

The Promotion & Preservation of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition

as an Intangible Cultural Heritage

Ong-art Inthaniwet⁺ & Suppharat Inthaniwet⁺⁺ (Thailand))

Abstract

The Klong Luang Lanna drum holds profound cultural significance in Northern Thailand, yet the tradition currently faces systemic threats that jeopardize its long-term sustainability. This research employs an ethnomusicological approach combined with Participatory Action Research (PAR) to investigate the cultural roots and support its recognition as national intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Key findings reveal critical historical evidence through archival photography and identify a significant inflationary trend in drum scale, indicating a transition from ritualistic use to competitive display. The study further analyzes internal and external threats, including declining youth participation. To ensure cultural sustainability, this research proposes a multidimensional framework involving community-led organizations, digital storytelling, and formal ICH registration. Ultimately, this study contributes a strategic roadmap for safeguarding sonic heritage, bridging traditional community practices with contemporary urban cultural policy.

Keywords: *Ethnomusicology, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Community Participation, Cultural Sustainability, Lanna Culture, Heritage Transmission*

⁺ Ong-art Inthaniwet, Assistance Prof., Music Education Program, Faculty of Education, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University Thailand. email: inthaniwet@gmail.com.

⁺⁺ Suppharat Inthaniwet, Assistance Prof. Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University Thailand. email: srinsrin2519@gmail.com.

Introduction

The promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is not merely a process of preservation but a vital mechanism for cultural sustainability and the continuity of national identity. This approach serves to recognize and honor participating communities, fostering pride and leading to the continuous revival of knowledge. In Thailand, this concept has been continuously implemented and promoted. Government agencies have consistently and seriously established guidelines and emphasized the importance of studying the values and knowledge in various dimensions of the nation's intangible cultural heritage.

Furthermore, Modern societal changes and economic pressures have led to the reconfiguration of cultural practices. The Klong Luang Lanna tradition, once central to community life, now faces existential threats significant challenges from global disruptions particular, the COVID-19 pandemic which have altered the socio-economic landscape of Northern Thailand. Consequently, ongoing impacts on how these communities organize and sustain their cultural activities. The forecast by the Comptroller General's Department (2020:1-2) regarding economic stability in Chiang Rai Province for the year 2020, with an annual inflation rate of 0.1 percent, is considered reliable. This prediction is shaped by heightened consumer spending caution due to various risk factors, such as the ongoing spread of the COVID-19 virus, political conflicts, potential disruptions in agricultural production from natural disasters, and air pollution (haze) challenges.

Therefore, the researchers recognize that promoting and conserving national cultural heritage can mitigate cultural threats and foster sustainable development, enhancing both cultural richness and economic value. Thai society remains largely rooted in rural community structures characterized by mutual support and strong social cohesion. These factors serve as a shield against rapidly occurring social changes. By integrating community participation as a tool for consolidating community strength in education, development, and advancement, it not only enhances collective knowledge but also develops self-management skills to effectively utilize related resources for maximum benefit in their activities. As noted by Adom (2017), successful cultural preservation is fundamentally grounded in community-led initiatives rather than top-down approaches.

The Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition, which is popular among the people of northern Thailand or Lanna, especially the Tai Yong¹ ethnic group in Lamphun and Chiang Mai provinces, historically spread to Chiang Rai province through population migration. This socio-cultural phenomenon is particularly evident in the Tai Yong communities of Chiang Rai and Lamphun provinces, where the Lanna drum competition serves as a primary site for cultural negotiation. Traditionally, this practice functioned as a musical skill competition in which each drum represented a community. However, today this tradition is increasingly at risk of disappearing due to contemporary socio-cultural changes. Field observations indicate that previously, Tai Yong people commonly sought to purchase traditional musical instruments, including the drums and other percussion instruments, which were kept and regularly used in community temples. These instruments functioned as sonic symbols of community prestige within Buddhist rituals. The Klong Luang, in this context, transcends its musical function becomes a metaphor for collective identity and communal pride among the Tai Yong people. Following ritual processions, villagers would bring their community drums to compete, assessing which temple's drum produced the loudest and most melodious sound. Prior to each competition, teams devise ingenious techniques to

enhance the drum sound, which are regarded as closely guarded secrets, in order to produce distinctive sounds and outperform their competitors. At the end of the competition, the winning team receives prize money and brings prestige to their temple and community. The tradition of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition is typically held annually from April to May each year. This period enables family members working elsewhere to return home, making it an important occasion for family reunions and collective cultural participation. These processes are dynamic, involving both systematic thinking and cultural dimensions, as Anan Ganjanapan (2019:208-209) noted:

"They demonstrate the value of humanity, with integrated thinking that views connections in a contextual and relational manner, avoiding rigid dichotomies. There is a dynamic process of learning, creativity, innovation, and adaptation within local communities, influenced by social and environmental contexts that differ across settings. This aligns with educational concepts in ethnomusicology, where music is shaped by human experience. Therefore, studying music within cultural contexts requires ongoing exploration of cultural contexts unique to each community."

