

PIPAT TRADITION IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS: TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA

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Abstract: Pipat tradition would be referred to a type of traditional music which was once court music in Thailand. At present, the tradition is abundantly in practice in central Thailand. The details of Pipat tradition are discussed briefly in different perspectives in order to understand the whole panorama of the present Pipat tradition phenomena. In the post-genocidal war era, Pinpeat still prevails and retains its strength culturally. It can be reflected from widespread, intensive practice of the tradition in ritual or ceremony, as part of Cambodian way of life. The emergence of Donti Puenmuang has a great effect to the court Pinpat tradition in many facets.

Keywords: Pipat tradition, strength culturally, the emergence.

A. CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

THAILAND:

Thai culture and Pipat culture share several common characteristics. Cultural dimensions can be briefed as follow:

- Transmission, (teacher-pupil tradition)

Adult and senior people are always respected by younger members in society. The pupil must respect and obey their teachers. Once the new learner is accepted by a master as the disciple, there is a close link and relationship between them. This close tie is a major phenomena hidden in the process of transmission. Oral method is the important means of transmission of Pipat culture to the next generations.

- Status of musicians

The musicians are in different status in the society. There are number of musicians who play music for their living, mostly they are the owner of the ensemble inherited from their ancestors. These

musicians may be not proudly recognized in the society, but they are honored among musicians themselves. Some musicians also earn their living from other jobs at the same time, their status would be more recognized. The musicians who are proficient and well-trained would have a better chance to be appointed in governmental departments. These governmental music officers are more prestigious than village musicians. Music teacher in educational institutions of any level is probably the most preferable profession.

Cambodia:

- The nature and status of musicians

Cambodian musicians are not as highly prestigious as some other professions in society. There are three main statuses of musicianship in Cambodia i.e. a government officer, an employee in an NGO and a private musician. A musician in a governmental office would be considered to be a virtuoso and would command wider acceptance. Musicians who work with NGOs also get wide

recognition, but not as wide as those in governmental offices, than village musicians who are recognized only in the community level. Most of the village musicians also earn their living with other professions. National Artist proclamation is another mean to honor and acknowledge the virtuosity of the renowned musicians. There are, however, scarce financial contribution from the government.

Theoretical Concepts

Thailand:

Pipat culture has long been in Thai society for centuries. The principles, theories and concepts have been crystallized. When music is brought into educational curriculum, all those theoretical concepts have been studied, scrutinized, analyzed and synthesized systematically rather than orally. The major issues can be discussed as follow;

- “Thang”

“Thang” is probably the most important basic concept of Thai music. This concept has been mentioned by many musicians, music scholars and music teachers even they do not understand this concept in the same way. More clarifications need to be made.

- *Pitch name*

Thai music is now widely notated and well-documented but does not acquire any native pitch names. The cipher notation which was once used is not applicable at present. The pitch denominations used for Thai music are sol-fa

system written with Thai alphabets. Western notation is also applied.

- *Main melody*

Main melody is now accepted as the main element of Thai music. The Khong Wong Yai melody is accepted as the main melody of the piece.

- *Variation*

Variation is another important element in Thai music. In Pipat ensembles, this element is played by every melodic instruments in the ensemble other than Khong Wong, which maintains the main melody. However, Khong Wong Yai plays variation in solo manner.

- *Rhythmic element*

Ching and various kinds of drums execute this important element. States of “Chan” and the patterns of drum strokes are strictly rendered. Creation of a new drum pattern seems not to be in the interest of traditional musicians. However, variations on the traditional patterns for drums strokes are rather admired.

- *Form*

There are some numbers of new compositions with unconventional forms, but these forms are not in favor for traditional musicians and those who love traditional repertoires. The forms are transient. The traditional forms and types of music are consistently in practice e.g. Pleng Napat, Pleng Ruang, Pleng Thao, Pleng Tap.

Cambodia:

In Pinpeat tradition, transmission has been done with few explanations on theoretical and other related issues. There are some phenomena that can be discussed below;

- Pitch Denomination

To utter the melody of the Pinpeat repertoires, the musicians have been using a meaningless word like “no”. Pitch denominations are not assigned and used in the tradition. Until recently, when younger generations are interested in playing western music and western instruments, western pitch denominations are borrowed and applied in Cambodian traditional music. Practically, numeric and alphabetic denominations are used.

- The concept of main melody

In Pinpeat ensemble, there is no instrument that plays the main melody exclusively. According to Pinpeat music scholars, the main melody is on the vocal part. It is assumed that the main melody is most likely derived from the vocal part. Since the Sralai could play or imitate the vocal part, then the Sralai is accepted as the instrument that carries the main melody of the song.

- The concept of variations

The instruments other than Sralai play the variations of the song. Each instruments plays the variations in their own idioms and styles.

