

# Lam Mahachai: Text and Style People's Democratic Repub

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## Abstract

Research on Lam Mahachai: Text and Style People's Democratic Repub, aims to study: 1) the Characteristics of Lam Mahachai, 2) the Characteristics of the Lam poem text, and the Lam Mahachai poem style. Qualitative research methods were used, including document and field data collection. Field data collection was interviews, observations, and focus groups in Lao PDR, with 14 key informants providing information for verification. The research used triangulation to ensure accuracy in analyzing data according to the set objectives and presented the research results in a descriptive and analytical form. The findings showed that the characteristics of the Lam poem text include the Lam Phaya poem style with content divided as follows: The poem text pays homage to teachers, professors, and listeners and portrays interactions between male and female Mor Lam. Lam melodies, or Lam Mahachai style, are associated with specific language accents and can be divided into four main melodies which are: Lam Mahachai Phonewa (original melody), Lam Mahachai Phonemee (middle melody), Lam Mahachai Yao (Mahachai Nong Bok), and Lam Mahachai Tha (or Lam Mahachai along the Mekong River). Additionally, the Khan melody helps punctuate the rhythm, allowing Mor Lam performers to contemplate verses and rest their voices between performances. Each Khan is also responsible for setting the tone for the Mor Lam performance, as the Mor Lam's sound serves as the foundation. Mor Khan must select a Khan with a sound that matches the scale of Mor Lam. Therefore, for each performance, Mor Khan must prepare a Khan corresponding to the number of Mor Lam's sound scales. The structure of the Lam Mahachai melody is divided into four parts: 1) The lead melody, which is a specific melody played by an introduction Khan performer, sets the tone for Mor Lam. 2) Lam Kern serves as the beginning of Mor Lam, consisting of a short dance of approximately 3 - 10 verses in harmony with the melody of the Khan. The content of the Lam poem text serves as an introduction to connect with the subsequent section. 3) The main Lam story shares the same melody as Lam Kern but is longer and includes verse content extending from Lam Kern. 4) The ending of the Lam shares the same

melody as the beginning and the main Lam story but comprises only one stanza. Characteristics of the Lam melody and Khan melody of Mahachai are similar throughout the whole poem text, with only some differences, including 1) The lead melody consists only of the Khan, with no Lam. 2) A descending rhythm occurs at the end of the introductory melody. Both the sound of Lam and the sound of Khan shift to the 4th tone of the group of melodies. 3) The ending melody of the Lam is only one stanza long. The last stanza slows down the rhythm and changes the melody to the 4th tone of the Lam Mahachai melodies group. There are two types of sound-producing media: the singing voice and the Khan voice, which is a free-tongue instrument. The Khan's voice uses a five-tone system similar to the Pentatonic System to create a melody that connects with a steady rhythm and slows down at the end. The beginning and ending melodies of the skin are characterized by Homophony Drone Harmony, with a regular rhythm and no rhythmic instrument used.

**Keywords:** Lam Mahachai, Folk Music, Lao Music, Lao PDR.

A vocal poem and Lam are the most popular performing arts in Laos and are important for preserving and restoring ancient vocabulary, ancient literature, and ancient poetry, spreading Buddhism, and preserving the original melody, ancient musical instruments, Lao melodies, and written language. Mor Lam is required to use a poem text called "Klon Lam". Klon Lam or Lam poetry must contain words that convey a clear meaning to the listener with melodious rhyme and beautiful style. Therefore, it can be seen that Lam is not just a performing art that provides entertainment but is a factor that has the power to help integrate various branches of Lao culture into one cohesive (Charoenchai Chonpairoj, 1983).

Lao people have 12 different names for vocal poems and Lam (Singing) which are widely known. Some names were derived from districts (such as Lam Salavan), some from villages (such as Lam Tang Wai), and some were given according to ethnic groups (such as Kab Tai Dam). Five types begin with the word "Kab" and are prevalent in the northern region, which is separated by a barrier of mountains. This geographical division often leads to communication difficulties and results in distinct classifications, highlighting their special characteristics. Each type of Kab performer has a different performing style. Kab Ngum (located along the Ngum River in the north or northeast

of Vientiane Province), Kab Tum Luang Prabang (found in Luang Prabang Province), Kab Sam Nuea (found in Sam Nuea Village, Hua Phan Province), and Kab Tai Dam (named after the ethnic group living in the central northern region). Additionally, the prefix "Lam" usually refers to the singing style of people in the south, particularly in the central plains near the Mekong River. These areas are usually easy to travel and communicate with, and the style may also be found in the northeastern region of Thailand (Terry E. Miller: 1977).

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is divided into 17 provinces, including Attapeu Province, Bo Kaeo Province, Bolikhamxai Province, Champasak Province, Houaphan Province, Khammouane Province, Luang Nam Thao Province, Luang Prabang Province, Udomxai Province, Phongsali Province, Salavan Province, Savannakhet Province Vientiane Province, Xayaburi Province, Sekong Province, and Xiangkhouang Province. Central Region of Lao PDR. has various local of Lam Kab as follows:

