

THE LITERARY FOLK SONGS OF KANCHANABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND: THE RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

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The objectives of this research were (1) to collect folk songs from Kanchanaburi province, Thailand; (2) to analyze the functions of the folk songs in creating community identities; and (3) to study the procedures of restoring and conserving the cultural heritage of folk songs in Kanchanaburi. The research employed purposive sampling to collect primary data from fieldwork using in-depth interviews and to obtain secondary data on Kanchanaburi folk songs recorded in writing. The research found 20 Kanchanaburi based folk songs that can be categorized into five groups: (1) conversing and flirting songs between men and women, namely, *Phleng Yaei*, *Phleng E-Saew*, *Phleng Phuang Malai*, *Phleng Choi*, *Phleng Song Khruaeng*, *Phleng Chak*, *Phleng Song Fang*, *Phleng Phan Fang*, *Phleng Song Kho Lam Phuan*, and *Phleng Chak Kradan*; (2) play songs, including *Phleng Ram Thon*, *Phleng Khlong Chang*, *Phleng Khao Phi*, and *Phleng Choen Phi*; (3) children's songs, comprising *Phleng Klom Dek*, and *Phleng Plop Dek*; (4) bemoaning songs, containing *Phleng Phitsathan*, and *Phleng Roi Phansa*; and (5) ceremony songs, consisting of *Phleng Hae Nang Maeo*, and *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak*. These folk songs serve five different functions: entertaining; reflecting the culture and strengthening the conservation of the culture; educating and cultivating world views and values of the society; acting as an emotional outlet from social pressure; and publicizing information. Four knowledge management models can be applied to restore and conserve folk songs as cultural heritage in Kanchanaburi: knowledge seeking, knowledge creation, knowledge preservation, and knowledge sharing.

Keywords: Literary folk songs of Kanchanaburi; restoration and conservation; cultural heritage; folk songs

1. INTRODUCTION

The lifestyle of Thai people has been rich musically since ancient times as they treasure merriment and jollity as the main purpose of life. If life is fun and jovial, life is considered good and complete (Klaimuk, 1998, p. 22). Therefore, music has perpetually been one of the most important parts of life. Songs in different

areas of the world vary according to the conditions of those areas, creating the identities of each nation and language. The songs that carry the identity of a given society are called “folk songs.”

The earliest Thai record of folk songs can be found in “The Palace Law” during the Ayutthaya period, composed during the reign of King Borommatrailokkanat. This folk song was called *Phleng Ruea*, and was sung by men and women on a boat. Participating in *Phleng Ruea* was forbidden at the pier of the Crystal Pool and some areas of the palace. During the Thonburi period, *Phleng Thap Thong* was mentioned. It was performed in royal cremation ceremonies. During the Rattanakosin period, during the reign of King Rama I and King Rama II, folk songs such as *Phleng Prop Kai*, *Phleng Thap Thong*, *Sakkawa*, and *Phleng Dok Soi* were performed in grand ceremonies (Sirisanpan, 2009).

Folk songs are local rhymes. They are oral literature created by locals to exert and express their feelings. These songs are not often written down. Words are arranged in rhythm, creating rudimentary poems (Sirisanpan, 2009, p. 43). Wongthet (1982) also stated the following:

The distinguished qualities of folk songs are their simplicity and local characteristics. The simplicity can be found in the patterns of words, lyrics, and melodies. A simple spoken language is used. The poems are of a rudimentary nature and contain wisdom, or are conversations between men and women. (p. 76)

Folk songs are a type of oral literature that are of significant value to humanity. Since they are an integral part of Thai culture, studying them creates a more thorough understanding of its societies and lifestyles. Dundes (1969, p. 76) stated: “Oral literature can reflect the attitudes of the people who own the culture. Sometimes this reflection is incorrectly distorted, but the literature work is the most important thing that helps us understand the people better.” Apart from being a part of culture that indicates local identities, folk songs also express other values of each society. Those values include 1) sentimental values, as folk songs nourish one’s mind and relieve stress, causing enjoyment; 2) social values, as folk songs are sung in activities where people come together, which shows the cooperation and unity of that society; and 3) cultural values, as folk songs are a cultural heritage that indicate the identity of a particular society or nation in different aspects, such as lifestyle, tradition, language, and music (Khumsopa, 1999, p. 22). These three values reflect the significant roles that folk songs play in Thai society.

Folk songs in Kanchanaburi are a varied and intangible form of Thailand’s cultural heritage. They can still be seen in performances at important local festivals, such as *Phleng Roi Phansa*, *Phleng Phitsathan*, *Phleng Yaei*, *Phleng Ram Thon*, and *Phleng E-Saew*. However, performances of these folk songs are gradually decreasing in number; people today are more interested in popular contemporary music. This is the result of changes in lifestyles, with modern media and technology, which are easily accessible and fast-paced, having an influence on this.

The authors conducted a preliminary survey and found that some authors have previously studied folk songs in Kanchanaburi and the central region of Thailand: Ruangdet (1975) studied folk songs from Phanomthuan, Kanchanaburi; Nawigamun (1984) collected folk songs from the central region; Patrachai (1980) studied the songs of the central region; and Suphannayos (2014) collected and stored information on folk songs in the central region, which is a collection of folk songs from Kanchanaburi province and the central region. However, it was felt that many other folk songs of Kanchanaburi had yet to be collected or systematically studied. In addition, the study of the roles and functions of folk songs, and how folk songs can be restored and conserved using the knowledge management process had yet to be identified. Therefore, the objectives of this research were (1) to collect folk songs in Kanchanaburi province, Thailand; (2) to analyze the functions of folk songs in creating community identities; and (3) to study the procedures of restoring and conserving the cultural heritage of folk songs in Kanchanaburi province. This study will further expand the knowledge of folk songs in Kanchanaburi province, and be a guideline for restoring and conserving the cultural heritage of those folk songs.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Data and Sources

The data used in this research are divided into two types as follows:

2.1.1 Primary data

This type of data was collected in various localities by recording the meetings with the informants. The informants consisted of professional troupes, amateurs, and people with at least 20 years’ experience, knowledge or interest in folk songs.

