

# “Hin Le Le” Folk Songs in Phitsanulok Province:

## *Identity and Existence in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic*

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### Abstract

The objectives of this qualitative research were to investigate (1) the identity of folk songs in Phitsanulok province, Thailand (2) the forms, methods and existence of folk songs during the COVID-19 pandemic, using musicological methodology. The examination of the background, musical characteristics, components and forms at present revealed that the identity of Hin Le Le folk songs is “the songs that reflect the way of life of the locals in Phitsanulok province, keep up with ongoing events for all age groups and are created by the elderly in the community.” The examination of the forms and existence methods of folk songs in Phitsanulok during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that fewer musical events were held during the pandemic than in normal circumstances. However, Hin Le Le folk songs, which were composed specifically to portray the COVID-19 situation and promote preventive measures, continued to be performed with support from the Cultural Office. This research sheds light on the cultural significance of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province and their resiliency. It highlights the importance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage, particularly during times of crisis.

**Keywords:** Folk Song, Musical Identity, Hin Le Le Song, Thailand, Phitsanulok Province, Wat Bot District, COVID-19

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## Introduction

Every ethnic group has its own unique culture, especially the musical culture, which indicates the history of ethnic groups, living habits, and other related cultures. Michael B. Bakan (2019:10) referring to Edward Tylor in the defined of culture, asserting that complex whole includes knowledge, belief, art, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man. On this formulation has proven extraordinarily durable. It still provides a good baseline for comprehending the concept of culture in our modern world. Given the present-day global cultural trends, it is obvious that the influence of outdoor cultures has had an impact on the culture within society. It is undeniable that globalization is a significant factor in the transformation of global society. Additionally, natural disasters and pandemics are also contributing factors in the emergence of new cultural trends, which is consistent with sociological and anthropological processes.

The intangible aspects of art and culture, such as principles, beliefs, narratives, melodies, and sounds, are the fundamental essence of art and culture of ethnic groups. These aspects are primarily associated with indigenous knowledge, which is transmitted through societal practices to portray the history as well as reflect the way of life and the uniqueness of their culture. This is based on the love, faith, and trust in the principles established by their ancestors. Culture clearly represents the background and occurrences within a particular society, encompassing both tangible and intangible elements. The term “culture” refers not only to the clothing, housing, language, or way of life of a particular group within society, but also encompasses art, performance, and music.

The arts and culture, including the local music culture, play a vital role in preserving the history and cultural heritage of ethnic groups. Additionally, the arts and culture can encompass the study and performance of music within ethnic groups. The performance of music is an integral part of the arts and culture, contributing to the uniqueness and the interplay between community, environment, and technology employed in each era and society. It also plays a crucial role in communication among individuals and ethnic groups, especially within multicultural societies. In Thailand, it is common to witness a diverse range of musical cultures that represent the unique identities of ethnic groups, spanning from the northernmost to the southernmost regions.

The musical culture of each ethnic group in each region of Thailand can certainly represent similarities and differences in the uniqueness or identity of each region. Thailand has a diverse population made up of many different ethnic groups, each with their own distinct traditions and cultural practices.

These regional musical styles are not only distinct in terms of the instruments and melodies used but also the lyrics, which often reflect the daily life and traditions of the local communities. By listening to and studying the music of different regions in Thailand, one can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity and identity of each region.



Phitsanulok province has played a significant role in shaping its musical culture, which combines different regional styles from central, northern, and northeastern Thailand. Folk songs in Phitsanulok share similar characteristics with those of the central region, in that they are typically sung in leisure time during agricultural harvest or at play in important festivals. As Chanvichai (2011:31) refers to folk songs in Phitsanulok, Pin Le Le or Hin Le Le songs are ones in which young males and females sing in a call-and-response form when they meet at festivals. Call-and-response singing is performed extemporaneously. There are several traditional folk songs sung as call and response between men and women in Phitsanulok province in Thailand, for example, Hin Le Le (ฮินเลเล), Kun Son Kun (กุ่มซอนกุ่ม), Pleng Malay (เพลงมาลัย), Ling Lom (ลิงลม), and Nang Dong (นางดั่ง).

