

The Study of Knowledge about String I-san Folk Music

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—Review of—
**Integrative
Business &
Economics**
—Research—

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aimed at: 1) examining *Technique* of playing *I-san* Folk Music; 2) investigating the *Lai Pleang* of the folk artists; and 3) exploring the guidelines for preservation, transmission of *Technique* and *Lai Pleang* of these *I-san* Folk Music. The data were collected through documentary study, indepth interviews and observation from 4 key-informants, 9 casual informants, and 6 general informants. The results of the study showed that the structures of the folk artists consisted of showed that there were 8 techniques used in *I-san* playing; these included : string springing, string vibrato, string touching, sound embellishing, string sliding, bow striking, and forte-pianissimo. Each technique was executed differently and accordingly to different tempo. *Lai Pleang* of I-san folk have 2 group these included: north *I-san* folk and south I-san folk. *Song for vocal, for ensemble and for solo*. Preservation and transmission of *Technique* and *Lai Pleang* of *I-san* Folk music could be done through bringing a variety of *I-san* performances. The government should give support to artists for their well-beings, giving financial support for the youths who want to become professional artists. The government should help artists to establish their own organization for their strength, stability, and honor as other professions. In conclusion the results of the study can be used in terms of the instruction and the transmission of cultural arts as well as for national security in which the government should give the support and take a good care of professional artists .

Keywords: Knowledge , String *I-san* Folk Music

Introduction

There are many types of local *I-san Saw*. They are called in accordance with the materials used to make the sound hole. If it is made of coconut shell are called. "*Sawkapow* or *Sawkala*".

If it is made of bamboo stripes are called "*Sawbang*". If it is made from bucket are called "*Sawpeep*". They are string folk *I-san* instruments, played by bowing like the *Saw-U* and the *Saw duang*. But the *Sawpeep* bows are separated from the instrument. Unlike the *Sawkapow* and the *Sawbang* that they have. They are played for entertainment and an auspicious occasion.

Knowledge about string folk *I-san* Music. They rarely record their own knowledge in the forms of written materials so it can be disappeared in no time. This made me interested in studying about *I-san* music to study the *Technique* of playing *I-san* Folk Music, to study the melody of *I-san* folk artist. Include study guidelines for the conservation of heritage and inherited wisdom.

Moreover, this precious kind of music deserves to be conserved if not it will soon disappear. As you may know, *I-san* folk music has rarely been recorded in any forms. And all eight *I-san* folk artists are very old. If we do not do something to keep up with their wisdom, we will definitely lose all of their knowledge in a short time.

1. Purposes and Objectives

The purposes of this research were as the following:

1. To investigate the *Technique* of playing *I-san* Folk Music
2. To investigate the *Lai Pleang* of the folk artists
3. To exploring the guidelines for preservation, transmission of *Technique* and *Lai Pleang* of these *I-san* Folk Music.

2. Materials and Methods

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

1. Research contents:
 - 1.1 Technique of playing *I-san* Folk Music
 - 1.2 To investigate the *Lai Pleang* of the folk artists
 - 1.3 To exploring the guidelines for preservation, transmission of *Technique* and *Lai Pleang* of these *I-san* Folk Music.
2. Research areas:
 - 2.1 Roiet Province
 - 2.2 Surin Province
 - 2.3 Mahasarakam Province
 - 2.4 Kalasin Province
 - 2.5 Amnatcharern Province
 - 2.6 Ubonratchatanee Province
3. Research sample:
 - 3.1 4 key – informants
 - 3.2 9 casual informants
 - 3.3 6 general informants
4. Research instruments:
 - 4.1 documentary
 - 4.2 observation
 - 4.3 indepth interviews
5. Research period: One year

The first stage is a documentary investigation, the researchers searched dissertations and documents concerned for understanding and answering all research objectives. These dissertations and documents were gathered and categorized as a base of knowledge for this research. An observation form and an interview form were based on the information from this base.

The second stage is a creation of research instruments, an observation and an interview form were created in this stage. All forms were examined by the experts and then these forms were improved according to the advice of the experts.