Ultimately, this research seeks to address the tension between the preservation of ancient traditions and ongoing urbanization in Northern Thailand. By examining the Klong Luang Lanna through the framework of cultural sustainability, the study aims to connect traditional community practices with contemporary urban policy frameworks. Accordingly, the study proposes to integrate traditional practices with modern policy approaches by proposing sustainable strategies for the Klong Luang Lanna competition. This approach provides a practical roadmap for local custodians to navigate contemporary challenges while ensuring that the sonic heritage of the Tai Yong remains a vital and enduring element of regional identity.

Background

The previous studies on the Klong Luang Lanna Drum have been limited in scope. Nevertheless, there are several studies that serve as foundational references to advance contemporary research, such as 'History of Wat Phra Phutthabat Tak Pha, Lamphun Province' by the Fine Art Department (1989:52-87). This book narrates the history of Wat Phra Phutthabat Tak Pha from ancient until 1989. The section pertinent to the Lanna Drum provides detailed information from a key informant, Phra Khru We-lu-wan-phithak, the abbot of Wat Phra Phutthabat Tak Pha. He possesses extensive knowledge of various types of Lanna drums and actively works to preserve this knowledge. The research document titled 'Siang Klong Song Fang Lum Nam Mae Raming: Klong-Luang' by Chusit Chuchati (1989:6-15) examines the appearance and role of the Klong-Luang as a central element of agrarian society, reflecting unity within each group. It explores the collaborative efforts centered around monastic leadership in fostering community cohesion. The thesis by Ronnachit Manmalai (1994:40-131) focuses on the roles, situations, and development of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum, including its sound system and the key elements that define its acoustic characteristics. The study area covers Lamphun and Chiang Mai provinces. Additionally, the study by the Cultural Council of Lamphun Province (2006:1-31) examines local wisdom, associated rituals and beliefs, roles in competitions, and the benefits of such competitions within the cultural context. These studies align with the concepts of Bruno Nettl (2005:139) who argues that in ethnomusicology, fieldwork is a principal theoretical concept and is seldom

framed within broader methodological discussions. Ethnomusicologists often require practical tools, including audio recording, photography, video documentation, and terminology collection. Therefore, earlier ethnomusicological writings on fieldwork emphasize hands-on practice. However, the studies by the Fine Art Department (1989), Ronnachit Manmalai (1994), and the Cultural Council of Lamphun Province (2006) all conclude similarly on the evolution of the Lanna Drum's characteristics. They divide this evolution into three periods: the ancient period (circa A.D. 1802 – 1884), the middle period (circa A.D. 1885 – 1957), and the modern period (A.D. 1958 to the present).

Conceptual Framework

Through a collaborative partnership between community members and researchers, this study facilitated the codification of traditional knowledge and its transmission mechanisms. The research team jointly conducted a SWOT analysis to evaluate environmental threats and internal vulnerabilities. Subsequently, they developed and proposed strategies to promote and safeguard cultural heritage wisdom, aiming to apply the findings in both direct and indirect ways to provide tangible benefits to the heritage custodians and the academic community.

Methodology

This research study is a qualitative investigation utilizing ethnomusicological methods, Participatory Action Research (PAR), and SWOT Analysis. The research methodology is detailed as follows: The study utilizes purposive sampling to select regions with significant cultural heritage, focusing on two areas: Mae Chan District in Chiang Rai Province, where the study seeks to uncover information on the current situation, threats, and cultural promotion efforts, and Pa Sang District in Lamphun Province, where the focus is on studying local knowledge, cultural context, and historical background of the Lanna Drum tradition. Data collection was facilitated through triangulation, employing audio recording devices, cameras, semi-structured interview guides, observation forms, and discussions guides. The data analysis process for cultural knowledge and its transmission includes: reviewing primary information from documents, conducting field visits to explain objectives and establish local working groups, collecting field data, creating a knowledge base, verifying data for accuracy, studying the factors threatening Klong Luang Lanna Drum tradition, and exploring ways to promote and preserve the cultural heritage. Data collection methods include document review, field data collection, interviews, and facilitating discussion forums. The study protocol strictly adhered to ethical standards and was submitted for human research ethics approval to the Human Research Ethics Office at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University. It received exemption approval with the certification number COE.P1-005/2566 and the research project number P1-005/2566.

History of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition

The study of the history of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum indicates a paucity of documented evidence, and there are no records indicating. Most of what is known is based on inference and oral historiography. However, previous studies suggest a consensus that the Klong Luang Lanna Drum evolved from the “Klong Aeo Drum.” Historically, villagers used the Klong Aeo Drum alongside the gongs and cymbals to create rhythmic music for dance processions and merit-making activities for Buddhist temples, known as “*Hae Khrua Tan*.” This tradition remains significant in Lanna and continues to be practiced today.

