KACHIN SOUND INSTRUMENTS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE KACHIN
BAPTIST CONVENTION OF NORTHERN BURMA:
HISTORY, CLASSIFICATION, AND USES

A MASTER’S THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

BY
WALTER BRATH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ETHNOMUSICOCOLOGY

FEBRUARY 2013
Copyright © 2013 by Walter Brath
All rights reserved
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to publically profess God’s goodness in giving me the most amazing help-mate in the person of my wife, Shana Brath. Without your love, support, and understanding, I would never have finished this journey (or many others). I thank God for my three spirited children: Graydon, Karissa, and Levi – your boundless energy and love have been a constant encouragement to me. It is a privilege and joy to be your dad.

God has blessed me with incredible parents – thank you Walter and Jacque Brath for your never-ending sacrifice and love. Thank you also to Dr. Donald and Connie Gray for your support and love.

A special thank you to Dr. John Benham – the chair of ethnomusicology at Liberty University, Dr. George McDow – my main adviser/reader, and Dr. Katherine Morehouse – my second reader. God has used the three of you to teach, model, and mentor me so well through this process. Thank you for your heart to equip the next generation of Christian musicians to minister around the world.

I thank God for Dr. Charles Steddom, Pastor for Worship at Bethlehem Baptist Church, for his friendship, mentoring, and for introducing me to the Kachin church in 2011. Likewise, there are many friends around the country, and locally from All Nations Christian Fellowship in Brooklyn Center, MN, Christ Redeemer Church in Woodbury, MN, and Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN, that have supported me through their prayers and support. May God bless you for your kindness and generosity.

Finally, I would like to thank the Kachin Baptist Convention Music Committee leaders who invited me to come and teach on biblical worship. I will forever be grateful to God for the opportunity to know you and count it a great honor to serve our Lord together. A special thank you to Matthew Gumjat, who helped translate our teaching time and resources for this paper. May God continue to give Jinghpaw churches new songs for worship and may God bring gospel peace to Jinghpaw land!
ABSTRACT

This paper will identify the Kachin’s sound instruments as well as considering evidence towards an initial indigenous classification system. There is little research to date on the music of the Kachin peoples of Northern Burma. This is the first English language study specifically examining their system of classifying indigenous sound instruments. This is a qualitative study based on ethnographic interviews and participant observation drawing on fieldwork conducted in the Kachin State of Northern Burma (modern day Myanmar) during the months of May 2011 and November 2012. The participants in this study are music leaders in the Kachin Baptist Convention. This organology successfully documents and classifies many of the indigenous sound instruments of the Kachin in Northern Burma. Though a complete indigenous classification is still in progress, this thesis presents evidence towards an emergent scheme.
CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: Introduction  
  Statement of the Problem ................................. 1  
  Need for the Study ........................................... 3  
  Purpose Statement .......................................... 4  
  Research Questions ....................................... 4  
  Organization and Terms ................................. 5  
  Limitations/Delimitations of Study ..................... 6

CHAPTER II: Literature Review  
  Organology as Cultural Ethnography ................. 7  
  Surveying the Musical Landscape – The Kachin Context .......... 23  
  Kachin History .............................................. 28  
  Music Characteristics of the Kachin ...................... 36  
  The Manau Festival ......................................... 38  
  An Unexpected Surprise .................................... 39

CHAPTER III: Methodology  
  Description .................................................... 42  
  Rationale for Research Method .......................... 42  
  Participant Selection Process ............................. 43  
  Fieldwork Procedures ....................................... 43

CHAPTER IV: Research Findings  
  Htu Ren .......................................................... 50  
    History and Classification .............................. 50  
    Function and Uses ......................................... 51  
    Construction and Playability .......................... 52  
  Wunpawng Sumpyi .......................................... 55  
    History and Classification .............................. 55  
    Function and Uses ......................................... 56  
    Construction and Playability .......................... 56
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pyi-sun and Roi Zaw</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larung Sumpyi</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyi-man and Pyi-yep</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tauba Pyirun</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyi Htawt Sumpyi</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanang Sumpyi/Pyi Lang Sumpyi</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larung Sum Hkran Nara Shingran</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisu Tauba Pyirawng</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumba</td>
<td>History and Classification</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function and Uses</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction and Playability</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ILLUSTRATIONS

## MAPS
1. Map of Southeast Asia .................................................................23
2. Map of Burma ............................................................................24

## FIGURES and PHOTOS
1. The national *Manau* festival grounds in Myitkyina, Myanmar ........3
2. Organography/Organology Chart ..................................................9
3. Pre-Western Kachin Song Categories ...........................................32
4. *Chyoi Pra Htingnu* - Original Kachin Song .................................37
5. *Jinghpaw Wunpawng Htunghking Shingni Madum Sumpyi* Book Cover .... 40
6. Photo of the *htu ren* taken by the author ..................................50
7. Photo of Kachin musician playing the *htu ren* .................................51
8. Chart of fingerings for the *htu ren* ................................................53
9. Transcription of *htu ren* tune ......................................................54
10. Photo of the *wunpawng sumpyi* .....................................................56
11. Chart of fingerings for the *wunpawng sumphyi* ...............................57
12. Photo of the *pyisun* ..................................................................59
13. Photo of *larung Sumpyi* ..............................................................60
14. Photo of the *pyi-man* (top side) .....................................................61
15. Photo of the *pyi-man* (bottom side) ..............................................62
16. Closeup of the *pyi-man* (mouth-piece) ..........................................62
17. Drawing of *tauba pyirun* ............................................................64
18. Photo of the *pyi htawt* (top side) ..................................................65
19. Photo of the *pyi htawt* (bottom side) ............................................65
20. Photo of the *pyi htawt* mouthpiece .............................................65
21. Closeup of the *pyi htawt* mouthpiece ..........................................66
22. Kachin musician playing the *pyi htawt* .......................................66
23. Kachin musician playing the *lanang sumpyi* .................................68
24. Photo of the *lanang sumpyi* ........................................................69
25. Photo of *larung sum hkran nara shingran* ................................................................. 70
26. Photo of *larung sum hkran nara shingran* ................................................................. 71
27. Photos of *lisu tauba pyirawng* .............................................................................. 72
28. Photo of the *dumba* ............................................................................................... 74
29. Closeup of the *dumba* mouthpiece ....................................................................... 74
30. Closeup of the *dumba* ‘horn’ ............................................................................... 74
31. Kachin musician playing the *dumba* ..................................................................... 75
32. Transcription of the *manau* tune .......................................................................... 76
33. Photo of the *pau* .................................................................................................... 78
34. Photo of the *be tang* ............................................................................................. 78
35. Photo of the *she tang* and bow (side view) .............................................................. 80
36. Photo of the *she tang* and bow (top view) ............................................................... 81
37. Closeup of *she tang* resonator (top view) ............................................................... 81
38. Closeup of the *she tang* resonator (bottom view) .................................................... 82
39. Photo of the *chyingtawt* ....................................................................................... 83
40. Photo of the *htawng ching* (closeup head) ............................................................... 85
41. Photo of the *htawng ching* (closeup top half) .......................................................... 85
42. Photo of the *htawng ching* (closeup bottom half) ................................................... 85
43. Photo of the *htawng ching* (full length) ................................................................... 85
44. Photo of the *bau maung* (front and back views) ..................................................... 88
45. Kachin VCD cover ................................................................................................... 102
46. Kachin VCD insert .................................................................................................. 102
47. Kachin VCD cover ................................................................................................... 103
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Colonialism and technology have played a large part in saturating the Southeast Asian musical landscape with Western instruments and ideals. Many indigenous musical instruments and forms have been abandoned by the younger generation or syncretized with Western pop music. This is certainly true for the music of the Kachin peoples of Northern Burma (Myanmar)\(^1\), who have had to sort out many cultural issues due to English and French occupation in the nineteenth century, as well as ethnic and political complexities for the past forty-five years. Limited research has been done examining Kachin music and practices due to the difficult political situation resulting in restricted access. More specifically little research has been able to identify any local system of classifying indigenous sound instruments. This thesis will identify the sound instruments used by the Kachin of Northern Burma as well as considering evidence towards an initial indigenous classification system.

Modern day Burma (Myanmar) is made up of fourteen “States,” one of which is the Kachin. They received their independence in 1948 and acquired the name, “Kachin” from the Burmese. They originally called themselves “Jinghpaw” which is also the name of their language. Six tribes make up the Kachin people: Jinghpaw, Rawang, Zaiwa (Atsi), Maru (Lhloav), Lachik (Lashi), and Lisu. The Kachin settled in northern Burma approximately four hundred years ago, when several tribal groups migrated to this area. Anthropologists feel that the Kachin came there from China and Tibet because of a number of shared characteristics with the Chinese, including physical features and

\(^{1}\) The Kachin along with the other ethnic minority groups still refer to the country as Burma.
cultural expressions (Steddom 2009, 16). Since the beginning of recorded history, the Kachin practiced Animism as a religion. Animism is the belief that things in nature (e.g., trees, mountains, sky, and animals) have souls or consciousness. It also teaches that a supernatural force animates and organizes the universe and that people have spirits that do or can exist separately from their bodies. The Kachin practiced this form of worship exclusively until the entrance of Western missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century.

In Kachin society all dancing was traditionally connected with animistic customs; dancing for entertainment did not exist. This is less true today as evidenced by the dancing of the manau. The manau has become the main festival for Kachin people all over the world, regardless of religious beliefs. It is part of a large nationalist movement to celebrate Kachin history and traditions. It contains songs, dances, and customs that are centuries old and steeped in ancient ritual and animism. Christians in Kachin culture have changed the meaning of the manau, separating its animistic symbolism from its cultural significance, enabling them to participate and promote the dance among members (Ze Hkawng 2011, interview).

The Manau has been celebrated annually since earliest historical data was recorded. The host erects painted posts (approximately twenty feet in height) that visually retell the history of the Kachin migration to Burma. A large cylindrical drum (manau chying), suspended on the shortest of the posts, is used to accompany the manau dance. At the appointed time all the guests come together in their finest Kachin traditional dress.
Need for the Study

In his doctoral dissertation, Charles Steddom introduces readers to the vocal traditions of the Kachin. Steddom gives a thorough historical overview of the social, religious, and political climate while discussing how Kachin vocal music gives identity to Kachin nationalism. There is limited research to date on the music of the Kachin peoples of Northern Burma. Because the focus of the paper is primarily on the vocal tradition, little is mentioned about sound instruments and how they add to Kachin culture and history. This thesis is the first English language study specifically examining their system of classifying indigenous sound instruments.

Margaret Kartomi, in her pioneering work, *The Classification of Musical Instruments: Changing Trends in Research from the Late Nineteenth Century, with Special Reference to the 1990s*, discusses the major trends in organology as well as reviewing recent publications in the discipline, focusing on current trends regarding indigenous concepts and classifications. Due to its brevity, this article lacks many
specifics that are needed to show how indigenous musical instrument classification exeges a culture’s philosophical, religious, social, and musical values. In reviewing the literature on the classification of sound instruments, a growing interest appears to be emerging in the study of organology which seeks an indigenous classification – (see Berliner 1981, Lysloff 1985, Kartomi 1990, Lu 2008, and Douglas 2010). Unfortunately, nothing to date has been published in English on a classification of the Kachin’s sound instruments.

**Purpose Statement**

This study identifies the Kachin’s sound instruments and considers evidence pointing toward an initial indigenous classification system. Their musical instruments’ history, social function, design, construction, and performance practice are investigated with the goal of looking for relationships to Kachin philosophical, religious, social, and musical values. Organology should not be a study of sound instruments in a vacuum, but must keep in the forefront the reality that sound instruments in a given culture can only have meaning because they are tools in which human beings express the values listed above.

**Research Questions**

The central question this paper addresses is: What are the sound instruments of the Kachin in Northern Burma? A closely related question is: How do the Kachin classify their sound instruments? Investigating a classification scheme in a culture will require the researcher to examine the context in which the objects are used. These include the religious, cultural and/or social associations that each object holds within the culture. Within this context how do the Kachin’s sound instrument’s history, social
function, design, construction, and performance practice relate to their philosophical, religious, social, and musical values? What can we learn about from an indigenous classification of Kachin sound instruments when compared with other classification schemes?

**Organizations and Terms**

Before entering the main portion of this thesis, the reader should be aware of a few key names and terms. The Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) was formed in 1890 and is the largest Evangelical organization in Myanmar. It represents approximately 350 churches (550,000 members) and is headquartered in Myitkyina, Myanmar. The conference is divided into sixteen districts – each with its own leadership. I have had the privilege of traveling to Burma twice at the request of the KBC Music Committee to teach.

The term *Jinghpaw* (in earlier years spelled *Chingpaw*) is the name that the Kachin give themselves. It is also the name of their language (Steddom 2009, 5). The concept of instrumental music in *Jinghpaw* is expressed by the phrase: *Wunpawng madum sumpya hpung*. *Wunpawng* means all the peoples (sub-tribes) that make up the modern day Kachin. *Madum Sumpya* refers to all the sound instruments that are Kachin. *Sumpyi* is the word for flute. *Hpung* is the term for musical group or band.

*Organology* is “the study of musical instruments in terms of their history and social function, design, construction and relation to performance” (Libin 2001, 1). This specific area of study has interested scholars since the seventeenth century.
Limitations and Delimitations

This study will be limited to the Kachin peoples of Northern Burma (Myanmar), which includes the: Jinghpaw, Rawang, Zaiwa (Atsi), Maru (Lhloav), Lachik (Lashi), and Lisu tribes. It will focus on the members of the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) partly due to the my access to them through invitations to teach and the reality that Kachin Baptists make up roughly 550,000 out of 850,000 Kachins that live in Northern Burma. This study is concerned with an organology of the sound instruments in Kachin culture but does not attempt to establish the origins of the Kachin sound instruments.

\[2 \text{ There are an estimated 1.2 million Kachin world-wide (http://www.kbckachin.com/).}\]
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Organology as Cultural Ethnography

Music is a product of man and has structure, but its structure cannot have an existence of its own divorced from the behavior which produces it. In order to understand why a music structure exists as it does, we must also understand how and why the behavior which produces it is as it is, and how and why the concepts which underlie that behavior are ordered in such a way as to produce the particularly desired form of organized sound (Merriam 1964, 7).

The mbira is not just an instrument to us. It is like your Bible…It is the way in which we pray to God (Berliner 1981, 4).

The moral effects of instruments, then, lie in their spiritual significance (Kartomi 1990, 139).

Although this study is delimitated by the focus on indigenous taxonomies, a few historical works that set the foundation for organology must be mentioned. Eric von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs’ (H-S) work, “Classification of Musical Instruments,” with all of its critiques is one such treatise. To their credit Hornbostel and Sachs had a dynamic view of classification schemes in general as evidenced by their testimony that any theory or classification is always subservient to the music and the instruments used to create it:

Treaties on systems of classification are by and large of uncertain value. The material to be classified, whatever it may be, came into existence without any such system, and grows and changes without reference to any conceptual scheme. The objects to be classified are alive and indifferent to sharp demarcation and set form, while systems are static and depend upon sharply-drawn demarcations and categories (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 4).

This is crucial to keep in mind when investigating indigenous systems. The challenge for the researcher is to navigate this dynamism, swimming through the current of an ever-fluid cultural stream. This was a major hurdle in researching Kachin sound instruments. How is a true Kachin classification discovered when the majority of their culture has “moved on” from the animistic practices that defined their beginnings? Does their
current cultural construct even account for these instruments that are, by-in-large, irrelevant to their everyday lives (or have become so due to cultural changes)?

