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The role of music in Thai funeral rituals in contemporary Bangkok: its history, performance and transmission

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Music

2014

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the role of music in Thai funeral rituals in contemporary Bangkok, examining specifically its history, performance and transmission. The three main ensembles used in funeral ceremonies have been studied extensively in this thesis. The ensembles featured are the *bua loy*, *piphat nanghong* and *piphat mon*. As well as the history of the three ensembles, the thesis has also investigated each ensemble's unique repertoire of compositions, musical instruments, style of performance and transmission.

The research also studies the Thai concept of death and music's purpose within the context of the Thai funeral ceremony in contemporary Bangkok, with the aim of bringing new substantive information for the benefit of the study of ethnomusicology. There is also an examination of Thai royal funeral music, with particular reference to its role in funeral ceremonies held for elite persons such as government officers.

The research undertaken reveals how and why the *piphat mon* ensemble has usurped the traditional *piphat nanghong* and *bua loy* ensembles as the preferred music to be played for the majority of Thai people at their funeral ceremonies. The thesis considers the role played by the Royal Family, in particular HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn in preserving Thai funeral music. It also includes my commentary of two renowned music schools in Bangkok, namely Sanoduriyang and Phatthayakoson, in respect of the transmission of funeral music. The concept of *huang wicha* (guarding musical knowledge) and its influence on Thai funeral music is discussed.

The thesis intends to bridge a gap in Western academic music research, as I have discovered that there is a paucity of information regarding this subject in both Thai and English.

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Transliteration of Words and Names

In this thesis, the principle of transliteration of Thai words will be applied and follows "the system of transcribing the Thai alphabet to the Roman form" set out by the Royal Institute in Bangkok (1999). I have followed this system rigidly, only making exceptions for the names of people and organisations as well as all quotations in order to preserve the original text.

The precise system of transliteration of Thai characters into Roman

Thai consonants	the initials of a word	the final letter of a word
ก	k	k
ข ฃ ค ฅ ฆ	kh	k
ง	ng	ng
จ ฉ ช ฌ	ch	t
ซ ทร ศ ษ ส	s	t
ญ	y	n
ฎ ฑ ด	d	t
ฏ ต	t	t
ฐ ฑ ฒ ถ ท ธ	th	t
ณ น	n	n
บ	b	p
ป	p	p
ผ พ ภ	ph	p
ฝ ฟ	f	p
ม	m	m

ย	y	-
ร	r	n
ล ฬ	l	n
ว	w	-
ห ฮ	h	-

Thai vowels	**Roman vowels**
อะ ◌ั รร อา	a
รร	an
อำ	am
อิ อี	i
อึ อื	ue
อุ อู	u
เอะ เ ◌็ เอ	e
แอะ แอ	ae
โอะ โอ เอาะ ออ	o
เออะ เอิ เออ	oe
เอียะ เอีย	ia
เอือะ เอือ	uea
อัวะ อัว	ua
ใอ ไอ อัย ไอย อาย	ai
เอา อาว	ao

อุย	ui
โอย ออย	oi
เอย	oei
เอือย	ueai
อวย	uai
อิว	io
เอ็ว เอว	eo
แอ็ว แอว	aeo
เอียว	iao
ฤ (เสียง รึ) ฤา	rue
ฤ (เสียง ริ)	ri
ฤ (เสียง เรอ)	roe
ฦ ฦา	lue

Table of Thai Historical Periods and Royal Reigns

The Sukhothai period

(1240-1438)

The Ayutthaya period

(1351-1767)

The Thonburi period

(1767-1782)

The Rattanakosin period (1782 – present) and the list of Chakri Dynasty Kings

List of Chakri Kings and the years of their reign

1. Phra Buddha Yodfa Chulalok the Great (Rama I) April 1782 - September 1809
2. Phra Buddha Loetla Nabhalai (Rama II) September 1809 - July 1824
3. Phra Nangklao (Rama III) July 1824 - April 1851
4. King Mongkut (Rama IV) April 1851 - October 1868
5. King Chulalongkorn the Great (Rama V) October 1868 - October 1910
6. King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) October 1910 - November 1925
7. King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) November 1925 - March 1935
8. King Ananda Mahidol (Rama VIII) March 1935 - June 1946
9. King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great (Rama IX) June 1946 - present

(taken from *Thailand: A Short History* by David K. Wyatt 1984)

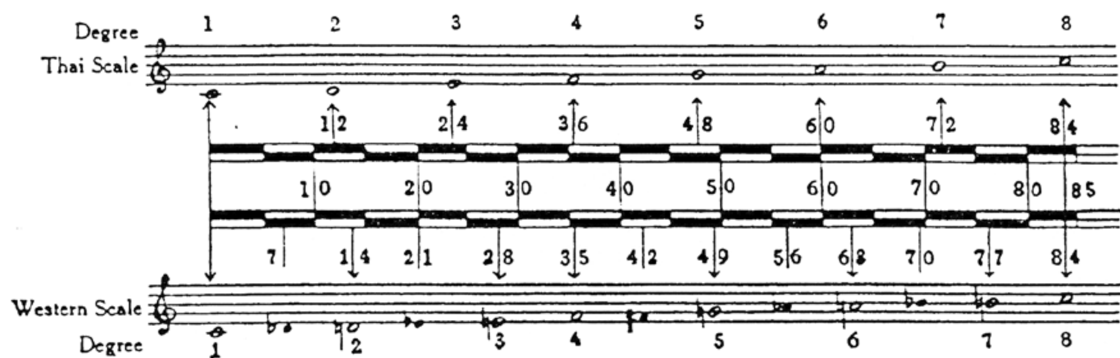
A Guide to the Names of the Thai Nation (Siam /Thailand)

For the purpose of this thesis and historical accuracy, I have referred to the Thai nation as Siam from the Sukhothai period (1240-1438) up until its change of name. This occurred in May 1939 when the nation's name was changed to Thailand (Thongchai:1994:150). Throughout the thesis in order to maintain consistency, I have used the term "Thai" as a prefix when describing aspects of culture such as ceremonies, musical compositions etc. This is in accordance with Thai academic practice whereby musicians, composers and lecturers in contemporary Bangkok consistently adopt the term "Thai" when making references to cultural activities from the Sukhothai period up until the present day.

The Thai Traditional Tuning System

Traditionally, Thai tuning follows the equidistant system. This idea has been supported by at least two renowned researchers, one non-Thai - Eillis Alexander (1885) - and the other, a Thai national, Khru Boonchouy Sovat (1998). In 1998 Khru Boonchouy attempted to seek and find a standardised note frequency for the Thai scale. In his conclusion, he summarised that the Thai tuning system is an equidistant system and has been used in Thai music since ancient times as a fundamental element of Thai music.

The following comparative diagram shows the difference between the Western and the Thai scales:



Source: Montri: 1995:28

A Guide to the Names of Thai Teachers

Throughout this thesis, I have used the word “Khru” meaning “teacher” prefixing the forenames of Thai music teachers and masters. The deployment of the word “Khru” is considered a mark of respect for teachers in Thai culture. I have also referred to the Thai authors by using their first name instead of surname in order to follow the protocol employed in Thailand in respect of bibliographic references. By way of a contrast in respect of Western authors and those from other parts of the world, I have referred to them by their surnames in order to conform with Western academic etiquette.

Chapter1
Introduction

Having performed in Thai funeral rituals myself with my father's ensemble and other ensembles in Bangkok since the age of 13, I have always been fascinated by its role in Thai society and its meaning to the Thai people. I have been very surprised to learn that there has only been one published article among Western ethnomusicologists that specifically examines funeral music in Thailand: "Mon music for Thai death: ethnicity and status in Thai urban funerals" by Deborah Wong in 1998. I endorse Wong's views that you cannot "succumb to a simple social analysis of Thai funeral music as an esoteric practice or as a behaviour that directly symbolises particular social relations" (Wong:1998:101).

I concur with Wong that the role of Thai music must be assessed "historically over time as well as between times, places and peoples. In an urban Thai funeral, more is more - the quantity of material goods and the length of performance(s) quite literally "speak" status. But status in late-twentieth-century Bangkok is emergent and contingent, based on odd mixtures of wealth, education, militarism, and other hallmarks of this Newly Industrialised Nation (NIC)" (ibid.:101-102).

In this thesis, I would like to expand on Wong's views and answer a number of questions that I have pondered throughout my time as a Thai classical musician. Whilst performing at a Thai funeral ceremony, I have often reflected on my reasons for being part of such an event. When I have posed the question "what is our purpose as musicians at this occasion?" to my teachers, I have consistently been met with the following responses: "we are here to provide company to not only the deceased whose body maybe retained in the temple for a number of days, but also to offer comfort to the mourners as they grieve for their loved one. Finally, our presence enhances the social status of the deceased". Whilst I fully respect the answers that my teachers have furnished me with in respect of this subject, throughout my life as a musician I have, however, become concerned about the apparent decline in the presence of Thai music at funeral ceremonies. Prior to commencing my fieldwork in my home city, Bangkok, in November 2009, I was

keen to establish answers to a number of questions that I consider to be key to understanding the role and meaning of music in Thai contemporary culture.

1. Why do Thai people consider the funeral ritual to be one of the most significant aspects of their culture?
2. Why is music needed at a Thai funeral and what is its purpose? How does it fit in with the overall soundscape?
3. Why did the *piphat mon* ensemble become the most popular music to be played at Thai funeral ceremonies?
4. To what extent have changes in the funeral ritual ceremonies affected the performance and types of music played at funerals?
5. What is the meaning of *huang wicha*[1] in a musical context, and does it still carry great importance in today's society in Bangkok?
6. What teaching methodologies are used by Bangkok's most renowned music schools, specifically the Phatthayakoson and the Sanoduriyang schools to pass knowledge onto their students?
7. To what extent are ordinary Bangkok citizens aware of the musical traditions associated with cremation ceremonies?
8. What support does the Royal Family, specifically HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, currently provide for maintaining the Thai funeral music tradition?
9. What effect is the practice of using pre-recorded music by way of CDs having on the performance of live funeral ensemble music?

1.1 Aims and scope

The main purpose of this thesis is to study and investigate the role of Thai music played in funeral rituals across all strata of society in contemporary Bangkok and to question what it means to the people of the city. This research has concentrated specifically on three Thai classical music ensembles namely the *bua loy*, the *piphat nanghong* and the *piphat mon*. I have observed and participated in performances and looked closely at the transmission of the music. I have examined the attitudes of people from different social backgrounds to funeral music and sought to understand what it

[1] *Huang wicha* is the Thai concept of "guarding musical knowledge".

means to them. There appears to be a distinct lack of literature and information available regarding this subject in either English or Thai, and it is the ultimate aim of this thesis to fill this void.

1.2 Contribution

This thesis represents the first comprehensive study of the role of Thai music in the funeral rituals of contemporary Bangkok. Previous Thai researchers have documented the performance aspect of the music played during the funeral ritual but have not examined the subject from an historical and social context. I would like this research to be considered as a valuable tool for Western ethnomusicologists seeking to gain an understanding of not only the technicalities of the music but also to learn about the reasons for its revered status in Thai culture, in other words, what it means to Thai people today, with particular regard to the funeral ritual. Finally, this thesis has been based heavily on conducting interviews with a wide range of people in contemporary Bangkok, including historians, leading and ordinary musicians, monks, temple officers, students and mourners. By assembling the views of these various sectors of society, I would hope that this thesis will stimulate Thai people, both living in the country and expatriates, of which there are millions around the world, to appreciate and maintain their own rich culture and traditions.

1.3 Methodology

For the purpose of examining the methodology used in my research, I have divided the thesis into three sections.

1.3.1 A study of the history and the role of music in Thai funeral rituals

During my years studying Thai music, it has been clear to me that there has been very little coverage of the role of Thai classical music in Thai funeral rituals. Due to the paucity of information it is difficult for people from different backgrounds and cultures to appreciate and understand this subject. In particular, there is a distinct lack of literature available in respect of this topic in both the English and Thai languages. In order to

address this issue, one of the key aspects of my methodology has been to conduct interviews with many leading masters and authorities in Thai music, as well as academic historians of Thai music. As the focus of this thesis relates specifically to the role of music in Thai funeral rituals in Bangkok, my interviews have been based mainly in the Thai capital.

As Thai is my principal language, there are two reasons why it is possible that I will have an advantage over foreign researchers who may only have a basic knowledge of the Thai language. Firstly, without adequate knowledge of Thai, the overseas researcher may encounter difficulties in obtaining permission to observe and participate in activities with Thai musicians. Secondly, they could also find it very challenging to establish meaningful relationships with Thai Masters. In my own case, I have studied Thai music for 30 years and taught it for the past 20. During the majority of this time, I have been fortunate to conduct classes at Chitralada School which is situated in the Chitralada Palace in Bangkok under the patronage of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. In respect of my methods used in gathering research materials, I have employed the contacts that I have made during my years studying and teaching Thai music to enable me to obtain information and interviews with leading authorities in this field. My primary sources of information have been from Thailand and my interviews with Thai nationals. One of the key aspects of my methodology has been to convey to my Thai interviewees the experiences that I have personally had playing Thai music and conducting workshops for people in countries such as the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, France and Japan. In each of these countries, the natives who attended had very little or no knowledge of Thai classical music and in particular its role in the Thai funeral ritual. I have therefore emphasised the significant part that each interviewee has played in developing the wider world's knowledge and understanding of this subject matter.

As it was my intention to make direct contact with my interviewees, I also sought out teachers, colleagues and other persons in authority to assist me in finding appropriate people to interview. Details of my interviewees[2] are given below:

[2] The positions held by my interviewees were current at the time of my fieldwork.

1. Khru Sirichaicharn Farchamroon, the musical advisor to HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand and the most senior music consultant at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.
2. Khru Boonchouy Sovat, the senior lecturer of Thai classical music at the Cultural Centre of Chulalongkorn University. He is considered to be one of the finest Thai oboe players and conductors in Thailand and a representative of Sanoduriyang Music School.
3. Khru Peeb Konglaithong, one of the most renowned Thai oboe players in Thailand, a senior member of the Department of Fine Arts and a representative of Sanoduriyang Music School.
4. A representative of Phatthayakoson Music School, Khru Somsak Triwat.
5. As well as Khru Peeb Konglaithong (see point 3) several other senior members of the Department of Fine Arts, the most important person being Khru Boonchouy Sanganan.
6. A representative of Sanoduriyang Music School, Rangsi Kasemsuk.
7. Khru Therapon Noinit, a percussion teacher at the College of Dramatic Arts**,** Bangkok who is also very well known for his playing in the *piphat nonghong* suites.
8. Various Thai musicians who perform funeral music at temples.
9. Various heads of the funeral music ensembles.
10. Several Thai Buddhist monks.
11. Wethin Wichaikhatkha, head officer for music in the Royal Household.
12. Boonream Sukchaloemsri, a court musician from the Royal Household.
13. The organisers and temple officers of funeral ceremonies at the following temples: Saket, Thepsirin, Makut, Buengthonglang and Bangtoei. These temples are situated in different districts of Bangkok and represent a cross section of the various social classes to be found in the city.
14. At each funeral ritual that I attended in Bangkok, I endeavoured to interview several of the mourners and the deceased persons' families.

Although my interviews with the above subjects are a key aspect of my methodology, I have also placed a great emphasis on obtaining information from existing historical documents. I utilised famous libraries such as the Thai National Library and those established in leading Bangkok-based university libraries. When I visited these

establishments, I first sought permission from the head librarians, to examine and photocopy any manuscript which I considered to be relevant to my research. Another primary source that I used was in respect of the murals situated inside the Grand Palace in Bangkok. These are particularly significant due to their vivid depictions of a typical Thai funeral ceremony.

One of the most significant aspects of my methodology is the fieldwork that I undertook in Bangkok. However, before I embarked on my fieldwork, I attended a training course to improve my skills regarding video and sound recording. I also received tuition in respect of editing at SOAS. I applied this knowledge when I was conducting my fieldwork. In order to examine the changing attitudes of ordinary people living in Bangkok in respect of music being played at funeral rituals, I conducted interviews with mourners attending ceremonies. I visited temples in Bangkok which are representative of the different social classes to be found in the city, in order to construct a balanced argument in respect of this particular subject. I spent nine months on this aspect of the thesis, collecting research materials largely through my interviews and observations. By using these methods, upon concluding my fieldwork, I had a comprehensive understanding of how music in the Thai funeral ritual has changed over time.

1.3.2 A comparison of the way that two renowned Bangkok schools perform Thai music and how they transmit knowledge in respect of music for the Thai funeral ritual.

Case study schools:

- Phatthayakoson
- Sanoduriyang

I have explored how music is taught and transmitted from one generation to another. I have chosen the two aforementioned music schools because of their fame and excellent reputation in Thai music circles.

The Phatthayakoson Music School has a long history and was established approximately 200 years ago. The school building was constructed behind the Kanlayanamit Temple in the Thonburi district of Bangkok and has remained there right

up to the present day. This school has always been held in very high esteem by the Thai Royal Family and as a result, musicians from the school were regularly invited to teach in the Royal Palace. Many of the school's musicians are from families who have strong musical traditions, with much of their musical knowledge being transmitted to them by their elders.

The Phatthayakoson School's most famous musician is Changwang[3] Thua. He served as the head musician in the Bangkhunphrom Palace approximately 100 years ago and composed many individual songs and suites which had their own unique and distinguished style. His musical legacy has been preserved until the present day. His grandson, Khru[4] Uthai Phatthayakoson, was head of the School until his death in 2007. Although his wife, son and daughter have survived him, their involvement with the School is limited to the undertaking of various administrative duties. His two children play no part in teaching students, although very occasionally they will perform in a musical event being staged by the School. However, the songs and influence of Changwang Thua have been kept alive by musicians currently studying at the School.

The Phatthayakoson Music School has recently been invited to perform music at prestigious royal events, namely the funerals of the Princess Mother of Thailand in 1996 and Princess Kanlayaniwattana (HM the King's sister) in 2008. The *piphat nanghong* and the *piphat mon* ensembles were featured in both ceremonies. One of the most important aspects of my research is the exploration of how this music school not only transmits its musical knowledge, specifically for the Thai death ritual from one generation to another, but also the methods that they employ for maintaining their style of performance, with little variation, over a long period of time.

Although traditionally a musician from one particular school may not be allowed to study in another music school, I was fortunate to obtain special dispensation to visit the Phatthayakoson Music School as part of my research. Although I studied at the Sanoduriyang School, Khru Somsak Triwat, one of the most senior teachers at the Phatthayakoson School allowed me to study with him. He agreed that I could interview him about the style of musical performance maintained by the School and how they

[3] The word Changwang in Thai means head teacher.
[4] The word Khru means teacher and always precedes the name of the person in question.

achieve this consistency year after year. As the School has a strong reputation in respect of writing notation, I asked Khru Somsak to discuss the methods he uses and whether he applies them to songs performed in the Thai funeral ritual. As well as studying music theory with Khru Somsak, another aspect of my fieldwork was to participate in the school performances.

Turning to the Sanoduriyang Music School, it has been chosen for this thesis because of its long established links with the Royal Family dating back to the reign of King Rama V (r.1868-1910). The School is particularly well known for the *bua loy* ensemble which was established by Phraya Sanoduriyang (this was the title bestowed upon him by the King - his birth name was Cham Suntharawathin (1866-1949), and he served in the Department of Entertainment). The School has a lineage of musicians, beginning with Phraya Sanoduriyang and spread over four generations, who are in the unique position of being the only people to have a comprehensive knowledge of the *pi chawa* (Javanese oboe) in the *bua loy* ensemble. I have listed them below:

1. Phraya Sanoduriyang (Cham Suntharawathin (1866-1949))
2. Khru Thiap Konglaithong (1902-1982)
3. Khru Boonchouy Sovat (16 January 1947 - present)
4. Khru Peeb Konglaithong (3 July 1953 - present)

In this thesis, I have examined why so few musicians have this knowledge and how the *bua loy* nearly became extinct. My methodology with respect to the above consisted of interviewing Thai music historians. As a priority, I arranged interviews with Khru Boonchouy Sovat and Khru Peeb Konglaithong, both well-known authorities on this subject. As the *bua loy* ensemble has always been taught orally, it has been subject to variations over time. One of my challenges was to utilise recordings made by two generations of musicians, the aforementioned Khru Thiap Konglaithong and also Rangsi Kasemsuk, a student of Khru Boonchouy Sovat, in order to compare differences in the execution of the music. I interviewed Khru Boonchouy in order to gain an understanding of what has caused the variations in style that have been passed on from one generation to the next. One of the reasons that this area of Thai music is very interesting for ethnomusicologists is due to the fact that in the Western world the majority of classical music is tied to a definitive written score.

My methodology in respect of making a comparison in the way that the two music schools perform Thai music in a funeral ritual consisted of attending performances by musicians from the two schools in Bangkok. I observed each school and recorded their respective performances. I also interviewed several Thai musicians using these recordings as the basis of our discussions in order to learn how they perfect their performances. Another aspect of my methodology, in order to gain an understanding of the differences in the two schools' approach to playing music in the Thai funeral ritual, was to participate alongside and observe musicians from each establishment.

1.3.3 A study of the development of music in the Thai funeral ritual

In this section, I have investigated how music in the funeral ritual, namely the *bua loy*, *piphat nanghong* and *piphat mon* ensembles, was developed by Thai master musicians. I have examined their choice of compositions and the musical instruments selected in the funeral ritual performance. My methodology was based on examining Thai musical historical documents housed in leading libraries and music schools. The documents comprised articles in journals and research papers. I also made recordings of interviews that I undertook with Thai musicians in respect of the compositions that they have been taught in the past by their teachers and also regarding the pieces that they play in funeral rituals in contemporary Bangkok.

Another important aspect of my research was an examination of how musicians have constructed their compositions and the influence of Mon music on the composition process. I analysed one specific piece, "Chang Prasan Nga", which was composed by Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson who was one of the leading musicians at the Phatthayakoson Music School. He was strongly influenced by Mon music and I analysed his compositions in respect of their form, pitch level, structure and style. I compared and contrasted my findings with traditional Thai music theory.

1.4 Research ethics

For a thesis to be considered as a valid and effective document, it is crucial that the author has adhered to an ethical code of conduct in respect of the collection of research data. As a student of SOAS, prior to commencing my fieldwork, I read the university's

code of research ethics and fully understood what I had to do to abide by its principles. The subject matter of this research, Thai classical music, is itself underpinned by principles and behaviours which all musicians are made aware of at an early age. The hierarchy in Thai classical music is very significant: for example, a student must always address the teacher in a respectful manner. Any breach of this ethical code, such as a student referring to the teacher as an equal, is considered to be a serious insult and may have severe consequences for the student. Therefore, in view of my subject matter's strong code of ethics, I had to be extremely careful when assembling information for my research. I have highlighted five aspects of my studies which give rise to ethical issues.

1. Translation

The majority of the information that I gathered was derived from written texts in the Thai language. As I have translated quotations and important details from my sources, it is vitally important that I have been completely accurate with this task. Any small error in translation could result in a different meaning in English. I have also acknowledged the cultural differences between Thailand and much of the English speaking world. I have endeavoured to achieve the correct balance in translation between the original Thai meaning of a statement and making this understood in a clear way to English-speaking readers. As David B. Resnik suggested "it may be useful to seek advice from a colleague, senior researchers, your department's chair or anyone else you can trust" (http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/ accessed 24 February 2012).

2. Accuracy of factual information

As this thesis has a strong factual content, particularly from an historical perspective, I have done my utmost to ensure that the data I utilise is reliable. There are two main aspects that I have had to consider. Firstly, where I have quoted from written texts, the authenticity of the facts being presented have been independently verified. Secondly, in situations where I have undertaken interviews with musicians from the same school for example, I have compared their statements to check for any inconsistencies in the factual content.

3. Confidentiality

With respect to this research, I have followed the SOAS code which reads as follows: "the confidentiality of information provided by research participants and their anonymity should be respected, unless they have consented to the disclosure of information" (http://www.soas.ac.uk/researchoffice/ethics/file50158.pdf accessed 15 September 2013).

4. Copyright

When quoting from a written source I have listed the author under the reference section of the thesis. I have been very careful not to plagiarise the work of other writers. Copyright becomes a more complex process when conducting face to face interviews. Before I commenced an interview, I advised the individual in question of the purpose of the meeting. I provided details of my research and requested the permission of the interviewees to allow his/her contribution to be used in my completed work. A typical example involved requesting permission to attend a music school ensemble. This could include making a recording of the music being played and interviews with the key musicians and making sure that I did not interrupt the musicians between performances. Where it was necessary to take photos, I informed them in advance and asked for their permission.

A very sensitive aspect of the subject of copyright concerned my attendance at Thai funeral rituals. In these circumstances, it was essential that permission was given by the deceased person's family for me to be an observer. I required their authority to not only use video and audio recordings but also to obtain their full consent to this material being reproduced for this thesis. I was fully respectful of their wishes and if they declined my request I did not pursue the matter. With regard to non-family mourners and participants such as musicians, I endeavoured to obtain interviews during the ceremony. From a cultural viewpoint in Thailand, it is deemed to be an acceptable code of behaviour to interview non-family participants in this manner.

5. *Huang wicha* (the idea of guarding musical knowledge) / cultural issues

I have already explained the ethical issues that can arise through the translation of text between two languages i.e. Thai and English where there are huge cultural differences. Any anthropologist studying or undertaking research in a country where the author is unfamiliar and has a limited knowledge of the native language may run the risk of mistranslating key words and phrases. This inevitably can lead to an incorrect interpretation or diagnosis of a particular subject. An example of this can be seen in Wong's misinterpretation of the Thai words *dok mai chan*[5], the literal translation of which is "moon flowers" and features thus in her writing (Wong:1998:114). However, the individual Thai words in this phrase when used in sequence take on a totally different meaning in the context of a Thai funeral ritual. The correct interpretation being: "a set containing a joss stick, a candle and sheets of dried sandalwood".

The Thai concept of *huang wicha* which translated into English means "guarding musical knowledge" certainly falls into the cultural differences category. I have attempted to explain the concept itself in a clear and concise way, in the knowledge that the English speaking readers are likely to be unfamiliar with this practice. When I undertook field research I had to initially explain to my interviewees who were Thai "guardians of music knowledge" that this thesis was being produced for the benefit of a reading audience who are from a different culture. I needed to act with integrity and honesty and above all respect the wishes of the guardians of *huang wicha.*

Most Thai musicians are traditionally very reserved and are not used to talking about the music that they play. However, it would be true to say that many of them have never been questioned before and as a musician myself who has been used to being "inside" (emic), the music, I was able to demonstrate some empathy with them. Now, as I am examining the music from the "outside" (etic) in my role as an ethnomusicologist, I encouraged my interviewees to convey their feelings about their life in music, with specific regard to the funeral ritual. I had the advantage of personally knowing many of my interviewees and as such the mutual respect that we have for each other has provided

[5] According to Thai tradition, it was believed that the fragrance of the *dok mai chan* had the effect of transferring the soul of the deceased to heaven. It should be noted today that it is very difficult to find sandalwood and consequently it is very expensive to purchase. Nowadays, similar wood from other types of tree are used instead of sandalwood.

for meaningful and in depth discussions. I also believe strongly that this is the ideal time in the history of my country's capital city to reflect on the role that funeral music has in today's rapidly changing society. My experience of living in London for four years has allowed me to reflect on my country from afar: its traditions, religion and place in today's world.

One possible disadvantage of my close association with the subject matter is that I may have a tendency to provide an analysis of this topic based upon my emotions, in comparison to somebody who is an "outsider" who will perhaps be better placed to provide more rational and dispassionate observations. As a Thai musician, I am almost too aware of the superstition that surrounds Thai music and culture unlike an "academic" who is an "outsider" who would not be impeded by this factor.

In conclusion, in order for this thesis to be of value I needed the cooperation and input of a large number of different people and it was crucial that I followed an ethical approach to my research. For example, when conducting formal interviews, I included the "consent form for research-subjects" which forms part of the SOAS Ethics Statement, para.9(ii).

1.5 My own experiences in studying and playing Thai classical music

When I led the Thai Music Circle in the UK (TMC) in our performances at the open air festivals in Trafalgar Square, London in 2008 and 2010, I realised that my love of Thai classical music had taken me on a very long and fascinating journey. It all began when growing up as a young child on the outskirts of Bangkok, I used to listen to my father performing pieces of Thai classical music with his own ensemble. There would be as many as five musicians practising in our home at any one time. The music that they played was occasionally lively and at other times slow and relaxing. I enjoyed listening to and watching their performances and occasionally joined in by playing an instrument known as the *krap* (this is a Thai wooden clapper whose function it is to keep time and give the beat). It was therefore inevitable that together with my three brothers and sister, I would be encouraged to learn music.

My father came from a farming background and his ancestors had no history of playing Thai classical music. He was a young man when he was first captivated by hearing the *pi nai* (Thai oboe) being performed at temples and houses in respect of an auspicious event. As he had no musical background, he enlisted the services of a music teacher who helped him to develop his musical skills. After several years, my father became a competent player of the *pi nai*, and he then decided to purchase various musical instruments to form his own *piphat* ensemble. Both my siblings and I received tuition for several years from not only my father but also a teacher who he hired specifically for us. We performed as a family within my father's ensemble. Typically, we would play music from the *piphat* repertoire at ordination ceremonies for monks and other traditional events such as the famous *kon chuk* (top knot cutting ceremony). Having established his *piphat* ensemble as one of the leading musical groups in our local sub-district, my father then assembled musical instruments to form his own *piphat mon* ensemble. This was approximately 30 years ago and in the context of this thesis it is interesting to recall that my father's main reason for setting up the *piphat mon* ensemble was to satisfy the many requests that he was receiving to play Mon music at funeral rituals. I also remember that he loved the aesthetic quality of the Mon instruments which looked wonderful being displayed in my home. Last but not least, I should mention that performing the *piphat mon* at Thai funeral ceremonies was financially rewarding for my father who considered himself a full time musician.

For my part, encouraged by both my parents I began my musical education by learning the *khong wong lek* (a small gong-circle) at home and then in 1980 I studied the *khong wong yai* (a large gong-circle) at the College of Dramatic Arts, situated in central Bangkok. In order to gain admission to this prestigious school, I had to pass an entrance exam which consisted of academic tests and also required me to perform music. After two years studying the *khong wong yai,* I was selected to receive tuition in respect of the *ranat ek*, which is a Thai xylophone. I was fortunate that my father and his teacher were also helping me with my development of this instrument at home. My first major performance playing the *ranat ek* was in respect of the famous *wai khru*[6] ceremony which my school performed at the National Theatre in Bangkok. The *ranat ek* is considered to be one of the

[6] *Wai khru* is the name given to an event or ceremony whereby students pay respects and show gratitude to their teachers.

most important instruments in the ensemble and it is commonplace for the leader of the ensemble to play it.

I learnt a great deal about how to adapt the melodies of traditional Thai classical pieces to be performed in a style that suited the *ranat ek*. I was aged 14 at the time of the *wai khru* event and by this time I had a reasonable understanding of the melodic structure which underpins Thai classical music. This was to serve me well, when I was selected by one of the leading Thai oboe teachers, to be one of only three female musicians selected out of approximately 20 to learn the *pi nai* (Thai oboe). Very soon I was the only woman left due to my two fellow students leaving the class as a result of the physical and technical challenges posed by learning this instrument. In particular, musicians are required to learn complex circular breathing exercises in order to prolong the performance of this instrument. At the same time a musician needs to be focused on the ever changing melodic nuances of the music being played. In addition to all of this, one must learn to control the sound of this instrument, in particular, managing carefully the interaction between the musician's tongue and the reed of the instrument.

At the same time that I was receiving tuition in respect of the *ranat ek* and the *pi nai* at the College of Dramatic Arts, I was also being taught at home to play the *khong mon wong lek* (a small crescent-shaped *mon* gong-chime). My first performance at a Thai funeral ritual took place when I was approximately 13 years of age and my featured instrument was indeed the *khong mon wong lek*. I performed as a part of my father's Mon ensemble and I recall feeling particularly nervous and scared as we had to play very close to where the deceased's coffin was placed. In between our performances, Buddhist chants courtesy of the monks present echoed around the hall. The tempo of the music we played was very slow and in keeping with the sombre nature of the occasion.

By the age of 18, I considered the oboe to be my main instrument and at this time I was able to pass the entrance exam to become a Thai music student at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. I was fortunate to develop my skills further in respect of the *pi nai* by learning under Khru Boonchouy Sovat and Khru Peeb Konglaithong, who are considered to be the leading Thai oboe players in Thailand. One of my highlights during this period occurred on 14 May 1987 at Tha Phra Palace when I performed with an all female ensemble known as Suphot Tosanga in the presence of HM the King's daughter,

HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. It was the first occasion that I had played in front of HRH and the Princess's love of Thai classical music was clearly evident in her attendance on that occasion. For the next few years I learnt techniques in respect of mode, form and composition. I also gained a great deal of knowledge regarding Thai music theory and also the techniques that are required to arrange famous ensembles such as the *piphat sepha*.

In 1990, my final year at university, I began to learn the *pi chawa* which is very famous for being one of the most prominent instruments featured in the *piphat nanghong*. After I completed my studies in 1991, I received some wonderful news from the Principal of the Chitralada School (Royal Palace School) inviting me to take up a post as a Thai music teacher at the School. The pupils that I taught ranged in ages from 6-17 years and came from diverse backgrounds. Alongside my teaching I continued to develop my knowledge of Thai woodwind instruments such as the *pi nai*, the *khlui* (Thai recorder) and the *pi chawa* under the guidance of my two mentors, Khru Boonchouy and Khru Peeb. With regard to professional qualifications, I gained my BA degree in Thai music in 1991 and my MA degree in 1998 whereby I conducted research in respect of the *piphat nanghong*. When time permitted, I still performed occasionally with my father's ensemble playing the *piphat* and *mahori* ensembles at auspicious occasions such as weddings, ordinations and house warming parties as well as the *piphat mon* at funeral rituals. I tended to play the *pi mon* (Mon oboe) at these occasions, adapting techniques that I had learnt playing Thai woodwind instruments. I have never received tuition in respect of Mon music at any of the music schools that I have attended, due to the fact that Mon music is considered to be "foreign".

In 1995, I received what I consider to be the most important accolade of my professional music career when I was selected to learn the most sacred piece within the Thai music repertoire, known as "Ong Phra Phirap". I was fortunate to receive permission from Khru Prasit Thaworn to be taught the piece by Khru Boonchouy. Khru Prasit had a reputation at the time for being one of the most important musicians in the country and he was also awarded the title of National Artist of Thailand in 1988. Historically, women have not been permitted to play this piece of music. Whilst I was very excited to be chosen, I was also very afraid and superstitious about playing music that was traditionally the domain of men. My mentor Khru Boonchouy allayed my fears, convincing me that I

would not be harmed by playing this piece. My first public performance of "Ong Phra Phirap" occurred on a visit to England in 1999 and since then I have performed it on several occasions in Thailand, playing the *pi nai* as the only woman in an otherwise male ensemble. For more information regarding "Ong Phra Phirap" I would recommend reading pages 124-127 of Deborah Wong's book entitled *Sounding the center: history and aesthetics in Thai Buddhist performance*.

During my lifetime as a musician working in my own country, I have only performed Thai classical music at funeral rituals on three special occasions. In each case, the *piphat nanghong* was performed and the deceased were all important members of Thai society. I recall that at the beginning of the rituals we played in a slow tempo, which although making me feel very calm, also evoked sad emotions within me. Later on though, we were required to perform pieces in a faster tempo which I found very challenging, particularly as we were expected to improvise because of the changes in pitch level required. With the music suddenly becoming lively, my mood improved accordingly. The complexity and degree of difficulty associated with the *piphat nanghong* is one of the reasons why musicians feel uncomfortable playing the music and thus we very rarely hear it in today's society.

I would like to conclude this section concerning my own experiences playing Thai music, by expressing the debt of gratitude that I owe to HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. As one of her passions is to promote Thai classical music throughout the world, I have been very fortunate under her patronage to be given an opportunity in recent years to teach and spread awareness of Thai music in the UK and in Europe. HRH has taken a personal interest in the development of the TMC where I was the Head teacher (2007-2012). I take great satisfaction and pride in being able to pass on my knowledge to future generations of musicians. I hope that by doing this, I am in some way repaying the trust that HRH has placed in me to keep the tradition of Thai classical music alive, particularly in respect of funeral ritual music.

1.6 Review of early and relevant literary sources

The literature that I have referred to in this thesis has been gathered primarily from the most prominent libraries in Bangkok. I discovered that there was a paucity of written

material about the subject matter from both Thai and overseas scholars. In this section, the reviews of literary sources are listed in chronological order.

Prince Naris and Prince Damrong

Possibly the most significant primary source that I will utilise is in respect of the famous correspondence between Prince Naris and Prince Damrong known as *San Somdet* volume 18 or the "Royal Letters" (1962). This consists of letters between the two Princes written between 1914-1943. This correspondence was published in 1962 and only a limited number of copies exist today, housed in learning faculties. I have provided two quotations below from one letter written by Prince Damrong dated 16 July 1940. The first quotation makes specific reference to the role of the *piphat mon* in the Thai royal funeral ceremonies, and as it has never been published in English, I have provided my own translation.

"Regarding the use of the *piphat mon* in funeral rituals, Somdet Phrachao Luang (King Rama V) advised me that the *piphat mon* was performed for the first time at the funeral of Somdet Phrathepsirinthara, due to the fact that her origins are Mon (although I do not know which of her parents had Mon blood). As a result, King Rama V has ordered that the *piphat mon* be performed at the funerals of members of the Royal Family who come from the same blood line as Somdet Phrathepsirinthara. However, ordinary people may be confused about this change in the type of music played at royal funerals, but will imitate it all the same. By continually playing the *piphat mon* at their funerals, ordinary people will eventually adopt the belief that they are having the equivalent of an aristocratic funeral. In the same way, Japanese fireworks being displayed at an ordinary person's funeral has been popular over a considerable period of time because it is associated with the death ritual of an elite person…" (ibid.:236). Through my research, it is evident that Mon music is favoured over Thai traditional classical music (as represented by the *piphat nanghong* ensemble) in the majority of funerals held in Bangkok. Nowadays, the *piphat nanghong* ensemble only tends to feature in funeral ceremonies for elite members of society including senior musicians.

As well as writing about the effects that the *piphat mon* may have on ordinary citizens and his belief that they would eventually adopt this music for their funeral rituals, Prince Damrong in the same letter also wrote about his appreciation of the *piphat nanghong*. He attended a performance of this ensemble at the royal funeral held for his wife, Mom Chueai Disakul[7], which took place at Thepsirin temple. "The only music that has been used in the Thai funeral ritual is the *piphat nanghong.* It is a combination of the *bua loy* and the *piphat* ensembles…the two *piphat nanghong* ensembles of Luang Sena and Phra Pradit (who is also known as Tat) performed well and the audience was impressed. I also liked it very much and felt that it was a shame that this occasion was a funeral, otherwise I would sit and listen to the music for my enjoyment…" (ibid.:237). Two more authors who have discussed the significance of Somdet Phrathepsirinthara's funeral ritual are Narongrit Kongpin in his Thai thesis entitled *The study of the Piphat - Mon music culture* (1996) and Deborah Wong in her article: "Mon music for Thai deaths: Ethnicity and Status in Thai Urban Funerals" (1998).

These letters are particularly notable as they contain the first detailed discussion of the *piphat mon* and *piphat nanghong* ensembles. Without this correspondence between the two princes, scholars would be bereft of invaluable historical documents regarding the history of two of Thailand's most iconic ensembles. With the notable exception of the two princes's letters, there had been a dearth of written material by Thai musicians regarding the music that they played.

Sathiankoset

Sathiankoset is a pseudonym with the author's family name being Phraya Anuman Ratchathon. He is a leading authority on Thai philosophy, who wrote a book entitled *Pra Pheni Nueang Nai Kan Tai* in 1962 which in English means "death ritual tradition". This book is considered by Thai scholars to be the most important work on this subject and has never been translated into English. This is the first book to undertake an in depth analysis of how changes in Thai society over many hundreds of years have impacted on Thai funeral rituals. The author is a highly respected anthropologist and this work is considered by Thai scholars to be a benchmark by which other studies in this field are judged.

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[7] Mom Chueai Disakul passed away on 17 December 1903.

The author states that one of the main purposes of the Thai funeral ceremony is to invoke a feeling of joyfulness in the spirit of the deceased (Sathiankoset:1988:34). He also describes how the ceremony provides an opportunity for the mourners to display their admiration for the deceased (ibid.:33). In his commentary, he emphasises the fact that the holding of a funeral ceremony is regarded in Thai society as a very prestigious occasion (ibid.:34). Sathiankoset contrasts urban funerals with ones held in rural areas, pointing out that in towns and cities, the ritual ceremonies tend to be different from those in the countryside. He points out that some funeral rituals are no longer practised in the city, but still feature in rural areas. An example of this is the ritual whereby coconut water is poured over the deceased's body prior to the actual cremation taking place (ibid.:12). He writes specifically about various rituals including the concept of placing money in the deceased person's mouth to signify the fact that you cannot take material possessions with you to the next life. He also makes an observation that the undertaker will be the beneficiary of the coin and by making such a payment, the deceased's family will be assured that their loved one's body will be cremated (ibid.:61). He discusses different types of ritual from all over Thailand and makes the point that every society around the world from the Chinese to the Egyptians has different ideas concerning funeral ceremonies. He also discusses the changes that have taken place in respect of Thai traditions and ritual ceremonies over many hundreds of years, paying particular attention to the central regions of Thailand**.** He notes that many of these rituals have died out and a typical ceremony held at the time the book was published may bear little relation to one from a much earlier era. Finally, it is notable that in his text he did not provide any details concerning the music featured in the ritual ceremony.

Sathiankoset's book has inspired many academic writers including Prani Wongthet, one of the country's most respected anthropologists and author of *Phithikan Kieokap Kantai Nai Prathet Thai* (1991) (Death rituals in Thailand). She cited Sathiankoset's book as a primary source in her discourse concerning funeral rituals. From my own perspective, having attended and participated in a number of funerals during my fieldwork, I was surprised that many of the rituals that I had read about in historical texts no longer featured in today's ceremonies. Therefore, I am in agreement with Sathiankoset's assertion that a large number of these rituals appear to have become extinct. However, I should mention that the funerals I attended were within Bangkok and

I am unable to comment on changes that may have occurred in the rural areas of Thailand.

David Morton

The following review is based on an extract from David Morton's book *The Traditional Music of Thailand* (1976) concerning special ensembles. It should be noted that Morton's book may well be the first to have been written in English specifically about Thai music. His book encompasses all aspects of Thai music: the instruments used, their individual characteristics, mode, forms and compositional techniques including notations and of course ensembles.

In his extract on special ensembles, he begins with a comparison of two types of drums, the *klong khaek* (a pair of drums used in auspicious ceremonies) and the *klong malayu* (a pair of drums used exclusively in funeral ceremonies today). He explains that the former originated in Java whereas the latter came from Malaya (Morton:1976:111). He describes in detail the different techniques used to play these drums. From an historical perspective, he quotes Prince Damrong (King Rama IV's son) who believed that "the *klong malayu* probably came first and was used in royal processions, such as the elephant processions in which Malayans took part" (ibid.:112). Later on, the *klong malayu* was used to accompany royal funeral rituals and "gradually its use began to be exclusively to provide music for ceremonies in connection to the dead" (ibid.:112). As a result, it eventually disappeared from other types of events.

Morton, again citing Prince Damrong, states that the *klong khaek* first appeared in Thai music when it was played to accompany various dances such as the sword dance and the Javanese Kris dance. Other processions that featured the *klong khaek* included the hair-shaving and Royal Barge ceremonies. He continues by saying that the *klong malayu* originally featured in the above procession when its influence in funeral rituals grew. He quotes Prince Damrong who suggested that "…when it came to be associated with ceremonies for the dead it was considered an inauspicious instrument…" (ibid.:112) whereas the *klong khaek* was used for happy and auspicious occasions. Morton then describes how the two types of drum were incorporated into the *piphat nanghong*. In

respect of the *klong khaek*, he states that it first appeared in the *piphat* ensemble during the performance of the Javanese play Inao[8]. The *klong malayu* meanwhile featured in the *bua loy* ensemble. It was the combination of these ensembles with the addition of various melodic percussion instruments which resulted in the creation of the *piphat nanghong* ensemble (ibid.:112-113) (for further commentary refer to Dhanit Yupho (2001) *Thai musical instruments*, translated from Thai to English by David Morton).

Morton concludes his section on special ensembles by examining the instruments that comprise the *piphat mon*. He lists the various instruments as well as providing an illustration of the ensemble. He also describes the appearance of a set of seven two-faced drums known collectively as *poeng mang khok* and makes a comparison with a similar arrangement of Burmese instruments. He also makes the point that the *piphat mon* is played at Thai funeral rituals (ibid.:113).

On pages 111-113, in his extract, he did not provide any information about the songs and history of the *piphat nanghong*. In addition, he did not mention the significance of *pi nok tam* (a type of Thai oboe which is similar to the *pi nai* but smaller and shorter in shape) which was used in the *piphat nanghong* about 60 - 70 years ago. This instrument played a crucial role in the performance of the *tap* (the term *tap* means “suite” and usually refers to the telling of a specific story such as “Tap Phrommat” and “Tap Nangloy” which originates from the Indian epic *Ramayana*). I will discuss in depth this subject and why the *pi nok tam* no longer features in the *piphat nanghong* ensemble. Specifically, I will examine why the *pi nok tam* has been replaced by the *pi chawa* (Javanese oboe).

Boonchouy Sovat

In his Thai language article: “Bua Loy” (30 September 1993) presented to the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University, the senior music lecturer, Khru Boonchouy, begins by suggesting that the construction of Thai classical music can

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[8] Inao is one of the most famous poems in Thai literature and dates back to the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767). It is based upon a Javanese work entitled Panji. The Thai version tells of a love story between a Prince named Inao and a Princess called Bussaba. This work is still compulsory in Thai studies for students across the country. The poem has been adapted by many writers to accompany musical and dance routines, the most famous version being written by King Rama II (r.1809-1824).

be divided into two main types, namely, music for religious rituals and music for entertainment or social functions. He believes that the development of classical music in funeral rituals has been held back due to Thai people's traditional belief in superstition[9] and discusses this in detail using the specific example of the *bua loy* ensemble.

He states that Thai musicians believe that it is taboo to play the *bua loy* suite at home or even to hum the melodies, for fear that these actions will bring ill fortune and result in their premature death. He explains that they must practise their music only in sacred places of worship such as temples where the musicians believe that they will be protected from evil spirits and bad luck. The restrictions placed on students in respect of where they can learn and practise, has hindered the expansion and the development of the *bua loy* (ibid.:2). He also provides another reason that has hindered its progress. The small number of musicians who possess knowledge of the *bua loy* are extremely careful in respect of selecting appropriate people to pass their knowledge onto. In normal circumstances, it will be transferred to musicians who study at the same musical school. In addition, the Masters of the *bua loy* have to ensure that the recipients will preserve its repertoire after being bestowed with this important knowledge. Khru Boonchouy believes that this is a significant factor in the decline of Thai traditional music (ibid.:3).

Khru Boonchouy then discusses aspects of his own musical upbringing, including his time at Sanoduriyang Music School. He discusses the instruments that make up the *bua loy* ensemble. One musician plays the *chawa* oboe, two musicians perform on the *malayu* drums and the final one plays the *meng* (a kind of gong). He states that the knowledge that he gained by playing the *chawa* oboe was passed onto him by Khru Thiap Konglaithong who himself was a student of Phraya Sanoduriyang. Apart from Khru Peeb, who in 1973 received knowledge of the *bua loy* from Khru Thiap, no other musician was deemed suitable to learn this repertoire until 1993. Finally, Khru Boonchouy breaks down the *bua loy* suite into eight stages, each evoking differing emotions for people involved in

[9] Prior to the Hindu faith being adopted by ordinary citizens living in the region that is now known as Thailand, there was no organised religion in the country. However, as was the case in many countries in Southeast Asia, there was a widely held belief that spiritual powers were contained within inanimate objects such as plants, rocks and trees as well as many kinds of animals. This manifested itself into a faith known as animism. When confronted with an object possessing animist powers, people would automatically adopt superstitious behaviour for fear that should they act in a different manner then they would inevitably suffer great pain and be cursed. With the advent of organised religion and a more civilized society, this belief in animism has receded significantly.

a funeral ritual. I will explain this subject matter in much greater detail when I discuss the development of the *bua loy* ensemble in chapter 4.

Narongrit Kongpin

Narongrit Kongpin's (1996) Thai thesis for his Master's degree at Chulalongkorn University was the study of the *piphat mon* music culture. His main purpose was to show how Mon music, which originated from an ethnic group of people, became an integral part of Thai musical culture. He concentrates his research on the history of the *piphat mon*, from its origins up to the present day, where he focuses on three provinces in Thailand, namely Prathumthanee, Nonthaburi and Samutsakorn. He provides detailed descriptions of the six instruments, the *khong mon* (a crescent-shaped *mon* gong-chime), the *pi mon*, the *taphon mon* (Mon drum), the *poeng mang khok*, the *mong sam bai* (three gongs) and the *ranat* (a xylophone), that are considered to be Mon. Narongrit also examines important aspects of Mon culture such as *mon rong hai*, a ritual whereby the singer is obliged to cry during the ceremony. Additionally, he observes Mon traditional dancing known as *mon ram* and also the piece, "Thayae Mon".

As a part of his research, he conducted an interview with the relatives of Khru Sum Dontricharoen who was considered by many scholars to be the first person to bring a *khong mon* to Thailand. However, this widely held view is thrown into doubt by his descendant's assertion that Khru Sum Dontricharoen was actually born in Thailand and it was his ancestors who were responsible for introducing the *khong mon* and the *piphat mon* into the country (ibid.:99-100).

In his research, Narongrit names four Thai pieces, "Narai Plaengrup", "Mon Ramdap", "Surintharahu" and "Asaewunki" as among the earliest pieces of music to reveal a Mon influence. These compositions date back to the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767) (ibid.:75). In another aspect of his research, Narongrit examines the role of the *piphat mon* in respect of Thai funeral rituals. According to Narongrit, it was Khru Montri Tramot who claimed that performances of the *piphat mon* dated back to the Thonburi period (1767-1782), highlighting its presence at a famous celebration of the Emerald Buddha in 1779 (ibid.:85). Somewhat surprisingly, Narongrit along with other notable

authors such as Khru Montri Tramot and Deborah Wong did not provide an explanation or speculate on the purpose of the Emerald Buddha's celebration in 1779.

With respect to the history of Mon music in Thai society, he divides this into three eras. Firstly, he concentrates on the migration of Mon people to Thailand during the Ayutthaya (1351-1767), Thonburi (1767-1782), and Rattanakosin periods (specifically in the years 1782-1851). He states that initially Mon music was restricted to Mon communities only. However, it gradually spread out from Mon circles and in particular was used by Thai royals in ceremonies and festivals[10] (further detail provided in chapter 4). The second era that Narongrit describes is the reign of King Rama IV (r.1851-1868) during which Mon music had a huge impact on the values and beliefs of Thai society after Queen Somdet Phrathepsirinthara's funeral in 1862. Henceforth Narongrit states that Thai people used Mon music exclusively for Thai funeral rituals and that it was no longer performed at other festivals and events. The third and final period covers the end of King Rama VI's reign (r.1910-1925) up until the present day. He comments on the growing influence of the Mon style of music in the compositions of Thai musicians and also focuses a great deal of attention on Luang Pradit Phairo in his role as the first person to compose Thai music in a Mon style on Mon instruments (ibid.:193-194).

Narongrit's work is rich in historical detail when analysing the rise of the Mon race. From the perspective of Mon music, he gives particular focus to those Mon songs that accompany Mon dances in the provinces of Prathumthanee, Nonthaburi and Samutsakorn. He omitted, however, to include any analysis of Mon compositions included in funeral rituals. There is a dearth of information regarding this subject and as such I have sought to address this through my field work in this thesis.

[10] When discussing this subject Wong mentions that "…the first record of a large influx of Mon refugees is from the reign of King Naresuan (1590-1605) during the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767); the reigns of Kings Prasart Thong (1629-1656) and Narai (1656-1688) similarly recorded waves of Mon fleeing the Burmese, with most resettling in the Ayutthaya area. Pathum Thani (then called Samkhok) was founded during the late Ayutthaya period as a Mon settlement. In 1757, the Mon capital of Hongsawadi was sacked by the Burmese army, and thousands more Mon resettled in Samkhok. Ongoing warfare between the Mon and Burmese resulted in large-scale Mon emigration to the Chao Phraya river area below Ayutthaya during the reigns of King Taksin (1767-1782) and Rama II (1809-1824)…" (Wong:1998:115).

Jutamas Poprasit

For my Master's degree at Chulalongkorn University (1997) I wrote a Thai thesis on the history and performance of the *piphat nanghong* ensemble. I looked at the origins of the ensemble, describing how it was formed through a merger of the *piphat phithi* and the *bua loy* ensembles. This occurred during the Rattanakosin Period (at the end of the reign of King Rama III (circa 1845-1851). I discussed how it was the most popular musical genre to accompany Thai funeral ceremonies. I examined the impact that the emergence of Mon music had following the funeral of Queen Somdet Phrathepsirinthara during the reign of King Rama IV (r.1851-1868) and its role in the declining fortunes of the *piphat nanghong* ensemble.

As well as the history and traditions of the *piphat nanghong* ensemble, I researched in depth the musical format of the ensemble. I interviewed the representatives of three renowned music schools in Bangkok, namely Phatthayakoson, Luang Pradit Phairo and Duriyapranit, to gain an appreciation of how each one constructed the *piphat nanghong* ensemble. I focused on the order of performance in respect of the suites used during the Thai funeral ritual and discussed the performance style, the drum patterns and pitch levels used in the ensemble. I discovered that whilst each school employed different ways of arranging its repertoire for performance, they all conformed to the same basic musical template.

It became clear to me that the performers in the *piphat nanghong* ensemble must be exceptionally talented and they should all work together as equal members of the team. To highlight this, I provided a case study in respect of the Desbala ensemble (The Thai Classical Ensemble of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration) due to its excellent reputation in performing the *piphat nanghong* music. During this research, I noted that more than 30 suites of *nanghong* songs had been recorded by the Desbala ensemble. These are retained at the Cultural Centre of Chulalongkorn University. To demonstrate the flexibility of the *piphat nanghong* ensemble, I analysed the suite "Thon Samo" which was composed during the Ayutthaya period. This provides an excellent example of how Thai musicians used different styles to construct a suite for the *piphat nanghong* ensemble. I also examined the role of each musical instrument featured in the ensemble. I

discussed the different melodies that can be played on these instruments: the *pi chawa*, the *ranat ek* (high-pitched Thai xylophone), the *ranat thum* (low-pitched Thai xylophone), the *khong wong yai*, the *khong wong lek* and the *klong malayu* (a pair of drums), as well as how they deal with tempo and rhythm.

By not participating in the ensemble but instead acting as an observer, I was able to gain a real appreciation of the ensemble's performance. I realised that the combination of excellent teamwork, highly skilled musicians and a great conductor were crucial elements in producing an effective presentation of the *piphat nanghong* ensemble. Many musicians in Thailand have difficulty with the fast tempo of the music and the improvisations that are needed. For these reasons, only a handful of musicians are able to fulfil the requirements of playing the *piphat nanghong* ensemble which is why it is rarely heard today.

I should state here that this thesis expands greatly on the research that I undertook for my Master's degree in 1997. For example, I only focused on the *piphat nanghong* ensemble in my previous thesis. As well as providing fresh material in respect of the *piphat nanghong*, this thesis also examines in depth the other two key ensembles, the *bua loy* and the *piphat mon* ensembles. It should also be noted that I did not previously visit the three renowned schools in Bangkok to undertake my interviews with their respective representatives. In the course of this research, I actually visited the Phatthayakoson School for which I have received special permission. This gave me a much greater understanding of how this school performs and teaches Thai music. In the research that I conducted in 1997, I utilised only Thai originated sources. However, for the purpose of this thesis, I combined Thai material with texts gleaned from Western ethnomusicologists.

Deborah Wong

It would be true to say that Deborah Wong is the first ethnomusicologist to analyse the subject of Mon music in the Western academic world. She based her work on interviewing many musicians in Bangkok and attending funeral ceremonies. Her main focus was centred on the historical and social relationship between Mon music and Thai people.

The central theme of Deborah Wong's article (1998): "Mon music for Thai deaths: Ethnicity and Status in Thai Urban Funerals" is how the music of an ethnic group became a key part of Thailand's most significant ritual. She provides some background to the Mon people's history and how and why they migrated to Thailand. She examines the reasons why the *piphat mon* ensemble, which after Queen Sirin's funeral in 1862 had been the preserve of the aristocracy, was adopted by the lower and middle classes as the music to be played during their funeral ritual. One of the main factors behind this transformation concerned the need for temples to raise funds following the abolition of slavery in 1873 and forced labour in 1905. Renting out temple space was a good source of income and as such cremations became a mass market business and thus affordable for middle and lower classes (Wong:1998:103,124).

One of Wong's major discussion points concerns the importance of status to Thai people. This is particularly significant when one considers the construction of tall towers in Bangkok crematoriums after the Second World War which was aimed at replicating the funeral structures of the aristocracy. Therefore, Wong states that ordinary Thai people living in Bangkok had the opportunity of having a funeral ceremony similar to that of an aristocrat (ibid.:124). Regarding the music, she also mentions that "…late twentieth-century Thais are likely to include a *piphat mon* ensemble in funeral rituals because it speaks sadness, status and fun" (ibid.:125). I concur with Wong regarding the importance of status to Thai people, evidence of which can be traced back to the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767) (Neher:1979:5) and is still a fundamental aspect of a Thai citizen's identity today. However, I would add that whilst status is still at the core of Thai society, the severity of the economic downturn in recent years has meant that many Thai people have scaled down their funeral ceremonies according to their budget.

Wong observes that one of the most significant factors behind the emergence of Mon music as a significant part of Thai culture, concerns one of the traditional characteristics of Thai people, namely that of embracing outside or foreign influences[11]. She provides evidence of this dating back to temple murals in the Ayutthaya (1351-1767) and

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[11] It should be noted that whilst Thais historically welcome and absorb foreign culture, they also are very respectful of their own Thai traditions and therefore there is a continuous challenge to maintain the balance between the two. In particular in recent years mainly through the efforts of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, there has been a movement to reassert Thai traditional music used in Thai funeral ceremonies which previously had lost status due to the pre-eminence of Mon music.

