

KLon Lam Text and Watlam Singing Style of the National Artist

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— *Review of* —
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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the followings : 1) To examine the elements of the *Klonlam* texts 2) to investigate the *Watlam* singing styles of the national artists 3) To develop the guidelines for preservation, transmission of the *Klonlam* texts and *Watlam* singing styles of the national artists. Research areas were Ubonratchatanee ,Khonkaen and Roiet Provinces in Thailand. Field data were collected from observation and interviews.The data were examined by means of a triangulation technique, analyzed according to research purposes and research results were presented by means of a descriptive analysis.

The research results revealed that the components of the national artists *Klonlam* could be divided into 3 types: *Klonrai*,*Klontud* and *Klonyern* or *Klonnithan* In addition,two *Watlam singing styles*,*Wat Khonkaen Style* and *Wat Ubon Style*,were discovered.Lastly, some quielines to preserve and transmit *Klonlam* and *Watlam* were suggested in this study.

Keywords : KLon Lam Text , Watlam performance,

Introduction

Lam Phaya is the origin of many types of Lao performing arts. It is traditional in Lam Phaya performance, a male performer sings a lyric to ask a female performer and the female performer also answers him through a lyric. These responsive lyrics are developed to many kinds of lyrics for singing in Lam performances. At present, some branches of Lam Phaya were called in the names of Lam Maha Xai, Lam Ban Sok, Lam Khon Savan and others. Each kind of Lam performance needs khaens accompaniment for enhancing an entertaining atmosphere so singing voice plays a role as a swimmer and khaens accompaniment plays a role as water. In a Lam performance, the audience can exchange a jok called Soi with the performer in order to make a friend with each other.

Musical performance of Luang Prabang people consists of three people, one plays the khaens, one sings lyrics, and another plays the claves. Total musical tones of the musical performance are sweet and gentle. The body of the khaens consists of 16 tubes of reeds arranged in a socket made of sandalwood, on this socket has a hole for blowing, when a musician blows the hole and touches fingers along the holes on the reed tubes, it produces a wide variety of sounds. The Lao khaens and the Thai khaens are not different both their forms, functions, and sounds (Henri Mouhot. 1968).

The distinct differences between an Isan Lam performance of northeastern people of Thailand and a Lao Lam performance are lyrics used for

singing, melodies of *khaens* accompaniments, musical arrangement, and movement of the *Khaen* player. Generally, the Lao *khaens* Players and the Lao – folk singers usually perform on the stage in the posture of sitting but the Thai *khaens* players and the Thai – folk singers only perform on the stage in the posture of standing and move around the stage freely (Duangchampi Wuttisuk. 2008 : 11)

The research concerning instruction element of the *klonlam* texts, Investigating the *watlam* singing styles of the national artists and the guidelines for preservation, transmission of the *klonlam* texts and *watlam* singing styles of the national artists. Some examples of the research which conducted the topics alike this are the research entitled Lao Poetics : Internal Rhyme in the Text of Lam Siphandone Perform of Carol J. Compton (1992), the research entitled Tradition Music of the Lao of Terry E. Miller and Charernchai Chonpairot (1985), the research entitled voyage dans Les Royaumes de Siam, de Laos of Henri Mouhot (1968), the research entitled *Mokhaen* and *Molam* in Isan Region of Charernchai Chonpairot, the research entitled *Khaen Making : A Case study of Tambon Si Kaew, Amphoe Mueang, Changwat Roi Et of Surasak Phimsen* (1989). This research may be a pilot study for other researchers to conduct research like this in depth.

Objectives

The purposes of this research were :

1. examine elements of the *klonlam* texts
2. to investigate the *watlam* singing styles of the national artists
3. to develop the guidelines for preservation, transmission of the *klonlam* texts and *watlam* singing styles of the national artists.

