

Krung Curatorial Practice and Creative Sustainability for Ethnic Music of Mountainous Villagers in Nan Province

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Abstract

The objective of this project is to explore the collaborative methods in preserving the wealth of *krung*, one of musical resources in Nan province. The curatorial and collaborative methods engaged with the process of developing plans together with artisans, testing the model with stakeholders, adapting to learn the lessons and mistakes in the field, and to implement a longitudinal activity to integrate cultural and biological ecology. Active agents are the only two instrument makers in the village who possess local wisdom of plant identification, wood cutting, forest hiking. Stakeholders are the local administration of the village, local organization of water management, district administration, educational personnel, and high school students and teachers. The model included meetings, forest survey, collaborative design for a workshop, an instrument making workshop by backward design thinking process, musical instrument design and a student presentation.

Keywords: *Krung*, Creative Sustainability, Curatorial Practice, Ethnic Music, Nan, Thailand

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Introduction

Krung refers to a set of bamboo musical instruments associated with the *Khamu* ethnic group in Nam Sod village, Thung Chang district, Nan province, Thailand. The *Khamu* is a small hill tribe group located in northern Thailand, particularly in the border area of Chiang Rai and Nan provinces, which also extend to Laos. Phoasavadi (2008) conducted a study on the ethnic music of the *Khamu* in Nan province identifying Thung Chang district is one of their primary residences. According to Phoasavadi's findings, *krung* is the sole musical instrument used by the *Khamu* in this village. This instrument is crafted from five different types of bamboo grown locally.

In a subsequent study, Inthanivet (2024) focused on the *Khamu* community in Chiang Rai. His research indicated that the *Khamu* in Chiang Rai utilized a set of bamboo instruments, yet the *krung* was notably absent from their repertoire. Buppacharoen (2024) corroborated these findings, stating that the *Khamu* in Chiangrai were unfamiliar with the *krung* and have never played it. However, they were aware of a *Khamu* community in Nan province and had established a network of *Khamu* communities across Thailand. Instead of the *krung* the Chiang Rai *Khamu* played a different set of bamboo instruments, including the *tornl* (bamboo tube), which was often combined with the *kinltong* (bamboo rack), *shunl* (bamboo flute), and *lhong* (mouth harp).



Figure 1. Four types of *krungs*.

A set of *krung* comprises of four distinct types of bamboo rods, sourced from the lush forests bordering streams in Nan province. Consequently, these bamboo musical instruments not only embody cultural significance but also act as barometers of the forest's richness. The very existence of *krung* hinges on the thriving ecology of the forest, as each bamboo variety required for its construction thrives within an environment teeming with biodiversity. Thus, the presence of *krung* signifies not only musical heritage but also the vitality of the

surrounding ecosystem, where the bamboo grows abundantly amidst the natural splendor of Nan province's deep forests. Each size of *krung* is assigned with their names in descending order. Four types of *krungs* are named as follows:

1. *Mae* means a mother.
2. *Tam Mae* means to follow a mother
3. *Sam Kam* (right side) means to call three times, which stands on the right side of the mother.
Sam Kam (left side) means to call three times, which stands on the left side of the mother.
4. *Khei* means the male in-law or the daughter's husband.



Figure 2. A bamboo grove growing along a stream in a deep forest of Nan province.

The typical length of a *krung* is approximately 31.5 cm. Various components of the *krung* are metaphorically associated with the human body, suggesting that the Khmu people have embodied their worldview and lifestyle within this musical instrument. The upper section of the *krung* is referred to as the "head," with its bamboo surface meticulously scraped to create a fringe. The two rods that extend through the head are termed the "upper eyes" (Ta Bon) and the "lower eyes" (Ta Lang), while the lower section is called the "foot" (Teen). The *krung* is constructed from five types of bamboo sourced from Ban Nam Sod village in Nan Province. These bamboo types include *Bong* bamboo, *Khao Lam* bamboo, *Rai* bamboo, *Hia* bamboo, and *Lo* bamboo.



Figure 3. *Krung's* fringe (hair) made by scraping the bamboo.

The five kinds of bamboo used are as follows:

1. *Bong* bamboo is used to make wedges and bamboo strips.
2. *Khao Lam* bamboo is used to make the bottom part or foot (Teen).
3. *Rai* bamboo is specifically used to craft the core stem that is inserted into the *krung*, which produces sound when the instrument is shaken.
4. *Hia* bamboo is used to make the body and the head of a *krung*.
5. *Lo* bamboo is used to make a leg of *Krung*
(La Paopa, interview, February 5, 2024)

Mae (left side) produces the note that approximately equal to B in the Western diatonic scale.

Mae (right side) produces the note that approximately equal to E in the Western diatonic scale.

Tam Mae (left side) produces the note approximately equal to C in the Western diatonic scale.

Tam Mae (right side) produces the note that approximately equals G in the Western diatonic scale.

Sam Kam (left side) produces the note approximately equal to D in the Western diatonic scale.