Rattanakosin (1782-present) periods which show foreign people as being "deeply different" (ibid.:123). The Mons, being outsiders or "other" people and with their own ethnic music, easily fulfil this criteria. Wong believes that the music of the Mon people in the early 20th century gained the wider attention of ordinary Thai people in Bangkok through the innovative Thai musician Luang Pradit Phairo. He was fascinated by two Mon musicians, Khru Sum and Khru Choen Dontricharoen, who had settled in Bangkok and he used their influence to incorporate Mon structures into Thai compositions (ibid.:117).

A large section of Wong's article provides a breakdown of the different musical instruments which make up the *piphat nanghong* ensemble and also describes how the music is incorporated into a typical funeral ritual (ibid.:105,116). She also provides a detailed review of a three day funeral ritual which she attended in respect of the funeral of a famous musician's wife (ibid.:119). Wong's study focuses almost entirely on the *piphat mon* ensemble which is understandable, as the main brief of her article was to examine the Mon influence on Thai funeral rituals. She mentions briefly the *bua loy* and *piphat nanghong* ensembles and this thesis will look in depth at the history and transmission of these two ensembles.

Denis Segaller

Denis Segaller (2000) in his book, *Thai Ways*, writes about various aspects of Thai customs and culture, including royalty and nobility, festivals and ceremonies. He describes in vivid detail his experiences of attending Thai funeral ceremonies and linking these thoughts with his understanding of the Thai concept of death. This review concentrates on his chapter concerning Thai funeral ceremonies, entitled "After someone dies". He states that in the case of a person who dies at home, the deceased's body is kept in the house, normally for three days. However, if somebody dies outside of their home, for example, in an accident or through an illness in hospital, the dead body is transferred to a temple. Segaller states that soon after the person is pronounced dead, the body is washed and dressed in the deceased person's favourite clothes with the head pointing to the west in recognition of the Thai belief that the setting sun is a symbol of death. The participants in the funeral ritual will all be dressed in dark clothing. As they each pass by the deceased, they will pour perfumed water over the right hand of the dead person in

order to cleanse the body and to request forgiveness for "past quarrels and wrongs" (Segaller:2000:40). During the evening, four monks will be invited to the ritual and chant for seven nights. Segaller mentions that in Bangkok chanting ceremonies will normally be held from 7-9 pm but in rural areas they may last all night.

Segaller states that the next stage of the funeral ceremony is the cremation of the body. He points out that due to superstition cremations never take place on a Friday. The reason for this is that the Thai word for Friday, *wan suk* has another meaning which is "happiness" and is therefore deemed to be inappropriate (ibid.:41). The cremation will usually take place at temples and Segaller writes about the entertainment that accompanies cremation ceremonies in the provinces of Thailand. He lists classical Mon music, *li-ke* (Thai folk opera) and *khon* (Thai masked dance) as crucial elements of the entertainment. He states that '"…many Thai people believe that this entertainment is not only for the sake of the many funeral guests, but also keeps the dead person's spirit company and prevents it from feeling lost or lonely" (ibid.:41). In respect of entertainment forms such as *li-ke* and *khon* as Segaller mentioned above, I have discovered that due to the expense of staging these activities, they rarely feature in funerals held in Bangkok today. The global economic downturn of the past few years has certainly been a significant factor. Also, another reason for the absence of these entertainment forms can be attributed to the policies adopted by many temples, namely that their buildings should remain silent as they are primarily places of worship. I interviewed several temple officers whose policies forbade the staging of the *li-ke* and *khon*. I noted that the strictest policies were reserved for temples in the centre of Bangkok whilst those in the suburbs tended to be a little more lenient.

In the final segment of this chapter, Segaller describes his participation in the funeral ritual of a woman who died at the age of 93. Her body was held initially at a temple in central Bangkok, Prayoon temple, and then after three nights was transferred to the Suan Som temple situated in her birthplace on the outskirts of Bangkok. The cremation ceremony lasted for two days at the temple. On the first evening, music which had sad overtones was played on "classical Mon drums and gongs" (ibid.:43). This performance lasted from 7 pm until midnight. This is the only example of music being played during this particular ceremony given by Segaller. He describes in depth various ancient rituals that took place over the two days as well as other forms of entertainment such as the *khon*

masked drama *Ramayana*. He concludes his article by stating that one of the deceased's grandchildren is his wife.

Dusadee Swangviboonpong

The main theme of Dusadee's book (2003) *Thai Classical Singing: its history, musical characteristics and transmission* is an analysis of Thai classical court singing including the teaching methods and transmission. He also devotes a section to the subject: "the status of Thai music since 1932", which was a pivotal year in Thailand's history as it marked the end of 150 years of absolute monarchy. He describes the impact that the changes in the political dynamics of Thailand had on the country's music. He states that musicians were compelled to join the new regime's Fine Arts Department (ibid.:14). Due to the fact that the monarch had been overthrown, musicians could no longer receive the support of the Royal Court. He mentions that some musicians did not join the Fine Arts Department and had decided to set up their own musical groups.

Dusadee states that the anti-monarchy theme continued during the period of General Phibun's tenure (1938-44 and 1948-57). He points out that as traditional Thai music was closely linked to the monarchy, it was largely ignored by the government. Using Witayasakpan (1992:130-1) as a source, Dusadee states that "…Phibun's politics were anti-monarchist, which led to neglect and restrictions on all kinds of art related to the monarchy, including traditional music and dance drama, although these were nominally preserved as part of a national heritage" (ibid.:14-15). He mentions that many traditional musicians either gave up music or left Bangkok so they could play music in less restricted rural areas "…because the law wasn't as effective outside the capital…" (ibid.:15).

Dusadee goes on to describe the revival of Thai classical music following the end of Phibun's period in charge. He cites the influence of Uthit Naksawat, a student of Luang Pradit Phairo who presented a TV programme on Thai music. Dusadee makes it clear that HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's influence has been crucial in the renaissance of Thai traditional music. Since 1975, she has been involved in the musical activities of Chulalongkorn University and the promotion of events staged by students (ibid.:15-16).

I have reviewed another extract from Dusadee's book examining the concept of *huang wicha* (guarding knowledge) and *khru phuk lak cham* (stealing knowledge). He quotes Myers-Moro (1993:118) who describes *huang wicha* as "guarding knowledge" (ibid.:145). He suggests that it is the Gods rather than the teachers who are the true guardians of musical knowledge because they do not want musical traditions being passed onto unsuitable people. He also believes that these people may be adversely affected by the music's supernatural qualities.

Dusadee uses the example of the *naphat* musical repertoire to demonstrate the power of *huang wicha* in the context of knowledge being controlled by the musical Gods. He notes that "it requires not only very advanced musical skill, but also spiritual maturity and high social standing on the part of the "knowledge receivers"…" (ibid.:146). He mentions that women were only allowed to learn the most sacred *naphat* pieces of music after a change in the rules. Dusadee states that both men who had not become monks and women must be over the age of 35 in order to play some of the most respected music. He mentions that despite the eligibility of older women to play this music, only a handful possess the knowledge to do so.

Dusadee also discusses *huang wicha* in the context of teachers guarding knowledge from their pupils. He uses the example of Luang Pradit Phairo who was only willing to teach the solo piece entitled "Krao Nai" to one pupil, Boonchon Keedkhon. However, he states that the latter could not afford to pay the necessary lesson fee and therefore the knowledge was not passed on. Dusadee also goes on to say that the unwillingness to transfer musical knowledge is often the result of rivalry and competitiveness among musicians - "the refusal to pass on knowledge comes from a high degree of competition amongst musicians and singers, even those who work for the same institutions" (ibid.:147).

Dusadee states that it is very likely that the concept of *khru phuk lak cham* (stealing knowledge) came into being as a direct result of *huang wicha*. He defines "stealing knowledge" as a situation where musicians and singers effectively plagiarise the musical ideas and techniques of their competitors. He gives an example of the extreme lengths that some musicians will go to in order to protect their knowledge from "thieves"

(ibid.:148), namely musicians who undertake their practice in fruit gardens where they cannot be heard.

Dusadee comments that today throughout Thailand in music university departments, the practices of *huang wicha* and *khru phuk lak cham* still exist. He justifies the practice of stealing knowledge by stating that it is just “one more way of learning”. From the findings of this research, I have discovered that music scholars fall into two distinct camps in respect of the concept of *huang wicha*. Firstly, there are those such as Khru Boonchouy Sovat and Khru Sirichaicharn Farchamroon who assert that *huang wicha* has never existed in Thai music circles. Secondly, there are others including Dusadee and me who have experienced *huang wicha* first hand and believe that it is still practised in modern day Thai classical music.

Pornprapit Phoasavadi

I have undertaken a review of one aspect of Pornprapit Phoasavadi’s dissertation *From Prachan to Prakuad*, namely the chapter concerning the Sanoduriyang lineage (2005:128). It has played a crucial role in the teaching and the development of the performance of not only the *mahori* and *piphat* ensembles, but also the *bua loy* which underpins the Thai funeral ritual. In respect of this thesis it is important to understand the importance of musical lineage, in other words the passing of information and ideas from teacher to pupil and from one generation to another. Pornprapit provides a detailed history of Phraya[12] Sanoduriyang’s early life and the knowledge that he gained from his father Choi who was a blind musician and taught music in the Royal Palace (ibid.:132).

In her dissertation Pornprapit mentions that Choi was awarded the title Khun Sanoduriyang from the King (ibid.:136). However, this view point is challenged by the writings of two respected Thai music historians namely Khru Montri Tramot and Phunphit Amattayakul who asserted that the honour awarded by the King was bestowed upon Choi’s son, Phraya Sanoduriyang, and not Choi himself. During my university

[12] Phraya was the third highest ranking honour that could be bestowed upon a government officer or a member of the nobility. Altogether there were seven different levels which are known in Thai as Bandasak, namely, Somdet Chao Phraya, Chao Phraya, Phraya, Phra, Luang, Khun and Muen (from the highest rank to the lowest).

education, my tutors taught Khru Montri Tramot's and Phunphit Amattayakul's version of this event.

Pornprapit concludes the lineage with a summary of the life of Khru Charoenchai who was a daughter of Phraya Sanoduriyang and one of the most famous singers in Thailand's history. Pornprapit mentions that the Sanoduriyang School reflected its founder's personality in that he was very traditional and adhered to conservative methods. In his life time he did not compose any new music and Pornprapit quotes students who recall him saying "we ought to learn all the traditional music before we perform new music" (ibid.:131). This thesis will discuss in depth the particular technical qualities of the Sanoduriyang School and how his influence enhanced the skills of many generations of Thai music students. I will pay particular attention to the transmission of knowledge in respect of the *bua loy* ensemble, the teaching of which has its roots in Sanoduriyang. I will examine the reasons why there is a great mystery and secretiveness surrounding the teaching of this ensemble.

Conclusion

In this opening chapter, I have provided an overview of the content of the thesis including my musical background and the nine key questions that I am seeking to answer in order to establish what Thai traditional music means to people in contemporary Bangkok. This thesis, underpinned by the fieldwork that I have undertaken, is intended to be a reference point for future scholars wishing to learn about Thai culture and in particular the hitherto largely unexplored relationship between two of its most revered traditions, namely the funeral ritual and Thai traditional music. Although I have only been able to access limited literary sources in respect of the study of funeral music, the authors cited in my review of literature have provided me with invaluable historical detail which has underpinned the research that I have carried out and assisted in my quest to establish why this unique musical tradition has survived over hundreds of years and what it means in contemporary Bangkok. In the next chapter, in order to glean a greater understanding of its roots, I will examine the history and practice of Thai music in funeral rites dating back to the Ayutthaya period up until the present day.

Chapter 2

Thai music in funeral rites: a historical perspective

A Buddhist doctrine:

คนหนุ่ม คนแก่ คนโง่ คนฉลาด
ย่อมไปสู่อำนาจแห่งความตาย
มีความตายเป็นเบื้องหน้าด้วยกันทั้งนั้น
กายนี้ไม่นานหนอ จักเป็นของเปล่า
ปราศจากวิญญาณทับถมแผ่นดิน
ดั่งท่อนไม้อันหาประโยชน์มิได้ (Somphop:1996:8)

Whether someone is young or old, silly or wise, they will eventually be confronted by death. Our bodies in a physical sense are nothing but a useless waste of space comparable to a lump of wood unless they have an injection of soul.

Overview

The importance of music can be seen in its role and meaning. "Music has no universal meaning since cultural familiarity is a precondition" (Mehta:2008:163). The role of music around the world has many different functions:

> "...to inspire religious dedication, to express political protest, to coordinate work, to lull one's baby to sleep, and so on. In these examples, participation in the music is at least as important as its sound. Through such functions, music can reinforce family ties or strengthen communities; it can provide a path to meditation, exhibit devotion, or act as an inseparable component of rituals. And it may not be directed to human listeners at all. In some cultures music is performed as entertainment for, or communication with, the divine..." (Alves:2006:5).

In common with music in many places around the world, the Thai classical genre is used by Thai people to adorn many different functions, ranging from social occasions such as house warming parties through to rites of passage events such as weddings and birthdays. Although Thai arts and the country's society in general have been influenced by Western and other cultures, Thai traditional music to this day still embodies the essence of the Thai race and has the capacity to bring Thai people together. As the author Manop observes "…Thai music represents the soul of the Thai people, reflecting the way

of life of a people with a unique culture and exotic traditions. Echoes of beautiful music created by different regions continue to resound throughout the kingdom…" (Manop:2003:74). Manop's observation resonates with my own as I have witnessed firsthand Thai music's capacity to unify people during my four years living in the UK. I observed students living and studying in cities such as London, Oxford and Cambridge who organised annual "Thai nights". The purpose of these events was to unite expatriate Thais and to exhibit Thailand's culture to a UK audience including friends and teachers. Thai classical music always featured heavily during these occasions.

Thai people's spirit derives from the fact that in its history it is never been conquered by another nation, whereas its surrounding neighbours such as Burma, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia have been occupied by foreign forces. "Thailand has had an unbroken history, untainted by colonial powers" (Streckfuss:1993 cited Myers-Moro:2004:200).This coupled with the country's love for tradition which is ingrained into Thai people from a very early age has created a strong national identity and forms the essence of Thainess. Since the time that Siam was established 700 years ago, Thai traditional music has been an integral part of the nation's culture. It has its roots firmly in a bygone age and as Myers-Moro states is "past rather than future - orientated" (Myers-Moro:1993:234). She also makes the point that Thai traditional music is "frozen and undeveloping but it fits so well in Thai society" (ibid.:234).The importance of music to the population of Thailand can be clearly evidenced in the following observation made by Manop:

> "Since ancient times, music has been part of everyday life. Handed down from generation to generation, the true value of this inheritance was best expressed by a poet, Sunthorn Phu, who wrote the 'Phra Abhai Manee' classic: "Music is of value in all ways - It is as priceless as precious gems". Thais have always been deeply attached to music; it has become part of their soul, and is an important factor in daily events, as is evidenced by the inclusion of music on all occasions. It is realistic to say that music is a significant part in the life of any Thai, accompanying him or her from the day of birth to the day of death" (Manop:2003:94).

In Thai society, music and religion are inextricably linked as Herndon and McLeod observe "the closest bond between music and any other aspect of life is with religion. In all societies, whether religion is a cultural focus or not, music plays a part in ceremonial and ritual" (Herndon and McLeod:1982:114). Indeed "religion affects nearly every major event in a Thai's life" (Kislenko:2004:37). I have detailed below the strong relation

between religious rituals and Thai classical music where music can be seen in many aspects of Thai life in Thai society and is a fundamental component[1].

One of the major roles of music in religious rituals is to uphold tradition. In Buddhism a very good example of this is the *thet mahachat*[2] (a preaching ceremony) which has its origins in India and has been performed in Thailand for more than 200 years (Chulalongkorn, King:1973). In this ceremony a piece of music called "Sathukan" is played to accompany two rituals - firstly when the host lights candles and joss sticks and secondly when a monk steps up to the pulpit whereupon he will tell the story of Buddha to the worshippers. In total, the *mahachat* comprises 13 separate parts, each with an individual piece of music accompanying them. The importance of the music in this ritual cannot be understated. The list of 13 pieces used in the *mahachat* is as follows:

1. *Thotsaphon* – "Sathukan"
2. *Himmaphan* – "Tuang Phra That"
3. *Thannakan* – "Phleng Rueang Phaya Sok"
4. *Wanaprawet* – "Phaya Deon"
5. *Chuchok* – "Sen Lao"
6. *Chunlaphon* – "Rua Sam La"
7. *Mahaphon* – "Choet Klong"
8. *Kuman* – "Choet Ching" and "Ot"
9. *Matsri* – "Thayoy Ot"
10. *Sakabat* – "Ho"
11. *Maharat* – "Krao Nok"
12. *Cho kasat* – "Tra Non"
13. *Nakhon kan* – "Klong Yon" and "Choet"

(Montri:1995:36)

[1] The information used has been gathered from various sources (both Thai and English), with much of it deriving from my own experience of studying, teaching and performing music in Thai rituals. I have drawn on my recollections of attending auspicious occasions as well as funeral ceremonies in Thailand since the 1980s.

[2] The *mahachat* (the Great Incarnation of the Buddha) tells the story of Lord Buddha in his previous life. Its main purpose is to provide people with a moral code of conduct and is a major factor in how Buddhism is taught in Thailand.

During this religious ceremony, it was traditional for monks to preach a story in the *pali*[3] language. However, more recently in order to allow the audience a greater understanding of the story, the Thai language has been employed. A recent innovation has been the presence of actors portraying Buddha, his wife and children in previous lives, alongside the monk as he preaches to the congregation. This particular performance is called *thet mahachat song khrueang*[4]. Nowadays, *thet mahachat song khrueang* has become more popular with Thai audiences due to not only the Thai language superseding the *pali* language which makes the occasion more comprehensible for Thai people, but also the addition of actors and actresses has injected elements of fun, happiness, sadness and love to the proceedings. In order to make the story a more intense experience, monks will chant the narrative. Drums and the *ching* (a small cymbal) are used for this recital as the musical accompaniment. Monks are normally forbidden to sing according to Buddhist doctrine; however, in this case as the recital is deemed to be a chant, then it is acceptable.

There is another major religion, Hinduism, which has heavily influenced the day-to-day lives of Thai people, including Thai musicians. In Hinduism there are many different Gods and deities. Each of these Gods has specific rituals which are observed by its worshippers and within these rituals individual pieces of music play an important role. The meaning of music in this aspect may be seen as "medium for the divine - derives from contexts of performance" (Myers-Moro:1993:258). A very good example of this is the *wai khru* classical music ritual which has been performed over many hundreds of years. *Wai* means salute or to give respect and *khru* in this context refers to Hindu Gods and deceased music teachers. This ritual is performed once a year and for Thai musicians, it will not only represent a way to express gratitude and respect for their deceased teachers, but also show a sense of unity and companionship among the Thai musical community. It is performed in musical venues and schools all over Thailand[5]. In respect of music performed during the *wai khru* ritual the writer, Wong, states that "it evokes powerful responses, ranging from solemnity and joy to poignancy…" (Wong:2001:248). In this context, music may be seen as "the most malleable and most profound expression of this human imaginal power to reflect all realities in the phantasms it generates.

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[3] *Pali* is considered to be an important language for monks when chanting, reciting and preaching.

[4] It features actors and actresses who appear in historical costumes.

[5] For full details of the *wai khru* ceremony, refer to *Sounding the Center: History and Aesthetics in Thai Buddhist Performance* by Deborah Wong (2001).

Through musical phantasm human beings give voice to universal harmony, by performing music that resembles the sound of the celestial spheres. Humans even imitate the sound of the divine being" (Sullivan:1997:3).

Another significant example of the role of Thai classical music can be seen in all types of royal and court ceremonies. Both Buddhist and Hindu rituals underpin many royal events and Thai classical music features prominently in the rituals of both faiths. The earliest reference to the presence of Thai classical music in the religious rituals of the aforementioned faiths is contained within a book by Nang Nopphamat entitled *Nang Nopphamat Rue Tamrap Thao Si Chulalak*[6] written during the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng (r.1279-1298) in the Sukhothai period. King Chulalongkorn in his book written in 1888 entitled *Calendar of Royal Ceremonies* referred to Nang Nopphamat's writings which described instances of Thai court music interacting with Hindu religious rituals. The King also specifically mentioned the Royal Ploughing Ceremony, a traditional Hindu ritual which featured Thai court music during the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng (r.1279-1298) (Chulalongkorn, King:1973: 397-398).

The Royal Ploughing Ceremony is known in Thai as *raek na* which means "the first ploughing in the paddy field". The ceremony is held to mark and announce the beginning of the new planting season. This ceremony has a significant role for Thailand which has a largely agricultural society with about half of the country's population of 65 million being dependent on farming. It has been performed for 700 years having derived from the Hindu faith. In modern times, the ceremony takes place over two days[7]. On the first day music is played to accompany the activities of the King when he engages in a particular Buddhist religious ritual. When the King arrives at the ceremony, a piece of music known as "Phleng Cha" is played, followed by "Sathukan", which accompanies the King lighting candles and joss sticks as part of this ritual. The final piece of music "Krao Ram" is used at the end of the ceremony and signifies the return of the King to his royal palace (Montri:1995:35).

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[6] Although many people believed that Nang Nopphamat's book was written in the Sukhothai period, others considered its origins to be much later citing the early Rattanakosin period.

[7] Before the reign of the current monarch, HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej (r.1946 - present) the music accompaniment would be provided by the royal court only. However, today as well as royal court music, the *piphat phithi* ensemble also performs in the Royal Ploughing Ceremony. This was at the behest of HM King Bhumibol who requested that a greater musical presence feature in this ceremony.

On day two the ceremony observes a Hindu religious ritual known as *charot phra nang khan.* A procession is led by a royal ensemble of musicians, then followed by two sacred cows and the Minister of Agriculture who is presented as the Lord of the Ploughing Ceremony. He engages in an act whereby he throws grains of rice behind the sacred cows as a symbolic gesture of the harvesting season. A piece of music entitled "Phaya Doen" (The Lord Walking) is performed to recognise the role of the Agriculture Minister. This ritual is presided over by either the King or one of his representatives such as a prince or a princess. At the same time that this ritual is taking place, another group of musicians who do not form part of the procession perform the *piphat phithi* ensemble[8]. They play separate pieces of music to accompany three specific elements of the religious ritual. The first piece is called "Khom Wian" and accompanies the participants of the procession whilst they complete the first three of nine circuits around the royal grounds. The next piece is entitled "Choet Chan" and symbolises the act of the Lord following the sacred cows during the next three circuits. The final piece of music covering the last part of the procession is called "Pluk Tonmai" (Planting a tree) and represents the symbolic planting of the grains of rice (Montri:1984:106).

The Royal Family has played a key role in maintaining Thai traditional ceremonies, including the use of music in religious rituals to commemorate special occasions. A fine example of this is the use of the *sang trae* ensemble which has been performed for the past 400 years in army processions on both land and water as part of the Royal *kathin* ceremony[9] (Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts:1985:142). The *sang trae* ensemble also performs a piece entitled "Long Song" in another ceremony which has a Hindu theme. The music accompanies a newly established King as he performs a ritual in which he pours sacred water over his head to signify the purity of the new monarch (ibid.:142). The *sang trae* ensemble also regularly features today in the funerals of royal members. It

[8] The *piphat phithi* is commonly used in Thai religious ceremonies and consists of melodic, rhythmic percussion and woodwind instruments.

[9] Miller (1994:93-94) used Caron and Scouten (1663/1935:128) as a source stating that " The earliest description of a *kathin* procession that includes music was written by Caron and Schouten in 1636 as follows: "Once every year, about the moneth of *October*, the king of Siam shews himself by water and land in state to his people, going to the principal Temple of the Gods, to offer there for the welfare of his Person and Kingdom, the manner follows: When he goes by land, the procession is led by two hundred Elephants, each attended with three armed men; these are followed by many Musitians with Gomnies, Pipes and Drums, and a thousand men richly armed, and provided with Banners". Miller noted also out the "…the most likely group of instruments would be conch shell trumpets, horn (*trae ng-awn*), and European-style trumpets in addition to drums..." The aforementioned instruments are familiar to me as they comprise the *sang trae* ensemble although Miller did not specifically refer to the name of the ensemble.

should be noted that it is used exclusively for royal occasions and does not appear in the funerals of commoners. I have personally witnessed the *sang trae* ensemble performing at many funerals of royal members. Two non-Thai authors namely Ferdinand Mendaz Pinto and Simon de la Loubère who entered Siam in the Ayutthaya period have provided evidence in their published works that Thai court music has featured in royal ceremonies for more than 400 years with its first performances dating back to the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767). However, neither author made reference to the *sang trae* ensemble and the most reliable source to substantiate its origins is the existence of a royal decree issued in the Thonburi period (1767-1782)[10].

In keeping with the formal and serious nature of a royal funeral ceremony, the Thai court music that accompanies these occasions has both sad and reflective overtones. The music is characterised by slow tempo pieces containing beautiful, mournful melodies played in a grandiose manner by a large ensemble. Thai traditional royal court music has remained unchanged for many hundreds of years, as highlighted by the following extract from Bunta's article entitled "The Sounding of the Hours for the Royal Cremation of Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra" written in 2008.

> "According to an ancient tradition, the sounding of the hours is regularly made as the signal to alert court officials on duty which will be performed at intervals in every 3-hours period. From the Ayutthaya Period until the Rattanakosin Period during the reign of King Rama V, the sounding of the hours for the royal cremation had comprised Nang Rong Hai (the sad song) and Klong Chana (Victory drum) started from the beginning of performing laments to the end at the same time. In the royal cremation ceremony of Her Royal Highness Somdetch Phra Srinagarindra Boromrajajonani in 1996, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn had a command to bring in the Fine Arts Departments' classical music ensemble known as the Pi Phat Nang Hong ensemble to perform at intervals with the Sung – Trae (Conch shell – Bungle) ensemble and Bureau of the Royal Household's classical music ensemble known as the Pi Chanai – Klong Chana (Siamese oboe – Victory drum) ensemble. It was the first time that the Pi Phat Nang Hong took performing in the sounding of the hours in the royal cremation ceremony. The songs played by each ensemble were different; that is "Samrap Bot" played by Sung – Trae ensemble, "Phraya Soke Loi Lom" played by the Pi Chanai – Klong Chana, and "Ruang Nang Hong" played by the Pi Phat Nang Hong ensemble." (Bunta Kiantongkul, translation by Salinya Mephokee:2008:60).

[10] For more detail refer to pages 77-78.

As I have described in the aforementioned overview, Thai traditional music has played a major role in many aspects of Thai cultural life. In this thesis, however, I will focus specifically on the unique relationship between music and the death ritual and how this has developed in the capital city of Bangkok. Whilst I have already expressed the strong sense of tradition that pervades Thai society, it is undeniable that the country and in particular Bangkok has undergone a huge transformation in recent years. From my own perspective as an "insider", the perception of Bangkok today has its origins in the tourism boom to Thailand which has gathered pace over the past 30-40 years. Previously Thailand would have been seen as a luxury destination that only the affluent could afford but the advent of package holidays in recent years has made it far more accessible, This together with clever branding by the Thai tourism authorities accentuating the warm welcome that tourists will receive in "the land of smiles" has made Thailand the most popular destination for Western travellers among the Southeast Asia nations. A proliferation of night clubs and bars have opened up in the capital as well as beach resorts to cater for the influx of tourists and helped fuel the hedonistic label that Thailand has garnered in recent years.

Although the population of Bangkok has seen its way of life change immensely due to the impact of globalisation and modernisation, most individuals are still keen to preserve their culture. This is demonstrated in the religious ceremonies that form a key element of everyday life for the people of Bangkok and in which music often plays a role. For example, even though many Bangkokians may be influenced by Western lifestyles such as drinking alcohol in bars and listening to pop music, they will still find the time to commemorate important events in the Buddhist calendar. One such occasion is the Vesaka Day which celebrates Buddha's birth, enlightenment and his death. On this particular day, it is common place for many citizens of Bangkok to visit a temple with the aim of making food offerings to monks and donations of money to the temple. These actions are believed to enhance the spiritual status of their deceased ancestors and at the same time are seen as an act of merit-making on behalf of the individual visiting the temple. There are a number of days in the Buddhist calendar which will be observed by Bangkokians that involve them practising traditional rituals. Another obvious example of how Bangkokians have embraced Western culture but preserve their own traditions can be seen by how both the Thai New Year in April and the commencement of the New Year in the West on the 1st January are each celebrated enthusiastically.

As a citizen of Bangkok myself, I have always been fascinated by the relationship between music and the funeral ceremony in my home city. Moreover, I consider the rituals and music that have characterised my upbringing to be two of the most potent symbols of expression for mankind. With respect to the former, the leading anthropologist, Victor Turner, featured a quotation from Monica Wilson, expressing her view that "…Rituals reveal values at their deepest level…men express in ritual what moves them most, and since the form of expression is conventionalized and obligatory, it is the values of the group that are revealed. I see in the study of rituals the key to an understanding of the essential constitution of human societies" (Monica Wilson:1954:241 cited Victor Turner:1969:6).This is certainly the case in Thai society, where the funeral ritual is considered to be perhaps the most significant event in an individual's life. Music is regarded as the most emotive art form by Thai people and as such plays a key role in all aspects of society. This is borne out by John Clewley (2000) who states in his article entitled: "Thailand: songs for living" that "music is everywhere in Thailand" (Clewley:2000:241). As music evokes a wide range of feelings among people, it is logical that there should be some musical accompaniment during funeral rituals where strong emotions are aroused.

Music has been used by all strata of Thai society over many hundreds of years to commemorate significant events in an individual's life ("rites of passage"). In Thai culture, the first significant "rites of passage" ceremony in an individual's life traditionally is the *kon chuk* ceremony (cutting the knot) which occurs between 11-13 years of age. It used to be common place for every Thai child in the early years of their life to have all their hair shaved except for a knot tied together on top of their head. The purpose of the knot was to show that an individual was in the first stage of their life and therefore if they made a mistake or did something wrong, adults should show forgiveness on the basis of the child's tender age and innocence. There was also a wildly held belief that by having a knot in their hair they would not succumb to illness. When a child reached the age of between 11-13 years, their parents would decide to "cut the knot" to signify the next stage of the child's life. A ceremony would be held either at a child's home or conducted in a temple and musicians from the *piphat* ensemble would be invited to perform to accompany this ceremony. It should be noted that in Bangkok this ritual has almost disappeared over the last 20-30 years, although it remains popular in the outskirts of Bangkok and rural areas.

The next significant event in a male's life, which still has great relevance in Bangkok society as well as the rest of Thailand, is the ordination ceremony whereby a young man is enrolled as a monk. Typically this will be at the age of 20. By way of a comparison with the Western world, it should be noted that both the cutting the knot and ordination ceremonies are not a feature of Western culture. In the West, reaching the age of 18 is considered to be an important life event and tends to be celebrated by way of a party with friends and family. However, it is important to note that this occasion does not feature a ceremony or follow a specific ritual. The third significant event in a Thai individual's life is marriage. There is a common thread between Thai and Western cultures in respect of marriage ceremonies where music is an important aspect of these occasions in both cultures. The final stage of a person's "rite of passage" is death. In order to glean an understanding of the role of music in the Thai funeral ritual, it is important to firstly examine the Thai concept of death.

2.1 The Thai concept of death

According to Garces-Foley, "culture, class, ethnicity, lineage, and gender may all influence how people enact religion in the face of death" (Garces-Foley:2006:xi). Therefore, it is not surprising that there are many different sets of beliefs and values held by people around the world in respect of the concept of death. This research into the attitude of various societies and ethnic groups around the world has revealed that music's significance in death rituals differs from one group to another.

One clear observation that can be made is that the concept of death and religion are inextricably bound together. Religion can be defined as a system of beliefs which necessitates the worship of a God or Gods, and the activities that are associated with the worship of them (Hornby:2005). Religious beliefs give human beings an understanding and meaning of the universe. They also are seen as a source of hope and comfort when a tragic or unexplained event occurs such as a friend or relative being killed in an accident or when an unpredictable force of nature takes place, for example, a hurricane or tsunami. The running theme throughout religion around the world is the adherence to ritual. Turner provides a succinct definition of a ritual: "Ritual, unlike theatre, does not distinguish between audience and performers. Instead, there is a congregation whose leaders may be priests, party officials, or other religious or secular ritual specialists, but all share formally

and substantially, the same set of beliefs and accept the same system of practices, and the same set of rituals or liturgical actions" (Turner:1982:112).

However, in order to understand why the funeral ritual plays a highly prominent role in Thai society, I believe it is appropriate to discuss the Thai concept of death. The first key consideration when examining the Thai concept of death is to note that 95% of Thai people consider themselves to be Buddhist (Stalker:2004:313) and that their views on death are based on the teachings of the religion. The particular strand of the religion that Thais follow is known as Theravada Buddhism[11]. This is one of the two principal schools of Buddhism to be found in Asia and it is interesting to note that the Thai Buddhists have incorporated both Hindu and animist influences into their teachings and beliefs. This becomes clear when a person enters a Buddhist temple and finds a statue of a Hindu god. Thai Buddhists will often use Hindu gods and animist spirits to help them deal with day to day problems, such as taking an exam or undertaking a job interview. In a display of worship, Thai Buddhists will visit a shrine dedicated to Hindu Gods such as Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma. Typically, the individual will make an offering by way of flowers, candles, joss-sticks and food. Should the individual's wish come to fruition, the beneficiary will often display gratitude for the God's assistance by offering more material gifts or even hiring a dance and music group to perform at the shrine of the God in question. The Erawan shrine in Bangkok is the most significant Hindu place of worship in Thailand. I have personally witnessed dancing and music being performed in a display of gratitude to the Hindu God known as Phra Phrom. Another earlier and very prominent Hindu place of worship in Bangkok is the temple known as Thevasathan. I have passed by this building on many occasions and observed worshippers engaged in the act of making a wish.

[11] In respect of religion, it is a widely held belief that Buddhism first appeared in what became known as Thailand in the 3rd century B.C. This occurred when Buddhist missionaries led by Venerable Sona and Uttara were sent to the province of Nakorn Pathom (previously known as Suwannaphum) by the Buddhist Indian emperor Asoke. After its introduction, Buddhism soon became widely accepted throughout the country (Thanapol:1994:42). The particular strand of Buddhism followed by the majority of Thais is known as Theravada. Within this faith other religions and doctrines have been absorbed. Notably, one can see elements of Hinduism and animism in Thai Buddhist beliefs.

All classes of Thai people seek guidance from Hindu Gods and animist spirits. The present monarch[12], HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who considers himself Buddhist, has demonstrated his allegiance to the Hindu God, Vishnu, by also assuming the name of Rama. Rama is renowned for being Vishnu's seventh incarnation on earth (Gray and Ridout:2001:788). In respect of animism or superstition, Thai Buddhists believe that spirits inhabit the natural world through objects such as trees and plants, also animals, and even rice, this being the staple food for many Thai people. Thai Buddhists also believe that supernatural forces can affect day to day events. They have a healthy respect for spirit houses known in Thai as *san phra phum*, which they believe can protect them and their homes against evil forces. Spirit houses can be found in the homes of most Thai Buddhists and typically they are miniature versions of Thai traditional houses and contain statues of people and animals. Thai Buddhists believe that these houses contain the spirits of the land on which they are built. They will decorate the houses with flowers, candles, joss-sticks and food. They believe that these offerings will help bring them prosperity and that by showing respect to the spirit houses, their homes will be safe and protected from all evil.

Thai society today reflects the combined influences of Buddhism, Hinduism and animism. Evidence of these can be seen when one visits a temple in Bangkok where images of not only Buddha but also Hindu Gods are displayed. Typically, if one walks down a street in the city, one will see spirit houses situated in front of buildings. Indeed, Thai classical musicians show respect to all three of the aforementioned philosophies. One of the most significant ceremonies where this combined show of respect can be demonstrated is known as the *wai khru* (refer to my description on pages 55-56).

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[12] Since the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767), one significant belief that Thai people have adopted is the view that the monarch is a representative of God and has been created in the image of God. This belief can be traced back directly to one of the core elements of Hinduism. During the Ayutthaya era and the early part of the Rattanakosin period, Thai people believed that the King was all powerful and could act in a way which rewarded good people with gifts such as land and money, but could punish bad people by removing their possessions and even harming them through injury or even death. As the King is perceived to be a reincarnation of God, people were not allowed to look at him directly. One such occasion was when the King whilst on public duty passed by his subjects, these people were compelled to crouch down with their faces pointing towards the ground. They were not even allowed to raise their heads until the King's procession was away and out of sight. People who were found guilty of breaking this rule would be shot in the eye by the King's soldiers. It was believed that if people looked directly at the King, this was a show of disrespect to somebody who was a representative of God and as a result the country would be burnt to ashes. Although there have been many changes in Thai society since the Ayutthaya period, the belief that the King is a representative of God still remains to this day.

One of the most significant aspects of Buddhism which applies to not only followers of the Theravada strand but also all other Buddhists is their belief in reincarnation. A Buddhist's ultimate goal is to achieve an "enlightened" state known as Nirvana, referred to in Thai as *parinipphan*, which will allow them to escape the cycle of death and rebirth. Connected to this is the Buddhist law of karma. Karma can be defined as a wilful action by an individual through thought, speech and behaviour. Buddhists believe that a good action / karma can lead to a better life when they die and are subsequently reborn. Conversely, a bad action/ karma motivated, for example, by greed and hatred will result in a person being reborn in the next life where they are more likely to suffer pain and hardship as a consequence of their actions from their previous life.

These entrenched views held by Thai Buddhists mean that the significance of the funeral ritual cannot be understated. One of the most interesting aspects of the Buddhist funeral ritual is the display of merit-making by the mourners. Buddhists hold the belief that the offering of gifts by the mourners to the monks who are in attendance at the ceremony, will provide good karma or merit in respect of the deceased, allowing them a comfortable passage into the next life. These gifts often take the form of food, money and monks' clothing. The monks are perhaps seen as a gateway for the deceased's spirit and the positive actions of the mourners will also benefit themselves directly as they journey through their lives. In addition, this "good" karma will be reflected in their status when they are reborn into the next life. It is of significant interest to note that the Thai concept of status appears to be inextricably linked to religion, specifically in relation to the law of karma. Indeed, "one could look at the formal organisation of the society as having a hierarchy of positions to be filled by persons who had just that much past merit for the specific positions. The concept of "bun" which was used to justify a person obtaining high position, served to link status hierarchy with the doctrine of cause and effect in Buddhism " (Akin:1979: 36).

The Thai people's concept of death and the role of monks are also bound closely together. A good example of this is the practice of sending young male relatives of the deceased to act as young novices for the duration of the funeral ceremony. It is believed that their presence can be seen as a positive factor in the accumulation of merit for the deceased's next life. This also applies to a person who has been guilty of bad karma, with

the presence of young novice monks counteracting some of the negativity / bad karma surrounding the deceased.

For Thai Buddhists, making good karma in order to ensure that they have a smooth passage into the next life is perhaps the most important aspect of their existence. One book stands alone in Thai culture as being considered the most influential literary work in respect of its study of the Thai concept of death. *Triphum Phra Ruang*[13] which literally means the three worlds of Buddhist cosmology, was written by King Lithai (r.1347-1374). The core subject of the book focuses on the Thai belief that when human beings die, they are reborn into "three worlds"[14], known as "Triphum". In discussing the book, Thongchai notes that "…in the Triphum cosmography, beings are classified by their merit and designated to live in particular places according to their store of merit. The most evil beings are in the lowest section of hell; the more merit one makes, the higher the level where one resides. The store of merit can be accumulated or diminished by one's deeds and account for one's next birth. By this logic, one's present existence is the outcome of the previous one…" (Thongchai:1994:20).

Since the Sukhothai period right up until the present day, the act of merit-making by virtue of being inextricably linked to the Thai concept of death, underpins and gives meaning to the lives of Thai Buddhists. Therefore, it is not surprising that merit-making is a key component of a Thai funeral ceremony. An example of this is how a family will manage the merit-making aspect of a funeral ceremony for their deceased relative by extending an invitation to monks to come and chant at the funeral. The chanting of monks is not only used in connection with merit-making for the deceased, but also in respect of people who are still alive to remind them that they should undertake good deeds in their life time to enhance their happiness and wellbeing in the next life.

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[13] Although the *Triphum Phra Ruang* does not reveal any evidence of music being played in the Thai funeral rituals, it influenced Thai people's beliefs and the way they conducted their lives. In particular, the concepts of karma and showing gratitude to people who make merit on your behalf are values that are at the core of every Thai person's heart. The *Triphum Phra Ruang* has strongly influenced the Thai people's thinking over many hundreds of years right up until the present day.

[14] The three worlds comprise of *kama phum* (nether world), *rupa phum* (physical world) and *arupa phum* (ethereal world) according to Thai belief.

2.2 Evidence of Thai funerals rituals in murals

It would be true to say that one of the murals constructed 200 years ago in the Grand Palace, Bangkok was the first evidence of how music interacted with the Thai death ritual. It also is the longest mural in the world. As with other murals in Thailand, the one that surrounds the pavilion of the Grand Palace depicts the epic story of *Ramayana* which represents good against evil. The murals were painted at the same time that the Grand Palace was built and they were re-painted later on three occasions. Firstly, during the reign of King Rama III as a preservation measure, secondly in the reign of King Rama VII due to the effects of a flood disaster in Bangkok. Finally, during the present King's reign, work was carried out to maintain the mural. The picture itself was painted in a traditional Thai style with extravagant colour and decoration. The murals in the Grand Palace work on two different levels. Firstly, they tell the epic story of *Ramayana* and secondly they are a reflection of the Thai way of life. Even though there are in total 178 different paintings contained within the walls of the Grand Palace, there are only two murals which depict music in the context of the death ceremony, namely murals numbers 17 and 113. The funeral taking place in mural no.17 features a golden urn which is situated in the centre of the crematorium tower.

Figure 1: Mural no. 17 in the Grand Palace, Bangkok.

On the left hand side of the mural, one can see a group of musicians performing royal funeral music. The instruments on view include the *trae ng-on* (a curved trumpet), *trae farang* (a European trumpet), *sang* (a conch-shell), and *klong chana* (a victory drum). From this observation, I deduce that these musicians are playing in the *sang trae* ensemble. On the right hand side of the mural, a group of shaven headed women are seated on the floor. They are most probably household servants belonging to the deceased King Tosaroth. In this painting, one can see a depiction of the cremation ceremony of King Tosaroth. In the foreground, two figures, Queen Kaiyakesi and Phrot, are seen crying as they have not been given permission to attend the ceremony. In the top right hand corner of the mural, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana are shown walking into the forest.

Mural no.113 is deemed to have much greater significance in Thai history than mural no.17. Indeed, there have been many references in texts to mural no.113. The mural describes the cremation of a legendary evil king known as Thotsakan whose body was kept inside a golden urn known as *phra kot*. The cremation was prepared by a relative called Phiphek.

Figure 2: Mural no. 113 in the Grand Palace, Bangkok.

In mural no. 113, one can see an in depth display of the various activities that take place during the Thai cremation of the demon, Thotsakan. In the centre of the mural is the cremation hall in which the body of Thotsakan is maintained in a golden urn. In the hall, one can see men and women servants sitting in crouching positions spread around the room. At the front of the mural, a hermit is seated on a royal chariot which is surrounded by many musicians and soldiers who are seen pulling the royal chariot into the cremation hall. Alongside the carriage, some soldiers are carrying royal umbrellas and sunshades to be used by the King and members of the Royal Family. Ordinary people were not allowed to use such accessories. Soldiers are dressed in red costumes and they wear a reddish/ golden hat on their heads. Many people believe that the costumes resemble those worn by officers and musicians from the royal court. Meanwhile, the group wearing long white gowns and pointed crowns on their heads (in figure 4) are considered by Thai people to be male angels known as *thewada.* This description is based on the traditional appearance of male angels as depicted in historical texts and works of art. As one would deduce, women musicians do not feature in the murals as they have traditionally not been allowed to perform in the royal court.

The musicians are seen playing a variety of instruments and I can see featured the *pi chanai*[15] (an oboe), the *klong chana*, the *trae ng-on*, the *trae farang*, the *sang* and *mahorathuek* (a barrel drum which is made of metal, an alloy of copper, lead and tin). All of these instruments are still used in the performance of royal court music. The role of the musician is to provide musical accompaniment to the royal chariot procession. As it makes its way to the cremation hall, the music being played would be royal funeral music and its tone would be very sombre but graceful.

Figure 3: A procession of royal funeral music.

[15] The *pi chanai* is the same shape as the *pi chawa* but smaller and shorter in size.

Figure 4: A procession of royal funeral music with the *phra kot* (a golden urn) at the centre of the proceedings.

On the left hand side of the mural, several displays of entertainment are seen taking place. There is a shadow puppetry show which is being accompanied musically by a *piphat* ensemble. There are two puppets displayed on the mural, one known as Rammasun and the other Mani Makkhala. The story being enacted is from the epic known as *Ramayana* whereby Rammasun and Mani Makkhala are engaged in a ferocious fight with each other, the intensity of which results in an explosion of thunder and lightning.

In the mural it can be clearly seen that the *piphat* ensemble comprises the following instruments: the *pi nai*, the *ranat ek*, the *ranat thum*, the *taphon* (two faced drum), the *klong that* (a pair of barrelled drums) and the *krong* (a long percussion instrument constructed from bamboo). Surprisingly, I cannot see a *ching* featured. The *ching* sets the tempo of the music played by the ensemble and this would appear to be an omission by the painter of the mural, as it would be impossible for the ensemble to function without the presence of the *ching*. The *piphat* ensemble is not associated with the specific

cremation funeral ceremony and its role in this occasion is purely to provide lively accompaniment to the *nang yai* (a shadow puppetry show).

Figure 5: The *piphat* ensemble accompanying the *nang yai* (a shadow puppetry show).

In the top left hand corner of the mural, a demon is seated inside a golden pavilion surrounded by many women. Close by the pavilion, there is a group of women wearing white costumes, who could be either nuns or Thotsakan's officers. In Thai tradition, when somebody from a higher class or nobility dies, his relatives and servants must shave their heads. This is done to illustrate the fact that they are in a period of mourning. In the top centre of the mural, one can see various displays of entertainment such as tightrope walking, acrobatics, dances and both puppet and shadow puppetry shows. Finally, there are entertainers leaping through a hoop of fire. These performances are attended by many people who will be viewing the funeral ceremony. It is a Thai custom to have entertainments in their funerals in order to celebrate the life of the deceased.

I mentioned earlier that Thailand has absorbed both the Buddhist and Hindu religions, and this mural can be seen as a representation of Hindu beliefs. A further example of this can be seen in the crematorium hall which is decorated with Hindu ideas

symbolising the sacred *sumeru* Mount. In Hindu legend, the Mount is a resting place in heaven for the gods and angels to stay. There is also an illustration of Phra Phrom, a Hindu god known as Brahma who has four faces, on top of the crematorium hall. The ritual involving Phiphek preparing the cremation of Thotsakan's dead body is heavily influenced by the Brahma or the Hindu religion as it is otherwise known.

To summarise, in respect of a monarch's funeral, the Thai elite classes partly follow the Hindu doctrine which perceives the King to be a representation of God. On the other hand, Thai people from lower classes observe the Buddhist doctrine of freeing oneself from bad karma. The main role of music in the murals is to provide affirmation of the status and prestige of the deceased. The various entertainments on display illustrate a reflection of Thai society and the Thai traditional belief that a person's life should be celebrated and that their death merely represents a stage on the journey into the next life.

2.3 The origins of Thai funeral music in rituals

Thais believe that music is one of the most perfect tools to evoke and express their feelings. In Thailand music is used widely to accompany people engaged in meditation and for this reason is compatible with the deep feelings and high concentration levels experienced by mourners in funeral ceremonies. There is also a strong superstitious element to Thai music and as such many Thais believe that music can bring good luck to a particular ceremony.

Thai music has its foundations in oral traditions and for this reason there can be problems tracking its history. In order to prove that Thai classical music existed in early times, historical documents, archaeological sources and literature must be used as collateral evidence to uncover its past. Khru Montri Tramot, who is considered to be one of Thailand's most renowned scholars in respect of Thai classical music, mentioned in his book that the earliest known reference to classical music in Siam was in respect of an inscription carved on stone made during the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng (r.1279-1298). The wording on the stone was written in the ancient form of the Thai language. It makes reference to the reverberation of the music made by the *piphat* which consists of several percussion instruments and the oboe. The inscription states "who wishes to play may play, who wishes to laugh may laugh, who wishes to sing may sing" (Montri:1984:7).

The words indicate that people living in this era known as the Sukhothai period were free to express themselves.

Although there is evidence that Thai people have been creating their own traditional music since the 13th century, it is much more difficult to trace the origins and development of individual songs. Thai classical music is based upon what is known as the oral tradition resulting in a distinct lack of written information on this subject. The oral tradition has been maintained over many hundreds of years and continues right up to the present day. The reason for its longevity is that Thai musicians are well versed in transmitting songs from one generation to the next without using notation or maintaining any written records.

In this chapter, I will provide some background historical information regarding the role of music and Thai funeral rituals. My commentary will begin with an examination of the Sukhothai period (1240 -1438), my rationale being that Sukhothai is acknowledged to be the first capital city of Siam. Although there is evidence of funeral rituals taking place during the Sukhothai period, I have been unable to establish whether music played any part in these occasions.

Sukhothai (1240-1438)

During the Sukhothai period, the modern Thai alphabet was written by King Ramkhamhaeng (Kislenko:2004:43), a crucial development in Thai history. In this period, aside from stone carvings, one of the most significant books in Thai literary culture was written namely *Triphum Phra Ruang.* Within its text, there are descriptions of Thai funeral rituals and their significance to Thai people. Of particular interest is the passage in the book concerning the funeral of King Phra Maha Chakkraphat.

> "…The dead body of Phra Maha Chakkraphat was soaked by scented powder, and then the elaborate white clothes were tied to the body. Altogether there were 1,000 layers of white clothing. In between each layer of white clothing was a covering of cotton. The perfume that was used had to be poured over the King's body 100 times. After this, the King's body was transferred to a crafted golden urn (known as *phra kot* in Thai), which was beautifully decorated with gold and jewellery. This ceremony consisted of merit making and a cremation. The urn was then kept in a pagoda (known as *chedi* in Thai) in the centre of the city. This was for people who wished to come to pay their respects to the King..." (Lithai, King:1972:143-144).

As one can see from the text, the funeral of King Phra Maha Chakkraphat was a very regal and meticulously organised occasion for a monarch who was highly respected by his subjects. Unfortunately, there was no mention in the *Triphum Phra Ruang* of music accompanying this funeral. Indeed I have been unable to uncover any evidence of the presence of Thai music at funeral occasions during the Sukhothai period.

Ayutthaya (1351-1767)

Ayutthaya was the second capital city of Siam, "although it took almost a century for Ayudhya, especially the Supanburi rulers, to complete the political integration of Sukhothai. At the outset, diplomatic and military means were used to achieve this goal. However, it was through religion that Sukhothai was finally incorporated into the Ayudhya kingdom" (Charnwit:1973:209). It was the Ayutthaya monarch, King Trailok, who used religion to underpin his integration policies and the city "Ayudhya now emerged as the centre of the Thai world" (ibid.:209). Ayutthaya maintained its independence for 416 years. During what became known as the Ayutthaya period the customs and culture of the country were well preserved and developments were seen in respect of the arts and architecture.

During the Ayutthaya period, records show that missionaries came from countries in the Western world, such as France, Portugal and Holland for commercial as well as religious purposes. The first person from this part of the world who is mentioned in connection with Thai music history is a Portuguese traveller, named Ferdinand Mendaz Pinto. He wrote a book entitled *The Voyages and Adventures of Ferdinand Mendaz Pinto*. He specifically commented about the music that was played during the funeral of the Thai King Chairachathirat who died in June 1548. "…there were lots of noises, saluting fire, hitting bells and blowing the conch shell...." (San T. Komonbut:1973:69). During the burning of the King's body, Pinto mentioned that "…this was accompanied with so horrible a din of cries, great Ordinance, Drums, Bells, Cornets, and other different kinds of noise, it was impossible to hear it without trembling" (Pinto 1692:276 cited Miller and Jarernchai:1994:98). Pinto did not, however, during his observation of the funeral rituals mention any specific songs.

As a result of Siam's links with foreign countries during this period, missionaries such as the French national Simon de la Loubère (1691) visited Siam. He makes specific references in his book entitled *The Kingdom of Siam* to the various forms of entertainments on display at funeral ceremonies, which he observed between 1678-1688. He states that many people would pay large sums of money in order to provide the best possible funeral service for deceased family members and that ceremonies were often grand occasions "…that is what is practised at the Funerals of the Siamese: to which it is requisite only to add, that they embellish the Show with a great many Fireworks, and that if the Funerals are for a man of great consequence, they last with the same shows for three days…" (Loubère:1986:124). In addition, Loubère provides an interesting description of the funeral rituals he observed:

> "…They burn not the coffin, but they take out the body which they leave on the pile: and the *Talapoins* of the convent, near which the body is burnt, do sing for a quarter of an hour, and then retire to appear no more. Then begin the shows of the Cone and of the *Rabam*, which are at the same time, and all day long, but in different theatres. The *Talopoins* think not that they can be present thereat without sin; and these shows are not exhibited at funerals upon any religious account, but only to render them more magnificent. To the ceremony they add a festival air, and yet the relations of the deceased forbear not to make great lamentations, and to shed many tears, but they hire no mourners, as some have assured me…" (ibid.:123).

It is interesting to note that according to Loubère these shows displayed at the funeral have no link to religion and are put on purely to make the whole event more colourful. Although Loubère makes no mention of music participating in performances such as the *cone*[16], I can confirm that these types of show always feature music accompaniment. In this period, Thai classical music continued to develop in the context of the formation of ensembles, song structures and performance style.

Evidence of music featuring at a Thai funeral ceremony during the Ayutthaya period is provided by a foreign observer, Nicolas Gervaise (1688), who observed monks chanting whilst music was being played. However, Gervaise does not draw a connection between the two as detailed below:

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[16] Evidence of the *cone* or *khon* (Thai masked dance) was documented by Loubère during the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767). Loubère used the word *cone* in his text which San T. Komonbut subsequently translated as *khon* (San T. Komonbut:2009:368). Furthermore, Khru Montri stated that performances of *khon* featured in the Ayutthaya period (Montri:1984:23).

> "… the priests go there each night to chant their prayers….. Afterwards, the monks from the pagoda assemble and, to the strains of music of drums, fifes, bells and other instruments, the relatives and friends of the deceased meet together dressed in white…… The nearest relative of the deceased lights the fire and while the firework display is in progress, the female mourners and dancers, who are masked and disguised, dance round continually and assume a thousand horrible postures. The music does not cease nor do the priests stop their chanting until the corpse has been entirely consumed with fire…" (Gervaise: 1688/1928:92 cited Miller and Jarernchai:1994:98-99).

During the late seventeenth century, another overseas scholar who visited Siam witnessed music being played in the Thai funeral ritual for a member of the nobility. He states that "… the Corpse is carried to the burial place by water in a stately Prow, as they are here call'd; which is sometime gilt all over, the Drums beating and the Music playing all the while…" When the body is cremated, music is again used. "…After this manner the Corpse is brought to the burial place, accompanied…by Talapoins [priests], the Music playing all the while, and there burnt… together with the coffin (Kaempfer:1690-1692/1906:21cited Miller:1994:99).

Perhaps the earliest evidence provided by a Thai scholar in respect of Thai classical music featuring in funeral rituals in Siam can be found in the writings of Phaladisai. He stated that during the funeral procession for King Prasatthong (r.1629-1656), music was played featuring the following instruments: the *trae*, the *sang*, the *khong*, and drum. Other entertainments accompanying the funeral ceremony were *khon*, Thai classical dancing and shadow puppetry shows (Phaladisai:2008:132). After this funeral, 32 years later, further evidence of Thai classical music in the funeral ritual in Siam can be found in the writings of Somdet Phra Phanarat (a monk) who attended Chatuphon temple and described the funeral of the Great King Narai Maharaj (a monarch in the Ayutthaya period from1656-1688).

> "… in the full moon, in June, in the year of the pig. …the dead body of the Great King Narai Maharaj is transferred from the Suriyamarin castle to be kept above the throne situated on the royal chariot which is decorated by much gold and jewels…..during the ceremony the musicians of the curved trumpet, European trumpet, and conch-shell make a lot of sound with the *pi klong chana* being prominent…" (Department of Fine Arts:1995:67 cited Kientongkun:2005:140).

Near the end of the Ayutthaya period between the reigns of King Ramathibodi II (r.1491-1529) and the Great King Narai (r.1656-1688), Siam not only had a great deal of

contact with many countries from the West, but also from the East including China and Vietnam. Its society and culture was heavily influenced by these countries. An example of the assimilation of different cultures can be seen with the suite of songs known as *phleng phasa*. This composition contains lyrics from these countries. Musically, in the songs, rhythmic patterns that originated from Siam's neighbours can be heard. There is also a Western influence found in *phleng phasa*. Thai people saw the drum marches playing in the armies of the Western world countries and incorporated them into their music.

The development of music in the Ayutthaya period came to an end following the war with Burma in which the capital city "Ayutthaya was sacked by the Burmese in 1767" (Chanwit:1973:211). With respect to Thai songs which featured during the Ayutthaya period, Khru Montri claimed that there were more than one hundred, which appeared in suites or as they are known in Thai "Tap Mahori". However, he stated that 70% of them are not played in the present day. Whilst they might not have disappeared altogether, he believed that they may have changed their name. During this period he noted that many foreigners came to stay in Siam and that their influence emerged in the construction of compositions such as "Mon Plaeng" (the Mon accent), and "Farang Thon Samo" (European accent) (Montri:1984:30).

After the Ayutthaya period many wars were waged in bordering areas and Thai music's development was somewhat curtailed. Khru Montri (1984) even suggested that in the Thonburi period (1767-1782) which followed the Ayutthaya era, due to the unsettled political situation, Thai music did not develop or improve at all. He commented that a great deal of foreign music could be heard originating from the Mons, Malays, Europeans, Vietnamese and Cambodians. Thai people from the Ayutthaya period had considered entertainment such as *khon* and *nang yai* to be one of the most important expressions of art in respect of both auspicious and inauspicious events.

