

CHAPTER 3

Phlaeng Khorat: Combination of Local Expression of Mundane Fun and Local Representation of Khon Khorat

This chapter discusses the ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* which is later developed into votive *Phlaeng Khorat*. It is believed that *Phlaeng Khorat* is *Thao Suranari*’s favorite performance. *Phlaeng Khorat* is therefore believed to be ‘an authentic’ representation of *Khorat*-ness. However, in this chapter it will be pointed out that the ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* was reconstructed only around 1930s - 1940s, roughly at the time of the construction of the monument of *Thao Suranari*. Moreover, it will be explicated that traditional *Phlaeng Khorat* is different from votive *Phlaeng Khorat*. ‘Traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* still contains rural people’s desire of an entertainment with rude words and verbal contestation full of witty dialogue from the performers. Votive *Phlaeng Khorat*, on the other hand, is mainly performed without an enjoyment of dialogical relation and the original ‘rudeness’. This is because it is considered a ‘respectable’ performance for worshipping *Thao Suranari*. Particularly, it is performed in front of the monument and the replica of *Thao Suranari*. Though votive *Phlaeng Khorat* could claim the origin of *Khorat*ness, it is different from ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat*.

3.1 Folk Performance as Mundane Fun

A local scholar *Preecha Uitrugool* (1993) explains that ‘*Phlaeng Khorat*’ was transformed from *Phlaeng Kom* or short versed song. Local people both male and female used to sing it back and forth as a style of outwitting dialogue between them during their time of working in rice field or in ceremonial events. Each *Phlaeng Kom* has two verses. *Phlaeng Khorat* was composed out of more *Phlaeng Kom* compiling in a longer and longer trail of verses (*Preecha*, 1993: 15). *Lumduan Jakkaraj*, a male *Maw Phlaeng*, or singer suggests that *Phlaeng Kom* comes from spoken language

playing by elders with a tactic of expanding the pronunciation and a tactic of using metaphors. It is like outwitting dialogue with a use of metaphors for enhancing its mood and meaning rather than with a use of direct communication.

For example, when a boy is flirting with a girl, she asks him

“Which way are you from, from Na Wah (a farm of Jambolan plum) or from Na Ma Kham Pom (a farm of Indian gooseberry)?”

This is a metaphor playing with taste of fruits. The sweet taste of Jambolan plum is compared to a smooth situation that means their parents allow them to see each other; the bitter taste of Indian gooseberry is compared to the guy's bitter feeling from his parent's averseness (cited in *Nakhon Ratchasima Teacher College*, 1993: 20).

‘*Phlaeng Khorat*’ in premodern society was sung by young people for entertaining and flirting during party and festival, particularly *Songkran* Days and Chinese New Year. The performance was popularized in rural areas such as *Non Thai*, *Non Sung*, *Chok Chai*, and partly *Sung Noen* (Thaworn et al., 1979: appendices 1). Moreover, *Nate Uttamang*, a local intellectual suggests that in ‘*Phlaeng Khorat*’ the rhyme structure of pronunciations is more emphasized than the meaning content. Words or some phrases in the same poem may be totally irrelevant to the story line, but they are chosen merely for constructing a rhyme from a verse to the next one (cited in *Nakhon Ratchasima Teacher College*, 1993: 15).

In the 1920s the structure of lyric and melody of *Phlaeng Khorat* had been reinvented by Mrs. *Jieaw*, a famous female *Maw Phlaeng* at that time. She lengthened the poems composing more words in each verse, more lyric and longer rhythm using high and low pitch for melodic singing. The reinvention of ‘*Phlaeng Khorat*’ of Mrs. *Jieaw* was widely copied by several performers, so it became the model of “traditional *Phlaeng Khorat*” until today (Thaworn et al., 1979: Appendix 2-3).

Table 3.1 Comparison between lines of *Phlaeng Kom* and lines of the ‘refined’ *Phlaeng Khorat*

<i>Phlaeng Kom</i>	<i>Phlaeng Khorat</i>
<p>Woman: Did you take shortcuts or cut the road, to get here?</p> <p>Man: None of them. I took a straight road, I did not get lost.</p> <p>Woman: Did you jump off of the window or break out the wall, to get here?</p> <p>Man: None of them. I made my exit out of the door (<i>Phodchara</i>, 2000: 49).</p>	<p>Woman: “Don’t get mad at me! May I persuade you to buy a land? May I test your feelings? Do you want to go to my place? Carry me on your hip! We...may have scorned each other, or may have desire for <i>Pia</i> doughnut. When you go to bed nets with your wife, <i>Nil</i>, she may feed you some milk. But if you get with the girl like me, she will go to a chair for sleeping. Please don’t hate me, I beg you, husband of <i>Nil</i>! (Mrs. <i>Jieaw</i>’s parlance, cited in <i>Thaworn et al.</i>, 1979: Appendix 44).</p>

3.2 Sexual Connotations as Folkloric Outwitting: Interactive Relation between *Maw Phlaeng* and Audience

The basic of ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* was adapted from *Phlaeng Kom* conversing between men and women. Its purpose was to get one cornered in the dialogue; the cornered one was considered a loser. Normally, *Maw Phlaeng* in the past dialogued with his female partner with his dirty talk and ‘rude’ words in an invitation song at the beginning of the show. Meanwhile, the female *Maw Phlaeng* also fought back with rudeness in her next singing or in a refusal of the invitation. The remarkable features of *Phlaeng Khorat* are scolding, using sexual symbols, tactics, using metaphor from characters in literature, and flirting (*Thaworn et al.*, 1979: 14).

So, *Maw Phlaeng* usually dialogued with dirty talk or ‘rude’ words especially words referred to sexual organ or sexual behaviors. Playing with those kinds of words

could easily get the other embarrassingly cornered. Which side was unable to keep the dialogue going would be considered defeated, but to the audience that situation was rather amusing (Preecha, 1993: 15-16). This reflected the folkway of outwitting the opponents.

