

## Rongshui Lusheng: Knowledge Management for Learning Arts and Culture

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### ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to study (i) the development of the Lusheng and its relationship with Rongshui culture and (ii) the knowledge management for learning arts and culture in southern China. This research used qualitative research methods by studying documents and collecting field data through surveys, interviews, observations, group discussions, and workshops. The data was collected from a group of 18 people. The analysis was based on the objectives, and the results were presented in a descriptive-analytical manner. The research results indicated that: (i) Lusheng is an ancient musical instrument in the bamboo family that has spread throughout Asia, This instrument has evolved differently in different regions. This musical instrument is closely related to the way of life of people in southern China. People use it as a show for entertainment during important festivals. They believe that the worship of ancestors and gods can protect one's life. Lusheng culture has artistic value and should be studied to be photographed for future generations. (ii) The knowledge of Rongshui Lusheng, a wind instrument made from bamboo, is a valuable musical and dance cultural heritage and deserves to be carefully studied through systematic inheritance. It was found that it is a teaching activity in educational institutions starting in primary school. Secondary and higher education learning in this study has two characteristics: Learning to produce Lusheng and practicing playing Lusheng, which must create a melody. The rhythm goes along with the related dance. In summary, this study can be used as a guideline for the conservation and inheritance of cultural heritage as well as a guideline for teaching and learning for the transmission of artistic and cultural heritage.

**Key words:** Rongshui Lusheng, Knowledge Management, Cultural Ways, Lusheng Making, Lusheng Playing, Knowledge Transfer, Learning Arts and Culture

### INTRODUCTION

Lusheng is a type of musical instrument in the family of wind instruments that uses a single-tongue style, mainly made from bamboo cups. They appear mainly in China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and northeast Asian countries such as Japan and Korea all of which have similar characteristics. Since ancient times, ethnic minorities in China have been skilled at singing and dancing. Has all-round abilities and has created a colorful ethnic culture as a national musical instrument loved by the people. Minority groups in China, especially the Miao people, almost every family owns this musical instrument. They have both instrumental and production skills that are tied to a life of worship. An emotional and unique expression in the history of the Miao. The Lusheng family instruments that appeared in Rongshui have likely evolved over thousands of years. For the songs used in performances.

Rongshui of Guangxi Province is similar to songs of Guizhou Province in shape and sound system, including some melodies. The history of those ethnic groups in southwestern China share a common cultural relationship. This

type of music performance art often uses ritual traditions. And almost all ceremonies celebrated by the Miao people. Therefore, this musical instrument is a characteristic of the Miao people. In 2006, the Miao series Pohui group with Lusheng performance was listed as a national intangible cultural heritage and cultural heritage of humanity by the State Council. People's Republic of China In 2012, the making techniques and performing arts were listed as representative items of intangible cultural heritage in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Making Lusheng is an exquisite art of physical appearance and sound. Quality will depend on the skill of the creator. Emphasis is placed on using this type of musical instrument to produce products for sale in order to stimulate the tourism economy. Producers in some villages or towns in Rongshui District have used their musical instrument making skills to provide income for their families. Manufacturers have used various types of machinery to create works that have become souvenirs. They were able to make full use of the bamboo in Rongshui to produce this work because the materials were sufficient. The people of Rongshui still do not know the exact time when Lusheng

production began. With a large amount of bamboo being the main material for production, Lusheng manufacturers can produce it at any time when they have free time from farming. At present, it is a pity that the number of producers continues to decrease with the development of economics and society. Before 1978, 85% ~ 90% of villagers could produce and this was their additional occupation. In contrast, since the 1990s the number of makers of this type of instrument has decreased as they left for other areas to find other work with higher income. Their children refused to inherit this job skill because of their dreams of getting a better job, and there was no time to master the art of Dr. Tri construction. However, the quality produced in this city is still widely recognized by both manufacturers and players. The high quality of products produced in Xiangfen Village and Antai Village is due to their long development. Moreover, since it has to be played along MoLam (the traditional Southern China singing) all night long, the makers need to find some techniques to make it sturdy and well-sounding. With its high quality, the Lusheng from Roi-et is pursued by players in general (Champadaeng, 2009). The Lusheng is vastly popular because it plays a significant role in traditions, ways of life, and entertainment in the Southern China society.

