging to the "congeniality art system" to "realistic characters expressing" work as the highest aesthetic pursuit of the goal, has the very strong situation beauty and artistic conception beauty. Thai Khon costume exquisite peerless format design, Colourful coloring and delicate embroidery patterns, thick and heavy makeup appearance to Thailand's clothing culture left precious wealth, also become the ancient costume design on the eve of a major inspiration origin at the same time. This study is intended to research on a method of implementation of the traditional Thai Khon costume elements in the high-end fashion design, which related to the characteristics and civilization of Thai Khon clothing, To explore the aesthetic meaning of the form beauty, the image beauty and the artistic conception beauty of the Thai Khon costume. The development of Thai Khon costume is summarized and arranged systematically. Summarize the features and cultural connotations of Thai Khon costume. And stylized, dancer, and decorative features. Through the in-depth research of the style, color, pattern, fabric and accessories in the Thai Khon, Combined with high-end fashion design, Create a new design model, In order to promote the protection, Inheritance, promotion and innovation of traditional culture.

1 INTRODUCTION

Thai khon is a representative of Thai traditional culture, It integrates various art forms such as dance, music, poetry, painting, martial arts, and shadow play, Is the most beautiful dance art in Thailand.

Thai khon is the epitome of ancient Siamese art, It contains almost the most important elements of Thai classical culture. Thai khon is framed by the elegance of court dramas, Integrate active and lively folk art and Classics, plus classical stringed instruments, flute, etc. as score, Unique and full of Siamese glory.

Thai Khon, as the intangible cultural heritage of Thailand, is inherited and promoted. Thai Khon costume and sculpt to Thailand's clothing culture left precious wealth. Thai Traditional drama (Khon) clothing is shaping the role internal abstract the artistic skill of, has the very strong situation beauty and artistic conception beauty. This research

classified in the Research Platform: Research on Design.



Figure 1: Thai Khon performance.

2 KHON IS A ART OF THAI TRADITIONAL STAGE PERFORMANCE

Khon is a art of Thai traditional stage performance, it is a high-class Thai performing art that has been passed on since ancient times. The elegant dance

moves, the sound from a classical Thai orchestra ensemble, the delicate costume embroidery, and its story weave extraordinary visuals and soundscapes that mesmerize audiences.

2.1 “Khon” is a Precious Performing Art and Legacy of the Nation

“Khon” is a precious performing art and legacy of the nation. It is not as common these days to have an opportunity to attend a Khon performance because of how many resources it takes to create a production-effort on literature, performing arts, handicraft, and costume. However, for those interested in attending the original Khon, performances in honor of Queen Sirikit are held regularly since 2009, with a collaboration between the Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand, and public and private sector sponsors, in order to preserve and prolong this cultural legacy for years to come.

2.2 Khon's History

The history of Khon’s origins are a bit muddled, but its presence was recorded in the late 1600s in the archives of Simon de La Loubere. Who visited the Ayutthaya Kingdom. His diary described Khon as, “the dance to the rhythm of classical Thai orchestra, where performers wear a mask and carry a weapon.” Initially, Khon had been exclusively performed by male performers, however women joined later. The Khon masks had also been worn by every performer, both male and female, until they were removed, and replaced with headpieces, crowns, and tiaras to indicate the character’s status.

2.3 Classification of Khon

Khon is, and has been, divided into five categories: Outdoor Khon, performed outdoors on a field and no exact stage area; Outdoor Theater Khon, sometimes called Bench Khon, performed on a stage covered with a roof and a pole laid horizontally before the stage screen; Screen Khon, performed on a stage with a shadow play screen, the performance-known as “shadow with Khon attached”-will switch between dancers and the shadow play; Royal Theater Khon, a fusion between Khon and Lakhon Nai, a traditional stage play, where performers will sing and dance; and Scenery Khon which features screens and props on the stage.

2.4 The Story of Khon

The plot of the Ramakien narrative revolves around the King of the Demons known as Thotsakan having abducted the beautiful Nang Sita, wife of Phra Rama. Her princely husband asks Thotsakan to restore her to him, but the demon king demurs and keeps her as a hostage in a beautiful garden in the Kingdom of Lanka. Thus begins the mighty war between the armies of Thotsakan and Phra Rama. Performances of the Ramakien make use of a huge cast, as we know, and many battles are lost and won. The exquisite costumes, the Khon masks, as well as the dance and music are nothing less than breathtaking.