Below is an example of the use of rude words in *Phlaeng Kom* between Boon, a male *Maw Phlaeng*, and Fueang, a female *Maw Phlaeng*:

หมอลำชายชื่อบุญ “ไหนมึงมาแต่ในเมืองนี้ อีเพื่องหีไฟ”
 เป็นไร”
 หมอลำหญิงชื่อเพื่อง “หาว่ากูมาจากเมือง นี้อีเพื่องหีไฟ ไ้บุญเอ๋ย ถ้ามึงมีบุหรื มาจุดกะหี กู
 ยังไง”
 หมอลำชายชื่อบุญ “กูมีแต่ยากระแตร กูกลัวไหมแต่มึงตาย”
 หมอลำหญิงชื่อเพื่อง “มึงเอาบุหรืจุดหีกู ปากมึงจะอยู่ยังงั”
 หมอลำชายชื่อบุญ “เพื่องเอ๋ย อยากขอถามกรงๆ ว่าหีมันง(น่าจะเป็น งิง ซึ่งหมายถึงยกตั้งขึ้น)
 ยังงั”
 หมอลำหญิงชื่อเพื่อง “ให้สังเกตุ จมูกมา เวลามันกินหญ้า มันยังบ้วนมาบ้วน ไป”
 หมอลำชายชื่อบุญ “อย่างมึงนี้ กูเดินตาม สองท่งสามท่ง(ท่ง) กะคอไม้ งิง(น่าจะเป็น งิง) ชักหี
 หมอลำหญิงชื่อเพื่อง “มายังงั้น กูจะพาเข้าป่า เลิกผ่า(ผ่า)คูหี ถ้าไม่งศาตลาด(น่าจะเป็น งิงอาด
 หลาด ซึ่งหมายถึงยกตั้งขึ้นอย่างเปิดเผยโดดเด่น)จะให้แปดบาทสองท่ง(จะให้
 ร่วมเพศสองครั้ง)”

Transcription:

Boon: Nai Mueng Ma Tae Nai Mueang nee, E Fueang Hee Fai

Fueang: Haa Waa Koo Maa Jaak Mueang, Nee E Fueang Hee
 Fai, Tha Mueng Mee Buree Maa Jood Ka Hee Koo Pen
 Rai

Boon: Koo Mee Tae Ya Karat, Koo Klouaw Mai Taed Mueng
 Tai

Fueang: Mueng Aow Buree Jood Hee Koo, Paak Mueng Ja Yoo
 Yung-ngai

*Boon: Fueang Aye Yaak Kor Thaam Krong Krong Waa Hee
Mun Ngong Yung-ngai*

*Fueang: Hai Sungkhet Doo Jamook Maa, Wehla Mun Kin Yaah
Mun Yung Booy Ma Booy Pai*

*Boon: Yaang Mueng Nee Koo Dearn Taam Song Tong Saam
Tong, Ka Dore Mai Ngong Suk Tee*

*Fueang: Maa Yung Ngunn Koo Ja Paa Khao Paa Leauk Paa
Doo Hee, Tha Mai Ngong Kaad Laad Ja Kai Paed Baht
Song Tee*

Translation:

Boon: You girl from uptown, aren't you, Miss Fire-Pussy Fueang?!

Fueang: You ask me if I'm from uptown, and you call me Miss Fire-Pussy Fueang. Hey guy, if you have some cigarette, come light it at my pussy and let's see if it's lit!

Boon: I've got only foreign cigarette, I'm afraid that it'll burn your clitoris to death.

Fueang: But after lighting it at my pussy, how can your lips bear with it?!

Boon: Hey Fueang, may I ask you directly, how can your vagina get erected?!

Fueang: It's like when you watch at a nose of horse, when it is chewing grass, and its lips are puckering up and down.

Boon: A girl like you can't turn me on. Even I walk with you as far as a few blocks of field; my dick is not getting hard-on.

Fueang: Hey guy, let me take you to the woods. I'll let you see my pussy there. I assure you if your dick is not greatly erected, I let you '8 Baht' me twice! (I let you fuck me twice) (Thaworn Subongkotch et al., 1979: Appendix 25).

Audience of *Phlaeng Kom* was quite the same with group of singers and almost everyone who could sing can neatly participate in the show. Once *Phlaeng Kom* was changed to 'traditional' *Phlaeng Khorat*, audience of 'traditional' *Phlaeng Khorat* became distant from the singers, because 'traditional' *Phlaeng Khorat* contained longer verses than *Phlaeng Kom*, and the audience had less skill to create the verse comparing with the singers. They might become only audience, unlike being participants of *Phlaeng Kom*.

Although it might be the case that the audience of 'traditional' *Phlaeng Khorat* knew the structure of the verses, rhyme, and structure of stories told by *Maw Phlaeng*, they were neither good at poetry, nor at singing and telling stories for making the connection of emotion with others. They could reply to *Maw Phlaeng* with simple poems for teasing, challenging and asking questions to *Maw Phlaeng*. Although there was a wide gap of skill between the audience and *Maw Phlaeng*, audience was still allowed to test *Maw Phlaeng*.

Phodchara Suwanaphachana (2001) explains that audience and singers were separated because the composition, process and style of the show were formally arranged, and this did not allow the audience to participate in the show. The audience could attend to the show when *Maw Phlaeng* made their stories a verse and sang it on the stage (*Phodchara*, 2001: 45). However, I think that even though the process and steps of the show were already set, the audience received brotherhood relationship and emotional participation, and especially they were entertained by sarcasm and intelligent argument among *Maw Phlaeng* and sometimes between *Maw Phlaeng* and audience, particularly with obscene and rude words.

Preecha Uitrugool, a lecturer from *Nakhon Ratchasima Teacher College*, suggests that the audience would know swiftly about the structure of the song, the poem, and the rhyme between verses, they could have a judgement of who wins or

loses in the competition (cited in *Nakhon Ratchasima Teacher College*, 1993: 26). This may be considered that it is a social relationship where the knowledge and power between local audience and local producer of culture was rather equal.

The original content in ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* such as explicit words referred to sexual organs and sexual content has been changed to playful teasing about health, beauty, look, complexion, or obesity of the other side in the competition.

