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The Vocal Music of Ethnic groups in Southern Laos, the Lao PDR

ກຽມງາ ສຸຂສຳເນົຝ¹

Krissada sooksumnieng

Email : nengnengpk@hotmail.com

ເຈົ້າຍັຍ ຂນໄພໂຮງຈນ²

Charoenchai Chonpairoj

ເຂົມສັກດີ ພິກຸລຄຣີ³

Chalermsak Pikulsri

¹ PhD. candidate in musicology at College of Music, Mahasarakham University Khamriang Sub-District, Kantarawichai District, Maha Sarakham

² Assistant Professor PhD. College of Music Mahasarakham University

³ Associate Professor PhD. Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts Khon Kaen University

Abstract

At present, traditional music of many ethnic groups have been existed in Laos. People, however, in their nowadays modern life, have generally neglected to preserve their music culture from which its trend reflects popularity lose. Though the Laos people fail to preserve their music cultures, the performance commonly still practice. Musical contexts and music characteristics should be investigated and documented by means of the qualitative research.

From the research, it is found that two main ethnic groups have been inhabited in the southern area of the country identified as lowland Laos and middle Laos. Most of the vocal music of these two ethnic people are in the form of strophic structure, repeating of a similar short melodic section. Variation might be appeared during performing by ornamental elaboration. Each section song texts are improvised by a singer. The meaning of the text content is depended on circumstance or any particular topic presenting such as native history, natural context, religious faithful story, courting, or teaching of moral. The performing of the singing is generally in moderate or fast tempo and mostly accompanied by Khan playing. The seven-tone diatonic scale system is used in lowland Laos melodic line while the pentatonic is prevailed among the ethnic groups of the middle land Laos people. In addition, the function of the lowland Laos' vocal music is customarily applied for entertainment aspects. On the other hand, for the middle land Laos, the vocal music is mostly employed in the religious worship.

Keywords: Music, Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Laos Music, Vocal Music

Introduction

The Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang was a colony of the Kingdom of Thailand during the reign of King Taksin the Great. Towards the end of the era of its ruler, King Suriyawongsatammikaraj, power struggles took place and the Kingdom of Lan Xang was divided into two sides, namely Luang Phabang and Vientiane and in 1713, the third city, Champasak came into existence. Until the European colonization period, the entire Lan Xang Kingdom was colonized by France in 1887. Subsequently, Lao and other countries in Indo-China were intervened by the USA in 1954. Until 1975 independence was gained and declared and the Lao People's Democratic Republic was founded (Potisan Sumet and Poommachan Nuxai, 2003). The administration was set up into 3 regions, i.e. the North, the Central and the South, locally known as the Northern Lao, the Central Lao and the Southern Lao, comprising following various districts:

Northern Region – comprising those districts of Pongsalee, Oudomxai, Luangnamtha, Bor-keow, Xaiyabuli, Huapan, Xiangkwang and Luang Phabang.

Central Region – comprising those districts of Vientiane, City Wall of Vientiane, Bolikamxai, Xaisomboon special District, Kam-muan and Sawannakhet.

Southern Region – comprising those districts of Salawan, Champasak, Xekong and Uttaپue. (Donsakda Thongmee and Xaiyawong Boonyang, 1997)

The main area of the southern land was the former Champasak, with diverse ethnic population and the wealth of its culture still remains. The demography of various tribes in Laos (Kaewmaewong Xinxai & team, 2008), indicated that the tribal ethnic of Mon-Khmer scattered throughout various districts in Laos, with 10 tribes in the North, 12 in the Central, and

the majority 17 tribes (out of 32) in the South, with the Lao tribe spreading all over the country, and the Putai tribe, the only population of the Lao-Tai, while other tribes are the ancestry of Mon-Khmer. It is noteworthy that the Northern and Central regions hold the mixture of population of all tribes and roots of different dialects.

In order to further gather the cognitive knowledge of music and culture of those diverse ethnic groups who are at the high risk of gradually disappearing, effected by various factors such as politics, war, the flow of trendy external culture etc. the researcher is of high interest in pursuing the Musical analysis of music of different ethnic groups in the Southern Region of the Lao PDR. A Doctoral Thesis is hereby prepared, titled “The Vocal Music of Southern Laos”.

Research objectives

1. To study the components of vocal music of the Southern Regional of the Lao PDR.
2. To study the social roles of vocal music of the Southern Regional of the Lao PDR.