Thonburi (late 1767 – April 1782)

King Taksin, following the loss of the city of Ayutthaya to the Burmese in 1767, successfully relocated to Thonburi. He gathered many people who had been dispersed

during the war between Siam and Burma, in order to establish the new city of Thonburi. However, the King retained the legal system from the Ayutthaya period. "…Taksin's immediate task was to re-establish central authority by subduing his rivals. His first such attempt, an expedition against Phitsanulok in May 1768, was unsuccessful. Toward the end of the year, however, he captured Phimai and early in 1769 sent an army into Cambodia and annexed Battambang and Siem Reap. Later in the year, his armies subdued Nakhon Si Thammarat and in mid-1770 took Phitsanulok and Fang. Within three years, he had reconstituted the territories of the Kingdom of Ayudhya and already, from December 1768, was reigning as a crowned monarch..." (Wyatt:1984:141).

During the 15 years of King Taksin's reign, he encountered many economic problems and was constantly protecting the country from invasion. This included fighting a war with Burma. Despite these problems, he was still able to provide support for Thai culture. For example, music appeared during the ceremony of the celebration for the Emerald Buddha which occurred in this era. I have undertaken research by examining accounts from both overseas and Thai scholars regarding the use of music in Thai funeral ritual ceremonies during this period. I have concluded that throughout the Thonburi period, music played a key role in Thai funeral rituals. This is evidenced by examples of three royal funerals which took place in this era, each of which featured music, namely the funerals of King Taksin's mother, Somdet Phraphanpiluang Kromphrathephamat in 1776 (The Committee for the Publication of Historical Documents:1980), Krommakhun In-Tarapithak(1776) and Phra Chao Nara Suriyawong (1776) (Narinthrathewi, Princess:1966:111,149). At each of these ceremonies, royal court music was performed by the *pi klong chana* and the *sang trae* ensembles. It should be noted that music also featured in funeral ceremonies for other royal members during this period.

Thai music did not evolve a great deal during the Thonburi period with musicians conforming to the style and content that had been practised by their predecessors from the Ayutthaya period (Montri:1984:33). This is despite the influx of various ethnic groups to Siam, in particular the Mon[17] who were to have a huge influence on Thai culture in the Rattanakosin era which superseded the Thonburi period.

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[17] In the manuscripts that I have studied the Mon race is known by its former name Raman**.** A brief background of the Mon and their history in Siam has been discussed in appendix 6.

Rattanakosin period 1782 – present

When King Rama I moved the country's capital city from Thonburi to Bangkok[18] in 1782, he constructed the Grand Palace on the East bank of the Chao Phraya River. From this base, the King embarked on a wide ranging programme "to restore the glories of Ayudhya" including "the revival of state ceremonies" (Wyatt:1984:146). The King also revamped the legal system introducing a code named "Three Seals Laws" as well as demonstrating his commitment to religion by investing in the building of new monasteries and improving the education of monks…These religious ceremonial, and legislative activities, as well as literary and cultural activities...were consonant with the traditional expectations Siamese had of their rulers..." (ibid.:147). The King's cultural legacy can be seen through the restoration of many art forms that had almost disappeared including literature, architecture and music. During King Rama I's reign, there is evidence of music being played in a funeral ritual in respect of the funeral ceremony for Thao Somsak[19] in 1803. The *pi klong malayu*[20] ensemble provided the music accompaniment and I have detailed below a transcription in respect of its performance.

> "…Phra Nakornban made the funeral bridge at the residence of Chao Phraya Rattana Phinit and the crematorium was well-prepared with a banana tree having been cut up and placed on top of the funeral pyre….in addition, officers made preparations to play the *pi klong malayu* which was to be performed on a state barge. Then, the *pi klong malayu* was to be performed at the crematorium during the day and night until the dead body had been cremated by a Royal fire..." (The Committee for the Publication of Historical Documents:1982:14).

[18] Bangkok was established in 1782 and its Thai translation represents the longest place name in the world. It is detailed in full below:

- **krungthepmahanakhon**
  The great city of angels,
- **amornrattanakosinmahintarayutthayamahadilokphop**
  the supreme unconquerable land of the great immortal divinity (Indra),
- **noparatrachathaniburirom**
  the royal capital of nine noble gems, the pleasant city,
- **udomrajaniwetmahasathan**
  with plenty of grand royal palaces,
- **amornphimanavatansathit**
  and divine paradises for the reincarnated deity (Vishnu),
- **sakkatatthiyavisanukamprasit**
  given by Indra and created by the god of crafting (Visnukarma).

[19] Thao Somsak was a daughter of Chaophraya Rattanaphiphit (Son Sonthirat, who was the Mahatthai (Ministry of the Interior), responsible for the North and East provinces of the capital) during the reign of King Rama I (The Committee for the Publication of Historical Documents:1982:14).

[20] Khru Boonchouy Sovat, an expert on Thai classical music at Chulalongkorn University, holds the view that the *pi klong malayu* eventually developed into what has become known today as the *bua loy* ensemble (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 2 March 2014).

Prior to this occasion individual Thai instruments may have featured during funeral rituals. However, through the creation of this ensemble it is widely believed that this was the first occasion that a coordinated musical approach had been adopted. Previously, the *pi klong malayu* performed during auspicious occasions such as royal parades and several royal ceremonies. Examples include *hae phra sai* which was a procession involving the transportation of sand to Worapho temple (Damrong, Prince (1972:96-97) cited Chaivud:2002:60) and *hae phra ratcha san*, a ceremony staged in 1784 to mark the symbolic gesture of a royal letter being carried by a procession of boats to the ruler of China (Jutamas:1997:24).

In the reign of King Rama II (r.1809 -1824), there is evidence that the *pi klong malayu* ensemble performed in a funeral ritual for a distinguished monk in 1815. His name was Phra Bowonmuni from the Ratchaburana temple, Bangkok. This statement was found in the orders of King Rama II "…soldiers were to prepare the *pi klong malayu* ensemble to perform at the temple on Wednesday and on the next day the *pi klong malayu* ensemble is to accompany the dead body of the monk in the boat until the cremation…" (Damrong, Prince:1972:314 cited Chaivud:2002:61).

During the reigns of King Rama I and III, Thai music developed, particularly with regard to drums and percussion. This period saw the emergence of Thai drums and percussion instruments, namely *klong that*, *song na* (two-faced drum used in the *piphat sepha* ensemble) and *ranat thum*, which were all used in the *piphat* ensemble (Montri:1984:35). However, in the reign of King Rama III (r.1824-1851), Thai music did not flourish when compared to the "golden age" of King Rama II. There is little evidence of any significant musical or for that matter dramatic entertainment development. Mattani Rutnin, wrote in the context of the end of King Rama III's reign:

> "...His Majesty respected the Buddhist religion and the members of the royal family to a high degree. He always carried out administrative responsibilities, major and minor, without any failings, from his hour of rising to his hour of retiring. He never listened to any singing or watched any dancing. He remained (in his old age) within the Royal Palace and did not make any visits (outside the Royal Palace), except during the Kathin (a presentation of robes to the monks at the end of the rainy season)..." (Mattani:1996:61).

It is almost certain that King Rama III considered most musical and dramatic performances to be wasteful luxuries. His prime concern, in keeping with his devout Buddhist beliefs, was to restore and maintain the Buddhist religion. In addition, he understood that there were many external political threats of warfare with neighbouring countries like Burma and Vietnam, and the Southern states of Siam, as well as the threat of aggression from the Western powers. He did not think that it would be appropriate to have any of what he considered to be frivolous acts of entertainment within the Royal Palace during such a crucial period in the country's history. Although King Rama III considered that music was not as important as economics, it still played a significant role in boosting the country's image. Indeed, the importance of music can be seen by the presence of the *pi klong malayu* ensemble at the funeral of King Rama III himself.

Khru Pichit Chaiseri (1999) claimed that Thai songs that originated during the Rattanakosin period could be divided into three eras as detailed below:

1. Period of Restoration (Kings Rama I-III r.1782-1851). This refers to the era that covers the reigns of Kings Rama I-III and follows directly after the Ayutthaya and Thonburi periods. During this time, songs were "restored and innovation took place". For example, two large *klong that* drums began to be used in performances compared with one large drum which used to feature in the Ayutthaya and Thonburi periods. This was, however, limited during King Rama III's reign due to his ambivalent attitude to music.
2. Period of Flourishing (Kings Rama IV-VI r.1851-1925). This era covers the reigns of Kings Rama IV-VI. There were significant musical developments and a new level of technical expertise was attained by Thai musicians. These years can be compared with the most famous important periods in the growth of Western classical music. During this time, foreign influences could be heard in Thai music. For example a Thai string ensemble could feature a piano which was a direct result of Western influence.
3. Period of Revelation (Kings Rama VII-IX r.1925-present). This era incorporates the reigns of King Rama VII up to the present King. During the Period of Flourishing, Thai music overlapped with an element of Western music. The era known as the Period of Revelation sees a clear distinction being made between traditional Thai music and Western music. In the meantime, Thai music

> ensembles began to resemble Western style orchestras, in that they would feature a much larger array of instruments than had previously been deployed. An example of this new type of Thai orchestra can be seen in the work of Khru Prasit Thawon. This ensemble featured over a hundred people which made it by far the largest gathering of musicians seen in a single Thai musical performance. During this period, there has also been a greater awareness of the Thai culture and identity (Phichit:1999:89-94).

In respect of Thai funeral music, Khru Phichit believes that the *piphat nanghong* ensemble (formed by a combination of the *bua loy* and *piphat* ensembles) first featured during the Period of Flourishing i.e. from Kings Rama IV-VI (r.1851-1925). He states that the *nanghong* was the central piece of the performance in Thai funeral ceremonies during this period. However I, together with many musicians such as Khru Chau Dontrirot, Khru Samran Koetphon, Khru Tuean Phatthayakun and Khru Therapon Noinit, believe that the *piphat nanghong* ensemble was first performed in the context of a funeral ritual towards the end of King Rama III's reign which therefore places its origins firmly in the Period of Restoration (Interview with Therapon Noinit on12 May 2010).

Apart from being performed at Thai funeral cremations, another significant scenario where music was played, concerns the parade whereby the ashes of King Rama IV (King Mongkut) (r.1851-1868) were transferred to the Grand Palace in Bangkok. In the parade, I have detailed below the array of musical instruments which comprised the ensemble that performed at the grand royal ceremony.

"...80 victory drums
1 oboe player
1 drummer
20 curved trumpets
16 European trumpets
2 conch-shell blowers
6 *piphat* groups comprising in total 6 oboe players, 18 percussionists (there were also 24 people employed to carry these instruments)
4 *klong khaek* groups consisting of 4 oboe players and 8 percussionists (plus 16 instrument carriers)

5 Chinese *piphat* groups featuring 4 Chinese oboes and 10 drummers…" (Bunta:2005:141).

The parade featured the following instruments: the *pi*, *klong chana*, *trae*, *sang*, Thai *piphat*, *klong khaek* and several different Chinese percussion instruments. All of these instruments are still in use today[21], with the exception of the Chinese percussion instruments. It should be noted that the number of drums that have featured in ceremonies from this era right up until the present day, varies depending on the status of the deceased person. In other words, the higher the rank of the deceased, the greater the number of drums that will feature in the ritual.

The main reason that the royal ceremony is structured differently from that of an ordinary citizen is due to the powerful, traditional belief held by Thai people that the King is a representative of God. "The cremation of a royal person differs from that of a noble or commoner by reason of the extreme length and elaboration of all the ceremonies connected with it; as well as by reason of the fact that whereas the cremation of the ordinary Siamese is almost entirely Buddhist, the cremation of royalty is Buddhist superimposed on a Hindu basis, and accompanied by the survival of much Brahmanical ritual" (Wales:1931:155).

During the reign of King Rama IV (r. 1851-1868), the first well-known evidence regarding the rise of Mon music in Siam came to light with the *piphat mon*[22] being played at a funeral ceremony for Queen Somdet Phrathepsirinthara in 1862. Her origins were Mon, so her blood relatives were keen to have their music played at the funeral. Many people who witnessed this funeral, especially members of the aristocracy, were impressed with this new kind of music, which some of them had never heard nor seen before. This event had a huge influence on changing the views of all strata of Thai society. By changing the attitude of the Thai people, Prince Naris, a son of King Rama IV, stated that

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[21] Wales commented that "the Siamese Royal Cremation as it is, or rather as it was before it had been corrupted by the innovations and abolitions of the last fifty years, is undoubtedly a close copy of the Ayutthaya form" (Wales:1992:155). I would argue that the practice of Thai royal cremations is still going strong, as can be seen in respect of the funeral of the HM the King's mother in 1996 and his sister in 2008. The structure of these particular funeral ceremonies and the musical content replicate similar occasions held during the Ayutthaya period.

[22] The *piphat mon* is also known as *piphat raman (*Raman means Mon*).*

following the performance of the *piphat mon* at the funeral of Queen Somdet Phrathepsirinthara, this genre was now more popular than Thai classical music in the context of accompanying funeral rituals (Naris, Prince:1962:223-224). In addition, there are two main arguments that can be put forward to explain the significant increase in popularity of Mon music in Thai society. Firstly, one of the most significant characteristics of Mon music is the way that the ensemble played pieces of music in a slow tempo, emitting mournful sounds. As a result, it had the effect of stimulating people to feel sad (Montri:1984). Secondly, Mon music became very popular because it contained relatively simple musical arrangements when compared to the very complex pieces played by the Thai classical ensemble - *nanghong* ensemble (Jutamas:1997:68). During the last one hundred years, it was not just Mon but also Thai musicians who opted to learn Mon instruments and songs because they were less challenging than Thai classical music (Montri:1954:25).

Patarawdee (1993) notes that during the reign of King Rama V (also known as King Chulalongkorn (r.1868-1910)), Thai people held the belief that their reputations would be enhanced by organising a large event such as a funeral ceremony. Hence, these occasions tended to be staged on a large scale. The funeral rituals that took place were a demonstration of the host's financial position. It is therefore not surprising that funeral ceremonies were very grand occasions. A large funeral ceremony could be seen as not only a family's demonstration of respect for their deceased relatives but also as a means to enhance their reputation and to show off their wealth to the wider community. These occasions would also feature various forms of entertainment such as masked dances, puppet shows and music which were appreciated by the mourners and added to the reputation of the family (Wachirayanwiset: an unpublished manuscript dated 21 January 1891 cited Patarawdee:1993:55).

At the core of the funeral ceremonies was the Buddhist belief that the deceased was about to embark on the next chapter of a journey that would end in Nirvana. As Karl Dohring stated "...a cremation is a feast, since the soul departs from the body to be reborn in a prettier, higher and happier existence..." (Karl Dohring:1924 cited in Somphop:1996:470). The observation made by Dohring provides a rationale for the fact that music performed in the Thai funeral ritual, at least up until the reign of King Rama

V, was always played in a lively style in accordance with the celebratory nature of the occasion.

It was, however, during the reign of King Rama V that many European missionaries and dignitaries expressed their opposition to the way that Thai people "celebrated" their funeral. They exercised their influence on the government of the day who consequently took the decision to "abolish all kinds of entertainments; and that is the reason why today the Siamese cremations are of great seriousness and dignity, as well as sombre and sad, like the funerals in Europe" (ibid.:470). At the same time, it is no surprise that the musical content underwent a radical transformation. It was during this period that the *piphat mon* became the preferred choice of funeral music in Thai society due to its overall sadder and more serious tones.

In King Rama V's reign, Siam embarked on a radical programme of modernisation. There were developments in social, political and cultural spheres. This era saw Siam, which was previously a rather insular nation, open its doors to foreign influences. King Rama V was keen to build Siam along the lines of European nations. During the King's first visit to Europe in 1897, he visited 14 countries, and the ideas that he gleaned from this trip, he employed in his efforts to modernise Siam. Principally, he wished to develop the infrastructure of Siam as rapidly as possible, with emphasis on transportation, communications, and the legal system. Another reason for King Rama V proactively pursuing a foreign policy whereby he befriended powerful nations such as Russia, was to prevent Siam becoming a victim of imperialism. As Chakrarot stated, King Rama V visited all of the European courts and indeed had his photograph taken with Czar Nicholas II of Russia. King Rama's strategy was to make Siam into a buffer state between the French and British empires in Southeast Asia (Chakrarot:2004:55). To this day, Siam is the only country in Southeast Asia not to have been colonised.

European influence had a profound effect on all aspects of Thai society. For example, Siam adopted the democratic political systems favoured in Europe. European ideology was particularly popular with the nobility and middle classes. They adopted many European customs and habits. For example, it was common place to see royalty and middle classes dressing in European costumes. They also indulged in popular European activities such as dancing, cycling, and listening to various styles of Western music.

Many buildings were constructed based upon European designs. These European influences filtered their way through to the lower classes who adopted many of the aforementioned activities. Traditionally, Siam's lower classes have copied the mannerisms and behaviours of the country's elite classes, to whom they aspire. Khru Montri noting that mimicry is a typical human trait, states when Mon music was adopted by the Royal Family, nobility, and senior government officers, members of the lower classes in Siam followed suit (Montri:1954:24-25).

In respect of Thai classical music, whilst some members of the nobility and middle classes preferred listening to Western classical music, the majority remained supportive and continued to listen to Thai music. Under the patronage of members of the Royal Family, many proficient musicians were brought from outside Bangkok to play in the royal palaces. One such notable musician was Luang Pradit Phairo who came from Samut Songkhram province. During this period, music competitions featuring the *piphat sepha* became highly popular. The *piphat sepha* is a variation of the *piphat* ensemble and there would be head to head competitions between ensembles from different palaces. The stakes were very high and should the ensemble of a particular palace lose it would bring shame and loss of face to that palace. On the other hand, if a palace ensemble was victorious, its reputation would be cemented for a very long time. This competition created an environment whereby each palace devised its own unique style in respect of composition and performance. This was a fertile period for Thai music with many advanced techniques being created. This in turn led to the establishment of famous musical schools such as Phatthayakoson and Sanoduriyang. I will conduct an in depth comparison between these two schools on how they teach and perform Thai music in chapter 5.

In order to assist with the process of modernising Siam, King Rama V sent his royal princes to European countries such as England, Germany and Russia in order for them to be educated. Most of the princes in question were 13 years old when they were sent away. The King hoped that when his sons returned home, they would be able to use their knowledge to develop Siam into a "modern" and "civilised country". "These princes not only brought back knowledge from the modern world, but with it, Western aesthetic values and culture" (Dusadee:2003:7). One of the princes who benefited from this European experience was Prince Paribatra (1881-1944). He travelled to Europe in 1894

at the age of nearly 14 in order to pursue a military career. His father King Rama V's intention was for Prince Paribatra to glean knowledge about Western military strategy which could be usefully deployed in Siam. Prince Paribatra was able to understand and learn about Western music which was already popular amongst the elite classes, during his eight years away, two of which were spent in England with the other six being in Germany. It was at his staff college in Germany (Siriratbutsabong, Princess and Phunphit:1981:9) that he learnt to play the piano. Upon returning to Siam at the age of 22, he began working for the Royal Navy where he started composing military music for Western style bands. He was the first person in Thai history to compose Thai songs using Western staff notation, musical theory and composition style.

Figure 6: HRH Prince Paribatra Sukhumbhand (1881-1944)

Prince Paribatra is most famous for composing one particular piece of music in a Western style for the Thai funeral ritual. He adapted an original Thai composition entitled "Phaya Sok" which means the mourning of a lord, and constructed a new piece simply known as "Sok", which is used to accompany funeral ceremonies today, for not only Royal Family members, but also all classes of Thai society. The first occasion that this piece was played was at the funeral for the Queen Mother Sri Bajrindra (King Rama VI's mother) in 1919. King Rama VI (r.1910-1925) listened intently to the music as he walked along with the funeral procession. Due to its mournful tune, he felt that it was an

appropriate piece to be performed for the funerals of royal members and also those of ordinary people. "Sok" is usually performed by a military brass band and is still a pivotal feature of funeral ceremonies in Thailand today, although it is not as popular as the *nanghong* and *piphat mon* ensembles. Although Siam had began to be influenced by Western culture, especially its music, Thai people during this era still on the whole preferred traditional Thai and Mon music to be played at funeral rituals.

Figure 7: An excerpt of notation from "Sok", a piece of music composed by Prince Paribatra.

King Rama VI, during his reign, established the Krom Mahorasop (Department of Entertainment) in 1919 which featured performances of Thai classical music, Thai classical dance and string orchestras and brass bands playing Western style music. This era is considered to be a golden age of Thai classical music. More than 60 musicians who worked at the Department had honours conferred upon them. Consequently, Thai music attained unprecedented popularity during this era.

In terms of the Thai ensemble's role in the Thai funeral ritual in this era, Khru Son Yuprakhong, a musician of the Phattayakoson Music School, mentioned that "during the reign of Kings Rama VI-VII, people preferred to hire the *piphat nanghong* rather than the Mon ensemble. I myself have witnessed the presence of Mon musical instruments in the Phatthayakoson Music School, but it appears that people favoured using only the *piphat nanghong* rather than the Mon ensemble" (Jutamas:1997:66).

A major challenge presented itself to Thai musicians in the form of the change from absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy which occurred in 1932[23]. The role of the elite classes, who had up until that time had almost a monopoly over the performance of Thai traditional music, "played for and to some extent by the elite" (Myers-Moro:1993:231) diminished as "the government bureaucracy fully took over the patronage role of the courts" (ibid.:244). Under the leadership of the Prime Minister Plaek Phibulsongkram, there were increasingly fewer opportunities for Thai traditional music performances which inevitably led to a decline in the status of musicians and moreover he actively encouraged Thai people to adopt Western culture and life styles.

An example of the Prime Minister's actions which had a detrimental effect on Thai traditional music was the introduction in 1943 of a Royal decree regarding the performance of music, singing and reciting. This law was aimed at creating a minimum standard that musicians had to attain and also was an attempt to create a clearer national identity. Their training would be carried out by the Krom Mahorasop and when they qualified they would receive a *sinlapin* card or *bat sinlapin* (the word *bat* when translated

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[23] Prince Naris commented on 12 January 1937 on the issue of the status of Thai musicians and the lack of Thai musical texts, that "ordinary people wished to distance themselves from singing and performing music as both were associated with servants using these art forms as a means to entertain their masters" (Naris, Prince:1962:239-240). When Prince Naris wrote these comments in the 1930s, Thai music appeared to be in an irreversible slump which had begun after the cultural and political upheaval in 1932.

means a card whilst *sinlapin* refers to an artist/musician) which would allow them to play music in public. Although the law was introduced with the aim of enhancing standards, many musicians believed that it was brought into force as a means of eradicating Thai culture, especially Thai music. This led to a decline in the number of musicians, with many Thais believing that this was an infringement of their personal liberty. They were disappointed that the government was imposing this regulation, when previously they were able to perform with total freedom. Furthermore, people believed that this law excluded many from performing Thai music and thus encouraged them to turn to and appreciate Western music. This law was enforced vigorously throughout most of the country, however there were some areas where it was not as effective. For example, an experienced musician who had not obtained a *sinlapin* card could travel north of Bangkok to the city of Ayutthaya and perform Thai music at funerals because this area would not have been as well policed[24]. Added credence to the fall from grace that musicians have experienced in recent years can be gleaned from Myers-Moro, who commented that "musicians never became rich by being musicians, and today in the civil service musicians are low-ranking" (ibid.:231). I can confirm from my own experiences that the image portrayed by Myers-Moro of Thai musicians being perceived by society as being of a low and middle ranking, holds true in Bangkok today.

Prime Minister Plaek Phibulsongkram's 1943 decree was quashed upon the accession to the throne of the present King Rama IX (HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej) (r. 1946 - present). His first government could see that this law was having a detrimental effect on Thai classical music and was keen to restore the fortunes of this once revered art form. It saw Thai classical music as "the music of the nation". As HM the King himself once stated during a speech on the opening ceremony of the Ayutthaya Museum on 26 December 1961 "kan raksa watthanatham khue kan raksa chat", meaning "to preserve culture is to preserve a nation". Throughout Thai history, the country's monarchs have followed a doctrine whereby they must govern the nation in a peaceful and calm manner in order to make a comfortable life for its citizens. One of the most important duties that the monarch has to undertake is to be patron of the Buddhist religion and Thai culture, including Thai classical music. This point is emphasised by Nongyao:

[24] This information has been gleaned from my studies at Chulalongkorn University in respect of Thai musical history lectures.

> "From time immemorial, Thai kings have always been patrons of the arts. Their courts have, by the same token, been the centre of national culture. Fundamentally, the culture of Thailand revolves around the Buddhist religion. Architecture, painting, sculpture, and fine arts find their expression in Buddhist art for the simple reason that, like the majority of their subjects, Thai kings have all been fervent Buddhists. The Chakri monarchs have consistently kept up the tradition and the early kings in particular restored and built a vast number of temples throughout the kingdom in an effort to assure the Thai people that things had returned to normalcy and the old glory of Ayutthaya was equalled if not surpassed by the splendour of Rattanakosin. Other arts have not been neglected by the Chakri Monarchs. Not only have they promoted literature, drama and music, but also made their personal contribution to these arts. Quite a few of them were outstanding authors and including the reigning monarch, great composers. The following picture essay merely touches on a few samples of these arts - all have been either created by the kings themselves or under their personal supervision and loving care" (Nongyao:1982:243).

The King today is still considered to be the country's Head of State and is greatly revered by the Thai population. The original features of royal funeral music remain intact and have survived the political transformation of Siam in 1932, when with the advent of a constitutional monarchy and in particular the policies of Prime Minister Plaek Phibulsongkram, its very existence was threatened. It is clear that funeral music is deep-rooted in Thai society and culture. It is important to note that royal funeral music is performed not exclusively for Royal Family members but also for senior members of the government who have been considered royal servants of the country. For these non-royal funerals, it is common place for HM the King to allow the service to follow the template used in respect of members of the Royal Family. The King also provides gifts for the monks who will be chanting at the funeral and contributes towards the cost of hiring the funeral hall and crematorium. The beneficiaries of a royal funeral would be figures such as a National Artist of Thailand, former Prime Ministers and Heads of the Buddhist religion in Thailand. By covering the cost of the funeral, the King is acknowledging the contribution made to Thai society by the deceased.

Throughout the present King's reign, Thai classical music has generally been able to resist the impact of Western culture which has pervaded nearly all aspects of Thai society. The key component of Thai music such as its Thai tuning system, form and compositions still remain intact and are practised throughout Thailand. In addition, traditional musical rituals are still performed regularly: the *wai khru* for example is still considered to be a fundamental element of a new music student's education.

During the 1980s, the Thai government took proactive measures to preserve traditional aspects of Thai culture, including Thai music, as it was concerned that Western influence was eroding Thai traditional art forms. For example, in 1984, the position of National Artist of Thailand was created. The recipients of this title are those individuals who have made a significant contribution to the preservation of traditional Thai culture. Alongside the government, the Royal Family has also been active in promoting and protecting traditional Thai art forms. This includes funeral music in which HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has played a significant role in emphasising the need to retain traditional music values.

Figure 8: HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, the patron of Thai classical music.

Regarding the influence of HRH in Thai music, a senior music teacher once said: “HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is more beneficial to Thai music than several benevolent angels”. The truth in this statement may be displayed by HRH’s leadership qualities in the field of Thai classical music. She plays instruments, sings, encourages musical training at every educational level, writes about music, and promotes instrument making and the conservation of classical music (The Thai Music Circle in the UK:2011:NP). Thai musicians hold her in very high esteem as can be seen from the following statement made to me by a freelance musician based in Bangkok “Thai culture and music are very fortunate to receive the patronage of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand. Without this both Thai culture and music would not survive!” (Interview with Bat on 22 November 2009).

HRH explained her support of Thai classical music in her article entitled: "Why I like Thai Classical Music". HRH mentioned that "Thai classical music is truly captivating. Whenever an opportunity arises, I would attend a musical performance. In the past my appreciation simply derived from patriotism. But now I am genuinely fascinated by its versatility and colourful tunes" (Manop:2003:7). HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's devotion to promoting Thai traditional classical music in the context of the funeral ritual has been a crucial factor in the survival of this art form. HRH has been instrumental in the revival of the *piphat nanghong* and the *bua loy* ensembles which had been in steep decline since the *piphat mon* had asserted itself as Thailand's most popular form of funeral music. Due to the fact that the Royal Family is held in such high regard by the Thai people, the Princess' influence has been felt across the whole of Thai society. It has meant that strong Western influences on Thai performing arts have not totally overwhelmed the Thai way of life and its culture, with the result that both Western and Thai art forms can coexist comfortably together. For example, one may occasionally see a brass band performing at a funeral (this tends to be in respect of people who have had a military or navy career), at which they play Thai traditional songs using Western originated instruments such as clarinets and trombones.

Another example of the efforts that HRH has made to preserve Thai traditional funeral music can be seen by her advising the Department of Fine Arts to produce a quality notation book and CDs as cremation souvenirs for HM the King's sister. This is the first time in Thai music history that funeral compositions have been published. In the past, many musicians were superstitious in respect of the publication of these compositions believing that they may bring ill fortune and even premature death. These musicians would normally only produce notation books for auspicious ceremonies. I have provided information and photos regarding the CDs below:

Front cover of CD 1 -2 Back cover CD1 Back cover CD2

Figure 9: The memorial CDs for HM the King's sister's funeral in 2008, were released in the following year, 2009 and feature compositions used in royal Thai funeral ceremonies. Both CDs are performed by the Music section of the Department of Fine Arts. They were circulated to Thai people as a cremation souvenir.

Translation of the CDs text detailed below:

Front Cover of CDs 1 and 2
Pieces of music used in Princess Galyani Vadhana's funeral
HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has kindly permitted the Department of Fine Arts to make CD recordings of the music performed in the funeral of Princess Galyani Vadhana at the Royal Meru, Sanam Luang on Saturday 15th November 2008.

Back Cover of CD 1
Song Suite: Phleng Rueang Ching Phra Chan
Comprising the following pieces of music: "Phleng Ton Phleng Ching", "Phleng Soi Phleng Ching" , "Phleng Sam Sao", "Phleng Chorakhe Khang Khong", "Phleng Thoy Lang Khao Khong", "Phleng Thay Thoy Lang Khao Khong", "Phleng Ching Phra Chan Si Thon", "Phleng Ching Nok", "Phleng Ching Klang", "Phleng Ching Yai", "Phleng Ching Lek", "Phleng Ching Sanan", "Phleng Ching Chan Diao" and "Rua Phleng Ching".

Back Cover of CD 2
Song Suite: Phleng Rueang Nanghong
Comprising the following pieces of music: "Phleng Phram Kep Hua Waen" "Phleng Sao Sot Wan", "Phleng Krabok Thong", "Phleng Khu Maleng Wan Thong" and "Phleng Maleng Wan Thong".
Naphat repertoire: this is performed in a ritual symbolising the sacrifices that are made to placate the gods.
Featuring the following pieces: "Sathukan", "Tra Sannibat", "Tra Choen", "Proy Khao Tok", "Long Song", "Mahachai", "Maharoek", "Phleng Cha Rueang Soison (Ok Phleng Reo Mae Won Luk- Luk Won Mae and "Phleng Proi Khao Tok"), "Phleng Choet" "Phleng Krao Ram".

HRH's efforts to revitalise Thai classical music in today's society have been very beneficial, however the impact of social change seen in the country and in Bangkok particularly have presented fresh challenges to the classical music fraternity. In recent years, there has been an increase in anti social behaviour in temples which has affected funeral ceremonies. From my own experiences, I recall witnessing people gambling at my own temple in Bangtoei approximately 10 years ago. On this particular occasion a group of mourners were playing a game which involved money and using dice. This activity took place at night after Buddhist monks had ceased chanting and occurred at the end of the first day of the three day funeral ceremony. As far as I was aware the participants in the gambling game concealed their activities from the monks and temple officials. I also saw on several occasions alcohol being consumed at the end of the day during a funeral ceremony. As with the aforementioned gambling game, the consumption of alcohol appears to be a way for some of the mourners to release tension caused by the solemnity of the funeral ceremony itself.

Upon my return to Thailand in 2013, when I attended funeral ceremonies, I was surprised and relieved to note that these "dubious activities" appear to have been eradicated altogether. There was no sign of alcohol consumption or gambling taking place at any stage of the funeral ceremonies that I witnessed. With respect to the music that accompanies the funeral rituals I have also noticed some distinct changes. For example, music that is used to entertain the mourners between the various ritual activities used to be performed for the full duration of the ceremonies which would be typically for three - four days. However, now it only tends to be played on the final day of the ceremony when the actual cremation takes place.

In the modern age with the majority of people having access to television and the internet, attitudes to life have changed and this has affected the way that people view funeral ceremonies. For example, whereas in the past people were content to listen to music being played at funeral ceremonies and watching the entertainment on display, they are now more likely to observe the key elements of the funeral ceremonies and when the monks have left the temple for the day, the mourners will tend to follow suit and return to their homes.

Conclusion

Throughout the country's history, it is clear that religion and the Royal Family have both had a major influence on the role of Thai traditional funeral music. With respect to religion 95% of Thais follow Buddhism and at the cornerstone of their faith are the rites of passage, from birth to death, in which music plays a pivotal role. The fact that a funeral ceremony is deemed to be the most important rite of passage and occasion in a Thai person's life is linked inextricably to the vast majority of the population being Buddhist. The law of karma represents one of Buddhism's core beliefs and from the Sukhothai period particularly, through the influence of the seminal work, *Triphum Phra Ruang*, Thai people have made acts of merit-making the cornerstone of their lives. The culmination of this behaviour occurs during funeral ceremonies where not only is it the last opportunity to bestow merit on the deceased but it also represents an occasion for the mourners to demonstrate their worthiness and in so doing enhance their status in the next life. The Thai people's respect for tradition which exists across all strata of society explains why music, as both an accompaniment to the funeral ritual and as a form of entertainment for the attendees, is still deemed to be of significant importance today. In particular music's role in serving both of the aforementioned functions can be evidenced by documents such as royal decrees, accounts of funerals attended by foreigners, missionaries and traders and also murals that feature in the Grand Palace.

Apart from royal court music which has been immune to change since the Ayutthaya period, other strands of Thai funeral music have been affected by socio-economic factors and foreign influences. For example, the *bua loy* and the *piphat nanghong* ensembles were superseded by the *piphat mon* ensemble. During the reign of King Rama V (r.1868-1910), the rise of the *piphat mon* ensemble and the impact of Western culture, as evidenced by the inclusion of the composition "Sok" in funeral ceremonies, have left an indelible mark on the Thai nation and its music. In the present day, although Thai traditional funeral music carries less importance than it did in the past, through in particular the efforts of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, it still plays a significant role in society.

In the next chapter, I will examine the funeral rites that are performed in ceremonies in contemporary Bangkok, together with the logistics of organising a funeral. I have also

included my own observations of funeral music and rites at five temples in Bangkok illustrating the differences between those staged in the centre of the city and ones held in the suburbs. My analysis is augmented by the inclusion of three VCD recordings featuring both traditional funeral music and royal court music.

Chapter 3

Thai funeral rites and music: contemporary practice

The previous chapter's analysis of the role of music within the context of Thai funeral ceremonies revealed that throughout history, despite many political and socio economic challenges, Thai funeral music has maintained its position as one of the core elements of Thai life and culture. Unfortunately, due to the paucity of information both in Thai and English in respect of accounts of funeral ceremonies held in the past and also because the documents that are available reveal only details of ceremonies held for royal members and elite classes, little is known about how funerals were organised and conducted for ordinary citizens. Therefore, in order to address this issue, observations in respect of the practice of contemporary funeral rites and music across a wide range of Bangkok society, both in the city centre and on the outskirts, have been included in this chapter.

3.1 Funeral rites and customs in contemporary Bangkok

In today's society in Bangkok, when someone passes away, there are strict regulations that Thai people must adhere to in respect of organising a funeral ceremony. I have gleaned information from Suthin Thongphui, the officer of the Makut temple. In his handout which he wrote in 2008[1]: "Recommendations for the Management of Funerals", he categorised the deceased into 3 categories:

1. Deaths in hospitals
   - 1.1 The family members should contact the funeral office of the temple and check the availability of the hall.
   - 1.2 If the hall is available, the document confirming the death should be retrieved from the hospital and presented to the District Office in order to obtain a death certificate. The District Office must be informed about which temple will be

[1] Suthin Thongphui, confirmed to me that the protocol in respect of organising a funeral ceremony as documented in his handout in 2008 has remained unchanged during the past six years (Personal communication with Suthin Thongphui on 12 June 2014).

used for the funeral and when this will take place. Some hospitals will organise these affairs on behalf of the deceased's family.

1.3 A family member will be required to contact the funeral office of the temple, to inform them of the date of chanting and the day of the cremation.

2. Deaths whilst at home (classified as "natural causes")

2.1 The family member should contact the funeral office of the temple and check the availability of the hall.

2.2 If the hall is available, the family member is required to contact the local police station to notify them of the death.

2.3 Confirmation from the police station of the death is necessary in order to obtain a death certificate from the District Office. As detailed in category 1, the District Office must be then informed about which temple will be used for the cremation.

2.4 The same as 1.3

3. Deaths due to an accident or murder

3.1 Police will identify the cause of death.

3.2 Until such time as the cause of death is determined, the deceased's body cannot be moved.

3.3 Once the cause of death has been verified by the police and doctors, family members will obtain documents from both the police and doctors in order to allow them to collect the death certificate from the District Office. Again they will need to inform the District Office concerning which temple is to be used.

3.4 On confirmation that a temple of their choice is available, the death certificate will be brought to the funeral office of the temple. The date of the cremation and chanting will be agreed with the funeral office by the members of the family. Where the deceased is considered to be worthy of a funeral containing "royal fire"[2] the Royal Household must be informed. They will then consider the merits of the deceased and decide whether this person should be granted a royally approved funeral.

3.5 Family members have to liaise with the funeral office to check that there is available space to accommodate the deceased's body until the day of the

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[2] The "royal fire" originating from the Royal Household can best be described as a candle whose flame burns within the confines of a square shaped lamp. During the ritual a guest of honour will carry a *dok mai chan* and light it from the burning candle. The guest of honour will then place the lit *dok mai chan* under the coffin.

funeral service. Once this has been completed, the process of ordering the invitation cards for mourners will take place (for the majority of funerals invitation cards are not issued – they tend to be only for funerals where the deceased has remained in the temple for at least 100 days).

The death of an individual has to be registered within 24 hours of the deceased's body being found (The Office of the National Cultural Commission:1991:160). At this point, the practice of Thai funeral rites will commence. In respect of members of the Royal Family, senior religious figures and eminent government officers, royal protocol will be followed. This individual will receive royal water to cleanse their body. The body will then be placed into a royal golden urn and the cremation will take place using "royal fire". With respect to funerals that have been granted royal status, family members must bring to the Royal Household a golden tray containing a banana leaf which houses fresh flowers, including a farewell card, a joss stick, and a bees wax candle. This ritual acts as a sign of respect for the deceased and also is symbolic in that it is a final opportunity to bid farewell to HM the King on behalf of the deceased. At the same time, family members also have to bring the following documents: a certificate confirming the medal awarded to the deceased and the death certificate. After this, the Royal Household will consider the case for a royal funeral. Should they grant the request, approval documents will be sent to the temple where the deceased's body is retained. Due to a law which has been maintained since the reign of King Rama VI, people who have died by suicide will not be granted a royally approved funeral (ibid.:200).

Funeral rites in Bangkok may differ slightly from temple to temple. However, generally when a person passes away, the body will firstly be cleaned and dressed in new clothing often reflecting the favourite style of the deceased. This process tends to be overseen by friends and family of the deceased:

> "…In Thai society, the funeral rite is a social occasion. It is the time when family and community obligations must be expressed with full earnest. Like all Thai customs, the practice of funeral rite is influenced by three sources: i.e. animism, including folk cultures which form existential bases of traditional Thais, Hinduism and Buddhism" (Manilerd:1988:58).

The activities and the practice of Thai funeral rites in Bangkok and Thai society in the present day for ordinary people will normally be as follows:

1. Changing clothes

After the deceased is pronounced dead, the body will normally be brought to either their home or the temple. The deceased will always be dressed in their favourite clothes or in the case of a government officer will be dressed in a uniform. Replacement shoes may also be appropriate. In many cases, the deceased's body is cleaned by family members prior to being dressed in new clothes. The cleansing of the body is considered to be very important in Thai society as "this part of the rite is thought to be a preparation for the departed soul to enter the thereafter world in a purified condition" (ibid.:58).

2. The rite of pouring water on the deceased's hand

After the deceased has been dressed in fresh clothes, the body is placed on a bed table with the right hand manoeuvred into a position above a tray, in order for mourners to be able to pour water on the deceased's hand as a final mark of respect. The deceased's hand is sprinkled with water filled with rose petals, jasmine and a Thai perfume known as *nam op Thai.* The purpose of this act is threefold. Firstly, it represents the mourners asking for forgiveness with regard to any harm that they may have caused to the deceased. Secondly, it is a symbolic act, demonstrating the mourners' wish for the deceased to have a smooth transition from this life to the next. Thirdly, it acts as a reminder to people that no matter how wealthy you are when you die, you will not be able to extract any material possessions, and it will simply be your own reputation that will be remembered by the local community and only your good karma will pass on to the next life.

During the act of pouring water on the deceased's hand, it is traditional for the following *pali* (an ancient Indian language) words to be spoken: "kayakammang wachikammang manokammang a-hosikammang sappapapang winutsatu ei-thang matakasarirang uthakang wiya sinchitang a-hosi kammang". However, if the mourner does not have any knowledge of these *pali* words, they can speak in Thai. The English translation of this is: "If I used to offend or insult you with my manners, speech and thoughts whether by intention or not, please forgive me. Any merit that I attain, I will share with you".

3. The tying of the deceased's body

After the pouring water rite, the deceased's body will be tied together with a white sacred thread and placed into a rectangular coffin (this may be either of a plain design or more elaborate depending on the financial status of the deceased's family). The palms of the deceased will be joined together in an act of *phanom mue* (a type of Thai greeting). A candle, three joss sticks and flowers will be placed into the deceased's hands. This act symbolises a mark of respect to be displayed by the spirit of the deceased who will present these offerings to Buddha. Typically, a one baht Thai coin is placed into the deceased's mouth. Regarding this particular act, Kislenko (2004:38) noted that "…the placing of a coin by family members in the mouth of the deceased - which allows him or her to buy their way into purgatory…". However, Sathiankoset, a Thai scholar noted that in Buddhism, you are unable to take any of the money and property that you have accumulated with you. You can only take your karma, which will be as a result of your happiness, or alternatively you will suffer in purgatory (Sathiankoset:1988:61).

Finally, the coffin will be sealed and placed in the crematorium hall. It will be decorated with colourful flowers and a photo of the deceased. A small altar containing candles and joss sticks will be placed in front of the coffin. Wreaths presented by mourners will be placed on stands alongside the coffin and occasionally will be displayed on the walls of the hall. Either a lamp or a candle which is situated in front of the coffin is lit throughout the cremation service and this is a signal to the deceased's spirit indicating that the body is contained within the coffin. I have learnt from many seniors in my home temple that on some occasions instead of a lamp, a large joss stick is used and it is the undertaker's job to ensure that it remains lit throughout the night so that the deceased's spirit will recognise its own body.

Figure 10: In the hall, a display of the deceased's coffin and his photograph can be seen, decorated with fresh and colourful flowers.

Figure 11: Outside the hall, many wreaths from the mourners will be displayed as a sign of respect, love and sadness for the deceased. Each wreath will feature the name of the respective mourner. A large number of wreaths will indicate that the deceased had an excellent reputation among their community or indeed Thai society.

It should be noted that in respect of the lower classes, the deceased's body is retained in a coffin, however, only members of the Royal Family and senior officers are cremated in a *phra kot* (a golden urn). This distinction shows how different strata of Thai society are treated in death[3]. An example of this can be seen in an important mural which is maintained in a lacquered wooden pavilion decorated sumptuously with gold-leaf motifs during the late Ayutthaya period (1351-1767) and situated in the Suan Pakkad Palace museum in Bangkok. The mural described a story regarding the cremation at the funeral of Buddha whose body was kept in a coffin rather than a golden urn. This method of cremation reflects Thai people's belief in a Buddhist style of funeral as opposed to the Hindu way which would use a golden urn. The mural itself displays a scene featuring monks and groups of men and women wearing royal costumes. These costumes may symbolise angels and heavenly bodies grieving for the loss of Buddha. Some of them can be seen using their hands to cover their faces as a display of their sadness.

[3] There are two main ways for Thai people to be cremated:

1. The Buddhist method whereby the dead body is placed in a coffin and cremated, with the ashes maintained in a pagoda.
2. The Hindu or Brahmin method, where the dead body is placed into a *phra kot* (a golden urn) and following the cremation the ashes are poured into a river.

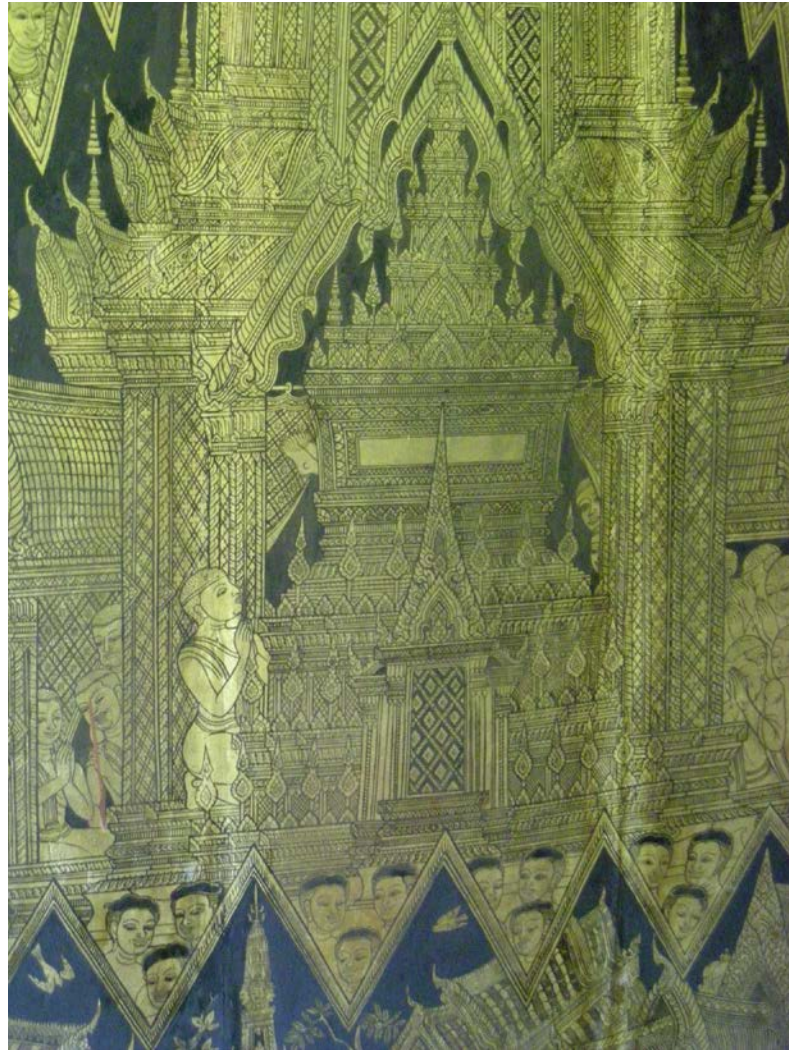

Figure 12: The body of Buddha is placed in a coffin surrounded by mourners, Buddhist monks and heavenly angels. This mural is kept in the Suan Pakkad Palace museum in Bangkok.

4. Chanting

In contemporary Bangkok, particularly in the suburbs, the next stage of the funeral will involve the mourners commencing a religious ceremony at approximately 7 pm. However, in the centre of the city, these ceremonies will occur earlier in the day. The ceremony begins when a family member of the deceased lights two candles and three joss sticks in front of a small wooden cabinet which contains Buddhist funeral texts. This lighting ritual is then repeated in front of the coffin, but on this occasion still featuring two candles although there will only be one joss stick[4]. Upon

[4] Traditionally, one joss stick is lit when respects are being paid to spirits and three joss sticks for monks and the Buddha. Finally, when more than three joss sticks are lit, this will be due to a display of respect to Hindu deities.

completion of this act, four monks will commence a series of chants known as *suat phra a-phitham*. They will complete four separate chants during the ceremony with a break between rounds three and four. During this interlude, food will be served to the mourners.

Figure 13: Four monks can be seen chanting. Throughout their chanting, each monk will use a *talaphat* [5] to cover their face. In the foreground, gifts, money and alms to be presented to the monks are displayed on a golden tray. Alongside these offerings, is a silver tray containing several vessels. Each vessel is filled up with water and will be poured into a goblet in an act of merit making for the deceased.

At the same time that this is occurring, a close relative of the deceased will bring some food to the coffin and call for its spirit by knocking on the coffin. "... Spirits play an important social role in Thailand. They can function as members of the family..." (Goss and Klass:2006:75). The relative will utter simple phrases requesting the deceased to take up the offer to eat food and drink water. This act symbolises the respect that the mourners have for the deceased, treating them as if they were still living.

[5] *Talaphat* is a palm leaf fan with a long handle used by Thai Buddhist monks. From my own experiences I have been told by monks and seniors in my community that the *talaphat* is regularly employed during rituals and blessings both in auspicious and inauspicious Thai Buddhist ceremonies. According to Natthaphat, with respect to funeral rituals in bygone ages, monks used a *talaphat* to counter the odour emitted from the deceased's body, and then from this practice, it became a tradition for monks to take a *talaphat* to Thai Buddhists ceremonies, particularly for use at funeral rituals (Natthaphat:1995:11).

After the mourners have finished eating, the monks will resume their chanting. This will be followed by the relatives pouring water into a small bowl to make merit to the deceased. Simultaneously, the monks will perform a short chant requesting the participation of the mourners to show their respects. On completion of the fourth and final chant, a family member of the deceased will then present ritual offerings (typically household items such as soap, toothpaste and medicines e.g. paracetamol), money and alms to the monks. Having received these items, the monks will perform their chanting and then return to their residence known as *kuti*. Afterwards, the mourners will move forward and each will light a single joss stick in front of the coffin as a mark of respect. This signals the end of the ceremony for this particular day. It is commonplace for some mourners to request monks to perform *suat phra a-phitham* for 3, 5, 7 or even 9 nights. Traditionally, the deceased's body is kept in the temple for 100 days, although in some cases this can be up to a year. On this subject, Wong stated that "keeping the body for more than one hundred days is a sign of status and affluence" (Wong:1998:111).

5. Food offering to monks

On the day after the final chanting of *suat phra a-phitham* has taken place, the cremation itself will occur. This day will commence with an offering of food to the monks. There will normally be nine monks present and also novices may be invited. There are, however, occasions where the number of monks in attendance will equate to the age of the deceased person. Consequently, both logistically and financially, this will involve a great deal more planning and expense should the deceased have been advanced in years. In these circumstances, the deceased's family is likely to be wealthy and able to absorb the additional financial costs.

The monks will begin chanting, after which they will consume their food offering. "The monks' chanting helps the family to cope with the death and helps to transfer good merit to the dead…The merit attained by family members for their generosity to the monks is transferred to the deceased" (Goss and Klass:2006:76). There will then be another ritual act involving the pouring of water into a bowl by family members to make merit to the deceased, followed by a further presentation of gifts, money and alms to the monks. Finally, the monks will chant once more before returning to their residence.

6. Sermon

At certain temples, a senior monk or on occasions even two or three will give a sermon for the mourners. The sermon itself will contain Buddhist teachings, especially on how to make acts of merit and to eliminate bad or evil deeds. The sermon will also emphasise the need to display gratitude to those people who guide you towards having a better life, for example parents and teachers.

7. Funeral processions

The procession will always be led by a senior monk. “Monks lead the processions with the coffin tied to them by thread, symbolising their guidance into the next life” (Kislenko:2004:38). Where music is played, the musicians will be positioned in front of the monks. The coffin will be followed by a photo of the deceased which will be carried by a family member with the other relatives in close attendance. The procession will circulate the crematorium three times in an anticlockwise direction. The reason for this is due to the Thai belief that the clockwise direction can be used in respect of auspicious events only such as ordination ceremonies and in respect of *wian thian* (this means the action of circulating the lit candle during *phansa* - the Buddhist Lent).

8. Cremation ceremony

The final part of the funeral ritual is when the deceased’s body is cremated. Thai people are superstitious and because the Thai word for Friday, *wan suk* can be translated as happiness day (*wan* means day whilst *suk* means happiness), many believe that cremations must not take place on a Friday. They hold the view that it is not only the deceased’s body that is burnt on *wan suk* but also the happiness of the mourners will be burnt and eroded as well. In addition to this superstition, I have learnt from an elderly relative that there is a Thai proverb *phao sop wan suk hai thuk kae yat* which effectively means that unhappiness will befall the relatives of the deceased if the cremation occurs on a Friday. However, out of necessity, funeral services in the suburbs of Bangkok take place frequently on a Friday due to heavy demand. Throughout Bangkok and indeed Thailand, the vast majority of temples will not schedule funeral ceremonies on the Thai King’s and Queen’s birthdays. In addition, some temples adopt a policy whereby funeral events are not to be staged on significant days in the Buddhist calendar, for example Makhabucha, Visakabucha and Asalahabucha.

At the beginning of the cremation ceremony, a series of robes are presented by mourners to the monks as a signal that this is their last opportunity to make merit to the deceased. A mock cremation will then follow, whereby the guest of honour lights the *dok mai chan* and places it under the coffin "as the act of setting fire to the coffin" (Segaller:2000:45). Whilst this is taking place, monks will chant. "Buddhist monks neutralise the destructive power of the spirits and ensure that the dead can journey safely to the other world" (Goss and Klass:2006:77). Also, many Buddhists believe strongly that one of the main purposes of chanting is to remind the living that they should make as much merit as they possibly can during this lifetime. Mourners will place a *dok mai chan* under the coffin in order to pay their own respects and ask for forgiveness from the deceased. "Such reparation frees both relatives and the deceased from the lingering negative aspects of their bonds to each other" (ibid.:76).

Generally, each mourner will be given a souvenir. "This is a universal custom at Thai cremations" (ibid.:45). The souvenirs provided will consist of items such as an amulet, a medal of King Rama V, a book of Buddhist scriptures, CDs of Buddhist chanting, a key ring, a book featuring Thai music notation, and other less significant items such as plates, mugs, bowls, fans, umbrellas and even inhalers. These items will be inscribed with the name, date of birth and death of the deceased. In return, it is common practice for mourners to make a financial donation to the deceased's family in order to help them pay for the cost of the funeral. This type of act has a special name in the Thai language *ng-oen chuai* which literally translates as "assistance money".

The actual cremation will then take place and this is normally attended by family members and close friends only. The first act in the cremation ritual occurs, when the coffin is opened and coconut water is poured over the deceased's body as a sign of purity. This also represents the final opportunity for family members to view their loved one. Next, the coffin is placed into the crematorium furnace together with the *dok mai chan* provided by both the deceased's family and the other mourners. This signifies the end of the cremation ceremony.

9. Ashes collection

After the cremation has taken place, during the next morning a ceremony is held whereby the deceased's ashes are collected by the family. During the ceremony, a single monk will be invited to chant, whilst the ashes of the deceased are arranged on a table in a human form. Meanwhile the monk will be chanting for the rebirth of the deceased into the next life. Some of the ashes will be collected and retained by the deceased's family, whilst the remaining ashes will be poured into a river. In the case of funerals held in Bangkok, the ashes are normally scattered into the Pak Nam River before flowing into the Gulf of Thailand.

3.2 Examining the logistics of organising a funeral ceremony in Bangkok

As I mentioned earlier in this thesis, I have conducted case studies in respect of five temples. Each temple that I visited has its own organisational structure with three of them being managed by monks and the other two controlled by temple officers. Every temple has its own unique approach to Thai funeral rituals and music which I will reflect upon in this thesis.

It would be true to say that in the majority of Thai funeral rituals in the present day, family members of the deceased have had the responsibility of organising the funeral ceremony. The family members would also be involved in the various tasks that need to be undertaken in order to stage the ceremony. Typically, funerals may last up to four days and the family members will tend to take a proactive role throughout the duration of the event, right up until the end, when the ashes are collected. In Bangkok, it is normal practice for the actual cremation to take place within a week of the deceased's passing. Thai communities tend to be very close knit, so people that attend the funeral rituals would have known about the event by word of mouth from their friends, neighbours and work colleagues. Formal invitation cards are therefore not normally extended to guests and anybody is welcome to attend the ceremony. With respect to the organisation of Thai funerals, Wong gave an interesting description as follows:

> When a death occurs, family members decide on a particular wat for the funeral events, and this decision may be based on any number of factors, such as the proximity of a wat to their home, cost, whether or not the family has connections with the military or police and the family's perceived status.

> Almost immediately, they must contact the wat and make a number of arrangements. Wats that host lots of funerals have a special office just for this purpose, usually in the area of the funeral halls; here the family schedules the many events that make up an entire funeral, from monks' chanted-prayer sessions to the cremation itself. They also choose the type of coffin, the hall size (i.e., they must decide how many guests will attend), the flower arrangements, the food and drinks for attending guests and so on. Some wats have a book of sample photographs for the family to peruse, showing different kinds of coffins and flower arrangements. Every decision – whether the guests will be offered weak tea or soda to drink, whether the coffin will be rather plain or elaborately carved and painted, etc. – affects the total cost of the funeral, and wats usually have all of this available in itemized form. Funerals are about money, and each decision not only affects the total cost, but makes statements about the family's (and the deceased's) wealth and status (Wong:1998:112).

