



# Pipat Traditions in Music Culture in the Mekong River Basin: Practice and Phenomena in the Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## **Abstract**

“Pipat”, or “Pinpeat” in Cambodian and “Pinpat” in Lao, is a specific word used to define a traditional ensemble from the musical culture of the three countries. The instruments in the ensemble mostly consist of melody making, punctuating instruments. Pipat music has long been used during theatrical performances, royal ceremonies and ritual functions. The compositions played are highly regarded and considered sacred.

There are many common elements between the Pipat Traditions in the three countries mentioned above, for example, the instruments used in the ensemble are similar in name and physical appearance. The differences between repertoires from the different regions, while obviously recognizable by the musicians, have not been closely studied in terms of their interrelationships. Research needs to be undertaken to find out and understand more about this shared tradition. The results would serve as the agent that links their present interrelationship to their history and finally their individual origins. The purposes of this research were:

1. To clarify and explain the phenomena of the contemporary Pipat traditions in the three countries.
2. To interpret the role and status of the contemporary Pipat traditions in the society in the three countries.
3. To find out the interrelationships between the Pipat traditions in the region from the point of view of instruments, repertoires, theories, and performance practices.

Results found that the present phenomena and situation of the Pipat tradition in the three countries appears to be different. The Pipat tradition in Thailand seems to be more active than in Cambodia and Laos. From an insider’s point of view, the concerned authorities do not give adequate support or raise cultural issues to the national agenda in a practical way. Research and academic work is mostly conducted by scholars in educational institutions. The sustainable policy in cultural affairs is not clearly seen on a national level as the policies change with changes in personnel. The Pinpeat tradition in Cambodia has support from organizations and NGOs. However, the Pinpeat tradition has lost the majority of musicians and so encouraging the younger generations into Pinpeat music must be pursued. The Pinpat in Laos needs urgent revival. A vast number of Pinpat music repertoires have been lost along with instruments and musicians. Authorities need to monitor the transition from the old to the revolutionary tradition and help preserve the old tuning system.

**Key words:** Pipat tradition, Pinpeat tradition, Pinpat tradition

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## Introduction

The history of Thailand is divided into periods based on the emergence of the capitals of the country. "Sukhothai" (1238-1448) was the first known capital of the Kingdom of Thailand. It is believed that musical instruments and some kinds of ensembles already existed but there is no clear physical evidence of the instruments, repertoires, functions of music, or ensemble arrangements.

In the Ayutthaya period, musical instruments became more developed and refined. The existence of the melodic percussion instruments such as Khong Wong and Ranat can be seen more clearly than during the Sukhothai period. It is believed that all four categories of Thai instruments; plucked, bowed, percussion and blown instruments, were already being used during this period. There were four types of predominant ensembles; the Khab Mai, Khrueng Sai, Mahori and Pipat ensembles. These ensembles were arranged in their respected standard forms.

After the fall of Ayutthaya, the new Chakri Dynasty established a new capital in Bangkok. All kinds of performing arts, both classical and folk, were highly developed in this period and music too was highly developed in many aspects. Music played an important role in the Thai people's lives during various occasions, for example, music was played during rituals, ceremonies, festive events, and for entertainment purposes. There was the creation of new instruments i.e. Ranat Thum, Khong Wong Lek, Ranat Lek, Klong Tapone, and a set of seven gongs for the Pipat Dukdamban. Musical activities have long been under the patronage of Royal families. Music was included as a subject in the educational curriculum during this time, and has eventually become taught as a major subject in several universities.

The most powerful and highly civilized Cambodian kingdom was the Angkor Kingdom, which flourished from the early 9<sup>th</sup> century to the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that all kinds of performing arts, especially music, were highly developed and

spread to the subservient neighboring kingdoms and they were assumed to be the prototype of several art forms in the region. Since the decline of the Angkor Kingdom, Cambodia has been challenged by uncertain political crisis.

