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Sirirak Chusawat : A PROCESS OF TRANSMITTING SKILLS IN PERFORMING A REGAL CEREMONIAL FANFARE WITH A SET OF ROYAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN HONOR OF THE KING IN THE RATTANAKOSIN PERIOD)

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This research is a descriptive study, using historical approach. It aims to study the history of a regal ceremonial fanfare in honor of the King and the history of fanfare musical instruments, the beliefs associated with them and their function as well as the process of transmitting skills in performing a regal ceremonial fanfare in the Rattanakosin period.

The study has revealed that a regal ceremonial fanfare was part of Thai culture. It was meant to sing the praises of the King. This practice had been crystallized over a long period of the time as verified by evidence found at ancient historical sites, ancient artifacts and literature spanning a pre-recorded history period and the present time with religious and administrative factors determining the function and the importance of the regal ceremonial fanfare. This is evident of the government system during the Ayudhaya period when the King was held as a divine being according to Brahmanism. The King is endowed with power, aura and sacredness to rule heaven. It is in this context that regal symbols had been devised, hence a regal ceremonial fanfare which aimed to reinforce the royal legitimacy and sacredness.

The nine fanfare instruments are a metal drum, Mahorathuk (kettle drum), Gong Chai, Perngmang, Klawng Chana, Sang, Trae Ngawn, Trae Farang, Pi-chawa, and Pi-chanal. These instruments differ from others in that their sound is emotionally appealing, galvanizing, and conducive to the ceremonial setting. The function of the regal ceremonial fanfare is to express reverence and to sing the praises of the King as well as to express allegiance and the deep bonds between the King and his subjects. In addition, it signals as to exactly where the King is physically present. It also has another significant role in royal ceremonies by serving as a signal that the King is in the process of performing the most important part of a royal ceremony.

Our study on the process of transmitting skills in performing a royal ceremonial fanfare with a set of royal musical instruments in honor of the King, has revealed that the Royal Regalia and Klawng Chana Section, Bureau of the Royal Household, serves as a school which transmits skills in performing a ceremonial fanfare to 5 groups of students. Musical instruments used in this fanfare are grouped into 3 categories: (1) percussion instruments, (2) wind instruments producing a single sound, and (3) wind instruments producing a melody. The teaching and learning process is a traditional one. Usually, the students will first be introduced to percussion instruments by playing their assigned instruments in the band. The skills in playing Trae Farang is taught by way of playing musical pieces called Sam-rub-bot, Ook Kun Nang, and Song Sadet. The skills in performing Pi-chawa are taught by way of playing musical pieces called Plaeng Pa-Ya-Daern, Ta-Yare-Klawng-Ya-on, Krabi-lee-La as well as other moderately fast pieces. Students will be initiated to Pi-Chanal by playing a musical piece called Pa-ya-Soke-Loy-Lom. The students at the Royal Academy of Suan Kularp, the Military Academy and the Cadet Academy are trained to play Klawng Chana. The first two learn to perform musical called Sam-Mai-Nee, See-Mai-Lai and a special beat called "Ting-Peung". Each group of students learn their skills through lectures, demonstrations, and repetitive practices until they perform correctly. The Navy's Duriyanga Band is assigned to perform only Plaeng Sam-Rub-bot with Trae Farang. As for the Trae Ngawn and Sang, students have to teach themselves how to perform them.

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