Practically, the Sralai does not play only the main melody but also make variations for itself.

- The concept of “Chaon” – melodic time level or melodic stratum

Theoretically, Cambodian Pinpeat compositions are designated to a time “level” or Chaon. The term “Thev”, a phrase of a particular melody, is the most understood example of the relativity of the three different Chaon-s. However, there is no elaborate theoretical explanation on the Chaon of the non-Thev melodies.

- The concept of rhythm; Ching strokes and drum patterns

Ching strokes does not relate to the Chaon. It is played at any appropriate speed to the song to maintain its tempo. Chaon is exhibited through the pattern of drum strokes. The drum patterns in Bey Chaon is twice longer than that of Pi Chaon and the Pi Chaon is twice longer than the drum pattern of Muoy Chaon. The length of the melody in different Chaon also falls in the same principle applied to the drum pattern.

B. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL OVERVIEW

Thailand

The history of Thailand is basically divided in to periods based on the emergence of the capitals of the country. “Sukhothai” (1238-1448) was the first known capital of the Kingdom of

Thailand. Before Sukhothai period, there were the Kingdom of Dhavaravadi, situated in the west of present Thailand, flourished between the 7th - 11th centuries; the Kingdom of Srivijaya, situated in the south of present Thailand, flourished between 8th - 13th centuries and the Kingdom of Khmer, situated in the east of present Thailand, flourished between 9th - 15th centuries. During Sukhothai period, the country ruled by the kings under the system of absolute monarchy. It is believed that the musical instruments and some kind of ensembles already existed but there is no clear evidence of physical appearances of the instruments, repertoires, functions of music and ensemble arrangements.

In Ayudhaya period, musical instruments had been developed and refined. The existence of the melodic percussion instruments such as Khong Wong and Ranat were more obvious than the Sukhothai period. It is believed that all 4 categories of Thai instruments; plucked, bowed, percussion and blown instruments, were already being used in the period. There were 4 types of predominant ensembles which are Khab Mai, Khrueng Sai, Mahori and Pipat ensembles. These ensembles were arranged in their respected standard form.

After the fall of Ayudhaya period, the new Chakri Dynasty established the new capital, Bangkok. All kinds of performing arts, both classical and folk, are highly developed. In this period, music too has been highly developed in

many aspects. Music plays an important in Thai people's life style in various occasion, for example, music is played in rituals, ceremonies, festive events and for entertainment purpose. There are creations of new instruments i.e. Ranat Thum, Khong Wong Lek, Ranat Lek, Klong Tapone, and a set of 7 gongs for Pipat Dukdamban. There are three main ensemble arrangements which are Pipat, Khruengsai and Mahori ensembles. These ensembles arrangement can be in several sizes. This period, abundance of music maestros and virtuosos musicians are also sees. Musical activities have long been under the patronage of Royal families. Music is included as a subject in educational curriculum and is eventually taught as a major subject in several universities.

b. Cambodia

Cambodian history has been dated as far back as the 1st century during Funan Kingdom. The most powerful and highly civilized kingdom was the Angkor Kingdom, which flourished between early 9th century and early 15th century. The kingdom was ruled by several kings successively until the kingdom declined and finally vanished. The most prominent architectures during the Angkor Kingdom were Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. It is believed that all kinds of performing arts, especially music, were highly developed and spread to the subservient neighboring kingdoms and they were assumed to be the prototype of several art forms in

the region. After the decline of Angkor Kingdom, Cambodia has been challenged by uncertain political crisis. The most dreadful political incident was the genocidal war of the Khmer Rouge in which approximately 2 million Cambodians were executed during Pol Pot regime (1975-1979).

After the war in Cambodia completely ended in 1989, many organizations both governmental and NGOs have revitalized all kinds of art forms in numerous ways. The Royal University of Fine Arts was first founded as Ecole des Arts Cambodgiens in 1918. The teaching in the institution ceased during 1975-1980 as most of the masters were killed. Currently, the university conducts traditional Khmer and western music, Khmer classical dance, modern drama, circus arts and folkloric dance and theater. The living treasures and maestros were recruited from villages to teach in the university.