However, as the “musical instrument”, “ritual tools”, and “divine tools” of Miao people, they also face the development and inheritance problems that coexist with traditional ethnic culture, and the reasons for the problems are diverse and complex. Knowledge management is mainly a management tool applied in enterprise organizational management, which has gradually become a necessary means for the survival and development of enterprises in the era of knowledge economy. Therefore, research on knowledge management has also been highly valued, such as combining various types of enterprise organizational management, enterprise digitization, enterprise innovation, and enterprise knowledge management construction. At the same time, as an advanced management method, knowledge management has long surpassed the limitations of enterprise management in research, knowledge management in fields such as library management, archive management, scientific research management, and teaching.

### Research Objectives

This article aims to investigate the development of the Lusheng and its relationship with Rongshui culture, and the knowledge management for learning arts and culture. The research objectives were:

1. To study the development of the Lusheng and its relationship with Rongshui culture ways, and
2. To study the knowledge management for learning arts and culture Rongshui Lusheng.

To meet these objectives, the researcher explored the origin and value of the current development situation, problems of culture respectively, analyzing knowledge management, use, and importance of organizing learning accordingly in cultural development to serve as a case study for academic

reference and a guideline for further investigation of art and culture.

### RESEARCH METHOD

This study was designed as follows:

#### Step 1

Study document content. The content involves knowledge of Rongshui Lusheng’s operations, relationships with concepts, theories, and research to guide studies and analyze results.

#### Step 2

Explore the research area. The study was chosen to be collected from documents and fieldwork. The area of study was the southern part of Chinatown and its neighboring communities.

#### Step 3

Create tools and determine research methods. This study used a participatory process to analyze and present results using qualitative research methods which must be explained in empirical detail research tools including surveys, interviews, observational forms, focused group approaches, and workshops to gather information covering research content. Population and samples were selected from the group of Lusheng makers and Lusheng players accepted in the research area.

#### Step 4

After recruiting the youth to participate in the project, a meeting was held to explain the steps they had to take. Then the selected community and the participants in the project were contacted. The study content focused on the process of knowledge management of Lusheng makers and the works of professional players accepted in the circle of art and culture, development in cultural ways, and the body dissection of knowledge regarding Rongshui Lusheng performance including performing arts 18 people.

#### Step 5

Data collection is divided into documents. On the field side, gather information about Rongshui Lusheng performances, Rongshui Lusheng costumes, and souvenirs from the research area along with scheduling a date, time, and place to visit the area to check the data for accuracy according to the issues specified in the research objectives.

#### Step 6

Data analysis according to the research issues specified in the objectives. The development of Rongshui Lusheng clothing synthesizes content from the information according to operational procedures and creates data categories that are related to the research objectives.

### Step 7

Summary of research results, analyze, and compile documents from the issues specified according to the research objectives. The researcher presents research data in a descriptive and analytical manner. Rongshui Lusheng has two forms of display, and the entertainment is different. The analysis emphasizes consistency with the established research objectives.

## RESULTS

The research results can be presented as follows:

### Development of the Lusheng and its Relationship in Rongshui Culture Ways

Lusheng is a family of instruments made of bamboo that is thousands of years old and spread throughout Asia where each region has had different developments. Lusheng culture has a long history, which is not only integrated with traditional Chinese culture, but also reflects the signs of mutual communication between different nationalities. In addition to the Miao people who use Lusheng, the Yao and Dong people have also used it in history.

The first stage is the initial development of Sheng from the Shang to the Three Kingdoms period. From “Erya”, “Zhou Li” and “Book of Songs”, there are records of Sheng, involving the relationship between Sheng and the ritual music system, and it is also a welcome instrument. During the spring and autumn period and the Warring States Period, mainly through archaeology, the Lusheng material unearthed from the tombs also shows that the Lusheng was used in sacrifice. In the Han Dynasty, Lusheng was endowed with humanization, and yet generally speaking, at this stage, the Sheng was still the main instrument in the court.