2.1.2 Secondary data

Some examples of this type of data are folk songs recorded in written form and documents that mention different types of folk songs. The sources of data collected in Kanchanaburi were from Ban Huai Talung Community and Ban Nong Khao Community, Nong Khao sub-district, Tha Muang district; Ban Huai Saphan Community, Nong Rong sub-district, Phanomthuan district; Ban Thuan Community, Phanomthuan sub-district, Phanomthuan district; Ban Phrathuen Community, Phrathuen sub-district, Tha Maka district; Ban Lat Ya Community, Lat Ya sub-district; Mueang district; and Nong Bua Community, Nong Bua sub-district, Mueang district.

The sample group was selected using a purposive sampling method. Of the 20 informants, five were community leaders, nine were school administrators and teachers from a Thai language department, and six were people interested in folk songs. The informants comprised male and female lead singers and choruses, mostly over 40 years of age.

In-depth interviews and records from a focus group were used for the data collection.

2.2 Research procedure

The researchers followed seven steps to fulfil the research objectives. The procedure was as follows:

1) Review the literature by studying documents, concepts and theories; related research on folk songs in Kanchanaburi province; and the functions of folklore.

2) Study the primary data of the community pertaining to local folk songs by collecting data using folklore methodology from June 2020–January 2021. In-depth interviews, both fixed-structured and semi-structured, and participant observation were undertaken with experts (professional troupes, amateurs, and people who have folk song knowledge and performing experience of more than 20 years), performers and people who are interested in folk songs from various localities.

The authors set two criteria for selecting the folk songs: 1) they needed to be known to more than 50% of the experts who provided information, and 2) they had to have been recorded in writing or have their lyrics memorized or sung by the people.

3) Categorize types of folk song data according to folklore methodology in order to identify any trend from the data for restoration and conservation purposes.

4) Analyze the roles and functions of folk songs in Thai society using William Bascom's theory (1954) on the functions of folklore.

5) Organize a focus group meeting with experts to study how to restore and conserve the folk music culture in Kanchanaburi by applying the knowledge management process by Marquardt (1996, pp. 129–155). These experts were divided into two groups:

5.1 Informants that are local experts.

This group of informants was at least 40 years of age. They were talented performers, singers, and composers in Kanchanaburi.

5.2 Informants that have a connection in restoring and conserving folk songs in Kanchanaburi. This group of informants included school administrators, teachers from a Thai language department, scholars, and community leaders. They helped to evaluate the appropriateness of the wisdom management model in terms of restoring and conserving the folk songs, as well as sharing additional suggestions.

6) Study the guidelines for restoring and conserving folk song culture in Kanchanaburi by analyzing the focus group report.

7) Organize and report the research findings in the complete research paper.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Types of folk songs

There were 20 folk songs found, namely, *Phleng Yaei*, *Phleng E-Saew*, *Phleng Phuang Malai*, *Phleng Choi*, *Phleng Song Khruang*, *Phleng Chak*, *Phleng Song Fang*, *Phleng Phan Fang*, *Phleng Song Kho Lam Phuan*, *Phleng Chak Kradan*, *Phleng Ram Thon*, *Phleng Khlong Chang*, *Phleng Khao Phi*, *Phleng Choen Phi*, *Phleng Klom Dek*, *Phleng Plop Dek*, *Phleng Phitsathan*, *Phleng Roi Phansa*, *Phleng Hae Nang Maeo*, and *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak*. These songs can be categorized according to the purpose of singing, based on Sujachaya's criteria (2002), into five types as follows:

1) Conversing songs. These are songs that are conversations between males and females. The content is usually flirtatious. The words in the songs are impromptu and sung spontaneously in a courtyard in front of others. The highlight of these songs is the witty language that shows the quick-thinking of both singers. The analysis revealed that there were ten songs of this type:

1.1 *Phleng Yaei* or *Phleng Dok Khae Ruang* (a conversing song with the ending word “oei” in Thai) is a conversation between a man and woman that shows the quick-thinking of both singers, singing in a flirtatious manner. It is commonly sung during Songkran, public holidays, auspicious events, and local festivals.

1.2 *Phleng E-Saew* or *Phleng Yua* (a flirtatious conversing song) is a conversation between men and women made in a tantalizingly teasing manner for fun and enjoyment. It can be sung on any occasion.

1.3 *Phleng Phuang Malai* (a wooing conversing song with the ending words “Phuang oei Phuang Malai” (a garland) in Thai) is a conversation between a man and woman, both taking turns singing along with a chorus that sings and claps rhythmically. It is commonly sung during Songkran.

1.4 *Phleng Choi* or *Phleng Cha* (a conversing song with a chorus) is a conversation between men and women similar to *Lam Tat* (a Thai-style antiphon). There are usually 2–3 singers, both male and female. The uniqueness of *Phleng Choi* is that the chorus will sing along with the lyrics “Eh Cha, Eh Cha, Cha Cha Cha Cha, Noi Mae.” It can be sung on any occasion.

1.5 *Phleng Song Khrueang* (a literature-based conversing song) is a song with two parts. In the first part, the male and female performers will first have a conversation. The second part is the performance of the *Phleng Song Khrueang*, a story-based show with no interactive music playing, using folk songs, mainly *Phleng Choi*, and dancing according to the lyrics taken from Thai literature (Keawkwang, 2012).

1.6 *Phleng Chak* (a departing conversing song) is a conversation between men and women during the harvesting of rice and the evening before going home or dispersing.

1.7 *Phleng Song Fang* (a conversing song depicting recreation for scraping the rice straw out of the rice grain on the threshing floor) is a short conversation between men and women during the time after harvesting rice when the buffalo or oxen trample the ears of the rice so that the grain comes out of it. They dig up the rice straw so that the grain mixed with the straw falls from the bunch. Thus, both men and women teasingly sing this song while working together.

1.8 *Phleng Phan Fang* (a conversing song depicting recreation for gathering the rice straw into a heap of straw on the threshing floor) is a short song sung interactively between men and women during the threshing when they pick up the straw with no grain to pile it together using a hayfork. Thus, both men and women sing this song while working together.

1.9 *Phleng Song Kho Lam Phuan* (conversing song depicting recreation for collecting all the scraps of straw before putting the rice grain into a barn) is a short song sung interactively between men and women during the time before the rice is stored in a barn. Beforehand, they must gather all leftover straw called “Kho Lum Phuan”. Both men and women will sit in a circle around the threshing floor, help clear the leftover straw, and sing this song.