H-S recognized the limitations of a classification system that claimed universality. “The difficulties which an acceptable system of classification must surmount are very great, since that which suits one era or nation may be unsuitable as a foundation for the instrumental armoury of all nations and all times” (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 5). They freely admit the inconsistencies of the scheme noting that “…stringed instruments [are] distinguished by the nature of the vibrating substance but wind and percussion by the mode of sound-excitation—ignoring the fact that there are stringed instruments which are blown, like the Aeolian harp, or struck, like the pianoforte” (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 6). Because H-S welcome as the most important principle of division, the physical characteristics of sound production, their system is incomplete, lacking the structure for discovering indigenous classifications. A notable improvement over the Mahillon’s scheme was to recognize the limitations of the “…ranking of divisions within the system by means of specific headings” (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 9). This led H-S to adopt the Dewey Decimal System, which allows the researcher to follow a specification to its limits while recognizing from the last digit, the ranking of sound instruments within the system.

Klaus Wachsmann’s entry, “Classification,” in The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments, gives a good overview of other historical approaches besides the H-S system. What all attempts at a new taxonomy have in common is the relationship between organography, or a classification that relies on a mere description of instruments,

---

3 Mahillon’s classification system was used as the basis of the Hornbostel and Sachs system.
4 Mahillon used the terms: classe, branche, section, and sous-section, for his headings.
and organology, which attempts to understand the cultural factors that must be considered in the classification. As Wachsmann explains,

The flow chart,\(^5\) mapping currents of ideas about musical instruments, places construction (material, design) at the centre, as the common ground and link between organography and organology. The three rectangles to the right refer to intrinsically musical aspects, those to the left to contextual ones. Lateral arrows lead to the centre of the diagram, while curved lines bypassing the centre indicate that a classification might treat details of construction as secondary in importance… “Corporeal Determinants” refers to the player’s body movements such as pulling, pushing, striking and lifting, tension and distension of muscles (Wachsmann 1984, 407).

This diagram encapsulates important criteria for understanding how a sound instrument’s history, social function, design, construction, and performance practice reflect a culture’s philosophical, religious, social, and musical values.

Part of the disconnect between ethnomusicology and organology may be due to the limits of the H-S classification system with its “hierarchical taxonomy”\(^6\) (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 213). Lysloff and Matson recognized these limitations and proposed a classification, which “includes the dynamic interaction between instruments and human

---

\(^5\) See figure 2.

\(^6\) The authors explain: “The hierarchical basis of the taxonomy imposes an arbitrary ranking order of categories which is even inconsistent internally among its four major instrument types. For example, iodiophones, aerophones, and membranophones are classified according to sound initiation (second level of
behavior, developed in a manner which facilitates cross-cultural comparisons” (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 213). One of the advantages of their system is that it may encourage ethnomusicologists to move past the typical organology of “categorizing static objects…[which] is a procedure for investigating complex sets of shared characteristics among instruments, in a manner which can subsume existing categories and assumptions if they are appropriate for the purposes of a specific inquiry” (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 232). Having a tool that “classifies the products of human behavior” would go a long way in encouraging researchers to see organology as more than a formalist study left to systematicians.

The Lysloff and Matson scheme may be the most viable for cross-cultural classifications, even though it is un-wielding in its approach. Because the H-S system is a hierarchical taxonomy, Lysloff and Matson decided to build a non-hierarchical scheme “based on the principle of grouping instruments according to shared observable characteristics” (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 213). On the surface Lysloff and Matson explain their system as

A technique of data analysis - Multidimensional Scalogram Analysis (MSA) – [which] graphically represent[s] relationships and affinities among instruments. Each instrument is graphically represented as a point in space and located within a configuration of points in such a way as to reflect the shared characteristics: the overall configuration is immediately interpretable by scholar and layperson alike (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 213).

Lysloff and Matson give an “honorable mention” to Mantle Hood’s “symbolic taxonomy,” which “utilized categories drawn from the H-S system, though he also suggests many others based on sociocultural criteria. While far more attractive and intriguing than a long array of integers, Hood's iconographic coding is cumbersome and

the diagram) while chordophones are grouped according to construction” (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 214).
The first innovation in the Lysloff and Matson system is their concept of what constitutes a *sound-producing instrument*. The authors go with the broadest possible definition, namely “any device or human behavior constructed or carried out for the primary purpose of producing sound, whether musical or otherwise” (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 217). The authors clarify that this is especially important in cultures where sound is produced by employing materials at hand, often non-manufactured items such as blades of grass or conch shells. However, devices or behavior which produce sound, but whose primary purpose is other than sound production, are not included. Therefore, while the system is capable of classifying wind-chimes, whistling, or even brass door knockers, it is not constructed to classify jet engines, air-conditioners, thunder, whale or bird songs, or any other natural acoustical phenomenon (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 217).

The next area that is redefined by Lysloff and Matson is the concept related to the phenomenon of resonance, more specifically “the components known as sympathetic vibrator and resonator” (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 217). The authors go into a detailed description of this distinction, but for the purpose of this paper, here is a brief explanation offered by the authors. “The sounding body is that part of the instrument which is the primary source of sound production, the ‘basic acoustical radiator.’ The sympathetic vibrator shares many of the characteristics of the sounding body (and even of the resonator),” yet is essentially distinct (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 217).

Finally, in order to follow their rationale, the authors offer three definitions: *Sound initiator* is the device used to set the vibrations of the sounding body in motion. We avoid the term *musician* with all its implications, and used instead player, defining it as the human agent involved in sound initiation. We use this term because we recognize that not all instruments are used in musical contexts, and not all are activated by human agents. We use the term *intermediary device*. By this we mean any device that is used to transfer energy from the player to the
sound initator - for example, the mechanical action of a piano, or the rope used in ringing a steeple bell (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 218).

Space will not allow for a detailed description of their system. The classificatory variables that the authors use are quite impressive in their inclusivity. Once the sound instrument is identified according to the variables, the process moves to the next phase of the system: the Multi-Dimensional Scalogram Analysis (MAS). “More specifically, MSA depicts each sound-producing instrument as a point in space. The space is partitioned such that the line (or plane, in a three-dimensional configuration) which divides the space represents the divisions created by the variables of the classification system” (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 224). This rather complex method is where the system appears to break down. Like acquiring a foreign language, this scheme seems to have a steep learning curve, and because it is not widely used, most scholars are not motivated to spend the time necessary learning it.

As editor and contributor in her work, Issues in Organology, Sue Carole Devale helps to give organology a framework in the larger structure of ethnomusicology by carefully examining its vision and goals in the context of history. Devale admits from the onset that organology suffers from a semantic setback due to its ambiguity. Historically, this equivocality has not been as severe in other contexts as evidenced by the German field of Instrumentenkunde, which literally means the science of instruments (Devale 1990, 1). Devale spends just enough time bemoaning the absence of attention that organology receives from her contemporaries – noting as an example that Nettl’s, The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts, does not include aspects of organology – before she begins to cast her vision for its importance and value in the
broader context of ethnomusicology and the humanities. No one can accuse Devale of an anemic scope for organology, as she envisions,

The architect or engineer…might wonder who is the instrument maker and what are the principals that underlie his process of design and construction. The physicist may want to understand the acoustics of an instrument, or how its sounds are produced, resonated, and transmitted. The metallurgist could well express interest in the proportions of the metals found in alloys used in or on instruments. The chemist may recommend analysis of the composition of paint pigments or varnishes used to decorate and preserve instruments. A zoologist might wish to know which animals became parts of instruments; the botanist, which trees or plants. The biologist could propose the classification of instruments in a taxonomy equivalent to family, class, phylum, order genus and species… (Devale 1990, 3).

Devale continues her sermonette for another few paragraphs which could be seen as a purely idealistic exercise, but the wide expanse that she paints deserves appreciation. Based on her scope of vision for organology, the different ways for researching sound instruments should never be depleted.

Devale divulges her definition of organology as “the science of sound instruments” (Devale 1990, 4) and that “The ultimate purpose of organology should be to help explain society and culture” (Devale 1990, 22). She clarifies that “Defining the instruments of a culture or world area as ‘sound instruments’ may have been done the first time by Hornbostel (1933) in ‘The Ethnology of African Sound Instruments.’ Wachsmann followed suit in his ‘The Sound Instruments,’ part two of Tribal Crafts of Uganda (1953)” (Devale 1990, 4). Devale sees organology as a “multidisciplinary systematic network” existing in three branches: classificatory, analytic, and applied (Devale 1990, 5):

Classificatory organology attends to the categorization of instruments. Analytic organology answers specific questions concerning the instruments or the discipline itself, drawing on techniques and methodologies from the arts, humanities, and sciences. Applied organology attends to the creation, use and
adaptation of instruments for practical, scientific, artistic or educational purposes (Devale 1990, 5).

Using Devale’s criteria, this study focuses more on a classificatory organology of the Kachin’s sound instruments.

Related to the importance of discovering indigenous classifications, one of the most enlightening aspects of Devale’s chapter is the discussion regarding the “nature of the origin of the H-S system for instruments of the world…” (Devale 1990, 6). Most scholars would agree on the limitations of using a “Western” system, which includes its presuppositions and world-view, to classify sound instruments from a non-Western culture – unless the only concern is with the instrument’s appearance. “What do we do with the fact that their [H-S] system was created within the sub-culture of German scientific academe but is based on a quadripartite Indian scheme” (Devale 1990, 6)? H-S never claimed that their scheme was an original idea, but does the fact that they were able to aggregate multiple sources to achieve their goals in classifying sound instruments mean that their system is not bound in their “Western-ness,” or at least their “German-ness?”

In the same work the chapter entitled, “An Explication of the Hornbostel-Sachs Instrument Classification System,” by Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy sorts through the nuances of the H-S scheme. The author begins by analyzing the Mahillon system and mentioning the well known inconsistencies which accompany it – namely that “the branches of the four basic classes vary in number and the terminology as well as the principal underlying them is not entirely consistent…In the same way, the sections and sub-sections of the system also reveal inconsistencies and varying numbers” (Devale 1990, 82). Jairazbhoy states that he does not intend to criticize but “to draw attention to the diverse character of
sound-producing instruments which resist completely systematic classification” (Devale 1990, 82). I am not sure that an instrument would be considered unclassifiable, except if trying to use one system for all instruments. The H-S system draws much from Mahillon’s scheme, attempting to address the above-mentioned inconsistencies (which are largely concerned with how to classify instruments by method of excitation) by

...arguing that a violin remains a violin whether one bows it, plays it pizzicato with the fingers, or strikes it col legno. Later they (Hornbostel and Sachs) clarify their approach – ‘In general we have tried to base our subdivisions only on those features which can be identified from the visible form of the instrument, avoiding subjective references and leaving the instrument unmeddled with,’ thereby emphasizing the fact that one of their primary concerns was to provide a classification for museum purposes (as was Mahillon’s) and the location of instruments in display cases (Devale 1990, 88).

In another chapter entitled, The Beginnings of Organology and Ethnomusicology in the West: V. Mahillon, A. Ellis and S.M. Tagore, Jairazbhoy gives the reader a panoramic view of history as he traces three pioneers of ethnomusicology (Devale 1990, 67). The lesser known story of the Raja Sourindro Mohan Tagore, an eccentric “patron” of music from India and his influence on organology in the West is fascinating. For many years in the late nineteenth century, Tagore supplied museums in Europe with musical instruments and treatises from India.

Continuing her survey Devale inspects classification systems from around the world beginning with an Indian system from Bharata’s Natyasatra. She points out that “while instinctively one might wish to label this a ‘totally endogenous, totally culture-specific, and highly inclusive’ system, India is a conglomerate of cultures and subcultures and some of its instruments, like the bow harp, probably had their origins

7 “A Sanskrit treatise with the parts on music probably written during or before the Gupta period (fourth and fifth centuries A.D.)” (Devale 1990, 7).
8 Endogenous is more specific than indigenous. The latter refers to a whole, independent object

15
elsewhere” (Devale 1990, 7). No culture comes to mind where that is not the case. Many ethnomusicologists report negatively about the contamination of cultures by Western missionaries when these same cultures were converted to Islam by force in the previous century. Are there really any “closed cultures” that have had no extraneousness? As a culture absorbs and assimilates the influences around it, there must come a point when this acculturation becomes their own. Devale divides up her analysis by looking at cross-cultural and culture-specific systems. Regarding the former, she briefly acknowledges the work done by Mahillon, Hornbostel and Sachs, Schaeffner, Drager, Heyed, Elschek, Hood, Sakurai, and Lysloff and Matson, leaving an analysis and historical development of these pioneers to Klaus Wachsmann, then spends the bulk of her time on culture-specific systems. Because this study is occupied with an indigenous classification system for Kachin sound instruments, this section on culture-specific systems is of great interest.

One culture-specific system that is rarely mentioned is, “that of the Roman Senator, Flavius Magnus Aurelianus Cassiodorus, dating from the middle of the sixth century A.D” (Devale 1990, 9). Devale relates that:

…he defined three classes of instruments: tension (strings), wind (from trumpets to organs), and percussion (all were metal idiophones, no membranophones were

---

9 One of the most vocal opponents of the effects of Christian missions in ethnomusicology is Michelle Kisliuk in her 1998 work, *Seize the Dance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

10 Lysloff and Matson give a helpful historical overview: “Andre Schaeffner (1932) based his system on a two-part division of solid bodies and air as vibrating materials, using only a few further divisions. His category of tensile/nontensile solid bodies recognizes similarities, for example, between chordophones and membranophones (see further, Wachsmann 1980). Hans-Heinz Draeger (1948) attempted to refine some of the less-developed aspects of the H-S classification. Though his categories tend to be more consistent among all instruments, many apply only to some types. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Draeger system is his concern with extra-acoustical criteria; this reflects a shift from viewing instruments as museum pieces to regarding them as dynamic elements of culture. Kurt Reinhard (1960) based his system on two principal categories: number of sounding bodies, and adjustment of pitch. Tetsuo Sakurai (1982), on the other hand, used seven major divisions: solid, membrane, reed, air, string, combination, and oscillator-vibrating instruments. Sakurai’s second level of classification grouped instruments according to their over-all shape. While innovative, these systems all share the fundamental problems of taxonomic hierarchy, which discourage comparative study” (Lysloff and Matson 1985, 215).
mentioned). With the exception of the common practice of adding “brass” when talking about orchestral instruments, Cassiodorus’ categories – strings, winds and percussion (the latter now also including drums), appear to have remained as the basis of instrument classification in the Western world, until Mahillon adopted the quadripartite Indian system in 1880 (Devale 1990, 9).

The reason an indigenous classification system is important to discover is that they are “based on more than the physical aspects of instruments, music terminology, or music typological conceptions as a whole” (Devale 1990, 9). Devale gives the Chinese system of associating compass points and seasons of the year with specific instrument groups, as well as the “Javanese view that classifies gamelan instruments into families with three members that represent the Trimurti, the Hindu-Javanese Trinity of Brahma, Visnu, and Shiva,” (Devale 1990, 10) as evidence.

Though admittedly not an exhaustive survey, Devale raises the awareness of the importance of allowing each culture to express its unique ways of classification. “Systems created in a culture for its instruments, are far older and are based on as many diverse criteria as those which underlie cross-cultural systems” (Devale 1990, 8). This is certainly true as confirmed by the ancient history of the Chinese bayin system, “dating from as early as the eighth century B.C.” (Devale 1990, 9). Devale rightly reports that this system divides up music instruments into eight categories based on the sounding material (i.e. metal, stone, silk, bamboo, gourd, clay, skin, and wood), only mentioning the cosmological worldview that may have lead to the codification.