The third stage is a field study, after all appointments had been already made, the researchers began to conduct a field study according to the dates of appointments in the four sites of research areas. This field study period was about 12 months. The data were collected for responding all research objectives.

The fourth stage is a data correction and research synthesis, the data were examined and corrected by using a triangulation technique. This technique used for examining the relation between situations and dates, situations and places, and situations and persons. When everything was corrected, the researchers began to make a research report until it had been finished.

The fifth stage is a presentation, the researchers presented a research report in the presence of research committee. A descriptive analysis was presented through multimedia. Afterwards, the research report was published by the university press.

Results and Discussion

The Study of Knowledge about String *I-san* Folk Music. The results are as follows:

1. Technique of playing string *I-san* Folk Music

Appearance of musicians (*So Kapow*) include:

1) Hold the bow with your right hand. Open the palm of the hand and grab at the end of the bow with your pointed finger underneath. The middle finger insert into the bow between the bow and the horse tail pin. While the little finger and the ring finger are supporting.

2) The scrape of a bow on a fiddle by passing the energy from the shoulder to the elbow without using the force from the wrist. This would make the bowing smoothly and produce articulate and beautiful sound.

3) Hold the body of the *So* with the left hand between the thumb and the pointed finger about one inch lower from what we call “Rad - ok” in order to slide your finger on the string up and down easily. Catch the rope about 1 inch your finger point to your body without bending your wrist.

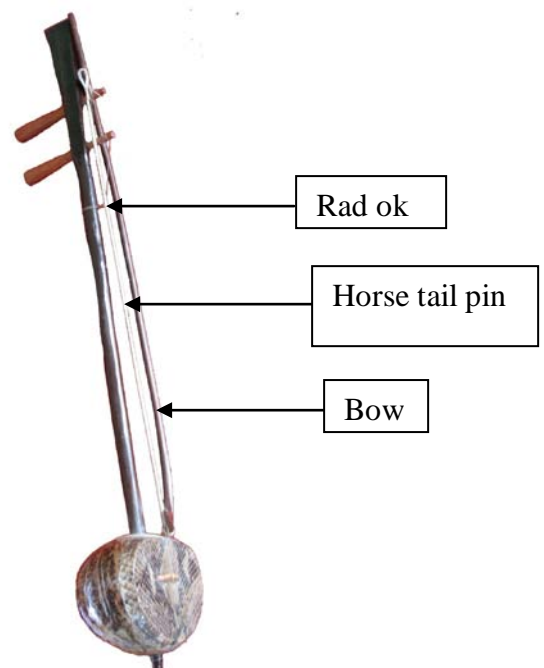
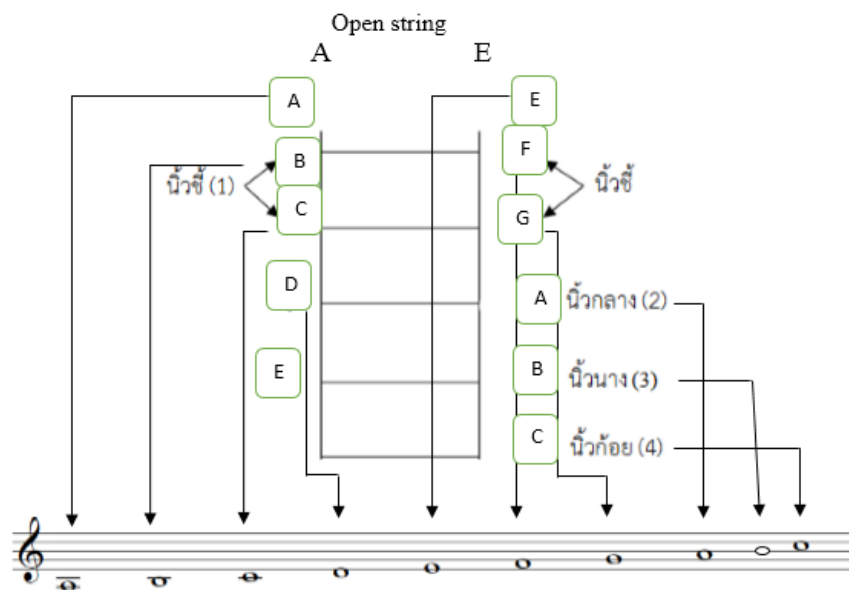


Figure 1 player and *So Kapow*



4) Normally, most players like to sit on the chairs while playing. Put the *So* skull in front of your left leg. The player will use only three fingers: the fore finger, the ring finger and the little fingers for playing and use the middle finger to only support. Use the inner part of your finger to switch the note of the song.