1.10 *Phleng Chak Kra-dan* (conversing song depicting recreation for rice-gathering using sweeping planks) is a short song sung interactively between men and women while sweeping the threshed rice and piling it up to be kept in the barn. Thus, both males and females sing this song while working together.

2) Play songs. These are songs used in adult play during the Songkran festival. They are sung by one person or in a group. The analysis revealed that there were four songs of this type as follows:

2.1 *Phleng Ram Thon* (circle-dance song) was a popular song sung during World War II because Kanchanaburi was a strategic area at that time, with Japanese soldiers coming to form Japan’s army. The Free Thai Movement (Seri Thai) secretly set up a national rescue force. The Allies were bombing the area, causing the villagers to panic. Therefore, this song was commonly sung as consolation and for fun.

2.2 *Phleng Khlong Chang* (elephant-capturing song) was a song for young people to have fun. It used to be sung during Songkran, but it is no longer popular.

2.3 *Phleng Khao Phi* (ghost-respecting song) is a song used to invite ghosts to possess a person as a medium. Children and adults, both male and female, can all participate. It is still sung during Songkran.

2.4 *Phleng Choen Phi* (ghost-summoning song) is a song to be sung together while ghosts are possessing a person. It is regarded as a veneration of ghosts.

3) Children’s songs. These are songs that mothers sing to their children. They can be ***Phleng Klom Dek*** (lullaby songs), used to calm children, and ***Phleng Plop Dek*** (baby-soothing songs), used to stop children from crying or fussing, to tease children to create fun and humorous feelings, and to pacify children so that they obey parents’ commands to go to sleep. They are usually short and related to daily routines and life conditions.

4) Bemoaning songs. These songs are sung to describe various emotions, such as begging, pleading, and inviting listeners to be spellbound. Two of these songs were found in the study, called ***Phleng Phitsathan*** (wishing song) and ***Phleng Roi Phansa*** (donation-requesting song).

5) Ceremony songs. These are songs that are sung during particular ceremonies. They are very important because their lyrics usually include a summary of the purpose or principles of the ceremony or ritual. The accompanying music also guides the mood and feelings of the participants. Two ceremony songs were

found: ***Phleng Hae Nang Maeo*** (cat-parade song) that is used during the rainmaking ritual, and ***Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak*** (Buddhist preordaining chant), which is used during the novice ordination ceremony.

3.2 Functions of folk songs in Kanchanaburi

The folk songs reflect the lifestyle, ideal society, and Thai culture. The analysis shows that there are five main functions of folk songs.

3.2.1 Entertaining

The main function of folk songs is to provide entertainment and pleasure. The folk songs in Kanchanaburi, especially conversing songs, are used in courtship and to exchange witty words. Cheerfulness and enjoyment occur due to the use of humorous and flirtatious language. Sexual content can sometimes be found in some conversing songs, for example, in *Phleng E-Saew*. This creates much laughter. These songs have a fun rhythm, causing jollity. The performances also include beautiful dancing gestures that suggest flirtation. This non-verbal language, such as pulling ears, arm pinching, pointing, stomping, raising eyebrows, raising hips, and tapping the chest, attracts the audience's attention. An example of witty words and sexual content in the lyrics can be seen in the excerpt from *Phleng E-Saew*:

If you and I have a fling,
You will have the time of your life;
I will buy you a diamond ring,
That you can wear right,
In the day, my little duck,
That diamond ring, I'll give you;
In the night, with you, I will ...,
Scrub that jewel.

(S. Phosrithong, composer, personal communication, December 20, 2020)

The verses above show the singer's ability to compose witty, amusing lyrics. The use of sexually ambiguous words is one of the unique linguistic styles of folk songs; these ambiguous verses are called 'Klon Daeng' (red verses). There is the use of euphemisms and symbolism of human genitalia. 'Diamond ring' stands for a woman's genitalia. The word 'scrub' substitutes the word that rhymes with the verse before, which means 'copulate'. This is to avoid the rudeness of such a word and the pause that occurs. Instead, that rude word causes excitement for the audience as they wait for the singer to sing the next word. This shows the quick wittiness of the composers, who can choose the right words to keep the song going smoothly. This creates linguistic humor for the audience.

3.2.2 Reflecting the culture and strengthening the conservation of the culture

Folk songs act as a mirror that reflects Thai culture in many ways.

1) Traditional Thai clothing

Specific clothing is worn during the performance of folk songs in Kanchanaburi. For example, most performers of *Phleng E-Saew*, both male and female, wear colorful clothing. Male performers usually wear different colored traditional pants called 'Chongkraben', short-sleeve t-shirts with a flower pattern, and a waist sash. Female performers wear Chongkraben with different patterns and colors, a short-sleeve t-shirt, a waist sash, accessories such as a necklace, earrings, bracelets, etc., and an ear flower. This regalia shows the adaptation of traditional clothing in a contemporary context. Chongkraben has been part of Thai clothing culture since the Ayutthaya period, and during the Rattanakosin period, it was worn during Songkran festivals. Early in the reign of King Rama IV and King Rama V, popular clothes were adapted to be more modern. Later, in the mid-20th century, the popularity of a 'floral-print, round-neck shirt' arose among men all over the world due to the fashion icon Elvis Presley, which set a norm for the "coolness" of young men. These short-sleeve shirts were worn by the Thai people every day almost 40–50 years ago because they perceived them as beautiful and colorful ("*Songkran Attire, Thai Clothes, or Floral Print T-shirts*", n.d.). This kind of shirt became the fashion standard among men and women of the time. Then it became the clothing culture for folk performers of songs such as *Phleng E-Saew*. It reflects the identity that performers have held onto for generations. The clothing culture among folk song performers is a mixture of the traditional Thai Chongkraben and foreign traditions, such as the round-neck shirt from Chinese and Indian cultures. The floral pattern not only refers to the actual print of flowers, but also the patterns that have small prints all over the fabric; this is called a "floral print shirt" (Wongthet, 2016). The clothing culture in folk song performances brings different cultures together harmoniously and creatively (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The Costumes of the Folk Song Performers “E-Saew.” Phanomthuan Chanupatham School, Kanchanaburi

Source: Phanomthuan Chanupatham School, taken on August 17th, 2015

2) Traditional Thai festival

The folk songs in Kanchanaburi province reflect the beautiful traditions passed on from ancient times.

