
PHRA PHIRAP (THE BHAIRAVA ŚIVA OF THAILAND)¹

Siriphong Kharuphankit

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Abstracts

Phra Phirap is the Thai version of the Bhairava Śiva. The music and dance associated with this deity is considered the most sacred of the various forms of traditional Thai art. This is an excerpt from a book by the Buddhist Monk Phra Siriphong Kharuphankit who is an artist and maker of the “teacher's heads,” or Khon masks devoted to the deities of art, music and dance. His intention in writing this book was to preserve a knowledge which he saw in danger of disappearing. It is a record everything he knew about the making of the masks, the history and the teachers of the performance, the katha's for worshiping the deity in the Wai Khru ceremony and the music of the Ong Phra Phirap.

Editor's note:

This is the work of Phra Siriphong Kharuphankit who is an artist and maker of the “teachers heads,” or Khon masks devoted to the deities of art, music and dance. He is also a Buddhist monk which is quite rare for a practicing artist. His intention in writing this book was to preserve a knowledge which he saw in danger of disappearing. The knowledge concerning Phra Phirap or the Thai version of the Bhairava Śiva. The music and dance associated with this deity is considered a sacred traditional knowledge which is accessible only to those properly initiated. Phra Siriphong, fearing much of this sacred knowledge would be lost, quite boldly decided to record everything he knew about the making of the masks, the history of the performance, the katha's for worshipping the deity and the musical notation. More information and illustrations can be found in the original Thai publication of the National Library. And on the website devoted to Phra Siriphong Kharuphankit at monnut.com. Our purpose in publishing Phra Siriphong's writing is to continue in this spirit of the preservation and to bring it to the attention of a larger number of people. Please also see Phra Siripong's autobiography also published in this issue of our journal.

***Vanditvā Asuradevānaṃ
Mahantapalaṃ Antarāyaṃ Vināssanti²***

The Importance of Phra Phirap in Thailand

The *na phat* [sacred song and dance] of Phra Phirap Tem Ong is the highest of all the various forms *na phat*. The rules for the study of the songs and dance of Phra Phirap are very strict, since the gestures and movements of Phra Phirap are considered to be a direct manifestation of Phra Isuan [Śiva]. He is in fact a dark and wrathful [*tamasic*] form of Śiva called a Bhairava, a creator and destroyer, who gives life and death to the universe.

Professor Mattani Rutnin in the journal *Siamrath*³ speculated on the direction of cultural transmission from India to Suwanabhumi. She considered two possibilities. One possibility is that the early artisans of

India who worshiped Phra Bhairava and lived in the vicinity of sacred rivers, moved across the Indian Ocean to the early Javanese and Khmer kingdoms and then eventually to Suwanabhumi. The second possibility is that Suwanabhumi culture received this dance tradition directly from India with the arrival of these Indian artisan groups who traveled directly from the cultural center of Banaras [Varanasi]. Banaras was the important center of the group that worshiped Phra Bhairava, and the good relationship between Banaras and Suwanabhumi was a very important conduit in the transmission of religion and culture throughout Suwanabhumi history⁴.



Khru Rongpakdee dancing the Ong *Phra Phirap Temong* in the audience of the King on 16 November 1961.

Phra Phairap (Phra Bhairava) in Nepal and India

Phra Bhairava inspires both fear and great respect because on one hand he is a blood-drinking deity of death and destruction, and on the other hand, he can also bestow grace to alleviate suffering and sickness. In the city of Kathmandu, there are many forms of Phra Bhairava. Some are made of bronze and some of stone. Some are full statues and some depict

only the head. He is usually depicted with bulging eyes, extended tongue and tusks. When Professor Mattani Rutnin went to India to research the art of dance, her archeologist friend bought a small three-inch copper statue called a Phra Kan Bhairava. This is a dark and wrathful [*tamasic*] form of Śiva. Many artists and dancers worship him. In the Indian theogeny there are eight major types of Bhairavas.⁵