Methods

The Ethnomusicological Qualitative Research is used, comprising document/data collection and information gathered from the field study, in the forms of survey, observation, interview and group discussions. All facts and figures are further analyzed and the descriptive appraisal is presented.

The central question addressed in this study was, “What are barriers that Thai doctoral music students encounter in doctoral socialisation?” The findings presented in this paper resulted from in-depth interviews with 12 doctoral students and graduates from four different

stages of doctoral education across four universities that launch PhD programs in music. The four different stages include 1) first year of studying, 2) finishing the coursework, 3) completing the qualification exam and doing a dissertation, and 4) finishing the degree. The interviews took place in the interviewees' schools, homes, or other locations of their choice. The Thai language was used for convenience in communication between the researcher and the participant. The interviews were recorded and the important points during the interview were noted.

After the data was collected, the researcher transcribed the recording. The transcribed text was sent to each participant the transcription to check for accuracy. After the data had been verified and approved, the pertinent parts of the interviews were translated into English. Then, I used hand analysis of qualitative data, which is a way to analyse the data by reading through, marking, and dividing the data into parts by hand. The next process of analysing was coding, or organising the data into categories and segments. During this process, I marked specific themes which each interviewee had in common. After that, I encoded the raw data into categories that had similarities with the contents of the document. To better understand the findings, I reread the transcriptions and literature.

Literature Review

Laos has contiguous area with different countries. The north is adjacent to China and Myanmar. The east is adjacent to Vietnam. The south is adjacent to Cambodia, and the west is adjacent to Thailand. The area of the country is about 236,800 square kilometers, Three in four of the whole area, or about 177,000 square kilometers is rich in forest resources. The Mekong River is the most important river that runs through Laos in a distance of 1500 kilometers. (Charnvit Kasetsiri. 2001)

The only four provinces in the southern district, the areas of research Including Champasak province, Salavan province, Sekong Province and Attapeu province which contextual information of these areas is as below

Champasak Province

On the year 1713 the city Champassaknagaburi has been established, and was decreased as the only Champasak Province during the period under French rule in 1904. (Onmaneesorn Thongkhum.1998) The information on the year 2003, population was 622,400 people, covering approximately 15,415 square kilometers. The border is contiguous to Salavan province, Sekong Province, Attapeu province, Thailand and Cambodia. Most areas is on the Champasak plains and the Boriwein plateau. The productivites is tea, coffee, rice, rubber, fish, sugarcane and marble. There is an important archeological source called “Wat Poo” stone castle.

Salavan Province

It was found that the area of the present Salavan province had ever been the place that The community has been inhabited since 1500. Most of them dwell at Pha Taem on the area of Phoolahid (Seehajuck Phosai and team. 2000) The population surveyed in 2546, with 318,100 people, approximately 10,691 square kilometer. The border is contiguous to Savannakhet Province, Champassak Province, Sekong Province, Vietnam and Thailand. The area is the lowland plain along the Mekong River and the Sedoan River. The part area on the Boriwein plateau is an important agricultural productivities source for rice, tea, coffee, bamboo, sugarcane etc. The eastern part is area of high moutains that is rich in minerals such as coal.

Sekong Province

From the year 2003 census there was a population of 79,000 people, and

the area of about 7665 square kilometers. The border closed to Salavan Province, Champasak Province, Attapeu Province and Vietnam. The terrain is mountainous and highland area with high traffic problems during the rainy season. Most products were the agricultural crops include rice, taro, yam, corn, tobacco, cotton, sugarcane, tea, coffee, pigs, goats, forests and several kinds of minerals, such as gold.

Attapeu Province

Areas of Attapeu Province while under the rule of the Khmer was called “ Ra-ma-rug-ong-karn ” is appear as an important evidence of the Khmer castle, built in 5-7 century. (Chanthacote SungKhaya. Nd.) Attapeu Province, surveyed in 2003 had a population of 108,300 people, an area of 10,320 square kilometers. The borders close to Sekong Province, Champassak Province, Vietnam and Cambodia. The terrain is mostly mountainous, but fertile plains of the Sekaman River. The main products are rice, corn, green beans, sugarcane, cattle, poultry, timber and minerals, including gold, silver, coal, etc. (Pantaba Sitha and team. 2005)

The belief of Laos people that had linked with Ethnomusicological values traditions and rituals appeared in the story of Thao Hung or Thao Jueng, the important Lao ancient literature that depicted about the use of music for the entertainment in the parties of the ruling elite and the royal court.. (Royal Academy, 2005).

