



# The Projection of Cambodia, today: An Inquiry into Representation, Fantasmatics and Politics via Tourism

Vannsy Kuon

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# **THE PROJECTION OF CAMBODIA, TODAY:**

AN INQUIRY INTO REPRESENTATION, FANTASMATICS AND  
POLITICS VIA TOURISM

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# **THE PROJECTION OF CAMBODIA, TODAY:**

An Inquiry into Representation, Fantasmatics and Politics via Tourism

By

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## ABSTRACT

Today, Cambodia has gained entrée into the world via international tourism. The ingression of tourism has also been accompanied by the prowess over the projection of aspects of culture and heritage. The purpose of this emergent, soft-science inquiry into the projection and representation of Cambodia is to sift through aspects of the culture gene bank (after Horne) of the nation to corroborate testimonies associated with the industrially/institutionally-scripted representation via international tourism. The inquiry henceforth gyrates around the projective “discourse” (after Foucault) of peoples, cultures and places. The study is philosophically inspired by “perspectivism” of Nietzsche and “pluralism” of Berlin and Connolly and methodologically actuated by constructivism of Lincoln and Guba. The study of the discursive representation is approached vis-à-vis bricolage and cultural/critical pedagogies of Kincheloe and multi-sitedness of Marcus. The study identifies prevailing ramifications of the Angkorean discursivity or Angkorcentrism from constitutionality to “banality” (after Baudrillard) and from public to private agents. The Angkorcentricity is nestled in the mainstream politics of projection of the nation by the state, as attested in the landscaping of public places/spaces, where the state attains its primacy in the projective authority. On the one hand, the finding anent Angkorcentric representation of the nation is generally congruent with that by Winter. On the other, the study accentuates the symbolic/projective prowess of the state in harnessing the selection, production and projection of places and spaces. Another feature which sets this emergent inquiry apart from the others about Cambodia is that it delved into the performative aspects of cultures and identities, particularly in the portrayal and characterisation of ethnicities. Otherisation has been deployed (un)consciously in the performance industry and in the official projection of peoples and places. The nucleus of this inquiry is to fathom the scripting of the dominance, subjugation and silencing in representation of facets of culture gene banks of Cambodia. The dominant aspects of

cultures were manifest in the cultural dressing of places and hypostatized in the form of monumental statues, pastiches of sculptures and performances. Facets of the marginalised peoples/cultures were materialised in the projection of otherness via dances, stereotypic utterance and so forth. The museumisation of places testified the discourse of “phantasmatic Indochina” (in Norindr’s word) in the framing and the normalisation of Cambodia. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in tourism studies both conceptually and methodologically. The conceptual contributions are associated with culture gene bank, performativity and normalisation. The methodological contributions are linked with the emergent study and (critical) cultural pedagogy. This emergent, soft-science study of the projective discourse of Cambodia culminated in the Foucauldian normalisation, the Bhabhan fantasmatics and the Edensorian performativity of aspects of the Hornean culture gene bank via tourism. Further studies may crescendo along these aspects (i.e. normalisation, framing, fantasmatic, performativity and so forth) to advance particularistic understanding in the respective areas.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APSARA	Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATF	Asian Tourism Forum
CNN	Cable News Network
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
EFEO	The Ecole Française d' Extreme Orient
ICSO	Indigenous Community Support Organisation
LDC	Least Developed Country
MCFA	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
MOT	Ministry of Tourism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

## KHMER TERMS

Apsara	A minor female divinity, often depicted as celestial dancer(s)
Archa	A guru in Khmer tradition, culture or religious practice
Dambang Kranhoung	Dambang (staff); Kranhoung (black)
Daun	Grandma or an old lady
Ganes/Ganesha	The elephant-headed son of Shiva
Kampuchea	A country name, especially known in a period prior to the term Cambodia came to be used in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century
Khmer	A main ethnicity of Cambodia or the language of the Khmer people
Naga	A multi-headed serpent (in a basic form of cobra) with many mythical connections, associated with water, fertility, rainbows and creations.
Phnom	Hill or mountain (or mount)
Preah	Pertaining to god or something/somebody sacred/holy
Phsar	Market
Rama	A seventh earthly incarnation of Vishnu and eponymous hero of the Ramayana
Reamker	A Khmer version of Ramayana, one of the two great epics, narrating about eponymous hero Rama and his faithful wife Sita.

Sdach/Sdech	King
Shiva	One of the Hindu Trinity, the god of Destruction and Rebirth
Vishnu	A principle god in Hinduism, one of the Hindu Trimurti (Trinity), a preserver and a protector of the Universe.
Vishvakarman	An architect of the Universe in Hinduism
Wat	Pagoda(s) or temple(s)

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### The Projective Discourse of Cambodia

The Angkor complex is the soul of the Khmer people....Angkor accurately represents Khmer art, great civilization, spiritual heart, national identity, and political power.

Ministry of Tourism (MOT, no date, p.23)

#### 1.1 Introduction: The Projection and Representation of Aspects of Cultures, Peoples and Places of Cambodia

Tourism has become a most attractive industry ever in the twenty-first century and “tourism as an industry had probably achieved a higher profile in the public consciousness of the developed world than ever before” (Hall, Williams and Lew, 2004). The authors critiqued the loaded conceptualisation of tourism towards to the economic perspective which defines tourism in terms of businesses producing goods and services to facilitate leisure and pleasure activities of tourists. This conceptualisation overlooks, they said, the interlocking nature of the production and consumption of tourism; thus it fails to account for its social and political dimensions and the issues of commodification in its political economy (A.Williams, 2004). In capitalist societies, culture becomes the focal point of mass production and consumption which Adorno called the ‘cultural industry’ (Pratt, 2009). In the wake of the *technik* (after Benjamin), the world is deprived of its aura of authenticity due to the (re)production process in the modern age (Lechte, 1994). Tourism then capitalises especially on culture (and nature). Barker (2004, p.44) noted that culture can be multitudinously defined, for example, culture “as power” and “as constituted by representation”.

The main thrust of the study of the projection of Cambodia is the inspection of the emerging articulative discourse of peoples and cultures via tourism, especially from the perspectives of representational practice and power/knowledge (after Foucault, 1980). The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in tourism studies both conceptually and methodologically. The conceptual contributions are associated with culture gene bank, performativity and normalisation. With regard to the *culture gene bank*, Horne (1992) defined it as:

In the cultural storehouses of modern-industrial societies—the museums, historical sites, libraries and archives, the reprints, reproductions and compact disks, and the places used for representations of performance—there are preserved for us to use as we wish more varied repertoires of what it might mean to be human than could ever before have been imagined. These made up a kind of ‘cultural gene bank’, which is one of the greatest wonders of our age and one of the greatest justifications for sightseeing.

(Horne, 1992, p.377)

Horne (1992) considered these places as cultural storehouses/showcases, varied repertoires (or “cultural gene bank” in his own term) where meanings/significances of a culture or nation were kept, imagined and performed. In light of Horne’s (1992) interpretation, the historical/cultural site of Angkor temples, dances, dramas, music, visual images and so on can be considered as aspects of a nation’s culture gene bank. Hollinshead (1999a, p.171) added that in the (re)imagining of tourism “material and political symbolism is thereby an essential or axiomatic process of the contemporary selectivity in and of tourism...as visitors to places are told what to appreciate....and locals are told what to celebrate about themselves”. This telling or promotion of what to appreciate and celebrate or what not to is part of the discourse of power/knowledge (after Foucault, 1980). Based on Horne’s work, Hollinshead (1999a) distilled the skilful appropriation of a nation’s cultural repertoire by tourism agency and its ‘ideological power’ in projection and representation of culture, heritage and nature in tourism. Apart from Hollinshead’s (1999a) theoretical distillation of the ‘culture gene bank’, ‘heritage gene bank’, ‘nature gene bank’ or ‘tourism gene bank’, other work specifically devoted to this conceptualisation has not been diagnosed. More work is needed to solidify Horne’s intellectual contribution of culture gene bank in the Tourism Studies/Tourism

Management. I believe that this study of aspects of culture gene bank (or tourism gene bank) of Cambodia contributes to conceptual development and substantiation of Hornean notion.

With regard to *performativity*, Loxley examined the history and debates of the concept among key thinkers such as J.L. Austin, John Searle, Stanley Fish, Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man and Judith Butler. As Butler (1999) noted in *Gender Trouble*, Bhabha's work on identification has set light on the colonial production of the colonised minority identities that is vital for the notion of performativity of race and identity. Butler (1999) has also had considerable influence on the social construction of gender (or feminism/identity). She asserted that the performative power is achieved by naturalisation or repetitive acts. Edensor (1998, 2001, 2009) has gained ascendancy over performance in tourism studies, for example, regarding the tourist roles at symbolic tourism sites and the production of tourist spaces. The current investigation into the performance of ethnic identities, emerging via dance shows and stereotyping of minority cultures/groups in Cambodia, certainly contributes to the debates and conceptual substantiation of the 'performance' (or rather performative power) and the critique of the (re)production or (re)configuration of ethnicities in tourism.

The third contribution of the study is the concept of *normalisation* which was canvassed by Michel Foucault. Normalisation is a technique or method in the construction of idealised bodies, thoughts and practices (Foucault, 1977). In D. Taylor's (2009) interpretation, the norm and normality are entangled with dynamic relations of power. Few studies about normalisation of culture, heritage or/and tourism have been identified. They include those by Clark (2000) on normalised Chinese ethnic culture in the Malaysian society, Hayes (2007) on normalised cosmetic surgery along the line of thought of Foucault and Butler, Seidman and Meeks (2011) on civic individualisation and gay normalization and Bourne and Calás (2013) on 'women and gendered normalisation of work'. The investigation into facets of culture gene bank contributes to the rare literature on normalisation of culture and heritage in tourism in Cambodia and is



distinctive in that the study critically scrutinises the normalisation in the projection and representation of aspects of culture in tourism via performances, monumental pastiches of cultural significances and stereotypic discourse.

The methodological contributions are mainly linked with the emergent study and critical cultural pedagogy. Nagy, Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2008) edited a 32-chapter text on 'emergent methods'. However, the employment of emergent methodology in actual research was scanty. Gallagher and Wessels (2011) used 'emergent pedagogy' and 'collaborative methodology' in their empirical ethnographic study of drama classes. Apropos of the *emergent study*, the investigation into aspects of the culture gene bank, i.e. the projective/articulative discourse of peoples and cultures via dances and monumental representations, is atypical of the traditional pre-planned studies (i.e. the mainstream or 'common-sense' study designs). This particular study opens up a new methodological terrain concerning emergent designs and substantially contributes to a new way of thinking in the conduct of soft-science research, promoting engagement with the study milieu and populations, fostering empathy with the study subjects and enhancing responsiveness to dynamism with high degree of flexibility in the field and unfolding issues/areas as investigators, in Gallagher and Wessels' (2011, p.256) words, "wade into very murky and often turbulent waters". A problem that researchers may encounter in designing an emergent study is time. Research is often conducted under time constraint, and issues may not unfold during the study. Thus, the exercise of emergent methodology in soft-science studies requires sufficient/flexible time and persistent engagement.

The utilisation of (critical) *cultural pedagogy* in the inquiry is sided with the current impulse in education and cultural studies (see Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991; Trend, 1992; Giroux, Lankshear, McLaren and Peters, 1996; Giroux, 2005; Kincheloe, 2008), but critical cultural pedagogy as a main methodological approach in tourism research is rarely seen employed to excogitate the production of culture and identity (or rather the industrial/corporate production of culture for/in tourism). In Kincheloe and McLaren's

(2005) view, the well-versed and well-practised corporate pedagogical process tames violent reactions in this century. In 'cultural pedagogy', for them, one needs to scrutinise and critique the hegemonic or agentive cultural production (or rather cultural scripting). Belhassen and Caton (2011) called for the capitalisation of critical pedagogy in tourism education. Thus, the fact that the soft-science study of culture gene bank of Cambodia capitalises on cultural and critical pedagogies (or critical cultural pedagogy) is a methodological contribution to the emergent methodology.

This chapter first contextualises tourism in Cambodia by familiarising readers with its geographical location, brief background to tourism and, meanwhile, its sketched history related to kings, temples and foreign domination. The chapter also examines the discourses of tourism with respect to the economics, environment and politics, emphasising that the discourses in tourism did not occur separately but competingly. The chapter thereby situates Winter's (2006a) argument that the framing and representation of Cambodia have predominantly grounded in the glory of Angkor and the genocidal legacy of the Khmer Rouge (KR), each of which perches on the opposite ends. By situating his argument, it illustrates that another representational discourse has emerged as the result of the global imperative.

In the beginning, the research (sub)questions were provisionally formulated as shown in section 1.3 to guide the very initial stage of the investigation. In a later stage of the research process, particularly during the investigator's extensive engagement with the research activities (i.e. priorethnography) and after the pilot study, they underwent a series of progressive reformulation. The dynamic reformulation of the research questions in response to the newly emerged pressing discursive (mis)representation are further shown step by step in chapter 3. In section 1.4, the rationale of the study is explained with regard to the under-inspection of representation, fantasmatics and politics in the Tourism Studies and it is further concretised in chapter 2. The assumptions of the study are elaborated in 1.5 before finally recapping this chapter and outlining the organisation for the rest of the study.

## **1.2 Background to the Study: Contextualising Tourism in Cambodia, Today**

Tourism in Cambodia today is not occasioned with a smooth development due to disrupted political conflicts over decades, or even centuries. Cambodia (see the map in Figure 1/1, overleaf) has embarked on its national reconstruction project over some 20 years after it fell into year zero in mid-1970s. In that period, all sectors of the Cambodian economy were severely paralysed (Chandler, 1991; Tully, 2005). After the 1979 revolution ushered by former Khmer Rouge cadremen—notably Heng Samrin, Chea Sim and Hun Sen, who had defected to Vietnam (Tully, 2005)—the Cambodian government saw a prospect of returning to tourism. Chandler noted that, with trades, investments and tourism across the borders with Thailand and Vietnam, “many Cambodian government officials became wealthy, as have individual traders themselves often Vietnamese, Chinese, and/or Chinese-Cambodians” (1991, p.37). Today, tourism in Cambodia—though increasingly stronger over the years—still had a low profile compared to other countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Cambodia has been in the stage of rehabilitation and reconciliation for the last two decades; the country still depends largely on financial and technical assistance from the international communities and donors. As Winter wrote, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) peacekeeping forces received US\$2.2 billion for its operation in Cambodia, leading up to the 1993 United Nations-sponsored election and US\$1.39 billion were disbursed to Cambodia for the 1992-95 period (Winter, 2007). The total overseas development assistance (ODA) to Cambodia has increased in recent years. According to a government database managed by the Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC), the ODA to Cambodia rose to US\$1.4 billion in 2011 and to US\$1.5 billion in 2012 (<http://cdc.khmer.biz/index.asp>). In 2012, the World Bank reported that Cambodia’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached 15.25 billion and the total population of Cambodia mounted to 15.14 million (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia>). Nation-building has thus relied primarily on development aid in the restoration of such sectors as the cultural, social and economic. At present, tourism is a potential dimension drawn upon in this reconstruction process.



Figure 1/1 Tourist Map of Cambodia (Palmer and Martin, 2008, Inside Cover)

In the post-war period, tourism was first featured as an important tool/strategy in the socioeconomic plan by the Royal Government of Cambodia in 1996 (Winter, 2007) and in the subsequent plans (e.g. National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), 2006-2010, 2009-2013). According to the statistic in the CDC database, tourism accounted for only 1.32% of the total ODA in 2011 but increased to 3.18% in the following year. Contrariwise, the funds for culture and arts saw approximately 1% decrease in 2012 from 3% of the total ODA in the preceding year. The majority of funding for the culture/arts, however, went to the coffer of Angkor safeguarding projects.

Recently, one may have seen a growing effort to promote Cambodia as a *Angkor-centred* tourism destination to international visitors and local people in Cambodia such as the introduction of the 1997 'open skies' policy (Thet, 2001); the production of tourism handbooks, leaflets, brochures, the multimedia, the promotional video spots for local and international markets (e.g. for the Cable News Network (CNN)); and oversea trade expositions. Tourism branding messages such as *The Rising Star of Southeast Asia* and *The Kingdom of Wonder*, ongoing endeavour to promote tourism to the world and less political barriers among the ASEAN countries have contributed to the increasing visitation to Cambodia. However, the marketing and promotion of tourism Cambodia have mainly been fixated on aspects with Angkor in the limelight, nature with cynosural beaches and luxury resorts. Winter (2006a) argued that the international tourism in Cambodia is antipodally based on the ancient glory of Angkor and the modern tragedy of the Khmer Rouge and that the two historical episodes have constituted the dominant cultural representation of Cambodia since the early 1990s. However, Thanatourism appears absent in the official promotional material and leaflets today, although Thanatourist sites were opened to visitors from the onset.

Cambodia, formerly known as Kampuchea and with the Sanskrit name as Kampujadesa (MOT, 2011a), has undergone turbulent pasts throughout its history from being an empire in Southeast Asia with the land area of approximately one million square kilometres (Leclère, 2005; see Figure 1/2 in the Appendix) to the present-day tiny country of more

than five times smaller than the size of its empire, almost vanishing from the global map like Kampuchea Krom (lowland Cambodia) and the Kingdom of Champa. The latter was sacked and engulfed by Vietnam in 1471 (Tully, 2005; Ray and Robinson, 2012) and the former is now known as Saigon, Ho Chi Minh city or the South Vietnam. It is what Tully (2005) subtly highlighted in the subtitle of his book: 'from empire to survival'. Under the Indian influence, many temples were constructed, especially during the reign of a new king. They, including the behemoth Angkor Wat, were built at different moments. In the Angkorean period, Khmer Empire was not only a monument-building society/culture but also an epicentre of philosophers and scholars of Southeast Asia.

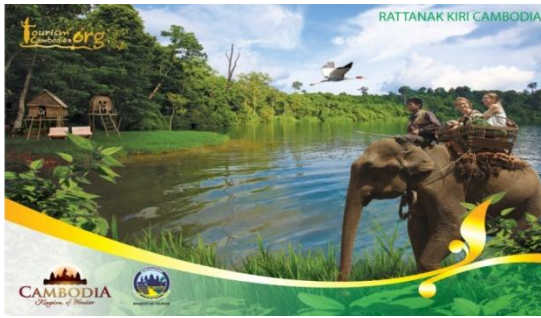
The arrivals of Indian merchants and holy men in 100<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of the Indianisation process: Indian languages (Sanskrit and Bali), religions and sculptures became firmly established (Ray and Robinson, 2012), tailored and practiced by the Khmers. Facets of Indian culture were later adapted into Khmer lives such as languages, dresses, food, music, family relationships, beliefs, religions, politics, aesthetics, astronomy and architecture (Chandler, 1991). The traditions of Cambodia then developed "as its cultural entity in its own right between 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries" (Ray and Robinson, 2012, p.25; Chandler, 1991). Monuments (temples) were built almost everywhere even before Cambodia became an empire. Many ancient Khmer inscriptions dated back to 6<sup>th</sup> century were found not only in Cambodia but also in its neighbouring countries "as far afield as Vientiane in Laos, Sukhothai, Nokor Swan and Norkor Reach provinces in Thailand, and the delta of South Vietnam" (You, 1976, p. 85).

Cambodia also had a historical connection with China and then with Siam and Vietnam. The Chinese have been present in Cambodia since the pre-Angkorean period (Chandler 1991; Tully, 2005), and the first Chinese envoy, Zhou Daguan, was sent to Cambodia in 1296. Cambodia fell under foreign domination and aggression for centuries, especially from its neighbours Siam and Vietnam. The Siamese sacked Angkor in 1431 and took thousands of Cambodian intellectuals, artisans and dancers from the royal court to Siam. Due to constant power-tearing conflicts within the royal families and repeated incursions

from its more powerful neighbouring countries, Cambodia began its retrogression from being an empire to a colonised state in 1863 (Tully, 2005; Edwards, 2007). French influences were still found in various aspects of the political, economic and social lives of Cambodians, today (Chandler, 1991; Mabbett and Chandler, 1996). Cambodia subsequently entered another new decade of political unrest and instability. It became involved (and victimised) in the Vietnam War (as tons of ordnance were dropped along the eastern border of Cambodia), a United States-supported coup, the Pol Pot regime and conflict and civil war.

The United Nations-led peace talks to end Cambodian civil war began in 1987 and Vietnam announced plans to withdraw its troops from Cambodia completely [sic] in 1989 (Tully, 2005). The United Nations intervention sought to bring all fighting factions together to the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991 with the introduction of the UNTAC peace-keeping forces who helped make the national election possible in 1993 . Since that election, the war-torn Cambodia has slowly begun its new journey in the post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. About 15,000 peace-keeping troops and 5,000 civilian advisors with almost US\$ 3 billion were dispatched to build democracy in the present-day Cambodia (Maguire, 2005). The post-conflict nation has then embarked on its infrastructure restoration and construction projects with international development assistance. In the process of opening up the country, the Royal Government of Cambodia, hereafter RGC or the government, saw tourism as a means of generating foreign exchange earnings and employment and as a tool for economic growth and poverty reduction for the post-war nation (Winter, 2007).

At present, the projection of Cambodia is not limited to the spectacles of the Angkor and the Khmer Rouge. Various aspects of the natural landscape of Cambodia are often seen incorporated in representation of Cambodia. Beaches, mangrove forests, wildlife and the ecoscapes of the northeastern provinces have recently been subsumed in the projection of the national images (Figures 1/3 and 1/4, overleaf).



Yeak Laom Lake and Elephant Trekking, Rattanakiri  
 (www.tourismcambodia.org/)



Waterfall, Rattanakiri  
 (www.lonelyplanet.com/cambodia/images/waterfall-ratanakiri-cambodia\$5671-15)



Resort, Koh Kong  
 (www.tourismcambodia.org/)



Beach, Sihanoukville  
 ( http://www.catacambodia.com/photo\_gallery.php)



Irrawaddy Dolphin, Kratie  
 (www.tourismcambodia.org/)



Sopheamith water rapid, Steung Treng  
 (www.tourismcambodia.org/)



Indigenous culture, Mondulkiri  
 (www.tourismcambodia.org/)



Durians, Kampot  
 (www.tourismcambodia.org/)

**Figure 1/3: Projection of Naturescapes: Ecotourism Sights in Cambodia**





**Figure 1/4: Constellation of the Projection and Representation of Cambodia**  
(MOT website's running images, [www.tourismcambodia.org/](http://www.tourismcambodia.org/))

Generally, Cambodia has recently been projected beyond just the temples of Angkor and the Khmer Rouge, although the former still maintains its supremacy in the representational discourse of the nation and the Khmer.

Before turning to the next section, it reiterates here that the occurrences around temples and the Khmer Rouge atrocity in the history of Cambodia led some people such as Winter (2006a) to view that tourism in Cambodia today is mainly based on these two opposite poles. As seen in the preceding Figures, the cultural/natural repertoire of Cambodia has been expanded to include the ecoscapes of Cambodia's bay and the northeastern frontiers. The next section outlines provisional research questions and reformulated questions which correspond to the unfolding issues of projection and representation of aspects of Cambodia's culture gene banks.

### **1.3 Study Aim and Objectives**

The study of culture gene bank of Cambodia is concerned with the agenda of representation, fantasmatics and politics within the projection/exhibition of people, past and places in/via tourism. I thereby set out the following provisional aim and objectives (accompanied by corresponding research question and sub-questions) to guide the early phase of the investigation into the normalisation and naturalisation of aspects of culture gene banks. They were *provisionally* formulated due to the nature of the emergent, soft-science study and the complexities of the present, which tended to create 'wicked problems' (Brown, 2010). They were later *re-formulated* in a timely response to the issues of indigenous performances and stereotyping and the projection of aspects of culture and people in public places via statues of various significances. The aim and objectives are subsequently presented in two separate sub-sections so that readers are able to grasp the importance and dynamic development of the conduct of this emergent study. While section 1.3.1 documents the aim and objectives pre-conceived to navigate the very initial

stage of the research process, section 1.3.2 registers the aim and objectives re-designed as the study evolved to fine-tune them to the emergences of pressing issues of projection/articulation of indigenous minority groups and sculptural landscaping of public places and institutional spaces.

### **1.3.1 Pre-Designed Aim and Objectives: Formulating Provisional Research**

#### **Questions**

In this emergent, soft-science study, I often lingered but remained vigilant over (contested) articulative issues to unfold. Despite so, the following broad aim and objectives were provisionally set forth in mid-2011 to assist the commencement of the research process. They are later modified as the study developed, particularly in response to the exigencies of projective or discursive issues. The pro tempore aim formulated prior to the actual conduct of the study was to understand how Cambodia is projected and scripted in tourism via the representational discourse of aspects of culture gene bank. The aim was accompanied by the subsequent provisional objectives.

1. To identify what constitutes composition of culture gene banks of Cambodia from the perspectives of the stakeholding groups of the populations;
2. To explore how the dominant aspects of people, culture and heritage are selected, produced and projected via tourism;
3. To seek evidence of the acts of dominance, subjugation and silencing in the projection and representation of Cambodia; and
4. To establish evidence of the manifestation of the representational system, if any, which governs the projection of aspects of culture gene bank of Cambodia.

The research questions corresponding to the above objectives are:

1. What constituted culture gene banks of Cambodia in terms of the interpretations of various stakeholders?
2. How was the dominant version of culture gene bank of Cambodia selected, produced, performed and projected?
3. What, if any, indicated the acts of dominance, subjugation and silencing in the representation of Cambodia?

4. What evidence, if any, was there which indicated the existence of the form and development of representational system which governed the projection of Cambodia?

### **1.3.2 Re-Designed Aim and Objectives: Formulating Exigent Research Questions**

In the subsequent phases of engagement with research activities and piloting, the study began to gradually migrate to slightly different but more specific foci in response to the emergences of the critical contestation of indigenous projection, representation and stereotyping and to the exigency of the landscaping via statues of cultural significances. First, the trade exposition held in Nanning, China, in late October 2011 signals a development of the pressing issue of indigenous projection and (mis)representation via dance performance and cultural display. Second, the observable impulse of cultural projection via cultural landscaping of public places in the form of statues/sculpture by provincial authorities, particularly in early 2012 triggers the migration of the research foci to this unfolding impulse (see section 3.4.2). The third pertains to the stereotyping of indigenous minority group (i.e. the Bunong) publicly remarked by a Cambodian lawmaker in late 2012 (see Reflexivity 3.12.1).

More details about the three significant exigencies that prompted the migration of the research questions as the study developed are further elaborated in chapter 3, particularly integrated within the sequence of research activities and the occurrence of the issues. In response to the developments, the above pre-determined aim and objectives were reconfigured. While engaging in the actual conduct of the study, a new aim of the study was re-directed towards the understanding of how the nation of Cambodia is scripted, represented and projected via performances, the state production of public places/spaces and the stereotyping of indigenous minority groups. Thus, the re-formulated objectives are correspondingly set as follows:

1. To capture the emergent issues of representation and projection of aspects of culture gene bank of Cambodia;

2. To explore how concerned indigenous groups of populations are projected and represented via performances;
3. To examine how aspects of the dominant people and culture are produced and projected via statues in the making of public places; and
4. To understand the counteraction and sentiments of the stereotyped indigenous minority groups.

In light of the above objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the critical issues of representation emerging from the projection and performance of aspects of culture gene banks?
2. How are the typical indigenous groups of populations (mis)represented via performances?
3. How dominant aspects of culture are projected in the production of public places/spaces via statues of cultural significance?
4. How do the targeted indigenous minority groups in Cambodia react to the projection and representation of them?

#### **1.4 Justification: Representation, Fantasmatics and Politics**

Cambodia has, in principles, chosen to march on a democratic path as stated in the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement. Despite the adoption of democracy via elected parliamentarians and government, the incumbent Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has been dominant and most powerful in governmentalising Cambodia since the 1993 national election. Likewise, the (re)making of contemporary international tourism has been mainly held within the province and management by top government officials and the elites who have been collaborating with the tourism business industry and local/international organisations to direct the selection, production and projection of aspects of Cambodia's inheritances. In the post-conflict Cambodia, the revitalisation and (re)production of history and heritage of Cambodia signals a vital role of tourism not only in generating economic benefits and the (re)appreciation of own culture but also in creating cultural consciousness. These practices are seen played out via the prescriptive discourse(s) in which aspects of the projected facets of culture/heritage are articulated via tourism.

Scholarship about tourism in Cambodia has recently attracted attention of academic community, particularly since the early 1990s. Scholars examined different issues related to tourism, culture, heritage, colonial imagining and other related problems in tourism development. Ollier and Winter (2006) opened up an investigation into the politics of the Cambodian pasts, identity and change and contributed fresh theoretical perspectives. Winter and Ollier (2006, p.6) partly examined the Cambodian Cultural Village, the site of projection of ethnic cultures, and argued that it is an expression of the “relationships between tradition and modernity, diaspora and home, memory and identity, and the citizen and the state”.

Although Winter and Ollier (2006, p.3) agreed that the Cultural Village provides a unique and captivating experience, they adjectivise it as “Disneyesque”, “surreal” and “tacky”. The place, they said, provides edutainment through various means such as performances and creates ‘the staging of a nation’ (after Edensor). Edwards (2007, p.255) also dubbed the Cultural Village, a modern history museum funded by an oversea Chinese bank, as “kitschy and inauthentic”. It exhibits narratives of Cambodia, for example, via the wax figures of Zhou Daguan, Phirum Ngoy, Chuon Nath and other famous singers and film stars from the 1950s to 1970s. A journalist from the Phnom Penh Post newspaper Olszewski (2010) wrote that the Cultural Village supposedly presents the history and culture of Cambodia but ‘academic authenticity’ does not prevail. Turnbull (2006) examined the state of performing arts and the implications of cultural support which determines what aspects of culture/tradition ought to be revitalised and maintained.

It is reasonable to assume that each nation or ethnic group has a certain kind of stories about their culture to tell via dances or rituals which build cultural and spiritual connection among the people within the same ethnicity. In Cambodia, dances are seen performed for international tourists. Undergoing revitalisation and re-invention for decades since the the 1953 independence, the *apsara* (celestial dancer) for the Khmers symbolises their cultural renaissance which embodies the country’s national spirit today (Winter, 2004, 2006a). It is the performance of the “soul of the nation” (Turnbull, 2006, p.140). It is

perhaps under this representational logic that the aspects of ethnic cultures in Cambodia such as the Chinese, the Kola, the Bunong and the Kroeung were staged, projected and represented via dance performances at the Cultural Village. Winter (2006a) was convinced that the *apsara* dance (or the royal ballet) has been promoted as a must-see for visitors to Cambodia. Turnbull (2006) inspected a burnt-out theatre, with European architectural styles, which accommodated performances. The *apsara* dance, he said, was turned into commercial performance for visitors during the cultural revival of the 1980s and artists welcomed tourist money and produced for in-house performances by hotels and restaurants. H.Thomas (1995) noted that dance is a cultural product and a social activity and that until recently the study of dance as a 'representational' form has been neglected. Due to perceived and practical cultural/religious significance of dance performances coupling with their recent emerging appeal to represent ethnicities (for example, the case of Nanning Exposition; see Reflexivity 3.6) during my virtual prioethnographic engagement, the study sets out to critically explore further how ethnicities are represented via performances.

The aforementioned studies examined some issues flimsily and theoretically surrounding *apsara* dance performances, particularly with regard to the issue of commercialisation, while a focus of this study is to empirically and substantiatively investigate into how aspects of cultures of the unfolding projected groups of indigenous populations are performed. Norindr (2006, p.68) urged that "our scholarly attention should now focus on the invisible, the marginal, and the subaltern". His call is congruent with ways of critical cultural pedagogy. Winter (2004) pointed out that the *apsara* dance is an example illustrating the importance of performance as an adjuvant driver of cultural production for international tourism.

Norindr (2006) viewed the present Angkor, a site for tourism, as an intellectual product of the colonials manufactured via filmic and literary narrativisation and representation. He shifted our attention from the colonial preoccupation with the grandeur of Angkor to the marginalised resulting from tourism development in the area. Pritchard and Morgan (2007,

p.13) stated “analyses of social injustice, disenfranchisement and human and spatial marginalization have been all too rare in tourism enquiry”. In addition, while the Angkor-related narratives have been constructed by the French to represent the dominant ethnicity which becomes a yardstick for cultural, social and economic comparison, the other minority groups are often made venerable or invisible by the touchstone. The stereotypic remark by a lawmaker in late 2012 provided evidence of this issue which notably unfolded amid the research process. Norindr (2006), Pritchard and Morgan (2007) and the emergence of the verbal stereotype further justify the direction of the inquiry of projection and representation of the marginalised or disfavoured social/cultural groups. While Norindr (2006) articulated the significance of the film by Rithy Panh *The People of Angkor* whose thrust is on the economic aspect of the disadvantaged residents of Angkor as a consequence of tourism development, the central point of the current study is about (mis)representation or (mis)articulation of the projected deprived populations.

Edwards (2006) inspected ‘graffiti’ on the walls of Angkor temples a proof of Cambodian cultural practices and spiritual convictions contesting the view that Cambodian culture is generally oral. Edwards (2007) explored the work of the colonial imagination of Cambodia (particularly Angkor), the translation and authentication of the Angkorcentric Khmer culture/religion connecting the past to the modern Cambodia and the movement of monastic reform by prime Buddhist figures such as Chuon Nath and Huot Tath. B.Anderson (1991, p.181) noted that the European colonials, particularly for the those living in Southeast Asia, attached themselves with antiquity that is increasingly linked to tourism and allowed the state to become the custodian of “a generalized, but also local, Tradition”. W.Anderson (2007, p.107) stated that Angkor was growing as an attractive tourist destination for the colonials residing in Saigon or Bangkok, who would travel to the temples in convoys and stay there for a night or two. In Cambodia, the archaeological landscape of Angkor temples has been Europeanised (i.e. Frenchified) or, in B.Anderson’s (1991, p.182) words, reconstructed with “smartly laid-out lawns around



them, and always explanatory tablets, complete with datings, planted here and there...Museumized this way, they were repositioned as regalia for a *secular* colonial state". This colonialistically constructed regalia of Cambodia, i.e. the temples of Angkor, have now been made the "cash cow" of tourism development (Winter, 2007, p.2). The author critically inspected and contextualised Angkor within post-conflict recovery, socio-economic reconstruction and politics of heritage conservation and development. In part of his observation, illustrated by his photomontage, Angkor has regained its social, economic, cultural and political synergy for the cultural revitalisation and postwar development of Cambodia. Angkor also attracted Hollywood Blockbuster *Tomb Raider* to be filmed at the religious/spiritual ancient temples and, in Winter's (2002) view, it creates contradiction to conservation efforts.

Quite a number of texts were written about Angkor, for example, regarding Angkor and heritage conservation/development (Winter, 2002, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007), Angkor as constructed colonial 'fantasy' (Edwards, 2005, 2006, 2007; Norindr, 1996, 2006), Khmer performance arts (Turnbull, 2006), development of the Khmer Rouge legacies for tourism (Wood, 2006), state and tourism planning (Chheang, 2009), and so on. However, at present, I am not cognizant of any previous studies which specifically and critically examine the representation of the past and the present in Cambodia via the selection and production of statues/monuments for public places. Thus, the study is significant for at least two reasons. First, the current study substantiates the aforementioned studies by Winter, Edwards and Norindr from a different perspectival angle, i.e. from the sculptural landscaping. Second, the current study, together with that of the statue construction and narrative of King Korn by Peleggi (2013), opens up a fresh area of concern in the projection and representation of the dominant culture, meanwhile (un)consciously depreciating other minority communities. The impetus of statue construction in the projection of cultural, social and political significances (notably prevailing during my engagement with the research activities in early 2012) further justifies the investigation.

## **1.5 Assumptions of the Study: Representation, Fantasmatics and Politics of Culture Gene Banks**

The study—to explore the projective discourse of Cambodia—is set out with the premise that it will contribute to a richer understanding of (mis)representation of aspects of the peoples, pasts and places in Cambodia. The first important assumption is that the projective language and practice concerning representation, fantasmatics and politics existed, or will emerge during the study. This assumption is drawn from the previous works mentioned earlier in this chapter such as those of Said (1978), Buck (1993), Hall and Jenkins (1995), S.Hall (1997), Hollinshead (1998), Edwards (2005, 2007) and Winter (2006a, 2007).

The second assumption is that data on/about the projective discourse of Cambodia are detectable during the permitted fieldwork timeframe. Various groups of the human populations are accessible for the interviews and various sources of relevant non-human data are obtained. Despite the limited available resources and the prevailing avalanche of work, it is hoped that this discourse can be situated. The inspection of this discourse thus involves the identification of various statements/practices related to—or/and the paddling through the complex relations of—the institutions or agencies associating with performances, statued representations and stereotypic utterance pertaining to aspects of culture gene banks so as to understand the (re)configuration of power/knowledge within various groups of populations.

Next, the analysis is concentrated on the multi-perspectives/interpretations by the respondents and the secondary data sources in order to make sense of the discursive manifestation of cultures and places. These perspectives are not expected to be unitary but diverse. Last, it is assumed that the political situation in Cambodia remains stable and conducive for the data gathering to take place. Post-election problems often occurred in the past. The nationwide commune election is scheduled on 03<sup>rd</sup> June 2012 and the 5<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2013. During the election season, institutional

leadership participates more frequently in political activities such as political party meetings, visits to their constituencies and election campaigns. This political sensibility is intricately linked to the aforementioned second assumption. In short, the above assumptions have to be met for the study implementation. The complications concerning the projective discourse, data access, analysis and political circumstances may have important bearing on the study conduct. The next section recaps this chapter and outlines the organisation for the remainder of the study.

## **1.6 Summary of Chapter 1 and the Organisation of the Study**

The emergent soft-science study of the projection and representation of aspects of culture gene banks of Cambodia via dance performances, stereotyping and stuated landscaping of public places is set against the backdrop of key thinkers from diverse disciplines such as political sciences (e.g. Foucault, 1977, 1980), cultural studies (e.g. S.Hall, 1997), postcolonial studies (e.g. Said, 1978; Edwards, 2005, 2007), history (e.g. Buck, 1993; McKay, 1994; Rothman, 1998), marketing (e.g. M.Hall, 1994) and tourism studies (e.g. Hollinshead, 1998, 2009a, 2009b). The study focuses on representation, fantasmatics and politics of the aforementioned issues under investigation. The inquiry into the projective discourse of Cambodia is informed by the interpretivist/constructionist positionality.

This positionality implies that the study employed emergent, soft-science approaches and methodologies, and they are sketched in chapter 3. For the time being, it suffices to stress that this emergent inquiry involves gathering different discursive interpretations and perspectives on/about the normalisation and naturalisation of aspects of Cambodia via tourism, today. Regarding the actual conduct, the study took place in Cambodia on two separate occasions, first during March-May 2012 and again during the same months

of 2013. A pilot study was conducted in February of 2012. The approaches and methodologies are further elaborated in chapter 3.

The thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on/about representation, fantasmatics and politics identified in the past studies or theories. Chapter 3 outlines methodological approaches and methods employed in the emergent study. The chapter also illustrates gradual development of the migration of the study (i.e. the reformulation of the research questions) in timely responses to the significant cultural, social and political issues emerging during the later stages of the research process. Chapter 4 of this thesis document accommodates major findings and immediate interpretations. The chapter consolidates perspectival interpretations from various data sources such as qualitative interviewing, past studies/literature, culture gene banks and the media. Chapter 6 takes the immediate interpretations to another level, zeroing in on specific implications and contributions derived from the findings. This last chapter comprises rounded interpretations of selected themes in light of available philosophies, theories/concepts and past studies from various sources. It also outlines recommendations for future research agenda.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE

### Representation, Fantasmatics and Politics

#### 2.1 Discourses of Tourism: From the Global to Local Imperative

Tourism discourses were shifted over historical periods with newly available findings and interpretations of the global phenomenon of tourism. The discourses may have been captured well by Jafari (1989). This section briefly examines three discourses of tourism: the economic discourse, the environmental discourse and the political discourse. These dominant discourses often co-existed although Jafari (1989) tended to categorise his four-platform model in different epochs.

The early form of tourism are articulated as the economic discourse, as reflected in Jafari (1989)'s advocacy platform. Under this platform, tourism is regarded as the panacea for economic growth and it is promoted as mass tourism so that more economic benefits accrue to the destinations visited (Weaver and Lawton, 1999). At the same time, the host destinations had opportunities for cultural revitalisation. In fact, even at present, the economic discourse of tourism is still positioned at the forefront of economic development and poverty alleviation, especially within the context of developing countries. For instance, in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), tourism is placed under the Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s economic cooperation programme as identified in the forward by the ADB President (ADB, 2005) and the tourism sector evaluation by the same organisation (ADB, 2008). The economic side of tourism serves as a seductive drive behind tourism which is employed as a tool for employment generation, poverty reduction and promotion of economic growth under the umbrella tourism sector strategy in the Subregion.

In the above documents of the ADB as well as the policies of Royal Government of Cambodia, tourism development in Cambodia is chiefly intended to promote economic

growth and reduce poverty. The thrust of economic benefits in tourism development in Cambodia is congruent with Winter's (2007) view and Chheang's (2009) textual analysis of Hun Sen's tourism-related speeches. M.Hall (1994) and Winter and Ollier (2006) contended that economic prosperity is highly desired on the tourism agenda for developing countries. Chheang (2009) identified several factors associated with discursive tourism policies in Cambodia at the hub of which is the seductive economic benefits.

Although the economics-induced tourism discourse took place during the advocacy platform in the 1950s and 1960s, it is much recent in Cambodia. As Winter (2007) noted, in Cambodia it was realised that tourism has potentials for growth and poverty alleviation in the first socioeconomic plan in 1996. Tourism is also featured as an important growth-driven sector in the government's subsequent economic development strategies. One of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (e.g. PRSP, 1996-1997) stated "GDP at constant prices grew at an average of 7.0% per year, led by rapid growth mainly in garments manufacturing, tourism and construction" (RGC, 2005, p.viii). The government expressed confidence in a Rectangular Strategy that "tourism will generate employment and incomes for Cambodians, thereby reducing poverty and improving the well-being of our people" (RGC, 2004, p.4). Thus, positive economic prospects initially drove the government to adopt tourism and the government exhibited efforts to project tourism in its preferred representation of Cambodia.

The global sustainability imperative has influenced Cambodia in its move towards ecotourism, which is part of the global discourse of the environment (or sustainable development). This discourse can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s, for example, with the publications of Carson's (1962) *Silent Spring* and Hardin's (1968) *Tragedy of the Commons* and the landmark event of the 1972 UN Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (Liburd, 2010). Another grand event is the 1987 Brundtland report *Our Common Future*. This global sustainability discourse warns people of the side-effects of tourism on the environment and host cultures and to turn to consider other forms

alternative to mass tourism. This caution of effects of tourism and the turn to alternative forms correspond with Jafari's (1989) cautionary and adaptancy platforms, respectively. Concerns over the environmental problems caused by tourism were also been voiced and initiatives were taken up, by various UN and international bodies such as the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, United Nations Environmental Programme, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the World Wide Fund for Nature (Hardy, Beeton and Pearson, 2002). As Rutherford (1999) noted, the environmental movements have become more 'scientised' and 'globalised' in outlook since the 1970s.

This global sustainability imperative was politicised much later in Cambodia. The language of ecotourism and conservation for tourism was first incorporated as part of the government's strategy in 2008 as evidenced in the Prime Minister's address on his Rectangular Strategy (see RGC, 2008, para.56), although such language and practices often contradict. In Cambodia, ecotourism as a form alternative to mass tourism was further popularised after its entry into *The Most Beautiful Bays in the World* club and the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Ecotourism Conference in Sihanoukville in 2011. The government saw "**natural and cultural tourism**" as "**green gold**" for socio-economic development, poverty reduction, employment generation, contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Products and cultural/environmental protection (Thong, 24 October 2012a; original emphasis).

In Cambodia, tourism has been treated as having economic priority but not really an instrument for conservation and environmental protection. At best, the conservation discourse is a mere echoing enchantment within the above politics of global sustainable development and development assistance. The Cambodia Human Rights Task Forces (CHRTF) recently reported that a parent company (Group) is well connected with big bosses in the government in devastated illegal logging and concession violations in 12 provinces in Cambodia (CHRTF, 2013; also see Radio Free Asia, 2013; Kong, 2013), which is a sign of the environmental crisis of modern societies (Eder, 1990). The CHRTF report stated that 66,089 hectares of economic land concession were not actually turned into productive use but mostly into massive logging which inflicted 1, 445 families: "the

[G]roup uses agro-industrial plantation: peppers and rubber plantation as a cover of timber business which does not generate much income to support its business activities” (CHRTF, 2013, p.3). Thus, the widespread logging and evictions of the locals would decapitalise ecotourism resources and the logging was not only an environmental problem but also a “cultural problem” (Eder, 1990, p.42). The government sometimes failed to address communal needs and wants, resulting in evictions, housing rights abuses and underpaid compensations for the sake of centralised capital accumulation, nepotism and partisanism where politics has an important role to play.

Some critics see tourism as a political discourse because tourism involves allocation of resources and decision-making power. Due to the axially of tourism, politics was inevitable. M.Hall advocated that tourism has to be understood from ‘its inherently political nature’, especially in relation to institutional configurations, government roles, interest groups, power and policy-making and ideology and so forth (M.Hall, 1994). The state, its agents and stakeholders engage in the selection, production and projection of the pasts and ethnicity, involving appropriation and creation what is celebratory for tourism (Hithcock and King, 2003). Development, including tourism development, implies the pursuit of economic benefits and modernisation. Development in the least-developed countries (LDCs) is often modelled upon the First World’s development/modernisation style (M.Hall, 1994). He said the Western modernisation theory (of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and/or the ADB) is imbued in and often espoused by the LDC governments and local elites in an attempt to reap economic benefits from development. M.Hall (1994) elaborated that governments feel the need to develop (international) tourism as a tool for economic growth (foreign exchange earnings, employment, foreign direct investments, improved debts and so on) aiming for the benefits of modernisation. In the businesses of tourism, there are complex interactions between people and organisations in “the exchanges of capital, labour, and knowledge”, which require “contract, social relations and politics of intermediations” (Hall and Coles, 2008, p.7).



Resources, including tangible and intangible inheritance and land/landscape, are often decided and sometimes predecided upon in the process of selecting, producing and projecting the pasts and places in a way Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) termed heritage (or rather tourism) as the consciousness industry (also see Hollinshead, 2006). Moreover, tourism as the conscious industry is inherited with performative and mediative power and complex collaborative mechanism (Hollinshead, 2006), involving arrangements and pre-arrangements of production and consumption. Hollinshead and Kuon (2013, p.3) contended that tourism resources are configured but in the manner that “they have been pre-organised over time to course through the governing public bodies of tourism, the techno-corporate empires of the private-for-profit sector, and/or through the other sanctioning interest groups of the third sector (the private-not-for-profit) sphere”. Tourism then involves matters of (pre-)seeing and (pre-) knowing of the institutional construction of the tourist gaze. Thinkers such as Buck (1993), McKay (1994), M.Hall (1994), Rothman (1998), Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) and Hollinshead (1993, 2006b, 2009a, 2009b), for example, dealt with the politics of tourism or tourism as an inherent political discourse.

## **2.2 Tourism Development: Constructing the Spectacle for Touristic Consumption**

### **2.2.1 Tourism and Representation: Projecting Tourism Destinations**

Representation is a way in which meaning is constructed and communicated in/through the performative power of language (S.Hall, 1997). To bring it into Tourism Studies, representation of tourist destinations is any communication of ideas, meanings and emotions to a particular audience (usually, travellers/tourists) via various means such as signs, symbols and images. Tourism developers and destination marketers send messages to (potential) visitors through marketing/promotional media such as brochures/leaflets, guidebooks and other still/filmic images of the destination; they are called ‘signifying practices’, to use S.Hall’s (1997) term, of representation of tourism destination. Signification is increasingly becoming an act of visualisation (Urry, 2002),

problematizing the difference between representation and reality (Baudrillard, 1983; Lash, 1992). The signifying practices script tourist performance at the destinations, as they travel to pursue tourism signs and experience visual places (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Representation of aspects of tourism destinations has been inspected in a number of studies such as those by Jenkins (2003), Santos (2004), Weninger and Williams (2005), Cuillier and Ross (2007), Palmer (2007), Hunter (2008), Xiang (2009), G. Phillips (2011), Yang (2011), Milman (2011) and others. In the study of culture gene banks of Cambodia, the terms 'representation' and 'representations' are used after Lidchi (1997).

Jenkins (2003) studied the projection of Australia in travel brochures and backpackers' personal photography. Employing content and semantic analyses, she generally found the hermeneutic circle of representation. The iconic images of Australia marketed to travellers in brochures are perpetuated in the photographs of the destination they captured. Hunter (2008) analysed the content of brochures and guidebooks from 21 destinations and identified two broad typologies of photographic representations of tourism, namely by space (i.e. natural landscape, cultivated landscape, heritage/material culture and tourism product) and by subject (no human subject, tourist, host, and tourist and host). Hunter (2008, p.360) also found that the tourism material in the study depicts "groomed spaces" (i.e. clean, vacant or pristine places), awaiting tourists to experience, discover, or to be served. In his critical interpretation of the findings, Hunter (2008) pointed to the universal/standardised commoditization in McDonald's (1986) sense, the naming and framing of culture/destination in MacCannell's (1992) judgment, exotic/authentic spectacle in MacCannell's (1976) view, entrenched "commodity fetishism" in Selwyn's (1996, p.14) language and so on. Hunter (2008, p.361) critiqued the premediative concealment of the unfavourable spectacles from tourism marketing such as "unsightly construction sites, urban blight, poverty, crime, violence or pollution".

Using quantitative analysis, Milman (2011) assessed the role of postcards in representing the image of Berlin as a destination and identified under-representation of human subjects and its cultural/heritage attractions and over-representation of the 'Cold War

themes', the 'generic icons' and the 'legendary mascots' of Berlin. Milman (2011) argued that abundant iconic features of polar bears, panda bears and bear sculptures on the postcards are examples of representational irrelevancy in the projection of the city and that the portrayal of some food distorts the destination's identity and authenticity. Tourism destinations are marketed with a difference; in other words, difference has a value in destination marketing. Thus, the tourism industry is concerned with the "production of difference" and the industry benefits from it (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p.152) or from marketing the destination exotica. In this regard, the tourism agency constructs a distinctive identity for destinations.

The construction of cultural identity for a destination is problematic, because it involves establishing the relations between the centre and the peripheral (Selwyn, 1992). M.Hall (1998) noted that many Western tourists form the images of the Pacific as a paradise (also see Huggan, 2011), which is concretised by touristic advertising and inherent in tourism phenomenon based on "the production, reproduction and reinforcement of images" (M.Hall, 1998, p.140). The next section examines the centre-periphery relations in the construction and projection of the exotic Other.

### **2.2.2 Representation of the Other: Producing Culture, Heritage and Identity**

Distinguishing the centre from the periphery, M.Hall (1998, p.141) noted that the Pacific was socially constructed "with its attendant myths which dominates the tourist's mind and was commodified for the tourist's pleasure" and the Spice Islands of the Indonesian archipelago simulated the French's and the English's sense of the 'exotic' or 'paradise'. Such conception of the Orient was greatly enhanced by European travellers/explorers (see Deliss' (no date) 'exoticism and eroticism of Africa', M.Hall's (1998) 'making of the Pacific', Robson and Yee's (2005) 'France and "Indochina"', Muller's (2006) 'colonial Cambodia' and Mash's (2009) 'India in the French imagination'). They constructed the spectacle of the Pacific for the tourist (M.Hall, 1998).

In many parts of the world today, tourism destinations (attractions) are products of the colonial legacies of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The legacies have been perpetuated in representation of local culture/identity (in terms of the colonial pasts), intensifying the centre-periphery relations. Winter (2006b) discussed challenges of tourism at the Angkor ruins and showed that the sanitised construction of the Angkor landscape provokes cultural romanticism. In Cambodia, the national heritage tourism of Angkor is a product of the French “fantasmatic” in Bhabha’s (1994, p.61) word or “phantasmatic” in Norindr’s (1996, p.16) term.

Bhabha (1994) used the term “fantasmatic” to speak about the cultural and racial divide between the coloniser and the native established by the former. The European colonial attempts to (re)construct the discourse of identity and the politics of alienation (e.g. us versus them) in their colonial governance. The construction of racist, stereotypic and binary discourse which signifies, naturalises and estranges identities, class, gender and ethnicity is the imperialist strategy to establish the fantasmatic of the Other (Otherness) or to create the body of knowledge of the Other. In a similar vein, Norindr employed the vocabulary “phantasmatic”, particularly in the French colonial phantasmatic, to specifically refer to “the ideological reality through which colonial fantasies as the support of desire emerged, operated, and manifested themselves...[and] to the psychic process, the structuring action, which shapes and orders the subject’s life as a whole” (Norindr, 1996, p.16). For him, it is the fantasy defined not as:

the object of desire but its setting. In fantasy the subject does not pursue the object or its sign: he appears caught up himself in the sequence of images. He forms no representation of the desired object, but is himself represented as participating in the scene....

(Laplanche and Pontalis, 1968, p.2)

Norindr extended the concept of phantasmatic to include a nation’s discursive practices or the colonial fantasies which primarily act as “the mise-en-scene of desire” (Norindr, 1996, p.92) and to entail the discourses on sexuality, race, identity, imagination, romance and representation in relation to the colonial master and the colonised subject. He argued

that “the colonial phantasmatic elaborates a complex restructuring of both psychical and cultural reality” (Norindr, 1996, p.17).

Just like India as a French imaginative construct (Mash, 2009), ‘Indochina’ is a product of French imagineers (Robson and Yee, 2005). Fjellman (1992, p.60) employed the term “imagineers” to refer to Disney designers, who would imaginatively fabricate the corporate history/past in the way they believed it should have been written or ought to have happened. He said there is no place for the real in the presentation of the history or past at Disney, but only for ‘corporate’ versions of reality. The French imagineers such as Henry Mouhot, Louis Finot, Alfred Foucher and Louis Delaporte (see Edwards, 2007) constructed the temples of Angkor as a colonial heirloom in Cambodia, and they are subsequently transformed it as a golden goose for tourism development, today (Winter, 2007).

The grand narrative of culture and heritage of Cambodia is about Angkor. The narrative began with *re-Induisation* project of the Ecole Française d’ Extreme Orient (EFEO), involving the re-purification and re-sacralisation of the temple, relocation of Buddha statues and removal of Buddha images considered as eyesores to the French projectors (Edwards, 2005, 2007). The (de/re)purification—single-mindedly attuned to the Hinduism as the only narrative of the Khmer culture in general or of the temple in particular—means stripping Buddhism away from the religious/spiritual contexts of Cambodia (Edwards, 2007). Buddhism is vital for the nation not only in the past (see Chandler, 1991) but also in the present and (perhaps) the future. Today, thousands of Buddhist monasteries and spirit shrines sprawl across the country. Hinduism and Buddhism have become much more harmonious than in the medieval period and statues of Hindu and Buddhist deities have been erected sprawlingly. The religious amalgamation in the Khmer society and the plethoric statue-building reinforce the grand narrative of Angkor by idiosyncratically attributing the Angkorean glory and Buddhism to the hero King of the Khmer Empire of the late medieval era.

Sasagawa (2005) noted that the French colonial discourse has survived until today. Edwards (2005, p.23) asserted “Angkor was remade as both the embodiment of Khmer national essence and an irretrievable, unachievable and impossible moment of cultural perfection”. The French colonisation of Cambodia is far from over, and “new cultural representations through which France contemplates its Indochinese past are emerging” (Robson and Yee, 2005, p.10). Examining the Cambodian court dance, Sasagawa (2005) asserted that it is an outcome of the colonial discourse which links the dance to the Angkorean tradition. The discourse of Angkor and its associated court dance as idealized representations of the ‘true’ pasts of Cambodia was articulated to justify the colonial rule in Cambodia (Sasagawa, 2005; Norindr, 2006; Edwards, 2007). Thus, the projection and representation of the people, culture, arts and identity of Cambodia today is overshadowed by the colonial’s representational politics. The ideology/belief that Angkor represents the idealised past of the Khmers or Cambodia may be called *Angkorcentrism* and the Angkor has been axiomatically scripted at the inner core of the Khmer culture, heritage and identity.

Tourism is a form of “new colonialism” because host cultures are displayed and commodified and locals become victims within the process (Palmer, 2007, p.648). In his study of representation of Cambodia in the *Lonely Planet Cambodia*, Tegelberg (2011) scrutinised discursive representation of tourist locations in the widely read guidebook and detected that it is inclined to perpetuate the colonial reminiscence and subjugate the local voices. Norindr, who unpacked Rithy Panh’s film *The People of Angkor*, made a similar argument regarding the silencing of the marginal people living around Angkor, saying that they rarely appear on screens and their labour is seldom acknowledged and adding that “[b]eing poor in Cambodia is indeed synonymous to being “invisible,” especially when the divide between poor and rich is exacerbated by the pressures exerted by modernity and global tourism on the local economy” (Norindr, 2006, pp.67-68). The cultural production and fascination of Angkor suppress the invisible and nail them to the exotic landscape in service of tourism development. Tegelberg (2011) also noted that the *Lonely Planet*

*Cambodia* is engrossed with representation and projection of the imagery which appeals to European travellers. The photographic/filmic representations have the power to transform a tourism destination into a commodity (Hunter, 2008). In Palmer's (1994) contention, the colonial ideology reinforced on a destination via tourism imagery impedes the local people from defining and fostering the national identity of their own. Tim Winter, Penny Edwards, Panivong Norindr and others have significantly contributed to the understanding of tourism, representation and colonial production of heritage in Cambodia.

Winter (2002) essayed the cinematic projection of Angkor in/by Hollywood movie *Tomb Raider* and raised concern over the modern media production of Angkor which contradicts the endeavour of conservation agencies. In terms of representation of place, culture and history, "Angkor's designation as an isolated World Heritage Site has significantly contributed to a form of spatial rupturing, where historical and cultural references are both simultaneously erased and invoked" (Winter, 2004). Ollier and Winter (2006) and Winter (2007) also contribute to the understanding of aspects of tourism development, politics, heritage conservation, identity and change. Ollier and Winter (2006) critically examined the urgencies of heritage conservation, tourism development, politics and progress that contribute to the (re)shaping of idealised national identity and cultural transition.

Winter (2006a, p.39) argued that "the dominant framings and representations of Cambodia as a tourist destination are non-Cambodian". In addition, according to Winter (2006a), Cambodia has been molded into two main representational episodes: the modern tragedy (the Khmer Rouge genocide) and the ancient glory (Angkor). Wood (2006) inspected the policy of the Royal Government of Cambodia to transform the last Khmer Rouge stronghold Anlong Veng into in-situ museumised area. Like Tuol Sleng Museum and the Killing Field Memorial in Phnom Penh, the Anlong Veng project capitalised on the nation's calamity to project the tragic history to international tourists (Wood, 2006). As a matter of fact, this version of traumatic history has long been framed by the West via guidebooks, history books, films (e.g. the Killing Fields) and other forms

of representation. The flooding of evidence of the two dominant representations of history and heritage of Cambodia in both international and domestic arenas lends to Winter's (2006a) aforementioned argument. However, the exotic landscape as another form of representation in tourism emerged in late 2000s. McCarthy (1992) asserted that "[c]ultural representations help form the images we have of others; if assimilated by those others, they help form the images they have of themselves as well; they get embodied in institutions and inform policies and practices".

The projection and representation of peoples, ethnicities and identities by the dominant groups were also critically examined in other studies. They include the studies by Chang and Holt (1991) on 'cultural representations of Taiwan'; Liu, Wilson, McClure and Higgins (1999) on 'cultural representations of Aoteroa/New Zealand'; Santos (2004) on 'framing Portugal'; Weninger and Williams (2005) on 'cultural representations of minorities in Hungarian textbooks'; Santos and Yan (2008) on 'representational politics of Chinatown'; Yang (2011) on 'ethnic tourism and cultural representation'; G.Phillips (2011) on 'representation of ethnic minorities in Australia's television current affairs programs'; Hanusch (2011) on 'representations of foreign places outside the news'; Rideout (2011) on representations of the Third World in the advertising by non-governmental organisations (NGOs); Chuang (2012) on 'representations of foreign versus (Asian) American identity in a mass-shooting'; and so on.

### **2.2.3 Space and Representation: Constructing Public Places and Identity**

The endeavor to transform the Khmer Rouge stronghold into a tourist spectacle is an example of the intention to produce tourist space, particularly to instill the public memory of the modern tragedy, which constitutes a dominant representation (Winter, 2006a) of international tourism in Cambodia today. As in Huyssen's (2003) argument in the *Present Pasts*, memory reminds us of the past and orientates us towards future conduct or event. The memories of the Khmer Rouge holocaust of the late 1970s are perceived as an important tourism attraction. Holocaust museums such as Tuol Sleng Genocidal Museum



and the Killing Field Memorial in Phnom Penh are maintained and gradually sanitised to enhance visitor experience. The genocidal museums and memorials are not mere tourist attractions but are used to project a particular version of history and its associated notorious elite cadres. Along with this version of history, a huge monument of liberation, i.e. the Vietnam-Cambodia Monument, in Phnom Penh was built to celebrate the 7<sup>th</sup> January Victory Day over the Khmer Rouge regime, also an official public holiday in Cambodia. The Monument appears in guidebooks such as the *Rough Guide to Cambodia* (Palmer and Martin, 2008) and the *Lonely Planet Cambodia* (Ray and Robinson, 2012) as a landmark monument in Phnom Penh, particularly in the present politics of governance. In Huyssen's (2003, p.3) words, "today we rather think of memory as a mode of re-presentation and as belonging ever more to the present. After all, the act of remembering is always in and of the present..." (also see Bonder, 2009).

The other archetypal representation of Cambodia's pasts (national identity) is Angkor (Winter, 2006a). The Angkorean gene bank contributing to the constitution of this version of the past and tradition ranges from the temples of Angkor themselves, national museums, dances, festivals, monumental statues and so on. Drawing from Wolfgang Sonne, E.Thomas maintained that building sculptures/monuments has political overtones:

First, the erection of a public building is itself a political and public activity, because it is a highly visible process and involves large numbers of workmen....Second, the visual layout of public architecture can have political implications, especially the relative amounts of space given to public and private buildings and their distribution and size. In this way architecture shows how power is shared in a community. Third, some buildings are political in function, not only assembly buildings...but also audience-halls, public precincts, temples, theatres, and amphitheatres housing imperial rituals. Finally, architecture can be used as a medium of political propaganda....  
(E.Thomas, 2007, p.107)

Likewise, the building of the tall Vietnam-Cambodia Monument as a Phnom Penh landmark and other huge monumental statues in public places such as those of the Lord Ganes, Lord Vishnu, Chuon Nath, Phirum Ngoy and King Korn are culturally, socially or/and politically motivated. For example, Norén-Nilsson investigated the narrativisation of the sixteenth century King Korn and paralleled him to the contemporary politics of

Cambodia, particularly to Prime Minister Hun Sen. For Stewart (2003, p.19), statues are “free-standing sculptural representations of full figures; they are usually life-size or larger”. Statued monuments emerged noticeably during the study in Cambodia as common forms of cultural representations, and they helped constitute the nation’s idealized identity, iconicity or the ‘fantasmatic’ spectacle for the public gaze. Knudsen, Soper and Metro-Roland noted tourists are attracted to various forms of spectacle from natural, pastoral and heritage to fantasy; “thus, just as a place’s landscape is the built-up consequences of a place’s identity process, so too is tourism the practice of deciphering identity from clues in the landscape of a place” (Knudsen, Soper and Metro-Roland, 2008, p.1). Pritchard and Morgan (2006) asserted that tourism studies have failed to address space as a site for the production of power relations and mediation of social forces in the socio-cultural construction of tourism places.

In the study of culture gene bank of Cambodia, space is used in the sense of Lefebvre’s (1991) social space, which implies diverse knowledge. Social space, for him, is the outcome of production and reproduction in which mediations and mediators have to be taken into account in the relations of production, i.e. “the action of groups, factors within knowledge, within ideology, or within the domain of representations” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.77). Thus, to understand the production of space/place, ones have to unveil the ideologies/politics concealed in the production mediation, mediators, agents or commissioners within the broader social and cultural forces. Edensor (1998, 2009) elaborated on two types of touristic space, i.e. the enclavic space and the heterogeneous space. The enclavic space is dominated by tourists and tourist-oriented services and is designed primarily for tourist use such as hotels, resorts and tour buses. Such space is tightly regulated, controlled or mediated to provide selective tourist activities, experiences and comforts. The heterogeneous space is where tourists and locals mingle. It is a multi-functional space and is not primarily dominated by tourists and touristic catering services. Many spaces, places or attractions in Cambodia are situated along the continuum between the two types of touristic space.

'Place', after Cosgrove and della Dora (2009), does not only denote physical location or topographic characteristics but also is an expression and medium of social, political, or/and symbolic processes of expropriation. Hence, cultural landscaping (or rather placemaking) pertains to human agency and cultural landscape is loaded with power, ideology, symbolic meaning and social identity (Greer, Donnelly and Rickly, 2008). Place is thus signified (after S.Hall, 1997). For example, the Angkor landscape is the product of romanticism or symbolism to establish the prototype of, or to prototypically perform, the Khmer past and identity. Cosgrove (2008, p.8) noted the topical issues associated with the colonial "epistemological violence" in the production of place/landscape such as the production of images of the colonised places and peoples, the role of images and stereotypes in framing political actions and the ways in which memory and desire collectively (re)shape the form and experience of tourist landscapes. Rubertone (2008) stated that spectaclisation of public places is often a thorough decision and is designed to selectively and deliberately generate or condone remembrances which sometimes bear significance for colonial heroic qualities and has little or no relevance to particular localities or indigenous groups. Robertone (2008, p.14) added that "what is made known to outsiders has all too often excluded, suppressed, and devalued history of place still shared by insiders". In the case of Cambodia, the epistemological violence permeates the production and representation of many aspects of culture gene banks such as in cultural landscaping, statuary reproduction, festivals, dances/performances and others produced in service of tourism.

#### **2.2.4 Dance and Representation: Performing the Past and Identity**

Dance is a common commodity in tourism. In the language of a Jamaican dancer, choreographer and cultural theorist Rex Nettleford, dance is valued as "part of a society's ancestral and existential reality...[and as] one of the most effective means of communication, revealing many profound truths about complex social forces operative in a society groping toward both material and spiritual betterment" (P.Taylor, 2001, pp.1-2).

Daniel noted that some make use of dances to project their nations of origin and others depend on the tourism industry to use dance performances to project their national identities and to seek to establish their international recognition (Daniel, 1996). MacCannell (1999) stated that dance, music and visual arts are striking aspects of commodity in the modern capitalist society. These facets of culture can be easily staged, performed and turned into tourist spectacle.

Dean MacCannell redefined Guy Debord's notion of 'spectacle' in terms of performance. He proposed that "spectacles are performances-*for-others*. They are not 'performances-with-others' such as occur in routine face-to-face interaction; they are *for others*" (MacCannell, 1992, p.234). The staging of performances for others can be made by either the performer or the audience and testified by the existence of certain enchantments. The spectacles are derived from the production of the moral and the aesthetics of various (almost any) aspects of life, from spectacular enactments or from accomplishment of verisimilitude in staged performances. Touristic dance spectacles are often exoticised and eroticised (MacCannell, 1992; Daniel, 1996; Edensor, 2009). MacCannell (1992) elaborated on the development and promotion of ethnicity-for-tourism. The touristic notion of ethnicity is often reconstructed by the coloniser and is an object for display (e.g. in museums for tourists) or for tourist/public gaze. Ethnicity for tourism is high in demand due to tourists' efforts to 'go native'. Exoticism is also promoted out of the modern notion of ethnicity. MacCannell reiterated:

Constructed ethnicity is only a conceptual springboard to a more complex phenomenon. The global diffusion of White Culture, internal colonization, and the institutions of modern mass tourism are producing new and more highly deterministic ethnic forms than those produced during the first colonial phase. The focus is on a type of ethnicity-for-tourism in which exotic cultures figure as key attractions: where the tourists go to see folk costumes in daily use, shop for folk handicrafts in authentic bazaars, stay on the alert for a typical form of nose, lips, breast, and so on, learn some local norms for comportment, and perhaps learn some of the language.

(MacCannell, 1992, p.158)

'Reconstructed ethnicity', he added, means kinds of political or ethnic identities under the forces of the White Culture and tourism. The reconstruction of ethnicity or dance

performance deemed necessary for the colonial masters as they quickly sensed the dangers of ethnic nationalism from allowing the colonised people to dance, drum and have fun (P.Taylor, 2001). Religion, as well as dance, expressed via different forms of culture is a site for opposition to the European colonialism (P.Taylor, 2001).