1. Songkran festival

Folk songs play an important role during Songkran. The performance of *Phleng Yaei* marks the beginning of the Songkran celebration, as *Phleng Yaei* is a popular performance during the Songkran period. However, the authors found that *Phleng Yaei* is also performed on other important occasions in the community, such as the Loi Krathong festival, a celebration in honor of King Naresuan, and a royal visit to a Kanchanaburi memorial expo. This is an important scheme for conserving *Phleng Yaei*.

2. Loi Krathong festival

Loi Krathong occurs annually on the 15th night of the 12th month in the lunar calendar. This can be seen in the lyrics of *Phleng Yaei* sung in the Ban Tuan community in the Bantuan sub-district, Pa-nom Tuan district, Kanchanaburi.

Male: Loi Krathong in Ban Tuan,	we invite you to dance...
Female: An ancient tradition,	the legend told in Thailand...
Male: Continuing this tradition,	let us all conserve it...

(S. Dokyor, composer, personal communication, September 10, 2020)

The lyrics show that *Phleng Yaei* plays an important role in conserving and continuing the Loi Krathong festival.

3. End of the Buddhist Lent festival

Phleng Roi Phansa is a folk song sung from the 12th night of the 11th month in the lunar calendar until the last day of the Buddhist Lent, on the 15th night of the 11th month. It is sometimes extended a few nights to ask for donations for the temple. Originally, this song was sung only in the Phanomthuan district of Kanchanaburi (Cultural Arts Center, Kanchanaburi Teacher’s College, 1987, p. 7); however, neighboring districts (such as the *Ban Nong Bua* community in Mueang district) have since adopted this tradition.

It is apparent that the folk songs in Kanchanaburi reflect the clothing culture and are a part of festivals in the community, such as Songkran, Loi Krathong, and the End of the Buddhist Lent festival. They also preserve the culture of Kanchanaburi and strengthen it, allowing communities to live harmoniously while practicing their traditions.

3.2.3 Educating and cultivating world views and values of the society

Apart from being a source of entertainment, folk songs also educate and instill society with ethical concepts and values. Folk songs acted as a tool to educate and refine the society even before the formal education system that we have today came into practice. The songs, composed in poetic form, are filled with life stories to be learned, as well as accepted ways of life, concepts, beliefs, and values. Folk songs teach good attitudes, help people understand the standards and values in the society, and cultivate good ethics.

1) Folk songs as a tool to educate the society

The folk songs in Kanchanaburi contain knowledge of different areas.

1. Knowledge of religious matters

The folk songs contain knowledge about religions, especially Buddhism, both in the historical and ethical aspects, as can be seen from the following lyrics of *Phleng E-Saew*:

... I'd like to pay homage to Prince Siddhartha,
Whose birth I still remember;
He was born on Thursday,
In the year of the chicken;
He who has ten reincarnations, at the age of twenty-nine,
Carried a bowl into monkhood to avoid sins;
He let go of the circle of life,
Entering Nirvana to escape danger;
He entered monkhood in the year of the rabbit,
As the timing is perfect for achieving his goal.

(S. Phosrithong, composer, personal communication, December 20, 2020)

Another example can be seen in *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak*:

Flirting with women in the field while wearing the monk attire is wrong. Avoid doing this. If you take the example of misbehaved monks, you will bring yourself shame. Your preceptor will scold and punish you. Gabbling with birds and chickens and caring about worldly matters should not be done as they are opposed to the teachings. Be studious and exactly obedient to the teachings of the prophet.

(K. Chomchuen, composer, personal communication, July 23, 2020)

This *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak* teaches ethics on how to be a good novice worthy of becoming a monk, which requires one to strictly follow the Buddhist monk regulations.

2. Knowledge of the origins of humankind

Thais' understanding of the origins of humankind is heavily influenced by Buddhism, especially by the book *Triphumikatha*, written in 1345. It explains the creation of life, starting from the existence of life in the mother's womb and how life comprises eight elements: earth, water, fire, wind, color, scent, flavor, and food. The book explains the phenomenon of life until the mother gives birth.

Triphumikatha explains life in the womb of a mother as follows:

...When reaches seven days, there are five limbs. These limbs are called *quinque artus*. Two of them are hands; two of them are feet; and one is the head. In the next seven days, there are palms and fingers. In the next 32 days, hair, toenails, and nails which are tools given to all humans will come out... The fetus sits in the center of the mother's stomach and turns its back on its mother stomach. The food that the mother consumes earlier goes under the fetus. The food that the mother consumes later goes above the fetus... The umbilical cord is hollow, like the lotus stem. The end of the umbilical cord is also hollow and is connected to the back of the mother's stomach, and the food that the mother consumes becomes liquid, which goes into the umbilical cord and into the fetus's stomach... (Maha Thammaracha I, 1962, pp. 73–74).

The explanation of life in the womb of a mother in *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak* is as follows:

... It takes some time after fertilization for a fetus to have all 32 limbs. This is in comparison to a storm that separates rain into a hundred thousand parts. The Lord of Dharma molds the blood in the womb until it thickens into a clot. This is the beginning, followed by the brain and two eyes. Then the clot becomes a body. Five limbs come out of it. Then, the nine entries of the body begin to show. The Lord of the Dharma then decorates it with impermanence, non-self, and suffering. It squats in its mother's stomach, turning its face to her spine. A membrane covers it. The placenta goes around its neck. It sits on old food. The new food goes on its head. Two hands hold up the umbilical cord to its mouth to eat food.

(K. Chomchuen, composer, personal communication, July 23, 2020)

Triphumikatha explains the delivery in this way: "... When coming out of the mother's stomach, the wind from the mother's womb will blow the head of the fetus out of the exit, which is very narrow..." (Maha Thammaracha I, 1962, p. 77). *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak* explains the same condition in another way:

... When the ninth month is complete and the baby is moving out of its mother's womb, the wind from the mother's womb will blow violently causing the mother to be in great pain as if death is at the door. The mother's life is a destruction and is about to depart...

(K. Chomchuen, composer, personal communication, July 23, 2020)

3. Knowledge of history

Folk songs contain historical knowledge of communities as can be seen in the following excerpts from Phleng E-Saew:

Phleng E-Saew (from the Don Chedi Monument)

Don Chedi Monument	stood here for a long time (chorus)
Since the time that Burma	attacked Thailand (chorus)
People died	so many did die
Since the time of Ayutthaya,	the great city
.....	
Don Chedi Monument was founded	in honor of the king that freed our nation
This is the historical evidence	of the announcement of freedom
This is the chronicle	of Kanchanaburi
This is the city of the elephant fight,	the one that makes Thai history
King Naresuan freed our country	to make it secure
To make it stand,	as no one's vassalage.

