

Ram Tone's Knowledge Preservation and Literacy Transmission in Mahasarakham Province, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Ram Tone is a traditional play that is unique to Thailand. It is a popular folk play in all regions of Thailand and has been popular since ancient times. Ram Tone is a band dance with male and female dancers dancing in a circle, accompanied by tone, cymbaling, and Krab. The objective of the present study is to learn more about Ram Tone's literacy preservation and knowledge transmission in Mahasarakham Province, Thailand. The information is offered by knowledgeable individuals, practitioners, and general informants through qualitative research methods, including preliminary surveys, interviews, and observations. The researchers assessed the data for accuracy, evaluated the data in relation to the desired objectives, and presented the study findings using descriptive analysis. The results of this study show that the Kantharawichai District and Mahasarakham Province have acquired knowledge and built on their indigenous wisdom through the development of the Ram Tone dancing stance and educational curriculum.

Key words: Preservation, Transmission, Knowledge, Ram Tone

INTRODUCTION

Ram Tone is a traditional play that is unique to Thailand. It is a popular folk play throughout all regions of Thailand that has been popular since ancient times. The history of tone dance does not tell exactly when and who initiated it. For example, according to the Royal Mandirbal Law (1991–2031), it is stipulated that “Do not sing boat songs, blow flutes, blow pi, play the fiddle, bounce, or beat tones in the palace area”. Therefore, the mandir rule was created, and that tone is a musical instrument that has been around since the Ayutthaya period. Also, according to the National Cultural Office's tone dance book, “There is a tone dance skit first. World War II is around Ban Phaea, Saraburi Province” (Chanlun, 2005; Sevdalis & Keller, 2014; Kaeosanit & Jumnie, 2016; Deecharoen et al., 2018).

Thai folk dance, as far as evidence is found, uses the word “Ram Tone” with a circular singing style before other types of performances, which found that “Thone” is the name of leather goods in Thai bands. There is a tether that accelerates the sound from the edge of the leather to the neck. It has a tail sticking out and is escalating. The tone is called according to the shape that appears in 2 types of tones, namely chatri tone and monstous tone, but it is popularly called “Thon-Tub” to not be understood as rump tone. The above was said in the Ayutthaya period. There is evidence of Thai musical instruments during this period in the Law of Montienban, which states the name of Thai musical instruments increased. As

previously stated in the evidence of the Sukhothai period, it is probably the musical instruments that were newly born in this period, such as the krachapi, flute, chake, and rammana, that show that at that time Thai music was very popular even in the royal area. Until the king has to issue a rule of law (Silapabanleng & Jindawatt, 1978; Zaimi, 2020), there is also evidence from La Luber's records that the play Ram Tone is a play that the locals sing in the evening. It's a way of playing from a tone. There is also evidence of tone instruments that were widely played in the Ayutthaya period and were played in transmission from the Thonburi period to the Rattanakosin period (Jamfa, 2017; Rattanasawat, 2009).

Ram Tone has been a popular skit since before World War II and was very popular during World War II, when Field Marshal P. Piboonsongkram was prime minister. People in Phra Nakhon, Thonburi, and rural areas, especially in the lowlands, central, and regional areas. Isaan is commonly played in Ram Tone, but we are in a state of war and people are stressed. It's a fun way to play, and you'll find that Ram and Tone are the most popular. Marshal P. Piboonsongkram has tried to promote Ram Tone as a structured art and considers Ram Tone a culture. One of the nations is of the opinion that culture is an important part of nation-building. Therefore, the development of standard band dance is the most important work in the field of culture (Office of the National Cultural Commission, 1994).

The cultural environment during Marshal P. Piboonsongkram's reign was also discovered to have an