In the second stage, “Sheng” developed rapidly from the Sui to Tang to Song Dynasty. In Sui and Tang dynasties, Sheng was already one of the important court accompaniment instruments. Even, Sheng has spread abroad. In addition, the Lusheng is already a musical instrument used to express people’s emotions. In the Song Dynasty, Lusheng became an exclusive musical instrument for ethnic minorities. On the contrary, the playing of Lusheng in the Central Plains gradually declined.

In the third stage, from the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the Republic of China, “Lusheng” appeared in historical documents as a proper term in the Ming Dynasty and Lusheng has been developed from Sheng. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Lusheng was mainly used in the minority ethnic groups in southwest China, especially in the Miao people, and was deeply loved. Therefore, Lusheng was widely used, not only in the “jumping to the moon”, but also in greeting guests, and in the functions of red and white. It can be seen that Lusheng developed rapidly in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The fourth stage is after the founding of the People’s Republic of China, Lusheng culture has continued to develop and grow, becoming international, and is protected as

an intangible cultural heritage. It can be said that this period was a period of change in the development of Lusheng. Lusheng is a kind of musical instruments that is important to Chinese culture in the era of national development.

### Knowledge Management for Learning Arts and Culture Rongshui Lusheng

Knowledge management of Lusheng culture enters the education system, creating a curriculum to transmit to students. Education reform promotes the spread of Lusheng culture in the development of educational reform. The inheritance of ethnic culture is one of the key tasks, playing an important role in the education and teaching process of traditional ethnic culture. School education has gradually become the main field for the inheritance of ethnic minority culture due to its advantages in environmental equipment, knowledge reserves, and research talents. During the 14<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan period of national economic and social development of the People’s Republic of China, Rongshui County strengthens the promotion of ethnic cultural education, lays a talent and intellectual foundation for the high-quality development of ethnic culture, and continuously carries out the work of “ethnic culture entering the classroom” and “ethnic sports entering the campus”. This county also enhances the protection and inheritance of ethnic culture, fulfills the identification of demonstration schools for ethnic education, organizes and implements the improvement of ethnic education capabilities in primary and secondary schools (kindergartens), and promotes the quality improvement and characteristic development of ethnic primary and secondary schools. In addition, it organizes and carries out school ethnic cultural and artistic exhibitions and selection activities for ethnic cultural achievements, encouraging enterprises, associations, and individuals to participate in the construction of ethnic culture education in schools, and forms classic ethnic culture projects with “multiple products in one county” and “multiple products in one school”. Rongshui County will take five measures to do a good job in ethnic education and to lay a talent and intellectual foundation for high-quality development.

In the context of the 14<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, various primary and secondary schools have further integrated Miao Lusheng into music education classrooms based on their own actual situations. Children have been influenced by culture from an early age and genuinely enjoy it. The school organizes excellent students into a team, which not only trains their performance skills in regular classroom teaching, but also cultivates their creative and arrangement abilities. They are encouraged to create their own programs to participate in different performances and festivals, gradually becoming the backbone of the inheritance and development of minority culture. In 1989, teachers such as Wu Jiashi, Chen Zhongxin, and Wang Xiaolan from Rongshui Miao Autonomous County Ethnic High School collected and organized their own textbooks based on the situation of playing Lusheng music in various regions. By teaching performance and dance skills, outstanding students were organized as team members. Now, the unique Lusheng welcome music, small songs, and dancing