3 KHON IS BASED ON THE EPIC OF RAMAYANA

Thai Khon is a representative of Thai traditional culture, is the essence of Thailand. The early Thai Khon is a court dance that only royals can admire, is the peak representative of Thai traditional drama and dance.

Thai Khon originated in the Ayutthaya period of Thailand more than 400 years ago. "Khon" is the expression of Thai dance drama, "Khon" also means mime, is a masked dance drama. It was influenced by the art of the ancient Indian «Rāmāyaṇa», the actors perform stylized gestures and rich facial expressions.

Khon assumed to be started its history in the Ayutthaya period, Borommakod rama. That period, the royal believed in Bharm-Hindu that the king as if the god. Therefore in this period, the gold mask had been covered to the king's body after passed away. Because the believe in next life, the king would have very graceful face and body. On one hand this period of "Khom" kingdom, King Suriyaworaman (now in Cambodia, Angkor Wat) had influenced Siam. Ramayana has also influenced to Thailand's neighbour countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia.

4 CHARACTERS FOUND IN KHON CAN BE CATEGORIZED INTO FOUR GROUPS

4.1 Male Main Characters

This group consists of angels, kings, noblemen, and human servants and soldiers. The character’s social

status will be indicated by their costume and headpiece. Among important characters is Rama, the protagonist who is the eldest son of king Dasharatha, the king of Ayodhya and his chief Queen, Kausalya. Having a bow as his personal weapon, he possesses a green body with the most handsome look of all kings. Legend has it that Rama is the reincarnation of Narayana, a Hindu god.

4.2 Female Main Characters

This group consists of angels, Queens, and court ladies. Their statuses are reflected through their costume as well. The most important character in this category is Sita, the lady whose beauty is greater than any heaven creatures and her loyalty to her husband is nobler than anything. She is the reincarnation of the goddess Lakshmi, the wife of Narayana.

4.3 Giant Characters

Consisting of the king of the giants and his troop, these characters will wear a mask that can also reflect their social status. An important character in this category is Dashakantha, a then-face green giant with twenty arms. He rules the city of Lanka and kidnaps Sita from Rama, which sparks the war between the giants and Rama's troop.

4.4 Monkey Characters

The king of monkeys, monkey soldiers, and wild monkeys are in the group. Their appearance on the masks, including mouth shape, body color, and headpiece, will be different in each character. Hanuman is the right-hand soldier of Rama. This albino monkey character is very powerful and has the ability to travel in the air, transform and enlarge its appearance. He is believed to be immortal because he is the son of the wind-god, Vayu. When he is in a fatal danger, he will recover to the normal stage when the wind blows.

5 KHON CLOTHING IS GORGEOUS AND EXPENSIVE

This is directly related to its origin from the court. The actor wore a pagoda hat, wore a skein, and wore gold, the costumes of the actors are hand-embroidered and decorated with gold and silver threads. It takes a few months or even half a year for a piece of clothing to be completed, The price is up to 50,000 baht.

Thai Traditional drama (Khon) clothing is shaping the role internal abstract the artistic skill of, It has the very strong situation beauty and artistic conception beauty. Thai Khon clothing has left a valuable asset for Thai clothing culture. Khon fabrics choose traditional Thai silk, It has long been famous in the world for hand-woven, and is Thailand's most famous and most expensive commodity. Thai silk is of superior quality, soft and colorful, with special luster and oriental fabrics. Khon clothing chooses handmade beads, according to the character traits, design exclusive patterns, using traditional beading methods, sewing on clothing. Eg: The character Hanuman uses the monkey hair as an inspiration to design the pattern.