In sector of the villagers, music also plays a vital role in everyday life as well. Furthermore if it can be one of the four factors, then it is shown to be more important. The factors that was used as a cure, such as in the ceremony of "Lum-Song" which is a type of singing performance. This singing show also aims to serch for the cause of illness. The Northeast believed that the cause of illness is from a mysterious power called Phee / ghost. (Jaruwan Tharmwatra. n.d.)

Phaiboon Phang-ngeun (1999), said that "Mor-Lum – Mor-Khan

/ dancing – singing performance artiste is a creative artist in the field of entertainment knowledge of life various traditions, moreover, is also a source of intellectual folklore for the inhabitants that can be applied in their everyday life as well. "

All of this Mr. Onmaneesorn Thongkhum(1998) have discussed about the role of the singing performance in conclusion that it is the most active cultural performance that role in Lao society. They use for entertainment, inheritance the wisdom of literary heritage, transfer the knowledge and as well as a tool to communicate with the public

It is seen as Lao society and culture in the level of the high court people down to the ordinary people all focus on the musical. Whether the activity is due to the rituals, beliefs or the recreation activities to entertain, it's hard to deny that "music" is an important part assimilated in the life of the Lao people that cannot be separated from each other.

In addition, the musical instruments had been recorded as historical information, can be found in almost every Lao literature and also appears that the inheritance in using many kinds of instruments continuing to the present day. According to the verse in the literature Thao-Nokkaba-Pheuk. (Anatole-Roger PELTIER, 1995 A) and the literature Nang-Phom-Hoam another story which has rewritten by Anatole-Roger PELTIER, it appears the citing of the musical instruments, musical bands and entertainments as well. (Anatole-Roger PELTIER, 1995 B)

The reason that Khan (free Reed) has been widely popular among the Lao people is because Khan is a public looks musical instrument accompanying to cultural life of general public. Because of the simplicity making, Inexpensive outlay and the ease of portability so that Khan was immensely popular among the Lao people as in Lan-Chang period. It also was reasoned about the popularity's declination of the instruments like

Gongs or drums that in addition to a high art value, difficult making, expensive and heavy to transport to different places are also considered as sacred which represent power and class society, so that it is not required by tradition, be cherished and difficult to be possible for one to convey freely in any evacuation route. Even the idea of starting up new production to spread out widely will be more difficult because of the changes with age of belief, faith, basis of social and tastes.

What to verify the musical bond between the Northeastern Thai and the Lao people demonstrated in the ritual of the Northeastern Thai and Lao people to have a musical component. Both of them had the mutual cultural belief in the "Heat-Sib-Song" (The Twelve traditions) as below.

The Boon Koon Lan of the second month when Buddhist monks had finished chanting continued a preaching and that night the entertainment was the "Mor-Lum-Kloan" "Mor-Lum-Moo" or drum playing as well as the amusement activities of young people

The Boon Pha-wed of the forth month "...Most of these special preaching were woven bamboo baskets carried in parade around the village together with the band of gongs drum lyres and tambourines..."

The Boon Songkran of the fifth month "...in the afternoon everyone joined the sand forming activity then continued with dancing, singing and folk plays for the celebration..."

The Boon Bank Fai of the sixth month "...A lot of people rally together within many small parades procession. Some arrays carried "Bank Fai" (the rocket) and some others were singing, dancing and delightfully ..." (Wimonpan Pitathawatchai. 2005)

In this research other than the Ethnic Lao, the researcher also studied the Middle Lao ethnic groups with the Katu tribe.

The Katu people have lived in Laos for many centuries, but their

exact origins are relatively unknown. The historical background and origin of this ethnic group is similar to those of other members of the Mon-Khmer languages group. Many researchers believe that the Katu migrated from Southeast India and southern parts of China. In these regions, there are still people who speak Mon-Khmer languages such as the Moondah and Koln people.

Presently, the majority of Katu live in the Southern provinces of Laos such as Kaleum, Darkcheung and Thataeng districts of Sekong province, Laongam districts of Salavan province and Paksong and Bachiengchalernsook of Champassak province. In addition, Katu ethnic people also live in Vietnam in Quang Nam, Danang, and Theua Thian Hue provinces.