effect on Ram Tone playback. As a result, the gameplay and play composition have changed. Inspired by popular state policies, cultural revolutions, and government mandates, P. Piboonsongkram, Marshal. In addition, the National Cultural Act was approved. In order to identify and address the different cultural issues that your policies influenced the way of life of the people at the time. Several features must be properly adhered to by all citizens. Furthermore, Field Marshal P. Piboonsongkram because of the significance of Ram Tone there is promotion and an incentive to participate. During that time, the government was urged to write Ram Tone, which was one of his tactics, to transmit the government's policy to the people. Ram Tone was employed as a political instrument by Field Marshal P. Piboonsongkram. Stateism is a critical policy that people must adhere to in order to bring the country to civilization (Jamfa, 2017). Jamfa has analyzed the development of Ram Tone performances because Ram Tone, a traditional Thai play, was used during World War II. The play's progress can be divided into 3 phases, as follows: (i) Ram Tone prior to World War II (the beginning of the Ayutthaya period, 1940) The play's style will mirror the villagers' way of life. It is a lot of fun. Not so careful. (ii) Ram Tone during World War II (1941–1945) was a popular period of playing Ram Tone that had the qualities of Ram Tone prior to World War II but was affected by government policies. (iii) Ram Tone's playing style has changed from the post-World War II era (1946–present), with a combination of Thai and Western cultures.

Ram Tone arose from a band dance, with the dancer dancing in a circle, matched between a man and a woman. According to the dancer's satisfaction, there are no standard dancing moves. Short songs, most of which represent Thai society or young people's courting, are typically played at night. Young peasants of all ages will invite coworkers to join in the enjoyment by playing Ram Tone after completing a task. The light of the moon on moonlit nights and the light from the bonfire, torches, or storm lights on gloomy nights will enhance the atmosphere for the Ram Tone to have fun. There are no restrictions on the number of male and female Ram Tone. If it is a dark night, a table with lanterns or an ensemble is placed in the center of the dance circle. When Ram Tone music becomes the custom of playing Ram Tone, the drummer, seated in the center with the rhythmic accompaniment, is toning, cymbaling, and klabbing. The men bend over, and the women invite them to dance, and then they pair the dances according to the Ram Tone's lyrics and rhythm. After a round of dancing, the guys will either stroll or stand to return the female dancers to their seats. The same thing will happen when the song starts over in the next round (Boonket & Pongpian, 2022; Boonrod, 2022; Fung & Nandhabiwat, 2008; Karin, 2016; Pholprasert, 2009; Photikanit & Sirasoonthorn, 2018; Pornsawan, 2022).

In Project 1, Program 1, Arts and Culture, Mahasarakham University, it was discovered that work was being done on the process of developing learning about community history for the establishment of a folk museum of Buddhist temples. Narawit Daoruang, an academician at Mahasarakham University Museum Project, has interview information about

the interesting folk performing arts that arise in the area of interest, specifically Ram Tone, which currently lack an inheritance and a record of such information.

According to Ram Tone's history, this is why Ram Tone was used to get initial data from the field. The Ram Tone performer of Khok Phra Subdistrict in Kantharawichai District found out that the Ram Tone of the Kantharawichai people came from their ancestors who moved here from Nakhon Ratchasima Province, though it is not known when they did so. It is played at the traditional merit ceremony, which happens once a year and is a party like Loy Krathong. So, to keep Ram Tone alive and pass it on to future generations, the researchers chose the Ram Tone Kantharawichai study area and came up with ideas for how to keep it alive and pass it on for future generations to study.

Objective

The objective of this study is to explore Ram Tone's knowledge literacy preservation and transmission in Mahasarakham Province, Thailand.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research methodology to collect information from academic publications, books, textbooks, research papers, and field data. The substance of the study on the cultural environment and strategies to improve sustainability in Ram Tone, Kantharawichai District, Mahasarakham Province is theoretical. The analysis of field studies based on interviews is done in accordance with the study objectives, which are as follows:

Step 1: Use Ram Tone paperwork and information, as well as practicing ability skills in Isan, theories, and research, as a reference for how to study and conduct research.

Step 2: Study and choose the main study areas, which included Ban Tae, Thawatburi sub-District, Thawatburi District, Roi Et Province, Ban Pla Khao, Pla Khao sub-District, Muang District, Amnat Charoen Province, Ban Nong Loeng, Khaen sub-District, Kham Khuean Kaew District, Yasothon Province, and related areas. MoLam artists, musicians, and Roi Et Rajabhat University cultural management students were among those who attended the event. The operation procedures were as follows: 1) provide a platform to describe the project; 2) host a workshop; 3) gather field data; and 4) develop a knowledge base and choose works to serve as a model for education transmission activities to youth and other interested parties.

Step 3: This document's key informants consist of two experts on the Ram Tone of Kantharawichai, three instructors, and ten members of the general public.