A type of the world's popular/renowned performances is the ballet dance (Daniel, 1996). In Cambodia, MacCannell (1992) noted the court dance is reconstructed from the memory of the old people who once connected or attended to the murdered performing artists. Guests are invited to witness the iconic performance as evidence of the eternal spirit of the nation. The court and folk dances are pervasively performed in various enclavic spaces in Cambodia (Sasakawa, 2005; Winter, 2006a). The court dance is predominantly constructed and influenced by the colonial version of the representational discourse of Angkor gene bank.

Edensor (2009) observed the burst in the adoption of dramaturgy and theatricality in touristic settings. Dance performances are adjusted, adapted and designed to fit with practical tourist contexts. Local customs and traditions are modified (or even invented) and staged (or even exoticised/sexualised) in enclavic spaces. The staging of performances and the media conjoin to construct dramatised tourist landscape. In the dramatic techniques, tourists are also drawn to participate in the performances themselves to enhance their experiences of the exotic cultures. Edensor (2009, p.554) remarked that "actors are trained to perform roles that fit in with their institutional setting and express attributes such as deference, eagerness to please and friendliness, and are required to wear outfits and expressions that harmonize with themed environments". Touristic settings are themed to strictly provide mediated experiences as tourists emerged in the themed environments by means of dramatic imagination, fantasmatic characters, fictions and other forms of cultural styles, although tourist experiences and meanings can never fixated. The contestation lies in the outcome of the performers, performance itself, the stage (re)designs and the audience interpretation.

The instability in the provision of touristic experiences and meanings via performances is central to Daniel's (1996) discussion of the tension between authenticity and creativity in production and projection of dances. The tourists' efforts to 'go native' are to seek authentic experiences, but many tourists eventually end up in consuming staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1999). In case of performing arts, authenticity is concerned with the exactitude or replication of the pasts, traditions, cultural events and the enactments of aspects of history, culture and tradition into dances and such is the kind of "experiential authenticity" (Daniel, 1996, p.782). Wang (1999) recognised existential authenticity in tourist experiences, with which the self is at the core. According to Wang (1999), Daniel (1996)'s elaboration of performances in which tourists are drawn to physically participate in dances or cultural events is an instance of involving tourists in seeking their true selves or existential experiences. Daniel (1999) gave further comments on authenticity in dance performances. She said from the point of view of the performing arts communities authenticity is evaluated in terms of "style, type and context" (Daniel, 1999, p.785). For example, any modification of dance steps is not considered authentic. The performer and the resultant performance pertaining to the former's commitment to the dance and effects experienced by the audience are critical in determining the authenticity of the dance. In short, the actor, the acting and the audience are significant in tourists' perception of authenticity in dance performances (also see Edensor, 2009).

However, if situated dance performances with Heraclitus' analogy of life to a river, performing arts in touristic settings cannot be maintained strictly within the "traditional" domain as first enacted by genuine local culture/people. Extravaganza dance performances need to undergo creativity to sustain tourism businesses. Daniel (1999, p.790) noted that "overlap accompanies the dichotomy between authenticity and creativity" 'Spontaneity and creativity' enliven dance traditions and juice up entertainments. Continuous repetition or routinisation of dances eventuates in "performance death" (Daniel, 1999, p.790). Dance entertainments are exoticed, eroticised or modernised. The actors, the acting, the setting, the stage designs and other

associated aspects are dramaturgically and theatrically “made and refashioned, contested, and transformed through the performances of tourists and the dramatic productions of the tourist industry” (Edensor, 2009, p.556). In this regard, dances can never strictly reflect the true identity of the culture or people represented in performances, but the performative identity industrially scripted for tourists. Thus, identity is highly fictive and unrepresentative and “culturally marginalizes those who do not share in the power to generate the knowledge and requisite material productions necessary to energize or revitalize their cultural lives” (Khan, 2001). Norindr (2006) told remarkable stories associated with the construction of Cambodia’s *apsara* dance, a classical Khmer dance reminiscent of the carved celestial dancers that compose the artistic landscape of the stone temples. The stories are very much about the colonial efforts to represent the dance in the world stage, involving the French sculptor Auguste Rodin, the exotic travel writer Pierre Loti, camera operator Gabriel Veyre, film director Jacques Feyder and so on. They promoted the *apsara* dance and contextualised it against the backdrop of Angkor or the “Oriental Dream” (after Oms in Norindr, 2006, p.64). Winter (2006a) described the displayed items of the spectacle and commented on a few aspects of the dance performances. Winter and Ollier remark:

While it does not strive to be anything other than a theme park for family entertainment, the Cultural Village in fact provides a progressive and inclusive representation of Cambodian culture, one that is plural, transnational, popular, and forward-looking. Its commemorative approach to history, albeit selective, is free-flowing and seamless....the Village’s narratives on popular memory “dance and leap” through time in a joyous celebration of Cambodian history and cultural achievements, free of the angst often felt in other discursive realms, namely the loss of culture and identity, and the distinction between myth and reality.

(Winter and Ollier, 2006, p.4)

The study of culture gene banks of Cambodia delved deeply into the (re)production of dances by taking the Cultural Village in Siem Reap as a case and into the projection and performance of ethnic cultures and identities. By doing so, it contributes to a richer understanding of representation and misrepresentation of various aspects of the

projected cultures and it unearths the discourse of power and knowledge in the production, selection and staging of performances.

Um (2006) provided insights into the diasporic Cambodian Americans such as Arn Chorn Pond, Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Prach Ly and Sam-Ang Sam who were unable to terminate cultural and spiritual ties with their homeland. Their return has contributed to cultural revival, particularly to the performing arts, in the decades following the 1993 election. They actively involved in the interstice of performing arts and advocacy because their soul (and for that of many Cambodians) inhabits in music, dance and culture. She cited a famous Cambodian writer as saying “when culture is alive, the nation also survives” (Um, 2006, p.96). Turnbull (2006) told stories of other individuals (e.g. Ministers of Culture and Fine Arts of the 1980s and 1990s, actor and writer Pich Tum Kravel and other Western individuals/organisations) who have contributed to the resurrection of Khmer culture and arts, almost all aspects of which were buried, forgotten, suppressed and silenced during the Khmer Rouge regime. There existed the sense of exigencies in rejuvenating the cultural heritage. Turnbull wrote that the ‘Culture Day’ was established by the then Minister of Culture Nouth Narang in 1998 and artists were convoked with the number mounting to 800 in the late 1990s compared to 254 performing artists in 1962 (Turnbull, 2006). He observed that “Cambodians take the arts for granted”, as in the “manifestation of music and dance” in “weddings, funerals, prayer ceremonies, and Buddhist rituals” (Turnbull, 2006, p.140). In other words, music and dance are part and parcel of banal or normal activities of Cambodians. Everyday cultural icons have been increasingly integrated into the nation’s cultural performance repertoire. In addition, dance gestures (*Kbach*) and gilded *apsaras* have been adjusted, modified and commercialised (Turnbull, 2006). He also noted that music and dance in the post-conflict Cambodia were also used for propaganda. “The first line of the lyrics that usually accompanied the *apsara* dance was changed to “January 7<sup>th</sup> Liberation Day”” and other popular dance dramas are reconfigured to communicate revolutionary ideology (Turnbull, 2006, p.134).



Edwards (2007) noted modern cultural performances sanctioned into the Cambodia's cultural repertoire in the 1930s as a result of the adaption from the exoticist Cambodian court dance were constructed in line with the colonial modus operandi. The performances were promoted as newly acquiesced spectacles of Cambodian dance theatre and as revelation of inclusive and progressive national culture and regularly staged to establish "the existence of the state of normality" (Edwards, 2007, p.220). The next section examines the literature regarding normalisation in the production and representation of aspects of culture gene banks.

### **2.2.5 Production and Representation of Culture: Normalising the Gene Bank**

The field of cultural production was cogently examined by Bourdieu (1993). He noted that culture and arts do not exist severally from their producers and mediators and are shaped by complex institutional framework which "authorizes, enables, empowers and legitimizes them" (Bourdieu, 1993, p.10). In tourism, according to MacCannell (1999), culture and arts are produced within a broad radius of circumstances and communicated within a wide range of medium and influence, from small things as advertising photographs to the mega events as festivals sanctioned throughout the life of communities. For him, cultural productions are signs and sometimes rituals which are perpetuated, replayed and framed to provide cultural experiences.

R.Williams recognised medium of communication as medium of cultural production, with forms of human agency which constitutes "indispensable elements both of the productive forces and of the social relations of production" (R.Williams, 2005, p.50). The production of culture and arts has its utmost effect when they become "second nature" via the process of inculcation (Bourdieu, 1993, p.234). They are naturalised, represented and projected as social reality. The studies of naturalisation/normalisation and representation of aspects of culture and heritage in tourism have been limited. Clark (2000) provided a research note on the practice of ancestral worship in the Malaysian Chinese community.

Despite differences in symbolic meanings in interpretation of rituals and ideological systems among diverse groups of the Chinese in Malaysia, ancestral worship plays an important role in reconciling and compromising the differences to actualise "social normalization" through common participation (Clark, 2000, p.277). Such actualisation of social normalisation is what Bourdieu (1993) would call, after Weber, routinisation in religious practices.

Hayes (2007) studied the normalisation of the psyche of cosmetic surgery, acknowledging feminist critiques of cosmetic surgery not only as beauty discourse but increasingly as palpable representation of identity, i.e. as a norm of becoming one's true self. She argues that beauty and identity are implicated within the same phenomenon, i.e. the process of (Foucauldian) normalisation and (Butlerian) performativity of cosmetic surgery. Weber's (1952) routinisation, Foucault's (1977) normalisation, Bourdieu's (1993) habitus and Butler's (1999) performativity share a common conceptual building block pertaining to 'iterativeness' of cultural production, communication and projection to the point of unconsciousness or subconsciousness. Seidman and Meeks (2011) examined the literature regarding the politics of gay normalisation focusing on rights, identity, pride and social integration particularly during liberationism. Bourne and Calás (2013) studied the gendered practices adopted by women to become 'real' entrepreneurs via embodiment, spatiality and temporality in terms of 'real' work and 'not-real' work. The study contributes to the reconceptualisation of normalisation of jobs or workplaces as proper or productive within the patriarchal framework of capitalist economy. The redefining notion of gendered work via the concepts of total organisation of labour and provisioning includes woman work into the feminist economies, i.e. activities such as baby sitting, family schedule arrangement and transport coordination which are subsumed under the capitalist production, distribution, exchange and consumption.

The "banality" (after Baudrillard, 1983, p.49; Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron, 1991) of discursive practices or repetitive receptions normalises and legitimises the architecture of representation and production of social and cultural realities. The

Cambodian royal ballets performed for official diplomats, staged for tourists and popularised. To a certain extent, the writings of postcolonial critics such as Edwards (2005, 2007), Norindr (1996, 2006) and Winter (2006a, 2007) imply the naturalisation/normalisation or configuration of Angkor as the cultural essence of Cambodian national identity, which in turn intensifies the Them-Us discourse (Bhabha, 1994; Young, 2008). However, their observations of normalisation in the cultural production in Cambodia are concerned very much with Angkor. The naturalisation of Angkor as an iconic representation of the national heritage or identity of the Khmers is complicated in its genealogy (Edwards, 2007). Sasagawa (2005) and Wood (2006) studied the dance performances in Cambodia but under-emphasised their normalising aspects. The current investigation into dance performances and the production of staged space/landscape in Cambodia supposedly extends the projects of the aforementioned postcolonial critics into different areas of production, i.e. commercial dance performances and reproductions/pastiches of culture, with a special emphasis on amplifying effects or politics of normalisation in representation and projection of these aspects of culture gene banks. By doing so, the study contributes to better understanding of normalisation or routinisation in the production of culture and heritage in tourism, which has a great impact on the construction of social realities.

Amid the prevalence of the dominant discourse of Angkor, fragments of the grand narratives were constructed and harmonised and the construction can be identified today in perpetual projection and cultural revitalisation of peoples, pasts and places via statues of deities, myths, music, dances/performances and festivals. In Cambodia with free enterprises and wild capitalist development, facets of indigenous cultures or local narratives of weaker ethnic groups have been produced, commercialised, suppressed, misrepresented or even threatened to extinction. For example, Crowley (1996) wrote about the winds of change in the cultures of the northern tribes in Cambodia, highlighting the proselytising of highlanders by missionaries of Christianity introduced to the former in 1992. Graeber wrote an article concerning the spirits and history of the Yeak Laom lake

(volcanic crater), the centrepiece of ecotourism of Rattanakiri province and eventually stated that “massive logging concessions now threaten to denude even protected conservation lands”, visible in many places in the province, “paradoxically making Yeak Laom lake an ideal eco-tourist destination” (Graeber, 1997; also see Moul and Seng, 2012).

### **2.3 Summary of Chapter 2: Representation, Fantasmatics and Performances in Tourism**

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature concerning representation, fantasmatics and performance in relation to ideology and politics. The chapter begins with the overview of discourses of tourism, outlining that tourism in Cambodia has been emphasised and promoted with economic significances. The political significance of tourism was seemingly silent. Subsequently, the construction of tourist spectacles and aspects of gene banks (touristscapes) is reviewed, with a special attention to representation, performance and projection of the past/heritage, place and identity.

The study has diverged from its pre-determined aim and objectives due to the emergences of pressing issues during the study, particularly concerning performances, stereotypic utterance about the indigenous Bunongs and the production of statued/sculptural representations in public places in Cambodia. The migration in response to the unfolding issues during the study engagement constitutes the bedrock of this emergent, soft-science research. In view of the exigencies in the conduct of the emergent study, dance performances, projection of otherness, construction of space/place and cultural production form the fulcrum of this chapter. The royal ballet dance, once performed within the royal court and for royal events only, has now been popularised for tourists. It has been transformed as a tourist commodity. Likewise, the statues of cultural, historical and religious significances, once used to be kept in museums, have now been reproduced and displayed in public places. They are brought

outdoors for public gaze. The noticeable impulse in the (re)production and projection of dance performances (not just the court dance) and statued representations warrants further investigation in this emergent, soft-science study of aspects of culture gene banks of Cambodia because it builds on and extends previous studies into other facets of culture gene bank, Angkor gene bank and performance gene bank.

The next chapter elaborates on methodologies and research designs which were used to collect data about the aforesaid emerging representational issues. It includes ontological and epistemological considerations particularly inspired by pluralism and perspectivism. The study utilised tricks-of-the-trade approach (i.e. bricolage) to navigate the complexities of the research milieu and to address the dynamics of emergent soft-science research. Cultural/critical pedagogies are also incorporated in chapter 3. In addition to these approach and pedagogies, chapter 3 accounts for data collection methods (e.g. formal interviewing, casual conversation and reactive technique), sampling strategies, pilot studies, data analytical framework and research ethics. Under data collection methods, the migration from the pre-formulated aim and objectives is again highlighted within the sequential development of the study and, at the same time, the unfolding pressing issues are elaborated to provide the narratives of the emergent, soft-science research journey.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### Constructionist-Inspired Inquiry into the Projective Discourse of People, Culture and Place

#### 3.1 The Complex Nature of the Inquiry: The Intricacy of the Social, Cultural and Political Contexts of Cambodia

In the era of global complexity and change, attempts to understand a society as a single entity are problematic. Urry (2003, p.x) noted society is unlikely to operate within the totality of law and order but in a “diverse, historical, fractured and uncertain” system. Nonlinearity, disequilibrium, dynamism, interconnectivity and interdependency are some of the manifestations of a complex system. Developed first in the fields of physics and biology, the complexity theory inspired by von Bertalanffy of the late 1960s ignites interests among social scientists (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009).

Lyotard (1984) denied the scientific conception of society as a ‘unified totality’ and argued for the opposite, saying that society is heterogeneous and dynamic, with many different entities interacting together as a complex system and some are more dynamic or interactive than others. Likewise, certain discourses or patterns of activities cut across other elements in the society (Cilliers, 1998). Cilliers said the lived world is not a unification of stable parts glued together in one as viewed by hard scientists; in fact, it inhabits co-existences of many interconnected entities, which perpetuate change (Cilliers, 1998).

Today’s society is characterised by mobility, hybridity and change (Appadurai, 1990; Bhabha, 1994). Human movements traverse, to varying degrees, every part of the world. Cambodia, where the research took place, is no exception. More dynamic mobility within

the country and across regions and continents facilitates the transgression of culture, technology and expertise across local, national and regional boundaries. The cultural realm of Cambodia is not only limited to cultural matters per se but is broadly related to complex relations of social, historical, political, psychological and economic matters. The Cambodian society accommodates many ethnic groups such as the Khmer, the Chinese, the Cham, the Vietnamese and other indigenous minorities (see MOT, 2011a, 2012a).

Development projects have taken place and extended from city to countryside into remote areas of Cambodia. Those places once so remote are being bridged. To certain extent and accessibility, people of different ethnicities in Cambodia open their door for outsiders to gaze. In some places, the change is happening too rapidly and does not allow adequate time for adaptability. Economic development projects preach, but not much spirituality and peace, capitalism whose philosophy is, sometimes blindly, obsessed and revered. Some Cambodians or ethnic groups are positively affected, while others are adversely affected.

With mobility and interconnectedness, the Cambodian society has become more dynamic and complex in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than ever before. The inquiry into the communities so exposed to the outside 'capitalist' world must take into due account the complexities (not the unicity) of social, cultural, political and psychological contexts. An *open/emergent design* is therefore useful in navigating the complexity and mobility, focusing on what Lyotard (1984, p.60) called "petit récit". The macronarrative of the scientific discourse, which conceptualises society as atomistic units for investigation, can no longer permeate the complexities of today. Coles, Hall and Duval *et al.* (2006, p.295) contended that "realities are fluid, dynamic, vague, socially constructed and multiply constituted". In the study of representation, performance and stereotyping of peoples and cultures, local narratives/perspectives were captured from different individuals (the carriers of local knowledge) who made up the society (the pool of cultural/social knowledge): the narratives binding them together socially, culturally, historically and psychologically.

For Lyotard (1984), each narrative (local knowledge) is conceived to be locally determined; its meanings are conceivably constructed in temporally and contextually. Cilliers argued in favour of Lyotard that narratives and discourses are interacted over many individuals as nodes in a network of society but “no discourse is fixed or stabilised by itself. Different discourses—clusters in the network—may grow, shrink, break up, coalesce, absorb others or be absorbed” (Cilliers, 1998, p.115). Lyotard’s (1984) perspective deemed applicable to the study context of Cambodia. Table 3.1 illustrates some contributions he offered in relation to complexity theories of today’s societies. The Table highlights four main areas conceived to be highly relevant to representation of culture (tourism) gene banks of Cambodia: the co-existences of different elements in society, the exposure of elements (the self) to other activity patterns, the conception of knowledge constructions (little narratives) and situated interpretations of knowledge.

Lyotard (1984) appeared to adhere strictly to *local legitimation* (see Table 3.1), rejecting grand narratives. The inquiry into performances, statued landscape and stereotypic remark delved into local matters in relation to other broader contexts and vice versa. The national, regional and global contexts/imperatives helped set light on areas of dominance, subjugation and silencing and on their pursuance. The inquiry did not attempt to search for absolute consensus of the narratives or narrators but to tell contextual constructions, stories or aspirations under specific circumstances of the explored matters. Lyotard (1984, p.xxv) maintained that “consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games”.

As Kellner (1995) stated, there are not level playing fields in the present societies of dominance and subjugation. As Lyotard (1984) noted, the grand narrative can no longer represent the postmodern condition of knowledge. And as Urry (2003) stated, today’s societies do not conform to the totality of law and order. Thus, an investigation with rigid, pre-planned methods and instruments may not be able to adapt to societal complexities. The open emergent inquiry per contra rendered an opportunity to navigate the social/cultural realms.



**Table 3.1 Lyotard’s (1984) Contribution to the Understanding of Complexity:  
Methodological Implications in the Inquiry into the Projection of Cambodia**

Lyotardian Concept	Decipherment of Complexity in Contemporary Societies (Drawn from Lyotard (1984) Unless Otherwise Stated) <i>(Δ) Translation to the Study Context</i>
● <i>Co-existence of entities</i>	<p>Society comprises “many different language games—a heterogeneity of elements” (Lyotard, 1984, p.xxiv), which dynamically interact with one another in a non-linear and asymmetrical fashion, resulting in disequilibrium and struggles for legitimation. He called it “the agonistics’ of society” (Lyotard, 1984, p.10).</p> <p>Δ <i>The study acknowledged the complexity of the rich history and multi-cultural society of Cambodia. It is the society of multiple ethnicities, social and cultural configurations and competing players in the projection and legitimation of cultural representation of facets of culture gene banks of Cambodia.</i></p>
● <i>Multi-self</i>	<p>“A <i>self</i> does not amount to much...each exists in a fabric of relations...more complex and mobile than ever before” (Lyotard, 1984, p.15; original emphasis). The co-existed entities or the selves does not act as atomistic units but in interrelationship with each other. The same self is part of many patterns of discourses or activities in a self-organised, open system (Cilliers, 1998).</p> <p>Δ <i>The research participants lived in the complex social, cultural and political society. They identified themselves with different social, cultural and political roles. Henceforth, a research task was to understand the roles, identification and contexts, which helped shape their perspectives and situated them in the wider social, cultural and political frameworks.</i></p>

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**Table 3.1 (Cont'd) Lyotard's (1984) Contribution to the Understanding of Complexity:  
Methodological Implications in the Inquiry into the Projection of Cambodia**

Lyotardian Concept	Decipherment of Complexity in Contemporary Societies (Drawn from Lyotard (1984) Unless Otherwise Stated) <i>(Δ) Translation to the Study Context</i>
● <i>Condition of knowledge (Petit récit)</i>	<p>Lyotard (1984) argued against grand scientific knowledge but for local knowledge. Local narratives, in a cluster of network, are transmitted over many individuals. They are contingent, historical and unstable in nature. Local knowledges are characterised by différence, dynamism and paralogism and consensus is unlikely to be obtained (cf. Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 1989).</p> <p>Δ <i>The inquiry sought for local, historical and institutional knowledge. Perspectives and practices produced by stakeholders (respondents) were explored, with a special attention to the areas of dominance, subjugation and silencing within/among populations. Such cynosure was conceived to have the potential of bringing more justice to the Cambodian society.</i></p>
● <i>Local Legitimation</i>	<p>The conditions of knowledge/understanding are “locally determined” (p.61) in a system said to be “unstable” (Lyotard, 1984, p.59). Knowledge, legitimation and interpretation of narratives are not systematically enacted or fixed but are temporal and contextual. Meaning can only be deciphered in the play of the system (Cilliers, 1998).</p> <p>Δ <i>Under the complexity of the multi-ethnic society of Cambodia, knowledge construction was hardly seen to be ‘fixed’ or ‘stable’, so was interpretation. Interpretations of the respondents were assumed to be contingent and provisional.</i></p>

### **3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations: The Conduct of the Inquiry into the Projection and Performance of the Past**

As stated in the earlier chapters, the inquiry into aspects of culture gene banks of Cambodia emphasised the political/ideological dimensions of representation, fantasmatic and politics. This chapter indicates that the study was paradigmatically attuned to constructionism in the investigation of representation of the unfolding issues concerning performances, sculptural landscaping and stereotypic utterance (see section 1.3). This constructionist paradigm was positioned towards the scrutinisation of the prevailing and tacit power/knowledge about discursive aspects of the Angkor gene bank, dance gene bank and sculptural gene bank.

In this chapter, my positionality is exposed, together with constructionist-aligned approaches, strategies and methods. Meanwhile, their implementation and issues of applicabilities in the conduct of the inquiry were accordingly inspected. Ontology and epistemology are two important methodological aspects to be discussed in this chapter because they orientated the position I have taken. They influenced the emergent design; the choice of approaches, strategies, and methods of data collection; and the interpretation and *perspectivisation* of the findings. Next, the study design and data collection are examined in light of the actual conduct of the inquiry with reference to various constructionist thinkers.

Paradigmatic forms of constructionism from Husserl to Goodman and Foucault are summarised in Table 3.2. For Rojszczak and Smith (2003), the Husserlian constructionism, or rather *phenomenological interpretivism*, is grounded in the epistemological objectivism as the precondition of knowledge. Similarly, a prominent member of positivist cycle Carnap was severely criticised for his logical empiricism, which assumes naive realism of the universal scientific language and the correspondence theory of truth (Hesse, 1980). The practice of social construction was also identified in scientific laboratory (Latour and Woolgar, 1986). The ideas of Goodman (1978) and

**Table 3.2 Selected Forms of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Constructionism:  
Theoretical Elucidation with Related Translations to the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Thinking in Constructionism</b>	<b>Theoretical Elucidation (Δ) <i>Relevance to the Study of the Projective Discourse of Cambodia</i></b>
● <i>Husserlian Constructionism</i>	<p>This type of constructionism—also called ‘constitutive phenomenology’ (Welton, 2003)—is grounded in Husserl’s concept of constitution, whereby intentionality is its precondition of constitution. Husserl insisted that “human consciousness actively constitutes the objects of experience” (Holstein and Gubrium, 2005, p.484). Knowledge/object is constructed by human intentions. His concept of constitution is established in the objective world: “constitutive phenomenology...follows the necessary history of objectification, and thereby, the history of the object itself” (Husserl quoted in Welton, 2003, p. 261). However, Heidegger (1985) rejected Husserl’s constitution as making but as being seen.</p> <p>Δ <i>The study of the projective discourse of Cambodia was informed by constructionism. Schwandt stated that the Husserlian intentionality can probably be placed under the phenomenological interpretivism, which is different from the constructionist perspective in subtle ways (Schwandt, 1994). The interpretivist philosophy tilts towards distant and objective approach to understanding, while constructionists view that the world is constructed by sophisticated constructions and interpretations (or rather perspectivisation), which are expressions of personal and political subjectivity (Schwandt, 2000) (or rather plurality). The study of culture gene banks of Cambodia took an ontological stance towards Berlin’s (1990) and Connolly (2005)’s pluralism and the epistemological position towards Nietzsche (1967, p.267)’s perspectivism.</i></p>
● <i>Fleckian Constructionism</i>	<p>It is Fleck’s belief that there is no freestanding, mind independent fact but a historical construction of fact via conceptual framing (Rockmore, 2005). Thus, for Fleck, it is impossible to choose the correct representations of the objects unknown or unheard of (Rockmore, 2005).</p> <p>Δ <i>The inquirer viewed facts as social, perspectivistic constructs, thus meaningful to a particular thought-collective group or rather to a community of shared perspectives (Kuhn, 1996). The thought-collective led to the development of social constructionism, the preferred paradigm of choice for the study. One of the aims was to abduct “tacitness” (Polanyi, 1962, p.95) and understanding of “communicative production” (R.Williams, 2005, p.53) or signifying practices (S.Hall, 1997, p.24) within “communities of practice” (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002, p.3).</i></p>

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**Table 3.2 (Cont'd) Selected Forms of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Constructionism:  
Theoretical Elucidation with Related Translations to the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Thinking in Constructionism</b>	<b>Theoretical Elucidation (Δ) <i>Relevance to the Study of the Projective Discourse of Cambodia</i></b>
● <i>Kuhnian Constructionism</i>	<p>This kind of constructionism, which may be called ‘perspectival constructionism’, denies a neutral standpoint to facts; on the contrary, it claims that truth/knowledge can only be justified against shared perspectives of the same paradigmatic generation of practitioners (Kuhn, 1996).</p> <p>Δ <i>Influenced by Fleck, Kuhn (1996) scrutinised the history of scientific knowledge. He attacked the concept of the truth-based science. Scientific facts actually result from the process of social construction (Latour and Woolgar, 1979). Kuhn’s conception of knowledge as the product of shared perspective resonated with the study of performing artists/dancers, sculptors/statue commissioners, projected populations and other concerned individuals, organisations or institutions.</i></p>
● <i>Goodmanian Constructivism</i>	<p>Goodman (1978) grounded in his skeptical and relativistic positions of the constructed symbolic worlds because the old worlds can be formed, re-formed and/or deformed as different new worlds. Thus, for him, the worlds are made/remade rather than found (Elgin, 2001).</p> <p>Δ <i>Goodmanian constructivism or “worldmaking” (Goodman, 1978, see pp.7-16) amplified the pluralistic ontology and perspectivist epistemology of the study. Once the worlds (i.e. the projected peoples/pasts/places) are made, power/knowledge is employed with a certain ideology/politic.</i></p>
● <i>Foucauldian Constructionism</i>	<p>Foucault maintained that “when human beings are ‘made subjects,’ they are also subjected, that is, constructed as objects of power” (Miller, 2008, p.252). They are called “docile bodies” which are constructed through discourses because they, gripped by very strict powers, can be “subjugated, used, transformed, and improved” (Foucault, 1977, p.136).</p> <p>Δ <i>In the case of culture/heritage in Cambodia, facets of the Angkor gene bank have been normalised in the Khmer temperament. They served as the agents of normalcy in their everyday utterances and deeds. They thus became the tourism-judges or the heritage-judges (Hollinshead and Kuon, 2013). The study of the projective discourse of Cambodia sought to explore a similar line of discourse (docility or normalisation) which created a particular understanding and knowledge in the (mis)representation of Cambodia via tourism.</i></p>

Foucault (1977, 1980) converged in term of the worlds (truths) being made or constructed via power/knowledge or discourse. For Foucault (1977), the subjects are constructed as 'docile bodies' and they then become the agents of normalisation/naturalisation. The language and praxis of Angkor, or rather the Angkor gene bank, involved the knowledge production/arrangement from the logical positivist standpoint pioneered by the EFEO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Edwards, 2007; Winter, 2007). The EFEO/UNESCO's expertise, which often culminated in political motives (after Boswell, 2009), paved a critical path in what and how Angkor has been seen and celebrated.

### **3.2.1 Ontological Consideration: Seeking Pluralistic Constructions of Culture Gene Banks**

Constructionism is ontologically conceptualised as a way of thinking which does not impute to the objective reality but to the social construction of knowledge, i.e. how people/research participants construct the social/cultural things or the worlds around them. The constructions are considered relativistic and varied from one individual or social group to another. To approach such knowledge, a constructionist has to *actively engage* with the constructors or the actors in knowledge production to understand their minds and how their knowledges were (re)shaped socially, culturally and politically.

Ontology, built around the question of the nature of reality (Phillimore and Lisa, 2004), is attributed to Parmenides as its founder (Kenny, 2004). Positivists conceive that reality exists 'out there' to be discovered using reasons, arguments and observations. Woolgar (1988, p.68) argued that the discovery is however "a process rather than a joint concurrence". P.Berger and Luckmann (1966, p.13) cogently argued that "reality is socially constructed and that sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which this occurs". Goodman (1978) argued more radically that reality/truth is made and

remade. Hacking (1999) outlined numerous concepts such as gender, idea, the self, emotion, truth/reality, knowledge, all of which are putatively constructed. Kukla (2000) added they are not only numerous but also remarkably heterogeneous. Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined four ontological positions (see Table 3.2.1, overleaf). They recommended the ontological position of constructed realities in naturalistic inquiries and warned of the resultant suspension of disbelief if inquirers adopt the ontological view of created reality.

In the conduct of the study of the aforesaid unfolding issues, it was not practical to search for reality or truth but their interpretations or the perspectivalisation of the issues. Attention was paid to how they constructed, viewed or told stories of themselves and others. During the fieldwork, the application of the constructivist thinking was helpful in discussing the representational issues and in drawing my own attention to key concepts or terms in the discussion with the respondents. The following exemplars illustrate an insight of the constructionist philosophy. First, in my first interview with Sokhom (a pseudonym of the respondents used in the study) about the performances at the Cultural Village, I quickly picked up some important concepts he was using such as add/addition (e.g. scenes, dancing styles/poises), imagine/imagination (artistic imagination), create/creation/creativity, context/contextualisation, themes/storylines and represent/representation. These terms appeared to stand out to me when Sokhom was talking about performing arts and the selection and production of the dances. The constructionist insight concerning reality/truth stimulated I who did not have much background knowledge in performing arts to probe further into those artistic concepts. Sokhom was self-conscious that performances of facets of indigenous cultures from the northeastern provinces were “representations” and, meanwhile, he also pointed out the ‘authentic’ aspect of the performances, e.g. regarding the music composed by the indigenous people whose aspects of their cultures were being performed at the Cultural Village.

Channa served as another illustrator. In the first interview, his view on reality prevailed as he discussed the concept of ‘culture’ as something ‘true’ but then he said that “culture exists upon creations, meaning human creations”. It was in the repeat interview that he

**Table 3.2.1 Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) Four Ontological Positions:  
From the Objective Reality to the Created Reality**

Types of Ontology	Elucidation drawn from Lincoln and Guba (1985) (Δ) <i>Translation to the Study of the Gene Bank</i>
● <i>Objective reality</i>	<p>The first position of reality, also called the ontology of “naive realism” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.82), posits that the singular, physical reality out there can be fully explained and understood from the assembly of its discoverable parts, independently from the observers, to the unified whole or the absolute reality.</p> <p>Δ <i>Rand, a dedicated espouser of objectivism, held that “reality is an objective absolute unaffected by, and existing independently of, any perceiver or any perceiver’s feelings, wishes, hopes and fears” (Podritske and Schwartz, 2009, p.15). Nietzsche, however, rejected the notion of the absolute truth, contending that “there is no such thing as objective truth, but merely an extension of subjective truth” (Southwell, 2009, p.19). The study of the projection of gene banks of Cambodia was situated along the line of Nietzschean perspectivism.</i></p>
● <i>Perceived reality</i>	<p>Perceived realists assume that reality exists but cannot be fully understood. Reality is piecemeal and resides in the perceptions of a number of persons, not in any one individual. Both naive realists and perceived realists believe that reality existed but the two ontological positions differ in what is “knowable about that reality” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.83).</p> <p>Δ <i>Constructionists shift the overreliance on the objective reality to the subjects—also known as ‘person-reality’ (Arbib and Hesse, 1986)—who have their own freedom to perspectivistically construct realities or knowledges.</i></p>

*Continue on next page.*



**Table 3.2.1 (Cont'd) Lincoln and Guba's (1985) Four Ontological Positions:  
From the Objective Reality to the Created Reality**

Types of Ontology	Elucidation drawn from Lincoln and Guba (1985) (Δ) <i>Translation to the Study of the Gene Bank</i>
● <i>Constructed reality</i>	<p>There is no singular, tangible reality out there and the existence of reality is debatable. But if there is, it would be multiple realities formed by different individual constructions, incomplete, possibly flawed and specific to cultures and societies. The whole is not summation of the parts defragmentable to represent the absolute reality but different parts represent different aspects of lives, societies, values and so forth.</p> <p>Δ <i>This is the ontology of choice for the study of representation of aspects of gene banks. It advocates the plural knowledges and understandings. Berlin argued cogently along with Vico that peoples/societies have "a panorama of a variety of cultures, the pursuit of different, and sometimes incompatible, ways of life, ideals, [and] standards of value" which could not coalesce into one great harmonious structure (Berlin, 1990, p.65).</i></p>
● <i>Created reality</i>	<p>According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this ontological position is more radical than the preceding one, positing that reality does not exist at all. Human beings influence reality and how they want the reality to be; therefore, they actually create it.</p> <p>Δ <i>Although Lincoln and Guba argued in mid-1980s for the reasonableness of the third ontological position because the last position "requires a greater suspension of disbelief" (1985, p.87), the fourth position were not totally irrelevant for the study today owing to astonishing technological development over the last three decades. Maad attributed today's world ontologically to 'augmented reality' created by the Augmented Reality technology "a more expansive form of VR [Virtual Reality] is emerging as a cutting-edge technology that integrates images of virtual objects into a real world" (Maad, 2010, p.v).</i></p>

palpably attributed 'true/real' ('truth/reality') to 'authentic/authenticity', and he discussed 'authenticity' in some details. Channa did not even agree that the performances at the Cultural Village were 'representations' of the projected peoples and cultures. In his view of the dance performances, he often appeared to impute authenticity to the aspects actually practiced by the represented aspects of culture gene banks. He repeatedly drew my attention to the terms 'create', 'true', 'authentic', etc. The cultural agent's view (i.e. that of Sokhom) about the dances at the Cultural Village was situated almost on the opposite end of the authenticity continuum from Channa's. While the former argued that the dances reflected the reality of the ethnic cultures, the latter contended that there were "created out of vacuums". Hence, it was useful for me to have had some background understanding of constructionism prior to the conduct of the fieldwork. Contestation between the two respondents concerning authenticity in the projection of dances prevailed. Contestation and nebulous perspectives were also identified in the interviews with the indigenous Phnornng, hereafter Bunong, as to what aspects of their own culture were authentic because their traditions had undergone transitions/transformations.

To sum up, in the study of the emerging issues of performances, stereotypes and stultid representations via tourism, I sought for pluralistic or multiperspectival understanding of the above issues because the singular universal truth of yesteryear does not deem applicable to societal complexities of today. Thus, the inquiry in messy contexts was healthier to set out to understand particularistic/perspectival truths/issues among different groups of populations. In Cambodia, indigenous people, cultural producers, cultural consumers and government agencies, participating in tourism held different perspectives on the cultural production, selection and projection. Aligned with constructionist thinking, I conceive truths and knowledge production as contextually specific, so the quest for multiperspectives or multi-interpretations are grounded in the epistemological position discussed in the next section.

### 3.2.2 Epistemological Consideration: Pursuing Perspectivistic Understanding

Two important conceptions of the nature of reality are realism and antirealism. The ontological notion of the former asserts that reality exists independently of human mind (Crotty, 1998). It is connected with 'objective reality' of entities and its epistemological notion is known as "objectivism" (after Rand, 1990). The antirealist ontological position assumes the opposite: reality is contingent on human minds. Idealists are antirealists, and they view that reality is confined within the mental framework (Crotty, 1998).

The constructionist paradigm is grounded in the mental construction of the cognised subjects. Its ontological position is pluralistic. For the constructionists, there can possibly be varied interpretations/perspectives of the same object, phenomenon or event due to historical, social, political and cultural diversities. Guba called this epistemological position *subjectivism*: "subjectivity is not only forced on us by the human condition (as the postpositivist might admit) but because it is the only means of unlocking the constructions held by the individuals" (Guba, 1990, p.26). Constructivist findings are the intersubjective outcomes from interactions between the researcher and the researched (Guba, 1990; also see von Glasersfeld, 2002). Intersubjectivistic constructions are then contingent on conscious beings as constructors. The constructionism aligned to the study of the projection of the aforesaid emergent issues pursued pluralistic ontology—informed, for instance, by multiple realities (Guba, 1990) and pluralism from Berlin (1990) and Connolly (2005)—and perspectivistic epistemology or perspectivism (Nietzsche, 1967).

Constructionists believe that facts are not independently separated from theories (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), and the difference is not crystal clear as made by positivists. If data are gathered under the guidance of theoretical frameworks/hypotheses, there is no way that facts/realities obtained from the data are free from theoretical formulations. Since theories are human constructs, so are facts. Human values/errors are then inherited in the production of theories and facts (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Hence, constructionists have to get inside the heads or the voices of the reflexive knowledge producers; whereby,

improved understanding can interactively be sought. The objectivist stance, void of interactions, is not likely to help much in obtaining such tacit knowledge (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

According to Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba are idealist and, for them, "truth is a matter of the best informed and most sophisticated construction..." (Schwandt, 1998, p.243). Constructionists make both '*psychological*' and '*epistemological*' claims (Schwandt, 1998; original emphasis). The former claim postulates that there is no "pristine, unmediated grasp of the world as it is" and there is no definitive distinction between the researchers, their accounts of the world and their subjects (Schwandt, 1998, p. 248). He also asserted that knowledge is not the discovery of "pre-existing, independent, real world outside the mind of the knower" [subjectivist claim] and that the process of meaning-making/knowledge production is inherent in one's own mental process (Schwandt, 1998, p.249). Individual constructors are then 'carriers' of knowledge and societies are 'pools' of knowledge (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). The aim of constructionist inquiry is therefore to enrich multi-perspectival understandings and sophisticated co-constructions of knowledge.

To reiterate, the study of representation of Cambodia stressed *pluralistic* ontology (after Berlin, 1990; Connolly, 2005) and *perspectivistic* epistemology (after Nietzsche, 1967; Kellner, 1995). As a strong advocate of perspectivism, Nietzsche noted that an uninterpretable world has no meaning and a world is comprehensible only when people have made it. He also refuted the fact-based positivism: "I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact "in itself": perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing" (Nietzsche, 1967, p.267). Nietzsche stressed that even subjectivism is an interpretation and that "the "subject" is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is" (Nietzsche, 1967, p.267). The Nietzschean subjects hereof concur with the Foucauldian ones. For Nietzsche, to make judgement, the subjects has to speak from a particular standpoint, and thus 'perspectivism' implies that there is no singular, objective knowledge but

'knowledges' or perspectives from which the world is viewed (Sedgwick, 2009). Nietzsche reiterated "there is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival 'knowing'; the *more* affects we are able to put into words about a thing, the *more* eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing" (Pearson and Large, 2006, p.427; original emphasis). Perspectivism, according to Nietzsche (1967), is the biology of the drive to knowledge, i.e. the epistemology of mediated perspectives.

In the epistemological application in the investigation of culture gene banks of Cambodia, multi-perspectives of different populations were sought. The search for diverse perspectives via different methodological approaches and data collection methods are discussed in the sections that follow. For the time being, the benefits and challenges of the application of the constructivist thinking are presented in Table 3.2.2. One of the challenges to operationalise constructionist thinking was perhaps it was so (too?) difficult to read the minds of the concerned constructors of knowledge. For instance, the respondents in the current study had very diverse backgrounds and levels of education, which rendered differences in their interpretation. However, varied interpretations (multiple perspectives) were what I had aimed for in the inquiry. Another relevant issue was that, in order to get into the minds of the knowledge carriers, there needed to be sufficient engagement, which was not practical for the three-year doctoral programme.

**Table 3.2.2 Application of Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) Constructivist Thinking:  
Benefits and Challenges on the Ground**

<b>Benefits of Constructionist Thinking</b>	<b>Challenges of Constructionist Thinking</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● With the constructionist digestion prior to the study, I was able to capture the representational concepts of reality or truth more than if otherwise.</li> <li>● The constructivist thinking improved an understanding that truth was varied from one individual to another, i.e. multiple perspectives.</li> <li>● It enhanced the conception that what considered as truth was most of time blurry—truth derived from a particular context.</li> <li>● It provided evidence that truths were highly value-laden—constructed truths, just as in the exemplars about Sokhom, Channa and indigenous respondents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing the back of the constructors’ minds—their soul—was a great contender. Double-checking and cross-checking the data with other constructors of knowledge within the same stakeholding groups was a most arduous job in the investigation.</li> <li>● It was difficult to make the linkage among intersubjective accounts or constructions.</li> <li>● The perspectivisation of value-laden constructions was sometimes incapacitated by time, resources and other operational constraints.</li> <li>● Since the constructionist thinking is based on idealism or perfectionism, it was sometimes hard to navigate the practical difficulties on the ground such as the search for multi-perspectives from different groups of the populations, accessibility to data/interviews and personal constraints to name a few.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Bricoleurship: The Jack-of-All-Trades Approach to Inquiry

The discussion of the societal complexities of today's world has an implication of the choice for the emergent, soft-science study and bricoleurship. I theoretically opted for bricoleurship because it has a potential approach to navigate these complexities. The term 'bricoleur' (or bricolage) has been commonly attributed to Lévi-Strauss (Wiseman, 2007). However, Wiseman (2007; footnote) noted that it was seen used by Paul Valéry. Lévi-Strauss discussed the difference between a bricoleur in the work of arts and an engineer in modern science. Unlike the latter, a bricoleur creates a "*metaphorical equivalents*" (transposition) (Wiseman, 2007, p.41; original emphasis), aiming to capture a synthesis of his own being and becoming.

Bricoleurship sought to be employed in the investigation of areas of the cultural projection/articulation of the pasts/history was particularly an open, jack-of-all-trades approach in steering the emergent, soft-science study and in flexibly and timely responding to the unfolding issues and difficulties encountered during the study of culture gene banks of Cambodia. While navigating through unexpected problems in the study such those of institutional barriers, the conduct of interviews and time taken in the communication back and forth with potential respondents, I had to triage the problems, prioritise research activities and evaluate alternatives in the conduct of the study. Moreover, bricoleurship served as an outstanding candidate for the study project in capturing the multiplicity of local narratives and diverse constructions of heterogeneous populations. Its focus on the socially, culturally and politically excluded groups is conceived as an important goal of bricoleurship as well as cultural and critical pedagogies (see Kincheloe, 2005).

Kincheloe (2001, 2005) elucidated the theorisation and operational dynamics of bricolage beyond disciplinarity. He said the boundaries between disciplines have to be crossed in order to navigate the complexities in the investigation. For instance, economic activities are not just a matter of finding out about the voluntary exchange of goods and services

(in monetary terms). The understanding of economic activities shall be enhanced if they are placed in the broader networks of other social, cultural, and political dimensions and external influences. Thus, the understanding of sociology, media/cultural studies, history, geography, and political economy may also be required. Under the ontology and epistemology of the complexity, vagueness, dynamism and multiplicity of socially constructed realities, Coles, Hall, and Duval (2006) argued that an inquiry confined within disciplinary parochialism fails to construe the present mobility or the societal complexities. The fine line of disciplinary division (e.g. history and geography) along the temporal and spatial dimensions has become growingly suspicious (Massey, 1999). "Defining a discipline defines what lies beyond it" is a proposition Massey (1999, p.6) put forwards. Disciplines are created by combining subject matters together under substantive areas of society. She noted that "the economy...is by no means purely and exclusively 'economic'" (Massey, 1999, p.7).

A bricoleur works towards a *synergetic effect* (Kincheloe, 2001, 2005). In other words, he/she is a *flâneur* and practitioner of a variety of theories and methods across disciplines for his/her own research agenda. Such requirement challenges researchers. Drawn from Kincheloe (2001), Table 3.3 summarises different conceptual levels and their implications for the conduct of the current study. Kincheloe (2001) added that bricoleurs work with debris of social construction and then participate in the interpretations of the obtained constructions themselves, creating their own being and becoming.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) used the concept of 'quilt-making' as a metaphor for bricolage: the metaphor which Ellingson (2009) later used for 'crystallization'. Kincheloe (2001) employed a metaphorical concept of a negotiator for researchers-as-bricoleur. In the study of the projective discourse of culture gene banks, a range of methodological approaches (e.g. cultural and critical pedagogies, priorethnography and data collection methods) and the constructionist outlook were utilised in support of bricoleurship. Various data sources were sought in the study to enhance the perspectival spectrum of bricoleurship.



**Table 3.3 Kincheloe's (2001, 2005) Bricoleurship:  
Different Conceptual Levels beyond Disciplinary Inquiries**

Conceptual level of bricoleurship	Kincheloe's (2001, 2005) Explication of Bricoleurship (Δ) <i>Translation of Bricoleurship to the Culture Gene Bank Project</i>
● <i>Transdisciplinary</i>	<p>Disciplinary research limits the understanding and knowledge production in complex and dynamic worlds. A researcher-as-bricoleur transcends the disciplinary boundary into the luminal zones of collision beyond the disciplinary conceptual level.</p> <p>Δ <i>The open emergent study of the gene banks assumed the complexities of articulated utterances and practices. Transdisciplinary outlook was sought to address what Bohm (2005, p.248) called "the explicate and implicate orders" of multi-layered social relations in the production and performance of culture and heritage.</i></p>
● <i>Theoretical</i>	<p>The theoretically informed bricoleur clarifies the process of inquiry and works his/her way through the ontological and epistemological assumptions on which the inquiry is grounded. He/she scrutinises the nature and consequences of social construction of knowledge, understanding and human perspectival interpretations.</p> <p>Δ <i>Multiple and perspectival interpretations were pursued to deconstruct normalising practices in production and projection of tourism spectacles, i.e. dance performances, stereotypic remarks and reactions and statted representations in public places.</i></p>
● <i>Methodological</i>	<p>The bricoleur—a methodological negotiator—employed a range of methodological tools to tackle the issues under investigation and a repertoire of theoretical perspectives to study those issues in a triangulated/crystallised manner.</p> <p>Δ <i>The emergent study of the gene banks sought to employ a range of approaches, strategies and methods accommodative and enabling in probing the areas of normalisation/naturalisation of aspects of dance performances, production and projection of statues in public places and stereotypic utterances and reactions.</i></p>

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**Table 3.3/2 (Cont'd) Kincheloe's (2001, 2005) Bricoleurship:  
Different Conceptual Levels beyond Disciplinary Inquiries**

Conceptual level of bricoleurship	Kincheloe's (2001, 2005) Explication of Bricoleurship (Δ) <i>Translation of Bricoleurship to the Culture Gene Bank Project</i>
● <i>Fictive and imaginative</i>	<p>Bricolage required high level of enthusiasm, imagination, creativity, performativity and awareness of power and knowledge production.</p> <p>Δ <i>The emergent study was designed for an effort to explore the polysemous constructions of the discourse of dominance, subjugation and silencing.</i></p>
● <i>Multiperspectival</i>	<p>Bricolage emphasises thick and multidimensional questioning and knowing, or “multiperspectival” approach (Kellner, 1995, p.26). A researcher-as-bricoleur critically examines how perspectives are mutually shaped by social, cultural, political/ideological and discursive forces.</p> <p>Δ <i>Voices from different groups of populations were included to capture holistic views of the issues under study. Reflexivity and voice of the researcher deemed important. All of them supposedly constituted a collage of multiple ways of seeing, experiencing, being and becoming.</i></p>

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 3.3/2 (Cont'd) Kincheloe's (2001, 2005) Bricoleurship:  
Different Conceptual Levels beyond Disciplinary Inquiries**

<b>Conceptual level of bricoleurship</b>	<b>Kincheloe's (2001, 2005) Explication of Bricoleurship (Δ) <i>Translation of Bricoleurship to the Culture Gene Bank Project</i></b>
● <i>Highly interpretive and critical</i>	<p>Bricoleurs acknowledged that interpretations are products of social, cultural and political forces. They are equipped with cultural and critical pedagogies and multi-competencies, being able to extend their interpretive realm beyond the horizon.</p> <p>Δ <i>In the open/emergent study, an endeavour was made to bring about emancipatory discourse or local counter-narratives to challenge the current (oppressive?) ways of saying, seeing and performing. The interpretivist-cum-constructionist-cum-critical approach is hoped to widen the hermeneutic horizon.</i></p>
● <i>Highly interactive</i>	<p>Interactivity is key to dynamic co-constructions of knowledge. Bricoleurs engage in dynamic processes of ontological and epistemological worlds. They look into emergent designs to accommodate the highly interactive and complex process of synergistic knowledge production.</p> <p>Δ <i>The Cambodia project placed the cynosure on the sophisticated co-constructions and interpretations of the lived worlds. Thus, embeddedness deemed central in building and enhancing trust and relationships; thereby, fuelling proactive interactivity in the study milieus, perhaps gaining more opportunities to tap into tacit knowledge and local fantasmatics/aspirations and, meanwhile, closely observing pressing issues to unfold.</i></p>

In addition to the triage and evaluation of the research priorities, I realised that interpersonal skills such as listening skills were critical in enhancing interactions with the research participants in the study of culture gene banks. Listening skills became more helpful when I managed to get to know or familiarise myself with the respondent's character/personality before the actual interviews. For instance, during the first meeting with a university professor, I found it rather difficult to manage the dialogue with him. However, after the meeting and after hearing his students talking about his personality, it found it more comfortable to deal with him in the interviews. I felt that he was not into hard talk (i.e. his ideas to be challenged) or "confrontational interview" (S.Adams, 2009, p.3). I was compelled to listen/watch carefully when his moods were changing in the second dialogue. The change in his mood heralded whether I could stress the same question (i.e. lingering a little) or I had to continue to another. I also realised that my reactive technique, in which I asked for reactions (pro-argument or counter-argument) to the statements from other previous respondents to enhance perspectivisation, did not actually work well with him.

The triangulated data sources from different populations and approaches/methods enhanced bricoleurship. For example, beginning from the marketing material, a marketer was asked to elaborate about the meanings and significances of the projected places/attractions or iconic provincial statues/monuments such as the statue of King Dambang Kranhoung, the statue of Daun/Grandma Penh, the Independent Monument, the Royal Palace, the attractions in northeastern provinces, the indigenous peoples there and particularly the reasons behind the selection of those iconic structures/landmarks, places and figures/peoples for the official promotional handbooks. The responses from the marketer were used to cross-check (triple-check) with a university lecturer (a former MOT staff member) and other sources such as books and articles about the topics. The indigenous people projected in the handbook were also traced to their villages. Their opinions about them being projected were sought. The trace involved a considerable amount of time/resource because they lived in remote areas with poor road infrastructure

which posed problems with accessibility. As part of bricoleurship, I turned my attention to intercepting them when they travelled to towns or cities. This interception required extensive communication. It was with the indigenous populations that the reactive technique (responses to visuals or visual representations) became very useful in communicating with them.

The pilot study in February 2012 (see 3.11) together with preparations, interpersonal skills and first-point-of-contact impressions deemed momentous in inviting participation for the study. On-the-spot communication/interviewing skills could not be neglected in doing bricoleurship. Moreover, the flexibility, creativity and criticality were cardinal aspects of the researcher-as-a bricoleur. For instance, in 2013 I found it difficult to get through to the person at the advertising company for a *repeat interview* (see 3.12.2.1). Withal, it would be a higher risk waiting much longer as the time to return to England was approaching. Thus, I had to seek for another respondent in close parallel with that person. Thus, a *parallel interview* (see 3.12.2.2) was conducted with another member of the handbook production team. The use of bricoleurship in the present study was limited by some of the constraints (e.g. such as time and budgetary factors, the limited engagement in the fields and the first-time practice of bricoleurship) to be discussed later in this thesis document.

#### **3.4 Priorethnography: A Sine Qua Non of the Study Proper of the Projection of Cambodia**

The study of representation, fantasmatics and politics of projection of performances, statued places/spaces and stereotypic utterances made use of *priorethnography*, the term Lincoln and Guba (1985) borrowed from Corsaro. Like the central concept of ethnographic research, priorethnography is an observational approach for inquirers to participate in research activities in order to raise their awareness of the nuances of the study settings and familiarise (or accommodate) themselves with the people and

social/cultural environment. In conducting prior ethnography, inquirers must have an adequate feel of the research contexts (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) or engage amply with the participants to increase their level of tinkering and criticality. From the constructionist standpoint, knowledge is socially constructed and is acquired by being/getting *embedded* within the interactions with the embodied people (Bishop, 2005). Researchers must engage in various research contexts, including the physical, historical, cultural, social, economic, ethical and aesthetic (Stake, 2005). Chase stated that, by doing so, they are able to understand how people construct and communicate meanings through a range of discourses; how stories are embedded in the interaction between the researcher and the narrators; how people make sense of their experience in relation to other talks/practices; and how people draw on, resist and transform those discourses as they narrate their selves, experiences and realities (Chase, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that prior ethnography be highly desirable for it is a 'springboard and a benchmark'. In addition, when researchers engage in prior ethnography, they become more tuned into the nature and conduct of the social constructionist inquiry.

The conduct of prior ethnography for the study of the gene banks are chiefly divided into two stages. In late 2011 and early 2012, the first stage is called *virtual prior ethnography* which is named parallelly after Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007) 'virtual ethnography' whose data are limited to what could be gathered electronically. The virtual prior ethnographic activities were conducted in various stages from scoping reading to (re)defining the study to the days leading up to first-hands prior ethnography and fieldwork in February/March 2012. The visual prior ethnographic activities in assessing the inquiry into the representation, fantasmatics and politics, especially during the first year of the study programme, included:

- ▶ *Scoping reading*: I did the scoping reading to redefine my proposal submitted for the admission to the doctoral programme and to produce of the RS1 research paper. The scope of the study changed slightly as the study progressed.
- ▶ *Cultural event participation*: I participated in a cultural event (the Khmer New Year celebration in April 2011) in London, where I came across a fresh publication of the tourism handbook by an advertising company. This handbook drew my initial focus on the study of the projection of Cambodia and stimulated a

thought of a potential respondent whom I would pursue in March 2012. The handbook also gave me insights into the official selection, production and projection of aspects of culture/heritage, peoples and places in Cambodia through its contents/themes. These themes gave an important indication for me to accordingly pursue during the subsequent fieldworks.

- ▶ *Surveying and engaging with news outlets:* I realised that news outlets were important to keep myself updated to the current social, cultural and political situations in Cambodia, not just because of my reminiscence but also because of their importance and sometimes relevance to my study. Some news outlets included below were informative sites to survey:
  - *Camnews.org* (fresh online news in Khmer, particularly about Cambodia): I scanned through this website a few times a week to look for interesting news which might be unexpectedly related to my study. This website was not biased to the incumbent government.
  - *Radio Khmer* (A complementary iPhone application): This application gave users access to streamlined news about Cambodia and the world in Khmer language from more than 10 radio channels, both inside Cambodia and abroad. I had to develop a habit of listening to news about Cambodia daily before going to bed from a few channels such as the Radio Free Asia, Voice of America or/and Radio France International. These channels are thought of as independent from the incumbent government.
  - *The Phnom Penh Post* (<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/>) and *the Cambodia Daily* (<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/>) – instant online news both in English: These are Cambodia-based English newspapers targeted especially for educated readers and foreign audience. I went to their websites from time to time scan for relevant information for my study. The newspapers are considered independent from the government.
  - *The Khmer Live TV Online* (<http://www.khmerlive.tv/>): This website provided access to online televisions (the BayonTV, the National Television of Kampuchea and TV3) with streamlined news. Some of the news could be accessed through an archive. These televisions were viewed to be aligned with the CPP-led government.
  - *Official Website of the Ministry of Tourism* (<http://tourismcambodia.org/>): The website provides access to extra online information besides that in the official handbook I obtained from the cultural event in April 2011. The link to the official handbooks and other multimedia tourism resource can be located at <http://www.tourismcambodia.org/multimedia/>
- ▶ *Email Groups:* I subscribed to two professional email groups, both with diverse backgrounds of members from various countries, mainly Cambodia. One of the groups specialised mainly in Khmer Studies and the other group in economics. In fact, both groups had members from diverse disciplines, including lawyers, journalists, historians, researchers and employees/employers of local and international non-governmental organisations. I had access to discussions and information shared in both groups.
- ▶ *Refinement of the inquiry:* Given available information and priorethnography, the study of representation and projection of Cambodia was redefined from the proposed study of the tourism resources of the Greater Mekong Subregion submitted for my admission to the doctoral programme to the study of the projection and representation of the cultural landscape of Cambodia via tourism

as proposed in the RS1 and to the study of culture gene banks in RS4. The refinement included the scopes and objectives of the study.

- ▶ *Mapping potential populations/samples*: Having engaged in prioethnographic activities, some potential populations/samples were identified:
  - *Material*: Some important material were identified including video clips on the Kingdom of Wonder; articles/reports on the lighting issue at Angkor, Khmer cultures, tourism, tourist statistics and others; a copy of the official handbook and tourist guide; and so on.
  - *Peoples*: Potential respondents included those involved in the production of the handbook/tourist guide, people working at the Cambodian Cultural Village in Siem Reap, staff at some art/craft workshops, people projected in the handbook, people working at the Ministry of Tourism and so forth.

### **3.4.1 Migration of the Study Focus: Re-Designing Research Questions in Response to the Emerging Issue of Indigenous Performances**

The refinement of the study of representation of Cambodia is a response to an emerging issue during the extensive virtual prioethnographic engagement in late 2011. The study began to migrate from the general examination of culture gene banks as outlined in 1.3 to specific foci on indigenous representation and performance. The representational issue in the projection of indigenous people in Cambodia which caused the study to migrate is registered in Reflexivity 3.4/1, overleaf.

The representational issues happened to capture my attention when I was engaging in virtual prioethnographic activities of the projection of aspects of culture in Cambodia. The cultural show at the China-ASEAN Trade Exposition in late October 2011 testified an emerging problem of representation. After deliberate reflexivity of the event, diligence was then attuned to the issues of indigenous misrepresentation and dance performances. The Ministry of Culture's official dance troupe travelled to many countries, not just to China, to perform the cultures of the Khmers and other minority groups. The dancers were trained at the School of Fine Arts from a very young age, practiced, rehearsed and naturalised in representation of the Khmer and the ethnic Other. However, many of the trainers and dancers had never interacted with, or immersed within, the cultures and the peoples they represented. As the shows at the Trade Exposition emerged to be very



**Reflexivity 3.4/1: The 8<sup>th</sup> China-ASEAN Trade Exposition 22<sup>nd</sup>—25<sup>th</sup> October 2011, Nanning (Guangxi), China**

One of my habits was reading and listening to news about Cambodia. One day in early November, while I was watching the archive videos on the internet, I came across a 19-minute video clip on the China-ASEAN Trade Exposition in Nanning of Guangxi province, which was cross-posted in the Bayon Television archive ([http://ec2-75-101-138-0.compute-1.amazonaws.com/archive/20111031\\_TVK\\_The\\_8th\\_China-ASEAN\\_EXPO.php?silverA](http://ec2-75-101-138-0.compute-1.amazonaws.com/archive/20111031_TVK_The_8th_China-ASEAN_EXPO.php?silverA)). According to the commentator from the National Television of Kampuchea, the purpose of the Trade Exposition was to boost economic cooperation between China and the ASEAN countries.

In the 19 minute clip, the commentator spent about 5 minutes showing about the theme of Rattanakiri branded as the charming province of Cambodia. Then, what attached me most was the show of indigenous culture. The clip projects Rattanakiri with greenness, wildlife, indigenous people and their tools. The video clip about the cultural shows at the Exposition from the archive of the Bayon Television gives viewers an idea of the representation/stereotyping of different cultural groups in Cambodia. The Cambodia booths at the Trade Exposition were decorated with the trees featuring Yeak Laom lake, statues of elephants, a buffalo head, and a large jar of rice wine in front of indigenous houses (e.g. groom's high stilt houses and the bride's stilt houses). I noticed in the video that dancers (men and women) were dressed in indigenous clothes sitting at the houses. And some visitors had their pictures taken with them. The commentator said that there were two indigenous people performing the textile-making. She added that visitors were so interested in the show of indigenous people and culture. "Wait a minute", I said to myself. I saw more than two dressed in indigenous clothes in the shows.

I also saw, in the video clip, dancers dressed in indigenous clothes holding the red ribbon at the Opening Ceremony of the Cambodia booths. And they performed indigenous dances such as the buffalo sacrifice dance and the rice-harvest dance. The governor of the Rattanakiri province said at the Exposition that Rattanakiri was rich in natural resources such as mountains, forests, lakes and ecotourism sites. He added although some of the province's forests had disappeared, we replaced them with agro-crops such as rubber trees [sic].

**Table 3.4/1 Migration of the Research Questions:**

**From Pre-Designed to Dynamically Re-Designed Questions in Response to the Unfolding Issue of Performances**

<b>Pre-Designed Questions</b>	<b>Re-Designed Questions</b>
1. What constituted culture gene banks of Cambodia in terms of the interpretations of various stakeholders?	1. What are the critical issues of representation emerging from the projection and performance of aspects of culture gene banks?
2. How was the dominant version of culture gene bank of Cambodia selected, produced, performed, and projected?	2. How are the indigenous groups of populations (mis)represented via performances?
3. What, if any, indicated the acts of dominance, subjugation, and silencing in the representation of Cambodia?	
4. What evidence, if any, was there which indicated the existence of the form and development of representational system which governed the projection of Cambodia?	

relevant to my study, I was compelled to migrate from the originally planned research focus to this more critical unfolding aspect of indigenous projection. With the prevailing issue in dance performances, the preceding Table 3.4/1 illustrates the newly developed research questions re-defined, half-way in the emergent, soft-science study, from those designed prior to the conduct of the virtual prioethnography (i.e. before the emergence of the issue concerning the performance at the Nanning Exposition in October 2011). At that point in time (i.e. the time when the issue of dance performance at the Trade Exposition emerged), only two research questions were re-designed, with an anticipation that other issues might continue to unfold while the study was progressing (also see 3.4.2). I therefore made a decision to answer the two pressing questions.

The second stage of prioethnography, i.e. the hands-on prioethnography, began in Cambodia in February/March 2012. (Pilot studies were also conducted in February 2012.) I made numerous calls/contacts and visits to seek the person(s) who led the dance troupe to Nanning. After a week of extensive communication, I obtained her contact. We agreed to meet. At the interview, she told me about the kinds of dances performed at the Trade Exposition. She did not have contacts, nor did she know the names of the two indigenous ladies who were invited to showcase their textile-production. She just knew that they came from the Northeast. To obtain more information about the activities of the two indigenous textile performers, I decided to travel to the Northeastern provinces. Thus, the two indigenous performers were my next targets.

The main hands-on ethnographic activities which were conducted in early 2012 took different forms in different contexts. They paved the way to reduce some of issues of access to different groups of respondents. Some of the main prioethnographic activities implemented on the ground included:

- visiting the Ministry of Tourism to converse with some of the officials mainly about the handbook and tourism marketing/promotion;
- visiting the Ministry of Culture of Fine Arts (MCFA) to map and diagnose its possible connections with the Ministry of Tourism;

- paying visits to museums, such as the National Museum, the Tuol Sleng Museum, the Killing Field Memorial, and other places of interest, including sculpture/painting workshops, carving villages and night markets;
- conversing with friends, colleagues, street people, hotel keepers/owners and so on to gauge potential respondents;
- attending a seminar with indigenous people about their capacity building on land rights; and
- frequenting libraries, bookshops and newsagent's to look for relevant material (see Table 3.4/2, overleaf).

I visited the above places/institutions with an expectation that I could possibly obtain information about the selection, production and projection of culture and heritage. The Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Culture were the first institutions on my hands-on prioethnography list in my exploratory effort to understand tourism marketing and promotion activities and possible collaboration with other institutions in carrying out the activities (see Reflexivity 3.4/2). I also visited performing arts organisations such as the School of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh and the Khmer Arts in Kandal province to reconnoitre their activities and to chat with the trainers about their organisations and performances. I returned for an interview with one of the dance trainers.