After the end of the war in Cambodia in 1989, many organizations both governmental and NGOs revitalized all kinds of art forms in numerous ways. The Royal University of Fine Arts was first founded as Ecole des Arts Cambodgiens in 1918 and it teaches traditional Khmer and western music, Khmer classical dance, modern drama, circus arts and folkloric dance and theater.

The history of Laos can be traced back to the Lan Xang Kingdom in 1353. Like other kingdoms, Laos has had internal conflicts resulting in the change of the ruler and the capital. Finally, there was a people's revolution which took complete control of the country and abolished the monarchy in Laos.

After the revolution, music of the court has had a limited space in society as the government promotes "music for Lao people". However, the ethnic culture and music is still in practice among ethnic groups and there are as many as 69 such groups.

## Objectives

1. To clarify and explain the phenomena of the contemporary Pipat traditions in the three countries.
2. To interpret the role and status of the contemporary Pipat traditions in the society in the three countries.
3. To find out the interrelationships between the Pipat traditions in the region from the point of view of instruments, repertoires, theories, and performance practices.

## Methodology

1. Documentary research - used for descriptions of instruments, ensembles, types of music, repertoires, masters and musicians as well as the history of music.

2. Field work data collection - used to take field notes, sound recordings, photographs and videos of the instruments, masters and musicians, ensembles and the performances.

3. Interview - used to gain information from masters, musicians and relevant persons. Structured and unstructured interviews have been used.

4. Observation - used to observe participants in accordance with the field work situation.

5. Transcription - used to transcribe the important recorded music into the western music notation system for analysis and comparison.

The method used was qualitative research.

## 1. Data Analysis

### 1.1 *The phenomena of the contemporary Pipat traditions in the three countries.*

#### 1.1.1 Musical dimension.

1.1.1.1 Instruments and ensembles.

1.1.1.2 Performance practices.

1.1.1.3 Repertoires.

1.1.1.4 Playing techniques.

#### 1.1.2 Theoretical concepts.

1.1.2.1 The concept of Thang (or pitch level or key).

1.1.2.2 The concept of main melody.

#### 1.1.3 The concept variations

1.1.3.1 The concept of rhythm; Ching strokes and drum patterns.

1.1.3.2 The concept of forms.

### 1.2. *The role and status of the contemporary Pipat traditions in the society in the three countries*

#### 1.2.1 Cultural dimensions.

1.2.1.1 The nature and status of musicians, group/school.

1.2.1.2 Transmission.

1.2.1.3 Occasion, function and process of performance.

### 1.3. *The interrelationships between the Pipat traditions in the region from the point of view of in-*

*struments, repertoires, theories, and performance practices.*

## Results and Discussion

The research results of the study of the Pipat Traditions in Music Culture in the Mekong River Basin are as follows.

### 1. The phenomena of the contemporary Pipat traditions in the three countries

The results of the study of the Pipat traditions in music culture in the Mekong river basin show that there are six different Pipat ensembles known to date in Thailand; the Pipat Chatri, the Pipat Mai Khaeng, the Pipat Mai Nuam, the Pipat Dukdamban, the Pipat Nanghong and the Pipat Mon. The instruments and ensemble arrangements in each ensemble are different and each Pipat ensemble takes on a particular role and function. The Pipat tradition in Thailand refers to a type of traditional music which was once court music. At present, the tradition is abundantly in practice in central Thailand. Pinpeat music and ensemble is the traditional court music of Cambodia. In the post-genocidal war era, Pinpeat still prevails and retains its strength culturally in Cambodia. It can be reflected from widespread, intensive practice of the tradition in rituals or ceremonies, as part of the Cambodian way of life. The ensemble comprises wind and percussion instruments i.e. a Sralai Tauch (high-pitched oboe), a Sralai Thom (low-pitched oboe), a Roneat Ek (high-pitched xylophone), a Roneat Thung (low-pitched xylophone), a Roneat Dek (high-pitched metallophone), a Kong Tauch (high-pitched gong circle), a Kong Thom (low-pitched gong circle), a pair of Ching (finger cymbal), a Sampho (small double-headed barrel drum), a pair of Skor Thom (large double-headed barrel drums) and Chamrieng (vocalist). Laos Pinpat ensemble is the old form of the category of the court music tradition when Laos was ruled under a system of monarchy. The Pinpat tradition of Laos is now under revitalization by the Lao government. The emergence of Donti Puenmuang has

had a great effect on the court Pinpat tradition in many facets.