However, some other content in ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* reflected Buddhist discipline and moral teaching. Here is an example of the lyric about the story of *Maha Vessantara Chataka*;

“ดอกสั่นเคี้ยวที่เขาเถื่อนสันติ ให้แม่คนสวยเป็นมัทรี พี่จะเป็นทรงเดชเวสสันดร
ทหารเมืองจันทน์จะหนีจาก ตัดเอาตอนพระมารดาทอนไล่จากหนีจร อย่าว่าแต่พี่หนีจน เอย...จะอยู่
ในอาณาเขต ก็พ่อเกลียดแม่เคียด จำจะร้างหนีเมือง แล้วตาม
อีแม่คุณ ทั้งจะเฉยจะเมินหรือก็ไม่เป็นมูล สมมติแม่เยาวมาลย์ คนเป็น...เมีย”

Transcription:

“*Dok Sun Daea Tee Khao Thuea Sun Dee, Hai Mae Khon Suay Pen
Muddi, Pee Ja Pen Song Det Vessatara*

Taharn Mueang

*Jeen Tee Juan Jaa Nee Jaak, Tud Aow Tohn Pra Marn Daa Taan
Lai Jaak Nee Jorn, Yah Wah Tae Pee Nee Jon ey Jaa...Yoo*

*Nai Anakhet, Kor Por Kliead Mae Keaung, Jum Jaa Raang Nee
Meuang Laew Taa Kom*

*E Mae Khun, Thung Jaa Cheoy Jaa Meon Rue Mai Kor Pen Mool,
Sommud Mae Yaowamal, Khon Pen...Mia”*

Translation:

“Oh, my beauty, Could you be Muddi? I could be your Vessantara.

Like when the Chinese army that was about to run away, like when his mother pushed him away, I'd rather run away from this poor house. Don't you blame me about it!

My honey, I have to run away from where mom and dad's hatred is overwhelming.

Oh my dear, I don't care if you keep quiet to my proposal. You are already my wife in my possible world (Thaworn et al., 1979: Appendix 56)."

3.3 Reinvention of 'Traditional' *Phlaeng Khorat* as Local Representation of *Khon Khorat* under the Central State

In 1931, Queen *Saovabha Bongsri* of Siam was invited for an opening ceremony of *Chomsurangyat Rd.* In front of the Queen was a welcome show of *Phlaeng Khorat* from Mr. *Ree Baan-Suankha* (Ibid., 24).

As "*Phlaeng Khorat*" had been presented to the Queen *Saovabha Bongsri* and the public in 1931, "*Phlaeng Khorat*" had become a symbol of *Khon Khorat*. As such, attempt has been made of various actors to 'take care' of "*Phlaeng Khorat*".

Prachachart Newspaper published in 1933 mentioned that when *Khorat* people participated in the ceremony of worship of town spirit on 17th November 1933 there was a performance called "*Phlaeng Khorat*" (Saipin, 1995: 66).

This was later used by *Nakhon Ratchasima*'s Boy Scouts as a theme of their play in the National Boy Scout Jamboree, and it was the first time that '*Phlaeng Khorat*' was officially seen in national affair (Thaworn et al., 1979: 7).

In 1934 there was an article written by *Phrarajadhammanithet* who was a local teacher mentioning '*Phlaeng Khorat*' as a revelation of localness.

Table 3.2 Trajectory of “*Phlaeng Khorat*”

Time	Incidence
Approx. 1925-1927	Mrs. <i>Jieaw</i> , a famous female <i>Maw Phlaeng</i> , had been accredited as a pioneer who refined <i>Phlaeng Khorat</i> by lengthening the poems as more lyric and created longer rhythm.
1931	Queen <i>Saovabha Bongsri</i> visited <i>Khorat</i> . “ <i>Phlaeng Khorat</i> ” was performed in front of The Queen. However, <i>Khorat</i> people still called it <i>Phlaeng Kom</i> , or <i>Wah Phlaeng</i> , or <i>Len Phlaeng</i> .
1933	“ <i>Phlaeng Khorat</i> ” was performed in the ceremony of worship of town spirit.
1934	<i>Phrarajadhammanithet</i> wrote an article in 1934 mentioning “ <i>Phlaeng Khorat</i> ” in a performance from <i>Nakhon Ratchasima</i> ’s boy scouts in the National Boy Scout Jamboree. This signified that the word <i>Phlaeng Khorat</i> had become generally used and accepted.

Nate Uttamang, a local-born non-academic historiographer, recognizes that the word “*Phlaeng Khorat*” has been used in 1940. He suggests that “*Phlaeng Khorat*” was called “*Wah Phlaeng*” by local people before the change from absolute monarchy state to constitutional monarchy state in 1932. The formation of the naming of “*Phlaeng Khorat*” may have occurred in the era of “cultural construction” by Field Marshal *Plaek Phibunsongkhram* in the 1940s. Here is his explanation;

“I was born in 1924. To sing *Phlaeng Khorat* then was called “*Wah Phlaeng*” (to speak the song). But if a group of four singers was on the stage, it was called “*Len Phlaeng*” (to play the song). Doing it in one man show was called “*Wah Phlaeng*”. The name

Phlaeng Khorat was substitute for those words in 1940 when Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram gave his support for *Phlaeng Rumwong* and his wife Madame La-Eard Phibunsongkhram gave her support for *Phlaeng Thai Derm* (old Thai music)” (cited in *Nakhon Ratchasima Teacher College*, 1993: 32).

In the 1940s, “*Phlaeng Khorat*” was a creation of an identity of folk performance related to the name of the province which belongs to, and is a part of ‘Thai’ nation, not to a village in rural areas although it was popular only among rural people in some areas of the province. “*Phlaeng Khorat*” which existed in Thai construction of culture reflected the domination of Bangkok power and language to name anything in the local as part of Thainess at that time. If Nate Uttamang’s direct experience was true about the historical naming, then the new identity of this so-called *Phlaeng Khorat* should be considered a modernized identity completely unrooted out of its old origin. To endorse the name “*Phlaeng Khorat*” and to stop calling it “*Wah Phlaeng*” may not be the way of showing their resistance, it was instead the way of showing their engagement into Thai culture under the central state. Hence, it was a nationalization process and localization process of “*Phlaeng Khorat*” at the same time.

When “*Wah Phlaeng*” or “*Phlaeng Kom*” became “*Phlaeng Khorat*”, the oral tradition came to be recorded in written words and became “knowledge”. In 1979 Thaworn Subongkotch et al. from *Nakhon Ratchasima Teacher College* collected information on “pattern” of *Phlaeng Khorat*. According to Thaworn Subongkotch et al. (1979), the pattern performance of ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* is listed as following:

- 1) Prelude song or introduction song; male *Maw Phlaeng* get on the stage first, introduce to the audience the reason of the show, the host, the purpose of the host and then introduce themselves.

- 2) Invitation song; male *Maw Phlaeng* invites female *Maw Phlaeng* to get on the stage.

3) Responding song; when two women come up to the stage, they will sing to thank the invitation of the man, or sometimes to complain what took the man so long to invite them.

4) Teasing song; the women will look for weak points of the men in order to tease them or reject the friendliness from the men (*Sunthri Siri-angkun et al.*, 2012: 23).

