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TRANSMITTING TRADITIONAL LANNA MUSIC IN THE MODERN-DAY CITY OF  
CHIANG MAI

Mr. Joel Akins

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Thai Studies

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# Chulalongkorn University จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Thesis Title

TRANSMITTING TRADITIONAL LANNA MUSIC IN THE  
MODERN-DAY CITY OF CHIANG MAI

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วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ศึกษาเรื่องของการสืบทอดดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนาในเมืองเชียงใหม่ซึ่งเป็นศูนย์กลางของภาคเหนือของไทย วัตถุประสงค์ของวิทยานิพนธ์ประการแรกคือ ให้ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับวิธีการต่างๆที่ใช้สืบทอดดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนาในเมืองเชียงใหม่ในปัจจุบันโดยละเอียด วัตถุประสงค์ประการที่สองคือ วิเคราะห์ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างแนวทางการสืบทอดดังกล่าวกับความหลากหลายของรูปแบบดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนาทั้งแบบดั้งเดิมและประยุกต์ซึ่งมีอยู่ในเชียงใหม่ในปัจจุบัน

วิทยานิพนธ์พิจารณาถึงวัตถุประสงค์ทั้งสองประการโดยการทำวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพซึ่งประกอบด้วย การสัมภาษณ์ การสังเกต และการวิเคราะห์งานวิจัยที่มีอยู่แล้ว ผู้เขียนอาศัยการรวบรวมและเปรียบเทียบข้อมูลเหล่านี้ในการนำเสนอประวัติวัฒนธรรมดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนาในเชียงใหม่ และอธิบายวิธีการต่างๆที่ใช้สืบทอดดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนาในเมืองเชียงใหม่ในปัจจุบันโดยละเอียด ในการตอบวัตถุประสงค์ของวิทยานิพนธ์ประการแรก งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้เห็นว่าการสืบทอดดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนาในเมืองเชียงใหม่มีทั้งความหลากหลายและเป็นที่แพร่หลาย ประการที่สอง ผู้เขียนได้สังเกตความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการสืบทอดซึ่งมีความหลากหลายมากขึ้น เช่น การใช้เทคโนโลยี การสอนดนตรีพื้นเมืองในห้องเรียน กับการขยายรูปแบบดนตรีล้านนาที่สืบทอดมาจากดนตรีพื้นเมืองดั้งเดิม

การวิเคราะห์สุดท้ายของวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่า ความหลากหลายของการสืบทอดดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนาในเมืองเชียงใหม่สามารถแบ่งได้เป็นสองระบบ ระบบแรกเป็นการระบุนว่าการจัดกิจกรรมการสืบทอดนั้นๆเป็นทางการหรือไม่ เพียงใด และระบบที่สองระบุนว่าผู้สืบทอดกับผู้รับมีความประสงค์ที่จะสืบทอดดนตรีล้านนาในกิจกรรมนั้นๆเพียงใด ในปัจจุบัน สาเหตุหลักที่ทำให้การสืบทอดที่เป็นทางการกับการสืบทอดที่ไม่เป็นทางการมีความใกล้เคียงกันมากขึ้นคือ ระบบวิทยากรดนตรีพื้นเมือง ล้านนาในเชียงใหม่ ส่วนสาเหตุที่กำลังทำให้กิจกรรมที่มุ่งสืบทอดกับกิจกรรมที่ไม่มีจุดมุ่งหมายในการสืบทอดดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนามีความคล้ายคลึงกันมากขึ้นคือ ระบบเทคโนโลยี

ในส่วนสุดท้าย วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ได้ผลสรุปว่าสภาพดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนาในเมืองเชียงใหม่เป็นการแสดงออกที่หลากหลาย มีชีวิตชีวา และเป็นธรรมชาติในสังคมเชียงใหม่ปัจจุบัน หลักการสืบทอดที่มีการพัฒนาตั้งแต่อดีตจนถึงปัจจุบันมีสามประเภท ได้แก่ มุขปาฐะ ครูพักหลักจำ และการสืบทอดที่มาจากดนตรีตามงานต่างๆ การขยายตัวของ การสืบทอดสามวิธีนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่าวิธีการสืบทอดในปัจจุบันล้วนสืบเนื่องมาจากรากฐานการสืบทอดดั้งเดิมทั้งสิ้น ดังนั้น จึงสามารถยืนยันได้ว่ากลุ่มศิลปินกับนักวิชาการได้ค้นพบวิธีที่จะทำให้ดนตรีพื้นเมืองล้านนามีบทบาทในวัฒนธรรมดนตรีเมืองเชียงใหม่ในปัจจุบันอย่างแท้จริง

สาขาวิชา ...ไทยศึกษา..... ลายมือชื่อ.....

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KEYWORDS : MUSIC TRANSMISSION / TRADITIONAL MUSIC / FOLK MUSIC / LANNA MUSIC / NORTHERN THAI MUSIC / URBAN CULTURE

JOEL AKINS : TRANSMITTING TRADITIONAL LANNA MUSIC IN THE MODERN-DAY CITY OF CHIANG MAI. THESIS ADVISOR : BUSSAKORN BINSON, Ph.D, 112 pp.

This thesis studies the transmission of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai, the urban center of northern Thailand. The first objective of this thesis is to provide a detailed record of the various ways traditional Lanna music is being passed on in the city of Chiang Mai. The second objective is to analyze the relationship between these different types of transmission and the spectrum of traditional and adapted styles of Lanna music in Chiang Mai.

These objectives are addressed in this thesis through qualitative research. Interviews, observations and document research provide most of the information in this thesis. By corroborating the various accounts, the author has been able to present historical background on traditional Lanna music culture in Chiang Mai, followed by a detailed record of the different ways traditional Lanna music is currently passed on in the city. In reference to the first objective, it was determined that the activities for transmitting traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai are both diverse and widespread. In considering the second objective, a non-causal link was observed between the increased variety of transmission – using such modern means as technology and formal classroom instruction – and the recent expansion of musical styles derived from traditional Lanna music.

The final analysis presented in this thesis shows that the range of activities that transmit traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai today can be organized on two scales: from informal to formal transmission, and from deliberate to incidental. At present, the main factor blurring the distinction between formal and informal transmission is the system of *withayakon* (lit. expert, in this case a teacher or accomplished musician/ensemble); the principle agent responsible for breaking down the division between deliberate and incidental transmission is technology.

This research concludes that the traditional Lanna music environment in modern-day Chiang Mai is a diverse, vibrant and natural expression of Chiang Mai society today. The diversification of three key types of historical transmission – *mukhapatha* (master-pupil rote instruction), *khru phak lak jam* (observation and imitation) and transmission through music at events – show the extension in modern times of the foundations of traditional Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai. This confirms that artists and academics have successfully found ways to incorporate traditional Lanna music into the living music culture of modern-day Chiang Mai.

Field of Study : Thai Studies ..... Student's Signature .....

Academic Year : 2010 ..... Advisor's Signature .....



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I of course owe a large debt of gratitude to the musicians, researchers, teachers, students and professionals who gave up their time to grant interviews. Not only did they contribute important information to my understanding of Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai, but they also went out of their way to help me in my research, by recommending other interviewees, printed sources and opportunities for observation. Though this group is too numerous to list here, their names can be found as interview subjects in the references section of this thesis. Nonetheless, Thitinadda Maneewan of the Social Research Institute at Chiang Mai University, deserves special recognition for her contributions through interviews and her own research reports to my understanding of traditional Lanna music culture in modern-day Chiang Mai.

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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Importance and Background of the Issue

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the once grand city of Chiang Mai had been virtually reduced to a ghost town by warring and a shortage of resources. When the Thai Yuan, led by *Chao* Kawila, finally regained control of the city and the kingdom, they had the daunting task of reintroducing population, basic services as well as cultural life into the city. As recorded in the Chiang Mai Chronicle, they placed notable emphasis on reestablishing music and performance traditions along with their other activities such as reconstruction and population resettlement (Wyatt and Wichienkeo, 1995:179). These musical activities played a fundamental role in once again asserting the authority and sophistication of Chiang Mai. Similar to his ally, King Taksin of Siam, *Chao* Kawila was especially concerned with establishing his right to rule after a centuries-long period of predominantly Burmese domination. He was exacting in his reconstruction of cultural – including musical – elements in Chiang Mai. In doing so, it was necessary to consult authoritative historical sources and communities outside of Chiang Mai, where living traditions had an unbroken link with the past. Much of this happened naturally as large populations in the region were forcibly resettled in Chiang Mai.

Approximately 200 years later, the onslaught was not war or famine, but cultural imperialism from beyond, domestic disregard and feelings of cultural inferiority in the local area. This was an entirely different kind of crisis; no one was displaced, and whether they intended to, virtually everyone participated in the dramatic reshaping of their own cultural identities. Since the city was still full of people, several key figures, events and circumstances succeeded in adapting the old traditions for survival in the currently shifting social climate. Then, toward the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, various external and internal influences again aligned, and historical and adapted forms again became more commonplace, and began to be transmitted on an increasingly broad scale.

Today, traditional Lanna music is possibly reaching more learners and listeners than ever before. Schools, temples and informal initiatives have recognized the importance of traditional Lanna music in maintaining northern Thai cultural

identity, and they have been overseeing the transmission of musical expertise for many years now. The rapid technological advances of the past century are also affecting transmission of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai. Advances such as broadcast media, audiovisual recordings, and the internet all play a significant role in this musical transmission. This thesis is an attempt to discover and understand exactly how the traditional music of Lanna is being passed on in present-day Chiang Mai.

Effective transmission of folk traditions is perhaps the most important factor in maintaining these cultural expressions in modern society. Musicians and teachers in Chiang Mai recognize this and are continually seeking to pass on a meaningful and sustainable tradition. This means they can't simply copy what they learned in the past because the social environment is significantly different now, and the available tools and spaces for transmitting music have changed. However, abandoning the teachers and traditions of the past is also a poor option, and especially offensive to musicians and listeners raised in a culture of deep reverence for musical forbears (พ่อครูแม่ครู *pho khru mae khru*) who passed down their knowledge through generations.

The last few decades have also seen an expansion of traditional Lanna music styles. Some of this is related to instrumentation. Some local ensembles have added or substituted instruments like the electric bass and Western drum kit, while others have been more creative and deliberate, choosing other Asian or Western instruments not out of convenience but purely out of desire for a certain tone quality. Other major adaptations to traditional musical styles have to do with the form of the music. Formal adjustments are especially prevalent in the tourism industry, where performances are strictly limited by time. Many musicians also alter technical aspects of the music. For example, they might speed up the tempo and shift the rhythmic structure of traditional Lanna music to make it more exciting for modern audiences drawn to *luk thung* and pop rhythms.

Whether it is the driver of musical change or a product of changing stylistic influences, musical transmission obviously plays a key role in developments like the above adaptations. Present-day music transmission in Chiang Mai is affected by – and also influences – how these adaptations interact with the traditional music culture that has been passed on for generations. Therefore, it is necessary to be mindful of the

various ways that traditional Lanna music is transmitted in Chiang Mai, even in discussions devoted to more recent stylistic developments in Lanna music.

As seen from tourist literature and the opinions of musicians and teachers of Lanna traditional music, Chiang Mai is currently viewed as something of a success story in the making.<sup>1</sup> While tourist and government literature often highlight how the city (and greater region) is often recognized as “conserving” traditional music and culture, many academics and musicians have also pointed out ways that traditional music culture in Chiang Mai is shifting, and some have voiced concerns about the rate of musical change in Lanna music. While maintaining a neutral, outside perspective, this thesis will show that this conservation and adaptation is happening through the dedication of practitioners and creative maintenance of the ways it is transmitted. Documenting and analyzing the transmission of traditional Lanna music at the present time will provide a historical record that future scholars can refer to in determining how Chiang Mai has managed to maintain its traditional music culture, and it can serve as a case study for musicians and researchers concerned with the transmission of indigenous cultures in Thailand.

## **1.2 Premise and Perspectives**

Instead of looking only at “what” is changing in the music, studying its transmission helps us understand “how” traditional Lanna music culture in Chiang Mai has come to reflect change and continuity. This thesis will analyze the different ways traditional Lanna music is transmitted to new generations in urban Chiang Mai. In doing so, it will seek to arrive at an understanding of the way traditional music can be included in the living music culture of a contemporary urban environment.

It seems important not to preface a qualitative cultural study like this one with something as quantitative as a hypothesis, but it will be useful to first outline the bearing and philosophy behind this research. In fact, perhaps the most central notion behind this research is a resistance to clear-cut, quantitative classification. While such practices are often valuable and even preferable in research reports, it would be inferior in this case. Consider a declaration that a type of music transmission is in a single category when in fact it mixes elements of two or three. Such a

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<sup>1</sup> This view has been echoed in interviews with musicians and teachers in Chiang Mai. Also, a simple internet search on “Chiang Mai culture” turns up a long list of tourist, informational and academic sites on the vibrant, “must-see” culture of Chiang Mai.

pronouncement makes for an easy-to-understand research report, but it would be a factually inferior one. This thesis aims to overcome this challenge by creating a picture of music transmission based on the perspectives of musicians, students and other professionals involved in sustaining Lanna music culture, along with the information in existing books and articles from recent decades. By building an accurate picture of how traditional Lanna music culture is both shifting and being maintained in contemporary Chiang Mai, this research will help determine the degree to which various types of music transmission build thoughtfully on tradition.

### 1.3 Objectives

As the above section points out, examining musical transmission is a way of understanding how both musical continuity and change are being sustained in the traditional Lanna music culture of Chiang Mai. To attain this overall goal, this thesis has two specific objectives:

1. To provide a detailed record of the various ways traditional Lanna music is being passed on in the city of Chiang Mai.
2. To analyze the relationship between these different types of transmission and the spectrum of traditional and adapted styles of Lanna music in Chiang Mai.

In order to address the first objective, it will be necessary to take a more detailed look at music transmission in Chiang Mai, with a special focus on recent decades. Once it is clear how the present traditional music environment in Chiang Mai came about, it will be possible to deal with the first objective of documenting the ways and spaces of traditional Lanna music transmission in this modern-day city. We can also reformulate this as a question: *How has this widespread revival of traditional music come about, and how is it being sustained?*

The second objective of charting the relationship between transmission and stylistic change in Lanna music can also be posed as a question: *How are the heightened possibilities for traditional Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai related to the music itself?* To answer this, it will be necessary to analyze the representative transmission activities to see how they work with different musical styles.

From an examination of these two objectives, we can obtain a clear picture of the traditional Lanna music transmission environment in the modern-day city of Chiang Mai.



## 1.4 Concepts and Terminology

### *Lanna, Lan Na, Lannathai*

Today, “Lanna” refers to the eight northernmost provinces in Thailand. However, the meanings and connotations the term “Lanna” have been a recurring subject of debate among scholars. In fact, even the spelling is disputed, in both English and Thai. In Thai, the argument is over the tone mark.<sup>2</sup> In English, the debate is whether to write it as one word (Lanna) or two (Lan Na). In the past, many academic sources (especially histories of the region) have written “Lan Na,” while nearly everyone else uses “Lanna.” In his dissertation on Lanna music and dance, Andrew Shahriari chose “Lanna,” based on the fact that “Lan Na” is mostly associated with historical descriptions of the kingdom built by King Mengrai, whereas “Lanna” is used widely today in reference to a variety of concepts, from the culture of the region to the geographical label of Thailand’s 8 northernmost provinces (Shahriari, 2001: 2). This thesis will follow Shahriari’s advice and the quickly solidifying academic convention of sticking with “Lanna.”

A third common variation, “Lannathai,” is frequently used in the same indiscriminate manner. The term “Lannathai” probably gained popularity in the time of *Chao Dararasmi*, after Lanna grew closer – and was eventually absorbed by – Siam. It does indeed express unity with the Thai state by recognizing their shared ethnic background. The use of “Lannathai” is therefore more a communication of national identity than an indicator of cultural characteristics.

Finally, it is important to remember that none of these terms are widely used by the people of the region to describe themselves. Though they sometimes include “Lanna” in referring to their music or culture, the descendants of lowland residents in the region (predominantly Tai Yuan) have always preferred to call themselves *khon mueang*. Though this term is difficult to render accurately in English, a good concise translation is “people of principalities,” as rendered by Andrew Forbes and David Henley. This conveys the general isolation of each of the principalities that were tied together in the Lanna kingdom, and it implies the closeness that inhabitants of a single

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<sup>2</sup> This particular argument seems to have been settled. In Thai, the first syllable is usually now written with a high tone (ล้านนา).

*mueang* must have felt for one another (Forbes and Henley, 1997). At present, the meaning of *mueang* in the phrase has expanded to include the entire Lanna region.

### ***Spaces of Musical Transmission***

The term “musical transmission” usually takes on an educational connotation, referring to the action of spreading musical knowledge from those who know to learners. However, it is not always such a clear, conventional process, especially when considering modern developments such as recordings and media. This thesis will address all types of transmission, including formal and informal music education, transmission through ensemble and individual musical output, the incidental musical transmission in streets and temples, and finally the way that technological developments affect transmission in different scenarios. Other scholars have sometimes called the more incidental type of transmission “idea diffusion.” In other words, people see or hear something, and copy, adapt or use it as a source of inspiration for their own creations.

This thesis will consider ways of transmission, meaning what exactly takes place and how knowledge of traditional music is passed from one individual or group to another. It will also deal with spaces of transmission, referring not only to the physical contexts of various transmission activities, but also to the circumstances surrounding each transmission activity.

### ***Folk Music, Traditional Music***

Especially when referring to Lanna music, folk music and traditional music are nearly the same thing. However, there are some slight differences to consider. First, the traditional palace music and dance of the Lanna kingdom cannot be called “folk” because the performers were hired professionals, and commoners were not allowed to enjoy the entertainment. In reality though, folk *pat kong* ensembles in rural villages were virtually the same in composition as the palace *piphat* ensemble; only the contexts were different. Also, *Chao Dararasmi* was especially responsible for bringing folk influences into palace dances, and then she finally released palace music and dance traditions to the general public in the late 1920s. Another difference is that folk music can be modern; but again, the distinction is actually an ambiguous one. Sometimes area musicians mention “traditional music” when they are really referring to music or dance (in a traditional style) created in the 1980s. And even the

truly old “traditional” performing arts have gone through a long process of development that can often be traced through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. So for the purposes of this thesis, which is primarily focused on the transmission of “traditional music” in the time since *Chao Dararasmi*, both “traditional Lanna music” and “Lanna folk music” are identical.

Another possible way to classify different types of traditional Lanna music is into three groups: religious music, court music and music for social entertainment (Kanteewong, 2009: 3). These categories describe the three main historical contexts for traditional Lanna music, but there are many types that fit into more than one category. It is of course necessary to document, describe and analyze relationships, but because of this fluid nature of traditional Lanna music, it may be of limited usefulness to a researcher to construct definite categories when considering intangible subjects like musical contexts. This research has been carried out on such principles of forgoing most pre-determined classifications in hopes of reaching a more accurate final analysis.

### ***Music culture***

“Music culture” refers to all aspects surrounding the performance of music in a given society – from melody and instrumentation as mentioned above, to contexts, customs and conventions pertaining to playing, listening and learning the music. Though some may consider it overly semantic, the terms “music culture” and “musical culture” also reflect some variation. Whereas “musical culture” seems to describe all aspects of a culture that are related to music, “music culture” focuses on the music itself, in addition to all its cultural accoutrements and contextual surroundings. It is therefore easier to speak of “music culture” as an object of transmission that can transcend generations and continually adapt, finding new relevance and context in different eras.

The use of “music culture” in this thesis also partly stems from discomfort with some popular labels in ethnomusicology – in particular “gong-chime culture,” which is about as accurate and constructive as labeling Western Europe a “keyboard culture.” Though the term “music culture” by itself may not be descriptive of Lanna music in the way that “gong-chime” gives a slight understanding of the sound of some Southeast Asian music, it is at least respectful of Lanna traditional music culture

being a system of many parts, all of which function together or in a complementary manner.

### 1.5 Limitations

The objectives of this thesis are limited to understanding traditional Lanna music only in the modern urban center of northern Thailand, so the geographic area to be studied is limited to *amphoe mueang* of Chiang Mai – mostly inside the municipal administrative district (*thesaban nakhon*).

It is also necessary to specify the timeframe to be studied. “Modern-day” includes both the present and recent decades. This focused will be prefaced with a look at Chiang Mai’s musical history, starting with *Chao Dararasm*’s return to Chiang Mai in 1914.

The music to be studied is limited primarily to traditional Lanna folk music sung or played on traditional instruments (such as the *sueng*, *salaw*, *phin pia*, etc.) The research will also consider traditional music that incorporates some other Western or Asian instruments. Finally, “contemporary” music that takes significant elements of Lanna folk music, such as *folk song kham mueang*, is also pertinent to this study.

### 1.6 Methodology

This research predominantly follows the methodology of ethnomusicology, which strongly advocates the necessity of carrying out fieldwork in reaching an accurate understanding of a given music system. There is a branch of ethnomusicology – once advocated by prominent ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam – that insists only learning to play a foreign music will provide an acceptably deep understanding of that musical system (Campbell, 2003: 25-27). However, it seems that this might be an ineffective way to accurately understand music education and transmission as it naturally occurs, because the teacher(s) will undoubtedly present the material differently in some ways to one coming from outside the culture. On the other hand, it does seem prudent to have a solid understanding of not only the music itself, but also the local culture and social history as this will aid in understanding the data that is encountered.

In this thesis, selected activities of traditional Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai illustrate the types and variations of musical transmission in the city

today. These selections will be made based on personal observations and the recommendations of local musicians. The majority of the information presented in this thesis is from qualitative research: interviews with performers, teachers, students and other professionals such as recording engineers; as well as personal observations of music classes and performances. In considering the spectrum of formal and informal musical transmission in Chiang Mai, key informants necessarily include teachers, students, researchers, local professional musicians and professionals in related fields, such as the recording industry and radio. Documentary research provides further material for this examination of traditional Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai. Existing literature on traditional Lanna music provides background, historical perspective, clarification and confirmation of data gathered from fieldwork.

### **1.7 Literature Review**

The variety of literature pertinent to this research reflects the broad spectrum of perspectives and academic disciplines that should be considered. The most clearly relevant sources are on the background and characteristics of traditional Lanna music, and there is a wealth of printed material on these topics. While transmission is usually not the main focus of this body of scholarly work, the studies often provide integral anecdotal evidence as well as a sound framework for understanding Lanna music culture in the past and present. Most of these sources are in Thai, but there are a few useful studies in English as well. Aside from resources specifically on Lanna music, there are a few studies on the transmission of central Thai music, which serve as excellent comparisons. Yet another pertinent corpus of research includes broader studies on ethnomusicology, foreign music education systems throughout history and modern urban culture in Asia.

#### ***Sources in English***

An American scholar who has recently conducted research on traditional Lanna music and dance is Andrew Shahriari. Part of his doctoral dissertation, “Lanna Music and Dance: Image and Identity in Northern Thailand” (and his subsequent book which is essentially a condensed version of dissertation excerpts), provides comprehensive information on Lanna instruments, ensembles and performance contexts. Of particular interest are sections detailing the development of Lanna identity. Shahriari explains the changing usage of *Lanna*, *Lanna-thai* and *khon*

*mueang* throughout the region's history, and explains the way these terms reflected different aspects of local identity. He details the origins and evolution of the popular *khantok* dinner show, and he also shows how music activities of *poi luang* ceremonies and instruments such as the *phin pia* function in building the cultural identity and self-image of the region's inhabitants.

In 2009, Thitipol Kanteewong presented a paper titled "The Re-Contextualization of Lanna Traditional Music in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand" at an academic forum on urban culture. He addressed not only some of the historical foundations of Lanna music but also some of the ways that traditional Lanna music is finding new relevance in the modern society of Chiang Mai. His paper outlines some ways that Westernization has affected Lanna music, and also discusses the "experimental movement" (p. 9-10) in Lanna music that is finding different ways to bridge the traditional/contemporary dichotomy. In an overall sense, Thitipol's paper has been enormously helpful in formulating a realization that transmission is in fact one integral factor of this re-contextualization.