Phra Bhairava has a direct relationship to dance. This form originates a particular dance called *Vichitra Tāṇḍava*.⁶ This is a marvelous dance as it depicts the 108 gestures of Phra Shiva. As mentioned earlier, in India, Phra Bhairava is worshiped especially by artisans in association with sacred rivers, such as the Ganges, and rivers in the region of Orissa, such as the Mahanadi. This cult is especially strong in the region of Banaras [Varanasi]. The worship of this image protects from misfortune and bestows grace to cure illness. In the temple of Phra Suriyathep⁷ at Konark in the present state of Orissa there is a statue of Phra Bhairava which is very beautiful and elegant. It is mixture of Bhairava and Suriyathep. The name of this statue is Mārttāṇḍa-Bhairava. He is a deity of darkness and death. The rituals connected to this deity are always conducted after sunset. The name Mārttāṇḍa means *sunset*.⁸ His body is black and nude. He has three faces and has a third eye on the forehead. His mouth is in the form of a grimace-like smile and he has short blunt tusks. The mouth is in fact like our own image Phra Phirap. He wears a garland of skulls, and wears anklets and bracelets. He has six arms (but two are broken). In one of his right hands he holds a trident, in another he holds a lasso. And in another he holds a skull bowl [*kapāla*], which can hold either a poison or a cure, since he is the one to not only cause sickness and death but also provide cures and give life. In one left hand he holds small drum called a *ban daw* [*damāru*]. His dancing position represents a dance called the *Silapa Sirahatta*. This dance involves one leg bent and one leg raised. When I saw this dance I began to suspect that Phra Phirap is directly connected to Phra Bhairava and Phra Śiva Natarat [Naṭarāja, the famous dancing image of Śiva].⁹



Khru Rongpakdee

The person who dances the *na phat*, is not depicting the dance of a normal *yak* (a common misunderstanding in Thailand) but the dance of a great deity, the same as the dance of the Phra Śiva Natarāja. It is done not merely for purpose of artistic beauty, but also involves symbolically the themes of life and death. This shows the dark sacredness of the dance of Phra Phirap.

The highest level of the art of dance is always involved with life and death, creation and destruction. These are opposites, yet they also balance one another. Like the dance of Phra Śiva Natarat. While his right leg treads upon an *asura* [Muyalaka] who represents baseness and evil, his left leg is raised in an elegant posture reflecting the beauty of artistic creation. He is surrounded by a ring of fire representing the movement of the universe. Some believe that when Śiva stops dancing, the universe will burn and will be born again. Therefore this dance maintains the universe and keeps it in motion. It suppresses evil, and also renews the universe, maintaining its balance and harmony.¹⁰



King Rama IX (Bhumibol Adulyadej) performs the Khob Khru Phra Pirap initiation ceremony of for Khru Rongpakdee 25 October 1984

Phirap in the Ramakien

Because Phra Phirap is a Bhairava Śiva with a fierce visage, he has been depicted by Thai artists in the same manner in which they would depict an *asura* or a *yak*. This often causes confusion with a yak character Phirap in the Ramakien. According to the Ramakien of King Rama I, Phirap is an *asura* or *yak* that was cursed by Phra Isuan, who condemned him to live only on Atsakhon mountain. This *yak* Phirap was very powerful and mischievous. He created his own garden and planted a very beautiful tree called a *Pawatong*. One day, Phra Ram, Phra Lak, and Nang Sida entered this garden to rest and picked the fruit from this tree. The servants of Phirap upon discovering this tried to expel them from the garden, but Phra Ram fought back, killing many of them. Phirap, who was absent for seven days, returned and became very angry when



Śiva-Linga made of sandstone and possessing both Indian and Javanese influences. With the image of the Bhairava or Phra Pirap, accompanied by a dog vehicle. He holds in a left hand a skull-bowl containing poison.

he discovered that someone trespassed into his garden. But when he first saw Nang Sida, he fell in love and wished her to become his wife. Using magic, Phirap created darkness, whereupon he abducted Nang Sida. Phra Ram shot an arrow to lift the darkness, and saw that Nang Sida being taken away. He shot Phirap, with a powerful arrow called *Phrommas*, and he took Nang Sida back. Phirap died as a result. From this story we can see that this Phirap is very quarrelsome and not worthy of respect. Not like the *yak* Phipet who is very worthy of respect.¹¹

According to the work of Professor Mattani Rutnin, Phra Phirap is not the same as the *yak* Phirap found in the Ramakien. She points out that the character in the Ramakien was earlier called *yak* Virap, which was only gradually changed to Phirap. This difference is significant, especially since the word *virap* when translated, would refer to a deviant. When one examines the story of Virap in the Ramakien one finds he was divinely condemned, so her interpretation seems to be accurate. Based on the research of Professor Mattani Rutnin and the Ramakien of King Rama I, we can see clearly that Phra Phirap, and his role in the music and the dance of Na Phat Phra Phirap Tem Ong, is very different from the *yak* Phirap we find in the Ramakien.