5) Greeting song; the men sing to ask how women are and about personal affairs, and ask women to introduce themselves.

6) Sarcastic song; both sides sarcastically reply to each other.

7) *Wai Kruu* song. Each side takes turn to recall to teachers.

8) Consulting song; both sides consult each other about what stories they are going to tell.

9) Flirting song; they flirt with each other.

10) Inviting song; after flirting they invite each other to do something else.

11) Nature appreciation song.

12) Story song; telling story such as story of *Maha Vessantara Chataka*.

13) Quiz song; testing knowledge of something like history of *Thao Suranari* and current interesting event in the society.

14) The 'not-wishing-to-be-apart' song; they say good bye, wish best luck or ask to stay together.

15) Soothing song; soothing each other as they need to separate.

16) Separation song; telling the reason of separation.

17) Lamenting song; showing how sad to be separated.

18) Blessing song; blessing the host, audience and *Maw Phlaeng*.

19) Farewell song; saying good bye to the host, audience and *Maw Phlaeng*.

Phlaeng Khorat was usually shown in night time from dusk until dawn. It was performed on the stage that was set on the same level between the performers and audiences. This reflects the close connection between performers and audiences characteristic of traditional folk performance¹.

The description of how the performance is “traditonallly” practiced is given. *Thaworn Subongkotch et al.* (1979) wrote:

“After they (performers) had all dressed up on up stair of the host’s house, they began the show first by the presence of men who invited women by singing a poem of twelve verses. Because the invitation song was mostly about insulting women, after that women came on the stage and sang with insults in return. The audiences were satisfied and gave them a big whoop. Next; they sang a song to respect their masters. Even in this part that was supposed to be singing modestly, they couldn’t help insulting each other. When it was very late at night, there might be some competition of singing dialogue between male and female *Maw Phlaeng*. They chose from topic to topic, such as a battle between a knife and a wood stick. One assumed oneself as a knife, and the other one assumed him/herself as a wood stick. For anyone to win this singing battle, it was considered from the ability of whether he was talented in being an improviser poet. After that, it would come to a part of philandering songs. Men and women acted as if they fell in love. This part was filled with funny and hilarious

¹ *Phodchara Suwanaphachana* (2000) explains that on the stage there is a wooden mortar for paddies putting upside down served as a table to put water cooler for *Maw Phlaeng*. Torches are lit. Before getting on the stage, *Maw Phlaeng* have to check what time is auspiciously proper, choose which direction is the lucky one, and give the audience adoring prayers for an appreciation in the show (*Phodchara Suwanaphachana*, 2000: 76-77).

Ramphan Sri-aphai states that a traditional show of *Phlaeng Korat* is from dusk until dawn. The stage is traditionally set on the same level between players and audience. It is because the stage is simply on ground or in temple’s pavilion, unlike the present day that the stage floor is set higher from ground (*Ramphan Sri-aphai*, 2012, interviewed).

poems. When it was about dawn, they sang a song of lament for saying good-bye. In the past, *Maw Phlaeng* ended the performance with *Phlaeng Rong Lum*, the song of traditional Thai gamelan instruments playing harmoniously from verse to verse. During the music from the gamelan instruments, they performed traditional Thai dance in group. Finally, the performance ended in the morning. Before they gave the host a farewell and went back home, they were treated with breakfast by the host, and were given some payment and reward (cited in *Thaworn et al.*, 1979: Appendix 7-8).

Apart from “pattern” of song, appropriate costumes must also be observed, to represent “authentic” “*Khorat*” culture. Male *Maw Phlaeng* must wear *Chongkraben* made of *Hang Krarok* silk, traditional *Khorat* weaving sild, a traditional shirt without collar and *Pakhkaoma* (loincloth) tying around the waist. Female *Maw Phlaeng* also wear *Chongkraben*, skintight shirt without collar, and in ancient time they tied around their breast with loincloth and covered again with *Sabai* (*Thaworn et al.*, 1979: 55). Both men and women usually wear white shirt and white *Pakhkaoma* also (*Ibid.*, Appendix 7). Their costume looked rather ordinary, not so much different from what the audience wears especially in making merit ceremony and ceremonial event in the past. It was different from *Likay*’s costume, which was more fancy (*Suriya et al.*, 1998: 21-22).

The traditional costume has never been changed. *Suchada Sitthithunyakam*, a female performer explained that the traditional costume represents an identity of ‘*Khorat-ness*’ (*Suchada Sitthithunyakam*, 2012, interviewed). A most famous female performer of the applied *Phlaeng Khorat*, *Kawao Chokchai*, explained that the costume was chosen to wear for showing in *Thao Suranari*’s song, therefore it had to be simple and polite (*Kawao Chokchai*, 2011, interviewed). Setting the pattern of costume could represent a traditional local identity of *Phlaeng Khorat*.

3.4 Becoming a *Maw Phlaeng*: Hierarchical Relations between Teacher and Student

Thaworn Subongkotch et al. (1979) explained that *Maw Phlaeng* who had a lot of knowledge and was very intelligent would be respected by other villagers and some people would ask to be his disciples. Most *Maw Phlaeng* lived in rural areas. Their daily activities were farming (*Thaworn et al.*, 1979:58). “Teacher schools” of *Phlaeng Khorat* thus, dispersed in many communities, sometimes very far from each other (*Ibid.*, Appendix 6). *Phodchara Suwanaphachana* (2001) explained that *Maw Phlaeng* must be intelligent in order to make witty reply in the chant. *Maw Phlaeng* who was omniscient in many fields such as geography, history, social culture, belief and moral, was often considered a sage. Those who knew how to sing, but could not make witty reply, were called “*Pen Phlaeng*” or capable of singing (*Phodchara*, 2001:38-39).

Ramphan Sri-aphai, ex-female *Maw Phlaeng*, 81 years old, said that disciples must go to teacher’s house to ask for lessons. *Maw Phlaeng* did not make any recruitment. It was not an official school. Moreover, disciples had to do housework and work in the rice field for their teacher throughout the period of the lessons. *Ramphan* worked with her teachers four years before seriously learning to be *Maw Phlaeng* (*Ramphan*, 2012, interviewed). Meanwhile the relationship between teacher and disciple was about hire. *Maw Phlaeng* who had been rewarded as a National Artist in 1996, *Yai Wisetphalakrang* hired a teacher to his house for face-to-face lesson (*Sombat Champangeun*, 2003: 439).