The Chinese classification system is covered in other works, such as Margaret Kartomi’s On Concepts and Classifications of Musical Instruments, in which she states, “the concept of chi, (subtle matter, emanation, human breath, spirit),” greatly influenced the Chinese view that sounds produced by musical instruments were “portents, prognostic aids, and manifestations of the equilibriums and disequilibrums of nature and political
power” (Kartomi 1990, 39). According to the Chinese each instrument made from one of the materials in the eight-fold taxonomy can induce one of the “eight winds,” which in turn, gives the musicians control over the seasons and weather (Kartomi 1990, 40).

Modern Chinese scholars have criticized this traditional taxonomy for its leanings towards legend in favor of a classification “derived from aspects of practical music making” (Kartomi 1990, 48). According to these scholars, the older eight-fold scheme seems to be an attempt to explain cosmology and has little to do with musical practice. Another limitation to the eight-fold scheme is its inability to incorporate other instruments, such as those made from bone, shells, or modern instruments (Kartomi 1990, 52).

Another culture-emerging taxonomy that Kartomi investigates is the Javanese system, which differs from the Chinese in that, until recently, it was primarily an oral tradition. Java is home to some of the most diverse percussion instruments in the world, and their music favors percussion over other types of instruments. Even when they use wind and string instruments, the Javanese consider them to be ditabuh, (“beaten”) (Kartomi 1990, 85). The following is their orally transmitted classification scheme as reported by Kartomi:

1. Instruments beaten with a padded hammer (the suspended gongs)
2. Instruments knocked with a hard or semihard hammer (the saron – keyed metallophone and the boning (gong-chimes)
3. Hand-beaten instruments (kendhang – drum)
4. Plucked instruments (zithers)
5. Pulled instruments (jew’s harp with string mechanism)
6. Bowed instruments (rebab)
7. Blown instruments (suling – flute)
8. Shaken instruments (angklung – bamboo idiophone)

The importance in the Javanese taxonomy “is a culture-emerging scheme that reflects Java’s musical identity in several respects. It includes all Javanese musical
instruments; it bestows prominence on the culture’s preferred instruments – gongs, drums, and *rebab* – by giving them each a separate category; and it distinguishes no less than four percussive categories according to their mode of sound excitation” (Kartomi 1990, 87). Whereas the Chinese system operates in a more metaphysical, cosmological sphere, the Javanese organology is more concerned with musical practice. Though the Javanese classifications tend to be more practical in nature, they do share an ontology with the Chinese that attributes spiritual authority to their instruments, especially the gongs.

Another distinction between the two schemes is that the Javanese have at least seven traditional ways of classifying musical instruments, as opposed to the two major classifications found in the Chinese *Yo chi* and *pa yin*. The Javanese classify musical instruments according to sound excitation, the tone system to which they are tuned, “male” and “female” pairs, those with slab keys versus knobs or bosses, loud and soft pieces, spatial arrangement of instruments, and social-religious strata (Kartomi 1990, 90). Even though the Javanese make distinctions between pre-Muslim, post-Muslim, and European influences in their taxonomy, the gamelan ensembles hold a special place in Javanese culture and “are kept quite separate in their musical practice and social context from those of Muslim …[and] Western origin or the international popular scene” (Kartomi 1990, 91).

For both the Chinese and Javanese, there has been a trend to re-think the ancient classifications handed down through the centuries. This is partly due to the fact that every generation must account for its current musical instruments and practice. It may also reflect a growing globalization and cross-pollination that technology has made possible. The Chinese have traditionally favored classifications based on the materials
used in making the instruments, whereas the Javanese have tended to focus on how the
instruments are used in an ensemble. One advantage in both schemes is the way in which
they reflect the world-view of the culture. An obvious disadvantage to the Chinese
taxonomy is the narrow categories of classification, which does not easily allow for new
instruments to be accounted for. An interesting study that is beyond the scope of this
thesis would be to look at how these taxonomies compare with other non-musical
classifications in the same culture. How does the meaning of indigenous taxonomies
relate to the philosophical, religious, social, and musical values of these cultures?

Yet another culture-emerging system that validates the need for discovering
indigenous classifications is the Mandailing peoples of West Sumatra. They have a
religious view that favors a bisexual unit as being “more complete and powerful than a
single-sex unit, and groups of bisexual units as being more powerful than a single
bisexual unit” (Kartomi 1990, 222). This is realized in their drum ensembles; sets of pairs
with an additional drum representing the product (child) of the pair. The Minangkabau
peoples of West Sumatra also use instruments as aids in worship, “the sounds of these
instruments induce feelings of religious devotion and may even assist a Sufi-oriented
worshiper in the attempt to achieve unity with God” (Kartomi 1990, 227).

Paul Berliner in his book *The Soul of Mbira* describes how the Shona peoples of
Zimbabwe see the Mbira as a vehicle for spirituality. The oldest tunes for the Mbira were
favored by the musicians for their “power to dream about the future, to bring about
miracles, and to make [them] invincible. It is also said that these are effective pieces for
bringing about the possession of spirit mediums today” (Berliner 1981, 74). The Shona
believe “the mbira to have the power to project its sound into the heavens, bridging the
world of the living and the world of the spirits and thereby attracting attention of the
ancestors” (Berliner 1981, 190).

“To classify groups of objects such as musical instruments is a fundamental
principle of human thinking” (Kartomi 1990, 3). Kartomi sees a direct correlation
between the cultural assumptions and purpose of the classifying culture and the
distinguishing characteristics of the classification scheme. She gives an example of a
Western classification that highlights “morphological elements that influence the sound
production…largely because of the traditional acoustic and morphological bias of the
dominant Western concept of instruments” (Kartomi 1990, 4). The result being a
distinction between single and double reed instruments found in practically every
Western classification. The author compares this with the classification scheme of the
Batak peoples of North Sumatra, who use single and double reed instruments, but do not
see the division as important enough to be chosen for classificatory purposes. They
classify them based on size, material, and ceremonial function. Kartomi’s conclusion is
that “The chosen characters of division are culture-specific” (Kartomi 1990, 4).

Like Devale, Kartomi argues that organology in general has been neglected in
musicology and ethnomusicology resulting in studies that have primarily focused on
physical descriptions of instruments and a Western classification. “Instead of searching
for native categories in the field, most ethnomusicologists have automatically fallen back
on what they learned at school as being the ‘objective’ ways of classifying instruments”
(Kartomi 1990, 6). Some ethnomusicologists have expressed that instrument
classification is a too “formalist” kind of study that doesn't have a direct bearing on
ethnography. Kartomi combats this argument by reiterating her conviction that
“classifications are often synopses or terse accounts of a culture’s, subculture’s, or
individual’s deep-seated ideas about music and instruments, as well as, in some cases, philosophical, religious, and social beliefs” (Kartomi 1990, 7).

As a framework to help ethnomusicologists think about the challenges in organology, Kartomi introduces two types of classifications, culture-emerging and observer-imposed, that should be familiar categories as they relate to the role of researcher and informant, etic and emic, outsider and insider. Culture-emerging classifications are ones which “emerge naturally” from a culture over time, whereas, observer-imposed are “artificially manipulated” by the observer for an intended purpose. Kartomi recommends that researchers engage in this culture-emerging model, which is advantageous in ethnography:

Not only individual instruments but also ensembles may be classified in a culture. Some cultures habitually classify ensembles in addition to or in preference to individual instruments, which they may see as being philosophically incomplete in comparison to ensembles, which may be seen as symbolizing social groups or ranks or simply as reflecting the usual musical practices (Kartomi 1990, 17).

*Issues in Organology* concludes with several organological studies in which non-Western cultures are explored. In light of Devale’s earlier stated purpose, that organology should help explain society and culture, the lack of time spent in these ethnographies exploring the ways in which each culture’s classification system speaks to a larger cultural narrative is disappointing. Victor Fuks’ chapter, *Waiapi Musical Instruments: Classification, Symbols, and Meanings* came the closest to addressing this issue (Devale 1990, 143). Fuks describes, “the ambiguity inherent in musical performances, with their high level of redundancy, [which] characterizes music as an ideal mode of expression...Musical performances often constituted indexical statements about society and pointed to recurrent patterning of Waiapi ideas and concepts” (Devale 1990, 168). He includes a helpful classification chart for Waiapi sound instruments with
the following headings: Hornbostel-Sachs Equivalent; Association with Animal, Bird, or Spirit; Solo or Group; Context of Performance; Place of Performance; Age Group; Size (in CM); Material; Ornaments; Special Features; Other Characteristics (Devale 1990, 170, 171).

Surveying the Musical Landscape – The Kachin Context

![Map of South East Asia](image)

Map 1. Map of South East Asia (Miller 1998, 149)

Just as all musics found on the African continent cannot be reported as sounding African, so too, musics from Thailand, China, Laos, and Burma (to name a few) cannot be homogenized into “Asian” music. Since so little research has been done specifically on Kachin music, the following survey of some scholarship on the geographic area
(namely Burma and Southern China) may help the reader with context. Burma,\textsuperscript{11} known today as Myanmar, is named for the Burmese people that make up roughly sixty-eight percent of the population. The rest of the country’s population is made up of: Shan 9\%, Karen 7\%, Rakhine 4\%, Chinese 3\%, Indian 2\%, Mon 2\%, other 5\%\textsuperscript{12} (CIA World Fact Book). Burma consists of 14 provinces with the Kachin occupying the most Northern state.\textsuperscript{13}

![Map of Burma](https://example.com/map.png)

\textsuperscript{11} The minority groups still refer to the country as Burma.
\textsuperscript{12} Only about 850,000 Kachin live in Burma compared to the countries 54.5 million people.
\textsuperscript{13} See Map 2.
Because Burma is ‘nestled’ between India, China, and Thailand, it has always played an important part geographically as a crossroads of Southeast Asia. This has greatly influenced the musical culture, as noted by Hsin-chun Lu:

Thai/Siamese theatrical plays and music were adopted within the Burman artistic tradition after the Burmans’ triumph in the Thai-Burman battles of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. In these two military victories, Burmans brought thousands of captives back to their court, among whom were numerous Thai musicians and dancers from the Thai court, Ayutthaya. This artistic infusion generated a new style, yòdayà, which has been one of the most popular musical styles in Burma since the second half of the eighteenth century… As a result, what is known as Burmese classical music today is an out-come of a centuries-long blending of diverse ethnic musics (Lu 2009, 257).

“Burmese music is clearly indebted to India for some instruments, but surprisingly little evidence of direct influence survives, and still less of Chinese influence” (Miller 1998, 364). This is not true for the Kachin, whose music and instruments owe more to the Chinese than to the Burmese or Indians. Currently “Kachin music is of three types: traditional music, newer adaptations of Christian hymns, and interesting combinations of the two. All the hill tribes seem to distinguish between various genres of vocal music and dance music” (Garfias 2008, 1). Historically,

The earliest documentary reference to Burmese music is found in China, in a Tang Dynasty chronicle. It gives an account of a troupe of musicians and dancers sent to the Chinese court by the Pyu, in Lower Burma, in the 800s. Only some of the fourteen types of instruments described in the chronicle seem to correspond to anything now known in Burma, most notably one of the two harps and perhaps the ‘lizardhead zithers.’ [The] Burmese claim that many of their artistic traditions developed out of Siamese-Thai courtly arts brought to them by artists obliged to move to the Burmese capital when Ayuthaya fell to invading Burmans in 1767 (Miller 1998, 365).

“Burmese music can be divided into two styles: an outdoor type and an indoor, chamber type” (Miller 1998, 364). Traditionally, the outdoor type is characterized by loud music and the indoor type by soft music (Miller 1998, 367). Most outdoor ensembles include six to ten performers and are named for their respective drum types.
with the *hsaiñ*, consisting of drums, gongs, and aerophones, being the most common (Miller 1998, 367). A chamber ensemble’s instrumentation ordinarily consists of harp or xylophone and a vocalist who also plays bamboo clappers or finger cymbals.\(^{14}\) (Miller 1998, 367).

This description of the Burmese concept of melody and harmony I find to be true among the Kachin as well:

Though certain instruments can play two notes simultaneously, Burmese musicians do not distinguish between a melodic part and a harmonizing part secondary to it. True, the upper range of such instruments is used for playing something like a basic melody of a composition, and the lower range plays either the same note an octave lower, or a concordant note. But the overall effect is not one of harmony. Instead, two-part instruments play lines that may at times be identical, at times distinct, but both of which relate to an underlying basic melodic line, which every instrument approximates. This kind of texture, known as heterophony, is as typical of the drum circle and gong circle in the *hsaiñ* as it is for the harp and the xylophone in chamber ensembles. In fact, it is true in most Burmese uses of the piano (Miller 1998, 372).

One of the ethnic minority groups of South China is the Jingpo. The Zaiwa (what the Kachin are called in China) are the largest subgroup of the official Jingpo nationality, who are called *Xiaoshan*, meaning “small mountain” by the Chinese (Zaiwa, 568). These groups each have a “cultural system” that gives a framework to their music. One such system, the Di-Qiang, includes the Jingpo, as reported by Shen Qia:

The Di-Qiang system includes the Qiang, Pumi, Yi, Naxi, Lisu, Lahu, Hani, Achang, Jingpo, Jino, Dulong, Nu, Bai, and Tujia. The most basic and widespread characteristic of the music of these fourteen peoples is an emphasis in their scales on the fourth degree up or down from the tonic center in what can be called the "frame of a fourth" (Miller 1998, 485).

This “frame of a fourth” was also reported by Steddom, in what is the only scholarship in English presently published on Kachin music. “The most distinct harmonic feature of

\(^{14}\) Another good text on music in the “Indochina” region is Gavin Douglas' *Music in Mainland Southeast Asia: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
Kachin music appears at final cadence points. Kachin musicians state that their melodies end on Re (solfegge). None of the Kachin musicians and leaders consulted throughout my study had a musical or historical reason for stating that their melodies end on Re, even when the tune is in a minor mode and Re (the second degree of a major scale) would be understood to be Fa (the fourth degree)” (Steddom 2009, 99).

According to Qia, the Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yueqi zhi (Musical Instruments of the National Minorities of China) and Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yishu cidian (Dictionary of the Art of the National Minorities of China) offer an extensive look at musical instruments of national minorities in China (Miller 1998, 490):

The former is arranged according to four categories long used by Chinese music scholars: wind instruments, bowed strings, plucked strings, and percussion, with the addition of a further category of struck strings. In this book, 493 of the instruments are from the ethnic groups covered in the present article, including 207 blown, 188 percussion, 59 plucked strings, 37 bowed strings, and 2 struck strings. The latter book uses the international Sachs-Hornbostel system and records 330 instruments from the ethnic groups discussed here. They include 150 aerophones, 67 chordophones, 61 idiophones, and 52 membranophones (Miller 1998, 490).

Because the political complexities in Burma closed the country to research from the late 1960s to the early 1990s, only a few scholars give an ethnographic “window” into Burmese music.15 Judith Becker’s work in 1969 focuses on the relationship between oral tradition and the Burmese modal16 system (Becker 1969). Another more recent study looks at how individuals and groups in Burma including its diaspora use music to articulate different identities (Lu 2008).

---

15 Scholarship on Burmese music includes work by: John Okell, Judith Becker, Muriel Williamson, Robert Garfias, Tokumaru Yoshihiko, Ward Keeler, Gavin Douglas, Kit Young, Christopher Miller, Jane Ferguson and Hsin-chun Lu.