Scope of the Study

A methodology of qualitative research was used for this investigation. The elements of the research were as follows :

1. Research contents :
 - 1.1 The examining element of the *klonlam* texts and the *watlam* singing styles of the national artists
2. Research areas :
 - 2.1 Ubonratchatane Province
 - 2.2 Roiet Province
 - 2.3 Khonkaen Province
3. Research sample :
 - 3.1 6 key – informants (academics)
 - 3.2 5 casual informants (*molam* singers)
 - 3.3 7 general informants
4. Research instruments :
 - 4.1 observation form
 - 4.2 interviews questions
5. Research period : One year

The first stage is a documentary investigation, the researchers reviewed related dissertations and documents to answer the research objectives. These dissertations and documents were gathered and categorized as knowledge base for this research. An observation form and an interview form were used as the main instruments.

On the second stage, the interview and observation forms were examined by the experts.

This field study period was about 12 months. The data were collected to respond all research objectives.

The fourth stage is a data collection and analysis, the data were examined and corrected using a triangulation technique. This technique is used to examine the relation between situations and dates, places and persons.

Results and Discussion

1. The components of the national artists *klonlam* could be divided into 3 types : *klonrai*, *klontud* and *klonyern* or *klonnithan*

1.1 *klonrai*

- frequently used at the beginning of *molam* performance
- usually consisted of 3-5 syllables

1.2 *klontud* - also called “*klonkarb*”

- usually written in phrases
- no limitation of the number of phrases or stanzas

1.3 *klonyern*

- limited the number of phrases (4 phrases per stanza)
 - usually consisted of 7-12 syllables per phrases
 - specified the falling tone
 - the final word of the first phrases is rhythmic with the first word of the next
 - used in both “*lam thang san*” and “*lam thang yao*” performances
- The melody of *klonlam* was classified into 2 categories : *lam thang san* melody and *lam thang yao* melody

1) *Lamthang san* melody

- no vocalization except at the beginning
- fast and upbeat melody

2) *Lamthang yao* melody

- long vocalization (homesick, brokenhearted)
- conveyed sad emotions
- slow melody (express sadness)
- ended with the word “oh la na euey”

3) Context of *klonlam* was separated into 2 parts :

- Secular part (love, knowledge, entertainment, traditions)
- Religious part (dharma lessons)

2. The *watlam* singing styles of the national artists

2.1 *wat khonkaen* style

- fast and upbeat rhythm
- usually ended unexpectedly

2.2 *wat ubon* style

- slow rhythm
- used sweet and gentle words language
- soft dynamic

3. Preservation and transmission of *klonlam* and *watlam* of the national artists

3.1 Preservation of *klonlam* and *watlam*

3.1.1) developed the knowledge of the *molam* artists.

3.1.2) created the community involvement

3.1.3) The support from the government

- provided good welfare for local *molam* singers
- praised and honored successful *molam* artists

3.2 Transmission of *klonlam* and *watlam*

3.2.1) added *molam* practice into educational curriculum

3.2.2) Invited knowledgeable national artists to teach in schools, organizations, community centers, learning centers, universities, local cultural centers, etc.

This research focused on a field study through observation and an interview about the phenomena which were related to research objectives. In terms of the element of the *klonlam* texts, the *watlam* singing styles of the national artists and the guidelines for preservation, transmission of the *klonlam* texts and *watlam* singing styles of the national artists., indicated that the achievement depended on a students' intention.

Conclusion

The research aimed to develop the guidelines for preservation, transmission of the *klonlam* texts and *watlam* singing styles of the national artists in Ubonratchatane, Khonkaen and Roiet Provinces in Thailand. It is not only suitable for Roiet Province, but exists. also suitable for neighboring countries where *Molam Klon*. These findings might be beneficial for both state and private organizations that they can adapt some data in this research to be used in the future.

Significance of the study

- 1.To raise the awareness of Thai people especially for Thai youths to see the values and help preserve Esan folk
- 2.To preserve the uniqueness and the civilization of Thai arts and culture

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