

การศึกษาการเดินทางเชิงประวัติศาสตร์เพื่อกระบวนการประพันธ์เพลงไทย :  
การเดินทางของเอกอะหมัดจากเปอร์เซียสู่อยุธยา

THE STUDY OF A HISTORICAL JOURNEY FOR THAI MUSIC COMPOSITIONAL PROCESS :  
THE JOURNEY OF SHEIK AHMAD FROM PERSIA TO AYUTTHAYA

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**บทคัดย่อ**

บทความวิจัยนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของงานวิจัยเรื่อง “การประพันธ์เพลงไทยชุด การเดินทางของเอกอะหมัด” โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาแนวคิดที่สำคัญเกี่ยวกับการเดินทางของเอกอะหมัดอันเป็นแรงบันดาลใจแห่งแนวคิดการประพันธ์เพลงไทยเชิงสร้างสรรค์ชุด การเดินทางของเอกอะหมัด โดยใช้วิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพจากการสัมภาษณ์ผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิและการค้นคว้าทางเอกสาร

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า แนวคิดสำคัญ 4 ประการซึ่งเป็นสาระสำคัญและสร้างแรงบันดาลใจในการประพันธ์บทเพลงประกอบไปด้วยเรื่องเล่ากึ่งตำนานเกี่ยวกับการเดินทางของเอกอะหมัด แนวคิดด้านภูมิศาสตร์กำเนิดของเอกอะหมัด แนวคิดด้านวัฒนธรรมและดนตรีเปอร์เซีย และแนวคิดด้านพฤติกรรมของอุฐูในวัฒนธรรมเปอร์เซีย เส้นทางการเดินทางของเอกอะหมัดเริ่มจากเมืองกุน (Kune) แคว้นแอสเตราบัด อาณาจักรเปอร์เซีย (ประเทศอิหร่านในปัจจุบัน) สู่กรุงศรีอยุธยาในช่วงปลายของสมัยสมเด็จพระนเรศวรมหาราชโดยใช้อูฐเป็นพาหนะ แนวคิดการประพันธ์เพลงไทยชุดการเดินทางของเอกอะหมัด ประกอบด้วย 4 บทเพลง ได้แก่ 1. เพลงปฐมคุณา แสดงจินตภาพในการเดินทางจากเปอร์เซียด้วยความระลึกในพระคุณแผ่นดินถิ่นฐานภูมิภคินา 2. เพลงมรรคาสดุดี แสดงความเคารพต่อแผ่นดินโดยการสัญจรทางบกซึ่งมีอูฐเป็นพาหนะขนสัมภาระและสินค้าเนื่องจากอูฐมีสภาพร่างกายที่อดทนเป็นพิเศษต่อความแห้งแล้งในทะเลทราย 3. เพลงชลธิพรรณนา แสดงจินตภาพการเดินทางในทะเล 4. เพลงปัจฉิมวารกายี แสดงจินตภาพการเดินทางถึงกรุงศรีอยุธยาโดยสวัสดิภาพ โดยตีความนัยยะของคำว่า กายี ออกเป็น 2 ความหมาย คือ กายี ที่หมายถึง ตำบลท่ากายี อันเป็นจุดหมายที่เอกอะหมัดเดินทางมาถึง ส่วนอีกนัยหนึ่ง กายี ในที่นี้คือ กายา หรือ กาย อันหมายถึงเรื่องราวของเอกอะหมัด เป็นการแฝงความหมายทางนามธรรมเปรียบเปรยได้ว่า บัดนี้ร่างกายของเอกอะหมัดได้สูญสลายไปตามกาลเวลาแต่คุณงามความดีของเอกอะหมัดยังคงอยู่แม้กายสูญสลายแต่นามปรากฏชั่วนิรันดร์

**คำสำคัญ :** การประพันธ์เพลงไทย/ การเดินทาง/ เอกอะหมัด/เปอร์เซีย

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## Abstract

This article is part of a doctoral research entitled "Thai Music Composition: The Journey of Sheik Ahmad." The objective is to investigate the journey of Sheik Ahmad who gave an inspiration to this creative music composition: *the Journey of Sheik Ahmad*. By using a qualitative research methodology, the author analyzes historical and musical information collected from document research, fieldwork, interviews, composing music and launching performances.

The findings show that four import concepts which are the essence of this music compositional process consist of semi-legendary narratives of Sheik Ahmad's journey, the concept of Sheik Ahmad's birthplace, the concept of Persian music culture, and the concept of camel behaviors in Persian culture. It is arguably debated that Sheik Ahmad began his journey from Kune, Astarabad region, Persian kingdom (Iran at present) to Ayutthaya in the late period of King Naresuan the Great by using camels and sloop ships as their vehicles. The music composition consists of 4 consecutive pieces: (1) *Prathomkuna* depicted the imaginary journey from Persia with remembrance of homeland; (2) *Maraka Sadudee* pay respect to the land where a legendary figure took off on a caravan of camels; (3) *Chonlatheepannana* depicting the sea journey that is full of uncertainty, endlessness, and danger; (4) *Pachimawan Kayi* featuring the moment when the travelers arrived Ayutthaya safely. By interpreting the meanings of the word Kayi, two meanings are doubled. First it refers to Tha Kayi sub-district. The second meaning refers to the body. Tha Kayi was the destination that Sheik Ahmad reached. By interpreting the word kayi as the body, which referred to the body of Sheik Ahmad in an abstract meaning, It could be compared to Sheik Ahmad's posthumous virtues and his name which still resonates unceasingly.