1) Lam Ngum - Vientiane Capital, 2) Lam Khon Savannah - Savannakhet Province, 3) Lam Tang Wai - Savannakhet Province, 4) Lam Phu Thai - Savannakhet Province, 5) Lam Takuay - Savannakhet Province, 6) Lam Ban Sok - Savannakhet Province, 7) Lam Mahaxai - Khammouane Province. The Lam Mahaxai is

considered a form of literary and folk music art in Khammouane Province. It has the characteristics of Lam Phaya, which was later changed to Lam Mahachai or Lam Ei Mahachai (Narathanaporn Phongnil, 2012). Lam Mahaxai is a unique form of native Lam of the Lao tribe in Mahaxai City, Khammouane Province, Lao PDR. Lam Mahaxai is a local identity of Lam Lao. that was widely popular in ancient Lao society in conveying proverbs and sayings, the Khan is an important musical instrument of Laos. Lam Mahaxai Chai is considered a folk performance in the culture of southern Laos. Found a lot in traditional merit-making ceremonies or on important occasions. That occurs within the local area which is a tradition that sharp society adheres to and follows called "Heet Sib Song Khlong Sib Si" which is the customary practice of the Tai-Lao ethnic group. Which is practiced on various occasions in each month of the year such as weddings, housewarmings Merit making ceremony for Buddhist Lent, Kathin Merit Ceremony, etc. But if it is a traditional event in the form of a procession or there is a reason to join the procession to celebrate There will often be people standing and performing moves to the rhythm of the music, such as at the Bun Bang Fai event, as well as at auspicious and festive events or on various important occasions. Which is the cultural way of southern Laos Most of them have similarities with the culture of the northeastern region of Thailand. (Noppon Chaayason, 2019).

The researcher found that Lam Mahachai is unique to Khammouane Province in the Lao PDR, distinguished by its unique composition. Therefore, a study of the elements of this musical art is warranted. This study should consider the content of the poem text, the prosody, as well as the sound, rhythm, style, melody, and emotion, following the academic principles of music. To preserve the ethnic music heritage of Khammouane Province, no one has ever conducted an in-depth study based on the academic principles of music before. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a

research study on Lam Mahachai: Text and Style People's Democratic Repub to create knowledge about Lam Mahachai in practice.

## Research Objectives

1. To study the prosody and content of the Lam Mahachai poem text.
2. To study the characteristics of Lam Mahachai's style.

## Conceptual Framework of the Research

The scope of the research can be divided as follows:

1. Area Boundaries: The research on "Lam Mahachai: Text and Style" will focus on the Kham Muang Subdistrict in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which is the origin of Lam Mahachai. The researcher used a specific area selection method to identify this region.

2. Scope of Content: The researcher has divided the content into two topics:

2.1 Study of Prosody and Content of Lam Mahachai Poem Text: This involves examining the style and content of spoken word poetry or composed words, including the meaning and type of content of the Lam Mahachai poem text in Kham Muang Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic.

2.2 Study of the Characteristics of the Lam Mahachai Style: This includes analyzing the tone, voice control, style, and emotional depth of Lam Mahachai, as well as the sound system, rhythm, and melody of Lam Mahachai.

## Literature Review

Culture is the way of life of a society. Arises from joint practice and it is the same continuous approach It has been passed down as a social legacy from the past to the present. The way of life of each society has its own form. Different roles and duties it depends on the mindset and objectives of applied Culture may be classified as international culture. National culture and local culture, each of these fields of culture They all have a common characteristic: they are the way of life of society. Make people in society

Have a feeling of being the same at the same time, it also shows the uniqueness of each society that is different from other societies (Poonpit Amatyakul, 1992: 25) Therefore, music is an important part of human culture that has been passed down since the past. Humans in every society need to have knowledge about "music" first before understanding the relationship between music and culture. Because of music it is a product that has characteristics of being the work of humans that is unique. It can exist only when there is cooperation of people in society (Panya Rungruang, 2003).

Lao PDR is a country with a culture. and various traditions It has been inherited since the time of our ancestors and has been practiced for a long time. The traditional customs and traditions are similar to those in the northeastern region of Thailand. Especially the singing aspect called "Mor Lam". Even though Thailand is close to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Lao Mor Lam has a different singing method from Mor lam. of the northeastern region in Thailand Both in terms of the melody, the melody of the khan, the coordination of the khan sound and the sound of the horn. As well as the customs of taking a boat, for example, Lao doctors will sit on a boat or a boat on the house. But the Northeastern Mor Lam will stand firm. Lao Mor Lam uses their own local melody. The customs and traditions as well as various artistic forms of Laos can be considered to have developed from the cultural heritage of various ethnic groups as well as being influenced by neighboring countries. Which is the characteristic of Lao culture Characteristics can be divided into 4 types: 1) Various Customs, which includes the culture of living. 2) Cultural wisdom, which includes the study of knowledge in science, technology, fine arts, and literature. 3) Cultural consciousness, which includes customs, moral teachings, and morals. and 4) cultural entertainment, including singing, dancing, musical performances, local sports. (Sunet Photisarn, 2006).

Mor Lam is a traditional folk performance from the Thai-Lao ethnic group. "Lam" refers to the free utterance of sounds and melodious words, with the length of the sound uncertain. The melody is created by using words and is often performed in a call-and-response style between men and women. Lam was once widespread across various cultural groups, such as the Red-Black River Basin (Northern Vietnam) and the Mekong River Basin (Sibsongpanna area in Yunnan Province, China, down to the Thailand-Laos region). In the early Ayutthaya period literature, the traditions of "Kab Saw" and "Lam Khan" played a crucial role in the royal court. Nowadays, the "Kab" tradition is found in northern Thai cultural groups, while the "Lam" tradition is widespread among Lao cultural groups, including the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the northeastern region of Thailand. Lam performers are called "Mor Lam," and those who play the khan (a traditional instrument) are called "Mor Khan" (Sujit Wongthet, 1989: 30).