The total population of Katu people living in Laos is 17,024 people. The Katu share 0.4% of the country's total population, according to the second population census in 1995. (Kaewmaewong Xinxia & team, 2008)

Findings

Role and Functions of the Vocal Music in Southern Laos, the Lao PDR

Vocal music in Lao PDR is grouped in 2 categories, "khab" and "lam" (Khab is the term used to call the vocal music in the area of Northern Laos and Lam in the area of Southern Laos), with melodic variations, compiled and divided in accordance with administrative district zones of the Lao PDR. They are:

Khab Toom Luang Phabang	- Luang Phabang District
Khab Sum Nua	- Hua Pun District
Khab Ngum	- Vientiane District
Khab Xiang Kwang/Khab Puan	- Xiang Kwang District
Khab Muei Lhuk 20	- Bolikumxai District
Lam Putai/Lam Tangwai/Lam Bansok/Lam Donsawan	- Sawannakhet District

Lam Salawan	- Salawan District
Lam Tangwai	- Blu Tribe
Lam Sipandon	- Champasak District, Muang Khong, Pakse
Lam Mahaxai	- Kammuan District, Muang Mahaxai

(Nettawong Kongduen.2002:36)

In view of the above context, it could be construed that “khab” is used for vocal music in the Northern Region and “Lam” is used for vocal music in the Southern Region of the Lao PDR, from Vientiane downwards (Sujit Wongthes, 2542:49) and those performers/singers are called “Chang Khab” and “Mor Lam” respectively.

“Mor Lam” – as mentioned earlier, there are many kinds of Vocal music singers in the Southern Region of Lao PDR, and is moreover the joint Thai-Lao culture (Terry Ellis Miller, 1985). The vocal music that gained wide popularity and became famous amongst the Laotians, with its prominent identity and known as “Lam Tai” is “Lam Sipandon” cultivated from “Lam Soam”. The word “Sipandon” derived from “Si + Pan + Don” each word bearing its own meaning as shown below:

Si = beauty, prosperity

Pan = thousand

Don = island

Therefore, the significant sense of Sipandon is “the prosperity of the inhabitants in those thousand islands, in other words, the song admiring the natural beauty of those islands (Wutisuk Duangchampi, 2004).

As previously stated, Lam Sipandon was developed from the Lam Soam, the development of which was a result of a progress derived from the olden-time palm-leave-bind literatures, originated in Don Soam, one of the big islands in the Mekong River, Mekong Urban, Champasak District. Depicted verses touched upon the beauty of the nature, like the

scenery along those isles of the Mekong Urban. It is believed that the original melodies were rather tardy, unlike in the current time when they are more compact and swift. (Onmaneesorn Thongkhum.1998)

Lowland Lao Song: Lam Salawan

J = 70

Voice

Instrument

8

Voice

Instrument

14

Voice

Instrument

20

Voice

Instrument

o na sa lawan eiy

26

Voice

chay eiy - nong nee fark sieng hong pen korn lam nor song khaow de nor. chay eiy

Instrument

31

Voice

nong phu nao yu dai ka nueng ay yu bor way say jai eiy

Instrument

(“F” = Passing Notes)



Picture 1 The Mor Lam show of the "Si Pan Don".

Photograph recorded by Mr.Krissada Sooksumnieng

Another popular vocal music that gained wide recognition in the Salawan District and was named after the District itself is “Lam Salawan”, derived from the Lam Pitai. Prior to reaching the final name of “Lam Salawan”, it was known as “Lam Somsakidsudti-ao” which was part of the “Luep-pa-soon Message”, the Royal Writing of King Anuwong during the war with Siam. “Lam Salawan” was known in the year 1960 by General Mr.Ma, the Lao Air Marshall who had applied the western music into its original local tunes. (Supachai Singhayabus & Team, n.d.)

Other than those is the vocal music of the Middle Lao main Group, i.e., the Ethnic Tribe of Katu, one of the groups of the Mon-Khmer emigrating from the South-eastern region of India and the Southern region of China respectively. The majority of those immigrants settled in the Southern region of Lao PDR scattered in different urban of Ka-Leum, Dak-jeung, Ta Dang in Xekong District, Lao-ngam Urban in Salawan District and Pakxong & Bajengjaroensook in Champasak District.

The Katu's regime has high persistency in their customs and tradition, including the belief and worship of sacred objects and spirits, via vows/prayers and violation of the tradition, the latter of which is called "kha-lam".

Religious ceremonies of the Katu engaged in musical activities and vocal music for various ceremonies namely the merit making of mother goddess of grain, funeral, a ritual of buffalo slaughter/consumption. Almost similar music is performed, i.e. a variety of vocal music, together with other instruments like drum, flat gongs, Khan, etc. Only Lam-ra-roy and Lam-ya-yua are reserved for funeral ceremonies.