Thaworn Subongkotch et al. (1979) explain that when teacher would accept students, he considered voice quality of the candidates. Besides of beautiful tone of voice, the ability to imitate natural and animal sounds was also considered, as some songs imitated natural sounds such as birds, and cicadas (*Thaworn et al.*, 1979: 44-45). Once accepted, students must pay respect to the teacher by offering six of cones made of banana leaves full of white flowers, candles, and incense sticks, one piece of white cloth for about one meter, and money of six or twelve bahts (*Ibid.*, 52-53). *Kampan Baantaan* (2001) cited that the offering composed of a banana leaf cone

filled with betel nuts, betel leaves, tobacco, incense sticks, and a candle, one piece of white cloth, six bahts and a bottle of alcoholic drink (*Kampan Baantaan*, 2001: 5).

Ramphan Sri-aphai explained that custom of teaching *Phlaeng Khorat* in the 1940s was based on a relationship of unequal power between teachers and disciples. Disciples were taught to pay respect to teachers because they granted their favors including knowledge and food to the disciples. The teachers could be severe and be able to punish the disciples like earning. Nevertheless, she thought that most of the disciples were not to be forced to do things. Since they were willing to be disciples of the teachers, so they must be under the rules of the teachers. Most of them did not find teachers' punishment outrageous. The first song that the disciples usually learned was teacher praising song (*Ramphan Sri-aphai*, 2012, interviewed). *Kampan Baantaan* (2001) explained that at the beginning of the lesson, the disciple would repeat the song after the teachers, particularly to practice pronouncing "Ooh..oh" which was a prelude of *Phlaeng Khorat*. This was to practice phonation of voice from the lungs, and concentration (*Kampan*, 2001: 3).

In accordance with *Ramphan Sri-aphai*, teaching approaches of teachers in 1940s were that teachers taught their lessons by singing directly, and disciples had to memorize by themselves. If they could not remember, they would be punished. This was because at that time most disciples and teachers could neither read nor write. When the disciples were more skillful, they had to attend to "Khao Kam" ceremony or meditation ceremony for seven days. The teachers would set dates in accordance with auspicious time. They would have only a full fist of plain rice and water and would not allow practicing singing during the ceremony as it was believed that it would make them crazy and mad. They spent most of the time in meditation and recite the prayers of the ceremony. If *Maw Phlaeng* broke the rules called "Kam Taek", like singing during *Khao Kam* ceremony, they must restart the ceremony conforming to favorable time set by the teacher (*Ramphan Sri-aphai*, 2012, interviewed).

Thaworn et al. (1979) add that male students might be taught magical prayers especially adoring prayer during *Khao Kam* ceremony including other ceremonies such as eating seven spoons of rice, drinking holy water and eating a hundred grains

of pepper with a belief that it would make them have good memory, intelligence, and fluency of singing (Thaworn et al., 1979: 53).

Kampan Baantaan (2001) mentioned that in the ceremony of eating incantation pepper, students had to eat fifteen peppers equal to the number of the fifteen days they attended to the ceremony. On the sixteenth day, they would eat one pepper less each day. The total days of the ceremony were 30 days. It was believed that pepper would make students excited, hot-tempered, so the teacher would sprinkle them with holy water to cool their temper down and this was to practice concentration as well (Kampan, 2001: 5).

Before getting on the stage and starting the show, *Maw Phlaeng* get dressed in the area arranged by host. They must pay reverence to their late masters in *Wai Kruu* ceremony. Then, male *Maw Phlaeng* checks whether *Wai Kruu* offering is ready, and start the *Wai Kruu* ceremony. The ceremony comprised of many votive objects such as a sheet of white cloth, six banana-leaf cones, flowers, candles and joss sticks, six baht coins for paying respect to the teacher (twelve coins if in a funeral). *Maw Phlaeng* pay respect to their parents. However, some pay respect to *Mara* (demonic spirits) begging them for destructing their opponent singers (Thaworn et al., 1979: 54).

3.5 Discourses of the ‘Origin’ of *Phlaeng Khorat*

Apart from the compilation of the “form” and “pattern” of *Phlaeng Khorat*, the discourses of the “origin” of *Phlaeng Khorat* was also constructed. Different discourses reflect the different emphasis that each informant perceives of *Phlaeng Khorat*. Thaworn et al. (1979) came up with four different themes that discuss the origin of *Phlaeng Khorat*; the first one emphasizes the harmony of common people with nature; the second emphasizes the influence from abroad; the third emphasizes the linguistic development; while the fourth tries to relate *Phlaeng Khorat* to *Thao Suranari*.

According to **the first theme**, a hunter named *Phetnoy* living in *Nong Bunnak* (a name of a district on present day) went out for hunting. One night he met a beautiful daughter of *Nāga* walking off the water and singing alone. *Phetnoy* heard that voice,

so he eavesdropped not far from her. He was very impressed by the beauty and lyric of the song, so he memorized the lyric and the rhythm of the song to repeat it to other people (Thawon et al., 1979: 26; Boonsom Sangsuk, cited in Thai Shown Program, 2009). This theme reflected a state of normal local people and reflected his adventurous livelihood. *Phlaeng Khorat* is considered as an art for general commoners who relay stories about the way of life and difficult livelihood of people and local moral. It shows intelligence of duo *Maw Phlaeng* through the dialogues of the songs. This myth reflects the value of *Phlaeng Khorat* as “a treasure” of Grand *Nāga*; important, sacred and powerful creature in accordance to local belief. Once, this value of *Phlaeng Khorat* was in the hands of normal people, it became more important and more respectful due to the interpretation of states of human being and sacred Grand *Nāga*. The Grand *Nāga* was more powerful than human being for self-consciousness situated between these two creatures. Therefore, *Phlaeng Khorat* was originated from the harmony of sacredness and power of nature.

The first theme also emphasizes the importance of *Maw Phlaeng* as a leader of the harmonious and beautiful entertainment for local people. In the past, *Maw Phlaeng* were normally respected by people as a teacher or *Kruu* although some of them did not teach *Phlaeng Khorat*. They were recognized as experts not by professional status but by intellectual or wisdom status. This narrative reference allows *Maw Phlaeng* to connect his/her place and his/her secular life to the pastness which gives him/her a sense of sacred space. To refer to a sacred place and claim that the place is the origin of a storyline in *Phlaeng Khorat* can render the feeling of sacredness in the performance of *Phlaeng Khorat*. It reflects adaptation from its ‘uncivilized’ origin to its civilized culture. This discourse which emphasizes the beautiful lyric of the sacred symbol but ignoring the singing in dirty talks and rude words in *Phlaeng Kom*, reflects the partial and contradictory construction of ‘social memory’ and social practice.