Comparing my observations of Thai funeral rituals, conducted during my fieldwork between November 2009 - July 2010, with Wong's description of the ceremonies that she attended, I noted that there were no significant changes in respect of the organisation of these events. Wong's statement highlights how business orientated the temples have become with every facet of the funeral ceremony having an associated monetary cost. The temples are able to accommodate very simple funerals as well as extravagant ceremonies depending on the budget of the deceased family. She makes the point that a funeral ceremony is considered to be very much a symbol of the deceased's status in Thai society as well as an indicator of their wealth. As a result, it is not surprising that Wong comes to the conclusion that "funerals are big business" (ibid.:112). This is borne out by the fact that the funeral business as a whole makes approximately 1,000,000,000 baht profit in a typical year (Kittisuksathit and Maha A-cha:2006:1). The illustrations below reveal the escalating average cost of staging a funeral in Bangkok.

Table 1: 1997

Estimated cost to cover chanting and a funeral per person	Baht
3 days	12,000 – 15,000
5 days	16,000 – 20,000
7 days	20,001+

Table 2: 2006

Estimated cost to cover chanting and a funeral per person	Baht
3 days	24,000 – 27,000
5 days	40,000 – 45,000
7 days	56,000 – 63,000

Cited in Sirinan Kittisuksathit and Wanipphon Maha A-cha, Depth interview, 5-6: 2006.

Table 3: 2011

Estimated cost to cover chanting and a funeral per person	Baht
3 days	40,000 – 60,000
5 days	50,000 – 70,000
7 days	70,000 – 150,000 +

(Interview with Sorathat Thankaeo, a public relations officer for Makut temple on 17 August 2011. At the time of the interview the exchange rate was 49.72 baht per one pound sterling (source: Bangkok Bank)) (http://www.bangkokbank.com/Bangkok%20Bank/Web%20Services/Rates/Pages/FX_Rates.aspx accessed 12 June 2012)

Sorathat Thankaeo suggested to me that the cost of each funeral varied, depending on how much an individual family was able to *thawai patchai* (ritually offer money) to the monks. The offerings typically range between 100 and 1,000 baht for each session that the monks chant. The sum of money offered is dependent upon the financial status of the host. Another large expense for the family is in respect of food prepared for the monks. The accepting by monks of money from the deceased's family raises an interesting discussion point which Wong highlights: "the conflict between doctrinal Buddhism, which forbids monks to handle money, and temples as profitable businesses is an old one, and it has been discussed elsewhere, the funeral business is but another manifestation of such contradictions between doctrine and practice" (Wong:1998:112). When I

interviewed Sorathat, I was advised that monks are forbidden to physically handle money. Therefore family members transcribe the amount of money onto a card known as *parawana*. This card can then be transferred into cash and deposited into the monk's bank account at a later date.

Table 4: Comparison of the cost of a typical funeral at the Makut temple (situated inside the city) and Bangtoei temple (situated on the outskirts of Bangkok).

Cost	Makut temple	Bangtoei temple
Hall rental per night	2,000 -3,000 baht	900 baht
Maintenance cost of the cremation tower	2,000 baht	1,000 baht
Fuel for cremation	2,500 baht	1,500 baht
Temple officer's wages	1,500 baht	500 – 1,000 baht
Hire of a van to bring the deceased from hospital to the temple	1,000 baht	500 – 1,000 baht
Coffin (this ranges from plain to very elaborate)	4,700 – 5,500 baht	4,700 – 7,000 baht
Maintenance cost in respect of the deceased's body being retained at the temple per month	500 baht per month	300 baht per month
Alms for monks as detailed below:	Monk's full robe = 600 baht bathing robe = 100 baht small alms package = 120 baht	Monk's full robe = 300 baht bathing robe = 100 baht small alms package = 50 baht
One large *dok mai chan*	25 baht	20 baht

for a guest of honour		
A small *dok mai chan* for a normal guest per guest	2 baht	1.20 baht
Floral decoration surrounding the cremation tower	6,000 – 20,000 baht	12,000 baht
Funeral music (*piphat mon*) per day	3,500 baht	3,500 baht
	Source: Interview with Sorathat Thankaeo, a public relations officer for Makut temple on 20 July 2012.	Source: Interview with Phra[6] Samphan Yassathammo, a monk officer at Bangtoei temple on 29 May 2012.

The typical daily cost of hiring a standard *piphat mon* ensemble is 3,500 baht. Should the host require two more *khong mon* and other instruments, this cost will rise to 6,000 baht. The typical rates payable to musicians, both male and female who perform *piphat mon* range between 350 - 500 baht per session. One session will normally last for 8 hours between 9 am - 5 pm. Some temples have their own ensembles that are able to perform funeral music. The head of the ensemble will be contacted either by the host of the deceased's family or the temple officer. In respect of the temple officer, he will receive a "commission" of approximately 500 baht from the head of the ensemble.

[6] The word Phra in Thai means a monk.

Figure 14: The Bangtoei temple displaying photos of various types of coffin and flower decorations. The host will choose the most appropriate combination according to their budget.

It is traditional for Thai people to make a funeral a grand occasion to reflect their standing in society and also as it is the final opportunity for them to make merit to the deceased. Due to the fact that there is a much larger financial commitment to meet nowadays, some families have ended up with crippling debts, which in turn creates social problems. Unfortunately, in some cases the financial burden of staging such a costly event means that many hosts suffer financial hardship due to the expense that they have had to meet. This act may be described in Thai as *khon tai khai khon phen* which can be literally translated as "the deceased brings a burden of debt to a living person". I can verify from my own personal experience of observing funerals during my fieldwork from November 2009 - July 2010, that those staged on the outskirts of Bangkok, unlike in the centre of the city, were not organised in a "business way". That is to say, people would offer their services for free as a friend or a neighbour. During this period if you had benefited from these displays of generosity, you would be expected to reciprocate these favours at a later date. Normally, individuals will repay the help that they have received at not only funeral events, but all kinds of occasion, whether auspicious or inauspicious. There is a Thai term *nam chai* which is used to refer to people who possess these generous qualities and means literally "willing to help each other" or "mutual co-operation". It is also very important to note that these acts of kindness will mean that the individual is gaining merit and as a Thai Buddhist, this is very significant as making merit is one of the fundamental tenets of the religion.

In today's Thai society, however, funerals have been transformed from being low cost affairs into expensive occasions. When I attended my fieldwork at Buengthonglang

temple on the outskirts of Bangkok on 14-16 November 2009, I witnessed many acts of kindness that could be referred to as *nam chai*. For example, I saw neighbours giving up their time for no payment to organise food for monks and mourners as well as cleaning the hall and undertaking washing up duty. By way of a contrast, observing funerals in the city, the absence of *nam chai* was very notable. The funerals were far more business-like with the host being required to pay for every task performed during the ceremony.

3.3 Observations of funeral music being played at temples across Bangkok

In this section, I will discuss the fieldwork that I undertook in Bangkok between November 2009 - July 2010. During this time one significant problem that I encountered was in respect of the political turmoil in Bangkok during the middle part of May which adversely affected my fieldwork. I could not attend and observe funeral ceremonies at *wat*[7] Makut, *wat* Thepsirin and *wat* Saket for a month due to the fact that anti government protesters known as the “red shirts” had blocked the routes to these temples. Also following the curfew during May and early June, I was unable to observe funeral rituals taking place in the evening at the Buengthonglang and Bangtoei temples which are situated near my family home. A further problem that arose was in respect of my planned tuition with Khru Somsak Triwat, a master musician from the Phatthayakoson Music School. My study period with him was initially scheduled for the month of June but again due to “the red shirts” occupying the route to the School, I had to delay my studies with Khru Somsak until July when the political situation had improved. I also had some logistical difficulties with respect to planning my interviews with Buddhist monks. Moreover, there was the issue of Buddhist doctrine whereby a woman is not allowed to talk with a monk in private. Fortunately, I was given special dispensation to conduct interviews with monks. I had to be accompanied by a temple official in order to preserve the purity of the monk. My initial contact with the monks was by way of attending events at their respective temples.

During my fieldwork, the methodology used was mostly based on interviews with many leading master musicians, monks, mourners and temple officers. Although interviews with these key figures were a significant aspect of my methodology,

[7] The word *wat* can be literally translated into English as temple.

observations of funeral ceremonies in a non-participating context also took place. By attending a significant number of funeral ceremonies, I was able to gain a comprehensive understanding of how music in the Thai funeral ritual has changed over the past one hundred years. My fieldwork activities were concentrated upon temples in Bangkok. I focused my research at five different temples detailed as follows: Saket, Thepsirin, Makut, Buengthonglang and Bangtoei. The first three temples are situated in the centre of Bangkok, whilst the latter two can be found on the outskirts of the city. I believe these temples represent a cross section of the different social classes to be found in Bangkok. Therefore, this thesis will reflect the varied experiences that I witnessed at the funeral rituals that I attended. I attended 18 funeral ceremonies in total at the aforementioned temples. I have detailed my experiences below.

1. The Saket temple

The full formal name of this temple is Saket Ratchaworamahawiharn. According to an information leaflet published by the temple, *wat* Saket was built during the Ayutthaya period. Prince Damrong, however, referred to *wat* Saket as an old temple but could not provide specific details of when it was constructed. There is a reference to the temple in the Thai Royal chronicle of 1782, under its former name of *wat* Sakae (the temple changed its name to *wat* Saket in 1785 during the reign of King Rama I (Damrong, Prince:2014:183-184). *Wat* Saket owes its fame to two main factors. Firstly, it is the closest temple in proximity to the Grand Palace and secondly it was used for mass burials during the late 19th century - during the cholera epidemic of 1881, “between 60 to 120 bodies were brought to the temple every day and buried in mass graves with quick lime”(Wong:1998:103). *Wat* Saket, Smithies (2003) cited Bock in 1884 who stated that due to the effects of the cholera epidemic, *wat* Saket was a “terrible sight”. Sommerville also confirmed in 1897 that *wat* Saket was “one of the most offensive and horrible sights of Bangkok”. Smithies expanded on these observations by stating that this was “because it was used as a cremation ground for the poor and destitute of the city” (Smithies:2003:44). During this period, *wat* Saket was populated by vultures who were seeking to devour corpses prior to their cremation. Fortunately, the temple today is an altogether more welcoming proposition. In the absence of any vultures, *wat* Saket plays

host to its well renowned temple fairs, especially the festival of *loy krathong* which is normally held either in October or November.

Today, *wat* Saket has a very significant reputation in Thai society due to the close relationship that it has maintained with the Thai monarchy throughout its history. An example of this can be found in the Royal chronicle of the Rattanakosin era which contains details of King Rama I undertaking a royal bathing at *wat* Saket. This event occurred in 1782, after which he was officially established as the first King of the Chakri dynasty. The focal point of *wat* Saket, known as the Golden Mount, was constructed under the decree of King Rama III and completed during the reign of King Rama IV. In 1899 in the reign of King Rama V, Buddhist relics from India were housed in the Golden Mount (Office of Archaeology:1992:9). Since then, *wat* Saket has continued to receive royal sponsorship and support, including the construction of new religious buildings within the temple, incorporating monks' living quarters, as well as funds to cover the cost of restoration works. *Wat* Saket has also been granted by royal decree the status of a second ranking royal monastery.

When I first visited the temple, there was no sign of any funeral ritual taking place, and I witnessed the presence of both Thai nationals and foreign tourists. The Thais were engaged in the process of merit making, which they did by way of paying respects to the Buddhist relic's position in the Golden Mount and also by donating money to support the temple. I heard the bells on top of the Mount being rung continuously as a show of respect to Buddha by visitors to the temple.

I interviewed a woman who operated her own stall in the temple, selling drinking water, who advised me that funeral ceremonies in the temple today were very rare and music almost unheard of. In her experience, many people visited the temple to make merit rather than attend a funeral. However, on the several occasions that she did hear music being played at funeral rituals, the ensembles only played for a short period of time.

Before I arrived at the temple, I attempted to contact the temple officer but received no response. I therefore decided to go there without any appointment. Fortunately, I spoke to three people who worked at the temple who confirmed to me that the funeral rites

conducted at *wat* Saket are similar to other temples in Bangkok. (Interview with Upatham Rotyoy, Naphaporn Khumphae and Chang, a manager and officers of *wat* Saket respectively on 9 July 2010). One interesting regulation of this temple is the requirement that the deceased person must have been a regular attendee at the temple throughout their lifetime and lived in the local community. If the deceased does not fulfil these criteria, then the temple reserves the right to refuse to conduct the funeral service. There is a distinction to be made between the types of funeral held in the two halls of the temple. The majority of people use the main hall for their funeral services, however, there is a smaller hall which provides a very basic ceremony for the poorest people in the community.

During my observation on 9 July 2010, I noticed that the atmosphere on the night of the funeral was very quiet. The rainfall that occurred during the ritual also added to the sombre atmosphere. As with other temples in Bangkok, there was a break between rounds three and four of the chanting. Gifts and alms were presented to the monks and the mourners consumed food during this interval. This last ritual was completed in 40 minutes. There was no sign of any music being performed on this particular night and indeed Chang, a temple officer confirmed to me that "only 10% of funerals in the past year had featured music" (Interview with Chang, an officer of *wat* Saket on 9 July 2010). Upatham Rotyoy, the manager of the temple, endorsed this statement advising me that "live music was only permissible if the musicians agreed to keep their noise levels down". Upatham, however, was in favour of recorded music by way of CDs being employed for the very reason that the noise emitted could be controlled. Any live performance must be given prior approval by the Abbot.

2. The Thepsirin temple

The formal name of this temple is *wat* Thepsirintharawat Ratchaworamahawiharn. The construction of Thepsirin temple began in 1876 and was completed in 1878. King Rama V's (r.1868-1910) wish was for the temple to serve as a memorial to his mother, Queen Debsirindra. The temple was later renamed after her (Anon:1999:1,3). King Rama V also ordered the construction of a Royal Crematorium to be used specifically for members of the Royal Family, which was situated on the grounds of Sanam Luang, adjacent to the Grand Palace. Today, the Royal Crematorium also stages cremation

ceremonies in respect of senior government officers. Another project that was instructed by King Rama V, was the building of the Phlap Phla Issaryiphorn Pavilion which was used to inter the body of his son Prince Issaryiaphorn. Nowadays, the Pavilion is used as a resting place for members of the Royal Family prior to the commencement of royal cremation ceremonies (ibid.:27-28).

With respect to the funeral rituals held at the temple, I interviewed Prasoet Phoemwong who has been employed there for 12 years. He insisted that "the funeral rites conducted in this temple follow the same pattern as those that take place in other temples. For example, cremations never take place on a Friday, the King's and the Queen's birthdays, and also on the important day of Buddhist lent" (Interview with Prasoet Phoemwong on 14 July 2010).

The distinction between this and the crematorium mentioned earlier which was constructed at Sanam Luang, is that elite members of the Royal Family such as the King, Queen and the heirs to the throne will have their cremation ceremonies at Sanam Luang, whilst lower ranked royals and senior government officers will receive their funeral rites at the *wat* Thepsirin crematorium. These deceased who have been interred in a *phra kot* will always have their funeral rites at this temple. Prasoet confirmed to me that due to the fact that the temple has hosted numerous funerals for royal members, elite classes and senior officers who have been bestowed the high rank of "order of merit", royal funeral music is always performed in a display of respect and honour for the deceased. (Interview with Prasoet Phoemwong on 14 July 2010). With respect to my own observations of a funeral being held at Thepsirin temple, I was fortunate to be allowed to participate and record music at the grand funeral ceremony held for the Lieutenant General of the Air Force and Army, Phingphan Sucharitkul. HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn presided over the ceremony and the Royal Crematorium itself was decorated in expensive flowers and beautiful black and white cloths. When I arrived, an official from the Bureau of the Royal Household was already on duty at the Crematorium, awaiting the arrival of HRH. *Dok mai chan* and a souvenir book were circulated to the mourners. On either side of the Royal Crematorium, a brass band from the Royal Navy and the royal funeral ensemble called the *pi chanai klong chana* were set up ready to play (see VCD no.6 for footage of both ensemble performances). *Wat* Thepsirin actually contains two crematoriums, the first one used for members of the Royal Family and the

second one for ordinary citizens. This temple with its two crematoriums illustrates the importance of the Royal Family and its place in the hierarchy of Thai society.

3. The Makut temple

Wat Makut Kasattriyaram Ratchaworawiharn is the full name of the Makut temple and is situated in central Bangkok. *Wat* Makut was constructed under the royal command of King Mongkut (King Rama IV) in 1868, 99 days before the King passed away in the same year. Prior to it being built, King Mongkut constructed another temple, the Somanas temple, as a memorial to his wife, HM Queen Somanas Vadhanavadi (The Crown Property Bureau :2010:30, 34).

With respect to the temple's funeral rites, I questioned Sutin Thongphui, a Public Relations officer of the temple, who confirmed to me that "the Thai funeral ceremonies conducted there were similar to those that took place at other temples, but with some minor variations. For example, sermons will occur in the morning before monks begin eating, instead of after they have finished the meals, as is the case in other temples" (Interview with Sutin Thongphui 15 July 2010). Of the 30-40 funeral ceremonies that take place there each month, fewer than 10% feature music. However, the Vice-Abbot of the Makut temple, who has spent more than 20 years at the temple as a monk, explained to me that on occasions, displays of folk drama (*li-ke*) by students of deceased teachers would feature funeral music (Interview with Phra Khru[8] Sitthithammonkkhon on 15 July 2010).

After my participation in a funeral at this temple, I drew the conclusion that its ceremony had largely the same content and was conducted in the same way as those ceremonies that I witnessed at other temples. This particular temple had a relaxed attitude to music, allowing the deceased's relatives the choice of whether they wanted music or not to accompany the funeral ritual. The only caveat of this, is their policy which dictates that the sound level must be kept under control, as each hall is inter-connected. An anonymous interviewee suggested that if one were to perform music too loudly, the next hall would be unable to hear the chanting of the monks. Therefore, one has to consider

[8] Normally, the words Phra Khru refer to a monk who holds the position of Head of the temple, however in this context they are used to describe a lower rank of Buddhist monks in Thailand.

this situation and respect the occupants of the adjacent hall. I also noted that although musicians wanted to continue playing music in the evening, the temple officers were keen to terminate the day’s proceedings in order to prepare themselves for the following day. I detected some frustration among the musicians as they wanted to make a greater musical contribution.

4. The Buengthonglang temple

The temple is situated in Latphrao district on the outskirts of Bangkok. It was given an award in recognition of its excellence by the government in 1997. It is situated very close to the Bangtoei temple which is my home temple. Regarding the funeral rites, the temple follows the same protocol as other temples that I have visited. For those people with low incomes, the temple will assist with the financial cost of the funeral. For example, the temple may offer to donate the coffin free of charge.

The funeral that I attended in November 2009 was in respect of Prathueang Wongphrom aged 71 years, who was an important figure in the local community. I gained permission to participate in this event from Nikon Thangsuwan who was the Head of the *piphat mon* ensemble which was performing at the ceremony. Nikon advised me that “I had been hired previously several times to perform the *piphat mon* ensemble in this temple from people who lived in the local community. The presence of Mon music was especially important for older people” (Interview with Nikon Thangsuwan on 14 November 2009). The popularity of Mon music in respect of this temple was confirmed to me in a conversation that I had with Phra Soradet, a monk officer from the Buengthonglang temple, who stated that “music was performed in 80% of the funerals staged at the temple” (Interview with Phra Soradet on 3 July 2010).

I also interviewed one of the deceased’s family members. His name was Autsadawut Sila-on, a nephew of the deceased. I enquired about the cost of the funeral and he replied by stating that it was more than 1 million baht (approximately 20,000 pounds sterling). I also questioned him about the role of the music used in the funeral. He responded by stating that:

> "... the *piphat mon* is so attractive and joyful that the mourner will not be sad and will feel a sense of joy instead"... Music is responsible for good karma and will bring recognition to my family. There is also a demonstration of philanthropy as many poor people will be able to witness the many forms of entertainment on display, which normally would be too expensive for them to consider. There is also a commercial benefit for those stall holders who will be able to sell their products which will enable them to increase their income. Last but not least, people in our community will recognise this funeral event as being a prestigious occasion and a worthwhile tribute to the deceased." (Interview with Autsadawut Sila-on on 14 November 2009).

The funeral event lasted three days from 14-16 November 2009. I attended each day and was given permission to make a video recording of the event by Autsadawut Sila-on. (VCD no.4 contains footage of the first two days only of the ceremony, as I did not record the third and final day).

On day one, when I arrived at the temple, ten *khong mon* and other Mon and Thai instruments were already set up on the stage. The *khong mon* were positioned at the front of the ensemble and decorated with colourful flashing lights. Close to the stage was the crematorium hall, in which the coffin was already placed on a stand surrounded by freshly decorated flowers and flashing lights. Outside the hall, there were many stalls selling food, clothes and children's toys which made it seem like a weekend market. Adjacent to the crematorium, preparations were made to stage the *li-ke* (a Thai folk drama). The atmosphere was very relaxed and I felt that I was attending a temple fair (VCD no.4). Mourners advised me that Prathueang's body had been preserved for 100 days, in accordance with tradition, and was now ready for cremation.

On day two, the mock cremation ceremony featured the piece "Pracham Ban", followed by a performance of "Pracham Wat Ok Prachum Phoeng", which accompanied the actual cremation ritual. All of these pieces were performed by the *piphat mon* ensemble. Following the completion of the cremation ceremony, the event was brought to a close with a performance of *khon sot* which is a type of Thai masked dance whereby the performers' masks are opened to reveal their made-up faces. Their performance of the episode entitled Wirunchambang from the *Ramayana* epic was received very well by the mourners. (VCD no.4 contains excerpts of the aforementioned musical pieces as well as the *khon sot*).

After a short break, the musicians commenced playing a piece entitled "Nanghong" suite. This was followed by an evening overture, "Homrong Yen", from the *piphat* repertoire. This sequence of music often features in auspicious events. The ensemble also played songs from the *sepha* repertoire which is characterised by being lively in style and featuring singing. All of the songs that featured after the cremation ceremony had taken place can be classified as auspicious pieces of music. In other words, they are synonymous with happy and joyful occasions and are a reflection of the Thai Buddhist belief that the deceased's spirit has been reborn. The aforementioned pieces of music are considered appropriate for auspicious occasions and reflect the changing mood of the participants once the actual cremation has taken place. Thai people believe that after the cremation, it is important to relax and to celebrate the life of the deceased and as such people will change their clothing from darker, sombre colours to lighter shades.

5. The Bangtoei temple

The Bangtoei temple is my home temple and I lived in this area for more than 30 years. It is situated on the outskirts of Bangkok. I was given the handout about Bangtoei temple's history by Phra Theppharit during my interview. He handed me a leaflet written by a monk which mentioned that the Bangtoei temple was built approximately in 1828 during the reign of King Rama III.

From my fieldwork observations, I noted that the ritual activities were very similar to those that I witnessed at the inner city temples which I visited. The only significant difference was that the rituals commence later in the day at approximately 7.30 pm whereas in the temples situated in the heart of Bangkok proceedings tended to begin between 6-7 pm. I will provide a review of my personal experiences of the Thai funeral ceremony held in this temple that I attended.

When I was back in Thailand for my fieldwork studies during 2009-2010, I happened to be staying in my own home, nearby to my sister's residence. On 2 January 2010, I was told that her homehelp, Yao, had died in a motorcycle accident. My sister was concerned that her deceased employee's family was very poor and would not be able to meet the cost of a funeral. Indeed, Siha Pramoenphan, the mother of Yao, the deceased, directly requested financial assistance from my sister and also me, as well as asking us to help in

organising the funeral. Both my sister and I wished to provide a fitting tribute to her employee and as such we were pleased to be able to finance a ceremony that would feature traditional Thai classical music played by my father's ensemble. We would also arrange for the provision of food and drink for the monks in attendance as well as the guests. The ceremony was actually held over three consecutive days and cost approximately 40,000 baht (£733)[9]. The expense incurred and the length and features of this particular funeral are typically seen in circumstances where middle and upper class people have died. The deceased's salary was £120 a month which is an average figure for a working class person in Thailand. Siha advised me that "... if your family had not been able to assist with the cost of the funeral, Yao would have received a very basic service that would have featured one monk chanting before the cremation of the body. This would take approximately an hour, and would typically cost under a hundred pounds..." (Personal communication with Siha during the ceremony).

In extreme circumstances where the deceased's family have no money at all, the relatives would normally ask the temple to provide the service for free. In the majority of cases, a nominal payment is made to the temple which will waive most of the funeral costs. From a personal perspective, I participated in the ceremony purely as a mourner and did not feature in my father's ensemble which provided the musical accompaniment. When I first heard the music being played as the ceremony began, it stirred up strong emotions in me releasing feelings of tension due to the gravity of the event and also overwhelming sadness for the tragic death of somebody who I knew very well. During the funeral, I sat next to the deceased's mother who told me that the music being played was a source of comfort to her and was a welcome distraction from the feelings of great sadness that she felt at the loss of her son. She told me that the music helped her with her grieving process. The ensemble played a mixture of traditional ritual pieces which are characterised by sad and mournful overtones in keeping with the nature of the ceremony. These particular pieces are only ever performed in the context of a funeral. The other pieces of music performed by the ensemble are lighter in tone and more lively. These songs are not directly linked to the funeral ritual and are played in the intervals between

[9] The rate of exchange on 4 January 2010 was 54.57 baht per one pound sterling (source from http://www.bangkokbank.com/Bangkok%20Bank/Web%20Services/Rates/Pages/FX_Rates.aspx accessed 12 June 2012).

the specific ritual acts. The assistance that was provided by my family to that of Yao is considered to be an act of merit making according to Buddhist beliefs.

During my fieldwork, I visited the Bangtoei temple many times and by pure chance on 10 January 2010, I was able to observe royal funeral music being played there and was also able to interview musicians from the Royal Household. I had not planned or was even aware that the funeral was taking place. I stumbled across this event when I was on my way to visit my father's home and I noticed a group of people, who were wearing red and gold costumes. It was at this moment that I realised that a special funeral was taking place in the Bangtoei temple. I parked my car nearby the temple and then grabbed my video and note-taking book and made my way to the hall which contained the golden urn. A temple officer advised me that this was the funeral ceremony of Thawatchai Khueawet who was a senior government officer. I then asked him if it was possible to be introduced to the deceased's wife. He obliged and I asked her for permission to observe and record the event, to which she agreed. I then took the opportunity to move towards the musicians that were assembled for the event. I asked one of the musicians whether I could interview the Head of the ensemble. I was fortunate that the Head musician, Wethin Wichaikhatkha, was happy to be interviewed. He confirmed that the ensemble which is known as *pi chanai klong chana*[10] - the name is derived from the two main instruments that feature namely the *pi chanai* and the *klong chana* - performs at three specific times during the funeral ceremony. These are as follows:

1. The royal bathing ritual for the deceased.
2. To accompany the transfer of the golden urn (or coffin) to the cremation tower.
3. During the mock cremation.

The ensemble itself is reserved for those persons who have been bestowed the highest level of honour by HM the King. For example, this would include the prestigious *khrueang ratcha itsariyaphon chunla chom klao* (Grand Companion of the Most Illustrious Order of Chula Chom Klao) and a lower class of honour known as *tatiya chunla chom klao wiset*. The beneficiaries by virtue of these awards will be entitled to royal musical accompaniment at their funeral ceremony. The Royal Household also

[10] I was aware from my Thai music theory studies that *pi chanai klong chana* took on this particular role in respect of funeral rituals only.

bestows other less prestigious medals to recognise worthy deeds undertaken by Thai citizens. These individuals, due to the lower status accorded to them by way of this honour, will not receive royal musical accompaniment at their funeral ceremonies. However, they will be the recipients of the "royal fire" during the cremation stage of the funeral.[11]

It is protocol that once the deceased has been bestowed royal patronage, the deceased's family cannot decline the award. Generally, in terms of costs the ensemble is made available to the deceased's family free of charge by the Royal Household (Interview with Wathin Wichaikhatkha on 10 January 2010). This gesture by the Royal Household is viewed by Thai society as being an affirmation of the strong bond between the Royal Family and its subjects.The royal music provided by the *pi chanai klong chana* ensemble is a crucial element of the royal patronage awarded to the deceased. The music played by the ensemble evokes very strong feelings of pride and glory amongst the family members. To be recognised in this way by the Thai Royal Family is the highest honour that a Thai citizen can receive in their lifetime.

[11] Another important difference that I have noted between funerals granted by royal patronage and those that I have attended in respect of other Thai citizens, concerns the chanting by the monks present at these occasions. During funerals which benefited from royal patronage, the monks who will have been the recipients of specialised training provided by a small number of prestigious temples (e.g. *wat* Saket and *wat* Suthat) will chant the melody of *ka luang*, whilst those monks in attendance at funeral ceremonies for ordinary citizens will conduct a chant, without melody, in the *pali* language (Decha:2005:124).

Figure 15: The golden urn is placed in the middle of the cremation tower at Bangtoei temple prior to the actual cremation ceremony taking place.

When I observed the funeral processions myself, I witnessed 12 musicians, 10 who were playing the *klong chana* (a victory drum), one playing a drum known as *poeng mang* (a two-faced drum), with the remaining musician playing the smallest oboe in this category of Thai musical instruments namely the *pi chanai*. Whilst the musicians were performing, several officials from the Royal Household carried a senior Buddhist monk seated on a wooden stretcher. I could see other officers holding items such as royal sunshades and royal umbrellas as they proceeded to walk anti-clockwise around the cremation tower three times, prior to placing the symbolic golden urn at the centre of the cremation tower (see VCD clip no.2 for full explanation). In the past, the deceased's body would be placed in the golden urn, typically in a seated position, with knees down and hands joined in the manner of making a prayer (known as the *wai* position). Nowadays, rather than the deceased's body being placed in the golden urn, it is

transferred instead to the coffin. "The top of the golden urn points upwards symbolising the journey to heaven and the fact that the King and members of the Royal Family are representatives of God and will return to him when their life on earth comes to an end" (Phaladisai:2008:30).

The piece named "Phaya Sok Loy Lom", which can be translated as "the lament drifting in the wind" was performed whilst the coffin was transferred to the cremation tower and then the musicians reprised it during the mock cremation which followed. The sound that is emitted from the *pi chanai* during the piece is one of a very high pitched tone. Boonream Sukchaloemsri, who was an oboe musician playing on the day, told me that the purpose of this tone was to replicate the sound of a person crying (Interview with Boonream Sukchaloemsri on 10 January 2010). Indeed, having heard this piece, I can confirm that the sound made by the instrument was uncannily like a woman crying, however, the effect was somewhat submerged by the noise of the drums which were being played intermittently. My experience draws parallels with the following observation made by Karl Dohring who whilst describing the sound of the *pi chanai* states that "... in the centre walked a flute-player, who played long drawn-out melancholic tunes. At certain moments all the drummers produced a deep, and mournful sound. This funeral music was very emotional..." (Dohring:1924:470). Dohring's experience occurred more than 80 years before I witnessed the *pi chanai*'s unique mournful tones and confirms the unchanging nature of Thai traditional court music.

I noticed that the dress of the musicians in the funeral was different in colour to that of the mourners. The royal musicians wore striped reddish-golden hats and red-coloured costumes instead of black. Normally, if a mourner wears red, bright coloured clothing at a Thai funeral this is considered to be very rude and disrespectful. However, in prestigious funerals such as this particular one, the proceedings are managed on a grand scale, as the role of the musicians is deemed to be a crucial component of the occasion. They should be dressed in distinctive and opulent clothing. As well as the musicians, royal officials, who carry royal fans and umbrellas, are also dressed in these red coloured outfits.

Prior to the commencement of the mock cremation, a piece from the *piphat mon* was played from a CD. This was followed by a reading performed by a temple officer in

which he described the deceased’s life and conveyed to the congregation how he had served the Thai government and country with distinction. After this reading, the Master of Ceremonies requested that the congregation stand on their feet in silence for one minute. The mourners then sat down whilst the guest of honour offered a symbolic yellow robe to the monks in attendance. This is considered to be an act of merit making for the deceased.

Figure 16: The procession of royal music being performed during the cremation ceremony at Bangtoei temple.

The guest of honour lit the *dok mai chan* from the royal fire which was a signal for the mock cremation to begin. The *pi chanai klong chana* ensemble then began to play “Phaya Sok Loy Lom” for the second time, accompanied by four chanting monks. The mourners then stepped up to the cremation tower to place their *dok mai chan* offering under the golden urn. This sombre piece ended when the last mourners left the cremation tower. This signified the end of the mock cremation ceremony, with both musicians and mourners leaving the temple.

The golden urn was then taken back to the office of the Royal Household. Meanwhile, the deceased’s body which was now placed in the coffin was taken to the crematorium furnace. The coffin lid was then opened for the deceased’s family to view their loved one and in order for them to make a final wish prior to the coffin being placed

in the crematorium furnace. This was the final act of the Thai cremation ceremony that I witnessed.

At the funeral which I attended, only one ensemble performed throughout the ceremony. However, in respect of the grandest of funeral ceremonies, which are reserved for senior members of the Royal Family, it is common practice for two ensembles to perform, namely the *sang trae* and the *pi chanai klong chana.* The presence of the *sang trae* ensemble makes a Royal Family member's funeral unique from a musical perspective, as it is played exclusively for royalty. At this ceremony, the ensembles are required to perform throughout each day at three hourly intervals, known in Thai as *yam*[12].

I have described in this chapter the most elaborate and grand types of funeral that one will find in Thai society. The elite classes have the financial means to be able to afford an extravagant funeral event. However, for the average Thai citizen staging a grand funeral can cause them to plunge into debt. Many people in Thailand are critical of such behaviour and this can be summed up by the Thai proverb *tam nam phrik lalai mae nam* or "to make ducks and drakes of one's money". Many ordinary Thai people take risks with their finances to stage spectacular funeral events because of the entrenched belief in Thai society that these occasions represent the final opportunity for them to make merit for the deceased. There is also the potential stigma that if they do not stage an expensive and grand funeral event, they may lose their status in Thai society.

Conclusion

By attending a large number of funeral ceremonies across all strata of society in contemporary Bangkok, I have discovered that in many cases, the music and funeral rituals practised remain largely unaltered from my experiences of attending such occasions 30 years. The only significant change has been in some scenarios, particularly in central Bangkok, namely the shortening of the funeral rituals and also the accompanying music, due to both the economic downturn of recent years and also the

[12] *Yam* can be literally translated as a period of three hours. The first performance will start at 6 am (*yam* 1), 9 am (*yam* 2), 12 noon (*yam* 3), 3 pm (*yam* 4), 6 pm (*yam* 5), 9 pm (*yam* 6), and midnight (*yam* 7).

noise pollution policy of the temples. Meanwhile, on the outskirts of the city, the majority of the funeral ceremonies that I attended were not subject to noise restrictions and longer rituals were held. Funerals in the centre of the city have been transformed logistically from family organised occasions to more commercially oriented events. This contrasts with funeral activities in the city's suburbs where the community still has a strong sense of "*nam chai*" whereby neighbours join together to organise funeral ceremonies in a non-business like way. In the funeral ceremonies that I attended, I observed the three main ensembles, namely the *bua loy*, *piphat nanghong* and *piphat mon*, which are used in the Thai funeral ritual. In the next chapter I will examine more closely these ensembles, their history, musical instruments employed, repertoires and their role in the funeral ritual.

Chapter 4

A study of the three most significant ensembles in the Thai funeral ritual

The performance of Thai music at a funeral in Bangkok today can be divided into three significant ensembles:

- *bua loy* ensemble
- *piphat nanghong* ensemble
- *piphat mon* ensemble

4.1 *Bua loy* ensemble

4.1.1 History of the *bua loy*

Figure17: The *bua loy* ensemble performed by musicians from the Music Division of the Department of Fine Arts during the funeral of HM the King's sister's in 2008. The instruments from clockwise are *klong malayu* (female drum), *pi chawa*, *meng* (partly seen) and *klong malayu* (male drum).

According to the dictionary of the Royal Thai Institute (2003), the words *bua loy* have two meanings. One refers to a kind of Thai dessert made of glutinous rice flour which is round and small in shape and boiled in coconut milk and palm sugar

(Ratchabandittayasathan:2003:619). The second interpretation of *bua loy* is that of the name given to the melody of the Thai suite used in funeral ceremonies. The vast majority of Thai people remain unaware of the second meaning and in fact it is only musicians who recognise its musical connotations. In actual fact *bua loy* has confused leading Western academics namely Myers-Moro (1993:50) and Wong (1998:122) who in their writings have referred to this phrase by its literal translation of "floating lotus". The aforementioned Royal Thai Institute dictionary meaning whilst correct is not considered to be the complete definition of *bua loy* as in the context of the ensemble itself, these words refer to the main featured segment of music and also the name of the drum pattern that underpins this piece. In effect the *bua loy* ensemble has adopted its name from its core piece of music[1].

Neither Thai nor overseas scholars have been able to pinpoint exactly when the *bua loy* emerged. Khru Boonchouy Sovat, however, commented that "the ensemble has its origins in the *pi klong malayu* ensemble which eventually developed into being what we know today as the *bua loy*" (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 2 March 2014). I agree with Khru Boonchouy's assumption on the basis of references to *pi klong malayu* which I uncovered in documents containing royal decrees (these date back to the Thonburi period (1767-1782) and relate to the funeral ceremony of Thao Somsak in 1803 which I have already described in chapter 2). The *pi* and *klong malayu* together with the addition of a gong represent the instruments used in the *bua loy*.

The term *bua loy* was documented for the first time in a book entitled *Tamnan Khrueang Mahori Piphat* written by Prince Damrong in 1928. The Prince uses the term "*ti bua loy*" (performing the *bua loy*) to describe the performance of the *klong malayu* during funeral ceremonies for members of the Royal Family. The Prince also mentions the presence of the *klong malayu* in the *piphat nanghong* (Damrong, Prince:1930:15-16). Among scholars, very little information has been gleaned about the *bua loy* ensemble, and indeed Prince Damrong only made a passing reference to the term "*bua loy*". The only

[1] A minority of musicians believe that the *bua loy* suite has a connection to the *bua* (a lotus) which is considered to be a symbolic flower used in a show of respect to Lord Buddha and monks. In Buddhism, *bua* is also referred to as a symbol of virtue. However, the majority of musicians that I have spoken with are of the opinion that the words *bua loy* have no specific meaning and do not have any connection with Buddhist religion and rituals.

substantive scholarly reference to the *bua loy* ensemble is contained in the famous correspondence collected in the book entitled *Ban Thuek Rueang Khwamru Tang Tang* volume 3 (this is one of the first comprehensive collections of written material, gathered between 1935-1943 in respect of Thai culture, by Prince Naris and Phraya Anuman Ratchathon). Although the ensemble still exists in Thai society today, very few musicians possess the knowledge to perform in it. In order to illustrate the unique and almost mysterious quality that the *bua loy* evokes, I have provided a quote from *Ban Thuek Rueang Khwamru Tang Tang* volume 3 which is derived from a letter Prince Naris wrote to Phraya Anuman Ratchathon on 16 March 1939 which I have translated below:

> "…the suite of *bua loy* has not been performed by anyone for a long time. I revived it to be performed at the funeral of my grandmother. The only person that I could find who was able to master the repertoire was Phraya Prasan. He memorised the pieces clearly but he has since passed away. It is not only very difficult to find suitable musicians but sourcing musical instruments such as *meng* (a gong), is also a real problem. The only one that is available to borrow is from the royal court. It is not a common gong but it is thicker than the *kangsadan* [2] …" (Naris, Prince:1978:333).

There is, however, a contemporary reference to the *bua loy* ensemble written by two Thai musicians, Khru Boonserm Phusari and Khru Peeb Konglaithong (1982) in an article entitled "Bua Loy". The musicians stated that the main piece of the suite was composed with words which originated from a traditional Thai lyric *tae cha tae khao hae yai ma pho thueng sala khao ko wang yai long*[3]. The first three words (*tae cha tae*) have no specific meaning and therefore cannot be translated, with the remaining lyrics stating "they carried the grandmother, when they reached the pavilion, they lowered her down". The aforementioned lyrics were written before the *bua loy* ensemble was created and were incorporated into the *bua loy* suite. The melodies were composed around these words to be played specifically on the *pi chawa* or Javanese oboe. The ornamentation and techniques used in the *bua loy* are highly complex and require a great deal of skill. As a result it has always been very difficult to find a musician who has the ability to play these beautiful and elaborate melodies.

[2] The *kangsadan* is a bell in the shape of a lotus leaf.

[3] As well as Khru Boonserm Phusari and Khru Peeb Konglaithong, Khru Boonchouy Sovat confirmed that the melody of the *bua loy* originated from this lyric (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 21 February 2010). Another musician, Khru Suwit Khaewkramon also endorsed this view (Suwit Khaewkramon:1990:111).

Due to the lack of information regarding the *bua loy* and because it is rarely performed, one of my greatest challenges is to be able to attend funeral ceremonies that feature the *bua loy*, which is only reserved for seniors monks, high ranking individuals in Thai society and respected musicians and their families. I was able to travel at short notice on a visit back to Thailand in February 2009 to the funeral ceremony of a famous Thai musician at Buengthonglang temple. I was advised by a musician friend that the *bua loy* ensemble would feature in the ceremony. Even though I did not know the deceased's wife, I was fortunate that she gave me permission to record the ceremony after I explained to her the nature of my research. I also sought and received the permission of the musicians in the ensemble to make a recording. It should be noted that any Thai classical musician is able to attend a funeral ceremony even if they did not know the person who has passed away, the caveat being that they must know at least one participating musician.

An important observation that I noted was that the repertoire of the *bua loy* ensemble which lasted for 20 minutes was played only once during the funeral ceremony - this was at the commencement of the cremation process. In the past it has been documented that the *bua loy* would be performed at the following times during the entire funeral ceremony i.e. 06.00, 12.00, 18.00 and 24.00. However, in the present day the *bua loy* ensemble will only perform during the mock cremation[4] on the cremation day itself.

4.1.2 Musical instruments

The *bua loy* has its own style of performance and a unique repertoire. The *bua loy* is rarely heard today and the small numbers of musicians who have the knowledge to play the suite are all men. The *bua loy* comprises only three musical instruments: one melodic (the *pi chawa*) and two percussion instruments (the *klong malayu* and the *meng*) as described below.

Pi chawa is a member of the four reed musical instrument family. It consists of two sections: the cylindrical body which is 20 cm in length and the lower bell or horn part which is 14 cm long. The instrument can be constructed either out of hardwood or ivory.

[4] The mock cremation can be attended by all of the mourners, whereas the actual cremation ceremony will only be populated by the deceased's family members, relatives and close friends.

The literal translation of its name in the Thai language is Java and this explains its origins. The Javanese are understood to have based the design of the *pi chawa* on an Indian instrument known as the *pi chanai.* Thai musicians began using the instrument in the late 14th - late 15th centuries in royal and army processions. The epic poem *Lilit Yuan Phai* makes reference to it. Nowadays, it is used in Thai fencing bouts and also the performances of the Javanese drama - Inao (Dhanit:2001:82-83).

Klong malayu[5] is an instrument comprised of two drums, one "male" and the other "female". The male which is called *tua phu* is characterised by a higher tone, whereas the female or *tua mia* features a lower tone. A wooden stick is employed to beat the right side of the drum (the larger face), whilst the palm of the musician's hand is used for the left side. The *klong malayu* has a lengthy and colourful history having been used in army processions in the past. According to Dhanit, the *klong malayu,* long considered an integral part of the *bua loy* ensemble, was used in army processions in the Ayutthaya period approximately 400 years ago. It is described in the old epic poem entitled *Khlong Phrayuha Yat-tra Phet Phuang* which was composed by Chao Phraya Phra Khlang (Hon) who lived in the late Ayutthaya period and early Rattanakosin period. I have provided the following translation: "The Malays march in procession with gongs and drums whose sounds waft through the air. The sweet, yet mournful sound of a single *pi* is heard. Columns of marching men alternate with female elephants" (ibid.:46-47).

The *klong malayu* has always featured in both auspicious occasions and funeral ceremonies. With respect to the former, one such example is the traditional robe offering ceremony whereby elephants and horses are marched by members of the Royal Family to a royal temple. However, since the early part of the Rattanakosin period (1782 onwards) the *klong malayu* has been employed exclusively for funeral ceremonies involving members of the Royal Family and has never been used to accompany auspicious occasions. Due to its lengthy association with funeral ceremonies, it is considered to be an inauspicious instrument (Morton:1976:112). The *klong malayu* features in both the *bua loy* and *piphat nanghong* ensembles.

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[5] Despite its name, the *klong malayu* has no Malay musical influences in respect of its role in the *bua loy* (a personal communication with Khru Peeb Konglaithong on 12 January 2014 at Ban Plainoen Palace).

Meng is a small gong which is played by using a round piece of wood. The length of the wood beater is 15cm and the width is 5cm. The approximate specifications of the actual instrument are as follows: the gong is 1cm thick and constructed out of brass with the circular surface 19cm in diameter. The inner circle of the *meng* is 6cm wide.

4.1.3 Repertoire of the suite

To appreciate the repertoire of the *bua loy* ensemble as it is performed in funeral rituals today, I have classified the different elements of the suite based on Khru Boonchouy Sovat's article titled "Bua Loy" presented to the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University on 30 September 1993. He breaks down the *bua loy* suite into eight stages, each evoking differing emotions for people involved in a funeral ritual.

1. "Rua Sam La" is an introductory piece and makes the participant in the ceremony feel grateful to be alive and to use their allotted time to do positive deeds.
2. "Bua Loy" creates a feeling of sadness among the participants in respect of the deceased.
3. "Nang Nai" is played to accompany the preparations to cremate the deceased.
4. "Rua La Diao" acknowledges the end of the cremation preparations.
5. "Fai Chum" focuses on the control of the fire being used in the cremation process.
6. "Reo" is played at a fast tempo in keeping with the actual cremation which is over very quickly.
7. "Rua La Diao" is repeated (see no.4) to signify the end of the cremation process.
8. "Nanghong" (*thang luang*[6] style) evokes a feeling of calmness as the deceased's spirit rises from the body following the cremation (Boonchouy:1993:9).

As well as Khru Boonchouy Sovat, Khru Therapon Noinit (1984:14-18) described the meaning of the *bua loy* suite as detailed below.

1. "Rua Sam La" has many meanings as follows:

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[6] It is sometimes referred to as *wat* Saket style.

1.1 This piece can be conveyed as paying respects to the Three Gems of Buddhism namely Buddha, Thamma and Sangkha.

1.2 It also illustrates the respect that living musicians have for the deceased master musicians who created the *bua loy* suite.

1.3 The actual sounds emitted by the *bua loy* ensemble, namely the loud drumming coupled with the mournful output of the oboe, create an atmosphere conducive to showing respect for the deceased.

2. "Bua Loy" is played by the *pi chawa* which emits sad sounds. This piece stimulates the participants to mourn for the deceased and allows them to recall an act of merit by the deceased which they carried out when they were alive.
3. "Nang Nai" is played to demonstrate the pride that the deceased's families have in the contributions of their loved ones whilst they were alive. This piece addresses the issue of whether the deceased will go to hell or heaven which is dependent on their karma.
4. "Rua La Diao"[7]. This piece is similar to the first one, "Rua Sam La", in terms of the pattern of the basic melodies. "Rua La Diao" will be performed on two occasions during the ritual (see no. 7) whereas "Rua Sam La" will be showcased three times in various styles. The meaning of the piece is to show forgiveness to the deceased in respect of bad acts that they may have carried out whilst they were alive.
5. "Fai Chum" focuses on the burning fire emanating from the deceased's body during the cremation and conveys sad emotions for the mourners over their loss.
6. "Reo" is played at a fast tempo in keeping with the actual cremation itself which is over very quickly.
7. "Rua La Diao". This piece is played in a different style to how it is performed earlier in the ritual (see no. 4). It signifies the final act of reflection amongst the mourners towards the deceased, concentrating on the fact that the friends and relatives will no longer have an opportunity to see the deceased and allowing them to forgive each other for the bad deeds that both parties may have committed. The piece also focuses on the mourners seeking reassurance

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[7] The word *la* in Thai music terms means an ending, whereas *diao* means one. This piece indicates the act of clasping one's hands together, known as the *wai,* in a display of gratitude from the mourners to the deceased for one last time.

for their loss in the knowledge that the acts of merit making and good deeds undertaken by the deceased will remain in the world.

8. "Nanghong" (*thang luang* style) represents the soul of the deceased rising to heaven and hoping that there will be a next world in which everyone is reunited. The piece evokes a wish for the deceased's soul to be placed in heaven.

"Nanghong" (*thang luang* style)

Unknown

Musical Example 1: An excerpt of a basic melody of "Nanghong" (*thang luang* style) from the *bua loy* suite. I have transcribed the above into Western notation from the Thai alphabet notation as documented by Khru Therapon Noinit (1999:24).

Khru Therapon also mentioned that in the past there were two more pieces of music that were added to the *bua loy* suite - "Kadidi" for which there is no meaning and "Raeng Kraphue Pik", which literally means a vulture flapping its wings. The second piece evokes a scene whereby this enormous bird arrives from heaven to seize the deceased's soul and then flies back with it to heaven. The melody and rhythms of both pieces are very fast and lively and are performed when participants gather to walk up to the crematorium prior to the cremation. Very few musicians have ever received sufficient knowledge to learn how to play these pieces. Consequently, they have disappeared from the *bua loy* suite. The author claims that this is due to the concept of *huang wicha*. He states that musicians were afraid to play this music in public, because they believed that

listeners would steal or modify the melodies. This discouraged them from performing these pieces live and made them reluctant to transfer their knowledge of this music to other musicians.

I can confirm that there are at least four music schools in Bangkok that have the capability to perform the *bua loy* suite. These are as follows: Phraya Sanoduriyang, Luang Pradit Phairo, Phraya Prasan Duriyasap and Meun Tuntrikanchenchit. A fifth school, Phatthayakoson, used to be one of the leading practitioners of the *bua loy* but unfortunately, due to the fact that teaching of the music was not transmitted to recent generations, the *bua loy* has disappeared from the school. One of the main reasons for this might be due to the practice of *huang wicha* (guarding musical knowledge) which is also a custom of other Asian countries such as Indonesia and India. *Huang wicha* will be discussed in depth in chapter 5. The author Chaivud also makes reference to the fact that much of the musical content of the *bua loy* had disappeared, stating that this was due to the lack of opportunities available to musicians to perform this suite. Thai musicians tend to be very superstitious and due to the fact the *bua loy* suite is entirely concerned with the concept of death, they fear that performing this music will bring them ill fortune (Chaivud:2002:88).

Up until recently, it had seemed that the *bua loy* ensemble would disappear altogether from Thai society. Its presence had waned, due to firstly, the concept of *huang wicha*, with its association in respect of pieces that concern themselves with death, and secondly the ever decreasing range of opportunities to perform. However, as a result of the efforts of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, a revival of the *bua loy* ensemble has meant that it should endure for future generations.

In 1996, the *bua loy* ensemble surfaced at the royal funeral of HM the King's mother. In fact there were actually two ensembles that played. However, there was only a small number of musicians all of whom were senior in years. The revival of the *bua loy* really gained momentum in 2008 when HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn ordered the performance of the *bua loy* ensemble to feature in the funeral of HM the King's sister. Prior to the ensemble fulfilling its role in the actual cremation itself, the Fine Arts Department under the direction of Khru Sirichaichan Farchamroon (the musical advisor

to HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn), authorised the *wai khru* ritual to be performed for the purpose of transferring knowledge of the *bua loy* from senior musicians to a newly selected younger generation. Although today more musicians have the opportunity to learn the *bua loy* suite, only a small number are able to perform its repertoire competently due to the high level of skills and maturity required. During my interview with Khru Sirichaichan in July 2010, he commented on the circumstances that led to the significant decision to pass on the musical knowledge associated with *bua loy* repertoire.

> "... before 2008, the knowledge of *bua loy* was still mysterious, that's why many musicians were stealing knowledge by recording and transcribing melodies without first receiving permission from the *bua loy* senior musicians. They may have transcribed inaccurately which therefore means they will not be able to perform an authentic version of the *bua loy* repertoire. If they learn from teachers of the *bua loy*, do not copy from tapes or CDs, and then they will understand the repertoire correctly. Thai music is best learnt through an "interactive" process instead of the students resorting to CDs and tapes. Moreover, learning from those sources is not something that fits into Thai culture. In 2008, many senior musicians from the Department of Fine Arts considered that it was now an appropriate time to become more serious about learning and transmitting the knowledge contained within the *bua loy* repertoire. (Interview with Sirichaicharn Farchamroon on 7 July 2010).

The beneficiaries of this initiative were officers from the Fine Arts Department and music teachers from the College of Dramatic Arts. These were young people who had demonstrated a high level of technical skill and had the maturity to learn about the mysteries of the *bua loy*. Whilst the *bua loy* is currently enjoying a revival, there is still only a very small proportion of musicians who can say that they have performed in this ensemble. This is due to the complexity and technical challenges that the *bua loy* presents to a musician wishing to learn its repertoire.

4.2 *Piphat nanghong* ensemble

4.2.1 History of the *piphat nanghong*

The term *piphat* has many meanings in Thai music. I will detail these below:

1. It is always used as a prefix when referring to the range of musical instruments which are played by using hands or sticks, would include the *ranat ek*, the *ranat thum*, and *klong that*. This group is known collectively as the "*piphat* instruments".

2. It is a generic name for an ensemble. The other generic names being *khrueang sai* and *mahori.*
3. It can be employed to describe the person who plays the group of instruments which were described in point 1, as in a *piphat* player.
4. It is used to describe seven different types of ensemble which comprise various instruments and functions as detailed below:

   4.1 *Piphat chatri* - accompanies the *nora*, a Thai folk dance performed in the South of Thailand and also *chatri,* a Southern drama dance.

   4.2 *Piphat phithi* - always performs at religious ceremonies as well as accompanying *khon* (Thai masked dance).

   4.3 *Piphat sepha* - performs at auspicious ceremonies and competitions.

   4.4 *Piphat mai nuam* - featured in Thai dance-drama and also auspicious occasions such as weddings and house warming ceremonies.

   4.5 *Piphat nanghong* - this ensemble is used in Thai cremation ceremonies.

   4.6 *Piphat duek damban* - accompanies the *duek damban* dance drama.

   4.7 *Piphat mon* - exclusively performs at Thai funeral rituals.
5. *Piphat* is used to classify a group of particular songs i.e. the *piphat* repertoire which is distinct from the *mahori* and *khrueang sai* repertoires.
6. It prefixes the name of musical competitions. For example, *piphat prachan* means a competition solely for the *piphat sepha* ensemble.

Every Thai ensemble was originally created by a music master for a specific purpose. The *piphat nanghong* is no exception and its “raison d’être” was to provide musical accompaniment for funeral ceremonies. The earliest evidence of the term “*piphat nanghong*” was documented along with the term “*bua loy*” in Prince Damrong’s book entitled *Tamnan Khrueang Mahori Piphat* written in 1928 (Damrong, Prince:1930:16). It is interesting to note that in the English version of the book published in 1931, the term “*piphat nanghong*” and “*bua loy*” were both omitted, the reason for which remains unclear. Historical records point to the *piphat nanghong* being formed as the result of a combination of the *piphat* and *bua loy* ensembles (Montri:1991:12). It made its first appearance during the Rattanakosin period at the end of King Rama III’s reign (r.1824-1851) (Jutamas:1997:205)[8].

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[8] For more information refer to page 82 in chapter 2.

Figure 18: The *piphat nanghong* ensemble being performed at Buengthonglang temple by musicians from the Music Division of the Royal Thai Army.

Before Mon music rose to prominence, the *piphat nanghong* was considered to be the most popular ensemble in Thailand with respect to funeral occasions. Its importance cannot be underestimated in the context of Thai society where "Thai music is distinctively linked with the people and clearly reflects the Thai way of life" (Manop: 2003:94). It plays an important role in many aspects of Thai life from celebrating the birth of a child through to the death of an individual. " Music has been central to Thai funerals for centuries, and playing at funerals has long been an important source of work for musicians and, along with monks' ordination rituals, continues to form the bulk of most musicians' engagements" (Wong:1998:105).

From a musical perspective, I will now examine how the *piphat nanghong* ensemble came into being. The final piece of music within the *bua loy* suite, entitled "Nanghong" (*thang luang* style), played a crucial role in the emergence of the *piphat nanghong*. This particular piece is led by the *pi chawa* and is accompanied by a drum pattern known as *nathap*[9] *nanghong*. In addition to the pair of *malayu* drums providing the rhythm, there is a *meng* which keeps the beat for the ensemble. The foundations of the *piphat nanghong* can be traced back to a time when Thai music masters adapted the melody played by the *pi chawa* in order that it could be performed by the *khong wong yai.* This instrument which is a large gong-circle is the main instrument underpinning the basic melodies

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[9] *Nathap* is a term generally used to refer to the pattern of Thai drumming.

played in the *piphat* ensemble. In effect, what we have here is a piece of music from the *bua loy* being adapted to be played in the style of the instrument pivotal to the *piphat*. It should be noted that the piece entitled “Nanghong” (*thang luang* style), from the *pi chawa*, once adapted is known as “Phram Kep Hua Waen”.

Department of Fine Arts 2008

Musical Example 2: An excerpt of a basic melody of “Phram Kep Hua Waen” documented by the Department of Fine Arts.

In order to create the “Phleng Rueang[10] Nanghong”[11] for the *piphat nanghong* ensemble, a number of other pieces of music from various sources played in a *song chan* (level 2) style[12] were assembled. The running order played by the *piphat nonghong* ensemble was as follows: “Phram Kep Hua Waen” (this piece of music originated from the final segment of the *bua loy* suite - “Nanghong”), “Sao Sot Waen”, “Krabok Thong”, “Khu Malaeng Wan Thong” and lastly “Malaeng Wan Thong”.

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[10] *Phleng rueang* is a ceremonial suite and normally does not feature a vocal. It is played in a combination of moderate (*song chan* – level 2) and fast tempo (*chan diao* – level 1). The *phleng rueang* is performed mainly at auspicious ceremonies except for the “Phleng Rueang Nanghong” which is used exclusively for funeral ceremonies. Khru Pichit Chaiseri (1992:76) claimed that the “*phleng rueang* is very useful for music students as part of their education as it helps them memorise lengthy pieces of music”. *Phleng rueang* is also a term used to classify many different types of ceremonial suites of music. In addition, I have heard claims that in the present day there are over 40 different suites of *phleng rueang*.

[11] For the full notation of “Phleng Rueang Nanghong” see pages 276-279.