On the Sacred Song of Phra Phirap Tem Ong¹²

This is a song which is very important and deeply revered by all artists of dance and music. It is the sacred song of Phra Phirap which has existed since ancient times, although the first textual evidence appears in the texts concerning the Wai Khru of Khru Khaet (Phra Ram) during the period of King Rama IV (Phrabaht Somdet Phra Chomklao Chao Yuhua). This text had been used in the Wai Khru ceremony since 1854 (the year of the tiger). The song of Phra Phirap is song number 14 of the Wai Khru ceremony (Phleng Ong Phra Phirap – Prathom - Rua Thamada) and is unique since it has to be performed in a strict series which is as follows:

1. *Lua Sien Na*
2. *Sien Na*

3. *Ong Phra Phirap*
4. *Rua Sien Lang*
5. *Sien Lang*
6. *Pan Phirap Rua Tai*
7. *Prathom Long (and concluding with) Rua La Deow.*

The student who is to learn the song of Phra Phirap, must be able to reproduce it strictly according to its traditional form. They must proceed through three levels: the *beginning na phat*, the *intermediate na phat*, and the *high na phat*.¹³ The student must be distinguished by their good character and must possess the qualities maturity, proper age (over 30 years), and must have been an ordained monk.

On the Sacred Dance of Phra Phirap Tem Ong

This dance has existed since the period of King Rama VII (Phrabaht Somdet Phra Pokklao Chao Yuhua). The person who innovated this form was Phraya Natakanurak (Tongdee Suwannaparot). He was the one to initiate Mr. Rongpakdee Jarujarana.¹⁴ This instruction was conducted on the verandah of Phra Ubosot of the Emerald Buddha Temple. The first dance was conducted in connection with the white elephant ceremony [*Phra Savetkhotchadetdilok*] of King Rama VII on 16 November 1927.¹⁵ The site of the performance was the stage for the performance of Khon drama at the Dusit palace for King Rama VII and the Queen (Somdet Phra Nang Chao Rambhai Barni Phra Borommarachini).

Later, His Majesty the King Rama IX (Phrabat Somdet Phra Chaoyuhua Bhumibol Adulyadej), wishing to preserve this dance, issued a royal command to Mr. Rongpakdee (Jian) Jarujarana, who was the senior teacher of the Bureau of the Royal Household, to conduct the *Pidhi Krob Ong Phra Phirap* (the *ram na phat* which is the highest and most sacred of all Thai dances). This ceremony was conducted for the instructors of art in the Fine Arts Department at Amphon sathan Theatre in the Dusit Palace, on Thursday 24 January 1963, on the new moon, in the second lunar month in the year of the rabbit.

In this ceremony, His Majesty the King admitted the members of royal family, the privy councilors, the government officials, the artists, and the students of dance of the Fine Arts Department.

In this ceremony the Fine Arts Department arranged for four senior teachers of dance to be initiated to Ong Phra Phirap by Khru Rongpakdee:

1. Mr. Arkom Sayakhom *Teacher of Phra*
2. Mr. Aram Inthornnut *Teacher of Yak*
3. Mr. Yat Changthong *Teacher of Yak*
4. Mr. Yosange Pakdeedeva *Teacher of Yak*

These were the four senior teachers of dance who had reached the highest level of skill, knowledge, and maturity.



Mr. Rongpakdee (Jian Jarujarana), Khunying Natakanurak (Thet Suwannaparot), the artists of the Fine Arts Department, and the Royal officials on 16 November 1961.

Making the Phra Phirap “Teacher’s Head” (Srisa Khru)