**Keywords:** Thai Music Composition/ Journey/ Sheik Ahmad/ Persia

## Introduction

Sheik Ahmad is an ancestor of the Bunnag family and other related families who traveled from Persia to settle down in Ayutthaya in the latter part of the reign of King Naresuan the Great. He was married to a Thai lady named "Choei" has two sons and one daughter. The first son named Chuen was Chao Phraya Aphai Racha (during the reign of King Prasat Thong). The second son named Som was infected with smallpox and died since he was young. And the daughter named She is a royal consort of King Prasat Thong<sup>1</sup>. Sheik Ahmad is considered an important person in the history of the Ayutthaya period who is responsible for running civil service in Siam, especially in security and commerce.

The rationales of Sheik Ahmad's journey from Persia to Ayutthaya could be inferred into two reasons: The first one was to seek luck with trade as the main goal, as Pittaya Bunnag proposes as follows:

*The reason for Sheik Ahmad to travel to Ayuthaya is solely for trading. He already had a connection in the kingdom. He came to see his friends and saw an opportunity to start a new business by trading goods. His younger brother stayed in Hyderabad. Once knowing what Siam needed, he would order from there. I think he did not sail by himself. He himself was not a captain but he was a merchant.<sup>2</sup>*

The second hypothesis speculated that he traveled to Ayutthaya under the support of the King Shah of the Safavid Dynasty to expand the Iran's influence, making relations including missionaries as semi-military merchants who were also intellectuals during the 16th - 17th century. Teeranun Chuangpichit, an advisor to Chao Phraya Bowonrajchanayok Foundation (Sheik Ahmad) argues as follows:

*Diplomacy and religion can be combined into something workable like a diplomatic missionary who travelled around the world with trading. The evidence of Persia in this area existed even before the Sukhothai. Before Sukhothai is the Dvaravati period. The archaeological evidence in Nakhon Pathom, Don Ta Phet, Kanchanaburi province, Khlong Thom, Krabi province, Khu Bua, Ratchaburi province is there. The terracotta statue of human face, the colored stone beads came with these merchants. Therefore, the journey of the Iranian people to our home came in before Islam.<sup>3</sup>*

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1. Sakul Bunnag, *Sai Sakun Bunnag Club* (Bangkok: Club, 1999), 22.

2. Pitaya Bunnag, "The reasons of the journey to Ayutthaya of Sheik Ahmad," interviewed by Wongwasant Wasantasuri, April 5, 2020.

3. Teeranun Chuangpichit, "The purposes of the journey to Ayutthaya of Sheik Ahmad," interviewed by Wongwasant Wasantasuri, April 2, 2020.

Both arguments above show that the reason for the journey of Sheik Ahmad is a debatable topic that still needs more investigation. The study of Sheik Ahmad's route from Persia to Ayutthaya is necessary to be looked at from the route which the Persian ambassador took to Ayutthaya. This information appears in a book entitled *The Ship of Sulayman* translated by Direk Kunsirisawat (1984). Both journeys' destination was Ayutthaya but different routes were taken. The Persian ambassadors took off from Isfahan<sup>4</sup> where the capital city of Persia was located at that time. Due to the close proximity of the city to the port, the ship was the main transportation for traveling. On the other hand, the journey of Sheik Ahmad began from Kune, which was a city in the northern part of Persia. It could be inferred here that going to the port to board a ship to Ayutthaya from Kune would have taken so long to travel down south to the port.

The story of Sheik Ahmad is considered a semi-legendary narrative in that it has been continuously memorized for more than 400 years ago with a few references of evidences. Nonetheless, the narratives are very important to the families of Sheik Ahmad who live in Thailand as Thai citizens. It can also be assumed from various sources that the route that Sheik Ahmad began as a land journey by a camel caravan from Persia via Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and continued his travel by ship through Bago and finally reached Ayutthaya in the seventeenth century. This heroic semi-legendary narratives leads to an inspiration of the concepts to compose a piece of traditional Thai music entitled *The journey of Sheik Ahmad*. The composition is consisted of four individual compositions which reflect the imagery of Sheik Ahmad's journey. The first composition recounts the moment when he began his journey from Persia with a reference to his birthplace, his obligation and responsibilities, namely, *Prathomkuna*. The second composition, titled *Maraka Sadudee*, describes a land journey on camels with respect to the land's spirit and trails over deserts. The third composition, entitled *Chonlatheepannana*, features the danger of sea journey and human feelings on a ship facing uncertainty of natural power and weather conditions in the ocean. The ending piece is titled *Pachimawan Kayi*, depicting the last part of journey when the crews arrived the capital city of Ayutthaya safely.

## Research Objective

1. To study the journey of Sheik Ahmad from Persia to Ayutthaya
2. To formulate concept of music compositional process based on the journey of Sheik Ahmad

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4. Direk Kunsirisawat, *The ship of Sulaiman* (Bangkok: The Foundation for the Promotion Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Project, 1984), 1.