C. PIPAT TRADITION IN THAILAND

There are six different Pipat ensembles known to date i.e. the Pipat Chatri, the Pipat Mai Khaeng, the Pipat Mai Nuam, the Pipat Dukdamban, the Pipat Nanghong and the Pipat Mon ensembles. The instruments and ensemble arrangements in each ensemble are different. Each Pipat ensemble takes on particular roles and functions. The details of the six ensembles are as follow;

a. *Pipat Chatri*, which seems to be the only folk Pipat ensemble in the category. The ensemble accompanies the Nang Talong (southern shadow puppet) and Lakon Chatri (southern folk play). The term “Pipat Chatri” is given by music scholars from central Thailand despite the fact that the term is not known to the local musicians. The ensemble consists of an oboe, a small barrel drum, a pair of single-headed goblet drums and a Ching being attached to the Mong’s box. The Ching and Mong are played by one musician. The position of instruments in the ensemble is not fixed.

b. *Pipat Mai Khaeng*, this ensemble is the prototype of the other Pipat ensembles. The basic instruments are Ranat, Khong Wong, Pi and rhythmic percussions. There are three sizes of the ensemble i.e. Pipat Mai Khaeng Khrueng Ha (five-instrument or small ensemble), Pipat Mai Khaeng Khrueng Khoo (doubled-instrument ensemble) and Pipat Mai Khaeng Khrueng Yai (large Pipat Mai Khaeng ensemble). This ensemble can be classified into two function-based types – Pipat Pithi (ritual, ceremonial and theatrical Pipat) and Pipat Sepa (Pipat for entertainment). The mallets used for Ranat Ek is the hard mallets (“hard mallets” means “Mai Khaeng”) which produces a loud noise. The blown instrument in Pipat Mai Khaeng ensemble is Pi Nai. The Tapone and Klong Tat are the drums used in Pipat Pithi while Klong Song Na or Klong Khaek are

used in Pipat for entertainment. The compositions to be played for Pipat Pithi are Napat, Ruang while for Pipat Sepa are Sepa music like overture, Thao and solo music.



Pipat Mai Khaeng performed for Wai Khru ceremony, at the residence of a music group owner in Bangkok. (Photo by Manop Wisuttiapat, 2009)

c. *Pipat Dukdamban*, an ensemble primarily performed for a particular opera-like performance called Lakorn Dukdamban since 1899. Neglecting the high pitch instruments, this ensemble consists mainly of low pitch instrument. Khong Wong Lek and Ranat Ek Lek are omitted. The ensemble has only one standard size. Soft mallets are used for Ranat Ek. The unique instrument is a set of 7 big gongs each hung on a stand encircling the player. These 7 gongs are tuned to the pitch of other instruments and

intermittently play the important notes of the composition. The Klong Tapone is a pair of Tapone placed in a slant position, this Klong Tapone plays the role of Klong Tat. The compositions to be played are those played by Pipat Mai Khaeng (music for theatrical performance).

d. *Pipat Mai Nuam*, or soft mallets Pipat ensemble. The mallets used for Ranat Ek is soft mallets. Klui substitutes Pi and Klong Tapone replaces Klong Tat in Pipat Mai Khaeng with an addition of Saw U to the ensemble. The ensemble is played for theatrical performance and for entertainment. The ensemble comes in three different sizes. The compositions to be played are the same as those for Pipat Mai Khaeng.

e. *Pipat Nanghong*, the sizes and the main instruments in this ensemble is similar to those of Pipat Mai Khaeng, but Pi Chava and Klong Malayu are used in this ensemble. This ensemble is used exclusively for funeral ceremony. Hard mallets is used for Ranat Ek. The basic compositions to be played by this ensemble is Phleng Ruang Nanghong.



*Pipat Nanghong at Wat Tritotsatep, Bangkok, in a funeral ceremony of a musician from the Fine Arts Department.
(Photo by Manop Wisuttiapat, 2009)*

f. *Pipat Mon*, this pipat ensemble is a combination of original Mon musical instruments and Thai Pipat instruments with a specific ensemble arrangement. The original Mon instruments are Khong Mon, Pi Mon, Tapone Mon and Chap Yai. The Thai Pipat instruments are Ranat Ek, Ranat Thum, Ranat Ek Lek, Ranat Thum Lek and Ching. Khong Mon Wong Lek was a new creation to form the Pipat Mon Khrueng Khoo. The ensemble is also played exclusively in funeral ceremony in Thai society. Hard mallets are used for Ranat Ek. The compositions to be played are the original Mon and new Mon compositions.



*“Cha-rernsilp” ensemble, Supanburi province.
(Photo by Manop Wisuttiapat, 2008)*

Present Phenomena and Practice of Pipat

Tradition

The six Pipat ensembles are still playing a significant roles in the daily life of Thai People. Pipat Chatri is discussed separately while the other Pipat will be discussed accordingly.

Southern Pipat Tradition : Pipat Chatri

This ensemble seems to be totally different from the Pipat tradition in the central Thailand in term of the instruments, ensemble formation and

repertoires. It would be, in the first hand, to clarify the present phenomena of the ensemble in some extent since this music is also related to Pipat culture in some way or another. This ensemble accompanies Nora and Nang Taloong. The traditional ensemble with traditional instruments is still widely found. The older generations including musicians and audiences still admire the traditional ensemble that plays the traditional tunes. Amidst the global changes, some ensembles with younger musicians, in order to develop their ensemble, would bring in western instruments e.g. electric keyboard and a drum set to play in the ensemble. The combination of the instruments of these two different cultures give a new perspective on their performing arts. However, the functions of the ensemble remain as they were before. The Nora and Nang Taloong are still preserving their performing styles. Some rituals are strongly in practice as well like Waikru.

