



History of S'Tieng instrumental music in Binh Phuoc province perspectives on conservation – promotion and inheritance from a cultural management perspective

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Abstract

Vietnam is a multiethnic country. In the territory of Vietnam, there are 54 ethnic groups living. Each ethnic group has a process of attachment to the historical process of Vietnam through the periods, making contributions in the history of building and preserving the country. In the history of establishment and development, Binh Phuoc province belongs to the Southeast, an area with many ethnic groups and communities, including the S'Tieng ethnic group. The cultural assets of the S'Tieng ethnic groups in the Southeast are quite diverse and complex, with many cultural systems intertwined. On this land, there were ethnic groups living for a long time before the Vietnamese came to declare the land. Ethnic groups such as S'Tieng, Mạ, Chơ-ro, Cơ ho, and Mờ nông are considered indigenous inhabitants. The cultural heritage of the S'Tieng ethnic group has its peculiarities, contributing to making the cultural appearance of the Southeast in general and Binh Phuoc province more diverse, and rich.

Keywords: Cultural management, Ethnic minorities in the Southeast, S'Tieng instrumentation

1. Introduction

Traditional musical instruments carry spiritual values. As an "antique" with historical value, ethnic musical instruments have existed for a long time. It has a long association with human life. Thanks to that attachment, objects and people have an inseparable connection with each other. An artist never gives up the guitar that has been with them since the beginning. If they are forced to give up, they will always remember it. Those are the feelings people often have towards their musical instruments.

National musical instruments are also part of the national spirit. National spirit belongs to the nation and is the consensus and common direction of people. In the work of expressing the national spirit, national musical instruments serve the task of uniting people. It is the co-creation and co-expression of an entire regional community.

Musical instruments of ethnic minorities in general and musical instruments of the S'Tieng people in Binh province, in particular, have great values, affecting the material and spiritual lives of people in the past, present, and future. hybrid. The Stieng ethnic minority community lives together in hamlets in high mountainous areas. The S'Tieng people love music very much. During festivals, weddings, and funerals... the S'Tieng orchestra often plays loudly and mournfully.

Figure 01. Artist Dieu Chonl plays the M'Buot flut



Source: Photo taken on March 5, 2021 in Phu Nghia commune, Bu Gia Map district

Figure 03. Artist Dieu Kieu plays the Dink Duk in Phu Nghia commune, Bu Gia Map district, Binh Phuoc province



Source: Dr. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Dung.

Figure 02. The author interviews artisan Dieu Ninh who plays the flute (Blue t-shirt) and artisan Thi Muong sings music for the new rice celebration (black t-shirt), photo taken on November 24, 2023 in Thanh An commune, Dong Xoai town, Binh Phuoc province.



Source: Author Thao Pham Dac Vy

Figure 04. The gourd, the main material used to make the resonator box of the K'Buot trumpet, has a very small upper part to make the bellows and copper reed, which is not easy to find nowadays...



Source: Photo taken on March 5, 2021 in Phu Nghia commune, Bu Gia Map district

1.1 Word concept

The Stieng people have several other names, such as Xa Dien, Bu Lo, Bu Dek, Bu Biet, Bu Dip, Bu Lach... According to the government's list of ethnic names in 2009, the ethnic name is recorded as Xtieng. In the Stieng-French dictionary published by Mr. R.H. Azémar in 1886, it is written as Stieng; this is the first official name of the Stieng people. In the Stieng-French dictionary in 1886, the word "Xtieng" is not written, and in the Stieng-EEnglish dictionary system by author Ralph Haupers, "Xtieng" is not written either. The People's Committee of Binh Phuoc Province published the Alphabet System and Vowels, Consonants of the Stieng Writing System in 2018, which did not include the word "Xtieng". On April 1, 2019, the Provincial Ethnic Committee issued document No. 18/TTr-BDT proposing to adjust the way of writing ethnic groups' names from Xtieng to Stieng. At the same time, because the announcement "Selection..." of the Department of Science and Technology of Binh Phuoc province stated "Stieng," the explanation will be written in this way, except for the names of documents, books, etc., which will be written exactly according to the published work.