Hin Le Le, also known as Pin Le Le, is a kind of Pleng Pa Ti Pak featuring a call-and-response singing between male and female voices performed live, which requires quick wit to perform call-and-response singing instantly. The lyrics encompass themes of courtship, complaints, and at times incorporate elements of sarcasm and mockery, intended to provide entertainment and offer a chance for young males and females to engage in courtship. Hin Le Le songs in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, are typically performed in conjunction with Nang Dong songs, Nang Tan songs, and Ling Lom songs. Hin Le Le in Nakhon Thai district, Phitsanulok province, are typically performed alongside Chacha Lahong songs and Phuang Malay songs. The singers engage in call-and-response singing, taking turns throughout the day, and they may interrupt the singing by other plays or performances such as Luk Chuang, Saba, and Mon Son Pha, in both Wat Bot district and Nakhon Thai district. Hin Le Le songs are characterized by their brevity, with each line typically consisting of ten syllables or more, and each line ending with a word with the vowel /e:/. The songs are performed live and therefore demand a certain level of quick thinking and improvisation from the performers. The call-and-response performances promote exercising the brain and intelligence simultaneously. Also, the analysis of the lyrics of Hin Le Le/Pin Le Le songs revealed the presence of dialect words within them. Moreover, the expressions used in the lyrics can provide insights into the contexts, modes of thinking, and societal values of the period in which they were created (ศูนย์ข้อมูลกลางทางวัฒนธรรม กระทรวงวัฒนธรรม, accessed 2022).

As previously stated, culture and tradition serve as a means of conveying the stories, histories, and ways of life of people transmitted from generation to generation, using various mediums throughout different historical periods. If there is a phenomenon that affects ways of life, attitudes, and driving forces across all systems, including cultural and traditional practices, that phenomenon holds great significance. The COVID-19 pandemic is yet another phenomenon that poses a threat to the ways of life of people worldwide.

The end of 2019 witnessed the outbreak of COVID-19, and Thailand began to be impacted by the incident in early 2020. At that time, the government operated a strict disease control policy both at central and regional levels, causing everyday life and activities in Thai society to be adapted and modified to move forward.

Many cultural events throughout the country, such as Songkran Festival, had to be canceled. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on people's lives, including their mental health and well-being. Music culture can play an essential role in helping people cope with the stresses and challenges brought on by the pandemic. Here are some ways in which musical culture holds importance for humans amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the pandemic situation, it is certain that people worldwide, including those in Thailand, are experiencing stress in all aspects concerning their survival and adjustment to the new normal. Mass gathering events and group gatherings are prohibited to reduce the number of people per private activity. Ways of life, working, doing activities, and communication are set up online. Lifestyles, work, activities, and communication have transitioned to online platforms. Music can be therapeutic. Music has been proven to have a therapeutic effect on people's mental and emotional health. It can help reduce stress and anxiety, improve mood, and promote relaxation. During the pandemic, when people are dealing with a lot of stress and uncertainty, music can provide an escape and a way to cope with difficult emotions. Music can bring people together. Although the pandemic has forced people to isolate and distance themselves from others physically, music can still bring people together virtually. Online concerts and music festivals have become increasingly popular during the pandemic, allowing people to connect with others who share their love for music. Music culture is incredibly important for humans during the COVID-19 pandemic. It can provide therapeutic benefits, bring people together, provide a sense of nostalgia, and inspire creativity. As we continue to navigate the pandemic, music culture can be a powerful tool for helping us to stay connected, cope with stress, and find joy in difficult times.

In the live performance of the event, “National Artists on the Road” (ศิลปินแห่งชาติสัญจร), organized by the Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University, at the end of 2020 at the first wave end of the COVID-19 pandemic, folk song artists in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, were invited to perform their own music. The researcher found that the main performance of the Wat Bot artists was Hin Le Le songs, which have already been registered with the Ministry of Culture as the folk songs of Phitsanulok province. As the researcher has an interest in investigating folk songs that are vigorous and culturally transmitted and that are under management and administration to preserve their own musical culture, she is interested in examining “Hin Le Le Folk Songs in Phitsanulok Province: Identity and Existence in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

### Objectives

In the study, *Hin Le Le Folk Songs in Phitsanulok Province: Identity and Existence in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, the significance of folk songs in Phitsanulok is underscored by the researcher's personal connection to this province, where she is currently residing and working. Moreover, the ongoing pandemic has highlighted the importance of exploring and preserving cultural heritage such as folk songs. The researcher outlined two research objectives. The primary objective was to explore the identity of folk songs in Phitsanulok province during the pandemic

and gain insights into the characteristics of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province. The secondary objective was to examine the forms and existence methods of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province during the pandemic, with the aim of using the research findings to help preserve these traditional songs.

### Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative approach in the field of ethnomusicology. Field data were collected through interviews and observations. The resulting interviews were then transcribed into written texts for analysis. The audio recordings of the Hin Le Le folk songs were transcribed into musical notation for further analysis and synthesis. To achieve the research objectives of exploring the identity of folk songs in Phitsanulok province and their forms and existence methods during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study employed analysis and synthesis methods based on ethnomusicology and Western music theory.

### Population and Sample

The researcher sought information from the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office about a group of folk song artists who have been consistently recognized for their empirical work in the field of folk songs in Phitsanulok province, as well as at the national level or by other organizations. The information obtained revealed that the folk song artists who have been recognized for their empirical work are in Wat Bot district and Nakhon Thai district. After considering the inclusion criteria established by the researcher, the group of folk song artists that meet the criteria of recognition in the field of folk songs in Phitsanulok and at the national level or by other organizations is those in Wat Bot district since their work has been registered as cultural heritage Hin Le Le folk songs by the Ministry of Culture.

### Research Site

Since the research sample was the Hin Le Le folk song artist group in Wat Bot district, the researcher collected field data in the same district within Phitsanulok province. In addition, the researcher obtained a performance recording of Hin Le Le against COVID-19, performed by the artist group in Wat Bot district, from the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office's YouTube channel for analysis purposes.

### **Background, Role, Function, and Hin Le Le Songs in Phitsanulok Province at Present**

Phitsanulok is a province located in the lower northern region of Thailand that is known for its rich cultural heritage, including its traditional folk songs. The musical culture of Phitsanulok is a blend of the musical culture from the central region and the traditional folk songs from the northern region. The folk songs of Phitsanulok come in various forms, including solo singing and group singing, which are in line with the traditional style of Thai folk songs. The folk song singing style in Phitsanulok province is characterized by its group singing, and it is similar to the group singing style known as “Pleng Pa Ti Pak” in the central region, which comes in various forms such as Pleng Kiew Khao, Lum Tad, Pleng Ruea, and Pleng Phuang Malay. Based on the analysis of field data, the researcher found that folk songs in Phitsanulok province are sung alongside other folk songs that are commonly found in the central region of Thailand such as Pleng Phuang Malay and Pleng

Rumwong Boran. Phitsanulok folk songs come in various forms and are often sung during traditional and cultural events for entertainment, as well as to portray the harmony of local villagers through singing. One such song is called “Hin Le Le,” which is believed to have originated within the province during the early 20th century and has become a beloved part of the region's cultural heritage.

Hin Le Le is a folk song that has been treasured through generations, making it an integral part of Phitsanulok's cultural heritage. The artist group in Wat Bot district, comprised of artists from various areas in Phitsanulok, has been passing down the traditional folk songs for centuries. Hin Le Le is a creative work that captures the thoughts and feelings of the locals, recording the experiences of the ancestors that have been passed down to younger generations. Additionally, this folk song helps to preserve Thai indigenous knowledge and contributes to the enhancement of wisdom among Thai locals both directly and indirectly. The transmission of Hin Le Le songs has been voluntary. Evidence demonstrates that the Hin Le Le folk song artists in Phitsanulok province are eloquent and poetic, making Hin Le Le songs recognized by the Ministry of Culture as a unique cultural identity of Phitsanulok. In addition to Wat Bot district, Hin Le Le songs are frequently sung in Nakhon Thai district, Phitsanulok province. In this district, there is a folk song called “Pin Le Le,” which shares similar patterns and characteristics as Hin Le Le songs in Wat Bot district, despite having a different name. Based on the interviews with local wisdom scholars of folk songs in Phitsanulok province, it was found that the singing of Pin Le Le in Nakhon Thai district predates the singing of Hin Le Le in Wat Bot district. Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a shortage of composers for Pin Le Le songs in Nakhon Thai district, as the previous composer died of old age during the outbreak, causing the development of Pin Le Le songs to slow down. The singers also consist entirely of elderly individuals. The song commonly sung during cultural events is Rumwong Boran. According to the field data collection, it was revealed that the folk song artists in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, are a group of artists selected by the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office to be one of the top representatives of folk song artists in Phitsanulok province in presenting works of folk song culture at provincial and national levels on behalf of Phitsanulok province, as the artists have various works and they are recognized by related organizations at provincial and national levels.