16 “Mode is not defined here in its restricted meaning of scale, but mode in the broad meaning of a system of melodic formulae which provide the material and structure for oral composition” (Becker 1969, 268).
Kachin History

In order to better understand the ethnic group that this research focuses on, delimiting the name *Kachin* will be helpful. According to Steddom’s research, the term

…is most commonly [used] to designate a group of mountain tribes and their subdivisions that inhabit eastern Assam, northern and northeastern Burma, and the adjacent area on the China side of the border. These groups speak three distinct languages, Jinghpaw, Maru, and Rawang, plus numerous dialects of greater or lesser mutual intelligibility. Despite linguistic differences and other cultural variations, such as dress, there is a commonality of tradition and a sense of belonging to one another (Steddom 2009, 5).

The modern day people known as *Kachin* are made up of six tribes - the Jinghpaw, Rawang, Zaiwa (Atsi), Maru (Lawng waw), Lachik (Lashi), and Lisu as purported by Ola Hanson in his work, *A Grammar of the Kachin Language and Dictionary of Kachin Language*; Charles Gilhodes’ *The Kachins, Religion and Customs*; and Henry Hertz’s *Practical Handbook of the Kachin and Chingpaw Language*17 (Steddom 2009, 5).

According to their tradition, the Kachin settled Northern Burma some three-hundred and fifty years ago (Steddom 2009, 15). The Kachin, as well as the Karen, Lisu, and Lahu believe their ethnic groups migrated from the Tibetan region. “Many of the cultural expressions of the Kachin seem to have strong Chinese influences; [for example] the Kachin funeral and the Chinese funeral ceremonies are quite similar in form and substance” (Steddom 2009, 15).

A “seismic wave” that forever changed Kachin culture was British colonization in the early nineteenth century and the coming of missionaries from the United States shortly after.18 “One of the most significant missionaries to work among the Kachin is

---

17 The term *Kachin*, which is a derogatory term meaning “wild man,” was foreign to the Jinghpaw, who feel that it was given to them by the Burmese. The Jinghpaw now refer to themselves as *Kachin*, which is the term I will use throughout the paper.

18 Two books that explore in depth the political, religious, and social history of the Kachin are: Charles Gilhodes’ *The Kachins: Religion and Customs* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1996) and Edmund Ronald
Rev. Dr. Ola Hanson, who arrived in Bhamo in [1890]” (Steddom 2009, 49). He was a skilled linguist who quickly learned Jinghpaw (the Kachin language) and Burmese, compiling a Jinghpaw-English dictionary and later achieved his goal of translating the Bible into Jinghpaw. “In addition to the completed Bible, he also produced a catechism, hymnal, spelling book, primer, grammar handbook and book on Kachin culture” (Steddom 2009, 50). The early missionaries, in most cases, were not intentionally trying to import their Western brand of Christianity into other cultures. In the nineteenth & early twentieth century, missionaries were not trained in the process of translating the truths of the Bible into a culture; i.e. contextualization.\textsuperscript{19} As a result, the Kachin abandoned their indigenous sound instruments and adopted the music of the West. An interesting link exists between Hanson and Steddom; the former was sent out as a missionary to Burma in the 1890s by Bethlehem Baptist church (BBC), the church where Steddom presently serves as a worship pastor. Steddom led a delegation from BBC to Burma in 1999 at the request of the Kachin Baptist Convention to celebrate their Christian heritage. An outgrowth of that invitation, Steddom’s dissertation gathers in one source a very thorough treatment of the social, religious, and political history of the Kachin.

As stated earlier, the only published scholarship on Kachin vocal music is Steddom’s 2009 doctoral dissertation, an “Introduction to the Choral Music Traditions of the Kachin people of Northern Myanmar.” Even though his work was not intended to be an ethnography in the ethnomusicological sense, Steddom recognized that “The occasion

---

\textsuperscript{19} For an in-depth look at how contextualization in missions has changed see Roberta King’s \textit{Music in the Life of the African Church, the Nairobi Statement on Worship} at \url{http://www.worship.ca/}
and function of much vocal music relates directly to specific actions or daily tasks performed by the Kachin, and it contributes directly to the corporate identity of the Kachin people” (Steddom 2009, 62). Steddom’s research is important because it lays a groundwork for future study by providing the social, political, and religious context (albeit, focused on vocal music) that have contributed to Kachin music (Steddom 2009, 62). He divides his research into three periods: “the Pre-Western Period, which ended in 1876, the Literacy/Education Period from 1876 to 1977, and the Kachin Nationalism Period, which began in 1977 and continues to the present” (Steddom 2009, 62).

“Prior to the arrival of western Catholic and Baptist missionaries, the Kachin were a tribal people with what would be classified as an oral culture” (Steddom 2009, 64). The absence of a written history may be due to the fact that they were a nomadic people. As is true in other oral cultures, their song texts dealt with a wide range of subjects such as nature, hunting, war, farming, and personal relationships (Steddom 2009, 64). Because of the focus of his research, Steddom only briefly mentions sound instruments as they relate to vocal music:

Music was created and passed on by village singers using simple instruments, such as the wooden flute, the bau - a crude string instrument that was plucked or bowed, a metal gong, and a single skinhead drum. The melodic structures and patterns of Kachin vocal music were based on the sounds of these musical instruments, as well as on sounds that were heard in nature, especially birds. As the culture moved away from Animism, fewer and fewer Kachin openly practiced Animistic rituals and the musical forms connected with those traditions were less frequently repeated (Steddom 2009, 65).

Much of Kachin history was collated through the communicative gifts of the Jaiwa, appointed members of Kachin society, who used vocal chant as a vehicle to deliver narratives at community events for the education and celebration of their culture.
Another source of music was attributed to the *Dumsa*, selected men and women in Kachin culture that were “trained to perform intercession rituals to the spirits on behalf of the people for health, prosperity, and protection” (Steddom 2009, 66). As Steddom reports, this vocal music

...was composed and performed as a part of life rituals such as rice planting, house dedications, childbirth, victory celebrations, weddings, and, most importantly, funerals. Most of this music was of a solo texture, since it was created and performed by an individual Animist priest. Ensemble singing existed only as an occasional response to a call. Group singing was insignificant before the arrival of western influence (Steddom 2009, 67).

Since the Kachin were a nomadic tribe originating around Tibet, Steddom acknowledges their Chinese heritage as evidenced by their food, clothing, clan systems, funeral rituals, vocal music, and sound instruments20 (Steddom 2009, 68). Based on his interviews with the Kachin, Steddom reports that music in the pre-Western period was divided into two broad categories: music for communicating to each other and music for communicating to spirits (Steddom 2009, 68).

---

20 A Shan and Thai influence seems to also be present, especially as it relates to governmental structure (Steddom 2009, 68).
### Pre-Western Kachin Song Categories

#### Songs for Communicating to Each Other and Songs for Communicating to Spirits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Performers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Songs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice pounding</td>
<td>Shoawa</td>
<td>Majan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoi Lu</td>
<td>Majan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Love Songs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtship</td>
<td>Shayawq Goi</td>
<td>N’chyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Celebration Rituals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weddings</td>
<td>Lanyi</td>
<td>N’chyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tsunat</td>
<td>N’chyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kabung N’chyin</td>
<td>N’chyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aw Zaw</td>
<td>N’chyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Ja Tawng</td>
<td>N’chyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manau (dance)</td>
<td>Majan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Pre-Western Kachin Song Categories (Steddom 2009, 68)

The *Literacy/Education period* began in 1877, when missionaries started using Western hymns for music education and as a vehicle for Christian worship (Steddom 2009, 87). In *The Kachin – Their Customs and Traditions*, Hanson briefly mentions their use of flutes made of bamboo, gongs, drums, and a “one-stringed” violin (Hanson 1913, 92). Hanson reports that the only “genuine musical instruments of the Kachin” seem to be the “double-barrelled” flute; the rest he attributes to Shan or Chinese origin (Hanson 1913, 92). The *solfegge* system was introduced as an aid in learning the songs. Steddom notes the effects of this period:

Today as Kachin young people are polled about their enthusiasm for their own indigenous (pentatonic) music, they often comment that it has limited appeal to them, and they view Western music as being more interesting. This interest parallels increased exposure to Western media. Yet as a result of formal music
education and contact with Western music forms, group singing is firmly established as part of current Kachin musical expression (Steddom 2009, 88).

Since most of the Kachin rituals (and musical practices) were tied to Animism, their new-found Christian practices meant that “musical instruments such as the bamboo flute, gong, and long drum that once were used in performing many of the daily ritual songs were replaced with piano accompaniment or a cappella singing” (Steddom 2009, 89). Song forms not tied to Animistic practices, such as Majan, work songs, love songs, and Manau songs, still survive today. As evidenced in many other cultures that have worked through issues of contextualization a few generations removed from their exposure to Christianity, the Kachin “feel disconnected with Western tonality and rhythm” (Steddom 2009, 89). This led to the “emergence of the first contextualized Kachin music form—the Wunpawng, or folk song” (Steddom 2009, 89).

As Steddom relates,

The Wunpawng as a form emerged as a Kachin equivalent to the Christian hymn. By definition, the Wunpawng was a simple vocal song based on a Kachin melody in basic duple meter. Unlike its predecessor, the Majan, the Wunpawng was text-based and designed to be sung by groups of people. Many of the early Wunpawng have multiple strophes. Having experienced the use of the Western hymn in teaching, church and village leaders wrote these songs to help educate and encourage the village people. These songs are very popular in many of the rural areas of northern Burma (Steddom 2009, 90).

The Wunpawng was an important development among the Kachin, as it signifies a shift from only using “Western” hymns and tunes, to an indigenous expression of Christian worship.21 In May of 2011, I witnessed first hand the juxtaposition between a group of Kachin musicians singing Western hymns translated into Jinghpaw and the singing of

\[\text{\footnotesize 21 For a good discussion on all nations using the arts in an “incarnational” way, see Redeeming the Arts - The Restoration of the Arts to God's Creational Intention. (Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 46. available at http://www.lausanne.org/documents.html)}\]
Wunpawng songs. The singing of Western hymns was a bit stilted.\textsuperscript{22} As they sang their Wunpawng songs, their countenance changed, closing their eyes and smiling, and they began to gently sway to the beat. Another observation was that even when they sing indigenous songs or participate in traditional dance, it is always accompanied by Western piano (or keyboard) and/or guitar.

The next phase in the development of Kachin music was “an increased sense of nationalism” (Steddom 2009, 91). From 1900 to 1944, considerable growth and stability took place among the Kachin. This nationalistic period ended with the Japanese invasion and the start of World War II, along with the departure of the British in 1948 (Steddom 2009, 91). The 1950’s and 1960’s brought a season of internal strife with the Burmese, which culminated in the forming of the Revolutionary Government of the Union of Burma in 1961 (Steddom 2009, 91). Steddom elaborates that

There were other issues that deeply affected the Kachin society. Although the new constitution guaranteed religious freedom, beginning in 1962 there was a steady process of isolation, oppression, and national instability that manifested itself in a number of ways. First, all missionaries were expelled from Burma, and the eyes of the western world were closed off from this jungle country. This created a vacuum within the Kachin leadership of Baptist churches and schools, because missionaries had been highly revered as teachers and mentors. Second, in nationalizing the schools, the Burmese removed a very significant teaching platform from the Kachin. Third, in the national schools, music was no longer a part of the curriculum. Fourth, the language taught was Burmese. Finally, all legal political parties were banned. The newly ratified constitution created the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma and national relations were normalized with Communist China (Steddom 2009, 91).

In 1977 the Kachin Baptist Church marked its centennial anniversary with a weeklong celebration, recounting God’s faithfulness to them the past one-hundred years and looking to the future (Steddom 2009, 92). One significant outcome was the “Kachin

\textsuperscript{22} The Kachin have no reservations in singing Western hymns. The reality is that the \textit{prosody} – the marriage of the text and tune, is not their “heart language.”
Baptist leaders…[officially] extend[ing] a call to Kachin composers and songwriters to write new songs for the church in a distinctly Kachin style. As a result, newly composed Kachin hymns and songs began to appear” (Steddom 2009, 92). What began to emerge from this “call” was a new indigenous song which Steddom classifies as the choral hymn (Steddom 2009, 94):

This form is designed for both choir and congregation. The choral hymn usually begins with two to four strophes set to a unison folk melody. It then shifts to a two or three-part antiphonal type of refrain. Each of these choral hymns is built on a distinct Kachin Wunpawng tune. The refrains are a combination of melodic and rhythmic techniques, such as call and respond, sequences, rhythmic imitation, and simple two-note harmonies. Three of these pieces, written in the late 1990’s were published in the 2000 edition of the Kachin Baptist Hymnal: Madu Asak Pyendin by Sara Hkun Seng; Jinghku’ Majing Gaw Yesu by Sara Hkun Seng and Kun le - Rev. Hawng Hkawng; and Grau Htum Mungga Htawn Tsun Ga by Sara Hkun Seng (Steddom 2009, 94).

As is true in most parts of the world today, a Kachin popular style also emerged in the 1980s, due to the youth’s exposure to media from around the world. Since most Kachin youth were never taught how to play traditional instruments, the keyboard and guitar became their vehicle for creating music (Steddom 2009, 94). Steddom relates that

The electronic keyboard is unique in that it allows Kachin to combine the Wunpawng tunes with the pop rhythmic beats available on the keyboard menu. The ability to fuse Kachin tune and western pop sound has created a nationalistic youth culture genre of music. It is so powerful that the Kachin Independent Army recruiters use this type of music, combined with dance and costume, to project a progressive image to young people who might be potential army recruits. All throughout Myanmar, the Asian/pop fusion music is heard (Steddom 2009, 95).

Music Characteristics of the Kachin

Kachin tonality is based on the pentatonic scale. The most common one used as observed by Steddom is A, C, D, E, G, which can be transposed depending on the singer’s range and/or instruments involved (Steddom 2009, 98). Steddom reports that
Kachin melodies are pentatonic and composed from a purely linear perspective, meaning that they were not written with harmony as a major consideration. They incorporate wide ranges, up to an octave plus a seventh, and large, angular intervallic leaps are common. Motivic repetition and melodic ornaments are frequent (Steddom 2009, 98).

Since most of their songs use unison or two-part melodies, harmony is more of a by-product of the two melodies interacting. I did observe the use of keyboard and guitar playing chords underneath most of the Wunpawng songs.

Rhythmically, all Kachin music:

is based on the beat of a single long drum or tong. The accent and main pulse are always on the beat. In strict Kachin melodies, there is never an instance of syncopation or irregular meter. The steady beat forms the foundation for all Kachin dances or, in a more subdued work song setting, the act of pounding rice. Thus, Kachin songs are in a simple duple meter (4/4 or 2/4). The 6/8 meter does exist but, similarly, it is performed with two strong beats. Generally, there are no tempo changes in the music, nor are there sections of ritard or rallentando. All rests between phrases or verses are to be considered in tempo (Steddom 2009, 101).

Since Steddom’s research is focused on Kachin vocal music, little is mentioned about their sound instruments. He has one section entitled “Instrumental Accompaniment” which gives a brief introduction to the topic. Steddom reports that the “three primary traditional instruments used in accompaniment [are]: the longdrum (tong), a metal gong (bau mawng), and the bamboo flute (sumyi) (Steddom 2009, 103).

