

Fua Haripitak

Fua was the greatest living Thai artist of his time. His artistic creations were as spectacular as those of any leading international artist. But he chose to devote his mind and life to the restoration of traditional Thai art. In other words, he helped preserve important Siamese artistic and cultural currents. The Thai ruling elites are however oblivious to this virtue. Without Fua, the Tripitaka Library at Wat Rakang Kositaram wouldn't have been restored to its proper greatness by the early 1980s. But like all things restored by Fua, the Library was ultimately and sadly abandoned to the ravages of time. Fua's efforts were all in vain. The proper way to pay tribute to Fua Haripitak is therefore to continue his life mission so that Beauty will exist alongside with the Truth and the Good.

The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF) had collaborated with Fua on numerous projects and activities pertaining to art restoration. SNF had also looked after his health and wellbeing till the end of his life. On the occasion of Fua Haripitak's centennial birth anniversary, SNF in collaboration with Silpakorn University (where he once studied and taught; perhaps its greatest student and teacher) and many contemporary artists will organize commemorative activities throughout the year.

We will kick off the commemoration at the Tripitaka Library, Wat Rakang, in the morning of 22 April 2010. The building is an architectural as well as an artistic marvel of the early Chakkri Dynasty. Hopefully, many contemporaries will again see its tremendous value and seek to restore it to its original greatness. This seems to be a good way to begin commemorating Fua's legacy.

In the evening of the same day an art exhibition will be opened at Silpakorn University, and it will run for several days. This art exhibition will then be carried over to the Bangkok Art and Culture Center at the Pathumwan intersection.

Aside from organizing a keynote address, a number of seminars or discussions, and art exhibitions, a book will also be published so that contemporaries will know about Fua's life and work.

Kamron Kunadilok has also finished a play based on Fua's life, and it will be performed on this occasion as well. One of Kamron's previous plays, *The Revolutionist*, is about the life of Pridi Banomyong. It was fairly successful too. Fua's love life—to put it modestly—was much more interesting than Pridi's. Although Fua did not 'rupture' or 'revolutionize' Thai politics like Pridi did, the former did 'overturn' the art scene in Siam.

Fua's paintings are numerous and exceptional. It is extremely difficult to find any contemporary Thai artist who will be able to match Fua's artistic talent and skills. It will be a proper homage to Fua by establishing an art and cultural center in his name.

The main organizers of this yearlong commemoration include SNF, Silpakorn University, Poh Chang School of Arts and Crafts, the Association of Siamese Architects Under Royal Patronage, the Society for the Conservation of National Treasure and Environment (which had collaborated with Fua in the restoration of the Tripitaka Library.)

Hopefully, this commemoration will help awaken the Thai civil servants and Thai Sangha to perceive the importance of Thai art—its study and preservation—and the ability to distinguish between mediocrity and excellence.

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