The folk songs in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, are composed by Mrs. Chalom Samit, pensioner of teacher government official, who formed the band of Wat Bot district prior to her early retirement in 2011. Mrs. Chalom Samit is a renowned and highly respected composer of Hin Le Le songs in Phitsanulok province. She applies her knowledge of Thai poetry composition, using assonance and repetition of tones in her composition, as well as her passion for folk song singing since her young age. The song lyrics refer to current situations, way of living, and courtship, all of which Mrs. Chalom Samit has kept up to date on current events and represented the way of life of the locals in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. All the songs performed by the singing band of Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, on several occasions are call-and-response songs between males and females (Pleng Pa Ti Pak). Typically, these songs involve a male singer singing a verse, which is then followed by a female singer responding with a verse of her own. The lyrics of these songs often depict stories of love and courtship and encompass

various genres, such as Hin Le Le song, Kun Son Kun song, Phuang Malay song, and Chap Kay song.

Singers are a vital component of folk songs because they are responsible for transmitting songs to society and passing down musical culture. They act as both transmitters and receivers of musical culture. All the singers in the singing band of Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, are the locals residing in the Wat Pak Sa Phatthana community, Wat Bot subdistrict, Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. The band consists of more than 16 members, all of whom are aged over 60 and spend their time after work rehearsing singing and doing activities together. Nowadays, Thailand is an aging society. Wat Bot district is considered to be a good example of locals taking initiative and engaging in activities, by continuously receiving the policy-based support from the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office. For instance, the locals are sent as provincial representatives to present folk songs on various stages and they are also sent to the cultural village contest at provincial level. The elderly group in Wat Bot district are nominated to the contest, performing Hin Le Le folk songs. According to these data, it is found to be consistent with Vich Boonrod's (2022:29) statement as follows.

“According to a report by the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI), it is found that Thailand's population structure has undergone significant changes over the past 3-4 decades. The Thai population has increased by approximately three times, resulting in a shift from a youth population to an elderly population in terms of age structure. In other words, the birth rate of the Thai population has decreased, while the elderly population has increased. The gap between the birth rate and the death rate narrowed in 2019. The number of newborns exceeded the number of deaths by just 100,000, accounting for 0.2% of the population. According to the Office of the National Economics and Social Development Council, it was estimated that by mid-2019, Thailand's registered household population would consist of 66.4 million Thai nationals and 2.9 million non-Thai nationals, predominantly comprising Myanmar people, Cambodians, and Laotians. As a result, the total Thai population would be approximately 69.3 million.”



Figure 2. A rehearsal prior to the performance of the elderly group of folk song artists in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. Source: Sasinut Phongnil (December 15th, 2021).



Given that the Hin Le Le folk song artists are a group of elderly individuals, this artist group has become a key driving force behind the preservation and propagation of folk song culture in Phitsanulok province. In this context, the researcher regards them as performers who provide entertainment to their audiences. Additionally, these artists convey the uniqueness and identity of Phitsanulok's folk song culture, while also passing on their knowledge of singing and composition to younger generations. The transmission of knowledge of folk song singing in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, occurs through oral tradition. The melody currently being played is the original. The poetic lyrics are adapted by the composer to achieve the singing objectives. The songs are mostly sung to entertain at various festivals and traditions such as Songkran, Loy Krathong, and wedding receptions.

However, when considering the role of Hin Le Le songs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the field data collection revealed that the role of Hin Le Le folk songs in local communities in Phitsanulok province was very limited. This can be attributed to the emergence of new forms of entertainment, as well as the education system's role in promoting and controlling society, replacing the role of folk songs. With the fast-paced development of technology, communication, and transportation, the younger generations have become more interested in contemporary music rather than traditional folk songs. Therefore, the role of Hin Le Le folk songs has declined if the content and pattern are not developed to be suitable for modern society. As a result, the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office plays a significant role in promoting and encouraging the learning and transmission of knowledge regarding Hin Le Le folk songs to younger generations. Afful et al. (2022:215) discusses the importance of being aware of the advancement of multimedia, which can have an impact on creating works that meet consumers' demands, as follows:

“In the advancement of technology, social media has created a great platform for producers, artists, designers among others to carefully market and create the needed awareness on relevant issues through their practice.”