Therefore, the enlargement of the *Klong Aeo Drum* led to its designation as "the Klong Luang." The term "Klong" denotes a drum, while "Luang" in the Lanna dialect means "large." Thus, this type of large drum is referred to as the "*Klong Luang*." Ethnohistorical data suggests that the cultural origins of the Klong Luang Lanna community trace back to people displaced from Mong Yawng, Myanmar, who settled in Pa Sang District, Lamphun Province between 1816 and 1852. Regarding the use of the Klong Luang Drum in competitions and cultural festivities, its exact origin remains unclear due to limited documentation. However, it is inferred that the tradition began as an informal competitive display among participants to determine whose drum produced the loudest sound. Over time, this evolved into a sustained and popular community tradition. Subsequently, competition standards such as judging criteria, rhythmic patterns, and drum size regulations were developed and standardized. This evolution from a 'playful challenge' to a 'standardized competition' reflects the formalization of community identity, where musical excellence became a measurable indicator of village prestige.

Historically, the most prominent figure with extensive knowledge and involvement in the Klong Luang Drum was Phra Khru Weluwanphithak (1929-2005). He was renowned for his expertise in crafting the Klong Luang Drum and played a crucial role in its promotion and development. According to oral accounts documented by the Fine Arts Department (1989:69) Phra Khru Weluwanphithak provided insights into the origins of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum, stating:

"The Klong Luang Drum has been around for approximately 80 years. A craftsman named Nan-luang from Thung Tum Village, San Pa Tong District, Chiang Mai Province, was the first to create it. The drum's face measures 20 inches in diameter and is about 140 inches, which was larger than the typical Klong Aeo Drum of that time. Initially, it was offered to Phra Khru Phutthiwongsa Thada of Wat Chang Khao Noi for use in processions and competitions, where it quickly gained popularity among the local community. Consequently, others emulated this design and developed larger drums, ranging from 22 to 26 inches in diameter, with the largest measuring 28 inches in diameter and 130 inches in length." (Fine Arts Department, 1989:69).

Based on the oral accounts documented by Phra Khru Weluwanphithak, the researchers speculate that the craftsman Nan-luang likely witnessed or was familiar with the use of the Klong Luang Drum or drums of a similar nature in processions. This exposure likely inspired him to create larger drums. Therefore, such design concepts likely existed before 1909. However, the researchers identified historical documents containing archival photographs documenting the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition in the area, as below.

Figure 1 presents an archival image captured by the renowned Japanese photographer Kakiji Yagi, whose portfolio extensively documents the socio-cultural landscape of early twentieth-century Chiang Mai. This copy, provided by Sukhon Yagi, offers valuable visual evidence of a drum competition in progress. The photograph suggests that the Klong Luang Lanna tradition had already reached a high level of institutional maturity before 1919. Furthermore, the image reveals important organological and logistical details, illustrating the traditional method of transporting large drums on wooden carts, with the instruments securely lashed using heavy ropes contrasting sharply with the mechanized trailers used in contemporary practice.



Figure 1. Reproduced historical photograph of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition at Wat Phra That Hariphunchai, (1919). (Source: Yagi, 2024).

In summary, the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition has endured for over a century in the districts of Pa Sang (Lamphun) and San Pa Tong (Chiang Mai). Early records from 1919 suggest that these events indicate that platform for artistic virtuosity, where communities showcased their musical prowess to enhance the reputation of their respective temples. However, the tradition experienced a temporary decline around 1937. However, the tradition experienced a temporary decline around 1937 due to shifts in national governance and the socio-economic impacts of the Sino-Japanese War. A significant cultural revitalization occurred in 1957, led by Phra Khru Weluwanphithak at Wat Phra Phutthabat Tak Pha, paving the way for a large-scale resurgence in 1982. Today, the tradition has evolved into a cornerstone of Lamphun's cultural identity, remaining a vibrant and competitive form of living heritage that continues to foster community solidarity.



Figure 2. A contemporary Klong Luang Lanna drum mounted on a mobile trailer with repurposed automotive tires, reflecting modern logistical adaptation. Source: Authors (2024).

From figure 2, this image illustrates a significant evolution in the material culture of the Klong Luang Lanna. Departing from traditional bullock carts, contemporary practitioners now use mechanized trailers equipped with automotive tires to facilitate mobility in urban contexts. This technological adaptation reflects the community's strategic effort to integrate traditional competitive practices with modern infrastructure, ensuring the drum's continued viability and prestige in a rapidly changing socio-economic landscape.