Mor Lam has its origins in four traditions: Storytelling, Phaya, Han Sutta Kwan, and Sermons. Storytelling is often performed in prose, but the important and emotional parts are conveyed through poetry by the storyteller. Regardless of whether it is telling a general story or stories at funerals, it will be called "Ngan Huean Dee." Later, storytelling developed into "Lam Phuen" or "Mor Lam Phuen," which means Mor Lam who tells stories. By incorporating poems from Jataka tales or legends into Lam, such as the tales of Thao Bae, Thao Ma Mui, Thao Na Phak, Klai Kradong, Thao Champa Si Ton, and the legend of the creation of Vientiane, this type of Mor Lam developed into a large ensemble of Mor Lam, similar to or called in the Isaan language as "Wad-Lam/Style," such as Wad Ubon, Wad Kalasin, Wad Sarakham, and Wad Khon Khan. Another type of Mor Lam is Mor Lam Klon or Mor Lam Khu, all types of Mor Lam are related to Phaya. Laos is a country with cultural traditions most similar to Thailand in terms of religion, traditions, values, etc. Music

and performances in Laos are similar to those in the Isaan region, with Mor Lam being a common identity that is widespread and well-known. In the north of Lao PDR, Lam will be called "Kab" and is performed according to the accents of various localities. For example, Kab Tum Luang Prabang, Kab Xiang Kwang, and Kab Ngum. In southern Laos, such as Champasak Province, it is called "Lam" after the name of the province or city, such as Lam Si Phan Don, Lam Salavan, Lam Ban Sok, Lam Tangwai, and Lam Khon Sah Wan (Charoenchai Chonpairroj, 1983). In the Lao PDR, Mor Lam originates from courtship singing when carding cotton and during traditional events. Young people meet and exchange rhetorical expressions with flirtatious meanings on these occasions. This speech combines the melody of the Dhamma with a melodious tune, called Lam Phaya. Later, a Khan was used to compose it, thus becoming Mor Lam which occurs for three reasons:

1. It originated from rituals to treat illness and ensure agricultural abundance, such as Lam Phi Fa, and Lam Song. This type of Lam stems from the belief in Phi Fa and Phi Tan and serves as a ritual to relieve individual and societal pressures. Later, these Lams developed into "Lam Phuen" and "Lam Klon," respectively.
2. It originated from reading bound books, folk literature inscribed on palm leaves with stories that may be Jatakas or amusing folk tales, such as Karaket and Siewswat. This custom of reading bound books aims to provide entertainment for the community.

3. It arises from the courtship practices of young people on various occasions. This courtship involves "Phaya Speech" or "Distributing Phaya." Later, "Distributing Phaya" was adapted into Lam, known as "Lam Phaya" or "Lam Klon," where flirting takes place in the courtyard. Unlike other types of Lams, the method involves sitting down, not standing, to perform Lam (Thongkam Onmaneesorn, 1998).

As mentioned earlier, Laos is the country with the most similar cultural traditions to Thailand. In terms of religion, traditions, values, and other aspects, such as music and performance, especially to the Northeastern region of Thailand, and mostly similar to the Mor Lam and Mor Khan cultures. In the Lao PDR, there is a cultural heritage of music and "Kab Lam" from three civilizations as follows:

1. From the Nong Sa Tali Nan Chao Kingdom civilization, also known as Taliphu, approximately 300 years ago, Khun Lor was the king of the Ai Lao people, located to the east of the Mekong River in the Yunnan area of present-day China.
2. From the civilization of the Lan Chang Kingdom during the reigns of King Fa Ngum, King Chaiyachethathirat, and King Suriyawongsa. During this era, Laos developed its cultural style and identity for use in various ceremonies, both royal and folk traditions.
3. The civilization of all the tribes in Laos, which is an ancient culture that arose from the wisdom of the Lao tribes.

Lao performing arts can be divided into six categories as follows:

Table 1. Types of Lao Performing Arts.

Types of Lao Performing Arts		
1	Art of dancing.	Solo dance, Group dancing of men and women, Lao Pan dance, Lao boxing dance, Phra Lak-Phra Ram dance, and Dances of various tribes.
2	Dramatic arts.	It is another ancient art form of Laos, which anthropologists believe was influenced by the Khmers during the Lan Chang Kingdom era. Examples include La Korn Wao (spoken drama), stage plays, folk dramas, Khone dramas, and dance dramas. The most popular stories performed are from Lao literature, such as Thao Sinchai, Nang Phom Hom, Khu Lu Nang Ua, Champa Si Ton, Thao Kam Ka Dam, and Xiang Miang, etc.,

3	The art of singing and reading.	It involves singing and playing music, such as traditional Lao singing and playing songs. These include the prelude song, Na Phat songs, Tab songs, and miscellaneous songs. These songs are played to accompany folk dances and rituals.
4	The art of singing and Kab Lam.	The songs are sung, including native Lao Lam and all the tribal songs that have been passed down from ancestral experts to the present day. They have been divided into various "Kab" groups of the central, northern, and southern regions, such as Kab Lue, Kab Tum, Kab Yaw, Kab Ngum, Lam Klon, Lam Long, Lam Ploen, Lam Khon Savan, Lam Si Phan Don, etc.
5	A group of various games, according to Lao traditions.	It is a traditional folk game of all Lao tribes, from the north to the south, which has been passed down since ancient times. There is no fixed pattern, and it can be changed according to the appropriateness of society. It is divided into two types: folk games only for children and traditional games only for adults, such as Tug of War (Chak Ka Yer), etc.,
6	Original Lao music bands.	It brings together many musical instruments to create music. The sound of each type of instrument is combined, for example, using a Khan to play with a Saw. This can be divided into three types which are: the Phin-Phat band, the gamelan band, and the folk music band playing music of the various tribes.

## Research Methods

### Step 1 Data Collection

1. Secondary data Collect information on the history of the singing arts of Laos, such as books, research, and academic documents. From online databases as well as asking relevant knowledgeable people, experts, academics, or people who provide insight into the history of Lam Mahachai.