Techniques of How to Play the *So Kapow* consist of:

1. There are two ways of bowing: out bowing in bowing and double bowing
2. Sound embellishing
3. Bowing touching are used only with open string
4. There are two ways of flipping: finger flipping and bow flipping
5. Bowing vibrato
6. Bowing sliding

showed that there were 8 techniques used in *I-san* fiddle playing; these included: string springing, string vibrato, string touching, sound embellishing, string sliding, bow striking, and forte-pianissimo (Direction to perform first loudly, then softly. Often abbreviated). Each technique was executed differently and accordingly to different tempo.

Bow is a thin wooden stick, along which is stretched a flat band of horsehairs, which is drawn over the strings of the *So Kapow*, and various other stringed instruments, causing them to sound. Like the instruments themselves, the bow has changed considerably over the years. Originally it had a deep outward curve, like the type of bow used to shoot arrows, which accounts for its name. The stick is usually made of Dang wood (a kind of Thai wood). It comes from the tails of white horses and is rubbed with rosin so as to provide friction when it is drawn over the *So Kapow* strings (without friction between the bow and the strings, the strings would not be made to vibrate and therefore would not sound).

The technique of playing a stringed instrument with a bow, the most important of such modern instruments being the *So Kapow*. There are many ways of using a bow, some of which are indicated in scores by special signs. The two most important are (**in-bow**), which indicates that the bow is to be drawn from the frog toward the point, and (**out-bow**), which indicates that the

bow is to be drawn from the point to the frog. In general, the in-bow is used on accented notes and the out-bow on unaccented notes.

The resonance, or fullness, of a musical tone depends on the presence of another material that is made to vibrate with the original vibrations and reinforce them. In the *So Kapow* the vibrating strings cause the belly to vibrate, reinforcing their tone. In wind instruments like the oboe, the vibrating air column causes itself to vibrate. Resonance is an important consideration for instrument makers; a fine *So Kapow*, for example, must resonate with all of the fundamental tones and their harmonics, providing beautiful and consistent tone quality. Resonance and tone color are further affected by the place in which an instrument is heard.

Sound holes in stringed instruments such as the *So Kapow* and *Pin*, small openings cut into part of the body of the instrument. Sound holes enable the belly, back, or another part of the body to vibrate freely when the strings are played, thus reinforcing their sound. *So Kapow* and *Pin*, and *Pin bass* usually have a pair of sound holes in the belly.

String a thin cord of wire, gut, nylon, or some other material that is made taut by being fastened at

both ends and is caused to vibrate, and therefore sound, by being struck, stroked (bowed), or plucked. Some strings are caused to vibrate indirectly, by means of another vibrating material. The tone quality and pitch of the sound produced depend on the length and thickness of the string, as well as on its surroundings (the presence or absence of factors that will increase, decrease, or otherwise change the string's vibrations). If the string is allowed to vibrate along its entire length, it is termed an open string. If it is allowed to vibrate along only a portion of its length,

Stringed instruments a family of musical instruments in which the sound-producing agent is one or more taut strings. The term most often refers to instruments whose strings are bowed (*So Kapow*) or plucked (*Phin*, *Phin bass*). However, it may also be applied to the *Khaen*. In the bowed stringed instruments the individual strings are sometimes referred to by number; the string of highest pitch is called the first string, the next highest the second string, and so on.

The strings are considered the backbone of the ensemble, giving it its characteristic sound. Bands, on the other hand, rarely include any stringed instruments, usually consisting wholly of winds and percussion. In popular and folk music, the plucked strings.