The second theme or second discourse describes that *Phraya Khem-Phet* who travelled from India and brought musical shows from India to Thailand including *Likay*, *Lamtat* and *Phlaeng Khorat*. *Likay* was in Bangkok, *Lamtat* was in central and *Phlaeng Khorat* stayed in Nakhon Ratchasima. *Phraya Khem-Phet* gave the songs to

Mr. *Chan* to distribute in *Khorat*. As a result, it was called “*Phlaeng Khorat*” (*Thawon et al.*, 1979: 26; *Boonsom Sangsuk*, cited in *Thai Show Program*, 2009).

This theme gives more important value of India than that of *Khorat* locality. In addition, it connects *Phlaeng Khorat* to cultures of Bangkok and Central region as they are invented from the same ‘origin’. According to John Rundell (2001), process of cultural construction was usually linked to main civilization of the world (Rundell, 2001: 14). By claiming that India is the origin of the three different performances, it reflects that local people interpret that the folk performance of *Phlaeng Khorat* is as valuable as the folk performance from the Central region of Thailand. It is harmonious with Thai culture. Nevertheless, this discourse significantly implies the difference of these three folk performances accordance to political structure between *Khorat*, the central region, and Bangkok. Hence, this discourse is an instrument of cultural politics, not only in order to balance the difference of the three folk performances; but also in order to challenge the domination of Thai culture from Bangkok and Central region and exert *Phlaeng Khorat* on equal par.

The third theme or the third discourse suggested that *Phlaeng Khorat* was originated from the change of the way people talked and sang in the past, which was called *Phlaeng Kom* (*Boonsom Sangsuk*, cited in *Thai Shown Program*, 2009). This discourse emphasized the existence, origin and development of *Phlaeng Khorat* focusing on the skill of witty art of local people, and tactic of linguistic usage which was comprehension and communication system between *Maw Phlaeng* and audience. They felt free from morality, sacred spirit, and appropriation of the central state. In particular, when it was communicated in live performance, its identity was generated from keeping tactic and verbal language of *Khorat* people in contrary to formal central Thai language.

The forth theme or fourth discourse is about *Thao Suranari*.

Boonsom Sangsuk, head of the Association of *Phlaeng Khorat*, named *Phlaeng Khorat* as “song of grandmother *Mo*”. He was interviewed by the TV program in front of the *Thao Suranari* monument². Here was his interview from the show,

“When *Ya Mo* was living, she favored *Phlaeng Khorat*. After she had conquered over *Chao Anouvong* of Vientiane and came back to town, *Khorat* people celebrated their conquering with *Phlaeng Khorat*. In addition, after she died and latter her memorial was constructed in 1934, it was firstly performed for celebrating of *Thao Suranari*’s victory; since then, it had been performed every year (cited in *Thai Shown Program*, 2009).”

Boonsom Sangsuk suggested that the origin of *Phlaeng Khorat* was related to the history of *Thao Suranari*. He related this local folk performance to people’s feeling of victory and root of locality of *Khorat* people. This supported self-respect of not only performers of *Phlaeng Khorat* but also *Khorat* people in general under ‘historiography’ of the central state. He pointed out that the symbol of *Ya Mo* monument gave some reason for the conservation and survival factors of this ‘traditional’ performance. He was also representing the grand narrative of the ‘origin’ of *Phlaeng Khorat* with patriotic history of *Thao Suranari*. While the central state was presenting *Thao Suranari* monument as a symbol of national loyalty, *Phlaeng Khorat* was considered a local identity of *Khorat* people. *Khorat* people used the symbol of *Thao Suranari* monument to make their own identity, while at the same time accepting the authority of the central state. The central state and *Khorat* locality became two sides of the same coin.

² On July 3rd, 2009 *Phlaeng Khorat* was shown on TV, by *TV Thai Channel*, in a program called the “*Thai Show*” with a purpose of cultural preservation suggesting romanticism and conservationism of Thainess. The TV program focused on its authentic and exotic as one of local culture. However, this program signified that local cultures are Thai culture. According to Arjun Appadurai (1996), mass media offered condition of collective action and pleasure of a group to imagine and feel thing together (Appadurai, 1996: 3-4). The TV program could create collective image of Thainess, while presenting characteristic of each locality.

3.6 The Competition from *Likay* and *Phlaeng Lukthung*

In the study of *Suriya Smutkupt et al.* (1998), there is a mention of another *Khorat*'s local performance called *Thai Tom-Tom Likay (Likay Klong Yao)* or *Khorat Likay* which presented stories about folktales in the local area. It was assimilated with a form of *Likay* performance from the Central region since the period of King Rama V. It was also immensely reinvented by performers who moved from Bangkok to *Nakhon Ratchasima*, especially in the 1940s. This form of *Likay* performance was supported by *Phibunsongkhram*'s government as seen from many *Likay* contests in the province in this time. As a consequence, permanent stages of *Likay* performance were built near the monument of *Thao Suranari*. *Likay* was greatly favored during the decades of 1950s-1970s. *Suriya Smutkupt et al.* (1998) explains that because of the cultural proximity between *Khorat* and Bangkok, and of the attempt in identity presentation that *Khorat* was different from other Laotian cultures, *Likay* was supported by bureaucrat and merchants as hosts who hired *Likay* performers. Even though *Likay* performance was full of stories about rulers' miracle with its stage decorated elegantly with surrealistic scenes, its theme was always related with human love, greed, hatred, envy, and revenge. As such, it attracted the audience who were from labor class (*Suriya Smutkupt et al.*, 1998: 96-103, 201).

Both the *Likay* and traditional *Phlaeng Khorat* were popularized in modern period after the 1932 revolution and the 1934 construction of the monument of *Thao Suranari*. However, *Phlaeng Khorat* was popularized in rural area whereas *Likay* became more popular in town center.

Later, around the 1960s, *Phlaeng Khorat* also faced competition from *Phlaeng Lukthung*. *Thaworn Subongkotch et al.* (1979) quoted Mr. *Pueang Chantasorn* who said that:

“Since the dawn of popularity in *Phlaeng Lukthung* in local audience, the popularity of *Phlaeng Khorat* has obviously been decreased. In any entertainment fair, if there are *Phlaeng Khorat*

and *Phlaeng Lukthung* music in the same fair, it can obviously be seen that there are fewer audience in *Phlaeng Khorat* section. Whatever shows that is not successful in calling audience's attention; the players would surely be discouraged in doing their things (Thaworn et al., 1979: Appendix 15).