Step 4: For this study, the research tools use surveys to survey the area and investigate the basic facts. Structured interviews are in-depth interviews with peasants, sages, and community leaders. Unstructured interviews are free-form talks in which there are no right or wrong responses. Observation is used to observe the general condition of the research participants through a combination of participatory and non-participatory observation.

Step 5: As a data collection method to explore the cultural context and sustainability promotion guidelines of Ram Tone, Kantharawichai District, and Mahasarakham Province, document data is acquired through the investigation of documented documents in Thai and foreign languages. Field data is information that the researcher gathers at the research site. In-depth interviews are conducted utilizing both the unstructured interview and the structured interview, and a focus group is employed to get information from various populations.

Step 6: Data Analysis: The most important details in this text are the steps taken to classify and check the reliability of the data, summarize the issues, look into triangulation, determine the study findings, use verified data, give information about different parts of the study, talk about the findings, and make comments to help guide future research.

Step 7: A summary of what I found in my research and how I graded the papers according to the topics I was given. The content was consolidated, and descriptive reports were written.

RESULTS

Ram Tone from the Kantharawichai District collected field data. The Kantharawichai people's Ram Tone was discovered to have been gained from their forefathers who migrated from Nakhon Ratchasima Province, although it is uncertain when they relocated. It is used in the annual traditional merit ceremony, which is a joyous event comparable to Loy Krathong. Festivals include Songkran, Boon Koon Lan, and the yearly merit event. Only the elderly, particularly pensioners and peasants, remember the rhythms and dances. When a yearly event or exhibition is held in multiple places.

Project 1, Program 1, Arts and Cultural Research Narawit Daoruang of Mahasarakham University is creating education about community history in preparation for the development of a folk museum of Buddhist temples in Kantharawichai District, Mahasarakham Province. The academician of the Mahasarakham University Museum Project has written about the intriguing folk performing arts that emerge in the region of interest, notably Ram Tone, which today lacks transmission and a record of such information.

In 2016, the Mahasarakham University Project for the Preservation of Arts and Culture, led by Kamkrit Karin, went to the area to study and met Moral and Poonsri Robwongchan at Ban Khanomchin, Khok Phra Subdistrict, Kantharawichai District, Mahasarakham Province, and a group of elderly people gathered to preserve Ram Tone, the community's performing art that has been passed down. Due to a lack of consistency, the project has recreated dance music, but the same melody is used. But when the unique lyrics of Kantharawichai are included, the ten songs are: (1) Wai Kru song, (2) Phra song, (3) Kantha city song, (4) Kantharawichai song, (5) Our house song, (6) Majaknai song, (7) Evening song, (8) Handsome song, (9) Saeng Chan song, (10) La song.

In 2021, there was a 1-tambon, 1-university project under the Ministry of Higher Education and Innovation. Or the name of the project: a 1-university project under the Ministry

of Higher Education and Innovation. Or the project is called "University to Tambon" (U2T), and Assistant Professor Warakorn Seeyo is in charge of it. The project has made it possible for Ram Tone activities to continue for the elderly in the Kantharawichai District, where there was a disease problem at the time. The COVID-19 epidemic happened when people were far away from each other, and it was hard to get people together to organize ongoing activities. Even in the last phase of the project, activities can be organized, and Komkrit Karin has added new songs and written new songs. The name of the song is Ram Wong in the COVID-19 era, and it uses the folk melody of Ram Wong. Master Yupin Laothong has written dance moves to fit the situation of the campaign.

Meanwhile, agreements were made for Ram Tone Kantharawichai to create the project's local curriculum. It is known as the Integrated Economic and Social Improvement Project (1 Subdistrict, 1 university). In the sub-project "Development of Tourist Attractions, Organic Vegetable Cultivation, and Upgrading of OTOP Products for Economic and Social Development in Communities in Khok Phra Subdistrict, Kantharawichai District, Mahasarakham Province," the group created activities to develop the skills and potential of the people in Khok Phra Sub District, Kantharawichai District, Mahasarakham Province.