So Pip or So Krapong

So pip or *So Krapong* is a bowed lute that made from available materials. In the old days, a kerosene can was used for making a fiddle soun-box, giving a beautiful sounds. It was used as a solo instrument, playing with a *khaen* mouth organ, or accompanying a *molam* singer. Then, when a new type of can, Halls can, *so krapong* fiddle. A *so krapong* is more popular than *so pip*; this due to its medium size and seet tones. It can be used as a solo instrument, accompanying by *khaen* and *phin*, or accompanying a *lam* singing Appearance of musicians (*So Pip*) include:



Figure 2 Mr.Boonma namoma and *So Pip*

Trua (*So kantruem*)

Trua, *tro*, or *traw* was derived from *saro*, *saz*, or *sarinda* in Sanskrit; it is called *so* in central Thai, *salo*, *talo*, or *thalo* in northern Thai, meaning fiddle or bowed instrument. In Burma it is called *tayo*, *tayaw*, or *ta-yae*. In Surin the fiddle is called *trua*; the most popular type of *trua* in Southern Esan is *trua u* or *trua kantruem*, meaning a *trua* that is used in *kantruem* ensemble. The sound-box of *trua kantruem* is made of coconut-shell. A *trua* is used for accompanying a *jariang* singing; if a *trua* is used for the accompaniment, the *jariang* is called *jariang trua*. In some regions of Southern I-san, truas of different sound-box materials are found, such as, *trua kradong tao* (turtle-shell fiddle) and *trua khao khwai* (buffalo-horn fiddle)

Appearance of musicians (*So kantruem*) include:



Figure 3 Mr.Tongchai samsi with *So kantruem*

So Bang Mai Phai or So Phu-Thai

So bang mai phai, meaning a bamboo tube fiddle, is a *Phu-thai* fiddle. It is made from a bamboo tube with node at each end. The tube acts as both a sound-box and a neck at the same time. A *so phu-thai* has two strings; the string is made of silk, cotton, or wire. Its bow is made of bamboo stick with horse hair. One string is used for melody, while the other is used for drone. Mostly, the two strings are bowed at the same time; and they are tuned in major second. Appearance of musicians (*So bang mai phai*) include :

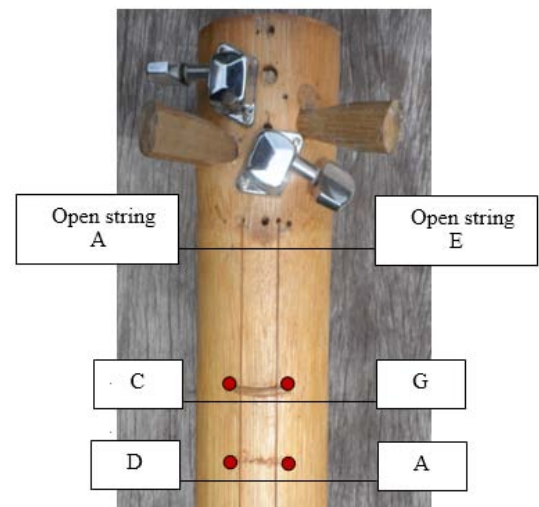


Figure 4 Mr.Sawad suwannatai and *So Bang Mai Phai*

Showed that there were 9 techniques used in *I-san* fiddle playing; these included:

1. Press your finger up and down frequently in order to produce high and low pitches increasingly.
2. For “*Kaan Pra*”, we use only the tip of the middle finger to produce the high and low pitches increasingly on the open strings.

3. Use the ring finger and the middle finger to vibrate the strings in order to make vibrating sounds periodically.
4. Use the fore finger and the ring finger to slide up and down on the string and then draw the bow outwards. Remember that the player can slide on a string at one time, mostly sliding on outer strings.
5. We normally produce “melisma” in order to make listeners amenable to the song.
6. Grab the bow tightly and draw the bow in and out repeatedly and as quickly as possible to produce trembling sounds.
7. To make three sound in one bow, we have two techniques: wipe with your fingers and wipe with your bow.
8. Bow striking, we use a bow to produce “hiccough” sound in order to make the audience feel sad by pulling the bow in and out.
9. We can play the Saw softly and hard while playing without tumbling.