It was in early March 2013 when I had an opportunity to attend a three-day capacity-building seminar in Phnom Penh with indigenous representatives from 15 provinces. I was trying to get close to the indigenous seminar participants. My attendance had at least a two-fold purpose. First, I expected to acquire some knowledge about the indigenous activities and to raise my awareness of development issues inflicting on indigenous cultural practices (e.g. rituals/sen). Second, I could possibly seek to identify some of the participants for interviews. Eventually, some of them were selected to talk about their cultures and traditions, together with the issues detrimental to their cultures and livelihoods under the capitalist development banner. The Cultural Village belonged to a big local parent company, and the place was also promoted in the handbook and by

**Table 3.4/2 Illustration of the Conduct of Hands-On Priorethnography:  
Main Institutions and Organisations Visited before the Actual Research Conduct**

<b>Institutions, Organisations and Places Visited</b>	<b>About the Institutions, Organisations and Places</b>	<b>Purpose of Visit</b>
● <i>Ministry of Tourism (Phnom Penh)</i>	The Ministry, together with almost 200 core staff members, is responsible for tourism policy formulation, regulation and management of the tourism industry and tourist attractions, according to the tourism law (see RGC, 2009a). See <a href="http://www.tourismcambodia.org/mot/index.php?view=mot_cambodia#comp">www.tourismcambodia.org/mot/index.php?view=mot_cambodia#comp</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To seek information about ongoing activities of tourism marketing and promotion</li> <li>▪ To particularly ask about the production of the official handbooks, tourist guides, CNN spots and other material</li> </ul>
● <i>An advertising company (Phnom Penh)</i>	The company, an associate of the media communication agency the OMD Asia Pacific, provides marketing services to 'develop integrated marketing strategies'. The Ministry of Tourism, travel companies, hotels, airlines and others are some of the company's clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To try to understand the company's work on tourism marketing and its collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism</li> <li>▪ To specifically talk about the production of handbooks.</li> </ul>
● <i>Ministry of Culture (Phnom Penh)</i>	The Ministry's jurisdiction is to lead, manage and safeguard cultural properties of Cambodia and cultural and historical sites and attractions, while uplifting the cultural values of the nation (see RGC, 2007). See <a href="http://www.mcfa.gov.kh/">http://www.mcfa.gov.kh/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To test my presumption that the Ministry of Culture had some kinds of join collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism in the production of marketing and promotion material or in other work areas.</li> <li>▪ To understand the engagement of the Ministry of Culture in performance arts activities.</li> </ul>

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**Table 3.4/2 (Cont'd) Illustration of the Conduct of Hands-On Priorethnography:  
Main Institutions, Organisations and Places Visited before the Actual Research Conduct**

<b>Institutions, Organisations and Places Visited</b>	<b>About the Institutions, Organisations and Places</b>	<b>Purpose of Visit</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>The National Museum (Phnom Penh)</i></li> </ul>	<p>Associated with an effort of the colonial administration in the early 1900s, the Musée du Cambodge in 1919 and the Musée Albert Sarraut (after the name of the then Governor-General of Indochina) in 1920, the National Museum now houses the most cultural material and arts, including sculptures (e.g. statues), ethnographic objects and ceramics from the pre-Angkorean period and later. At present, it is placed under the juridic administration of the Ministry of Culture. See <a href="http://www.cambodiamuseum.info/index.html">http://www.cambodiamuseum.info/index.html</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To get re-acustomed with the site via repeat visits</li> <li>▪ To look for material related to the study, including the visit to the Museum library and displays</li> <li>▪ To seek access to a target respondent</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (Phnom Penh)</i></li> </ul>	<p>A former high school converted into the main prison and torture/interrogation centre during the Khmer Rouge, the Museum now serves as a tourist attraction, portraying skulls, photographs of torturing tools and methods, prison cells, bloodstains and so on in order to produce dramatising effects of the Khmer Rouge rule. See <a href="http://www.tuolsleng.com/">http://www.tuolsleng.com/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To get a feel of the place again</li> <li>▪ To meet a person working for a Khmer Rouge project</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Choeung Ek Killing Field Memorial (Phnom Penh)</i></li> </ul>	<p>With the portrayal similar to that of the Tuol Sleng Museum and located about 17km from Phnom Penh, this Killing Field Memorial contained a stupa of thousands of skulls and marked mass graves (or grave pits) in the field behind it and big trees against which children were smashed (Istvan, 2003). Also see <a href="http://www.cekillingfield.org/index.php/en/">http://www.cekillingfield.org/index.php/en/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To get a feel of the place again</li> <li>▪ To see if there were tourists visiting the Memorial</li> </ul>

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**Table 3.4/2 (Cont'd) Illustration of the Conduct of Hands-On Priorethnography:  
Main Institutions, Organisations and Places Visited before the Actual Research Conduct**

Institutions, Organisations and Places Visited	About the Institutions, Organisations and Places	Purpose of Visit
● <i>Department of Performing Arts (Phnom Penh)</i>	It is a Department of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts which is situated in a building away from the Ministry's main building. It also contains a theatre for dance training and rehearsal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To familiarise myself with the institution and its work</li> <li>▪ To seek contacts of target respondents</li> </ul>
● <i>Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA) (Phnom Penh)</i>	Established in 1965 but with its origin tracing back to 1918, the RUFA is now an institutional arm of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Its mission is responsible for human resource development/education, training and research in archaeology, architecture and urbanism, plastic arts, choreographic arts and music. See <a href="http://www.rufa.edu.kh/">http://www.rufa.edu.kh/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To visit its library</li> <li>▪ To look for a contact of a targeted respondent</li> </ul>
● <i>School of Fine Arts (SFA) (Phnom Penh)</i>	The SFA is another institutional arm of the Ministry of Culture responsible for education and human resource development in performing/circus arts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To get a feel of the School</li> <li>▪ To see dance training and to talk to trainers</li> </ul>
● <i>The Khmer Arts (Phnom Penh)</i>	A performing arts organisation, whose mission is to foster "the vitality of Cambodian dance and music across borders" and "seek to create a continuum of recruitment, training, research, outreach, creation and performance that developed accomplished artists, compelling works of art and diverse, informed audiences". See <a href="http://khmerarts.org/">http://khmerarts.org/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To see what was going on there</li> <li>▪ To talk to trainer(s)</li> </ul>

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**Table 3.4/2 (Cont'd) Illustration of the Conduct of Hands-On Priorethnography:  
Main Institutions, Organisations and Places Visited before the Actual Research Conduct**

<b>Institutions, Organisations and Places Visited</b>	<b>About the Institutions, Organisations and Places</b>	<b>Purpose of Visit</b>
● <i>Libraries and bookshops (Phnom Penh and provincial towns)</i>	The National Library, the Senate Library, the Buddhist Institute Library and other books shops in cities and towns provide information about tourism attractions and sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To look for relevant material/news</li> <li>▪ To keep updated with the social and political situations in Cambodia</li> </ul>
● <i>The Cambodian Cultural Village (Siem Reap)</i>	The Village contains replicas of important structures in Cambodia. It also stages shows various ethnic cultures living in Cambodia for tourists/visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To familiarise with the place and the performances</li> <li>▪ To talk to dancers and trainers</li> </ul>
● <i>Artisan d' Angkor (Siem Reap)</i>	The French-owned private company produces and sells crafts and works of arts which were mainly related to those of Angkor. It offers free guiding service and visits to the on-going production by crafters and artists. See <a href="http://www.artisansdangkor.com/">http://www.artisansdangkor.com/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To see what was being produced/carved and sold as souvenirs to tourists</li> <li>▪ To seek participation in the study</li> </ul>
● <i>Seminar (Phnom Penh)</i>	The three-day capacity-building seminar was designed to train indigenous activists (members) in 15 provinces of Cambodia. The organisation, which provided the training, also ran a radio program with the National Radio which gave an opportunity for the indigenous to voice their concern about development, cultures and societies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To get a feel of what was going on there</li> <li>▪ To seek to talk to (indigenous) participants</li> </ul>
● <i>Visitor Information Centres (Phnom Penh and provincial towns)</i>	The Visitor Information Centres (VICs) were managed by Departments of Tourism in the capital and provinces. They were execution bodies of the Ministry of Tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To look for leaflets and brochures of attractions and places</li> <li>▪ To observe what was going on</li> </ul>

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**Table 3.4/2 (Cont'd) Illustration of the Conduct of Hands-On Priorethnography:  
Main Institutions and Organisations Visited before the Actual Research Conduct**

Institutions, Organisations and Places Visited	About the Institutions, Organisations and Places	Purpose of Visit
● <i>The NGO Forum on Cambodia (Phnom Penh)</i>	It is a local network non-governmental organisation with an Indigenous People Rights Project working to promote and protect communities in mitigating negative impacts from economic land concessions. See <a href="http://www.ngoforum.org.kh/eng/en_project_article.php?article=10">www.ngoforum.org.kh/eng/en_project_article.php?article=10</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To try to understand the project</li> <li>▪ To map local NGOs working with IP (indigenous peoples)</li> </ul>
● <i>Indigenous Community Support Organisation (ICSO) (Phnom Penh)</i>	ICSO is a local non-governmental organisation working with IP projects such as empowerment, community media and village organisation in 15 provinces throughout Cambodia. See <a href="http://www.icso.org.kh/">http://www.icso.org.kh/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To learn about the organisation and its work by attending a capacity-building seminar</li> <li>▪ To look for opportunities to meet with the IP activists at the seminar.</li> </ul>
● <i>Cambodian NTFF Development Organization (CANDO) (Rattanakiri)</i>	CANDO is a local Cambodian non-governmental organisation which “seeks to develop sustainable livelihood and self-independence of the poor, disadvantaged, IP, vulnerable peoples and their communities”. See <a href="http://candodevelopment.org/">http://candodevelopment.org/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To learn about the organisation activities and look for information regarding indigenous peoples who were sent to th Nanning Exposition</li> </ul>
● <i>Cambodia Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA) (Phnom Penh)</i>	CIYA works to mobilise mutual support, networking, capacity-building among IP communities and promote their involvement in indigenous development programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To seek to understand CIYA work and reaction to the remark/attitude of the CPP lawmaker (see Reflexivity 3.12.1)</li> </ul>

### Reflexivity 3.4/2: Engagement in Hands-on Priorethnography

I obtained a copy of the handbook and a tourist guidebook upon my participation in the Khmer New Year celebration in London in April 2011. From the publication information in the handbook, I had some idea where to go and whom to ask about the production of the marketing material. I assumed that the nicely designed handbook was the work of the Ministry of Tourism alone. In order to understand more about the selection of tourist sites, places and aspects of cultures and peoples represented and projected in the handbook, I decided to approach the Ministry directly as part of my priorethnographic activities in early 2012. I also expected to identify respondents who could possibly give information about the publication and the selection of places in the handbook.

I approached the Ministry and talked to some people there about its marketing and promotion. I obtained some promotional material which gives me information about which places/sites and sought to understand the rationale behind the selection and projection of those sites. During the conversation with a member of the production team, it gave me a strange feeling that I was not asking the right person. Although I kept hearing in the conversation that the Ministry produced the handbook and other material, I was not able to elicit other related information. Only after a while into the conversation did he hint that the handbook and other marketing material were produced with some form of collaboration with an advertising company. It happened that the name of this company was the same as that told by a friend of mine a few days earlier. I had to take a slightly different path in my search for the right person to talk to.

I was also told in the conversation that the Ministry of Tourism was working with the Ministry of Culture in the selection and production of marketing material and projection of tourism sites, peoples and places. However, I was not able to obtain clear information from the conversation about the collaboration. As part of the pursuit, I also approached the Ministry of Culture to ask if there was any cooperation/ collaboration in the production of tourist guides/handbooks. There was no collaboration, as told by some Ministry officials. Part of this activity of going places asking 'possibly' relevant people/agents was to map out the relationships of the issues in question and to identify potential respondents for the main study. Thus, my attention was next switched to the advertising company, the main agency, in representation and projection of Cambodia via the selection of places for the handbook and other marketing material.

hotels and travel agencies. To pursue representational issues of performances, the Cultural Village was taken as a case. It provides assorted snapshots of the peoples and cultures in Cambodia and it receives both local and international visitors daily. Thus, it deserved a further investigation into the selection, production and projection of cultures via performances being practised there. I first had to familiarise with the place and the performances. Although I visited it once when it was first opened in early 2000s, I floundered again for the 2012 fieldwork. After talking to some of the staff members there in 2012, I was introduced to an information-rich person whom I later decided to be included in the main study. I revisited the Village in 2013 to witness changes so that I was prepared for a repeat interview with a respondent there.

Due to time constraint, the floundering (after Whyte, 1993) integrated into the investigation could not be brought to the level I had previously expected. First, the overall time allowed for the whole doctoral programme was certainly very short, especially for a prolonged priorethnography (or lengthy qualitative work) to take place. The priorethnography, if prolonged, might have had adverse effects on the actual study conduct and the write-up. The time could have been sufficient if I had opted for a model-based or questionnaire-based inquiry. Instead, the emergent soft-science project was chosen because I did not wish to work under the dictate of consciences. Second, breaking up the total fieldwork period into two parts (first, in March-May 2012 and, second, in the same months of 2013) due to the nature of the multi-sited approach (inspired by Marcus, 1995), time was consumed in travelling to remote northeastern provinces. Travelling did not only pose time but also budgetary constraints. Thus, these factors were important challenges for the implementation of the emergent, soft-science study. They determined the feasibility and possibility of prolonged engagement and the actual research conduct. To put in perspective, priorethnography proved useful in the study, but these factors had to be taken into account. In this section, priorethnographic activities have been hitherto explained and illustrated with the benefits and challenges in the subsequent Table 3.4/3.

**Table 3.4/3 Conduct of Hands-On Priorethnography and Paraethnography:  
Evaluation of Benefits and Challenges on the Ground**

	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
● Prioethnography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The prioethnography provided an initial assessment of the research contexts.</li> <li>■ A proper prioethnography was important to engage in a triage for the study conduct.</li> <li>■ The prioethnography was useful in clearing some of the gatekeeping problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The prioethnography required sufficient time and resources.</li> <li>■ I was sometimes indulged in the conduct of prioethnographic activities, while time did not allow many of those.</li> </ul>
● Paraethnography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ I was not able to undertake paraethnographic activities, as conceptualised by Holmes and Marcus (2005), despite its usefulness in cultivating existing local knowledge of research partners. More about paraethnography is elaborated later in this chapter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Collaboration was the life and death of paraethnography.</li> <li>■ Collaboration, or complicity (Holmes and Marcus, 2005), was arduous to obtain due to time constraint and limited embeddedness.</li> </ul>

### **3.4.2 Migration of the Study Focus: Re-Designing Research Questions in Response to the Emerging Issue of Cultural Projection via Statues**

During the hands-on prioethnography in Cambodia, particularly in February 2012, another significant issue of representation emerged. It was the dominant representation of the Khmer culture via statues of religious deities and important personas in Cambodian history and society. It stimulated my re-consideration of the pre-designed research questions in 1.3, particularly the second question regarding “How was the dominant version of culture gene bank of Cambodia selected, produced, performed and projected?” This general, open question was then more specifically re-defined by tuning it to the inspection of domination and subjugation via the projection of aspects of culture and society.

I observed various projections via statues (i.e. statued/sculptural representations) at the places I visited during my hands-on prioethnographic engagement. For example, I came across the statue of Vishnu deity in the middle of the ground floor of the main building of the Ministry of Culture. An imposing reclining statue of the Buddha at the Cultural Village also drew my attention upon my visits. More importantly, news about the construction of new statues in town such as those of Lord Ganes, Goddess of the Earth, Supreme Monk Chuon Nath and Techo Meas and Techno Yort (or Techos Meas/Yort) came to capture my attention. The construction of all those statues in early February 2012 was commissioned by the Phnom Penh Municipality. I began to deliberately reflect back to the projection of facets of culture gene banks of Cambodia via statues and realised that it dominated the cultural landscaping of public places. Numerous statues were also employed, displayed and embellished as provincial landmarks/icons. At this point, the pre-designed research questions evolved further to capture the nature of emergence of the representational issues in the soft-science study of the projection of aspects of culture gene banks of Cambodia. The following Table 3.4/4 therefore expands Table 3.4/1 by accommodating another question developed to tap into the unfolding dominance of statued representations in public places.

**Table 3.4/4 Migration of the Research Questions:**

**From Pre-Designed to Dynamically Re-Designed Questions in Response to the Unfolding Issue of Sculptural Representations**

<b>Pre-Designed Study Questions</b>	<b>Newly Re-Designed Questions</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What constituted culture gene banks of Cambodia in terms of the interpretations of various stakeholders?</li> <li>2. How was the dominant version of culture gene bank of Cambodia selected, produced, performed, and projected?</li> <li>3. What, if any, indicated the acts of dominance, subjugation, and silencing in the representation of Cambodia?</li> <li>4. What evidence, if any, was there which indicated the existence of the form and development of representational system which governed the projection of Cambodia?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the critical issues of representation emerging from the projection and performance of aspects of culture gene banks?</li> <li>2. How are the indigenous groups of populations (mis)represented via performances?</li> <li>3. How dominant aspects of culture are projected in the production of public places/spaces via statues of cultural significance?</li> </ol>

Up to this point in the gradually developed research process, the three re-defined questions were set forth in the study and were further tested in pilot studies. The pilot testing of the new research questions is elaborated in section 3.11. Even after piloting, the study was still open to other possible unfolding problems in the projection of culture gene banks. The other problem, which was later incorporated into the list of the research questions, prevailed in late November 2012. The inclusion of this last unfolding problem is presented in Table 3.12.1 under data collection methods (for the sake of sequential occurrences of the unfolding issues in relation to the research process because the unfoldment occurred after the first round of data collection in March-May 2012). For the time being, target populations, sampling strategies and cultural/critical pedagogies and pilot studies are discussed before turning to elaboration on the incorporation of the last emergent issue, i.e. the stereotypic utterance.

### **3.5 The Target Populations: Groups of Participants Included in the Study**

Before turning to the populations included in the study, it is reiterated here that the study of discursive articulation of culture gene banks was gauged from dance performances, reproductions of statues for public places and stereotypic utterances/reactions. The respondents included in the study can be classified into different groups from the public and private sectors to non-human samples.

The respondents (see Table 3.5) are given pseudonyms as a means to protect their identity. Some of them (with *italicised* names) fit with more than one group of populations. Visal and Sinuon, for instance, are classified in the indigenous population. However, they also worked for international and local non-governmental organisations. Thus, their perspectives could also be shaped by their workplace. By the same token, Channa, Phanny and Sopheap can also be classified in more than one group. Although their main jobs were concerned with education/research, they were also affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

**Table 3.5 Populations Concerning Culture and Tourism Gene Banks:  
The Respondents and Samples Targeted**

Target Populations	Samples obtained
● <i>The public sector</i>	Bopha; Pheaktra; Kravann; <i>Channa</i> ; <i>Phanny</i> ; Chinith; <i>Sopheap</i>
● <i>The private sector</i>	Kolab; Mala; Sokhom; Soknak; Sambo; Sonita; Udom; Bona; John; Mary
● <i>The indigenous (Names of indigenous groups in brackets)</i>	Kaliyan, Nimol and Bora [Kroeung]; Sochea and Chenda [Kuy]; Rithy and Rotha [Tumpoun]; Pheakdei, Phirum and Pich [Por]; Samang, Reaksmeay, Ponleu, <i>Sinuon</i> , <i>Visal</i> , Vichara, Heng, Malis, Chanthou, villagers, Kosal, Sophal, Kunthea, Chan and Chamroeun [Bunong]
● <i>Development organisations/NGOs</i>	<i>Visal</i> ; <i>Sinoun</i>
● <i>Academia, trainers and/or researchers</i>	Channa; <i>Sopheap</i> ; <i>Phanny</i>
● <i>Non-human samples</i>	Official tourism handbooks; tourist guides; official MOT website; promotional spots, etc. (See Tables 3.9.2 and 3.9.3)



Due to meagre civil servant salary, some participants engaged in multiple paid jobs to supplement their income.

I was not able to delve deep into the various human populations as previously configured. The institutional perspectives (e.g. from statue commissioners) were under-represented in the samples due to the following reasons. First, time and resource were determining factors. Second, for the public sector, the current context of the not-so-transparent political manifestation in Cambodia hardly made sensitive public information accessible. Officials in charge sometimes became hypersensitive to the search for information. Besides, the characteristic of the study, which sought to understand the discourse (power/knowledge) in the projection of various populations, was possibly seen as highly intrusive and provocative. In the next section, purposive sampling in the actual study conduct is examined.

### **3.6 Purposive Sampling: The Conduct and Challenges of the Sampling Selection**

The main purpose of selecting samples here was to target the persons most relevant to the issues under investigation so that the understanding of the issues could be deepened. The persons most connected with or knowledgeable about the issues were the most desirable purposive samples. However, selecting the target samples purposefully for the inquiry into (mis)representation of normalising aspects of culture gene banks was sometimes a challenge.

Before looking at the challenges encountered in the selection of purposive samples in the implementation of the current study, it reiterates here that the purposive samples were targeted in relation to the issues in question. The purposive samples corresponding to the issues of the emerging representational problems in section 1.3.2 and other issues in accessing the target purposive samples are examined shortly. The higher political positions the target samples held, the stronger/thicker the barriers of access. Although

the access to indigenous communities deemed relatively easy, the time and budgetary constraints sometimes became inconvenient due to their geographical remoteness.

In the study, I purposively identified at least one sample under each of the themes/issues in the investigation into the projection of representational repertoire of Cambodia. The target purposive samples for the projection via marketing material was the Editor in Chief but was then switched to Bona due to the reasons stated in Table 3.6/1 (col.4); for the indigenous stereotyping was the lawmaker and the Bunong representatives but the lawmaker was not accessible; and for the performances was the Dance Troupe leader(s), indigenous participants in the Trade Exposition and members of the Cultural Village. These samples were selected to provide perspectival interpretations of the emerging issues of projection and (mis)representation. The benefits and challenges of the purposive sampling selection in practice are summarised in Table 3.6/2. This sampling was useful in enhancing the pursued understanding of the construction of the projected peoples and cultures (most) relevant to the problems. However, it also posed challenges in terms of accessibility to the target purposive samples due to factors such as red tape and time. Moreover, my challenge to interviewing Kaliyan was geographical remoteness (see Reflexivity 3.6). Having examined the purposive sampling, I now turn to the snowball sampling.

**Table 3.6/1 Selection of Purposive Samples:  
Samples Purposively Targeted in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Representational Issue under Investigation</b>	<b>Target Purposive Sample</b>	<b>Brief Description of the Targeted Sample</b>	<b>Remark on Access</b>
● <i>The projection of peoples, cultures and places via marketing material</i>	Editor in Chief of the Official Handbook Production Team	The Editor in Chief was a top official in the Ministry of Tourism. Since access was too difficult to obtain and since the design and production of the material were mostly done by another on the team from an outside advertising agency. The selection was switched to another person who did most of the work.	No. Attempt to gain access was given up due to the reasons stated in the description.
	Bona	Bona oversaw the selection and production of the marketing material in his company credited by the Ministry of Tourism.	Yes. A lengthy interview (approx. 1.5 hours) was conducted about the selection, production and projection of aspects of peoples, cultures and places.
● <i>Representation via Performances</i>	Bopha	She was one of the persons who led the Dance Troupe to the Nanning Exposition in 2011.	Yes. A one-hour interview was conducted with her about the event and the dances there.
	The two indigenous participants (Only Kaliyan was contactable.)	Two indigenous people from the Northeast were invited to attend the Nanning Exposition to showcase their handicraft production.	Yes. But I managed to have a dialogue with only one of them about their feelings at the event, the performances and her reactions of being represented.

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 3.6/1 (Cont'd) Selection of Purposive Samples:  
Samples Purposively Targeted in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Representational Issue under Investigation</b>	<b>Target Purposive Sample</b>	<b>Brief Description of the Targeted Sample</b>	<b>Remark on Access</b>
	Sokhom	He was an important staff member of the Cultural Village in Siem Reap. He had also received formal training in music and performances.	Yes. An interview was conducted with him about the selection, production and projection of aspects of peoples and cultures via performances there. A repeat interview was also conducted.
● <i>The lawmaker's remark</i>	A lawmaker	A CPP lawmaker who called an opposition counterpart 'a Bunong'. The Bunong community was an indigenous minority group living mainly in the northeastern provinces of Cambodia, particularly in Mondulkiri. His remark was now considered as a stereotypical innuendo to the Bunongs and triggered their reaction.	No. But his interpretation of the Bunong in his remark was available in a number of sources (e.g. radios and newspaper articles)
	Sinuon, a Bunong representative	An educated Bunong, having work experience with an International Organisation, led the advocacy against the stereotypic conception/remark and demanded recognition and apology from the lawmaker.	Yes. A long interview was organised with her to seek her interpretation and reaction against the assumed mis-stereotyping of her people.

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 3.6/1 (Cont'd) Selection of Purposive Samples:  
Samples Purposively Targeted in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Representational Issue under Investigation</b>	<b>Target Purposive Sample</b>	<b>Brief Description of the Targeted Sample</b>	<b>Remark on Access</b>
● <i>Projection and representation via statues</i>	Phanny, a university lecturer	He was also a retired staff member from the Ministry of Tourism and was knowledgeable in Khmer mythology. He was also a university lecturer. .	Yes. The interview was not only about the Khmer mythology and the meanings and significances of the statues projected in the public places. I also sought his views concerning marketing publications and cross-checked some information from Bona.
	Channa, a university lecturer	Known as an ethnologist, he obtained his education in Europe. He had extensive work experience in culture and monuments.	Yes. The interview with him was about his views anent the meanings and significances of the statues built in public places, of indigenous cultures and their performances at the Cultural Village and of the projection in marketing material. Some information from Phanny and Sokhom was also used to cross-check with him.
	Statue commissioners (and artists)	They authorised (and built) the statues in the areas. There was at least one imposing statue in each town throughout Cambodia. In the capital and some big towns/provinces such as Phnom Penh and Kampong Cham, there were numerous landmark statues.	No. Since the commissioners were often big people in the government, I was not able to obtain access to them. Thus, there was little chance to obtain contacts of the artists. However, the meanings and significances of the statues could also be obtained from secondary sources such as guidebooks to the National Museum.

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 3.6/1 (Cont'd) Selection of Purposive Samples:  
Samples Purposively Targeted in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Representational Issue under Investigation</b>	<b>Target Purposive Sample</b>	<b>Brief Description of the Targeted Sample</b>	<b>Remark on Access</b>
● <i>Projection (discourse) of cultures, peoples and places</i>	The handbooks (MOT, 2011a, 2012a) and other marketing material	The handbooks and the Ministry of Tourism's website are main 'official' sources of information about the selection and projection of aspects of cultures and places in Cambodia.	Yes. The handbooks, CNN spots and other provincial tourism leaflets were collected for use. The website was maintained pretty well with updated information, including speeches, about some of the activities of the Ministry of Tourism.
	Guidebook to the National Museum (Khun, 2002)	The guidebook provides brief information about the objects displayed in the National Museum in Phnom Penh.	Yes. It provides information about most of the statues built in public places throughout Cambodia such as those of god Vishnu, god Ganes and the Buddha
	Khmer mythology (Roveda, 1997)	The book provides information about (meanings and significances of) many of the mythological arts carved on the walls/galleries of the Angkor temples.	Yes. The information from the book serves as important sources for cross-checking and double-checking that from other sources such as interviews.
	Khmer performing arts (Chheng, 2003)	The book contains a collection of dances in Cambodia.	Yes. The book provides a means of verifying data from other sources about performances, including those of the indigenous.
	Living on the margins (Hammer, 2008)	The book consisted of collected conference papers concerning indigenous peoples.	Yes. The book gives information/data from research about indigenous peoples done by both Cambodian and non-Cambodian scholars.

**Table 3.6/2 Purposive Sampling:  
Benefits and Challenges of the Sampling in the Study**

<b>Benefits of Purposive Sampling in the Study</b>	<b>Challenges of Purposive Sampling in the Study</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rich information about feelings, emotions and reactions constructed by particular persons (or agencies) most relevant to the issues in question could be extracted.</li> <li>● Particular understandings of the issues under investigation were enriched from the persons most pertinent to them.</li> <li>● Judgemental acumen could be enhanced from the specific problems in question constructed by the purposively selected samples.</li> <li>● Relevancy among the issues, the concerned persons/agencies and contexts was improved.</li> <li>● Suggestions or recommendations could be directed straight to those agencies involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accesses to the target samples most pertinent to the issues were sometimes barred from complicated institutional bureaucracies.</li> <li>● Time sometimes posed a challenge (e.g. time available in the field; long waiting time; waiting to no avail) in gaining access to the purposively targeted individuals (or agencies). Factors such as their movement and geographical locations exacerbated the constraint of time.</li> <li>● The target purposive samples might not be able to elaborate the contexts and issues pertinent to them. This limited ability was often the case for the indigenous samples.</li> </ul>

### **Reflexivity 3.6 Selecting a Purposive Sample: Identifying and interviewing an Indigenous Respondent Kaliyan**

It took me almost two weeks to seek contacts of the target indigenous respondents who attended the Nanning Exposition. A week in Phnom Penh was spent in tracing her contacts (i.e. through the institutions which were suspected to send her to the Exposition) but to no avail. The only useful information I obtained in Phnom Penh was the fact that they came from Rattanakiri, a northeastern province of Cambodia. With that little information, I yet decided to wander off to the province, hoping that more information could be obtained therein.

The trip to the province took a whole day in early April 2012. The trip was not designed because there was no clear information from Phnom Penh about the two indigenous ladies although I had contacted the province's tourism officials. It took me a few days in Rattanakiri to trace. Because the Exposition was led by the Ministry of Commerce, I approached a person of the Provincial Department of Trade and then a local non-governmental organisation. To meet Kaliyan at her house took a 2-hour moped drive on gravel roads through hundreds of hectares of rubber plantations. I managed to see her when she came back from her crop fields in an afternoon of April, the hottest month in Cambodia. Due to accessibility problem, I failed to meet another, who lived much farther away.

Kaliyan was selected by the Trade Department and the NGO to participate in the textile showcase at the Nanning Exposition because of her outstanding performance in textile production at her village and in the Kroeung tribal community. She had also been abroad doing similar things before. Another lady in her company from a different tribal group was also selected with the same criterion.

Before meeting Kaliyan for an interview, I did not expect any problems communicating with her. She greeted me unexpectedly. I had tried to contact her by phone before the trip to her village because I meant to inform her about my intention to see her. However, I could not get through to her because, as she told later in the dialogue, she was often at the crop fields from early in the morning. Luckily, upon my self-introduction, we sat down to talk about her trip/experience, the textile show and the indigenous dances.

In the dialogue, I had unexpectedly encountered difficulties in understanding her because she could not speak Khmer language very well and I did not speak hers. I often felt a need to rephrase the same questions again and again. She also showed a sample piece of textile she was asked to show at the Exposition. Kaliyan also shared with me her unfavourable experience with some Cambodians and their struggle (her and her company) as indigenous persons in new cultural settings. Although the talk took approximately one hour with strong linguistic challenges, I did appreciate her effort to try to get her message across in the interview.



### **3.7 Snowball Sampling: The Snowballed Research Participants**

Table 3.6/1 illustrates the target purposive samples under three main foci, i.e. the projection of aspects of Cambodia via marketing material, the representation via performances and the discourse of places and spaces via statues. In this section (3.7), the practical implementation of the snowball sampling is elaborated. The snowball sampling was conducted with due consideration of access-securing process and the pursuit of multiple issues.

In the inquiry into the representational issues, Soknak and Sambo were snowballed. They were traced with the information provided in an interview with Sokhom. Despite the information about the next potential respondents from the previous interviews, I had to consider if they fitted with the study purpose. In this regard, I had to engage in a triage, taking into account their fitness with my study and the costs (time and budget) in an endeavour to obtain an extra sample. In the study, I managed to meet Soknak in person for an interview. However, it could have been too costly to meet Sambo in person because I was not able to get through to him till the last days of my fieldwork in 2013, and to meet him in person could have cost me a day trip. Thus, I decided to interview him on phone, instead. The blurring line of sampling strategies occurred when I was trying to evaluate the respondents (e.g. Soknak and Sambo) for the interview against the purpose of my study and the associated costs of my decision. Soknak and Sambo could be called snowballed samples but they were selected with the evaluation of how relevant they were with the investigation into the production of performances. Soknak was selected because he used to serve as a Master of Ceremony at the Cultural Village. Sambo was selected because he was a researcher responsible for the study of aspects of cultures of the indigenous populations in the Northeast and his findings were fed into the staging of the performances at the Cultural Village.

In the actual selection, it was very difficult to distinguish between the purposive sampling and snowballing. The selection process was far from simple and neat, but blurred and

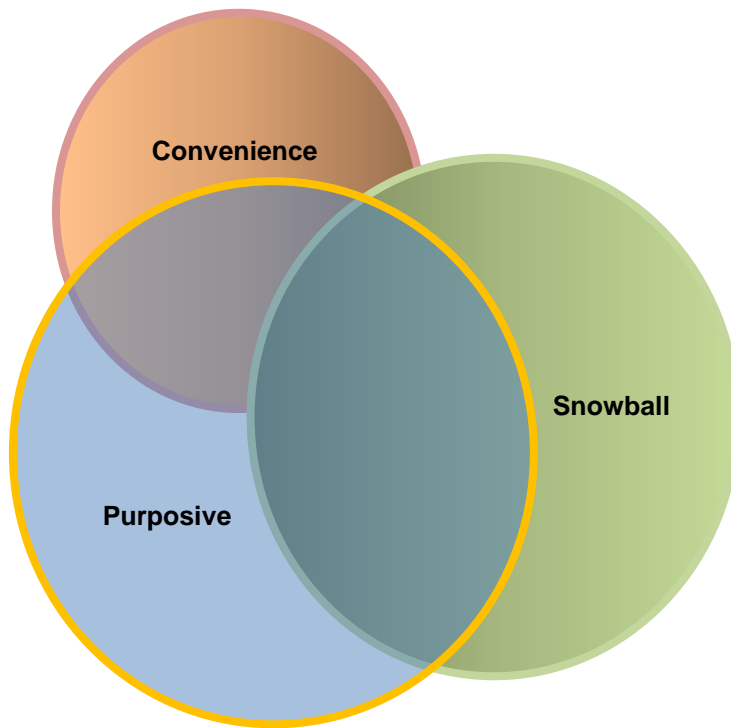
complex, due to a number of factors. First, under many circumstances, the decision to select a particular sample would not become apparent until a couple of interviews have been done. Second, although other individuals were referred to in the previous interviews and said to be related to a particular issue in question, the decision to proceed often involved an assessment against other aspects of the research (incremental usefulness, relevancy, costs and benefits, and so on). Such activities are central to paraethnography and bricoleurship. The benefits and challenges of the conduct of snowball sampling are registered in Table 3.7. Third, although I sometimes had the target samples in mind, I was often engaged in other interviews (conversations) to seek or assess possible alternatives to get to the target samples. Direct approaches to the target purposive samples might result in failure. If failures were inevitable, some data would have already been collected and secured along the way in the alternative-seeking process.

The differences between the purposive, snowball and convenience samplings are graphically presented in Figure 3.7, which illustrates a considerable overlap between the purposive and snowball sampling strategies in the study of (mis)representation of aspects of culture gene banks via marketing material, performances and statues erected in public places. Basically, it is meant to say that there were no clear-cut sampling strategies precisely categorised in definitive types in the study and perhaps in many emergent, soft-science research circumstances.

Strictly speaking, the snowballed samples pursued in the study were not purely snowballed as discussed earlier in this section. The decision to proceed with the snowballed had to go through various judgements (trages). Alternatively stated, not all peoples identified or recommended from the previous interviews/conversations were eventually selected. If they were, they had to be assessed against the aforesaid criteria. The snowball sampling might render higher risk without control. Apart from the purposive and snowball samplings, convenience sampling was also employed in the study and it is nested in section 3.8.

**Table 3.7 Snowball Sampling:  
Evaluation of Practical Benefits and Challenges in the Study**

<b>Benefits of the Snowball Sampling Selection in the Study</b>	<b>Challenges of the Snowball Sampling Selection in the Study</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The snowball sampling in the study rolled around the issues under investigation.</li> <li>● The unexpected informative respondents emerged during the sampling process (e.g. John, Soknak and Sambo).</li> <li>● There was not much planning involved in the selection process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The snowball sampling was open to an unpredicted wide geographical coverage of the research activities to be pursued.</li> <li>● Accessibility to some parts of Cambodia was far from convenience (e.g. Kaliyan and her companion).</li> <li>● Human mobility further posed time and budgetary pressures on the already limited research timeframe.</li> <li>● The sampling was prone to be led (or misled) by respondents.</li> <li>● The next snowballed respondents might not be information-rich.</li> </ul>



**Figure 3.7 Purposive, Snowball and Convenience Sampling Strategies:  
Approximate Sampling Relationships in the Inquiry into Aspects of the Projected Gene Banks**

### 3.8 Convenience Sampling: Participants Selected on the Spot

The convenience sampling in the study of performances, staged representations and stereotypic utterances was selected on an ad hoc basis. The convenience samples selected in the study often context-specific (or time- or/and place-specific). In other words, the convenience sampling selection took place mainly during my hands-on engagement in the field.

In the purposive sampling selection, most of the respondents in the study had sometimes been identified even before the 2012 fieldwork began. In the snowball sampling, participants were identified during the fieldwork, especially after the first, second, third... interviews were conducted. In the convenience sampling, most of the samples in the study were identified during my visits to places, and they were asked to participate in the casual conversations about the aforementioned issues. Peoples like Heng, Mary, Kolab, Pheaktra and some others were asked to participate on the spot. Heng was an indigenous Bunong who was employed by a local non-governmental organisation in Monduliri province. I met him upon my visit to the organisation, seeking his reaction about the lawmaker's stereotypic remark. Mary was referred to by the administrator of a foreign-owned crafts/arts company in Siem Reap, while I was seeking information about the company and crafts selection and production. I met Kolab on stage just after her acting in the show (as a main player) at the Kroeung village. I engaged a dance trainer Pheaktra in a conversation about performances on the training floor at the School of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh.

As shown in Figure 3.7, the three types of sampling strategies in the study were not completely distinct from one another. For instance, although I had not known that Mary would be my respondent before I was advised by the administrator, I visited the crafts/arts company with a *purpose* in mind in the first place, i.e. to seek what pieces of crafts and arts were produced at the company. And the decision about which crafts company to visit and to seek further information (e.g. via an interview) was also

proceeded with a purpose. I visited the company partly because I had heard people talking about it and I had come across it in marketing material from which I made further inquiry (i.e. a snowballing aspect). Furthermore, I could select her for the interview because the time, place and cost were convenient, and Mary was thought to contribute to incremental understanding of the selection and production of crafts and arts in the tourism industry. Thus, Mary might be regarded as an outcome of a selection process mixing two or three types of sampling.

In short, it was difficult to distinctively categorise sampling strategies employed in the study of the gene banks although each of the above sampling types might be more classified in one and less in the others. The actual implementation of the sampling selections was complex and sometimes ad hoc. For instance, Kaliyan was later identified after weeks of intense communication. It took several days to identify Bopha and another week to meet Kaliyan, for instance. Thus, the decision did not culminate in smooth/neat sampling procedures because of time consumed in the identification of the target samples and time made available by the respondents.

### **3.9 Sampling Criteria: Selecting the Samples for the Study**

The non-human samples and some of the respondents were purposefully selected based on the criteria registered in Table 3.9/1. For the human samples, they were chosen on the ground of their direct/indirect association with the issue in question and their capability to give different perspectives, insights and the evidence. One may generally note that the samples from indigenous population constituted a large proportion. It was because they were often the subjects of (mis)representation, and they were sometimes the participants in the projection. Thus, they had direct and sometimes indirect involvement. In the study, they were given opportunities to provide insights and perspectives and express their voices via interviews, casual conversations and reactive techniques.

**Table 3.9/1 Criteria for Subject Selection:  
The Human and Non-human Samples**

	<b>Human Samples in the Study</b>	<b>Non-human Samples in the Study</b>
● <i>Criteria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ association with the issue in question</li> <li>■ ability to give contrasting perspectives</li> <li>■ variety of backgrounds</li> <li>■ source of in-depth knowledges</li> <li>■ source of double-checking and cross-checking the availability of evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ high relevancy to the issue under investigation</li> <li>■ variety of sources and information</li> <li>■ authenticity of the material</li> <li>■ source for double-checking and cross-checking</li> </ul>
● <i>Sample size</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 27 participants, from the interviews, including three repeat interviews and a parallel interview</li> <li>■ 13 participants, from the casual conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ a range of core and contingent material (e.g. handbooks, tourist guides, leaflets, promotional videos, museum guides, radio broadcasts, reports and so on (see Tables 3.9/2 and 3.9/3)</li> </ul>

For the non-human samples one of the selection criteria was their high relevancy or associativity with the issues under investigation. Some of the material about the projection of various aspects of cultures came in the form of books, official handbooks and tourist guides, promotional leaflets, video clips, CDs, websites, radio broadcasts and websites to name a few. These forms indicated a variety of sources of interpretations/perspectives. Attention was also given to the selection of authentic material. Some were also chosen as a means of double-checking and cross-checking information across the human and non-human samples.

The non-human samples were purposively selected from the material concerning representation, performance and projection of the emergent issues. This material often contained cross-cutting projection. Table 3.9/2 illustrates important material regarding the projection of various aspects of the gene banks. The official handbooks (MOT, 2011a, 2012a) features fifteen provinces, cities and municipality (hereafter, provinces) in main thematic clusters, such as the capital Phnom Penh, the temples in Siem Reap, the coastal area (the seas and beaches) and the Northeast. The two documents contained similar themes, though with slightly different pictorial depictions. The Angkor history and civilisation were given relatively more attention. The Angkorean civilisation still maintains their steadfast standing in the CNN promotional spots and in the official homepage/website. Rattanakiri and Mondulakiri provinces in the Northeast were promoted as offering the ecotourism products, including the indigenous cultures, nature and wildlife. The Yeak Laom lake, the indigenous dwelling, dances/cultures and elephants became attractions (also see Reflexivity 3.4/1). What was also noticeable was that only the same fifteen out of the twenty-four provinces of Cambodia were projected via the two handbooks.

Selectively few tourism products and places were promoted via the CNN spots, where time became a prime consideration. The selectivity reflected well the level of significance of aspects of culture, heritage, and nature. As indicated in Table 3.9/2, the sources illustrated important material gathered from the fieldwork. Other books and articles



**Table 3.9/2 Illustration of the Non-Human Samples from Fieldworks:  
Main Material Collected for the Study of the Projection of Culture Gene Banks**

Selected Non-Human Samples	Brief Descriptions of Non-Human Samples
● Official handbooks (MOT, 2011a, 2012a)	The handbooks give thematic tourist attractions in fifteen of the twenty-four provinces of Cambodia. The attractions are divided into city tourism, city development, cultural tourism, beach tourism, ecotourism and so on.
● <i>CNN promotional spots</i> (MOT, various years)	The promotional spots project Cambodia as the 'Kingdom of Wonder'. As time is of prime importance, the spots provide an idea of prudent selectivity of the compelling aspects of culture/heritage and nature.
● <i>MOT official website</i> ( <a href="http://www.tourismcambodia.org/">http://www.tourismcambodia.org/</a> )	The website contains tourism information such as attraction descriptions and speeches. It also hosts multimedia of various forms such as e-brochures, videos, maps, photos, wallpapers, screen savers and e-cards.
● <i>The Lonely Planet Cambodia</i> (Ray and Robinson, 2012)	The guide contains a broader coverage of tourism attractions and activities in each of the 24 provinces.
● <i>The new guide to the National Museum</i> (Khun, 2002)	The guide provides the meanings and significances of sculptural representations and objects of arts within the National Museum in Phnom Penh.
● <i>My photographs during the fieldworks</i>	The photographs give visual support to the findings and discussions in the study.

**Table 3.9/3 Illustration of the Non-Human Samples from the Fieldworks:  
Some Contingency Material Collected for the Study of the Projection of Culture Gene Banks**

Selected Contingency Item	Description of the Contingency Material
● <i>The land and the people of Cambodia</i> (Chandler, 1991)	The document contains the history of Cambodia from the pre-historic time to the modern.
● <i>The age of Angkor: Treasures from the National Museum of Cambodia</i> (Brand and Chuch, 1992)	The book details information about the pieces of the Khmer sculpture in the National Museum of Cambodia.
● <i>Khmer mythology</i> (Roveda, 1997)	It entails Hindu and Buddhist legends associated with stone reliefs at the temples of Angkor.
● <i>The customs of Cambodia</i> (Daguan, 2001)	The translated document offers insights into the customs of Cambodia during the Angkorean period (of the 13 <sup>th</sup> century).
● <i>Khmer performing arts</i> (Chheng, 2003)	It details various performances considered important for the Khmers, not Cambodian, culture.
● <i>Tourism sites of Cambodia</i> (Keo, 2004)	The guide provides information regarding tourist sites in each of the provinces from a Cambodian perspective.
● <i>Bibliography of venerable monks</i> (Lim, 2004, Khmer version)	The book includes the biography of the Venerable Monk Chuon Nath.
● <i>The mountain of precious stones: Ratanakiri, Cambodia</i> (Bourdier, 2006)	It consists of social anthropological essays about indigenous populations in Cambodia.
● <i>We visit the National Museum</i> (Sun, Meng and Caillat, 2006)	The guide provides basic information about the national museum.

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 3.9/3 (Cont'd) Illustration of the Non-Human Samples from the Fieldworks:  
Some Contingency Material Collected for the Study of the Projection of Culture Gene Banks**

Selected Contingency Item	Description of the Contingency Material
● <i>Living on the margins</i> (Hammer, 2008)	It contains a collection of the edited papers from the international conference 'Mainland Southeast Asia at its margins: minority groups and borders' in Siem Reap. The parts on 'Development and indigenous communities' and 'Constructing self and others' deem relevant to my study project.
● <i>Minority groups in Cambodia</i> (Hean, 2009, Khmer version)	The book contains a chapter on the northeastern indigenous populations in Cambodia and information about their identities.
● <i>ASEAN Destination Guide for the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2011</i> (MOT, 2011b)	It includes a section on Cambodia destination. It provides an idea for selectivity/competitiveness of tourist attractions at the regional destination level.
● <i>Destination guide</i> (MOT, 2012c)	This official tourist guide is more selective than the handbooks, though it contains similar thematic coverage.
● <i>Moni Mekhala and Ream Eyso</i> (Ok, 2013)	It is part of the cultural renewal, which was initiated by the Cambodian diaspora. It is about a Khmer classical dance which tells a story of a giant (the demon, Ream Eyso) and a goddess Moni Mekhala.
● <i>Angelina Jolie 's journey to Cambodia</i> (Louis Vuitton full commercial)	It features Cambodia countryside, poverty and its mystery.
● <i>Official tourist guide</i> (MOT, no date)	A previous version of the handbooks was produced by a different marketing company or marketer. It gives a point of the comparison with the newer versions (MOT, 2011a, 2012b).

accumulated during the study period were also important sources of information although they are not listed here due to space limitation. The same thing applied to the collected contingency material in the preceding Table 3.9/3.

The contingency samples, which were collected from the fieldwork, were primarily allocated in case of need. The collection of contingency material was however hindered by the weight limit allowed by the airline. Other material was left behind in the field. The tabulated core and contingency documents above were related to the history, guidebooks, minorities, museum objects, and the projection of Cambodia. Their brief content descriptions were also given along with the documents listed in the first columns.

### **3.10 Cultural and Critical Pedagogies: Inspection of the Areas of Cultural Selection, Production and Performance**

The study looked at the emerging (mis)representation via performances, sculptural representations and stereotypic remarks. The dances performed for the public and tourists were tapped into, together with the performances/shows at the Cultural Village as illustrating examples. The exemplary stereotypic remark with regard to the Bunongs, an ethnic minority group living mainly in Mondulkiri province, was also delved into, with supporting transcripts from some interviews and texts from radio broadcasts and newspapers. In the employment of the cultural pedagogy, the following areas were inquired into:

- the reproduction of statues for the public places/spaces;
- the cultural production, commodification and representation through dances/performances;
- the private-public representation of Khmer culture (the case of a company producing Khmer arts and crafts); and
- Reactions of a minority group to the representation of their people and culture.

In the study, the (re)production of culture by various cultural agents (e.g. the government and private companies) were inspected from the meaning-making/signification of the projected cultural, historical, religious aspects, the identity discourse, the contested representation and commodification of facets of the gene banks.

The conduct of cultural pedagogy was helpful in the study. The approach drew attention to questions, such as 'how was the current representation constituted?' and 'who involved in it?' Withal, cultural pedagogy deemed practical in seeking the responses to these questions. Understanding the normalisation/naturalisation produced by the cultural agents (e.g. at the Cultural Village and the arts/crafts company) was paramount to this pedagogical approach. Cultural pedagogy was preeminent for critical pedagogy, in which the power relations between various stakeholding groups were critiqued.

The current study did not only inspect the ways in which agents selected, produced and projected facets of cultures but also aimed to critique the current representation. The critique for social goods was a cardinal feature of the critical pedagogy. The critique in the inquiry aimed at the following aspects:

- the representation of the dominant culture;
- the under-representation of other cultural groups;
- the misrepresentation of the ethnic Other;
- the power structure surrounding cultural production and projection in the current institutional arrangements;
- the commodification of aspects of dances and reproduced pieces of arts;
- the contestation in cultural production and projection; and so on.

A challenge in carrying out the cultural and critical pedagogies was that it was strenuous to access the back of the minds of the cultural producers/commissioners because many of the masterminds of iconic statue production were top government officials. For instance, an iconic statue in Kompong Thom town, the subject of discussion in the next chapter, was commissioned by the governor. The issue of time in the field did not permit penetration through officialism. This section has reflected on the implementation of the

cultural and critical pedagogies in the study of the cultural selection, production, projection and commercialisation of the indigenous cultures.

### **3.11 The Pilot Study: Testing the Field for the Inquiry into the Projection of Cambodia**

The pilot study aimed to test the first stage of fieldwork in the trial-and-error manner. It was conducted in February 2012. The pilot interviews served as feedbacks for the study conduct. Six persons were chosen for the pilot study: one from the MOT, two from local NGOs, another two from the Cultural Village and the other from a Bunong community in Mondulhiri (see Table 3.11/1).

The respondent from the Ministry of Tourism gave some insight into the marketing activities, the visitor information centres and an assurance to my prior assumption of a/the most important agency involving the production of the marketing material. He dropped a hint in my search for the agency which produced most of the official marketing/promotion material. The local NGO employees worked directly with different groups of indigenous peoples and were helpful in putting me in contact with the targeted indigenous groups and other employees. Similarly, the two from the Cultural Village hinted towards those individuals actively involved in the selection and production of performances and provided additional information about some others in the performance industry. The other piloted respondent in the pilot gave insights into the stereotyping of the Bunongs; she became my guide and put me in touch with indigenous elders. The preceding Table 3.11/2 indicated aspects of the pilot in which the confirmation of the study assumptions was sought. Other aspects of the study were also piloted, and they included the mapping of relevant issues and agencies in the scripting of cultures and places, the approaches to the first-contact communication with respondents, questioning and probing, and the pursuit of other issues. During the pilot,

**Table 3.11/1: The Pilot Study in February 2012:  
Respondents in the Study of the Representation of Peoples and Cultures**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Affiliation, Province</b>	<b>Place of Participation</b>	<b>Date of Participation</b>
● <i>Virayuth</i>	MOT, Phnom Penh	Phnom Pen	10 February 2012
● <i>Sophat</i>	Indigenous Community Support Organisation, Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh	13 February 2012
● <i>Pharath</i>	The NGO Forum on Cambodia, Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh	15 February 2012
● <i>Vira</i>	The Cambodian Cultural Village, Siem Reap	Siem Reap	15 February 2012
● <i>Mala</i>	The Cambodian Cultural Village, Siem Reap	Siem Reap	17 February 2012
● <i>Vichara</i>	A Bunong (a freelance guide), Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	22 February 2012

**Table 3.11/2 The Pilot Study in February 2012:  
Seeking Feedbacks for the Inquiry into the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Aspects of Study Piloted</b>	<b>Brief Elaboration of the Piloting Aspects</b>	<b>Feedback to the Main Study</b>
● <i>Feasibility of the study of the projection</i>	The pilot study tested the newly re-designed research questions in Table 3.4/4 as well as the five assumptions, especially the first four, in 1.5.	The scripting/the discourse of Angkor and indigenous cultures stood out, particularly through statue construction and performances.
● <i>Mapping linkages of the projection</i>	The pilot also aimed to map the linkages in the representation of various aspects of cultures, especially with regard to the marketing projection, the performance of cultures/identities and the stereotyping.	The agencies (companies and individuals) involved in the projection and representation were documented. Mala and Vichara became the samples for the main study.
● <i>Communication with respondents about research</i>	The communication with respondents was tested in the pilot with regard to the language use and briefing of the research information to create a first positive impression for research participation.	The first contracts or approaches to potential respondents were to be carefully planned in terms of the rearrangement of information to be presented, the date and time of contacts, eye contacts and so on.
● <i>Interviewing (questioning and probing)</i>	The pilot sought to practise questioning, probing and, meanwhile, learning to get hints from the respondents in the conversations, from their voices and emotions.	Interpersonal skills had to be taken into account in seeking hints of when to listen, when to ask, when to continue, when to skip and come back to the same questions.
● <i>Aspects or themes of the research</i>	This aspect of the pilot was examined with relation to the emerging issues of the projection of aspects of Cambodia via marketing and promotion, of the representation of the indigenous peoples and cultures and of other possible themes.	The problematisation of indigenous misrepresentation and cultural landscaping of public places became more acute in the pilot testing among the selected test samples.



the nonhuman samples were also surveyed with regard to the assurance of the projective discourse or scripting of the cultures, peoples and places. Meanwhile, I also began taking testimonies of the statues by photographing those in towns and provinces I have been to. Some of the testimonies are used as illustrations in the next chapter. Next, let's turn to the data collection methods employed in the study of the normalised aspects of culture gene banks.

### **3.12 Data Collection Methods: Obtaining In-Depth Information**

Different methods were employed in the current study to answer the unfolding questions captured during the research process. The re-designed questions in response to the emergent representational problems were concerned with the projection of indigenous cultures via dance performances and the projection of the dominant Khmer culture in the form of statues. The next problem unfolded in late 2012 with regard to the stereotyping of indigenous minority peoples and cultures. The data collection methods to seek detailed answers to the dynamically re-designed questions include formal interviewing (one-on-one interviews and repeat interviews), the reactive technique and casual conversations.

Generally, interviewing is a form of conversation, asking questions and gathering information and material for publication (S.Adams, 2009) with the purposes to “inform, entertain and challenge audiences” (Sedorkin and McGregor, 2002, p.2). In the media interviewing and the postpositivist approach, the conversation—mainly one answers the questions posed by the other who seeks the information about the former—is conducted in a way that the questioner tries their best to *objectively* obtain the information. This kind of objective conversation is a monologue as opposed to the negotiated text advocated by Fontana and Frey (2000, 2005).

The term ‘interview’ in the study is conceived as a dialogue or “epistemic interviewing” (Brinkmann, 2007, p.1117), in which both the investigator and the respondents engage in

the co-construction of knowledge. Withal, the term implies a certain degree of formality in the access-obtaining procedure, from very formal to semi-formal. The less formal form of dialogue is termed as a 'casual conversation' in this study. The total of 27 formal interviews was conducted in the study, seven of which were carried out in March-May 2012 and the rest in the same months of 2013. After retreating to England, another pressing representational issue, i.e. stereotypic utterance expressed by a lawmaker, emerged publicly in Cambodia.

### **3.12.1 Migration of the Study Focus: Re-Designing Research Questions in Response to Indigenous Stereotyping**

At the time when the issue of indigenous stereotyping prevailed in November 2012 (see Reflexivity 3.12.1, below), the other emergent research question was developed to bring the pressing problem of the indigenous Bunongs under investigation. This last emerging question for the whole study period concerns with seeking the perspectives of respondents about the minority groups, particularly about the stereotypes of the Bunongs and other ethnicities and reactions from the stereotyped populations.

In this emergent, soft-science study of the projection and (mis)representation of aspects of culture gene banks of Cambodia, the newly re-shaped, re-developed questions departed quite significantly in terms of the study foci. The study moved gradually from the general pre-determined questions developed before prioethnography and the prevalence of the representational issues to more specific study questions to capture the unfolding issues of the projection and representation of aspects of dominant Khmer culture via statues and those of indigenous/ethnic minority cultures via cultural shows and indigenous reactions to the stereotyped public remark. The evolving process of research question formation for this study is shown step-by-step in the second columns of the previous Tables 3.4/1 and 3.4/4.

### **Reflexivity 3.12.1: The Stereotyping of the Bunongs by a Lawmaker**

In early November 2012, an issue of representation emerged, as I was listening to overseas radios on my iPhone forecasted in Khmer language that a lawmaker from the present ruling (CPP) party described an opposition leader as a Bunong during a debate in the National Assembly, which connoted an vituperation of ignorant, uneducated and uncivilised people. The stereotyping caused an outcry among the Bunong communities, calling for his recognition and public apology according to their tradition.

The purpose of the second round of fieldwork in March-May 2013 was two-fold. First, I wished to go back to the respondents I interviewed in March-May 2012 for repeat interviews. In the repeat interviews, I would also have a chance to ask other related questions. Second, I decided to pursue the Bunong reaction to lawmaker's vituperation. The pursuit was to understand more into the feeling of the Bunongs and their responses. The attitude, like the lawmaker's, was said to have been ingrained in the Khmers, the dominant racial majority, at least since the 1960s. It was the period when King Sihanouk first began to develop the northeastern province of Mondulkiri.

Pursuing the issue of the accused utterance involved meeting and interviewing some more people. Initially, I had assumed that the indigenous reaction came from Mondulkiri, where Bunong communities were situated. Thus, I went to the province with a two-fold purpose—one was again to seek Bunong perspectives on the Bunong dance, which was also performed at the Cambodian Cultural Village; two was to talk to indigenous representatives who demanded for the public apology at their scared hill. It took a few days, following the conversations with various people in the provincial town of Mondulkiri, before I found out that the representative worked in Phnom Penh and was out of the country at that time.

In Mondulkiri, I continued talking to indigenous people and meeting elders about the meanings and significances of dances, their views on them being projected in the handbook and some other aspects of the Bunong culture. I met several indigenous people (IP) about their culture and responses to the remark. Some of conversations were short ones. As having experienced with an IP respondent Kaliyan from the fieldwork in Rattanakiri province in 2012, I had to get an indigenous guide to take me to IP villages and she also helped with translation. I also had an opportunity to learn about the guide's miserable experience about her people's traditions and belief systems. In addition, when in Mondulkiri in early April, I was trying to find places to see a Bunong dance but there was none without an arrangement. Until the end of May did I have a chance to meet the representative of Bunongs in Phnom Penh, who demanded for acceptance and public apology from the lawmaker.

In May, I had an opportunity to see more dances in Siem Reap province in addition to those in the Cultural Village, noting what was happening in the performance industry. Tourists could see dances daily in Siem Reap in restaurants on Pub Street or at an orphanage just outside the town centre.

The fieldwork in early 2012 mainly concentrated on seeking answers to the questions concerning the projection and representation of indigenous groups via dance shows or performances and via cultural landscaping of public places in the form of statues. The second fieldwork in early 2013 pursued the question concerning the reactions towards the lawmaker's stereotypic remark of the Bunongs, who particularly live in a northeastern province of Monduliri. The 2013 fieldwork was also set up to double-check/triple-check the data obtained from the fieldwork in 2012.

### **3.12.2 Formal Interviews: Collecting Detailed Information about the Projection of Culture Gene Banks**

Interviews were conducted with 27 respondents in the two rounds of the research fieldworks, first in early 2012 and second in early 2013. The respondents were mainly from four main provinces of Cambodia, i.e. Phnom Penh capital, Siem Reap, Rattanakiri and Monduliri.

The topics were covered from culture, history, beliefs, religion, identity, tourism, performances/dances and cultural meanings/significances. Those included in the interviews had been contacted, informed about the purpose of the research and provided with research information they needed prior to the interviews. Those included in the casual conversations, per contra, were met ad hoc at the places or events I visited. The research participants in the study fell in one or more of the following populations: marketers, academia and researchers, performers/dancers, performance artists, public/private agencies and the projected individuals/communities. As argued by Lyotard (1984), some of them instantiated multi-selves. The aim of including multiple populations was to enhance perspectivisation of the issues in question. Although this inclusive strategy was traded off by time/resource, a range of perspectives were sought so as to reduce the risk of the singular/dominant interpretation, leaving others unaccounted for. Such strategy was an important part of the critical cultural pedagogy and bricoleurship.

**Table 3.12.1 Migration of the Research Questions:**

**From Pre-Designed to Dynamically Re-Designed Questions in Response to Unfolding Issue of Stereotyping**

Pre-Designed Questions	Re-Designed Questions
1. What constituted culture gene banks of Cambodia in terms of the interpretations of various stakeholders?	1. What are the critical issues of representation emerging from the projection and performance of aspects of culture gene banks?
2. How was the dominant version of culture gene bank of Cambodia selected, produced, performed and projected?	2. How are the typical indigenous groups of populations (mis)represented via performances?
3. What, if any, indicated the acts of dominance, subjugation, and silencing in the representation of Cambodia?	3. How dominant aspects of culture are projected in the production of public places/spaces via statues of cultural significance?
4. What evidence, if any, was there which indicated the existence of the form and development of representational system which governed the projection of Cambodia?	4. How do the targeted indigenous minority groups in Cambodia react to the projection and representation of them?

**Table 3.12.2/1: Respondents in the Main Study:  
Collecting Data for the Study of Normalising Aspects of Gene Banks**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Affiliation or Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date of Participation</b>
● <i>Bopha</i>	The Ministry of Culture, Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh	17 March 2012
● <i>Bona</i>	An advertising company, Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh	20 March 2012
● <i>Phanny</i>	A university lecturer and a former staff of the Ministry of Tourism	Phnom Penh	23 March 2012
● <i>Channa</i>	A university lecturer (the university was managed by the Ministry of Culture) [Repeat Interview]	Phnom Penh [Phnom Penh]	25 March 2012 [26 May 2013]
● <i>Kaliyan</i>	A Kroeung (a participant in the Nanning Exposition)	Rattanakiri	07 April 2012
● <i>Rithy</i>	An indigenous Tumpoun (a community leader of Yeak Laom lake) [Repeat interview]	Rattanakiri [Phnom Penh]	09 April 2012 [21 May 2013]
● <i>Sokhom</i>	The Cambodian Cultural Village, Siem Reap [Repeat interview]	Siem Reap [Siem Reap]	15 May 2012 [02 May 2013]
● <i>Sochea, Chenda</i>	Indigenous Kuys (community activists from Kampong Thom)	Phnom Penh	14 March 2013

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**Table 3.12.2/1 (Cont'd): Respondents in the Main Study:  
Collecting Data for the Study of Normalising Aspects of Gene Banks**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Affiliation or Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date of Participation</b>
● <i>Pheakdei, Phirum, Pich</i>	Indigenous Pors (community activists from Battambang and Pursat)	Phnom Penh	15 March 2013
● <i>Vichara</i>	An indigenous Bunong (a freelance guide in Mondulkiri)	Mondulkiri	05 April 2013
● <i>Heng</i>	My Village, a local NGO in Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	05 April 2013
● <i>John</i>	A shop owner (from the United States), Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	06 April 2013
● <i>Kosal</i>	A Bunong community elder, Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	07 April 2013
● <i>Kunthea</i>	A Bunong community elder, Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	07 April 2013
● <i>Soknak</i>	A former Master of Ceremony at the Cultural Village, Siem Reap	Siem Reap	05 May 2013
● <i>Chinith</i>	The MOT, Phnom Penh [Paralell interview]	Phnom Penh	10 May 2013
● <i>Mary</i>	A management staff member of Artisan d' Angkor	Siem Reap	17 May 2013

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 3.12.2/1 (Cont'd): Respondents in the Main Study:  
Collecting Data for the Study of Normalising Aspects of Gene Banks**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Affiliation or Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date of Participation</b>
● <i>Nimol, Bora</i>	Indigenous Kroeungs (community activists from Rattanakiri)	Phnom Penh	19 May 2013
● <i>Raksmey, Ponleu</i>	Indigenous Bunongs (community activists from Mondulkiri)	Phnom Penh	19 May 2013
● <i>Rotha</i>	Indigenous Tumpoun (community activist from Rattanakiri)	Phnom Penh	20 May 2013
● <i>Samnang</i>	Indigenous Bunong (community activist from Mondulkiri)	Phnom Penh	20 May 2013
● <i>Sambo</i>	A former research staff at the Cultural Village, Siem Reap	Phnom Penh [Phone interview]	25 May 2013
● <i>Sinoun</i>	A Bunong representative (leading advocacy against the stereotyping of the Bunongs by the lawmaker)	Phnom Penh	27 May 2013
● <i>Sonita</i>	A management staff member of a performance group	Kandal	28 May 2013



In the study, the interviewees were contacted directly (or via a gatekeeper, for example, in the cases of Mary and Bona) and explained about the general aim of the research project. Sometimes, I was required to write a formal letter and enclosed supporting documents. This process, especially when the bypass was inevitable, took at least a week for me to obtain the reply. Regarding Mary, her positive response took exactly a week in May 2013 and another week for the actual interview to take place. The request for a meeting with Bona took a few weeks before the reply was given and the interview date was scheduled.

An attempt was made to seek insights from a respondent from the National Museum in 2012 but failed partly due to her political commitment leading to the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2012 commune election. Access to other persons at the Ministry of Culture was also unsuccessful due to the public bureaucracy. In the study, a respondent worked for a University under the jurisdiction of the Ministry. However, a couple of books such as those related to museums and dances written by peoples from the Ministry were obtained. The preceding Table 3.12.2/1 registers the pseudonyms of participants in the study of the gene banks, accompanied by their affiliations/positions, the locations and the dates of the interviews.

The subsequent Table 3.12.2/2 contains the issues or themes of the inquiry; the imaginary names of the respondents were marked with ■ (interview), ▣ (repeat interview), ◇ (parallel interview), and © (casual conversation) together with the breakdowns of the issues. Repeat interviewing, parallel interviewing, and the reactive technique are further elaborated in the sub-sections that follow. The cutting edge of the thematic coverage was a dialogue concerning the aspects of cultural selection, production, projection, and the indigenous voices/reactions. The Table registers 27 interviews (including three repeat interviews and one parallel) and 13 casual conversations. In addition, the strengths and weaknesses of interviewing in the study of the representation, fantasmatics and politics are reflexively registered in Table 3.12.2/3.

In this emergent, soft-science study, I had to stay alert to the unfolding problems, the populations and the dynamic contexts in which the research took place, and the research activities had to be adapted to the exigencies of the changing research needs. Questions asked to respondents during the study also varied in details from one person to another as each participants tended to have their own particulars, distinct experiences, views and attitudes. General questions asked during the interviews, conversations and reactive techniques are provided in Table 3.12.2/4. The Table registered general questions together with target populations. The exploratory questions were designed to be adaptable to specific interviews, conversations and contexts. Other precise questions were built upon the responses, comments or reactions given during the dialogues. Thus, probing questions asked to research participants tended to differ in questioning details from one person to the next.

#### **3.12.2.1 Repeat Interviewing: Checking the Data for Clarity**

In Lincoln and Guba's (1985) contention, member checks could be continually conducted with the respondent who gave the data/information or with another in the same stakeholding group. I sometimes called it double-check(ing) or cross-check(ing), respectively. In member-checking, a piece of information could even be triple-checked or verified with more than two respondents or sources. In the study, repeat interviewing was introduced and implemented, although it was not planned prior to the study conduct. A repeat interview, here a second interview of the same respondent, was conducted on three individuals, i.e. Sokhom, Channa and Rithy (see □ in Table 3.12.2/2), from an attempt of four including Bona. Thus, the three respondents out of nine interviews in 2012 were re-interviewed to double-check key information they had provided in the first interviews, to cross-check information offered by other participants and to further probe into other relevant issues.

**Table 3.12.2/2 Thematic Coverage Sought in Employment of the Data Collection Methods:  
Breakdown of the Data in the Study of Normalisation of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks**

Issue Under Investigation	Respondent	Thematic Breakdown
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>The Projection and Representation of Peoples, Cultures and Places via Marketing Material</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bona</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The official handbook/tourist guide production; decision-making in the selection, promotion and projection; projected themes in the handbook; meaning and significance of symbols included; meaning of the promotional message; the Nanning Exposition and views on representation; Khmer identity</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>© Villagers at a Bunong community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The community members and dances in the handbook photos (MOT, 2011a); their dressing; their dance/performance versus their actual practices; transformation of aspects of their culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>© Chan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The photo of him in the 2011a handbook; the traditional costumes and dances in the handbook; rice-harvesting ritual (ritual or 'sen' in indigenous term); change in the dance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>© Chamroeun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The dance, the rice-harvesting sen and its change; the dressing and others</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Chinith</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The production of marketing material (including CNN spots); marketing partnership and collaboration; selection of tourist sites in the handbook; themes in tourism marketing/promotion; tourism information centres (TICs); Issues regarding the marketing of the Khmer Rouge legacy; branding messages/slogans</li> </ul>

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 3.12.2/2 (Cont'd) Thematic Coverage Sought in Employment of the Data Collection Methods:  
Breakdown of the Data in the Study of Normalisation of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks**

Issue Under Investigation	Respondent	Thematic Breakdown
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Reactions to Lawmaker's Stereotyping of the Bunongs</i></li> </ul>	© Visal	▶ Reaction; misconception; retreat of Bunong communities from town; the buffalo sacrifice sen
	■ Heng	▶ Reaction; (mis)conceptions of Bunongs; cultural change; dances/dressing; religious conversion
	■ John	▶ Reaction; (mis)conceptions of the Bunongs; the non-sustained beliefs; Khmerisation of the indigenous (passive genocide); land grabbing; religious conversion; influence of modernity
	■ Sinuon	▶ Reaction to the slur; the demand for public apology/recognition at a hill in Mondulkiri
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Projection via Performances with particular emphasises on those of the Kroeungs and Bunongs</i></li> </ul>	■ Bopha	▶ The dance troupe to and performances at Nanning; indigenous participations; the dancers' representation of indigenusness
	■ Kaliyan	▶ Her textile production shows; her participation in the show of indigenous culture; the dance troupe/dancers' activities; Kroeung dance
	▣ Rithy	▶ His comments on performances/dances, selection and representation
	© Kolab	▶ Her role in Kroeung performance at Cultural Village; her acting in the 'Choosing a Fiancé' ceremony
	© Mala	▶ Show of the Bunong's sen (sacrifice of a buffalo); dressing; dress-production
	▣ Sokhom	▶ Cultural selection, production and performances at Cultural Village; communication with visitors via performances; artistic creativity and imagination; meanings and storylines projected; elements of performing arts—justice, virtue and beauty/aesthetic; dance categories and so on.