(P. Baiyam, composer, personal communication, August 19, 2020)

The above lyrics mention the reasons why the monument of King Naresuan was built. This monument is located in the Don Chedi community in Village 2, Don Chedi sub-district, Pa-nom Tuan district, Kanchanaburi. It is believed that King Naresuan defeated the Crown Prince of Burma in elephant combat. A brief description of the combat setting is given including the weapons used, the decorations for military animals, emblems, and bullets.

Phleng E-Saew (Community Fund Committee)

Female: I have a question for you, dear.	What's the community committee?
I have been around for many years.	Never heard of this. It must be new.
Male: The Community Fund Committee,	in short, is called CFC.
They help and give suggestions	as well as give advice to all adults.
They help with community affairs and	take care of other legal matters.
According to the governmental pattern	and the assignments from our sheriff.
Let our CFC coordinate,	work, integrate, and create opportunities.
Let them make development plans	and coordinate with other organizations.
If you agree to be my girlfriend,	we'll make a development plan together.

(S. Phosrithong, composer, personal communication, December 20, 2020)

The lyrics of *Phleng E-Saew* mention the responsibilities of the Community Fund Committee. It gives us a picture of Thai society in 2001 under the administration of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, whose intention was to eliminate poverty in Thailand. He founded this committee to be the source of circulating capital in communities so that economic and social development could occur. Moreover, the CFC also helped the community to achieve the ability to organize and manage its own funds and helped the community reach their full potential, to strengthen the society and economy in the community. This was hoped to lead to the community in being sustainably self-reliant and boost the economic and social immunity for the country (National Village and Urban Community Fund Office, 2001).

It can be said that these folk songs are historical literature for the people. They record stories of the community and communicate them to the audience in a simple and straightforward way. They also reflect the society and way of life in the community in an interesting way. Folk songs are a truly entertaining part of the heritage, worthy of restoration and conservation.

2) Folk songs as tools to cultivate world views and values

The lyrics of folk songs in Kanchanaburi express the values of the Thai people, who are expected to cultivate the minds of future generations and possess the following attributes and behaviors:

1. Loyalty. *Phleng Yaei* reflects people's loyalty to the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX). The following verse is an example:

Male: Good day to all	who join us today...
Female: I'm paying respect	to all of you here.
Male: Loving Thailand	is what we should do together...
Female: Be loyal to His Majesty,	the pillar of the Kingdom...
Male: His eightieth birthday,	the pillar of people's life...
Female: Long live the King!	We praise His Majesty.

(P. Baiyam, composer, personal communication, August 19, 2020)

2. Worship and faith to the things most respected. The composers of *Phleng Yaei*, *Phleng Phuang Malai*, *Phleng Song Khrueang*, *Phleng E-Saew*, and others reserve a part of the song to worship and pay homage to sacred beings and benefactors. The people mentioned in this part of these songs pay homage to the three jewels of Buddhism (Triratna), deities, ghosts and spirits, teachers, benefactors, parents, etc. In *Phleng E-Saew*, there are 'the deity teachers' such as Narayana and the musical hermit and 'the human teachers.' In addition, another type of teacher is one that performers learn from, but from whom they do not obtain knowledge directly.

3. Gratitude. This is the behavior that shows appreciation for the things your parents do for you. The behavior may include obedience, respect, care, and returning their love. The lyrics of folk songs such as *Phleng E-Saew* often mention parents' kindness towards their children since birth and how children should return the kindness and pay the highest respect to them. Here is an example:

I'm paying respect to my father and mother who gave me life,
Keeping me from harm;
You gave me milk since birth;
You gave me your own blood from your breasts;
You fed me food and water;
Sweat came down as you cared for your children;

.....
Even if I made seven scriptures,
I would not be able to return all your love;
Even the height of Mount Sumeru,
Is not tall enough to compensate your kindness;
Don't be offended when parents scold you;
Don't clench your fists or raise your weapons;
My father, I put on my right shoulder,
And my mother on the left,
So that they can be my auspicious ornaments,
Keeping me from any danger.

(S. Phosrithong, composer, personal communication, December 20, 2020)

4. Love and unity. Folk songs help to create a feeling of unity among the people in the community due to their Buddhism beliefs. *Phleng Roi Phansa* expresses the unity and collaboration among the parties in the community and the sacrifice they make for the community. Performers devote their labor and time in order to obtain items for donation and for public benefit. Even though they have to give up a few nights sleep to perform, they never get discouraged. Instead, they are delighted in their almsgiving. People that donate several items also recognize their contribution to the public benefit. Everyone is delighted to help. Their deeds are of pure intention, which has a wonderful outcome. *Phleng Song Fang*, *Phleng Chak Kra-dan*, and *Phleng Song Kho Lam Phuan* are the outcomes of collaboration during the rice harvesting season. This brings about love and unity, which helps to get the work done.

5. Respect and humility. Respect and humility come in the form of actions, words, and thoughts toward others, while behaving appropriately. Folk songs such as *Phleng Roi Phansa* reflect the values of having respect and humility toward others. This song is usually sung when performers arrive at someone's house to call the house owners to the door and to greet the performers. The lyrics usually compliment the house, the area, and the good fortune of the house owners. For example, the performers would sing, "Oh... I am at the crystal staircase. I'm bringing good merit to you. Your entrance is so grand. I am sitting here paying respect to you, my lady of kindness..."

6. Behaving in accordance with tradition. '*Phleng Khao Phi*' shows an example of Thai ethics, which is not to break tradition, such as having an affair with the court ladies. If someone were to break that taboo, shame would be brought upon that person. The following lyrics of *Phleng Khao Phi* mention such an event: "Mr. Kaeo is disgraced as he had an affair with a court lady."

7. Courage. This is the expression of bravery and one's ability for the public benefit, which is shown in the following *Phleng Yaei*:

Male: Nong Kaw people are brave, daring to litigate the governor.

Female: He did not work hard so people called for justice.

Male: The king admires us. Our land is prosperous.

Female: The small Nong Kaw, our barn is full of rice.