Klong Luang Lanna Drum: Organological and Cultural Dimensions

The Klong Luang Lanna drum is classified as a membranophone, specifically a single-headed long drum. It is crafted from a hollowed tree trunk and fitted with a single drumhead. The drum produces sound when struck on the drumhead, while its body is carefully carved and shaped to specific design requirements. The Klong Luang Lanna is notably large, resembling a long drum but on a significantly larger scale. The drum body is constructed from a single elongated piece of wood along its entire length. In the past, the Klong Luang Lanna drum was traditionally constructed from *Azelia xylocarpa* (Maka wood); however, its relatively soft texture produced muted and insufficiently loud sounds when struck. Later, craftsmen turned to *Dalbergia sissoo* Roxb. (Indian rosewood) for its harder structure and superior acoustic properties, although suitable sizes were difficult to obtain and the material was costly. Subsequently, *Pterocarpus macrocarpus* Kurz (Burma padauk) and *Diospyros mollis* Griff. (black ebony) became more widely used alternatives. An essential component of the Klong Luang Lanna drum is its drumhead, typically made from male buffalo hide due to its durability. A distinctive organological feature, known as "Ja Klong Luang" (tuning paste), is created by mixing boiled glutinous rice, rice husk ash, and other ingredients based on the craftsman's formula. This mixture is applied to the center of the drumhead in a circular form, functioning as a tonal regulator that enhances acoustic resonance when the drum is struck. Additionally, various smaller components of the drum are assigned specific names. Currently, the price of a Klong Luang Lanna Drum ranges from 80,000 to 100,000 THB (approximately \$2,200-\$2,800 USD) and may increase depending on specifications.

As shown in Figure 3, this image provides a comparative anatomical view of the Klong Luang Lanna. The left sketch delineates the external morphology, identifying key components such as the *Na Klong* (drumhead) and *Aeo Klong* (waist). The right sketch provides a rare cross-sectional view of the internal bore, highlighting the intricate carving of the *Hai-Klong* (resonance chamber) and the *Ru Aeo* (narrow air passage). This unique internal geometry is crucial for producing the drum's characteristic deep, resonant bass and high-decibel sound projection. The terminology reflects the local taxonomy of Tai Yong craftsmen, where each component serves both structural and acoustic function.

