
The Importance of Music in Cambodian Traditional Wedding Ceremonies

Francesca Billeri*¹

¹University of London – United Kingdom

Abstract (in French and English)

This paper presents part of a fieldwork research on traditional Khmer wedding music conducted in Phnom Penh and Takeo province. Wedding is considered to be one of the most important ceremony for the Khmers and it is believed to be of mythical origin. It consists of a succession of rituals which symbolize different aspects of wedding such as eternal union, magical blessing, success, happiness and fertility. Through the analysis of traditional wedding song texts and ritual objects emerges the dense and complex Khmer symbolism, cosmology and religious syncretism in which Theravada Bud-dhism, Hinduism and animistic beliefs live together harmoniously. Khmer wedding music, which is named phleng kar, is the lifeblood of the wedding ceremony since it not only accompanies the wedding rituals but also describes and prescribes the ritual scene. The meaning of phleng kar text songs is the result of the Khmer popular wisdom and reflects social and cultural values such as the position and duties of women, the spouses' position in the Khmer society and the passage from adolescence to adulthood. The paper aim is to show the vital role of traditional music within the rich and complex wedding ceremony context as well as the Khmer society and culture.

Keywords: Cambodge, Patrimoine, Culture, Cambodia, Heritage, Identity, Music

*Speaker