## Research Methodology

The project employed qualitative methods including the following procedures:

1. Document research from the following sources:
  - 1.1 National Library of Thailand.
  - 1.2 Office of Academic Recourses, Chulalongkorn University.
  - 1.3 Fine & Applied Arts Library, Chulalongkorn University.
  - 1.4 Office of Academic Recourses and Information Technology, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University.
  - 1.5 The central Library of Srinakharinwirot University.
  - 1.6 Cultural Center of the Islamic Republic of Iran-Bangkok.
2. Collecting data from interviews with experts as listed:
  - 2.1 Associate Professor Pitaya Bunnag.  
Retired Lecturer, former Associate Professor of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University.
  - 2.2 Assistant Professor Julispong Chularatana, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of History, the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.
  - 2.3 Mr.Teeranun Chuangpichit  
Academic Advisor of Chao Phraya Bowonrajchanayok Foundation (Sheik Ahmad).
  - 2.4 Mr.Sunti (ali) Suasaming, Chairman of the expert subcommittee, Sheikul Islam Office,  
The expert in Islamic history.
  - 2.5 Mr.Thamniap Sanggoen, The academician of Thonburi Community History Information Center.
  - 2.6 Mr.Sukree Sarem, The independent academic in Islamic history.
3. To collect data from fieldwork in the following locations:
  - 3.1 Chao Phraya Bowonrajchanayok (Sheik Ahmad) cemetery, Phranakorn Si Ayutthaya Rajabhat University.
  - 3.2 Japanese Village Museum, Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya province.
  - 3.3 Dutch Village Museum, Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya province.
  - 3.4 Portuguese Village Museum, Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya province.
4. To analyze the route of journey of Sheik Ahmad data, Persian music, and the behaviors of camels.
5. Data analysis concluded in order to formulate the concepts of *The Journey of Sheik Ahmad* music composition.

## Research Results

Four concepts of *The Journey of Sheik Ahmad* music composition can be formulated from the study.

The concept deals with the issues of the semi-legendary narratives. It also investigates the birthplace of Sheik Ahmad. This issue can be divided into 3 points as follows:

Firstly, the first group of scholars point out that Sheik Ahmad was a Muslim Shi'ah sect and was born a Kuni of Persian kingdom (Iran at present). He traveled to Ayutthaya with his younger brother Muhammad Said during the reign of King Naresuan the Great. His brother returned to his hometown but Sheik Ahmad married to a Thai woman named Choei. He passed away in 1631<sup>5</sup>. Some scholars have speculated that he passed away before the reign of King Narai. But they cannot find any evidences indicating the demise of Sheik Ahmad precisely. He was a predecessor of Sheik Ahmad lineage consisting of many families in Thailand: Bunnag, Buranon, Chatikarat, Suphamit, Sripen, Wasuthan, Wichayapai, Panuwong, Ahamadchula, Akayi, Chularat, Choungsamee, Chitanuwat, Suwakul.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, there is another group of scholars offering a slightly different opinion on the origin of Sheik Ahmad. Siri Tangtrongchit proposes that Sheik Ahmad was born in 2086 B.E. (1543 : Hegira 463 ) in Parenaechahal sub-district, city of Qom in Persia.<sup>7</sup>



Picture 1 (left) map of Tommaso Porcacchi the Venezian around 16th century showing the location of Kune. (the underline words in the middle of the map)

Astarabad Region (In the map was written in Latin: Leselbas )

Picture 2 (right) The map of Ayutthaya, Phraya Boran Rachatanin 2469 B.E. version showing the location of Thong Khaek, Khok Khaek, Ban Kayi, and Thay Koo,

Source: Julispong Chularatana, *Chao Sen Shi'ah in Siam*  
(Bangkok: Offset Plus Company Limited, 2014).

5. Sudara Sutchaya, "History in Iran (Persia) Retraces the Relationship from the Suvarnabhumi to the Present."

*Journal of Art and Culture* Vol. 25, No. 5 (March 2004): 77.

6. Singhanet, Kanthathip, *Jao Chom Kok Or* 4th edition (revised version) (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 2015), 6.

7. Siri Tangtrongchit, *Chao Phraya Bawornrajchanayok Sheik Ahmad* (Bangkok: Chao Phraya Bawornrajchanayok Sheik Ahmad Foundation, 1990), 2.

Thirdly, it is assumed that Sheik Ahmad was a Khaek Ma Ngon (Mogul). The Siamese people called people of this ethnicity "Khaek Ma Ngon."<sup>8</sup> Considering the meaning of the word, it was found that Ma Ngon is a word that used to refer to people from South East Asia, including Muslims. In fact, the word Ma Ngon comes from the word Mugal referring to people from the Mogul kingdom in India. The use of such word does not appear in Persia.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, some scholars assume that Sheik Ahmad was of the Indian origin. Sunti (ali) Suasaming proposes his views to support this assumption as follows:

*Some people may postulate that Sheik Ahmad were an Indian or half-Indian and Persian because during the Mogul period, there were contacts between Persian and North Indian royal courts. There was an evidence that noblemen and philosophers in the Mogul dynasty were originated from Persia.<sup>10</sup>*

Although the concept of semi-legendary narratives on the domicile of Sheik Ahmad is unable to reach a clear conclusion. Nonetheless, from the study of the three points mentioned above, it can be concluded that Sheik Ahmad was a Persian of ethnic origin.