1.2 Methodology

The author primarily employs an interdisciplinary approach to cultural management, integrating research methodologies from cultural studies and sociology to elucidate the cultural and heritage values associated with the S'Tieng people's musical instruments. As a result, the author employs the Cultural Management methodology to assess and analyze the current condition of existing rules regarding the protection and promotion of cultural assets in general, and specifically, the musical instruments of the S'Tieng people. Simultaneously, the author examines the role of state cultural management agencies in the Southeast area in preserving and promoting the musical heritage of the S'Tieng people in Binh Phuoc province, from the period following Resolution 5 of the 8th Central Committee to the present.

The paper used the method of cultural research to examine the cultural values of gong music among the S'Tieng people in Binh Phuoc province within an urban social context. The author employed the sociological approach upon initiating research on the article's topic. The author developed a survey instrument utilizing questionnaires and performed comprehensive interviews with artisans, managers, and select public members regarding S'Tieng musical instruments in Binh Phuoc province, employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Throughout the survey, research, and subsequent analysis, the author compiled information to ascertain the number of experienced artisans proficient in playing musical instruments of the S'Tieng people who are still living. The author compiled statistics on the quantity of musicians, ethnic cultural programs, ethnic music, and ethnic music groups that have been and are currently active in Binh Phuoc province and the Southeast area.

To elucidate the research issues, the article's author employs his specialized knowledge of music while adopting a perspective rooted in the oral music tradition of ethnomusicology, utilizing theories from the interdisciplinary domain of musical anthropology to examine folk music, particularly that of the S'tieng ethnic group. The article will demonstrate that the author has employed various interdisciplinary research methods to investigate the characteristics of S'tieng music and musical instruments in Binh Phuoc province, including their origin, formation, existence, and development within community life. Examine the community's involvement in music preservation and promotion.

2. Body of paper

2.1 Musical instruments of the S'Tieng people

S'Tieng's musical instruments have a diverse structure, mainly used in two main forms: percussion and air music.

2.1.1 Floating neck drum (Guar)

It is a handcrafted musical instrument, the drum is made from jackfruit wood, hollowed out, 50-60cm long. The head has a hollow, slightly flared mouth, the middle is tightened, and the drum face is made of camel skin. Around the empty body wrapped in rattan rope. The way to use the drum is to clamp it on the hip and use two hands to beat the drum. When used depending on the rhythm so that the hitman can stand or sit, one hand holds the drum, and the other hand pats the drum face. The difference between this instrument from other musical instruments is that it is mainly used in the exorcism ceremony, the worship ceremony of Mrs. Ball, the neck drum is also used to chase birds, and squirrels destroy crops in the worship ceremony of Mrs. Ball, the neck drum is also used to chase birds, squirrels destroy the crops of the S'Tieng people.

2.1.2 Bamboo guitar

It is a musical instrument made by hand from the body of a bamboo tube, the structure consists of 5 tubes made of cork of different short lengths, on each bar there is a hole in the middle, and the bars are connected by a wire. The longest tube is about 49 cm long, the shortest is about 44 cm. This instrument is used in the festival of the S'Tieng people.

2.2.1 Percussion music

2.2.1.1 Gong Gong

It is a copper alloy instrument, belonging to the percussion, round shape, often used by hand to hit. Gong, the musical instrument has 05 round shapes, the center has a knob, the broken curved wall has perforated strings, and the sound trigger point of the Gong is always a convex knob in the middle. The gong has 06 round shapes, the surface is flat, and the walls are curved and broken with perforated wire attachments. In the Gong set, each one only plays a certain music (each one is a note), and each performer uses an instrument, so the player requires each person's coordination ability when performing. When performing a circle of artisans hitting and moving the gong from right to left with the opposite meaning of time towards the source. According to authors Vu Hong Thinh (Thinh and Bui, 1995), and Bui Lam: "In terms of music, Gong is a typical musical instrument, a pillar in the music of the S'Tieng people, no instrument in our country has a leading role like Cong Cong in the music of the Vietnamese ethnic community. No instrument has a massive number and dense distribution density like the Gong of the S'Tieng and Central Highlands. There is also no musical instrument with high spiritual value like Gong Gong, a symbol attached to the life of each person, each community in all cultural activities, customs and rituals attached to the soul of the whole nation."

