

Khaen: An Application of Isan Local Wisdom for Conservation Revitalization and Development of Raw Materials and Khaen Making for Value-Added Culture

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Abstract: Problem statement: The electricity in recent time, the raw materials for making “Khaen” (Lao reed mouthorgan) were decreased. The Reed Mouthorgan manufacturing was a high wisdom heritage. The objective of this research was to study the following issues: (1) the history of Reed Mouthorgan musical instrument, raw material and Reed Mouthorgan manufacturing in Esan Region. (2) The state of problems in conserving, rehabilitating and developing the raw material and manufacturing Reed Mouthorgan in recent time. (3) The application of local wisdom in conserving, rehabilitating and developing raw material and Khaen Making for creating additional cultural value by collecting data from documents and field work information in Roi-et, Nakon-panom, Mookdahan, Kalasin, Jantaburi, Surin and Chiayapum Provinces by using technique in surveying, observing, interviewing and focus group discussion. **Approach:** The samples were 86 people. The research findings were presented by descriptive analysis. For the background and history of ancient musical instrument “Reed Organ” as the blowing type, it was found in many countries in Asia. For “Reed Organ” in Esan, there were evidences at wall painting and literature. Most of raw materials were from natural product and synthesis. The famous source of Reed Organ was in “Roi-ed Province. There was no evidence of the age it started. At Nakon-panom Province, it started about 70 years ago. The problem situations of conservation, rehabilitation and development of raw material. Making Khaen in the present time, the raw material, when natural resources was destroyed. **Results:** As a result, every kind of raw material using for manufacturing Reed Mouthorgan decreased until almost being in crisis. For the silver and bronze coin, the price were high and scarce. It would be lacked of in future. For the state of Reed Mouthorgan manufacturing, 8 Khaen makers were selected. It found that the Reed Mouthorgan manufacturers from Roi-ed and Nakon-panom had different techniques. The quality of Khaen sound included different strength and weak point. It was caused from their teachers’ knowledge transferring to them and their direct experience as a Reed Mouthorgan manufacturing. For the inheritance of Reed Mouthorgan manufacturer’s occupation, the application of local wisdom in conserving, rehabilitating and developing raw material and Reed Mouth-organ manufacturing in order to create additional cultural value. It found that the raw material from wood and plant could be reproduced by technique in cultivating seed, root, soaking a grafting in water and cultivating tissue. For raw material from animals, there were, for example, buffalo’s horn and elephant’ bone. This kind of raw material was based on the existence of both kinds of animals according to cultural relationship. For the dammar, it could be nurtured and reproduced. But, appropriate context should be chosen. For metal using for Reed Mouth-organ manufacturing for quality reed organ. When it was analyzed, found that the silver coin included metal for 99%. The bronze coin included copper for 95%, tin for 4% of tin and 1% of zinc. For Reed Mouth-organ manufacturing, the body of knowledge in selecting each manufacturer’s Reed Mouth-organ with better quality. For the cultural additional value aspect, it included 6 aspects: business aspect, social aspect, cultural aspect, Aesthetics aspect, inspirational aspect and environmental aspect. **Conclusion/Recommendations:** The research findings should be used in planning for solving problem of raw material shortage, for example, growing dammar, extending area for growing Ku Khaen Tree and cooperation for ordering metal to manufacture the valve of Khaen from factory in order to use in future. The workshop should be organized for the Khaen

Manufacturers' manufacturing in Esan Region since the famous Khaen Manufacturers had various kinds of knowledge and techniques. Most of them were old. So, sharing of knowledge was needed and it should be urgent performed as data base using for developing quality of Khaen musical instrument for both lines of manufacturers in the next generation. The workshop in cultivating dammar should be organized because it was the raw material nearly be in crisis before other things. Moreover, it was economic creature to increase the income in another way for community members. The content should be included in local curriculum as a part in planning for solving problem of raw material in manufacturing long period of quality Reed Mouthorgan.

Key words: Khaen, Khaen making, application, culture, isan local wisdom, conservation, revitalization, development, raw materials, value-added

INTRODUCTION

Khaen or Mouth-organ is a musical instrument in Mouth-Organ line. It was related to cultural thinking system for a long period of time in Indo-china Ocean. According to evidence appearing on the ceremonial kettle drum surface of Dongson cultural in Vietnam, it was in old age approximately 800 years before Christ Era (Etr Harich-Schneider, 1973: 125). According to old record of China, Khaen, in 2154, stated that before Christ, Wang Tee Emperor sent the expert "Ling Lune" to the western mountain area for cutting the bamboo stalk to manufacture the musical instrument as a Chinese Reed Mouthorgan or Sheng. Later on, European imitated manufacturing Reed Mouthorgan, Harmonica and Accordion as China. The musical instrument like Reed Mouthorgan was still be used in to Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Mianmar, Thai, Lao, Cambodia and Indonesia. The eastern countries like Iraq, Iran^[2]. Therefore, Reed Mouthorgan was one of the oldest musical instrument in the world.