Picture 3 The map of location of Qom

Source: "Map showing the location of Qum," Pictures, Accessed in April 2, 2020, <https://www.infoplease.com/atlas/middle-east/iran-map>

Further investigation has shown that the city's name of Kune has been changed to another name, which presumed that the city neighborhood Gorgan in the present.<sup>11</sup> (Located in the Astarabad area, currently known as Masadaran). This is to be confirmed by a 16th century map that showed the name of Kune or Kuni in Latin, which is spelled Kune. This evidence showed that the city did actually exist. The speculation that leads us to believe that Sheik Ahmad came

8. Phraya Komarakul Montri and Sela Rekharchi, *Sheik Ahmad and Ton Sakun Bunnag* 4th edition (Nonthaburi: Sophon Printing, 2003), 1.

9. Sukree Sarem, "The meaning of the word Khaek Ma Ngon," interviewed by Wongwasant Wasantasuri, April 4, 2020.

10. Sunti Suasaming, "The presumption of ethnic group of Sheik Ahmad," interviewed by Wongwasant Wasantasuri, April 3, 2020.

11. Pitaya Bunnag, *Pathom Chula Ratchamontri: From Persia to Ayutthaya* (Bangkok: The Sai Sakun Bunnag Club, 2014), 73.

from Kun, Kune or Kuni may be derived from a linguistic point of view. The word “Qum” and Kune has a similar pronunciation. At present, the word Kune is not on the map of Iran, but instead a city like Qum is on the map. When one studies deeply into the context of Qum, one will find that Qum has been an important city and it has been a religious center of Iran today. Most religious students graduated from this city. Considering the context of Sheik Ahmad, one could interpret that Sheik Ahmad was a religious person. Therefore, those who are knowledgeable in this field should come from a religious center such as Qum and have been chosen to travel as a missionary leader.

Apart from a debate on his hometown, there is also a debate around his professions and purposes of traveling to Ayutthaya. These issues can be summarized into two theories. First, Sheik Ahmad was believed to be a merchant traveled to Ayutthaya to trade mainly. In other words, it can be said that, Sheik Ahmad thought. The author argues that his hometown is still unknown; whether or not it is Kune or Qum, in order to establish a point of departure for the journey, the author/composer opts to follow the hypothesis that offers to support Kune. This will yield a ground for the composer to begin a musical journey and make a semi-legendary narrative more complete at the starting point of traveling to Ayutthaya himself. When entering the land of Siam, he traded until business prosperity and had the opportunity to trade with many people, even the royal court. This point may be the beginning of his civil service of Sheik Ahmad. The royal court may see the ability of Sheik Ahmad in trading that could be beneficial to Siam.

On the other hand, the speculation of Sheik Ahmad’s profession brings to another direction. It is believed that he was a semi-military merchant who was a sage during the 16th-17th century. He traveled to Ayutthaya with the support of the King Shah of the Safavid Dynasty to expand Iran's influence, making relations including missionaries. The main objective was political implications rather than coming directly to trade. Several evidences supported the possibility of this hypothesis.<sup>12</sup> It can be interpreted that if Sheik Ahmad was just an ordinary merchant without any political or military knowledge, he would not have had a chance to be involved in the line of governance and the royal court. One of the historical recordings in Ayutthaya history supports of this presumption and portrayed Sheik Ahmad and his close friend, Ja Meun Sriworarak. The historical recordings also portrays Shiek Ahmad as a heroic figure when the Japanese rebellion occurred, Sheik Ahmad brought his troops together with the forces of Ja Meun Sriworarak to evict them successfully. Thus, he must also have military knowledge in governance and controlling the troops for a battle. Therefore corresponding with the concept that Sheik Ahmad is not just a normal merchant but he was a semi-military merchant.

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12. Julispong Chularatana, “The speculation of Sheik Ahmad’s profession,” interviewed by Wongwasant Wasantasuri, April 3, 2020.

The second concept deals with the semi-legendary narratives of the route of his journey from Persia to Ayutthaya. It is found that Sheik Ahmad began to depart from Kune by a camel caravan travelling over the land to the Masulipatham port in southern India. Then he continued to travel by crossing the Andaman Sea through Mergui Tenasserim into Siam, passing through Kui Buri, Phetchaburi, Bangkok and finally arrived Ayutthaya. Two speculations of his route can be presented.