The gong is a bronze musical instrument, sometimes mixed with gold, silver, or black bronze. Gongs are types with knobs, and gongs without knobs. This instrument has many sizes, with diameter from 20 - 60cm, and the maximum type can be up to 120 cm. Gongs can be used singly or in stages, sets from 2 to 13 units, even in some places 18 to 20 units. The gong can be tapped with an awl, or punched by hand. S'tieng people mainly punch with their hands and apply the technique of blocking the sound with their left hand or create a melody on a gong.

2.2.1.2 Female drum

In the timbre of the gong, trumpet, flute... emerges in the middle of the rhythm of the female drum. The female drum is the soul of the Stiêng orchestra. Female drums are usually made of wooden trunks, forest jackfruit trunks, or old trunks, with a diameter of 0.5 m or more. Intestinal chisel dried, use buffalo skin or cowhide to make an empty face. When performing a very rich tone, the echo and flight are very far. Female drums are often used to keep the rhythm of orchestras during festivals (often played with gongs, gongs, flutes, and guitars), such as the ceremony of going to the rice house, praying for rain, Mrs. Ball; during funerals, and weddings. Historically, there existed starvation, warfare, and mortality; nonetheless, among the Stiêng people, a drum must be present as it symbolizes an heirloom, poetry, and melody. As life is sufficiently abundant, it is imperative to maintain emptiness for future generations (Ngoc).

2.2.2 Air music

2.2.2.1 Trumpet

It is a musical instrument that is blown by air, handmade from a bamboo tube body, on the body, holes are evenly spaced, when playing, use your mouth to blow and your hands to create musical notes according to the user's will. Used in S'Tieng festivals combined with gongs.

2.2.2.2 Flute

It is a vertical flute, made from a bamboo tube body, with holes punched evenly spaced on the body. The way to play this instrument is to use your mouth to blow and your hands to use your fingers to create musical notes according to the user's will. The flute is performed solo by S'Tieng people during summer festivals, friendship exchanges, or family holidays.

2.2.2.3 Pregnant horn (M'buôt) (Figure 01)

It is a fairly common musical instrument of the S'Tieng Bù Lơ group. Constructed by a hole-forming gourd shell that uses the mouth to blow and six structural tubes through the gourd shell, using the hand to make a sound. The horn when blowing has a warm, smooth sound; simulating the sound of birds and natural phenomena, so it is often used in harmony with gongs and gongs in friends, and family activities and especially in harmony with gongs in festivals.

2.2.2.4 Prison and

As a type of prison and horizontal blowing musical instrument, handmade from buffalo horns, the process of choosing horns, sawing two heads to suit as you like, on the body, creating splendid holes, the loud volume was deafening before due to the sound of Prison and loud and resounding, so it was used to signal when there was danger in squirrels, enemies attacked, wild animals... But now prison is built by the S'Tieng people into a set to make orchestral instruments along with gongs in the buffalo stabbing festival to celebrate victory to create an eloquent, vibrant sound.

2.2.2.5 Lip Trumpet

It is a musical instrument used to confess love, and make love and is an indispensable musical instrument in the love singing of S'Tieng boys and girls.

S'Tieng's lip trumpet is handcrafted from a metal bar, in the shape of a bamboo leaf to create a gap in the middle, using the mouth to blow and the handle of the trumpet to change the

sound emitted, creating a unique musical language, which is lazy, phi, loving, affectionate, and affectionate that only listeners nearby can understand the content of the song.

2.3 Cultural space of S'Tieng musical instrument

2.3.1 Tradition in daily life

S'Tieng folk musical instrument was born in the working life and cultural and spiritual activities of the community. From tools to chase birds, and wild animals on the field to entertainment tools after a hard day's work or a means of condolences to the family of the deceased and hunting tools, all have become folk instruments of the S'Tieng ethnic group. It is one of the sound art media that is more capable of expressing human souls, thoughts, and feelings.

2.3.2 In festival and event activities

In traditional rituals, folk musical instruments have created a very dignified atmosphere, sometimes bustling, lively, sometimes mellow lyrical, sometimes quiet... it can be said that folk musical instruments have been closely associated with the lives of S'Tieng people, in a field that clearly shows their cultural identity, vitality and spiritual world.