Additionally, bamboo flutes of various shapes and sizes are used along with “several lute-like stringed instruments, [and] an oboe-type reed instrument (dumba)” (Steddom 2009, 103).
Figure 4. Original song composed by Kachin Baptist Conference leaders: Mangkyi Hkawng Lum, Ndaw Hkun Seng, Wanghte Gyung Naw, Dungla Kum Hpang, and Galau Sau Bawm as an assignment from the author.
The Manau Festival

“Dance is one of the most significant cultural symbols of the Kachin” (Steddom 2009, 75).

The Manau is a yearly festival that celebrates Kachin history, costumes, and traditions (Steddom 2009, 40). Through song and dance, it re-enacts that journey that the Kachin made from China to Northern Burma and is one of the only “cultural links” they have to traditional instruments and song forms. Giant painted polls are erected “that visually retell the history of Kachin migration” (Steddom 2009, 41). Dancers in elaborate dress are accompanied by “a series of gongs, drums, and traditional reed instruments, [which] creates the dance rhythm with the dance continuing until nightfall” (Steddom 2009, 41). Even though one national Manau festival is held in Myitkyina every January, smaller Manaus may be celebrated throughout the year as Steddom relates,

Historically, the Manau is celebrated for particular occasions in the Kachin community. There are nine different Manaus, each for a different occasion. The Sat Manau is for a rich man to become richer; the Ju Manau or Roi Dawng Ye Manau is a funeral ceremony for dead parents; couples who are unable to have children organize Shakawng Manau to appease spirits; the Htingrim Manau is for a new house blessing, and the Humran Manau is for times when a rich villager leaves his birthplace. The Larawt Htinghtang Manau is to be celebrated by Duwas (tribal chiefs) before they go into battle. If the entire village decides to move, they dance a Hpun Dud It Manau, and if the chief is not feeling well, they have a Nga Makum Manau. The tenth Manau is Htinghtang Manau, which is celebrated for eight days and is to show off the chief’s wealth (Steddom 2009, 42).

Many of these smaller festivals have disappeared, along with the ability to accompany them on traditional instruments. When I was in Myitkyina in May of 2011, the young people decided to dance the Manau for my colleague and I, accompanied by a CD track

---

23 See Figure 1.
24 The Kachin count themselves fortunate if they are able to celebrate the one large manau in Myitkyina each year due to the political unrest. It is rare for any other manaus to be celebrated at this time.
of Kachin popular music.\textsuperscript{25} Among the Kachin leadership a growing desire is emerging to re-discover an indigenous instrumental accompaniment to the dances in their festivals.

\textbf{An Unexpected Surprise}

During this past visit to Burma (November 1 – November 24, 2012), I had arranged to meet with two Kachin musicians who are considered experts by their peers regarding indigenous sound instruments. I had no idea that when they arrived, they would bring a self-published book entitled, \textit{Jinghpaw Wunpawng Htunghking Shingni Madum Sumpyi (The Kachin Traditional Musics and Their Rituals)} (Zau La 2012). This work documents the Kachin sound instruments and gives a brief introduction into their history and is the first published work on Kachin sound instruments. During my interviews with the two experts, I was curious as to how the Kachin think about organizing their sound instruments. The general consensus between the KBC Music Committee leaders and the experts was, “We organize them like you in the West – strings, winds, and percussion” (Zau La 2012, interview). Later, when I had a chance to have the book translated into English, I discovered all the instruments were organized into two main categories – Wind Instruments and Percussion. Under the “winds” category were all the aerophones, idiophones and chordophones. Under the “percussion” category were all the membranophones.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{25} Kachin popular music uses older synthesizers and drum machines for accompaniment along with pentatonic melodies sung in the Jingpaw language.

\textsuperscript{26} I discuss the implications of this discovery in chapter five.
Zau La is passionate about preserving the rich legacy of Kachin sound instruments. His goal for the book is that the Kachin church would embrace all their indigenous musical instruments and use them to the praise and glory of God\(^2\) (Zau La 2012, 6). Under the heading “The Current Issues Involving Our Traditional Instruments,” Zau La recognizes that God has given these instruments to the Kachin. In the past the

\(^2\) The Kachin Baptist churches have been slow to leave the instruction of the Christian missionaries, who forbade the use of Kachin sound instruments, songs, and dance in worship. In the last sixty years progress has been made towards a fully contextualized, indigenous expression in the churches.
Kachin have used their musical instruments in *Manau* festivals, *Nat* (spirit) worship, weddings and funerals, house warming celebrations, and other gatherings, but now they “are not taking them seriously” (Zau La 2012, interview). This change has happened because

There are no schools to teach [the instruments]; There is no one to teach the young people how to make the instruments; There are no gatherings where children can learn; The Kachin Baptist Convention has stopped having Summer music camps for children; We have not passed on our love for these instruments to our children; There is a generational gap in using our instruments because young people don’t see them used in church; This is why our Jubilee celebrations, weddings and festive occasions have been so dry…because we have not used our traditional instruments. It is a very sad thing for us Kachin, because when we want to play our traditional instruments, we don’t know how (Zau La 2012, 7).

The forty-eight page book is a great introduction into Kachin organology and the first published work of its kind. The author spends time on different aspects of each instrument – bringing out the history, the construction, performance methodology, and even a brief pedagogy, which I have incorporated into chapter four. Included with the book are a CD and some transcriptions that are more “prescriptive” in nature (they do not include the ornaments and nuances of the performances). The CD is a recording of a piano playing the melodies of each piece included in the book, which allows the reader to hear the tune unaltered. I would have preferred for the CD to have included the recordings of the songs on the appropriate instruments as well. Zau La is considered one of the foremost experts on Kachin sound instruments by his peers. Fortunately, I was able to have the entire book translated into English before leaving Burma.28

28 The Kachin musicians also produced two VCD’s that demonstrate indigenous dance and music. VCD’s are video compact discs that usually use a form of compression called MPEG (Moving Picture Experts Group) to store audio and video. See photos in the Appendix.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Description

According to Creswell “Qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and materials of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Although the processes are similar, qualitative procedures rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse strategies of inquiry” (Creswell 2009, 73). Many things distinguish qualitative research from quantitative methodology. These distinguishing characteristics include the following items:

1. Qualitative research takes place in natural settings, where human behavior can be observed.
2. The researcher is the main instrument used in data collection.
3. That emergent data in a qualitative study is descriptive and reported in words, pictures, and sounds, rather than in number.
4. Qualitative research seeks to understand participants’ perceptions and experiences.
5. Qualitative research is concerned not only with the outcome, but the process that leads to the outcome and understanding how or why it occurred (Creswell 2009, 195)

Rationale for Research Method

This study uses the ethnographic research method, which “emerged from the field of anthropology…[and seeks] to obtain a holistic picture of the subject of study with emphasis on portraying the everyday experiences of individuals by observing and interviewing them” (Creswell 2009, 196).

As stated above the researcher is the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research. This has both positive and negative effects on the study, as the researcher’s personal values, assumptions, and biases can affect the information that is gathered and how it is interpreted. My experience as a pastor for the past twenty years
and my recent work with the Kachin in Myanmar as a teacher have shaped my thoughts and feelings toward their culture. I recognize that my biases, both culturally and spiritually, will “shape the ways I view and understand the data I collect and the way I interpret my experiences” (Creswell 2009, 197). I have made every effort to minimize these biases by employing various techniques such as: triangulation, member checking, negative and discrepant information, and peer debriefing.

**Participant Selection Process**

This study was conducted in the Kachin State of Northern Burma (Myanmar). The participants in this study are music leaders in the Kachin Baptist Convention. As stated earlier, my access to this group has been through invitations to teach. Kachin Baptists make up roughly 65% of all Kachin in Burma. I have also discovered a growing Kachin community in the United States, especially in Omaha, NE, which may help provide additional resources for processing data in the future.

**Fieldwork Procedures**

As mentioned above, I sought to ensure the validity of the data through triangulation – using multiple sources; member checking – using participants to check data as well as give interpretation; and peer examination – having an adviser and peers review the work. Gaining a historical perspective of Kachin sound instruments was important, as was an understanding of their use and function in contemporary contexts. This study uses a combination of audio/video recording and field note techniques as described in Emerson’s, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Emerson 1995). One of the

---

29 The Kachin Baptist Conference (KBC) was formed in 1890 and is the largest Evangelical organization in Myanmar. It represents approximately 350 churches and is headquartered in Myitkyina.
major challenges I faced in my research was translation. During my first visit to Myanmar in May 2011, a Kachin musician allowed me to record on video forty minutes of his demonstrating different Kachin instruments. Most of his explanations are in Jingpaw. During my last visit (November 1-24, 2012), I was able to have all the interviews and materials translated by Matthew Gumjat, a Kachin native and doctoral student in Missiology here in the United States.

Using ethnographic research methodology, the focus of my study is to identify the Kachin’s sound instruments and attempt to discover an indigenous classification that explores how the Kachin’s musical instruments’ history, social function, design, construction, and performance practice relate to their philosophical, religious, social, and musical values. I took fieldnotes employing Emerson’s technique of interviewing participants "interactionally rather than cognitively…; [the fieldnotes] will document not how members talk about various social objects, in general and out of context, but how members construct meaning through interactions with other members of the group..." (Emerson 1995, 140). This is always difficult for the researcher because participant's meanings are not, "pristine objects that are simply ‘discovered,’" but entail, "sensitively representing in written texts what local people consider meaningful...making their concerns accessible to readers who are unfamiliar with their social world" (Emerson 1995, 108).

As mentioned earlier, two leaders in particular have a passion for preserving their indigenous sound instruments and making sure their musical history is passed to the next

---

30 I was able to find a Kachin woman in Minneapolis who agreed to meet and help with the translation. She struggled to translate many of the musical concepts into English.

31 I am indebted to Matthew Gumjat, who translated our times of teaching for the Kachin leaders, as well as the interviews and Zau La’s book into English.
Ze Hkawng and Zau La. Ze Hkawng has served as the leader of the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) Music Committee in the past. During my first trip to Burma in May 2011, I was invited by the KBC to teach biblical worship principles to leaders from the Kachin Baptist churches. I was also able to interview Ze Hkawng and complete a final project for an organology class on the *htu ren*. I was invited again to teach in November 2012. The plan was to teach for two weeks, and then I would stay an additional week to finish my fieldwork.

One of the biggest challenges when doing fieldwork overseas is dealing with the unexpected. Due to the political complexities in Burma, communicating with the Kachin from the United States is difficult. The infrastructure there makes international phone calls and internet unreliable at best. Details as to the specifics of meeting with the musicians for interviews was not available in advance. All I knew as I was in route to Burma was their interest in being interviewed. The two options were either they would fly from Myitkyina to Maymyo, where our teaching was being conducted, or most likely I would need to fly to Myitkyina during my last week in the country. My concern about having to fly to Myitkyina is that “foreigners” are not easily allowed in the Kachin capital. We reached Maymyo on Sunday, November 4, 2012, and were told that the musicians were flying to Maymyo sometime during the week. This meant that they were going to be present during the first week of our seminar. I immediately began thinking through the schedule...we were teaching every day (except Sunday), two sessions in the morning before lunch; one session in the afternoon; a two hour break before dinner; an evening session. When was I going to have time to interview the musicians? I asked

---

32 We have been working with sixteen leaders from their corresponding districts within the Kachin Baptist Convention. They in turn take the material and teach it to the three hundred and fifty plus
how long they were able to stay in Maymyo - most likely until Friday or Saturday of that week was the response. I began to panic! This wasn’t going to work. I have just spent a couple of years preparing for this thesis only to have my fieldwork fall apart. It is my habit to pray to God regularly, and I availed myself of divine help by staying up most of the night on Sunday.

Monday morning brought fresh mercies. My team leader for the trip and long time friend, Charles Steddom said, “This is what we need to do!” “Take Tuesday and teach on principles of ethnomusicology and tools for field work. When the experts arrive on Tuesday evening, guide the leaders through the interview process.” This was a major breakthrough and the only way forward in light of our time constraints. I used papers I had written in my anthropology of music, applied ethnomusicology, field of ethnomusicology, and organology classes, to give the Kachin leaders an overview of the field of ethnomusicology and tools to conduct field work.33 Only by God’s grace was I able to employ this collaborative approach to the interview process of my fieldwork with great success. It is important to note that the sixteen Kachin music leaders present were as invaluable to this research through the interview process as was the book on Kachin instruments I had translated. The information from these group interviews was collected and is included in the instrument descriptions below, though the information will not be attributed to any one individual. I have included their insights throughout chapter IV and cite them as Zau La 2012, interview.

In accordance with my Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I asked
permission of all participants’ who were interviewed and recorded. Interviews and videos were accomplished over a six-week period (May 16-30, 2011, and November 1-24, 2012). I am presenting my findings in this thesis for partial fulfillment of a Master of Arts in Ethnomusicology at Liberty University. Kartomi states that “classifications are often synopses or terse accounts of a culture’s…deep-seated ideas about music and instruments, as well as, in some cases, philosophical, religious, and social beliefs” (Kartomi 1990, 7). My goal is that through exploring an indigenous instrumental taxonomy with the Kachin, a better understanding of their culture and values can be attained.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Many factors affect a culture over the course of time. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the Kachin in Northern Burma have had to deal with massive cultural changes including: United States missionaries and British colonization, which began to change their identity through religious and social transformation. In 1962 political tensions between the minority Kachin and the Burmese military reached a climax as war officially broke out. 1988 saw the house arrest of democratic Burmese activist Aung San Suu Kyi. Since the 1960s the Burmese have imposed military rule on the Kachin and other ethnic minorities, which include curfews, closing their schools and forcing them to go to Burmese schools, and denying them the freedom to come together and dance the manau. Since the manau was one of the last cultural treasures of the Kachin, a whole generation of Kachin children didn’t grow up with this identity. In the manau the indigenous Kachin instruments are used – Dumba (lead instrument), Chying Galu or Manau Chying (great drum), Bau Maung (small gong), Bau Kaba (great gong), and the Sumpyi (flute). In 2001 the Burmese government lifted the ban on the Kachin assembling and dancing the manau. The reinstatement of this culturally specific festival parallels the KBC Music Committee’s desire to see a revival of their sound instruments in the Kachin churches.

The situation between the Burmese and the Kachin is very complex. While a long history of conflict has existed between the two groups, inter-marriage between them, though not common, is a reality. Because the culture in Burma is so interdependent (Kachin consider cousins to be the same as brothers and sisters), marrying into a Burmese family presents a complex social situation. Kachin Christian churches have added services in the Burmese language as a way to accommodate this situation. All of these
issues along with globalization have greatly affected the ability of the Kachin in Northern Burma to maintain a continuity with the past regarding their sound instruments. Even so a remnant within the Kachin Baptist Convention are passionate about the preservation and the propagation of their musical traditions. Using interviews with the Kachin musicians and the information provided in Zau La’s book, this chapter will present an organology of Kachin sound instruments that will aid the Kachin people in their efforts at fully contextualizing Christian worship. Before the individual instruments are discussed, a brief presentation of how the Kachin conceptualize instrumental music is given.