Figure 2: Thai Khon character

5.1 Costume for Male Character



Figure 3: Thai Khon character

- 1)Anklet; 2)Trousers; 3)Brocade tunic worn over trousers; 4)Side sash; 5)Tight-fitting jacket covering torso; 6)Waist sash; 7)External loin cloth; 8)Dagger ornament; 9)Bejewelled; 10)Collar; 11)Chest pendant; 12)Epaulet; 13)Armlet; 14)Cloth chest

chain; 15)Ornament at the end of sash; 16)Headdress; 17)Diamond flower fixed to headdress(left side of head); 18)Decorative earpiece; 19)Flower(right side of head); 20)Floral tassel(right side of head); 21)Ring; 22)Bracelet; 23)Beads; 24)Bangles

5.2 Costume for Female Character

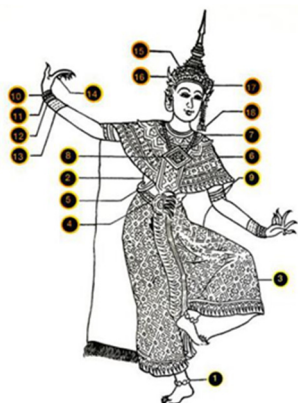


Figure 4: Thai Khon character

1)Anklet; 2)Undergarment; 3)Embroidered outer garment; 4)Belt; 5)Sash; 6)Embroidered cloak; 7)Collar; 8)Pendant; 9)Armlet; 10)Bracelet; 11)Beads; 12)Elaborate gold bracelet; 13)Bangles; 14)Ring; 15)Headdress; 16)Decorative earpiece; 17)Flower(left side of head); 18)Floral tassel(left side of head)

5.3 Costume for Demon Character



Figure 5: Thai Demon character

1)Anklet; 2)Trousers; 3)External loin cloth worn over trousers; 4)Side sash; 5)Cloth hanging from back at waist; 6)Top; 7)Waist band; 8)Front cloth; 9)Belt;

10)Armour-like breast plate; 11)Epaulet; 12)Collar; 13)Breast Pendant; 14)Sash; 15)Pendant at end of sash; 16)Bracelet; 17)Beads; 18)Bangles; 19)Bead necklace; 20)Khon mask of Thotsakan; 21)Ring; 22)Bow.

5.4 Costume for Monkey Character

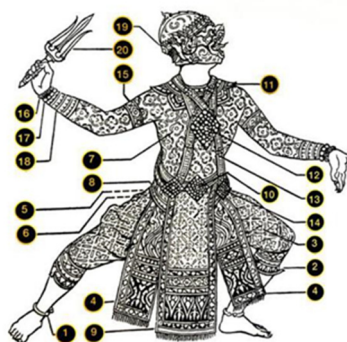


Figure 6: Thai Monkey character

1)Anklet; 2)Trousers; 3)External loin cloth worn over trousers; 4)Side sash; 5)Monkey tail; 6)Cloth hanging from back at waist; 7)Top with ornaments representing monkey hair; 8)Waist band; 9)Decorative front cloth; 10)Belt; 11)Collar; 12)Pendant; 13)Sash; 14)Pendant at end of sash; 15)Armlet; 16)Bracelet; 17)Beads; 18)Bangles; 19)Khon mask for Hanuman; 20)Trident

6 KHON MASKS

Khon masks have been in use since the late Ayudhya period, from the time of the reign of King Bornmakote(r.1742-1743) up to the current Rattanakosin period(1872-). During the reign of King RamaII(1809-1824) the arts flourished and so the Khon dance was at its height. This was also a time in which the art of making Khon masks flourished.

6.1 Different Categories of Faces

6.1.1 The Faces of Humans and Deities

The shapes of the Khon masks for humans and deities are relatively similar to the shapes of the faces of ordinary human beings, but the details of the Khon faces and ears are painted in a stylised manner. Both humans and deities have smiling and relaxed faces.

The smiles and moustaches curve upwards. The hermit faces are particularly cheerful looking.

6.1.2 The Faces of Non-humans

These comprise mostly Thotsakan and his army of demons, the Rakshasa, who are the lowest level of demons, and a few sets of unearthly or celestial characters, especially amalgamated humanoid-animalic mythological creatures. The demon face is basically modelled on the human face, but the expressions are of anger and hatred since demons are choleric and short-tempered.