2.3.3 The role and cultural value of musical instruments

The S'tieng ethnic community in Binh Phuoc considers gongs to be the leading language of communication between people, gods, and supernatural forces. Each gong of each family represents property, power, and safety (Figure 02).

According to some research documents, in Vietnam today there are hundreds of different types of musical instruments. Each instrument has a regional characteristic. There is a musical instrument that is simply the creativity of the people of that land. However, some other instruments are the introduction of another region. Thanks to its creativity and transformation, it gradually became the musical instrument of that region.

Ethnic musical instruments have musical significance for the Vietnamese. In the past, ethnic musical instruments were a form of entertainment for Vietnamese people. We can see this meaning through small performances at the communal house, home yard, or even in the garden in documentaries. In the southern area like Bac Lieu, we can easily see a photo or painting of a farmer singing a harp. Those are the customs from ancient times.

To this day and age, at large stages, ethnic musical instruments are also often appearing. Every year, to preserve and promote national values, musical instruments are also often performed. Not only that, ethnic musical instruments are also promoted abroad

Ethnic musical instruments carry spiritual values. 'As an "antique" of historical value, ethnic musical instruments have existed for a long time.' It is long-term attached to human life. Thanks to that attachment, things, and people have an inseparable bond with each other. An artist who never gives up the guitar that has followed him since the beginning, if they are forced to give up, they will always remember it. Those are the feelings people often have with their musical instruments.

Ethnic musical instruments are also part of the national spirit. The national spirit belongs to the nation, and is the unity and common sense of people. In the work of expressing the national spirit, the national musical instrument is responsible for linking people. It is itself the co-creating, co-existence of an entire regional community.

2.4 The reality of the disappearance of the musical instruments of the S'tieng people

2.4.1 M'Buôt (Figure 01) gourd horn (vapor-blown music, consisting of 6 cork tubes plugged through 1 gourd, each tube has a single copper chip-mounted sound hole) is the most complex structure and use of musical instruments of the S'Tieng ethnic group. It is also because of this complex structure that the number of artisans as well as people who can proficiently use M'Buôt horn is less and less. Khèn M'Buôt has a smooth, strong sound, and can be played with harmony, so it is often used to accompany lyrical or love songs. Currently, it is very difficult to make M'Buôt horns because the main material that makes horns is gourds that grow in nature, with a special shape with a small top to make bellows that are difficult to find in nature. Today's popular gourds have a fairly large potting nozzle, making it difficult for trumpeters to breathe as well as control the airflow while blowing the horn. Not to mention, an important and indispensable material in K'buot's craft is the copper chicken tongues placed in each sound outlet of the horn, which is almost impossible to find...

2.4.2 Đink Đuk (Figure 03) is an ancient musical instrument of the S'Tieng ethnic group, made of a dry umbrella giant tube, separating the outer shell to form a string, using a piece of bamboo / or small wood as a guitar (from which to adjust the sound or string) and the guitar by turning on the string. The Đink Đuk has a small volume, opaque color, and is often used to accompany narrative songs, charming lyrics, and especially the musical reenactment of the gong orchestra. S'tieng young people in the past all knew how to craft and play the Đing đuk. The herd is like a soulmate, a confidant, sent to the girls that. They love or have fun and entertainment in their free time.

In the current survey, there are very few artisans who make the Đing Đuk because of the small sound, the sentimental sound, and the concoction cannot overcome the sounds from radio transmitters, television broadcasts, amplifiers, and newly introduced music genres. For the Đuk to play guitar, in the tradition, players must know how to make their guitars. It is they who can measure the size of their hands when crafting, and from there, they distance to measure the distance between the strings... to be the controller of the guitar

Not to mention, the Đuk (Figure 04) is a gong simulation instrument, with the nature of multiple sounds, at the same time, players create improvised songs with accompaniment and melodies such as multi-sonic instruments... Moreover, players often simulate gongs and gong songs to play on Đing Đuk, so the number of people who know how to play Đing đuk are also people who know how to play gongs and gongs. The number of players who get Đing Đuk is not much. Today, in crafting, artisans also change some structures, such as the rattan wire wrapped at the top of the guitar is exchanged with thin zinc wire that is both tough and strong and easy to buy...