(P. Baiyam, composer, personal communication, August 19, 2020)

The above passage shows that the citizens of Kanchanaburi were courageous enough to petition directly to the king. King Chulalongkorn (1968, p. 54–56) recorded this event, which occurred on February 21, 1888, in the ‘Poetic Diary of an Amateur’. His Majesty wrote that the “Nong Khao people dare to litigate the bureaucrats who bent the law directly to the king, and they speak with an accent”.

8. Conservation of Thai culture. Folk songs, such as *Phleng E-Saew* and *Phleng Yaei*, motivate people to recognize the values and importance of Thai traditions. The ending part of these songs invites people to see the values of Thai culture and tradition, so they consider it important to conserve them. Here is an example:

Female: The time is coming. I need to leave.

Male: Let us wish you luck before we leave.

Female: People of the next generation, do keep in mind.

Male: Thai culture is the thing we must conserve.

(N. Jindakul, composer, personal communication, September 8, 2020)

3.2.4 Acting as an emotional outlet from social pressure

Folk songs are filled with the imagination of the composers. Symbolism is used to portray the reality of society. This is a social mechanism to escape from reality to a fantasy world. The world of music compensates for the displeasures of reality. Folk songs act as emotional outlets from the pressures caused by many factors, as follows:

1) People in the society

Folk songs act as an emotional outlet from the pressure caused by people in the society. The lyrics of *Phleng Phitsathan* express the desire of women pertaining to romance. In some parts of Thai society, women are considered as followers. Their decisions are based on men. Therefore, women want to marry men with stability, who can lead them and their family well. Apart from that, they want men that do not drink or smoke and adhere to moral principles. However, it is difficult to find such a man in reality. *Phleng Phitsathan* acts as an emotional outlet for women by giving them hope through the words of prayer. It compensates for the disappointment of reality, as it states that even though their prayers are not fulfilled in this life, they can be fulfilled in the next life. Here is an example:

I raise my hands in respect, holding up the holy tray of flowers. In the next life, please keep me away from a drunkard as I have prayed.

(chorus) I float my wish in a raft. Please let my prayer come true.

(M. Ubontham, expert, personal communication, November 10, 2020)

Some songs express the sadness when people are leaving. For example, when men and women come together in the morning to harvest rice, they sing *Phleng Chak* to show their sadness that they need to leave in the evening. The lyrics express the desire of their hearts and what they want to happen, which gives them happiness. Sometimes people that come to harvest together live nearby, but they sing the folk songs as if they lived far away and would not see each other again for a long time. That is because they all have responsibilities waiting for them. Singing together helps them to escape those responsibilities for the time being. While singing, they are kept from the exhaustion of harvesting rice and their family responsibilities. Everyone pretends to be single, coming to flirt with each other and mourn the departure of the others.

2) Certain traditions and values, especially ones related to sex

Thai society views sex as a taboo. Young children are not taught about sex because it can be viewed as vulgar and shameful. Talking about sex openly is discouraged. There are many traditions and limitations surrounding sex. However, society sometimes allows an outlet for people during festivals such as *Songkran*, with storytelling and performances that include some vulgarity, i.e., *Lakhon Nok*, folk songs, and riddles (Patrachai, 1997, pp. 95–96).

Folk songs act as an outlet for the aggression caused by the suppression of the sexual instinct. They go against social regulations and help people escape from traditions and values by using words about sex, sexual organs, and sexual intercourse. One example of this is *Phleng E-Saew*, in which the singer persuades the opposite sex to have sex with him. This kind of lyrics is called *Bot Chomna*.

Look at that piece of land
On the bank of the stream,
I don't let grass grow on this land.
I'm diligent. I don't even sleep.
When it's time for plantation, it floods.
I let it flow. I pump it out
Pumping needs some lubrication,
I'll give my water through a pipe.

with a stream running through it.
there're shrubs, no big trees.
I pluck it 'til the land's smooth.
Don't you feel embarrassed.
Water flows to the stream.
'til water splashes everywhere.
so I'll give you my water.
Otherwise, I'll just flood the field.

(S. Phosrithong, composer, personal communication, December 20, 2020)

3) The farming profession

Folk songs relieve the stress caused by poverty in the farming profession. Performers sometimes criticize the government for its lack of support for farmers. The following example is from *Phleng E-Saew*:

You see, this country of ours	has problems that need to be fixed.
Poverty needs to be eliminated.	If you help me, I won't be lonely.
I won't wait for the government	because they always come too late.
Never in time to relieve grief,	they always deliver bad news.
We migrate to the city.	Our fields are barren, as is our future.
I am too exhausted to try again.	I don't want to be a farmer anymore.
I'll find a job with you.	I'd rather be a servant than a farmer.
Living from hand to mouth	is fine as long as you understand me.

(S. Phosrithong, composer, personal communication, December 20, 2020)

3.2.5 Publicizing information

Folk songs play a role in publicizing information in place of the mainstream media. Folk song performers help to share local information with different parts of the community using plain language, modest poetic meters, simple melodies, and fun rhythms. This function of folk songs can be seen through *Phleng Yaei*, which celebrates King Naresuan's victory over the Crown Prince of Burma at the battle of Don Chedi in Phanomthuan district, Kanchanaburi (*Phleng E-Saew* by Sayan Phosrithong and *Phleng Yaei* by Phayung Baiyaem). It also explains the importance of the 80th birthday celebration of King Rama IX (*Phleng Yaei* by Phayung Baiyaem), and how the Community Fund Committee came into being (*Phleng E-Saew* by Sayan Phosrithong).

Moreover, folk songs help to promote tourism in Kanchanaburi. The following lyrics of *Phleng E-Saew* invite tourists to visit famous attractions there:

Kanchanaburi	has many good things;
There're dams and mounts.	There're many rivers.
There's Srinakharin Dam.	There's Tha Thung Na dam.
There's Vajiralongkorn Dam	which is beautiful.
Please visit Tai Temple,	which is charming.
There's the War Cemetery	that is in Thailand.
See the Bridge Over the River Kwai	that leads to the waterfall.
Lastly, we can come	to pay homage to Luang Pho Lam Yai.

(S. Phosrithong, composer, personal communication, December 20, 2020)

The verses above give us information about the tourist attractions in Kanchanaburi, such as Srinakharin Dam, Tha Thung Na Dam, Vajiralongkorn Dam, Tai Temple, the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery (Don Rak), the Bridge over the River Kwai, and Thung Lat Ya Temple (where Luang Pho Lam Yai is located).