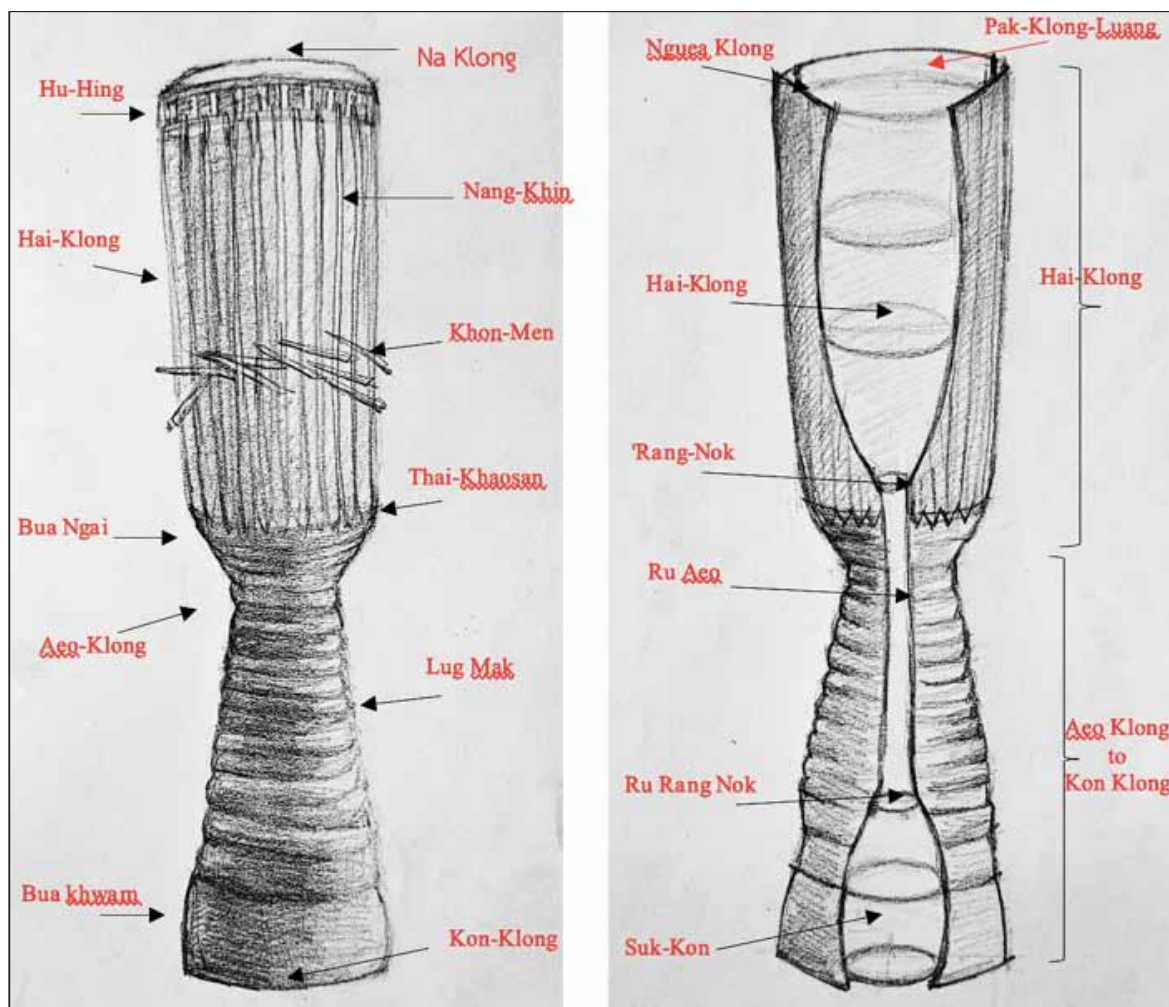


Figure 3. A detailed anatomical sketch of the Klong Luang Lanna drum, illustrating its external appearance (left) and internal acoustic chamber (right). Source: Authors (2024).

The Klong Luang Lanna Drum in Chiang Rai

Around 1881, Tai-Yong migrated from Lamphun played a pivotal role in revitalizing Chiang Saen from its deserted state. These settlers established communities to restore and repopulate Chiang Saen District. Today, these communities are located in Chan Chwa and Chan Chwa Tai Sub-District in Mae Chan District, Chiang Rai Province, extending toward the Chiang Saen border. This area lies approximately 15 kilometers from ancient Chiang Saen. Therefore, researchers suggest that the origin of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition in Chiang Rai Province can be traced to around 1881. This estimation accounts for the time required to construct homes and essential infrastructure, which typically took at least ten years to return to stable conditions.

Field research conducted in Mae Chan District, Chiang Rai Province, identified a total of 11 extant Klong Luang drums. Each drum is primarily maintained by a temple, with oversight provided by a community cultural committee. Furthermore, based on a survey of existing Klong Luang Lanna drums in the area, the researcher presents details on their shape and size in comparison with the historical periods studied. The development of the Klong Luang Lanna drum can be categorized into three periods, each exhibiting distinct styles and structural characteristics, as follows:

Era	Drum Head Size (inc.)	Total Length of Drum (inc.)	Characteristics	Drum' Name	Temple
Ancient Era Approx. 1802–1884	18 - 19	148	Transported by carts; primarily used in auspicious ceremonies; not competition-oriented.	Fang Thanthong	Muangchum
Middle Era Approx. 1885–1957	20 - 25	135 - 145	Transportation relied on carts; drums increasingly used outside temples; emergence of sound competitions alongside ceremonial functions.	Tulung-Sangma	Pasakluang
				Buatong	Pabongluang
				Dao-Prakai	Nongrong
				Khruba-Sanglui	Tonyang
				Fa-khanong	Bandong
				Nang-khammun	Huainamrak
				khrok-Sanan-fa	Nongkhrok
				Monbanae	Kiophrao
Phra-Yayong	Banmai				
Modern Era 1958 to Present	30-50	150- 207	Use of automobiles for transportation; drums enlarged for greater sound projection; strong emphasis on competition.	Kaeo-Sathanfa	Pangmopwong

Figure 4. A comparative analysis of the organological evolution and socio-cultural characteristics of the Klong Luang Lanna across three historical eras (1802–Present). Source: Authors (2024).

The data in Figure 4. illustrates the significant transformation of the Klong Luang Lanna in terms of its physical dimensions and functional roles within the community. The data reveal a clear increase in scale, with drumhead diameter expanding from 18–19 inches in the Ancient Era to as much as 50 inches in the Modern Era. This physical enlargement corresponds to a shift in the drum’s primary function from a ritual instrument used in auspicious ceremonies to a competitive instrument designed for maximum sound projection. Furthermore, the transition from traditional carts to modern automobiles reflects the community’s adaptation to contemporary mobility demands. Each drum's unique name, such as Fang Thanthong or Kaeo-Sathanfa, serves as a marker of local identity and a manifestation of village prestige associated with specific temples.