Sam Kam (right side) produces the note that approximately equals A in the Western diatonic scale.

Khei (left side) produces the note approximately equal to C in the Western diatonic scale.

Khei (right side) produces the note approximately equal to F in the Western diatonic scale.

The *krung* is played by shaking it up and down, causing the sound stem inside to strike the closed lid above, producing a bass, soft sound. The bamboo internode functions as a sound box. Each *krung* produces a single musical note, and different sizes of *krung* yield different notes. Crafting a *krung* requires skill to identify each type of bamboo grove growing along a stream in a deep forest of Nan province, particularly in estimating the size of the sound stick inserted into the bamboo internode to achieve a pleasing sound.

Regarding the songs of the Khmu people, it has been observed that in Ban Nam Sod, only one song remains. This song is performed by an ensemble in which every *krung* participates equally, with no single instrument playing the main theme. Instead, the melodies and rhythms are distributed among the *krungs*, ensuring each has an equal role. The melody of the "*Mae Krung*" instrument encompasses every rhythm of the full melody but is not considered the main theme. The other *krungs*, namely "*Tam Mae*," "*Left Sam Kam*," and "*Right Sam Kam*," do not play melodic variations but adhere to the regular melody of the entire song. The musical notes of the *krung* song are recorded using the traditional Thai musical notation system, encompassing eight bars, as follows:

To play *krung*, both left and right hands are shaking simultaneously according to their *krung*'s ranks which are represented with signs as follows:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| <i>Mae</i> | approximately close to the pitch A in the Western diatonic scale = 6 in Krung notation |
| <i>Tam Mae</i> | approximately close to the pitch B in the Western diatonic scale = 7 in Krung notation |
| <i>Sam Kam</i> | approximately close to the pitch C in the Western diatonic scale = 1 in Krung notation |
| <i>Khei</i> | approximately close to the pitch D in the Western diatonic scale = 2 in Krung notation |

| | Intro | 1 st Beat | 2 nd Beat | 3 rd Beat | 4 th Beat | 5 th Beat | 6 th Beat | 7 th Beat | 8 th Beat |
|---------|-------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Mae | --- 6 | --- 6 | --- 6 | --- 6 | --- 6 | --- 6 | --- 6 | --- 6 | ---- |
| Tam Mae | ---- | ---- | --- 7 | --- 7 | ---- | ---- | --- 7 | --- 7 | ---- |
| Sam Kam | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | --- 1 | ---- | --- 1 | - 1 -- | ---- |
| Khei | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | --- 2 | ---- | --- 2 | ---- | --- 2 |

Figure 4. Notation of *Krung* rhythmic patterns. Note: The strongest beat falls on the fourth beat of each bar.

This component of a set of *krung* reflects the importance of a woman in the household. In many cultures, the woman plays a pivotal role in maintaining the household's harmony, unity, and well-being. As such, her significance is often commemorated through a specific item or symbol within the *krung*. This component serves not only as a tribute to her contributions but also as a reminder of the essential role she plays in the family dynamic. One common representation of the woman's importance in the household is through an intricately crafted figurine or sculpture. This figurine might depict a mother figure engaged in various activities that are central to her role within the family. She could be shown cooking, nurturing children, or engaged in other domestic tasks that highlight her nurturing and caregiving role.

The placement and prominence of this component within the *krung* further emphasize the woman's significance. Positioned at the heart of the set, it serves as a focal point, symbolizing the central role she occupies within the family structure. This placement not only acknowledges her importance but also reinforces the idea that the family's well-being hinges on her efforts and contributions. The significance of this component goes beyond the confines of the household. It reflects broader societal values regarding the role of women in family life and community cohesion. By acknowledging and valuing the woman's contributions within the domestic sphere, the *krung* reinforces the importance of gender equality and respect for women's roles in society. In essence, the component of the *krung* that reflects the importance of a woman in the household serves as a tangible expression of reverence, gratitude, and acknowledgment for her pivotal role in shaping the family's identity and well-being. It stands as a testament to the enduring influence and significance of women in nurturing, sustaining, and enriching the fabric of familial and cultural life.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the collaborative strategies for the preservation of the rich musical heritage of *krung*, a bamboo musical instrument in Nan province in the norther part of Thailand within the context of cultural sustainability. This investigation encompasses a multi-faceted approach that involves the identification and confrontation of pertinent issues through cooperative engagement with key participants. This includes the development of strategic plans in conjunction with local artisans, the empirical testing of proposed models with concerned parties, and the iterative process of learning from both success and failure in practical applications. The ultimate goal is to establish a long-term initiative that harmonizes cultural practices with the principles of ecological conservation.