Pipat Tradition in Central Thailand

Pipat tradition would be referred to a type of traditional music which was once court music. At present, the tradition is abundantly in practice in central Thailand. The details of Pipat tradition are discussed briefly in different perspectives in order to understand the whole panorama of the present Pipat tradition phenomena.

Sizes and arrangements of present Pipat ensembles

There are three sizes for Pipat Mai Khaeng, Pipat Mainuam, Pipat Nanghong and Pipat Mon i.e. Pipat Khrueng Ha (five-instrument or small ensemble), Pipat Khrueng Khoo (medium or doubled-instrument ensemble) and Pipat Khrueng Yai (large ensemble). The size of the ensemble depends on the melodic percussion instruments. When the ensemble comprises only Ranat Ek and Khong Wong Yai, it forms Pipat Khrueng Ha ensemble. When Ranat Thum and Khong Wong Lek are added to Pipat Khrueng Ha, it forms Pipat Khrueng Khoo. When Ranat Ek Lek and Ranat Thum Lek are added, it then forms Pipat Khrueng Yai. The rhythmic percussion and blown instruments in all ensemble sizes are the same.

The arrangement of the instruments in the Pipat Khrueng Yai are in two main rows. The front row (from right to left, facing the audience) are Ranat Ek Lek, Ranat Ek, Ranat Thum and Ranat Thum Lek. The second row are Khong Wong Yai (behind Ranat Ek) and Khong Wong Lek (behind Ranat Thum). Pi is behind Ranat Ek Lek and Tapone is on the right side of Pi. A pair of Klong Tat is behind Ranat Thum Lek while the Ching is a little backward between Ranat Ek and Ranat Thum. All other rhythmic percussions are at the back row of the ensemble. In Pipat Mai Nuam, Saw U is placed behind Ranat Thum Lek and a pair of Klong Tat is behind Saw U. The arrangement of the instruments in Pipat Khrueng Khoo and Pipat Khrueng Ha are of the same

principle as Pipat Khrueng Yai, only omitting the instruments that are not the members of the ensembles.

In Pipat Mon ensemble, Khong Mon-s are in the front row while the Ranat-s are in the second row behind Khong Mon-s.

Pipat Dukdamban has only one size with a unique arrangement. Ranat Thum is on extreme right, to the left is Ranat Ek and Ranat Thum Lek is on extreme left. A set of seven-suspended-gongs is at the back.

The physical appearances of the instruments

The body of Ranat types are generally made from teak wood. Mai Ching Chan is the favorite one and Mai Marid is considered the most valuable. The wooden surface either plain or carved finish and covered with gold leaves, decorated and design in different features. The ivory-decorated Ranat body is the most expensive and precious one. The bars of Ranat Ek and Ranat Thum are made of hard wood and bamboo respectively whereas the bars of both Ranat Ek Lek and Ranat Thum Lek are made of iron or brass.

The gongs of Khong Wong are made of brass. The high quality gongs are made by hammering the metal plate to shape the gong's rim and knob. The Khong Wong-s are made of bronze out of a secret formula in the mixture of the material.

The frame of Khong Wong is made of 4 rattan rods that are bent in to circular form leaving some gap between either ends with a piece of wood attached at both ends. The gongs are suspended on this rattan frame. The wooden part at both ends of the gong circle is plain for ordinary Khong Wong. On some Khong Wong, the wooden part is carved and covered with gold leaves in the same style as it is done on Ranat body.

The Tapone body is made of hard wood. The two heads are covered by buffalo hide. Stripes of leather are stretched around the edge of both sides to stretch the drum's faces. There is no decoration for Tapone body since the stripe of leather covers the whole body of the drum. The Tapone is put on a plain wooden stand or well-carved and decorated.

The body of Klong Khaek and Klong Tat are also found in two styles - plain and well-carved and decorated

There has not been much change to the Pi body. However, the raw material to make the instrument varies. Basically Pi Nai is made of hard plain wood, or with ivory decoration, or totally made of ivory. Mahogany wood is also a favorite wood for Pi Nai due to its light weight.

Tuning system

Thai tuning system, 7-eqidistance in an octave, is still the principal tuning system applied to all fixed-tuning instruments like Ranat, Khong

Wong and Chakhey. At present the pitch level of the Fine Arts Department seems to be the best reference for the standard pitch tuning. The tuning is still executed by listening rather than using any electronic device.