While progressing through the interviews and demonstrations of instruments with the KBC leaders, an impasse arose regarding an indigenous term for “instrumental music.” The discussion began when I asked about the delineation between “vocal music” (yu-ngii nsen), and music without vocals. A lively debate was followed by a few suggestions that revolved around the phrase, Wunpawng Madum Sumpyi Hpung. This literally means – unified, playing of flute, group or band. What the leaders finally agreed upon was the phrase, Wumawng Madum Sumhpa Hpung, which means “all the Jinghpaw peoples playing different instruments in a group.” It is my understanding that this is a new phrase to the Kachin. This definition of instrumental music is significant in that it represents a unity among the Kachin tribes that coincides with a long struggle to maintain their identity in the midst of severe persecution throughout most of the twentieth century (and continuing today). The following discussion of indigenous sound instruments also embodies the Kachin’s desire to preserve their unique cultural characteristics.
**Htu Ren**

**History and Classification**

This flute, more than any other instrument, is a source of great pride for the Kachin. The participants recounted a story (also documented in Zau La’s book) of an archeological discovery which uncovered a stone *Htu Ren* dating back to around 1500 BC, most likely made from Jade (Zau La interview, 2012). There is also an article in *The Kachin Post* that corroborates this claim. The article states that “A Jinghpaw researcher Duwa Manam Tawng uncovered the historical link between ancient and modern Jinghpaw civilization by proving the archeological evidences; A single-hole jade flute was unearthed in Chifung village in Hongshan area of People’s Republic of China in 2004...The single-hole stone flute was made with a stone which is similar to Jade stone” (The Kachin Post, 2009). According to the article “Jinghpaw [the Kachin people] originated from the area nowadays called Gansu, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Hebei and some areas of Inner Mongolia in China” (The Kachin Post, 2009). According to the archeologists, the Kachin were the only musicians able to play the stone flute. The Jade mines are in the Kachin state of Burma, which may give further evidence that this flute was made by Kachin musicians around 1500 BC and brought to China.

![htu ren](image)

*Figure 6. Photo of the *htu ren* taken by the author. Maymyu, Burma, November 9, 2012.*
According to the Kachin the *Htu Ren* is a “central embouchure flute” (Zau La 2012, 9). The H-S classification for the instrument is an, “aerophone, without a duct, open, side-blown flute, without fingerholes;” 421.121.11 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 25). The original bamboo instrument had one hole in the center, burned there with a hot metal rod, with both ends of the flute being open. On my two visits to Burma, I have also seen *htu ren’s* made from aluminum. The musicians like the durability of aluminum over bamboo.

**Function and Uses**

Ze Hkawng explained that the *htu ren* was used historically by his ancestors to imitate sounds made by animals which they heard in the jungle. The instrument was traditionally played by farmers as they rode on the back of oxen in route to their fields and as they plowed (Zau La 2012, interview). Bamboo instruments, according to the *pa yin*, correspond to the Spring and possibly the planting season, which would coincide
with Ze Hkawng’s description of farmers using the instrument riding as they farmed. More research needs to be done that investigates the relationship between the playing of these instruments and the cosmology of these early farmers.

According to Zau La, the *htu ren* was used by the Kachin during the harvest season for work songs pounding rice, while herding animals in the mountains and jungles, passing the time watching over their farms (protecting them from wild animals), and to signal other Kachin to come help with the harvest. It also kept them company while walking through the jungle to collect firewood (Zau La, 2012).

**Construction and Playability**

The *htu ren* is traditionally made from a single piece of bamboo, approximately twenty-two inches long, without “eyes.” The embouchure hole is made by heating a piece of metal and burning a hole a little off-center into the flute (approximately an inch in diameter). In 2003 the KBC Music Committee voted to allow Ze Hkawng to give the *htu ren* an extra hole near one end in order to give the flute the ability to play extra notes and encourage its use in the worship service (see Figure 8). This is a recent example of how the Kachin are trying to preserve and contextualize their traditional musical instruments. This is also an example of acculturation – adapting the *htu ren* to be able to play Western melodies. The *htu ren* plays a major pentatonic scale (without the added hole) – equivalent to C, D, E, G, A. The *htu ren* traditionally plays: the ‘*htu ren*’ tune – a melody unique to this instrument (see Figure 9), and *wunpawng* tunes (see the previous discussion on this traditional song form).

---

34 The bamboo stalk is divided by “eyes” or nodes - the circular pieces that run perpendicular to the stalk.
MATSING - Ḥku “C” gaw gyin shalat da ai Ḥku re ai.

(note - The above hole "C" has been added)

LESSON - 1

SCALE DUM SHARIN AI DAW

(sections on how to play the scales)

1. A Ḥpe B hpe rau Ḥpaw dum yang
   (holes A' and B open gives you the following pitch)

2. A Ḥpe Ḥpaw B Ḥpe Ḥpat / Ḥa dum yang
   (open 'A' and closed 'B' gives you the following pitch)

3. B Ḥpe Ḥpat / Ḥa dum yang
   (only close 'B' gives you the following pitch)

4. Ḥku yang (A B C) Ḥpe Ḥpat / Ḥa dum yang
   (closing 'A' 'B' and 'C' gives you the following pitch)

5. B Ḥpe sha Ḥpaw dum yang
   (only 'B' open gives you the following pitch)

Figure 8. Chart of fingerings for the htu ren (English translation added by author)
(Zau La 2012, 12).
Htu Ren Tune
played by Zau La, November 7, 2012
transcribed by Wally Brath, December 24, 2012

Actual pitch is an octave higher than written

Figure 9. Transcription of htu ren tune by the author. Each line represents a phrase that was played without a strict meter.
**Wunpawng Sumpyi**

**History and Classification**

The term *Wunpawng* is equivalent to saying *American* in the United States. It is a term that signifies unity among the six sub-tribes of the Kachin.\(^{35}\) The word *sumpyi* is the Kachin term for flute. *Wunpawng sumpyi* means that this flute is able to play all the different melodies from the seven sub-tribes. In light of its construction, it is the most versatile of all the Kachin flutes, being able to play heptatonic as well as pentatonic scales. The Kachin consider this instrument a “side flute” (Zau La 2012, 9). According to H-S this instrument is an “aerophone, open side-blown flute with finger holes,” 421.121.12-7 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 25).

Zau La relates that in 1851, Hpau Shwi Lagun (a Kachin musician) was witnessing a marriage in Nbapa Buga – a village in the Kachin State of Burma. While at this wedding, he heard Ndup Hka (another Kachin musician) playing a Burmese flute. Hpau Shwi Lagun enjoyed the sound and went home after the wedding to try and make this flute for himself (Zau La 2012, 13).

Other significant historical events for this instrument include a church building dedication on February 3, 1951, when the *wunpawng sumpyi* was played during the ceremony in which the very influential Kachin Pastor, Dumhpau Naw, presided. A year later on March 2, Dumhpau Naw gave his blessing for using the flute in Christian worship and prayed that the Kachins would continue playing it. In 1955, then Prime Minister of Burma, U Nu was at a political ceremony in Zinlum Bum (near Bhamo) when a Kachin musician played the *wunpawng sumpyi*. Because of this event all of Burma

---

35 The six sub-tribes of the Kachin are: Jinghpaw, Rawang, Zaiwa (*Atsi*), Maru (*Lhloav*), Lachik.
officially recognized this flute as a “Kachin” instrument. Due to this special designation the Kachin musicians were invited by the Burmese to Yangon to play the flute on the radio and record songs in a studio (Zau La 2012, 13).

**Function and Uses**

Because of its construction the *wunpawng sumpyi* is able to play all the melodies of the six sub-tribes of the Kachin, both pentatonic and heptatonic. This instrument was made to replicate a Burmese flute (see above) and is evidence of how the different cultures in South East Asia have influenced each other. According to the Kachin, this instrument is the most likely one to be played in a Christian worship service today.

**Construction and Playability**

The *wunpawng sumpyi* was traditionally made from a piece of bamboo with no nodes approximately 14.5 inches long. The mouthpiece, as well as the finger holes, was made by taking a hot metal rod and burning it into the bamboo (see Figure 10). Flutes made from aluminum are not uncommon today because of that metal’s availability and durability.

Figure 10. Photo of the *wunpawng sumpyi* taken by the author, November 9, 2012.
Figure 11. Chart of fingerings for the wumpawng sumphyi (English translation added by author) (Zau La 2012, 15).
History and Classification

The Kachin call this instrument an “end-blown melody flute” (Zau La 2012, 23). According to Zau La and Kachin tradition, this instrument dates back thousands of years to the Hung Shan area of China (which is modern day Hongshan, China). For as long as the Kachin can remember, their forefathers played this instrument. The Kachin believe that this instrument was played when they descended from Majoi Shingra - a place near Tibet. At one time a Kachin musician is believed to have played this instrument for the Queen of Mongolia. In 1964 the head of the Kachin Independent Army, Pungshwi Zau Seng, popularized this instrument by having it played for the troops. The H-S classification for this instrument is an “aerophone, single end-blown flute, with internal duct;” 421.221-7 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 25).

Function and Uses

The Pyisun was used in the songs of Ning Chin – a vocal and instrumental style of improvised songs that praise nature or anything else the musician encounters. It was also used in the villages when neighbors were visiting, as well as while travelling to the rice fields and herding oxen (Zau La 2012, 23). Zau La remarked that this instrument is the second most flexible flute, next to the wunpawng sumpyi, being able to play pentatonic and heptatonic scales.

36 The instrument is called by two different names depending on which sub-tribe is speaking about it.
Construction and Playability

The Pyisun is a six holed flute. It was originally made from a piece of bamboo with no nodes or “eyes.” In the end that is blown, a piece of dried resin blocks about 1/3 of the air that is blown through the flute. This resin acts like a mute or damper, giving the flute a quieter sound than the wumpawng sumpyi. Many of the Kachin flutes today are made from plastic or aluminum, which aids in durability.

Figure 12. Photo of the Pyisun taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Larung Sumpyi

History and Classification

Zau La and Ze Hkawng did not bring this instrument to the interview. The word larung literally means “horn-like, long.” The Kachin consider this instrument a “long free reed flute” (Zau La 2012, 27). This instrument does not use a reed as in a reed pipe but most likely is referring to the material used for construction. The H-S classification for this flute is an “aerophone, end-blown flute, with finger holes;” 421.111.12-7 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 25).
**Function and Uses**

The *larung sumpyi* was used during the harvest season for celebration and work songs. Both men and women also used it while relaxing by the fire in the villages at night (Zau La 2012, 27). Zau La’s book does not speak to the contemporary use of this instrument, and he did not bring the instrument to the interview. One may wonder if the instruments are still being used for these same functions today. The impression I was given regarding the sound instruments in general is that very few Kachin associated with the KBC in Northern Burma know how to play them which is why I have put the functions in the past tense.

**Construction and Playability**

This flute is made from bamboo with no nodes or “eyes” and is approximately twenty inches long (Zau La 2012, 27). It has four symmetrically spaced holes on the front, with a fifth placed closer to the end of the flute. I did not see this instrument played in person, but from the picture, it looks like a larger version of the *pyisun*.

Figure 13. Photo of *larung sumpyi* (Zau La 2012, 21).
Pyi-man and Pyi-yep

History and Classification

I am listing these two instruments together because the former is a larger version of the latter. When the Kachin musicians came to Maymuy with their instruments, they only brought the *pyi-man*. Neither of the two musicians knew the origin of these flutes. *Pyi-man* comes from the Kachin word *manme* which means “two as one.” The word *sumpyi*, as noted above, is the word for flute. Combining the “pyi” from *sumpyi* with the “man” from *manme*, translates “the two as one flute” (Zau La 2012, interview). The Kachin feel that the *pyi-man* and the *pyi-yep*, along with the *htu ren*, are a unique treasure among their people. The Kachin musicians consider the *pyi-man* a “double-tube flute,” and the *pyi-yep* a “small double-tube flute” (Zau La 2012, 23). The H-S classification is an “aerophone, double pipe with free reed;” 422.32-7 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 27). This instrument is a hybrid – a reed pipe with finger holes and a flute with a duct. This will be discussed in more detail under the section “construction and playability.” Here is an example of a “Kachin” classification, namely grouping all reed pipes together as *sumpyi* (flutes). I will delineate this fact for each instrument with the H-S classification under the heading “history and classification,” but will refer to all reed pipes as “flutes” in the description to recognize the Kachin taxonomy.

Figure 14. Photo of the *pyi-man* (top side) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.
Function and Uses

This flute has two main functions. The young people used it in the Nla Dap (party house), and the adults used it around the fire in the evening for quiet times (Zau La 2012, interview). Nla Dap was a place where young people could gather and socialize. Historically, it could be a place of promiscuity but also was where young people exchanged ideas and skills, such as music (Zau La 2012, interview).

Construction and Playability

Both of these instruments are double-end blown flutes. According to the musicians, this is the hardest flute to make (Zau La 2012, interview). This instrument is made up of two bamboo cylinders (without nodes or “eyes”) that are joined together with resin (or pitch) and string. The smaller of the two “flutes” plays a drone sound, while the
larger uses six holes to play melodies. The front four holes are symmetrically spaced, while the fifth is located near the “bottom” of the instrument. An additional hole for the thumb is on the back of the flute. One major difference between the two tubes (besides their size) is that the larger one employs a copper piece that is placed near the mouthpiece which acts like a reed - the smaller tube uses a duct (see Figures 14-16). The player’s mouth covers the copper piece when blowing into the flute.

Tauba Pyirun

History and Classification

The music experts did not bring this instrument for the interview. The only information that I have is a brief description in Zau La’s book. The Kachin call this instrument a “free reed pipe” (Zau La 2012, 26). The tauba pyirun is associated with Lisu melodies but is accepted by all the Kachin as an instrument.37 This instrument is common throughout S.E. Asia and could be classified as “sets of oboes with cylindrical or conical bore, with fingerhole stopping” depending on the bore; 422.121-7 or 422.122-7 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 25).

Function and Uses

The only use listed in Zau La’s book is that the tauba pyirun can be employed at the manau (Zau La 2012, 26). Zau La’s account is not exhaustive and more research should be done in the future to explore the uses of Kachin sound instruments.

37 The Lisu are considered to be a Kachin sub-tribe by the Burmese but are considered a separate people group by some Kachin.
Construction and Playability

This instrument uses three bamboo flutes attached together with string and pitch or resin. The middle pipe (the largest in diameter and length) has six holes on the front and one on the back for the thumb. The outer two pipes function as drones.

Figure 17. Drawing of tauba pyirun - mouthpiece is on the left (Zau La 2012, 26).

Pyi Htawt Sumpyi

History and Classification

Most of the names of Kachin instruments describe how they are made or their physical characteristics. Pyi htawt means “tube capped flute” (Zau La 2012, 24). The H-S classification for this instrument is an “aerophone, flute with external duct, partly-stopped flute with fingerholes;” 421.211.32-7 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 25). The Kachin musicians were not able to give an exact history of this instrument. Zau La’s book states that it had a resurgence after World War I (Zau La 2012, 24). The history of many Kachin instruments are tied to their pre-Christian functions and uses (see below).

Function and Uses

This instrument was originally used by the Kachin youth in the Nla Dap (party house). As noted earlier, the Nla Dap was not only a party house but a place where young Kachins exchanged cultural knowledge and functioned as an informal music
school. The young men would use the flute to “signal” to everyone that a social time was going to happen. It was also used at funerals, memorials, house warming celebrations, and while herding oxen in the fields\(^3\) (Zau La 2012, interview).

