

## Contemporary conservation strategies of the central region rice harvest song

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### Abstract

The objectives of this research paper are 1) to study the conservation of rice harvesting song wisdom from the learning behavior of general people, and 2) to propose a contemporary conservation strategy of the central region rice harvesting songs. This research is a qualitative research and the tools used for data collection were interviews, questionnaires, group discussions, and observations. A sample group consists of 23 individuals who are artists or folk performing arts entrepreneurs, students, and village scholars. The obtained data was analyzed with content analysis technique.

The results showed that conservation of the rice harvesting song wisdom from the learning behavior of general people consists of 4 methods namely; 1) inheriting from family members, 2) transmitting from local scholars to students and interested people, 3) transferring from teachers to students in the classroom, and 4) transferring through performance activities. The researchers also analyzed the content based on the context of conservation, concepts, theories, and related research, along with various factors. From the study, it is found that there are 8 guidelines for the conservation of Thai wisdom, which the researchers revised to be a contemporary conservation. The contemporary conservation strategy of the central region's harvest song has 6 practices; 1) raising awareness of values, 2) restoring and improving wisdom to be appropriate for the era, 3) transferring to the next generation in society to know the benefits through the family and educational institutions, 4) promoting and supporting the creation of a network of inheritance and development, 5) disseminating and exchanging wisdoms and cultures, and 6) promoting local scholars to develop the potential to pass on wisdom that is beautiful and valuable to continue.

**Keywords:** conservation strategy, contemporary conservation, rice harvest song

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### Introduction

The lifestyle of Thai people in Chao Phraya River Basin, Central Region, where agriculture such as rice farming or cultivation is conducted, is a livelihood because rice is the staple food of Thai people. In the past, there were many steps in rice farming, starting from preparing the soil, sowing the seeds, taking care of the seedlings, and starting to produce until harvesting. During the harvest time, there will be a gathering of nearby people to help harvest the products that both men and women work together to make it work well. Therefore, there are activities for men and women to get to know each other through popular songs that have fun and easy-to-listen melodies. The rice harvesting song is a local wisdom that has been inherited through generations of ancestors by teaching from generation to generation as a legacy that is inherited from family members or self-taught personal preference. The language used in the song is generally simple and uncomplicated with a distinctive local accent and specific identity reflecting on one's own knowledge (Limtiew, 2018). The lyrics are various, indefinite, and can be versed according to circumstances. The singers therefore must be witty in singing interactions to entertain the audiences.

The harvest songs are songs to be sung in the area where rice is planted during the harvest time. The fun melodies made the songs become

popular and are inherited from each other. The role and importance of the rice harvesting songs to the agricultural society in addition to reflecting the way of life, values, beliefs, and unity of people in the community with the harvest, it is also a skill training tact to the singers and the listeners including educating the general public both directly and indirectly (Phuangsombat, 2018). This includes socially appropriate lifestyles through the songs about the rice that the singers will insert the teachings of the previous generation. The main contents of the lyrics are about Thai society which let the listeners think and practice in their own life. The shifting condition of Thai society which is an agricultural society with a simple way of life to an industrial society which is a capitalist economy according to the changes of the world society. This causes changes in the way of life and the old values of Thai people rapidly. As a result, it affects many aspects of Thai life and culture (Luo, & Rattachaiwong, 2022) including the local songs like rice harvesting songs that used to be the legacy that entertains, represents the aesthetics of Thai people including assertiveness tact intelligence Language proficiency (Kaewkwang, 2018). It can be seen that the rice harvesting songs have begun to fade with time (Hantawee, & Kasenpholkoon, 2020) because of the used of machines in rice farming and cultivating. The obvious evidence is that during the harvesting of

rice which used to be labor intensive and has a relatively high cost of harvesting, the owners of the product have turned their human-labor harvesting into less costly machines. However, there are many scholars who want to preserve folk songs in various fields, including rice harvesting songs to remain in other ways. The elements that contributed to the successful conservation of folk songs require good strategies as a guideline for creating a vision and determining the direction of conservation both in short and long term. Such strategies must be based on the actual conditions involved such as politics, economy, society, environment, and epidemic. Hence, the importance of strategic planning suitable for the conservation of knowledge will help a step-by-step conservation approach clearly tangible because the strategies used in the planning must have a clear purpose, and allow the people who want to preserve to understand and act in a step-by-step manner. The responsible individual must find a way to adjust the perception of the song about rice and people in society to the current situation where each party is working properly to connect and use as a guideline for preserving folk songs and the harvest song consciously systematically through dissemination and continuation of exemplary principles since it is the importance of this research.