The first speculation views that his camel caravan began to travel from Kune to the east. Heading to the south of India and boarding a ship to Ayutthaya, he completed his route with a camel caravan and a ship sailing. According to records written in the book *The Ship of Sulayman* (1984), the second speculation is different from the first speculation that the route began from the city of Kune and then follow the Persian ambassador's route to Ayutthaya. This second speculation is supported by Julispong Chularatana as follows:

*I believe that Sheik Ahmad came by land because he was from northern Iran. The land journey was more convenient. I understand that he seemed to be more adept at land caravans than by ship, even passing through Herat, coming in Kandaha, Lahore to Delhi".<sup>13</sup>*

In addition, Sunti (Ali) Suasaming also corresponds to the statement by Julispong Chularatana that

*He came from Kune via Iran into Afghanistan, entering northern India. He travelled to Golconda continuously down to south India, near Hyderabad, and came aboard at Musulipatum port. I assumed that he used the type of ship known as sloop heading to the Andaman Sea got on the Tenasserim route. He then came to Prachuap, Phetchaburi, went to Suphanburi, next to Ayutthaya.<sup>14</sup>*

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13. Julispong Chularatana, "The presumption of the route of journey to Ayutthaya of Sheik Ahmad," interviewed by Wongwasant Wasantasuri, April 3, 2020.

14. Sunti Suasaming, "The presumption of the route of journey to Ayutthaya of Sheik Ahmad," interviewed by Wongwasant Wasantasuri, April 2, 2020.

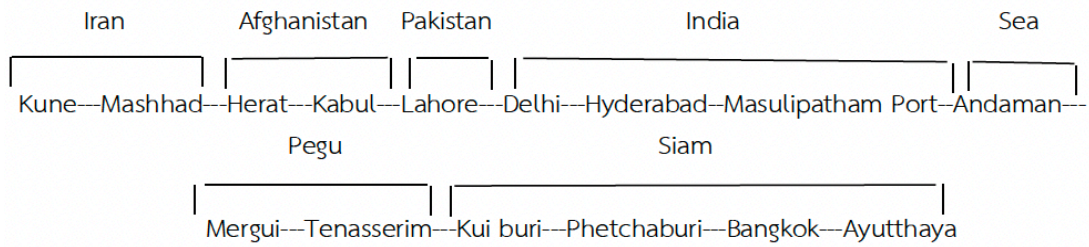


Diagram 1: The route of Sheik Ahmad from Kune, Astarabad region, Persia to Ayutthaya, Siam  
Source: Wongwasant Wasantasuri

Thamniap Sangngoen has argued that the route that Sheik Ahmad began his route from his hometown in Kune. Since he also believes that Sheik Ahmad was a native of Kune, he is of an opinion as follows:

*In truth, for I do not dare to decide which route he took because there is no evidence recording of his route. But one thing that can be certain is the record of the Iranian ambassador. If we based our assumption on that route, travelling patterns may be adjusted a bit because according to the record, the journey began from Isfahan but he was a man of a Kuni llocality. Therefore, he would begin traveling from his hometown, Kune to Isfahan. Here he probably traveled by camel. Once he started from Isfahan, he followed the route as recorded.<sup>15</sup>*

Another speculation proposes that the route began from Kune and then travelled along the route of journey of the Persian ambassador to Ayutthaya, according to the recordings found in *The ship of Sulayman* (1984)<sup>16</sup>. The diagram of the second speculation of sea route is presented below as follows:

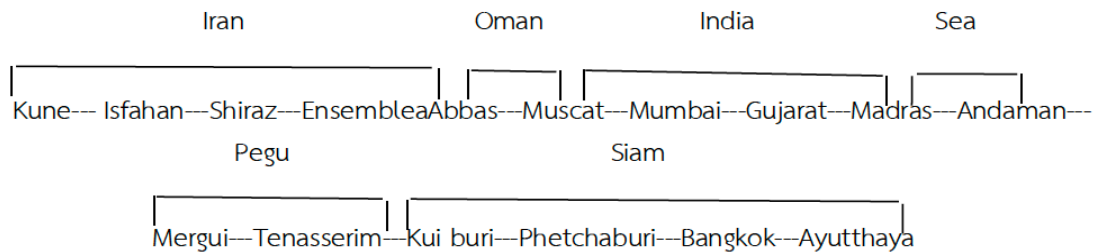


Diagram 2: The route of the Persian ambassador's Journey to Ayutthaya according to the recording of *The Ship of Sulayman* (1984).  
Source: Wongwasant Wasantasuri

15. Thamniap Sangngoen, "The route of journey of Sheik Ahmad to Ayutthaya, according to the records of The ship of Sulaiman," interviewed by Wongwasant Wasantasuri, April 3, 2020.

16. Direk Kunsirisawat, *The ship of Sulaiman* (Bangkok: The Foundation for the Promotion Social Sciences and Humanities Textbook Project, 1984), 1-15.



Picture 4 Map of Sheik Ahmad's Journey from Kune to Ayutthaya showing route 1 and route 2  
Source: "Asian map," Pictures, Accessed in April 2, 2020, <http://tabeetabitavel.com> (the route drawn by Wongwasant Wasantasuri)

Upon the study of semi-legendary narratives, the route taken by Sheik Ahmad from Persia to Ayutthaya can be speculated in order to assume the mode of transportation by changing the means of transportation from land to waterway. Traveling by ship to Oman passing the coast of Muscat harbor, it can also be speculated that Muscat harbor is one of the most important seaports of past maritime routes on the coast of Oman, which has calm tides from November to March. The coastal port of Oman is a source of fresh water for drinking water on a commercial ship heading to India<sup>17</sup> to travel to Mumbai. Travelling to the south of India, passing through Gujarat and passing up to Madras, he continued his traveling courses in the Andaman Sea and took the route as appeared the same in both Diagram 1 and Diagram 2 from Mergui---Tenasserim to Ayutthaya.