---

\(^3\) Events such as weddings, funerals, and memorials – remembering a deceased loved one, have undergone various levels of contextualization since the Kachin converted to Christianity in the late nineteenth century. The Kachin are slowly learning how to celebrate these events in an indigenous manner including using their traditional instruments.
Figure 21. Closeup of the *Pyi htawt* mouthpiece taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Figure 22. Kachin musician playing the *Pyi htawt* – photo taken by the author, November 9, 2012.
Construction and Playability

All of the original Kachin flutes were made from bamboo. The end of the *pyi htawt* that is blown is completely blocked by a node or “eye.” A duct approximately one inch from end has been carved into the instrument. A knife is used to thin out the bamboo around the duct where a separate bamboo “cap” is placed, acting as the mouthpiece (see Figures 20 and 21). This “external duct” makes the instrument much softer dynamically than the *wunpawng sumpyi* – which is open on both ends. The *pyi htawt* has four holes on the front and one on the back – played by the thumb.

*Lanang Sumpyi/Pyi Lang Sumpyi*

History and Classification

The name of this “flute” literally means “all to hear” (Zau La 2012, interview). This instrument’s history is rooted in the work songs of the planting and harvest seasons. The Kachin would grab reeds that were in the fields and construct make-shift flutes to be played for the encouragement of the workers. The H-S classification for the *Larung Sumpyi* is an “aerophone, reedpipe with finger holes;” 422.111.2-7 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 27).

Function and Uses

As noted above, the *lanang sumpyi* was used to play work songs during the planting and harvest seasons. It was also used by the older men and women for relaxation around the fire at night. The Kachin leaders told me that when they hear this flute played today, it still reminds them of the harvest season (Zau La 2012, interview). The farmers would spend long hours after they planted the seeds watching for birds and
protecting their rice crops. They passed the time by playing this flute (Zau La 2012, 28).

**Construction and Playability**

The *larung sumpyi* traditionally was made from reeds but is now made from bamboo. This is an end-blown “flute” (a reed pipe according to H-S)\(^{39}\), which is closed by a bamboo “eye” or node – like the *pyi htawt*. The air excites a small, hair-line slit that runs parallel to the body of the flute (see Figure 27). The “flute” has four unevenly spaced slits used for finger holes. The end opposite where the musician blows air is open.

\(^{39}\) See discussion for the *pyi-man*.
Figure 24. Photo of the *Lanang Sumpyi* taken by the author, November 9, 2012. The tiny horizontal slit, in which the player blows air, is located on the far right in this photo.

*Larung Sum Hkran Nara Shingran*

**History and Classification**

The musicians did not bring this instrument to the interview. I believe that some of the larger, more fragile instruments were not brought because the musicians were flying to our teaching site at Maymyo. Zau La reveals in his book that this flute was enjoyed by the Kachin in the mountains of Mongolia for as long as they can remember. They call this a “long embouchure flute” (Zau La 2012, 27). The H-S classification for this flute is 422.31-7; “Single pipes with free reed and fingerholes” (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 27).

**Function and Uses**

According to Zau La’s book, this flute was used by the Kachin in their “down time” as they played music for their lovers. It was also used in the *nla dap* (party house) and can be used in the *Manau* dance – due to its loud dynamic potential (Zau La 2012, 27). The musicians said that this flute has its own unique tune/melody (Zau La 2012, interview).
Construction and Playability

This instrument is by far the largest of the Kachin “flutes,” at approximately forty-eight inches (Zau La 2012, 28). The musician sits down and holds the instrument at an angle, blowing into the mouthpiece that projects from the smaller of the two flutes – close to where they come together to form a “V.” The air goes up through the small flute and into the larger one via a small “connector” that bridges the tubes together at the top (see Figure 25). The mouthpiece contains a small reed.

Figure 25. Photo of Larung Sum Hkran Nara Shingran aluminum and bamboo (Zau La 2012, 21).
**Lisu Tauba Pyirawng**

**History and Classification**

The musicians were not able to bring this instrument as well. The Kachin consider this a “polyphony pipe.” According to Zau La’s book, this instrument is attributed to the Lisu people (Zau La 2012, 27). This instrument is similar to the Chinese “Sheng” and is common throughout S.E. Asia in various forms. The H-S classification for this instrument is “aerophone, sets of free reeds;” 412.132 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 24).

**Function and Uses**

This instrument is traditionally used in house warming ceremonies, as well as harvest time and other festive occasions (Zau La 2012, 27). As mentioned earlier, more research needs to be done regarding the function and uses of these instruments.
Construction and Playability

The *Lisu Tauba Pyirawng* is made from a gourd or squash-type plant with a long neck, which is dried and hollowed out. Four or five bamboo pipes are attached to the body of the gourd with pitch. Each flute has a piece of copper that is placed inside and vibrates when played (Zau La 2012, 27). Two of the flutes have finger holes with the others functioning as drones (Zau La 2012, interview).

![Figure 27. Photos of Lisu Tauba Pyirawng (Zau La 2012, 21).](image)

Dumba

History and Classification

The Kachin call this instrument, an “oboe” (Zau La 2012, 22). The H-S classification is an “aerophone, single reed pipe with free reed and fingerholes;” 422.31-7 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 27). Historically, for as long as the Kachin can remember, this instrument leads the *manau* dance (Zau La 2012, 22).
Function and Uses

The main function of the dumba is leading the manau dance.\textsuperscript{40} Because of its loud dynamic presence, it is able to project over the singing and drumming during the manau. This same projecting quality also makes it useful in signally over long distances for a gathering. Other uses include new crop celebrations, new year’s celebrations, playing work songs during the harvest, new church building dedications, and house warming celebrations (Zau La 2012, 22).

Construction and Playability

The dumba is made up of three separate parts. The body of this instrument is made from the hollow trunk of a Chyingma tree, approximately sixteen to twenty inches long.\textsuperscript{41} It needs to be dried slowly and carefully over a fire. Hot metal rods with the desired diameters are used to burn the finger holes. Four holes are on the front of the instrument for fingering – the hole closest to the mouthpiece is a little larger in diameter than the rest, and one hole on the back is played with the thumb. The mouthpiece is created by using the cartilage (stem) of a bird feather, carefully inserted into a piece of straw, which is then placed into a carved piece of bamboo that fits on the body of the instrument (see Figure 29). The bell of the instrument is made from an oxen or buffalo horn. Manau symbols, which tell how the Kachin migrated to Burma from China, are painted on the side of the instrument (Zau La 2012, 22).

\textsuperscript{40} All the leaders present during our interview agreed that without the dumba, the Manau celebration could not take place. (Zau La 2012, interview)
\textsuperscript{41} Everyone I asked in Burma could not give me an English equivalent to the Chyingma tree.
Figure 28. Photo of the *dumba* taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Figure 29. Closeup of the *dumba* mouthpiece taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Figure 30. Closeup of the *dumba* ‘horn’ taken by the author, November 9, 2012.
Figure 31. Kachin musician playing the *Dumba* - taken by the author, November 9, 2012.
Dumba Manau Tune
played by Zau La, November 7, 2012
transcribed by Wally Brath, December 24, 2012

quarter note = 90 bpm

![Musical notation]

Figure 32. Transcription of the manau tune by the author.

Kawa Pau

History and Classification

According to the Kachin this instrument was created by a man to console himself over his wife’s death. They call this instrument a “mouth harp.” It is also referred to as Pau Krawk, - krawk means “carving” (Zau La 2012, 25). The H-S classification for this
instrument is an “idiophone, idioglot guimbardes;” 121.21 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 16).

**Function and Uses**

This instrument is associated with sexuality. The young Kachin men played this instrument at night under the window at the home of a virgin to signal for her to come out and join them at *nla dap* (party house). The Kachin males previously believed that this instrument had seductive power over the females. Older couples also used this instrument as they relaxed at home (Zau La 2012, 25).

**Construction and Playability**

This instrument can be made from three types of material: *Sama Pau* (a type of bamboo), *Mai Chy Pau* (a type of tree), and *Magri Pau ni re* (copper). It is most commonly made from a rare type of bamboo that grows in single stalks by itself.  

Bamboo stalks are divided into sections by their “eyes” or nodes. Zau La said that the best piece of bamboo to use in making this instrument is the third section from the top of the bamboo stalk (Zau La, interview). Once a mature bamboo stalk is found, it is dried very slowly over a fire. Once the drying process is completed the musician used a sharp knife to carve this instrument (see Figure 33). When playing the *pau*, the musician uses his tongue and lips, consecutively blowing and sucking the air. The right hand is used to gently “pluck” the instrument, creating a “twang” sound (Zau La 2012, 26). The *pau* is approximately five inches long.

---

42 Bamboo usually grows in bunches. The musicians weren’t able to think of the name of this bamboo, which grows in a single stalk by itself.
Be Tang

History and Classification

The Kachin musicians were not sure about the history of this instrument other than it has always been used by the Kachin but is more closely associated with the Lisu, Maru, Zaiwa, and Lachek sub-tribes. The name literally means “strumming” (Zau La 2012, interview). The H-S classification for the be tang is a “chordophone, necked box lute;” 321.322-6 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 23).

Function and Uses

This instrument is used to accompany many of the Kachin traditional dances. The Kachin sub-tribe known as the Maru have a special dance (Samve) that can only be
performed accompanied by the be tang. The melodic patterns of the be tang will affect the way in which the dance unfolds (Zau La 2012, 28). This instrument is also used in festive occasions, as well as funeral rites. Traditionally, neighbors in the village visit the family of the deceased, singing and dancing all night long accompanied by the be tang (Zau La 2012, interview).

**Construction and Playability**

The resonator and neck of the be tang are made from wood. The instrument has four strings, which were originally made from horse-tail hair and played with a plectrum. The strings are tuned: G, D, C, G, (the low G and high G are an octave apart – G3, G4). Though the pitch center may change, the interval relationship of the strings is always maintained. This instrument is approximately twenty-four inches long.

**She Tang/Wunpawng Dawraw**

**History and Classification**

The Kachin consider this instrument a “pulled-guitar” or a “spike-fiddle.” It received its name because the musician pulls the bow over the strings. The musicians told me that they compare this instrument to a Western violin. In his youth Ze Hkawng remembers that this instrument was associated with the Lhaovo, Lachek, and Lisu sub-tribes (Zau La 2012, interview). The H-S classification for this instrument is a “chordophone, spike tube lute with a bow;” 321.313-71 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 23).

**Function and Uses**

The she tang was traditionally used by the Kachin in the mountain villages as a
solo instrument played by the men. It can be used to accompany many different types of Kachin songs but is most commonly used in “heart felt” love songs to women. The musician accompanied himself as he improvised lyrics to his lover (Zau La 2012, interview).

**Construction and Playability**

The *she tang* neck and tuning pegs are made from wood. The resonator is from a large piece of bamboo, covered by snake, frog, or deerskin, which is dried and stretched over the opening of the bamboo tube closest to the spike. The hide covers the sides and is attached at the bottom of the resonator (see figures 36-38). The strings were originally made from the tail of a horse. The instrument has three strings, which are tuned from lowest to highest: C4, D4, G4. The pitch center may change but the pitch relationship of the strings remains the same (Zau La 2012, interview). Nothing was mentioned in Zau La’s book about the bow. From my observation, it is made from a thin piece of bamboo that is bent and strung with hair from a horse’s tail.

![Figure 35. Photo of the *she tang* and bow (side view) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.](image-url)
Figure 36. Photo of the *she tang* and bow (top view) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Figure 37. Closeup of *she tang* resonator (top view) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.
Figure 38. Closeup of the *she tang* resonator (bottom view) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

*Chyingtawt*

**History and Classification**

The Kachin refer to this instrument as the “short drum.” In Zau La’s book all idiophones and membranophones that are played with the hand are called *lata* (Zau La 2012, 30). Kachin history tells the story of a time when tremendous rains from the sky and water from beneath the ground flooded the earth. *Ja nyi* (a man) and *Ja nga* (a woman) used the *chyingtawt* like a boat and waited inside for the flood to cease. One day they tried to poke a hole in the side of the drum with a gold needle to see if the water had receded, but water rushed in the drum, so they had to plug the hole with a leaf and wait longer. According to Za Lau’s book, this drum has been with the Kahcin people since 5000 B.C. (Zau La 2012, 30). The H-S classification for this instrument is a “membranophone, struck directly, tubular, barrel-shaped;” 211.221.1-8 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 18).
Functions and Uses

The musicians did not bring any of their membranophones to the interview. Zau La’s book does not mention any uses for this instrument. From my conversations with the Kachin leaders after Zau La and Ze Hkawng had flown back home, this drum is most likely used for dances in smaller settings other than the manau.\(^43\)

Construction and Playability

I was not able to see this instrument in person, and as noted above, Zau La’s book contains no information regarding this instrument’s uses or construction. There is a small photo in the book which looks as though the drum is made from wood with animal skin stretched over the top. The drum appears to be approximately twenty-four inches long.

_Htawng Ching_

History and Classification

This instrument is referred to by the Kachin as the “long drum.” The H-S classification for this instrument is a “membranophone, hour-glass shaped drum;”

\(^43\) The Kachin have a dance called the Htawngka which uses the smaller membranophones and idiophones.
Function and Uses

The htawng ching is primarily used in Kachin dances – especially the htawngka dance. The drum is also used for signaling Kachin in other villages, to commemorate a house warming and for harvest celebrations (Zau La 2012, 30).

Construction and Playability

The htawng ching is made from three different types of trees: kadung hpun, maga hpun, and ndaw daw hpun. The drum is approximately four feet long. The drum head is made of either goat or cow skin which is dried then soaked in water so it can be stretched over one end. The skin is then tied down. Once the drum head is attached, the musicians place a small “ball” of sticky rice or resin in the middle of the head, pressing it flat and letting it dry. This helps with the tone of the drum (Zau La 2012, 30). The musicians did not bring any of their percussion instruments to the interview, but I was able to find a htawng ching at a Kachin church in Mandalay and took photographs (see below).

---

44 The Htawngka dance differs from the Manau in that it only uses twelve or so participants and is highly choreographed (Zau La 2012, interview).

45 The Kachin have combined the United States holiday of Thanksgiving with the indigenous celebration of new crops (Zau La 2012, interview).
Figure 40. Photo of the *htawng ching* (closeup head) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Figure 41. Photo of the *htawng ching* (closeup top half) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Figure 42. Photo of the *htawng ching* (closeup bottom half) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Figure 43. Photo of the *htawng ching* (full length) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.
**Chying Galu/Manau Chying**

**History and Classification**

The Kachin call this instrument their “great drum” or “manau drum.” The H-S classification is “membranophone, double-skin, cylindrical drum;” 211.212.1 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 18). This instrument is an important cultural symbol to the Kachin and, along with the *dumba*, is essential for the *manau* dance (Zau La 2012, 31).

**Function and Uses**

As stated above, the *manau* dance cannot take place without this drum. Depending on the size of the *manau* festival (thirty to forty-thousand Kachin attending these events is not uncommon), up to three of these drums can be used (Zau La 2012, 31).

**Construction and Playability**

Due to the instrument’s size and scarcity, I was not able to see this drum in person while in Burma, nor does Zau La’s book have a useable photograph. The drum is approximately seven feet long and sits in a “cradle.” It is made from the wood of the *hpundaw* and *maga hpun* trees, which are “barreled” out so that they are hollow. The drum heads are dried goat or cow skin, soaked in water in order to stretch them over the ends, and then tied (as stated above – this is a double-skin, cylindrical drum). The drum is played by two musicians at the same time, on opposite ends, using their hands (Zau La 2012, 31). The book does not say how the heads are tuned, or if they are tuned to the same pitch.
**Bau Maung**

**History and Classification**

The H-S classification for this instrument is an “idiophone, individual gong;” 111.241.1 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 15). The Kachin also refer to this instrument as a “small gong.” This instrument has been used in Kachin rituals related to *nat* (spirit) worship from antiquity (Zau La 2012, 32).

