



Folk Wisdom of a Lanna Music Teacher: A Study on Mr. Boonlert Teekang

Chanidapa Sankam-ai

MFA Candidate, Faculty of Fine Arts, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand

Rujee Srisombut

Faculty of Fine Arts, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand

Abstract

This research aims to study; one, the history and folk wisdom of Lanna music of Mr. Boonlert Teekang, and; two, Tuengnong drum bands in relation with traditions, rituals, and shows. From the study of the information that was obtained from surveys, interviews, and data analysis; it was revealed that:

1. Mr. Boonlert Teekang is an experienced man in local Lanna music and is well accepted among local Lanna musicians in Chiang Mai province. Moreover, he is a lecturer who has knowledge about the production of the Aaw drum, or Tuengnong drum, and has the ability to play various local music instruments. In addition, he made the Aaw drum that had the best sound and gained acceptance from people during the Aaw drum competition held in Chiang Mai, and received the award "Pet Rajabhat" from Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. Mr. Boonlert is considered as a person who continues and preserves the knowledge of making Aaw drums, which he received from Master Dumrong Chaipet, who once was the father of Lanna drums who passed away years ago.

2. Tuengnong drum bands: Tuengnung, or Tuengnong, drum is the name of a type of drum named after the sound when played together with a big gong, Hui gong, and other instruments, such as cymbals, Talodpod drum, Naeluang, and Naenoi (similar to clarinet). This combination is called "Tuengnong band," in which the Aaw drum makes the sound of "Tueng" and "Yong," and the Hui gong makes the sound of "Nung" or "Nong". Tuengnong drum band is played on various occasions, such as a merit parade to the temple, religious buildings celebration, and other entertainment events. As mentioned above, the Tuengnong drum band has a unique melody and sound which plays an important role in Lanna community for a long time. Furthermore, Aaw drums or Tuengnong drums can also be played together with Talodpod, Yong gong, Hui gong, and Sawa, and are usually played during merit events and used as a background music for the finger-nails dancing, one of the famous northern traditional dancing styles, performing for welcoming guests. The Aaw drum has been developed since the Mungray dynasty, which the drum appearance was similar to Singmong drum, Pujaedrum, and Luang drum, and it was called differently in different areas. In order to make Aaw drums, there are many rituals involved such as the ceremony of cutting the wood and making drumhead, and paying respect to the spirit and teacher. In addition, people who are involved in Aaw drums, they carry on the belief of good luck and bad luck day, as well as the belief of drum luck, which is rooted from religious belief and the folk wisdom of ancestors, which have been carried on for ages.

Key words: folk wisdom, Lanna music teacher, Mr. Boonlert Teekang

Introduction

Music is a cultural heritage that serves people from all communities, languages and classes. In the meaning of social science, people set music as a medium between them and their gods, such as, music play during religious ceremonies in western countries, and the belief of paying respect to the spirit of music in Thai music (Kanjana Intarasunanun. 1989: 63). Music is one of arts that can be found in every crowd and nations, even in a very small community. Music is about the sound that requires auditory nerve to listen and interpret meanings or without the interpretation of meanings, which is similar to the sound of speaking. However, regarding the interpretation, meanings can be interpreted differently according to a person's opinion and perception (Sangad Phukhaothong: 1989: 63). Whether time and places have changed, whether it is a primitive group or the most civilized one, music is always one of their riches using on both religious ceremonies and recreations, therefore music is a mind necessity that people cannot live without because it is considered as a religious that enriches their hearts to be blithe and joyful. Moreover, music can specify how well of a nation's living or how nice people are by looking at their singing and dancing and may compare with the other nations to see how different they are regarding culture (Phraya Anuman Rajadhon: 1972: 104)

Thai local music began long time ago, before Sukhothai Kingdom and has always been developed, and when there was a connection with foreigners, it occurred in exchanging music more, resulting in styles and structures as appear nowadays. Local music is a cultural inheritance of villagers that occurred since long time ago, the objective was to relax from hard work and to entertain themselves, as well as to create the feeling of having fun working together. On some occasions, music is used in rituals and to express love and harmony among groups of people, which it has been inherited and has become the symbol of such a community (UdomCheikeewong. 2005: 120). Apart

from local music, there are local performances which have a long background and history since the Kingdom of Ayuthaya, created by the folk wisdom of villagers based on their environment. Local performances are outstanding regarding characteristics, styles, movements and accents according to each local area, manners, and belief (RenuKosinanon. 1994:73)