The third concept deals with culture and Persian music. Persian music has grown to the utmost popularity, especially during the Arabian occupation during the seventh until the eighth centuries. After that period, Persian music had developed a leap forward that is said to be the golden age of Islam. Considering the roots of Persian music, it can be seen that it is similar to Arabic music. They share similarities in the shape of musical instruments and musical terminology. Persian musical instruments have originated from the royal court. Musical instruments are exquisitely designed. When referring to various types of musical instruments in Persia, one can be see that the most outstanding ones are stringed instruments and drums.<sup>18</sup>

Most of Persian musical instruments were spread in the former Persian Empire throughout the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia. Their musical culture was associated with trade in Europe and Asia. In ancient times, the Silk Road played a powerful role in the spread of Persian musical instruments. The musical instruments of Persian culture are included as followings:

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17. E.B. Matin, *Cargoes Of The East: The Ports, Trade And Culture Of The Arabian Sea And Western Indian Ocean* (London: Elm Tree Books, 1978), 5.

18. Jean Jenkins and Poul Rovsing Olsen, *Music And Musical Instruments In The World Of Islam* (London: World of Islam Festival Publishing Company, 1976), 12.

*Ud* is a short neck plucked string instrument and has a pear shaped. The sound box is quite flat. The pattern is engraved on the neck using only one piece of wood. There are 4 strings across the neck of the instrument.

*Rabab* is one of the bowed string instruments that is widely seen in the Islamic music world, especially in the Middle East. It is a musical instrument similar to the *Karmanche* with 3 strings. The bow is free outside the strings like a violin or viola.

*Tar* was a long-neck plucked lute. The initial form appeared in the early 19th century and was converted into the present form at the end of the century. There are carvings using wood from Mulberry trees. The sound box of the instrument is assembled to the neck of the instrument of such length with a total of 6 strings (a pair of strings is counted as 1 sound).

*Karmanche* always appears in ancient paintings taking a fiddle shape. The ending has a pointed spike which is inserted into a sound box of the instrument from one side to the other to make the structure of the instrument strong. The spike has another function in helping to sustain and stand vertically during playing. The upper body consists of 3 knobs, with all 3 of the *Karmanche* strings passing through the body to the knob by coiling the ends of the wires next to each knob to adjust the looseness of that particular string.

*Santur* looks like a dulcimer. The average width is approximately 90 centimeters and length is approximately 35 centimeters. There are a total of 72 strings divided into 18 groups of 4 playing with a soft mallet called *Mezrabs*.

*Daf* is the Arabic language used in many countries, from North Africa to Pakistan. *Daf* has a place in the Tambourine family. It is a frame drum. There are many different types of Tambourines with different sizes. The physical characteristics of *daf* are made with the same large sheet of leather stretched over a wooden frame that has been formed around the drum.

*Tonbak* or *Zarb* is a conical drum. The body can be made of ceramics, wood, or metal. This drum is very popular and is commonly used to accompany belly dancing and popular ensembles. It is played in a horizontal position in modern Iranian music. It has also been widely used in the Middle East and North Africa before.

*Ney* is a woodwind instrument. The sound resembles to that of a wooden flute but the method of blowing is implemented from the beak. Considered to be the most popular side-blown flute in the Middle East, this instrument is an ancient instrument that was established no less than 5,000 years ago.

Many paintings, especially in the 13th - 18th centuries, show various forms in the production of *ney*. The *Ney*, measured roughly between 60-70 centimeters, possesses outstanding acoustic characteristics: powerful, gentle, and philosophical. Such qualities

must be performed by skilled musicians.<sup>19</sup>

The rhythmic system in Persian music is one of the most complicated systems in the world. To begin with, two major systems known as *Atanin* and *Adwar* are point of reference. The *Atanin* system is characterized by the counting of syllables which symbolize the rhythm. The structure is divided into 3 parts: beginning, middle, and ending.<sup>20</sup> It utters ta or tan sound at the beginning, the na sound in the middle and the nan sound at the end, with the regulation of using the rhythm circuit which is to create the rhythmic sound together with the lyrics of singer. The *Adwar* system is quite detailed and complex. The performances of the rhythm circuit in such a system can be the starting point for dividing the structure of the larger rhythmic section. In terms of basic rhythms the meter 4/4 6/8 3/4 is normally approached and gradually proceeded with a rapid rhythm.<sup>21</sup> Drum patterns such as Makshum and Musadi patterns are canonic patterns.<sup>22</sup>

The Persian sound system is distinctly different from the Western music system. What can be seen is the distance of the sound range also known twelve tone equidistant scale consisting of half and full intervals. On the other hand, Persian music system has a complex distance from the sound system of international music to 5 phases in total, with a distance of 17 phases (consisting of half-tones and full tones).<sup>23</sup>