Bussakorn Binson has made significant contributions to recent scholarship on Lanna music culture through two papers published in 2009. "Rites and Beliefs of Music in Thailand's Lanna Region," focuses on *wai khru* ceremonies (rites for honoring teachers), which reflect the essence of the master-pupil rote teaching relationship (ꨀꨁꨂꨃꨄꨅ *mukhapatha*) that has been the central type of musical transmission through generations of Lanna performers. Her article details the complexity and subtlety of traditional Lanna music culture that can be compromised by classroom teaching through technology and media. She also points out how a more recent practice – that of giving out awards to the top traditional music teachers in the province – currently works to support the customary *mukhapatha* system. "The Role of Food in the Musical Rites of the Lanna People of Northern Thailand" is an important reminder of how traditional Lanna music culture is intertwined with local folkways. The article differentiates the three *wai khru* ceremonies prevalent in traditional Lanna music culture, and details how the use of food in the ceremonies relates demonstrates affinity with nearby Asian cultures. Finally, there is an interesting account of change in *kuet*, or prohibitions on what traditional Lanna musicians are allowed to do. Though these were once strict, Bussakorn notes that many musicians have come to take a more pragmatic view of *kuet*. This documented,

non-controversial change suggests that adaptation in Lanna music culture is not a new phenomenon.

Pamela Moro, an American scholar, has conducted research on both traditional Lanna music and the traditional music Southeast Asian cultures. In 1999, she presented a paper at the International Conference on Thai Studies held in Amsterdam. Her presentation focused on the past and present roles of the *khantok* show in Chiang Mai, and how pieces of rural Lanna culture function in the context of the dinner entertainment. Five years later, she wrote an article on the classicization of music in Southeast Asia and India. In this article, she explores how and why traditional music – especially court music – has become representative of a country’s “national culture.”

Patricia S. Campbell’s article analyzing the intersection of ethnomusicology and music education is wonderfully instructive in showing how this study on the transmission of traditional Lanna music fits with larger currents in the field of ethnomusicology. She notes that while ethnomusicology is a very broad field with researchers embarking on a spectrum of projects,

“some ethnomusicologists are studying the very *raison d’etre* of music education, the teaching and learning processes of master and aspirant musicians. As they have shifted their lenses from the music alone to the music-makers, ethnomusicologists have developed a participant-observation process that has had a way of turning scholars into beginning students of a musical system, and by this very nature, they have been drawn into questions of music’s pedagogy, training, and educational systems.” (p. 17)

In this passage, “participant-observation process” means an ethnomusicologist traveling to a foreign land and learning one of their instruments, thus gaining insight on the pedagogical style of the local music culture. However, there are two potential drawbacks to this approach. First, not only are there many different instruments that the researcher could choose to learn, but there are also many teachers and instructional approaches. Choosing to focus on attaining at best an intermediate level of mastery over a single instrument hampers the researcher’s ability to observe and participate in other important aspects of musical culture. Second, such an approach may not end up exposing the ethnomusicologist to pedagogy as it happens naturally in that place. Most good teachers tailor their instruction based on the needs of the student, and it’s very unlikely that the researcher, with an entirely different cultural background and linguistic upbringing, will be taught in the same way that local

participants are instructed. As described in the previous section, this thesis is not the product of a researcher becoming a “beginning student of a musical system,” at least not in the sense that Campbell means. Rather than attempting to understand this musical system by learning to become a proficient performer in it, the current study is predicated on the desire to understand traditional Lanna music culture by becoming a proficient listener, observer and participant (note that this does not have to mean performance) in the music culture.

“Transmission and Reproduction of Traditional Thai Music in Contemporary Thai Society: A Case Study of the Foundation of Luang Pradit Phairoah (Sorn Silapabanleng)” is a 2009 master’s thesis written by Theptida Silapabanleng. She aimed to understand how the foundation not only helps traditional central Thai music survive, but also encourages continuing development of Thai music. This description seems similar to the way that traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai has also been brought into the current music culture of the city through the creativity and dynamism of musicians, academics and other professionals. Like the many initiatives concerned with transmitting traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai, this foundation in Bangkok uses a combination of activities to pass on traditional music, including formal teaching materials, an informal music club, and – most notably – technology. Through technology like software teaching aids and an in-depth website geared toward Thai music learners, Theptida argues that the Foundation of Luang Pradit Phairoah (Sorn Silapabanleng) is making traditional Thai music relevant to a sizable segment of central Thai residents. The thesis also emphasizes how the foundation uses media – audio, film and print – to disseminate their musical knowledge.

“Music Education: Source Readings from Ancient Greece to Today,” edited by Michael L. Mark, is a collection of influential perspectives on music education throughout the history of Western civilization. Starting with the writings of Plato and working up to contemporary views on music education, this collection shows the basic motivations and justifications for music education in the history of Western society. While folk music is seldom specifically mentioned, these excerpts are useful for comparison with historical and present attitudes towards music education in Thailand, which began adopting these Western educational norms in approximately the past 100 years. The education system in Thailand has long been modeled on Western educational principles, and examining the opinions gathered in this book leads to the realization that ideas on music education in Thailand also appear to also



mirror Western thoughts. In ancient times, philosophers like Plato and Aristotle argued for the centrality of music education as part of the school, but since Thailand began implementing Western educational theory, writings on the value of music education have focused on justifying such programs as being supportive of effective learning in other subject areas, such as mathematics.

The Soviet composer and music educator, Dmitri Kabalevsky, often wrote about passing on musical understanding and appreciation to children. His essays collected in a 1988 Unesco publication titled “Music and education: a composer writes about musical education,” offer insights into the way children learn and approach music, as well as recommendations on teaching techniques. One chapter deals with the effects of music technology on music education and music culture. He frankly discusses the positive and negative impacts recordings and other technological advances have had on transmission. He expresses his frustration with the glut of music now available for consumption, saying, “„Entertaining“ music does not just entertain. It also fills man’s mind – but with what?” (p. 131) He also assesses the potential of these new formats by listing examples of playing recordings of specific composers for classes, while cautioning educators against the desire to “be up to date” (p. 133) in their classroom selections, even at the cost of quality.

Mike Featherstone’s “Consumer Culture and Postmodernism” describes the postmodern outlook prevalent in contemporary urban cultures around the world. With phrases such as “antifoundational stance” and “privileging of the local,” Featherstone writes of modern-day cities that are “much more image and culturally self-conscious.” (p. 96-97) Featherstone also brings up the tension between what is real and a created sense of authenticity, a conflict paralleled in developments such as *khantok* and tourism-inspired performances. This book is not relevant all areas of culture in Chiang Mai, but it seems clear that many developments of life in the city – such as renewed focus on local culture and concern for the aesthetic experience of residents“ and visitors“ daily lives – are reflections of postmodern sentiment.

### ***Sources in Thai***

In 1995, the 26<sup>th</sup> annual *Dontri Thai Udom Sueksa* (Thai Music in Higher Education) conference of the country’s Thai music educators was held at Chiang Mai University. The book of research papers from this meeting contains many interesting articles on Lanna music culture and Chiang Mai University. The studies most

pertinent to this thesis are those that contain information not easily found elsewhere, such as the articles on CMU's official song and overture, a discussion of the university's Lanna Folk Club and a description of a set of tapes recorded in honor of Chiang Mai's upcoming 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The collection of papers also indicates how high the level of interest in Lanna and folk music studies had become. Though this was not the first time CMU had hosted the *Dontri Thai Udom Sueksa* conference, this compilation of papers from the 26<sup>th</sup> session marks the first time that a majority of the research is directed at local music culture.

Thitinadda Maneewan, a researcher at the Social Research Institute, has written an indispensable two-volume set on performance traditions of Tai Yuan. Since the Tai Yuan are the majority ethnic group associated with the Lan Na kingdom, any study of their performance traditions is essentially a study of "genuine" Lanna performance. Not only are the old and new clearly identified, but also their development is plainly traced for the reader. For truly old practices with unknown origins, Thitinadda outlines a probable course of development into an art form. There are also some sections specifically on the transmission of these different styles in the past and present. Moreover, the informative descriptions of the invention and adaptation of Lanna performance forms provide an outline of transmission currents over generations.

Phunphit Amatyakun, Thirayut Yuangsri and other Northern scholars collaborated to put together *Dontri Thai Nai Lanna*, a commemorative book issued on the occasion of Sunthorn Na Chiangmai's cremation in 1987. It is a valuable source for reconstructing the history of Lanna music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it contains extensive biographies of several key figures (many of whom studied with *Chao Dararasmi*) in the transmission of both Lanna music and central Thai music in Chiang Mai. In addition are several letters from former pupils and other musicians who were close to Sunthorn. The volume is prefaced with a letter from Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn detailing how Sunthorn was significant in her own musical development. Former Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts president Mongkhol Boonwong added an interesting account of working with Sunthorn in the 1970s and 1980s to redirect attention to the neglected topic of traditional Lanna music. This book also contains information on the beginnings of Lanna music culture and its relation to central Thai music through the centuries.

Pornpilai Tepkum's 1996 Chulalongkorn University thesis on *phleng kham mueang* furnishes excellent background information on the development of *phleng kham mueang*. Her detailed account of individual Chiang Mai musicians giving rise to songs in the local dialect helps illuminate the interesting cultural context in which *kham mueang* music flourished. Her research not only addresses the *folk song kham mueang* of artists like Jaran Manopetch but is also concerned with other types of *phleng kham mueang*, which receive much less academic attention than the creative work of Jaran.

Wimala Siripong's 1991 Thammasat University master's thesis compares the activities of two prominent families of Thai musicians in Bangkok: Silpabanleng and Phatayakosol. She shows how their varying approaches – through the establishment of a Thai music foundation (Silpabanleng family), and faithful conservation of customary ways of transmitting Thai music culture (Phatayakosol family) – function in modern Thai society to effectively pass on skills and knowledge of the Thai musical tradition.

The Thai writer who goes by the pen name “Si Re” issued perhaps the most useful printed resource for learning about Jaran Manopetch and *folk song kham mueang*: a collection of selected interviews Jaran gave over a period of several years. The volume is based on a collection first published in 1984, and it was reissued with additional interviews and commentary in 2008. In this book, Jaran speaks of his childhood, personal and musical development, beginnings as a professional artist and his personal philosophy towards the effects of his work. There are also album-specific interviews for many of his recordings. In these interviews, Jaran explains his motivations for writing and performing the songs, as well as his understanding of the public reaction to the album in question.

## CHAPTER II

# The Rebuilding of Traditional Lanna Music Culture in Chiang Mai

### 2.1 Traditional Lanna music in the time of *Chao Dararasmi*

Music in the conglomeration of principalities that formed the Lanna kingdom was clearly divided into court music and folk music. Ruling families, such as the one in Chiang Mai, kept musicians and artists in their palaces, just like monarchs throughout the world. Outside of these noble circles, music was not a profession. All (or most) villagers participated, not only as listeners and audience members, but also as singers, dancers drummers and musicians. Music permeated daily life for the inhabitants of the Lanna kingdom, present in temple and community ceremonies, in times of war, and in courtship rituals.

About a century after Kawila oversaw the physical and cultural renewal of Chiang Mai, King Intrawichinontra (popularly called “Inthanon”) gave his daughter, Dararasmi, in marriage to King Chulalongkorn.<sup>3</sup> She was especially fond of music and dance, and she pursued this passion with further musical training while she lived in the royal court at Bangkok. She not only gained skill in performing Thai music and dance, but also was able to experience the systematic way it was taught. Following King Chulalongkorn’s death, *Chao Dararasmi* successfully petitioned for permission to return home, and brought with her this formal training in Thai classical music and dance. She took in area musicians and introduced profound changes that greatly formalized Lanna music and dance. Under her tutelage, music developed a tighter structure and choreography became more refined and coordinated within groups of dancers. The central Siamese influence she ushered in also led to more meticulous construction of Lanna instruments (Shahriari, 2001: 62). The music itself changed too, favoring vocal music and musical drama. The *salo so sueng* ensemble gained stature in this time, as it was the ensemble of choice to accompany both drama and dances (สนั่น, ลักษณะ..., 2538: 111). Today, some musicians and researchers refer to this era as a pivotal moment for Lanna music. Music and dance was prominent, but it was also changing due to a variety of outside influences – Thai, Burmese and

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<sup>3</sup> This occurred in 1885 (Chiang Mai Municipality, 2010).

Western. In the estimation of some, the social environment at the time was one that required clear local expressions, and the variety of outside influences allowed local musicians to fulfill this societal demand (ฐิติพล, 2548: 46).



**Figure 2-1 Chao Dararasmī**

The innovations overseen by *Chao Dararasmī* were largely confined to courtly circles in Chiang Mai; the common population had no opportunity to witness the formal changes *Chao Dararasmī* was bringing about. Finally in 1927, they were presented in public view to welcome King Rama VII's visit to Chiang Mai when *Chao Dararasmī* was placed in charge of the welcoming festivities. The presentation she organized served to legitimize northern customs as well as equate them with the fine classical traditions of Siam. King Rama VII's appearance was not only a statement of political unity, but also a declaration of cultural solidarity with Siam – the welcome celebrations showed that northern arts and culture were not foreign phenomena (all things northern were still referred to as “Lao” at that time), but fit seamlessly into the pantheon of “Thai” arts and culture within the Siamese social order.

Some researchers on Lanna culture and identity think that this period was the time that the term “Lanna-thai” began to be used widely (Shahriari, 2001: 58). The prevalence of this term shows not only the Northerners' acceptance of the social,

cultural and political unity with Siam achieved in the preceding decades, but a recognition of the ethnic Tai background of Lanna people. Today, “Lanna-thai” is often used by the tourism industry to connote a culture and topography that is different and exotic, but still an essential part of the Thai nation. However, in daily life, the most widespread term inhabitants use to identify themselves is *khon mueang* (people of the principalities), a term with a long history that indicates the alliance of *mueang* that was the Lanna kingdom.

## 2.2 Northern music under the new constitutional monarchy

*Chao Dararasmii*’s efforts were extraordinarily well timed. Five years after going public with these new incarnations of Lanna performance art, the support system for music in Chiang Mai crumbled with Siam’s abrupt shift to constitutional monarchy. The many post-1932 governments – dominated by Field Marshall Phibun Songkhram – were not neglectful in supporting arts and culture in Thailand; rather, they focused on creating a single national identity out of the country’s patchwork of cultures, and Lanna performance traditions suffered accordingly. Not long after World War II, Phibun Songkhram directed the Fine Arts Department to develop a “Thai” social dance and they came up with a circle dance called *ramwong*. New or reworked styles like the *ramwong* were strongly promoted through cultural centers; government workers even paused each Wednesday afternoon to practice the *ramwong* (“Field Marshall,” 2008).

Despite the emphasis on national culture, folk instruments considered too crude and musical forms deemed no longer appropriate faded from daily life. One example is the *phin pia*, a plucked stick-zither with a coconut shell resonator pressed against the player’s chest. There are competing explanations for the *phin pia*’s precipitous decline in popularity. A particularly dramatic account in the North claims that a young man used his *phin pia* as a murder weapon upon discovering a rival with his beloved, and it was then banned by the king of Chiang Mai as a safety precaution. Others contend that the *phin pia* was a victim of the central Thai government’s push for a “civilized” (in Western eyes) culture, and shirtless performances of the *phin pia* embarrassed the political elites, who felt such spectacles showcased the Thais as uncivilized. Whatever the reasons, the *phin pia* steadily lost its position in Lanna music culture, and by late 1970s there were only a handful of players left in the entire region (McGraw, 2007: 126).

The reemergence of interest in the *phin pia* is an intriguing instance of how globalization in the modern age sometimes supports the transmission of traditional Lanna music culture. Just as the *phin pia* was disappearing, a chance encounter in Europe led to renewed interest. Around 1970, Chiang Rai artist Tawan Duchinee was mesmerized by the gentle sounds of the *phin pia* in an opera house in Denmark (ถวัลย์, 2538: 51-52). It was a sound he'd never heard, but he was so moved by it that he sought out details on what had made that sound. When he asked what country it came from, he was dumbfounded to hear the reply: "Thailand." Upon his return, he sought help from the Siam Society, but they apparently hadn't heard of the *phin pia*. During another trip to Denmark, Tawan acquired a tape of *phin pia* music, and later played it for his students at CMU. Professor Prasit Leosiripong, teaching then at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, also took an interest in the tape and even helped Tawan track down one of the last remaining *phin pia* players in the North, Paeng Nocha. At nearly the same time, ethnomusicologist Gerald Dyck published his research on the music of northern Thailand, which included photos and recordings of *phin pia* music. In 1977, these resources attained wide exposure when they were included in a cultural exhibition presented in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai (McGraw, 2007: 127).

### 2.3 Key Musical Figures in 1950s-1970s Chiang Mai

With no court to sustain professional musicians and dancers, the dedication of musicians such as those taken in by Princess Dararasmi was key in conserving and passing on Lanna music traditions in Chiang Mai. Khruakaew Na Chiangmai and Sunthorn Na Chiangmai (not siblings) both received training in *Chao* Dararasmi's palace, and over the following decades would become central figures in Chiang Mai known as authorities on both traditional Lanna and Thai classical music.

Khruakaew Na Chiangmai was born in 1912, and from a young age studied singing with her relative, *Chao* Dararasmi, in both Bangkok and Chiang Mai (พูนพิศ และอื่นๆ, 2530: 95). Khruakaew developed skills as a singer for *khon* and *lakhon*, and in 1947 opened her own school where she taught singing to students in Chiang Mai. In 1971, the Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts opened, and Khruakaew was given the task of teaching students about traditional Lanna songs, especially *so* repertoire.

Sunthorn Na Chiangmai also helped increase the visibility of traditional Lanna music and he became especially influential in efforts to bolster its maligned reputation. Born in 1918, he showed an affinity for music from a young age, and was taken to study in the care of *Chao Dararasmi* when he was only 9 years old (Amatyakun et al., 1987: 96). There he spent most of his time learning Thai music, and stayed for approximately six years, until *Chao Dararasmi* died. After finishing his schooling, he served as a police officer, but continued to pursue his passion for music. Eventually, he gained a reputation as an excellent crafter of Thai and Lanna instruments. Youth in Chiang Mai interested in traditional Thai or Lanna music began to study with him at his home, and when the Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts opened in 1971, Sunthorn was invited to teach Thai and traditional Lanna music there. Sunthorn is also remembered for composing *Ueang Ngoen*, a companion piece to an earlier overture by famed Thai musician Montri Tramote. Montri's piece, *Ueang Kham*, was inspired by a dance performance he attended on a visit to Chiang Mai in the 1930s, and decades later was presented to the newly-opened Chiang Mai University (CMU) to be the school's official overture (��วกาล, 2538: 27). By the time of his death in 1984, Sunthorn had become such a highly regarded figure in the musical life of the North that the opening dedication of the book prepared for his cremation was written by Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

One notable figure in Chiang Mai cultural life of the 1950s, 60s and 70s was Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda, a prominent Chiang Mai businessman with a keen interest in traditional northern culture. He provided financial support for traditional Lanna music and also made significant contributions to the available body of knowledge on Lanna culture. For example, he conducted research on cultural reconstruction in the region after the nearly two centuries of Burmese occupation. His findings showed how the forced resettlements of different ethnic groups in the region redefined the cultural makeup of Chiang Mai and other areas. He also did field recordings, and was especially proud of recording Takham Chaiwina, the well-known blind *so* singer (ไกรศรี, 2524: 2). One of his most influential contributions was his development of *khantok*, a dinner show that combines customary Lanna dishes with a survey of Lanna performance traditions. Kraisri got the idea for *khantok* dinner when two friends of his, a Thai Ministry of Justice official and an American consul, were preparing to



leave Chiang Mai. In honor of their departure and contributions to the Chiang Mai community, Kraisri invited them to dress in traditional Lanna clothing and come to his home for a dinner of customary northern dishes served on a round, central table called *khantok*. While they ate and drank, Kraisri arranged for assorted regional music and dance performances. Shortly after this, Kraisri arranged a similar event for the Thai government to welcome (and woo) officials from the World Bank, and in 1956, he organized a *khantok* dinner for members and friends of the Siam Society making a visit to Chiang Mai (อภิชาติ, 2524: 1,4).

Kraisri's younger sister got the idea to adapt the *khantok* into a dinner show for tourists during a stopover in Hawaii in the late 1960s when she and her husband visited Honolulu's Polynesian Cultural Center and International Market (Shahriari, 2001: 86). When she returned, she and her husband set about constructing the Old Chiangmai Cultural Center, which was fully completed in 1972. Professor Vithi Phanichphant at CMU is careful to point out the foreign influence on the development of *khantok*, noting that it should correctly be considered "not Lanna, but Hawaiian and Thai Lue." He also maintains that he worked with Kraisri's sister in developing *khantok* for the tourist market (Farrell, 2009).

From its beginnings as a welcome or farewell celebration for politicians and other dignitaries through the time it was adopted and popularized by the tourism industry, *khantok* has served as a major economic motivator for the rebirth of traditional Lanna music and dance. However, many have been dismayed at the way *khantok* shows have appropriated culture; that is, made it a spectacle and presented it out of context. Such performances are often cited in the battle over "authenticity" – whether culture should conform to historical ideals or seek to blaze new paths to stay relevant to modern society. For example, matters of dress, food, performance styles and false or misleading historical background offend the sensibilities of many people who have dedicated significant amounts of time to studying, observing or even living the traditions that are rolled together into a single *khantok* dinner show.

Kraisri's actions worked with other events of the day to keep cultural expressions of northern Thailand from disappearing. Though these influences were small and inconsistent, they would prove to lay foundations for more significant developments in the future. One of these instances was when Phibun ordered the Fine Arts Department to develop a "Thai" dance that served the same social function as the

increasingly widespread western ballroom dance around the time of World War II. This „new“ dance (really a reformulation of a central Thai dance) called *ramwong* was accompanied by lively music, and several *ramwong* bands formed in Chiang Mai. Once they were firmly established, they began composing their own tunes and lyrics using the northern dialect instead of the standard central Thai language (พรพิไล, 2539: 14). This particular expression of Lanna identity would have great impact 20 years later through the folk singer Jaran Manopetch.

#### 2.4 Opening of the Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts

An important first for the region was the opening of the Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts (CMCDA; วิทยาลัยนาฏศิลป์เชียงใหม่ *Withayalai Natasin Chiang Mai*) in 1971. Though its main focus was (and still is) central Thai music, this was the beginning of the formal academic world in Chiang Mai taking the lead in conserving and passing on traditional central Thai and Lanna music. Before, experts inside and outside of the city had transmitted their knowledge of Lanna music in their own geographic areas; now this could take place in a structured, academic setting as well. CMCDA turned to many of these area experts – such as Sunthorn Na Chiangmai – in constructing a suitable course of study for their students. The most highly-regarded musicians in the community had received at least some training in the palace of *Chao Dararasmī*, so after CMCDA hired many of these teachers, it soon became known as a purveyor of the music and dance traditions developed and transmitted in her circle (ชิตินัดดา, 2551: 10).

At CMCDA the syllabus for traditional Lanna music has not changed much since its opening. Traditional Lanna music has never been offered as a principal course of study, which can be one of the central Thai performing arts, a Thai instrument or voice. Several of the early students at CMCDA have gone on to become music teachers themselves at CMCDA or other schools in Chiang Mai. Current students are often involved with other musical activities in the community and are enlisted to help with traditional performances in Chiang Mai. Many also earn spending money – and hone their skills – by working in *khantok* restaurants.

This connection with tourism has existed for decades. In fact, many of the subdued expressions of Lanna cultural identity in the time around the opening of

CMCDA are partly due to the central government beginning to actively promote Chiang Mai as a tourist destination (McGraw, 2007: 132). This was the first time Lanna culture could be clearly be seen as economically beneficial. Because the actions of the tourism industry regarding responsible cultural stewardship are often questioned (and rightly so) in Chiang Mai, it is easy to downplay the importance of this to the sustained growth of traditional Lanna music and arts over the following decades. However, the Thai and foreign money brought in by such cultural tourism as *khantok* has allowed musicians to maintain their focus on creating music instead of having to forgo the wholehearted pursuit of their passion to pursue a separate livelihood.

## 2.5 Jaran Manopetch

On Children’s Day (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of January) 1976, a young man named Jaran Manopetch went to the government office where he worked and handed out treats to the crowds of visiting children. But that afternoon, he got on a local bus and didn’t return, eventually ending up in Mae Sariang (Si Re, 2008: 113-114). 1976 was a year of intense political turmoil and unrest in Thailand, and Jaran was disillusioned with the society he saw around him. In fact, the massacres of October 6, 1976 shook the assumptions of many in the region – especially students. Many felt they could no longer trust the wishes of the central Thai state – including the idea that one “Thai” identity was more suitable than a patchwork of traditional local culture.

A few months after these terrible events, Jaran was one of many musicians invited to play his guitar and sing at a birthday party back in Chiang Mai.