The development of the community curriculum on "Ram Tone Kantharawichai" is a participatory work. Participatory Action Research (PAR) involved stakeholders: (1) community leaders, (2) local speakers, (3) community members with knowledge and experience about Ram Tone, (4) youth groups in the community, (5) school teachers in the community, (6) elderly students in the community, and (7) project workers. The research process is divided into two phases, as follows:

Phase 1: Primary research for curriculum development the working group studies the difficulties and requirements for developing a community curriculum. The steps are as follows:

- 1) Analyze community background data by analyzing relevant documents. The research team introduced themselves to community leaders, informed them of the purpose of entering the area to participate in the project, and conducted a survey of the problems and needs of the community. To include the community in development planning by participating in participatory activities and workshops. Using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) in the community, which analyzes and synthesizes projects and activities in the community as follows: 1. Activities to convey the Ram Tone in elderly activities 2. Activities to convey drumming tones to youth 3. Ram Tone Activity 4. Prepare teaching materials for Tha Ram Tone Kantharawichai. 5. Prepare the local curriculum (Ram Tone Kantharawichai). 6. Compose the lyrics and choreography for COVID-19 songs.
- 2) Analyze basic facts with the community to study Ram Tone Kantharawichai-related concerns that might be used as a curriculum by concentrating groups with community leaders. The observation and use of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats),

which examine and synthesize community initiatives and activities, are characterized as follows: 1. Ram Tone broadcasts of elderly activities 2. Programs to teach youngsters drumming tones 3. Ram Tone Activity 4. Create instructional materials for Tha Ram Tone Kantharawichai. 5. Develop the local curriculum (Ram Tone Kantharawichai) 6. Write lyrics and choreography for the COVID-19 songs.

Phase 2: Curriculum

- 1) Preparation: Designing a Course The working group and the community make judgments by utilizing the focus group approach to examine various data in order to choose topics regarding Ram Tone Kantharawichai and construct a community curriculum based on the course elements, which are principles, destinations, structure, and course descriptions. Content, class time Teaching and learning guidelines Can analyze and organize instructional materials by splitting the unit into five chapters. The following: Chapter 1: General Knowledge of Ram Tone, Chapter 2: The Composition of Ram Tone, Chapter 3: Lyrics and History of Ram Tone, Chapter 4: Drumming Chapter 5: The Ram Tone At the same time, we have produced a video of a sample of tonal drumming. Sing songs and make dance moves while explaining and demonstrating your teaching. There are 11 songs: 1) Wai Kru song 2) Phra song 3) Kantha city song 4) Kantharawichai song 5) Our house song 6) Majaknai song 7) Evening song 8) Handsome song 9) Saeng Chan song 10) La song, and 11) COVID-19 songs.
- 2) Course Trial Following the framework for learning experiences set by the working group as mentors and facilitators, community speakers tried using the curriculum to provide youth in the community with learning experiences about Ram Tone Kantharawichai. Observation, group interview, and test results from the course trial served as the data sources.
- 3) The results of the community course trial on Ram Tone Kantharawichai were reflected in the focus group, observation, and after-action review. In 2022, Assistant Professor Warakorn Seeyo oversaw putting the project together and participated in Ram Tone Kantharawichai Rungruang activities to assist the Ram activity project for the elderly. The project created two new songs, “Kong-Dee Kantharawichai” and “Kantharawichai Rung Rueng,” using fresh lyrics and words from a meeting with the people. The beat of the drums in both songs is regular dancing rhythms when lined up, and the dance moves in the performance of these two new songs were obtained from a meeting of the villagers and in

collaboration with the Faculty of Fine-Applied Arts and Cultural Science, Mahasarakham University.

Acting opportunities Formerly, Ram Tone was a drama performed at night to release tension and exhaustion from everyday labor. It is also a chance for young men and women to connect and talk. After Ram Tone lost its prominence, it became a form of entertainment in society by staging performances at different auspicious events, public holidays, traditional celebrations, and carnivals such as Loy Krathong, temples, and kathin. Make the elderly socialize. This will significantly ease and minimize loneliness among the elderly.

As shown in Figure 1, there are 5 types of musical instruments used in Ram Tone Kantharawichai: 1. small cymbals; 2. cymbals; 3. tone drums 4. Tamburin has leather and 5. Maracas.

Ram Tone Kantharawichai has four distinct rhythms: 1. Regular Ram-Thon rhythm 2. Horse Rhythm 3. Obbit rhythm and 4. Conga rhythm.

An example of the rhythm of Ram Tone Kantharawichai Rungruang’s songs and Khong-Dee Kantharawichai’s songs in an international style of music.