Location of *Krung* Music Culture

From the interview with Mr. Somkiat Kalasod, the headman of Ban Nam Sod, Moo 12, Lae Subdistrict, Thung Chang District, Nan Province, it can be concluded that Ban Nam Sod Village was founded in A.D. 1871. In this area there was a kind of bamboo grove growing up from the stream's bed, giving the name Ban Nam Sod ("Nam Sod" means shoot up from the water). Later on, people from different places came to settle in Ban Nam Sod which included people from Phu Phiang District who escaped the outbreak of leprosy; the fam-

ily Paopa from Phu Kham; Thin ethnic people from Ban Phae Klang who came in A.D. 1972; Hmong ethnic people from Lao People’s Democratic Republic who escaped from Communism. In 2024, Ban Nam Sod comprised of two villages, a community of three ethnic groups of people. Hmong in Moo 8 village and Khmu and Thin in Moo 12 village altogether there were more than 1,100 people (Kalasod, Interview, January 2, 2024). According to the Official Statistics Registration System, in 2023 the population of Lae sub-district consisted of 1,313 houses with the total population of 3,664.

| Male | Female | Total population | Number of Households |
|-------|--------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1,772 | 1,892 | 3,664 | 1,313 |

Figure 5. Statistics of Population in Lae sub-district, Thungchang district, Nan province. Source: https://stat.bora.dopa.go.th/new_stat/webPage/statByYear.php.

The primary local experts involved in this project are the only two instrument craftsmen from the Lae village, who held specialized knowledge in the areas of plant identification, timber harvesting, and navigating the forest terrain. The broader spectrum of stakeholders encompasses the village’s local government, the water management organization, district-level administrators, educational staff, secondary school educators, and a researcher who fulfills roles as both the project coordinator and the author of this article.

Ritual and Beliefs of The Khmu Ethnicity in Ban Nam Sod Village

Khmu people lived in the watershed forest of Nan Province, especially Ban Nam Sod, Thung Chang Subdistrict, Thung Chang District which is an important water resource in the Project of Watershed Forest Conservation of the Department of Forestry. Somkiat Kalasod, the village headman of Moo 12, Lae Subdistrict, Thung Chang District described as follows:

The rituals concerning sacred spirits and the respect of hill and forest gods help promote people to join in the conservation of forest areas and are far more effective than the modern campaign. Khmu people respect the forest, especially the watershed one which they consider more sacred. Consequently, the forest area of Ban Nam Sod is still abundant. The villagers of Ban Nam Sod are encouraged to live their original lifestyle and their cultural activities are supported to help educate the younger generation in conserving and cherishing their watershed forest (Kalasod, Interview, December 23, 2023).



Figure 6. A Khmu woman Dress.

According to the data of the Committee for Document and Archives Processing in the Organizing Committee for the Celebration in Honor of His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej (2002:2), it is found that Nan Province has faced the problems of severe deforestation. Nan's forest area has decreased from 7.1 million rai (71.15% of the land area of Nan Province) in A.D.1970 to 3.27 million rai (45.66% of the land area of Nan Province) in A.D. 1993 which means the deforestation rate is 50,000 rai each year and the forest area of Nan Province may be all destroyed in 61 years. As a result, the watershed forests in Northern Thailand decrease rapidly and can be the cause of severe natural disasters in the future.

The Khmu people at Ban Nam Sod, Thung Chang District, believe in sacred spirits who dwell in nature. Hence, before doing any activity concerning nature, the guardian spirits need to be informed. The spirits of ancestors and the guardian spirits of the fields need to be worshipped with offerings such as pigs, liquors, and rice. In Ban Nam Sod, there live 3 ethnic groups, Khmu, Thin, and Hmong, each has its language and dressing style, but they cooperate to organize the annual worship of spirits, one of the important rituals of Ban Nam Sod.

There are 3 kinds of spirits according to the belief of people in Ban Nam Sod:

1. The house spirit, called "Oy Klang" in the Khmu language, is the ancestor guardian spirit of a house.
2. The village spirit, called "Oy Kung" in the Khmu language, is the guardian spirit of a house group or "Khoom" of 2-3 houses.
3. The all-spirits, are called "Oy Num" in the Khmu language. In an annual ritual worshipping the all-spirits, all people in the village come together with offerings of pigs, flowers, incense sticks and candles, and savory and sweet dishes.

According to the beliefs, if any villager does something wrong, such as committing adultery, the spirit will make a warning to someone else in the village, making him sick. The family of the sick one will go to ask the village shaman about the cause of the sickness and the preferred food of the house spirit, and then make the offerings.

The rituals of the Khmu people include:

1. The Oy Num ritual, the annual worship of spirits
2. The Su Khwan blessing ritual
 - 2.1 The Su Khwan blessing ritual for buffaloes. In the past, farmers of Ban Nam Sod used buffaloes in a field plowing and they may sometimes scolded and beat the animals. Consequently, the ceremony is held to apologize to the buffaloes with offerings of savory and sweet dishes.
 - 2.2 The Su Khwan blessing ritual for rice. The ritual means to call the rice spirit to dwell in the barn with offerings including banana shoots, sugar cane shoots, flowers, incense sticks and candles, betel nuts, savory and sweet dishes.