“In January of 1977, I went to a friend’s birthday party. There were lots of people there – both professional musicians and non-professionals, and each of us got to play one song. When it was my turn (I was the last one), there wasn’t anything left to play, because the others had already played all the songs I knew. So I dug out an old *phleng kham mueang* [song in the northern dialect], Noi Chaiya. Once I started to sing, my friend (whose birthday it was) and my friend’s mother got up and started dancing. Everyone was able to sing along with at least some sections or lines, but for the most part, they just hummed along with the melody. I realized that songs like this one lived in the very core of every northerner. That night, Marnit Atchawong had come to the birthday party too, and he asked me if I wanted to record *phleng kham mueang*. At first, I didn’t really think he was serious, so I didn’t take it to mean much. A while later we met again, and he asked, „When are you going to put together some *phleng kham mueang*? I’m waiting, you know.“ So I started to search for old ... folk songs to arrange. [...] I ran into a lot of

problems, because song lyrics were never the same from one place to the next, but the melodies were the same.”

(Si Re, 2008: 116-117; translation by author)

The audience’s powerful reaction – and later the response of the general public – showed how deeply these traditional local melodies stirred emotions and memories. Sanan Thammati of CMU’s Center for the Promotion of Arts and Culture explains that Jaran was able to present traditional musical material in a new way. Previously, very few expressed an interest in traditional Lanna music, and those who did were viewed as outdated. By fusing traditional Lanna songs like *Noi Chaiya* with the acoustic folk style popular in the United States in 1960s, Jaran made it “modern” again, and thus acceptable, accessible and relevant to modern listeners. In fact, Jaran’s rapid rise in popularity at the close of the 1970s seems to have been a watershed moment in convincing *khon mueang* to reconsider their local cultural heritage. Though only some of his songs had traditional melodies, the language, tunes and subjects spoke to the cultural identity of the North. Probably because of this, children began to find Lanna cultural heritage intriguing, and in a few more years, Chiang Mai would finally begin to see youth dedicate their energy and talents to recovering and rebuilding traditional Lanna cultural expressions.



*Photograph by Karun Wongthani, ca. 1978*

### **Figure 2-2 Jaran Manopetch**

Patchara Panjamul, a singer who performs many of Jaran’s songs at a small restaurant in Chiang Mai, also attributed the quick popularity of Jaran’s music to the

relevance to Northerners at the time. He notes that the songs have enjoyed such longevity because of the high quality and poetic nature of the lyrics. He compares these to Jaran's later songs, which feature a different approach to lyric-writing. These songs were as a whole less popular and more quickly forgotten. Patchara says that "Jaran was not the only one to do *folk song kham mueang*, but was first and most famous" as a result of his songwriting prowess.

The astuteness of Jaran's lyrics is especially highlighted in his transformation of foreign melodies to poignant reminders of life in the North. Though his penchant for reintroducing Lanna folk melodies is frequently cited and quite famous, few consider how he borrowed melodies from Peter, Paul and Mary (*Ui Kham*), the Shadows (*Pi Sao Khrap*) and the Beatles (*Ban Pa Mueang Doi*), even though Jaran didn't try to hide this. In fact, *Ui Kham*, which tells the true story of an old widow whose children abandoned her and eventually died alone, is one of Jaran's best-loved songs, an insightful indictment of the social ills of modernization and a quintessential depiction of modern life in Chiang Mai. It is truly remarkable that Jaran was able to take a melody from an American acoustic folk band and combine it with his own poetic lyrics in the local dialect to form a song that deeply engages both Northerners and other Thais.

Jaran went on to release over 20 albums, and became famous throughout Thailand for his singing and acting. He gave many live concerts and performed at his own restaurant in Chiang Mai (ประมวดี, 2552: 137). In September 2001, Jaran died of a heart attack at his home in Lamphun. He was only 50 years old, but his life and work continue to gain fans and command the reverence of appreciative Lanna citizens. Memorial concerts are held each September in Chiang Mai, and in many years concerts are organized in Bangkok as well. *Folk song kham mueang* is widely enjoyed by listeners in the region and beyond, and it is now performed on stages and in restaurants throughout the city. There are many new artists too; some perform Jaran's songs, while others compose their own songs in the same style.

## **2.6 A new generation of traditional Lanna music enthusiasts**

Around the same time that Jaran's output was changing the public's attitude towards the cultural heritage of the region, the academic world in Chiang Mai was also working to preserve and renew Lanna's near-dormant traditional music. In 1981,

Mongkhol Boonwong took over as president of CMCDA. One of his objectives was to help renew traditional Lanna music, so he first worked with Sunthorn Na Chiangmai and other teachers to expand the available repertoire. Sunthorn then organized a succession of performances – including a special concert for a royal audience at the Kawila military camp in Chiang Mai. Widespread revival of traditional Lanna music and culture was still years away, but momentum was clearly established. In the late 1980s, Sunthorn (a skilled maker of Lanna and central Thai instruments) told Mongkhol he didn't have to worry about traditional Lanna music sinking back down into obscurity, as he could no longer keep up with orders for Lanna instruments pouring in from schools around the North (มจคด, 2530).

In the early 1980s, local academic researchers were also beginning to a greater interest in traditional Lanna music. We have already seen how some had begun rediscovering the *phin pia* and its music, but several other research projects, papers and academic presentations reflected a concern for the state of traditional Lanna music culture. In January 1981, Chiang Mai Teachers' College hosted a three-day conference on "Lanna-thai Folk Music" that attracted teachers, researchers, writers and other professionals from throughout the city of Chiang Mai, other provinces around the North, Bangkok and even other regions of the country. Local musical stalwarts like Sunthorn Na Chiangmai, Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda and CMCDA's Thirayut Yuangsi presented information on traditional Lanna music and its historical role in the North, while outside experts such as Anek Nawikamune and Naowarat Pongpaiboon offered their insights on the conservation and promotion of folk music.<sup>4</sup>

At roughly the same time, students and faculty at CMU were making important explorations into traditional Lanna folkways. In 1981, Sanan Thammati enrolled in CMU and joined the Thai Music and Dance Club. However, he and some classmates wanted to focus more exclusively on Lanna music, art and culture. So Sanan, Suchat Kanchai and Suthep Saenmongkol joined fellow student Suphoj Boonmee to start the Lanna Folk Club in 1984, and set about the task of learning everything related to the traditional culture of the North.<sup>5</sup> However, there was a lot

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<sup>4</sup> Selected papers from this conference are cited in the reference page.

<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to pinpoint who was the original student(s) behind forming the club. Founding advisor Direkchai Mahatdhanasin pointed to Suphoj in an interview with Thitinadda Maneewan, though both Sanan Thammati and Ruthairat Kanjana

that could no longer be found in Chiang Mai, so they made frequent trips around the Lanna region to interview elderly villagers, make recordings and take notes. After each trip, they would bring back all of their notebooks, tapes and other materials to share with the other members who had stayed back. In this manner, the club learned more about traditional Lanna music and dance, notably the *phin pia*, the *teng thing* ensemble, *klong sabadchai* and a variety of folk dance forms such as *fon choeng* (ทัศนีย์, 2538: 151,154). Newer members soon joined them in their efforts and carried on the practice once they left, and before long a storehouse of valuable ethnographic information built up in their meeting room.

The students were eager to put this knowledge into practice, and they became quite skilled traditional musicians, dancers and purveyors of traditional Lanna folk culture. Eventually the club also made recordings under the name of their traditional Lanna music ensemble, *Ueang Lanna* (ทัศนีย์, 2538: 154). These activities of the CMU Lanna Folk Club were crucial in two regards – they began to significantly rebuild the body of knowledge on traditional Lanna culture in Chiang Mai; and the club served as a focal point for the growing community of young Lanna culture enthusiasts in Chiang Mai by making the information they gleaned available to this new generation.

More and more university students and young adults were acting on their interest in traditional Lanna culture. By the early 1990s, a core of young musicians emerged in this drive for renewed traditional Lanna music culture in Chiang Mai. One of these people was a gifted musician named Panutat Apichanatong, at that time a student at CMCDA. Panutat (today widely known as “Khru At”) was fascinated by traditional Lanna music from a young age, when he was playing with friends and ran into a room full of traditional instruments. An older musician gave him his first impromptu instruction in Lanna music, and from then on, he enjoyed watching and listening to the sounds of traditional Lanna music. Panutat didn’t really try playing it until he borrowed a friend’s *khloi*. Because of his years of careful observation, Panutat quickly learned many Lanna folk instruments; the wider Chiang Mai community was especially surprised to see a young *pi* player, something many hadn’t

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(Suchat’s younger sister) have mentioned the other names. This could just point to the collaborative, close-knit nature of the club in its early days.

seen for a generation. When he was old enough, Panutat enrolled in CMCDA where he continued his musical education. He also spent a lot of time with other young traditional musicians in Chiang Mai who all coalesced around the Lanna Folk Club at CMU.

One of Panutat's favorite activities at that time was to enter traditional music competitions, often with friends from the Lanna Folk Club. The young ensemble drew lots of attention among a field that consisted almost entirely of elderly players; they also won virtually every time, probably because of their youthful dexterity, energy and long hours of practice (Panutat speaks fondly of spending nearly all his free time – even eating and sleeping – with the club). Eventually the club decided to stop entering competitions, purportedly to give others a chance at winning the top prizes. Panutat says that he liked having these chances to showcase his skills so much that he would still “sneak away to competitions,” telling his friends that he had to go do some errand or obligation when he really headed straight to the sites of the musical contests.

Panutat and a few of his friends decided to form an ensemble named Nakatan. In the words of Prasong Saeng-ngam (Khru Bird), one of several notable traditional music teachers in present-day Chiang Mai, Nakatan had three “tigers”: Panutat, Somboon Kawichai<sup>6</sup> (Khru Boy) and Udom Litrakul (Khru Kiat). These three eventually parted ways, but went on to be significant figures in the traditional Lanna music culture of Chiang Mai (as Prasong put it, “Each of these three has great talent and expertise; in fact, so great that they can't all stay in the same ensemble.”). Panutat continued with Nakatan, Somboon started the Lai Muang group, and Udom went on to start a traditional *piphat mon* ensemble, Anek Prasongsilp. Another active member of the group was Lipikorn Makaew, who helped found the Lanna Folk Arts Club at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL). Members of this club and the students from the nearby Lanna Folk Club at CMU collaborated very closely throughout that decade.

One of Nakatan's efforts was a set of recordings released in 1996 to mark the 700th anniversary of Chiang Mai. Sanan Thammati, a former founding member of the Lanna Folk Club at CMU, used the anniversary to organize the production of these tapes that celebrated the city's musical heritage. In fact, this anniversary – a

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<sup>6</sup> Name recently changed to Wisanthat Ratanamongkhonkasem.



celebration of regional history and local pride – provided an impetus and highly visible opportunities for young traditional musicians to perform. For Boonying Kanthawong (another music teacher in Chiang Mai), an especially significant performance was at Chiang Mai's newly built 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sports Complex, where the 1995 Southeast Asian Games were held. Boonying remembers the opening ceremony of the games, which featured a large number of *klong sabadchai* playing together and made an impression on many in Chiang Mai.

Besides the buildup of musical expertise and the increase of prestige afforded traditional music by events such as the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, disillusionment with Thailand's fervent push towards development and modernization also played a sizeable role in the renewal of traditional Lanna music and culture in Chiang Mai. While this frustration was clear from the time Jaran Manopetch first performed *folk song kham mueang*, the dissatisfaction with the relentless economic focus continued to inspire many more to pause and reexamine their cultural roots.

In late 1996, Chatchawan Thongdeelert, who was part of a civic organization concerned with the promotion of northern Thai culture, built a coalition of area artists, academics, local and national government representatives and professionals out of concern for the declining position of traditional Lanna heritage. They met and agreed on the pressing need to preserve and pass on local culture, especially in the face of the sharply economic focus brought on by the incredible financial gains of recent years. These calls for a return to local roots and their implied misgivings about the supremacy of economic development were swiftly justified when Thai markets imploded during the financial meltdown that struck in early 1997. Further discussions led to the establishment of an annual *Suepsan Lanna* festival, celebrating traditional local food, music, dance and other cultural expressions.

The first *Suepsan Lanna* festival was held in 1997 at CMU's Center for the Promotion of Arts and Culture and was well-attended by the general public, and it won widespread approval. Performers mostly consisted of youths and young adults, with the audience made up of all ages. One of the youth traditional music ensembles of Lai Muang, the group formed when Somboon Kawichai left Nakatan. Thitinadda Chinachan (now Maneewan) wrote of being deeply impressed when she saw a young boy playing the *klong sabadchai*, and also when she overheard two boys wondering

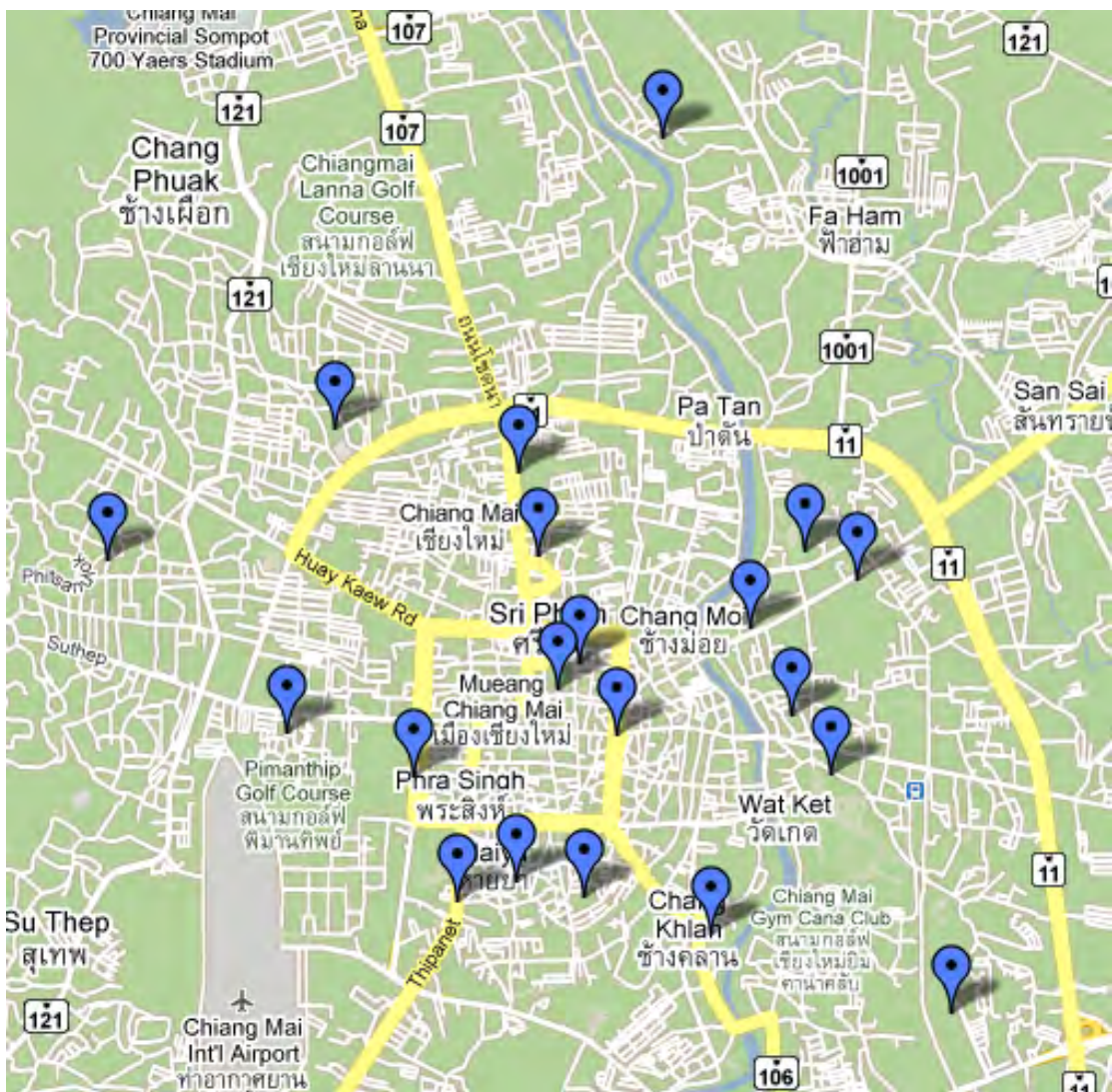
aloud where they too might learn to perform like this (ชิตินัดดา, 2543, สืบสานล้านนา: 58).

Though there is no consensus on the precise time traditional Lanna culture became widely respected again in Chiang Mai, several musicians, teachers and academics mention this first *Suepsan Lanna* festival as marking the widespread return of traditional Lanna culture to Chiang Mai. However, such statements should not be taken as referring to a turning point, as that could lead to the misguided understanding that there was some sort of “before and after” effect on traditional music culture in Chiang Mai. This is of course an incorrect assumption; as seen from the previous pages, a lot was happening in the preceding decades, and we will see that even today, efforts to transmit traditional Lanna musical knowledge are often still met with ignorance or disinterest. Nonetheless, the successful organization, execution and reception of the *Suepsan Lanna* festival showed that traditional Lanna music was no longer in a defensive, preservation-minded mode, but was again a living musical culture that would be sustained by a new generation prepared to help usher traditional Lanna music culture into the new millennium.

## CHAPTER III

### Spaces of Musical Transmission in Modern-Day Chiang Mai

Based on observations and recommendations of local musicians, a number of transmission activities have been selected for further study. When pinpointed on a map, these representative programs, initiatives and musical activities provide visual confirmation that traditional Lanna music is truly spread throughout the city.



*Developed by the author using Google Maps; © Google – Map Images*

**Figure 3-1 Geographic distribution of selected musical activities**

#### **3.1 Transmission of traditional Lanna music through formal education**

##### ***Secondary Schools***

A significant portion of traditional Lanna music transmission for children in Chiang Mai nowadays falls within the scope of formal education. Though it is often

combined with more traditional informal study outside school, most children will have at least some experience with traditional Lanna music in the classroom. The instruction often focuses on acquainting the young learner with the basics of Lanna music – the instruments, the melodies and some basic playing techniques. Time limits and the number of students make it necessary to focus only on the basics, so no one student is able to progress very far solely in classes. For this reason, many schools also have a traditional Lanna music clubs that meet after school, where students who are more interested can hone their talents further.

At Wattanothaipayap School, Kamol Tangtua teaches Thai and Lanna music in regular classes and an after-school club. Kamol was among the first students to study at CMCD, learning from Sunthorn Na Chiangmai and the other faculty there from 1971 to 1979. He sees his role as a teacher primarily as one of conservation and passing on Lanna music according to tradition. In the classroom, Kamol tries to do this by instilling in each student an understanding of the basic characteristics of traditional Lanna music culture – melodies, instruments and contexts; however, even though he says he tries to avoid newer or adapted musical styles, he is open to adapting his pedagogical approach. In addition to customary demonstration, he normally gives each student handouts with basic information on each instrument and notation of common Lanna songs. Kamol has also created instructional videos to teach students how to position themselves and play several different Lanna instruments. Starting last year, Kamol has been able to take advantage of a technological refurbishment of his classroom. New video, audio and computer equipment incorporated into the classroom allow him to effectively use these videos to instruct his many students in ways that handouts and explanations may fall short given the time constraints. Any students who are especially interested in traditional Lanna or Thai music and wish to spend more time on it than permitted in regular classes may apply to join the club. The club plays both traditional Lanna and Thai classical instruments, and performs for school events and engagements in the community. In 2008, they went to Korea, and they are currently preparing to perform in Turkey next year.



**Figure 3-2 Kamol Tangtua and the traditional music club at Wattanothaipayap School**

At Thepbodint School, Ratakan Singkaew is the Lanna music teacher and advisor of the traditional Lanna music club. Ratakan first became interested in traditional Lanna music at the funeral of his grandfather, and subsequently learned to play by seeking lessons from expert musicians around his home. Ratakan refined his musical skills for about ten years, and then began teaching at Thepbodint in 1997. Like Kamol Tangtua at Wattanothaipayap School, Ratakan seeks to impart an understanding of the basic, underlying qualities of traditional Lanna music. He notes that getting students to appreciate the distinguishing characteristics of traditional Lanna music is what will lead to the music's conservation so it won't disappear from Northern society. It is sometimes difficult to get all the children interested in traditional Lanna music, but Ratakan attributes this to their youthful mindset that is easily fascinated or distracted, as well as the encroachment and sometimes dominance of Western culture.

At Thepbodint School, there is also a traditional Lanna music club for dedicated student musicians that meets after school or during breaks in the school day. Ratakan began to build a club for students interested in traditional Lanna music

shortly after he began teaching, and the administration and students have been very supportive since the beginning. In 2004, the club's musical excellence was officially recognized when they were awarded a prize by Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. The club performs in a variety of occasions both in the school and outside. If the performance also involves dance, Ratakan often enlists the help of fellow teacher Sungworn Penpanich, who is especially knowledgeable on the subject. Thepbodint has also had a connection with CMCDA; Witep Kantima, a recently deceased expert in traditional Lanna music at CMCDA, regularly made trips to Thepbodint to help advise. Witep, who once studied with Sunthorn Na Chiangmai, was a highly respected teacher of all types of traditional Lanna music in the Chiang Mai community. Ratakan even figures that Witep would have gone on to become a national artist had he lived longer.

Yupparaj College, near the center of old Chiang Mai, is a secondary school with a well-developed traditional Lanna music program. One of the most notable activities at Yupparaj is its traditional Lanna music club, which was started and continues to be run by students. Thanom Inprasit, the traditional Lanna music teacher at the school, acts as faculty advisor to the club, but he doesn't teach in the club. This entirely student-maintained dynamic is viable because most members of the club have already had some instruction in traditional Lanna music, so they are capable musicians even before they join. Most of the music the club plays is to accompany traditional dance performances.

To the northeast is Dara Academy, where Kittidet Onpha teaches Thai music and traditional music of the North. A native of Phitsanulok, his focus is on the classical music of central Thailand, which he says is somewhat neglected in Chiang Mai because in contrast to the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lanna music has become more popular than traditional Thai music in Chiang Mai. Kittidet always enjoyed listening to Thai music, but never had a chance to learn how to play until his third year in Payap University. Kittidet focuses on teaching traditional Thai and Lanna styles, but says he is also open to adaptation. Like many of his government school peers, he also emphasizes the importance of helping students understand the basics of Thai and traditional Lanna music. His goal is not to create skilled musicians (though this may be a side effect), but to give his students knowledge of the components of Thai and local music. At Dara Academy, there are three different ensembles that meet outside of class time, separated according to the age and skill



level of the players. In order to make it into the top ensemble, students must demonstrate both excellent skills on an instrument as well as the ability to memorize a large repertoire of music. They are invited to play for a wide variety of engagements in the community, and they must be prepared to perform at a moment's notice. Since he only began playing Thai music as a university student and is not yet an expert musician himself, Kittidet oversees the basic training, and for more advanced students, he enlists the help of Phiphatphong Masiri, a professor Thai music at Payap University. Dara Academy is also a private school, so it doesn't get government funding. Instead, all music programs at the school are combined into a single budget, and it must be divided between them. The various teachers – from the marching band to Thai music – must coordinate to determine the proper allocation of funds allotted for the school's musical activities. However, the Thai music program does get some extra money for instrument acquisition and maintenance through the clubs' paying engagements.

Another private Christian school nearby is Prince Royal's College. Over the years, the school has gained a respected reputation for its teaching of traditional Lanna music through the efforts of teacher Dechawut Sittiyot. The traditional Lanna music was not just limited to instruments like *salo* and *sueng*, but also included local drum music. Dechawut still teaches at the school, but the Lanna music program effectively ceased due to his advancing age and a tighter schedule. PRC recently hired Tomanoon Hongthong, the son of a well-known *so* singer in Chiang Dao, and charged him with renewing the program. Tomanoon majored in Thai Music at Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, where he also studied traditional Lanna music with Boonying Kanthawong. Tomanoon wants his students to see traditional Lanna music as a deep part of their shared cultural identity, and not just another subject. He says it's not difficult to get his students interested in traditional Lanna music, but like children everywhere, they can be somewhat impatient. Their demanding study schedule also precludes spending too much time on practicing music. At the moment, Tomanoon is attempting to initiate a project to renew PRC's traditional Lanna music program. There is an ensemble of *salo*, *sueng*, and *khlui* that meets after school or during breaks in the school day, but there are plans to rebuild the program to match the former vibrancy of the traditional Lanna music program under Dechawut. Though at that time students were able to study and perform both traditional and adapted

styles, Tomanoon wants to start his reconstruction by sticking to tradition first, and then branching out once a traditional music program is firmly established.