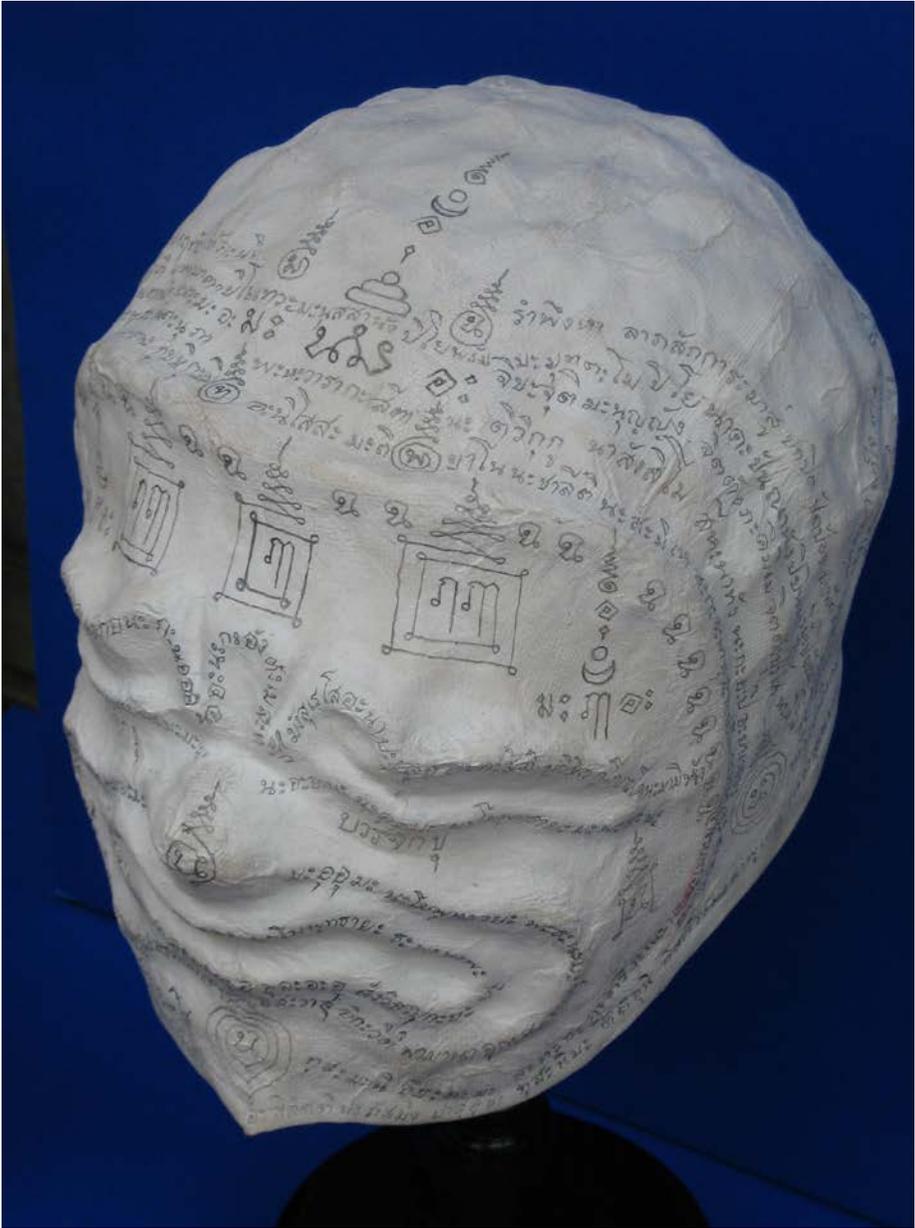
The making of the Phra Phirap *Srisa Khru* [teacher’s head] is different than the making of the Hua Khon masks for performance. Before the creation of the model of Phra Phirap, the maker should provide an offering of raw and cooked food, including many kinds of fruit and sweets. Also included are *baisi* [offerings wrapped in banana leaves] placed on the right and left. This also involves the worship of the Triple Gem of Buddhism and the Invitation to the Devas [*Chumnum Thevada*]. And finally it involves the Worship of the Teacher [*Bucha Khru*].

Then the creation of the model can begin. Traditionally, it involves the use of pure soil which is uncontaminated by the decaying carcass of any animal. Nowadays, instead of soil we use clay. When this model is finished a second offering is made. Then the model is used as a mould for a layer of lime. A third offering is made in order to “close” the model.

The next step involves the covering of the model with a brown *papier maché*. Each layer of paper is inscribed with Pali sacred stanzas (*katha*) and *yant diagrams*. The first three layers of *papier maché* use water, which allows the form to be easily removed from the mould. The next nine layers contain a kind of gum or glue. It is then completed with nine layers of rice paper [*gradat sa*]. These are also inscribed with *yant diagrams*. The model is further shaped with a hard instrument and left to dry, but not to completely dry, so it can be removed from the mould without cracking.

A fourth offering is made which is accompanied by an apology which is offered before the *papier maché* form is cut and torn from the mould (this apology is also made when making the head of Phra Rishi). Then the form is sewn back together. The contours of the face are made including the eyes, nose and mouth. It then sanded and decorated with tusks and ears [*jon hu*]. The head is then covered with black lacquer [*long rak*], and then painted and decorated with gold leaf [*pid thong*] and colored glass.

Now a fifth offering is made asking permission to inscribe the line-patterns on the face and hair. The clockwise spiral patterns inscribed



The yant as applied to the layers of *papier maché*

on the face represent his descent from Phra Isuan.¹⁶

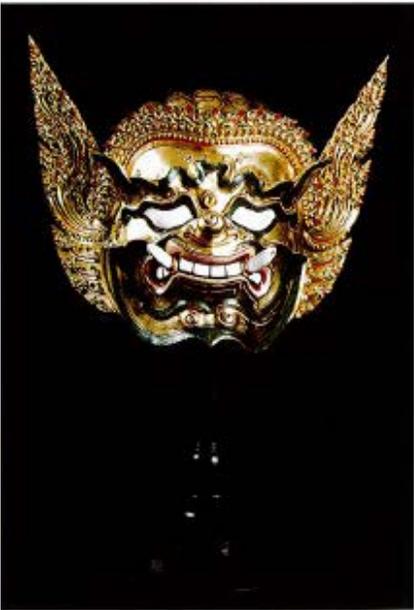
Initially the eye is left only white without a pupil. A sixth offering is made where permission is asked to open the eyes [*beuk net*]¹⁷ whereupon the pupils are painted in, and to open the ears, nose and mouth [*beuk*