In some previous records or according to the book "S'tieng ethnic musical instrument by Phung Dang Quang (Quang, 2005), the musical instruments of the S'Tieng people are full of surnames: self-render, slightly vibrating, vibrating strings and vibrating membranes, quite rich with over 20 different musical instruments.' These musical instruments are often crafted from simple materials, found in nature, the residence of the people. Some musical instruments of the S'tieng people have strange pronunciation principles, and unique timbres such as Đink Đuk, K'buot horn, Đing Ghoh, M'hôm gourd, etc.

2.5 Preserve and promote and inherit the value of S'Tieng musical instruments

Experiencing social and cultural upheaval, the culture of the S'tieng people is still reserved in the community. Those are customs that have been maintained for generations such as folk beliefs and a system of rituals in the human life cycle, crop rings, traditional craft villages, folk literature, folk music, folk art... as well as gathering knowledge in social organizations,

recognizing weather for production and healing.... However, due to the absence of writing, under the influence of society through the historical and cultural periods of the S'tieng community, there was a continuation and change. Currently, with changes in the process of strong ethnic exchange, the natural environment, the changing living conditions, the S'tieng community as well as their cultural heritage values face challenges, and the risk of being lost and completely lost. It can be said that the cultural capital of the S'Tieng people today is still reserved in community life but is no longer bold by many factors. This reflects the development process of ethnic human society in general as a rule that the S'tieng community is not an exception.

Currently, the cultural heritage of the S'Tieng people is being interested in conservation work. In the areas where the S'tieng people live, the state has invested in building grassroots cultural institutions to promote them in new social conditions. State investment in many fields is necessary to improve and enhance the material and spiritual life of the S'tieng people. However, whether the culture of the S'tieng people will have vitality and adapt to and adapt to today's social conditions or not is a problem for managers, policymakers, and the local cultural sector to study to take appropriate steps and effective solutions. Identifying the values of cultural heritage that need to be preserved and promoted in new social conditions requires a sense of right, high responsibility, and timely action of the government, community, and the S'tieng community itself.

3. Conclusion

The rhythm of pounding rice along with the deep sound of gongs is an indispensable "food" in the spiritual and cultural life of the S'tieng people. In addition to gongs, the S'tieng people also have many traditional musical instruments such as k'buôt horn, gourd flute, pi flute, gourd... For the S'Tieng people, gong music and musical instruments are invaluable assets, a culture with a mark of time and space, it is also a symbol of the material and spiritual strength of the S'Tieng people. In the past, S'Tieng musical instruments appeared in festivals to celebrate new rice, stab buffaloes, weddings... However, S'Teng musical instruments in general, and S'Tieng musical instruments, in particular, are almost exclusively in restoration festivals or intercultural competitions of ethnic minorities. Other music is also only very few people know how to craft and use. In some regions, there are almost no S'tieng people who know how to use music.

I chose Binh Phuoc province because, in Binh Phuoc province alone, the S'tieng community accounts for 96.20% (General Statistics Office, 2019)) of the total number of S'tieng people in the country. The music of the S'tieng ethnic group in Binh Phuoc is an important part contributing to the shape of the S'tieng ethnic music art in our country in particular and the colorful richness of the music of ethnic groups in Vietnam in general. Over the centuries of creating, continuing, developing... S'Teng's musical instruments today have changed many. Along with the change in labor, production, and economy as well as the process of globalization, technology, and urbanization... the life, beliefs, and customs of the S'tieng people have changed a lot, and the cultural and music space of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands in general and of the S'tieng people in Binh Phuoc province have appeared changes, as well as the risk of irresistible death.

S'Tieng music in general and S'Tieng music, in particular, are the unique identity of the S'Tieng people, it sticks like blood and flesh, making the cultural value of the people. That is the practical basis that motivates me to learn and study more about the above issue, to make even smaller, but more specific and practical contributions to the conservation and promotion of S'Tieng instrumental music in Binh Phuoc province.

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