

MUSIC USED IN FUNERAL RITES OF BUDDHISTS IN SRI LANKA: AN ETHNO-MUSICOLOGICAL STUDY

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Music is an art, which considers 'sound' as its medium. The main function of music is to present human expressions in an artistic and emotional manner. When considering the music practiced in the world, it can be classified into three types namely, folk music, classical music and popular music. There is a systematic approach to the grammar of classical music in both theoretical and practical studies. However, folk musicians do not pay much attention to the systematic grammar of music. Popular music is the other type of music. Social, economic and technological forces shape it. Popular music is closely linked to the social identity of its performers and audiences.

Ethno-musicology is a discipline, which has been developed under the influence of both sociology and anthropology. Therefore, Ethno-musicology can be identified as a subject or a field distinct from the study of both classical and folk music. Ethno-musicology has a different perspective, which focuses on the relationship between the institutions existing in society and music. Studying the relationship between social institutions and music is the main function of ethno-musicology and the main purpose of the ethno-musicologists. The ethno-musicologist thus analyzes music and its evolution comprehensively on the basis of sociology, psychology and anthropology.

In this study the music used at funerals of Sinhala Buddhists in Sri-Lanka will be examined from an ethno-musicological perspective. The paper discusses features such as communication to others of the funeral concerned and the evoking of pity by such funeral music.

In this study, I have used the methods such as literary surveys, participant observation and interviews in order to gather data. Based on this study I can conclude that art being a social institution revives the social stratifical concept and that it also enhances the dynamic nature of the cast system under social change.