Figure 1. Ram Tone Kantharawichai musical instruments Source. Warakorn Seeyo



Figure 2. Costumes Source. Warakorn Seeyo

Klxng Thon

Ching

Thai Percussion

Bha Thon Tone Chap Ching

Ram Tone was initially thought to be a folk clothing. Playing Ram Tone has not been included in the dress code in the past because it's just for fun. Long-sleeved ladies dress is a sarong or silk sarong over a floral sabai. Men's clothing has round necklines and short sleeves with a finished loincloth used as a girdle, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 3 shows dance movement examples *Come to Kantharawichai*, *Khong-Dee Kantharawichai* song, with the head left tilt, left arm perpendicular at shoulder level, elbow in lotus band, and right arm pleated to the back. The rhythmic foot begins with the left foot (Figure 3).

DISCUSSION

Ram Tone in Mahasarakham Province, Thailand, was inherited from ancestors who emigrated from Nakhon Ratchasima Province, which is not known for sure in what phase of the move, and playing Ram Tone has been inherited from one another by using it in the annual merit-making ceremony, which is various festive events, such as the Songkran festival or the annual merit-making festival, etc., and maybe there are displays in other areas, consistent with Chamnian et al. (2022). The study of the preservation and creation of Ram Tone Nok Pitid lyrics and dance moves to promote community-based tourism used qualitative research methodology by conducting in-depth interviews with tourists who stayed overnight in the area by an accidental sampling of 22 people, non-participatory observations of tourist behavior watching Ram Tone Nok Pitid, and group conversations with key informants, which came from a specific sampling of 10 people from three groups: comm The dancing techniques, rhythms, costumes, and duration of the performances are acceptable, but middle-aged and young individuals may be added to the act for extra interest and inheritance. Also, lyrics referring to the history of Ram Tone Nok Pitid, the naturalness and community way of life of the area, and tourist sites, as well as the preservation and production of lyrics and dance movements, should be included to promote community-based tourism. The community agreed to hold a preservation and creative workshop on Ram Tone Nok



Figure 3. Tha Ram Tone and cordially invite you to Kantharawichai
Source. Warakorn Seeayo

Pitid to promote community tourism. This resulted in the preservation of five old songs and the production of three new ones, namely the historical songs Ram Tone, Nok Pitid, The Song of Pa Pra, and The Song of Visit Krung Ching. Boonkhet and Pongpien (2022) investigated the preservation of the traditional drama "Ram Tone" in Ban Pa Daeng, Pa Lao Subdistrict, Mueang District, and Phetchabun Province. They collected their data by conducting in-depth interviews, and observation of all stages of Ram Tone play management in Pa Daeng Village, utilizing qualitative research techniques. Their results indicated that the folk play "Ram Tone" in Ban Pa Daeng undergoes a process of change according to the economic, social, and livelihood conditions determined by government policies from the past to the present through three periods: "Ram Tone" in the era of community establishment; it remains significant to the way of life in terms of worshipping and respecting the sacred things in the village. Traditional indigenous cultures are regarded as obsolete as the country enters the age of transformation led by Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram. Hence, a nation-building policy was conceived during the cultural revolution. Hence, "Ram Tone" was changed to "Standard Dance" for internationalization purposes. And presently, as a result of the influence of media technology on the village, there is a quick interchange of opinions from the outside world, leading "Ram Tone" to lose its legacy from Pa Daeng Village. There are now just a few seniors who continue to maintain this traditional game. Nonetheless, the majority are retained in memory and transmitted through storytelling. In order to conserve the legacy of local knowledge, "Ram Tone" was designated a national cultural treasure. Preservation guidelines are based on economic, social, and government policy variables and have thus become a crucial aspect of sustaining the cultural foundations for social formation and sustained communal economic development.

CONCLUSION

Ram Tone Kantharawichai is an art and culture show put on by the people of Mahasarakham Province's Kantharawichai District. It was inherited and developed through numerous university programs as well as government and central projects, culminating in Ram Tone's continual transmission and preservation. To ensure the continuation of the Ram Tone, the community's government agencies should include a budget plan that includes Ram Tone activities for the elderly and youth to encourage community continuity. Another option for making Ramese language preservation easier for young people to learn and access is to develop a community curriculum. The original knowledge order enables Ram Tone enthusiasts to study and seek knowledge in order to enhance and preserve the community's art and culture. The goal is to improve the talent and skills of Ram Tone for community members.

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