2. Primary data Use field-specific survey methods to obtain information. Important people involved such as singers, musicians, and bands, as seen in the southern area of Laos, namely Khammouane Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic. This is the cultural origin area for the origin and a famous place for Lam Mahachai. There is a city that is related to Lam Mahachai as follows: 1) Muang Nong Bok, Khammouane Province. 2) Xe Bang Fai Town, Khammouane Province.

### Step 2: Recording data

Record information in writing from relevant research documents. As well as field interviews group chat Organizing seminars to exchange opinions from experts in notebooks and computers. According to the aims of the study

### Step 3: Preparation and analysis of data

All data from the field were organized into categories and categories according to the objectives of the study. Ready to check for accuracy before publishing.

Step 4: Summarize, discuss results and present data.

Prepare a summary of research findings, discuss results, and make recommendations. According to the aim of the research using the method of descriptive analysis (Descriptive Analysis), then using the results of the study. Publish research articles in foreign academic journals.

## Research Results

6.1 Characteristics of the Lam Mahachai Poem Text.

The word "Phaya" means shrewdness. Proverbs are commonly used in books, literature, poems, poetry, and everyday speech. In Laos, it is mostly derived from the Sanskrit language "Prajya" but it has been slightly distorted into the Lao language as "Phaya". The word that has been popularly used since ancient times is "Phaya Phanya" which comes in two types:

1. Phaya is found in the expressions of almost everyone in Laos because it demonstrates a person's personality and how wise and sharp they are. In the past, if someone didn't have Phaya, it meant that the person was not very intelligent and lacked tact in communicating with others. This reflected their ability to pursue a stable and wealthy career.

2. Phaya poems are not only known in conversations between young people, but they also highlight the outstanding literary language of the nation, including the languages of various tribes recorded together with the Pali language. Phaya poems can be categorized into different themes, such as courtship, moral teachings, questions, tourism publicity, and beliefs. These are characteristics of Mor Lam when interacting with Phaya. Most types of Phaya poems are organized as follows:

1. Kuen Ao's poem pays homage to teachers and listeners.
2. A poem asks about the news between a male and female Mor Lam.
3. Lam Kiao Neaw Kaw Tor Yae's poem.
4. Ao Krasan or Khan A-sa's poem
5. Poem for engagement proposal or to adore.
6. Poem to say goodbye between Mor Lam and Mor Khan.
7. Poem blessing the place when performing Lam.

Lam Phaya poetry is a combination of Phaya words and verses, written by Mor Lam as short rhetorical poems composed immediately. There is also a "Mor" who responds to the Phaya. Mor Lam brings out the Lam in a harmonious voice that is beautiful, deep, and heartfelt. Most commonly, this poetry expresses the love between young men and women by taking on the role of flirting with a young lady, known as "Wao Saw." This tradition dates back to the prosperous era of the Lan Chang people in Laos, who were well-versed in art and literature, and widely recorded in the memory of the masses. Another type of unique Lam Phaya poetry that is popular and famous in the Lao PDR is the local Lam Mahachai. It has locally expanded content

where Mor Lam composes poems describing the beauty of nature, social life, and other distinctive aspects within the Khammouane District area, such as Huai Nam, Lam Se, Sai Nam Yom, Nam Ula, and Se Bang Fai, as well as other outstanding beautiful things. The content of Lam's poems also includes themes of preserving the nation, fighting, and praising the ancestors who fought for national independence. These themes have been passed down through various forms and methods. During the era of the national struggle to free the people from the tyrannical yoke of feudalism and foreign emperors, the devastation of war and the poetic praise of the results of each victory were commonly depicted. The Lam Phaya Mahachai poem serves as a sharp weapon that directly attacks the enemy, and there are also poems to encourage people of all tribes, create unity, and depict peace and greatness, replacing the hopelessness of the past.

The traditional basis of Mor Lam Phaya Mahachai is a local identity of Lam Lao that was widely popular in ancient Lao society. Mor Lam is considered an important vehicle for recording wisdom, Phaya proverbs, and various quotes, and releasing them to society through the performance of Mor Lam art, such as:

1. Courtship expresses love politely, similar to Lam Phaya poems or paying Phaya interactively to each other. Later, methods such as dispensing Kap Klon (improvised poetry) and Kap Surang became popular in various traditional and merit-making ceremonies, such as Bun Bang Fai, Bun Phawet, and other merit-making ceremonies.

2. Lam performances are shown in real areas, such as Toobs (huts), Phams (stages), Pavilions, and various public places. Later, it became popular to set up a Mor Lam stage. Performances on stage began with the assembly of single Mor Lam, Lam Khu, and Lam Phuen (Lam stories), using the structure of local tales to describe the story with Phaya poems and Lam poems with long content, celebrating merit-making from early evening until early morning light.



Figure 1. The dress of the female singer and the characteristics of the Lam Mahachai folk music band, Lao PDR.

#### 6.1.1 Content aspect of Lam Mahachai

In the content, the researcher has classified the content categories regarding the Lam Mahachai poem as follows:

1. Courtship Poetry - Contains content about courtship between a woman and a man, courting and interacting with each other. This type of poem is prevalent because the content of Lam's poems is fun. The poems are fierce and sharp, often with equivocal meanings and mostly gender-related.

2. Teaching Poem - Traditional ethics and teachings in Buddhism are another type of poetry that is popular. It is performed as a Lam after the flirtatious poetry ends. This type of poem is commonly used among the elderly due to its content of legends and tales, often including morals and ethics and presented as interesting stories. It is worth following and easily understood. Adults often use it to teach or give guidance to their children and grandchildren by listening to this kind of Lam Phaya.