- 2.3 The Su Khwan ritual for the sick. The ritual is held when a sick person is prophesied that his sickness is caused by the loss of his *Khwan* or guardian spirit. In the ritual, the sick person's clothes, a banana, a lump of cooked rice and a boiled egg are prepared to invite the spirit from the area it is supposed to drop, back to the sick man's house. When the shaman arrives at the sick man's house, he will ask whether the *Khwan* has already returned, and the answer must be yes. Then, a tray of offerings to welcome *Khwan* are set up which include two cooked chickens, a bottle of liquor, flowers, incense sticks and candles, and savory and sweet dishes. The shaman, relatives, and elderlies come to bless better health upon the sick man and pray for his *Khwan* to remain with him. After the ritual, the food offerings are shared in the thank you party.

The New Year ritual is performed on Songkran day, called Phaya Wan in the North, which is believed to be the day when stars have strong power. In the ritual, the village headman and the shaman prepare a tray with incense sticks, candles, and talc, and a bucket containing water infused with pods of Sompoi (acacia concinna) and floated with scented flowers. The scented water, considered sacred water, is to be poured on the hands of revered elders, asking for their blessing and apologizing for any offense to them including giving them gifts. The elders will bless the villagers with happiness and well-living. The ritual is completed after the village headman thanks all participants in the ritual.



Figure 7. The New Year Ritual.

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Cultural Resources for Krung Studies

I returned to meet with the former head of the village, Somkiat Kalasod in order to re-connect with the last two *krung* makers in the village, Master Som Paopa and Master La Paopa. In order to quickly safeguard the knowledge of the process of making *krung*, I also arranged with Somkiat Kalasod to coordinate with the male farmers in the villagers to set up a team and go into the forest to cut bamboo. Then, I followed the group to select the dates to cut the bamboo and followed into the forest in order to observe how to select, cut, and transport the bamboo back to the village. During the process of making the *krung* in the village, I asked permission to film the process of making the *krung*, interview the process and the parts of *krung*, and plan the workshop of *krung* making together with two masters in order to prepare a *krung* workshop for 20 high school students at Thung Chang school in Nan province.

The three masters in the village for an interview are as follows:

1. Somkiat Kalasod, the headman of Ban Nam Sod, resided in Ban Nam Sod, Lae Subdistrict, Thung Chang District, Nan Province. Somkiat Kalasod can speak Thai, Lanna, Khmu, Thin, and Hmong languages, and is so efficient in management that the villagers of all ethnicities entrust him to be their village headman. His duties include taking care of villagers' welfare, managing the village's affairs and cooperating with government units in watershed forest conservation, watching over the flash floods and forest fire, presiding in the annual ritual of spirits sacrifice, and supporting and promoting the cultural heritages of Khmu and Thin ethnics, enabling them to survive and be accepted as people of Nan.



Figure 8. Somkiat Kalasod.

2. Som Paopa is a master of making *krung*. He is married to Ms. La and has 4 daughters. All his family members are music artists except the 4 daughters. His main occupation is farming. Wishing to inherit the musical knowledge from his father, Phor Khru Som Paopa has learned to play *Krung* with his father since he was 17 years old until he mastered the *Krung* playing. Before learning, a ritual to sacrifice to spirits was performed.

3. The third person is a *krung* maker who lived in the Nam Sod village. La Paopa was born on November 17, 1947, at Ban Nam Sod, a son of Mr. Noi and Mrs. Nang. He is married to

Ms. Noi and has a son and two daughters. His family members work as farmhands. La Paopa is skillful in making a *Krung*. Learning to play *Krung* is a tradition passed on for a long time within his family and relatives. At the age of 18, Phor Khru La began *Krung* learning with Khru Ping Paopa, his first teacher, at Ban Phu Kham, Thung Chang Subdistrict. Phor Khru La has learned the knowledge of making *Krung* with Khru Ping by rote.



Figure 9. Left, Som Paopa. Right, La Paopa.

The Ritual and Beliefs Concerning Krung

The *Khmu* people believe that each piece of bamboo that is used to make *krung* represents Phi Fah (the celestial spirit), the greatest spirit. To cut the bamboo for *krung* making begins one day before the cutting with the ritual of informing the spirit of the house. The next day, men are called to help cut bamboo in the forest. Since women are not familiar with the tools and the cutting process, only men are allowed to cut the bamboo. Cutting bamboo in the wrong way may result in the sound of *krung* deviating from the desired property (Som Paopa, interview, March 8, 2024).

Four to five *Khmu* men started their bamboo cutting trip at 7.00 a.m. and carry their cuttings out around 10.00 a.m. The men needed to know the characteristics of bamboo. They counted to the 2nd internode above ground and cut under the node ring. The bamboo was cut more than the quantity needed in case of any mistake happened during the *krung* making.