Reed Mouthorgan was a popular musical instrument in Esan. Now, there were both old and practicing Reed Mouthorgan Manufacturers about 500 people. Seven kinds of raw material had to be used including: metal for manufacturing reed, Ku Khaen bamboo, Kee Sood, Tao Khaen Teak, Kiang Sub Lin, shell lime. The substance tying Reed Mouthorgan was a kind of medicinal vine and Kla Tree. The large amount of them had to be used. Its value was approximately 5,000,000 baths. There was a problem that many kinds of raw material especially Ku Khaen Tree importing since it started to deforest Hia Bamboo Forest for the fruit of economic tree imitating Thailand. The second order was the ancient coin using for manufacturing the reed and dammar or Kee Sood. These problems reflected future serious problem. Besides, the community produced other kinds of local musical instrument most. The instruments were sold throughout the country and expert items for foreign countries.

In recent time, there was an increasing need for Reed Mouthorgan and other kinds of local musical instrument. It was caused from promotion of Esan Local Culture to be widely used. Moreover, the local curriculum was determined in many levels of educational management. There was a favorably received trend in Esan Culture causing from entertaining media. These were major issues for applying local wisdom again. As a result, there was an increasing power in buying. So, the production occurred. On the contrary, the imported substance to process of manufacturing Reed Mouthorgan decreased based on the changing of ecological system context. Natural resources as raw material were decreased. Moreover, there were some items of law which didn't facilitate the raw material use. Therefore, it was a serious problem and more and more problems growing up. So, the researcher saw the situation that should be conducted research in order to find guidelines for solving problems and utilizing those who manufactured the Reed Mouthorgan in Esan region as well as motivating the villagers in conserving their own good wisdom leading to stability of natural culture in the future.

Purposes and objective: The purposes of this were to (1) the History and background of Reed Mouthorgan Musical Instrument, raw material in manufacturing Reed Mouthorgan in Esan Region. (2) The State of problems in conserving, rehabilitating and developing the raw material and manufacturing Reed Mouthorgan in recent time. (3) The application of local wisdom in rehabilitating and developing the raw material and manufacturing Reed Mouthorgan for creating the additional cultural value.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population and sample: The population included 86 people living in Nakon-panom, Mookdahan, Kalasin,

Jantaburi, Surin and Chaipayume Provinces of Thailand.

Instruments: Data collection in field work study by using instruments including: Survey Form, Structured Interview, Unstructured Interview, Participant Observation, Non participant Observation, Focus Group Discussion by taking note and video tape recording. Data were analyzed by Triangulation for investigating correctness of information.

Data analysis: The data analysis results were subsequently presented by means of a descriptive analysis.

RESULTS

- The history and background of Reed Mouth-organ, raw material and Reed Mouth-organ manufacturing in Esan were known
- The cause of recent problem in conserving, rehabilitating, developing of raw material and Reed Mouth-organ manufacturing in Esan
- The information for application of local wisdom in conserving, rehabilitating and developing raw material, as well as Reed Mouth-organ manufacturing for creating additional cultural value

DISCUSSION

The history and background of Reed Mouth-organ started before Christ Era. It was a musical instrument widely used in Asia as well as a popular musical instrument from commoner to royal court. It played an important role in ceremony and entertainment. The oldest place manufacturing Reed Mouth-organ in Thailand was See Kaew Chuang Community producing the coin using in producing reed spreading to Esan. Now, manufacturing Reed Mouth-organ has boomed. It was supported by Picken *et al.*^[1] study manufacturing Reed Mouth-organ in North Eastern Region of Thailand. The content included the production of coin in the 9th Reign by using factor analysis, found the metal as bronze, copper, tin and zinc.

The state of problems regarding to conserving, rehabilitating and developing raw materials as well as manufacturing Reed Mouth-organ in Esan Region, found that both fields of research study including Roi-ed and Nakon-panom Provinces, there was difference in state of problem both for raw material and manufacturing of Reed Mouth-organ. There was a problem in raw material. It was expected that the crisis state would happen in the near future since there was a

decrease of natural resource. It was support by^[4] study titled “the wood for manufacturing 10 kinds of Esan local musical instrument, was decreased”. So, it was necessary to find out how to conserve forest for manufacturing musical instrument in the future.