Most of the sound system of Persian music uses 7 musical notes, and in the group of notes, it is called Maqams in Persian. Each mode has a unique name. This creates different types of melodies (such as gushes) of Persia, in which the melodic or expressive feelings through that song depend on the tastes or the needs of the transmitters, singers or composers. Most of music scales are divided (Octave) into 12 tones (half interval and full interval).<sup>24</sup>

The results of the study of Persian music and musical instruments will be applied to a formulation of Thai music ensemble by way of employing the theory of semiology. The author would like to opt for the most ideal case of inviting Persian musicians to play Persian musical instruments with Thai musicians. However, such ideas are impossible to be executed during the time being of coping with COVID-19 crisis around the world. According to the Center of Persian Culture at the Embassy of Iran in Bangkok, none of professional musicians from Iran reside in Thailand. Shipping Persian musical instruments from Iran to Thailand to be played by Thai musicians without proper training would make no sense and disrespectful to the culture. The author therefore has chosen Thai musical instruments that are representing certain characteristics of Persian instruments in order to formulate a new type of Thai musical ensemble including *khim*, *saw sam sai*, *saw daung*, *saw u*, and a pair of *thon* and *ramana*. This ensemble represents Persian comers to Ayuthaya.

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19. Jean During, Zia Mirabdolbaghi and Dariush Safvat, *The Art Of Persian Music* (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 1991), 144-147.

20. Mohammad Reza Azadehfar, "Rhythmic Structure in Iranian Music" (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2004), 34.

21. Mohammad Reza Azadehfar, "Rhythmic Structure in Iranian Music" (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2004), 37.

22. Pomprapit Paosawadi, "Halal culture: the development of music culture of Anaheid Muslims in Bangkok" (Research report, Thailand Research Fund, 2018), 22-23.

23. Jean During, Zia Mirabdolbaghi and Dariush Safvat, *The Art Of Persian Music* (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 1991), 82.

24. Jean During, Zia Mirabdolbaghi and Dariush Safvat, *The Art Of Persian Music* (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 1991), 87.

The fourth concept deals with a study of camel behaviors in Persian culture. Camel is an animal suitable for long journeys. It is a popular animal for traveling over long distances in Persian and Arab civilization. In addition, camels possess physical characteristics that tolerate to the arid climate, especially the desert area, which is the route that Sheik Ahmad passed. Camel is patient and strong. It can transport baggages to poor areas for long distance.

Camel is a mammal in the genus *Camelus*, belonging to the family Camelidae. It can live without feeding food or water for 2 weeks because of the accumulation of fat in the hump, and because the body can store water very well. Therefore, it can live in a desert very well. It eats leafy foods in the desert and the adult has a height of 1.85 meters and a hump height of 75 centimeters. It can carry 150-200 kilograms of body weight, body temperature can change from 35 degrees Celsius at night to 41 degrees Celsius during the day. Nowadays, the animals in the camel family have been raised as economic animals in some countries. But is used in various fields, such as food, shaving, milking, and using meat for consumption<sup>25</sup> Humans used camels as a vehicle of transportation for millennia. Camel can carry a weight of about 170 to 270 kilograms until receiving the common nickname: "Ship of the Desert".<sup>26</sup>

The indication of the camel's unique characteristics is tolerating arid climate, especially in the desert. They can continue to walk without food and water for up to 2 weeks because it has fat stored in the hump and the body can use as energy. It can close the respiratory way of the nose immediately as needed if exposed to the desert wind. It also has very long eyelashes to prevent sand from getting into the eyes. It can adjust the temperature of the body to achieve a balanced life, which can withstand the heat of the temperature up to 41 degrees Celsius, which is a common temperature in the desert. It can drink tens of liters of water at a time, or almost one-third of its body weight, allowing travel a long distance in the desert without having to drink water frequently. Also, it can run faster than 16 kilometers per hour. Importantly, it can walk through the desert 40 kilometers a day, carrying over 100 kilograms of luggage or belongings, making it suitable for transportation as it shortens the traveling time and can travel in poor area. Besides, the camel's dung can be used as a fire fuel to cool off at night, which is very useful to travelers.<sup>27</sup>

The size of the hump is a measure of the camel's readiness to travel. If the hump is large and hard, it is a sign that the camel body is full of fat and ready to travel.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the benefits of the camel as a supporting factor in travelling over long distances, the important presumption that can be believed that Sheik Ahmad used camel as a vehicle of transportation is raised on the evidence of the discovery of traces of the trade caravan between

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25. "The Secret of the Camel: Ship of the Desert," Wasan Chanthep, Accessed in April 4, 2020, <http://pirun.ku.ac.th/~b521030273/youknow.html>

26. "Camel : Fact, Type and Picture," Alina Bradford, Accessed in 4 April 2020, <https://www.livescience.com/27503-camels.html>

27. "Camel's special characteristics," Sunti Suasaming, Accessed in April 4, 2020, <http://farid-dorkpla.blogspot.com/2009/06/blog-post.html>

28. "Camel: Argosy Desert.," Suthas Yoksan, Accessed in April 4, 2020, <https://mgronline.com/science/detail/9490000126271>

Isfahan (Persia) and Lahore from the records of a British traveler<sup>29</sup> in 1618., a Dutch traveler's records<sup>30</sup> were also found stating that a caravan of 6,000 camels traveled to Persia to load Indian clothes to that place. It can be concluded that camel is a major transporting vehicle used in Persian culture that can be interpreted in the context of research on Ayutthaya and Asia.