According to Phoasavadi (2018), La Paopa explains that having finished the bamboo cutting, the *krung* making process begins on the same day, first with *krung*'s head. An internode of bamboo was cut, and its outer skin was scraped out and slit into long strips with a knife to make *krung*'s head and hair. Then, its handle was made, and ropes were tied around. Shafts (called Ta meaning eye) were inserted. Then, a sound stick was inserted in the internode, and lastly; a foot (Teen) was assembled at the lower part of *krung*. The size of *krung* is not

fixed but depends on the size of bamboo acquired. However, its shape is built as has been inherited from *Khmu* ancestors. As for the musical note tuning, Phor Khru La Paopa used the method of shaking the *krung* and listening to identify the right note by his 40 years' experience in making *krung*. If it cannot produce sounds that were loud enough, the *Krung's* foot (Teen) needed to be changed. The making of *Krung* must be completed in one day, adding three days for sound testing by shaking it every night until its sound became stable and ready to be used. *Krung* was played in the field and during the transportation of rice products. *Krung's* makers believed that the house guardian spirits were needed to be informed when *krung* is made.

Curatorial Practice of Krung Musical Instruments

On March 9, 2024, a six-hour workshop took place in a music classroom at Thung Chang district school, catering to twenty students. Initially, the atmosphere lacked enthusiasm as there wasn't ample time to establish rapport with the students. However, I endeavored to engage them by sharing my personal journey with the *krung* since 2011. During my introduction, I showed photos of my 2011 journey and videos of making *krung* and a demonstration of *krung* ensemble. This video was made together with a group of relatives of Som and La in 2011 in order to record how to shake the five *krungs* together.

The year 2011 marked my introduction to the *krung* and my encounter with Som and La, the skilled *krung* instrument makers from Ban Nam Sod village. Witnessing their intricate craftsmanship, the complex process of crafting the instrument, and the quest for five types of bamboo left a profound impression on me. Returning to Ban Nam Sod reaffirmed the stark reality of the diminishing musical heritage within the village. Assisted by the Chulalongkorn University staff in Nan province and local villagers, bamboo was cut on March 7-8, 2024 as a preparation for the workshop. According to La and Som's design, bamboo was cut into four pieces in order to facilitate students to learn how to make the *krung* during the workshop faster. The students will learn how to assemble parts of the instruments, if they were not able to use the knives by themselves. The students were organized into four groups. Following my account of my journey in 2011, I extended an invitation to Som and La to join the workshop at the school. I sent a van to pick La and Som from their houses in Ban Nam Sod village which were about 15 minutes from the school. They arrived with their knives. They told me that they would lend their knives to students during the workshop. They would let the students to work on the bamboo with their knives to make the hair of the *krung* top part. Both La and som arrived equipped with their traditional knives called "pra ngok" – sharp knives featuring a curved metal tip. Mastery of this knife demanded advanced skill to hold the grip; it served not only for cutting bamboo but also for safeguarding against wildlife and snakes while traversing the forest in search of bamboo along the stream.

After students were divided into four groups, they were led to pick up pieces of bamboo on the tables. They were seated on the floor with bamboo rods in front of them. La and Som were comfortable to lead the workshop. I asked if I could lead the students to shake the *krung* first after they first heard the sound of *krung* from the video I had shown at the beginning of the workshop. The students then learned that the instrument was actually

quite heavy and this may be the reason for a village takes turn to play bamboo during the rice harvest ritual. Apart from participation, it is labor distribution of music sharing that students learn from the workshop.

The instrument makers from the village was able to lead the workshop adamantly. The former head of the village also helped the two instrument makers explained students how to make the instrument, how to cut the bamboo, and how to hold the bamboo. One student did not listen to the instrument when the instrument maker asked the student to tight the top of the bamboo with the thin slides of bamboo strings. The instrument maker explained that the bamboo string would hold the bamboo together and prevent them from cracking. Suddenly, the bamboo cracked after a few minutes. The students asked more questions to the instrument makers while they were learning how to make *krung* from the instrument makers.

Later, the female members of each group began to design their new instruments based on an inspiration from the workshop, the lecture, and the interactions with *krung* instrument makers. The first group named their new instrument *ma-ka-rung*; they named their instrument after *krung* and took a name after a maracus. Other new designed instruments include *samarugy* & *samarugoh*, *nong bong*, and *klong kreub*. Students learned how to design a musical instrument that is made of bamboo and each contains a sound box. After designing an instrument, students gave a name to their new musical instruments and gave a presentation of inspiration and outcome. They included their local seeds such rice seed, corn seed, and nuts. The new design of these instruments based on a *krung* workshop will be realized into an actual instrument. The new musical instruments will be incorporated in their folk song band later on when the next semester starts in June. The following photos show the design by four groups of students in Thung Chang district after a workshop.