For the application of local wisdom in conserving, rehabilitating and developing raw materials as well as manufacturing Reed Mouth-organ for creating additional value. When the crisis happened, it was indispensable to find out how to solve problem by applying local wisdom in developing the raw materials as well as finding something to replace. It was supported by^[3] study titled “A Study of Techniques and Steps in manufacturing Esan Musical Instrument from Hevea brasiliensis”. It found that Hevea brasiliensis could be made of 6 kinds of musical instruments: drum, well-ventilated harp, electric harp, bass harp and Pong Lang. The quality was nearly the same as raw materials used by Esan people.

CONCLUSION

For the history and background of Reed Mouth-organ musical instrument in blowing type, it was nearly the same as Mouth-organ of China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Loa and Esan Region of Thailand. For Reed Mouth-organ in Esan, it was found at the wall painting and literature. Most of raw material received from natural resource and synthesis. There were 3 groups: (1) the metal using for making reed, including silver, copper and brass. (2) The teak and plant including Ku Kan making from small size bamboo, rough surface of Sa bamboo using for polishing the reed, Tao was made from root of Burmese rose wood, core of Rak Nam Kliang wood. The raw materials using for tying Ku Kan together were Kla and medicinal vine. (3) The raw materials getting from animals, included the buffalo’s horn and elephant’s bone using as chopping block for chopping reed. The dammar was used for merging Ku Kan and Tao together, the ribbed clam using for making lime using for stopping the reed of mouth organ. There were no evidences from the background of Reed Mouth-organ that what age it started. But, it was one of the famous place for manufacturing Reed Mouth-organ in Esan Region. Its center was at Ban-see-kaew. In recent time, the number of manufacturers were reduced only 12 people. For Reed Mouth-organ manufacturing in Nakon-panom Province, its center was at Tareau Sub-district since 70 years ago. Later on, there were increasing number of those who were interested in manufacturing Reed Mouth-organ. Now, there were approximately 500 manufacturers.

For the current state of problem in conserving, rehabilitating and developing the raw material as well as manufacturing the Reed Mouth-organ, for raw materials, when they were destroyed, every kind of raw materials using for manufacturing the Reed Mouth-organ were decreased until almost reaching crisis stage. For Ku Kan Trees grew at Pu-pan Mountain, they were taken care by the government and under Conservative Forestry Preservation Act. So, they couldn't be openly used. Consequently, they were stealthily cut some time. Another number of Ku Kan Trees came from The Office of Loa Commission of Counter Corruption. The problem of international law. Besides, it found that the Laotians starting in opening up a trail of forest for growing economic plants. So, it directly affect the manufacturer group of Thailand. For the silver and bronze coin, the price was very high. They were scarce and would be shortage in the future. For the problem in manufacturing Reed Mouth-organ, eight famous manufacturers were selected for the study, found that those who came from Roi-et and Nakhon-panom Provinces, including different techniques. The quality of sound from Reed Mouth-organ included different strength and weakness. It was caused by their knowledge transferred by their teachers as well as their own experience. For inheritance occupation of manufacturer group in Roi-et Province, there were little number of inheritors. For Nakhon-panom Province, there were a many manufacturers because the community people gave an importance to it. Besides, there was a support from some work units. For selling and marketing, both sources had been continuously ordered.

For the application in using local wisdom for conserving, rehabilitating and developing raw materials as well as manufacturing the Reed Mouth-organ for creating additional cultural value, found that the raw materials from wood and plants including Hia bamboo, Sa bamboo, Burmese rosewood, big Calotropis gigantea, Indian mulberry, Kla and medicinal vine, they were reproduced by technique in cultivating seed, rootstock, soaking a cutting root, cultivating tissue. For the raw materials from animals included buffalo's horn and elephant's bone, this kind of existence of both kinds of animals based on cultural relationship. For dammars, they could be fed and reproduced. But, the context should be appropriate. Quality metal using for manufacturing reed were analyzed its element, found that silver coin included 99% of metal. For bronze coin included 95% of copper, 4% of tin and 1% of zinc. For Mouth-organ manufacturing, body of knowledge, technique, advantage of each manufacturer were selected as a guideline in manufacturing Reed Mouth-

organ with better quality. The additional cultural value included 6 aspects including: Business aspect, social aspect, cultural aspect, Aesthetics aspect, inspirational aspect and environmental aspect.

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