



THE *PEK BU* PLAYED BY THE LUN BAWANG, ITS PERFORMANCE AND MUSIC

by

Connie Lim Keh Nie

INTRODUCTION

Pek bu, plucked bamboo zither, made from a node of a large bamboo known by its local name, *bulu' betung* by the Lun Bawang can be described as idiochordic, due to its physical outlook. The playing style is a combination of idiophone and chordophone families of musical instruments (Matusky, 1986). This idiochordic instrument is commonly found in Sarawak, Kalimantan and Sabah with different names known by its tribal group. Although they vary in size and tuning they are similar in construction.

This article aims to examine the construction of the instrument, performance technique and its repertoire. The discussion will be confined to the Lun Bawang *pek bu* players found in Long Tuma, Lawas Damit and Long Semadoh in Lawas District.

THE PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION

Pek bu is constructed from a length of large, straight bamboo tubing, which is closed at both ends by the natural bamboo nodes. The strings of the instrument are the bamboo strips which are finely cut from the surface of the bamboo tube itself. Thus, the strings are still attached to the tube at both ends. Two small rectangular-shape bridges (called *bulu'*), made of dried wood or bamboo are inserted beneath each end of the individual string. The bridge functions as a tuning peg, and can be moved to shorten or lengthen the vibrating string to set it to a specific pitch. A narrow slit is cut lengthwise through the bamboo wall almost to the full length of the tube to