The size of the Thai Pipat ensemble varies. There are three sizes for the Pipat Mai Khaeng, Pipat Mainuam, Pipat Nanghong and Pipat Mon i.e. the Pipat Khrueng Ha (five-instrument or small ensemble), Pipat Khrueng Khoo (medium or doubled-instrument ensemble) and Pipat Khrueng Yai (large ensemble). The size of the ensemble depends on the melodic percussion instruments. The rhythmic percussion and blown instruments in all ensemble sizes are the same. There are only two sizes of the Cambodian Pinpeat ensemble - small and large. The small ensemble consists of Roneat Ek, Kong Thom, Sralai Thom, Sampho, Skor Thom and Ching. In the large Pinpeat ensemble there are Roneat Thung, Kong Tauch, Sralai Tauch and Roneat Dek in addition to the small ensemble instruments. The instruments in the ensemble are set in the standard arrangement and position. The front row of the ensemble consists of Roneat Dek on the right, Roneat Ek in the middle and Roneat Thung on the left. Kong Thom is behind Roneat Ek and Kong Tauch is behind Roneat Thung. Sralai Tauch is on the right of Kong Thom and Sralai Thom is on the left of Kong Tauch. The Sampho is next to Sralai Tauch and the Skor Thom is next to Sralai Thom. Ching is towards the back, in between Roneat Ek and Roneat Thung. The Pinpat ensemble in Laos at present is quite flexible in terms of instruments and size. The main instruments like Ranat, Kong, Tapone, Klong Tat and Ching are still in use. The Pi has disappeared and has been substituted by Kui. Saw, Pin or Khaen has been added to the ensemble. The ensemble arrangement is, however, unchanged.

The Pipat tradition in Thailand still follows the traditional way of playing the mostly old repertoires. There are few recently composed repertoires in the Napat and Ruang categories. In Laos the traditional music is divided in to two main categories - instrumental and vocal. The instrumental is played by the

Pinpat ensemble while the vocal is played by the Donti Puenmuang ensemble. Instrumental music is the music for rituals, ceremonies and theatrical performances. The Cambodian Pinpeat repertoires are of two types; one is the Laim (dance) pieces and the other is the non-dance pieces. The Laim pieces are the typical repertoires for the Pinpeat ensemble and can be played solely or grouped into suite forms. The Laim pieces are played to accompany the dance in accordance with the scene, action and other dance related factors. Laim pieces are also played at a certain time of the monk's prayer during merit making ceremonies. Hom Rong, a kind of Pithi Sampeah Kru or Pithi Buong Suong, is a ceremony held by musicians. In this ceremony, there are a number of set repertoires to be played as a suite. There are 32 pieces in Homrong Thom and 12 pieces in Homrong Tauch.

The playing technique of each instrument in the ensemble is quite unique. Sralai uses the technique of running melodies with long legato playing. Roneat Ek plays running melodies mostly in octave with occasionally the 4th and 5th intervals. The 3rd and 6th are very rare. Roneat Ek also plays tremolo when there are longer note values in the composition. The use of octave and forth are executed with both hands simultaneously and alternately. Syncopation is an important technique for Roneat Thung. The Tremolo is generally used when the composition has longer note values. Kong Thom has more or less the same techniques of playing as that of Roneat Thung with less syncopation than the latter. The Sampho player uses both hands simultaneously and alternately to produce different sounds on the recognized patterns with closed and opened strokes of palms and fingers. The pair of Skor Thom marks the down beats and phrases of the song. Ching is played by striking the two cups together with opened and closed strokes.