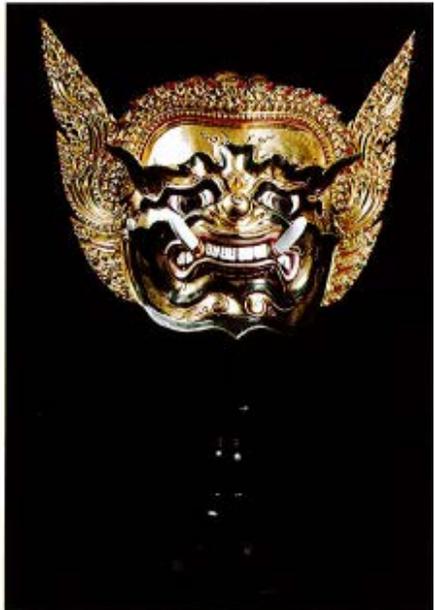
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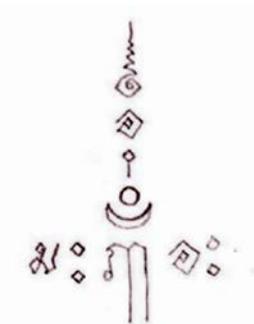
Stages in the finishing of the mask

tawan]. This again involves the chanting of Pali sacred stanzas which also activate the 32 organs [*kamkabdooiagahn samsipsong*] which brings the head to life. Then the spirit of Phra Phirap is invited to come to inhabit the Srisa Khru.

The above process needs to be followed for the one who would like to study the making of Srisa Khru according to Phra Siripong Kharupankit, the student [*sitphokhru*] of Phra Paratamuni. This process is very strict and involves *right thought* and *right action*. This is because the sacred things that we believe and worship derive ultimately from these divine teachers we are representing, who bring good things for the one who makes as well as the one who worships the Srisa Khru. It must also be mentioned that both the maker and worshiper require not only a strict spiritual belief but also some material wealth. The artist should own one pair of Srisa Khru: Por Khru Paratamuni and Por Khru Phra Phirap. But it is not that difficult to save the material wealth required to continue the art of making these intricate and beautiful Srisa Khru, since the divine teacher will reward one's efforts by bringing prosperity to one's life and the life of one's descendents.

Yant Diagrams

The *yant* which are inscribed on the papier maché in order to *close* the model of the Srisa Khru Rishi and Phra Phirap. In other words, they are magical diagrams that help bring the mask to life. These *yant* are accompanied by the chanting of Pali sacred words.



Na Natong Maha Niyom (the highly esteemed face of gold)



Na Song Pan Din (preservation of the earth)



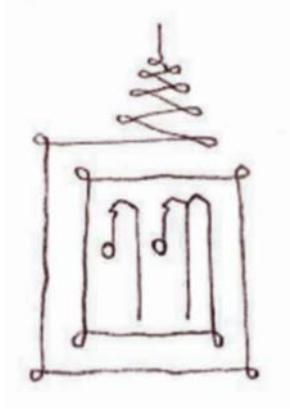
Na Charoen Sri (prosperity)



Na Rum Jai (integrity)



Na Ow (possession)



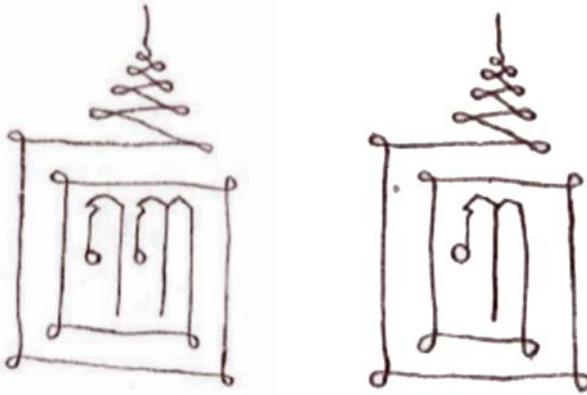
Na Lung Leu (fame)



Na Maha Laluyai (great wealth)



Na Long Na Khon (a type of *yant* specific to Khon)



Na Hua Jai Rishi (the heart of Rishi)

Pranom Katha
(for worship of the Triple Gem)

The ceremony for Phra Phirap begins by invoking the Triple Gem.