[12] The second out of three levels of a *thao*. The *thao* is a form of musical repertoire and composition. Its structure consists of a slow tempo in the beginning (*sam chan* - level 3), which speeds up to a moderate tempo (*song chan* - level 2), and finally ends with a fast tempo (*chan diao* - level 1) and *luk mot* (presto coda) respectively.

According to Khru Therapon Nionit (1999:34), the "Nanghong" suite was composed by Phra Pradit Phairo[13] (Mi Duriyangkun) during the latter part of King Rama III's reign (r.1824-1851). He used as his sources three renowned and respected musicians, namely Khru Samran Keotphol, Khru Chua Dontrirot and Khru Tuean Phatthayakul, all of whom agreed that Phra Pradit Phairo was the composer of the suite. The five pieces of music that comprise the *nanghong* suite all feature the same tempo and have a similar melody. "Nanghong"'s title is derived from the name of the drum pattern that it employs, which is known as *nathap nanghong*. As well as the aforementioned three musicians, Khru Montri Tramot and Wichien Kunlatan have also endorsed the view that the name of the drum pattern was the overriding factor in determining the title of this suite (Montri and Wichien:1980:358).

In Thai contemporary society, it is not only the *bua loy* that is rarely heard today but indeed also the *piphat nanghong*. This is borne out by Myers-Moro's claim that "...one example of an ensemble type which is tightly tied to context is the *wong piiphaat naang hong*, an ensemble rarely played today. Its role was to play music at cremation ceremonies, and this role is virtually filled today by the *piiphaat maun*. The ensemble's instrumentation is similar to that of the *piiphaat khryang khuu* (medium size) but includes another kind of *pii*, the *pii chaawaa* (Javanese *pii*), and the *khaung* maalaajuu. The *piiphaat naang hong* has its own repertoire, which is not played by any other kind of ensemble..." (Myers-Moro:1993:49). I would like to add to the statement above by confirming that at the time this book was published, the *piphat mon* ensemble was already incorporating pieces of music from the *piphat nanghong* repertoire and playing them on their own distinctive Mon instruments. Amongst the pieces performed by the *piphat mon* which originated from the *piphat nanghong* repertoire were "Phleng Rueang Kanlaya Yiam Hong", "Phleng Rueang Phirom Surang" as well as the *nanghong* suite.

Traditionally, each Thai suite of music will be prefixed with the words *phleng rueang*. It is also true to say that the title of each suite is derived from the name of the first piece to be performed. For example, "Phleng Rueang Chin Sae", the first piece of this particular suite is entitled "Chin Sae". There are examples of names given to a particular *phleng rueang* which derive from the activities being performed at a particular

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[13] He is also known as Khru Mi Khaek and was a great Thai composer and musician who lived during the reigns of Rama II-V (in the 19th century).

time. For instance, “Phleng Rueang Ching Phra Chan” refers to the act of eating and is performed when monks are consuming food. Other types of “Phleng Rueang” derive their names from the most important pieces in the suite. This can be illustrated by the “Phleng Rueang Phleng Yao” suite whereby the key composition “Phleng Yao” appears throughout this particular suite. A final example of the origins of the name given to a specific *phleng rueang* is in respect of the “Phleng Rueang Nanghong”. This name can be attributed to the drum pattern used to accompany the *nanghong* suite. Pornprapit Phoasavadi also mentioned that “the *phleng rueang* is only played by the *piphat* musicians and is only composed to be played by a *piphat* ensemble. When the *piphat* ensemble played the *phleng rueang*, it was called *wong piphat phithi* or *piphat phithi* ensemble. This is because the *phleng rueang* accompanies only rituals and ceremonies, especially those involving religious performances. The *phleng rueang* is a form of suite encompassing a corpus of songs without lyrics and singing parts that focuses on internal balance and complexity through melodic and instrumental motion” (Pornprapit:2005:92).

In 1994, a year after Myers-Moro published her book and unaware of its content, I embarked on a research document in respect of the history and performance structure of the *piphat nanghong*. My research uncovered five significant characteristics of the *piphat nanghong*:

1. To be effective the performers must be united.
2. They must have equal abilities, wisdom, and excellent memories due to the length and number of pieces that they have to learn.
3. There must be a professional director to conduct and arrange as well as select pieces from the repertoire. It is important that each presentation is unique and should not be imitated.
4. Performances are rare due to the technical difficulties of performing the repertoire’s tempo and scale.
5. The decline in the number of *piphat nanghong* performances is in direct contrast to the ascendency of the *piphat mon* (Jutamas:1997:abstract page).

The complexity and beauty of the *piphat nanghong* makes it an intriguing and much sought after target for aspiring Thai musicians. According to Khru Saman Noinit, “whoever gains the *nanghong* suites, then becomes a smart and valuable person” (ibid.:68). This is the reason why many Thai musicians have tried to maintain and protect

their knowledge of the suites and do not teach or perform this repertoire. As the concept of “stealing knowledge” has spread amongst Thai musicians who copy music from tapes, CDs and videos, this has become a huge concern for master musicians.

4.2.2 Musical instruments

The instruments used in the *piphat nanghong* replicate those used in the Thai *piphat phithi* ensemble, with the exception of the *pi nai* which is replaced by the *pi chawa* (I have already discussed the instrument earlier in this chapter) and also the *taphon* which is replaced by the pair of *klong malayu* drums. The ensemble requires a very high level of technical expertise from its performers who must play as a very cohesive unit. Normally, the standard size of the ensemble consists of the following instruments:

1 *pi chawa* [14] – a Javanese oboe
1 *ranat ek* – high-pitched Thai xylophone
1 *ranat thum* – low-pitched Thai xylophone
1 *khong wong yai* – a large gong-circle
1 *khong wong lek* – a small gong-circle
A pair of *malayu* drums – a pair of Malayan drums
1 *ching* – a pair of small hand cymbals
1 *chap yai* – a pair of large-sized cymbals
1 *chap lek* – a pair of small-sized cymbals
1 *krap* – a wooden clapper
1 *mong* – a medium-sized gong

Occasionally, the *klong that* will be used to accompany the *nanghong* suite instead of the *malayu* drums.

[14] Khru Boonchouy Sovat believes that in the past Thai musicians used the *pi nok tam* (a Thai oboe, shaped similar to the *pi nai* although smaller in size), rather than the *pi chawa*. He gave me an example citing the “Tap Nang Loy” and “Tap Phrom Mat” which is performed as part of the *nanghong* performance during the chanting day. It is technically very difficult to play the *chawa* oboe in these pieces which is why the *pi nok tam* is preferred. Unfortunately, the *pi nok tam* itself is heard infrequently nowadays as there are only a limited number of actual instruments currently in existence (Personal communication during my study with Khru Boonchouy Sovat at Chulalongkorn University).

Figure 19: *Piphat nanghong*- this illustration represents the *khrueang khu* version which is the most popular ensemble size[15].

4.2.3 Repertoire of songs

The most distinctive feature of this ensemble is not the instruments themselves, but the pitch levels employed (known as *thang* in Thai). The pitch level utilised for the *nanghong* ensemble is called *thang phiang o bon* (sometimes known as *thang nok tam*). The author Khru Montri Tramot (1997:63-64) wrote about the significance of the term *thang* in the context of Thai classical music. As well as being a generic term for the seven pitch levels which are utilised in Thai classical music, it also has two other meanings which I have detailed below:

1. *Thang* can refer to a specific style of playing which covers all the major melodic instruments that feature in Thai ensembles.
2. *Thang* is also used to describe the specific individual style of the teacher. For example, an ensemble leader may instruct his musicians to perform a piece of music in the *thang* of Khru A (in the style of teacher A). Even though a

[15] There are two other variations namely the *khrueang ha* and the *khrueang yai*. The former is the smallest in size and consists of only the *pi chawa,* the *ranat ek*, the *khong wong yai*, a pair of *malayu* drums and the *ching*. The latter is the largest version of the *piphat nanghong* and contains all of the instruments that feature in the *khrueang khu,* with the addition of the *ranat ek lek* and the *ranat thum lek***.**

musician may be asked to play his instrument in the style of teacher A, he can still improvise depending on his musical education and experience.

Khru Montri also mentioned *thang* (pitch level) in respect of it being used as the name for the seven pitch levels of Thai classical music. These pitch levels are based on the sound emitted from the pitch of the 10th to 16th gongs of the *khong wong yai* (a large gong-circle) from left to right. In ascending order I have detailed the seven pitch levels, the ensembles, theatrical forms, tonic and equivalent Western notation below:

No.	*Thang* (pitch levels)	Ensemble	Theatrical forms	Gong-circle number	Diatonic scale in Western pitch name
1	*phiang o lang*	*piphat mainuam*[16]	*lakhon duekdamban*[17]	10	F
2	*Nai*	*piphat*	*lakhon nai, lakhon nok*[18] (traditional Thai dances) and *khon* (the masked dance)	11	G
3	*Klang*	*piphat*	*nangyai* (shadow puppet) and *khon* (masked dance)	12	A
4	*phiang o bon*	*mahori*, *khrueang sai* and *piphat nanghong*	n/a	13	B^b

[16] One of the most important features of the *piphat mainuam* ensemble is the use of soft sticks. Also, *khlui phiang o* (a Thai recorder) and *so u* (a low-pitched Thai fiddle) will be added to provide a soft sound which is the main characteristic of this type of ensemble.

[17] A kind of traditional Thai dance which was popular during the reigns of Kings Rama VI-VII (r.1910-1935) and other Thai dances, which are performed by the *piphat mainuam* ensemble (a strand of the *piphat* ensemble).

[18] A male only traditional dance in the past.

5	*Kruat*	accompanies a style of singing known as *sepha*	*lakhon nok*	14	C
6	*klang haep*	rarely used in any ensemble today	previously employed in Thai shadow puppet plays	15	D
7	*Chawa*	*khrueang sai pi chawa*	n/a	16	E

Some detail obtained from Montri Tramot (1997:63-64) and Myers-Moro(1993:84) with additional commentary from me.

Typically, the *nanghong* repertoire is played in the pitch level of *thang phiang o bon* and also that of the *thang chawa* which suit the *pi chawa.* However, the remaining instruments of the ensemble such as the *ranat ek* and the *khong wong yai,* have to adapt the melodies that they play in order to conform to these two particular pitch levels. In particular, the *thang chawa* pitch level represents a very difficult challenge for musicians who are required to display great skill and wisdom in order to master it. It does not mean, however, that musicians have to play in the same pitch level for the entire length of the suite being performed. In Thai classical music, composers often include many different pitch levels in a particular piece. It should be noted that each piece of music will employ one main pitch level which is deemed to be the focal point of the piece with other keys operating around the main pitch level.

Today, the *nanghong* consists of several different suites. A unique aspect of the *nanghong* is that the musical director can select different pieces from the repertoire to make his own versions of the *nanghong*. Other repertoires of Thai music suites are not as flexible, particularly in respect of music played for auspicious occasions. The content of these suites tends to be fixed in terms of the running order and the particular pieces performed. The repertoire of the *nanghong* is characterised by two distinctly different styles. The first and indeed the most popular style is in the form of question and answer (*luk lo luk khat*). The second involves improvisation on the part of the musicians, resulting in very lively renditions of the suite, with the performers occasionally “realising

a melody" (*damneon thamnong*)[19]. In respect of this research, I have uncovered nine different forms of *nanghong*[20] repertoire.

Form 1

nanghong suite *song chan*

Form 2

phleng sam chan[21]	*phleng reo*[22]	*luk mot*[23]

Form 3

phleng sam chan	*phleng reo*	*phleng phasa*	*luk mot*

Form 4

nanghong sam chan	*phleng sam chan* either in the style of question and answer (*luk lo luk khat*) or realising a melody (*damneon thamnong*)	*phleng reo*	*phleng phasa* with vocal	*luk mot*

[19] Francis Silkstone (1993:20-21) translated the phrase *damneon thamnong* as "realising a melody" referring to "compositions in which the performer can find his own way".
[20] During my research for a Master's Degree at Chulalongkorn University, I noted in my case study that the Desbala ensemble was recorded featuring 23 suites of music from the *nanghong* repertoire. This represents a valuable musical document belonging to the Centre of Culture of Chulalongkorn University, although unfortunately several of the tape reels were damaged and poorly maintained.
[21] The first of the three levels of *thao*.
[22] This is a type of Thai composition which is played in a fast tempo. It is accompanied by drums, with the *song mai* drum pattern normally being used.
[23] *Luk mot* is a piece of music which is performed directly after the main theme. *Luk mot* (presto coda) is always played after *chan diao* (level 1) to signal that the piece is going to come to an end.

Form 5

Either *sam chan* or *song chan* in the style of question and answer (*luk lo luk khat*). Must not be played in a restricted style[24]	*phleng reo*	*phleng phasa*	*luk mot*

Form 6

phleng sam chan or *song chan* either in the style of question and answer (*luk lo luk khat*) or realising a melody (*damneon thamnong*). Must not be played in a restricted style	*phleng reo*	*phleng ching*[25]	*phleng reo*	*phleng sipsong phasa* with vocal	*luk mot*

[24] A restricted style is known in Thai classical music as *phleng kro* whereby the percussion instruments use the techniques of *kro* (tremolo) to play the melody. Usually, musicians are not allowed to improvise when they play in this style and therefore the melodic instruments such as the *ranat ek* and the *khong wong yai* follow closely the basic melody of the piece. Examples of a restricted style can be seen in the compositions "Khamen Saiyok" and "Saen Kham Nueng".

[25] *Phleng ching* is a type of Thai composition which is played in a fast tempo. Instead of being accompanied by drums, it employs the *ching* (a pair of cymbals) only.

Each *nanghong* suite, if played correctly, should employ a different version of the *phleng ching* to accompany each individual suite. If a musician repeats the same *phleng ching* for multiple *nanghong* suites, this will be considered to be a sign of limited knowledge, experience and wisdom.

Form 7

phleng nanghong song chan in the style of question and answer (*luk lo luk khat*) or realising a melody (*damneon thamnong*). Must not be played in a restricted style	*phleng song chan* in the style of *song mai* drum pattern. For example, compositions such as "Thale Ba", "Ok Thale" and "Thorani Rong Hi"	*phleng reo*	*luk mot*

Form 8

phleng nanghong hok chan in a solo version for each melodic musical instrument except the *pi chawa*	*phleng nanghong song chan*	*phleng reo*	*luk mot*

Form 9

phleng sam chan either in the style of question and answer (*luk lo luk khat*) or realising a	*phleng reo*	*phleng ching*	*phleng sipsong phasa* with vocal	*luk mot*

melody (*damneon thamnong*) such as "Thep Ban Thom". Must not be played in the restricted style such as "Nam Lot Tai Sai"				

As the above illustration shows, one can see that most forms of the *nanghong* repertoire will include either *phleng phasa* or *phleng sipsong phasa* before ending with a traditional short piece of Thai classical music known as *luk mot.* With respect to the meaning of the term *phleng phasa*, *phleng* normally refers to "composition" or "song", whilst *phasa* literally means "language". Collectively, the term *phleng phasa* describes "a foreign musical tone in Thai music". The music falling under the umbrella of this term will always contain the characteristics and style of performance of a particular country which has influenced Thai music. Historically, Thai musicians have incorporated melodies derived from foreign influences into their own compositions to create something new. On occasion, Thai musicians have adapted a foreign piece of music either in its entirety or using some part of the melody and performed it using their own instruments whilst at the same time employing Thai drum and rhythmic patterns. As such *phleng phasa* can best be described here as Thai music containing foreign musical influences. Thai musicians are taught to recognise each foreign individual style of music by its *samniang*, a term which refers to the "accent" employed in a particular composition. *Samniang* will vary depending upon the melodic "phrase" or "sentence" containing the imitation of the distinctive musical and melodic character of a particular nation, continent or ethnic race e.g. China, Europe and Mon. Myers-Moro's interpretation of *phasa* is that "the word differentiates an actual song type" contrasting with "…the *phleng phasa* most fully demonstrate a given *samniang*; really, the difference between the two is a matter of degree…" (Myers-Moro:1993:79-80). As well as Myers-Moro (1988), other

ethnomusicologists such as Panya Roongruang (1990) have written about *samniang* and *phleng phasa* and provided musical examples.

Thai musicians have traditionally incorporated stereotypical elements from each foreign nation into their music. For example, Chinese music is always characterised by the presence of the *klong* and large cymbals - *chap yai*. This music is always played loudly in keeping with the way that Chinese people conduct their music performances. With respect to playing *phleng phasa* in a European accent, Thai musicians will base their performances on a marching style utilising a large bass drum, snare drum and large cymbals to get close to replicating Western marching music. In my experience, Thai musicians have been unable to interpret the European style of music by deploying a symphony orchestra. This is due to the fact that the Thai scale does not have semi tones, sharps and flats as is the case with Western music.

The term *phleng sipsong phasa* is the collective name of the 12 foreign musical languages that feature in Thai classical music compositions. The *phleng sipsong phasa* is an important element of the *nanghong* suite repertoire and in Khru Montri's handout in respect of the *History of Thai Music*, he stated that "the *phleng sipsong phasa* is the most enjoyable musical sequence of the Thai funeral ceremony" (Montri:13:NP). *Phleng sipsong phasa* is very popular among Thai *piphat* players and also in respect of the musicians who perform in the *nanghong* ensemble. Nowadays, it is also popular with *piphat mon* musicians as it can be adapted to the songs that comprise the *piphat mon* ensemble. It should be noted that some Thai musical schools include fewer than 12 foreign languages, while others have a repertoire of up to 15. However, it should be reemphasised that the term *phleng sipsong phasa* is used universally to describe a collection of foreign musical languages. On occasions one can hear Thai musicians using the term *phleng ok phasa* to describe the transition of completing a Thai originated piece of music before entering into a foreign musical style.

Sangat Phukhaothong in his book *Kan Dontri Thai Lae Thang Khao Su Dontri Thai* reproduces the list of 12 foreign languages formulated by Nim Pho-im. I have detailed these below:

Foreign groups		***Phleng sipsong phasa***
1. Khaek Sikhs (Indian Sikhs)	=	"Khaek Chao-sen"

2. Khaek Chawa (Javanese) = "Ta-khreng or Sarama"
3. Phama (Burmese) = "Phama Ram Kwan"
4. Mon (Mon, formerly known as Raman) = "Mon Kla"
5. Lao (Laotian) = "Lao Kra-sae"
6. Khamen (Cambodian) = "Khamen Om Tuek"
7. Yuan (Vietnamese) = "Yuan Ram Phat"
8. Farang (Western) = "Yo Salam"
9. Chin (Chinese) = "Chin Ho Hae"
10. Khaek Ka-reng = "Khaek Ka-reng"
11. Kha (a group residing in the South of Thailand) = "Worachet"
12. Tarung (ditto) = "Sat Chatri"

(Sangat Phukhaothong:1989:208)

Somphop Phirom who was a student at the Luang Pradit Phiro Music School has a different interpretation of *phleng sipsong phasa* which I have reproduced below:

Foreign groups	*Phleng sipsong phasa*	The meaning of the lyrics
1. Thai	"Krao Nok"	Represents preparation for war, the lyrics were taken from the Khun Chang Khun Phan story.
2. Khaek	"Krao Khaek"	Preparing the troops to fight against the Mon tribe.
3. Gn-iew	"Sele Mao"	The act of flirting with a woman.
4. Chin (Chinese)	"Chin Khim Lek" and "Chin Chai Yo"	Describing the Sam Kok story or as it is better known Romance of the Three Kingdoms. The excerpt mentions Khong Beng playing the *khim* – a dulcimer on the wall.
5. Khamen (Cambodian)	"Khamen Luang"	- the lyrics are taken from the story of Phra Rueang.

	"Khamen Reo"	- describing the angry actions of Khun Man, a demon.
6. Talung	"Krao Talung"	From the story of Manora – a story of a woman who is half human and half bird and who falls in love with a prince.
7. Yuan (Vietnamese)	"Yuan Wang De" and "Yuan Thot Hae"	The lyrics are in Vietnamese and there is no translation of the meaning.
8. Lao	"Lao Chiang"	The Prince of Chiang Mai prepares himself to fight for his beloved woman.
9. Phama (Burmese)	"Krao Ram Phama" or it is known as "Thung Le"	The lyrics tell the story of a Burmese person who enters Thailand and becomes the head of a village. He plays the *klong yao*, the long drum that represents Burmese culture, becoming well-known for his fast drumming.
10. Mon	"Phaya Lam Phong"	Preparing the troops to fight.
11. Khaek	"Khaek Yawap"	The lyrics come from an ancient Indian story for which there is no translation.
12. Farang (Western)	"Marching to Georgia" and "Farang Yihem"	The lyrics are in old English – I have been unable to find a translation of the meaning.
13. Chawa (Javanese)	"Karat Kaya", "Kadiri" and "Bukan Tamo"	The lyrics are in Javanese – likewise no translation available.

(Jutamas:1997:51-59)

The singers of the *phleng sipsong phasa* are mostly men rather than women because the songs are relevant to fighting in wars and the art of flirting. These songs are sung with a great deal of emotion and passion and are performed in a lively and fast tempo. I interviewed Khru Boonchouy Sovat for the purpose of establishing the precise number of different songs that are used to introduce the *piphat nanghong* suite. The literary source that I used in conjunction with my interview with Khru Boonchouy was a book entitled *Fang Lae Khao Chai Phleng Thai* [26] - the Thai edition edited by Khru Montri Tramot and Wichien Kunlatan (1980). There are approximately 247 songs contained within *Fang Lae Khao Chai Phleng Thai*. The songs in the book can be divided into two categories: *phleng kret* (general songs) and *phleng luk lo luk khat* (question and answer style). All of the songs that feature in the book can be used as the introductory piece of the *piphat nanghong* suite. I questioned Khru Boonchouy in respect of *phleng kro* (tremolo style) and as to whether this has ever been employed in respect of the introduction to the *piphat nanghong* and he responded by saying that "whilst it was technically possible, the tremolo style is considered inappropriate for the occasion. It is characterised by being rather slow and languid whereas the occasion demands lively musical performances" (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 12 October 2011). The most popular introductory songs of the *piphat nanghong* suite tend to be performed in a "question and answer" style (known as *luk lo luk khat*) and include "Phirom Surang", "Kanlaya Yiam Hong", "A Hia", " A Nu", "Thep Nimit" and "Thep Run Chaun".

In a performance of *phleng sipsong phasa*, the musical instruments played represent each featured nation. For example, the *taphon mon* and *pi mon* reflect the Mon accent, the *chap yai* and *klong tok* the Chinese accent and finally the Western drum and *chap yai* represent the Farang (Western) accent. There are some instruments that are used in performances of the *phleng sipsong phasa* which many Thais considered to be foreign in origin, hence the name given to instruments such as the Javanese oboe. This instrument, according to musicians from Java, has no connection to their country and its origin remains unknown. However, some instruments connected to the ensemble most definitely have their roots in foreign nations, such as the snare drum and bass drum which

[26] The book mentions many songs whose names begin with foreign prefix e.g. Mon=6 (in total), Ngiew= 1, Lao=11, Khamen=17, Khaek Mon=3, Chin=11, Yuan=1, Khaek=13, Yipun=1, Phama=4, Farang=3, Khom=6.

originated from Europe. I will list the musical instruments of each nation as used in the context of a Thai musical performance.

Foreign groups	The musical instruments which typically represent a particular foreign accent and style.
1. Thai	Thai ensemble, *taphon* and *klong that*
2. Gn-iew	*mong* (a gong)
3. Chin (Chinese)	*klong tok* (a small drum), *ching, chap yai* and *so duang*
4. Khamen (Cambodian)	*klong tuk* (a pair of small barrel-shaped drums)
5. Talung	*thon chatri* (a pair of small goblet-shaped drums)
6. Yuan (Vietnamese)	*mong* (a gong)
7. Laos	a pair of *klong khaek* drums
8. Phama (Burmese)	*klong yao* - can be translated literary as a long drum. It is in fact a long goblet-shaped drum.
9. Mon	*taphon mon, peong mang khok, khong mon* and *pi mon*
10. Khaek	a pair of *klong khaek* drums
11. Farang (Western)	snare drum and bass drum
12. Chawa (Javanese)	*pi chawa*

Historically, although Siam had contact with other peoples in the 13th century by way of trade, diplomatic relations and visiting missionaries, they did not share in each others musical culture. During the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767), Khru Montri Tramot (1984:30) wrote that many foreign nationals came to Siam. Therefore, it is not surprising that this era saw the emergence of compositions characterised by a foreign accent such as "Mon Plaeng" (Mon accent), and "Farang Thon Samo" (European accent). During this period, there were many songs that referred to the relationship between Laotians, Mons, Khmers and Thais. Most of these songs were of Thai origin in which the old master tried to imitate the accent of the other languages and create new songs. As Khru Montri commented "…Having grasped the spirit and the themes of the foreign music, Thai

musicians began to compose their own music, using the traditional Thai melodies but giving to them the new foreign "accents" or themes or sometimes introducing short parts from the foreign music into their new compositions. These pieces, composed after contact had been made with foreign peoples, were given the names of various nationalities, by way of briefing the listeners to the national themes or accents which have been employed…" (Montri:1996:10). Therefore, it can be clearly seen that the addition of both the "question and answer" style (known as *luk lo luk khat*) and foreign accents to the *nanghong* repertoire has resulted in a more lively style of performance, which is a reflection of the traditional Thai practice of celebrating the life of the deceased person.

4.2.4 Ritual and performance

In this section, I will examine the performance of the *piphat nanghong*. I will provide a case study of the *piphat nanghong*'s role during the whole of the cremation ceremony at Bangtoei temple.

On Tuesday 24 November 2009, whilst on the way to visit my father I drove my car via the temple and by chance I heard some music being performed at the Bangtoei temple. It was about 3.00 pm; I parked my car within close vicinity of the temple, and then proceeded to take out my video, tape recorder and my note book. It quickly became apparent that it might be difficult and uncomfortable for the musicians if I asked to record their performance, given my sudden unexpected arrival and also due to the fact that I had never previously met, let alone interacted with them before. I introduced myself to a man who I now know to be the head of this group. He immediately agreed to give me an interview and also allowed me to record the event on video.

The *piphat nanghong* that I observed on this day did not contain the full complement of instruments normally associated with the ensemble. The one instrument that did not feature was a small gong-circle (*khong wong lek*). Nowadays, the *khong wong lek* is considered to be less important to the overall sound of the ensemble. The name given to this version of the *piphat nanghong* is *na chua*. This term refers to the triangular shape in which the three main instruments are set up, namely the *ranat ek*, the *ranat thum* and the *khong wong yai*.

The head of the ensemble was a man named Naewwit Niyomwong, aged about 31. He is the Musical Curriculum Executive for Suthiratthena Sangkhitsin School situated in Bangkok. The ensemble consisted of eight people, seven men and one woman. Apart from Naewwit, the males in the group were aged between 19 -21, with the sole female being about 25. When I questioned Naewwit, he stated that "this ensemble was hired by the deceased's granddaughter due to her grandmother's love of Thai music. The deceased, Sawing Noiyu, passed away at 83 years of age. The ensemble played at the service between the hours of 10 am - 5 pm. The cost of hiring the ensemble was about 4,000 baht. Normally the typical cost of providing a similar ensemble would be approximately 7,000 baht but the lower price was charged due to the friendship between Saiwarin Phinthong, the singer of the ensemble and the host of the funeral, the deceased's granddaughter" (Interview with Naewwit Niyomwong on 24 November 2009).

Ordinarily, musicians who play in the *piphat nanghong* ensemble require a great deal of practice in order to achieve a unified sound which is crucial to be able to produce an effective performance. Due to the fact that Naewwit was asked to assemble a group of musicians to play the *piphat nanghong* at short notice, he gathered together some friends who study at his university, Kasetsart University in Bangkok. Perhaps the lack of practice time was the reason that I witnessed more solo pieces than one would normally hear in renditions of the *nonghong* repertoire. However, I should emphasise that the musicians played to a very high standard.

At about 3.30 pm, the ensemble performed a suite from the *nanghong*, entitled "Phirom Surang". This particular suite is one of the *nanghong*'s most famous pieces. The majority of Thai musicians would have been taught the "Phirom Surang" in the early stages of their musical education. The "Phirom Surang" begins with a slow tempo (*sam chan* - level 3) and then gradually speeds up as the piece evolves. Following the conclusion of "Phirom Surang", the musicians then performed three pieces entitled *phleng reo, phleng phasa* and *luk mot* (reference form 3 page 152). During these performances, I noticed that the tempo was very upbeat and became progressively faster. The music was very uplifting with the overall sounds and the drum pattern making me feel joyful as though I was in attendance at an auspicious event.

Between 4.05 - 4.30 pm the sole female, Saiwarin Phinthong, began singing a song entitled "Bulan Loy Lean Thao" which is one of the most famous pieces from the *piphat sepha* and *mahori* repertoire. On this occasion, the ensemble played in a different pitch level to that normally employed in respect of the *piphat* repertoire. The pitch level that was utilised was designed to suit the *pi chawa*. The *pi chawa* is normally only used in respect of the *piphat nanghong* when the ensemble is required to perform at funerals. It is defined by the musicians having to play a much higher pitch than they would normally use for the other type of Thai oboe, *pi nai*, which always features at auspicious occasions. During the performance, I noticed that a large number of guests arrived and began to congregate in the main hall where they were welcomed by the host of the funeral.

During the interval, I asked Naewwit about his personal thoughts in respect of the importance of music being played at funeral events. He told me that "for me, music can eliminate the silence and bring an atmosphere of gravitas as befitting a funeral. Music also provides a necessary accompaniment for the religious activities that take place during the funeral rituals…" (Interview with Naewwit Niyomwong on 24 November 2009). I also spoke with the singer, Saiwarin, who in her opinion believed that "the repertoire of the *piphat mon* is able to convey greater feelings of sadness among mourners when compared with the *piphat nanghong*. (Interview with Saiwarin Phinthong on 24 November 2009). After the conclusion of my interviews, the ensemble began to perform a solo piece by the *khong wong yai,* entitled "Phaya Sok" which means a Lament of the Lord. After this, the *ranat thum* player delivered a solo version of the same piece. This was followed by the *ranat ek* player who performed a solo piece entitled "Sarathi".

Once the music had ceased, the temple officer invited the monks to receive yellow robes from the family of the deceased. These robes were presented to the monks by honoured guests and represented an act of merit-making to the deceased. During this ritual, each robe was placed in front of the coffin and the monks would chant whilst accepting the robes. They chanted in the *pali* language as follows: *anitcha wata sangkhara uppathawayathammino uppatchittawa nirutchanthi tesang wupasamo sukho.* This can be translated as "our bodies do not last forever, and will eventually disappear".

Following the presentation of robes to a total of six monks, the temple officer read a short biography of the deceased, describing the good deeds that she had performed in her

roles as a mother, grandmother and member of the community. This was followed by a rendition of *khap sepha* by Saiwarin, the singer, with no musical accompaniment. When the singing finished, the deceased's granddaughter recited a specially written poem expressing her love for the deceased. I noticed that during this time the atmosphere was quieter and more sombre. The temple officer requested the mourners, who now numbered approximately 100 people, to stand up and pray for the deceased for approximately a minute. This specific act is known as *yuen wai a-lai.*

The next stage of the funeral ceremony saw a very large yellow robe being presented to the senior monk. Once this had taken place, there followed the lighting of a *dok mai chan* (a set of sandalwood, a joss stick and a candle). This act signified the beginning of the mock cremation ceremony. An electrical buzzer rang at the same time that the *dok mai chan* was lit, to prompt the mourners to stand up. Those monks who were not participating in the chanting but attending as honoured guests, then proceeded into the crematorium to place the *dok mai chan* in front of the coffin as a mark of respect.

As the bell began to sound, the *pi chawa* player began to play a piece of music entitled "Phleng Rueang Nanghong" *song chan* (level 2) to accompany the ritual of the monks and guests placing the *dok mai chan* in front of the coffin. Some musicians are of the opinion that this composition possesses powers to help transport the deceased to the next world. During this piece which lasted 4.30 minutes, the mourners entered and then left the crematorium. When the piece finished, there were no more guests to be seen in the crematorium. However, four monks remained to chant for the final time. Upon completing their chanting, the four monks received more gifts from the host as a continuation of the merit-making act for the deceased.

When the actual cremation began, there were no monks chanting, however, the ensemble performed a piece entitled "Fai Chum" to accompany the activity. The host and the deceased's other relatives placed the *dok mai chan* into the crematorium furnace as a final act of respect and forgiveness. The word *fai* means fire and *chum* means gather. The piece was concluded within a minute and the only remaining sound that could be heard was the gentle sobbing of the mourners.

4.2.5 The role of the *piphat nanghong* in the funeral ritual

When studying at Chulalongkorn University, one of my lecturers used to emphasise the prestigious role that the *piphat nanghong* played in Thai society over a hundred years ago. Most Thai people would recognise the music instantly when being played at a funeral. However, the significance of Thai classical music, and in particular the *piphat nanghong,* in the Thai funeral ritual has greatly diminished over the past century, primarily due to the rise of Mon music. However, it has not died out altogether, and there are still occasions where Thai classical music is played at funerals. Due to the high cost of staging a funeral ritual and the complexity of the music, these ceremonies tended to take place among wealthy people and senior musicians. In addition, it is very difficult to find musicians who can perform the *nanghong* repertoire for the entirety of the cremation ceremony.

In the last ten years there has been an interesting development, aimed at promoting and increasing awareness of Thai classical music, not only among Thai people but also in other countries around the world. The movement to re-establish Thai classical music has been led by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, who is very keen to maintain the historic traditions which HRH believes define the Thai identity. Her main priority has been the preservation of Thai classical music, and HRH is especially keen for it to reassert itself above Mon music, with respect to Thai funeral rituals. This is borne out by the following statement, dating back to 1995 (supplied to me by the musical advisor of HRH, Sirichaicharn Farchamroon), whereby HRH made the point that "Mon music is not really our music" (Jutamas:1997:70). He continued on this theme by suggesting that "Thai people have been simply influenced by Mon culture" (ibid.:70). However, it is very important to HRH that the Thai identity as represented by Thai classical music plays a crucial part in the Thai funeral ritual. To support her argument, at the funeral of the present King's mother in 1996, she advised the Department of Fine Arts and the Phatthayakoson Music School to play the *piphat nanghong* at the funeral. Also, during the funeral of the present King's sister in 2008, HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn again directed the Division of Music, the Department of Fine Arts, to play the *piphat nanghong* throughout the funeral (Interview with Sirichaicharn Farchamroon, musical advisor of HRH on 7 July 2010).

Other notable examples of HRH actively promoting traditional Thai ensembles can be seen in 1996 and 2008 when she requested an additional ensemble, the *piphat nanghong* to perform alongside the *sang trae* and the *pi chanai klong chana* ensembles at the funerals of the King's mother and sister respectively. This is the first occasion that the *piphat nanghong* ensemble played at a royal funeral ceremony (I have explained HRH's rationale for this in chapter 2). According to royal protocol, the order of performance for the King's sister's funeral in 2008 was as follows:

1. *Sang trae* ensemble played the piece entitled "Phleng Samrap Bot".
2. The *pi chanai klong chana* ensemble performed the piece named "Phaya Sok Loy Lom".
3. *Sang trae* ensemble then reprised "Phleng Samrap Bot".
4. This was followed by the *pi chanai klong chana* ensemble reprising the piece named "Phaya Sok Loy Lom".
5. *Sang trae* ensemble performed "Phleng Samrap Bot" for the third and final time.
6. The *piphat nanghong* ensemble performed the *nanghong* suite.

Each performance lasted 25 minutes in total. A completed performance represents one *yam* (Bunta:2008:67).

In conclusion, the lively style of the *piphat nanghong*, although very popular among Thai people over a hundred years ago, has now been superseded by the more solemn Mon music in Thai funeral ceremonies today. The technical difficulties associated with playing the *nanghong* suites mean that there are very few musicians who are able to play the music. In addition to the efforts of the Department of Fine Arts and other academic institutions to revive the *piphat nanghong* ensemble, as long as Thai people show a desire to retain their identity and musical traditions, there will always be a place for the *piphat nanghong* in Thai society.

4.3 *Piphat mon* ensemble

4.3.1 A brief history of the development of the *piphat mon* in Thailand

Although Mon people had been entering Siam since the Sukhothai period (1240-1438), their music had not made an impression on Thai people. However, during the next significant era of Siamese history known as the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767), Thai

songs in a Mon style became popular when played in the context of entertainment for Thai people (Narongrit:1996:75). This was developed further during the Thonburi era (1767-1782) and in the early part of the Rattanakosin period (circa 1782-1851) when both Mon dances and songs were used in both funeral rituals and auspicious events. The earliest documented evidence of *piphat mon* music being played for a specific occasion occurred during the Thonburi period in 1779 when the *piphat mon* ensemble performed in the famous Emerald Buddha ceremony. This event featured music from various ethnic groups of people who were living in Siam during this period. For example, as well as the Mon community, music representing minority groups such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Burmese and Cambodian were also performed. Khru Montri confirms the presence of Mon music during the celebration of the Emerald Buddha in 1779[27]. He states that for the Emerald Buddha's celebration "…the King ordered the Thai *piphat* ensemble, *piphat mon*, Thai string ensemble, *mahori*[28] of *khaek, farang, yuan, khamen* to perform for a period of 2 months and 12 days…" (Montri:1995:23).

[27] The arrival of the Emerald Buddha in 1779 to Thonburi following its journey from Laos, heralded one of the most famous royal occasions in Siam's history. A great welcoming ceremony with music and other forms of entertainment were held and people were able to pay their respects to this most revered Buddhist symbol. It is traditional for Thai people to stage an elaborate welcome when an iconic Buddhist symbol arrives in the country (Interview with Thida Saraya, an expert on Thai history and advisor to the editor of Mueang Boran magazine, on 14 March 2014).

[28] *Mahori* ensemble is a combination of Thai stringed instruments and many types of Thai percussion instruments.

Figure 20: *Piphat mon* being performed by the Phattayakoson ensemble at Prayun temple. At the front of the stage, a pair of klong khaek (drums) are displayed - these are played by musicians during intervals between rituals when monks are eating together. Ordinarily, one may expect to see the *poeng mang khok* (seven semi-circle drums) and also the *mong sam bai* (three different sized gongs) in the picture, however, evidently these instruments were not included in this particular performance.

Figure 21: A typical version of the *piphat mon khrueang khu,* as performed by my father's ensemble at the Bangtoei temple on 14 January 2010 at the funeral of Yao, who was my sister's home help.

There is evidence of Mon music being played approximately 200 years before the Emerald Buddha ceremony. There are Thai songs dating from this period using the word Mon in their titles. The three examples of this are “Mon Plaeng”, “Mon Lek”, and “Saming Thong Mon” which were performed in a musical recital known as *dok soi sakawa*[29]. The funeral of Queen Somdet Phrathepsirinthara (Queen Sirin) in 1862 can be seen as the pivotal moment in the development of the *piphat mon* and its assimilation into Thai culture. According to Wong, it is highly likely that the *piphat mon* made its inaugural appearance at a royal funeral occasion 11 years earlier, namely at the funeral ceremony of King Rama III in 1851. Wong bases this assertion on the royal chronicles accounts of the funerals of King Rama IV which occurred in 1868 and the aforementioned King Rama III, noting that there were “four piiphaat Mon ensembles (one at each corner of the pyre) at the funeral of King Rama IV” and that the “funeral entertainment was identical with that of the funeral for Rama III. We can infer from this evidence that piiphaat Mon ensembles may have been used in royal funerals as early as 1851” (Wong:1998:117).

Previously, the *piphat mon* had been used exclusively for auspicious events, most famously in respect of the Emerald Buddha ceremony. The inclusion of the *piphat mon* at Queen Somdet Phrathepsirinthara’s funeral transformed the way that it was perceived, with the result being that henceforth it ceased to be an accompaniment to auspicious occasions. The *piphat mon* became increasingly popular among the middle and upper classes of society, who adopted it as their preferred choice of music to accompany the funeral ritual. It effectively replaced traditional Thai classical music in this role and has retained its popularity in contemporary Bangkok.

Today the *piphat mon* ensemble features both Thai instruments and those that originated from the time that the Mon emigrated to what is now known as Thailand, bringing with them their own instruments. In respect of Thai musical instruments, the *piphat mon* ensemble includes the *ranat ek* (high-pitched Thai xylophone) and *ranat thum* (low-pitched Thai xylophone). With respect to Mon instruments, the ensemble features the *khong mon* (a large crescent-shaped *mon* gong-chime), *taphon mon* (a two-headed

[29] *Dok soi sakawa* was a popular recital amongst the elite classes in Siam during the Ayutthaya period. This was typically performed in the months of November and December. The occasion would feature mainly groups of young people singing and flirting with the opposite sex. The instruments used in the performance were *thon* (drum), *krap* (clapper) and *ching* (cymbal) accompanying the vocals.

drum), *pi mon* (a Mon oboe) and *poeng mang khok* (half-circle of seven drums) (Narongrit:1996).

Standard sizes of the *piphat mon* ensemble

The *piphat mon* ensemble today consists of three distinct sizes. I have detailed below the instruments that comprise each version of the ensemble and have provided an illustration of how they are arranged together:

1. The *piphat mon khrueang ha*
   1.1 *pi mon*
   1.2 *ranat ek*
   1.3 *khong mon wong yai*
   1.4 *taphon mon*
   1.5 *poeng mang khok*
   1.6 *ching*
   1.7 *mong*

2. The *piphat mon khrueang khu*
   2.1 *pi mon*
   2.2 *ranat ek*
   2.3 *ranat thum*
   2.4 *khong mon wong yai*
   2.5 *khong mon wong lek*
   2.6 *taphon mon*
   2.7 *poeng mang khok*
   2.8 percussion instruments such as *ching, chap lek,chap yai, krap* and *mong*

3. The *piphat mon khrueang yai*
   3.1 *pi mon*
   3.2 *ranat ek*
   3.3 *ranat ek lek*
   3.4 *ranat thum*
   3.5 *ranat thum lek*

3.6 *khong mon wong yai*

3.7 *khong mon wong lek*

3.8 *taphon mon*

3.9 *poeng mang khok*

3.10 percussion instruments such as *ching, chap lek,chap yai, krap* and *mong*

Seating arrangement of the *piphat mon* ensemble

1. The *piphat mon khrueang ha*

Poeng Taphon Ching Mong

Ranat Ek Pi Mon Khong Mon Wong Yai

Front stage

2. The *piphat mon khrueang khu*

Krap Chap Lek Ranat Ek Ching Ranat Thum Chap Yai Taphon

Mong Khong Mon Wong Yai Pi Mon Khong Mon Wong Lek Poeng

Front stage

3. The *piphat mon khrueang yai*

Krap Chap Lek Ranat Ek Lek Ranat Ek Ching Ranat Thum Ranat Thum Lek Chap Yai Taphon

Mong Khong Mon Wong Yai Pi Mon Khong Mon Wong Lek Poeng

Front stage

The main difference between the *piphat mon khrueang khu* and *khrueang yai* is the addition of the *ranat ek lek* and the *ranat thum lek* in respect of the latter. These instruments are placed near the *ranat ek* and *ranat thum*. Seating arrangements in respect of certain percussion instruments such as *ching*, *krap*, *chap lek*, *chap yai* and also the *pi mon* are interchangeable depending on the musical direction of the head of the ensemble. However, the ensemble's most important instruments such as *khong mon wong yai*, *khong mon wong lek* , *ranat ek* and *ranat thum* retain fixed seating positions.

There were frequent variations in the size of the *piphat mon* ensemble up until the 1930s. During this period, the Department of Fine Arts carried out an exercise to classify all Thai music, creating sub sections for each genre. *Rabiap kan chat watthanatham* (an order to rearrange culture) was the name given to the process of classification by Khru Boonchoy Sovat, a respected senior lecturer and academic Thai musician. The *piphat mon* had already been accepted into Thai musical culture and as a consequence the Department of Fine Arts dictated that there would be three acceptable sizes of ensemble (the aforementioned *piphat khrueang ha, piphat khrueang khu* and *piphat khrueang yai*) which remain unchanged right up to the present day.

Of the roles played by these three different sizes of *piphat mon* ensemble, the *khrueang khu* is the most prominent, featuring at funeral ceremonies across most strata of Thai society. On the occasions where the *khrueang khu* is performed, it is replaced by *khrueang yai* which tends to be featured only when a very prestigious funeral is held. For example, one may hear the *khrueang yai* at the funeral of a master musician or a member of the elite classes. The addition of the *ranat ek lek* and the *ranat thum lek,* constitutes the main difference between the *khrueang yai* and *khrueang khu.* However, both instruments have a minimal effect on the sound and the performance of the *piphat mon* ensemble and it would be true to say that in contemporary Bangkok, these instruments are becoming increasingly irrelevant. It should be noted that both instruments are very heavy in weight and this is also a factor in the *khrueang yai* declining in popularity.

The smallest of the *piphat mon* ensembles, known as *khrueang ha*, is almost extinct in my experience. This varies from the two aforementioned types of ensemble due to the smaller number of instruments that it deploys. In my 30 years as a musician I have never seen nor heard any reference to the *khrueang ha*, although it is still officially recognised

by the Department of Fine Arts. It should be noted that the *piphat* Thai variant of the *khrueang ha* is featured regularly in contemporary Bangkok in religious ceremonies. Conversely, the *piphat nanghong khrueang ha* and the *piphat mon khrueang ha* are rarely used in the context of Thai funerals.

In contemporary Bangkok today one rarely hears the names given to the three different sizes of *piphat mon* ensemble mentioned, as people tend to speak about the ensemble in terms of the number of *khong mons* that will be featured in a particular performance. For example, in the case of a funeral of a respected citizen such as a member of the elite classes, the organiser will typically request that the ensemble includes ten *khong mons*. This contrasts with a funeral ceremony for an ordinary citizen where as few as two *khong mons* will be featured. In addition, depending on the status and wealth of the host of the funeral, it is commonplace to see a larger "even" number of *khong mons* added to the ensemble i.e. 4, 6, 8, or 10. Thai people can use a funeral to demonstrate their affluence and status and a very important factor in this strategy is to provide an ensemble featuring a large number of instruments and musicians.

4.3.2 Mon musical instruments

Figure 22: The four main Mon musical instruments.

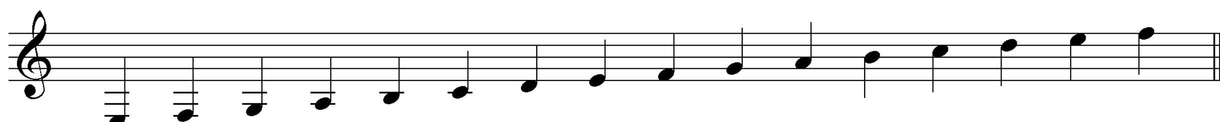
1. *Khong mon wong yai*

The Mon gong's appearance is quite different from that of the Thai gong-circle. The frame of the instrument is crescent-shaped and stands upright in comparison with the Thai gong which is circular-shaped and lies parallel with the floor. It is made out of heavy wood and decorated with gold leaf, pieces of coloured glass and mirrors. The left hand side of the crescent is carved to represent the body of a half bird - half human creature from Thai mythology known as *kin non*. Sculpted into the *kin non* is the *na phra* (face of the god). The right hand side of the crescent is decorated to represent the tail of the *kin non* (Dhanit:2001:31). The middle part of the curved stand is decorated in Thai design.

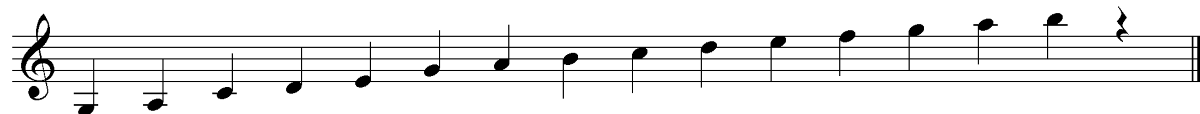
The instrument can normally be divided into two sections: the exterior consists of a sound box known as *ran khong*, whilst the inner section comprises 15 gongs. The Thai version consists of 16 gongs which are positioned to represent the order of the Thai musical scale. On the other hand, its Mon counterpart features 15 gongs which do not conform to the running order of the Thai musical scale. I have illustrated the differences between the two instruments below:

Musical example 3: comparison of pitch between *khong* Thai and Mon

Thai: *khong wong yai* pitches



Mon: *khong mon wong yai* pitches



Many Thai musicians initially find it difficult playing the *khong mon* as it requires them to be proficient in the manoeuvre known as *lop sieng* which literally means "avoiding or escaping a gap or a sound". For example, in respect of the Thai gong, the player uses eight gongs to produce the octave range, however, in respect of the *khong*

mon on occasion, only six gongs are actually required to produce the same octave sound. The *khong mon* produces the same range of pitches as the more common *khong wong* gong-circle. In the centre of the instrument, the key feature is a stand which is used to maintain the balance of the instrument. The mallets used to play this instrument also differ from those employed in the case of the Thai gong. The *khong mon*'s mallets are long and round in shape. The handle is made of hardwood and the top half of the mallet is covered with a thin cloth in order to achieve a softer sound.

Several Thai historians hold the view that the Thai gong-circle (*khong wong*) was adapted from the *khong mon* to allow female musicians to be more effective in playing this instrument. The rationale behind this is the fact that the Thai gong-circle requires the female musician to be seated and apply downward force on the instruments. This contrasts with the *khong mon* where the musician needs to raise her hands to hit the gong which is positioned vertically. In respect of etiquette this is considered to be unladylike as women out of necessity will display their arm pits (ibid.:31). However, I should emphasise that there are a number of scholars who do not support this theory as they believe that the *khong wong* was designed without any particular gender in mind.

2. *Pi mon* (Mon oboe)

The *pi mon* can be classified as a quadruple-reed instrument as are Thai oboes such as *pi nai, pi nok* and *pi nok tam.* The appearance of the *pi mon* is similar to the *pi chawa* (I have already described this instrument earlier when discussing it in the context of the *bua loy* ensemble). However, its main body is longer than the *pi chawa* - 50 cms compared with the *pi chawa* which is 27 cms in length. The horn bell or the lower part of the *pi mon* is also wider than the *pi chawa* - 23 cms compared with the latter which is 14 cms in width (ibid.:82,84). The *pi mon* can be divided into two separate pieces. The main body of the instrument which is known in Thai as *lao pi*, has a conical shape and is constructed from one of the three following types of wood: jackfruit, teak or hardwood. At the head of the main body, there is a hole in which the tube and palm reed will be inserted. Both the reed and tube have a similar design to those that feature in the Thai oboe, although they are both on a larger scale. The enhanced size provides the bass sound that characterises the *piphat mon*. The *pi mon* player will come into contact with a small round-shaped piece of coconut shell against their lips when blowing into the instrument.

This is for the purpose of circular breathing and to reduce the flow of saliva from the player.

The second section of the instrument, known as the *lam phong* or horn bell, is inserted into the base of the main body. It is constructed out of brass or stainless steel and is horn-shaped. Its primary function is to produce a louder sound from the *pi mon* and this enables the instrument to accompany the *ranat ek* which is considered to be the lead instrument of the ensemble. Some *pi mon* players use a cord to tie around the neck of the body of the instrument in order to prevent the two pieces of the instrument – the main body and the *lam phong* - from coming apart and slipping from the player's hands.

On the front of the main body, the instrument contains seven holes with a further one carved out on the other side of the instrument. This design is similar to that of the *khlui* (Thai recorder). The method of locating the holes using the fingers of the musician is the same as that employed on the *khlui*. The *pi mon* typically produces mournful sounds which evoke sad emotions amongst the listeners, more so than any other instrument in the ensemble.

3. *Taphon mon*

This instrument is barrel-shaped and incorporates a two-faced drum. It is a similar looking instrument to the *taphon* Thai but larger in size. The *taphon mon* consists of two sections. The first one which is the main body of the instrument is constructed out of either teak or jack fruit wood. The body of the instrument is covered in a layer made of cow leather. The layer can be tied tightly or more loosely to enable the musician to tune the sound of the instrument. By tying tightly the instrument will make a high tone and conversely anything looser will lower the tone. The body consists of two faces, the larger one known as *na theng* is 51 cms wide whilst the smaller one, *na mat* is 37 cms in width. The length of the body is 74 cms (Dhanit:2001:37). On the *taphon* Thai, the larger face of the body, *na theng* is situated on the right hand side of the player with the *na mat* on the left hand side which is the opposite way round from the *taphon mon*.

The second section of the *taphon* known as *thao* is situated at the base of the instrument. This is effectively a stand on which the main body rests and enables the

instrument to be placed on the ground securely. Handles are placed on each side of the main body, which makes moving the instrument around much easier. By placing a mixture of steamed rice and coconut ash onto each face of the drum, the musician is able to regulate the sound of the instrument. In order to produce an excellent performance from the instrument, the musician will seek to achieve a high pitch sound on the right face of the drum and a lower one on the left. The role of the *taphon mon* for musicians is very important. It is considered to be a representative of the God of Music which can be clearly seen when the leader of the ensemble performs the *wai khru* ritual. In this ceremony, flowers, joss sticks, a candle and money-offering will be placed on top of the body of the *taphon.* This ritual always occurs before the music is performed. As there are very few genuine Mon musicians in contemporary Bangkok, it is not clear what type of ritual they engage in before they begin playing Mon music. The *taphon mon* as the name indicates, has its roots in the culture of the indigenous Mon people. In contemporary Bangkok, it is almost impossible to find a Mon musician who has not been influenced by Thai culture. Therefore when one hears the *taphon mon* being played, strong Thai musical influences are revealed.

4. *Poeng mang khok*

This instrument consists of seven drums which are placed in order of size. The drums are hung around a semi circular stand which is made of hardwood. The player will sit inside the semi circle in order to play the drums. The stand is divided into three pieces and this allows it to be taken apart and reassembled easily. The role of the *poeng mang khok* is to accompany the *taphon mon* in order to nurture the rhythm. The seven drums are arranged in order of pitch running from low to high and from left to right, so that a particular melody can be played easily. Typically, steamed rice and coconut ash mixed together will be applied onto the faces of the seven drums in order to achieve the desired pitch and tone. This is the traditional method, however, nowadays mashed dried bananas or even blue tac will be used in preference to steamed rice and coconut ash as it preserves its use for a longer period of time. In respect of the instrument's history, Thai musical experts such as Sangat believe that the *poeng mang khok* originated from Mon culture and that it only featured one drum. According to another researcher, Narongrit, the set of seven drums was created by Thai musicians although he cannot name the specific people responsible (Narongrit:1996:147).

Other instruments that have been used in the *piphat mon* ensemble are the *ranat ek, ranat thum, khong mon wong lek, ching, krap* and three different sizes of *mong*. All of these are categorised as Thai musical instruments. For more details, please refer to David Morton's book entitled *The Traditional Music of Thailand (*1976).

4.3.3 The repertoire of the *piphat mon* ensemble

Although there is evidence that the *piphat mon* ensemble performed at the historic ceremony of the Emerald Buddha in 1779, musical historians have been unable to identify the compositions, notation and style of performance that was used. The Thai classical music repertoire contains only three pieces of music which feature the word "*mon*" in their title (refer to page 169). These three pieces originated from the *mahori* repertoire and are used exclusively for auspicious occasions such as weddings and are never performed during funeral ceremonies.

From my interviews with Thai musicians who have performed in funeral rituals, I have concluded that there are no more than 15 different pieces of music used in Thai funeral ceremonies in contemporary Bangkok which can be classified as genuine Mon compositions - that is pieces that have been composed by Mon musicians. Examples of these are "Pracham Wat", "Pracham Ban", "Yok Sop" and "Choen Sop". It is generally believed that these compositions originate from the early 19th century, although there is no mention of the composer. During King Rama VI's reign (r.1910-1925), the *piphat mon* ensemble became more popular in Thai funerals and new pieces were added to its repertoire which were composed by Thai musicians. The key musical figures who were responsible for promoting and increasing the popularity of the *piphat mon* were Luang Pradit Phairo and Khru Sum Dontrichareon**.** An important distinction to be made here concerns the fact that these newer pieces tend to be played in the intervals between the specific ritual acts of the funeral, whereas the older authentic Mon pieces are reserved for the rituals themselves.

The background to the introduction of the *piphat mon* can be traced back to an ancestor of Khru Sum who brought a *khong mon,* which had been cut into three separate pieces, from the Mon community in Burma and carried this with him to Siam in the early Rattanakosin period. Khru Sum's ancestors were of Mon origin and settled near the Chao

Phraya River in Pathumthani province. Khru Sum gleaned his knowledge of the *piphat mon* from his ancestors and he passed his mastery of Mon music to his relatives and his students. In 1919, he moved to Bangkok and took up residence near Saket temple[30]. The main purpose for Khru Sum's move to this location was to forge closer links with the Luang Pradit Phairo Music School (or as it was known at the time "Ban Bat"). Luang Pradit Phairo had a very prestigious reputation in respect of his knowledge and tuition of Thai classical music.

As well as being the leading master musician at the school which he founded, Luang Pradit Phairo was also the Head of the music section at the Krommahorasop (which later changed its name to the Department of Fine Arts). Furthermore, he was also a music advisor to King Rama VII (r.1925-1935). Throughout his life, he concentrated his efforts on not only discovering new techniques that could be employed for each Thai instrument, but also establishing different styles of composition in respect of pieces with foreign influences. Luang Pradit Phairo's compositions included elements of music from countries such as Cambodia and Indonesia. It should be noted that he employed Thai musical theory to these compositions. One of his most famous pieces composed in 1907 was entitled "Chawa" and was adapted from a tune that originated from Java, Indonesia.

Due to his formidable reputation, many parents who had ambitions for their children to become Thai musicians would take them to meet and show their respect to Luang Pradit Phairo. Such was the high esteem in which he was held that both parents and children would literally drop down at his feet, pleading for an opportunity to allow their children to be taught by the Master musician in his own home. In exchange for receiving Luang Pradit Phairo's tuition, the child would have to carry out various household duties. Moreover, it was commonplace for parents to send sacks of rice to Luang Pradit Phairo as a display of gratitude for teaching their children. Luang Pradit Phairo was in demand not just by parents who wished to have their children taught by him but also adult professional musicians such as Khru Sum who were keen to expand their musical knowledge. In return, Luang Pradit Phairo respected Khru Sum as a Master of Mon

[30] Up until 1946, Saket temple was a temple situated on the edge of the royal boundary area. During this time, if an ordinary person who lived within the royal zone died, their body would be taken into this temple as ordinary citizens were not allowed to be buried or cremated within the royal zone. Today, Saket temple is considered to be one of the royal temples.

music and learnt a number of Mon compositions from him which he was able to pass onto his students.