Even though folk songs have lost popularity in Thai society, they still exist because local scholars and many people are trying to restore and conserve them. The authors will present the knowledge management process, representing how the community contributes to restoring and conserving these folk songs in the following section.

3.3 Procedures for the restoration and conservation of folk music culture in Kanchanaburi

In this research, the authors have adapted Marquardt's (1996) concept as a criterion for the study. Regarding the process of the knowledge management of folk songs, there are four steps as follows:

3.3.1 Knowledge seeking. This step begins with seeking knowledge from different sources, such as learning directly from instructors, receiving information from within the folk song performers' circle, exchanging knowledge through performances, and learning from different media such as recorders and videos. This keeps the Kanchanaburi folk songs in existence because they are continually exchanged and learned, both directly from teachers and through various media.

3.3.2 Knowledge creation. Knowledge creation includes the development of folk songs in two aspects.

1) Content development. An interview with a prestigious performer, S. Phosrithong (December 20, 2020), suggests that experienced performers receive knowledge from different sources. They also use their intuition or 'talent' and exchange knowledge with other experienced performers they have performed with. This allows them to apply current events or situations to their poems. This act is called 'Don Klon Sot' (coming up with lyrics on the spot). This makes their compositions interesting and modern. New performers usually sing the lyrics their teachers composed for them because they cannot come up with lyrics on the spot. This is due to their limited experience.

2) Dancing gesture development. Experienced performers of folk songs also develop dancing gestures that go with the lyrics so that their performances will be more interesting. S. Phosrithong (December 20, 2020) suggested that performers should always “sing, think, listen, notice, and use wit.” This maxim has given Phosrithong her reputation for conserving and perpetuating the tradition of *Phleng E-Saew*. Recently, she has been passing on her knowledge to the students in Lao Khwan Rat Bamrung School and Phanomthuan Chanupatham School.

3.3.3 Knowledge preservation. Through studying related documents and interviewing experienced informants, it was found that most experienced performers store the knowledge in their memory; they can remember the lyrics without having to write them down. Relying on memory may cause a loss of knowledge when performers are older and become more forgetful. Literate and experienced performers have begun to record their lyrics in written form so that they can pass them on to the next generation. K. Chomchuen (July 23, 2020), one of the famous performers, said that before his grandfather, Pan Muenming, passed away, he gave him a complete record of *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak* (Figure 2). This shows the benefit of recording the knowledge as the knowledge is not lost when the performers die.



Figure 2: *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak*, Which Was Recorded in Writing
Source: Ratree Chamniyom, taken on August 10, 2020

3.3.4 Knowledge sharing. Interviewing performers and learners of different kinds of folk songs revealed that there are five ways of passing on the knowledge.

1) Creating a local curriculum and integrated learning for a unified concept. According to the National Education Act of 1999 and 2002, this was done in the educational plan.

2) Direct training from experienced performers. When a student has the desire to become a performer, they can ask to be trained by experienced performers. Most of these students are of older age and have a lot of free time. They would form a group to learn together until ready to perform. The least popular type of folk song for this type of knowledge sharing is *Phleng Roi Phansa*.

3) Training in the family. A lot of performers grow up in a folk song environment as their families are also performers. They began their training at a young age and gained expertise in a specific kind of folk song by learning from their parents. Having the opportunity to hear their parents perform helps them absorb the ability to sing.

4) Training at events. Some performers give training at events held by different organizations. For example, Phayung Baiyaem, a guest speaker, gave training in *Phleng Yaei* and *Phleng Ram Thon* at an event held by the Ban Huai Talung School. Sayan Phosrithong also offered training on *Phleng E-Saew* at the same school. The school would shorten each period of study to put this training session into the students' schedule. This helped to strengthen the local culture. The researchers' team encourages all schools to make this plan more concrete.

5) Freestyle training. Nowadays, many educational units, including primary schools, high schools, and universities, have begun to set up folk song conservation clubs. Students that love folk songs gather together, practice, and perform on different occasions, which has been promoted and supported by relevant agencies such as schools, local administrative organizations, and temples. For example, Phanomthuan Chanupatham School has the *Phleng E-Saew* club, and the Wat Pra Thaen Dong Rang School has the *Phleng Phitsathan* Club. Apart from educational units, Buddhist temples also play an important role in restoring and

conserving folk songs. Performers would gather at the Lat Ya Temple and the Sri-uplaram Temple to practice *Phleng Roi Phansa* and perform during the End of the Lent festival.

Figure 3 summarizes the knowledge management process for the restoration and conservation of folk songs in Kanchanaburi.