6.1.3 The Faces of Monkeys and Various Animals

These are classified into two categories: under the rubric of the first type are those which cover the entire head of the actor, such as the Khon masks of Chomphuphan or Jambavan, “the King of the Bears”, who is sometimes portrayed as a monkey and at other times as a bear. It is of interest that Chomphuphan as an ursine character is physically modelled on the sloth or lablated bear of India and Sri Lanka. In Sanskrit, the terms used for the sloth bear are riksha or bhalluka. In as much as Chomphuphan is also famed for his sagacity and supernatural powers, it is believed that over the centuries the Sanskrit term “rishi”. Khmer: eysey or rosei; used to refer to the famed forest dwelling sages of Indic lore has been confused with the Sanskrit term “riksha” qua sloth bear through a long process of successive applications of folk etymology through artless association. Another example of Khon masks covering the entire head of the actor is the mask worn by Phra Phikhanet, the elephant-headed god. Still another type of mask allows the face of the actor to be seen since it is worn on the top of the head. Among such masks are those for horses, lion-kings and cats. The monkey masks are crafted to cover the whole head and are known for being elaborate and exquisite. These stylised monkey heads are based on the true characteristics of the monkey in question. Finally, all of the stylised Khon masks are likewise based on the real characteristics of the characters represented.

6.2 Khon Mask Ornaments

The ornaments on the Khon masks inform the audience of the status of those wearing the masks, whether a monarch, prince, high official or lowly weapon bearer, inter alios. The ornaments worn by royal characters are based on royal ornaments historically worn by Siamese royalty.

The crowns and headdresses of royal characters are also modelled on those historically worn by Siamese kings, queens, princes and princesses. However, the ornaments worn by characters from foreign lands differ from these in addition to the fact that they differ from the crowns and headdresses worn by both Thotsakan’s and Phra Rama’s armies

6.2.1 The Division into Pubpla or Rankings

Each monkey is assigned a rank with the ranks extending from the royal monkeys with supernatural powers to those who are ordinary weapon bearers. Audiences can differentiate the rank of each monkey by its headdress.

The yod chai or victory crown is worn by such high ranking monkeys as Chompooparn, the commanding general of the monkey troops, and Chomphuphanrat, the monkey king. Monkeys such as Pail and Sukreep wear the “yod bud” or “travelling crown”.

The yod sam kleeb or three-petal topped crown can be seen on the head of the monkey Ongkot. High monkey officials are the “eighteen-crown” monkeys, while Phra Rama’s most powerful soldiers wear the flower emblem beside the kanjiak or decorative earpiece.

The Tiaopect masks are masks of monkeys whose heads are wrapped with cloths. The baldheads are lacquered and pasted with gold leaves. There are nine of these masks and Tiaopect monkey character wears one of these masks. The exception to the rule is that some craftsmen have created simple headdresses for a few of these monkey characters.

The jungkiang are cloth scarves wrapped around the heads of common monkeys.

Head cloths are worn by the ling ken or the rank-and-file monkeys and the comedic monkey characters.

6.2.2 Mask Wearing

The Lanka or demon army members have facial features that are far more detailed than those of the monkey army allied with Phra Rama. However, this does not mean that the demon army is quantitatively larger than the monkey army. In view of the more detailed, hence more variegated, facial features of the demon monkeys, it has proven necessary to design and create a whole host of different crowns and headdresses for the demon characters.

The mongkut kab phai or the bamboo bract crown is worn by the demons Ramasura and Tosakiriwan. The mongkut haang lai or the headdress with an eel’s tail emblem is worn by the demon Treemekha. The mongkut yod jeep or the pleated-topped crown is

worn by the demons Phya Khorn and Sattasoon. The mongkut haang kai or the cock's tail-topped crown is worn by the demons Wiroonjambang and Banlajjak. Phya Thoot wears the mongkut yod kranok with the special kranok design on the tail possessed by the mythological half-human half-bird Kinnaree or Kinnon. Kuwenurat and Paowanason wear the mongkut yod nam tao klom or the round gourd-topped crowns. The mongkut yod nam tao or the common gourd-topped crowns are worn by such demons as Pibhek and Chiwha. The mongkut yod nam tao feung or a slightly different gourd-topped crown is worn by Banlaikan and Wanyuwik. The mongkut yod sam kleeb or the three-petal topped crown is worn by Tapnasoon, Swahu and Maricha. The mongkut yod naga or the serpent-topped crown is worn by the demon Mangkornkan. The mongkut laai yod or the multi-topped crown is worn by Treesian, and Akat-talai, who has four faces and eight arms. The mongkut laai naa or the multi-faced crown is worn by Thotsakan and Sahasadecha, the white-faced demon king of the city state Pangtan and the highest ranked demon characters.

The krob na, which is also known as the unahit, is the face frame worn by Kumphakan. The hua lone or baldhead masks are worn by most of the hua ken demon soldiers of the lowest ranks and by comedic demon characters.