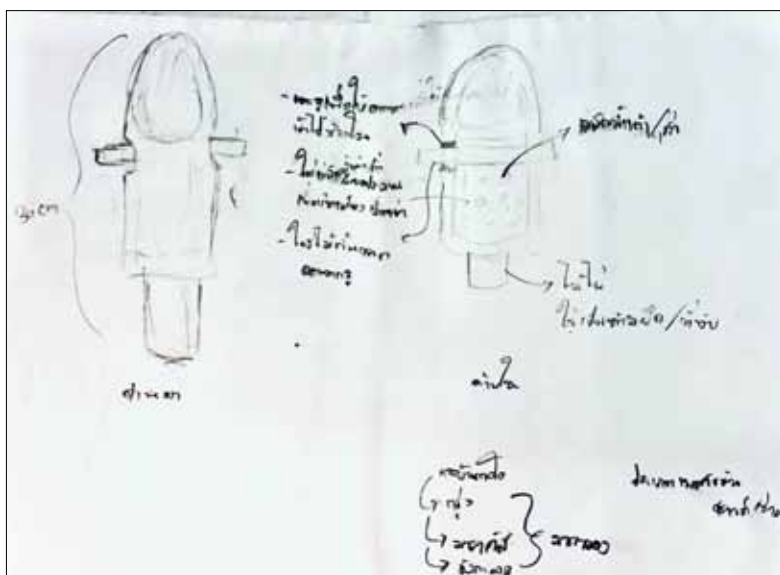


Figure 10. A design of a new musical instrument named *ma-ka-rung*.

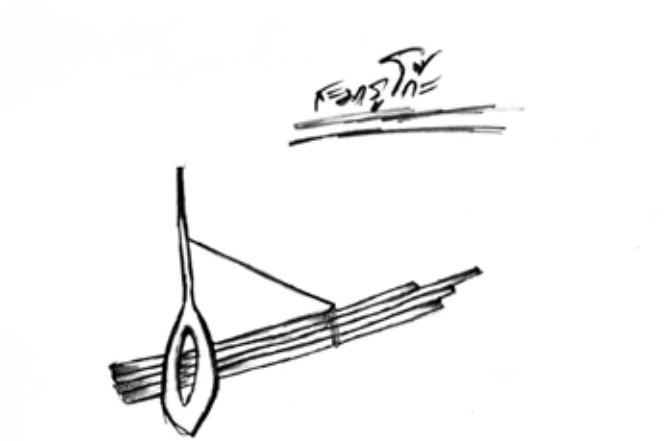


Figure 11. A design of a new musical instrument named *samarugoh*.

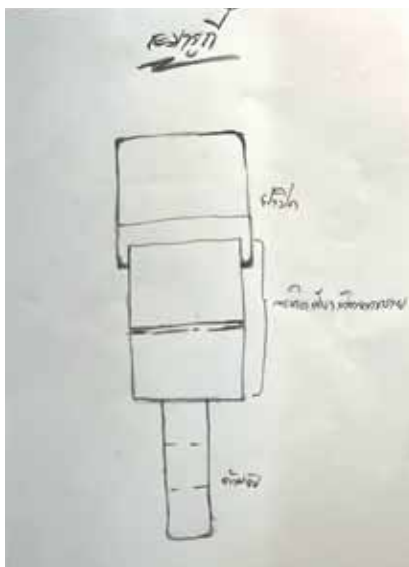


Figure 12. A design of a new musical instrument named *samarugy*

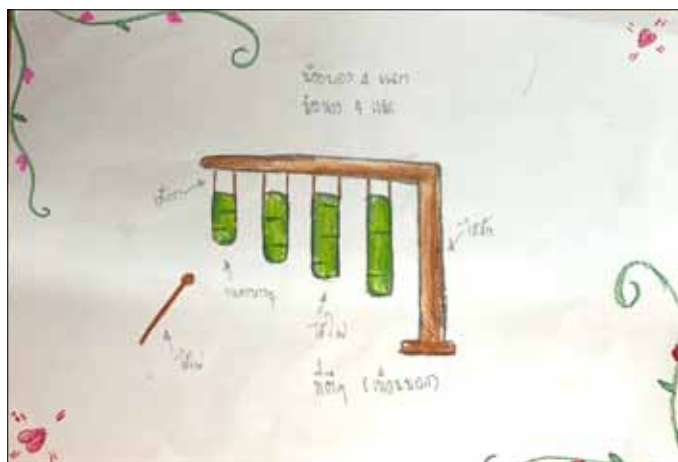


Figure 13. A design of a new musical instrument named *nong bong*.

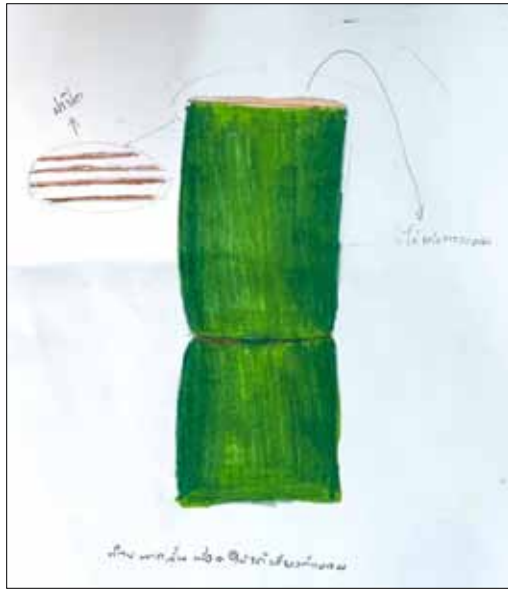


Figure 14. A design of a new musical instrument named *klong kreub*.