Standard pitch position concept rather than standard pitch level concept

At present, even the pitch level used in the Fine Arts Department is the standard reference for tuning the instruments of most ensembles or groups. Playing Thai traditional repertoires is still based on the standard pitch position of the Ranat bar or gong of the Khong Wong. For example, if a piece is assigned to start on the highest pitch gong of Khong Wong Yai, the musician must start the song on that position no matter what the pitch level is.

Compositions and repertoires

Pipat tradition in Thailand is still following the traditional way of playing, the repertoires are mostly the old ones. There are few recently composed repertoires in Napat and Ruang categories. Pleng Hang Khrueng (a short additional song played after playing the main repertoire), on the other hand, are created relatively more.

Practice

I. Initiation to Pipat tradition

To start learning Pipat music and instrument, one must approach his favorite renowned master. The master would appreciate if

the novice follow the custom of being a pupil by offering the devoting objects, such as a piece of white cloth (or a handkerchief) flowers, candle, incense stick and few money (preferably 6 or 12 baths). These objects are put in a metal bowl “Khan”, and then presented to the master as a request for being his pupil.

The master starts the first lesson which is usually “Satukam” and the Evening Prelude suite, followed by Pleng Ching Pra Chan. Then the master will, on his own consideration, start other repertoires.

II. Performance, role and function

The performances, roles and functions of each Pipat ensemble are as followed;

- Pipat Mai Khaeng

Pipat Mai Khaeng is generally performed in three different functions i.e. Pipat Mai Khaeng for ritual and ceremony, Pipat Mai Khaeng for theatrical performance and Pipat Mai Khaeng for Sepa music performance. Pipat Mai Khaeng for ritual and ceremony is performed for both royal ceremonies and the ceremonies for layman e.g. Royal Ploughing ceremony, Wai Kru ceremony and ordination ceremony. Pipat Mai Khaeng for theatrical performance is performed for several kinds of traditional performing arts e.g. Khon and Nang Yai. Pipat Sepa is performed for entertainment or for concert.

- Pipat Dukdamban

The only Pipat category that was created exclusively for a particular purpose – Lakon Dukdamban performance. The practice of Pipat Dukdamban is just to revitalize and preserve this unique tradition rather than practicing it as for the aesthetic reason itself.

- Pipat Mai Nuam

The function of Pipat Mai Nuam seems to function as the Pipat Mai Khaeng does but in a smaller dimension. Pipat Mai Nuam is also performed for ritual and ceremony when it is not fully official. Theatrical performance, like Lakon Nok and Lakon Nai is still accompanied by this ensemble and music. Pipat Mai Nuam is another alternative performed for entertainment when the function is in a limited space and needs a softer music.

- Pipat Nanghong

This Pipat tradition seems to be obsolete for the general people. This tradition can be seen only in royal funeral, high rank officers and people in the field of music. The practice, role and function of this ensemble are almost entirely substituted by Pipat Mon.

- Pipat Mon

The Pipat Mon music is the only Pipat culture that is frequently seen and widely in practice in present Thai society. Again, even the majority of the general people consume Pipat Mon as a part of funeral ceremony. The host mostly do not understand the meaning of the

repertoires nor appreciate the functions of the Pipat Mon in the ceremony. It is again symbolic.

It is observable that the functions of all Pipat music are not much appreciated and do not play as much important role as it was before. Among the musicians and people in the other fields related to music, they still keep practicing music in the traditional way, like Wai Kru ceremony. In some cases, the practice is loosen up due to the change of the present society. For the people outside music field, they just consume Pipat tradition as symbol. They have less understanding and appreciation on the meaning and the functions of music.

D. PINPEAT TRADITION IN CAMBODIA

The music traditions in Cambodia at present should be discussed first, followed by the Pinpeat tradition in details. Different kinds of music tradition at present are as follow;

a. *Arak music (Phleng Arak)*

Arak music is the ceremonial music for spirit worship. The Arak ensemble consist of Khse Muoy (plucked monochord), Tror Khmer (three-stringed fiddle), Chapey Dang Veng (long-necked lute), Pey Prabauh (double-reed pipe), Skor Arak (fat-bodied drum), Ching (small finger cymbal) and Chamrieng (vocal).