A former classmate of Tomanoon's at Rajabhat University teaches Thai and Lanna music to *mattayom* 1-3 students at Montfort College, a prestigious Catholic school in Chiang Mai. Krithaphon Kongla is especially skilled with Thai and Lanna string instruments, with which he has been fascinated since taking an interest in Lanna music as a primary school student. The activities at Montfort are similar to the schools profiled above – classes and a club for students more interested in traditional music. The highly-regarded club ensembles play for school events and outside venues. Like at several other schools, Krithaphon is concerned with teaching historically accurate musical styles, but he also leads classroom discussions analyzing and comparing different musical adaptations that students see when they go out to competitions or witness other Lanna music performances. One small difference with other teachers is how Krithaphon explained that the first and most important thing to teach about traditional Lanna music is respect and appreciation of Lanna music culture through teaching students how local music culture is unique, and upholding ceremonies like the *wai khru* to honor current and deceased teachers. He maintains that if students are taught to respect and appreciate the music culture, all subsequent teaching will be much easier.

### ***Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts***

The Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts (CMCDA) has had a larger part than any other secondary school in transmitting traditional Lanna music, mainly because teaching music and arts is the main purpose of the school. As just one of the several institutions in Thailand's Dramatic Arts College system, Thai classical music has been the focus since its opening in 1971. However, many of the local teachers have been experts in traditional Lanna music as well, so the CMCDA has become a repository of regional performance traditions. Though traditional Lanna music is not offered as a major, each student spends approximately 3 hours per week (depending on their principal course of study) learning traditional Lanna music or dance, and much more if the student joins one of the school's clubs for traditional Lanna performing arts. Students of CMCDA are often active in the community, whether dancing or playing in *khantok* shows or collaborating with other area youth in performing traditional Lanna music.





**Figure 3-3 Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts**

Rakkiat Panyayot is a traditional Lanna music teacher at CMCDA. He first pursued his interest in music by taking up the Western flute while still studying in primary school, but he started learning about traditional music from Sunthorn Na Chiangmai after enrolling in CMCDA in 1973. When questioned about conserving traditional forms versus fostering adaptations in Lanna music, Rakkiat explained that the school regards conservation as the foundation, or basis, for creativity. Rakkiat believes in fostering students' natural creativity. For instance, a melody will be taught according to tradition, but if students "put themselves into the music" by changing some notes, rhythms or ornamentations, Rakkiat approves what he considers a natural musical development. He says it is important for teachers to recognize and nurture their students' natural curiosity and creativity. Rakkiat, who doesn't use recordings in his teaching, does sometimes use notation as a teaching aid. However, he cautions against an excessive reliance on notation, saying "if a player only knows the notation, he or she won't be able to leave the notation" and the song as they play it will always stay exactly the same, resulting in no musical development. On the other hand, Rakkiat and the other professors at CMCDA certainly do not advocate free, unrestrained change to traditional performance styles. For example, if traditional dancers try to wear trendy costumes that don't actually reflect Lanna customs, they

would be told to change. This kind of carefully regulated change is a hallmark of musical adaptation in CMCD, and similar approaches are shared by several other musicians and teachers in Chiang Mai. However, their approach to traditional Lanna music is not universally admired outside the realm of formal education. CMCD strictly applies methods for teaching central Thai classical music, whereas the musical style of the North is much less structured.

### ***Higher Education***

There are also some higher education options for the study of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai, either as an elective or as part of a major in Thai or Western music. One institution highly regarded for its instruction in Lanna and central Thai music is Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. At Rajabhat, students cannot major in Lanna music – they must choose Thai music – but the university offers classes on the subject as well as in Western music. Those who would like to teach Thai and traditional Lanna music in the region generally choose to study at Rajabhat. Outside of classes, students may also participate in a local music club and a Thai music club. Boonying Kanthawong graduated from Rajabhat and has returned to teach there, in addition to teaching at other schools and instructing groups and individuals outside the realm of formal education. At Rajabhat, he teaches both theory and performance classes. Theory includes history, background, beliefs, ensemble and instrumental characteristics and in-depth study of traditional Lanna repertoire.

Boonying is well known in the Chiang Mai musical community as a result of his broad involvement in both formal and informal traditional Lanna music education. Born in 1979, he grew up in Mae Rim and was fortunate to have a few old neighbors who played traditional Lanna music. He asked to study with them and spent several years working on his technique. In 1995, he met Somboon Kawichai, who invited him to join his ensemble, Lai Muang. Boonying played with the group for about five years, though even today he sometimes still performs with Lai Muang. Eventually, he decided he wanted to be a music teacher, so he chose to attend Rajabhat. After graduating and teaching for a semester in Nakhon Sawan, Boonying returned to Chiang Mai, teaching at Montfort College, Rajabhat and around Chiang Mai. He has also started making traditional Lanna instruments, and his workshop doubles as a place to meet pupils for individual lessons.

Payap University is known best for Western music, but it also offers classes in Thai music. All students are required to study at least some Thai music, and they can also choose to join a traditional Lanna ensemble. Phiphatphong Masiri teaches both Thai and Lanna music, and says that each semester, around five to seven students choose to study traditional Lanna music. Phiphatphong likes to begin his teaching with an explanation of the different characteristics of Lanna music, including instruments, contexts and purposes. When he's teaching a song, he sometimes uses notation if the group of students is large, but he prefers to teach only by memory if possible. Teaching songs by memory may be slow at first, but the depth of understanding is much greater. Phiphatphong, like several other music teachers in Chiang Mai, says that students who play from notation will sound stiff or rigid, while those who play from memory sound more natural. Adaptations to traditional music are more prominent at Payap due to the music department's strong focus on Western music. Also, like the affiliated schools Prince Royal's College and Dara Academy, Payap is a Christian university, so certain ceremonies – such as the *wai khru* ceremony honoring past teachers and musical deities – have been adapted to Christian beliefs.

The most significant Lanna musical activity at CMU is the aforementioned Lanna Folk Club. There are some other traditional Lanna music ensembles on campus – the most notable belongs to the Faculty of Fine Arts. Nowadays, members of the Lanna Folk Club don't often go out to neighboring districts or provinces to record information on Northern traditions, though they sometimes invite experts to come teach members at the university. The majority of the teaching in the club is from the older members to the younger ones. Their performances include both university and outside activities in Chiang Mai and other provinces; occasionally they perform in neighboring countries as well.

Ekkapong Kuntarak joined in 1999. Though he was familiar with traditional Lanna music as a child, he first heard of CMU's Lanna Folk Club at his grandfather's funeral when he examined the cover of an *Ueang Lanna* (then the ensemble of the Lanna Folk Club) tape that was playing over the loudspeakers. He decided that if he ever made it to CMU, he would be in this club. Though he only played *sueng* when he first joined, Ekkapong says the supportive and non-competitive camaraderie of the club helped him become skilled in a range of instruments. He also credits this dynamic for the club's longevity; though similar clubs are often organized in

individual university faculties, they rarely last so long because there is usually not such a strong emphasis on good relations between the members.

Apiwat Intapan, who joined in 2006, came from the same secondary school as Ekkapong, who along with several other older students advised Apiwat to consider the Lanna Folk Club. Apiwat also appreciates the way club members support each other. In his estimation, the club is more about fostering positive experiences than building up each member's personal skills as a musician or dancer. The club accomplishes this through music dance and other traditional culture of the region. Through their shared cultural background and curiosity, students are able to come together and support each other in a cooperative venture to learn what it means to be *khon mueang*. Apiwat also notes that the Lanna Folk Club – unlike the Thai Music and Dance Club from which it came – is concerned with all folkways, from music and dance to language and beliefs. This broad approach ensures that the students will not all be learning or practicing the same things, but each develops his or her own separate area of expertise.

All this does not mean that members always get along with each other, but the emphasis on learning and experiencing traditional Lanna culture helps them overcome and work through disagreements. On one occasion observing the club as they prepared a music and dance performance to be presented in Laos, two members got involved in a heated argument. One ended up stalking away, and instead of everyone stopping and conferring with the other party about the dispute, the other members continued with their rehearsal, and subtly used the music to involve and calm the angry student. Some time later, the young man who walked away came back, and he was given the same treatment. This dynamic also exists in the wider traditional Lanna music community in Chiang Mai. One advantage the outside researcher has in attempting to construct a detailed ethnography of one community is that he can come in objectively, not knowing what drama has come up in the past, and simply document what has happened – how different people have come together and moved apart. There is evidence that various disagreements have flared between personalities in the traditional music community in Chiang Mai, but the musicians rarely said anything disparaging of other artists, even when their ideas contradict each other.

Aside from consistently demonstrating the cohesiveness of the traditional Lanna music community in Chiang Mai, CMU's Lanna Folk Club is and has been an important source of adaptations in traditional Lanna music and dance. The club is

responsible for the creation of dances and music such as *fon hariphunchai*, which has entered the standard repertoire, and is widely performed in Chiang Mai and throughout the region. One notable figure driving this adaptation was Direkchai Mahatdhanasin, the club's advisor until his death last year. When he started teaching at CMU in 1971, he took over as the advisor for the Thai Music and Dance club. When a few members split to found the Lanna Folk Club, Direkchai became advisor to the fledgling club. He was responsible for the creation of several dances, and the process shows the collaborative and all-encompassing nature of the Lanna Folk Club. Direkchai found inspiration nearly everywhere – a Tai Yai game, villagers picking tea leaves, and even temple architecture. Other club members would compose the accompanying music; finally the members would rehearse and present the work in performance.

As mentioned earlier, members of the Lanna Folk Arts Club at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL) have also supported the traditional music culture of Chiang Mai. Lipikorn Makaew, one of the original founders and once a member of Nakatan and Lai Muang, is now head of the university's Thai Art department and is advisor to the club. In fact, most of the club's activities are outside the university. Lipikorn notes that one big difference between the present and the past is simply the availability of performance opportunities in Chiang Mai now. Because the general public atmosphere is much more receptive to traditional arts than 25 years ago, there are many more people who are willing to hire musicians, include them in various festivities and attend their performances. Lipikorn remembers that early on in the Lanna cultural revival, there were only a couple companies interested in sponsoring events that included traditional Lanna culture, and now there are many. Though this club's focus is more specifically on art, dance and music, many activities are similar to the CMU's Lanna Folk Club – performances at university functions, temple fairs and ceremonies, and other outside engagements such as area festivals.

### **3.2 Transmission of traditional Lanna music through informal education**

Over the years, the RMUTL Lanna Folk Arts Club has shared a special relationship with Lai Muang, a traditional Lanna music ensemble in Chiang Mai. Lai Muang was established in 1996 when Somboon Kawichai left Nakatan (the ensemble with Panutat Apichanatong, Udom Litrakul and Lipikorn Makaew). Somboon, who invited a few area experts and professors to advise the fledgling group, was soon

joined by Lipikorn and several other young musicians. Lai Muang's first large performance was for the inaugural *Suepsan Lanna* festival held in 1997. The young group gained renown for their work in traditional Lanna music, and in 2001 they even traveled to Canada for a performance in Vancouver. The group's dynamic underwent a big change around 2003, simply due to the members growing up. The many members who used to gather at Somboon's house left to pursue careers, get married and spend more time nurturing their new families. Today they give fewer performances, but the group is still highly regarded and their expertise is often sought in organizing traditional Lanna music events. Their repertoire consists of traditional melodies, original compositions and even improvisation. Lai Muang was the first group to incorporate *phin pia* into an ensemble. Customarily a solo instrument, the *phin pia* produces a soft, subtly undulating sound well-suited for its original use as an instrument with which to court ladies. Its sound does not carry very far and cannot compete with the louder sounds of other traditional Lanna instruments, but with the aid of amplification, it can be heard alongside instruments like *salo*, *sueng* and *khlui* (รัตนัดดา, 2543, บทบาท...: 63). Lai Muang has also included instruments from other ethnic groups in the North, like the *sae mu*, a Lahu lute. Occasionally they have even invited vocalists to perform with them, most notably Suntaree Vechanont, the former duet partner of Jaran Manopetch. Somboon recently changed his name to Wisanthat Ratanamongkhonkasem, and he says one of Lai Muang's main goals is for audiences to experience, understand and accept Lanna music as a valid standalone musical genre. One factor that has helped Lai Muang remain true to musical tradition is that the group has never focused on tourism, so they don't have to cater to the demands of visitors or the tourism industry (รัตนัดดา, 2543, บทบาท...: 128). Wisanthat says the majority of Lai Muang's audience comes from the North, and they usually already have some interest in traditional Lanna culture.

One group that has shared the stage with Lai Muang is the Rak Lanna group, led by Prasong Saeng-ngam. Prasong started the group in 1999 as a university student, and – like the Lanna Folk Club at CMU – the group seeks a holistic understanding of traditional Lanna culture. He describes Rak Lanna as using music as one means to attain a deeper grasp of Lanna identity. Members of Rak Lanna have varied backgrounds and interests and therefore different reasons for participating in

the group. Prasong notes this and says that overall, he hopes Rak Lanna will help these youth become people who can pass on Lanna music and culture out of a genuine love and appreciation of Lanna arts. Because of these broad goals and interests, Rak Lanna is not as highly accomplished musically – though some members are indeed remarkably gifted musicians.



**Figure 3-4 Rak Lanna music ensemble**

Besides playing music, Rak Lanna goes on outings to learn about the area’s natural resources, takes part in traditional ceremonies such as the *dam hua* during Songkran, and even develops their own “traditions.” One of these events is a bonfire celebration that features local musical activities like *klong sabadchai*. Other groups from around the region are invited to participate, and the bonfire has even garnered a visit by Duangduean Na Chiangmai, community activist and president of the Chiang Mai Cultural Council. The musicians of Rak Lanna are generally secondary school students (plus Prasong), though some have already gone on to university. Recently, they’ve been studying *piphat mon* with Boonying Kanthawong. Since 2000, Rak Lanna has met at the Lanna Wisdom School (โฮงเฮียนสืบสานภูมิปัญญาล้านนา; *Hong Hian Suepsan Phumipanaya Lanna*), where Prasong teaches music.

The Lanna Wisdom School grew out of the *Suepsan Lanna* festival organized by Chatchawan Thongdeelert. The annual festival was a success by all measures, but while the proceedings were entertaining and helped keep traditional folkways alive, they still did not do enough to meet the original goal of sustaining and passing on local wisdom and traditional cultural knowledge. Some of the festival organizers

wanted to do something more. Phra Buddhajarawanaporn, the abbot of Wat Chedi Luang in the center of the old city of Chiang Mai, provided the impetus for further action when he articulated this sentiment:

“Passing on Lanna culture and wisdom cannot be effectively achieved by organizing the *Suepsan Lanna* festival only four days a year. These activities need to be carried out continuously. In other words, devote your every breath to this work, and the results will be real and lasting.”

(ไม่ประมาทข้อ, ประวัตินองเขียน; translation by author)

Mindful of this advice, the organizers of the *Suepsan Lanna* festival met with local teachers to rethink their activities and plan opportunities for interested parties to study traditional Lanna culture.

In June of 2000, the Lanna Wisdom School opened to teach Lanna arts and traditional local wisdom to a total of about 80 students. In addition to music, the Lanna Wisdom School offers instruction in five other areas of traditional Lanna culture: dance, visual arts, craft-making, Lanna script and literature and traditional ceremonies. Each subject is further divided into basic instruction and advanced classes. While the advanced classes are mostly arranged between the students and teachers, the more structured basic classes are taught on Saturday and Sundays over an eight-week period. Before starting classes, students join in a northern-style *wai khru* ceremony to show respect for their teachers. The most popular subject is northern dance, followed closely by classes in regional music. There is also steady interest in classes teaching reading and writing of traditional Lanna script, in contradiction to the common warnings about vanishing knowledge and interest in the local language.

Each basic level course is taken by an average of 15 students, and the class will not be offered unless there are at least 10 students. About 30 percent of the total number entering classes at this level do not finish their chosen course. More intensive courses, such as those in Lanna language, have a higher dropout rate, while other courses maintain a more even enrollment throughout the duration of the course. Though students who discontinue their studies offer a variety of specific reasons, the decision stems from a feeling that studying at the Lanna Wisdom School is not as relevant to modern life as other activities. Indeed, 30 percent is a high dropout rate, and it reflects the steep demands facing this type of project in today's urban society. On the other hand, this also means that roughly 70 percent of students find this type of



transmission relevant and workable. Therefore, this number is not only a strong indicator that the Lanna Wisdom School model for transmitting cultural knowledge has significant room for improvement, but it also appears to confirm that this approach can work in present-day urban society.

The students range from around age six to mature adults. Since the school does not receive regular support from outside sources, students are charged a small tuition, which varies by subject. In 2007, most courses were 400 baht, with more material-intensive ones at 600 or 800 baht. The money goes to support the operation of the school, and to pay the teachers a small salary (currently around 3,500 baht for the whole 8 weeks of instruction), though most instructors have more regular outside employment.

At present there are about 60 to 70 teachers, though the number swells to over 80 when taking into account the number of professional *so* singers that sometimes come to teach. The teachers can be roughly classified into two main groups: “old generation” and “new generation.” These don’t refer to the ages of the teachers, but rather to when they began teaching. While the trend of transmitting traditional cultural knowledge is still generally from older to younger, this new model recognizes that this transmission is no longer necessarily a function of age.

In addition to its core instruction, the Lanna Wisdom School is active in the community throughout the year. The school holds intensive camps that teach basic skills and knowledge over a 5-day period, with children coming to the school each morning and going home in the evening. For older youths, the school leads three-day camps to nearby districts, which include overnight stays. The Lanna Wisdom School also helps coordinate traditional Lanna performances and workshops throughout Chiang Mai.

School administrators have identified two main challenges facing their continued success. The first is that printed materials are scarce because these subjects have traditionally been transmitted orally. The school is working to develop texts, but in the meantime the shortage is most problematic with younger students, who expect to study from books and handouts. School officials are also concerned that the knowledge students gain the Lanna Wisdom School is not deep or lasting enough due to limited class time and conflicting social pressure on the students (Untitled document).

One initiative that teaches only traditional Lanna music is at Wat Suan Dok. The main instructor is Panutat Apichanatong, who first started a weekend traditional music instruction program at Wat Loi Kroh when he was invited to teach music to area children. The abbot of Wat Loi Kroh agreed to host the program, and the temple bought a set of Lanna instruments for students to use. Panutat moved to Wat Suan Dok around 2005, but the music instruction program at Wat Loi Kroh has continued to the present with different teachers. Panutat's philosophy on teaching traditional Lanna music is that it has to be fun. He believes that musical instruments are tools in creating a fun atmosphere, not simply a part of Lanna musical heritage. Panutat's goal is to help the group of learners cooperate and have fun together – not shape them into professional musicians, so he encourages pupils to relax and enjoy what they're doing. This contrasts with his experience on the receiving end of tiresome rote instruction solely focused on teaching the notes. When Panutat started teaching at Wat Loi Kroh, about 30 pupils showed up. By the second year, the number reached about 200. Instruction has always been free of charge and completely open – meaning students can attend whenever they choose. Every Saturday and Sunday, they gather around Panutat and play together from books of traditional Lanna songs Panutat has notated. Though he doesn't get any financial compensation, Panutat says he enjoys the familiarity and respect this teaching has given him in the community. Nowadays Panutat is increasingly busy with outside obligations as his reputation as a Lanna musician and entertainer has spread, so former pupils sometimes teach at Wat Suan Dok in his place. This does have some affect the nature of the program. Since Panutat is such a dynamic personality, he may be one of the main reasons behind the program's success. Now that students are less sure about who will be leading the instruction, the number of students at a given session is again back down to the programs original number of around 30. While some of the substitutes for Panutat are quite skilled and give excellent instruction, at other times the sessions might be just a chance to play along with an advanced musician rather than receive genuine instruction on how to play traditional Lanna music.

Another temple offering free instruction in traditional Lanna music is Wat Lam Chang, inside the walled portion of the city. The program is more flexible than the one at Wat Suan Dok – generally there are no scheduled times for all students to come play together, but individual students can come whenever they choose. Boonying Kanthawong often teaches here on Saturdays, though others teach there

during weekdays after school and all day on weekends as well. The temple owns the instruments, and allows anyone to come and learn. They can receive individual instruction when they come to Wat Lam Chang, or they can just use the instruments to practice on their own. It is not only free individual study; there is also a youth ensemble instructed by Boonying. He sometimes takes these musicians to perform in other temples or engagements in Chiang Mai.

A group that grew out of this temple instruction is Phet Lanna, an ensemble that was formed by students of Panutat at Wat Loi Kroh. One of them – a nine-year-old boy (Chinachot Phumwiset, now 19) – asked his mother, Sirikorn Phumwiset, to help his friends and him start an ensemble. In 2000, they began rehearsing at Wat Lok Moli, just across from the north wall of the city and closely affiliated with Wat Phra That Doi Suthep. Through these rehearsals they developed their musical prowess and cohesiveness as an ensemble, and they soon began playing for free (sometimes they got a free meal, but never monetary payments) at various venues around Chiang Mai. They only started to earn money from playing when they began entering competitions, and the members always divided any prize money among themselves. Today, Phet Lanna still performs around Chiang Mai, but almost always gets paid. Since most of them are just entering university, they no longer have time for regular rehearsals, so they only come together to prepare for upcoming performances. If some are unable to participate in an engagement, or the performance is especially large, they enlist the help of students from CMCD. Sirikorn and Chinachot have also just been invited by the Wualai neighborhood – where they live – to host a community initiative teaching traditional Lanna music to local youth.

The last main type of informal transmission of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai is the most traditional – instruction at a teacher's home. However, even this is quite different from the past, when pupils would live with the teacher and help around the house in exchange for the knowledge and skills they gained from the teacher. Nowadays, a common situation is that a group of neighborhood youth gathers at the home of a local expert to study from him or her. The group often has some kind of semi-official recognition, and may even receive modest financial or material support from government or private organizations to help offset costs.

One such expert in Chiang Mai is Manop Yarana. Born in 1931, Manop was named a national artist in performing arts in 2005, and he teaches pupils at his home not far from the Chiang Mai train station. With extensive experience in Lanna martial

arts, various dances and playing drums such as *klong sabadchai*, *klong pucha*, *klong puche* (also called *klong kon yao*) and *klong mong soeng*, he has been offering instruction in some capacity since as far back as 1954 (ไม่ประภักดิ์ชื่อ, พ่อครูมานพ..., 2553). In addition to teaching at home, he has taught special classes at CMCD and other public and private educational institutions. Though he has greatly reduced the time he devotes to such teaching in recent years, it has been estimated that Manop is responsible for passing on traditional Lanna arts (music, dance, martial arts) to over 3,000 people since his first days as a teacher (“Directory”: 5). For much of his teaching at outside institutions – and all of his instruction at home – he doesn’t ask for any payment. Despite his advanced age, he still spends some of his spare time operating a *samlo* (bicycle taxi) around town.

Another teacher is Suthas Sinthopthong, a native of Mae Hong Son with a Tai Yai ethnic background. Growing up, Suthas was surrounded by a large Tai Yai community, and had access to excellent teachers and musical experts. In this atmosphere, Suthas developed a strong interest in traditional Tai Yai culture and a sense of pride in his unique cultural heritage. He enrolled in CMU for two years and then finished his studies through Sukhothai Thammatirat Open University. He spent some time working at a Chiang Mai boarding school for blind children, and then he accepted a position with a special education center in Lamphun province. Outside of his main employment, Suthas teaches Tai Yai music privately and even makes and sells drums. Besides his own skill and expertise in Tai Yai music and arts, Khru Suthas also joins other teachers in his neighborhood in San Pi Suea to teach traditional Lanna music to area children after school or on weekends. Altogether there are 6 teachers and about 20 students age 10 – 16 who come to study traditional Lanna music and Tai Yai music. Approximately 70 percent of the group’s performances are local, though they have gone to Mae Hong Son, Phayao and even Bangkok. The teachers have a goal of helping each student achieve a solid proficiency and ability to pass on traditional Lanna music to others. Neighbors are supportive, and sometimes even come to watch and listen.