Jinena yene ānitaṃ Lokassa amatamhitaṃ
Tassa pādambujaṃ vande Brahmadevindavanditaṃ ၁

The Lord Buddha (Phra Chinachao) who brings the immortal truth (*nibbana*) to the human animal is worthy of highest respect. I worship Him, as did Phra Phrom (Brahma) and Thao Sakka.

Tassitām munirājena Vande dhammadivākaraṃ
Mohandhakāraviddhaṃsi Veneyyaṃ budhabodhanaṃ १

I worship the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha, the sun which burns away all anger, so that the human animal can achieve nibbana.

Sobhitāṃ sīlaraṃ sīhi Vande saṃ ghaṃ nisākaraṃ
Pasādakamudaṃ niccaṃ Bodhentaṃ janamānase १

I worship the Sangha, the ray of the moon, like the yellow flower (*dok komud*), which guides the human animal in their quest for nibbana.

Natvā Vatthuttayaṃ evaṃ Yaṃ puññaṃ mayā
Tassa tejena hantvrāna Antrāye asesato १

With the merit I gain from worshiping the Triple Gem, I cast away all dangers.

Katha Bucha Phra Phirap

All three Katha of Phra Phirap are composed in a synthesis of Pali and Thai language, which is unorthodox, yet has a special meaning. Now I would like to examine the meaning of these three Katha.

Katha I Triple Gem

Imaṃ Buddhaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā
Dhaṃmaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā
Saṅghaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

*Buddho siddhiridh dhammo siddhiridh sangkho siddhiridh
sukha sukha chaiya chaiya lābha lābha
sabbhadhammānaṃ
prasidhime prasidhite
buddho savasdeemeechai dhammo savasdeemeechai sangkho
savasdeemeechai
Imaṃ patitaṃ suraṅgadhāṅgaṃ adhiṭṭhāmi ๑*

This first Katha is from the book Phra Phirap of Khru Phrapan Sukhontachart, who quotes from the text of the Wai Khru and the Pidthi Krob Khru (initiation rite) of the Khon Lakhon of Phraya Natakanurak (Tongdee Suwannaparot).

Again, the Triple Gem is invoked. The first Katha begins with the word “Buddha” (Buddhaṃ), it reads: *Buddhaṃ ongphrapirādhamā khoehichongmā*. It asks for the presence of Phra Phirap. The second line begins with the word “Dhamma” and the third line with “Sangha”. These three names constitute the Triple Gem of Buddhism.

This invocation of the Triple Gem is not to worship Phra Phirap, because Phra Phirap is a deity of Brahmanism. But it is included because the person who composed the Katha is a Buddhist who believes in the Triple Gem. When we observe the history of Phra Phirap we find he is a Bhairava form of Phra Isuan (Śiva), he is a deity of war and death, and he is also the deity who can cure sickness. His form is that of an *asura*.

It is the tendency of human beings to guard against powers that bring calamity and danger, powers which are hidden and beyond their imagination. For this reason, the person who composed the Katha of Phra Phirap initiates each Katha with the worship of the Triple Gem, in order to bring purity and calmness of heart, and to mollify Phra Phirap’s violent power. The remainder of the stanza asks for the merit and power of the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, to bestow happiness, victory, wealth, fortune for those who participate in the ceremony. These things are asked not of Phra Phirap but from the Triple Gem.

Katha II

Inviting the presence of Phra Phirap

Namo (Three times)

Imam Buddhaṃ ongphrapirādham khoehichongmā
Dhammam ongphrapirādham khoehichongmā
Sagṇham ongphrapirādham khoehichongmā

Buddho siddhiridh dhammo siddhiridh sangkho siddhiridh
sukha sukha chaiya chaiya lābha lābha

sabbhadhammānaṃ
prasidhime prasidhthite

buddho savasdeemeechai dhammo savasdeemeechai sangkho
savasdeemeechai (Three times)

This is from the text of the Wai Khru of Thai music of Khru Montri Tramote who received it from Luang Pradit Phairoh (Sorn Silapabanleng). In the second Katha, the spelling of Phra Phirap (พระพิราพ) is changed to *Phra Phiradh* (พระพิราด). Because in inviting Phra Phirap to come, the sound is similar to the sound *pang* (ปัง), which means to destroy. The human mind always guards against destruction, so we change the voice from *pang* (พ) to *dtang* (ด). When we offer the fruit, we always select them based upon the meaning of their names, especially those which connote good luck. For instance: khanun (jackfruit), lamyai (longan), lychee, pomelo, and matum (bel-fruit). In the offering there is a rule to never offer fruit with names which are inauspicious. For instance: mangkhut (mangosteen), phutsa (jujube), noina (sugar apple), and langsat (iansa). It is feared that if we offer such fruit, we will receive something bad in return.