Kar music (Phleng Kar)

Kar music is played exclusively for wedding ceremony. The Phleng Kar ensemble consists of Khloy (duct flute), Krapeu (three-stringed floor zither), Tror So Tauch (medium-high-pitched two-string fiddle), Tror Ou (low-pitched two string fiddle), Khim (hammered-dulcimer), Ching (small finger cymbal), Skor Arak (goblet drum) and Chamrieng (vocalist).

b. ***Pinpeat music (Phleng Pin Peat)***

Pinpeat music and ensemble is the traditional court music of Cambodia. The ensemble comprises wind and percussion instruments i.e. a Sralai Tauch (high-pitched oboe), a Sralai Thom (low-pitched oboe), a Roneat Ek (high-pitched xylophone), a Roneat Thung (low-pitched xylophone), a Roneat Dek (high-pitched metallophone), a Kong Tauch (high-pitched gong circle), a Kong Thom (low-pitched gong circle), a pair of Ching (finger cymbal), a Sampho (small double-headed barrel drum), a pair of Skor Thom (large double-headed barrel drums) and Chamrieng (vocalist).

c. ***Mahori Music (Phleng Mahori)***

Mahori music is played solely for secular affairs such as banquets, for entertainment, as well as to accompany the Mahori play and accompany the dances. The Mahori ensemble originally consisted of melodic percussion, strings, wind and rhythmic instruments. The instruments in the ensemble are Roneat Ek (high pitch xylophone), Roneat Thung (low pitch xylophone), Khloy (duct

flute), Tror Che (high pitch two-string fiddle), Tror So Tauch (medium low pitch two-string fiddle), Tror Ou (low pitch two-string fiddle), Krapeu (three-string floor zither), Khim (dulcimer), Ching (finger cymbal), Thaun-rumanea (a set of two drums) and Chamrieng (vocalist). In some cases, Kong Tauch (small gong circle) and Kong Thom (big gong circle) are added.

d. ***Other musical genres***

There are several other musical genres in music tradition in Cambodia but they are not as widely popular as the musical genres mentioned above. There are Kong Skor Music, Pey Keo Music, Skor Chneah Music, Pradall Music, Yi-ke Music, Basak Music, Ayai Music, Chamrieng Chapey Music, Ken Music, and Kantrum music.

Among Cambodian popular music, Ramvong and Ramkbach, are in favor for Cambodian people in social function.

e. ***Pinpeat in Cambodia***

In the post-genocidal war era, Pinpeat still prevails and retains its strength culturally. It can be reflected from widespread, intensive practice of the tradition in ritual or ceremony, as part of Cambodian way of life. The details of present Pinpeat are discussed below.



*A Pinpeat ensemble at Mr. Puy Kim Sean's residence, Battambang
(Photo by Manop Wisuttipat, 2008)*

f. *The Instruments and Ensembles*

The instruments and the ensembles can be discussed separately as follow;

1). *The instruments*

- Sralai

Sralai is a quadruple-reed oboe. There are two sizes of Sralai namely Sralai Tauch and Sralai Thom. The body of Sralai is made of hard wood i.e. Kakor, Beng or Neangnuon. The reed, made of palm leave, is attached to a brass tube in the upper end of the Sralai. The pitch of the Sralai Tauch is a fourth higher than Sralai Thom.

- Roneat

There are three types of Roneat – Roneat Ek, Roneat Thung and Roneat Dek. This xylophone-type instrument has two main parts, the body and the bars. The body is made of hard wood while the bar of Roneat Ek is made of bamboo or hard wood. The bar of Roneat Thung is made of bamboo but the bar of Roneat Dek is made of brass or bronze. The bars of Roneat Ek

and Roneat Thung are suspended over the body. The bar of Roneat Dek is laid on the body. The Roneat Ek and Roneat Dek have 21 bars while Roneat Thung has 16 or 17 bars. The Roneat Ek and Roneat Thung are tuned by adding or removing the tuning wax underneath both ends of the bars. The Roneat Ek bars that made of hard wood can be tuned by trimming the wood underneath both ends. The Roneat is played by two mallets, each mallet held in each hand of the player who sits cross-legged behind the instrument. The body is designed and decorated in several patterns – plain or well-carved with color finish.

- Kong

There are two types of Kong – Kong Thom (big gong) and Kong Tauch (small gong). The gongs are suspended on a circular rattan frame. Kong Thom has 16 or 17 gongs while Kong Tauch has 16, 17, or in some cases 18 gongs. Kong is played by a player who sits in the center of the instrument and holds a mallet in each hand.

- Sampho

The Sampho is a two-headed barrel drum placed horizontally on a stand. The body, made of wood called Khnor, Kakos, Rang or Beng, is hollowed out, bulging at the center and gradually tapering at both ends leaving one end a little bit smaller than the other. The drum face is covered by calfskin, the two faces are stretched by rattan,

skin stripe or nylon cord. Sampho is tuned by tuning paste applied on the drum's face.

Sampho is the most respected instrument. Before the performance, musicians usually pay homage to the god and teacher then place the incense on the Sampho.