Figure 15. Four *krungs* made by four groups of students in a *krung* workshop.

Assisted by Som, La, and Somkiat, the students swiftly crafted four *krung* instruments. Although the results did not produce optimal sound quality and the instruments were not in pristine condition, the students took pride in their intricate bamboo creations. Each *krung* presented unique challenges: the first lacked hair, the second had an incorrect foot size resulting in an additional foot attached to the body, the third was too high, and the fourth boasted the curliest hair. None of the groups managed to complete the feet properly; the first two groups used bong bamboo instead of the correct *tao* wood. It was only the third and fourth groups that employed *tao* wood or Siamese pom-pom tree (*Mallotus barbatus* Müll. Arg.) for the feet, as advised by La Paopa and Som Paopa. They explained that only *tao* wood could impart the desired mellow and deep tones to the *krung*, emphasizing its superior quality for crafting these traditional instruments.

Continuation of The Krung Workshop

An initiative was discussed among the community leaders after the workshop. The school will set up the *krung* club for high school students which they realized the importance of their bamboo instrument. Their hand-on experience after the process of making and learning with the instrument makers made them realized that the bamboo instrument is an important tool to safeguard their cultural and biology ecology system. To safeguard their cultural legacy, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and the reinforcement of communal bonds. *Krung* are integral aspects of their cultural identity and heritage. The school director expressed that the *krung* will be re-introduced to the school's rice harvest season. This is to re-contextualize the instrument from the original context of village ritual of rice harvest to a school edition of rice harvest. The workshop created a platform for an instrument to function ritually as the rice farmers cut the bamboo to celebrate the first harvest and to thank the rice goddess for yielding and protecting the crops from natural damages such as storms, rain, flood, and animals. The former head of the village stated for the reason of the cease of the musical instrument disappearance from the rice harvest ritual:

We do not play this instrument during the harvest anymore. We stop because the villagers no longer grow rice. They grow other types of crops that are more commercial easy to grow such as corns. Moreover, it is also difficult to find all five types of bamboo in order to make the instrument (Kalasod, Interview, March 8, 2024).

Another villager in Lae sub-district also pointed out that he recalled the ritual from his childhood. He continued to tell from his childhood memory of *krung* and its function during the rice harvest ritual as follows:

People would come around the piles of new rice after the harvest with the instrument. Each member of the village knew how to play the instrument. They would gather around the rice and celebrate by shaking the bamboo instrument in different rhythm. Men and women in the village will then take turn to shake the bamboo instrument on the rice field. Then, they would move the rice to be kept inside of the rice barn. Then, there would be another round of shaking the instrument around the barn in the village again one more time (Lekchai, Interview, March 10, 2024).

Apart from this rice harvest ritual context, the villagers had described an occasion when they held the bamboo instruments to make the sound of *krung*. However, it was not for the ritual but it was designed for the annual festival in Nan province to display cultural diversity comprising of cultural show from various ethnic groups living Nan. Although such venues may not appropriate to the original context of the bamboo, it served as a continuation

of the living spirit of *krung* and the instrument makers. It was the only chance for them to make their bamboo instruments, to renew their knowledge, and to pass down their wisdom and heritage to the younger generation.

In 2024, the author is able to meet with a younger generation who is taking of and safeguard the knowledge of making *krung*, the knowledge of selecting the bamboo, and the knowledge of cutting the bamboo. The author followed Mr. Pongsakorn Khanthaseema, known as Nong in the village, to select and cut the bamboo in the forest of Ban Nam Sod village. Khanthaseema instructed the author how to select and how to cut the bamboo as followings:

Look out for the bamboo that grow up right. The rod should be straight up to the sky. The bamboo rod must not be broken in the middle of the rod. The good location to find the good bamboo is somewhere near the stream. Bamboo needs a lot of water and good soil to grow in order to grow yield good sound quality. Therefore, our village is known and titled Ban Nam Sod. It means the village with the water stream that has bamboo growing along the shore of the water stream. The appropriate age of bamboo is about the old one. If we pick the young bamboo rod, it will crack easily (Khanthaseema, Interview, March 8, 2024).

An initiative to cultivate a botanical plantation of bamboo was inaugurated by the principal of the Thungchang school. This venture is set to expand through the collaboration with experts in the fields of botany and soil science, as well as the engagement of the local instrument makers. This holistic approach aims not only to safeguard the musical traditions of the region but also to foster an environment where cultural and natural resources coexist and sustain each other. The author learned from this trip to cut bamboo in the deep forest that bamboo species also serves as an indicator of forest richness and abundance of resources. The cutting bamboo journey is also an opportunity to explore the abundance of trees, animals, birds, and natural resources in their forest along the forest trail from the village.