Some practices have been influenced by other cultures such as the Chinese. The Chinese never offer mango since the Chinese call the mango *suay* in Thai language the name *suay* means *bad luck*. Therefore, it is never used as an offering for Wai Chao. In Bangkok there is one textbook about the history of Phra Phirap where they wrote the name:

Phra Phirabh (พระพิลาภ). This is because the *bh* connotes *smooth going* or *good luck*. In one case they made a head of Phra Phirap and used the headdress of Rishi for advertising one product and called it *Poo Rishi Phirap* (ปู่ฤๅษีพิลาภ). But according to the stories concerning Phra Phirap he was never a hermit. I consulted many khrus concerning this, and they all said that it is not right to reduce such a high deity as Phra Phirap to the level of a hermit. The craftsman apparently did not fear that this might lead to misfortune.

Katha III

Prayer for the Worship of Phra Phirap

Imaṃ saccavācaṃ adhiṭṭhāmi dutiyaṃpi imaṃ saccavācaṃ adhiṭṭhāmi

Tatiyampimam saccavācaṃ adhiṭṭhāmi

Buddhaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

Dhammaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

Sagṇhaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

*Buddhosiddhiridh dhammosiddhiridh sangkhosiddhiridh
sukha sukha chaiya chaiya*

*Lābha lābha sabbhadhammānaṃ prasidhi me prasidhi te
buddhosavasdeemeechai*

*Dhammosavasdeemeechai saṅghosavasdeemeechai
patitang suraṅgandhang adhiṭṭhāmi Dutiyaṃpi buddhaṃ
ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā*

Dutiyaṃpi dhammaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

Dutiyaṃpi sagṇhaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

Buddhosiddhiridh.....adhiṭṭhāmi

Tatiyaṃpi buddhaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

Tatiyampi dhammaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

Tatiyampi sagṇhaṃ ongphrapirādhaṃ khoehichongmā

Buddhosiddhiridh.....adhittāmi

***Imassaming vandāmi āeāriyaṃ sappasaiyaṃ vināssanti
siddhikāra***

***Apparapajā imassaming sidththi bhavatu subbadā
namassitavā āeāriyaṃ***

***Isilokanāthaṃ buddhasarāmi namassitavā āeāriyaṃ
isilokanāthaṃ patipatibhōjā (vanditavā asōradebānaṃ
mahantapalaṃ antarayaṃ vināssanti) sidthikāriya***

Pirādhāsōrayaṃ vicāranasaṃpannaṃ namāmihaṃ

***Agghīpahōpubhaṃ ahaṅvantā āeāriyaṃ sappasaiyaṃ
vināssanti***

Siddhiparapajā imassamiṃ phavantu me

Dutiyaṃpi agghīpahōpubhaṃ bhavantu me

Tatiyaṃpi agghīpahōpubhaṃ bhavantu me

The third Katha is taken from the text of the Wai Khru of Khru Arkom Sayakhom, who received it from Phraya Natakanurak (Tongdee Suwannaparot). It is from the funeral book of Khru Arkom Sayakhom from Wat Makukasatirityaram Bangkok on Thursday, 9 December 1982. Concerning the third Katha. The first part is a repetition of the first and second Katha. And the final part is a prayer which is as follows.

***Imassaming vandāmi āeāriyaṃ sappasaiyaṃ vināssanti
siddhikāra***

***Apparapajā imassaming sidththi bhavatu subbadā
namassitavā āeāriyaṃ***

***Isilokanāthaṃ buddhasarāmi namassitavā āeāriyaṃ
isilokanāthaṃ patipatibhōjā***

***(vanditavā asōradebānaṃ mahantapalaṃ antarayaṃ
vināssanti) sidthikāriya***

Pirādhāsōrayaṃ vicāranasaṃpannaṃ namāmihaṃ

The added part is longer and more special than Katha number one and two. It is a direct prayer to Phra Phirap. One day when I went to assist Khru Arkom with a Wai Khru at the house of M.R. Kukrit Pramoj on Thursday 25 October 1979. I asked him why is this third part is longer than the other parts. Khru Arkom explained: “I have another volume of the Wai Khru in my home which is the volume of Chaokun Poo Phraya Suntorntheprabam (Plian Sutornnat). I combined his Katha Phra Phirap with that of Phraya Natakanurak to make it more powerful. So I now have three texts of Wai Khru on account of my parents who are a family of artists.”

One personal observation concerning my description of the Katha Bucha Ong Phra Phirap, I would like to sincerely express that I respect and I would never diminish such sacred matters. If there are any mistakes or misunderstandings, I take full responsibility. But I write this because I am proud to record such things.