3. Question Poem - The content of Lam asks about the lives of others, such as the suffering and happiness of the other party. This type is mostly initiated by the male Mor Lam Phaya in a flirtatious manner.

4. Public Relations - It is characterized as a medium for publicizing government policies and creating understanding among the people. It started in the era when Venerable Kaison Phromwihan took over as the country's leader. At that time, Mor Lam was an important mechanism in driving government policy towards the people. Nowadays, Lam with public relations content

also includes aspects of tourism, culture, and good traditions in the local area. It is used as a tool for disseminating various news from the government sector.

5. Beliefs - There are poems written in native literature, newly composed poems, and poems that the Mor Lam improvises while performing. Most of the time, Klon Lam uses passages from stories in literature, religion, and history that incorporate morals, traditions, beliefs, and local conditions. This type of poetry often reflects the author's thoughts, studying literature that reflects the subconscious mind, personality, and role of the author. It manifests itself directly and indirectly through various forms of cultural symbols.

Lam Mahachai of Khammouane Province, Lao PDR, is considered an amusement for entertainment activities. It serves as a rhythmic instrument in folk bands along with other instruments, such as the Khan, Drums, Cymbals, etc. In the past, it was often used only with the Khan. Later, bands were formed to create a more boisterous and joyful harmony. Lam Mahachai has a unique style, with variations according to each area, reflecting the accent of the spoken language of the Mor Lam, which differs according to the characteristics of each local area. Lam Mahachai is considered a cultural heritage and an important local identity of Khammouane Province. It is famous and widely popular in Xe Bang Fai, Mahaxai, and Nong Bok, reflecting the unique style of art, music, and singing of that locality.

#### 6.2 Characteristics of Lam Mahachai Style.

In analyzing the vocal characteristics of Lam Mahachai of the Lao PDR, the characteristics of Lam Mahachai consist of male and female performers. There is a person called "Mor Khan" who plays the Khan to accompany the Lam Mahachai. The sound is harmonized with the melody of the Lam by comparing the pitch scales with the Khan. Many Mor Lam usually have their Khan (tuned), and the sound and melodies of the Mor Lam follow the same melody in a 5-tone sound system (Pentatonic Scale), differing



only in pitch. When compared with the sound of the Khan, it was found that the male Lam melody consists of the sounds Do, Re, Fa, Sol, and La (Lai Posai), and the female Lam melody consists of the sounds Sol, La, Do, Re, and Mi (Lai Sud Sa Naen). For example, the male side uses the Lai Posai (Posai Mode), which has 5 sounds: Do, Re, Fa, Sol, and La. The sound Sol is the first and main sound of the Lai. In addition, the Lai Posai is similar to the pentatonic major scale of international music.

Lam Mahachai has a melodious style, with the rhythm of the drums using the Phu Thai rhythm and the Khan as the main melody instrument. The musical instrument used to accompany the Lam Mahachai is the Khan, which carries the main melody. This is similar to the general Lam in the northeastern region of Thailand but differs in that the performers sit while performing the Lam. Due to cultural factors and the close relationship between them, the musical cultural structures are similar, but the melodies are different, indicating the uniqueness that distinguishes them from other cultural areas. This uniqueness is considered a representative image to present their identity, making the name "Lam Mahachai" of Khammouane Province well-known. It reinforces that Khammouane Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic, has a unique cultural music and performance style that is different from other cultural groups. Regarding the rhythm of Lam Mahachai, the researcher has divided it into two parts which are: Musical Accompaniment and Lyrics Accompaniment, with the following details:

#### 6.2.1 Musical Accompaniment

The researcher has transcribed the notes according to international music theory. The sound characteristics were analyzed by selecting a main part of the song, which the researcher carefully listened to and transcribed according to international music theory. It was found that this part carries the melody and includes various musical elements related to the analysis of sound characteristics, which align in the following direction:

#### Intro Khan 1



#### Intro Khan 2



#### Intro Khan 3



Lam Mahachai has a slow, mellow melody. The drum rhythm uses the Phu Thai rhythm. In the culture on the left bank of the Mekong River, the Khan is used to perform the main melody. The characteristics of the singing melody adapt to consist with the musical instruments and include poetic songs. The melody of the song can be sung along with the instrumental melody or independently. The most important aspect of this singing is that it must be based on the melody, with the Khan used to perform the main melody. In some areas, the Harp or Pi Phu Thai, drums, cymbals, and Kub-Kab wood are incorporated into the music band, with instruments similar to the traditional musical instruments of Isaan, Thailand. This similarity is due to cultural factors and close relations between the regions, making the musical cultural structures similar.

The Lam Mahachai poem is one type of poetry divided into three parts as follows:

1. The Beginning Part of Poetry (Klon Kuen): This consists of short paragraphs.

2. The Main Poem (Klon Lak): This is the part of the poem that contains the important content. A complete verse usually consists of four paragraphs which are: the 1st paragraph, 2nd paragraph, 3rd paragraph, and 4th paragraph. An incomplete verse usually has two paragraphs, typically the 3rd and 4th paragraphs. Additionally, in the Mahachai Lam poem,

prepositions are used to express relationships between words, messages, or sentences, providing continuity and making the message clearer. These prepositions are placed at the beginning of the paragraph and the end, known as “Kam-Soi”.

3. The Downward Poem (Klon Long): This consists of three short words, namely, O-La-Nor, similar to other Lao Lams.

The structure of the Lam Mahachai melody can be divided into three parts consisting of:

1. The Beginning Melody: This is a short melody similar to each part. Most people like to use the melody of the 3rd and 4th paragraphs to start performing Lam as the main poetry.