Currently, the new generation of youth acquiring the folk singing knowledge of both lyrical composition and vocals are very few. In other words, there is almost none, especially those acquiring the knowledge of lyrical composition of Hin Le Le folk songs. According to the interview with Mrs. Chalom Samit, the Provincial Cultural Office has offered her opportunities to be a speaker passing on the knowledge of Hin Le Le folk song singing to students at Wat Lao Khwan School, Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, to be able to sing at fundamental level to make video presentations introducing Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok. However, it is currently very rare to find successors to continue the legacy of folk song artists.

Given that the folk song artist group in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, consists entirely of elderly individuals and the management of folk song singing knowledge at Wat Lao Khwan School is not consistent, there is concern about the availability of potential successors to Hin Le Le singers who can effectively present cultural performances and compose new Hin Le Le songs.



Figure 3. A screenshot of the video clip introducing Hin Le Le folk songs by the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office. Source: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrJlKymu1PA&t=584s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrJlKymu1PA&t=584s).

### Characteristics of Hin Le Le Songs

The principal components of Hin Le Le songs comprise not only the singers who perform them but also the lyrics that convey the message. The poetic form of Hin Le Le song is arranged in verse, using assonance and repetition of tones based on the form of Thai folk songs. The refrain begins with the word “Hin Le Le,” which is also the title of the song, before singing each line. The singing form involves call and response between male and female singers. This song genre is called Pleng Pa Ti Pak, in which the male singer begins singing a line first, as illustrated below.

ฮินเลเล เอ้า! ฮินเลเล ฮินเลเล เอ้า! ฮินเลเล (สร้อย)

ชาย : แต่งงานกับแม่คนสวย แต่งงานกับแม่คนสวย ของกินสี่ถ้วย กันด้วย (นะเว)

ฮินเลเล เอ้า! ฮินเลเล ฮินเลเล เอ้า! ฮินเลเล (สร้อย)

หญิง : สี่ถ้วยนั้นไม่เป็นไร สี่ถ้วยนั้นไม่เป็นไร น้องทำกันได้ที่นั้น (นะเว)

ฮินเลเล เอ้า! ฮินเลเล ฮินเลเล เอ้า! ฮินเลเล (สร้อย)

ชาย : แต่งงานขาดเสียไม่ได้ แต่งงานขาดเสียไม่ได้ แยกกล้วยเหลือโยกันด้วย (นะเว)

ฮินเลเล เอ้า! ฮินเลเล ฮินเลเล เอ้า! ฮินเลเล (สร้อย)

หญิง : ห่อหมกพร้อมทั้งทอดมัน ห่อหมกพร้อมทั้งทอดมัน น้องต้องทำกันอยู่แล้ว (นะเว)

Figure 4. The poetic structure of Hin Le Le lyrical composition. Source: Sasinut Phongnil (2022:84).

The lyrics of Hin Le Le song, as shown in Figure 5, is intended to demonstrate the use of assonance in poetic lyrics. In order to facilitate the comprehension and pronunciation of Hin Le Le song lyrics, the researcher transcribed the lyrics into phonetic alphabets along with their translation. This example of lyrics conveys

the message of wedding preparation, emphasizing the importance of the bride possessing advanced cooking skills, which are a traditional Thai cultural quality expected of a housewife, as shown below.