**Figure 3-5** Suthas and students demonstrate *Klong Kon Yao* performance

A unique meeting point between formal and informal music education in northern Thailand is the *withayakon* system, which helps foster cohesion and variety in teaching about traditional Lanna music. *Withayakon* simply means expert or special lecturer on a given topic, and in this case, it refers to expertise on Lanna music or traditional cultural heritage. Because official government curricula support it, schools in Chiang Mai are often able to often invite these experts from around the community to come teach on different topics. Nearly all musicians mentioned in this paper have been *withayakon* (and many have also invited *withayakon* to teach their students). *Withayakon* can be from any background – from experienced musicians in the Chiang Mai area to teachers at other educational institutions – as long as they have expertise to share. This practice functions as an excellent bridge between the transmission that goes on in formal and informal education because the *withayakon* can come from either source, and likewise are not limited to transmitting their expertise through one outlet. This setup encourages that no single source be regarded as the definitive voice on traditional Lanna music, but individual figures are all able to spread their knowledge, understanding and views of traditional Lanna music to people they might not normally encounter. For instance, consider CMCDA – the school is highly regarded as a repository of expertise on traditional Lanna music, but a second school might invite CMCDA teacher Rakkiat Panyayot to be a *withayakon* for its

students one week and the following week host Boonying Kanthawong, who is most active in informal education. CMCDA itself also seeks *withayakon* to share their expertise with the students there, like when they have brought in Manop Yarana (the elderly national artist with expertise in traditional Lanna drums). At Montfort College, *withayakon* come to help prepare students for competitions or other important engagements. TV and radio can ask *withayakon* to be guests on their shows; for example, Panutat Apichanatong is often sought after for broadcast media because of his entertaining approach and affable personality, but *withayakon* in these cases can also come from the realm of academia as well. Figures like Sanan Thammati at CMU or Lipikorn Makaew at RMUTL are accustomed to sharing their knowledge and experiences of traditional Lanna music as *withayakon* both in broadcast media and around the community. *Withayakon* can be collective as well, like when the Lai Muang group was invited to be *withayakon* at Prince Royal's College.

In fact, *anyone* with expertise in traditional Lanna music can be a *withayakon*. This promotes a free exchange of ideas, which is a mechanism vital to the maintenance of any culture that can be called “living” in a modern society that reflects many pervasive Western attributes, like in Chiang Mai today. The apparent success of the *withayakon* system in sustaining the revival of traditional Lanna culture in the city has implications for organizations that affect cultural policy in such settings. The *withayakon* system in Chiang Mai seems to support the idea that a dynamic culture might not be something to be managed, but only “facilitated.”

### **3.3 Transmission of traditional Lanna music in other spaces**

One major outlet for traditional Lanna music transmission is funerals and other temple ceremonies. These events are a common instance for everyday Chiang Mai residents to encounter traditional Lanna music, either through live performance or through recordings; such events are also an abundant source of performance opportunities for traditional Lanna musicians. Virtually every ensemble is eager to play at temple ceremonies or festivities, from Boonying Kanthawong's group at Wat Lam Chang to Panutat's group Nakatan, which recently performed for the cremation of Wat Phra Singh's former abbot. Like in central Thailand, *piphat mon* is the traditional ensemble to play at funerals, but music from other traditional ensembles is also often heard at funerals.

A large festival unique to Chiang Mai is the week-long *Inthakin* festival in honor of the city's pillar (*lak mueang*). In his 2001 dissertation on Lanna music and dance, Andrew Shahriari describes the musical activities at the *Inthakin* festival as mainly reflecting traditional Lanna music from Chiang Mai and the surrounding area (Shahriari, 2001: 212-213). A few years after Shahriari reported this, the responsibility for musical entertainment at *Inthakin* began to shift from local temples to businesses. While temples would present performances by traditional music groups in the community, businesses have tended to sponsor more "modern" performances that more closely match the type of entertainment at temple fairs throughout Thailand. There are still several instances of traditional Lanna music at *Inthakin*, but it is given less emphasis than in the past. During his dissertation research, Shahriari noted that "a *so* stage is erected near the city pillar for continuous performances every evening, and a larger stage is constructed near the front gate of the temple for dance troupes and drum ensembles" (Shahriari, 2001: 212). At the 2010 *Inthakin* festival, no *so* stage was present, and on three separate nights the large stage opposite the city pillar shrine featured a youth *luk thung* pageant, the traditional Lanna music pupils from Wat Loi Kroh, and a dramatic dance from central Thailand. On one of these nights, there was *folk song kham mueang* and acoustic Thai folk songs at the far back of the temple, behind the massive brick *chedi* that dominates the temple complex. On another night, there was a skillfully presented *klong sabadchai* performance behind the *wihan* and in front of the large *chedi*.



**Figure 3-6 *Klong Sabadchai* performance at 2010 Inthakin festival**

Another popular venue for traditional Lanna musicians in modern society has been competitions. As opposed to temples, music competitions are not a traditional venue for Lanna music, but they have motivated youth to perform Lanna folk music. They became especially popular with youth in the time of the young traditional Lanna music culture that developed in the years after the Lanna Folk Club formed at CMU. Besides the recognition and prize money, competitions also give musicians a chance to mix with each other, share ideas and exchange their creativity and expertise. Perhaps 10 to 15 years ago, competitions were much more prevalent and took place in a wide variety of settings, but now they are mostly limited to large-scale competitions put on by the Cultural Council of Chiang Mai or the Ministry of Culture. There are typically three categories of competition based on the ages of the contestants: students (in primary school), youth (any contestants under 18), and adults. There are often multiple rounds, and the winners of the most prestigious regional competitions get prizes from Princess Sirindhorn or other royals.

The rise of the tourism industry in Chiang Mai and the North has been unmistakable and well-documented. One reason foreign and Thai tourists flock to the



North is to experience Lanna culture – or at least the tourists’ own expectations of what that entails. Performances and recordings geared toward the tourist market are therefore big moneymakers for many Chiang Mai musicians, and these artists understandably tailor performances to please their customers and end up changing the musical traditions they transmit. The tourist industry’s use of all things “Lanna” is not even limited to Chiang Mai and the region, but is hyped even in Bangkok. Purporting to take the audience on a tour of Thailand without even having to leave Bangkok, Siam Niramit’s well-produced and impressive show surveying the cultural diversity of Thailand features one section demonstrating the glory of the “ancient kingdom of Lanna.” While this does indeed give audiences a flavor of the region’s distinctive culture, there are sequences that would make many traditional Lanna musicians either chuckle or recoil.

But the classic example of the impact of the tourist industry in Chiang Mai is *khantok*. After Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda’s aforementioned development of the *khantok* dinner show in 1953, his younger sister opened the Old Chiang Mai Cultural Center in 1971 to present these shows to tourists (Shahriari, 2001: 85). Many question the ease with which *khantok* shows adapt, mix, dilute and even invent “authentic” Lanna performance arts. The time allotted to each performance is strictly managed, so musicians and dancers have had to find ways to shorten each presentation (ชิตินัดดา, 2551: 113). Some establishments also mix repertoire, removing it even further from its “proper” context; for example, audiences might witness a scene from central Thai *khon* and a Tai Yai dance formerly reserved for *ok phansa* interspersed with dances from *Chao Dararasmi*’s palace – not just a potpourri of performing arts from around the region but some might say a confusing hodge-podge of cultural expressions that ends up working to erase the cultural identity and memory of an entire people.

Despite these criticisms, it has been an immense force in supporting traditional music and musicians in Chiang Mai. *Khantok* has also been something of a stepping-stone as students seek to advance their musical skills and careers. For example, Panutat practiced both his musical skills and ability to be an entertaining emcee through his work at a *khantok* restaurant, and Kittidet Onpha currently spends some evenings playing for *khantok* shows after teaching. Many other musicians and dancers in *khantok* are students at CMCD, performances at these restaurants is how

they can earn some extra spending money. The daily repetition also sharpens their skills and ostensibly strengthens their confidence at the same time. However, CMU's Thitinadda Maneewan wrote of one *khantok* performer whose skills "neither regressed nor progressed" over the term of employment there, and the performer's enthusiasm for playing was sapped by the constant repetition (ชิตินัดดา, 2551: 114).

*Khantok* dinners are also popular among northern Thais and can be held at homes and schools on special occasions like welcoming a distinguished guest or celebrating a family's special achievement. This is one of the ways that some fear the tourist industry is influencing the average person's understanding of traditional Lanna music, and perhaps it is more justified than fears that the performers themselves are gradually being taught to promote "false" traditions. A number of the musicians and dancers (though not all) actually understand how their performances break with tradition because they are interested in traditional culture. They take the time to learn what is in accordance with historical customs and what is modern fabrication, but average people without a strong interest in the subject do not understand this, so they defer to the managers of tourist shows. They think that after all, those people get paid a lot of money to present Lanna culture, so they must be experts on it. The designers of the adapted performance styles for tourists of course have no sinister desire to rewrite history or cheapen Lanna culture, and many of them may even understand exactly how their shows disagree with tradition; however, their creations might still be accepted as historically accurate by those who aren't well-versed in traditional Lanna music culture.

A more immediate effect of tourism on traditional Lanna music transmission for the average Chiang Mai citizen is from large performances for festivals and other occasions. Though most attendees are probably from Chiang Mai and the surrounding area, the city welcomes a huge number of tourists to these celebrations each year. During Loi Krathong (or "Yee Peng" as it's called in Chiang Mai), the local government goes all out in sponsoring events throughout the city. Area musicians gather to perform in a long parade, and they also give performances on stages throughout the city. Performers represent a variety of styles, from traditional music and dance to *phleng kham mueang* and combined Lanna and Western music styles. On many other occasions, stages are set up at the Thapae gate or the courtyard around the Three Kings Monument, and both tourists and residents are welcome to

watch the shows. This is one of the clearest examples of what some scholars point to as the main difference between historical performance contexts and modern ones. Long ago, Lanna music and dance was much more participatory. Performers and audiences were not so clearly split into a creator-spectator dichotomy, though now this is customary.



**Figure 3-7 Traditional Lanna<sup>7</sup> music on stage**

Every Sunday evening, hundreds of area vendors line the road in the middle of Chiang Mai. They are joined by enterprising traditional Lanna music ensembles selling CD's and instruments, or simply performing for donations. Many musicians and academics point to the Sunday Walking Street as the most authentic and spontaneous context for traditional Lanna folk music in modern-day Chiang Mai. It is indeed a completely open venue for musicians to perform any way they want. Traditional musicians and ensembles are mixed with acoustic bands performing Western and Thai pop songs. However, it will be interesting to see whether this truly functions as a crucible for musical creativity in the long run. Over the past several years, the popularity of the Sunday Walking Street has risen meteorically (it is now featured on tourist T-shirts sold daily all across Chiang Mai), and the sharp increase in crowds has made the atmosphere more reminiscent of the performer-audience dynamic than in past years. Such an environment may not be conducive to musical

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<sup>7</sup> Some might object to including the music of highland minorities with traditional Lanna music. These tribes and their music were not part of the Lanna kingdom, but modern usage of the "Lanna" label expresses a more inclusive view (see Chapter I).

experimentation or taking creative risks, but nonetheless, it is still an important venue and opportunity for musicians – young and old – to showcase their ability.

### **3.4 Technology as a space for transmitting traditional Lanna music**

Technology has had a significant – and growing – impact on the way Lanna folk music is passed on in Chiang Mai. It affects nearly every type of transmission in the city, from formal teaching, like in Kamol Tangtua’s newly renovated classroom, to informal teachers who play tapes and CD’s to help teach their pupils. Technology can also be its own outlet of transmission, as in the case of audio and video recordings. Such technological developments make traditional music available to more people, and they also have a dramatically democratizing effect on the music and musicians, because they have been able to identify and utilize an increasing number of ways to transmit their music. Therefore, the all-encompassing and empowering nature of technology can also be considered both a mechanism and a major “space” of musical transmission in Chiang Mai.

Recording technology is a development that has been democratic and empowering; however, there are of course drawbacks. Dmitri Kabalevsky, the late Soviet composer and music educator, wrote about technology’s effects on disseminating Western classical music:

“From its first steps, the technological revolution in music showed flagrant contradictions. [...] The first of these contradictions lay in the fact that music, which used to be available to only a small number of connoisseurs, now became available to crowds of people. [...] The ... second contradiction, which, to a certain extent, stemmed from the first: the impetuous development of the mass media for disseminating music created a link between cultural and artistic education, on the one hand, and industrial production, the creation of all kinds of commercial interests, on the other – which is very far from the ideals of artistic creation.” (Kabalevsky 1988: 129-130)

These comments can also be applied to music transmission in Chiang Mai. In Chiang Mai, the “commercial interests” and “artistic creation” have sometimes coincided to the benefit of students and Lanna folk music lovers in Chiang Mai, but at other times the commercial pressures have prevailed at the expense of artistic integrity and fidelity to tradition.

Recording on wax cylinder first came to Siam between 1894 and 1897. At first it was only a hobby of wealthy Siamese, but some of them ventured out of Bangkok and recorded folk songs in the surrounding area (พูนพิศ, ...ตอนที่ 2). The lac

bug (the source of shellac) is an insect native to Thailand, but the discs were pressed abroad – often in Belgium (พูนพิศ, ...ตอนที่ 1). The first recording of Lanna music may have been a disc produced by the T. Ngek Chuan Store's "Rabbit Brand" record label in 1937, featuring *so* music and traditional Lanna songs along with other Thai folk music (นายช่างสน, 2545: 46). Most early recording artists in the North were *so* singers like Talai Kanthachan (performed under the name "Kaew Talai"), who recorded in Chiang Mai and Bangkok (ไม่ประภักดิ์ชื่อ, Profile:funmuang, 2552).

Kaew Talai and area musicians also made recordings for Chiang Mai's first radio station, *Withayu Pracham Thin 2* (WPT2; widely referred to as *wo po to song*) which officially opened in 1956. The central Thai government established WPT2 to increase their communication with rural residents in the North. The government (and increasingly the Americans as well) was concerned that rural inhabitants, such as the highland minorities, were getting their information primarily from communist rebels, and they hoped WPT2 would help combat that by broadcasting in the local languages. Broadcasts were not simply crude propaganda, but genuinely informative and entertaining communications aimed at integrating the diverse groups in the North and making them feel like an important part of the Thai nation. About 40 percent of each broadcast day consisted of music, and nearly one third of that was local music. The station had its own recording facilities, and area musicians would respond to the station's periodic invitations to come record. Current station director Wanlop Manvongprom notes that musicians no longer need WPT2's studio as technological advances have made recording equipment common. Nonetheless, musicians continue to send recordings to the station, and the broadcasting schedule still includes regional music. In fact one of the biggest differences is that they are no longer the only communication outlet in the region, but are joined by numerous other stations, television and internet.

Radio was prevalent in Chiang Mai for about 20 years before Jaran Manopetch, Chiang Mai's most well-known recording artist, began releasing music. He first recorded a tape that sold well in Marnit Atchawong's (his eventual manager) shop. Initially, it provoked the ire of some staunch traditionalists, but Jaran gained support as folk song *kham mueang* greatly increased in popularity (ลิเหรี, 2551: 49).

His early albums featured newly composed songs alongside songs that blend traditional Lanna folk music with modern musical tastes, and even Western melodies accompanied by lyrics in the local dialect. One of the traditional local tunes incorporated into multiple *kham mueang* folk songs by Jaran and others is *Pan Fai*, an old folk melody and dance that has been performed and rewritten for generations. Other Lanna folk songs arranged by Jaran include *Selemao*, *Phleng Ngiao*, *Noi Chaiya* (which was earlier shaped by the activities of Princess Dararasmi) and many others. Jaran also arranged the famous northern folk song *Long Mae Ping*. Though the origin is not known, *Long Mae Ping* gained popularity in the late 1970s as part of the repertoire of a Chiang Mai University *salaw saw sueng* ensemble, which had learned the song from a professor at Chiang Mai Dramatic Arts College (ไม่ประภักดิ์ชื่อ, ห้องดนตรีล้านนา, 2551). Jaran then added to the heritage of this song by composing lyrics and arranging it in his own unique style. Jaran's fame and popularity spread as he released approximately 20 albums<sup>8</sup> and acted in many movies, television shows and stage plays. Since his unexpected death in early September 2001, Jaran's recordings have helped establish *folk song kham mueang* as the next step in the evolution of Lanna's popular folk music.

Besides making his compositions widely available through recordings, Jaran directly affected transmission by opening his studio free of charge to area students in need of recording technology. But the indirect influence of Jaran's musical creativity is far greater and more difficult to measure. From his first performance of *Noi Chaiya* at that birthday celebration over 30 years ago through the subsequent release and distribution of his recordings, the cultural affirmation this music is part of has inspired many other musicians to pursue their interest in northern Thai music.

Pannarawee Pojanasun, a 27 year-old singer with several years of formal musical training from the Chiang Mai Dramatics Arts College and the Bunditpatanasilpa Institute in Bangkok, performs *folk song kham mueang* under the name Nam Min Chiang Dao. On a recent album she is joined by a male teacher from Chiang Mai in performing songs composed by Jaran, including his *kham mueang* reworking of a song composed by Paul McCartney and recorded on the Beatles

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<sup>8</sup> Sources disagree on the number of Jaran's albums because some were released only locally or in a limited capacity.

“White Album.” On the CD, Nam Min also performs a newly composed song by northern singer/songwriter Patinya Tangtrakul. The “establishment” also seems to be behind Pannarawee: Marnit Atchawong, Jaran’s manager, has provided her with advice and support; he even helped produce this CD for her.

Patinya, in whose apartment-turned-studio Nam Min recorded her album, is another figure currently active in *kham mueang* music. He talks of frequently encountering music as a child, whether hearing traditional Lanna music or learning guitar from his neighbor. He has worked in radio and with the Thai recording giant GMM Grammy, but is currently an independent songwriter and musician in Chiang Mai. Patinya usually uses the computer to compose music, often recording traditional instruments like *sueng* or *khloi* and mixing it with music created in a computer program. He is currently working on an instrumental album, but has sung on several previous projects. In addition, Patinya has partnered with many other musicians to make recordings in the past. Another *folk song kham mueang* group is Mai Muang, which performs at their restaurant in Chiang Mai and elsewhere in the city. They compose new *folk song kham mueang*, and have released several CDs over the years gaining wide respect in the community.

As described earlier, recordings of traditional Lanna music have been much more frequent since the time of *Ueang Lanna* (of the CMU Lanna Folk Club) and Nakatan. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Chiang Mai record store Tippanetr Enterprise helped enable area musicians to create and market recordings. They welcomed both traditional and adapted musical styles, and usually different groups would approach the store asking for sponsorship, so Tippanetr Enterprise would not have to go out looking for artists. They helped produce *luk thung kham mueang* albums, comedy CDs using the local dialect, Lanna children’s music (such as the well-known group *Noklae*) and traditional music like *so* and traditional instrumental music. One traditional music ensemble they especially supported was *Ueang Lanna*, whose respected recordings were often played at important occasions like funerals.



**Figure 3-8 Tippanetr Enterprise record store**

Another important step came in the late 1990s, not long after Bringkop Vorarai returned to Chiang Mai after studying ethnomusicology in the United States. One day, Bringkop was driving through downtown Chiang Mai when he spotted Panutat Apichanatong. It had been a long time since the two had met, and in the course of their conversation, Bringkop asked Panutat if he was interested doing a recording – Bringkop as producer, and Panutat as performer.

The resulting CD was recorded in a single, uninterrupted 48-hour session. Panutat played each instrument on a separate track, and Bringkop layered them together to create an ensemble sound. Interestingly, making ensemble recordings in this way has interested Panutat since he started playing traditional Lanna music. He described playing into a tape recorder and then using a separate tape recorder to record the first tape along with his live playing of another instrument. He went back and forth between the two tapes in this manner, finally ending up with an admittedly low-quality ensemble recording. Bringkop recalls the experience as the occasion when he truly understood the extent of Panutat’s ability, the depth of his motivation and the strength of his commitment to traditional Lanna music. According to Bringkop, Panutat simply stayed in the studio for two days and played music. “If [Panutat] thought of some instrument he wanted, I would run out to find it for him. When he was hungry, I would go out to get food.”

Witnessing Panutat’s dedication and talent during the process increased Bringkop’s desire to showcase the work of Panutat through recordings. The finished CD was released in 2000 under the title “Traditional Music of Lanna: Khantoke.” In



2001, this was followed with another release, titled “Traditional Music of Lanna: Instrumental Music.” Whereas previous recordings of traditional Lanna music were mostly intended for a specialized, local audience, these two recordings focused on educating people in Bangkok and foreign countries about the music of northern Thailand. Album notes were in English, and the musical selections were chosen to help people understand the nature of Lanna music.

Though the outward focus meant that the recordings have only sold a small amount for local use, the albums set a new standard in producing recordings of traditional Lanna music. When Panutat, Bringkop and a friend of his began distributing the first CD, other musicians in the area were able to hear the quality (fully-digital production as opposed to the conventional method of recording to reel-to-reel tape), and they certainly noticed the brisk sales of the albums. These CD’s were a new force in transmitting Lanna music in Chiang Mai – not necessarily by teaching new musical techniques or styles, but by spreading an awareness of available possibilities.

The joint venture is unique in another way: it has also been an attempt to reshape the usual contractual (or sometimes even non-contractual) business deals between recording companies and artists. Unlike some past deals for traditional music recordings in Chiang Mai, whereby artists would only receive a one-time lump sum, Bringkop and Panutat agreed to a simple formula: 50% of all proceeds for Panutat, and 50% for Bringkop. Though the recordings don’t bring in a lot of money, both Bringkop and Panutat continue to receive proceeds, and will for as long as the CD is sold. Compared to the past record deals, this business arrangement helps sustain the musical tradition over a longer period of time. For example, the money Panutat still receives helps him be able to offer free instruction at his weekend traditional Lanna music school currently at Wat Suan Dok.

Panutat has gone on to play on many other recordings, and he has even gained a notable following as a *luk thung* recording artist. He has made a number of CD’s with producers outside Thailand as well. Bringkop has produced more albums for others, and has even released recordings of his own. In addition, he has given lots of advice to other musicians who want to make CD’s. While the technology of the day has made it relatively simple for any musician to record, they are sometimes unfamiliar with the process of creating and releasing a recording, so they ask Bringkop’s advice on production and distribution.

One musician Bringkop has worked with is Somboon Kawichai, the founder of Lai Muang. Bringkop penned the liner notes for the ensemble's most recent release, *Spirit of Lanna* (2008), which is another traditional Lanna music CD aimed primarily at listeners outside of Thailand. The album is part of a regional music project by AMI Records in Bangkok and they recruited the services of Thomas Van Nes, a Dutch recording engineer who has lived just outside of Chiang Mai for many years. A musician himself, Van Nes began dabbling in amateur reel-to-reel recording many years ago. Later, he frequently traveled to Japan where he performed as a one-man band, and that is where he learned about the latest recording technology. Through persistent research on the best technologies, Van Nes selected some equipment and soon got into the professional recording business in Chiang Mai. He still doesn't consider it a significant source of income, but his involvement in the recording business has grown "from a small hobby to a large hobby." He has lived in the North for many years, during which he's averaged around one recording project dealing with traditional Lanna music per year. Despite his long-term residence in the region, Van Nes has always found traditional Lanna music inaccessible to his ears. He identified with one of the common reasons given by visitors to Thailand who find it difficult to listen to traditional Lanna music: the ensemble sound can seem monolithic, and the lack of variety in timbres and textures can be monotonous to Western ears accustomed to a diverse aural spectrum.

During the recording sessions, Van Nes worked to isolate the sounds of the instruments by putting each player in a separate room instead of recording the entire ensemble in a single space. This yielded multiple tracks for each song (one track for each instrument – for example, a single piece played by *salaw*, *sueng* and *khlui* would result in three tracks). Similar to the way Bringkop formed an ensemble recording by layering multiple tracks of Panutat playing separate instruments, Van Nes then set to work mixing the multiple tracks laid down by the different musicians of Lai Muang. In the mixing process, Van Nes decided to try what he terms a "bluegrass" or "jazz" approach – letting individual instruments take the lead for different sections of each song. When asked how he determined which instrument to bring out, Van Nes answered, "I just used my ears." This statement is expressive of the "jazz" approach mentioned above, and it worked beautifully with the traditional sensibilities of Somboon. The resulting textural variation and close focus on the sounds and playing

styles of each instrument presented northern Thai music to Western listeners in an innovative, more engaging way.

Somboon advised on characteristics of the music itself, such as when the music reached a point of repetition fitting for a change in timbre or texture, and Van Nes would choose to highlight one or two instruments while softening the other instruments. Somboon is careful to note that the result of this mixing style is technically not in accordance with traditional ideals, but he also says that it adds feeling to the music and makes the melodies more approachable for some listeners. Since recording, Lai Muang has even begun showcasing this style in their live performances, especially with audiences of mostly non-Thais.