2. The Main Melody: This melody is based on the intonation marks that control the high and low sounds of the words in each paragraph.

3. The Downward Melody: This is usually a short melody with only one punctuation, typically found at the end of the 4th paragraph, where the rhythm is lengthened and slowed down, ending with the tonic sound dragging towards the fifth tone of the scale, which is the high Do - La sound.

The relationship between the Lam melody and the music of Lam Mahachai is such that the melodic line of the Lam works as the musical tune. As for the melodic line of the band, it produces a harmonious sound in the form of an ostinato, meaning it is played in a rhythmic style with a short phrase repeated constantly. The Lam melody and musical melody are different in both heavy and light rhythms, and the division of punctuation is not relevant. They are related only by the same scale; this type of harmony is called "Homophony".

#### 6.2.2 Controlling Voice and Style.

Lam Mahachai consists of many factors that Lam performers must go through a regular and appropriate training process for. This training enables them to perform as good Mor Lams and to control their voices effectively. The Lam performer is akin to a general, acting as the leader of the performance. Even if they have a beautiful voice but lack training, they can't be a

good Mor Lam. Vocalization is an important aspect of Mor Lam's performance. Performers begin by practicing how to express their voices in prose and poetry, such as Kham Phaya, by reading poems aloud and clearly to become accustomed to their voices. This practice helps prevent them from losing their voice. In singing Mor Lam, performers ensure that listeners are unaware they are about to run out of breath by using a method that involves nearing the end of breath while the Lam hasn't finished with the punctuation yet. Lam performers must try to retain some air and slowly release it to make the sound powerful at the end of the sentence. Another important point is that Mor Lam must practice pronouncing sounds correctly according to the characteristics of the dialect.

The methods for controlling the sound of Mor Lam and their style can be summarized as follows:

1. As the composer wrote, Lam must have the correct intonation high and low tones.
2. The tempo must be correct and precise.
3. Pronounce correctly according to the orthography.
4. Divide the punctuation of the lyrics correctly to get the meaning.
5. Perform the personality and posture appropriately.

In singing with high and low voices, there will be differences. In other words, while singing in a low voice, Lam performers should not breathe heavily, as this can cause the throat to become constricted, resulting in the sound being unable to come out. Otherwise, if the breath of the Lam performers is weak, it will produce a soft sound. Lam performers must practice using their breathing to suit themselves. Practicing singing at a medium volume scale will help the Lam performers control their voices more easily than when singing at a high volume. Singing in a high-pitched voice is no different from speaking loudly, which may cause fatigue. Lam performers must avoid breathing through the mouth as it can interfere with singing. Instead, they should gently release the breath from the

mouth, it should not be released all at once. However, mastering Kab Lam skills is a matter of trial and error; individuals must use their experience to correct and develop their skills. Moreover, having teachers as guides is like a mirror that reflects the listener, allowing individuals to practice before performing in public. As for style, it is a personal charm. Many Mor Lam have unique styles, which are different according to their learning processes and experiences. Some Mor Lam may even emulate the style of their teachers based on their geographical location and personal preferences.



Figure2. Perform the personality and posture in singing Lam Mahachai folk music band, Lao PDR.

### 6.2.3 Expressing Emotions in the Performance.

Including emotions in the lyrics and melody of the song will evoke various feelings and emotions, and help enhance the beauty of the melody. Other elements, such as songs with a slow tempo, can convey sweetness, a sad mood, or feelings of discouragement and hopelessness. On the other hand, songs with a relatively fast tempo can convey feelings of fun, joy, excitement, etc. Lam Mahachai poetry, with its verses, language, and literary arts, conveys different meanings and emotions depending on the author of the Lam poem or the Lam performers who convey them through a unique melody. Whether it is a chapter that tells a sad story or represents overflowing love, the content and script that the Lam performers convey to the listener must connect with the listener's feelings wonderfully. Therefore, the emotions expressed by the Lam performers are integral to the feelings

conveyed to the listener, determining whether the performance is perceived as melodious or not. However, it depends on the performers how effectively this element is conveyed. The types of emotions conveyed by Mor Lam or artists, in general, can be classified into two categories which are: Positive Feelings, including various happy emotions such as happiness, joy, liveliness, delight, sweetness, love, and encouragement, and Negative Feelings, including various distressing emotions, such as sadness, anger, stress, discouragement, etc.

### Conclusion and Discussion.

1. Characteristics of Lam Mahachai: Mor Lam is a popular form of amusement throughout Laos and the northeastern region of Thailand. The Mor Lam performance consists of two important groups of people which are: Mor Lam and Mor Khan, the history of Mor Lam's performance started with reading books and inviting knowledgeable men to perform various rituals and recite mantras. Over time, this developed to include Mor Khan playing the Khan together with Mor Lam. Eventually, female Mor Lam performers were added, and the content used during Kab Lam began to show various patterns and names, depending on the popularity and demand of each locality. Various types of Mor Lam arose, such as Kab Tub, which features the slow melody of Luang Prabang Province, or the quick and concise melody of Lam Tang Wai from Ban Tang Wai. This development led to Mor Lam performances in the style of a country music band, referred to as "Applied Mor Lam". As new styles of Mor Lam have become trendy, traditional Mor Lam has become less popular and is at risk of being lost. Therefore, the researcher traveled to Khammouane Province in Laos, which is adjacent to Thailand's Nakhon Phanom Province, to gather information about Mor Lam Mahachai. It was found that many Mor Lam Mahachai still maintain the traditional Mor Lam performance style with only minor changes.