Thus, the study of music in many regions is not about studying only the culture of music, but also music and culture of a group of people in a certain area (Punya Rungrueng. 1998: 116). For the study of local culture, there are various cultures that are similar and different, such as rituals and traditions. These traditions consist of songs, ceremonies, and other elements that based on the value of each group, which provide knowledge about the history of folklores, poetries, local languages, and people's living (Kanjana Intarasunanun. 1993:52)

People applied the value of music in order to create various benefits including entertainment and ceremony; therefore, many rituals consist of music as one of the important elements such as oblation, worship, and blessing. It clearly shows that music has values toward human's living. As the value of satisfies human's needs, people from all over the world consider that music is one of the most important factors for their living in accordance with their own way of life. Thus, music from each area is different and unique according to its environment and villagers' ideas (Sukich Polpratoom. 1995:19)

Local folk wisdom is a build-up of life and social experiences in different environment, and it is being transferred from generation to another in a form of a culture. In order to continue undertaking a culture, it requires intelligence to find out things that are already exist, and restore, imply, and create new things based on the old things that were found. A person who restores, implies, and creates work regarding local culture is called a "local scholar" or a "learned man", and the intelligence used in this creation is

called “folk wisdom” or “local wisdom” (Department of Cultural Promotion 1991:52)

The transfer of folk wisdom of Thai music by teachers or those who inherit the art of Thai music is concerned as an important part in order to transfer knowledge to students from generation to another, which teachers practiced and record by using almost only their memories. Therefore, each teacher has different style of music, even though some songs are the same but they are expressed in different styles according to each teacher (Surapon Suwan. 2006: 19)

Hence, the study of folk wisdom of a Lanna music teacher is very important in order to collect information and analyze a person who is an expert in Lanna music in manners of the study of methods of Lanna music, play techniques, knowledge transfer, Lanna music work, and knowledge collection, which these are useful for the study of Lanna music including both in schools and outside schools as well as lifelong learning in order to support Lanna music to be strong and being transferred to the others continuously. Moreover, this will help to preserve the uniqueness of Lanna music and remain Thailand as a nation with a cultural strength.

Therefore, it is important to analyze the information of a person who has high ability regarding the study of music, play techniques, knowledge transfer, new knowledge of music creation, music instruments and the original knowledge, which will be useful for the study of the production of Lanna drum. The study of music helps to preserve the uniqueness of the nation as a civilized country with a cultural strength.

The researcher selected to study on the topic of folk wisdom of a Lanna teacher, a case study on Mr. Boonlert Teekang, who is a Lanna music teacher that has ability regarding Lanna music such as playing Peenae (clarinet) and drums, and makes many kinds of drums such as Pong drums, Tengtueng drums, Talodpod drums, and Tuengnong drums. He learned all of the knowledge from Master Damrong Chaipet, who was a famous artist and was well accepted in the

northern region, who passed away years ago.

Mr. Boonlert Teekang was born on August 27th, 1956 in Chiang Mai province. He is the third child from nine siblings. His father name is Mr. Ain Teekang, and his mother name is Mrs. Phong Teekang. Mr. Boonlert Teekang graduated the fourth grade from Khajao temple school and became a monk for nine months. After that, he left the Buddhist monkhood in order to work and help his parents. Due to his love of Lanna music, he learned, practiced and developed his skills and later became a professional.

Mr. Boonlert Teekang married to Mrs. Junbarn Teekang in 1976 and has two children. Mr. Boonlert Teekang agreed that Lanna music is the folk wisdom that the ancestor built-up for the young generation and he would like to preserve it for the next generation, so he studied with a master, who had knowledge and ability of music and making Lanna drums. He practiced, worked hard, and always developed his skills and became a Lanna music expert, and headhere to it as his occupation. The skill of making Tuengnong or Aaw drums of Mr. Boonlert Teekang is well accepted among Lanna artists and musicians. In addition, he is an idealistic person who intends to maintain and preserve Lanna arts, and he also is a student that always respects his teachers. Moreover, he made Tuengnong or Aaw drums and joined many competitions and gained acceptance from people. He is willing to transfer his knowledge to the young generation and anyone who is interested in.