While the role and functions of vocal music are not clearly specified, however, according to the rhythm and melody as well as performance and social-related activities that encompass the vocal music, they can be categorized as follows:

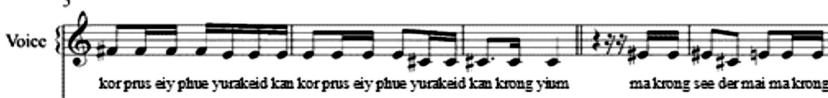
Middle Lao Song: Lam Pa-noj-tan-kong

100 (+ 30) (+ 30)

Voice: 

Instrument: 

5

Voice: 

Instrument: 

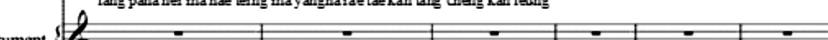
10

Voice: 

Instrument: 

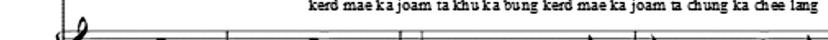
16

Voice: 

Instrument: 

22

Voice: 

Instrument: 

26

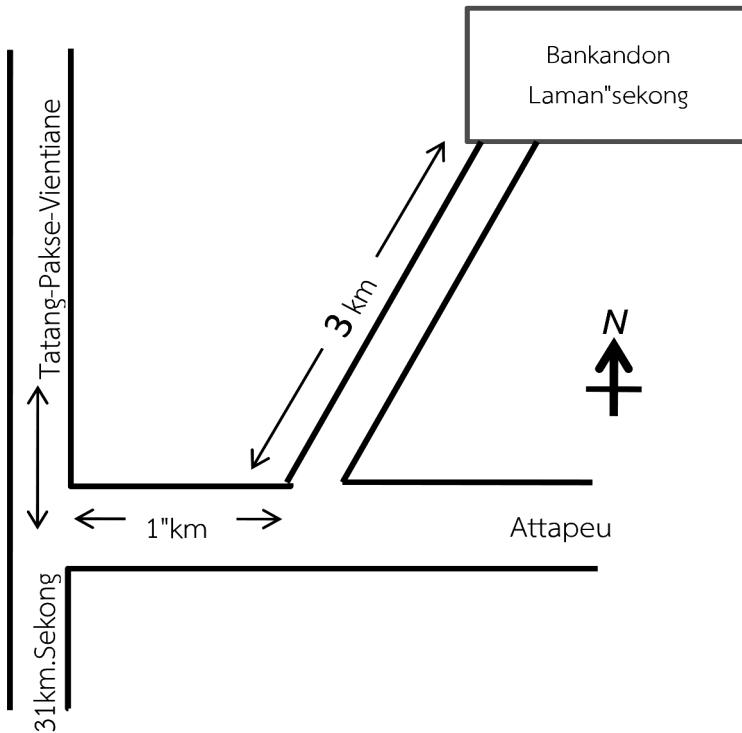
Voice: 

Instrument: 

Ceremonious role

The musical and vocal music duties for ceremony are not found (Lam Soam, Lam Sipandon and Lam Salawan), but were apparent in the Katu's notion related to the buffalo consumption rite by striking the flat gongs.

The Katu tribal community has strong belief in the “buffalo slaughter/consumption ceremony” entailing the significance of the animal affecting their sustainable livelihoods in cultivation. “Buffalo” is regarded as highly valuable resource and is used as an exchange for other items like Pa-had and Pa-noh (flat gongs) which are precious musical instruments.



Picture 2 The map for the route to the Kan don village, the current location of the Katu tribes.

In his interview in 2011 Mr.Hur Gee had cited the importance of the buffalo that not only it is used in farming, but also is the source of protein that can be distributed amongst villagers. Apart from the consumption, the left over organs can be transformed into other commodities such as the skin that is used for the drum head.

Such “buffalo slaughter/consumption ceremony” is found in a range of nature, i.e. treating patients, religious ceremony and/or rectifying the misconduct of certain tradition such as tying of the buffalo to the pole of someone else’s compound. In such a case, the violator is subject to a fine of a buffalo as an offering to that landlord.

The researcher has examined the “buffalo slaughter/consumption ceremony” as part of the annual religious ritual of the Katu Community of the Don Mai Village, the tradition of which takes place on every fifth of March with a feast to celebrate the anniversary of their existing habitation, under the following sequential order:

On the second of March, upon completion of the preparatory work and decoration, after 1600 hours – around sunset, a buffalo is tied up to the pole at a ceremonial pavilion of the village. The villagers leisurely enjoy the party of the night.