Social and Cultural Roles of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum in Chiang Rai

In contemporary Chiang Rai, the tradition is expressed through an annual event known as the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition. Typically, each temple sends its drum to participate in the event, which is hosted annually by a designated temple. The competition is organized through mutual agreement among participating drum teams, including decisions on participation and whether betting will occur, although the hosting temple does not organize or endorse such activities. The Klong Luang Lanna serves a dual function: as a ritual centerpiece in processions and as a competitive medium that enhancing the aesthetic and traditional atmosphere of the event. The drum is integrated into a heterogeneous ensemble comprising gongs (khong), cymbals (chab), and auxiliary drums, supporting rhythmic patterns with traditional instruments such as sets of 3–7 gongs and both large and small chab. Other instruments such as klong Sing Moong and Klong Talot Pot are

also included. Performances may be either stationary or procession-based, incorporating rhythmic structures that bridge local improvisational styles with more standardized musical patterns. The continued presence of the Klong Luang Lanna in urban-religious contexts demonstrates how intangible cultural heritage (ICH) can adapt to modern social structures while preserving its core communal values.

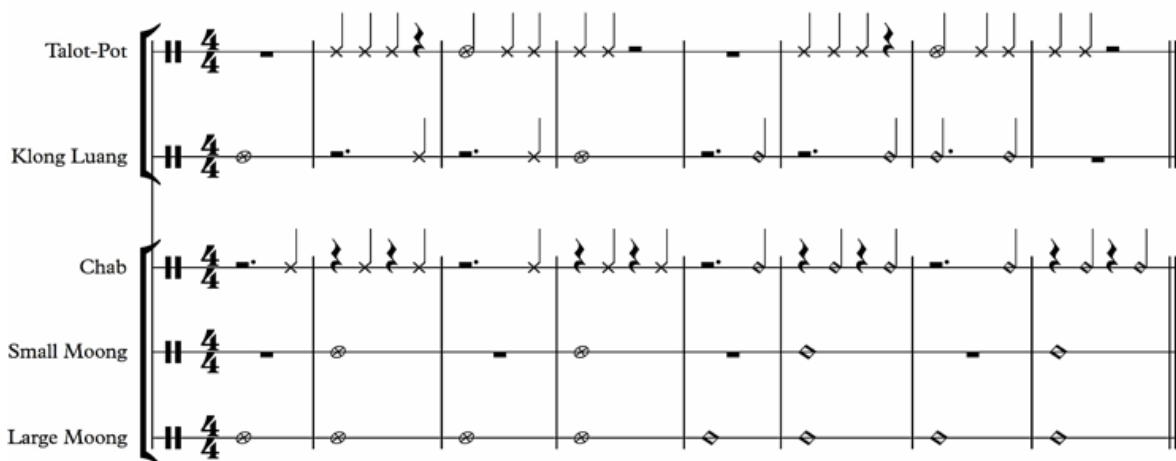


Figure 5. Rhythmic transcription of the Klong Luang Lanna drum within a traditional ensemble context, featuring the talot pot, chab, and moong. Source: Authors (2024).

The transcription in Figure 5 illustrates the polyrhythmic relationship between the Klong Luang Lanna drum and its supporting ensemble. While the moong (gongs) provides a steady temporal foundation, the Klong Luang engages in a syncopated dialogue with the talot pot. This ensemble structure reflects a hierarchical rhythmic organization in which the Klong Luang serves as the primary sonic element, supported by interlocking percussion patterns that create a dense and energetic festive atmosphere. In such competitions, participants typically perform using a single drum, following specific rhythmic patterns as outlined below:



Figure 6. Presents specific rhythmic patterns and triplet motifs used for competitive purposes in Klong Luang Lanna drum performance. Source: Authors (2024).

Figure 6. highlights the technical demands of the competition through rapid triplet motifs and high velocity strokes. The notation emphasizes rhythmic density and dynamic intensity, which are key judging criteria in the contest. These patterns are designed to maximize the drum’s resonance while showcasing the performer’s endurance and precision, reflecting a shift from ceremonial performance to an agonistic display of musical virtuosity.

Discussion

This study generates valuable academic and cultural knowledge in at least two key aspects. First, the discovery of historical photographic evidence confirms that the Klong Luang Lanna drum competition first appeared in Lamphun Province around 1919 (Figure 1). This photograph clearly illustrates the interconnected roles of monks and the com-