The recordings by Panutat and Lai Muang are just two examples of widespread traditional Lanna music recordings. Bringkop feels distribution is currently more of a problem for these recordings, as wide access to recording technology has produced a surplus of recorded tracks waiting to find outlets. These recordings function as means of direct transmission and of inspiration for area musicians. Commercial recordings of traditional music can also be very informative. As Caroline Bithell wrote almost 15 years ago in a study on recordings of traditional Corsican music,

“Essentially, a commercial recording is a product in a way that a field recording is not. [...] Precisely because they are a product of reflection, commercial recordings can provide us with vital information in terms of how the performers perceive their own tradition and how they wish to present it to the outside world.” (Bithell, 1996: 49)

An important addition to this is that commercial recordings also reveal the ways producers, recording engineers and record companies view traditional music. Recordings of traditional Lanna music can also be analyzed in this way, especially those that are aimed at least partly at audiences outside of the North. For example, much of Lai Muang’s recording can be seen as highlighting the roles and characteristics of traditional Lanna instruments like the *phin pia*. A few selections from most recent Lai Muang recording and several tracks by Changsaton seem to communicate the leisurely nature of traditional Lanna music by playing new compositions in a style reminiscent of “ambient music” that many people in Asia and the West listen to in order to help themselves relax. Panutat Apichanatong’s recordings produced by Bringkop Vora-urai emphasize both traditional accuracy and skillful command of traditional instruments.

Today there are university and community radio stations in Chiang Mai that broadcast Lanna folk music – from traditional instrumental pieces such as *salo so sueng* to more recent adapted forms like *folk song kham mueang*. WPT2 is still broadcasting Lanna music, but now there are many more broadcasters. Sanan Thammati hosts a radio program on traditional Lanna music in which listeners are encouraged to call with questions or comments on traditional music. The main community radio station dedicated to Lanna music is CM77. They also have a large internet presence, and their website has a searchable database of primarily *kham mueang* genres (*folk song kham mueang, luk thung kham mueang, hip hop kham mueang, etc.*). The Northern Thai Information Service of Chiang Mai University maintains a website with detailed background information on folk music types in northern Thailand, as well as an archive of over 500 tracks recorded by artists from Chiang Mai and elsewhere in Lanna. There are several other websites offering audio and video resources, forums to discuss Lanna culture and information on the history of the Lanna region.

One of these sites, [ketalanna.com](http://ketalanna.com), was started by Ruthairat Kanchai, whose brother was one of the founding members of the Lanna Folk Club at CMU. She was not all that interested in traditional Lanna music until she started learning from Panutat. At this time, she started to have the idea that there should be a central resource for musicians and traditional culture enthusiasts in the region. Her website transmits Lanna music through both audio samples and notation available to site visitors.

As Kamol Tangtua's efforts at Wattanothaipayap School show, modern technology can aid in the classroom. At Payap University, Bringkop Vora-urai uses YouTube and other online media in his ethnomusicology classes. Many other teachers of traditional Lanna music play expert recordings as models for their students to emulate. Another technique is to record the student, and then play it back so the student can hear exactly what was performed well or needs improvement. The recording can also be compared to a recording of an accomplished musician, thereby highlighting which points in the student's rendition need special attention. Prasong Saeng-ngam also uses recording technology in these ways at the Lanna Wisdom School. Prasong also said students sometimes call from the CD shop and ask him for advice and recommendations. Pannarawee Pojanasun (Nam Min Chiang Dao) recalls one singing teacher at the Chiang Mai Dramatic Arts College who passed out

homemade CD's at the beginning of the semester. Students had to sing these songs throughout the term, and if any part was not satisfactory, the teacher could then refer back to the recording. Most teachers also recall using tapes when they were students, when opportunities to study traditional music were not as common. Prasong remembers the sense of accomplishment he felt when he and his friends (or sometimes he alone) brought home recordings and practiced until they could play along, and Panutat also speaks fondly of spending time trying to reproduce the melodies on tapes from his teachers. The same type of self-instruction has happened with *so* music. *Lakhon so* has been recorded to VCD, and students have supplemented their learning by using the discs to practice on their own (วิวัฒน์, 2547: 202).

A frequent complaint against recordings of folk music – not only from Thailand – is that they remove the music from its proper context. Music that was originally intended for certain occasions can now be accessed track-by-track, from the privacy of one's own home. However, as CMU professor and musician Thitipol Kanteewong has described, traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai is in a process of "re-contextualization," that is, practitioners are determining how to once again make it relevant to Chiang Mai's modern urban society (Thitipol, 2009). Recordings and related technological applications are a part of this search for a new context. In fact, when this traditional music developed, there were not recordings, no radio and nothing like the internet. Now that society has changed, traditional culture has been able to survive only by adapting with it. Those who are unsure whether re-contextualization is a good idea for traditional music must also consider the alternative – what if the traditional music didn't change? Would it still even exist? Perhaps a small number of enthusiasts would preserve the historical traditions, but can such limited, static expressions still be considered "culture" or would they be more fittingly labeled museum curiosities, or another branch of historical studies? Indeed, such study of cultures through history is valuable, but as Chiang Mai has shown, technological developments can be used not just to preserve traditional Lanna music, but also to help it continue to function as dynamic culture in today's society.

## Chapter IV

# The Relationship between Transmission and Styles of Traditional Lanna Music

The relationship between transmission and musical styles in Chiang Mai has been one of parallel growth – as avenues of transmission have increased, so have the number of Lanna musical styles. It would be premature to claim that increased transmission has led to more diverse musical styles (or vice versa); such a pronouncement would require more detailed and sustained analysis. However, it is fair to hypothesize that one could not exist without the other. It does seem plausible that increased avenues of transmission – such as through notation or recording technology – allowed musicians to try new things and introduce changes in musical style. On the other hand, it seems just as likely that musicians wanted to create variations in style but the existing ways of transmission did not allow for such adapted styles to be spread, so they had to develop new ways of communicating the music. New options for musical transmission in Chiang Mai support have led to increased stylistic variation in traditional Lanna music, just as varied stylistic developments can sometimes support alternative ways of transmission.

How is this functioning in the current landscape of musical transmission in Chiang Mai? To reach a possible answer to this question, it is necessary to consider how the activities mentioned in the previous chapter reflect this parallel relationship. The following analyses will show that the link between transmission and musical styles is manifested in degrees – in some instances hard to see, but obvious in other cases.

### **4.1 Styles of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai today**

Styles of traditional Lanna music in modern-day Chiang Mai fall into two overall categories: historically accurate (ดั้งเดิม *dang doem*) and adapted (ประยุกต์ *prayuk*). The main variations in historically accurate Lanna music are melodic ornamentation and adjustments to the overall duration of the piece. Adapted styles are of course much wider and more eclectic. Adaptations of traditional Lanna music can showcase a number of influences, but it usually involves the mixing of indigenous

Lanna musical traits with those from outside the region. For example, an ensemble like Changsaton uses mostly local instruments to perform musical compositions and improvisations inspired by foreign musical elements (such as non-Thai scales or rhythmic structure). Conversely, *folk song kham mueang* artists typically use a Western instrument, the guitar, to perform their adaptations of local folk tunes.

## **4.2 The link between transmission and styles in formal education**

### ***Secondary Schools***

Schools are one of the main sources of traditional Lanna music transmission for most children in Chiang Mai, but they also show perhaps the lowest rate of stylistic change. It can be difficult to see the relationship between increased possibilities of musical transmission and stylistic expansion in the classroom setting. Though teachers have incorporated new techniques through the decades like using sol-fa, written notation, recordings and now things like video technology, the teaching remains focused on the rudiments of traditional Lanna music – understanding the instruments and recognizing some basic melodies. In clubs that meet outside of regular class time, the potential for a transmission-stylistic expansion link is easier to see, partly because they are able to spend much more time practicing and performing. When a school ensemble from Thepbodint School enters a competition, their focus will naturally be on detailed – perhaps even fastidious – replication of what they understand to be pure traditional Lanna music performance. However, in this zealous focus, they reaffirm the decades-long shift from the original loose, widely participatory nature of Lanna music to a clear performer-audience dynamic. In other instances, they might perform at a temple event or community celebration; when the context for the performance is more relaxed, they will be freer to experiment with stylistic elements like ornamentation or perhaps even instrument roles and the makeup of the ensemble. In these ways, the different opportunities for transmission available to school clubs support stylistic variations and flexibility. Conversely, the club members' ability to vary performance styles also allows them to take advantage of different ways to transmit their musical output, as this proficiency will get them invited to play for a greater variety of engagements.

Another interesting possible link is due to the number of students involved with traditional Lanna music beyond required classes. When a student at Wattanothaipayap School was asked why she joined the traditional music club, she

responded that she simply loved to play and also wanted to carry on Lanna traditions. Such an answer may seem obvious and unremarkable, but it is striking when one considers that a generation ago, such a sentiment was uncommon, and even more rarely expressed openly. In only a few decades, the social atmosphere has changed from one that discouraged expressions of local cultural pride to one that encourages such sentiment.

### *Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts (CMCDA)*

Students at CMCDA of course spend much more time on music than their peers at other schools in Chiang Mai, yet stylistic experimentation remains strictly regulated. Nevertheless, there have been changes over the years. Around 1984, CMCDA was the birthplace of the Mahaduriyang Lanna group, founded at the urging of Sunthorn Na Chiangmai as an attempt to increase people's exposure to Lanna music. The Mahaduriyang Lanna ensemble consisted of a very large number of musicians playing traditional instruments together, similar to the *mahaduriyang* groups set up in Bangkok by Luang Pradit Phairoh as an attempt to give a Thai answer to Western symphony orchestras. The concept was deemed successful in raising curiosity in local music, and in 1985, Sunthorn led a concert of 400 musicians. More recently, teaching techniques have sometimes incorporated modern technological developments. Though teacher Rakkiat Panyayot does not use recordings in his Lanna music classes, one former student said she used recordings extensively when studying voice at CMCDA.

There are many styles of music coexisting at CMCDA: Thai, Lanna and even Western music, and many of the students are active in two or even all three types. Rakkiat noted that Western music pedagogy has influenced the way traditional Lanna music is approached at CMCDA. This includes an increased use of notation (the version they use is a central Thai development influenced by the ideas of Western notation), and more intangibly, the way students and teachers interact. Folk music in Lanna was originally closely tied to religious or ceremonial events, and it was therefore not something to be questioned. As a result, the process of teaching Lanna music was more one-sided, and it was perhaps more strongly oriented to conservation of teachers' techniques and styles. Since Western pedagogical practices have become more common, students have been more likely to challenge accepted traditional practices or theories. Rakkiat believes it is important to affirm this curiosity, which



he maintains is a natural human impulse. Though this environment is carefully monitored for changes that CMCDA teachers might feel are too radical or ill-advised, students feel freer to add small changes like speeding up the tempo of a traditional melody or adding their own creative ornaments. Many of the students are also active in performances outside the school – often with *khantok*, festival performances in the community or as part of an ensemble like Phet Lanna, so they bring influences from those experiences back to CMCDA. Some of this can filter back into CMCDA, but it may not be ultimately accepted if deemed inappropriate. This could lead students and even those with no official affiliation to feel critical toward CMCDA and its stance on traditional Lanna music expressions. Some area musicians do appear to hold concerns about the dichotomy of cultural activity “inside” CMCDA and that outside. It is important to note that the Dramatic Arts College system is essentially a creation of the central Thai state. Though many CMCDA teachers were raised locally, and thus have a lifetime of experience and expertise in Lanna music, the institution is still associated with highly formal central Thai performing arts. Stylistically, this means that the Lanna music at CMCDA is also strictly guarded, while Lanna folk music in more informal spaces is much more flexible, and theoretically quicker to change. This raises a question: What is “real Lanna music” – the century-old courtly traditions maintained by what is essentially an outside institution; or music that more readily accepts adaptation and is quicker to shed historical detail, yet is maintained by more informal local structures?

### ***Higher Education***

Because of their positions as information storehouses, meeting points for the creative exchange of ideas and venues for careful questioning, institutions of higher education offer several interesting illustrations of the link between varied musical transmission and the expansion of musical styles. It is also notable that both faculty and students are instrumental in fostering the cross-fertilization between music transmission and musical styles. At Chiang Mai University (CMU), even the understanding and conservation of historical Lanna music traditions are supported in a variety of ways. Researchers such as Thitinadda Maneewan of the Social Research Institute and Sanan Thammati of the Center for the Promotion of Arts and Culture provide a large source of information on traditional Lanna music culture by conducting fieldwork and analyzing historical records. Students such as those in the

Lanna Folk Club or the Faculty of Fine Arts“ Lanna music ensemble learn about these customs by reading the reports by CMU“s and other institutions“ researchers and seeking input from respected musicians in the community. In the past especially, when traditional Lanna music was not as widespread in the city, students often conducted their own field research by going outside of Chiang Mai to encounter these musical traditions for themselves. Through their data collection and subsequent sharing with peers, they charted a new path of musical transmission that hadn“t been followed much in recent decades.

This comfortable understanding of traditional Lanna music culture pairs with the less-constricting social structure of university life to create an encouraging atmosphere for stylistic adaptation and experimentation. Whether in creations like Lanna Folk Club advisor Direkchai Mahatdhanasin“s collaboration with students in develop new music and dances, or Thitipol Kanteewong“s founding of the musically adventurous Changsaton ensemble with classmates in the Faculty of Arts, the depth of traditional cultural expertise at CMU has informed and inspired students and faculty in their musical endeavors. In addition, the social freedom of campus life compared to secondary school allows students interested in traditional Lanna music time to brainstorm, experiment and refine their technique and repertoire.

There is a similar dynamic in other universities in Chiang Mai as well. RMUTL and Rajabhat of course have professors and researchers interested in the same topics as those at CMU, and both institutions also have similar clubs that include traditional Lanna music. Payap University has also built up a sizeable archive of traditional Lanna music field and studio recordings, and making these available to researchers is yet another way knowledge of traditional Lanna music is transmitted to artists in the academic realm. Payap“s proficiency with recording technology has also assisted musical initiatives outside of academia. During the time Thippanetr Enterprise sponsored many traditional and modern Lanna music recordings, they often used the studio at Payap University.

#### **4.3 The link between transmission and styles in informal education**

The realm of informal education also shows a connection between transmission and musical styles. In contrast to formal education, the relationship is more fluid and less regulated, and it is therefore less quantifiable. In transmission through informal education, the correlation between transmission and styles

highlights such intangible things as personality, musical instincts and the spiritual substance of Lanna music culture. This spiritual side of Lanna music culture is embodied in the *wai khru* ritual, in which performers pay respects to their musical forbears and request guidance and protection in future practice and performance. Though the *wai khru* is still regarded by a huge majority of Lanna musicians as an integral part of their traditional music culture, formal instruction programs often do not have time or resources to maintain the regular *wai khru* ceremonies. However, informal instruction programs tend to remain more faithful to the *wai khru* tradition.



**Figure 4-1** A traditional *wai khru* ceremony

Though most informal traditional Lanna music educators contend that their programs are conservative in nature, the more open atmosphere helps encourage the incorporation of different musical elements and learning activities. This is similar to the flexibility provided by higher education, but outside of universities there is less convenient access to academically rigorous research on traditional Lanna music. This relatively open environment not only allows pupils some leeway in exploring the boundaries of traditional music styles on their own, but also gives teachers opportunities to brainstorm new activities, spend more time on what they feel is most

important and broaden their approach to teaching traditional Lanna music culture. The flexibility also means students are well-positioned to move around to different initiatives, and even be involved with multiple programs simultaneously. All of the following descriptions of varied musical transmission and stylistic adaptation in the realm of informal education show the relationship between transmission and stylistic development either by describing how students and teachers are exposed to an increased number of sources on traditional Lanna music, or by showing how stylistic changes work their way into the current framework of musical transmission in the modern-day city of Chiang Mai.

### ***Lanna Wisdom School***

In some ways, the music transmission activities at the Lanna Wisdom School are like those in schools around Chiang Mai. Activities are based around a formal education model and there is a similar risk of standardization and homogenization as teaching moves from oral instruction to formalized materials such as recordings and handouts. However, the students generally have a much higher level of interest than in general schools. Also, since most classes are taught only when school is not in session, students have more time to devote to learning traditional Lanna music. Another key difference is that students have more options once they learn the basics in the beginning level course. From there they can continue with flexible, mostly one-on-one study with a Lanna Wisdom School teacher like Prasong Saeng-ngam, and they can also be referred to one of the many ensembles or informal music activities in the area, almost all of which have at least some sort of informal connection to the Lanna Wisdom School. At least in theory then, studying traditional Lanna music at the Lanna Wisdom school leads to more varied stylistic possibilities than study in Chiang Mai secondary schools.

### ***Neighborhood Programs***

Informal education in the community, like efforts led by Manop Yarana or Suthas Sinthopthong, are more successful at preserving the traditional performance styles and idiosyncrasies of their teachers. In fact, this individual or small group study with expert musicians in the neighborhood is the form of transmission closest to the historical way of passing on musical knowledge, before the widespread onset of Western influence on education in the North. Therefore, it is one of the most natural

ways that traditional Lanna culture is passed on in Chiang Mai. The old teacher-pupil hierarchy is stronger in these cases, and the Western egalitarian educational tendency seen in other more formal educational initiatives is less prominent here. In addition, the bond between the teacher and student is also stronger.

Despite their predisposition towards conservation and preservation of traditional music, such informal community-level initiatives may end up being distasteful to those tasked with managing the region's culture, precisely because the activities are so organic – and therefore unmanageable. The teachers themselves may change their instruction, and there is not much a third party can do to significantly shape the process. As the instructors adapt to the changing society around them, they can bring in technological or pedagogical techniques that fit better with their (or their pupils') lifestyles; however, cultural managers might deem such adaptations inauthentic.

### ***Music Instruction in Temples***

The free traditional Lanna music education programs at Wat Suan Dok and Wat Lam Chang are both dependent on active independent study and practice. Though Panutat Apichanatong's program at Wat Suan Dok only offers group instruction, each student should spend some time practicing on his or her own outside of the regular study time on Saturday and Sunday. One interesting thing that often occurs in the group instruction dynamic at Wat Suan Dok is that students often seem to learn through imitation – not only following the teacher leading the session, but also listening to the playing of the other students. At Wat Lam Chang, the instruction is more individual in nature, but it is safe to assume that students also spend time outside of the temple learning about Lanna music, if not actually practicing. Students of both programs will consult a variety of sources, all of which will influence their understanding and performance styles of traditional Lanna music.

Some students also have the chance to apply what they have learned. At Wat Suan Dok, more advanced pupils are occasionally given the chance to transmit their own ideas of traditional Lanna music when Panutat is unable to come teach. Some go on to form their own ensembles, like Chinachot Phumwiset, who studied at Wat Loi Kroh and left to found Phet Lanna with the help of his mother, Sirikorn. A similar case is 15 year-old Kiatisak Phosiri, a current CMCDA student who studied at Wat Loi Kroh and Wat Suan Dok with Panutat for several years before joining a

traditional music ensemble called “Sen Siang Wiang Ping.” At Wat Lam Chang, some of the advanced students are able to join an ensemble instructed by Boonying Kanthawong. Boonying, who himself performs in an ensemble from a temple near his home, takes this youth ensemble to perform at funerals, other ceremonies and events in the area.

#### **4.4 The link between transmission and styles in other contexts**

Outside of formal and informal music instruction programs, musical transmission in Chiang Mai largely takes place by observation and imitation of other musicians (ครูพักลักจำ; *khru phak lak jam*). The descriptions that follow are also all examples of incidental transmission. Some may be formal (*khantok*), and others informal (Sunday Walking Street), but in each case, one or both sides of the transmission relationship is not primarily concerned with the passing on of musical knowledge.

##### ***Ensembles in Chiang Mai***

It is even easier to notice the link between increased musical transmission and the stylistic expansion of traditional Lanna music when considering the pursuits of music ensembles in Chiang Mai. In these instances, the members are already skilled musicians, and they are often responsible for transmitting – but not necessarily “teaching” – Lanna music to the general public. As a result, their activities are more varied and reflect a wider spectrum of influences than purely educational programs; they are also more willing to experiment with these different possibilities.

One of the clearest examples is Lai Muang, the ensemble led by Wisanthat Ratanamongkhonkasem (formerly Somboon Kawichai). In the late 1980s and 1990s, Somboon was involved early on in the youth revival of traditional Lanna music loosely centered on the Lanna Folk Club of CMU. After he left Panutat’s Nakatan ensemble and formed Lai Muang, the group became respected as an ensemble dedicated to accurate traditional Lanna music. Yet they have been responsible for a number of innovations, most of which would probably also be approved by Rakkiat Panyayot, the CMCDA teacher who says the conservation of traditional styles should serve as a foundation for future stylistic expansion in Lanna music. Their creative developments make use of many different types of transmission. They used

technology to allow *phin pia* to join in ensemble performances and have presented traditional Lanna music to varied audiences – students and adults, Thai and foreign. Their most recent recording alters the usual texture of traditional Lanna music, and they have since performed in the same way for certain audiences.

In the past, the Nakatan and Ueang Lanna ensembles were eagerly sought because of their reputations for historically faithful performances. In other words, their close attention to the historical basis of traditional Lanna music led to opportunities to further transmit their music. Now, Nakatan is still highly regarded for their traditional music performances, and many young groups like Phet Lanna and the current music ensembles of the Lanna Folk Club have moved into this role as well. This is largely due to the previous dedication of such ensembles as Ueang Lanna, Nakatan and Lai Muang in reasserting the role of traditional ensembles.

The Rak Lanna ensemble is difficult to classify, because they are not structured solely as a music ensemble, but as a group that uses traditional music as one way of reaching an understanding of Lanna identity. They both give performances and are students of their leader, Prasong Saeng-ngam, and area musical experts like Boonying Kanthawong. The breadth of their activities reflects a number of musical styles and ways of transmission. Musical performances may include Western instruments like guitar or violin. Activities for members of the Rak Lanna group and similar youth initiatives include improvisatory workshops on making and playing antiquated instruments of the region and an annual bonfire party that features traditional musical celebration.

As mentioned earlier, the Changsaton ensemble has positioned itself to transmit their unique musical creations in the scope of formal higher education. In addition, they also seek ways to communicate with the general public through recordings, the Internet and performances in Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Founded and still led by former student and current professor Thitipol Kanteewong, Changsaton transmits much of its mixture of avant-garde and traditional Lanna music culture through performances, recordings and the Internet. Their public following remains limited, but they are widely recognized in academia. Students in university clubs trade recordings and discuss Changsaton's innovations. Though the ensemble's activities are not limited to the world of formal education, Changsaton has used this environment as one main venue to transmit their unique musical style.

### ***Music for Tourism***

Much has been written of how the tourism industry in Chiang Mai has turned Northern culture into a commodity. Several scholars and local traditional musicians also point out the many ways that authentic traditional folk music expressions have been adapted for inclusion in *khantok* and other tourist performances. Pamela Moro has noted how rural folk performances, academic developments and business-driven adaptations are all intertwined in *khantok* (Moro, 1999: 4). These two ideas mirror one another – the buildup of this confusing conglomeration of stylistic devices mirrors the introduction and evolution of a relatively recent paradigm in transmitting Northern cultural traditions: one in which culture is a product for consumption.

One related aspect Thitinadda Maneewan has written about is the impact of event organizers who are hired to arrange performances of Lanna music and dance on the local, regional, national and international levels (ชิตินัดดา, 2551:125-126). The business decisions and logistical requirements that influence *khantok* exert a similar influence over the cultural “products” in these cases. Thitinadda notes that the business environment for event organizers in Chiang Mai is a competitive one that rewards the ability to design creative, eye-catching presentations of Lanna cultural character. This is achieved mostly through mixing cultural influences and following popular modern trends at the expense of rigorously following traditional performance norms. The high visibility of these performances – often for a crowd of predominantly foreign and Thai tourists – goes a long way in spreading misconceptions of what traditional Lanna culture really is. Even the musicians and dancers, many of whom understand that the performances are not historically accurate, feel the effects; these events pay well, and only performers who can most readily develop exciting routines are regularly employed.

### ***Event-based Transmission***

At present, the Sunday Walking Street is trending toward the category of offering traditional music as a commodity. On a stroll down the congested street, one is likely to find performances that seem like a small version of the “event organizer” presentations discussed above. However, this evening street market has not succumbed quite yet, and several traditional musicians still eschew this more showy style as they sell instruments, CDs and play their music along the street. It is also



worth noting that the atmosphere changes from season to season as well. During the popular cool season when foreign and central Thai tourists flock to the city, the Walking Street is naturally quite crowded and features a higher proportion of more polished performance contexts, while it can be more relaxed at other times of the year. The Walking Street still has a reputation among local traditional musicians as a space of authentic folk music transmission. This is partly because of the street market's low-key beginnings. It might be notable that the loose dynamic of the Walking Street – especially in previous years – is somewhat similar to the organic, hard-to-control atmosphere of informal community music education with neighborhood musical experts (as described earlier); both of these spaces of musical transmission are held in high regard by a number of Chiang Mai musicians. In such settings, the relatively unrestrained transmission has proven to be a healthy environment for the natural development of traditional Lanna music.