On the third of March, at 04.00 hours a group of men of unlimited numbers lead the striking of the flat gongs – Pa-had and Pa-noh.



Picture 3 The Pa-had playing by the Katu tribes.

Photograph recorded by Mr.Krissada Sooksumnien

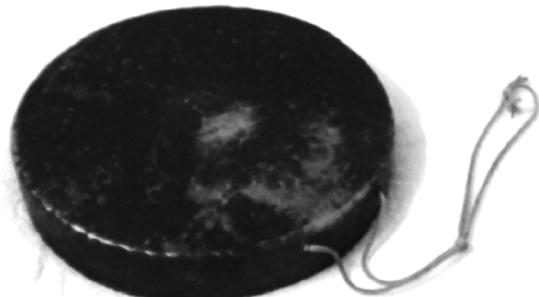
The striking of these flat gongs – Pa-had and Pa-noh, Mr. Hur Gee had shared his view, at the interview given in 2011 that it is considered part of the signals reaching out for everyone's early rise to be ready for full participation in the ritual. Given the importance of the ceremony, a special permission to use “Pa-had”, an outstanding musical instrument, is granted.

At dawn, a buffalo is slaughtered, with a knife stabbed at its neck, then dissected for equal distribution amongst villagers. One portion is retained for luncheon preparation for the entire tribe of the Katu people and visiting guests from other neighbouring tribes, district leaders (governors).

A big feast would start at midday, with the vocal music of the Katu tribe. The musicians and performers are from the local tribe who could recall the rhythm and lyrics carried down from generation to generation, and some could even improvise. They are non-professional traditional singers, only pure amateurs.

At night, a banquet is again taken place at every house in the village. There was the stage in the central area of the village for dance. Tickets are sold to attendants joining in the dance for each round. Vocal music and Lao popular music are played. The foreign music is prohibited for this kind of function.

Flat Gong (Pa-noh)



PAE NGUEN
PHOTOGRAPH BY MR. KRISADA SOOKSUMNIENG

Flat Gong (Pha-had)



Picture 4 The Pa-noh and the Pa-had.

Photograph recorded by Mr.Krissada Sooksumnieng

Entertaining role

The researcher found out that the entertaining role of the vocal music can be seen in every type of such music, including the Lowland Lao and the Middle Lao, the Lao Terng (Katu Tribe). Any competent individuals can take up this vocal music as their primary occupation, with the main intention to entertain the audience and the lyrics may touch upon their daily life, history narration of their past and present soil. The melodies may be plain and ears-catching and easy to sing along, compact and cheerful and rejoiced by all.

Although bearing the same entertaining desire, the basis is different. For the Low-land Lao – the host would hire the singers, out of his own trust and confidence, according to the character and style of the occasion and the price varies, depending on the ability and reputation of the singers and Khan player. The entertainment of the Middle Lao main group derives from the individuals in the society of the Katu Tribe. The singers can perform in various events such as:

Auspicious occasion: House-blessing, Wedding, Rice Dole-out

Religious occasion: Buddhist Lent, Presentation of robes to the monks

Inauspicious occasion: Funeral

With the exception of only Lam-ra-roy and Lam-ya-yua of the Katu Tribe that are exclusively reserved to be performed at the funeral only.

Many factors contributed to entertaining pleasure are as follow:

1. Lyrics

The audience could sense the pleasure through the words of

the songs. The Low-land Lao songs are finely rhymed with well-defined wordings and quite rhythmic while the songs of the Middle Lao main group are less versed, i.e. Sipandon by Tongbang Kaewsuwan.

ເນື້ອຈັນທອນໄດ້ເວົ້າ	ພັດນີ້ເງາຈານແວນ
ຄັນເປັນແຫວນອຍກໃສ່ກ້ອຍ	ເປັນສັກຍອຍກໃສ່ຄວ
ພຸ່ນເດືອຍເອຍ	

Phonetics

Meūx cān thxn dī wēā	phād mī ngeā ngām wæn
khān pēn hæwn xyāk sī kxy	pēn sīxy xyāk sī khx
phūnde sāy xey	

The lyrics said about being suitable partnership and need to be together between two lovers.

The above song clearly proved that Tongbang, the vocal music singer is an impromptu poet whose wordings are well depicted, and perfectly tuned in-between phrases.

Another example of Pa-noj-tan-kong song of the Katu which was sung by Mr.Veena Moonjaikaew.