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**Table 3.12.2/2 (Cont'd) Thematic Coverage Sought in Employment of the Data Collection Methods:  
Breakdown of the Data in the Study of Normalisation of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks**

Issue Under Investigation	Respondent	Thematic Breakdown
● <i>Projection via Performances with particular emphasises on those of the Kroeung and Bunong (Cont'd)</i>	© Udom	▶ Dances/performances at the orphanage; views on some dances there
	■ Soknak	▶ Performances and his role at the Cultural Village
	■ Nimol, Bora	▶ Comments on the Kroeung performance and its storyline at the Cultural Village
	■ Raksmeay, Ponleu	▶ Comments on the Bunong performance and its storyline at the Cultural Village
	■ Rotha	▶ Comments on performances
	■ Samnang	▶ Comments on the Bunong performance and its storyline at the Cultural Village
	■ Sombo	▶ Research methods in the study of indigenous cultures/traditions as inputs in the writing of indigenous storylines for the performances at the Cultural Village; aspects of indigenous cultures
	© Pheaktra	▶ Views on the creativity/modification of dances
	■ Sonita	▶ Views on the creativity/modification of dances; dance selection, production and projection; communication and meanings/significations of dances/performances
	● <i>Projection of Aspects of Cultures and Places via Statues Projected in Public Places</i>	■ Phanny

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**Table 3.12.2/2 (Cont'd) Thematic Coverage Sought in Employment of the Data Collection Methods:  
Breakdown of the Data in the Study of Normalisation of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks**

Issue Under Investigation	Respondent	Thematic Breakdown
● <i>Projection of Aspects of Cultures and places via Statues Projected in Public Places (Cont'd)</i>	▣ Channa	▶ Double-checking claims in the previous interview; cross-checking of information; views on various aspects such as performances, projection in marketing and statue erection in public places; authenticity and others
	© Sopheap	▶ Views about statues and production
● <i>Contingency Interviews and Conversations</i>	■ Sochea, Chenda	▶ Indigenous Kuy culture/livelihoods and development; language; beliefs; annual cultural events/sens; the iron production; [Techo Yort was a Kuy, using Kuy sword]
	■ Pheakdei, Phirum, Pich	▶ Kuy culture/livelihoods and development; language; beliefs; annual cultural events/sens; expectations; identity faking/politics of own identity; legal identity (identity on legal documents); conception of Pors; racial discrimination
	■ Vichara	▶ Handicrafts and embedded identity; misconceptions of the Bunongs; international tourist activities in Mondulkiri; the buffalo sacrifice for rice-harvest sen; culture and change; religious conversion; personal history; beliefs and influence on livelihood
	© Kravann	▶ History and belief at the hill where the lawmaker was demanded to hold a ceremony of apology

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**Table 3.12.2/2 (Cont'd) Thematic Coverage Sought in Employment of the Data Collection Methods:  
Breakdown of the Data in the Study of Normalisation of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks**

Issue Under Investigation	Respondent	Thematic Breakdown
● <i>Contingency Interviews and Conversations</i>	■ Kosal	▶ International tourism to the village and income; culture and belief; meaning and significance
	© Malis	▶ Religious conversion
	© Chanthou	▶ Religious conversion
	© Sophal	▶ Religious conversion
	■ Kunthea	▶ Tourism activities and income; culture/beliefs; sens
	■ Mary	▶ Meaning/implication of the name of the company; selection, production and projection of crafts and arts and connection with identity; reproduction to artistic imagination/creativity; cultural symbols; services by foreign tourist guides

**Table 3.12.2/3 The Interviews in the Study Implementation:  
Evaluation of Practical Strengths and Weaknesses**

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<b>Conduct of Interview in the Study of Culture Gene Banks</b>	
<b><i>Strengths of Interviewing</i></b>	
● <i>Sustained focus</i>	The respondents appeared to maintain their focus on the discussion topics longer than those from the casual conversations.
● <i>Preparedness</i>	The sustained focus probably resulted from the choice of their time/location and their preparation for the interviews.
● <i>Concise information</i>	The information from the respondents often deemed more specific and concise. The resulted clarity was probably due to their preparedness.
● <i>Probing vantage</i>	Because the interviews were conducted with much less interruption than the casual conversations, I had a better chance to probe into relevant issues.
● <i>Note-taking/recording</i>	I had a better opportunity to take notes or record the interview upon consents.
<b><i>Weaknesses of Interviewing</i></b>	
● <i>Access clearance</i>	Access problem was thicker for some interviews than others.
● <i>Boredom/tediousness</i>	For those interviews with which I had to clear gatekeepers, it sometimes created a (temporary) atmosphere of 'boredom'.

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**Table 3.12.2/3 (Cont'd) The Interviews in the Study Implementation:  
Evaluation of Practical Strengths and Weaknesses**

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<b>Conduct of Interview in the Study of Culture Gene Banks</b>	
<b><i>Weaknesses of Interviewing (Cont'd)</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Time consumption</i></li> </ul>	<p>The more difficult access, the more time/resource involved in the access-securing efforts. Sometimes, the effort was in vein.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Amount of information</i></li> </ul>	<p>The great amount of information obtained from the interviews created sometimes a feeling of tediousness.</p>
<b><i>Leverage to the Weaknesses</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Assessment of the access clearance</i></li> </ul>	<p>I had to evaluate the accessibility. He sometimes retreated to other research activities to save some time, and effort and to reduce the level of weariness.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>On-going digestion of information</i></li> </ul>	<p>When time allowed, the collected information was examined from time to time despite the fact that I did not have many opportunities to do so because the fieldworks demanded a lot of travelling.</p>

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**Table 3.12.2/4 General Questions for Interviews, Conversations and Reactive Techniques:  
Main Exploratory Questions for the Study of the Projection and Representation of the Gene Banks**

Adaptable Questions	Target Populations in the Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What aspects of culture were projected at the Nanning Exposition?</li> <li>● How were they presented/showed to the Exposition-goers?</li> <li>● What were you performing at the Exposition?</li> <li>● Can you tell me more about the performances at the Exposition?</li> </ul>	<p>Nanning Exposition performers and dance troupe leader(s)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Under how many themes in the handbook were you trying to project/represent Cambodia?</li> <li>● What are the meanings/significances of A, B or C?</li> <li>● How did you decide to project A, B or C but not others?</li> <li>● What decisions were made about not projecting of them (the non-projected) in the handbook?</li> </ul>	<p>Handbook Production Team and related individuals</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How did you decide to select the performances H, O, P at the Cultural Village but not others?</li> <li>● What were the meanings and significances of those performances?</li> <li>● How did you obtain information for the dances (cultures performed)?</li> <li>● What do you wish to communicate to your audience about the dances H, O, P?</li> <li>● Have you ever received any reactions from the peoples whose cultures were performed here? If yes, can you tell me about them?</li> </ul>	<p>Managers and supervisors at the Cultural Village in Siem Reap</p>

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**Table 3.12.2/4 (Cont'd) General Questions for Interviews, Conversations and Reactive Techniques:**

**Main Exploratory Questions for the Study of the Projection and Representation of the Gene Banks**

Adaptable Questions	Target Populations in the Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What roles were you performing in the shows H, O, P?</li> <li>● What were the meanings and significances of the performances H, O, P?</li> <li>● Please tell me more about the aspects of the cultures in your performances.</li> <li>● How did you get training for the shows H, O, P?</li> </ul>	Dancers/Performers at the Cambodian Cultural Village
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do you feel about your pictures/cultures/dances in the material/clips X, Y, Z?</li> <li>● Do you think your pictures or clips in X, Y, Z tell fairly accurately about you? If not, can you tell me what is wrong with them?</li> <li>● Someone said statements K, L, M about you/your culture. What do you think? [A sample question for the reactive technique]</li> </ul>	Represented (indigenous) peoples and related individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can you please tell me about your decisions to have statues H, I, J built in places L, M, N, respectively?</li> <li>● What are the meanings and importance of statues H, I, J?</li> <li>● What are your opinions about the building of statues H, I, J?</li> </ul>	Projected Statues and related individuals such as commissioners, university professors, researchers and so on
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are being projected in material O, P, Q?</li> <li>● About what does each of the projected aspects want to communicate to the audiences?</li> <li>● Who did each of the projected cultural activities, structures and places belong to?</li> <li>● Does any of the projected activities and places tend to convey problematic representation? If so, what are they?</li> </ul>	Non-human samples

For example, Sokhom participated in the second interview, in which he was asked to clarify some ideas and concepts, such as his frequent use of 'we', the elements of the performing arts, and artistic 'creativity'. The interview was also expanded to include the shows recently set up between the first and second interviews. He was also asked to react to statements from another respondent about inauthenticity ('fakeness') of the shows at the Cultural Village. The purpose of the second interview was to check if the information given in the first was what Sokhom (and other repeat interviewees) meant to say. Likewise, the data from the first interview with Channa were summarised and presented to him in the repeat interview, which was then extended to the discussion on other aspects of the indigenous cultures and authenticity. The repeat interview with Rithy was also broadened, e.g. to other aspects of the indigenous performances. The data gathered from the interviews were confirmed in two main ways: first, through repeat interviews and, second, through the reactive technique. The technique was employed as part of the member-checking process and as part of further probing and eliciting information from the respondents.

A number of problems were associated with carrying out more repeat interviews. First, time limited the conduct of member-checking. Second, accessibility to remote provincial areas where the respondents, such as Kaliyan, lived was also a problem. Yet, her linguistic challenge was another issue (see Reflexivity 3.6). Third, the movement of the respondents for various purposes compounded the difficulties. As access to the repeat interview with Bona deemed unsuccessful, I had recourse to parallel interviewing with another member or official of the handbook (marketing) production team. Parallel interviewing is treated in the next section.

#### **3.12.2.2 Parallel Interviewing: Tackling Access to Repeat Interviews**

Parallel interviewing was not imagined prior to the actual conduct of the fieldwork. The idea for parallel interviewing was conjured up as access to the repeat interview with Bona loomed abortive. Parallel interviewing was conceived as a method employed to seek an

alternative respondent most coordinate with (or tantamount to) the inaccessible one, involving the selection of the next best sample to the initial target. In the study, Chinith was selected on the basis that he and Bona were on the same production team, and the former was also an important person working in the area of the marketing and promotion.

In the case of Bona, I felt that it would cost too much time, resource, and energy to wait for a repeat interview with him. Hence, in order to cross-check the information Bona had provided in 2012, I spontaneously decided to turn to one of his teammates Chinith who was also involved in the production of marketing/promotional material. I named this interview as a 'parallel interview'. In the parallel interviewing with Chinith, similar questions used with Bona were again employed. As it was alternative to the repeat interview, the main purpose was to seek his perspectives about the same/similar issues (projection via marketing material) so that their views (those of Bona and Chinith) would be compared and contrasted. The interview rendered a confirmatory indication of the viewpoint of the officials in the selection, production and projection of aspects of the gene banks.

Strictly speaking, identifying respondents for parallel interviewing could be highly problematic. In the above case, the identification of Chinith for parallel interviewing was based mainly on the fact that they were on the same team, collaborating in the production of the MOT handbooks and other promotional material. Actually, they might differ a great deal in terms of background and experience, eloquence, the actual effort in the production, the level of cooperation, and personality, to name a few. Due to the difficulties associated with identifying and matching people with parallel attributes, I decided to opt for the above selection criterion (i.e. in terms of production team) and set aside the remaining endeavour to other important aspects of the study implementation. Parallel interviewing was conceptually insightful, but the sample selection might be problematic. Although parallel interviewing was carried out with only a respondent, I believed that this method was useful when the attempts at the targeted respondents deemed futile due to various factors, such as time and respondent mobility.

### **3.12.2.3 The Reactive Technique: Eliciting Richer Information**

The reactive technique was applied in the interviews, especially when I was trying to elicit comments on certain aspects of cultures such as statues and performances. Some interviews were mainly based on the reactive techniques. It was a technique (or a method) in which respondents were asked to respond (i.e. react) to other respondents' selected statements/views or to the visuals such as a handbook, a CNN promotional spot, a filmed show and/or photographs of statues. They were used as visual aids in the conduct of the technique.

One of the advantages was that the technique triggered responses regarding visual aids, in my pursuit of richer meaning and signification of cultural objects such as statues and sculptures. Further, the interviews often became more interesting with the visual aids. The visuals also revved up recollections. Another benefit of the reactive technique was the way in which it was employed to stimulate reactions from respondents. Some of the statements expressed by earlier participants (e.g. Channa) were used to elicit reactions from another (e.g. Sokhom) in order to seek diverse perspectives on the issues under investigation. Besides, the visual aids themselves became the subject of the discussion, especially for the indigenous respondents, such as Nimol, Bora, Raksmei, Ponleu, and Samnang. A main problem encountered was that the employment of reactive technique using the visual aids as a main subject for interviews lengthened the already would-be long dialogues.

In some cases, the respondents were presented with statements selected from the previous respondents and they were asked for comments. The purpose to doing that was to enrich perspectival interpretations concerning aspects of the problems under investigation such as dance performances, authenticity and reproduction of statues (or pastiches). The sources of the statements were revealed to in the reaction-seeking process to protect the owners' anonymity.

#### **3.12.2.4 The Casual Conversations: Beating Problems of Time Constraint for the Study and Access to Interviews**

The thirteen casual conversations were indicated by © in Table 3.12.2.4/1. They were called casual conversations because they lacked the formality employed in the interviews. In the current research project, a 'conversation' referred to an *informal* dialogue carried out without a prior plan. I engaged in the informal conversations with the respondents during my priorethnographic activities. The conversations listed in the Table lasted from 15 to 45 minutes.

The respondents were explained about the study just before the conversations on the spot (e.g. at attraction sites, a seminar and a show), and the conversations began with the introduction to the study. For example, I met Kolab, still in indigenous costumes, on the stage just after her performance. I met Pheaktra at the dance training floor and Oudom soon after he finished putting up the performance at an orphanage. I met Visal in his office to talk about his views on the Bunong culture and his reaction to the lawmaker's utterance and Kravan at a sacred tribal attraction site, a hill at which the lawmaker was demanded to hold a traditional ritual of apology.

The casual conversations had their own strengths and weaknesses, which are listed in Table 3.12.2.4/2. The casual conversation as a method to seek data from respondents saved time as paperwork/gatekeepers and waiting time were largely evadible. One of the drawbacks of employing the method was that the respondents were less prepared than those in the interviews. It was a reason why casual conversations were generally shorter than the interviews. Data from many of the casual conversations were gathered from the indigenous populations. Other loopholes of the casual conversation could be mitigated with the tactics indicated in the Table. Despite some of the weaknesses, the method could be employed to shun the above obstacles, such as time and gatekeeping encountered in interviewing. Thus, the casual conversations were a mitigating method, complementing the formal interviews in the study.

**Table 3.12.2.4/1 The Casual Conversations:  
Respondents in the Study of Normalisation of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Affiliation or Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date of Participation</b>
● <i>Villagers</i>	Villagers of a Bunong community, Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	02 April 2012
● <i>Chan</i>	A man projected in the handbook (MOT, 2011a), Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	02 April 2012
● <i>Chamroeun</i>	A Bunong community elder/chief (invited to help composed music at the Cultural Village), Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	02 April 2012
● <i>Kolab</i>	A dancer at the Cultural Village, Siem Reap	Siem Reap	10 May 2012
● <i>Mala</i>	A dresser at the Cultural Village, Siem Reap	Siem Reap	10 May 2012
● <i>Visal</i>	A NGO staff member working in indigenous land registration (and identity inventory) project, Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	05 April 2013
● <i>Kravann</i>	A staff member of the Provincial Department of Culture and Fine Arts, Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	06 April 2013

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**Table 3.12.2.4/1 (Cont'd) The Casual Conversations:  
Respondents in the Study of Normalisation of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Affiliation or Position</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date of Participation</b>
● <i>Malis</i>	A Bunong converted into Christianity, Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	08 April 2013
● <i>Chanthou</i>	A Bunong converted into Christianity, Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	08 April 2013
● <i>Sopha</i>	A Bunong converted into Christianity, Mondulkiri	Mondulkiri	09 April 2013
● <i>Udom</i>	A supervisor at an orphanage where performances were conducted for tourists in the evenings, Siem Reap	Siem Reap	29 April 2013
● <i>Pheaktra</i>	A trainer at the School of Culture and Fine Arts, Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh	30 May 2013
● <i>Sopheap</i>	A researcher at the Center for Khmer Studies, Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh	31 May 2013

**Table 3.12.2.4/2 The Casual Conversations in the Study Implementation:  
Evaluation of Practical Strengths, Weaknesses and Mitigation Strategies**

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**The Casual Conversations Employed in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia**

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***Strengths of Casual  
Conversations***

- *Gatekeeper-shunning*      The casual conversations were used as an approach to bypass some complex entry procedures, especially when the respondents could not be directly reached. This is not to say that, in the interviews, the complex entry procedures had to be there at all times.
  
- *Time-saving*      In employing the casual conversations, some amount of time was saved especially with regard to the formality involved in the access-clearing procedures of the interviews.
  
- *Relationship-building*      Relationship, especially informal one, was easily built than that in the interviews. This relationship was sometimes made it easy for me to reach the respondents again for double-checking and cross-checking. Informal rapports were important for re-accessing them.
  
- *Flexibility*      Flexibility could be easily maintained although the casual conversations sometimes occurred in the private space.

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**Table 3.12.2.4/2 (Cont'd) The Casual Conversations in the Study Implementation:  
Evaluation of Practical Strengths, Weaknesses and Mitigation Strategies**

<b>The Casual Conversations Employed in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia</b>	
<b><i>Weaknesses of Casual Conversations</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Interruption</i></li> <li>● <i>Lack of focus</i></li> <li>● <i>Recalls of data</i></li> </ul>	<p>The casual conversations were susceptible to interruptions by other people visiting the public shops, attractions and places, although they could be resumed after interruptions.</p> <p>The interruptions sometimes resulted in a lack of attention to the conversation topics. There were a few instances where the respondents did not realise what they just talked about before the interruptions.</p> <p>Because the information from the casual conversations was memory-based, I sometimes had difficulty in recalling them.</p>
<b><i>Mitigation of Weaknesses</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Frequent Recap</i></li> <li>● <i>Early Recall</i></li> <li>● <i>Contact detail</i></li> </ul>	<p>After each interruption, recapping the conversations was helpful in reminding the respondents of the problems/issues just covered and in bringing their concentration back.</p> <p>The memory-based conversations had to be recalled as soon as possible after the conversations so that much of the information could still be retained.</p> <p>Respondents' contact details were kept in case I encountered difficulty in recalling or in case there was anything else I would like to confirm with them.</p>

### **3.13 Analyses of the Data: Thematic Tapping into the Projective Discourse**

In the above subsections of 3.12, the implementation of the aspects of the methodology was examined from the study populations/samples, sampling strategies and methods of data collections, such as interviewing, casual conversations, and reactive techniques. Part of the purposive sampling strategy (the maximum variation sampling) was to select samples which were thought suitable to each of the issues under the investigation with the criteria registered in Table 3.9/1 for the human and nonhuman samples. The projection of Cambodia via performing arts, the pastiches of statues and stereotypic utterances was developed as the fulcrum of the inquiry into the discourse of normalising aspects of culture gene banks of Cambodia.

The findings pivoting around the fulcrum are presented in the next chapter, together with immediate interpretations of collected texts. The texts are collated and adduced to provide evidence of the representational discourse(s). The themes related to the discourse(s) (after Foucault, 1977, 1980) of the projection and representation hinged on normalisation of aforesaid unfolding issues. The adduction is derived from various sources to corroborate the language and practice of the representation and politics of the projection of aspects of the cultural repertoire of Cambodia.

In the next chapter, the presentation of the findings are sought to produce perspectival texts, and interpretations/preliminary analyses are provided together with findings. These immediate interpretations serve as signposts to the main discussions/analyses in the last chapter. The discussions in chapter 4 are concentrated on the leitmotifs (or themes or sub-themes) of the projective discourse of aspects of the gene banks drawn in the study. The main aim of the analysis of the data gathered using the methods elaborated in the previous sections was to bring in views from various sources to bolster perspectivisation of the issues explored in the study.

### **3.14 Research Ethics: Consideration of Ethical Issues in the Inquiry**

The inquiry into culture gene banks of Cambodia depended very much on the data collected from the participation of human subjects, particularly utilising ethnographic activities, interviewing and reactive technique. I was the only investigator in the study of representation, fantasmatics and politics of the projection of Cambodia via dance performances, sculptural embellishment of place/space and stereotyping of indigenous populations. This section elaborates on main ethical issues anent selection of research participants, the data protection, use of the findings, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants' identities, and risks associated with the study.

The research participants of this emergent study were selected based on sampling strategies such as purposive, snowball and convenience. They must be at least 18 years old to be allowed to participate in the study. They were approached and informed of the main purpose of the research. Their consents were thereby sought and obtained before appointments with them were made and the interviews formally conducted. In the casual conversations, the agreements of the participants were sought on the spot before the conversations were brought to the central issues under investigation. Special care was taken with regard to the reactive technique employed on the participants in the data-gathering process. The identities of participants such as their names and institutions were not revealed in the data collection. In the reactive technique, especially when reactions to the perspectives of the previous respondents were sought, written statements were presented for reactions. Under no circumstances were the voices or ownerships of the perspectives revealed.

The data gathered from the research participants were kept confidentially. Real names of the respondents were coded and separately kept with a passcode and notes of interviews and conversations bore the codes of the respondents. Imaginary names (or pseudonyms) are used in the presentation and interpretation of the findings of the inquiry. Moreover, they are used only for academic purposes, and under no circumstances were the findings

commercialised. The raw data and research notes are to be destroyed once the post-viva modifications to the thesis have been accepted.

The level of risk associated with the inquiry was low. There were no apparent physical risks from participating in the research. There might be political risks but I sought to ascertain that the data collection was not aggressively intrusive. As a result, participation from concerned government officials was low. There might also be risks on the part of the respondents from participating in the study. Hence, informed consents were to be secured, and they were given freedom to withdraw anytime during the study. Many, however, saw the interviews as an opportunity to promote their activities (e.g. dances), and the projected populations saw the conversations as a chance to share their stories and to interact with the investigator.

### **3.15 Recap of Chapter 3: The Conduct of the Inquiry into the Projection of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks of Cambodia**

The current study was investigated with regard to dances/performances, the lawmaker's observation of the indigenous groups, and the cultural dressing of public places with statues/monuments. They were also projected via tourism marketing/promotion and the media. The five main sections above featured the implementation of the study within two periods (i.e. March-May 2012 and March-May 2013) during doctoral programme. The chapter on the study conduct was sketched via the philosophical, theoretical, and methodological orientation, including the constructivist thinking, priorethnography, cultural and critical pedagogies, bricoleurship, and data collection methods.

First, the constructivist paradigm of Lincoln and Guba (1985), which was realigned with the pluralistic ontology and perspectivistic epistemology, informed the study conduct to a great extent. It drew my attention to key concepts and understanding of the configuration of multiple, blurry truths/authenticity. However, its application encountered some

problems, e.g. those of accessibility to the constructors/respondents' minds and the linkage of different intersubjective constructions. Second, priorethnography was practically advantageous, although its actual activities were offset by the time, budgetary, and geographical factors. If conducted with sufficient time and resource, it might have enhanced accessibility and assessment of the emergent design. Third, the arts of cultural and critical pedagogies were insightful to the investigation of the cultural realm in tourism. They levered the conduct of the fieldwork in the areas of cultural selection, production and projection by drawing particular attention to the knowledge, power and hegemony of the cultural agencies. Next, bricoleurship transcended and harmoniously supported other approaches employed together in the study. For instance, the reflexive engagements with and pursuit of the emerging issues, the flexibility/creativity (e.g. the use of the sampling strategies, interviewing and the casual conversations), a range of perspectives captured from the interviews/other data sources, and the employment of various approaches, methods and technique in the study conceivably served as a theoretical and practical enhancement of bricoleurship. The methodological approaches, sampling strategies and data collection methods are summarised again in Table 3.15/1 and Table 3.15/2.

The purposive sampling was prioritised in selecting the samples, but the practical issues in the field had to be combated by alternative strategies. The purposive heterogeneity sampling was augmented by the snowball sampling and convenience sampling. The sampling employed in the inquiry into the projective discourse of Cambodia might be termed as a mixed sampling strategy, the use of more than one sampling strategy in the same study. The human and non-human samples obtained by means of interviews, reactive techniques and casual conversations were associated with the issues of the projection of aspects of Cambodia via marketing material, the lawmaker's remark and the performance of various aspects of cultures. Other respondents came from the indigenous populations, the marginalised groups of the society. Some of the respondents were re-interviewed for double-checking the information they provided in the first interviews and for cross-checking the information obtained from different sources during the study

conduct. Parallel interviewing was also carried out to seek to evade the problem of access. Casual conversations were employed to get around some accessibility problems confronted by the bureaucratic procedures in obtaining interviews. The collected data were analysed within the thematic and discursive frameworks in accord with the findings to be presented in the next chapter.

The constructivist approach implied that individual perspectives or voices from the study populations in the projection of aspects of cultures of Cambodia were a chief concern in the analysis. Those perspectives were derived from the respondents and other textual sources. The findings in chapter 4 are presented in a way to produce perspectival texts and immediate interpretations. The findings are presented with various perspectives/voices regarding the representational issues congruent with the ontological pluralism and the epistemological perspectivism. It is hoped that the focus on various voices in the representations and interpretations of the findings help enhance the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of the discursive matters of the projection of the aspects of culture gene bank or tourism gene bank of Cambodia. Thus, the aims of the analyses were to adduce the projective discourse(s) concerning the (mis)representation and performance in order to enhance perspectivisation and to provide the broader contexts of the viability and transferability of the issues in question.

The findings in the next chapter are organised by the thematic issues derived from the study. The chapter begins with the Angkorean discourse. Various aspects of Angkor stated in laws and policies and practiced by the state institutions, businesses, organisations and individuals are then illustrated. It shows that the Angkorean aspects transcended the cultural realm of projection and representation of Cambodia. The opening sections of the next chapter advances the discourse found to be pervasive in the projection of Cambodia and other aspects of the Khmer culture, traditions and beliefs and in Angkorcentricisation of the Khmer culture and identity. In fact, aspects of the normalisation/naturalisation prevail throughout the next chapter. Sections 4.4 to 4.6 elucidate the cultural dressing of public places (i.e. placemaking) via statues of various



significances such as the religious, mythical and political. The last sections of chapter 4 are allocated mainly for the projection of the ethnic Other via performances, i.e. the performance of identity by cultural agents.

**Table 3.15/1 Summary of Philosophical and Methodological Orientations:  
Application of the Approaches in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia**

Approach Employed in the Study	Application of Methodology
in Inquiry into the Projection of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks	
● <i>Constructionist-inspired inquiry</i>	It is the study of social, cultural and political constructions/interpretations, which were constituted by actors or agents involving in the (re)configuration of pluralistic and perspectivistic understanding and dialectically situated knowledge. The unfolding issues of performances, sculptural representations and stereotypic utterances were investigated in the light of constructionist ontology epistemology and methodology as discussed in this chapter).
● <i>Priorethnography</i>	Priorethnography was employed to assess the study setting(s) towards the emerging research design. Situated in and accommodating to the research context(s), I sought to prioritise research activities and to adapt and re-designed the aim and objectives in response to the aforesaid emergent issues. Although with some hindrance concerning access to institutional space and officials, this approach proved instrumental leading to the execution of the study.
● <i>Paraethnography</i>	The approach sought opportunities to make use of local knowledge/expertise because local intellects as research partners, with embedded social, cultural and political knowledge, were expected to direct/re-direct research focus, point to relevant issues to be further investigated or the sensitivity of the research situations, for example. However, it was difficult to apply due to the collaborative issues.

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 3.15/1 (Cont'd) Summary of Philosophical and Methodological Orientations:  
Application of the Approaches in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Approach Employed in the Study</b>	<b>Application of Methodology in Inquiry into the Projection of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks</b>
● <i>Cultural pedagogy</i>	In employing the cultural pedagogy, I brought under scrutiny the existing cultural system in which cultural agents selected, produced and projected/represented the dance performances, open public places with statues and the ethnic Other.
● <i>Critical pedagogy</i>	I utilised the critical pedagogy to draw my attention to the critique of the normalisation and naturalisation of peoples, cultures and places by cultural agents, bringing the prospect of (more) awareness and equity in society. In particular, the production and projection of dance performances, statued representations and ethnic stereotyping were scrutinised.
● <i>Voice and reflexivity</i>	I incorporated my own voices and reflexivities in this study. These aspects constitute the linchpin of this chapter and the next ones.
● <i>Bricoleurship</i>	Despite limitations, I sought to make use of bricoleurship, a philosophical and methodological approach in the examination and critique of the ways in which cultural agents produced knowledge. Bricoleurship was a helpful jack-of-all-trades approach in utilising the resources, methods and strategies at hand to get around difficulties in the field. However, I felt that there was much room for me to improve through practices; it is a life-long learning process, not just for this inquiry.

**Table 3.15/2 Summary of Strategies and Methods:  
Data Collections in the Study of the Projection of Cambodia**

<b>Method Employed in the Study</b>	<b>Application of Methods in Inquiry into the Projection of Aspects of Cultures and Performances in Cambodia</b>
● <i>Target population</i>	The perspectives from different groups of populations—both in human and non-human—were included although the indigenous (subjugated) population appeared to be larger than the others.
● <i>Sampling strategy</i>	Three different sampling strategies were used in the study; they include purposive sampling, the snowball sampling and convenience sampling. They last two types were employed to complement the unexpected pitfalls of the purposive sampling.
● <i>In-depth interviewing</i>	In the conduct of the study, the qualitative in-depth interviewing was employed as a main method of data collection to get into the breadth and depth of the unfolding issues. In probing into related issues, I also applied interactive techniques (see below). Moreover, repeat interviewing was also used to double-check and cross-check the data obtained. Interview data were also triangulated with secondary data and vice versa. Parallel interviewing was also conjured up for use.
● <i>Casual conversations</i>	Casual conversations were employed as an important method to get around certain issues encountered in the field conduct. Formality scared away certain target groups such some indigenous participants, who felt more comfortable in the form of chit-chats. Informal social conversation was a strategy workable in many of my research contexts.
● <i>Perspectivisation</i>	It is a form of textual analysis corroboratively placed texts/perspectives together under certain themes to produce a coherent synthesis.
● <i>Reactive technique</i>	The reactive technique was employed to illicit information from the respondents. Photos, videos and unnamed statements from previous interviews, news and other types of texts were utilised to seek reactions from the respondents.

## **CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS**

### **Immediate Interpretation about the Selection, Production and Projection of Aspects of Cambodia**

#### **4.1 Introduction: Key Findings of Representation, Fantasmatics and Politics**

The overview of the contemporary tourism in Cambodia was provided in chapter 1, which introduced some significant cultural and natural tourism resources and the endeavours of cultural agents (e.g. private and public agencies) to project Cambodia via international tourism and, effectively, to the outside world. Certain images (e.g. the temples of Angkor, the beaches), depicting aspects of the cultural/natural resources, appeared more prominent than others in the projection of the nation. The conservation and protection of the temples of Angkor were resumed after the Paris Peace Agreement. Actually, as stated in the UNESCO website about Angkor, the conservation and restoration of the Angkor first began in 1907 by the EFEO. Chapters 3 was concerned with philosophical and methodological approaches and methods used to gather data for the two rounds of fieldwork in March-May of 2012 and the same months of 2013.

The study began freshly with a set of pre-designed aim, objectives and research questions. In the conduct of this emergent, soft-science study, they were re-evaluated and modified in response to the emergences of the pressing issues concerning the performances of indigenous dances in late October 2011, the reproduction and representation of public places constituting staged spectacle in early 2012 and the public stereotypic utterance by the lawmaker in late 2012. The first round of fieldwork in March-May 2012 pursued the first two issues and the second round of fieldwork in the same months of 2013 investigated the indigenous stereotype and reactions from the concerned

populations. The findings in this chapter are therefore built around these aspects. The approach from the three angles to understand the projection and representation of normalising aspects of culture gene banks (or rather the Angkor gene bank, the performance gene bank and the culture gene bank) captured the importance and the recency of representational realm within the context of tourism and cultural production in Cambodia today.

Tourism in Cambodia gained its immediacy soon after the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement. It is shown in this chapter that, from the Constitution of Cambodia, the whole nation appeared to fix its fantasmatic and representation of their identity and cultural politics with the Angkorean culture/civilisation at the central realm of their imagination and aspiration. The Angkorean glory permeated at all levels, including the international, regional, national/institutional, and individual. The glamorisation of the renowned Angkorean culture, society and politics in legal, economic, social and cultural policies and practices at various levels was evident in a range of aspects from the Constitution of Cambodia, to local businesses, shops and street vendors at tourist attractions. The Angkorean civilisation has embodied the heart and mind of the Khmers, who officially promoted their nation as the *Kingdom of Wonder*. Hardly have any Cambodians waged criticism of the Angkorean imaginal; they have endowed it, per contra. As Edwards (2007) noted, Angkor has been employed as an ideological/political discourse by different regimes.

Cambodians were proud of his political and social achievements and his protection of the country against outside invaders. Aspects of the Angkorean glory were performed to produce a significant Khmer identity and were identified in dances (e.g. the royal ballet), Khmer martial arts (e.g. Bokator), the narration/show of the King and his heroism and others performed by the Cultural Village. Some of these were designed to give visitors a snapshot of 'authentic' experience of the cultures and identities of Cambodians. Two esteemed religions in the history, culture, traditions and customs of the Khmers were Hinduism and Buddhism, which blossomed in the Angkorean era from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Chandler, 1991). The two became the legacies for the Khmers today

but Buddhism—first championed by King Jayavarman VII—permeated the temperament of the Khmers

As shown from the findings later in this chapter, symbolisation of cultural/religious significances via statues erected in public places was commonplace throughout Cambodia, today. Monumental statues of revered Hindu figures/deities such as those of Lords Vishnu, Vishvakarman, Ganes and Rama were placed in roundabouts, road corners and other public institutions. Their images and reverence became institutionalised. The statues connoted symbolic values and spirituality and, as part of the Angkorean legacy, they entered the common sense of the Khmers. Representations (after Lidchi, 1997) of Buddhism in the form of statues or physical religious infrastructure (i.e. Buddhist pagodas/*Wat*) pervaded the public landscape of Cambodia.

In addition to the politics of the Angkorean enchantment, monumental statues such as those of kings of the post-Angkorean period were constructed to commemorate their attainments, heroism and patriotism and thus inoculated them to the public memory. The commemoration and instillation of the public memory via the imbuelement and normalisation of the seeing and experience of the statued representations became a common sense practice of cultural producers or commissioners. A top politician was said to impersonalise the King due to their close affinities (see Norén-Nilsson, 2013).

As attested from the findings, the statued representations signified a historical importance of Cambodia when it was torn between Vietnam from the East and Thailand from the West. Although King Ang Duong was politically manipulated by the Siam, he was thought of as a saviour of Cambodia from the two lions by reaching out to the French, who later colonised Cambodia for almost a century. Furthermore, this chapter highlights historical and cultural aspects of royalism/elitism which were significantly captured in the investigation into the projection of tourism in Cambodia. Statues, monuments and their replicas became part and parcel of representation and commoditisation of Khmer identity. The Cultural Village is employed as an illustrative case for this.

A collage of historical, cultural and religious aspects was materialised into symbols and markers of culture gene banks and tourism products of Cambodia. In addition to the above-mentioned statues, the production of historical, cultural and religious reifications and Khmer literati were added to the composition of the Khmer representational repertoire. A finding also shows that part of the Vietnam-Cambodia narrative, symbolising the 7<sup>th</sup> January victory over the Khmer Rouge. The 7<sup>th</sup> January subsequently became a (the?) grand narrative of liberation for Cambodia today and was especially reiterated during the political propagandas and election campaigns

Religions, beliefs and legends had a good share in culture gene banks of Cambodia. In addition to religious beliefs in Hinduism and Buddhism, the Khmer temperament was frequently governed by legends and myths. The Cambodian aspiration towards the Angkor glory today may have been conceived as a political myth (after Bottici, 2007). Numerous myths, i.e. Hindu mythology, were associated the temples of Angkor (see Roveda, 1997). In addition, legends were commonplace and were represented in the form of statues for worship. Sometimes, they became a political tool.

It may also be drawn from the findings that the repertoire of Cambodia's culture, history religion and nature can be inspected with regard to the ways the nation was embellished with statues/monuments of various significances. They were encountered daily by locals and tourists alike. Sometimes, it was so banal that they did not enter their consciousness. The projection and instrumentalisation of culture and history were engineered towards the branding of Cambodia as the *Kingdom of Wonder*. The projection of Cambodia, its culture/heritage and natural serenity via the media serves as a testimony. Although various aspects of culture and nature were captured, the images of the Angkor culture/civilisation were branded at the epicentre of the media projection. In short, tourism Cambodia today was primarily about the production and projection of the Khmer identity and culture, especially attuning to the Angkorean fantasmatic.



The study shows that the projection of Khmer identities via the production of statues/monuments with historical, cultural and religious significances was a poetic and politic of public exhibition. It gave narratives of various aspects of culture gene banks of Cambodia. Dances/performances were another projective aspect. They were sometimes mobile and were found on show throughout Cambodia, especially concentrated in tourist destinations such as Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. The Cultural Village as an agency in the tourism industry showcased the Khmer history, culture and nature in its museums and exhibited replicas of important sights in Cambodia. Moreover, various aspects of Khmer culture, traditions and customs were singled out and produced for tourism . These aspects of the shows were acts of meaning-making (Bruner, 1990) in the projection of the Khmer cultures and identities.

Not only were aspects of Khmer culture and identities produced but also those of other ethnic minorities were represented via the cultural agents. The thematic presentation and interpretation of the findings are clustered according to types of cultural significances and the aforesaid unfolding issues explored in the study, i.e. sculptural representations, performances and stereotypic utterances and reactions from the articulated indigenous populations.

#### **4.2 Legal and Policy Discourse of Tourism: The Angkor Normalised to the Core of Tourism Projection and Development**

This section of the findings derives from the review of policy documents concerning tourism development in Cambodia. The aim was to detect discursive policy practices which prescribed directive paths to tourism projection and promotion. Policy scripting and goal-setting are perceived as instrumental in understanding cultural production and representation of gene banks.

In the Preamble of the 1993 Constitution, the people of Cambodia were inspired by the fame of the Khmer Empire, especially from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their aspiration was legitimated in policy documents and strategies of the Kingdom of Cambodia. The Constitution is the top legal framework and it was first adopted by the National Assembly in 1993 was a result of the Paris Peace Accord. The following preamble was taken from the English version of the Constitution.

We, the People of Cambodia

Accustomed to having a grand civilization, a prosperous nation, a very large territory, a prestige glittering like a diamond;

Having fallen into a terrifying decay for the last two decades, when we have been undergoing unspeakable, demeaning sufferings and disasters of the most regrettable way;

In a burst of consciousness, rising up with a resolute determination in order to unite, to strengthen the national unity, to defend the Cambodian territory, to preserve the precious sovereignty and the marvellous civilization of ANGKOR, to rebuild the country and become once again an "Oasis of Peace" based on the system of a liberal multi-party democracy, to guarantee human rights, to ensure the respect of law, to be highly responsible for the destiny of the nation forever evolving toward progress, development and prosperity.

*(Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, 1993, p.1)*

As seen in the above quotation, Angkor is engraved as the 'grand civilisation'; the civilisation that was - 'prosperous, powerful and glorious' and it thus become the dream of the people of Cambodia.

The temples of Angkor were a (the?) most important cultural resource for tourism in Cambodia, today. As having witnessed, most of the international tourists to Cambodia visited the Angkor temples. However, the exact number of international tourists visiting the temples of Angkor did not seem to be publicly available. Statistical reports from the Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia showed international (and domestic) visitors to Siem Reap but did not provide the numbers of those visiting the temple complex, nor did the Sokimex private company provide the figures of the visitation. Sokimex was given the sole right to collect revenues from tourists visiting Angkor temples by the government. A local English newspaper the Phnom Penh Post reported:

Sokimex was granted the concession to ticket sales to the sprawling 9th-to-15th century temple complex, Cambodia's biggest tourism draw, last

year. Under the deal signed in April 1999 Sokimex was to pay the Government a flat fee of \$1 million in return for the ticket concession and could keep all revenue above that. The deal came after years of lost revenue under Government management.

(Vong and Marcher, 2000)

The government realised the importance of tourism for economic growth and poverty alleviation, as evident in the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) 1996-2000, Hun Sen's rectangular strategies (RGC, 2004, 2008), the five-year national strategic development plans (NSDP) (see RGC, 2002, 2006, 2009b), and Council of Ministers (2008). In a NSDP, one of the bulleted proposed measures was to "further improve and develop tourism products focusing upon at four prioritised areas (Siem Reap Angkor, Phnom Penh and peri-urban, the coastal zone and the Northeast) and expand to other destinations throughout the country" (RGC, 2006).

The government recognised tourism as cultural and nature-based tourism in its national tourism policy (Council of Ministers, 2008). The four main zones (i.e. Siem Reap Angkor, Phnom Penh capital, the coastal areas and the eco-tourism in the Northeast) were the central focus of tourism development and promotion. In one of its visions, the policy indicated prime attractions which included the Angkor Park, the Temple of Preah Vihear, the Tonle Sap (Great) Lake/its biosphere, the river dolphins and the eco-tourism in the northeast. The utmost significance of Angkor could also be seen in the quotation at the very beginning of chapter 1.

Although tourism was a top earner among garment, construction and agriculture (see RGC, 2009a), it was very much concentrated in Siem Reap-Angkor. Among the four target zones, the northeast received the least tourists. The tourism law with 77 articles stipulated various primary and secondary responsibilities of the Ministry of Tourism (RGC, 2009a). The law mainly provided legitimacy to the Ministry with a range of authorities from issuing licenses and crediting tourism businesses/activities to establishing a National Tourism Institute, a Tourism Vocational School, and a University of Tourism and Hospitality. The law provided the Ministry with a legal framework within which the institutional master could operate comfortably. Although tourism today began since the

early 1990s, there appeared to be a lot more policies for the Ministry of Tourism to produce such as the National and Regional Development Plans (RGC, 2009a).

The main tourist attractions/sites in the four zones prioritised for tourism development in an effort to help enhance economic growth and reduce poverty were found crammed in official handbooks promoted by the Ministry of Tourism. They were themed mostly around the Khmers and their identity, the group of population who conceivably inherited their culture, traditions and customs from the Angkorean ancestors (also see the song 'the Children of the Great Empire' in Extract 4.2, Appendix). The tourism law stipulated that the marketing and promotional activities are a primary responsibility for the Ministry. The goal-setting in the national policies to be cultural tourism with the ancient Angkorean culture as the icon for the development of tourism and as an important expression of the national identity was perhaps due to the assumed collective spirit that Angkorean history/culture was unrivalled in the national, regional and global arenas.

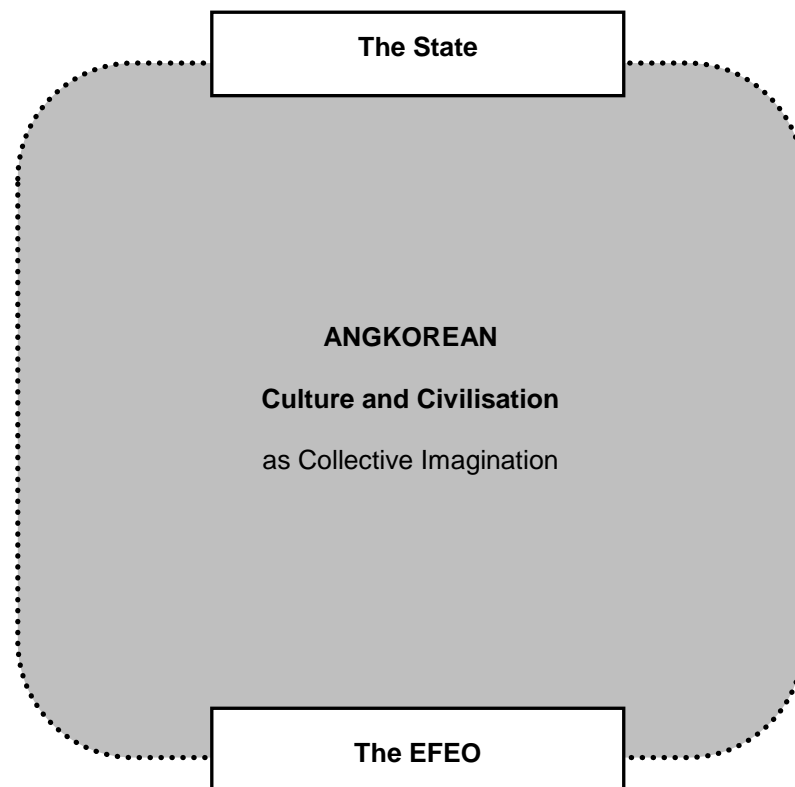
#### **4.2.1 Normalisation of Angkorean Civilisation: Interpretation of Angkorcentric Disposition of the Khmers**

Apparently, the civilisation of the Angkor emerged out of a narrative of an imposing structure supposedly built by a people in Southeast Asia, i.e. by the present-day Khmers. Dagens (1995) noted that a French naturalist Henri Mouhot appeared to have funded his travel to the region by his family fortune with his first tour of Thailand and his second tour of Cambodia from December 1858 to April 1860 when he had the encounter with Angkor Wat then engulfed by the jungle. He died of exhaustion east of Luang Prabang on 10 November 1861 (Dagens, 1995; Glaize, 2003). Tully (2005, p.16) however mocked at the hearsay that Mouhot 'discovered' Angkor, stating that he never made that claim himself because "he was guided there by a French priest, Father Sylvestre". After all, at its apex, the narrative of the discovery of the Angkor and its temples, which had been there for centuries, was constructed by the French, especially the EFEO. The institution used its

scientific expertise to provide knowledge about the Angkorean culture and civilisation, which were thus born out of the imagination of the French archaeologists (Edwards, 2007; Winter, 2007).

Explorers, photographers, artists, and Emperor Napoleon III had seen Angkor immediately after the proclaimed discovery, and various drawings, photographs and stories were produced in an attempt to depict the temples and make them known (Dagens, 1995), perhaps in the attempt to produce the phantasmatic of Cambodia/Indochina (Norindr, 1996). Many of the drawings and narratives of the Khmers at that time illustrated the barbarousness of the natives but the superiority of the civilised Europeans, especially the French.

With the “*technique*” (Ellul, 1964, ch.1) and the imaginative capacity of the EFEO archaeologists, the temples of Angkor made a comeback and the culture and traditions of the contemporary Khmers were revitalised as an ‘essentialist’ component of Cambodia’s cultural politics, especially since the Angkor temples were brought to standing. The narrative was so renowned and inviting that famous celebrities visited Cambodia and the Angkor temples in late 1960s. The institution invested a great deal of technologies, efforts and imagination to study, restore and re-configure the temples for about three quarters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to make a transition from the temples engulfed with dense vegetation to the Angkor Park. Subsequently, Angkor had a profound influence on the national identity and aspiration made possible with the assistance from the colonial “technique in the construction of modern Cambodia (Edwards, 2007; see Figure 4.2.1, below). The Figure is meant to show that the state and the French EFEO institution were the two most important agents of normalcy in the construction of Angkorean discourse as a collective imagination in the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a timeless continuation of the French imaginary, the representation of Cambodia and the projection of the Khmer attachment with the Angkor, Cambodians (as stipulated in the Preamble of the 1993 Constitution) were under great determination to preserve the civilisation of Angkor, the “civilizing mission” (Norindr, 1996, p.27) or “*la mission civilisatrice*” (Edwards, 2007, p.29).



**Figure 4.2.1 Representation of Angkorean Civilisation:  
The State and the French Imagination**

In my various encounters in life in Cambodia, numerous aspects of the Angkorean culture/civilisation were selected and produced for tourist consumption and projection of the national identity and Khmerness. From the public/private media broadcasts, institutions visited (not just during the fieldworks) and communications encountered, they were embedded with the Angkorean discourse or rather “Angkor-centric nationalism” (Edwards, 2007, p.9). This Angkorcentric discourse deemed undisputed in Cambodia. Thus, the colonial ideological prescription was not in vain and Angkor became the “cash cow” for tourism development (Winter, 2007, p.2).

Angkor has been engrafted in the minds and hearts of the Khmers. This deep-seated temperament was turned into speech and action among Cambodia leaders and citizens. This discourse of Angkor will be again shown in various places in this research document. For the time being, two exemplars of such deep aspiration and fantasmatic towards Angkor from members of different Cambodian emailing groups would suffice. First, in an email of a member about her reflection from watching a YouTube video broadcasted on the National Television. The excerpt in Extract 4.2.1 (Appendix) from her email communication indicated her pride of having Angkor and, for her, Angkor was the symbol of harmony, spirituality and peace. A member of the other emailing group also provided a testimony of his belief and aspiration springing from the group discussion about the preliminary result of the July 2013 parliamentary election. Towards the end of his email, he wrote “superstition might offer that King Sihanouk has not stopped working hard, even with his super soul, to bring his ancestors' country back to Angkorean glory some day, possibly in the life time of those in their 30s now” (Chan, 29 July 2013). The snippet indicated the writer’s strong desire to go back to the Angkorean glory, believing that the ex-King Sihanouk’s spirit could have some influence in pushing Cambodia towards the past glamorous days. In short, he exemplified the belief/aspiration, like that of other Khmers, for the idealised Angkorean fame.

This Angkorcentric aspiration was cultivated by speech and praxis. The next section will show that the media projection articulated various aspects of the Angkorean culture,

tradition and history. A largest aspect of the Khmer performing arts and crafts today pivoted around the Angkorean frame of reference. The cases of a Thai actress, the Angkorean lighting project and the sentiment of another member of the just mentioned professional group (a different case) in 4.3 illustrate the sensibility towards the infringement of Angkorean symbolic power, meaning/significance and the wide public recognition of the Angkor in terms of Khmer fantasmatic and spirituality. Also, the poetics and politics of public place production by the state to be shown in other sections enforced the fantasmatic and concretised the praxis, maintaining the tradition and direction for the Angkorcentric psyche for the collective, imagined community (after B.Anderson, 1991). It was stated in 5.1 that Angkor was etched in the Constitution and tourism development policies. Subsequently, the projection of tourism via the media is examined.

#### **4.3 The Media Projection of Tourism: The Khmers and the 'Kingdom of Wonder'**

Section 4.3 draws on the media projection of tourism because it is critical to understanding the power and the reach of tourism representation. The media transport signs and images (or semiotic representations) to the audience or tourists. Culler contended that tourism cannot be divorced from signs and tourists are agents of semiotics because they are reading objects, places, cities, landscapes and cultures as sign systems (Culler, 1981). These are markers that constitute the tourist sight or spectacle (MacCannell, 1999). The media project and represent these markers to tourists. In the study of the gene banks of Cambodia, markers (and signs) were thus employed to create the image of the *Kingdom of Wonder*, and the media projection deserves inspection to provide contextual framing of the emergent issues in question.

Promotional video spots were produced to frame Cambodia as the *Kingdom of Wonder*. In the 41 second spot made for the Cable News Network (CNN), the images shown in the video included the temples of Angkor, a Buddha image, the Royal Palace, the beaches, Mekong river dolphins, a waterfall and a child bathing under, the *apsara* dance, the Gate



of the Bayon temple and the shadow theatre. More importantly, images of the temples appeared from time to time in the video. Below is the script written verbatim from the video:

Behold a realm awash in the colour of the sun,  
discover a world bathed in beauty and adventure,  
enter a land blessed with the warmth of its people,  
experience the magic of its culture,  
come visit Cambodia, Kingdom of Wonder.  
(MOT, 2010)

The frequent appearance of different images of Angkor temples in this short CNN promotional video indicated the important, or the most significant, images of the temples of Angkor in tourism. The video featured the Angkor Wat temple, the Ta Phrom temple with the invasion of a gigantic tree, a guardian lion, the *apsara* dance, the Gate of Bayon, and the shadow theatre, all of which gave a sense of awe about the Khmers to viewers. The Angkor temple complex, the *apsara* dance, and the Khmer Shadow Theatre were enlisted as UNESCO's world heritage (see MOT, 2011a, 2012a) and they were important contributions to the fantasmatic of the *Kingdom of Wonder*. The dolphins and the waterfall shown in the video spot were parts of the tourism products in the Northeast. The marketing/promotion thus stayed in line with the policy of tourism development.

Another promotional spot also produced for the CNN about two years ago showed a lady running with a backpack and casual clothes—the lady acted as a backpacker! In a forest, she stood looking away at the Angkor temples with a pair of binoculars and was then searching the temple ruins in dense vegetation. Then, she found herself running/racing. She stopped and looked at an *apsara* on a wall of a temple and the celestial being began dancing. The video also showed the temple of Preah Vihear and the Bayon, where she was riding an elephant. There was also a scene where she arrived to a waterfall in Mondulkiri and ran in water. She kept running past the Independent Monument and stopped briefly to glance at the new tall building/tower of the Canadian Bank in Phnom Penh. She went on racing and arrived in front of the Central Market where cyclo riders were going past her. She then ran past the National Museum and the Royal Palace, where she startled pigeons in from of the palace to begin flying. The one-minute spot also

showed boat racing/water festival celebration and golf playing in a green field. The lady was then running along a beach and arrived to a place where she saw a bridge connecting to an island. Eventually, she found herself on a speedboat driving through mangrove forests towards the Tatai resort in Koh Kong province. The one-minute promotional spot was transcribed below:

Sometimes to understand the present, you have to go back to the past. And this time, it's a race, a race against time. A time is running out to reveal something so amazing and so exciting. It will literally leave you breathless. A race to show something so authentic and so original. You wonder if it ever lasts. Hurry, this is the Kingdom of Wonder Cambodia!

(MOT, 2012b)

The promotional spots above worked to produce an awe and excitement to see the temples and an appeasement of the minds to see the great natural beauty. The ancient temples were a fantasmatic in which the Khmers imagined through eyes of the French imagineers. Chheng (2003) noted that the Khmers have had thousands of years of history on their land and they used to build a prosperous and advanced civilisation in its own history, especially during the Great Empire.

The 'the Children of the Great Empire' gave a narrative, regarding the Angkor and a Khmer person of interest, saying that "[the] Khmer have glorious race being respected and worldwide of having prosperous ancestral tradition of Great Empire". The song continued that the Khmers were characterised by 'heroism', and 'Buddhism' was a vehicle of education about "sin, merit, and guilt". The song itself educated the general public to pay reverence and gratitude to the "Seven[th] January", which was "the genuine Mother and Father of the sons and daughters". In fact, it was Hun Sen, the Prime Minister with high morality and honour, who had to be respected, and "this is the real Children of the Great Empire". He was lifted up and projected as an apotheosis of the contemporary politics of Cambodia.

The natural assets like the rainforests and its views at Tatai River in Koh Kong, etc. were considered 'worldly heaven'. The Khmer song 'memories of Tatai resort' narrated the

beauty and natural landscape of the Tatai as a 'paradise' for visitors (see Extract 4.3/1, Appendix), describing the mangroves as 'beautiful', fish 'abundant', breakfast 'delicious' and tourists entertained under 'moonbeam night' in harmony. The song stated that, at the Tatai resort of "international' standard...and good service", tourists could enjoy "sound sleep in a dream of good smell and a taste like heaven". In addition, "delicious morning breakfast by the islands with fresh crabs, shrimps, watermelons, honey [bee] pineapples, tasty durians, and soothing feelings like the beauty of a young woman". The song and music were designed to ensure that tourists would definitely enjoy the 'perfect' paradise or worldly heaven at Tatai in Cambodia, the Kingdom of Wonder!

Bona, who had significant contributions to the production of the local, national and international marketing material, explained the meaning of the *Kingdom of Wonder* as seen in snippet (1) of the interview with him in Extract 4.3/2. The media projection and marketing of Cambodia as the *Kingdom of Wonder* was hardly found contested, especially with regard to the goodness of the Angkor. The contestation was perhaps rivalling if the projection was related to politics such as the case of the 'Children of the Great Empire' or the case of resort development which resulted in negative consequences. A song projected as a counter-discourse of those composed by the Ministry of Tourism was 'the Kingdom of Wonder' (Extract 4.3/3, Appendix). This song with pictorialism contradicted the official media projection about the wonder of Cambodia in framing the Cambodian public lives. Bona articulated the meaning of wonder, differentiating between 'wonder' as a singular noun, and 'wonders' as a plural noun in his branding message the *Kingdom of Wonder*; on the contrary, the above anti-projected song attempted to articulate the term 'wonder' as a verb.

According to online dictionaries, the term wonder referred to something or a country, which aroused awe, astonishment, surprise, or admiration ([www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com) and <http://dictionary.reference.com>). It was also used, among other meanings, to talk about a monumental human creation like in the Seven Wonders of the World. Bona argued that wonder (the singular form as in the *Kingdom of Wonder*) meant the

experience tourists obtained or sold to them. It was the goodness and the richness tourists discovered and the amazement/awe tourists obtained from their visits. He said he was not selling the wonders, which were plentiful in Cambodia. Nevertheless, one might critique that it was the experience and perhaps the experience(s) selected by him and the Ministry of Tourism.

Credited by and collaborated with the MOT, Bona produced marketing material, such as the official handbooks (see MOT, 2011a, 2012a) and the ATF magazine (see MOT, 2011b). The ATF magazine depicted Cambodia thematically in a close affinity with the depiction in the two official handbooks. With fewer attractions/sites and some smaller pictures than those in the handbooks, the magazine included attractions in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and the Tonle Sap (biosphere), Sihanoukville, Kampot, Koh Kong, Kratie, Steung Treng, Rattanakiri, and Mondulakiri in their 28 page section on Cambodia. The handbooks incorporated more attractions in several other provinces, i.e. 15 out of the 24 provinces in Cambodia. The three marketing documents had very similar themes, though. With regard to a place for the Khmer Rouge history in the official marketing, Bona asserted that “atrocities do not sell” (see (2) in Extract 4.3/2).

There was a testimony that the media and marketing of Cambodia at national, regional and international levels were sided with the policies set out by the government. The 15 provinces were strategically selected under the main themes of cultural tourism, the Cambodia bay, ecotourism, and tourism investment; fewer attractions/sites from each province were in turn chosen. Bona also indicated these marketing themes. Those investments such as the Tatai Resort, the Sang Sa Island Resort and the Boko Hill Resort were primarily featured in the official media and marketing, although these developments (not just in tourism) by Chinese investors and Cambodian tycoons were said to take for granted the damage to the environment, and its biodiversity of the locations and the resultant evictions of local residents (see Yun and Vandenbrink, 2013a; Bradsher, 2013; Say, 2013). Once nature/landscape has been commercialised, public

access was restricted, as in the cases of Tatai Resort in Koh Kong and the Sokha Resort in Sihanoukville.

There were also numerous videos and articles, for instance, on DVDs, YouTube, the National Geographic and CNN in both Khmer and English which told stories about Cambodia, the temples of Angkor and its culture/traditions (see Winchester, 2012 and Dunston, 2013, for instance). In addition, scenes of Cambodia and the temples of Angkor were also shot in Hollywood movies, such as the *Tomb Raider* filmed at the temples of Angkor (see Winter, 2002) and Louis Vuitton commercial shot of Angelina Jolie in the countryside of Cambodia (see Jolie, 2011) might partly help made the country known to the world. Furthermore, guidebooks/travel websites on Cambodia such as the Lonely Planet, the Rough Guide and the TripAdvisor (also see Freeman and Jacques, 2010; Glaize, 2003) have helped made a range of information about the country and its tourism available to the outside world. They provided various aspects of Cambodian culture, customs, traditions, history, people and places. Freeman and Jacques (2010) and Glaize (2003) concentrated on the temples of Angkor, its architectures, styles and history. However, it did not suggest that academic sources such as those by Ollier and Winter (2006a), Edwards (2007) and Winter (2007) were to be ignored.

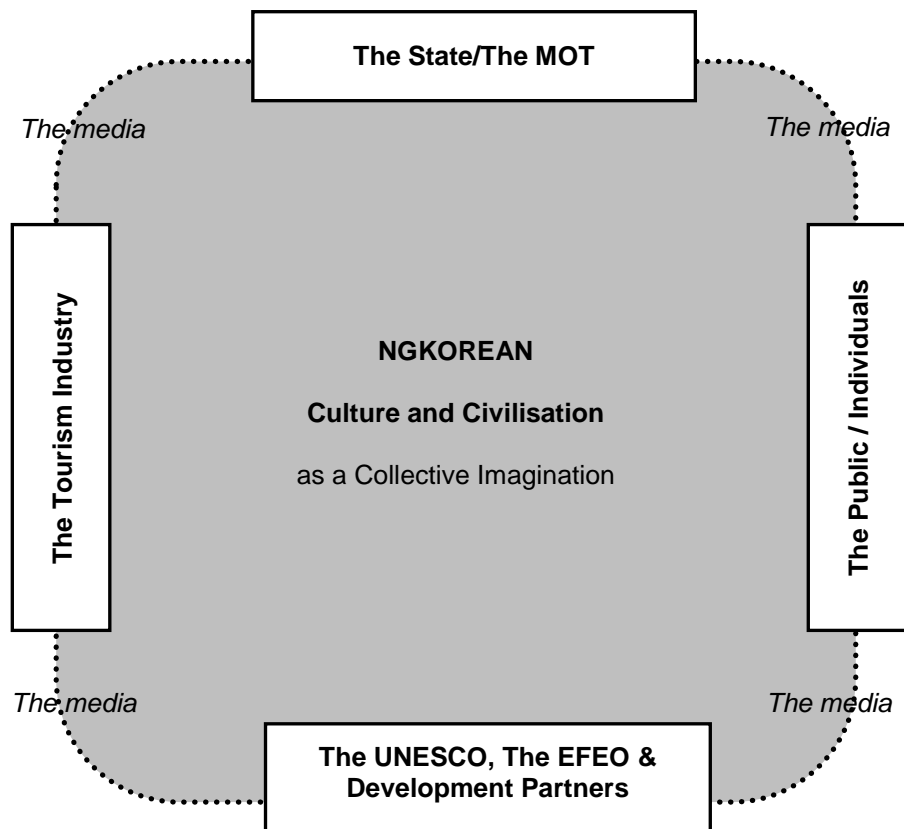
Cambodia was also known through performing arts. Today, performing arts organisations both in Cambodia and abroad such as the Khmer Arts, Cambodian Living Arts, Epic Arts, Season of Cambodia and Amrita Performing Arts took shaped. They organised performances and were invited to perform outside Cambodia such as in the United States, Australia, Britain and Hong Kong (see Heywood, 1994; McPhillips, 2001; Vachon, 2013). Chheng (2003) noted that, in the contemporary Cambodia, culture and arts began to attract the world's attention since the 1950s, the time when performing arts (e.g. classical, folk and hill tribe dances) were created and led by Sisowath Kossamak, ex-King Sihanouk's mother (also see Sun, Meng and Huot, 2012). The pride of performing arts in the 1950s-60s was unfortunately in danger due to conflict and civil war in the 1970s, especially during the Khmer Rouge period (Chheng, 2003). After the 1993 election, the

Cambodian performing arts were revitalised and reproduced, partly owing to international support and Cambodian diasporas. The Cambodian royal ballet dance troupe launched a 64-day tour of Europe (Post staff, 1999).

In addition to the above performing arts agencies, today the Ministry of Culture also had a dance troupe to perform for regional and international delegates and at events and trade expositions in Cambodia or abroad. Bopha told that she led the dance troupe to the Trade Exposition in Nanning, where the royal ballet, Reamker, monkey dance and other indigenous dancers were chosen for performances there (Interview with Bopha, 17 March 2012).

Besides performances, arts and crafts were also regenerated. There were arts/crafts workshops, including plastic arts, in various places in Cambodia, two of which were the Artisan d' Angkor in Siem Reap ([www.artisansdangkor.com](http://www.artisansdangkor.com)) and Phare Ponleu Selpak Arts School in Battambang province ([www.phareps.org](http://www.phareps.org)). The former produced crafts of the Khmer culture, especially those from the Angkorean arts. The latter produced visual arts, Khmer theatres and circus. Mary told that tourists were offered free guiding at the Artisan d' Angkor. As noted earlier in this section, media and cultural activities helped market and promote Cambodia to the world. Although some activities were parts of training/performances inside organisations, they entered the media (e.g. newspapers, magazines, CNN, YouTube and websites). The concerted projection of aspects of Cambodia is graphically presented in Figure 4.3, overleaf.

Moreover, the Angkor half marathon has been organised for many years to attract athletes from all over the world to Siem Reap and, meanwhile, boosted tourism to the province (MOT, 2012a; L.Sok, 2011). This annual event for good cause was first launched in 1996, drawing "thousands of runners from more than 40 countries around the world" (MOT, 2012a, p.37). The Cultural Village in Siem Reap staged shows of Khmer, Chinese and tribal cultures in Cambodia. The shows/performances at the Cultural Village



**Figure 4.3 The Media Projection of Angkor:  
Key Agents in Representing the Khmer Past and Identity**

permeated the media and they could be located on the Internet such as the TripAdvisor and YouTube. The Cultural Village became a site for production, projection and representation and commoditisation of aspects of cultures and identities. The above aspects of Cambodia have become parts of the local television programmes and broadcasts, which helped concretise the views of the Khmer culture and identity in discursively branding Cambodia as *the Kingdom of Wonder*.

#### **4.3.1 The Projection and Fantasmatics: Interpretation of Angkorcentric Frame of Reference**

In Edwards' (2007) argument, Cambodia was framed with reference to the Angkorean civilisation from French colonial vision and phantasmatic. The framing was an important part of the economic, social and cultural construction of Cambodian identities and traditions. The culture, traditions and religions of Cambodia appeared to be projected with the dominant frame of reference of the Angkorean civilisation.

Inside and outside knowledge production about, and media projection of, Cambodia helped reinforce this frame of reference, which apparently received little dissonance towards the normalised discourse of the *Kingdom of Wonder*. Dill (2009) stated the media, or rather the mass media, had a profound influence/power on the public lives. Things—like it is 'only' a video, it is 'only' a performance or it is 'only' a song—entered the viewers' temperament unconsciously, transforming fantasy to 'reality' (Dill, 2009). She quoted Kilbourne: "the most effective kind of propaganda is that which is not recognized as propaganda" (Dill, 2009, p.9). She entailed two basic errors: one was the belief that fantasy stories did not shape realities at all and two was the belief that media played the entertaining role only. Narratives had a strong persuasive power and they could be built into storylines. According to Dill (2009), constructed fantasies and information were transported into the minds and beliefs of people. Beliefs were sometimes accepted "not



only uncritically but also involuntarily” (Dill, 2009, p.14) and then became part of social behaviours.

The fantasmatics of Angkor were constructed and normalised with stories of Hindu gods/goddesses, such as Lords Vishnu, Ganes and Rama. A new finding about the Angkorean civilisation by Australian archaeologists and researchers using airborne laser technology was expected to unearth new/more evidence about the ancient Empire (Gelineau, 2013). In fact, the formation of the Angkorean imagination contained the elements of truth (after Gramsci, 2000) over which fantasmatics has been glossed.

Angkor was established with a cultural purview in which many other aspects of culture entered the representational discourse of the nation of Cambodia. This Angkorean cultural frame possessed at least three characteristics as identified by Hertog and McLeod, 2001, pp.142-143): the “symbolic power”, “excess meaning” and “widespread recognition” (also see Hollinshead, 2004, for symbolic power). First, Angkor Wat took its abode in the heart and soul of Cambodians. The towers of Angkor became the symbol of the national flag and Angkor, whose names bore on an airline, hotels, cars, pure drinking water, newspapers and so forth became so commoditised. It featured on banknotes and postage stamps (see Winter’s 2007 ‘Angkorean montage’; also see Figure 4.3.1, below). Other famous temples such as Bayon and Ta Phrom were similarly used. Angkor acclaimed “its symbolic value” and the emblem of national culture of Cambodia (Winter, 2007, p.45). Second, its outstanding values were widely recognised not only at local but also at international stage in terms of its civilisation, architectures, and styles. The temple complex was enlisted as a World Heritage of Humanity in 1992. The Angkorean discourse deemed uncontested. Third, in terms of the superfluous meaning, the Angkorean culture set a frame of reference for other related myths, narratives, history, heroism, policies, and so forth. The legal and policy frameworks inspired by the Angkorean symbolic power and significances were covered in 4.2. The myths, narratives and heroes related to the Angkor are located in the following sections on statues and monuments.