Siriphong Kharuphankit

Khon Wang Na 1977

EDITOR'S ENDNOTES

¹ Phra Siriphong asked the translators to undertake this translation to accompany the exhibition of his work at the National Library of Thailand. We are presenting only a partial translation to promote the work of Phra Siriphong. The journal does not hold any rights to this content. It is taken from the book:พิมพ์ที่ โรงพิมพ์ บริษัท ทรงสิทธิ์วรรณ จำกัด 1017 ประชาชื่น ถนน ประชาชื่น แขวง บางซื่อ เขตบางซื่อ กรุงเทพมหานคร 10800 ชื่อหนังสือ พระพิราพ รวบรวมและเรียบเรียงโดย พระศิริพงษ์ ทรัพย์นันทกิจ

² This *Katha*, or Pali sacred chant has been left untranslated because it is a sacred prayer which Phra Siriphong is using before beginning of his account. All transliteration of Thai and Pali are in accordance with the Fine Arts Department.

³ *Siamrath* Sunday, 23 December 1973. See also Mattani Moj dara Rutnin's book *Dance, Drama and Theatre in Thailand: The Process of Development and Modernization*.

⁴ *Suwanabhumi* is the preferred name for ancient Thai culture.

⁵ T. A. Gopinatha Rao, in his work *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol 2, part 1, writes:

... Bhairava's aspect has eight different forms, named Asitāṅga, Ruru, Chaṇḍa, Krōdha, Unmatta-Bhairava, Kāpāla, Bhīṣhaṇa and Saṁhāra. Each one of these forms is divided further into eight subordinate forms, thus making sixty-four in all." (Rao, p. 180)

- ⁶ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, in his famous essay "The Dance of Śiva", writes: The second well-known dance of Śiva is called the *Tāṇḍava*, and belongs to His *tamasic* aspect as Bhairava or Virabhadra. It is performed in cemeteries and burning grounds, where Śiva, usually in ten-armed form, dances wildly with Dēvī, accompanied by troops of capering imps... This *tāṇḍava* dance is in origin that of a pre-aryan divinity, half-god, half-demon, who holds his midnight revels in the burning ground. In later times, this dance in the cremation ground, sometimes of Śiva, sometimes of Dēvī, in interpreted in Śaiva and Śākta, literature in a most touching and profound sense. (Coomaraswamy, p. 57)

Alain Daniélou in his book *Sacred Music: Its Origins, Powers, and Future*, also draws connections between Śiva and Dionysius. See pages 120-122.

- ⁷ This refers to Sūrya, the sun deity.

- ⁸ Rao lists this form as a subordinate form of Asitāṅga. See Rao, p. 180.

⁹ Coomaraswamy supports this connection of the dance of Bhairava and Naṭarāja. He writes:

Śiva is a destroyer and loves the burning ground. But what does he destroy? Not merely the heavens and earth at the end of a *kalpa*, but the fetters that bind each separate soul. Where and what is the burning ground? It is not the place where our earthly bodies are cremated, but the heart of the *bhakta*, the devotee, laid waste and desolate. He brings not peace but a sword. The place where their selves are destroyed signifies the place or state where their egoity or illusion and deeds are burnt away: *that* is the crematorium, the burning-ground where Śrī Naṭarāja dances, and whence He is named Sudalaiyādi, Dancer of the burning-ground. In this simile, we recognize the historical connection between Śiva's gracious dance as Naṭarāja, and His wild dance as the demon of the cemetery. (Coomaraswamy, p. 61)

- ¹⁰ This is also supported by Coomaraswamy:

Now to summarize the whole interpretation, we find that *The Essential Significance of Śiva's Dance is threefold: First, it is the image of his Rhythmic Activity as the Source of all Movement within the Cosmos, which is represented by the Arch: Secondly, the Purpose of his Dance is to Release the Countless souls of men from the Snare of Illusion: Thirdly the Place of the Dance, Chidambaram, the Centre of the Universe, is within the Heart.* (Coomaraswamy, p. 65)

¹¹ The fortune teller of Totsakan (Ravana) who switched allegiance to serve Rama.

¹² *Tem Ong* has been left untranslated, it refers the full body of the deity.

¹³ *Na phat* refers to the ritual dance-movements *before* the piphat ensemble.

¹⁴ Concerning the lineage of the masters of the dance of Phra Phirap, please see the section on the biography of Khru Arkom.

¹⁵ Descriptions of this ceremony can be found in the book by Amranand and Warren, *The Elephant in Thai Life and Legend*.

¹⁶ The Thai word for Śiva. A counterclockwise spiral would denote a deity is descended from Phra Narai or Vishnu.

¹⁷ The *Phra Beuk Net* ceremony is often used to “open the eyes” of the Buddha statue in its last stage of creation. This process is described in detail in Stanley Tambiah’s book *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*.

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