The bond between Luang Pradit Phairo and Khru Sum was mutually beneficial with Khru Sum being able to promote Mon music by teaching and performing regularly at funeral ceremonies in Bangkok. As a result, Mon music gained an ever widening audience and an increasing number of Thai musicians learnt to appreciate Mon music and expressed the desire to perform what to them was a new genre of music. Whilst this was happening Luang Pradit Phairo began composing Thai pieces in a Mon style and introduced these to funeral events. These new Mon style compositions were readily accepted both inside and outside of the Thai classical music community and became part of the fabric of Thai society. Examples of these pieces are “Krong Thong”, “Song Kuman”, “Nae” and “Kratai Ten”.

During the 1920s, many prestigious music schools such as the Phatthayakoson and Duriyapranit not only learnt Mon music from musicians who had Mon blood, but also began to compose Mon compositions using Thai musical methods. An excellent example of this was the use of the *thao* style[31]. In respect of Mon musical instruments such as *khong mon wong yai* and *khong mon wong lek*, one of the most famous places where these were constructed was in the vicinity of Phraphiren temple, Worachak Road, Bangkok. Not only were these instruments popular with Thai musicians who wished to learn Mon music for the purpose of performing it in funeral ceremonies, they were also in demand by government departments such as the Music Section of the Department of Fine Arts. The widespread appeal of both Mon music and Mon instruments established the identity of this ethnic race upon Thai society which continues until the present day.

The book entitled *Phang Lae Khao Chai Phleng Thai* (Listening to and understanding Thai music) written by Khru Montri Tramot and Wichian Kunlatan in 1980 is considered a bible for Thai academics and musicians. The reason for this is that the book delivered a most comprehensive study of Thai classical compositions and their origins. Unfortunately in respect of the Mon musical repertoire, there has never been

[31] *Thao* refers to a music structure whereby a given melody is performed in an intricate theme and variation form. David Morton’s translation of the word *thao* is: “the telescopic variation compositional form” (Morton:1976:243).

published a book which catalogues the history and specific details of Mon compositions. In this thesis I will list significant pieces of music that have been performed in Thai funeral rituals in contemporary Bangkok. I will not, however, be collating Mon compositions that have connections with auspicious occasions such as weddings and other art forms such as Mon dance. I will instead concentrate my efforts solely on those pieces within the Mon repertoire that have direct links with the funeral ceremony.

The author Narongrit (1996) interviewed Khru Surat Sawasdikun, a very respected musician from the Music Division at the Department of Fine Arts in Bangkok who had Mon ancestry. He revealed that there are only two styles of Mon composition employed in funeral rituals, one played at a *song chan* (level 2) and the other performed at a *chan diao* (level 1) or otherwise known as “Phleng Reo”. Unfortunately, he did not mention the names of any specific pieces.

Mon pieces of music are used to accompany three distinct events which occur during the funeral ceremony: music for the deceased, music to accompany the monks’ activities, and music as entertainment for the mourners and participants.

1. Music for the deceased.

   These are deployed in conjunction with specific ritual acts. One such example is “Yok Sop”, whose title means to convey an invitation to transfer the deceased’s body from its initial resting place such as a temple hall to the cremation tower, prior to the mock cremation taking place. Meanwhile, “Cheon Sop” is performed on the first day in a ritual whereby the deceased’s soul is “invited” into the funeral hall, whilst the coffin is being arranged on the main stage. Another piece, “Pracham Ban” has two functions: firstly, it is played when the deceased’s body is kept at home and secondly it is performed when the body is ready for the mock cremation. The mock cremation is held for members of the public. Typically, the participants lay the *dok mai chan* under the coffin and ask for forgiveness from the deceased for any act of bad karma. Also, participants will make a wish for the deceased to have a comfortable journey to the next life. Another Mon composition, “Pracham Wat”, is played when the deceased’s body is lying in rest at the temple and is also performed as a prelude to “Prachum Phloeng” to accompany the actual cremation which is normally only attended by members of the deceased’s family and close friends.

2. Mon pieces of music are also used to accompany the activities of the monks.

2.1 All played in a *chan diao* (level 1) known as “Phleng Reo” which will be played in a fast tempo.

2.1.1 They are played to accompany an invitation to the monks to visit the temple when the funeral is taking place and to accompany the senior monk as he proceeds into the pulpit before giving his sermon. These pieces are categorised as “Phleng Reo Rap Phra”. The word “*phra*” in Thai means monk, whilst the word “*rap*” can be translated as a greeting to the monks.

2.1.2 Music is also used to signify the monks’ departure from the funeral after they have completed their meals, finished chanting and given a sermon. The pieces that feature in this repertoire are called “Phleng Reo Song Phra”. The word “*song*” means to send.

2.1.3 When one of the deceased’s relatives lights the candles and joss sticks in front of the altar and the deceased’s coffin this is the sign that a religious ceremony is about to begin. A piece of music entitled “Phleng Reo Chut Thian” is played to accompany this action.

2.2 “Phleng Phra Chan Mon” is a composition used to accompany the monks whilst they consume the food offering given to them by the mourners. Large sections of the “Phleng Phra Chan Mon” are played in a moderate tempo and it is only at the conclusion of this piece that the tempo is speeded up.

3. The final rationale for the inclusion of Mon music in the funeral ceremony is to provide entertainment for the mourners and participants. There are many pieces from the Mon repertoire that are used for this purpose. For example, “Phleng Yam Kham” is performed in the evening of the first day of the funeral whilst “Phleng Yam Thieng” is performed at noon on the cremation day.

During my research in Bangkok, I discovered that in addition to the many Mon compositions being used during the funeral ritual, a number of Thai classical pieces were also featured. These originated from the *sepha* repertoire, which is an offshoot of the *piphat* ensemble and are characterised by their lively and joyful tempo. I also heard other styles of music, in particular, Thai classical compositions which contained a Mon accent such as “Mon Ram Dap”. Also I witnessed the performance of compositions derived from Thai pop and country music, namely *luk thung* and *luk krung*. Both of these genres

betrayed Western musical influences. For example, these pieces would feature a western-style drum pattern. Several musicians advised me that many of the mourners who attend funerals in contemporary Bangkok are more familiar with the aforementioned Thai country songs than the traditional Mon classical compositions.

4.3.4 *Piphat mon* performance: a case study of Mon music being performed in a funeral ritual at Bangtoei temple.

It was around 5.00 pm when I arrived at the first funeral ceremony that I attended in respect of my fieldwork. The funeral was for an elderly man who died three months short of his 100th birthday. This ceremony lasted for nine days and took place at Bangtoei temple on 7 November 2009. My brother knew the deceased personally and told me that he was a highly respected person in my local community, a man who devoted his life to the temple and gave generous support to its activities.

The deceased received one of the highest honours that can be bestowed on a Thai national. After receiving a petition from the man's family, the Royal Household granted him the accolade of being kept in a royal coffin which is a symbol of his devotion to his community and the Buddhist religion. I managed to conduct interviews with musicians and mourners as well as observing the funeral ritual. My main recollection of the occasion was one of overwhelming sadness amongst the mourners. I did feel a little awkward as I was alone and did not know personally any members of his family. I did have some interaction with him when he was alive and he had my respect as a senior member of the community who led a rich and purposeful life.

When I first reached the hall where the funeral was to be held, more than 50 people had already congregated. They were all involved in various tasks such as preparing food and drink for the guests and constructing what is known as an alms offering. This comprises a yellow bath robe, a bunch of flowers, a candle, joss sticks and money. The purpose of this ritual is to demonstrate respect to the monks by way of offering alms. Both the mourners and participants will also benefit from their acts of merit-making which in turn will enhance the status of the deceased as he journeys into the next life.

It was about 5.10 pm when the *piphat mon* started to perform the piece entitled "Pracham Wat". Typically, this composition is the first to be played whilst the deceased's body still remains at the temple. At the conclusion of the piece, the musicians were invited to have an early dinner by the mourners. The meal was taken in the temple. For this research, I was careful to behave in an ethical manner at all times and as such I had to gain permission from the daughter of the deceased, a lady named Yuphin Phueakmanee, to observe the funeral ceremony. She kindly granted my request and offered me some food and found me a chair to sit on. After accepting the offer of food, I proceeded to meet the head of the ensemble, a man named Sanong Sangarun in order to interview him regarding the music to be performed in the funeral. He did not hesitate to answer any of my questions and was even willing to discuss financial aspects of the funeral, for example, the fact that he had agreed to lower their normal rates to fit in with the deceased family's budget.

At 6.45 pm, the *piphat mon* performed a piece of music entitled "Choen Sop", inviting the soul of the deceased and other divine beings to enter the hall where the funeral ceremony was taking place. At about 7 pm, a piece entitled "Phleng Reo Rap Phra" was performed to accompany the arrival at the ceremony of four monks. Literally "Phleng Reo" can be translated as "fast composition", however it is actually played in what can only be described as a moderate tempo, certainly not quick and it is compatible with the pace of the monks walking into the temple. As the majority of Thai people in attendance at the event were Buddhist, they performed a religious mark of respect to the monks as they entered the temple, by bowing their heads and clasping the palms of their hands together. This act is known as *wai* and is used to show respect for significant figures in Thai society, in particular to a person who is older than yourself. The musicians ended the piece at the point when the four monks had taken their places on stage. After this a temple officer led mourners and participants in a prayer to Buddha followed by another prayer to the monks.

After this, the host of the ceremony, Yuphin, lit two candles and three joss sticks which were placed in front of the four monks on the stage and then repeated this action in front of the coffin (although only one joss stick was lit on the second occasion). At the same time, a piece entitled "Phleng Reo Chut Thian" (lighting candles) was performed to accompany the activity.

Phleng Reo Chut Thian

Unknown

Musical Example 4: An excerpt of a basic melody of "Phleng Reo Chut Thian".

At the same time that this was taking place, the mourners showed their respect to the Buddha by performing the *wai*. Following this, they began a form of spoken worship to Buddha, the format of which involved the monks in unison speaking for a short while, then stopping to allow the mourners to repeat their words. The language used in this worship has an Indian origin and is known as *pali.* This form of practice is prevalent in the Theravada School of Buddhism, the strand of the religion followed by the majority of Thai people. Most men will understand the meaning of this text due to the fact that they will have entered temporary monkhood at an early stage of their lives, whilst on the other hand, only a small number of women tend to have knowledge of the meaning of this text. During the funeral, I asked three women sitting near me for their interpretation of the text and none of them had any real understanding of the content of what they were hearing. The words spoken in this particular ritual relate to the Five Precepts in Buddhism (also known as the Five Virtues). These rules were laid down for Buddhists to follow as they journey through their lives. During the funeral ceremony, a senior monk will quote each of the Five Precepts with the mourners repeating his words.

In my observations, I found many objects in the temple which reveal connotations of death. For example, each monk has a fan with a long handle known as *talaphat* which he holds up to cover his face. In the past, the purpose of this object was to protect the monks from the pungent smell of the deceased's body. Although it is not an issue nowadays, this tradition continues and also serves a purpose of isolating the monks from the mourners. Typically, the *talaphats* have inscriptions which conjure up images of death. For example, I have seen a *talaphat* with the words *pai mai klap* "go never come back", *lap mai tuen* "sleep never wake up", *phuen mai mi* "not getting up" and *ni mai phon* "not escaping". I have also witnessed another version of the *talaphat* which has displayed on it the words *koet*, *kae*, *chep* and *tai* meaning respectively "Birth", "Old", "Ill" and "Death".

Overall, I estimated that there were over 250 people attending the ceremony. During the first session of chanting by the monks (known in Thai as *chop*), both mourners and participants listened whilst performing the mark of respect mentioned earlier as *wai.* Interestingly, members of the audience seated at the back of the hall chatted among themselves during the chanting. One of the main reasons for this would appear to be the lack of understanding in respect of the text being chanted by the monks. As mentioned earlier, the texts were written in the ancient Indian language (*pali*). The main purpose of the monks is to act as a reminder to the living to lead a good and respectful life. Also the chanting aims to inform people that an act of merit or karma will enhance them when they die and are then reborn into the next life.

After this first session of chanting had been completed, the musicians performed a short piece of Thai music entitled "Rabam Sukhothai" which normally accompanies a Thai dance. The final segment of this piece "Thep Thong" is believed to have originated in the Sukhothai period which was 700 years ago. Sukhothai was the first capital of Siam. The instruments used in this piece are chosen according to the level of sound that they produce. With respect to "Rabam Sukhothai", instruments that emit soft and quiet sounds such as the *khlui* (Thai recorder) are utilised instead of louder instruments such as the *pi mon*. The piece is performed to give the monks a short break from chanting. The composition itself is approximately seven minutes in length. The monks then began chanting a different *pali* text. When they finished the second session of chanting, the *piphat mon* musicians played a piece entitled "Rabam Sriwichai". This composition possesses a soft melody and describes a type of Thai dance called "Rabam Sriwichai".

After the third session of monks' chanting, two pieces of music were performed entitled "Saen Kham Nueng" and "Soi Lampang" which accompanied the mourners and participants as they were served a meal consisting of pork boiled rice and a dark jelly with syrup. These pieces may be described as sweet in tone and their easy listening virtues are deemed appropriate when food is being served. As the music was being performed, one of the participants requested the ensemble to play a piece entitled "Khang Khao Kin Kluay" which means "the bat eats the banana". The piece has no particular meaning but is very popular among Thai people due to its lively tempo, attractive melody and rhythm. The musicians, in order to satisfy one particular individual's request to play louder, had to change their mallets from the soft to a hard type. In normal circumstances, it is deemed appropriate to use softer mallets in order to keep the noise levels to a minimum so as not to disturb other activities taking place in the next hall. The individual who made this request appeared to be very happy and was laughing when the musicians responded by playing louder. After the fourth session of chanting, the deceased's family presented an alms offering to the monks, followed by a ritual which involved pouring water into a bowl for the purpose of transmitting good karma to the deceased. After completing their chanting duties in respect of the funeral ritual, the four monks left the hall to return to their residence. As they left the building, a short piece entitled "Phleng Reo Song Phra" was performed as an accompaniment.

One of Thailand's traditional customs concerning elder members of the community who have died, is the practice of maintaining the coffin in the funeral hall for three months or up to 100 days. In respect of the ritual for maintaining the deceased's body, a combination of soil, flowers, and money is prepared and wrapped together, after which they are then placed in a large tray which is positioned in front of the coffin. The purpose of this action is to signify the reservation of an area of the temple in order that the deceased can rest in comfort. Both monks and mourners would collectively place this offering in front of the coffin, whilst at the same time making a wish for the deceased's body to have a comfortable stay. During the ritual, the *piphat mon* performed a piece entitled "Pracham Ban", signifying the end of the funeral ceremony. The deceased's body, after remaining in the temple for a further three months, was then cremated in a separate ceremony which I did not attend.

Before I left the temple, I questioned Sanong, the head of the *piphat mon* ensemble regarding the purpose of the music that was played to accompany the ceremony. In his view, "… music is very important and alleviates the sadness and tension that people feel by attending such a solemn occasion. It would also be an overly quiet occasion without the presence of music. I also believe that the music which has been performed at the ceremony plays a crucial role to facilitate the deceased's journey to heaven as the sound of music will only be present in heaven and not in hell…" (Interview with Sanong Sangarun on 7 November 2009).

To sum up, as a Thai musician who has played music at Thai funeral ceremonies, I believe that there are several key roles that music has in the context of funeral rituals. Firstly, a funeral is, unarguably, a very sad occasion and music has qualities which comfort and reduce feelings of grief and anxiety. Secondly, Thai funeral ceremonies tend to be very lengthy affairs and music performs a pivotal role in lightening the mood of the occasion, providing a source of entertainment for the mourners in between the actual ritual activities. Thirdly, as Sanong stated, many Buddhists hold the belief that music can only be heard in heaven and as such it plays a symbolic role in the journey of the deceased from this world to the next (Interview with Sanong Sangarun on 7 November 2009). I have provided below a timetable of the ritual activities and pieces of music which were performed during the funeral ceremonies.

Table 5: The ritual activities and pieces of music being performed in a funeral ritual at Bangtoei temple.

Time	Ritual activities	Religious activities	Names of compositions	Musical instruments	Lyrics
5.10 pm	The first ritual activity commences		"Pracham Wat"	Full ensemble of the *piphat mon*	
6.45 pm		Ceremony introduction	"Choen"	the *piphat mon*	
7 pm		Monks arrive	"Phleng Reo Rap Phra"	the *piphat mon*	

7.10 pm	Lighting the candles and joss sticks in front of the four monks on the stage with this action being repeated in front of the coffin		"Phleng Reo Chut Thian"	Full ensemble of the *piphat mon*	
7.20 pm		First round of monks chanting	"Rabam Sukhothai"	Several Mon instruments, *khlui* and *klong khaek*	
7.30 pm		Second round of monks chanting	"Rabam Siwichai"	Several Mon instruments, *khlui* and *klong khaek*	
7.40 pm		Third round of monks chanting	"Saen Kham Nueng", "Soi Lampang" and "Khang Khao Kin Kluay"	Several Mon instruments, *khlui* and *klong khaek*	
8.05 pm		Monks depart	"Phleng Reo Song Phra"	the *piphat mon*	
8.15 pm	Placing soil, flowers, and money on to a tray in front of the coffin prior to it being placed on display for three months		"Pracham Ban"	the *piphat mon*	

4.4 The current status of the three main funeral music ensembles in contemporary Bangkok

Throughout my observations of music being performed at rituals in Bangkok during my fieldwork in November 2009 - July 2010, I have sought to establish answers as to why this unique musical tradition underpinned by the three main ensembles, has managed to withstand significant political, socio-economic and cultural changes and continues to play a part in everyday life in contemporary Bangkok. The fieldwork that I have undertaken has been based upon interviews with key participants in the funeral ritual process and observations of music being performed at funeral ceremonies across all strata of Bangkok society.

I have also contrasted and compared my findings with Wong (1998), the preeminent ethnomusicologist and the only non-Thai researcher to analyse Thai funeral music. Wong deduced that music's purpose is "linked to centuries-old beliefs about the role of performance as a ritual offering - as a way to connect cosmological spheres - yet it also allows urban Thais to enact status in perhaps the rite of passage. In death, any Thai can become an aristocrat for a moment - can be sent on his or her way out the chimney of Mount Meru" (Wong:1998:126). Wong also asserts that "Thai funeral music speaks status" (ibid.:125). I concur with Wong's statement, as for each individual in Thai society, social status (both ascribed status and achieved status) represents one of the most significant aspects of their identity. In today's Bangkok, the authors, Jaree and Vicharat, make interesting observations about how the concept of status[32] has evolved through "the impact of modernization and limited democratization". They observe that whilst status traditionally was referred to by way of a citizen's "family background and descent (whether royal or common)" (Jaree and Vicharat:1979:423), in contemporary Bangkok one can add two other categories - "wealth and education" (ibid.:423).

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[32] The emergence of the concept of status among Thais can be traced back to the Ayutthaya period. As the author, Neher, states: "the kingdom of Ayutthaya which lasted over 400 years provided much of the political and cultural foundations for contemporary Thailand" (Neher:1979:5). It was during this period that status in the country was defined through "the hierarchization of the kingdom which was carried out by King Boromotrailokanat (now known as King Trailok) in 1448" (ibid.:6). The author observes that this system of hierarchy "has persisted in modified terms in Thai cultural patterns to the present day" (ibid.:6). Neher's comments regarding status published 35 years ago, remain valid in respect of Bangkok society today.

Parallel to Wong's statement concerning status, I would add that Thai people also perceive the staging of a grand funeral ceremony to be an opportunity to utilise music as an offering to the deceased in the form of merit-making (as observed in chapter 3 at the Buengthonglang temple). This act serves to enhance the reputation of the host family within the local community and as such elevates their social standing in society. When Thai people aspire to stage an elaborate funeral on a grand scale with music being at the core of the ceremony, they are seeking to emulate citizens of high ranking status, who would predominantly consist of senior government and army officers, major cultural figures and of course the Royal Family.

Observing the current status of music in the funeral rituals of Bangkok, Wong notes that "although it is now possible to hold a funeral without any music or performance (funerals are increasingly stream-lined in the rushed, time-pressed world of Bangkok), music was traditionally felt to be essential for a death ritual. Certain musical pieces that punctuate the stages of a funeral are not just mere accompaniment but are, rather, musical pieces that embody ritual actions that release the dead from this world" (Wong:1998:105). Whilst Wong is correct to state that music's role has diminished, I would argue that it is still a significant aspect of Thai funeral ceremonies for many citizens, especially in the outskirts of the city among the middle and upper classes. I can add some statistical evidence to support my claim: at the Buengthonglang temple, Phra Soradet, a monk who is the chief funeral officer advised me that at 80% of the funerals held, Thai music features (consisting mainly of the *piphat mon* ensemble), whereas at the Bangtoei temple, Phra Theppharit who is the deputy Abbot, told me that music is played at 60% of the funerals that took place in his temple (Interview with Phra Soradet on 3 July 2010 and Phra Theppharit on 2 July 2010 respectively). These statistics would appear to vindicate the viewpoint of respected musicians Khru Boonchouy Sovat and Khru Sirichaicharn Farchamroon who both agreed that the role of Thai classical music in Thai funerals is an integral part of the ceremony. Khru Boonchouy commented that in all types of Thai ceremonies, both auspicious and inauspicious "sounds" are expected to feature prominently and enhance the overall atmosphere. Khru Boonchouy also made the point that the presence of music in Thai funeral rituals was a logical progression, as it is already a key element of the auspicious event. This refutes the theory that Thai masters did not create music purely for sending the soul to the next life (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 25 July 2010).

Figure 23: A large scale *piphat mon* ensemble performing at the Buengthonglang temple, Bangkok. The *khong mon* are decorated with colourful flashing lights.

From my interviews, both formal and informal, with people in Bangkok, it became clear that there was a difference in attitude to the role of Thai classical music in the funeral ritual, between those living in the suburbs of the city and people residing in the central districts of Bangkok. As I mentioned earlier, in the outer communities of the city, the majority of funerals feature live Thai music played by an ensemble. However, in the inner sectors of Bangkok, people that I interviewed stated that they felt that the presence of the Thai music in funeral ceremonies was almost a "luxury" due to the severe financial constraints that many households now face as a result of the global economic downturn. As well as forfeiting music, people are having shorter funeral ceremonies in order to save money. For example, the temple officer at the Thepsirin temple advised me that "some significant religious rituals have been removed from the funeral ceremonies by families of the deceased. For example, the sermon normally delivered by a monk is often omitted" (Interview with Prasoet Phoemwong on 14 July 2010). Having attended many funeral ceremonies during my fieldwork, I concur with Prasoet's statement in respect of these occasions generally being much shorter in length with sermons and chanting curtailed in many cases, thus meaning there is no space for funeral music. Prasoet also noted that

> "Funeral music such as the *piphat mon*, I have not heard for four-five years. Before this time, it was popular and was seen as a necessity by many people. Family members and mourners would hire ensembles to perform on the cremation day. However, it has now disappeared"..."I saw Thai classical

> dancers perform several routines in front of the coffin during chanting rituals. I also heard Thai music being performed by the students of the Thepsirin temple in respect of senior monks' funerals and also for funerals in respect of teachers of the school. Apart from these occasions, it has been very quiet. However, I have heard the royal music several times as this is the only temple that contains a Royal Crematorium or Royal Meru Luang " (Interview with Prasoet Phoemwong on 14 July 2010).

Prasoet concluded the interview by stating that "...for me music can be beneficial to break the silence which can often make mourners afraid. In the present day, many people think of funeral music as a luxury, and not a necessity, due to the pressures of the current economic crisis..." (Interview with Prasoet Phoemwong on 14 July 2010). This view is endorsed by my interviewee, Aunchittha Boonpheng, a female musician who is employed by the Division of Music at the Department of Fine Arts who confirmed to me that performing music today in the Thai funeral ritual is very different from the past, due largely to the economic meltdown experienced by Thailand in recent years. Also, the frenetic pace of today's society has impacted on musical performances which are much shorter in length than they used to be. One significant musical omission today concerns funeral ceremonies in respect of those Thai citizens who have been rewarded for their great service and deeds to the nation and have as a result been granted the "royal fire" by the Royal Household. As recently as 20 years ago, these honoured individuals would have had a piece of music entitled "San Soen Phra Barami", the Royal Anthem, played at their funeral to signify the beginning of the ceremony. However, at funerals where HM the King himself is not present, the Royal Household in the 1990s issued a directive that for this reason, it would no longer be appropriate to play this piece of music. Aunchittha commented that this policy has caused an overall reduction in the number of funeral ceremonies featuring an ensemble (Interview with Aunchittha Boonpheng on 29 May 2012). She also conveyed to me:

> "...during the last 10-15 years, as a result of pressure from temple officers, funeral ceremonies have tended to be approximately 1.30 hours shorter than they were in the past. For example it used to be commonplace for a funeral to finish at 9.30 pm but nowadays proceedings will normally be brought to a close at 8 pm or even earlier at 7.30 pm. As a consequence, families of the deceased are not so willing to commit funds to hire an ensemble, the rationale being that they will not receive the same value for money that they would have done in the past when the musicians played for much longer periods. Today's shortened version of the funeral ceremonies means less time for musical interludes and families are instead tending to make donations to monks instead of using these monies to hire musical ensembles" (Interview with Aunchittha Boonpheng on 29 May 2012).

In respect of the above mentioned statement, Aunchittha is referring to funeral ceremonies held in the central districts of Bangkok. By way of a contrast, she pointed out that in the city's outskirts and rural provinces such as Nakhonnayok, people from all classes are more willing to embrace and include Thai music such as the *piphat mon* in their funeral ceremonies. This view point is also held by a freelance female musician, named Wilai Ngamchum, who told me that "music has become less popular in recent years in the central districts of Bangkok, whereas in the outskirts it is still very much in demand". Wilai told me of her experiences in respect of temples in central Bangkok who have strict rules regarding the playing of funeral music. Typically, the playing of live ensemble music will not be allowed in the evening as temples officers are concerned that it may distract the monks whilst they are chanting. However, these temples will permit musical performances during the day to accompany the cremation rituals (Interview with Wilai Ngamchum on 29 May 2012).

Another significant reason for the absence of live Thai music at funerals in inner Bangkok is the sensitive subject of noise pollution. In the densely populated inner city districts, one will often find that there is less of a community spirit among residents. This is often reflected in the temple's rules and regulations which tend to stipulate that a host must carefully control the noise level of the ceremony in order that they do not disturb activities taking place in adjoining halls. This contrasts with the attitude in the suburbs of the city where because residents will be much more familiar with each other, there is a more relaxed policy adopted by temples in respect of noise levels. In these cases, a host will be free to arrange the musical content of his choice without worrying about breaching any temple policy regarding noise volume.

In the inner city temples, increasingly CDs are used as a means to save both money and to control the soundscape. These views were conveyed to me by people from all strata of Bangkok society. However, I could sense frustration among many of my interviewees who still retain strong beliefs brought about by their adherence to Thai tradition and their Buddhist faith. Without the encumbrance of noise restriction policies and financial concerns, they would embrace the idea of having a grand funeral ceremony with music at the hub of the proceedings. It is clear that even with the many cultural changes, in particular the influence from the West, which Thailand has undergone in the past 50 years, its citizens still consider the death ritual to be a fundamental aspect of their

existence and are keen to make merit on the occasion of the funeral of a friend or relative, to enhance their own as well as the deceased's karma.

Today in Bangkok, despite the effects of the recent global economic crisis which has led to a reduction in the presence of music ensembles at funeral ceremonies, traditional funeral music has survived and moreover as "Thai funeral music speaks status" (Wong:1998:125), the Thai masses will continue to aspire to emulate the elite classes, culminating in staging a funeral ceremony which befits their standing in society. For a Thai Buddhist it should also be noted that the funeral ceremony has great significance as it is the final "rite of passage" in an individual's life and that such an occasion would be enhanced by the presence of music provided by one of the three main ensembles.

Conclusion

As I have evidenced in this chapter, all three of the ensembles discussed have their own unique and fascinating history which are inextricably linked to the history of Thailand and the characteristics exhibited by its people. For example, my research highlighted the trait amongst the lower strata of Thai society to be influenced by the behaviours of the Royal Family and elite classes. In respect of the funeral ritual, the trend towards having a more sombre type of musical accompaniment which superseded the livelier repertoire previously associated with these occasions, was triggered by the funeral of Queen Somdet Phrathepsirinthara in the reign of King Rama IV (r.1851-1868) in1862. This heralded the rise of the *piphat mon* ensemble which today is still the most commonly used ensemble at funeral ceremonies in Bangkok, at the expense of the *piphat nanghong*.

The *piphat mon* also typifies the Thai characteristic of embracing outside or foreign influences with the ensemble consisting of a mixture of Thai and Mon instruments and the repertoire drawing on both musical cultures. By way of a contrast, the *piphat nanghong* has a repertoire that can be considered pure Thai, although the effect of foreign cultures is revealed by its inclusion of *phleng sipsong phasa* (twelve foreign musical languages in Thai musical dialect) and the fact that it employs instruments such as *klong malayu* and *pi chawa* which originate from Malaysia and Indonesia.

By observing closely both of these ensembles, it was revealing to note that the *piphat nanghong* repertoire and style of performance has remained largely unchanged over many hundreds of years, whereas the *piphat mon* has been constantly evolving, as it absorbs new influences. In contemporary Bangkok, in the context of the funeral ritual, from the evidence of my research in this chapter, I have concluded that the *piphat mon* is the overwhelming choice of musical accompaniment for the majority of the city's middle and lower class citizens, with only a minority opting for the *piphat nanghong*. The most intriguing ensemble of the three discussed, is without doubt the *bua loy* due to a combination of the technical challenges that its repertoire presents to a musician and also the concept of *huang wicha.* As a consequence it is only rarely performed and is exclusively reserved for the elite classes, senior monks and respected musicians. As a musician myself, when observing this ensemble, I fully appreciated the technical skills required to perform the *bua loy* repertoire which has remained unaltered, consisting of traditional Thai compositions, since its first surfaced several hundred years ago.

There is still a place for all three ensembles in contemporary Bangkok society and indeed each of them feature exclusively at funeral rituals and are not deployed at other auspicious occasions. The Thai concept of status plays a pivotal role in the deployment of the ensembles in contemporary Bangkok as citizens from all classes aspire to hold a funeral ceremony that demonstrates their wealth and standing in the community. Music and the staging of a grand funeral are inextricably linked. Musicians who perform in these three main ensembles will require a high degree of technical ability and it is necessary that they receive a sound musical education. In the next chapter, I will examine the two most renowned schools in Bangkok with regard to the transmission and teaching of these three ensembles.

Chapter 5

An analysis of the two most prominent Thai Music Schools - Phatthayakoson and Sanoduriyang Music Schools

Even though there have been many respected music schools throughout Thai music history, the two subjects of this chapter are considered to be the most prestigious. I have chosen to provide an analysis of their unique styles of performance, compositions, and transmission in the context of funeral performances. In this chapter, much of the content has been gathered through primary sources and is new and fresh material. I have been fortunate to have had access to the main representatives of the two most significant music schools in Bangkok namely Khru Somsak Triwat from Phatthayakoson and Khru Boonchouy Sovat from Sanoduriyang. I have also included information gleaned during my fieldwork and from many Thai books which have never been translated into English. I have conducted other interviews (formal and informal) with leading Thai scholars and musicians. I have also shared my experiences in respect of the knowledge that I gained from the lectures that I attended at Chulalongkorn University, as well as my recollections from playing Thai music in funerals over the past 30 years[1].

The Phatthayakoson Music School

5.1 History of the Phatthayakoson Music School

The school first came to prominence in the early years of the Rattanakosin period (1767-1809). It was founded by an eminent musician known as either Chao Krom Thap or Luang Kanlayanamit (in actual fact his birth name was Thap Chusat). He was born in Ayutthaya province[2] (Arada:1989:40) and then later moved to Bangkok during the reign of King Rama II. He made his home near Kanlayanamit temple, where he secured a position as a director of the temple. This role was bestowed upon him by a member of the

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[1] In respect of the methodology employed in this chapter, refer to pages 20-26 in chapter 1.

[2] This is a fertile place for producing distinguished Thai musicians with many of the country's leading exponents having their roots there.

royal court and he was awarded the title Chao Krom (Interview with Khwanmueang Kittiwan on 27 May 2012). He was very successful in generating a healthy financial profit for the temple. As well as his business activities, he devoted a great deal of his time to teaching. He established his famous school behind the Kanlayanamit temple. He was proficient in respect of many Thai musical instruments. "His style of teaching was very serious and strict. For example, students who were underperforming could expect to be punished by having a burning joss stick placed on their back!" (Arada:1989:41). However, the strong discipline that he instilled in his classes paid dividends, as many of his students became excellent musicians who in turn used the knowledge that they gained from him, to pass on to new generations of musicians.

His expertise was rewarded by Prince Paribatra, a son of King Rama V (r.1868-1910), who gave him a new surname Phatthayakoson to replace his family name of Chusat. Phatthaya means "music" whilst Koson refers to "wisdom". Chao Krom Thap passed away in the year 1919. His legacy has been maintained through the school that he established in his own name and also through his children who became very famous musicians in their own right. One can see a clear musical lineage beginning with Chao Krom Thap through to today and incorporating five generations of his family (Interview with Nopawan Phatthayakoson on 26 March 2012).

Thai musicians when speaking about the Phatthayakoson Music School will refer to it using one of three names. Firstly, "*thang phang thon*" - *thang* in Thai means "style and identity" and "*phang thon*" refers to the name of the Thonburi[3] district which is directly opposite the Grand Palace on the other side of the Chao Phraya River. Secondly, "*thang phang kha non*" has a very similar meaning to "*thang phang thon*" referring to the style and identity of the Thonburi district. Finally, "*thang ban khrueang*", refers to the fact that the School contains many valuable and antique Thai instruments. The term "*thang ban khrueang*", is also used to describe the style of the performance practised by the School.

[3] During the reign of Kings Rama II-III (r.1782-1851), Yutthana Chitthum (2002) wrote that many outstanding Thai musicians, including Khru Mi Khaek, who was one of the great musical authorities of this era, made the Thonburi area their base. It continued to be very popular with Thai musicians during the reign of King Rama IV (r.1851-1868), however, there were a number of musical family groups who gravitated to other areas across the Chao Phraya River from Thonburi. One such family, Ban Khru Mi Khaek, moved to the Wang Na Palace (the King's brother's palace). Yutthana went on to state that in the reign of King Rama V (r.1868-1910), many Thai musical families from the Thonburi area spread out to live in other provinces surrounding Bangkok. For example, popular destinations included the district of Amphawa in Samutsongkhram province, and Phrapradaeng district in Samutprakan province.

Specifically, this highlights the unique methods the Phatthayakoson Music School uses to construct music which differ significantly from the other schools in Bangkok.

The golden age of the Phatthayakoson Music School is considered to be during the reign of King Rama V, when the son of Chao Krom Thap, Changwang Thua, and his music ensemble were requested to provide music on behalf of the King's son, Prince Paribatra. Changwang Thua was chosen because of his excellent teaching reputation and his track record of enabling his students to become better musicians. Under the royal patronage of Prince Paribatra, Changwang Thua was responsible for leading the ensemble in performances and creating new compositions for the palace competitions. It was during the reigns of Kings Rama V-VI (r.1868-1925) that many royal members developed the practice of having Thai musical competitions between their respective palaces. They believed that by winning a competition, the prestige of their own palace would be enhanced. Conversely, if you were to lose the competition, you would strive to source better musicians in order to make the ensemble more competitive. This heightened level of competition resulted in a fertile period for Thai music with creativity at the core.

Prince Paribatra had a significant influence on Changwang Thua, teaching him how to write Western staff notation. Prince Paribatra was educated in Europe and brought this knowledge to Siam from the West. On the other hand, Changwang Thua imparted knowledge to Prince Paribatra regarding the structure of Thai compositions. With this knowledge Prince Paribatra became a teacher and composed songs for the brass band in the Thai Royal Navy. Later, Changwang Thua also taught the brass band for the Thai Royal Navy which also enhanced his understanding of writing musical notation. The result of the collaboration between Prince Paribatra and Changwang Thua Phatthayakoson was to see staff notation being used on a regular basis to maintain records of Thai songs.

The Siamese Revolution in 1932 whereby Thailand changed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional one had a direct impact on the Phatthayakoson Music School. Its patron, Prince Paribatra, resigned from his post at the Ministry of Defence and relocated to Indonesia. As a result of this, the School had to move premises from the Bangkhunphrom Palace back to the original building situated behind the Kanlayanamit temple. Even though Prince Paribatra had fled the country and was living in Java,

Indonesia, he and Changwang Thua remained in contact and continued to compose Thai music. According to Thai music history, Prince Paribatra created more than 70 songs (Dusadee:2003:12) during his time in Indonesia. Some of these songs have stood the test of time and are popular amongst the Thai music community today, and in particular can be heard in the performances by the brass bands of the Thai Navy and Army.

After the death of Changwang Thua in 1938, two of his children, Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson and Khunying[4] Phaithun Kittiwan[5] took over the role of leading the Phatthayakoson Music School - in the case of Khru Thewaprasit through to his death in 1973 and in respect of Khunying Phaithun until 1995 when she died. During this period both of them taught members of the Royal Family including all of the children of the present King, one being HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Khru Thewaprasit was a highly respected music teacher at the School and taught in many universities. He was also involved in the production of important musical recordings undertaken by the School. One such composition is the renowned "Tap Mahori" which consists of seven suites, as well as many other songs recorded at the request of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Meanwhile, Khunying Phaithun was responsible for teaching the students of the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy for many years up until her death in 1995. A lasting legacy of Khunying Phaithun is the musical performance of the School on the occasion of the King Chulalongkorn Memorial Day which takes place on 23 October annually. This event celebrates the memory of King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V) and symbolises Thailand's freedom and emancipation from slavery. Khunying Phaithun was responsible for arranging and leading the ensemble when it performed and was present at all subsequent events. This is a very significant occasion in the Thai cultural calendar and is shown on the Military channel (channel 5) after the Royal news. HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn herself joins in each year with the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy's performance. Khunying Phaithun passed on her knowledge in respect of the style of performance, including singing and the repertoire of songs originating from the Phatthayakoson Music School to her students who maintain her legacy to this day. As well as the unique and fruitful relationship that the Phatthayakoson Music School maintained

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[4] Khunying is a title which is only awarded to married women who have already been bestowed the order of "the Most Illustrious Order of Chula Chom Klao" from the King. In respect of single women who have been bestowed this order, the title Khun is applied as a prefix to her forename. Khunying is also used to refer to "the wife of a premier or outstanding minister" (Haas:1964:94).

[5] Khunying Phaithun Kittiwan was selected and bestowed the title of National Artist of Thailand in 1986.

with Prince Paribatra and his palace, Bangkhunphrom, the School also developed a strong bond with another palace, Ban Plainoen. This was the residence of his half brother, Prince Naris. The Phatthayakoson Music School provided the musical accompaniment at the Ban Plainoen Palace from the 1930s up until the 1970s (Phunphit:1998:78-81).

Following the deaths of Khru Thewaprasit and Khunying Phaithun, the son of Khru Thewaprasit, Khru Uthai Phatthayakoson, became the head of the Phatthayakoson Music School. Khru Uthai, as well as acting as a teacher at the School, was also employed as a librarian at the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy situated in Nakhonnayok province. When Khru Uthai died in January 2007, another senior musician, Khru Somsak Triwat succeeded him and became the first non family member to lead the Phatthayakoson Music School. Khru Somsak himself had been the beneficiary of teachings from Khru Thewaprasit and other teachers of the School who passed on their musical knowledge and the values of the School to not only his son, Khru Uthai, but also to the aforementioned, Khru Somsak. Khru Somsak has involved himself heavily in the activities of the Phatthayakoson Music School and passed on his musical knowledge to his family members and students. It should be noted, however, that the musical lineage of the School remains to this day through a daughter and a son of Khru Uthai, Nopphawan and Yutthana respectively, who although not leaders, are involved in the musical activities of the School.

The Phatthayakoson Music School's reputation was established more than two centuries ago, and throughout this period it has been strongly identified with Thai music competitions and the *naphat* repertoire (sacred ritual compositions). However, its influence regarding the *piphat nanghong* and the *piphat mon* has only been seen in the past 20 years. In addition, one of the most renowned features of this school concerns the many musical instruments that Khru Thewaprasit inherited from his ancestors, some of which have great sentimental value: for example, *pi than phra*[6] and *so thuan nak*[7]. Also, there were several Thai musical instruments which were very beautifully decorated and are all still in excellent working condition. Amongst these priceless pieces are the set of elaborate *piphat mon* which were designed by Prince Naris and also contain an engraved

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[6] This was the private oboe of Phra Pradit Phairo.
[7] This was a special three-stringed fiddle with a copper peg.

logo of the Phatthayakoson Music School. This set of *piphat mon* was used at the funeral of HM the King's sister in 2008.

Figure 24: The Phatthayakoson Music School's *piphat mon* ensemble performing at the funeral of HM the King's sister in 2008.

The circumstances which resulted in the Phatthayakoson Music School's reputation being enhanced in respect of the two aforementioned ensembles occurred when HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn requested the School to perform, firstly, at the funeral ceremony of HM the King's mother in 1996 and, secondly, at the King's sister's funeral in 2008. The Phatthayakoson Music School was the only private group outside of the government and royal court musical circles chosen by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to perform at the aforementioned ceremonies.

Figure 25: The Phatthayakoson Music School today.

Today the School provides musical performances at auspicious social functions for both the government and private individuals. In addition the School will perform at funeral ceremonies for distinguished individuals playing the repertoire of the *piphat mon* ensemble. The School performs at approximately 10 funerals per year in the Bangkok area. It prides itself in transferring musical knowledge from one generation to the next, retaining its unique style throughout. To augment its musical performances, the School has a project to publish CDs aimed at educating students and researchers who would like to learn about the history of the School (Interview with Somsak Triwat on 6 December 2009). Having played a prominent role in the education of musicians in Thailand over the past two hundred years, the Phatthayakoson Music School continues to be one of the most important centres of style and knowledge in the country regarding Thai classical music.

5.2 Famous musicians and composers of the Phatthayakoson Music School

Probably, the two most renowned musicians who feature in the Phatthayakoson musical lineage were Changwang Thua and his son, Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson.

Changwang Thua (1881-1938)

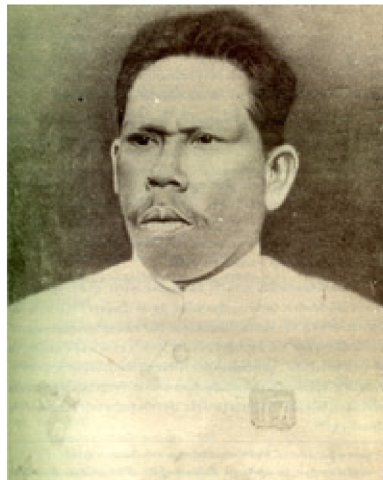

Figure 26: Changwang Thua Phatthayakoson.

Changwang Thua was born on 21 September 1881, the son of Chao Krom Thap (Luang Kanrayanamit), the founder of the Phatthayakoson Music School (Arada: 1989:103). For the whole of his musical life, Changwang Thua created and developed the unique style of performances that the Phatthayakoson Music School is renowned for. It is almost certainly true to say that without the music competition between various palaces and ensembles that occurred during the reign of King Rama V (r.1868-1910), Changwang Thua may not have had the inspiration and motivation to construct and shape the Phatthayakoson Music School's unique style. During this period, most of the elite classes and Royal Family members would have their own music ensemble, which was a symbol of their high status in Thai society. Typically, these elite members of society would recruit the best possible musicians that they could find both within Bangkok and also outside the city from provinces such as Samutsongkhram and Ratchaburi. With respect to the Phatthayakoson Music School, it benefited under the patronage of King Rama V's son, Prince Paribatra, and achieved great fame and financial status.

A musical historian and lecturer at Chulalongkorn University, Patarawdee Puchadapirom (1993), cites Changwang Thua as one of the most significant musicians in Thai musical history. As the Head musician for the Bangkhunphrom ensemble, under the patronage of Prince Paribatra, Changwang Thua won many competitions which enhanced his reputation as a musician. He was greatly in demand as a teacher and typically would have groups of between 5 - 10 students coming to study with him at his home. Many of his students stayed for years with him and he was renowned for his generosity, even financing the cost of food provision for his students (Patarawdee:1993:95).

An example of a famous Thai musician who was taught by Changwang Thua was Khru Tuean Phatthayakun. He was raised in Phetchaburi province, was sent by his father to study with Changwang Thua and spent more than 20 years under his tutelage (ibid.:195). He progressed so well that he became a National Artist of Thailand in 1992. Another example to illustrate Changwang Thua's teaching skill was in respect of his relationship with another famous musician named Changwang Suan. The two met at the Thatian Palace and although Changwang Suan subsequently moved away, he still remained friends with Changwang Thua and demonstrated this by sending his children there to study (Yutthana:2002). The majority of Changwang Thua's students after completing their musical education with him would join the Music Department of the Thai Army and Thai Navy, both in Bangkok. Therefore, the style of performance and compositions of the Phatthayakoson Music School have been preserved in these departments through to the present day.

With respect to music played at the funeral ceremony, Khru Tuean Phatthayakun states that "Changwang Thua created the *nanghong* suite imposing his own style. He selected existing pieces and combined them to create the *nanghong* suite. ….. Everyone in his ensemble knew exactly what they had to perform. This was not the case with other ensembles whereby the group would rely on the *ranat ek* player to guide them through the transition from one piece of music to another. Musicians in Changwang Thua ensemble are able to move seamlessly from one piece to the next without hesitating or needing to refer to the *ranat ek* player" (Jutamas:1997:83). During his musical career, he composed many songs and created solo versions for each instrument in the *piphat* ensemble such as the *ranat ek,* the *khong wong yai* and the *pi nai.* However, he did not compose any new pieces of music to add to the repertoire of the *piphat mon*. It is a well known fact that

during his life time, the *piphat mon* was rarely heard with many people choosing instead the *piphat nanghong* to be performed at their funeral. One of the main factors for the *piphat mon*'s lack of exposure was the fact that many Thai musicians did not possess the knowledge to play the repertoire. Changwang Thua's knowledge of the *piphat nanghong* was passed on to his family members, thus continuing the musical lineage and also ensuring that the knowledge passed on to his students.

Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson (1909-1973)

Figure 27: Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson.

One of the Phatthayakoson Musical School's most famous musicians and composers is Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson. He is renowned for composing three very famous pieces for the *piphat mon* namely "Nakboriphat", "Chang Prasan Nga" and "Phama He". (Later on in this thesis, I will examine the musical style and theory behind these compositions). His musical life was a fascinating one as he had an innate talent for absorbing and learning different facets of Thai music theory and practice from a wide range of other Thai musicians. He was also part of a famous musical lineage with both his father, Changwang Thua, and his grandfather Chao Krom Thap (the founder of the Phatthayakoson Music School) being accomplished musicians. In this section, I will provide some background detail regarding his motives for composing his own music. I would also like to show how significant it was for him to be able to play a variety of musical instruments proficiently before he began composing Thai and Mon music.

The name Thewaprasit bestowed upon on him by Prince Paribatra was very apt because his musical talent was like "a gift from god". In Thai, Thewa means "god or divinity" and Prasit means "success". Khru Thewaprasit was born on 24 September 1907. He had eight siblings of whom six passed away before they reached adulthood (Thewaprasit:1974:NP). Of the two remaining, apart from himself, his sister Khunying Phaithun Kittiwan became a renowned musician in her own right. Her main achievement was to hold the position of musical advisor to HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, in respect of singing and playing the *so duang* (a Thai high-pitched fiddle).

Khru Thewaprasit was fortunate to be taught by both his father and his grandfather from an early age at the Phatthayakoson Music School. Through their tuition, he was an accomplished player of the *ranat ek* by his 8th birthday (ibid.:51). Prince Paribatra who had formed a close bond with Changwang Thua allowed his wife Mom[8] Chareon[9] to live with Changwang Thua's family and she was instrumental in teaching Khru Thewaprasit how to sing. In addition, he was taught to play the *pi nai* by Phraya Prasanduriyasap (Plaek Prasansap) and indeed playing this instrument, he won a prestigious competition at the Bangkhunphrom Palace at the age of 15 (Arada:1989:117). Prince Paribatra showered him with high praise and presented him with two valuable oboes which had belonged to the renowned musicians, Phra Pradit Phairo (Khru Mi Khaek) and Phraya Prasanduriyasap. As well as the *pi nai*, his other favourite musical instrument was the *so sam sai* (a three-stringed fiddle). Initially, he learnt the rudiments of the instrument from his grandfather and thereafter, he was taught by Prince Paribatra at his palace, Bangkhunphrom. The Prince presented him with a special copper version of the *so sam sai* known as *so thuan nak* (ibid.:117).

Arada (1989:116-118) in her biography of musicians from the Ratthanakosin period states that Khru Thewaprasit developed a very high level of skill, knowledge and creativity in respect of the *so sam sai.* This was evident when, once during a radio broadcast, one of the *so sam sai*'s strings broke. This, however, did not deter him from continuing to play until the piece had been completed. Such was his skill and adaptability,

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[8] The word Mom in this context refers to a consort of the Prince.

[9] Mom Charoen used to be a wife of Chao Phraya Thewetwongwiwat who then presented her to Changwang Thua so that she in turn could become his wife. This practice was commonplace amongst Thai royalty during this period with male members of the nobility often having several wives. Mom Charoen was one of the most prominent singers at the palace of Chao Phraya Thewetwongwiwat, Banmo.

it would have been extremely difficult for the listeners to notice that he had been inconvenienced by having to play the instrument with only two strings instead of three.

When he was 20, Khru Thewaprasit embarked on a career within the military and played in a band for the royal guards. His musical knowledge was widened by the specific duty that he had to perform during his time in military service, namely writing musical notation for the repertoire played by his musical band. After he completed military service, he joined his father, Changwang Thua and Prince Paribatra in the Thai music ensemble at Bangkhunphrom Palace (Thewaprasit:1974:NP). Khru Thewaprasit was particularly close to Prince Paribatra. After the Prince's departure to Java, Indonesia, they would correspond regularly via post. These letters included instructions, advice and musical notes that were written for the band when they performed on the radio. Khru Thewaprasit was invited to Java to work on several songs alongside Prince Paribatra as well as performing music for him.

Several institutions invited Khru Thewaprasit to demonstrate his musical talents including Thammasat and Chulalongkorn Universities in Bangkok. Occasionally, he gave lessons to the Royal Army and Police Bands to improve their performance. He also lectured at several other institutions. Two of the most impressive achievements of his professional career were the opportunities to teach members of the Royal Family. As well as HRH Princess Maha Chaki Sirindhorn, he also taught HM King Bhumibol's eldest daughter, Princess Ubolratana Rajakanya for several years to play the Thai three-stringed fiddle (Arada:1989:117-118). Khru Thewaprasit's students throughout his teaching career benefited from his ability to teach them various instruments. Khru Thewaprasit was very innovative and always made his classes stimulating by using new teaching methods and musical ideas. Among his more famous students were Khru Somsak Triwat and Khru Bunrot Thongwiwat, both of whom are respected musicians of the Phatthayakoson Music School.

Above and beyond his ability to play to an extremely high level various musical instruments, he was also an excellent composer. Initially he was reluctant to compose new music for fear that he would be encroaching upon the territory of Prince Paribatra who was a renowned composer. In Thai musical culture, Prince Paribatra as a "Khru" or teacher of Khru Thewaprasit would always be considered as a "superior" musician to his

pupil, Khru Thewaprasit. By not committing to composing new music in his early musical career, Khru Thewaprasit was demonstrating this traditional pupil-teacher show of respect.

It was only later in his musical career that he began to compose pieces such as the "Mahachulalongkorn" Overture. This composition was written at the request of the present King to provide Chulalongkorn University of Bangkok with their own signature piece of music. It is very popular with the many ensembles in the university, especially the renowned So Cho Mo ensemble or as it is otherwise known as, the Thai Music Club of Chulalongkorn University (Siriwan and Uthai:2007:NP). In respect of the "Mahachulalongkorn" Overture, Khru Thewaprasit incorporated a Western influenced melody from HM King Bhumiphol known as "Mahachulalongkorn" which was the first song that HM the King composed by using the pentatonic or five tone scale in the Thai classical melodies that he had composed. Among his other compositions was the signature piece for the Phatthayakoson Music School, the "Athit-uthai" Overture. He is also famous for his Mon style compositions, "Phama He", "Nakboriphat thao"[10]and "Chang Phrasan Nga thao".

Khru Thewaprasit throughout his career only played and taught songs from the Phatthayakoson Music School repertoire. This is borne out by an anecdote from Khru Somsak who received a rebuke from Khru Thewaprasit when during a performance, he heard Khru Somsak and fellow musicians playing a piece that originated from another music school. He questioned Khru Somsak: "As you performed a composition from another music school, have you played all the pieces in the Phatthayakoson Music School repertoire?". At this point, the piece came to an abrupt end and the musicians then recommenced their performance with compositions from their own school's syllabus (Interview with Somsak Triwat on 29 November 2009). When Khru Thewaprasit died in 1973, it represented a great loss to the Thai classical music scene and also the wider Thai music community.

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[10] The word *thao* in Thai music means to play a composition continuously without stopping during the performance, beginning with *sam chan* - level 3, followed by *song chan* – level 2 and then *chan diao* - level 1 and concluding with *luk mot* which signifies the end of the piece.

5.3 Compositions by the Phatthayakoson Music School for the *nanghong* suites and in the *mon* music style

Before I explain about the composition style of the Phatthayakoson Music School, I should first provide detail concerning the general theory behind Thai compositions. A study by music students at Chulalongkorn University concluded that Thai compositions could be divided into four methods (Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts:1985:78-82) and I have provided musical examples in order to clarify the process as follows:

1. Automatic composition

This is a "free" style method of composition. In these circumstances, the composer has no real conditions to adhere to apart from understanding the pattern of the song and whether to play it in a *propkai*[11] or *song mai*[12] drum pattern style. Usually, one can hear the basic melody which will be played by the *khong wong yai*. For example, the basic melody of *damneon thamnong* always uses the *propkai* drum pattern to accompany it, whereas the "question and answer" repertoire will always be in a *song mai* drum pattern.

2. Extended composition

This kind of composition will double the length of the original melody. Normally, this basic melody will derive from *song chan* (level 2) and *chan diao* (level 1). For example, if the measure of *chan diao* is 8 bars, the composer when writing the extended section of the composition into *song chan*, must extend it to 16 bars, thus doubling the length. The basic melody of bars 8 and 16 of *song chan* must be the same notes as at bar 4 and 8 of *song chan* as indicated by the arrows below.

[11] *Propkai* is a metrical kind of pattern. The majority of *propkai* compositions have been created using an improvisational style. An example of this is "Khaek Borathet".
[12] *Songmai* is another kind of metrical pattern and always played in a question and answer style. An example of this is "Khaek Lopburi".

Musical Example 5: An example of an extended composition: "Khaek Borathet"

chan diao
Section 1

song chan
Section 1

From the above illustration of *chan diao*, it can be seen that both of the arrows highlight the two main basic melodies. The arrows which are positioned on the top of bar 4 and bar 8 indicate the main melody. It is a compulsory for a composer to follow these two basic melodies when constructing an extended composition from *chan diao* to *song chan*. The basic melodies from bar 4 and bar 8 in respect of *song chan* and *chan diao* must still contain the same notes but the length of the composition will be doubled as explained earlier (as indicated by the arrows in the above illustration of the "Khaek Borathet" *song chan*).

3. Reduced composition

This is in effect the opposite of the extended style of composition. The number of bars in a song will be half of those that feature in the original version. The main melody is retained throughout the piece.

4. Varying composition

With respect to the final method, the principal note with the first melody at the beginning of bars 8,16,24,32 and 40 remains constant as well as the length of the piece. However, the rest of the melody will be subject to changes. The term used to describe this variation for Thai musicians is called *thang plein*. Under normal circumstances, the original melody of the composition is played in its entirety, after which it is played with variations in the melody. Many Thai musicians compose *thang plein* in a “foreign tone” using the traditional Thai musical style. Examples of *thang plein* include Farang (Western), Chin (China), Lao (Laos), Khamen (Cambodia) and Khaek (India). An example of *thang plein* can be found in the piece “Thong Yon”. I have provided the basic melody notation below:

Musical Example 6: The basic melody of "Thong Yon"

Musical Example 7: A variation of "Thong Yon" in the *mon* style

In the variation of "Thong Yon" as presented above, the composer incorporates characteristics sourced from Mon music into the piece, by employing a long, slow melody interspersed with jumping movements, an example of which can be found in bars 6-7 and 13-14. Khru Boonchouy comments that "the combination of a long, leaping melody together with the disjunct motion technique[13] is one of the most important elements for the composition of Mon style music by Thai composers. Also, as in the example of "Thong Yon", the tonality used in the Mon language is a key feature of musical compositions by Thai composers and is a fundamental aspect of this style of

[13] The disjunct motion is a musical term referring to melodies which feature large gaps. "Jumping" and "skipping" are other terms used to describe this technique (Personal communication with my supervisor, Nick Gray, on 9 July 2014).

music" (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 20 April 2014). With respect to the pitches employed in Mon compositions, Morton comments that "…In the mon style six pitches are often prominently used, making a hexatonic supply arrangement six adjoining (diatonic, in the Thai sense) equidistant pitches obtain - 123456 or 123 567(= 567123) – while in the pentatonic arrangement only the three equidistant pitches 123 are adjoining. But in the hexatonic pattern the sixth pitch is generally used in secondary, unaccented positions, and the hierarchy of pitches involves only five (sometimes less) principal pitches..." (Morton:1976:117). I can confirm that the above musical examples from a piece named "Thong Yon" showing the original Thai composition and Mon variation, are uniformly used by Thai composers in contemporary Bangkok.