**Figure 4.3.1 Representation and fantasmatics of Angkor: The Symbolic Significance for the Nation of Cambodia (Logos of Institutions, their Homepages)**

Since the meaning and significance of Angkor were widely shared among the individual Khmers, their reminiscence and ideology, any ill-gotten attempt to scar the Angkorean frame was likely to cause indignation among the Khmers. The 2003 case of the Thai actress in a rumour (she said on television Angkor Wat belonged to Thailand) sparked a public outcry and the Thai embassy building in Phnom Penh was stormed in a riot (Paddock, 2003). The 2009 case of Angkor Wat lighting project for tourists to visit at night drew a protest from a local NGO leader, because the lighting installation and high voltage was viewed to damage the temple (Heng, 2011). A November 2012 posting about Angkor in a 'professional' email group caused the sentiment among the moderators and members and the poster was then accused of as "being overtly sarcastic" and warned (or rather threatened) of being removed from the mailing list. The three cases illustrated the violation of the public frame of Angkor, which was shared in the ideology, beliefs and temperament of the Khmers, as its symbolic power was abused, its significancy impaired, and their recognition marred.

The discursive etching of Angkor in the legal and policy documents and in the media projection of aspects of peoples, cultures and places via tourism have been examined thus far. The permeative aspects of the ancient civilisation captured the inspiration of the Khmers and were chiselled at the bottom of their hearts, individually and collectively. The institutional cultural practices to be examined in the next section further manifest the imprint of Angkor in the Cambodian society. The state's signifiatory practices are inspected via the selection and production of the statued/sculptural spectacle, which can be produced and aligned with the projection of national identity (Wolfel, 2008). In Lefebvre's science-of-space project, he claimed that space represented "the political...use of knowledge" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.8) and "the ideology designed to conceal that use" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.9). Wolfel stated that while some argued that meaning is produced/read by tourists, others accentuate the role of the state in the production of meaning: "the notion that meaning of a tourism site is created solely by tourists has increasingly come under attacked" (Wolfel, 2008, p.68). In the study of gene banks of

Cambodia, the space production is viewed within a larger political discourse or signifiatory practice of the state.

#### **4.4 The State and Signifiatory Practices: Cultural Production and Projection via Statues**

The findings in this section are presented as the answers to the question (research question 3) concerning the production of place/space and the reproduction of pieces of sculpture for open place display or embellishment. They pertain to the second issue unfolded in the study in early 2012. They are also related to Lefebvre's (1991) production of space, Huyssen (2003), Gosgrove (2008), Knudsen, Soper and Metro-Roland (2008), Gosgrove and della Dora (2009) and others discussed in chapter 2. The statued representations also served as markers (MacCannell, 1999) of place and space.

This section focuses on the signifying practice of the state (i.e. the government and provincial authorities) in the projection of aspects of Khmer culture, history and identity through the selection and production of monumental statues which were erected in strategic locations as an important part of landscaping of public place and space. It is shown in the section that the state was an active producer of space as part of the construction of a collage of national identities and, meanwhile, an aspect of tourist consumption. This production enforced the Angkorcentric discourse in the identity-making of Cambodia in national, regional and international arenas. While others centred on the tourist power in the production of place, this section underscores the state's prominent role as a *proactive agency* in the production and projection of history, culture, heritage, and national identity. Those who had been to Cambodia may have had various encounters with monuments and statues (or statued representations) while travelling or wandering around in their gaze of aspects of cultures, peoples and places in different provinces/locations of Cambodia. Many of them signified different meanings of the culture, history and religions of Cambodia.

Aspects of religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism were reproduced from pieces of sculpture and arts in museums (particularly, the National Museum of Cambodia) and the pastiches were erected in many places throughout Cambodia. They constituted an important process of the cultural production and projection of Cambodia in line with the Angkorcentric normalisation in tourism. Although the government declared Buddhism as the national religion, various aspects of Hinduism were still practised in religious rituals and ceremonies today. Hinduism and Buddhism were the two most important religions practised during the Angkorean period.

In the sub-sections that follow, pictorial illustrations are provided in the Appendix to enhance visual perceptions of the statued representations in public places in Cambodia. Figure 4.4.1 in the Appendix consists of an assemblage of four pictures of Hindu deities, Figure 4.4.2 a picture collage projecting Buddhist persona and significances and Figure 4.4.3 a pictorial juxtaposition of cultural significance of the *nags*. The photographs illustrated in this chapter were taken during my two rounds of fieldwork in Cambodia.

#### **4.4.1 Public Landscaping of Cultural Significances: Statued Representations of Hindu Deities**

##### **4.4.1.1 Statues of Lord Vishnu: The Symbolic Preserver of the Universe**

The first statue (①, Figure 4.4.1) is Lord Vishnu or Lord Naray/Lord Hari (Sun *et al.*, 2012). The statue was located at the junction of the city hall of Kandal province (i.e. the road junction marking the border between Phnom Penh and Ta Khmau town of Kandal province and connecting Phnom Penh to national road No.2). There was another statue of Lord Vishnu in the town centre which also stood out at the southern end of the public garden on the Bassac river. Contrary to the first one, this second statue at the garden held a ball in lower right hand and a long mace functioning as a prop in lower left. In the appended Figure, the monumental statues of four-armed Lord Vishnu held four different attributes. Sun *et al.* (2012, p.42) noted that Lord Vishnu was the preserver of the

universe and was “represented in human form with two, four [and even] eight arms, standing or reclining on the serpent” with the attributes of a “ball, disc, conch shell and club”.

In talking about the statue of Vishnu using the interactive technique in an interview, a university lecturer (and a former MOT staff member) Phanny commented that, in protecting the cosmos, Lord Vishnu used his divine attributes to destroy all evils. The four objects Vishnu held in his hand had their own symbols. He stated “the conch symbolises Water, the ball represents the Earth, the disc is the emblem of Fire, and the mace is the symbol of Wind” (also see Khun, 2002). The 12 spires of the Chakra (i.e. the Disc) represented the 12 months of the Khmer lunar calendar year. Phanny added that the Khmers preferred building the statue of Vishnu to building the statue of Shiva (see the interview snippet (2) in Extract 4.4.1).

The statues of Lord Vishnu, a principal and popular Hindu deity, were built and placed in/at public roundabouts, road corners, and Buddhist pagodas, not only in Ta Khmau town of Kandal province but also in other places throughout Cambodia. For instance, there was another statue of eight-armed Vishnu in the roundabout leading up to the Hill Tribes Cultural Centre of Dos Kramon hill in Mondulkiri province. Other statues of Lord Vishnu at pagodas, such as Phnom Chey Kiri [Victory Hill] pagoda and Angkor Knong [Inside Angkor] pagoda in Kampong Cham, in the centre of the ground floor of the main building of the Ministry of Culture, in a small roundabout on the road between the coastal provinces of Kampot and Kep, and especially at the west entrance gopura of Angkor Wat temple, were encountered during the fieldwork. The physical representations of Lord Vishnu occurred more frequently than those of Shiva.

#### **4.4.1.2 Monumental Statue of Lord Vishvakarman: The Emblem of Universal**

##### **Architect**

Another exemplar of the selection and production of Hinduism in the projection of Cambodia was the statue of Vishvakarman (②, Figure 4.4.1). Facing westward, the statue was positioned right in the town centre of Kampong Thom province, which was about 80 kilometres east of Siem Reap province on national road No. 6 (NR6). Channa, a university professor, remarked with regard to the question about the meaning and significance of the statue in relation to Moni Mekhala and Ream Eyso (see snippet (1) in Extract 4.4.1.2).

Moni Mekhala and Ream Eyso was the title of a drama in which they were two most important characters. As retold by Ok (2013), the brilliant goddess of the seas Moni Mekhala and the fearsome storm demon Ream Eyso were under the same tutelage of a hermit (Lok/Lauk Ta Eysei) who taught them magic and martial arts. After having trained Moni Mekhala and Ream Eyso with sufficient magic and power, the hermit permitted them to leave. Upon their departure, the hermit gave Moni Mekhala a ball and the demon an axe. Part of the tale was narrated in a classical dance called Moni Mekhala and Ream Eyso, the scene where Mekhala engaged in a battle with the latter with an axe attempting to attack her for her crystal ball. She finally defeated the demon upon his attempt to seize the ball.

In commenting about the statue in an interview, Channa assumed that the axe it was holding was perhaps associated with the drama of Moni Mekhala and Ream Eyso, adding that he did not object to the production of the statues, but he restrained from saying that it promoted Khmer culture. In his view, he was not certain if the statues promote Khmer culture (see (2) in Extract 4.4.1.2).

While Channa made that assumption about the statue, Sopheap stated it symbolised Lord Vishvakarman, the divine carpenter or architect of the cosmos, holding carpentry

tools, such as a pair of pliers, a try square, a handsaw, a screw driver, a chisel, a knife, and an axe. Texts about the statue in various sources were not identified, and Sopheap noted that “the statue was the symbol of Lord Vishvakarman and it almost vanished from the Khmer culture. It was simply forgotten.”

#### **4.4.1.3 Monumental Statue of Lord Ganes: The Divine Representation of the Universal Knowledge**

The third statue of Hindu significance in Khmer culture was Ganes (③, Figure 4.4.1). The then Governor, who presided over the inauguration of the Ganes statue of 7.5 meter height on the 02<sup>nd</sup> of February 2012, announced:

... it [the statue of Ganes] will be regarded as a symbol of a peaceful city and a new face of enhancing the area of administration location of the Government because the park is near the main road which captures all kind of delegation eyes...the statue indicates a promising Angkorean art and architecture of Khmer ancestors...and it could lift up the image of Phnom Penh along with modern skyscrapers which together turns the Capital into a true Charming one”.

(Phnom Penh Municipality, 03 February 2012)

Furthermore, the governor was proud to claim that the statue was another achievement for the government to host the ASEAN summit chaired by Cambodia in late 2012. The imposing statue did not only catch the eyes of delegates but also tourists who passed by (Phnom Penh Municipality, 03 February 2012). They would likely see Ganes when travelling in the capital or even when they took the Phnom Penh walking tour recommended by Ray and Robinson (2012) because the statue was situated between point 5 and point 6 on their map.

On Ganes, Phanny pointed out that the god was the fusion between Shivaism and Vishnuism signified by the attributes it held. He emphasised the religious significance of god Ganes (see (3) in Extract 4.4.1). The statue of god Ganes, said to be made of pure grey stone from Preah Vihear province and assumed to catch the eyes of all delegations to Phnom Penh, was also “believed to bring good luck, happiness, prosperity and peace to the country and her people” (Phnom Penh Municipality, 03 February 2012).



#### **4.4.1.4 Monumental Statue of Rama: The Seventh Incarnation of Lord Vishnu**

The last statue/exemplar here to illustrate the importance and influence of Hinduism on the Khmer culture was Lord Rama, the 7<sup>th</sup> avatar of Vishnu and the main persona in the Ramayana epic which featured Rama and his battle with the demon King Ravana to rescue his abducted wife Sita. The episodes of Rama, Ravana, and their battles were carved on base-reliefs of various temples of Angkor, especially at Angkor Wat and Bantey Srei (Roveda, 1997). The statue of Rama holding a bow and arrow and riding on the Monkey King Hanuman was also found at a pagoda on the way to Prasith hills about 25 kilometres northeast of Phnom Penh.

The statue of Rama (④, Figure 4.4.1) was erected just behind the Peace Palace (Vimean Santepheap) of the Council of Ministers in Phnom Penh. In the Khmer literary study of Reamker (or Ramayana), Rama was viewed as the protagonist symbolising a desirable character who destroyed evils and protected others. Various scenes of the story were enacted in the dominant royal ballet's repertoire. Although with slightly modified versions depending on what scenes and the senses of humours selected for projection, this classical Ballet prevailed and permeated in the performing industry, especially in formal occasions and tourist settings. One of the respondents Bopha in the current study led a dance troupe abroad and Sonita, a Cambodian diaspora, was engaged in the production of the royal ballet and other dances. The temple of Angkor Wat was dedicated to Lord Vishnu, the preserver of the Universe, whose principal incarnations were "Matsya (fish), Kurma (turtle), Varaha (boar), Narasimha (human with lion head), Vamana (dwarf), Parasurama (man with axe), Rama (from the Reamkerti epic), Krisna, Buddha and Kalkin (man with horse head)" (Khun, 2002, pp.17-18, also see Sun, Meng and Caillat, 2006).

#### **4.4.2 Public Landscaping of Cultural Significance: Sculptural Representations of Buddhist Personas**

##### **4.4.2.1 The Buddha: The Most Important Persona in Buddhism and its Teaching**

Buddhism existed along with Hinduism although the former was not revered as the state religion until the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Chandler, 1991). The sage of the Buddhist teachings the Buddha was assumed to be the 9<sup>th</sup> incarnation of Lord Vishnu (Khun, 2002; Sun *et al.*, 2006). Some of the statues symbolising Buddhism and its personas are illustrated in Figure 4.4.2. Two of them (① and ②) were the images of Lord Buddha at different public places: the first situated on the summit of Udong (or Oudong) hill in Kandal province, aka Arthaross (meaning the Temple of Eighteen Points in Sanskrit) or Preah Reach Troap hills, about 40 kilometres northwest of Phnom Penh (MOT website 'Phnom Oudong') and the second at *Wat Ek Phnom* pagoda about 12 kilometres north of Battambang provincial town (Moeun, 2010a).

Statues of the Buddha were the representation of the most important personage in Theravada Buddhism in Cambodia. They were regularly found at/in Buddhist pagodas (*Wat* in Khmer). They bore religious significances for the Khmers, approximately 90% of whom were Buddhist (MOT, 2012a). The Buddha statue at the hilltop *Wat Arthaross* faced northward, but statues of the Buddha were traditionally positioned eastward. The northward position of the hilltop Buddha statue was explained according to a tale associated with China. The tale of Udong is accessible via this official website ([http://tourismcambodia.org/provincial\\_guide/index.php?view=placesdetail&prv=16&att=124&](http://tourismcambodia.org/provincial_guide/index.php?view=placesdetail&prv=16&att=124&)).

A Buddha stupa, situated in the far north of the middle-saddled Udong hill, was built in 2002 to house the relocated Buddha relics. Presided over by ex-King Norodom Sihanouk, the relocation ceremony marked the biggest ever in the last few decades and was said to draw more than a million of people lining up for the procession from the capital city of Phnom Penh to the Udong hill. The place has become a significant pilgrimage site for

Cambodians from the time of the inauguration. The hill and the stupas atop were also featured in guidebooks and travel websites. Hence, the Udong site was an expression of historical and cultural significance for the Khmers and the Buddha statue as one of a symbol of religious importance. In 1992, UNESCO, as seen in its website, enlisted Udong site as one of the nine tentative world heritage sites of Cambodia. Siddhartha Gautama, or the Buddha once reached Enlightenment, abandoned the luxury of his royal life and family to seek for truths of life. The Buddha was the primary figure in Buddhism. His life and his teachings were propagated and practised by the majority of Cambodians. Portrays of his lifeline from birth to death were seen on walls of pagodas. Huge Buddha statues have been built in/at many pagodas and sometimes at tourist sites in his honour and for religious practices. During the fieldworks, other gigantic statues (e.g. at *Wat Phnom Prasith* and *Wat Tuol Reach Chea* pagoda in Kandal, *Wat Angkor Knong* in Kampong Cham, and *Wat Ek Phnom* pagoda, Phnom Chita Pich in Takeo province, and in the Cultural Village) were also encountered during the fieldwork.

The statues of the Buddha were built with different gestures and postures, which carried different meanings or stories. The hand gestures and sitting position of the one at *Wat Arthaross* (①, Figure 4.4.2), i.e. sitting upright with crossed legs and left hand facing inwards on one lap and the right hand on the other pointing down to the earth, depicted a scene where his meditation was perturbed by evils and bad temptations. His hand pointing to the ground symbolised 'calling the earth to witness' his invocation of power in dispelling all evil forces or the mara. The statue of Buddha (②), with the right hand facing outward and the left on one lap, signified blessing, reassurance, courage, and protection from fears and delusion. With regard to the mara, Roveda noted:

Mara was the god ruling over the World of Desire inhabited by ghosts, asuras, and animals, and knew that if the Future Buddha discovered the reason for the never-ending cycle of birth and rebirth, his power would come to an end. Therefore, when the Buddha saw the Future Buddha in meditation under the bodhi tree, he decided to assault him, riding a war elephant, accompanied by an army of demons with animal faces.

(Roveda, 1997, p.62)

Hence, the hand gesture/mudra was associated to a legend of the rampaging elephant freed by a Buddha's schismatic cousin, who attempted to murder the Buddha. He then displayed the mudra to pacify the violent animal. The mudra thus not only symbolised the appeasement of the mind but also the protection and the absence of fears.

#### **4.4.2.2 Statue of Preah Neang Kong Hing: The Goddess Representing the Witness of Truth and Justice**

The mura of the first statue of the Buddha (①, Figure 4.4.2) was associated with the legend of Neang Kong Hing, the Goddess of the Earth (③, Figure 4.4.2). It was located at the five-road intersection north of the (new) Olympic stadium which was built in early 1960s. She was "often depicted in Buddhist scenes such as the eviction of the Māra that can be seen on the mural paintings of the vihara [pagodas]" (Khun, 2002, p.35). The legend of the Goddess of Earth was narrated that the Mara, a symbol of evils and ominous intentions, wanted to conquer the Buddha, who then called on the Goddess to "bear witness to the legitimacy of his claim on the throne because of the alms he was given in previous existences. Thanks to her magical powers, a twist of her wavy hair forms an ocean that drowns the army" (Khun, 2002, p.35).

According to the Phnom Penh Municipality (5 September 2011), the sandstone piece, i.e. the 3.4metre tall and the 5-metre long crocodile, illustrated the "beautiful form and style of art and the greatness of Khmer civilisation". The then governor also recommended holding a ceremony (Krong Pili in Khmer) once the construction was completed to pray for "the prosperity to all citizens" (Phnom Penh Municipality, 5 September 2011). The image of the Goddess was to be built in a way which preserved the identities of the Khmers (Phnom Penh Municipality, 29 August 2012). The statue of the Goddess standing with slightly bended knees expressed "her youth as she manifests her magical powers. The posture also communicates truth and justice" (Khun, 2002, p.35).

Hence, the Goddess of the Earth carried cultural and religious significance for the Khmers. The most popular places in the communication with the Goddess of the Earth to

the public were at Buddhist pagodas throughout Cambodia. Khmer lady-sized statues or smaller replicas of the Goddess were erected at/in religious compounds or at pious altars/shrines. Thus, building statues was a signifying act.

#### **4.4.3 Statues of *Nagas*: Representation of Guardianship, Fertility and Creation**

The *nagas* were associated with both Hinduism and Buddhism, and they also bore meaningful significance in the contemporary Khmer culture. While the legends of *nagas* were commonplace in Hinduism as evident at the temples of Angkor and elsewhere, the Buddhism-related *nagas* were rare. The *nagas* at the Hindu temples, e.g. in Siem Reap province, were used to convey symbolic meanings and significances. In a guide to the ancient Angkor, Freeman and Jacques explained in their glossary that a *naga* was a “multi-headed serpent with many mythological connections, associated with water, fertility, rainbows, and creation” (2010, p.235). Similarly, Roveda stated “the naga is the guardian of the treasure of the earth, the keeper of the energy stored in water and the guardian of the prosperity of the region, traditionally related to water availability” (p.76).

The *nagas* were built in roundabouts and used as banisters of Buddhist pagodas throughout Cambodia. The statue of the *nagas* (①, Figure 4.4.3) in the roundabout approaching the Kampong Cham town from Phnom Penh on national road #6A (i.e. NR6A) was used as a welcome sign. There was also a similar *naga* statue in the roundabout right at one end of the Kizona bridge in the provincial town—the bridge connecting Phnom Penh and Kampong Cham to the Northeast. Locals and tourists must have had frequent encounters with statues of the *naga* used for religious and identity projection and as architectural decoration when travelling in Cambodia (also see ② and ③, Figure 4.4.3).

The *naga* covering the Buddha (④, Figure 4.4.3) was perhaps the only scene in the Buddhist life. A legend told that the *Naga*-king with hood protected the Buddha from the

disturbing elements of the thunderstorm when he was meditating near a pond (Roveda, 1997; Sun *et al.*, 2006). The nine-headed *naga* was found on the southern section of the east gallery of Angkor Wat. Moreover, *nagas* also carried their importance in the legend of the origin of the Khmers—that of the *naga*-princess (see Ngea, 1973a; Roveda, 1997). Thus, although as a way of religious or historical projection or ornamental dressing of public places and pagodas, the utilisation of the *nagas* reflected their important standing in and the expression of the Khmer culture, traditions and customs.

#### **4.4.4 Religious Representations of the Past: Interpretation of Sculptural**

##### **Reproductions by the State Authorities**

Hinduism and Buddhism in Cambodia were influenced by Indians, especially during the Indianisation of Cambodia since before the Common Era or at least since the 1<sup>st</sup> century (Chandler, 1991). The Indian influence was also identified in the legend of the *naga*-princess. According to Coedès (1968), Cambodia is an 'Indianised' state of Southeast Asia. These two umbrella religions have had a profound influence on the conduct of Cambodian daily lives and national practices. It is evident from the findings that the state played an important role in the reconstruction of Khmer traditions and identities and the reproduction of sculpture in representation of public places and spaces. The study of the emergent aspect of cultural (re)production via statues/monuments by the Cambodian government and relevant local authorities has been under-inspected in the Tourism Studies. However, I must acknowledge the examination of the narrative of King Korn's incarnation undertaken by Norén-Nilsson (2013). Despite so, the investigation into the state's (re)production of culture/traditions offered an important insight into the views of the state in the selection/prioritisation and projection of aspects of culture, national identity and politics.

Hinduism and Buddhism were inheritances from the past, i.e. the Angkorean legacies (or an heirloom of the colonial fantasmaties) which spiritually inspired the Khmers, today.

Chandler (1991) stated, as opposed to Buddhism, Hinduism in Cambodia is a religion teemed with divine deities, such as Shiva, Vishnu, Ganes and Rama. The production of Ganes for the public and tourist gaze and projection of the spectacle by the Phnom Penh Municipality testified the state involvement. In fact, those statues/monuments were a typical indication of the state's concern with its own projection of the nation. Vishnu, Vishvakarman, Ganes and Rama were among the most important aspects of cultural (re)manufacturing of Cambodia, today. Angkor Wat is a symbolic representation of Lord Vishnu or the Hindu cosmology (Chandler, 1991; Sunet.al, 2012). Lord Rama is an important character in the Ramayana epic or Reamker in Khmer, whose various aspects of his divinity are featured in Khmer performing arts such as classical dances/dramas, shadow puppetry shows and masked plays (see Chheng, 2003). Thus, "elements of Hinduism persist to this day in Cambodia...and include aspects of royal court ritual, art and literature, and the recognition of Indian gods" (Tully, 2005, p.50). This recognition also took the material form of the symbolic statues and monuments, whose (re)productions were engineered by the state and provincial authorities.

While deities and divine avatars abound in Hinduism, Buddhism has fewer personas. Although Buddhism existed roughly at the same time as Hinduism did, the former began to thrive about six or seven hundred years after the Common Era (Chandler, 1991). It prospered when King Jayavarman VII took up his Mahayana teaching (Chandler, 1991). At present, Cambodia adopts Theravada Buddhism as small vehicle to Nirvana. Chuon Nath is thought to have an important contribution to the development of Theravada Buddhism, a cardinal aspect of identity of most Khmers, today. The government legitimised Buddhism as the state's religion and the state as an agency involved actively in the production and materialisation of significant aspects of Buddhism, for instance, in the cases of the statues of the Buddha, Neang Kong Hing and the *nagas*.

Today, the state was perhaps the biggest agency in Cambodia proactive in the construction of Khmer identities via channels of public funding and/or charity mobilisation. Guangun (2010) reported a Secretary of State of the Ministry of Cult and Religious Affairs

as saying there were 4392 pagodas and 50,000 monks throughout Cambodia. Pagodas are sites where Buddhist preaching/chanting, festivals and religious production occur constantly. Monks and Archa (Buddhist priests) are agents of religious preaching and practice. The media/televisions had various Buddhist programmes such as Buddhist advice in early mornings. Festivals and Hun Sen's speeches at inaugurations of Buddhist construction sites were broadcasted on the media. Some Buddhist festivals such as Meak Bochea Day and Visakh Bochea Day were decreed as public holidays. In 2011, the government received a charity of some US\$260,000 from a Buddhist money-raising ceremony (called Kathen) to build a pagoda in one of Hun Sen's villages in Preah Vihear province (Southeast Asia Weekly, 2 November 2011). Although Buddhism was declared as the national religion, various aspects of Hindu rituals were well integrated with Buddhist practices. The Khmer New Year, a three-day public holiday in mid-April, and the Pchum Ben (calling upon the souls of the dead) were embedded with both Buddhist and Hindu religious significances.

Not only the state but also the general public actively participated in the manufacturing of cultural, religious significances. The state however had a legitimate authority in landscaping public places. For instance, erecting the statues of the Goddess of the Earth and the *nagas* in road roundabouts were an attestation of the state's signifiatory practice. In this regard, aspects of the elite culture, i.e. the culture of the kings, nobles or rulers, were put out for public displays. Instead of just keeping the statues/sculpture of the Khmer identity in museums, they were reproduced for the public/tourist gaze. Such pastiches or reproductions of statued representations could be seen as a way of normalising the Angkorcentric discourse and cultural identification.

I am of an opinion that investigators could enhance their understanding of the making, re-making, and de-making of culture and identity (Hollinshead, 2004) by examining how the state dressed their nation culturally in public places. Although Hinduism and Buddhism waxed and waned in the medieval period of Cambodia, their presentational discourse gained steadfastness in the Khmer psyche and society, today. Tully (2005) noted



“Khmers are devoutly religious, practising the Theravada strain of Buddhism, mixed with elements of folk religion, superstition and remnants of Hinduism”. There were noticeable impulses in the state’s (re)production of space and, at present, the whole Cambodia has been museumised by means of materialisation of aspects of culture/heritage, religion, and identities. The Angkorean exhibitory discourse embodied the public sphere. Although the Angkorean frame of reference was the main projection of Khmer culture and identity, other aspects of Khmer culture and history broaden the cultural frame. As will be illustrated in the next section, heroism was identified as an important production engineered towards politics and political projection.

#### **4.5 Projection, Fantasmatics and Politics: Statues of Heroic Significance for the Khmers**

The sub-sections that follow are devoted to the findings associated with gallantries projected via kings and individuals conceived as exceptionally prominent in the history, culture, society and politics of pasts and contemporary Cambodia. As in section 4.4, Figure 4.5 contains a pictorial bricolage of six statued representations of heroic significances and is provided in the Appendix to enhance visualisation.

##### **4.5.1 King Jayavarman VII: The Most Desirable Hero of the Angkorean Era**

The statue of the King Jayavarman VII (①, Figure 4.5) was culled due to his multi-fold unravelling qualities. The public was commoved by the projection of his leadership qualities, namely his grand building programmes, victory over invaders and devotion to Buddhism. A respondent Phanny indicated seven good points about the King (see snippet (1) from the interview with Phanny in Extract 4.4.1).

King Jayavarman VII was chosen an important signification at least for three reasons. First, the King was seen as the greatest historic and victorious warrior in the protection of

his territory against outside invaders. For example, he defeated the Cham armies from the then Champa Kingdom who invaded Angkor in 1177 and crowned himself King in 1181 (Chandler, 1991). Second, he was a great builder of physical and social infrastructure. Situated at Angkor Thom in the present day Siem Reap province, he, compared to the Angkorean kings, began the largest construction programmes which included hydraulic works, temples, roads, bridges, schools, over 102 hospitals, and 121 roadside rest-houses throughout Cambodia (see Chandler, 1991; Brand and Chuch, 1992; Roveda, 1997). The official handbooks (MOT, 2011a, p.8; MOT, 2012a, p.15) noted the character and temple-building achievements of the King in the two-page Khmer history (basically just about the Angkorean history). Third, Jayavarman VII was a fervent Mahayana Buddhist (Chandler, 1991; Tully, 2005). As in the quotation above, he made Buddhism the first ever national religion during his reign and he exercised great patience with Hinduism (Roveda, 1997).

In a workshop on King Jayavarman VII at the Russian Centre of Science and Culture in Phnom Penh in 2007, organised by the Khmer Culture Support Committee and participated by Khmer historians, students and monks, the organiser was reported as saying the workshop was held to “support and promote the Khmer history and civilisation” and that “it is the duty of the Khmer people to uphold our culture and civilization” (Ton and Lim, 2007, p.39). Consequently, the Khmers today respect and admire King Jayavarman VII and incorporate him in the cultural/historical projection of the Khmers and their ancient Empire. The statues of the King (sometimes, just his busts) were not only found in Kampong Cham, where there were probably the most, but throughout Cambodia in/at roundabouts, road corners, educational establishments, private companies/shops and government institutions. The grand Angkorcentric/fantasmatic discourse has been effectively normalised till today.

#### **4.5.2 King Korn: A Warlord and a Constructed Embodied Representation of Contemporary Politics**

The statues of a 16<sup>th</sup> century King/Sdach Korn was found to appear in places throughout Cambodia (Kent, no date), for example, in Kampong Cham (②, Figure 4.5) and on the Kep seaside. More importantly, it was said that Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia impersonated King Korn (Norén-Nilsson, 2013). The narrative of King Korn can be located in Ngea (1973b), Norén-Nilsson (2013) and Kent (no date).

Two main statues of King Korn were seen built, one at Bantey Prey Nokor or the historical site of Luong Preah Sdach Korn (see MOT, no date, p.41) and another at Kep seaside. Rumours regarding the construction of the statues of Sdach Korn as the ressembler of Prime Minister Hun Sen permeated various media and academic cycles. According to a September 2007 translation of an article from a local Khmer newspaper Rasmei Kampuchea, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Preah Sdach Korn book authored by a professor of political sciences was sponsored by the Prime Minister. The hearsay of the Prime Ministry's personification was also captured by bloggers (see KI-Media, 2007; Khmerization, 2008), some of whom were considered as the opposition to, or rather critics of, the Prime Minister. Some bloggers provided information about the King and others criticised the Prime Minister's political regime and his effort in the statue construction of the statues of Sdach Korn. There was also a rumour in October 2007 about turning Sdach Korn's narrative into a movie by a local Hang Meas video company, according bloggers who quoted the Rasmei Kampuchea.

In tourism websites such as the Ministry of Tourism's' and travel agencies', the site where the statue of Sdach Korn in Kampong Cham province was developed as a historical site for tourists called "Historical Site of Luong Preah Sdech Korn... a former capital of the pre-Angkor period" (MOT, no date, p.41). A large photo of King Korn was also featured on the front cover of Kampong Cham provincial leaflet (see Moeun, 2010b). The historical site of [Luong Preah] Sdach Korn was also highlighted in websites of local travel

companies. It was formally inaugurated by the Prime Minister in December 2009 (Cheang and O'Toole, 2009).

The statues of King Korn were built to resemble Hun Sen (Kent, no date) and his 'political and personal power' (Peleggi, 2013). In Kent's view, the Prime Minister "has been fostering his quasi-monarchical status by merging his image with that of a long-forgotten 16<sup>th</sup> century Khmer King: Preah Sdach Korn" (Kent, no date, p.15). He added "like Hun Sen, Korn was born in the year of the dragon to a family of commoners. He usurped [usurped?] the throne in 1515 and, like Hun Sen, is judged by some as a power-hungry commoner but by some as a ruler who brought peace and prosperity to the Kingdom" (Kent, no date, p.15). Introducing Norén-Nilsson's article 'Performance as (re)incarnations: the Sdech Kân narrative', Peleggi noted the reinvention of Sdach Korn upheld "the incumbent prime minister's political and personal power" (2013, p.1). Thus, the construction of the statues of Sdach Korn, book publications and perhaps movies about him were politically motivated, and the statues performed the embodiment of the country's so-called prominent leader. It is the political imagination of the Prime Minister, who was conceived as having personal and political characters parallel with King Korn in that both arose from a farmer family to statesmanship.

#### **4.5.3 King Ang Duong: The Symbolic Savoir of Cambodia from its Neighbours**

The Vietnamese Emperor Ming Mang looked after the Vietnamese supervision in Cambodia in 1830s, instructing his viceroy "to 'civilise' the Khmers with Vietnamese customs and advice" (Chandler, 1991, p.96). The emperor instructed his viceroy:

We have tried to punish and reward Cambodian officials according to their merits or demerits...After studying the situation, we have decided that Cambodian officials only know how to bribe and be bribed. Officials are sold; nobody carries out orders; everyone works for his own account.... The barbarians in Cambodia have become my children now, and you [i.e. the Vietnamese viceroy] should help them, and teach them our customs.... As for language, they should be taught to speak Vietnamese. If there is any outdated or barbarous custom that can be simplified or repressed, then do so.... Let

the good ideas sleep in, turning the barbarians into civilised people.

(Chandler, 1991, pp.96-97)

Ex-King Ang Duong, the great, great grandfather of ex-King Sihanouk, who died of a heart attack in October 2012 in Beijing at the age of 89, inherited the legacy of the Vietnamese domination. He reigned under the supervision and assistance of the Siam. Battambang and Siem Reap provinces were seized and controlled by the Siam since 1794 (Ray and Robinson, 2012). Ang Duong grew up in the period of war and conflict and was enthroned in 1848 after having been in exile for most of the first half of his life in Siam (Chandler, 1991). Ang Duong was crowned in Bangkok and throned at Udong (Ray and Robinson, 2012). In Article 14 of the 1993 Constitution, the eligible, constitutional king had to come from the blood line of King Ang Duong, King Norodom and King Sisowath, all of whom were in the closest blood relation to ex-King Sihanouk.

For the remembrance of the King as a saviour of Cambodia from Vietnam and Siam and for “his merit, skill, and masterly intelligence” (Chandler, 1991, p.95), monumental statues and shrines of him were built, notably the one in the Royal Palace complex and the brass equestrian one on NR5 in Ponhea Leu district (©, Figure 4.5) close to Udong hill where he was crowned. His monumental statue in the royal complex and stupa on top of the hill were also captured in guidebooks and photography (see Palmer and Martin, 2008; Ray and Robinson, 2012). His capital Udong was also featured in the TripAdvisor.

#### **4.5.4 Phirum Ngoy: Master of Khmer Poetry and the Representation of Khmer**

##### **Literary Culture**

Phirum Ngoy, aka Kram Ngoy, began as a Khmer traditional flute singer of folk poetries, which later became known to the Khmer and Thai royal courts (Edwards, 2007). He gave a range of advice to the Khmers. His codes of conduct given via poetic song performances and festivals were collected and recorded by the Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh (Yi, 2005; Edwards, 2007).

A monumental statue of Phirum Ngoy (④, Figure 4.5) was built to honour his contribution to the Khmer life, culture, arts and literature. It was a traditional flute he was holding in the picture. Born during the French protectorate, Phirum Ngoy became famous and respected partly due to his efforts in maintaining Khmer cultural pride under the pressure of the French influence (see Edwards, 2007). Tourists walking or travelling along the river in the Phnom Penh capital are likely to encounter this monumental statue of him. Ngoy's literary talent and codes of conduct are widely quoted and referred to by the Khmers, including singers of Ayai (Khmer traditional rhymic song) (see Vong, 2003; Touch and Khiev, 2012; Touch, 2012).

According to a source quoted in the Rasmei Kampuchea newspaper, the inauguration of the monumental statues of Phirum Ngoy and Chuon Nath, both of which were situated about 100 meters away from each other, were launched on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2008 by the then Phnom Penh Municipality governor (KI-Media, 2008). Another huge statue of Phirum Ngoy was erected in Mongkul Borei Secondary School in a northwestern province of Banteay Meanchey. The statue of the Khmer literati was not found mentioned in travel guides and websites by the time of writing. His contribution to Khmer culture and society was similar to Chuon Nath's.

#### **4.5.5 Supreme Patriarch Chuon Nath: The Emblem of Khmer Language and Identity**

Similar to Phirum Ngoy, Venerable Chuon Nath was credited for reinforcing Khmerisation and was named as “a visionary Khmer lexicographer and leader of Cambodian Buddhism” (Becker, 2011). Born in 1883 and capable in many languages (see Lim, 2004; Becker, 2011), the head of Theravada Buddhism Chuon was said to have significant contributions to the preservation of the Khmer culture and language, especially under the French colonial time when Khmer language was on the verge of being replaced by French (Chandler, 1991).

Chuon wrote the national anthem Nokoreach (see Extract 4.5.5) corresponding to the motto of Cambodia 'Nation, Religion and King'. The anthem projects the nationalist spirit and reminds the Khmers of their root/race, culture, heritage and history at the critical time under the so-called French protection, especially provoking them to the path of the Khmer Empire. Becker (2011) stated that "Chuon Nath's movement influenced a great many young Khmer monks during the early 20th century. Cambodian nationalism was enhanced by the movement which helped identify a unique Khmer identity and culture through the language".

The French's pernicious attempt to replace the Khmer language with theirs became abortive. The legacies of Chuon Nath such as the seminal Khmer language dictionary, Khmer identity and Khmer pride commoved the Khmers today, leading to the building of his monumental statue (©, Figure 4.5). The statued representations of him dressed in monk robe were seen in many places throughout Cambodia. However, like that of Master Ngoy, the monumental statue of Chuon Nath did not appear to be covered in travel guides and websites, although tourists might encounter a huge statue of him in the capital and in various other places.

#### **4.5.6 Vietnam-Cambodia Monuments: Construction of Embodied Victory and Eternal Friendship**

The monumental statues of Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship were seen in many places throughout Cambodia, including the largest one in the middle of Phnom Penh capital (©, Figure 4.5). The statued representation was intended as a symbol of the discourse of "eternal" friendship and victory over the Democratic Kampuchea regime led by Pol Pot.

This monumental statue in the capital city was mapped, listed and found in travel guides and websites such as the Lonely Planet Cambodia, the Rough Guide to Cambodia and the TripAdvisor website. Ray and Robinson (2012) showed it on their map of Phnom

Penh and listed the monument in their section on sights and activities. They described it as “the optimistically named Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship Monument, built to a Vietnamese (and rather communist) design in 1979” (Ray and Robinson, 2012, p.79). With regard to the monument, Palmer and Martin indicated that it was designed to commemorate “the Vietnamese liberation of Phnom Penh from the Khmer Rouge in January 1979 and it features massive sandstone figures of a Khmer woman holding a baby, flanked by two armed Vietnamese liberation soldiers” (Palmer and Martin, 2008, p.98). Thus, the Monument is a symbolic representation constructed for/by the contemporary politics of Cambodia.

Although varied in sizes, the monuments of the Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship were also erected in Ta Khmau town of Kandal province, on Victory Beach of Sihanoukville and in the provincial town of Kampong Chhnang. In fact, the statues symbolising the friendship and victory over the Khmer Rouge were erected in various places throughout Cambodia. In addition to the Lonely Planet and the Rough Guide, the TripAdvisor enlisted the Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship statue as one of the attractions in Phnom Penh. Among the reviews by tourists to Phnom Penh, the image of the monument in the context of the Vietnamese involvement in Cambodia deemed contradictory to what was intended to communicate. Snippets from some of those reviews are registered in Table 4.5.6 (Appendix).

#### **4.5.7 Representation and Politics: Interpretation of Production of and Identification with Heroism**

The sprawling monumental statues to commemorate the heroic significances of the Khmer elites and the historic political event of the 7<sup>th</sup> January served as other frames of reference in representation and projection of peoples and places. The political elites of the past were celebrated for their gallantries and honour in territorial protection, building programmes, warfare, colonial resistance, and the conservation of literature, language



and identity. These aspects of qualities were exhibited for the common people to cherish. They were valorised as part of the national identities or national spirits in line with the cultural legacies of the Angkor Empire.

R.Williams (1981, p.13) conceptualised culture as a “*signifying system*” or practices “through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (also see S.Hall, 1997). The signifying practices involve all forms of social activities from arts, philosophy to journalism and advertising (R.Williams, 1981). Similarly, S.Hall (1997) argued culture is not so much about things but about a process or set of practices concerning meaning production, exchange, interpretation and making sense of the worlds. I thereby engaged in examining the practices of the state (and other cultural agents) and the signification of the embodied cultural practices of statued representations which were agentively produced. Cultural materialism might be helpful in examining signifiatory praxis.

The projected figures/statues of Khmer kings/elites such as King Jayavarman VII, King/Warrior Korn, King Ang Duong, Phirum Ngoy and Chuon Nath entered (deeply) into the realm of cultural/historical significances. Dollimore asserted that “there is no cultural practice without political significance” (Sim, 2011, p.217). In reflecting back to 4.4 and 4.5, the elite culture was displayed for the public, projected and normalised. Winter (2007) noted the embodied connections between former rulers, worshiped as ancestral deities and a pantheon of Buddhist personas and Hindu gods.

Jayavarman VII has been considered as the most enchanted king of the Angkorean era and the sprawling statued representations of him at many places and institutions further enforce the Angkorcentric fantasmatic/discourse. The public display of reproduced statues articulated the identification of the Khmers with heroic qualities of the past political figures. The state production of statued markers may be considered as normalisation; as an effort in the production of fantasmatics, which is well scripted in the Constitution; and as an endeavour to project individual politicians/elites. Sinfield noted

'culture is political' (Sim, 2011, p.217). The selected aspects for the representational projection of Khmer culture and identity became a common sense of cultural politics and political articulation. The Gramscian common sense was conceptualised in a similar way as naturalisation/normalisation because the social order embodied in cultural representation and projection was made to appear banal via repetitive acts.

Political selves, especially those of the eminent politician of Cambodia indicated in 4.5.2, permeated the public discursive platform. As indicated by Peleggi (2013), King Korn was (re)narrated to project the top politician and his contemporary politics related to a prince of the royalist party in late 1990s. In this regard, the production of the staged representations of King Korn was a performative act, not an intrinsic, cultural production/projection; it was a political scripting. Another instance of political projection was the Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship monument. It promoted the 7<sup>th</sup> January discourse. This liberation discourse pervaded the political arena, which performed a historical/political myth of the Cambodian atrocity or the 'second mother' of all Cambodians, today.

The state possessed the means for cultural (re)production, display, and projection via its ideological apparatuses including the legal, political, and cultural (after Althusser, 1971). As indicated in 5.1, Angkor was chiselled in the Constitution, and it later entered the policies of tourism development. Angkor and its related aspects were materialised, represented, and projected within the Angkorcentric frame of reference. The symbolic sculptural pastiches in 4.4 expand the frame by selecting the religious aspects of Angkor for production and representation, and section 4.5 still include conterminous projection via Jayavarman VII but also transgressed the Angkorcentric frame to incorporate other elite and heroic personalities. The selection of what/who to be projected was mainly exercised within a larger frame of reference, the frame of Khmer national identity or Khmerness with the Angkorean civilisation at the centre. Horne contended that "there is human selectivity in all representations" (1986, p.6). The next section will unearth another

frame of Khmer culture, i.e. the myth frame (after Hertog and McLeod, 2001) vis-à-vis statues of mythical significances.

#### **4.6 Monumental Statues of Legendary Quality: Personified and Spiritual Attachment with Narratives of Peoples and Places**

The findings pertaining to research question 3 are mainly registered in sections 4.4-4.6 covering reproductions of statues and sculptural representations of public places. The subsequent sections, again with aiding visual representations of legendary personalities in Figure 4.6 of the Appendix, examine mythological figures which embodied the traditional and cultural practices of the Khmers. They include Daun Penh, Techos Meas/Yort, King Dambang Kranhoung and the White Horse.

##### **4.6.1 The Statue of Grandma Penh: The Legendary Creator of Phnom Penh Capital**

The monumental statue of Daun (Grandma) Penh was erected across the road from the hilltop *Wat Phnom* (①, Figure 4.6). It was built to honour the legendary figure believed to be the first founder of the sanctuary on the hill and to be in close relationship with the founding of the capital city (MOT, 2011a, 2012a).

The statue of Daun Penh figure was inaugurated under the presidency of the present King Norodom Sihamoni in May 2008 (Heng, 2008). An advisor to the Buddhist Institute suggested that the Capital Hall (Municipality) do more research to retrieve the stories of other Cambodian heroes and build statues of them in the name of Cambodia (Heng, 2008). *Wat Phnom*, loaded with the mythical force of Daun Penh, was also considered by many Khmers as a sacred place. Recently, in the July 2013 post-election controversy between the two winning parties (i.e. the Cambodia National Rescue Party and the CPP) over the execution of the 'free and fair' election, and the legitimacy of the ballot counting,

and the result accused by the former, there were rallies by NGO workers, Buddhist monks, and laypeople at *Wat Phnom* to pray for peace (see Yun and Vandenbrink, 2013b; Blomberg and Mech, 2013; The Cambodia Herald, 2013). Thus, the legendary figure of Daun Penh was presented as the symbol of the first founder of the centre of Phnom Penh capital, which was later built upon and extended by Khmer kings and as an emblem of mythical force residing in the belief of many Khmers. The next section will look at the production of the statue of two warlords of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### **4.6.2 Monumental Statue of Techos Meas/Yort: The Legendary Twin Warriors**

The statue of legendary Techo Meas/Yort (②, Figure 4.6) was situated on the touristy river bank in the Phnom Penh capital. The statue was built to remind Cambodians of the heroism of the two warriors as indicated in the announcement by the Phnom Penh Municipality:

Phnom Penh Capital Hall would like to inform Samdech, His Excellency, Lok Chumteav, ladies and gentlemen that Phnom Penh authority will organize official inauguration ceremony of Techo Meas and Techo Yort statues on September 1st, 2012 at 8.00 am at the park in front of Onalom pagoda, Chey Chumneas Commune, Daun Penh District, Phnom Penh under honorable chairmanship of Lok Chumteav MEN Sam Orn, Permanent Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Parliament-Senate Interaction and Inspection Ministry, highest representative of Samdech Techo HUN Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia. This ceremony is for goal to remind the patriotism and heroicness of our famous ex- commander in chief who did efforts and sacrificed to protect the country from the enemies. The ceremony is also conducted Roeb Bat program (Buddhist tradition) by participating from 69 monks and fireworks display.

(Phnom Penh Municipality, 29 August 2012)

Moreover, according to a Siem Reap-based travel website, the two warlords were famous warriors from Kampong Thom in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It described Techo Meas as a “powerful and intelligent warlord”. Before his death, he handed his control over to Techo Yort, who was an indigenous Kuy. Kuy respondents from Kampong Thom province (i.e. Sochea and Chenda) also stated that Techo Yort was a Kuy and one of them said in March 2013 that

“in a drama, Techo Yort stopped King Samre’s cut on Techo Meas with his combat knife/sword. The knife was a Kuy knife”.

A Lakhon Basak, i.e. a type of Khmer traditional drama, about Techo Meas/Yort was identified on YouTube. It was performed on the Southeast Asia Television (SEATV) in Cambodia by a group of performers from the Department of Culture and Fine Arts from Kampong Thom (see Tep, 2012), just before the inauguration of the monumental statues of them. As told in the drama, Techo Meas was a legend from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. It narrated the story of Techo Meas, together with Techo Yort under the former’s command, in successive victories over the battles against his enemies. Techo Meas was projected with good personality, such as power, intelligence, and good will. Some of his enemy’ solders defected to him. The drama illustrated that Techo Meas finally toppled down the then King and ruled the country himself. In effect, the drama was narrated in parallel with Hun Sen, the five-term Prime Minister of Cambodia.

#### **4.6.3 The Monumental Statue of King Dambang Kranhoung: A Mythical Symbol of the Province of Battambang**

King Dambang Kranhoung, also called Ta Dambang Kranhoung in Khmer, was a legend related to the name of the province of Battambang in northwestern Cambodia bordering Thailand. The statue of Ta Dambang Kranhoung (③, Figure 4.6) was used as the symbol of the province, which was also locally known for rice. The legend dated to the pre-Angkorean era was found in stone inscriptions (Ton, 2009). Cambodia was under the domination of the Siam for more than a century from around 1795 (see Chandler, 1991; Palmer and Martin, 2008). The northwestern provinces of Battambang, Siem Reap and then Sisophon were returned to Cambodia in 1907 due to the French pressure on the Thais. The handover of the three provinces to Cambodia was seen depicted in a form of a huge sign/figure at the foot of *Wat Phnom*.

The monumental statue of King Dambang Kranhoung was erected “in honor of the staff-throwing King” (MOT, 2012a, p.106) in a large roundabout close to town, which was easily seen by the public/tourists travelling from Phnom Penh on NR5. It had first been built in a smaller size and, after its collapse, it was rebuilt in 1999 (Ton, 2009). The 2009 Battambang visitor guide stated “the statue is popular and effective for praying belief of domestic people. On Sila-day [holy day], you will see many people come to pray for happiness” (Ton, 2009, p.26). Battambang province was not only projected as a mythical and spiritual significance in relation to King Dambang Kranhoung but also seen as “the land of golden rice of Cambodia” (Moeun, 2010a, leaflet’s front page) or “the rice bowl of Cambodia” (MOT, 2012a, p.106).

#### **4.6.4 Monumental Statue of the White Horse: The Representation of Kep Seaside Province**

The statue of the White Horse (④, Figure 4.6) was located in Kep city about 174 kilometres away from Phnom Penh or about 25 kilometres from Kampot provincial town. From Kampot province, the statue was positioned at the junction of the road leading off NR33. The statue of the White Horse was built there because of a legend related to the location.

According to Bayon TV, a legend was told in connection with the name of Kep (*Travel in Cambodia*, 2013). There was a king named Sa Kor Reach, who practised his magic spell on a commander at Angkor Thom and his army. The King then stole the commander’s horse and escaped together with his troops to the Southwestern seaside. When taking a rest at a seaside, the King was suddenly informed that the commander together with his soldiers was following from behind. Overwhelmed by the commander and his soldiers, the King quickly jumped on the horseback and he, together with the horse saddle, fell off the horse. He got back on the horse and reared away, leaving the saddle behind. Thus,

the area or the seaside where the King left the saddle was called 'horse saddle' or Kep Seh.

The White Horse roundabout was also mentioned in the direction given in the Rough Guide to Cambodia and the Lonely Planet Cambodia (see Palmer and Martin, 2008; Ray and Robinson, 2012). Kep was actually part of the historical account of the French colonisation. They founded the place for their retreat in 1908 (Ray and Robinson, 2012). Kep became a popular seaside for both locals and tourists. Kep was also listed as part of the 440 kilometre Cambodian coastline recognised by the Most Beautiful Bays in the World club (Hun, 2011). The Cambodia bay, which included the four coastal provinces of Kep, Kampot, Sihanoukville and Koh Kong, received 226, 934 of the total 2,868,499 international tourists to Cambodia for the first 10 months of 2012 and Kep received 35% share of those to the coastal provinces (Thong, 2012b). In his speech, the Minister of Tourism also noted the government's long-term vision to insistently urge for the 'sustainable development' [sic] along the Cambodian coastline. The White House monument was intended to use as a marker of Kep and the legend associated with it amid the rise of local and international visitors to the seaside. The Ministry of Tourism promoted the place as "one of the 'must visits' when in Cambodia" (MOT, 2012a, p.79; also see Palmer and Martin, 2008 and Ray and Robinson, 2012).

In addition to the above statued representations presented as the findings to question 3, various other forms of representations were encountered during the fieldworks and could be identified promotional material, i.e. those the statues peculiar to areas (or provinces). For examples, the statue of the elephant/tigers served as a symbol of Kampong Thom town, that of Koupreys a symbol of Mondulkiri, that of Durian Fruit a symbol of Kampot, that of Clay Pot a sign of Kampong Chhnang, that of indigenous Tumpouns a landmark of their community who managed the Yeak Laom lake and so on. They are iconic representations of Cambodian provinces and are far from convenient to be discussed in this thesis document due to space limitation.

#### **4.6.5 Myths and Legends: Politics of Representation of Aspects of Cambodia**

Angkor is undeniably an enormous oeuvre left by the colonial's political imagination of the modern Khmers. Continuing efforts, assisted with latest technology (or cultural production "technique"), were made to (re)construct and to (re)justify this fantasmatics (still at work) based on 'scientifically constructed' facts or proofs of the medieval Khmer Empire. Recently, new evidence was identified as related to remnants of the past Empire, using laser technology by a group of archaeologists from the University of Sydney (Gelineau, 2013). Thus, more narratives about the Khmers are yet to be told by newly available evidence. Narrativisation and media projection help enforce the myth or rather the "political myth" (after Bottici, 2007) of Angkor and the legends of religious and historic personas. Barthes (1972) contended that myth was a communicative system in which message or discourse was conveyed (or rather normalised) as a mode of speech, writing or representation.

The statues of Grandma Penh, Techo Meas/Yort, Dambang Kranhoung and the White Horse were not constructed out of nothing. They communicated certain messages to the public or tourists who encountered them. For instance, the statue of Grandma Penh conveyed a message about the founding of Phnom Penh, the present capital city which was named after her. Battambang province was named after the legend of King Dambang Kranhoung, whose statue became a spiritual symbol. While the other statue productions in 4.6 carried the significance of place, i.e. a form of place-making, the statue of Techo Meas/Yort communicated both historical and political connotations. It is the images of the statues, which were signified in certain ways, which gave meanings to the locals and tourists alike. For Barthes (1972), such representations were conscious acts of signification.

Legends might differ from myths in their subtleties (Bottici, 2007). Legends help construct stories or tell anecdotes, and they often appealed to legendary personalities (Horne, 1986). One may consider the Angkor as a political myth, and the personalities such as



kings and those related to the names of places in Cambodia as legends. For Horne (1986), dominant myths are enacted by language. Myths, legends, tales and narratives are forms of story-telling via which language is a very important medium—the medium that constructs Barthes' (1972) communicative system. In telling the story, for instance, of Jayavarman VII, other characters were involved to help enforce heroism, especially the character of his enemy. While the legend of the King was illustrated with various achievements, it is shown later that in constructing the show of the glory of Jayavarman VII at the Cultural Village, in Phnom Penh and perhaps elsewhere, his enemy was highlighted in enhancing his legendary quality. The legend became an important representation or an icon of Khmer culture, history and identity. The legendary story illustrates the myth and partly effectuates the fantasmatic of the Angkor.

The legends of Daun Penh and Dambang Kranhoung penetrated the minds, the beliefs, and religious and political practices of Cambodians. Hertog and McLeod (2001) contented that myths and narratives are powerful concepts to cultural frames because they carry extensive cultural meanings and they are forms of cultural expressions. Not only the legends of Daun Penh and Dambang Kranhoung but other legends were passed down from one generation to another from oral to written traditions. Many of the inherited legends were associated with stories of places and others (e.g. the legends of Jayavarman VII and Techo Meas/Yort) are perhaps *expressive* and *instrumental*. For expressivity, they draw an attention to Cambodian common values and beliefs and hold them together and, for instrumentality, those legends are employed as a means to an end. They are used as a representation/personalisation of politicians or to promote a certain political message.

The expressivity and instrumentality of cultural displays such as those in museums or statues in public places are sometimes difficult to distinguish because largely it depended on available evidence. Those statues of Hindu deities and Buddhist personas covered in earlier sections were often reproductions from museums. The acts of statue production (or rather meaning production) is a religious expression, but the projection of the magical

power of those statues, which was sometimes linked to the glory of the Angkor Empire, can be considered as a politic of exhibition (i.e. an instrumentalisation of culture). For instance, in the case of public statues representing Lord Ganesha, it is palpable from the Phnom Penh Municipality (or the state) that it serves both expressive and instrumental values. It is an intended expression of the Angkorean art, which is deemed uncontested among the Khmers and a symbol of peacefulness and development of the capital. In the case of the White Horse, the instrumentalisation is blurry as opposed to those of the King Korn and Techo Meas/Yort. The impulse of myth-making and legendisation has become more notable amid with the increase in international tourism to Cambodia and domestic travel. Such (re)productions of myths and legends were an important apparatus of cultural signification.

In short, as seen in the findings, myths, legends and narratives represented and projected in the form of statues and exhibited in public places throughout Cambodia constitute important aspects of the cultural repertoire of Cambodia in that research question 1 has been partly answered. The facets of the gene banks serve both/ether as a cultural expression and/or a cultural instrumentalisation. They also indicated the state's behaviour/attitude towards cultural exhibition and the prioritisation/selection, production and projection of cultures, histories and identities. These acts testify how the Khmers, or rather the state, made sense of their life-world in what Hollinshead (2009a) and Hollinshead *et al.* (2009) called *worldmaking* (after Goodman, 1978). In the subsequent sections, the findings related to the projection of peoples and cultures via shows or via the performance of cultures, particularly at the Cultural Village in Siem Reap, are registered.

#### **4.7 The Projection of the Khmer Culture: Production and Performance of Cultural Identities at the Cultural Village**

Here is the section on dance performances whose findings derived from field visits and interviews with concerned performing artists, dancers and other individuals providing their perspectives regarding performances of ethnic cultures, including those of the Khmers, the Chinese, the Kola, the Bunong and the Kroeungs staged for visitors at the Cultural Village in Siem Reap. Pictorial snapshots of the miniatures of tourism landmarks (sights) in Cambodia are provided in Figure 4.7 in the Appendix to aid visualisation of the spectacle reproduced for visitors to the Cultural Village. They include the replicated representations of Udong hill, Buddha statue at the Arthaross pagoda, the Royal Palace, the National Museum of Cambodia, the Independent Monument, the Central Market and Wat Phnom. They were reproduced from the composite of gene banks of Cambodia. In this section, the Cultural Village is taken a case in examination of selection, production, projection and performance of ethnic cultures and identities.

##### **4.7.1 Attractions in the Cultural Village: The Show and Expression of Cultures**

The Cultural Village deemed rather popular for both international and domestic tourists, although it could be more known to the latter. The Village was captured in various sources such as guidebooks, TripAdvisor and YouTube. The Ministry of Tourism promoted that the place provides “an excellent insight into the life and culture of the Cambodians, their traditions and practices...a showcase of landmarks...a peek into the lifestyles of...ethnic minorities” (MOT, 2012a, p.67).

The Ministry of Tourism also depicted the Cultural Village with of its Khmer styled buildings, a huge reclining Buddha, dancers in hill tribe clothes, a Wedding procession, the show of King Jayavarman VII, and the Fishing Village. No aspect of Chinese culture was presented, although the Chinese village was one of the themed villages. In short, the MOT documents projected Khmerness. The Cultural Village was also promoted by tour

companies and the accommodation sector. Tour operators included the place as part of their itineraries. A travel agency 'Visit Mekong' states that the place "represent different cultural heritages and characteristics of 19 races".

Similarly, the accommodation sector stated highly of the Cultural Village. A guesthouse noted that tourists "can discover models of the famous sights of Cambodia" and tourists encouraged to change the travel plan, saying "change your plans, spend one day less at the temples and instead at the Cambodian Cultural Village" (Siem Reap attractions and information, no date). This section 4.7 has hitherto registered a brief survey of the sights/attractions supplied by the Cultural Village and the projection by the tourism industry, including the Ministry of Tourism, travel agencies and the accommodation sector. All of these agencies sought to promote the place in one way or another. In the sections that follow, the tourist attractions in the Village will be examined in more details.

#### **4.7.2 The Museums: Introductory Presentation to the Cultural Village**

The two museums on each side of the ticket check point were designed to introduce visitors to the Cultural Village. They depicted various scenes, telling stories about nature, history, culture, people's daily lives, and famous movies stars. Upon entering through the ticket check point, the museum on the left hand side illustrated different types of animals and ancient daily life tools in class boxes in the middle of the museum, the paintings of Khmer daily lives, the river/lake, pig fighting, bull fighting, cock fighting, circus, house building and a Khmer king and his armies engaged in the fighting with the invading Cham on the inside walls of the museum, and so on. The depiction was modelled after the stories carved on the galleries of the Bayon temple, a famous temple built by King Jayavarman VII. There was also a depiction of the activities of the construction of Angkor Wat temple with people using elephants, carving statues, and lifting huge blocks of stone. At the corner just before the exit, there were displays of Khmer traditional silk products,

paintings of Angkor Wat and other temples, T-shirts, scarves, postcards, statues of the Buddha, and other souvenirs made from stone, wood, and silver in different sizes.

On the opposite side, it was a Wax Museum. It began with the legend of the creation of Cambodia, telling the story of the *naga*-princess dating back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century, heroic narratives of the Jayavarman VII and his army, the official Chinese envoy to Cambodia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Chou Ta-Kuan with Chinese records hanging behind, King Ang Duong, King Norodom Suramrith, Chuon Nath, Phirum Ngoy, indigenous figures/their lives and famous film stars (also see Winter, 2006a). In an interview, Sokhom informed that those wax figures in the Museum were made in China. The two museums at the entrance introduced visitors to aspects of the history and culture of Cambodia. Visitors were also familiarised with replicas of other attractions on the walkway towards performance theatres and miniature ethnic villages.

#### **4.7.3 The Replicas of Attractions: Representations of Various Aspects of Cambodia via National Symbols**

The miniatures of important landmarks in Cambodia are shown in Figure 4.7. Since the Buddha statue/Udong hill and *Wat* Phnom were already covered in section 4.4.2 and 4.6.1, respectively, the following passages thus incorporate only the meanings and significances of the rest of the reproduced landmarks.

The formation of the **Royal Palace** is mainly associated with King Ponhea Yat (1393-1463) and King Norodom (1834-1904) (MOT, 2012a). The Palace has been the abode of the Khmer kings for long. Upon the abdication of King Sihanouk in 2004, Prince Sihamoni, a present throned King and a constitutional monarch resides at the Palace. The Royal Palace complex contains a number of attractions such as the Throne Hall, the temple of the Emerald Buddha, stupas and a Napoleon III building.

The Royal Palace is hailed as “Phnom Penh’s most memorable sight” (Palmer and Martin, 2008, p.70) and a most important sight in Phnom Penh recommended by Ray and Robinson (2012). It is also featured in a regional tourism magazine produced for the 2011 ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF). The official texts about the Royal Palace produced by the Ministry of Tourism were exactly the same, with just slightly different pictorial illustrations. In the Cultural Village, the replicas of Royal Palace and others were clustered together on both sides of the walkway from the entrance.

The **National Museum** of Cambodia was among the copies of the landmarks. It was a copy from the one in Phnom Penh, whose history is associated King Sisowath (MOT, 2011a, 2012a) and the French. It received the first official inauguration by the King in 1920 (MOT, 2011a, 2012a). Containing 1,400 items, the Museum is acclaimed as housing “the world’s largest collection of Khmer arts, including sculpture, ceramics, bronzes, and ethnographic objects” (MOT, 2011a, p.13). The Museum does not prevail itself in the ATF magazine, nor is it seen under the ‘places of interest’, the ‘must-sees’, nor under the ‘must-dos’ in the magazine (MOT, 2011b).

Another miniature of the landmark structures is the **Independence Monument**, whose history dates back to the ex-King Norodom Sihanouk’s endeavour to gain independence from France in 1953 (Tully, 2005; MOT, 2012a). The Monument was built in 1955 to commemorate “the souls of brave combatants and heroes who had laid down their lives for the freedom of the country” (MOT, 2011b, p.32). The independence from the French was annually celebrated on the 09<sup>th</sup> of November; the date also marked a one-day public holiday in Cambodia. The replica of the Independence Monument in the Cultural Village signifies this episode in the Cambodian history. There were also other copies of the Independence Monument and they were placed in roundabouts and public places throughout the country. In the official handbooks and website, there was however no information regarding the architect who built it.

The **Central Market**, also called Phsar Thmey in Khmer, was also among the miniatures in the Cultural Village. Built in 1937 with colonial styles, the Market, one of the tourist markets in Phnom Penh, became an outstanding landmark in Phnom Penh. Like Phsar Toul Tum Pong (or the Russian Market). It is perhaps such an important landmark that its miniature replica was constructed. Thus, the Royal Palace, the National Museum, the Independence Monument and the Central Market are important tourist “markers” (MacCannell, 1999) with meaning and significance tracing back to the history, culture and stories of the Khmers.

The miniatures in the Cultural Village were built after those landmark attractions/structures in Phnom Penh. Touch and Touch (2010) stated that “in the 1950s and 60s, [as an international tourist destination,] Phnom Penh was called the Pearl of South East Asia due to a thriving arts scene and its remarkable architecture.” This promotion of Phnom Penh as the ‘Pearl of Asia’ was also seen in current promotional material, including those of the Ministry of Tourism (MOT, 2011b). Many flourishing and outstanding buildings with remarkable styles from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century were born out of an important contribution from a Khmer architect Vann Molyvann and a former Director of APSARA Authority, whose name appears to be suppressed in current official tourism promotion material. He built the Olympic Stadium, the Chaktomuk Conference Hall, the campus buildings of the Royal University of Phnom Penh, the Independence Monument and others (Vater, 2010).

#### **4.7.4 Staged Shows: Performing Cultures in the Cultural Village**

##### **4.7.4.1 The Mixed Shows: Staged Performances at the New Theatre**

Prior to the construction of the New Theatre, the mixed shows were performed at the Small Theatre. The New Theatre was built to accommodate newly created shows, especially for Korean clients. Sokhom said that the New Theatre was constructed in early March 2013 upon the request from Korean tour leaders and operators. He claimed that

the shows were set up “first for conservation of culture, second for promotion and third for income generation for the staff” (Interview with Sokhom, 02 May 2013). At the New Theatre, the shows comprised Drum music, Lotus Flower dance, Clay Pot dance, Khmer Martial Arts, Pestle dance, *apsara* dance and Khmer Wedding ceremony. The implications of these shows drawn from Sokhom are summarised in Table 4.7.4.1.

First, with regard to the **Drum music**, Sokhom said it was created after Kantremming (KM) music, which was used in different parts of Cambodia and which was closely related to Pre Rup temple of the middle 10<sup>th</sup> century in Siem Reap (Freeman and Jacques, 2010). He noted that the music in different parts of Cambodia was slightly different, adding that it depended on the composer’s imagination, creativity and principles to make the music attractive. Sokhom traced the music back to its origin from the Bunongs, the “indigenous Khmers” in his own word, who composed the music for the then king in the early centuries. (However, he was not sure exactly when.) He added “the present Big Drum music has changed from its original. Big drums had been used in various contexts, such as in battles, royal weddings and ceremonies, and royal burials”. First, in the ancient battles, big drums had been used to give signals to soldiers either to attack the enemies, to withdraw, or to stop fighting. Second, big drums had also been used to create music in royal weddings and crowning/enthroning ceremonies. Third, KM music had been used in royal funeral rituals. For instance, as far as he knew, four musicians had played the music at Pre Rup temple in the past; first turning back to back with their faces towards the four different directions and up to a certain point facing one another, signalling that the dead body’s soul was in peace.

The next show at the New Theatre was the **Lotus Flower dance**, in which the dancers held (the representation/symbol of) lotus flowers’ leaves. The dancers themselves were at the centre. Sokhom acknowledged that the music, which was more of Chinese, did not tell a national identity of the Khmers. However, Sokhom added “lotus flowers’ leaves themselves were at the heart of the Khmer culture, tradition and belief”. He stated he selected the Chinese music and rewrote it by keeping the same melody. He continued:



There was an absence of national identity in the music in the Lotus Flower dance but what we have as part of our national identity is the leaves of lotus flowers because they are a symbol of good deed, a symbol of justice, virtue, the Buddha, Dharma and Monks.

(Interview with Sokhom, 02 May 2013)

Third, Sokhom told that the **Clay Pot dance** was designed in accordance with the Khmer tradition. He asserted the fact was that the Khmers had used clay pots in their daily lives. As witnessed, the dance showed beautiful ladies walking in Khmer traditional manner, each carrying a clay pot against her hip. At one point in the dance scene, they washed themselves at a pond before carrying water in the pots home. Sokhom said the dance was part of the idea of a deceased staff member and later materialised by her husband, another important member of the Cultural Village.

Sokhom said the dresses of the Clay Pot dancers were designed via the imagination of those worn during the reign of the legendary *naga*-princess Lieou-Ye in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the time when the Khmers did not actually know how to dress yet. There was also a wax figure of Lieou-Ye in the Wax Museum. Those, especially tourists, who did not know the story of the dancers' dresses as articulated by Sokhom, might see the dresses as sexy. [Yes, they were sexy, indeed!] (See the interview snippets (15), (17) and (51) of Extract 4.7.4.1, which is an example of full-length interviews conducted in the study). Although the dancers looked sexy in the dresses, Sokhom rejected that the dresses looked like Chinese ones. He said there was an endeavour to make them the same as the dresses imagined to be used in the first century but the skills in making them did not meet the imagination.