ຢູ່ຮເກີດກັນກອ ປຽບ ເອຍເພື່ອ ຢູ່ຮເກີດກັນກອ ປຽບ ເອຍເພື່ອ¹
ຢູ່ຮເກີດກັນໂກຮງເຢີມ
ມາໂກຮງສີເຕອະໄມ ມາໂກຮງຊື່ນເຕອະໄມ ເອຍເພື່ອ
..... ມາແຫຼເຕິງ ມາເອິກລາງ ປະນະນາະ ມາແຫຼເຕິງ ມາຍຢ້ວහແຮ
ແດະກັນເດັງ ເຊັກນິ້ນ
ເກີດແປປໂຈນ ດະຄຸກາບຸງ ເກີດແປປໂຈນ ດະຈຸກະໜີ

Phonetics

Yū r keid kən kx prūš xey pheūx yū r keid kən kx prūš xey pheūx
yū r keid kən ko rng yeī m
mā krong sū texa mī mā krong sūn texa mī xey pheūx
..... Mā hæ teing mā xeik lāng pa na neā a mā hæ teing
māy yawh ræ dæa kən deng se ngkənlung
keid mæ pa com da khu kā bung keid mæ pa com da
sung ka sī

The lyrics described the nature of the beautiful forests, mountains and the livelihood of people in which to be involved as well.

A special words-repetitive technique is engaged in composing the Pa-noj-tan-kong song of Katu Tribal group. They are repeat words with a slight touch of rhyme.



Picture 5 The performance of Pa - noj - tan - kong for the Can-blowing of the Katu tribes including with hands clapping stroke by Mr. Vipad the Kandorn village's leader.

Photograph recorded by Mr.Krissada Sooksumnieng

Moreover, people find much pleasure in those songs describing their livelihood, social and locality of both present and past history, i.e. Lam Soam by Mrs. Tongbang Kaewsuwan.

ตามเหลือง เจ้าผู้ต้นทานเลื่อง	
เหลียวเท็นพูดคนเมือง	ไหล่ผ่านดาวน้อยุ่หลายหลาย
ฟังเดอ นางชิชาໄຟຜອ	ขอຈາຕັ້ງຕ່ອ (ໄອຍ່ ນ່ວ)
ໄປແກ່ພົ່ນອົ່ງ ໃຫ້ຈຳແຈ້ງຈື່ອເສີຍ	ສໍາເນົາຍແຫ້ແຫ້ໄ້ ລາວຫລານສີພັນດອນ
ໄພອຍາກເມື່ອນອນຫັ້ນ	ນ້ອງເຊີຍກ້ອນເຫັນອ້າຍ
ເຈີນເດອ ເສີນໄປກິນປາເທັກກ	ເນື້ອໂຈງຫຍາກ (ໄປເດອອ້າຍ)
ຄ້າບໍ່ແຫນງໜ່າຍໜ້າ ເສີນອ້າຍໃຫ້ແມ່ຍ້ານ ເສີນໄປກິນຂ້າວດ້ານ ແກ້ວແຄບດອນໂຈງ	ໃຫ້ຢ່າມກັນນອນຫັ້ນ
ແລ້ວຈິ່ງລົງເມື່ອເຊື້ອນ	

Phonetics

Tān hēlūxng cēā p̄hū tān leūxng	
hēlīyw hēn phū dāen meūxng	hīl p̄hān tā wān xyū hīlāy hīlāy
fāng dex nāng si cā p̄hi p̄hx	khx cā tāng tx (xoy t̄x)
p̄i kāe phng phīlāxng hī cā cāng cū x̄seīng	shāneīyng thā thā tī lāw hīlān sī phān dxn
p̄hi xyāk meūx nxn ūxn	hīxng hēīy k ūxn sei n̄xāy
seindex sein p̄i kīn pā tēā kk	meūxng khong hā yāk (p̄i de x̄xāy)
thā b̄ hāenng hīlāy hīlā sei n̄xāy hī māe x̄yān	sein p̄i kin khāw dān thāw thāb dxn
khong lāew cùng l̄ng meūx hēūxn	hī hīw mkān nxn ūxn

The lyrics are said to invite to watch the nature of the land on the islands called " See Phan Dorn " a beautiful and fertile area.

One more characteristic of the song that is very entertaining is the one that directly senses through the audience with great excitement, triggering spontaneous interaction or rebuke to the opponents, thus causing humiliation. However, it is mostly found in the temporization of the Low-land Lao vocal songs. Middle would normally memorize the

existing verses like the Sipandon Song by Mrs. Tongbang Kaewsuwan, Reprimanding songs by Wanna Kaewpilom.