From the study of the problem conditions and conservation guidelines for the aforementioned rice harvesting song, the researchers inquired about the problems in the contemporary conservation approach with the local philosopher and realized the importance of learning from the behavior of people in society as being related to the way of preserving rice harvesting songs that can be analyzed as contemporary conservation strategies for understanding like the rice harvesting songs. The researchers intend to study the subject Contemporary Conservation Strategies of the Central Region Rice Harvesting Songs to present strategies for the conservation of rice harvesting songs, promote the way of continuation inherit, and preserve in various forms for youth and agencies interested in preserving folk songs and harvest songs later on.

### **Research objectives**

1. To study the conservation of rice harvesting song wisdom from the learning behavior of general people.

2. To propose contemporary conservation strategies for the central region's rice harvesting song.

### **Concepts and theories about preserving folk song**

Conservation of Thai culture requires the cooperation of all Thai people. Rattanaphan (2012) mentioned that there are method as follows:

1) Study the research on Thai culture and local culture to know the foundation of life. The acceptance and appreciation of such cultures ready to be utilized; 2) Encourage everyone to see the value together to maintain cultural identity and understand how to adapt and respond appropriately to other cultural trends; 3) Campaign the people and the private sector to recognize the importance of shared responsibility by promoting academic knowledge and funds for cultural activities; 4) Promote and exchange culture within the country and between countries by using arts and culture as a medium to build relationships between each other; 5) Build attitudes, knowledge and understanding that everyone has a duty to enhance, restore and maintain the natural environment and cultural assets that are national treasures and 6) Establish a cultural information network system to serve as a center for disseminating results for people to understand and support more cultural events.

#### **Guidelines for the contemporary conservation of Thai wisdoms**

Conservation is important to Thai wisdoms because there are many intelligences that have been lost from Thai society. Preechapanichpattana (2015) said that there should be research, studies, and collected information on Thai wisdom in various fields focusing on studying the history of the past and the current situation through conservation by

raising awareness among local people to realize the value, essence, and importance of local wisdom, promoting and supporting activities according to traditions and cultures to create awareness of being a local person as well as establishing local museums or community museums to show the conditions of life and the history of the community. This will create knowledge and pride in the local community with the restoration process through the selection of lost perception or that has been lost to make it valuable and important to the local lifestyle, especially the ethical foundations, morals, and values, and should be developed, initiated creativity, and improved insight to suit the era and benefit in daily life as a basis for grouping career development. Knowledge of science and technology should be applied to help continue to use in production, marketing and management, as well as to protect and conserve the environment. This is along with conveying such cultures to people in the society to perceive the value benefits and act appropriately through family institutions and educational institutions, organizing various cultural activities, promoting activities and supporting the formation of a network of inheritance and development of the intelligence of various communities in order to organize cultural activities and local wisdom continuously. More actions including disseminate and exchange knowledge and culture widely with the media and a wide variety of methods as well as

with other countries around the world, and strengthen local philosophers by promoting and supporting the development of villagers' potential who are the operators to have the opportunity to show their knowledge potential in full competence. Tothiap (2013) said that there are many traditions, cultures and acumens of Thai society where each of them has been with Thai society for a long time. However, at present, all of these things are fading away with new technologies taking their place so people do not really care. Being one of the Thai people who do not want those traditions to be lost, he suggested that there are many different methods of conservation such as conducting research to study and collect information on Thai wisdom in various fields, studying the history of the past and the current situation through conservation, creating awareness of being a local that must collectively conserve the unique intelligence of the locality as well as supporting the establishment of local museums or community museums to show the conditions of life and the history of the community. This will create knowledge and pride in the local community as well and must be restored by choosing knowledge being lost or that has been lost to make it valuable and important to the local lifestyle only on the basis of ethics, morals and values and develop acumen to suit the times and benefit in daily life. It is the basis for the integration of professional development