Fourth, the **Khmer Martial Arts** show was meant to communicate typical Khmer Martial Arts (Bokator) to visitors. Having learned some martial arts from his father, Sokhom said he selected only a different few out of hundreds of kbach/fighting styles to show. As witnessed in the show, youth dressed as members of different ethnic groups first came out with their traditional daily tools and baskets of fruit, sitting in a semi-circle before the

Cock Fighting and Martial Arts competition began. Just before the Martial Arts competition actually began, boxers on the fighting arena gave their respect/gratitude to their trainers via the performance of certain slow fighting styles.

Fifth, the next consecutive show was the **Pestle dance**, a traditional folk dance associated with farmers. Sokhom noted, in the real doing, there were actually other tools/things and activities, such rice mortars, rice, and the pestling of rice, etc. For convenience, the dance did not picture these, he said. Chheng (2003) stated that the Pestle dance originated from such provinces as Kampong Cham and Kandal.

Next, the **Royal Ballet**, was also shown at the New Theatre in the Cultural Village.

Sokhom noted that the *apsara* dance had at least two significances:

First, it is related to divinity. Second, it is the alms-giving dance because those who have problems such as worries, sorrows and family rows, can feel relaxed after watching this dance. They stop thinking about the things happening to them. Thus, it is called the alms-giving dance.

(Interview with Sokhom, 02 May 2013)

[At the early stage of the *apsara* dance production,] Sokhom said the dance was not targeted for the general public but for only kings and diplomats to Cambodia, noting that there have been different versions of the *apsara* dance and the dresses [but still with the same classical form]. He gave an instance of a person (who was also a respondent in the current study) who came up with different hair styles of dancers. Chheng (2003) indicated that these celestial dancers must have existed long before the 7<sup>th</sup> century because King Jayavarman I liked to present them to his God. The *apsara* dance was registered as a UNESCO world heritage in 2003 (MOT, 2011a, 2012a). The dance has now been part of official shows for officials and diplomats. It also became an important commercial dance for tourists at hotels, restaurants, and NGOs.

**The Khmer Wedding** was shown last at the New Theatre, where the shows were designed especially for the Korean tourists. It was also shown at the Millionaire House, where the show had been there longer (see the next section, below).According to

Sokhom, performing arts could be examined in terms of their virtue, justice, and beauty/aesthetic (see snippet (10) of Extract 4.7.4.1). Beauty was said to be related with the decoration of the stage, the dressing, the atmosphere, the dancers, etc., the aspects that make the shows/dances attractive to visitors. As the owner of the Cultural Village asserted (see (14) and (15) of Extract 4.7.4.1), beauty was the utmost importance in performances, meaning that of the dancers themselves and it was an outstanding criterion in recruiting/employing dancers.

#### **4.7.4.2 The Khmer Wedding Show: Showcasing the Ceremony at the Millionaire House**

While the Khmer Traditional Wedding show at the New Theatre was one of the shows set up especially for Korean tourists, the **Khmer Wedding** presentation at the Millionaire House was performed there for longer, and it was shown at two different times in a day, first at 10:30am and again at 3:10pm.

Actually, Khmer weddings consisted of several different stages, even before the actual wedding day(s) took place. There were various ceremonies, which might include dowry procession and presentation of dowry, hair cutting, pairing, and so forth (MOT, 2012a). However, people in different regions in Cambodia and at different historical periods might practise slightly different wedding rituals and procedures. Those influenced by Chinese culture might also include a tea ceremony (MOT, 2012a). The MOT described processes of the conduct of a Khmer Wedding and stated that “traditional Cambodian weddings are intricate affairs that consist of multiple ceremonies lasting three days and three nights” (MOT, 2012a, p.30). The MOT illustration on the Khmer Wedding ceremony made use of the photos of the Wedding show at the Cultural Village (see (8) and (9) of Extract 4.7.4.1).

As witnessed in the presentation of the Khmer Wedding, only the pairing ceremony was selected for the show. At the Millionaire House, the pairing ceremony was led by a Khmer

Archa (priest). In the ceremony, the bridegroom, the bride, their best men and women, parents from both sides and participants were called out to join. The bridegroom and the bride were asked to sit bending forwards with their lower limbs on a nicely decorated pillow and the pairing ceremony began. In the show, after the pairing ceremony, the groom held one end of the bride's band (part of the wedding outfit placed across the body from over her shoulder; also see (8) and (9) of Extract 4.7.4.1). This last aspect of the show made direct reference to the origin of the marriage between the legendary *naga*-princess and the Indian prince. During the show, international and domestic visitors sat opposite, listening to the traditional wedding music and watching the presentation of the pairing ceremony. The ceremony was an important part of the Khmer traditions and customs and, today, an aspect of the commercialisation of Khmer culture in a tourist setting.

#### **4.7.4.3 A Staged Show: Projected Aspects of Khmer Culture at the Khmer Village**

The show staged at the Khmer village provided visitors with a sense of the past regarding the Khmer army. The show was contextualised with an indication of the significance of a Khmer classical music, called Kantremming, which was used by the Khmer ancestors in commanding their army. The following text was written verbatim from the introductory narrative in English which contextualised the show, the use of Kantremming, and aspects of the Khmer culture (snippet (1), Extract 4.7.4.3).

Further contextualisation of the show was provided by Sokhom in an interview (see (43) and (44) of Extract 4.7.4.1). The selection of the Kantremming music was part, particularly revitalisation, of culture and history of the Khmers. The music was chosen as an attraction for visitors and, meanwhile, as part of the business of the Chinese ethnic owner and cultural agents.

Kampuchea in Khmer language, which was later known as Cambodia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, lasted for thousands of years and climbed its apex during the reign of King Jayavarman

VII, the figure shown at the Cultural Village on weekends. Also part of the Khmer culture and traditions, Kantremming music was shown at the Khmer village, together with fighting contests and dances. According to Sokhom, the music bore historical significance for the Khmers. At present, one might have noted that Kantremming music, song, and dance were still popular in Cambodia.

#### **4.7.4.4 A Staged Performance: The Making of the Glory of Jayavarman VII**

The show of King Jayavarman VII's achievements, success, and glory was scheduled on the last three days of the week. From an introductory narration in Khmer, Jayavarman VII was regarded as the unrivalled hero King, the superb commander, the national reconciler of polity states under his rule, the ruler of the great Khmer Empire, and the greatest stone temple builder, etc.

The show was about the battle between a prince, who later crowned himself King Jayavarman VII, and his army and the Cham army who sacked and ruled Angkor temporarily. In the show, he defeated his enemy in a fierce battle and the building programme began. Sokhom stated his team did research and set up the scene for the performance of the King, saying that "we gathered information and checked with one another for reliability. If the data on history were the same, we used it; if different, we didn't use it" (see (53) of Extract 4.7.4.1). Sokhom stressed the prowess/heroism of King Jayavarman VII in protecting Cambodia's territory, reclaiming Angkor from outside invaders, such as the Cham who occupied it in 1177 (Brand and Chuch, 1992). The King did not only provide territorial protection but also launched his temple building programme, some of which were famous at present (e.g. the Bayon). Cambodia's reverence and admiration of the King, who was placed at the ganglion of Angkor and Cambodia's national pride, were examined earlier in 4.5.1.

The glory of Jayavarman VII can also be detected in the annual celebration of the Water/Boat Racing Festival organised for three days sometime between October and

November. The festivity was also featured as a very important event in MOT (2011a, 2012a) and also echoed in guidebooks. Ray and Robinson (2012, p.19) described the Festival as the celebration of “the epic victory of Jayavarman VII over the Chams”. The Phnom Penh Post also reported the connection between the Water Festival and King Jayavarman VII, stating that “it started as a war. The great Angkorean King Jayavarman VII led his naval fleet against the Chams invading the Khmer Empire. He defeated them in 1178 and set the stage, nearly a thousand years later, for Cambodia's annual Water Festival” (Coren, 2003). A respondent Phanny added “they [the racing boats] are royal boats which were built, decorated and modelled upon those fleet boats of King Jayavarman VII”. In addition, the King was set as the National Culture Day tribute in April 1999 (Zamo, 1999). Hence, the show at the Cultural Village helped echo the triumphant glory of King Jayavarman VII, the most inspired and aspired Khmer King in the history of Cambodia.

#### **4.7.5 Production and Performance of Identity: Interpretation of Portrayal of Aspects of Elite Culture**

Various sections in 4.7 elucidated the framing of more of the elite/royal culture and less of the folk culture. The styles of the Cultural Village buildings, various miniature representations of landmark structures, aspects of the Buddha and kings, some of the Angkor-related exhibits in the Cultural Village museums, the Khmer Wedding show at the Millionaire House, the *apsara* dance, the Bokator Martial Arts and so on were associated mainly with performance of facets of the elite culture. The Peacock dance, Pestle dance, Clay Pot dance and other ethnic minority shows portrayed and characterized aspects of folk culture. The following interpretation focuses on the production and projection of Khmer culture, many aspects of which belong to the elites, rulers or kings placed within the imaginary/creative realm of the cultural production.

The selection and production of various aspects of Khmer culture were generally concerted with attempts to frame Khmer culture, particularly in positive and authentic manner of projection from the perspectives of the cultural agents. The selection of the exhibits in the museums at the Cultural Village was dominated by aspects of elite culture, tradition and identity. It told stories of the Angkorean kings, construction activities and lives identified at Angkor. In the Wax Museum, there was a depiction of indigenous lives, strictly speaking in the form of commodification and disparaging comparison. It was again contrasted by the exhibition of film stars, Angkorean kings and history, the post-Angkorean kings and other elites.

Again the replicas of the Royal Palace, National Museum, Independence Monument and the Central Market are representations of the elite culture, thus the culture of Cambodians/the Khmers. The National Museum housed statues/exhibits related to aspects of Hindu and Buddhist religions, Angkorean culture and the royal families. The Independence Monument projects the legend of ex-King Sihanouk in his struggle for independence from France. Immediately after his recent death, a statue of him was constructed near the Independence Monument (Mom, 2012; Vong and Teehan, 2013). The Royal Palace and the Central Market also serve to project aspects of high culture. Similarly, the Drum music/Kantremming music, the symbolic Lotus Flowers dance, Khmer Martial Arts (Bokator) and the royal ballet were various fragments of materialistic culture placed within projection and representation of best aspects of the elites, thus performing elitism.

Such selective fragments of cultural exhibitions or performances are perhaps related to what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett called *fragmentation*, an aspect of *madness* and *hereness* in the logic of placemaking (see Hollinshead, 2006). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998, p.18) talked about “exhibiting the fragment” in the context of an ethnographic museum and collections. In the current study, different selective aspects/fragments of Khmer cultural repertoire were reproduced and reified for the museums and sometimes performed on stage with artistic modification and creativity in the cultural representation and projection

of the Khmers. More euphemistically, such commodification was agentive acts of meaning-making or story-telling/narratives within the imaginative creativity of the performing artists. Replicas and the statue of the Buddha were (re)produced and various aspects of performances were showcased for the tourist consumption. They were given a commodity value in the form of the ticket price (US\$5 per person) for the visit. For Marx, the producers, or rather the cultural producers, could not determine their commodity values (or cultural values) until they took them to the market for a successful exchange (Harvey, 2010). Thus, the ticket price was a monetary equivalent of the cultural value of the snapshot of various exhibits, performances and cultural commodities. Similarly, W.Anderson explored the private ownership of Cambodia's heritage (e.g. by Sokimex) and noted that aspects of the heritage are conceptually appropriated in the interpretations and displays and commoditised into artworks with little attention given to its in-situ context (W.Anderson, 2007).

I conceive that the production of identity via the shows at the Cultural Village is an instance of the process in which culture/tradition is revitalised and, meanwhile, commercialised in tourism, creating a performance/cultural spectacle—the one, in its manifestation, which represents mainly the elites. Aspects of this spectacle also enter the media such MOT marketing material, YouTube video clips and newspapers. Debord noted “the spectacle is both the outcome and the goal of the dominant mode of production...the spectacle epitomizes the prevailing model of social life...the spectacle serves as a total justification of the conditions and aims of the existing system” (Debord, 1995, p.13). The spectacle represents the affirmation of choices which have been made or are being made in the sphere of production and performance. Certain aspects of the shows—perhaps many of them—are create with seductive attractions that capture visitors' attention as identified in (15) and (47) in Extract 4.7.4.1.

Although some tourists to the Cultural Village found the shows helpful, others did not (see Tables 4.7.5/1 and 4.7.5/2). The latter group sometimes attacked the shows on (or doubted) their authenticity. From the findings, the shows (e.g. the Drum music, the Lotus



Flower dance, the show at the Khmer village, Jayavarman VII, the Bunong show) were constructed from certain specks of truth or aspects of cultures/traditions, upon which other artistic creations were glossed to build storylines and, especially, to attract tourist attention. The veneering—including cosmetic makeup, the stage decor, the dresses, theatrical effects and so forth as in what a respondent called the ‘beauty’, the aesthetic aspects or the artistry of performing arts—made the shows felt less authentic and more commercial. It was partly due to what Benjamin called the *technik* available in the modern epoch, making the work of arts lose its authentic aura in its (re)production (Lechte, 1994). And it falls within the authenticity-creativity relationship as in the study by Daniel (1996).

On this basis of the techniques at hand, the portrayal of aspects of the Khmer cultures/traditions via performances have gradually become those techniques of the cultural industry in its capacity to represent the Khmers in various aspects of culture/heritage, which were sometimes conceptually flawed once taken out of contexts (W.Anderson, 2007). As will be seen in the next section, the issue is more serious once it come to representing the ethnic Other.

#### **4.8 Projection of Otherness: Production and Performance of Ethnic Cultures and Identities**

##### **4.8.1 A Staged Show: Projecting Chinese Culture at the Cultural Village**

The Cultural Village did not only produce and perform Khmer culture but also the cultures of other ethnic groups in Cambodia, including that of the ethnic Chinese, the Kolas, the Kroeungs and the Bunongs. The show of Chinese culture contained various scenes (e.g. chilly-picking dance, happy youth dance, long hand dance, long leg dance, dragon dance and oily pole climbing), many of which were embedded with martial arts shows and comic acting.

Sokhom talked about the show of the Chinese culture in relation to especially justice and virtue in performing arts (see (17) and (18) of Extract 4.7.4.1). He appeared to speak very highly of the ethnic Chinese in Cambodia about their 'good' values and their struggles to become business owners, in which his boss (the owner of the Cultural Village and the Canadia Bank Plc) was an example of all those characters/values. He also suggested that Khmers and others learn from the Chinese in that respect. There were, of course, some positive facts about the ethnic Chinese in Cambodia, Sokhom appreciated. However, as witnessed today, the economy in Cambodia had perhaps been controlled by the ethnic Chinese, as well, and often at the expense of the million others under development banners. Anyway, it is undeniable that the Chinese was an important part of Cambodian history/society. Chinese immigrants were said to arrive in Cambodia from the 1<sup>st</sup> century (see Ngea, 1973a; Chandler, 1991). The first Chinese envoy Chou Dakuan (or Chou Ta-Kuan) was officially dispatched to Cambodia in late 13<sup>th</sup> century by Timur Khan, the grandson and successor of Kublai Khan, just before the decline of the Khmer Empire (Palmer and Martin, 2008; Dakuan, 2001).

#### **4.8.2 A Staged Show: Performing Kola Culture at the Cultural Village**

After the Chinese village, it was the Kola village, where the show was presented under the theme 'Princess's Dream of Pious Peacock'. The Peacock dance was said to be a traditional dance of Kola ethnic minority, whose culture was performed in the show. An introductory narrative was given to visitors both in Khmer and in English (See (2) in Extract 4.7.4.3). A couple of dances were included in the Kola show such as an Umbrella dance and traditional Gem-Mining dance and Snake dance (also see (19) and (20) of Extract 4.7.4.1).

According to a legend, the gem stones found by otter hunters in a region, the present-day Pailin province, were heard to the Kola who then lived in Chanta Bun of the Siam (Bou, 2001). Then, the Kola set up regular trades in gem stones with the local hunters and the former later came to settle in the region for their trade (Bou, 2001). Today, the Kola ethnic

was on the brink of extinction. Once asked about the storyline in the show, Sokhom highlighted various aspects of the performing arts (see (22) of Extract 4.7.4.1). As a performing artist, he emphasised creativity, imagination, visitors' attention, and dramaticity. The scene was set as in the forest with rocks (part of the theatricality), just like in the other staged shows at the Cultural Village.

#### **4.8.3 Performance of the Kroeung: Staging the Show of Ethnic Culture**

The show at the Kroeung village was intended to communicate the culture of the Kroeungs. More than 18,000 indigenous Kroeungs lived in the Northeast and 18,142 of them in Rattanakiri province (Hean, 2009). The show communicated to visitors about how a Kroeung girl/lady chose her fiancé. At the opening of the show, the narration (in Khmer, Chinese and English) told visitors that the Kroeungs in the Northeast did not have a civilised society as other ethnic minorities but the Kroeungs strictly followed their traditions and customs. For instance, a Kroeung girl was given full freedom in selecting a fiancé by their parents (also see (28) and (29) of Extract 4.7.4.1). As in the other shows at the Cultural Village, comic acts and the settings were important aspects of the show of Kroeung culture to attract visitors' attention. The Chinese, Cham and Indian bachelors were added as ingredients to make the show comical and enjoyable. Kroeung dances were also shown in the 'Choosing a Fiancé' ceremony.

Research on the cultures of the Kroeungs and Bunongs was conducted in early 2000s, and the findings were fed into the production of the shows. Nevertheless, its methodology might be catechised. In a conversation with a respondent Sambo, he said the research was done on their ways of living and their arts, noting that their cultures were similar but their (house) architectures were different. Sambo did fieldwork research on various topics about the ethnic groups and told that he stayed for about 10 days each time in the field. He visited the field often but each time researching different topics. When asked if he studied the same topic and met the same persons each time, Sambo said "no, I did not. I

did research on different topics”. Sambo admitted that the shows at the Kroeung and Bunong villages underwent some adjustments “because the performances were shown as storylines”. He pointed out that creativity was an important aspect of the design of the shows and the themed villages, saying that “I sketched their houses and the sketches were adjusted a little [by my boss]”.

In the comments and reactions from Kroeung respondents (see Table 4.8.3), they appeared to understand the whole storyline projected via the show but they pointed out the differences between the show and their actual practice. As Sokhom said, additions and omissions (i.e. performance editing) from the actual cultural practices in the production of the performances at the Cultural Village were part of creativity, imagination and performing artists, whose aim was to attract visitors’ attention and to make the shows comical and enjoyable. Sokhom emphasised that performing arts/literature was dead without creativity and imagination (see Daniel, 1996; see snippets (17) and (22) in Extract 4.7.4.1).

#### **4.8.4 Staging of the Bunong: Performing Identity of the Ethnic Other**

While the show at the Kroeung village gave an account of ‘Choosing a Fiancé’ in Kroeung culture in Rattanakiri province, that of the Bunong culture narrated the rice harvest sen/ritual by the Bunongs in Monduliri. Again, in the show and in telling the story, dramaticity and theatricality were essential additions to the show/sen in which a buffalo was scarified to the god of rice (snippet (3), Extract 4.7.4.3).

Again, Sokhom contextualised the Phnorngs/Bunongs in his account given in Extract 4.7.4.1 (see (32), (33) and (34)). Mala, another staff member of the Cultural Village, provided a similar thematic account of the show at the Bunong village, saying that “it is a rice dance—the dance to offer to the Soul of Rice. The Bunongs do it for the harvest. They do this offering-to-the-soul-of-rice dance before putting rice in the storage.” Like

Sokhom, for Mala, creativity and beauty (e.g. in terms of dresses) were important factors for her in dressing the dancers, noting that “sometimes, we do not know how to dress dancers for each village. We had to do some research for that and incorporate some of our own design to make them beautiful”. Sokhom and Mala told that the show was intended to communicate the Bunong culture and ways of living to the visitors but both had not been to or seen an in-situ Bunong village yet. According to Hean (2009), out of 31, 912 Bunongs in the Northeast, most of them (20,163) lived in Monduliri and in Kratie (10,836).

It has been hitherto shown that the presentation and performances, especially of ethnic minorities, via dances diverted to some extent from the actual cultural practices of the peoples in the projection. Perhaps, the diversion came from both conscious and/or unconscious knowing of the projected cultures, especially in the cases of the Kroeungs and the Bunongs. Both were among the marginalised cultural groups in Cambodia. Bunong respondents Raksmei and Ponleu suggested that “before the shows, there should have been a proper study of the culture. Or have a Bunong elder there to give advice on the culture.” Their comment about the divergences of aspects of the show from their actual practices is registered in Table 4.8.4.

There had been rumours, or rather misunderstandings, of the Bunongs and other ethnic groups living in the Northeast since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, according to Bunong respondents (e.g. Vichara, Heng, Raksmei, Ponleu, Sinuon and Visal), the Bunongs were thought of as having a hollow chest, having a tail or eating human flesh by Khmers. The Kroeungs were also viewed in the same way by some Khmers, according to Nimol and Bora. According to Sinuon, she noted that the misconceptions were partly due to rumours, performing arts, films/movies, and limited understanding of those involved in the production/projection of aspects of the Bunongs’/her culture. Another respondent John told a story of a friend of his:

I have a Khmer friend in Phnom Penh who said the most terrible thing that Bunongs smell bear. It was just crazy racist things. And I said ‘Have you ever met the Bunong persons?’

Have you ever been among the people? No. But everybody knows, he said, that they are stupid [and that] they are crazy. The same kind of things the white American said about the black Americans 50 or 60 years ago.

(Interview with John, 06 April 2013)

#### **4.8.5 Stereotyping of the Other: The Social Identification of the Bunongs**

What John said reflected the statement of the lawmaker in early November 2012 in his stereotyping of the Bunongs. During a parliamentary session/debate over nuclear security in Cambodia in late 2012, a CPP lawmaker was accused of insulting an opposition counterpart by calling the latter 'a Bunong'. This comparison enraged the Bunongs, some of who worked for local and international NGOs, because it had a connotation of the uncivilised. A US-based Khmer radio, the Voice of America (VOA) reported:

He [the CPP lawmaker] then said Kem Sokha was acting like a "Phnong," a minority group in the country, a slur against whom is associated with ignorance and poor education. Kem Sokha, who later called the slur "unacceptable," then led a walkout of around 20 lawmakers.

(Kong, 2012)

In the CPP lawmaker's first reaction, he denied there was such a people called the Bunongs (Eang, 2012). That the Bunongs were savage was not acceptable for the Bunongs (K.Sok, 2012) and resulted in the outcry among them. They demanded for a public apology and recognition of their ethnic group in Cambodia through a representative and a chairwoman of an indigenous organisation. In an interview with a Bunong representative, Sinuon explained:

The Bunongs, the name of an ethnic group, are also human beings. We [the Bunongs] do exist in Cambodia and we are recognised by law that we are indigenous but indigenous minority. The Khmers are indigenous but indigenous majority. Thus, both the Khmers and the Bunongs are human, although the latter have different identities such as language, tradition and belief. He [the CPP lawmaker] said the Bunong no longer existed because the word 'Bunong' was forbidden/removed since the reign of King Sihanouk.

(Interview with Sinuon, 27 May 2013)

Sinuon said what they (the Bunongs) wanted was for him to announce a recognition and apology in public and in the Bunong rite, with which the latter was yet to be organised. And John, who has been living in Cambodia for years, was discontented towards the projection of the indigenous minorities, especially the Bunongs:

One thing that bothers me a lot about tourism is the sort of contact offered by the tourist agencies and even the tourist department and the tourism ministry is they were offering contact about savages, the pictures of them dancing, smoking, drinking rice wine, riding elephants and carrying spears and cross-bows. All of these images reinforce the idea that the Bunongs are savage people living in the jungle.

(Interview with John, 06 April 2013)

The lawmaker defended himself that he had not intended to insult the Bunongs: he said "I meant it for those who do not respect the law, do not apply the law, are outlaws, have no civilization and no culture" (quoted in K.Sok, 2012). The lawmaker's remark regarding the Bunongs was a typical image constructed about the Other, i.e. indigenous minorities in this case.

#### **4.8.6 Performance of Ethnic Cultures and Identities: Interpretation of Portrayal and Characterization of the Other**

Argued in line with Gramsci (2000) in the interpretation of the preceding sections, the (re)production of cultural aspects for the shows was not entirely based on fabrication but on certain specks of facts/truths of the represented cultures and was attested in section 4.8, as well. The shows of the Chinese culture/traditions and the ethnic Kolas, Kroeungs and Bunongs were based on their stories/narratives.

The doctoring/editing, creativity, and comicality for the commercial staging were more important than the research endeavour to capture cultural realities about the ethnic minorities, such as the Kroeungs and the Bunongs. Simply, it meant business first. In the interviews with the respondents currently working at the Cultural Village, they repeatedly

mentioned the importance of attracting visitors' attention, and none seemed aware of what was actually practiced in those cultures they represented.

It seems that, at the Cultural Village in particular and in the tourism industry in general, whenever there was staff movement, resignation or turnout, a next staff member (usually less well-trained) came in to take over the vacancy position (especially in the middle and top management) and the vicious circle kicked in. Such issue was evident during the fieldwork, and I met some who had left the Cultural Village. The performance manager previously in charge at the Village in Siem Reap was appointed to a new theatre. His position was taken over by somebody else. Sambo, the researcher of ethnic culture/traditions at the Village, quitted for a new job. A Master of Ceremony also resigned to a new plausible career. Despite the challenges, business as usual continued in order to sustain the operation, which could mean in the context of the tourism industry, that the cultural (re)production and/or performances kept going. The issue perhaps got worse if there were no proper policies in place for on-the-job training or staff development, which, in the context of the current Cambodian business framework, might be seen as a slight chance for the tourism-related companies to reap immediate maximum monetary profits.

Then, the shows would inherently render problems of knowledge, especially in the portrayal and representation of the Other. As stated by some of the respondents (e.g. John and Sinuon), the stereotyping of indigenous minorities has always been problematic at least since the 1960s. The stereotyping had effects in the construction/writing of cultural performances/storylines in which the indigenous cultures/peoples were portrayed and actors of the indigenous characterised in the imaging or the representation of different races or social groups. Drawing from Dill (2009), in portrayal, a person/group (e.g. cultural agents) framed another person/social group (e.g. ethnic minority) telling the latter's story in the former's way; in characterisation, the former sketched the character and moral—or rather cultural, values of the latter in the form of acting (e.g. in performing). Thus, cultural agents practised framing, characterisation, and stereotyping via



performances. Derived from reactive techniques where videos of the performances at the Cultural Village were played, Tables 4.8.3 and 4.8.4 register views of the indigenous respondents that illustrate subtle differences between the projection of the indigenous in the shows and their actual practices. These differences were perhaps hard to decipher among the Khmers or domestic visitors, let alone among the international tourists. Their identities were produced via misstereotyping or misrepresentation over time. Hence, the stereotyping of the Bunongs by the CPP lawmaker indicated the view of the dominant Khmers towards the indigenous minorities since the 1960s and, today, the subalterns spoke back.

#### **4.9 Chapter Summary: Representation, Fantasmatics and Politics of Cultural Framing and Identity-Making**

The findings of the current study show that the Khmers lived and breathed with the fantasmatic of Angkor, the bedrock of tourism in Cambodia today and the temperament of the Khmers. Angkor was considered as the dominant national myth/psyche or myth which inspired the Khmers economically, socially, culturally and spiritually. It received the most prominent projection of Cambodia, as a nation via tourism. Engineered by the French colonial, Angkor resided in the hearts and souls of the Khmers, young and old alike. It discursively framed the behaviours and attitudes. It was created as a dominant discourse of the Khmers and their nation, in which the Angkorean aspiration was chiselled in the Constitution and policy framework for development.

Angkor was well fitted with the criterion of the dominant frame spelled out by Hertog and McLeod (2001)'s and Hollinshead's (2004) conception of symbolic reach because it is loaded with symbolic power, excess meaning and widespread recognition. Any encroachment of this dominant frame tends to ignite a commotion from the general public of Cambodia as testified in various cases of the Thai movie star on her television talk

show, the Angkor lighting project and the members of the academic/professional networks. The Angkorean frame of reference, both consciously and unconsciously, guided the cultural discourse and politics of Cambodia and set the ways in which many other cultural aspects were anchored upon and operated. The Angkorcentric frame was a dominant operative framework of cultural selection, production and projection of culture gene banks.

The National Museum of Cambodia and the Angkor National Museum were teemed with, or dominated by, the Angkorean cultural exhibits. Hinduism and Buddhism were predominant religious legacies inherited (or rather constructed) from the Angkorean era. Devine deities and personas of these religions have been re(produced) and displayed in open public places such as in roundabouts, road corners and public/private institutions throughout Cambodia. Statues representing the Angkorean and elite personalities were built and brought within the public eyesight as a form of architectural embellishments of places. The move from indoor exhibitions to outdoor/open space displays of statues of various religious, heroic and legendary significances rendered strategic uses of public space reflected from Lefebvre's (1991) conception of space along with Meethan's (2001) symbolic economy of space.

Many aspects of culture, history, and heritage were selected with the Angkorcentric frames of reference that thrived within the dominant manufacturing and projection of cultures in Cambodia, today. The contemporary elite/political personalities were also the target of cultural projection and representation. Images of personalities such as King Korn and Techo Meas/Yort were turned into stone statues mainly because they were considered to be parallel with the present prominent politician, who personified these warlords. The strategic selection of what aspects of culture to produce was mainly a political decision. Such decision was *instrumental*, not merely *expressive*. The instrumentalisation of culture became obvious in the conscious projective logic or in tourism as the conscious industry (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Barthes (1972) would call this instrumental aspect as a conscious act of *signification*, in which people participated in

making their own life-world as in Goodman's (1978) and Hollinshead's (2009a) conception of *worldmaking*.

Narratives of heroes were enhanced by telling against their villains. The narratives of King Jayavarman VII and King Ang Duong could serve as exemplars. The historical accounts of the Cham army's invasion of Angkor were told to ennoble the heroic quality of the Angkorean King. Similarly, the domination and invasion from Vietnam and Siam were highlighted to promote King Ang Duong as the national savoir of Cambodia. In storytelling, the good parts belong to the heroes and the bad belong to the enemies. Generally, such was a way of constructing stories. Cambodia fell under the French colonisation for almost a century and various heroes emerged from this unfortunate history, including Phirum Ngoy, Chuon Nath and especially King Sihanouk. The King was viewed as the liberator of Cambodia from the French; the Independence Monument was erected to celebrate this historic victory and, after his death, a statue of him was built to sustain his heroic quality that is politicised by today's politicians from time to time. Basically, the projection of the Khmer culture was basically the projection of the culture of the elites, and ethnic cultures/peoples were placed in the backdrop to further elevate the culture of the former.

When it came to the projection of otherness, common issues occurred. They were the issues of misrepresentation and misstereotyping. The indigenous powerless and the socially marginalised groups were portrayed and characterised according to the cultural agents' ways of thinking/perceiving, mocking or fun-making. Nevertheless, performance of the Other was grounded in specks of facts but the doctoring of the Other's narratives by editing and staging strategies with the primary purpose of entertaining and seducing visitors for profiteering purposes contributed to veneered representation and stereotyping of the projected (voiceless) ethnic peoples and cultures. The arrival of the capitalist mode of production exacerbated the problems. Under the guise of investment and development, the capitalists destroyed the environment, grabbed indigenous lands and deforested, making the indigenous population more economically, socially and culturally vulnerable.

With the capitalist modes of production and modern techniques, the aura of the authentic has withered as Benjamin put it (Lechte, 1994). Authentic cultural aspects were turned to commodities with their prices reflected in admission tickets. With capitals, almost every aspect of culture could be turned into commercial representations. Commodification is a recurring phenomenon. Various aspects of culture/history have been reified and commercialised under the label of conservation/preservation and development. Angkor has been contracted out to the private company in the name of more efficient management under the capitalist worldview. The Cultural Village, located in the strategic location (i.e. Siem Reap), was owned by an ethnic Chinese, a tycoon in Cambodia and a typical capitalist. The Cultural Village serves as an exemplary site of cultural production, projection and commodification. Various shows/performances were created and staged for tourists who were interested in having a snapshot of the assorted cultures of Cambodia.

The findings have been hitherto presented and the immediate interpretations of them are ensured. The next chapter takes the interpretations to another level by synthesising the findings, from which important concepts are extracted, supported and further shaped. Before the extraction and shaping in section 5.3, the chapter provides a synopsis of the themes that unfold from the findings in chapter 4. . In the final sections of chapter 5, recommendations for actions and further research are drawn. The conceptual distillation and the recommendations could have been bolstered if time had not been a problem. As stated earlier, time was a crucial issue permeating the whole research process, including the write-up.

## **CHAPTER 5 SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Representation and Projective Discourse of Aspects of Cambodia**

#### **5.1 Introduction: The Projection, Representation and Performance of Aspects of Culture Gene Banks**

The study examined the projection of Cambodia with regard to statued representations, the state projection of mythical and legendary characters, fantasmatics and personification. The purpose of inquiry was to exhume matters of normalisation in the politics of representation of various facets of gene banks (Angkor gene bank, performance gene bank, sculptural gene bank) with a special focus on the projective matters of dominant and subjugated projection. The study migrated from the initial pre-designed aim and objectives to the issues of performances, statue production and representations, and stereotyping which unfolded later as the study progressed. The responses to the emergences of the problems formed the bedrock of this emergent, soft-science research.

The findings in the preceding chapter were classified under the themes of (or as identified in) legal/policy framework; the media projection of tourism; the state involvement in dressing public spaces and places with statues of cultural, historical, mythical and political significances such as religions and heroism; and the performances, especially those at the Cambodian Cultural Village. In the last theme of chapter 4, the study focused mainly on the projection and representation of the ethnic Other (i.e. otherisation) via dances/shows and stereotypic utterance and its reaction. Particular attention was paid to the subjugated groups of the projected cultures such as the Kroeungs and the Bunongs in/from the Northeast.

This last chapter summarises the study aim and objectives (and the research questions), synthesises the findings under the concepts identified, suggests the implications for further/closer studies and finally offers recommendations to some important agencies covered in the study and further research. The identification of the concepts serves as conceptual distillation of the study, whereby the implications for further research are drawn. Beginning from section 5.3.1, the findings will be synopsised under the section headings of normalisation, legitimisation, framing, fantasmatics and performance/performativity. The synopses are further synthesised with the study implications or rather conceptual instillation. The implications are organised in conceptual boxes together with which implications for further research are accordingly suggested. The recommendations in 5.6 are drawn from the findings and reflexive deliberations in the study and they will be harnessed towards actions by key agencies involving the representation through the selection, production and projection and through the marketing of peoples, cultures and places and by the peoples or the subjects projected and represented within the discourse of tourism.

## **5.2 Summary of the Study and Research Problems: Scripting of Peoples, Cultures and Places**

This emergent, soft-science study of normalised/normalising aspects of gene banks of Cambodia via tourism was re-aligned to the unfolding issues of performances, staged representations of public places and stereotypic utterance. For example, the issues which emerged during the research process included the October 2011 China-ASEAN Trade Exposition where indigenous peoples and cultures were also represented/performed, my numerous encounters with statues of various significances in early 2012, and the lawmaker's stereotypic public remark in November 2012 concerning his characterisation of the Bunongs and his conception of their existence. These issues rendered empirical attestation which confirmed the research assumptions in section 1.5 that it was feasible to examine the problems of representation and discursive practices in the projection of

peoples and cultures of Cambodia. The emergent issues also indicated specific direction in which the study was supposed to proceed. They formed the fulcrums of the study objectives and research questions.

The first question anent of the critical issues of representation and projection pertains mainly to the methodological design of the emergent study in which the investigator patiently but engagingly awaited for the critical issues to unfold. Certainly, the critical risk that the issues would not have emerged within the timeframe of the research was an inherent problem of this study of this kind. In the conduct of this study, rigorous engagement provided a prospect and optimism of identifying the critical issues of performances, sculptural pastiches and stereotypic utterance. The second question concerning performances, particularly ethnic dances, was answered via the investigation into the dance performances (dance shows) at the Cambodian Cultural Village in Siem Reap which not only provided a snapshot of cultures and traditions of ethnic peoples in Cambodia but also a snapshot of miniatures replicated from well-known landmarks (or tourist sights) in Cambodia. These aspects of cultural production and projection are subsumed in culture gene banks that constitute the tourist spectacle of the nation.

The third question apropos of the (re)production of public places via the installation of monumental statues or statued representations of various religious and cultural significances was inspected in relation to the expressive and instrumental construction and embellishment of public places. The inspection reveals that they were shaped within the politics and fantasmatics of the Angkorcentric cultures and traditions inherited from the French construction of cultural landscape of Cambodia. The fourth research question regarding the stereotyping of indigenous minority populations prompted by the lawmaker's remark that captured the public and media attention in late 2012 was examined in relation to the reactions and responses from the projected populations who considered the remark as a public insult. The stereotypes were also identified in the staging, portrayal and characterisation of dance performances.

In section 1.3, the research questions were interlinked from the examination of the evidence of normalising/naturalising acts to that of alternative discourse or counter-discourse and to that of effects/consequences of normalisation of aspects of cultural repertoire of Cambodia. The sections that follow are structured in a way that captures key contributions from the study guided by the research questions. The concept of 'normalisation' was inspired by Foucault (1977, 1978). In the study, many aspects of the dominant culture were subsumed into the mainstream projection and representation of the Khmers as the continued traditions of the Angkorean legacies such as the erection of statues of religious deities in the public places (the museumisation of the pasts) and performance of identity by staging the Khmer Wedding, Bokator (kick-boxing) and so forth. Strategic liaisons among the elites rendered a means, authority, and control over the management of culture/heritage and places and over profiteering from tourism and development. For Foucault, power could be detected within and across different hierarchies (Rabinow, 1984); it was protoplasm of human relations.

### **5.3 Synopses of Key Findings: Projection, Representation and Performance of Aspects of Culture and Heritage**

#### **5.3.1 Normalising Culture: Domination via Projection of Aspects of Angkorean Heritage**

Angkor and its related cultural legacies have been the subject of cultural politics in various regimes and survived through times. The aspiration for the Angkorean glories was scripted in the Constitution of Cambodia and it was shown in chapter 4 that this aspiration was instilled in both institutions and individuals, today. In fact, the discourse of the Angkorean glory has been sustained from the colonial era (see Edwards, 2005, 2007; Norindr, 2006; Winter, 2006a, 2007).



Today, the scripting of the Khmer/Angkorean culture has been detected during the study in the following:

- *The Constitution, the top legal framework*: The preamble of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia in 1993 was set out to reserve and uphold the civilisation of Angkor (see 5.1).
- *Tourism and development policies*: The Council of Ministers (2008) stated clearly about Cambodia's attractions in a vision of the National Policy for Tourism with the temples of Angkor and the temple of Preah Vihear being the first and foremost attractions (see 5.1).
- *Marketing material and agents*: Almost always, tourism marketing material made references to aspects of Angkorean civilisation as the central provenance of the projection of Khmer identities and traditions. The quotation from the official tourist guide at the very beginning of chapter 1 was very telling of this provenance. The official handbooks (MOT, 2011a, 2012a) dedicated the two-page section of the history of Cambodia solely to the Angkorean kings and the temples they built. Additionally, when commenting on the Nanning Exposition, a marketer Bona—credited by the Ministry of Tourism for the production of marketing material—stated “we always bring Angkor Wat with us because it is the supreme representation, the icon of the history, the very, very rich history”. And in his forward of a directory, the president of the Cambodia Association of Travel Agents (CATA) noted that “with Angkor Wat Temple as heritage of humanity and the world wonder, Siem Reap province is well known as *the cradle of Khmer civilization*” (CATA, 2011; added emphasis). Songs, such as ‘The Children of the Great Empire’, also projected reverence and spiritual attachment of today's Khmers to the ancient glory (see Extract 4.2).
- *Festivals and events*: It was shown in 4.7.4.4 that an annual event called ‘the Water Festival’ was dedicated to King Jayavarman VII's legendary victory over

the Chams. This annual event was designed to celebrate the glorious past of the Khmer Empire, and it has been practiced for many decades. When asked if Cambodia could have possibly celebrated other events, Phanny stated “the Ministry has not been able to promote big ceremonial events in the Angkorean period because it will cost millions of US dollar. For example, the ceremony of sin ablution on the Thousand Linga river on top of the Kulen Mountain [in Siem Reap]”, the mountain conceived as the “mythical seat of the Khmer civilisation” (Edwards, 2006, p.23). Besides, other events, such the Angkor Wat International Half Marathon, have been celebrated at the temple complex as a strategy to market the temples to the outside world. Hollywood movies, such as Tom Raider and Transformers 3, were partly shot in the Angkor complex.

- *National museums:* Today, museums, such as the National Museum of Cambodia in Phnom Penh and the Angkor National Museum opened in 2007 in Siem Reap, housed mainly the relics and arts/sculpture from the Angkorean era. In fact, the latter Museum, also featured elegantly in the MOT official handbooks, was a point of commercialisation. Back in 2008, tickets to this Museum was 12 US dollars per tourist, while most of the exhibits were borrowed from various other museums in Cambodia (Olszewski, 2008). The International Herald Tribune accused “the museum of misappropriating the names ‘national’ and ‘Angkor’, of being purely profit-driven, of being crass with a design that has ‘provoked some derision’” (Olszewski, 2008). The criticism was also owing to the fact that this Angkor National Museum was Thai-owned (Olszewski, 2008).
- *Placemaking and landscaping:* The two Museums, especially the National Museum in Phnom Penh, were important sources upon which the reproduction of the Angkorean arts and statues was modelled. Today, the reproductions were taken to open public spaces. The pastiches from the Angkorean arts/sculptures were produced for the landscaping of public places. This landscaping further underscored the importance of the Angkorean civilisation,

culture, and tradition. With regard to the pastiches, Channa did not mind statues being reproduced, but he strongly believed the current state/quality of reproduction did not promote Khmer culture: "I do not mind the statues being reproduced. But I cannot say that it promotes Khmer culture". Channa maintained his position that "if they [builders] do not claim that they copied from the original, it is fine. But if they say that the statues copied from the original, it is wrong". It was also noted during the fieldwork that the reproduction was rather liberal and varied widely in localities due to respective artistic talents and commissioner's expectations.

- *Performances:* Angkor-related performing arts were dominant in the representation of Khmer culture both in tourist settings and in official events. The *apsara* dance and the Khmer Shadow Theatre were popular among officials, locals and tourists alike. *Apsara* dance and Jayavarman VII entered the commercial realm.
- *Logo representation (logoisation):* Figure 4.3.1 highlights the logoisation of government ministries and private organisations with dominant references to the temples of Angkor and Preah Vihear, for instance. This projection affirmed Bona's aforementioned view of Angkor as the 'supreme representation' of Cambodia. Those logos further concretised the symbolic power/reach of the normalisation of the Angkorean culture as the 'cradle of the Khmer civilisation' and identity.
- *Banal practices:* Angkor images were widely produced and used by the ordinary locals. Winter (2007) pointed out such practice in his Angkorean montage, from souvenirs, T-shirts, car brands, restaurant names, hotel names, company names and wedding gates to institutional logos, bank notes and national flags.

In fact, the symbolic power of Angkor as the dominant representation of Cambodia has permeated into (almost) every aspect of Khmer daily lives, from top institutional hierarchies to banal activities of laypeople. This representation constituted a core branding message of Cambodia today (i.e. 'the *Kingdom of Wonder*'). As having seen in 4.1 and elsewhere in chapter 4, the Angkorean culture was chanted as the most revered aspiration among the Khmers. King Jayavarman VII was hailed as "the most fascinating personality in Khmer history" (MOT, 2011a, p.8; MOT, 2012a, p.15), as the subject of the first National Culture Day in April 1999 (Zamo, 1999), and as the subject of theatre performances at the Cultural Village in Siem Reap, and at Koh Pich (Diamond Island) in Phnom Penh.

The government of Cambodia, public/private institutions, and individuals depicted the King with his busts or a cross-legged meditative sitting posture. Palmer and Martin (2008) stated "the king is portrayed as a clean shaven, slightly rotund middle-aged man, the expression peaceful. The head of Jayavarman VII is much reproduced as a tourist souvenir" (p.96). He was extolled as "provident and compassionate ruler" but perhaps without a cause, (Tully, 2005, p.29) doubted. Criticism of the King was rare; in fact, it deemed silent among the Khmers. However, Ray and Robinson (2012) put forth contestations of this legendary King of Cambodia. They noted (accused) that the King was depicted as "presiding over battles of terrible ferocity" (2012, p.28) on bas-reliefs of the Bayon temple; that he was a hasty builder of temples and public infrastructure, resulting in labourers' hardship and leading to the decline of his empire; that he was driven by compulsion to legitimise his rule despite other possible contenders from his blood bloodline and to introduce a new rivalling royal/state religion (i.e. Buddhism) while Hinduism was the predominant religion and that he was the first socialist leader, announcing equality among the population, eradicating castes and launching public works programmes.

Some of the above rare criticisms of King Jayavarman VII could be challenged although it might be agreeable that the consequences of his massive building programmes were

hypothesised to lead to exhaustive labour supply and reduce agricultural productivity coincident with wars to the East and the West of the Kingdom (also see Chandler, 1991). First, the criticism of the King's ferocity (reclaiming Angkor from the Cham army) in the context of war by comparing with his meditative posture often portrayed by his statues deemed unwise, however. Ray and Robinson (2012) expected unitary/universal depiction or characterisation of the King regardless of the contexts (i.e. war vs. meditation). Second, their criticism of the forceful introduction of Buddhism was debatable. They themselves stated that Hinduism and Buddhism co-existed since the first century (also see Chandler, 1991). Prior to Jayavarman VII (13<sup>th</sup> century), some kings were also Buddhist. A stone inscription mentioning four Buddhist texts from the reign of Jayavarman II (circa 9<sup>th</sup> century) was also identified (Khun, 2002). And there was a huge reclining Buddha statue at Baphuon temple of the early 11<sup>th</sup> century (Freeman and Jacques, 2010) and, by this time, "Buddhism was gaining in influence, illustrated here by the Baphuon-era seated Buddhas, some showing a faint smile and sheltered by the seven-headed naga" (Palmer and Martin, 2008, p.96). Finally, Ray and Robinson's (2012) accusation of Jayavarman VII of being the first socialist ruler was very much related to the contemporary competing ideology. Proponents of liberal capitalism, such as Friedman (1982), alleged their opponents (e.g. those of Marxist traditions) of promoting equality and welfare in societies. Many liberal capitalists would argue that inequality was a good thing for societies, while welfarists would argue for the opposite.

The annual Water Festival was interpreted in association with King Jayavarman VII or the Angkorean glory in general and the Cambodian public generally accepted in the interpretation. This festive event, held for three days (often) in November, attracted approximately 2 million people to the capital city of Phnom Penh (Coren, 2003). After its revival in 1992, the Water Festival became a popular culture involving tourists and millions of local people. Once, another water festival was organised just after the formal one and became a personal event for the ruling elites when the occasion was used to jab at the opposition (see Ham, 1998; Bou, 1998).

**Box 5.3.1 Synthesis and Implications—Normalisation:  
Angkor as a Sanitising Project of Cultures and Places**

Thoughts on normalisation were provoked by Foucault (1977, 1978) who inspected the disciplinary power and instruments in their naturalisation via technical and legal authorities, judgements, decisions, rationalities, and punishments by creating norms within the systems of language and practice. For him, normalisation had the power to classify, hierarchise, homogenise, sterilise, and individualise for interpretations, rules, standards, truth productions, and controls. In the case of Cambodia, Angkor underwent a series of truth production through scientific methods and logical positivism (see Edwards, 2007; Winter, 2007) and via films and media or the filmic scripting of realness and authenticity (Norindr, 2006).

The scripting via the language and praxis of Angkor became entrenched in the legal and political frameworks, policies, and daily practices. Chapter 4 illustrates that these scripts instituted the Angkorean frame of reference in which its breaches were a provocation and were responded with strong reactions. The critics, below, have triggered thoughts about the colonial project. In fact, they implied that the Khmer temperament has been normalised to the point of unconsciousness. Postcolonial critics, such as Edwards, Norindr, and Winter, examined the discursive formation of Angkor from different angles. Edwards (2005, 2007) attempted to trace the production of Angkor as a World Heritage today in its colonial historicity. She viewed Angkor as a French re-Indianisation project of Cambodia and of Indochina in its totality. She showed that Angkor was constructed with authoritative and predominant expertise and science of the French Indianologists. In 2005, she stressed this project of transforming Angkor into the Taj Mahal and figuratively called this romantic project as the 'Taj Angkor'. However, some Cambodians proudly said there were no two Angkors in the world. In the words of a literary critic Norindr (2006), Angkor was viewed "not simply [as] a monument to man's creativity, a repository of cultural values, or an object of pure aesthetic enjoyment; it is the site of intense aesthetic re-imagining, and political and economic appropriation" (p.54). He pointed out the necessity to understand this French vision of Angkor and the French prescriptions of seeing and imagining Angkor. Winter (2007) concurred with the other critics' views and argued that the prescription of Angkor has been normalised in the discourse of heritage, tourism, and modernity. All agreed that the EFEO undeniably played an indispensable role in the scripting/naturalisation of the communication and practice of culture, tourism, and development, which were a consequence of 'la mission civilisatrice'.

The public institutions, the private sector, universities, and individuals have unconsciously become agents of normalcy in upholding their civilisation, national identity, and spirituality towards Angkor. The above critics problematised the manifestations of the colonial mission and its discursive effectuation of the policies and politics of tourism and development, today. The study of the projection of peoples, pasts, and places did not suggest an argument that Cambodians, or rather the Khmers, desisted this colonial/Angkorcentric representation of Angkor completely; however, *those who are interested in deepening the understanding beyond the above critics and the pervasiveness of the colonial imperatives, either in Cambodia or elsewhere, may turn to critical, radical or postcolonial stance in taking*

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**Box 5.3.1 (Cont'd) Synthesis and Implications—Normalisation:  
Angkor as a Sanitising Project of Cultures and Places**

*the above problematisation further.* For instance, Adorno (2004) proposed *negative dialectics, anti-drama, anti-hero* and/or *anti-system*—say, in the case of Cambodia—of colonial representation, projection, and production of knowledge (also see Marcuse, 2009, on *negations*). Similarly, Ashcroft *et al.* (1998) suggested *abrogation*, a strategy to repudiate the normative, colonising concept of ‘correct’ and ‘standard’. By taking this strategy to Cambodia, perhaps the coloniser’s language and paradigm will not be able to be outrooted but adapted to means of localised linguistic and paradigmatic conceptual transformation, enunciation, and denormalisation. The ‘supreme’ representation may be decentralised and (more) folkloric representation introduced, say, to museum exhibitions, tourism marketing, and placemaking. The sense of belonging to the temples should be broadened, not confined mainly within the tourist consumption and the elite consumption to that of the Cambodian public, their personal attachment, and spirituality. The marketing of local cultures, peoples, and places as exoticism may have to be minimised, resisted or disavowed but morality and equality promoted.

Winter (2007, p.115) noted that various Cambodian voices were subjugated: popular “understandings and voices...have remained under the veil of hegemonic discourse(s)”. Likewise, in 2013, a study participant (a marketer) stated, regarding the representation of tribal peoples and cultures, that “they can be tribal but they may not have been trained in the right culture [sic]. Although they are tribal but not everybody [superb rhetoric!] born in the tribe can perform rightfully the cultures, the traditions of their ethnic backgrounds”. In other words, for him, experts were the most suitable or the ‘right’ persons to perform or represent the cultures of the ethnic Other. In future inquiries, such conception or normalisation via expertise in which the power of representation was centralised and shifted towards the experts should be questioned, countered, or resisted. Thus, it shall be necessary to make the subaltern voices heard (Spivak, 1992) and accounted for if morality and equal opportunities is to be promoted. In this instance, expertise has to be problematised in the parameter of what is ‘right’.

Norindr cogently argued that the images of Angkor were reproduced and circulated widely by the coloniser and could be identified in travel narratives, films, ethnographic accounts, literary texts, art catalogues, and journalistic reportages, all of which constructed “a discursive field that authenticates these images and gives them the status of the real” by simply stamping them with ‘authenticity’ (Norindr, 2006, p.56). With the power of the expertise and normalisation strategy, Winter indicated that the discourse of heritage of Cambodia was reinterpreted, reconstructed, and catalogued by her master: “approaching heritage as the convergence of authority and knowledge reveals how local voices and values are politically marginalized within a hierarchy of international ‘expertise’” (Winter, 2007, p.141). Hence, the inspection of the normalisation of the culture, heritage, and landscape from the colonial legacies today called for postcolonial approaches to questioning, resisting, and countering the hegemonic grand narrative in favour of *petit récit* (Lyotard, 1984; Table 3.1).

Hence, as seen in chapter 4 and in this section (5.3.1), aspects of the dominant culture of the Khmers were those of the Angkor and its glory as evident from its gargantuan monuments and numerous statues in the Museums, especially engineered and normalised by the elites. The statues have now entered the open public landscapes and have become fantasmatised by various groups of the populations. This Angkorcentric normalisation was significantly passed down as a consequence of the French perpetual efforts and their techniques of heritage interpretation and knowledge production for more than a century now. The preceding conceptual Box 5.3.1 contains the synthesis of normalisation and an implication for further study, for instance, by means of negative dialectics (Adorno, 2004), negations (Marcuse, 2009), and/or abrogation (Ashcroft, Griffins and Tiffin, 1998), while seeking alternative interpretations and knowledges differently from the coloniser-‘judge’ (after Foucault, 1977). The next section (5.3.2) synthesises key findings regarding *legitimisation*.

### **5.3.2 Legitimising Culture: The State Projection of Peoples, Cultures and Places**

Section 5.3.1 summarised and synthesised the findings related to the Angkorean discourse scripted via various acts of legalisation and policy-making, museum exhibition, landscaping of places, performances, and events/festivals. The section also suggested some of the strategies of further problematising the master narrative (discourse) of Cambodian peoples, heritage and places. This section (5.3.2) summarises aspects of the findings with regard to the role of the state (and local authorities) in the projection of places, many facets of which were modelled upon the normalised inheritance and others of which were modelled upon the elites.

Various places in the previous chapter illuminated the Angkorcentric scripting of inheritance which prevailed from top institutional practices to individual expressions and acts. Angkorcentricism pervasively influenced the ways of thinking, seeing and doing within the purview of legal and policy frameworks such as the Constitution and



development strategies which routinised and legitimised those ways. The acts of normalisation of culture and heritage above carried out the order of legitimisation (legitimacy) and politics of inheritances stipulated in various legal and policy documents through the wielding of state power or projective/representational authority. Althusser (1971) contended that the state employs power via the state apparatus, often involving coercion and hegemonisation and, in Foucault's contention, the power is performed via "the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it" (Foucault, 1977, p.170). Beetham (1991) emphasised that power is problematical and thus the powerful would seek to justify it to rules and consents to legitimise themselves.

Like elsewhere, the government, as a legal entity and under the spirit of the Constitution, is equipped with the duty and responsibility to preserve and maintain 'the precious sovereignty and the marvellous civilisation of Angkor', just as under the guidance of policies to legally decide on what and how tourism is developed and who must involve and thus benefits. The question hereof is more about the issues of legality and legitimacy. Reflecting back to the findings, these issues underlay the government decisions of which companies (or who) were given exclusive rights to collect revenues from tourists to Angkor, to develop large-scale resorts, to give permission to bar/restrict public access to the consumption of landscapes and places. The issues of legality and legitimacy would be worse if the other branches such as the monarchy, the legislature, the judiciary and the media were collapsed in the hand of the executive power. The culmination of wealth from (tourism) development in the hands of the dominant class and the exacerbation of inequality in the society were important sources of 'legitimation crisis' (Habermas, 1992).

While some such as Bealey (1999) contended that legality and legitimacy are synonymous in democratic country, the two did not necessarily converge (Beetham, 1991; Calise and Lowi, 2010). For Weber, "there is rule by virtue of "legality," by virtue of the belief in the validity of legal *statutes* and practical "competence" based on rational rules"

**Box 5.3.2 Synthesis and Implications—Legitimation:  
Politics of Culture/Heritage Production and Representation**

The politics of identity formation, which attributed the Khmers to Angkor, were played out by their colonial master. Legitimacy via the myths of origin was a strong characteristic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French thought (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998). This legitimation of the grand culture of Angkor had pervasive influence on Cambodia, today. Chapter 4 elaborates both formal and informal practices of legitimation of aspects of heritage, myths, and legends, many of which were authorised, authenticated, and landscaped in public places throughout Cambodia. Aspects of the Angkorean legacies were legalised and legitimised through laws and policies and through museum exhibits, while the legalisation and legitimation of many other cultural aspects were conducted through work on faith and superstition (i.e. without legal binding) such as those of Grandma Penh, King Dambang Kranhoung, Techo Meas/Yort, and the White Horse. Hence, legitimation was worked at/on.

Although legitimation has been widely studied in political sciences, it was under-inspected in Tourism Studies. For those who are interested in legitimation in political sciences may consult Gellner (1974), Foucault (1977, 1978, 1980), Blumenberg (1983), Beetham (1991), Habermas (1992), Weber (2004), and Kühnelt (2008). Legitimation produced power, dominance, subjugation, and restriction of access to culture, resource, and public consumption, aspects of which were also identified in the study of the projection and representation of peoples, cultures, and places in Cambodia. Exclusive right was given to certain companies to collect revenues. Local residents were deprived of land and consumption of places and access to resources they used to have due to tourism/resort development. Ethnic cultures were commodified in the name of preservation/development and so forth. In addition, the practice of faith and the exercise of beliefs and myths were brought into politics and judged by the ruling class over legality and legitimacy, such as the prayer-for-peace rally (see The Cambodia Herald, 2013) and, on the day of writing, the crackdown on the prayer rally for the release of activists (see Aun and Zsombor, 2014; Khouth and Teehan, 2014).

In Beetham's contention, dominance, and subjugation created "inequality of circumstances" justified via a principle of differentiation in held positions which formed the basis of power, problematic "transfer of powers of opportunities and resources", restriction of freedom, and "subservience to the requirements and purposes of the dominant" (Beetham, 1991, pp.59-60) to name a few. He also construed legitimacy as normatively acquiring from rules, their 'justifiability', and expression of consent. In fact, legitimation was socially and culturally constructed (Beetham, 1991). For Foucault (1977, 1980), legitimacy was wielded via the discourse articulated via the mechanism of governmentality. Lilleker (2006) argued that political communication was also important to establish the legitimacy of policies and practices. Since the rise of the Modern Age, power/hegemony had to be rationalised and justified against its uses and actions, sometimes regardless of how dehumanising they were.

The Royal Government of Cambodia and its executive branches took a legitimate role of public landscaping in hand, deciding what the landmarks (i.e. statues) were and where they were located. Consciously or not in the state practices, places, and spaces were marked or landscaped with iconic statues of various cultural, historical, mythical, and political significances contributing to the iconography of Cambodia. With this iconography, the public and tourists were given a vision of the history,

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**Box 5.3.2 (Cont'd) Synthesis and Implications—Legitimation:  
Politics of Culture/Heritage Production and Representation**

culture, and aspiration of the nation. Knudsen, Soper and Metro-Roland (2008) argued that tourism could not be separated from the issues of identity because landscape performed its role as “both the locus of tourism and reification of identity” (p.1) in which the signified was legitimised by the government, the legitimisation which was “commonly a reflection of the societal elite, their desires are reflected through government action” (Soper, 2008, p.57). Insights from political sciences could be helpful in the examination of legitimisation of culture, heritage, and places in Tourism Studies. The study of the projection of Cambodia did not manage to specifically focus on the formation of the justification and consent-manufacturing in construction of the statues covered in chapter 4 due to time constraint and access to the respective commissioners and artists. Hence, the meanings and significances of those statues were silhouetted from the perspectives of others who bore knowledge of the matters and from historical accounts. Thus, to deepen understanding regarding the projective matters, *further study may direct the spotlight on the statue commissioners and the artists because they might have their own reasoning or justification in commissioning certain statues but not others*. It was, however, suspected from the study that aestheticisation, personification/embodiment, and fantasmatics, for instance, were still important factors in stimulating the construction of statues throughout Cambodia. Personification here meant representation of someone else or of suprahuman power (see Dodson, 2008, for different meanings of personification). In addition, the impulse in the construction of statues for the projection of Cambodia, today, might be compounded by the search for opportunities to use public funds, with which some critics have seen the lack of transparency and accountability. For instance, a human-size copper statue of King Sihanouk was recently built, the cost was claimed to be US\$1.2 million but was not disclosed to the public (Meas, 2013; Sen, 2013). Without public bidding, the construction was credited to a Construction Group owned by an official from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (Meas, 2013).

By closely examining the rationality, justification and interpretation of the actions in the construction of aspects of the projected cultures, peoples, and places (in tourism), researchers will tune into the legitimisation, power, and hegemony employed via the projection of those aspects. However, researchers may need to be aware of various issues associated with such studies, especially in the context of Cambodia. Some of them (i.e. these issues) were also elaborated in section 3.6.

(Weber, 2004, p.34; original emphasis). In other words, according to Sruton (2007), legality is bound by or is conformed to law and regulation, while legitimacy rests on the question of whether power is exercised rightfully. Legitimacy is broader than legality and the latter is only a dimension of the former (Beetham, 1991; Calise and Lowi, 2010). Both legality and legitimacy are very important sources of power, dominance, obligation, obedience and subjugation (see Box 5.3.2, above).

As implied from the findings, in Cambodia legitimisation did not only pivot around the justification of the use of rules and laws but also the justification of faiths, beliefs and myths which are sometimes unwritten and are culturally and socially bound. The beliefs in the supernatural power that could bring peace, justice or good luck to the people were widely practiced either/both instrumentally or/and expressively, and they were stated/depicted in various places in chapter 4. Box 5.3.2, further synthesises aspects of legitimisation and legalisation.

### **5.3.3 Framing the Public Memory: Constructing the Anatomy of Cultural Meaning and Significance**

The earlier sections of 5.3 stressed the normalisation and legitimisation of facets of the cultural repertoire of Cambodia. They were part of the process in the representation of peoples, cultures, and places, especially with regard to the decisions on what was selected, produced, and projected and what was not. This process might be complicated; however, the framing of public memory had its contribution. From the findings, the framing was done in the form of commemoration of statues of deities, personalities, mystical figures, events, and so on. This section will summarise and synthesise aspects of the findings which indicated that framing was important in polishing desirable outcomes of the representation and normalisation of the culture and heritage.

In his frame analysis, Goffman (1974) pointed out the conceptual complexities of frames because a frame was a dimension of meaning, and thus there could possibly be many layers of frames. He employed the term 'frame' in more or less the same way as that used by Bateson (1987). The latter argued that a frame was a message, or a set of messages, which was intended to influence perceptions of meanings and significances and, meanwhile, it was aimed to include an intended communication and exclude others (from the frame). In addition, framing was comprehensively utilised in analyses of media and communication. To Entman, "framing entails *selecting and highlighting some facets*

*of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution*" (Entman, 2003, p. 417; original emphasis). The words and images in the frames had to be chosen with high cultural saliency, making the frames "*noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged*" (Entman, 2003, p. 417; original emphasis). Careful selection would render cultural resonance and magnitude in evoking thoughts, emotions, and feelings (Entman, 2003) or in creating particular 'trains of thought' (de Vreese, 2004). Framing was 'a process of selection and salience' and to frame was to choose certain facets of 'a perceived reality' and make them more prominent (de Vreese, 2004).

Likewise, in the study of the representation and politics of aspects of culture and heritage in Cambodia, framing was detected. Today, Angkor was the dominant frame, and it was projected around its past glory and the desirable imagination of the Khmers. The framing was participated by various groups of the populations, such as local/national authorities and state institutions, the private sector (e.g. tourism-related businesses), and individuals. They engaged in activities of the production of the Angkorcentric discourse or frame of reference. Figures of Hindu gods and the Angkorean King (i.e. Jayavarman VII) constituted aspects of the anatomy of framing and meaning-making, so did logoisation of the Angkorean features. The MOT marketing framed the King as 'the most fascinating personality'. His figures (busts/statues) were extensively used as an expression of salutation, belief, approval, augustness, and future orientation. Moreover, religions were framed within the grand rubrics of Hinduism and Buddhism. And tourists to the Cultural Village were acclimatised to the cultural atmosphere of the place. There, facets of cultures were gradually presented and tourists were ensured with a smooth lead-in through their seeing, first with museums, next with renowned structures/buildings, and then with Khmer architectural styles before they were introduced to the actual staged performances.

**Box 5.3.3 Synthesis and Implications—Framing:  
Constructing Resonance and Saliency in Projection**

The framing of culture and heritage has continuously been worked at. Just like ‘multiple realities’ (Schutz, 1945) and ‘frame analysis’ (Goffman, 1974), there were manifold frames constructed by the individuals and actors in the tourism industry in Cambodia, including the state itself. The Angkorean frame of reference was remarked from time to time in chapter 4. Although Angkor constituted the dominant frame or representation towards which Khmer cultures and identities were (re)configured and (re)aligned, other aspects of culture and nature were also framed in the projection of Cambodia. Some of these aspects were closely associated with the Angkor, such as religions.

The projection of Chuon Nath, Phirum Ngoy, the indigenous minorities, and aspects of landscapes/ecoscaples were other frames produced and marketed to local and tourist consumption. Although these frames were not ranked as high as those of the Angkorean aspects, they were meant to tell stories of the grandeur of Cambodia. The meanings of these frames might be interpreted differently. For instance, since Chuon Nath was a monk and highly respected among the Khmers, he (his statue) could be interpreted in association with religion (i.e. Buddhism). This interpretation complemented or helped enhance the inheritance of the past (or Angkor) which had been projected. Another interpretation could be related to the efforts of maintaining Khmer culture, language, and literature (Khmerisation) under the colonial master. The national anthem he composed spiritualised Angkor (and its sublimity) and attributed the roots of the Khmer race to the grandiose past (see 4.5.5). In so doing, other negative aspects of past realities were ostracised. Likewise, the ecoscapes and indigenous populations provoked exoticism and authenticity, which could be seen as an attraction to tourists or allurements of visitation from the tourism marketers/promoters’ point of view. However, exoticism could also be interpreted as a framing of otherness in the commercialisation of cultures and places, and such framing might retrograde the indigenous populations, some of whom have already been socially and culturally progressive. In other words, the framing suppressed them to the state of primitivity, the nation’s backstage for tourism. Such suppression could be sensed in the lawmaker’s remark/attitude towards the indigenous Bunongs and progressivity was identified in their representative’s reaction.

Goffman (1974) asserted that social framing, or rather cultural framing, was important because it provided “background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being” (p.22). This social/cultural framework also involved rules of the game, interpretations, politics, and manipulations to the agency’s beliefs and interests in which realities (or values) were glossed and augmented. Hence, understanding framing helped define the situation and gain insights into the configuration of meanings, cultural resonance, and agentive actions. For Schutz, action was constituted by a “meaning-instituting and meaning-interpreting process” (Grathoff, 1989, p.xxix). In Cambodia, the framing created and enhanced the public memory; however, the line was sometimes blurred between the public remembrance, the group memory, or the personal one in the projection and representation of culture and heritage, perhaps due to the complexities of the framing as argued by Goffman (1974), the vagueness of the term ‘public’, and the power to authorise or reject public memories (see K.Phillips’s (2004) framing public memory).

Like elsewhere, in Cambodia, the elite culture was framed to the forefront of public memories. The memories of the royal culture/personalities, such as the Royal

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**Box 5.3.3 (Cont'd) Synthesis and Implications—Framing:  
Constructing Resonance and Saliency in Projection**

Palace, the Independent Monument, and the past kings were actualised or (re)activated in tourism and the public minds. Certainly, there could be an argument for this statement, contending that the kings had to be respected by the public, that they were the symbols of the nation and sovereignty, and that “the person of the King shall be inviolable” (*Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia*, 1993). The argument might continue that the Independent Monument was the symbol of Sihanouk’s achievement and thus the achievement by all Cambodians. However, there might be controversies over who actually fought for the independence and who appropriated the victory. Next, King Korn could be interpreted as an important figure in the history of Cambodia, and thus his statue was built to commemorate him. Similarly, a counter-interpretation could be that King Korn was the usurper of a legitimate throne, and there was no point in commemorating him. Moreover, it was accused that the King’s personality and politics were parallel to today’s politics/top politician, and it was this parallel which stimulated the construction of the statue of the King, just like the case of the construction of Techo Meas/Yort. In MacCannell’s contention, tourism was also “an ideological framing of history, nature, and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature into its own needs” (1992, p.1).