2. Characteristics of Lam Mahachai Poetry of Text and Style: In Khammouane District, Phaya poetry is used in Lam Mahachai, which can be divided into the following contents: 1) Kuen Ao Poem: To pay homage to teachers, professors, and listeners, 2) Poem to Ask About News: Used between a male and female Mor Lam, 3) Lam Kiao Neaw Kaw Tor Yae's Poem, 4) Ao Krasan Poem or Khan A-sa, 5) Poem for Engagement or Love, 6) Farewell Poem: Between Mor Lam and Mor Khan, 7) Blessing Poem: To bless the place of Lam. The content currently used is divided into several sections, such as courtship, proverbs, moral teachings, dhammachariya (Buddhist teachings), questions, comedy, and travel public relations. From the research, it is known that the Lam Mahachai performance is a unique Mor Lam performance to Mahaxai City and Khammouane District. The performance of Mor Lam Mahachai has two following roles in society: Firstly, it works as a source of amusement for entertainment at various events, both auspicious and inauspicious. Most of these are annual merit-making events, such as the Kathin Merit Ceremony and the Pha Pa Merit Ceremony. Secondly, it functions as a public relations tool for the government and community, as well as helping to spread religion and provide various types of knowledge. The Lam Mahachai poem has no definite prosodic structure. One chapter of Lam's poem can have paragraphs ranging from one to six, and one paragraph can contain from two to seven words. Also, the rhyme position between the punctuations and the rhyme between chapters is not yet clear. The most popular Lam poem has four paragraphs with four to six words per paragraph. The rhyme between the punctuations is at the last word of the first punctuation, rhyming with the third word or the last word of the next paragraph. The rhyme between the stanzas is the last word of the first stanza and the last word of the first punctuation in the next stanza. There is only one type of musical instrument used in the Lam Mahachai

performance that is the Khan. It is the Eight-Khan type and is a Free Reed instrument.

The musician who plays the Khan is called "Mor-Khan" They must play the Khan melodies harmoniously with the Lam melodies of the Mor Lam. In addition, the Khan melody helps to punctuate the rhythm for the Mor Lam to improvise the Lam poems and have a chance to rest their voices while performing Lam. Each Khan also sets the tone for the Mor Lam because Mor Lam's performance is based on the Mor Lam's voice. Mor-Khan must find a Khan that has a sound on the same scale as the Mor Lam. Therefore, in each performance, Mor-Khan must prepare their Khan to match Mor Lam's voice. The characteristics of the literary arts found in Lam Mahachai's poems reflect the thoughts of the author to the listener based on the roots of ideas expanded and created with the five senses which are: form, taste, smell, sound, and feeling. By using words and language to convey meaning and erotic feelings, they persuade people to follow and create mental imagery as a result. The words used in the Lao language in various Kam-Lam are similar. The Northeastern region has the same characteristics, using words to convey meaning, emotions, feelings, and persuasion, and creating imagery for the listener to form a mental picture. This allows people to see the beauty of literary art through the strategy of playing with words and touching vowels and consonants to create melodiousness. The characteristics of the literary arts in Lam Mahachai poems can be divided into two following large groups:

1. Creating Imaginary Language: This is about using words appropriate to the content according to the context, place, nature, etc., to convey experiences into images or perceptions in the mind, allowing the listener to see and feel various forms, tastes, smells, sounds, touches, feelings, and body movements. The Lam Mahachai style uses words to create imagery related to emotions and feelings through the person and people's way of life, as well as a reflection of various social cultures within society.

2. **Creating Language to Convey Emotions and Feelings:** These demonstrate emotions and feelings communicated through the performer's thoughts, reflecting the way of life, atmosphere, social conditions, and details of the Lam poem in the context of place and nature, all in unity. The use of language or words to create a mental image in the listener causes them to experience emotions and feelings that follow the content of the Lam poem. This creates an aesthetic experience through images, smells, and sounds, forming the imaginary language of Lam Mahachai. This language often reflects literature, traditions, beliefs, history, and local conditions through the thoughts of the author and the Lam performer. Creating language to convey emotions is a unique characteristic of Lam's poetry, known as "Aesthetics". By using melodious and beautiful local Thai words, Lam's poetry creates happiness and accessibility for listeners, reflecting emotions in addition to the descriptive images of nature, society, and culture. The language in the Lam poem also conveys emotions, reminiscent of the past or the future, evoking tears and showing the listeners' appreciation wonderfully. Lam Mahachai shares the same characteristics of conveying emotions as other Lam, using the local dialect to reflect emotions and feelings and create imagery in the Lam poetry for the listener, causing them to resonate with the content conveyed by the Lam performer. The conveying of emotions in Lam's poems can be grouped into the following categories:

1. **Good Mood, Happiness, and Blessing:** These are often used to express joy, fun, or even strong opinions. Mor Lam frequently expresses opinions or communicates in a charming and fun way. Such poems often have a unique style to entertain and bring pleasure to the reader or listener, showcasing various feelings and reactions of Lao people.

2. **Suffering, Sorrow, Inferiority, and Separation:** These emotions are often used to express feelings when the emotion is crucial to the creation of a literary work. A sad mood

conveys messages of sadness, mourning for love, separation, or loss. The author or Lam performers express feelings of love and condolences for the person who has been separated, resulting in the emergence of such literary art.

3. **Love, Miss, and Care:** These are often used to express feelings stemming from life experiences, inner feelings, values, and societal problems. Descriptions connect stories, focusing on recording nature and various observed things, which are based on the experiences of the author and Lam performers. It often links personal experiences to the shared experiences of society.