Tuengnong drum bands: Tuengnung, or Tuengnong, drum is the name of a type of drum named after the sound when played together with a big gong, Hui gong, and other instruments, such as cymbals, Talodpod drum, Naeluang, and Naenoi (similar to clarinet). This combination is called “Tueng Nong band,” in which the Aaw drum makes the sound of “Tueng” and “Yong,” and the Hui gong makes the sound of “Nung” or “Nong”. Tueng Nong drum band is played on various occasions, such as a merit parade to the temple, religious buildings celebration, and

other entertainment events. As mentioned above, the TuengNong drum band has a unique melody and sound which plays an important role in Lanna community for a long time.

However, due to advancements and changes in our societies nowadays, it impacts on culture; therefore cultural music does not play an important role among the young generation anymore, which leading to the disappearance of cultural music.

As a result, the researcher is interested in studying and collecting work of folk wisdom of a Lanna music teacher, from a study on Mr. Boonlert Teekang, who carries on a real folk wisdom of Lanna music. The information is collected directly from fieldwork in which the researcher will analyze in order to present the study results clearly so that it can be as a guideline for others who are interested in studying Lanna music, and hopefully it will help to maintain this valuable folk wisdom to remain as the nation's heritage.

Objectives

The researcher has set objectives as follows:

1. To study the history and folk wisdom of Lanna music of Mr. Boonlert Teekang.
2. To study Tuengnong drum bands in relation with traditions, rituals, and shows.

Methodology

This research is a qualitative research which aims to study on documents, text books, and related researches, as well as information collected from the fieldwork. The information is gathered and is written in a form of descriptive analysis research, which the researcher designed guidelines and procedures as follows:

1. Study and data collection

1.1 Prepared topics and gathered information from related document, which collected from the following sources:

1.1.1 Main library, Srinakharinwirot University.

1.1.2 Main library, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University

1.1.3 National library of Thailand

1.2 Collected information directly from Mr. Boonlert Teekang and people who are close to him. The researcher did a fieldwork in Muang district, Chiang Mai province. Tools used in the data collection are;

1.2.1 Interview

1.2.2 Digital camera

2. Data Study

2.1 Studied and composed a writing based on the information collected from academic essays and related researches.

2.2 Composed a writing based on the information collected from the interview with Mr. Boonlert Teekang

2.3 Composed a writing based on the information collected from the interview with Mr. Boonlert Teekang's students and people who are closed to him.

2.4 Composed a writing from photographs

2.5 Composed a writing of drum making process.

3. Data analysis

3.1. Studied personal information and folk wisdom of Mr. Boonlert Teekang.

3.1.1 Background and work regarding music

3.1.2 Awards

3.1.3 Folk wisdom of Lanna music

3.2 Studied on Tuengnong drums in relation with traditions, rituals, and shows.

3.2.1 Studied the process of making Tuengnong drums.

3.2.2 Studied on how to play Tuengnong drum bands and the inheritance

3.2.3 Studied the role of Tuengnong drum bands in Lanna community

Results and Discussion

The main information collected from the interview and related document and research, and composed into a consistent writing which can be divided into the following topics:

1. The study of personal information and folk wisdom of Mr. Boonlert Teekang.

1.1 Personal information

Mr. Boonlert Teekang was born on August 27th, 1956 in Chiang Mai province. He is the third child from nine siblings. His father name is Mr. Ain Teekang, and his mother name is Mrs. Phong Teekang. Mr. Boonlert Teekang graduated fourth grade from Khajao temple school and became a monk for nine months. After that, he left the Buddhist monkhood in order to work and help his parents. As he loves Lanna music very much, he learned, practiced and developed his skills and later became a professional.

1.2 Background and work regarding music

Mr. Boonlert Teekang agreed that Lanna music is the folk wisdom that the ancestor built-up for the young generation and he would like to preserve it for the next generation, so he studied with a master, who had knowledge and ability of music and making Lanna drums. He practiced, worked hard, and always developed his skills and became a Lanna music expert and adhere to it as his occupation. The skill of making Tuengnong or Aaw drums of Mr. Boonlert Teekang is well accepted among Lanna artists and musicians. In addition, he is an idealistic person who intends to maintain and preserve Lanna arts, and he also is a student that always respects his teachers. Moreover, he made Tuengnong or Aaw drums and joined many competitions and gained acceptance from people. He is willing to transfer his knowledge to the young generation and anyone who is interested in.

1.3 Awards

Mr. Boonlert Teekang received many awards from joining many Lanna music competitions including the competition of making Tuengnong

drums. He also received the "Pet Rajabhat" award from Chiang Mai Rajabhat University.