- Skor Thom

The Skor Thom is a large barrel drum that usually comes in pair, one has low pitch and the other has a higher pitch. Skor Thom is made of wood that is either Chres, Koki or Tnot. The body of the Skor Thom is hollowed out with a slight bulge in the middle and tapered at both ends that are covered with ox hide or buffalo hide. The hide is stretched and attached to the body of the drum by several pegs around the body. There is a ring at the body of Skor Thom. The ring is hung to a hook that attaches to a tripod-like wooden stand holding the Skor Thom in a slant position. Skor Thoms are beaten with two wooden or bamboo sticks by a player sits behind the drum. Finishing on the body of the drum is usually plain with a little decoration or painting.

- Ching

The Ching is the finger cymbal made of thick and heavy bronze in cup-shape with narrow rim. The Ching comes in two pieces which are joined by a cord, about 30-40 cm. long, that passes through the center of each cup. The open stroke sounds "ching" which is considered to be the unaccented

beat while the close stroke sounds "chep" and considered to be the accented beats.

2). *Ensemble*

There are only two sizes of Pinpeat ensemble – small and large. The small ensemble consists of Roneat Ek, Kong Thom, Sralai Thom, Sampho, Skor Thom and Ching. In the large Pinpeat ensemble there are Roneat Thung, Kong Tauch, Sralai Tauch and Roneat Dek in addition to small ensemble. The instruments in the ensemble are set in the standard arrangement and position. The front row of the ensemble are Roneat Dek on the right, Roneat Ek at the middle and Roneat Thung on the left. Kong Thom is behind Roneat Ek and Kong Tauch is behind Roneat Thung. Sralai Tauch is on the right of Kong Thom and Sralai Thom is on the left of Kong Tauch. The Sampho is next to Sralai Tauch and the Skor Thom is next to Sralai Thom. Ching is a little backward in between Roneat Ek and Roneat Thung.

3). *Musical Instrument Makers*

Musical instruments makers in Cambodia are musicians themselves and make instruments for their personal use. In most cases, the musicians make the instruments that they play. If his expertise is recognized, he will be requested by other musicians to make the instruments for them. In some cases, a musician becomes more successful as an instrument maker than as a musician.

However, there are some musical instruments factories that manufacture instruments as mass production for business. These factories acquire some electric machines to produce gongs, Roneat Dek bar, drum's body and other instruments adequately.

4). *Performing Practice*

Cambodian musicians, especially Pinpeat, still strictly practice the Sampeah Kru ceremony. Before playing Pinpeat music, in a performance or practicing, they always practice the ceremony faithfully. The sacrificial objects must be prepared, the incenses and candle are lit and prayers are recited, then the musicians place the incense on the Sampho. The ensemble will always start with "Sartugar" which is considered the "teacher song".

- *Theoretical Concepts*

In Pinpeat tradition, transmission has been done with few explanations on theoretical and other related issues. There are some phenomena that can be discussed below;

- *Pitch Denomination*

To utter the melody of the Pinpeat repertoires, the musicians have been using a meaningless word like "noi". Pitch denominations are not assigned and used in the tradition. Until recently, when younger generations are interested in playing western music and western instruments, western pitch denominations are borrowed and applied in

Cambodian traditional music. Practically, numeric and alphabetic denominations are used.

- *Tuning system*

Theoretically, Cambodian melodic percussion instruments are tuned to 7-equidistance tuning system. The musicians are still tuning their instrument by listening, causing the imperfect tuning in the system. Sralai seems to have flexible interval since the pitches also depend on the blowing technique.

- *The Concept of Scale and Key*

Cambodian traditional music are basically based on pentatonic and heptatonic scales. The structure of the pitches of pentatonic scale are 1 2 3 5 6 8 while heptatonic scale is 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8. The repertoires are played in two different keys. Pinpeat repertoires are played in the key of G while Mahori repertoires are played in the key of C.

- *The concept of main melody*

In Pinpeat ensemble, there is no instrument that plays the main melody exclusively. According to Pinpeat music scholars, the main melody is on the vocal part. It is assumed that the main melody is most likely derived from the vocal part. Since the Sralai could play or imitate the vocal part, then the Sralai is accepted as the instrument that carries the main melody of the song.

- *The concept of variations*

The instruments other than Sralai play the variations of the song. Each instrument plays the variations in their own idioms and styles. Practically, the Sralai does not play only the main melody but also make variations for itself.

- The concept of "Chaon" – melodic time level or melodic stratum

Theoretically, Cambodian Pinpeat compositions are designated to a time "level" or Chaon. The term "Thev", a phrase of a particular melody, is the most understood example of the relativity of the three different Chaon-s. However, there is no elaborate theoretical explanation on the Chaon of the non-Thev melodies.