From research on Lam Mahachai in Mahachai City, Lao PDR, it was found that Lam Mahachai is a local "Kab Lam" of Mahachai City, Khammouane Province, Lao PDR. This can be divided into four main tunes as follows: 1) Lam Mahachai Phonewa (original melody), 2) Lam Mahachai Phonemee (medium melody), 3) Lam Mahachai Yao (Mahachai Nong Bok), 4) Lam Mahachai Tha (or Lam Mahachai along the Mekong River). These four melodies are related to the Lao, Yao, and Thai ethnic groups. The Lam is performed with the accompaniment of a Khan in the G scale, similar to Toey Hua Non-Tan and Kon Savan, consistent with Chonpairot Jarernchai's (1990), that researched Lam Khon Savan, a local Kab Lam in the southern part of Lao PDR. He found that Lam is a type of folk singing in southern Laos, typically performed with a Khan. There are many types of Lams, each with its unique characteristics and accents that follow the local language. Some types are named after their hometowns, tribes, and regions. From the studies, it was found that the Lam Khon Savan melody is similar to other types of Lams, having approximately 5-6 accents, depending on their local language. The relationship between the spoken sound and Lam's sound is not fixed, allowing for variety and adaptation according to the process of creating sound levels. For example, the middle and low sounds of Lam are determined as natural sounds, but the high sound will gradually decrease according to the sound's

descending cycle. Lam Khon Savan is repeated twice when performed, the melodies can be divided into four sentences, each sentence having eight rhythmic beats. The first sentence starts with the main note G, and the first half of the second sentence flows down to the D-C note tones. The third sentence is similar to the first sentence, except in the 6th beat, it is played with the main note of G, while the 6th beat of the third sentence is played with the note of A. The Khan can be played in many ways, such as the short side called Lai Sud Sa Naen, consisting of the sound notes GACDEG or Lai Posai CDFGAC. The A-level of Lai Sud Sa Naen is a highlight of the Khan in extending the sound and ending the song with the main note.

In Laos, the distinctive characteristic of Lam performance is that Mor Lam usually sits on the floor, which is considered part of Lao folk music culture. Most of them have a simple style of playing, which involves sitting and playing with other musical instruments. The reason for sitting and playing is assumed to be influenced by the customs of the royal court. The area of Savannakhet Province in the past was under the Lan Chang Champasak Kingdom, which had administrative territory extending from Nakhon Phanom, Khammouane, and Savannakhet down to the city of Chiang Taeng (now Stung Treng Province in Cambodia). Therefore, the tradition of sitting and playing music is partly derived from the cultural pattern of playing in front of His Majesty, where performers must lower themselves to show humility and follow the royal tradition of showing respect to the Great Lord and those with titles. Inheritance of the culture of Lam Mahachai in Khammouane Province or Laos faces significant challenges, risking its potential loss. The Culture and Tourism News Department was established to conserve and revitalize local arts and culture and promote the dissemination of national culture. However, their role is primarily promotional, and there are still many obstacles to support and development. The local and rural music curriculum in the Lao education system, which emphasizes community

participation, still faces problems and obstacles. Despite these challenges, the practice of folk musical instruments has been passed down through generations, playing an important role in promoting cultural happiness within local communities. This tradition, based on traditional wisdom, has become a distinctive local identity of great national value.

This study of Lam Mahachai is also consistent with the educational context of Saleepun Siriyaporn. (2022), which reflects the trend of the process of transition from the traditional era to the new imaginary era. with cultural changes and adjustments that reflect historical stories Society and culture in various periods, which is a factor in maintaining cultural traditions to adjust oneself to the development of the country. Being up-to-date and in line with government policy allows the trend of change to continue by the changing needs of society according to the market mechanisms that are fashionable in the new imagination era. Which is connected to the political, economic, social, and cultural context and way of life of the Lao people in each era and is still popular and exists alongside Lao culture forever.

## Suggestions

The researcher had the opportunity to study the culture of music, society, and way of life of the Lao people. Therefore, suggestions for the continuation, preservation, and dissemination of Lao arts and culture to ensure they remain the cultural heritage of Laos include developing an incentive system and a process for creating works valuable to the community in that area. Educational institutions should incorporate curriculum content for Kan-Mor Lam and other Lao musical instruments at risk of being lost. This will help revive, promote, and develop local games to remain sustainable and maintain the distinctive identity of that locality, as detailed below.

1. Policy Recommendations to the Lao Government.

1.1 The Lao government should include music and dance subjects and national art as compulsory subjects in the country's education curriculum. This will provide an alternative for future generations to have the opportunity to know, study, and consider principles to conserve these arts.

1.2 Honor and promote artists who have knowledge and abilities that are accepted by the local community, ensuring they have a good life and the morale to continue and spread arts and culture.

1.3 Collect and study the history and works of local artists, gathering them systematically to facilitate study and research and to help prevent these arts from being lost.

1.4 Seriously promote research on arts and culture within the country by providing adequate funding to researchers and supporting those interested in research studies to have the opportunity to learn modern research techniques abroad.

1.5 Produce television programs about arts and culture that are of good quality, and interesting to watch, and broadcast them regularly.

2. Suggestions to the public.

2.1 Jointly establish a community cultural center to collect academic information about local arts and culture.

2.2 Organize local art and cultural performances and rotate them regularly at appropriate times, such as every Friday evening at the beginning of the month. This will provide a source of recreation for people in the community, a study source for those interested, and a cultural tourist attraction for foreign tourists.

2.3 Use the arts and culture of the community as a tool to publicize the community, such as news and public relations. Every community activity should use the Lam Mahachai melody for public relations to create a local identity.

2.4 Organize art and cultural competition activities for youth and the general public to stimulate interest in local arts and culture among people in the community.

2.5 Cultivate youth awareness of the value of national arts and culture through the training of teachers and professors in schools and parents by pointing out the value of arts and culture, paying attention to their benefits, and developing pride in being a person of culture and setting an example of the importance of culture.

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