Musical form of the Phatthayakoson Music School

With respect to the musical form of the Mon and *piphat nanghong* repertoire as performed by the Phatthayakoson Music School, I should emphasise that it is quite distinct from the other schools in Bangkok. This unique style can be recognised easily by Thai professional musicians. In particular the *piphat sepha* repertoire in respect of its style of singing and performance can be immediately identified as belonging to the Phatthayakoson Music School. This can be illustrated by the fact that other schools such as Luang Pradit Phairo and Sanoduriyang will perform each piece of the *piphat sepha* repertoire for one cycle whilst the Phatthayakoson Music School will play two cycles of the same piece (the variation will be added in the second cycle). This style of performance was considered innovative when introduced into Thai music circles. An example of this composition can be seen in "Bulan" (*sam chan* – level 3).

With respect to the Mon repertoire, Chuchart Pinpart (2003) notes that "Mon music in today's society tends to consist of new compositions, replacing older pieces of music which are no longer popular. The structure of these older Mon compositions is very sophisticated and because they are very lengthy, it has proved difficult for musicians to memorise them. We can only find a small number of people who are able to perform pieces such as "Phrachan Mon" and "Ko Thum Preing" (Chuchart:2003:202). Also it should be noted, that many Mon ensembles in contemporary Bangkok always perform exclusively what are known as "general songs" (*phleng thuapai* or as some musicians say

phleng talat. These two words can be translated as “songs that can be found anywhere”). However, the Phatthayakoson Music School will only perform pieces composed by their own musicians. One of the School’s most famous musicians, Khru Thewaprasit, is credited with composing at least three new Mon style compositions, namely “Nakboriphat”, “Chang Prasan Nga” and “Phama He” respectively. Each composition has its own unique style and they were all influenced by original Thai tunes. With respect to my own experiences, I learnt three pieces of music named “Chang Prasan Nga” “Nakboriphat” and “Phama He” from Khru Somsak Triwat at the Phatthayakoson Music School, who was taught these pieces by Khru Phangphon Tangsuepphan, one of the most respected musicians of the School. All three are lengthy compositions and I had to employ a hand pattern unique to the School which was technically very challenging.

In terms of the method of Thai musical composition, “Phama He” uses the varying option whereas “Chang Prasan Nga” is an example of an extended composition from a *song chan* (level 2) into *sam chan* (level 3). By way of an analysis of Thai compositions constructed in a Mon style, I have provided an illustration using a piece entitled “Chang Prasan Nga”. This is an extended composition in a Mon style. Khru Thewaprasit composed a new piece based on this original Thai tune which was written in *song chan* (level 2) style. This composition has been extended utilising *sam chan* (level 3) style and at the same time he composed a new melody in a Mon accent. He also replaced the original *song chan* (level 2) adapting this to be performed in a Mon style. This was done very subtly without anybody realising that it was originally a Thai composition. I will now provide a comparison between the original Thai tune and his subsequent composition.

In general, Thai compositions will tend to have either one, two or three sections (there are rare examples of pieces that feature as many as four and five sections e.g. “Bulan” and “Phama Ha Thon”). In the case of “Chang Prasan Nga”, it has only one section, featuring 32 measures and it also uses the *propkai* drum pattern to accompany it. The tempo and *ching* structure are the same.

Musical Example 8: The original Thai tune of “Chang Prasan Nga” in *song chan* (level 2) style

Musical Example 9: “Chang Prasan Nga” composed by Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson in Mon accent and *song chan* (level 2) style

Musical Example 10: "Chang Prasan Nga" composed by Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson in Mon accent and *sam chan* (level 3) style.

Even today many Thai musicians consider "Chang Prasan Nga" to have been composed in a *thao* style. In fact, I would argue that this piece of music represents a new style of Thai composition. Morton (1976) gave an explanation of Thai musical composition theory:

> "the *thao* technique (and form) is based on two main principles: (1) the technique of augmentation and diminution of a given composition, and (2) the constant doubling of tempo – that is, doubling the number of *ching* strokes per measure, which gives a feeling of doubling the tempo. These principles in themselves are neither new nor revolutionary, but the way that Thais have used them to create a specific form is unique. Because of the customs in Thai music not to create new and original compositions, this technique of composing was and is admirably suited to the Thai music system and customs" (Morton:1976:182,185).

From Morton's observation, it can be concluded that the composer of "Chang Prasan Nga", Khru Thewaprasit, utilised the *sam chan* and *song chan* styles but did not employ the *thao* style. Actually, he did not compose in *chan diao* (level 1) style but instead introduced a *phleng ching* called "Chang Prasan Nga" influenced by the *piphat* repertoire. This method of composition has been used regularly in the construction of new musical pieces for the *piphat mon*.

According to Khru Boonchouy, there are three main principles that a composer must consider when writing Thai pieces in a Mon accent. Any composition in this style should contain at least one of these principles, although to be considered a definitive work in this genre, the piece should include all three of the following:

1. The melody should be written in a Mon melodic form (*samnuan*[14] *mon*) with the composer having the option to include the disjunct motion technique[15]. The piece entitled "Thong Yon" is an example of this method of composition (see pages 214-215 for my explanation)[16].
2. Thai compositions with a Mon accent tend to be composed in the pitch level of *nai lot* (this is also referred to as "*siang mon*" which can literarily be translated as "mon pitch level"). An example of this can be found in the Thai composition "Khaek Mon".
3. Thai compositions in a Mon style will typically be played utilising Mon instruments and Mon drum patterns in order to infuse the performance with Mon musical characteristics.

(Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 20 April 2014).

As can be seen from the composition detailed above in the musical examples 7-8, the composer Khru Thewaprasit, as well as injecting Mon melodic influences by his use of Mon accents, also borrowed the basic *samnuan* melody (this underpins all Mon styled

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[14] Francis Silkstone (1993:257) provides the following translation of the word *samnuan*: "literally means "wording", and so in a musical sense, "formulaic vocabulary"".

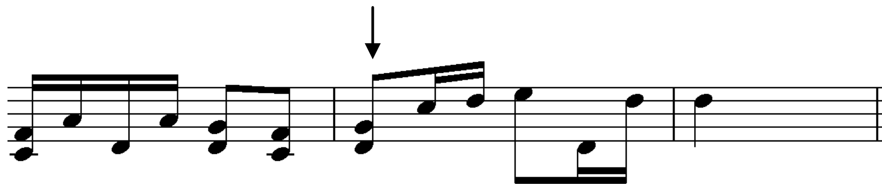
[15] From my informal conversations with many musicians in Bangkok including Khru Somsak Triwat from the Phatthayakoson Music School, in addition to *samnuan mon,* the use of *mue khong mon* (the basic melody employed when playing the *khong mon*) will also be considered by Thai composers seeking to write in a Mon style . Examples of the *mue khong mon* can be heard in the Mon funeral ritual pieces "Pracham Wat" and "Yok Sop".

[16] In addition to Khru Boonchouy's example "Thong Yon", from my own musical experiences, I have discovered other Thai compositions featuring *samnuan mon*, namely "Mon Du Dao", "Khaek Mon Bangkhunphrom" and "Mon Ram Dap".

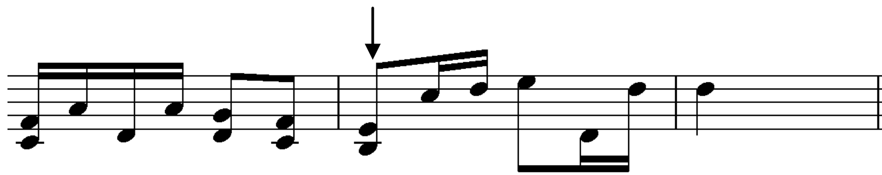
Thai compositions). An earlier Thai piece that bears the hallmarks of this compositional structure is “Khaek Mon Bangkhunphrom” *sam chan* (in example 8, bars 13-14). Khru Thewaprasit’s use of the Mon accent can also be seen in the Thai composition “Mon Ram Dap” (in example 7, the last four bars 15-17). Khru Thewaprasit’s composition differs from “Mon Ram Dap” by the changing of a single note as illustrated by the arrow detailed in the comparison below:

Musical Example 11: A comparison of Khru Thewaprasit’s composition, “Chang Prasan Nga” *song chan* and the original Thai piece “Mon Ram Dap” *song chan*

“Chang Prasan Nga” *song chan*



“Mon Ram Dap” *song chan*



Although Khru Thewaprasit has altered the melody through the changing of a single note, the above composition still maintains a Mon accent, and he followed the hexatonic-heptatonic mode - 123456 or 123 567(= 567123) - when composing the piece. As well as employing the hexatonic-heptatonic mode, Khru Thewaprasit also used both pitches 4 and 7 as passage running notes which can be seen throughout examples 7-8. This composition conforms with Morton’s observation that “...in the mon or hexatonic-heptatonic style pitch 4 or 7 (sometimes both) is prominently and consistently used, particularly in running passages. Whether the pitch of the passing tone should be labelled 4 or 7 depends on which pitch level is chosen for the passage. Usually, six pitches, forming a hexatonic mode, are used for compositions on mon style...” (Morton:1976:32-33).

To sum up, it can be clearly seen that Khru Thewaprasit followed the structure of Thai composition as I have demonstrated overleaf. This is an example of how new Thai compositions were written with a Mon accent. As well as compositions with a Mon flavour, Thai musicians have also composed original Thai pieces that feature foreign accents such as "Khaek" (Indian) and "Farang" (Western). The unique musical heritage and character of each country is the main source of inspiration for these compositions.

Structure of the *nanghong* repertoire in the style of the Phatthayakoson Music School

I was fortunate to interview Khru Uthai Phatthayakoson, a former Head teacher of the Phatthayakoson Music School in 1997 when I conducted research about the *piphat nanghong* ensemble. I also had an opportunity to interview two further respected representatives of the school, Khru Tuean Phatthayakul and Khru Son Yuprakhong (this was in 1997 whilst I was studying the *nanghong* repertoire during my MA degree at Chulalongkorn University). They emphasised that the *nanghong* repertoire can be structured in five different ways which I have detailed below:

Structure 1

nanghong song chan

Structure 2

nanghong song chan	*phleng song chan*	*phleng reo*	*luk mot*[17]

For my dissertation, I interviewed Khru Uthai (Jutamas:1997:81) who stated that "the pieces to be used in this form can be chosen from all categories of Thai composition. The most important thing in terms of Thai music is that the connection and transition from piece to piece has to be smooth and consonant (intervals of 2, 3, 5, and 6 are employed in this structure)". The interval refers to the distance between two pitches: for example, if a piece ends on note 1, then the following piece should begin on note 2, 3, 5, or 6.

[17] *Luk mot* is a piece of music which will be performed directly after the main theme.

Structure 3

phleng sam chan	*phleng reo*	*phleng phasa*	*luk mot*

Structure 4

phleng sam chan either in the style of question and answer (*luk lo luk khat*) or realising a melody (*damneon thamnong*)	*phleng reo*	*luk mot*

Structure 5

nanghong sam chan	*phleng sam chan* either in the style of question and answer (*luk lo luk khat*) or realising a melody (*damneon thamnong*)	*phleng reo*	*phleng phasa*	*luk mot*

(Jutamas:1997:81-83)

To conclude, the Phatthayakoson Music School's contribution to Thai musical heritage in respect of *nanghong* and Mon composition is immense. The leading exponent of Mon music at the Phatthayakoson Music School was Khru Thewaprasit who composed Mon music using his own unique hand pattern. In one of his three major Mon style compositions, he used the extended method template and created his own variation of this using both *sam chan* (level 3) and *song chan* (level 2) styles in "Chang Prasan Nga". The Phatthayakoson Music School has always been associated with this unique composition style and also with Khru Thewaprasit's innovative hand pattern.

Regarding the *nanghong* composition style, the Phatthayakoson Music School follows basic Thai music theory but employs its own distinctive hand pattern. Wimala confirmed this by stating that "the Phatthayakoson Music School has its own "path" in respect of its unique hand pattern" (Wimala:1991:95). This characteristic of the Phatthayakoson Music School style can be heard in their renditions of the *nanghong* suites which sound quite different from other schools. This is certainly the case in respect of "Phleng Reo".

5.4 Transmission of the Phatthayakoson Music School

According to Shehan, "… One of the crucial differences between Western and non-Western art music instructions clearly is the difference between the teaching of literacy skills and the oral tradition. Aural/oral learning used in informal instruction either ignores notation completely or uses it as a memory aid. The non-Western learning sequence is often a close interaction of aural and kinetic elements, and its practice is widespread throughout Asia, Africa, and rural areas of Western continents…" (Shehan:1987:2).

The oral tradition is still used among Thai musicians, particularly those professional musicians from the Phatthayakoson Music School. It is considered to be also a very effective way to pass musical knowledge from one generation to the next. Although the oral tradition is an essential element of the learning process laid down at the Phatthayakoson Music School, written notation was also an alternative trusted method of transmitting music that the School employed (however, since Khru Thewaprasit passed away the oral method has been used exclusively to teach music right up until the present day). Throughout the history of the School, it is important to state that notation has never been referred to during an actual performance. The only time that it is used is for recording purposes and specifically to ensure that the original hand patterns and melodies of the pieces are maintained. Santi (2007) mentioned that "more than 40 *phleng rueang* [18] including "Ching Phra Chan", "Krabok" and "Tao Thong" were all recorded using the staff notation method employed by the Phatthayakoson Music School" (Santi:2007:NP). I spoke with a musician who wished to remain anonymous from the Phatthayakoson Music School, who informed me that "regarding the *nanghong* suite and Mon repertoire of the School, there are no records. These compositions have been transmitted by using the oral tradition only".

Khru Somsak stated that "Notation is available to be used whenever we need to check details regarding the melody of the piece, particularly those composed by Prince Paribatra. Apart from this, it is never used... Notation records are maintained and treated as valuable objects by Khru Uthai Phatthayakoson's family..." (Interview with Somsak Triwat on 19 April 2010). When examining the teaching methods of the prominent

[18] *Phleng rueang* is a musical suite and also refers to a term used to classify a collection of musical compositions or repertoires and specifically relates to the *piphat* ensemble.

musicians who featured in the history of the Phatthayakoson Music School, one must begin with the founder, Chao Krom Thap. He was renowned for taking his lessons very seriously, with those lacking in attentiveness and passion when practising, being punished. His son, Changwang Thua was also very strict with his teachings. Arada wrote that “even when situated far away from his students, he was able to differentiate between whether a melody had been correctly or incorrectly played” (Arada:1989:104). Khru Tuean Phatthayakun, a famous musician who attended the Phatthayakoson Music School between 1915 -1916, stated that the School was willing to accept students irrespective of their musical abilities. All students would be given knowledge of Thai compositions such as *phleng rueang*, *thao*, *phleng tap* as well as other solo pieces. These pieces in particular were the foundation upon which all students were taught by the School. Students would then be classified into classes according to the assessments made of their abilities (Tuean:1994:3).

A typical day at the Phatthayakoson Music School in the musical life of Tuean, consisted of the following activities:

05.00 - 09.00	Practising the piece entitled “Thayae” and also solo pieces or songs that were supplied by teachers
09.00 - 10.00	Breakfast
10.00 - 16.00	Learning new pieces or practising ones which had already been taught
17.00 - 19.00	Dinner followed by a period of relaxation
19.00 - 21.00	Practising the evening overture, the *sepha* repertoire and other pieces supplied by the teachers
21.00 - 05.00	Rest and bed

(ibid.:4)

This strict regime has helped produce many famous musicians such as Sap Senphanit, Nop Sripehtdee, Yanyong Pongnamchai, Kamon Malaiman, Khian Suksaichon, Pun Khongsriwilai and Salee Malaiman (Arada:1989:104). This group continues to have a great influence over musicians in the Thai music community. As listed in the schedule detailed above, one can see that the oral tradition had been a key factor in the methods employed by the Phatthayakoson Music School in transmitting music to its students. Both on a one to one basis and in groups of students, the tutors at

the Phatthayakoson Music School always teach a small phrase/section of a composition until the piece is grasped in its entirety. Once the teachers are satisfied that the students are comfortable with all of the elements of a particular piece, they will be allowed to practise it all the way through. Teachers at the School use different techniques in order to coach the students. For example, a teacher may suggest that the students rehearse alone. Alternatively, the teacher may adopt a more "hands on" approach whereby they will show the students how to position their wrists when playing the *ranat ek* and the *khong,* in order to achieve the best possible sound. It is common place, once all students have learnt a particular piece, for both themselves and the teachers to begin rehearsing together. This is for the purpose of clarifying the tempo and style in which the piece is to be played. The process is very similar to the Western musical theory ensemble "advanced arrangement".

The schedule that the students are asked to undertake is very demanding and consequently some feel unable to fulfil all the necessary requirements of the teaching and are forced to drop out of the School. The ones that remain must possess qualities of great endurance and determination in order to achieve the high standards set by the School. This factor explains why the School contains only a relatively small number of students. Today, the Phatthayakoson Music School is still not making use of notation and audio-visual aids for their transmission and the oral tradition is still the mode of teaching which underpins their philosophy.

5.5 Learning the *khong mon wong yai* from the Phatthayakoson Music School with Khru Somsak Triwat

It is still clear in my memory the moment when I first met Khru Somsak Triwat, on 29 November 2009, when I went back to Thailand to conduct my fieldwork. My first act on meeting him was to present three garlands of flowers. This was to show my respects to not only Khru Somsak and all of the teachers who have studied and taught at the Phatthayakoson Music School and since passed away, but also to the Gods of music. Initially, I perceived Khru Somsak to be reluctant to interact with me as he appeared to be withdrawn when in my company. I felt that this may have been due to my not having originally studied at the same establishment as Khru Somsak. I believed that he was curious as to why I needed to broaden my knowledge about the *piphat mon* and *piphat nanghong* repertoires. However, after I explained in greater depth and detail about my

intentions, aspirations, the aim and scope of the thesis, he became more at ease when in my company. I believe that this more relaxed attitude prompted an invitation to me to attend a ceremony whereby I was to bring three garlands of flowers as a mark of respect to the deceased Principals and teachers of the Phatthayakoson Music School. With this invitation, I finally felt that he had accepted me and that this was the beginning of a strong teacher and student relationship.

One of the instruments that I was fortunate enough to study with him was the *khong mon wong yai*, a large crescent-shaped *mon* gong-chime. I found this to be fascinating, as my previous experience of playing this instrument was restricted to a few lessons from my father and a music teacher in my home many years ago. I should emphasise the fact that the *khong mon wong yai* plays a pivotal role in the ensemble as it provides the basic melody around which other musicians within the group improvise on their instruments. I learnt one specific piece that is used in the ritual itself which is called "Pracham Wat". This is a traditional piece and as such it is not credited to an individual composer and it is believed to have Mon origins.

As this composition relates to death, I asked Khru Somsak whether his home would be an appropriate place in which to learn and practise these Mon pieces. I was concerned that it may bring ill fortune or even death to people who live in the house. However, Khru Somsak allayed my fears by reassuring me that this was not a problem as "this house is near the temple and this land also belongs to the temple." (Personal communication with Somsak Triwat when I studied with him). I was also able to learn three pieces: "Phama He", "Nakboriphat" and "Chang Prasan Nga" that were composed by Khru Thewaprasit Phatthayakoson. Each of these are played in between the main sections of the funeral ceremony.

During my first lesson learning the *khong mon wong yai,* I sat opposite Khru Somsak who played the *ranat ek* in order to demonstrate the basic melody of the piece that he was teaching me. Once I had grasped the basic melody, he began to play a more complex and developed melody using the *ranat ek*'s unique style. This method of teaching is referred to as the rote process, or in other words the oral and aural traditions. "... Oral transmission takes the perspective of the teacher and implied interaction between teacher and the learner by oral transmission, singing and playing. Aural transmission takes the

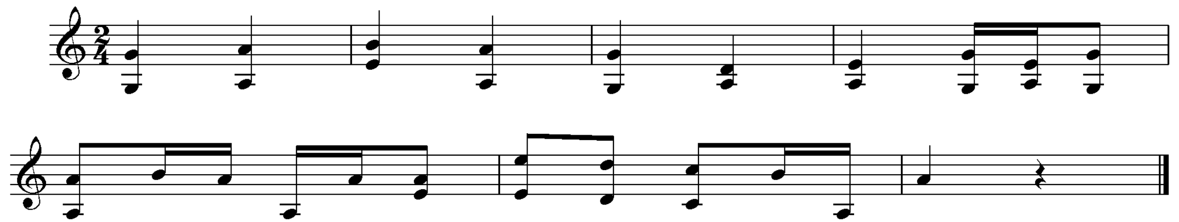
perspective of the learner, who hears the music through some aural source...” (Wade:2004:17).

During my lessons, not only did I gain knowledge from him by way of visual observations and attentive listening, I was also able to absorb facets of Thai culture from someone who I regard as a role model, specifically from his polite way of teaching whereby he made me feel at ease, together with his generosity. For example, he would regularly offer me food and drink and suggest frequent breaks to keep our session fresh. Being comfortable in his company made me want to share many of my personal musical experiences with him. As well as Khru Somsak, his wife, daughter and grandson also welcomed me and were very hospitable.

He did not use notation in any of his teachings. When learning the *khong mon wong yai*, he began by showing me how to hold the sticks in the correct manner and then how to apply them on the *khong mon wong yai* to achieve a perfect sound. Then, he began to teach me a piece entitled “Pracham Wat”. After I had become comfortable with the melody that Khru Somsak had taught me, he would complete our sessions by reverting to the *ranat ek* playing a piece in its own unique style with me accompanying on the *khong mon wong yai.* During the lessons, I was able to observe closely the style being employed by Khru Somsak when playing the *ranat ek.* I played the *khong mon wong yai* which provided the basic melody whilst Khru Somsak would improvise on the instrument (see VCD clip no. 5).

I already had a good understanding of “Pracham Wat” from the teacher who was hired by my father approximately 25-30 years ago. However, Khru Somsak taught me a different hand pattern and variations in respect of some of the melodies that I learnt from my previous teacher. I should emphasise that the main melody was always retained. Khru Somsak was very patient with me when I used the incorrect hand pattern and would correct me immediately on each occasion that I made an error. I have illustrated below the different melodies and hand patterns used by Khru Somsak and my previous teacher.

Musical Example 12: "Pracham Wat": *khong mon wong yai* from Somsak Triwat on 29 November 2009[19]



Musical Example 13: "Pracham Wat": *khong mon wong yai* from Khru Chong

At the end of each individual lesson, I had the opportunity to discuss in greater detail the musical history of the Phatthayakoson Music School. As well as Khru Somsak, I also conducted interviews with Phatthayakoson's descendants regarding this subject which features earlier in this chapter. The time spent learning, observing and discussing Thai music with Khru Somsak and other musicians from the School has enabled me to gain a clear understanding of the unique musical style of the Phatthayakoson Music School.

Figure 28: Learning the *khong mon wong yai* with Khru Somsak Triwat during my fieldwork trip at the Phatthayakoson Music School.

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[19] The entire song in staff notation is on pages 272-275.

The Sanodiruyang Music School

5.6 History of the Sanoduriyang Music School

In contrast to the Phatthayakoson Music School which has had a permanent base behind the Kanlayanamit temple for nearly two hundred years, the Sanoduriyang Music School has never existed in a physical sense, that is to say there has never been a building in this name on which students converge. The School was founded by a musician named Phraya Sanoduriyang (otherwise known as Cham Suthonwathin) and initially he would invite students to his home to learn from him. For example, a famous musician who studied at the Sanoduriyang Music School was Khru Thiap who learnt to play the *pi.*

What makes the Sanoduriyang Music School unique is the emotion that Phraya Sanoduriyang brought to his music. For example, before Phraya Sanoduriyang, Thai singing consisted of various techniques, all delivered in an unemotional way. Phraya Sanoduriyang was the first person to bring feeling and aesthetics to the art of Thai singing. The same could be said for his work in respect of woodwind instruments such as the *pi* and *khlui* whereby he placed an emphasis on the instruments being played in a manner which promoted qualities of beauty and feeling. As well as his home, he taught in various other places. For example, he tutored Khru Chamchoy in respect to singing at the Suan Kulap Palace, as well as teaching Thai drums to Khru Mi and the *ranat ek* to Khru Shap, both at the palace of Chao Phraya Thammathikoranathipbodi. He was also invited to be an honorary teacher at the Duriyapranit School.

The School has a reputation for being “conservative” in that it has always concentrated on preserving existing pieces whilst at the same time developing new techniques and settings in which they could be played. However, it has never prioritised the writing of new music and indeed Phraya Sanoduriyang himself never composed any pieces. According to Khru Boonchouy, his reputation was founded on coaching inexperienced musicians using innovative methods and theories to enable them to become highly skilled professionals (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 19 February 2011).

With respect to the *bua loy* ensemble, it is the template laid down by Phraya Sanoduriyang in the early part of the 20th century that has been followed by musicians for the past hundred years right up until the present day. Myself and other musicians consider Phraya Sanoduriyang to be a musical maestro and the most respected *pi* player in Thailand. As Pornprapit (2005:131) wrote in quoting Khru Phichit "… Many musicians in Bangkok trace their status and musical lineage to Phraya Sanoduriyang, who is widely considered to be the greatest musician of the twentieth century. The Sanoduriyang School was highly regarded for both musical and personal qualities. Performers in Bangkok see the *piphat* and *mahori* musicians of the Sanoduriyang School as refined, modest and sometimes ascetic dispositions of personalities…". Phraya Sanoduriyang's musical lineage (both his father and grandfather were musicians) has continued with his daughters who were taught singing techniques by their father. With respect to the *bua loy* and many solo pieces played by *piphat* musical instruments, Phraya Sanoduriyang passed his knowledge to students who in turn, whilst not establishing their own schools, transmitted this learning to their own pupils.

5.7 Famous musicians and composers of the Sanoduriyang Music School

There are two musicians who vie for the title of the most renowned musician in the history of the Sanoduriyang Music School. As well as students at the School, musicians across the whole of Thailand hold these particular people in the highest esteem. One of these particular musicians, Phraya Sanoduriyang, has been the subject of two studies in recent years. Firstly, Pornprapit Phoasavadi in 2005 concentrated on Phraya Sanoduriyang's musical lineage with a great deal of focus on the activities of Phraya Sanoduriyang's father and grandfather. She also wrote specifically about Phraya Sanoduriyang's teaching of the *mahori* ensemble. Meanwhile, Dusadee Swangviboonpong (2003) translated an article written by Khru Charoenchai who was a daughter of Phraya Sanoduriyang. In this she wrote about the theory behind her father's singing methods (Dusadee:2003:183-189). In this thesis I will endeavour to unveil fresh information regarding his activities in connection with the *bua loy* ensemble. I will also detail a comprehensive list of the musical activities that he undertook during his life which were not covered in the aforementioned pieces of research. Finally, I will include interviews with his students regarding his teaching methods.

Phraya Sanoduriyang (Cham Sunthonwathin) 1866-1949

Figure 29: Phraya Sanoduriyang (Cham Sunthonwathin)

There is no doubt that Phraya Sanoduriyang was a very professional and gifted musician, who was highly regarded by many of his fellow Thai musicians for his knowledge and skills in both practising Thai music and its theories. He was renowned for both singing and arranging solo pieces based on old tunes played on various instruments. Many musicians have proclaimed him to be "the first musician who developed a singing technique, and refined it, to be expressive and attractive to listeners" (Pornprapit: 2005:130). However, I will add additional information to show that not only did he make a significant contribution to singing methods but also was an innovator in respect of developing techniques regarding woodwind instruments such as *pi* and *khlui*. Phraya Sanoduriyang is regarded as a genius of Thai music. He had a strong intuition for the correct technique to be employed in respect of each instrument and he also had a deep appreciation for the aesthetics of Thai classical music. He came from a family with a strong musical heritage, with his father, Choi, despite being blind, being considered one of the most famous and skillful musicians of the Rattanakosin period and who is credited with composing many great pieces of music. Some of these remain popular right up to the present day. For example, "Khaek Lopburi", "Khaek Ot" and "Ok Tha-re" are characterised by the question and answer style of composition. These pieces have been particularly popular with *piphat* players ever since they were composed over a hundred years ago.

Many accounts of Phraya Sanoduriyang's early life indicate that he was a very talented child musician. Due to the fact that he was so small he had to sit on a stool to be able to play the *ranat* comfortably. Evidence of his musical genius at an early age is provided by an account from Khru Son Wongkhong, who was one of his students, who told a story whereby as a boy, Phraya Sanoduriyang was watching two fish fighting each other in a jar under his home, whilst his father taught students in the main house. Despite being distracted by the fish fighting and not being present in the same room as his father and the other students, he was still able to memorise and perfect the piece in question ahead of the other students. Khru Mi Sapyen, who was one of his students, also mentioned that he had an innate ability to hear something once and be able to retain this knowledge permanently. For example, he could hear a note being played by the big gong-circle and then be able to tell immediately which one of the 16 smaller gongs had been struck (Phichit:1989:296).

When he was 13 years of age, due to his prodigious musical skill, he enrolled as a musician at the Ban Mo Palace. After gaining invaluable musical experience at the palace he then joined the Krom Mahorasop (the Department of Entertainment). Here, he was able to interact with musicians from other musical schools which helped him advance his skills. On 19 August 1925, he received the noble title, Phraya[20] Sanoduriyang, conferred on him by King Rama VI in recognition of his position as Head of the Royal Department of Music (otherwise known as Krom Piphat Luang) (ibid.:294). The literal translation of Sano is "pleasant to the ear" whilst Duriyang refers to "music". Therefore, his name can be interpreted as "pleasant music". During his life time, he never actually composed any new music. However, his legacy are the methods and advanced skills that he introduced for singing and the performance of instruments that comprise the *piphat* ensemble. Two of his most famous musical achievements were his rearrangement of the piece entitled "Tap Mon Kla" and secondly his use of traditional Thai pieces to accompany the story of *Gno Pa* which was written by King Rama V.

Regarding the *bua loy*, Phraya Sanoduriyang passed his own knowledge with respect to how the *pi chawa* should be played in the ensemble to Khru Thiap Konglaithong and Khru Chot Duriyapranit. As well as the *bua loy*, he also taught many solo pieces to

[20] Phraya is the second highest rank of conferred nobility and government officer.

students of the Duriyapranit Music School which has enhanced its reputation right up to the present day.

Khru Thiap Konglaithong 1902-1981

Figure 30: Khru Thiap Konglaithong playing the *pi chawa* (the instrument having been constructed out of ivory) for the *bua loy* ensemble. Seated behind him is a musician playing the *klong malayu.* Also, at the back of picture is the *khong mon*.

Khru Phichit (1989:110) stated that Khru Thiap was a son of a Thai musician, Khru Plaek, and was born on the 25 August 1902 in the Thonburi district of Bangkok. When he was young his father taught him to play the *pi nai* (Thai oboe). At the age of 9, he received tuition from Khru Thongdee Chusat[21], in respect of learning the *khong wong yai*. Around the age of 16, his father took him to meet Phraya Sanoduriyang who would be the last teacher in his life and who played an important role in his success. Khru Charoenchai Sunthonwathin, the youngest daughter of Phraya Sanoduriyang, wrote that "Khru Thiap came to my home every morning at 6 am, and then waited for my father to get up. He would always be preparing his oboe's reeds prior to having the first music lesson of the day from my father!" (Charoenchai:1982:19). Khru Phichit also stated that "during his time under the tutelage of Phraya Sanoduriyang, Khru Thiap proved to be a hard working student, always polite in a traditional Thai way, as well as being kind, faithful and loyal to

[21] Khru Thongdee Chusat is the uncle of Chao Krom Thap, who was a founder of the Phatthayakoson Music School (Arada:1989:110).

his teacher. He was capable of playing fluently all the instruments that feature in the *piphat* ensemble. In Thai musical circles, one refers to a multi instrumentalist with this ability as "*rop wong*". However, his most proficient instruments were of the woodwind variety including all the different types of *pi* (Thai oboe)" (Phichit:1983:119).

Khru Charoenchai mentioned that:

> "My father taught Phi[22]Thiap every solo piece and many different types of composition ranging from very simple ones through to highly complex pieces. Phi Thiap could play them all skilfully in a lively and beautiful style. His unique oboe playing style can be seen in his performances of the piece entitled "Choet" in which the *piphat* players would play the base notes whilst Phi Thiap would improvise by playing notes on his oboe which would float sweetly above the *piphat*'s melody and then back down again to join them at the base of the piece. Another example of his skilful and fluent style is in respect of a solo piece "Chui Chai'" whereby he would follow note for note the singer's performance in a seamless and perfect rendition. His melodic gifts were also showcased in respect of the *pi chawa* oboe. I have never heard anyone else play this instrument like him. I believe that there have never been any other musicians who can play such sweet-sounding notes and in such a fluent style as him" (Charoenchai:1982: 19).

Khru Thiap then joined the orchestra of Chaophraya Thammathikonnathipbodi, an officer of the Ministry for the Palace during King Rama VI's reign. He followed this by enrolling as a cadet in the Royal Palace Guard but was given special leave to undertake oboe lessons. After leaving the army, he served some time as the royal page in the Royal Orchestra for the Music Department during the reign of King Rama VII. When in 1932 there were far reaching changes in the government structure of Thailand due to the monarchy changing from absolute to constitutional, Khru Thiap was transferred to the Thai music section of the Krom Mahorasop (the Department of Entertainment which later changed its name to Department of Fine Arts). He remained there until his retirement (Phichit:1989:120). Whilst working in the Department of Fine Arts, he recorded many pieces of music which are treasured by the younger generation of musicians. Many of his recordings were available for purchase by the general public. However, one notable exception was the *bua loy* ensemble. It is fortunate that Khru Thiap's students made a recording of his performance of a *bua loy* ensemble for their own studies. I have had the privilege of hearing this performance after Khru Boonchouy Sovat, a student of Khru Thiap, presented me with a copy of the CD recording. My first impression upon hearing

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[22] The word Phi in this context refers to a prefix and is always used to refer to someone who is older than oneself; it is considered to be a mark of respect.

this rendition of the *bua loy* repertoire was of mysterious and sacred music being performed, the like of which I had never heard before**.** The music that was played, I considered to be "art" of the highest level and the excellent techniques employed stimulated a strong feeling of melancholy within me. The music also conjured vivid images of funeral ritual activities. For example, the piece "Fai Chum" created a picture of the cremation fire gathering intensity, with specifically the drum pattern being repeated with an ever increasing tempo.

Khru Chamnian Srithaiphan[23], who was to became a National Artist of Thailand in 1993, commented on his feelings when he heard a *bua loy* performance performed by Khru Thiap at the cremation ceremony of Changwang Thua in 1939: "I was aged about 20. I felt thrilled, with my hair standing on end when I heard the impressive sound of the oboe. It mesmerised me so much, it made me feel that I would like to learn this repertoire. However, as a rural boy, I feared that I would never have the opportunity to learn it" (Anant:1996:33).

As well as being an excellent all round musician, Khru Thiap was also a highly skilled craftsman in respect of making woodwind instruments, particularly the *pi*. He also travelled extensively abroad to demonstrate his oboe playing in countries such as Laos, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Germany and Japan. These foreign visits proved to be very popular with many overseas musicians travelling to Thailand to learn under Khru Thiap. He worked as a teacher at the College of Dramatic Arts until his death at the age of 80. Confirmation of his love and dedication to the *pi* can be gleaned from the fact that he played the instrument everyday of his life from his teenage years right up until his death (Personal communication with Boonchouy Sovat during my study with him).

In respect of Khru Thiap Konglaithong's cremation ceremony on 31 March 1982, HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn wrote in the book of condolences that "Khru Thiap played the oboe very pleasantly and very melodically. Even though I have no knowledge about the *pi*, I like its sound very much... The loss of Khru Thiap represents the loss of a diamond from the Thai music circle..." (HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn:1982:no page number). Although Khru Thiap never composed any new

[23] Khru Chamnian Srithaiphan was taught the *bua loy* repertoire by another teacher named Khru Chot Duriyapranit, who was one of Phraya Sanoduriyang's students, in 1954.

music, he developed many new techniques and methods in order to improve the performance and the sound of the *pi*. These techniques and methods were passed onto his students, in particular Khru Boonchouy Sovat and Khru Peeb Konglaithong, who are regarded as the finest *pi* players in Thailand today.

5.8 The structure of the *bua loy* in the style of the Sanoduriyang Music School

Even in the present day, Thai musicians and historians have been unable to discover the identity of the composer of the *bua loy* suite. This is not particularly surprising, as there are many other pieces of Thai classical music that were composed during the past two hundred years which remain unaccredited. The first documentary evidence of the suite (without notation) was discovered approximately a hundred years ago when mentioned in the "Royal Letters".

Within the structure of the pieces[24] which feature in the *bua loy* suite, there are many different movements as detailed below:

1. "Rua Sam La": slow to fast tempo performed three times
2. "Bua Loy": very slow
3. "Nang Nai": moderate
4. "Rua La Diao": slow to fast performed once
5. "Fai Chum": fast
6. "Reo": very fast
7. "Rua La Diao": slow to fast performed once
8. "Nanghong" (*thang luang* style): very slow

Along with the other three schools who teach and perform the *bua loy* in Thailand today namely, Luang Pradit Phairo, Phraya Prasan Duriyasup and Meun Tuntrikanchenchit, the Sanoduriyang Music School has maintained the same style of performance which has passed seamlessly from one generation to the next over the past hundred years. As with the other schools, the Sanoduriyang Music School has never composed new pieces for the *bua loy* and even after the huge cultural and political

[24] I have discussed the content of the *bua loy* suite in chapter 4.

upheaval which took place in 1932 with the ending of the absolute monarchy in Thailand, it has its own unique, well-preserved style of teaching the *bua loy* repertoire. In effect, this could be termed as "frozen music" due to the fact that it has been preserved and unaltered for the past hundred years. Many musicians will instantly recognise pieces from the *bua loy* repertoire played by musicians taught by the Sanoduriyang Music School due to its distinct style. For example, I had an informal interview in March 2014 with colleagues from the Chitralada School and a teacher from the College of Dramatic Arts, in which I questioned them as to how musicians recognised the *bua loy* repertoire when played on the *pi chawa*, the only melodic instrument in the ensemble. Many of them agreed that the sound emitted by using *tot* (a technique used on the *pi chawa* in which the player will use the tongue to interact with the reed of the instrument in order to create clear sounds) bears the characteristics of the Sanoduriyang Music School teaching methods. Students from the School are also taught how to choose suitable palm leaves and then learn how to dissect them in order to make good quality reeds. This is a painstaking process which is necessary to ensure that students produce the best possible quality of sound from the instrument when employing the *tot* technique. It is significant that the majority of other music schools do not possess the technical knowledge in order to replicate the Sanoduriyang Music School method in respect of *tot.* The technique of *tot* when employed on the *pi chawa* will allow the musician to produce deep, powerful and vivid sounds. Musicians from schools who do not use the Sanoduriyang Music School method are unable to produce a fully rounded sound effect from the *pi chawa*, with instead their instruments emitting a narrow, screeching sound. The contrast in sound makes the Sanoduriyang Music School's technique instantly recognisable to many musicians.

5.9 Transmission of music by the Sanoduriyang Music School

"... In other music-cultures, there usually is no formal instruction, and the aspiring musician must glean from watching and listening, usually over a period of years. In these circumstances it is helpful to grow up in a musical family. When a repertory is transmitted chiefly by example and imitation and performed from memory, we say the music exists "in oral tradition." Music in oral tradition shows greater variation over time and space than music that is tied to a definitive, written musical score..." (Titon:

1996:11). Thai classical music would certainly feature as one of the “other music-cultures” referred to in the above quotation.

With respect to the teaching of the *bua loy*, the oral tradition has been used exclusively in the Sanoduriyang Music School throughout its history, with this method still employed today. Students learning the repertoire of this ensemble have never seen any kind of written notation. Teachers from the School base their oral tuition of the *pi chawa* on using the 18 different pitches of the *pi* scale to develop their students' knowledge (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat via international call on 16 January 2012). The tuition of music orally can lead to variations from one teacher to another which contrasts with the written notation method which is more structured and rigid. An example of such a variance can be seen with the piece entitled “Fai Chum" which features in the *bua loy*. I have illustrated on the next page two versions, one by Khru Thiap Konglaithong and the other by Rangsi Kasemsuk[25], a student of Khru Boonchouy Sovat.

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[25] Rangsi Kasemsuk is currently a lecturer in Curriculum Instruction at the Faculty of Education, Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok. He is now 55 years of age. My interview took place with him on 28 June 2010.

Musical Example 14: Khru Thiap Konglaithong's version of "Fai Chum".

In this version a *meng* (gong) is played once in every two bars. Below I have detailed the drum pattern which is the same for both versions.

The basic drum pattern of "Fai Chum".

Male

- - ting ting	jo - ting ting

Female

- - - ja	- tang - phang

Occasionally, the drummers may add ornamentation under this structure to suit the *pi chawa* melodies (Interview with Boonchouy Sanganan on 26 March 2012).

I have detailed Rangsi's version below with the main differences being that a *meng* features in each bar, not once in every two bars as is the case with Khru Thiap. Also, Rangsi's interpretation differs because he has provided additional melodic input. For example, as can be seen in Khru Thiap's version, there are only 15 bars in section 1 and 22 bars in section 2 (the arrows point to the beginning of each section), whilst Rangsi's version features 16 bars in section 1 and 28 bars in section 2. In section 2, Rangsi repeats bars 1-2 twice and adds additional melodic input in bars 5-6, whereas Khru Thiap's version possesses a shorter melody due to his omission of bars 3-6. In terms of ornamentation on the *pi chawa*, Khru Thiap employs the technique of *lak changwa* or "to syncopate" throughout the piece, meanwhile Rangsi with his version always plays on the beat of the basic melody. Finally, it is important to note that Rangsi repeats each section twice whereas Khru Thiap plays it only once[26].

This composition is a typical example of how a piece of Thai classical music can be altered in terms of melody and structure when passed down orally through the generations. This piece of music, as with other compositions in the Thai musical repertoire, will continue to evolve in the future due to the fact that musicians do not study from a written text as in the Western musical world and instead learn through oral methodology. For Thai classical musicians, the opportunities to improvise and to construct a new style according to Thai musical theory are greatly enhanced as they are not restricted to playing a particular piece of music note by note.

[26] Traditionally, each section of a Thai composition is always performed twice. However, in the case of the *bua loy*, the *pi chawa* player has the authority to add or to reduce the amount of repetition depending on the particular occasion (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 2 March 2014).

Musical Example 15: Rangsi Kasemsuk's version of "Fai Chum".

1.

2.

Due to the *bua loy*'s association with death, one golden rule in respect of the oral teaching of the repertoire is that the transmission of knowledge must take place in either a temple or palace. We can attribute this to the long held belief by Thai people that temples and palaces are sacred places and can ward off any evil or bad spirits. There are some musicians who hold the belief that as well as temples offering protection from evil spirits whilst they are learning the *bua loy* repertoire, rivers can also ward off ill fortune. Therefore, musicians would sometimes locate themselves along the banks of rivers in order to learn or to practise. Also according to Khru Peeb, the sad and mournful nature of the *bua loy* repertoire makes it inappropriate to be performed in an environment such as one's home (Interview with Peeb Konglaithong on 21 February 2010). To conclude, many students appreciate the strong historical and cultural context of the oral tradition maintained by the Sanoduriyang Music School. The values instilled in students from one generation to the next can be considered to be an important facet of Thai musical heritage.

5.10 The teaching of the *bua loy* repertoire by the Sanoduriyang Music School

As the *pi chawa* player in the *bua loy* has the most important role in this ensemble, in this section I will illustrate the qualities and preparation required to fulfil this position. As many Thai musicians from this school concentrate on passing their musical knowledge to the next generation, the process of choosing a beneficiary can be a painstaking and lengthy one. The recipient must possess a high degree of skill and comprehensive training will be required in order that the student can effectively retain the transmitted knowledge. I will provide a case study from the Sanoduriyang Music School, showcasing a student taught by one of the leading *pi* teachers at the School, namely Khru Boonchouy Sovat.

The School has a reputation for specialising in the teaching of woodwind instruments and in particular the *pi nai* (Thai oboe) and *pi chawa* (Javanese oboe). The School has laid down a teaching template in respect of transmitting the techniques unique to the *pi nai*. All teachers including Khru Boonchouy conform to this template. Khru Boonchouy himself advised me that the learning of the *pi nai* provides the students with a stronger musical foundation than the other woodwind instruments. Khru Boonchouy's student in this case study is Rangsi Kasemsuk. He advised me that prior to receiving tuition in

respect of the *bua loy* repertoire from Khru Boonchouy, he learnt to play the *pi nai* and many other types of Thai woodwind instrument. He was proficient in all of these instruments before he began his *bua loy* education from Khru Boonchouy approximately seven years ago.

Rangsi confirmed to me that the first piece that he learnt in his *pi nai* education was one entitled "Tao Kin Phuk Bung" (a turtle eats morning glory). It is a tradition of the Sanoduriyang Music School dating back to Khru Thiap Konglaithong, who was the successor to the Sanoduriyang Music School, that all new *pi nai* players begin their tuition with this composition. Khru Boonchouy is following in a long line of music teachers by endorsing this piece as the ideal introduction to the *pi nai*. The reasons for this choice are as follows:

1. This composition requires the learner to produce and control a wide range of sounds from the lowest to the highest pitch.
2. It contains both fast and slow melodies, some easier and others more difficult for learners to practise.
3. The piece comprises three sections, all of which are easy to remember and the correct length for beginners.
4. It requires the player to change pitch levels when playing, so that the learner can practise moving from one pitch level to another. When players have to change pitch levels in other pieces, they can apply this technique readily (Boonchouy:1982:132).

During the transmission of this piece, the teacher will also conduct a lesson regarding the circular breathing technique which is used to play the *pi nai* to maintain the consistency of sound needed to complete whatever piece is being played. The circular breathing technique is described as follows:

1. Start by breathing air through the nostrils into the lungs. Use both cheeks to push the air past the reed of the oboe to make a sound.
2. Control the flow of air from the lungs and release through the mouth rather than the nose in order to create enough energy to control the reed to make a sound. Repeat step number one.

As a part of their education, students have to learn how to construct a reed for the *pi nai*, tailored to suit their individual requirements. Teachers will assist by advising the students about which type of palm leaf is most effective. A good palm leaf will produce clear sounds with correct pitches and can also better withstand the airflow and moisture from the musician's mouth. Such leaves, when combined with a high quality oboe and a talented oboist, will certainly create wonderful musical sounds. With respect to the *pi chawa*, I observed and interviewed students who studied under the Sanoduriyang Music School. I found that most students studied in different ways at the beginning of their education. Khru Boonchouy advised me that there were different levels of study, depending on the ability of the student in question. He also mentioned during the interview that

> "... the musician who aspires to be the *pi* player of the *bua loy* must be very professional and have a very good understanding and knowledge of the *pi nai*. A student once competent on the *pi nai* will then progress to the *pi chawa*. Students will firstly be confronted with the very different finger placements used in respect of this instrument. Unlike the *pi nai*, the *pi chawa* requires a great deal of practice to control the sounds that it emits. It is very easy for an inexperienced student to play the wrong tune. Once the student has reached a level where he is familiar with the characteristics of the instrument and has mastered basic melodies, then he will learn other pieces that reflect the Thai way of life. For example, compositions such as those that feature in religious ceremonies in respect of Buddhism and Brahmanism. In addition, the student will be taught pieces used in the context of martial arts displays and finally those played in funeral ceremonies..... for me it is not important which piece is the first one to be mastered as it depends on the individual teacher's viewpoint..." (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat via international call on 24 May 2011).

Rangsi, in my interview with him advised me that once he was proficient in the *pi nai* and *pi chawa*, he was able to learn the *bua loy* repertoire from Khru Boonchouy. He told me that "the first piece that Khru Boonchouy taught me was entitled *phleng reo* then followed by other compositions from *song chan* (level 2). Following this I was given tuition in respect of the *khrueang sai pi chawa*[27]repertoire and also compositions which accompany Thai martial arts. All of these pieces of music represented a foundation on which the *bua loy* repertoire would be later taught". He also advised me that "... before learning the *bua loy*, you must have demonstrated your proficiency as a musician in order that you can protect this knowledge and pass it onto the next generation... Not only your

[27] This name refers to both a type of Thai music repertoire and also a Thai ensemble which is a combination of many Thai stringed instruments and a *pi chawa*.

skill level, but your manners and general behaviour will be considered by the teacher... " (Interview with Rangsi Kasemsuk on 24 May 2011). Rangsi continued by saying that:

> "I first began learning this suite with Khru Boonchouy in 2005, phrase by phrase and piece by piece. Once I was confident about mastering each piece of music, I would practise extensively on my own. I was accompanied by two drummers who played the *klong malayu* (a pair of drums) and a musician who performed on the *meng*. Khru Boonchouy organised us to practise as a group. It took a great deal of time before we were able to play as a cohesive unit. However, when we finally succeeded, we were able to convey the aesthetic beauty of the music to the audiences. In the context of a funeral, the music would help the participants to concentrate and enable them to pass on their best wishes and respects for the deceased. I have only performed the *bua loy* suite on two occasions. Thus far, I have not passed this knowledge to anyone as I have not found a suitable candidate to study the *pi chawa*. If indeed I find that person, I will definitely pass my knowledge on" (Interview with Rangsi Kasemsuk on 24 May 2011).

Khru Peeb Konglaithong, the son of Khru Thiap Konglaithong, whilst acknowledging the strict criteria that applies to prospective *bua loy* candidates stated that "even though there are a limited number of receivers, I am confident that this knowledge will be preserved within Thai society" (Interview with Peeb Konglaithong on 21 February 2010). Whilst methods of teaching in respect of other strands of Thai music have developed and adapted to modern Thai society, the tuition of the *bua loy* has remained unchanged for over a hundred years. The challenge for Thai musicians in respect of the *bua loy* in the future will be to endeavour to preserve and retain its original form in order that future generations can appreciate one of Thai music's most revered traditions.

5.11 A performance of the *bua loy* ensemble

On 8 March 2010, I attended a cremation ceremony in respect of a very well-known composer and conductor, Khru Saman Naphayon, who was also known in Thai-Western music circles as Khru Yai. He received a highly prestigious award from the Thai government in 1996 in recognition of his contribution to musical culture. He held the position of conductor of the Music section of the Government Public Relations Department. The ceremony was held at Makut temple, Bangkok. I was told by one of my teachers, Khru Peeb Konglaithong, that he would be performing in the *bua loy* ensemble at this cremation event. I was only advised of this two days before the ceremony and as

the *bua loy* is rarely heard today, I considered this to be an excellent opportunity to attend such an occasion.

Approximately 400 people attended the ceremony. When I arrived, I heard an ensemble which was a combination of the *piphat* and *khrueang sai* ensembles performing a song entitled "Thayoy Nok". The lyrics of the song originate from a story entitled Khun Chang Khun Phan which has been popular since the early part of 19th century. In the excerpt that I heard, Phim, the main character is saying good bye to Kaew Kiriya, her servant and requesting that she looks after Khun Chang, who is her husband. The lyrics of this song are as follows:

I will leave you right now, my dear Kaew
Please remember the daily tasks that I have performed
Look after Khun Chang, console him
And prepare food for him as I once did

The tempo of the song was very fast and at the end, the mourners gave generous applause. After this, a brass band began to play a story suite entitled "Tap[28] Phrom Mat" which originates from the epic known as the *Ramayana.* Normally, Thai instruments would be used to play this suite. However, in this instance, Western instruments such as the oboe and the clarinet were used, although Thai drums (*taphon* and *klong that*) were included in the performance. The reason for this Western influence was due to the fact that Khru Saman Naphayon had strong links to Western music circles. The ensemble consisted of teachers and students from the College of Dramatic Arts in Bangkok. Included within the "Tap Phrom Mat" suite is the *phleng naphat*[29] repertoire which is considered to be a very sacred piece of music and on this occasion was adapted to Western musical notation. Indeed, there was a conductor leading the band during the

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[28] *Tap* is a suite consisting of many pieces played together. *Tap* are divided into two types.

1. *Tap rueang* is a story suite. Even though the pieces in *tap rueang* will have different tempos and form, the significance of *tap rueang* is to tell and focus on the story. Fine examples of *tap rueang* are the "Tap Nang Loy" and "Tap Nakkhabat" episodes from the *Ramayana* story.
2. *Tap phleng* is a term used to emphasise consistency in tempo or rhythm. The stories and lyrics in *tap phleng* pieces are almost irrelevant and it is instead the connection between the rhythm and melody that is very important. An example of this type of suite is "Tap Lomphat Chaikhao".

[29] *Phleng naphat* or *naphat* repertoire is normally performed and used for the *wai khru* ceremony and to accompany Thai performances such as Thai masked dance (*khon*), Thai shadow puppetry (*nang yai),* Thai puppet show (*hun krabok*) and Thai folk opera (*li-ke*).

performance which lasted 40 minutes. I was fortunate to be given permission to make a recording of the proceedings by the son-in-law of the deceased, Phithak Liamsuepphan. Whilst I did not record the whole event, my video contains two excerpts from the "Tap Phrommat" suite, namely the pieces "Krao Klang" and "Choet" (see VCD no.3).

Figure 31: A brass band provides musical accompaniment (left) for the *khon* (masked dance) (right).

Following on from this, the life and achievements of Khru Saman were celebrated through a reading by the event's announcer. As the reading was taking place, Khru Peeb and three other musicians, two who would be playing the *klong malayu* and the other the *meng*, arrived at the small stage situated near the crematorium. Khru Peeb, as head of the ensemble performed the *wai khru* ceremony before the performance. This is a tradition that is carried out by all Thai ensembles before they commence their performances. All the musicians wore the Thai government's uniform - the reason for this formal dress was due to the fact the HRH Princess Maha Chakhi Sirindhorn presided over this ceremony. Whilst Khru Peeb led the *wai khru* ceremony, on the adjacent stage the *piphat mon* ensemble from the Music Division of the Department of Fine Arts began to play a Mon piece whose sound was at the same time very soft and sad. At this point, a large group of people had surrounded the *piphat mon* and the *bua loy* ensembles.

At approximately 5 pm, HRH Princess Maha Chakhi Sirindhorn arrived at the ceremony and stepped up into the crematorium hall to present a yellow robe to each of the monks. The yellow robe symbolises the act of merit making from HRH to the deceased. The monks then began a short *pali* chant and when they completed it, HRH Princess Maha Chakhi Sirindhorn then lit a set of *dok mai chan* as a sign that the cremation

ceremony was to begin. An electrical buzzer rang as a signal to the mourners to stand up in order to enter into the crematorium.

Three musical performances then followed, the first being by the brass band which performed the "Sok" piece, followed by the *bua loy* and concluding with the *piphat mon* (see VCD no.3 for excerpts of the performance of "Sok" and the *bua loy*). During the performance by the *bua loy* ensemble, I noticed that there were a large number of musicians both young and old in attendance. The reason for this interest was because the *bua loy* is rarely performed and indeed I noticed that several musicians recorded the performance without requesting permission, using their mobile phones to facilitate the recording. For myself, I had been granted permission to attend by Khru Peeb for the purpose of this thesis.

Figure 32: A performance of the *bua loy* ensemble during the cremation ceremony for Khru Saman Naphayon on 8 March 2010 at Makut temple. Khru Peeb Konglaithong[30] is playing the *pi chawa*, clockwise seated second from the left.

The duration of the *bua loy* ensemble performance was about 11 minutes. The final musical act of the event was when the *piphat mon* played a piece entitled "Pracham Ban" until the last guest had left the crematorium. I did note that the *piphat mon* performance did not interest the musicians in attendance as much as the *bua loy*. The *piphat mon* is played frequently at Thai funerals and the musicians at this event would have been very

[30] Khru Peeb Konglaithong is one of the finest *pi* (oboe) players in Thailand and is the son of Khru Thiap Konglaithong who is a *pi* master at the Sanoduriyang Music School.

familiar with its content. Therefore, it was no surprise that I did not see any musician making a recording of the *piphat mon* performance. After the mock ceremony had finished, Khru Peeb took the money offering made by Khru Saman's daughter as part of the *wai khru* ceremony and explained to me that "we will be not able to use this money, therefore we have to either give it directly to the monks or purchase some food for them, in order that they can make merit to help the deceased musical teachers have a smooth transition into their next life" (Personal communication with Peeb Konglaithong on 8 March 2010).

5.12 Thai concept of "*huang wicha*" (guarding musical knowledge)

Nowadays, regretfully many significant songs and their vocal parts have become almost extinct due largely to the Thai practice of *huang wicha*. *Huang wicha* is one of the most intriguing concepts to be found in Thai music. The term *huang* means "to refuse to share or give away, to guard, keep back, and care for zealously" (Haas:1964:575). In Thai educational terms, the word *wicha*, in fact normally means '"subject" but here it is interpreted as "knowledge". Myers-Moro (1993) and Dusadee (2003), both mentioned the Thai concept of *huang wicha* in the context of the control exercised over musicians by the musical deities. In his thesis, Dusadee cited Myers-Moro:

> "…Sometimes guarding is not only overly the choice of the teacher himself, but of the deities….. This strict guarding has saved the most sacred repertoire from falling into the hands of students who are likely to abuse tradition by passing the repertoire on to others indiscriminately or who might be harmed by the supernatural power associated with some songs..." (Myers-Moro:1993:118).

and then added his comment "Such a statement presents *huang wicha* as a concept where the restriction of knowledge is under the control of musical deities. It is true that Thai musicians guard very much against the improper passing on of certain repertoire, particularly *phleng naphat*…" (ibid.:180).

In the Western world, the practice of guarding musical knowledge and not sharing this with other musicians is almost unheard of. The concept of *huang wicha* is based on the process of musicians selecting appropriate people to pass their knowledge onto. Musicians seeking to guard their musical knowledge will apply *huang wicha* to not only

colleagues at their own music school, but also those from other schools. In other regions of Asia, the protection of musical knowledge is also prevalent. For example, in Indian musical culture, students traditionally are taught not in schools but by an individual teacher known as a *guru.* Before the advent of public schools and public concerts, young musicians would receive detailed tuition from their guru, often living with him as a member of his family. In Thai society, this is exactly what would happen with the Thai equivalent known as a Khru (teacher). The *guru,* especially in the North of India would be a master of what is known as a *gharana* which refers to a particular school of vocal or instrumental performance. The secrets contained within each *gharanas*'s instruction and compositions are maintained within a family of musicians. Again, similarities can be drawn from the Thai concept of *huang wicha* whereby musicians guard their musical knowledge and in many cases are reluctant to transfer this to other musicians. Nowadays, students tend to be more flexible and although the dedicated ones will still position themselves proudly with a *guru*, they may also look to receive lessons from other teachers and study the musical styles and performances from musicians who follow other traditions. At universities, classical Indian music is taught independently of any particular *gharana* (Alves:2006:130-131).