The Thai tuning system, 7-eqidistance in an octave, is still the principal tuning system applied to all fixed-tuning instruments such as the Ranat, the Khong Wong and the Chakhey. Theoretically, Cambodian

melodic percussion instruments are tuned to the 7-equidistance tuning system. The musicians still tune their instruments by ear, causing imperfect tuning in the system. The tuning system in Pinpat music in Laos is in a state of reluctance. In “Donti Puenmaung” or modern Pinpat ensemble, the tuning system tends to follow the Western diatonic scale. This tuning system is applicable for modern Pinpat ensembles with Khaen and other western instruments. The traditional or old tuning system is still used by the National School of Music and Dance as well as the private ensemble in which traditional repertoires are played. At present, the pitch level used in the Fine Arts Department is the standard reference for tuning the instruments of most ensembles or groups in Thailand. In Cambodia, to utter the melody of the Pinpeat repertoires, the musicians have been using a meaningless word like “noi”. Pitch denominations are not assigned and used in the tradition. Recently, since younger generations have become interested in playing western music and western instruments, western pitch denominations have been borrowed and applied to Cambodian traditional music. Practically, numeric and alphabetic denominations are used. Lao music does not have any pitch denomination. The designations mostly used by musicians of younger generation are in three forms 1) Hindu-Arabic numbers 1 - 7 where number 1 stands for “DO”, 2) sol-fa system written in Lao language, and 3) Roman letters a-g where “c” signifies “DO”.

Cambodian traditional music is basically based on pentatonic and heptatonic scales. The structure of the pitches of pentatonic scale are 1 2 3 5 6 8 while heptatonic scale is 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8. The Pinpeat repertoires are played in the key of G. Traditional repertoires are still played in a certain pitch position in the Lao Pinpat ensemble. In some cases where the string instruments are used in the ensemble, the string instruments are tuned to the key of Pinpat. Main melody is now accepted as the main element of Thai music. It can be seen in Pipat music. In the

Khrueng Sai realm, the main melody is also mentioned but is not as transparent as in the Pipat domain since there is no instrument in the Khrueng Sai ensemble that clearly plays the main melody. In the Cambodian Pinpeat ensemble, there is no instrument that exclusively plays the main melody. According to Pinpeat music scholars, the main melody is on the vocal part. It is assumed that the main melody is most likely derived from the vocal part. Since the Sralai can play or imitate the vocal part, the Sralai is accepted as the instrument that carries the main melody of the song. The concept of main melody in Lao Pinpat is not clearly defined for any instrument. The musicians play the instruments relying on the idiomatic technique of each instrument called the collective melody. This collective melody can be perceived only after the musicians play a composition for some period of time and become accustomed to it.

Variation is another important element in Thai music. In Pipat and Mahori ensembles, this element is played by every melodic instrument in the ensemble except the Khong Wong, which maintains the main melody. In some cases, the Khong Wong Yai plays a variation in solo pieces. In the Khrueng Sai ensemble, it can be said that all instruments play a variation of the melody. In the Cambodian ensemble, the instruments other than Sralai play the variations of the song. Each instrument plays the variations in their own idioms and styles. Variation as a concept of Lao traditional music relies on the idiom of the playing technique of an instrument. The collective melody is the element that a musician considers to be variations. Theoretically, Cambodian Pinpeat compositions are designated to a time “level” or Chaon. The term “Thev”, a phrase of a particular melody, is the most understood example of the relativity of the three different Chaon. However, there is no elaborate theoretical explanation of the non-Thev Chaon melodies. “Chan” or melody levels in Lao traditional music are identified by the melody itself. In “Thao” form, the melodies are in three different levels i.e. Sam Chan,