Figure 5 *Phin I-san*

Phin, a plucked instrument, has been used by *I-san* people since ancient time; it is sometimes called *sung* or *krachappi*. The word "*phin*" was derived from or *bin* in Sanskrit, whereas the word *sung* was derived from *saung*, meaning plucked instrument, in Burmese or *sueng* in northern Thai dialect. *Krachappi* was derived from *kachapi*, meaning turtle, in Sanskrit. A *phin* consists of five parts---sound-box, neck, tuning pegs, strings, and plectrum. A *phin* is used as a solo instrument, playing along with a *khaen* mouth organ, *pong-lang* xylophone, or accompanying a *molam* singer.

Characteristics:

- Uses of pentatonic scale
- Playing in an ostinato form
- Accompanied by long drums, bass drums, metal plates, and *Khean*

- Shouts and action are part of the performance

Phin is a three stringed plucked lute; it is tuned as E- A- E or A- D- A Follow as:

G	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E 3
C	A	G	F	E	D	C	B	A
G	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E 1

C	A	G	F	E	D	C	B	A
G	E	D	C	A	G	F	E	D
C	A	G	F	E	D	C	B	A

Two strings are used as melodic strings while the third string is used as a drone string. The drone string is normally plucked along the melodic strings. The music is based on the *khaen* music.

1. Tuning A - E For play song : *Lai Tui, Lai ponglang*

E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D	C	B	A 2
B	A	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E 1

2. Tuning A - D For play song : *Lai rodfaitairang, Lai serngbangfai*

E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D	C	B	A 2
G	F	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D	D1

3. Tuning C - D For play song : *Lai Sudsanana*

G	F	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D	C2
G	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D1

4. Tuning D - D For play song : *Lai Poo pa lan, Katenkon*

G	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D2
G	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D1

5. Tuning E - A For play song : *Lai Voubaksong long lennam*

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B	A	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E 2
E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D	C	B	A 1

Appearance of musicians (*Phin*) include:

For the *phin* playing techniques of each artist, they were different; however, the basic foundation of *phin* playing was similar. These included *phin* holding, pick holding, *phin* string tuning and fingering usages, drone playing, modal changing, special tonal effect making, and tonal embellishing. On the techniques that identified the identity of each artist were as followed: Mr. Bunma Khaowong used technique of palm striking on strings, series of fingering plucking, sliding plucking and finger vibrating touches. Mr Thongsai Thapthanon used technique of resonances and drone effect for each particular *lai* (piece.) Mr. Songsak Pratumsin and Mr. Buncha Chopboon used technique of modal changing in both *lai thang san* and *lai thang yao* modes and used of chordal-style accompaniment.

In conclusion, the *phin* performing techniques of I-san folk musicians were considered as individual artistic capability. These skills were obtained from teachers, observations, memorizations, as well as creative ideas to catch with the tastes of the audience of the time, combining together, and becoming one's own identity. The institutions of all levels should bring in these artists to teach and to pass on the valuable *phin* playing techniques to more students and youth.

1. Hold the pick with your right hand which the thumb is on the pick and the forefinger is under the pick, plucking out and in .This way of plucking created by Mr.Boonma Kaowong.but after artist play the *phin* by plucking up and down.



Figure 6 *Mr.Boonma Kaowong, Mr.Tongsai Tabtanon and Mr.Songsak Pratumsin* play the *phin*

2. *Lai Pleang* of *I-san* folk Music

Lai Pleang of *I-san* folk have 2 group these included:

2.1 *Lai Pleang* for vocal **have** 2 group these included: north *I-san* folk and south *I-san* folk.

1) North *I-san* folk call song is *Lai* included: *Lai lamplern* , *Lai toi*, *Lai phootai*,

Music examples

Lai toi



2) South *I-san* folk call song is *Pleang* included: *Omtook* , *Ayai* , *Krantrum*.