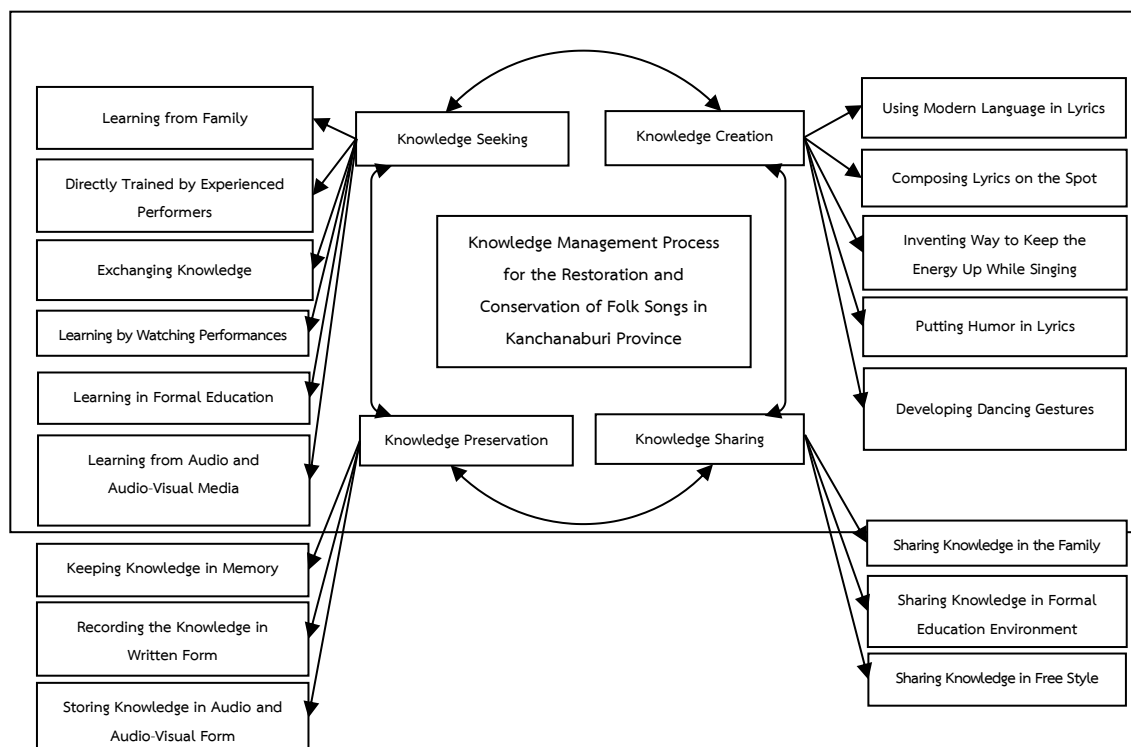


Figure 3: Folk Song Knowledge Management Process for the Restoration and Conservation of Folk Songs in Kanchanaburi Province

Nowadays, it could be said that some folk songs in Kanchanaburi have lost their functions in Thai society. Some examples include *Phleng Song Kho Lam Phuan*, *Phleng Phan Fang*, and *Phleng Chak Kradan*. However, some of the folk songs have become popular again, such as *Phleng Yaei*, *Phleng E-Saew*, and *Phleng Phitsathan*. This is because local schools have taken charge in putting these folk songs into the local curriculum and have encouraged people to restore and conserve them. The findings of this research can also be integrated into local curriculum, which could lead to the development of folk song lessons for the sustainability of Kanchanaburi heritage. This will help restore and conserve the folk songs.

4. DISCUSSION

This study reveals that music is an important part of country life because of the agricultural lifestyle that people have. People sing songs in every phase of their life. They sing children's songs to children. When they are of working age, they sing conversing songs, work songs, and ceremony songs. This shows the nature of humans to seek entertainment.

The analysis of the roles and functions of folklore suggests that folklore materials such as songs, plays, performances, beliefs, and rituals answer a human's emotional needs and strengthen the culture in each society. When looking into the functions of folk songs specifically, this research's findings align with the research findings of Na Thalang (1994, pp. 12-42) and Udomsilp (1998, pp. 201-223). Both researches utilized William Bascom's four functions of folklore theory. The authors found that there are five functions of folk songs in Kanchanaburi, which are, as stated above, to entertain, to reflect the culture and strengthen the conservation of culture it, to educate and cultivate the world views and values of the society, to act as an emotional outlet from social pressure, and to publicize information. If the world views and values that folk songs cultivate were looked at closely, it can be seen that they are in accordance with the 12 values implemented by the National Council for Peace and Order by the Head of The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). Some examples

of these values are loyalty to the nation, religion, and the king; honesty; gratitude; obedience to elders; charity; and living according to Thai traditions and culture.

5. CONCLUSION

Most folk songs in Kanchanaburi, for example, *Phleng E-Saew*, *Phleng Phuang Malai*, and *Phleng Phit sathan*, are similar to those in other areas of central Thailand. Differences can be found in the content of these songs. On the other hand, some songs can only be found in Kanchanaburi, namely, *Phleng Roi Phansa*, *Phleng Chak*, *Phleng Yaei*, *Phleng Khlong Chang*, *Phleng Chak Kra-dan*, and *Phleng Song Kho Lam Phuan*. It was also found that the folk song performances are heavily influenced by neighboring areas. For example, *Phleng E-Saew* in Kanchanaburi is influenced by performances in the province of Suphan Buri. This is caused by the musical tastes that the two provinces share.

There were twenty types of folk songs found in Kanchanaburi, which can be categorized according to the objectives of singing into five groups: 1) the conversing and flirting songs between men and women: *Phleng Yaei*, *Phleng E-Saew*, *Phleng Phuang Malai*, *Phleng Choi*, *Phleng Song Khrueang*, *Phleng Chak*, *Phleng Song Fang*, *Phleng Phan Fang*, *Phleng Song Kho Lam Phuan*, and *Phleng Chak Kradan*; 2) the play songs: *Phleng Ram Thon*, *Phleng Khlong Chang*, *Phleng Khao Phi*, and *Phleng Choen Phi*; 3) the children's songs: *Phleng Klom Dek* and *Phleng Plop Dek*; 4) the bemoaning songs: *Phleng Phitsathan* and *Phleng Roi Phansa*, and 5) the ceremony songs: *Phleng Hae Nang Maeo* and *Phleng Lae Tham Khwan Nak*.

There are five functions of the folk songs in Kanchanaburi: to entertain; to reflect the culture and to strengthen the conservation of culture; to educate and cultivate the world views and values of the society; to act as an emotional outlet from social pressure; and to publicize information. The most common function observed was to educate and cultivate the world views and values of the society. This is likely due to the folk songs' main role as a cultural heritage, accumulated and passed on to other generations.

The procedure for restoring and conserving folk songs in Kanchanaburi consists of four stages of the knowledge management process: knowledge seeking, knowledge creation, knowledge preservation, and knowledge sharing. This will help prolong the existence of Kanchanaburi folk songs. The fourth stage, knowledge sharing, has achieved concrete results. Model schools act as network centers for learning folk songs to restore and conserve the folk songs in Kanchanaburi: 1) Ban Huai Talung School and the Wat Ban Thuan School set up network centers for learning, restoring and conserving the folk song *Phleng Yaei*; 2) Wat Phra Thaen Dong Rang School created a network center regarding *Phleng Phitsathan*; and 3) Phanom Thuan Chanupatham School established a network center for *Phleng E-Saew*. These schools are role models for continuing to perform folk songs.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this research show that the procedures for restoring and conserving folk song culture in Kanchanaburi are based on the four stages of the knowledge management process, especially in the fourth stage, knowledge sharing, by creating local curricula and integrated learning to the unified concept. The school administrators and teachers in the community play an essential role in helping Kanchanaburi folk songs, such as *Phleng Yaei*, *Phleng Phitsathan*, and *Phleng E-Saew*, to get more recognition by composing new songs incorporating current events and conditions into the lyrics. This makes the lyrics more interesting and increases the desire of Kanchanaburi people to restore and conserve these folk songs.

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