munity, who collaborated through shared effort and devotion. The preservation of distinct acoustic identities is a hallmark of Lanna culture, evident in both the complex melodic structures of Mahachat sermons (Inthaniwet & Pidokrajt, 2021) and the resonant power of the Klong Luang. As highlighted by Adom (2017), successful cultural preservation is rooted in community-led initiatives rather than top-down mandates. In the Klong Luang Lanna Drum competition, it is customary to name the drums after their temples or honorary titles, thereby asserting ownership and collective identity. These traditions, representing authentic cultural heritage, have been faithfully transmitted across generations. Second, the study examines the current presence of the Klong Luang Lanna drum in Mae Chan District, Chiang Rai Province. This analysis provides insights into the drum’s age classification and its persistence in the region. The revitalization of Lanna identity in urban spaces aligns with Denes and Pradit (2022) who emphasize the role of intangible heritage in shaping contemporary cultural landscape. Building on research on the endurance of Lanna Mahachat melodies in contemporary contexts Inthaniwet and Pidokrajt (2021) this study confirms that the survival of the Klong Luang tradition likewise depends on maintain aesthetic relevance while adapting to urban social structures. This study offers findings that directly benefit and indirectly contribute to further research in fields such as historical and cultural studies and cultural tourism development. For example, Supharit Tarathipnara and Okama Jakae (2022) identified key factors in cultural tourism revival include distinctive community lifestyles, effective local management, and cooperation among relevant organizations. They propose a three-step process: (1) fostering individual acceptance, (2) strengthening intra-group relationships, and (3) expanding networks through intergroup connections. Supporting community solidarity is essential for successful implementation, with cultural councils playing a crucial role in these efforts. This aligns with Shawanluck Kunathikomkit et al. (2020), who emphasize that cultural councils, with their deep understanding of heritage, should lead the registration of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). However, a key challenge remains the lack of data integration. Similarly, Dhanyaporn Phothikawin (2022) highlights that fostering acceptance and recognizing the value of traditions are crucial for their continuity in contemporary contexts. Ultimately, this research bridges traditional community practices and contemporary urban policy, providing a roadmap to ensure that the sonic heritage of the Tai Yong remains a living component of regional identity.

Moreover, findings from the field seminar on factors threatening the Klong Luang Lanna Drum Competition can be categorized into two main types: internal community factors and external factors. These findings are summarized in the table below.

Factors from within the community	Factors from outside the community
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of effective management in organizing the competition ritual. 2. Insufficient participation among youth and young men in seriously learning and preserving cultural heritage. 3. Perception among some drum groups that variations in drum size create competitive disadvantages. 4. Lack of preservation and respect for their own cultural knowledge and beliefs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Event organization formats perceived as exclusive to certain groups. 2. Planning and budget constraints in organizing the Lanna Drum competition.

Figure 7. Identification of internal and external threats affecting the sustainability of the Klong Luang Lanna Drum competition. Source: Authors (2024).

From Figure 7, the findings indicate that internal community factors pose a greater threat to the tradition’s longevity than external pressures. Consequently, strategic interventions should prioritize intra-community capacity building and knowledge transmission before addressing external systemic challenges. This is consistent with Phongphanich et al. (2023), who argue that community-led management is the cornerstone of effective cultural heritage safeguarding. By formalizing the Klong Luang Lanna competition as a recognized national cultural heritage asset, stakeholders can mobilize support systems to advance traditional knowledge and ensure its effective preservation in contemporary urban contexts.

Therefore, in considering the value of the Klong Luang Lanna drum competition tradition for registration as national cultural heritage, the researchers examined the 2017 (B.E. 2560) regulations of the Cultural Heritage Promotion and Preservation Committee regarding the preliminary selection criteria for cultural heritage items. This involved analyzing and comparing the official criteria with the characteristics of the Klong Luang Lanna drum competition tradition. This analysis provides a rationale for evaluating its eligibility for registration as national cultural heritage, as detailed below:

Criteria for Preliminary Selection	Supporting Reasons for Consideration
1. Characteristics as specified in the announcement of the Cultural Heritage Promotion and Preservation Committee regarding the criteria for cultural heritage recognition, B.E. 2560 (2017).	The Klong Luang Lanna drum competition meets the specified criteria. It embodies practices that have been continuously performed until they become customary norms, corresponding to characteristic (b), traditions related to festivals.
2. It is an intangible cultural heritage located within the geographical and cultural boundaries of Thailand.	The Klong Luang Lanna drum competition is widely practiced in Lamphun, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and among Tai Yong communities in the upper northern region.
3. Distinctive and representative of local or national heritage.	It represents the unique ethno-musical identity of the Tai Yong, integrating indigenous craftsmanship with ancestral knowledge.
4. Continuity and risk of disappearance.	It remains an active communal practice but faces vulnerability due to a decline in traditional leadership and formal knowledge transmission.
5) Historical, academic, artistic, and creative values.	Research demonstrates significant intellectual and creative development across historical periods, which is essential for future sustainability.
6. Documented or referenceable original knowledge.	It is documented through photographs and research studies conducted by local academics.
7. Consent for registration by the community.	Communal consensus has been achieved through regional seminars, with a formal resolution supporting registration in the national ICH inventory.

Figure 8. Evaluative framework comparing the Klong Luang Lanna drum competition with national criteria for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) registration. Source: Authors (2024).

Evaluation against the preliminary selection criteria indicates that the Klong Luang Lanna drum competition meets all requirements for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) recognition. The findings highlight both its historical and artistic significance, as well as its potential for future development. By securing a place on the national heritage list, the tradition can be effectively safeguarded, establishing a resilient framework for its transmission and ensuring its enduring role within Lanna cultural identity.