2. Rhythm

The rhythm encompasses those of the chanting of the songs and the musical cadence. In his interview in 2554 BE (2011 BC), Mr. Vipad revealed that there are 2 types of entertaining rhythm.

(i) Plain, and melodious – can be slow-to-medium and/or a solo, without any musical instruments which can be found in the Lam Soam of the Low-land Lao, Kan-trus-kan-til, Pa-noj-tan-kong and Lam Ka-leoy of the Middle. The songs describe the beauty of the nature, general coaching and lullabying.

(ii) Swift beat – fast and stimulating and fun-oriented. The Khan, tube free reed is the main player to control the tempo, associated with drums, cymbal and shaken, which can be found in the Lam Sipandon and Lam Salawan of the Low-land Lao, the La-rien-kan-trus-kan-til and La-loh-ha-tan-joy of the Middle. The songs touch upon the present-day tale, merriment, and courting.

3. Performance

In addition to the above-cited lyrics and rhythm, any song can never be successful in the absence of the singers performed. All are inter-related, mainly from the song itself. The Low-land Lao enjoy direct pleasure from the singers. In the interview given by the singer, Mrs. Kaewsuwan Tongbang in 2011, it was emphasized that the success of the singer, apart from the lyric and rhythm, the ability of perform and entertain well, is inevitable.

The highly capable singers with long years of experience need to be observant, attentive to the audience' interest and desire and inviting their participation in the songs performed. Interaction with the audience through courting and teasing songs, encouraging them to join in the dancing

and singing with the singers, making use of their own talent, would not only add more pleasure to the entire show, but also merit in getting monetary prize from the audience as well.

Middle Lao are entirely opposite from the Lowland Lao. Their pleasure does not start from the listening or watching the show, but rather from the tribal activity from the feast, to the degree that when all are in the drunken mode, one would begin singing, and more would join in, with whatever musical instruments that might be readily available.

Other roles/functions

1. Sustaining and dissemination of religious/cultural/ceremonial belief and tradition as well as preservation of social norm as their livelihood bears deep religious bond. Furthermore, it is significant in determining private and social vision, i.e. faith in the good and bad deeds, and leading one life's dutifully.

2. Serving as a mean of communication to the locals and imparting knowledge and understanding to those illiterates in the community. Interlocutory approach had proven the best practice. Vocal music is a media reaching out to the society as a journalist, a press conveying to non-specific audience/recipients. Through vocal music, people at the bottom level are seamlessly furnished with the news update of the country, inclusive of the chronicles from past to present as a historical record of time.

3. Acting as educational role model – as there was no proper curriculum in place, self-acquiring learning process in gaining knowledge was formulated amongst the society members where everyone was obliged to have common learning system in order to get to know the world on a self-natural basis as well as by observations and to apply in daily life as applicable. There were no fixed rules and regulations. Syllabus did not exist and the only non-formal education leading to ethical

behaviour and loyal to their tribal ancestry was commonly adopted. Vocal music could be regarded as a school or teacher with its mobility to different communities sharing knowledge to the people – be they geography, history, doctrines/faith/belief, moral standard, ideas, etc. Furthermore, composition of any rhyming lyrics is a good course of expertise in poetry sphere and at the same time enhancing general knowledge on a regular basis and the vocal music singer would become a resource person and could pass on his skill to others.

4. Supporting country's unity political notion – through various performances which are influential to the audience/listeners and the views expressed by the vocal music singers, including politics and government tend to be widely acceptable by people at large. Therefore, the Government would find this purposeful that they represent the country as effective public relations tools conveying the Government's concept and principle to the mass. Mr.Wanna Kaewpilom, a vocal music singer stated that during the conflicting regime, vocal music carried out a publicized role to the extent that people were aroused to comply with the Government, resulting in the exemption of those vocal music singers from being drafted and sent to the battle fields but operating as an official Government's Public Relations Bureau.

Conclusion/ Discussion/ Suggestions

The transfer of knowledge and skills of the vocal music is informal, independent, and self-promoted, based on the oral form of self-interest and talents. Modern lyrics are written to reach people of all ages and groups. In other words, it links idea of people of each level together, to ably communicate and to bring out peace and happiness in the society, connecting the minds of people of various classes to co-exist mutually in harmony. The government should pay more attention in prioritizing

to these cultural art with the systematical research study , provide the promotional supports the performances show in the next other occasions and induce to the teaching process for the sustainable succession.

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