3.7 Adaptation of *Phlaeng Khorat*

Thaworn Subongkotch et al. (1979) interviewed Mr. Pueang Chantasorn who turned 74 years old in 1979. He suggested that most of those who liked singing 'traditional' *Phlaeng Khorat* were people in *Non Thai*, *Non Sung*, *Chok Chai*, *Sung Noen*, *Dan Khun Thot* and *Phimai* District (Ibid., Appendix 2). Organization of 'traditional' *Phlaeng Khorat* performers was founded in the city slightly before 1960s. Previously, *Maw Phlaeng* dispersed in many areas. Expert *Maw Phlaeng* and *Maw Phlaeng* teachers had disciples. Each performer could freely accept any jobs. Yet, with new association, each group had a head who managed performer members. The head would distribute jobs to each member in accordance with appropriate occasion. However, membership of a group was not fixed as the head could borrow *Maw Phlaeng* from other groups to join the shows. A new form of 'traditional' *Phlaeng Khorat* organization was a new way of organizing *Maw Phlaeng* into a group with an office in town. It was different from the old form of relation among *Maw Phlaeng* who used to live on their own where they could make a living in their local village. Living in the village was a condition for *Maw Phlaeng* to have their epithet or second surname referred back to the place where they live (Ibid., 25). Supposed there is a *Maw Phlaeng* with a name, say, "*Klai Non-Sung*," "*Klai*" is supposed to be his name and "*Non-Sung*" is supposed to be his second surname coming from his village or his living place.

A new way of organizing into group has had an effect on each *Maw Phlaeng*'s spatial identity. When *Maw Phlaeng* were combined into a group, they must be predominantly called by the name of that group. So, if *Klai Non-Sung* was in a group with a name, say, *Silp Korat*, he must be called by that new name as his second surname. The importance of his original geographic identity was lessened. From the

fact that many of new *Maw Phlaeng* were combined into groups with an office in town, their second surname was covered to accord with the group.

In 1956, Mrs. *Song-Mueang Indrakumhaeng* had established a ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* group at *Suranarai Rd.* in town (Ibid., 64-65). However, the group did not mean to be an office where every member needed to come every day. Each *Maw Phlaeng* was free to accept any shows, work in their farm and several of them still lived in their own village. The head of the group was a representative or coordinator accompanying each *Maw Phlaeng* to the show instead of leaving organizers to deal everything on their own. Presently, they use mobile phone to contact one another.

Preecha Uitragee explains that the new organizing was grouped loosely. *Maw Phlaeng* could still be invited to play with members from another group. Their head was therefore considered the one who did the job of a manager or a facilitator with a duty of finding some equally talented *Maw Phlaeng* to a show (cited in *Nakhon Ratchasima Teacher College*, 1993: 26).

The new way of organizing *Maw Phlaeng* in group is a way to give their service to a new group of target clients who are in town. Therefore, the presence of ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* in town was related to the urbanization of *Nakhon Ratchasima* which was a central city for local people from various villages with a variety of cultures and ways of life. This conformed with the development of areas around *Thao Suranari* Monument which was supposed to be a major commercial area in early 1960s.

3.8 Diversification into *Phlaeng Khorat Cing* and votive *Phlaeng Khorat*

In the 1970s, ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* was noted of its decreasing popularity while *Thao Suranari* spirit cult was beginning. As decreased popularity was affected from the audience’s request of some other types of music such as *Phlaeng Lukthung* (Ibid., 57), performers decided to adapt their performance. For example, performers in the group of *Thongsook Kumpung* compounded Western music into their show in late 1970’s. But it was then not much widespread (Ibid., 64). Their mixed and match

performance was recognized as “*Phlaeng Khorat Pra Yuk*” (applied form). A new style of contemporary *Phlaeng Khorat* which was identified as “applied *Phlaeng Khorat*” then (i.e., 1970s) was a style of music with fast speed tempo along with modern musical instrument. I saw that the so-called “applied *Phlaeng Khorat*” in its early period used new music program arrangement on stage shuffling from various kinds of music such as *Phlaeng Khorat*, *Maw Lum*, and *Phlaeng Lukthung*.

Commercialized *Phlaeng Khorat* became prominent from 1970s. They were derived from traditional song and adapted into two different styles which served two different purposes: applied *Phlaeng Khorat* (or *Phlaeng Khorat Pra Yuk* or *Phlaeng Khorat Cing*) for entertainment and votive *Phlaeng Khorat* as votive gift to *Thao Suranari*. Phodchara Suwanaphachana (2000) explained that applied *Phlaeng Khorat* was *Phlaeng Khorat* mixed with country songs or contemporary songs requested by audience. It used international musical instrument including dancers. *Maw Phlaeng* did not have fixed pattern of costume unlike ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat*. *Maw Phlaeng* might wear traditional or modern costume, and dancers might wear local costume or colorful mini-skirts. Its clients were mostly young people.

On the other hand, votive *Phlaeng Khorat* was more traditional. Lyric or verse would be repeatedly used. Its content was usually about the host. *Maw Phlaeng* did not need to use their intellect to interchange dialogues. And the clients rarely watched the show because it was for grandmother *Mo* (Phodchara Suwanaphachana, 2000: 56-60).

Applied *Phlaeng Khorat* after the 1970s was obviously more modern. It used various modern lighting and sound system to arouse audience’s emotion by using light, sound, quick rhythm of storytelling. It opened an opportunity for young performers’ more than elder performers. Adding sexual seduction of dancers, it still kept original identity of *Phlaeng Khorat* singing which used sexually implied verses.

Contrarily, votive *Phlaeng Khorat* chose to keep tradition of singing and dancing rhythms, avoiding electronic devices (except a microphone and an amplifier used in some shows of some villages). It displayed the characteristics of antiquity and authenticity by referring to the supernatural power of *Thao Suranari*. It told stories

about the favors of *Thao Suranari* that was granted to the professional success of clients. While the identity of applied *Phlaeng Khorat* was an entertainment for working-class clients using technology and modern emotional arousal equipment such as multicolor lights, loud voice, quick rhythm and sexual arousal through bodies of dancers, the identity of votive *Phlaeng Khorat* did not use any technology and modern emotional arousal.