From the study of the 4 concepts above, it leads to the formulation of a music composition that employs the compositional methods of Thai traditional music with an application of Persian musical elements entitled *The Journey of Sheik Ahmad*. In *the Journey of Sheik Ahmad* through all 4 subset of compositional pieces: each particular piece will be elaborated as follows:

*Prathomkuna* opens this music composition depicting the beginning journey from Persia. In this song, To compose a musical piece from an inspiration of the land where Sheik Ahmad had left and this piece is also designated to glorify his ethnicity rooted in Persia. The melodies uses drums as a symbol and reference to a representative auditory patterns in Persian rhythmic patterns at the beginning. According music cultures in Persia, a frame drum is a musical instrument that is allowed to accompany worshipping. *Tonbak* and *daf* is selected as a medium to interpret Persian music for this composition. In this piece, the author will employ Thai drums which have similar physical characteristics and are also the same type of drums, such as Thon Mahoree (Tonbak's symbol) and Rammana Mahoree (Daf's symbol). The Thai drums signified that Sheik Ahmad was contemporary in the Safavid Dynasty when he was still a civil servant in Siam who was loyal to the royal court all along.

*Maraka Sadudee* song, this composition depicts the point of time when Sheik Ahmad traveling on land by a caravan of camel.

The song above depicts the imagery of the reverence to the land throughout the journey with a respect to Sheik Ahmad. The music structure consists of melodies and rhythm based on the study and imagination of the camel's walk, walking speed, and docile behaviors. It also includes an insertion of the camel's small bell sound to convey the journey using the camel as a vehicle clearly and more enjoyable of music. The rhythmic structure shown below is a metric structure composed to exemplify the interlocking of camel's small bell sound and the rhythmic drum pattern.

Note Table 1 The concept of rhythmic pattern and the camel's small bell sound in Maraka Sadudee song.

Source: Wongwasant Wasantasuri

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29. Julispong Chularatana, "Ayutthaya and Asia in The ship of Sulaiman Reflections of the Eastern World in the Persian Journey record in the 17th Century" (Research Report, Department of History, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, 2018), 53.

30. Julispong Chularatana, "Ayutthaya and Asia in The ship of Sulaiman Reflections of the Eastern World in the Persian Journey record in the 17th Century" (Research Report, Department of History, Faculty of Arts Chulalongkorn University, 2018), 53.

rhythmic pattern	x x x x	x x x x	x x x x	x x x x	x x x x	x x x x	x x x x	x x x x
The camel's small bell sound	----	----	--- camel's small bell	----	--- stop	----	--- camel's small bell	----

*Chonlathipannana* is the last subset of a music composition depicting a moment in which Sheik Ahmad changed the route from land to water. Traveling by ship in the ocean that is far and endless, will inevitably have to face many uncertainties, danger, and diverse feelings. In the beginning, the music features a ship that sailed in the middle of peaceful sea. During the encountering with natural disasters, inclement weather, shortage of food, the vast of the sea that brings loneliness, the longing for the past, the music was designed to combine principles of Thai traditional music composition which included *ranad thum* solo section in this section.

*Pachimawan Kayi* is the last section depicting the last section of his journey which ends at Tha Kayi, Ayutthaya safely. Therefore, the meaning of this piece can be interpreted in two implications. Firstly, the intention of the author/composer who would like to name the melodies with the word *Kayi* referring to Tha Kayi subdistrict, Ayutthaya where is the ending of the journey of Sheik Ahmad. In other words, *Kayi* means body. In figurative meaning, his virtues remains still in our mind who have heard the story of Sheik. Although his body has gone, he still resides in the individual's memories. The mood of this tune is lively, celebratory, and blissful showing the success and completeness of the journey. It is a combination of Thai music with a Thai and Persian accent which symbolizes Sheik Ahmad's arrival in Ayutthaya.

## Summary and discussion

Suphasiree Piyaphipat. (2010) states in the research findings of Musical Creation of Lunar Year Symbols and horoscope which aimed to feature lunar year symbols that the subject of human horoscopes were conveyed through lyrics<sup>31</sup> while the *Journey of Sheik Ahmad* transfers the author/composer's inspiration and imagination through melodies without lyrics. The intention of composing melodies without using lyrics is to focus on the sound of music that will trigger more imagination to the land far away in time and distance. Horoscope is a familiar subject to Thai audience whereas the objects portrayed in the *Journey of Sheik Ahmad* is much less accustomed to Thai audience such camels, Persian drums, and obstacles from monsoon dynamics in Indian ocean during his journey.

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31. Suphasiree Piyaphipat, "Musical Creation of Lunar Year Symbols" (D.F.A. thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 2010), 3.

## Research Suggestions

*The journey of Sheik Ahmad* is a presentation based on his historical journey only. Therefore, there are still other interesting aspects that could be further studied as a knowledge leading to an inspiration in Thai music composition such as a music composition devoted to camels, especially the stories about trading caravans across Asia.

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