**Function and Uses**

The *bau maung* was used by the Kachin elders of the village to call people for meetings. This instrument was used in pre-Christian times for *gabung* (*nat* or spirit worship).\(^{46}\) It was also used in their traditional funeral ceremonies – *maha si* (Zau La 2012, 32).

**Construction and Playability**

The gong is made from bronze, heated in a fire and shaped (see Figure 44). It is twelve to fourteen inches in diameter and played with a mallet (Zau La 2012, 32).

---

\(^{46}\) The Kachin voluntarily converted to Christianity in the late nineteenth century. Today, the Kachin leaders struggle with using this gong in Christian worship because of the strong associations it has with *Gabung* (Zau La 2012, interview).
Figure 44. Photo of the bau maung (front and back views respectively) taken by the author, November 9, 2012.

Shi Hkam Bau/Bau Kaba

History and Classification

I was not able to see this instrument in person, and little information is available in Zau La’s book regarding its history. This gong, along with the chying galu (manau drum), has historically centered around the manau dance. The Kachin call this instrument the “great gong” (Zau La 2012, 33). The H-S classification is an “idiophone, individual gong;” 111.241.1 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 15).

Function and Uses

The bau kaba, the dumba, and the chying galu are the key instruments in the manau dance. The bau kaba is also used in funerals and in pre-wedding ceremonies.

47 Kachin wedding rituals in pre-Christian times were a long process involving a separate “sending off” the bride ceremony (num wawn or la hta) and a receiving of the bride ceremony (hkungran poi) (Zau La 2012, interview).
Construction and Playability

This gong is essentially the same as the above *bau maung*, except that it is larger. Zau La’s book has no information regarding the diameter and I was not able to see the instrument in person. By studying similar gongs in S.E. Asia, I would imagine the *bau kaba* is approximately three to four feet in diameter.

Kawa Wahpawk

History and Classification

The Kachin refer to this instrument as a “bamboo clapper” (Zau La 2012, 33). The H-S classification is either 111.13 – “concussion trough clapper”, or 111.14 – “concussion vessel clapper” (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 14). The musicians did not bring this instrument to the interview and there is not a good photo in Zau La’s book.

Function and Uses

Kachin farmers originally used this instrument to keep birds from eating rice seeds. They set up these instruments in the ground around the field with strings attached. When they saw birds trying to steal the seed, they pulled the string, exciting the clappers and scaring off the birds. At some point the Kachin musicians began using them as musical instruments (Zau La 2012, 33).

Construction and Playability

The *kawa wahpawk* is made by taking a large diameter bamboo stalk and splitting the top of it into two pieces (still attached at the base). The musicians shake the base
which causes the bamboo to “clap” at the top (Zau La 2012, 33).

**A note about the last three instruments:**

The last three instruments in this chapter are not indigenous to the Kachin and have been “adopted” by the them from English military bands that colonized the country during the nineteenth century. Zau La’s book does not mention this fact. I remarked several times in my interview with the Kachin musicians that these instruments resemble those found in a military band. They seemed to down play this observation and related that these instruments are an important accompaniment to their dances (Zau La 2012, interview).

*Dumbu Chying*

**History and Classification**

The Kachin call this a “band drum” (Zau La 2012, 32). The H-S classification for this instrument is a “membranophone, double-skined, cylindrical drum;” 211.212.1-811 (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 18). As I mentioned above, this drum was imported to Burma by English military bands during the nineteenth century, resulting in what may be the first effects of globalization for the Kachin musicians.

**Function and Uses**

The Kachin have a *dumbu hpung* (musical band) that uses the *dumbu chying* (bass drum), the *tek tarek* (snare drum), the *shup sheng* (cymbals), and various Kachin flutes. This *dumbu hpung* configuration is used in almost every celebration and ceremony (Zau La 2012, 32).
Construction and Playability

The Kachin make this drum with goat or cow skin attached to a metal hoop. It is played with two mallets (Zau La 2012, 32).

Teik Tarek

History and Classification

The Kachin refer to this instrument as a “side drum” (Zau La 2012, 32). The H-S classification is 211.212.1-81; a “membranophone, individual cylindrical drum” (Hornbostel 1961, 17). This is another example of acculturation.

Function and Uses

See “Function and Uses” above for dumbu chying.

Construction and Playability

Made similarly to the dumbu chying and played with two sticks (Zau La 2012, 32). More research is needed to see how the Kachin have adapted this instrument in comparison to the original marching snare drums brought over by the British military.

Shup Sheng

History and Classification

The Kachin refer to this instrument as “cymbals” (Zau La 2012, 32). The H-S classification is 111.142; “idiophone, cymbals” (Hornbostel and Sachs 1961, 14).

Function and Uses

See “Function and Uses” above for dumbu chying.
Construction and Playability

The Kachin make these cymbals by heating and hammering brass or bronze metal to the desired shape. They are played in pairs by “crashing” them together (Zau La 2012, 32).
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Music is a product of man and has structure, but its structure cannot have an existence of its own divorced from the behavior which produces it. In order to understand why a music structure exists as it does, we must also understand how and why the behavior which produces it is as it is, and how and why the concepts which underlie that behavior are ordered in such a way as to produce the particularly desired form of organized sound (Merriam 1964, 7).

. . . Classifications are often synopses or terse accounts of a culture’s, subculture’s, or individual’s deep-seated ideas about music and instruments, as well as, in some cases, philosophical, religious, and social beliefs” (Kartomi 1990, 7).

Organology should not be a study of musical instruments in a vacuum but must keep in the forefront the reality that sound instruments in a given culture can only have meaning because they are tools in which human beings express their philosophical, religious, social, and musical values. I have been mindful throughout this study of moving past an “organography” – a classification that relies on a mere description of the sound instruments, to an “organology,” which attempts to understand the cultural factors that should be considered in a classification study. My goal has been to identify and classify the indigenous sound instruments of the Kachin in Northern Burma and to investigate their relationship to Kachin culture. A major challenge in this endeavor to discover an indigenous classification is the reality that Kachin culture has “moved on” from the animistic practices that defined the functions and uses of their sound instruments. I do not feel that I was able to uncover any “deep structures”\(^{48}\) in terms of how a Kachin classification of their sound instruments relates to other aspects of their culture. This would at the very least require more time for fieldwork in the country. One

\(^{48}\) John Blacking in his article, Deep and Surface Structures in Venda Music, explains that to understand “deep structures,” there must be a, “total participation,” in the culture in question along with an, “unconscious assimilation of the social and cognitive processes on which the culture is founded” (Blacking 1971, 95).
way to move forward in the future may be to look at non-musical taxonomies in Kachin culture compared to how they classify their sound instruments.

There was some progress made during my fieldwork in reference to how the Kachin think about classifying their sound instruments. There are clues in Zau La’s book, *Kachin Culture of Musical Instruments*, that I believe display a “culture-emerging” classification that will serve as a foundation for future study into Kachin sound instruments (Zau La 2012). When I first asked the musicians during my interviews about a classification, their response was, “We classify them like you do in the West – percussion, strings, and woodwinds” (Zau La, interview), but when I was transcribing Zau La’s book, I began to notice that he groups the instruments into two sections: percussion – which includes the *chyingtawt*, *htawng chying*, *chying galu*, *dumbu chying*, *tek tarek*, *shup sheng*, *bau maung*, *shi hkam bau*, and the *kawa wahpawk* (all the idiophones and membranophones), and the aerophones and chordophones – which includes the flutes, the *dumba*- oboe, the *be tang* – strummed guitar, and the *she tang* – spiked fiddle. This is not unlike the Javanese who favor percussion in their taxonomy and consider their wind and string instruments to be “beaten” (Kartomi 1990, 85). An additional discovery was their classification of reed pipes as “flutes” – even when a flute and reed pipe were joined together into one instrument, such as the *pyi-man*. As I report in chapter four, all of the indigenous names of the Kachin instruments describe the physical description, the construction material, the sound excitation, and/or the function of the instrument.49 This is similar to the Chinese *bayin* system in which the sound instruments are divided into categories based on the sounding material (Devale 1990, 9).

49 See “Kachin Sound Instruments Classification Chart” in the Appendix.
Another observation is the acculturation of the English military idiophones and membranophones. As I stated in chapter four, Zau La does not mention this fact in his book or during the interviews. All the Kachin leaders from the KBC Music Committee acted as though these were their instruments. The Kachin have an ensemble called *dumbu hpung* (musical band) that uses the Western bass drum, snare drum, and cymbals, along with various Kachin flutes. There is a sense that because the Kachin use these instruments in their music – the instruments are Kachin.

The term for Kachin “instrumental music,” *Wumawng Madum Sumhpa Hpung,* (literally - “all the Jinghpaw peoples playing different instruments in a group”) that surfaced during my interviews with the musicians is significant because it represents a fundamental desire for unity among the Jinghpaw sub-tribes which has been an important part of their identity and survival through much adversity in the last 150 years. This gives some insight into how the Kachin think about themselves culturally. In their definition of instrumental music the Kachin seem to be highlighting the communal nature of playing instruments in their culture. There is a real aspiration among the Kachin musicians I interviewed not to lose the knowledge of their traditional sound instruments. Along with a sense of identity, they are motivated to secure the knowledge and practice of their traditional instruments because of cultural pride, the connection with their past, and a conviction that they are God-given.

An encouraging development during my last visit to Burma (November 2012) was the KBC Music Committee leaders recognizing the need for and agreeing to create a degree program at the Kachin Baptist Seminary for church music leaders. In addition to the courses in biblical worship and music, the program would also include teaching
students to play indigenous Kachin sound instruments. The Kachin leaders believe that this will greatly enhance the worship in their churches and will aid in contextualizing Christian worship.

“To classify groups of objects such as musical instruments is a fundamental principle of human thinking” (Kartomi 1990, 3). Having done this study, I believe a direct correlation exists between the cultural assumptions and purpose of the classifying culture, and the distinguishing characteristics of the classification scheme. The researcher’s goal is to discover these relationships. So much more needs to be investigated in the Kachin context because an indigenous classification system is “based on more than the physical aspects of instruments, music terminology, or music typological conceptions as a whole” (Devale 1990, 9). It is my hope that this study will add something of value, not only to the scholarship of ethnomusicology, but to the Kachin’s desire to use their indigenous sound instruments to worship the God who created them.
APPENDIX

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Certification Documentation

October 6, 2011

Wally Brash
IRB Application 1177: Myanmar Musical Instrument Classification

Dear Wally,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your submitted application, and that no further IRB oversight is required unless you make changes to your protocol that would cause your application to be classified as human subjects research.

Your study does not classify as human subjects research because you are not collecting identifiable private information about living individuals [45 CFR 46.102(f2)].

Please note that this determination only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Application number.

If you have any questions about this letter, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your current status with the IRB, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
IRB Chair, Associate Professor
Center for Counseling & Family Studies

(434) 592-5054

Liberty University
40 Years of Training Champions for Christ: 1971-2011
Recorded Interview/Performance Consent Form

I (we), ________________________________________________________________
give permission to Wally Brath to archive and to use for non-commercial, non-profit research purposes the
interview/performance/photograph we have recorded today,

Date:_______________________________________________________________
Location:___________________________________________________________

Signed,

__________________________________________  date ___________________
__________________________________________  date ___________________
__________________________________________  date ___________________
__________________________________________  date ___________________
# Kachin Sound Instruments Classification Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kachin Instrument</th>
<th>Kachin Description</th>
<th>Kachin Classification Based on instruments physical description</th>
<th>Kachin Classification Based on instruments construction material</th>
<th>Kachin Classification Based on instruments sound excitation</th>
<th>Kachin Classification Based on instruments function</th>
<th>H-S Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>htu ren</em></td>
<td>Central embouchure flute</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>aerophone, without a duct, open, side-blown flute, without fingerholes; 421.121.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>wunpawng sumpyi</em></td>
<td>Side flute; name literally means -flute that is able to play all the different melodies from the seven sub-tribes.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>aerophone, open side-blown flute with finger holes; 421.121.12-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pyi-sun/ roi zaw</em></td>
<td>end-blown melody flute</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>aerophone, single end-blown flute, with internal duct; 421.221-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>larung sumpyi</em></td>
<td>Long free reed flute¹; name literally means -horn-like, long</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>aerophone, end-blown flute, with finger holes; 421.111.12-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pyi-man and Pyi-yep</em></td>
<td>Double tube flute; name literally means – two as one.</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>aerophone, double pipe with free reed; 422.32-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tauba pyirun</em></td>
<td>Free reed pipe</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>sets of oboes with cylindrical or conical bore, with fingerhole stopping, depending on the bore; 422.121-7 or 422.122-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ This instrument does not use a reed as in a reed pipe but most likely refers to the construction material.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kachin Instrument</th>
<th>Kachin Description</th>
<th>Kachin Classification Based on instruments physical description</th>
<th>Kachin Classification Based on instruments construction material</th>
<th>Kachin Classification Based on instruments sound excitation</th>
<th>Kachin Classification Based on instruments function</th>
<th>H-S Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>psyi htawt sumpyi</em></td>
<td>Tube capped flute</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>aerophone, flute with external duct, partly-stopped flute with fingerholes; 421.211.32-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lanang sum pyi lang sumpyi</em></td>
<td>Name literally means – all to hear</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>aerophone, reedpipe with finger holes; 422.111.2-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>larung sum hkran nara shingran</em></td>
<td>Long embouchure flute</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Single pipes with free reed and fingerholes; 422.31-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lisu tauba pyirawng</em></td>
<td>Polyphony pipe</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>aerophone, sets of free reeds; 412.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dumba</em></td>
<td>oboe</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>aerophone, single reed pipe with free reed and fingerholes; 422.31-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kawa pau</em></td>
<td>Mouth harp</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>idiophone, idioglot guimbardes; 121.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>be tang</em></td>
<td>strumming</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>chordophone, necked box lute; 321.322-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>she tang/ wampawng dawraw</em></td>
<td>Pulled guitar or spiked fiddle</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>chordophone, spike tube lute with a bow; 321.313-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>chingtawt</em></td>
<td>Short drum</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>membranophone, struck directly, tubular, barrel-shaped; 211.221.1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>htawng ching</em></td>
<td>Long drum</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>membranophone, hour-glass shaped drum; 211.241.1-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachin Instrument</td>
<td>Kachin Description</td>
<td>Kachin Classification Based on instruments physical description</td>
<td>Kachin Classification Based on instruments construction material</td>
<td>Kachin Classification Based on instruments sound excitation</td>
<td>Kachin Classification Based on instruments function</td>
<td>H-S Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chying galu/manau chying</td>
<td>Great drum or manau drum</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>membranophone, double-skin, cylindrical drum; 211.212.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bau maung</td>
<td>Small gong</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>idiophone, individual gong; 111.241.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shi h Kam bau/bau kaba</td>
<td>Large gong or great gong</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>idiophone, individual gong; 111.241.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kawa wahpawk</td>
<td>Bamboo clapper</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>concussion trough clapper; 111.13 or concussion vessel clapper; 111.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dumbu chying</td>
<td>Band drum</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>membranophone, double-skinned, cylindrical drum; 211.212.1-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tek tarek</td>
<td>Side drum</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>membranophone, individual cylindrical drum; 211.212.1-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shup sheng</td>
<td>cymbals</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>idiophone, cymbals; 111.142;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 45. Kachin VCD cover. (Ying)

Figure 46. Kachin VCD insert. (Ying)
Figure 47. Kachin VCD cover. (Ying)
REFERENCES