- The concept of rhythm; Ching strokes and drum patterns

Ching strokes does not relate to the Chaon. It is played at any appropriate speed to the song to maintain its tempo. Chaon is exhibited through the pattern of drum strokes. The drum patterns in Bey Chaon is twice longer than that of Pi Chaon and the Pi Chaon is twice longer than the drum pattern of Muoy Chaon. The length of the melody in different Chaon also falls in the same principle applied to the drum pattern.

- Playing techniques

The playing technique of each instrument in the ensemble is quite unique. Sralai uses the technique of running melody with long legato playing. Roneat Ek plays running melodies mostly in octave with occasionally the 4th and 5th

intervals. The 3rd and 6th are very rare. Roneat Ek also plays tremolo when there are longer note values in the composition. The use of octave and forth are executed by both hands simultaneously and alternately. Syncopation is an important technique for Roneat Thung. The Tremolo is generally used when the composition has longer note values. Kong Thom has more or less the same techniques of playing as that of Roneat Thung with less syncopation than the latter. The Sampho player uses both hands simultaneously and alternately to produce different sounds on the recognized patterns with closed and opened strokes of palms and fingers. The pair of Skor Thom marks the down beats and phrases of the song. Ching is played by striking the two cups together with opened and closed strokes.

- Repertoires

The Pinpeat repertoires are basically of two types; one is the Laim (dance) pieces and the other is the non-dance pieces. The Laim pieces are the typical repertoires for the Pinpeat ensemble and can be played solely or grouped in to suite forms.

The Laim pieces are played to accompany the dance in accordance with the scene, action and other dance related factors. Laim pieces are also played at a certain time of monks prayer during merit making ceremony.

Hom Rong, a kind of Pithi Sampeah Kru or Pithi Buong Suong, is a ceremony held by musicians. In this ceremony, there are number of

set of repertoires to be played as a suite. There are 32 pieces in Homrong Thom and 12 pieces in Homrong Tauch.

- *Occasion and function (and process) of performance.*

The Pinpeat ensemble accompanies court dance, mask dance, shadow puppet and religious as well as other non-religious ceremonies. In the theatrical performance, the ensemble fundamentally plays Laim pieces in accordance with actions, movements and moods of the actors and actresses.

In a religious ceremony like the merit making ceremony, Pinpeat ensemble plays the Hom Rong suite at the beginning of the ceremony followed by many different Laim pieces in the ceremony for both ritual and religious functions.

In a votive offering ceremony, Pinpeat ensemble plays the Hom Rong suite at the beginning, then Laim pieces are played throughout the all-day-long performance. Pithi Sampeah Kru or Pithi Buong Suong is always accompanied by Pinpat ensemble by which the Homrong pieces are played.

E. CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Following are the issues discussed under the cultural dimension of Pinpeat tradition.

- *The nature and status of musicians,*

Cambodian musicians are not as highly prestigious as some other professions in society. There are three main statuses of musicianship in Cambodia i.e. a government officer, an employee in an NGO and a private musician.

A musician in a governmental office would be considered to be a virtuoso and would command wider acceptance. Musicians who work with NGOs also get wide recognition, but not as wide as those in governmental offices, than village musicians who are recognized only in the community level. Most of the village musicians also earn their living with other professions.

National Artist proclamation is another mean to honor and acknowledge the virtuosities of the renowned musicians. There are, however, scarce financial contribution from the government.

- *Group/school*

In the governmental agencies, there are authorities that nurture and promote the Pinpeat tradition like Royal University of Fine Arts and Department of Performing Arts.

Cambodian cultures have been restored by NGOs and private organizations e.g. Chenla Theatre, a private theatre and Sovanna Phum Theatre and Arts Gallery in Phnom Penh; School of Arts for Cambodian traditional dance and music, and the hmer Organization Cultural Development, a center teaching traditional music and dance for orphaned children in Siem Reap

province; Phare Ponleu Selpak In Battambang province.

There are several music groups across the country which are still active. In Kandal province, almost every temple owns a Pinpeat ensemble. The music group of Mr. Puy Kim Sean seems to be the strongest music group in Battambang province. In Siem Reap, Mr. Mongkol Um, who is also a musician himself, nurtures a Pinpeat and other types of ensemble.

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- Transmission

Transmission of Pinpeat music is done in two main manners – formal system and private Pinpeat teaching. The formal system of transmission is conducted in a university and in NGOs premises. Private teaching is done mostly in the master's residence. The transmissions in both manners are carried out orally and still follow the old tradition of teaching and learning process.

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Publications

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 - Thai Music Transmission of Bang Lampoo music group : an oral tradition
 - An Analysis on Thai Classical Vocal Techniques in H.R.H. Princess Sirindhom’s lyrics compositions.
- Books
 - Theoretical concept in Thai Music
 - Thai Music Notation
 - Thai Music Analysis
 - Thai Music composition
- Articles
 - “LI-GE” Traditional Thai Folk Play
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