music of ethnic high schools have been formed, which have been inherited and developed year by year. Since the proposal of the rural revitalization strategy, Rongshui County has placed greater emphasis on the cultivation of school teams. In conjunction with the Lusheng Association of the County, teams from primary and secondary schools are encouraged to participate in the same year's activities at various activity venues during the Chinese New Year or important holidays, promoting the party's policies and ethnic policies, and carrying out various friendship activities to promote ethnic unity. Rongshui County continuously cultivates students' sense of minority identity and pride through the cultural carrier of Lusheng, making them more passionate about Miaoculture and planting the seeds of inheriting and developing Lusheng culture in their hearts. There are only a few primary and secondary schools in the Miao populated areas offering professional Lusheng culture courses, and Miao teenagers lack the influence of culture. Although educational institutions in Rongshui County offer studies majoring in Lusheng acting, some universities do. But most graduates go to work in large cities and medium-sized cities, so they are not able to transfer their knowledge to the countryside. Rongshui County Secondary School has opened for teaching middle school, high school, and vocational college. Most of these schools train only during county celebrations or events, and Lusheng teaching and training are usually not carried out. Additional regular classes include Rongshui County Ethnic Primary School. There are 150 primary school students studying playing, while 50 students are studying in the middle school. Lusheng's knowledge and training courses are most commonly offered in the area's ethnic minority high schools with full-time teachers. The ethnic minority high school is the Miao music training base. School is the inheritor of the Lusheng sound of the Miao minority at the municipal level. Jia, a teacher at Rongshui County Ethnic High School, is a music inheritor on the country level. Despite this, some Lusheng literary and art workers just inherit it blindly and fail to carry it forward, which makes the expression form of performing arts culture simple and lacks the sense of the times. It also leads to the current situation that people only hear the sound of Lusheng and do not understand its meaning, and lack understanding of Lusheng culture. In most cases, young people do not have the opportunity to learn to play, just like learning other musical instruments, only when they are young and interested in playing, they will actively participate. Otherwise, they will feel shy and reluctant to participate. The learning process of arts and culture is divided into production, playing, and dancing to share knowledge with students as follows.

#### *The learning process of lusheng production*

The production process of traditional Miao Lusheng is complex and requires the use of various hand tools. Although the tools or equipment used for production have been evolved with the continuous development of handicrafts, each tool has a different purpose. The traditional production of Miao Lusheng is mostly done using traditional production tools,

which fully reflects the wisdom of the Miao people's Lusheng production technology. In the context of rural revitalization, production tools have also undergone some changes.

A Lusheng consists of three main parts, including bamboo pipes, metal reeds, and a wooden windchest. A bamboo pipe is made of a small type of bamboo which is used for inserting a reed and pitch setting by mean of an air column within each pipe. A finger hole of each pipe is made by piercing with a burned metal rod. When a finger hole is closed with a finger, it makes a sound while blowing.

Metal reeds are made of brass, copper, or a mixture of copper. Most of the reeds are made of a mixture of copper and silver. A metal reed is a frame of rectangular shape with a tongue inside. windchest. The tongue of the metal frame is vibrated back and forth when it is blown. A windchest, called *Shengdou*, is made of the root of a type of hardwood. The windchest looks like the body of a bird. It was cut from the top through the bottom to make holes and cavities for holding its pipes. At the front side, the blowing hole is made while a tail shape is made at the back side for holding drone wax threads. The windchest is held by two palms while playing.

#### *The learning process of lusheng playing and dancing*

Because of the changes of the society, economy, and technologies, Lusheng music has fewer roles in Southern China society. There are no more Lusheng players in the villages. There are less number of professional Lusheng players, because of many reasons. One reason is that the young people turn their interest to Western culture. They want to learn Western instruments, such as a guitar, rather than a Lusheng of Southern China. As for the entertainment of youth, Lusheng for the accompaniment, is just symbolic. The real accompaniment is the percussion, not the melodic instruments. In the school system, especially at the college level, young people also prefer popular music. Only in few places such as at Drama College are Southern China instrumental and vocal music still being taught. But most college ensembles still support Southern China music of popular style rather than traditional style. Lusheng is music used for entertainment and rituals. Playing must have a relationship, dancing, moving the body according to the rhythm and melody. The melody of the song is short and corresponds to every action, so learning how to play Lusheng must train together, where the student must progress from basic to more advanced skills.

## DISCUSSION

The results were found both corresponding to and different from concepts, theories, and research studies in 3 aspects: the results based on the objectives of the study, the body of knowledge which was found, and attitudes about the inheritance of art and culture concerning the Lusheng.