groups. Scientific knowledge and technology should be applied to help further through broadcasting by selecting the acumens of the past and filter for causes and results carefully in all aspects through family institutions, educational institutions and various cultural activities. These will allow people in society to know, understand, and recognize the value and benefits, and to act appropriately including to promote activities to support the creation of a network of succession and develop the intelligence of various communities in order to continuously organize cultural activities and local wisdom as well as to disseminate and exchange acumen and extensive culture. This also includes strengthening local scholars to develop the potential of villagers by allowing the new generation to participate creatively such as arranging for local youth to participate in activities that show their talents to feel proud and inserting activities in local traditions. There will be a stage for performing music in various merit-making events and festivals using what interests them. They then felt proud to be involved in the preservation of traditions but the most important thing is continuity of activities.

#### **Rice harvesting song**

Rice harvesting song is the song played during the harvest season. The content of the song is characterized by flirting and questioning the well-being of the other party. There will be retaliation

between men and women (Boonsom, 2016). Rice harvesting song is easy and fun to listen to There are tricks in playing thought-provoking words. It is the ingenuity of the singers playing the harvest song. There will be musical instruments involved, such as drums and cymbals, or may not be used, but will be clapped to the beat at the same time. It is the song that is played for entertainment at work. Nowadays, most of the harvest songs that have been performed are Suphan Buri-style rice harvest songs where there is a single-headed verse to give the rhythm of the melody by clapping, and Ayutthaya-style rice harvesting song where there is a pair of children waiting to sing along. Since the lyrics do not have a specific chapter, the songs are change according to the occasion but still have the same rhythm.

### **Concept of wisdom conservation strategy**

Conservation strategies for rice harvesting songs in the central region, Wanthong (2015) stated that communication strategy has a persuasive effect that allows people to participate in the development and restoration of local wisdom by entering and exchanging discussion with the individuals involved including the search for local scholars who have expertise to educate (Chunngam, & Worasesthaphong, 2018) from ancestors through teaching and explaining, developing and improving communication through the establishment of training teams with partners

from both public and private sectors in the community, as well as to evaluate the results of various activities used to conserve astuteness which communication strategies in succession. We can determine strategic study concepts that solve conservation issues, such as stabilization strategy, recovery strategy, and differentiation strategy. There are many forms of wisdom conservation through activities that enhance the understanding of people in the community which emphasize the importance of wisdom to create awareness, leading to the behavior of conservation.

### **Methodology**

This article is a qualitative research model in which the operation is divided into steps as follows:

1) The preparatory stage for the study: This stage is to find out the basics of the story related to the songs by studying information from academic documents, articles, research papers, and related literature to adopt information for research, including concepts and theories related to rice harvesting songs. Concepts and theories related to the conservation and continuation of folk songs, concepts and theories related to management strategies are also collected to explore the data by liaising with the people providing the information for the research with the properties who are knowledgeable about rice harvesting songs, such as artists or entrepreneurs in folk performing arts

philosophers, villagers, and students. The target group consists of 23 people.

2) The stage of conducting the study: This stage is to collect data in the field visit which obtained from the behavioral study and the result of realistic behavior by studying case studies of recognition and learning of the rice harvesting song from people related to the target group set in the research including studying the relevant context. The researchers conducted the study as follows:

3) The observation: In this study, the researchers observed behavior in the perception and learning of 20 students.

4) The interview: The researchers used both formal and informal interviews in order to study information from related people such as artists or entrepreneurs in folk performing arts, village philosophers and students, total of 23 people.

5) The use of questionnaire: The researchers used an open-ended questionnaire model through group discussion, which divided into 2 groups. The first group consists of artists or entrepreneurs in folk performing arts and local scholars, and the second group consists of students.

6) The data analysis: The use of information obtained from observations, interviews and questionnaires obtained from group discussions to analyze according to the stated objectives including repetitive information from the interview

that will also be used as part of the Content Analysis Technique.