While the *krung* in Thailand is found to play after the rice harvest, in West Java, there is a musical instrument made of bamboo for a rice harvest. But the ceremony takes place before the planning and harvesting in order to ask for the blessings of the rice field. The ritual of placing rice in bamboo, a tradition among the Sundanese people, is accompanied by a musical presentation featuring tuned bamboo rattles known as Angklung. (Baier 1986). These instruments hold significance in the agricultural rituals of Indonesia, particularly in West Java where they were traditionally believed to ensure a bountiful harvest. The enchanting melodies of this music were thought to beckon the spirit or goddess of rice, inviting her to bless the land with prosperity (Baier, 1985:9).

A reflection of the rice-and-bamboo myth can be found in the Southeast Asia: the old Sundanese practice of planting bamboos with holes in them along the rice fields. (Wessing, 1998:52). In Indonesia (especially on Java), traditional music associated with growing rice included the use of tuned bamboo rattles {Angklung}, whose sound was pleasing to the goddess of rice, Dewi Sri. Since the mid-1970s, Angklung have been co-opted as tools for Western-style classes in music (Williams, 1998:114-115). In central Thailand, goddess of rice is also worshipped but there is no musical accompaniment to the rice harvest ritual to invoke and please the rice goddess. In this research which the fieldwork was taken place in Nan province, the northern part of Thailand, it shows that the bamboo instrument is found

to be associated with the post-harvest ritual in order to thank the spirits of the land and the spirit of their ancestors.

In the context of our workshop on bamboo instrument craftsmanship within the hill tribe communities of Nan, Thailand, our experiential journey led us to a profound understanding of the temporal intricacies inherent in bamboo harvesting. As we engaged in the fabrication of musical instruments alongside indigenous craftsmen, we encountered firsthand the importance of timing in ensuring the quality of our craft. This revelation emerged through observations made during our harvesting endeavors, where we discovered that March was not an ideal time for bamboo cutting due to suboptimal bamboo quality. This finding resonated with our prior experience in December, where we encountered challenges related to the size and dryness of the bamboo, resulting in inferior instrument quality.

Our realization underscored the significance of harvesting bamboo during the rainy season, typically spanning June, July, and August. During this period, the increased moisture content of the bamboo renders it more suitable for crafting high-quality musical instruments. This newfound knowledge not only enhanced our technical understanding of bamboo instrument production but also deepened our appreciation for the intricate relationship between environmental conditions and craftsmanship within indigenous communities. The insights gained from our experiential journey resonate with scholarly discourse on indigenous ecological knowledge and traditional craftsmanship. Studies such as those by Berkes (2018) and Nazarea (2006) highlight the importance of indigenous knowledge systems in sustainable resource management and cultural preservation. Additionally, research by Maffi (2005) underscores the interconnectedness between cultural diversity and biodiversity, emphasizing the role of traditional ecological knowledge in maintaining ecological resilience. Furthermore, our reflection on the urban-rural dichotomy, as experienced by an urban researcher immersed in the rural landscapes of Nan, Thailand, aligns with discussions on the complexities of environmental perception and place-based knowledge (Grünenewald & Smith, 2014; Ingold, 2000). This introspection underscores the transformative potential of experiential learning in fostering cross-cultural understanding and ecological consciousness. Our journey through the hills of Nan illuminated not only the technical intricacies of bamboo instrument craftsmanship but also the profound wisdom embedded within indigenous knowledge systems. Through collaborative engagement with local communities and immersion in their cultural practices, we gained invaluable insights into the temporal rhythms of nature and the symbiotic relationship between humanity and the environment.

Conclusion

This curatorial practice project of *krung* explored an experiential journey in the Ban Nam Sod village, where an initiative was undertaken to organize and culminate in a workshop on crafting bamboo musical instruments with young students in the village in collaboration with senior instrument craftsmen. The workshop was framed within the context of navigating the complexities of cultural preservation amidst ecological challenges. Participants were students who were engaged in hands-on learning experiences encompassing various stages of instrument production, including bamboo selection, cutting, and designing. There were guided closely by the expertise of local artisans. Through this immersive process, insights were gained into the temporal intricacies of bamboo harvesting, highlighting the significance of timing in ensuring instrument quality. Furthermore, collaborative interactions with instrument makers facilitated a deeper understanding of the cultural significance embedded within traditional musical practices, fostering cross-cultural dia-

logue and knowledge exchange. This experiential journey not only enhanced technical proficiency in instrument craftsmanship but also fostered ecological consciousness and ethical stewardship. Through collaborative efforts with the community, a holistic approach to cultural preservation and sustainability was embraced, emphasizing the interconnectedness between human societies and the natural world. This article underscores the transformative potential of experiential learning in fostering cultural resilience and ecological awareness within indigenous communities. Fundamentally, the workshop transcended its role as a mere conduit for technical skill acquisition, embracing a holistic approach informed by the theory of Anthropocene. Through the medium of bamboo musical instruments, it endeavored to cultivate ecological consciousness and ethical stewardship in a world profoundly shaped by human activity

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