Another example of a *huang wicha* culture can be found in Indonesia. Older musicians in Karangasem are known to be very protective of their music. Gray (2006) wrote that it was harder for him to look for Karangasem pieces than in Sukawati and that the musicians could test the patience of a potential learner. This is borne out by Gray's assertion that "I had to go there several times before I was received. I was almost tested to know if I was serious". A local musician, Sutawa described the older Karangasem player's secretiveness as "if they had a piece, it was as if they had a powerful weapon" (Gray:2006:132).

In this topic, I will analyse in depth the Thai concept of *huang wicha* (guarding knowledge), its origins and why it still carries great significance in today's society in Bangkok. To gain an understanding of the concept of *huang wicha*, it is useful to draw a comparison with a facet of Thai culture known as *chaloei sak*, whereby highly skilled workers dating back to the 19th century were highly protective of their talents. These workers were very independent and were not keen to be royal officers. Typically they would produce their products and sell them anonymously. Due to their anonymity, these

people attained legendary status particularly due to the fact that they guarded and protected their knowledge so fiercely. The *chaloei sak* workers main motive for not sharing their skills and techniques was so that they could benefit themselves financially (Thai Junior Encyclopaedia Project:1991:205).

I interviewed one of the most famous practitioners of Thai and Mon music, Khru Veera Dontricharoen[31], who informed me that "… in the past many musicians had the idea of *huang wicha* and *huang phleng* (guarding songs). These musicians would never practise at home but instead would only improve their skills in actual performances..." (Interview with Veera Dontricharoen on 28 November 2010). I also interviewed Khru Sirichicharn Farchamroon, musical advisor to HRH, and Khru Boonchouy, a respected musician, both of whom are of the opinion that the Thai concept of *huang wicha* does not exist (Interview on 7 July 2010 and 19 February 2011 respectively). However, Khru Boonchouy admitted that there are circumstances when musical knowledge may not be passed on by Thai musicians and cited two significant factors. Firstly, the teacher does not consider the pupils to be sufficiently skilled to be able to play the piece of music in question. Secondly, the teacher may be unhappy with aspects of the pupil's behaviour and character and therefore deems the person unsuitable to receive the knowledge of a particular piece of music. He indicated that "… there is a blame culture in today's Thai music circles. Typically, if a teacher postpones a request from a pupil to be taught a new piece of music, that pupil will often blame the teacher and will not submit a second request…".

From Khru Boonchouy's point of view, he will only pass on his knowledge to pupils who demonstrate good behaviour including an appreciation and understanding of musical culture (Interview with Boonchouy Sovat on 19 February 2011, at Plainoen Palace, Bangkok). It should be noted that Khru Boonchouy's strict criteria for passing on musical knowledge applies only to highly complex and technically challenging pieces of music. Examples of these are solo pieces such as the *bua loy* suite and the prestigious *naphat*

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[31] I met Khru Veera Dontricharoen on 28 Nov 2010, at Bangtoei temple, Bangkok. He is the owner of a *piphat mon* ensemble which bears the family surname Dontricharoen. Khru Veera is an ancestor of the famous musician, Khru Sum Dontricharoen, who was at the forefront of the movement that introduced Mon music to Thai society.

(sacred) repertoire, especially, the piece "Ong Phra Phirap"[32] which is considered to be the most prestigious and technically challenging piece of music in the *naphat* repertoire. Khru Boonchouy is keen to teach students of all abilities and for those who wish to learn relatively straightforward and simple pieces of music, he will relax his normally strict criteria and will not refuse the vast majority of requests from prospective pupils.

With respect to the concept of "guarding the songs" (known as *huang phleng*), Khru Boonchouy, also mentioned that "… Thai musicians over a hundred years ago (in the late 19th and early 20th centuries) would develop songs by typically playing them in the style that they were originally composed in *song chan* - level 2 and then extending the length of the pieces by playing in *sam chan* - level 3 style. The master musician was keen to recreate the slower versions of the pieces exclusively for high profile musical competitions. These versions would include different styles of singing and elaborate variations to the melodies employed". With respect to this matter, Morton stated that

> "… The technique of Thao composition arose in the late nineteenth century and reached its height probably in the twentieth century during the reigns of Rama VI and Rama VII (from about 1910 to 1930). Because royal patrons often took their own musicians along when visiting other royal households, a spirit of friendly rivalry grew up among resident and visiting musicians. Soon definite contests were arranged. Besides rivalry as to which ensemble could play the best and which solo players could demonstrate the most skill as virtuosos, musician-composers began to devise special works for these contests. In about the middle of the nineteenth century they began in earnest to conduct their adaptation and rearrangement of existing compositions according to specific rules so that the original compositions would be difficult to ascertain; hundreds of these "new" compositions were created. If an opposing group of musicians failed to identify the original composition, it lost face as well as the contest. Great lengths were resorted to by groups to try to discover in advance what rival groups were going to play for a contest--- spies tried to get into rival households or were sent to loiter nearby in the hope of overhearing a rehearsal. If one team's composition could be discovered beforehand the other team could compose another version of the same composition, and after the opposing team had played its version they could counter with theirs. From all reports this subterfuge fortunately was never other than friendly and only the end result of entertainment and fun was desired…" (Morton:1976:182).

The concepts of *huang wicha* and *huang phleng* have contributed to many traditional songs disappearing from the Thai music repertoire over the years. Khru Montri himself stated that more than 70% of the songs contained in the "Tap Mahori" (the *mahori* suite)

[32] Deborah Wong mentioned that "… Ong Phra Phiraap is simply a dangerous piece, and to play it badly is considered worse than not playing it at all" (Wong:2001:125).

during the latter part of the Ayutthaya period (18th century), were no longer played today (Montri and Wichian:1980:59). The concept of *huang wicha* is borne out by my personal experiences. For example, the teacher under whom I learnt the *ranat ek,* when I studied at Chulalongkorn University withheld his knowledge in respect of several pieces of music from his students. He told me that "I do not want to pass on some of my solo versions to anyone, not even my cousins; I will take them with me to my cremated fire" (he referred to "fire" because every Thai Buddhist has a cremation ceremony when they die). It should be noted that the solo version requires a very high level of expertise. Examples of these songs are "Krao Nai" and "Thayoy Diao".

Khru Boonchouy (1987) believes that the process of learning Thai music can be very painstaking as it takes years to improve techniques and learn various styles and compositions. Teachers themselves have had to strive to reach high levels of competency and therefore many of them believe that it is only right that their students in turn work very hard to be in a position to receive knowledge. Khru Boonchouy pointed out that many musicians have suffered, particularly those who come from outside Bangkok because they have found it difficult to meet a knowledgeable teacher. Some of these musicians have been unable to afford gifts for their teacher and would typically have to work hard in the teacher's household to pay their way.

Due to the fact that Thai music uses the oral tradition and there were no records of notation two hundred years ago, Thai students who were resident at a teacher's house would have to rise early at 5 am in the morning and play through until 9 pm at night (as in the case of Khru Tuean Phatthayakun, page 224). During this time, they would have to practise pieces repeatedly in order that they did not forget them and also to enhance their skills. This method of working in Thai music terminology is known as *lai mue* (practising skill) and *thong phleng* (practising songs). Typically, a group of students would play together at the same time and learn techniques from the teacher. With respect to solo versions, the spirit of *huang wicha* would have been evident, because it was commonplace for students to cover their instruments with a blanket or cloth to hide their technique and melodies from their peers. From the Thai teacher's perspective, they would base their decision on whether to transfer their knowledge to their students on their analysis of their student's character and competency. In addition, Khru Boonchouy also

has mentioned that students had to display a team work ethic and that any selfishness would be frowned upon (ibid.:67).

Many musicians who have been denied the right to learn a particular piece of music by their teacher have often employed subtle or even devious methods to extract the knowledge that they wish to possess. For example, if their teacher is taking part in a public performance, it is commonplace for a student to observe the teacher as part of the audience and memorise or as happens today, tape the techniques employed in order to acquire the knowledge. The most sought after pieces of music have tended to be prestigious solo works. Master musicians, in order to avoid their work being "stolen" by students or rivals, would according to Wichian Kunlatan "practise their music in fruit gardens where no one can hear them; some fiddle players put a piece of cloth into the sound box in order to mute the sound for the same reason; some play the tunes very fast so that nobody can possibly remember and so steal the melody; some masters of *pi nai* players practise their instruments sitting in trees and put the end of the *pi nai* into the jar so that the sound cannot be heard clearly" (Wichain:1983:36).

In today's society although the concept of *huang wicha* still exists, with the advent of the internet, students are able to view numerous performances through channels such as YouTube which means that there are fewer and fewer musical secrets. Plagiarism has been an issue for many years and there are numerous examples of songs being "stolen" in whole or part with the perpetrator of the "theft" making minor adjustments and adding more melodies to the piece and in the process claiming to have composed a new piece of music. In conclusion, it would be true to say that *huang wicha* and *huang phleng* are less common today, although I have seen examples myself particularly where highly advanced techniques are required to execute the performance of a particular piece.

Conclusion

As a musician, from an early age I was aware of the unrivalled reputation for musical excellence that both the Phatthayakoson and the Sanoduriyang Schools possess. Further substance to my impression of these two institutions was gleaned through my fieldwork, as revealed in this chapter by my study of documents which have yet to be translated from their Thai language, regarding the origins concerning the two Schools, as well as

interviewing many professional musicians from Bangkok. The overwhelming consensus of my findings from these various sources is that both Schools have played a pivotal role in the teaching of Thai funeral music over many years and moreover continue to exert major influences on today's musicians.

With respect to the oral tradition, my participation in the activities of both Schools, confirmed that this method of tuition continues to be favoured by both institutions and is an endorsement of a long standing Thai classical music practice. Whilst Western influences have purveyed much of Thai culture, it was significant for me to observe the adherence of both Schools to teaching practices which have remained largely unaltered for more than two hundred years. This is in contrast with other music schools in Bangkok which favour a combination of both the oral tradition and Western notation in their teachings. Indeed the only reference that I found in respect of Western notation during my fieldwork at the two Schools related to Phatthayakoson's use of notation in order to maintain records of their compositions. Interviewees in respect of this subject made it clear that notation has never been used during performances. Having received personal tuition in respect of the *khong mon wong yai* from the Phatthayakoson Music School by Khru Somsak Triwat, one of Bangkok's leading musicians, I was able to absorb the history as well as the etiquette involved in learning this instrument. Meanwhile the Sanoduriyang philosophy only allows for the oral tradition to be taught, which can lead to variations in performances of the *bua loy* suite which I demonstrated through my description of a piece from this repertoire, namely "Fai Chum".

In respect of the composition of new music specifically for funeral rituals, I established that of the two Schools, only the Phatthayakoson can be credited with creating original pieces. These compositions are characterised by their foundations being typically based on traditional Thai melodies with the composer adapting these pieces into a Mon style structure. For example, as I have discussed earlier in this chapter the piece entitled "Chang Prasan Nga" bears the hallmarks of this style of composition. By way of a contrast, the Sanoduriyang focuses on teaching methods and the development of techniques in respect of the use of the *pi chawa* in the *bua loy* suite. The School is not associated with the composition of new funeral ritual music in respect of the *bua loy* ensemble.

The concept of *huang wicha* has influenced the teaching of Thai classical music for many hundreds of years and specifically is still relevant to the transmission of knowledge in respect of the *bua loy* ensemble. Senior musicians are keen to guard their knowledge of the *bua loy* due to the high level of technical expertise which is required to perform the repertoire. Hence, the fact that there are very few musicians who can consider themselves proficient in the *bua loy* today. However, traditional methods of teaching as practised by the Phatthayakoson and the Sanoduriyang Music Schools and the concept of *huang wicha* are being challenged in contemporary music circles by media outlets such as YouTube which are broadcasting performances of the *bua loy* ensemble to a new audience of musicians.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This research has focused on the role that Thai funeral music plays in Thai society, with particular emphasis on a study of the history, performance and transmission of the three main ensembles that have traditionally performed in funeral ceremonies, namely the *bua loy*, the *piphat nanghong* and the *piphat mon* ensembles. This particular field of study has been largely unexplored by previous ethnomusicologists and whilst this has provided me with an excellent opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the study of Thai culture, I was also faced with the challenge of overcoming the paucity of information that exists in respect of Thai funeral music. I have used the ethnomusicologist Wong as a primary source and sought to expand on her theory that music speaks status. As an ethnomusicologist, my key objective has been to collate comprehensive answers to the questions detailed in the thesis introduction, in order to allow me to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role and meaning of Thai funeral music in contemporary Bangkok. My research findings based upon these aims can be categorised into three aspects namely history, performance and transmission.

1. History

The single most important factor in understanding the role of Thai music in funeral ceremonies and what it means to people living in contemporary Bangkok, is to examine its history which is inextricably bound to the social, political, and economic changes that the country has undergone since the Sukhothai period (1240-1438), when Siam first emerged as a nation, and the traditions of its people, underpinned by the country's strong adherence to Buddhism. Although I have been unable to uncover any substantive evidence of the existence of music taking place in funeral rituals during the Sukhothai period, I have provided accounts from foreign missionaries and traders, royal decrees as well as murals painted on the walls of the Grand Palace in Bangkok, which confirm the presence of music in funeral ceremonies from the eras that followed, beginning with the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767). The evidence gleaned from the aforementioned sources points to funeral ceremonies being conducted on a grand scale for members of the Royal

Family and those from elite classes and it is notable that there are no accounts of funerals being staged for ordinary citizens.

With respect to the *piphat mon* ensemble, the first documented evidence of it performing in a funeral ceremony is 1851 when it featured at the funeral of King Rama III. Documenting the emergence of the *bua loy* ensemble has proved to be more challenging, although my interviewee Khru Boonchout Sovat, the leading Thai musician and historian, asserts that the *pi klong malayu* ensemble developed into the *bua loy*. Whilst it was not until 1928 that the term *bua loy* was first used in a musical context by Prince Damrong in his book entitled *Tamnan Khrueang Mahori Piphat,* a royal decree makes reference to the *pi klong malayu* ensemble performing at a funeral ceremony for Thao Somsak in 1803. The third and final ensemble that I have examined in this research, namely the *piphat nanghong* appears to have been formed through a combination of the *piphat phithi* and the *bua loy* towards the end of the reign of King Rama III (circa 1845-1851). The first mention of the term *piphat nanghong* can also be found in Prince Damrong's book *Tamnan Khrueang Mahori Piphat.*

Throughout the Ayutthaya period up until the middle of the 19th century, music performed two main functions in funeral ceremonies: firstly as an accompaniment to the funeral ritual and secondly as a form of entertainment alongside other performing arts such as *khon*, *hun krabok* and *nang yai* when the music performed was delivered in a lively style. However, in the second half of the 19th century, attitudes towards the role of music in funeral ceremonies changed, due to two significant factors which resulted in the *piphat mon* becoming the preferred choice of funeral music for the majority of Thai people. Firstly, the funeral of Queen Sirin in 1862, who was of Mon origin, featured the *piphat mon* as the musical accompaniment to the ceremony. The sombre and sad overtones that characterise the *piphat mon* influenced the elite classes who attended this funeral ceremony and thereafter, the *piphat mon* became the preferred choice of funeral music for not only wealthy citizens but also ordinary people. Thais traditionally have always endeavoured to emulate the behaviours and style of the Royal Family and this character trait explains why the *piphat mon* was adopted by the masses to be used in their funeral ceremonies. The second significant factor which coincided with Queen Sirin's funeral was the growing influence of European missionaries and dignitaries, who opposed the "celebratory" nature of Thai funerals. As a result of their pressure, the government

abolished all kinds of funeral entertainment, in order that funeral services would become more sombre and serious occasions. An example of a composition characterised by its grand but mournful and sad overtones is the Western-influenced "Sok" composed by Prince Paribatra in 1919 which is performed by a brass band and does not feature any Thai traditional musical instruments. This piece has become a regular feature of Thai funeral ceremonies, in particular those held for royal members. However, the *piphat mon*'s pre-eminence contrasts with the *bua loy* which by 20th century had almost become extinct whilst the *piphat nanghong*'s popularity had also waned. In the case of the *piphat nanghong*, its diminishing role can be attributed partly to the policy of Prime Minister Plaek Phibulsongkram's government in 1943 to introduce the *sinlapin* card, which restricted the performances of Thai traditional music, including the *piphat nanghong*. Another factor in its decline can be found in the complexity of the compositions that comprise its repertoire. As a result, a decreasing numbers of musicians have been competent enough to be able to master its content.

In contemporary Bangkok, in recent years, the *bua loy* and the *piphat nanghong* have been revived by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn who made arrangements for both ensembles to perform at the funerals for HM the King's mother in 1996 and HM's sister in 2008, in an effort to preserve and maintain Thai traditional funeral music. Also, in order to increase awareness of both of these ensembles amongst the wider public, HRH authorised the publication of a book commemorating the funeral of HM the King's sister. The book itself included a CD recording of the *piphat nanghong* ensemble performing the *piphat nanghong* suite and also contained Western notation in respect of the compositions included within this suite. Meanwhile, the *bua loy*, perhaps due to its sacred reputation and the concept of *huang wicha*, did not feature in either the book or the CD. However, HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has personally requested that the Department of Fine Arts encourage the passing on of knowledge in respect of the *bua loy* from senior musicians to the next generation. It should be noted that HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn also retains an interest in preserving the *piphat mon* ensemble which was also present at the funeral of HM the King's sister in 2008. In answering the question of royal support for the funeral music tradition, it is clear that through in particular HRH Princess Chakri Sirindhorn's endeavours, the profile of both the *bua loy* and *piphat nanghong* ensembles has been raised, due to their participation once more in royal funeral

ceremonies. HRH's commitment to preserve traditional funeral music is undoubtedly a key factor in the genre's ability to be able to survive in contemporary Bangkok.

Since the Sukhothai period (1240-1438), a recurring theme throughout Thai history has been the importance of status in Thai society, with this thesis examining its effect on the role of funeral music and specifically the performances of the *bua loy*, the *piphat nanghong* and the *piphat mon* ensembles. As a basis for this research, my prime source has been Deborah Wong and her article: "Mon music for Thai death: ethnicity and status in Thai urban funerals". Wong is regarded as the first ethnomusicologist to examine in detail Thai funeral music, in particular the *piphat mon* ensemble and I was particularly drawn to one of her most significant observations: "Thai funeral music speaks status" (Wong:1998:125). Through religion and the Thai Buddhist belief that by making-merit, an individual will be reincarnated to a higher plane in the next life, to the long held Thai tradition of aspiring to emulate the elite classes and Royal Family, status is at the core of the Thai identity. In examining why the funeral ritual is considered to be one of the most significant aspects of Thai culture, through this research, I have observed that Thai people will endeavour to stage the best possible funeral ceremony for their loved ones, primarily as a demonstration of their status in today's society. Moreover, "rites of passage" from a person's birth through to their death underpin Thai Buddhist ideology, with the funeral ritual being considered to be the most significant rite of passage.

2. Performance

From a musical perspective, through my fieldwork, I was fortunate to be able to observe the three main ensembles performing at funeral ceremonies and also to interview prominent musicians who both taught the repertoires and performed in the ensembles. During the single performance of the *bua loy* ensemble that I have witnessed at a funeral ceremony, I noted that the repertoire, its style and musical instrumentation remained consistently faithful to its original form. Meanwhile, during my observations of the *piphat nanghong* and *piphat mon* ensembles, it was clear that the musicians adhered to the traditional repertoire of both ensembles during the actual funeral rituals. However, during intervals in the ceremonies, it was notable that both ensembles introduced compositions from other Thai ensembles. For example, the *piphat nanghong* featured the *sepha* repertoire from the *piphat sepha* ensemble, which is normally used in auspicious occasions and music competitions, to accompany displays of entertainment for the

participants. From my observations, I have concluded that the main reason for the introduction of other ensemble pieces is due to the overall complexity of the *piphat nanghong* repertoire. With respect to the *piphat mon*, music from this ensemble featured at the majority of the funeral ceremonies that I attended, thus confirming its status as the preferred choice of funeral music for most Thai people. In keeping with its popularity, it is acceptable practice for musicians who perform in the *piphat mon*, to include musical compositions and performance styles from many other Thai ensembles. Consequently, during the intervals between rituals, I was able to hear the *piphat mon* perform a wide range of music in a variety of styles evoking both joyful and sad emotions amongst the mourners.

In contemporary Bangkok, the desire to stage a grand funeral occasion has been affected in recent years by the global recession and in the centre of the city to a lesser extent by noise pollution policies enforced by temples. This has had a significant impact on the performances of the *piphat nanghong* and the *piphat mon* ensembles, which are now shorter than they have been in the past. I have witnessed this trend at a number of funeral events that I attended, where I have also observed the rituals being curtailed as families move towards holding less costly and shorter ceremonies.

Indeed, families organising funerals for their loved ones may be inclined to forgo live music altogether and instead choose the less costly alternative of recorded music by way of CDs, MP3 and tapes. From the temple's perspective, the use of recorded music is much easier to control than that of a live performance. From my own experiences, at temples in the inner suburbs where CDs are used instead of an ensemble, I am pleased to note that the musical content has consisted of traditional funeral music, with the *piphat mon* repertoire being heavily featured. In fact, I would conclude that the advent of pre-recorded music has had a positive impact on the preservation of Thai traditional music as it has enabled many families, who for financial reasons have been unable to afford live ensemble music, to include extracts from mainly the *piphat mon* at their funeral ceremonies. Moreover, pre-recorded music is more acceptable to many inner temples who are able to control the volume of the output in accordance with their noise pollution policies.

With respect to the *bua loy* ensemble, as the *bua loy* suite is only performed during the mock cremation ceremony, its performances have not been affected by temple policy,

as there are no restrictions on musical accompaniment for this particular ritual. Moreover, there has been no discernible impact on the *bua loy* through the recent economic downturn, mainly due to the fact that it is only very rarely performed and is preserved for only a small, select number of individuals such as senior monks and respected musicians, with the ensemble members offering their services free of charge as a mark of respect.

3. Transmission

With respect to the transmission of funeral music for the three main ensembles, I have noted that the long held practice of oral tradition is still the preferred teaching method of the two most renowned music schools, Phatthayakoson and Sanoduriyang. This contrasts with other teaching establishments in Bangkok today which are increasingly adopting Western-influenced teaching techniques such as the use of audio and visual aids, as well as employing Thai and Western musical notation. Indeed, the Phatthayakoson Music School only utilises Western musical notation in respect of archiving non funeral music and has never used notation in teaching. A significant disadvantage of the oral tradition, can be seen by the minor variations in performances that can occur due to the fact that there is no definitive written musical text. In the case of the Sanoduriyang Music School, I analysed this through transcribing two versions of the *pi chawa*’s performance in the *bua loy* ensemble, highlighting the differences in a discussion in chapter 5. There are, however, a number of significant advantages to the teaching of the oral tradition, ranging from the strong bond that can be forged between the students and teachers through regular verbal interaction, to lessons in etiquette, musical history, religion, morality and Thai culture. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the oral tradition breeds an environment of creativity with musicians having the freedom to impose their own style on the repertoire that they perform. I discovered that the concept of *huang wicha* (guarding musical knowledge) in respect of the teaching of the *bua loy* is still prevalent at the Sanoduriyang Music School, with master musicians reluctant to pass on their musical knowledge of the ensemble’s repertoire, unless their students meet the strict selection criteria. However, with the advent of multimedia outlets such as YouTube, the role of *huang wicha*, is beginning to diminish with musicians from outside the Sanoduriyang School being able to explore the *bua loy* repertoire without seeking permission from a music master in the traditional way.

With respect to the three main ensembles that underpin the Thai funeral ritual, I have conducted the first in depth study of their history performance and transmission and augmented this with an account of the rewarding experience that I had in studying the teaching methods of Thailand's most famous schools. This was an opportunity that has not been previously afforded to an ethnomusicologist. The research that I conducted confirmed to me that despite having a lower profile today than in the past, Thai funeral music's role within the context of Thai funeral rituals will continue to evolve in the future alongside changes in society. As the VCDs that I have included as an integral part of my research show, funeral occasions in Bangkok are significant events which draw members from all strata of the local community together. As a result, ordinary Bangkokians can be seen participating in these occasions, and their exposure to traditional funeral music fills me with optimism regarding its future and its place in Thai society. However, in order for the three main ensembles to thrive, they will undoubtedly require the unequivocal support of the government, educational institutions and above all the personal interest shown by Royal Family members, in particular HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

New questions and further research

In addition to the material in this thesis, there exist many opportunities to discover more about Thai funeral music. For example, a scholar could research the background and evolution of individual compositions that feature in the various Thai funeral ensembles. A particularly under-researched subject matter concerns the distinctive funeral music from Thailand's different regions. This thesis has concentrated on my experiences of funeral music in Bangkok; however, this could be replicated by scholars seeking to explore the musical soundscape in other parts of Thailand. Also, whilst I have included research in respect of the funeral music that features at the Thai Royal court, an ethnomusicologist can use this subject to construct an in depth analysis of this particularly fascinating aspect of Thai culture.

A key question and indeed concern facing the future of Thai funeral music is its exclusion from the core curriculum of Thai establishments ranging from primary and secondary schools through to universities. Music lessons will feature both traditional and contemporary Thai music although the students will not be exposed to any compositions from the Thai funeral repertoire (as detailed in chapter 4, there are specialist music

schools which will provide comprehensive tuition in respect of Thai funeral music). The result of this is that many children, unless they come from a strong musical background, will grow up unaware of the rich musical heritage associated with Thai funeral music. A crucial question that must be addressed in order to help preserve funeral music, is how to implement a project across schools in Thailand that will increase awareness and understanding of, for example, the *bua loy*, the *piphat nanghong* and the *piphat mon*.

The foundations for such a project should be built on a policy of cooperation between the Government's Education Department, schools and universities and Buddhist temples. The Education Department could for example make it mandatory that schools incorporate the history and tradition of Thai funeral music in its sociology, religious education and Thai culture classes. From a purely musical perspective, teachers should be instructed to introduce elements of the funeral music repertoire to their students. A major challenge that needs to be surmounted concerns the fact that the vast majority of music teachers in Thai schools are not themselves familiar with traditional Thai funeral compositions. This could be addressed by schools forming closer links with their local temples. Music teachers could benefit by attending ceremonies where live ensembles are performing as well as receiving tuition from members of the ensembles. From a personal perspective, I am sure that school music teachers would welcome the opportunity to learn some of the Thai funeral repertoire, not only because of its rich historical tradition but also because of its depth and beauty. I believe that such a joined-up approach would be successful in the outer suburbs of Bangkok and rural areas of Thailand where communities are generally much closer, although in the centre of the Thai capital this may prove to be more of a challenge due mainly to the frenetic pace of life which characterises the city's inner districts.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

English	Thai	Meaning
bat silapin	บัตรศิลปิน	An artist identity card. All musicians and performers were required to hold one during General Phibun's leadership.
bua loy ensemble	วงบัวลอย	A Thai classical ensemble which usually performs at Thai funeral ceremonies and is rarely heard nowadays
bun	บุญ	Merit (Buddhist meaning)
chakhe	จะเข้	A three-stringed zither
chan diao	ชั้นเดียว	Level 1of a *thao*. It is always played in a fast tempo.
Changwang	จางวาง	A head teacher
ching	ฉิ่ง	A pair of small cup-shaped cymbals
dok mai chan	ดอกไม้จันท์	A set of objects comprising a joss stick, a candle and sheets of dried sandalwood, used in the Thai funeral ritual, both in the mock cremation and the actual cremation
dontri	ดนตรี	Music
huang wicha	หวงวิชา	Guarding knowledge
hun krabok	หุ่นกระบอก	A Thai puppet show
khlui	ขลุ่ย	A Thai recorder
khon	โขน	A Thai masked dance
khon sot	โขนสด	A Thai masked dance in which the made-up faces of the performers are fully revealed, with

		the masks positioned on top of their heads.
khong mon wong yai	ฆ้องมอญวงใหญ่	A large crescent-shaped *mon* gong-chime
khong mon wong lek	ฆ้องมอญวงเล็ก	A small crescent-shaped *mon* gong-chime
khong wong lek	ฆ้องวงเล็ก	A small gong-circle
khong wong yai	ฆ้องวงใหญ่	A large gong-circle
Khru	ครู	A teacher
khru phak lak cham	ครูพักลักจำ	Stealing knowledge
khrueang sai	เครื่องสาย	Stringed instruments
klong chana	กลองชนะ	A victory drum. Its shape is similar to *klong malayu* and *klong khaek* and is distinguished by its red colour. Musicians typically use a single stick when performing this instrument which is used in royal ceremonies only.
klong malayu	กลองมลายู	A pair of drums with musicians employing a single stick in performances and used in Thai funeral ceremonies only
klong khaek	กลองแขก	A pair of drums. Commonly used in the *piphat* ensemble with musicians using their hands to perform. The instrument is always used in auspicious occasions.
klong that	กลองทัด	A pair of barrelled drums
krachap pi	กระจับปี่	A four-stringed fiddle
krap	กรับ	A Thai wooden clapper. Traditionally, there are many types of *krap* instruments such as *krap phuang, krap sepha* and *krap mai*.
la-khon	ละคร	A play or a theatrical form without masks
li-ke	ลิเก	Thai folk opera

luk bot	ลูกบท	A piece of music which will be performed directly after the main theme of the repertoire
luk mot	ลูกหมด	A piece of music which signifies the end of a performance. It is always played after *chan diao* (presto coda).
luk lo luk khat	ลูกล้อลูกขัด	A type of Thai classical music composition performed in a question and answer style
mahorathuek	มโหระทึก	A large single-faced bronze kettle drum, used in royal ceremonies only
mahori ensemble	วงมโหรี	An ensemble which combines both Thai stringed and percussion instruments
meng	เหม่ง	A gong which is used only in the *bua loy* ensemble
mong sam bai	โหม่งสามใบ	Three gongs which are different in size but have the same shape
muay Thai	มวยไทย	Thai boxing
nam chai	น้ำใจ	Mutual co-operation
nang yai	หนังใหญ่	Thai shadow puppetry
nathap songmai	หน้าทับสองไม้	A drum pattern, always played in a question and answer style
nathap propkai	หน้าทับปรบไก่	A drum pattern, always played in two different styles, one being restricted and the other realising a melody. A rhythmic structure which underpins the majority of Thai melodies. The majority of *nathap propkai* songs have been created using an improvisational style. An example of this is “Khaek Borathet”.
phra kot	พระโกศ	A royal golden urn used for people of high status only
phleng	เพลง	A musical piece, a single composition or musical work

phleng ching	เพลงฉิ่ง	Compositions without drum accompaniment
phleng kro	เพลงกรอ	A composition which requires a tremolo style of performance
phleng phasa	เพลงภาษา	A foreign musical tone in Thai music, which always contains musical elements from other nations
phleng reo	เพลงเร็ว	A piece of music which is played in a fast tempo. It is always accompanied by drums. Normally, the *song mai* drum pattern is used to accompany this type of composition. Its equivalent Western term would be "presto".
phleng rueang	เพลงเรื่อง	A ceremonial suite of compositions
Phra	พระ	A Thai Buddhist monk
Phra Khru	พระครู	A monk who holds the position of Head of the temple. However, in the present day, it is commonplace for several monks in each temple to be bestowed this title even if they are not the actual head of the temple.
pi chawa	ปี่ชวา	A Javanese oboe
pi nai	ปี่ใน	A Thai oboe
pi chanai	ปี่ไฉน	The smallest oboe among Thai woodwind instruments. Its shape is similar to the Javanese oboe but smaller in size.
pi mon	ปี่มอญ	A Mon oboe
pi nok tam	ปี่นอกต่ำ	A type of Thai oboe which is similar to the *pi nai* but smaller in size
piphat mon ensemble	วงปี่พาทย์มอญ	Mon ensemble
piphat nanghong ensemble	วงปี่พาทย์นางหงส์	A traditional Thai classical ensemble normally used for Thai funeral ceremonies

piphat phithi ensemble	วงปี่พาทย์พิธี	A Thai classical ensemble normally used for accompanying Buddhist religious ceremonies
piphat sepha ensemble	วงปี่พาทย์เสภา	A Thai classical ensemble normally used for Thai musical competitions and social functions
poeng mang	เปิงมาง	A two-faced drum
poeng mang khok	เปิงมางคอก	A set of seven Mon drums which are hung on a circle-stand
prakhom	ประโคม	Playing music
ranat ek	ระนาดเอก	A Thai high-pitched xylophone
ranat thum	ระนาดทุ้ม	A Thai low-pitched xylophone
ranat ek lek	ระนาดเอกเหล็ก	A Thai high-pitched metallophone. It is normally made of brass or metal.
ranat thum lek	ระนาดทุ้มเหล็ก	A Thai low-pitched metallophone, which is also usually made of brass or metal.
sang	สังข์	A conch-shell
sang trae ensemble	วงสังข์แตร	Used in royal ceremonies only, featuring a single conch-shell, several curved and European trumpets (*trae ng-on* and *trae farang*), *mahorathuek* and a *bando* (a percussion instrument). The word *sang* translates as conch-shell whilst the word *trae* in Thai refers to a trumpet.
sanuk sanan	สนุกสนาน	Having fun
sam chan	สามชั้น	Level 3 of a *thao*
samniang	สำเนียง	This Thai musical term can be best described as an “accent” whereby the distinctive musical and melodic character of a particular foreign tone is imitated and incorporated into a Thai composition

so	ซอ	A fiddle
so sam sai	ซอสามสาย	A three-stringed fiddle
song chan	สองชั้น	Level 2 of a *thao*. Always played in a moderate tempo.
song na	สองหน้า	A two-faced drum used in the *piphat sepha* ensemble and also in *the pi chani klong chana* ensemble
thao	เถา	*Thao* is a Thai classical music form, which normally begins with *sam chan* (slow tempo) and moves to *song chan* (moderate tempo) followed by *chan diao* (fast tempo) and *luk mot* (presto coda). Thai music theory requires the *thao* form to be performed continually from *sam chan* through to *lok mot*.
thon	โทน	A vase-shaped drum
thon	ท่อน	A section or part of a composition
taphon mon	ตะโพนมอญ	A large, barrelled two faced Mon drum
taphon Thai	ตะโพนไทย	A barrel-shaped two faced drum which is smaller than the *taphon mon*
thawai patchai	ถวายปัจจัย	A money offering to Thai Buddhist monks
thiao plian	เที่ยวเปลี่ยน	An alternative version of a composition
trae farang	แตรฝรั่ง	A European trumpet
trae ng-on	แตรงอน	A curved trumpet
wan suk	วันศุกร์	Friday
wat	วัด	A Buddhist temple
wong	วง	An ensemble

yuen wai a-lai	ยืนไว้อาลัย	A term which refers to the act of a mourner standing up as a mark of respect to the deceased and remaining silent for a short period of time

Appendix 2: The basic melody of "Pracham Wat" played on the *khong mon wong yai* in the style of the Phatthayakoson Music School. This basic melody was transmitted to me by Khru Somsak Triwat.

Pracham Wat

1

Phatthayakoson Music School

2

3

4

1.

2.

Appendix 3: The basic melody of "Phleng Rueang Nanghong" ("Nanghong" suite) published by the Department of Fine Arts.

"Nanghong" suite *song chan*

Department of Fine Arts 2008

Phram Kep Hua Waen part 1

1.

Phram Kep Hua Waen part 2

2.

Sao Sot Waen Part 1

2

Sao Sot Waen Part 2

Krabok Thong Part 1

Krabok Thong Part 2

Khu Malaeng Wan Thong Part 1

Khu Malaeng Wan Thong Part 2

Malaeng Wan Thong Part 1

Malaeng Wan Thong Part 2

4

Appendix 4: Periods of Thai history and emergence of the three Thai ensembles which are used in Thai funeral rituals.

Sukhothai period (1240-1438)

Ayutthaya period (1351-1767)

Thonburi period (1767-1782)

1779 - the *piphat mon* ensemble was documented for the first time in respect of the celebration of the Emerald Buddha, however, this was not in the context of a funeral ceremony.

Rattanakosin period (1782 – present)

1803 - the first documented reference to the *pi klong malayu* ensemble emerged. The *pi klong malayu* provided the foundations for the development of the *bua loy* ensemble (Interview with Khru Boonchouy Sovat on 2 March 2014).

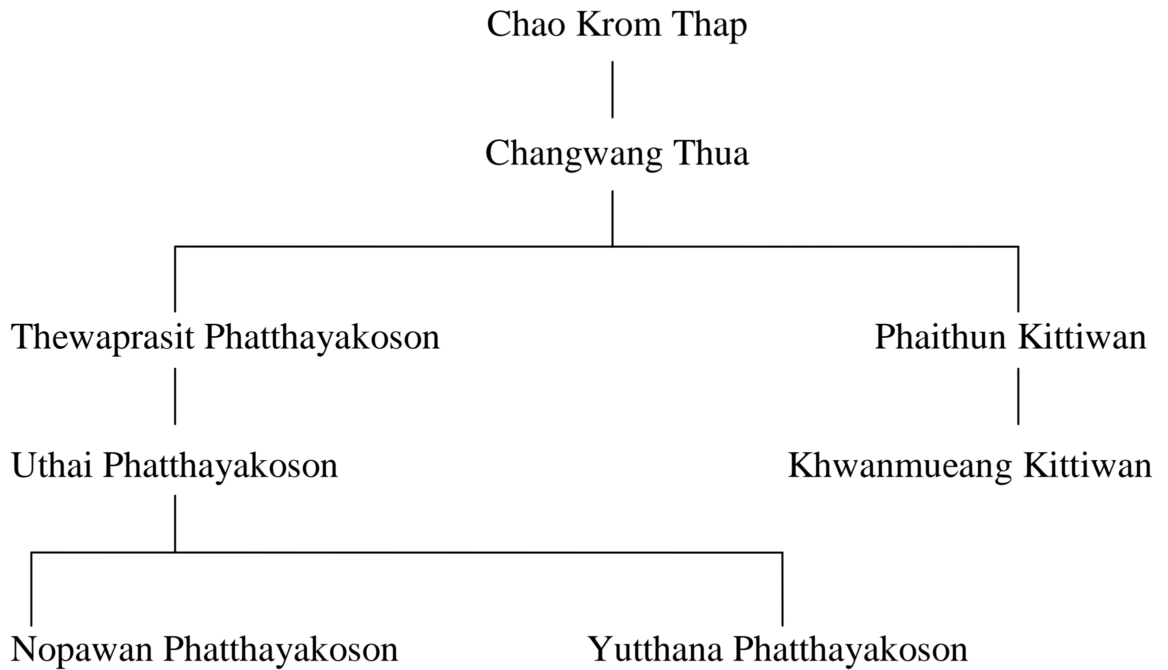
Circa 1845-1851 - the *piphat nanghong* was created through a combination of the *piphat phithi* and the *bua loy*.

1851 - the *piphat mon* was performed for the first time at the funeral ceremony of King Rama III.

1862 - the *piphat mon* ensemble was performed at the funeral of Queen Somdet Phrathepsirinthara's (Queen Sirin), who was of Mon origin. This occasion was the catalyst for the popularisation of the *piphat mon* among Thai people.

1928 - the actual terms "*bua loy*" and "*piphat nanghong*" were documented for the first time by Prince Damrong in his book entitled *Tamnan Khrueang Mahori Piphat* [History of *mahori* and *piphat* musical instruments].

Appendix 5: Chao Krom Thap's family tree[1]



[1] Only the names of family members featured in this thesis are included in the family tree.

Appendix 6: A brief background of the Mon people in Thailand

Guillion mentioned that the earliest known references regarding the existence of the Mon can be traced back to the 7th century, when Chinese pilgrims mentioned in their travelogues a Buddhist kingdom located in what is now known as central Thailand, called To-lo-po-ti. Samuel Beal translated this name into Sanskrit by which it became known as Dvaravati. In this kingdom, it was discovered that Mon was the only language featured in descriptions dating back to the 7th century. Further credence to this theory can be demonstrated in the discovery by Chinese pilgrims in the years AD 638 and AD 648 of silver coins which bore the inscription "Sri Dvaravatisvarapunya" which means the "meritorious work of the King of Dvaravati". The majority of art historians apply the name Dvaravati to all the various Mon art forms to be found in Thailand (Guillion:1999:73). Chinese documents support the view that this kingdom only lasted for a hundred years from AD569-669 (ibid.:7). However, there are many other historians who hold the view that the Mon people or "people without a country" (Smithies cited in Halliday:1986:33) originally came from either India or Mongolia, travelling south and settling in what is now Western Thailand and Burma two thousand years ago. In addition, Halliday mentioned that 'the Mons of Siam (the former name of Thailand) are the Talaings of Burma' (Halliday:2000:3).

During the first recognised period of Thai history known as Sukhothai (1240-1438), the earliest specific reference to a person with a Mon ethnic background concerns a man known as Makatho, who was the son of a Mon merchant. He travelled to Siam during the early part of the Sukhothai period in order to trade goods. His journey took him from the Burmese town of Mottama to the city of Sukhothai which is recognised as the first capital of Siam. After he finished trading his goods, whilst fellow Mon traders returned to their hometowns, he elected to remain in Sukhothai and secured a position as an assistant to King Ramkhamhaeng's (r.1275-1299) elephant keeper. His industry and wisdom was acknowledged by the King, who bestowed upon him the title King Farua of Pegu (r.1287-1296). Pegu was the capital of the Mon communities which was later seized by the Burmese and is today still a part of Burma. He received this title when he married King Ramkhamhaeng's daughter and this event helped to develop a closer relationship between the Siamese and Mon communities.

Later on, during the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767), the links between the Mon and Thai races became even stronger. It was during the reign of King Naresuan (r.1590-1605) that we can see the strengthening of their bond when the two Mon cities of Tenasserim and Tavoy came under the control of the monarch with the Mon population swearing allegiance to the King whereas before they were loyal to the Burmese. The musical historian Khru Montri stated that there were large numbers of Mon people moving to Siam during the reign of King Naresuan as well as his successor King Boromakot (Montri:1954:17). Furthermore, Mon people continued to emigrate to Siam during the subsequent Thonburi and Rattanakosin periods. In particular, these numbers peaked in the mid 18th and early 19th centuries (Halliday:1986:9,15). Halliday mentioned that mass migration by the Mon people from Burma to Siam took place on three occasions: 1660, 1774 and 1814 (ibid.:9-11). Mon people generally received a warm welcome to Siam from the reigning monarchs. The majority of them made their homes near the Chao Phraya River located in provinces such as Pathumthani, Nonthaburi and Samutprakan. Throughout their history, the Mon people have had a turbulent relationship with Burma which has continued right up until the present day.

Additionally, a number of Mon people were entrusted with key positions and also had titles bestowed upon them by the monarchy. For example, a man of Mon origin, Luang Bamroesak, was given the title Phraya Ramanwong during the reign of King Taksin (r.1768-1782) which meant that he became the senior governor of the Mon community. Due to the excellent relationship between the monarchy and the Mon people, it is not surprising to note that when King Taksin staged the Emerald Buddha ceremony in 1779, Mon music played a pivotal role in the event. Another example of a Mon person receiving a royal title is in the case of Saming Thong who was a son of the leader of the Mon community in Siam, Phraya Cheng, during the reign of King Rama II (r.1809-1824). He was in charge of a newly reconstructed city named Nakhon Khuean Khan, with his main duty being to protect the city from any potential enemies such as Burmese invaders. The title that was bestowed upon him was Phraya Nakhon Khuean Khan (Montri:1954:14). It can be seen throughout Thai history that there has been a healthy level of cooperation between the Thai and Mon communities. This is emphasised by the fact that many Mon people settled close to the Chao Phraya River which meant that they

were the first line of defence in the event of an invasion by Burma (Phisan:1987:115). Mon people accepted this “buffer” role as a mark of gratitude to the King for allowing them to settle in Siam.

Also during the reign of King Rama II, there was a famous occasion in 1814 when the future King Rama IV (a son of King Rama II) met the Mon people fleeing Burma at the border town of Kanchanaburi. He provided them with work and granted them large areas of jungle land in which they were able to settle (Gray and Ridout:2001:234). In addition, King Rama II’s reign witnessed a significant event which occurred when the head of the Mon community that was being persecuted in Burma, a man named Saming Sot Bua, approached the Thai King with a letter requesting his assistance. King Rama II helped the Mon cause by allowing them to settle in communities such as Prathumthani, Nonthaburi and Nakhon Khuean Khan (known today as Samutprakan). These groups of Mon people were given the name Mon Mai (the New Mon) (Montri:1954:14,20).

Nowadays, Mon people can still be found in the aforementioned provinces and also in Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi and Lopburi. There are also some Mon people who live mainly along the borders between Northwest Thailand and Southern Burma. These groups still preserve their own culture. For example, there is a traditional performance known as Saba which is performed on Songkran day (New Year) and the ceremony in respect of style and costume is typically Mon. The musical accompaniment is by way of a Mon string ensemble which features the singing of a traditional Mon composition known as “Tha Yae”. Many Mon people today, due to the fact that both they and their ancestors have been raised and assimilated into Thai culture, are unable to speak or understand the Mon language.

Phuttha Na Bangchang stated that “…Mon people use their own music for all kinds of occasion, both auspicious and inauspicious, for instance weddings, house warmings and funerals. Also, sometimes Mon music is used to accompany a sorcerer’s dance to exorcise evil spirits. In respect of these different types of occasions, there are specific Mon songs which are used to accompany the event. The majority of Mon people will recognise the songs that are performed…” (Phuttha:1999:131). Thai people however will only tend to use Mon music in funeral rituals. They believe that if Mon music is utilised in a different type of occasion such as a wedding, the couple will divorce or have bad luck

in their lives. Many Thai people are so familiar with Mon music being used for Thai funeral rituals that they are not aware that they have their own ensemble which is rarely used for these occasions.

Today, the majority of Mon people who live in Thailand have forsaken their own language and use Thai instead. Mon people were able to assimilate into Thai culture easily due to the similarities between the two races in respect of religion, way of life etc. As Smithies stated "… it seems therefore sure that one day the Mon will be completely absorbed by the Thai…" (Smithies:1986:34).

Appendix 7: Description of VCDs

VCD no. 1

This is a video recording of the funeral ceremony of Khru Thongbai Rueangnon, who was awarded the status of National Artist of Thailand in 1997. His cremation was held on 19 November 2007 at Sunthonthammathan temple, Bangkok. I was handed the recording in November 2009 by Khru Boonchouy Sanganant who made the recording directly from one of Thailand's national TV channels, which broadcasts Royal news on a daily basis.

In this short video clip, the funeral ceremony commences with the mock cremation ritual, the first act consisting of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn laying two small bowls made from banana leaves containing flowers under the coffin of the deceased. An officer from the Royal Household then hands her a lantern which contains the "royal fire". HRH uses the royal fire to light the *dok mai chan* which are also placed under the coffin and HRH bows her head in front of the coffin as a mark of respect to the deceased. This act which formally signifies the beginning of the mock cremation ceremony, is accompanied by music from the *bua loy* ensemble which is performed by musicians from the Music Division, the Department of Fine Arts. The musicians commence playing a piece from the *bua loy* suite entitled "Rua Sam La" at the point in the opening ritual when HRH lights the *dok mai chan*.

The musicians continue to play as HRH moves away from the funeral stage. The video then shows various dignitaries filing up one by one, each placing a small *dok mai chan* under the coffin, whilst at the same time performing the act of *wai.* This has the dual purpose of not only cleansing any bad karma between the deceased and the mourner but also serves as an opportunity for the mourner to convey their wish for the deceased's spirit to pass smoothly onto the next life. Following on from the dignitaries, one can then see a steady stream of people, several clasping commemorative red books, showing their respects to the deceased by way of a *dok mai chan* offering. These people are comprised of friends, relatives, colleagues and students of the deceased. As the mourners continue to show their respects, the video switches to the *bua loy* ensemble for the first time and focuses on Khru Peeb Konglaithong, a son of Khru Thiap Konglaithong who was considered to be the most proficient *pi* player in the Sanoduriyang Music School. Khru

Peeb is the lead musician in the ensemble and is seen playing the *pi chawa* in respect of the third piece of the *bua loy* suite namely “Nang Nai”. He is accompanied by musicians playing the *malayu* drums and the *meng*. The rapid beat of the drums and the fast flowing melody, as played by the *pi chawa*, stimulates an intense atmosphere amongst the mourners whilst the mock cremation is in progress. Meanwhile, HRH is seated on a raised platform and converses with members of the deceased’s family, who position themselves in a traditional Thai sitting posture called *phap phiap*. The position assumed by the mourners represents an act of respect reserved for senior members of the Royal Family. The *bua loy* having completed its repertoire, is followed by the *piphat nanghong* ensemble, which in keeping with tradition, provides musical accompaniment as the mock cremation continues. The music is played in lively tempo and creates a less intense and more relaxed atmosphere in the temple. The footage from this video actually shows two separate *piphat nanghong* ensembles performing the *piphat nanghong* suite.

It is a testament to the deceased’s status in Thai society as a senior musician, that his funeral ceremony was attended by HRH, who is the patron of Thai culture and arts, and featured the *bua loy* ensemble, which is only reserved for members of the elite classes and Royal Family, and also included two *piphat nanghong* ensembles. The concluding part of the video also reveals the presence of a *piphat mon* ensemble seated behind one of the *piphat nanghong* ensembles. Unfortunately, this recording does not contain any visual or audio coverage of the *piphat mon*. This video demonstrates the pivotal role that traditional Thai classical music plays, whilst accompanying the rituals which comprise the Thai funeral ritual. The music complements each act of the ritual and is fundamental in creating the mood of the occasion.

VCD no. 2

In the beginning of this video, which was made at the Bangtoei temple in Bangkok for the funeral ceremony of Thawatchai Khueawet on 10 January 2010, one can see an officer of the Royal Household, in formal uniform, leading a group of musicians of the *pi chanai klong chana* ensemble, who are dressed in red costumes, around the cremation tower. The musicians are performing “Phaya Sok Loy Lom” featuring the *pi chanai*, which is accompanied by ten musicians playing the *klong chana* drums and a single drummer playing the *poeng mang*. As I noted earlier (see pages 128-129), one can clearly

hear a sound being emitted by the oboe which appears to imitate a person crying. As they circulate the cremation tower anti-clockwise, the procession continues with four officers holding royal sunshades and umbrellas and these are followed by other officials who can be seen carrying a monk who is seated on a wooden stretcher. Behind this group, the golden urn comes into view as it is carried around the cremation tower by officers. This is followed by more officials seen holding royal sunshades and umbrellas, who precede a group of mourners all dressed in black, except for several government officers who are wearing white uniforms. Once the funeral procession has rounded the cremation tower three times, the golden urn is seen being placed on the ground, as robes are untied in order that the urn can be transported up the flight of steps to the centre of the cremation tower. Whilst this is taking place, all the participants in the funeral procession line up in front of the cremation tower. Throughout the video, one can hear the musicians performing "Phaya Sok Loy Lom" until the ritual draws to a close. This ritual precedes the mock cremation ceremony.

The *pi chanai klong chana* ensemble is unique to the Royal Household and it is only performed in ceremonies where the deceased has been awarded the highest honour that an individual can receive in Thailand. It is very rare to hear this ensemble being performed at a temple on the outskirts of Bangkok. My overriding impression of the performance was one of conveying a mood of sadness and grief for the deceased which was accentuated by the oboe replicating a person crying. Consequently, the mourners appeared to be very solemn throughout the ensemble performance of "Phaya Sok Loy Lom".

VCD no. 3

This video contains excerpts from musical performances which featured at the funeral ceremony for Khru Saman Naphayon on 8 March 2010 at Makut temple, Bangkok. The recording begins with a traditional Thai masked dance (known as *khon*) accompanied by a brass band playing pieces entitled "Krao Klang" and "Choet" in which one can see dancers in costumes portraying angels and demons. After the completion of the second piece, the audience, including the mourners, begin clapping in order to show their appreciation of the performance. This is followed by the brass band performing a piece called "Sok" to signify the commencement of the mock cremation. At this point, I was advised by an officer from the Royal Household that due to Royal protocol, I would

not be able to film HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn as she stepped up to the cremation tower in order to lay some flowers and to light the *dok mai chan*. Whilst this ritual was being conducted, I switched my video off and stood among the other participants, who were situated near the stage, where the *bua loy* ensemble was positioned.

Following the lighting of the *dok mai chan*, the *bua loy* ensemble can be seen performing the last piece of the *bua loy* repertoire entitled "Nanghong"(*thang luang* style) as a mark of respect to the deceased. The *bua loy* is only performed for senior members of society and in this case, the deceased, as a major cultural figure in Thailand fulfils this criterion. During the closing sequence of the video, one can hear the mournful sound of the *piphat mon* ensemble performing "Pracham Ban" as the mock ceremony nears completion.

VCD no. 4

This video contains footage of the first two days of the funeral ceremony held for Prathueang Wongphrom at the Buengthonglang temple on 14 -15 November 2009 (NB. although I attended the third and final day of the ceremony, I did not film any of the activities taking place on that day, and so was there purely as an observer).

The opening sequence on the evening of day one shows the cremation tower which has been lavishly decorated with many displays of fresh flowers on view. Situated in the foreground is a photograph of the deceased and on the right hand side of the cremation tower steps, one can see a display showing his full name. On the left hand side, a board reveals the Thai words *ng-an cha pana kit* (funeral ceremony). Adjacent to the cremation tower is a large hall where the grand *piphat mon* ensemble is seated and can be heard playing a lively piece of music from the Mon repertoire. The purpose of this upbeat music is to invoke feelings of joyfulness amongst the mourners and other community members in attendance as a celebration of the deceased's life. The ensemble consists of both Mon and Thai instruments, with the ten *khong mon* particularly prominent, each one being decorated with sparkling lights.

One can then see various items including food, toys and clothing for sale on stalls set up around the temple. This has the atmosphere of a weekend market, the people in attendance are not participating in the funeral rites and would have known about the occasion through a combination of word of mouth and local advertising. Whilst filming this scene, monks chanting can be heard in a funeral chant. Following this, there is a display of entertainment provided by the host of the ceremony known as *li-ke* (a Thai folk drama) on a large stage situated in the temple ground.

On day two, the video commences with the mock cremation ceremony and a number of monks are seen descending the cremation tower steps having paid their respects to the deceased by way of placing a *dok mai chan* under the coffin. The mourners follow the monks and enter the cremation tower from two separate entrances on either side of the tower. The monks preceding the mourners in respect of this ritual is a sign of their higher status in accordance with Buddhist doctrine. Upon descending the cremation tower steps, the mourners are seen being presented with a funeral souvenir in the form of an expensive umbrella. This can be seen as a demonstration of the wealth of the deceased's family and a mark of their status. During this ritual the *piphat mon* ensemble is performing a Mon ritual piece entitled "Pracham Ban" which serves to accompany the deceased as he makes his journey to the next life. The *ranat ek* player is performing a double melody which results in a very lively rendition of this piece. From a personal perspective, this style of performance did not evoke a feeling of sadness within me, unlike other renditions of this piece that I have heard, which have been played in a much slower tempo.

This is followed by a piece called "Pracham Wat Ok Prachum Phoeng", the purpose of which is to signify the beginning of the actual cremation ceremony. One can see mourners gathering in front of the cremation furnace in order to pay their final respects to the deceased. Following the completion of this ritual, there is a display of entertainment in the form of *khon sot* (another form of Thai masked dance). This is a further demonstration of the host family's high status within the local community, emulating the royal and elite classes who provide such entertainment at their funeral ceremonies. The staging of the *khon sot* also serves as an act of merit-making as it allows the attendees to enjoy free entertainment and releases tension among the mourners. This concludes the funeral proceedings.

The content of this funeral ceremony, ranging from the *piphat mon* ensemble accompaniment of the rituals performed and also the entertainments provided, is typical of the type of event staged for wealthy and senior individuals. I witnessed a ceremony which undoubtedly conforms to Wong's statement that "…late twentieth-century Thais are likely to include a *piphat mon* ensemble in funeral rituals because it speaks sadness, status and fun" (Wong:1998:125).

VCD no. 5

A full description of this video, in which I received tuition in respect of learning the *khong mon wong yai* from Khru Somsak Triwat, is contained on pages 225-228 chapter 5.

VCD no. 6

The opening passage of this video recording which was made at the funeral of Lieutenant General of the Air Force and Army, Phingphan Sucharitkul on 14 July 2010 at Thepsirin temple, shows a group of senior monks walking in line and each one holding the *talaphat* which is used in their chanting rituals conducted in front of the deceased's coffin. At the same time, one can hear a trumpet player from the Royal Navy performing a piece called "Taps", a Western originated composition. The musicians are standing to the left of a large line of soldiers dressed in military uniform. The reason for the significant army presence is due to the fact that the deceased was a senior general. During the performance of this piece, my overwhelming emotion was one of sadness, due to the mournful sounds being emitted by the sole trumpet player. Aside from this music, everything else was quiet within the temple grounds. This silence is broken when a male's voice from the Royal Army can be heard saying "*klong thahan kiattiyot*" which is a signal to the musicians from the Royal Army to commence a piece entitled "Maharoek" in a Western style. Traditionally, in Thai classical music, this piece is used in auspicious occasions only I was, however, very surprised to hear it being included at this cremation ceremony. Unfortunately, I was unable to interview any Royal Army musicians in order to glean the reason for the performance of this piece. Following the completion of "Maharoek", the brass band continues with a performance of a piece entitled "Sok" which is a traditional feature of cremation ceremonies. At the same time that the brass band is playing "Maharoek", the video shows the *pi chanai klong chana* ensemble from the Royal

Household, dressed in red costumes performing "Phaya Sok Loy Lom", a royal funeral music piece. To the left of the royal musicians, one can see ten officials holding elaborate royal lampshades. The significant presence of these royal lampshades and the large number of drums in view, is an indication of the high ranking status of the deceased. After the Royal Army musicians have completed "Sok", the Royal Household musicians continue to perform "Phaya Sok Loy Lom", which accompanies the mourners as they step up to the cremation tower in order to show their respects to the deceased. The mournful tone of the *pi chanai* can be heard throughout the mock cremation ceremony, interspersed with regular drum beats. The musicians continue to perform until the mock cremation ceremony has finished.

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