Song Chan and Nung Chan. There are no specific Ching strokes and drum patterns assigned to the particular melody in each level. It is quite difficult to distinguish the levels of a composition that possesses one or two melodic levels. Ching strokes do not relate to the Chaon. They are played at any appropriate speed to the song to maintain its tempo. Chaon is exhibited through the pattern of drum strokes. The drum patterns in Bey Chaon are twice as long as that of Pi Chaon and the Pi Chaon's is twice as long as that of the drum pattern of Muoy Chaon. The length of the melody in different Chaon also falls in the same principle applied to the drum pattern. Ching strokes and drum patterns of ordinary compositions are simply assigned to be the beat-keeping element and have no role in the identification of the melodic level.

## **2. The role and status of the contemporary Pipat traditions in the societies of the three countries.**

It is observable that the functions of all Pipat music are not widely appreciated and do not play as an important role as before. Among the musicians and people in the other fields related to music, they still keep practicing music in the traditional way, for example during Wai Kru ceremonies. In some cases, the practice is loosened up due to the change of present day society. For the people outside the field of music, they just consume the Pipat tradition as a symbol. They have less understanding and appreciation of the meaning and the functions of the music.

The different Thai Pipat ensembles have different functions. The Pipat Mai Khaeng is generally performed for three different functions i.e. the Pipat Mai Khaeng for rituals and ceremonies, Pipat Mai Khaeng for theatrical performances, and Pipat Mai Khaeng for Sepa music performances. Pipat Dukdamban is the only Pipat category that was created exclusively for a particular purpose - Lakon Dukdamban performance. The practice of the Pipat Dukdamban is just to revitalize and preserve this unique tradition rather than practicing it for aesthetic reasons. The Pipat Mai

Nuam is also performed for rituals and ceremonies but when they are not fully official. Theatrical performances, like Lakon Nok and Lakon Nai are still accompanied by this ensemble and music. The Pipat Mai Nuam is another alternative for performances for entertainment when the function is in a limited space and needs softer music. This Pipat tradition seems to be obsolete for general people. This tradition can be seen only at royal funerals, funerals for high ranking officers or people in the field of music. The Pipat Mon music is the only Pipat culture that is frequently seen and widely in practice in present Thai society. Again, even the majority of the general public consumes Pipat Mon as part of a funeral ceremony. The hosts mostly do not understand the meaning of the repertoires nor appreciate the functions of the Pipat Mon in the ceremony. The Cambodian Pinpeat ensemble accompanies court dance, mask dance, and shadow puppet, religious and non-religious ceremonies. In the theatrical performance, the ensemble fundamentally plays Laim pieces in accordance with the actions, movements and moods of the actors. In a religious ceremony like the merit making ceremony, the Pinpeat ensemble plays the Hom Rong suite at the beginning of the ceremony followed by many different Laim pieces during the ceremony for both ritualistic and religious functions. The most important occasion that the Lao Pinpat ensemble essentially accompanies is the Wai Kru ceremony. This ceremony does not take place very often, but it holds a significant function in music culture. Pinpat ensemble is also played in other ceremonies and festive events. Another important function of Pinpat ensemble is to play for theatrical performances. In a votive offering ceremony, the Pinpeat ensemble plays the Hom Rong suite at the beginning, and then Laim pieces are played throughout the all-day-long performance. Pithi Sampeah Kru or Pithi Buong Suong is always accompanied by the Pinpeat ensemble through which the Homrong pieces are played.

Cambodian musicians, especially Pinpeat, still

strictly practice the Sampeah Kru ceremony. Before playing Pinpeat music, for a performance or practice, they always practice the ceremony faithfully. The sacrificial objects must be prepared, the incense and candles are lit and prayers are recited, then the musicians place the incense on the Sampho. The ensemble will always start with *çSartugaré* which is considered the “teachers’ song”. In Laos, three different practical domains of music can be observed - government sectors, National School of Music and Dance, and private sectors. The government sectors like the National Fine Arts Division and the Provincial Fine Arts Division primarily play music to serve government missions. They do not play many traditional or old repertoires but more revolutionary and modern music. The National School of Music and Dance and private sectors still play the traditional repertoires. The Wai Kru ceremony is still strictly in practice.