The changing nature of performances at the *Inthakin* festival described in the previous chapter demonstrates how altered responsibility for sponsorship of musical entertainment affects what musical styles are transmitted to the crowds. It appears that as area temples ceded control of selecting music for the *Inthakin* festival to local businesses, performances at the celebration have gradually shifted their focus from “tradition” to “entertainment.”

Music for funerals and other temple occasions remains a staple of traditional Lanna music transmission to Chiang Mai residents, and even seems to be an effective barometer of what musical and artistic developments are “acceptable” to the local populace. Several years ago, several traditional and adapted dances were performed in front of the funeral pyre of a deceased monk in Chiang Mai, a practice that is generally frowned upon in the North (ชิตินัดดา, 2551: 127-128). Pictures of this circulated on the internet sparked a heated argument on the proper nature of Lanna performance culture. As this example shows, traditional and adapted styles are not only transmitted at the temple through live performance or recordings over a loudspeaker, but also subject to transmission via video technology and the internet.

#### **4.5 Factors Affecting the Relationship Between Transmission and Styles**

There are of course other instances demonstrating the parallel relationship of musical transmission and stylistic variation in Lanna music, but we can already see

that the two are linked. Sometimes the relationship is clear while in other cases it is not so obvious, because this link is not a closed equation; in fact, it shouldn't be regarded as an equation at all. It is not quantifiable because after all, traditional Lanna music culture is an art, developed through centuries of expression, ceremony and experience. It can be described, but not defined. Two tangible forces that have a great impact on the way the transmission-styles connection is manifested are the vision and initiative of individual musicians, and the creative use of technology.

In Chiang Mai, the renewal of traditional music culture has been shaped by many dedicated personalities. Virtually every Chiang Mai music teacher, musician or professional mentioned in this paper has built and sustained this renewal through his or her own dedication, capitalizing on available materials and ideas to help transmit pieces of Lanna musical culture. These pieces naturally contain their own interpretations and creative developments (i.e. musical style).

There are a number of specific examples from Chapter III. Panutat Apichanatong teaches with specific mannerisms and records in certain styles, while Prasong Saeng-ngam and Boonying Kanthawong pass on their own stylistic influences in their instruction. Academics such as Sanan Thammati or Lipikorn Makaew might focus on more strict conservation of historical traditions while artists like Patinya Tangtrakul experiment with Lanna music and welcome more diverse input to Lanna music culture. Another category of remarkable personalities is made up of those who manage informal music education programs in their neighborhoods. These expert musicians, who often have other employment as well, dedicate their time and energy to the transmission of traditional Lanna musical knowledge in their communities, usually without any material compensation. These figures all take advantage of the many possibilities for transmission described in the above pages, and thus pass on their take on traditional Lanna music culture to a diverse audience of learners and listeners. In many instances, transmission has not just depended on the notable efforts of one person, but on the significant output of a collaborative effort. This is illustrated by the Lanna Folk Club at CMU and other academic clubs; it is also the case with music ensembles like Nakatan, Lai Muang and Changsaton. The accumulated creative impulses of several individuals make for potent responses to questions of transmission and stylistic adaptation. Quite often, these responses take the form of stylistic change that takes advantage of new alternatives in transmission,

as happened with Lai Muang's addition of *phin pia* to a traditional music ensemble because it was possible now that technology allowed it.

The availability and careful adoption of technological developments is another major tangible variable in the function of the transmission-musical styles link. Recording devices, broadcast technology and the spread of computers have transcended distinctions between formal education, informal instruction and community performances, and such technological developments are used prominently in each context. Even as far back as the early days of recordings and radio in the North, technology affected the way music was presented. Recordings were of course time-limited, as were radio broadcasts. The connection between radio and the spread of *lakhon so* also has yet to be analyzed. Through its broadcasts of different traditional and modern music, radio brought the region's population – including highland minorities – a deeper understanding of collective Northern identity. When Jaran began using the recording medium to transmit his music in the late 1970s, a growing number of residents in the North were inspired to reconsider their musical and other cultural roots. Eventually, other *folk song kham mueang* musicians followed Jaran's lead, and this active atmosphere led to even more stylistic adaptations and possibilities for transmitting traditional Lanna music.

Technology also showcases the widest amount of stylistic variety, as it allows people to create and disseminate highly varied styles and ideas through an array of channels, including online forums featuring debates on Lanna folk music culture, local record stores and national chains, broadcast media, live performances in public spaces and other creative technological collaborations. Each technological outlet of transmission also supports many different styles; for example, at Chiang Mai record store Tippanetr Enterprise, *kham mueang* records are sold alongside CD's of traditional *pat kong* and *salo so sueng* music.

Amplification and mixing technology have also been instrumental in supporting the transformation of live performance. Being able to increase the volume enables larger audiences and the ability to compete with other musical distractions in the vicinity. Mixing the sounds before sending them through speakers allows unconventional combinations of Lanna instruments, like in the case of Lai Muang's inclusion of *phin pia* in ensemble pieces. This technology also allows for the integration of instruments with divergent sonorities. An especially interesting example is the ensemble led by the *Pakakoeyo* musician Chi singing and playing the

traditional harp of his ethnic group. Instead of employing the typical electric bass to provide foundation for the group's harmonies, they have opted for the acoustic sensitivities of the cello. The sound is much more closely suited to the subtlety of the other instruments and the relaxed character of their performances. Because of mixing and amplification technology, both large and small audiences can easily hear the group's gentle sounds.

One seemingly incongruent phenomenon that has taken hold of live traditional Lanna music performances is over-amplification. Most Lanna musicians cite the balance between the calm nature of Lanna music and its entertainment value, but many live performances of traditional Lanna music nowadays are amplified to a high volume. This could be related to the need to compete sonically for the attention of audience members and passers-by. Not only are there the sounds of personal electronics (mobile phones, etc.), but many vendors – especially at events like temple fairs – have their own music playing through a small sound system.

#### **4.6 Views on the Expansion of Transmission and Lanna Musical Styles**

The expansion of musical transmission can cause local musical experts to voice concerns; some musicians have criticized the Bangkok-centric and sometimes unintentionally derogatory coverage of media outlets from the Thai capital, while others have spoken against the “do-it-because-we-can” attitude that has been encouraged by the sharp expansion in possibilities for musical transmission. A much more frequently discussed and controversial topic is the stylistic change in the music that comes through the increased channels of musical transmission in Chiang Mai.

Opinions vary on what degree of change in traditional Lanna music is acceptable. CMCD teacher Rakkiat Panyayot echoes a view held by many academics – some change is necessary and inevitable, but it should be regulated in a natural, smooth process. For example, people with this mindset would support rhythmic and melodic changes, but might have reservations about unconventional instrument combinations or radical changes in content. One academic in Chiang Mai said that Thitpol Kanteewong's Changsaton ensemble, which experiments widely in both compositional and performance technique, is a musical group that is still searching for itself. Such a remark does not necessarily reflect disapproval, but it expresses the uneasiness many feel at seeing such avant-garde techniques applied to traditional Lanna music culture. It is worth noting that the traditional Lanna music

establishment in Chiang Mai also had initial misgivings about the changes Jaran Manopetch ushered in with his music. CMU professor Sanan Thammati has said Jaran's persistent display of clear aims and carefully thought-out ideas are what made his contributions so successful in the long run.

Teachers in general secondary schools tend to be even a little more conservative in their teaching approach. Because of time limitations, these teachers focus on teaching the fundamental aspects of traditional Lanna music, and they are unable to initiate extensive discussions on modern adaptations to traditional Lanna music. They therefore choose to focus on presenting a historically accurate picture of Lanna musical culture as they understand it. They can go deeper with students who join clubs that meet outside of regular class time, having time to teach melodies or even have students try playing different instruments.

At all levels – even in instruction programs outside of schools – teachers debate the merits of using notation in teaching students to play. A number of musicians said that traditional Lanna music played from notation sounds stiff or hard compared to memorized pieces. However, many teachers acknowledge that notation is useful, especially in saving time and making sure students learn the melody correctly. Most instruction – in and out of the classroom – relies on a combination of notation and memory. Thitinadda Maneewan notes that this drive toward convenience now pervades the teaching of traditional Lanna music, and it stems from musicians having different aims from the past. Whereas they once learned music for ceremonial purposes, to aid communication or build enjoyment, now the goal is to perform (ชิตินัดดา, 2550: 252). Nonetheless, teaching without notation is still common. Recently Boonying Kanthawong has taught *piphat* music to Rak Lanna members, and regularly teaches them new pieces by singing small sections until they can reproduce the whole melody. Also, neighborhood music teacher Suthas Sinthopthong explained that notation is still not used in teaching Tai Yai music.

Among musicians, there is a wider spectrum of opinions on the expansion of Lanna musical styles. Again there is a strong desire to remain true to historical traditions, but at the same time, artists are taking advantage of the many creative possibilities now open to them. A large majority of musicians reiterate the need to carefully conserve the traditions that were handed down to them; however, they are also proud of their innovations. Panutat was happy to recount the way he first started

creating layered ensemble recordings with several instruments and two tape recorders, and Wisanthat has explained how he appreciates having participated in recordings that both showcase innovations in traditional Lanna music and serve as historical records for future generations of musicians. However, accomplished and knowledgeable performers like Panutat and Wisanthat generally do not draw concern for their thoughtful adaptations to traditional Lanna music; instead, it is musicians who are not as advanced who cause worries for the future of traditional Lanna music. Since they don't have the extensive background and understanding of such respected traditional musicians, the danger is greater that they will form and pass on an inaccurate understanding of traditional Lanna music. Another reason that this group of lesser-trained musicians causes such concern among conservation-minded musicians and teachers is that they tend to be less motivated to seek accurate information on historical Lanna music, instead being attracted to the easy and popular over performance practices according to tradition.

Expressing a more liberal, inclusive idea is Patinya Tangtrakul, who speaks passionately in favor of remaining open to all kinds of developments in Lanna music culture. He believes that all cultural influences are valid, and local music that incorporates new influences should be embraced in an open, understanding environment. While he maintains that musicians and academics who study and conserve historical traditions are necessary and valuable, he also contends that Lanna culture is not something to be guarded and kept away from change, but should be open for the general public to experience and adapt as they desire. Patinya believes that if "non-traditional" elements are continuously culled, eventually there will be nothing left with relevance to the general populace.

Even though this position is not frequently articulated in traditional Lanna music circles, it is not held only by Patinya, and it highlights the rift between approaches to managing traditional Lanna music culture in modern-day Chiang Mai. The debate is captured in the following question: should the work of traditional musicians embrace a historically accurate picture of Lanna culture even though it means lower participation, or should traditional musicians instead encourage a more fluid, unregulated cultural milieu that enjoys widespread participation despite being historically inaccurate? Those who would answer in the affirmative prefer authenticity and dedication to historical traditions, while those who agree with the second position favor a broad-based cultural effort instead. It would be false to say

that either group wants preservation only, or change only; this is simply a way of classifying their predominant preferences. As implied earlier, there is a third group – the one that raises the most concern among advocates of traditional Lanna culture. This is made up of those who would think they are in favor of authentic, historical accurate performances, but they witness (audience members) or adopt (performers) practices that do not follow Lanna music customs of the past, and they accept them without seriously questioning their historical authenticity.

#### **4.6.1 Comparison to Traditional Music Revivals in Other Countries**

It is worth noting that these issues are not only facing Chiang Mai and Thailand. The renewal of interest in traditional music and culture in Chiang Mai has been concurrent with a worldwide re-examination of local folk culture in recent decades. Placing the “re-contextualization of traditional Lanna music” (Thitipol, 2009) in Chiang Mai in this international arena is a huge topic that merits detailed research of its own, but it is still helpful to at least have an awareness of what has been happening in other countries. It is also informative to consider outside examples’ similarities and differences to this present study on transmission.

A revival of traditional music in the French island of Corsica appears to have many similarities with the one in northern Thailand. A resurgence in traditional Corsican sung polyphony and monody seems to have been in full swing by the mid-1990s (Bithell, 1996: 39-40). Like in Chiang Mai, the rebuilding of traditional Corsican music culture benefited from community and government initiatives along with an active recording industry, starting from the early 1970s.

Central and Eastern Europe also reveal interesting recent trends in traditional music. Timothy Rice’s 1996 article on traditional music education in Bulgaria provides an interesting account of some aspects of traditional music transmission before, during and after decades of communist rule (Rice, 1996: 1-12). Similar to the governments of Phibun Songkhram, the Communist regime in Bulgaria used music to help further their ideals. The nearby country of Slovenia was also Communist for many years as part of Yugoslavia. In the past decade, freewheeling, flexible musical gatherings called “Dance Hall” after their Hungarian roots have become part of that country’s recognition of its cultural roots. Dance Hall can be seen as an expression of Slovenia’s more open and democratic society (Pettan 2010).

Government control of culture also was a feature of several East African nations throughout the 1950s and 1960s as they started gaining independence from foreign rule (Kubik, 1981: 84-85, 87). In many of these areas, traditional music actually got a big boost when World War II drew to a close and there was an ensuing economic boom, which aided the creation of several radio stations as well as a fledgling recording industry. Besides the date, the growth of radio and recording in Chiang Mai starting in the 1950s is similar to what happened in Africa.

Taiwan faces issues similar to the way figures in the Chiang Mai musical and cultural communities face questions of how to properly integrate Lanna, Thai and Western musical influences. Musicians and scholars there debate how to address three main musical components in their modern culture: traditional local (Taiwanese) music, traditional Chinese music and Western music (Ho, 2007: 463-483). Like in northern Thailand, questions of national identity, history and politics weigh heavily in this discussion. These concerns are especially prominent because of Taiwan's historical and current relationship with mainland China.

There have been similar traditional music revivals in other parts of Southeast Asia in recent decades. One interesting link is the surge in academic research on the region's traditional music around the same time that it picked up in northern Thailand. Fresh attention in the form of articles, compositions and translations by native and foreign scholars rejuvenated the academic discourse on Southeast Asian traditional music, especially the music of Indonesia (Kartomi, 1995: 366-400).

Finally, a comparison with the folk music revival in the United States, highlights how resurgent adaptations of folk music often become linked to political circumstances. In the US, the folk music revival began in the 1950s, as Americans began to lose faith in their government, first over its overzealous paranoia of communist infiltration, and then over its continued military involvement in Vietnam. Many musicians who led the folk music revival began to perform protest songs against the war and social injustice. In Thailand, the bloody political disaster of 1976 caused Northerners to lose faith in their central government, leading to Jaran Manopetch's resignation from civil service and the birth of *folk song kham mueang*. Unlike in the US, *folk song kham mueang* has remained apolitical, aside from the reassertion of regional identity and implied social criticism of songs like *Ui Kham*.

It is apparent that there are many similarities and correlations between the renewal of interest in Lanna folk music in Chiang Mai, and the folk music revivals



that have taken place around the world in roughly the past half-century. Determining what exactly has caused these regrowths of curiosity in local culture worldwide is beyond the scope of this thesis. Perhaps they are common human impulses to the advance of globalized culture and the perceived loss of unique identity. Whatever the reason, Chiang Mai is clearly just one example in a larger context. It is fitting to conclude this discussion of transmission's role in stylistic continuity and adaptation with this reminder that the issues Chiang Mai musicians face are being addressed around the world. Just as globalization has thrust foreign influences upon previously unadulterated indigenous cultures, so can ideas on how to deal with this new cultural tension can be gleaned from similar situations across the globe.

## CHAPTER V

### Analysis and Conclusion

#### 5.1 The traditional music transmission environment in modern-day Chiang Mai

The data presented in this thesis show that the transmission of traditional music in Chiang Mai is currently fluid and diverse. This research has shown that different activities can make use of different types of transmission at varying levels, so ways of transmission in Chiang Mai are best described as a spectrum than presented as a classification chart. The traditional Lanna music transmission activities in modern-day Chiang Mai can be laid out in accordance with either of two scales: one ranging from formal to informal, and another from deliberate to incidental.

Formal transmission is marked by structure and oversight provided by a different entity from the one that actually passes on the music culture. An example of formal transmission is music taught in secondary school classrooms or the Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts (CMCDA). Not only are the schools themselves responsible for overseeing and approving the activities that take place on their premises, but government also exerts control through local, provincial and national bodies and educational policy. Less apparent examples include *khantok* dinner shows and transmission of traditional Lanna music through recording and broadcast technology. With *khantok* and other music for tourism in Chiang Mai, business structures are responsible for directing how the music is presented. In the cases of transmission through recordings and broadcast technology, organizations such as record companies, distributors and radio or TV stations are ultimately in charge. These situations are less clear though because different organizations are able to give different levels of autonomy to musicians and disc jockeys.

Informal transmission then is when the transmission is more self-directed. Three time-honored types of informal transmission are *mukhapatha*, *khru phak lak jam* and transmission through music at events. *Mukhapatha* denotes pupil-master rote learning. In contrast to this teacher-led tuition, *khru phak lak jam* refers to students who learn through observation and imitation of other musicians. Music at events includes both traditional ritual based performance or more modern events like the Sunday Walking Street.

Deliberate transmission means that both the transmitter and the receiver intend for that activity to be primarily concerned with passing on traditional music. On the informal end, this includes activities like oral master-pupil musical training. On the formal side, traditional Lanna music instruction at the Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts is the strongest example of deliberate transmission.

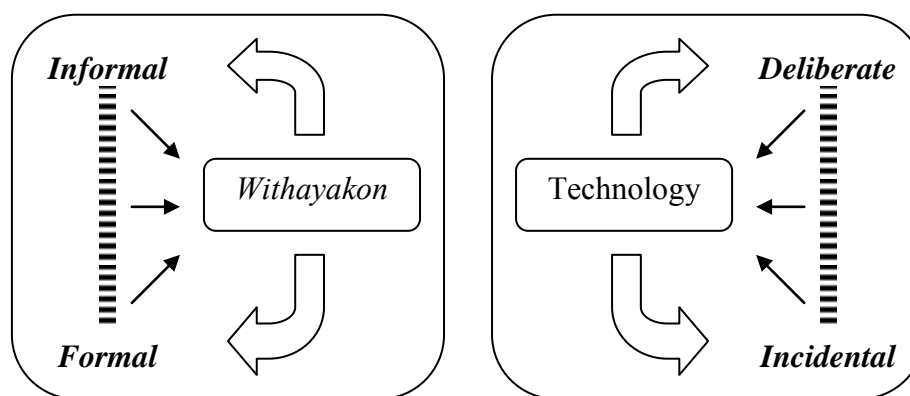
In the case of incidental transmission, one or both parties may be less concerned or even unaware of the musical transmission. An example of incidental transmission on the formal end of the above scale is music for tourism, such as *khantok* dinner shows. In the case of *khantok* shows for tourists, the viewers usually intend to gain insight into Lanna performance art culture, but the owners of such ventures are motivated by commercial interests. The performers themselves are not even the ones responsible for directing what is transmitted about traditional Lanna music culture; they are best considered conduits through which the owners and managers transmit this subject matter. Music at events like the Sunday Walking Street is an instance of incidental transmission from the informal end of the spectrum shown in figure 5.1. There may be some intent on the part of artists to gain exposure, and there is also a desire among many visitors to take in the sights and sounds of the evening market. However, these intentions are very casual, and fall far below concerns like earning money and finding handicraft deals.

### **5.1.1 Mechanisms linking transmission types: *Withayakon* and technology**

The *withayakon* system, in which invited experts on traditional Lanna music share their understanding with students or audiences, is the principal link in modern-day Chiang Mai between the realms of formal and informal transmission of traditional Lanna music. The system is widespread and works in both areas of the spectrum in figure 5-1. On the formal end, CMCDA invites musical experts from Chiang Mai, villages or area universities to share their knowledge; in a case of more incidental formal transmission, a *khantok* restaurant like the Old Chiangmai Cultural Center may seek guidance from a Lanna music and dance expert. In the informal segment, local events or celebrations might employ an expert on Lanna music instead of the typical presenter to host an event and introduce acts. In pupil-master (*mukhapatha*) relationships the teacher may encourage the student to seek out another musical expert for specific information or help with a certain technique. In this scenario, the

musical expert functions as a type of *withayakon*. Students who seek out *withayakon* are most likely to be involved in informal transmission relationships.

The use of music technology by traditional Lanna musicians in Chiang Mai is an equalizing, democratizing force in a number of ways. One of the main effects of such widespread use of technology has been a blurring of the distinction between deliberate and incidental transmission. A single radio program on traditional Lanna music can be material for meticulously study or background music for entertainment. Conversely, a recording made for commercial or leisure purposes may end up being highlighted as a key example in the music classroom.



**Figure 5-3 Bridges between opposite sides**

## 5.2 The relationship between transmission and Lanna musical styles today

Before the time of *Chao Dararasmi*, transmission of Lanna music was done informally. It was marked by master-pupil (*mukhapatha*) teaching and incidental transmission in the community. Over the last 100 years, formal transmission has taken shape; during the past 35 years, the variety of ways traditional Lanna music is transmitted has expanded considerably. Concurrently, styles of traditional Lanna music have diversified as well – added to the old *pat kong* ensemble music and *so* vocal repartee are *kham mueang* music and ensembles that try unconventional combinations of Lanna and Western instruments. This growth has not necessarily been a causal relationship, but certain ways of transmission do correspond with specific stylistic elements. Chapter IV explored how this works with examples of traditional Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai; these examples can be distilled further to yield basic kinds of transmission. The relationship of these transmission types to different stylistic elements can be outlined in a simple table. In the left-hand column are these basic building blocks of traditional Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai today, and to the right are the associated stylistic elements.

<b>Transmission Type</b>	<b>Associated Stylistic Elements</b>
Oral – master/pupil	Continuity of individual playing styles
Observation/imitation	Development of personal style, musical instincts
Using notation	Slightly hard or stiff sound, uniformity
Academic affiliation	Historical authenticity, sound theory, careful technique
Group – member-led	Ensemble sensibility, openness to adaptation, flexibility
Group – teacher-led	Deference to musical authority, uniformity, ensemble skills
Performing ensemble	Confident playing, experimentation
Tourism-oriented	Time limitation, repetition, spectacle over authenticity
Unregulated individual	Personal style, flexibility, rapid change
Recording technology	New ensemble combinations, self-production
Broadcast media	Time limitation, musical quality control (DJs/audiences)
Internet	Variety, experimentation

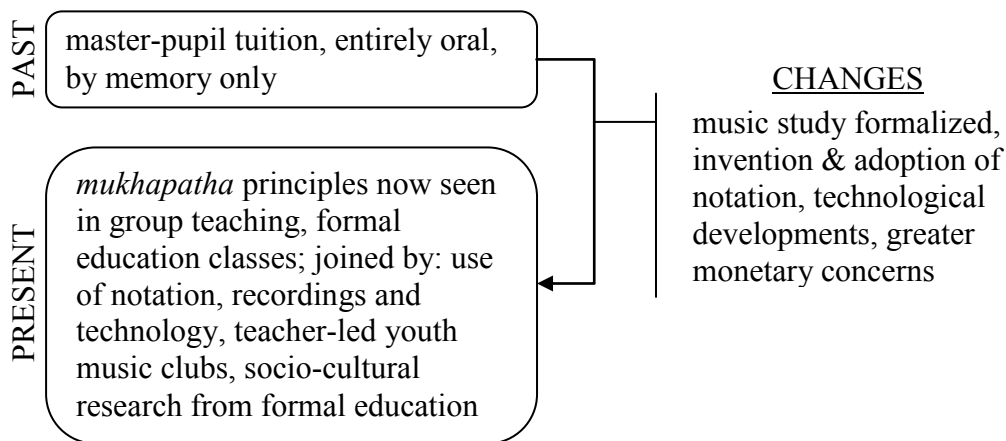
**Table 5-1 Transmission and Musical Styles**

### **5.3 Transmitting traditional Lanna music in the modern-day city of Chiang Mai**

This thesis has shown both how traditional Lanna music is passed on nowadays in Chiang Mai and how these different kinds of transmission are related to stylistic attributes in the music. Based on these findings, how can the transmission of traditional Lanna music in the modern-day city of Chiang Mai be summarized? This research suggests that the traditional Lanna music environment in Chiang Mai is a diverse, vibrant and natural expression of Chiang Mai society today. In general, it does not solely value music with ancient origins as “authentic,” nor is it a proverbial ship without a rudder, wholly unable to value historically precise Lanna music culture. Though there is spirited debate among Chiang Mai musicians and academics about what deserves to be called “authentic Lanna,” the local music culture continues to accommodate the varying views. Links between old and new types of transmission are what characterize how the transmission of traditional Lanna music in modern-day Chiang Mai has come to reflect both change and continuity. This mix of volatility and persistence – or combination of older and newer ways of musical transmission and musical styles – creates an active atmosphere for the maintenance of Lanna music culture in the modern-day urban center of the region.