2.2 *Lai Pleang* for ensemble have 2 group these included:

1) North *I-san* included: *Lai lamplern* , *Lai toi kong*, *Lai phootai*, *Lai Ponglang*, *Lai mangpootomdok*. The music in the Mahoree *I-san ensemble* included: *Wai-kru* song, *Brumas haekajad*, *hae prawed*, *Jeen long rua*, *Brumas ram kwuan* song.

Music examples

Lai toi kong



2) South *I-san* included: *Kadpaka* song, *Trood* song, *Happiya* song

2.3 *Lai Pleang* for solo have 2 group these included:

1) North *I-san* included: *Lai annungsuanoi*, *Lai poopalan* , *Lai wuakeunpoo* and *Looktung Molam* song included: *Hongtongkanonglam* , *Kidhodseangso* , *Saonakruan*

2) South *I-san* included: *Ayai* song, *Waikru* song, *Omtook* song,

3. Guidelines for the preservation of knowledge

Problems of *I-san* Folk Music conservation;

- 1) They haven't systematically recorded their pieces of work. Some artists passed away; some who are still a live cannot remember their own pieces of work.
- 2) There are fewer and fewer skillful artists; most of them are aged people
- 3) Those who want to learn about folk music have to memorize the melodies of the songs.

4) The Lack of quality artist

5) They still need more support and promotion from government sectors.

Preservation and transmission of *Technique* and *Lai Pleang* of I-san Folk music could be done through bringing. The government should give support to artists for their well-beings, giving financial support for the youths who want to become professional artists. The government should help artists to establish their own organization for their strength, stability, and honor as other professions.

Traditionally, there was no notation for musicians. Music was transmitted from teacher to student aurally or orally. But nowadays, some simple type of notations are used, especially in school system. Numbers or alphabets may be used for doh, re, mi, fa, soh, la, ti, doh ; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1; or ด, ๑, ม, ฟ, ซ, ล, น, ด

Conclusion

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 instruction process on knowledge about string *I-san* folk Music, it indicated that the achievement of each student depended on a level of intention. This is consistent with *Thisana Khammani* (2012 : 323), she suggested that the achievement of all learners depended on instruction process design of instructor so the instructor should understand learning style of each learner and designed learning aid media which was compatible with the learning style of the learner. *Surasak Phimsaen* (1989 : 80) commented that the transmission of The Study of Knowledge about String *I-san* Folk Music to the learners focused on the person who transmitted its techniques and the quality of Knowledge about string *I-san* folk music used for performing, both perfection would lead to the perfect learning.

Traditionally, there was no notation for musicians. Music was transmitted from teacher to student aurally or orally. But nowadays, some simple type of notations are used , especially in school system. Numbers or alphabets may be used for doh, re, mi, fa, soh, la, ti, doh ; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1; .Traditional music in contemporary environment cannot survive without adaptation. Because the world of the musicians or the composers belongs to the old world, old environment, but the audience belongs to the new world, new environment, new ways of live. It is hard for younger generation to understand and appreciate to art of different epoch. However, there must be a way to improve the situation. This is a promising opportunity for us to get together and exchange our views and our experiences to keep our traditional music alive and well. In conclusion the results of the study can be used in terms of the instruction and the transmission of cultural arts as well as for national security in which the government should give the support and take a good care of professional artists.

Suggestion

1. Suggestions for implementing the findings to good use. This research can be put to learning folk northeast Institutions involved local folk music.

2. Suggestions for further research. Knowledge of folk music east has something to many studies Preservation cannot be done by one person or organization.

Should cooperation between other agencies. Should study guidelines for the preservation of the neighboring countries. To cooperate in international operations. The strengthening of the culture in the region.

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Interviews:

1. Mr. Bunma Kaowong, *I-san* Artist, Kalasin.
2. Mr. Tonghuad Fated, Mahasarakham.
3. Mr. Oon Tomngam, Roi-et.
4. Mr. Sawad Suwannatai, Roi-et.
5. Mr. Tongsai Samsri, Surin.
6. Mr. Tongsai Tabtanon, Ubonratchatani.
7. Mr. Songsak Pratumsin, Roi-et.
8. Mr. Bancha Chopboon, Roi-et.