Thai	ฮิน เล เล เอ้า! ฮิน เล เล ฮิน เล เล เอ้า! ฮิน เล เล (สร้อย)
phonetic	Hin Le Le Xêā! Hin Le Le Hin Le Le Xêā! Hin Le Le <b>(Refrain)</b>
English	(It's do not have meaning in this lyric. It's the part of the song's name.)
Thai	แต่งงาน กับ แม่ คน สวย ขอ กิน สี่ ถ้วย กัน ด้วย (นะเว)
phonetic	Tàengngān kạb mæ khn swy K̄hx kinsīthwỵ kạn đwỵ (nawe)
English	Marry with my beautiful lady. May I have four cups of food please?
<b>(Refrain)</b>	
Thai	สี่ ถ้วย นั้น ไม่ เป็นไร สี่ ถ้วย นั้น ไม่ เป็นไร น้อง ทำ กัน ได้ ทั้งนั้น (นะเว)
phonetic	Sī thwỵ nận mị pěnri sī thwỵ nận mị pěnri ãxng thả kạn đị thậngnận (nawe)
English	Four cups is OK. All of this. It's so easy and we can make it.
<b>(Refrain)</b>	
Thai	แต่งงาน ขาด เสีย ไม่ได้ แกง กุ้ง เหลือ ไข่ ด้วย (นะเว)
phonetic	Tàengngān khād sēiy mị đị kæng k̄wỵ hēlụx yị đwỵ (nawe)
English	Wedding arrangements can't be without the banana curry.
<b>(Refrain)</b>	
Thai	ทอดหมก พร้อม ทั้ง ทอดมัน น้อง ต้อง ทำ กัน อยู่ แล้ว (นะเว).
phonetic	H̄xh̄mk ph̄xm thậng thxdmạn ãxng t̄xng thả kạn xyữ lậw (nawe)
English	Steamed fish curry in banana leaves and fish cake in deep fried, It's so easy and we can make it
<b>(Refrain)</b>	

Figure 5. Table of the Thai Hin Le Le song lyrics obtained through the field data collection, with their meanings and phonetic transcriptions. Source: Sasinut Phongnil (May 2nd, 2023).

The Hin Le Le song analyzed based on their transcription is in a major tonality. The sounds produced by the Hin Le Le song are cheerful, delightful, and easy to listen to. The song conveys a sense of happiness that aligns with the meaning of the song, which describes the courtship and the joy of young lovers. It also conveys positive messages or thoughts. Each artist has unique vocal accents, tones, and vocal ranges. Singing is the act of using the human voice as an instrument to produce musical sounds. Singing folk songs is aligned with local ways of life. The singers do not follow strict or fixed music theory rules, regulations, or patterns as they sing for entertainment, and each singer has a unique vocal quality. They each have unique vocal qualities, including clear or hoarse voices, high or low pitches, and varying singing abilities. These factors contribute to the movement of

rhythms, melodies, and other components in folk songs that may not entirely conform to Western music theory. However, from the perspective of ethnomusicology theory, this phenomenon is considered the charm and identity of folk songs.

**ฮิน เล เล**

Andante ♩ = 74

Major tonality

ฮิน เล เล ฮิน เล เล >>> Refrain

ฮิน เล เล ฮิน เล เล ส. วัส >>> Refrain

ดี พี่ น้อง จำ ส. วัส ดี พี่ น้อง จำ วัน นี้ ฉั น

มา เล่น ฮิน เล เล ฮิน เล เล >>> Refrain

Figure 6. The structure of Hin Le Le song from the field data collection in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. Source: Sasint Phongnil (May 2nd, 2023).

Based on the aforementioned results, the researcher aims to summarize the main points that characterize the identity of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province. Hin Le Le songs in Phitsanulok are the songs whose melody has been passed down from generation to generation. Nowadays, the songs are sung by the group of elderly singers. The lyrics are composed, and the management of the folk song band is overseen by elderly individuals who have earned recognition at both provincial and national levels. The songs reflect the way of life of Phitsanulok locals, and they have been adapted to keep up with ongoing events in Thai society, especially the ones affecting Phitsanulok locals' way of life.

The identity of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok in 2021 is "the songs that reflect the way of life of the locals in Phitsanulok, keep up with ongoing events in all ages and are created by the elderly in the community."