The data collection location was in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province and it took 6 months to collect the data.

7) Stage of presenting research results on contemporary conservation strategies of the central region rice harvesting songs: The researchers determined presentation of the research results, including the preparation of a research report for presentation in the academic community in the form of academic journals, national or international academic conferences, bringing the research results back to the area and integrate research results with teaching and learning tertiary.

## Results

A study of the conservation of rice harvesting song wisdom from the learning behavior of general people found that the inheritance of rice harvesting song can be done through the following methods:

1. The elder teaches the younger among the family because rice harvesting is mainly based on family members and asking for help from people in the vicinity. If it is a family inheritance, it is for the children in the family to hear and listen at an early age. It is considered indoctrination and learning in the early stages. Listening and trialing with singing is an interpersonal communication.

2. Village scholars and disciples are the main mechanism of inheritance in old teaching. The teachers will have an example song. The sung chapter has a composer style in which the last word of each paragraph must have the same vowel sound, called a single-headed verse. The teachers will start to let the students understand the melody of the songs of the main singer and the chorus of the couple and teach the pronunciation of singing to listen as an example for students to sing along. Then the teachers will use a memorization method or record a sound,

and bring the songs about the rice to memorize and then sing to them for advice. When they can sing fluently, the teachers will teach the gestures and use of jokes to make the songs interesting. Also, the village philosopher has homework for his disciples to try to compose a song that is a current event which is becoming popular and is of interest to young people for students to use their creativity to the fullest. By using the principle of composing one-headed poems as shown in (Figure 1), the village sages taught the technique of composing lyrics in the harvest song.



**Figure 1** Village scholars and disciples learn about rice harvesting songs.

Source: Polamuangdee (2015)

3. Teachers and students in the classroom in transferring of knowledge: teachers are educators and students are recipients of knowledge. An important aspect of this learning is

teaching and learning management where the learner is the center of the learning. In (Figure 2), it shows the transfer of knowledge about harvest singing in the existing training.





Figure 2 Teacher and students in the classroom learn about rice harvesting songs.

Source: Polamuangdee (2015)

Table 1 Exercise no. 1 practicing tonal conjugations and symbols from Ajarn Suppachart Satientanasan.

practicing tonal conjugation and symbols accompanying the reading were defined according to the two step of reading as follows:

tone/word (image and sound match)	the low (common)	the falling (ek)	the mid (toe)	the high (tri)	the rising (jutva)
xex	xex	xèx	xêx	xéx	xěx
xeing	xeing	xeìng	xeîng	xeéng	xeǐng
xey	xey	xèy	xêy	xéy	xěy
xeā	xeā	xèā	xêā	xéā	xěā

The table above (Table 1) is the teaching content where there is a practice of reading the lyrics to the harvest melody which called the 2 step of reading. Firstly, practice reading the words according to the rhythm or punctuation in the harvest song. At this stage, the students read with a normal prose reading accent by trying the rhythm slowly and try to focus on the accuracy of the words. Secondly, read the words out loud and practice reading aloud to know the rhythm and

style of reading. The reading at this stage is to read in an accent that extends each sound through schedule for practicing tonal conjugation and symbols used for reading, such as tonal tone, general, Ek, Toh, Tri, Chutwa.

4. Organizing activities related to performing folk songs in various genres, including rice harvesting songs. It is to create entertainment and enjoyment for those who listen to the harvest songs, consisting of unique lyrics which can vary according to the

occasion, work show, news, or events that are of interest to show the contemporary of the rice harvesting song. The contents can be varied according to the era to make the listeners feel cheerful and fun. Content education is to teach both directly and indirectly about the content that mentions the changed environment, knowledge of important traditions, teaching the dangers of drugs, and warnings about the consequences of drug abuse including living in today's society with epidemics such as COVID-19. Social control through the content of the song about the appropriate behavior in society leading an orderly life, having good behavior, knowing an individual's duties, being honest and unity, knowing how to sacrifice for others, patience, gratitude, diligence, and morality.