Sometimes, public memories were directed to a specific audience. For instance, the Khmer Rouge (KR) legacies were not part of the official tourism marketing because they were conceived that “atrocities do not sell”. However, the Khmer Rouge sites were still open to the public (tourists and locals) and the sites were sold rather well. Perhaps, the atrocity was rather a disgrace to the *Kingdom of Wonder*. However, Cambodians were reminded of the Khmer Rouge genocidal acts through the CPP-aligned media, Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship Monuments, and an annual event (Day of Hatred) which were framed within the 07<sup>th</sup> January and dubbed as the second birth of all Cambodians who had to pay respect to the Day and the incumbent government. They were wished, or rather required, to pay back, especially on the day of the parliamentary election held every five years. Sometimes, the public memories were lost due to circumstances, such as the looting of the tightly guarded relics of the Buddha on the Udong hill (see Khy and Hruby, 2013). The loss of the relics symbolised a bad omen, the nation’s ills (Meyn and Khy, 2013).

The construction of the monumental statues of key personalities throughout Cambodia could be seen as the framing of culture, history, and the past. The statues (i.e. their symbolic meanings and enduring significances) did not only ‘embody or represent an event’ or a person but it also strived to preserve the memories of them (Casey, 2004). The statues were thus a means of projection, representation, and instillation of public memories. Framing was then an important tool the state has employed as a politic of remembering (or forgetting). Frames—historical, cultural, social, or political—acted as ‘cognitive shortcuts’ (Lilleker, 2006). Moreover, people were encouraged or discouraged to identify with a particular event, while other storylines were suppressed in the framing (Entman, 1991). In addition, he argued that the framing of an act or event also signified the judgement of importance, (de)moralisation, advancement/suppression, a category and generalisation to appropriate cultural resonance and saliency (Entman, 1991). In political communication, Entman identified ways of framing: conflict, personalisation, consequences, morality, and responsibility (Lilleker, 2006). *In tourism, there has not been an inquiry in that similar cynosure like that by Entman, and a further study can be undertaken along his line.*

From the statues of elite personalities (e.g. those of King Jayavarman VII, King Ang Duong, King Sihanouk, Venerable Monk Chuon Nath, Poetry Master Phirum Ngoy, and those of mythical figures of Daun Penh, King Dambang Kranhoung and Techo Meas/Yort), one could see that the state and the commissioners of statue construction were obsessed with personality politics in the projection of aspects of peoples (the elites), cultures and events. Just before mid-2010, the Head of a newly established Anti-Corruption Unit pedestalled the statue of Hun Sen just inside the gate of its office building, but it was shortly removed due to criticism (Chhorn, 2010; Khouth, 2010). Some analysts criticised the 'personality' politics in Cambodia and preferred 'principle' politics. In fact, the pedestalling attempt signalled a portension that Hun Sen will be revered (or worshiped?) in the form of statue/monument after his death, just like the worship of his competing personality King Sihanouk, if the current political system and key players remains steadfast. Box 5.3.3 contains a synthesis of framing drawn from the study and from MacCannell (1992), Goffman (1974), and political communication thinkers, thereby suggesting that a further inquiry into framing in tourism be inspected along the line of the media and political communication thinkers.

#### **5.3.4 Constructing Cultural Fantasmatics: Tourism as a Political Expression**

The previous section summarised aspects of the findings about framing which was important in understanding the projection of cultures, peoples, and places via tourism. More importantly, framing was a practice or an instrument whereby messages were conveyed to the public or specific audiences, and those scripted messages tended to be manipulated to the advantages of a particular group (often the elites) of Cambodia. Framing shaped people's perceptions and behaviours if it was effectively used. This section will turn to the summarisation of the facets of the findings associated with fantasies, or rather fantasmatics, in the selection, production, and projection of peoples, cultures, and places.



Said (1978) and Bhabha (1994) talked about colonialism. The former elaborated the colonial fantasmatic of the Orient and the latter employed the term 'fantasmatic' as in 'fantasmatic identification' when he talked about colonial racism in the projection of the Other or the relationship between the colonial 'I' and the persecutory 'them'. Young (2005) similarly used the term 'fantasmatic' to talk about culture and race theory and about the colonial discourse. In chapter 2, fantasies were traced back to Freud (see Laplanche and Pontalis, 1968; Thurschwell, 2000), Deleuze and Guattari's (1983) criticism of Freudian fantasizing, Lacanian discourse of the Other (see Castoriadis, 1987), and so forth. Hollinshead (1998) also developed a conceptual definition of fantasmatism (see A2.0). Chapter 2 also argued that Indochina, particularly the Angkor of Cambodia, was the fantasizing project of colonialism which Norindr (1996) called the 'phantasmatic Indochina'.

The Khmer temperament in tourism development today was still based very much on the colonial phantasmatism such as those aspects of the Angkorean heritage and Wat Phnom. As Edwards (2005, 2007) and Winter (2007) contended, the colonial fantasmatic was still alive in the form of cultural heritage chaperonage. The re-Hinduisation scheme has been effective till today, although Buddhism has been dominant in the Khmer societies since the medieval period. At present, many aspects of Hinduism were synchronised into daily Buddhist practices and materialised in the form of statues erected in public places throughout Cambodia and in the form of performances. Hinduism has been internalised into the fantasmatic realm of the Khmers as seen in the projection of culture and heritage via tourism. Regarding the relation between the Khmers and their colonial chaperon, the former was subdued via the knowledge production of culture and via the politics of advice/expertise by the latter in today's Angkorcentric tourism/development. Said (1978) spoke of the penetration of the colonial hegemony (after Gramsci) by 'consent' via 'affiliations' or institutions of the civil society. In Cambodia, the protectorate established schools and turned the limelight on elite education, such as the establishment of "the Bali School, the Musée Khmer, the School of Fine Arts, the Royal Library, and several elite schools" in the early 1900s (Edwards, 2007, p.59).

**Box 5.3.4 Synthesis and Implications—Fantasmatics:  
Tourism via Narratives of Peoples and Places**

Tourism and the projection of peoples, culture, and places were largely based on storylines, i.e. stories of myths, legends, and heroism such as religious deities, kings, warlords, the founder of the Phnom Penh capital and people, animals and fruits peculiar to regions. Mythical characters were hypostatized in the form of statues/monuments. Grandma Penh and King Dambang Kranhoung, for example, exhibited influence in the public sphere. Many of the mythical storylines resided in the Khmer folklores in which (magical) qualities were told about characters. The mystique of the 7<sup>th</sup> January liberation was narrated through the media and through placemaking. The narrativisation of the nation and national identities were performed through imposing statues and eye-catching monuments erected in strategic locations, such as road corners, roundabouts, or inside public/private institutions. Cambodia and her people could be understood via the stories or narratives and contexts of those statues and their intended communication.

Currie (2010) stated that narratives were stories produced by agency, and they mediated between the narrators and their audiences. Narratives were sometimes based on characters, and character-based narrations were peculiar to Henry James (Currie, 2010). In Cambodia, characters (i.e. projected through statues) were constructed to represent aspects of myths/legends, and the narratives about these characters were contextualised through storytelling in tourism such as the telling of god Vishnu, god Ganes, Grandma Penh, the Buddha, *nagas*, and King Korn. For the commissioners or narrators, stories could be best told by visualisation (for instance, in the form of statues/monuments). Thus, statues were proofs of acts in the communication of meanings and significances to the viewers, such as sightseers/tourists and locals in their encounters. Stories (or statues) rendered signification, because they answered the question 'why' they were worth telling/building, and thus they were not *ex nihilo* (Bruner, 2001). The narratives via statues were also an instrument of identity representation. Characterisation was employed in performances the Cultural Village and elsewhere.

Sometimes, tourists had different interpretations from the intended communication conveyed by the agency or statue commissioners. For instance, while the Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship Monument was intended to promote gratitude/indebtedness to Vietnam and the incumbent government (the ruling party), the Monument was also interpreted alternatively by tourists (see Table 4.5.6), just as by some locals in their anti-discourse against the 07<sup>th</sup> January Day. The Monument was a token artefactually employed to dramatise the genocide, and the dramatisation was also done through the annual Day of Hatred in May and the preservation of memorials, some of which were turned into tourist sites. By dramatising the holocaust, the public emotion was aroused and indebtedness was maintained or even enhanced. Similarly, alternative perspectives or interpretations were also identified with the storylines of King Korn and Techo Meas/Yort.

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**Box 5.3.4 (Cont'd) Synthesis and Implications—Fantasmatics:  
Tourism via Narratives of Peoples and Places**

At the time of the inauguration of the statue of Grandma Penh, an advisor of the Buddhist Institute suggested that the Phnom Penh Municipality quest for more Khmer heroes and have the statues of them built (see 4.6.1). The findings in the preceding chapter gave an indication about how the mythical characters and heroic personalities were selected, produced, and projected. The selectivity hinged on themes of piety, heroism, myths of place (creation), and peculiarity to regions. Just as in Schmid's (2010) narratology, one had to examine the logic of selectivity and non-selectivity in the inquiry into storylines behind the projection of culture (also see Prince, 1982; Bal, 1997; and Kindt and Mülle, 2003 on narratology). The representation of various aspects of religions and culture via mythical and legendary characters and heroes were attempted to explain the Khmers, their origin, and identities. Just as in Horne's (1992) contention, nations had ways to explain their own races/ethnicities through myths, legends, rituals, folklores, and ceremonies via which nations justified and legitimised their powers. He thus suggested that tourists use their experience to try to understand national myths and legends. The hypostatized forms of myths and legends were publicly projected throughout Cambodia, and they constituted the important iconography in the country's cultural landscape.

Similar to Horne's (1992) contention, *it is suggested herein that further research be done to understand the meanings and significations beneath the visual hypostatisation via statues and monuments, particularly those of the narratives/storylines and the fantasmatics of culture and heritage utilised and contextualised in, through and/or for tourism.* Due to resource constraint and political context/sensitivity, this inquiry into the projection of aspects of peoples, pasts, and places of Cambodia did not manage to get behind the heads of the commissioners and artists of statues and monuments. However, the inquiry might set a direction for those interested in further investigation into fantasmatics and cosmology of culture/heritage of Cambodia. Hollinshead (forthcoming) called for more in-depth studies on matters of the fantasmatics, especially in terms of "*the emic (re)selection and (re)production of narratives (and related material objects and edifices), and of how those storylines are specifically contextualised through tourism*" (original emphasis).

In further investigation of fantasmatics, *it is also suggested that powerful narratives, legends, and myths (i.e. 'mythomoteurs') be examined in terms of how they were artefactually worked at* (i.e. selected, produced, or appropriated) (see 'mythomoteurs' in Armstrong, 1982 and Smith, 1986). Here, the term 'work-at' needs emphasising. First, it accentuates the conscious aspects of the fantasmatics (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, for tourism as a consciousness industry), and it would thus involve (concerted) efforts to make things happen. Second, the term 'work-at' then accentuates the politics of meaning-making or worldmaking, institutional involvement, and manipulation to one's advantages. Next, following from the first and the second, the term underscores the political logic, the cultural logic, the narrative logic, and the logic of (non-)selectivity and (non-)production of storylines or mythomoteurs.

In addition to these institutions, today the UNESCO played a crucial role in facilitation, coordination, and production of knowledge about culture and heritage. It was through affiliations that the linkage was (re)established between the colonised and the imperial culture, and hegemonic relation was maintained through this linkage (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998). The colonial hegemony in Cambodia was also cultivated through ‘compradors’ (after Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). It has been a cultural (soft) strategy of the new centuries. The reification of myths and legends was rife in Cambodia. Chapter 4 registered important ramifications of cultural hypostatisation in the forms of statues/monuments and performances. The coverage of Chapter 4 composed mainly findings about myths/legends, and tourism in Cambodia was chiefly capacitated by them. Conceptual Box 5.3.4 below synthesises aspects of the fantasmatics with an implication for further investigation into the working of myths/narratives, i.e. the fantasmatics of peoples, cultures and places.

### **5.3.5 Acquiring Performative Power: Producing and Stereotyping Ethnicities**

It was emphasised in the preceding section that tourism in Cambodia was largely conducted through legends and myths which were hypostatized to tell stories to tourists and locals alike. Those myths/legends projected via the imposing statues and monuments contributed to the constellation of mythomoteurs which drove the national psyche of the Khmers and justified the existence of the ethnicity. Section 5.3.5 will summate aspects of the findings in the previous chapter in terms of the performative conducts in tourism which led to the (mis)representation of cultures and identities of the projected populations.

The findings in chapter 4 indicated that the agencies, such as the state and local authorities, and religious institutions, such as pagodas, were catalysts of the production and projection of religions (e.g. deities of Hinduism and Buddhism) and other cultural aspects (e.g. mythical, literary, and political figures). They were part of what Kirshenblatt-

Gimblett (1998) called 'the agency of display', who assumed important roles in the performance of culture and heritage in tourism. In fact, almost everyone contributed to performing the aspects of Angkorcentrism, which predominated in the public sphere and whose materialisation tended to take over a great deal of public places and spaces with a tendency in the purification of space (Sibley, 1988) deeply into the ascendant Angkorcentric cultural category. The purification began with the colonial civilisation mission, such as the refinement and embellishment of Phnom Penh city with Angkorean architectural styles and arts (Edwards, 2007) which has had a great influence almost everywhere in Cambodia, today.

The Cultural Village as a whole was designed to maximise the effectuation over tourists via theatricality. The layouts of the prominent structures, such as the Royal Palace, the Independence Monument, the National Museum, the Buddha statues, the Central Market to name a few, were to perform the Khmer cultures in the tourist setting, and these structures were to be identified with the Khmers. They served as an inducement of thought: when thinking of Cambodia (or the Khmers), tourists were convinced to think in terms of these structures (heroes and their histories) in addition to Angkor. The whole Cultural Village was actually a 'theatrical spectacle' (after Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998), ranging from the museums at the entrance, the layouts of the landmark structures, and the smaller themed Villages to the shows themselves. As van Eck and Bussels (2011) pointed out since the inception of the term in 1711 by Shaftesbury, 'theatricality' has been employed beyond the boundary of plays and dramas per se. It also had a connection with the public life (Sonnett, 1976). Theatricality enhanced the *mise en scène* of stages/performances; it was a material logic of placemaking (Hollinshead, 2006) and sensemaking in tourism. Theatricality was an important aspect of stage-design for the shows at the Cultural Village where the smaller themed villages with indigenous houses were distinctly constructed to produce architectural and environmental stereotypes of the respective ethnicities. For instance, the houses and the environments of the Khmer village were placed in a spatial setup distinctly from those of

**Box 5.3.5 Synthesis and Implications—Performativity:  
The Production of Cultures and Identities in Tourism**

The study of the projection of Cambodia via representation, fantasmatic, and politics revealed that aspects of the Khmer cultures and identities with regard to Angkor today was a consequence of a discourse or performance tracing back to the colonial cultural phantasmatic and that the portrayal and characterisation of the indigenous/tribal peoples, in particular, was a consequence of the discourse of the 1960s. Aspects of Angkor, such as the *apsara* dance, a sign (signifier and signified) of Khmer identities, became more commercialised than ever before in this age of tourism as an important engine of economic growth. This classical dance—in fact, different versions of them—slightly changed over the period of time as modernity began to take over. The blend between classicality and modernity adjusted the composition of Khmer identities over time as more of new dance poses, steps, hand styles, costumes, and adornments were ‘creatively’ designed to ‘attract’ the audiences. From the study findings, creativity, artisticity/aesthetisation, comicality, theatricality, and artistic enlivenment (i.e. making aspects of dead cultures alive) were significant to the production of performances and to the performance industry (also see MCFA, 2014). Thus, identity contents and (re)configurations were dynamic and forward-looking. Similarly, new aspects/signs of identities of the indigenous peoples (e.g. their dance styles, aestheticisation, theatricality, daily tools, and so on) were perpetually created in the performance industry. These artistic acts contributed to the production and performance of the projected cultures and identities over time by the participating agencies, such as those at the Cambodian Cultural Village, the MCFA dance troupe, the School of Culture and Fine Arts and other performing arts groups, which were reported to reach 2340 organisations/businesses in Cambodia in 2012 (MCFA, 2013).

The study of the projection of Cambodia did not manage to delve into the effects of the performances on the visitors/tourists, although misconceptions of the indigenous cultures and identities (e.g. the social action of the CPP lawmaker’s remark) were evident among the Khmers. In the shows of indigenous cultures at the Cultural Village, the stages were set up and dancers undertook their duties to act as “performative primitives” who were transacted or exploited in “merely economic dealings with tourists” (MacCannell, 1992, p.29). Edensor (1998, 2001, 2009) looked at how tourist spaces and meanings were produced, represented, and performed. He offered useful insights about the conception of the performance and performativity from Goffman, Turner, Carlson, and other later thinkers in the field.

Performativity could be traced back to speech acts by Austin, Cavell, Searle, Derrida, De Man, and Butler (see Loxley, 2007). Butler (1999) argued gender was subverted through repetitive acting or ritualisation of the body. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) explored ‘the agency of display’ or performativity in museums, fairs, and festivals. In tourism, MacCannell (1992, 1999) argued that tourism was a performative encounter where sites and practices emerged as a situated and negotiated context of rituals and performances. Edensor (1998) ethnographically inspected tourists’ practices in the performance of their roles at the symbolic site Taj Mahal. On the production of performative tourist space, Edensor (2001) highlighted the staging of tourism (e.g. the purification, soft control, and weak classification/blurred boundaries of tourist space), the making of dramas, scenography, and mediatisation. *The study into the performativity (e.g. in tourism and the performance industry) has not been conducted on tourists to Cambodia yet, and it is a potential area for a further inquiry.*

Bunongs, the Kroeungs, and the Chinese. Places and spaces were arranged, and stages were designed to produce theatrical effects which were as indispensable as the performances themselves. For Edensor (1998, 2001, 2009), tourist spaces and meanings were produced, represented, and performed. A performing artist in the study of aspects of Cambodia stated that performances were designed to capture 'justice', 'virtue', and 'beauty', most of which largely depended on 'artistic imagination'. This imagination often implied essentialism and timelessness, bringing today's ethnicities back into their pastness or primitivity because many aspects of cultures portrayed and characterised in the performances were no longer practiced (see Tables 4.8.3 and 4.8.4, for instance). Although some were still practiced, they were not presented in the same ways as they were in the performances. The preceding conceptual Box 5.3.5 further synthesises the findings regarding performativity.

#### **5.4 Limitations: The Constraints of the Study Conduct**

In section 1.5, a number of assumptions are provided in order that the current study could be made possible. The assumptions are related to the projective discourse, the identification of it, the accessibility to the data, and so on. The limitations of the inquiry in the projection of Cambodia were reflexively stated in various places in light of the study implementation and they are treated more carefully in this section. First, time and budget constraints appeared to permeate all aspects of study from the conduct of priorethnography to the actual implementation of the main study. Particularly, in the conduct of this emergent, soft-science study inspired by Marcus's (1995) multi-sited approach, time was needed for me to immerse with the study populations and the contexts. Due to time, for example, the inspection of the performances was very much limited to the extravaganza dances staged for tourists to the Cultural Village because it was where the interviews/conversations could be built around different themes of ethnic performances. The dances were set up with institutional but commercial arrangements driven towards monetary benefits and were managed by experts in performing arts (for

instance, Sokhom and his colleagues). I could have managed to interview other relevant individuals such as Sokhom's prominent colleagues who were sent to work elsewhere, officials from the Ministry of Culture working with performances and heads of Provincial Departments of Culture to enhance multiperspectivalisation. Despite so, as part of hands-on priorethnographic activities, I conversed more widely with dance trainers, dancers, dance troupe leaders and concerned indigenous peoples about dance performances. However, I did not manage to incorporate much of the data and notes from the conversations partly because they provided similar views to Sokhom's and partly because space limitation. The similar views might be attributed to the fact that they were trained at and came from the same fine arts institutions (school/university). Although performing arts organisations have thrived for the last decades due to the growing industry along with tourism, formal training (i.e. school/university training) has been limited to the School of Fine Arts and the University of Fine Arts, the main source of arts education.

The study also underwent the pressure of time as the issues inclined to unfold as the study progressed or towards later stages in the research process. For example, the study was designed in early 2011 but then re-designed to capture the emergent issues that towards the end of 2011 and 2012. It thus constrained the data collection process. Third, the constructionist thinking focuses on individual constructions of knowledge and deprioritised the theory-driven approach. Thus, the more constructions or views obtained, the better for the constructivists, theoretically until different constructions were exhausted to form sophisticated knowledge. The time constraint limited the possibility of this exhaustion, and perhaps practically constructions can never be exhausted because they are dynamic and responsive to the changing circumstances of the complex world. Moreover, the search for multi-perspectives is resource-consuming and sufficient time is needed to evaluate and capture respondents with diverse backgrounds and knowledges. In the research context where I spent most of the time in England did not actually favour the hunt for multiple perspectives. On top of that, the actual sampling strategies carried



out were not all purposive and thus it might limit the research capacity to maximise perspectival variation. However, those who view that sampling strategies conducted within the framework of emergent design can be outlined distinctively, precisely and sequentially step by step would underestimate the impromptu and spontaneous requirements in response to the social, cultural and political complexities of the research settings, mobility of respondents and other unanticipated constraints. For this reason, on-the-spot triages become more desirable.

The political contexts (e.g. the approaching of the commune election and national election) and institutional arrangements (fear of information leakage and corruption) limited accessibility to institutional spaces and views. The power centralisation in state institutions in Cambodia means that authority and decision-makings are concentrated in the hand of the top few. Access to institutional spaces and decisions, for example, in the case of a statue commissioner, were too difficult and time-consuming. The attempt to get through to him was given up. Similar cases applied to the potential key persons in the handbook production team. This issue of access may affect the perspectivalisation of the issues under study.

Another limitation outlined here is that the study seemed to be hijacked by the arts (performing arts and plastic arts). It may be due to the fact that the arts industry is thriving as tourism in Cambodia becomes more promising. Perhaps, opportunities in the (performing) arts industry drew more artists (cultural agents) into producing and performing to meet the increasing demand of the tourists. Thus, the findings may favour the field of arts rather than culture gene bank in general.

Time as well as the internal capacity of the researcher constrained the actual operation of the study of the aforesaid emergent issues under the framework of paraethnography and bricoleurship. Prioethnography, paraethnography and bricoleurship are conceptually distinguishable but operationally considerably overlapped. The conceptualisation of the approaches was covered in chapter 3. Here, I would like to stress the operational issues

that limit the conduct of the study. In my reflexive view, to carry out prioethnography, researchers need to understand the social, cultural, political and geographical contexts of the study, so that they know how to get around and decide where and with whom to spend more time. In addition, they have to be able to know the study populations and map the sources of individual, communal or institutional knowledge. Viewed within this range of activities, they seem to be impossible for researchers to navigate with academic programme requirements. At best, they find themselves situated somewhere along the prioethnographic spectrum. It is where the limitation of prioethnography lies. Paraethnography, if strictly viewed in terms of Holmes and Marcus (2005), is a kind of collaborative approach to doing research in which the researcher and the researched get into partnership to produce co-constructions of knowledge. In this regard, the (local) research partner (para-ethnographer or para-researcher) is capable to engage collaboratively with the research in the production of knowledge. In the discussion of para-ethnography by Holmes and Marcus (2005), their paraethnographer was politically motivated in the research collaboration. Practically, in the study of the gene banks of Cambodia, their conceptual application was really difficult to implement due to constraints from both sides—the researcher and the research participants due to time, the level of trust and perhaps interests in collaboration. If viewed in terms of engagement in triages and prioritisation of research activities (which is considerably overlapped with prioethnography), paraethnography is practically feasible and very much depends on the success of prioethnography. Bricoleurship involves a broader range of research activities from prioethnography to the actual conduct and presentation of the findings. Although prioethnography and paraethnography can be distinctively viewed in relation to bricoleurship, operationally they sometimes shared the same activities such as triaging. However, the decision and choices of sampling strategies, data collection methods and techniques that are informed by prioethnography and paraethnography are subsumed under bricoleurship. Bricoleurship also pertains to the choices and decision regarding presentation of the findings. Attempts to apply these concepts created some of the methodological hiccups in the conduct of the study of the gene banks. These concepts

need to be further developed and reflected upon in future research agenda. They deem to more appropriately belong to ethnographic research, which is rare in the world of academic research at universities.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Further Research: Contributions and Implications for Future Studies**

The current study of the projection of Cambodia explored four research questions concerning dance performances, statued representations and stereotyping of the Other. They were considered as palpably emergent aspects of culture gene banks of Cambodia. These issues were set within a broader framework of the Angkorcentric frame of reference which triggered active cultural production and projection in tourism, Angkorean inheritances, the Khmer Rouge legacies, performing arts, plastic arts, crafts, myths/legends/narratives, historical/literary figures, and other events/festivals constitute the composite gene bank of Cambodia and many of their aspects were transformed into tourist spectacle.

The study contributes both conceptually and methodologically to Tourism Studies. Conceptually, the study advances the understanding of Horne's (1992) "cultural gene bank". To Horne (1992), cultural gene bank appears to be limited to "cultural storehouses" such as museums, sites, libraries and so on (i.e. physical places) that contain celebrated cultural objects, values and significances. In this thesis document, the term 'culture gene bank' (or 'culture gene banks') is conceived to more reasonably capture the scope of the study. The investigation into culture gene banks of Cambodia broadens this conceptual level to more fluid characters of culture gene banks, not just pertaining to physical places and tangible cultural items but to include abstract/immaterial, psychological and spiritual characteristics of culture gene banks. The gene banks compose both physical and non-physical elements that are either/both celebrated, neglected or/and subjugated. Horne's conceptual attribution of the "cultural gene bank" to something physical forms is limited.

Beliefs, mythical/legendary values, performances, the killing fields/psychological trauma, panoramic landscape and so on whether or not they are materialised or still resided in the minds/aspirations of a people or culture with or without subjecting to any particular physical places/spaces can also be considered as aspects of culture gene bank(s). Moreover, this study of the gene banks is original in a sense that no studies have examined them. Second, the study also originally contributes to additional understanding of the production of dance performances in terms of their selection, production and projection approaching from different angles to the current knowledge produced by Edensor (1998, 2001, 2009), Sasagawa (2005), Turnbull (2006), Winter (2006a, 2007) and Edwards (2005, 2007). Normalisation is another conceptual contribution and extension of the aspects examined by postcolonial critics such as Norindr (1996), Edwards (2005, 2007), Ollier and Winter (2006) who mainly focus on the normalised aspects of Angkor and court dances. The current study inspects other aspects of cultures that are being normalised and projection to tourists and the public, for example, in the case of statued representations of religious, mythical and legendary significances.

Methodologically, the study contributes to the fresh understanding of emergent designs in tourism studies and the associated risks in the conduct of the emergent, soft-science research. The research agenda has been dominated by positivist, rigid designs with little or no flexibilities once studies have been planned. The application and evaluation of cultural pedagogy, cultural pedagogy and other approaches open up a fresh field of inquiry in tourism research.

- ❑ In light of the study constraints and contributions, further research is needed to open up fresh lines of inquiry and enrich the knowledge production in Tourism Studies which have not been properly examined in the study of culture gene banks of Cambodia.
  
- ❑ *Exploring Tourist Perceptions of Performances*: The study of the gene banks developed an understanding of performances of cultures and identities from the view points of the cultural agent and the projected populations but was not able to

delve into the views of tourists (the audience or spectators) concerning performances. Examining performances from this angle will enhance the perspectivalisation of the issue.

- ❑ *Tracing the Origins of Mythical and Legendary Narratives:* Although the study of the projection of Cambodia substantially relies on historical explanations of the mythical and legendary representations, it fails to take serious historical studies of those mythical/legendary figures. From the study, it is suspected that the myths and legends which have sustained a place in the beliefs and spirits of the Khmers today had historical origins to the French colonial. If that is the case, the pervasiveness of the impact of the discursive normalisation of the Khmer culture, tradition and identity has hitherto been under-estimated. However, this needs to be carefully studied to further assess the impact of the colonial naturalisation and routinisation in the construction for the Khmers.
  
- ❑ *Understanding Signification of Statued Representations from the Point of View of the Commissioners and Artists:* The meanings and significances of statues have been much inquired into, but the points of view of the commissioners and artists who authorised and built particular statues seemed to be missing from the study. Approaching from this angle will enhance the multi-perspectival production of knowledge.
  
- ❑ *Exploring Tourist Understanding of and Impacts of Cultural Landscaping on Tourist Experience:* This area of investigation would potentially contribute to increased understanding and evaluation of reproduction of statues on tourist sightseeing and experience, and meanwhile raises the awareness of the cultural producers or artists to re-orientate their production towards enhancing touristic experiences.

- ❑ *Developing (Re)Identification Strategies*: The current study raises the awareness of the issue of stereotyping of the ethnic peoples and cultures. Further studies may delve into how the projected populations can define and redefine their cultural strategies to guard against the stereotypic mainstream projection. It may involve developing new or re-defining cultural identifiers of the indigenous people and formulating counter-identification strategies.

## **5.6 Recommendations for Actions: Selected Agencies Involving the Projection and Representation of Aspects of Peoples, Cultures and Places**

Findings from the inquiry into the projection and representation of aspects of peoples, cultures, and places were summarised in the sections above. The synopses were followed by syntheses and implications for further research, particularly with regard to normalisation, legitimisation, framing, fantasmatic, and performativity. In this section (5.6), the recommendations, based on the findings and reflections from the study, will be proposed for a number of key agencies participated in the projection and representation of cultures and places. In the last subsection of 5.6, the recommendations were offered in relation to the proposed restructuring of tourism jurisdiction to minimise tourism bureaucracies and improve efficiencies. The recommendations in the study will be communicated back to the respective agencies captured in the study.

In open transdisciplinary research, Brown (2010) suggested four steps in tackling complexities of issues (i.e. 'wicked problems'), today. First, researchers had to reflect on or develop principles and ideals, answering the question 'what should be?' in which a range of worldviews were identified. The second step involved posing the question 'what is?' in generating facts and evidences and in establishing parameters from various views. Creative thinking slipped into the third step where fresh ideas, potentials, and conditions for creativity were developed. This step was guided by asking 'what could be?' Lastly, creativity (new ideas) had to be tested for applicability and knowledge-sharing.

Brown's (2010) guided questions will be adjusted for the recommendations in the sections that follow. The adjusted questions consist of: ■ 'what was done?' which is designed to give a snapshot of the work the agencies did, ■ 'what could have been done?' formed to indicate the missing parts of the activities which could have had additional contributions, ■ 'what should be done?' ideally formulated to put together the possibilities of actions, and ■ 'what can be done?' composed to classify doable activities in short term, medium term, and long term. The recommendations below will be geared to the state/provincial authorities, the Cultural Village, Indigenous Communities/ Organisations, the Ministry of Tourism, and the reconfiguration of tourism jurisdiction.

#### **5.6.1 The State and Provincial Authorities: Consignment and Production of Monumental Statues of Significances**

##### **■ What Was Done?**

The statues of religious, historical, political, and mythical significances were dotted throughout the landscape of Cambodia, but the country was not the only one in the world fancied by the projection of aspects of meanings and significances via statues. The state and provincial authorities were the agencies authorising the construction of statues in public places and deciding what statues to build/project and where to locate them. Signs about the statue commissioners (or/and funders) were provided at the designated statues but, in the current practices, hardly was any information given about the designated statues.

##### **■ What Could Have Been Done?**

△ *Artistic values:* It appeared that artistic talents in the construction of statues were greatly varied. Some statues of religious significances were built unproportionately between the bodies, limbs, and heads. Sometimes, the same statues were built of different shapes and sizes for the public places. Some

statues were thought to have little artistic values due to the material they were made of and due to artistry. Artistic values of statue construction could have been overseen and improved by the statue commissioners for attractiveness and minimisation of great variation from the original statues, especially among those in the National Museum. Kapferer (2008) stated that spaces could be read against their social and political practices and their metaphorical signposting of customary practices. The values read from statues could reflect the values inscribed by their artists and commissioners.

△ *Consultation*: There could have been a broad consultation with artists, museum professionals, the MCFA specialists, researchers, and others on statue characteristics, building material, and techniques, for instance, before commissioning the statues for public places. A respondent Sopheap criticised the commissioning of the kneeling statue of King Dambang Kranhoung after the standing one had collapsed. The kneeling statue was thought to connote submissive rather than powerful representation of the mythical King. In addition, when building statues of indigenous peoples, care could have been taken not to construct them in a way that connoted despicability. Consultation could have enhanced the legitimacy of the production and projection of sculptures or statues.

△ *Information signs*: Since there were numerous deities in Hinduism, the projection of them via the landscaping of public places and spaces was confusing, especially to non-professionals, the public, and tourists who would not be able to distinguish among those religious deities and understand their meanings/significances. Hence, information signs (not merely about the builders/funders) about/at the projected deities in the designated places could have provided better insights into the religious significances and better understandings of the Khmer cultures/traditions. Similar considerations could have been given to the statues of mythical, historical, and political significances in the making of public places and spaces.



■ **What Should Be Done?**

- △ *Authority in selection and construction:* Currently, the state and provincial authorities ruled the decision over the selection and construction of statues without much consultation with relevant departments/ministries. Here, it is argued that the MCFA (in cooperation with the Ministry of Cult and Religion, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, and relevant institutions) should have authority over the decision on the selection and production of statues of religious and mythical significances because the MCFA work was more pertinent to this matter, and the Ministry was supposed to have appropriate human resources. The MCFA should be able to coordinate resources from the Ministry itself and its line institutions, such as the National Museum and the Royal University of Fine Arts. In addition, there should be something like a *Committee/Council for (City) Sculptural Landscape* whose responsibility was to select, coordinate, produce, or/and make decision about the construction of public sculpture (or statues).
- △ *Production of statues:* Statues (e.g. of religious deities and personas) to be erected in public places should be produced with maximum artistic values adhering to the originals (in the National Museums) so as to avoid public criticism and contamination of (authentic?) cultural values.
- △ *Location of the statues of religious deities:* Statues, including those of sacred ones, were erected in roundabouts, road corners, junctions, public gardens/parks and other crowded places because those statues were designed to catch the eyes of the public/tourists. However, the statue of a Hindu god located at the foot of the Hill Tribe Cultural Centre (see 4.4.1.1) in Mondulkiri province was only several meters from Karaoke/KTV Entertainment Centre. The decision for such location risked being considered as an insult to the god/religion.
- △ *Documentation:* Since the selection of statues projected to the public was grounded in their religious, historical, mythical, and political significances for

Cambodia, they should be carefully documented, especially with regard to their stories, related meanings, and interpretations. Their stories have not been compiled in one place readily for public use, e.g. for tourist guides, students, and researchers. In doing so, interpretations of those statues/sculptural pieces should be enhanced.

■ **What Can Be Done?**

- △ *Short term:* Within a period of two or three years, the *Committee/Council for (City) Sculptural Landscape* can be established to make decision on cultural decorations of public places (e.g. statue construction) and oversee constructions. Moreover, stories/myths related to those publicly projected statues can be compiled in one place.
  
- △ *Medium term:* Within the period of four or five years, information signs to be designated to each statues can be achieved. These information signs are hoped to communicate the meanings and significances of the statues better to tourists and the public.
  
- △ *Long term :* Within the period of five or ten years, the artistic values of the existing statues/sculpture erected in the public places for the last twenty years or so can be re-examined for improvement of artistic values in compliance with the original pieces. Moreover, some of them can be relocated to suitable locations. Statues of indigenous people can be corrected in a way to minimise disdain towards them and their communities. Re-landscaping the public places and spaces can be made possible in the long term. Statues themselves can be actually turned into attractions per se.

## 5.6.2 The Cambodian Cultural Village: Selection and Production of Performances of Ethnic Cultures

### ■ What Was Done?

The Cultural Village was designed as a one-stop shop for a variety of aspects of cultures and traditions of peoples living in Cambodia, although the Khmer culture (architectural styles, customs, history, and so on) was dominant there. The Village was themed into smaller villages designated for ethnic cultures such as those of the Khmers, the Chinese, the Kolas, the Kroeungs, and the Bunongs. Each village was stereotypically constructed with housing styles and decorations/stages and was landscaped with the environments similar to those belonging to the respective cultures. Research had been conducted, especially about the ethnic peoples and their cultures so that the villages could be stereotypically designed or themed and that stories about them were told via narrations at the start of the performances and via acting.

### ■ What Could Have Been Done?

△ *Performances:* Although research about ethnic cultures had been conducted to construct stories and narrations in the shows, and indigenous elders had been invited to help compose music for the shows, there was room for improvement, especially for those hilltribe ethnic performances. There could have been a regular (not just one-off) consultation with respective indigenous elders or representatives. By doing so, the performances of their cultures could have been improved, the stereotypical errors from the point of view of the projected peoples and communities corrected, the narrative transportation (Green and Brock, 2002) geared more to the factual and present customary practices and long-term misconception of the ethnic peoples and cultures rectified. A representative in the study Sinuon identified misrepresentation of the Bunongs in films and

performances, and John stated that the misrepresentation could be traced back to the 1960s. This misrepresentation could be contributed to or informed by the CPP lawmaker's remark about the Bunongs.

Δ *Consultation*: Dialogues could have been conducted with the projected peoples/cultures. Expenses on the consultation could be an issue for the company which ran the Cultural Village. However, the indigenous peoples did not have a professional consultancy company which charged high fees. Thus, the costs could involve more with transportation, food, and some stipends. And if the consultation was spaced out (e.g. once or twice a year), costs would be affordably spread. Alternatively, the company could have got in touch with indigenous representatives who were possibly willing to offer advice (free of charge) on the performances. They could be contacted through an indigenous association in Phnom Penh.

Δ *Staffing*: Some of the staff (or dancers) could have been members of indigenous communities whose cultures were represented and projected via performances at the Cultural Village. Sokhom stated those elders, who were invited to help compose music for performances at the themed villages, could not become acclimatised to the new (urban) environment. However, younger generations of the communities have integrated themselves and they could have possibly been targeted. By so doing, benefits could have been shared with those peoples whose cultures were being commoditised.

Δ *Distribution of benefits*: Staffing with some indigenous peoples whose cultures were on show was one way for benefit-sharing. Some indigenous respondents suggested that the Cultural Village think of ways of reinvesting some of the revenues from the commodification of aspects of their cultures/traditions in maintaining their cultures, such as in education for younger peoples of the communities whose cultures were being assimilated and endangered or in

employment. Benefits could have also been shared through purchases of indigenous products (or crafts), such as baskets, cloth/es, and tools which were used in the performances.

△ *Inspection:* According to a respondent, there were no inspections of the production of aspects of cultures and performances at the Cultural Village from any concerned authority or department. The MCFA or its relevant departments could have done this task to ensure that the cultural messages tourists/the public obtained from the shows were acceptable and to help improve the performances.

#### ■ **What Should Be Done?**

△ *Minimisation of discontents:* The Cultural Village should minimise the vexation of the projected indigenous peoples and cultures through performances and supports to them. Discontents deemed galvanising with regard to negative stereotyping or misrepresentation of the marginalised cultures and peoples, more of whom have emerged into more educated groups of the society due to the works by local and international NGOs while others of whom have become victims of development projects in the recent decades.

△ *Portrayal and characterisation of indigenous cultures:* The representation of aspects of the ethnic cultures (especially those of the marginalised ones) via performances should be handled carefully, because it can possibly produce dramatic transportation effects and characterisation which lead to the cultural disintegration of the society. If possible, try to have the indigenous peoples represent their own cultures rather than them being represented. Cautious representation should also apply to the MCFA dance troupe or the MCFA Department of Performing Arts and other performance businesses. Having them self-represent can possibly enhance their cultural values and the values of time and money for the tourists, reducing some tourist conceptions of inauthenticity.

△ *Collaboration*: The relationship between the performance agency (e.g. the Cultural Village) and the projected populations should be improved through collaboration and cooperation in various aspects from simple trade with the latter (e.g. purchase of their handicrafts and tools for the purpose of the performances) to more complicated cultural and technical issues of the performances. The agency should make use of this collaboration for mutual benefits and cultural/mutual understanding.

■ **What Can Be Done ?**

△ *Short term*: The company can organise dialogues with indigenous representatives to seek to bolster mutual cultural awareness and to understand their expectations from the performances and representation of aspects of their respective cultures and traditions. The company can also establish a channel/mechanism via which advice/consultation can be sought and communication can be facilitated to get things done.

△ *Medium term*: Performances can be adjusted in line with mutual interests of concerned parties and expectations of the projected communities. The company can thus shape, reshape or deshape to scale down misconceptions/misunderstandings, thereby the portrayal and characterisation via performances can be more accommodating to concerned parties, especially the represented one.

△ *Long term*: Staffing can be rethought to give opportunities to the indigenous peoples who are interested in working for the company (the Cultural Village). Mutual benefits can be enhanced through dialogues, communication, and other economic opportunities. The prevailing discontents can be curtailed. Tourist experiences shall be enhanced through the provision of more authentic encounters—the encounters between the indigenous dancers/employees and

tourists. Moreover, the image of the company as a tourist attraction can possibly be improved through enhancing values of tourist time and money.

### **5.6.3 The Indigenous Communities and Organisations: The Projected and Represented Populations**

#### **■ What Was Done?**

Indigenous communities, especially those in the Northeast such as the Bunongs and the Kroeungs, sometimes became victims of development in which their collective land and forest (e.g. their spiritual forest and swidden farming land) were disowned. The disownment in turn endangered their livelihoods and their cultural practices (called 'sen'). Their helplessness in times of social, cultural, and economic shocks due to dispossessions forced approximately half of the indigenous populations in the northern provinces of Cambodia, such as Mondulkiri to abandon their cultural practices, to fall into cultural disintegration, and to be converted into Christianity. They were generally weak (weakened) and marginalised.

However, more of the indigenous peoples have been educated to understand their rights, some became activists and sometimes they began to resist, just like their reaction towards the CPP lawmaker's remark about the Bunongs. Yet, their human power was far from adequate to confront with the prevailing misconception, identification, and representation of their cultures and communities.

#### **■ What Could Have Been Done?**

△ *Assiduity towards misstereotyping*: At present, indigenous activists, representatives, and organisations confronted with the issues at hand—those regarding home, land, and forest. They could have invested more efforts in pursuing the projection of aspects of their peoples and cultures and begun more

corrective representational discourse/activities, with a close examination of the projection and representation of the cultural identifiers. Although their human resources could have been a challenging issue, they could first have begun organising and building more solidarity.

△ *Cultural activities:* Indigenous groups could have been (more) proactive in organising cultural activities, especially beyond the sphere of their groups and communities in an endeavour to buttress cultural communication to the wider public. Local and international NGOs such as the NGO Forum, the ICSO and International Labour Organization (ILO) and other interested organisations or individuals might have been strong supporters of the activities.

△ *Organised tourist guides:* Tourism has begun invading the northeastern frontier of Cambodia, and there were more tourists visiting indigenous homes and communities, today. It could have been an opportunity to have an organised guiding service or guides who could show tourists their own cultures and traditions. Some of the indigenous guides there had a potential for just little training to provide a more customer-oriented service. Their personal life stories themselves could potentially be an attraction. Organised guiding services could have possibly reduced certain stereotypical characterisation of indigenous peoples carried out by the non-indigenous guides.

#### ■ **What Should Be Done ?**

△ *Empowerment:* Indigenous groups and representatives should find ways to empower themselves and their communities and work closely with concerned groups, organisations, and individuals. Empowerment should also include building human resources, skills, and networking first with their own collective funds. They should also amass (indigenous) human resource to make them already available for utilisation.



- △ *Mapping of Agency*: The indigenous groups, especially those who were projected via performances, films, and media, should map out those agencies involved in the projection and representation of aspects of their cultures and communities, obtain the contacts of the agencies/focal agents, and regularly update them.
  
- △ *Communication mechanism*: A system should be established, so that communication among members of indigenous groups/representatives, indigenous organisations, the agencies, and relevant authorities can be smoothly conducted.
  
- △ *Development of cultural identifiers*: Assisted by concerned parties and individuals, indigenous groups and communities should develop a set of pointers or indicators which (distinctly or indicatively) identify with their respective cultures and traditions and another set of identifiers which misrepresent them, with which they wish to strategically (re-/dis-)identify. They should develop the other set for which they aspire.
  
- △ *(Re-/dis-)identification strategy*: Indigenous peoples should mobilise supports, resources, and human power to develop strategies to tolerate, collaborate, hinder, or/and counter negative stereotyping and misrepresentation of aspects of their cultures.

■ **What Can Be Done?**

- △ *Short term*: Cultural agencies involving in the performance and representation of the projected peoples and cultures can be mapped within two years. Some of those agencies included the Cultural Village, the Department of Performing Arts of the MCFA, the School of Culture and Fine Arts, performance organisations and informal dance troupes performed at restaurants and hotels. Besides, a communication mechanism can be installed, so that information can be shared,

cooperation/collaboration can be implemented, and intervention can be smoothly obtained.

△ *Medium term:* Cultural activities, possibly in cooperation with concerned parties and individuals, can be organised to raise awareness, bolster understanding, and slacken misconception. Moreover, organised guiding service can be set up with a little work of marketing and promotion. Apart of that, sets of cultural identifiers can be initially developed.

△ *Long term:* Human resources and human power can be developed, garnered, and accumulated. In addition to the agency mapping and the communication mechanism, indigenous groups/representatives and interested parties can formulate the sets of cultural identifiers to re-identify and de-identify aspects of the projected indigenous cultures and traditions which have been misstereotyped and misrepresented.

#### **5.6.4 Ministry of Tourism : Marketing and Promotion of Aspects of Culture and Heritage for Tourism**

##### **■ What Was Done?**

This section highlighted the state of marketing/promotion work undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism. By law, the Ministry of Tourism had the role and responsibility to market and promote tourism both at home and overseas (RGC,2009a). Promotional and marketing material, such as handbooks, posters, and leaflets in a few languages, have been produced and more visitor information centres (VICs) in provinces were being established to serve both domestic and international visitors. Sea festivals were organised annually in December since 2011. The Ministry and the tour operators attended international travel fairs and events in various countries, such as the UK, the US, France, Germany, Australia, Russia, China, and other Asian nations.

Moreover, the Ministry annually had 30-second video spots about tourism Cambodia produced and aired on CNN. The Ministry also produced other multimedia and songs narrating and celebrating cultural and natural resources of Cambodia, and it maintained its official website well. The marketing and promotion undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism and other relevant agencies undeniably contributed to the rapid growth of tourism in Cambodia in the last decades.

#### ■ **What Could Have Been Done?**

△ *Potential marketing tactics:* Marketing/promotion of aspects of culture and heritage was mainly done internally by the Ministry and a main credited advertising company and/or tourism industry alone. First, it could have also been done across different departments and ministries. Integrated marketing in tourism could have saved some budgets. Such marketing has already occurred as it was integrated as part of the strategies of overseas trade expositions by the Ministry of Commerce. Similar things could have been done with other ministries. Second, Cambodian embassies abroad could have been more rigorously involved in marketing/promoting tourism and could have become agents of tourism marketing. Third, the Ministry of Tourism could have cooperated (possibly through Cambodian Embassy officials in respective countries) with overseas Cambodians and students to organise marketing activities to promote tourism to Cambodia. It could be as simple as handing out leaflets/brochures or helping at events/organisations. This could have been started with the Ministry reaching out to those overseas individuals, groups, or student associations. Fourth, New Zealand government promoted tourism through its own citizens by encouraging them to invite friends/relatives at home or overseas to visit them. Cambodia could have also begun moving in a similar direction. Fifth, according to the 2013 calendar of the international travel fairs and events of the MOT (See [http://www.tourismcambodia.org/mot/index.php?view=travelfairs\\_events#comp](http://www.tourismcambodia.org/mot/index.php?view=travelfairs_events#comp)),

they were highly concentrated in Asian markets, notably in China, while European markets were given less attention, perhaps due to the lack of means and resources. Thus, making use of other means (tactics above) with less demand of financial resource could have been considered. In addition, similar things could have been done inside the country to inform those tourists who were already in the country about other places they might visit with possible supports from students and volunteers, particularly tourism students.

△ *Diversification*: Tourism in Cambodia remained concentrated in a few destinations— Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, and the Cambodia bay. These destinations were much more heavily marketed than other destinations in Cambodia. For the past few years, the marketing and promotional endeavours were geared mainly to the 15 provinces as identified in the handbooks; very few of them were actually captured in the CNN spots. Efforts reserved for marketing other provinces have been piecemeal although there were leaflets/brochures for all provinces now. Thus, there was a need to bridge the international tourism to more local tourism suppliers. Many attractions in Vientiane, listed in the Lonely Planet Laos, were in fact Buddhist pagodas. Cambodia had more than pagodas to offer to international tourists, and local/village-based handicrafts could potentially attract visitors if properly organised and promoted. The Royal Government of Cambodia has worked on 'One Village, One Product' scheme which could have been better integrated into tourism marketing programmes. Diversifications of tourism products/attractions could have improved trickle-down tourism benefits to wider populations.

△ *Cleanliness and services*: The Royal Government/the Ministry of Tourism has creatively begun 'Clean Cities, Clean Resorts, Good Services' programme whose contest was officially launched in 2012 (Hun, 2012). Channa complained that "development in our ways is destructive to culture. Culture is disappearing, vanishing. Attraction sites are littered with a lot of rubbish/plastic. They are places

for enjoyment/pleasure but there are a lot of plastic bags". Certainly, attraction sites in general were littered although it was very clean inside the Angkor complex. The Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment could have proactively involved in making or maintaining the sites as pleasant/clean as possible. Sufficient education (and training) could have been provided to both the attraction site management/staff and visitors. Means and resources could have been sufficient. Rubbish bins could have been adequately supplied and regularly cleared.

In addition, visitor/customer services (and staff languages) could have been improved through proper training, especially to those who were at the front stage such as those working at the Visitor Information Centres. And the VIC in Phnom Penh was more a business/restaurant than a VIC, and there were often short supplies of information, such as handbooks, leaflets, and brochures.

△ *Budget transparency:* Budgets for marketing/promotion of tourism were not specified and remained confidential to the public. For instance, what percentage of national earnings from tourism was reinvested in the marketing and promotion of tourism? The national budget law stated only very general categories of allocated budgets. Just above nineteen percent or 19.16% (approx. US\$9,701,175) of tourism earnings in 2013 and 17% (approx. US\$11,499,675) in 2014 bounced back to the MOT current expenditure (see RGC, 2012; RGC, 2013). However, the detailed breakdowns of the MOT expenditure were not available and the budgetary allocation for marketing and promotion was not known to the public. If it were, implications for budgetary utilisation for marketing could have been drawn.

In practices, the Ministry of Tourism garnered contributions from travel companies/the private sector and donors in making events happen. For instance, there were also advertisements in marketing material from which earnings/contributions were derived. The MOT cooperated with a main advertising company to get material produced. Members of the advertising company working

in a close collaboration with the MOT claimed that they were not paid for the production of tourism marketing material. In fact, they helped find sources of funding for the publications. With scarce funding, the marketing tactics above might be helpful.

△ *Interministerial collaboration*: There seemed to be no on-going collaboration between concerned ministries at all in the production of promotional/marketing material. Tourism law and policies appeared to give exclusive rights to the Ministry of Tourism to *promote and market* aspects of culture/heritage (RGC, 2009a) and places, and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts was decreed to *safeguard, maintain, and uplift* the values of tangible and intangible culture and heritage (Norodom, 1996). However, the marketing/promotional contents and the selection of aspects of heritage to market could have been improved if the two Ministries and marketing companies worked together. The choices of what aspects of culture and heritage were significant, places to be marketed, and contents to be designed could have been improved.

Since the Ministry of Tourism was not likely to have sufficient resources to design and produce marketing material, they were mainly handled by an advertising company. A respondent included in the study designed and produced most of the MOT marketing material, including their contents. The marketing contents and selections could have been upgraded with effective collaboration from other relevant departments or ministries.

△ *Regional positioning*: Marketing and promotion played an important role in enhancing the perceptions of tourists and in boosting visitations. Although Cambodia had the temples of Angkor and other huge ancient temples bragged to be the most competitive in the region, tourism policy makers and marketers have not been able to lift the position of tourism in its competition with the other nine ASEAN nations. At the current position, it was safe to say that Cambodia did little

better than only Myanmar in tourism (<http://www.asean.org/news/item/tourism-statistics>).

To elevate the positioning of tourism within the region, especially among the ASEAN nations, proper and efficient marketing strategies had to be drafted and improved, and marketing budgets had to be increased and transparently managed. So far there have not been any proper marketing/promotion strategies/plans available to the public which exactly specified what was to be done. With clear marketing actions/strategies, impromptu marketing/promotion could have been minimised. A three-or four-year marketing strategy, similar to the one by Tourism New Zealand, might have been suitable for the Ministry of Tourism. In addition, participation in strategies/tactics of marketing and promotion of tourism Cambodia could have been widely expanded to potentially concerned individuals, volunteers, and organisations beyond the circle of few individuals or agencies.

#### ■ **What Should Be Done?**

The preceding sections elaborated the state of marketing and promotion as identified from the fieldworks and marketing activities which could have been done. This section will briefly cover what 'should' be done in the marketing and promotion of tourism in Cambodia and some of which will be taken drawn from the preceding sections.

△ *Marketing strategy*: The Ministry of Tourism should develop a four-year marketing strategy to guide the implementation of marketing and promotion of tourism Cambodia.

△ *Market reach*: The MOT should widen the markets, for instance, to American, European, and other Asian markets. The Ministry should also establish VICs in strategic locations in the tourist generating regions, and they should have similar functions as those VICs in Cambodia (see bookings via VICs, below).

△ *Marketing and publication budgets:* As indicated in the above point, there was no information about the budgetary allocation for marketing/promotion. However, there should be a specific sum set aside for marketing activities/publications and thus minimise the hard time given to the advertising company which collaborated with the MOT on this matter and the delay associated with fund sourcing. Publication specific budget should be increased, so that the MOT could minimise reliance on contributions for promotion/marketing activities although the MOT could derive revenues from advertisements. With the increased budget, more publications (handbooks, brochures, and leaflets, etc.) should be made available at all times, especially at the VICs, accommodation facilities, restaurants, airports, and so on throughout Cambodia and at Cambodian embassies and student associations abroad.

△ *Bookings via Visitor Information Centres:* Besides giving information about travel and tourism in Cambodia, the VIC staff members should be trained to become booking agents and to facilitate needs (accommodation, air tickets, transportation and guiding, for instance). Booking/ticketing systems should be in place for them to do the job. By doing so, the VICs and staff members should be able to generate extra revenues to improve their services and to contribute to the national tourism revenues. In addition, the VIC website(s) should be established and well maintained, and systems should be in place to facilitate information provision and (overseas) bookings.

△ *Specialised promotion/marketing website:* The MOT should create and maintain a specialised promotion/marketing website in addition to its (general) official website. This specialised website should target market segments with different tourism products.

△ *Wider collaboration and consultation:* The Ministry should seek collaboration across state departments and ministries for their assistance/consultation in the selection of



aspects of culture and heritage to be marketed and in the design and production of the contents of the material. The MOT should also seek collaboration from various groups of the populations at home and abroad to assist in the marketing activities and in campaigns for tourism Cambodia in the overseas markets. In addition, the projection and marketing of aspects of indigenous cultures should be widely consulted with indigenous groups or at least with their respective representatives.

△ *Transparent coordination:* The public-private sector liaison should be improved to transparently manage marketing budgets, financial contributions, and marketing/promotion activities.

#### ■ **What Can Be Done?**

There are quite a few things which could be possibly achieved in the short, medium, and long terms.

△ *Short term:* Within a three-year timeframe, a marketing strategy and a specialised website can be developed. In addition, interministerial collaboration/cooperation mechanism can be established to seek consultation regarding the marketing/promotion contents and selections of aspects of cultures and heritage to be marketed and promoted. These are low hanging fruits at hand to pick and garner.

△ *Medium term:* Within the four-five year timeframe, potential concerned groups, such as the private sector, home and overseas students, student organisations, embassies, and so on, can be mapped out to seek their assistance and participation in various marketing/promotion activities. Moreover, VIC staff members and management can be trained as better service providers and booking agents. In addition, the public-private mechanism can be improved in the marketing and promotion of aspects of culture and heritage.

△ *Long term:* Within the five-ten year timeframe, a transparent MOT budgeting system can be created, and budget can be distinctly allocated for the marketing/promotion category. Besides, the MOT can lobby the government for an increase in marketing budgets proportionally to national tourism earnings and then more markets can be reached, especially to Europe and the US. Tourism products can be diversified to other areas in Cambodia, rather than concentrating comfortably on some of the products in the 15 provinces. Cleanliness, good hygiene, and customer services can be improved to help boost tourist visitation and to competitively reposition tourism Cambodia among the ASEAN tourist destination regions. In addition, VICs abroad can be kick-started and developed in the long term.

#### **5.6.5 Restructuring of Tourism Jurisdiction: Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sports to Be Established**

##### **■ What Was Done?**

While the MCFA bore the responsibility of protecting and managing cultural properties, cultural attractions, and archaeological, anthropological, and historical sites of Cambodia (see Article 3 of Sub-Decree in RGC, 2007), the MOT was given legal primary responsibility for regulating tourism business activities, including tourist sites/attractions (RGC, 2009a). Here, the responsibilities of the two Ministries were clearly in conflict, particularly the conflict of interest over the management of revenues from tourism when the sites/properties under the MCFA were also the tourist sites/attractions.

Strictly speaking, the MCFA had the same duties and responsibilities as those of the APSARA Authority, although the latter had the exclusive responsibility for protecting and managing the Angkor complex and the region of Siem Reap (Norodom, 1995). A year after the birth of the APSARA Authority in 1995, the MCFA was established with

the responsibility for leading and managing culture and fine arts of the Kingdom of Cambodia (Norodom, 1996). The institution was also equipped with the duties of protecting, maintaining, and uplifting the values of the cultural heritage and cultural properties of Cambodia (RGC, 2007). And among other activities, the MCFA also assessed and determined cultural/heritage sites which had the potentials for tourism (MCFA, 2014).

In the current practices, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) had more executive branches or government agencies (i.e. Ministries and Authorities) than those of some ASEAN member countries with larger land areas and populations such as the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. In Thailand, sports was managed and led by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports together with its important arm the Tourism Authority of Thailand, while sports in general was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education in Cambodia. However, tourism-related sports (of/in Cambodia) were classified under the 'primary responsibility' of the Ministry of Tourism (RGC, 2009a). In Vietnam, culture, sports, and tourism were under the leadership and responsibility of just one ministry. In the UK, tourism was under the province of the Department of Media, Culture and Sports.

#### ■ What Could Have Been Done?

△ *Merging culture, tourism, and sports:* It would be impractical to have the MOT without giving it the responsibility and authority over tourist sites and attractions. It would be impractical either to have the MCFA without rendering it with the responsibility for (and regulation of) cultural and historical sites and properties. This dilemma will continue to rule, and the competition between the two Ministries will still exist if the legal framework is not restructured. One way to deal with this problem is to merge culture, tourism, and sports together under the same jurisdiction.

## ■ What Should Be Done?

△ *A new ministry to be established:* There should be a restructuring of Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Ministry of Tourism, and the APSARA Authority to reduce superfluous public spending on 'ghost' staff and complicated bureaucracies and to increase productivity among those who regularly turned up to work. These three agencies should be restructured to form a new ministry (say, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Sports) because culture, tourism, and sports are coherently related and it is unnecessary to put them under different jurisdictions. In addition, a specialised agency (an arm of the new Ministry) should be formed to carry out marketing and promotion of culture, tourism, and sports (say, the Marketing and Promotion Board). This new Ministry shall be the merger of the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and the takeover of sports from the Ministry of Education.

## ■ What Can Be Done?

△ *Short-term:* A circular can be issued and promulgated among the three concerned Ministries, the industries, and the public to keep them informed about the imminent institutional restructuring.

△ *Medium term:* Resources can be planned for mobilisation and reallocation. Some of the existing resources can be made redundant and some relocated. New manpower can be recruited and taken on board. In addition, a royal decree and a sub-decree for the new Ministry can be prepared and issued within a four-five year timeframe.

△ *Long-term:* The Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Sports (MOCTS) can be established with the jurisdiction over culture, heritage, tourism and sports. By doing so, there will be clearer roles and responsibilities, greatly reducing overlaps and hesitations in carrying out duties and activities. In addition, a specialised tourism

promotion agency (say, the Marketing and Promotion Board) can be established under the overall responsibility of the MOCTS. The agency shall in turn be responsible for marketing and promoting tourism Cambodia at home and abroad. It shall assume the duties and roles under section 5.6.4. A specialised website, such as *Tourism Cambodia* or *Visit Cambodia*, can be established, possibly with modifications of the present official MOT website. The new Ministry shall be able to work more effectively with its arm (e.g. the Marketing and Promotion Board) similar to those in New Zealand and Australia or to Tourism Authority of Thailand.

## APPENDIX



Figure 1/2 Map of the Khmer Empire from 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century (Tully, 2005, p.28)  
(The Empire Represented by .....)

## **Extract 4.2 The Song ‘The Children of the Great Empire’**

The Khmers are a glorious race respected worldwide for their ancestral tradition of the Great Empire. The Khmers are characterised by heroism, bravery, determination and honesty. They have abundant magnificent cultural resources throughout the nation. Every Buddhist temple complies with Buddhist sangha and monks educate people about sin, merit and guilt so that they behave with virtue and honesty. Even a spoon of rice or a string of beans can be considered as the divine alms worth of wholehearted gratitude to the virtuous giver.

The 7<sup>th</sup> January was a second Mother who blessed with the new life today the sons and daughters who have to respect the Day with morality. They must realise that they owe this gratitude to the incarnate Children of the Great Empire. Without any hostile provocation, the Khmers are as tolerant and enduring as the stone of Angkor. With Samdach Techo Hun Sen’s diamond recommendations, this small country has morality and honour towards its neighbours, not taking them as enemies. All countries near and afar are all friends. This is the real Children of the Great Empire.

(Edited Song Script, [http://tourismcambodia.org/multimedia/list.php?cat\\_id=3](http://tourismcambodia.org/multimedia/list.php?cat_id=3); my translation)

### **Extract 4.2.1 Aspiration for Angkor: Excerpt from an Email of a Member of the Cambodian Academic Network (CAN)**

I kept doing some reflection back to what I have learnt from school and from people I had talked about. I was so impressed and I had a very peaceful feeling that I was born on this land. However, it was a miserable time and night mare for many Cambodians during [the] French Colony up to [the] KR period.... Everything we used to have was destroyed especially natural resources. Well, I did not come across both happy and sad period [;] however, everything was documented and I have been taught and told a lot. To me as young generation of Cambodia, I would like to urge all Cambodians to give up all the angers and keep the sad time as a good lesson learnt and never fall into that trap again [.] [I]nstead let’s come and cheer ourselves for being Angkorean citizens. Angkor represents a harmony and holy place for Theravada and gods (Buddhism and Hinduism) and we have to be proud of being born and residing on this gold land. In history, during a great Angkor empire, we had a strong kingdom with great devoted and committed leaders. Even during [the] French period, we still had a lot of scarified heroes to help physically and spiritually rescue the nation from the bad group of people. I believe that everyone around the world including Cambodian people wants peace, but just a minority of people prefer[s] to have own sake [and] never care about peace for all.

(KR Regime (Suffering) vs Angkor Regime, 02 August 2013).

### **Extract 4.3 The Song 'Memories of Ta Tay**

Dreaming of the waves, glittering like diamond and gold, of the convergence of four rivers and an island of Tatai with beautiful mangroves lining up on both sides of the rivers with abundant fish reminded me of fishing at the lake side under the pleasant breeze resplendent with the beautiful view of Tatai hidden in nature where tourists flocked to have the experience of the Tatai paradise. I still retained the memory of rowing a kayak for a fresh view of the river together with new tree leaves shooting and coconut trees dancing with the breeze while songs were entertaining tourists harmoniously in the moonbeam night.

Prepared by the islanders, delicious breakfast with fresh crabs, shrimps, watermelon, honey pineapples and tasty durians gave a soothing feeling like that of a virgin girl.

I fell in a sound sleep with a dream of having a good smell like that in the worldly heaven, the clean Tatai resort with international standard and good services developed for tourism. [Back to Para 1]

The strength of the economy came from the sacrifice required to achieve and reinforce the community. Local guides with good knowledge of geography led tourists safely using the communities as the point of interest. [Back to Para 3]

(Edited Song Script, [http://tourismcambodia.org/multimedia/list.php?cat\\_id=3](http://tourismcambodia.org/multimedia/list.php?cat_id=3); my translation)



**Extract 4.3/2 The Interview with Bona: Snippets Quoted in Chapter 4**

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Snippet Number	Snippets from the Interview with Bona (20 <sup>th</sup> March 2012)
(1)	<p>The Kingdom of Wonder makes you when you come here to wonder why Cambodia is so good, so rich but it is not open to the world. It is amazement. When you [tourists] come here, you are in awe with what you see. Ok. That is the meaning of the Kingdom of wonder. When you come here, then you suddenly realise that this is it. I am not selling you the wonders of Cambodia which are plentiful. I am selling you an experience. When you come here, you suddenly feel wow look at this. That is what we meant when we say the Kingdom of Wonder. But the world challenges this. But that is not the point. The point is they are reading off texts. When you come here, of course, you will know. You see the amazement, people are amazed by the wonder that we have.</p>
(2)	<p>Sometimes, people wonder why like you asked me why we give up Anlong Veng [the last KR stronghold], why we give up the Khmer Rouge. We did not give up. Today, Tuol Sleng [museum] is there. Tuol Sleng is still there. You can still see the school. We did not give up, except that, you know, like I said 'Atrocity does not sell.' And they should not before. They are there. Why should we go and highlight them to hurt people? And you start to kill the feelings of the people who read this. Why do we not show them the advancement, the beauty of Cambodia? So, I think that is the direction we should be moving, more to promote Cambodia as this. We did not push/press down Anlong Veng. We did not press down Tuol Sleng. When the tourist come here, the people who are curious, who want to go to the Killing Field, the people who are curious who want to know the school, people who are curious who want to know/go to Mr. Pol Pot's burial grave, they ask you before visiting, except that we do not highlight them in our promotional material. That's it. There is no reason other than that I feel. I do not represent the ministry but atrocity doesn't sell. No reason to highlight them.</p>

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**Extract 4.3/3 The Song 'The Kingdom of Wonder' (Sreymore, 2013)**

I wonder  
where all the trees went

And I wonder...why our future's for rent.  
I wonder... some have no rice to eat.

And I wonder... "Lexus on the street?!"

I wonder...[twice]  
The Kingdom of wonder

I wonder... why the police are fat. And I wonder...  
"By the sweat of whose back?"

I wonder...We're at the top of the pack. But I wonder...  
"Should we be happy for that?"

I wonder... [twice]  
the Kingdom of wonder

I wonder...They know why clothes are so cheap.

And I wonder..."Would they ever reach deep?"

I wonder..."Will our neighbours play nice?"

And I wonder...What they will give for our rice.

I wonder... [twice]  
the Kingdom of wonder.

I wonder.... "What's fear ever done?"

And I wonder, "Has a new era begun?"

And I wonder when the violence will cease?

But I don't wonder: We got the courage for peace!

I don't wonder... I don't wonder...  
though we're the Kingdom of Wonder. The Kingdom of wonder.



① Lord Vishnu  
Ta Khmau town, Kandal province



② Lord Vishvakarman  
Town centre of Kampong Thom province



③ God Ganes / Ganesha  
Sen Monorom park, Phnom Penh capital



④ Lord Rama  
The Coucil of Ministers, Phnom Penh capital

**Figure 4.4.1 Projection of Religious Significances: Hindu Statues Worshipped by the Khmers, Today**

**Extract 4.4.1 The Interview with Phanny: Snippets Quoted in Chapter 4**

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<b>Snippet Number</b>	<b>Snippets from the Interview with Phanny (23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012)</b>
(1)	What was the statue of King Jayavarman VII put up for? First, the King had great achievements for the nation. He won into successive wars. Second, he was a great, committed Buddhist disciple, who made Mahayana Buddhism the state religion. Third, he managed to expand the Khmer territories to the greatest extent in history. Fourth, he was a hero King in wars. Fifth, he was the King who built the most temples. Sixth, he was the King who took upon himself all the people's hardship and gave back happiness. Seventh, he was the king who established a good number of huge capitals such as Angkor Thom capital of 3x3 square kilometres and other capitals in the present Thailand.
(2)	Khmers like to build and display statues of god Vishnu but rarely for god Shiva. People can see statues of Vishnu on the roads and in/at roundabouts. Now we also have the statue of god Ganes, the god with a human body and an elephant head. I wanted to point out that those statues are related to divinity.
(3)	First, god Ganes is the god of the four Vedas—the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda. Second, god Ganes is the god of knowledge. To obtain knowledge, ones have to worship god Ganes. These two representations are the most special of god Ganes. We [people] have a lot of skills. All skills and knowledge are attributed to the Vedas. And if ones want to obtain knowledge, they have to pray and ask for it from god Ganes. People may build god Ganes with multi-arms. Why multi-arms? Multi-arms represent divine powers.