#### Existence of Hin Le Le Folk Songs in Phitsanulok Province During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The further examination of the interview with the Phitsanulok folk song artists regarding the current forms and presentation methods revealed that the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office and other related organizations have come to play a role in creating a video clip of folk song in Phitsanulok, i.e. Hin Le Le, and publishing it on YouTube since Hin Le Le song has already been proposed to the Ministry of Culture as the folk song of Phitsanulok province. Other songs such as Kun Son Kun have not yet been widely disseminated through online media; however, these songs are frequently performed alongside Hin Le Le at cultural events.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has spread worldwide since the end of 2019 and started in Thailand in early 2020, has caused people's lives and activities in Thailand and around the world to be adapted under vigilant measures against the spread of the disease both at provincial and national levels. Phitsanulok province has issued measures against the spread of COVID-19, causing difficulties in organizing events, including onsite events that promote art and culture. For instance, since 2019, singing rehearsals and social gatherings have required control and prevention. Essential events have had to be conducted online. Therefore, the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office operates the policy aiming at expanding and promoting Phitsanulok folk song culture intended for the youth in the local area and citizens around the world interested in Phitsanulok folk song culture. The policy also aims at encouraging folk song artist groups in various localities in Phitsanulok to create and present their works on a wider variety of media channels.



Figure 7. An example photo of performance on the song, Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19, by the folk song artists of Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province. Source: <https://youtu.be/iJXOxn6tINk>.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office had the idea of promoting folk song culture by presenting folk song works on the occasion of Thai Heritage Conservation Day on April 2, 2021. The song's concept is "Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19." The song lyrics refer to the act of understanding and knowing about COVID-19, risks, and prevention. The performers' dress is in colorful folk song singing costume in line with typical folk song singing costume in Phitsanulok province, which is typical costume in the central region. The singing venue is the temple court of Wat Bot, which has been a popular performance venue since in the past. This is because, historically, temples served as the primary gathering places for community activities and events. Nowadays, however, the choice of performance venue is determined by the convenience and objectives of each individual performance event. Thai society places great importance on cultural activities and traditions that have been held at temples in communities since ancient times to the present day. These activities and traditions are an integral part of Thai society and are deeply ingrained in the country's history and

identity. Most videos featuring the folk song artist group in Wat Bot district and other artist groups are filmed in temple courtyards, and so is the video, “Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19,” which is filmed the temple courtyard of Wat Bot. The objective is to present the forms that preserve the traditional forms of folk songs in Phitsanulok province, as well as the unique forms that are specific to the region.

Thai	ฮินเลเล เฮ้า! ฮินเลเล ฮินเลเล เฮ้า! ฮินเลเล (สร้อย)
Phonetic	Hin Le Le Xêā! Hin Le Le Hin Le Le Xêā! Hin Le Le (Refrain)
English	(It's do not have meaning in this lyric. It's the part of the song's name.)
Thai	สวัสดี ครับ ทุก ท่าน เรา มา ฟัง กัน เพลง ฮินเลเล
Phonetic	S̄wās̄dī khr̄ab thuk thān reā mā fang kan phelng h̄i nlele
English	Hello everyone. Hello everyone. Let's listen to Hinlele songs.
Refrain	
Thai	โค วิด เชื้อ ไวรัส ช่วย กัน กำจัด อย่า ใต้ ตั้งเล
Phonetic	Kho wid cheūx wīrās̄ chwy kan k̄ac̄ad x̄yā đ̄i t̄ang le
English	COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus. Let's not be complacent and work together to prevent the spread of the infection.
Refrain	
Thai	คู่ แรก ผ่าน ไป ขอ เชิญ คู่ ใหม่ ออก มา นะ เว
Phonetic	Kh̄ū r̄æk phān p̄i k̄hx cheiy kh̄ū h̄im x̄x mā nawe
English	The first couple sang I invite the next pair to continue singing.
Refrain	
Thai	ปิดแมส และ ล้างมือ จะต้อง ยึดถือ กันไว้ นะเว
Phonetic	P̄id m̄æs̄ læa l̄āngm̄ūx ca t̄xng yud̄th̄ūx kan w̄i nawe
English	Wearing a mask and washing your hands regularly are essential practices that should be observed diligently. Please do not forget to do so.
Refrain	
Thai	อยู่ห่างกัน สักพัก อย่าอยู่หมู่มาก กันเลยนะเว
Phonetic	Xyū h̄āng kan s̄ak phak x̄yā xyū h̄im m̄āk kan ley nawe
English	During this time, it is important to maintain social distance and avoid being in close proximity to large groups of people.
Refrain	
Thai	หมั่น วัด ไข้ เมื่อ มีอาการ ร่วม ด้วย ช่วยกัน ปลอดภัย ทุ่เม
Phonetic	H̄m̄an wad kh̄i meūx m̄i x̄ākār r̄wm đwy chwy kan pl̄xdphay th̄umthe
English	When experiencing unusual symptoms, it is important to regularly monitor body temperature and seek medical attention. Let's not be complacent and prioritize everyone's safety.
Refrain	

Figure 7. Table of the lyrics of Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19, with their meanings and phonetic transcriptions. Source: Sasinut Phongnil (May 2nd, 2023).

The Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19 song, sponsored by the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office, was transcribed into written text, and then transcribed into phonetic alphabets. These transcriptions provide insights into the song's meanings and Thai pronunciation in the same way as the lyrics' phonetic transcriptions shown in Table 1. The lyrics of Hin Le Le were paraphrased in each example to help readers understand them. These lines of the lyrics refer to the preventive

measures practiced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, the researcher presented six lines of the lyrics, excluding the three repetitive refrains “Hin Le Le,” which is the song’s title and has no inherent meaning. The lyrics of Hin Le Le Keep up with COVID-19, with their meanings and phonetic transcriptions, as illustrated in Table 2, are as follows. Line 1 means, “Hello everyone. Hello everyone. Let’s listen to Hin Le Le songs.” Line 2 means, “COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus. Let’s not be complacent and work together to prevent the spread of the infection.” Line 3 means, “The first couple sang. I invite the next pair to continue singing.” Line 4 means, “Wearing a mask and washing your hands regularly are essential practices that should be observed diligently. Please do not forget to do so.” Line 5 means, “During this time, it is important to maintain social distance and avoid being in close proximity to large groups of people.” Finally, line 6 means, “When experiencing unusual symptoms, it is important to regularly monitor body temperature and seek medical attention. Let’s not be complacent and prioritize everyone’s safety.”

### Conclusion and Discussion

The two research objectives have resulted in the following research findings. From the examination of contexts in the past, songs’ background and forms, existing musical components, and existing social components and situations, it can be concluded that the identity of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok is “the songs that reflect the way of life of the locals in Phitsanulok province, keep up with on-going events in all ages, and are created by the elderly in the community.” This is in line with Vich Boonrod’s (2022:29) assertion citing the report by the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI) that “Thailand’s population structure has undergone significant changes over the past 3-4 decades. The Thai population has increased by approximately three times, resulting in a shift from a youth population to an elderly population in terms of age structure. In other words, the birth rate of the Thai population has decreased, while the elderly population has increased. The gap between the birth rate and the death rate narrowed in 2019. The number of newborns exceeded the number of deaths by just 100,000, accounting for 0.2% of the population.” This is connected to the research findings of the second research objective, which pertains to the forms and existence methods of folk songs in Phitsanulok province during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phitsanulok province has formulated a plan to develop urban society and promote culture in the region. The province also collaborates with various organizations from the public and private sectors, with a special emphasis on the private sector. Community-level network coordinators have been appointed to strengthen culture in the community and carry out various projects to continuously initiate a cultural move in the province. As a result, Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province have continuously been performed at various events and created even during the global outbreak of COVID-19. This phenomenon is consistent with Afful et al.’s (2022) assertion that “In the advancement of technology, social media has created a great platform for producers, artists, designers among others to carefully market and create the need awareness on relevant issues through their practice.”

The involvement of the Phitsanulok Provincial Cultural Office in promoting Phitsanulok’s folk song culture is a highly positive phenomenon since nowadays the significance of folk songs in the daily lives of the locals has diminished and altered due to technology’s prevalence. Rapidly advancing distractions in society are significant factors that negatively impact the younger generation’s inclination to study folk songs. There are very few individuals interested in studying folk songs, if any. Modern music receives greater attention in contemporary entertainment, although its cultural value cannot be compared to the beautifully crafted cultural heritage left by the ancestors. Musical culture is not only an artistic expression, but musical culture in each city or place is also an entity explaining the historical background and way of life as well as representing the melody of cultural moves surrounding musical culture that coexists in each urban society. In the researcher’s opinion, “folk song artists” are essential for the successful and prosperous progression of musical culture in each urban society while also coexisting harmoniously with the ethnic identity of each city.

The researcher would like to extend her sincere gratitude to all the esteemed elder members of the folk song artist group in Wat Bot district, Phitsanulok province, and would like to encourage and advocate for the continued existence and perpetuation of Hin Le Le folk songs in Phitsanulok province for generations to come.

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