Transmission of the Pipat music in Thailand is from teacher to pupil. Adult and senior people are always respected by younger members of society. The pupil must respect and obey their teachers. Once the new learner is accepted by a master as a disciple, there is a close link and relationship between them. This close tie is a major phenomenon in the process of transmission. The oral method is an important means of transmission of Pipat culture to the next generation. Transmission of Pinpeat music in Cambodia is done in two main manners - formal system and private Pinpeat teaching. The formal system of transmission is conducted in a university and in a NGO’s premises. Private teaching is done mostly in the master’s residence. The transmission in both manners is carried out orally and still follows the old tradition of the teaching and learning process. Transmission of Pinpat culture in Laos has been carried out orally inside and outside the educational system. Outside the educational system, Pinpat is transmitted from father to son, master to disciple, as well as among one’s relatives and other members of the village. The new practitioners must follow the tradition of becom-

ing a disciple by approaching and devoting himself to the master and honoring the master with a flower, a candle and incense sticks. Traditionally the master will begin with teaching repertoires in the Homrong suite on the instrument chosen by the disciple.

At present, Thai music schools and music groups are changing and evolving their roles and functions. Most of the members in the schools and groups do not only serve in the schools and groups but also have a permanent job in various governmental offices. Those musicians are still proud to be members of the schools and groups. In Cambodian governmental agencies, there are authorities that nurture and promote the Pinpeat tradition such as the Royal University of Fine Arts and the Department of Performing Arts. Cambodian culture has been restored by NGOs and private organizations e.g. Chenla Theatre, a private theatre and Sovanna Phum Theatre and Arts Gallery in Phnom Penh; the School of Arts for Cambodian traditional dance and music, and the Khmer Organization Cultural Development, a center teaching traditional music and dance to orphaned children in Siem Reap province; and Phare Ponleu Selpak in Battambang province. Several music groups across the country are still active. In Kandal province, almost every temple owns a Pinpeat ensemble. In Vientiane, the majority of Pinpat music groups belong to the governmental bureau to serve the government’s missions. These governmental bureaus are the National Fine Arts Division, National School of Music and Dance, and the Arts Teacher Training School. Outside the Vientiane municipality, there are few music groups that still perform Pinpat music occasionally. In Luang Prabang, the Pinpat ensemble seems to be more preponderant and abundant than it is in Vientiane. In Champasak province, Pinpat culture is on the decline. At the Fine Arts Division, the Donti Puenmuang musicians play Lao modern and popular music on Western instruments.

The musicians hold different status in Thai society. There are a number of musicians who play

music for their living; mostly they are the owners of the ensemble inherited from their ancestors. These musicians may not be proudly recognized in society, but they are honored among musicians themselves. Some musicians also earn their living from other jobs at the same time, making their status more recognized. Musicians who are proficient and well-trained have a better chance to be appointed in governmental departments. These governmental music officers are more prestigious than village musicians. A music teacher in an educational institution of any level is probably the most preferable profession. Cambodian musicians are not held as being as highly prestigious as some other professions in society. There are three main status of musicianship in Cambodia, i.e. a government officer, an employee in an NGO and a private musician. A musician in a governmental office would be considered to be a virtuoso and would command wider acceptance. Musicians who work with NGOs also get wide recognition, though not as wide as those in governmental offices, but wider than village musicians who are recognized only at the community level. National Artist proclamation is another means to honor and acknowledge the virtuosity of the renowned musicians. There is, however, scarce financial contribution from the government. The village musicians in Laos are recognized only in the community while musicians who obtain regular work are more recognized. The highly recognized musicians are those working permanently as government officers in the Fine Arts Department, the Fine Arts Division, Schools and other organizations. However, the musical profession is not regarded as high ranking when compared to other professions.