1.4 Folk wisdom of Lanna music.

Mr. Boonlert Teekang studied with a master, who had knowledge and ability of music and making Lanna drums. He practiced, worked hard, and always developed his skills and became a Lanna music expert and adhere to it as his occupation. The skill of making Tuengnong or Aaw drums of Mr. Boonlert Teekang is well accepted among Lanna artists and musicians. Moreover, he is an expert in adjusting and improving drums for the best sound and won many competitions.

2. Study on Tuengnong drums in relation with traditions, rituals, and shows.

2.1 Study the process of making Tuengnong drums.

2.1.1 Prepare a log about 2 meters long and 14 inches wide; find the center of the log in order to put it into the lathe machine.

2.1.2 Shape the log into a cylinder

2.1.3 Measure the length and wide of the log

2.1.4 Lathe the log to make it the same size and then mark it into parts including drumhead, body, elephant nails or holes around the drum to put a string on, narrowed part, and bottom.

2.1.5 Put the log on the girder in order to core the inside of the log and adjust it for the best sound.

2.1.6 Cut the cowhide in a circle shape and leave a surrounded space around 1 inch for making holes

2.1.7 String the cowhide together on the drumhead.

2.2 Study how to play Tuengnong bands and the inheritance.

In order to play the Aaw drum in Tuengnong bands, it usually is played with Talodpod, Yong gong, Hui gong, and Sawa, The style of the play is divided into three parts including, the beginning

rhythm or Tuengnong rhythm, the main rhythm which is played in regularly rhythm and the last one is the connection rhythm or the ending part which leading to the change of section or the end of the song.

2.3 Study the role of Tuengnong drum bands in Lanna community

Aaw drums are the drum that is played in Tuengnong bands, sometimes is called Tuengnong drum, it is one of a few drums that will not be played alone by itself but only in the band. It is usually played in merit events and use as a background music for the fingernails dancing, one of the famous northern traditional dancing styles, perform for welcoming guests.

Conclusion

Mr. Boonlert Teekangreed confirmed that Lanna music is the folk wisdom that ancestor built-up for the young generation. Moreover, he also maintains the folk wisdom of making Aaw drums or Tuengnong drums and he is willing to transfer his knowledge to anyone who is interested. Furthermore, Aaw drum or Tueng Nong drum is usually be played together with Talodpod, Yong gong, Hui gong, and Sawa, and is usually played in merit events and use as a background music for the fingernails dancing, one of the famous northern traditional dancing styles, performing for welcoming guests. The Aaw drum has been developed since the Mungray dynasty, which

the drum appearance was similar to Singmong drum, Pujae drum, and Luang drum, and it is called differently in different areas. In order to make Aaw drums, there are many rituals involved, such as the ceremony of cutting the wood and making drumhead, and paying respect to spirits and teachers. In addition, people who are involved in Aaw drums, they carry on the belief of good luck and bad luck day, as well as the belief of drum luck, which it is rooted from religious belief and the folk wisdom of ancestors, which have been carried on for ages.

Recommendations

The research on the topic of "Folk Wisdom of a Lanna Music Teacher: A Study on Mr. Boonlert Teekang" provided the researcher interesting knowledge, such as the living, the history, and the culture of Aaw drums or Tuengnong drums, as well as knowledge about folk wisdom of music. Therefore the researcher would like to provide a few recommendations for further study about Lanna music;

1. Should study on the folk wisdom of other Lanna music instrument craftsmen.
2. Should study on the folk wisdom of the production of drums in other areas.
3. Should study on the comparison of the folk wisdom of the production of Lanna music instruments in Chiang Mai or other nearby areas.

References

- Kanjana Intarasunanun. (1989). *The Analysis of Folk Songs*. ManutsatParitat : Journal of Humanities
- Kanjana Intarasunanun. (1993). *Folk Songs*. Education Science of Encyclopedia Volume 12. Faculty of Education Science, Srinakharinwirot University. Bangkok: Pattanasueksa.
- Phraya Anuman Rajadhon: 1972. *Basic Culture*. 6th Edition. Bangkok: Religion.
- Renu Kosinanon. (1994). *Thai Local Performances*. 3rd Edition. Bangkok: Thaiwattanapanich.
- Sa-ngad Phukhaothong. (1989). *Thai Music and the Access to Thai Music*. Bangkok: Ruenkaew Printing.
- Udom Cheikeewong. (2005). *Thai Arts and Culture*. Sangdao Publishing.