Conclusion

Strategic efforts to safeguard and promote the cultural heritage of the Klong Luang Lanna drum competition should prioritize sustainable development and aesthetic revitalization. First, local communities should formalize community-based organizations that promote ethical practices, disseminate knowledge, raise awareness, and ensure the effective transmission of traditional wisdom to younger generations. Second, sustained institutional support for the “Young Cultural Researchers” initiative is essential to cultivate a new generation of heritage custodians. Third, cultural programming should be diversified to build a resilient cultural ecosystem that encourages public engagement. Additionally, implementing integrated digital storytelling and strategic social media campaigns will be vital for expanding the reach of this heritage. Ultimately, formal recognition as national intangible cultural heritage (ICH) will provide a framework for the sustainable development, promotion, and advancement of the Klong Luang Lanna cultural legacy.

Recommendations

The findings provide a robust empirical basis for preliminary consideration in Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) registration, particularly in relation to social practices, ceremonies, rituals, and festivals. Additionally, the study can inform further research on historical data analysis and cultural migration using interdisciplinary scientific methods, such as wood-type analysis, acoustic frequency analysis, and artifact dating. Moreover, efforts should be made to foster communal ownership, agency, and awareness of the benefits of local cultural heritage.

Endnotes

- 1 Tai Yong refers to a group of Tai Lue people who originally resided in Mong Yawng, in the eastern part of Shan State, Myanmar. Over a century ago, some members of this group migrated and settled in northern Thailand, particularly in Lamphun, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Nan provinces.

References

- Adom, Dickson. "Promoting Cultural Traditions, Social Inclusion and Local Community Participation in Environmental Development Schemes." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 14 (2017): 80-103. <https://doi.org/10.14456/jucr.2017.5>.
- Cultural Council of Lamphun Province. *Klong-Luang Lamphun*. Lamphun: Nattapon Printing, 2006.
- Fine Art Department. *History of Wat Phra Phutthabat Tak Pha, Lamphun Province*. Bangkok: Por. Samphan Printing, 1989.
- Ganjanapan, Anan. *Withikhit Choengson Naikan Wichai Chumchon Phlawat Lae Sakyaphap Khong Chumchon Nai Kan Phatna*. 2nd ed., Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund (TRF), 2019.
- Chuchati, Chusit. *Siang Klong Song Fang Lum Nam Mae Raming: Klong-Luang*. Bangkok: Office of the National Culture Commission, 1989.
- Comptroller General's Department. *Chiang Rai Economic Outlook 2020 Forecast*. Chiang Rai: The Chiang Rai Provincial Office of The Comptroller General, 2020.

- Denes, Alexandra & Ajirapa Pradit. "Chiang Mai's Intangible Cultural Heritage: Urban Revitalization and Cultural Identity in a Northern Thai City." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 25 (2022):3-17. <https://doi.org/10.14456/jucr.2022.17>.
- Inthaniwet, Ong-art & Narongchai Pidokrajt. "Rabam Desana Preaching: Its Melodic Values to The Telling of Desana Mahachati Lanna." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 22 (2021): 164-181.
- Kunathikornkit, Shawanluck, Boonyakiat Karavekphan & Jeerawat Linakanit. "Promoting the Cultural Council's Potential in Conducting Preservation and Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage." *Rajapark Journal* 14, No 34 (2020): 186-202.
- Manmalai, Ronnachit. "Ethnomusicology of Klong-Luang-Lanna." MA Thesis., Mahidol University, 1994.
- Ministry of Culture. "Preliminary Criteria for the Selection of Intangible Cultural Heritage Items for Inclusion in the Cultural Heritage Register B.E. 2560." *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Thailand*. <https://ich-thailand.org/lawmanualform> (accessed April 2, 2024).
- Nettl, Bruno. *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*, 2nd ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005
- Phongphanich, Nara, Kanokkarn Mueangkaew & Jaruek Aupala. "Management of Cultural Heritage and Local Wisdom of Hainan Chinese People at Koh Rat, Donsak District, Surat Thani Province." *Journal of MCU Social Development*. 8, No.3 (2023): 287-302.
- Phothikawin, Dhanyaporn. "The Inheritance and Existence of the Trae Wong Band in Bang Len District Nakhon Pathom Province." *Mahidol Music Journal* 5, No.2 (September 2022-February 2023): 112-129.
- Tarathipnara, Supharit & Okama Jakae. "The Continuance New Year tradition for Promoting Cultural Tourism of Thai Hill tribe Ethnic Groups Khlong Lan District in Kamphaeng Phet." *Journal of MCU Social Development* 7, No.2 (2022): 33-43.
- Yagi, Kakiji. Mai Het Hari Phun Chai. "Mai Het Hari Phun Chai." <https://shorturl.asia/Td2Mc> (accessed March 12, 2024).