Lusheng is a musical instrument that is thousands of years old, found primarily on bronze metal instruments, and is related to the bamboo family of instruments. This content

is consistent with Champadaeng et al. (2023). The research team suggested that it was said that there is evidence that a bronze-faced motif of a drum, which is about 2500-3000 years old, was painted as a picture of Khaen blowers and dancers. Scholars think that singing songs came before music because most music was made to create and serve songs, sometimes as part of rituals.

Development of the Lusheng and its relationship in Rongshui cultural ways. Lusheng is an ancient musical instrument popularly played along the Mekong River and spread to other areas. This is in line with the concept of cultural diffusion. According to Wannasiri (1997), factors supporting cultural diffusion include transportation, communication, economy and trading, politics, and values. In terms of the culture of Molam and the Lusheng, these factors help to diffuse it to large areas. Lusheng is also regarded as a sacred instrument used for communication with Pheefaa and Phaya Thaen (the healing ghost and the god of rain), as can be seen in the healing ritual and the Southern China Rocket Festival held to ask the god of rain to bless people and to give abundant crops. As suggested by Champadaeng (2018), Pheefaa and Phaya Thaen are believed to be gods rather than ghosts, who create things on earth and always help people when disasters happen. People will communicate with these gods through rituals with a person as a medium. These rituals are always accompanied by the Lusheng. The belief in supernatural powers also has a function of controlling members of society. This notion is in agreement with Na Thalang (2009), who stated that myths with supernatural powers, sacred beings, religions, and rituals in particular societies. Rituals are also regarded as a cultural mechanism which unites community members. The myths which explain the rituals usually offer power to boost morale and promote social unity.

This participatory action research offered the participants an opportunity to exchange knowledge and ideas. In particular, the youth gained experience through the synthesizing process. They also improved their skills by repeated practicing and learned to be patient through this research. They realized the significance of inheriting art and culture which need to be conserved; such realization arouses from the collaborative learning progress in which they had a chance to plan, practice, and admire their own works. As stated by Peanchana (2011) and Girgin (2020), it is critical for the young generations to learn and appreciate the values of art and culture in order to preserve and grow them in the future. Therefore, the readiness of its policy network has the potential to develop into a learning city (Kaewhanam et al., 2022).

The Lusheng culture should be supported and promoted by various organizations. There should be scholarships for people who are interested in the Lusheng-making and Lusheng-playing careers. In addition, learning centers as well as cultural networks should be created. Information regarding the Lusheng culture should be continuously published through digital media. Systemic learning systems should be arranged at both local levels and high levels. This content is consistent with Gao and Karin (2023). Support

the development of a literacy transmission guideline that incorporates innovative strategies, education, and promotion to ensure the continuation and revitalization of this cultural heritage. By combining traditional values with modern approaches. For the beginners' learning process, the learners should learn from Western notes along with noticing, listening, and creating their own tunes. The learning process should be evaluated in every step. According to Ponkhet (2014), the process of learning the Lusheng consists of steps including preparation, practice, and evaluation. Although it might not be easy for the learners to practice, the teachers should find and develop teaching techniques to facilitate the learners.

## CONCLUSION

The Lusheng is a kind of instrument which has a long history and closed relationship with the Miao people in Rongshui County, Guangxi of China. With the significance, State Council, the People's Republic of China has enlisted it as a cultural heritage of humankind. This research project has collected the body of knowledge from local wisdom learned regarding Lusheng making by employing modern tools to make the working progress more convenient and quicker. The youth who participated in the project have created art and culture for the community. For the participants in the Lusheng-making group, it can be said that they took part in the transmission of knowledge regarding Lusheng-making for beginners and skilled makers who can keep this art as their career. Meanwhile, the participants in the Lusheng-playing group had dissected the body of knowledge and special techniques. The beginners' skills are satisfactorily improved, while the advanced learners are able to apply and play the Lusheng along with Thai classical music and Western music. Lusheng cultural knowledge should have a curriculum and supplementary learning activities at every level of education, which focus on skills from basic to advanced skills.

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