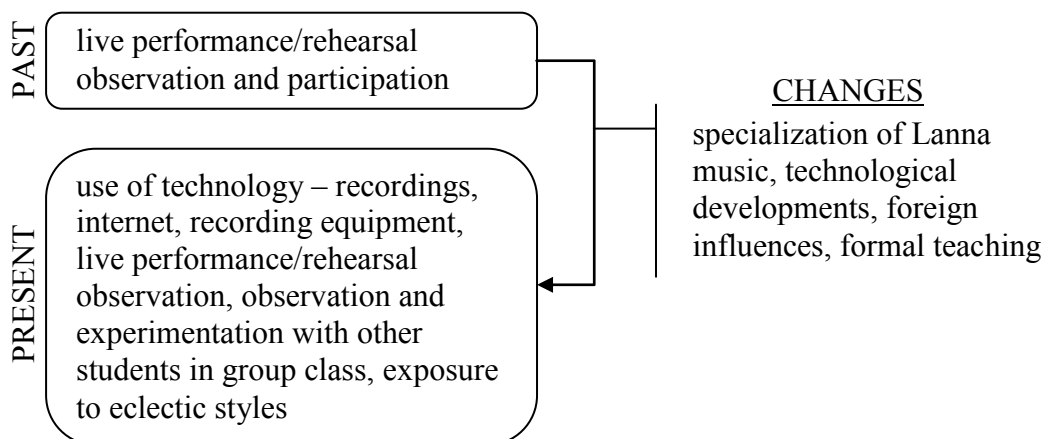
Chapter II showed how this came about after a period of dramatic decline in traditional Lanna music culture. When there was a critical confluence of a number of key personalities, shifting social mores and technological advancements, traditional Lanna music culture in Chiang Mai again began to flourish – not a reproduction of what once existed, but a reformed musical identity that is able to endure in a modern urban society. As laid out in Chapters II, III and IV (and again in the present chapter), this rejuvenation included the diversification of both traditional ways of transmission and traditional musical styles. Below are diagrams depicting this expansion from three key ways of transmission in the past to an array of transmission types in tandem with stylistic growth in modern-day Chiang Mai.

1. Oral master-pupil rote transmission (*mukhapatha*)



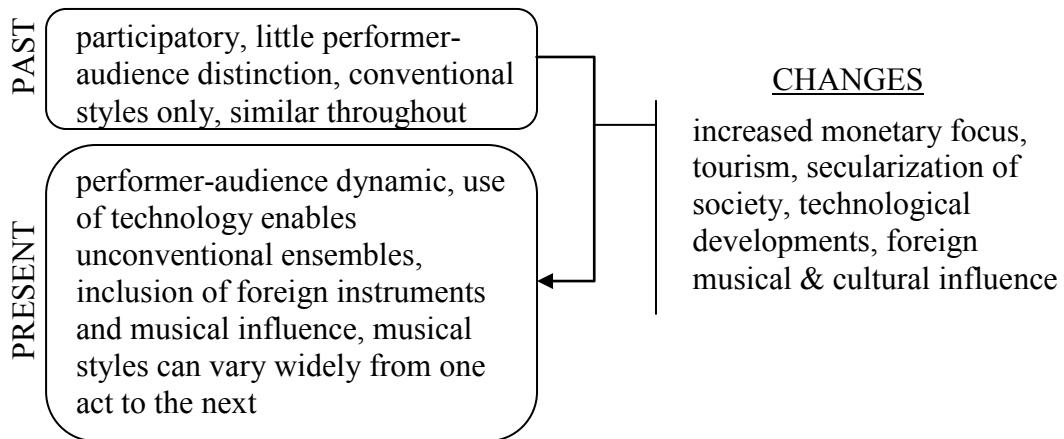
**Figure 5-4 Oral master-pupil rote transmission (*mukhapatha*)**

2. Transmission through observation/imitation (*khru phak lak jam*)



**Figure 5-5 Transmission through observation/imitation (*khru phak lak jam*)**

### 3. Transmission through music at events



**Figure 5-6 Transmission through music at events**

The three charts above show the extension in modern times of traditional Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai. Such analyses clearly show the “what,” but it is also very important to remember the “who” on both sides of these changing transmission relationships. In general – but not uniformly – relationships between the transmitter and receiver (i.e. teacher and student, performer and listener) have become more formal. It is much more common now for transmission to go through a third party. Where there was once only individual rote *mukhpatha* instruction, now there are school boards and classroom materials aiding the teaching of traditional music. In imitation/observation transmission, budding musicians practicing *khru phak lak jam* now rely heavily on recordings and other technology to learn new techniques from accomplished artists. In transmission through music at events, performer and audience roles now clearly defined, though they were fluid in the past. Also, a large driver of musical change in these instances is the event organizers. Through the organizers, the economic and time concerns of modern-day Chiang Mai shape the transmission relationship.

In summary of this thesis, these three diagrams suggest that the musical change and diversification of musical transmission in modern-day Chiang Mai are local musicians’ natural expressions in the face of societal change. Artists and academics have successfully found ways to incorporate traditional Lanna music into the living music culture of Chiang Mai.

#### 5.4 Recommendations for future study

The results of this study raise a number of questions for future research. Some of these are specific enough that they could be addressed in a single paper; others would require more extensive study.

A limited research project could analyze a single contributor to the rebuilding of traditional Lanna music culture in Chiang Mai, such as the Lanna Folk Club at Chiang Mai University.

It would also be useful to clarify exactly how much the tourism industry affects Northerners' understandings of their own cultural heritage as opposed to spreading cultural misunderstandings among visitors. It may be that *khantok* and other tourist shows really do exert large influence on the rate of musical change; on the other hand, the cultural tourism industry may just be grabbing attention from the actual catalysts of stylistic change in traditional Lanna music.

Another paper could explore how the transmission of traditional music in Chiang Mai compares to transmission in other regions of Thailand. A broader issue to explore is how the resurgence of interest in traditional Lanna music fits with the global folk music revival trend in recent decades.

Perhaps the most theoretical question raised by this thesis is whether the work of cultural management in Thailand should really be cultural "facilitation." If given the chance, does expertise and motivation to pass on traditional local music come naturally from the community, or does it need to be encouraged by cultural managers?



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## **APPENDICES**



## Appendix A

### Glossary of traditional Lanna music

*A glossary of some traditional Lanna instruments, ensembles and genres referenced in this thesis.*

#### Instruments

*sueng* – two-stringed fretted plucked lute. Sometimes the strings are doubled, giving it a total of four strings (i.e. two tuned in unison, and two tuned in unison five notes higher).

*salo* – two-stringed bowed spike fiddle with a coconut shell resonator. It is played vertically, with the coconut shell near the ground. In Chiang Mai, the *salo* has no frets, but the *salo* indigenous Nan province has frets. Unlike the central Thai *so duang* and *so u*, the bow of the *salo* is not attached to the instrument.

*phin pia* – a fretless bar zither made of a single wooden shaft, metal headstock, and a coconut shell resonator. It can have from two to five strings. When played, the coconut shell rests against the chest of the player. For optimum resonance, the player performs shirtless; for this reason performers have been exclusively male. In modern performances, the player often wears a shirt, and microphones compensate for the slight loss of natural acoustic resonance.

*khlui* – vertical flute made of bamboo, hardwood or plastic pipe. The Northern *khlui* is thinner and shorter than the *khlui piang o* common in central Thailand. The northern *khlui* is similar in size to the central Thai *khlui lip* but it does not have a thumbhole (Shahriari 2001: 124).

*nae* – fits into the central Thai category of instruments called *pi*. The *nae* consists of a mouthpiece, wooden body and a brass bell. The mouthpiece includes a reed made of a dried palm leaf and folded into four or six layers (Shahriari 2001: 127). The *nae* is sometimes compared to the Western oboe as it is a double-reed wind instrument, but the construction and tone quality are considerably different.

*pi* – unlike the central Thai *pi*, the Northern *pi* is played transversely, and contains a free metal reed. There are five different sizes of *pi*, and they are often played in ensembles of either three different sizes or all five together. Such *pi* ensembles are referred to as *pi chum*.

*khong wong* – gong circle also used in central Thai music, consisting of a set of gongs arranged on a frame that can be managed by one player. In one type of *khong wong* all of the gongs are mounted horizontally in a near-circular frame around the front and sides of the player. The Mon variation features a frame that has a similar shape but is turned 90 degrees so that the two sides of the arc rise up vertically in front of the player, forming a rough “u-shape.” Though the Northern and Central *khong wong* are usually identical, occasionally the Northern gongs are a bit shallower (Shahriari 2001: 153).

*ranat* – keyed melodic idiophone (xylophone) also common in central Thai music. The keys are usually made of hardwood or bamboo, depending on the type of *ranat*. The keys are suspended over a resonating box.

Goblet-shaped drums – In the North, these drums include the *klong aew*, *klong luang*, *klong yao* and *klong puche*. Of these, the *klong yao* is common in central Thai folk music. The *klong puche* is a common in Tai Yai communities, where it is called *klong kon yao*. It is usually played with an ensemble of gongs and a set of cymbals called *chawae*, and it sometimes accompanies dances, like the Tai Yai *fon nok kingkala*.

Barrel-shaped drums

*klong bucha* – a set consisting of a large barrel-shaped drum next to three small drums. Traditionally kept in every temple, the *klong bucha* had a religious function, such as communicating that the following day was a holy day. Its significance for Buddhism in the North is expressed in the saying, “If there is ever a time that the sound of *klong bucha* disappears, Buddhism will also then fade away.” (ศรีบุญทศ, 2540:

27)

*klong sabadchai* – sometimes called *klong chaimongkhon*, *klong sabadchai* was originally like the *klong bucha* but kept outside the temple and used for various nonreligious functions in the community. It has since become much shallower, and the small drums to the side have either lessened in number or disappeared altogether. Today *klong sabadchai* performances are popular for opening concerts and shows, such as *khantok* dinners.

*klong mong soeng* – *mong soeng* is actually from the Thai Yai language and refers to the drum's performance with several different gongs (ตีระยุมทอง, 2540: 31). Cymbals might also be used in *mong soeng* performances, and the drum player performs a slow, rotating dance while playing.

*klong talotpot* – a narrow cylindrical drum played with a wooden beater as part of the *tueng nong* ensemble.

*klong pong pong* – *klong pong pong* is somewhat similar to the central Thai *klong song na*. It is used mostly in ensembles, notably the *salo so sueng* ensemble. Sometimes it is played with its larger cousin, the *klong theng thing*.

## **Ensembles**

*salo so sueng* – though related to ensembles that would form for special occasions as far back as 500 years ago, the present *salo so sueng* ensemble was established after local musicians encountered the idea of the central Thai *khrueng sai* ensemble when Chao Dararasmi returned to Chiang Mai (ตีระยุมทอง, 2540: 5). The basic *salo so sueng* ensemble (which is often expanded) is made up of *sueng*, *salo*, *khloi* and *klong pong pong*.

*tueng nong* – this ensemble is commonly used in parades and processions, and features a *klong aew* on a wheeled frame, *klong talodpod*, *nae*, *chawae* and gongs.

*piphat* / *pat kong* – originally had no *ranat*, like the *piphat khrueng ha* in Sukhothai and early Ayutthaya (ศรีสุทโธ, 1997: 2). Both *piphat* and *pat kong* refer to the same type of ensembles, but just in different contexts – *piphat* in the palace and *pat kong* in folk music settings.

*pi chum* / *so* – *pi chum* is an ensemble of three or five *pi*. This *pi chum* contingent is often part of a *so* ensemble that includes two singers, called *chang so*.

### **Genres/Styles**

*dang doem* – “traditional” style. *Dang doem* music is performed according to performers’ understanding of historical customs in Lanna music. Thus the instruments and ensemble makeup are in accordance with traditional Lanna music. Usually, *dang doem* only refers to instrumental music, though most *so* is also considered to be authentically traditional.

*prayuk* – “adapted” style. *Prayuk* music is when performers adopt unconventional techniques, such as technological developments and non-Northern instruments, in their performances.

*so* – vocal repartee music, with two singers (one male, one female) accompanied by a *pi jum* ensemble. Skilled *so* singers mix memorized lyrics with improvised lyrics appropriate to the situation.

*kham mueang* – songs with lyrics in the local dialect. There are several subgenres, from *luk thung kham mueang* to *hip hop kham mueang*, but the one most relevant to traditional Lanna music is *folk song kham mueang*. Introduced by Jaran Manopetch, *folk song kham mueang* mixes Northern elements (like traditional melodies or locally-relevant lyrics) with the folk music style popularized in the United States during the 1960s.

## Appendix B

### Partial index of key informants and others involved with traditional music transmission in Chiang Mai

*Note: There are many others active in the traditional Lanna music culture of Chiang Mai. This list is just a selection based on personal contact with them or incidental research into their work.*

#### 1. Boonying Kanthawong (บุญยั้ง กันชะวงค์)

*Activities:* musician, teacher of Thai and Lanna music (private lessons, schools, Rajabhat University), aspiring maker of traditional Lanna instruments

#### 2. Bringkop Vora-urai (bringคพ วรอุไร)

*Activities:* head of music department at Payap University, musician (Western, some Northern instruments), ethnomusicologist, recording producer and contributor

*Note:* also called Khru Joe, Ajarn Joe

#### 3. Chatchawan Thongdeert (ชัชวาลย์ ทองดีเลิศ)

*Activities:* community organizer promoting appreciation of Northern cultural identity, original organizer of collaboration that led to *Suepsan Lanna* festival, founder and director of the Lanna Wisdom School

#### 4. Damrong Chaipetch (ดำรงค์ ชัยเพชร)

*Activities:* private teacher of Lanna drumming, drum maker

#### 5. Kamol Tangtua (กมล ตั้งตัว)

*Activities:* teacher of traditional Lanna music classes and club at Wattanothaipayap School, player of many traditional instruments, former pupil of Sunthorn Na Chiangmai

#### 6. Kittidet Onpha (กิตติเดช อ้นภา)

*Activities:* teacher of traditional Lanna music at Dara Academy, native of Phitsanulok, more experienced with central Thai music

*Note:* also called Khru Det

#### 7. Krithaphon Kongla (กรีฑาพล ก้องหล้า)

*Activities:* teacher of traditional Lanna music at Montfort College (grades 7-9) and head of music club for this age group, performer of Lanna and Thai music

*Note:* also called Khru Tum

**8. Lipikorn Makaew (ลิปิกกร มาแก้ว)**

<i>Activities:</i> visual artist and player of many traditional instruments, early member of Nakatan and Lai Muang, current head of Thai Art department and asst. head of Cultural Studies Center at RMUTL, advisor of Lanna Folk Arts club	<i>Note:</i> also called Khru Ot
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**9. Manop Yarana (มานพ ยาระณะ)**

<i>Activities:</i> expert in Lanna drum playing, <i>fon choeng</i> , National Artist in performing arts, teacher of traditional Lanna music, <i>fon choeng</i> and martial arts in San Pa Koi sub district	<i>Note:</i> also called Po Khru Phan
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**10. Marnit Atchawong (มานิต อัศววงศ์)**

<i>Activities:</i> manager to Jaran Manopetch, continuing influential proponent of Jaran's work and <i>folk song kham mueang</i> , organizer of regional tours with a cultural emphasis
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**11. Pannarawee Pojanasun (พรรณรวี พจนสุนทร)**

<i>Activities:</i> <i>folk song kham mueang</i> singer, recording artist	<i>Note:</i> performs as Nam Min Chiang Dao
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**12. Panutat Apichanatong (ปานุตัด อภิชนาง)**

<i>Activities:</i> teacher of traditional Lanna music at Wat Suan Dok (started at Wat Loi Kroh), player of many traditional instruments, instrument maker, founder and current leader of Nakatan ensemble, experienced presenter, recording artist	<i>Note:</i> also called Khru At
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**13. Patinya Tangtrakul (ปัทมัญญา ตั้งตระกูล)**

<i>Activities:</i> singer, recording artist, composer/arranger using computer, gives creative participation in Lanna music culture precedence over conservation of traditional music	<i>Note:</i> nickname Nong
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**14. Phiphatphong Masiri (พิพัฒน์พงศ์ มาศิริ)**

<i>Activities:</i> teacher of Thai and Lanna music at Payap University, musician, occasional participant in Thai and Lanna music recordings, guest teacher in Dara Academy's after-school music program	<i>Note:</i> also called Khru Nim
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**15. Prasong Saeng-ngam (ประสงค์ แสงงาม)**

<i>Activities:</i> teacher of traditional Lanna music at Lanna Wisdom School, founder and leader of Rak Lanna group, musician, Thai and Lanna folk art enthusiast	<i>Note:</i> also called Khru Bird
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**16. Rakkiat Panyayot (รักเกียรติ ปัญญายศ)**

<i>Activities:</i> teacher of traditional Lanna and Thai music CMCDA, player of many traditional instruments, former pupil of Sunthorn Na Chiangmai
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**17. Ratakan Singkaew (รัตกานต์ สิงห์แก้ว)**

<i>Activities:</i> teacher of traditional Lanna music classes and club at Thepbodint School, player of many traditional instruments	<i>Note:</i> also called Khru Ae
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**18. Ruthairat Kanchai (อุทัยรัตน์ กันชัย)**

<i>Activities:</i> founder and webmaster of www.ketalanna.com, learned traditional music with Panutat Apichanatong, sister of a founding member of CMU's Lanna Folk Club	<i>Note:</i> nickname Nokyung
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**19. Sanan Thammati (สนั่น ธรรมธิ)**

<i>Activities:</i> researcher at CMU's Center for the Promotion of Arts and Culture, author of publications on Lanna culture and performing arts, host of interactive Lanna music radio program on the CMU station, musician, founding member of the Lanna Folk Club at CMU
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**20. Sirikorn Phumwiset (สิริกร ภูมิวิเศษ)**

<i>Activities:</i> founded and still oversees (but doesn't play in) Phet Lanna ensemble, director of traditional music project in the Wualai community	<i>Note:</i> also called Pa Pha
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**21. Somsak Thapanya (สมศักดิ์ ทาปัญญา)**

<i>Activities:</i> manager of Thippanetr Enterprise record store, through store sponsored many Lanna music recordings in the 1990s, current distributor (through store) of Lanna recordings	<i>Note:</i> nickname Tui
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**22. Suntaree Vechanont (สุนทรี เวชานนท์)**

<i>Activities:</i> folk song <i>kham mueang</i> singer with Jaran Manopetch, recording artist, restaurateur and performer
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**23. Suthas Sinthopthong (สุทัศน์ สินธพทอง)**

<i>Activities:</i> accomplished drum player, expert in Tai Yai performing arts, teacher of traditional Lanna music in neighborhood initiative in San Phi Suea sub district, social studies teacher at special ed. center in Lamphun	<i>Note:</i> also called Khru Nihon
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**24. Thitinadda Maneewan (ชิตินัดดา มณีวรรณ)**

<i>Activities:</i> researcher at CMU's Social Research Institute on northern Thai performing arts, author of publications on Lanna music and dance, married to former regular member of Lai Muang who is especially skilled at <i>fon choeng</i>
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**25. Thitipol Kanteewong (ชิติพล กันต์วิงศ์)**

<i>Activities:</i> musician, founder/leader of Changsaton, recording artist, professor at CMU's Faculty of Fine Arts, researcher on traditional and contemporary Lanna music
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**26. Thomas Van Nes**

<i>Activities:</i> recording engineer, producer, bluegrass musician	<i>Note:</i> home and recording studio in San Kamphaeng
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**27. Tomanoon Hongthong (ธรรมบุญ หงษ์ทอง)**

<i>Activities:</i> teacher of traditional Lanna music at Prince Royal's College (restarting program originally built by Dechawut Sittiyot), Lanna, Thai and Western musician, son of well-known <i>chang so</i> in Chiang Dao	<i>Note:</i> also called Khru Tum
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**28. Udom Litrakul (อุดม หลีตระกูล)**

<i>Activities:</i> player of many traditional instruments, early member of <i>Nakatan</i> ensemble, founder and leader of Anek Prasongsilp ( <i>piphat mon</i> ensemble)	<i>Note:</i> also called Khru Kiat
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**29. Wanlop Manvongprom (วัลลภ นามวงศ์พรหม)**

<i>Activities:</i> current director of WPT2 (Chiang Mai's first radio station), sound engineer, broadcaster	<i>Note:</i> often called Khru Nim
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**30. Wisanthat Ratanamongkhonkasem (วิสันท์ศน์รัตนมงคลเกษม)**

<i>Activities:</i> player of many traditional instruments, instrument maker, early member of <i>Nakatan</i> ensemble, founding member and organizer of Lai Muang ensemble, recording artist with Lai Muang	<i>Note:</i> changed name from Somboon Kawichai, also called Khru Boy
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## **Appendix C**

### **Sample Interview Questions**

During the research process, the questions for each interview were written uniquely for each subject. However, there were some standard types of questions that were posed to subjects in each category. Below are some model interview frameworks for each of the major categories of informants. Please note that many of the informants fit into multiple categories.

#### **Secondary School Music Teachers**

1. What classes/clubs do you teach?
2. In what activities (i.e. performances) do the students participate?
3. What is the most important thing to teach students of traditional Lanna music?
4. Do you use notation in your teaching? Recordings/technology?
5. How has the Thai government supported traditional music education in your school?
6. Have you had local musicians or experts come teach your students about traditional Lanna music?
7. Is it difficult to get students interested in traditional Lanna music?
8. What different styles of Lanna music are taught and played at your school?
9. Have you taught or performed outside of your school?
10. What is your own background in Lanna music?
11. Other/follow-up:

#### **Teachers in Higher Education**

1. What is your current position? How are you teaching Lanna music now?
2. What is your background in traditional Lanna music? When and how did you become interested?
3. What ensembles have you been involved with?
4. Why is transmission of traditional Lanna music currently widespread and receiving so much interest in modern-day Chiang Mai? What has sparked the interest?

5. How has transmission of Lanna music changed? How is it now compared to different points in the past?
6. How are changing musical styles related to different ways of transmitting music?

### **Teachers in Informal Education\**

1. What is your current job, and what is your involvement with teaching traditional Lanna music?
2. What is your background in traditional Lanna music? How did you get interested?
3. When and how did you get involved with [*informal education program*]?
4. How do you prefer to teach (notation, oral, recordings/technology, etc.)?
5. What is the most important thing to teach students of traditional Lanna music?
6. What instructional/performance activities are the students involved in?
7. What styles are taught/performed?
8. How has transmission of Lanna music in Chiang Mai changed over time?

### **Professional Musicians/Ensemble Leaders**

1. How did you become interested in Lanna music?
2. What is your musical background (including training and employment)?
3. How did you get involved with [*ensemble*]?
4. What are your activities with this ensemble (especially performing and teaching)?
5. What recordings have you made?
6. In live performances, do the pieces sound basically the same as in the recordings, or do you change them?
7. Do you compose your own music? If so, what is the process like? Do you use notation to write down the music?

### **Music Students**

1. How and when did you first become interested in traditional Lanna music?
2. With whom have you studied?
3. Where do you currently study and/or perform?
4. What ways of teaching have helped you the most?

5. Who do you go to for information or instruction on different styles of Lanna music (i.e. traditional, adapted, etc.)?
6. What are your thoughts on changes in traditional music? Is it disappearing, changing too fast or in an unfitting way?
7. Will you pursue Lanna music as a profession or only as a hobby? What are you interested in besides music?
8. What do your non-musicians friends think of your involvement with traditional Lanna music?

### **Other Professionals**

As each subject in this category does specialized work and was sought out for a specific reason, virtually no standard questions were asked. If the informant overlapped with another category, some standard questions from that category were used.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Joel Akins grew up in Menominee, Michigan in the United States, and has long had a strong interest in music. After graduating from St. Olaf College with a bachelor's degree in music, he moved to Lamphun, Thailand to teach English. It was during this time that Joel first encountered Northern Thai music. He returned to the US to work for two years, and then decided to study Thailand and its music more closely as a student in the MA in Thai Studies program at Chulalongkorn University.