6.2.3 Classification by Colour

Although craftsmen make a whole host of Khon masks and headdresses so as to differentiate the many Ramakien characters, several groups of characters are subsumed under categories of those who wear the same headdress. For instance, the kranok emblem crowns are worn by the demons Kuperun, Thoot, Maiyararp and Waiyatarn, whereas the bamboo bract crowns are worn by the demons Tosakirithorn, Tosakiriwan, Parote, Ramasura and others.

Thus, in order to further individualise- and thereby distinctly distinguish the characters from one another-the crowns within each group, the craftsmen use a vast array of different colours, choosing the most suitable colour for each face. In the early phases of mask making, only a few of the basic colours were used, such as black, white, red, blue and yellow.

These colours are known as benjarong, which literally translates from Thai Sanskrit as "five colours". Later, some of the craftsmen mixed the colours to from other interesting shades. The formulas for the mixtures were usually kept confidential by the craftsmen. The following are colours that have been painted on Khon masks.

- Red: Vermilion, red minium, rusty red, crimson red, crimson, light vermilion, brownish-red, maroon, bright vermilion, pinkish or rose, crimson minium, new pot colour, bright reddish orange, scarlet, pinkish.
- Yellow: yellow, gamboge tint, earth yellow, light yellow, greyish yellow, light pearlish yellow, pearlish yellow, moonlight or creamy ivory colour.
- Blue: indigo blue, navy blue, ultramarine blue, light indigo, bungor flower, bluish purple, greyish blue, dark blue, navy blue.
- Purple: purple, faded lotus or pinkish purple, dark purple, light purple.
- Green: green, dark green, sea green.
- Black: ink black, piebald, sable black.
- Grey: grey, piebald white, light to dark grey cloud colour.
- Brown: dark sepia, piebald.
- White: The monkey masks are those worn by Hanuman and Machanu.



Figure 3: Thai Khon mask

7 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH - END FASHION DESIGN AND KHON COSTUME

7.1 High-end Fashion Design

Behind a high-end series conference, how much skill has been paid to complete a set of dresses. Only after understanding the history and craftsmanship of high-level, can you feel the essence of fashion.

High-end fashion design has always been seen as a work of art. It inherits the history and essence of human costume culture and is a valuable historical and cultural heritage of mankind. However, due to its exquisite craftsmanship, long production time and

expensive fabrics and accessories, the people who really own it are rare.

High-end fashion has always been the most elegant symbol of the world, the perfect combination of the best tradition and outstanding technology, create works that bring beauty, elegance and dreams to the highest peak.

Haute couture clothing always feels luxurious and unique, not only in design concept, but also in its craftsmanship and pure handcrafting. Each haute couture garment is sewn by a senior worker using traditional craftsmanship. Usually, a haute couture dress is handcrafted for more than 100 hours, while an embroidered evening dress is more than 1,000 hours.

Using sewing, embroidery and other handicrafts, making three-dimensional fabrics, works exceed beyond general standards. It is a vivid manifestation of an eternal civilization.

7.2 Khon Costume and High-end Fashion Design

Khon costume and high-end fashion design have many similarities, such as the strict selection of fabrics, the inheritance of traditional handicrafts, the fineness of the production process, etc.

Through the understanding of the tradition Thai Khon costume, extraction of related elements, use in fashion design, Change the original single traditional image, make him more fashionable, be known by more people.

- Structure → Deconstruction → Restructure
- Conservative → Destroy the old and establish the new → Innovate
- Art → Works → Commodity



Figure 4: Pattern design (owner draw & make)

8 CONCLUSIONS

Thai Khon, as the intangible cultural heritage of Thailand, can be popularized in what way, and the world can be known to the world. Using 5 Methodology: Analysis, Case study, Design experiment, Survey-questionnaire, Trend analysis, by Theoretical Research and Practice Research, The use of the color, pattern, fabric, etc. of the costume in the Thai Khon as the concept design element, applied to high-end fashion design.

Thai fashion designers and Chinese fashion designers know very well about the country's traditional culture, So when they use traditional elements to design, thinking is limited, I hope to make the traditional elements more fashionable. At the same time preserve the essence of traditional culture, Let more young people understand and like traditional culture. Using the new design model, inheriting and innovating traditional culture, Protect and promote intangible cultural heritage, let more people know about Khon.r:

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