### **3. The interrelationships between the Pipat traditions in the region from the point of view of instruments, repertoires, theories, and performance practices.**

The three countries have long been ruled under systems of Absolute Monarchy, with only Laos' Monarchy being eradicated from its current system. The

majority of the population of the countries has long been practicing Buddhism. These social and political constituents would be the factors that could lead to the discovery of the origins of Pipat or Pinpeat or Pinpat tradition in the respective regions. However, this musical tradition in the three countries at present reveals a strong similarity in terms of instruments, repertoires, theory, and performance practices. The physical appearances and the components of the instruments are generally identical, only design and decoration vary. Ensemble arrangements are in the same pattern but the number of instruments in the ensemble is altered. There are numbers of repertoires that are commonly recognized by musicians from the three countries. The melody, for example Satugarn or Satugar, is accepted as being the exact same repertoire since it carries the same important structural notes, length and its tonal base. The techniques of playing are mostly the same while the idiom of playing is different. The theoretical concepts are utilized or employed in several aspects. The three countries determine the same concepts on "level" or "strata" of melody as "Chan" in Thai and Lao and as "Choan" in Cambodia. Cyclical elements appear on the drum patterns. The tonal base of the compositions is the same.

Initiation to this tradition is done in the same way in the three countries. The novice has to approach and devote himself as a pupil to a master. *ç*Waikrué or "Sampeah Kru" is an essential ceremony that a musician should practice regularly. The music is mostly performed in Royal ceremonies, religious ceremonies, festive occasions, and for entertainment. This music tradition does not serve any Royal ceremonies in Laos due to the absence of a monarchical system in the country.

## **Conclusions**

The research of the Pipat Traditions in Music Culture in the Maekhong River Basin showed that the present phenomena and situation of Pipat tradition



in the three countries appears to be different. Pipat tradition in Thailand seems to be more intensive than in Cambodia and Laos. From an insider's point of view, the concerned authorities do not give adequate support or raise cultural issues, in general, to the national agenda in a practical way. Researches and academic works are mostly conducted by scholars in educational institutions. The sustainable policy in cultural affairs is not clearly seen on a national level. The policy is changed when the political and administrative personnel is changed.

The Pinpeat tradition in Cambodia is not in a serious critical state since several organizations and NGOs are now trying to revitalize, promote and preserve all kinds of performing arts. However, the Pinpeat tradition has lost the majority of musicians and virtuosi. Those who are still living must be praised and honored socially and financially to the satisfactory level as valuable living treasures. Encouraging the younger generations to initiate Pinpeat music must be pursued continuously and they must be trained professionally.

The Pinpat in Laos seems to be in the most critical situation, it should be revitalized urgently. Laos has lost a vast number of Pinpat music repertoires. The Pi has completely vanished from Pinpat ensemble. The virtuosi are very rare. The authorities should pay more attention to the transition from the

old tradition to the revolutionary tradition. The new tuning system that came along with the new form of traditional music could destroy the old tuning system, which could potentially be the cause of the disappearance of the repertoires. The old tuning system must be preserved while developing the new tuning system. More numbers of younger generations should be initiated seriously and profoundly into Pinpat tradition.

### Recommendations

Since the Pipat tradition has long been transmitted and is still practiced through oral traditions, more research must be conducted thoroughly. In the three countries, the data collecting and documenting in a digital format needs to be completed urgently, especially in Laos and Cambodia. Research and analyzing the music in the three countries must be done collectively and respectively. Comparative, theoretical, historical and action researches in music need to be pursued continuously and systematically on many different issues. Seminars and conferences on the Pipat tradition must be held individually and collaboratively in order to clarify the distinctive and common identities of the Pipat tradition in each country. Books, textbooks and other written documents should be produced and published widely. Grants for researchers need to be adequately allocated.

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