However, both applied *Phlaeng Khorat* and votive *Phlaeng Khorat* reflected social changes in which applied *Phlaeng Khorat* was used to promote joyfulness of modernity whereas votive *Phlaeng Khorat* was used to cure unhappiness and worries of modernity.

If there is a question why it is not easy for votive *Maw Phlaeng* to change their style, despite the fact that audience does not seem to pay attention to their performance, their answer often is that the ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* and votive *Phlaeng Khorat* are not just only song of grandmother *Mo* but also a song representing the local identity of *Khorat* people. This is because *Khorat* local language is used in the song. To preserve their local identity is crucial for preservation of these values. Their answer reflects that they interpret their root of local identity in relationship with spiritual ancestors, especially grandmother *Mo* the heroine; and the use of local language. In daily life, the local *Khorat* language has already been much assimilated with local language from the Central Region of Thailand. But I think that *Maw Phleang* attempt to maintain their local identity by singing in *Khorat* dialect even though they speak central Thai with other people in their daily life.

Thaworn Subongkotch et al. (1979) suggests that the popularity of ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* was seriously decreased because new generation of audience disdained obscenity and preferred other kinds of entertainments such as *Likay*, boxing, country music, and *Rumwong*, etc. Although government broadcasted *Phlaeng Khorat* through Radio Thailand, the obscene words were forbidden (*Thaworn et al.*, 1979: 64).

Thaworn Subongkotch et al. (1979) argues that the moment the performers started to use Central language and mix it into ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* lyric or to

use it with a *Khorat* accent, it may be considered the first moment of the adaptation of modernity into ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* (Ibid., 42). From another point of view, it can be seen that the changes in *Phlaeng Khorat* are stemmed from a big change in linguistic structure. Some explains that modern-day local people turn their back on their parent’s local language. They use Central Region language which is official. This is because they have been educated in school where official language is used; hence they cannot understand ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* that is created from *Khorat* dialect (*Nakhon Ratchasima* Teacher College, 1993: 31-32, 226). The change in their daily use of language has an effect of their understanding of and interest in ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* content.

The decline of popularity of *Phlaeng Khorat* was expressed in the research of local intellectual group from the faculty of human science and social science, the *Nakhon Ratchasima* Teacher College in 1979. It was a study by the local intellectuals who propose to promote conservation of its ‘traditional’ pattern, as it was considered as an art and culture of the province; and as a representative or a subset of Thai culture. The local intellectuals were concerned about an extinction of ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* popularity; and were concerned about weaken local identity of *Nakhon Ratchasima* or *Khorat*, as Thailand was undergoing rapid social and economic change. Since the time of the Cold War and American culture influence, the local intellectuals started to collect the words of traditional songs from elder teachers of the performance while they attempted to build up the Art and Culture Center. They were not both performers and owners of *Phlaeng Khorat* culture; some of them came from Bangkok or the province’s elite. They publicized this culture in order to present an identity of the province by referring the narrative of local people. This can be considered as an act of appropriation of local culture, to a certain extent, though certain traditional characters of *Phlaeng Khorat* were still maintained.

The movement of the intellectuals in constructing localism began in 1970s and 1980s, and it was promoted by local intellectual rather than by performers themselves. It was an attempt by the local cultural intellectuals who assume the role of “cultural guard”. Their positions were based on academic and communicative rationality but their emotional aesthetics influenced their rationality. Therefore, this “*Phlaeng Khorat*

preservation movement” was not an opposition between rationality and emotion but it was a “rational authorization of emotion” within the hierarchy of reasons. In addition, it can reflect the consciousness of modernity of “local cultural guard”, or to use Joel Khan’s phase, the movement of rationalization and aesthetic emotion of modern subjects (Khan, 2001: 16).

In December of 1993, a topic of the problem of ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat*’s changes was set in a seminar in *Nakhon Ratchasima* Teacher College by that same group of teachers. Many people from the academics, media, bureaucrats, popular intellectual singer, and elder performers were invited to the seminar. Some participants in the seminar criticized applied *Phlaeng Khorat* of not conserving the ‘authentic’ trait of *Phlaeng Khorat* while some criticized votive *Phlaeng Khorat* in its aspect of using repetitive content of the performance (*Nakhon Ratchasima* Teacher College, 1993: 35-45). The seminar seemed to be the stage of “rational” communication among intellectual voices. In addition, it was extended from intellectuals’ consciousness in order to present ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* as ‘proper’ local identity in the public sphere.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the construction of ‘traditional’ *Phlaeng Khorat* to become a representation of *Khon Khorat*. After the visit of Queen *Saovabha Bongsri* to *Khorat* in 1931 when the Queen was presented with the performance of *Phlaeng Khorat*, thus, local interests in *Phlaeng Khorat* developed. This began with an article mentioning the word “*Phlaeng Khorat*” written by *Phrarajadhammanithet* in 1934. This took place in the time of Field-Marshal *Plaek Phibunsongkhram* who emphasized the construction of local culture to form part of an ancient national “Thai” culture.

Later *Thaworn Subongkotch* et al., local lecturers in *Nakhon Ratchasima* Teacher Collage, wrote a book on *Phlaeng Khorat*, describing the “origin” forms and patterns of *Phlaeng Khorat*. In the book, folkloric tradition such as sexual interplay/outwitting between *Maw Phlaeng* was mentioned, the structure of *Wai Kruu*

which is a hierarchical structure of students and teachers were emphasized, and other tradition such as form of traditional costumes was also mentioned.

But as the country becomes modernized *Phlaeng Khorat* which was slow-singing (though witty) faced competition from other more exciting performance. *Phlaeng Khorat* becomes de-popularized and it had to adapt itself. One direction is to become “*Phlaeng Khorat Pra Yuk*” by applying modern musical instrument into the music. The other direction is the change into votive *Phlaeng Khorat* where sexual interplay/outwitting dialogism was dropped, while the ‘traditional’ element of the performance such as wearing *Chongkraben* and singing in *Khorat* dialect was preserved. The subject of the cult of *Thao Suranari* in association with votive *Phlaeng Khorat* is the topic I will discuss in the next chapter.

The seal of Chiang Mai University is a circular emblem. In the center is a stylized elephant facing left, with a decorative tusk-like element on its trunk. Above the elephant is a traditional Thai umbrella (parasol). The elephant is flanked by two circular floral motifs. The outer ring of the seal contains the text "CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY 1964" in English and Thai script.

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