For the second objective of the research which is to propose contemporary conservation strategies of the central region's rice harvesting songs, it was found the guidelines as follows:

1) Awakening awareness of the value of the essence and the importance of local wisdoms by promoting and supporting activities according to traditions and cultures to create consciousness to collectively conserve unique wisdoms and create pride in local wisdoms; 2) Restoration and improvement of wisdom to suit the era to make it valuable and important to life, especially on the basis of ethics, morals, values and environmental

conservation; 3) The transmission of wisdom by carefully selecting and filtering it carefully and thoroughly, and then passing it on to the next generation in society to know and understand the value of realizing the benefits and taking appropriate action through family and educational institutions; 4) Promoting activities by promoting and supporting the creation of a network of inheritance and development wisdoms to organize cultural activities and local wisdoms continuously; 5) Exchanging and disseminating by promoting and supporting the dissemination and exchange of wisdoms and cultures in folk songs by propagating various local wisdoms with various media and methods widely, and 6) Enhancing local scholars by promoting and supporting the potential development of Thai music teachers and Thai culture to have opportunities to demonstrate their wisdom with full competence.

Based on the results of studies that answered both objectives, the researchers discovered through analyzing how the collecting, preserving, inheriting and conserving of what is called "cultural heritage" that comes from experiences, knowledge, and observations over time. It is updated according to the culture and era as it happens and is promoted by a group of people who love and desire to inherit through diverse channels from family and teacher to disciple through the media and various activities according to the traditions

that have been held in various places by transferring knowledge that has a method that makes learning interesting and easy to understand. Students and interested people can understand and be able to inherit and pass it on to future generations to know that there is a cultural heritage called "Rice Harvest Song".

### Discussion

Conservation of the wisdom of rice harvesting songs from learning behavior of general people is done by the way the elder teaches the younger from the family because the harvest will be based on the family and ask for help from people in the family. If it is for the children in the family, the conservation will be in the form of hearing and listening since a young age, which is considered to be cultivated and learned in the beginning, and in the form of listening and trialing with singing as an interpersonal communication. The results were found to be consistent with the research of Sunthornwat (2012) on Ratchaburi Folk Songs : Inheritance to Children and Contemporary Communication under the project series. A study of Ratchaburi local wisdom for sustainable development based on the concept of sufficiency economy found that there should be a policy to support with practical organizations such as local schools.

Village scholars and disciples are the main mechanism of inheritance in old teaching. The teachers have the example songs that the sung chapter has a composer style in which the last word of each paragraph must have the same vowel sound, called a single-headed verse. The studying starts from teaching to understand the melody of the songs of the main singers and the chorus of the couple and teaching the pronunciation of singing to listen as an example for students to sing along which uses a memorization method, records the sound and then the students take the song about the rice harvesting to memorize and sing to teachers for advice. When the students can sing fluently, they will be taught to use gestures and jokes to make the song interesting. The results were found to be consistent with Suphanyot (2018) who studied the Inheriting and Preserving the Wisdom Heritage of the Folk Songs of the Central Region. It was also found that the organization of the project had organized the Central Region Folk Music Camp (cultivation of good folk songs) by recruiting interested youths from all over the country to attend an integrated workshop for learning and practicing folk song skills. The students have better development from the interview when local scholars asked them to try to compose a petition that is a current event that is becoming popular

and is of interest to young people because they can use their creativity to the fullest.

Teachers and students in the classroom; in the transferring of knowledge, teacher is an educator and student is the recipient of knowledge. An important aspect of this learning is the teaching and learning management, where the learner is the center of learning emphasizing on teaching from the content that has been made as a practice of reading the lyrics, to the melody of a-rice harvest songs, according to the rhythm or punctuation in the songs. Reading at the first stage should be a normal prose reading accent by slowing the tempo, trying to focus on the correctness of the words, trying to read in full, and practicing reading aloud in order to recognize the melody and style of reading. The reading at the second stage is reading an accent that extending each word with the use of schedule for practicing tonal conjugations, and symbols used for reading, such as tones, sounds, common, ek, toe, tri, and jutva. When the students have mastered it, they will sing the rice harvesting songs to the teachers for further advice. The results of the research were found to be consistent with Chunngam, & Worasesthaphong (2018), A study on a Pprocedure of local wisdom: learning, transferring, and utilizing social media. Chunngam, & Worasesthaphong (2018) found local wisdom in arts, local wisdom in language

and literature and local wisdom from ancestors including the transmission from generation to generation through various methods of transmission such as teaching, explaining, or transferring knowledge and experience from senior to younger generation.