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**Extract 4.4.1.2 The Interview with Channa: Snippets Quoted in Chapter 4**

Snippet Number	Snippets from the Interview with Phanny (25 <sup>rd</sup> March 2012)
(1)	I do not know because it [the statue] holds everything. Go ask the builder. For example, holding an axe is a different story. A god holding an axe is only found in the royal ballet in the scene of Moni Mekhala and Ream Eyso. These [the handsaw and the axe] never belong to any god.
(2)	So for me, I cannot say that such statues promote Khmer culture; but I do not mind if they were built. I do not even appreciate them for their artistic beauty. Today's Khmers are crazy with theories. Everyone wants to reveal their own theories. But they are personal theories, which do not originate from Khmer culture. If they come from Khmer culture, you can ask Cambodian countryside people about the statues and they will be able to tell what they are. But these are not inside them [ordinary people]. They [the builders of the statue] created their own theories, while millions of other people do not know anything about them. Are they [people] stupid? So I cannot say what the statues represent. Let me repeat. I do not mind those statues being built.



① **The Buddha**  
At the pagoda on top of Udong hill, Kandal



② **The Buddha**  
Ek Phnom pagoda, Battambang province



③ **Neang Kong Hing, Goddess of the Earth**  
North of new Olympic Stadium, Phnom Penh

**Figure 4.4.2 Projection of Culture: Statues of Buddhist Significances for the Khmers, Today**





① **The Nagas**  
Kompong Cham town



② **The Nagas**  
Provincial town, Rattanakiri



③ **The Nagas**  
Wat Phnom, Phnom Penh capital



④ **The Nagas**  
Wat Tuol Reach Chea, Kandal province

**Figure 4.4.3 Placemaking: Projection of Nagas in Public Places**



① King Jayavarman VII (1181-1220)  
Kampong Cham town



② King Korn (1498-1505)  
Angkor Knong temple, Kampong Cham



③ King Ang Duong (1796-1860)  
National road NR5, Udong, Kandal province



④ Phirum Ngoy (1865-1936)  
Opposite the Hotel Cambodiana, Phnom Penh



⑤ Venerable Chuon Nath (1883-1969)  
Near the Hotel Cambodianna, Phnom Penh



⑥ Vietnam-Cambodia Monument  
Near the Royal Palace, Phnom Penh

**Figure 4.5 Placemaking: Projection of Statues of Heroic Quality**



**Extract 4.5.5 Projection of the Nation: English Translation of the Cambodian National Anthem**

***Venerable Chuon Nath : Cambodian National Anthem Nokoreach***

All Khmers, please remember the root and history of our great country  
Our boundary was wide and well known  
Others always thought highly of our race  
And always placed our race as the elders.  
We have great heritage and culture  
Which has spread far and wide in the Far East.  
Religion, arts and education,  
Music, philosophy and strategies are all that we have spread.  
All Khmers, please remember our roots and history  
Which speaks of the grandeur of our great race  
Make up your mind and body and try hard to rebuild  
In order to lift the value of our nation  
To once again rise to the greatness that we once had.

(Chuon, quoted in Becker, 2011)

**Table 4.5.6 Tourist Reviews from TripAdvisor:  
Snippets from the Reviews of the Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship Monument**

<b>Tourist Originating Region (Date of Visit)</b>	<b>Extract from tourist review of the Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship Monument</b>
● <i>Australia</i> (January 2012)	Located on a wide boulevard to the south of the Royal Palace, this monument commemorates the fall of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge in the 1970's....On the south side of the tower a simple statue of soldiers and a woman and child form the centrepiece of the monument.
● <i>US</i> (no date)	It looks nice and it's in great shape. It was worth of my time. I am rather happy to see a monument [to] [of] friendship between nations, something so uncommon in the time we are living.
● <i>Germany</i> (no date)	Just near my guesthouse, it's a kind of a propaganda monument to persuade Khmers that the Vietnamese invaders are nice liberators, except they kind [a] [of] never wanted to leave ...
● <i>US</i> (October 2012)	I drive by it frequently and it is an ugly monument which does nothing but remind one of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. The monument is of that coarse proletariat style which does not fit in with the many graceful building of this city.
● <i>UK</i> (February 2013)	The monument itself is a bit of a strange one, more militaristic than I'd like but then afaik it does commemorate when Vietnamese invaded and chased the Khmer Rouge out of Phnom Penh and up into the hills.
● <i>Perth</i> (February 2013)	The statue is a typical "communist" looking one, unless you are visiting the square it's not worth it.
● <i>UK</i> (March 2013)	It is significant of course because for the history of aggression between these two nations.

([www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction\\_Review-g293940-d2520976-Reviews-Cambodia\\_Vietnam\\_Friendship\\_Monument-Phnom\\_Penh.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g293940-d2520976-Reviews-Cambodia_Vietnam_Friendship_Monument-Phnom_Penh.html))



① **Grandma (Daun) Penh**  
Phnom Penh capital



② **Warriors Techos Meas/Yort**  
On River Bank, Phnom Penh capital



③ **King Dambang Kranhoung**  
Provincial town, Battambang



④ **White Horse**  
Kep province

**Figure 4.6 Cultural Projection: The Public Display of Representations of Legendary Quality**



① Udong hill



② Buddha statue at the Arthaross pagoda



③ Royal Palace



④ National Museum of Cambodia



⑤ Independent Monument



⑥ Central Market



⑦ Wat Phnom pagoda

**Figure 4.7 Miniatures in the Cambodian Cultural Village:  
Representations of Aspects of Cultures/Histories**

**Table 4.7.4.1 Performances at the New Theatre:  
Sokhom on the Dance Shows at the Cambodian Cultural Village**

Shows at the New Theatre		Significance of the Show Drawn from the Interview with Sokhom (15 May 2012)
● <i>Drum music</i>	Background	It consisted of beatings of different types of drums in a manner to orchestrate traditional music. This Drum orchestra/music was modelled upon the larger piece of music composed by a person from the Department of Culture and Fine Arts in Phnom Penh at the occasion of the inauguration of a riverside park of Hun Sen. The music at the opening was literally called the ' <i>soul-awakening music</i> '. The Drum music at the New Theatre was only a small select part.
	Virtue	Different types of drums could be used to create a new, good melody. In so doing, the real value of Khmer traditional instruments/drums was to be realised.
	Justice	It was whether the Drum music had existed in Cambodia. This Drum music was grounded in the type of music Cambodia had, which was called <i>Kantremming</i> music and melody. And Cambodia has also had the same instruments/drums. <i>Kantremming</i> music could be traced back to the Bunongs.
● <i>Lotus Flower dance</i>	Background	The Lotus Flower dance on show at the New Theatre had been part of the idea of a staff member of the Cultural Village, who died a year ago.
	Virtue	The dance raised the awareness of the values related to the Khmer tradition, religion and belief in Buddhism, a symbol of which was the lotus flower.
	Justice	The lotus flowers and their leaves have really existed in the Khmer tradition. The centre of the lotus flowers could be bended and was represented by the bodies of dancers themselves.

*Continue on next page.*



**Table 4.7.4.1 (Cont'd) Performances at the New Theatre:  
Sokhom on the Dance Shows at the Cambodian Cultural Village**

<b>Shows at the New Theatre</b>		<b>Significance of the Show Drawn from the Interview with Sokhom (15 May 2012)</b>
● <i>Clay Pot dance</i>	Background	The music for the dance was modelled after the melody of 'Beautiful Girl' in the post-Angkorean period but the dress after the pre-historic when people did not really know how to dress, i.e. during the reign of the legendary <i>naga</i> -princess Lieou-Ye.
	Virtue	The dance showed the value of the traditional tool/pottery of the Khmer.
	Justice	The clay pots have existed and they were used to carry water, especially when the Khmers had not had modern tools as they had now. Thus, the justice lied in the clay pots and the dancer's way of walking.
● <i>Khmer Martial Arts</i>	Background	Sokhom had experience learning the Khmer martial arts from his father.
	Virtue	The show of Khmer Martial Arts aimed to instil the love of Khmer fighting styles among the visitors. They might become fond of Khmer martial arts and help preserve them.
	Justice	The Khmers had had hundreds of fighting styles in the Khmer martial arts, including fighting with bare hands and with stick/staff. The show was only the select few from those fighting styles.

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 4.7.4.1 (Cont'd) Performances at the New Theatre:  
Sokhom on the Dance Shows at the Cambodian Cultural Village**

<b>Shows at the New Theatre</b>		<b>Significance of the Show Drawn from the Interview with Sokhom (15 May 2012)</b>
● <i>Pestle dance</i>	Background	Pestle dance was associated with farmers. After the rice-pestling, they celebrated and danced.
	Virtue	The dance helped educate visitors, especially those who had never seen pestles used in rice-pestling.
	Justice	The Pestle dance existed in Cambodia and the Khmers have used pestles to husk their rice.
● <i>Royal ballet (apsara dance)</i>	Background	<i>Apsara</i> dance has been considered as a divine dance, which was later created by ex-king Sihanouk's mother Sisowath Kossamak. Sokhom learned this dance from the then ex-Minister of Propaganda and Information. Then, there was no Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts yet. The <i>apsara</i> dance had been so famous that it was registered as a world intangible heritage.
	Virtue	The dance had an important role in the Khmer culture, relating to divinity and the ex-king's mother. It educated visitors about the importance of the dance, which became a world's heritage. Having watched the dance, they were perhaps encouraged to help preserve it.
	<i>Justice</i>	The dance styles and postures were found at the temples of Angkor, especially Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. Thus, it existed in the ancient Khmer culture.

**Extract 4.7.4.1: Conduct of Interviews:  
An Example of Transcribed Full-Length Interview with Sokhom  
(15 May 2012; my translation)**

Note: Information about identity of the respondent and other relevant individuals has been omitted as part of ethical consideration.

**1. Personal History**

*Inquirer: Yesterday you told me a bit about some of your personal history. Now, could you please tell me a bit more?*

Sokhom : (1)...I cannot dance but I can write and set up scenes for dances and plays....When I want a play, I write the theme. If I want dances, I set up plans [Krala] for dancers—where to start from, back to where... After that I would ask dance specialists to do the dances. From here to there, you do the dance/gestures [Kbach]. Upon returning, you do another Kbach...

[Note: Most of the Sokhom's personal history has been omitted for the ethical purpose.]

**2. Cultural Production, Selection and Performances at the Cultural Village**

*Inquirer: In this Cultural Village, how many performances/shows are there?*

Sokhom: (2) In this Village... In fact in the cluster of my performances, there are many. First are classical and folk dances. The second one is Siek [circus], which is divided into acrobat dances and body-bending dances. The later dance is body bending and acrobat is jumping, somersaulting and juggling. And many others.... Third is musical, which is divided into classical and modern. The classical include Pinpeat, wedding musical, symphony.... [Others include electricians, decorators, scenes organisers, administrations, etc.]

(3) Then, we began to locate at different villages. Before, we also had a Cambodian overseas village but now we don't have it any more, because the performance was not in-depth for overseas Cambodians. Sometimes, things have changed. And Surin village was taken out as well because of political matters. Also excluded are Por and Kuy villages, because there were too many. We keep the Phnorng village because it is the identity of our Khmer ancestors. The Phnorng village, the Kroeung village, the Kola village, the Chinese village, the Millionaire House and the Khmer village, the small theatre, the big theatre, the Cham village and the inundating/flooding village. The inundating village is divided into two. One is the inundating village itself and the other is the fishing village. The former



is about those living along river banks but the latter is about those living on the rivers who make their living by fishing.

*Inquirer: Are there performances at the Cham and Inundating villages?*

Sokhom: (4) We do not perform at the Cham and inundating villages, because of the shortage of dancers and timing issues. With many performances, the starting and closing of performances are too tight. In that case, we've got to have more dancers/actors. Because we do not have enough dancers, we cannot manage. Thus, we dropped performances from those two villages and the Overseas village.

*Inquirer: What political matters involve in the Surin dance?*

Sokhom: (5) In the beginning, we had it performed but the matter was to do our cultural politics. For example, Surin is now situated in Thailand. Surin and Khmer dances are not different. We use the same Chhay Yam [a type of traditional dance], for instance. So when we put on Surin dance in which there was Chhay Yam, it was indistinguishable from that of Thailand. Sometimes, we served their [Thai] culture and sometimes, they serve our culture because it is the same. If we play Chhay Yam—normally our Chhay Yam has different beats—and if we want to do Surin dance, we also use Chhay Yam. What Surins have are Chhay Yam, Tro Ou and Kantrem dances. Thus, the cultural performance is confusing. We want to promote our Khmer culture but we also promote the culture of others (Thais) at the same time when showing Surin dance. We also have Chhay Yam in this village, so we just do it and then it can also reflect our culture. If we perform Surin dance, we have to do in Surin contexts but if we do it, we will also serve Thai culture.

*Inquirer: Sorry, I do not understand that point. We perform Khmer Surin dance but we serve Thai culture. How?*

Sokhom : (6) We serve Thai culture completely...For instance, I have a family and customarily I do three offerings per year. But your family makes four offerings per year. When I see you do more often, you have more people and I think that is good. So I want to make four, too.

*Inquirer: But in the case of Surin, the same dance, the same music...so nothing different...but in your example just now, it is different—your family makes three offerings and mine makes four.*

Sokhom : (7) It is like this...you must understand. For example, Surins are in Thailand and so Surins do dances that serve Thai culture for about 6 centuries now. Surins has already adopted Thai ideology. What is different is hand styles [gestures] and posture. When Thais asks Surins to dance, the dance is in faster pace but we do it slower with touches of forefingers and thumps. If we dance in our ways, people will say the dance is Khmers', not Surins'. If

we take Surin context, we need to do the same as they do. If we do that, we serve Thai culture. Surin ideology has shifted to that of Thais and the colour of their dresses is lighter. If we dress in Kben (Sampot tucked to the back) like Khmer do, people will say they are not Surin's dresses; they are Khmer's. If we dress like Surins do, then people will say we serve Thai culture, not Khmer's. For example, I once was asked to set up scenes for the play of "King Yasovarman II", the scene where he killed his uncle, the uncle of King Jayavarman VII. We borrowed dresses from an Association of Khmer Culture. Once we started to dress, the play director did not accept the dresses. Why not? The play director said they were Thai dresses. We are afraid of serving that, including the melody. That is culture. If we are not careful, we will serve others' culture completely. That is why; the director did not accept the dresses.

*Inquirer :*        *Could you please elaborate on the show at each village. What does each performance or play want to show to visitors?*

Sokhom : (8) Ok. Now, let's start from the Millionaire House. At the Millionaire House we [the management team] want international and domestic visitors to understand about Khmer customs and traditions in a wedding. We know that the European bride and groom just promise each other in a church and that's all. But Khmers have a different practice. In Udong, Longvek, Angkor periods....in Angkor period, a wedding ceremony took 7 days and 7 nights. From Udong period, it took 3 days and 3 nights. In Chaktomouk era, it took just one day and one night. These days, the ceremony sometimes takes one day and one night and, sometimes, it is just one morning. That's it. So the days are reduced due to modern society and modern market economy—modernity and globalisation. Though time is short but it is valuable for human lives in this modern society.

(9) In short, the show of the wedding ceremony at the Millionaire House wants to communicate our culture to international and domestic visitors. Some young domestic visitors do not know about the traditional wedding, either.... That show allows them to know about Khmer customs and traditions, including the ways of walking, pairing, music, dressing.... The ceremony is now impure. Before, the bride had only a band around her body [hanging from her shoulder] and fringes, dressed in Kben with short-sleeved white shirt and a veil. Now, it is modern and people come up with new designs, styles, fashions.... But the respect of roles, customs and traditions are still grounded in our traditional practice. That is at the Millionaire House.

*Inquirer :*        *Is the change or impurity related to beauty?*

Sokhom : (10) Yes. Dance has three elements. One is justice; two is virtue; and three is beauty. Justice is what is true, according to customs and traditions. It is the education of people about what to know, what to understand and what to

see. It is justice and it aims for good, for people to know what is good and what is true. It is justice. Beauty is about stage decoration, dressing...

*Inquirer :*     *What if beauty works against justice, for example, decorating/dressing that is not true?*

Sokhom : (11) We have that. It is called picture [appearance/look] betrays essence. If the essence from customs and traditions must have certain things, what we are doing the same such as hairdo, dresses... That is called picture [appearance/look] betrays essence. But another essence.... It is like a lie. For example, in a fishing dance we have the following fishing tools such as Bouk, Snor, Ang Rut, Uorn, Lorb, etc. [all are different types of fishing traps and fishing spears] for fishing but we do not have them. For example, in a fish-catching dance, if we play about something that is not related to fish/fishing, that is picture [appearance/look] betrays essence, because there is nothing to do with fishing.

(12) For virtue, it is what we want people to do, what to know, or what to understand. Virtue is education. It is what performing arts want to educate people about. There can be two-folded education. Sometimes, they are educated to be bad people and sometimes to be good people.

*Inquirer :*     *So, here, I would like you to focus on those elements.*

Sokhom : (13) Yes...in performing arts, we must have the three elements. But I want to say why I mentioned as above. It is because the performances are cultural tourism performances.

*Inquirer :*     *What does that mean?*

Sokhom : (14) It means that we do not need justice. We do not need virtue. We need only beauty. It is because the term tourism does not refer only to customs and traditions..... That is what the owner wants. But we cannot do that.....[interruption by a staff member]....I studied in China for a short time.

(15) The owner of Canadia Bank is an ethnic Chinese and he said now we are doing tourism culture but we do not want to go away from what is called Khmers' virtue. He said what is important is that we do not need to know a lot about dances; we care more about dancers' beauty/attractiveness. Dress them rather sexy like modern dancers, orchestra singers and when they are dancing, visitors will like to see.

(16) But we cannot do just that because we are performing artists. We have backgrounds in culture and we are the ones who maintain culture. We cannot do that but we can change a little. Thus, we started doing within the framework of some justice and virtue.

(17) Next, I am talking about the Chinese village. From the Millionaire House, we come to the Chinese village, so I am talking in relation to justice, virtue

and beauty. It may not be necessary to talk about beauty because simply what are related to beauty are the dresses and accessories. Music and decorations are also included in beauty. So, where is virtue in the performance at the Chinese village? And is there justice? Normally, performing arts is about making dead nature into live nature, bad into good, or hard into soft. For the performance in the Chinese village, is there justice? Pig slaughters...Yes, Chinese exist in Khmer society. They slaughter pigs and roast them. How about the Chinese vendors in the show? Yes, in 1969s, there were. Even the owner of Canadia Bank, he was an ethnic Chinese with Khmer nationality. He came to Cambodia in 1960s and he sold newspapers from place to place. His mother was a Chinese teacher. So we contextualised those events so that we have justice in the show. How about Shiviling [Chinese] martial arts? Is there in Cambodia? Yes, now there are practices of the Chinese martial arts. The trainings of the martial arts are everywhere in Cambodia. How about the pole climbing? There have been a lot of cultural exchanges. The Chinese/foreigners learned from us and we learned from them. We gave to them and they gave to us. But we need to know the identity. So, justice is there. And what does the performance want people to do, to know.....to know about life, the values of life. Why the values of life? Because the struggle at that time....the performance at the Chinese village is about Chinese people, not about Khmers, the struggles of the Chinese who came to Cambodia with bare hands, sold salty eggs and some other small things, they worked hard to become owners. The performance wants us to know such that; it is justice.

- (18) And virtue, the show wants people to know and to understand the virtue of their life in Cambodian society. Actually, we do not know about their country. It could be disordered like our country but we show about the Chinese living in Cambodia, their struggles and their studies. They learn Khmer language and Chinese language and did petty trading/businesses until they became big business owners; so that is the virtue the Chinese have, their characteristics.... And how can we take them as a model? Not just Khmers or Chinese, all ethnic groups in Cambodia should do the same, so that life changes for the better like the Chinese's. The show educates people about the struggles and the care of their relatives and neighbours. It is what the performance is all about.

*Inquirer :*        *And the Kola village?*

Sokhom : (19)Kola... I am not sure where Kola people come from but at that time there were no Thais. If I am not wrong, Kola is the ethnic groups of Burma and Malaysia since Water Chenla and Land Chenla. I do not know when exactly Thais came to existence. I do not want to talk about it; it is political. I knew that Tai ethnics created Thais after Burma. The exchanges of culture and trades were conducted by Kolas [Kola people] who were big usually merchants/traders. We dug gem stones in exchange with fruits, textiles and other eatables with Kolas. After that, the Tais began to attack and isolated Kolas who are now living in Pailin town.

(20) What we are doing here is that we set up a scene with Yat hill, houses and gem-mining activities. Why a religious/pious peacock? The story goes among Kolas. A princess could not sleep and eat despite good food because she wished to have the magic/pious peacock only and wanted him to give sermons for her. So, she asked a hunter to catch the peacock for her. How could the hunter catch the pious peacock without having to shoot him? What the hunter did was to look for an attractive female peacock seduce the pious one who was then doing his meditation. Because of the attractive/seductive power of the female peacock's beauty, the pious peacock then went crazy with her beauty. Usually, to attract another, the female must be beautiful. The pious peacock was caught by the hunter who then gave him to the princess. Actually, the magic peacock became human and the story continued. There were Suoys, for example. But the scene is set up just for this part. Where is justice and virtue of the story or performance? Kola people exist even now; that is the justice. What do Kolas like to do? They do gem-mining and gem-polishing for a living. Grandma Yeay Me Meun was a Kola woman. So, it is justice for Kolas we created in the performance. How about virtue? The virtue is with the peacocks, with the hunter, etc. There are good virtue and bad virtue. The latter is the bad deed of the hunter, who wanted power and wealth and respect, decided to hunt for the pious peacock in mediation. Usually, the religious/pious is a pure individual. Even though his body was to be cut open to take the inside out, he would dare face with such bad deed. But why did the powerful pious peacock submit himself to the female peacock or why was he crazy with her beauty? It is an inconsideration. That is a bad virtue. That is what we want to show or we want the visitors to consider. Beauty is the decoration of the scene and the dresses.

*Inquirer :*        *So Kolas still live in Cambodia? Whereabouts are they?*

Sokhom : (21) Yes, they are somewhere in Pailin town. Now, they dress like Khmers. You can go ask about other things such as history.

*Inquirer :*        *And the story/theme in the performance! How do you know the theme/the storyline go like that?*

Sokhom : (22) Normally, we are performing artists [Sella-pak]— Sella and pak. Pak means creativity. Sella mean magic (Bampan), making people indulged in something like in a magic (sel vichea). So, the performing artists do not subscribe to perfect truth. Performing arts means creativity. If we do not create, the literature is dead. So we must create. For example, the story is this short but we can beat around the bush [and make it longer] to attract visitors. So, the presence of the king, hunter, umbrella dances etc. was created to draw visitors' attention. Otherwise, we would not have umbrellas. Why taking umbrellas to the forest? But, they were just created to attract attentions.

*Inquirer :*        *Does the umbrella dance belong to Kola?*

Sokhom : (23) Yes, it is Kolas'. We do not create things different. The peacock dance was also Kolas'. Gem-mining is also Kolas'. So, if the theme is about Kolas, we use the contexts of Kolas. If we use Khmer context, it is wrong.

*Inquirer :*     *Did you mean Kolas were not yet vanished?*

Sokhom : (24) Kolas lost its name...but the race/the ethnic still survives.

*Inquirer :*     *And now, Kolas do the same dances?*

Sokhom : (25) Kolas now are a minority. Among Kolas, some still dance like that; some no longer do it because it has now become a minority. Some still respect it [practise the dance]. For example, if I am the only one who studies/speaks English and the rest at home speak Khmer, I couldn't be able to convince them to speak English. So from time to time, it has changed. But they still remember their customs/dances. Kola dances in the performance were made up by us. We use their contexts/theme/story only. Kolas do not have the same dances like the ones on show. As I told you, Kolas have the story this short but we have to extend it just for the sake of attracting attentions.

*Inquirer :*     *Is it a representation of Kola dances?*

Sokhom : (26) Yes. It is just a representation. We just show that Kolas are doing gem-mining, using hoes, large flat sieving baskets, etc. They take earth and put on Kan Dieng to sieve for gems.

*Inquirer :*     *I saw two girls in black and white dancing like what...like snakes?*

Sokhom : (27) Those are snakes. It is the creativity because we normally we have to create attentions, using/including artistic imagination. The inclusion has to go along with contexts. A hunter walks in forests. He normally encounters snakes or other wild animals. When the hunter is tired, he leans against a tree trunk. And the snakes bite him. When looking at them, he sees snakes dancing. It was just an addition to/an ingredient for the dance [A long pause].

*Inquirer :*     *After Kola village, it is Kroeung village.*

Sokhom : (28) Yes. Kroeungs and Phnorngs were similar, not exactly the same, though. They both believe in animism. We describe/show about Kroeungs. The song and music were composed and recorded by Kroeungs themselves [five Kroeungs] together with me. The show is about the Kroeungs' love. As far as I know, when girls reached a marriage age, they were to live in Keung [small high stilled house] about 5-10 meters above the ground. In Khmer, we call it *Chol Mlob* in Khmer. They [Kroeung girls] could do whatever they wanted. The bachelors in the village had an instrument called *hethout*. The blows were an important sign for communicating love. When they wanted to make love, they blew it. When heard to a single

woman, she would blow back in she was still single. Then, the boy comes to live with her for some months and sometimes till having a baby. It is not like this for the present Kroeungs. Only after living together, the boy asked his parents to ask for the girl's hand. The girl's parents demanded (a number of) certain animals such as buffalos, pigs, chickens, rice fields, etc. If the man loved the woman and he happened to have a duty away from home, he must have given something/dowries to the woman to keep. Even a jackfruit would do. Here in the performance, the man gives a necklace. But Kroeungs did not actually have a necklace but fruit. Even when the jackfruit became rotten and only its stem was left, the woman has to keep it/the stem till the man comes back. This means true love. In this case, even other bachelors blow *hethout*, the woman wouldn't response. But now it is different.

*Inquirer :*     *And the performance?*

Sokhom : (29) And, the performance! Why we have Cham, Chinese and Indian bachelors. As I said, it is only to draw attentions. We invite a visitor (acting as a bachelor) to join because we want to entertain visitors; so we want to them to participate. How about justice? What I said earlier is justice. But here justice lies in presentation of pigs, drinking jar alcohol. We do not do *hethout* dances. The chief of the tribe comes out and gives blessing to the couple and drink. It is their wedding. The justice is there. And the virtue? Like I said, if we have love, we love only one person. Nothing can separate us, if we do not separate ourselves. If we love each other, even a fatal bullet cannot stop us. But if there is no love, even we give them 10000 US or even one million, he/she will run away the next day or later. The importance lies in individual persons. That is the educational part.

*Inquirer :*     *In the performance, the groom is the visitor who gets married with the Kroeung girl....There are Cham, Chinese and Indian guys who attempt to make love with her but she didn't accept them. Is this because she waits for her lover?*

Sokhom : (30) Like I said, she has got her lover, so she does not response to other guys' calls. She waits until her lover comes back.

*Inquirer :*     *In that performance, there is not hethout-blowing?*

Sokhom : (31) No, there isn't. Because once the show is related to visitors, they do not know how to blow it [a long pause].

*Inquirer :*     *Is it the Phnorng village, next?*

Sokhom : (32) Phnorng village is similar to that of Kroeungs'. The difference is that when the latter wants to make love, they do not blow *hethout*. They go into the forest quietly and then make love. And Phnorng customs is a little different

from that of Kroeungs. The belief in animism is about the respects of tree spirits and the natural surroundings. All the nature around them has souls/spirits that can speak and feel angry and they can have impacts on their lives. They adhere to animism and they respect nature. The sacrifice of a buffalo and the drinking are done in parties and ceremonies. They have good solidarity and are helpful. If a child dies in their village, the whole family will be helped by other villagers to move/to lift the house to another place. It is done like that throughout their lives. They believe that nature has life. If someone dies, the nature does not like or is angry them. So, they have to move from place to place without exact destinations. It is justice. The sacrifice of the buffalo is justice. They tie the buffalo and stab them in the throat. They have a bucket to get the buffalo's blood. They make fire and drink fresh blood of the buffalo.

(33) And the performance of the soul of rice at the Phnorng village... Why do I say they celebrate the soul of rice? It is because they regard rice as a god. It is the living nature that is important for life. They respect rice. After the villagers harvested and before they keep the rice in the storage, they arrange an offering to ask the spirits of water and land for blessing. They ask for the safety of rice in the storage so that they can use it as seeds for the year to come. Then, they spread grains of rice on the ground in the ceremony. Then, the tribal chief comes out and drinks alcohol. The dancers come out. They dance with dresses made of rice straws. Those dancers represent rice. Rice is happy and dance. That is it.

(34) There were eight Phnorngs coming to help write songs and compose and record music. They advised us on how to dance. The language used by dancers is Phnorng language. The cultures of Kroeungs and Phnorngs are different but the beliefs in animism are similar.

*Inquirer :*        *In Cambodia, where can we find Kroeungs?*

Sokhom : (35) It is difficult to tell. We know they are in the Northeast. But to find the exact location is difficult to tell. They are somewhere in Steung Treng, bordering with Laos. There are Phnorngs [or Bunongs] and Kroeungs there.

*Inquirer :*        *By the way, have you ever been to a real Kroeung village?*

Sokhom : (36) No, I have never been/seen real Phnorng and Kroeung villages.

*Inquirer :*        *And the Kroeung dance performed at Kroeung village here is truly Kroeung's dance?*

Sokhom : (37) In fact, Kroeungs do not have dances. They just dance like this [showing his gesture] and step backwards and forwards. But performing arts is about the creativity. We add some gestures and postures. But we do not add gestures that are the same with dances by the middle-land Khmers so as not to confuse. In performing arts, if we add gestures without caution, it will



be confusing/mixed up. I said earlier about Thais and Khmers and it is the same as in the case of Phnorngs and Kroeungs. If not careful, Phnorngs and Kroeungs will serve each other's culture.

*Inquirer :*     *So did you add gestures to Phnorng and Kroeung dances?*

Sokhom : (38) Yes, we added. Phnorngs never dance, clapping their hands. We created them.

*Inquirer :*     *If, for example, a foreign visitor who comes to see a Phnorng dance here and by any chance he/she happens to see another Phnorng's dance, or the real Phnorng' dance. If they notice the difference, what will happen then?*

Sokhom : (39) Look...culture! Culture is broad. Khmer dances have more than 1700 gestures. The uses of those gestures vary with certain purposes and in places. For example, in Siem Reap... The dances taken for the School of Fine Arts are fishing dance, coconut shell dance, mortar-pounding dance, Tonaitine dance, Tonsorng [a kind of animals] dance, buffalo sacrifice dance...

*Inquirer :*     *What is Tonaitine? Is it a Khmer word?*

Sokhom : (40) [He sings a little] The word and the dance come from Suoy tribe in Kampong Thom.

*Inquirer :*     *So you mean we just create them. Phnorngs' or Kroeungs' dances—the same dances—are different from place to place?*

Sokhom : (41) Yes. That's right. Even Trot...Trot in Siem Reap is called Trot Neang Mev. Trot in Phnom Penh is called just Trot. And the dance is different. In Siem Reap, they have Chrot Proleung [fishing for souls] and in Phnom Penh is Hav Proleung [calling for souls]. But the rest of the dance is the same. It depends on regions. To be easy for you to understand, for performing arts, we respect three customs [Toumniem Toumloap]: The first is traditional dances, which that are based on traditions/customs; the second is regional customs, which is based on popularity in regions [folk dances]; and the third is popular dances.

(42) Traditional dances are performed only once a year but popular dances can be performed any time. For example, Trot is a classical dance and it is celebrated only once a year, before the Khmer New Year. But why the dance is done very day, it is just a show/a performance (he refers to the Trot performance in the Cultural Village?). Also, Ambok-eating dance is celebrated only once a year before the rice is available soon after the new harvest. That is called classical. For popular dances such as round dance, Kbach dance and Lamleav dance, can happen any time. Coconut shell

dance is a popular dance. We have few classical dances. And Boran (ancient) dances are a different story. Boran dance is divided into two: deva [celestial] dances and Brahma dances. Deva dance are, for example, Reamker and Moni Makhala dances. Brahmin-related dances and Buddhist-related dances are under Brahmin/Hindu dances. Hindu dances are related to sel vichea (magic) like Basak play, Monketha [magic spells], chub [magic creation], etc. Buddhist-related dances are about Buddhist advices, educating people and their mentality, for example. Where were we up to?

*Inquirer :*     *We just talked about the Phnorngs' village.*

Sokhom : (43) So, now we are talking about Khmer village... We know that we believe in both Hinduism and Buddhism. In the Khmers village we show about Hinduism and for the whole theme we have.... They dressed as in Udong period. In that period, there was war. Before entering war, we organised an offering [the blessing ceremony] for happiness [safety] or victory in the war. And the officers, the 1.2m and the skinny, are only added scenes to attract/to entertain visitors. Actually, we didn't have officers like those. They then just came to salute to and ask for blessing from archas [Kroubacha]. Why do we include the large drums? Actually, the beating of the large drums has different meanings. It could mean waking the souls and commanding army, withdrawing army, or stopping activity/rest. Once we did not have phones, so the drums were used. For instance, if the drums were beaten three times, the army had to stop. If they were beaten five times, the army had to withdraw. If they were rapidly and repeatedly beaten, the army had to run forwards for the battle. These signs were determined by individual commanders.

*Inquirer :*     *The large drums were used in the performance, too?*

Sokhom : (44) Yes...but what I am saying is about the truth—the justice of the show [interruption by a staff member]. And the use of small drums.....Small drums [hand drums] are also seen at Pre Rup temple. I did research there. They were used in royal funerals. If commanders in chief, royal relatives, high ranking officials or chiefs of provinces, who died, then often because of war, were cremated there. That's why; it was named Pre Rup temple. During the cremation, the music *Kantremming* was played. Four musicians came to play together. The four represent Water, Earth, Fire and Wind—relatively represented by Drum, Chap, Kong Mong, & Peiy [All are Khmer musical instruments]. They turned their backs towards one another. They had an offering in the middle to ask the souls of the dead to be quickly reborn or ask for happiness in their next lives. After that, the musicians began to face each other, which signalled the end of the music and the dead was cremated. It was the *Kantremming* music. *Kantrem* means drum and *Ming* means large. The two terms combined mean large drum[s].

*Inquirer :*     *So the performance shows justice?*

Sokhom : (45) Yes, it is justice. The virtue: The show, at the Khmers village, wants to us know that it was like that in the accent time, to love, to care for the Khmer heritage. Beauty is the decoration, the dresses, the staging....

*Inquirer : By the way, who built the Phnorng and Kroeung villages?*

Sokhom : (46) His name is Sokhnaek [an imaginary name used in the study]. I do not remember his surname. He specialised in architecture and then studied in China. Upon his return, he worked for the Cultural Village. He went to see real Phnorng villages. Phnorng houses now are not like this. Their houses are rather fancy. He went there and asked about their customs and traditions of Kroeungs, Phnorngs, etc. He also went to Surin to get ideas for the constructions.

*Inquirer : And the Big Theatre—King Jayavarman VII*

Sokhom : (47) Yes, Jayavarman VII.... And I do not need to talk about the Small Theatre here, because it is not a village. It is a hall to practise dances, to do the training and to do the performances. We perform Orpateaysrok Khmer there. On Saturdays and Sundays, we have Tum Teav... But in the beginning, it was Machas Kanseng [literally, the owner of the veil], which was managed/conducted by a Chinese working here. The performance was designed to be so sexy by the Chinese. Then, when the Chinese went back to his country, Teacher XXX said if we performed like that, Khmers would not watch it. And it was not a good culture and we did not know whom to educate. We are keepers of culture. But, because our owner was paid by that Chinese, we just let him do it. But once he was back home, we have changed it. Before it was named Machas Kanseng, now we named it Machas Pha Hum. We've modelled our performance upon Tum Teav. We changed some of the old version such as wedding dowry procession, Ork Choun [the regional chief in Tum Teav novel], dresses, to name a few. Before then, it was so sexy, showing belly button [navel]. Now, only in circus that the dancers dress sexy... Teav's and No's paints [Teav is the main female character; No, Teav's attendant] are dressed like in Robam for pants and their blouses/tops like in Yike. Then, local visitors can accept it and international visitors can understand. More importantly is the music. Right now, it is not Khmer music but the mixture of English music, Chinese music and Indian music.

*Inquirer : How so?*

Sokhom : (48) Because when the performances at the Small Theatre were set up in the beginning, he [the Chinese boss] did not think about whom the music/performances served, whose culture they served. So, he chose only fancy, exciting music that is pleasant to the ears and chose fancy dance. He did not think of identity of the melody. When dancing, the dancers raised their hands in all directions and shouted he ho he ho. The result is a

mixed music at the Small Theatre. If I wanted to change, I could not. Even though we wanted to integrate Trapeang Peay melody, I couldn't.

*Inquirer :*     *Are all of them Khmer dances?*

Sokhom : (49) There are many dances/performances in the Small Theatre. For example, dancing and waving handkerchiefs like this [He is making the gesture with his hands.] is not a Khmer dance; it is a Chinese dance. Why not change it? It is because if we change it, the music does not go with it. So we left them unchanged and we created our own: the wedding dowry procession, dowry dance and circus. Circus is international, so we can use it. So, the music and the dance, shouting 'he ho he ho', are left untouched because we couldn't change them.

*Inquirer :*     *So, it could not be changed completely, could it?*

Sokhom : (50) No, we cannot. We can change only some scenes. I wanted to change completely but I couldn't.

*Inquirer :*     *So were you saying that we have Khmer plays, for example, Tum Teav but foreign music?*

Sokhom : (51) Yes, foreign music. I don't want to object to it but there is no national identity. And the owner of the Cultural Village [also the owner of Canadia Bank] did not allow us to change. So, we do those performances in the Small Theatre—mixed performances. That is why; we did not put them on as a village.

(52) And the big theatre.... The storyline of King Jayavarman VII was written by Mr. Soknak [a pseudonym of respondent used in the study]. The scene was set up by teacher (a) XXX, (b) XXX and me. I was responsible for all martial arts and music; XXX, responsible for Boran/classical dances; XXX, for dress designing; XXX with XXX, responsible for classic dances like Cham and Siem dances. The editors were (a)XXX and (b)XXX. Normally, we plant trees and get fruits; we give the fruits to the two editors. And the editors can either fry, make soups or whatever they want to do. It is up to them. We just set the scenes up and the editors will edit them. We have evidence from research. We looked at the works of Ros Chantrabot, Mr. Samoth, French documents, Chinese documents and stone inscriptions. I went to look for information at the pagoda Wat Athea, for example, where King Jayavarman VII's grave is. The pagoda is on the street to Phnom Krom. When you get to the crocodile farm, just ask people there and they will tell you. We gathered information and checked with one another for reliability. If the data on history was the same/reliable, we used it; if different, we did use it.

*Inquirer :*     *So, it is justice?*

Sokhom : (53) Yes, that is related to justice. The justice is that.....We want to say that in that period, because we did know that either; we knew it through documents only. When king....I forgot his name now. When King Thotandintra [?], upon his death, asked Jay Thon [Jay Thon was King Jayavarman VII] to enter war for him. Then, Jayavarman VII's uncle Yasovarman IV took the throne by force, During the latter's reign, there was an upheaval staged by Trei Kou Pongnea Tith, the then Chams' King, who invaded Cambodia, Jayavarman VII, in turn, overthrew Trei Kou and took the throne back. That is justice. We also have the exact dates for the events. For virtue, when visitors see the show, they are completely indulged with the story of Jayavarman VII. They would think that they cannot believe their eyes to have seen the struggles of King Jayavarman VII. The show also educates people/visitors about what was going on at that time and their thinking about the history, about the happiness and sorrows, about the development then and about the solidarity in fighting/war and in the construction of temple [Bayon temple] where female dancers come out dancing The show wants visitors to understand the struggles at that time when they dealt with large pieces of stones in the construction of the temple. Even now, we do not know how those temples were built. So, it is incredible. Beauty is the decorations, the staging, dresses, accessories, the make-ups, etc. You know that.

*Inquirer :*        *The Cham dances, how do we know about the dances?*

Sokhom : (54) Like I said, in the practices of performance arts, we cannot adhere to conservative ideology only. We also develop/create, just as Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen said "preservation for development, development for preservation". So, in the creation of for the Chams' dances, we grounded in the bases of truth and real customs of the Chams. So what is real? In the Cham customs, they.... Have you ever seen the Degn Ubtrup dance [evils-chasing dance]? We employ a scene of the evils-chasing dance where dancers ride on horse backs. It is true in the Cham dance. The dance is done once a year to drive away diseases, evils, etc., just like the Khmers dance Trot. And the raising of hands/legs, we just added them based on their customs. The putting of the hands together [sampeah] like this [He is showing the gestures] is not ours but it is Malaysians'. Malaysians and Chams are the same.

*Inquirer :*        *Teacher, I want to know the discussions which were going on before deciding to choose certain dances/performances.*

Sokhom : (55) We did a lot of advocacy then. In the beginning, I managed to select 70 dancers and 5 musicians. Previously, the General Director of this Cultural Village was a Chinese [the Chinese he mentioned earlier], not a Khmer. He and I used to argue with each other about Khmer customs. He wanted the groom and the bride to walk faster in the wedding performance. He wanted Preah Thorng [Kaundiya, the Indian Brahma, which means the groom] and Neang Neak [the *naga*-princess = the bribe] to walk faster. I am a keeper of Khmer culture. When I was doing advocacy with him, I

asked him 'What do you call this Village?' He said it is the Cambodian Cultural Village. I said if it is the Cambodian Cultural Village, we have to do things according to Cambodian/Khmer culture. We cannot do things according to Chinese culture. If you do things according to you [Chinese] or if it is about your [Chinese] culture, you have to change the name to the Chinese Cultural Village. Then, it is fine. Do not forget that.

(56) [Do not forget that] when people from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts asked about that, can you (the General Director/the Chinese) be responsible? If not, what belongs to Khmers and what Khmers are keeping leave it to Khmers. Then, he followed us. For the organisation of each village....The person from Archaeology School, Sambo [a pseudonym of respondent used in the study], initiated the idea to build wax figures in the wax museum on the right hand side from [near] the ticket checkpoint. Sambo was not the one to build them. The wax was bought in China and the figures were built in China by Chinese. On the left hand side from the ticket checkpoint, wax figures [those of Cambodian hilltribe people, film stars and other famous people] were built by Khmers.

*Inquirer :*        *How did they come to the decision on which dances—Kroeungs', Kolas', or the show of King Jayavarman VII, for example—to be chosen for performances?*

Sokhom : (57) One, we considered the time available for all the performances. We calculated the time. We start work at 8:30am and it takes about 30 min for us to clean places and to change dresses at each village. So, we have got time from 9:00am to 10:30am, because we start the first performance at 10:45 am at the Millionaire House. So, we have only 1.30 hours from 9:00am. What should we perform in the morning for that duration of 1.30 hours? If we perform in two villages, we do not have time to rehearse or for training. So, we do only one performance at the Millionaire House and allocate the time 1.30 hours for practice/training at each village. So, we have 1.30 hours for rehearsal/training. In the afternoon, the performances begin from 2:00pm to 6:30 pm from Mondays to Thursdays. How many hours do we have and how many villages we need to perform at? We thought about these and we began to discuss with other trainers. There were many then, up to 6-7 trainers; but there are only two trainers now. As a result, we decided to perform at the Millionaire House first. There, we've chosen only certain scenes from the Khmer wedding for the performance.

*Inquirer :*        *I wanted to know that you have chosen a particular dance/show for each village from the abundant cultural resources we have. Does each have any special features or uniqueness for the selection?*

Sokhom : (58) As I told earlier that Sambo, who specialises in Archaeology, knew that. Now, if we had chosen Phnorngs' and Kroeungs' dances, both would have been the same; but they are our indigenous people.

*Inquirer :* We have many indigenous/tribal groups but why it was thought that the two indigenous people were special representations of Khmers?

Sokhom : (59) Because we think that Phnorngs come from Mons, so the indigenous people. Thus, we want to show them. How about other tribal groups? They were only the tribal of Mons and they were under a [the Mon] kingdom at that time. So, if they were under the control of another group, they were slaves. They hardly existed but they [the rulers] only kept the names for them [the other tribal groups]. Why not showing the cultures of other groups such as Tumpouns, Pors, Suoys, Stiengs, Samres, Kuys? It is because they are all the same. They are not completely the same in all aspects. The person who chose/created these present groups may think that the other groups were/are small and they were living under the Mons groups. I do not know exactly in details.

*Inquirer :* Who is Sambo?

Sokhom : (60) He was a student of Archaeology. He graduated from the Department of Archaeology of the Royal University of Fine Arts. He used to work here.

*Inquirer :* Where is he working now?

Sokhom : (61) Now, he worked for another place in Kampong Thom province. He created another Cultural Village in Kampong Thom.

*Inquirer :* Where exactly in Kampong Thom?

Sokhom : (62) He also worked in a Cultural Village but there are no performances there.

*Inquirer :* Was it at Boeung Somret Lake or the Water City?

Sokhom : (63) Maybe that one. I have never been there.

*Inquirer :* In Kampong Thmar district. I visited the place during Khmer New Year.

Sokhom : (64) Yes, that one. Did you see the same Millionaire House?

*Inquirer :* Yes, there were Khmer-styled houses, too.

Sokhom : (65) Yes, he designed them. He used the same designs. Another person is XXX; he is an architect. He lives in Siem Reap province. He no longer works here for the Cultural Village. Both studied in China.

*Inquirer :*     *How can I contact him?*

Sokhom :     [He is giving the phone number of Sambo's friend.]

(66) They [Sambo and his friend] constructed and designed the places [houses and villages]. I am only leading the dances/shows/performances at the built villages/houses. If they built the Cham village, I put on the Cham performance there. If they built the Chinese village, I put on the Chinese show there. If they had built a Kuy village, I would have arranged/organised the Kuy performance there. Why the Surin village is not there now? I told you about that already. We used to have an Overseas village and a Cham village. But people complained about that.

*Inquirer :*     *Who complained?*

Sokhom : (67) For Cham village, Malaysians complained.

*Inquirer :*     *Malaysians lived in Malaysia; how did they complain?*

Sokhom : (68) The Malaysians who visited this Cultural Village with the Cambodian Chams complained.

*Inquirer :*     *Did they complain as individuals or as an organisation?*

Sokhom : (69) As individuals. Why did they complain? They complained because, as I said, performing arts is creativity. Our creativity was not really in-depth/shallow, so they were upset. Then, we stopped the performance. If we didn't, it would affect others. They asked us to give up the performance. So, we decided to give up. If we did not agree, there wouldn't be a problem because in Cambodia we used to have it and it was included in the curriculum of the School of Culture and Fine Arts. The first issue is related to our dance troupe, who couldn't meet the need in every village. The second is timing. We had short time. If we put on the show there [at the Cham village], the time would be extended; so we could not run around to perform at the other villages. Thus, we decided to give up the show there, since we had the complaint then. Now, we still have the representative village there, just for them to pray when visiting.

(70) How about the Khmer Overseas village? Why did we close it, too? As I said, we did not know much about the Cambodians overseas because they are different from country to country. The Khmer overseas in the US would be different from those in another country. We have the surfaced knowledge about them. We could not please them all. Hence, we decided to close it, too. Before, we had it. We had music/orchestra there. But we were not sure of their storyline/theme, so we closed it.

*Inquirer :*     *Where did you get dancers?*



Sokhom : (71) In 2003, when the Cultural Village was first opened, I recruited 22 classical dancers from Phnom Penh and 6-7 circus performers. They were all high school graduates, both males and females, who were young. After 7-8 years here, some became old, got married and gave up the jobs. Some were sent to perform at Koh Pich island resort to help teacher XXX and XXX, who are there now. We also show about King Jayavarman VII there. The majority of the present dancers were recruited from Siem Reap. First, Siem Reap is here and the residents are often gifted in dances, as it is a tourist destination. As for the trainers, we used to have a lot. I did not have problems then. But, now we have few, which makes it difficult for me to manage. Some quitted the jobs because they were too old. Some quitted because they were not happy. Normally, we have all sorts of pressures, from the top and from the below. If we do not know how to deal with them, it is impossible to stay on the jobs. The pressure from below is that from our staff. We have hundreds of them. At present, we have about 200 people—trainers, trainees and performers/dancers. There are 120 dancers and 40 trainee dancers. So, there must be pressures. We need to deal with pressures, both from the top and from the below.

(72) Performing arts is inherited with three problems: Love disease, fortune disease and main actor disease. The main actor disease is...The person who can lead dancers can be compared to the one who can lead the country. Dances [performing arts] have to be given the same orders like that of the military. Punctuality.... They have to be punctual. If the show starts at 3:00pm, the main actor cannot come at 3:15. It is impossible to find the substitute. So, the main actor disease is this. When a person is awarded as the main actor, he/she feels too proud. He/she would think that he/she is the only person who can perform as the main actor. He/she would turn things around or cause troubles when he/she is not happy, thinking that without him/her the performance cannot be made possible. If he/she is happy with the trainer/leader today, he/she will perform well. If he/she is not happy tomorrow, he/she may say that he/she cannot perform because he/she pretends to be sick and stay at home. Can the show take place, then? No. This is called the main actor disease. If the main actor does so, that is it. If a movie star is the main actor and he is not happy with the film director, the shots must be cancelled. We cannot make a sick person work. So, what can we do? Here, I do not let such thing happen. I always have substitutes ready in case the issue happens.

(73) Second, it is a fortune disease. Actors may argue on the share of benefits [the pay]—the issue of unequal share. How can we share benefits between the main actors and the secondary actors? We need to talk it over with the latter. In this show/play, for example, can I give the former 2 US\$ more, because they do more acting. They say: That is okay. So, we give the main actors 7 US\$. In some plays, we share equally because, for instance, without the secondary players[s] standing here always, you cannot become a main player. It is the fortune disease.

(74) Third, the love disease makes it difficult for dancers to perform. Why? If he/she have had love problems outside, i.e. breaking up with his/her lover, he/she cannot smile/be happy when the performance/play requires him/her

to be. That's why; every evening I normally teach them theories of performing arts. Once understanding the theories, they will perform well.

(75) Performing arts also have the following issue. Truth is false and false is truth. Have you heard about that? They are opposites. For example, what is the truth outside must not be the truth on stage and what is the truth on stage must not be the truth outside. If dancers/performers fight each other offstage and when they play fighting on stage and they do a real fighting, that will spoil the show. So the truth offstage should not be the truth onstage and vice versa. If they play lovers on stage and they become lovers offstage too, that is not right. Anything else?

Inquirer : [It was high time for his lunch. He was about to leave] No. Thank you very much for your time. By the way, can I come back to you again if I need further information?

Sokhom : (76) Yes, you can. Just let me know in advance.

*Inquirer : Thanks again. I appreciate your time.*

#### Extract 4.7.4.3 Introductory Commentaries to Dance Performances at the Cultural Village

Snippet Number	Introductory Commentary (Verbatim Transcript; my translation)	Dance Venue
(1)	<p>Ladies and Gentlemen, warmly welcome to the Khmer village! Khmers are the most of people who live throughout Cambodia. Khmer people do their living standards mainly by farming and fishing or by weaving, silver making, or sugar making and craving. Right now at the Khmer village, we would like to present you about Kantremming. Kantremming is the name of Khmer classical music. It was formed by the Khmer ancestors since sixth century. It was performed in most ceremonies such as wedding ceremonies, the celebrations of welcoming the victory of army and military processions to the battle ground. And in this performance, you are going to see about the celebrations for choosing army commander, high robe walking circus and Kantremming dance as well.</p>	The Khmer Village
(2)	<p>Ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to Kola village. Kola people are ethnic minority who live in the Western Pailin town. Pailin province is the great land of precious stones in Cambodia. Kola ethnic do their living standard by mining precious stones, hunting and agriculture. Peacock dance is a traditional dance of Kola ethnic. They always dance in major ceremony, especially in New Year ceremony. The performance dance you are going to see in a minute is the history of Peacock dance.</p> <p>The story goes like this. Once, there was a princess. She dreamed of a very beautiful peacock, which could play multiple tricks and preach sermons melodiously. When she got up she desperately wanted the peacock to preach to her again but it was impossible. She was terribly sad. Although she was entertained by dances and songs in her palace, her sadness wasn't released. That's why, the King asked what happened to her. As soon as her father knew the truth, he ordered a hunter to seek for and catch the magical peacock. With special skills in hunting, the hunter tried to find a peahen to use as a court. At last, he caught the magical peacock successfully for the princess.</p>	The Kola Village
(3)	<p>The Bunong tribe adheres strictly to their traditions and customs in Hinduism and animism. The rice harvest sen is a ceremony done to pay gratitude to the god of rice. The Bunongs do many sens a year, from sowing seeds till harvest which is the last sen. The Bunongs always organise the rice harvest sen every year. They believe that the nature surrounding them has soul/spirit. If they do not organise the sen, the nature will punish them. The coming show is about the rice harvest sen that the Bunongs make when they gather their crop for storage.</p>	The Bunong Village

**Table 4.7.5/1 Tourist Perspectives of the Cultural Village :  
Statements from the TripAdvisor Supporting the Place and the Shows**

<b>Tourist Originating Region (Month/Year of Visit)</b>	<b>Excerpts of Views of Tourists to the Cultural Village</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Seattle, USA</i> (no date)</li> </ul>	<p>This is a theme park of stage performances that are done throughout the whole day. I think the Cambodian Cultural Village overall shows some aspects of Cambodian culture and influences.... Even if you don't understand Cambodian language, I highly recommend the show....</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Mumbai, India</i> (February 2011)</li> </ul>	<p>The sprawling Cambodian Cultural Village is an entertainment extravaganza as well as a very interesting introduction to Cambodia's history, culture and the lifestyle of its people. Many of the historical building replicas, all made of quality wood, are to full scale and give an insight into that country's ancient architecture. The Cultural Village actually has eleven ethnic villages. These feature houses of the majority Khmer community, as well as the Chams, from today's Vietnam, Chinese, the Kola from Burma, the Surin from the Thai-Cambodian border and others .Each of these feature ethnic architecture, exquisite temples, classical and folk dances, handicrafts and lifestyles.... The Wax Museum has excellent wax works of great Cambodians from the First Century AD to our times. Also very interesting is the Miniatures Museum that has one-twentieth scale models of historic structures including the Royal Palace, Angkor Wat temple and a statue of the Reclining Buddha...</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Brisbane, Australia</i> (July 2011)</li> </ul>	<p>The park is set out on a large area...It is very clean and inviting. The live performances are very amusing (even though it is in Khmer)....</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Sydney, Australia</i> (July 2011)</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, like the other reviews we had a bit of fun there. We would not have gone but without a guide for the day, our driver suggested he take us and we probably had as much fun watching him enjoy it, as we did the performances. The place was clean and well designed and the shows a bit of fun. My husband was also selected to be part of one performance and at 150 kg and wearing not much more than a grass skirt, he too became a celebrity with lots of photos being taken of him. The whole afternoon we were the only "[W]esterners" there....</p>

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 4.7.5/1 (Cont'd) Tourist Perspectives of the Cultural Village:  
Statements from the TripAdvisor Supporting the Place and the Shows**

<b>Tourist Originating Region (Month/Year of Visit)</b>	<b>Excerpts of Views of Tourists to the Cultural Village</b>
● <i>Australia</i> (June 2012)	...it is a cross between zoo (complete with wolf), Haunted Castle (really scary!), beautiful Botanic Gardens, museum, performances every hour, including a re-enactment of a traditional Khmer wedding, miniature versions of many Cambodian icons, a beautiful recreation of a floating village plus picnic grounds for the children.
● <i>Edmonton, Canada</i> (June 2012)	Besides the obvious temples, this was my highlight! ...my tuk tuk driver suggested I visit and I must say I thoroughly enjoyed my time! ... You start by going through some rooms set up a little like a museum of civilization.... There is a program set up where you follow along from one place to the next and a performance takes place at each of the replica villages. They are very interactive and often involve spectator participation. The grounds were beautiful and well maintained and there were even food vendors along the way between shows and all around. A very cool must see...
● <i>Arizona, USA</i> (November 2012)	I wondered about the authenticity of the programs but I went with Khmer friends and they and their children totally enjoyed.
● <i>Unknown</i> (March 2013)	In order for you to understand more of the Cambodian culture, it is best to visit this place too. Here they have some reenactment of different Cambodian marriages and traditions.
● <i>Illinois, USA</i> (February 2013)	...So before paying \$15 entrance fee, call ahead and ask for the show schedule. Sometimes they are in the mornings but they are mostly in the afternoons. We saw 6 performances of about 20 minutes each. They are a combination of traditional dances with some skits. You can follow the story line without knowing any Khmer....
● <i>Delhi, India</i> (no date)	Very cool place to learn all about the culture and tribes of Cambodia. To make it interesting, they have dance shows & plays going on at the center. The best day to visit would be a weekend as they have more shows on going on then.

([http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction\\_Review-g297390-d1913712-Reviews-Cambodian\\_Cultural\\_Village-Siem\\_Reap\\_Siem\\_Reap\\_Province.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g297390-d1913712-Reviews-Cambodian_Cultural_Village-Siem_Reap_Siem_Reap_Province.html))

**Table 4.7.5/2 Tourist Perspectives of the Cultural Village:  
Statements from the TripAdvisor Questioning the Place and Performances**

<b>Tourist Originating Region (Month/Year of Visit)</b>	<b>Excerpts of Views of Tourists to the Cultural Village</b>
● <i>Seattle, USA</i> (no date)	With the jokes, singing, dancing and pulling audience volunteers it is obvious that this is more for entertainment than historical lessons...
● <i>Taipei, Taiwan</i> (01/2012)	...All the shows were in Khmer and did not seem authentic at all. The male performers hammed it up in front of the Chinese tourist and the female performers just looked bored. The final performance of the night went on for way to long and was all in Khmer. Everyone around us looked bored including my kids...
● <i>Marlborough, Massachusetts</i> (no date)	...We went mainly to see the performances. They were entertaining but I have no idea how authentic they were to traditional Khmer culture....
● <i>Manila, Philippines</i> (March 2012)	I think this tourist attraction's objective is supposed to show the world Cambodia in a nutshell. The truth is, in my opinion: it's boring. Expensively boring. The actors and dancers in the vignettes they have scheduled the whole day around the "village" were exceedingly deadpan. The dances (I'm sorry if I offend anyone) are very slow, very repetitive and are hard to watch, because I kept nodding off. Even the "Choosing Fiancé" performance was boring. The Judgment Tunnel and Ghost House is extremely dark - I was more scared of falling down (the floor's unpaved - it's a pseudo-tunnel) than of the wax ghosts.
● <i>Bangkok, Thailand</i> (May 2012)	The price of this theme park is too high. The facility is poor. The design is of low taste. Look like they try to combine all Cambodian popular culture along with some Asian culture. You may not be impressed by anything in this park. They have some good show though.
● <i>Adelaide, Australia</i> (August 2012)	...Was it worth the \$15 entry fee, I am not too sure about that as we were only there for a couple of hours and I do not think I would bother going back to see what we missed....

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 4.7.5/2 (Cont'd) Tourist Perspectives of the Cultural Village:  
Statements from the TripAdvisor Questioning the Place and Performances**

<b>Tourist Originating Region (Month/Year of Visit)</b>	<b>Excerpts of Views of Tourists to the Cultural Village</b>
● <i>Sydney, Australia</i> (April 2012)	Quite possibly the worst theme park in the world. Outrageously overpriced, with nothing at all of any value, cultural, educational or otherwise. I really pitied the poor Cambodian people there who were wandering around desperately hoping to have some fun.
● <i>Georgia, USA</i> (May 2012)	...The park itself was just ok... the shows were seemingly unenthusiastically performed, by probably overworked cast members....the Khmer wedding was long drawn out and tedious, spoiled also by the large Korean groups chattering all the way through.
● <i>Unknown</i> (no date)	...The wedding was conducted entirely in the Cambodian language and we had absolutely no idea what was going on, even when we were asked to go on stage to join in the dancing. Once the show ended, we started packing our camera and when we looked up, the entire place was completely cleared. It's like a Copperfield act! As we were going down the stairs, we were greeted by cast members changing in plain view in the room beside the staircase.... We entered the Chinese & Cham houses and they looked absolutely sad. The Cham one was empty inside and the Chinese temple had a Western glass chandelier hanging over the statue of the deity...
● <i>Hong Kong</i> (November 2012)	After spending three days in the marvellous temples in Siem Reap, we went to this Village according to some tourist guide books.... There are only some artificial Cambodia Tribe villages and some miniatures of famous structures in Cambodia. We watched a traditional local wedding show but it was not interesting.
● <i>Sydney, Australia</i> (April 2013)	The exhibits in the 2 museums are poorly lit, taxonomically amateurish and either have limited written explanations or none in English. Perhaps the Village is not meant for foreigners but they were happy enough to take our money.
● <i>London, England</i> (May 2013)	This theme park has almost nothing to offer beyond the numerous shows. And the shows are all spoken in Khmer, no concession to people speaking other languages, despite foreigners being charged triple the local entrance fee (\$15).

([http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction\\_Review-g297390-d1913712-Reviews-Cambodian\\_Cultural\\_Village-Siem\\_Reap\\_Siem\\_Reap\\_Province.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g297390-d1913712-Reviews-Cambodian_Cultural_Village-Siem_Reap_Siem_Reap_Province.html))

**Table 4.8.3 Indigenous Respondents' Views of Performance of their Kroeung Culture Against their Actual Practice:  
Differences between Aspects of their Culture Performed and those Actually Practiced**

<b>Aspects of the Show of Kroeung Culture</b>	<b>The Show at the Cultural Village</b>	<b>Nimol and Bora' s Views of Differences</b>
● <i>Ladder of the girl house</i>	The ladder was made of one main, big and strong wooden rod in the middle on which the steps rest.	The ladder in the show was more like Tumpoun's or Jarai's. Kroeung's wooden ladder had the steps layering up within a frame, not just one big rod that carried all the steps.
● <i>Buffalo heads</i>	Three buffalos' heads were decorated on the front part of the girl's parent's house.	The use of buffalos' heads for decoration was not common at individual homes but at the village's public hall/building.
● <i>Choosing the fiancé</i>	The show told about three men taking turn to flirt and then climb the woman's house (she was in it) and all of them were thrown out of it. She finally found a man (a visitor) and agreed to marry him. The ritual (sen) took place.	<p>The flirting took a form of men's visit to a women's house and chatting. Once a woman and a man were fond of each other, the rest quitted. Only when both agreed, the man could climb to her house and slept with her (just sleeping, nothing else). If they really liked each other after a while, the boy told his parents to ask for the girl's hand. The girl's parents asked their relatives if they like the boy. If they do, there will be an arrangement/invitation of both sides' relatives and the village elders to come to the girl's house to discuss the plan of marriage (called 'sen' by the Kroeung). In the sen, only a pair of chickens, jars of traditional wine and bowls of cooked rice were needed, although a 'sen' party happened at a larger scale. Each of the pairs was given by each side of the families. Parents of each side ate the chicken and rice and drink wine supplied by their counterpart.</p> <p>The dowry was not in the form of fruits but bracelet or necklace. If bracelet or necklace were not affordable, Sampot and tusk were also accepted as dowry.</p>

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**Table 4.8.3 (Cont'd) Indigenous Respondents' Views of Performance of their Kroeung Culture Against their Actual Practice: Differences between Aspects of their Culture Performed and those Actually Practiced**

Aspects of the Show of Kroeung Culture	The Show at the Kroeung Village	Nimol and Bora' s Views of Differences
● <i>Carrying of khapa</i> (cylindrical basket)	The girl walking down the steps of her parent's house carrying a <i>khapa</i> in against her hip (she and her mother carried the same way later).	Khapa was actually carried on the back, not on the hip.
● <i>Dances</i>	Most of the time, each dancer danced separately. They held each other's hand only very briefly.	The Kroeung danced together, holding one another's hands and putting their hands around (half of) one another's waists. They commented that the dance the show looked like Tumpoun and Jarai dances in which people danced separately.
● <i>Dance outfit</i>	Sampot (like a robe) was dressed up to the dancers' chests.	The Sampot was separate from the round -necked shirt, not like a robe.
● <i>Arm and head bands</i>	Men, i.e. the groom, the girl's father and the chief, wore a band on both upper arms and around the head.	In actuality, the Kroeung did not wear arm or head bands.
● <i>Music</i>	The music was claimed to be recorded by the Kroeung. [But, the music of other nationality such as that of Indians was also part of the show.]	The music was Kroeungs' music from the beginning but it was not toward the end.

**Table 4.8.4 Indigenous Respondents' Views of Performance of their Bunong Culture Against their Actual Practice: Differences between Aspects of their Culture Performed and those Actually Practiced**

Aspects of the Show of Bunong Culture	The Show at the Bunong Village	Raksmey and Ponleu' s Views of Differences
● <i>House architecture</i>	The roof of the Bunong house was rather steep and connected as one.	The houses in the Bunong village were similar. However, the roof of a Bunong house actually had two parts, not connected as one and they (the two parts of the roof) were not that steep but rather flat.
● <i>Buffalo heads in front of a main house</i>	A tiger head was placed between buffalo heads in front of the houses.	Raksmey and Ponleu had no idea of meaning of the heads placed in front of the house in a rice harvest sen but buffalo heads could be used in Bunong wedding ceremonies.
● <i>Two small houses on stilts</i>	Two small houses were placed on each side of a main house in the Bunong village, which had a scatter of houses.	The respondents had no idea for what the stilted houses were, saying that the two houses could be used for storage. But, if they were for that purpose, they were not built beside the main house but at the back of it. The stilted houses were, of course, not for the grown-up boys and girls as found in Tumpoun and Kroeung cultures because Bunong children always lived with their parents, not in separate houses.
● <i>Dancers' dresses</i>	The dresses was made of black, blue, yellow and red striped cloths wrapped around from the chest to ankle level for girls/women and just around the bottom part for boys. Boys/men had a cloth band around their upper arms. For girls, there were red fringes on the dresses' edges.	The colours and stripes were similar but the texture was different from that of the Bunong dresses and there were no fringes on edges of the dresses, Raksmey and Ponleu said. Dancers had a cloth band around their upper arms for men and usually ankle bracelets for women.

*Continue on next page.*

**Table 4.8.4 (Cont'd) Indigenous Respondents' Views of Performance of their Bunong Culture Against their Actual Practice:  
Differences between Aspects of their Culture Performed and those Actually Practiced**

<b>Aspects of the Show of Bunong Culture</b>	<b>The Show at the Bunong Village</b>	<b>Raxmey and Ponleu' s Views of Differences</b>
● <i>Sas</i> (cylindrical basket)	Dancers carried a <i>sas</i> on their backs. The <i>sases</i> were plain, with no colouring.	The respondents told that their <i>sases</i> looked similar to the ones the dancers used but with theirs were painted with back stripes around the upper part and the bottom part.
● <i>Bunong language and music</i>	Dancers spoke some of the Bunong language. The language was also recorded with the music of dances.	Raxmey and Ponleu stated they could not understand what the dances said in the Bunong language. In addition, only a small section of the dance music was that of the Bunong and the rest was not.
● <i>Cloth covering the sacrificed buffalo</i>	A black piece of cloth was used to cover the sacrificed buffalo, represented by its head, before dancing began in the performance of the sacrifice of the animal.	Black cloth was not used but bright one. The sacrificed buffalo was not covered with a piece of cloth. A piece of cloth was instead folded into a small piece used as a symbol only, while the animal was tied with a rope before the sacrifice.
● <i>Rice and candle</i>	A candle was lighted and placed in a dried gourd.	The respondents said it was not the way they did. They instead used a bowl of rice, not a dried gourd.
● <i>Sacrifice dance</i>	A dance was performed in the sacrifice of the buffalo. In the dance, they used spear-like shafts to kill the animal.	In their actual practice, the sacrificed buffalo was tied with ropes when it was killed. They did not kill the way dancers performed.
● <i>Buffalo blood</i>	The show did not tell about what the Bunong did with the fresh blood from the sacrificed buffalo but Sokhom told that in the sen the blood was mixed with rice wine (tribal alcohol) for their drinks.	The Bunong respondents told that they did not drink fresh blood with their rice wine. Just little blood was used to put on the outside edge of the mouth of their wine jar as a symbol in the rice harvest sen. They drank the wine not the blood.

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