Phuangsombat (2018) had published a research titled: The Role of Folk Song toward Youth in Folk Song Club at Phetchabunwittaya School. It is found that educating using the learner as the center of learning will result in greater learning outcomes.

Organize activities related to performing folk songs in various genres, including rice harvesting songs in order to create entertainment and enjoyment for those who listen to the harvest songs, consisting of unique lyrics which can vary according to the occasion, work show, news, or events that are of interest to show the contemporary of the rice harvesting song. The content can change according to the era to make the listeners feel cheerful and fun. The results was consistent with Kaewkwang (2018), a study on Bantherng Roengram Lamnampleng, which found that organizing activities related to folk performances was the beginning of creativity in bringing together relevant knowledge.

The proposed contemporary conservation strategy for the central region's rice harvesting song includes the following guidelines: 1) Awakening

awareness of the value of the essence and the importance of local wisdom by promoting and supporting activities according to traditions and cultures. Creating consciousness to collectively conserve unique wisdom and pride in local wisdom; 2) Restoration and improvement of wisdom to suit the era and to make it valuable and important to life, especially on the basis of ethics, morals, values and environmental conservation; 3) The transmission of wisdom by carefully selecting and filtering it carefully and thoroughly, and then passing it on to the next generation in society to know and understand the value of realizing the benefits and taking appropriate action through family and educational institutions; 4) Promoting activities by promoting and supporting the creation of a network of inheritance and development wisdom to organize cultural activities and local wisdom continuously; 5) Exchanging and disseminating by promoting and supporting the dissemination and exchange wisdom and culture in folk songs by propagating various local wisdoms with various media and methods widely, and 6) Enhancing local scholars by promoting and supporting the potential development of Thai music teachers and Thai culture to have opportunities to demonstrate their wisdom with full competence. The results showed that it is consistent with Schoolnee (2010), A model for preserving local community identity, the art of Lam Tad folk songs

of the Administrative Organization Na Mai sub-district, Lat Lum Kaeo district, Pathum Thani province, which found that the conservation of Lam Tad folk song has proceeded through the development of the talent of the performer who has access to educational resources. There must be integration with all sectors in the management of the learning center and access to resources for learning permanently as well as encouraging people in the community to see the value of folk songs with the revival of tradition way of life and creating roles and duties for folk songs including the development of teaching and learning folk songs and encouraging the singing of folk songs on various occasions regularly.

### Conclusion

Contemporary conservation strategies for the central region's rice harvesting songs must be promoted and integrated in all relevant sectors to jointly manage, access, and make a permanent learning resource center including the preparation of lessons that make interested people understand singing, melody, rhythm, and principles of using poems that are suitable for rice harvesting songs, as well as encouraging people in the society to see the value of folk songs through the activities of performing harvest songs and allow people in the society know old folk songs that look uninteresting to show the songs'

attribute of fun, contemporary entertainment. The results obtained from this research have been used for teaching and learning Thai arts and culture for tourism, where students in the field of tourism, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Suvarnabhumi, can apply their knowledge to further their careers related to tourism such as entertaining tourists interested in cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is popular today through the performance of the central region's harvest song wisdom as part of the activity. Additionally, the local scholars have taken it as a process of succession and conservation of contemporary song about rice harvest in the central region to remain forever.

Suggestions: There should be a promotion of conservation by raising awareness of the value, essence, and importance of local wisdom; improving wisdom to suit the era and benefit in daily life. This can be done by using wisdom as a basis to promote and support the creation of a network of inheritance and development of wisdom with those involved.

Suggestions for the next research: The lost and about-to-lost wisdom should be restored to remain later on.

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